



**The Chugoku Shimbun Newspaper, 27 November 2006**

**Conserving Heritage sites over difficulty for tomorrow**

**10 year anniversary of A-Bomb Dome and Itsukushima Shrine World Heritage Registration**

**Interview: Dr. Hiroshi Kishida, Professor, Department of Literature Ryukoku University**

**Interviewer:** What do you think about last 10 years of two World Heritage sites in Hiroshima?

**Prof. Kishida:** The WH Convention imposes that the parties should protect, conserve, manage and transfer to the future generations. Especially the way to transfer is important. I think Hiroshima has not done anything to implement this.

**Interviewer:** You are very critical.

**Prof. Kishida:** The Culture Agency of Japan nominates sites according to Japanese laws and doesn't create additional national laws. Therefore the responsibilities for local communities are high. Hatsukaiti City which merged Miyajima Town needs to reform their ideas to conserve Itsukushima Shrine. There are lot to: for example, unregistered assets could be registered at the municipality level so that they are protected against natural disaster next time. The local government can support renovation of town architectures.

**Interviewer:** The Board of Education of Hiroshima Prefecture changed its guidelines for conservation to include the landscape of the opposite bank of Itsukushima Shrine.

**Prof. Kishida:** It is good idea. There is a difference between lives in Miyajima and that in the opposite bank. It is important to try to understand each other and fill the gaps. It is necessary to make efforts to make a landscape plan to include opposite bank and the sea as part of the World Heritage site. The greenery could be increased and the colour of buildings and signs could be reconsidered.

**Interviewer:** As a person who worked for the A-Bomb Dome registration as National Historic Monument, what do you think about debate about landscape surrounding the Dome?

**Prof. Kishida:** Building surrounding A-Bomb Dome was problem from the beginning of its registration as a World Heritage site. I think people do not recognize Hiroshima as the city which possesses a World Heritage site. It is not normal that the citizens of Hiroshima are not informed until it shows up visually while constructors and city authorities know about it. Kyoto city has a system of conservation of historic landscape in a defined area.

**Interviewer:** What should we do to conserve the significance of the World Heritage?

**Prof. Kishida:** You can find a model of the site in front of the gate of Shuri Castle, the World Heritage site in Okinawa. Miyajima needs to make something like that. More important thing is education. It will be difficult to support conservation of these sites in the future without having appropriate education to strengthen children's consciousness to conserve the World Heritage sites. We need to make educational material for it too. We should learn from Onomichi City which has a passion to make it a historical and cultural city aiming at the inscription as a World Heritage site.

## **Interview: Ms. Nassrine Azimi, Director of UNITAR Hiroshima Office**

**Interviewer:** What is the significance of two World Heritage sites in Hiroshima?

**Ms. Nassrine Azimi:** A-Bomb Dome recalls menace/threat of nuclear weapons; Itsukushima Shrine recalls that the threat of natural disaster. Those two menace/threats are the biggest issues that humanity is facing now. It is significant that Hiroshima possesses these two heritage sites.

**Interviewer:** What kind of message have these sites been conveying in last 10 years?

**Ms. Nassrine Azimi:** The Dome conveys not only the sad message of war but also hope toward reconstruction in the future. Hiroshima people should not forget that it can give hope to people from post-conflict countries like Afghanistan. Afghan people, whom UNITAR invited, were impressed by Hiroshima's reconstruction and had hopes for their future. Itsukushima Shrine has survived from many natural disasters over thousands years. However we cannot be optimist. It is not the building itself which is fragile, but human activities lead to environmental destruction and climate change. While talking about conservation, we have to also discuss environment.

**Interviewer:** Do you think these sites are conserved properly?

**Ms. Nassrine Azimi:** Compared with other World Heritage sites, the answer is yes, Hiroshima maintains properly. Even though there are several points to be improved, international experts, who visited Hiroshima, were impressed by the management.

**Interviewer:** What we can improve?

**Ms. Nassrine Azimi:** We should not think of the Park and Dome separately. In this context it was a very good decision for Japan to register the Peace Museum as a national cultural property and the Park as a beauty spot. There are experts who are seeking the possibilities to re-nominate the whole park (incl. museum, park and dome). The sacred atmosphere of Itsukushima Shrine is difficult to feel because of the buildings behind the Torii. The forest itself can not be maintained without careful conservation. It should take balance between parts to be untouched and parts to be conserved.

**Interviewer:** What should the local government and society do?

**Ms. Nassrine Azimi:** It is important to attract young people's attention and involve them into the conservation activities like cleaning volunteers. People should proud of their WH sites. It is important to invite many international experts and exchange with them. Although there might be several people who have critical views, Hiroshima people should exchange ideas and listen to them for the future of their sites.

# 苦難越え明日へ残す



ビルに囲まれた原爆ドーム、マンション建設に伴い、景観問題も浮上している（撮影・荒木謙）

## ドーム 届かぬ核廃絶の祈り 宮島 台風・高潮相次ぐ被害

「この十年、原爆ドーム」の周辺は、多くの市民の「核廃絶」の祈りが届かぬままに、マンション建設が相次いでいる。景観問題も浮上している。

宮島市は、原爆ドームの周辺に、多くのマンションが建設されている。このため、原爆ドームの景観が損なわれるという懸念が、市民の間で広がっている。

また、台風や高潮による被害も、宮島市では頻りに発生している。このため、市民の間では、核廃絶の祈りが届かぬままに、苦難を乗り越え、明日へ残すという思いが、強く感じられている。

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**A-Bomb Dome – Wish for nuclear disarmament could not accomplish**

**Miyajima – Continuous damage by typhoon and high tide**

In the last 10 years the A-Bomb Dome has been surrounded by anger and protests. The World Heritage registration was promised to be a good news for meeting the plea of this site of bombing. At the time of the end of the Cold War, international public opinion was rising for the prevention of nuclear proliferation and ban of nuclear testing. The birth of another “negative” World Heritage site after Auschwitz alarming to the humanity convinced the hibakushas and citizens of Hiroshima that an important step has been made forward to the eradication of nuclear weapon.

