

## CULTURAL ROUTES AND THE NETWORK CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION

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After 1970s, the conservation of cultural heritage has been presenting a new developing tendency. Since UNESCO constituted «*Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*», the conservation of cultural and natural heritage has become a course gradually which is focused by people all over the world and the category of its objects has also been extended, from important historic buildings and monuments to historical cities and cultural landscapes. Meanwhile the understanding of cultural heritage has been developing, too, from great works to cultural diversity. During this course, ICOMOS has been playing a very important role. Since the «*Venice Charter*» of 1964 defined the basic principles for conservation of cultural heritage, important documents like «*The Florence Charter*», «*Washington Charter*», «*Principles for the Preservation of Historic Timber Structures*», «*International Charter on Cultural Tourism* », and «*Charter on the Built Vernacular heritage* », have already formed an integrated system of conservation of cultural heritage. Under the flag of «*Venice Charter*», many countries constituted their own conservation principles according to their specific conditions. Take «*Burra Charter*» for example, further enrich the theoretic structure of cultural heritage conservation.

After World Heritage Expert Meeting in 1994, the imbalance of cultural heritage conservation was put forward. In the same year, «*The Nara Document on Authenticity*» referred some principles that the cultural diversity must be respected and the authenticity of cultural heritage must be protected. After 10 years of practice, we now can see clearly that the conservation of cultural diversity not only promotes the conservation of the whole human cultural heritage, but also awakens our conservation consciousness. However, the conservation of cultural diversity also strikes out the differences and imbalance of evaluation of cultural heritage. As for it, this course now faces a critical problem that a new system that can reflect the particularity of cultural heritage conservation today should be established. Therefore, the notion of Cultural Routes, as a new kind of cultural heritage, provides possibilities of establishing such a new system. The inscription of *Kii Mountain Range* in 2004(Japan), *Incense and Spice Road* (Israel) and *Struve Geodetic Arc* ( covering 10 European countries ) in 2005, and the programs of Incan Roads (South America) and Silk Routes (across Europe and Asia) processing now , reveal a rudiment of this new conservation system.

The traditional culture itself is diverse and open to the

influence of natural and artificial factors. In the process of its development and evolution, the relative enclosure of traditional cultural and its limited exchange with other cultures in a specific historical period result in its uniqueness and the evident differences from other cultures. Under such a cultural background, humanity forms and improves their own view of nature and the world as well as standards of morality and aesthetics and the difference between all kinds of traditional cultures in these aspects. Despite of various modes of cultural communication and integration, including religion and trade, war and conquering, as for a broader region, differences of the cultures in the center of cultural impacts and communication which is far away from the core area full of culture and civilization conflicts are very obvious. In ancient world, this kind of difference is even expanding all the time.

Two world wars in twentieth century led to collision of cultures as well as more and more communication and integration between different cultures. Especially the World War II, since more peoples and countries were involved, the cultural communications between them were facilitated. After the war, the development of science, technology, and the instrument of information exchanging, particularly the confrontation between two camps and the cold war afterwards, all of which resulted in the merging of weak cultures by the strong cultures to a greater extend. After the cold war, strong cultures produced greater shock over traditional cultures of different peoples in different regions along with the economic globalization, which on the one hand turned conservation of cultural diversity into a common understanding, on the other hand also made more traditional cultures vanish unconsciously.

Today, we discuss the conservation of cultural heritage which is a part of world heritage. The cultural heritage which belongs to the world, of course, is a kind of wealth belonging to the whole humanity, so itself undoubtedly acquires outstanding universal value ( OUV ) and possesses unique features and influence in the world. Yet when we try to measure such OUV or to explain the evaluation criteria of cultural heritage, our judgment is influenced by our cultural backgrounds and understandings of traditional cultures. In this process, apart from a few amazing human creations and miracles, the criteria often used by the international society

become vague, which leads to people's doubt of the objectivity and impartiality in evaluating the heritage, therefore, the credibility and authoritativeness of world heritage are challenged and the authoritativeness of ICOMOS (Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee) is also affected in terms of cultural heritage evaluation.

