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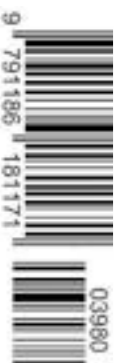
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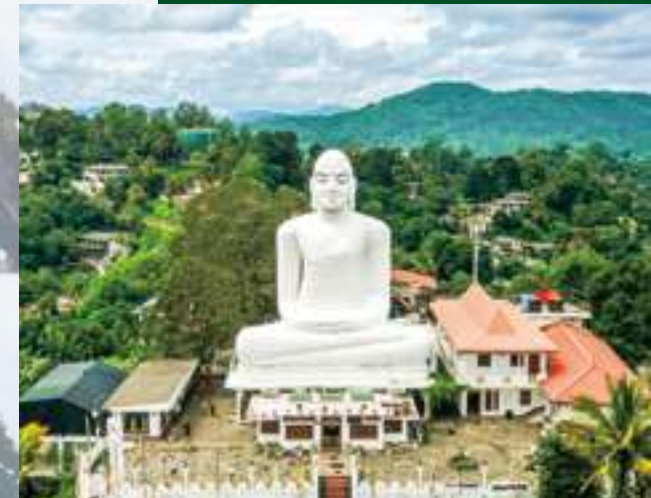
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Edge of Time Permeating Space

*Encountering symbolic spaces
that connect humanity and nature,
past and future*

The edge of time permeates space, telling us mysterious stories beyond our senses. World Heritage sites are spaces that embrace these edges—traces created as layers of human time accumulate and fade away. These traces don't merely preserve the past; they become places where time and space meet, prompting us to reconsider humanity's identity and values.

These precious heritages, formed by the harmony between human creativity and natural wonder, aren't just physical spaces but products of intertwined stories from various eras and civilizations. Thus, these spaces allow us to discover social, cultural, and spiritual values within the flow of time. In this way, World Heritage sites serve as bridges connecting the past and present, and as windows opening new perspectives toward the future.

World Heritage reminds us of the importance of sustainability. It represents both the fruits of humanity's efforts to live in harmony with nature and a symbol reminding us of our obligation to preserve it. This is why these heritages transcend specific regions or ethnic groups, becoming precious cultural assets that all humanity must share and preserve together. Through them, we respect and understand different cultures, enriching our appreciation of universal human values.

At the edge where time permeates space, we do not merely encounter heritage preserving traces of the past, but symbolic spaces that connect humanity and nature, past and future. This is where we gain inspiration to reflect on ancient wisdom in the present context and contemplate our direction toward the future.



George Town and Melaka, Malaysia

George Town and Melaka, inscribed in 2008

Developed at the crossroads where Eastern and Western civilizations meet, George Town and Melaka preserve traces of cultural fusion spanning several centuries. As central hubs along Southeast Asian trade routes, these two cities embody the heritage left by various civilizations, including Chinese, Indian, Arab, and European, throughout their spaces.

The street murals of George Town serve as a vibrant canvas where tradition meets modernity. The wooden houses of Clan Jetties reflect the lives of early immigrants, while the ornate decorations of Kek Lok Si Temple symbolize the harmony of multicultural religious beliefs. The narrow alleys, like fabric woven by time, connect past and present, where traditional shops coexist with modern cafés.

Melaka, a riverside city, was a historical center where Eastern and Western civilizations intersected. The red buildings of Dutch Square bear the legacy of European powers, while A Famosa fortress stands as a witness to colonial history. Cheng Hoon Teng Temple presents a unique aesthetic where Eastern and Western architectural styles merge, and the flowing waters of the Melaka River whisper the footsteps of merchants who have passed through for centuries.

The urban silhouettes of George Town and Melaka are masterpieces created by time. George Town's traditional houses and Melaka's riverside scenery each embody distinct cultural identities, while together, these two cities sing their histories like a musical score written by time. The sounds of merchants echoing through the alleys and the reflection of the sunset on the riverside are spaces where past and present meet to write new stories.

Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens, Pakistan

Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens, inscribed in 1981

Embracing the grandeur of the Mughal Empire, Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens are masterpieces harmonizing architecture and nature, showcasing the essence of 17th-century Indo-Islamic civilization. These spaces symbolize the monarchs' authority while captivating people with intricate art and craftsmanship.

Lahore Fort shines with Mughal emperors' majesty and artistic sensibility, featuring brilliant tiles and delicate carvings. Located at the heart of the fort, the Palace of Mirrors evokes a dreamlike world through the interplay of light and reflection. The gold-decorated ceilings and walls of the palace testify to the Mughal Empire's golden age, while the panoramic view of Lahore from the fortress walls offers timeless beauty.

Shalimar Gardens maximize the garden design aesthetics of the Mughal era. The three-tiered garden features waterways and fountains running along the center, embodying the Mughal Empire's ideal of harmony between humanity and nature. The symmetrical layout and sophisticated hydraulic system demonstrate the technological excellence of the time, while the garden's flowers and trees add vitality that changes with the seasons.

As the stone patterns of the fort blend with the waterways in the garden, this place whispers historical tales like a musical score of time. With each fountain droplet sparkling in the sunlight, the space becomes one where past glory and present peace harmonize to write new stories. Thus, Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens are living, historical cities where time dissolves into space, and past and present engage in endless dialogue.





Pashupatinath Temple, Nepal

Pashupatinath Temple, inscribed in 1979

Located in the heart of Nepal, Pashupatinath Temple is one of Hinduism's most sacred sites, a spiritual space where soul and nature commune. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, this temple transcends being merely a religious space to become the center of Nepalese culture and faith spanning centuries. Here, the sacred Bagmati River flows quietly, symbolizing a spiritual journey where God and human, life and death intersect.

The gold-plated roof and silver-adorned doors showcase the essence of Hindu architecture, while the linga at the temple's center symbolizes Lord Shiva's infinite power. Intricate carvings on the temple's pillars and walls embody mythological epics in themselves. Around the temple, ancient stone shrines are scattered, each holding unique myths, awaiting visitors.

The ghats located along the Bagmati River are spaces where the edge between life and death is dissolved. Here, cremated bodies are released into the river, and with each moment, the resonance of silent rituals permeates the atmosphere.

The forests and fields surrounding Pashupatinath's temple complex are sacred spaces filled with nature's breath and beyond spaces of faith, they are "eternal resting places" where Nepal's history and spiritual identity breathe. Every moment where humans meet the divine and life transitions to death is recorded here. Thus, Pashupatinath Temple is not simply a collection of stones and carvings, but a living mythological foundation embracing stories of life, death, and beyond.



Historic Centre of Bukhara, Uzbekistan

Historic Centre of Bukhara, inscribed in 1993

For over 2,000 years, Bukhara, a major hub on the Silk Road, has stood as a crystallization of time shaped by the intersection of Eastern and Western civilizations. The elegant spire of the Kalyan Minaret has served as a lighthouse for merchants since the 12th century, and still stands proudly toward the desert sky, bearing witness to the glory of the Silk Road.

The serene pond of Lab-i Hauz Square has been an oasis quenching travelers' thirst for centuries, while the surrounding madrasas preserve the golden age of Islamic scholarship. The thick walls of the Ark Fortress, having witnessed the rise and fall of numerous dynasties, stand as testimonies of time, with history permeating them, still breathing today.

Under the hemispherical domes of Taki-Zargaron Market, the vibrant sounds of merchants' bargaining continue to echo after more than a thousand years, and the narrow alleys of Chorsu Bazaar are filled with the fragrance of spices and silk. The intricate brick decorations of the Ismail Samani Mausoleum convey the architectural techniques of the Samanid dynasty, while the Maghoki-Attar Mosque, transformed from a Buddhist temple to an Islamic mosque, demonstrates the coexistence and evolution of religions.

Thus, Bukhara is a city of time where the Silk Road's brilliant past and present coexist. In this place, where the footsteps of ancient merchants and the wisdom of Islamic civilization blend, every building becomes a witness to history, and every street becomes a story told by time.





Taj Mahal, India

Taj Mahal, inscribed in 1983

Revealing its dazzling figure in the dawn of Agra, India, the Taj Mahal is a symbol of love and eternity, an immortal masterpiece where human emotion is engraved upon pure white marble. This mausoleum, built by Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan to honor his beloved wife, Mumtaz Mahal, transcends being a mere tomb to become a monument where love is embodied as light.

The moment one passes through the marble entrance beyond the vast garden, people's gazes are drawn by an irresistible force toward the central dome of the Taj Mahal. The dome's perfect symmetry and intricate design showcase the pinnacle of Mughal architecture. Islamic patterns and Quranic verses engraved on the outer walls of the Taj Mahal have been sublimated into a form of prayer wishing eternal peace.

The gardens and waterways situated along the Yamuna River are natural elements that complete the perfection of this monument. In this place where Mughal garden design aesthetics are maximized, water is not merely flowing river water. It signifies the cycle of life and love, and the reflection of the Taj Mahal in the central waterway creates an illusion of the edge between earth and heaven dissolving.

At night, the Taj Mahal transforms into another world. When the marble surface gleams silver under the full moon, this place becomes not just a historic site but a sanctuary of eternal love. The Taj Mahal is a timeless poem of love, and even hundreds of years later, the final chapter of that poem continues to be written.

Standing on the Edge of Solidarity and Isolation

Cultural heritage does not simply record the past but serves as a bridge connecting the present and future. This bridge shows us how we can live together and exist independently.

Kyoto, Japan's ancient capital, is filled with UNESCO World Heritage temples, gardens, and traditional wooden architecture. Kyoto, as a symbol of cultural solidarity, is where people have shared Buddhist and Shinto philosophies, tea culture, and art for centuries. While modernization progresses throughout Kyoto, traditional streets and landscapes remain preserved. In this process, Kyoto demonstrates how isolation and solidarity can achieve harmony.

The historic district of Prague is another fascinating example. Located in the heart of Europe, Prague is renowned for its Gothic and Baroque architectural masterpieces. Prague maintained its originality by choosing isolation amid war and political turmoil. Simultaneously, it formed solidarity with other European countries through music, literature, and art. Prague's bridges are not merely physical means of connection but symbols of cultural interaction. Prague shows how to balance solidarity and isolation while creating and preserving history.

Venice, built on water, served as a hub connecting European and Eastern trade for centuries. While developing unique architectural styles and ways of life created in isolation, Venice prospered through constant exchange with the world. Walking through Venice's narrow alleys and canals, one can feel how this city embraces both solidarity and isolation simultaneously. However, climate change and tourism pressures remind us how sensitive we must be at the edge between the past and present.

Intangible heritage also holds an important place in this discussion. Flamenco, originating from the Andalusia region of southern Spain, has been passed down through collective solidarity. At the same time, flamenco demands unique expression and interpretation from individual performers. These two elements demonstrate how flamenco balances solidarity and isolation. Flamenco breathes where regional identity meets global interest.

Philosophically, the edge between solidarity and isolation reveals the essence of human existence. Jean-Paul Sartre once said that humans are essentially beings who exist "in others, yet separate from others." Solidarity connects us with others, while isolation allows us to exist as independent subjects. Cultural heritage expresses this materially and symbolically. Cultural heritage develops originality in isolation and expands its value through solidarity.

UNESCO World Heritage cities teach us to understand the delicate balance between solidarity and isolation and how to design our present and future through it. Cultural heritage is a collective creation by humanity, while also being a story uniquely preserved by each individual and community, providing us clues to understand the world and ourselves more deeply.

Our mission is to respect this edge and ensure the next generation can continue writing this story. Cultural heritage is not simply a remnant of the past but a compass telling us who we are and where we should go. It is our duty to receive its message with an open mind and preserve this heritage responsibly.

The Edge

World Heritage is not simply historical buildings or natural landscapes, but spaces where the flow of time and human traces blend to create new stories. Kandy in Sri Lanka, Luang Prabang in Laos, Kyoto and Himeji in Japan, the Angkor in Cambodia, and the Potala Palace and historic ensemble of Lhasa in Tibet are special examples that offer new perspectives on the meaning of edges.

Kandy in Sri Lanka and Luang Prabang in Laos are places where spiritual edges are embodied. The Temple of the Tooth (Sri Dalada Maligawa) in Kandy houses Buddha's tooth relic, serving as the heart of Buddhist faith. Here, religious characteristics are not simply confined within the temple walls but permeate the entire city, functioning as the cultural center of the local community. The temples of Luang Prabang are spaces where Buddhist traditions and daily life intertwine, showing how the edge between religion and secular life dissolve and faith connects intimately with human life.



Kinkaku-ji and Ginkaku-ji each demonstrate a harmonious blend of architectural beauty and natural landscape. Here, human touch does not create edges with the flow of nature, but rather shows how it can blend within it. Himeji Castle is a masterpiece created at the edge between defense and peace, functionality and beauty. The solidity of the castle walls contains traces of war, but the white exterior draped over them symbolizes serene peace. These edges show that Japan's heritage is not simply the preservation of tradition but a creative attempt that transcends boundaries.



The Angkor in Cambodia symbolizes the edge where human ambition and nature's overwhelming power intersect. Angkor Wat is a space where two religious traditions—Hinduism and Buddhism—meet and is the product of human creativity colliding with nature. However, the sight of this massive temple complex gradually being swallowed by nature shows the subtle edge between human effort and nature's magnitude. The Angkor is one of the most dramatic examples of how human heritage transforms within nature's time.



