

Revisiting authenticity in the Asian context



Cultural Heritage
Administration

Revisiting authenticity in the Asian context



Temple of the Tooth Relic, Kandy, Sri Lanka by SachinthakaS (CCo)

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Revisiting authenticity in the Asian context

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Edited by
Gamini Wijesuriya and Jonathan Sweet

△ **Forum on Revisiting Authenticity in the Asian Context**

8–12 December 2014, Sri Lanka

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▽ ***Revisiting Authenticity in the Asian Context***

Edited by Gamini Wijesuriya and Jonathan Sweet

△ ISBN 978-92-9077-283-5

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International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property

Via di San Michele, 13 00153 Rome, Italy

www.iccrom.org

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△ Designed by Soapbox

www.soapbox.co.uk

▽ This volume was produced thanks to the generosity of the Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA), Republic of Korea.



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Foreword

This volume contains the collection of papers presented at the Second Annual ICCROM-CHA Forum – Revisiting Authenticity in the Asian Context held in Sri Lanka in December 2014. The Forum was a result of a collaborative effort between the Korean Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA) and ICCROM. It is a new thematic programme for developing contextual heritage policy guidance and/or principles for the Asian region. While focusing on Asia in particular and contributing to regional capacity building processes, the programme aimed to provide benefits on a global scale.

The goals of the thematic programme were:

- 1 to explore, research, and debate key themes emerging from the Asian region that have implications for effective conservation and management of heritage;
- 2 to formulate policy guidance notes and/or principles related to the above themes for improved and effective conservation and management of heritage; and
- 3 to contribute to capacity building efforts in the region.

The programme was launched in 2013. The theme of the first Forum was ‘Asian Buddhist Heritage: Conserving the Sacred’, and its proceedings have already been published. Following this tradition, the theme selected for the second Forum held in 2014 was ‘Revisiting Authenticity in the Asian Context’.

2014 marked the twentieth anniversary of the Nara Document on Authenticity. The Nara Document is considered an important watershed in the history of conservation, for expanding the concept of authenticity from earlier documents such as the Venice Charter and especially for drawing attention to cultural diversity within the heritage discourse. The full incorporation of the Nara Document into the *Operational Guidelines* of the World Heritage

Convention in 2005 made it relevant and essential for the listing and management of cultural heritage properties of Outstanding Universal Value, since authenticity is recognized as one of the three mandatory pillars supporting Outstanding Universal Value.

In spite of this international recognition of authenticity and the Nara Document, there has been in-depth discussion of its applicability in the African and American contexts through a series of meetings organized in the regions, such as the San Antonio meeting and associated Declaration in 1996 and the meeting on Authenticity and Integrity in an African Context in 2000. At its twentieth anniversary, Africa revisited its impacts for the second time on the conservation and management of heritage in the region, particularly in relation to World Heritage, the results of which were presented at this Forum. Although the Nara Document was developed in Asia, regional heritage practitioners felt the need to revisit it due to specificities and the challenges faced by them in the conservation of heritage.

We wish to thank all those involved in organizing and participating in the Forum, the Sri Lankan heritage authorities in particular. It can also be considered as a tribute to Sri Lanka which was among the first seven founding members of ICCROM entering the organization on 4 September 1958 and to Roland Silva who indeed was also a former participant of ICCROM's activities and later reached the helm of the conservation world by becoming the first non-European President of ICOMOS, during which period the Nara Document was produced. This book, the first of its nature focused on a region and published by ICCROM, will undoubtedly contribute to the current debate on the theme of authenticity.

Stefano De Caro
Director-General
of ICCROM

Rha Sun-hwa
Administrator of the Cultural
Heritage Administration
of the Republic of Korea

Acknowledgements

Given that the volume contains the collection of papers presented at the second annual ICCROM-CHA Forum – Revisiting Authenticity in the Asian Context, we would like to acknowledge with gratitude a number of organizations and individuals who contributed to the success of this publication:

All the staff from ICCROM and the Korean Cultural Heritage Administration (CHA), who were engaged in the development and implementation of the Forum;

The Ministry of National Heritage, the Department of Archaeology, the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology, University of Kelaniya of Sri Lanka;

Prasanna B. Ratnayake and Rasika Dissanayake of the Department of Archaeology, Sri Lanka;

Dr Jonathan Sweet, Deakin University, Australia; who acted as Rapporteur for the Forum;

All participants of the Forum;

Paul Arenson and Jennifer Copithorne, ICCROM for facilitating the publication.

A very special thanks to Ioannis Poullos who acted as a consultant to ICCROM and without whose tireless efforts this publication would not have been possible.

Gamini Wijesuriya

Jonathan Sweet



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Revisiting authenticity in the Asian context

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Introduction

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Authenticity is perhaps the conservation profession's most nebulous term, or as Stefano De Caro has observed, it presents a conundrum in its application to conservation practice. This concept that is currently dominant within the World Heritage process has in the main, privileged materials-based approaches to conservation practice rather than recognizing the profound links in many historical instances to spiritual and other non-material values and the attributes that carry them. One may argue that, while the Nara Document (Larsen, ed., 1994) may have opened the door for recognizing such values and their respective aspects, in reality prioritizing material over everything else remains in command.

In the work of heritage practitioners in Asia the conservation of material and spiritual values are not necessarily in conflict and there are many instances where these are reconciled in conservation. However, as this book demonstrates, in some cultural circumstances the historical weight of the concept of authenticity within the conservation discourse poses challenges to conservation practice in the region. This is evident in some international approaches and obligations that may make it difficult to address the specific local cultural circumstances that have a bearing on heritage conservation and, as counterpoint to this, there are some local cultural and/or religious practices that may hinder the work of heritage practitioners working to meet so-called international requirements.

The theme of this book specifically addresses the meaning and application of the concept of authenticity in the Asian context. In the form of introductory remarks, Gamini Wijesuriya raises some issues for discussion, which are particular to the Asian context. His account of the history of the discourse concerning authenticity reflects his work in heritage conservation over many years in both the pre- and post- Nara Document eras, and this provides the context that led to the organization of the Forum. Central to the discussion at the Forum, and presented in this book, were issues related to the role of authenticity in the World Heritage context. This is because authenticity is currently a mandatory requirement for presenting nominations for heritage sites to be inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Therefore, in

drawing on his experience and broader knowledge of conservation in Asia, Wijesuriya (1993) poses the question of how applicable the concept of authenticity is to the region. Furthermore, he queries its legitimacy in the nomination process, particularly noting that there is often a lack of clarity in the statements that are being produced to fulfil such obligations. Another question he poses is the complexity of using the term authenticity as a generic term against linking it to one or more aspects i.e. authenticity of materials; form; function, etc. which has profound implications for assessing the impact on a site's Outstanding Universal Value. As we shall see in the contributions to this book, the reasons for this include the variable and diverse understandings of the meanings and applications of authenticity in the region. The contributors to this book are all heritage practitioners. Their professional activities range from managing a national heritage department to hands-on action research seeking to preserve heritage values through supporting participatory processes. In addition, the case studies investigate the issue of authenticity in a range of circumstances in Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, and when taken together these reflective papers provide an invaluable representation of how heritage practitioners are approaching the issue of understanding and protecting heritage in Asia.

While these contributors clearly recognize the global dimensions of their practice, they also reflect a view which is more widespread within the region that the meanings and applications of the concepts of authenticity are diverse. The contributors assert that the meanings and applications of authenticity may be different in the traditions of Asian cultures than other regional contexts, for example in Africa, Europe, the Pacific or in the Americas. Thus, importantly, they also assert that the meanings and applications of the concept of authenticity have their own specificities. This position reflects the influence of the Nara Document on Authenticity hereafter referred to as the Nara Document, which is discussed shortly. The Forum was convened on the twentieth anniversary of the Nara Document and thus offered a timely opportunity to reflect on the document's influence and relevance, not only in

Asia but also other parts of the world. To provide a wider context therefore a paper presented at the Forum and included here by Webber Ndoro discusses the relevance of the Nara Document to African conservation practices. Importantly too, the participants clearly recognized the importance of longstanding international disciplines such as archaeology, something discussed by Zuraina Majid in the context of heritage sites in Malaysia. Importantly too, the influence of international Conventions and frameworks on national heritage systems are also contextualized in many of these case studies; for example, Guo Zhan discusses the influence of the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) in China, and Lu Zhou discusses the evolution of the *China Principles* (China ICOMOS, 2000) and its understanding and incorporation of the concept of authenticity and the recommendations of the Nara Document.

The reasons for highlighting the issues of authenticity in Asia are historical, cultural and political. This is evident in the history of the concern for debating the issue of cultural and heritage diversities and the implications of these to heritage practices and assessments over a number of decades in the twentieth century. This discourse culminated in the Nara Document on Authenticity, which represents a milestone in the history of shaping international heritage practice. The document was developed through an initiative of the Government of Japan with the support of UNESCO, ICOMOS, ICCROM and a select group of heritage practitioners. However, the Nara Document has gained a semi legal status as it has since been integrated into the *Operational Guidelines* of the World Heritage Committee (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016).

The Nara Document explicitly called for greater respect for cultural and heritage diversities in conservation practice. This came two decades after the adoption of the UNESCO Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (World Heritage Convention) of 1972 (UNESCO, 1972). In particular, the Nara Document expands the issue of the framework for assessing authenticity and it questioned the methodology and sources of information that the process required. The existing methodology was regarded as essentially based in a Western

empirical tradition, which was symbolized by the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (1964 Venice Charter). This charter stated that “the principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings should be agreed and be laid down on an international basis, with each country being responsible for applying the plan within the framework of its own culture and traditions” (ICOMOS, 1965, Introduction). While it may be argued that the Venice Charter recognized diversity based on the above statement and agency in conservation management to an extent, the strong material and technical focus on the conservation of monuments and sites is now considered outdated (Wijesuriya, 2017), very narrow and unlikely to successfully address “the full richness of their authenticity”, which was one of its underlying aims. While the Venice Charter stipulated that assessments should have “recourse to sciences and techniques”, the language of the Nara Document is more strident in its call for broadening the heritage assessment process to be more inclusive of alternative methods of documenting significant heritage in societies which had established and distinct cultural traditions. The Nara Document reiterated that “the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which it belongs” (Article 11). It was in this context that in 2015 the then President of ICOMOS Gustavo Araoz described the significance of the Nara Document in re-evaluating the concept of authenticity:

The Eurocentric doctrinal foundation that had been developed for over two centuries to sustain its focus on materiality was effectively challenged in the Nara document, which recognized for the first time that authenticity is a relative concept that depends on its socio-economic context (Araoz, 2011, p. 57).

Thus, it argued that the assessment of authenticity and heritage values should recognize local knowledge systems and processes, and involve the communities who have been the traditional custodians of the heritage and who are intimately linked to the heritage values through memory and identity. As Roland Silva observed in his presentation at the Forum, the reinterpretation

of the term and assessment of authenticity at Nara, enabled “the wonderful shrines of Japan to be brought onto the World Heritage List”. This influence has also been felt in more recent activities: in this book, Nilan Cooray explores the relationships between living religious heritage and authenticity in the context of the UNESCO World Heritage city of Kandy, and similarly Radhika Dhumal focuses on the restoration of the spire of the Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya.

The World Heritage Committee is constantly challenged by differing approaches to conservation in Western and Eastern societies. Viewed from a Western empirical perspective, as in the Venice Charter, a building may be considered authentic because it is a truthful example of a structure from a particular historic period, clearly known and supported by documentary evidence. This means there is sufficient material preserved with as little intervention as possible. Where conservation treatment has been undertaken, the original (authentic) elements and materials of the building are still evident and clearly identifiable. This process reflects a linear conceptualization of the relationship between the past and the present, where the argument for the conservation of a building lies in its ability to embody important or valued aspects of history. Heritage practitioners in the region and others engaged in the discourse have challenged this reductive view (Wijesuriya, 2008).

It was in this context that the need for revisiting authenticity in an Asian context was considered a timely theme for the Forum. There is certainly diversity in Asian cultures in terms of approaches to the preservation of heritage structures; thus questioning the validity of a one-size-fits-all philosophy. As Silva relates there were clearly articulated principles and frameworks in Asian societies, which seem to closely parallel those expressed in the Venice Charter. For example, the restoration of temples in South Asia was discussed in the *Mayamata*, a manuscript from the ninth century (Dagens, 1993). It contains directions for the restoration process that are intended to ensure respect for the original materials, dimensions and integrity where the process is guided by “the knowledgeable”. In other cultural contexts, the preservation of the material remains of a historic building may not be paramount and there is

a tradition of continuous renewal and rebuilding, where the process embodies spiritual significance, as is the case with some temples in Japan. This is informed by a regenerative view of the relationships between the past and the present, which is circular and continuous (Wijesuriya, 2008, 2010). In general, while older elements may be obscured in a building by more recent treatments the place may still be understood as authentic because it represents a revitalizing spiritual process or the continuing embodiment of enduring spiritual beliefs and practices valued by the community. In his contribution to this book, Ashley de Vos examines this issue through a detailed discussion of the traditional processes of maintaining Buddhist stupas. Rohit Jigyasu also investigates the ramifications for conservation practice based on an alternate cosmological view, and in his contribution to this book he discusses the ambiguities and difficulties of applying current international frameworks of authenticity in the context of recent disaster recovery efforts in India and Nepal.

In part, the discussion of the concept of authenticity remains problematic because the term is not always directly translatable into the many local languages that exist in Asia. Conservation practitioners therefore rely upon inexact synonyms in the establishment of local frameworks or in their interactions with communities and stakeholders. The ramifications of this for frontline practical conservation efforts in a traditional Nepalese context are well illustrated in the chapter written by Kai Weise. Or, as Sujeong Lee details, in the Republic of Korea there has been an effort to define the meaning of authenticity through national legislation, which has been informed by international models. In this case the idea of authenticity is interpreted as the original form. In this book Seong-do Kim also investigates the application of this definition through a number of detailed case studies of architectural heritage restoration, including the Suwon Hwaseon Paldalmun Gate.

This variation in contexts, meanings and understandings has philosophical and practical implications for heritage conservators in Asia. Materials-based, scientific and empirically supported notions of authenticity may be necessary. Nevertheless, as some of the case studies here demonstrate, and some of the contributors

argue, this often does not go far enough in some Asian circumstances. When seeking to preserve the heritage values of a place through conservation management planning, for example, there is a need to identify and describe where the values of the place are most clearly expressed. This often means making judgements about the extent to which conservation programs should prioritize material over spiritual values in the preservation of buildings, sites, and precincts or in intangible cultural features. Amongst the contributors there is a strong message that supports the increased recognition of people-centred approaches to heritage conservation, but which also critically engages with issues associated with community participation. In their contribution to this book, Neel Kamal Chapagain and Sudarshan Raj Tiwari highlight two important issues concerning this in their analysis of the conservation of temples of the Kathmandu Valley, where they have encountered difficulties in interpreting the authenticity because of restricted access to information concerning the traditional processes of ongoing maintenance. In her contribution, Tara Sharma questions the extent to which the material form is relevant to the preservation of spiritual values or cultural practices in Ladakh, where she has identified the need for more concerted research efforts into significances which utilize community participatory processes for the assessment of heritage values. Similarly, Abu Sayeed M. Ahmed and Naushad Ehsanul Huq highlight the increasing need for multidisciplinary and inclusive approaches to the decision-making process in Bangladesh. And, Eric Babar Zerrudo analyses the relationship between traditional conservation practice and community participation, highlighting the challenges of reaching a consensus in describing the attributes of authenticity that were most important in the restoration of the Malate Church (Church of Our Lady of the Remedies) in the Philippines.

It is fitting therefore that 20 years on from the Nara Document that (as this book demonstrates) heritage conservation practitioners from countries within Asia are leading the discussion on the relationship between authenticity and heritage conservation in the range of cultures to which they belong and in which they work in very particular circumstances. They discuss the meanings and

implications of the concept of authenticity and how it informs or is interpreted in conservation practice in the region with examples from a diverse range of projects. In the main the contributors adopt a case study approach and they provide many details of the projects that they have been involved in, highlighting and discussing issues concerning understanding authenticity that have emerged in their own spheres of professional activity. We see that contributors have raised issues of community participation, rebuilding, and the recognition of alternative sources of knowledge and conservation processes, and in addition, in some contributions the case studies focus on quite technical aspects of conservation work. Vasu Poshyanandana outlines the history and influence of Western conservation practice in Thailand and provides a detailed examination of the relationships between anastylosis and authenticity in the restoration of Khmer architectural monuments. Focusing on the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Angkor, Peou Hang discusses the relationships between traditional knowledge, as represented by the hydraulic system, authenticity and the possibilities of sustainable development. And, in the Sri Lankan context, Prasanna B. Ratnayake discusses the complex relationships between traditional and modern management systems through case studies of the Embekke Devale shrine and the Nawagala Stupa.

The meeting in Sri Lanka at which the participants presented the papers produced in this book also generated much discussion and debate about the concept of authenticity and its applicability and usefulness as it relates to current conservation practice in Asia and identified a number of key concerns. These were later revisited and developed into a document worthy of consideration at the ICCROM-CHA Forum held in 2017 in the Republic of Korea (see note at the end of this book).

After reading this book you can draw your own conclusions about whether or not these examples illustrate approaches that are representative of established global frameworks or whether they are paradigms of conceptualizations of conservation practice that have arisen in Asia in the wake of the Nara Document, or whether this continues to be work in progress.

Gamini Wijesuriya

Jonathan Sweet

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◊ CHAPTER I ◊

**Revisiting authenticity
in the Asian context:
introductory remarks**

Gamini Wijesuriya



Is it only a theory?

The 2014 Forum focuses on revisiting authenticity in the Asian context. This paper raises several questions and issues which were discussed at the Forum and are mostly based on my own experience of practice within the region, and to a lesser extent, on theoretical reflections globally over the past 35 years.

The first generic question is related to the concept of authenticity: do we have a good understanding of the term or is it another buzzword that has entered the vernacular? We have become accustomed to such words, mostly imposed on us, and tend to accept them without being able to contextualize or use them at all. Heritage conservation indeed is a context-dependent endeavour which has now been widely accepted. This is also a key message from the Nara Document (Larsen, ed., 1994), which was the centrepiece of our discussion at the Forum. It has been argued that authenticity is “a measure of the degree to which the values of a heritage property may be understood to be truthfully, genuinely and credibly expressed by the attributes carrying the values” (Stovel, 2004, p. 3; Stovel, 2007, p. 23). This is nice in theory, yet the key question is how it can be translated in practice for the benefit of all the audiences engaged in the heritage process, namely practitioners, policy makers, and communities and networks.

The work of the “pious vandals”

In 1992, I spent a year at the University of York (Wijesuriya, 1993). My mission was to compare and contrast, or rather justify, the work on the restoration of Buddhist monuments belonging to a living religious tradition in Sri Lanka. Within this framework, I was particularly concerned with an expression used by early twentieth century European heritage experts for the local Buddhists who were engaged in restoration of religious buildings that had been neglected during the colonial period. These communities were referred to as “pious vandals” in a 1930 address by the then well-known l'École française d'Extrême-Orient scholar Goloubew (Pearson, 1931).

At York, I made two discoveries. The first was the group engaged in the restoration of religious buildings in England in the 1830s who were also

called pious vandals. The work of this group is described by Dellheim as follows:

the relationship between religious revivalism and the vogue of architectural restoration is best illustrated by the ‘Camden Society’. The Camden Society, founded by Cambridge undergraduates in 1839, strongly believed that the architectural fabric of the medieval period had been spoilt by additions and alterations and, as such, had lost the appearance that was conducive to the required ecclesiastical activities. The Camden Society believed that the religious symbolism attached to the churches had been lost, and therefore needed to be brought back. Apparently, their fundamental premises were ‘that only the restitution of the medieval stress on dignity, ritual, and sacrament could re-generate the Church of England’ and that this could take place only in authentic medieval settings (Dellheim, 1982, p. 81).

In this context, in order to recreate the lost medieval environment, this group began to restore churches to their original design as they believed that “nothing but the original structure would bear the stamp of truth” (Prince, 1981, p. 45). They believed that “to restore is to recover the original appearance, which has been lost by decay, accident or ill-judged alterations” (Dellheim, 1982, p. 82). They had the support of professionally qualified architects who translated the desires of the religious purists into practical restoration. Although this approach and philosophy were different to the one of the Sri Lankan Buddhists, I thought this was an interesting parallel to explore.

My second discovery was that all ecclesiastical buildings in use in England were exempted from the heritage law, which was contrary to what the colonial rulers of Sri Lanka had done over the course of time. Indeed, heritage legislation in Sri Lanka established during British colonial rule in 1940 primarily aimed at controlling the work of the pious vandals mentioned above. But I began to question whether controlling the work of the pious vandals might be a way forward for the conservation of Sri Lankan living monuments and whether it has achieved its objectives, and my findings were quite to the contrary.

My arrival at York took place at a time when the conservation community was heavily dependent upon one approach to conservation

based on a modern conservation movement developed in the West, which I have elsewhere (Wijesuriya, 2010) identified as the conventional conservation approach. The conclusions of Jokilehto, in his thesis presented at the University of York, provided evidence to this effect which had implications on the theme I wanted to explore: restoration/reconstruction. He wrote:

the penetrating mind of John Ruskin and the efforts of William Morris gave it [modern conservation movement] a clear definition, emphasizing the question of historic time and authenticity in relation to the original object, and the impossibility to reproduce an object with the same significance in another historical-cultural context. Any reconstruction was refused, and additions were recommended in contemporary form (Jokilehto, 1986, p. 8).

Jokilehto also emphasized the importance of authenticity for the current heritage discourse although reference was made directly to World Heritage:

The universal value of this heritage depends on its authenticity; it is the test of this authenticity which has to be passed in order to be eligible to be included in UNESCO's List of the World Cultural Heritage, and it is authenticity that forms the basic principle and guideline of the Venice Charter (Jokilehto, 1986, p. 8).

In this context, it was not easy for my relatively young mind to question the apparently well-established conservation principles. However, I also read the ICOMOS Charter for the Protection and Management of the Archaeological Heritage which states: "reconstructions serve two important functions: experimental research and interpretation. They should, however, be carried out with great caution, so as to avoid disturbing any surviving archaeological evidence, and they should take account of evidence from all sources in order to achieve authenticity" (ICOMOS, 1990, Article 7). This meant that I had no choice but to explore the concept of authenticity if I were to place the restoration of religious buildings by pious vandals in a global context. This happened in 1992, only two years before the birth of the Nara Document on Authenticity.

Yet, there were others who questioned the complexity of the restoration of religious buildings. Linstrum, who supervised Jokilehto's thesis, questioned the applicability of strict codes such as minimum intervention:

while it is relatively easy to apply this to, say, a ruined Abbey, it is not a counsel of perfection that is difficult to follow in every-day conservation. What about those buildings that are still in use? (Linstrum, 1991, p. 6).

Linstrum stated that "religious buildings occupy a special place in the feelings of those who worship there because of what they represent in their lives. They are symbolic as well as personal" (1991, p. 3). This opinion was shared by the former director of ICCROM Paul Philippot: "As regards living architecture, it is obvious that lacunae may have to be completed to a much larger extent than justified on purely artistic grounds for archaeological remains" (Philippot, 1976, p. 11).

The historical context of this theme has been dealt with elsewhere by the author (Wijesuriya, 2015) where references to limits of restoration/reconstruction of living heritage have been raised as far back as 1903.

In my work at York, I was further inspired by Silva's views on achieving the right balance:

The living monuments require the forbearance of both devotee and specialist. Either extreme can produce distortion and eccentricity. On the one hand the restoration or rebuilding concept of pilgrims and peasants can move monuments out of their own balance and replace such sites of hallowed dignity with monstrosities of a previous generation. On the other hand the pure policy maker may be unmindful of the necessary balance and harmony that should exist between science and religion, and thereby make living and religious monuments no more than specimens of scientific interest (Silva, 1983, p. 43).

All these views gave me the space to think about the living dimension or the functional aspect as the key line of my argument in discussing the restoration of Buddhist monuments, but I still had to struggle to understand the concept of authenticity. Linstrum was also puzzled, but gave me some further food for thought. A definition of authenticity is that it corresponds to facts and is not fictitious; but



how do we move forward using such a strict definition if there is only a heap of bricks in the stupas and is this what we should aim at preserving in order to maintain authenticity? His thoughts gave me the impression that authenticity is not a generic term but a notion that has to be qualified with a particular aspect be it the fabric, history, an architectural concept and so on, thereby becoming a measure of success using various conservation efforts. Linstrum is worth quoting:

If we keep in mind that when we talk about a particular instance of authenticity we need to identify exactly what we mean in that individual case. If our aim is to preserve authenticity, then we might assume that whatever we want to preserve exists – otherwise it cannot be preserved. But is it the authentic fabric that we mean? Or the authentic history? Or the authentic appearance? Or the authentic architectural concept? It might be all four, but not necessarily; and so our intention must be clear at the outset, otherwise we shall not only confuse ourselves – and probably everyone else in the end (Linstrum, 1991, p. 6).

This to me was an interesting way to look at authenticity not simply as a broader philosophical concept but as a tool or criterion that can be related to the conservation process. Only if we ask what aspect of authenticity rather than authenticity *per se* would make sense to the conservation process.

In my work at York, I concluded that the work of pious vandals in Sri Lanka (later supported with professional inputs) benefited the community at large. The question to answer was whether one can privilege the regaining of the lost values (spirituality) to the community over material remains of sacred places destroyed or neglected due to colonial occupation.

The restoration of the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Sri Lanka, a case study

Six years after leaving York, and four years after the Nara Document, I had to deal with the issues of authenticity again in the process of the restoration of the Temple of the Tooth Relic (located in the Sacred City of Kandy, Sri Lanka) which was bombed by terrorists in 1998 (Associated Press, 1998). This was a property inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988 (UNESCO World

Heritage Centre, 2017a); therefore, we knew that the global conservation community would be watching what we did. In the process, while reflecting on my work at York, I was more rigorously thoughtful about the living religious aspects of the heritage. The temple was the most sacred place for the Buddhists in the country as well as for many Buddhist communities in the region (Wijesuriya, 2000). This time I began to question the entire heritage discourse, partly puzzled by the command given by the then president of Sri Lanka, who chaired the restoration committee. As described in my 2000 paper, according to her, all conservation decisions were to be finally agreed upon and approved by the two chief monks and the lay guardian of the temple. This, indeed, compelled us to move towards a bottom up approach and start listening to the views of the Buddhist monks. We began the restoration process in cooperation with the chief monks, quite contrary to what we as conservation experts were familiar with.

I looked at the Nara Document which was then only four years old, and made some references to it in my final restoration plans, but insisted that the “regeneration” of an atmosphere conducive to the daily, monthly and annual religious activities of the monastic community of the temple (the function of the temple) be the ultimate goal. I highlighted the importance of the intangible elements attached to the temple including traditional arts and crafts. In terms of materials, some originals were used, while some others were replaced in keeping with the appropriateness of the interventions.

This example, which I have discussed at several international meetings and published in peer review journals (Wijesuriya, 2000, 2003), raises a series of interesting questions. When the temple was bombed, which aspects of authenticity were impacted or destroyed partially or fully? Also, in the restoration process, are we talking about *minimum* interventions or *appropriate* interventions? Which aspects of authenticity should we restore, and which aspects could be sacrificed? Can the different aspects of authenticity be placed in a hierarchical order? Where does authenticity reside, and for whom? Furthermore, how can authenticity be judged when dealing with heritage impacted by disasters? Can the lost or compromised authenticity be restored?

Sustaining and managing continuity: ICCROM Living Heritage Sites Programme

At the Forum on Living Religious Heritage organized by ICCROM in 2003 (Stovel, Stanley-Price and Killick, eds., 2005), I had the opportunity to present a paper based on my research and field experience, entitled “Buddhist Perspectives in Conservation”. In this paper, I discussed the dimension of continuity, which invariably brings the notion of change into the discussion of the authenticity of living religious heritage.

Continuity was also the dominant theme under the Living Heritage Sites programme (ICCROM, 2017; Wijesuriya, 2015); and which I developed since joining ICCROM in 2005. I was convinced that continuity was a theme missing in the heritage discourse and by pursuing it, we needed to reconsider the concept of authenticity – and I am pleased to report that Weerasinghe, who spent two months at ICCROM working on it, produced the first scholarly paper on this (Weerasinghe, 2011), pointing out that various aspects like continuity and livingness were missing from the conservation discussions.

I have elsewhere (Wijesuriya, 2005) reiterated that the meanings and values reside not only in the fabric, but also in the knowledge and wisdom that created them and in the associated traditions, and that there is a need to view authenticity within a broader framework. It was for this purpose that at ICCROM we began to promote the notion that there is more than one approach to conservation and that there are many more dimensions to bring to the discussion including that of the communities. Specifically, in conservation we deal with the continuity of places created in the past: some have fallen into ruin, some have acquired new uses, while some continue in the original purpose for which they were established. The latter we have characterized as living heritage. In all cases, changes are inherent. It is these places that we in the present have designated as heritage and take responsibility for their safeguarding (Wijesuriya, 2015).

It was also at ICCROM that I met Webber Ndoro who talked about the dual meanings of heritage. His paper on Great Zimbabwe was subtitled “your monument our shrine” (Ndoro, 2005), which has profound implications and raises several questions related to authenticity. Ndoro participated

in this Forum as a special guest to share his experience on the subject from the African context (for more information on the 2000 meeting on the same topic see Saouma-Forero, ed., 2001). Here, his paper addresses the divergent views between foreign heritage experts and the significance assigned to sites by local communities. These issues can also be seen in many contexts throughout Asia.

Is authenticity only for World Heritage?

Authenticity has become a key issue within the World Heritage process and to a lesser extent within the heritage sector. ICCROM’s role as an advisory body to the World Heritage Committee has compelled us to engage directly in discussions on authenticity of which some of the activities are listed below.

Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV): When the new *Operational Guidelines* of 2005 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2005) made SOUV compulsory, there was no clear format for drafting it. Thanks to a research project by ICCROM in 2008, the current format for writing a SOUV was agreed upon and adopted by the World Heritage Committee. There is a section on authenticity in the SOUV. With immediate effect, this format was introduced to the second cycle of the periodic reporting process, and the countries were asked to draft SOUVs retrospectively. However, the statement of authenticity is still the weakest part of any SOUV currently being written. Although some of the new aspects introduced with the Nara Document, such as function, spirit and feeling, have now been added to the statement of authenticity, there is a need to improve the clarity of the statement. It is more about picking and integrating one or more of the aspects listed in the *Operational Guidelines*. The following statement of authenticity for Angkor World Heritage Site illustrates the lack of clarity:

Previous conservation and restoration works at Angkor between 1907 and 1992, especially by the École française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO), the Archaeological Survey of India, the Polish conservation body PKZ, and the World Monuments Fund have had no significant impact on the overall authenticity of the monuments that make up the Angkor complex and do not obtrude upon the overall impression gained from individual monuments (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017b).



State of Conservation Reports (SOC): In the process of writing SOC reports, authenticity is being used as a generic or overarching concept without highlighting what aspects of authenticity are being impacted, which has serious implications for assessing the state of conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value for which sites are inscribed.

There are very few countries who have integrated the concept of authenticity into official conservation policy and practice, China being an exception. However, if the statement of authenticity is not included, the nomination for World Heritage status will not be accepted. Does this mean authenticity is only for World Heritage? How credible are the aforementioned statements? Is it really a useful concept in the World Heritage process? These are some of the questions discussed at the Forum.

The way forward: the Nara+20 Document?

The Nara +20 meeting (see *Agency for Cultural Affairs for Japan, 2014*) was held with a view to celebrate the twentieth anniversary and map out future strategies to promote the Nara Document (Larsen, ed., 1994). The participants of the meeting agreed that the Nara Document promoted diversity but some of the themes in the document needed more work. They also agreed to add a new theme which is sustainable development. Yet, the group left the Nara Document untouched, like the Venice Charter.

In the meeting, the case study of the restoration of *Dzong* (religious, military, administrative and social establishments) was presented. The issue raised was an apparent conflict that exists between the traditional value systems and practices of restoration and renewal of these places and modern conservation principles. On one hand, there cannot be conflicts if we go by the principles of the Nara Document which states the task in hand is “to apply the test of authenticity in ways which accord full respect to the social and cultural values of all societies” (Article 2). On the other hand, this was new to many of the non-Asian

participants. Therefore, I emphasized that this is a common situation to many sites in the Asian region. I commented that the traditional values and practices which are also changing are the core social and cultural values that define and give meaning to a given society. What we have labelled as heritage today and have started assuming responsibility for safeguarding are the cultural expressions of societies that have continued to the present with varying degrees of change, thanks to the associated traditional value systems, advanced practices and management systems mostly in intangible forms.

In this instance, the authenticity of heritage has to be looked at by taking these traditional values and practices into consideration. The challenge is to recognize and integrate them in modern conservation. Failure to do so will continue to cause conflicts. Often in Buddhist societies, the renewal process or the continuity of religious places is undertaken for various reasons such as earning merit (Wijesuriya, 2005). Authenticity has to be looked at in relation to the renewal, the use of traditions including craftsmanship, techniques and the materials. Unfortunately, we have largely ignored the traditional yet changing knowledge systems that sustained these places for centuries. This suggests the need for much broader discussion on authenticity as a way forward, and was the task of this Forum.

Concluding note

In this paper, I raised only some of the issues worthy of discussion based on practice in Asia and theoretical reflections globally over the past 35 years without making any attempt to provide answers. In my view, the overall picture on authenticity is not very clear. Authenticity as a generic term is one thing and authenticity of different aspects is another that deserves a longer discussion. There is a need for discussion on which aspects of authenticity to respect and which to compromise particularly when dealing with living heritage; and what are the challenges or implications in dealing with authenticity in the Asian context.

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◊ CHAPTER 2 ◊

**Tracing the roots
of authenticity: considerations
on the Ship of Theseus Paradox**

Stefano De Caro



Introduction

On authenticity, the theme of this Forum and a topic on which we recently had a discussion in the General Assembly of ICOMOS, I could not say that I am a specialist on the theory of the Nara Document (Larsen, ed., 1994), even though as an archaeologist working in Italy I had continuous occasions during

my career to deal with the issue of authenticity in the restoration projects I directed. Yet, I do not want to speak about them; I prefer to relate an ancient Greek tale about the ship associated with the myth of Theseus, and extract from it some considerations in relation to the issue of authenticity.

The myth of Theseus

Theseus was the mythical founder-king of Great Athens. The memory of Theseus still lives in several surviving monuments, the most famous of which is Hadrian's Gate in Athens. Two inscriptions are carved on each side of the lower architrave of the gate: on the northwest side towards the Acropolis, the inscription states "this is Athens, the ancient city of Theseus", while the inscription on the opposite side reads "this is the city of Hadrian, and not of Theseus".

Theseus, like other mythological heroes had divine origins (Bulfinch, 1968; Wikipedia contributors, 2017a). Theseus was the hero of the Ionians, and in particular of those living in the region of Attica. He was believed to be responsible, through his various tasks and trials, for the *synoikismos* (dwelling together) or the political unification of Attica under the authority of Athens (prior to this, Athens had been only a small village built on the rocks of the Acropolis).

The most famous of these tasks was the killing of the Minotaur. As revenge for the murder of his eldest son by an Athenian family, King Minos of Crete required Aegeus to send as tribute every seven years the seven most courageous youths and the seven most beautiful maidens to be devoured by the Minotaur, a half man-half bull creature who lived in the Labyrinth, an inescapable maze-like construction built by Daedalus for King Minos.

Thomas Bulfinch tells the tale thusly:

Theseus resolved to deliver his countrymen from this calamity, or to die in the attempt. Accordingly, when the time of sending off the tribute came, and the youths and maidens were, according to custom, drawn by lots to be sent, he offered himself as one of the victims, in spite of the entreaties of his father. The ship departed under black sails as usual, which Theseus promised his father to change for white, in case of his returning victorious. When they arrived in Crete, the youths and maidens were exhibited before Minos; and Ariadne, the daughter of the king, being present, became deeply enamoured of Theseus, by whom her love was readily returned. She furnished him with a sword, with which to encounter the Minotaur, and with a clew of thread by which he might find his way out of the labyrinth. He was successful, slew the Minotaur, escaped from the labyrinth, and taking Ariadne as the companion of his way, with his rescued companions sailed for Athens. On their way they stopped at the island of Naxos, where Theseus abandoned Ariadne, leaving her asleep. His excuse for this ungrateful treatment of his benefactress was that Minerva appeared to him in a dream and commanded him to do so.

On approaching the coast of Attica, Theseus forgot the signal appointed by his father, and neglected to raise the white sails, and the old king, thinking his son had perished, put an end to his own life. Theseus thus became king of Athens (Bulfinch, 1968, p. 159).

The Ship of Theseus

According to Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, the Athenians kept Theseus' ship in the harbour as a memorial (Thayer, 2017). The ship had to be maintained in a seaworthy state, for, as remembered by Plato, in return for Theseus' successful mission, the Athenians pledged to honour Apollo every year henceforth: they sent a religious mission to the island of Delos, one of Apollo's most sacred sanctuaries, on this very ship to pay their fealty to the god.

Therefore, in order to preserve the ship, any wood that wore out or rotted was replaced. Over time it became unclear just how much of the original ship actually remained, giving rise to a philosophical question on whether it should be considered the same ship or not.

This is one of the most interesting philosophical problems; the problem of authenticity, or Theseus' paradox.

The Ship of Theseus Paradox and considerations on authenticity

This is perhaps one of the most ancient discourses on authenticity. In this context, let us examine a recent reconsideration of the paradox by the American philosopher Noson S. Yanofsky in his work *The Outer Limits of Reason: What Science, Mathematics, and Logic Cannot Tell Us* (2013) who takes the experiment beyond objects and into human identity:¹

If you replace one of the planks, is it still the same ship of Theseus? ... How do things stay the same even after they change? At what point does an object become different? When we talk about a certain object and say that "it changed," what exactly is "it"?

Yanofsky continues:

We are not answering these questions simply because there are no objective correct answers. Some maintain that changing one plank changes the ship and makes it no longer the ship of Theseus. Others claim that as long as there is at least one plank from the original, it is still the original. There are also those who maintain that the changed ship is always the same as the original ship because it has the form of the original.

Let us continue asking more questions about our beleaguered boat. What happens if we switch the old wooden planks for more modern plastic planks? ... What happens if the people who replace the planks make mistakes in putting in the new planks and the ship has a slightly different form? Another question: Does it matter who is making all these changes to the ship – that is, whether one group of workers does it or another? ... What if we make so many changes to the boat that it can no longer float out to sea? ... Imagine that every time a plank is changed, rather than consigning the old planks to the scrap heap, we store them in a warehouse. After some time, all the old planks are assembled into a ship. This new construction is made to look exactly like the old ship with the planks in their original position. Question: Which ship has the right to call itself the ship of Theseus, the ship with the replaced planks or the ship constructed out of the old planks? ...

Rather than answering all the [complex] questions ... let us try to resolve the issues by meditating on why none of the questions have clearcut answers. Why is it that when we pose these questions to different people, we get so many different answers? ...

¹ The Theseus paradox continues to be an important discourse, as illustrated by the award-winning movie *Ship of Theseus* written and directed by Anand Gandhi in 2012 (Wikipedia contributors, 2017b) see also an interview with the director (Ruia Film Society, 2014).



Examine the way people learn to recognize different objects, make definitions, and create distinctions. [From birth, children gradually acquire skills for recognizing and classifying the world around them, thereby] imposing order and structure on the complicated world they have entered. ... With these classification abilities the children can comprehend and start to control their environment. ... [and] learn to classify abstract entities....

We only have what we learned – that is, the stimuli we were taught to associate with the ship.

The ship of Theseus does not really exist *as the ship of Theseus*. ... It exists as a collection of sensations but not as an object. ... Human beings combine these sensations and form the ship of Theseus. ... It is we who further demarcate the ship as somehow belonging to the mythical general Theseus. ... It's all in our mind (Yanofsky, 2013).

As archaeologists and conservators, we are less sceptical than Yanofsky. We will try to define the ship of Theseus, and other extant material culture: a wooden temple, a mud-brick building through its properties.

We could divide them into two series. The first series deals with the **physical object** made of a **material** (wood, in its variety) and a **shape** (the ship is geometrically definable, with a certain plan and section, and is today precisely measurable). Furthermore, this material object has a **function** and can perform a task. This function is a **potentiality** that is put into effect if the object is in proper condition and if other conditions are provided such as human actors. The second series of properties is non-material: it is the **relationship** with Theseus. The ship of Theseus was considered a living cultural heritage in its time. The Athenians would pay for the maintenance of the ship, through the replacement of planks, because it had a high value for their identity; they identified themselves as the people of Theseus. Questions about the identity of the material arose when the city of Athens started to decline and lost confidence in its traditional values.

For the Athenians, the preserved ship was a *tekmerion*, evidence which kept fresh their understanding that Theseus had been an actual

historic figure, and gave them a tangible connection to their divine providence. The Athenians had other important *tekmeria* of Theseus. Since his spectre had been seen at the Battle of Marathon fighting against the Persians on the side of the Athenians, after the war the oracle at Delphi directed them to rescue his relics from the island of Skyros where he died approximately 800 years before, and after repatriating them to the city of Athens, honour him as a hero. Thus, Kimon, King of the Athenians went to Skyros in 475 BCE, and discovered Theseus' tomb by a miracle: an eagle upon a rising mound pecking with her beak and tearing up the earth with her talons. Upon this divine inspiration, Kimon had the mound dug up and found the coffin containing Theseus' gigantic, larger than life relics, a spearhead and a sword. On their arrival in the city, the relics were received with splendid processions and a festival with theatrical contests in which both Aeschylus and Sophocles participated (mythagora, 2017). Sacred rites were also instituted for him as a god to be celebrated on the eighth day of the month Pyanepsion (when he returned from Crete), as well as sacrifices on the eighth day of every other month. Furthermore, a monument, called Theseion, was erected near the gymnasium, in a still unexcavated area between the Agora and the Kerameikos to receive the relics. The site became an asylum where slaves and the persecuted could, in the memory of Theseus having assisted and protected the distressed, find refuge. In Byzantine times this sanctuary was erroneously identified with Ephaistos' Temple in the Agora. Needless to say, this is one of the earliest examples in Europe of revering relics (the word comes from the Latin *reliquiae*, meaning what remains of something), in the proper sense of the physical remains of an acclaimed person preserved as a tangible memorial for purposes of veneration.

Of course, the question of the authenticity of Theseus' relics is a classical argument in atheist philosophical debates. Nevertheless, as to their consideration as heritage, it is important to note how the persistence of ritual and belief in the community became more important than the historical evidence of their authenticity or even of the existence of the venerated person. Sanctuaries which house relics could be utterly renewed several times without losing their value.

Conclusion

As illustrated by the tale of the ship of Theseus,² function is one of the most relevant aspects in connection to the issue of identity. Not only the original function, but also the many functions of an object, a monument or a site has assumed over time. The Hagia Sophia in Istanbul, originally a Christian basilica and then an Islamic mosque, is one of the many examples of monuments that

continue to be considered sacred places despite the change of religion and of the people using them. Archaeological sites that we see today only as tourist attractions on the grounds that they have lost a considerable part of their integrity are still heritage because they perform the new function of testifying to the history and actions of humanity.

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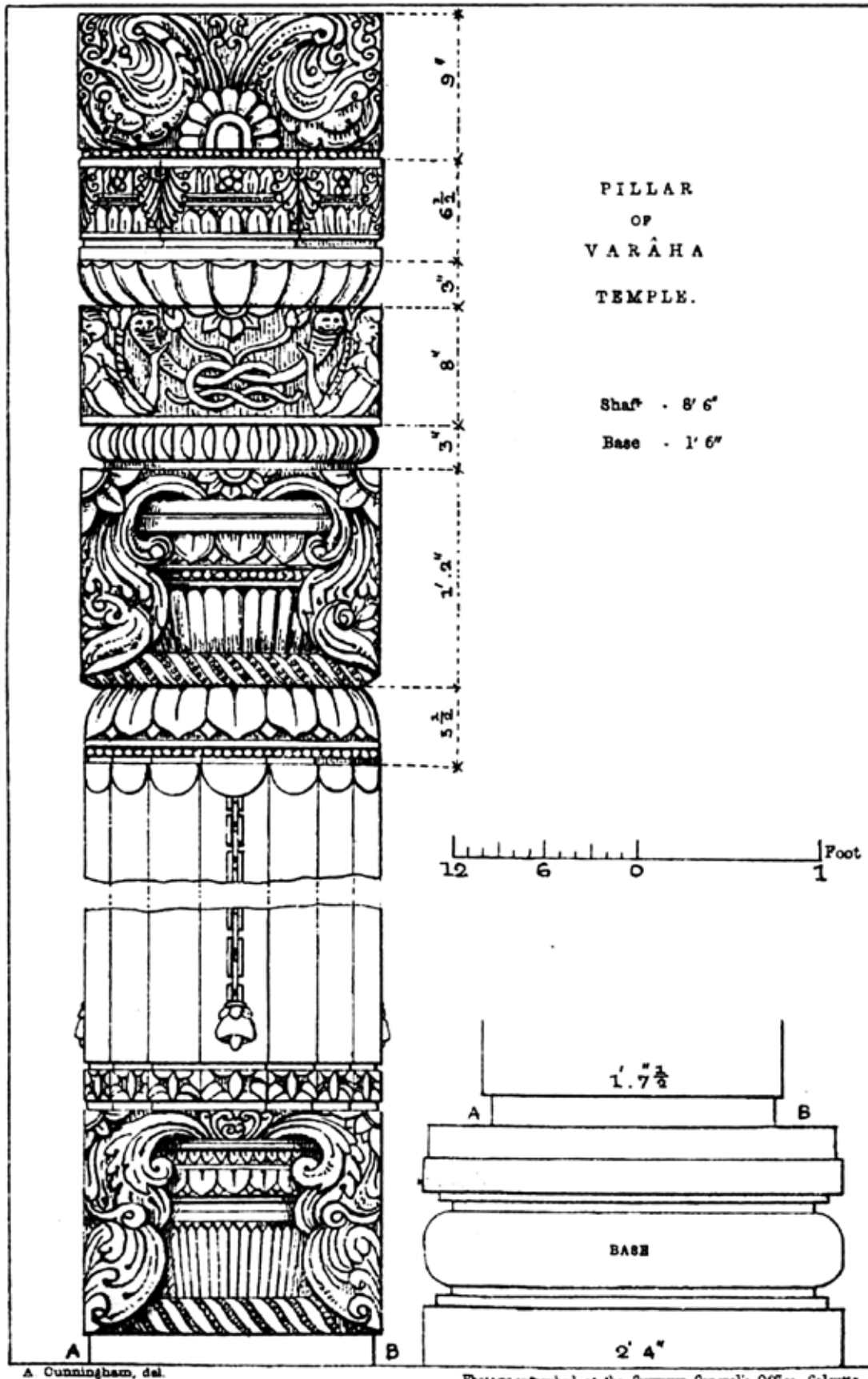
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² Such discourses on authenticity are posed not solely by the Ship of Theseus but by other heritage structures as well. A characteristic example to this end is the hut of Romulus, the legendary founder and first king of Rome. The hut was repeatedly damaged by fire and storms over the centuries, but carefully restored to its original state on each occasion. A second hut of Romulus is also recorded, probably a replica of the original one.





◊ CHAPTER 3 ◊

**Following the route
of authenticity**

Roland Silva

Questions on authenticity

The subject of authenticity in the conservation of monuments needs to be seen in the light of its own creation in term of its birth, be it for royalty or for labourers. The vital responses for data gathering would be to record answers for the following:

- For whom were these monuments built?
- Who designed them?
- For what purpose were these erected?
- Of what materials were these constructed?
- In which environment were they constructed?
- In which geographical area of the world were these edifices located?
- To which historical period(s) do these belong?
- Under which stylistic influences were these designed?

