Path between Authenticity and Integrity

- From Nara Document on Authenticity to Historic Urban Landscape –

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Test of Authenticity

Form the very beginning of the launch of the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention (hereafter referred as Operational Guidelines) in 1977, the clause of 'the test of the authenticity' was included in it, and it read, 'meet the test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship and setting' (paragraph 9, Operational Guidelines(1977)).   It means that the building, group of buildings or site which is to be proposed to be inscribed in the World Heritage List should meet the test of all these four components of the authenticity.   This implies that the test of authenticity can be understood as the requirements of the solid monument or site to be complete.

The text of the Operational Guidelines was slightly amended in 1980 as 'the test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship or setting' (paragraph 18b, Operational Guidelines(1980)).   The change from the requirements of all the four tests to any of the four if necessary implies that it is not always the case that the cultural nomination can meet the all the four tests.   It became clear that, in some cases such as living historic towns, that material authenticity cannot always met the requirement.

Three of these required viewpoints – design, material and workmanship - are from the architectural details. Only the rest, setting, is from overall observation.   But the setting is the result of the course of time not the outcome of the expression of the works of the building.   This is because the material target is a single entity, whether it is monument or site.   It is a solid single object with clear-cut architectural or other intension.

However, along with the extension of idea of cultural heritage from single monument and site to cultural landscape since 1992, requirement of 'test of authenticity' began to gradually change to accommodate different aspect.   2002 Operational Guidelines had already mentioned that 'in the case of cultural landscapes their distinctive character and components' should be counted (paragraph 24(b), Operational Guidelines(2002)), although the term 'distinctive character and components' were not properly defined in the Operational Guidelines.

Furthermore, when one is to deal with historic city or historic district of a certain city, test of authenticity became much more complex, because the area is inhabited by many local dwellers and their contemporary needs for modern life cannot be neglected, even though the area is designated as conservation area. Therefore, test of authenticity began to accommodate moderate change by extending the idea of authenticity.

Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)

Even a single monument may have to change its nature when monument made of organic materials, such as wood and earth, was included.   This shift eventually resulted in the Nara Document on Authenticity (hereafter referred as Nara Document) in 1994, which expand the traditional range of authenticity of design, material, workmanship and setting to include "form and design, materials and substance, use and function, traditions and techniques, location and setting, and spirit and feeling"(section 13, Nara Document).   It also introduced the idea of 'information sources' which contained the values and authenticity within the cultural monuments.   Information sources were defined as "all material, written, oral and figurative sources which make it possible to know the nature, specifications, meaning and history of the cultural heritage" (Appendix II of Nara Document), which clearly included the intangible heritage in it.

This wide spectrum of Nara Document was consequently influenced the Operational Guidelines which was provisionally revised in 2002 and officially adopted in 2005 to incorporate almost all new aspects of authenticity derived from the Nara Documents as a 'variety of attributes' (paragraph 82) such as
 " -   form and design;
   -   materials and substance;
   -   use and function;
   -   traditions, techniques and management systems;
   -   location and setting;
   -   language, and other forms of intangible heritage;
   -   spirit and feeling; and
   -   other internal and external factors."(paragraph 82, Operational Guidelines(2005))

However, some of the attributes introduced by Nara Document and 2005 Operational Guidelines may contradict each other, when one tries to follow the authenticity of the properties.   For example, authenticity of use and function may mean that material can be replaced when its use and function remain unchanged, or in even more drastic way, material may subject to be regularly substituted in order to retain the authentic function.   This is exactly what Japanese claimed when they host Nara Conference on Authenticity in 1994 which led to the landmark amendment of the definition of authenticity.

This fluctuation of the application of test of authenticity based on the different nature of the properties came to the end in 2005 when the conditions of integrity began to apply not only natural nominations but also cultural nominations (paragraph 87, Operational Guidelines (2005)).

Authenticity and Integrity
Before 2005, when conditions of integrity began to apply to the cultural nominations, however, the term, integrity, was used several times in the course of discussion of the World Heritage Committee and eventual inclusion of the term, integrity, into the decision made by the World Heritage Committee.

For example, when the proposal of two bridge construction at the World Heritage Site of Hampi, India (inscribed in 1999) came up to the discussion of the Committee, it concluded that, World Heritage Committee worried the "potential dangers threatening the integrity and authenticity of the site"(WHC-99/23.COM/COMF209/22) in 1999.   This decision resulted in the inclusion of the Hampi into the World Heritage List in Danger in the same year.

In 2003, the Committee discussed the high-rise development at the opposite bank of the Historic Centre of Riga, Latovia, World Heritage Site inscribed in 1997, requesting "to protect the World Heritage property and its visual integrity"(WHC-03/27.COM/7B.69).

In the next year, 2004, World Heritage Committee criticized high-rise building plan near Cologne Cathedral

(listed in 1996), saying "urge the City of Cologne to reconsider the current building plans as to their visual impact on the World Heritage property of Cologne Cathedral and to request that any new construction should respect the visual integrity of the property"(WHC-04/28.COM/15B.70).   At the same Committee meeting, the Committee opposed the plan of the construction of multifunctional complex close to the Meidan Eman, Esfahan, Iran (inscribed in 1979), made a comment "with a view to ensure the conservation of the authentic setting and integrity of the historic city (WHC-04/29.COM/15B.63).

