



State of Conservation Report

(in compliance with Paragraph 169 of the Operational Guidelines)

Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu (Japan) (C972)

1. Executive Summary of the Report

The State Party of Japan submits this report as requested by the World Heritage Committee through its Decision 44 COM 7B.29.

Since the fire that broke out in October 2019 at the Shuri-jô site (Shuri Castle Remains), one of the component parts of the World Heritage property "Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu", the State Party of Japan has promoted efforts toward the recovery of the Shuri-jô site in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including private organizations and local communities, led by national authorities and local governments concerned.

In response to Paragraph 4 of the abovementioned Decision, after the fire, underground remains of the *Seiden* (state hall) site were regularly monitored and opened to the public after completion of conservation measures such as surveys of the extent of the damage and reinforcement of the remains. These were carried out appropriately under the supervision and guidance of the Agency for Cultural Affairs or the Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education (section responsible for cultural properties) in conformity with the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties. Regarding replica structures, in accordance with "Work Schedule for the Rebuilding the Replica of the State Hall and other Replica Structures of Shuri-jô site" developed in March 2020, the State Party of Japan has continued working to rebuild the state hall, which is due to be completed by 2026.

In response to Paragraph 5 of the Decision, the State Party of Japan sent an invitation letter for a Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in November 2021. Due to the travel restrictions by the COVID-19 pandemic, while the exact date of the mission is yet to be confirmed at the time of writing this report, the State Party of Japan will continue to coordinate with UNESCO and prepare for the implementation of the mission.

In response to Paragraph 6 of the Decision, in the rebuilding other replica structures including the *Hokuden* (northern hall) and *Nanden* (southern hall), fire prevention measures must be properly installed in line with the "Fire Prevention Guidelines for National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (Buildings)" devised by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Specific fire prevention measures have been developed by an advisory panel for technical examination and its working groups. Concerning the local community participation, local experts are involved in the recovery process as members of the advisory panel for technical examination. Additionally, from 2020 to 2021, more than 4,000 people, including local inhabitants, participated in volunteer activities to clean damaged roof tiles for reuse. The State Party of Japan will continue to ensure the local communities are involved in the recovery process of the Shuri-jô site.

There are no other conservation issues or major development projects identified that may have an impact on the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property. Public access to this report is acceptable.

2. Responses to the Decision of the World Heritage Committee

Follow up actions to the Decision **44 COM 7B.29** adopted by the World Heritage Committee at its 44th session are as follows.

4. *Requests the State Party to implement a comprehensive recovery strategy for the property, including a restoration plan for the archaeological remains and the reconstruction of fire-damaged replica structures, in consultation with the relevant experts and in line with the national laws and regulations;*

After the fire of October 2019, the State Party of Japan has promoted efforts toward the recovery of the Shuri-jô site in cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, including private organizations and local communities, led by national authorities and local governments concerned. Since the previous report on the progress of recovery was submitted in May 2020, the recovery work has progressed as planned, especially the rebuilding of the state hall has consistently moved ahead toward the target for its completion by 2026. The specific progress made after the submission of the previous report is as follows.



Shuri-jô site after the fire (November 2019)



Up-to-date view of Shuri-jô site (August 2022)

a) Underground Remains

As informed in the previous report submitted in May 2020, from November 2019 to April 2020, the extent of the damage to the underground remains of *Seiden* (state hall) was investigated, and then the remains were reinforced with resin and a temporary shelter was constructed. Thus, the conservation measures for the remains were completed. After that, while the condition of the remains has been regularly monitored, a temporary walkway and observation deck were installed to be opened to the public. These measures were carried out appropriately under the supervision and guidance of the Agency for Cultural Affairs and the Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education (section responsible for cultural properties) in conformity with the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties. In order to prepare for the rebuilding work of the state hall, the remains were backfilled with sand capping and it has been suspended to be open to the public since May 2022. The detail of which work is described in the following section.



Underground remains immediately after the fire



Cleaning residual sand the remains



Resin reinforcement



Temporary shelter



Protection by sand capping on remains for preparation of the rebuilding work of state hall



After backfilled the remains with sand capping

b) Replica Structures

Regarding the replica structures, as mentioned in the previous report, the State Party of Japan has continued working towards the rebuilding of the state hall which is due to be completed by 2026 in line with the “Work Schedule for the Rebuilding of the Replica of the State Hall and Other Replica Structures of Shuri-jô site” formulated in March 2020.

