

Annexe 1:

Living Heritage: A summary

Abstract

Defining heritage itself is a challenging task and it becomes even more challenging when a 'living' dimension is added to it. Nevertheless, use of the theme 'Living Heritage' has become increasingly popular within heritage discourse in the recent past. Debates on living vs. dead monuments (the dominant terminology of the past regarding heritage) originated in the formative period of conservation discourse when emphasis and interest seems to have focused on the latter. Interestingly all discussions on the theme 'living' seem to have been linked to the 'use' of heritage places or even more recently for the 'purposes for which they were originally intended'. Lately, particularly since the 2005 convention, the term 'Living Heritage' is being linked to 'communities' and the 'continuity' of traditions and practices. Furthermore, various countries use the theme to identify heritage that comprises of living dimensions or the continuity of traditions, skills and even craftspeople.

For this discussion, Living Heritage is characterized by the concept of "continuity"; in particular the continuity of a heritage site's original function or 'the purpose for which they were originally intended' and the continuity of community connections (continuity of a core community). In response to the changing circumstances of the core community heritage places continue to evolve or change with added tangible and intangible expressions (continuity of expressions). The core community is also responsible for the continuous care of the heritage through traditional or established means (continuity of care). In this sense, change is embraced as a part of the continuity or living nature of the heritage place, rather than something which is to be mitigated or kept to a minimum. Based on recent research and field activities of ICCROM, this paper will characterize 'living heritage' based on continuity and change as dominant concepts. Conservation is therefore about managing continuity and change for which new decision making processes has to be evolved.

Introduction

'Living Heritage' has become a recurring theme over the last 10 years. ICCROM launched a programme on Living Heritage Sites in 2003 as part of its Integrated Territorial and Urban Conservation (ITUC) activities. The rationale behind the programme was to emphasize the living dimensions of heritage sites: their recognition and relevance to contemporary life, including benefits and people's interests and capacity to engage in continuous care as true and long-term custodians of these sites. Retaining living dimensions which contain and support diverse socio-cultural activities was considered as important as the material fabric. The goal of the programme was to promote awareness of the living heritage concept, within the domain of conservation and management of heritage sites. Specific objectives included: the creation of tools necessary to develop a community-based approach to conservation and management, promotion of traditional knowledge systems in conservation practices and increased attention paid to living heritage issues in training programmes. In this way, it was expected to increase awareness and sensitivity towards living heritage; encourage the use

of local resources, traditional practices and know-how; strengthen efforts to retain local craft traditions; and increase support for social and religious activities and functions played by sacred places.

The five-year programme started with a strategy development meeting held in Bangkok in 2003ⁱ and the Forum on Living Religious Heritage held in Rome in 2003 (Stovel, Stanley-Price, Killick 2005). The Mekong River Project emerged at the strategy meeting and aimed at carrying out several pilot studies in the region, with the main activity conducted in Phrae, a region in the northern part of Thailand. Interim results of this project and some of the ongoing research were discussed at a workshop on ‘empowering communities’ held in 2005 in Thailand (Wijesuriya, Right 2005). This was a theme which emerged from various pilot projects and experiences in other parts of the world. A number of internships, individual research projects and several fellowships were carried out at ICCROM to further develop and synthesize the resultsⁱⁱ based on which, a workshop was held in Bangkok in 2009. Since 2003, several PhD dissertations were submitted at a number of universities on these themes; many of those candidates engaged in discussions with ICCROM staff.

Other recent developments in heritage approaches

While ICCROM carried out the Living Heritage Sites programme, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in 2003 and it came to effect soon after. This became an increasingly popular instrument and soon incorporated the theme of ‘living heritage’ into its activities. However, intangible heritage approach has also been criticized for its lack of a holistic view on heritage by only emphasizing the intangible aspects (Wijesuriya, 2010). There are many parallels between the ideals being promoted between intangible heritage and the Living Heritage Approach, but no formal links have been established. The focus on ‘living heritage’ – which is acknowledged in the intangible heritage too, can in fact effectively address the above-mentioned criticisms of intangible heritage. Community as a central theme is the most obvious aspect of the two approaches.

Conservation as the ‘management of change’ is another view that has become increasingly popular over the last two decades. The central theme of continuity invariably linked to change therefore, conservation is about the management of continuity and change and has little or no contradiction with the new idea.