In view of continuous growth of heritage inscribed on the world heritage list, we can see that more heritage sites are conserved and get worldwide attention, however, another unavoidable problem comes out, that is, how to evaluate and recognize the value of heritage as well as the representative and credibility of cultural heritage.

«*Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*» in 1972 defined the criteria of outstanding universal value with regard to world heritage. «*Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*» sets out six criteria for evaluating cultural heritage which states definitely that the world heritage should witness an unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition. But there is no criterion available to make persuasive judgment on whether the culture is exceptional or give definite and apparent definition of the so-called culture. The evaluation under such situation can only lead to doubt on its credibility. In another point of view, a man in a specific culture and another one outside it may also have different opinions in the recognition and understanding of such culture. This difference prevents people from evaluating the value of such heritage on an impersonally objective standpoint.

As the number of States Parties is growing, more countries and peoples hope that their own cultural heritage reflected in the world heritage list, which is, of course, a proper and reasonable request. Yet it also affects the management and understanding of the criteria of culture heritage. In order to seek for a new solution under the frame of existing convention, it becomes a new need for people to understand the significance of the conservation of world heritage in a new horizon; to find out the possible ways to guarantee that these are determining the direction of world heritage conservation.

World heritage conservation has been evolving from conservation of individual buildings to historical precincts, then to protection of historical cities and cultural landscapes. In this process, more cultural factors get to be conserved and exhibited. It shows some changes of our attention, from the outstanding aesthetic value of cultural heritage to their historical, cultural, and even emotional value. New «*Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the*

*World Heritage Convention*» brings out the examination of integrity based on authenticity of cultural heritage. Then what is the integrity of cultural heritage? What are the differences and similarities between integrity of cultural heritage and natural heritage? These problems will make us consider further about the boundary of cultural heritage as well as the problems interconnected in space, time, and category in cultural heritage conservation.

The conservation of Cultural Routes provides a new possibility that based on the study of the sixth criteria for cultural heritage, to construct a new and complete network for conservation of national, regional, and worldwide cultural heritage which is on a line of important historical and cultural events of humanity. Under such a network, not only the heritage with OUV can be defined and conserved, but the heritage which is not typical of OUV but are able to reflect cultural diversity and witness history and civilization to some extent, which constitute part of the Cultural Routes and exhibit integrity, are also exhibited and protected in this new system.

“*Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range*”, which were inscribed on the world heritage list at 28th World Heritage Committee Meeting in 2004, and “*Incense and Spice Road*” (Israel) which were inscribed on the world heritage list at 29th World Heritage Committee Meeting in 2005, both of which reflect people's understanding of Cultural Routes--the new category of cultural heritage. These two heritage sites exhibit a conservation system that is constructed in one country but contains numerous cultural heritage interconnected in time and space.

“*Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (Japan)*” has a history of 1200 years, contains traditional Japanese Shintoism and Buddhism introduced from China and Korean Peninsula, and its objects of conservation include The forested mountains, Three main shrines (*Yoshino and Omine, Kumano Sanzan, Koyasan*), Pilgrim routes. Pilgrimage routes and three important shrines also contain considerable quantity of cultural heritage, such as other relevant buildings, monuments, etc. Seen individually, the value of such heritage can not be defined as OUV. Apart from tangible cultural heritage, this site also includes many important intangible cultural heritage, such as Association with Shinto and Buddhism, Diaspora effect – the sites as models for other shrines, temples and sacred sites, and Inspiration for poets and painters. As a unique cultural landscape with a history of 1200 years, such sacred places and pilgrimage routes, of course, document Japanese history. The conservation of such a site far exceeds what is covered by a single cultural heritage site in the past. It not only

contains huge quantity of tangible cultural heritage, but also has natural heritage and intangible cultural heritage. So more governmental and non-governmental organizations, academic groups participate in conserving this site, which promotes the conservations of cultural heritage in this region effectively, even the whole country.

