



INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON MONUMENTS AND SITES
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A flash report on the Kumamoto Earthquakes

The series of massive earthquakes started rattling wide parts of Kumamoto and Oita Prefectures on 14 April 2016 and have killed 49 people, wounded about 1,100 people, and left 1 person unaccounted for, as of 26 April. As for damages to residential buildings, 1,553 of them have reportedly been destroyed, 1,460 buildings are half-destroyed and, 2457 buildings are partially damaged. Some 5,000 other buildings are damaged, but its extent is unknown yet. Aftershocks are still continuing to strike to this day and many people are still spending their days and nights in temporary shelters. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to many of the ICOMOS colleagues who have kindly extended us messages of sympathy.

The 2016 Kumamoto Earthquakes were caused by two plates slipping against each other along with Futagawa Fault and Hinagu Fault which run across the central part of the island of Kyushu. The events have taken place at spots inland as shallow as 10km underground. They are typical epicentral earthquakes. The main tremor recorded magnitude-7.3, causing a huge shake with maximum JMA (Japan Meteorological Agency) Seismic Intensity 7. There have been more than 1000 aftershocks as of 28 April, including one triggering another Seismic Intensity 7, and five with Seismic Intensity 6.

As far as material damage to cultural heritage in Kumamoto Prefecture is concerned, 107 items of cultural properties - among which 46 are nationally designated and 59 are locally designated – are affected, along with a number of old houses. The numbers are believed to increase, as the whole picture of the after-earthquake situation becomes clear.

Among the damaged cultural properties, Kumamoto Castle, which is one of the most well-known castles from the early modern period, has suffered a significant damage; sections of its stonewalls have crumbled and some constructions such as *yagura* keep collapsed. Other severely damaged cultural heritage include a gate of Aso Shrine, an Important Cultural Property, and the municipally-designated cultural property Janes Residence (former teacher's residence of Kumamoto Yogakko school), which was the first Western-style building constructed in Kumamoto in 1871. Moreover, other Important Cultural Properties such as the Eto Residence, as well as many nationally-registered tangible cultural properties including the Yano Residences, where my family owns and I used to live as a child, are suffering serious damages.

Meanwhile, a historical Japanese garden called Suizenji Jojuen, nationally-designated as a place of Scenic Beauty, is famous for its designed ponds with abundant spring water; however the water has stopped coming out since the shocks.

Japan ICOMOS is sending a team of experts from 3 to 5 May to conduct a survey of the damages, which will be reported to the ICOMOS International in due course.

Secretary-General, Japan ICOMOS

Kazuyuki Yano





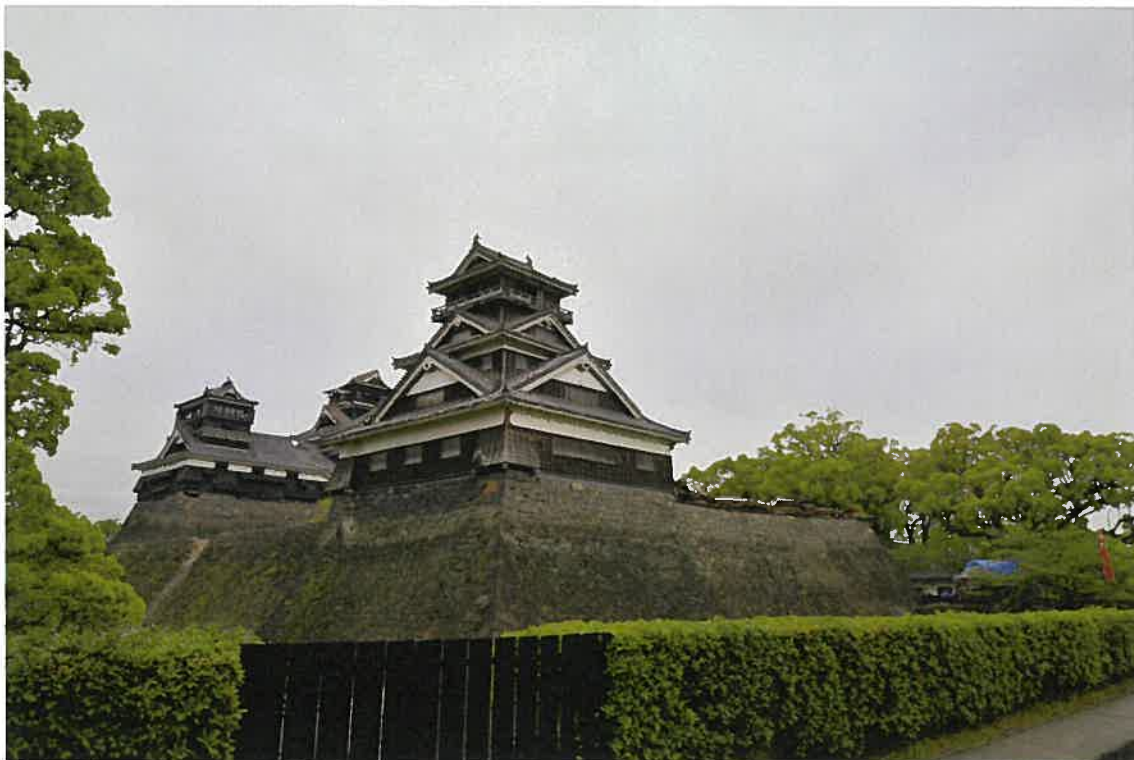
The Kumamoto Castle, Kumamoto City



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The collapsed *Romon* gate of Aso Shrine, Aso City, Kumamoto Prefecture



The ruin of the Janes Residence, Kumamoto City



The main building of the Eto Residence (Important Cultural Property), Ozu Town, Kumamoto Prefecture



The Eto Residence, Ozu Town, Kumamoto Prefecture



The Yano Residence, Nishihara Village, Kumamoto Prefecture



The crack in the barn of a Yano Residence, Nishihara Village, Kumamoto Prefecture



Suizenji Jojuen garden, Kumamoto City



The old town, Kumamoto City



The Old town, Kumamoto City