Commodification of a Rural Space in a World Heritage Registration Movement: Case Study of Nagasaki Church Group

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Abstract The expectation that local economies will positively benefit because of a World Heritage designation is usually high, with some believing that it will lead to local revitalization through the promotion of tourism. Nowadays politics surrounding World Heritage designations has resulted in the important challenge of conserving and using cultural landscapes such as rural space. This paper examines the World Heritage registration movement of the “Nagasaki Church Group and Christian Related Cultural Assets” as a case study and the meaning of and problems that local faith-related heritages in rural areas and their cultural landscapes can expect, including the attention they will be exposed to as a cultural heritage site. In this paper, the author focused on the role of three main actors, “World Heritage Association” that hopes to achieve the goal of World Heritage registration for the Nagasaki Church Group, the administration that wishes to create an opportunity to promote tourism while conserving them as cultural properties, and the Catholic Church that wishes people to understand Christianity while remaining in harmony with tourism. Culture attracts the attention of others and changes itself, so the problem of being treated as a consumer item can occur. When the value of being a World Heritage site is bestowed upon a cultural landscape such as the Nagasaki Church Group, ever larger waves of commodification can sweep over it. Generally, to commercialize something, it needs to be exchangeable after being separated from the context of its production. A church could be separated from the context of life in which it is rooted and that has maintained its vocational activities, climate and accumulation of history, and the place itself then produced and consumed as information. The concept and philosophy of being a World Heritage site may be part of human wisdom, but the more strongly heritages is connected to a region, the broader will be the influence on the region by being registered as a World Heritage site.

Key words Nagasaki Church Group, World Heritage, tourism, pilgrimage, actor, rural landscape, commodification

Introduction

In recent years the phenomenon of a “World Heritage Boom,” as it could be called, has become prominent in Japan. The expectation that local economies will positively benefit because of a World Heritage designation is usually high, with some believing that it will lead to local revitalization through the promotion of tourism. Being designated as a World Heritage site dramatically increases the amount of information made available globally through various media such as travel magazines, guidebooks, TV, the Internet etc., the result being the expectation of an increase in the number of tourists visiting the area. Tourism-related industries expect an increase in tourists, local governments and economic organizations etc. then expect that a World Heritage site registration will trigger regional development, and the aim of being registered as a World Heritage site becomes active. Because of this, on January 23, 2007 the Agency for Cultural Affairs decided to add the 4 sites of “Tomioka Silk Mill,” “Mt. Fuji,” “Asuka · Fujiwara” and the “Nagasaki Church Group” as Japanese candidates to be placed on the tentative list for nomination as cultural heritage sites. Designation as a World Heritage site means that the value of precious Japanese cultural properties will be evaluated internationally, and, in addition, it also then means that general efforts to conserve the cultural properties of a region will be dramatically improved in the designation process. The Agency for Cultural Affairs, therefore, positively aims for World Heritage site designations.

The “World Heritage Boom” can be attributed not only to the needs of the region that presumes it will stimulate tourism but also the tourists themselves. The baby-boom generation has started to reach retirement age and thus there is an increase in demand for leisure and tourism activities. The baby-boom generation is also comparatively
rich, and is very much interested in history and culture, and hence aspires to culturally educational type tourism. World heritage sites are very attractive to people who have the time and money to travel around their own country or abroad and it is expected that tourism to World Heritage sites where supply and demand can be balanced will further expand the market.

However, it has been pointed out that being designated a World Heritage site also includes many negative elements. Examples of this include not only damage to cultural properties or contamination by tourists (Shackley 2001; Matsui 2005), but also the deterioration of residents’ living environments and an increase in income disparities due to excessive tourism, the destruction of natural environments and landscapes through areas being designated tourist spots, and even a loss in value of being a World Heritage due to this (Goda and Arimoto 2004; Saito 2006; Kuroda 2007). In addition, some people question whether a World Heritage site designation does actually lead to lasting development of an area. World Heritage site designations can temporarily increase the number of tourists visiting an area, but this may not be a rapid increase, and occasionally is merely a temporary tourism boom. This type of danger has also been pointed out (Tanno 2008; Fujiki 2009).

Being designated a World Heritage site can largely depend on the intentions of the World Heritage Committee. The Global Strategy, which was adopted in 1994, requires that any imbalances in different area and type designations should be taken into account and the representativeness and reliability of heritage sites secured. Too much importance has often been attached to “Europe,” “Cities,” “Religion” and “Buildings,” but a trend of discovering value in culture, traditions and ethnic landscape around the world, which have been apt to have been too abstract, and emphasis placed on the relationship between people and land is now occurring. New World Heritage site targets therefore are landscapes such as the Rice Terraces in the Philippine Cordilleras or the Gassho Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama, and since 1995 a movement where value as a World Heritage due to this (Goda and Arimoto 2004; Saito 2006; Kuroda 2007).

Recently, rural geographers have noticed that one of the most significant elements of rural change in developed countries was the transition from an economy based on production to an economy based on consumption (Woods 2005). This transition is considered as the commodification of rural spaces. Cloke (1993) suggested the changing nature of rural space and the importance of understanding the social and cultural constructs of rurality. He also showed us a series of new markets for countryside commodities: rural lifestyles, rural landscapes and rural productions in Britain. After his paper appeared, commodification was thought to be an integral part of rural changes and therefore underpinned the establishment of new rural geography and ensembles of rural production and consumption which may be understood as re-resourced rural areas (Perkins 2006).

The most prominent component of consuming rural places is tourism (Woods 2005). In the literatures of Japanese rural studies, Tachikawa (2005) focused on rural functions beyond agriculture in terms of post-productivism and discussed urban consumers demands for rural spaces such as tourism, scenic beauty, and healing. Concerning theoretical approach, Takahashi (1998, 1999) analyzed how rurality has been socially constructed, how various actors and their networks linking locality and broader social spaces engaged in rural dynamics through representing their interests over the locality. On the other, Iguchi et al. (2008) and Tabayashi et al. (2008) depicted the commodification process of rural spaces and the possibilities of developing tourist industries based on the commodification of rural spaces through case studies in Japan.