The Potala Palace and the historic ensemble of Lhasa in Tibet are spaces where the edges between sacredness and secular life coexist. The Potala Palace functions as the spiritual center of Tibetan Buddhism within its majestic exterior while simultaneously serving as a symbol of political power. Here, disparate elements of devotion and power blend, revealing diverse aspects of humanity. The historic ensemble of Lhasa shows how everyday life and religious practice continue without boundaries. These spaces possess richer meaning precisely because their boundaries are not distinct.



World Heritage is a space that explores the meaning of edges and shows how human creativity and natural providence intersect within edges to create new value. Each heritage site contains complex relationships between time and space, sacredness and secularity, and humanity and nature. Through this, we learn that the concept of edges does not mean separation but rather the rich harmony created when different elements meet.



Kandy, Sri Lanka and Luang Prabang, Laos

The Sacred City of Kandy in Sri Lanka and Luang Prabang in Laos were inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1988 and 1995, respectively. These two cities preserve Buddhist traditions and local community identities intact, demonstrating their value as World Heritage Sites through their unique historical, architectural, and religious characteristics.

Kandy is located in the central highlands of Sri Lanka and served as the capital of the Kingdom of Kandy, Sri Lanka's last independent kingdom, from the late 14th century until the early 19th century. This city has played an important role in Sri Lanka's history and culture and is known as a center of Buddhist faith. Kandy is built around the Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic, which houses Buddha's tooth relic. The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic serves as the heart of Sri Lankan Buddhism, with thousands of devotees and tourists visiting annually to practice their faith and appreciate its historical heritage.

The Temple is believed to have been built in the early 17th century and showcases traditional Sri Lankan architectural styles. Famous for its complex and intricate decorations, it displays numerous monuments and artifacts of high artistic value. Various sculptures and paintings express Buddhist doctrines, particularly the golden Buddha statue and diverse religious artifacts inside the temple.

The Esala Perahera festival, held annually in July or August, is a large-scale religious event that starts from the Temple and parades throughout the city, vividly conveying Buddhist faith traditions. Hundreds of elephants join with traditional dances and music. The elaborately decorated elephants in the procession symbolically represent Kandy's cultural identity. Because of this, they play an important role in reviving ancient Buddhist traditions in modern times.

Kandy also boasts a unique environment where nature and the city harmonize around the beautiful Kandy Lake. Located in the city center, it forms a beautiful landscape with the surrounding hills. The lake's gentle waves add tranquility to the entire city, allowing visitors to enjoy walks or rest while appreciating the beauty of nature. Additionally, the plants around the lake form diverse ecosystems, contributing to local biodiversity.

Luang Prabang is a historic city located in northern Laos, situated at the junction of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers. It served as the capital of the Lane Xang Kingdom from the 14th to the 19th century and as a Buddhist center with over 30 temples distributed throughout the city, boasting unique architectural styles and artistic heritage.

Wat Xieng Thong, one of Luang Prabang's representative temples, is renowned for its beauty and historical significance. Built in 1560, it is well-known for its elaborate mosaic decorations and ornate wooden structures, particularly as an excellent example of Buddhist art, characterized by the blend of traditional Laotian architectural styles and various decorative elements.

In Luang Prabang, a traditional alms-giving ceremony takes place at dawn every day, with monks processing through the city to receive offerings. The alms-giving ceremony features monks receiving alms (food donations given for offerings) from city residents, which is one of Buddhism's important traditions. This serves as a crucial element forming Luang Prabang's cultural identity, with many tourists venturing out early in the morning to experience this special ceremony.



Additionally, Luang Prabang houses the Royal Palace Museum, which was once the residence of royalty. The Royal Palace Museum was established in 1904 and exemplifies traditional Laotian architectural styles. Inside the museum, various artifacts and artworks from ancient Laotian kingdoms to modern times are displayed. Here, visitors can appreciate royal clothing, ornaments, and historical documents, which greatly helps in understanding Laos's rich cultural heritage. The city is also famous for its beautiful natural scenery and unique cultural experiences, with green mountains and rivers surrounding the city, along with various traditional markets, cafés, and restaurants offering opportunities to experience local food and culture.

Kandy and Luang Prabang are evaluated as heritage that transcends the edges of time and space. The Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic in Kandy and the temples of Luang Prabang are not merely religious buildings but living spaces reflecting the lives and faith of local residents. Both cities provide unique environments where past and present coexist, showing how historical heritage is deeply connected to the cultural identity of local communities. Furthermore, these two cities are examples that well-demonstrate how urban environments and religious architecture harmonize through the interaction of nature and humanity, and they are representative World Heritage sites expressing Buddhist faith and local community culture in their unique historical contexts.

Kyoto and Himeji, Japan

Kyoto and Himeji in Japan were inscribed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 1994 and 1993, respectively.

Kyoto is known as Japan's millennial capital and served as Japan's political and cultural center from the Heian period (794-1185) until the Meiji Restoration (1868). The city still preserves numerous historical temples and shrines, showcasing the essence of traditional Japanese culture. Kyoto includes 17 UNESCO World Heritage properties, among which Rokuon-ji (Kinkaku-ji) and Jishō-ji (Ginkaku-ji) are the most representative.

Rokuon-ji (Kinkaku-ji) is a Zen Buddhist temple built during the Muromachi period (1336-1573), featuring a three-story building covered in gold that harmonizes with the lake and garden. With nature and architecture perfectly blended, it can be considered a masterpiece of traditional Japanese gardens. In contrast, Jishō-ji (Ginkaku-ji) is a temple that pursues humble and simple aesthetics, reflecting the Japanese philosophy of wabi-sabi. The garden of Ginkaku-ji emphasizes the providence of nature, and the surrounding landscape of the temple shows a unique beauty that changes with the flow of time.

Kyoto also has iconic shrines such as Fushimi Inari Shrine. Dedicated to Inari, the deity of abundance and agriculture, it is famous for its long pathway lined with red torii (traditional shrine gates). The endless succession of torii reflects the harmony between Japanese faith and life that transcends the edges of sacredness and secularity. Additionally, Zen Buddhist temples like Ryoanji showcase karesansui (rock gardens), composed of stones and gravel, demonstrating the essence of Japanese Buddhist aesthetics. These temples and shrines are not just perceived as religious spaces but as places embodying traditional Japanese values and aesthetic philosophies.

Himeji City in Hyogo Prefecture is well-known for Himeji Castle, which showcases the essence of Japanese medieval castle architecture.





Also known by the nickname White Heron Castle, this castle is considered a masterpiece of Japanese castle architecture due to its white plastered walls and elegant structure

Himeji Castle was first built by the Akamatsu clan in the late 14th century and was completed in its current form during the Edo period. This castle holds meaning beyond a simple defensive facility and is closely connected to historical events in Japan. The maze-like structure inside the castle provides a safe space separated from external threats, well-demonstrating Japanese defensive thinking and concepts of isolation.

The exterior of the castle is artistic in itself. The white outer walls are plastered, and the curved beauty shown by the multi-layered roofs of the castle demonstrates the essence of traditional Japanese architecture, making it a building that reflects Japanese aesthetic sensibilities and cultural values.

Himeji Castle is also closely related to the Japanese faith and way of life. Shinto, Japan's traditional faith, emphasizes harmony with nature, which is well revealed in the architecture of Himeji Castle. The castle's design was created with consideration for the natural environment, incorporating elements that harmonize with the surrounding landscape. The castle's gardens and surrounding nature reflect Shinto values, reflecting the Japanese reverence for nature as sacred.

Himeji Castle has deep connections to historical events in Japan. In the mid-16th century, Toyotomi Hideyoshi used it as a military base to unify Japan, and it played an important role in various battles afterward. In this historical context, it functioned as a center for defense and politics.



Kyoto's temples reflect Japanese faith and reverence for nature, while Himeji Castle exists as a symbol of defense and safety within its historical context. The cultural heritage of these two regions provides a link between past and present, essential for understanding Japanese ways of life and philosophy.

Kyoto's temples and shrines show the harmony between nature and humanity, the fusion of sacredness and secularity, providing an aesthetic and philosophical foundation of Japanese culture. In contrast, Himeji Castle shows the essence of Japanese architecture that transcends the edges between defense and aesthetics, functionality and beauty. These two cities are valued as important spaces for exploring the harmony of past and present, faith and life through their respective heritage.

Angkor, Cambodia

The Angkor in Cambodia was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1992. As the capital of the Khmer Empire that existed from the 9th to the 15th century, it is both an archaeological site and an essential space for understanding the complex interactions between the past and present, nature and humanity, religion and politics.

The Angkor region began to develop as the capital of the Khmer Empire under the rule of Jayavarman II in 802. From this period, the Angkor functioned as a political, economic, and religious center, leading to the prosperity of the Khmer Empire. The empire's development was made possible thanks to excellent agricultural techniques and water management systems, which allowed population growth and economic revitalization. Against this background, the Angkor established itself as an important place forming the identity of the Khmer Empire. Angkor Wat was built as a Hindu temple by Suryavarman II in the early 12th century and was later converted to a Buddhist temple. As the

world's largest religious building, its architectural symmetry and intricate carvings demonstrate the aesthetic sense of the Khmer Empire. In particular, the walls of Angkor Wat are engraved with murals depicting Hindu epics such as the Ramayana and Mahabharata, providing important materials for understanding the beliefs and cultural values of the time.

Angkor Wat was designed with a structure that maintains symmetry in all four cardinal directions, with the central tower symbolizing the universe. This structure reflects the will of the empire's rulers to combine divinity and power. The moat surrounding the temple goes beyond defensive functions to signify harmony between nature and architecture. This element showcases the worldview of the Khmer Empire, offering a glimpse into how they perceived the relationship between humanity and nature.



Angkor Thom, built by Jayavarman VII in the late 12th century, was the last capital of the Khmer Empire, with the entire city surrounded by defensive walls. At the center of Angkor Thom stands the Bayon Temple, which well demonstrates the originality of Khmer architecture and Buddhist symbolism. The Bayon Temple is famous for its carvings of benevolent smiling faces on 54 massive towers, interpreted as representing either Avalokiteshvara or Jayavarman VII himself.

The Bayon Temple was used not only for religious ceremonies but also as a space symbolizing the political power and religious integration of the time. Jayavarman VII adopted Buddhism as the state religion, aiming to promote social integration and stability through it. The sculptures of the Bayon Temple depict various historical events of the Khmer Empire and play the role of visually expressing political power. In this respect, Angkor Thom is an important case showing how politics and religion were fused.

The Angkor site is a vast area where one can glimpse the Khmer Empire's outstanding urban planning and water management systems, with intricate reservoirs, canals, and embankments working in harmony. This infrastructure was an important element supporting the empire's agriculture-based economy. The West Baray, a representative reservoir in this area, played an important role in agricultural water supply and flood control. These water management techniques maximized the agricultural productivity of the Khmer Empire and played an essential role in commerce and transportation. These technical achievements demonstrate the scientific knowledge and social organizational power of the time, suggesting that the Khmer Empire developed into a civilization beyond simple military conquest.

Another notable place in the Angkor site is Ta Prohm Temple. It is a unique example of harmony between nature and human creations, with impressive giant tree roots embracing the temple structure. The architects of the Khmer Empire era designed temples considering the natural environment, and this approach provides important lessons for sustainable architecture and ecological design even today. Harmony with nature contributes to forming principles of life maintenance and sustainable development beyond merely aesthetic aspects.

In addition to its historical value, the Angkor has great cultural value. It provides essential materials for understanding the culture of the Khmer Empire and offers opportunities to glimpse the beliefs, arts, and social structures of people at that time. The temples of Angkor reflect the lifestyle and worldview of the time. For example, the murals of Angkor Wat depict the myths and historical events of the time, contributing to the formation of the Khmer Empire's identity and cultural heritage. The Angkor also functions as a space to explore identity and connectivity in modern society while commemorating the brilliant civilization of the past, and through the heritage of the Khmer Empire, Angkor continues to provide important lessons and inspiration to modern people.





Historic Ensemble of the Potala Palace, Lhasa, Tibet and China

The Potala Palace, a historical building located in Lhasa, Tibet, was inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994 as the center of Tibetan Buddhism and a historical symbol.

The Potala Palace was first built in the mid-7th century by Songtsen Gampo, the second king of the Tibetan Kingdom. Songtsen Gampo introduced Buddhism to Tibet and made it the central ideology of the state; the Potala Palace was initially a small and simple structure but underwent a major expansion to its current form in the mid-17th century by the 5th Dalai Lama. During this period, the Potala Palace established itself as a symbol of political power and a Buddhist sacred site.

The Potala Palace consists of two main parts. The White Palace served as a space for political functions, being the official residence of the Dalai Lama and the administrative center of the government. In contrast, the Red Palace served religious functions, storing Buddhist scriptures and sacred relics. These two parts symbolically represent the important role of Tibetan Buddhism and show how the Potala Palace developed through the fusion of politics and religion.

