

FUSION OF ‘INTANGIBLE’ AND ‘TANGIBLE’: ‘CULTURAL SPACE (INTANGIBLE HERITAGE)’ AND ‘CULTURAL LANDSCAPE (WORLD HERITAGE)’

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INTRODUCTION

This paper approaches the theme the fusion of intangible and tangible from two aspects: the ‘cultural space’ defined in the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the ‘cultural landscape’ defined under the UNESCO World Heritage Convention.

This paper consists of four pillars as follows:

1. UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention and ‘cultural space’
2. World Heritage Convention and ‘cultural landscape’
3. Safeguarding the intangible elements of a place
4. Japanese World Heritage properties and their protection of intangible values as ‘cultural landscapes’

The first and second pillars are related to the ‘cultural space’ and ‘cultural landscape.’ Based on these two points, the third pillar is about the intangible elements and meanings of the place. It’s about how to transmit the elements and meanings of the place of human activities from generation to generation. The fourth pillar deals with how the intangible element of the place is protected in Japan’s World Cultural Heritage property, especially the case inscribed on the World Heritage List from the perspective of ‘cultural landscape.’

‘CULTURAL SPACE’ UNDER THE CONVENTION FOR THE SAFEGUARDING OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Article 1 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage defines the purpose of the Convention. Its first objective as listed on Item a. is to safeguard the intangible cultural heritage. It is often said that the peculiarity in this Article is that it uses the term ‘safeguard’ instead of the term ‘protection’ as

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used in the World Heritage Convention. 'Protection' means 'maintaining stability' of the heritage property, while 'safeguard' means 'ensuring the viability' of the intangible heritage. The difference between these two terms is based on the fact that intangible cultural heritage is mainly focused on the aspect of living heritage. It should be made clear that there is a difference in the way of thinking about the transmission of heritage itself between the tangible part, which is mainly covered by the World Heritage Convention, and the intangible part of the heritage, which is mainly covered by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage.

Article 2 of the Convention defines intangible cultural heritage as follows:

For the purposes of this Convention,

- 1. The intangible cultural heritage means the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills—as well as the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated therewith that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. (omitted below)*
- 2. The intangible cultural heritage, as defined in paragraph 1 above, is manifested inter alia in the following domains:*
 - a. oral traditions and expressions, including language as a vehicle of the intangible cultural heritage;*
 - b. performing arts;*
 - c. social practices, rituals and festive events;*
 - d. knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe;*
 - e. traditional craftsmanship.*

The definition consists of a two-tiered structure, with the first section providing a comprehensive definition and the second section providing specific examples. It is particularly noteworthy here that the comprehensive definition in the first section includes 'cultural space.' Intangible cultural heritage is a wide range of intangible aspects of human activities, such as oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social customs, ceremonies and festivals, knowledge and customs about nature and all things, and traditional craftsmanship. However, the place or space in which they are performed is also in view. This is important because it shows that human activities are inseparable from places or spaces.

The 'cultural space' is a place that has been created or recognized by human activities. 'Cultural space' under the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is a place or space in which human activities unfold, and the size and scale of these spaces differ depending on the nature of the human activities. It could be a square in a city or a village where performing arts and festivals are held. Also, it could widely include a natural environment such as farmland, forests, and grass fields where people use for their living.

Table 1 Criteria for the justification of Outstanding Universal Value (Cultural Heritage)

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)

What about the World Heritage Convention? Table 1 shows six Criteria relevant for justification of Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of cultural heritage properties.

A closer look at these criteria reveals that several terms related to human activities can be seen in each of these cultural criteria. For example, Criterion (ii) requires exhibiting an important interchange of human values, and Criterion (iii) requires being unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization. Criterion (v) includes traditional human settlement and land-use, which expresses human interaction with the environment. In addition, Criterion (vi) goes far beyond the intangibles and requires direct or tangible associations with events, living traditions, and artistic and literary works that have outstanding universal significance.

The World Heritage Convention is a system that justifies the OUV of the tangible parts of heritage property, but it also takes into account the intangible parts such as human activities, events, ideas, beliefs, and art that are reflected in them.

Table 2 is a list of intangible cultural heritage inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, with a strong awareness of the connection with a space or place.

In 2006, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into force, replacing the previous Proclamation of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Then, all the intangible cultural heritage that had been registered under the Proclamation was inherited as elements under the List of the Convention in 2008. From this table, you can see that many of them were registered as 'cultural spaces.' However, the number of intangible cultural heritage registered as 'cultural space' has decreased since then.

