

The Development of Attitudes to Historic Conservation - From Eurocentrism to Cultural Diversity -

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Abstract

This paper investigates the development of attitudes to historic conservation from the turn of the nineteenth century when certain theoretical opinions on the protection of buildings began to be developed, through the time when the Venice Charter was established, to recent international trends in historic conservation. This paper also explores the contribution of these attitudes and ideas towards an international approach for historic conservation. This paper demonstrates that the Venice Charter is the acme of progress in the European stance towards restoration, reflecting European values of architecture and its conservation, and thus it is not sufficiently 'universal' to be unequivocally applied in non-Western countries. Secondly, recent international trends in historic conservation subvert the notions of Western cultural hegemony which have permeated global conservation practices, and accept the diversity of value criteria for heritage and its conservation in different cultural context. Thirdly, this paper argues that the conservation approaches in Asian societies need to move further into the retention and extension of the spirit and naturalistic sensibilities inherent in the architecture. Historic conservation is an expression of different cultural values attached to heritage resources by different societies. For conservation program to be effective, conservation should take place within a socio-cultural context.

Keywords : Conservation, Architecture, Heritage, Cultural Diversity, Eurocentrism

1. INTRODUCTION

The Venice Charter, the foundation of modern conservation, was developed in Venice in 1964. Once the Charter was formulated it has been used as the ethical guideline for the protection of architectural heritage throughout the world. The very basic tenet of the Venice Charter is to ensure the authenticity of the original of the monuments to be restored. The Charter declares its aim as being "to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on respect for original material and authentic documents..."(Art 9)

The consciousness about respect for the authenticity of the aesthetic and historic value of the monuments to be maintained appeared in the nineteenth century in Europe. This paper investigates the development of conservation attitudes which have brought this consciousness from the turn of the nineteenth century, when certain theoretical opinions on the protection of monuments began to be developed, through the time when the Venice Charter was established, to recent international trends in historic conservation. The paper also explores the contribution of these attitudes and ideas towards an international approach for the conservation of ancient monuments, and raises some issues to consider especially in the Asian societies.

2. CRITICAL DEBATES FOR RESTORATION: RESTORATION VERSUS PRESERVATION

2.1 The criticism of James Wyatt's approach to restoration: stylistic unity versus stylistic diversity

The protection of relics which have been inherited from the past has a long history. However, it was not until the turn of the nineteenth century that certain ideas about and theoretical opinions on the protection of ancient monuments were developed and the critical debates which reflected attitudes towards restoration of the period were generated.

The early critical debate on the protection of ancient monuments was inspired by James Wyatt's (1746-1813) restoration projects in England. In the 1790s Wyatt's radical restoration approach which led to unnecessary alterations elicited fervent criticisms in England which became one sign of the development towards theoretical ideas on restoration. Wyatt was involved with a number of cathedral restoration projects. The most controversial of his restoration projects was that of Salisbury Cathedral. The work at Salisbury Cathedral occupies a pivotal position in the history of European conservation because Wyatt's drastic alterations caused critical debates which reflected attitudes of the period about restoration: restoration versus preservation, and stylistic unity versus stylistic diversity.

Salisbury Cathedral was in severe disrepair in 1789 when the restoration work commenced. In this restoration work, Wyatt aimed at improving the building's physiognomy by unifying the whole internal space with little respect for the authenticity of the original. Wyatt introduced the principle of uniformity which incorporated yet cancelled out the individual parts of the building according to his own favorite style. This in turn led to unnecessary alterations destroying the authenticity of the building.



