



Himeji City

WORLD HISTORICAL CITIES



Site Visit to Himeji Castle

137 Member Cities

AFRICA

Alexandria / Algiers / Fès / Giza / Luxor /
Tunis

ASIA

Andong / Baglung / Bhotekoshi / Buyeo /
Chengdu / Chiang Mai / Dujiangyan / Gongju /
Gyeongju / Hanoi / Hariharapurgadhi / Harion /
Himeji / Hue / Kaesong / Kamakura /
Kanazawa / Kathmandu / Kurunegala /
Kyoto / Lahore / Masuda / Matsue / Nanjing /
Nara / Shankharapur / Sunkoshi / Suwon /
Taichung / Tainan / Ulaanbaatar / Varanasi /
Vigan / Vyas / Wuxi / Xi'an / Yangon /
Yangzhou / Yogyakarta / Zhengzhou

EUROPE

Alba Iulia / Amsterdam / Athens / Bad Ischl /
Barcelona / Bordeaux / Bratislava / Brussels /
Budapest / Chernivtsi / Cologne /Constanța /
Córdoba / Corinth / Dublin / Edinburgh /
Florence / Geneva / Helsingborg / Iași /
Izhevsk / Kazan / Klaipeda / Kraków / Kutaisi /
Kyiv / Lisbon / Ljubljana / Lutsk / Lviv / Minsk /
Montpellier / Mtskheta / Nicosia / Niš /
Norwich / Odesa / Paris / Prague / Riga /
Rome / Santiago de Compostela / Sarajevo /
Sheki / Shusha / South East Region of Malta /
Strasbourg / Tashkent / Termez / The Hague /
Veliko Tarnovo / Venice / Vienna / Vladimir /
Zagreb

LATIN AMERICA

Cartagena / Cuenca / Cusco / Guadalajara /
Mexico City

MIDDLE EAST

Ankara / Ardabil / Baghdad / Bursa /
Hamedan / Hebron / Isfahan / Istanbul /
Jerusalem / Kashan / Kong / Konya /
Mashhad / Masouleh / Natanz / Nayshabur /
Osmangazi / Şanlıurfa / Selçuklu / Semnan /
Shiraz / Tabriz / Tehran / Yazd

NORTH AMERICA

Boston / Montreal / Quebec

PACIFIC

Ballarat / Melbourne / Norwood Payneham
and St Peters / Whanganui

Contents

01. Invitation to the 20th World Conference
02. Conference Registration
03. Call for Speakers
04. Call for Youth Program Participants
05. Excursion Destinations
06. Greetings from the New Secretary General
07. Announcement from the Secretariat

Dear Mayors of the League of Historical Cities,

It is with great pride and joy that we will welcome you all to Himeji this November 2026, as the City of Himeji has the distinguished honor of hosting the 20th World Conference of Historical Cities and welcoming participants from around the world.

Himeji joined the League of Historical Cities in 2021. In 2024, the city attended the 19th conference in person in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Under the theme “Creating a Vibrant Walkable City Centre through Sustainable Urban Mobility,” it had the valuable opportunity to learn from the diverse policies of the participating cities.

Himeji is a city rich in history and culture, epitomized by Himeji Castle, a structure that has stood for over four centuries and was the first site in Japan to be registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city also boasts a wealth of regional treasures passed down through generations, including cultural properties, festivals, traditional crafts, and local industries.

The experience of the 1995 Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake has driven Himeji City to commit to building a resilient city that safeguards the lives of its citizens and ensures these invaluable resources are preserved for future generations.

The 20th Conference will bring together historic cities from around the world under the theme “Preservation and Utilization of Cultural Heritage for a Sustainable and Resilient Future” where they can share insights and experiences on passing cultural heritage to the next generation, aiming to achieve Target 4 of SDG 11. It is our sincere hope that this experience will raise awareness of the importance of protecting cultural heritage and inspire participants to channel this awareness into efforts to create safer and more secure communities.

The World Conference of Historical Cities serves as a vital platform for historic cities to share their experiences and achievements in addressing the challenges they face. We would like to extend a warm welcome to all of you and look forward to seeing many of you in Himeji this November.

Yours Sincerely,

MAIN THEME: *Preservation and Utilization of Cultural Heritage for a Sustainable and Resilient Future*

- Conference Venue-

Arcrea HIMEJI is a large-scale convention center that opened in 2021 as a hub for promoting social interaction and collaboration in Himeji City. The 20th World Conference of Historical Cities will be held in the Exhibit Hall, with a viewing space for audience members set up in the Medium Hall. Located in the heart of the city, home to the World Heritage Site Himeji Castle, Arcrea HIMEJI serves as a center for cultural exchange and academic dissemination, providing a suitable venue for the 20th Conference.



清元秀泰
KIYOMOTO Hideyasu
Mayor of Himeji



松井孝治
MATSUI Koji
Chairperson of the LHC,
Mayor of Kyoto

KEYNOTE SPEAKER: Prof. KONO Toshiyuki

Professor Kono specializes in private international law in the global value chain and elucidating and theorizing the heritage ecosystem at Kyushu University. In 2017, he became the first Japanese national to serve as President of ICOMOS. He has been involved in the drafting of UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of UNESCO.