The Potala Palace is itself an outstanding architectural structure in itself. Located at an altitude of 3,700 meters, its construction required special technical approaches in both structural design and material selection. Built using stone and wood, the palace is based on traditional Tibetan architectural styles. Its exterior is filled with vibrant colors and decorations, embodying the symbolic meanings of Tibetan Buddhism.

Inside the Red Palace, there are numerous Buddha statues and murals. These visually express the history and doctrines of Tibetan Buddhism and demonstrate the artistic level of the time. The murals of the Potala Palace depict Buddhist scriptures and legends, conveying Tibet's faith and history to visitors.



Historically, the Potala Palace was the center of Tibetan Buddhism. The Dalai Lama used the Potala Palace as a residence, spreading Buddhist teachings and serving as Tibet's political leader. He made it a space of important religious significance to Tibetans, where Buddhist ceremonies and festivals are held.

The Potala Palace was also an academic center for studying and teaching the doctrines of Tibetan Buddhism. Many monks received education here, studying Buddhist scriptures and philosophy. This educational aspect shows that the Potala Palace was not just a political base but an important place that contributed to the development of Tibetan culture and faith.

Lhasa, where the Potala Palace is located, was the capital of Tibet. Lhasa has remained a sacred site of Buddhism, with many Buddhist temples and stupas, since the time of Songtsen Gampo, through various dynasties and political changes. Lhasa was also a center of trade and cultural exchange. As a meeting point of various ethnicities and cultures, Lhasa served as Tibet's political and economic center. This historical background gives significance to the Potala Palace as a symbolic place showing the fusion of politics and culture, not simply a Buddhist temple.

The Potala Palace and Lhasa contain the essence of Tibetan culture. The faith and lifestyle of Tibetans are deeply rooted in the lives of the local residents. Because of this, the Potala Palace serves as a symbol of pride for Tibetans and plays an important role in strengthening their history and identity.

As a historical site, the Potala Palace is a space that commemorates the brilliant civilization of the past while exploring identity and connectivity in modern society. As a symbol of Tibetan Buddhism, it is an essential element for understanding the complex interactions between past and present, nature and humanity. Therefore, the Potala Palace is not just a building but a complex symbol encompassing Tibet's history, politics, and religious beliefs. This place is essential for understanding the life and faith of Tibetans and their historical experiences. It symbolizes the cultural values and identity of Tibet itself and plays a role in passing down the historical heritage of this region to future generations. The historic ensemble of Tibet and Lhasa is a meaningful place that commemorates the brilliant civilization of the past while exploring identity and connectivity in modern society.

Restoring World Heritage and Eco-friendliness



World Heritage sites are important assets reflecting our history, culture, and natural environment as humanity's shared heritage. An eco-friendly approach is essential in the process of protecting and restoring these heritage sites. As urbanization and development accelerate in modern society, finding a balance between world heritage preservation and eco-friendly development is becoming increasingly important.

The new urban project in Hue, Vietnam is a representative case where traditional urban structure and modern development harmonize. This project is proceeding in a direction that strengthens modern urban functions while protecting cultural heritage. Based on nature-friendly design principles, it maximizes green spaces and physical landscapes, creating parks and gardens to restore the city's ecosystem and provide spaces for residents to connect with nature. This approach contributes to securing both Hue's historical value and ecological sustainability simultaneously.

The Ile de Nantes regeneration project in France is a case that aims for transformation into a modern city while preserving industrial heritage. This area is actively introducing eco-friendly elements in the process of transforming past industrial facilities into centers of culture and art. The city of Nantes focused on reducing carbon emissions by utilizing renewable energy and strengthening public transportation systems. Additionally, through collaboration with local residents, they are seeking ways to build sustainable development models, preserve cultural heritage, and revitalize the local economy. These efforts reflect the will to achieve future-oriented development while maintaining the city's identity.

The riverside regeneration project in the Historic City of Melaka, Malaysia, is a good example of eco-friendly development considering both history and nature. Melaka's riverside regeneration project aims to restore the local ecosystem and improve water quality. By installing walkways and bicycle paths along the riverside, they provide spaces for local residents and tourists to enjoy nature while focusing on preserving the city's historical landscape. Furthermore, they are encouraging local residents' participation to raise awareness of sustainable development and are moving toward increasing the economic benefits for the local community.

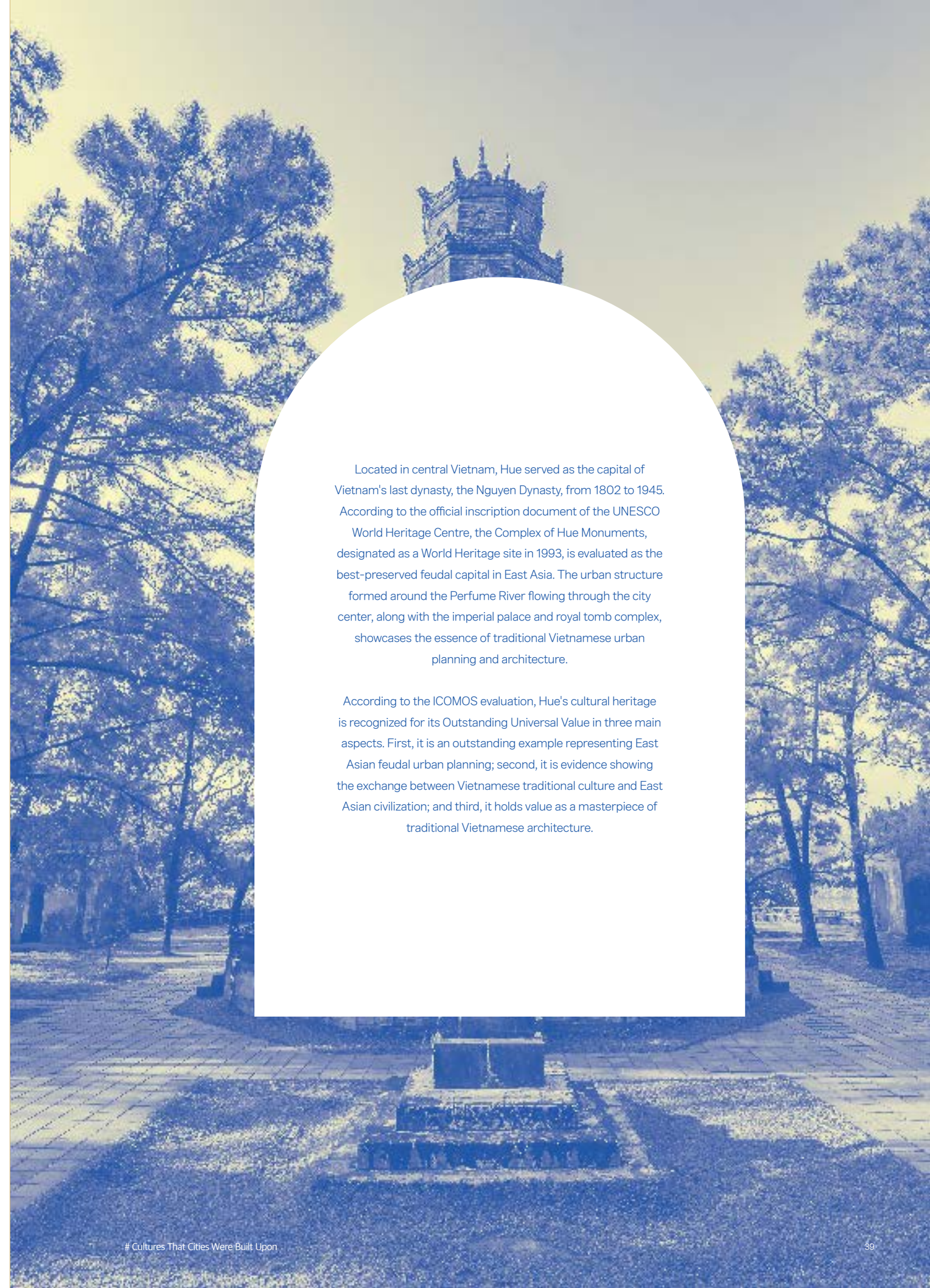
In conclusion, world heritage restoration and eco-friendly approaches are in a complementary relationship. The cases of Hue in Vietnam, Nantes in France, and Melaka in Malaysia demonstrate methods of preserving world heritage and achieving sustainable development within different cultural and historical backgrounds. These projects don't just stop at preserving the past but serve as guides for passing precious heritage to future generations.

The restoration of world heritage and eco-friendly development remain important challenges that must continue to develop in the future. We have no doubt that these collective efforts will contribute to creating a sustainable future for humanity.

Vietnam Hue City



New Urban Project of Hue City, Vietnam



Located in central Vietnam, Hue served as the capital of Vietnam's last dynasty, the Nguyen Dynasty, from 1802 to 1945. According to the official inscription document of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, the Complex of Hue Monuments, designated as a World Heritage site in 1993, is evaluated as the best-preserved feudal capital in East Asia. The urban structure formed around the Perfume River flowing through the city center, along with the imperial palace and royal tomb complex, showcases the essence of traditional Vietnamese urban planning and architecture.

According to the ICOMOS evaluation, Hue's cultural heritage is recognized for its Outstanding Universal Value in three main aspects. First, it is an outstanding example representing East Asian feudal urban planning; second, it is evidence showing the exchange between Vietnamese traditional culture and East Asian civilization; and third, it holds value as a masterpiece of traditional Vietnamese architecture.

Background and Purpose of Urban Development Project

According to official documents from the People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province, Hue faces dual challenges: preserving its value as a World Heritage site and strengthening its function as a modern city. In particular, cultural heritage damage due to climate change, urbanization pressure, and the burden coming from the increasing number of tourists are identified as major challenges. In response, Hue applied UNESCO's Historic Urban Landscape approach to establish a comprehensive urban development plan. This referenced the experiences of other World Heritage cities in Vietnam, particularly utilizing the preservation management cases of Hoi An and Hanoi's Old Quarter as key reference materials.

Successful Preservation Management Case of Hoi An

According to the Viet Nam National Authority of Tourism (VNAT) report, Hoi An has seen a significant increase in annual visitors through successful preservation management after its World Heritage inscription. In particular, the preservation and utilization of traditional houses, the creation of pedestrian-centered urban spaces, and resident-participatory cultural heritage management are cases that Hue is actively benchmarking. Hoi An's "Ancient Town Preservation Management Ordinance" has served as an important reference for establishing Hue's cultural heritage preservation policies.

Urban Regeneration Case of Hanoi's Old Quarter

Hanoi's Old Quarter is regarded as a successful case of introducing modern functions while preserving traditional urban fabric. According to materials from the Vietnam Urban Planning Association, Hanoi's "36 Streets District" preservation project is recognized as a model that successfully harmonizes the maintenance of traditional commercial functions with its utilization as a modern tourism resource. Based on Hanoi's experience, Hue established plans for preserving and utilizing the traditional commercial district around the Perfume River.



Hue City's Major Implementation Project: Imperial City Complex Heritage Preservation

Hue's citadel preservation program has been implemented since 2015 to systematically preserve the citadel, the core area of the UNESCO World Heritage site. This program includes fortress wall repair, moat maintenance, and traditional building restoration, with the Purple Forbidden City restoration project forming its core. The fortress wall repair work combined traditional architectural techniques with modern technology, carried out through collaboration between the Vietnam Cultural Heritage Preservation Center and international experts. The biggest challenges in this process were securing traditional building materials and skilled personnel, which are being resolved through traditional architectural technology education programs.

Perfume River Comprehensive Development Plan

The Perfume River (Huong Giang) is Hue's historical and cultural center, maintaining a close relationship with the city. However, rapid urbanization and industrialization over recent decades have degraded the environment around the Perfume River area, negatively impacting Hue's heritage and ecological values. The Perfume River waterside restoration project was initiated to address this.

The Perfume River waterside regeneration project is Hue's representative urban regeneration project, which has been ongoing since 2018 with the support of the Asian Development Bank. This plan includes water quality improvement, traditional floating house preservation, and waterside cultural space creation. In particular, referencing Hoi An's Thu Bon River development case, they are seeking ways to preserve traditional waterside landscapes while finding modern utilization methods. Targeting a waterside zone spanning 15km in total length, main contents include water quality improvement, traditional floating house preservation, and cultural space creation.

A particularly notable achievement is the modernization project of traditional floating markets, successfully improving sanitation facilities while preserving traditional landscapes. In this process, balancing improved living conditions for floating house residents with tourism commercialization was an important challenge, being addressed through resident council operations.

Smart Heritage City Development Project

Hue's traditional house preservation and utilization project began in 2019. This project targets about 100 traditional houses built in the 19th century within the historic district, seeking modern utilization methods while ensuring the physical preservation of the buildings. The Heritage House program is considered particularly successful, maintaining the architectural authenticity while utilizing traditional houses as boutique hotels or cultural spaces. In this process, achieving harmony between introducing modern facilities and preserving traditional values was a crucial challenge.

As part of the Vietnamese government's smart city pilot project, Hue is introducing advanced technology in cultural heritage management. The main components include building digital archives, cultural heritage interpretation systems using AR/VR technology, and IoT-based monitoring systems. This references Hanoi's smart city development experience and presents a new management model for cultural heritage cities.