This paper therefore concerns the World Heritage registration movement of the “Nagasaki Church Group and Christian Related Cultural Assets” (hereinafter referred to as the “Nagasaki Church Group”) as a case study, whose tentative registration on the World Cultural Heritage site list was decided upon, and the meaning of and problems that local faith-related heritages in rural regions and their cultural landscapes can expect, including the attention they will be exposed to as a cultural heritage site. As many people know, Nagasaki is the area where the Catholic faith permeated the earliest and deepest in Japan, and hence is an important constitutional element in its regional history (Matsui 2006).

Figure 1 shows the distribution of candidate for World Cultural Heritage in Nagasaki Church Group, having 26 churches and Christian heritage sites. In villages where the transportation system was very poor (Sotome region, Hirado - Ikitsu, Goto Islands and others) there are churches that were built by hidden Christians that moved to these areas in the Edo era to escape persecution. The
buildings include places of faith and also for living, and are quite scenic (Figure 2). The aforementioned churches include many buildings designed by Yosuke Tetsukawa, who was renowned for constructing churches in Kyushu. There are also some churches that were registered as government-designated important cultural properties, for example the Aosagaura Church (Figure 3) and the Kuroshima Church (Figure 4) in World Heritage registration movements, with the value of the buildings also having been evaluated. As ecclesiastical buildings their religious value and value as a cultural property have been acknowledged, but have not been the targets of tourism, apart from special churches like the Oura Cathedral or Urakami Cathedral. However, recently more and more tourists are visiting churches in villages on isolated islands. And unlike pilgrims on the Santiago route there is no actual target church set. Nevertheless, many people visit a number of churches in what could be called a pilgrimage to sacred places. The question is, why has the number of pilgrims to the Nagasaki church group increased?

Of course some people visit churches as a sign of their faith. For Catholic pilgrims the churches in Nagasaki and the Goto Islands are buildings that concern the history of persecution of Christianity, and the concealment and revival that their ancestors experienced, and thus have

Figure 1. Distribution of candidates for World Heritage in Nagasaki Church Group, Nov. 2009. Source: Nagasaki Prefectural World Heritage registration promotion division (2009).

Figure 2. Landscape of the daily life with church in Hirado City, Nagasaki. Note: Taken by the author, July 2005.

Figure 3. Aosagaura Church in Shinkamigoto Town, Nagasaki. Note: Taken by the author, July 2005.
special meaning. When visitors to a church in the Goto Islands were asked why they came, many catholic pilgrims answered that “I wish to visit all the churches on the Goto Islands.” And recently more and more tourists who do not have any particular interest in religion are increasing in number (Matsui 2008a). It is also clear that many tourists like high/junior high school students have been visiting with school excursion for a long time, especially in front of Oura Cathedral (Figure 5), however the author focused on the rise of new alternative tourism, of some small group or individual tour to an isolated island like Goto and seeking to the opportunity to hear the local Christian history told by a local guide (Figures 6, 7). Some visitors are impressed with the beauty of the buildings or the splendor of the location and call into a church by chance, but people visiting churches in Nagasaki because of information available in various brochures and travel guides in addition to packaged tours put together by travel agencies are also increasing in number. It could be said that a new boom of making a pilgrimage to sacred places is growing. This movement of making pilgrimages to sacred places has not occurred merely by chance but rather, the administrations of prefectures, municipalities and tourist federations, which have churches and martyrdom sites regarded as sacred places in their areas, have made use of them.

In this paper, from the viewpoint of a World Heritage registration movement, the modern dynamic of commercializing a rural area in Nagasaki, where the faith that is deeply connected to the area constitutes its history and culture, is analyzed. The attempt to register the Nagasaki Church Group as a World Heritage site naturally should not be entrusted to a special organization only. There are a myriad of actors involved, including
the people associated with the churches and the actual Christians themselves, in addition to other major external actors like public administrations, such as those of Nagasaki Prefecture and the individual municipalities, various economic organizations and companies, the mass media and even tourists. Figure 8 sets out the relationships of the main actors in the World Heritage registration movement involving the Nagasaki Church Group based on a quotation from the framework made by Endo (2005). Endo provides the three axes involved, namely tourists (consumers), residents and producers, and as a trend-setter in the registration of World Heritage sites the producer plays a considerable role. The author has published several papers discussing the actual situation of tourism in the municipalities involved and the contrivances presented by the public administrations of Nagasaki Prefecture and Hirado City (Matsui 2006), Kamigoto Island (Matsui and Kojima 2007) and also examined the significance of the role of some local-religious cultures as a World Heritage movement (Matsui 2007) or an analysis of representation of guests’ discourse (Matsui 2008a). However in this paper, as well as in a previous paper (Matsui 2007), the focus is on the philosophy and activities of the “Association for Declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage” (hereinafter referred to as the World Heritage Association) that played the role of being the leader in the World Heritage site registration movement. This Association is a voluntary association acting as the producer, shown in Figure 8. As of December 2006 it was not an NPO, but consideration is being given to the possibility of making it one in the future.

**Distribution and characteristics of World Heritage sites**

UNESCO adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage at a general meeting in 1972, and as of July 2009, 185 countries had ratified it. Japan ratified the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage in 1992, relatively recently, being the last among the major industrial countries to do so. As of July 2009 the number of registered World Heritage sites had reached 890. World heritage sites fall into three major categories: cultural heritage sites, natural heritage sites and mixed heritage sites, with the number of registered cultural heritage sites being 689, a little less than 80% of the total.

Cultural heritage sites involve monuments, buildings, ruins, cultural landscapes, etc., that are of remarkable universal value. Any object of a certain historical, scientific, artistic or anthropological value corresponds to this. Similarly, natural heritage sites include those with special topographical or geological features, particular ecosystems, endangered animal and plant habitations or areas, objects of universal scientific value, that need to be conserved or have particular native beauty. A mixed heritage site is anything that meets both stipulations (Agency for cultural affairs 2009). The registration procedure is as follows: A country creates a “Tentative list” in advance, the World Heritage Committee then examines and makes a judgment on it, and it is then officially registered. Japan has had 11 cultural and 3 natural heritage sites registered.

The criteria for registering a World Cultural Heritage site are given in Table 1. At least one of the 10 conditions must be met, with an important standard being whether the committee acknowledges the object to possess “remarkable universal value”. The object must have been deemed to possess special value in human history, and in addition, be authentic and have particular integrity (Ueno 2007). Cultural heritage sites in particular need to be of special value originating in human history that needs to be conserved. The distribution of World Heritage sites is provided in Figure 9, and looking at 6 continents reveals 365 sites in Europe, which is 53% of the total.