Figure 1. Interior of Salisbury Cathedral

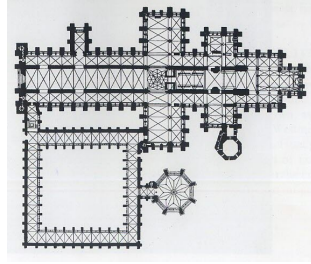


Figure 2. Plan of Salisbury Cathedral

Wyatt's approach in making such drastic alterations was severely criticized by people such as Rev. John Milner and John Carter. John Carter was a severe critic of Wyatt's treatment of the cathedrals generally, criticizing Wyatt's restoration work as being impertinent and malicious and attacking him through his articles for his "hatred of antiquity".¹ Criticism by the Bishop of Castalaba, the Rev. John Milner was even stronger than that of Carter. John Milner criticized Wyatt's work at Salisbury Cathedral. His criticism focused on three major points: 1) the loss of several monuments of antiquity; 2) the violations of the ashes and the memorials of many industrious personages of former times; and 3) the destruction of the proportions and the due relations of the different parts of the cathedral.²

The criticism of Wyatt's approach to restoration focused on the alteration of the artifact's physiognomy and through such fervent criticism we begin to see the formulation of certain values of the authenticity of the physiognomy of monuments.

2.2 The principle of unity of style and Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc

The criticism of Wyatt's approach to restoration did not prevent changes to the artifact's physiognomy because Wyatt's principle of uniformity was used extensively after his death and was elaborated by Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc in the mid-nineteenth century.

The greatest restoration architect of all was Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814-1879), a French architectural historian and theorist of his day. The so-called "unity of style" which early dominated the world of restoration in Europe was perfected by Viollet-le-Duc. Viollet-le-Duc undertook many of the major restoration projects in France. Viollet-le-Duc's approach focused on the whole rather than on individual characteristics of the work thereby providing the building being restored with a unity of style. Viollet-le-Duc insisted that every building must be restored in one predominant style. He also maintained that incorrect restoration of one part could lead to the damage of the character

of the whole.³ In order to complete a building in one predominant style, he integrated and neutralized the individual parts of the building. Viollet-le-Duc's restoration aimed at providing buildings with a unity of style, creating new forms which had never existed in the past without respect for the authenticity of the original. Viollet-le-Duc's attitude to restoration was well reflected in his bold definition of 'restoration':

"To restore an edifice means neither to maintain it, nor repair, nor to rebuild it; it means to reestablish it in a finished state, which may in fact, never have actually existed at any given time."⁴

Viollet-le-Duc's principle of "unity of style" came to dominate the world of restoration throughout Europe and ultimately was adopted as a basic principle at The Sixth International Congress of Architects held in Madrid in 1904:

"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."⁵

Indeed, old parts of many buildings were pulled down and new portions were erected in a 'better' style with little control over what constituted an appropriate intervention. Numerous restoration works were executed, mainly in religious buildings. The important force which encouraged the tremendous enthusiasm for restoration was the Gothic Revival which at that time came into fashion.

What then was meant by the term 'restoration' in the period of the Gothic Revival? At the time every intervention was regarded as a "stylistic unit". Most intervention aimed at 'improving' the artifact's physiognomy with little respect for the authenticity of the original. Most intervention was labeled as 'restoration' in the period of the Gothic Revival. However the term 'restoration' was gradually replaced by the concept of conservation. The outstanding French antiquarian Prosper Mérimée reflects a change in the understanding of the notion of restoration. He says in his *Rapport sur la restauration de Notre-Dame de Paris*:

"By restoration we understand the conservation of that which exists and the recreation of that which has definitely existed."⁶

¹ Madsen, Stefan Tschudi(1976) *Restoration and Anti-Restoration: A Study in English Restoration Philosophy*, Universitetsforlaget, Oslo, p.20

² Milner, John(1798) *A Dissertation of the Modern Style of Altering Ancient Cathedral as Exemplified in the Cathedral of Salisbury*, J. Nichols, London, p.16.

³ Erder, Cevat(1986) *Our Architectural Heritage: From Conscious to Conservation*, Unesco, Paris, p.131.

⁴ Viollet-le-Duc, Eugène-Emmanuel(1990) *The Foundation of Architecture: Selections from the Dictionnaire Raisonné*, George Braziller, New York, p.195.

⁵ Locke, W. J.(1904) 'The Sixth International Congress of Architects, Madrid, 1904, Madrid; Report of the Secretary of the Institute', *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects (London)*, Vol. XI, Series III, p.344.

⁶ Prosper, Mérimée(1845) *Rapport Sur la Restauration de Notre Dame de Paris*, Paris; cited in Madsen, *op. cit.*, p.15.