He was also instrumental in supporting the development of cultural heritage legislation in Bhutan, and he is actively engaged in both the theory and practice of cultural heritage protection both domestically and internationally.

In particular, his contributions to the sustainable preservation of cultural heritage are based on the concept of a 'Heritage Ecosystem', which views cultural heritage not merely as objects but as a system that intersects with local communities, the natural environment, and human activities.

In his keynote speech, he will discuss the preservation and utilization of cultural heritage and the future of historical cities.

Job Title

- Honorary Distinguished Professor of the Kyushu University Institute for Advanced Study
- Honorary President of the International Council for Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)

02

Conference Registration

Registration Deadline:

September 30, 2026 (WED)

- >> Prior to registering, please carefully check the details for both the Conference and Excursion at the following link: (<https://wchc2026-himeji.jp/en/registration/>) or QR.
- >> Excursions (one of the following: Himeji / Kyoto / Nara) are not included. Please apply separately.

Capacity:

200 people

- >> Registration will close once capacity is reached.
- >> Open to both member and non-member cities of The League of Historical Cities

Registration Fee per person:

80,000 yen (tax incl.)

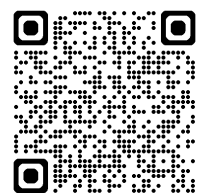
- >> Registration Fee Includes:
Conference Access (Nov 10–12 AM) / 3 Nights in Himeji (Check-in: Nov 9, Check-out: Nov 12) / 7 Meals (Nov 10: B, L, D / Nov 11: B, L, D / Nov 12: B) / Himeji Castle & Koko-en Garden Tour / Transportation from KIX to Himeji (Check the conference HP for details)

Important Note

- >> All participants have to create an account to register. All necessary procedures, such as payments, are completed through My Page.
- >> Photos/videos taken during the event may be used for promotional purposes (TV, Web, SNS, print) by the organizers and media. Completion of registration implies your consent.



**Please scan for
details!**



Round Table

Subtheme

Co-creating a Sustainable Future for Cultural Heritage Preservation

Select and apply under the following categories

- Category (R1):
Resilience through Adaptation
- Category (R2):
Action for Climate Change

Procedures & Deadlines

- Application Submission by June 30*
*Deadlines may be extended. Please check the official website.
- Presentation Outline Submission by July 31st

NOTE

- ▶ If the number of applicant cities exceeds the capacity, selection will be made based on the outline of the presentation content.
- ▶ Further details regarding the presentation format, available equipment, and other relevant information will be provided individually after the presenters have been confirmed.

Mayor's Session

Subtheme

Building a Virtuous Cycle of Cultural Heritage Preservation and Utilization

Select and apply under the following categories

- Category (M1):
Community Continuity Preservation
- Category (M2):
Engagement for the Well-being of All Individuals
- Category (M3):
Innovation for Sustainable Historic Cities

Procedures & Deadlines

- Application by July 31st
- Presentation Outline Submission by Aug. 31st

English Speech Contest

Theme

My Town That I Want to Share with the World

Eligibility

Junior and high school students (ages 12–18) residing in cities participating in the 20th World Conference of Historical Cities

Procedures & Deadlines

Participating cities are requested to compile their city's entries and submit application form by September 30

Note

- ▶ Personal information collected through the application process will be used only for the management of this contest and for no other purpose.
- ▶ Please note that your Google account email address will be recorded when using the Google Form.
- ▶ Submitted data will be stored on Google Drive servers

Art Exhibition

Theme

My Town's Treasure

Eligibility

Elementary school students (ages 6-12) residing in cities participating in the 20th World Conference of Historical Cities

Procedures & Deadlines

Participating cities are requested to compile their city's entries and submit application form by September 30

Note

- ▶ Depending on the total number of applicants, the number of artworks may be limited.
- ▶ The "Artist's Name," "Title of Artwork," and "Why I Created This Artwork" provided in the application form will be displayed together with the artwork as a caption.
- ▶ Artworks to be exhibited must be brought to Himeji by the cities attending the conference. Details such as the submission location will be provided to the applicants.

HIMEJI

Fishing Industry Tour

Himeji is a city blessed with rich natural surroundings, facing the Seto Inland Sea. This tour includes a cruise around the Ieshima Islands, located off the coast of Himeji, where participants will have the opportunity to observe local fisheries in action.

Participants will learn directly from island fishermen who are working on the front lines to address various challenges facing the sea and to promote sustainable fisheries. For lunch, participants will enjoy a Japanese-style meal featuring fresh seafood.

**Shoshazan Engyoji Temple Tour**

This tour takes participants to Engyoji Temple, located on Mount Shosha in northern Himeji, where they can experience a glimpse of the world of monks through activities such as Buddhist vegetarian cuisine and sutra copying. Founded approximately 1,000 years ago, Engyoji Temple has long welcomed visitors from across Japan. Many of its temple buildings are designated cultural properties, and participants will have the opportunity to experience Japanese history and culture in a solemn setting created by nature and historic architecture.



