

# Holy Island, Isle of Arran

## Scotland, United Kingdom

*Isabel Soria*

### Introduction

Holy Island is situated just off the east coast of the Isle of Arran, a short ferry ride from the settlement of Lamlash. Arran itself is the largest island in the Firth of Clyde and lies 26 kilometres off the Ayrshire coast, North Ayrshire Unitary Council Area, south-west Scotland.

Holy Island covers an area of 340 hectares and its central peak, Mullach Mor, rises 314 m a.s.l. Since there are no roads on the island, the only way to travel around is on foot. The island has been a private estate for centuries and was acquired in 1992 by the Rokpa Trust, a non-profit Buddhist organisation founded in 1980 by the Tibetan doctor and teacher Dr. Akong Tulku Rinpoche. In May 2003, the trust opened the Holy Island Centre for World Peace and Health in the north of the island, along with a monastery retreat, the Kagyu Samyé Ling Tibetan Centre, in another part of the island. This 'Holy Island Project' is part of the Rokpa Trust's wider 1000-year plan to promote world

peace, interfaith spirituality and ecological sustainability in harmony with nature, all under the guidance of the project's Executive Director and Abbot of Kagyu Samyé, the venerable Lama Yeshe Rinpoche. The Centre and retreat provide accommodation for over 60 people and offer opportunities for short stays or longer retreats, as well as courses in meditation, yoga and T'ai Chi. The island's permanent resident community is made up of around 15 volunteers, who help run the Centre for World Peace and Health, and 12 Buddhist nuns who live in the Long Term Retreat Centre, which is closed to the public.

### Natural values

Holy Island is an example of management through ownership and it aims to restore the natural biodiversity that is one of the main natural values of the site. However, there are currently no officially designated sites of interest for wildlife on the island. The Holy Island Project states that the objective of its environmental management is to protect "a pristine and unspoiled ecosystem, where all forms of natural life and the land itself are respect-

*< Dorje Phurba Drubchen ceremony, with Dulmo Choje and other lamas from India and Nepal, Holy Island of Arran.*

ed, using an approach that is in harmony with the island's unique ecology".

The owners of the island have created an internal designation for environmental management. The east coast of the island has been designated as the "East Coast Nature Reserve" to protect breeding birds. Although access to the area is not prohibited, visitors are recommended not to enter the area to avoid disturbing the birds.

As an undesignated site, the management of the island is left in the hands of the owners. The management of the whole island is the responsibility of the Executive Director of the Holy Island Project, Lama Yeshe Rinpoche. He defines the activities needed for environmental improvement on the Island. However, since the island receives funding from the Forestry Commission's Millennium Forest Scheme for developing semi-natural habitats and planting coastal woodland, the conservation management is committed to observing the statutory conditions of the Woodland Grant Scheme. The community also seeks advice from environmental professionals (on a voluntary basis), conservation agencies, forest rangers from the mainland, governmental environmental organisations (Scottish Natural Heritage and Forestry Commission) and informally from

visitors who have some expertise in the field.

Holy Island features a mosaic of different semi-natural habitat types. The most dominant habitats are dry heath (heather moorland), woodland (recent plantations) and coastal habitats (rocky shores and saltmarsh). Although the island forms a dramatic landscape, biodiversity is not particularly high. Like most of the land in Scotland, it has been used for agriculture and hill grazing for many centuries (Holy Island Management Plan, 1996). Nevertheless, the island is still representative of the natural heritage of the south of Scotland as described below.

The two most interesting natural habitats on Holy Island are the cliffs and coastal heaths, and the marine habitats that include maerl beds in the open water and the sea-bed environment benthic zone of the Firth of Clyde. The cliff and coastal heath habitat supports a wide range of different natural communities and the biodiversity here includes refuge areas for rare plants and fragments of semi-natural woodland, as well sites for nesting birds. The maerl beds –a collective term for several species of calcified red seaweed- in the benthic zone are located in the channel between Arran and Holy Island and have been identified as a key site in the coastal and marine Habitats Biodiversity

Action Plan. The maerl beds are much under appreciated and fragile habitats that have never been considered to be of sufficient quality to merit designation. However, the promotion of both the maerl beds and the coastal habitats is supported by the UK Habitat Action Plan and the UK government has a legal commitment under the Habitats and Species Directive –albeit only in a general sense under this vague piece of legislation— to protect these habitats.