It was also during this time that the UNESCO programme on historic urban landscapes was born and developed, with some input from ICCROM. The final result came in the form of UNESCO recommendations, which also have some parallels to what has been developed in the Living Heritage Sites programme.

Hence, the Living Heritage Sites programme has evolved in response to some major criticisms of conventional heritage conservation and management approaches (Wijesuriya 2010) and it also integrates some of recent developments in heritage discourse. It should be mentioned here that the living heritage sites programme was developed within the

context of immovable heritage, it indeed advocate to avoid compartmentalization between tangible and intangible and movable and immovable. The Living Heritage Approach, therefore, is not necessarily a substitute for the earlier developed approachesⁱⁱⁱ, but it is a complementary development to contemporary heritage management approaches. As the participants of the Bangkok meeting in 2009 agreed the Living Heritage Approach is an improvement on the two existing approaches namely, fabric based and values based and can be adapted to deal with any category of heritage. Indeed, the experience of living heritage sites programme that generated the interests for ICCROM to develop a general programme for promoting ‘people-centred approach to conservation’^{iv} in which the beneficiaries are both the heritage and the community.

Continuity as the key to living heritage

There is a risk of trying to define heritage. The World Archaeological Congress has an email server for its members. In 2008 one of the members proposed to form a group to define heritage, This was resisted by the majority. As one scholar put it: ‘I think heritage is too important a field of enquiry to be left to “experts” who wish to fix it (and thereby kill it stone dead)!’ (John Carman in WAC email) another scholar endorsed this and said: ‘it strikes me that all such "definitions" are (and should be) contingent, context-sensitive, and fluid’ (Carol McDavid in WAC email). However, throughout the Living Heritage Sites programme, it was abundantly clear that there was a need to expand the way we think about heritage that will capture the significance of living dimensions as we do for the material remains of the past. This was necessary for professionals and practitioners to re-orientate their approaches to conservation. Most importantly, this helps to convince communities that they have a role in conservation and management of heritage and indeed could be the principal beneficiaries.

At the Strategy Development meeting mentioned above, it was concluded that the ‘continuity’ is the key to characterizing living heritage and since then, all our work carried out within the programme has reinforced this conclusion. The Intangible Heritage Convention also recognises continuity as a key element in defining living heritage. Continuity is therefore the basis on which to characterise living heritage. Indeed, all heritage places (as we called them today) have been continued to survive and changed: some adapting to time and needs of the society but performing some function, some abandoned by the people. Of the former, some functions (use) were the same for which heritage places were created and such places are characterized as living heritage which will be discussed below. In many ways, heritage which *continues* to perform functions for society hasn’t faced that divorce from present society, the isolation that the ‘museumification’ process that many Western management systems have created. The need for new approaches conservation and management continuity is therefore a need of the day.

The conventional conservation approach, which is the legacy of the modern conservation movement^v, was built on some assumptions and with some knowledge gaps. In particular it has overlooked the living dimensions of heritage places by placing greater emphasis on the fabric. This often results in the suppression and even the breaking down of

communities' connections to heritage and the marginalization and exclusion of communities from conservation and management of heritage, with long-term negative consequences for the heritage itself (Ndoro, Tauvinga 2003). We have argued elsewhere that the conventional conservation approach has overlooked three key elements of heritage namely: diversity, continuity and community (Wijesuriya 2010). One reason for overlooking the continuity relevant to this discussion was the assumption that the historical continuity between the past and present in heritage has been broken. This led to the development of conservation principles that advocate freezing heritage in a given time and space, thus eliminating the idea of continuity within the discourse. But let me highlight why continuity is important.

The link between the past, present and future is not always broken or unconnected and cannot be always considered as linear. The fact that time was considered as a linear concept was well established in the western society and not surprisingly, conservation principles were influenced by this. Philippot explains that 'the past has been considered by Western man as a complete development, which he now looks at from a distance, much as one looks at a panorama...' (Philippot 1996) In other words, this makes it easier to draw a line between the past, present and future.

