



Kagoshima
International
Conference
on World Natural Heritage
(KICWNH)

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 6 / March 2004



Symposium to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Yakushima's Designation as a World Natural Heritage Site

Motomi Kariya

Chairman, Executive Committee
10th anniversary of Yakushima's Designation as a World Natural
Heritage Site
Director General,
Environment and Citizens Affairs Department,
Kagoshima Prefecture

On the 28th and 29th of October 2003, the "Symposium to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Yakushima's Designation as a World Natural Heritage Site" was held at the Yakushima Development Center in Kami-Yaku.

Approximately 600 people (residents of the island as well as those from other parts of the country) took part in this commemorative conference for two days. There was a report by some of Yakushima's young people entitled "How Yakushima should appear from now on," as well as a keynote speech by the author Wahei Tatematsu. A panel discussion was also held featuring intellectuals from the island and elsewhere and topics such as the registration system for guides, how to proceed with Eco-tourism from now on, the environmental ticketing system, how to collect funds for environmental cooperation etc. were discussed from various standpoints. Subsequently, we were able to see a concrete direction with regards to the future initiatives that Yakushima must consider.

Using this discussion as a starting point, we plan to work together with those related, on a local level to devise a concrete scheme, including

admission fees for entrance to the mountains. In addition I would also like to ask for your further advice and cooperation.



CONTENTS

*Symposium to commemorate
the 10th anniversary of
Yakushima's Designation as a
World Natural Heritage Site* 1

Yakushima Now 2

World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka 3

*Amami Islands have become
Japan's Natural Candidate Site for Nomination to
the World Heritage List* 4

Yakushima NOW

Environment and Development Trends
In Yakushima

Premarathne Dissaneyake

Central Environmental Authority of Sri Lanka
Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources

According to the yakushima civilization records, there have been a long period of history a approximately from 2000-1000 B.C. Peoples from the barbarous yaku region who worshipped at the yaku shrine in great Miyanoura. Was about 1000 years ago? Their livelihood basically depends on sea, mountains and wood. The Jomon peoples used wood from yaku-tane pine to make log boats for their sea traffic. The Islanders feel that they fear of felling the yaku-sugi cedar and take permission from gods to fell trees. The sea was the most important natural resource base of the yakushima people. The fishermen pray to the god of Ebisu for good catches. This symbolized from the ceremony of pulling the Rope. This is also a symbol of a strong dragon. Pray for good fish catch and safety home.

Behind these stories, rituals, ceremonies and gods symbolised the sea, mountain and forest etc. These are yakushima basic environmental component and objectives of these stories, rituals, ceremonies, gods are the conservation and utilization of the environment. This is the symbol of the environment culture in Yakushima.

Yakushima environment culture consists basically two parts or approaches; Environment and development. Kagoshima prefectural government have been fully realized this approach and conducting several programmes to conserve it.

Kamiyaku and Yaku town government have

been implementing the programme for achieving the concept of zero emission society. Under this concept, town governments are conducting the successful programmes like promoting recycling, electric vehicle. Eco-tourism and eco-development etc. As a result of this programme, Yakushima environment become very attractive. All rivers, beaches streams, forest are very clean due to these recycle activities.

Peoples awareness, education, and knowledge is a vital factor for achieving balance development. It is a transparency way, to realize equality on environment and development. For the purpose of this Yakushima Island environmental and cultural village centre Yakushima Island environmental and cultural Learning centre, Yakushima world Heritage conservation centre, Yakushima museum and other agencies are conducting well-plan environmental research activities. Due to these activities, peoples attitudes, knowledge, behaviours are improved progressively and that also help to become a reality of Yakushima environment culture.



World Heritage Site in Sri Lanka

Premarathne Dissanayake
Central Environmental Authority of Sri Lanka
Ministry of Environment & Natural Resources

Sigiriya is one of the famous world heritage sites in Sri Lanka. It was developed by Ancient King Kassapa as his royal residence. The 5th century fortified city built on the Sigiriya summit.

Sigiriya Rock

Recent excavations at Sigiriya under the auspices of the UNESCO triangle project have unearthed the very important archaeological data. Among these data revealed that Sri Lanka produced some of the most remarkable water garden in Asia. The water gardens at Sigiriya described as "One of the oldest landscaped gardens in the world"

Sri Lanka has a long history of a hydraulic civilization and even longer tradition of an Environmental Culture in which water was regarded as a purifier and life giver and symbol of fertility. Conserving water for domestic and agricultural purposes was not the only concern of the hydraulic engineers of ancient Sri Lanka, landscape gardening also found in water as natural resources that added to its aesthetic beauty.

Sigiriya rock and landscape water gardens on the surrounding slopes where they have integrated the natural rock and shoulders with the built environment in the most interesting way. This large area of land was covered with buildings, terraces and ponds creating a specially designed environment to collect the seasonal rain water. All these landscape were consciously created by integrating the topography, water, soils, natural elements, functional requirements, geometry, environment, climate situation vegetation cover etc. It's considered the basic environmental elements and applied the integrated environment and development approaches. According to these integrated manners, the trees selected to plant on the summit gardens, and slopes of the micro irrigational canals would have provided the shady and pleasing environment. Those were freely growing or

consciously and systematically planted have maintained an ecological balance with green shady and a cool surroundings.

