

The Future of World Cultural Heritage in Japan (First Report)

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Council for Cultural Affairs

Introduction

This report comprehensively discusses the current challenges related to World Cultural Heritage and provides a direction for future actions.

Throughout this report, we would like to emphasize that Japan should contribute to the sustainable development of society by:

- 1) working with local communities to achieve appropriate preservation and utilization of World Cultural Heritage in a sustainable manner, and
- 2) promoting the nomination of appropriate properties in order to contribute to enhancing the diversity of the World Heritage List.

1. Why must we examine the “Future of Cultural World Heritage” now?

The *World Heritage Convention* was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO in 1972 with the aim of establishing a system of cooperation and assistance for the protection of cultural and natural heritage as part of the World Heritage of humanity as a whole. Its adoption was triggered by the International Campaign to Save the Monuments of Nubia, including the temple complex of Abu Simbel, which were threatened by the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Since its entry into force in 1975, 1,121 properties in 167 countries have been inscribed on the World Heritage List. This has established a system for the international community to cooperate in protecting the common heritage of humanity and contributed greatly to raising awareness of the world’s diverse cultures and natural environments. It has also fostered people’s respect for cultural diversity and rich natural environments, embodying UNESCO’s mission of achieving peace through mutual understanding.

Since the acceptance of the *World Heritage Convention* in 1992, Japan has contributed to expressing humanity’s cultural diversity and uniqueness by inscribing 19 cultural heritage properties on the World Heritage List. In particular, since the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–), Japan has sought to share with the world the methods of protecting cultural heritage that have been established under its modern legal system, based on the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties and its predecessor laws. Japan has also contributed to the development of the World Heritage system by participating in discussions on revising the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (hereinafter referred to as the *Operational Guidelines*) and in international discussions among experts on topics such as the protection of cultural World Heritage.

In recent years, the situation surrounding World Heritage has become more

complex as the number of World Heritage properties has grown, and various challenges have arisen in each State Party. The World Heritage Committee has been holding discussions in which members reexamine the essence of World Heritage, such as how World Heritage properties should be preserved and utilized, what the nomination process for inscription on the World Heritage List should be like, and how World Heritage can contribute to solving the various challenges facing the international community.

Japan also faces various challenges surrounding World Heritage, including the lack of cooperation among diverse stakeholders involved in World Heritage protection; the impact of renewable energy development and the like on the surrounding environment of World Heritage properties; damage to properties due to unforeseen disasters, climate change, and other natural phenomena; the sudden increase and/or decrease in the number of visitors to a site before and after its inscription on the World Heritage List; the impact of the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; and the decline of local communities supporting World Heritage properties due to factors such as depopulation and a declining birthrate and aging population.

In order to preserve and utilize World Heritage, it is essential that local communities take the initiative. Inscription on the World Heritage List is not the goal, but rather a starting point for further conservation in the future. Various outcomes—such as regional revitalization—are expected through the proactive participation of local communities (including local residents, owners, enterprises, academics, schools, NPOs, and other related agencies and groups) and local governments in promoting appropriate protection based on the value of the heritage.

Under these circumstances, we will reevaluate the significance of World Cultural Heritage in Japan and analyze its current state and challenges while taking social conditions into account, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)¹

¹ The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all Member States at the United Nations summit in 2015, sets forth the common global goal of achieving a sustainable and better society that “leave[s] no one behind.” The Agenda consists of 17 goals and 169 targets to be reached by 2030. The targets associated with World Heritage are as follows:

2.4: Ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices

4.4: Substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship

4.7: Ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development

5.5: Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership

6.6: Protect and restore water-related ecosystems

8.3: Encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises

8.9: Devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products

10.2: Empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all

11.4: Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage

12.b: Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism

14.5: Conserve coastal and marine areas

15.1: Ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services

16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making

16.10: Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms

16.a: Strengthen relevant national institutions for building capacity to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime

defined by the United Nations (UN), before considering the desired future of World Cultural Heritage in Japan.

2. Background of the deliberation

In response to the November 5, 2020 consultation from the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology on what the World Cultural Heritage in Japan should be, this report is the result of discussions held five times (including interviews with stakeholders) by the Council for Cultural Affairs' Subdivision on World's Cultural Heritage, based on their recognition of the above-mentioned challenges.

This report summarizes the significance of inscription on the World Heritage List in Chapter 1, identifies the current state and challenges of the World Heritage system in Japan and abroad in Chapters 2.1 and 2.2, and considers what World Cultural Heritage should be like in Japan in the future in Chapter 2.3. In addition, what future nominations should be like is also considered in Chapter 3; deliberation on this topic will be continued in the next fiscal year.

On the other hand, with regard to Goal 7 (Energy), coordination is needed to balance the development of renewable energy with preserving the value of cultural World Heritage.

Chapter 1. The significance of inscription on the World Heritage List

The purpose of the *World Heritage Convention* is to protect cultural and natural heritage and to ensure that they are passed on to future generations. Efforts to nominate and inscribe a property on the World Heritage List results in the discovery of the property's Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) from a global perspective that goes beyond its national value. This leads to greater communication of value to the international community and mutual understanding of value. Furthermore, as cultural heritage properties are a source of pride for people in regions in which they are located, it is important that community development utilizes World Heritage properties to contribute to regional revitalization. Based on the above three pillars of preservation, value, and utilization, we will discuss several perspectives on the significance of inscription on the World Heritage List.

(1) Preservation

a. Establishment of a comprehensive system

A cross-organizational system and the participation of diverse stakeholders from a wide range of generations are essential in order to pass cultural heritage on to future generations while protecting it in a sustainable manner. World Heritage properties' role in attracting people contributes significantly to building such a system.

b. Safeguarding of the surrounding environment

World Cultural Heritage requires safeguarding the surrounding environment by, for example, imposing supplementary development regulations in the area surrounding the property, called the buffer zone. At the same time, because the setting (including the buffer zone) is the ground that gave rise to the World Cultural Heritage property, it shares a context that can be understood in continuity with the property. Community development that makes the most of the World Cultural Heritage property can be promoted by striving to safeguard and establish the setting in an integrated manner based on the characteristics of the region as well as of the heritage itself.

c. Model for preservation activities

World Cultural Heritage often involves considering the ideal form of protection for the site based on international discussions and implementing protection initiatives that have not previously been common in Japan. These efforts can serve as reference cases for the protection of other forms of cultural heritage. In addition, striving to reach mutual understanding with experts in other State Parties on Japan's efforts to protect cultural heritage will lead to the improvement of protection efforts and the development of human resources with an international perspective.