The early purpose of the adoption of the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage was to protect cultural heritage sites (ruins) that were facing crises such as war or environmental disruption and to promote tourism along the way, resulting in the registration of world-famous historic

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**Figure 8.** Main actors of the World Heritage movement in Nagasaki Church Group. Source: Endo (2005) and Matsui (2007).
Commodification of a Rural Space in a World Heritage Registration Movement

buildings and art work. As discussed, after 1994 when the World Heritage Committee adopted “The Global Strategy for a Balanced, Representative and Credible World Heritage List,” the criteria for being a World Heritage site has become more diverse and includes industrial heritage, negative legacies, and cultural routes, cultural landscapes, with more of a regional balance being taken into consideration.

The problem of what exactly is “remarkable universal value?” still lingers. It is natural that the criteria change according to the international power balance and current thinking of society, but any area aiming for registration as a World Heritage site in particular needs to be constantly rethinking their strategy. What does it take to be acknowledged as “heritage site?” How do we reveal that it is in fact a “heritage site?” What must be sought is remarkable universal value.

Because of this it goes without saying that a faith-related heritage site has important meaning as a cultural heritage site. Of the all 11 World Cultural Heritage sites in Japan 7 of them are religion-related, with a plurality of religion-related heritage sites being included in the tentative registration list (Figure 10). “Sacred Places and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii mountain Range” is an example and was registered as a World Heritage site for its association with the religiously sacred places of Yoshino and Kumano and its farming and mountain village landscapes. The “Nagasaki Church Group” is the

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**Table 1. Criteria for registering of World Heritage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>To represent a masterpiece of human creative genius</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>To 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>To bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>To be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>To 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</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>To 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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>To 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)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>To be outstanding examples representing major stages of earth’s history, including the record of life, significant on-going geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>To be outstanding examples representing significant on-going ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>To contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-situ conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UNESCO.

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**Figure 9. Distribution of the World Heritage in the world by continents and categories, 2009.**

Source: UNESCO.
first tentative candidate related to Christianity in Japan. And although the negative side of its history has often been emphasized in the Christian faith, the move here is to evaluate its universal value and uniqueness to Japan as a cultural heritage site, something that could be said to be an epoch-making event in the history of religion in Japan. At the same time the rural landscapes including the church group involve the interactions between the lives of the people and the environment of the area, and hence the entire local culture, which was inherited, will be acknowledged to be cultural heritage.

**“World Heritage Association” as the Producer**

**Establishment of “World Heritage Association”**

The nomination of the “Nagasaki Church Group” as a candidate World Heritage site involved many people, with the campaign led by the “World Heritage Association,” named Association for Declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage, in particular playing an important role. The “World Heritage Association” is an organization that was established with the aim of World Heritage site registration by volunteers, including people associated with the churches, local companies, the mass media, and involved in administration, in September 15, 2001, and now has approximately 80 members. They have steadily wrestled with academic investigations and research on the architectural value of the Nagasaki Church Group and its distinctive local historical and cultural background, for example the hidden Christians, and have held symposiums and awareness movements to help people understand it as cultural heritage through the promotion of international exchanges.

According to a publication issued by the “World Heritage Association” the purposes and concept of the Association are as follows (The Association for declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage 2007):

This Association was established by volunteers from various fields, including specialists and people associated with the churches, to carry out activities to register the Nagasaki Church Group as a World Heritage site in September 15 of 2001.

Introducing the existence of the splendid and valuable Nagasaki Church Group, which was created in the long history of the faith of many people, to people both in and outside Nagasaki and abroad is very important, and we aim to register it as a World Heritage site as a useful means of doing so.

Some people may consider them neither as old or as large-scale as churches in Europe, but the ecclesiastical buildings, which were created by combining the efforts of the local people with their cultures and the faith of rustic people in a beautifully natural place and a culture peculiar to Nagasaki, like nowhere else in the world, and are very appropriate for designation as a World Heritage site. It is an important point to note that registration on the (World Heritage) list is not the only goal here and that we should commence full-scale conservation of them. (All underlines added by the author.)

The church group is regarded as an expression of the local history and the attempt to promote its registration as a World Heritage site a means to exhibiting and providing information on it. Compared to the World Heritage sites related to Christianity that have already been registered around the world, the Nagasaki Church Group is in a situation where it is difficult to emphasize the value of its scale, history, and splendor. The historic characteristics of Nagasaki are therefore being emphasized, along with the existence of the church group as an expression of a historic landscape.

**What is the value of the “Nagasaki Church Group”?**

Now, what exactly is the value as a World Heritage site of the “Nagasaki Church Group”? The “World Heritage Association” emphasizes the following three points as the value of the Nagasaki Church Group in the light of the UNESCO criteria (The Association for declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage 2007). First,
consider its historic value. Churches in Nagasaki have a 450-year long history of Christianity, since St. Francis Xavier first arrived at Hirado in 1550, and could even be said to be the history of Christianity in Japan. The Christianity that St. Francis Xavier introduced to Japan has a checkered history—persecution by Anti-Christian Edicts, a period of being concealed during the Edo era, and revival after the ban was abolished in 1873 in the Meiji era, and almost half the churches built before World War II and still existing being distributed throughout Nagasaki Prefecture (Kawakami and Tsuchida 1983; Kawakami et al. 1985 etc.). Many of those churches were designed by foreign missionaries and built by Japanese master carpenters, a blend of Eastern and Western cultures. The master carpenter who is referred to whenever discussing ecclesiastical architecture is Yosuke Tetsukawa. Mr. Tetsukawa, who was born into a family of master carpenters in Kamigoto in Nagasaki Prefecture in 1889, engaged in many ecclesiastical architectural projects, mainly in Nagasaki Prefecture, from the end of the Meiji era through to the beginning of the Showa era. His work, which was influenced by foreign missionaries like Father Pelu, Father de Rotz and Father Fraineau, is a precise blend of Eastern and Western architectural styles. The churches he was involved with were the Aosagaura Church and the Kashiragashima Church (both in Shinkamigoto), and the Tabira Church (Hirado City) having already been designated government-designated important cultural properties, and with many others of the churches he created being candidate World Heritage sites.

