

Report on the Symposium in FY 2019

Many Minds Many Hearts One Shikoku

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

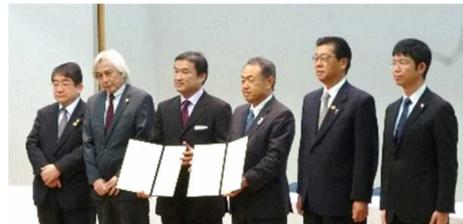
- Date and Time: Saturday, January 25, 2020. 1:15~4:30 p.m.
Venue: Ehime University Nanka Memorial Hall
(3, Bunkyo-cho, Matsuyama City, Ehime Prefecture)
- Program:
- Keynote Report: What Is the Outstanding Universal Value of the Shikoku Henro?
Akihiro Kinda (Kyoto Institute, Library and Archives, Kyoto Prefectural University)
 - Keynote Lecture: Trends of World Cultural Heritage Program and Asian Pilgrimage
Gamini Wijesuriya (former Project Manager, ICCROM)
 - Panel Discussion: The Value of the Shikoku Henro and Challenges in Its Inscription on the World Heritage List
Facilitator: Nobuko Inaba (Professor, University of Tsukuba)
Panelists: Gamini Wijesuriya (former Project Manager, ICCROM),
Chihei Suzuki (Senior Cultural Properties Specialist, Office for International Cooperation on Cultural Heritages, Cultural Resources Utilization Division, Agency for Cultural Affairs)
Hikaru Ebesu (Director, the Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World, Ehime University)
- Organizers: Organized by: The Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council
Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World, Ehime University
- Supported by: Tokushima Prefecture, Kochi Prefecture, Kochi Prefecture Board of Education, Ehime Prefecture, Ehime Prefecture Board of Education, Kagawa Prefecture, and Kagawa Prefecture Board of Education

■ Outline

On Saturday, January 25, 2020, the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council held an international symposium titled “To Make the Shikoku Henro a World Heritage Site” at Ehime University Nanka Memorial Hall, Matsuyama City, Ehime Prefecture. About 160 people participated in the event.

Prior to the symposium, a partnership agreement was signed by the council’s Committee for Evidence of Outstanding Universal Value and the Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World, Ehime University. The partnership agreement is expected to advance collaboration in research on the Shikoku henro.

At the symposium, the Chairman of the Research Group of Evidence of Outstanding Universal Value presented an interim report on studies of the outstanding universal value of the Shikoku henro. Moreover,



based on recent trends of the World Heritage program and comparison with other pilgrimage customs in Asia, lively discussions were held about features of the Shikoku henro and its outstanding universal value, evidence for which is required for its inscription. The discussion involved specialists in the World Heritage program. The symposium proved to be effective in promoting concerted efforts of all Shikoku residents to work for the inscription of the Shikoku henro by incorporating perspectives outside Japan.

■ Greetings by Related Parties



Chairman Hayato Saeki of the Shikoku Henro World Heritage Inscription Council (Chairman of the Shikoku Economic Federation)

In his greeting, Chairman Hayato Saeki of the council discussed that in the context of the ongoing trends of social digitalization, it was particularly meaningful to pass on the Shikoku henro, the spiritual culture treasured and inherited by the public in the region, to future generations. He expressed his hope that the partnership agreement with Ehime University would promote collaborations and drive the campaign toward inscription on the World Heritage List.

Following his greeting, Mr. Hiraku Hachiya, Deputy Governor of Ehime Prefecture, which hosted the symposium, read a message on behalf of Governor Tokihiro Nakamura. He said that given a decrease in the number of candidate properties on Japan's Tentative List, it was expected that the list would be revised. Since public support is essential in promoting the registration of the property on the Tentative List, he requested the audience of the symposium for their cooperation in promoting the attractive features of the henro culture in order to realize the registration on the Tentative List and ultimately on the World Heritage List.

President Yuichi Ohashi of Ehime University expressed his hope that the university's three community-oriented research centers in humanities, including the Research Center for the Shikoku Henro and Pilgrimage of the World, opened in April 2019, would contribute to the revitalization of the region by reevaluating regional culture and sharing research outcomes. He concluded that the partnerships between the council and Ehime University would contribute to resolving problems in achieving registration as a World Heritage site.

■ Keynote Report: What Is the Outstanding Universal Value of the Shikoku Henro?

Director Akihiro Kinda of the Kyoto Institute, Library and Archives, Kyoto Prefectural University, who serves as the Chairman of the council's Research Group of Evidence of Outstanding Universal Value, reported on the history and profile of the Shikoku henro, along with the study process of the research group.