(2) Value

d. Discovery and deepening of value

In the process of summarizing the OUV of a cultural heritage from a global perspective for inscription on the World Heritage List, there is a possibility that previously unrecognized value will be discovered. In addition, there have been many cases in which further value beyond the property's OUV has been discovered by continuing academic research after inscription.

e. Message to the international community

Communicating to other State Parties the value of cultural heritage and how it should be protected from a Japanese (and therefore Asian) perspective will not only contribute to the development of the World Heritage system, but will also contribute to the promotion of global cultural diversity and provide suggestions for the sustainable global development. It is possible that communicating Japan's cultural heritage to the world will help to foster international awareness.

(3) Utilization

f. Local community ties

Through local community activities such as the education of children, people will understand the OUV of World Heritage (which is simultaneously local and global) and foster a local identity by working to protect their cultural heritage. These outcomes will further promote the proactive participation of local residents and local enterprises in sustainably preserving and utilizing cultural heritage, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of the region. In addition, in the event of a disaster, cultural heritage can provide emotional support and serve as a stronghold for reconstruction and recovery.

g. Visitors and revitalization of the local economy

Improving the attractiveness of a region and increasing its visibility through the inscription of a site on the World Heritage List is expected to increase the number of visitors, including inbound tourists, and revitalize the local economy. By implementing visitor management that considers the preservation and utilization of cultural heritage, the site can be sustainably utilized, and its value can be actively communicated in an integrated manner that goes hand-in-hand with cultural heritage preservation.

h. Contribution to local communities

Increasing the number of visitors will help to create new jobs and solve various challenges that local communities face, such as by attracting visitors and residents to the region. The sustainable preservation and utilization of World Heritage properties will, in turn, contribute to the sustainability of local communities.

Chapter 2. Sustainable preservation and utilization of World Cultural Heritage

1. Current international situation and challenges

(1) Preservation

The World Heritage Committee is examining the state of conservation of properties that face various challenges. During the 43rd session of the World Heritage Committee in 2019, 166 properties (116 of which are cultural or mixed properties) were examined. The main challenges were inadequate management systems and legal protections, the impact of development in and around the sites (about 30% each), and the destruction of properties due to as war/civil war and other threats (about 10%).

a. Inadequate management systems and legal protections

Regarding inadequate management systems and legal protections, the committee emphasized the importance of strengthening the role of the site manager² and developing a comprehensive preservation and management plan, among other measures. In addition, promoting preservation and utilization in an integrated manner requires that multiple departments, including those in charge of heritage protection, development, and tourism, work together to establish a management system.

b. Impact of development in and around the property

There is a growing number of cases in which developments could negatively impact OUV. Therefore, there is a strong need to conduct Heritage Impact Assessments (HIAs)³ to properly assess the impact of development on World Heritage properties and their components, both within and outside the buffer zone. In particular, cities under high development pressure are recommended to formulate a World Heritage site management plan that integrates with the city's development plan, paying attention to the possibility that the protection of World Heritage properties may contribute to adding new value to the city and to solving various urban problems. Such an approach was also emphasized in the UNESCO Recommendation on the Historic Urban Landscape adopted in 2011⁴, and Japan held an international experts meeting on the same topic in Fukuoka in January 2020.

² The person who oversees and leads the decision-making process for the management of each cultural heritage site. In Japan, it is often the case that the local government experts in charge fulfill these roles.

³ Assesses the impact of development projects on cultural heritage when such projects are planned within World Cultural Heritage properties, buffer zones, and their surrounding areas.

⁴ Adopted at the 36th session of the General Conference of UNESCO (November 2011) in response to the increasing number of cases in which commercial development has led to the destruction of historic landscapes, especially in urban areas. It advocated the landscape approach to the conservation of historic urban heritage as a means of protecting historic landscapes in cities, and recommended that State Parties take appropriate measures to implement this approach.

c. Impact of disasters, conflicts, and other threats

There have been reports of earthquakes, extreme weather events, and other unforeseen disasters—most notably, the fire at Notre-Dame Cathedral. As a result, international interest is growing in post-disaster restoration and disaster prevention measures. In addition, effective means of protecting cultural heritage from man-made damage are being sought to address the never-ending cases of intentional destruction and serious damage to properties caused by conflicts and civil wars. Another challenge is that many cultural heritage cannot be adequately protected by the State Party alone due to factors such as a lack of funds, technology, and expertise.

(2) Value

d. Diversification of heritage and increasing complexity of evaluation procedures

As the types of properties become more diverse as a result of the promotion of the Global Strategy,⁵ ICOMOS⁶ evaluation procedures are becoming increasingly complex. In many cases—such as heritage linked to religious beliefs with deep ties to people’s spiritual worlds and heritage deeply rooted in the traditional culture of a region—the evaluation must be based on a thorough understanding of these elements, including the background of the heritage in question. In addition, heritage with diverse value can be evaluated from multiple perspectives, often giving rise to “differences of opinion” between States Parties and the Advisory Bodies. Furthermore, the nomination of serial properties,⁷ in which multiple component parts are of OUV as a whole, requires a rigorous explanation of how each component contributes to the overall OUV. Matters such as these require State Parties to come up with new or more careful responses to the increasingly complex examination.

e. Challenges of cultural heritage diversity

The *World Heritage Convention*’s efforts to enhance the World Heritage List with the aim of promoting cultural diversity can be viewed as serving the same purpose as UNESCO’s mission of achieving peace by promoting mutual understanding among people belonging to different cultures.

In order for stakeholders such as State Parties and site managers to share the diverse value embodied by World Cultural Heritage, as well as success stories of

⁵ The Global Strategy for a Representative, Balanced and Credible World Heritage List adopted at the 18th session of the World Heritage Committee (1994). Its aim is to identify and eliminate major gaps in the World Heritage List.