Some of these questions were addressed in my 1978 paper Traditional Design and Modern Architecture:

The process of a design becoming a tradition is, indeed, a devious one. A design in itself can be viewed philosophically to fluctuate within three dimensions, first, the dimension of 'Time' in a stratified cultural sequence. Second, the question of 'Place' in terms of its geographical identity of hot or cold, dry or humid, hilly or coastal, rocky or in sandy location etc., and third, in the context of the 'Person' in the same sense as an autographed painting (Silva 1978).

These limited variants can be expanded to eight or more subdivisions as indicated above.

A few more questions pertaining to the above eight variants have been raised in a 2000 Convocation Address which was titled Architect and Planner and which stated:

It is, indeed, a healthy moment to reflect upon the meaning of such professional decorations. We have shown, the status of the two professions, 'Architects' and 'Planners', which we merged into a single discipline in the past, both in the East and in the West, and the high respect that these savants of old received from kings, state, and society. We are told of the services of 'Architects' and 'Planners' by worthy writers like those

who produced the *Manjusri Vastuvidyasastra* (fifth century), the *Manasara* (fifth – seventh century) and the *Mayamatha* (ninth century) in a South Asian context, and *Vitruvius* (fifth century BC) and *Vasari* (fifteenth century) in a European situation. Scholars like Acharya have compared, for example, the works of *Vitruvius* with the *Manasara* as the latter was by itself a summation of nearly three hundred variant texts of earlier times, like *Kautilya's Arthashastra* (third century BC) and the *Laws of Manu* (second century BC), which are of a parallel date to *Vitruvius*. The opening Chapter of either text, the *Manasara* and *Vitruvius*, sing the praises of their patrons, which the former referring to. Brahma, Siva, Vishnu, and the rishi called *Manasara*, the latter text to Caesar and his father and sister. The next Chapter in either text refer to qualifications of an 'Architect' and 'Planner', and their teams, and this we have elaborated upon at length below. However, the remarkable deduction is that these specialists had the ear of the Ruler and was among the Master's first consultants on any matter. The subjects of such consultancy as given in these texts of the east and west are:

- a) The selection and construction work at sites under different climatic considerations.
- b) The testing of the ground and soil for building.
- c) The designing, whether these were, villages, towns, forts, palaces, temples, dwellings, furniture, conveyance, machines or weaponry.
- d) The Principals governing design, fitness, arrangement, proportions, uniformity, consistency and economy.
- e) Preparing conceptual plans for towns, villages, buildings, etc.

These consultations with 'Architects' and 'Planners' covered basically all state activity in any country in this period up to the end of the nineteenth century, and until after the effects of the Industrial Revolution. You will notice that even conveyances by land like the chariots, or by water as naval architecture, or even air travel as was attempted by Leonardo da Vinci; and even the designing of weaponry, as it was then, was a part if the responsibilities of 'Architects' and 'Planners' (Silva 2000).

The Venice Charter (1964)

It is, indeed, sad to note that in terms of the need of authenticity in conservation covering the two all-embracing disciplines of architecture and planning, there is a complete absence in finding any specific reference to the scientific principles covering the critical aspirations governing authenticity in its day-to-day practice in the Western texts until 1964, when UNESCO ratified the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) in a landmark document that codified prevailing practices mainly by scholars of the Occident in 1964. We give below the critical Articles of the Venice Charter regarding authenticity:

Article 1.

The concept of a historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or a historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time.

Article 2.

The conservation and restoration of monuments must have recourse to all the sciences and techniques which can contribute to the study and safeguarding of the architectural heritage.

Article 3.

The intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence.

Article 4.

It is essential to the conservation of monuments that they be maintained on a permanent basis.

Article 5.

The conservation of monuments is always facilitated by making use of them for some socially useful purpose. Such use is therefore desirable but it must not change the lay-out or the decoration of the building. It is within these limits only that modification demanded by a change of function should be envisaged and may be permitted.

Article 6.

The conservation of a monument implies preserving a setting which is not out of scale. Wherever the traditional setting exists, it must be kept. No new construction, demolition or modification which would alter the relations of mass and colour must be allowed.

Article 7.

A monument is inseparable from the history to which it bears witness and from the setting in which it occurs. The moving of all or part of a monument cannot be allowed except where the safeguarding of that monument demands it or where it is justified by national or international interest of paramount importance.

Article 8.

Items of sculpture, painting or decoration which form an integral part of a monument may only be removed from it if this is the sole means of ensuring their preservation (ICOMOS, 1965, p. 1–2).

With regard to the Venice Charter, we were invited to a World Congress in Basle in 1983 to view the effectiveness of this hallowed document of UNESCO and, speaking as an Asian conservator, I stated:

Has the experiences of treating monuments of the north and south, and of the east and the west, been brought together, to share the benefits of the gathered knowledge of all countries, and of all peoples? Such action will surely eliminate the possible segregation of regions and of communities from one another, as is the case with profession like medicine, where the *Ayurvedic* system is frowned upon, in preference to the universality of Western Medicine. The barefoot conservators of China and Japan, of India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka, have looked after their precious monuments from the periods before Christ, and their practices can add to the principles of preservation in a new International Charter, commencing perhaps here in Basle, if serious headway is made from this significant first meeting (Silva, 1983, p. 41).

However, it is heartening to note that a South Asian text titled the *Mayamata* of the ninth century devotes a whole chapter to the topic of authenticity in conservation titled Renovation Work thus:

A temple (may be) ruined, broken down, fallen down, aged as to its materials or decrepit. Those (temples) whose characteristics are perceptible in their principal and secondary elements (are to be renovated) with their own materials. If they are lacking in anything or have some similar type of flaw, the sage wishing to restore them, (must proceed in such a way that) they regain

their integrity and that they are pleasantly arranged (anew), this (is to be done) with the dimensions – height and width – which are theirs, with decorations consisting of corner, elongated and other aedicule, without anything being added (to what originally existed) and always in conformity with the advice of the knowledgeable (Dagens, 1993).

The Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)

The short and sad conclusion to this insight into authenticity is that we organized a whole world of researchers amounting to over one hundred experts both young and old, and congregated in Nara, Japan in 1994 under the auspices of ICOMOS International. We were generously hosted by Japan during my tenure as president of this world body. It has now been 20 years since

this necessary international gathering reinterpreted the idea of authenticity. The host country benefited immensely – with several Japanese sites having been inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1993 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017). However, the ill recorded proceedings of the conference (Larsen and Marstein, eds., 1994) have yet to be revised.

Concluding remarks

With the establishment of UNESCO in the 1940s as the guide and philosopher of the world in terms of culture, many major steps were taken to further the aspirations of this human thirst. Many institutions of international standing: ICCROM, ICOM, ICOMOS, IFLA and the World Heritage Centre as well as many other extensions of these world bodies are still expanding according to the ever evolving objectives of humans and the world body. We are, indeed, fortunate to have

in our midst the director general of ICCROM, one of the oldest affiliates of UNESCO where many Sri Lankans and many more from South and East Asia have been privileged to cut our teeth in the cultural ambience of this hallowed organization. May we take advantage of the presence of the director general to say how deeply honoured and privileged we all are who have been blessed to quench one's cultural thirst at this unique institute of international excellence.

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Royal Palaces of Abomey by Karalyn Monteil/UNESCO (CC BY-SA 3.0-igo)



◊ CHAPTER 4 ◊

**Drawing parallels: authenticity in
the African context – until lions
learn to write, hunters will tell
their history for them**

Webber Ndoro

Abstract

This paper discusses the application of authenticity in the context of African World Heritage Sites. The interpretation of this important attribute on the African continent has resulted in many properties being included on the list of World Heritage in Danger. It has also resulted in fewer sites being nominated to the prestigious World Heritage List. The Western interpretation of authenticity has resulted in biases towards places of Western origin being nominated to the list at the expense of sites considered significant by African experts and communities. This paper discusses and explores some of these limitations, and poses the question of whether the Nara Document is suitable as a guide on the African continent given its thrust towards cultural context and diversity.

Introduction

Heritage management is a multifaceted concept which considers the physical landscape on which heritage resources exist, the actual resources – in their tangible and intangible forms – and the concerns of all groups interested in heritage. The general practice of heritage management in Africa can be classified into three main concepts:

- memories: denoting individual, collective, cognitive, and culturally constituted processes;
- culture: signifying actions, habits, text, music, rituals, events, material objects, monuments, structures, places, nature, and landscapes; and
- cultural heritage: denoting individual, as well as collectively defined memories and cultures produced as a result of deliberate sociopolitical processes (Ndoro, 2001).

This classification stems from the fact that the landscapes on which heritage resources exist should be viewed as part of the cosmology of past and

present societies and that they provided a platform for a human-environment interaction (Ndoro, 2001; Andrews and Buggiey, 2008; Ndobochani, 2016). These concepts of heritage are at odds with the expressions of authenticity and integrity which govern the management of heritage as expressed by UNESCO through the 1972 World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 1972). Here the conservation and management of heritage is basically expressed through the physical attributes and reflect past expressions and cosmologies (Luxen, 2001). The emphasis on the physical values may negate some of the more expressive attributes of heritage on the African continent. It must however be expressed that there are no unified African traditions or approaches. However, there are traits which are common on the continent. For example, heritage places are very much part and parcel of everyday life. The division of intangible and tangible or of nature and culture is very much unsustainable in the context of Africa.

Issues of authenticity and integrity

The idea of the authenticity and integrity of heritage places and objects is generally considered by UNESCO and the Advisory Bodies as critical to all the cultural values (Jokilehto, 2006; Jerome, 2008). It is the concept upon which heritage places are evaluated and tested before being nominated to the World Heritage List. When the authenticity and integrity of a World Heritage Site is threatened the site is initially placed on the Danger List and threatened with delisting. The fact that Africa has more than 40 percent of its sites on the Danger List is a clear indication that more sites from the continent are failing the test of authenticity as it is set by the World Heritage Committee and its advisory organizations. The basis of World Heritage and its practice of conserving material and tangible objects and buildings is considered crucial to the cultural value of heritage places. Understanding of authenticity plays a fundamental role in all

scientific studies and management aspects of the cultural heritage. If this is the case, the context of African heritage sites presents a problem, hence the large number of negative state of conservation reports from Africa and the high number of endangered sites. Furthermore Africa's proposed sites to the World Heritage List are routinely declined for not meeting the test of authenticity and integrity which is supposed to reside in the physical attributes. The case of the Borotse Cultural Landscape (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017a) and the Genocide sites in Rwanda (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017b) have been rejected due to lack of physical evidence upon which authenticity can be judged.

The issues of authenticity as expressed in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) clearly work on built heritage places such as monuments and buildings, particularly in the European context. It has to be



♥ **Figure 1**
The City of Asmara
celebrating Italian
architecture and urban
planning in Africa.

understood that the Venice Charter was a result of a particular need and context in Europe. The destruction of areas and buildings during the Second World War required specific regulations for the restoration of buildings.

However for other regions the application of these has been problematic as indicated by the Nara Document (Given, 2004) which clearly was a result

of the Japanese experience. Thus the two documents which today govern the application of authenticity and integrity are not influenced by any of Africa's notions of what constitutes heritage. There is no wonder that the majority of Africa's cultural heritage sites on the World Heritage List celebrate European heritage on the continent. For example the forts and castles of Ghana (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017c) which are of Dutch origin or the numerous Portuguese forts dotted along the coast of Africa.

Nara Document and Africa

It has been suggested that the Nara Document (Larsen, ed., 1994), given its non-Western origin might be more appropriate for Africa. The Nara Document was thus heralded as a document to improve the nomination of non-Western heritage sites to the World Heritage List. The Nara

Document introduced a broader definition of authenticity to the Convention that is sensitive to a cultural context (Jokilehto and King, 2001). This was contrary to the concept of authenticity that was based on original design, material, setting and workmanship – emphasizing originality. Contrary



to the Venice Charter, the Nara Document highlighted the context as being very important in defining heritage, authenticity, management and sustainability of a place. The other important notion is that the definition of heritage should not only be the prerogative of experts, but also of the community in which it exists. Ensuring community participation in management, conservation, beneficiation and responsibilities, will ensure a sustainable and living heritage. As Stovel (2008) contends, it provides a broader technical framework for analysing authenticity and assisting in practical decision-making processes.

The insistence on originality at times fails to acknowledge that change over time is real – authenticity promotes the fossilization of heritage. The result is that people living today cannot interact with heritage resources in ways that best define their interests at sites. Therefore, the meaning of significance changes over time. When highlighting the dichotomy between the physical versus spiritual in the use of the concept of authenticity, it can be argued that the reality is that the physical has always been given priority, because it is what can be seen and can be touched with a specific geographic location.

Authenticity and African sites

The Sukur Cultural Landscape in Nigeria (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017d), the first from Africa in this category to be inscribed on the World Heritage List (1999), vividly illustrates the interface between spirit and matter, nature and culture, as well as the intangible dimension of immovable heritage. Slave routes, pilgrimage routes, liberation itineraries, trade routes, and places of technical production bear unique testimony to the intangible heritage of Africa.

Munjeri (2004) has observed that the sites listed as World Heritage tend to speak to grand narratives and European notions of aesthetics and national identity, with elitist architecture, including cathedrals, castles and palaces being over-represented on the List. Lowenthal (1996, p. 239) has suggested that “Europeans rate their own national heritage as so superior it ought to be global”, while Smith (2006, p. 11) contends that the “eurocentrism of the listing reflects the dominance of the ‘Authorised Heritage Discourse’, which frames and underpins the listing criteria ... this affects the ability of certain cultures to have their sites perceived as world heritage”.

This is despite the fact that the current *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016) of the 1972 World Heritage Convention are supposed to take into consideration the Nara Document on Authenticity that seeks to incorporate non-Western approaches to heritage management into UNESCO practice.

The 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity was perhaps the first international declaration that made attempts to include non-Western concepts within the ways in which heritage is dealt with at international levels. Based on the Asian experience, and more specifically Japanese practice, it tried to be critical (Ruggles and Silverman, 2009) and at the same time expand the definition of materiality and attention given to context as laid out by the Venice Charter. The Nara Document, in contrast to the Venice Charter, states that the cultural context must be taken into consideration when seeking to understand heritage and its significance. It also suggests going beyond the material fabric of heritage in considering questions of authenticity.

Kasubi Tombs

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Kasubi Tombs, Uganda (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017e) illustrates the fact that, despite the general acceptance of the Nara Document by the World Heritage Committee, ICOMOS still uses the Venice Charter to evaluate and define what can be conserved and what can be of Outstanding Universal Value. The Kasubi Tombs are the burial grounds of the Kabakas, the kings of the Buganda kingdom, renowned for its traditional thatched architecture. Yet for the sake of expedience in the 1970s and 1980s some of the tombs were provided with corrugated iron roofs. This did



♥ Figure 2

Island of Mozambique.
Unoccupied Portuguese
fort World Heritage
Site for Africa.

not in any way affect the value or significance of the tombs to the custodians and the owners. However, the precepts of World Heritage status made sure that the original thatched roofing was restored using French and

South African experts before nomination, given international convention dictates on material authenticity. While the use of other materials for the building has not in any way affected the use or value of the site to the local community, ICOMOS deemed that the thatched roofs are crucial to the Outstanding Universal Value of the site. According to ICOMOS experts, Kasubi was “a major example of an architectural achievement in organic materials, principally wood, thatch, and wattle and daub”. For the Buganda people nothing could contaminate the burial place of the Kabaka; the value of the place would remain irrespective of what type of roof covers it. Unfortunately the Kasubi Tombs were damaged by fire in 2011.

When the site was gutted by fire the World Heritage Centre sent French and Japanese experts to supervise the rethatching of the tombs!

Royal Palaces of Abomey

Similar occurrences of fire have been observed at the Abomey Palaces of Benin (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017f). Almost every two years or so fires have occurred at the palaces, and each time French experts will be called to conduct the restorations. This is despite the fact that traditionally, fires have occurred at these buildings and local solutions have been used to ensure continued use of the palaces. In actual fact both the Buganda in Uganda and the community around the Abomey palaces do not regard the fires as a major threat to their heritage for the simple reason that this does not reduce the value of the places and is part of the cultural practices. To the experts, however, fires equal destruction of authenticity of the building and therefore must be stopped at all costs. The palaces themselves are



now being protected as a museum with the local communities not playing any significant part in the management or conservation of the buildings.

Matobo Hills

The disjuncture between global heritage organizations and local communities is also demonstrated by the refusal of ICOMOS to include Njelele (a sacred site) as part of the nomination of the Matobo Cultural Landscape in Zimbabwe (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017g). For ICOMOS, the rock art found within the Matobo were of far greater value to the world than the rituals and religious values of Njelele (a rainmaking shrine), which was considered by some experts to be a pagan practice (Makuvaza, 2008). This was despite the fact that for Zimbabweans, Matobo *is* Njelele: this is the abode of Mwari, the Shona equivalent of God and therefore regarded as the most important heritage place in Zimbabwe (Nyathi and Ndiwini, 2005). The condition of inclusion was that the religious leaders

and communities had to abide by the rules and regulations of a protected area. No indigenous rituals were to be permitted, and permission for any use had to be authorized by the protected areas' management authority and should not threaten the fauna and flora of the area. For the local community, nomination meant a change of ownership of the sacred site from the community at large to National Parks and National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe, with the consequence that local community use of the site would be restricted, while at the same time opening the site to tourism (Makuvaza, 2008). For local communities the concept of a "protected area" or "monument" has often meant fences, a denial of access, and desecration of sacred places through tourism.

Genocide sites

The authorized heritage discourse, as Smith (2006) puts it, of UNESCO's World Heritage system can at one level be seen as a means by which certain

Figure 3
Kuomboka ceremony.





interests are imposed over others, especially as it always conflicts with local practices. In Rwanda, the fallout between the government and French authorities over the 1990s genocide has meant that UNESCO and ICOMOS experts have rejected the State Party-proposed Tentative List that predictably contains only sites associated with the genocide. In turn, UNESCO has sent ICOMOS experts to assist Rwanda in identifying possible heritage sites to nominate. The UNESCO experts suggest, among others, a list of cathedrals, churches, and archaeological sites as part of a compromise for tentative listing. As far as Rwandans are concerned, no site can have more or greater significance than the sites of genocide that were witness to the wiping out of so many of their compatriots. Despite Rwanda seeking assistance from UNESCO for their own expert findings, the Advisory Bodies have ignored the interests and values of the Rwandans themselves.

James Island

Several sites on the African continent nominated to the World Heritage List are based on monumental remains but their significance goes beyond the relics from bygone days. For example James Island in Gambia (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017h), where the nominated area consisted of the colonial forts and trading places built to protect the entrance to the river, and to facilitate traffic on this first trade route into the inland of Africa. While the nomination only concerned the extant “monuments” as relics of the past, the Outstanding Universal Value of the site goes beyond the relics and expands to the issues of slavery to the extent that the site had to be renamed Kunta Kinteh Island after the character in Alex Haley’s 1976 novel *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. Due to its strategic positioning, the island was an object of rivalries between European nations (Portuguese, Dutch, French, British) battling for control of the harbour. The protection of the island today requires an acknowledgement of the fact that the island is a living site, with living needs and cultures.

Concerning the authenticity and integrity of the site, the space has not been significantly modified over the centuries. The island continues to offer the visitor a specific architecture which has remarkable harmony between its various units (i.e. forts, houses, streets, squares), while individually telling the history of the island. What remains a current challenge regarding the Nara Document is to find ways of meeting the expectations of stakeholders (i.e. the needs to have more facilities, more revenue streams etc.), without affecting the values, authenticity and integrity of the island as seen by experts from UNESCO.

Barotse Cultural Landscape

The Barotse Cultural Landscape is located in the Western Province of the Republic of Zambia. The landscape is dissected by the mighty Zambezi River, and has rich cultural and natural resources which have been preserved and utilized sustainably through a traditional management system. The Barotse Cultural Landscape is an exceptional example of a landscape designed and intentionally recreated and manipulated by man. It is characterized by intense transformation of the natural environment through the construction of mounds for homesteads, sacred and highly spiritual royal graves, and a bulwark network of man-made canals for land drainage, flood control, agriculture and transportation. The site hosts an annual picturesque *Kuomboka* ceremony and demonstrates exceptional vibrant living traditions, which have remained unchanged for over four centuries. Once a year, when the flooding waters are rising and threatening men and livestock, the *Kuomboka* traditional ceremony celebrates the movement of the Lozi people of Western Zambia from the flood plain to high ground when the Zambezi River floods. The ceremony is done every year towards the end of the rainy season. The traditional management system in place helps to protect the authenticity and integrity of the site. In the absence of any physical remains, ICOMOS has consistently rejected the nomination of this cultural landscape which is still being used today.

Conclusions

Issues related to authenticity need to respect the cultural contexts to which such places belong, the belief systems associated with them, and the related cosmology of the communities in which these places are found. Concepts of land, time, and movement that embody meaning in the local culture are very different from that which are prescribed by UNESCO and its Advisory Bodies.

The recognition of both cultural diversity and heritage diversity in the Nara Document on Authenticity and the World Heritage Convention *Operational Guidelines* has broadened the approach to addressing authenticity in cultural heritage, from those with different worldviews that relate to place in fundamentally different ways. Even though the *Operational Guidelines* do recognize the Nara Document on Authenticity and its attempt to expand the application of authenticity beyond the Western context, there has been

reluctance by the Advisory Bodies to embrace this when considering African properties. This is clearly indicated with the emphasis on colonial architecture and archaeological remains on the World Heritage List.

David Lowenthal's (1999, p. 9) astute exploration of authenticity across the ages demonstrates that what counts as authentic has continually shifted in form, space, and time: "the criteria of authenticity we choose reflect current views about how yesterday should serve and inform today". What people value as authentic is an attribute of the here and now rather than the past.

The current World Heritage Convention concept of universal value which embodies a static view of authenticity as applied by the Advisory Bodies in relation to Africa does not seem to recognize the cultural diversity and regional contextual cosmologies.

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◊ CHAPTER 5 ◊

**An exploration into
authenticity in archaeology for
World Heritage nominations**

Zuraina Majid



Abstract

The concept of authenticity has been discussed for more than three decades, but these discussions have focused on built heritage. Authenticity in archaeology as applied to the evaluation of World Heritage nominations is rarely discussed. This paper is a thought piece, and proposes several indicators of authenticity to be explored. It also touches upon the question of integrity when applied to prehistoric sites. This paper highlights the peculiarities of archaeological sites and how they are different from other cultural sites; and calls for discussions on authenticity and integrity in archaeology with reference to the Venice Charter and especially to the Nara Document on Authenticity which are equal in depth and scope as has been undertaken for other cultural sites. Archaeological sites mostly from Malaysia are used as examples. It is shown that, unlike authenticity in built heritage which has different meanings in the East and the West, authenticity in archaeology is more universal as it is discipline based. This is especially true for prehistoric sites. Further discussions and refinements are needed in order to better understand this group of cultural sites, when they come up for World Heritage nomination.

Introduction

The concept of authenticity has been discussed for more than three decades, ever since the principles enshrined in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) were introduced into the 1977 UNESCO *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016). The Venice Charter and World Heritage guidelines regarded authenticity as a homogeneous concept, applicable to all sites in the world. It was observable that inscriptions were mostly from the West as most sites from the East did not pass the authenticity test. Subsequent debates on the inapplicability of this Eurocentric notion led to the establishment of the Nara Document on Authenticity of 1994 (Larsen, ed., 1994). This is perhaps the first formal document to readdress this issue and regard the concept of authenticity as a non-homogeneous notion. Authenticity has been discussed further from time to time by Stovel (2007), Kwanda (2010) and Jokilehto (2006) among others, in an effort to refine our understanding of authenticity.

However, these discussions on authenticity are focused mostly on the conservation of buildings and structures, and rarely touch upon archaeological sites. Stovel (2007) makes a slight mention of the authenticity of archaeological sites. This dearth of literature may be because archaeology (especially prehistory) is not the main thrust of ICOMOS, or heritage experts. Archaeological sites that have received World Heritage inscriptions amount to about 15 percent of cultural sites. My interest in exploring this subject arose when several archaeological sites were being evaluated each year that I was on the World Heritage Committee (2011–2014). A site's "failure" to fulfil the accepted notion of authenticity meant that they were sometimes not recommended for inscription. For example, the trench walls had collapsed and therefore the site was said to be no longer authentic were among the reasons a site was not recommended. Fortunately, a brief explanation on how trench walls do not make a site authentic

and an archaeological explanation of the issues, corrected the situation and the Committee decided to inscribe the site (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017a). Hence, I see a need to explore the notion of authenticity in archaeological sites, in order to appreciate the peculiarities of archaeological sites whose age can go back thousands or even hundreds of thousands of years, and are very different in time scale and material culture from other cultural sites such as historic cities and buildings.

A literature search on authenticity in archaeology as applied to the evaluation of World Heritage Sites showed that there is a dearth of material on this subject. Most of the literature is on authenticity of archaeological artefacts. Perhaps the lack of discussion on authenticity in archaeology in the context of World Heritage may be because archaeological sites, like those with monuments, are considered to be similar to historic buildings, and hence can be covered by similar values. In my literature survey, I did find UNESCO standards relating to the principles governing the protection and excavation of archaeological sites as found in the Recommendations on International Principles Applicable to Archaeological Excavation (UNESCO, 1957) and to the preservation of archaeological sites mentioned in the Recommendation concerning the safeguarding and contemporary role of historic areas (UNESCO, 1977). These documents cover the protection and preservation of archaeological sites but do not mention what should be considered the pillars of authenticity in an archaeological nomination.

Archaeology has unique features that vary depending on whether it is historic or prehistoric archaeology. Archaeological sites are distinctly divided into historic monument sites and prehistoric sites, each very different from the other. An archaeological site of the historic period usually has evidence of monumental structures below or above ground, while a prehistoric site leaves behind open trenches that often have had artefacts removed.

Prehistoric archaeology

Prehistory is usually accepted as a period prior to the advent of writing, building, and the presence of a stratified society. The prehistoric period is recognized as having three major phases: Palaeolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic, followed by the metal ages and is the longest period of human history spanning a few million years – it may be said that 99 percent of human existence on earth is in the prehistoric past. During this period, tremendous steps in technological developments in stone working and pottery, especially towards the use of metal took place at a very slow pace, forming the basis for a faster technological growth during the historic period.

The uniqueness of prehistoric archaeology is that it is based on excavations from which artefacts are derived and interpretations made

totally based on a multidisciplinary approach involving anthropologists, geologists, soil scientists, chemists, botanists, zoologists, physicists, medical and dental scientists, and other disciplines

depending on the excavated artefacts and what information can be derived from them – in short a scientific approach to studying the prehistoric past and understanding as accurately as possible the cultural past of early man. During excavations, artefacts are recorded prior to

removal for analyses and interpretation of the site. Samples of soil, charcoal or other relevant material are collected for tests; and the soil profile and the excavations are exhaustively recorded. After excavations, the empty trenches are usually filled back in with earth, after a note has been placed in the trench to indicate to future archaeologists that the trench had been previously excavated. Sometimes trenches are left open for display.

Therefore, what are the measures for authenticity of archaeological sites? Are the trenches in the site the subject of authenticity? Or are the artefacts? Or are the analyses? What should be the measure(s) of authenticity? Let us examine these questions bearing in mind the spirit of the Nara Document on Authenticity, which elaborated on the topic mentioned in the Venice Charter. The Nara Document referred to in the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016, Annex 4) is very general, and discussions elaborating on this document have focused on non-archaeological sites, as evidenced by the papers presented in this volume. King (2014) has questions on how much of an archaeological site needs to be exposed, a good start to realizing that integrity, and perhaps authenticity, in archaeology may need some thinking. What is needed is exploration of the notion of authenticity for archaeological sites, equal in depth and scope as has been done for other cultural sites. Hopefully, such an exercise will come up with measurements for authenticity at archaeological sites that are true to this important category of cultural sites.

Towards this end, I have searched for references on authenticity relating to archaeology. Marko Marila (2011) looked at it from the philosophical view of the meaning of archaeological interpretations and the real past. Others have questioned archaeological authenticity in tourism, authenticity of artefacts, authenticity of archaeology in theatre; but nothing that we could apply to our context of world heritage. For this we have to start on the ground floor. It was challenging drawing on more than four decades of archaeological work in Malaysia to assess the requirements and indicators of authenticity and integrity when considering the nominations of World Heritage Sites. Time and space are the major concerns in archaeology, and so any discussion on archaeological authenticity must consider these aspects.

Briefly, among the authenticity indicators that should be explored are the following:

- A site must be *in situ* or undisturbed. This is the basis of archaeological authenticity and validity



Figure 1a

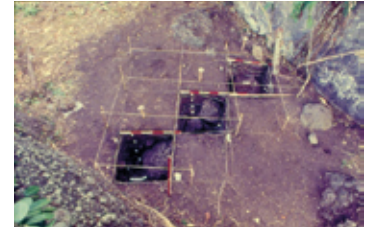
Excavation of the Perak Man skeleton in a trench with weak walls. If the walls collapse over time it would certainly not affect the authenticity and integrity of the skeleton.

of interpretation. If a site is disturbed, i.e. not as it was left by its users, it is normally not of much significance. There must be evidence that the archaeologist's hands and eyes are the first to see and touch the artefacts since they were originally deposited. This could be in the form of artefact arrangement e.g. pottery broken that can be pieced together; or skeletons that are in articulation; or stone tools with associated debitage nearby.

- Artefact analyses must be scientifically based. Authenticity is closely linked to the meaning of material artefacts. The reliability of meaning will depend on analyses. Identification of artefact material e.g. type of metal has to be based on chemical composition of the artefact through X-ray fluorescence. For a source area for a particular material such as obsidian, to be identified, chemical finger printing must be done. However, meaning does not depend on material alone but also on its function and use context.
- Sample for chronometric dating of site has to be related to artefacts that are associated with the cultural layer. If a piece of charcoal from a trench is to be tested chronometrically, it has

to be proven that it is contemporaneous with the level and the artefacts being studied. This is a crucial indicator of dating authenticity.

- Interpretation must be accepted and acknowledged. If a site is not generally accepted by peers, and its significance is questioned, then the authenticity of the site is uncertain.



△ Figure 1b
Trenches in an open site excavation in the tropics would not keep their shape well over time but all the details on the trenches have been recorded.

Thus, the authenticity of an archaeological site depends on it being an *in situ* site, its scientific artefact analyses, its chronometric dating and its interpretation being generally accepted. These features as well as its significant role studied through a comparative analysis; together with site integrity which could be interpreted as the physical condition of the site and its surroundings would add to the Outstanding Universal Value of a prehistoric site.

Historical archaeology

For this period, archaeology is sometimes aided by documentary evidence in interpreting artefacts and site context. This is also a period where monuments and structures may be more evident. However, unlike prehistoric sites, historical archaeology has an additional aspect to authenticity that should be carefully considered. Physical evidence usually in the form of ruins can sometimes be reconstructed, and in such cases authenticity can be an issue. Let me focus on reconstruction and renovation as important aspects of authenticity in historical archaeology.

Most monuments at Angkor, Cambodia, went through changes made at different periods by different rulers. For instance, Angkor Wat was originally built in the twelfth century as a Hindu temple but in the fourteenth century

it was converted to a Buddhist temple and relevant statues were added to its rich sculptural decoration. But because changes to these monuments

were constructed a long time ago to fulfil their changing spiritual needs, we have accepted them as authentic. The conservation practice in Asia largely focuses on the subject rather than the object. The intangible often supersedes the tangible (see Zerrudo in this volume). Thus, it is common practice to repair, renew and restore in order to



△ Figure 2
Excavation of Bastion Middelburg revealed its foundation.



extend the life of the building in contrast to the Eurocentric notion of authenticity where the rule is minimum intervention.

Reconstruction can also be made in archaeological sites with traces of a monument.

However, this should only be done when it can confidently be reconstructed after in-depth study. I would like to focus on Bastion Middelburg one of the nine bastions that protected the Fort of Melaka in Malaysia during historic times.



Figure 3
Bastion Middelburg
reconstructed.

The foundations of this fort remained in the ground and there were no traces of the bastion above ground. The construction of a controversial tower at the World Heritage property of Melaka (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017b) came to a halt when construction drills could not penetrate the ground. Upon examination, we found that blocks of laterite were present underground and these were manmade and construction was halted for archaeological investigation. It became apparent

that the site contained foundations of a large structure, which upon further investigation was identified as Bastion Middelburg through historical records.

The whole structure was revealed through archaeological excavations and we had a choice of leaving it as is, or reconstructing the bastion. The pros and cons were carefully weighed and given that we had reliable documentary sources and physical evidence to guide the reconstruction, we decided to reconstruct this historic monument. Maps, plans, paintings, books and documents bearing detailed measurements that could be tested against the given measurements of an existing monument, the discovery of the source area of the laterite blocks, the method of reconstruction, contemporaneous Dutch bastions in the region – all these pointed to an accurate reconstruction, without losing historical integrity (Department of National Heritage, 2010). This was concluded over several workshops and discussions among relevant experts such as Portuguese and Dutch historians, architects, engineers, conservationists, archaeologists, geologists and chemists. Having done this, the question now is whether, after a comprehensive study such as this, the above ground reconstruction may be regarded as authentic.

Conclusion

This cursory exploration suggests that the measures for authenticity differ between archaeology and built heritage, and that there is a need to study authenticity in archaeology as deeply as has been done for other cultural heritage sites. Unlike the notion of authenticity in built heritage which may differ in the West and the East, authenticity in archaeology is more universal as it is discipline based. However, as for site integrity, geography plays a part, e.g. fluvial processes in

the tropics could affect site integrity. Integrity in archaeological sites also has to be explored as there may be a case to be made for it not being of equal importance to authenticity when considering non-monumental archaeological sites. Does a collapsed trench wall mean that a prehistoric site has lost its integrity? Clearly, further work needs to be done on the concepts of authenticity and integrity in archaeology especially for non-monumental or prehistoric sites.

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An example of dancheong, the Korean art of painting buildings, photo by ICCROM



◊ CHAPTER 6 ◊

**Redefining authenticity
in the Korean context:
focusing on authenticity
of form**

Sujeong Lee



The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony to the history which it has experienced. Since the historical testimony rests on the authenticity, the former, too, is jeopardized by reproduction when substantive duration ceases to matter (Benjamin, 1936).

Abstract

Authenticity is a modern word and concept in the Republic of Korea, introduced around two decades ago when the state began to actively nominate sites and buildings to the UNESCO World Heritage List. However, the meaning of authenticity has never been examined nor has it been tailored to make it a working principle in practice for Korean heritage, therefore it is still a problematic and marginalized concept that is difficult to implement. This paper explores the ways the concept of authenticity has been understood and practiced in the Korean context. It examines the relationship between the intangible and the material in architectural heritage, while comparing traditional and modern perspectives on materials and intangible attributes in conservation practice. It argues that the modern concept and practice ignore the traditional perspectives of architectural practice, and therefore intangible characteristics have not been equally considered. The current practice has misunderstood authenticity and interfered with the “substantive duration” (Benjamin, 1936) of valued heritage. It addresses the problem that the obsession with form means a building is frozen in time. In conclusion, it highlights that all historical layers should be carefully respected in defining authenticity.

Authenticity, a perplexing concept in the Korean context

The term authenticity in Korean is a modern word and concept, introduced around two decades ago when the state began to actively nominate sites and buildings to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Now the word appears daily in the principles and guidelines for conservation practice. However, heritage professionals find it difficult to explain the meaning of authenticity because this concept developed in the West has not been thoroughly studied here. A few important exceptions include the following: Jo (2013) and Kang (2010) examine the concept of authenticity in the World Heritage context; Lee (2007) develops the concept of authenticity in the Korean context focusing on religious buildings in use; and Gang (2014) focuses on the relationship between authenticity of material and techniques. Furthermore, it has never been examined whether authenticity is a useful concept in conserving Korean heritage and has never been tailored to make it a working principle in practice for Korean heritage, which has a different substance and essence from that of other cultures. For Koreans the word exists only in the text of the *Operational Guidelines* for UNESCO World Heritage Sites (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016), but not as a working concept in daily practice. Authenticity therefore is a problematic and marginalized concept, which is difficult to implement in practice.

Since the Nara Document on Authenticity (hereafter Nara Document) was drafted in 1994 (Larsen, ed., 1994), the concept of authenticity has been much studied, criticized and analysed from a Western perspective. However, it seems that still many countries, including the Republic of Korea, are perplexed in regards to interpreting the concept and describing the authenticity of their heritage. Such problems are apparent in the descriptions of authenticity included in nomination documents. The problem is a result of the concept being still fixed to a Eurocentric perspective of understanding heritage. Although Article 11 of the Nara Document encourages us to judge authenticity “within the cultural contexts to which it belongs” local efforts to understand such cultural contexts vary, including the way to judge a context which has not yet been fully examined.

Furthermore, it is an agreed upon idea that the intangible aspects of authenticity should be recognized more than the material ones in certain cultures, including the Republic of Korea, yet the way to achieve this has yet to be developed. Conservation practice aims at the “substantive duration” of what we value, and in the case of Walter Benjamin’s writing, substantive means both the physical and material aspects of authenticity. However, substance can be the immaterial, spiritual or other intangible elements in the Asian context. This paper examines the relationship between intangible expressions and material ones in Korean architectural heritage, while comparing traditional and modern perspectives on materials and intangible elements in the conservation practice. By scrutinizing the relationship between material and intangible aspects in defining the authenticity of heritage and applying it to conservation practice, this paper argues that the current practice of conservation has misunderstood authenticity and interfered with the “substantive duration” of valued heritage. It addresses the problem that the attachment to the form means a building is frozen in time. In conclusion, it will highlight that all historical layers should be carefully respected in defining authenticity in form, and such an approach will ultimately sustain the substantive duration of heritage in conservation practice.

♥ Figure 1
Landscape painting
by Huang Kungwang
(1269–1354).



Jinjeongseong or *wonhyeong*, a local concept of authenticity

For the word authenticity, the word *jinjeongseong* (眞情性, the nature of truthfulness) was created as a translated term, mentioned more in the World Heritage context. However, another word *wonhyeong* (原形, original form), which has been in use longer than *jinjeongseong* in practice, contains a closer meaning of authenticity. Furthermore, the word *wonhyeong* has been more commonly used in the same context of authenticity in regards to the World Heritage Convention in Korea than *jinjeongseong*.

Authenticity and *wonhyeong* play similar roles in assessing values of heritage. As authenticity is a “measure of degree to which the values of

a heritage property may be understood to be truthfully, genuinely and credibly, expressed by the attributes carrying the values” (Stovel, 2004, p. 3), *wonhyeong* has been applied to the process of evaluating designations to the National List. Since the concepts of both have been understood as “the ability of a property to convey its significance over time” (Stovel, 2007, p. 21), they have been a theoretical tool in conserving identified values. Therefore, the meaning of *wonhyeong* should not be limited to the form and design only but be extended

to the various qualifying factors, such as materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016, paragraph 82).

Since *wonhyeong* first appeared in writing during the 1920s (Kwon, 1921), it has been a primary principle and goal of conservation for the last 50 years.

This, combined with the more recent creation of the World Heritage translated term *jinjeongseong*, which was created without comprehending the international meaning of authenticity, has created a conceptual dichotomy between the two words, even though both words contain the meaning of authenticity. In addition to this, *wonhyeong* was not given a chance to be examined and thereby determined whether it was a compatible concept for authenticity. As a result, both words have been understood to have different meanings and therefore different applications in practice.

The words *jin* (眞), which is a part of the word *jinjeongseong*, and *won* (原) of the word *wonhyeong* are the closest Chinese characters that reflect the English concept of authenticity: the former means “truthful, honest, sincere and genuine” and the latter “original”. Therefore, both the words *jinjeongseong* and *wonhyeong* can be regarded as the closest terms to translate authenticity in Korean. However, the key element of being, *jin* and *won*, lies within the intangible expressions rather than within material substance, and such attitudes toward conceptualizing both the words *jin* and *won* makes the intangible more important within the authenticity of Korean heritage.

However, the meanings of *jin* and *won* are not the same when evaluating whether an object is the original or not. A copy can be *jin* and *won* in Korean, whereas it cannot be genuine or original in English. Making a copy or imitating an original has been a well-established genre of genuine painting as a creative work. There are three different ways of copying: *im* (臨), *mo* (摹) and *bang* (倣). Both *im* and *mo* were more a way of practice than a creative work. They are the process of understanding a sublime spirit by repeatedly copying a masterpiece. The concept of *bang* is to understand



◁ Figure 2
Landscape painting
by Lee Yeongyun (1561–1611).

the sublime spirit of an original painting and to follow its artistic intent in a creative way. Then the painting from the *bang* process is no longer a copy or forgery but an original. The creation of the painting followed an authentic process, which includes intangible values. Important criteria of becoming *jin* and *won* is not in material elements such as the form, material or style but in immaterial ones such as intention, creativity, and spirit. Most *bang* painting does not have much similarity in style and form with the original as displayed in Figures 1 and 2.

The way in which a building is constructed and repaired follows an authentic process, which includes several ceremonial processes and formulated practice. According to the *uigwe* records, one of the important royal records regarding the construction and repair of buildings in the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), the style, size, layout, and arrangement of buildings was decided by Confucian philosophy and architectural order based on the *Chinese Architectural Manual* of wooden structures (for a modern discussion on the ancient text, see Feng, 2012). The 1832 record on the construction of the Gyeongbok Palace (the western palace) noted that the construction:

...has been completed based on traditional order...
The reason why Jeongjeon Hall and Pyeonjeon Hall

is separated is to make a place for meetings to be secluded and solemn. The route between the inner and external garden is intersected to make the vassal's access to a king easy. The level of the location is the third degree but it represents frugality. The best location (according to geomancy) is a seat for a noble and venerable king (Gang et al., 2010, p. 93).

Such construction principles have affected the way in which the aesthetic value has been appreciated and the way its authenticity of form has been interpreted in the process of repair.

By looking at *dang* (house), *jae* (pavilion), *chungmun* (gate), *saripmun* (small gate) and *soshe* (atmosphere) I felt austerity free from secular thought and peoples. Scholars in this Confucian school have protected the buildings by repairing and sweeping them with devotion and respect. In addition, the provincial governor has also put exceptional effort on the preservation. (Author's translation, Jeong, 1686, p. 310).

Jeong's perspective appreciated the relationship of the arrangement of buildings in regards to the Confucian school and the noble thought of its founder and designer. It illustrates the Korean perspective of looking at the value of a building and has considered the aesthetics of intangible substance as a more important factor than that of a tangible one.

Wonbyeong, a static principle in practice

Introduced in the early twentieth century (during the Japanese colonial period), preserving material remains is a modern concept and practice in Korea. Before then, material objects were regarded as a manifestation of sublime spirits, useful knowledge, useful teachings, respected principles, and human values. Therefore, the material aspects could be changed and replaced as long as the changes reflect the intangible attributes. It is not clear exactly when the concept of heritage in regards to cultural value was created or introduced in Korea. Yet, it is clear that political and social changes associated with the Japan-Korea Annexation (1910–1945) and the rapid influx of Western cultures was considered as

detrimental to the traditional spirit, and concern over this loss drew the people's attention to the physical remains of heritage. Koreans began to recognize material remains which would help to preserve national identity because they visually and tangibly display the pride of a long history and rich culture of the people.

Such a shift in attitude towards material remains has in turn changed the perspective towards the relationship between material and intangible expressions. Material substance is no longer recognized as a manifestation of a sublime spirit of religious belief, craftsmanship or an artistic and religious process, which should be carefully

valued and reflected in assessing heritage values. Intangible elements are subordinate to material substance; therefore, placing material substance at the centre of interest, while undermining the significance of the intangible.

The meaning of *wonhyeong* first appeared during the Japanese colonial period and became solidified after the Korean War (1950–1953) in the process of reformulating national identity. However, this fixed definition of *wonhyeong* has not been discussed, despite the Western conservation theory that has been adopted, and this has created a philosophical disjunction in Korean conservation practice. In actual practice, during the early years of the twentieth century, the concept quickly began to establish its meaning as the earliest form. The earliest writing mentioning *wonhyeong* is found in the 1921 article by Kwon Deokyu. In his travelogue, he criticized the 1915 Japanese conservation of Seokuram Grotto which caused irreversible damage during the process of dismantling and reassembling. He explicitly defines the word as the earliest phase of the building as follows:

They (the Japanese authority) continue to plaster cement on the surface of sculptures in order to prevent further damage by leaking in the grotto. So, they became whiter and do not look old. But, in my opinion, it is necessary to re-repair and restore them into *wonhyeong* in order to solve the fundamental problem. When something loses *wonhyeong* during repair, it becomes re-creation and does not achieve the purpose of conservation of historical sites (Kwon, 1921, p. 72).

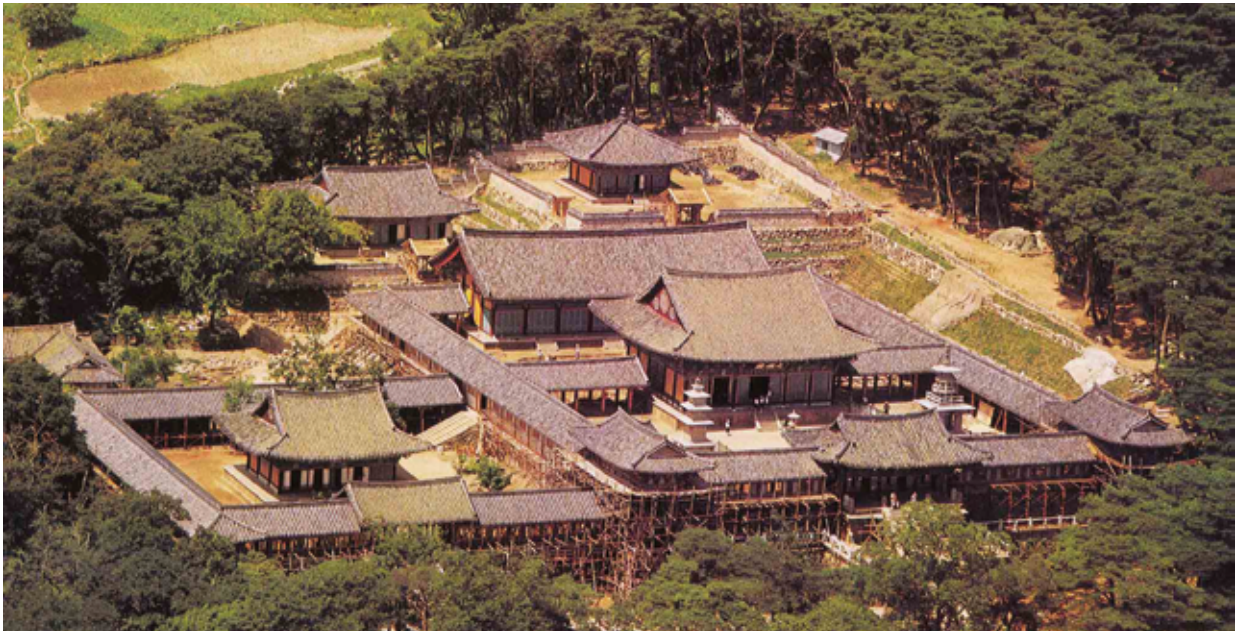
Defining *wonhyeong* as the earliest form has caused the problem of dissonance between the ideal status of material remains as a principle and the reality of the condition in practice as exemplified by the case of Sungnyemun (south gate of the ancient capital Seoul, National Treasure No 1). During the Japanese colonial period the city walls were destroyed in order to make room for a road. During the Korean War, a part of the roof was destroyed by a bomb. In 1961, the Korean government planned to restore it in *wonhyeong* – as its earliest form dating to the fourteenth century – but due to later changes and damage,

it was impossible to identify what remained of the original structure (Lee, 2002, p. 228).