2.3 Anti-restoration movement

As the appearance of many buildings was severely changed because of restoration which aimed at recreating the stylistic unit, a strong reaction against 'restoration mania' gradually spread. George Gilbert Scott, John Ruskin, William Morris and Camillo Boito played an important part in the 'anti-restoration movement' as it became known and managed to prevent a large number of excessive restorations. Ultimately, their views on restoration were to pave the way for the most basic philosophical tenet of modern conservation: emphasis is to be laid on the authenticity of ancient monuments.

George Gilbert Scott (1811-1878) was a notable figure who made a great contribution to church restoration in his period. Scott divided all causes of deterioration of buildings into three categories: nature's destruction, destruction by alterations and destruction by over-restoring.⁷ Scott pointed out that: "The great danger in all restoration is doing too much; and the great difficulty is to know where to stop."⁸ He also insisted that the most dangerous and destructive factor for monuments is over-restoration.⁹ Scott's 'General Advice to Promoters of the Restoration of Ancient Buildings' shows well his philosophy of restoration. The 'General Advice' emphasizes that any elements of ancient buildings should be preserved and that be repaired only when necessary. If alterations were inevitable he insisted on the reuse of original material.¹⁰

There is an important point in Scott's 'General Advice'. Scott pointed out the significance of monuments as historical documents. He regarded a building as the physical evidence of history and urged restorers to protect its elements:

"Every old building has an historic value, and it should be remembered that this is gone when its authenticity is destroyed."¹¹

Alterations made over various generations were also important for Scott because they provided a three-dimensional record of the building's history:

"Ancient buildings will generally be found to have been altered at various periods; when this is the case, the whole of old work should be preserved and exposed to view, so as to show the history of the fabric with its successive alterations as distinctly as possible."¹²

So we begin to see the concept of preserving ancient monuments as historical documents becoming the very basic tenet of modern conservation philosophy.

As the pioneer of "romanticism", John Ruskin (1819-1900) introduced new concepts of restoration hostile to the principle of the "stylistic unit". The romantic attitude to restoration created a strong desire for sincerity, an enthusiastic love for ancient monuments and consequently a strong antipathy for over-enthusiastic intervention. In this view the ancient monument must remain as it has been.

Ruskin regarded restoration as a falsehood: "Do not let us talk then of restoration. The thing is a lie from beginning to end."¹³ He insisted that the restoration and the abandonment of a building was no less than destruction."¹⁴

Ruskin understood ancient monuments as documents which represent the historical memory: "For indeed the greatest glory of a building is not in its stones or in its gold. Its glory is in its Age...."¹⁵ He maintained the view that stylistic restoration did not add to the value of historic buildings as historical documents and that monuments must be allowed to decay into the remnants of their former glory. Thus any restoration would incur an irrevocable loss of the historical memory which was reflected in artifacts.

Ruskin's romantic attitude to restoration had a strong influence on another outstanding man in the history of restoration - William Morris (1834-1896) who founded 'The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings' (SPAB) and ultimately prepared the ground for the various preservation movements. Morris recognized that if ancient buildings were continuously restored according to the architect's subjective artistic senses throughout their history there would eventually be nothing left.¹⁶ Thus he maintained that people who restored the original form of a historic monument were responsible for eradicating its authenticity and that preservation was performed only by constant maintenance. If a building was in the need of being restored, it should be destroyed.¹⁷ Morris also criticized industrialization because rapid technical progress was essentially accompanied by ugliness and argued that preservation was the only mean of settling the problem.¹⁸ In 1877, Morris instituted the 'Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings' (SPAB) to attract public attention to ancient monuments ruined through 'restoration' and ultimately prepared the ground for the various preservation movements in Europe.

The concept of respecting the authenticity of the monument in the process of restoration was maturing. After assessing the theories of Viollet-le-Duc and those of Ruskin, the Italian Camillo Boito (1836-1914), professor of architecture in Italy, established the fundamental principles of restoration in its modern sense at the Third Convention of Architects and Engineers held in Rome in 1883. His prin-

⁷ Madsen(1976) *op. cit.*, p.56.