Second, consider the aesthetic and artistic value of the ecclesiastical buildings. As described previously, the churches in Nagasaki include many distinctive buildings where the architectural techniques of the West brought by foreign missionaries and the conventional techniques of Japan were mixed together. (The Photo collection of Misawa and Kawakami (2000) provides extensive pictures of the churches.) The redbrick and stone churches in particular, which were built from the early Meiji era through to the Taisho era, are famous for the exteriors, described as being “exotic” or “romantic.” They emphasize that with these churches, which were built by mixing the architectural techniques of the West brought to Japan by foreign missionaries and the conventional techniques of Japanese master carpenters, a blend of Eastern and Western cultures reached fruition in distinctive ecclesiastical architecture. The master carpenter who is referred to whenever discussing ecclesiastical architecture is Yosuke Tetsukawa. Mr. Tetsukawa, who was born into a family of master carpenters in Kamigoto in Nagasaki Prefecture in 1889, engaged in many ecclesiastical architectural projects, mainly in Nagasaki Prefecture, from the end of the Meiji era through to the beginning of the Showa era. His work, which was influenced by foreign missionaries like Father Pelu, Father de Rotz and Father Fraineau, is a precise blend of Eastern and Western architectural styles. The churches he was involved with were the Aosagaura Church and the Kashiragashima Church (both in Shinkamigoto), and the Tabira Church (Hirado City) having already been designated government-designated important cultural properties, and with many others of the churches he created being candidate World Heritage sites.

Third, consider the value of the cultural landscape that a local climate creates. The “World Heritage Association” values the environments in which the churches stand as being cultural landscape where humans were in harmony with nature, and emphasize that the decline in occupations, including agriculture, and the population due to the falling birthrate and aging population and rural exodus, make maintenance of those cultural landscapes extremely difficult in island villages (Goto Islands and Hirado) and Nishi-Sonogi peninsula in Nagasaki Prefecture. They are in fact emphasizing the inestimable value of the landscapes, including the environment surrounding the churches and the difficulty of conserving them.

The three points given above reveal that the “World Heritage Association” is emphasizing that the Nagasaki Church Group is a symbol of the local history, is rooted in the local climate, and that the local history is special in the history of Christianity in Japan, and incomparable to any other world history. They therefore aim to register it as a World Heritage site as the best means of acknowledging the aesthetic and artistic value of the church group as a historical symbol, and intend to conserve and exhibit it.

To be registered as a World Heritage site it must be acknowledged publicly that the Nagasaki Church Group is a precious cultural property and a consensus gained. The “World Heritage Association” is hence promoting the registration of churches and church-related facilities as cultural properties. As of November 2009 there have been 1 national treasure, 8 government-designated important cultural properties and 7 prefecturally-designated tangible cultural properties registered, with 3 government-
designated and 3 prefecturally-designated objects being registered after 2001 when the “World Heritage Association” was established. The move to designate the churches of Nagasaki as cultural properties is thus rapidly increasing.

However, the “World Heritage Association” does not regard the Nagasaki Church Group to be a cultural property that is merely a relic of the past. As Kimura (2007a) points out, the Association aims to value the Nagasaki Church Group in its true condition as a “living church,” and maintain it as such. Some of the churches have been damaged and have deteriorated due to natural disasters such as typhoons or whose maintenance is difficult because of the reduced number of Christians due to the decreasing population. And although urgent countermeasures are necessary, in the present situation useful measures are not adequate due to the bad financial condition of the municipalities involved and the principle of separating religion from politics. The Association states “It is necessary to position it as a precious cultural heritage site while maintaining its function and sacredness as a religious facility of the living church” and “The idea of positive use of cultural properties in a variety of applications in order to conserve them is important, but easy diversion and use into a form where its true function would be impaired could lead to the destruction of its cultural value and atmosphere, and therefore the utmost care should be exercised.” The basic principle in the academic investigations and awareness movements that the “World Heritage Association” has wrestled with is the existence of the churches as religious living spaces and the strong critical awareness that the churches and the history behind them may vanish if the present conditions continue to exist (Kimura 2007a).

The “World Heritage Association” is strongly aware of the problem of conserving the churches in situ. For example, the opportunity for the Association to be inaugurated came about through a Society for Architecture and Conservation meeting being held on Naru Island, one of the Goto Islands (Goto City). It is the hometown of Mr. Kakimori, the Director-general, Mr. Kakimori was born into a Mizukata (one of posts) family of “hidden Christians,” and was familiar with Oratio. The establishment of repair and conservation techniques for ecclesiastical buildings means to act to preserve the church as a building, conserve local history, and create a personal history.

However, the intention of registering the Nagasaki Church Group as a World Heritage site is not just about conserving some “valuable and splendid” churches, but also about introducing them to as many people as possible. The modern problem of being in harmony with tourism here is constantly highlighted. The “World Heritage Association” has taken the problem of the conservation and exhibition of the churches and harmony with tourism into consideration since first being established. Documentation from the Association (The Association for declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage 2007) states that “The churches and the environments surrounding them have particular charm and value as “spaces to restore people's mentalities,” regardless of the faiths of modern society where people live such busy lives in urban areas, but also have the potential to act as a catalyst in local revitalization as a tourism resource.” Furthermore, it clearly states that “Registering the ecclesiastical building group as a World Heritage site naturally opens the door to people from outside the area, thus making balancing the tourism a major issue.” It emphasizes that “Tourism and the conservation of the church group have contradictory sides, so careful consideration to harmonizing both is required, and we need to also carefully note that improving the roads and providing parking for tourists and establishing shops may become a hindrance to the landscape or lead to the destruction of culture properties and the environment.”

The coexistence of conservation and tourism resources, which seems such a contradiction on the surface, is a problem relating to the core elements of the concept of being a World Heritage site. In other words the spirit of the World Heritage treaty concerns not only the conservation and control of heritage sites of remarkable universal value around the world but also their conversion into economic value and the promotion of tourism in where they are situated (Muneta 2006).