Table 2 Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity connected with a space or place

No.	Year	Name of the element	State Party	Notes*
1	2008	Cultural space and oral culture of the Semeiskie	Russian Federation	
2	2008	Cultural space of Boysun District	Uzbekistan	
3	2008	Cultural space of Palenque de San Basilio	Colombia	
4	2008	Cultural space of Sosso-Bala	Guiana	
5	2008	Cultural space of the Brotherhood of the Holy Spirit of the Congos of Villa Mella	Dominican Republic	
6	2008	Cultural space of the Yaaral and Degal	Mali	
7	2008	Cultural space of Jamaâ El-Fna Square	Morocco	WH
8	2008	Space of gong culture	Viet Nam	
9	2008	Hudhud chants of the Ifugao	Philippines	WH
10	2008	Kihnu cultural space	Estonia	
11	2008	Cultural space of the Bedu in Petra and Wadi Rum	Jordan	WH
12	2008	Royal ancestral ritual in the Jongmyo shrine and its music	Republic of Korea	WH
13	2012	Nachi no Dengaku, a religious performing art held at the Nachi fire festival	Japan	WH (CL)
14	2018	Nativity scene (szopka) tradition in Krakow	Poland	WH
15	2020	Pilgrimage to the St. Thaddeus Apostle Monastery	Iran, Armenia	WH

* Marked with 'WH' are the World Cultural Heritage properties and 'CL' is Cultural Landscape.

As many intangible cultural heritages other than performances in theatres are often closely related to the place in which they are performed, it might have been considered that there is no need to add the word 'cultural space' to the name of the inscribed heritage element. It may also be considered that the evaluation of the place where intangible cultural heritage has been handed down has shifted to the perspective of World Cultural Heritage.

Let's look at some examples.

Medina of Marrakech (Morocco)

'Medina of Marrakech' of Morocco located in the northwestern part of the African Continent, is a city where cultural traditions common to Morocco intersect, and the entire city is inscribed on the World Heritage List. On the other hand, Jamaâ El-Fna Square, located in the center of Marrakech, is also a 'cultural space' inscribed on the List of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, where many street performers gather and musical, religious and artistic expressions are accumulated. In this case, both the intangible element of human activities and the

tangible element of the square where they are performed were evaluated as 'cultural space' under the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage. And the square, which is a 'cultural space,' is also the core of the city of Marrakech, which has been inscribed as a cultural property on the World Heritage List. This is an example of approaching both the human activity that should be passed down to the next generation and the place where it takes place, from both the intangible and tangible cultural heritage Conventions.

Kihnu Cultural Space (Estonia)

Estonia, which faces the Baltic Sea, has islands called Kihnu and Mania, with a community consisting of 600 people. The cultural expressions and agricultural traditions of the community have been kept alive for centuries, mainly through the women of the island. The most iconic of these is the wool handicraft worn by the women, whose designs featuring intricate embroidery are rooted in ancient legends.

'Kihnu cultural space' is also striking in terms of the interrelationship between the rich cultural and natural heritage represented by the islands as a whole. Both islands have preserved their characteristic landscapes of grasslands, pine forests and coastal sands in relatively good condition to this day. This heritage is closely related to the concept of 'cultural landscape,' combined works of nature and of man, defined under the World Heritage Convention. In this way, we can see that the 'cultural space' of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has characteristics in common with the 'cultural landscape' of the World Heritage Convention.

Jongmyo Shrine (Republic of Korea)

'Jongmyo Shrine' in Seoul, Republic of Korea, is the setting for Confucian ritual dedicated to the ancestors of the Joseon dynasty (14th to the 19th century) that encompasses song, dance and music that have been handed down by the descendants of the Korean royal family. The buildings and the courtyard surrounded by them are inscribed on the World Heritage List. On the other hand, performing arts related to rituals and music are inscribed on the List of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. Although not recognized as a 'cultural space' under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention, the OUV of the place or space where human activities are carried out is justified under the World Heritage Convention.

Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range (Japan)

There are cases where places or spaces of human activities are valued as ‘cultural landscapes.’ Japan’s ‘Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range’ was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004 as a ‘cultural landscape.’ The scope of this World Heritage property has spread widely over the Kii Mountain Range covering from the southern part of Nara Prefecture to the neighboring prefectures of Wakayama and Mie.

