The *Nara document:* its achievement and its limits

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Abstract

Diversity of heritage, diversity of cultures. Since the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, *both data have been taken into account. The contribution of the Nara Conference and subsequent meetings have enabled all of the regions of the world to delve further into those concepts and highlight the need for a flexible application of the test of authenticity. Herb Stovel played a major role in this welcome revolution. Nevertheless, it is the adoption of the "Global strategy" in particular that opened up the World Heritage List to include additional and more diverse sites and, thus, better represent the different nations and cultures. However, both this broad extension and the relativity embraced in the test of authenticity pose problems: the identification of cultural assets, interpretation, the management of urban sites or inhabited landscapes and the reconstruction projects. To ensure the credibility of the Convention, it is important to avoid the temptation of identity withdrawals and of commercial or savage conservation practices, in order to jointly develop universal conservation principles as part of the multilateral international cooperation in compliance with UNESCO's objectives.*

Keywords: Heritage diversity, cultural diversity, universality, human rights.

The Nara Conference, an important milestone in heritage protection

The Athenians attached great importance to the preservation of Theseus' ship. Every time a piece of wood in the hull decayed, they carefully replaced it. A time came when all the pieces had been replaced. Could it then still have been regarded as Theseus' ship? Was it still authentic? The Nara Conference attempted to answer similar questions. It gave rise to a fertile period of colloquiums and publications that, with the participation of Herb Stovel, sought to go beyond the *Venice Charter* and "establish internationally applicable conservation principle."

Since 1994, the *Nara document on authenticity* has been an essential reference in the recognition of cultural heritage and in conservation and restoration practices. Like the *Venice Charter,* the *Nara document* has the merit of brevity and opens a field of intellectual depth and confrontation of theory with practice. The intellectual effervescence that followed Nara has led to significant advances in conservation doctrines and dialogue among various cultures and specialties.

WORK SESSION DURING THE NARA CONFERENCE, HERB STOVEL, JEAN-LOUIS LUXEN, CHRISTINA CAMERON. *Image: Jean-Louis Luxen.*

Herb Stovel's major role

Herb Stovel was a key player in the months of preparation for the Nara Conference. Co-rapporteur with Raymond Lemaire, he took a decisive part in the preparation of the final declaration. In particular, he ensured the follow-up of Nara through the organization of various seminars, including the development of the *San Antonio declaration* for the Americas in 1996 and during a series of seminars in Pernambuco, Brazil. He had the scientific and moral authority as a result of his abilities as a sharp analyst, a conservation activist and a convincing pedagogue.

Two important changes had occurred in the early 1990s. On the one hand, at the General Assembly of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), a new Executive Committee was elected. Until then, the Committee had been presided by French-speaking Europeans (Raymond Lemaire, Michel Parent, Roberto Di Stefano). The Committee chose a new president, Roland Silva, architect and archaeologist from Sri Lanka, as well as a new general secretary, Canadian Herb Stovel. The result was a more open approach and the insistence that the contributions of the various regions of the world be taken more into account. On the other hand, in 1992, the spectacular success of the *World Heritage Convention* (hereinafter "the Convention") led UNESCO's Director-General Federico Mayor to create the World Heritage Centre. Endowed with some autonomy of action to fulfill the tasks of the secretariat of the Convention, the Centre had to bring together the services in charge of culture and nature and quickly become the reference point for the world of conservation. Because of his distant location, President Silva delegated many important tasks to Herb Stovel, his Secretary-General. Stovel, proved to be hard-working and fully committed to the new development of ICOMOS and its representation in the World Heritage Committee.

In his earlier work, Herb Stovel had been very much involved in the conservation of wooden architecture. His work at the church of Kizhi Pogost in Russia led him to consult with Nordic professionals, especially with the Norwegian Antiquities Service. Following Japan's ratification of the Convention (timber construction is common in Japan), he expanded his contacts to

Asia. When he left the post of Secretary-General in 1993, all of the preparatory work for the Nara Conference was underway. This included the convening of a meeting of experts in Bergen in January 1994 at the invitation of the Norwegian authorities, who then would ensure the editing of the conference minutes coordinated by Knut Einar Larsen. Herb Stovel was involved, not only in the follow-up to the Nara Conference, but also in the implementation of the Convention. He was very open to collaborations with his colleagues and stayed in touch with Nobuo Ito and Nobuko Inaba from Japan, Christina Cameron, Director of Parks Canada, and, above all, Jukka Jokilehto, his colleague at ICCROM, in Rome.

