

Draft Recommendations of International Conference 2011

“Human Resources Development for the Transmission of Traditional Skills: National Approaches and their Application to Stone and Brick”

1. Nature of Cultural Heritage in Stone and Brick

- Cultural heritage in stone and brick in Asia, although considered very durable because of the nature of the material, transmits rich knowledge on traditional skills that need to be considered for their conservation
- Conservation approach for cultural heritage in can be classified on the basis of scientific understanding and scientific, historic and artistic values identified in local context
Moreover heritage structures in brick and stone are hybrid/composite in nature as they utilize various materials and techniques besides stone or brick.
- Each of the two broad categories calls for special consideration of authenticity of material, design, usage, workmanship and conservation interventions (protection, repair, restoration and reconstruction).
- Cultural heritage in stone and brick is specific to its local context representing cultural diversity of the people. However It should be noted that exchange of ideas have added to the cultural diversity in Asia especially in the case of 20th century/modern heritage.
- Cultural heritage in stone should be seen as a process consisting of selection of appropriate type of stone from quarries, their cutting, laying, pointing and carving. In case of brick, it should be seen as a process that ranges from brick manufacturing including selection and mixture of appropriate types of clay and sand in correct proportions, moulding, traditional facilities such as kilns fired at specific temperature as well as brick laying and pointing. In many cases, each task is specialized by crafts people. This need to be properly understood for deciding appropriate interventions for conservation, repair and restoration
- There is a close link between tangible heritage values (product=building) and intangible values(process=skills and workmanship) in stone and brick cultural heritage.
- Therefore cultural heritage should be seen as a compendium of traditional knowledge systems on construction as well as care and maintenance of buildings. This knowledge is orally transmitted among generations and is sufficiently documented in historic texts and material evidences manifested in heritage itself. It is possessed by various kinds of people including craftspeople, architects and religious leaders.

Moreover it is characterized by continuity of use, community relationships, care and expressions.

2. Threats to Traditional Skills in Stone and Brick

- Traditional craftsmen are leaving their profession in search of other sources of livelihood since there is not enough market for their skills. This is partly due to larger impact of globalization and economic development. This has especially resulted in gradual loss of traditional knowledge in (re)construction, maintenance and repair.
- Loss of craftsmen is also attributed to their low social and economic status in various regions of Asia.
- Although in most parts of Asia, stone craftsmen are still available, there is greater emphasis on quantity at the cost of the quality of workmanship. On the other hand, master craftsmen are very few and expensive to employ.
- In many cases, cultural heritage in stone and brick is also confronted with issues of safety especially against natural disasters such as earthquakes. This may be due to their vulnerability resulting from higher requirement in the contemporary society as well as inherent problems in construction in hand lack of maintenance.
- Vernacular constructions in brick and stone in rural and urban areas are generally not recognized as cultural heritage to be protected and thus are being gradually replaced with contemporary constructions that are insensitive to local context.
- Lack of resources and policies in traditional building skills in stone and brick is one of critical challenges.

3. Principles of conservation, repair and restoration

- Depending on the nature of heritage (archaeological/monumental or living heritage), appropriate interventions should be considered; ranging from cleaning and consolidation to repair, restoration and rebuilding of heritage buildings with emphasis on material as well as structure by utilizing traditional skills. The former would require research and practice in conservation science that seeks to protect the original fabric while the latter seeks continuity of skills while incorporating changing needs of inhabitants.
- It is important to record and document the entire conservation/repair/restoration process rather than merely the final product (structure).

- It is important to consider viability of high quality of workmanship in restoration based on appropriate evidence based scientific research by analyzing the authenticity in terms of materials, tools and skills. The extent of their application would be dependent on the nature of heritage.
- Various measures should be adopted to upgrade living heritage buildings to enable lower energy consumption for ecological considerations.
- Upgradation of vernacular housing to meet contemporary needs with minimal compromising of values should be encouraged.
- Optimum safety requirements should not be compromised for the protection of values. Therefore risk reduction measures should be integrated in conservation, repair and restoration of cultural heritage.

4. Recommendations for regeneration and transmission of traditional skills in stone and brick

- Conservation of urban cultural heritage in stone and brick needs to be integrated with planning policies and guidelines to encourage regeneration through adaptive reuse.
- To ensure the transmission of traditional technique, a future intellectual property right of craftspeople should be considered by laws and regulations.
- Professional education in the fields of engineering and architecture should include construction, repair, restoration and retrofitting techniques in traditional stone and brick buildings.
 - Vocational training in traditional material and construction techniques in brick and stone should be imparted to the younger generation.
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 - Research on traditional materials and tools should be promoted by recording living crafts/skills, historic texts as well as through physical evidences in buildings. Applied research for development of physically, socially and economically appropriate materials and techniques for conservation, repair and restoration of cultural heritage in brick and stone should be encouraged.
 - Older Craftsmen should be encouraged to transfer their skills to younger generation. To support livelihoods of traditional craftsmen, subsidies should be provided by the government. Other appropriate measures for increasing livelihood opportunities for craftsmen especially younger generation should be considered

- It is important to build capacities of practitioners (those with direct responsibilities of heritage), institutions (decision and policy makers) as well as community networks.
Administrators should especially be made aware of the importance of conserving and restoring cultural heritage.
- Adaptation of traditional techniques in brick and stone should be encouraged for contemporary constructions to ensure their sustainability and viability. Where possible and appropriate, combination of traditional and contemporary materials and technology should be encouraged for new constructions.
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- Considering the similarity of traditional materials and techniques and various regional influences, international cooperation especially among academic and research institutions for conservation, repair and restoration of stone and brick heritage should be strengthened while respecting the diversity of cultural heritage
- An integrated team consisting not only professionals and experts but also craftspeople should be established for undertaking conservation works.r
- Awareness about traditional materials and constructions and their appropriateness for local environment should be raised among general public.
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