However, different societies have different views and maintain different links with their past and some considered time as a cyclical concept. For instance, Hinduism views the concept of time in a different way. Hindus believe the process of creation moves in cycles and because the process of creation is cyclical and never ending, it 'begins to end and ends to begin'. This is true for Buddhism (Wijesuriya 2010) as well which includes the concept of 'samsara' or the wheel of life, which consists of birth, life and that occurs in cycles, which explains vividly that time is cyclical.

The fact that there is an unbroken link between the past and the present is evident in many other non-western societies as well. Anyon explains that for American Indians: "time is often not the linear concept it is to most Americans...To the Zunis, the present does not have to look like the past because the past lives on in the everyday actions of the Zuni people. The essential cultural difference is that non-Indians want to see the past to know it, whereas to Indians the present embodies the past and thus they do not necessarily have to see their past to know it" (Anyon 1991). Matunga from New Zealand explains the view on time for the indigenous Maori community: "The past is viewed as part of the "living present". This is at odds with the view that there is a firm line between the past and the present, and which often results in the relinquishing of obligation to the past in favour of the present" (Matunga 1994).

All these lead to the conclusion that there is a historical continuity between the past and the present and therefore heritage has to be understood from this point of view as well. This may not be true for places abandoned by societies and fallen into ruins which we presently identified as but the principle of continuity and changes apply to them as well. More importantly, these have many implications for their protection. Anyon has articulated this vividly: 'While the protection of the past appears to be a simple concept, both the "past" and the nature of its "protection" are culturally defined' (Anyon 1991).

Historical continuity has already been recognized at an international level within the Intangible Heritage Convention. It says that intangible heritage ‘is transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provide them with a sense of identity and continuity’. This indeed is true for heritage characterized as living heritage as well and will be further discussed below.

Continuity of the function (use)

Having concluded that continuity is a key feature that helps to characterize living heritage, we have further surmised that use (or the function) for which it was originally intended is an important element of defining continuity for this discussion. This should not be confused with the fact that all heritage places have some form of function or use for the present society. Use or the original function is also a key component of the cultural contents (Wijesuriya 2007) of a heritage which is linked to the identity of a people and establish strong bonds or connections. It is also well established that the challenges for conservation and management are greater when heritage under consideration maintains its original function (including contested issues and even destruction).

Use or the original function was a key theme within the heritage discourse debated for nearly a century (although it was eclipsed by concerns for the emphasis placed on the fabric). The Resolutions adopted at the Madrid Conference (1904)^{vi} divided monuments into two classes, *dead monuments* i.e. those belonging to a past civilization or serving obsolete purposes, and *living monuments* i.e. those which continue to serve the purposes for which they were originally intended. Key to the difference was the purpose or the function for which they were originally built. Implications of conservation of such places were also elaborated in the same resolution as follows:

1. Living monuments ought to be *restored* so that they may continue to be of use, for in architecture utility is one of the bases of beauty.
2. Such restoration should be effected in the original style of the monument, so that it may preserve its unity, unity of style being also one of the bases of beauty in architecture, and primitive geometrical forms being perfectly reproducible. Portions executed in a different style from that of the whole should be respected, if this style has intrinsic merit and does not destroy the aesthetic balance of the monument.

The following quote reflects the debate continued in Great Britain as far back as 1913 on the same lines as above. Charles Peers, Chief Inspector of Ancient Monuments wrote in 1913 (Emerick 2003):

‘There is a great distinction between buildings which are still occupied and buildings which are in ruins. Buildings which are in use are still adding to their history; they are alive. Buildings which are in Ruin are dead; their history is

ended. There is all the difference in the world in their treatment. When a building is a ruin, you must do your best to preserve all that is left of it by every means in your power. When you come to a building which is being used as a dwelling house, or a church...you have a different set of problems. You have to perpetuate it as a living building, one adapted to the use of the present generation, but which has a history to be preserved’.

When John Marshal, wrote the famous conservation manual in 1927 for the Archaeological Survey of India, he also recognized the ‘living Monuments’ and guided saying ‘in the case of living monuments it is sometime necessary to restore them to a greater extent than would be desirable on purely archaeological grounds.....’. (Marshall 1923)

With regard to restoration of religious buildings in use in Sri Lanka, Paranavitane (1945) in 1945 wrote ‘restoration of ancient shrines ... has to be carried out without hurting the religious susceptibilities of the people.....that intervention by the Department does not affect their vested interests and traditional rights...’