NARA

Nara Park

Adjacent to the World Heritage site Todaiji Temple, this vast, lush park stretches 4 km from east to west and 2 km from north to south. It is home to over 1,400 wild deer a national natural treasure that roam freely and are cherished as "divine messengers of the gods." This is a globally unique spot where visitors can interact with the deer and feed them "shikasenbei" (deer crackers).

**Heijo Palace Site**

This is the former site of the Imperial Palace of Heijo-kyo, which flourished as the capital of Japan 1,300 years ago. The vast grounds feature reconstructed structures such as the majestic Suzaku Gate and the Great Audience Hall, both rebuilt on an awe-inspiring scale. Here, you can experience the lifestyle of the ancient imperial family and nobility and feel the very beginnings of the Japanese nation. Nara City, the birthplace of Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi, provides a unique connection between Japan's ancient heritage and the present day. This is a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Yakushiji Temple**

Yakushiji Temple is a UNESCO World Heritage site with over 1,300 years of history. It is widely renowned for its vibrant vermilion-lacquered complex and the East Pagoda—a three-storied

structure often called "frozen music" and praised as one of the most beautiful towers in Japan. The temple enshrines Yakushi Nyorai (a National Treasure), the Buddha of Healing, to whom visitors pray for health and recovery.

KYOTO

Nijo-jo Castle

Nijo-jo Castle has witnessed some of the most important events in Japanese history in the 400 years since it was built. The castle was completed in 1603 on the orders of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder and first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867). Tokugawa Ieyasu unified Japan after a long period of civil war, and ushered in a period of over 260 years of peace and prosperity. The government that Ieyasu established lasted for fifteen generations, and was one of the longest periods of stability and prosperity in Japanese history. The 400-year-old buildings of the Ninomaru-goten Palace, the Kara-mon Gate and the Ninomaru Garden, are unique survivals from one of the golden ages of Japanese architecture and design, the early Edo period, known for its ornate architecture and magnificent interiors.



Kyoto City Nijo-jo Castle Office

Ninnaji Temple

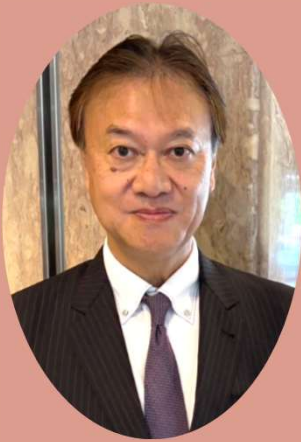
Ninnaji Temple, designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994, is not only committed to the ongoing preservation and restoration of its cultural properties but is also advancing a variety of initiatives to share the value of these cultural assets to the present day through special opening, cultural events, unique overnight experiences, and the development of new viewing platforms.



These efforts to protect and restore cultural properties while communicating their value to visitors provide an example of a virtuous cycle between preservation and utilization.

Kinkaku-ji (Temple of the Golden Pavilion)

We'll also take you to Kinkaku-ji Temple, which was designated a World Heritage Site in 1994.



牧 敬二

MAKI Keiji
Secretary General

Dear Colleagues,

I succeeded my predecessor, Mr. Takuya Nishimatsu, as Secretary-General, assuming the position on April 1, 2026.

Currently, conflicts and environmental issues are becoming increasingly severe around the world, shaking the very foundations of international society. Especially in these turbulent times, the significance of 'historical cities'—which have long tackled the universal challenge of 'Preservation and Development'—interconnecting beyond borders to serve as bridges for mutual understanding has never been greater.

The 20th World Conference of Historical Cities (Himeji City)—being held in Japan for the first time since 2010—provides an excellent opportunity to strengthen our ties. Taking this important milestone as a catalyst, I am determined to further enhance our partnership among member cities and to exert my utmost efforts toward safeguarding historical heritage and world peace. I sincerely request your continued support and cooperation.

Notice on the Election of Principal Officers

The terms of the current Principal Officers will end at the General Assembly to be held during the 20th World Conference in Himeji. The next Principal Officers shall be elected from among the Member Cities by the General Assembly.

Accordingly, Member Cities wishing to stand for election as Principal Officers should notify the Secretariat of their intention by September 30, 2026.

Please note that the tenure of office shall be from the day of their election to the day of the General Assembly meeting to be held four years later, at which the successor to the posts are elected. The Principal Officers shall be eligible for re-election.

Directors shall attend the Board of Directors Meeting called by the Chairperson once a year.

- Reference -

Covenant

Chapter IV Principal Officers

Article 10 : Principal Officers

1. The League shall have the following principal officers;

- (1) a Chairperson;
- (2) two Vice-Chairpersons;
- (3) seven Directors, two of whom shall be the Vice-Chairpersons; and
- (4) an Auditor.

2. The principal officers shall be elected from among the Mayors.