Environmental Considerations and Sustainability

Hue is paying special attention to the vulnerability of cultural heritage due to climate change. Following ICOMOS recommendations, they are establishing climate change adaptation strategies, focusing particularly on preparing measures against floods and typhoons.



Sources

UNESCO World Heritage Centre - Complex of Hue Monuments: <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/678>
Vietnam National Administration of Tourism: <http://vietnamtourism.gov.vn/english/>
Asian Development Bank - Vietnam Projects: <https://www.adb.org/countries/viet-nam/main>

Community Participation and Capacity Building

The People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue province operates various programs to strengthen community participation. Representative examples include training cultural heritage interpreters, transmitting traditional craft skills, and implementing resident-participatory cultural heritage management. In particular, benchmarking Hoi An's resident participation program, they support voluntary cultural heritage protection activities by local residents.

Future Development Direction and Challenges

Hue's urban development project requires continuous supplementation and development moving forward. While maintaining the quality of preservation management through regular UNESCO and ICOMOS monitoring, they plan to strengthen experience sharing and cooperation with other World Heritage cities in Vietnam. In particular, referencing successful cases from Hoi An and Hanoi, they plan to develop Hue's unique cultural heritage management model.

Conclusion

Hue's urban development project is building its own development model while effectively utilizing the experiences of other World Heritage cities in Vietnam. Continuous effort and innovation will be necessary to achieve the harmonious accomplishment of both goals: preserving cultural heritage and modern utilization. Hue's experience is expected to serve as an important reference case for other historic cities in the future.



Nantes Historic Areas



Historic District of Nantes Ile de Nantes Regeneration Project

According to official documents from Nantes Métropole, Ile de Nantes was a major French shipbuilding center since the 19th century. However, with the closure of the last shipyard, Dubigeon, in 1987, the industrial foundation collapsed, leading to overall urban decline. According to records from SAMOA (Société d'Aménagement de la Métropole Ouest Atlantique), until the early 2000s, the unemployment rate in this area was twice the city average of Nantes, and the deterioration of the urban environment due to abandoned industrial facilities emerged as a serious problem. This industrial decline led to overall urban stagnation, which became the direct catalyst for a large-scale urban regeneration project.

Les Machines de l'île Project

Les Machines de l'île is SAMOA's representative cultural arts project. This facility, created on a former shipyard site, is a case of creative reinterpretation of industrial heritage. In the initial planning stage in 2004, François Delarozière and Pierre Orefice proposed artistically reinterpreting the shipyard's industrial heritage. They envisioned a unique cultural space combining the imagination of Jules Verne, a Nantes-born author, with the region's industrial tradition.

First, the project's symbol, a giant mechanical elephant, was completed in 2007. This 12-meter-high mechanical sculpture is the result of combining the former shipyard's manufacturing techniques with contemporary art. According to SAMOA's report, former shipyard technicians participated in the manufacturing process, which included the meaning of preserving and continuing the region's industrial technology.

Creative Factory Development Case

Nantes Métropole's urban planning documents show the specific development process of the Creative Factory. This project began in 2009 with the conversion of the former Alstom factory building into a creative industry support facility. During the building's renovation process, it was designed to maintain industrial heritage characteristics while equipped with modern office space functions. The main goal was to create new jobs following digital economy growth by converting unused spaces in the former industrial district into creative industry hubs.

Initially, 2,500m² of space was divided into smaller units and provided to creative companies. Rent was set at 70% of market value, and tenant companies could share facilities such as common meeting rooms and exhibition spaces. The tenant selection process is particularly noteworthy. According to Creative Factory's operational documents, the selection committee comprehensively evaluated the companies' creativity, connection with the local community, and sustainability. The Creative Factory program has achieved significant success in nurturing startups, showing stable results with a 75% five-year survival rate after establishment. Additionally, many jobs were created in the service sector, including in hotels and restaurants, due to tourism industry growth.



Alstom Halls Conversion Project

The French Ministry of Culture's evaluation report evaluates the transformation of Alstom Halls as a successful example of industrial heritage repurposing. Originally built in the 1850s, this industrial facility has been gradually repurposed into cultural arts spaces since 2019. While preserving the building's distinctive steel structure and high ceilings, the interior was redesigned as a space for modern cultural arts.

Looking at specific implementation details, structural reinforcement work was carried out first to ensure the building's structural safety. During this process, French cultural heritage preservation experts were consulted to maintain the original architectural characteristics as much as possible. Interior spaces were configured as multipurpose cultural spaces, including exhibition halls, performance venues, and workshops, with particular attention to maximizing natural lighting.

École des Beaux-Arts Relocation Project

The relocation project of Nantes Art School is a notable case linking educational institutions with urban regeneration. According to SAMOA's project documents, this project, which began in 2017, aimed to convert a former food warehouse building into a modern art education facility.

While maintaining the building's exterior characteristics as industrial heritage, the interior was renovated to meet modern educational facility requirements. In particular, it was designed to organically connect students' workspaces with exhibition areas and included a public gallery space accessible to local residents.

Sustainable Residential Space Development

SAMOA's urban planning documents detail specific approaches to sustainable residential complex development. The development of the Prairie-au-Duc district is a representative case. This project began in 2015, setting environmental sustainability and social integration as core objectives.

First, passive house design standards were applied to improve building energy efficiency. Solar power generation systems were introduced and rainwater recycling systems were established. The diversification of residential types is particularly noteworthy. Following Nantes Métropole's plan, various housing options including social housing, general sale housing, and cooperative housing were provided to promote social mixing. As of 2023, 4,500 housing units have been completed, achieving results such as 50% energy consumption reduction and over 85% resident satisfaction.

Public Space Network Construction

Public space creation projects form an important axis of the project. According to SAMOA's documents, this project consists of three main elements. First is the regeneration of Loire riverside spaces. The goal was to return riverside spaces, previously disconnected due to industrial facilities, to citizens. Second is the construction of a green network. Small parks and gardens were created throughout the city and connected by walkways. Third is the creation of cultural arts spaces. Artistic elements were introduced into urban spaces through public art projects.

Through this, a 5km riverside walkway and a total 15km bicycle road network were constructed, and green spaces were expanded to a total area of 15 hectares. As a result of implementing public art projects and operating citizen participation space utilization programs, achievements include a 200% increase in pedestrian traffic, a 150% increase in bicycle usage, and a 30% expansion of green areas.



Economic Revitalization Strategy

Economic innovation centered on the Creative Arts District is also notable. A creative industry cluster has formed as digital media, architecture, and design companies have concentrated in the area. The Creative Factory's operational report shows specific strategies for local economic revitalization. For startup support programs, comprehensive support is provided to tenant companies, including management consulting, networking opportunities, and marketing support, in addition to office space. Particular emphasis was placed on creating an environment where digital media, design, and architecture companies could collaborate.

Future Development Plans

Nantes Métropole has established development plans until 2030. These plans include specific goals and implementation strategies for responding to climate change. Major tasks include building energy efficiency, expanding the use of renewable energy, and establishing a circular economy system. Smart city strategies have also been established to respond to digital transformation.

Transportation Infrastructure Improvement

Nantes Métropole's transportation planning documents show specific strategies for improving accessibility to Ile de Nantes. First, five bridges connect the island with surrounding areas, three of which are exclusively for pedestrians and bicycles. Public transportation systems have also been strengthened, with tram and bus routes circulating throughout the island. The construction of the bicycle road network is particularly notable. Dedicated bicycle lanes were installed along arterial roads, creating a bicycle road network connecting major destinations. As of 2023, the bicycle road network extends to 15km, and electric buses and trams circulate throughout the island. In particular, the Bicloo public bicycle system has achieved great success, with daily average users exceeding 5,000. Additionally, pedestrian-only zones were expanded and vehicle traffic was restricted to create a pedestrian-friendly urban environment.

Conclusion

The Ile de Nantes regeneration project is successfully achieving its goals of creatively utilization of industrial heritage, urban revitalization through culture and arts, and sustainable development. In particular, the gradual and flexible planning, participation of various stakeholders, and innovative governance system provide important implications for other urban regeneration projects. This project is expected to continue receiving attention as a model for sustainable urban regeneration.

Sources

SAMOA official website: <https://www.samoa-nantes.fr/fr/>
Nantes Métropole's Ile de Nantes project webpage: <https://www.nantes.fr/ile-de-nantes>
Les Machines de l'île official website: <https://www.lesmachines-nantes.fr/>



Melaka Historic Areas



Riverside Regeneration Project of Melaka Historical District, Malaysia

The city of Melaka, capital of Melaka State in Malaysia, is a historic port city located on the Strait of Malacca.

According to UNESCO World Heritage inscription documents, Melaka prospered as a center of East-West trade from the 15th century through Portuguese, Dutch, and British rule, and this multicultural heritage remains throughout the city. In particular, the Melaka River was a core axis of urban development, but during the industrialization process in the late 20th century, it suffered from water pollution and environmental degradation in the surrounding areas.

According to official documents from the Melaka State Government, interest in riverside regeneration increased following the 2008 UNESCO World Heritage inscription. Specifically, environmental improvement and cultural utilization of the Melaka River, which runs through the historic district, emerged as major tasks.

Think City's urban regeneration report noted the historical and cultural potential of the riverside area and raised the need for a comprehensive regeneration strategy utilizing this potential.



Main Content and Implementation Process of the Project

The Melaka Riverside regeneration project was carried out in three major phases. According to planning documents from the Melaka State Government, Phase 1 (2010-2014) focused on water quality improvement and infrastructure maintenance, Phase 2 (2014-2018) on cultural tourism infrastructure development, and Phase 3 (2018-2022) on community-centered revitalization.

Water Quality Improvement and Infrastructure Maintenance Project

According to the Melaka State Government's Environmental Protection Department data, the most important task in Phase 1 was improving river water quality. For this, a 9km-long sewerage system was maintained and water purification facilities were installed. Particularly in the historic district section, installing environmental infrastructure without damaging the traditional waterfront landscape was a crucial task. To achieve this, purification facilities were placed underground while the surface area was utilized as public space.

The riverside walkway creation project also achieved notable success. According to Think City's report, a 5 km-long Riverwalk was created, functioning as a tourism route connecting major cultural heritage sites in the historic district. In particular, the design reflecting traditional architectural styles and nighttime lighting facilities contributed to enhancing the landscape value of the riverside.

Cultural Tourism Infrastructure Development

The core of Phase 2 was expanding cultural tourism facilities. According to Tourism Melaka data, the following major facilities were developed from 2014 to 2018:

Melaka River Square

The area that was a historic trading port was recreated as a cultural plaza. The plaza design modernly reinterpreted Portuguese-era architectural elements and includes an outdoor performance venue and exhibition space. The conversion of existing warehouse buildings into cultural arts spaces is particularly noteworthy. According to Think City's evaluation, this space hosts over 50 cultural events annually, contributing to the revitalization of local culture and arts.

Heritage Interpretation Center

It is an exhibition hall converted from a Dutch colonial-era warehouse, introducing the history and culture of the Melaka River. While preserving the building's historical characteristics in its exterior, the interior was reconfigured as a modern exhibition facility. In particular, exhibition programs using augmented reality (AR) technology provide visitors with vivid historical experiences.

Riverfront Cafes and Restaurants

This is a project converting traditional commercial buildings into restaurants and cafes. In this process, introducing modern amenities while preserving the buildings' historical characteristics was an important task. Following the guidelines of the Melaka State Government, the approach maintained traditional elements in the exterior while securing modern functionality through interior remodeling.



Community-Centered Revitalization

Phase 3 focuses on locals community engagement and economic revitalization. According to Think City program's documents, several key initiatives are underway:

Community Heritage Program

Local residents participate as cultural heritage guides. After receiving professional training, they lead guided walking tours along the river. This initiative enhances understanding of local history and culture while creating economic opportunities for residents.

River Culture Festival

A riverside cultural festival held every year brings together the region's diverse traditions. Featuring performances and food festivals from Malay, Chinese, Indian, and other communities, the event strengthens the city's multicultural identity.

Traditional Trade Revival

A support program for traditional artisans and merchants. Historic riverside buildings have been transformed into workshops and retail spaces, where visitors can watch artisans at work and even experience traditional crafting firsthand.



Environmental Sustainability

The Asian Development Bank's project evaluation report gives a positive assessment of the environmental impact of the Melaka River regeneration. Water quality has improved significantly through purification efforts, leading to an increase in biodiversity. One of the most notable achievements is the introduction of advanced environmental management systems:

Smart Water Management

A water quality monitoring system using IoT technology has been implemented. Real-time data collection and analysis now allow for swift responses to any changes.

Green Infrastructure

Green spaces along the riverbank not only serve ecological functions but also help mitigate the urban heat island effect. Landscaping with native plant species has further improved the region's ecological characteristics.

Economic Impact

The Melaka State Government's economic development report highlights the economic benefits of the riverfront regeneration:

Improving Tourism

Visitor numbers have risen with tourists staying for longer periods. The introduction of nighttime tourism programs has also led to an increase in overnight stays.

Job Creation

The development of cultural tourism facilities and related service industries has created new jobs. Notably, there has been a surge in entrepreneurship among young people.