Concerning the origin of the Shikoku henro, he described as follows: "In ancient times, four provinces in Shikoku were part of the Nankaido (lit. southern coast) region, which was linked with the capital by a national highway. Although the route of the highway changed over time, it is believed that in the 8th century, a circular route running around Shikoku was built and that the Shikoku henro initially used that route." He then showed photographs of various structures that remain in various parts of Shikoku, including temple precincts with a *hondō* (building with a statue of the main deity) and *Daishidō* (building with a statue of Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi)), unpaved and stone-paved pilgrimage roads, roadside distance markers, signposts, and tea houses where *o-settai* (offering support) was practiced.

Next, he explained the present activities of the research group as follows: "We intend to divide the history of the Shikoku henro into the following four stages: [1] the period when Buddhist monks engaged in ascetic training in rural areas on Shikoku Island (ancient times to medieval ages), [2] the period when ascetic training spread widely (end of medieval ages to the beginning of early modern period), [3] the period when the present pilgrimage system comprised of the eighty-eight temples and their serial numbers was established and *Daishidō*, signposts, and other structures were constructed to support pilgrims (early modern period to modern period), and [4] the period when diverse transport means became available and the purpose of pilgrimage became diversified (after the end of World War II). Of the four stages, the Shikoku henro as it is now was established in stage [3]. In particular, the *Shikoku Henro Michi-shirube*, a guidebook for pilgrimage in Shikoku, written by Shinnen in 1687 in Osaka, clarifies the serial number of the eighty-eight temples and portrays pilgrimage styles. In this way, the guidebook significantly contributed to the establishment and spread of the Shikoku henro."

"It was in the latter half of the 17th century when the pilgrimage routes linking eighty-eight temples were established. In the 18th century, *Daishidō* were erected on the temple grounds, and along the routes, various structures were built, including signposts, distance markers, and rest stations. Moreover, the practice of *o-settai* became widespread. Local people living close to the routes offered free accommodation and meals to pilgrims based on faith in Kōbō Daishi. While this practice supported pilgrims, local people believed that helping pilgrims would also save the donors' souls. In this way, the practice was established based on mutual understanding among pilgrims and local people." After describing these features, Director



Director Akihiro Kinda of the Kyoto Institute, Library and Archives, Kyoto Prefectural University

Kinda suggested that the establishment of these structures and the practice of o-settai could be introduced as unique characteristics of the property to be nominated.

Finally, concerning the outstanding universal value of the Shikoku henro, he introduced the following tentative statement by the research group: “The Shikoku henro, which is closely linked to Shikoku, where it has been sustained by faith in salvation of both pilgrims and local residents, bears a testimony to a rare form of faith in the world, a faith that is characterized by salvation of diverse individuals and which has been fostered by local communities and retained to the present day as a living tradition.” He added that remaining problems to solve include how to explain differences from other pilgrimage cultures inside and outside Japan.

■ **Keynote Lecture: Trends of World Cultural Heritage Program and Asian Pilgrimage**

A keynote lecture was offered by Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya, a Special Adviser to the Director General of ICCROM from Sri Lanka. Based on his experience in the World Heritage program, he discussed recent views of World Heritage, practices of pilgrimage in the world, particularly in Asia, and challenges for the Shikoku henro project.

He said: “Generally speaking, pilgrimage is a journey for a religious purpose to a specific destination that is regarded as sacred. Components of pilgrimage include pilgrims, temples and other religious facilities and their remains, destinations, pilgrimage routes, and intangible elements such as religious ceremonies and rituals. Among the present World Cultural Heritage sites, seventy-two sites use either the term “pilgrimage” or “pilgrim” in their descriptions. Of those, six heritage sites use “road” or “pilgrimage routes” in their titles.”

To add a property on the World Heritage List, he said: “It is essential to have an excellent project team for the preparation and sufficient funds and time. In addition, involvement of local communities has become considered to be important in recent years. A project team must also study annual reports of ICOMOS and its revised operational guidelines to prepare application forms in compliance with them.” Concerning the protection and management of a property, the Heritage Impact Assessment has become necessary in broader areas, including areas outside the buffer zone, to analyze possible effects of development on the outstanding universal value of World Heritage properties. Accordingly, he stressed the importance of building a management system from a broad perspective, including benefits for local communities.

