

Report on the Symposium in FY 2018

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

- Date and Time: Sunday, January 27, 2019. 1:30~4:00 p.m.
Venue: The Crown Palais New Hankyu Kochi
(4-2-50, Honmachi, Kochi City, Kochi Prefecture)
- Program:
- Keynote Reports:
 - (1) Requirements and Merits of Registration as a World Heritage Site
Ichita Shimoda (Senior Cultural Properties Specialist, Office for International Cooperation on Cultural Heritages, Cultural Resources Utilization Division, Agency for Cultural Affairs)
 - (2) Initiatives and Challenges in Inscribing the Shikoku Henro on the World Heritage List
Kenichiro Kitayama (Secretariat of the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council, Culture Promotion Division, Arts and Culture Bureau, Kagawa Prefecture)
 - Keynote Lecture: Why Do People Go around Shikoku? – Attractive Features of the Shikoku Henro
Hikaru Ebesu (Deputy Director of the Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World, Faculty of Law and Letters, Ehime University)
 - Panel Discussion: To Make the Shikoku Henro a World Heritage
Facilitator: Masaaki Oishi (Vice President, Naruto University of Education)
Panelists: Ichita Shimoda (Senior Cultural Properties Specialist, Office for World Cultural Heritage, Monument and Sites Division, Cultural Properties Department, Agency for Cultural Affairs)
Hikaru Ebesu (Deputy Director of the Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World, Faculty of Law and Letters, Ehime University)
Shokyo Nagasaki (Chief Priest of Kongofukuji Temple [Temple 38], Chairman of the Tosa Chamber of the Shikoku Eighty-eight Sacred Sites Inc.)
- Organizers: Organized by: The Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council
Cooperation given by: 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, and Kagawa Prefecture Board of Education

■ Outline



On Sunday, January 27, 2019, the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council held a symposium to promote World Heritage registration of the Eighty-Eight Temples and Pilgrimage Routes of Shikoku at the Crown Palais New Hankyu Kochi in Kochi City, Kochi Prefecture. About 100 people participated in the event, including researchers of the Shikoku henro, specialists in World Heritage programs, and priests of related temples. In addition to presentations on the history and features of the Shikoku henro, discussions were held on issues related to testimonies to the property's outstanding universal value and the partnership with local communities, on which worldwide attention is now being focused. The symposium provided a good opportunity to deepen understanding of the Shikoku henro and the project to include it in 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)

The symposium began with a greeting by Chairman Akira Chiba of the council, who stated as follows: “Recently, we have seen increasing numbers of overseas tourists traveling in Shikoku. This made me realize that the culture of the Shikoku henro has universal value that is recognized by people all over the world regardless of their culture, religion, or nationality. As the chairman of the council, I will accelerate the process to inscribe the property on Japan’s Tentative List of World Heritage Sites at the earliest possible occasion since this is necessary before inscription on the World Heritage List. At the same time, it is my sincere hope that this symposium will mark an important step toward the inscription on the World Heritage List.”

Following his greeting, Governor Masanao Ozaki of Kochi Prefecture, said: “I believe that each step of the process toward the inscription on the World

Heritage List is meaningful and effective in promoting regional education, culture, and inbound tourism in Shikoku. I truly hope that our efforts to add the property on the World Heritage List will advance steadily in joint efforts with you all. I thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation.”



Vice Chairman Masanao Ozaki of the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council (Governor of Kochi Prefecture)

■ Keynote Report: Requirements and Merits of Registration as a World Heritage Site



Mr. Ichita Shimoda, Senior Cultural Properties Specialist, Cultural Resources Utilization Division, Agency for Cultural Affairs

Mr. Ichita Shimoda, Senior Cultural Properties Specialist of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, reported on the process necessary for inscribing a property on the World Heritage List, recent trends of the World Heritage program, and merits of inscription.

Concerning the recent trends, he said: “Since the number of inscribed properties has increased, UNESCO has begun limiting the number of candidate properties to be examined so as to reduce the burden of their screening, as well as tasks related to the protection of inscribed properties. Meanwhile, the range of target properties has been broadened; in addition to properties whose value is recognizable by simply viewing them, the targets now include properties the value of which becomes understandable only after description is provided. To add a property on the list, related parties should testify that the property they are nominating satisfies selection criteria and exhibit its outstanding universal value by clarifying its authenticity and integrity, as well as by announcing its management and protection plans. In the case of the Shikoku henro, related parties should identify the essential value of the property and clarify what determines the integrity of the property. In addition, they need to study the arguments used in applications of other properties comprising roads and paths.”

“Given the diversification of World Heritage sites and an increase in the number of sites where residents live, UNESCO has begun to place greater importance on the involvement of local communities. It is, therefore, important to build a system that ensures local residents benefit from the protection of the property.”

Finally, as merits of efforts to add the property on the World Heritage List, he said as follows: “The process of seeking the inscription can lead to new research findings and consensus among researchers, residents, and local governments, which in turn provides an opportunity for the four prefectures in Shikoku to align their efforts and share a vision. In addition, the process is effective in promoting local people’s understanding of their regional culture since they sometimes recognize its importance only after learning views of people outside Japan.” He suggested that related parties should work to determine what sort of mechanism is necessary to promote and share the merits of the process toward the inscription on the World Heritage List.