The “*Incense Route and the Desert Cities in the Negev*” of Israel has the same function. The heritage site lies in the Negev Desert, which as a whole accounts for two thirds of Israel’s land area. These sites were part of a network of trade routes which transported frankincense and myrrh starting at third century BC. On this trading route, people domesticated camels as means of transport that influences the life of humanity. It stretches out across a hundred kilometer section of the desert from Haluza in the northwest to Moa in the east on the Jordanian border, totaling distance about 2000km. The trading route constitutes one of the most important cultural landscapes on Arabian Peninsula. It was an important route from cities of Yemen and Oman on the southern part of Arabian Peninsula to the Mediterranean Sea and North Africa from 3rd century BC to 2nd century AD. It constituted a grand cultural landscape along the Red Sea. This site concerns four towns: *Avdat- Oboda, Haluza, Mamshit Kurnub, Shivta – Sobata* and large number of fortresses: *Moa Fortress and Caravanserai, Kasra Fort, Nekarot Fortress, Ein Saharonim- Ramon Gate Caravanserai, Makhmal Ascent and Fortress, and Graffon Fortress*. There are other remains lie along or near the main trade route such as Milestones along the route , road sections , agricultural evidence, etc. Such a cultural route exhibits the living conditions and economy of the people in this region as early as 3rd century BC as well as cultural collision, communication, and integration there. It also witnesses important historical events there, such as Roman occupation and the rise of Muslim in the region.

As a land measuring system from Hammerfest in Norway to Black Sea, *Struve Geodetic Arc* inscribed on the list in 2005 contains the mapping system of 34 measuring stations and more than 2800km in length. In some sense, this site has the basic character of a Cultural Routes.

To conserve and manage this project, cooperating with different governments and expert organizations in such a huge area, itself, is a test and challenge for the heritage conservation system of a country; meanwhile it is a challenge for international cooperation in such field, too. It urges relevant organizations to take integral consideration in three points: the influence of such heritage projects over the national strategy of conserving cultural heritage, the relationship between conservation and tourism and the influence of changing the environment to the cultural

heritage conservation in the region.

Although there are only two (or three) sites of this cultural routes kind among 812 world heritage sites, the boundary they cover and their abundant contents far exceed the former cultural heritage sites. Meanwhile, they integrate the broad natural landscape of heritage to the largest extent to form a complex heritage site containing with monuments, building groups, sites, historic cities, historic gardens and cultural landscapes. Such comprehensive conservation of cultural heritage will produce significant influence over heritage conservation and management system in a country or region.

At 29th World Heritage Committee Meeting, people’s attention was attracted by African efforts and unity shown as a whole in terms of heritage conservation. Such efforts have great significance to enhance the level of heritage conservation in a region, especially to strengthen civilian’s conservation consciousness. On the other hand, it turns the conservation into a new industry and promotes social development and progress. Such regional efforts are the basis of Cultural Routes conservation.

At 27th World Heritage Committee Meeting, Latin American countries report the conservation of Incan cultural route. It is a cultural route crossing 6 countries in Latin America. Its conservation means a regional conservation network, which links the Pacific coast in Latin America, need to be established. This network can possibly promote experience exchanges among countries more effectively and it also results in general development of regional heritage conservation so that the world heritage conservation can be promoted greatly.

In China, researches and conservation of Cultural Routes have been started, too. Such sites as the researches and conservation of Silk Roads by land and by water and Chama ancient road have begun. The Chinese Government has made a five-year plan for the conservation of Xinjiang section of the Silk Roads. Then there will be 80,000,000 RMB each year, totaling 400,000,000 RMB putting into heritage conservations in this region. This plan will improve heritage conservation generally and completely strengthen local conservation process.

The conservation of Cultural Routes will make significant influence over the international conservation of cultural heritage. Such influence will be represented in following points:

- . The cultural routes will combine the conservation of cultural heritage and natural environment more closely and make people understand the sitting of cultural heritage in a new perspective. In Japanese

*Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range*, mountainous environment around the sacred site and traditional vegetation make up of inseparable parts of this heritage. In the same way, the desert landscape in the cultural routes-Israeli "*The Incense Route and the Desert Cities in the Negev*" is a necessary part of this heritage. Such a relationship between natural environment and cultural heritage reflects the historical and cultural value of this site.

