



Cultural Properties for Future Generations

~Outline of the Cultural Administration of Japan~

Agency for Cultural Affairs, JAPAN

Cultural Properties in Japan

Types of Cultural Properties in Japan

Our cultural properties have been created, developed, and preserved throughout Japan's long history. They have been passed down from one generation to another, and they are now precious assets of the Japanese people.

Cultural properties include (i) structures such as shrines, temples, and private houses, (ii) Buddhist statues, (iii) paintings, (iv) calligraphy, (v) other skills called *waza* such as performing arts and craft techniques, and (vi) traditional events and festivals. Natural landscapes that remain after many years of history, historic villages, and townscapes are also regarded as our cultural properties.

Under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, these cultural properties are categorized as follows:

Tangible Cultural Properties

Tangible cultural properties consist of (a) those of high historical or artistic value such as structures, paintings, sculptures, crafts, calligraphic works, classical books, and ancient documents, and (b) those of high scientific value such as archeological artifacts and other historical materials. Tangible cultural properties other than structures are collectively called "fine arts and crafts."

Intangible Cultural Properties

Intangible cultural properties are defined as those that have high historical or artistic value such as drama, music, and craft techniques. They are embodied by individuals or groups who have mastered *waza*.

Folk Cultural Properties

Folk cultural properties are defined as items indispensable for understanding the transition in people's daily lives, such as (i) manners and customs relating (a) to food, clothing, and housing, (b) to occupation, (c) to religious faith, and (d) to annual events, (ii) folk performing arts, (iii) folk skills, and (iv) clothes, implements, and houses used in connection with the foregoing.

Monuments

Monuments include shell mounds, tumuli, sites of fortified capitals, sites of forts or castles, and monumental houses, which are of high historical or scientific value. They also include gardens, bridges, gorges, seashores, mountains, and other places of scenic beauty which are of high artistic or scenic value. Moreover they include animals, plants, and geological and mineral formations which are of high scientific value.

Cultural Landscapes

Cultural landscapes are defined as those that have evolved with the modes of life or livelihoods of people in Japan and with the geo-cultural features of the region. They are indispensable to the understanding of the lifestyles and/or livelihoods of the people of Japan.

Groups of Traditional Buildings

Groups of traditional buildings are defined as those that have high value and form historic scenery together with their surroundings.

Out of these cultural properties, the government designates, selects, and registers important items in respective categories as Important Cultural Properties, Important Intangible Cultural Properties, Important Tangible / Intangible Folk Cultural Properties, Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments. It gives high priority to the protection of them.

Additionally, we designate particularly valuable important cultural properties as national treasures, and particularly important historic sites, places of scenic beauty, and natural monuments as special historic sites, special places of scenic beauty, and special natural monuments.

Also protected are (a) underground cultural properties (Buried Cultural Properties) and (b) traditional skills and techniques that are necessary for the restoration and preservation of cultural properties (Conservation Techniques for Cultural Properties).

Number of Designated Cultural Properties

(as of August 1, 2019)

Designation	National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties		
	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	
Fine Arts and Crafts	Paintings	2,031 items	
	Sculptures	2,715 items	
	Crafts	2,469 items	
	Calligraphies, Books	1,916 items	
	Documents	774 items	
	Archeological artifacts	647 items	
	Historical materials	220 items	
	Subtotal	10,772 items	
	Structures	(289 buildings)	(5,033 buildings)
		226 items	2,497 items
Total	1,119 items	13,269 items	

Note: The figures for Important Cultural Properties include National Treasures

Designation	Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments	
	Historic Sites	Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments
Special Historic Sites	62 items	1,823 items
Special Places of Scenic Beauty	36 items	415 items
Special Natural Monuments	75 items	1,030 items
Total	173 (163) items	3,268 (3,154) items

Note: The figures for Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments include Special Historic Sites, Special Places of Scenic Beauty, and Special Natural Monuments. Historic sites, places of scenic beauty, and natural monuments may be repeatedly appointed, the contents within () are actually appointed.

Registration	Registered Monuments	110 items
Selection	Intangible Cultural Properties that need measures such as documentation	91 items
Selection	Intangible Folk Cultural Properties that need measures such as documentation	643 items

Designation	Important Intangible Cultural Properties			
	Individual Recognition		Group Recognition	
	No. of designations	No. of holders	No. of designations	No. of holding groups
Performing Arts	36 items	51 persons (51)	14 items	14 groups
Craft Techniques	39 items	59 persons (58)	16 items	16 groups
Total	75 items	110 persons (109)	30 items	30 groups

Note: Some holders receive multiple recognitions; the number in brackets indicates the actual number of individuals

Designation	Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties	Designation	Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties
	221 items		312 items

Selection	Important Cultural Landscapes	64 items
------------------	--------------------------------------	-----------------

Selection	Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings	118 items
------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------