⁸ Scott, George Gilbert(1850) *A Plea for the Faithful Restoration of Our Ancient Churches*, London, p.29.

⁹ Scott, George Gilbert(1861-62), 'On the Conservation of Ancient Architectural Monuments and Remains', *Sessional Papers of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, pp.65-84.

¹⁰ Scott, George Gilbert(1864-65) 'General Advice to Promoters of the Restoration of Ancient Buildings,' *Sessional Papers of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, pp.1-4.

¹¹ Madsen(1976) *op. cit.*, p.125.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp.123-124.

¹³ Ruskin, John(1886) *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, George Allen, Kent, p.196.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p.186.

¹⁶ Kain, Roger(1981) 'Introduction: Definitions, Attitudes and Debates'. In Roger Kain (ed), *Planning for Conservation*, Mansell Publishing, London, p.5.

¹⁷ Erder(1986) *op. cit.*, p.173.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

ciples were: (1) ancient monuments which are valuable not only for the architectural study but also for historic evidence of human achievement should be respected as documents because any alteration might give rise to erroneous assumptions; (2) ancient monuments should be consolidated rather than repaired, repaired rather than restored, and additions and renovations should be avoided; (3) if certain additions or renovations are necessary for consolidating the structure of monuments or for other unavoidable reasons, they should be easily distinguishable, maintaining the appearance of the monument; (4) the work of consolidation should be strictly limited to the essential and carried out in a discrete way to ensure the intrinsic and extrinsic sources of the artistic attraction of the monument; (5) any additions or alterations made in the different periods of time should be considered as parts of the monument.¹⁹

Boito's doctrines on restoration were based on an appreciation of the artistic and historic values of monuments and considered any alteration as deceitful. Ultimately his doctrines were to be reflected in the Athens Charter of 1931.

3. MODERN CONSERVATION PRINCIPLES

Boito's doctrines on restoration gradually spread all over Europe and formed the basis for the Athens Charter of 1931, the first international document on the restoration of ancient monuments. In the First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments held at Athens in 1931, Boito's ideas on restoration were accepted by many delegates from various European countries. In the Congress, all participants recognized the need for new conservation principles to be accepted by all European countries. As a result, the Athens Charter was produced.

The basis of the Athens Charter was established by the Italian Gustavo Giovannoni (1873-1947), professor of the restoration of historic monuments at the University of Rome. Giovannoni elaborated and extended Boito's principles and insisted that ancient monuments having artistic or historical characteristics belonging to any period had to be preserved without attempting to create a "stylistic unit". Giovannoni's ideas were reflected in *Italy's Charter of Restoration (Carta del restauro italiana)* of 1931 and *Recommendation of the Athens Conferences* of 1931. *Italy's Charter of Restoration* declares:

"That all elements having artistic or historic value should be preserved, whichever period they may belong to, without a desire to establish unity of style or to return to the original without intervening to exclude some elements to the detriment of others;..."

The Athens Charter also declared this point:

"When, as the result of decay or destruction, restoration ap-

pears to be indispensable, it recommends that the historic and artistic work of the past should be respected, without excluding the style of any given period. The Conference recommends that the occupation of buildings, which ensures the continuity of their life, should be maintained but that they should be used for a purpose which respects their historic or artistic character." (Conclusion I)

The Athens Charter abdicated the principle of "the unity of style" and instead encouraged the conservation of the authenticity of monuments. It can be said that the main tenet of the Athens Charter has been to ensure the authenticity of the historic and artistic value of ancient monuments.

The Venice Charter, the foundation of modern conservation, was formulated in Venice, Italy in 1964. The basic ideas of the Charter were based on *Italy's Charter of Restoration (Carta del restauro italiana)* of 1931 and *Recommendation of the Athens Conferences* of 1931. The Charter accepts the preservation of authentic historic monuments and refuses the principle of "stylistic unit". Article 11 of the Charter declares:

"The valid contributions of all periods to the building of a monument must be respected, since unity of style is not the aim of a restoration."

