



Kagoshima
International
Conference
on World Natural Heritage
(KICWNH)

NEWSLETTER

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The first issue of the World Natural Heritage Conference Newsletter



須賀龍郎

Tatsuuro SUGA
Governor
Kagoshima Prefecture

The Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage was held in Kagoshima City and Yakushima between 18 and 21 May 2000 inclusive. This was the first international conference in the world at the local government level relating to World Natural Heritage. The opening ceremony was attended by Their Imperial Highnesses the Crown Prince and Princess. The conference was attended by a total of 6,500 participants from 20 local governments and 5 central governments from 14 countries in the Asia Pacific Region, UNESCO and various other international organisations and numerous related departments, local governments and bodies from both within and outside Kagoshima Prefecture. Consequently, it ended extremely successfully. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to everyone who contributed to its success for their wonderful support and cooperation.

This conference was one of great significance. The Yakushima Summit Declaration, which shows the direction that participating local governments should be heading in the 21st century, was adopted unanimously. It was also decided that the 2003 Conference on World Natural Heritage will be held in Queensland, Australia. Here in Kagoshima Prefecture, we are already promoting the Yakushima Environmental and Cultural Village Concept in order to form a new region on Yakushima where people and

nature can live together in symbiosis. We are also considering the further promotion of various activities aimed at forming this new symbiotic region on Yakushima, through more fulfilling environmental studies incorporating children, the advancement of sightseeing and ecotourism, and endeavors to preserve the World Heritage sites by forming a tight network of related organisations, based on the Yakushima Summit Declaration.

The "World Natural Heritage Conference Newsletter" was created in an attempt to build closer relationships within the network of participating local governments, beginning at this conference. We plan to publish this newsletter biannually in the future. We trust that it will assist in the exchange of information and opinions on such issues as the preservation of World Natural Heritage.



Photos :

P.2
Lamington National Park
(Queensland, Australia)

P.3
(1) Mountain climbers heading for Mt. Miyanoura
(2) Inspection Tour at Yakushima Environment
Culture Foundation

P.4
(1) Shirakami Sanchi (The top of Futatsumori-dake)
(2) Education Forest and Mountain for Nature
Observation

CONTENTS

Governor's Message	1
Visit to Queensland	2
The Invitation of Specialist from Queensland	2
Yakushima Now	3
JICA Training Project	3
Other World Natural Heritage Area of KICWNH	4

Visit to Queensland, Australia, planned venue for the 2003 Conference on World Natural Heritage

Michihisa USHINOHAMA - Director General of Environment and Citizens Affairs Department visited the planned venue for the 2003 Conference on World Natural Heritage, Queensland, Australia, from 15 to 19 February 2001. The purpose of this visit was to inspect the current status of nature conservation efforts and to discuss the 2003 conference.

1. Meeting with Rod Welford, the State Minister for Environment and Heritage, and Minister for Natural Resources
 - He paid his respects to Kagoshima Prefecture for holding the Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage.
 - The planned venue for the 2003 Conference on World Natural Heritage is Cairns. We would like to assist in making the Conference a success.
2. The 2003 Conference on World Natural Heritage

1) Proposals by Kagoshima Prefecture

During the Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage, approximately 1000 people attended workshops of which the theme was "Youth and World Natural Heritage". Most of these people were junior and senior high school students from Yakushima. This turned out to be an excellent opportunity for children, who will be leaders in the 21st century, to think spontaneously and exchange views on topics such as the conservation of World Natural Heritage.

In the Yakushima Summit Declaration, we promised to promote ways of dealing with the conservation of World Natural Heritage by working together and sharing information with children who love nature, to allow them to play an important role in the conservation of World Natural Heritage.

Consequently, we would like request that you set up

The invitation of a World Natural Heritage specialist from Queensland, Australia, planned venue for the 2003 Conference on World Natural Heritage

In accordance with the promotion of the Yakushima Environmental and Cultural Village Concept, in October, we will invite a World Natural Heritage specialist from Queensland, Australia, a country at the forefront of environment protection to Yakushima. He will give lectures to and hold discussion sessions with junior and senior high school students and ecotourism companies. This is one of the methods, devised after

this kind of workshops for children as part of the 2003 Conference on World Natural Heritage as well.

