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文化機関(ユネスコ)



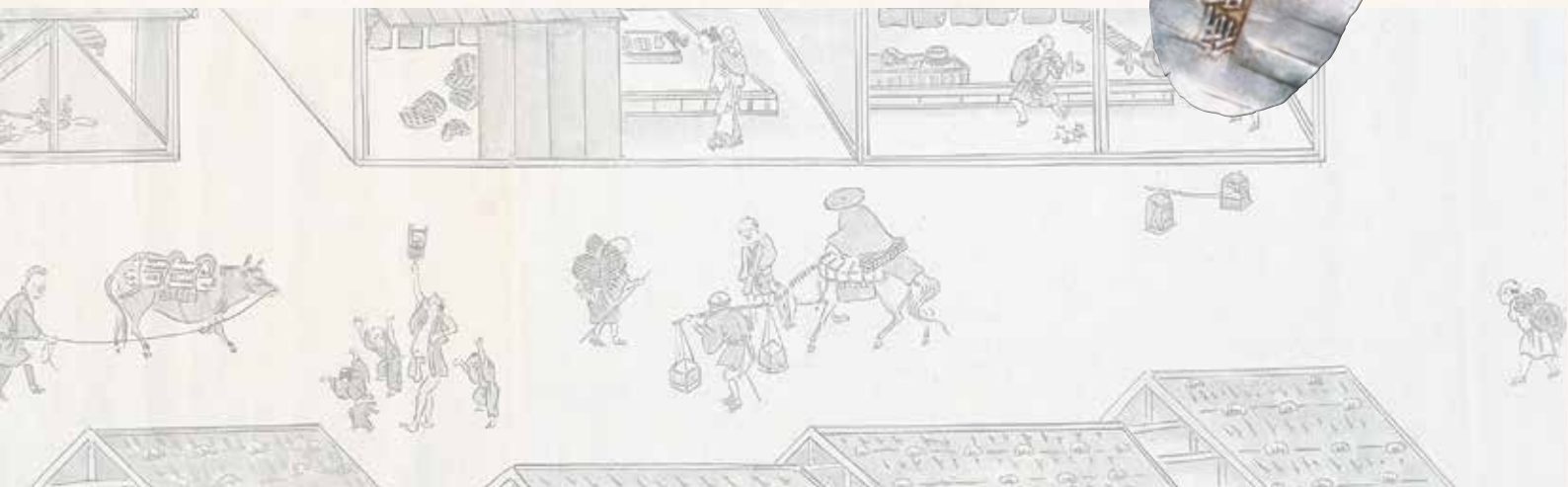
Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and  
its Cultural Landscape  
Inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2007

石見銀山遺跡とその文化的景観  
2007年世界遺産一覧表記載

# A Shining History Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape World Heritage Site

# Outline of the Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine, founded in 1527, led the world in the production of high-quality silver. The significance of the mine's history and the value of its cultural landscape resulted in its inscription onto the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2007. The Heritage Site consists of the remains of the silver mine and the mining town, the mountain transport routes from the mine to the coast, and a port town and harbours. This exemplary cultural landscape-forged by the union between relics of the mine and the abundant natural environment-yields a precious site of exceptional and universal value protected for the benefit of all humanity.



# Outstanding Universal Value of Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine

## 1 Economic and cultural exchange of global importance

During the 16th and 17th centuries, large amounts of silver produced in Japan, especially in Iwami Ginzan, circulated throughout East Asia via trade routes.

At the same time, Europeans sailed beyond their own sphere of civilization in search of gold, silver, spices and silk, and began to initiate trade with East Asia. This resulted in important economic and cultural exchange between the East and the West.

## 2 Silver production methods based on traditional techniques are well preserved






The entire mining process at Iwami Ginzan, from digging to refining, was carried out manually, and the concentration of silver smelting refineries near the mines made it possible to yield large quantities of quality silver. These traditional techniques for mining development have been well preserved at Iwami Ginzan.