Unity of style is not the purpose of restoration. Its prime purpose is to ensure the authenticity of the historic and artistic value of ancient monuments. Article 9 declares:

"The process of the restoration is a highly specialized operation. Its aim is to preserve and reveal the aesthetic and historic value of the monument and is based on the respect for the original material and authentic documents."

The very basic tenet of the Venice Charter is to maintain and preserve the aesthetic and historic value of a monument. In fact, the Charter is concerned primarily with the aesthetic and historical interest of ancient monuments, focusing on the objective physical reality of the monument to be maintained. Indeed, the Venice Charter has much contributed to international conservation practices. The most significant contribution of the Venice Charter so far has been the development of a critical approach to conservative restoration of historic monuments and sites, and especially the strict distinction that has been made between 'what was original and what was a replica'. The Charter has been viewed as a fundamental international document reflecting the internationally accepted philosophy for the protection of our architectural heritage. It was adopted as the ethical guideline for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and restoration architects throughout the world have since used the Venice Charter as guide for their work.

¹⁹ Boito, Camillo(1893) *Quesioni pratiche di belle arti, restauri, concorsi, legislazione, professione, insegnamento*, Hoepli, Milano, 1893; In Jukka Jokilehto(1986) 'A History of Architectural Conservation,' Ph.D thesis, University of York, pp.667-668.

4. RECENT TRENDS IN HISTORIC CONSERVATION: CULTURAL DIVERSITY

4.1 Criticism of Eurocentrism in global conservation practices

As historic conservation has become a global issue, there has been growing criticism about Eurocentrism in global conservation practices. P. Oliver criticizes that there is a basic problem in the Western attitude of conservation. According to him, the West tends to take its own cultural context for granted and thus often imposes a viewpoint of architecture and its conservation on the societies which have been based on quite different cultural values from Western culture.²⁰ Miles Lewis argues that the Venice Charter is strongly based on the concept of 'monument' in the European sense. Thus the Charter is not well suited to dealing with vernacular structures and sites in societies outside Europe.²¹ Graham Brooks expresses a similar opinion to Miles Lewis. He maintains that the Venice Charter drew heavily on the European background of many of its original authors and focused on the concept of 'monument,' - a term that encompassed the great historic sites and buildings of antiquity.²² In fact, the concept of 'monument' which conceives 'perpetuation' in its terminology runs counter to some societies which do not produce a large number of monumental buildings and do not emphasize the permanence of structure. In some societies more cultural weight is placed on symbolic and religious values rather than on European values of aestheticism, historical continuity, materialist wealth.²³

The Venice Charter is inevitably and fundamentally based on European conditions and attitudes in its approach. Western culture, which has evolved towards the development of a value based on the reality of the visible material world, leads to an architectural approach of placing considerable importance on a vivid sense of external form, centering on the richness of detail, the grandeur of scale, and the solidity or permanence of material. This attitude to architecture in turn deeply permeates the Venice Charter which emphasizes the permanence of the material aspects of monuments as historic evidence of human achievement.

An attempt to revise the Venice Charter was made at the Fifth General Assembly of ICOMOS in Moscow in 1978, although the proposal did not bring results. On the other hand, Cevat Erder stated that it was difficult to develop another comprehensive and effective charter like the Ven-

ice Charter and thus the Venice Charter should be protected, as it stands, as an historic monument.²⁴ The Venice Charter remains unrevised as a universal document establishing standards for historic conservation.

4.2 Cultural diversity

As the Venice Charter was not been revised, conservation methodologies for indigenous sites in societies outside Europe have been devised in other ways. One way has been to supplement the limitations of the Venice Charter through the development of national or regional documents.