Among the shrines and their compounds that consist of ‘Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range,’ *dengaku* performed at the shrine compound of Kumano Nachi Taisha Shrine is inscribed on the List of UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage. It is a Japanese folk performing art that has a deep connection with the Kumano Sanzan, one of the sacred sites in the Kii Mountain Range, and has been handed down against the backdrop of the belief in the Kumano Sanzan and its shrines. In this example, the intangible element of traditional performing arts was inscribed as a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage, and the shrine’s architecture and compound were registered as attributes of the ‘cultural landscape’ of the World Cultural Heritage property.

I would like to explain in a little more detail about the World Heritage Property, ‘Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range.’

SACRED SITES AND PILGRIMAGE ROUTES IN THE KII MOUNTAIN RANGE

The Kii Peninsula of Honshu Island, which is roughly in the center of the Japanese archipelago, is a mountainous area covered with deep forests and has long been revered as a sacred area. It consists of three sacred sites, Yoshino/Omine, Koya-san, and Kumano Sanzan, and the pilgrimage routes that connect them. Since this area entirely covered with deep mountains and forests became a sacred place for ancient Japanese Shintoism, Buddhism introduced from the Chinese Continent, and *Shugendo*, a fusion of the Shintoism and Buddhism, it was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004 as a ‘cultural landscape’ deeply associated with outstanding universal beliefs and thoughts.

In the Kii Mountain Range, which has long been a sacred place, the Yoshino and Omine areas were first developed as training grounds for *Shugendo* in the 7th and 8th centuries. From the 9th to 10th century, the high priest Kukai opened an esoteric Buddhism training spot on the top of Mt. Koya-san. Then, from the 11th to the 14th century, the Kumano Sanzan area was developed as a sacred place for the aristocrats living in Kyoto. From the 15th century onwards, this area was further developed into a large sacred site involving commoners of all ages.



Figure 1 Gotobiki-iwa within the Kamikura-jinja Shrine Compound (©M. Motonaka, 2008)

The small shrine building of Kamikura-jinja exists on the mountain top as an enclave of the shrine compound, and there is a huge rock called Gotobiki-iwa Rock within this shrine compound, which is the object of worship (Figure 1). Before Buddhism was introduced to Japan, it was believed that gods descended on the natural mountain, river, spring, huge rock, large old tree, and deep forest, and these natural features and areas were the objects of worship. Gotobiki-iwa Rock of Kamikura-jinja is positioned as a component part of the World Cultural Heritage because it is important as a place that represents the form of ancient Japanese nature worship.

In early February every year, the residents of the town at the foot of the mountain hold up torches and rush down the steps of the approach from the Gotobiki-iwa Rock at the top of the mountain for the grand Otou Matsuri. In the evening, young people dressed in white robes gather in the town and aim for the shrine building and Gotobiki-iwa Rock at the summit of the mountain. The origin of this festival is said to go back to the 7th century, and it is said that it evolved into the current form by the local residents after the 17th century. The Otou Matsuri is a festival of faith rooted in the local community, so it is designated and protected as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property by the National Government. Since this festival expresses the close relationship between the practice of faith in the Kii Mountain Range after 17th century and its place or space, we can consider that both have important significance related to the OUV of the World Cultural Heritage property.

Numerous traditional Shinto rituals have been performed in the mountainous areas and pilgrimage routes that make up the World Heritage Property, consisting of huge rocks, rivers, and waterfalls that are objects of worship. All these human

activities have evolved in close association with natural objects and natural areas. In addition to those that have been handed down as activities of the Shinto rituals performed in the shrine compounds, there are also those that have been protected as intangible folk cultural properties under the relevant domestic legislative systems and have been supported by the residents. These human activities should be evaluated as elements of the 'cultural landscape' that expresses the spiritual relationship between nature and humans in the Kii Mountain Range.

One of the three sacred sites in the Kii mountain range, Yoshino/Omine, has a large Shugendo temple called Kinpusen-ji. At the main Buddhist hall of this temple, Zao-do, a *Renge-e* ceremony to offer lotus flowers is held on July 7th every year. This ceremony is followed by the Frog Jumping Ceremony, which is based on the legend of a man who repented of his wrongdoings and was turned back into a human from his green frog form. This humorous ritual is handed down by temple monks and local preservation society members, and is designated as a Nara Prefectural Intangible Folk Cultural Property.

