



V. International Correspondent

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1. General Information

International Correspondent on Cultural Heritage Protection in the Asia-Pacific Region 2024 'Trends and Needs in Heritage Conservation in the Asia-Pacific Region'

1. Organisers

This programme is organised by the Cultural Heritage Protection Cooperation Office, Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU Nara).

2. Background

To promote disseminating and exchanging the news and latest information on cultural heritage protection in the Asia-Pacific region and maintain a connection with the former training course participants, ACCU Nara invites candidates annually to submit applications for the International Correspondent programme.

This programme allows the ACCU to learn from our former participants about the activities they are currently involved in, the principal challenges they face, and how we can support ongoing heritage protection efforts in the Asia-Pacific region.

Previously, the programme involved collecting correspondent's written reports and publishing them in a separate volume. This year the programme has been changed. Now, the format is an online presentation with Abstracts collated and published in this report detailing the full range of the ACCU Nara's training courses and other programmes.

3. Dates and Method

13:00-15:00, 29 November 29, 2024

The International Correspondent programme occurred online on 29 November (Friday), 2024. It involved a two-hour session of presentations with time for questions and discussion.

4. Participants

Former participants of ACCU Nara's various training programmes were invited to submit applications. **Eight participants** from **eight countries** were selected.

5. Theme and Content

Theme: Trends and Needs in Heritage Conservation in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Content: The presentation contents should be related to cultural heritage in the author's country and introduce research or conservation/management projects conducted inside it. The report should be related to cultural heritage protection in which the author is/has been involved.

The main focus of the International Correspondents' reports should be on the following:

- Efforts and achievements by individuals and organizations in the Asia-Pacific region to protect, transmit and utilize cultural heritage in all its forms and expressions for the benefit of societies.
- Persisting challenges, practical needs and issues that heritage conservation professionals in Asia-Pacific countries face today.

6. Requirements

Participants were expected to prepare and deliver:

- 10-minute PowerPoint presentation
- Abstract of up to 300 words

7. Programme

There were eight correspondents from eight countries covering the Asia-Pacific region between New Zealand and Iran. Due to the 8-and-a-half-hour time difference between the participant-correspondents, the programme was designed so that the order generally followed an east to west sequence of country representatives.

All correspondents submitted Abstracts of their papers which were shared with the participants prior to the event. Due to last-minute work commitments, two correspondents (Dorji Dorji, Bhutan, and Atefeh Amraei, Iran) could not present on the day. However, video recordings of their PowerPoint presentations were provided.

The full programme was as below:

- 13:00 – 13:05 Opening Remarks
Mr MORIMOTO Susumu, *Director*
Cultural Heritage Protection Cooperation Office,
Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU Nara)
- 13:05 – 13:15 Presentation 1: **Jethro Tulupul STALEN**, *Doctoral Student*, World Heritage
Studies Program, University of Tsukuba * TTC2017
“Threats to Museum Collections in Papua New Guinea and Areas in Need of Improvement”
- 13:15 – 13:25 Presentation 2: **Matthew SCHMIDT**, *Senior Heritage Advisor*, Kaitohu
Matua Taonga Tuku Iho, Southern South Island, Department of Conservation * GTC2008
“The Department of Conservation & Heritage in the Southern South Island – Conservation projects 2024-2025”
- 13:25 – 13:35 Presentation 3: **Donking O. ROQUE**, *Architect II*, National Historical Commission of the
Philippines (NHCP) * GTC2023
“Sustaining Historical Legacy: Five Years after the Restoration of Lazi Church, A National Cultural Treasure”
- 13:35 – 13:45 Presentation 4: **Rohayah binti CHE AMAT**, *Senior Lecturer*, Malaysia-Japan International Institute
of Technology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Kuala Lumpur * GTC2023
“Preserving Stories and Spaces in Promoting Kuala Lumpur as a Historic City”
- 13:45 – 13:55 Presentation 5: **Dorji**, *Project Manager*, Rigsum Goenpa Restoration
Project, Rigsum Goenpa Restoration Project, Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development,
Ministry of Home Affairs * GTC2023
“Sustainable Architectural Heritage Conservation – the Bhutanese Approach”
- 13:55 – 14:05 Presentation 6: **Suresh Suras SHRESTHA**, *Joint Secretary/ Head*, Culture Division, Ministry of
Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation * GTC2009
“Trends and Needs: Cultural Heritage Conservation in Nepal”
- 14:05 – 14:15 Presentation 7: **Tatyana TRUDOLYUBOVA**, *Researcher/ Master’s Student*,
Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany * GTC2022
“Documentation of cultural heritage: applying international standards to Uzbekistan’s heritage sites”
- 14:15 – 14:25 Presentation 8: **Atefeh AMRAEI**, *Executive Advisor*, World Heritage
Department, Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts * GTC2023
“Heritage Conservation in Iran: Trends, Challenges, and Future Directions”
- 14:25 – 14:50 Discussion session (includes Q and A)
- 14:50 – 15:00 Wrap-up and closing remarks
* GTC...Group Training Course Participant * TTC...Thematic Training Course Participant

8. Overview

This was the first time that the International Correspondent was held online. Accordingly, there were numerous advantages and challenges for this format in the planning and execution of the event.