In terms of the island's flora, the dominant communities are heath, stands of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and grassland, with trees a rarity. For many centuries the island has been extensively used for grazing domestic animals, although some remnants of ancient natural woodland remain along the western slopes of the island up to about 30 m a.s.l. There is also some natural regeneration of birch (*Betula pubescens*); the reforestation carried out in 1996 consisted mainly of the planting of pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*), European ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and *Sorbus* spp. The two plant species of most interest on Holy Island are the healthy population of the nationally scarce rock whitebeam (*Sorbus rupicola*), a very rare plant on Arran and supposedly one of the original parents of the endemic *Sorbus arranensis* (a hybrid), and bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*), a prostrate

evergreen shrub of the Ericaceae family, rare in southwest Scotland.

The Island has an important diversity and richness of sea birds: Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Shag (*Phalacrocorax aristotelis*), Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and Fulmar (*Fulmarus glacialis*) all nest in the sandstone cliffs on the eastern side of island (Holy Island Project News, 1997). Large mixed colonies of Herring Gull (*Larus argentatus*), Greater Black-backed Gull (*Larus marinus*) and Lesser Black-backed Gull (*Larus fuscus*) exist mainly on the northeast side of the island; Gannets (*Sula bassana*) come from the nearby colony on Aisla Craig (a bird sanctuary) to fish in Lamlash Bay. Other birds found on the island include Stonechat (*Saxicola torquata*) breeding on the shore, and Common Buzzards that visit from Arran.

The marine life in the waters surrounding Holy Island is of interest and Common Seals (*Phoca vitulina*) and Basking Sharks (*Cetorhinus maximus*) are regular visitors. The agro-biodiversity of the island is increased by the Soay sheep (*Ovis aries*), one of the United Kingdom's oldest surviving livestock breeds, feral goats (*Capra hircus*) and a few of the original native ponies of the Western Isles of Scotland, Eriskay ponies (*Equus caballus*).

The main activities relating to the island's natural heritage are focused on environmental restoration and include the solving of the problems caused by overgrazing and the replanting with native tree species. Two conservation management plans were written by volunteer consultants in 1992 and 1996.

The activities proposed in these plans include the following:

- Planting 30,000 native trees in a fenced-off area to prevent grazing damage.
- Bracken clearance to restore pasture land.
- Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*) clearance: this shrub is a pest in Scottish forests and has spread throughout the island since it was planted originally at the farmhouse.
- Monitoring wildlife.

At the moment trees have been planted as was planned and now the greatest efforts are being put into clearing the rhododendron. In terms of animal management, the management plan for 1996 states that advice will be sought on appropriate stock densities for conservation grazing. At the moment the number of grazing animals is thought to be acceptable and animals are left to graze on their own and are not subject to herding.

Visitors and local people are responding very positively to the new management strategy focused towards nature conservation that is being promoted by the island's owners. People from Arran have the feeling that the Buddhists are taking good care of the island.

Since acquiring the island, the Buddhists have been disseminating environmental information and have set up an information centre on Holy Island where volunteers provide information about the island's natural and spiritual values. They have also produced informative brochures for visitors and have established a regularly maintained footpath that crosses the island via its most interesting sites.

## Spiritual and cultural values

The main significance of Holy Island is its spiritual value. It has been considered a sacred place since the sixth century, when St. Molaise —a Celtic Christian— retreated there to live as a hermit. Even then it was already recognised as a holy site by the indigenous Celtic peoples, who referred to it as the 'Island of the Water Spirit'. Since the days of St. Molaise the island has been regarded as sacred by Catholics and other Christians. Nowadays, however, the spiritual interest of the island has

been extended by its recent acquisition by the Tibetan Buddhists as a place of retreat.

Most of the sites of spiritual and cultural value on the island date from the days of St Molaise. St. Molaise's Cave, where the saint lived, lies on the western shore of the island and nearby there is a circular sandstone block known as either St Molaise's Table or the Judgment Stone. The monastery that once stood on Holy Island is purported to be on the north-western corner of the island and between this site and St. Molaise's Cave there is another cave, known as the

Smugglers' Cave. This cave was used for ecclesiastical purposes and there are a number of crosses carved upon the walls. Also near St. Molaise's Cave there is the Holy Well, which is associated with the history of St. Molaise. It was thought "to bring a blessing to those who drink from it" and to heal the sick. The Holy Well has long been known to Catholics as a place for healing. The Saint was believed to have miraculous powers and so became a figure of popular devotion, and it became customary to celebrate St. Molaise's day on April 18. The cave and the well are still sacred for Christians and are treated as such by the Buddhists.