Future Development Plans

The Melaka State Government has outlined a long-term development plan through 2025. The development plan includes:

Adopting Smart City Technology

Plans are in place to improve tourism services and urban management systems through digital innovation.

Responding to Climate Change

Strengthening infrastructure to counter rising sea levels and introducing eco-friendly energy systems are top priorities.

Expanding Cultural and Arts Programs

Efforts will be made to support local artists and expand international cultural exchange programs.

[References]

- UNESCO World Heritage Centre - Melaka and George Town Documentation (<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1223>)
- Melaka State Government Official Resources(<https://www.melaka.gov.my/>)
- Think City - Malaysian Urban Rejuvenation Organization (<https://thinkcity.com.my/>)
- Asian Development Bank - Malaysia Urban Development Projects (<https://www.adb.org/countries/malaysia/main>)

Conclusion

The Melaka River regeneration project is a well-balanced example of preserving historical and cultural heritage while integrating modern uses, ensuring environmental sustainability, and fostering community engagement. A phased approach, comprehensive planning, and the participation of diverse stakeholders played a key role in the project's success. These experiences are expected to offer valuable insights for waterfront regeneration in other historic cities.



Korea Council of World Heritage Cities



The Korea Council of World Heritage Cities is an alliance of cities in South Korea that are home to UNESCO World Heritage sites. Established to promote sustainable development through the preservation and utilization of heritage, the council was founded on November 29, 2010, and currently includes 31 member cities, counties, and districts. Its main focus is addressing shared challenges related to heritage sites and raising awareness of their value both domestically and internationally.

Several factors led to the establishment of the Korea Council of World Heritage Cities. First, UNESCO World Heritage sites, whether cultural or natural, are valuable assets for all of humanity and require systematic conservation and management. However, individual cities faced limitations in managing their heritage sites independently, making intercity cooperation essential. There was also a growing demand to connect World Heritage sites with regional development. These sites have great potential as tourism resources, and cities needed strategies to leverage them to revitalize local economies and improve the residents' quality of life. Furthermore, there was a lack of a legal framework for the preservation, management, and utilization of World Heritage sites, making policy cooperation essential. The establishment of the council was inevitable to strengthen the international status of World Heritage cities and build networks with similar cities abroad.



Objectives

- Strengthen friendly exchanges between cities that house World Heritage sites
- Conduct joint research and coordinate efforts on World Heritage-related affairs
- Promote the effective administration of World Heritage through discussions among member cities

Activities

- Discuss and propose improvements to cities that house World Heritage sites
- Facilitate communication among member cities to exchange opinions and jointly seek solutions to common issues
- Submit council decisions and recommendations to central government agencies

The Korea Council of World Heritage Cities continues to contribute to the preservation of World Heritage sites while ensuring their sustainable use.

Preservation and Management of World Heritage

The council develops and implements comprehensive plans for the systematic preservation and management of World Heritage sites. Each city assesses the condition of its heritage sites, supports restoration and maintenance when necessary, and collaborates with the National Heritage Administration to advance relevant policies. For example, measures such as protecting historic buildings within World Heritage zones and establishing buffer areas help prevent any damage to the value of these sites.

Promoting Heritage-Linked Tourism

One of the council's main goals is to use World Heritage sites as tourism resources to boost local economies. It develops interconnected tourism programs for member cities, creating a synergy that attracts more visitors. For instance, it has developed a heritage tourism route that connects Bulguksa Temple and Seokguram Grotto in Gyeongju, Hahoe Village in Andong, and Hwaseong Fortress



in Suwon. This initiative is drawing both domestic and international tourists. These efforts not only revitalize local economies but also raise awareness of World Heritage sites.

Education and Public Awareness

The council actively promotes the significance of World Heritage through various educational and awareness campaigns. It offers educational programs for citizens and students to highlight the importance of preserving these sites. Seminars, forums, and academic conferences are also organized to foster discussion and research. Additionally, it distributes promotional materials about World Heritage to the public and shares information through online platforms.

International Cooperation

The council is committed to strengthening international networks and partnerships, particularly with the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC). Through these efforts, it promotes exchanges with heritage cities worldwide and participates in international conferences to share best practices. Additionally, it continues working to enhance the global recognition of Korea's World Heritage sites.

Strengthening the Legal Framework

The council collaborated with the National Heritage Administration to hold public hearings and policy discussions in the National Assembly for the enactment of a special law on the preservation, management, and utilization of World Heritage sites. This special law serves as a foundation for cooperation among heritage cities and the sustainable management of heritage sites. During the legislative process, input from various cities was incorporated, clearly defining the roles of both the national and local governments. The law not only emphasizes the heritage preservation but also promotes balanced development by ensuring that its utilization benefits local communities. This approach supports local economic revitalization while safeguarding cultural values. As a result, policies related to World Heritage can now be implemented more efficiently and consistently.

Regular Meetings and Leadership Elections

Member cities hold regular meetings to discuss issues and determine the direction of the council's activities. In 2024, the 29th General Meeting was held at Tongdosa Temple in Yangsan, Gyeongsangnam-do. During the meeting, Gochang-gun was elected as the next chair city, while Andong was chosen as the vice-chair city. These meetings contribute to the continued growth of the council and help strengthen cooperation among member cities.

Participation in Heritage Korea

The council took part in Korea's only cultural heritage industry exhibition, the World National Heritage Industry Expo, by setting up a joint promotional booth. This initiative helped improve the status of member cities as World Heritage destinations and promoted the significance of heritage preservation. Through this event, the council also strengthened cooperation among heritage cities and contributed to the development of industries related to cultural heritage.



Overview

- Established: Nov. 29, 2010
- Legal Basis: Article 169 of the Local Autonomy Act (Organization of Administrative Consultative Council)
- Membership Eligibility: Local governments in South Korea that house World Heritage sites
- Number of Members: 31 cities, counties, and districts (as of 2024)
- 15th Executive Committee: Chair: Gochang-gun
Vice-Chair: Andong-si
- Term of Office: Executive members serve a one-year term and may be reappointed once
- Meetings: Regular Meetings: Held twice a year, Special Meetings: Held as needed when agenda items arise

Term	Period:	Chair	Vice-Chair
1st	Nov 29, 2010 - Nov 28, 2011	Mayor of Suwon	Mayor of Jongno-gu
2nd	Nov 29, 2011 - Nov 28, 2012		
3rd	Nov 29, 2012 - Nov 28, 2013	Mayor of Jongno-gu	Mayor of Gyeongju
4th	Nov 29, 2013 - Nov 28, 2014		
5th	Nov 29, 2014 - Nov 28, 2015	Mayor of Gyeongju	Head of Hwasun-gun
6th	Nov 29, 2015 - Nov 28, 2016		
7th	Nov 29, 2016 - Nov 28, 2017	Head of Hwasun-gun	Mayor of Gongju
8th	Nov 29, 2017 - Nov 28, 2018		
9th	Nov 29, 2018 - Nov 28, 2019	Mayor of Gongju	Mayor of Iksan
10th	Nov 29, 2019 - Nov 28, 2020		
11th	Nov 29, 2020 - Nov 28, 2021	Mayor of Iksan	Head of Hapcheon-gun
12th	Nov 29, 2021 - Nov 28, 2022		
13th	Nov 29, 2022 - Nov 28, 2023	Head of Hapcheon-gun	Head of Gochang-gun
14th	Nov 29, 2023 - Nov 28, 2024		
15th	Nov 29, 2024 - Nov 28, 2025	Head of Gochang-gun	Mayor of Andong

Term	City	Representative	World Heritage Sites
1	Gochang-gun, Jeonbuk State	Shim Deok-seob	Gochang, Ganghwa, and Hwasun Dolmen Sites (2000), Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats (2021)
2	Andong-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do	Kwon Ki-chang	Historic Villages of Korea: Hahoe and Yangdong (2010), Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018), Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
3	Gyeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do	Joo Nak-young	Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple (1995), Gyeongju Historic Areas (2000), Historic Villages of Korea: Hahoe and Yangdong (2010), Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
4	Hapcheon-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do	Kim Yoon-chul	Haeinsa Janggyeong Panjeon (1995), Gaya Tumuli (2023)
5	Jongno-gu, Seoul	Jung Moon-heon	Jongmyo Shrine (1995), Changdeokgung Palace Complex (1997)
6	Suwon-si, Gyeonggi-do	Lee Jae-joon	Hwaseong Fortress (1997)
7	Hwasun-gun, Jeollanam-do	Koo Bok-kyu	Gochang, Ganghwa, and Hwasun Dolmen Sites (2000)
8	Ganghwa-gun, Incheon	Park Yong-cheol	Gochang, Ganghwa, and Hwasun Dolmen Sites (2000)
9	Gwangju-si, Gyeonggi-do	Bang Se-hwan	Namhansanseong (2014)
10	Gongju-si, Chungcheongnam-do	Choi Won-cheol	Baekje Historic Areas (2015), Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018)
11	Buyeo-gun, Chungcheongnam-do	Park Jung-hyun	Baekje Historic Areas (2015)
12	Iksan-si, Jeonbuk State	Jung Heon-yul	Baekje Historic Areas (2015)
13	Yangsan-si, Gyeongsangnam-do	Na Dong-yeon	Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018)
14	Yeongju-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do	Park Nam-seo	Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018), Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
15	Boeun-gun, Chungcheongbuk-do	Choi Jae-hyung	Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018)
16	Suncheon-si, Jeollanam-do	No Gwan-kyu	Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018), Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats (2021)
17	Haenam-gun, Jeollanam-do	Myung Hyun-gwan	Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea (2018)
18	Hamyang-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do	Jin Byung-young	Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
19	Jangseong-gun, Jeollanam-do	Kim Han-jong	Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
20	Dalseong-gun, Daegu	Choi Jae-hoon	Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
21	Jeongeup-si, Jeonbuk State	Lee Hak-soo	Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
22	Nonsan-si, Chungcheongnam-do	Baek Sung-hyun	Seowon, Korean Neo-Confucian Academies (2019)
23	Seocheon-gun, Chungcheongnam-do	Kim Ki-woong	Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats (2021)
24	Shinan-gun, Jeollanam-do	Park Woo-ryang	Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats (2021)
25	Boseong-gun, Jeollanam-do	Kim Chul-woo	Getbol, Korean Tidal Flats (2021)
26	Gimhae-si, Gyeongsangnam-do	Hong Tae-yong	Gaya Tumuli (2023)
27	Haman-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do	Jo Geun-je	Gaya Tumuli (2023)
28	Goryeong-gun, Gyeongsangbuk-do	Lee Nam-chul	Gaya Tumuli (2023)
29	Goseong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do	Lee Sang-geun	Gaya Tumuli (2023)
30	Namwon-si, Jeonbuk State	Choi Kyung-sik	Gaya Tumuli (2023)
31	Changnyeong-gun, Gyeongsangnam-do	Sung Nak-in	Gaya Tumuli (2023)

International Council on Monuments and Sites

The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) is an advisory body to UNESCO, established in 1965 to implement the principles of the Venice Charter (1964) and to promote the conservation and sustainable use of cultural heritage worldwide.

The establishment of ICOMOS is closely tied to the global context following World War II. During the war, many of Europe's cultural heritage sites were destroyed, highlighting the need for international preservation principles in the post-war reconstruction era. In 1931, the Athens Charter was adopted as the first international guideline for heritage conservation. However, it had limitations due to its Europe-centered perspective.

A turning point came in the early 1960s with the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt, which brought global attention to the need for international cooperation in cultural heritage preservation. The dam's construction placed the Abu Simbel temples at risk of submersion. In response, UNESCO launched a massive international campaign to save them. Between 1964 and 1968, experts from around the world worked together in a large-scale preservation project to dismantle the temples and relocate them 60 meters higher. This event underscored the necessity and potential of international collaboration in safeguarding cultural heritage.

In May 1964, the 2nd International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments was held in Venice, where the Venice Charter was adopted. This charter introduced a more comprehensive and modern approach to cultural heritage preservation. Building on this foundation, ICOMOS was officially established during a conference held in Warsaw, Poland, from June 21 to 22, 1965, with its headquarters set in Paris, France.

ICOMOS's international role gained momentum with the adoption of the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage at the 17th UNESCO General Conference on November 16, 1972. This marked the beginning of its global activities in heritage conservation. The World Heritage Convention was the first international treaty dedicated to protecting cultural and natural heritage of universal value. To take effect, it required ratification by 20 countries. After the first country ratified it on December 17, 1975, the 21st ratification on December 17, 1978, brought the convention into force, initiating the inscription of sites on the World Heritage List.

The first World Heritage List included 12 sites, such as the Galápagos



Islands in Ecuador and Aachen Cathedral in Germany. To ensure expertise and a systematic approach in evaluating nominations, UNESCO designated three advisory bodies. ICOMOS for cultural heritage, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for natural heritage, International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) for expertise in conservation and restoration, based in Rome. ICOMOS serves as an official advisory body for the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, primarily responsible for evaluating World Heritage nominations and monitoring endangered sites.

The governance structure of ICOMOS is centered around the President, who is elected by a vote of all members. The organization is divided into five regions, with one Vice President elected for each region. The decision-making body consists of a 15-member board, including the President, five Vice Presidents, and regional representatives.