The 1970s conservation of Geungnakjeon (Hall of Western Paradise) at Bongjeongsa temple in the south-east of the country displays an extreme enthusiasm for the earliest form. During its total dismantling from 1972 to 1975, a written record of a 1363 repair of the roof of the building was found under a crossbeam. This enabled researchers to identify it as one of the oldest buildings still extant in the Republic of Korea. For a nation which has only a few remaining buildings earlier than the fourteenth century, such a discovery has had a huge effect on assessing the value of the building. It had three pairs of hinged doors with traditional paper windows, which were typical in the Joseon Period and located at the front of each bay of doors. However, in the restoration project the central pair was reconstructed in the style of the preceding Goryeo Period (935–1392) with a timber door *without* paper and the side doors were each replaced by lattice windows. In addition, the floor of the building was restored with a tile floor because the partial remains of the tile floor of the Goryeo Period were exposed beneath the wooden floor of the Joseon Period.

The changes made during conservation have convinced the Korean people that the work recovered an authentic form and style of the building, but the form was designed based on the assumption and study of the remaining Chinese buildings of the same period. The changes resulted in the building being darker due to the replacement of the Joseon hinged doors and colder due to the tile flooring (which is incompatible with contemporary rituals) despite the fact that the building is still in daily use as part of a living monastery.

This conflict in perspectives on the authenticity in form of Korean heritage has occurred during the nomination of World Heritage Sites Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa temple (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017). In particular, religious theory in Buddhist temples plays an important role in the arrangement of the buildings and other monuments such as stupas, lanterns, and *budo* (stupas for monks) in order to express various areas with respect to the Buddhist pantheon as described in various stupas (Kim, 1999, p. 63–66). This is an important aspect of aesthetic value.



Providing a representative example: Bulguksa in Gyeongju city has two areas within the central area of the temple compound, each dedicated to a different figure: one to the lands of Seokgamoni (the historical Buddha, Sakyamuni) and the other to Amita Buddha (Buddha of Western Paradise, Amitabha). The bridges to both areas as well as the pond (reburied after excavation) were named after the ones in the Buddhist sutras and on the teachings of each Buddha. Such a relationship between the physical layout of a temple and Buddhist theology is an important factor of authentic form.

However, the nomination document's description of authenticity does not mention any such aspects:

The masonry structures within Bulguksa have maintained their original form, having undergone only partial repair. The wooden buildings have been repaired and restored several times since the 16th century. All restoration work and repairs have been based on historical research and have employed traditional materials and techniques (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017, *Statement on Authenticity*).

It only describes form, materials and techniques from the Western perspective without clearly stating what the authentic form of the temple is. Without understanding what the real authentic form is in the Korean context, it still proved the site deserved to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

The 1970s “reproduction” of the ruined building in Bulguksa displays the extent of Korean attachment to an authentic form, not as a manifestation of religious principles and contemporary architectural styles, but as material remains to exemplify the long history of the Korean people. Only with information from archaeological excavations, major buildings in the temple, the Lecture Hall, the Hall of Vairocana, the Hall of Kwaneum (compassionate Buddha), and corridors to enclose different lands of the Buddhas, were newly built.

The constant passion for recovering *wonhyeong*, the earliest form, has been exacerbated by adding a principle of preserving *wonhyeong*, found in Article 3 of the 1999 revised edition of *Munhwajae-bohobeop* (Cultural Heritage Protection Act (Republic of Korea, 2010; ICH Courier, 2017)). Article 3 states “the basic principle for the preservation, management, and utilization is to preserve them in their *wonhyeong*”. This has exacerbated a passion for recovering *wonhyeong*. In most cases, it is difficult to identify the earlier or the earliest form, but where there is any partial evidence of the earliest form this has been preferred in conservation practice, even while ignoring the authenticity of material, function and techniques.

♥ **Figure 3**
Bulguksa showing areas dedicated to different Buddhist figures.



Conclusion: redefining *wonhyeong* from a static into a working principle

The reason why authenticity of form in the Republic of Korea has preferred the earliest form can be explained in two ways. One is the constant demand to build a national identity following the Japanese colonial period. The other is that, compared to China and Japan, relatively few buildings constructed earlier than the thirteenth century are still standing.

However, the first reason should no longer be accepted because, in order for Korean heritage to preserve its authenticity, authenticity of form should be respected along with design, substance, function and technique, which is a more intangible aspect of the inherent characteristics of Korean heritage. *Wonhyeong* as an earliest form should be redefined to embrace all criteria of authenticity and the form of a building should not be frozen in a particular time. The continuity of a building can be guaranteed only when the transmission of sublime thought, spirit, and philosophy are

delivered from one generation to another through original material.

Gang (2014) has revealed that conservationists of important buildings, such as Gaeksamun Gate, the Josadang Shrine of Buseoksa temple, and the Main Hall of Bukjisangsa temple, have replaced the original wooden components with new wooden components without hesitation. It has been a prevailing issue between Korean conservators that *wonhyeong* can only be achieved by the duration of form. However, considering the relationship between the tangible and intangible elements of Korean buildings, it is not possible to transmit values by pursuing the earliest form. This means that the concept of *wonhyeong* needs to be redefined to embrace both the tangible and intangible criteria of authenticity. As long as form dominates the concept of authenticity, heritage will be frozen in a certain moment, sacrificing other criteria of authenticity and in the end, leading to the loss of value.

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Hwaseong Fortress, Republic of Korea by cmkdream (CCo)



◊ CHAPTER 7 ◊

Architectural heritage restoration and authenticity in Korea: a comparative analysis¹

Seong-do Kim

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Abstract

Cultural heritage, including architectural heritage, represents not only the history and culture of an ethnic group but also the technologies and techniques that were used at any given time. Therefore, preserving its original form is of great importance in respect to keeping ethnicity as well as transmitting all humanity's heritage. When the architectural heritage in which people live deteriorates and its strength decreases as time passes, the fabric may be restored so that people can live in it while keeping the value and authenticity of the cultural heritage. But there are limits to restoration methods due to the gap between an ideal standard and a reality dictated by the philosophy of conservation, economic power, culture and broader historical circumstances. The present paper discusses authenticity in the practice of architectural restoration, seeking to understand how architectural restoration can be differently carried out according to the diverse comprehension of the meaning of authenticity. Emphasis is on Korean sites, while parallels are drawn to sites from different countries. First, universal principles of architectural heritage restoration are outlined, as applied to the Republic of Korea. Second, different applications of authenticity seen from case examples of architectural heritage restoration at the site of Angkor, Cambodia are examined. Third, authenticity seen from the restoration example of the Paldalmun Gate of Hwaseong Fortress, Suwon, the Republic of Korea (a UNESCO World Heritage Site) is examined. At this site, through the application of modern scientific techniques, even decrepit and corroded wooden aspects are continually used without replacement. This enables maintenance of the original form thereby retaining authenticity.



Finally, the specificity and limits of cultural heritage restoration in Korea, not to speak of other countries, is discussed. It is suggested here that this understanding of authenticity in Korea, based on the strict preservation of original form, may contribute to the construction of a concept of shared and universal authenticity.

♥ Figure 1
View of Baphuon temple
restoration, 2009.





Principles of architectural heritage restoration and authenticity in Korea

Every cultural heritage, including architectural heritages, incorporates not only the history and culture native to a people, but retains and expresses the techniques/skills of the time period of construction. In this respect it is extremely important to maintain and preserve cultural heritages, which are a synthesis of history and culture, as well as a precious treasure house, directly leading to inherit the human heritage, not to speak of the establishment of identity in a people.

On the basis of such values owned by cultural heritages, in Korea, “Cultural Heritage Protection Law” was enacted (Jan. 10, 1962) and has been enforced to date,² stipulating that the basic principle of the preservation, management and utilization of cultural heritages lies in maintaining an original form.³

Furthermore, to enhance the quality of cultural heritage restoration, “Law on Cultural Heritage Restoration,

Etc.” was enacted (Feb 4, 2010) and has been enforced. This law specifies that its purpose is to preserve/pass on cultural heritages to an original form, and that the basic principle of restoration of cultural heritages lies in maintaining the original form.⁴ ...

In addition, the CHA has enacted and enforced the “General Principles for Repair, Restoration and Management of Historical Architectural Heritages and Archaeological Sites”⁵ (Sept. 3, 2009) that was formulated, in order to specifically substantiate the basic principle, i.e., “maintaining an original form”, while paying due respect to international charters and the standards laid down by the Principles as well as according to actual conditions and reality in Korea (Kim, 2016, p. 27).

By stating “Given that the cultural heritage is irreplaceable once its original form is destroyed,

- 2 “Cultural Heritage Protection Law”, Article 1 (Purpose) stipulates that “The purpose of this Law is to promote the cultural edification of Korean nationals and to contribute to the development of human culture by transferring national culture and enhancing it to be utilized through the preservation of cultural heritage”.
- 3 “Cultural Heritage Protection Law”, Article 3 (Basic Principles of Protection of Cultural Heritage) stipulates that “The basic principle for the preservation, management and utilization of cultural heritage is to preserve them in their original state”.
- 4 Article 1 (Purpose) of the “Law on Cultural Heritage Restoration, Etc.”, enacted on Feb. 4, 2010 and enforced on Feb. 5, 2011, stipulates that “The purpose of this Law is to enhance the quality of restoration of cultural heritage and develop cultural heritage restoration works in a sound manner by prescribing matters necessary for the restoration of cultural heritage, on-site survey and design, superintendence, registration of cultural heritage restoration works, technology management, etc. in order to preserve and inherit cultural heritage in its original form”, clarifying that the purpose of restoration of cultural heritage is to preserve and inherit cultural heritage in its original form.
- 5 The preface of the “General Principles for Repair, Restoration and Management of Historical Architectural Heritages and Archaeological Sites” states that cultural heritage-related international organizations including the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) have contributed to the restoration of various types of cultural heritages including historic monuments, archaeological heritages, etc. to be implemented based on international criteria and principles by adopting international charters and recommendations for systematic preservation and management. The “General Principles for Repair, Restoration and Management of Historical Architectural Heritages and Archaeological Sites” is the criteria formulated with respect to the criteria laid down in accordance with the existing international charters and principles such as the “Venice Charter” and “Nara Document on Authenticity” as well as by adjusting it to the actual conditions and reality in Korea.

one should make efforts to maintain and preserve the values and authenticity of such heritage,” it defines the original form as when the values and authenticity of the heritage are kept.

... Meanwhile, the “Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Restoration, Etc.”⁶ enacted by the CHA as the restoration guidelines to be applied to every architectural heritage including wooden buildings stipulates that “For applying the criteria of time period to a cultural heritage restoration, the valid contributions of the elements of all periods to the construction of the cultural heritage must be respected and maintained.” In other words, a restoration shall be undertaken so that it respects and maintains the elements of all periods shown on the cultural heritage except the deformed ones.

Specifically, Architectural heritages that deteriorate over time and suffer periodical damages caused by natural disasters, etc. have been constantly repaired/restored to maintain them.⁷ The original appearance of an architectural heritage gradually changes through the above process, reflecting the techniques and materials available during each time period in which repair/restoration has been carried out, and retaining the vestiges of such time periods. Consequently, we

regard every such change in appearance during each time period as an original form, and pay respect to the vestiges of all periods.⁸

In the case of Korea, therefore, the basic principle for the restoration of architectural heritage, including wooden buildings,⁹ lies in maintaining an original form. It is stipulated that the valid contributions of the elements of all periods to the construction of a cultural heritage must be respected and maintained.¹⁰ Accordingly, the criteria for authenticity in the heritages are grounded in the maintenance of the original form explained above (Kim, 2016, p. 28).

This paper seeks to understand how architectural restoration can be carried out differently according to a diverse comprehension of the meaning of authenticity. This will be examined through a few examples from Angkor. On the grounds of a general understanding of authenticity, this paper will clarify the meaning and application of authenticity in Korea through the case of Hwaseong Fortress. Finally, this paper will discuss the specificity and limits of cultural heritage restoration in Korea, not to speak of other countries.

6 Article 2 of these guidelines restricts their scope of application to the restoration of buildings, historic sites, places of scenic beauty and similar cultural heritages among the designated cultural heritages.

7 The term “restoration” used in the Korean cultural heritage-related field includes such concepts as repair, restoration, etc. Article 2 of the “Law on Cultural Heritage Maintenance, Etc.” provides the definition that includes repair, restoration, maintenance, and measures for damage prevention.

8 Article 15, “Principles for Applying the Criteria of Time Periods to Cultural Heritage Restoration”, of the “Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Restoration, Etc.” stipulates that “For applying the criteria for time periods involved with cultural heritage restoration, the valid contributions of the elements of all periods to the construction of the cultural heritage must be respected and maintained. However, if the vestiges of a previous restoration of a cultural heritage have historical, archaeological or aesthetic value greater than that of the currently existing restoration, it is allowable to apply the restoration state of the previous restoration”. Meanwhile, in the case of damaged or broken cultural heritages, in compliance with the related proviso, they are to be restored to the previous appearance before the damage or breakage. In this case, in order to maintain the value and authenticity of the heritages, restoration is carried out by referring to direct reference materials for historical accuracy including old photographs, related structural remains, records, etc.

9 Since Korea has a natural environment with rich trees and stones, they have been extensively used for buildings through the ages. Accordingly, wooden buildings are an important part of architectural heritages.

10 The elements of all periods include form and design, materials and substance, utilization and functions, traditional skills and techniques, place and neighboring environment as objectives.

Different applications of authenticity seen from case examples of architectural heritage restoration

For restoration of architectural heritages, authenticity should be strictly applied in compliance with the principles of ‘maintenance of original form’, paying respect to the elements of all periods observed in the cultural heritages¹¹. ... Incidentally, in some cases, there are differences in methods of restoration between countries, depending on the natural environment, cultural and historical backgrounds, economic power, and restoration policy formed through all such factors of each (Kim, 2016, p. 29).

This section explains different applications of authenticity to architectural heritage through cases in Angkor.

At Angkor, Cambodia, in which many different countries are participating in UNESCO’s conservation and restoration projects, shows each country’s different approach to restoring the site. The following excerpt has been translated and amended by the author from the book *Inside Story of Architectural Heritage* (2014).

At Baphuon temple (a five-storied pyramid-shaped Hindu temple constructed in the middle of the eleventh century and restored by EFEO discontinuously since 1954) where the restoration is led by France, for example, not only up-to-date machinery including cranes but also modern materials such as reinforced concrete are actively used. In respect of material, traditional techniques and technology, this site can be regarded as an example of flexible interpretation about the authenticity.

In the case of Phnom Bakheng temple (restored by World Monuments Fund according to the demands of APSARA in 2004) on the other hand, restoration of the site is led by experts from the United States of America and they are more likely to put higher value on the conservation of its current situation rather than restoring its original form. Wood and ropes surrounding the outer walls of the pagoda are holding back the collapse of the pagoda in order to delay the loss or damage of the pagoda and maintain its original style, which indicates that they apply strict standards for interpreting authenticity.

Japanese experts are participating in restoring the Khleang site with traditional methods such as making a traditional ground rammer, rather than using modern equipment. Considering that they are attempting to restore the site in an original way including using traditional construction techniques the authenticity in this case seems to be interpreted strictly (Kim, 2014, p. 15–22).

As seen from above, it is possible to know that in East Asia, compared to the Western countries’ cases, the intangible heritage values such as traditional crafts and skills are highly regarded. Likewise the cultural heritage at Angkor has been restored in various ways according to the participating countries’ philosophies relating to conservation and restoration, and this well shows such variation is based on the differences in interpretation of authenticity.

11 This principle requires research on reference materials for historical accuracy, present-state survey and field measurement, and analysis of the record of restoration undertaken in the past before starting the project; subsequently, blueprints and specification are to be created. Furthermore, even after the project has started, it is necessary to continuously (continue to) perform the procedures to research reference materials for historical accuracy, present-state survey associated with dismantlement, and sampling, if necessary, while carefully proceeding with the restoration work.

Authenticity seen from the restoration example of Suwon Hwaseon Paldalmun Gate in Korea

In Korea, in order to ensure the quality of the restoration of every cultural property including architectural heritages, to meet international criteria, and to reflect the Korean features,¹² the “Law on Cultural Heritage Restoration, Etc.” and a broad range of the regulations and guidelines¹³ have been enacted for undertaking the restoration of cultural heritages. Above all, the CHA aims to maintain the original form of state-designated cultural properties through design review and technical guidance by strictly interpreting and applying “authenticity” to the aspects of form, design, raw materials/substances, utilization and functions, as well as traditional skills and techniques so that original form can be maintained. The restoration example of the Paldalmun Gate of the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress

(a UNESCO World Heritage) demonstrates the fact well¹⁴ (Kim, 2016, p. 31).

The Paldalmun Gate of the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress located at 2–138 Paldal Street, Paldal Ward, Suwon City, Gyeonggi-Do was constructed in 1794¹⁵ as the south gate of the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress,¹⁶ under the leadership of King Jeongjo, by concentrating the Spirit of Practical Science and scientific techniques of the 18th century, and by adopting the advantages of foreign fortifications into the Korean traditional fortifications (Kim, 2016, p. 31).¹⁷

... This Paldalmun Gate has been maintained as it was built except for several repairs of the roof including tiles.¹⁸ Recently, however, such problem occurred that the beams have projected outside, widening the gaps

- 12 Korea has properties such as stable natural environment in which almost no earthquakes occur and perspectives based on humane study respecting ancient times.
- 13 The regulations and guidelines include the “General Principles for Repair, Restoration and Management of Historical Architectural Heritages and Archaeological Sites (Sept. 3, 2009)”, “Guidelines for Cultural Heritage Restoration, Etc. (Dec. 22, 2010)”, “Regulations on Technical Guidance for Cultural Heritage Restoration (Aug. 20, 2009)”, and “Guidelines on National Subsidy Projects for Cultural Heritage Repair and Maintenance”.
- 14 The Paldalmun Gate of the Suwon Hwaseong Fortress was dismantled and restored under the technical guidance of the Restoration Technique Div. of the CHA during for the period from June 2008 to March, 2013, by injecting about ₩4,710,000,000.
- 15 Designated as a treasure on Sept. 3, 1964, the gate has two storied building that the first floor is 161.95m² and the second floor is 110.60m² in area, measuring five spans in the span direction and two spans in the ridge direction. For more information, see “The Hwaseong Management Office of Suwon City, Report of the 1st Technical Guidance Advisory Council for the repair of Paldalmun Gate” (July 2, 2010, p. 3).
- 16 The Suwon Hwaseong Fortress is not only a state-designated cultural property (historic site No. 3) but also a UNESCO world heritage site (inscribed on the List in 1997) as a modern architectural heritage autonomously constructed through unique methods based on Korean fortification techniques, while adopting advantages seen in those of China, Japan and the West. The fortress Measures 5.744 kilometres in total length, and 188,000 sq. metres in area, incorporating many heritages of national-defence structures including gates such as Paldalmun Gate (Treasure No. 402), West Gate (Treasure No. 403), North-East Pavilion (Treasure No. 1709), etc. and observation towers and pavilions and so on. For more information, see “*Modern and Contemporary Cultural Heritage*” (Kim, Seongdo, 2012, p. 174–176).
- 17 *Modern and Contemporary Cultural Heritage*, p. 174–176; *Story of Cultural Heritage encountered in the field*, Cultural Heritage Administration 2, 2012, p. 31.
- 18 The Paldalmun Gate has undergone trifling repairs several times, such as the replacement of roof tiles in 1950, 1960,



between the construction members. To fundamentally solve this problem, the dismantling restoration work was implemented for the first time in 200 years (Kim, 2016, p. 33).

Through this restoration of the Paldalmun Gate, in principle, deteriorated wooden members are repaired and reinforced to the maximum for reuse, not replacing them with new ones. The girders had deteriorated due to such causes whereby; (i) the portions on which the pillars are installed had cracks and rips; (ii) natural drying cause cracks and splits; and, (iii) white-rot fungus caused corrosion. To solve these problems, the girders have been repaired

and reinforced by using the hybrid restoration method after being pasteurized and fumigated (Kim, 2016, p. 34).

Through this method, firstly, the deteriorated parts of wooden members or those corroded by rot fungus are removed. Then a special epoxy resin is injected into the portions from which the deteriorated parts were removed. They are then pressed with hydraulic press, and lastly, reinforced with fittings.

After this treatment, most of the deteriorated wooden members can be reused, without replacing them with new ones.¹⁹ In addition, T-shape iron fittings are fixed

1975, and 2000, in addition to partial repairs of the outer castle wall in 1975 and 2002. For more information, see “The Hwaseong Management Office of Suwon City, Report of the 4th Technical Guidance Advisory Council for the repair of Paldalmun Gate” (June 22, 2011, p. 4).

- 19 The hybrid restoration method has the advantage that damaged or deteriorated construction members can continue to be used without replacing them with new ones by using both the adhesion method and the iron fitting

onto the upper part of the beams in order to increase the proof stress thereof to bear the upper load.

Furthermore, in order to solve a problem that a horizontal head-penetrating tie beam and the top plate of the head-penetrating tie beam were sagging due to upper load and aging, carbon fiber was fitted onto the bottom surface of the top plate of the head-penetrating tie beam for increasing its proof stress.²⁰ This method

enabled the reuse and reappearance of the existing original members, without the occurrence of change in size of the members such as the expansion of cross-sectional area. Through this method using modern scientific techniques, even decrepit and corroded wooden members can be continuously used without replacement. This enables maintenance of original form, retaining authenticity as a cultural heritage²¹ (Kim, 2016, p. 34).

Specificity and limit of Cultural Heritage restoration

... A specificity of architectural heritages is that the original form is overlapped by successive forms as time proceeds. In many cases, the original appearance of architectural heritages have changed through repeated restorations over time, reflecting unique techniques/materials available in each time period in which the restorations were undertaken, and retaining the traces of such time periods. In addition, the appearance of plane and elevation may also have changed to no small extent, depending on time period and use conditions.

In this case, not only the appearance at a single point of time but that of the other points must be respected as “original forms”. However, at such times, an expert judgement becomes necessary concerning whether to attach equal or differentiated importance to each time

period involved in the changes, while being based on related historical reference materials.

In addition, when undertaking cultural heritage restoration, the maintenance of original form faces a limit that there is limited by the gap between the ideal original form and that in reality under the practical conditions such as: (i) replacement of the materials harmful to the human body...; (ii) physical limit to the lifetime of the materials used for a cultural heritage; (iii) level of restoration techniques/materials accumulated to date; (iv) cultural heritage utilization plan and perspectives based on humane study; (v) budget and time period for the restoration; and, (vi) different natural environments of each country.

These specificity and limits cause difficulty in quantifying authenticity (Kim, 2016, p. 31–31).

Figure 2

View of Paldalmun Gate
and its restoration, 2012.

reinforcement method. This method enables highly reliable reinforcement of the members, and secures durability as well as strength performance of the reinforced members, based on engineering.

²⁰ Dirt, dust, and impurities are first removed. Then, surface-hardening treatment is undertaken using epoxy resin, the carbon fiber is fitted and, lastly, an epoxy resin coat is again applied as the finish coat.

²¹ *Inside Story of Architectural Heritage*, p. 23.



Conclusion

“Although restoration methods for wooden architectural heritages like this may basically appear to be similar each other, depending on the preservation policy, natural environment, etc. of each country, significant differences may exist, which are closely connected with authenticity of a cultural heritage” (Kim, 2016, p. 36). At the same time, finding a shared meaning of authenticity is of great significance through

accumulating expertise and considering each country’s different situations. Thus, continued international discussions and communication on this matter are needed. In this paper, the specificity of Korean authenticity which indicates the possibility of ideal authenticity through strict preservation of original form may contribute to constructing the concept of the shared and universal authenticity.

Figure 3
Interior view of Paldalmun
Gate restoration, 2012.

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Prasat Sdok Kok Thom, Thailand by Ddalbiez (CC BY-SA 3.0)



◊ CHAPTER 8 ◊

**The concept of authenticity in
heritage conservation in Thailand:
a case study of anastylosis**

Vasu Poshyanandana

Abstract

On the concept of authenticity in heritage conservation in Thailand, the author provides cases which used the anastylosis method as applied to stone monuments, especially Khmer style structures. The principle of the method, comprising the restoration of original materials to their original positions in the structure using original techniques, with minimal application of new materials or techniques only as necessary, is considered to have led to a more comprehensible interpretation of the monuments. The method is based on an international conservation concept which differs from the traditional Thai point of view on the significance of heritage and ideas on conservation, which do not focus on authenticity. In Thailand, this new international concept was introduced with the founding of the Fine Arts Department of the Ministry of Culture in 1911. The pioneer project, the restoration of Prasat Phimai, Nakhon Ratchasima province, using the anastylosis method, was supported in funding and technical cooperation by UNESCO in 1964 under guidelines laid out by French architects. The most recent project, the restoration of Prasat Sdok Kok Thom, Sa Kaeo province, demonstrates the development of ideas on authenticity which incline towards interpretation and the embracing of intangible elements rather than being concerned merely with material elements. Such projects reflect the changing trends and requirements of heritage conservation in Thailand.

Introduction

The concepts of heritage and conservation are rather new terms in Thailand, adopted from the Western world. Originally, for Thais, it was only temples and palaces that were considered valuable and required special attention, whereas common residences were not considered valuable. Archaeological sites and ancient remains were seen as sources of buried treasure or readily available building materials. As for the (valuable) temples and palaces, there were only two types of treatment, namely: restoration – to repair the structure to its original condition; and reconstruction – to demolish the structure and rebuild it regardless of the preservation of its original style (which could serve as historical evidence) in an attempt to save its status as a palace or temple in accordance with the interests of the revered religious or monarchical institutions.

Western colonialism spread to Asia during the nineteenth century. In order to avoid being colonized, King Rama IV, or King Mongkut, of Siam (former name of Thailand) initiated a modernization scheme which was intended to demonstrate the country's civilization. Several aspects of Siam were developed following Western standards. On this basis, the Western concept of conservation was adopted by succeeding reigns, and the terms restoration and reconstruction have been transformed to express international ideas of conservation with regard to the original values and styles of structures more than the traditional meanings of the terms.

The Fine Arts Department, founded in 1911, was intended to be an organization specifically in charge of conservation, and the valuable buildings and places under their supervision were called monuments. A special law was enacted for the first time in 1934, that is, the Act on Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums (originally only in Thai, but a 1961 English version can be read at [Thai Legislation, 2017](#)), which can be considered the only regulation that has been used practically in conservation of cultural heritage until the present day. It continues to be periodically updated.

The term monument was initially defined by the President of the Royal Institute Prince

Damrongrajanubhap as an ancient object which is immovable e.g. town, palace, temple, including shrine, ancient pit or stone bridge (author's translation), which is noticeably inclusive of architecture and landscape architecture, to the extent of a whole town. In a similar context, the definition in Section 4 of the Act on Monuments specifies an "ancient monument means an immovable property which, by its age or architectural characteristics or historical evidence, is useful in the field of art, history or archaeology..." which covers a larger scope including all immovable objects that are valuable in terms of art, history or archaeology regardless of style and date. However, the perception of monuments in Thailand, both by general people and some public officials, is limited to single built objects in the category of architecture. Moreover, the term monument which is literally translated as "ancient place" has led to the perception that the law and conservation concept is applicable only to very old (ancient) buildings or those in a state of ruin or ancient remains.

When Thailand became a Member State of ICOMOS in 1985, it adopted the Venice Charter ([ICOMOS, 1965](#)) as a guideline for conservation. The Charter was adapted to the Thai context in the declaration of the Fine Arts Department Regulations on Monuments Conservation B.E. 2528 ([Fine Arts Department, 1985, in Thai](#)), in which the international principles of conservation were integrated into the Thai concept with regard to religious places as places of worship, thus conservation treatments for religious places differ from those applied to other living monuments and ancient remains. Thus in Thai society, the state of being an ancient place and sacred place is integrally connected, apart from the aspects of history and art. Nevertheless, conservation works carried out by the Fine Arts Department followed international concepts, which are based on principles which aim to preserve authenticity as much as possible, especially in the case of archaeological sites and ancient remains such as stone monuments.

The concept of anastylosis

Anastylosis is a methodology for conservation of stone monuments which is internationally accepted at the present time as the most appropriate method. Anastylosis is a Greek term coined by Nikolaos Balanos, a Greek engineer, during his work as Head of Acropolis Conservation Project in Athens, Greece (Balanos, 1938). The term was officially used and accepted internationally for the first time in the 1931 Athens Charter (Congress of Architects, 2017) which resulted from the Conference on Conservation of Architecture and Determination of Fundamental Principles for Conservation of Monuments at the Acropolis. It was quoted that the anastylosis method was first applied to the restoration of the Parthenon, and its definition was “to return parts of the column to their original positions” and, in a broader sense, it covers the return of other architectural elements to their original positions (Poshyanandana, 1997, 2008). In conclusion, the principle of anastylosis is to return the **original material** to its **original position** using **original techniques**; however, it was commented that the emphasis was more on original elements rather than original positions of those elements (Jokilehto, 2004, p. 198). Thus, the original stones were sometimes cut in order to make them fit better with new ones and iron pieces were added to function as fasteners. Additionally, lack of skill in stone selection resulted in different stones from different parts of the building during restoration.

Following the Athens Charter, anastylosis was also mentioned in the most influential Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965). It has been the only method suitable for reconstruction of monuments because the method is considered to more efficiently conserve the monument’s authenticity, thus, Article 15 states; “nevertheless, reconstruction should not be considered unless anastylosis is applied, that is, the method to reassemble the scattered original parts only...”. Therefore, since authenticity is regarded as a core value of the monument as mentioned in the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016) and the Nara Document on Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994) anastylosis has

been applied to conservation of monuments all over the world.

From monuments in Greece, the method was applied to other stone monuments in Europe and, for the first time in Southeast Asia, was introduced in the restoration of Borobudur and Prambanan, Central Java, Indonesia by van Stein Callenfels, a Dutch archaeologist (Poshyanandana, 2008; Clementin-Ojha and Manguin, 2007). In these cases, the method was applied to the monuments originally built of basalt stones of high strength without mortar. The cause of damage, apart from earthquakes, had been problems of settlement caused by architectural and structural characteristics which were different from Greek architecture and were lower in strength. Thus, to restore the original materials to their original positions by original techniques was insufficient; structural problems had to be solved by adding reinforced concrete foundations and retention walls, which were hidden inside the monuments.

This practice was also applied to the conservation of structures at Angkor, Cambodia. Nevertheless, the main objective of preserving authenticity was still distinguishable in that anastylosis was acceptable although formerly, conservation at Angkor by the École française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO) was carried out by propping and bracing structural collapse in order to preserve originality in the way considered most efficient. Anastylosis as applied in Java was different from the original applications of anastylosis and may be called “applied anastylosis”. The successful application – for the first time internationally – of applied anastylosis method to Banteay Srei in Cambodia led to its recognition as an important method for the conservation of stone monuments in Khmer Angkor style and subsequently to its adoption in Thailand.

After the Venice Charter was adopted by many countries as the guideline for their heritage conservation, several other charters have been endorsed, some of which may be considered extensions to the Venice Charter: Charter for the Conservation of Historic Towns and Urban Areas (ICOMOS, 1987), Charter on Protection

and Management of Archaeological Heritage (ICOMOS, 1990), Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage (ICOMOS, 1999a) and International Cultural Tourism Charter (ICOMOS, 1999b). These charters have made conservation concepts and practices more relevant to the broader public. One of the latest ones is the Ename Charter for the Interpretation of Cultural Heritage Sites under the care of the ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Interpretation and Presentation (ICIP) (ICOMOS, 2017). The Preamble of this charter specifies “interpretation and presentation are essential components of heritage conservation efforts and as a means of enhancing public appreciation and understanding of cultural heritage sites”. Apart from this, Ename specifies that, in principle, interpretation must come from verifiable sources and respect the authenticity of each heritage site. In fact, concepts related to the interpretation and presentation of monuments without distorting their meanings have been understood and practiced since the Venice Charter. The method of anastylosis (which retrieves the monument’s original form by original materials and original techniques) and applied anastylosis (which is based on the principles of anastylosis) are considered appropriate for the interpretation of monuments with respect to authenticity.

In the restoration of the world’s largest sandstone Buddha image, part of the cultural landscape at Bamiyan, Afghanistan (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017) a World Heritage Site listed

after it was destroyed by the Taliban government in 2001 (Bearak, 2001). With the participation of ICOMOS and UNESCO experts, anastylosis was the term used to call the method applied, which was the following: that is, to bring the fallen and scattered parts of the image caused by bombing to be reassembled so that the image could be restored to its original features despite the original technique having been stone carving into the natural face of the rock, not stone masonry. From the first survey, the experts found that the carving was done roughly before finishing the surface of the image with a mixture of lime, wood fibres, and horse tail hair. The mixture was sculpted in the shape of the draping robes before the whole image was painted. In this case, modern technology in engineering had to be used, and a large amount of new materials had to be added to fill the joints and bind broken pieces together, since only 60 percent of the materials still existed as stones. However, the method helped the interpretation of the monument with respect to authenticity, and conforms to the requirements of the Afghans who believe that the restoration of the image would help improve their economic situation via tourism, as well as being a kind of repentance (ICOMOS Heritage at Risk, 2002; Poshyanandana, 2008; Gall, 2006). It can be said, therefore, that the method of applied anastylosis is considered to be based on the principles of anastylosis although it does not entirely, and solely, apply original techniques to the conservation.

The introduction of anastylosis in Thailand: presentation

In Thailand anastylosis was introduced and applied for the first time at the Angkor period Buddhist temple Prasat Phimai Nakhon Ratchasima (Poshyanandana, 2017). The method was applied to the restoration of the main sanctuary between 1964 and 1969. The project was supported by funding and expertise from UNESCO, who sent Bernard-Philippe Groslier to work as project consultant. Anastylosis as applied to the restoration of Prasat Phimai was adapted by Groslier by adding modern structural supports to help bear the load of the

original, which was restored by anastylosis, for the reasons of stability as well as protection from ground moisture. The new structures as mentioned comprised reinforced concrete structures hidden in parts of the building and reinforced concrete slab foundation. The success of Phimai made way for successive application of anastylosis, whose implementation process can be summarized as dismantling of stones and reassembling the stones to the studied original positions over a consolidated foundation made of reinforced concrete; and some



parts of the building were strengthened by reinforced concrete structures hidden inside (Pichard, 1972).

According to the characteristics of Khmer architecture stone blocks are laid carefully by rubbing the adjoining surfaces of stones until they fit together almost seamlessly, without using mortar. Anastylosis, therefore, is applicable because the original position of each piece of material can be located. In cases where there are carvings on the blocks of stone, it is easy to find the original locations of such blocks, comparable to the solving of a jigsaw puzzle. Nevertheless, it is still possible, although more difficult, to find out the original locations of stone blocks that were parts of a plain wall by observing the features on connecting parts of each stone block, of which the cutting, filing, and shoulder-marks were made in order to make the stone blocks fit together perfectly. These features, therefore, can be used to identify the original locations of each block of stone.

Aside from damage caused by humans who plunder monuments for treasure, the most important factor causing deterioration of Khmer architecture is instability of foundation. We have found that, in many cases, the foundation was made by only one layer of laterite. When too much compression occurred, the laterite blocks would break and their strength as a foundation failed. The superstructure base of the building, mostly built of one layer of stones built over alternating layers of sand and limestone blocks, or merely packed soil. Thus the monuments are found to be in the conditions of settlement, declined, or collapsed.

Following the Phimai Project, the same procedure was followed at Prasat Phnom Rung, Buriram province and several others under the careful supervision of Sanchai Maiman, Chief Architect of the Fine Arts Department. Thus several Khmer style monuments were restored by anastylosis, although the specific work varied according to the individual characteristics of each monument as well as the evolution of concepts and implementation techniques. For example, in Prasat Narai Chengweng, Sakonnakhon, the necessity of adding reinforced concrete structures was emphasized and those added parts were truthfully revealed (Sanchai Maiman, personal communication, 2014). The addition of structural consolidation was accomplished by restoring the original stones

to their original locations only, without adding new stones, which resulted in the conservation of authenticity but lack of expression in the original architectural features and interpretation of spirit and sacredness.

Following the Phnom Wan Excavation and Restoration Project at Prasat Phnom Wan, Nakhon Ratchasima in 1990, the Fine Arts Department created a training centre for conservation of stone monuments by anastylosis. Thai experts collaborated with the École française d'Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and the French government. Restoration procedures, which were carefully carried out along with training and experiments to find ways to avoid the use of Portland cement and reinforced concrete and to replace them with lime and laterite, as well as reduce the dismantling process in order to retain most of a monument's authenticity. The training project ceased in 1997 and in 2000, the remaining works were carried out by a contractor hired to restore the main Prasat and galleries. The results were restoration of the visible parts post-excavation, from which a large number of fallen stones had been left unused. Later, during 2003 and 2004, the Fine Arts Department took over the analysis and experimental reassembling of fallen stones, which rendered a greatly satisfactory result in that the information of every layer of the roof has been obtained, and only parts of niches remain uncertain. However, the amount of original stones to be returned to their positions remain less than 50 percent, therefore, it is an important point for consideration because the restoration of the roof in this case requires a large amount of new addition. Nevertheless, the Scientific Committee on Monuments Conservation of the Fine Arts Department has approved a complete restoration of the roof as mentioned, and requested that further studies be carried out for other parts of the monument in order to restore them to completion, if possible (result from the 4/2005 meeting of Scientific Committee on Monuments Conservation, 17 March 2005).

According to the principles of anastylosis accepted by the Fine Arts Department which place less emphasis on the authenticity of materials and more on the authenticity of architectural features for the benefit of interpretation, the latest big restoration project is the restoration of Prasat Sdok

Kok Thom, Sa Kaew, which is considered a field experimental project to restore a complete form of the monument by a new approach before continuing the work at Phnom Wan. The main principles still follow the procedure of anastylosis practiced since the time of Sanchai Maiman's supervision.

Anastylosis at Prasat Sdok Kok Thom (Poshyanandana, 2017a) has been carried out by making a plan of fallen stones; stone categorizing; experimental reassembling and making of existing drawings before restoration, following general standards of anastylosis. Nevertheless, based on basic information on structurally weak points and deterioration of the monument, the restoration design has applied a new structure of reinforced concrete slab foundation to help consolidate the building. The foundation as mentioned was finished with a damp-proof course so that the cement does not have direct contact with the original materials. Inside the base, laterite blocks laid with lime mortar were used to replace the original, which was packed sand, for better load bearing.

Results of experimental reassembling and comparative study have rendered a complete architectural feature of the monument. After obtaining information on the original feature of the building, the number of original stones that could be returned to their original positions was determined; condition of each block of stone was checked to specify the usable blocks and the blocks that needed repair or replacement. The results of these have been summarized and made into a restoration design.

Restoration work began with dismantling elements which were still in their original positions, layer by layer, and reassembling them with the previously reassembled stones. After additional structures were completed, the stones were returned to their positions, in a more consolidated state. Repair or replacement of stones was carried out according to restoration design and objectives, that is, for replacement of the lost or decayed parts or for comprehensibility of form. Added components are clearly distinguishable from the original materials, yet harmonize in overall appearance. After restoration work was completed, a restoration report which records all working processes, as well as architectural features after restoration was made. The report will be kept as a scientific document for further studies.

At the time when the Fine Arts Department came to survey the site, the sanctuary had become a heap of fallen stones whose plan, form, and decorations were difficult to comprehend. Although the fine craftsmanship was still perceivable, the architectural style was unidentifiable. Moreover, remnants from the Cambodian civil war – land mines – were scattered throughout the site.

The main sanctuary is a building with high-tiered roof style architecture built of white sandstone on a large laterite base. The interior has only one chamber for performing rituals. There are four stairs, one on each side. Above the stairs is a base which supports the body of the building, which has settled into the base because of its enormous load. Most of the upper part of the building had collapsed thus only two of the walls existed, namely, the western and the southern walls with blind doors. Of the roof only the stone core remained therefore, the architectural feature was difficult to comprehend.

Sdok Kok Thom (Wikipedia contributors, 2017) is very famous amongst scholars because of its two inscriptions which are highly significant in terms of Khmer historical study. The Sdok Kok Thom Inscription no.1 mentions the construction of a religious building circa tenth century as a sanctuary to enshrine a Shiva *lingam*. The date specified in the inscription was 937 CE the reign of King Jayavarman IV. Sdok Kok Thom Inscription no.2 is the inscription to honour King Udayadityavarman II on the occasion of the building of the monument until completion in 1052 CE. The inscription also records the history of religious civilization that clearly indicates that the kings of Cambodia were supporters and protectors of Hinduism, led by Brahmins who also acted as consultants and intermediaries between the gods and the kings. The inscription also records the history of an important Brahmin family who had served in the Khmer court some 200 years, since the time of the ninth century founder-king Jayavarman II. Thus the inscription is an important reference in dating Khmer history and Khmer art history from the foundation of Angkor until the reign of Udayadityavarman II.

The experimental reassembling of fallen stones and dismantled stones, and comparative



△ **Figure 1**
The main sanctuary before
anastylosis of fallen stones.

study of the monument to other monuments with similar characteristics were carried out in order to get a better understanding of the monument (see also Poshyanandana, 2017a).

Dating of the monument helped in analysing and hypothesizing of the missing parts with more accuracy. The comparative study as mentioned was defined to the dates directly related to those specified in the two inscriptions, that is, between the Koh Ker period (921–952 CE) and the Baphuon period (1017–1087). The styles between these two periods comprise Pre Rup (947–972), Banteay Srei (967–1007) and Khleang (972–1017).

From experimental reassembling, the inner chamber of the main sanctuary was discovered with remains of a large image base, believably for a Shiva *lingam* (a sacred phallic object) as mentioned in the inscriptions. The wall on the northern side, in the middle of the blind door, was a *somasutra* pipe

for carrying holy water from the sacred ceremony inside the building to worshippers outside. The gables of the main sanctuary were found to be of five different sizes, the largest of which fits the size of the gateway in the form of two-tiered gables. The other four gables, therefore, should match the four-tiered roof of the building, whose stones and the topmost water jar-shaped stone, and a stone for laying sacred objects, have been found. All tiers of the roof, therefore, have been discovered and the complete architectural features of the building were successfully concluded. A lintel was found during work whose size and location when discovered indicated its position to be above the main entrance on the eastern side. The designs on the lintel belong to Baphuon style. There were other lintels from Sdok Kok Thom which had been kept and exhibited at Prachinburi National Museum, the size and style of which indicated their original positions to be from the main sanctuary. The gables, after experimental reassembling, are of the same style as those of the *gopuras* (entrance gate), depicting *nagas* (sacred serpents) and decorative designs inside the gable frame, terminated on each side with a *naga* head, suggesting the turning point between Khleang and Baphuon styles. The corner decorations of each tier of the roof called *nak pak* are in the shape of *nagas*, the same style as those found on the gables. However, the building of a single Prasat on a large laterite base is different from the main sanctuaries found in other Baphuon sites, which have a rectangular hall called *mandapa* connecting to the main hall in the front by an *antarala*. This feature of the main sanctuary of Sdok Kok Thom resembles mountain style sanctuaries, for instance, Paksi Chamkrong and Prasat Thom in Koh Ker art.

The most interesting elements of Sdok Kok Thom are the laterite terrace and *sao nang riang* pillars surrounding and delineating a sacred area enclosing the main sanctuary, for these are features not found at other sites in Thailand and Cambodia although the delineation of a sacred area by setting up stone pillars has been mentioned in several inscriptions (Fine Arts Department, 1986). These special characteristics, which should relate to the determination of a sacred boundary found at this site conform to the information obtained from the inscription (no. 2) that was related to the Brahmin.



▷ Figure 2
Experimental
reassembling.

♥ Figure 3
The main sanctuary
after anastylosis.

The introduction of anastylosis in Thailand: review – balancing authenticity and interpretation

Information obtained from experimental reassembling, especially the information on the main sanctuary, provides us with a perspective on the complete architectural features of the building although we were unable to discover all of the original stones (Poshyanandana, 2017a). Evidence of stones from every layer confirms the height and decorations of the original. The discovery and restoration of remains of a Shiva *lingam* base and *somasutra* pipe which carried perfumed water or milk that the Brahmins poured over the *lingam* and became holy water to the worshippers who waited outside the sacred area, is significant in terms of interpretation of function, meaning, and spirit of the monument even though they are not in their complete form and the *lingam* was lost.

Restoration of Khmer monuments in Thailand have followed the principles laid out in the Venice Charter so strictly that the restoration of several sites had a large number of original stones left unused, which are mostly those belonging to the upper parts of the building and required a large number of new support stones in order to return them to their original positions. However, leaving the stones piled up on the ground or exhibiting them in a museum does not satisfactorily help visitors understand the monument.

In the case where complete information has been obtained at Sdok Kok Thom the concept of interpretation has been applied in the restoration





design. The authenticity of materials can be achieved by returning original stones to their positions with original techniques, using no mortar, whereas authenticity of architectural form has also been taken into account. It was specified that additional materials were to be in a similar colour to the originals for harmony of overall appearance, yet distinguishable from the originals by texturing, that is, the new blocks of stone were finished with iron tools as those in the past, but with neater texture, different from ancient craftsmanship. In the case of carved stones, the additional blocks were roughly carved for connection of lines and form as well as perceptibility of architectural features, for instance, the new stone for *naga* heads was carved in the form of a *naga* head, not merely a block of stone.

For the reasons mentioned, this site used more additional stones than other restoration projects in the past; however, this has resulted in a visibly complete and comprehensible architectural form. For authenticity of setting, the broken *sao nang riang* pillars have been repaired and returned to their

original positions around the main sanctuary and along the walkway. These attempts have been made to restore the landscape features of the past, the same concept as the dredging of the surrounding ponds and revival of the *barai* (reservoir).

The completed work at the main sanctuary has resulted in the revival of architectural and landscape characteristics, that is, artistic perception, date of the building, and symbolic religious meanings have become comprehensible and interpretable. The base of the image of worship was restored to its original place and indicates the existence of a sacred image in the past, which is in accordance with the concept on authenticity and interpretation which gives more consideration to intangible values, as specified in the *Operational Guidelines*, which has added use and function, intangible heritage, spirit and feeling, to the topic of authenticity. Consequently, the concepts of authenticity and interpretation have been applied to anastylosis conservation of other structures, both in Sdok Kok Thom and other stone monuments.

Conclusion: recommendations for new concepts in the application of anastylosis

Since the main objective of anastylosis is the impartation of the meaning of a particular monument by its authenticity, therefore, the point of consideration is the appropriateness of the amount of additional parts or elements. The principles for determining an appropriate restoration plan are summarized as follows:

- requirements in reassembling all available original stones in their original locations, with new stones added for better interpretation of important substance
- consideration on the overall integrity of form, only as suffices for comprehension and aesthetic balance; thus the ratio between the original stones and new stones should not be predetermined, but should be considered case by case, depending on the appropriateness
- added new materials must be distinguishable but harmonized with original materials, whereas their authenticity must be perceptible by material, colour, texture, size, and techniques and craftsmanship.

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◊ CHAPTER 9 ◊

**Discussion on authenticity in China:
reflections on the Venice Charter**

Guo Zhan



Abstract

The present paper discusses the intersections between theory and practice of conservation in China as relates to the Venice Charter. The first part focuses on the introduction of the Venice Charter in China. It is shown that the key conservation principles of China, including the understanding of authenticity, underpin the philosophy of the Venice Charter, firmly associated with the concept of original state. The second part examines a series of diverse practices recently adopted by Chinese professionals which question key principles of the Venice Charter, with specific reference to the concept of reconstruction. Finally, the relationship between the Venice Charter and the Nara Document on Authenticity is sought, with a discussion on the criteria of authenticity.

Introduction: the Venice Charter

The Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) enjoys wide acclaim in China. A characteristic example of a professional who followed the principles of the Venice Charter is the widely recognized pioneer and master in architectural heritage conservation of modern China, Liang Sicheng (梁思成 1901–1972). According to Liang Sicheng, restoration should be based on the principle of “being restored as it was” and “curing disease and prolonging life” rather than seeking a “brand new appearance”. According to him, monuments and sites should be treated as senior people, and the aim should be to keep them “old but vigorous”, rather than “rejuvenating them artificially”. The reinforcement or restoration measures that

need to be added should be made as least visible as possible. As he notes, “to have yet seems not to, to act yet appear all natural move, great wisdom could look slow witted” (Liang, 1984, p. 331–339).