Achievements of the “World Heritage Association”

Table 2 gives the various events the organization has been involved in (sponsorship, co-sponsorship, support, etc.). It reveals that they have constantly been involved in activities since first being established. The activities include phases of academic activities and promotional activities. The academic activities include forums, symposiums, and lectures being held once or twice a year, in addition to awareness movements and PR activities (including photo exhibitions, concerts at churches and tour programs of visiting churches) to reveal the charm and value of the Church Group to the general public. Although usually held in Nagasaki Prefecture, such as in Nagasaki City, Goto or Hirado, where the churches
Commodification of a Rural Space in a World Heritage Registration Movement

Table 2. Previous activities of the Association for Declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month/date</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Sep.</td>
<td>The Association for declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage is founded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct. 16th–20th</td>
<td>Exhibition &quot;The Road to a World Heritage: The Nagasaki Churches Group&quot; at Hamaya Department Store.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov.10th–29th</td>
<td>Exhibition &quot;The Road to a World Heritage: The Nagasaki Churches Group&quot; in Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oct.–Nov.</td>
<td>23 members of our Association pay a Courtesy Visit to the Vatican Culture Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Fr. De Rotz 90th years Death Anniversary Concert. In: Shitsu Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>Field trip to Historical Heritages of Macau.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dec. 22nd–27th</td>
<td>Exhibition about &quot;The Association for declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage&quot; activities. In: Hamaya D. Store</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>May 27th</td>
<td>&quot;Nagasaki Church Group and Christian Related Cultural Assets&quot; addition as candidates for the World Heritage Provisional List celebration. Pentecost Concert</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The Association for declaring the Nagasaki Church Group a World Heritage (2007).

are the most densely distributed, lecture meetings and photo exhibitions are also held in large city areas such as Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Fukuoka, and a special range of activities has started to spread even more.

To make known the special charm of Nagasaki Church Group, awareness movements for the general public are very important. Mr. Hiroaki Misawa, an architectural photographer, has played an important role in this process. He takes photos with the theme of buildings, streets, ruins, and civil structures both in Japan and abroad, with “Ooinaru Isan Nagasaki no Kyokai (Important Assets: Churches in Nagasaki),” which was issued in 2000, having great impact. It is a photo book that included a thorough explanation by Mr. Hideto Kawakami, a specialist in architecture and a member of the “World Heritage Association,” in addition to photos of churches taken by Mr. Misawa, and has been constantly reprinted. Dr. Kawakami is a professor at the Kinki University, Faculty of Humanity-Oriented Science and Engineering, and a researcher who has researched the architecture of the Nagasaki Church Group for many years. It is thought that the “World Heritage Association” functions as an incubator for the protection of its treasures, or the Church Group as precious buildings, by the Nagasaki Church Group being spotlighted by specialists.

Of course the activities of the Association do not just involve the aforementioned events. Various other activities such visiting churches abroad (in Rome, Macao and other countries), requesting the cooperation of the Vatican, and coalitions with various other organizations including administrative bodies, also take place, and they owe a great deal for the maintenance and operation of the Association to the dedicated efforts of Mr. Kakimori.

In this chapter, the author has examined the role of the association in promoting a World Heritage registration.
Moreover the author emphasizes that this registration movement is fundamentally supported by the authenticity of Nagasaki local history and their collective memories (Kimura 2001, 2007b; Hosoda 2004).

Creation of Pilgrimages to Sacred Places and the Actors Involved

Creation of pilgrimages to sacred places

Corresponding to the surge in the World Heritage movement the numbers of palmers and tourists that regard the faith-related facilities in Nagasaki as sacred places have increased. The movement towards making a pilgrimage to the sacred places is not a phenomenon that has occurred incidentally, but rather through the design of the administrations of prefectures and municipalities and tourist federations that have churches and martyrdom sites which are regarded as sacred (Matsui 2008b, 2009).

In Nagasaki Prefecture efforts to promote tourism using the history and culture of Nagasaki are being made within the “Project of Discovery and Transmission of History in Nagasaki” that commenced in 2005. The project concerns the creation of stories associated with many of the historic cultural heritage sites that exist in the prefecture as a new charming point to tempt people to visit them, with a special characteristic being that the education board and tourism department of Nagasaki Prefecture are promoting it together. Based on a historic theme that was set at a “Promotion Meeting” composed of business people and well-informed persons from both in and outside of Nagasaki, historic cultural heritage stories are created at a “Special Meeting to Create Stories (education board),” and distinctive local resources and historic culture then connected to the promotion of tourism (for example the creation of tourist routes with special local meanings and the development of tourism products). The intention here is the creation of a historical Nagasaki brand of Nagasaki. The first issue of the many historical themes that was covered was Christian culture. And this was because the Christian culture is peculiar to Nagasaki Prefecture and is a powerful theme for use abroad. It resulted in “Traveling and Studying Nagasaki” (edited by Christian culture and in 6 volumes) being issued. In these books the history and noted places of the Christian culture in Nagasaki are explained using the themes of the arrival of Francis Xavier at Hirado, the Christian daimyo of Nagasaki, the Delegation of Tensho Young Envoys, the Martyrdom of the 26 saints, the Shimabara Rebellion, and the hidden Christians in the Edo era, and they play the role of being a guidebook.

The Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Federation also places importance on “Christianity” in the tourism strategy of Nagasaki Prefecture. In the tourism strategy of the prefecture, how to promote theme-type tourism was positioned as an important issue, with Christian culture being the most powerful theme in the industrial heritage of Gunkan-jima. One concrete product development was the “Nagasaki Kirishitan Kiko (Nagasaki Christian Travel).” The Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Federation created 500 thousand booklets within which the prefecture is divided into 5 parts, “Hirado · Ikitsuki · Tabira,” “Sasebo · Kamigoto,” “Goto, Fukue-island,” “Nagasaki City · Nishi-Sonogi,” and “Shimabara · Unzen · Amakusa,” with model routes for touring the churches provided. The federation also created a booklet where special points of the ecclesiastical architecture are explained with the help of the Catholic Archdiocese of Nagasaki, and adopted positive use of church tours to aid tourism. Furthermore, they explain matters requiring attention when visiting churches and explain the manners expected of tourists in churches, and hence in this way thoroughly take Christian sensibility into consideration.

The concept of “Christian Travel” is both “high-class-oriented and high-value-added;” and targets the baby-boomer generation. It provides guest-oriented travel in small groups with a guide. It was created as a comfortable plan, although the travel charge is high, and aims to satisfy their need to learn about history and culture. People who wish to take advantage of this type of heritage tourism include many people who have traveled in Japan and abroad many times and are full of curiosity toward unknown places such as isolated islands.