⁶ International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). An international non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to the conservation of the world’s monuments, building complexes and sites, including World Heritage properties. It is an Advisory Body that reviews the nominations of World Cultural Heritage and ensures the conservation status of cultural properties inscribed on the World Heritage List.

⁷ *Operational Guidelines*, Paragraph 137: “Serial properties will include two or more component parts related by clearly defined links [...] and provided the series as a whole – and not necessarily its individual component parts – is of Outstanding Universal Value.”

how this value has helped to realize sustainable societies, greater dissemination of information on these experiences is needed.

(3) Utilization

f. Importance of local communities

Collaboration that extends beyond site managers and heritage protection departments to involve the entire local community is essential for the realization of appropriate preservation and utilization of World Heritage. The importance of local communities in the protection of World Heritage is increasing further, as indicated by the addition of a “fifth C” to the Strategic Objectives for the implementation of the *World Heritage Convention*⁸ and the Kyoto Vision⁹ adopted in 2012.

g. Importance of visitor management strategies

While visitors have the potential to contribute to the SDGs, concerns have been raised about their negative impact on cultural heritage due to factors such as overcrowding and the development of tourism infrastructure. State Parties are encouraged to develop visitor management strategies and to provide tourism services that consider the value of cultural heritage in offering longer and deeper experiences. They are also required to mitigate negative impacts on cultural heritage through entry restrictions and other measures.

h. Contribution of World Heritage to SDGs

Although “culture” itself is not included among the 17 Sustainable Development Goals,¹⁰ the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly seeks to achieve “a world of universal respect for cultural diversity” and recognizes that “all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development.” As targets of the 17 Goals, it also mentions the acquisition of “knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development” through “education for [...] appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” (Target 4.7) and efforts to “protect and safeguard the

⁸ The objectives set by the World Heritage Committee to promote implementation of the *Convention*. Four Cs were adopted by World Heritage Committee in 2002, namely: (1) **Credibility** of the World Heritage List; (2) ensuring the effective **Conservation** of World Heritage properties; (3) promoting effective **Capacity-building** measures in State Parties; and (4) increasing public awareness, involvement and support for World Heritage through **Communication**; to which (5) enhancing the role of **Communities** in the implementation of the *Convention* was adopted in 2007, resulting in five objectives (known as the “Five Cs”).

⁹ The proposal adopted at the Celebration of the 40th Anniversary of the *World Heritage Convention* in 2012. The Vision emphasized the importance of community involvement in World Heritage protection and indicated that benefits derived from heritage should be equitably distributed to communities to foster their sustainable development.

¹⁰ The themes related to each of the 17 Goals are as follows: (1) poverty, (2) hunger, (3) health, (4) education, (5) gender, (6) water and sanitation, (7) energy, (8) work and economic growth, (9) infrastructure, (10) inequalities, (11) sustainable cities, (12) sustainable consumption and production, (13) climate change, (14) marine resources, (15) terrestrial resources, (16) peace, and (17) means of implementation.

world's cultural and natural heritage” (Target 11.4).

Furthermore, the Culture|2030 Indicators (UNESCO, 2019) measure culture's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs across different themes—including education, environment and cities, inclusive social development and economic growth, peace and security—and provides indicators for monitoring progress.

2. Emerging challenges in Japan

(1) Preservation

a. Incomplete of comprehensive management plans/systems

For serial properties comprising several components, it is necessary to formulate a comprehensive preservation and management plan that specifies the overall preservation and management policy, preservation methods, and the like. Some of Japan's cultural heritage properties that were inscribed on the World Heritage List during its first years of existence have not formulated a comprehensive preservation and management plan because such plans were not yet required at the time of inscription.

In order to protect World Heritage properties together with their surrounding environments and local communities, it is critical to have site managers who can comprehensively manage the sites. In Japan, these roles are often fulfilled by the local government experts/officials in charge, but the actual circumstances regarding their level of training and their assignments vary from property to property and are not always adequate. Similarly, cooperation among multiple local governments, property owners, and related agencies, as well as compatibility between cultural property protection measures and tourism, development, and urban measures, are challenges that continue to need to be addressed.

Furthermore, there have been cases in which local governments that had focused on allocating personnel and budgets to World Heritage during the nomination process have been unable to maintain their previous budgetary measures and resources after inscription. Even after inscription on the World Heritage List, there continue to be opportunities for annual monitoring as promised in Chapter 6 of the nomination dossier, periodic confirmation of the state of conservation by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and periodic reporting on the state of conservation to the World Heritage Committee on a six-year cycle. In light of these ongoing requirements, it is essential to establish budgets and systems on an ongoing basis in order to perpetually preserve and utilize the World Cultural Heritage in a sustainable manner, and improvements are needed in this regard.

b. Challenges in safeguarding the surrounding environment

In recent years, the World Heritage Committee has required the establishment of appropriate buffer zones around World Cultural Heritage and strict management

of their setting, including areas outside of these zones. Therefore, there is an increasing need to properly assess the impact on cultural heritage when large-scale projects and other activities are planned. Coordination between heritage protection and development is often necessary, especially in urban areas where development pressures are high and in areas suitable for renewable energy development. Paragraph 118bis of the *Operational Guidelines*¹¹ requires States Parties to carry out HIAs that assess in advance the impact of development projects and activities on cultural heritage. In April 2019, the Agency for Cultural Affairs also released the *Reference Guidelines on Heritage Impact Assessments for World Cultural Heritage*¹² (hereinafter referred to as the *Reference Guidelines*), which outlines the basic concepts of HIA procedures and methods.

Even in the environment surrounding World Cultural Heritage, it is rather inevitable that people will need to update their homes and other facilities in order to live and work, and that they will make appropriate changes according to social conditions. In the first place, the current environment is not always favorable and may not even be in harmony with the property, which often necessitates improvements.