However, at the time of writing the Venice Charter which emphasized the protection of the fabric or the material remains, therefore, the use or the function for which they were built was not a major concern. In fact the assumption was that it was the duty of the heritage professionals to find a suitable use for heritage under consideration, hence recommendations to “use of them for some socially useful purpose”. At a later stage, when the values-led approach was introduced, ‘use’ was one of the values that stakeholders may wish to consider when assessing significance, without making a distinction between the original and current use which may be different. This was called ‘user value’ and had no hierarchy was established in the assessment process.

Today, however, we do not consider any heritage as ‘dead’. While some heritage places continue to be used for the purpose for which they were originally built, others have acquired new functions or use mostly assigned by the heritage professionals. New functions may be touristic, economic or social such as converting buildings to museums. However, as will be illustrated below, there are greater implications for the conservation and management of heritage where the continuity of the original function is evident. Recognising or characterizing such a category of heritage was foreseen by Philippot at least 30 years ago. He indicated that: ‘a concern for the conservation of the particular values of a historically transmitted and still living milieu... indeed requires a new definition of the object to be restored; this definition will have to be broader and more comprehensive than the traditional one.’ (Philippot 1996) Here he refers a new category of heritage. There may be many ways of approaching this but we would argue that the continuity of use or the ‘original function’ or the purpose for which particular heritage was established is the most relevant to our discussion and to characterize heritage as envisaged by Philippot.

One can argue that original function has been replaced by new functions in some heritage places. However, there are many heritage places, of which original function is clearly

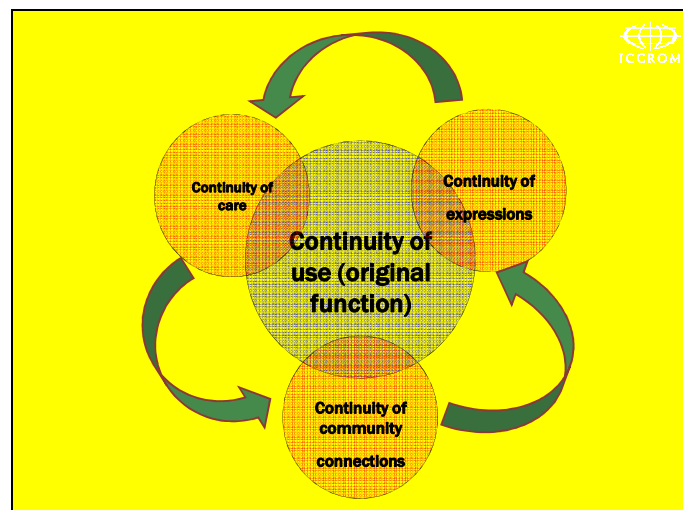
identified and varying attempts are made either to reintroduce the original function or to maintain the status core. For instance, some of the ruined Buddhist sites in Sri Lanka are being restored and reuse for religious functions while some are remaining as archaeological sites. This is true for movable cultural heritage as well. Some objects of which original function is known are protected as museum pieces while others are being used for the purpose for which they were created. Buddhist statues displayed in the National museum of Thailand are allowed to be worshiped by the people. Even within this complexity, there is a need to manage continuity of heritage places of which original function remains or reintroduced.

Other elements of continuity

Living Heritage Sites programme identified that where continuity of original function is evident, one can also identify three other supplementary elements of continuity. They are:

1. Continuity of community connections;
2. Continuity of cultural expressions (both tangible and intangible);
3. Continuity of care (through traditional or established means).

In fact, as seen in the diagram below, these connections to living heritage require different approaches to their understanding, conservation and management.



Continuity of community connections

If the original function continues into the present, there is an association or connection to a certain community for whom such places were created. We call them ‘core communities’ or the core decision-makers who (should) have more power within the decision making process than others e.g. practitioners, state authorities. The contemporary life of the core community is influenced by and influences such heritage.

In fact, this community connection has been recognized in the ICH Convention while defining intangible heritage as ‘expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects...– that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize, as part of their cultural heritage’. Interestingly, the Nara Document refers to community in somewhat similar terms to a core community, as having ‘responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently, to that which cares for it.’ In the process of identification, conservation and management of heritage, this link has to be understood and the expectations of communities have to be respected.

