



## Threads of Conservation

Social fabric • Fabric and place • Conserving fabric

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### Dr Tanya Park

Tanya recently completed her PhD in the World Heritage Department of the University of Tsukuba, Japan, following a background in anthropology and architecture in New Zealand. Her PhD research centred upon the preservation of historic timber architecture in Japan, with a focus on the associated intangible skills and the authenticity of materials. Part of the research also included Norwegian preservation and again the intangible skills and knowledge pertaining to the preservation process.

### Architectural Wooden Preservation in Japan: Gokoku-ji Temple and Intangible skills

#### Paper Abstract

Architectural Preservation in Japan is discussed through the study and observation of Gekko-den pavilion at Gokoku-ji Temple in central Tokyo. Gekko-den's importance lies in its affiliation with Onjo-ji Temple, founded in early Heian period, 672, which has been designated a national Treasure of Japan, and the head temple of the Tendaijimon Buddhist sect.

Preservation of Gekko-den began in November 2008 and continued until October 2013. Through the process of preservation at Gekko-den pavilion current issues are brought to the fore, including access to preservation materials necessary for repair and maintenance. Another main issue is access to a skilled knowledge base of craftsmen who hold the understanding and expertise pertaining to the material and to the intricate and complex designs surrounding large Japanese wooden heritage structures. Increasingly intangible skills are held up as being necessary to the survival of preservation, which is unequivocally true in wooden preservation where the importance lies in a deep understanding of the wooden material, and understanding of the structure.

This presentation will discuss some detail of the preservation but will focus on skills and knowledge transfer.