An initial obstacle was the 8-and-a-half-hour time difference and accommodating the correspondents various work commitments and personal schedules when selecting a time and date for the event. A second difficulty occurred on the day with some participants encountering unreliable internet connections. Added to this were technical issues, with sound problems for one of the PowerPoint presentations causing significant delays to the schedule. The impact of this delay meant that we could not show the two pre-recorded videos prepared by Dorji (Bhutan) and Atefeh Amraei (Iran), and the discussion and question time component was significantly shortened. These videos, along with the recording of the Zoom event, will be uploaded to the ACCU Nara YouTube channel for the correspondents to watch.

Despite the above challenges, the correspondents expressed their gratitude for participating in the event. Regular and repeat correspondents, such as Matthew Schmidt (New Zealand) and Suresh Suras Shrestha (Nepal), stated that they preferred the online format since they could meet and engage directly with other correspondents.

This opinion was widely shared by the other participants and encourages the continuation of the programme via this format.

There are many factors to consider for future events and the format will require modifications to maximise the benefits to both the correspondents and audience. Universally, more time was requested for questions and discussions. Several options therefore exist, and include: a longer programme schedule on the day of at least 3 hours length (minimum); or, a regular symposium-style event where 2 to 3 presenters will speak each month, over a period of time covering, for example, August-December. This symposium-style format could be structured so that the speakers in each session are selected from the same region, eliminating some of the scheduling issues of a single-event programme. The programme could also be opened to a wider audience. The balance of these issues will be considered in future planning.

9. Secretariat

ACCU Nara

Shaun MACKEY, *Director*, International Cooperation Division,

2. Abstracts

All eight participants of the International Correspondents programme provided abstracts for the presentations prior to the event on 29 November.

The Abstracts are presented in the order of the programme talks.



Group photo of the International Correspondents along with ACCU Nara staff and observer.

■Jethro Tulupul STALEN, Papua New Guinea

Doctoral Student, World Heritage Studies Program, University of Tsukuba

Title: *Threats to Museum Collections in Papua New Guinea and Areas in Need of Improvement*

Abstract:

Papua New Guinea is a country in the Pacific with the largest land mass within the region (excluding Australia). Despite its diverse culture, preservation efforts through the museum context are very slim. For instance, the current number of museums is fewer than five. However, only the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery and the JK McCarthy Museum can be regarded as museums proper based on the building structure, staff structure, and laws.

We conducted surveys regarding some threats to museum collections in the Papua New Guinea National Museum and Art Gallery, such as pests, mould, relative humidity (RH), temperature, etc. The problems with pest activities were overwhelming; relative humidity was high, and temperature was also high. The issue of mould was a concern for the museum collections.

We discovered that the main issues are the ‘unorthodox threats,’ which are issues such as lack of funding, staff capacity, knowledge capacity in conservation, and data and monitoring equipment.

Current solutions: It is important to improve situations such as unorthodox threats because issues such as lack of staff capacity, lack of funding, lack of conservation knowledge, etc., can be addressed through proper planning and effort. Improving on the unorthodox issues is vital to address the primary agents of deterioration in the museums. However, what is more important is using skills learned through courses, such as the ACCU, and utilizing that knowledge with local resources.

■Dr Matthew SCHMIDT, New Zealand

Senior Heritage Advisor, Kaitohu Matua Taonga Tuku Iho, Southern South Island, Department of Conservation

Title: *The Department of Conservation & Heritage in the Southern South Island - Conservation projects 2024-2025*

Abstract:

The Department of Conservation | Te Papa Atawhai (“DOC”) manages a third of the land in New Zealand and is also responsible for the conservation of vast areas of ocean and their associated islands. The Southern South Island.