In Japan, existing legal systems such as the City Planning Act, Cropland Act, and Landscape Act control developments in buffer zones in a multi-layered manner. Although some local governments have enacted ordinances for the protection of buffer zones, the above-mentioned legal systems were not established to protect World Cultural Heritage. In practice, however, they function as protection measures for buffer zones in Japan through their use as procedures for implementing appropriate restrictions and making adjustments to developments with the goal of protecting buffer zones.

Regarding areas outside of the buffer zones, it is often unclear to what extent these areas should be subject to control. In some cases, the legal basis for protection of these areas is inadequate compared to the protections allowed for

¹¹ *Operational Guidelines*, Paragraph 118bis: “Notwithstanding Paragraphs 179 and 180 of the *Operational Guidelines*, States Parties shall ensure that Environmental Impact Assessments, Heritage Impact Assessments, and/or Strategic Environmental Assessments be carried out as a pre-requisite for development projects and activities that are planned for implementation within or around a World Heritage property. These assessments should serve to identify development alternatives, as well as both potential positive and negative impacts on the Outstanding Universal Value of the property and to recommend mitigation measures against degradation or other negative impacts on cultural or natural heritage within the property or its wider setting. This will ensure the long-term safeguarding of the Outstanding Universal Value, and the strengthening of heritage resilience to disasters and climate change.”

¹² The *Reference Guidelines* categorize the HIA process into three stages: determining the need for detailed analysis, conducting the analysis, and post-assessment work, and provide the following points to consider during implementation.

- It is necessary to inform the public in advance about the need for HIAs and to clarify the procedures for HIAs in the comprehensive conservation management plan.
- It is necessary to summarize the “attributes” that convey the property’s OUV. (See footnote 16.)
- It is necessary to ensure objectivity.
- If impacts on OUV are not considered minor, it is necessary to consider mitigation measures and conduct a reassessment.
- It is necessary to report to the World Heritage Committee as needed.

components and buffer zones, and this makes it difficult to manage these areas.

On the other hand, Paragraph 104 of the *Operational Guidelines*¹³ states that a buffer zone is an area established “for the purposes of effective protection of the nominated property” and that OUV is not recognized in the buffer zone itself. However, the surrounding environment of World Cultural Heritage—including buffer zones—is often a place with cultural ties that link back to the property and tell stories about the cultural background that led to the formation of the property’s OUV. Thus, measures to safeguard the surrounding environment are a future challenge.

c. Impact of preservation efforts in Japan and abroad

Disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons hit Japan frequently. In recent years, World Cultural Heritage have been damaged by earthquakes, landslides triggered by extraordinary torrential rain, and typhoons. In addition, in 2019, a large-scale fire broke out at the Shuri-jō site. While it is necessary to ensure that cultural heritage are protected from these disasters, efforts related to disaster recovery and disaster prevention are also expected to contribute to the enhancement of measures at other cultural heritage sites.

For example, the Agency for Cultural Affairs formulated and revised the *Fire Prevention Guidelines for National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (Buildings)* in the wake of the fires at the Notre-Dame Cathedral and the Shuri-jō site. Based on these guidelines, the Agency inspected fire prevention equipment at National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (buildings) throughout Japan and formulated the *Five-Year Plan for Fire Prevention Measures for World Heritage Sites, National Treasures, and Other Properties*.

In addition, Japan’s preservation and repair of its wooden cultural heritage properties has received high international praise through the Nara Conference¹⁴ and other events. On the other hand, there have been some differences in thinking between Japan and other countries in recent years, including difficulties in gaining

¹³ *Operational Guidelines*, Paragraph 104: “For the purposes of effective protection of the nominated property, a buffer zone is an area surrounding the nominated property which has complementary legal and/or customary restrictions placed on its use and development in order to give an added layer of protection to the property. This should include the immediate setting of the nominated property, important views and other areas or attributes that are functionally important as a support to the property and its protection. The area constituting the buffer zone should be determined in each case through appropriate mechanisms. Details on the size, characteristics and authorized uses of a buffer zone, as well as a map indicating the precise boundaries of the property and its buffer zone, should be provided in the nomination.”

¹⁴ Held in 1994 in Nara City, Nara Prefecture, at which the following viewpoints were expressed regarding “cultural and heritage diversity” and “authenticity” (i.e., maintenance of the original characteristics of the cultural heritage; one of the conditions for inscription on the World Heritage List):

- Responsibility for cultural heritage and the management of it belongs, in the first place, to the cultural community that has generated it, and subsequently to that which cares for it.
- Judgments of “authenticity” must be considered within the cultural context to which the heritage property belongs.

In the *Operational Guidelines*, the Nara Document on Authenticity, as an international statement that responds to the need for respect for diversity, provides a “practical basis for examining the authenticity” of “properties nominated under criteria (i) to (vi)”. (*Operational Guidelines*, Paragraph 79 and Annex 4)

the understanding of experts in other countries concerning improvement projects and other activities at several cultural heritage sites. In order to bridge this gap, there is a need to further promote mutual understanding with overseas countries regarding Japan's approach to cultural heritage protection.

Japan has been cooperating with the international society to protect cultural heritage in various countries by utilizing its techniques and expertise in cultural heritage protection. In addition, using its knowledge of World Cultural Heritage, Japan has also cooperated with other countries to achieve results in terms of inscribing cultural heritage in various countries on the World Heritage List and eliminating sites from the List of World Heritage in Danger. These international contributions also have important significance for Japan's human resource development in that they have fostered a spirit of mutual understanding and respect with other countries through the protection of cultural heritage. On the other hand, as the number of experts and specialized agencies responsible for international cooperation is limited, strengthening the system to promote cooperation and securing the next generation of leaders are challenges.

(2) Value

d. Discovery and deepening of value

The 19 cultural heritage in Japan that have been inscribed on the World Heritage List so far are extremely diverse in terms of historical value, period of history represented, and background, and include wooden structures such as temples, shrines, and castle towers that have been passed down over generations, a large-scale kofun group (burial mounds), mountains that are objects of faith and worship, and sites that illustrate the trajectory of modernization. The diversity of these cultural heritage has greatly broadened the scope of the World Heritage List. The inscription of each site has added to the richness of the List and contributed to the promotion of diversity and the sustainability of human society and the environment.

