



Asian Urban Heritage: Its Authenticity and Integrity with Special Reference to the Historic Urban Landscape

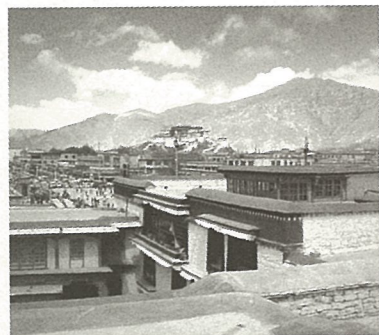
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Deputy Mayor Mr. Kawee Tansukatanon, President of ICOMOS Thailand Dr. Yongtanut Pimonsathean, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my great honour to be invited as a keynote speaker of this conference and I would like to congratulate the ICOMOS Thailand to have such a successful international conference. ICOMOS Japan has a long history for more than 30 years but we have not had such a big international conference yet.

Today, I'm going to talk about the Asian heritage and its authenticity and integrity. Maybe some of you are aware of the amendment of the World Heritage Convention's Operational Guidelines which was made in 2005 to include "integrity" for world cultural heritage nominations, which change our theme to evaluate our due part of urban heritage. Today I'll also talk about authenticity, which we are very familiar, and in particular, I'll make a special reference about our urban historic landscape. I want to adopt the recommendations resulted from General Assemblies of the UNESCO which are held every 2 years about safeguarding the historic urban landscape for the first time, and this will excellently describe how to safeguard the historic urban landscape and what is the authenticity of historic urban landscape, and its integrity, which, as a former Vice President of ICOMOS International, I have engaged in many discussions on these matters. So, today, I want to talk into the details of these discussions by using several examples from many World Heritage sites.



Potala Palace

This is the Potala Palace, Lhasa, which was inscribed in 1994, and was extended in 2000 and 2001. This is a kind of historic landscape, but the landscape was gradually replaced by these non-historical buildings which use some historical language in the details, and, after the completion of the massive railroad to Lhasa, these modern buildings are coming to threaten the value of the Lhasa city. Are we accepting this change or shall we stop it or have to modify it? In these places, however, it is a big problem.

In the 2003 Periodic Reporting, Section II Summary, by the Chinese government, it is quoted about Lhasa that, "Outside the protective zone and buffer zones, high-rise buildings of various kinds will be built, and this will seriously obstruct the perspective views of this World Heritage Site," this is written by the State Party, but the high-rise building itself is outside the buffer zones, so technically we cannot do anything about the control of the high-rise buildings. But when you look above the top of the roofs, there are high-rise buildings as seen in the photograph. The perspective views are very important for the urban cultural heritage and urban landscape but we have no legal tools to control in terms of the World Heritage.



Nanjing, China

In Nanjing, China, high-rise buildings as mentioned are also a big problem, and this area is not considered to be protected. Historical places are being demolished and replaced by high-rise buildings. This happens not only in China but also in many parts of Asia because they have to accommodate migration, rapid population growth, and there are very high demands from people to upgrade their own lifestyle



Macao

This is Macao, inscribed in the World Heritage List in 2005. This is the largest Christian church in Asia, but if you turn back you will see high-rise buildings, hotels and casinos, because the historic centre of Macao is very close to the casino area. As for the nomination of the World Heritage, only the square, the historic buildings and this narrow path are inscribed in the World Heritage List, because the idea of the nomination of Macao is that the spatial structure from 16th to 19th centuries show the sequence of

old narrow street leading to the open space in front of the historic buildings, the churches. This kind of spacious composition is the heritage, according to the State Party's nomination. The 16th century shoreline was designed as a border of the buffer zone, therefore, these high-rise buildings are outside the 16th century shoreline. Theoretically it is acceptable but visually, it is not agreeable for half of Macao to see high-rise buildings surrounding historic area, and some popping up behind the façade of the historic buildings. So the historical urban landscape in Asian context is at risk. We should seriously consider what is to be done in terms of criteria, protective measures, and should discuss about historical landscape and the measures for important historical landscape which is about to be rectified by the ICOMOS, UNESCO in the General Assembly this month by approving the recommendations.

It is not only in Asia but also in others countries, as seen in London, the Tower of London is inscribed in the World Heritage List but it is surrounded by high-rise buildings, so how do we make a good balance between economic, growth and cultural heritage preservation. It is not only our problem.



Genbaku Dome, Hiroshima



Kathmandu Valley

This is Hiroshima. This is Genbaku Dome which symbolizes the start of atomic energy era and the end of the World War. It is also surrounded with high-rise buildings. There is some political plea of the local community to stop high-rise buildings like this, but it is very difficult to control. At least they have been successful in removing all signage on those buildings which are facing the river.

Kathmandu Valley was inscribed in Heritage in Danger List in 2003 because there are some intrusions of the modern, high-rise buildings in the area. However, as a touristic city, it is somehow necessary to include tourism-related activities, which applied some of the traditional building technologies, but the problem is that the size or volume of the new buildings is not in accordance with the surroundings. So what should

be kept, what should be allowed to alter is a big problem. The World Heritage Committee in the year 2003 adopted a recommendation that, "the threat of uncontrolled development has persisted which continuously decrease the urban landscape and architectural fabric of the property". The committee used the term "urban landscape" when they find there is something to be done about urban historical landscape.