Region of DOC is the largest region in New Zealand and contains thousands of recorded heritage sites and thousands of sites yet to be recorded or discovered. These sites range in age from the first Polynesian explorers who arrived ca. 1250AD to the later Pakeha (European) and Chinese settlers from the close of the 18th century onwards. Heritage sites can be eroding middens on a beach front, gold mining sites in the centre of the island or Māori or Pakeha fortifications on the coast. The variety of heritage sites is extensive and is spread across numerous cultural groups. This provides a depth of history which is both challenging and satisfying to conserve and manage. This presentation provides a snapshot of new and ongoing conservation projects to provide an understanding of the complexity of heritage DOC manages in the Southern South Island of New Zealand.

■ **Donking O. ROQUE, Philippines**

Architect II, National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP)

Title: *Sustaining Historical Legacy: Five Years after the Restoration of Lazi Church, A National Cultural Treasure*

Abstract:

The San Isidro Labrador Parish, commonly known as Lazi Church, is a declared National Cultural Treasure in the Municipality of Lazi, Province of Siquijor of the Visayas Region, Philippines. This study revisits the restoration program undertaken by the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), and its post-restoration condition five (5) years after its completion. Further, the study evaluates the restoration efforts' effectiveness in ensuring the structure's preservation.

Siquijor Island is known for its mystical folklore and natural beauty. When the Augustinian Recollects arrived in the late 19th century, they built several churches on the island as part of their evangelization. The Lazi Parish was founded in 1857, and the church was completed in 1884, while its bell tower was finished the year after. The design of the church is of Baroque influence. As one example of the Spanish Colonial Period's architecture on the island, this edifice serves as a religious center for the local community and a symbol of the island's vibrant culture and heritage.

This study focuses on a mixed-method approach, incorporating on-site assessment, and interviews with stakeholders, including the Diocese of Dumaguete, the local government, and the parishioners who are the primary users of the church. The NHCP's restoration works conducted from 2018 to 2019 focused on addressing structural concerns, the use of modern sustainable methods, and site improvement while respecting the church's historic character. It also discusses the key challenges that were encountered during the restoration works, including the sourcing of original materials and the long-term preservation of workmanship by local craftsmen. Additionally, the restoration aims to strengthen the structure to mitigate various environmental risks like typhoons and earthquakes, which continue to threaten its stability. Finally, by revisiting the restoration of Lazi Church, this study can contribute to the discussions on heritage conservation practices in the Philippines.

■ **Rohayah binti CHE AMAT, Malaysia**

Senior Lecturer, Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Kuala Lumpur

Title: *Preserving Stories and Spaces in Promoting Kuala Lumpur as a Historic City*

Abstract:

Kuala Lumpur is Malaysia's capital city which is both rich in tangible and intangible heritage. However, some parts of the historical centre of the city (downtown area) is in economic decline as it is home to the lower classes, including the homeless and immigrants. Such a growth poses a direct threat to the character of the town and its potential as a historical and vibrant capital. And these issues must be addressed in order to retain the heritage of Kuala Lumpur while ensuring economic and social viability. This presentation emphasizes key challenges in promoting Kuala Lumpur as a historic city that include the two strategies which are: urban heritage revitalization and community engagement. Areas at risk of urban decline as a result of the neglect of heritage sites and socio-economic inequalities are also highlighted, calling for equitable urban policies that put people, heritage and vulnerabilities at the center of urban development and planning. There is an opportunity for Kuala Lumpur to regain its identity as a city that cherishes its heritage and history whilst looking forward to being sustainable in the future.

■Dorji, Bhutan

Project Manager, Rigsum Goenpa Restoration Project, Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development, Ministry of Home Affairs

Title: *Sustainable Architectural Heritage Conservation – the Bhutanese Approach*

Abstract:

Introduction

Architectural heritage is vital for cultural identity and community well-being but faces threats from rapid urbanization and changing lifestyles. Short-sighted urban development often prioritizes economic growth, leading to the demolition of historic buildings. Sustainable urbanization practices and economic models are needed for preservation, with tourism and public education playing key roles.

Factors Contributing to Bhutan's Preservation

Bhutan's architectural heritage remains well-preserved due to delayed modernization, isolation, and the Gross National Happiness policy. Key features include living heritage like fortresses, temples, stupas, and traditional bridges, which remain functional and culturally significant.