*Holy Island near the eastern coast of the Isle of Arran.*



It is important to appreciate how St. Molaise came to settle on Holy Island as this understanding provides clues to the origins of the sanctity of the island. In those days many holy men in the Celtic church went on pilgrimages with no apparent destination in mind believing that they would be guided to an appropriate place. It seems that St. Molaise followed this tradition and, influenced by Celtic myths, considered Arran to be the 'Land of the Blessed'. This power of attraction also brought the Tibetans to the island and Lama Yeshe has commented that during his three-year retreat he had a vision of an island in Scotland and Holy Isle's footprint-like outline attracted his attention as being auspicious to their faith. Additionally, it is said that a strong lay-line (earth energy line) crosses the island from north to south and gives the island a special spiritual status. Many people feel that it is the island's inherent spiritual qualities that make it such a sacred place. Whether it be due to these inherent qualities or the values conferred on the island by the people that have visited and lived there over the centuries, Holy Island undoubtedly plays an important role in the spiritual history of different faiths, from both West and East, and it thus can be considered as a sacred site.

Since 1992, the Tibetan Buddhist owners have brought their own spiritual values to

the specific context of Holy Island. However, for the Tibetan Buddhists, nature itself has a sacred value and, in turn, all nature is sacred. On the island they can live as a part of nature and this gives them the necessary environment they seek to develop their full spirituality. Following Tibetan tradition they believe that the island is full of natural spirits such as Naga, the Water Spirit, who helps you reach enlightenment. All of your actions have an effect on these natural spirits and you can be helped by them or hindered by them, depending on your attitude towards nature. There are rocks all over the island that are decorated with Tibetan Buddhist designs (Green and White Tara, the Karmapa) and other symbols that encourage you in your spiritual practices. As well, there are written mantras and a number of prayer signs.

Today it is the island's owners, the Tibetan Buddhists, who are in charge of the cultural and spiritual heritage of the island. However, all decisions relating to Christian values have to be agreed upon by the Catholic Church because of the sacred connections of the site with St. Molaise. The sacred values of the island are both recognised and enhanced by a variety of different activities including a regular pilgrimage to St. Molaise's Cave for miracles and healing. However, the custom of walking to the well has stopped since

Arran became Presbyterian. The spiritual value of the island was also enshrined by the custom practiced until the end of the eighteenth century of using it as a burial ground for the community of Lamlash.

The Holy Island Project promotes spiritual activities and aims to promote harmony between nature and living beings and thus achieve spiritual progress in people of all faiths. The primary objectives developed by the project aimed at enhancing spiritual practices include:

- Establishing the Centre for World Peace and Health. This is a place for people of all faiths and health to come to and focuses on global spirituality and living in harmony with the environment. It aims to be a central point for interfaith connection and retreat.

- Creating the Long-term Retreat Centre for Tibetan Buddhist Nuns, focused on keeping alive the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. The central tenets of this retreat are the teachings of Karma Kagyu.

These actions that aim to enhance the spiritual value of the island are complemented with other activities such as:

- The designation of Holy Island as a United Kingdom Sacred Site by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation.

- Preservation of the Christian Celtic heritage of the site by means of the maintenance and interpretation of sacred sites.

- Different spiritual ceremonies. Interfaith services with different representatives from all of the world's mainstream faiths that associate religion with natural harmony.

- Specific Buddhist ceremonies such as the Drupchen, held on Holy Island to contribute towards ending the obstacles we face in the world today: natural disasters, floods, earthquakes, war and violence. A Drupchen is an intensive period of spiritual practice involving a large group of Lamas and other Buddhist and non-Buddhist practitioners from west and east. Its role is to transform negative energy into positive energy. During this ceremony, the visiting Lamas consecrated the site of the proposed Stupa (a traditional Buddhism building that symbolises and transmits the energy of perfect wisdom and compassion) for World Peace. The function of both the Drupchen and the Stupa is to balance the elements and climate, and bring peace of mind and harmony to all living beings.

