

Report on the Symposium in FY 2017

Many Minds Many Hearts One Shikoku

Symposium to Promote World Heritage Registration of the Eighty-Eight Temples and Pilgrimage Routes of Shikoku

- Date and Time: Sunday, October 29, 2017. 1:30~4:00 p.m.
Venue: Sunport Takamatsu Kagawa International Conference Hall
(Sunport 2-1, Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture)
- Program: ■ Keynote Lecture: Recent Trends of World Heritage Program
Koichiro Matsuura (Representative of *Tsuyoi Bunka wo Tsukuru Kai* (Association to Create a Robust Culture), former Director-General of UNESCO)
- Panel Discussion: Outstanding Universal Value of the Shikoku Henro—Circular Pilgrimage Routes Unparalleled in the World—
Facilitator: Yukio Nishimura (Professor, the University of Tokyo)
Panelists: Kunio Iwatsuki (Professor Emeritus, University of Tokyo)
Takayoshi Igarashi (Professor Emeritus, Hosei University)
Masaaki Oishi (Executive Director, Vice President, Naruto University of Education)
- Organizers: Organized by: The Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council
Cooperation given by: *Tsuyoi Bunka wo Tsukuru Kai* (Association to Create a Robust Culture), Shikoku Henro Japan Heritage Council
Supported by: Tokushima Prefecture, Tokushima Prefecture Board of Education,
Kochi Prefecture, Kochi Prefecture Board of Education, Ehime Prefecture, Ehime Prefecture Board of Education, Kagawa Prefecture, Kagawa Prefecture Board of Education, Takamatsu City

■ Outline

On Sunday, October 29, 2017, the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council held a symposium to promote registration of the Shikoku henro as a World Heritage site at Sunport Takamatsu Kagawa International Conference Hall in Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture. With cooperation given by *Tsuyoi Bunka wo Tsukuru Kai* (Association to Create a Robust Culture), led by Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, former Director-General of UNESCO, the symposium was organized to celebrate the publication of the book “*Kaiyugata Junrei no Michi—Shikoku Henro wo Sekai Isan ni* (Circular Pilgrimage



Routes—To Make the Shikoku Henro a World Heritage Site)” issued in 2017, which recorded the content of discussions by specialists to promote the registration of the property. Despite the unfavorable weather, about 150 people participated in the symposium. From diverse viewpoints, specialists in law and natural sciences, as well as researchers of the Shikoku henro and the World Heritage program, joined lively discussions on attractive features of the Shikoku henro and challenges needed to be tackled in order to register it as a World Heritage site. The symposium proved to be an optimal opportunity to reconfirm the attractive features of the Shikoku henro viewed from diverse perspectives and to deepen understanding of the project to promote inscription of the property on the World Heritage List.

■ Greetings by Related Parties



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

At the beginning of the symposium, Chairman Akira Chiba of the council announced that in August 2016, he furnished a new written proposal to nominate the property for Japan's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites to the Director of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, together with the signatures of more than 200,000 people collected both inside and outside Shikoku. He said, "It is the responsibility of us, the present generation, to preserve the Shikoku henro and promote global recognition of the property to pass it on to future generations."

Governor Keizo Hamada of Kagawa Prefecture, which hosted the symposium, stressed the importance of seeking the optimal way to preserve and pass on the time-honored culture of the Shikoku henro, which has been fostered in respective regions in Shikoku. "As a result of efforts to promote the inscription of the property on the World Heritage List," he said, "many related sites have been designated as either historic sites or Japan Heritage sites." After reporting such outcomes of endeavors, he asked the participants for continued support of and cooperation in the campaign to inscribe the valuable property on the World Heritage List in order to preserve it for future generations.



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

■ Keynote Lecture: Recent Trends of World Heritage Program

Mr. Koichiro Matsuura, the Representative of *Tsuyoi Bunka wo Tsukuru Kai* (Association to Create a Robust Culture), who served as the Director-General of UNESCO for two five-year terms from 1999, gave a lecture on recent trends of the World Heritage program.



Mr. Koichiro Matsuura (Representative of *Tsuyoi Bunka wo Tsukuru Kai* (Association to Create a Robust Culture))

He first mentioned the Kyoto Vision, adopted in 2012 on the 40th anniversary of the World Heritage Convention. As essential matters in inscription of properties on the World Heritage List, the Kyoto Vision stresses involvement of local communities in the campaign and the protection of inscribed properties. In this context, he said, "I am pleased that Shikoku has established a solid organization, which is supported by many people."