Sacred places as consumer items and the actors involved

The move to promote church tours as a pilgrimage to sacred places has also occurred within the Catholic Church. In 2005 “Perfect Guide to Churches in Nagasaki and Amakusa and Pilgrimage Sites” was issued under the supervision of the Catholic Archdiocese of Nagasaki and is a guidebook to the Catholic churches in Nagasaki Prefecture and Amakusa (Kumamoto prefecture), and besides introducing the ecclesiastical architecture and the history of the churches, the churches are numbered to promote a tour of them as a pilgrimage. Furthermore, as a guidebook to the sites that commemorate martyrs, martyrdom sites and monuments, the last half of the book concerns graveyards and tombstones and the ruins of the Seminario etc., which are also introduced as a pilgrimage to sacred places. In this way the Catholic Church has also
responded to tourism and has provided a pilgrimage to the Church Group and sacred places that are the sites of martyrdom as a way of appealing to non-Christians within a range where the religious aspects of Christian life of Mass and ceremonial occasions will not be affected.

The move to try to use the pilgrimage to sacred places for Christians in Nagasaki is pointed out here not only as a religious intention but also to present the historic cultural heritage of the area and as a way of promoting tourism, which was heightened even more in the wake of the designation of the Church Group on the tentative list 2007. The Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Federation immediately came out with a plan to utilize their tourism resources entitled “Establishment of “Nagasaki Pilgrimage,” Creation of a New Cultural Entity”. Its objectives were to review the tangible and intangible Christianity-related assets that exist in each region of Nagasaki Prefecture and to create an official “Pilgrimage Route in Nagasaki” after consultation with the Catholic Archdiocese of Nagasaki. The central aims were to create a new pilgrimage route that had been authorized by the Catholic Church and contribute to the promotion of tourism in Nagasaki. As a concrete action policy the need to select “pilgrimage sites” in cooperation with the Catholic Archdiocese of Nagasaki, publicize pilgrimage manners and create official guides, create a “Nagasaki Pilgrim Map,” and disseminate information by holding events or through media were all pointed out. The Nagasaki Pilgrimage was modeled on the Shikoku Pilgrimage, and the goal in the future is to attract one million tourists a year. In response to this plan the Catholic Archdiocese of Nagasaki opened the “Nagasaki Pilgrimage Center” which they provide with staff in May of 2007. They divided 390 pilgrimage and pilgrimage-related sites in Nagasaki Prefecture into 6 parts, introduced them as a model pilgrimage course, and in addition began dispatching pilgrimage guides who had specialized in the history of the Catholic Church.

Because of the situation where the needs of consumers can diversify and the changes in the value of existing tourism resources, the Nagasaki Prefectural Tourist Federation positioned the creation of the “Nagasaki Pilgrimage” not merely as the creation of a tourism resource but rather the creation of a new cultural entity. Or in other words, the creation of a cultural entity that provides tourists with the chance to look back on their lives while in contact with the history and culture of the area, and thus promote a sense of peace and comfort. The expectation is that the spread of the “Nagasaki Pilgrimage” will lead to more interchanges taking place between people, the succession and creation of the historic culture in the area, and so contribute to the development of a historic culture around Nagasaki Prefecture, with tourism being expected to be the driving force.

In this way the “Nagasaki Pilgrimage” could be said to have created a route for a tour of existing churches and sacred martyrdom sites, but behind this are various other elements. In other words, it involves not only the political and economic requests of the local municipalities that expect an increase in the number of tourists visiting due to the development of the pilgrimage, but also religious philosophy and the propagation strategy of the Catholic Church, the social and religious situation, for example the spiritual boom, the surge in interest in cultural heritage tourism of baby boomers approaching retirement, etc., and also the effort to socially create sacred places.

As seen above, Nagasaki Church Group and its surrounding rural landscape is now being commodified as Nagasaki Pilgrimage by two main actors: local administration and the Catholic Church. However, it is also impossible to create such a new pilgrimage without the authenticity of these churches and Christian related sites. Both actors understand this point well and they carefully pay attention not to hurt their value and make an effort to create a sustainable relationship between tourism development and preservation. As a result, the commodification of Nagasaki Church Group and its surrounding rural landscape has gradually been promoted.

**Meaning of Registration as a World Heritage Site**

Being registered a World Heritage site requires not only the judgment that an individual cultural heritage site has universal value but also the cooperation of the national and local government to ensure that it can be appropriately preserved. In the case of Nagasaki Prefecture, because Gunkan-jima in Nagasaki City is also a World Heritage site candidate and due to the principle of the separation of religion from politics, they were not always considered to have been completely equipped to positively promote the “Nagasaki Church Group” as a World Heritage site candidate. However, when registration on the tentative list was decided, the move to positively support it became more active. For example, a “Nagasaki Church Group and Christian Related Culture Assets” symposium sponsored by the Nagasaki-Prefectural Board of Education was held in February of 2007 as a move toward early registration as a World Heritage site and in
response to an official recommendation for registration on the tentative list. The move toward registration as a World Heritage site is expected to become even more active, but at the same time, we should take into consideration the influence of the view that people have of religious local cultures being used as cultural property or heritage.

In a proposal submitted to the Agency for Cultural Affairs in November of 2006 an appeal was made regarding the following points on the universal value of cultural heritage (Nagasaki Pref. et al. 2006).

1. The Nagasaki Church Group and its relevant assets are symbols of sublime spirituality, freedom from persecution and the joy of the comeback of the church along with the history of a dramatic revival from long-term concealment never seen before in the history of the world. The churches, which are dotted throughout remote small areas, are generally small, stand in regions where Christians had to conceal themselves to avoid persecution and continue their faith, and realistically reveal how they devoted their property and labor to the church in spite of their poor lives and built the churches as proof of their faith.

2. The Church Group and its relevant assets are closely related to the distinctive natural terrain of the area, which has been partly designated a national park, need to be in harmony with the village landscape, which was established on land facing a cove and on an upland slope by people who lived by farming and fishing, and were established as part of an excellent cultural landscape to support the lives and spirits of local residents in the high spirituality of the revival from long-term concealment.