The attitude of the local population and visitors toward the spiritual value of the site has fluctuated over the years. Ownership of the island changed repeat-

edly over the last century and this has generated uncertainty regarding the conservation of the island. When the Buddhists acquired the island conflicts arose with the local population mainly because the Buddhists chose to reveal their plans to deny access to some of the western part of the island in a public meeting. However, today the attitudes of both parties have been clarified and access for visitors to Holy Island has been improved rather than restricted. A ferry runs regularly and an open day has been established to enable people to visit the Centre for World Peace and Health. In addition the paths to the spiritual sites on the island have been improved and this has helped the new owners and their new spiritual values to gain acceptance from their neighbours in the local population.

Furthermore, the spiritual values of the island are attracting new visitors from all over the world, some of whom are becoming part of the local community. The new visitors attend the courses held on the island and people visit or volunteer to work as part of a personal search for a special place in which to develop their spirituality. Amongst the visitors to the island there are always people who are curious to see what is happening there or to discover for themselves what is special about a place known as 'Holy Island'. A Christian tradition of visiting sites connect-

ed with St. Molaise still exists, even if nowadays it is most relevant to the people of Lamlash.

The Buddhists' idea of improving the sacred value of the site has been endorsed by both the Catholic Church, the church most affected by the new Buddhist tradition on the island, and the Church of Scotland (the Presbyterian church that reformed the Catholic doctrines in the sixteenth century according to the principles of John Calvin), the majority church on Arran.

The current feelings of the Buddhist community can be summed up in the following statement: "Today, with the acquisition of Holy Island by the Buddhist Community, two different traditions meet, bonded together by their respect for these peaceful places. From now on the Samye Ling community will be cultivating an island for the nourishment of the human spirit'.

## Pressures and impacts

As an island, Holy Island has a privileged status regarding pressures and impacts from the outside. It is also important to highlight again the fact that the island is in private hands and that it is managed with conservation in mind. However, there are still some human



activities that are having a negative impact on the site.

At the moment the main activity that could be considered to be a threat to the island is tourism. Tourism is increasing on the Isle of Arran and Holy Island represents one of the tourist attractions for visitors to Arran, although it is not one of the top 10 visitor attractions in the area. Since the Buddhists' purchase of the island, the local tourist office has begun to distribute leaflets to promote visits. Tourist activity mostly consists of visitors coming to Holy Island for the day. The information centre estimates that around 5,000 people visit-

ed the island for the day last year. Although visitor numbers are not high, the impact of these day-visits is real. Most visitors walk around the island and climb Mullach Mor, activities that lead to erosion and path damage. People also occasionally wander into the protected area in the east of the island, thereby breaking the owners' rules. As tourism increases, visitors may become a potential danger to the conservation of both the natural and spiritual values of the island.

When the Tibetan Buddhists first bought the island they considered the idea of not allowing people to access the western

*Tibetan Buddhist stupas near the Interfaith Centre, Holy Island.*



side of the island for part of the year in order to maintain the peacefulness of that area for spiritual practices. However, this idea was never implemented, maybe because of the Scottish land reform that gives statutory rights of access in Scotland. These rights are for outdoor recreation, for crossing land and water and for some educational and commercial purposes. Even so, the current owners want to welcome everyone to the island and do not think of visitors as a threat to the values of the island.

Furthermore, aside from tourists, human impacts derived from the increasing needs of the community living in the Centre of World Peace and Health could also potentially threaten the environmental sustainability of the island. This community consists of volunteers living on the island for long periods, as well as teachers and participants on courses and short-term visitors. The Centre provides accommodation for 60 people and has to meet all the needs of the different people that are staying there. Therefore, it has become a comfortable and 'high-class' building for people staying on the island, although the increasing demands of these people seems to have outstripped the natural resources of the island: for example, the increased need for water leads to restrictions during the summer, when water has to be collected from natural sources on the island.

The good management of the Centre of World Peace and Health comes into conflict with the management of the island's natural resources. Although the enhancement of the environmental values of the island is an important part of the Holy Island Project, these activities are still secondary to the development of the project's spiritual components. An environmental workgroup exists, but it has no representation on the management committee of the Holy Island Centre. The environmental workgroup consists of two volunteers working full-time on environmental issues, although their lack of knowledge and instability may be a handicap to the fulfilment of the management plan. In addition, this plan seems to be of little use as it does not provide any guidelines for specific actions; rather, it provides only general aims that need to be achieved, thereby making the task of improving the island's natural resources even more difficult.