The discrepancies between the English and French versions of the *Nara document*

The *Nara document* was prepared during the evening session previous to the closing of the Conference. Two rapporteurs were appointed: Herb Stovel and Raymond Lemaire. The latter was to return home on the same day and it was understood that the rapporteurs would work together to harmonize the two versions because there were some drafting differences. Unfortunately, Raymond Lemaire passed away before completing the work.

Based on personal contacts with Raymond Lemaire, I can claim that the differences between the two versions did not pose insurmountable substantive difficulties on his part and that he approved the scope of the *Nara document*. It is still very regrettable that the contents of such an important text are not always in perfect agreement; some of the translations are based strictly on the French version, while others, as in the case of articles 80 and 81 of the *Operational guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (hereinafter the Guidelines) are based on the English version. It should also be noted that the "suggestions" added by Herb Stovel upon completing the *document* were not discussed with Raymond Lemaire. This data recommends caution in referring to the provisions of the *Nara document.*

From heritage diversity to cultural diversity

In Nara's preparatory documents, the question of authenticity was related first and foremost to the continued extension of the concept of heritage. The interpretation in Article 1 of the Convention of the terms "monuments," "ensembles" and "sites" had allowed the recognition of various types of heritage: historical gardens, earthen architecture, industrial installations, cultural routes and, especially, urban ensembles. In 1992, in La Petite Pierre, France, a seminar defined the category of cultural landscapes, giving rise to a fruitful dynamic by highlighting the relationship between man and nature. It was then clear that the criteria for recognizing such diverse categories of heritage had to be applied taking into account these specificities, including in the assessment of their authenticity. In particular, inhabited sites, which must be able to evolve to offer the inhabitants modern living conditions, demanded another vision of their authenticity. For urban groups, as early as 1976, the *Nairobi recommendation* focused on "the safeguarding and contemporary role of historic areas." Therefore, some flexibility in the recognition of these new assets and in the definition of their authenticity was already commonly accepted. The evolution of the views regarding heritage and the requirement of authenticity were also considered. In Europe itself, 19th-century reconstructions "à la Viollet-le-Duc" were no longer accepted by the *Venice Charter*.

Similarly, a certain amount of relativism in the very definition of authenticity was widely accepted, even in Europe depending on the different cultures, so much so that the recognition of heritage depends on the history and perspective of the community involved. Raymond Lemaire, in an article dating from 1993, "Authenticité et patrimoine monumental," identified two "values of authenticity": the value of the object in question, and that which is a source of historical knowledge of this object. He wrote: "there is no single, unanimous or stable

conception of authenticity (...) it varies not only according to culture, but also according to the evolution of ideas and sensitivities within the same culture"[1] (Lemaire, 1993). Raymond Lemaire explicitly mentions two examples at "the polar opposite of each other": the Imperial temples of Ise, in Japan, and the buildings of the Acropolis, including the Parthenon, in Athens, which he considered, without hesitation, both equally authentic.

It is also worth mentioning the considerations made by Michel Parent, Vice-President and Rapporteur of the World Heritage Committee, in 1979, on the criterion of authenticity (Parent, 1979). Fifteen years before the Nara Conference, he has already in some way announced the conclusions:

> *Moreover, we have to stress that authenticity is relative and depends on the nature of the property involved.*
> *A wooden temple in Kyoto which has been perfectly maintained, and whose timbers have been replaced regularly as they decayed -without any alteration to the architecture or of the appearance of the material over ten centuries- remains undeniably authentic.*
> *The nature of a material, its finishing, its structural use, and its expressive use, the very nature of the civilization which built the building (whether or not it is the conductor of a genuine transmission) are all different factors according to which the idea of authenticity con be understood differently.*
> *Recent analysis of Western Europe stained glass windows have shown that only a proportion of the glass is original, without casting any doubt on the authenticity of windows* (Parent, 1979: 19).