Since testimony of the outstanding universal value, which is required for inscription, should be recognized outside the national borders, he stressed the importance of describing what changes the pilgrimage caused, how it developed on a global basis, and what tangible or intangible assets attest to its universal value. As examples of Asian heritage sites related to pilgrimage, he introduced Mt. Kailash in Tibet and Adam’s Peak in Sri Lanka, showing their tangible evidence, such as a rock with the sacred footprint of Buddha, various monuments along the routes, and a mural painting of a temple in Thailand depicting the pilgrimage to Adam’s Peak.

Finally, evaluating the Shikoku henro highly as one of the most splendid pilgrimage routes in the world, which changed the culture of Shikoku, he emphasized the importance of creating a message and a narrative to share with people around the world. As an outstanding feature of the property, he pointed out the fact that pilgrims traveled along the route repeatedly, driven by various objectives of their own while being supported by local communities that believed helping pilgrims would benefit themselves. He suggested that rather than placing excessive emphasis on the eighty-eight sacred sites, the focus should be on changes that the practice of pilgrimage caused to the sacred sites, which had existed long before. He advised that the related parties should stress the value of tangible and intangible assets that were created by the pilgrimage, such as new temples, new way of land use, communities, buildings and other structures, and festivals. In conclusion, he said, “Since there are many tasks to fulfill, it is important to seek suggestions from external parties.”



Former Project Manager Gamini Wijesuriya of, ICCROM

■ Panel Discussion: The Value of the Shikoku Henro and Challenges in Its Inscription on the World Heritage List

Based on the report and the lecture, panelists held lively discussions on the value of the Shikoku henro and challenges in adding it on the World Heritage List.

Director Hikaru Ebesu of Ehime University Research Center pointed out the following characteristics of the Shikoku henro: “The geography of the island, far from the capital, created a circular pilgrimage route that has

no final destinations, which characterizes the Shikoku henro. The leading players of the pilgrimage were and are common people. All temples along the route have Daishidō, in addition to hondō. And the pilgrimage is supported by local communities in Shikoku in the form of o-settai, which is supported by the belief in the salvation of both pilgrims and residents who help them.” He said: “In addition to faith in Kōbō Daishi and o-settai, another element should be added to the message of the property. For example, I believe it very interesting to consider that faith in Kōbō Daishi and the Shikoku henro contributed to the establishment of common people’s culture during the Edo period, when the Shikoku henro became popular.”

Mr. Chihei Suzuki, a Senior Cultural Properties Specialist of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, described the recent trend in which increasing numbers of properties related to religious faith have been added to the heritage list. Concerning characteristics of the Shikoku henro, he pointed out that the practice of the pilgrimage has no specific relation to any founder of a religion, scriptures, or missionaries. He said, “In other words, pilgrims were driven by faith but not by a specific religion, and this fact is worth noting, in addition to other features of the property, such as being a circular route without a destination and the involvement of people of various social classes.” Concerning the o-settai, he said, “It is worthy to note the influence of pilgrims, who were supported, on local communities, as well as interaction between pilgrims and local residents.” He also expressed his wish that local people in Shikoku would recognize the special value of roads, signposts, and temples in their neighborhood and treasure them.

Dr. Gamini Wijesuriya, who offered the keynote lecture, stressed the importance of reviewing and evaluating the value of the property from the perspective of the common values of the world and in line with the selection criteria. He also suggested as follows: “Since targets of the World Heritage program are real estate, it is necessary to carefully detect tangible evidence that shows what was created or what was added to existing assets by the pilgrimage, which began by touring existing temples. I have the impression that the Shikoku henro created a new culture. I do believe that you can find elements that show connection to what remains intact today.”

As the facilitator, Professor Nobuko Inaba of the University of Tsukuba said as follows: “As a starting point, we all have our own view regarding the value of the Shikoku henro. To add the property on the World Heritage List, however, we must find value that can be recognized worldwide. I believe there are



Facilitator: Ms. Nobuko Inaba



From left: Panelists Gamini Wijesuriya, Chihei Suzuki, and Hikaru Ebesu (Titles omitted)

three essential elements necessary for inscription of the property: value recognized worldwide, tangible evidence that represent the value, such as Daishidō, and the enthusiasm of local people to maintain the value and protect the tangible evidence, including temples, pilgrimage routes, rest stations, and roadside signposts.” She then stated that further research should be conducted to determine whether or not the term “*junrei*” (pilgrimage) is appropriate and how o-settai should be explained. She concluded that to nominate the Shikoku henro for the World Heritage List, related parties should first identify the *henro*, a probably non-religious practice that emerged from the culture of common people on an island called Shikoku in the Edo period. She asked the audience to join the search for the value of the Shikoku henro and its culture.