

FUNDAMENTAL THOUGHTS CONCERNING CONSERVING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ITS AUTHENTICITY IN THE COURSE OF TIME AND INEVITABLE CHANGES OF ITS SETTING

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Abstract

Can we conserve the cultural heritage forever?

It seems that many tend to think that it is possible to keep some of cultural heritage forever in the ideal condition. But, logically something that had been created or, appeared in time is inevitably going to be destroyed or disappear sometime. Physically, it also is true that all kinds of material is in course of constant change which cannot be stopped. It is more apparent when we consider the surrounding settings of a cultural heritage site.

Most important two kind of settings that surrounds cultural heritage site are natural settings and social settings and none of those two could be frozen in time. Changing weather is something that is beyond human power, and its effect on cultural heritage site is most great among other factors. To stop - minimize, in most case - those effect, we have to adopt some methods which is not very natural, and that in turn make us wonder if it's really conserved right. Recent scandal of Yuanmingyuan in Beijing is the perfect example. In developing country, urbanization is in its peak time and even though it's in different stage, developed country also has cultural heritage site endangered by development of social or economic need. Problem is, we can stop all those development. Authenticity of cultural heritage is very closely related to its settings too. Many of cultural heritage site has its value in relation with its social settings. Natural settings also plays important role in cultural heritage site. If, once all the social, natural settings are gone, could we just proclaim that the cultural heritage site is conserved in good condition just because its physical being seemed to have kept its appearance?

We should face the fact that it is impossible to conserve all the cultural heritage site in its original shape against time. Of course it is important to conserve cultural heritage of great value. But it also is important that we realize human power is limited and it's losing battle against time. It is time to figure out how long can we protect them, and how much we should pay for. That in turn will give us some guideline or roadmap for references in conserving cultural heritage.