The Holy Island of Arran is included in the Isle of Arran Local Plan adopted on 15 February 2005. This plan provides for the enforcement of issues concerning land-use in order to promote and control development. All planning applications are assessed within the guidelines of this plan and under local designations Holy Island is regarded as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Within these sites, all proposals for development require an envi-

ronmental impact study. Furthermore, where development is permitted, the local council may apply specific conditions to secure the protection of wildlife. Given its volcanic features, Holy Island is also considered to be part of the Arran coastal landscape and any development within this zone has to be referred to the Ayrshire Landscape Character Assessment.

## Conservation perspectives and sustainability

In recent times several initiatives have unsuccessfully tried to have Holy Island declared as a protected site. Currently, other projects are alive, such as the one championed by the local organisation COAST, the Community of Arran Seabed Trust, who have proposed that the seabed within Lamlash Bay be declared a Marine Protected Area.

As part of the resource management plan the owners of the island have designated part of the island as the 'East Coast Nature Reserve', although this declaration has no legal backing and is mainly founded on the design of the network of footpaths that make it difficult to access the area.

In order to safeguard the island's cultural and spiritual values from the potential negative impact of human activities, a list

of behavioural rules for the island has been drawn up. Even though the rules have no statutory regulations, the managers of the island believe that they are sufficient for preserving the island's inherent values. These five golden rules are as follows:

- Protect all life and refrain from killing.
- Respect other people's property and refrain from stealing.
- Speak truthfully and refrain from lying.
- Encourage health and refrain from intoxicants.
- Respect others and refrain from sexual misconduct.

The main goal of the current management of the island is for the spiritual values to contribute to the sustainable management of the natural values. The Holy Island Project is defined as an initiative aimed at promoting a commitment from religions on nature conservation. This commitment between different religions and the environment has also received backing from different patrons, including the H.H. the 17th Gyalwa Karmapa, the Most Revd. Richard F. Holloway, and the Bishop of Edinburgh. The Rt. Hon. Martin Palmer, director of the International Consultancy on Religions Education and Culture (ICOREC) has stated that "the project is a successful example of Buddhist awareness and concern for our natural world

and those who share it". Therefore, the Holy Island Project is thought to be a potential interfaith vehicle for a commitment to nature conservation.

On Holy Island the Buddhists believe that their contribution to nature conservation comes from their spiritual teachings that aim for a personal commitment of each human being with nature. They have absolute conviction that it is people who have to change first and understand their own nature and that only then will a feel for the conservation of nature follow. To help this personal search they have specific courses such as 'Buddhism and nature' and 'Meditation in nature'. These courses have a positive effect on the participants and attempt to awake an awareness of being in contact with nature; as such Holy Island works as a promoter of deep experiences in nature. In addition, there are other activities concerning the daily management of the island that are evidence of the Tibetan way of living in harmony with nature. Visitors to the island observing this different lifestyle should come away with a more considerate view of nature. Information about the Tibetan way of life is also given in the information centre. This allows day visitors that do not have the chance to experience the full way of life on the island to receive information about the spiritual and cultural values of the island. People that come for a walk usually seem very

interested in the Buddhist traditions and it is hoped that perhaps some change of attitude will occur as a result of receiving information on the subject.

The promotion of the spiritual values on Holy Island is attracting people from around world. It is surprising to see how people searching for spiritual improvement come from far away to visit this Scottish island. This benefits tourism in the area, since the people who come to Holy Island also get to know Arran and spend some days there as well.

On Holy Island it is understood that any successful conservation has to be based on deep philosophical conviction. Therefore, the spiritual development of all human beings is enough for conserving nature. However, spirituality by itself is not a valid tool for conserving nature. In order for formal protection to come from people and from their experiences with nature, we still need management tools, science and action from outside to achieve the sustainable management of resources and to be able to base conservation on deeply held human convictions. Although the environmental management of the island is satisfactory, more can be done to integrate these concepts into the way of life of the site. Despite its lack of any outstanding specific scientific value, the owners' aims to promote the natural

restoration of the island should be better supported. The expert advice that the owners of the island have been given is not clear and seems to be lacking in content. The synergy that exists on the island between spirituality and nature conservation has to be backed up by better environmental expertise.