Bhutan's Sustainable Conservation Approach:

1. **Use of Local Materials:** Locally sourced materials, such as stones and timber, reduce carbon emissions and support the economy. Traditional techniques, like mud mortar and wooden structures, ensure eco-friendliness and authenticity.
2. **Timber and Joinery:** Timber, a renewable resource, is used extensively with traditional joinery to preserve craftsmanship and minimize the use of factory-made materials.
3. **Natural Paints:** Locally prepared natural paints maintain traditional aesthetics without synthetic substances.
4. **Craftsmen:** Local artisans are prioritized for heritage projects, ensuring the transfer of skills, employment opportunities, and community pride.
5. **Community Engagement:** Communities actively contribute free labor and resources for heritage conservation, driven by religious faith and shared values.
6. **Modern Facilities:** Heritage sites are equipped with improved water, sewerage, and drainage systems to enhance functionality for residents like monks.
7. **Fire Safety:** Firefighting systems are integrated to protect against fire hazards.

Challenges

Maintaining authenticity, especially of wooden components, is challenging due to stakeholder preferences for modern replacements and limited understanding of conservation importance. Insufficient funding further hinders education and awareness initiatives.

■Suresh Suras SHRESTHA, Nepal

Joint Secretary/ Head, Culture Division, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

Title: *Trends and Needs: Cultural Heritage Conservation in Nepal*

Abstract:

Cultural heritage conservation in Nepal has had significant evolution and growth over the years, shaped by traditional practices, global trends and modern interventions. It is evolving to balance traditional practices and modern development. Historically maintained through community-led initiatives like the *guthi* system, conservation efforts have progressively incorporated systematic approaches under governmental and international frameworks.

Numerous trends highlight Nepal's efforts in preserving both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. It reflects a growing recognition of the importance of preserving its diverse and significant heritage. There is a notable shift toward community-based conservation, emphasizing the involvement of local communities and the use of traditional techniques and materials. Recent trends emphasize community participation, the integration of modern technologies and the rehabilitation of earthquake damaged structures using traditional techniques and materials. The integration of modern technology, such as digital and scientific documentation and compatible seismic retrofitting, is helping to address vulnerabilities and adapt to contemporary challenges. The focus on sustainable development has further highlighted the role of cultural heritage in fostering identity, preserving traditional customary systems and economic growth.

Nepal faces challenges such as rapid urbanization, limited resources and vulnerability to natural disasters. Addressing these needs requires strengthening institutional frameworks, increasing funding and enhancing disaster

preparedness. Capacity-building initiatives, including the training of artisans, conservation and other areas of cultural heritage professionals, are essential to maintain traditional skills and knowledge. Moreover, raising awareness and incorporating heritage education into the curriculum will foster a deeper appreciation for conservation among future generations.

By aligning conservation efforts with sustainability and fostering collaboration between local communities, national authorities and international organization, Nepal can safeguard and ensure its cultural heritage is preserved as part of its identity and legacy.

■ **Tatyana TRUDOLYUBOVA, Uzbekistan**

Researcher, Master's Student, Brandenburg University of Technology Cottbus-Senftenberg, Germany

Title: *Documentation of cultural heritage: applying international standards to Uzbekistan's heritage sites*

Abstract:

Introduction: Uzbekistan is rich in cultural heritage, with approximately 8,000 registered historical sites. Most of these sites have not been documented for more than 40-50 years. Further, this documentation no longer meets modern or international standards and needs to be updated.

Challenges: Most of Uzbekistan's World Heritage sites are active, living cities with vibrant, multicultural communities. Over the years, numerous development projects have been planned and implemented within the core and buffer zones of these properties. This uncontrolled development has raised concerns and the World Heritage Centre has frequently requested clarifications from the Uzbek government regarding these construction activities. There is currently no updated framework or approach for documenting historic sites, particularly within World Heritage properties. This lack of up-to-date documentation poses a challenge to the effective management of these sites.

Proposed solution: To ensure a comprehensive record of each site, including its current condition, and towards planning for sustainable development, a more modern and comprehensive set and systems of documentation is required. In particular, the documentation of all development projects within the World Heritage Sites and their buffer zones - especially those that may have a negative impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the sites - needs to be carefully assessed and provided with appropriate Heritage Impact Assessments.

Research methodology: Based on existing approaches of documentation in Uzbekistan and international standards and research, the aim is to develop a comprehensive set of documentation that is carefully planned to preserve the integrity and cultural significance of sites.

Conclusion: Proper documentation is critical to overcoming key challenges in the planning and budgeting of rehabilitation works. It ensures a thorough assessment of the current condition of historic sites and supports the development of effective conservation projects. In addition, comprehensive documentation facilitates the approval process by Advisory Bodies for proposed developments within World Heritage properties, while improving the overall management and conservation of these sites.

■ **Atefeh AMRAEI, Iran**

Executive Advisor, World Heritage Department, Iranian Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts

Title: *Heritage Conservation in Iran: Trends, Challenges, and Future Directions*

Abstract:

Heritage conservation in Iran faces numerous challenges and opportunities in protecting its rich cultural and natural legacy. This presentation highlights key efforts and achievements in safeguarding Iran's invaluable heritage, alongside the pressing challenges that professionals face today.