Such values are often newly discovered from a global perspective through focused studies and research that are conducted with the aim of nominating a site for the World Heritage List. It is necessary to further deepen the value of sites by maintaining this system and continuing studies and research after inscription, while using the OUV as a foundation. In addition, the outcomes should also be communicated to the rest of the world.

e. Communicating value and protection efforts

Japan has developed methods and initiatives to protect and pass on cultural heritage through traditions, customs, and cultural property protection systems according to the characteristics of the cultural heritage and the natural environment surrounding it. By communicating its cultural heritage along with its efforts to protect it, Japan has contributed to the diversity of cultural heritage protection and

provided suggestions for sustainable development in contemporary society.

Once a site is inscribed on the World Heritage List, the site's OUV, which is officially recognized by the World Heritage Committee, becomes the cornerstone of all efforts to preserve and utilize the site. Particularly in the case of serial properties, it is necessary to communicate the value of each component part—not only in terms of the value of the component itself, but also from the perspective of the property's overall OUV and how the component contributes to that OUV, as well as its relationship to the other components.

In addition, there is a great deal of international interest in Japan's efforts to protect intangible cultural heritage that is closely related to tangible cultural heritage—such as Japan's unique values and the traditional skills for the conservation and transmission of wooden architecture inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity—as well as Japan's approach to disaster prevention and reconstruction, which were expressed at the Sendai Conference.¹⁵ It is therefore necessary to aim to disseminate more information than ever and contribute in these respects.

(3) Utilization

f. Challenges with local community involvement

In recent years, cultural heritage that are deeply rooted in the unique cultures of each region of the world—such as faith-related cultural heritage and cultural landscapes—are being inscribed on the World Heritage List, making the understanding and role of local communities increasingly important in the preservation and utilization of cultural heritage.

On the other hand, there is an increasing number of cases in which the local community that supports a World Cultural Heritage faces challenges related to the survival of the area. For instance, the local community may be weakening due to depopulation, a declining birthrate, aging population, or other factors, and local industries closely related to the management of the cultural heritage may be falling into decline. In the future, it will be necessary to sustainably preserve and utilize cultural heritage inscribed on the World Heritage List while achieving sustainable development of each area with the heritage at its core.

In addition, there are also challenges such as the waning interest of local communities in World Cultural Heritage and inadequate participation of younger generations in certain areas.

¹⁵ The international experts meeting on “Cultural Heritage and Disaster Resilient Communities” under the framework of the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. The meeting was held in March 2015 with the objectives of including considerations for culture and cultural heritage in *The Sendai Framework for Disaster Reduction 2015-2030*, the outcome document of the 3rd UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction that outlines four priorities for action and seven global targets to reduce disaster risk, as well as indicating targets for efforts to reduce disaster risk at cultural heritages.

g. Challenges in handling visitors

The inscription of a cultural heritage on the World Heritage List tends to temporarily raise the profile of the site in question. While this stimulates the tourism industry by increasing the number of domestic and international visitors to the site, there are cases in which this has led to challenges such as over-tourism, an increased burden on the local community, and a sharp increase in the number of visitors followed by a sharp decrease.

In addition, World Heritage properties are especially popular destinations for international visitors, whose numbers have been growing in recent years. However, it cannot be denied that support for these visitors, such as multilingual explanations, is lacking.

On the other hand, the global spread of COVID-19 is also having a serious impact on Japan's cultural heritage. Stakeholders have been scrambling to enforce infection prevention measures, and the economic damage caused by the sudden drop in visitors is likely to lead to a lack of resources for the maintenance and management of heritage in the medium to long term.

From the perspective of interpretation, it is important that visitors are given adequate explanations about the significance of the site as a World Cultural Heritage and its value from a global standpoint. However, visitor support varies greatly from area to area and site to site, and it can be acknowledged that support is not adequate in some cases, such as when explanations are limited to domestic assessments of value or fail to address the value of a component in the context of the whole property.

h. Local community issues

Japan's World Cultural Heritage properties are situated in urban areas, mountainous regions, and remote islands, and their conditions are diverse. In all of these regions, properties often face significant challenges based on the characteristics of their locations. Some villages are suffering from a vicious cycle of depopulation, a falling birthrate, an aging population, and the decline of the local economy, while other urban sightseeing destinations are struggling to maintain a balance between developing for tourism and other demands and protecting cultural heritage.

The human and economic burden of protecting World Cultural Heritage often falls heavily on local governments. In many cases, local communities—such as local residents and local enterprises, who are expected to play a central and proactive role in protecting the sites—are losing their vitality due to community exhaustion.

Even if protecting cultural heritage is thought to contribute to the revitalization

of local communities, for this to happen, efforts in both regards must be planned and implemented in an integrated manner. Such awareness and systems, however, may not yet be adequate.

3. How things should be in the future

(1) Preservation

a. Enhancing comprehensive preservation and management systems

The role played by local governments will become more important than ever in realizing preservation and management systems that suit the characteristics of each cultural heritage and area. At the same time, it is essential to reinforce systems for protection in cooperation with various organizations and related agencies, including local communities, and establish councils and the like that allow all stakeholders to meet.

In addition, as the challenges surrounding World Heritage become more diverse, there is a greater need to establish cross-organizational systems and formulate comprehensive preservation and management plans. Furthermore, the role of the site manager is becoming increasingly important. Since the abilities required for this role are more diverse than those required by conventional cultural heritage protection roles, there is an urgent need to develop and appropriately assign human resources.

To ensure the preservation and management of World Cultural Heritage even after their inscription, it is essential to maintain and develop comprehensive preservation and management systems as follows:

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Establish expert committees and councils
- Maintain human and financial systems after inscription on the World Heritage List
- Develop and appropriately assign site managers
- Formulate comprehensive preservation and management plans and revise them as needed

Government of Japan:

- Provide support for comprehensive preservation and management efforts by local governments and communication of those efforts internationally
- Support the development of site managers through training and other measures
- Maintain and update systems by conducting regular checks on the state of conservation

b. Actively safeguarding the surrounding environment

Safeguarding the environment surrounding World Heritage properties requires finding meaning more actively than before, gaining the understanding and cooperation of diverse stakeholders, and implementing conservation in a manner that has multifaceted effects on local communities. It is important to:

- actively attach significance to the setting itself and draw up integrated spatial plans that make it easier to live in areas where heritage is located;
- organically utilize existing legal systems to properly safeguard the surrounding environment, strive to apply these systems in harmony with the values of World Heritage properties, and establish systems and plans that allow additional measures to be taken in areas where management is still inadequate; and
- recognize once again that all stakeholders, including governments, local residents, and enterprises, are agents who protect World Heritages property along with their surrounding environment, create prosperous communities centered on World Heritage properties, and receive the benefits.