In the same context, on a more practical level, the Law on the Protection of Cultural Relics of China is concerned with “the repairing, maintaining and removal of immovable cultural relics; the principle of keeping the cultural relics in their original state shall be adhered to”. Also, “where immovable cultural relics are totally damaged, the ruins shall be protected and the damaged relics may not be rebuilt on the original site” (People’s Republic of China, 2015, Articles 21–22; ORCP, 2017).

Contemporary practices and the Venice Charter: a review

Recently, some Chinese professionals have begun to distance themselves from the principles of the Venice Charter, even to the point of challenging these principles (Ye and Dai, 2002). More specifically:

On the original state

Some professionals interpret the original state as the state when a monument was first completed or in its prime time. This understanding has led to the so-called authoritative restoration, which promotes the elimination of other historical information that is considered non-original. My view is that authoritative restoration might have the danger of causing selective irreversible destruction of the authenticity of the whole historical process of a historic building or reconstruction of the historic heritage.

On the scale of intervention

There is a recent tendency towards excessive, as well as expensive, interventions to restoration works, mostly in the form of large-scale reconstructions, as illustrated by a typical practical example as the reconstruction of Datong city, Shanxi province, China. In my opinion, the result in most of these cases is that the false tends to become mixed

with the genuine, causing irreparable damage to historic buildings for example, with concrete restoration projects.

Reviving the past glory

At the peak of the dispute on the concepts of original state and current state, is the emergence of a trend of reviving the past glory of a monument, meaning restoring a monument to a condition as close as possible to its imagined ideal state of former splendour. In my opinion, this trend seems to be more of an attempt to satisfy certain political or functional needs and can have disastrous results for the monument in question.

Respect for traditional crafts

Some professionals tend to respect traditional crafts and techniques too much – to the extent of replacing partly or wholly the original fabric with a new one, without verifying whether the original parts really reached a condition in which they failed to function or could continue. Nonetheless, in several cases of monuments including timber-structured ones, the result of this practice could only be an early and arbitrary termination of the authenticity of the material.

Contemporary practices and the Venice Charter: suggestions

Nara Heijō-kyō Palace is a component of the World Heritage Site Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017). According to the UNESCO documents, Nara was the capital of Japan from 710 to 784. The UNESCO listing document (criterion iv) states “The layout of the Imperial Palace and the design of the surviving monuments in Nara are outstanding examples of the architecture and planning of early Asian capital cities”. Included in the statement on authenticity:

There has been some reconstruction of the gate, the study hall, and the garden at the Nara Palace Site. The continuity of traditional architecture in Japan and the substantial amount of data recovered by archaeological excavation has ensured that the reconstructed buildings have a high level of authenticity in form and design. The State Party is currently addressing how to best maintain that continuity in ongoing reconstruction work emphasizing the need for a clear rationale and justification for all interventions.

When visiting the Heijō-kyō Site in Nara I voiced my comments on interventions/reconstruction, which may be summarized as follows:

- reconstruction should not cause any damage or other negative impact to the existing authentic historic remains
- the reconstructed part is necessary or beneficial for the protection of the original historic remains
- reconstruction helps to provide complete interpretation and presentation for the public and the researchers, to facilitate further research, and there exists rather universal need for it
- reconstruction must be evidenced by historic archives, archaeological findings and other related documentation, to be faithful to the historic state
- similar materials and traditional craftsmanship conforming to the historic evolution of the site must be used whenever possible for the reconstruction
- the reconstructed part must be reversible, so that whenever considered inappropriate, it could be corrected or undone in order to recover the original state of the heritage site
- in cases where reconstruction is deemed necessary, professionals should make the work as simple and indicative as possible so as to leave enough space for imagination
- reconstruction should give as many possibilities as possible to the visitor; and not guide the visitor to only one possibility of history that professionals arbitrarily choose to be authoritative.

The Venice Charter and the Nara Document on authenticity: a discussion on the elements of authenticity

The Nara Document on Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994) inherited the tradition of the Venice Charter, by further emphasizing the diversity of culture and cultural heritage, and leaving the potential for diverse approaches and space for exploration to future professionals.

Regarding the elements of authenticity summarized in the Nara Document, I feel each

element might carry different weight. Specifically, in connection with the 1931 Athens Charter (Congress of Architects, 2017) and the Venice Charter, I care more about the authenticity of material elements such as material, location and structure. Furthermore, in my opinion, the concept of integrity can only be discussed on the basis of the authenticity of material elements. Also, respect for

various traditions, beliefs and emotions and respect for legitimacy and necessity of social and realistic functions and spiritual needs may be related to the authenticity of material elements, but also need to be distinguished from each other on many occasions.

At this point, I note the differences between the East and the West in terms of culture, philosophy, logic and thinking. These differences are even reflected in the terminology: terms with a clear meaning in the languages of the West, such as monument, site, setting, protection and conservation, are difficult to accurately translate into an Asian language (for translation of authenticity, see Lee, Weise, and Zerrudo papers in this volume). Yet, even in the Western context, in various discussions with colleagues, including Herb Stovel (who was among the professionals who drafted the Nara Document), they often find it difficult to identify the difference in meaning between the following twin terms: material and substance, form and design, and use

and function. Therefore, given the diversity in cultural backgrounds, more communication needs to be conducted on the concept and the elements of authenticity.

Some of my colleagues and I even propose to look at the elements of authenticity through a type of 100 point scoring system for the conservation and management of monuments and sites. Given the unavoidable restrictions posed by natural and social conditions, it is rather impossible for professionals to follow, in their actual conservation and management work, the proposed elements of authenticity in a precise way, and achieve a perfect score of 100; however, professionals should aim at the highest possible score, and get a score of 70 to 80, or at least not lower than 60.

As for cultural diversity, I do agree to adopt appropriate policies, approaches, technical guidelines and tools based on the background and context of the diverse cultures.

Conclusion

Although everything in the universe including human beings constantly changes, grows old and eventually dies, the physical authenticity and integrity of heritage should not comprise ever-changing realistic needs or trends in heritage practice which are not time tested, if it wants still to be deemed as heritage. If its authenticity changes or disappears, heritage cannot be considered heritage, at least in its original definition and nature. Instead, the heritage could be endowed with new features and functions, which might be the subject of a different scientific discipline.

The concept and rule of authenticity cannot be a philosophical issue based on a single national or regional cultural background. Differences in objective or subjective practices, in sustainability or decay period should not affect the necessity and the possibility to achieve global consensus on various levels with regards to the definition of authenticity, nor shake the critical position of authenticity in conservation theory and practice, even though professionals might have to encounter severe difficulties in their struggle for achieving their ideal.

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◊ CHAPTER 10 ◊

**Authenticity & the Principles
for the Conservation
of Heritage Sites in China**

Lu Zhou



Abstract

Authenticity, in the field of conservation in China is an important issue which began to be raised at the end of the 1990s. The traditional methods for maintaining historic buildings impacted the understanding of authenticity in China. In 2000, the *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* tried to connect Chinese conservation principles with the Venice Charter. It presented an outline of material authenticity in historic building conservation. Since 2000, heritage conservation in China has gained increased significance. Cultural landscapes and living heritage have also become very important parts of conservation. In 2015, a revised version of the *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* gave a new definition of authenticity for Chinese conservation principles. This paper focuses on the relationship between the first version and the revised version of the China Principles and the concept of authenticity, with a discussion of the similarities and differences from the Venice Charter.

The introduction of authenticity in China

As an essential aspect of conservation, authenticity has influenced the field of conservation in China since the 1980s, the same time the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) was translated and introduced to China. Since then, experts began to evaluate conservation work according to the principles of the Venice Charter, and furthermore, to discuss the applicability of the Venice Charter for the practice of conservation in China. In the 1980s, the maintenance and restoration of historic architecture was the most controversial issue for the conservation field, which was influenced both by traditional ideas of craftsmanship and academic research on historic architecture. Craftsmen, who insist on their traditional skills, cared more about the utilization of such skills during the maintenance or restoration process, rather than researching the specific style of the historic architecture in a region or historic period. Regarding academic researchers, the style of the architecture from a specific period attracted more attention, while local influence as well as later modifications were ignored. Additionally, the 1950s Soviet Union renovation style influenced Chinese conservation towards pursuing the original state or most glorious image of an historic building.

After being introduced in the 1980s, authenticity became widely discussed by Chinese experts. A conflict arose between the traditional thinking and the ideas presented in the Venice Charter. During the translation of the Charter, the term authenticity was translated as *yuan zhenxing* (原真性) which means both originality and truthfulness, with the idea of

originality being applied to restoration projects. This typical understanding of authenticity was still reflected in the Qufu Declaration, a document approved by the participants of a symposium for historic architecture research and maintenance in 2005. The Qufu Declaration (2005) states for damaged heritage architecture if carefully and scientifically restored according to the original style, original material, original structure and original craft, also possess the scientific, artistic as well as historic value.

In 1997, the State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) began writing the *Outline for Conservation of Chinese Relics*, by which, the SACH hoped to provide a unified guideline for the controversial issues in conservation ideas and practice. In cooperation with the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) and the Australian Heritage Commission, the achievement was issued by China ICOMOS (2000) as the *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* (hereafter the China Principles). The Preface defines the role as:

...professional guidelines within the existing framework of laws and regulations relating to the conservation of heritage sites and provide guidance for conservation practice on those sites, as well as the main criteria for evaluating the results of such work. These Principles also provide a professional explanation of the relevant articles of China's laws and regulations on protection of cultural heritage and form the professional basis for dealing with matters related to heritage sites (China ICOMOS, 2000, p. 3).

Authenticity in the original China Principles (2000)

The China Principles is composed of three parts: the principles, a commentary, and case studies. The Preface states:

China's magnificent sites are the heritage not only of the various ethnic groups of China but are

also the common wealth of all humanity; they belong not only to the present generation but even more to future generations. Thus it is the responsibility of all to bequeath these sites to future generations in their full integrity and authenticity (China ICOMOS, 2000, p. 3).

This echoes the Venice Charter concept of handing down to future generations heritage in its authentic form. Article 2 states:

The aim of conservation is to preserve the authenticity of all the elements of the entire heritage site and to retain for the future its historic information and all its values. ... All conservation measures must observe the principle of not altering the historic condition (China ICOMOS, 2000, p. 4).

The China Principles list ten basic principles, according to which the interpretation of authenticity in China includes the original site, the original conservation state, and the original character of the setting. Again, this echoes the expression of authenticity in the Venice Charter and the World Heritage *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016). Section 2.2 of the Commentary on the China Principles states: Heritage sites must be historically authentic.

2.2.1 Physical remains must be in their historic condition. This includes a site's condition as it was originally created, its condition after undergoing repeated adaptation throughout history, or its condition as a result of deterioration or damage over a long period.

2.2.2 Large complexes of buildings or historic precincts within villages and townships should retain their overall historic appearance. Modern additions, alterations, or loss should constitute only a small proportion of a site.

2.2.3 Landmarks and historic landscapes in 'Historically and Culturally Famous Cities' must retain their authenticity. Such places should be those having the greatest significance and should epitomize the unique cultural characteristics of the city.

2.2.4 Only the actual location of a commemorative place where an important historic event occurred may also be regarded as a heritage site.

2.2.5 Recent imitations of historic landscapes that use an historical name or borrow the name of a heritage site are not to be considered heritage sites (China ICOMOS, 2000, p. 15).

For discussing authenticity, originality is a hard bypassed concept in the context of Chinese heritage conservation. The debate between originality and present-state reflects the logical conflict between traditional and modern conservation ideas. The principal idea for the preservation of authenticity of heritage is to limit intervention as far as possible, and to preserve the original state as well as historic information in existing remains of heritage. Thus authenticity contains the original state, historic information, the original character of setting and site of the remains of heritage, in accordance with the principles of the Venice Charter. Therefore, the China Principles reflect the state of Chinese conservation practice in that period, and demonstrate China's effort at establishing a modern conservation system by incorporating international conservation principles into their own.

Authenticity in the revised China Principles (2015)

After 2000, the Chinese conservation field began to shift its focus from relic-based to heritage-based. The value, categories, as well as the amount of protected heritage has therefore increased. Meanwhile, along with urban renewal and renovation resulting from massive economic development, local governments have intended to maintain some historic vernacular architecture and neighbourhoods for the purpose of tourism oriented utilization, and for some historic villages, the local governments have even

handed over management of the whole historic site to tourism companies. All this has brought about a serious conflict between the original life of the local people in a historic place, while making the protected buildings and their setting a stage for performance. The cultural value of the historic sites contained in the traditional lifeways and crafts have begun to erode by modern tourism.

As an answer to this newly emerging situation, the China Principles needed revising. This began

in 2009 and was completed in 2014. Authenticity in the revised version of the China Principles (ICOMOS China, 2015) reflects a more nuanced set of guidelines, as stated in Article 10:

Authenticity resides in the original materials, workmanship and design of a site and its setting, as well as in its historical, cultural, and social characteristics and qualities. Respecting these aspects through conservation retains authenticity. The continuation of long-established cultural traditions associated with a particular site is also a means of retaining its authenticity (ICOMOS China, 2015a, p. 67).

The expression here identifies not only the material, but also the cultural traditions that a site supports or represents. The protection of the authenticity of a site means to protect its holistic truthfulness, including the historic, cultural as well as social information. This adds clarity to some of the confusion caused by the previous idea of solely preserving the authenticity during the maintenance or restoration by appealing to the original craft while ignoring the social life of the site. Furthermore, the Commentary of the revised China Principles, such expression is further interpreted as:

The principle of authenticity is the foundation for the conservation of a site's physical remains. All cultural attributes and traditions should be conserved based on the overall understanding of a site's values. The principle of authenticity relates to both tangible and intangible heritage. It is applicable to archaeological sites and ruins as well as traditional architectural sites that are a testament to history, and can also be used as a guide for the conservation of historically and culturally famous cities, towns and villages that retain their original functions, as well as cultural landscapes. Aspects relating to living heritage sites and the diverse range of cultural values that some sites may have are also important components of a site's authenticity and must be preserved in their entirety (China ICOMOS, 2015, p. 67).

In terms of continuity, the 2015 version absorbs some of the 2000 version:

The principle of authenticity is met under the following circumstances:

- i. Not reconstructing sites that are no longer extant.
- ii. Making the parts of a site that have been repaired or restored distinguishable.
- iii. Keeping detailed archival records of the restoration process and providing permanent signage indicating the date of intervention.
- iv. Conserving a site in situ (China ICOMOS, 2015, p. 67).

Such principles have become basic regulations in conservation in China.

The 2015 version of the China Principles, emphasize not only the tangible elements but also long-established cultural traditions. This reflects an integrated idea of heritage and its conservation, an important improvement in conservation practice for the Chinese heritage professionals. Article 13 and associated commentary of the 2015 China Principles address cultural traditions:

When a heritage site's values depend on the continuation of associated cultural traditions, consideration needs to be given to preserving these traditions along with the site itself.

Conservation of a heritage site may also involve conservation of cultural diversity. Sites may be places where traditional activities are still practiced or may be associated with special ways of production, life-styles or other intangible cultural heritage. These traditions, means of production, ways of life and intangible cultural heritage are important values of a site. Their continuation should be encouraged. Conservation of heritage sites should enable these types of traditional activities, production, ways of life and intangible heritage to adapt to the needs of contemporary life while maintaining their vitality (China ICOMOS, 2015, p. 71).

Therefore, authenticity is to be found and regarded not only in an historic district but in the very cultural and social information of a place and is to be protected. The interpretation of authenticity is also an important issue for consideration and must appeal to an appropriate way for displaying and objectively explaining the values of a place. To this end, Article 42 and associated commentary state:



The values of a heritage site should be presented and interpreted in an authentic, integrated, and accurate manner, and be based on comprehensive, in-depth research. Inaccurate interpretation of a site's history and culture must be avoided. Presentation and interpretation should meet the needs of various audiences and employ methods that are easily understandable (China ICOMOS, 2015, p. 100). ...

Presentation should, as far as possible, provide a complete and accurate vehicle for the interpretation of the heritage site. Interpretation should be based on in-depth research without subjective conjecture. When there is not one definitive conclusion to research results, alternative explanations should be provided (China ICOMOS, 2015, p. 101).

For sites where historical function is integral to our understanding of the value of the site, conservation of the heritage in its current state is addressed by Article 44 and associated commentary:

Sites that retain their original historic function, particularly those where the traditional way of life has become an integral part of the site's values should be encouraged to continue that function.

Sites such as historically and culturally famous cities, towns and villages, as well as cultural landscapes, having developed modern ways of life, while continuing their historic function, demonstrate a distinct cultural significance, and are living heritage. This heritage should continue its historic function while conserving traditional activities and ways of life.

Ensuring continuing historic function is a means of conserving the values of this heritage. When managing such a site, special effort should be made to protect the original function. Changes to the use should only be considered after careful consideration. Special attention should be given to avoid the transformation of a residential precinct into a commercial district, as this seriously diminishes its values and authenticity.

When living sites undertake necessary repairs, adjustments and modifications to satisfy modern needs care must be taken to ensure that there is no damage or alteration to a site's attributes and values. It is not permissible to change historic forms, structure, techniques, materials, decoration and the setting just for the sake of modern use (China ICOMOS, 2015, p. 103–104).

Conclusion

The *Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China* has served as the basis for the conservation field in China and reflects the main thoughts of the practice. Both the 2000 and 2015 versions place authenticity as an important aspect of the significance of heritage, and the difference between the two documents reflects changes in the idea and application of authenticity within the practice and theoretical discussions in China.

Authenticity, as it was imported via the Venice Charter, is reflected in the 2000 China Principles and expanded upon, with reference to the Chinese state of conservation, in the 2015 document. The concept of originality has been transformed into one more relevant to the life of heritage and this is reflected in the 2015 China Principles which

recognize the significance of intangible heritage, traditional crafts and the importance of conserving a continuation of cultural traditions by which the conservation of the heritage is integrated into its existing cultural background.

With such content in the 2015 China Principles, Venice Charter-centred international guidance has been adapted towards and integrated into a conservation-of-culture theory of authenticity which reflects the modern Chinese conservation philosophy of caring for both the tangible and intangible. Authenticity as interpreted in the 2015 China Principles contains three aspects for consideration: original, traditional craft, and cultural continuity, with an emphasis on cultural diversity. It covers heritage maintenance,

documentation, interpretation of cultural contents and values, continuation of functions and so on. This can also address the Nara Document (Larsen, ed., 1994) Appendix 1, paragraph 2 which states:

Efforts to determine authenticity in a manner respectful of cultures and heritage diversity requires approaches which encourage cultures to develop analytical processes and tools specific to their nature and needs.

However, the real situation on the ground presents great challenges for how to implement and reflect these principles for authenticity and achieve a more integrated and efficient protection, thus combining conservation efforts with sustainable development. A full understanding of the concept of authenticity is essential for modern heritage conservation and is both relevant to the World Heritage Convention and to national and local-level practices.

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Malate Church, Del Pilar Street by Judge Florentino Floro (CC BY-SA 4.0)

◊ CHAPTER II ◊

**If walls could speak: authenticity
in the Philippine context**

Eric Babar Zerrudo

Abstract

The concept of authenticity in Philippine conservation practice for built heritage is contested. This paper attempts to shed light on this sensitive situation in which diverse parties such as the national cultural agencies and local communities, grapple for a common understanding of authenticity and seek the best available compromise in conservation work. Recent controversies related to the demolition of built heritage, destruction of visual integrity, and authorized restoration works by national agencies have brought to the fore the active vigilance of communities over their heritage landscape. Approaches used to understand this discourse include: traditional knowledge systems of various ethno-linguistic groups in the Philippines; colonial legal systems and church involvement in conservation; examination of current preservation and conservation guidelines of national agencies which have been heavily influenced by the 1964 Venice Charter and the 1994 Nara Document of Authenticity; and finally, community-led initiatives such as cultural mapping. Subsequently, the case study of the restoration work on the Church of Our Lady of the Remedies conducted by the Escuela Taller Intramuros is reviewed in detail. The discussions provide a multidimensional perspective for a wider and better appreciation of this heritage struggle. Discourse and debate continue under different contexts and diverse participation of the community. Amidst this state of flux, heritage ideas, the concept of authenticity and approaches to conservation dynamically evolve.

Introduction

The Philippine heritage sector is a landscape of unresolved tensions. The theory and practice of heritage conservation, with its concomitant principle of authenticity and integrity, is a battlefield of discourse and debate. This situation is an outcome of ethno-linguistic diversity, colonial legal and church history and the participation of stakeholders in a society where there is a vast range of understandings and interpretation of heritage.

The diverse ethno-linguistic groups of the Philippine archipelago reflect a heritage vocabulary with many representations and interpretations. According to the northern Cordillera's Ifugao and Muslim Mindanao's Maranao indigenous communities which have been spared the impact of colonization, no specific indigenous words capture the Western concept of heritage, much less authenticity. On the other hand, the lowland Christianized communities used words, inscribed in Spanish colonial dictionaries which already approximated the Western concepts of heritage and authenticity. This dichotomy in language orientation already prefigures the divergent approaches to conservation practice. At the same time, a 2014 research survey conducted by the author reflected the domination of colonial vocabulary, understanding and practice in heritage.

The historical narrative of cultural heritage legislation demonstrates the transformation of heritage meanings and values from the Spanish colonial period (sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) to the current practice of national cultural agencies. The current practice draws substantially from UNESCO conventions and international charters, primarily from the 1964 Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) and, arbitrarily from the 1994 Nara Document of Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994). Because of this, conservation work has been

evaluated based on Western authenticity standards of materiality and form. Recent revisions in the guidelines have sparingly included and implicitly alluded to principles from the Nara Document such as the attribute on the “spirit and feeling of the place” (Article 13). Already integrated in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016), the holistic approach to authenticity is more evident and explicit in the conservation work of local communities in the Philippines.

Emerging community participation in defining heritage, in decision-making for conservation priorities and in the understanding of authenticity has become more pronounced over the years. The struggle of experts to communicate the idea of authenticity in material and form and how to conserve this, is aggravated by the limited resources of the conservation industry. This problematic situation is further amplified by any given community's demands for the usage of their heritage based on contemporary needs and wants. This maelstrom of issues and strains often leads to compromise that produces a syncretic form of authenticity with a mix-and-match conservation approach.

In the Philippines, the trajectory of heritage thought, conception of authenticity and conservation practice continues to evolve in a multidirectional manner. The Venice Charter is a classic guide constantly challenged by the tenets of the Nara Document. Beyond these two valuable references, the authorities have been inspired by other UNESCO charters such as the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS, 2013 (1999)) and Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) (UNESCO, 2013) to develop meaningful guidelines attuned to the changing cultural context of the country.



Contested authenticity

Heritage is anything of value from the past that gives meaning and identity to the present and that would inspire future generations (Zerrudo, 2008). Tangible cultural heritage, such as historic buildings and monuments, has been the most popular representation of heritage. The value and significance of this heritage has been primarily based on its authenticity. Issues on heritage do not only concern the presence, or the absence, of efforts to conserve but also how to conserve with the primacy of authenticity.

For the Philippines, 2013 was a remarkable year for natural disasters resulting in numerous obliterated national landmarks. Catastrophic destruction caused by the 7.2 magnitude earthquake to the churches of Bohol and Cebu and the storm surge of super typhoon Yolanda (international code name Haiyan) to the churches of Samar and Leyte was a call to united conservation efforts across the world. Ironically, the following year witnessed Filipinos rally against man-made destruction to their built heritage. The “September Massacre of Manila’s Heritage” (Sembrano, 2014e) will be forever etched in the collective memory. Heritage buildings that once dominated the Manila cityscape and brought nostalgia to Filipino mindscapes were demolished one after the other. Heritage academics, managers and advocates rallied through all forms of media and advocacy to halt the onslaught by developers. National cultural institutions and the Manila city government were in a frenzy to answer the vitriol of heritage workers on the poor implementation of Republic Act No. 10066 or the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 (National Commission for Culture and the Arts (hereafter NCCA), 2001).¹

Many Manila built heritage structures of historical, architectural and aesthetic significance on the national level were on the brink of

demolition experienced by others which were haphazardly pulverized. The iconic El Hogar building by the Pasig River, built in 1914 with elements of neoclassical and renaissance styles, was slated for massive redevelopment (Sembrano, 2014b). The turn of the century Army and Navy Club in Luneta Park, designed by William Parsons and declared a National Historical Landmark in 1991, was partially demolished (Sembrano, 2014a). The pre-war Juan Arellano designed Art Deco streamline modern Meralco building with “The Furies” of Francesco Ricardo Monti, the headquarters of the Manila Electric Railroad and Light Company (MERALCO) was ground into dust (Sembrano, 2014c). The Fernando H. Ocampo Admiral Hotel, completed in 1939 in the traditionalist mode and revivalist design, was a gaping hole along the scenic Roxas Boulevard (Sembrano, 2014d). All these emblems of the city are ghosts haunting the people who are on the brink of amnesia.

The latest heritage contestation has focused on the restoration work of the Philippine National Museum on the fortification walls of Fort Pilar in Zamboanga City (Jocson and Endozo, 2014). Built around 1720, the Fort was the Spanish bastion on the southern island of Mindanao built to deter the elusive Muslim slave raiders of their piratical attacks on the northern islands. Based on archival photos, the restoration work returned the walls back to a plastered state with which the community was unfamiliar. The white plaster was so strong and stark that it did not evoke the spirit and feeling of the old atmosphere. The local reaction led to a public outcry against the National Museum and its formulation of *paletada* (protective lime mixtures applied on walls).

The issue of *paletada* is an old and chronic bone of contention for many built heritage conservators (Jose, 1991). Church walls have been coated, stripped,

¹ Texts for the Republic Acts and Presidential Decrees discussed in this paper can be found online on the website of the Republic of the Philippines National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Cultural Laws, available at <http://ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/culture-profile/cultural-laws> or on the website of the Republic of the Philippines Official Gazette, available at www.officialgazette.gov.ph

plastered, painted, stripped, coated, and plastered over and over again for a long period of time. In the 1960s and 1970s, old heritage structures were so well romanticized that walls were stripped of coat and paint to expose old bricks and adobe stones. This exposed or peek-a-boo fashionable look supposedly gave the structure Spanish colonial authenticity and ambience. In the 1980s and 1990s conservators realized the detrimental effects of stripping the wall plaster and that owners reverted back to plastering with textbook formulas of lime and cement mortar. Formulation of plaster with cement has been discouraged, even prohibited, because of its ill effect to constrict and suffocate the “breathing” walls. Contemporary conditions and environmental contaminants have accelerated deterioration of traditional walls made of bricks, adobe and stones.

The *paletada* issue on the fortified walls of Fort Pilar brought to light the battle for the exact formulation of plaster on traditional walls. According to the Heritage Conservation Society, the National Museum should have referred to

the standard formulation of Vigan, the World Heritage City (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017a), as stated in the UNESCO published Vigan Homeowners’ Manual, calibrated at 1:1:3 (that is one part lime, one part cement, three parts sand) (UNESCO Bangkok, 2010). The National Museum explained that the Fort Pilar formulation of 2:1:9 (that is two parts lime, one part cement, nine parts sand) was the standard also followed by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines. In some practice, used lime from the old walls was recycled to be more original. For the Escuela Taller Intramuros, the technical vocational school of restoration, new formulations were experimented with and evaluated. With this case by case sensitivity approach, there is no exact *paletada* formula. These interpretations arise out of the experts’ obsession to be, or as close as possible to, authentic. And often, the attempt to exact the standard of authenticity fails when contextualized in contemporary realities.

Understanding authenticity through traditional knowledge systems

The Philippines is a constellation of ethno-linguistic groups spread across the archipelago. This tapestry of cultures reflects a diversity of languages and dialects. Exposure to Western cultures during the colonial period acculturated these ethno-linguistic groups to foreign concepts and expressions. Lowland Christianized groups which were consolidated during the Spanish period used words inscribed in the Spanish dictionaries. Interior upland groups that had not been wholly integrated into the Spanish system maintained indigenous vocabularies. Because of these two simultaneous and coexisting situations, local terminologies of heritage and authenticity vary in orientation and representation. This range of interpretations directly impacts the conservation practice of the local community. Local languages that have been heavily influenced by the West exact

materiality and form in authenticity. Indigenous languages that have not been impacted by the West assume a holistic combination of tangible and intangible attributes to authenticity.

Ilocano, the language of the Cagayan and Ilocos regions where the historic city of Vigan is located, refers to heritage as *tawid* or *taoid* which means anything of inheritance or legacy which could be tangible and intangible (R. Cavinta, personal communication, 2014). This is closely related to *gameng* or wealth. Authenticity is *pudpudno* or *patneng* which is truthfulness. Ifugao, one of the languages of the Cordilleras where the World Heritage Rice Terraces (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017b) are nestled, translates tangible heritage as *binoltan* or *odon* which is only limited to material things. Intangible heritage is roughly translated as *ni-atan* referring to thinking and



doing. Authenticity is approximately translated as *nitaguwam*. This is a very foreign concept since it emphasizes singularity of ownership without duplication and it changes when applied to things and people (J. Luglug, personal communication, 2014). Kapampangan, the language of Pampanga province, translates heritage as *pimamanan* which means inheritance of values while authenticity is *tubung kalalangan* which is related to real or nature of things (A. Lingat, personal communication, 2014). Bicolano, the language of the Bicol region, terms heritage as *suano* or *sagugurang* which is anything old or from the past. Authenticity is *pagkatotoo* or *pagkatunay* which means truth, real or genuine (S. Maloles, personal communication, 2014).

The Bisayan language group has similarities in their understanding of heritage and authenticity. Ilonggo Bisayan or Hiligaynon, the language of the Western Visayas region, refers to heritage as *panubli-on* or *handumanan* which closely relates to valuable materials of memory, although this has recently expanded to intangible expressions. Authenticity is translated as *pagkamatuod-tuod* or the state of truthfulness (E. Jamerlan, personal communication, 2014). Cebuano Bisayan or Sinugbuanon, the language of central Visayas, translates heritage to either the popular *kabilin* or the conservative *kapanulundanan*. *Kabilin* refers to tangible inheritance whether movable or immovable and usually refers to one having pecuniary value. This concept is proximate to *bahandi* or richness or wealth. *Kapanulundanan* refers to tangible and intangible, movable and immovable heritage, especially values worth following and emulating, emphasizing the future and the process of transmission. Authenticity is *katinuoran*, the root word being *tinuod*, true or genuine (M.T. Torralba, personal communication, 2014). Waray Bisayan, the language of Eastern Visayas, refers to heritage as *sulundanan* which means something valuable to follow, while authenticity is *matuod* or truth. Both terms are similar to the Bisaya terminologies and understanding (L. Almeria, personal communication, 2014).

Maranao, the language of the lake people of Lanao region in Mindanao, translates heritage to *posaka* (C.L. Gatmaitan, personal communication, 2014). This means legacy or inheritance which

is a rough translation pertaining to materials steeped in tradition and craftsmanship. The local concept highlights the tradition of skills passed on from mentor to student. Thus, authenticity is closely associated to skills, processes, tradition and transmission.

Tagalog, the language of the central and southern Luzon regions including Metro Manila, generically translates heritage to *pamana* and broadly encompasses tangible and intangible resources. This corresponds to legacies from the past, what we live with today, and what we individually or collectively pass on to future generations. Authenticity is translated as *pagkatunay* or *pagkatotoo* or truly what it is claimed to be (S. Cristobal, personal communication, 2014).

It is often said that cultural heritage is the soul of the nation. Translation of some heritage related words into Tagalog could be enlightening. Memory is *alaala*. Care is *alaga*. Custodian is *alagad*. Value is *halaga*. Share is *halad*. Common to all Tagalog word translations is the duo syllable *ala* which could allude to Allah or Bathala (Tagalog god of creation) or more generally, the divine. Therefore, heritage could very well be understood and experienced as the soul of the nation.

Heritage in the Philippine vocabulary has many representations and interpretations brought about by diverse expressions of various ethno-linguistic groups. This initial survey reveals specificities and ambiguities of the words heritage and authenticity. More cross references to dictionaries and studies on associated words could provide a deeper understanding and appreciation of Filipino perceptions of heritage. The vernacular words of Christianized lowland communities approximate the Western concept of tangible heritage and authenticity based on material and form. The particular cases of indigenous words from Ifugao and Maranao communities indicate the difficulty in capturing the concept of heritage, and the even more elusive translation of authenticity. In the Philippine context, heritage can be understood as any material object that is valued or it can encompass tangible manifestations combined with intangible expressions. It can highlight the past's transmission to the present or the present's responsibility to the future. As to authenticity,

it is inferred as the true, original, genuine and credible source of information. Since heritage is understood to be a holistic relationship of tangible

and intangible resources, authenticity should also be an integrated condition of both tangible and intangible sources.

Understanding authenticity through modern knowledge systems

Built heritage conservation legislation in the country reflects colonial administration to democratic valuations and the gradual transition of heritage concepts.

The Spanish colonial era (1521–1898) was characterized by the propagation of Christianity and consolidation of towns to foment political and economic programmes. The thrust for building construction and restoration was a function of safety and security, structural stability and health and sanitation conditions. As early as 1794, an edict specified the use of materials such as *tabique pampango* (partition wall constructed by setting up a screen of wooden or bamboo sticks coated with mortar), *tabla* (timber planks or wood panels) and *tisa* (terracotta tiles) for all structures built within 1,500 varas (1 *vara* is approximately equivalent to 836 mm) (Medel, 1994) radius from the Walled City of Intramuros in order to prevent the spread of fires (de Viana, 2001). Fifty years later in 1845, this was further strengthened with a royal ordinance requiring all proposals for alterations and constructions to pass for approval through the city engineers (de Viana, 2001). Following the 1880 earthquake, the Dirección General de Obras Públicas formulated a set of rules which required all repairs of houses and other structures to first consult the Governor General and the Municipal Architect (de Viana, 2001). In response to a massive outbreak of cholera in the country, an 1884 *cartilla* (primer) ordered households to observe utmost cleanliness and for houses to be cleanly whitewashed with lime to form a surface that was more impermeable and less absorbent than gypsum and other analogous coatings (de Viana, 2001).

The American colonial period (1898–1946) was marked by the benevolent assimilation of

the islands into commonwealth ideals through public education. The approach to heritage focused more on designation of important historical sites highlighting the heroism and patriotism of Filipinos who figured in the 1898 Philippine revolution against the Spanish. The Commonwealth Act No. 169 of 1936 appropriated PHP 50 000 solely for the purpose of “identifying and appropriately marking the historic antiquities in the Philippines, or preserving or acquiring the same” (NCCA, 2001 p. 47).

With the Filipino First policy of the post-war Republic (1946–1965), the effort was continued with Republic Act (RA) No. 841 of 1953 which focused on maintenance of monuments and repair of damaged sites. The enactment took charge of reconstructing, maintaining, protecting and cleaning monuments and historical markers (NCCA, 2001).

Building the New Society to recoup the greatness of a precolonial Malay nation, the Marcos era (1965–1986) had the most number and comprehensive legislations for defining, conserving and managing cultural heritage. The Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act (RA No. 4846 of 1966) clearly defined heritage as cultural properties referring to tangible heritage of cultural, historical, anthropological or scientific value or significance to the nation. Presidential Decree (PD) No. 260 of 1973 was a milestone declaration which specified sites, monuments and landmarks of national treasure category. PD No. 1505 of 1978 made it unlawful for any person “to modify, alter, repair, or destroy the original features of any national shrine, monument, landmark and other important historic edifices declared and classified” (NCCA, 2001, p. 21).



This law reflects the government's conscious adherence to authenticity of built heritage by using "original features".

To facilitate enactment of these legislations, Presidential Decrees (PD) substantiated, detailed and fortified the laws. PD No. 374 which amended RA No. 4846 mandated that all restorations, reconstructions and preservations of government historical buildings, shrines and landmarks, monuments and sites which have been declared should only be undertaken with permission from the Director of National Museum. PD No. 105 declared National Shrines defined as "sites of the birth, exile, imprisonment, detention or death of great and eminent leaders of the nation" (NCCA, 2001, p. 11) as hallowed spaces and prohibited their desecration. Accordingly, "desecration of National Shrines is described as disturbing their peace and serenity by digging, excavating, defacing, causing unnecessary noise and committing unbecoming acts within the premises" (NCCA, 2001, p. 12). This pronouncement was evocative of the spirit and feeling of place.

The Intramuros Administration Act or PD No. 1616 of 1979 created the agency responsible for the orderly restoration and development of Intramuros, the Spanish colonial inner city, as a monument to the Hispanic period of Philippine history. "As such, it shall ensure the general appearance of Intramuros shall conform to Philippine-Spanish architecture of the sixteenth to the nineteenth century" (NCCA, 2001 p. 108; Zerrudo, 2008). General appearance would resonate as authenticity in form and design. To achieve this, the publication *Arquitectura española en Filipinas (1565–1800)* by Lourdes Diaz-Trechuelo (1959) was a rich source of data for the Intramuros historical restoration. The restoration was guided by "respect for the original character of the structures, even as they were modified to accommodate contemporary needs and the use of original materials and methods of construction" (Camacho, ed., 2011 p. 25; Laya and Gathbonton, 1983). This principle highlighted authenticity in form and design, material and substance and methods of construction.

The Heritage Law or RA No. 10066 of 2010 is entitled "An Act Providing for the Protection and Conservation of National Cultural Heritage, Strengthening the National Commission for

Culture and the Arts (NCCA) and its Affiliated Cultural Agencies and for Other Purposes". From the law's key definitions, cultural heritage refers to "the totality of cultural property preserved and developed through time and passed on to posterity" (NCCA, 2001). Cultural property refers to "all products of human creativity by which a people and a nation reveal their identity including churches, mosques and other places of religious worship, school and natural history specimens whether public or privately owned, movable or immovable, tangible and intangible". This law is operationalized through various national cultural agencies particularly the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the National Museum and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

The National Commission for Culture and the Arts, created through RA No. 7356 of 1992, is the highest policy making body for culture and heritage. Section 9 dictates the Commission be comprised of National Committees for Libraries, Archives, Historical Research, Museums, Monuments and Sites (NCCA, 2001, p. 23).

Supporting the NCCA, the National Museum (NM) and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) are the two lead implementing agencies tasked to preserve and conserve the rich heritage of the nation. The National Museum Act of 1998 (RA No. 8492, Article 6.3) mandated the museum as a cultural centre which "shall take the lead in the study and preservation of the nation's rich artistic and cultural heritage, in the reconstruction and rebuilding of our past and the development of our cultural national wealth". The Strengthening Peoples' Nationalism Through Philippine History Act of 2009 (RA No. 10086) more commonly known as Historic Commission Act stated as the commission's responsibility to undertake and prescribe the manner of restoration, conservation and protection of the country's historical movable and immovable objects. These institutions have developed their own set of guidelines in identifying, documenting, preserving, conserving and promoting built heritage of cultural and historical significance.

Authenticity is mentioned in the NHCP Guidelines for Preservation of Historic Houses.

In the architectural guidelines for historic houses, it explicitly stated “the project must ensure the preservation of the authentic materials, plan, design and other distinct attributes of the historic edifices” (NHCP, 2014b). In addition, the site development guidelines stated “the project must be able to restore the historical ambience” alluding to the spirit and feeling of the place (NHCP, 2014b).

The National Museum and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines were the lead agencies in the conservation project for churches in the earthquake devastated islands of Bohol and Cebu. On 16 November 2014 (Cebu City) and 17–20 November 2014 (Tagbilaran City), an Experts Conference on the Restoration of Selected Heritage Sites was held. The NHCP Group 1 Summary Report mentioned the term “original” in the section on Investigation, Documentation and Analysis. There was no mention of the word authentic. In particular, the report recommended “Research original plans and specifications, if available”, “Research and sourcing of original materials”, “Documentation of construction systems and

techniques”, “Documentation of artistic motifs, designs, colors, carving techniques, especially in situ” (NHCP, 2014a). This recent Heritage Conservation Experts forum underscores the scope and limitation of authenticity which is defined only in terms of plans, materials, building technology, form and design.

In summary, the historical chronology of cultural heritage legislation portrays the transformation of heritage values from the Spanish period to the present national mandates. The significance of heritage began with security and sanitation values (Spanish period), to historical and memorial meanings (American colonial and Commonwealth period), to original appearance (Marcos period), to material and substance, form and design, methods of construction (Marcos period-Intramuros Administration) and finally to arbitrarily include, feeling and atmosphere (NHCP, 2014b). This construct validates the authority of national agencies in defining and conserving cultural heritage, reflective of the authorized heritage discourse (Smith, 2006).

Understanding authenticity through UNESCO charters and documents

The Philippine national cultural agencies have developed conservation guidelines (NCCA, 2007) that have been heavily lifted from the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965) and, so far, have not explicitly referenced the Nara Document of Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994). The 1964 Venice Charter emphasized authenticity based on the material and setting of a heritage object and site. On the other hand, Article 11 of the Nara Document has put authenticity into perspective wherein “heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong”. For this document, authenticity is based on credible sources of information such as “form and design, materials and substance ... traditions and techniques, location and setting”

and associated sources of information (Article 13). Since then, there have been myriad conservation approaches resulting from differing standards and definitions of authenticity. Recent updates (as cited above) to the 1972 UNESCO World Heritage Convention have included in the *Operational Guidelines* the authenticity considerations inspired by the Nara Document of Authenticity. The measures of authenticity range from the most tangible manifestation to the most intangible expression of an object or place.

Other than these two international references, Philippine academic institutions and organizations consult the Burra Charter or the Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance (Australia ICOMOS, 1999). In Article 1,



the charter clearly defines place, cultural landscape, conservation, and recognizes change as a significant factor. These concepts and the corresponding logical conservation approaches are very applicable in the Philippine context. The National Museum has adopted the conservation management planning format of this charter for the evaluation of built and historic heritage for national treasure declarations.

Paragraph 82 of the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016) upholds the

authenticity of structures or objects based on credible attributes: “form and design, materials and substance, use and function, tradition, techniques and management systems, location and setting, language ... spirit and feeling”. Although not yet mainstreamed in the conservation guidelines of Philippine national agencies, these credible attributes are evident in many local conservation practices of indigenous Filipinos that have been documented in cultural mapping projects.

Understanding authenticity through local communities: cultural mapping

Cultural mapping is a community research approach of documenting the heritage of a specific locality for purposes of conservation and development. This technique empowers the local community to identify and systematically document all their heritage – natural, built, intangible, local history and movable heritage, to evolve a memory and identity map and eventually, utilize the data for community programmes and projects (Cook and Taylor, 2013; Zerrudo, 2008). Cultural mapping documents the everyday heritage of the people and their valuation and utilization of this heritage.

Cultural mapping has been undertaken in many places of significance in the Philippines in the past 15 years. For example, according to documentation of the cultural mapping project of Ifugao house structures in the Rice Terraces of the Cordilleras, the Ifugao house owner constructs and repairs his house replete with house reconstruction rituals from timber gathering in the forest to the positioning of the house along the mountain slope according to the mountain’s geometric incline for good luck (Tronqued, 1994; UNESCO Philippines, 2009). In the same vein, based on the cultural mapping project at Butuan

(UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017c); site of the nationally significant archaeological excavations which revealed evidence of seafaring international trade for the twelfth to fourteenth centuries. According to the National Museum (2009) these *balanghais* boats, were constructed by Manobo master boat makers who built without any pattern, using handmade carpentry tools and selected the hardwood in the forest based on the season and beliefs. In the cultural mapping of Tugaya, the crafts village by Lake Lanao in Mindanao, the Maranao artisan crafts the golden *gador* (jar) using the lost wax technique (*cire perdue*) handed down by oral tradition, using the same red sand and water from the lake, incising traditional Muslim *okir* patterns in the same backyard foundry for generations (Guroalim, 2009). These examples prove that authenticity is measured beyond materiality but is holistically enriched by indigenous knowledge systems (Fadriquela, 2013). More importantly, authenticity is equated to transmission from generation to generation. For many local indigenous communities, heritage is a holistic concept and, authenticity is likewise an indissoluble relationship between the tangible and intangible.

Case study: the Malate Church restoration project of Escuela Taller Intramuros

A probe into a local church heritage conservation project reveals the exhaustive efforts exerted and generated to achieve and approximate the standard of authenticity. This is the case study of the Malate Church (Parish of Our Lady of Remedies), undertaken by the Escuela Taller Intramuros. The five-year project began in 2010 and a rigorous consultative approach between the experts and the community was undertaken to uphold the standard of authenticity and establish a model for good conservation practice.

Escuela Taller Intramuros is a technical vocational school established by the Spanish Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID) and the Philippine National Commission for Culture and the Arts in 2009. The original Spanish cultural program, which began in the mid-1980s, aimed to reconnect former colonies and embark on a youth-based conservation program of historic buildings (Escuela Taller, 2017).

The Philippine school aims to provide preservation and conservation skills to out-of-school or marginalized youth so that they will be mainstreamed into society as productive and skilled workers. It has a two-year cycle that provides modules in masonry, carpentry, woodworks, electrical, plumbing, painting and metal works. It has successfully undertaken conservation works on the historic walls of Intramuros, the Revellin de Recolletos, the Santa Ana Church of Manila and other built heritage.

The conservation programme for Malate Church was conceived to strengthen the foundation and fabric of the church and ensure its continuity to the next generation. Located in Malate District of Manila City, Malate was called *maalat* or salty by the indigenous population who resided around Manila bay at the time the Spaniards came to Luzon in the sixteenth century. With a long tradition of salt making along the Manila bay coast, the residents probably dried saline water from the bay in water beds for

purposes of evaporation. In 1624, the image of the Virgen de los Remedios was brought from Andalucía, Spain. This image was reported to be miraculous and made Malate a famous sanctuary where mothers presented their babies to the Virgin for cure of infantile ailments (Quirino, 1988).

The church and convent were built in 1591 and suffered heavily during the earthquakes of 1645 and 1863. When the British landed in Manila in 1762, they made the church their headquarters. During World War II, the church was burned by the Japanese, leaving only the walls. Restoration began in 1950 and another restoration campaign was carried out in 1978 (Quirino, 1988). Thus, the church has experienced and represents numerous layers of history and there were overlays of the various reconstructions before the Escuela Taller programme.

The restoration programme for the church was aimed at restoring the historic fabric of the church for its spiritual and social significance. Throughout the process, the experts conducted regular interpretations of research data and evaluation of conservation work. All findings were shared with the community in order to elicit community feedback. With these consultative meetings, the authority and accountability of experts along with the transparency and solidarity of the community established a good working relationship and realized a smooth conservation programme.

In August 2014, a round table discussion was initiated by the Columban priests, custodians of the historic church, to decide on the conservation approach for the famous and iconic facade of the church. At stake was the issue whether to plaster the weathered facade or maintain the present appearance, consolidate the material and stabilize the structure.

Various documentation research was undertaken to establish the history of the church's built fabric and its spiritual significance. Policies for church conservation were researched by Claire Vitug who gathered principles culled from the Venice,



Burra, Nara and Zimbabwe Charters (Vitug, 2014). There was no single definitive framework used, rather reference was made to a collection of complementary conservation principles.

The other important aspect of this novel conservation endeavour was the Malate community's participation. Inspired by the "5Cs" (credibility, conservation, capacity-building, communication and communities) of the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016, Paragraph 26) and the Burra Charter's provision on community participation (Australia ICOMOS, 1999, Article 12), it was agreed that all decisions made regarding the actual conservation process had to be in consultation with the different stakeholders. Without their involvement, the aim to make the conservation efforts participatory, respectful and meaningful would be futile.

Several studies were undertaken in order to address the structural issues. These are outlined as follows:

The study on materials characterization conducted by Juan Carlos Zamora and Romeric Pobre of De La Salle University concluded to redesign the intervention mortars with the following recommendations. Design 1: Lime/aggregate ratio (L/Ag) of intervention mortars set at 1:6 (Lime/Fine Aggregate). Design 2: Lime:Aggregate:Brick ratio (Lime: Coarse Aggregate: Crushed Bricks) set at 4:12:1. The recommended additives used were sticky rice solution, old coconut husks, titanium oxide nanocoat and palm oil. This formulation was meant to be more effective and closer to the original chemistry of the old mortar (Zamora, 2014).

