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### **ABSTRACT**

The paper treats the evolution of the use of authenticity as an important factor in assessing the suitability of nominations for inscription on the World Heritage List. It treats in sequence a number of major questions linked to authenticity:

- Is authenticity a heritage value in itself or a qualifier of heritage values?
- Is authenticity linked exclusively to authenticity of surviving material fabric or to other factors as well?
- What relation exists between authenticity and integrity?
- Is it possible to apply authenticity as a universal concept, or must assessments be modified in relation to context?
- How is it possible to use this concept in practical ways in conservation decision-making?

The above questions are examined in detail in the context of the ICOMOS-UNESCO-Japan Government 1994 Nara meeting on Authenticity held in Japan. The purpose of this meeting was to assess conservation practices (and “authenticity”) in various regional contexts, and subsequent follow up meetings at international, regional and national levels, including the “Authenticity and Monitoring” meeting held in Cesky Krumlov in the Czech Republic in 1995, the “Inter-American Symposium on Authenticity in the Conservation and Management of the Cultural Heritage” held in San Antonio, in 1996, and the “Authenticity and Integrity in an African Context” meeting held in Great Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe in 2000.

This paper aims to provide administrators and professionals, a greater understanding of the principal issues in the application of the authenticity analysis in conservation decision-making, and their relevance in the context of World Heritage inscriptions.