It is surprising to note that this report to the World Heritage Committee does not appear to have been properly taken into consideration in the preparatory documents for the Nara Conference. It was certainly necessary to further develop the question of authenticity that had been barely evoked in the *Venice Charter*; this was all the more true in a forum involving representatives from all regions of the world and which took into account in particular the point of view of the Far East. But there simply could have been a reference to Parent's report, which already promoted a more extensive interpretation of the concept of authenticity. This is not the only time when a debate was opened on topics that had already been discussed. Sometimes, the abundance of texts, reports or statements hides the results achieved earlier. On other occasions, the renewal of the membership of the World Heritage Committee -especially when members' are not specialized in the field of heritage- breaks the continuity of references and ideas.
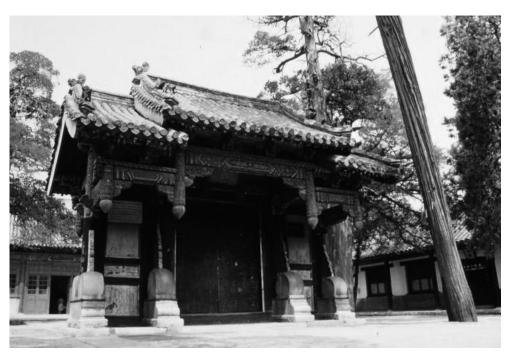
In any case, it seems that the "technical illusions" mentioned by Herb Stovel in his article had already been largely dissipated: authenticity is not a value in itself; the notion of authenticity is not absolute; authenticity should not relate to all elements of the cultural property. When Herb Stovel is right is when he identifies the need to provide "scientific clarification to improve understanding and importance of authenticity" by the Nara Conference and the subsequent meetings held on all continents.

Let us note with Herb Stovel that the publication widely disseminated in 1993, from the *Management guidelines for world cultural heritage sites* by Bernard Feilden and Jukka Jokilehto already advocated, in the chapter on "Treatments and authenticity," for a pragmatic interpretation of the test of authenticity (Feilden et Jokilehto, 1993).

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[1] Original quotation: "il n'y a pas de conception unique, ni unanime, ni stable en ce qui concerne l'authenticité, (…) elle varie non seulement selon les cultures, mais aussi selon l'évolution des idées et des sensibilités au sein d'une même culture."

For several years, Henry Cleere was in charge of presenting the ICOMOS evaluations to the World Heritage Committee. Displeased by the magnitude, excessive from his point of view, of mobilization around authenticity, to the detriment of other issues more directly related to the effective protection of heritage, he exclaimed: "All this for that!" (Cameron and Rössler, 2013: 88).

The author would like to share here his personal experience when he was commissioned in 1998 to carry out the in situ evaluation of the proposed inscription of the shrines and temples of Nikko, Japan. Conservation practices were exemplary in all aspects. Since the 17th century, a detailed record keeps track of all restoration interventions, their justifications and the implementation reports. The wooden elements decayed by time or weathering are replaced by perfectly identical parts, with the same essence. The color elements are renovated, when necessary, using exactly the same pigments, whose place of origin is specified. In many respects, it can be said that the shrines and temples of Nikko have a higher authenticity than the Cathedral of Notre-Dame in Paris, deeply remodeled in the 19th century by Viollet-le-Duc and that the Japanese people responsible for their conservation, despite the cultural diversity, have applied the principles of the *Venice Charter* for four centuries, long before its adoption!

ENTRANCE TO THE SHRINES AND TEMPLES OF NIKKO, JAPAN. An extraordinary authenticity guaranteed since the 17th century. *Image: Jean-Louis Luxen.*

The real twist: the *Global strategy* and the question of Outstanding Universal Value
During the same year 1994, a few months before the Nara Conference, a very important scientific meeting was held at UNESCO headquarters during which the *Global strategy* was defined to make the World Heritage List more "representative, balanced and credible." The exercise aimed at exploring the extensions that had to be given to the notion of heritage, to deviate from the dominant monumental concept which had prevailed until then. It was based on several reports or publications and, in particular, on the project of a Global study developed by ICOMOS in 1992, under the leadership of Herb Stovel and Henry Cleere, which combined three dimensions:

temporal, thematic and by "cultural provinces." Expanding analyses and perspectives, the *Global strategy* preferred advocating for an anthropological and evolutionary approach, which would allow to better take into consideration the "complex and dynamic nature of cultural expressions."[2]