Studies on the consolidation of Guadalupe tuff, a stone similar to that previously used for the walls of Malate Church, were reported by Tina Paterno. The findings revealed that the short artificial weathering produced significant deterioration for both treated and untreated specimens. Thus, the consolidation would slow but not stop the deterioration (Paterno, 2014).

The structural engineering investigation conducted by Raul Ramirez of the University of the

Philippines highlighted the stability of the structure in case of a magnitude 7 earthquake. He concluded that the structure would still be able to resist the forces as long as the cracks and all other damage were restored in an appropriate way (Ramirez, 2013).

The soil investigation conducted by George Padilla recommended stabilization in the soil substrata. Based on the study, it was recommended for the grouting of sandy solid (Layers B and C) as a mitigating measure to keep the foundation of the structure intact under the design (Padilla, 2012).

However, following the round table discussion and exchange through community consultation, no intervention was ever undertaken. The facade of Malate Church has been cleaned, documented and allowed to remain in its current state. This is because the community valued the weathered stones on the facade of the church. Even the damaged stone relief of the Augustinian symbol, which has been thoroughly documented with archival evidence, had to be left untouched because that was how the community remembered it. For the community, the church authenticity and meaning were revealed in the exposed weathered stone work of the facade evoking the feeling and atmosphere of the past.

The experience of the Escuela Taller Intramuros in the Malate Church project exemplified good conservation practice. The goal of the whole conservation project was to conserve the authenticity of the structure and the sustainability of the built heritage for future generations. The project had been afforded the best possible conditions – project team composed of heritage managers, technical experts and craftsmen, available funds for five years, community consultations and support, the luxury of time for experimentation and study, scientific studies and technical advisers. The serious documentation set against the contemporary context underpinned the rationale for all critical decisions that would be made. The layers of decision-making alongside the conservation process were a series of consensus and compromise among the experts and the community.

Conclusion: insights on authenticity in the Philippine context

First, the proliferation of heritage contestation in the Philippines indicates a heightened heritage awareness and appreciation held by the general public. Particular to historic buildings of national significance, public debate has reached the level of conservation approaches to uphold authenticity and integrity. On the other hand, government heritage conservation policies have become rigid and unresponsive such that the public demands more participation and engagement in the decision-making process.

Second, the Philippines has a plethora of words for heritage and authenticity. Conditioned by the diversity of ethno-linguistic groups impacted by Spanish colonization, local terminologies have cultural nuances with various orientations and interpretations. The upland interior Ifugao and Muslim communities do not have exact parallel translations for heritage and authenticity. Cultural heritage could refer to a valuable material object or the integrated composition of tangible and intangible. Its evolving meaning must transect the time dimensions of past, present and future generations. Authenticity generally refers to truthfulness, genuineness and originality. Beyond materiality, this concept is linked to transmission of knowledge and skills from generation to generation. Just as cultural heritage is the indissoluble relationship between tangible and intangible, authenticity should be discerned in terms of credible tangible and intangible sources of information.

Third, the Philippine history of cultural heritage legislation, influenced by international charters, demonstrates the authorized heritage discourse wherein heritage identification, valuation and conservation, particularly of structures of cultural and historical significance, have been legitimized by the government. However, cultural mapping has revealed that the heritage of the common people, particularly living heritage, and authenticity for that matter, provides a more holistic approach to conservation, integrating tangible and intangible properties.

Fourth, authenticity, as defined by the UNESCO World Heritage Convention *Operational Guidelines*, is a guide and measure for good conservation practice. The standard provides the parameters that discipline the conservation process. Even under the best conditions, conservation is a series of consensus and compromise between experts and communities, between the ideal standard and the real situation of resources and systems. This series of negotiation leads to a hybrid or syncretic type of authenticity. The contemporary context poses specifications and limitations to meet the current needs of the cultural users. Conservation will always need a critical balance between authenticity and sustainability to make heritage meaningful to all.

Heritage, as a concept, has evolved from the experiments of experts and policies of authorities to the active engagement of the community. Because of this transformation, conservation, the decision-making process to sustain the significance of the heritage, has also become an open forum for all stakeholders. Authenticity, in the Philippine context has two strains. First, authenticity purported by authorities based on material, form, design, construction methods, and location, which is derived from the Venice Charter. Second, authenticity practiced by the local community which includes tangible sources of information and intangible expressions of tradition, skills and more importantly, the transmission phenomenon reflective of the Nara Document on Authenticity. As the conservation practice attempts to exact the standard of authenticity, it will always fall short due to the specifications, limitations and needs of the contemporary users of heritage.

Changing contexts constantly transform the principles and practices of cultural heritage. If the walls could speak, they would be yet another important voice in the discourse of conservation and, more importantly, authenticity.



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◊ CHAPTER 12 ◊

Authenticity and the safeguarding of cultural heritage in Nepal

Kai Weise

Abstract

Heritage, with its changing definition which includes not only immovable monumental structures but also living traditions, requires a broader spectrum of approaches to management and conservation. Authenticity is an important concept for the conservation of heritage; however, this concept must be understood in a more appropriate manner depending on the context and the typology of heritage. Instead of defining authenticity only in respect to an absolute truthfulness, a more flexible understanding must be acknowledged.

This paper examines authenticity in conservation practices in Nepal. The historical approach to maintaining and renewing monumental buildings within the *guthi* socio-religious organization of the Newar is explained and how this has defined the continued approach to conservation in Nepal. Furthermore, the concept of authenticity is assessed in respect to two World Heritage Sites: Kathmandu Valley and Lumbini. The paper explains the importance of understanding authenticity beyond a single absolute perception when it comes to living heritage sites that incorporate the lives and livelihoods of people.

Introduction

The concept of authenticity has been a key factor in defining the approach to conservation throughout the world. This was established with the initial romantic notions of safeguarding ruins and expressed as early as 1877 when William Morris and the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings formulated a manifesto to “put preservation in place of restoration” (Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, 2017). This initial concept has permeated all modern conservation approaches. This must however be understood as a valid approach in a given time, context and specific typology of cultural heritage. Objections have been raised for cases of living heritage or monuments built of materials requiring constant renewal, for which this approach cannot be considered appropriate.

Authenticity is defined in the Nara Document (Larsen, ed., 1994) as the truthful and credible expression of the heritage values. Analysing this definition, we find that the two phrases used to define authenticity provide a wide enough spectrum to accommodate the changing circumstances and contexts of cultural heritage conservation. Truthful refers to an absolute understanding and can only be used to ensure preservation of cultural objects that do not have competing claims and definitions. Yet, there are often varying truths in the understanding of cultural heritage. These cases require the use of the second phrase: the credible expression of the heritage values. Credible refers to a compromise ideally reached by the involved community groups and relevant authorities within the specific context.

The approaches to conservation are changing, from a more exclusive one that focuses on monuments and palaces towards a more inclusive one that acknowledges the lives of the common people. In this context, the definition of heritage has expanded to include not only archaeological monuments but also complex living sites that consist of human activities and changing uses and significance. Regarding the heritage management practice, the more inclusive approach is a much more democratic one in the sense of recognizing varying perceptions of heritage, with an emphasis on the current needs and opinions of the communities living within the heritage site as well as their customs, rituals and beliefs that have sustained continuity of the heritage site over the course of time.

This paper explains the changing concept of authenticity in the context of Nepal. There is no widely accepted definition of authenticity in the Nepali literature on conservation; information is, however, provided on approaches to maintenance and renewal of community structures and spaces. Based on a survey of publications and reports as well as professional experiences of the author, the paper provides an understanding of changing approaches to conservation in Nepal, giving an insight into the changing implications on authenticity. Case studies on the two cultural World Heritage Sites of Kathmandu Valley (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017a) and Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017b) are presented. The paper furthermore provides a conclusion with notes on how authenticity might be better understood in the Asian context.




Defining authenticity based on the conservation of Kathmandu Valley

The *guthi* traditional system of management

There are inscriptions from as early as 491 CE (Tiwari, 2015) that proclaim donations from royalty and the rich for the maintenance and care of particular temples or to fund certain festivals. *Guthis* (the organizations associated with institutional landownership) were established to ensure the perpetuity of the monuments and festivals, supported by the piety of the community to care for one's roots and carry it into the future. This could be done through seasonal actions (*versabardhan day*), annual grants of harvests (*akshyanibi*) or an organization of community members (*gosthi*) (Tiwari, 2015).

The *guthi* system of land management in the Kathmandu Valley changed organization and responsibilities over time. The system was established during the Lichchavi period (fifth to ninth centuries) and became an important social system during the Malla period (tenth to eighteenth centuries). It is important to note that the *guthi* system protected and maintained both tangible and intangible heritage. The system is based on land being donated by individuals/clans/villages to an official institution in return for religious merit. Land was allocated for certain material culture or heritage or event, after which the revenues from that land were used by the *guthi* as a type of trust to fulfil their responsibility of maintaining monuments and their related functions. The *guthi* activities focused on temples,

 **Figure 1**
Change in use of Sattal
for a tourist restaurant.

stupas, monasteries, and public buildings such as public rest houses and water spouts as well as intangible cultural practices such as fairs and festivals. During the Malla period the Sanskrit word *samuchhaya* (group) was frequently used in relation to communal renovation activities (Sharma and Shrestha, 2007).

From the mid-eighteenth century onwards, under the Shah Kings, the *guthi* system was formalized and an office responsible for heritage preservation was formed at a central government level. This Chhenbhadel office had skilled artisans including masons, carpenters and blacksmiths to carry out the responsibilities as stated on a copper plate inscription dated 1799, “In renovation of heritage like temples, *pati*, *dharamasala*, *pauva* etc., one should follow the rule to build them permanently. For this, supervision is a must every year” (Nepali 1965, p. 129–130). During the Rana Period (1848 to 1951), the office of the Tin Sarkar Guthi was established to include the construction and repair of temples and other *guthi* buildings. The *amanat* system (direct involvement of the government) was simplified by having its own treasury and office to audit the accounts. In 1961, the entire *guthi* system was reorganized and the Guthi Sansthan (Guthi Corporation) was formally created in 1964 by the promulgation of the Guthi Sansthan Act (Sharma and Shrestha, 2007).

The establishment of the Department of Archaeology (within the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation) by the Ancient Monument Preservation Act 1956 (Government of Nepal, 2013) made the clear distinction between managing the tangible and intangible aspects of heritage. The Department of Archaeology was responsible for the immovable and movable tangible heritage. This was followed by the Guthi Sansthan Act 1964 (as discussed in Sharma and Shrestha, 2007), which mainly focused on land ownership and administration issues related to revenues. Article 17.3 of The Act indicates that the responsibilities of the Guthi Sansthan focused mainly on festivals “To carry out religious festivals and worshipping as set forth in the donation deeds, documents and customs, in a manner ensuring that the religious performance does not die out”.

Conservation response to the 1934 earthquake

A report was compiled on the reconstruction after the 1934 Nepal-Bihar Earthquake (Wikipedia contributors, 2017) by Major General Brahma Shumsher Rana. The discussion was on how best to reconstruct the buildings and monuments, since there was a lack of resources: material, skilled labour as well as finances. First priority was given to the dwellings and important government buildings, which were to be rebuilt on “a more modest scale than before” (Rana, 1934, p. 102). Some private residents were said to have been interested in building larger houses, especially in Patan, though this was frowned upon. “Such interest cannot be considered as good. Adding number of floors without widening the roads will only cause more destruction in the cases of future earthquakes” (Rana, 1934, p. 103). Most people however did not seem to be interested in even strengthening their walls and roofs. “Hence, even though the houses are rebuilt, we cannot be sure that they will withstand the future quakes. It seems that the newly built houses are as frail as they had been previously” (Rana, 1934, p. 103).

The report also mentions that monuments were not prioritized for immediate restoration and left to be dealt with later:

The renovation of temples and artistic buildings was scheduled to be done later on. Even though temples which suffered nominal damage could be repaired, those old masterpieces which were razed to the ground will be lost forever: a very unfortunate thing. Even if we reconstruct them, it might take years. As public rest houses, *patis* and *sattals* have been extensively damaged, it seems difficult to rebuild those which don't have any *guthi* or whose *guthi* are already lost. But as long as the issue of shelter for general public is not solved, no due attention will be given to those things (Rana, 1934, p. 102).

The reconstruction of monuments is still going on even after 80 years. Questions have been raised concerning the need for such reconstructions, especially since these do not seem to be linked to the needs of any specific communities, but are rather a contemporary trend of reconstructing the perceived golden age of one's cultural heritage. It is argued that the supposed need to fulfil the test of integrity demands “wholeness and intactness”



(UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016, paragraph 88), thus providing justification for recreating the heritage site to its former most glorious state. We must however remember that initially the test of integrity was reserved for natural World Heritage Sites and was only introduced to cultural sites in 2002 leading to the criteria for cultural and natural sites being merged.

Modern conservation efforts

One of the earliest conservation projects carried out in Nepal by Western experts was the Bhaktapur Development Project from 1974 to 1985 funded by the German government. The approach to conservation that was developed in Bhaktapur became standard practice in Nepal. The publication by Parajuli (1986) provides one version of the approach to conservation established through this project. Parajuli states that the project objective was “to improve the living conditions of the people of Bhaktapur” and was “tied to the overall preservation of the physical environment and character of the town”. So the character of the historic town was to be preserved, areas of architectural and historic interest were to be protected, traditional local skills were to be preserved, cultural activities were to be kept alive while ancient buildings were to be given active roles and the interaction between conservation and tourism made beneficial. The project followed the concept of “seven degrees of interventions” by Bernard Fielden (1979, p. 25–27) which are: prevention of deterioration, preservation, consolidation, restoration, reproduction, reconstruction and re-evaluation (adaptive reuse). There were however examples of projects carried out based on anastylosis, renovation, integration and conjecture. In many cases new construction techniques were introduced when restoring historic buildings considering that most buildings had changed their size and function since originally being constructed (Parajuli, 1986).

The work in Bhaktapur, which focused on improving the urban living conditions while taking into account the historic context, employed various approaches to conservation assessed as per the requirement of the particular location or monument. The question of authenticity arose in respect to certain examples, but seems to have been ignored

when dealing with others. Having been established as a development project in a historic context liberal interventions were carried out in respect to use of cement mortar, reconstruction of historic buildings and the adaptation to new functions.

Discussions on authenticity concerning World Heritage

Kathmandu Valley was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979 but there did not seem to be any clear approach to conservation. Authenticity was not mentioned in the nomination document, and the authorities believed that only the state of conservation of the listed monuments was important. The ICOMOS International Wood Committee raised concerns that authenticity was not being considered at their November 1992 meeting in Kathmandu. This discussion initiated both the Nara Conference in 1994 and the inclusion of Kathmandu Valley on the World Heritage in Danger List in 2003 (Kawan, 2015). Kathmandu has since then been removed from the List.

The main concern raised was that the historic buildings were being dismantled and reconstructed. In particular the I Baha Bahi project, overseen by a team from the Nippon Institute of Technology, was singled out (Larsen and Marstein, eds., 1994). This project did not correspond to the prevalent understanding of authenticity, which was centred on original material. The definition of authenticity was, however, questioned by Japanese conservation professionals based on their tradition of periodic reconstruction of historic timber buildings.

At roughly the same time, the German project in Bhaktapur was carrying out reconstruction projects. In 1990, a German-led team reconstructed Cyasilin Mandap (an octagonal pavilion housing an inscription) in Bhaktapur using largely modern materials (a steel frame as a tribute to the modern age) to fill the gap left by the destruction of the 1934 earthquake. This was a present to Nepal on the occasion of the visit of German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. This project however professed being authentic by recreating a lost structure, however using modern materials to ensure that there is no confusion in identifying when it was constructed in the form of the previous structure.

The differences in approaches to conservation came to a head as a result of these two projects.



The Japanese tradition of continually maintaining community and religious structures by replacing deteriorated parts or periodically tearing down and reconstructing entire structures provided justification for the possibility of upgrading and adapting to changing needs. In contrast, the European approach used at the Cyasilin Mandap is diametrically opposed to the understanding of a culture that has been going through a continuous process of adaptation and change. Rather than looking at changes in the structure over time, they fixed upon specific changes in specific time periods. But continuity in both tangible and intangible aspects of cultural heritage does not necessarily provide a fixed time from which a baseline for preservation can be taken.

Definitions of authenticity

A study on the translation and understanding of the concept of authenticity in all languages spoken in Nepal would be extensive. Here I will focus on the official language of Nepal, which is the Sanskrit-based Nepali language with Devanagari script. The online dictionary Shabdokosh (2017)

translates authenticity as *pramaanya* (proof/ testimony) or *satya* (truth). In translations of the Integrated Management Framework document for Kathmandu Valley, authenticity is translated as *aadhikaariktaalpraamaaniktaa*. The later translation of the Integrated Management Framework for Lumbini (Lumbini Development Trust, 2012) only uses the phrase *praamaaniktaa*. According to Kosh Prasad Acharya (personal communication, 2014), former Director General of the Department of Archaeology, *praamaaniktaa* is more preferable for authenticity in the heritage context. *Aadhikaariktaa* is more close to authority and *mauliktaa* would mean originality. According to renowned poet Viplob Pratik, the meaning of authenticity differs depending on the situation. For example, “authentic Nepali cuisine” would be *thet nepali khana*, *thet* meaning typical. He also proposed the terms *wiswasaniya* (trustworthy) or *patyaarilo* (convincing). He also

◊ **Figure 2**
Newly restored 55-window palace to the left and the Cyasilin Mandap to the right which was reconstructed in 1990.



Figure 3

The seto-machhendranath chariot in Hanuman Dhoka showing intangible values defining living cities.

suggested the use of *aadhikaarik* (authoritative) and *praamaanik* (original). Since there is no exact translation, the

word varies depending on the context of use.

The understanding of authenticity can also be derived indirectly from the understanding of how monuments were maintained over time. Inscriptions provide us with information on changing conservation approaches. During the second half of the first millennium CE, Lichchhavi inscriptions explain the principles based on the *pratisamskara* traditions. As per Tiwari (2015), *pratisamskara* can be defined as “near to” (perfection) or as near to as it was when created. Repair is carried out on elements with partial deterioration or those affected by natural wear or overuse over time. *Samskaran* would

however mean “edition” and not “reprint”, which would seem to authorize and accept additions and embellishments. Lichchhavi inscriptions clearly distinguish construction *samsthapana* from repair or restoration *pratisamskara*.

The approach changed during the Malla period, when construction materials for buildings, public utilities as well as images changed from stone to bricks/terracotta and wood. These materials were more susceptible to climate conditions, fires and earthquakes. By the fifteenth century a new term came to be used for conservation, maintenance, repair and renovation, *jirnoddhar*. Due to the deterioration of the materials, whether due to natural conditions, earthquakes or fires, more drastic measures of reconstruction were employed. Renovations, however, retained the foundations, which were usually made of stone, and only dealt with that which was above ground. The term for new construction, *sthapana*, however remained the same (Tiwari, 2015).

Case studies

Kathmandu Valley World Heritage property

The Kathmandu Valley was inscribed on the World Heritage list in 1979 as seven monument zones under criteria (iii), (iv) and (vi). The nomination dossier included long lists of monuments and their particular state of conservation with only peripheral reference made to the natural setting and urban context. This misconception led to Kathmandu Valley being put on the Danger List due to uncontrolled urbanization and significant loss of historic urban fabric. The redefined boundaries and buffer zones were adopted in 2006. The Integrated Management Framework document was adopted by the cabinet of the Government of Nepal in 2007 paving the way for Kathmandu Valley to be removed from the Danger List (Department of Archaeology, 2007).

Various approaches were introduced to accommodate the realities of the living urban fabric which had throughout history gone through the process of cyclical renewal. When defining authenticity, all the attributes were addressed as

listed in paragraph 82 of the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016). It was however noted that the conservation of heritage must fulfil two tasks:

1. be a testimony to the achievements of the past which necessitates the preservation of specific tangible elements in its original state; and 2. the continuation of a living cultural heritage which must be based on the appreciation of the past, however taking change into account (Department of Archaeology, 2007, p. 5).

The concept of “cyclical renewal” is based on the fact that the monuments of the Kathmandu Valley have been exposed to two extreme natural phenomena throughout history, earthquakes and dampness, both initiating periodic reconstruction.

In November 2013 the Revisiting Kathmandu Symposium focused on the linkages between authenticity, management, community involvement and disaster risk (Weise, ed., 2015).



The discussions clearly showed that authenticity can only be considered relative to other parameters. This means that the consideration of authenticity is relevant but cannot be viewed as an absolute condition (Weise, ed., 2015).

More recently, questions have arisen on the authenticity of various ongoing trends, especially in respect to changes to the built heritage within the buffer zones of the Kathmandu Valley. Bhaktapur Municipality provides partial funding for the traditional materials, specifically for facades. This has supported “facadism” whereby a new typology of building based on reconstruction using reinforced concrete with imitated traditional facades are subsidized. Another example is the trend of reconstructing structures lost during the earthquake of 1934. The reconstruction of monuments after the 1934 earthquake was not properly carried out due to lack of resources and many structures were never rebuilt. Projects are now being undertaken by the government and philanthropists to recreate the urban landscape that existed before the earthquake. The prioritization of reconstruction is questionable when every year it is difficult to bring together the funds required to carry out some of the festivals, such as the *rato machhendranath* chariot festival.

Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha, World Heritage Site

Lumbini was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1997 under criteria (iii) and (vi). The attributes are the archaeological vestiges as well as the site’s significance as a place of pilgrimage (Lumbini Development Trust, 2012).

Due to the universal significance of Lumbini, there are numerous approaches to view and interpret this sacred place. Each of these perceptions is valid and must be incorporated into the overall understanding of the Sacred Garden. The perceptions could be based on Buddhist literature, historical texts, archaeology and site interpretation, Kenzo Tange’s Master Plan, World Heritage inscription, the environment, the activities and the expectations on Lumbini. The inclusion of these perceptions in the definition of Lumbini allowed

for a far wider understanding of the site, taking into account the major stakeholders (Weise, ed., 2013). Based on this broad understanding the Guideline for the Physical Plan of the Sacred Garden of Lumbini consisting of 50 points was prepared in cooperation with all relevant authorities, stakeholders and experts (Weise, ed., 2013).

The main challenge at Lumbini is to cater to the requirements of pilgrims of diverse cultures while safeguarding the archaeology. The fragile brick masonry remains are exposed to allow visitors to view them but this also exposes them to rapid deterioration. At the same time the pilgrims need to show their devotion through various activities which create a particular newly created atmosphere, but often also directly impacts the archaeology. A conflict of interest arises when the archaeology itself becomes an object of veneration. A decision needs to be taken on how to deal with such circumstances. For example, certain pilgrims break off and eat bits of the ancient bricks. Others give offerings such as gold leaf, perfume, milk, and coins, or burn incense on or next to archaeology. Within the Mayadevi Temple, the Marker Stone is protected by glass while a newly constructed wall provides space for offerings. The Nativity Statue is out of reach of the pilgrims. The main inscription on the third century BCE Asoka pillar which is the true testimony of the location of Lumbini is however eroding away due to natural erosion, pollution and the impact of offerings. The destructive methods of veneration of the Asoka pillar and in particular the inscription, need reconsideration (Weise, ed., 2013).

When discussing the authenticity of a site like Lumbini, there are numerous conflicts that arise. It might be possible to identify the age, function and possibly even the historical setting, while recreating what the site might have been like at various points in time. This intellectual exercise determines the history of a belief system that still persists, that of Buddhism. So when the custodians of this belief system, in their diverse forms, reclaim their sacred site, who is to determine how this site is to be conserved or developed?

The implications of the Nara Document on Authenticity on conservation in Nepal

The Nara Document on Authenticity initiated the important dialogue on how tangible cultural heritage is closely linked to intangible heritage as well as cultural diversity. Though both these themes were separately addressed through the conventions of 2003 (UNESCO Office in Santiago, 2017) and 2005 (UNESCO, 2017) here the linkages are important. The Nara Document has however been misused by some who either misinterpret the articles that are vague or ignore the parts which are explicit. The assertion that cultural properties are required to be judged within the cultural context to which they belong and that values and authenticity cannot

be judged within fixed criteria is often taken as a license for site managers to freely carry out any activities as they see fit.

The Nara Document does validate certain circumstances in conserving cultural heritage in Nepal. In the aforementioned examples of Kathmandu Valley and Lumbini, interpretations of the values and approaches to conservation are based on the understanding of various stakeholders, the type of heritage and the physical conditions of the site. Both cases focus on the continuation and not solely on the preservation of the cultural heritage.

Conclusion

The Nara Document came about when the conservation philosophies of the East and West collided. Rudyard Kipling wrote “Oh, East is East and West is West and never the twain shall meet” (The Kipling Society, 2017). The Western understanding and approaches should not be forced upon the East, and vice versa. The differences must be acknowledged and amalgamated into a comprehensive framework.

An approach to conservation which focuses purely on authenticity of material and preserving structures in whatever form of ruin they might be, could be valid under certain circumstances. Such cases where the structure is obsolete in respect to any form of contemporary use, is not linked directly to any community or their activities, is of a material that does not erode quickly and is compatible to the inherent climate. Should these very specific conditions change, then quite clearly, the understanding of authenticity and the approach to conservation should change.

The two Nepali case studies presented in this paper provide varying responses to the concept of authenticity. For Kathmandu Valley, the notion

of a city must be considered which consists of a constantly changing living system of activities directly moulding the physical context. The additional factors of climate and earthquake have a continued impact on the material heritage which has throughout history required cyclical renewal. This phenomenon of regular and constant adaptation has itself provided the thread of continuity required for survival. The question that is raised is not whether this kind of renewal is acceptable within the understanding of authenticity, but much more a question of appropriate renewal.

At Lumbini, authenticity is understood to be relevant to the numerous possible perceptions and experiences of the heritage site. This is reflected in one of the Buddha’s inspired utterances (*Sutta Pitaka, Khuddaka Nikaya, Udana 68–69*) explaining the quarrelling between blind men about what an elephant is like after touching only one part of the animal. The Buddha Dharma Education Association (2008) translates it thus “O how they cling and wrangle, some who claim; for preacher and monk the honoured name!; for, quarrelling,



each to his view they cling; such folk see only one side of a thing”. Therefore, when the custodians of this belief system, in their diverse forms, reclaimed the sacred site of Lumbini, it is complex and unclear who has the right to determine the conservation and development of the site. Ultimately, the inscription on the Asoka pillar, which is **the** testimony to this being the birthplace of the Lord Buddha must be protected not only from the natural elements, but also from the impact caused by the offerings of devotees.

As evident in the many translations of concepts related to authenticity, the concept(s) themselves must be considered relative and specific within certain parameters. This means that the consideration of authenticity cannot be viewed as an absolute condition. The test of authenticity should not necessarily be used only as an assessment of value but also as a means of creating the basis for an approach to conservation. Even the approach to the definition and use of authenticity as a defining parameter for value needs to be reconsidered as per the context, the specific conditions of the site and the characteristics of the cultural heritage. This global concept needs a local interpretation which is specific and binding in Nepal.

The understanding of authenticity must go beyond the static understanding derived from preserving an archaeological site which is severed from history and community. Where there has been continuity of a living culture within a particular physical setting – be it a temple compound, a city or a landscape – the continuity

would need to be given priority. Continuity would require adaptation which would however need to be appropriate to the given circumstances. This means that a living heritage site must cope with changing circumstances and respond to external factors derived out of its own inherent culture.

For the Asian context, where many heritage sites are the result of continuous cultural interaction and transformation, an appropriate approach to conservation must be adopted. This means that the values would not necessarily lie solely in the tangible attributes of the heritage, but how these attributes have contained, enabled and expressed the values of a living culture. For example, without a break in the function of a monument, it is not possible to determine a specific state of the monument for preservation. Monuments and landscapes that are still being used and worked on will go through cyclical change which needs to be considered. The acknowledgement of continuity is essential, which might be of use, of physical structure, or even of significance.

Similarly, living heritage sites that incorporate the lives and livelihoods of people need to be understood beyond a single absolute perception. Authenticity needs to be understood beyond the truthful expression of values, since truthful requires an absolute and possibly exclusive definition of the site. In the Asian context, there is a need to understand authenticity much more as the credible expression of values, especially as credibility ensures a process of compromise and acknowledgement of differences.

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◊ CHAPTER 13 ◊

**Challenges to the
notion of authenticity
in the context of temples in
Kathmandu Valley, Nepal**

Neel Kamal Chapagain and Sudarshan Raj Tiwari

Abstract

The challenges of authenticity in different cultural contexts have been widely discussed, yet the concept has not been operationally broadened enough to address site-specific issues. This paper examines such challenges using temples in Kathmandu Valley as case studies, in relation to the existing intangible aspects of heritage, such as rituals, beliefs and cultural norms. The paper also examines some historic references where the idea of conservation is articulated contextually reflecting the context of local materials and artisanship. In such cases, the conventional notion of authenticity (which is anchored to fabric /material and historicity) makes little sense. The paper thus argues for revising the idea of authenticity, making it more relative to intangible aspects of heritage which may at times allow for the loss of a particular fabric or material but ensuring the overall authenticity.



Contemporary issues surrounding authenticity

In November 2013, ICOMOS Nepal along with UNESCO Kathmandu and the Department of Archaeology (Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation) organized an international symposium titled *Revisiting Kathmandu*, where four major themes were discussed: authenticity, community, management, and disaster risk management (Weise, ed., 2015). The idea of organizing a session on authenticity had a twofold objective. First, it was connected to the timely context of revisiting the concept on the eve of the upcoming twentieth anniversary of the Nara Document on Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994). Second, it was linked to the fact that one of the preceding discussions or debates on authenticity had in fact emerged from the Kathmandu Valley, particularly the restoration of the I Baha Bahi (a Buddhist monastery) in Patan.

The dialogues that led to the preparation of the Nara Document on Authenticity in 1994 began two years earlier in Kathmandu. In 1992 the Wood Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) met in Kathmandu and critical comments were made on the restoration work being carried out on the I Baha Bahi. The issue was raised at the World Heritage Committee session in 1992. This led to the demand mainly of Asian State Parties to review the concept of authenticity. It also led to a decade long discussion which placed Kathmandu Valley on the list of World Heritage in Danger in 2003 due to uncontrolled urbanization and loss of historic fabric (Weise, 2015, p. 6–7).

The discussion following the presentations on the theme of authenticity highlighted various issues surrounding the concept, and the challenges of its application in practice. It was then generally agreed that there must be recognition that in living heritage sites, authenticity may mostly refer to the craftsmanship that may sometimes supersede other aspects such as material, form and design. Following the discussion, one attendee who happened to be a member of the Swayambhu Management Committee, insisted that the authenticity team (including one of the authors

of the present paper Neel Kamal Chapagain) visit a temple at the Swayambhu World Heritage Site (part of the Kathmandu Valley, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017) where the management committee was facing a confusing situation.

The temple in question, located on the northern edge of the hilltop, is a relatively plain rectangular structure with a gabled roof that does not compete with the other temples at the site of Swayambhu. However, the management committee faced an especially complicated situation particularly because the temple roof was in desperate need of repair. Here in this temple, there was no documentation of the inner chamber which was going through a renovation. More importantly, the belief was that no documentation could be done of the inner chamber because access was restricted to the only priest of the temple. As a pleasant coincidence, one of the sons of the priest who had been initiated to be an assistant of the priest happened to be skilled at carpentry. Therefore, he was asked to look inside the temple which was always pitch dark to see what repairs were needed. But the challenge was he had taken an oath not to share or hint at what he saw inside, including any details of the structure or artefacts. Thus, what he could do at most was to tell the management committee that he would need so and so size of timbers to do some repair works inside, but he would not be allowed to share any further details. Hence, the challenge for the management committee was to convey this situation to the expert committee that would be visiting the World Heritage Site in order to ensure that the site management and various works were being carried out as per the professional norms.

In a situation where religious and cultural practices prevent outside experts from knowing or inspecting the details of material, construction, design or any other aspect of a sacred space; how then, is the concept of authenticity ensured? In the case of the temple discussed above, authenticity lies solely with what the initiated and authorized


 **Figure 1**
Front side of the temple
at Swayambhunath
World Heritage Site.



Figure 2
Side view Somke exterior
roof repairs going on but
the interior is unknown.

priest knows, sees, believes and eventually does to the structure. There is literally no way we can assess any sense of originality or authenticity in any of the aspects that we have been discussing. Now, what do we do? This was the very question that was bothering our colleague at the Swayambhu Management Committee. Do we begin changing the cultural norms and “enlighten” the local stakeholders that

“documentation” is a MUST for any heritage site so that we (the professionals) can judge whether any restoration or intervention carried out is “authentic” or not. Or do we enlighten ourselves and question the very notion of authenticity in this particular context, realizing that this supposedly universal idea which the Nara Document suggests to contextualize is not applicable in this (every) context. What we argue is that if there is a sense of authenticity in this case, it is the fact that outsiders are not supposed to know what is inside, and therefore no reference to historicist notions of authenticity can be applied. The only way we can perhaps justify the authenticity would be to recognize that this very tradition, which itself prevents us from thinking about authenticity in other aspects including material, design etc. is a valid aspect of authenticity in this particular case and that no other aspects can outweigh this one. The notion of authenticity here becomes transformed such that the only aspect that may subscribe to the notion is the fact of the tradition of not documenting (by oral or any other form) the inner sanctum as the only authentic thing in this case.

The tiered temples of Nepal

We must also see such a tradition in light of the historic evidence and historically existing practices that may relate to conservation and restoration. In discussing the practice of heritage conservation and the embedded notion of authenticity in the Nepali context (Chapagain, 2013, 2015), the cases of Nepali temples can provide sufficient insights primarily for two reasons:

- 1 The tiered temples and similar structures have passed through many cycles of loss and recovery as a result of
 - being constructed and styled out of perishable materials such as wood and brick while exposed to a harsh monsoon environment which seems to have been designed to inflict maximum deterioration
- 2 The practice and tradition of conservation as a particular mix of preservation, restoration and reconstruction seems to have begun along with the construction of Nepal’s earliest images and the buildings that housed them and developed and continued over centuries right down to present times. These cycles of construction, destruction, renovation and/or reconstruction have not only led to overlapping layers of history, meaning and materials in the heritage but also established its own standards of understanding, knowing and

- the siting of the Kathmandu Valley on one of the most active fault lines, thereby being subject to periodic large earthquakes, and
- occasional fires resulting from ritual offerings of lights during worship.

safeguarding it for presentation, preservation and enhancement, thereby informing us how the societies in the Kathmandu Valley have taken action to conserve the heritage passed on by the preceding ones. While these deteriorating and endangering conditions have influenced the approaches and methods of conservation and the evolution of the architectural heritage itself, the conservation approach and its demands – including the notion of authenticity in the contemporary conservation lexicon, have also extensively acted on the historical development of the heritage itself. The practice of regular conservation and the culture of reconstruction over such long periods has also meant that very few or none of the architectural heritage in the Kathmandu Valley is “original” as a whole or even in part, if we restrict the definition to its initial construction. Thus, these cases challenge the prevalent notion and emphasis on authenticity – material authenticity to be precise. It becomes clear from some inscriptional sources that the Nepali tradition of conservation itself was built on some sense of authenticity through design and construction skill practiced as family trade and the experience passed on from the older generation.

On the other hand, there are traditions belonging to many religious sites in the Kathmandu Valley which restrict access to certain parts of the structure or space, thus making it impossible to even think of what is inside (far from being able to assess what is original or new or what is damaged and what needs to be changed etc.). In both the above cases, the traditional idea of authenticity seems very problematic and more importantly, there does not seem to be an equivalent word in the local lexicon that would imply authenticity as such.

Translating the term

The key term used to describe ‘conservation’ by the early Lichchhavi in those pioneering days and throughout that period is *pratisamskara*, a Sanskrit compound word, formed with prefix ‘*prati*’ (meaning ‘near to’ or making it close to) on root word ‘*sanskara*’ (meaning what has been

‘handed down from respected tradition’ or ‘put together, refined or made perfect or as per sacred precept’), ... the use of term *pratisamskara* seems to be authorizing/ accepting additions and embellishments as integral to conservation of buildings also (Tiwari, 2009, p 4).

Moreover, Tiwari (2009) has also traced the use of different terminologies for different types of *pratisamskara* as follows:

khandafutta pratisamskara: repair of partial deterioration or chipping of stone and loss of polish back to original
pratisamskar or *kalakramena vishirabhagna*: restoration of natural wear and damage through passage of time,

pratisamskarascha kalantikramenaiva karya: restoration of works deteriorated by aggressive action of time – explaining the varying grades of deterioration and commensurate conservation action (Tiwari, 2009, p. 4–5).

Two inscriptions of Amshuverma [reign dates 595–621 CE] are instructive on authenticity and other objective principles followed by the Lichchhavi in conservation works. In his inscription dated 607 CE, Amshuverma records that ‘having observed that the coat of arms was worn out from the top (to bottom) by time, he restored it taking cue from the outline then existing’. ... The tradition of continuing design, style and material as per the original in any reconstruction action appears to have been set in place. In another inscription recording the restoration of a brick and wood *devakula* temple in the year 610 CE, Amshuverma inscribes ‘having repaired carefully so as to keep it in good condition for longer into future’ The aim of conservation appears to have been two fold: assuring continuity of cultural activity and longevity of the artifacts or edifices used in the activity (Tiwari 2009, p. 5).

Comparing the Malla period (tenth to eighteenth centuries) which was characterized by brick and timber structures, with the previous Lichchhavi period (fifth to eighth centuries), architecturally expressed through stone works, we can see the evolution of the concepts and terminologies of construction as well as conservation with regards to the evolving material and technological contexts, from relatively long-lasting stones to materials easily susceptible to weather and time.



Different terminologies for conservation, seen in Malla inscription, indicate a changed situation or approach. A 1359 CE inscription, which records the reconstruction of Pimbahal following the destruction of all the towns of Nepal by the king of Yaban Sultan Samasuddin states that the dilapidated chaitya fallen at that time was given a new cover ('*karoti navakam varayahahi*') or its renovation completed (*jirnoddhara pratipaditam*). In an inscription recording conservation of Jayabagesori water conduit done by Jayasthitimalla (dated 1388 CE) to augment religious merit of his late queen Rajalladevi ... his own action is characterized as '*punah samsthapya vidhivata*' (reconstructed according to ordained rules). The term leaves little doubt that what he did amounted to *samsthapana* (new construction) of the structure and the pit possibly retaining the golden spout from the earlier restorations as the original component. In an inscription recording a major restoration action undertaken by Jagatpalvarma in

1414 CE on Baghbhairav temple of Kirtipur, we find the description of existing condition as '*bhagnavesmashirah su*' (dilapidated and fallen temple including its top roof) and the work '*jirnoddar*' completed with the instruction of three specialists e.g. '*jirnoddaravidhanesim*' (expert in the rules of renovation), '*daivagnya*' (astrologer priest) and '*jajamand*' (family priest) (Tiwari, 2009, p. 5). ...

From ... the Malla period we find discontinuation of the term *pratisamskar* used by the Lichchavi, in favor of *jirnoddhar* (in Sanskrit and *lhongn* in Newar), *navakam vara* (new cover), *punah samsthapana* (reconstruction), and other phrases with similar meaning. One of the key reason for the shift from *pratisamskar* to *jirnoddhar* may be the fact that the later conservation involved less of repair and reconsecration of images and more of restoration, repair and reconstruction of buildings and building parts. This also substantiates that the material nature of the ensemble of architecture had changed with development of comparatively tall temples in brick and wood and construction and reconstruction methods informed with a greater empirical understanding of the action of deteriorating agents of climate, earthquake and fire (Tiwari, 2009, p. 6).

Hence, it can be seen that these concepts have evolved through a historical process, and are still seen in intuitive, community-led practices which are often also adopted by the Department of Archaeology. It is in this context that the case of Kathmandu Valley's living heritage deserves a contextual reference to authenticity rather than a pre-implied notion as has been followed in internationally prevalent guidelines and mindsets.

Conclusion

What emerges from the above two cases; the first discussion referring to a practical dilemma faced at one of the World Heritage Sites, and the second discussion looking into some historic inscriptions to trace terminologies used that are akin to conservation (thus hinting at some implication for authenticity), is that the case of temples in Kathmandu Valley perhaps deserve special attention with regards to the notion of authenticity. On the

one hand, there are many temples where the main shrine or a special part of the temple has a clear restriction on any form of documentation (even verbal descriptions about what is there). In such cases reference to authenticity is very challenging because we have no reference to which authenticity can be formulated. In such cases, authenticity can only be associated with the very tradition that prevents the use of authenticity in terms of material

or technique because we simply do not have any knowledge or reference for the existing state of the particular part of the temple or shrine.

The second case is more historic, but which is relevant to the contemporary discussion on authenticity. This historic discussion suggests that perhaps authenticity is relevant to continuous repair, reconstruction and even beautification but following certain standards of material and craftsmanship. In these cases, there is hardly a specific historic reference that could form the sole basis of judging authenticity because almost all the temples bear multiple layers of such works, thus literally making it difficult to infer the originality both in terms of material as well as design. Hence, the only way to move forward would be to devise approaches to authenticity which refer to the beliefs and traditions more than material and design.

“For cultures, whose historical development is predominantly steered by religions that had and have a cyclical and seasonal notion of time, history becomes diachronic and the layers seasonal. When such accumulated seasonal layers span centuries

of active socio-cultural” understanding, knowing and safeguarding of history, meaning and material cultural “and material action, conservation becomes a practitioner’s nightmare particularly if we take the definition of authenticity at layers of the seasonally renewed originals” (Tiwari, 2009, p. 9–10) or in the case of the temple discussed above, individually renewed “unknown” originals. However, even the practice itself may have undergone changes over time, and may evolve into some kind of negotiated practice in future too. This is not very unlikely if we recognize various new forces and frameworks that may be influential on such sites which are not only religious sites but also heritage sites and so on. Hence, one way or the other, many such religious sites may challenge our notion of authenticity at multiple levels, forcing us to (re)think the relevance of the very idea and the importance we have so far attached to this notion of authenticity.

◀ **Figure 3**
A temple under
restoration at Kathmandu
Durbar Square
World Heritage Site.

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Embekka Devalaya by Pierre Andre LeClercq (CC BY-SA 4.0)

◊ CHAPTER 14 ◊

**Authenticity in
the Sri Lankan context:
traditional maintenance systems,
modern management systems,
and present challenges**

Prasanna B. Ratnyake

Abstract

The paper examines the concept of authenticity in the Sri Lankan context, in connection to the traditional maintenance systems of local communities and modern management systems of heritage professionals. To this end, a series of questions are discussed such as the evolution of the traditional maintenance systems over time and the complexities regarding their sustainability to the present; the introduction of modern management systems from the West with little respect for the Sri Lankan sociocultural context; the relationship between traditional and modern maintenance systems with an emphasis on the applicability and adaptability of the former into the latter; and how this relationship defines present challenges for heritage conservation in Sri Lanka. Two Sri Lankan national heritage sites are used as case studies: Embekke Devale, a complex of shrines dedicated to the deity Kataragama, and Nawagala stupa, a temple in a traditional agricultural village.

Introduction

Sri Lanka is an island just 28 km south of the Indian subcontinent and at the heart of the ocean crossroads of the Silk Routes. It is an island where a rich cultural diversity has existed for the last three millennia. The most remarkable event in the history of Sri Lanka is the arrival of Arhat Mahinda (son of Emperor Asoka) from India in the second century BCE, who introduced Buddhism to the island. His sister Arhat Sangamitta arrived on the island with a sapling from the sacred Bodhi tree (the tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment) and with artisans excelled in 18 different arts and crafts to serve the Bo tree shrine (Geiger, 1912). Thereafter, a noticeable

development in all the arts and crafts was seen in the country, with many traditions continuing into future generations.

Sri Lanka has a written history of 2 000 years until three European nations interfered in the ruling for another 500 years after 1505 CE: the Portuguese, then the Dutch and finally the English (Pieris, 1920). Although they changed the traditional system of livelihood in different ways they contributed to the built heritage by constructing different buildings and structures that are now listed as archaeological monuments according to the Antiquities Ordinance of 1940 (Government of Ceylon, 1940).

Traditional maintenance systems for religious institutions: work for merit

Buddhist cultural heritage representing the past two millennia is a combination of both the tangible and intangible aspects – interrelated and interdependent. The traditions of the societies caused the survival of the monuments and in other ways the monuments caused a continuation of social patterns and livelihoods.

Most of the religious institutions, which are currently considered archaeological monuments were constructed with the sponsorship of the rulers or leaders of that time. Lands were allocated or donated to the institutions for their long-term use. People living on these lands cultivated crops, some of which were given to the institutions, while craftsmen, carpenters, blacksmiths and artisans also contributed to the life of the institution. Several functions and festivals (where dancers and musicians also contribute their skills) related to those temples and the community play a key role in every aspect of the temple. Better maintenance of the temple structures is ensured through this system. Even the craftsmen upgraded their skills

by engaging in temple renovations as the best methods were applied in religious places to get the maximum spiritual feeling. As per the Buddhist philosophy, work done for the temple gives merit for both the present and future lives (Kalupahana, 1975). Therefore individuals or communities may try to render the maximum qualitative work for the temple forgetting every other materialistic benefit. In turn, by engaging in that qualitative task, they could be able to improve and upgrade their skills. Therefore they have got the opportunity to engage in the works of the other people in their community and earn in addition to the advantage of living in the temple lands.

Those traditions were continued from generation to generation and therefore that knowledge was transferred and continued with several possible developments in skills and techniques. Although it was a good and positive system for the sake of the survival of temples, there was a negative aspect in that the community divided into different classes which were later



categorized as castes (Pieris, 1964). The caste system was helpful in continuing the traditions but with modern globalization, people have tended to abandon their traditional professions in order

to avoid caste discriminations. But even with the collapse of the caste system dedication towards the temples and religion continues. Therefore people still try to render their service in other ways.

Modern management systems

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the British established the Department of Archaeology in Sri Lanka (then known as Ceylon) in order to survey, record, research and protect important objects, monuments and sites.

In 1890, the first commissioner for archaeology was appointed and initially it was known as Archaeological Survey Department (Department of Archaeology, 1990). Several monuments and sites were identified, documented and restored. The Antiquities

Ordinance came into law in 1940 (Government of Ceylon, 1940), which was a common legal framework for all British colonial countries. The document sought protection for antiquities. No mention is made of intangible heritage. Even after several amendments and modifications, the Antiquities Ordinance (discussions for revisions and amendments began in 2005 but have not yet concluded) does not include intangible aspects which would ensure safeguarding of heritage as a whole.

Additionally, other legal frameworks in use by different institutions protect parallel heritage.

♥ Figure 1
Embekke Devale.



These are the Departments of Wildlife Conservation; Forest Conservation; Cultural Affairs; National Archives; and the Central Cultural Fund. Although the Department of Cultural Affairs and the Central Cultural Fund work to protect intangible heritage, they do not make a large contribution towards projects related to authenticity.

Prior to official legislation, as discussed above, archaeologically important monuments were maintained and looked after by the local community and only became protected monuments under the Antiquities Ordinance. Thereafter the maintenance and management of those monuments fell under the purview of the Department of Archaeology, where there are qualified professionals to carry out the restoration

works. Professionals from the department have conducted several projects throughout the country, mainly based on material conservation. According to the administrative reports ([Department of Archaeology, 1990](#)) it is clear that less attention was paid to the community and other stakeholders related to the monument. The fact that the Department of Archaeology is only 125 years old while most of the religious structures are more than 400 years old can lead to the conclusion that these structures have been taken care of over time by the local religious community through their skills, dedication and rich artistic taste. Therefore, it is important to understand the skills and needs of the community before commencing a conservation project.