Support for Holy Island, a site that is not formally designated as a protected area, should come from governmental environmental institutions because this sacred place is achieving important advances in conservation.

## Recommendations

One of the problems with the project on Holy Island is a lack of a clear vision regarding current policies. The Holy Island Project provides a good framework for the management of the island. A management plan for the natural resources of the island also exists, although it is not a feasible tool for the everyday running of conservation activities on the island. For the volunteers living on the island, who are the people who have to put into practice the environmental policies, the aims of the project are not particularly clear. It seems

*Tibetan Buddhist monks and nuns meditating in nature.*



that management consists essentially of solving problems as they appear through the common sense of the volunteers. As is consistent with the patriarchal and hierarchical traditional structures of Tibetan Buddhism, trends are decided by Lama Yeshe, who is advised by different experts. This sometimes makes it a little difficult to understand management policies and to fully appreciate their aims.

The recommendations for improving the management of the Holy Island Sacred Natural Site are as follows:

Everyone who plays a role in the resource management of the island should be aware of the importance and dynamics of the spiritual value of conserving nature. The role of the Holy Island Project for promoting this spiritual attitude towards nature and environmental protection should be fully recognised. It is part of the 'value' that the island can 'export' to the wider world. As an executive tool for improving the management of the Sacred Site, it is suggested that an overall management plan that will explain to all the exact nature of the Holy Island Project should, with Lama Yeshe's endorsement, guidance and insights, be drawn up. This should consist of an appropriate integrated land-management plan, in which spiritual values and scientific ecology mutually enhance each other.

The Management plan should consider the following issues:

- i. Completion of an accurate biodiversity survey in order to fully appreciate the ecological worth of the island.
- ii. Actions promoted in the plan should be developed in conjunction the stakeholders in the island's community, especially with those most often resident there. This action plan should be continuously monitored and developed by stakeholders, who should also receive expert advice.
- iii. Experts should provide the management tools for developing the best possible practices that can be derived from the spiritual values of the stakeholders' ethos. They should also provide long-term technical support for managers.
- iv. Technical advice and some financial assistance should be forthcoming from government institutions and other external sources.
- v. A regular monitoring programme should be set up with targets and indicators to control the achievements of the plan. The monitoring process will provide interesting data on how spiritually based management may

improve nature conservation and as such may be able to strengthen scientific knowledge.

vi. The right type of people needed for developing the plan should be found. The members of the island's community change very quickly owing to the turn-over of volunteers and so knowledge of the management plan often has to be passed on from one group of volunteers to the next. A core group of informed and committed people who can develop the plan in the long term should be identified. The management plan's activities should be clearly detailed and specified.

vii. The spiritual awareness of people towards nature should be enhanced on the island through wider contact with the world. Visitors should be informed about the experiences other people have had at the site. In addition, self-awareness activities contributing to a greater awareness of nature could be promoted and advertised via leaflets, signs, audio, video and personal contacts. This could be perhaps carried out via information panels complementing those panels with prayers that already exist, as well as through newsletters, writings and daily life experiences. In order to improve the promotion of the interfaith

characteristic of the Holy Island Project, prayers about nature from different religions could be displayed on these information boards. Scottish Natural Heritage produces free advisory publications and holds training events to assist in this process.

The positive interfaith connection to be experienced on the island should be promoted to a greater extent. A real commitment from groups of different faiths should be put into action in order to give more power to the ideas in the Assisi declaration; and Holy Island could be established as a very important place for religions to work towards nature conservation.

The conservation status of the island should be promoted in order to back up the current rules of behaviour established by the Tibetan Buddhists. This conservation status should take into account the improvement of both spiritual and ecological values, without ignoring the fact that spiritual values are the main driving-force behind island management. A Sacred Natural Sites legal designation that encouraged the spiritual-based management of nature could be promoted.

In a wider context, the recovery of the spiritual values of a site in the technologically developed world by a culture coming from



the non-technological world should be seen as a good way of reinvigorating natural spiritual values in a site that was almost spiritually dead. This fact may stimulate other cultures to take care of spiritual natural sites that have been abandoned and to show just how important nature is even if there is no real outstanding biodiversity value in the site in question.

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*Buddhist divinity, rock painting on Holy Island.*