The Burra Charter (1979), *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance*, was the first to be written for a specific country application after the Venice Charter of 1964. The Burra Charter redressed a Western bias of heritage conservation to develop a methodology which responds to the reality of the Australia, especially its Aboriginal heritage. One of the most significant aspect of the Charter is the use of the term 'place' instead of 'monument' which has been the main target of the Venice Charter. The concept of 'place' was introduced to accept those situations where traditional values and intangible aspects are more important than the physical fabric itself.²⁵ 'Social value' is another significant concept in the Charter. In contrast to the Venice Charter, which is concerned primarily with the aesthetic and historical value of ancient monuments, the Burra Charter widened the concept of 'significance' to include 'social value'. The Venice Charter is more focused on protecting the artistic achievement of the past rather than accepting the contemporary or social value of a site that has cultural continuity as an element of 'cultural significance'. This is problematic in Australia, which consists of many ethnic groups, because it has faced the necessity of confronting different aspects of the significance of sites to different groups in the community. The Burra Charter was developed to accept the differing cultural values of the various societies in Australia.

ICOMOS Canada and ICOMOS New Zealand have adopted similar documents respectively, known as the Appleton Charter (1983) and Aotearoa Charter (1992). These countries have in common the fact that they are multi-cultural nations which consists of many ethnic groups and have many heritage sites of indigenous societies.

'The Nara Document on Authenticity' (1994) was intended to extend the Venice Charter by making provisions for cultural diversity, thereby tempering the Eurocentric nature of the Document. The Venice Charter is judged primarily in terms of building fabric. However the Nara Document does not reside primarily in Western notions of

²⁰ Oliver, Paul(1982), 'Cultural Issues in Conservation Implementation'. In R. Zetter (ed), *Conservation of Buildings in Developing Countries*, Oxford Polytechnic Department of Town Planning, Working Paper No. 60, pp.2-13.

²¹ Lewis, Miles(1983) 'Conservation: A Regional Point of View' In Max Bourke, Miles Lewis, Bal Saini (eds) (1983) *Protecting the Past for the Future*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, p.6

²² Brooks, Graham(1992) 'The Burra Charter: Australia's Methodology for Conserving Cultural Heritage,' *Places*, Vol. 8 No. 1, p. 84

²³ Oliver, Paul(1982) *op. cit.*, pp.2-13

²⁴ Erder, Cevat(1977), 'The Venice Charter Should be Protected as an Historic Monument' , *The Journal of Faculty of Architecture, Middle East Technical University*, Vol. 3 No. 2, pp. 167-190.

²⁵ Logan, William(2004) 'Introduction: Voice from the periphery: the Burra Charter in Context' *Historic Environment*, Vol. 18 No 1, pp.2-8

building fabric but acknowledges the need to respect cultural diversity. It states that the diversity of cultures and heritage is an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness for humankind and thus the protection of cultural and heritage diversity should be promoted as an essential aspect of human development.(Art.5) It also points out that it is not possible to base judgments of values and authenticity within fixed criteria. On the contrary, the respect due to all cultures requires that heritage properties must be considered and judged within the cultural contexts to which they belong.(Art.11) The Document is an attempt to acknowledge local traditions and intangible values.

'The Hoi An Protocols'(2001) whose sub-title is 'Professional guidelines for assuring and preserving the authenticity of heritage sites in the context of cultures of Asia' is an important statement of the recognition of diverse cultural identities in Asia. Heritage sites in Asia are not only inextricably linked to but also arise from the natural settings of their respective cultures and serve as the setting for more intangible expressions of cultural traditions. Especially the preservation of the intangible aspects which form an essential part of every cultural resource is given special attention to the Protocol. The Protocols are an attempt to underscore the inter-relatedness of practices for the conservation of the physical heritage sites, the intangible heritage and cultural landscape.' (Preamble)

'Principles for the Preservation of Historic Timber Structures' drawn up by ICOMOS's International Scientific Committee for Timber and approved at the ICOMOS General Assembly in Mexico City in 1999. This document recognizes that, in certain circumstances, minimum intervention can mean that preservation or conservation may require complete or partial dismantling and subsequent reassembling, although it also asserted that such intervention should, by preference, use traditional methods.(Art. 6) This is especially suited to societies whose main buildings were generally made from timber. In fact, the emphasis on minimum intervention suits well the conservation of durable materials such as stone, concrete and brick, but is often in conflict with timber structures. Timber structure is vulnerable to natural as well as man-made hazards such as humid climate, woodworm, fire and wars, and thus require extensive restoration, even rebuilding, from time to time.