ICOMOS operates through its international headquarters and national committees. The national committees form the core of ICOMOS and follow a structure similar to UNESCO's National Commissions. Each national committee consists of ICOMOS members from that country, including experts in cultural heritage preservation. When UNESCO requires advisory services or evaluations related to World Heritage, ICOMOS collaborates with the relevant national committees to dispatch experts or conduct assessments.



ICOMOS Korea (Korean National Committee of ICOMOS) was established on November 17, 1999, as the Korean National Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

South Korea joined the World Heritage Convention in 1988. Interest in the international preservation and management of cultural heritage grew after the Seokguram Grotto and Bulguksa Temple, the Tripitaka Koreana at Haeinsa Temple, and the Jongmyo Shrine were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1995. Recognizing the need for partnership with ICOMOS, the National Heritage Administration (formerly the Cultural Heritage Administration) and cultural heritage experts worked together to establish ICOMOS Korea in 1999. Initially, the organization started with around 40 members. As of November 30, 2024, it has grown to 228 members, including nine institutional members. This includes 198 regular members (six honorary members and two ex officio members), 30 associate members, and nine corporate and institutional members. ICOMOS Korea holds regular board meetings and the ICOMOS Forum on the fourth Thursday of odd-numbered months (January, March, May, July, September, and November). In even-numbered months, it conducts online ICOMOS special

lectures, where members share their expertise through volunteer-led knowledge-sharing sessions. The ICOMOS Forum and special lectures are key activities contributing to ongoing academic exchange and professional development among members. ICOMOS Korea is mainly involved in four key areas. First, ICOMOS Korea provides expert consultation for South Korea's World Heritage nominations and regularly assesses the conservation status of already inscribed sites. Second, academic activities related to heritage conservation include hosting regular conferences and seminars, contributing to international academic journals, and conducting research on conservation techniques and theories. Third, training and education programs are offered for heritage conservation professionals, along with support for international exchanges for young experts. Lastly, international cooperation efforts involve collaboration with ICOMOS headquarters and national committees to build a global network for cultural heritage preservation.

The organization is structured around a Chairperson, Vice Chairpersons, and a Secretary-General, with specialized subcommittees handling different fields. These subcommittees focus on architectural heritage, historic gardens and cultural landscapes, archaeological heritage, modern cultural heritage, and intangible cultural heritage. Decisions on major projects and initiatives are made through a General Assembly and Board of Directors, ensuring a democratic governance system.

Recently, ICOMOS Korea has been expanding its focus to address emerging challenges in heritage conservation. It is conducting research on the impact of climate change on cultural heritage, digitizing heritage sites, developing sustainable tourism strategies, and encouraging public participation in heritage preservation. As a key hub for heritage cooperation in Asia, ICOMOS Korea is also exploring ways to collaborate on the preservation of North Korean cultural heritage.



INTERVIEW

ICOMOS Korea Chairperson Choi Jae-heon

The structure of ICOMOS National Committees varies by country. South Korea and Japan operate as non-governmental organizations, while in China, the committee is incorporated within a state organization.

ICOMOS Korea currently has 228 members specializing in diverse fields such as tourism, anthropology, history, landscape architecture, traditional architecture, architectural theory, structural engineering, cultural heritage conservation, utilization, and education. With this interdisciplinary and multi-faceted approach, ICOMOS Korea stands as a unique organization capable of offering innovative solutions.

As Chairperson, my key focus is on nurturing the next generation of professionals. To achieve this, I am actively working to educate and promote young experts, known as "Young Professionals" or "Emerging Professionals," and support their entry into the global stage. Ultimately, this initiative strengthens South Korea's capabilities and expands its international influence.

Additionally, in 2025, the ICOMOS Asia-Pacific Regional Assembly will be hosted in South Korea, organized by ICOMOS Korea. Delegates from 39 countries will be invited to attend, and preparations are steadily underway to showcase South Korea's global standing.



Organization of World Heritage Cities Inside the World Congress

Four days out of 730! A special event brings together representatives from World Heritage cities across the globe. This is the World Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC). From September 24 to 27, 2024, the 17th OWHC World Congress was held in Córdoba, Spain, a city renowned for its legacy of peace and coexistence. In a world where religious, ethnic, and cultural conflicts persist, the gathering in Córdoba held special significance as a place where Catholicism, Islam, and Judaism once coexisted a thousand years ago. Representatives from 55 World Heritage cities across 30 countries, spanning Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas, came together to explore how heritage cities can foster harmony and coexistence.



The OWHC World Congress consists of two major components: the General Assembly, which covers administrative matters, and the Symposium, which provides an academic platform. This year's congress followed the same framework. Part one of the General Assembly included reports on OWHC's major activities and presentations by candidate cities for the next Board of Directors and the host city for the next congress. Part two covered a comprehensive review of the congress and the approval of key decisions. As a result, Marrakesh, Morocco, was selected as the host city for the 18th OWHC World Congress in 2026. Additionally, eight cities were elected as Board Member Cities, including Québec in Canada, Córdoba in Spain, Bruges in Belgium, Kraków in Poland, Angra do Heroísmo in Portugal, Cuenca in Ecuador, San Antonio in the United States, and Dubrovnik in Croatia. These cities will serve

for the next two years. Meanwhile, Icherisheher in Baku, Azerbaijan, received the Jean-Paul L'Allier Heritage Award for its project improving the livability of the walled city, commemorating the legacy of Jean-Paul L'Allier, former mayor of Québec and founder of the OWHC. The project was recognized for its excellence in preserving, improving, and managing historic cities. Other key decisions included the extension of Secretary General Michel de Tisné's term, adjustments to regional office funding, and the approval of the 2025 budget. There were also discussions on renaming Solidarity Day and restructuring youth programs to better align with future goals. The academic symposium was held over three days, with discussions taking place across four sessions.

In the first session, participants examined the necessity and progress of the Québec Roadmap Project, which aims to address the complex threats facing historic and World Heritage cities. The second session introduced four strategic pillars, which are about strengthening residential functions, improving urban livability, innovating mobility, and regenerating the urban environment. A particularly significant aspect of the urban environment discussion was its comprehensive scope, which included not only physical surroundings but also intangible assets, community identity, and social cohesion. This broader perspective allowed for a renewed discussion on the diversity, complexity, and interconnectedness of human societies. The four strategic pillars were not viewed as separate components but rather as mutually reinforcing elements that function organically together. The second session continued with four workshops, each focused on one of the strategic pillars. The author participated in Workshop Four, which explored historic and environmental regeneration in World Heritage cities, with a focus on integrating intangible heritage, adopting a holistic and inclusive approach to heritage interpretation, and developing strategies for its sustainable use. In Workshop Four, discussions were structured around five working tables, each covering different aspects of heritage-driven urban regeneration. Topics included intangible heritage as a resource for urban regeneration, raising awareness and disseminating information about heritage, regenerating historic city centers through conservation, interpretation, and engagement, and preserving traditional craftsmanship and artisanal knowledge. A notable case study featured Gyeongju, which hosts the Asia-Pacific Regional Secretariat and has implemented virtual media spaces and heritage exploration game applications to improve visitor engagement with its historic sites. Additionally, community-based initiatives such as local YouTube channels and children's participatory mapping programs were introduced. A key discussion point was whether these children's programs were integrated into school curriculums. The Beguinage project in Bruges also left a strong impression. This initiative focuses on revitalizing historic districts, strengthening local identity and community belonging, and providing a healing space for both residents and visitors. Discussions drew parallels between Bruges' Beguinage and South Korea's Buddhist mountain monasteries (Sansa). In Korea, Sansa serves as a source of local pride and offers healing and educational experiences through temple stays for visitors. Although physically distanced from urban centers, their impact on local communities suggests a role similar to that of the Beguinage in Bruges. These discussions opened possibilities for future collaboration between the two heritage sites.





In Session Three of the symposium, discussions from the 19 working tables across four workshops in Session Two were summarized. Experts were also invited to present on new urban projects, emphasizing that cultural heritage is not static but a dynamic part of people's lives. This idea resonated deeply with the participants. Following the presentations, attendees engaged in small-group discussions, either in one-on-one or one-on-two formats. Discussions focused on three main topics: challenges in developing implementation methods, strategies for establishing new urban projects, and long-term requirements for participatory approaches outlined in the Québec Roadmap. Participants shared thoughts based on their experiences and knowledge. Responses were submitted digitally via a QR code provided by the organizers, allowing participants to answer using their smartphones. An AI-generated word cloud was displayed on a large screen, offering a visual summary of key discussion points from the small-group sessions. Prominent keywords included sustainability, intangible, participation, heritage, diversity, resilience, citizens, urban, and projects. Additional terms related to academic symposium topics and cooperative networks were also highlighted.



On September 27, the final day of the symposium, a summary of key discussions from the previous two days was presented. Experts from UNESCO's World Heritage Centre, ICOMOS, and CIAPA, key organizations in global heritage preservation, also shared their insights. The discussions reaffirmed the importance of strengthening academic capacity and policy understanding through research, case studies, and expert engagement in World Heritage cities. Participants agreed that for these discussions to translate into real-world implementation, strong policy support and community backing are essential. Bruno Marchand, Mayor of Québec City and President of the Organization of World Heritage Cities, expressed gratitude to all symposium participants. He emphasized the need for continuous learning and cooperation among member cities to address evolving academic and policy issues related to World Heritage.



Banners showcasing 12 Québec Roadmap cooperation networks were set up throughout the event venue, drawing the attention of participants. Through these banners, attendees could clearly grasp the achievements and future prospects of webinars, workshops, and other cooperative network activities that had been conducted since the first half of the year.

Separate from this, touchscreen displays featured digital posters introducing the heritage and projects of 19 World Heritage cities, available in English, French, and Spanish. Participants had the opportunity to explore outstanding case studies from cities including Bordeaux and Strasbourg in France, Bruges in Belgium, Budapest in Hungary, Dubrovnik in Croatia, Etchmiadzin in Armenia, Granada in Spain, Gyeongju and Jongno in South Korea, Harar in Ethiopia, Luxembourg, Mexico City, Morelia, and Oaxaca in Mexico, Québec in Canada, Rhodes in Greece, San Antonio in the United States, Vienna in Austria, and Visby in Sweden.

Currently, the banners and digital posters are available for viewing on the OWHC headquarters website.



Beyond the General Assembly and Symposium, which were open to all congress attendees, a separate meeting was held for leaders of Board Member Cities serving the 2022-2024 term. At the same time, in a different location, the Northwest Europe and North America Regional Secretariat (the only regional office to host such an event) organized a specialist workshop. Facilitated by Professor Cornelius Holtorf of Linnaeus University in Sweden, the workshop included not only experts from the Northwest Europe and North America Secretariat but also 20 specialists from the Southern Europe Secretariat and the Central and Eastern Europe Secretariat, including the author. Cultural heritage is often viewed as something that must be preserved for the future and passed down to the next generation. However, discussions rarely explore why it will be important in the future and what role it will serve. During this workshop, participants explored how cultural heritage contributes to resilience in today's and future societies, referencing key frameworks such as the 1945 UNESCO Constitution, the 1972 World Heritage Convention, the 2015 Sustainable Development Agenda 2030, and the upcoming 2024 UN Summit of the Future. At the end of the discussion, participants closed their eyes and imagined what the world might look like in 2060. Everyone shared their visions of the future, occasionally exchanging smiles as they listened to one another's thoughts. The discussion then shifted to identifying megatrends that might shape the world in 2060 and predicting potential challenges arising from them. Participants split into two groups to explore these trends and debated how World Heritage could contribute to addressing these global issues. Surprisingly, both groups arrived at nearly identical conclusions regarding the megatrends, challenges, and the role of World Heritage in 2060. In the social sphere, key megatrends included political polarization, threats to democracy, technological revolutions, and cultural diversity. These trends were expected to lead to challenges such as declining trust in information, increasing skepticism toward AI, heightened exclusivity within communities, intensified social conflicts, the disappearance of certain professions, and a decline in human cognitive abilities. In the environmental sphere, concerns were raised about climate change, worsening urban heat island effects, the shrinking of habitable areas, and population imbalances. World Heritage is not about ranking cultures or establishing superiority. It is a shared global asset of outstanding universal value, belonging to all of humanity. Cities and nations that hold World Heritage sites share a common understanding of a mutual commitment to preserving and valuing heritage. Based on this shared perspective, workshop participants concluded that World Heritage, rooted in the spirit of mutual respect and cultural relativism, could serve as a crucial mechanism for fostering dialogue, cooperation, inclusivity, and integration between individuals, cultures, and societies. To ensure this positive function of heritage is fully realized, participants agreed on the importance of heritage conservation and education, driven by both experts and local communities. Although most attendees were from Europe and North America, there was a strong awareness of the unique challenges faced by other regions, including Asia's hierarchical decision-making structures and economic disparities. Participants expressed a willingness to collaborate and engage in meaningful discussions to achieve true inclusivity and cooperation for a better future.



The OWHC World Congress 2024 in Córdoba, Spain, was not solely focused on formal activities such as the General Assembly, symposiums, board meetings, expert workshops, poster sessions, banners, reports, decision-making, and awards. Beyond these discussions, participants also had the opportunity to immerse themselves in Córdoba's vibrant cultural scene. To reach the gala dinner venues and event locations and to explore the historic sites, everyone wandered through Córdoba's maze-like streets and crossed the Roman Bridge, moving fluidly between the past and present.