Yamabushi, practitioners of *Shugendo*, collect lotus flowers from the pond that the founder of Shugendo, En-no-Ozunu, used for his first bath and carry them to the Kinpusen-ji Temple located on the top of Mt. Yoshino-yama. After the Frog Jumping Ceremony, *Yamabushi* carry the lotus flowers through the pilgrimage route of *Omine Okugakemichi*, which continues for about 80 kilometres from Mt. Yoshino-yama to Omimesan-ji temple on the top of Mt. Sanjou-ga-take of which altitude is 1,719 metres.

In this way, the lotus flowers are carried by *Yamabushi* to Mt. Sanjou-ga-take, a sacred mountain in the core of the Kii Mountain Range. It is no exaggeration to say that these series of events are intangible cultural heritage that has been handed down in the sacred Kii mountain range, along with the practice of *Shugendo* that continues today.

There exist three World Cultural Heritage properties in Nara Prefecture including 'Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range.' One of them is the 'Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara' inscribed in 1998. This World Heritage property consists of eight component parts in total, of which the Kasuga Taisha Shrine Compound and the Kasugayama Primeval Forest have the characteristics of 'cultural landscapes' that demonstrate the traditional nature worship of Japan.

'CULTURAL LANDSCAPE' UNDER THE WORLD HERITAGE CONVENTION

Table 3 shows the definition and three typologies of the World Heritage Cultural Landscape.

Table 3 Three typologies of cultural landscape under the World Heritage Convention

1. Landscape designed and created intentionally by people

⇒landscape constructed for aesthetic reasons which are often (but not always) associated with religious or other monumental buildings and ensembles, such as a garden or parkland.

2. Organically evolved landscape

⇒a relict (or fossil) landscape in which an evolutionary process came to an end at some time in the past, such as a historical mining landscape.

⇒a continuing landscape which retains an active social role in contemporary society closely associated with the traditional way of life, and in which the evolutionary process is still in progress, such as a rice terraced or vineyard landscape.

3. Associative cultural landscape

⇒landscape justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which may be insignificant or even absent, such as sacred mountains.

According to the Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention, 'cultural landscapes' inscribed on the World Heritage List are cultural properties and represent the combined works of nature and of man as designated in Article 1 of the Convention, and are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal.

Type 1 is a landscape designed and created intentionally by people, which meets to a garden or parkland. Type 2 is an organically evolved landscape, which meets to a relict landscape related to historical mining or a continuing landscape such as rice-terraces or vineyards. Type 3 is an associative cultural landscape justifiable by virtue of the powerful religious, artistic or cultural associations of the natural element rather than material cultural evidence, which meets to a sacred mountain revered by the people.

In other words, 'cultural landscape' can be said to be a cultural heritage that expresses the physical and spiritual relationship between nature and humans.



Figure 2 Yoshino-yama mountains covered with sacred cherry trees (©M. Motonaka, 2012)

Among them, sacred mountains, which are objects of Japanese faith, have historically been worshiped as the places of communication with the gods and Buddha, and the places of Shintoism and Buddhism (Figure 2).

‘Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range’ inscribed on the World Heritage List as a ‘cultural landscape,’ has been revered as sacred mountains associated with the belief in the gods and Buddhas for about 1,400 years since the 7th century, and related activities continues unbroken even now. The tangible aspects of sacred sites, pilgrimage routes and other places that are objects of worship, and the intangible aspects related to the activities of various traditional performing arts and Shinto rituals that have been undertaken there, are both incorporated into a ‘cultural landscape’ of Kii Mountain Range as a whole. It is inherited to this day by the local people.

The same can be said for the Kasuga Taisha Shrine Compound and the Kasugayama Primeval Forest of the ‘Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara’ (Figure 3). The five-storied pagoda of Kofuku-ji Temple can be found in the center behind the residential buildings. The mountain range behind is called Kasugayama, which has been the object of worship since ancient times. The area of the gentle cone-shaped hill just behind the five-storied pagoda of Kofuku-ji Temple is the Kasuga Taisha Shrine Compound. The whole mountain range behind the small cone-shaped hill is the Kasugayama Primeval Forest.



Figure 3 Small cone-shaped hill within the Kasuga Taisha Shrine Compound and the Kasugayama Primeval Forest that spreads behind it (©M. Motonaka, 2022)



Figure 4 Small cone-shaped hill within the Kasuga Taisha Shrine Compound looking east from the west (©M. Motonaka, 2013)

Figure 4 is a plan showing the area of the two component parts of the World Heritage property, the Kasuga Taisha Shrine Compound and the Kasugayama Primeval Forest. It shows the sacred mountains in the background of the lawn called Tobihino, where one of the Deer of Nara protected as a National Natural Monument eats grass. These are the elements of ‘cultural landscape’ related to Shintoism, the ancient Japanese religious belief.