Concerning recent trends of the World Heritage program, he explained as follows: "Today, forty-five years after the adoption of the World Heritage Convention and twenty-five years after Japan's joining in the program, the number of inscribed World Heritage sites reached 1,073. The screening of candidate properties will be increasingly rigorous, and the number of nominations will be limited to one property a year for each country. The most important conditions required in the selection criteria are authenticity and integrity. The former requires that the property either maintains its original form intact or has been repaired by using the same materials and design. The latter requires that the property maintains a perfect state." As examples of old roads like the Shikoku henro, he described cases of the Routes of Santiago de Compostela and the Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range. In the former case, he said: "In France, where only a few old roads remain, an old route was determined by linking churches and other monuments. In the latter case, more ancient paths were added to the property after its inscription." In the case of the Shikoku henro, he suggested that although the property had a solid narrative, challenges remained concerning the authenticity and integrity of tangible assets.

Concerning future tasks of Shikoku, he said that as the first step, related parties should seek inscription of the property on Japan's Tentative List. Since the number of properties on the tentative list has decreased, to make the Shikoku henro listed, he suggested as follows: "The council and the four prefectures of Shikoku should begin studies of the tentative list and repeatedly inform the authorities of their plan to furnish applications of the Shikoku henro. It would be best to have the property listed on the Tentative List at the earliest possible occasion and to study about the property thoroughly before finalizing the application form to be submitted to UNESCO. Since a step-by-step approach should be taken, it will take a considerable time. I truly hope that related parties will promote the inscription campaign steadily and persistently."

■ Panel Discussion: Outstanding Universal Value of the Shikoku Henro—Circular Pilgrimage Routes Unparalleled in the World—

In the beginning, Mr. Masaaki Oishi, the Executive Director and Vice President of Naruto University of Education, described the history of the Shikoku henro as follows: “The history of the Shikoku henro, pilgrimage routes linking sacred sites related to the 8th century Buddhist priest Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi), can be roughly classified into two periods: one before the 16th century and the other after the 16th century. In the earlier period, ascetic training was conducted by monks in rural areas, while in the latter period, common lay people went on pilgrimage in



From left: Panelist Kunio Iwatsuki, Takayoshi Igarashi, and Masaaki Oishi (Titles omitted)

Shikoku for multiple purposes. The practice of *o-settai* (offering support) originated when local people supported monks engaged in ascetic training. During the Edo period (1603–1868), many lay people began pilgrimage. As a characteristic unique to the Shikoku henro, we can point out this historic change from monk training to pilgrimage of common lay people. Another outstanding characteristic is that the pilgrimage route is circular without any destination and that pilgrims continued walking along this endless route believing that they were accompanied by Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi). In consideration of these characteristics, we can conclude that the unique value of the property lies in the fact that the pilgrimage culture was created and supported by common people, rather than people with power.”

Next, Professor Emeritus Kunio Iwatsuki of the University of Tokyo suggested that to seek inscription of the property on the World Heritage List, people in Shikoku should become aware that they have assets that they can proudly present to the world. He then expressed his view that the practice of *o-settai* was established in Shikoku partly because the custom of pilgrimage developed by involving followers of various sects of Buddhism, in addition to the Shingon sect, which was founded by Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi), and partly because the abundant natural blessings of Shikoku, home to rich biodiversity, enabled local residents to offer support to pilgrims. He said, “Through the custom of *o-settai*, people in Shikoku learned the spirit of the pilgrimage firsthand.”

Referring to his own experience of pilgrimage in Shikoku, Professor Emeritus Takayoshi Igarashi of Hosei University said that the Shikoku henro had a strong magnet, even though he was not so sure that individual temples and the roads had value matching well-known architectural structures on the World Heritage List. According to him, the Shikoku henro is a sort of culture and custom that transcends the framework of a religion. “In Shikoku,” he said, “tangible assets, such as temples and roads, are closely interwoven with intangible minds of people, creating unique communities around the henro.” He suggested that related parties could present the presence of these communities as the value of the Shikoku henro.



Facilitator: Professor Yukio Nishimura

Based on the discussions, as the facilitator, Professor Yukio Nishimura of the University of Tokyo said that the Shikoku henro was closely linked to daily life activities of local residents and this fact distinguished it from the Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes. He said: “We could suggest that the Japanese term *henro* is different from a pilgrimage route since *henro* has multiple meanings, including a road/path (structure), pilgrims (people), and pilgrimage (event). It would be a good strategy to present a new logic that smoothly links structures, people, and events.” Since Japan’s authorities have begun discussing revision of Japan’s Tentative List, he concluded that to advance the inscription process, related parties should present a new view of World Heritage sites by invigorating discussions in Shikoku and promote the significance of the view to the world.