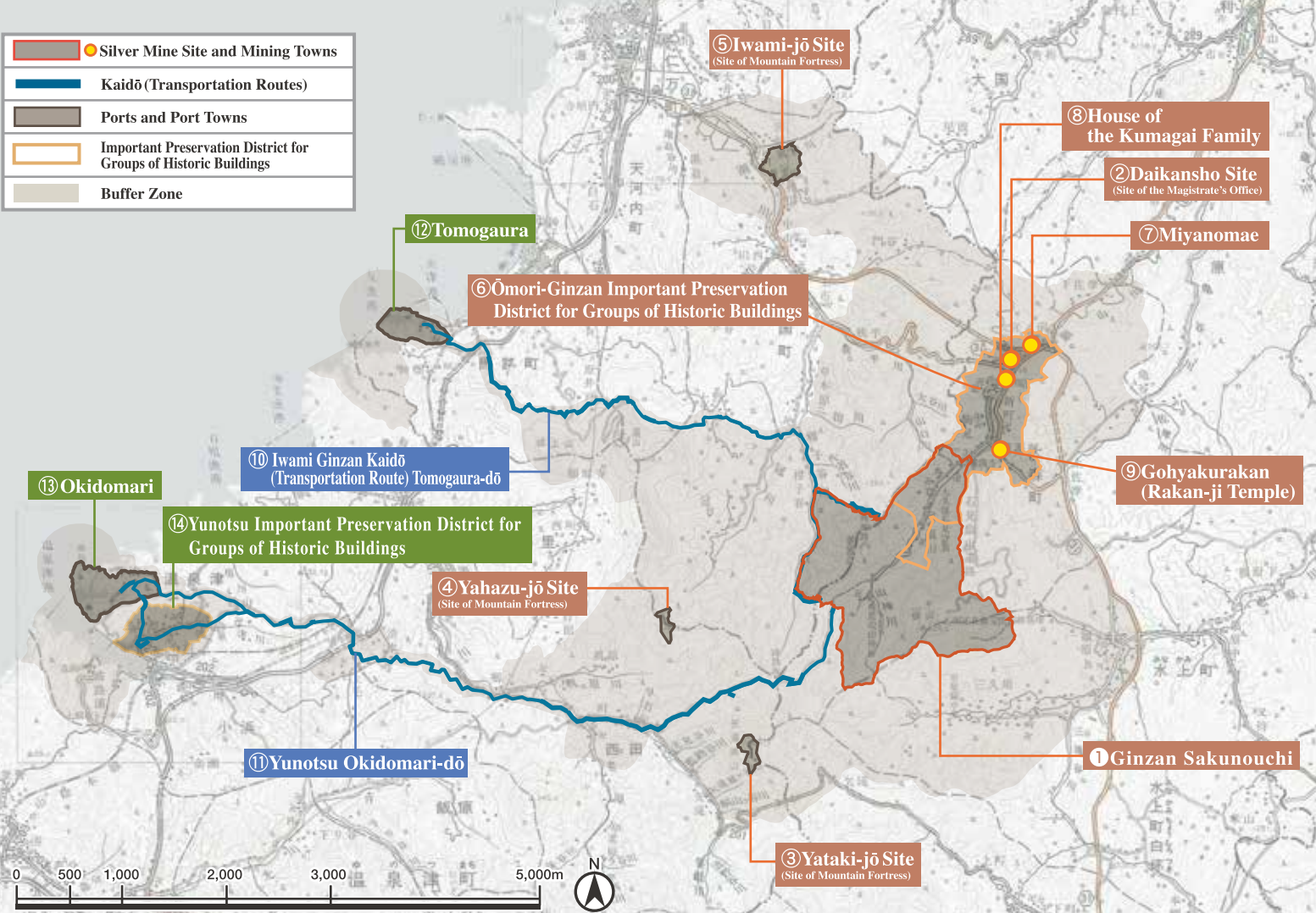
## 3 Complete industrial system, from silver production to shipment, is displayed in its entirety

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine presents an overall picture of mine management from silver production to shipment. There are remains of mines where digging and refining took place, ruins of mountain fortresses to defend the mines against enemies, and two transportation routes connecting the silver mines to ports for transporting silver ore, silver, and materials for the mines. Old towns and ports that once prospered from silver mining are now inhabited by local residents.





 Silver Mine Site and Mining Towns
 Kaidō (Transportation Routes)
 Ports and Port Towns
 Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings
 Buffer Zone



⑤ Iwami-jō Site  
(Site of Mountain Fortress)

⑧ House of the Kumagai Family

② Daikansho Site  
(Site of the Magistrate's Office)

⑦ Miyanomae

⑫ Tomogaura

⑥ Ōmori-Ginza Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings

⑩ Iwami Ginza Kaidō  
(Transportation Route) Tomogaura-dō

⑬ Okidomari

⑭ Yunotsu Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings

⑨ Gohyakurakan  
(Rakan-ji Temple)

④ Yahazu-jō Site  
(Site of Mountain Fortress)