First of all, to ensure that existing legal systems operate in harmony with the value of World Cultural Heritage, we must further promote the creation of systems to ensure that the setting of heritages are safeguarded and shaped through cooperation among related agencies and departments, such as by enhancing comprehensive preservation and management plans (which include HIA methods and procedures) and HIA manuals. It is also effective to share the setting's significance as an integral part of World Cultural Heritage in local government councils that contribute to the safeguarding and shaping of favorable landscapes, such as in the City Planning Council, the Landscape Planning Council, and the Cultural Properties Protection Council, and to strive for harmonious operation. Furthermore, it is important to monitor changes in the surrounding environment and set up systems that allow for necessary revisions and improvements to be made when existing spatial plans, systems, awareness-sharing efforts, and the like are inadequate.

HIAs should be actively used as a process to consider desirable development projects and other activities in areas with World Cultural Heritage properties. The spontaneous cooperation of local residents and enterprises should also be recognized as contributions to protecting heritage.

In the process of preparing a World Heritage nomination dossier, it is important to summarize how the setting relates to and contributes to the cultural heritage site's potential OUV,¹⁶ to actively find meaning such as connections to tangible

¹⁶ To assess the specific impact of a project or activity on a cultural heritage, the *Reference Guidelines* state that it is necessary to reconfirm the content of the property's Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (SOUV) adopted by the World Heritage Committee and summarize the "attributes" of the property's OUV. How this should be summarized varies depending on the characteristics of the cultural heritage and other factors, but because the work takes a certain amount of

and intangible culture and nature that link back to the property, and to clarify what should be protected.

By protecting what needs to be protected, improving what needs to be improved, and creating things that are desirable for the heritage and its many stakeholders when the creation of new facilities and the like is warranted, it will be possible to create a favorable surrounding environment that is in harmony with the World Heritage property.

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Conduct HIAs
- Formulate HIA manuals and other guidance materials that clarify the position of existing legal procedures
- Summarize HIA methods and the like according to the degree of impact of the development project or activity
- Actively provide appropriate explanations of the meaning of the HIA to project entities, request their cooperation, and offer commendation
- Cooperate across departments and operate relevant councils harmoniously
- Shape a favorable environment by actively positioning the conservation of the setting under plans such as the Regional Plan for the Protection and Utilization of Cultural Properties, the Plan for the Maintenance and Improvement of Historic Landscapes, and the Landscape Plan, as well as by utilizing townscape improvement projects and the like

Government of Japan:

- Promulgate the necessity of HIAs, collect case studies that include the operation of laws and regulations, enhance the *Reference Guidelines*, and so on
- Provide measures and resources for buffer zone conservation and coordinate and consult with relevant ministries and agencies

c. Improving the protection of cultural heritage through synergy

Although the challenges involved in protecting World Cultural Heritage are diverse, there are also many problems common to World Heritage properties, as well as similar challenges faced depending on the type of cultural heritage or the environment in which it is located. Each property has therefore accumulated its own experiences and knowledge on how to deal with these challenges. For this reason, it is important to establish opportunities that allow stakeholders to share their challenges and exchange information on their experiences and knowledge, as well as for the government to periodically check, monitor, and evaluate these

time, it is best to complete it in advance rather than to start it at the phase when individual projects or activities occur. When shared with stakeholders in advance, such preliminary work is expected to reduce the amount of effort needed during the HIA implementation phase to grasp what impact projects or activities will have on specific attributes of OUV.

initiatives. Widely disseminating best practices is also beneficial because World Heritage initiatives attract attention and have a significant impact on other forms of cultural heritage.

In addition, it is necessary to promote the exchange of information with experts in other countries and to utilize this information for the protection of Japan's cultural heritage.

Regarding international cooperation related to cultural heritage, we will promote greater cooperation through approaches such as strengthening collaboration between public, private, and academic sectors and cooperating with international organizations in order to make effective use of resources. By deepening understanding and respect for the cultural heritage of other countries through such international cooperation efforts, we will aim to improve the protection of cultural heritage in Japan and develop human resources among younger generations.

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Actively participate in information-sharing and networking opportunities
- Implement initiatives based on best practices in Japan and abroad and disseminate information on these initiatives

Government of Japan:

- Gather information on best practices in Japan and abroad and establish opportunities for sharing information with local government experts
- Have the national council members for World Heritage affairs and others conduct periodic inspections and offer advice, and commend outstanding initiatives
- Strengthen information dissemination through websites, social media, and other means
- Promote the protection of and coordination with intangible heritage that is deeply related to the protection of tangible heritage
- Promote international cooperation for cultural heritage in other countries

(2) Value

d. Promoting the continuous pursuit of value

Continuing to conduct academic studies and research on a property after its inscription will make it possible to obtain new knowledge based on the property's OUV, which can lead to a deepening of the value of the cultural heritage in question. In addition, high value related to a property's OUV is often found in cultural heritage and their surroundings from a natural sciences perspective. Since

the methods used by UNESCO Biosphere Reserves and Geoparks are also effective in evaluating cultural heritages, active collaboration is needed in this regard.

In particular, for serial properties, information must be actively disseminated and provided not only on the OUV of the cultural heritage in question, but also on how each component contributes to the OUV of the property as a whole and how it relates to other components.