These conclusions would fundamentally change the methodology for the recognition of the cultural properties of the World Heritage and the implementation of the Convention, by allowing the inscription of very diverse heritage, representative of the cultures of the world, in particularly taking into account their intangible dimension. Such openness was even more momentous than the relativity of authenticity that the *Nara document* was to defend. For the designers of the Convention, it was even a departure from their objectives with which they did not agree. In particular, Raymond Lemaire wrote, "It is necessary to abide to the object of the convention, the international protection of a limited number of works of art and sites that constitute the summit of World Heritage."[3] In advocating such openness, he feared that the *Global strategy* would be exposed to dangerous shifts such as political instrumentalization, a desire to exploit tourism and a disproportionate World Heritage List that would become difficult to manage. For him, it was necessary for "countries to propose for inscription their properties in accordance with the description made in Article 1 which they find to be the most outstanding." Although Raymond Lemaire was open to a flexible application of the criterion of authenticity, he adhered to a "deliberately elitist choice" for the World Heritage List.

In recent years, the World Heritage Committee has strongly supported the *Global strategy* and has shown flexibility, sometimes a lot of flexibility, in recognizing a wide range of cultural properties. Of course, this openness represented a much greater evolution than the relativity advocated by Nara for the test of authenticity... and this not without falling into the shifts foreseen by Raymond Lemaire. How many times has it been possible to observe a coalition of some members of the World Heritage Committee to bypass ICOMOS' recommendations, especially on the criterion of authenticity, and to proceed with controversial inscriptions? What a contrast between the numerous in-depth debates, around the world, to clarify the test of authenticity and the casualness with which the World Heritage Committee sometimes proceeds!

However, in a corollary to the opening of the *Global strategy* lies the difficulty of reaching an agreement on the essential notion of Outstanding Universal Value of very diverse categories of cultural properties. Despite numerous meetings and publications on this topic, the question remains topical and cannot be discussed here. It should be noted that an expert meeting, held in Amsterdam in 1998 (UNESCO, 1998), had already delved into the implications of the *Global strategy* by articulating natural and cultural heritage and by examining the issues of the Outstanding Universal Value.

The question is sensitive and can only be answered on a case-by-case basis (Petzet, 2008). Which qualifier should prevail: the "universal" or the "outstanding"? Is it to inscribe on the World Heritage List "the best sites among the best"? Or "a representative selection of the best sites"? (Cameron, 2008). Only then, depending on the answer, should the test of authenticity be performed.

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[2] Report on the Expert meeting on the *Global strategy* and thematic studies for a representative World Heritage List, held in Paris on 20-22 June 1993. UNESCO WHC-94/CONF.003/INF.6

[3] Lemaire, Raymond (1994) Personal letter to the author.

The main challenges arising from the *Global strategy* and the Nara Conference
The opening generated in 1994 by the *Global strategy* and the *Nara document,* as well as other new considerations resulting from the evolution of ideas and practices in the following years, raised many questions and caused many difficulties in the implementation of the Convention. It should be noted that the meeting organized again by Japan to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the *Nara document* in 2014 had to examine the consequences of these events (Nara+20, 2014).

The definition of heritage sites and the identification of their values
Of course, it is up to each country to identify which cultural property it wishes to safeguard or even propose for inclusion on the World Heritage List. However, to take into account the cultural specificities advocated by the *Nara document,* it seems increasingly imperative to combine the scientific and historical approach of heritage experts with the views and expectations of the communities involved with the property. A margin of relativism in the assessment of authenticity implies the compilation of various points of view and the consideration of social or affective contributions. The participation of all stakeholders thus enriches the definition of the values to be safeguarded. It also provides a form of commitment of these communities in the proper conservation of the site. But it makes this approach of identifying the values of a cultural property and the conditions of intervention more complex. Stakeholders are diverse, with variable authority and decision-making power. They can be local or national, or even established in another country. In one country, cultural minorities and indigenous peoples (UN, 2007) must also be able to make their voices heard: within the same country, there is often cultural diversity as well. It is not uncommon to see a country that invokes cultural diversity, but, on the domestic front, to deny it to its minorities. The challenge is to develop an internationally recognized methodology that allows the definition of the rights and duties of each group. Such a methodology is essential to avoid questionable inscriptions, often enforced by chauvinistic political statements or guided by commercial objectives.