. The Cultural Routes will represent the significance of authenticity and integrity in cultural heritages more effectively. As a complex heritage, the Cultural Routes has many sub-sites and there are mutual relationships existing in time and space among its sub-sites, such as cities, historical buildings, and archaeological sites belonging to cultural routes. Such relationships constitute the innate value and its comprehensiveness of Cultural Routes. The problem of authenticity of any sub-site will result in damages of the whole Cultural Routes, and the authenticity of each sub-site forms the most eloquent physical proof of human civilization through Cultural Routes. The integrity involved in a comprehensive cultural heritage is not only related to the cultural heritage itself, to a great extent, but also concerns natural environment, concerns the influential boundary of human culture represented by the cultural heritage, concerns the protection of intangible heritage and their mutual functions and relationships. Either "*Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range*" of Japan or Incan Road and Silk Roads contains buildings, building groups, relics, cultural landscapes, intangible cultural heritage and broad natural environment as its setting.

. In view of its size-effect, cultural routes contain various values in history, society, culture, art and related information, all of which other kinds of heritage is hard to compare. Such characteristics enable it to exhibit the progress of human civilization more amply; its linear feature and function of cultural intercommunion and transmission in history, especially its relation with important historical events, make cultural routes meet people's requirements for cultural tourism. Therefore, the conservation of Cultural Routes will promote regional cultural tourism and bring more development opportunities for this region. The cultural tourism itself is also an important factor improving conservation of Cultural Routes. The problem of conservation and management brought about by cultural tourism will facilitate a balanced development between cultural conservation and tourism.

.The conservation of Cultural Routes enhances

conservation of cultural diversity and makes it better combine with existing evaluation system. The development of culture consists of its own imbalance. Although culture should not be classified into higher or lower, in terms of cultural value, its influence makes a difference in time and space. It is unpractical to treat the diversity of cultures by an absolute equality way. It is no doubt that, in world heritage conservation, the emphasis on the cultural diversity has influenced the statement of outstanding universal value to some extent. This problem will be more striking along with the growth of the heritage number inscribed on the world heritage list every year. For Cultural Routes, it can contain and integrate numerous kinds of factors that are related and exhibit diversity of human cultures. In Cultural Routes, there are related and even different cultures, but there does not have the imbalance problems which are in the world heritage list; meanwhile, each kind of culture will add splendor to this Cultural Routes. Since each kind of culture is relevant or connected with the Cultural Routes, they will show their value with others in it as a whole site. Take Silk Roads conservation for example. From Xi'an, China to commercial cities of Europe, this long line involves different kinds of buildings, historical cities, cultural differences among different nationalities in Europe and Asia. The cultural diversity from different customs and conventions also constitute the outstanding universal value of this site.

. The Cultural Routes will facilitate conservation of multinational heritage site. *Struve Geodetic Arc* covers ten countries: Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine. Incan cultural routes of South America and Silk Roads spanning Asia, Europe, and Africa will also involve many countries. Their conservation will promote intercommunion and cooperation between these countries and effectively improve the capacity of conserving and managing cultural heritage in relevant countries.

. Studies on Cultural Routes will possibly establish a worldwide conservation network. This network will cover the original conservation system to some extent. Meanwhile, the conservation network based on Cultural Routes will cover cultural diversity to a greater extent and enable world heritage to turn from point exhibition of human civilization to linear and regional exhibition constructed on the basis of important human activities, which renders more definite and clear exhibition of the OUV of cultural heritage.

Cultural routes and the extension of relevant conservation works will change the system and layout of current world heritage conservation and result in a new conservation and management system. This system will become a new mode of international cooperation and global treatment across the boundary of countries. It will be more favorable for establishing a complete global cultural heritage conservation system. In such a process, any country can no longer undertake alone the task of conserving a site crossing countries and regions such as Incan cultural routes or Silk Roads. International professional organizations should play a more positive role in the conservation of Cultural Routes.

