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## Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine (Japan) No C1246

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### 1. BASIC DATA

*State Party:* Japan

*Name of property:*

Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape

*Location:*

Shimane Prefecture, Ohda City District

*Inscription:* 2007

*Brief Description:*

The Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine in the south-west of Honshu Island is a cluster of mountains, rising to 600 m and interspersed by deep river valleys featuring the archaeological remains of large-scale mines, smelting and refining sites and mining settlements worked between the 16th and 20th centuries. The site also features routes used to transport silver ore to the coast, and port towns from where it was shipped to Korea and China. The mines contributed substantially to the overall economic development of Japan and south-east Asia in the 16th and 17th centuries, prompting the mass production of silver and gold in Japan. The mining area is now heavily wooded. Included in the site are fortresses, shrines, parts of Kaidô transport routes to the coast, and three port towns, Tomogaura, Okidomari and Yunotsu, from where the ore was shipped.

*Date of ICOMOS' approval of this report:* 17 March 2010

### 2. ISSUES RAISED

*Background:*

The nominated property is a serial nomination of fourteen sites that demonstrate three aspects of silver mining production and transportation carried out on and near Mount Sennoyama and Mount Yôgaisan between the 16th and 20th centuries. The property comprises the remains of nine silver mine sites relating to the Iwami Ginzan mine, with archaeological evidence of administration buildings and fortresses; shrines and cemeteries, together with associated settlements, some still partly inhabited (Ômori-Ginzan); two Kaidô transportation routes to the coast with remains of wayside shrines, and three port towns (Tomogaura, Okidomari and Yunotsu) from where the ore was

shipped. The different areas of the inscribed property are joined together and surrounded by the buffer zone. The area of the inscribed property is 442 ha and the buffer zone area is 3,221ha.

The Advisory Body's evaluation of the property at the time of inscription suggested some modifications that could be made to the property boundaries as follows.

- 1) The nominated area boundary around the Ômori-Ginzan settlement was tightly drawn around the town area. The distinctively linear town stretching along the valley floor has developed because of the flanking ranges, which are a dominant feature of the town as part of a cultural landscape. Consideration should be given to including the flanking ranges, to the ridgeline either side, as part of the nominated area.
- 2) At the harbour at Yunotsu, consideration should be given to including the inner harbour to the high water mark as well as the presumed historic landing area, in the nominated area, as at the other two ports (Okidomari and Tomogaura).
- 3) The old Kaidô transportation routes continue in use as pedestrian or vehicle routes. Some sections of the routes display apparently early features and materials such as drains and steps; these have a high degree of authenticity and are included in the nominated area. Sections that were damaged by subsequent works have not been included as nominated areas, although the alignment of the routes is included within the buffer zone. The routes are dotted with stone stupas, small shrines, small Buddha halls, etc., which were built by people who passed along the route, or by local citizens.

*Modification:*

Ômori-Ginzan

Re-examination of past archaeological surveys of the flanking mountainsides has enabled identification of remains that have clarified the way the slopes were used and their relationship with the daily life of the residents of the mining towns at the time the silver mine was in operation. The remains include shrines, temples, cemeteries, sites of terraced farmland, and ruins of community roads that connected these sites with the mining towns. There are also stone walls, steps, drainage gutters and stone quarries.

One of the oldest gravestones bears the date 1621. Historical records indicate that the population of the town increased in the 18<sup>th</sup> century to well beyond its current built capacity, and this is borne out by the extensive settlement and cemetery remains on the slopes above the town, now covered by forest.

The proposed expansion of the current nominated area of Ômori-Ginzan will encompass these remains and the

topography of the town at its peak population by including the mountainsides as relict landscape around the town. The ridgelines correspond essentially with the traditional boundaries of Ōmori town, which was the extension of the Ginzan settlement, to the north-east. The additional area proposed is 129.9ha, an increase of around 36%.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed enlargement is justified as a minor modification enclosing the hidden part of the settlement and not affecting the Outstanding Universal Value. Although large in area it does not constitute an extension of the property in the sense of paragraph 164 of the *Operational Guidelines*.

#### Yunotsu

Additional research studies carried out since 2007 have identified the small promontory, beach and inner harbour as the original mooring and landing place at Yunotsu for the Iwami Ginzan mine. The proposed expansion of the current nominated area of Yunotsu will encompass this area, completing the integrity of Yunotsu as one of the three key ports for export of silver from the mine. The additional area proposed is 2.9ha, an increase of 8.6%.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed enlargement is justified as a minor modification incorporating a key element of the port area and reinforcing the Outstanding Universal Value.