During the last decades the Mahaweli development scheme where Sigiriya situated was the biggest modern irrigation project of the dry zone in Sri Lanka. Under this biggest irrigational project, the major part of the dry zone forest was cleared. Considering the fact that traditionally most of the indigenous trees were not conserved by the scheme. There were many exotic trees introduced from the other countries for Mahaweli scheme. This practice of the colonial landscape resulted in losing the traditional technology and use of the indigenous trees for environmental cultural values. Experience and knowledge I gained from the programme of Local Government Administration for Conservation of Natural Environment conducted by Kagoshima prefectural government in Japan will be useful to resolve present problems faced by Sri Lanka World Heritage Sites.



Editor's note: There are 7 World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka. From the perspective of "Environmental Culture", Sigiriya, a representative Cultural Heritage of Sri Lanka is introduced in this issue. In Sri Lanka "Sinharaja Forest Reserve" is the only World Natural Heritage Site.

Amami Islands have become Japan's Natural Site Candidate for nomination to the World Heritage List

The Environmental Ministry and the Forestry Agency of Japan held a Review Committee on Natural Site Candidates for nomination to the World Heritage List, in 2003. The committee, with relevant expertise, selected three sites with strong potential to meet the criteria needed for inclusion on the World Heritage List. The candidate sites are: 1) Shiretoko (Hokkaido), 2) the Bonin Islands (Tokyo), and 3) the Ryukyu Islands, including the Amami Islands (Kagoshima and Okinawa Prefectures). Official nomination procedure will take place while the legal and social conditions surrounding the designation of each sanctuary are studied. Nomination Documents for Shiretoko were initially submitted by the UNESCO Delegation Office of Japan in Paris to The UNESCO World Heritage Center on January 30th, 2004. Below is a part of the Chairman's Summary of the Review Committee.

Chairman's Summary of the Review Committee on Candidate Natural Sites for nomination to the World Heritage List

Monday, May 26, 2003

Kunio Iwatsuki, Chairman,

The Review Committee on Candidate Natural Sites for nomination to the World Heritage List

The course of studies at the committee meetings

The Review Committee has held four meetings on candidate natural sites for nomination to include in the World Heritage List since Monday, March 3

At first, the committee looked over as many sites as possible from the whole country that have high natural value, next, the sites were extracted for detailed study base on the size, the degree of human intervention and so forth. Then, the nineteen sites, shown in the attachment, were selected and studied further in detail in accordance with the criteria for the inclusion of natural properties in the World Heritage List.

Results of the study

The committee examined each site further in detail base on knowledge and information currently available from a scientific point of view. It was concluded that, at present, the three sites described below have high possibility to meet the criteria for the inclusion of natural properties in the World Heritage List and fulfill the conditions of integrity.

However, there are issues to be addressed for each

of the three sites, and the present conditions do not allow these sites to be instantly nominated for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

For this reason, the Government offices concerned including the Ministry of the Environment and the Forestry Agency should discuss with local government officials and make further coordination and studies, including social aspects. After those efforts, if any site has prospects of overcoming the problem, it is expected that the Government nominates the site for inclusion in the World Heritage List.

Sites with strong possibility to meet the criteria for the inclusion of natural properties in the World Heritage List

Shiretoko is highly evaluated for its unique interrelationship between the rich marine ecosystem nourished by drift ice and the pristine terrestrial ecosystem, and being an important habitat for endangered species of international significance such as Steller's sea eagle, white-tailed eagle and Blakiston's fish owl. The site is considered to have strong possibility to meet the criteria for the inclusion in the World Heritage List. However, to conserve its value, it was pointed out that the preparation of comprehensive management plan covering both terrestrial and marine areas was essential, and this is the main issue to be addressed.

Bonin Islands are highly evaluated for their wide arrays of endemic and rare species and the unique islands' ecosystems, and the site is considered to have strong possibility to meet the criteria for the inclusion in the World Heritage List. However, the countermeasures against the introduced(alien) species are urgently needed, and some parts of the most important areas are not designated as protected areas yet. These issues are urgent and essential problems to be solved.

Ryukyu Islands are highly evaluated for their unique geological history in relation to the Asian continent, diverse and unique subtropical ecosystems and coral reef ecosystems, beautiful landscapes and seascapes, and the habitats for many threatened species. However, some of the important areas including the habitats of threatened species, are not designated as protected areas yet, and this is the issue to be addressed.

Editor's note

It has been 10 years since Yakushima was recognized as a World Natural Heritage. The island is often featured in magazines and on television as well as in other forms of mass-media and as a result, is still very popular as a tourist destination.

At present Yakushima is devising schemes to continue the preservation of its natural environment while striving to create a unique area where the people and the abundant nature of Yakushima can co-exist.

Published by
Nature Conservation Division,
Kagoshima Prefectural Government
10-1, Kamoike Shin-machi, Kagoshima City 890-8577
<http://chukakunet.pref.kagoshima.jp/home/kanhogoka/heritage>
email : kanho@pref.kagoshima.lg.jp