



## ICOM UK Travel Bursary Report 2019

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### ICOM Kyoto 2019, the 25<sup>th</sup> General Conference

1-7 September 2019

Kyoto International Conference Centre, Japan

This is the first time I participated a conference organised by ICOM. The learning experience was marvellous and I would like to share with/cascade to my students (Chinese Cultural Heritage Management, a validated Master programme by Middlesex University) and the community groups in the UK.

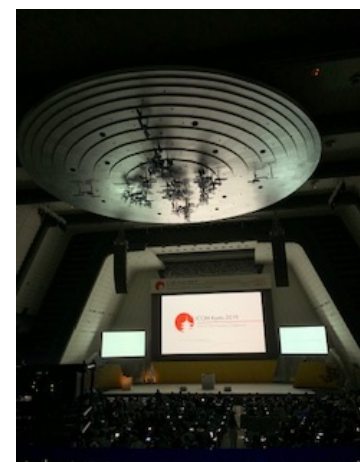
Ming-Ai's MA programme was launched in 2015, after the completion of a 4-year oral history project, which was funded by the then Heritage Lottery Fund – *British Chinese Workforce Heritage Project* ([www.britishchineseheritagecentre.org.uk](http://www.britishchineseheritagecentre.org.uk)). This project examined and investigated the history of the British Chinese migrants and their settlements' experience, and transformed the collected data into various exhibitions in collaboration with different local museums. One of the project outcomes was to develop a MA programme, with the emphasis on Chinese cultural heritage management, and to train more culture heritage workers.

Therefore, when I received the travel bursary from ICOM UK, I was glad to be one of the 3,000 plus international participants, to go to Kyoto – a beautiful heritage site to start the learning journey.



One of our teaching modules is about digital application in heritage management, and this conference had developed an App for all the conference participants. Firstly, this App included the venue maps, schedules of the total 554 sessions for you to choose (could be personalised to your preferences), the information of the Museum Fair and even details of the social programmes were provided. With this App you could put the "conference schedule book" at the hotel. Secondly, it had "personal profile" function, which could be used for finding other attendees. However, it seemed that not every attendee had uploaded his or her personal profiles there; it was a shame because we were meeting new people every day, and a good promotion of this App would help the attendees to keep in touch. Lastly, the App had the "evaluation" function, which would be very useful for the organiser to collect feedbacks.

Although the conference was scheduled between 1 and 7 September 2019, the core conference programme started from 2 September for non-committee members for 3 days. There were keynote speakers each day and it was not an easy job to decide which plenary sessions to attend (or to give up), luckily abstract of the speaker's presentation was provided online for those non-attendees. The various topics of the presentations provided a rich choice and it is a good opportunity for students to expand their knowledge and to acquire ideas of research areas. I will definitely encourage my students to attend similar conference in the future.



Subjects were based on the divisions of sub-committees, there were 32 international committees focusing on different subject areas; smaller scale workshops enabled participants for discussions.

Off-site meetings of ICOM sub-committees were arranged on the 5<sup>th</sup> day, 5 September. My sub-committee is Committee for Education and Cultural Action (CECA) and its off-site meeting was arranged in Wakayama, a 120-km south of Kyoto city, in collaboration with Wakayama Prefecture. It was an early start to visit 3 places in one day. In the morning we visited the Wakayama Prefecture Kii-Fudoki-No-Oka Museum of Archaeology and Folklore, and explored the Tumulus Group from the 5<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> CE, and their burials mounds. During lunch time session we had the opportunity to listen to the presentations by high school students on World Tsunami Awareness Day in Wakayama, after an Award Ceremony (The Best Practice Award and The Research Award). After that we had ample time to explore the Wakayama Prefectural Museum and the Museum of Modern Art, Wakayama.



Burials mounds, Wakayama Prefecture  
Kii-Fudoki-No-Oka Museum of  
Archaeology and Folklore



Delegates from different countries  
at CECA sub-committee lunch



Wakayama Prefectural Museum

I was told that organised excursions were an ICOM General Conference tradition, and this time more than 50 tours had been specifically arranged for ICOM Kyoto 2019. These excursions were arranged on the 6<sup>th</sup> day. There weren't many tours left when I booked the tours and I had picked C-17 (Traditional Crafts and Temple Conservation). This tour was to visit Kyoto Imperial Palace, Kyoto Guest House, Honryu-Ji Temple, and Toji. It was a hot day and we were outdoor most of the time (I walked over 20,000 steps that day) but the experience was fantastic. I believe the most memorable visit that day was to Honryu-Ji Temple, because we were able to walk through the current conservation site and to see how the works have been carried out in person.



Kyoto Imperial Palace



Conservation site, Honryu-Ji Temple



The shape of Toji was used as  
the design of ICOM Kyoto  
conference logo

The Museum Fair was another delight. Conference participants could have a focal venue to experience different cultures and learnt what problems were encountered and how they were solved within the museum world.

For examples, a cute little robot wearing kimono cat walking the stage, earthquake object-protection equipment, Noh performance, different types of museum applications and technologies, etc. I found myself did not have sufficient time to explore every exhibition. Participants were racing for time in queuing for lunch boxes and checking out the stalls during lunchtime.



Robots that shows kimonos and dancing around the stage



Lunch time Noh performance

Furthermore, full term participants were given a 7-day's bus and subway pass. There were also heritage sites and museums entrance free for ICOM conference badge holders during the conference period. It allowed us to explore the city if you had energy left, or to skip some sessions – with the packed schedule we wouldn't have spare time to enjoy the unlimited travel pass. It will be good for the next organiser to consider an extra day pass for participants to use before or after the conference period.

The social programmes provided were bonus to those travelling to Kyoto the first time. The opening party at the main venue allowed us to mingle with the delegations from different countries. Social events at Nijo-jo Castle, Kitayama, Okazaki areas during the evenings provided ample opportunities to participants in exploring Japanese culture and heritage in addition to the busy conference schedule. The closing ceremony and party at the Kyoto National Museum drew a perfect full stop and the official hand-over to the organiser of ICOM Prague 2022. I wish I would be able to join again in 3 years' time, and to bring along students to have another learning journey.



Opening Party,  
Kyoto Conference Centre



Social Event at Nijo-jo Castle



Closing Ceremony and Party,  
Kyoto National Museum