Cologne Cathedral, Germany, was in Heritage in Danger List because of the high-rise buildings across the river. The buildings are not very close to the Cathedral but situated 24 kilometres away, yet they still caused a great discussion, because, the public image of the skyline of this historical town is dominating the tower of Cologne Cathedral, so only a few high-rise buildings, very far from the cathedral was discussed as a risk. Thus the World Heritage Committee, in 2004, decided to "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". Here they used the term "integrity".



Cologne, Germany



St. Petersburg, Russia

In the year 2004, the World Heritage Operational Guidelines did not mention "integrity" for cultural property, but the World Heritage Committee already used the term "integrity" to warn the City of Cologne to protect the integrity of the skyline. A more eminent threat is the case of Russia's World Heritage Site of St. Petersburg. This is an 18th century city, the red line is the core zone and the blue line is the buffer zone. A giant Dutch company is going to build their headquarter adjacent to the borderline of the buffer zone to the northeast.

The followings are a few more examples of threats to World Heritage cities which have been under the concern of the World Heritage Committee.

Historic Centre of St. Petersburg (1990)

"the urban development might have a negative impact on the authenticity of the property, namely, as far as the protection of vistas is concerned."

(Periodic Reporting, Section II. Summary, 2006)

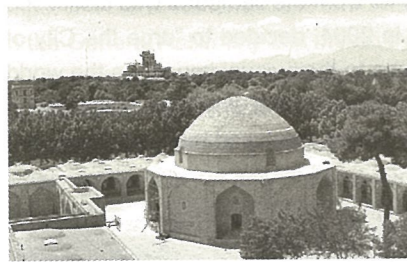


Riga, Latvia

Historic Centre of Riga, Latvia (1997)

World Heritage Committee worried about the high-rise development at the waterfront and request "to protect the World Heritage property and its visual integrity."

WHC-03/27.COM/7B.69)



Meidan Emam, Esfahan, Iran

Meidan Emam, Esfahan, Iran (1979, Danger List 2006)

World Heritage Committee strongly opposed the height of the on-going multifunctional complex "with a view to ensure the conservation of the authentic setting and integrity of the historic city."

(WHC-04/29.COM/15B.63)



Group of monuments at Hampi, India

Group of monuments at Hampi, India (1986, Danger List 1999)

World Heritage Committee worried about the "potential danger threatening the integrity and authenticity of the site " by the construction of two bridges. (WHC-99/23.COM/COMF.209.22)

Photo: <http://whc.unesco.org>



Lijiang, China

Old Town of Lijiang, China (1997)

World Heritage Committee noting with concern the uncontrolled tourism and other development projects being carried out at the property, which might have a negative impact on its heritage values, "requests the State Party to review the current comprehensive Management Plan of the property." (WHC-07/31.COM/7B.69)

World Heritage Committee in 2003 discussed Vienna's proposed high-rise, and eventually called for the international conference : World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape, at Vienna, Austria, 12th to 14th May, 2005. The results of the conference have rendered a "Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture – Managing the Historic Urban Landscape". The Vienna Memorandum describes historic urban landscape to be "composed of character defining elements that include land uses and patterns, spatial organization, visual relationships, topography and soils, vegetation, and all elements of the technical infrastructure." (section 8), and "townscapes, roofscapes, main visual axes, building plots and types are integral parts of the identity of the historic urban landscapes." (section 25)

The 15th General Assembly of the State Parties adopted the Declaration on the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscapes in October, 2005.

Shift of the main concern from maintaining the authenticity to managing and reviewing the "impact on the integrity of a World Heritage property." (Declaration section 32b)

The 15th General Assembly of ICOMOS at Xi'an, China in 2005 adopted the Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas in October, 2005.

Importance of managing "the change of the setting, while avoiding inappropriate visual and spatial encroachment or land use in significant setting" (Xi'an Declaration section 7)

Asian context of the Conservation of Historic Urban Landscape can be summarized as follows:

- Densely populated and diverse community
- Community-based and activity-led townscape
- Rapidly changing society
- Gaps between urban and rural areas
- Historic Urban Landscape
 - Approach, management tool rather than category
 - Key view
 - Common understanding of the landscape
 - View from the monument
 - 'co-visibility'
 - Design guidelines

Authenticity and Integrity
Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)

All judgments about values attributed to cultural properties as well as the credibility of related information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture. It is thus 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)

Nara Document on Authenticity (1994)

Depending on the nature of the cultural heritage, its cultural context, and its evolution through time, authenticity judgments may be linked to the worth of a great variety of sources of information. Aspects of the sources may include 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. The use of these sources permits elaboration of the specific artistic, historic, social, and scientific dimensions of the cultural heritage being examined. (Art.11)

Traditional 'test of authenticity'

Material
Design
Workmanship
Setting

New idea of 'conditions of authenticity'

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;
other internal and external factors.
(Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of WHC, paragraph 82)

New idea of 'conditions of integrity'

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 process which convey the property's significance;
- (c) suffers from adverse effects of development and/or neglect.

(Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of World Heritage Convention, Paragraph 88)

Xi'an Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas (2005)

Heritage structures, sites or areas of various scales, including individual buildings or designed spaces, historic cities or urban landscapes, landscapes, seascapes, cultural routes and archaeological sites, derive their significance and distinctive character from their perceived social and spiritual, historic, artistic, aesthetic, natural, scientific, or other cultural values. They also derive their significance and distinctive character from their meaningful relationships with their physical, visual, spiritual and other cultural context and settings. (Art.2)

