

## Report on the Symposium in FY 2015

Commemorating the partnership agreement between the Shikoku Henro and the Routes of Santiago de Compostela

### **“To Make the Shikoku Henro a World Heritage Site” International Symposium**

- Date and Time: Sunday, February 14, 2016. 1:30~4:30 p.m.  
Venue: Sunport Takamatsu Kagawa International Conference Hall  
(Sunport 2-1, Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture)
- Program:
- Keynote Lecture: Concepts of World Cultural Heritage and the Outstanding Universal Value of Pilgrimage Routes  
Yukio Nishimura (Director, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, the University of Tokyo)
  - Panel Discussion: Attractive Features of the Shikoku Henro and World Heritage Program  
Facilitator: Nobuko Inaba (Professor, University of Tsukuba)  
Panelists: Yukio Nishimura (Director, Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, the University of Tokyo)  
Francisco Singul (Director, Xacobeo Cultural Division, Galicia Region, Spain)  
Shinichi Shimizu (Professor, Tokushima Bunri University)  
Hiroshi Tsujibayashi (Director, Wakayama Prefecture World Heritage Center)  
Hikaru Ebesu (Professor, Ehime University)
- Organizers: Organized by: The Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council  
Cooperation given by: NPO Network for Shikoku Henro Pilgrimage and Hospitality  
Kagawa Prefectural Assembly Japan-Europe Friendship Federation

#### ■ Outline

On Sunday, February 14, 2016, the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council organized the first international symposium aimed at the inscription of the Shikoku henro on the World Heritage List at Sunport Takamatsu Kagawa International Conference Hall in Takamatsu, Kagawa Prefecture. The event, held with the theme “To Make the Shikoku Henro a World Heritage Site,” commemorated the partnership agreement signed in September 2015



between the four prefectures of Shikoku and the Galicia region, Spain, home to pilgrimage routes already registered as a World Heritage site. The symposium was participated in by about 160 people, including researchers of the Routes of Santiago de Compostela in Spain and the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (a World Heritage site in Japan), as well as other specialists in the World Heritage program. Based on comparative studies of views and initiatives taken by parties related to these properties, the participants held lively discussions on characteristics of the Shikoku henro and its outstanding universal value, which should be testified to in order to register it as a World Heritage site. The symposium provided an optimal opportunity to promote understanding of the project to inscribe the Shikoku henro on the World Heritage List, a project that should involve all people in Shikoku by incorporating a broad, global perspective.

## ■ Greetings by Related Parties



Chairman Akira Chiba of the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council (Chairman of the Shikoku Economic Federation)

The symposium began with a greeting by Chairman Akira Chiba of the council, who explained that concerted efforts were being made by residents in Shikoku to promote global recognition of the Shikoku henro, which has been developed and preserved by common people, and to pass on the treasured asset of Shikoku to future generations. He said that the partnership agreement with the Galicia Region could help the registration of the Shikoku henro, expressing his hope that the symposium would mark an important step toward its registration as a World Heritage site and that the friendship between Shikoku and the Galicia Region, Spain, would become even stronger.

Following Chairman Chiba's greeting, His Excellency Gonzalo de Benito, Spanish Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Japan, delivered a message in which he said that Santiago de Compostela and the Shikoku henro had common points in their historic origins and that friendship between Spain and Japan was being deepened day by day. Next, Manager Hiroki Kato of the Monuments and Site Division, Cultural Properties Department, Agency for Cultural Affairs, stated that the Agency for Cultural Affairs would continue to support the efforts of Shikoku as much as possible. Mr. Osamu Tsujimura, Chair person of the Kagawa Prefectural Assembly, pointed out various challenges in registration of the property, but he expressed his expectation that the symposium would achieve a great outcome.



Vice Chairman Keizo Hamada of the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council (Governor of Kagawa Prefecture)

In the closing ceremony, Governor Keizo Hamada of Kagawa Prefecture, which hosted the symposium, thanked the participants for joining lively discussions, which he believed would surely contribute to the registration of the property as a World Heritage site. He also asked the participants for their continued support and cooperation in promoting the campaign to inscribe the Shikoku henro on the World Heritage List.

## ■ Keynote Lecture: Concepts of World Cultural Heritage and the Outstanding Universal Value of Pilgrimage Routes

As a keynote lecturer, Director Yukio Nishimura of the Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, the University of Tokyo, who also serves as a member of the council's Committee for Evidence of Outstanding Universal Value, discussed recent trends of the World Heritage program and views of pilgrimage and cultural routes as follows:

“Although there used to be international conventions to protect cultural properties at the time of armed conflicts even before the establishment of the World Heritage Convention, a significant turning point was the construction of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt. To save ancient Egyptian temples from inundation by the dam construction, an international cooperation project was initiated, which led to the spread of the concept of World Heritage. As a result, the World Heritage Convention was established, which was the first framework to protect heritage sites at peace time.”

