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INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/AS/1632-IR

Charenton-le-Pont, 17 December 2020

H.E. Mr Atsuyuki Oike
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary,
Permanent Delegate
100, avenue de Suffren
75015 Paris

World Heritage List 2021 – Interim report and additional information request
Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan (Japan)

Dear Ambassador,

As prescribed by the revised Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention and its Annex 6, the Advisory Bodies have been requested to submit a short interim report for each nomination by 31 January 2021. We are therefore pleased to provide you with the relevant information outlining issues related to the evaluation process.

The ICOMOS technical evaluation mission to “Jomon Prehistoric Sites in Northern Japan” was carried out by Matthew Whincop (Australia) from 4 to 16 September 2020. The mission expert highly appreciated the availabilities and support provided by the experts in your country for the organization and implementation of the mission.

On 24 September 2020, a letter was sent by ICOMOS to request further information regarding the proposed justification for Outstanding Universal Value, integrity, the factors affecting the property, the boundaries, legal protection and conservation. Please convey our thanks to all the officials and experts for the additional information you provided on 10 November 2020 and for their continued cooperation in this process.

At the end of November 2020, the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel evaluated the cultural and mixed properties nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List in 2021. The additional information provided by the State Party, together with mission and desk review reports were carefully examined by the Panel members. This process will conclude in March 2021.

We thank you for the availability of your Delegation to the meeting held on Wednesday 25 November 2020 with some representatives of the ICOMOS Panel. The exchanges during this meeting were of great help for the third part of the ICOMOS Panel meeting. During the last part of the meeting, the Panel has identified areas where it considers that further information is needed.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points:

General comments
During the ICOMOS Panel discussion it was highlighted that the nominated property belongs to a type of heritage underrepresented on the Word Heritage List. Furthermore, the nomination dossier outlines many aspects of the legal, conservation and management framework that are already in place and functioning.

Jomon culture
The nomination dossier contains very little information on the Jomon culture in general (e.g. extension, important sites, chronology, ceramic typology etc.) and on the significant role in the history of ideas that the culture played by challenging the stage theory of human social evolution. Could the State Party supply further information on these aspects?

Selection of nominated components
The 17 nominated property components provide the information necessary to tell the story of the Jomon culture in northern Japan. However, Jomon culture sites are known from a much greater area:
(a) What were the criteria to select the focus on northern Japan and to exclude Jomon sites from other areas, that could have added further scope to the timeframe and the diversity of cultural expressions?
(b) Is there a regional subdivision of the Jomon culture that explains why the sites around the Tsugaru Strait were treated as a separate unit?
(c) What were the criteria applied to select the 41 sites used in the comparative study from the 20,000 sites identified in northern Japan?

Delimitation and protection
In the additional information the State Party supplied, it was explained that the delimitation of the property components is based on surface surveys and excavations. Do all the site limits proposed in the nomination dossier coincide with (a) the known or probable extent of relevant archaeological material and with (b) the limits of the Historic or Special Historic Site declarations? (c) How are archaeological sites in the buffer zone protected?

Ownership
In the nomination dossier it is declared that the remaining parts of the six property components that are not already 100 % Government owned will be acquired over the next 5 to 10 years' time, depending on the budgetary possibilities.
(a) Would it be possible for the State Party to give a more precise estimate? Does the State Party expect to encounter any problems, for example, budgetary setbacks or un-collaborative landowners?
(b) The ICOMOS Panel also expressed its concern about the non-compliant elements on the sites and, would be pleased to receive a more precise timeframe on the way to their removal or concealment.

Management
As regards the updating of management instruments, it appears that some of them have not been revised for more than a decade. How is the decision taken to update the management plans for individual components, what is the process and is there a "normal" or a specific period for which they run and are then formally reviewed?

Research, documentation, inventarisation and exhibition of the finds
(a) Given its acknowledged role in contributing to the potential OUV of the property, it would be very helpful if the State Party could provide details about the inventarisation, conservation / storage and exposition of the archaeological material (including human remains) excavated at the components.
(b) Is it planned to excavate further on the nominated property components? Is there a Research Strategy/Framework for the property with clearly defined objectives and methodology?
(c) Could the State Party provide some more information on the process of site survey, excavation and documentation?

The role of the indigenous population
What is the historic relationship between the Jomon people and the Ainu? Were the Ainu consulted during the elaboration of the nomination dossier and will they be involved in the property management?

We would be grateful if you could provide **ICOMOS** and the **World Heritage Centre** with the above information **by 28 February 2021 at the latest,** the deadline set out in paragraph 148 of the *Operational Guidelines* for supplementary information on nominations to be received. Please note that any information submitted after this date will not be considered by ICOMOS in its evaluation for the World Heritage Committee. It should be noted,

however, that while ICOMOS will carefully consider any supplementary information submitted, it cannot properly evaluate a completely revised nomination or large amounts of new information submitted at the last minute. So we would be grateful if the State Party could keep its response concise and respond only to the above requests.

We thank you for your support of the World Heritage Convention and the evaluation process.

Yours faithfully,

Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

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UNESCO World Heritage Centre