#### Kaidō transportation routes: Tomogauradō and Yunotsu-Okidomaridō

Further research on the Kaidō has identified 4 additional sections on the Tomogauradō route and 3 additional sections of the Yunotsu-Okidomaridō route, which on the basis of their record in 19<sup>th</sup> century cadastral maps, the physical remains of adjoining sections and/or the existence of the original road surface beneath the current surface, can be restored. The proposed addition of these sections to the Kaidō nominated area will increase the protected length of the routes from 65.21% of their total length to 73.51%. The actual area of the proposed increase is 0.25 ha, an increase of 9%.

ICOMOS considers that the proposed enlargement is justified as a minor modification extending the integrity of the property and reinforcing the Outstanding Universal Value.

The whole area of the proposed expanded nominated area is owned by Ōda City and protected by municipal ordinances of Ōda City and the National Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties. The additions will further endorse the Statement of Outstanding Universal Value for the property as inscribed by the World Heritage Committee's Decision 31COM8B.26. The proposed total combined increase in the area of the inscribed property is 86.77 (excluding areas of overlap), which is 19.6%.

The buffer zone boundary remains the same, but its area will be reduced by the area that was formerly buffer zone

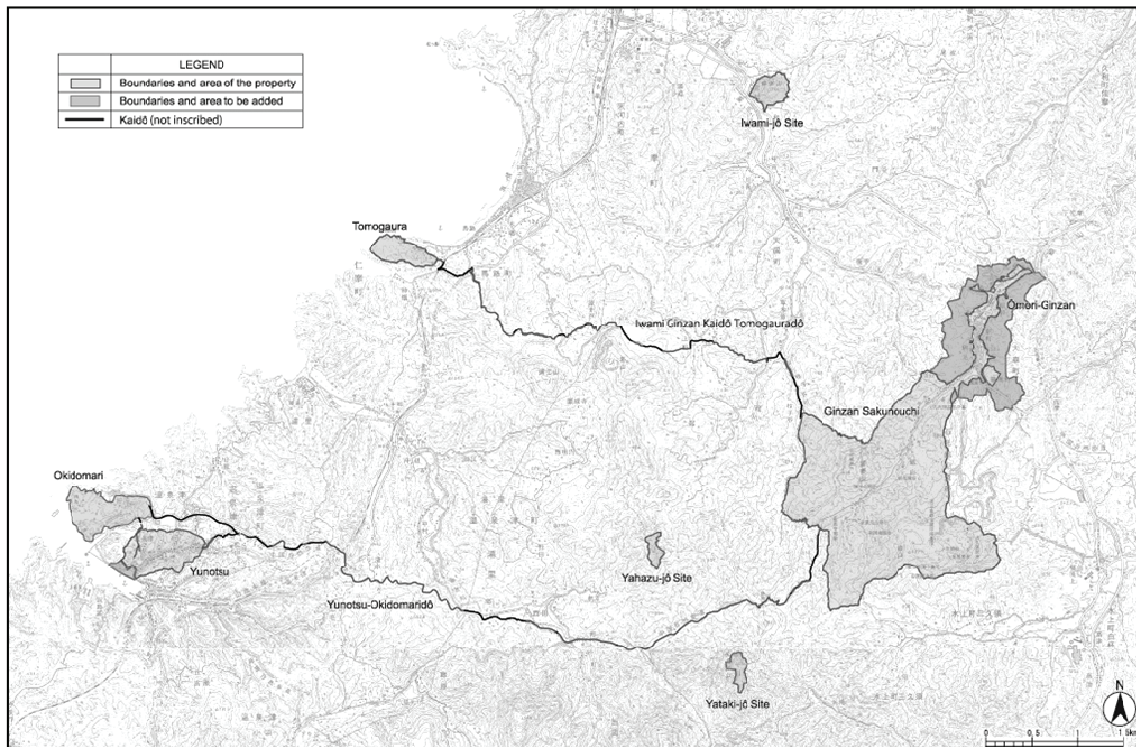
and is now proposed to become nominated area: 86.76ha, which is 2.7% of the former buffer zone area.

The proposal includes a statement of progress on the recommendations regarding management that were included in Decision 31COM8B.26, and Ōda City Preservation Plans for the Ōmori-Ginzan and Yunotsu Preservation Districts for Groups of Historic Buildings.

### 3. ICOMOS RECOMMENDATIONS

#### *Recommendation with respect to inscription*

ICOMOS recommends that the proposed minor modification to the boundary of the Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape, Japan, be **approved**.



Map showing the revised boundaries of the property