However, in less than two years since the registration, in 1999, India and Pakistan implemented nuclear tests. The terror in New York of September 11, 2001 has changed the world entirely. Retaliation to Afghanistan, Iraqi War... In October this year North Korea implemented a nuclear test. The 10-year anniversary is marked with these international tensions.

Itsukushima Shrine which conserves the beauty of harmony between its building and nature has had 10 years of difficulty. Numbers of Typhoon landing Japan increased by global warming. The Miya Forest and other sites have been seriously damaged by large scale typhoons.

Attached every couple of years by heavy storm, occurring normally once in a century, the building is destroyed as it is repaired. Since the registration the number of abnormal high tide rising over the corridor has been increased.

There is also the question of the reorganization of the US Navy. If the aircraft carrier troops are moved to Iwakuni, the silence of the place for pray will be perturbed and there is also a danger to the ecosystem.

On the other hand, in the World Heritage boom, the value of “brand” to attract foreign tourists. Hiroshima could attract a UN Training Institution as it had two WH sites.

However, have we had enough discussions to conserve the heritage and surrounding area?

Regarding the A-Bomb Dome, the height of a new apartment building in the buffer zone has gave rise to a discussion. The damage to the landscape of the Itsukushima Shrine by the development of the opposite bank is also considered as problem. The population of Miyajima decreased from 2500 to less than 2000 since the registration and this would reduce the manpower.

The guidelines for registration for the World Heritage site have become more stringent in recent years. Strategy by the local government and the residents to protect the landscape is required for registration. Many researchers consider it very difficult for these sites to be registered if it were now.

Next year, the Board of Education of the Hiroshima Prefecture will conduct, together with the Hiroshima City and the Hatsukaichi City, the first monitoring report of these sites. The report will have to include not only the overview of last 10 years but also concrete strategies for the future.



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**Iwami-Ginzan Silver Mine in the Chugoku Region expected to be registered as the World Heritage Site next year**

Iwami-Ginzan Silver Mine Site (Ota City), which is considered as the center of international silver trade in the great discovery age in 16<sup>th</sup> century, is considered possibly to become a new World Heritage site.

There is outlook for the Iwami-Ginzan Silver mine site to become the new World Heritage site in the UNESCO World Heritage Committee which will be held in New Zealand from 23 June next year. It will be the first industrial site in Asia. Its total area will be 442 hectares including the silver mine and town, silver ways and two port towns. Mr. Kengo Iwamoto, Director of Cultural Monuments of the Cultural Agency of Japan said with confidence that he was not worried about its registration in the press conference of October 21, right after the final hurdle which was a monitoring of the site by a researcher from ICOMOS.

There are 10 cultural world heritage sites and 3 world natural sites in Japan. According to the Sekaiisan Research Institute in Saeki-ku, Hiroshima, there are about 50 sites bidding for nomination for the World Heritage sites in Japan, including 10 in the Chugoku region.

The Cultural Agency of Japan adopted a public subscription system by local government to reinforce tentative listing for the World Heritage.. Three sites from the Chugoku region, including Kintai Bridge in Iwakuni entered for the public subscription by end this month. People are expecting for the brand value of the World Heritage site contributing to tourism.

Concept of the World Heritage has been drastically since 10 years ago where Itsukushima Shrine and A-Bombed Dome were registered. Conservation of cultural landscape surrounding the site, policy for action accommodating the increase of tourists, and system of local people and government protecting the sites as a whole are requested. Above all, the ways to tell a story to appeal to the world the universal values should be sought.

The researcher of ICOMOS said that the Iwami-Ginzan Silver mine site “has a story and is timely for the trends of World Heritage today”. The site is not as beautiful as other National Treasures such as temples and shrines. The Cultural Agency of Japan is thus working hard to achieve its registration as a new model of World Heritage site.

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**Movement of Chugoku region for registration for the World Heritage Sites**

**Iwami-Ginzan Silver mine** ( Ootashi, Shimane prefecture): expected to be new World Heritage site next year.

**Kintai Bridge and town of Iwakuni** (Iwakuni Yamaguchi prefecture): nominate tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan

**Santokusan Buddhists Site** ( Miasa-cho, Totori prefecture): nominate tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan

**Hagi hansyaro**( Hagi, Yamaguchi prefecture) : nominate tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan

**Onomichi** (Onomichi, Hiroshima prefecture): planning and preparing nomination for tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan (by city of Onomichi)

**Tomono ura** (Fukuyama City, Hiroshima prefecture): planning and preparing nomination for tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan (by NGO and private sector)

**Historical site of Onouchi Culture, Ruri** Five-story pagoda (Yamaguchi, Yamaguchi prefecture) : planning and preparing nomination for tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan ( by NGO and private sector)

**Oki's field and landscape** (Nishina-cho, Shimane prefecture) planning and preparing nomination for tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan (by NGO and private sector)

**Seto Inland Sea:** planning and preparing nomination for tentative list for the World Heritage in Japan (by NGO and private sector)