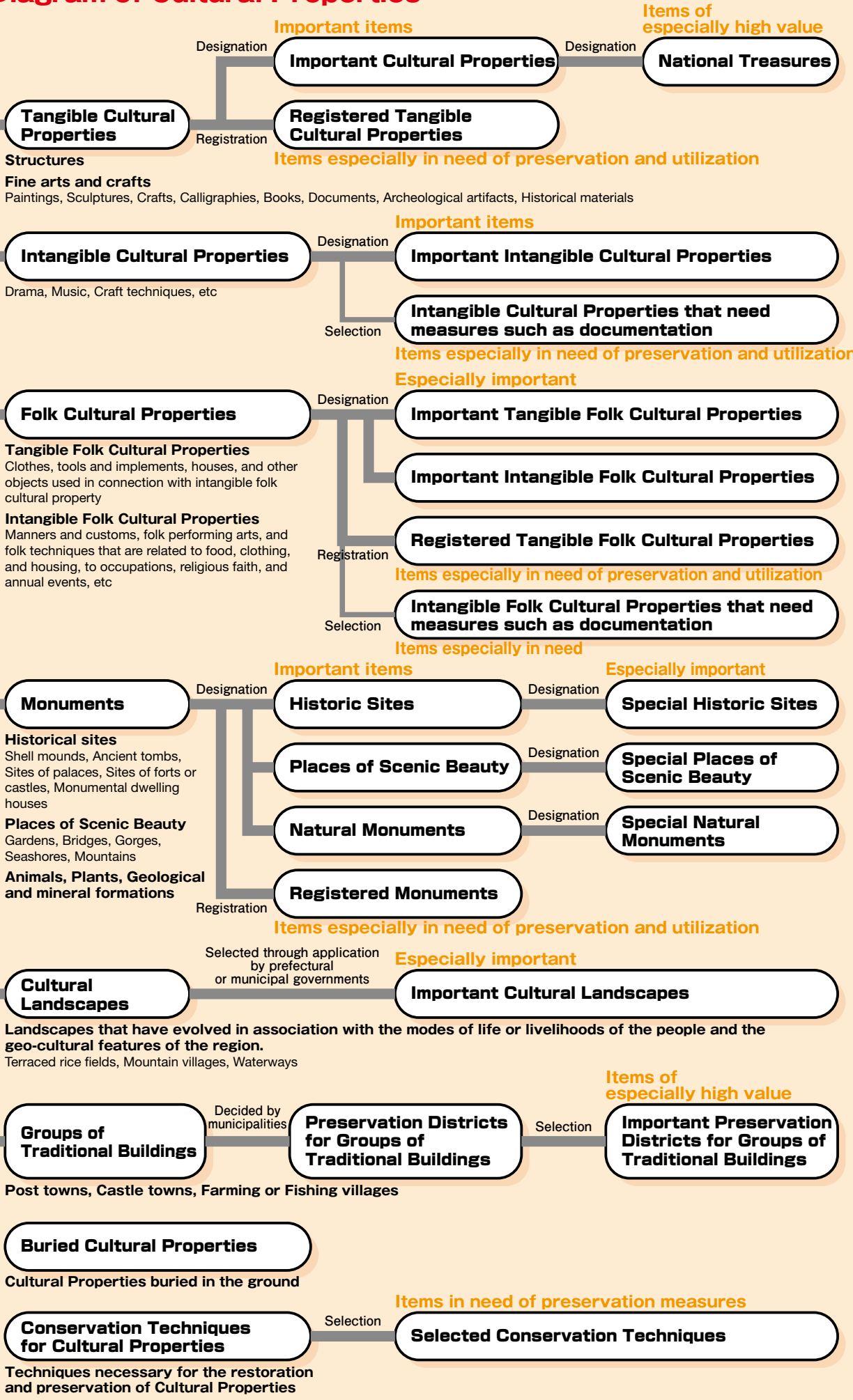
Selection	Selected Conservation Techniques	
	Holders	Preservation Groups
	46 items	55 holders
	37 items	39 groups (34 groups)

Note: Some preservation groups receive multiple recognitions; the number in brackets indicates the actual number of groups

Registration	Registered Tangible Cultural Properties (Structures)	12,121 items
Registration	Registered Tangible Cultural Properties (Works of Fine Arts and Crafts)	16 items
Registration	Registered Tangible Folk Cultural Properties	44 items

Schematic Diagram of Cultural Properties

Cultural Properties



Protection of Cultural Properties Logo
This logo invokes the image of a structure, called a *tokyo*, which is an important element of Japanese architecture. The three stacked elements symbolize the spirit of protection which eternally preserves our heritage of cultural properties from the past, in the present, and for the future.

Note: A *tokyo* is a kind of a wooden joint which is usually placed on top of each pillar to support the long eaves of temples.

History of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties

The protection system has been revised wherever necessary.