Traditional maintenance systems at Embekke Devale

Embekke Devale is a complex of shrines dedicated to the deity Kataragama, situated in Udunuwara in Kandy District, in the Central Province of Sri Lanka. This particular temple is special for me, as it is situated in my native village. The temple is across the paddy fields from my home, where I spent my childhood with parents and grandparents. Daily we heard the drumming before meal time and were always eager to see the annual festival in August, with dancers, drummers and decorated elephants. The annual pageant is a colourful event with the participation of hundreds of people from neighbouring villages. Several small shops are erected alongside of the street and sell sweets and toys for children. The street fills with the noise of people and vendors.

The temple rituals are performed by a lay custodian, whose profession is passed from generation to generation. Embekke Devale is famous for the timber carvings on the columns of the drumming hall. The roof structure, in which 26 rafters are fixed by one nail, is considered an architectural marvel. The temple has hundreds of acres of paddy and other lands occupied by people.

People of the area respect the temple as they believe in Kataragama, as one who fulfils their humble needs. Even people from afar come and

participate in the rituals in order to receive the blessings. Hundreds of foreign tourists also visit the place especially to see the great wood carvings and the architecturally important buildings.

The temple was built in 1376 by the King of Gampola and his queen and was accordingly bequeathed the necessary lands for its support. Rituals, then as now, are handled by a lay priest whose occupation has been passed down to his next generation. For maintenance of the temple and continuation of the rituals, the system of *rajakariya*, where tenured lands were divided among people skilled in different arts, crafts and tasks. Those people could live and cultivate lands but had to serve the temple in return ([Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017](#)). The temple itself comprises several building structures surrounded by a wall and one structure outside the wall at the end of the main street of the village. The villagers settled along the street creating an urban setting and there was a resting place for the visitors off the main street.

The daily rituals were carried out by the lay priest supported by several others including the drummers, musicians, and other helpers. The meals for the alms traditionally were cooked inside the temple in the kitchen adjoining the main granary



by a male cook, as women were not allowed to engage in the rituals (Jayawardena, 1961).

Annually there was a colourful festival in the month of August followed by the main festival at the Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy. Dancers, drummers, musicians all performed in the pageant which moved along the main street accompanied by beautifully decorated elephants. The lay custodian, representing the king, walks at the end of the pageant expressing his grandeur with other officials of the temple.

Ahead of the annual pageant, the maintenance and repairs are carried out on the temple buildings.

These are carried out by skilled craftsmen who live on temple lands and use the materials provided by these lands. Timber, clay and stones were collected from their own lands. Bricks and clay tiles were burnt in the kilns in the village. Professional potters living in the village made bricks and roof tiles for the temple. The masons and carpenters in the village engaged in

the repair works. Blacksmiths provided the iron and brass items needed. Paints were made with the lime produced in the village kilns. With all these materials, the village community rendered their services to repair and restore the buildings, structures and roads before the annual festival.

The artists such as drummers, dancers and musicians performed their talents in the pageant and culturally significant elephants were finely decorated. The rituals related to the festival were carried out by the relevant officials, and finally reported to the king or the lay custodian that they have successfully completed the task.

This system has continued for more than 600 years and the most important aspect is to recognize the local ability of maintaining the quality

of the site. Regardless of whether an individual performs a tangible or intangible task, they have been able to maintain the standards of service especially because of their dedication to the deity or religious practices.

The architectural products, the buildings and other structures were maintained in the best possible way while protecting its artistic, architectural and historical values. Performing arts were continued with their artistic value which safeguards national culture. Therefore both the tangible and intangible heritage aspects were protected through a local maintenance system.

Modern management system


The Department of Archaeology is empowered to list archaeologically valuable monuments as per the provisions in the Antiquities Ordinance (Government of Ceylon, 1940, Part III). Monuments which can be proved to have been built before 2 March 1815 automatically belong on the list. Therefore the Embekke Devale automatically became an archaeological monument in 1940 but the first “major” intervention in conservation took place in 1976 (Department of Archaeology, 1976); 600 years after the temple’s construction. However, the professionals in art, architecture and archaeology considered the Devale complex as a masterpiece of human creation and many scholars continue to study and value the temple. It continues to be a learning place for students who study fine arts, architecture, archaeology and even engineering and town planning.

Present challenges

However, following the 1976 conservation efforts, community contributions have gradually lessened. The community is convinced that the temple is under the legal authority of the Antiquities Ordinance and therefore restoration works must be carried out with professional involvement and with government funds.

While the professionals engaged in the first restoration works ignored the level of community participation that had been in existence for the past 600 years changing socio-economic and cultural patterns of the latter part of the twentieth century have meant that the community has allowed the professionals to engage in the



 **Figure 2**
Trade craftsman at
Embekke Devale.

restoration especially because the government used public funds for the works. Additionally, the introduction of an open economy, development of communication, transportation, international relations and education, long standing sociocultural patterns changed rapidly and people have had many choices in terms of profession. There has been a tendency of change in the traditional living patterns. Therefore, most of the duties that had been performed as tangible contributions have vanished from the system but intangible contributions have continued with difficulties but encouraged by the merits they gain. The intangible contributions are directly connected with the rituals of the temple and people are reluctant to refrain from those activities due to their dedication to the deity and religious practice. Therefore the daily rituals and annual festivals continue despite difficulties due to changes in the social patterns. As a result of this the skills in the tangible aspects are also disappearing from the community resulting in a major collapse in the self-sufficient rural economy.

Forty years after the first conservation efforts by the Department of Archaeology, community involvement in the maintenance works has totally disappeared. The socio-economic system bound up with the temple is disintegrated, and the families with traditional skills have converted to other professions. Very few crafts such as wood carving and brass works continue but largely cater to the tourism sector. Iron works, pottery and stone works have totally vanished from the system resulting in an import based economy in the country. There was an attempt to recreate these crafts with the UNESCO – Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle Project in the 1980s, but it was discontinued mainly due to the failure of maintaining the quality of the products and a resultant lack of economic gains coupled with changing national economic policies. When people performed those works in dedication to the deity or religious practice, the skills were excellent and when they did them only as a livelihood, the quality of the products was not achieved. Fortunately, many of the rituals and festivals continue with community involvement up to a certain percentage, even today. Although

the living standards and social levels have changed the daily rituals and the annual festival continues as an important event for the community. There is no government involvement in the system except for providing some public facilities such as transportation and rubbish collection during the annual festival season. Therefore performing arts such as drumming, music and dance still survive in the community and some traditional schools at the local level continue to teach them.

With regard to activities connected to the maintenance of the temple, it has become a tradition to get the involvement of the Department of Archaeology. Particularly, before the annual festival the lay custodian requests the department carry out maintenance works, but sometimes the community contributes to the work mainly by providing materials such as timber. They fear engaging in the works themselves, as they have been convinced that it is a legal offence.

Therefore, the challenge of maintenance of the temple lies solely with the Department of Archaeology, although there are manageable human and material resources within the community of the temple, developed over the last 640 years. It is the opinion of this author that the temple, community, and professionals would all benefit if the intangible contributions of the local people could be enhanced by tangible contributions made by professionals in the form of guidance – that they work together in symbiosis.

Traditional maintenance systems at Nawagala stupa

Nawagala stupa is located in the Anuradhapura District, in North Central Province of Sri Lanka. It is surrounded by an agricultural village where there are thousands of acres of paddy lands cultivated by irrigation water supplied from the man-made reservoir. The village has a history of nearly two millennia. It is commonly understood that there was a dark period before the eighteenth century, as most of the dry zone settlements were shifted to the wet zone due to Indian invasions and wide spread disease such as malaria. Therefore there were fewer people living in these villages, especially due to the abandonment of dry reservoirs following the shift of the kingdoms to the south (Geiger, 1960). After the restoration of the irrigation systems during



♥ **Figure 3**
Restoration of
Nawagala stupa.

the nineteenth century by the British rulers, the agricultural community was resettled (Brohier, 1934; Parker, 1909).

As attested to in inscriptions (Department of Archaeology, 1904) this religious complex, along with others at the time, was supported by the king in combination with the local community in terms of agricultural produce, materials and labour as discussed above.

But with the shifting of the Anuradhapura Kingdom to Polonnaruwa (Geiger, 1960) at first and then further south thereafter, the area was gradually abandoned. As a result, poor maintenance of the irrigation systems caused the farmers to leave the paddy fields and widespread disease such as malaria forced the people to move south, from dry zone to wet zone. It is said there was only one community which continued to live in Anuradhapura, in the village of Bulankuama who stayed to protect, serve and conduct the rituals for the sacred Bodhi tree. This is evidence for the continued traditional

system based on faith and dedication to Buddhism. Although the kingdom shifted south, it remained the responsibility of the kings to ensure the safety of the Bodhi tree shrine, and therefore they sent several missions to Anuradhapura.

During the British colonial period and the early years of independence, a modern transportation network was constructed throughout the country and the abandoned irrigation systems were restored (Brohier, 1934; Parker, 1909). Therefore new settlements were built in the dry zone, especially in the north central and eastern provinces. People volunteered to start new livelihoods in the difficult dry zone with less common facilities from the up country and down south were given lands for paddy cultivations and homes. They began cultivation and livelihoods in those villages and since then, many villages have revealed abandoned Buddhist temples.

In the 1940s Nawagala villagers found the ruins of an abandoned ancient temple in the middle of the paddy fields and started to conduct rituals



and constructed a new Buddha image house for the religious purposes. But they did not restore the ruined stupa nor did they construct a new stupa. They believed that the ancient stupa contains the most sacred relics and worshiped it without any restoration. But they had an ambition of restoring the stupa in order to obtain the required spiritual feeling from religious achievements.

Modern management system

The Department of Archaeology, as the authority for safeguarding the archaeological heritage of the country, has listed the Nawagala temple as a protected monument under the legal provisions of the gazette notification of the Antiquities Ordinance. No restorations took place mainly due to financial difficulties, but since the 1940s, the officer in charge of the zone has been inspecting the place regularly. All the sites are inspected regularly to prevent unauthorized construction, treasure hunting, looting, vandalizing, mining and blasting.

In 2009, following the end of 30 years of war in Sri Lanka, several new projects were begun with enthusiasm. There were several religious projects including the building of a massive stupa in memory of the lives of the war heroes in Anuradhapura. People were asked to contribute to the stupa construction and it is believed that most of the stupas were built during the peaceful and prosperous eras in the history.

The villagers of Nawagala, including the author as a representative local professional, got together and discussed how to contribute to the memorial stupa but decided instead to restore the ancient stupa in their temple to mark the historic event. It created enthusiasm among the villagers, especially among the younger generation and they were eager to contribute to the work. Therefore they invited the officer in charge of the zone to discuss the matter and informed them about their proposal. The Department of Archaeology was not in a position to fund the program but agreed to provide professional expertise. Therefore, the villagers formed a stupa restoration society and agreed to provide all the materials, manpower and other necessary services. The excavation works were started at an auspicious time, accompanied by religious and

political leaders of the area. The excavation team of the department commenced the excavations and the villagers supported in various ways. They engaged in works and provided accommodation and food for the team.

Present challenges: restoration work at the stupa

Remains of the original stupa were found by removing the earth and brick particles on the mound and the information revealed that there are two stages of the stupa. The oldest one is smaller than the later one, but does not coincide with the same centre. The three main lower tiers were clearly identified with entrance steps guarded with crystalline stone balustrades. The most important finding was the lime plaster bands on the surface which proved the stupa was originally plastered and white washed. The shape of the dome or the *garbha*, was clear but no square cube and pinnacle was found. The central pillar called *yupa* was found broken in two. Two stone umbrellas, called *chatra* were also found but in broken pieces.

With the newly discovered information, a debate commenced about the final shape of the stupa. The community wanted a stupa with a dome, cube and a pinnacle which is plastered and whitewashed to fulfil their religious needs, that feels the ultimate truth of life taught in Buddhism. But with the information found the Department of Archaeology was of the opinion of completing the stupa with the central stone and *chatra*.

It is important to note that several relic caskets were found during the first stage of excavation conducted to explore the shape of the stupa. These relics were kept in tiny golden caskets shaped like stupas and stored in a small glass casket inside a bigger stone casket. It was the first time that relic caskets were found in the outer surface of the dome. Normally they are kept in the inner chamber. These stone, glass and golden caskets have been made as models of the stupa and most of the time it is believed that the shape of the excavated stupa is similar to those caskets. Therefore there was a proposal to conserve the stupa as per the shape and proportions of the caskets. The golden casket represented a stupa with an open cube, that is a fence on the dome, and a pinnacle fixed on a centre pole. But those caskets lacked the same proportions as they were handmade by different craftsmen.



Meanwhile the debate over the restoration works was in progress. The conservators prepared a plan for restoration, based on the findings. It was with the centre stone and the *chatra* in the fence type open cube on the top of the *garbha*. But the community wanted a pinnacle on the solid cube, as in many other later period stupas. They also wanted to plaster the stupa and whitewash it. There were several discussions between the community and the Department of Archaeology officers, on site and in Colombo. The villagers got together daily at the temple to discuss the matter. There were some contradictory ideas also among different people in the community.

The relics found at the stupa have become very popular among the Buddhist community, and therefore many people come to see and worship them. Those relics are considered as most sacred and even when they were discovered, the

excavation officers had to follow the relevant religious procedures. It is more interesting that even the police officers who came on duty to provide security were worshipping the relics, while the priests preached their sermons. With the developing popularity, the temple authorities together with the community, decided

to hold a public exhibition of the relics. The Department of Archaeology agreed with the proposal and provided necessary facilities and the exhibition became popular among people from many parts of the country. Sometimes even foreigners came to worship the relics.

As Buddhists respect relics similar to a living Buddha, visitors offered many things for them, especially money and jewellery. Some promised to help in the conservation of the stupa. However, the temple community was able to collect enough money and other valuable materials to commence the stupa project. But still there

was no decision on the final shape and finish of the stupa from the Department of Archaeology.

To fulfil the Buddhist religious requirements the community and the monks strongly asked to complete the stupa with a pinnacle and whitewash. Some of the people who made contributions stressed that their contribution was given only if this method was followed. Otherwise the cost would have to be borne by the Department of Archaeology. In the past experience in stupa conservation, there were a number of stupas conserved with minimum intervention, without completion, and those were totally funded by the government (Kulatunga, 1999). And the worst situation was, those stupas had to be maintained by the government after the restoration as they did not fulfil the Buddhist religious needs. In other words, without the support of the local community, the projects failed.

I was told “the devotees wish to contribute to the whitewashing, but not in removing grass on the stupa” (Ragala Pannasara thero Thissamaharama, personal communication, 2014). The whitewashing gives a certain spiritual feeling to the devotees, as the shining bubble of the stupa gives a clear and clean feeling in the mind. Buddhists believe that this feeling gives merit to a better life especially in the next birth. But the removal of plants and other types of activities done on an incomplete stupa, do not give such feelings as such a stupa does not have the same visual impact. In general, Buddhist devotees believe that those completed shrines are more positive places for worship. In the disciplinary texts for Buddhist monks, the Lord Buddha has stated that it is not suitable for the monks to live in dilapidated buildings (Perera, 2016). That gives a clear idea about the importance of restoring and conserving the buildings in a temple or a monastery complex.

Ultimately, based on community opinions and requests, there were several discussions and considerations of the practical situation in religious, economical and maintenance issues related to the stupa; it was decided to restore the stupa, as per the proposal done for completion with a pinnacle and plastered whitewashed. But it was strongly recommended to protect those plasters with chemical methods and to restore the stupa keeping the most ancient and original surfaces, exposed. All the newly added portions would be plastered to get



Figure 4
Nawagala community
members engaged in
restoration works at
the stupa.

the religious appearance. An opening on the new dome was kept to show the most ancient original dome found inside in the excavation.

There was a proposal to bring the relics and relic caskets to Colombo for exhibition in the National Museum, as the archaeologists considered that they are important. But the community and the priests strongly rejected the proposal and wanted to deposit them back in the stupa. Their intention was to make the stupa more sacred by keeping them in the relic chambers. But the archaeological officers feared the relics would be looted. The villagers have ensured the safety of the relics through societies, security systems, awareness programmes and their sheer will to care for and protect the site as their ancestors did before them.

Thereafter, following a series of religious proceedings, conservation work began.

The conservators helped them by assisting in several matters, to avoid damage to the original structure. The main inner chamber was replaced with a new casket, made similar to the original one and the relics safely placed inside, following a colourful religious ceremony with the participation of hundreds of devotees. Other relic chambers were rebuilt on the outer surface of the dome, to redeposit the relics found in the same locations.

All the events in the restoration work were followed by different religious functions. People participated with great enthusiasm, in the belief of collecting merit. Also this collective effort in religious activities created a social coherence among the people. In another way it resulted in enhancing awareness for the protection of archaeological heritage.

Conclusion

The two case studies reveal two types of experiences based on the same system. The case of Embekke Devale discussed the traditional system of maintenance but which is yet slowly eroding in favour of handing over these duties to professionals. The case of Nawagala stupa expresses how respect for local traditions resulted in the enthusiastic participation of the community and the reestablishment of a fading system.

In both cases the community engaged in the sociocultural and religious activities related to the archaeological monument but were exempted from engaging in the traditional tangible contributions such as repairing, maintaining and restoring the monuments. They have the skills and need for engaging in the works and are dedicated to the

traditional and religious beliefs, thoughts and teachings. But the introduction of legal ownership, authority and protection by the state combined with changing socio-economic values, many of the traditions are vanishing. The author recognizes that these traditions provide many benefits to society. Even in the present day, these traditions may be advantageous for the development of social, economic and cultural sectors. In parallel to that there may be environmental benefits to the country.

Therefore, professionals in the heritage sector must turn towards the community and the traditional systems other than solely practicing modern technical methods which may be alien to long surviving cultural systems.



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◊ CHAPTER 15 ◊

**Authenticity in the context
of living religious heritage:
the Sri Lankan experience**

Nilan Cooray

Abstract

The term authenticity in the practice of conservation and management of heritage came to Sri Lanka from the West. On this basis the paper, while admitting that authenticity, as a useful concept in the decision-making process, attempts to raise certain issues with regard to the application of the concept in the context of the living religious heritage of Sri Lanka, where the traditions and management systems are still active and strong despite the introduction of modern techniques. Two of Sri Lanka's World Heritage Sites – Anuradhapura, an archaeological site with a strong living character and Kandy, predominantly a living religious site – are used as case studies. A wide range of issues associated with the operation and management of the two sites are addressed, such as World Heritage listing documentation, the conduct of rituals, the caring for monastic structures and new construction. The paper concludes by raising the appropriateness of giving equal emphasis to all aspects related to authenticity in order to sustain the spiritual values of a living religious site.

Introduction

Although the term authenticity in the context of conservation and management of heritage has come to us from the West, only a few experts in Sri Lanka (Wijesuriya, 1993, 2000; Weerasinghe, 2006, 2011) have so far made a serious attempt to find out what this term exactly means in Sri Lanka's sociocultural context or to find an appropriate term in the local languages, notably in Sinhala, that is equivalent or at least close to the imported concept of authenticity. This is one of the problems faced by us, particularly as teachers, when we introduce authenticity to undergraduate and postgraduate students in conservation and heritage management who follow lectures in the local languages. As an easy way out, most teachers use the direct translations given in the English-Sinhala dictionaries such as *kathruthvaya*, *sathyawadi-bava*, *thathyathava*, *sadikaratvaya*. These terms, however, are not at all close to the concept of authenticity, but are rather misleading and hence the students are confused in their understanding of authenticity. In order to revisit authenticity in the Asian context, as the theme of the 2014 forum suggested, it is vital to understand this concept in our local cultural heritage context so that beginners will find it easier and more efficient to grasp. This is a task by itself which involves referring traditional sources such as *silpa* texts (Hindu and Buddhist texts on the arts, crafts and design), historic inscriptional records, etc. with the possible input of linguistic experts to see if and how the term authenticity may make sense in a local language.

With regard to the literature in Sri Lanka on conservation and heritage management, there are only a handful of publications covering the concept of authenticity. Among them Wijesuriya (1993) is one of the first scholars who touches upon this concept with regard to the Buddhist religious monuments in Sri Lanka. Using several case studies from Sri Lanka, he argues that the user values of the religious monuments in use are supreme and discusses the issues connected to authenticity. He further continues his argument and applies it in relation to the restoration of the bomb destroyed

Temple of the Tooth Relic at the World Heritage Site of Kandy (Wijesuriya, 2000, 2007; and his paper in this volume) and suggests that this project proves that the practices of local culture may override internationally set conservation guidelines. In addition, Weerasinghe (2006, 2011) who discusses issues related to conservation of Buddhist heritage identifies space, form and sight (vision) as three physical or tangible domains of a Buddhist heritage as aspects that are related to authenticity. He concludes that the space of Buddhist heritage and in a broader sense, living heritage places must be able to accommodate the Buddhist rituals; the form of such living heritage must be able to embody the ritual and liturgical values of the heritage; and the sight of a heritage should be able to visually convey the meanings and values of the heritage.

With these introductory remarks, this paper attempts to bring to the fore certain issues with regard to authenticity in the context of living religious heritage by presenting two World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka – the Sacred City of Anuradhapura (an archaeological site with a strong element of livingness, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017a) and the Sacred City of Kandy (predominantly a living religious site, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017b). The relevant sections of the draft retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) of these properties prepared by the State Party and submitted to the World Heritage Centre for review are used here to assess the values of these properties. Since attributes are aspects of a property which are associated with or express the values of a property holistically, attempt is made thereafter to identify the attributes related to these properties as they are vital to the understanding of authenticity, which are the focus of protection, conservation and management. Then a discussion follows as to what actions have been made to express authenticity, especially in the context of living heritage. Based on the discussion, a statement on authenticity is derived for each site.

The Sacred City of Anuradhapura

Located in the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, Anuradhapura became the principal political centre of the island and a sacred city of Buddhism from the third century BCE to the tenth century CE. Greatly influenced by Buddhist ethics and practices, its city plan consisted of numerous monasteries and artificial reservoirs arranged in separate concentric rings encircling its walled citadel. The centrally located stupas of the monasteries and the reservoirs symbolize the spiritual and material well-being of the civilization. The array of monasteries which facilitated different functions ranging from meditation to scholarly activities of the monks showcase an unparalleled development and evolution of monastic planning in the whole of the Buddhist world. The stupas which enshrine the bodily relics of the Lord Buddha still survive while the Bodhi tree, an associate relic of the Master (and considered to be the world's oldest recorded living historical tree) is still living and venerated at Anuradhapura. Reaching a maximum height of about 120 m, the colossal stupas at Anuradhapura are the largest monuments of their kind in the entire Buddhist tradition, even rivalling the stone-built great pyramids of Egypt in height and volume. Images of the Buddha at Anuradhapura showcase the Master's pristine qualities of spiritual strength and wisdom in stone. The city was also an international centre of Buddhist learning and pilgrimage, and the spiritual capital of the most orthodox form of Buddhism. During 13 centuries of its existence, the city was invaded and occupied on several occasions by South Indians of non-Buddhist faiths. Anuradhapura's Buddhist character was so strong that it was impervious to hostile influences from outside and hence stands as a permanent manifesto to the identity of a nation whose culture is formed by the philosophy of Buddhism.

The Sacred City of Anuradhapura was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1982 under criteria ii (interchange of human values), iii (testimony to a cultural tradition/ civilization) and vi (associations). As per the draft retrospective SOUV, justification for inscription of Anuradhapura to the World Heritage List is as follows:

Criterion ii:

Sacred City of Anuradhapura is a unique representation which demonstrates the developments in town planning, architecture and sculptural art with the influence of Buddhism commencing from 3rd century BC over a period of 13 centuries as reflected by the monastic city dominated by several rings of monastic establishments, distinctive character and expression of ritual centers and structures, such as stupas (some of the largest in the world), Buddha images and decorative elements. These in turn exerted great influences on the development in monastic planning, architecture and sculptural art of the Sri Lanka's post-Anuradhapura period. The stupa design that evolved at Anuradhapura, in particular, has also exerted great influence on the development of stupa architecture not only in Sri Lanka, but in south east Asian countries such as Thailand and Myanmar (Department of Archaeology, 2012a, p. 1).

Criterion iii:

The city is an exceptional testimony to a world civilization that had evolved with the Buddhist ethics and practices and the highly sophisticated irrigation technology that blossomed since 3rd century BC for a period of 13 centuries. It is demonstrated through the overall morphology of its Buddhist metropolis whose skyline and cityscape is dominated by high concentration of grand scale ritual centers and structures as well as artificial reservoirs for irrigation, arranged in the three tiered layout of the city namely, the citadel, monastic rings and the reservoirs to facilitate spiritual and material well being of the populace by the ruler. The city also bears exceptional testimony to the brilliant organizational capabilities and technical knowledge of a civilization as reflected through the construction of massive stupas, which is unparalleled in the Buddhist world (Department of Archaeology, 2012a, p. 1–2).

Criterion vi:

Sacred city of Anuradhapura has been acknowledged throughout the Buddhist world during the 1st millennium AD, the spiritual capital of the Theravada Sect, the most orthodox form of Buddhism as reflected by the high concentration of monastic establishments and shrines associated with the relics of the Buddha. The city is also tangibly associated with the tradition of relic

worship as reflected by the stupas enshrining the bodily relics of the Buddha since 3rd century BC to date. It is also the place where sacred Bodhi-tree, another object of worship and brought from India in the 3rd century BC is located and considered as one of the most sacred objects by the Buddhist world over. This has been a renowned place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists in Sri Lanka and worldwide (Department of Archaeology, 2012a, p. 2).

From the above statements, we identify town planning, architectural, artistic, technological, archaeological/historical and spiritual values are associated with the Sacred City of Anuradhapura. Based on the statements related to the criteria given above, a number of attributes expressing the values of the city can be derived to aid discussion of what actions have been made to express authenticity in terms of the values of the property.

Monastic establishments

Although in ruined condition, the physical remains (form and design) of the monasteries reveal several monastic layouts. As these monasteries have ceased to function, there is no attempt to restore these structures to their former glory and hence they are preserved, as per the conservation guidelines (discussed in Silva, 1969), mainly through consolidation. However, due to the fact that living ritual structures such as stupas and the sacred Bodhi tree shrine are located within some of these monasteries, essential structures such as monks' residences and preaching halls are constructed within such monasteries, per traditional practices in order to facilitate the continuity of the living functions of these ritual structures. However, according to the current World Heritage *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016), the challenge is to ensure that these interventions are carried out with great sensitivity and respect to the historic layout (form and design).

Ritual centres and structures

With regard to the conservation of living stupas, which contain relics, the spiritual values associated with them suggest the concept of preservation is more symbolic (presence of the Master through the relics enshrined in historic brickwork and plaster) than physical apprehension

and preservation of the material remains of the structure. Although the British colonial policy of conservation during the first half of the twentieth century was governed by minimalistic intervention through the use of techniques such as consolidation (Wijesuriya, 1993) but prominent Buddhists and clergy at that time demanded the structures be reconstructed or completely restored in order to enhance the spiritual values and to re-establish the Buddhist identity which had diminished under the previous centuries of colonial rule. Therefore in the case of the living stupas carrying high degrees of spiritual values (such as Ruwanveli and Mirisaveti), they were completely restored to their former glory with the use of traditional design, similar materials, and traditional craftsmanship, in keeping with the traditional approach to historic monuments (Wijesuriya, 1993). Although Abhayagiri and Jetavana stupas have been conserved by the state institution, Central Cultural Fund, following a minimalist approach by maintaining the profile of the dome with exposed brickwork as it has survived without plastering and leaving the broken spires as they have survived to maintain a balance between archaeological and spiritual characters (Cooray, 2012) the need for complete restoration of these two mega stupas still surfaces from time to time. Similarly in the case of the Bodhi *malaka* (the surrounding structure of the sacred Bodhi tree), in keeping with the long tradition of renovating the structure to accommodate evolving ritual practices and the need to accommodate more devotees, the Bodhi *malaka* has been expanded and renovated in recent times to maintain the continuous living function of this sacred tree so that a high degree of authenticity is expressed by use and function and spirit and feeling (Cooray, 2012). However, the remains of other historic religious structures such as *vatadages* (circular relic houses, of which only the stone pillars are surviving at present) associated with Thuparama and Lankarama stupas have been retained without reconstructing the roofs as per the current conservation guidelines (discussed in Silva, 1969) to showcase their historic form and design. Similarly, the Buddha images and the decorative elements are largely untouched with respect to their historic form and design.



Skyline and cityscape

During the British colonial period, Anuradhapura became a provincial administrative capital and hence numerous administrative, commercial and residential buildings and establishments were established within the core historic zone. However, after independence (1948), a sacred area planning scheme was established under the patronage of

the then prime minister to revive the sacred character of the historic city. Most of the incongruous and intrusive elements and

features that affected the concentric city plan have now been removed (Wijesuriya, 1993). Therefore the location and setting of numerous monasteries and artificial reservoirs in relation to the citadel are preserved to a great extent. No interventions have been carried out with regard to the change of scale (extent) of the monasteries and artificial reservoirs. The artificial reservoirs still function and their immense sheets of water continue to dominate the

cityscape. Although some views in terms of skyline have changed, for example the Dakkhina stupa has lost its scale due to its present ruined condition and the Ruwanveli and Mirisaveti stupas are completely restored, the Jetavana and Abhayagiriya stupas still retain physical historic evidence which showcase the historic scale in terms of height and volume to express their dominance of the skyline and cityscape.

Construction of massive stupas

Although in ruins, the Jetavana and Abhayagiriya stupas, in addition to their height and volume retain enough evidence to showcase their form (parabolic profile of the dome, which is the most stable form for such a construction), materials and techniques (large burnt clay tiles bonded in

clay mortar with the foundations reaching down to the bedrock) as well as the massiveness of the undertakings (manufacturing of several millions of bricks, utilization of a massive labour force, scale of construction etc.) (Cooray, 2012). They have been conserved to highlight these aspects.

The sacred Bodhi tree and the stupas enshrining relics of the Buddha

The material remains of the sacred Bodhi tree and the stupas (Thuparama, Ruwanveli etc.) enshrining the relics of the Buddha (material and substance) still exist at the site. The historic written sources further confirm the tradition of the belief system as well as the continuity of worship associated with these ritual objects throughout the historical period. These ritual objects are still being worshiped. Although the original physical form and design were altered over several periods of history to facilitate evolving religious practices, practical needs of different periods through restoration, renovation and rehabilitation, these interventions have not affected the authenticity in use and function as well as the spirit and feeling.

The retrospective SOUV for the Sacred City of Anuradhapura, paragraph on Authenticity states:

The central location of the fortified citadel and the layout of the monasteries and artificial reservoirs in concentric rings encompassing the citadel are well preserved. The layout and design of the different types of monasteries have survived. The enormous scale of the monumental stupas as key objects of worship, are in ruined conditions but have been subjected to constant renewal by the religious community. The location, setting, use, and function of the artificial reservoirs for irrigation still continue. The Buddha images and decorative sculptures are well preserved. The continuous use and function, religious traditions, and spirit and feeling associated with the Bodhi-tree and the stupas enshrining the bodily relics are the truthful expressions of their associated value. Because of the Sacred City of Anuradhapura's continuing use as a place of worship, the stupas containing sacred relics and objects of worship are continuously restored using the same design, similar materials, and traditional craftsmanship. Pilgrimage is another aspect that maintains its authenticity (Department of Archaeology, 2012a, p. 2).



Figure 1
Ruwanveliseya, one of the great stupas enshrining the sacred relics (founded in the second century BCE and completely reconstructed during the first half of the twentieth century) at Anuradhapura and which continues to attract thousands of devotees every full moon.

The Sacred City of Kandy

Situated in the island's central highlands, Kandy became the capital city of the last precolonial kingdom of Sri Lanka from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries. The city's royal precinct, or the citadel, occupies the highest elevation of a hierarchical order of descending terraces. In keeping with the long standing politico-religious belief where the sacred tooth relic of the Lord Buddha was considered the palladium of sovereignty, the Temple of the Tooth Relic is located in close proximity to the royal palace. However, the city of Kandy offers an outstanding example which illustrates the final stage of this development where, the Royal Palace and the Temple of the Tooth Relic are juxtaposed. The citadel which consists of the sacred tooth relic (a symbol legitimizing sovereignty), is visually and physically separated from the rest of the city by means of moats and a large artificial lake to make it appear to float in the sky.

The Temple of the Tooth Relic in Kandy is one of the holiest shrines in the Buddhist world. The shrine has several purpose-built spaces to facilitate rituals associated with relic worship. The daily ritualistic traditions performed by thousands of devotees and performing arts through the rhythmic drum beating with religious music at the shrine reflect the ever flourishing Buddhist ritual centred on the sacred tooth relic. The annual pageant of the sacred tooth relic which has a history going back at least 17 centuries is still held to honour the relic. Regarded as one of Asia's grandest traditional festivals and world's most colourful processions, it parades through the historic streets of Kandy during the full moon of Esala (July/August) with about 100 caparisoned elephants with illumination, over 1 000 dancers and drummers, flag and torch bearers, whip-crackers and Kandyan chieftains in full regalia. The main attraction of the pageant is the richly dressed majestic tusked elephant of the shrine, which carries the replica of the relic casket, and the pageant is watched by thousands of devotees and visitors.

The Sacred City of Kandy was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1988 under criteria iv (typology) and vi (association). As per the draft

retrospective SOUV, justification for inscription of Kandy to the World Heritage List is as follows:

Criterion iv:

Kandy offers an outstanding example of a type of ancient royal city in Buddhist world which illustrates the final stage of the development of a long standing politico-religious belief where the sacred tooth relic of the Lord Buddha was considered the palladium of sovereignty, a belief, which has a history going back to the 4th century AD. This is reflected clearly through the architectural ensemble of the citadel where the royal palace and the Sacred Tooth Relic Shrine are juxtaposed and through the designing of the citadel to be physically and visually separated from rest of the city (Department of Archaeology, 2012b, p. 1–2).

Criterion vi:

The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, the Royal Palace complex, and the sacred city of Kandy are directly and tangibly associated with the ever flourishing cult of relic worship in the Buddhist world, to honour the Lord Buddha. It is reflected by the daily ritualistic traditions performed by the thousands of devotees and performing arts through the rhythmic drum beating with religious music at the shrine, by the purposive built environment of the Sacred Tooth Relic Shrine (one of the holiest shrine in the Buddhist world), and also through the annual pageant of the Tooth Relic which parades the streets of the city. This pageant brings a strong meaning to the shrine and is one of Asia's grandest traditional festivals with a history going back at least 17 centuries (Department of Archaeology, 2012b, p. 2).

From the above statement, we can identify spatial planning, architectural, artistic and spiritual values are associated with the Sacred City of Kandy. Based on the statements related to the criteria given above, a number of attributes expressing the values of the Sacred City of Kandy can be derived to aid discussion on what actions have been made to express authenticity in terms of the values of the property.

The original location of historic buildings within the citadel has survived to express the juxtaposition of the Royal Palace and the Temple of the Tooth Relic. Although the



High Courts building constructed during British rule demonstrates British colonial architectural characteristics within the citadel, it is located at its rear space and does not have any negative effect on the relationship between the palace and the temple. At present its judiciary function is moved out of this building to a site outside of the World Heritage property and the building now houses the International Buddhist Museum that is compatible with the heritage character of the precinct.

The location and setting of the citadel which occupies the highest elevation of a hierarchical order of descending terraces of the city, together with the forested mountain (Udawatte Kele) forming a backdrop to the citadel and the artificial lake and the moat that separates the citadel from the rest of the citadel are well preserved. The form and design of the wave-swell and cloud-drift parapet walls associated with the lake and the moat are also well preserved. Although some frontal parts of the shrine were damaged due to a terrorist bomb attack in 1998 (Associated Press, 1998) such parts have been reconstructed following the original design, materials etc. thus retaining the authenticity in form and design, material and substance,

to facilitate the continuity of use and function.

The tradition of numerous rituals being performed at the Temple of the Tooth Relic such as the offering of flowers and religious chanting to the sacred relic by devotees, offering of alms to the sacred relic three times a day at this

shrine by the custodians of the sacred relic to offer the most devout veneration similar to that given to the Buddha in his lifetime, the rhythmic drum beats filling the air with religious music to glorify the Master still continue. These rituals also contribute to the continuity of the spirit and feeling of the shrine.

The sacred space still retains the major ritual space of the hierarchical composition of the shrine. The layout of the sacred and service spaces as well as the use and function of the shrine (for example, the drummers' hall and the spaces for congregation of the peripheral structure, the ground floor of the central shrine with elongated hall called *dig-ge*, and the treasure room, where the gifts offered to the shrine are stored, the sandalwood tabernacle or *handun kudama*, and the perfume chamber or *gandhakuti*, which is the central chamber where the sacred tooth relic is kept for worship in the upper floor of the central shrine) is well preserved to express the tradition of relic worship to honour the Lord Buddha. With increased tourism, the challenge however, is to have a correct balance between pilgrimage and tourism so that controlled tourism will not have any effect on the sanctity of the sacred spaces. The spatial composition which gave hierarchical order to the central space enshrining the relics of the Master was disturbed at a later period due to the construction of the *paththirippuwa* the octagonal structure of the last king of Kandy in the early nineteenth century to address the public and raise the peripheral structure defining the courtyard surrounding the central shrine (Seneviratna, 1983). The recently introduced canopy over the central shrine which follows traditional architectural form and detailing has, however, revived the original hierarchical order making the central shrine the dominant element in its overall spatial composition. This is a unique example which illustrates how new elements could be used to enhance authenticity.

Figure 2

Annual pageant through the historic streets of Kandy (with the Temple of the Tooth Relic in the background) reflecting the ever flourishing cult of relic worship.

Annual pageant of the tooth relic

The traditions, spirit and feelings associated with the annual pageant of the sacred tooth relic still continue. The numerous forms of intangible heritage associated with the processions, caparisoned elephants, dancers and drummers, flag and torch bearers, whip-crackers

and Kandyan chieftains in full regalia, the richly dressed, majestic tusked elephants of the shrine carrying the replica of the relic casket, which parades the historic streets of the city are also continuing. Throughout the historical period, the form of the pageant has evolved with the introduction of new intangible items such as dancing, hence the authenticity of this aspect is not to preserve the same items in the pageant forever which will lead it to a static situation, but to introduce from time to time new items to the pageant that are compatible with its overall historic character. Since this pageant was an annual event throughout the historical period, any attempt at altering this tradition, such as holding it twice a year to gain monetary benefits due to tourism, however will seriously compromise the authenticity in terms of tradition.

The retrospective SOUV for the Sacred City of Kandy paragraph on Authenticity states:

The location and setting of the Sacred City of Kandy and the historic buildings within it have survived to express the juxtaposition of the Royal Palace and the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic. The tradition of numerous rituals performed at the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic still continues and contributes to the continuity of the spirit and feeling of the shrine. The layout of the sacred and service spaces as well as the use and function of the shrine are also well preserved. The traditions, spirit and feeling associated with the annual pageant of the Sacred Tooth Relic which is still held to honour the sacred Relic express the relic worship to honour the Lord Buddha. The numerous forms of intangible heritage associated with the world's most colourful processions, which parades the streets of the city and watched by thousands of devotees truthfully and credibly express the tradition of relic worship to honour the Lord Buddha (Department of Archaeology, 2012b, p. 2).

Conclusion

The two World Heritage Sites selected from Sri Lanka (one with an archaeological site with a strong element of livingness and the other, a living religious site) demonstrate that such attributes as use and function, traditions, techniques, spirit and feeling are directly related to the sustenance of the spiritual values of living religious sites. The example from Anuradhapura suggests that aspects such as material and substance, directly related to archaeological values are sometimes compromised to a certain degree

for the sake of highlighting the spiritual values, because of the strong livingness of the site. In such a situation, as outlined in the Nara Document on Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994), is it appropriate to conclude that the authenticity in terms of material and substance are impacted at Anuradhapura through the enhancement of spiritual values attributed to the site? Or does it point out that in the context of living religious heritage; the values-based approach to conservation and management has certain limitations?

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◊ CHAPTER 16 ◊

**Authenticity in connection to
traditional maintenance practices:
sacred living heritage sites
of Sri Lanka**

Ashley de Vos

Abstract

The term authenticity, according to its Greco–Roman origins means genuine and true, and its first use in an international conservation document is in the Venice Charter which was formulated within a Western European conceptual and ideological framework. While its application to the World Heritage nomination and declaration process of heritage sites of the Western European world could be seen as rather straightforward, its application to heritage sites from other cultural regions is still under examination. In this context, the present paper discusses the concept of authenticity in connection to traditional maintenance practices of living sacred heritage sites of the non-Western world and particularly of living Buddhist temples of Sri Lanka. The first part of the paper outlines the evolution of the definition of the concept of authenticity in an international context. The second part focuses on the traditional maintenance practices of living Buddhist temples in Sri Lanka. The third part outlines the key challenges regarding the conservation of these temples, with specific reference to the methodology adopted by the archaeological excavations carried out in Sri Lanka today. It is shown that most of the international conservation documents, following the principles of the Venice Charter, have adopted a mostly archaeological approach to the monuments, and therefore do not adequately address the concepts of a living heritage site and its authenticity.

The historic evolution of authenticity

The term authenticity, according to its Greco–Roman origins, means genuine and true. Its first use in an international conservation document is in the Venice Charter (ICOMOS, 1965), which was formulated within a Western European conceptual and ideological framework. It is important to stress, however, that the term is used in the charter with no definition of its meaning (see also Cleere, 1989). Specifically, in the Preamble to the charter, it is stated that one of the reasons that historic monuments should be safeguarded is because “it is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity”. Article 9 further states that the “aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents”. UNESCO stressed that every signatory has to fall in line with the charter, even though the largest cultural diversity in the tangible and intangible heritage of the world that existed outside Europe was not considered in its drafting. In 1972 and subsequent years, UNESCO brought out the *World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 1972) and the concept of the nomination of World Heritage Sites. The main criterion in the evaluation process was the authenticity and integrity of the sites. This gave heritage a very narrow definition.

In 1994, due to the significant difficulty faced by countries mostly of the non-Western world especially in applying aspects of the Venice Charter to their heritage, the Nara Document on Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994) was born in Nara,

Japan. As noted by one of the participants to the conference that led to the drafting of the Nara Document “during this conference, it became clear that the word authenticity has different connotations, and varies with (in) every country. These different opinions about authenticity also results in different values of the historic subject, and thus also on the conservation of the subject” (Galla, 1994, p. 312–315). The Nara Document attempted to rectify in some way the aforementioned inadequacies of the Venice Charter by providing a framework regarding authenticity that would ensure the legitimization of the diversity of heritage (Galla, 1994), i.e. some countries prefer to preserve the original, genuine material of a historic place or object, even in cases where it is incomplete; others prefer to have a complete image of the original shape even through the application of new materials; and for others the location of heritage is of highest significance. This recognized the legitimate rights of many of the South Asian and Far East countries to continue with the traditional practices of reconstruction of their heritage, e.g. using timber specially grown for the purpose of temple maintenance extracted from sacred forests, thus respecting and protecting the authenticity and ensuring the intransient quality of essential heritage requirements.

In 2001, UNESCO drafted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (UNESCO, 2001), recognizing the multiform nature of culture in time and space, as well as declaring cultural diversity to be equally important to biodiversity.

Authenticity in connection to the traditional maintenance practices for living sacred heritage sites in Sri Lanka

To the traditional Sri Lankan communities, authenticity has never concentrated on the form; it is embroiled in the continued protection and preservation of the original. The exclusive purpose

of the form is associated with the protection provided for the sacred relic enshrined within. Protection has been supported over the course of time by literature, inscriptions, word of mouth and



today also through careful excavation. The means of protection go through the same progressive changes as culture, following the influences and styles of each era.

This approach to conservation is not limited to the stupas but starts first with the sacred relics themselves. Recent excavations (Ratnayake, this volume) have exposed many relic enshrinements and their special means of protection over time to the present date: the relics deposited in the stupas have gone through ritual placement, in the form of chanting and recitation of sacred texts and rituals.

The dedication process of Ruwanveliseya stupa of the third century BCE is neatly described in the *Mahavamsa* (Geiger, 1912). According to which, the relic was first wrapped in gold leaf and placed inside a clear crystal stupa-shaped receptacle. This crystal reliquary was placed within a gold replica stupa that was usually modelled in gold foil based on the final shape of the stupa that would ultimately be constructed to protect the relic. The gold relic stupa was then placed within a terracotta receptacle with cover. The whole structure was subsequently placed within a hollow stone receptacle and sealed with a stone lid.

Accordingly, the construction and enshrinement within the stupa went through a similar process. The relic, complete with the stone protection receptacle, was placed on top of the vertical pedestal referred to as the *maha meru* stone (a sacred cosmological mountain in numerous South Asian-originating religions). The meru stone was placed on a *yantra gala* stone (a slab with rectangular stones sunk in it to receive valuables). The *yantra gala*, usually with nine or more holes of an odd number carved deep into the slab, has a stone cover and is a receptacle created to enshrine many important auspicious items. Usually a bronze statue of Brahma was placed in the centre hole of *yantra gala*, with statues of the gods of the four quarters and their *vahana* (beings, typically animals or mythical entities used as vehicles of the gods) placed in the hollows located at the cardinal points, with erstwhile auspicious symbols placed in the other hollows. The placing of the *maha meru* central to the *yantra gala* and on the top of Brahma is said to portray the message that the teachings of the Buddha, the Enlightened One, are supreme. The whole structure was assembled inside a large

stone-lined receptacle, the inner walls of which were painted with representations of *devas* (divine beings). The relic enshrinement in Sri Lanka took place at the level of the *pesewa* (stepped terrace), while on the subcontinent of India the relics were usually placed at a higher elevation at the level of the *harmika* or *hataras kotuwa* (square railing at the top of the stupa surrounding the central pole).

The stupa, constructed of high-fired terracotta bricks manufactured to a particular specification and size, with many bricks carrying the manufacturer's marks with pride, was built encompassing the whole. The fact that the stupa contained an enshrinement was recorded in literature and in stone inscriptions. There are also instances when the event is recorded in later inscriptions like the one of the establishment of the Girihanduseya temple at Thiriyaya. The jungles and rock caves scattered around the island are replete with stone inscriptions, damaged statues and remains of complexes that are evidence of this rich heritage, as has been recently confirmed by findings of the Department of Archaeology (Edirisinghe, 2014). The Thiriyaya inscription records the fact that the hair relics of the Buddha, which were personally collected by the trader brothers Thapassu and Balluka on a special request made to the Buddha himself after presenting the Enlightened One with his first *dana* (offering of the Buddha), were enshrined. Girihanduseya was constructed to enshrine the hair relic of the enlightened one during the life of the Buddha in the sixth century BCE. This may be the very first relic stupa in the world and certainly the first in Sri Lanka. This event would have taken place two hundred years prior to the construction of the Thuparamaya (third century BCE) which was the first stupa built in Anuradhapura to enshrine the collar bone relics of the Buddha. The subsequent requirement to construct a *vatadage* (roofed covering) over both stupas denotes the sacredness attached and concretizes its preciousness (de Vos, 1990). This also confirms the fact that Buddhist worship and the teachings of the Enlightened One existed in Sri Lanka before the establishment of the Anuradhapura kingdom and poses the question whether the early wave of settlers who arrived around 500 BCE had already been aware of the teachings of the Enlightened One.

The Anuradhapura period includes the historic conversion of King Devanampiya Tissa (third century BCE) and the royal court by Arhat Mahinda, the son of Emperor Asoka, and records the ensuing Buddhist story of Sri Lanka. The Pandya and Chola invasions and the unstable conditions that prevailed led to the constant shifting of the capital. The Girihanduseya was forgotten until the inscription recording the event and the additional protection afforded in the form of a *vatadage* was discovered. The discovery of the inscription brought this very special stupa back into prominence. The stupa is unique as it displays minimum intervention that possibly ceased with the second encasing and the installation of the protective *vatadage*. The form of the original small stupa is still visible and the stone columns that held up the heavy timber roof are in their original locations.