Cyclic restoration or rebuilding was also appropriate in some cultures for religious and commemorative buildings since keeping structures in good repair was an important way of showing respect to the ancestors and gods to which the buildings were dedicated in such societies. The great Shinto Shrine located at Ise, Japan was dedicated to the goddess Amaterasu-omikami. The Shrine consists of two groups -inner shrine and outer shrine- and is constructed of wood. The buildings of the Shrine are totally rebuilt every 20 years on adjoining site in accordance to the Shinto belief of death and renewal of nature and the impermanence of all things as a way of passing building techniques from one generation to the next.



Figure 3. Ise Shrine

Figure 4. Okihiki Festival showing the wood to be used to build the next shrine



'The China Principles' (2005), *The Principles for the Conservation of Heritage Sites in China*, are the first set of professional guidelines for the conservation and management of cultural heritage in China. The Chinese Principles model after the Burra Charter for conserving Chinese cultural heritage. The China Principles adopts Western conservation ideas and concepts in advocating the philosophy of respecting the physical authenticity of the fabric of heritage sites. However, the China Principles do not represent the imposition of Western heritage values but provide the opportunity to meet the needs of profoundly Chinese societies. The China Principles accept, warning its impact to the originality, that major restoration work, even restoration through complete disassembly, is necessary to ensure a stable condition.(Art. 32) China's bureaucratic socio-political system and national economic imperative make 'the China Principles' emphasize the conformity to Chinese heritage legislation and utilization of heritage sites as sources to raise revenue through tourism. The China Principles integrates traditional intervention approaches with recent international conservation practices, and thus the China Principles are regarded as owned by the Chinese and represent China's contribution to international conservation theory.²⁶ The China Principles are viewed as one of the derivatives from the Nara Document.

5. FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS IN CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATION

The value of authenticity of the original physical fabric has been the key criterion both in the Venice Charter and in many other following documents. However, the values of 'originality' and 'authenticity' of the physical fabric have been developed and defined in a Western tradition. These values cannot be equally applied to all of societies throughout the world. Conservation is an expression of different cultural values attached to buildings by different societies. In this sense, for conservation programs to be effective, conservation should be implemented on the basis of the cultural and aesthetic values of the societies in which the buildings are being conserved. Although the contemporary conservation movement has made an effort

²⁶ Sullivan, Sharon(2001) A well-baked Charter, *Historic Environment*, Vol. 15, No.3, pp.11-19

to accept the diversity of value criteria for heritage and its conservation in different cultural context, further issues are to be considered in some societies, especially in Asian societies, which have led an attitude of placing more emphasis on the inner meaning represented in a structure and on the natural environment, than on the visual and material aspects of a structure.

In fact, China, Korea and Japan have few very old buildings comparable to the Egyptian pyramids or the Greek temples. This is because most traditional buildings have been continually repaired, enlarged, and rebuilt throughout their existence. Even the greatest temples and palaces have lost their original form because of successive rebuilding. This fact shows that the Asian society did not place emphasis on the permanence of original forms. Instead, what Asians wanted to keep was the spiritual messages embodied in the structure that they built. Indeed, Asian attitudes to conservation have been quite different from the modern philosophy of conservation. Asians have paid little attention to the conservation of the original physical form of an artifact. It hardly mattered to Asians if a broken image was replaced by a new one.²⁷ This attitude is evident in the Confucius Temple at Qufu in China, which was built in B.C 478. The Temple is the historical home of Confucius, as well as the nexus of Confucianism. As a symbol of Confucius, the Temple is of the highest value in China. It has been continually restored, rebuilt, and enlarged throughout its history, and thus has lost its original form, including the architectural details of the various periods. However, the spirit of Confucianism has become even firmer through its numerous interventions. The emphasis has been placed on the spirit of Confucianism, rather than on the permanence of the materiality of the Temple.²⁸