■ Keynote Lecture: Why Do People Go around Shikoku? – Attractive Features of the Shikoku Henro

A lecture was provided by Deputy Director Hikaru Ebesu of the Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World of Ehime University, who discussed the history of the Shikoku henro and its attractive features as follows:

“The Shikoku henro originated in ascetic training of Buddhist monks in rural areas of Shikoku, just as Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi) engaged in such training in mountain forests on the island more than 1,200 years ago. During the Edo period (1603–1868), the sites of ascetic training changed into pilgrimage routes. This transformation was led by a mendicant priest named Shinnen, who wrote the *Shikoku Henro Michi-shirube*, a guidebook for the pilgrimage in Shikoku. He also erected many signposts when traveling on the pilgrimage route.”

“Even now, there are many such signposts along the pilgrimage routes in Shikoku. They bear a testimony to the role played by common people in building and maintaining the roads for the sake of common people, a fact that significantly characterizes the Shikoku henro. Another important characteristic is that at temples along the routes, pilgrims worshipped Kōbō Daishi at the Daishidō (a building with a statue of Kōbō Daishi) as well as at the hondō (a building containing a statue of the main deity). This indicates various forms of religious faith are unified by faith in Kōbō Daishi. Moreover, studies of votive cards (*osamefuda*) and graffiti have revealed that many pilgrims were either residents in Shikoku or travelers from the opposite shore on the main island. Diaries of travelers from other regions reveal that the writers noted the custom of *o-settai* (offering support) only after their landing on Shikoku Island. This indicates that pilgrims in the Edo period regarded *o-settai* as a custom unique to Shikoku. The diaries show that pilgrims accepted *o-settai* without fail, and the donors of the service always gave their names to pilgrims.”

“The Shikoku henro represents a typical form of pilgrimage in Japan, whose culture culminated through popularization. It is the only pilgrimage that is called *henro*, and this living tradition has been supported by *o-settai*, which characterizes the culture of Shikoku.”

Finally, he commented that non-Japanese visitors, whose number is increasing year by year, show their keen interest not only in temples but also the paths connecting them and concluded as follows: “Both pilgrims and pilgrimage routes have been supported by the regional culture of Shikoku, whereas such regional cultures in other parts of Japan have been lost. I believe that this fact helps us define what the outstanding universal value of the Shikoku henro is.”



Professor Hikaru Ebesu, Deputy Director of the Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World, Faculty of Law and Letters, Ehime University

■ Panel Discussion: To Make the Shikoku Henro a World Heritage



From left: Facilitator: Masaaki Oishi, panelists: Ichita Shimoda, Hikaru Ebesu, and Shokyo Nagasaki (Titles omitted)

The panel discussion began with a comment by Reverend Shokyo Nagasaki, the Chief Priest of Kongofukuji Temple (Temple 38) in Kochi Prefecture. He expressed his view that the base of the present form of the Shikoku henro was built by the people who experienced warfare, saying that the memorial services for war victims, held shortly after the end of World War II, helped develop the Shikoku henro and that the spread of the pilgrimage in Shikoku contributed to the formation of Shikoku Eighty-eight Sacred Sites Inc. To protect the eighty-eight temples along the pilgrimage routes, he said it was necessary to add the Shikoku henro on the World Heritage List and to promote inbound tourism in Shikoku.

The second speaker was Mr. Ichita Shimoda, Senior Cultural Properties Specialist of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. He suggested that it was necessary to describe various features of the Shikoku henro, such as the faith of common people, the unique form of circular routes, and the practice of o-settai in a form that meets the selection criteria of the World Heritage program. He said that comparative studies with other properties both inside and outside Japan were also necessary in setting forth unique attributes of the property. Whereas the property has a history of more than 1,200 years, to inscribe on the World Heritage List, he suggested that the related parties should pinpoint a specific period in its history. In addition, since the Shikoku henro features intangible elements, such as the practice of o-settai, he stressed the importance of searching for the best way to describe them to meet selection criterion vi (to be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance), which evaluates intangible elements.

Professor Hikaru Ebesu of Ehime University discussed that the history of the Shikoku henro could be divided into the following two stages: the period of ascetic training that originated about 1,200 years ago; and in and after the Edo period (1603–1868), when pilgrimage in Shikoku became widespread. Of the two stages, he stressed that the focus should be on the latter stage, where common people toured the eighty-eight temples and established the base of the pilgrimage form that has been inherited to the present day. Concerning tasks to fulfill, he said it was necessary to detect and investigate more distance markers, signposts, and rest stations to visually present the practice of o-settai.

Finally, as the facilitator, Vice President Masaaki Oishi of Naruto University of Education said as follows: “Since it is impossible to maintain pilgrimage routes without support of local residents, our most important task is to inspire residents in the region to recognize the cultural value of the Shikoku henro and encourage them to consider how to pass on the property to future generations and how to promote them worldwide.” He concluded that by considering ways of building partnership with local communities, related parties should detect more aspects of the outstanding universal value of the Shikoku henro so that it would be included on the World Heritage List.