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Accurately grasp the value to be protected and communicated
- Build and expand interpretation strategies
- Continue studies and research after inscription on the World Heritage List
- Ensure that the identified value is reflected in the Regional Plan for the Protection and Utilization of Cultural Properties

Government of Japan:

- Provide support for the continuous pursuit of value and its dissemination by local governments and others

e. Communicating the property's value and protection efforts

The 19 World Cultural Heritage properties in Japan that have already been inscribed on the World Heritage List all display high value in that they represent a part of the endeavors of humanity. On the other hand, there are still many cultural heritages that should be nominated by Japan for the sake of showing how humanity has responded to natural and social phenomena in the course of everyday life. In addition, it is important to share with the people of the world the methods of protecting cultural heritage that Japan has developed over the years, the role that cultural heritage plays in local communities, and especially Japan's response to disasters and the links between tangible and intangible cultural heritage, about which Japan has a wealth of experience and knowledge. Through these activities, we can contribute to the promotion of global cultural diversity and the realization of sustainable societies, and at the same time, we can cultivate our international outlook by disseminating information to the world.

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Update protection methods through ongoing research, training, and the like on perceiving value
- Communicate and gather information on preservation and utilization methods

- Promote international exchange and information dissemination through training of site managers and other means
- Share values and an awareness of challenges with the local community and promote joint initiatives

Government of Japan:

- Strengthen information dissemination through websites, social media, and other means
- Disseminate information to the international community on Japan's response to disasters, protection methods appropriate to the climate and natural features, and the like
- Disseminate information on the close ties between tangible and intangible value
- Hold international conferences, international training programs, and the like, promote exchanges with experts in other countries, and return the outcomes to local governments

(3) Utilization

f. Maintaining the involvement and interest of diverse stakeholders

In order for cultural heritage to become a part of the identity of the local community and for the community to work together as one toward its protection, it is important to communicate the value of World Cultural Heritage to various generations in an easy-to-understand manner and to ensure that the goals of protection and the benefits gained from it are shared among all stakeholders.

Measures such as boosting paid and unpaid volunteer and other activities conducted by the local community and building a network among activity groups to promote cooperation are also effective. In particular, it is necessary to promote the participation of younger generations in volunteer and other activities and to develop young people into future leaders of conservation through efforts such as World Heritage education.

Local communities not only include local residents, but also diverse groups and organizations such as local enterprises and universities. It is necessary to foster an environment in which each member of the local community can take ownership in protecting World Cultural Heritage and become a part of the protection system.

To ensure that local communities do not lose interest in the property after its inscription, it is also important to establish regular opportunities to reaffirm the property's value and the goals of conservation and to reflect on what has been accomplished and what challenges remain.

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Promote proactive activities by local communities, including youth
- Share with local communities the goals and benefits of protecting World Heritage
- Procure private funding such as donations and crowdfunding

Government of Japan:

- Disseminate information on the World Heritage system
- Disseminate information to local communities (e.g., via symposiums) in conjunction with regular inspections by the national council members and others
- Commend local communities for their proactive activities

g. Enhancing visitor management strategies

When explaining the value of World Cultural Heritage properties—especially of serial properties—it is important to not only explain the individual components, but also to prepare easy-to-understand explanations that enable visitors to understand how each component contributes to the property’s overall value, and to guide visitors in a manner that leads them to other components and related cultural heritage.

Informing visitors of the value of World Cultural Heritage and of efforts to protect them will lead to an increase in the number of supporters of heritage protection. It is necessary to provide adequate explanations in multiple languages and other support so that visitors from other countries can understand the heritage correctly.

On the other hand, visitor management that considers local communities is needed so that tourism pressure does not become a burden to local communities. In particular, the sharp increase in the number of visitors immediately before and after a property is inscribed on the World Heritage List and the subsequent sharp decrease is a challenge common to many properties. Therefore, properties that are nominated in the future must make careful preparations while taking advantage of the experiences accumulated to date. From this perspective, it is important to define a state of visitor management that is desirable for the region as a strategy, in agreement with local communities.

The increase in the number of visitors should not be a temporary occurrence, but rather maintained at optimal conditions in terms of both quality and quantity. It is important to aim for a state in which visitors give back to the local community, such as by leading to an increase in the number of people visiting and interacting with the local community, more active dialogue between visitors and the local community, and revitalization of the local economy.

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Explain value based on OUV approved by the World Heritage Committee
- Develop medium- to long-term visitor management strategies and the like
- Disseminate information in multiple languages

Government of Japan:

- Support local governments and other stakeholders in developing visitor management strategies based on the characteristics of each World Cultural Heritage

h. Ensuring the sustainability of local communities and World Heritage

Today, the communities that support cultural heritage often face various social challenges. However, community development that utilizes World Heritage properties is thought to create cohesive local communities, revitalize regions, and become significant sources of energy for overcoming local challenges. From this perspective, it is important to form a virtuous cycle of protecting cultural heritage and creating attractive communities, and to realize the sustainable development of both.

To this end, it is necessary to position the preservation and management of World Heritage within the overall goals and plans of the region, and for local communities to work together as one.

In addition, we must actively communicate our accumulated experiences and knowledge to serve as examples of how protecting World Cultural Heritage contributes to the development of sustainable societies, which is of great interest worldwide.

<Specific measures>

Local governments:

- Position the preservation and management of World Heritage within the comprehensive plans and goals for the region

Government of Japan:

- Provide support for projects that aim to sustainably preserve and manage World Heritage and for information-sharing about these projects

Chapter 3. Efforts to enhance the World Heritage List

In light of the international contributions that Japan has made, there is still room for Japan to keep contributing to the enhancement of the diversity of the World Heritage List and to the sustainability of human society and the environment going forward. We believe that Japan should continue to nominate properties that are appropriately prepared for inscription on the World Heritage List and that enhancing the Tentative List¹⁷ is effective for this purpose.

1. Properties that should be nominated

(1) Criteria for properties to be nominated

Like the cultural heritage that have been described so far, the properties that Japan should nominate in the future must be able to demonstrate in academic terms Japan's unique or typical and remarkable value, that is, a criterion for nomination is the ability to adequately explain the OUV¹⁸ scholastically not only from a domestic perspective, but also from a global perspective that considers discussions by the international community. Another prerequisite is the property's ability to contribute to the diversity of the World Heritage List and to the sustainability of human society and the environment. In addition to this, future nominations call for the ability to steadily implement various initiatives from the perspectives of preservation, value, and utilization as indicated in Chapter 2.3, "How things should be in the future." It is necessary to confirm in advance that local governments will continue to implement and develop their initiatives even after properties have been inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Furthermore, it may be possible to consider nominating properties that meet the above conditions as cross-border serial properties, if it can be smoothly coordinated with the other States Parties in which related properties are located.