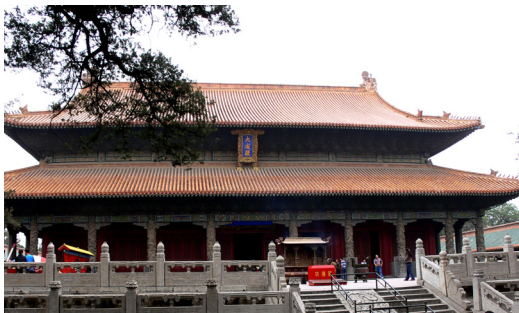


Figure 5. Temple of Confucius

The Confucius Temple Complex runs counter to the very basic philosophy of contemporary conservation theory, but may suggest the need for different approaches from conventional conservation philosophy for traditional Chinese architecture. For conservation to be more suited to traditional Asian architecture, it is necessary to provide a new approach primarily to convey the spiritual messages

embodied in the building to be maintained. Although the original form may be changed, the spiritual messages reflected in the building must remain unshakable and steadfast.

Contemporary conservation is also insufficient to ensure the intrinsic value of traditional Asian architecture which emphasizes the harmonious relationship with its surrounding nature. Harmony with nature is a very basic element defining the intrinsic values of Asian architecture. The conception of man as an intrinsic part of nature rather than as conflicting with nature permeates East Asian thought. In fact, all spheres of Asian life, including traditional science, medicine, and religions, have been permeated by the philosophy of harmony with nature. Asian architecture is no exception. In Asian architecture, the most important consideration is how to conform with nature, to follow nature's inherent laws and make the best use of them. Thus, the construction of a building was often regarded as a project of integrating the building into surrounding nature, with the whole surroundings of the scene taking part. In this sense, it is essential for traditional Asian architecture that the concept of conservation should not be limited to an individual building, but it needs to be extended to its natural surroundings. For instance, Buseok-sa, the Buddhist temple at Yeogju, Korea, shows the importance of the protection and control of the surrounding natural environment. The temple has been considered as one of the most beautiful traditional buildings in Korea. However, the quality of the temple lies not in the beauty of the buildings themselves in it, but in the fact that this site has evoked a profound sense of peace and solitude. Unless this feeling is retained, much of the value of this site will be lost. It is, thus, essential for some kind of environmental control and protection in recognition of this uniqueness of setting to be implemented if this place survives.

Most of contemporary conservation approaches have been concentrated on guidelines for building restoration. The conservation principles in societies, which have placed more cultural weight on the natural environment than on any structure itself, need to move further into considerations of protecting the surrounding natural environment too as the context for the building being conserved.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The Venice Charter of European values was adopted as the ethical guideline for the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and became the benchmark for the principles governing heritage conservation and restoration for 50 years. However, as conservation has become a global issue, there has been a growing awareness that conservation principles which are based on European architectural background cannot be viewed as international dogma and be equally applicable to societies outside Europe. Since the 1970s conservation movement has stressed the importance of formulating conservation approaches which respond to various local contexts and some coun-

²⁷ Agrawal, O. P.(1975) 'An Asian View of Conservation', *Museum*, Vol. 27 No. 4, pp. 157-160.

²⁸ Wei, Chen and Aass, Andreas(1989) 'Heritage Conservation: East and West', *ICOMOS Information*, No. 3, July/Sep., pp. 3-8.

tries have established their own documents for the guidelines for the protection of their cultural heritage. Those documents accept the general philosophy of the Venice Charter, but are tailored to special local conditions and needs.

Throughout the paper it has been demonstrated that the Venice Charter is the acme of progress in the European stance towards restoration, reflecting European values of architecture and its conservation, and thus the Venice Charter is not sufficiently 'universal' to be unequivocally deployed in non-Western countries. Secondly, recent international trends in historic conservation subvert the notions of Western cultural hegemony which have permeated global conservation practices, and accept the diversity of value criteria for heritage and its conservation in different cultural context. Thirdly, the conservation approaches in Asian societies need to move further into the retention and extension of the spirit and naturalistic sensibilities inherent in the architecture to be conserved. Historic conservation is an expression of different cultural values attached to heritage resources by different societies. Therefore for conservation program to be effective, conservation should take place within a socio-cultural context.

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