3. The Nagasaki Church Group belongs to Gothic Revival Architecture, which in a broad sense was a global trend at that time, but as the churches were built under the guidance of foreign missionaries who brought the styles and techniques of the West with them and with inventiveness based on the traditional techniques of Japanese master carpenters such as Yosuke Tetsukawa etc., various developments can be seen where the architectural culture of the West and that of the East were blended together, and a high-level of molding and design achieved. They also have regional characteristics, for example, a camellia pattern is used in the interior ornamentation of one. In this sense they are part of a globally rare and distinctive construction group heritage. (All underlines added by the author.)

From these three items the following articles can be pointed out as being part of the local culture. (1) Globally rare distinctive religious history, (2) Cultural landscape that the local climate created, (3) Original religious buildings completed in a blend of Eastern and Western cultures.

The “universal value” that is needed as part of the designation criterion of a World Cultural Heritage site given in Table 1 is said to satisfy all the items (Nagasaki Pref. et al. 2006).

The reason it satisfies ii): The Nagasaki Church Group and Christian-Related Cultural Assets reveal a globally rare complicated exchange process of Eastern and Western cultures—The Introduction of Christianity and Western culture to Japan in the Age of Discovery and the Blend of Traditions while Christianity was prohibited during the period of national isolation, and the new interchange after isolation was ended.

The reason it satisfies iii): The Nagasaki Church Group is unparalleled as material evidence that the Christian faith continued in spite of martyrdom and persecution from the end of the 16th century.

The reason it satisfies iv): The Nagasaki Church Group was built under the guidance of foreign missionaries and with inventiveness based on the traditional techniques of Japanese master carpenters, and are examples of the development process of ecclesiastical architecture in Japan, developments where the architectural culture of the West and that of the East were blended together, and high-level molding and design achieved.

The reason it satisfies v): Most of the churches of the Nagasaki Church Group are dotted throughout small remote areas in the prefecture where people lived in concealment, are closely related to the distinctive natural terrain of the area even now, are in harmony with the village landscape established by people who lived by farming and fishing, and where a superb landscape was established to support the lives and spirits of local residents.

The reason it satisfies vi): The Nagasaki Church Group and Christian-Related Cultural Assets can be directly linked to persecution and martyrdom, an event which had a major impact and an impression on the world, and a globally rare dramatic revival from 250-years of concealment. Furthermore, these assets have been used as a main theme in famous Japanese literary works, some of which are set in these places, and thus play an important role in literary history. The original form of “Oratio,” which was sung by hidden Christians for 400 years, is a Gregorian chant and ceremonial music brought to Japan by missionaries or a chant from a region of Spain in the 16th
century, and thus reveals the form of music at that time. (All underlines added by the author.)

Some of the expressions are duplicates, but it can still be said that parts can be regarded as the “remarkable and universal value” of the Church Group. The source of universal value is inseparably-linked to the context of local regional histories, and it is heritage such as buildings of the Church Group and relevant ruins that embodies local historic endemism. This cultural landscape, including faith-related assets, has been maintained by the residents’ voluntary religious acts and regular vocational activities, and the World Heritage movement is exactly what is needed to give more authority to those activities.

Finally, another 2 points can be given for registering the cultural landscape, including the faith-related assets, as an expression of the local regional culture on the World Heritage list. Ogawa (2002) pointed that anything could be registered as being part of a cultural heritage in modern society, as nothing has a cultural heritage at the start and something gains a cultural heritage through the action of finding meaning in it. According to Ogawa, conservation and exhibition are the most important activities in creating cultural heritage. And this is because the values of a society get reflected in a conservation activity and through the process of conservation and exhibition something gets separated from the local context it originally depended on and regrouped into new abstract universal context. If Ogawa’s indication is amplified upon, the process of registering the Church Group as a World Heritage site means that the churches will be separated from their individual religious and regional contexts and replaced with history and heritage. It is the process that leads to the development of religion becoming a thing, and religion becoming a thing faces the danger of being used up after being distributed and then treated as consumer item.

Authorizing local religious culture as a cultural property is a double-edged sword. While there is no doubt that it is a useful means of ensuring that people realize its value and then hand it down to future generations, registering it as a cultural property is exactly the same as giving new value to an individual local religious culture. It is the act of bestowing it with artistic, aesthetic, economic, historic or cultural value in addition to its inherent religious value. For Christians the ecclesiastical buildings were established as religious spaces for ceremonies and social living spaces, and had nothing to do with artistic or historic value. However, bestowing secular value will inevitably provide a secular church hierarchy. The risk is ever present that being categorized a cultural property such as a national treasure, national important cultural property, prefecture-designated cultural property or non-designated cultural property could lead to it being regarded as the valuation of its religious local culture, or the problem of regarding a cultural property as a thing, upon which the problem of commodification then occurs.

However, only the negative side of attempting to be registered as heritage should not be overly emphasized. The global valuation standard for being registered as a World Heritage site gives a local cultural landscape universal value. Yasuhuku (2000) pointed that tourism was an important element in forming the social image of a “Place” in the late 20 century, and as the means of registering a cultural property as a World Heritage site, for although cultural properties are distinctive to the culture in different regions and countries and are globally localized, that distinctiveness gets emphasized on the global stage as a cultural property of remarkable universal value by being registered as a World Heritage site.

Christians have been positioned as a social minority in Nagasaki. The value of the religious local culture of Nagasaki that includes the hidden Christians and martyrdom being authorized in the form of a “Church registered as a World Heritage site” and “Historic sites registered as World Heritage sites,” and the Christian culture being handled as an inside story, could uncover some positive meaning. The Church Group as a World Heritage site could go main-stream in the region, functioning as a symbol when the “traditions” and “history” of Nagasaki are told, and boost the local religious culture in Nagasaki on the global stage as a culture which has “remarkable universal value”. It could be said that the Christian culture will contribute to the establishing the pride and identity of a Christian and embody Christianity as a historic and experiential memory (Yamanaka 2007a).

Upon considering the influence that any changes and reversals of traditional values with the grant of a new value on a local culture, Hamada (2006) can be said to be quite influential. Mr. Hamada focused on the point that the Mingei Movement does not have meaning in industrial promotion but a view that changes the value of a product, and with the Nagasaki Church Group, the pilgrimage network of churches is being established and attention focused on it as a “group” (Kimura 2007a). During the surge in the World Heritage registration movement, the Catholic churches and other actors have become more active, with churches and martyrdom sites now being established as sites for a pilgrimage to sacred
places (Matsui 2006). It could be said that although an individual church or martyrdom site does not change, the meaning given to it gets radically changed, with new value being given to the site and regrouping forced upon it through receiving that kind of attention (Yamanaka 2007b).