“In recent years, the range of properties included on the World Heritage List has become increasingly diversified. In addition to magnificent cathedrals and other historic monuments, various properties whose value had not been well recognized before are being added to the list today, such as terraced rice paddies, railway roads, modern cities, and modern buildings. Underlying this trend is a broadened concept of World Heritage. Stepping forward from simply protecting assets of humanity from destruction, related parties have begun to recognize the importance of mutually appreciating cultures of the world while accepting their diversity.”



Director Yukio Nishimura of the Research Center for Advanced Science and Technology, the University of Tokyo

“In consideration of the outstanding universal value of pilgrimage routes, those already on the World Heritage Lists include the Routes of Santiago de Compostela, the pilgrimage routes in the Kii Mountain Range, the Silver Route in Mexico, and the Silk Roads. In addition to being paths of religious faith, they also feature cultural interaction and propagation. These properties comprise *lines* represented by roads, *points* represented by facilities, and the *invisible form* of the faith that enticed people to go on pilgrimage. Of the three components, intangible faith is the most difficult to describe. Accordingly, it is important to create an appropriate narrative on various forms of faith to present the outstanding universal value of a nominated property. In addition, it is necessary to clearly show how respective component parts contribute to the universal value. In the Kii Mountain Range, travelers on the pilgrimage routes feel they are purified by walking amid natural settings. In Sacro Monte in Italy, chapels dotted along the route have mural paintings and other works to deepen visitors’ understanding of Christian teachings. In this way, there are many forms of pilgrimage. It is therefore important to stress unique features of the Shikoku henro as compared with other pilgrimage routes by showing concrete examples.”

Finally, Mr. Nishimura introduced initiatives to improve the environment of Mt. Fuji, stating, “It is important that efforts to register a property as a World Heritage site be associated with activities to improve landscapes and the natural environment.” He suggested the project in Shikoku should incorporate this viewpoint.

#### ■ Panel Discussion: Attractive Features of the Shikoku Henro and World Heritage Program



From left: Facilitator: Nobuko Inaba; Panelists: Yukio Nishimura, Francisco Singul, Shinichi Shimizu, Hiroshi Tsujibayashi and Hikaru Ebesu (Titles omitted)

In the beginning, respective panelists commented on the theme.

Mr. Francisco Singul, a researcher of the Routes of Santiago de Compostela, stated that the pilgrimage routes in Spain had many common points with the Shikoku henro. He suggested, “It is important to claim the value of Buddhist temples’ architectural design, which has matching value to that of churches, and then to stress the role of the Shikoku henro as a backbone of Japanese culture.”

Next, Professor Hikaru Ebesu of Ehime University explained the history of the Shikoku henro, which originated as ascetic training of Buddhist monks and later transformed into pilgrimage of common lay people. He explained that the henro comprised circular pilgrimage routes developed by common people for the sake of common people and had been supported by *o-settai* (offering support) offered by local residents in Shikoku. He said: “The essence of the Shikoku henro is faith in and devotion to the Buddhist priest, Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi), nurtured in Shikoku. Pilgrims developed the faith that the journey with the Buddhist saint would lead to their rebirth.”

Professor Shinichi Shimizu of Tokushima Bunri University suggested that roadside tea houses, Daishidō (a building that has a statue of Kōbō Daishi) on the temple grounds, and temple towns could be presented as component parts that bear testimonies to the universal value. He suggested the need of valuing the modern period, stating, “If we are to specify the target period of the property to protect as the time when the majority of pilgrims traveled on foot, when traditional landscapes and natural settings were preserved, and when the practice of *o-settai* was common, these conditions are applicable to the times from the Edo period (1603–1868) to the early Showa era (1926–1989).” As a model case, he also introduced activities of

Hiraizumi, where related parties continue academic research and discussions to seek inscription of additional properties on the World Heritage List.

Director Hiroshi Tsujibayashi of the Wakayama Prefecture World Heritage Center explained the process taken before the inscription of the Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range on the World Heritage List, stressing that the partnership between the three related prefectures played a vital role. He said: “At the time of the registration as a World Heritage site, many roads, which comprised the major component parts, were not well preserved. To restore the roads, we built a system to involve volunteers, who still continue to engage in activities. To preserve the World Heritage site, we are seeking a way to sustain a regional culture in joint efforts with community residents.”

Following the comments by respective panelists, they discussed various features of the Shikoku henro, including the circular form of the pilgrimage routes, the living tradition of pilgrimage and o-settai, and the relationship between the pilgrimage and the natural environment in Shikoku. The panelists confirmed the need of selecting tangible historical assets to represent these intangible features. Referring to the Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range, where signposts and other traces of human activities along the routes represent pilgrims’ faith and prayers, Director Yukio Nishimura suggested that similar objects along the Shikoku henro could represent intangible aspects, such as prayers and salvation of the soul.

Based on the panel discussion, as the facilitator, Professor Nobuko Inaba of Tsukuba University suggested as follows: “It is important to delve into local history, determine the authentic value of the property based on thorough studies, and prepare an appropriate narrative based on facts. To add the Shikoku henro on the World Heritage List, it is essential to identify its universal value while at the same time taking protective measures of the property.” She concluded that related governments must continue surveys and research in joint efforts.