Several significant restoration projects illustrate Iran's commitment to preserving its heritage. The complex restoration of the Imam Mosque and Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Isfahan involved intricate work to restore damaged tiles and stabilize the structures. Similarly, the Bam Citadel's revitalization after the devastating earthquake showcased a meticulous reconstruction process, emphasizing both structural integrity and historical accuracy. The conservation efforts at Gonbad-e Qabus and the Sheikh Safi Complex demonstrate Iran's dedication to protecting its historic sites and enhancing visitor experiences. Additionally, the joint excavation at Persepolis with Italian collaboration highlights the value of international partnerships in archaeological research and restoration.

Despite these successes, Iran faces significant challenges, including climate change, which has led to floods,

droughts, and land subsidence affecting sites like Yazd and Persepolis. Urban development pressures threaten historic areas, while illegal excavations endanger archaeological sites. Financial constraints, exacerbated by sanctions, and a shortage of skilled artisans pose further obstacles.

Addressing these issues requires a multi-faceted approach: strengthening international collaborations, involving local communities in preservation efforts, leveraging modern technology, and promoting sustainable tourism. Improved policies and legal frameworks are essential to balance development with conservation needs. By implementing these strategies, Iran can protect its heritage while fostering economic growth and community engagement, ensuring that its cultural treasures are preserved for future generations.

3. CURRENT SITUATION IN PNG MUSEUMS.

Current situation 1: Visible presence of the common agents of deterioration in PNG Museum.

- Based on the preliminary assessment/ survey (before 2019 and 2020), including previous encounters of the issues such as presence of termites, cockroaches, rats, and even cobwebs.

Current situation 2: Persistent occurrence of the issues of agents of deterioration such as mold, pest proliferation, high RH, etc.

- Since the preliminary studies or prior, the same issues continued until the recent assessment in 2023.

Current situation 3: Slow efforts in addressing the issues that are affecting the collections.

- This has indicated through the persistent occurrence of agents of deterioration.
- The collections have very important significance with oldest collections dating back to 1800s.
- Is the slow responses are unintentional?

A: Mold growth on a wasted blade in the gallery 2022. B: Mold on bird specimen in storeroom 5 in 2023.

Presentation by Jethro Tulupul Stalen (Papua New Guinea)

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Presentation by Matthew Schmidt (New Zealand)

3. Restoration Overview:

Corrected Days: 455 Calendar Days (1 year and 3 months)

Budget:

PH\$ 203,317.23 (Philippine Pesos)
 3,895,385.96 (US Reserve Pes)
 \$648,154.79 (US Dollars)

Timber, a renewable resource, is being used extensively as structural members such as beams and columns.

Utilized traditional joinery techniques for timber components- Ensures the authenticity and pass on the valuable craftsmanship skills to the future generation.

Made an effort to reduce the use of factory-made materials, such as wire nails, cement, aluminum products, etc.

Heritage Site and Archaeology Division, Department of Culture and Domestic Development, Ministry of Home Affairs, Royal Government of Bhutan.

Presentation by Donking O. Roque (Philippines)

Introduction

Kuala Lumpur's rich heritage faces challenges from urban decline and socio-economic inequalities in its historic center. This presentation explores how urban heritage evaluation and community engagement can preserve its stories and spaces, ensuring a vibrant and sustainable future for the city.

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Presentation by Rohayah binti Che Amat (Malaysia)

Conclusion

- Nepal's cultural heritage is a vital component of its identity, reflecting centuries of artistic, architectural and spiritual achievements
- However, it faces significant challenges due to natural disasters, urbanization, climate change and inadequate resource allocation
- Recent trends in cultural heritage conservation emphasize community involvement and integration of modern technologies like scientific and digital documentation
- While these approaches are promising, there is critical need for capacity building, policy reform, increased funding to ensure long-term preservation
- Strengthening collaboration between many agencies, local communities and international organizations is essential
- By balancing conservation with development and fostering a deeper sense of ownership among stakeholders, Nepal can protect its invaluable heritage for future generations, which will be the best example or a piloting for the Asia Pacific region in this regard

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Presentation by Dorji (Bhutan)

1. Climate Change and Natural Disasters:

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Presentation by Suresh Suras Shrestha (Nepal)

Information for future actions, new information

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Presentation by Tatyana Trudolyubova (Uzbekistan)

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Presentation by Atefeh Amraei (Iran)