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Arbitration by The Commissioner for Cultural Affairs

## **Handling Guidelines Concerning the Exhibition of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties**

The exhibition of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (works of fine arts and crafts) must be actively encouraged from the perspective of ensuring that our nationals have the opportunity to familiarize themselves with cultural properties.

However, since many of our country's cultural properties are composed of vulnerable materials, the utmost care must be taken in their preservation to avoid damage to our precious cultural heritage through exhibition.

For this reason, exhibiting Important Cultural Properties requires harmony between exhibition and preservation through the observation of the following points concerning appropriate handling and other procedures.

Moreover, the materials, forms and preservation of Important Cultural Properties vary; therefore, for the purpose of exhibition, responsible decisions based on professional knowledge must be made according to the nature of each cultural property.

### **1 Items that must not be exhibited**

Objects suffering severe damage or exfoliation and which, despite temporary treatment, would be at risk of further damage through transportation or exhibition, must not be transported or exhibited until thoroughly repaired.

### **2 Frequency and term of exhibition**

(1) In principle, the frequency of exhibition should be no more than twice a year, and the total length should not exceed 60 days. However, exceptions to this rule may be made for cultural properties less prone to discoloration or deterioration caused by long-term exhibition.

(2) Objects at high risk of discoloration or deterioration should not be exhibited for

more than 30 days annually, and must be stored in repositories for the rest of the year.

### 3 Transportation for exhibition

- (1) In principle, transportation of cultural properties should be limited to twice a year, with careful measures taken in terms of environmental changes, packaging and handling.
- (2) Cultural properties that are extremely susceptible to damage due to vulnerability of material, large size, complex form, etc., should not be transported for the purpose of exhibition.

### 4 Handling at times of display, photograph, inspection, packaging and removal from exhibit

Handling for the purposes of display, photography, inspection, packaging and removal from exhibition should be carried out only by knowledgeable, experienced curators.

### 5 Methods of exhibition

- (1) In principle, cultural properties should be displayed in cases designed with regard for the size of the object, safety in displaying the work, functionality and resistance to earthquakes (except for especially large and/or sturdy objects), and with the following measures taken concerning the display cases:
  - ① Glass cases and other parts should be made of sufficiently durable materials.
  - ② Mobile display cases should have lower centers of gravity, and be equipped with anti-skid devices, etc.
- (2) Appropriate methods must be carried out in consideration of the material characteristics, forms and conditions of Important Cultural Properties, along with the following measures:
  - ① Appropriate methods of controlling temperature and humidity inside display cases must be used, with full consideration of the environment, structure and management procedures of the exhibition room.
  - ② Scrolls and other objects that must be displayed on inclined platforms for viewing purposes should be at an inclined angle of no more than 30 degrees in principle.

## 6 Environment for exhibition

Cultural properties should be exhibited in an environment free of and unaffected by dust, toxic gases, mold, etc., with no drastic shifts in temperature or humidity, and with the following procedures carried out for the purpose of preservation:

### ① Acclimatization

When unpacking objects moved from a constantly humid environment or objects that have been carried for long distances at low temperatures, ensure a sufficient period for acclimatization.

### ② Temperature and Humidity Adjustment

Standard temperature is 22 degrees Celsius (moderate temperature fluctuations between seasons are acceptable in view of the difference in outside average temperature in summer and winter where the exhibition facility is located). Standard relative humidity is 60 percent, with an allowance of plus/minus 5 percent (it should be maintained at a fixed level throughout the year). However, the relative humidity for metalwork objects should be no more than 55 percent.

When setting temperature and humidity for displays of objects with different material characteristics in a single case, or when the display environment is considerably different from the environment in which a work has long been preserved, make decisions according to the kinds of individual cultural properties and their preserved conditions.

### ③ Illumination

A. In principle, keep the intensity of illumination at 150 lux or lower; avoid exhibiting in places exposed to direct sunlight or places that are excessively lit. Furthermore, regarding cultural properties that are at especially high risk of discoloration or material deterioration, keep illumination low in consideration of the length of the exhibition period.

B. When using fluorescent lights, use those with discoloration-preventive finish in order to eliminate ultraviolet rays; when using incandescent lights, make arrangements to avoid the effects of heat rays (heat generation).

## 7 Consultation for exhibition

Exhibitors who find it difficult to follow these guidelines should consult the Fine Arts Division of the Cultural Properties Department at the Agency for Cultural Affairs before exhibiting Important Cultural Properties.