“Our own church has been registered as a World Heritage site.” This is exactly discovering culture, with conversion of the value of the target then occurring. A church that has been ultimately valued as a World Heritage site has received the attention of outsiders as a church which has universal value, and at the same time is newly established as a target that insiders themselves can ultimately control, as Ohta (1998) revealed in Culture’s Object Theory.

During the process where, similar to this, culture attracts the attention of others and changes itself, the problem of being treated as a consumer item can occur. One of the serious problems caused by the registration as a World Heritage site is the commodification of places (Smith 2003). Timothy and Boyd (2003) suggested that commodification entailed more than just the simple packaging of culture and heritage for tourist consumption. It is also blamed for creating extra spectacular events, and objects, for tourists have become dissatisfied with the ordinary world. Tanno (2008) also showed us some examples of the commodification of World Heritage sites in Japan. When the value of being a World Heritage site is bestowed upon a cultural landscape such as the Nagasaki Church Group, ever larger waves of commodification can sweep over it. Generally, to commercialize something it needs to be exchangeable after being separated from the context of its production. A church could be separated from the context of life in which it is rooted and that has maintained its vocational activities, climate and accumulation of history, and the place itself then produced and consumed as information. The concept and philosophy of being a World Heritage site may be part of human wisdom, but the more strongly heritage is connected to a region the more broadly the region will be influenced by being registered as a World Heritage site.

**Conclusion**

Eighteen church-related facilities including Oura Cathedral (national treasure), Kuroshima Church (government-designated important cultural property), Aosagaura Church and 8 Christianity-related heritage items such as the ruins of Hara Castle, which is the site of the martyrdom that took place in the Shimabara Rebellion, have been nominated as candidates for World Heritage sites. They are all historically and culturally important, but at the same time involve the faith and lives of Christians, and hence are not merely historic relics but also religious living spaces, also a key ingredient in their nomination.

In this paper, by focusing on the three main actors, “World Heritage Association” that hopes to achieve the goal of World Heritage registration for the Nagasaki Church Group and the administration that wishes to create an opportunity to promote tourism while conserving them as cultural properties, and the Catholic Church that wishes people will understand Christianity while remaining in harmony with tourism, the situation where the churches in Nagasaki, which were individually built in the religious practices of Christians, are being established as a church group for the new pilgrimage of the “Nagasaki Pilgrimage” was examined. Finally, from the viewpoint of consumption of culture and commodification of rural spaces, local people and locality were targeted in an attempt to study why this movement to create sacred places for pilgrimages is occurring in various regions and to expose any hidden problems.

On the Goto Islands of Nagasaki Prefecture, over which the church group is distributed, depopulation is increasing due to the falling birthrate and aging population and the Christians can no longer maintain the churches on their own. The church buildings, which have withstood wind and rain for many years, have become seriously damaged, with some of the facilities being in danger of collapsing. Many of the people associated with the church expect to receive financial support from the national and local governments and to be able to preserve their precious religious facilities, including the churches, as cultural properties through encouraging tourism (Hosoda 2008).

However, at the individual level, some Christians are afraid that their facilities (churches) will become a mere tourism resource (Kimura 2007a). Isn’t our place of faith being overrun by tourists nowadays? Hasn’t the faith that we inherited from our ancestors become merely a showpiece? Similar to these worries it probably cannot be denied that the religious spaces that were originally made for prayer may change if the movement to make the Church Group a tourism resource becomes more active.

Moreover the following three points should be mentioned in discussing the commodification of rural spaces in Nagasaki. First, it brings the package of rural places which are displayed for customers (Urry 1995). Those packaged places will facilitate easy consumption by urban customers and in this context, the rural
landscape becomes the realm of sign-consumption (Baudrillard 1998). Second, their Christianity as an honorable identity will be formed and strengthened through the reconstruction of public local memory brought by significant actors. Christianity in Nagasaki has not always represented a positive meaning. Although a history of Nagasaki Christianity was authorized as “universal, valuable history in the world” with a rise of World Heritage registration movement (Kimura 2007b; Yamanaka 2007a), we should understand this reconstruction of history might conceal a “true” history in which they had been discriminated as a Christian or a hidden Christian for a long time. Third, producing a new locality in order to facilitate consuming rural places has become so easy in the discursive space because of the development of the Internet. Therefore various localities have been produced simultaneously and disappeared after a short term, which is the danger of easy production of locality.

The phenomenon of making sacred places tourist spots and commercializing them has been classically-observed. Sacred places get created and given new meaning by people with a variety of (social and economic, political, cultural or religious) objectives, with conflict often constantly arising over them. The Catholic churches in Nagasaki are sacred spaces to a community of Christians based in a village, which then became a parish, with a church in one region originally being independent of a church in another. What will be the situation when a church? Being registered as a World Heritage site would then vanish. However, while society has rapidly become so easy in the discursive space because of the development of the Internet. Therefore various localities has become so easy in the discursive space because of the development of the Internet. Therefore various localities have been produced simultaneously and disappeared after a short term, which is the danger of easy production of locality.

When religion stood as a moral standard for society as a “sacred canopy” (Berger 1967), the sacred world had a lot more functions in society than in now. Because the waves of rationality that swept over the world in a special time and space, the Modern West, have penetrated all aspects of life, new spaces that are extremely useful, safe and comfortable were exchanged for them; with some people even thinking that irrational places like sacred sites would then vanish. However, while society has rapidly globalized, and standardization, homogenization and the leveling of time and space have all irreversibly spread, contrarily sacred places are in the spotlight again as being unique. It could be said that at the time, the creation of sacred places was also an act of a “Search for a Place” (Relph 1976). At that time sacred places were also created in large numbers, and as a result became standardized and used up. This is an aspect we need to be careful about.

The registration of a local religious culture as “Heritage” is the act of adding religious value to something that has the secular values of “history” and “tradition”. A World Heritage site is considered to have universal value for humans, but originally nothing to do with any religious value. What if a sharp line gets drawn in the future between a church that has been registered as a World Heritage site and one which is has not, and that difference gets etched in people’s minds as being the value of the church? Being registered as a World Heritage site obviously involves a variety of problems.

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