		Year									
		2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	and after
Seiden (state hall)	Material survey (large materials)		Market survey								
	Design		Basic design	Execution design							
	Material procurement (large materials)			Procurement/drying							
	Construction		Temporary road Rubble removal	Lumber storage	Order procedure (WTO)	Permanent works					
Hokuden (northern hall), Nanden (southern hall), etc.			Removal	Use as construction yard for the rebuilding of the replica of the state hall							Construction
			Consideration								

Work Schedule for the Rebuilding of the Replica of the State Hall and Other Replica Structures of Shuri-jô site

In 2020, the dismantlement and removal of the damaged buildings of *Hokuden* (northern hall), *Kugani-udun* and *Yuinchi*, *Nike-udun*, *Nanden* (southern hall) and *Bandokoro* were completed. As for the state hall, the removal of the rubble was also completed and development of a basic design was started. Considering the lessons learned from the fire, the overall concept for fire prevention measures at the Shuri-jô site and the “Fire Prevention Measures for the State Hall of Shuri-jô site” was devised (see the following section c) for details). In addition, an exhibition room was constructed to allow visitors to watch a video on the recovery process.



Hokuden (northern hall) (Before dismantling)



Hokuden (northern hall) (After dismantling)



Kugani-udun and Yuinchi (Before dismantling)



Kugani-udun and Yuinchi (After



*Nanden (southern hall) and
Bandokoro (Before dismantling)*



*Nanden (southern hall) and
Bandokoro (After dismantling)*



Exhibition Room



Exhibition Room (interior)

Annex 13 of the Operational Guidelines

In 2021, the development of an execution design of the state hall, the procurement and drying of the structural lumbers to be used as materials were started. The development of design and the selection of tree species for the structural lumbers were determined through discussions among experts from the advisory panel for technical examination, and in line with historical documents and the basic policies of the previous replication (1989-1992). Moreover, temporary roads were constructed, which are necessary for rebuilding works and to be removed once the rebuilding is completed. In addition to the state hall, discussion was started on the rebuilding of the southern hall, northern hall and other buildings. In parallel with that, it has begun to discuss on securing engineers necessary for rebuilding work and mid- and long-term capacity building measures to ensure maintenance after completion of the recovery. Particularly a cooperative framework with the national authorities, local governments, Okinawa Prefectural University of Arts and other organizations concerned will be established to train engineers through the rebuilding works of the Shuri-jô site.



Sawing of procured lumbers



Drying and storing of shaped lumbers



Temporary road for construction (south ramp)



Temporary road for construction (north ramp)

In 2022, until the time of writing this report in November, the design of the state hall was completed, and a temporary lumber storage and wood-processing plant were constructed. Prior to constructing these facilities, the Agency for Cultural Affairs confirmed its design so as not to affect the remains. In addition, a space for visitors to observe the wood processing in the storage, as well as interpretation and exhibition monitors, have been installed to make the recovery process open to the public. Furthermore, after the necessary order procedures, the rebuilding work of the state hall has been begun in November and is scheduled to be completed in 2026.



Temporary lumber storage and wood-processing plant



Temporary lumber storage and wood-processing plant (interior)



Interpretation and exhibition monitors



Observation spaces

c) Fire Prevention Measures for the State Hall of Shuri-jô site

Regarding fire prevention measures, which are one of the essential points in the recovery process, as described above, considering the lessons learned from the fire, the overall concept for fire prevention measures at the Shuri-jô site including the state hall and other replica structures, and the “Fire Prevention Measures for The State Hall of Shuri-jô Site” were developed in 2020 to prevent a future recurrence of fire. Summary of each are as follows.

