



Editorial

Civilizational Responsibility of Preserving Sacred Heritage

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Abstract

Sacred heritage sites hold a special place among the world's cultural treasures. While revered faith and devotion often protect them, they remain vulnerable to pressures of pilgrimage, development, interfaith tensions, and conflict. From Ayodhya to Lumbini, Bethlehem to Mecca, these spaces embody humanity's timeless search for righteousness, enlightenment, love, and divine truth. Their preservation is not just about conserving monuments and ruins but also about safeguarding living traditions—rituals, music, festivals, and oral lore—that give them meaning. With the help of informatics, these fragile, intangible legacies can be recorded and sustained, ensuring that future generations inherit both the spirit and the stones of humanity's sacred journey.

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Among the world's heritage sites, those rooted in religion hold a unique place of importance. Their sacredness and the reverence of believers often shield them from neglect or intentional destruction. Yet, they remain vulnerable—overwhelmed by the influx of pilgrims, strained by the expansion of facilities, and historically threatened by rival faiths or foreign rulers who sought to erase symbols of belief. Despite such challenges, religious heritage sites endure as milestones of humanity's cultural and spiritual journey, demanding protection, restoration, and conservation by progressive societies.

Among these sacred spaces, the birthplaces of Rama (Ayodhya), Buddha (Lumbini), Jesus (Bethlehem), and Prophet Muhammad

(Mecca) are not simply historical sites; they are living symbols of traditions that shaped civilizations. Each embodies a universal quest—for righteousness, enlightenment, love, and divine truth. Pilgrimage to these places connects believers not only to their own faith but also to humanity's larger, shared pursuit of meaning.

To harm or desecrate such sites is to inflict wounds far deeper than those on stone or soil. It is to rupture the spiritual memory of communities and to diminish humanity as a whole. When any one of these heritage spaces is destroyed, the loss belongs not to a single faith but to the human family collectively, for we are custodians of one another's sacred histories. Healing such injustices requires courage, compassion,

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and recognition that safeguarding these places is integral to safeguarding human dignity itself.

The case of Ayodhya illustrates this truth. For centuries, it stood as a site of grievance and unresolved hurt. Its resolution, achieved through the framework of law, dialogue, and acceptance by all parties, not only restored the sacred site to its community but also opened a path toward reconciliation. This act of rectification transcends the rebuilding of a temple—it is a rebuilding of trust. It affirms that peace and coexistence are possible when justice is pursued with sincerity and embraced with respect.

Yet, Ayodhya's significance goes beyond faith alone. The city's legacy, woven over three millennia, is preserved in literature, philosophy, art, music, and lived traditions. Archaeological evidence once revealed twelve layers of heritage structures, each marking stages in the evolution of Hinduism and Indian civilization. These layers, however, are now permanently sealed beneath new constructions, never again accessible to excavation or direct research. What has been lost underscores an urgent responsibility: to harness the tools of informatics to digitally recover, reconstruct, and preserve Ayodhya's layered heritage. Through archives, virtual reconstructions, and digital platforms, the story of Rama and the cultural journey of Ayodhya can be safeguarded—not just for the faithful, but for scholars, citizens, and future generations worldwide.

In this spirit, our journal has consistently explored Ayodhya's heritage from new perspectives - publishing work on cognitive informatics, pilgrimage networks, and intangible traditions. In this volume, we

continue that effort by presenting translated transcripts of two historic speeches delivered by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Ram Temple, during the foundation-laying and the Prana Pratishtha installation. In them, Rama emerges as the living confluence of cultural memory, spiritual ethos, human values, and universal ideals, reaffirming Ayodhya's place as both a sacred abode and a source of inspiration.

This issue also features a study by Prof. Richard Hay and his team, who trace three millennia of Rama heritage across philosophy, religion, literature, politics, art, and ethics—highlighting its influence not only across Asia but also on global traditions. Their research reminds us of the enduring depth of Ayodhya's legacy and of what has already been irretrievably sealed. It challenges us to recognize our civilizational duty: to employ Informatics - AI and allied digital methods and scholarship in safeguarding this inheritance, ensuring that Ayodhya endures as both a sacred city for the faithful and a living heritage hub where tradition and technology converge for the progress of humanity.

Beyond the physical structures and archaeological layers discussed in the papers' the intangible heritage of sacred sites - rituals, music, festivals, and oral traditions - represents a living dimension of culture that is equally vital to preserve. Using modern digital methods, these ephemeral expressions can be recorded and documented, ensuring that the practices and experiences of communities are safeguarded alongside stone and soil. Informatics can help to protect cultural memory and allow future generations to connect with the richness of human spirituality and creativity across time and space.