2) Opinions from the State of Queensland

The intentions of Kagoshima Prefecture were accepted. Although the venue and date of the conference have not yet been finalized, it is likely that it will be held in Cairns in September or October. This is considered to be a pleasant time of year in Cairns, which is located between two World Heritage sites, the Great Barrier Reef and the Wet Tropics. We will provide this information as soon as it is available, as decided by the Minister for Environment and Heritage / Minister for Natural Resources, and the Prime Minister.

Most World Heritage Sites are cultural heritage. For this reason, over two thirds of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee Meeting held in Cairns towards the end of last year was spent discussing cultural heritage. The Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage was extremely significant because emphasis was placed on natural heritage.

We trust the 2003 Conference will also prove to be significant.



the Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage in Yakushima, of preparing for the Conference on World Natural Heritage to be held in Australia in 2003.

In-depth reports of this programme will be made in the next issue.

Yakushima NOW

Water-soluble tissue paper

The toilet manners of tourists and mountain climbers in mountain areas are a problem in Japanese society.

At present, even on the mountain areas of World Natural Heritage registered Yakushima, people are using tissue paper when going to the toilet. In Japan, pocket-sized tissue packets are small, compact and easy to carry. They contain advertisements and are easily obtained for free.

Most of the freely distributed and commercial tissue paper available is made by using various chemicals, and as a result, it does not break down easily in water. Consequently, some signs read, "Do not flush tissue paper down the toilet."

When used by people in the mountains then left on the spot, such tissue paper will stay there and badly damage the natural environment. Furthermore, tissue paper flushed down the toilet or scattered in mountain huts and other establishments can cause blocked pipes and other problems.

For this reason, the Yakushima Environmental Culture Foundation has introduced a plan to distribute "water-soluble tissue packets" designed to break down in rainwater, and even low-impact water-soluble wrapping paper, in an attempt to conserve the natural environment, especially in the mountains.

May and August are holiday months for many Japanese. During these months, we are distributing

JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) training project, accepting members from the various local governments that attended the Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage

This project was started in 1997 by the Kagoshima Prefectural government. This training covers nature conservation administration by Japanese local governments, and management structures of World Natural Heritage as conducted by various administration bodies. Trainees are expected to apply their learning in the nature conservation management of their own countries. Kagoshima has accepted one trainee from Brazil, Indonesia and the Philippines respectively in the past. In April 2001, two trainees from Uttar Pradesh State in India visited Yakushima.

Below are trainees' impressions after the training.

"It was wonderful to be able to set foot in Yakushima's World Natural Heritage site and National Park regions."

"Most of the contents of the training programme are quite significant, and applicable in the nature conservation management of my own country."

"It's our duty to conserve World Natural Heritage properly, for the sake of the country and future generations."

"water-soluble tissue packets" with the co-operation of all the volunteers and related groups and organisations on the island in an attempt to develop consciousness and consideration for nature conservation. We are also trying to make everybody aware of the problems with tissue paper and the importance of removing all paper after use.

The Yakushima Environmental Culture Foundation plans to continue dealing with environmental conservation on the World Natural Heritage site, Yakushima in the future.



"It would be nice if the training programme had included environmental management in large urban areas such as Tokyo and Osaka."

Reference:

JICA home page address: <http://www.jica.go.jp>

Note: The listing of this address has been approved by JICA Kyushu International Centre.



Making Shirakami Sanchi (Shirakami Mountains) the base for the new environmentally-friendly century

Natural Resources and Conservation Division,
Department of Environment and Civil Life,
Aomori Prefectural Government



Shirakami Sanchi is the name given to a vast mountain region spanning an area of 130,000ha in Aomori and Akita Prefectures. An area of approximately 17,000ha in the centre of this region was registered as World Natural Heritage in December 1993. One of the largest Japanese beech forests in the world can be found here, which is nearly untouched by humans. A wide variety of flora and fauna inhabit this forest, supporting the valuable ecosystem.

The Yakushima Summit Declaration was adopted during the Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage held in Yakushima, Kagoshima in May 2000, and we feel an ongoing obligation to pass this superb natural environment on, as common heritage among all mankind, to the next generation, without detracting from its value. Accordingly, Aomori and Akita Prefectures, where Shirakami Sanchi is located, together established The Shirakami-sanchi Proclamation in order to establish rules for living in symbiosis with nature and to equally appreciate the value of the mountain region. The Forum commemorating the Proclamation Establishment was held in the Shirakami Sanchi World Heritage Site on Sunday 7 October 2001. At this forum, we plan to (i) announce to the whole world the charter in which the feelings of the people of Aomori and Akita Prefectures toward Shirakami Sanchi will be entrusted; (ii) promote a sense of positive involvement in the conservation and preservation of Shirakami Sanchi among the entire community; and (iii) further develop our thoughts on nature conservation.

