

Call for Abstracts

The Further Evolution of Authenticity through the Lens of Heritage Ecosystems:

Heritage, Communities, and Sustainable Development

--- 10th Anniversary International Symposium of the Tomioka World Heritage Site ---

2024 marks the 10th anniversary of the World Heritage inscription of the Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites. Efforts have been made in Gunma Prefecture not only to preserve and promote the component properties and other silk-related heritage sites but also to promote the silk industry within the prefecture and to engage in educational activities that convey silk culture.

2024 also marks the 30th anniversary of the Nara Document, an international declaration that addressed the need to respect the diversity of culture and heritage in contemporary society. In 2004, a decade after Nara, the Yamato Declaration was adopted, emphasizing the necessity of an integrated approach for tangible and intangible cultural heritages. In 2014, the need to explore authenticity in relation to society from five perspectives—protection, value, stakeholders, consensus-building, and sustainable development—was proposed as "NARA+20."

We live in a socio-economic environment different from the era in which heritage sites were created. Nevertheless, heritage serves as a source and treasure trove of past information, providing inspiration for the present and future. Therefore, as we look towards the future, we must address the universal challenge of authenticity. This involves maintaining the characteristics and qualities of heritage while allowing local communities to add various forms of value—economic, social, cultural, environmental, educational and technical—to achieve sustainability.

Against these backgrounds, this symposium aims to explore the challenges we face by focusing on the concept of a heritage ecosystem. A heritage ecosystem is understood to encompass the cyclical and organic relationships among various elements that constitute the rich cultural and natural environment of the region and that are connected to the heritage. Because challenges to heritage are ever-changing, the concept of a heritage ecosystem offers a powerful framework for better coping with the challenges that confront us today and those to come.

This approach also enables us to ponder and discuss heritage futures in relation to the site: For instance, how can the site contribute to future-making? What kinds of futures can we imagine for the site, its environment, and indeed, for World Heritage and authenticity more broadly? How long away is that future we are interested in now? What contribution can the site make to visible trends and scenarios over the coming decades in relation to climate change, advancement of technology and AI and digitalisation, population growth and demographic shifts, economic collapse, pandemics, etc.? Which challenges described in the forthcoming *UN Pact for the Future* and the *Declaration on Future Generations* relate to the site, and what do these challenges imply for its management?

We will discuss the directions, goals and strategies to simultaneously achieve the protection of the "Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites" as a World Heritage site. Drawing on related cases and insights from around the world presented at this conference, we aim to formulate

guidelines for the next ten years of the "Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites" and ultimately adopt the "Gunma Declaration" (tentative title) with a global perspective.

Four themed sessions as a framework of discussions:

1. Preservation and Management of Modern Buildings and Industrial Heritage

The core of the heritage ecosystem is the heritage itself. What is the current state of preservation and management of modern buildings and industrial heritage in other countries? What challenges do they face, and how are these challenges being addressed? It is essential to gather global insights and examine the following key issues to inform future efforts:

Keywords:

Preservation and replacement of materials; Adaptive reuse of heritage; Compliance with today's standards; Preservation and transmission of physically fragile heritage; Intangible aspects of heritage; Other inherent values

2. Mechanisms and Systems of the Heritage Ecosystem

The heritage ecosystem is a developing concept. In Gunma Prefecture, efforts have been made to honor and promote not only the World Heritage sites but also various tangible and intangible silk industry-related heritage, thereby planting the seeds of the heritage ecosystem in many places. It is essential to reveal the multifaceted functions and roles these heritages have played, as well as the impacts of external factors. It is also crucial to recognize that more people and organizations are stakeholders. It is desirable to contribute to the formation and expansion of the heritage ecosystem.

Keywords:

World Heritage sites and the various tangible and intangible heritages; Heritage and ecology; Various actors; Supporting industries; Cost-sharing; Management of changes and transmission of values; Collaboration in the heritage ecosystem; The relationship between environmental protection and heritage preservation

3. Formation and Role of Heritage Communities

The community is a core element of the heritage ecosystem alongside the heritage itself. Building a heritage ecosystem to preserve the "Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites" involves numerous people and organizations. Startups centered on silk are emerging. Amid diverse perspectives, rights and values, it is essential to form, expand and develop communities that can achieve consensus-building and collaborative cooperation for the sustainable development of heritage and the region.

Keywords:

Transmission of traditional management and preservation methods; Adjustment of differing values; Expansion, development and collaboration of actors; Mechanisms to support the formation and development of heritage communities; Decision-making processes in heritage management

4. Technology and the Future of Heritage

Technological exchange and innovation are crucial not only for understanding the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the "Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites" but also for considering its future preservation. Some kinds of technology hold potential to become pillars of support for the future of the heritage ecosystem. By examining the progress and application of cutting-edge digital technologies, we can expand the possibilities for the future of heritage and enhance the heritage ecosystem.

Keywords:

Significance, potential, risks and challenges of advanced technologies; Preservation and utilization with digital technology; Application of technology in the heritage ecosystem; Use of digital technology in heritage communities; Virtual and real authenticity; Authenticity in the era AI

Key Information

The conference website with concept notes: <https://www.heritage-ecosystem.com/html/en/>

The convener of the symposium: Prof. Toshiyuki Kono, honorary president of ICOMOS
Co-sponsored by Gunma Prefecture and ICOMOS Japan

Main venue: Gunma Music Center, Takasaki City, Gunma, Japan

Date: 10-11 January 2025

Working language: English

Each session will consist of short presentations, a panel discussion, and breakout sessions. Presenting authors are expected to take an active part in the discussion.

Prospective authors should submit a max. 300-word abstract by 20 August 2024 through the following link or QR code.

<https://officekit.form.kintoneapp.com/public/heritage-tomioka-abstracts>



Authors of accepted papers will be notified by 20 September.

Papers submitted after the symposium will be peer-reviewed, and accepted papers will be published by a renowned publisher.