

A CASE STUDY OF A PRACTICAL METHOD OF DEFINING THE SETTING FOR A CULTURAL ROUTE

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Introduction

In this paper, an example of a practical method of defining the setting for a cultural route is presented by choosing a cultural route contained in an existing World Heritage property as the case study site.

Based upon the definitions of the cultural route and its setting presented and elaborated in Dr Kunie Sugio's paper, this paper explores practical methods of defining the setting for a cultural route.

A GIS-based technique, which is considered to be an effective tool for practical operations for this purpose, was used for the analysis of actual cultural routes that are contained in an existing World Heritage property of Japan. The setting that has been identified as a result of this approach was compared with the current areas protected as the World Heritage area; lessons and suggestions have been drawn for future establishment of the appropriate definition of the setting for cultural routes.

Conditions for Methods of Defining Cultural Route and its Setting

Cultural routes are considered to be geographically more widespread, more diverse in nature and more strongly associated with intangible elements as compared with other types of cultural heritage.

This poses special challenges in the identification and analysis of a cultural route and in the related decision-making process. Firstly, especially in the case of international routes in which several countries are involved, different institutions will be involved and carry out the identification of the route according to different methods, although they might be coordinated. This will make it difficult and time-consuming to build consensus on any issues ranging from the route identification, the value evaluation to decision-making in relation to conservation and management. In this regard, any method to define the cultural route and its setting should be standardized or easily shared by different institutions or agencies in different

countries. This will facilitate the consistent comparison and analysis of different sections of one route and their integration into one continual route.

Secondly, cultural routes by nature rely much of their cultural values upon intangible elements, whether religious or secular; the movement of people or goods that constitutes the basis of routes is intangible in itself. When the value, or the universal outstanding value in the case of a World Heritage property, of the route is significantly associated with activities that were carried out in or along the route such as religious activities, the relevant factors that made such activities possible should be considered to be integral part of the setting of the route. When the value of the route is dependent upon special views or landscapes that were seen from the route, the visibility of these views and landscape should be part of the setting of the route. In this regard, any method to define the cultural route and its setting should be capable of inventorying these types of information and analyzing them.

GIS as a Tool for Defining the Setting of Cultural Route

As a tool to meet the conditions pointed out in the previous section, Geographical Information Systems (GIS) that have been used for a variety of planning purposes including environmental impact assessments, and also for inventorying the cultural heritages in many countries in combination with Global Positioning Systems (GPS), is considered to be an appropriate technical basis.

In order to provide the basis for future discussion, this paper aims to provide a case study of a GIS analysis in defining the setting of a cultural route, taking as an example the World Heritage property in Japan, "Sacred Routes and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range". The property was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004 based upon criteria C (ii), (iii), (iv) and (vi) including cultural landscape according to the previous Operational Guidelines that were in effect as the time of its nomination. Technically speaking, it was not evaluated from the perspective of cultural routes because such idea was not yet relevant for the purpose of the World Heritage nomination; however, pilgrimage routes included in the property are

considered to be cultural routes that were developed in close association with religious activities.

According to the definitions and categories of the cultural route and its setting proposed by Dr Kunie Sugio, the pilgrimage routes in the Kii Mountain range are a network type cultural route in terms of form and a local-level route in terms of the extent of existence. The routes contain not only the section going through terrestrial, mountainous areas but also the seacoast and the river.

Their value as cultural routes mainly derive from their association with religious activities and beliefs that have been inherited from generation to generation and are still going on through practices of Buddhist asceticism and festivals.

In defining the setting of the pilgrimage routes, areas that are directly and indirectly associated with such religious activities are identified and taken into consideration. In addition, the natural features that are distributed along the routes which are given religious significance by those passing through the pilgrimage routes are taken into consideration.

The result of analysis will be presented during the presentation at the Xi'an session.

In this study, ESRI's ArcView GIS software was used (version 3.2) as the main GIS tool. Although the latest version of the software is currently 9.1, the method used in this paper can be repeated with the newest version or other GIS software commercial available.

Suggestion for CIIC

In light of the unique characteristics of cultural routes, it would be most difficult to identify the setting of a cultural route than that of any other cultural heritage. It is mostly because the spatial distribution of a cultural route can spread over a vast area beyond administrative borders, making it difficult even to identify and inventory the tangible assets that constitute the evidence of the route's existence.

On the other hand, it is a race against time to do the job before tangible pieces of evidence, whose value might not be recognized except in the context of a cultural route, are forgotten or lost under development pressures or without proper protection.

Despite the difficulty of identification and management, the value of a cultural route is no less significant than that of any other type of cultural heritage; especially from the view

point of the culture of peace, cultural routes can become the effective common thread that connects different countries and cultures. Not only the existence of a cultural route but also the process in which several countries participate in evaluating the value, setting the property area for protection, defining the responsibilities for conservation and management and working together for the promotion of one same property will provide precious opportunities where different views and opinions are exchanged and mutual understanding is deepened so as to develop a shared value that is treasured by all the relevant countries, or for that matter by all the humankind if it exhibits the outstanding universal value.

Therefore, the development of practical and efficient methods that can be used in the identification, analysis, decision-making and consensus building of cultural routes is desired, so that the study of cultural routes at the practical level can be stimulated and expedited. It is expected from the ICOMOS CIIC in cooperation with other organizations, as appropriate, to take the lead in collecting examples from international experiences and compiling them into guidance for the convenience and consistency of international efforts to identify cultural routes of outstanding universal value.

Abstract

A case study of a practical method of defining the setting for a cultural route will be presented by choosing a cultural route contained in an existing World Heritage site as the case study site.

Based upon the definitions of the cultural route and its setting presented and elaborated in Paper of Dr Kunie Sugio, further consideration will be given to exploring practical methods of defining the setting for a cultural route.

A GIS-based technique, which is considered to be an effective tool for practical operations for this purpose, will be used and the analysis will be made of an actual cultural route that is contained in an existing World Heritage site of Japan. The setting that is identified as a result of this approach will be compared with the current areas protected as the World Heritage area; lessons will be drawn for future establishment of the appropriate definition of the setting for cultural routes.