Now in Aomori Prefecture, at the start of the 21st century dubbed the age of the environment, the collective opinion of the people of the prefecture is being fostered in order to protect the Shirakami Sanchi World Natural Heritage Site as the base for the new environmentally-friendly century.

Editor's note

I strongly believe that the Kagoshima International Conference on World Natural Heritage held in Yakushima and Kagoshima in May 2000 was an extremely significant conference in that it was the first international conference in the world dedicated to World Natural Heritage. I hope the Yakushima Summit Declaration that was adopted at this conference is passed on forever.

Starting with Shirakami Sanchi, included in this issue, we have established the "Heritage Corner" for regions that participated in the Kagoshima International World Natural Heritage. In order to improve this newsletter, opinions and comments are most welcome.

We plan to release the next issue in March 2002.

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Stunning view of Shirakami Sanchi World Natural Heritage Site



Koki YAMADA
Planning and Development Division
Fujisato Town

Fujisato Town located in the north of Akita prefecture, and Nishimeya Village of Aomori Prefecture, were linked directly by a prefectural road in July 1994, and there is extensive interchange between the two areas on both a sporting level, and a commercial and industrial level. Furthermore, these two towns in the 1,000m high prefectural border zone of Shirakami Sanchi Natural Heritage Site contain a vast virgin forest of Japanese beech.

In this issue, the spectacular view of Shirakami Sanchi as seen from two individual peaks is introduced.

One of those peaks is 1,158m high Komagatake, nicknamed Fujikoma. The car park near the start of the trail to the summit is 32km from the town office, approximately 55 minutes by car. At Tanashiro Marshland, 15 minutes into the walk, one can enjoy many wonderful seasonal flowers, ranging from skunk cabbages in spring to Nikko yellow day lilies, Vladivostok crown imperial lilies, rhododendrons and Shirane hollyhock. After leaving Tanashiro Marshland and walking through forests of Japanese beech and birch for approximately one hour, one reaches the summit, where it is possible to enjoy a magnificent 360-degree panoramic view.

There are many peaks to the northwest, beginning with Futatsumori and Shirakamidake in World Natural Heritage registered Shirakami Sanchi. Mt. Iwaki, Mt. Hakkoda, the Japan Sea and Oga Peninsula are visible in the distance. In particular, the obscure trees make an imposing appearance by forming neat lines up to the peaks. According to ancient belief, it is said that "Koma no Yukigata", the shape formed by the remaining snow on the side of the mountain during the May holiday period, is that of a horse that once ploughed the land in the Fujikoma (Tanashiro) Marshland, the "field of the gods" and took on the appearance of a farming horse on Maedake peak.

The second peak is 1,042m high Kodake at the source of Kasuge River, where Shirakami Sanchi Heritage Site opens up before one's eyes. The remarkable creeping pines at the summit are the northernmost in Japan. The journey to the top takes approximately 90 minutes, and many sections of the walk are suitable for ladies. Words cannot express the sensation of walking on the fallen Japanese beech leaves.

Mountain climbing enthusiasts can be divided into two groups: those who prefer Komagatake, and those who prefer Kodake. When considering the joys and sorrows of the journey to each peak, and the view from each summit, one can see why the extravagant mountains, each with its individual merits, are the pride of the area. There is an abundance of picturesque natural resources in the region, such as the 12ha Education Forest and Mountain for Nature Observation, where it is possible to experience the virgin forest of Japanese beech in the registered Natural Heritage Site.

Since the area was registered as a World Heritage site in 1993 and the World Heritage Centre was opened in December 1998, the number of visitors has continued to increase, as Shirakami Sanchi has become increasingly more widely known. We plan to promote the installation of public toilets, pathways and other facilities in the two-year period beginning in the 2001 fiscal year, to enable visitors to observe the natural environment and climb both mountains as comfortably as possible.

Furthermore, we introduced the Mountain Guide Training Project in 2000 with the intention of encouraging people to be more aware of environmental protection, and teaching people how to present their natural environment to visitors. There are more than 20 trainees at present, and we expect to see this number increase in the future.