In Córdoba, tapas were not just food. At restaurants, servers carried trays of dishes, walking around to personally offer them to each guest, making eye contact as they shared the experience. "What is this?" "How does it taste?" "It looks beautiful!" Pleasant conversations were exchanged, accompanied by warm smiles and friendly responses. Reaching out, we picked up the food with our hands, sharing conversations with those beside us. The warmth of the food, the connection through eye contact, and the kind words. The experience was wrapped in music and lively conversations. In Córdoba, a meal was not simply about satisfying hunger or indulging in flavors. It was a celebration of being alive and a reminder that we are living together.





On an Andalusian night, a Flamenco performance unfolded at the open-air theater in front of the Roman Bridge. The event also marked the 40th anniversary of Córdoba's historic district being inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage site. This cultural event was open not only to World Congress participants but also to the public. Even without understanding the song lyrics due to language barriers, even without comprehending the spoken explanations, the melody, the dance, the expressions, and the voices of the performers conveyed everything. The joy and sorrow, despair and fear, passion and ecstasy were all felt through the performance itself. The audience was completely immersed. Not a single moment passed where eyes left the stage. Cheering at one scene, sighing in relief at another, the crowd reacted as if swept into the emotions unfolding before them. The powerful passion and emotion shared between performers and the audience at this World Heritage site colored the night of Córdoba in September 2024 with unforgettable beauty, leaving a lasting impression in our hearts. Perhaps the intricate artistic expression of emotion through song, dance, and melody in Flamenco is what moved people's hearts 14 years ago, leading to its inscription as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

And then there was the mystical presence of the Córdoba Mosque-Cathedral at night. The harmony of light and sound. The silent crowd, watching in awe. It was in that moment that the profound value of Córdoba's intangible heritage could be felt in every sense.

The outstanding universal value of Córdoba, a city that stands as historical evidence of reconciliation and diversity between people and cultures, was expressed not only in its tangible heritage but also in its

intangible assets such as music, dance, and food. Moreover, it was the people of Córdoba, those who live there today and those who visit from all over the world, who created an atmosphere that warmly welcomed and embraced the participants of the OWHC World Congress. Perhaps it was within this atmosphere that the OWHC was able to engage in deeper discussions about World Heritage, people, and cities, reflecting more thoroughly on the future.

Thoughts already turn to what awaits in Marrakesh, Morocco at the next World Congress in two years. What kind of experiences will unfold? What conversations will we have? What will we learn together? The anticipation grows with every passing moment. Carrying this sense of expectation, we look ahead to the next two years, hoping to continue studying, learning, and strengthening academic capacities and developing policy solutions for the future of World Heritage and cities, inspired by the discussions that took place in Córdoba.

>> Lee Ji-eun, OWHC-AP

2024 OWHC-AP World Heritage Cities Youth Forum

Our Heritage, Our Future

: Improving Accessibility for the Sustainable Development of World Heritage



Day 1

● Opening Ceremony

- Opening Address - Jae Heon Choi, Committee President of ICOMOS Korea
- Welcoming Address - Lee Sung-rak, Director of External Relations and Cooperation, Gyeongju

● Presentation 1

- Apatani Horizons: Exploring Tradition and Access in India's Heritage Panorama
- Aditya Udaykumar, School of Architecture, University of Mumbai

● Presentation 2

- A Pragmatic Approach to Safeguard Buddhist Heritage Sites in Pakistan: Preserving the Legacy of Ancient Gandhara
- Dhushantha Gihan Mallawaarachchi, M.A., Faculty of Buddhist Studies, Nagananda International Institute for Buddhist Studies

● Presentation 3

- Life Satisfaction in Local Communities after the UNESCO World Heritage Inscription-Causal Inference Study using DID method - Kwon Yoo-jung, Graduate School of International Studies, Korea University

● Presentation 4

- Digitalization and Sustainable Development of Beijing's Industrial Heritage Landscape - Xinyi Liu and Rongting Li, Beijing University of Civil Engineering and Architecture

Session Discussions

● Presentation 5

- Smart Cities Themed on Historical and Cultural Cities within the Korean-Asean Region: An Analysis Compare of Smart City project in Vietnam and Gyeongju
- Lee Ye-eun, Department of History and Content Studies, Sangmyung University

● Presentation 6

- Developing Hwarang Route Tourism Resources: A Comparative Study with Goethe Way in Germany and tourism site related with Goethe in Weimar, Germany
- Geum So-dam, Department of History, Ewha Womans University

● Presentation 7

- World Heritage Site Archaeology and Anthropology: Creating a Sustainable Ecological and Cultural City
- Yoon Hyun-kyu, Department of Archaeology and Art History, Dongguk University WISE Campus

○ Final Review and Announcement of Judging Results

○ Awards and Closing Ceremony

○ Dinner

○ Gyeongju Cultural Heritage Night Tour

Day 2

- Daereungwon Tour - Visit to Daereungwon Tomb Complex and Cheonmachong Tomb

- Hwangridan-gil - Case study on urban regeneration and sustainable tourism within the World Heritage District



HIGH HERITAGE Hand-in-Hand Camp

As a gathering for youth who represent the next generation in World Heritage conservation and management, the HIGH HERITAGE Hand-in-Hand Camp was held in Gyeongju from August 19 to 21 for three days.

The OWHC-AP Youth Forum is a club where young people from World Heritage cities come together to participate in historical and cultural explorations, heritage promotion activities, and other initiatives. Through such experience, the forum fosters youth engagement in heritage conservation while encouraging them to grow as global citizens.

This year, 45 high school students from OWHC-AP member cities took part in the camp, including 35 from South Korea and 10 from other countries. Participants engaged in World Heritage education, team projects, and field explorations.

• Opening Ceremony



• World Heritage Education



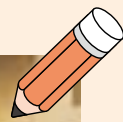
• Team Project: World Heritage Promotion Project



• World Heritage Exploration and Hands-on Learning



• Closing Ceremony



Reading the World Heritage Through Sound

Music is more than just a collection of sounds. It is a living record that embodies the identity, history, and emotions of a culture. Traditional music and folk songs reflect the lifestyle and values of a particular region, carrying wisdom and experiences passed down through generations. Beyond entertainment, music strengthens community bonds and helps shape cultural identity.

Sound is also a powerful tool for emotional expression. Emotions such as sorrow, joy, and love are conveyed more profoundly through music. This evokes deep empathy to listeners while fostering understanding between people from different cultural backgrounds.

Sound plays a crucial role in education and the transmission of tradition. Many traditional music forms are passed down orally, meaning that learning the music also involves inheriting cultural values and wisdom. In Korea, pansori (a form of traditional music) is transmitted from master to disciple. This process not only teaches musical techniques but also imparts the historical and social context embedded within the music.

As a cultural heritage, sound improves intercultural understanding. Music reflects a culture's history and values, revealing its unique identity. More than just listening, music creates an opportunity to share cultural experiences and emotions. As such, Sound is a vital part of cultural heritage, carrying the identity and history of each culture as a living record. Through music, emotions are expressed, connections are made, and people come to understand one another.

Pansori

South Korea, inscribed in 2003

Pansori is a unique Korean musical heritage, inscribed as a UNESCO Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity in 2003. A performance consists of a sorikkun (vocalist) and a gosu (drummer), creating a minimal yet powerful theatrical experience. Unlike other narrative performing arts, pansori stands out for its highly expressive storytelling. The sorikkun moves freely between chang (singing), aniri (spoken narration), and ballim (gestural movements) to convey complex narratives. A defining feature is that a single performer portrays all characters, while also serving as the narrator, showcasing an exceptional level of artistic skill.

Pansori is passed down through badi, which is a system of distinct stylistic schools. The oral transmission from master to disciple has allowed each school to develop its own vocal techniques and expressive styles. Audience interaction is also a key characteristic. Spectators actively engage through chuimsae (verbal exclamations), which improves the performance and heightens its energy. While deeply rooted in tradition, pansori continues to evolve, creatively embracing change while preserving its cultural essence.



Qawwali

Pakistan, inscribed in 2008

Qawwali is a traditional Islamic Sufi music from Pakistan, inscribed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008. As a form of religious music, Qawwali conveys spiritual messages, expressing the mystical philosophy of Sufism and devotion to Allah. Performances are based on poetry primarily in Persian, Urdu, and Punjabi. A Qawwal (lead vocalist) guides the main melody while accompanying singers and musicians build an intensifying spiritual atmosphere through harmonized choruses and repeated refrains. The harmonium (portable organ) and tabla (drums) are the primary instruments, creating the music's distinctive rhythms and melodies. Handclaps also play a significant role in shaping the rhythmic structure. Qawwali is mainly performed at Sufi shrines and religious ceremonies, where audiences engage deeply with the music in a collective experience of spiritual unity with the divine. Audience participation and response are integral to the performance. Passed down orally through generations, Qawwali has developed unique styles and repertoires within different musical lineages.



Radif

Iran, inscribed in 2009

Radif is both a repertoire and an educational system in traditional Iranian music, consisting of a complex and refined collection of melodies that has evolved over centuries. It comprises 250 to 400 melodies, forming the foundation of Iranian classical music. The structure of Radif is organized into 12 principal modes (Dastgah) and multiple secondary modes (Avaz). Each mode follows a specific scale, melodic pattern, and rhythmic structure arranged in a hierarchical system. Radif is transmitted orally, following a master-to-student tradition. Learners spend years memorizing and internalizing the intricate melodic sequences. Many musicians use Radif as a foundation for improvisation, maintaining traditional rules and structures while demonstrating artistic creativity. Beyond its role as a musical system, Radif embodies Iranian cultural identity and philosophical thought. It is deeply connected to Persian poetry, Islamic mysticism, and traditional arts, holding a significant place in Iran's cultural heritage.



Shashmaqom

Tajikistan / Uzbekistan, inscribed in 2008

Shashmaqom is a classical music system of Central Asia, inscribed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008 as a shared heritage of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. Meaning "six maqoms", shashmaqom refers to its structure of six principal melodic modes. Each maqom possesses a distinct scale, rhythmic pattern, and emotional expression, forming a complex musical framework. Performances are divided into Mushkilot (instrumental) and Nasr (vocal) sections, accompanied by traditional instruments such as the tanbur, dutar, and nay. The vocal component is based on Persian-Tajik classical poetry, characterized by delicate ornamentation and intricate melodic embellishments. Shashmaqom is passed down through oral tradition, following a master-to-student transmission. Musicians undergo years of rigorous training to master the complex structures and improvisational techniques of each maqom, learning not only the music but also its cultural significance. Developed at the crossroads of Silk Road civilizations, Shashmaqom represents a fusion of diverse musical influences. Blending Arab-Persian traditions with the unique musical heritage of Central Asia, Shashmaqom transcends the music itself, serving as a reflection of the region's philosophical, poetic, and spiritual traditions.





World Heritage in Danger

Across the world, natural heritage sites are under growing threat. The UNESCO World Heritage Committee's List of World Heritage in Peril highlights the severity of the crisis. The situation is especially dire for ecological heritage sites.

In Tanzania, the Selous Game Reserve (one of the largest protected areas in the world) provides a vital habitat for Africa's iconic wildlife. Yet, poaching and mining development are pushing it to the brink. Uranium mining threatens the delicate ecosystem, leading to a drastic decline in elephant and rhino populations and widespread destruction of wildlife habitats.

A similar crisis unfolds in Honduras at the Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve. As a rare convergence of tropical rainforests and coastal ecosystems, the region faces mounting pressure from illegal logging, poaching, and unchecked development. Coupled with deforestation and farmland expansion, the rise of illegal settlements is erasing its unique biodiversity.

Yet, efforts to safeguard these sites persist. Conservationists and activists worldwide are joining forces to protect these endangered landscapes. The UNESCO World Heritage Fund is providing emergency aid, while governments are reinforcing preservation policies. Public involvement is also increasing.

But these efforts alone are not enough. Stronger enforcement against illegal activities, deeper engagement with local communities, and advanced monitoring technologies are urgently needed. Above all, a fundamental shift in perception is required. Ecological heritage is not just a destination. It is an irreplaceable asset shared by all of humanity.

Selous Game Reserve

1982: Inscribed on the World Heritage List; 2014: Inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

Selous Game Reserve, located in southeastern Tanzania, is Africa's largest wildlife sanctuary, spanning an area of approximately 50,000 square kilometers. When it was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982, the reserve was recognized for its outstanding universal value as a prime example of Africa's rich and diverse ecosystems. One of its most defining features is the coexistence of multiple ecosystems. The landscape ranges from vast savannahs to dense tropical forests and wetlands, with the Rufiji River at its heart, shaping a unique aquatic ecosystem found nowhere else. Selous Game Reserve also holds extraordinary biodiversity. It provides a critical habitat for African elephants, black rhinos, hippos, lions, and leopards, along with more than 2,100 species of plants. At one time, it was home to the largest population of African elephants in the world.