¹⁷ The list of properties that are appropriate for inscription on the World Heritage List. In order to be nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List, a property must be included in the Tentative List at least one year prior to submission of the nomination dossier.

¹⁸ For a property to have OUV, it must have outstanding cultural significance and/or natural value that transcends boundaries and is of shared importance to humanity as a whole, both today and for future generations. The nominating State Party must also demonstrate that it has been maintained in its original state (authenticity) and that the wholeness of the value that it represents is intact (integrity). As criteria for the assessment of OUV for cultural heritage, the *Operational Guidelines* states that nominated properties shall:

- i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. (The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria).

(2) Criteria for properties to be included in the Tentative List

Given that the Tentative List is to be submitted to UNESCO as a list of properties with plans for nomination to the World Heritage List in the future, listed properties must have above a certain level of inscription potential. It is appropriate to add properties that meet or are expected to meet the above criteria for properties that should be nominated to the Tentative List.

Considering the recent discussions at UNESCO and the cultural background of Japan, and also considering the new contemporary era, new candidates could also be cultural properties that can be highly evaluated from perspectives such as coexistence with nature, response to disasters, and ties to intangible cultural heritage.

2. Procedures for revising the Tentative List

(1) Survey on cultural World Heritage awareness

When Japan added properties to the Tentative List around 2008, candidates were solicited from local governments and a conclusion was reached after deliberation by the Special Committee on World Cultural Heritage, which is a part of the Subdivision on Cultural Properties of the Council for Cultural Affairs. However, in order to enhance the Tentative List, the following points must be considered:

- while the enthusiasm of local governments is certainly important from the perspective of sustainability, academic review and examinations should be a major premise of future listings; and
- in recent years, there have been many nominations and inscriptions of serial properties that cross local government boundaries, and more are expected in the future.

From the above, it is appropriate to proceed with revising the current Tentative List without basing the process on public solicitation from local governments.

On the other hand, it is worthwhile to obtain a wide range of ideas from local governments and others for use as a reference for deliberation. Therefore, it will be considered conducting an awareness survey on the future state of World Cultural Heritage. When implementing the awareness survey as a result of these considerations, it will be possible to widely inform local governments and others of the significance of World Cultural Heritage summarized here by including questions in the survey on its significance.

(2) Consideration procedures

The Council must first narrow down to a certain number the properties that may be subject to deliberation, based on the results of academic research and the state of cultural heritage outside of Japan and their inscription on the World Heritage

List. Then, we will request local governments and other stakeholders to submit materials, conduct deliberations, and revise the Tentative List. In the process, new criteria shall be established for deliberation.

In cases where it is difficult to decide on revisions based solely on the provided materials, the Council may consider conducting in advance on-site inspections of the properties subject to deliberation or interviews with stakeholders.

Regarding properties that are added to the Tentative List as a result of the deliberation, local governments will prepare for their nomination by conducting further studies and research on their value and developing preservation and management systems, while the Government of Japan will provide the necessary support.

As for the properties that were subject to deliberation but were not added to the Tentative List, classifying them according to the challenges that need to be resolved and publishing this information is an effective way to ensure the transparency of deliberations after the fact and to encourage stakeholders to work toward their protection.

Both World Heritage List nominations and Tentative List enhancements should be performed only when properties are properly prepared. Therefore, while revision of the Tentative List must be considered further as concrete work progresses, it may be done as needed when necessary conditions are met, without setting a specific deadline or cycle.

(3) Revising the properties in the Tentative List

Active efforts by local governments are essential to ensure that cultural heritage is sustainable. For stakeholders who are unable to maintain their enthusiasm for inscription and protection, or who have found a direction for protection through methods other than World Heritage, inclusion in the Tentative List may become a burden. Therefore, we should also consider removing from the Tentative List properties for which activities toward nomination have not been conducted for a certain period of time (e.g., five years), after confirming with the relevant local governments their ongoing intentions.

In conclusion

This report summarizes the results of this fiscal year's examinations of the matters raised by the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology in November 2020. Even though time was limited, through this report, we were able to obtain a direction for three of the matters in the request for advice, namely:

- 1) the significance of the inscription of cultural heritage on the World Heritage List;
- 2) how World Cultural Heritage inscribed on the List should be sustainably preserved and utilized; and
- 3) what efforts should be made to enhance cultural heritage inscribed on the World Heritage List.

In addition, we have indicated the necessity, criteria, and procedures for the fourth matter in the request for advice, namely:

- 4) revision of the Tentative List.

In FY2021, on the basis of this report, we will determine the specific procedures for reviewing the Tentative List and proceed with discussions. After that, we would like to make a final report as the Council for Cultural Affairs.

In this report, we reexamined the significance of World Heritage and presented a vision for the future based on our analysis of the current situation and challenges. We then mentioned the need to revise the Tentative List from the viewpoint that Japan must continue contributing to the World Heritage system. Such discussions tend to focus only on the part about revising the Tentative List; however, it must be fully understood that going forward, the Tentative List will be considered on the basis of the significance of World Heritage and how World Heritage should be in the future, as described in the preceding paragraphs.

World Cultural Heritage properties have not only been proven internationally and academically to have universal value, but they also become sources of pride for the people living in or who are involved in the regions in which they are located. At the same time, the safeguarding and shaping of World Cultural Heritage properties and their surrounding environments increases the attractiveness of the regions in which they are located and provides opportunities to achieve communities that are comfortable to live in. We hope that the people who comprise local communities (including local residents, owners, enterprises, academics, schools, NPOs and other related agencies and groups) and local governments will actively find meaning in World Cultural Heritage and take the initiative in utilizing it as a means to solve local challenges. In particular, based on this report, we would like local governments to take immediate action where possible, such as by establishing systems, creating and revising necessary manuals, creating easy-to-

understand interpretation materials, and improving heritage sites.