The authenticity in the enshrinement was ensured by the protective covering afforded by the brick built stupa that engulfed it. When the outer encasing of brick suffered deterioration usually due to exposure to the elements, the wetting and drying cycles, subsequent kings, driven by a need to gain merit, rebuilt and introduced a second covering larger than the previous stupa utilizing similar materials, construction methods and ritual symbolism. The stupa was finally finished in lime putty and whitewash, thus maintaining the visual value expressed by the Buddha of a white stupa against the blue sky.

Each rebuilding was conducted as in the first building phase of the stupa, with similar expressions of religious fervour that often went on for several days. The religious community and the lay people gathered to chant the sutras and in every phase of rebuilding new sacred relics, usually that of later arhats (advanced practitioners), were enshrined. These later additions never disturbed the credibility of the original relic that established authenticity; rather they reinforced the legitimate value attached to the original enshrinement.

The neglected Neelagiri stupa that was recently excavated (Somadeva, 2011) is an excellent example where the archaeological evidence seen in the availability of stone *chatras* (umbrella-form stones that top the central pillar of the stupa) indicates that the stupa was rebuilt, on at least three or four occasions using terracotta bricks of the same

quality and size and methodology as was common in the Anuradhapura period. In the final phase of encasing, which was recently uncovered, 20 special gold reliquary enshrinements and in addition over 150 crystal reliquaries, deposited on the *pesawa* (stepped terrace), were discovered. The locations of the enshrinements were indicated by placing a *siripathula* (sacred foot print of the Buddha) carved on a stone slab in front of the more important enshrinement. The *siripathula* slabs display a stylistic variant from each other, pointing to the fact that the carvings were entrusted to different craftsmen or were executed at different periods.

It is interesting to note that *siripathula* stones, the earliest objects used for worship, were in use for a couple of centuries prior to the introduction of the statues of the Buddha. These *siripathula* stones belong to the earliest Anuradhapura (third to first centuries BCE) period. Therefore, the rebuilding phases may have followed very close to each other. However, as there is little literary evidence of the stupa in existence, possibly due to the correct historical name having eluded most scholars, more research and detailed investigation is required in the surrounding elephant infested forest to rediscover the extent of the monastery that supported this special stupa, before conclusions could be reached.

If there was a delay between the different phases of rebuilding, it is possible that the original shape of the first phase of the stupa was not followed. As the form of the stupa evolved and changed over time with the different influences that entered the country, the form was not considered critical. Greater importance was attached to the continuation of the original authenticity in the enshrined relic so that its credibility was maintained and protected by the different coverings or envelopes of brick that were added on top of each other from time to time.

Therefore, in Sri Lanka what was of the highest import regarding authenticity of living stupas is not the form but the relics that are enshrined within, which was the actual purpose for the construction of the stupas in the first place. As recorded in most of the inscriptions (Department of Archaeology, 1904), the longevity of stupas is considered a time period related to the life of the sun and moon, as long as they last, which means forever.



Conserving living heritage sites: challenges and suggestions regarding authenticity

Most of the international conservation documents, following the principles of the Venice Charter, have adopted a mostly archaeological approach to the monuments. The concepts of a living religious heritage site and its authenticity have not been adequately addressed.

Within this framework, a word of caution may be raised on the methodology adopted in most archaeological excavations carried out in Sri Lanka today. More specifically, there have been instances when the relics, which have been so carefully enshrined, with high symbolic, religious, historical, archaeological and national pride significance, are excavated and removed for safety to museums. Ratnayake ([this volume](#)) discusses the struggle

by communities to keep the relics enshrined in the stupa. Given that archaeology is by nature a destructive process, the very disturbance and removal of the relic irreversibly destroys the symbolic value attached to the enshrinement. On this basis, the excavated stupa has little value and has lost its original authenticity and therefore could be even permanently removed.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to educate heritage professionals on the special respect required during the handling of tangible and intangible heritage, as well as the religious custodians on the special cultural dimensions and conservation requirements for the inheritance of heritage to the future generations.

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Mural painting in the Hemis monastery by Michael Gäbler (CC BY 3.0)

◊ CHAPTER 17 ◊

**In search of the truth in the sacred
art of India: perspectives
on authenticity**

Tara Sharma

Abstract

The inseparable link between the spiritual and the material form raises fundamental issues for heritage conservators working on the conservation of sacred art. Negotiating these diverse values and establishing contextual conservation strategies to meet conditions of authenticity can be challenging when what we work on is the physical fabric alone. This paper attempts to explore these issues by positioning this inseparable link between spiritual and material attributes of sacred art within the framework of texts and traditions of India, with specific reference to the creation and the creators of sacred art. Then, through examples from conservation programmes and conversations with artists and Buddhist monks in the Transhimalayan region of Ladakh in India, the paper highlights how values are ascribed by different community groups, as well as the challenges this poses on meeting conditions of authenticity when values appear to be in conflict.

Authenticity in heritage discourse: international developments and the Indian experience

The Nara Document on Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994) was an important milestone in the heritage discourse recognizing cultural diversity and contexts within which values ascribed to cultural heritage are managed and conserved. Specifically, it states:

Conservation of cultural heritage in all its forms and historical periods is rooted in the values attributed to the heritage. Our ability to understand these values depends, in part, on the degree to which information sources about these values may be understood as credible or truthful. Knowledge and understanding of these sources of information, in relation to original and subsequent characteristics of the cultural heritage, and their meaning, is a requisite basis for assessing all aspects of authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994, Article 9).

Authenticity is viewed as an essential qualifying factor concerning values.

The later inclusion of the Nara Document principles in the World Heritage *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016) mandates that all World Heritage Sites meet conditions of authenticity by truthfully and credibly expressing their Outstanding Universal Value through a range of attributes including form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling, and other internal and external factors. Paragraph 83 of the *Operational Guidelines* notes in particular, the difficulty in practically assessing conditions of authenticity for attributes such as spirit and feeling but recognizes their importance nevertheless.

The Nara Document has paved the way for alternative narratives on values to emerge from diverse cultural heritage places particularly in the non-Western world. However, much remains to be done in strengthening our own knowledge and practice on its application in culturally specific contexts. This was acknowledged in the Nara+20

Document (Agency for Cultural Affairs for Japan, 2014, Article 1) which states that “further work is needed on methodologies for assessing this broader spectrum of cultural forms and processes, and the dynamic interrelationship between tangible and intangible heritage”.

Interestingly, the National Conservation Policy for the Conservation of Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (2014) adopts the framework of authenticity from the *Operational Guidelines* yet with an altered definition (Article 2.18):

Authenticity is a value/significance imparted to a monument through a truthful and accurate depiction of one or more of the following elements:

- location and setting;
- form and design;
- materials, construction techniques and building craftsmanship; and
- function and traditional management systems.

Interestingly, spirit and feeling have been omitted from this definition. Article 3.03 of the Policy elaborates the application of this in conservation interventions stating:

All efforts to conserve a monument should be made to retain its value and significance, its authenticity and integrity, its visual connections to and from the monument, and to sustain a *truthful representation of its original / historic appearance* [author's emphasis]. The purpose of such an effort should be to ensure that the monument is kept in its original state or, in certain cases, restored to an earlier known state or to a state as it was discovered at the time of its identification and notification.

The application of such clauses on religious sites in continuous use such as the monasteries of Ladakh remains deeply contentious.



Sacred art: reflections from Indian texts and traditions

The Indian subcontinent has a long and rich history of texts and traditions relating to the creation and the creators of sacred art and architecture including the *Citrasūtra*, which dates to between the sixth and tenth centuries (Mukherjee, ed., 2001) dealing with both secular and religious painting; the *Citralaksana* by Nagnajit (Goswamy and Dahmen-Dallapiccola, 1976). The *Mayamata* composed between the early ninth to late twelfth century (Dagens, 1995) and *Pratimāmānalakṣhanām* of sage Atreya on image-making translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan between the seventh and eleventh centuries (Jugnu, ed., 2013).

Creation of sacred art

The *Citralaksana* and *Pratimāmānalakṣhanām* survive as Tibetan translations of original Sanskrit works and form part of the Tangyur volumes. The first deals with painting while the second with image-making. The texts dwell at length not just on theories of proportions but also on the qualities of the artist engaged in the creation of the art and those of the patron commissioning the art. It should be recalled here that sacred Buddhist paintings, be they murals or thangkas (painted scrolls), are seen as tools for realization and therefore, have a mandate for their creation. Further, both the creator and the viewer perceive the image according to their own state of inner realization. The spiritual attributes inform the attributes of material and substance, form and design, use and function and without the former, the value of the latter ceases. Articulating and assessing conditions of authenticity of attributes of spirit and feeling therefore become all the more critical.

The origin of painting itself, in Indian texts, is given a divine origin once again establishing the link between the spiritual and the material. The *Citralaksana* of Nagnajit recounts a legend on the origin of painting. The story goes that a Brahmin once approached the king weeping and lamenting on the untimely death of his young son. He asked the king to secure the

return of his son from the other world. The king accordingly, approached Yama (the Lord of Death) who refused to return the child. A war ensued in which Yama was defeated. Brahma (the Supreme Creator) tells the king that life and death follow karma and Yama has nothing to do with it. He then guides him to draw a likeness of the Brahmin's son to whom he would give life back. The king does so, and Brahma gives life to that picture. Brahma tells the king that he could draw the picture only through his divine grace. This is considered the first picture in the world (Goswamy and Dahmen-Dallapiccola, 1976). The act of giving life to the image by Brahma reminds us of the act of consecration for a sacred image on its completion. Establishing this sacred origin to painting through its association with the Supreme Creator Brahma, the text goes on to instruct the artist on the correct theory of paintings, both sacred and secular paintings.

The theory of proportions followed in image-making and painting propounded in both the texts *Pratimāmānalakṣhanām* and *Citralaksana* enable trained artists to be able to both create new paintings as well as renew damaged ones. The basic unit of measurement in the *Pratimāmānalakṣhanām* is the *angula* (finger) and twelve *angula* make one *mukha* (face) and so on (Jugnu, ed., 2013). As pointed out by Gelong Konchok Pandey (personal communication, 2014) while reading excerpts from these texts for the author, an artist (with knowledge of the texts) can recreate a damaged image based on a single finger and its setting in a larger composition. Continuity lies in this knowledge and the process by which it is transferred into creating sacred art. The margin for poor quality of work is somewhat reduced when the texts describe what is translated as blemishes in a painting which can cause misfortune or loss to befall on the village or householder. Similarly hallmarks of excellence too are noted.

The *Mayamata* devotes an entire chapter to renovation works. Passage 35.40b-42 states:

When a temple, a Linga, a pedestal or images are to be renovated, the work is always to be done with materials similar (to those used initially) or better ones

Figure 1

A young artist painting an image of Guru Padmasambhava in a newly constructed temple in Gya village, Ladakh.

and never with less good ones. In the case of a decrepit (object), the knowledgeable one wishing to restore it, will process as indicated above in order to return it to its original condition according to rule; (but), if the object was small it is desirable that it be restored to at least equal size or even to a larger one for that is always auspicious. ...

Passage 35.43 states:

That which is made smaller has to be made of better materials or may be made identical, with the same materials as previously and with its dimensions in

accordance with those calculated from the sanctum, the pillars and doors of the sanctum (Dagens, 1995, p. 339).

For the renovation of images it clarifies:

A stone or wood image which is incomplete is to be rejected immediately and a new image installed in its place. A image of the required height and thickness, but which is split or which has any flaws of that kind, must be rejected and another image installed in its place according to rule. A metal or earth image lacking hands, nose, adornment, ears or teeth is to be restored to its original condition but if it is a principal limb which





is missing it must be thrown out and a new one put in its place (Dagens, 1995, p. 338–339).

The *Pratimāmānalakṣhanām* echoes the latter treatment of damaged images and prescribes different means by which they are to be dealt with depending on whether they are made of stone (immersed at the confluence of rivers or in a holy place), metal (melted in fire), wood (besmeared with ghee or honey and placed in fire) or clay (buried in the ground). The text concludes with the caring of old and damaged images prescribing ritual destruction and reinstating of the sacred essence in a new image (Jugnu, ed., 2013). This belief of permitting badly damaged sacred objects to decay naturally is still observed in Ladakh with the practice of placing old and worn manuscripts, thangkas in collapsed mud brick stupas or immersing them in the river. It is well worth noting here that both preservation as well as decay are accepted in the life cycle of an object.

Creators of sacred art

The knowledge of the artist or architect engaged in the creation of sacred art and architecture far exceeded their own fields. Buddhist knowledge included the five major classical forms of fine arts (*bzo rigpa*), inner knowledge (*nang rigpa*), logic (*gtan tshigs rig pa*), language (*sgra rig pa*) and medicine (*gso ba rig pa*). To this was added the five minor forms which included poetry (*snyan ngag*), prosody (*sdeb*

sbyor), synonyms (*mngon brjod*), drama (*zlos gar*) and astrology and divination (*skar tsis*). Tibetan translators inherited this rubric of the five forms of knowledge from the Sanskrit treatises on Indian Buddhism as early as the ninth century (Schaeffer, 2011).

The well-known Ladakhi painter, the late Padma Shree Tsering Angdus (personal communication, 2014) stated in a discussion with the author that the true artist would not only have profound knowledge of the theory of proportions but also knowledge of the specific qualities and attributes of the deities he was portraying. In the past, the task could take several months as pigments were carefully sourced and prepared by him and the ground prepared and consecrated with the mystical “Om ah hum” written on the wall by a spiritual leader before he began painting. If the painting was not well executed the deity could refuse to reside in the painting at the time of consecration and the senior monks conducting the consecration would point that out. This “intent” of the creator or artist is what imparts the specific intangible quality to the painting. Tsering Angdus’ work was well known across Ladakh and his disciples continue to create paintings for many of the major monasteries even today.

The influence of these texts survives to the present day as young artists are trained in the theories of proportions and artists continue to create new paintings or repaint damaged ones. Today, contemporary commercial pigments have replaced the older mineral pigments.

Safeguarding the authenticity of sacred art

The importance of recognizing diverse values where they exist in a heritage place cannot be overstated as illustrated in the following example. In 1998, Hemis monastery was included in India’s Tentative List for potential nomination for UNESCO World Heritage status. It was subsequently withdrawn as an individual property, and in 2015 it was included within the larger Cold Desert Cultural Landscape (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017) nomination on the Tentative List. At the time of its 1998 inclusion on the Tentative List, the values identified for the property related primarily to its antiquity (the oldest

monastery belonging to the Drukpa Kagyu school in the region) and its architecture (as a unique example of a monastic complex of the period). Its spiritual and social value as a functioning monastic institution and as an important headquarter for the contemporary Drukpa Kagyu sect were not reflected in the assessment of cultural value at the time and neither was the old traditional management framework seen as a value demonstrating a continuous cultural tradition of monastic management.

In 2008, the old assembly hall of Hemis Monastery was partially demolished and its wall

paintings subsequently repainted by the monastic community. The building had deteriorated to an extent that the monks feared it would collapse. The complex is a nationally protected monument by the Archaeological Survey of India (2017) who ostensibly has the mandate to carry out conservation works at the monastery – a charge that could not be carried out due to differences between the monks and the ASI stemming in some measure from the different values ascribed to the monastery. The issue was raised in the national media at the time and continues to be discussed among conservation professionals. In an article published in *Outlook Magazine* in November 2008, Gelong Tsewang Rigzen, then secretary of the Hemis managing committee stated that “Repair and renovation of the monastery is an ongoing process since we live and pray in them”. Countering this, a heritage practitioner commented that “with the best of intentions the monks do not have the expertise to renovate according to the traditional design” depending on village masons who have no idea of architectural conservation (Dogra, 2008). Both views stem from very different understandings of the cultural values embodied in the monastery.

Discussing the repainting of these murals with the late Tsering Angdus and his disciple (personal communication 2014, 2015) who carried out the work, it was learned that only those sections of the paintings which were lost in the partial demolition of the walls were created anew while the paintings in surviving sections of the walls were not initially touched. However, the stark difference in patina and brightness of the fresh colours used in the new paintings was distracting. It led them to fill in colours within the original outlines of the figures to tone down the difference. The old paintings remained, according to the artists, the original painting as they retained the hand of the original artist.

To examine how values are ascribed by communities

of believers, custodians and artists to sacred art, the author carried out a brief survey in 2014. Two depictions of Sakyamuni Buddha and his two disciples, one from the sixteenth century and one from the twenty-first century were shown to monks, artists and the lay Buddhist community to understand whether the older wall painting held additional cultural values. Interestingly, the respondents ranging from monks, youth, contemporary painters made no distinction between the old and the new painting in terms of their primary value as depictions of the Buddha worthy of worship. On further questioning it was revealed that older paintings may have more value in terms of their associations (consecrations) by high abbots or painted by artists of perhaps higher spiritual learning. Preserving Buddhist images or the written teachings, whatever their age, is viewed as an act of merit. This reiterated a point made by the late Rinpoche Dzongsar Ngari Chödje (2003):

The older a monastery, the better is the accuracy of iconography of statues and paintings, and most essentially, the greater is the spiritual value because they were blessed and consecrated by those great old masters

♥ **Figure 2**
The *thangka* of Guru Padmasambhava unfurled during the Hemis festival in 2004. Hemis monastery, an important seat of the Drukpa Kagyu sect, is one of Ladakh's major monastic centres with branch temples scattered in villages across Ladakh.





who possessed immense energy which they infused into these places, creating reserves of energy in these places which one could still feel.

Our understanding of the process by which spiritual values are assessed by the monastic community remains limited. It is crucial that heritage practitioners meaningfully engage with

custodians, contemporary creators of sacred art, and spiritual leaders from the communities in which they work to evolve appropriate methodologies to practically approach sacred heritage. Assessing the authenticity of attributes of “spirit and feeling”, critical in many sacred places, should be led by spiritual leaders from the community and not by external experts.

Negotiating the authenticity of sacred art?: challenges and suggestions

Spirit or tradition as seen above cannot thus be separated from form, design, layout, material and craftsmanship as it underpins them – it is from the spiritual belief that the temple or sacred object emerges. Without the spiritual value, the material value may have limited meaning.

This is illustrated in the following example. In 2001, a small Buddhist temple was “discovered” by a group of conservation professionals in the Transhimalayan region of Ladakh (Sharma, 2004). On entering the complex, it was noticed that there was an older ground floor level and a newer first floor. The ground floor chamber, which had elicited the initial interest of the architect due to the use of a brick size found in older constructions across Ladakh, appeared to be abandoned and was being used to store the shrubs and willow twigs used in the laying of mud roofs. A raised platform at one end of the rear wall with small holes where originally wooden pegs used to fix clay statues to the wall would have been placed, a feature seen in many early period temples (tenth to thirteenth centuries CE). The walls themselves were completely blackened with centuries of soot and there appeared to be nothing of interest until somebody climbed the platform and shone a torch on the wall to the left. There amazingly, through centuries of accumulated soot and dust, gazing benevolently at the team, was the face of a Buddha (one of the five Tathagatas) which even though completely obscured seemed to hint at the rich mineral colours and gold with which it had been painted. In addition to the Five Buddhas there

were traces of what appeared to be figures riding huge horses of which only the legs of the horses could actually be discerned. The figure was later revealed to be that of the powerful protector deity, Dorje Chenmo which the village community later informed us appears in the form of an oracle every year, making prophecies and providing guidance to the community.

Discussions were held between the Ladakhi NGO, Namgyal Institute for Research on Ladakhi Art and Culture (the project initiator), Hemis Monastery (under whose spiritual purview the temple lay) and the village community to initiate a conservation programme for the wall paintings. It was later learnt from the village *tsogspa* (an association or society of village members who assist the traditional village headman and council in carrying out welfare works in the village) and the monks that statues of the deity had been earlier removed to a new temple on the first floor along with all the ritual paraphernalia of the oracle. Obscured with centuries of soot and dust, the presence of the wall paintings had been lost in the village’s narrative of the temple. With the loss of its original function as a village temple and the shift of sacred statues to the new temple, the old temple room had ceased to hold a cultural value for the village community. As the conservation programme proceeded, the splendour of the old paintings was gradually revealed. The paintings would not be reconsecrated however, as the temple could not be returned to its original use. The future use remained uncertain.

As discussions for the use of the temple were being held, it was time for the annual village oracle. The oracle appeared that year, as always, after a month of solitary meditation, in trance, riding his white horse through the established route, before making his prophecies. His guidance to the village that year was to express his satisfaction at the village's efforts in restoring his old residence. The commendation from the oracle led to a renewed interest in the old temple. Further discussions among the villagers on its reuse were held and it

was finally agreed to consider housing some of the ritual paraphernalia of the oracle in the old temple.

This provided a new function for the old temple while retaining some of its original association with the protector deity. The fluid shift in values from a primarily artistic and historic value to include a renewed spiritual value meant revisiting the original attributes recognized (i.e. form, design, and material). Would the oracle's guidance be accepted by heritage practitioners as a credible source to establish conditions of authenticity?

Conclusion

As highlighted above, the cultural context within which values are ascribed, who identifies those values and how those values are conserved are considerations that are becoming increasingly important for heritage practitioners to address as our own understanding and definitions of heritage fluidly expand. The shift from the aesthetic bias of the curatorial approach to conservation to a people-centred approach has a particular impact on how conditions of authenticity are met (Araoz, 2013).

Cultural rights of custodians, lay communities and craftspeople over sacred heritage and their roles in the effective management of such heritage are

now finally being acknowledged. All this calls for the development of more effective methodologies to enable heritage practitioners to meaningfully engage with sacred heritage. Drawing on the expertise of spiritual leaders to articulate cultural values for sacred heritage and to help evaluate intangible attributes such as those of spirit and feeling to meet conditions of authenticity; developing management strategies which stem from the continuity of cultural practices and knowledge systems that govern the creation and renewal of sacred art rather than a top down addition into conventional management plans are some of the ways forward.



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◊ CHAPTER 18 ◊

Authentic gold!
Considerations on authenticity
based on the gold plating
at the World Heritage Site
of Mahabodhi Temple
at Bodh Gaya in India

Radhika Dhumal

Abstract

This paper discusses the concept of authenticity and its applicability to World Heritage Sites through a case study of the gold plating of the spire of Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya in India. The first part of the paper discusses authenticity in the international, national and local context of India, with reference to differing definitions. The second part presents the case study, and analyses the decision-making process regarding the gold plating of the spire of the site, with an emphasis on tensions among the international, national and local stakeholders and also on the criteria that led to the final decisions. The paper concludes with some concerns on the applicability of the current notion of authenticity to World Heritage Sites.

Considerations on authenticity: the international, national and local context of India

Over the past two decades the notion of authenticity has been formalized as requisite within the agenda of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. A statement of authenticity is now included in the retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) prepared; the retrospective SOUV is an exercise through which site managers attempt to understand authenticity in the light of World Heritage. On this basis, the *Operational Guidelines* (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2016) of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre are currently used – internationally as well as in India – as a benchmark to define authenticity for the needs of the preparation of nomination dossier/file, the maintenance of World Heritage Sites, the assessment of their state of conservation and their management.

The UNESCO World Heritage Centre defines authenticity as follows:

Authenticity is about the link between attributes and potential Outstanding Universal Value. That link needs to be truthfully expressed so that the attributes can fully convey the value of the property. ... Authenticity is therefore a measure of how well attributes convey potential Outstanding Universal Value. Authenticity can be compromised if the attributes are weak – communities cease to thrive, buildings collapse, traditions disappear, and so on (UNESCO et al., 2011, p. 61–62).

The Nara + 20 Document defines authenticity as:

Authenticity: A culturally contingent quality associated with a heritage place, practice, or object that conveys cultural value; is recognized as a meaningful expression of an evolving cultural tradition; and/or evokes among individuals the social and emotional resonance of group identity (Agency for Cultural Affairs for Japan, 2014, Section 5).

In India, the discussion on the notion of authenticity is a much earlier one.

The Conservation Principles of Ancient Monuments by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the key policy document for the

conservation of cultural heritage in India, makes various references to the terms authentic and authenticity since its first policy in 1907, updated and adopted in 2014. Specifically, the Conservation of Ancient Monuments, 1907 states:

The chief aim of conservation should be to preserve and perpetuate authentic specimens of the monumental antiquities of the country rather than to rebuild and renew them; and not so much to add new work in imitation of what the original is thought to have been, as to preserve what is left of it (Government of India, 1907, p. 1).

It further states:

Although there are many ancient buildings, whose state of disrepair suggests at first sight a renewal, it should never be forgotten that their historical value is gone when their authenticity is destroyed, and that our first duty is not to renew them but to preserve them (Government of India, 1907, p. 3–4).

It is evident that, philosophically speaking, the policy of 1907 discouraged restoration as it is understood according to the current policy of monuments in the process of conservation. This policy was written under the colonial regime in India. It may be noted that the 2014 National Policy for Conservation of the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains (NPC-AMASR) (Archaeological Survey of India, 2014), is an attempt to return to or give consideration to traditional practices, philosophy and beliefs in existence prior to the colonial period as well as evolve beyond colonial ideas. Hence, the policy now uses liberal language defining authenticity keeping in mind the international charters and definitions. Article 2.18 of The Conservation Principles of Ancient Monuments defines authenticity as:

Authenticity is a value / significance imparted to a monument through a truthful and accurate depiction of one or more of the following elements:



- location and setting;
- form and design;
- materials, construction techniques and building craftsmanship; and
- function and traditional management systems.

Here, authenticity is considered to be a value, attributed to a monument in terms of setting, form, material which is truthfully and accurately depicted.

On a local level, India presents a rich spectrum of age-old traditions in building construction, religious beliefs and diverse communities, many of which reside within or in immediate vicinity to the heritage properties. Within these communities, specific concepts of authenticity persist, through ideas such as *jirnodhar* (renovation) and religious beliefs of rebirth. A characteristic example of a local concept of authenticity is provided by the film produced by Rabindra Vasavada and Niels Gutschow entitled *Jain Architectural Heritage, Building New and Restoring Old Temples in Gujarat, India*, in 2011. As Vasavada explains:

When the ideas and imagination of creator are truthfully realized to its highest level as an artistic

creation, a created object is considered to be an authentic representation of the imagined idea. The degree of its value depends on the success in the truthfulness of its realization. The film tries to capture somewhat similar thoughts – the artistic will – explained by the sculptor at Palitana who actually tries to recreate the iconographic imagery for the temple. It is also the same penchant for the master craftsmen working on recasting the aged temples in their *jirnodhar* efforts, adopting the traditional techniques in indigenous material and recasting forms which they work on. There is always an effort to improvise and infuse contemporary viewpoints in renewal and reconstruction, which surely also is ‘authentic’ to our own present times (Gutschow and Vasavada, 2011).

These local concepts of authenticity, as well as their approaches to conservation, are individualistic to each particular property and its community. Subject to their interpretation, the community takes actions in accordance with its needs and beliefs. This in turn impacts several key parameters of the conservation process including interventions, protection and local economy and livelihoods alike.

Authenticity in connection to the World Heritage Site of Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya in India

Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya was inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2005 (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017) under the following criteria, qualification of authenticity and Outstanding Universal Value:

Criterion (i): The grand 50 m high Mahabodhi Temple of the 5th–6th centuries is of immense importance, being one of the earliest temple constructions existing in the Indian sub-continent. It is one of the few representations of the architectural genius of the Indian people in constructing fully developed brick temples in that era.

Criterion (ii): The Mahabodhi Temple, one of the few surviving examples of early brick structures in India,

has had significant influence in the development of architecture over the centuries.

Criterion (iii): The site of the Mahabodhi Temple provides exceptional records for the events associated with the life of Buddha and subsequent worship, particularly since Emperor Asoka built the first temple, the balustrades, and the memorial column.

Criterion (iv): The present Temple is one of the earliest and most imposing structures built entirely in brick from the late Gupta period. The sculpted stone balustrades are an outstanding early example of sculptural reliefs in stone.

Criterion (vi): The Mahabodhi Temple Complex in Bodh Gaya has direct association with the life of the Lord Buddha, being the place where He attained the supreme and perfect insight.

The belief that Buddha had attained Enlightenment in this particular place has been confirmed by tradition and is now called Bodh Gaya, this is of supreme value to the world. It has been documented since the time of Emperor Asoka who built the first temple in 260 BCE when he came to this place to worship the Bodhi Tree, which still stands as witness to the event, along with the attributes of the property (the Vajrasana, etc). Buddhist texts of both Theravadhan and Mahayan traditions have clear reference of this event of Buddha's enlightenment at Bodh Gaya. Buddhists from all over the world today venerate Bodh Gaya as the holiest place of Buddhist pilgrimage in the world. This confirms the use, function, location and setting of the complex/property.

The outstanding universal value of the property is truthfully expressed through the attributes present today. The architecture of the Temple has remained essentially unaltered and follows the original form and design.

The attributes of the property do not only include the Temple, balustrades and Vajrasana, to mention a few tangibles, but also uphold the intangible spiritual quotient, and a large community and their beliefs; these are clearly stated in the criteria (i), (iii) and (vi).

Retrospective Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The SOUV for Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, adopted by the World Heritage Committee in its 37th Session, 2013 ([UNESCO World Heritage Committee, 2013](#)) describes the values of the site through its criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi) and its statement of authenticity:

The Mahabodhi Temple Complex is the first temple built by Emperor Asoka in the 3rd century B.C., and the present temple dates from the 5th–6th centuries. It is one of the earliest Buddhist temples built entirely in brick, still standing, from the late Gupta period and

it is considered to have had significant influence in the development of brick architecture over the centuries. The present Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya comprises the 50 m high grand Temple, the Vajrasana, sacred Bodhi Tree and other six sacred sites of Buddha's enlightenment, surrounded by numerous ancient Votive stupas, well maintained and protected by inner, middle and outer circular boundaries. A seventh sacred place, the Lotus Pond, is located outside the enclosure to the south. Both the temple area and the Lotus Pond are surrounded by circulating passages at two or three levels and the area of the ensemble is 5 m below the level of the surrounding land.

It is also a unique property of archaeological significance in respect of the events associated with the time Lord Buddha spent there, as well as documenting the evolving worship, particularly since the 3rd century, when Emperor Asoka built the first temple, the balustrades and the memorial column and the subsequent evolution of the ancient city with the building of sanctuaries and monasteries by foreign kings over the centuries.

The Main Temple wall has an average height of 11 m and it is built in the classical style of Indian temple architecture. It has entrances from the east and from the north and has a low basement with mouldings decorated with honeysuckle and geese design. Above this is a series of niches containing images of the Buddha. Further above there are mouldings and series of niches, and then the curvilinear shikhara or tower of the temple surmounted by amalaka and kalasha (architectural features in the tradition of Indian temples). At the four corners of the parapet of the temple are four statues of the Buddha in small shrine chambers. A small tower is built above each of these shrines. The temple faces east and consists of a small forecourt in the east with niches on either side containing statues of the Buddha. A doorway leads into a small hall, beyond which lies the sanctum, which contains a gilded statue of the seated Buddha (over 5ft high) holding earth as witness to his achieved Enlightenment. Above the sanctum is the main hall with a shrine containing a statue of Buddha, where senior monks gather to meditate ([UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017](#)).



Case study: gold plating the spire of Mahabodhi Temple

A Thai devotee proposed to donate gilding for the spire of the temple shrine on the occasion celebrating 2600 years of the Buddha's enlightenment, as part of the celebrations for Her Majesty, the Queen of Thailand's eightieth birthday. A proposal, prepared by an Engineering and Fine Arts Department team of Thai devotees, was submitted to the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee (BTMC) along with the dates and a technical note on how they planned to gild the spire. It declared the donation to include 290 kg of 22-carat gold and all other expenses related to its implementation.

The BTMC is bound by the Temple Act of 1949 (**Government of Bihar, 1949**) which recommends that all conservation works of the Temple be carried out by the ASI. Further, since it is a World Heritage Site with the ASI being the nodal agency, the proposal was forwarded to the ASI for comment. Simultaneously, approvals were sought from the Ministry of External Affairs and Finance for the donation of 290 kg of gold to be brought from Thailand.

At this point, it is important to clarify that while the intervention of gold plating as a process of conservation is important, the stakeholders of the property are paramount in terms of the larger international community and related diplomatic relations.

The ASI, in accordance with the principles of conservation followed by them for over a century, and an understanding gained through these, raised objections to the intervention and questioned the authenticity of such an augmentation. Some of the questions raised were:

- was the spire originally covered in gold
- is there any authentic reference available
- is such an intervention acceptable within the archaeological norms, especially in the context of World Heritage?

The general opinion after assessing the proposal was that the materials used for gold plating of the spire of the temple were not in tune with the original material used in this structure, and would disturb the architectural style, brick and cornice details of

the built heritage. The questions raised were valid keeping in mind the principles of conservation laid out in 1907. However, the World Heritage norms are understood and embraced only by a group of conservation professionals, the so-called experts. Hence, the proposal was forwarded to a committee specially formed by the government under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture, called the Advisory Committee on World Heritage Matters. The committee recommended the following:

- a) The committee recommends the process of gold plating to be undertaken based on the available historic evidence from the ICOMOS evaluation on Mahabodhi Temple that mentions:
 - (i) First major rebuilding of the original Asokan Temple was done by the Hindus in the 2nd Century as per the original plaque in the Patna Museum. (Hindus follow the tradition of gold polishing of temple shikharas)
 - (ii) In 637 CE, when Chinese traveller, Xuanzang, came to the city of Bodh Gaya, he found the grand Mahabodhi Temple, 160 ft (50 m) tall, and a large fine sanctuary and mentions the bluish bricks, plaster, niches containing gilded statues of the Buddha, and many other details. (This indicates use of gold polish in that period)
 - (iii) The temple was restored/renovated by the Burmese in 11th century and then in 19th century. (Gold polishing of Shikharas is a tradition followed by the Burmese)
- b) The committee also considered the issue of integrity and authenticity of this World Heritage Site. Although, it is speculated that traditionally the use of gold polishing would have been practiced yet the proposal of gold plating is sensitive to the existing fabric. Considering, the gold plates which will act as a cover to the existing fabric are reversible in nature; the authenticity of the temple will not be challenged.
- c) Before implementing the proposal, the committee recommends to ascertain that the physical condition of the existing temple will not be compromised at any time due to the intervention.
- d) The committee recommends BTMC to ensure that the Management Plan under preparation for the site should record this process and reasons for

undertaking this intervention in detail, and formulate policies for such an intervention in future. It has to be understood that this is recommended as an exception due to presence of historic evidence, but should not become a norm to cover other areas of the temple with gold in a similar fashion (ASI unpublished).

Based on these reasons, the recommendation was accepted and conveyed to the BTMC with a 'No Objection', with approvals from the highest authorities in the State Party for Culture.

Immediately after the work began, however, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed by the local scholar/resident objecting to the gold plating. Some of the questions raised were regarding the archaeological norms and the belief that Lord Buddha and his philosophy extolled simple living. It was expressed that the application of gold would change the look of the brick temple and would result in the loss of its originality which is embedded in its archaeological value and heritage. The PIL however,

did not compromise the decision of the intervention (SWAMIJI, 2017). Generally speaking, the approach to management planning is initiated with the intention of a values-based approach underpinning the roles of various stakeholders and their concerns. However, in the aforementioned case, due to the underlying tension among the local, national and global stakeholders, religious devotees and a vast global community, it is an exercise that needs time and deeper understanding to come up with apt policies supporting the processes of conservation and satisfying the needs of the various stakeholders, while protecting the attributes of the site. The gold plating of the spire at the Mahabodhi Temple was successfully undertaken by trained engineers from Thailand with care, under the supervision and support of the BTMC and Government of India. The interventions were detailed largely to be reversible in nature and the process was well documented keeping in mind minimal impact to the historic brick temple.

Conclusion

Referring to statements and recommendations made, and keeping in mind the existing notion of authenticity from various sources on an international, national and local level, it is justified that the discussion of authenticity is of prime concern in India. The differing definitions of the notion of authenticity provided above are the latest references for the concept. These need to be simplified and integrated, so as to be recommended and followed throughout the region. However, the case study demonstrates the complexity of implementing a decision on authenticity within the conservation process. It is felt that the notion of authenticity could be marginalized to truthful evidence in form, material and use, or should priority be given to the beliefs/traditions if any.

Ultimately, the decisions taken by the various bodies/parties/stakeholders/interest groups (all inclusive) were heard in the case of the Mahabodhi Temple, either through legal communication or other means but it may be accepted that as long as an intervention is

reversible, it is to be appreciated and accepted. The processes were followed according to norms and policies, nationally and internationally, of documenting the intervention, monitoring and least impacting the attributes by creating reversible interventions. The case study also establishes the need for creating an overall understanding based on heritage, on one hand – its religious, archaeological and historic values and on the other – the rules and guidelines, to the professionals in the field of conservation in this region. However, the principles of authenticity were found to be a rather low priority for decision-makers when weighed against the emotions of the stakeholders, religious devotees and the political influences of the international communities. Mahabodhi Temple is an exceptional World Heritage Site and a living monument, at the same time demonstrating criteria (vi), having intangible values as well, where a strict notion of authenticity fails in all respects.



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◊ CHAPTER 19 ◊

**Authenticity: resynchronizing
theory and practice – analysis of
the decision-making process in the
conservation arena of Bangladesh**

Abu Sayeed M. Ahmed and Naushad Ehsanul Huq

Abstract

This paper attempts to examine the current state of discourse on authenticity in the conservation field by analysing the decision-making processes adopted by conservation professionals in selected projects. The analysis involves tallying the theoretical aspects of these decisions with the practical aspects; and thereafter resynchronizing practical issues with the current theory, so that future decision-making processes can be enriched. Diverse conservation projects, mainly from Bangladesh, are used as case studies, a number of which one or both the authors was/were involved. The methodology involves a multidisciplinary approach where the concept of authenticity is examined in connection with other disciplines such as philosophy. To this end, the authors, while both being architects, specialize in different sub-fields, one in conservation and the other in philosophy and architectural theory. The paper is thus based on the dialogue between the authors towards a synthesis of different points of view, regarding various aspects of the concept of authenticity in the conservation field including: competing conceptions of authenticity between society and conservation agencies; the authenticity of the conservation agent (or agency) itself; and the acceptance of ambiguity or open-endedness in the decision-making process.

Introduction

It is common practice among the practitioners of any field to continually refer to literature in an attempt to update and synchronize their practices. In this context, this paper attempts to examine the current state of discourse on authenticity in the conservation field by analysing the decision-making processes adopted by the conservation professionals in selected projects. The analysis involves tallying the theoretical aspects of these decisions with the practical aspects and thus resynchronizing practical issues with the current theory so that future decision-making processes can be further enriched. To this end diverse conservation projects, mainly from Bangladesh and South Asia, are used as case studies. In a number of these case studies, one or both of the authors was/were involved as conservation professional or architect. The methodology involves a multidisciplinary approach where the concept of authenticity is also examined in connection with other disciplines such as philosophy. The two authors of this paper, while both being architects, specialize in different

sub-fields, one in conservation and the other in philosophy and architectural theory. This paper is based on the collaboration and dialogue between the authors towards a synthesis of different points of view, regarding a series of aspects of the concept of authenticity in the conservation field. The paper is divided into the following parts:

- recalibrating the dynamics of the two forces of *social pressure* and the *power of expert knowledge* for the twenty-first century
- updating and understanding the complex richness of the concept of *self* as it is applied to the conservation professionals *themselves*, or the conservation agency *itself*; and
- learning to accept (and even celebrate) ambiguity, open-endedness and contradictions in the field-level decision-making process in conservation.

Yet, before discussing these three points, the conservation scenario of Bangladesh is outlined.

Context

Bangladesh, as part of the Indian subcontinent, is a rich ground for the practice of architectural and archaeological conservation. At the same time, the Bengal region has an opulent tradition of collective intellectual endeavours made evident through the existence of established educational and research institutions. In recent decades, Bangladesh as a nation has gone through various economic and social transformations which have caused, among other issues,

increasing financial investment and public attention towards conservation projects. As the conservation field is becoming larger and more vibrant and the conservation professionals are working hand in hand with funding authorities, donors and sponsors, it is crucial that the latter keep an interactive relationship with the academicians and researchers, so that the large-scale interventions made feasible through new investments stand on solid theoretical grounds.



Recalibrating the dynamics of the forces of *social pressure and the power of expert knowledge* for the twenty-first century

The task of negotiating with the local community regarding their various demands and requirements (such as functional or utilitarian, budgetary and aesthetics) is not new for conservation professionals. However, what has changed in the last two decades in Bangladesh (and apparently in most of South Asia), is the dramatic increase in the number and volume of channels through which people can give their feedback. These channels include newspaper readership, television talk shows and debates, Internet connectivity and field-level activism, new think tanks and universities and research groups organizing seminars and workshops. Even government authorities, before executing major projects, tend to organize public hearing events. Previously, it was a small part of the duty of the conservation professional to evaluate the validity and the urgency of the public demands; today it is no longer a minor duty, management of the sheer quantity of feedback and questions has become an issue in itself. The local community has now acquired a national stature.

The decision-making process regarding the external wall colour of Rabindra Kuthibari in south-eastern Bangladesh is such an example. Research findings of the Department of Archaeology show that this building was originally painted white, but at some later stage it was painted red to match similarly built railway bungalows. When an attempt was made to restore the original colour, newspapers and the electronic media created a massive uproar. This issue was widely discussed even in the national parliament, and a parliamentary investigative body was formed. At the end, the conservation team decided to respect public demand, on the grounds that the red colour has become part of the collective memory (Habib, 2014).

The case of Dhunia Chawk Mosque in northern Bangladesh can also be mentioned here. In this case, only the foundations and some walls could be identified as original. There was local level demand for its reconstruction, and thus government authorities totally rebuilt it. It can be argued that

the authenticity of the original attributes was compromised in this rebuilding process.

Analysis of these two decisions may demonstrate that such decisions should follow intensive critical scrutiny, and if possible these processes of critical analysis should not be conducted on an isolated project-by-project basis, but should rather become a collective and ongoing method. We hope that the present paper is also a part of this continuous discourse. Regarding the colour of the Kuthibari (a country-house used by feudal landlords), a review of the literature on collective memory supplies ample resources for sympathy with the demands of the general people. As Jan Assmann argues, “Cultural memory works by reconstructing, that is, it always relates its knowledge to an actual and contemporary situation” (Assmann and Czaplicka, 1995, p. 130). That is to say, the local people saw the Kuthibari (also) as part of their contemporary reality and valued it as it is. The importance of collective memory is also emphasized in the Nara Document on Authenticity (Larsen, ed., 1994).

Two further theoretical issues can be brought into this discussion. One is the newly vibrant field of social epistemology, i.e. the academic discipline that explores the possibility and potentials of socially created knowledge. This field began to attract much attention especially after the proliferation of knowledge sharing through the Internet. For example, the Internet-based encyclopaedia Wikipedia was initially looked down on by academicians, since most of its contributors were non-experts. Interestingly, a recent study showed that Wikipedia has evolved to become rather close to other expert-written encyclopaedias in terms of accuracy (Goldman and Blanchard, 2015) and in many cases this *almost* accurate information can be reliable enough to serve its purpose. This could entail that the popular or collective demands in the present age of interconnectivity should receive more attention from the conservation professionals and may no longer be disregarded outright as inauthentic. The other theoretical

issue is the emerging trend among academics and experts of questioning their own privilege over other sources of knowledge. This postmodern trend also includes questioning a series of other ranking systems or hierarchies, or collective habits of considering something more valuable or reliable than others without any serious foundation in objective reality (e.g. giving uncritical approval to prestigious institutions, famous professors or to certain academic subjects). As Hans Weiler sums

up in his paper “Whose Knowledge Matters?” (Weiler, 2017, p. 2), it is being increasingly accepted by academics that it is the actual case that “less ‘exact’ forms of knowledge [are] being relegated to lower ranks of prestige”. Thus the awareness that the “less exact” knowledge, on the basis of which society sometimes operates, is also valuable might make the works of the conservation professional more sensitive and might open the window to new forms of authenticity.

Updating and understanding the complex richness of the concept of *self* as it is applied to the conservation professionals *themselves*, or the conservation agency *itself*

Learning to give more value to the feedback of others (as mentioned above) does not necessarily give the conservation professionals an opportunity to become intellectually lazy by doing whatever the others want them to do. On the contrary, it rather makes their job more challenging as well as rewarding, because other people is not a single person, and there are many other complex issues involved. Conservation professionals themselves must judge all the factors before making a final decision. Two (pending) decisions from the conservation arena of Bangladesh demonstrate this challenge. Shankharibazar is a traditional street in the old part of the city of Dhaka. The ground floor of the houses were used as workshops and shops, while the upper floors as the residential quarters of the shop owners. There are ongoing proposals to make the street economically viable by introducing new types of use patterns. Yet, the proposed patterns (which include knocking down the old buildings and replacing those by real estate company-built housing and shopping malls) could fundamentally change the authentic character of this urban space. The other example is a proposal for installing air conditioning in the atrium (which was originally an open-air courtyard, before the renovation initiative) at the central courtyard of Bara Sardar Bari, i.e. a *jamindar* mansion complex near Dhaka (the senior author is the chief consultant for the currently ongoing conservation

project of this complex). The main sponsor of this project wants to install air conditioning to make it more tourist-friendly. Yet, the proposed intervention, aside from triggering further complications (such as temperature and humidity issues for the lime cement walls), would seriously affect the authentic character of the structure.

These two examples demonstrate that in delicate situations where strong economic, social and other forces pull in different directions, the fitness of the decision-making *self* (be it a person or an organization) becomes extremely important. The lack of this fitness can contribute to indecision and deadlock. After a survey of the contemporary discourse on self and its authenticity, it might be proposed that this fitness of the self begins with one becoming self-conscious in a critical sense and then gradually becoming fully aware of the various aspects of the richness of this concept (of self). First, the decision-making subject or self must ensure that it is not alone, that is, there is a collective effort or a certain degree of inter-subjectivity in the actions and thoughts that go into the decision-making process regarding authenticity. Here also the decision-making agent can employ the ideas of social epistemology (Goldman and Blanchard, 2015) in creating collective urgency regarding the authentic preservation of structures. In the last two decades, activists, journalists, academicians and other intellectuals have worked



hand in hand with the public by arranging and participating in seminars, conferences, workshops, TV shows, debates, demonstrations, meetings with policy makers, to create a huge support base for issues related to the environment and heritage. In the conservation field of Bangladesh, the general rule is not that a single person or group is dominating the others; it is rather a situation where every community group is being enriched by the experience and opinion of the others.

Second, each self is historically placed (Hall, 2004) and, while working with other selves towards a certain goal, should understand where one stands historically at this current moment and adjust one's intermediate goals accordingly. There are resources available in the form of historical and theoretical texts that can be used to make such consciousness and thus synchronize it with practice. *The Conservation Manual* of John Marshall (1923) shows that almost a century ago there was not much concern about authenticity in the local context. To this end, one can see that in the restoration work of Somapura Mahavihara in Paharpur in northern Bangladesh different kinds of brick bonds were used to reconstruct walls. At that point in history it was more important to remake the gross physicality of the object rather than thinking about authentically restoring the finer details. Later, modern educational and other institutions were set up in the region to study archaeology, architecture, art and related fields. Gradually the mindset shifted from the orthodox to a more inclusive approach. As a result, we can see that the triangular pediment added during the British colonial period at the entry of the Shait Gumbad Mosque (part of the Historic Mosque City of Bagerhat World Heritage Site (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017)) was

replaced by the original Bengal style curved cornice. Currently, the collective self of the conservation professionals and activists are highly conscious about their position and role in history, and this is manifest in their professional works and activism. It is suggested that more effort should be made to develop a written discourse of this period through the publishing of more journals and books.

The third synchronization that we suggest is one needed for the conservation professional self is an attempt to systematically develop a habit of autonomous and sincere adherence to self-imposed guidelines which would ultimately produce authenticity. As Somogy Varga and Charles Guignon argue:

The idea of autonomy emphasizes the individual's self-governing abilities, the independence of one's deliberation from manipulation and the capacity to decide for oneself. It is connected to the view that moral principles ... should be grounded in the self-governing individual who is free from diverse cultural and social pressures. According to the ethic of autonomy, each individual should follow those norms he or she can will on the basis of rational reflective endorsement (Varga and Guignon, 2017, Section 1.2).