As the largest world expert organization for the conservation of cultural heritage, ICOMOS is able to display a more positive and important role in Cultural Routes conservation. From «*Venice Charter*» in 1964 to «*The Florence Charter*» in 1982, «*Washington Charter*» in 1987, «*Charter on Protection and Management of Archaeological Heritages*» in 1990, «*Charter on Protection and Management of Underwater Charter Heritages*» in 1996, «*International Chapter on Cultural Tourism*», «*Charter on the Built Vernacular heritage*», and «*Principles for the Preservation of Historic Timber Structures*» in 1999, it has established a complete conservation system based on current concept of cultural heritage. The conservation of cultural routes makes the sittings of cultural heritage extend to a greater boundary and more complicated. Natural environment factors and intangible cultural heritage will produce more influence on Cultural Routes. And tourism will also play a more important role. With regard to the development trend of cultural heritage conservation represented by Cultural Routes, ICOMOS needs to adjust and formulate corresponding strategies to enable its conservation system, which has been basically complete, to adapt to such changes.

ICOMOS needs to participate in global conservation of Cultural Routes with more frequency and enthusiasm. It may need a pre-research over possible sites of the world by workshop; formulate a tentative list of global Cultural Routes, so that one can promote the conservation of Cultural Routes through national committees. Meanwhile, ICOMOS should study and establish the international charters, so that all States Parties can have ampler principles to promote this course.

Cultural Routes can not thoroughly solve all problems that cultural heritage conservation encounters today, but it enables us to see the development of human history and culture in a new perspective, as well as the interrelationship of such development and its reference to the cultural heritage. Meanwhile it will more effectively to establish an

international cooperation in the field of cultural heritage conservation so that people can possibly understand and recognize the values and significance of different cultures further. The conservation of Cultural Routes has been started and it still needs more studies and our attentions. ICOMOS should and is able to play a dominant role in this new development process.

### Abstract

Since UNESCO constituted «Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage», the conservation of world heritage has been focused by the people all over the world gradually and the protective object has also extended from certain historic monuments to cities and cultural landscape. Meanwhile the understanding of cultural heritage has been developing, too, from some great works to the cultural diversity. During this course, ICOMOS has been playing a very important role. Since the «Venice Charter» of 1964 defined the basic principles, such significant Documentation as «The Florence Charter», «Washington Charter», «Principles for the Preservation of Historic Timber Structures», «International Charter on Cultural Tourism» and «Charter on the Built Vernacular heritage» have already formed an integrated system of conservation of cultural heritage. Under the flag of «Venice Charter», many countries constituted their own conservation principles according to their specific conditions. Take «Burra Charter» for example, further enrich the theoretic structure of cultural heritage conservation.

In 1994, after world heritage committee, the imbalance of cultural heritage conservation was put forward. While in the same year «The Nara Document on Authenticity» referred some principles that the cultural diversity must be respected and the authenticity of cultural heritage must be protected. Practicing for 10 years, we now can see clearly that the protection of cultural diversity not only promotes the conservation of the whole human cultural heritage, but also awakes our conservation consciousness. However, the conservation of cultural diversity also results the imbalance among world heritage sites. As for it, this causes a critical problem that a new system that can reflect the particularity of cultural heritage conservation should be established. Therefore, the notion of cultural routes provides possibilities of establishing such a new system. The inscription of Kii Mountain Range (Japan), discussion of Incense and Spice Road (Israel) in the World Heritage Committee of 2004 with the programs of Incan Road (South America) and silk route (across Europe and Asia) processing now, reveal a rudiment of a new conservation system.

There is no doubt that the conservation of cultural routes will promote forming a concept in our heads concerning the whole human cultural heritage as well as establish a global network of conserving cultural heritage. This network has the richest contents in mentioned field, and enables the deeper understanding that exceeds the limits of nations, ethnics and regions. It would also make our cooperation between two countries as well as the government and their people more effectively, and consequently promotes the development of the human society.

For ICOMOS, the conservation of cultural routes also

means a new challenge. In the future, based on focusing cultural diversity, we should promote the expansion of cultural routes so as to establish an international conservation system, and promote the development of this conservation work through the cooperation between ICOMOS members, Country Committee and Professional Committee. Simultaneity, in both the perspective of conservation theory and science, issue of culture routes is under research and discussion. Moreover, the definition of guidelines should also deserve our attention.