However, in 2014, Selous Game Reserve was placed on the List of World Heritage in Peril. The most critical threat was poaching. During the 2010s, elephant poaching surged, causing a dramatic decline in population. According to a UNESCO report, the elephant population in 1976 exceeded 100,000, but by 2013, it had plummeted to just 13,000. The approval of uranium mining operations further worsened the situation. In 2012, the Tanzanian government granted approval for uranium extraction within the reserve. This posed a direct threat to



the ecosystem, not only due to habitat destruction from infrastructure development but also because of environmental pollution caused by mining activities. Another major concern was the Stiegler's Gorge Hydropower Dam, planned for construction on the Rufiji River. The dam was expected to have a significant impact on the aquatic ecosystem, disrupting the natural water flow and threatening the delicate balance of wetland habitats.

The situation in Selous Game Reserve remains critical. Although poaching has declined, development pressures persist. The uranium mining project is moving forward following an environmental impact assessment, and the dam construction is proceeding as planned. However, conservation efforts continue. The Tanzanian government has strengthened anti-poaching measures and improved wildlife monitoring systems. The international community is also providing support through the World Heritage Fund, while advanced surveillance technologies and community-based conservation programs are being implemented.



Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve

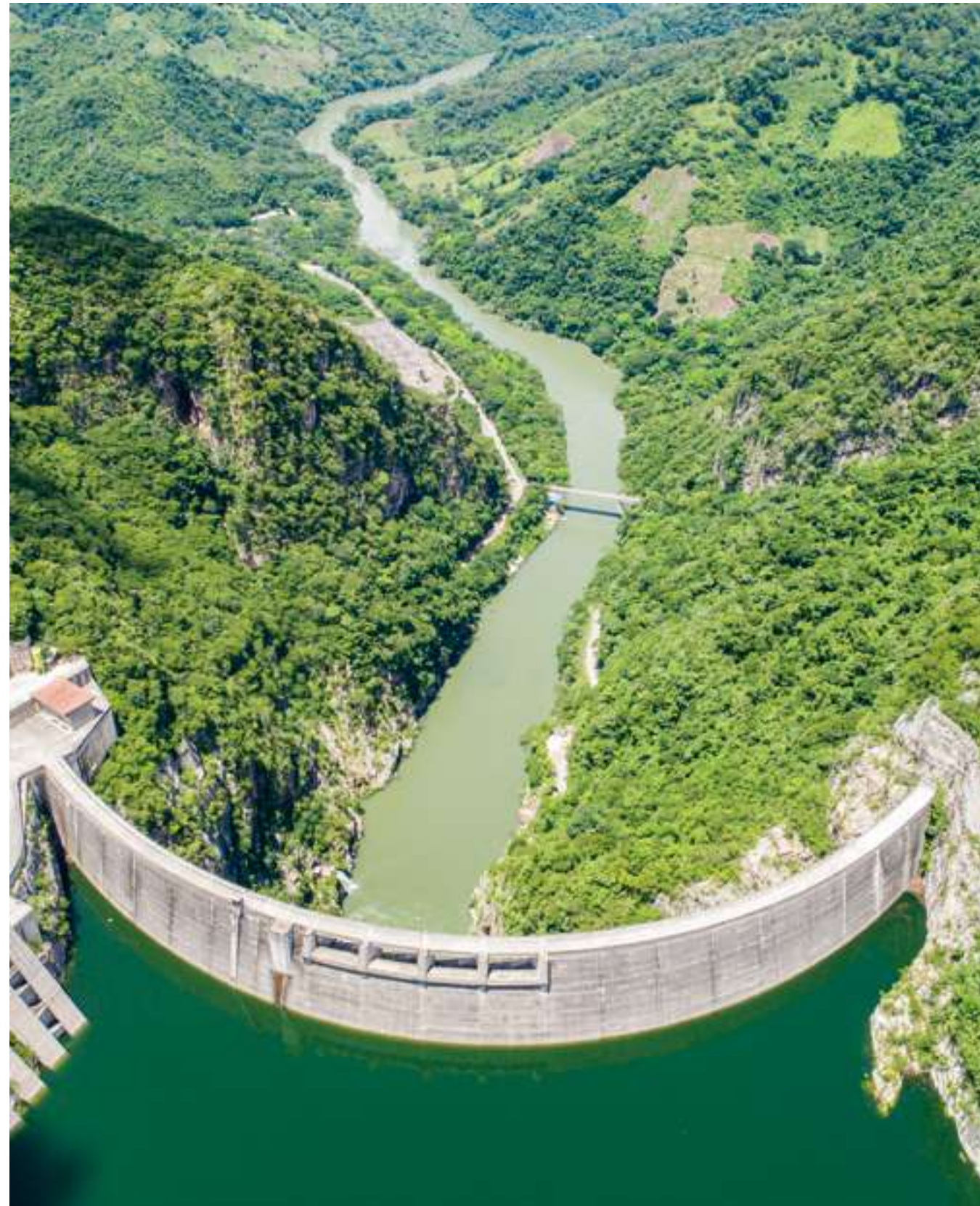
1982: Inscribed on the World Heritage List; 2011: Inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger

Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve, located in northeastern Honduras, is a tropical rainforest region designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1982. The area spans from lowland Caribbean coastal plains to mountainous regions reaching an elevation of 1,326 meters, encompassing a wide range of ecosystems. It is considered one of the best-preserved rainforests in Central America.

What makes this site particularly significant is its dual value as both a natural and cultural heritage. Ecologically, the reserve is home to over 800 plant species and provides a habitat for numerous endangered animals. Culturally, it has been inhabited by indigenous peoples for thousands of years, who have preserved their traditional ways of life. The Pech, Tawahka, and Miskito peoples have lived in harmony with the rainforest, developing a distinct cultural heritage.

Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve was first placed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 1996. It was removed in 2007 but was relisted in 2011 due to ongoing threats.

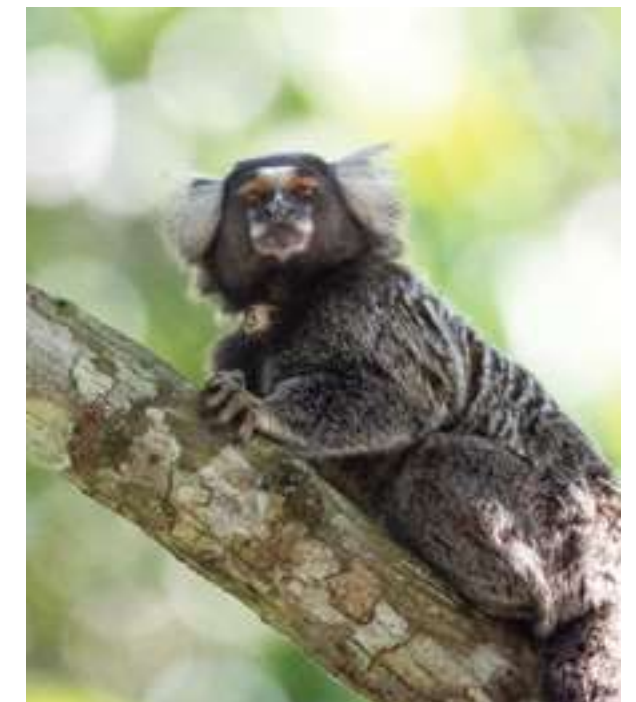
Illegal settlement and deforestation have been the primary concerns. As migrants seeking land moved into the protected area, forests were being cleared for agriculture. According to UNESCO reports,



thousands of hectares of forest disappear every year. Illegal logging remains a serious issue. High-value mahogany and other premium hardwoods continue to be targeted, causing not only deforestation but also further ecological destruction from road construction to transport the timber. Poaching and illegal grazing have also intensified. Wildlife poaching within the reserve has increased, while unauthorized livestock grazing is further disrupting the ecosystem.

The situation in Río Plátano Biosphere Reserve remains critical. With weak government control, illegal activities persist throughout the region. Reports indicate that after the COVID-19 pandemic, economic hardship has led to a surge in illegal activities.

However, conservation efforts are ongoing. The Honduran government, with support from international organizations, is working to strengthen monitoring systems and develop sustainable resource management strategies in collaboration with local communities. A key focus is working with indigenous communities, ensuring that traditional land-use practices are respected while advancing conservation efforts.



Musical Instruments Reflecting Life



Musical instruments are more than tools for creating sound. They serve as powerful mediums that reflect life itself. They embody cultural identity, historical context, communication between people, and heritage value, playing a crucial role as part of humanity's shared legacy.

Instruments express the identity of each culture. The gayageum in Korea conveys Korean sentiment through its traditional melodies. In Africa, drums foster community solidarity, holding a central place in festivals and rituals. These instruments are not just tools for music but symbols of cultural identity and spirit.

Instruments also reflect historical contexts. The violin, a staple of European classical music, carries the legacy of the Renaissance era. The guitar, integral to American blues, tells the story of pain and hope experienced by enslaved African Americans. Through sound, instruments preserve history and capture the emotions of those who lived through each era.

Musical instruments enable communication between people. Music transcends language, creating a universal connection. Traditional folk music brings communities together, providing a space to share stories of life and heritage. Beyond entertainment, music strengthens bonds between people and promotes mutual understanding. In this way, instruments serve as essential mediums for communication and solidarity.

Many instruments carry cultural traditions in both their craftsmanship and performance techniques, preserving their value as a shared legacy of humanity. The shakuhachi in Japan, for example, represents the depth of Japanese culture, while the process of learning and passing it down helps reinforce cultural identity. Such traditions are a heritage that must be passed on to future generations.

Musical instruments are not just tools for creating sound. They reflect identity, history, communication, and heritage, playing an essential role in humanity's collective cultural legacy.



Angklung, Indonesia
(2010)

The angklung is a bamboo musical instrument traditionally played on Bali and Java islands. Its most distinctive feature is its varied tonal range. The instrument consists of multiple bamboo tubes, each producing a different pitch. To play the angklung, performers shake the tubes, creating a clear and resonant sound that has captivated audiences for generations. Angklung is typically performed in an ensemble, where multiple instruments harmonize to produce beautiful melodies.

It is often played at community events and festivals, bringing people together in a shared experience of communication and unity. Beyond its musical function, angklung serves as a symbol of cultural identity, reinforcing collective traditions and social harmony.

Its repertoire extends beyond traditional folk music. Arrangements of modern songs and pop music have also been adapted for angklung, demonstrating its ability to evolve and stay relevant over time. This adaptability has contributed to its growing global appeal, making angklung a widely appreciated instrument worldwide.

The morin khuur (horsehead fiddle) is a two-stringed traditional instrument deeply rooted in Mongolian culture. Recognizable by its carved horsehead, this instrument is typically crafted from wood, with horsehair strings. The instrument produces a rich and evocative sound that echoes the vast Mongolian steppes and natural landscapes. Played with a bow, the morin khuur blends seamlessly with Mongolian throat singing and folk music, improving the deep, resonant melodies characteristic of the region.

The most distinctive feature of the morin khuur is its expressive musical quality. It deeply conveys the emotions of Mongolian traditional music and is often used for lyrical melodies. The morin khuur can express sorrow, joy, and love, reflecting the life and culture of the Mongolian people. It also serves as a vital medium for preserving Mongolian folklore and legends.

Morin Khuur, Mongolia
(2010)



**Dan bau, the Monochord Instrument of
Vietnamese Court Music
(2018)**

The dan bau is a monochord instrument that has been a central part of Vietnamese court music since the 13th century. The name dan bau combines two words. "Dan" refers to a stringed instrument, while "bau" means gourd, reflecting its early construction using a gourd resonator.

Played by plucking a single string, the dan bau produces subtle tonal variations and expressive vibrato. The left hand manipulates a flexible bamboo lever, adjusting pitch and vibrato, while the right hand plucks the string, allowing for intricate sound modulations. This technique enables delicate microtonal shifts and fluid melodic phrasing, mirroring the expressive nuances of Vietnamese traditional singing.

Its human-like tonal quality makes it particularly well-suited for accompanying Vietnamese vocal performances. By adjusting pitch through precise finger movements, musicians create rich emotional depth, reflecting Vietnamese sensitivity and artistic creativity. Despite using only a single string, the dan bau allows for a remarkable range of musical expression, showcasing the Vietnamese aesthetic of restraint and artistic refinement.



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Please visit the website if you wish to become a member city of the Organization of World Heritage Cities and share the same values, concerns, and goals. You are always welcome.



The Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) is an international advisory council representing cities with UNESCO World Heritage.

Founded in 1993, OWHC is headquartered in Quebec, Canada, with five regional secretariats globally.

As of 2025, there are around 120 member cities, and global and regional conferences are held every other year to discuss the sustainable development of world heritage cities. Finding and implementing better ways to conserve and manage World Heritage Sites by sharing vast knowledge and information are the shared hope and goal of the OWHC member cities.

The Organization of **World Heritage Cities Asia-Pacific Regional Secretariat (OWHC-AP)** was established in Gyeongju, Korea in 2013 as a branch office to oversee member cities in the Asia-Pacific region.

As of 2025, the Asia-Pacific region has 25 member cities dispersed across 8 countries, encouraging collaboration on the protection of world heritage cities, as well as the significance and importance of world heritage to the public, via a variety of activities such as academic, educational, artistic, and promotional projects.