If particular cultural approaches are accepted, it remains essential in the context of the Convention that these be clearly expressed to enable understanding by other cultures and to have international recognition. Two major requirements are then imposed: on the one hand, explicitly defining values, including authenticity, which, in the eyes of the community concerned, underpin the outstanding character of cultural property; on the other hand, that in any subsequent intervention, rigorous respect for these values is required.

Presentation and interpretation of heritage sites
As long as a wide variety of sites are accepted and their authenticity is essentially considered and assessed in the cultural contexts to which they belong, their presentation and interpretation should be meaningful for everyone. Taking into consideration the participation of the several stakeholders mentioned above, this interpretation may be plural, especially in terms of external views. It may vary over time, depending on the evolution of the cultural property or, more generally, of ideas. These views can also be contradictory, even conflicting, which requires great caution in their examination. Beyond these differences, consensus needs to be reached on the need and modalities of conservation. Due to the opening of the *Global strategy* and *the Nara document*, proposals for inscription are now being prepared for commemorative sites or battlegrounds of recent conflicts. This is where Nara's recommendation that emphasizes the "credibility of available sources of information" is applied. The contributions of history, archaeology and sociology thus open a fertile field of reflection and dialogue to ensure that the spirit of the Convention prevail and, far from exacerbating tensions, brings out a methodology of positive cooperation and dialogue.[4]

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[4] Coalition Internationale des Sites de Conscience (2018), *L'interprétation des sites de mémoire*, study requested by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre.

Managing an increasingly long and diverse World Heritage List
The opening of the *Global strategy* and the *Nara document* have resulted in an extension of the types of heritage properties and a steady increase in the number and diversity of sites inscribed on the World Heritage List. Of course, this represents an important cultural enrichment and helps in highlighting traditions and practices hitherto ignored or misunderstood. However, it is worth recalling the main objective of the Convention, which is the protection of the World Heritage. The credibility of the World Heritage List is also at stake, as many of these sites have a worrying or even disastrous state of conservation. Human and financial resources are far from sufficient to safeguard so many sites. Even the mechanism envisaged to mobilize efforts in extreme cases by inscription on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger is far from functioning adequately, because the country in question perceives it as a form of blame, as we have seen again during the World Heritage Committee in Baku, in relation to the Kathmandu Valley.

It is also important to consider the conditions under which site managers must fulfill their safeguarding mission. Many find it difficult to clearly understand the many conventions, charters and recommendations available in translations or in a foreign language. However, it is up to them to ensure practical implementation on the ground, often with insufficient means, of the principles developed at international meetings.

The evolution of inhabited sites and the challenges of sustainable development
A high proportion of the properties inscribed on the List concerns living places. It is clear that social dynamics cannot be frozen and that the inhabitants must be permitted to have living conditions that allow their full development; authenticity must be assessed taking into account this context. Many historic cities characterized by an ancient habitat and a network of narrow streets struggle to meet the aspirations of modern life. They are at risk of being abandoned by their inhabitants, replaced by external populations and denatured. On the other hand, some cultural landscapes present a great challenge, such as the Bandiagara cliffs of the Dogon country in Mali, the cultural landscape of Sukur, in Nigeria or the rice terraces of the Philippines. Inscription on the World Heritage List cannot condemn the inhabitants of these sites to survive in living conditions from another era. Inhabited sites are particularly exposed to tourist developments that, like Aesop's tongues, may be the best or worst of things. On the other hand, the safeguarding of the heritage of inhabited heritage sites can be a factor of human development; UNESCO was able to do it and take into account in the objectives of sustainable development (UNESCO, 2016). However, it is necessary, as required by the Convention in article 5, to "integrate the protection of that heritage into comprehensive planning programs" through the implementation of a strategy covering social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects. The 2011 *Recommendation on the historical urban landscape* expanded the *Nairobi recommendation* and confirmed the need to give the heritage site management plan a more comprehensive perspective on the use and development of territory, in a participatory approach.

