

articulated this vividly, “While the protection of the past appears to be a simple concept, both the ‘past’ and the nature of its ‘protection’ are culturally defined” (Anyon, 1991).

Historical continuity has already been recognized at international level within the Intangible Heritage Convention. It says that intangible heritage “is transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their interaction with nature and their history, and provides them with a sense of identity and continuity” (UNESCO, 2003). This is also true for living heritage and will be further discussed below.

Continuity of use (function)

Having concluded that continuity is a key feature that helps to characterize living heritage, we have further surmised that the use (or the function) for which it was originally intended is an important element for defining continuity. This should not be confused with the fact that all heritage places have some form of function or use for present society. Use or the original function is also a key component of the cultural contents of a heritage which is linked to the identity of a people and establishes strong bonds or connections (Wijesuriya, 2007). It is also well established that the challenges for conservation and management are greater when the heritage under consideration maintains its original function (including contested issues and even destruction).

Use or the original function was a key theme within the heritage discourse debated for nearly a century, although it was eclipsed by concerns for the emphasis placed on the fabric. The Resolutions adopted at the Madrid Conference (1904)⁶ divided monuments into two classes, ‘dead monuments’, i.e. those belonging to a past civilization or serving obsolete purposes, and ‘living monuments’, i.e. those which continue to serve the purposes for which they were originally intended. Key to the difference was the purpose or the function for which they were originally built. Implications of conservation of such places were also elaborated in the same resolution as follows:

- Living monuments ought to be ‘restored’ so that they may continue to be of use, for in architecture utility is one of the bases of beauty.
- Such restoration should be effected in the original style of the monument, so that it may preserve its unity, unity of style being also one of the bases of beauty in architecture, and primitive geometrical forms being perfectly reproducible. Portions executed in a different style from that of the whole should be respected, if this style has intrinsic merit and does not destroy the aesthetic balance of the monument.