To summarize, this section on self shows that, to ensure authenticity, the following steps are required: first, the decision-making body (person or organization) should see itself as part of a collective self so that the possibility of personal whimsical decisions are excluded; second, in order for the decision-making bodies to work collectively, they should be aware of their historical position; and third, each individual decision-making body should remain authentic to himself or herself through abiding by a self-imposed set of guidelines.

Learning to accept (or even celebrate) ambiguity, open-endedness and contradictions in the field-level decision-making in conservation

A conservation professional while presenting his or her work, tends to deal with any cases of ambiguity, contradiction or open-endedness with a certain

amount of unease. This could be the last set of issues regarding the exploration of authenticity which needs to be synchronized with theory and practice,

since in the theoretical field there is already a trend of acceptance of these issues. In many cases the field-level decision-making process is also quite flexible and intelligent in dealing with the non-availability of information, or practitioners can wait for a while on an issue (to do further research) while work can go on with other issues. However, the bureaucratic system tends to demand that all decisions are to be taken before starting any kind of field work. It must be acknowledged that the decision-making self (discussed above) is ever evolving. The lead author admits that he, as a practicing conservation professional, has evolved significantly in the past two decades as have other practitioners and conservation related organizations. For example, even ten years ago, the culture of providing universal accessibility was not widespread in Bangladesh, and local conservation projects demonstrate that absence. For example, in the restoration work of Nimtali Deuri (an old ceremonial city-gate in which the lead author is the conservation consultant), there were two stairwells available for use. It was decided that one well would be used for the installation of an elevator for people with disabilities. This would not change the outward appearance of the structure (and as such the collective memory image), and it can be argued that this decision is an example of being honest (authentic?) regarding the contemporary needs of the community.

Currently, it has become easier in our context to accept and express occasions of ambiguity regarding historical information. In the case of Nimtali Deuri, it was evident from old sketches that there were kiosks on the roof but those could not be rebuilt since no precise dimension could be extracted from those sketches. The conservation professionals had to leave it in that ambiguous situation. Local professionals are now seeking ways to express such indeterminate characters in physical forms wherever required. On a different note, at times, in large conservation projects (e.g. in the Bara Sardar Bari mansion project) work has gone on for years, and

during that time new information and technologies have become available posing different challenges. In the local context, the theoretical discourse of authenticity has yet to accommodate all these different aspects into the main conceptual model. Though it should be mentioned that all interventions are kept reversible in line with the conservation ethics mentioned e.g. in the INTACH Charter (INTACH, 2017), a synchronized set of theoretical information can also help the decision-maker to efficiently face the contradictions between the high standards of authenticity (or any other abstract goal for that matter) and the everyday reality of a project, that always affects the purity of the initial intentions.

Regarding the struggle for continuous attempts of *becoming* authentic, philosopher Martin Heidegger noted and is discussed in Varga and Guignon:

...we find ourselves thrown into a world and a situation not of our own making, already disposed by moods and particular commitments, with a past behind us that constrains our choices. With respect to this dimension of human life, we are generally absorbed in practical affairs, taking care of business, striving to get things done as they crop up from time to time. This 'being-in-a-situation' naturally inclines us to everyday falling...

(Varga and Guignon, 2017, Section 3.1).

This apparently hopeless fall into everyday reality is subsequently viewed in a different light as noted by Heidegger as discussed in Varga and Guignon:

My actions at any moment, though typically aimed at accomplishing tasks laid out by the demands of circumstances, are also cumulatively creating me as a person of a particular sort. ... So, for example, when I attend a boring parent/teacher conference, I do so as part of handling my current duties. But this act is also part of being a parent insofar as it contributes to determining 'that for the sake of which' I understand myself as existing

(Varga and Guignon, 2017, Section 3.1).

Conclusion

As shown above, the Bengal region was the intellectual hub of South Asia during a significant part of British colonial rule and up to the mid-twentieth century, and the Bangladeshi context is a part of that historical geography where those scholarly activities flourished. This region still remains as a power house of critical thought on the subcontinent. Yet, since the creation of Bangladesh as an independent nation in 1971 economic growth in recent decades has caused new types of activities in various fields, conservation is not an exception to this. Now it is the responsibility of the universities and the conservation professionals to keep a fruitful and effective interaction between theory and practice.

This will ensure the large-scale interventions made possible by newly available investments will remain honest and sensitive to historical, cultural and other theoretical structures.

Lastly, the discourse around authenticity is a vast one. Internationally, it is active not only in the field of conservation, but also in areas of art, literature and philosophy. In Bangladesh, especially in the present age of interconnectedness, there should be more multidisciplinary explorations of the concept of authenticity. Such fundamental concepts, as influenced by major historical trends, cannot be covered by a single discipline alone. And this interaction has the potential to be mutually enriching.

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◊ CHAPTER 20 ◊

**Safeguarding authenticity
in the context of sustainable
development at Angkor World
Heritage Site: the role of the site's
traditional hydraulic system¹**

Hang Peou

¹ Excerpts from the Hang, Peou 2016 paper Stakeholders of Angkor World Heritage Site Management have been reprinted here with permission from the UCM publishing office (Ediciones Complutense).

Abstract

The paper discusses the concept of authenticity at the World Heritage Site of Angkor in Cambodia through the tensions among differing groups involved in the life of the site. The key management challenges of the site are addressed: UNESCO World Heritage inscription, attempts to achieve international cooperation for conservation purposes, increasing tourism use, as well as the everyday needs of the local community. Emphasis is placed on the role of the site's traditional hydraulic system in connecting authenticity with sustainable development.

Introduction

Following the signing of the Cambodia Peace Agreement in Paris on 23 October 1991, UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia) was established to ensure implementation of the agreement, the organization and conduct of elections and other tasks. Prior to the first elections (organized by UNTAC in 1993) King Norodom Sihanouk nominated Angkor to the World Heritage List and it was so inscribed.

Angkor is a living Word Heritage Site that covers more than 40,000 hectares with 112 villages. Its inscription recognized:

For several centuries Angkor, was the centre of the Khmer Kingdom. With impressive monuments, several different ancient urban plans and large water reservoirs, the site is a unique concentration of features testifying to an exceptional civilization. Temples such as Angkor Wat, the Bayon, Preah Khan and Ta Prohm, exemplars of Khmer architecture, are closely linked to their geographical context as well as being imbued with symbolic significance. The architecture and layout of the successive capitals bear witness to a high level of social order and ranking within the Khmer Empire. Angkor is therefore a major site exemplifying cultural, religious and symbolic values, as well as containing high architectural, archaeological and artistic significance (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2017).

Angkor is a living Word heritage Site that covers more than 40,000 hectares with 112 villages. In the inscription Angkor complex was recognized as architect buildings but also hydraulic engineering systems from the Khmer

period with hydraulic structures like Baray (ancient reservoir), canals, dikes and basins that some of them still use up today. The hydraulic system is built not only for daily life or agriculture purpose but also to assure the stability of the temples that built on artificial sand layer which need ground water.

After inscription of Angkor in the World Heritage Site List in 1992, the Siem Reap/Angkor region has become the greatest tourism site in the country and a powerhouse of tourism development. Tourism has become one of the main pillars of economic growth and the majority of tourism is cultural. Nowadays the income from tourism is more than 16% of GDP for Cambodia. But it can also generate irreparable destructions of the tangible as well as intangible cultural heritage.

Due to the increasing number of tourists every year and the rapidly growing population of the whole region, the demand for water also increased dramatically. Water management for the Siem Reap-Angkor area is the most critical issue for safeguarding the monuments and for sustainable development, the challenge is to satisfy the needs of water for daily use, while assuring the stability of Angkor temples, which have a sand foundation and are linked to the groundwater. The government is developing approaches to assure the development of the region without spoiling the Culture heritage, and has been supported in this endeavor through UNESCO from donor countries. To assure this giant task, the government with the assistance of UNESCO has established a strategy and vision for Management of Angkor (Hang, 2016).

Management challenges and solutions

Discussion on the preservation of authenticity at Angkor is based on three major elements: monuments, water, and population. Therefore, a series of management challenges are addressed below.

Management process

The conservation and restoration works at Angkor is doing by many countries that needs a coordination for exchange of technical approach of difference teams. It's why the Intergovernmental Conference of Tokyo for Angkor (October 1993) established the International Coordinating



Committee for the Safeguarding and Development of the Historic Site of Angkor (ICC) known as ICC-Angkor to assure the conservation and development of Angkor on the right way. The ICC-Angkor is a forum of exchange the experiences between architects, engineers, restorers, archaeologists, researchers, anthropologists, technical experts in various fields for the preservation and development of the Angkor Park.

The ICC-Angkor is chaired by France and Japan with UNESCO as secretariat and conducted in close cooperation with the APSARA National Authority (that is responsible for the management of the Angkor World Heritage Site), contributing to policy making related to conservations of monuments, forest, water system and cultural landscape as well as to sustainable development in the Angkor area.

The ICC-Angkor meetings are held twice a year, one a Plenary Session in December, the other Technical Session in June. Before the meetings, the Ad-hoc expert groups visit the site working by different teams (national and international) to discuss and provide advice, solutions or methodologies for specific issues. The Ad hoc experts also bring the questions, solutions and recommendations to the ICC meetings to have approval from Co-Chair of meetings. The Plenary Session is used to introduce new projects and budgets from state parties. Note that the decision of Ad hoc experts is independent and it has Ad hoc experts for conservation and Ad hoc experts for sustainable development.

Angkor World Heritage Site with the ICC-Angkor mechanism can attract 14 countries (Australia, China, France, Germany, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, United State of America) to work for conservation and sustainable development. The ICC strategically assists the APSARA National Authority to gain more from this support by coordinating activities and sharing lessons and findings across all of the partners. This international cooperation has also supported the capacity development (theoretical and practical) of many Cambodian staff.

Safeguarding intangible heritage

Crucially, the villagers who live inside Angkor Park are the key conservators of intangible heritage and they maintain the cultural landscape including rice

fields. The villagers continue to practice traditional rituals and ceremonies in the villages and temples.

Since 2000 the APSARA Authority has deployed tremendous effort in conducting research and establishing inventory of different forms of intangible heritage in the Angkor Park by founding a research group named 'Social Studies Group'. Alongside these activities, on April 22, 2010, the APSARA Authority founded a research group called 'Research on Intangible Heritage in the Angkor Park'. This group concentrated its effort in drafting the 'Guidelines for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage within the Angkor World Heritage Site and other Sites under the Jurisdiction of APSARA Authority'.

International partnership: Cambodia and New Zealand

The Royal Government of Cambodia has a long and collaborative relationship with New Zealand regarding the management of Angkor World Heritage site. The initial activities commenced in 1998 with support for forestry activities. The first major contribution came in 2005 with support for the research and design of the Angkor Management Plan, which was published in 2007 with the primary aim to: 'bring together information on the Park's resources, with clarification of issues and the opportunities for APSARA and the management needs, goals, objectives and action plans for sustainable development involving the park community in a partnership role with APSARA and the provincial government agencies.'

With links to implementation of the Angkor Management Plan, the Angkor Participatory Natural Resource and Livelihoods (APNRM&L) programme started as a 6-month pilot in 2009 to determine if there was capacity to effectively work on community development and natural resource management activities in the World Heritage site. Positive steps made in this pilot led to the design of a larger APNRM&L programme, with a budget of US\$1 million and was conducted from 2010 to 2013. Independent evaluation considered the APNRM&L programme a success and worthy of further support, with major accomplishments including: Aerial Mapping, Water Infrastructure, Community Liaison Team capacity, Heritage Education, Village Action Plans, Self Help Groups, Business Planning and Value Chain Training, Environmental Good Practices, Food Security, and

Community Economic development enhanced through strategic training and support of heritage livelihood activities, including: agriculture, solar, handicrafts and community tourism.

Building on lessons learned from APNRM&L APSARA and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade have continued their collaboration with the Angkor Community Heritage and Economic Advancement (ACHA) project. ACHA has a budget of US\$3,753,000 and is proposed to be delivered across the entire Angkor Park over five years (2014–2018). The goal of the Activity is ‘sustainable management of Angkor Park, protecting heritage while providing economic prosperity and food security for the people who live within the Park’. Due to the significant role of water in safeguarding the monuments and in promoting livelihoods and food security for local people, nearly a third of the project budget is allocated in support of water infrastructure.

In previous phases of this Activity a Community Liaison Team (CLT) was established within APSARA. The CLT

has been successful in engaging with village people, building their trust and capacity, and supporting them to initiate income-generating activities, food production and farming initiatives, which are complimentary to the tangible and intangible heritage values of the site. With trust and communication established, people have been supported with activities to protect the park, use resources sustainably and directly benefit through livelihoods.

This collaboration between APSARA and New Zealand has adapted over time and succeeded as the relationship has allowed for responsiveness to opportunities and needs. The development of enhanced capacity to better communicate with the communities living within the World Heritage site and understanding of the natural and social features of the site as significant living heritage (intangible heritage) has helped to make more positive relationships. This has also complimented the capacity of APSARA staff to more holistically approach heritage management as more of a collaborative activity that is best-achieved together.

Authenticity in connection to sustainable development at Angkor: the role of the traditional hydraulic system

Introduction: the ‘Hydraulic City’ of Angkor

The Khmer mastery of water engineering in ancient times is shown in a range of Angkor’s hydraulic structures such as Barays (ancient reservoirs), moats, laterite spillway, laterite bridges, ponds, canals and dykes. Angkor is recognized by Bernard-Phillip Groslier (of the École d’Extrême-Orient – EFEO) in 1950s and 1960s as ‘Hydraulic City’ because of this city is organized around an immense water management network (Groslier, 1979), the system has been re-mapped by Pottier (Pottier, 1999) and later on in Geographical Information System (GIS), but the functioning of this water network didn’t discovered in that time. It is only from 2004–2005 that the Khmer researcher found how it functions then rehabilitated it. (Water section extract from Hang Peou, 2015).

The significance of water management in temple construction

The soil in central plain of Cambodia cannot support heavy loads. In order to build stone temples like Angkor Wat, Bayon, Ta Prohm and Preah Khan, the best technique had to be found. Khmer engineers at the time discovered the physical properties of sand and water and realised that they could combine these two elements for building: sand once wet can support a heavy load. The discovery of this technique led them to locate the places where this theory could be applied. Studies have shown that the Angkor region is the best location, as underground water is close to the ground surface (Acker, 2005). They then used the immediate presence of underground water to completely fill the sand layer under the monument to ensure its stability. To assure



the sustainable of ground water to support the temples, the Khmer ancestor introduces the water in its culture that we demonstrate only two main points (thousands of Lingas and Moat) without talking on the other ceremony practical by local people every day.

The ancient Khmers knew the vital role played by water resources in the safeguarding of the Angkor region and learned how to preserve water. This is why this vital resource is celebrated within the tradition, culture and spirit of the Khmer people. Some of these customs are still celebrated today.

Traditional hydraulic system: sacred water of Mount Kulen and the moats

Khmer ancestors carved the Siem Reap River of Thousand Lingas in the river beds of Mount Kulen and Kbal Spean, where these rivers source, before they flow into Siem Reap and the Angkor site plain. At Banteay Srei they flow together to form the Siem Reap River. The water flowing from the “Thousand lingas” has become sacred and has been used in the major ceremonies (e.g. coronations, cremation ceremony) of the Khmer Kingdom since the 9th century. During coronation, the sacred water of Mount Kulen is used to bless the future King. This tradition is still practiced. The Khmer population believes in the power of this

sacred water, using it to cure diseases or during blessings to bring luck. But the real goal of the sacred water from Mount Kulen is to underline to the population the need to protect water resources, the region's life-blood, and to maintain the sustainability of this resource, which is essential for the conservation and development of the Siem Reap region. Therefore, the water source of Mount Kulen will be lost if deforestation continues and the environment is destroyed.

The moats

Before the construction of temple, the natural soil was removed and filled back with sand that needs water for its resistance. Of course this sand layer link to groundwater but to make the sustainable of temple in case of variation of underground water, the moat system was adopted. Thus, each temple in central plain of Cambodia, is surrounded with moats which play a pivotal role: they collect runoff water from the temple during the monsoon and recharge the sand layer underneath the temple (Hang, 2014).

The Khmers ancestors understood that if the safeguarding of water was conveyed as a message or ordered (law) by using technical reason, this would not be sustainable. So by including the water as both a form of life-blood and as the basis for a system of

beliefs, the recommendations may have lasted. Then to assure the sustainable water in the moat to support the temple, the engineering approach was transformed into the religious. The moats are considered in the Khmer tradition as the Ocean and the temple as Mount Meru (the dwelling of the Gods).

Water management for the development of Siem Reap region

After inscription of Angkor in the World Heritage Site List in 1992, the Siem Reap/Angkor region has become the greatest tourism site in the country and a powerhouse of tourism development. For Cambodia, tourism has become one of the main pillars of economic growth and the majority of tourism is cultural. Nowadays the income from tourism is more than 16% of GDP for Cambodia. It means the visitor in the regional will continue to increase every year.

Due to the number of tourism increase every year, and the needs of water supply for daily used of the whole region caused to the demand of water is increase in remarkable. The whole region use underground water that link to the stability of the monument as mentioned in previous chapter. In this regard, Water Management for Siem Reap-Angkor is the most sensitive issue for Sustainable Development and Safeguard monuments-to assure the stability of Angkor temples stand on the sand layer that link to the groundwater. The groundwater can recharge naturally and quickly with the present of forest, but in the upstream and on top of Kulen Mountain is deforested.

To assure the compromise between the development of tourism and the safeguarding of the temple, the government of Cambodia is setting the long term policy to stop increasing of pumping underground water and take water surface like West Baray (storage of 56 million cubic meters) in 2015 and Tonlé Sap Lake in 2019. Without waiting the long time solution and assure the development of the tourism, since 2004, APSARA National Authority has been adopted two solutions, the first is the reforestation in the whole region to increase the recharge of underground water (Hang, 2005), but this solution will take long time for those tree grow up and play it role. The second solution is to rehabilitate the ancient reservoir like Baray, Moat and Basin to recharge underground water immediately.

Nowadays, we face not only the problem of water resources for the water supply in the region but also the flood that threat

every year since 2009 to this tourism region. The best ways to protect the temples, airport and Siem Reap city from the floods, Department of Water Management of APSARA National Authority has conducted necessary project in analysing, field investigating with theoretical and practical research in order to rehabilitate ancient Angkorian Hydraulic System to permit restore Cultural Landscape, Environment and recover their essential role of safeguard monuments. This long and challenging program has been implemented with technical and financial resources within the APSARA National Authority and especially comparing of analysis and preliminary findings with exceptional data provided by the upheavals following the floods of 2009, 2010 and 2011 (Hang, 2013).

◊ **Figure 1**
Thousand Lingas.

Rehabilitation of authenticity

The main task to be archived before the rehabilitation of ancient hydraulic structures is analyzed the flow from upstream limit of watershed to the outlet of the Kulen plateau until they spill into the Tonlé Sap Great Lake, by three watersheds: Stung Pourk in the West, the Stung Siem Reap at Center and Stung Roluos at East. It appeared that the Pourk and Stung Roluos are natural waterways; while the Stung Siem Reap is an ARTIFICIAL waterway from Bampenh Reach (it's a laterite Spillways – the connection between Pourk River and actual Siem Reap river).

More than ten years of applied research on the ancient hydraulic system of Department of Water Management of APSARA, the department achieved the restoration of some structures that built during the Khmer Empire of Greatness Angkor by hydraulics engineers as Srah Srang, Banteay Srei, Angkor Thom moats, Angkor Wat moats, Jayatataka or North Baray, Neak Pean temple, Preah Khan moats and West Baray.

Rehabilitation of the twelfth-century hydraulic system

Since 2009 the whole region is facing to flood in rainy season that has impact on the temples/monuments, villages, Siem Reap city (tourism and local resident).



APSARA Authority is able to manage the flow to protect the temples/monuments and some villages, but not the Siem Reap city. In 2011, Siem Reap city was flooded 5 times, some part like Old Market (center of Siem Reap city) can't access even the Pick-Up car. It needs some million dollars to repair the infrastructure for Siem Reap province. In 2012, the government requested to APSARA Authority to find out the solution to protect not only Angkor Park and upstream but also this city from flood. As showing in this article, the concept of APSARA Authority is to reuse the ancient hydraulic system.

It needs to go back to the history by looking on the record of the Angkor city in ancient time, how they can face to this challenge with their complex hydraulic system. After our research, no inscription in Khmer Empire territory mentioned about the flood neither the drought in the Angkor region. Otherwise the Khmer people should have a memory of disaster and transfer that information to next generation or use like a legend. If those problems never happened in the past, it means that the water management system in ancient time is the best system to optimize water

resources. Because of the ancient system unfunctioning for long time, that's why in 2004 it has drought – the Angkor Wat moats and Srah Srang dry up, and then it has floods in 2009, 2010 and 2011.

Understand the overall organization of the Angkorian Hydraulic System: rivers, Barays, Moats, canals, pounds and dikes, it can be identified on the field how it was ensured water flow and thereby highlight channels and their connections. This discovery led to understand that the level of the North Baray, at North-East, it has a canals and dikes East-West and an **ancient laterite bridge** (on Siem Reap river) of multiple arc form which could use to control the flow and discharge. With this distribution node, and through the channels, we managed to distribute water in three flow direction instead of sending all through Siem Reap river: one part to the South (Moat of Angkor Thom – 2 million cubic meters, Angkor Wat – 1.5 million cubic meters and to Siem Reap river), second part to the East (Stung Roluos river) and third part to the West that can be storage in North Baray – 5 million cubic meter, West

Baray – 56 million cubic of meter, the Stung Pourk river and Stung Preah Srok river).

In 2012, the main part of this system has been rehabilitated; it's why the Angkor and Siem Reap city can avoid the flood during rainy season of 2012 and 2013, without this work Siem Reap city will face to flood at less four times. Until 2014, APSARA Authority

rehabilitated more than 37.87 kilometers of 52 kilometers of system. It's why in the rainy

season of 2014 Siem Reap region doesn't have any flood. This result is confirmed that the Millennium Hydraulic System not only can optimization of Water Resources Management but also flood control.

◀ **Figure 2**
Angkor.

Conclusion

“Angkor is inscribed as Eco historic site with people who live inside. It means Angkor is the living site that is necessary to” help them to live in prosperity, if not, the living site would become archaeological site. “...The tourism and the development projects are complement” of historic authenticity (Hang, 2016, p. 535).

Before the rehabilitation of the ancient hydraulic system there was a serious risk of flooding affecting the temples, Siem Reap city and airport. The analysis of the hydraulic system has thus far confirmed the importance of the system in safeguarding the site and inhabitants – the very authenticity of the region and enhancing sustainable development.



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◊ CHAPTER 21 ◊

**Considerations on
authenticity in post-disaster
recovery of cultural heritage:
case studies from India**

Rohit Jigyasu

Abstract

This paper discusses the concept of authenticity with specific reference to the cases of post-disaster recovery of cultural heritage. The first part of the paper challenges the notion of disaster as understood in the Western world, based on rationality, and revisits it from an Eastern perspective based on the beliefs of Buddhism and Hinduism. Specifically, the notion of disaster is seen as: a spatial reality; a temporal reality; and an experiential reality. The second part focuses on specific post-disaster recovery case studies from India. Case studies that have applied the Eastern perspective to disaster and recovery are juxtaposed to those that have followed the Western perspective. The paper concludes with an attempt to reconceptualize the notion of authenticity and reconsider its application potentials as a tool for disaster recovery operations, with an emphasis on reinforcing continuity and adaptation.

Introduction: disasters, and their impact on cultural heritage

Cultural heritage is confronted with, and significantly affected by, various kinds of disaster risks, due to natural hazards such as floods, fires and earthquakes as well as human induced events such as terrorism, vandalism, armed conflict and arson. Examples include the historic castle of Ferrara in Northern Italy and largest adobe citadel of Bam in the Islamic Republic of Iran due to earthquakes in 2011 and 2003 respectively, the Old Town of Edinburgh (United Kingdom) due to fire in 2002, ancient city of Ayuthaya in Thailand due to 2011 floods, Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan (see Poshyanandana, this volume) and Aleppo Citadel in Syria due to armed conflict in 2001 and 2013 respectively.

Recovery of cultural heritage after these disasters is a huge challenge not only from technical but also from social and economic perspectives. Often the most difficult question is the decision

regarding the approach to be followed for recovery. Solutions may oscillate from one extreme end of completely replacing heritage with a new disaster-resistant structure to another extreme of restoring it exactly as it was even accepting the inherent vulnerabilities that led to damage in the first place. In between these two positions are discussions on appropriate retrofitting techniques for reducing vulnerability of heritage to potential disasters in the future. The debate on authenticity thus centres on the challenging task of balancing safety with heritage values.

However, in order to look at this in greater depth in the Asian context, we need to first challenge the notion of disaster as understood in the Western world based on rationality, and revisit it from an Eastern perspective, as deeply connected to the day to day lives of people through their beliefs in Buddhism and Hinduism.

Revisiting the notion of disaster from an Eastern perspective

The notion of disaster, as understood in the Western context, based on rationality and adopted by the conservation professionals, the so-called experts, is merely a problem solving exercise (Dombrowsky, 1998). Within this framework, Gilbert (1995, 1998) has classified numerous theoretical approaches to disasters into three main paradigms: The first paradigm sees disaster as a duplication of war. According to this paradigm, a disaster can be imputed to an external agent; and human communities are entities that react globally against aggression. The second paradigm sees disaster as an expression of social vulnerabilities. According to this, disaster is the result of underlying community logic, of an inward and social process. The third paradigm sees disaster as an entrance into a state of uncertainty: disaster is tightly tied into the impossibility of defining real or supposed, especially

after the upsetting of the mental frameworks we use to know and understand reality.

The bottom line of the aforementioned paradigms is that disaster is supposed to represent a total or near total breakdown of local systems. Yet, what seems ironic with these paradigms is that, on one hand they define disaster as an objective reality, while on the other the measures undertaken to reduce disaster tend to be so far from reality – hence in most cases disaster vulnerability is increasing at a very fast pace.

Dombrowsky (1998) sees disaster as the outcome of a scientific tradition that is “concentrated in time and space”, implying that disaster has mainly two types of “reality”; the spatial and the temporal. In the following sections, I will discuss each of these “realities” in detail with respect to spatial and temporal connotations yet from an Eastern



perspective based on the tenets of Buddhism and Hinduism.

A spatial reality

Disaster has clear geographical connotations with defined extent and boundaries. In fact, space characterizes key local factors that trigger disasters. These include natural hazards such as earthquakes that a particular space is exposed to. Additionally, it is characterized by local vulnerability processes at a particular point of time. Needless to say, space is also defined by the natural resources available and not to forget the people who inhabit that particular space and intervene over time to create a distinct cultural landscape. Disaster adversely affects the natural and human resources characterizing the space and creates sudden disruption in the local processes defining human-environment relationships in that particular space. All these aspects help us to spatially delimit disasters.

Let us now understand how space is understood and defined in an Eastern way of thought. The physical manifestation remains the same, as this is the reality which human senses can perceive, irrespective of social, cultural or religious background. However, in Eastern thought, such a physical manifestation gets directly linked to understanding at a subconscious level, which gives shape and deeper meaning to the landscape. Such a landscape is constructed through symbolic representations, sometimes even representing the whole cosmos at the micro level (Galtung, 1979; Vatsayan, 1994). This has clear philosophical connotations, which I will not pursue in detail. However, the main point is that space – its elements and processes – is no longer real, but in fact a construction at one or more levels of consciousness, which we will discuss in detail later.

This forces us to go beyond our conventional understanding of disaster as a spatial reality and view it as a phenomenon, which has impact deeper than visual. Its comprehension goes deeper for its effect on human perceptions. Disaster is no longer constrained by physical boundaries; rather it extends deeper into human consciousness. The psychological impact of this understanding is very deep – in fact, much deeper than one can expect – not only shaping

the way people perceive the cause of disasters but also the way they respond to it.

Interestingly, similar kinds of symbolical associations shape the perceptions and response actions which give meaning to the space in the first place. However, there is always a limit to what our senses and the tools available can measure and these in fact pose a limit to individual ability of comprehension.

A temporal reality

Our understanding of disasters is also linked to temporal dimensions. In fact, the changing theoretical paradigms of disaster mentioned before are very much linked to the notion of time. The perception of disaster as an event implies that disaster has a point of beginning and an end. Therefore we categorize disaster situations with reference to the event in focus; before, during and after disasters. This also determines disaster management actions as prevention or mitigation (before), emergency response (during) and long-term rehabilitation and development (after), which together form part of the disaster management cycle. When viewed this way, disasters have periods of onset, development and finally an end. One wonders, if it begins at a moment in time and stops at another moment; the moment being the smallest possible unit in time scale, which our senses or available tools can visualize. While considering disaster this way, we view time in a linear scale (Jigyasu, 2002).

However, the Eastern notion of time is cyclic; an endless cycle of birth and death, creation and destruction, implying that there is neither beginning nor an end (Galtung, 1979; Vatsayan, 1994). When seen from this perspective, disasters repeat themselves as part of this endless cycle of creation and destruction.

Moreover disaster as a cyclical process is a never-ending continuum, in which various phases merge into each other, and does not return to the point from where it began.

A central tenet of Buddhism is nothing is permanent; all things change (Heehs, ed., 2002). One has to work hard to reach salvation. Our actions and thinking processes can change the point of return in a way that we return but not exactly at the same point. It is part of our evolutionary processes to be in a cyclical loop.

So we discover that even the reality of time is what we construct for the sake of comprehension.

The experiential dimension

Now that we are breaking boundaries between reality and construct, I would like to bring in the third dimension, which is crucial to our understanding of disaster but has often been overlooked. This is the experiential dimension, which is inherently linked to our cognition levels determined by three modes of comprehension, namely conscious (visible), sub-conscious (hidden) and unconscious (invisible) modes. In fact, the spatial and temporal constructs discussed above get their enlarged meanings when we adopt a holistic view combining these three modes, each of which I will discuss briefly. Gupta (2003) discusses them in the following manner:

The visible *pratakshya* refers to the tangible aspect, which is mostly physical. The world itself is an illusion and its material content is completely destructible. The illusion is created to confuse oneself from the right path of God. The *maya* or illusion seduces one into the worldly materialist aspects away from God and the real experience and thus all tangible aspects are of no or very little importance. This mode of comprehension is most easily and clearly measured by our senses. The hidden, covered, *adrishya* is the second level where one begins recognizing the illusion and making the effort of discovering (trying to find the truth and meanings). This aspect is represented in nature, as it is believed that whatever God created (even illusionary) is greater than man-made, so sacred gets associated with nature. The divine aspect of trees, mountains, rivers, water bodies,

forests, stones etc. may not be apparent but needs discovery and creativity in this mode of comprehension. The visible manifestation of this hidden aspect is in the form of rituals and practices.

The invisible, intangible, *apratakshya* can never be seen by the human eye and can only be accessed through a pure heart. However, it can be experienced. This is considered to be the true landscape where all tangible and intangible, visible and hidden aspects become meaningless. The quality is only experiential without any physical attributes. It is something, which is a perfection of divinity and even difficult to define.

A most significant aspect which comes forth in the last mode of comprehension is that the human being is an inseparable part of these constructs; these are constructed within his self, which is defined metaphorically but experienced spiritually. Importantly, experience is different from perception. The latter determines opinion and not comprehension.

Now I return to our discussion on disasters. Experiencing a disaster may be part of a survival strategy; a source of continuity of existence, by accepting disaster as part of the endless cycle of birth and death. Within this experiential mode, disaster is not seen as an event to fight with but as part of existence to live with. In a way, this on the one hand seems to point to a tendency to turn people passive and not take actions they are supposed to take. Yet, on the other, this also turns out to be an effective psychological coping mechanism that helps communities to live with disasters.

Imposing an internal disconnect between the tangible and intangible: case studies

The rivers Ganga and Yamuna are the holiest rivers for Hindus. The spiritual association with these rivers has been so strong that it has led to the evolution of one of the greatest civilizations in the world. In fact, sacred landscapes such as Braj,

in which the story of Lord Krishna's childhood is interwoven with the natural landscape, have evolved around these rivers (Mason, 2009).

Undoubtedly, the visible qualities of these human interventions were, and remain, of extraordinary



architectural and ecological merit, and have been maintained over time to the present date.

The current state of condition of the rivers is as follows: most of the rituals and beliefs – the hidden and invisible dimensions of heritage remain as strong as ever – actually, many of them have become more intense over the course of time. Nevertheless, the water of the rivers – the visible dimensions of heritage are polluted to dangerous proportions, having become dumping grounds for all kinds of waste. The impression is made that the rivers have been slowly yet consistently disowned by their own communities (Jigyasu, 2005).

Conservation professionals, the so-called experts, attempt to handle the aforementioned problems in the following way: to deal with the pollution in these holy rivers. An action plan was drafted in the early 1990s spending millions of dollars from international aid. Most of this money was used to install sewage treatment plants to clean the water. Nearly every town along these rivers established these plants, including the holy cities of Mathura and Vrindavan, which were part of the sacred landscape mentioned above. Thus, the entire urban sewage in these towns was collected through electrically driven motors. These were installed in a direction opposite to the natural slope, to prevent the sewage from flowing towards the river. The entire system was heavily dependent on technology and requires regular maintenance.

The local traditional maintenance system to dispose of sewage obeys the natural landform, which had proved efficient to some extent preventing larger-scale pollution over time (as reflected for instance in the accounts of pleasant experiences of the pilgrims and travellers) and which was still in use, was abandoned (Jigyasu, 2005).

The end result is that most of the newly-established treatment plants are not working at all or working half of their original capacity. This is because there is not enough electricity to keep them running all the time and once power fails, the entire sewage system gets clogged and pollutes the river. The system is in direct opposition to the national topography. Furthermore, since technology is meant to do the job most people do not take initiatives for caring of the rivers, resulting in a solely techno-centric way of thinking.

Villages in the Marathwada region in India have been reconstructed following a 1993 earthquake using a city-like plan with wide streets forming a gridiron pattern and row housing. The designers in the local town planning office perceived that such a “modern” plan would ensure development of “backward” local communities. Ironically many local people also shared this perception. Interestingly however, several years after the quake, the villagers themselves have initiated drastic changes in these tailor-made designs to suit their way of life. Moreover, earthquake resistant technology, which was imported as rigid design packages, has failed to take root with local communities, owing to the fact that these were found to be unsuited to local climate, affordability and identity. Additionally, in the absence of proper workmanship, these in fact have resulted in poor construction, which ironically are even poorer than the traditional technology they have replaced (Jigyasu, 2001).

This example demonstrates the failure to include social and cultural aspects in the design and layout of the villages. Such examples are not uncommon. In fact, we continue to see the same phenomenon repeated over and over again irrespective of geographical context.

The aforementioned case studies lead to a series of remarks. First, there is an increasing gap between the visible dimensions and the hidden, invisible dimensions of heritage. Second, there is an increasing gap between the views of the conservation professionals and the local communities. Third, there is a division between our perceptions of what is modern and what is traditional. The former carries with itself the notions of development of “backward” traditional communities; while the latter either implies outdated knowledge or romanticized nostalgic images.

On a broader level, there seems to be a distance between our technological advancement and our inner self (Malik, 1990, 1995). Our perceptions have taken over our ability of comprehension at various levels. We no longer look deep inwards but tend to look outwards, denying internal contradictions as well as capacities.

The above is reflected in what we call disaster and in the actions that we take to reduce the impact of disasters. Although a disaster may be triggered by

an extreme natural hazard, it is a slow onset process, which is making us, the humans, not only physically but, more importantly, mentally more vulnerable than ever before. We are living in an age of lost

generations, which are neither able to reap benefits of what we call modern, nor able to make use of traditional systems developed over time through trial and error, which seem to have become outdated.

Reinforcing continuity and adaptation: case study

A study of transformational processes in the Marathwada villages was undertaken as part of research conducted by the author in partnership with Jennifer Duyne as part of a project on the long-term impacts of reconstruction funded by the Swiss Science Foundation. The research aimed at assessing the long-term impact of the post-earthquake rehabilitation process that initially failed to include social and cultural aspects in the design and layout of villages (Jigyasu and Upadhyay, 2016).

With the abundant space available, the reconstructed villages have transformed over time according to the sociocultural needs of the villagers and the growing population. For example, in Malkondji, one of the relocated villages, the well-shaded road next to the main *chowk* (square) has become the place for the elderly to gather and relax under the shade of gulmohur trees. In Gubbal, the village has become culturally and socially richer as a big mosque and two temples have been added to the village open areas. The lack of development of the other community spaces is mostly because of the decreased interaction between various social groups of the village. These usages were not foreseen at the time of design but later evolved as the villagers tried to adapt the given space as per their sociocultural needs (Jigyasu, 2013).

Interestingly, in the same village, the villagers brought all the major deities from the old village and made new temples for their gods. Not only the deities but also the original *deepmal* (lamp-tower) located in the old village has been brought to the new village. Villagers employed expert masons to first dismantle the *deepmal* at its original site in the old village and then later had it reconstructed as before, in the main public square of the new village opposite the main temple. This is a very significant attempt

by the villagers to revive the old village ambience and culture in the new village. However many villagers still visit the shrines in the old village especially during special festival days (Jain *et al.*, 2016).

In another relocated village of Lamjhana, people visit the shrine of a saint and also organize an annual fair called *urs* around it. Also after marriage ceremonies the newlyweds pay a customary visit to the temple in the old village to receive the blessing from the local deity. Also in Malkondji a seven-day festival is celebrated and organized around the temple dedicated to the local deity, situated in the old village.

It was also noted that relocated villages with cluster spaces of intimate scale were actively used by the local community compared to large spaces or row houses that had no link with the traditional sociocultural pattern of the village.

Interesting transformations were also seen in house designs in relocated villages as people made additions and alterations to suit their traditional living patterns even in those cases where ready-made designs did not facilitate this process. In the case of Gubbal, the circular plan and the curved Ferro cement walls made it impossible to make strong extensions integrated with core units. However it allowed the villagers to make the extensions around the dome completely surrounding it thereby creating an intimate open space in between the dome and these extensions. In many such cases, the house entrance with *dehleej* (platform for sitting on both sides) often looks like a typical *wada* style house (Jigyasu, 2013). These traditional houses are built using stone and wood; materials that have been available locally. Typically, the walls are made of stone masonry, sometimes more than 600 mm thick and with mud mortar. The most commonly found roof consists of a thick layer of soil serving primarily as roofing. A heavy



waterproof and insulating layer is placed on timber understructure (*malwad*). Houses of people with well-to-do status are characterized by a courtyard surrounded by a colonnaded veranda in front of the rooms. A front wall with dressed stone cladding and a massive doorway are other characteristic features of these houses. This typology has a front yard that is used as a buffer for private and public

spaces within a household. These *wadas* varying in size and shape are located adjacent to one another along winding roads.

This example demonstrates that restoring living cultural heritage in a post-disaster context is more about reintroducing cultural drivers to enable continuity and adaptation than mere preservation in a static materialistic sense.

Suggestions: from resisting disaster to living with it – the proactive role of cultural heritage in disaster risk reduction

I would like to conclude this discussion by stressing the fact that disaster is not just about spatial and temporal reality that has to be resisted. Disaster is as much rooted in consciousness of the self, which makes and breaks these spatial and temporal boundaries. This rediscovering of the self places ethics and responsibilities on each human being. In this experiential realm, we start from the self, move on to the community (with whom we share values and visions by choice and not compulsion) and to other levels, even extending to the cosmos (the most perceivable entity). But at the end, we must return and get connected to the self.

This implies that our understanding of disaster needs to be turned inside out and not the other way around, as it tends to become, thanks to the “expert” notions of what a disaster is. There needs to be a strong interface between the reality of disaster constructed by us, the experts, and the one created by the victims, based on their worldviews. After all, reality is nothing but a construct; it is about rediscovering the self. Only the self is real in the sense that it is the insurmountable truth of our existence; omnipresent in visible, hidden and invisible realms of consciousness.

Rather than wasting all our time and efforts on finding ways to fight the disaster as an external objective reality, we need to live with disaster, not as passive recipients but as proactive participants. This essentially requires moving from a perceptual mode of thinking (that unfortunately we have got

entangled in at present) to an experiential mode of comprehension.

Even at a tangible level, cultural heritage has a proactive role to play in building the resilience of communities and saving lives and properties. Countless examples illustrate this point. Traditional knowledge systems embedded in cultural heritage which have evolved over time through successive trials and errors can play a significant role in disaster prevention and mitigation, thereby contributing to more sustainable development. Such local knowledge often equips communities to face natural hazards better through their lifestyles, customs and traditional livelihoods. For example, several traditional constructions in Gujarat, Kashmir and Haiti have resisted earthquakes very well whereas many contemporary structures collapsed like a house of cards (Jigyasu, 2008; Langenbach, 2010). Traditional maintenance systems have helped certain coastal communities over the centuries not only to foresee natural hazards, but have become better equipped to deal with them through such measures as building on stilts and erecting wind-resistant structures. In fact, when traditional skills and practices are kept alive and dynamic, they can contribute to the rebuilding of resilient communities after disasters. Local masons and craftspeople can rebuild shelters using local knowledge and resources, salvage and reuse materials from collapsed structures, help the community to reduce dependency on external support and provide livelihood sources crucial for

sustainable recovery. In this sense, cultural heritage optimizes locally available resources and the sociocultural needs of communities (Jigyasu, 2017).

Cultural heritage sites have also served as refuge areas during disasters, for example temples located on higher ground were used as refuge during the Great East Japan disaster in 2011 (R-DMUCH, 2013). If properly maintained, traditional water systems as exemplified by the *hitis* (water tanks) in Nepal's Kathmandu Valley also provide supplies during

emergency situations when electricity cannot be relied on.

Last but not least, the symbolism inherent in heritage is also a powerful means of communicating risks and helping victims to recover from the psychological impact of disasters. Traditional social networks, rituals and cultural practices provide mutual support and access to collective assets are extremely effective coping mechanisms for community members.

Conclusion: considerations on authenticity in post-disaster recovery of cultural heritage

The above analysis may lead to a series of conclusions concerning the notion of authenticity.

Overall, it is important to move beyond a Western perspective on authenticity, based on rationality and emphasis on the conservation professionals, the so-called experts, and towards an Eastern perspective based on (religious) beliefs linked to the everyday life of local communities.

Regarding the meaning of disaster, the conventional, Western-based understanding of disaster as linked to a fear of loss that is unexpected and undesirable should be challenged; and be replaced by an Eastern-based understanding of disaster as a part of continual change in accordance with the inner self of the local communities, in the context of their connection with heritage and their creation of heritage.

Regarding the post-disaster recovery processes, the objective should no longer be to reduce the impact of the disaster, disconnecting the intangible from the tangible dimensions of heritage and

sacrificing the latter for the benefit of the former. Furthermore, achieving a positive result should not rely on or be under the exclusive control of the conservation professionals, through the application of modern, scientific-based conservation techniques at the expense of the traditional maintenance practices. Instead, the objective should now be to reinforce continuity and adaptation, prioritizing the intangible over the tangible dimensions of heritage; through the active involvement of the local communities with the help of conservation professionals, and through the application of traditional knowledge and maintenance systems with the support of modern scientific-based conservation methods.

On a final note, a disaster could be seen as an exceptional incident that can reveal in a more profound way the limitations as well as the challenges of the discipline of conservation today, beyond established notions of authenticity towards alternative ones.



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Dans le sanctuaire shinto Kasuga-taisha à Nara by Jean-Pierre Dalbéra (CC BY 2.0)

▽
Conclusions
△

**Revisiting
authenticity
in the Asian
context**
▽

The objective of this Forum was to explore and debate on authenticity and its relevance to the conservation and management of heritage with particular reference to the Asian region, and also reflect on the Nara Document on Authenticity (Nara Document) 1994 at its twentieth anniversary.

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Context

This Forum occurred during the twentieth anniversary of the Nara Document, and provided an opportunity to revisit the concept of authenticity. The theme of this Forum emerged from the concern in Asia that in some cultural circumstances the historical weight of the concept of authenticity within the conservation discourse poses challenges to conservation practice in the region. This is evident in some international approaches and obligations which may make it difficult to address the specific local cultural circumstances that have a bearing on heritage conservation; and, as a counterpoint to this, there are some local

cultural and/or religious practices that may hinder the work of conservation practitioners working to meet international requirements.

The Forum participants highlighted the validity of different approaches to conservation in Asia and questioned the Western concept of authenticity. They identified and discussed a range of issues associated with the use of the term authenticity in the assessment of World Heritage, but which are also echoed in other heritage evaluation processes.

As a result of the discussions, the participants questioned the continued validity of the prevailing concept of authenticity within World Heritage discourse and beyond.

Key issues/concerns

- 1 **Nomenclature** In part the discussion of the concept of authenticity remains problematic because the term is not always directly translatable into the many local languages that exist in Asia. Conservation practitioners therefore rely upon inexact synonyms in the establishment of local frameworks or in their interactions with communities and stakeholders.
- 2 **Ambiguity in the application** It was noted that there is currently ambiguity in the use of the concept of authenticity in the World Heritage context. On one hand the state of conservation regards authenticity as a generic or overarching term, while on the other, the designation of authenticity in the World Heritage nomination form this is reduced to the selection of specific aspects.
- 3 **Accommodating change** There are ambiguities resulting in difficulties in applying current frameworks of authenticity in the event of change which impacts the values of the place and in particular on the relationship between built heritage and the continuity of spiritual values (e.g. in the context of recent disaster recovery efforts).
- 4 **The process of understanding spiritual values, attributes and aspects of authenticity** While materials-based, scientific and empirically supported notions of authenticity may be necessary, there was, nevertheless, a consensus that this often does not go far enough in some Asian circumstances to include the spiritual values of the place.
- 5 **Community participation** The interpretation of authenticity in conservation practice may alienate local communities in the preservation of heritage places. This underscores the issue of who most benefits from conservation.

The process of conservation

- 1 **Longstanding traditions** There is diversity in Asian cultures in terms of approaches to the preservation of heritage structures and these are based on longstanding traditional theory and practices that predate the Venice Charter. For example, the restoration of temples in South Asia was discussed in the *Mayamata*, a manuscript from the ninth century.
- 2 **Continuity** There is a tradition of rebuilding buildings, where the process embodies spiritual significance. This is informed by a regenerative view of the relationships between the past and the present, which is circular and continuous.
- 3 **Conservation can be a revitalizing process** In general, while older elements of a building may be obscured by more recent treatments, the building may still be understood as authentic because it represents a revitalizing spiritual process or the continuing embodiment of enduring spiritual beliefs and practices valued by the community.
- 4 **A wider context** It was agreed that the assessment of authenticity ought to occur in a wider context because authenticity resides not only in material forms but also in processes and interactions and linkages between tangible and intangible aspects, living heritage and in cultural landscapes.

Applications

- 1 We propose that the concept of authenticity should be guided by the process of the assessment of a range of heritage values, rather than settling for a fixed aspect.
- 2 In real terms this would mean that the authenticity segment of the WH nomination form needs to provide a more substantial rationale that is clearly articulated.
- 3 There is a need for more concerted research efforts into the assessment of heritage values and the articulation of significances that utilize community knowledge and participatory processes.
- 4 There is a need to understand the extent to which the material form is relevant to the preservation of spiritual values and/or cultural practices.
- 5 As was suggested in the Nara Document, the participants recognized that each country would continue to benefit from revisiting the concept of authenticity in their own context; exploring the relationships between continuity and change, and between material and immaterial attributes and associated values.



Classical Gardens of Suzhou, China, by ICCROM

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ISBN 978-92-9077-283-5



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Cover image:
Tuangtong Soraprasert/Shutterstock
ISBN 978-92-9077-283-5
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