ICOMOS has repeatedly addressed these issues at its General Assemblies on "Social changes," in Sofia in 1996, on "Of wise use of heritage" in Mexico City in 1999, on "The spirit of place" in Quebec in 2008, on "Territorial development" in Paris in 2011.

Instead of authenticity, regarding these inhabited sites, we must talk about integrity; it is necessary to appreciate their organic or functional whole, or even of *genius loci*, to evoke the safeguarding of the faithful reflection of the relationships that the local community has with its environment, over time and depending on tradition. In addition, when considering the inscription of such sites on the World Heritage List, special attention should be paid to authenticity and to the consequences and perspectives that would result in the living conditions of the inhabitants (Charoenwongsa, 1994).

BIANDAGARA CLIFFS IN THE DOGON COUNTRY (MALI). The concept of authenticity must accept an evolution of the site that responds to the desire of the populations to have better living conditions.
Image: Jean-Louis Luxen.

Reconstruction projects

Article 86 of the *Operational Guidelines* is very clear:

> *In relation to authenticity, the reconstruction of archaeological remains or historic buildings or districts is justifiable only in exceptional circumstances. Reconstruction is acceptable only on the basis of complete and detailed documentation and to no extent on conjecture.*

And yet several recent symposia have aimed at legitimizing reconstructions that go against what is prescribed. This is particularly the case in some Gulf countries, who are tempted to resurrect buildings that were destroyed due to extremely rapid economic development, under the pretext of cultural diversity and a specific concept of authenticity. Precedents such as the reconstruction of the Rila Monastery in the 19th century or the historic center of Warsaw after World War II are invoked. However, this is tantamount to forgetting the precise justifications and respect for a very complete documentation which allowed their acceptance, taking into account the "exceptional circumstances" referred to in the Guidelines. As ICOMOS had made clear in its evaluation report, such justifications are absent at Al Ain's cultural sites in the United Arab Emirates, which, however, were controversially inscribed. An international seminar discussed these issues again in 2018, to produce the *Warsaw recommendation on recovery and reconstruction of cultural heritage*.

Joint development of universal conservation principles

A passage from the *Nara document*, in article 11, dangerously opens the door to questioning universally accepted principles. After stating that "information sources may differ from culture to culture, and even within the same culture," the article adds a questionable sentence: "It

RECONSTRUCTION IN DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. *Image: Department of Culture and Tourism.*

thus not possible to base judgments of values and authenticity within fixed criteria." It should also be noted that the Guidelines, which nevertheless reproduce almost word for word the text of the *Nara document,* have fortunately omitted this sentence in Article 81.

On this matter of great importance, it is necessary to return to the first sentences of the *Venice Charter.*

> *Imbued with a message from the past, the historic monuments of generations of people remain to the present day as living witnesses of their age-old traditions. People are becoming more and more conscious of the unity of human values and regard ancient monuments as a common heritage. The common responsibility to safeguard them for future generations is recognized. It is our duty to hand them on in the full richness of their authenticity.*
> *It is essential that the principles guiding the preservation and restoration of ancient buildings should be agreed and be laid down on an international basis, with each country being responsible for applying the plan within the framework of its own culture and traditions.*

These passages remain very relevant and, and as early as 1964, they outlined the main elements of the 1972 *World Heritage Convention.* Of course, it is necessary to adapt the vocabulary: instead of "historic monuments," today we would talk about "cultural heritage" to take into account the new categories of cultural properties that should be considered. Above all, it is important to take into account the level of recognition of this heritage. At the national or local level, which concerns the vast majority of cultural properties, each nation, if it so wishes, is free to follow it own precepts and practices. Since heritage attests to the "ancestral traditions" of a people, it is up to the people to ensure their safeguarding "within

the framework of their own culture and traditions." The *Nara document* joins the *Venice Charter* to give carte blanche in this regard. We should remember that, in 1972, at the same time as the *World Heritage Convention,* the UNESCO General Assembly adopted the *Recommendation concerning the protection, at the national level, of cultural and natural heritage.*

The situation is very different in the frame of the Convention, which can only work if States parties respect universal principles. The *World Heritage Convention* is a treaty of international public law that is part of the will for multilateral cooperation that has developed progressively since the last World War within the framework of UNESCO and the United Nations. Such cooperation is based on concepts and rules that States Parties to the Convention undertake to respect.