Continuity of cultural expressions

As mentioned before, all place continued to date and now called heritage have been subjected to change. When a heritage place maintains its original function and has a connected community, it does not remain static but continues to change/add various tangible or intangible expressions and changes can occur to existing tangible and intangible components. Indeed, their purpose is not conservation as material manifestations but to facilitate the function. Additions or changes to tangible expressions can be new construction, expansion of existing structures, renewal of buildings, changes to layout in order to facilitate the proper functioning and better serve users in response to changing circumstances which includes the growth of population. Similarly, the character of intangible expressions such as festivals, practices, pilgrimages may change or even add new items. In other words, there is a constant evolution of tangible and intangible expressions. What is relevant to intangible heritage quoted above is relevant here as well. This means that change has to be recognized as an inevitable phenomenon and the purpose of such heritage is not to freeze them in time and space but to allow functional in the lives of communities. Indeed, communities do not compartmentalize heritage as tangible/intangible or movable/immovable and it is in this context that the Living Heritage Approach hopes to integrate the perceived dichotomies by relating everything to community.

Continuity of care

Core communities have been conscious of the continuity of their heritage and guaranteed the long term care (within their own definitions) and management with traditional or established means. For this purpose, they possess knowledge systems for maintenance, interventions, extensions and renewal of buildings and their overall management. For instance, Pali literary sources reveal all types of terminology to suit different interventions: ‘patisankharam’ – restoration; ‘puna karayi’- renovation of a section to its original form; ‘navakamma’ – ‘replaced anew’; ‘pinnasankari’ and ‘navamkamankaryi’ – ‘replacing sections that have been decayed’; ‘parkathika’- ‘replacement of unit as it was previously’.

Some of these traditional management systems are well recorded while others are still in oral forms. An Indian treatise on architecture, Mayamatha ^{vii}, dates to the 6th century AD and devotes an entire chapter to the restoration of monuments. A 9th-century AD inscription from Sri Lanka (Wijesuriya 2005) outlines that ‘[There shall be] clever stone-cutters and skilful carpenters in the village devoted to the work of [temple] renewal...

They all... shall be experts in their [respective] work... the officer who superintends work... his respective duties, shall be recorded in the register... The limit [of time] for the completion of work is two months and five days. Blame [shall be attributed to] ... who do not perform it according to arrangement.'

In addition to the knowledge systems for care, there are traditions, skills, techniques and materials that are continued to use and can be utilized even today. All these were disregarded by the heritage sector until recently in the guise of modern conservation movement, but could still be used if adequate attention is given. Some of these are relevant not only as knowledge systems but could contribute to people's livelihoods.

Characterizing living heritage

With the above understanding we can now try to characterize living heritage: heritage characterized by the continuity of the original function or the purpose for which it was originally established. Such heritage: maintains the continuity of community connections, continues to evolve in the form of tangible and intangible expressions and taken care through traditional or established means. This would mean that living heritage is strongly linked to a community (we call them core community) and the sense change is embraced. This has profound implication in the very definition of conservation and the decision making process. Those connected communities can take the responsibility to maintain the heritage by traditional or established means. Furthermore, such heritage is linked to or has relevance to the contemporary life of the community who endeavour to draw different benefits. These are essential elements that should be given due consideration when assessing values and identifying attributes that manifest them. Value assessment should go beyond experts' frameworks of introducing regular categories such as historic, scientific and to allow those emerging from the communities through innovative processes such as cultural mapping. When undertaking condition assessments both positive and negative impacts should be considered, and the outcomes or outputs of the conservation and management process should be based upon such results. Outcomes and outputs should aim at benefiting both the heritage as well as communities (Wijesuriya, Thompson, Young 2013).

That said, it is not the intention to establish or campaign for a special category of heritage. Although some heritage places have lost their original function, they still continue to serve the society with different functions. Indeed, as mentioned above, all heritage places continue to survive with diverse changes until the present society identified them as Heritage. Intention here is to establish an improved version or approach to conservation and management of living heritage which is to be led by people or people up- approach. The Living Heritage approach described below could be used as one of the tools in the process of conservation and management of heritage..

