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Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and
its Cultural Landscape
Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2007

石見銀山遺跡とその文化的景観
2007年世界遺産(登録)

World Heritage

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape

Official Record

Shimane Prefectural Board of Education

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Foreword

This is a special book which includes academic works and explanations of the history and present-day condition of 'Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape', as listed under the terms of the World Heritage Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Chapter 1 was written by MOTONAKA Makoto, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Monuments and Sites Division, Cultural Properties Department, Agency for Cultural Affairs. Chapters 2 and 3 are based upon the Nomination Dossier which was submitted to the UNESCO World Heritage Center. Chapter 4 details the road to achieving World Heritage status.

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Greetings



Greetings from the Governor

Zenbee Mizoguchi
Shimane Prefecture

'Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape' was inscribed on the World Heritage List at the UNESCO 31st World Heritage Committee held in Christchurch, New Zealand, June 23 - July 2. Iwami Ginzan is the 14th World Heritage Site in Japan and the first mining site to be inscribed in Asia.

Since 1996, Shimane Prefecture and Ohda City have been working towards World Heritage inscription, taking a little over 10 years for the site to be listed. During this time, we submitted progress reports of our inscription efforts, and in 2001 our site was inscribed on the World Heritage Tentative List. The Nomination Dossier was accepted by UNESCO and we welcomed an ICOMOS On-site Evaluation Mission in 2007.

In spite of our efforts, ICOMOS recommendation to UNESCO was "deferral". This report amazed us all. However, we continued our hard work with the goal of overturning this recommendation, in order to ensure listing of our site. As a result of such efforts, it was decided by the World Heritage Committee that 'Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape' be inscribed on the World Heritage List.

'Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape' is a collection of three connected areas, the silver mine site and mining towns, *kaidō* transportation routes, and ports and port towns, including 14 component features. The total area of the property is 442ha, and including the Buffer Zone, the property has a total area of 3663ha.

At the Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine, appropriate ecological measures to preserve the natural environment were carried out. These measures included the control and preservation of forested areas, as large amounts of wood fuel resources were necessary for smelting and refining. Here in this silver mining town many historical buildings and ruins remain preserved in good condition, reflecting the lives of the people that worked and lived here in harmony with nature, creating a unique cultural landscape. These two points were regarded very highly by the World Heritage Committee and were important in this site's successful inscription.

To commemorate World Heritage inscription of this unique site, we have published this special book, which includes material from the Nomination Dossier and a detailed historical account detailing the site's Outstanding Universal Value as a place of world heritage. It is my wish that this book will be useful for the continuing maintenance and activities within the site. I believe that we should make every effort to protect the Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine, a unique area which we have inherited from our forbearers, and are responsible for gifting to the next generation. In order to correctly conserve and maintain these properties, it is essential to have the understanding and cooperation of many people.

Finally, we would like to extend our deepest thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agency for Cultural Affairs, and the many kind people of Ohda City who have generously given their assistance and support to promote the inscription of Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine.



Greetings from the Mayor

Sohichi Takegoshi
Ohda City

At the UNESCO 31st World Heritage Committee held in Christchurch, New Zealand, June 23 – July 2 2007, ‘Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape’ was inscribed onto the World Heritage List.

In 1996 Shimane Prefecture and Ohda City began a *sogo-chosa* (Comprehensive Investigation) to show the importance of this site. After successful efforts to place Iwami Ginzan onto the Tentative List in 2001, we held symposiums and international conferences to inform citizens of this site’s Outstanding Universal Value. In order to protect the special features of this historic site, the area was extended and Ōmori-Ginzan was selected as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings. A Mining Prohibition Area was designated, preservation activities were carried out, and the Iwami Ginzan Landscape Conservation Ordinance was legislated.

I often look back at the road we have traveled to achieve World Heritage status. Some 50 years ago, the Ōmori Town Cultural Properties Preservation Association was established and these people started preservation work and restoration activities, such as cleaning the property and placing explanation signs around the site. I believe this may have been the turning point in our journey towards promotion of Iwami Ginzan as a World Heritage Site. I would like to extend my deepest thanks to these local citizens for their committed involvement over many years.

As you may be aware, at the World Heritage Committee, our site was inscribed on the World Heritage List in spite of the ICOMOS recommendation of “deferral.” Together with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Agency of Cultural Affairs, we were able to highlight the importance of the site’s ecological mining system in the Supplementary Information document, helping us to successfully achieve our goal of inscription as a World Heritage Property. It is important to recognize that ‘Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape’ does have Outstanding Universal Value as a World Heritage Property and we must continue to strongly value this when carrying out preservation and maintenance activities.

The history of Iwami Ginzan dates back over 400 years. Our ancestors inherited this valuable silver mine and handed it down to each successive generation. It has now become a treasure for people all over the world. Here in Ohda City, we have great respect for the UNESCO way of thinking, “to build peace in the minds of men.” I hope that we can work together to achieve this and to conserve what we have here for future generations.

Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Agency for Cultural Affairs and the many other dedicated people who have supported and contributed to the inscription of Iwami Ginzan as a World Heritage Property.