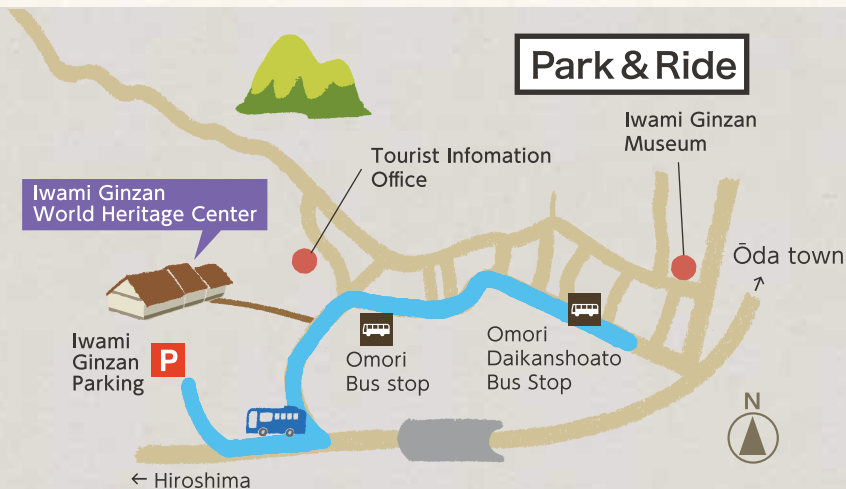
⑪ Yunotsu Okidomari-dō

① Ginzan Sakunouchi

③ Yataki-jō Site  
(Site of Mountain Fortress)

# Iwami Ginzan World Heritage Center

This facility offers comprehensive information and an enriching experience of the World Heritage Site. The exhibits will help deepen your understanding of Iwami Ginzan, through impressive displays of excavated items, replica models, video, and a bird's-eye view diorama of the entire site.



In order to provide safety, security and convenience to all visitors, we offer a park and ride system. Due to narrow roads and limited parking in the general area, we kindly request that visitors park their cars in the ample parking available at the world Heritage Center and proceed to the Omori-Ginzan area on the frequent buses provided.





### ③ Ryugenji Mabu (Mining Tunnel)

This *mabu* (mining tunnel) was developed in the 17th century. Chisel marks are visible on the walls of the lengthy section that is open to the public.



### ④ House of the Kumagai Family

The Kumagai house provided financial services, served as a purveyor to municipal officials and the Magistrate's office, and flourished as one of the most powerful merchants in town during the 19th century. The current building was rebuilt after the Great Fire of 1800. In recent years, major efforts were made to restore the building to its former glory. The hidden underground cellar is also a must see.

# Silver Mine Site and Mining Towns (Omori - Ginzan Area)



### ① Daikansho Site (Iwami Ginzan Archives & Museum)

From the 17th to 19th centuries this was the site of the magistrate's office from which the shogunate ruled. The public office built in 1902 is now used as a museum, showcasing historic materials of Iwami Ginzan.



### ② Kigami Shrine

This shrine is revered as the home of the guardian deity of Omori Town. A dragon is painted on the ceiling of the main hall, which was reconstructed in 1818. If you stand right beneath the dragon and clap your hands, you can hear the dragon roar!

# Ports and Port Towns (YUNOTSU Area)

Yunotsu (温泉津), as the meaning of the name in Japanese implies, is a port town built around hot springs. During the development of Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine it came to play an important role as a port which sustained the flow of trade, supporting both the production and consumption of the bustling mine. Now, Yunotsu is nationally designated as an Important Preservation District for Groups of Historic Buildings.







# Process of Silver Production at Iwami Ginzan

Step 1

## Digging



Inside the mine was completely dark, so miners used lanterns made out of turban shells to light their way. According to a record from 1858, there were 39 workers digging for silver ore in two shifts in the Ryugenji Mabu; 24 miners called “kanehori” dug with a chisel, and 10 ten year old boys called “tego” helped with digging work, while five workers carried out other simple tasks.



- ① Tsurunohashi
- ② Nutagiri
- ③ Yamatsuti
- ④ Yamabashi
- ⑤ Nakaishi
- ⑥ Tekko(chisel)

Step 2

## Carrying Out Silver Ore



The work of carrying out ore was called “Garayamaoi.” The workers picked up the ore from the ground and carried this out on their backs through the narrow tunnel.

Step 3

## Crushing & Sifting



The silver ore is placed on a cornerstone and crushed using a hammer. It is then placed in water and shaken to separate the silver.

Step 4

## Smelting



Lead and manganese are added to fine silver ore and melted. Impurities that rise to the surface are removed, creating an alloy of silver and lead.

Step 5

## Refining



The alloy is placed over a bed of coals and melted. The lead sinks into the coals leaving the silver on top. This process is repeated to increase the purity of the silver.