Living heritage approach

Having characterized living heritage attempts were made to evolve an approach that will help communities who are the guardians of such heritage and practitioners and policy

makers to re orientate their attitudes. Continuity of the original function being the core concept, this approach aims at empowering the core community and their needs to dictate the conservation decision making process. In other words this approach is about managing all aspects of continuity mentioned above. As much as the assessment of values are challenging, identifying the core communities may pose challenges. Defining original function may also pose challenges. Nevertheless, there are many heritage places people identified as living heritage and the research has shown that they linked to the continuity of original function and the most challenging task is to deviate from the current philosophical and practical approaches to conservation in recognizing the continuity. The expectation therefore is that this approach would bring a paradigm shift in characterizing living heritage and approaches to their conservation and management.

This approach has developed by comparing and contrasting the currently popular fabric based approach and the values based approaches. While it is recognized that the application of any given approach is based on a given contexts and up to the policy makers, practitioners or the communities to make conservation decisions, the intention is to highlight the key elements. It is summarized as follows:

As a philosophy: It emphasizes continuity which invariably brings change as the primary driver for the definition, conservation and management of heritage.

As a process: It facilitates a community-led (bottom-up), interactive approach to conservation and management by: emphasizing a core community and their values (recognizing the hierarchy of values and stakeholders); recognizing change as inevitable; utilising traditional or established management systems (in terms of knowledge, practices & materials) for the long term care of heritage and bring reciprocal benefits.

As a product: long term sustainability in safeguarding heritage with an empowered community engaged in decisions made for them and their heritage.

Conclusions

Living heritage approach addresses some of the gaps in the other approaches such as diversity and context dependency and community in decision making processes in defining, conservation and management of heritage. This approach can be primarily applicable to living heritage as characterized above but also easily adaptable to heritage in general. Indeed, while much of the early work on the living heritage approach came out of research and pilot projects in Asia, it can be readily adopted and adapted for heritage in other contexts. In particular, living heritage is proving to be a useful framework for conservation globally where there is still a clear living heritage tradition with continuity of use (e.g. religious buildings, urban landscapes, London underground, etc.) but also where communities have been cut off from their heritage by modern heritage management systems yet where attempts are being made to reinstate the heritage/community relationship.

Application of the living heritage approach and its implications for issues such as authenticity has been discussed and developed. These applications and implications deserve a separate paper-length discussion, but here it will suffice to highlight that approaching the issues like ‘authenticity’ in relation to ‘continuity’ and ‘community’ (as discussed above) helps to resolve many tensions between heritage practitioners and local communities. It is hoped that this people-centred approach to conservation and management emerged as a result of living heritage programme will serve a useful approach for all since it aims to respect the voice(s) of communities, recognising their identities, sense of heritage ownership/custodianship and capturing benefits that can be delivered. Heritage may be tangible or intangible and their protection is paramount, but is meaningless unless they are linked to people and their wellbeing. The Living Heritage Sites programme and the Living Heritage Approach has revealed the potential for a community-led, interactive and inclusive approach of heritage management, which will certainly be refined and developed through its application in practice. It is crucial to continue extensive discussions based on the application of the Living Heritage Approach in field projects along with the dissemination of information and methodologies through workshops.

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Notes

ⁱ Living Heritage Sites Programme- First Strategy meeting, SPAFA Headquarters, Bangkok 17-19 September. Summary report prepared by Kumiko Shimotsuma, Herb Stovel, and Simon Warrack in 2003. Unpublished ICCROM document

ⁱⁱ A number of interns/consultants have compiled the results during their work at ICCROM: Tara sharma 2006, Britt Baillie 2007, Ioannis Poullos, 2008 & 2010, Jagath Weerasinghe, 2008. Unpublished ICCROM documents

ⁱⁱⁱ Which we have defined as fabric-based and values-based approaches, see: Wijesuriya, G., Thompson, J., Young, C. (2013) *Managing Cultural World Heritage*. World Heritage Resource Manual. Paris: UNESCO.

^{iv} See programme and Budget of the ICCROM 20014-15.

^v Which Laurajane Smith refers to as Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), see: Smith, L. (2006). *Uses of Heritage*. London: Routledge.

^{vi} Recommendations of the Madrid Conference in 1909. Accessed on 20.06.2012. http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications_resources/research_resources/charters/charter01.html

^{vii} Mayamatha – For example, one excerpt says: ‘Those (temples) whose characteristics are still 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 were 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’.

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