These recommendations and resolutions of the World Heritage Committee referred to the 'integrity' without any definition and according to the Operational Guidelines, the term, integrity was only used in case to review the conditions of the nominated site for natural property.   They also indicated that the strong need to work on the idea of integrity, when one deal with the gradual change of the living historic towns.

This strong need eventually led to the comprehensive discussion between developers and conservationists over the management of historic landscape in living heritage cities in Vienna in May 2005 which proclaimed, at the end of the conference, the Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape, referred as the Vienna Memorandum followed by the Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscape at the occasion of General Assembly of the UNESCO State Parties in October 2005.   In the Declaration, shift of the main concern from maintaining the authenticity to managing and reviewing the "impact on the integrity of a World Heritage property"(section 32b, Declaration).

This strong concern on the integrity of historic urban landscape and other territorial conservation led the inclusion of the conditions of integrity for evaluation of the cultural nominations officially adopted in 2005 Operational Guidelines.

When one look back the Nara Document of 1994, one can say that the radical expansion of the idea of the authenticity was the effort to include several aspects of integrity into the authenticity discussion, because cultural nominations had been confined within the test of authenticity framework.

Therefore, after 2005 when one can discuss the integrity for the cultural nominations, one should redefine the idea of authenticity to balance these two conditions for evaluation of cultural nominations.

Definition of Integrity
In the newly revised 2005 Operational Guidelines and subsequence amendments defines the conditions of integrity as follows;
"Integrity is a measure of the wholesome and intactness of the natural and/or cultural heritage and its attributes.   Examining the conditions of integrity, therefore requires assessing the extent to which the property;
a) includes all elements necessary to express its outstanding universal value;
b) is of adequate size to ensure the complete representation of the features and processes which convey the property's significance;
c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect." (paragraph 88, Operational Guidelines (2005))

Before 2005 when the conditions of integrity were only applied to the natural nominations, the Operational Guidelines defined the integrity by using the term, 'key interrelated and interdependent elements' (paragraph 11(i), Operational Guidelines (1977) onwards), 'sufficient size' (paragraph 11(ii), Operational Guidelines (1977) onwards), 'ecosystem' (paragraph 11(iii), Operational Guidelines (1977) onwards).   New ideas of 'management plan' and 'long-term legislative, regulatory or institutional protection' were introduced by 1994

Operational Guidelines (paragraph 44b (v) and (vi).

Although original idea of integrity was based on the sufficient conservation of the natural nomination, some of the ideas such as management plan can be applied to the cultural conservation.

In fact after 2005, when evaluation of the cultural and natural nominations was made by the same process, the Operational Guidelines began to include the reference to the cultural nominations by adding the following paragraph;
"the physical fabric of the property and/or significant features should be in good condition, and the impact of deterioration processes controlled.   A significant proportion of the elements necessary to convey the totality of the value conveyed by the property should be included.   Relationships and dynamic functions present in cultural landscapes, historic towns or other living properties essential to their distinctive character should also be maintained." (paragraph 89, Operational Guidelines (2008))

It is well understood that when one deals with living properties such as cultural landscape and historic cities, integrity is crucial to evaluate their outstanding universal value.   However, the wide spectrum of the idea of the integrity has not yet comprehensively developed, compared with the idea of authenticity, which was well illustrated in the Nara Document and subsequent amendment of the Operational Guidelines.

The Operational Guidelines refers the totality of elements and size, (paragraph 88, Operational Guidelines (2008)) and the relationships and dynamic functions in cultural landscapes, historic towns (paragraph 89, Operational Guidelines (2008).   However, it does not cover several important viewpoints such as visual integrity and structural integrity as well as integrity of the land use and communal activities.

At the same time, the 2008 Operational Guidelines covers 'intactness', the state of the conditions of the cultural properties in paragraph 88 and 89, which used to be covered by the test of authenticity for the cultural nominations before 2005.   This may be understood as the integrity of the community and other administrative organization to manage the change.

New path between authenticity and integrity
After Nara Document had expanded the idea of authenticity to follow the cultural context to some extent to overlap the sphere of integrity, its scope of the wide spread authenticity should be modified and possibly reshuffled to make a proper balance between the idea of authenticity and that of integrity.

In the course of discussion of the new path between authenticity and integrity, idea and tool to manage the historic urban landscape may be of great help, because the landscape cannot be viewed only from the concrete, material bottom-up approach for the authenticity but viewed from the overall, comprehensive top-down approach for the integrity.

Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention adopted in October in 2000 Florence and came into force in March 2004 may be of great help for further understanding integrity.   The so-called Florence Convention defines the landscape as 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors' (Article 1 of Florence Convention).   A certain landscape becomes the landscape only when it is perceived by people.   Perception and interpretation by the people concerned is crucial to form a new idea of a certain landscape by delineate tract of land to represent certain idea.

It means people's involvement to a certain landscape is fundamental in formulating the overall idea of integrity in general.   At the same time, how to manage the people's involvement is also key to understand

the idea of integrity.   People's involvement is only controlled by proper planning.   Therefore, planning is another important point to understand integrity.

With the help of these newly emerging ideas, one should pursue the path between authenticity and integrity for understanding historic urban landscapes and cultural properties of outstanding universal value in general.

Current description on integrity of cultural properties in the Operational Guidelines, paragraph 89, is by far less described than paragraphs 90 to 94 dedicated to natural properties.   Paragraph 89 should be revised to accommodate various discussions on integrity including this paper.