Overall concept for fire prevention measures at the Shuri-jô site:

- As general theory, along with measures based on relevant laws and regulations (i.e., Fire Service Act), appropriate fire prevention measures are to be carried out in accordance with various assumed fire breakout factors, in line with the “Fire Prevention Guidelines for National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (Buildings)” by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. The concept of fire prevention measures at each stage from before to after fire is as follows:
 - As measures for prevention stage, to install equipment to prevent fire caused by the electrical issue, and surveillance cameras for crime prevention and emergency monitoring;
 - As measures for early detection stage, to install equipment that can detect fires at an early stage before the fire spreads;

- As measures for initial fire extinguishing stage, to install equipment that can automatically extinguish the fire and ensure easy operability so that even a small number of people may handle the initial fire extinguishing manually;
- As measures for prevention stage of fire spreading, to install fire shutters to prevent the spread of fire from adjacent buildings. From the viewpoint of effective use of limited water supply, to install equipment that can work at the appropriate location corresponding to the fire;
- As measures for firefighting activity stage, to install automatic unlocking of the entrance gate, which is linked with a connected water pipe and an automatic fire alarm equipment, so that the fire brigade can act swiftly;
- To strengthen the capacity of the management structure so that information such as fire conditions can be shared smoothly throughout Shuri-jô site in the event of a fire.

Fire prevention measures for the state hall of Shuri-jô site:

- To install earth leakage circuit breakers, seismic breakers, and insulation monitoring devices to prevent electrical fires, low-light monitoring cameras for crime prevention, arson monitoring sensors for early detection, and fire notification devices.
- To install closed-type pre-activation sprinklers (wet type) that quickly releases water in the event of a fire, reinforce eaves to prevent spread of fire, install automatic rotating water cannons, and increase the number of fire extinguishing water tanks and fire prevention water tanks for securing water sources.
- When installing the above fire prevention equipment, the design and layout of the equipment are to be devised so as not to impair the historical space and landscape, and consideration is to be given to making it distinguishable from the original materials and without any sense of incongruity in terms of design.

In view of the abovementioned concepts and measures, the State Party of Japan has continued the rebuilding works of the state hall and discussion towards the rebuilding of other replica structure.

Video archives showing the recovery progress made until October 2022 can be accessed through the following link (Japanese version only).

- Part 1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-lfBckOv5RU>
- Part 2 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcCUURuMqVs>
- Part 3 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DidDC2on35E>

5. *Also requests the State Party to invite a joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the property to assess the damage caused by the fire and the proposed restoration works to be undertaken, as well as to examine other aspects of the state of conservation of the property;*

In accordance with the request by the World Heritage Committee, the State Party of Japan sent an invitation letter for a Joint World Heritage Centre/ICOMOS/ICCROM Reactive Monitoring mission to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre in November 2021. Due to the travel restrictions by the COVID-19 pandemic, while the exact date of the mission is yet to be confirmed at the time of writing this report, the State Party of Japan will continue to coordinate with UNESCO and prepare for the implementation of the mission.

6. *Welcomes the establishment of basic policies and a work schedule for the recovery, including the installation of strengthened fire prevention measures and the reconstruction of replica structures at the state hall, and further requests the State Party to integrate appropriate measures for multi-hazard risk reduction, including fire prevention, into the upcoming reconstruction plan for other replica structures, in line with the “Fire Prevention Guidelines for National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (Buildings)” established by the Agency for Cultural Affairs and other necessary risk preparedness guidelines, and encourages the State Party to continue facilitating the participation of all stakeholders, including local communities, in the recovery process of the property;*

As described above, the 2020 overall concept of fire prevention measures for the Shuri-jō site indicates that appropriate fire prevention measures are to be carried out in rebuilding replica structures including the northern hall, southern hall and other buildings as well as the state hall, in line with the “Fire Prevention Guidelines for National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (Buildings)” developed by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Specific fire prevention measures for each building have been developed by the advisory panel for technical examination and its working groups.

Regarding the participation of the local community, local experts are involved in the recovery process as members of the advisory panel for technical examination. Additionally, from 2020 to 2021, more than 4,000 people including local inhabitants, participated in volunteer activities to clean damaged roof tiles for reuse. The State Party of Japan will continue to ensure the local communities are involved in the recovery process of the Shuri-jō site.



Volunteer activities

3. Other current conservation issues identified by the State(s) Party(ies) which may have an impact on the property's Outstanding Universal Value
None

4. In conformity with Paragraph 172 of the Operational Guidelines, describe any potential major restorations, alterations and/or new construction(s) intended within the property, the buffer zone(s) and/or corridors or other areas, where such developments may affect the Outstanding Universal Value of the property, including authenticity and integrity.
None

5. Public access to the state of conservation report
Accessible

6. Signature of the Authority

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