

第4部 課題

第17回 毎日パソコン入力コンクール 全国大会

【課題】

第4部 英文B

World Heritage listing an opportunity
to consider the future

制限時間5分

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Editorial: World Heritage listing an opportunity to consider the future 

The recent World Heritage listing of Okinoshima, an island in Fukuoka Prefecture held as a divine abode, provides food for thought. 

The island, located in the Genkai Sea, was registered alongside related sites in the Munakata region. A preliminary review panel for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had initially recommended that part of Japan's bid be dropped, but diplomatic efforts enabled this recommendation to be overturned. 

It is the fifth year in a row for Japan to have a site registered on the World Heritage list. The country now has 17 cultural and four natural World Heritage sites -- a total of 21. 

Evidence of prayer rituals that took place on Okinoshima between the fourth and ninth centuries remains practically untouched. Additionally, items from the Korean Peninsula and China that were used in rites have been unearthed on the island, resulting in it being dubbed "The Shosoin of the Sea" -- a reference to the treasure house of Todaiji Temple in Nara. 

Half of a total of eight recommended sites were permitted for registration by the UNESCO advisory committee. Japan stressed that ancient rituals on Okinoshima had gone on to form a link with beliefs of Munakata Grand Shrine. We express our appreciation for the efforts of those who enabled all the eight sites to be registered all at once. 

In late July, a Council for Cultural Affairs meeting will be

held in Japan to determine candidate sites for World Heritage listing in 2019. Nine items are included on the list needed for registration. Among these, one with a high degree of perfection is expected to be chosen. 

Over 1,000 World Heritage sites have now been registered. With prominent locations already having been listed, moves by countries to submit complicated candidate sites whose evaluation is difficult has become accentuated of late. 

If the number of registered sites increases, can they be properly protected? Should an upper limit be placed on registration to maintain the "outstanding universal value" of World Heritage sites? The time has come for the World Heritage Committee to seriously consider such issues. 

The Agency for Cultural Affairs also recognizes that the system is approaching a crossroads. The allotment for recommendations has been limited to one per country each year. The government and local bodies probably need to refine the content of proposals. 

World Heritage sites have been directly related to tourism. Registration is significant in that it heightens interest in such sites and enables local residents to confirm the importance of the sites. Another aspect is support of activities to preserve the sites through donations and the like. 

At the same time, there have been cases in which registration has resulted in deterioration of the scenery, such as that associated with an increase in tour buses at Shirakawa-go in Gifu Prefecture, which is known for its traditional buildings with thatched roofs. And then there are quite a few sites which have seen an increase in visitors following registration, only to see

a decline shortly thereafter. 

With regard to the recently registered island of Okinoshima, people have been banned from visiting in principle. However, to attract tourists from overseas, the idea of introducing treasures in multiple languages has been put forward. We hope efforts will be made to convey the value of the treasures while quietly preserving the heritage. 

The purpose of World Heritage listings is to pass treasures that are common to humankind on toward the future through international cooperation. This is a starting point that we want to reconfirm.