Traditional Shinto performing arts are undertaken at the Kasuga Taisha Shrine, around the area circled on the map (Figure 5). The Kasuga Wakamiya On-Matsuri Festival designated as a National Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property is a

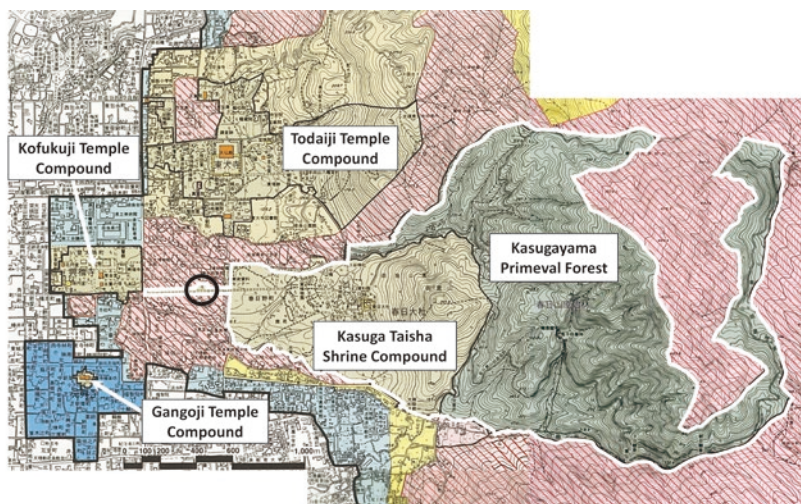


Figure 5 Scope of the Kasuga Taisha Shrine Compound and the Kasugayama Primeval Forest (Source: Based on Nara City, 1999)

unique traditional Shinto ritual held in December every year. The local people who are the members of the Preservation Society are making efforts to pass the traditional Shinto ritual on to the next generation.

At each of the Buddhist temples that have been selected as component parts of



Figure 6 Shuni-e torches at Todai-ji Temple's Nigatsu-do Hall (©M. Motonaka, 2024)



Figure 7 One of the Shuni-e torches at Todai-ji Temple's Nigatsu-do Hall (©M. Motonaka, 2023)

the World Heritage property, there are unique Buddhist rituals performed by only temple priests as religious activities, rather than being directly involving local residents such as preservation groups.

Shuni-e is an event held at the Hall of Nigatsu-do of Todai-ji Temple from February to March every year (Figures 6 and 7). Although this event is not designated as a cultural property, it is widely known both domestically and internationally as a tradition that tells us the arrival of spring in Nara. This event expresses the relationship between the place or space of the Buddhist temple and the human activity of the Buddhist rituals that take place there. In this sense, this event has the same characteristics as the Kasuga Wakamiya On-matsuri Festival.

CONCLUSION

In Japan, the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties was revised in 2020, allowing local governments to develop regional plans for the preservation and utilization of cultural properties existing in the region as a whole. The group of cultural properties targeted by the plan includes not only human activities such as performing arts and festivals that are designated and protected as intangible folk cultural properties, but also places or spaces such as buildings, ruins, landscapes, and so on, where these activities are performed. In developing the plan, not only local governments but also local residents, university researchers and experts are encouraged to participate. With the participation of various stakeholders, a group of intangible and tangible cultural heritage properties can be positioned within a story unique to the region, and a framework can be created for them to be passed on to the next generation as mutually connected heritage properties. It can be said that the stage for the fusion of the intangible and the tangible is being created.

From a global perspective, it is important to demonstrate a synergistic effect between the safeguarding measures required by the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the protection measures required by the World Heritage Convention. On the one hand, the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is about honoring and inheriting human activities, and on the other, the World Heritage Convention is about preserving and utilizing the places where those activities are carried out. It is important to have the perspective of handing down people's activities and their places as inseparable to the next generation.

A great synergistic effect that connects activity and its place can be expected in the 'cultural space' under the Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention and the 'cultural landscape' under the World Heritage Convention. However, it may not be

necessary to emphasize that the fusion of intangible and tangible is important, because approaches to these two aspects have been already achieved in each of the heritage fields through the efforts being made under the two Conventions.

REFERENCE

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