In his article, Herb Stovel, acknowledges that relativism in the appreciation of the values of a cultural property, and in particular its authenticity, risks opening the door to fanciful recognitions of cultural properties and to savage conservation practices, which could not be accepted in the implementation of the Convention. He had the good idea of proposing what could have been an additional article in the *Nara document.*

The point at which the *Nara document* and the *Global strategy* provide a new perspective is by triggering a common process of redefining the concepts and rules to be respected. In its plurality of particular cultural riches, the World Heritage challenges us, allows us to dialogue between cultures and enriches them all. It is in this constructive dialogue that we can adapt and improve, in order to take into consideration the cultural diversity, the shared definitions and principles to which each brings adherence and respect. Among the numerous enrichments, let us recall, for example, Japan's contribution to the recognition of intangible heritage, and in particular the crafts of heritage and "living cultural treasures," a completely original concept. Let us also recall Africa's decisive contribution in the conjunction between cultural and natural heritage and, again, intangible values.[5] These contributions have had a decisive influence on the implementation of the Convention, as well as in the treatment of heritage in other regions of the world. The spirit of the *Nara document* and the *Global strategy* also led to the adoption in 2003 of the *Convention for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage* and even, in 2005, the *Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions.* And this, as envisaged by the Convention in one of its considerations, "to adopt new provisions of a convention establishing an effective system of collective protection of the cultural and natural heritage".

Rather than focusing too much on specifics and affirmations of identity by emphasizing the diversity of the appreciation of authenticity, the Convention calls for a better emphasis on the multiple exchanges and crossings that have founded and nurtured cultures. Thus, historical cities have developed with similar plans in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Cuba, Vigan in the Philippines and La Laguna in the Canary Islands. They would all benefit if they collaborated in a network. The same goes for the safeguarding of Le Corbusier's architectural works present in several countries, in Europe, Argentina, India and Japan. The same applies to sites that bear witness to the slave trade and link Gorée in Senegal, or the Accra Forts in Ghana, Salvador de Bahia in Brazil, Cartagena in Colombia, Liverpool in the United Kingdom and Nantes in France and they could set a work of collective memory. Moreover, cultural

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[5] See the report's conclusions on authenticity and integrity in the African context. Expert meeting held in Great Zimbabwe from 26 to 29 May 2000 (Saouma-Forero, 2001).

STRUCTURE OF A TEMPLE IN JAPAN. The craft of heritage are considered as intangible heritage.
Image: Jean-Louis Luxen.

routes such as the Qhapaq Ñan, the Andean road network or the Way of Saint James connect countries and bear witness to cultural and artistic exchanges over time. The message of these examples of the World Heritage List, "in all the richness of their authenticity," bears witness to "the unity of human values."

It is important to note that the field of the heritage and cultural rights of peoples are part of the most fundamental context of the *Universal convention on human rights*, signed in1948 within the framework of the United Nations. At this level, voices are sometimes raised to require that specific conceptions or practices of one culture or another be taken into account. Here too, an open approach allows the extension, jointly decided, towards social, economic and cultural rights, referred to as second and third generation. But there are principles on which it is not possible to compromise, such as freedom of thought, conscience and religion, such as equality between men and women, such as the prohibition of female genital mutilation or as non-retroactivity of criminal sanctions.

True to the ideals of UNESCO's Constitution, the Convention is an ambitious and demanding international legal instrument. It finds inspiration and strength in the conviction that for the heritage inscribed on the World Heritage List "it is incumbent on the international community as a whole to participate in [its] protection." All nations and cultures are invited to share what is most representative and most valuable to their identity. They are obliged not only to ensure the safeguarding of the properties located in their territory, but also to provide mutual assistance. They then deserve a fair appreciation of their commitment, of their sincerity, in a way... also of their authenticity.

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