The destruction by fire of the mural paintings in the *kondo* main hall of Horyuji Temple in 1949 gave impetus to the enactment of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, which is Japan's first comprehensive legal framework for the protection of cultural properties. The new law combined “the National Treasures

Preservation Law,” “the Law regarding the Preservation of Important Works of Fine Art,” and “the Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments Preservation Law” of that time, expanding and reinforcing the existing system for protection. As the society developed, further amendments have been made since then. In the current social context, the Law is becoming more and more important year after year.

- 1871 Decree for the Preservation of Ancient Artifacts
- 1897 Ancient Temples and Shrines Preservation Law
- 1919 Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments Preservation Law
- 1929 National Treasures Preservation Law
- 1933 Law Regarding the Preservation of Important Works of Fine Arts

1950

Enactment of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties

Committee for the Protection of Cultural Properties established

Amendment of a designation system (division into two-grade categories of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties)

..... Important Cultural Properties that are especially important are designated as National Treasures; Historic Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments that are especially important are designated as Special Historic Sites, Special Places of Scenic Beauty, and Special Natural Monuments.

Establishment of a system for protection of Intangible Cultural Properties and Buried Cultural Properties

..... Addition of intangible cultural products and buried cultural properties as objects to be protected

1954 Amendments

Expansion of a system for Intangible Cultural Properties

..... Establishment of a system for designation of Important Intangible Cultural Properties, and for documentation of selected intangible cultural properties

Expansion of a system for Buried Cultural Properties

..... Established as a separate category from Tangible Cultural Properties; a system of advance notice implemented for excavation in land known to contain cultural properties

Expansion of a system for Folk Materials

..... Establishment of a designation system for Important Tangible Folk Materials separate from Tangible Cultural Properties; establishment of a system for documentation of selected intangible folk materials

1968 Amendments

Agency for Cultural Affairs established

Council for the Protection of Cultural Properties established

1975 Amendments

Development of a system for Buried Cultural Properties

..... Establishment of system of exemptions for excavation of ruins by the national government and development of system for the protection of ruins discovered in the course of construction

Expansion of a system for Folk Cultural Properties

..... Folk materials renamed Folk Cultural Properties; establishment of a system for designation of Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties and Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties

Establishment of a system of Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings

Establishment of a system for protection of Conservation Techniques for Cultural Properties

1996 Amendments

Establishment of a system of Registered Cultural Properties

..... Establishment of a registration system for the preservation of structures other than those designated by the national or local governments

1999 Amendments

Transfer of authority to prefectures and designated cities

Reform to Council for Cultural Affairs

2004 Amendments

Establishment of a system for protection of Cultural Landscapes

..... Establishment of a selection system for Important Cultural Landscapes

Expansion of a system of Folk Cultural Properties

..... Addition of folk techniques

Expansion of system of a Registered Cultural Properties

..... Expansion of registration system to include Tangible Cultural Properties other than structures, Tangible Folk Cultural Properties, and Monuments

2018 Amendments

Establishment of a planning system for cultural property protection and utilization

..... Establishment of a certification system for prefectural principles and municipal regional plans relating to the protection and utilization of cultural properties

Development of structure for participation of diverse inheritors

..... Establishment of a certification system for protection and utilization plans
..... Establishment of a designation system for Cultural Property Protection and Utilization Support Organizations
..... Easing of appointment requirements of the custodian system

Enabling of transfer of cultural property protection administration to departments of local government heads

System and measures for the protection of cultural properties in Japan

“Cultural Properties” are thus preserved and utilized.

Cultural properties thus categorized under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties are protected in a way most appropriate to them.

The process leading to designation, registration, or selection of cultural properties:



Designation and other

Cultural properties are designated, selected, or registered after the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has consulted the Council for Cultural Affairs and received its report.



National Treasure:
Nyorai-do hall and Miei-do hall,
Senjuji Temple
(Tsu City, Mie Pref.)

(Photo: Courtesy of Senjuji Temple)

Preservation

- Guidance and subsidies concerning repair and maintenance to owners and municipalities
- Subsidies for municipalities to purchase land or structures which are cultural properties
- Regulations on alterations to current state, restrictions on export
- Establishment of tax exemptions
- Preparation of required documents and their publicity
- Environmental preservation



National Treasure:
Standing Thousand-Armed Kannon,
wood
(enshrined in main hall of Rengeoin Temple)
(Myohoin Temple)

Utilization

- Subsidies, recommendations, orders, and directives to owners or municipalities regarding the public display of cultural properties
- Establishment and operation of museums, theaters, and other public facilities, and centers for cultural properties research



Nirayama Reverberatory Furnaces
(Izunokuni City, Shizuoka Pref.)

Examples of Preservation and

Important Cultural Property (Structures)

Former Residence of the Maeda Family (Western Building)

Ideally, cultural property structures are utilized actively, not only as architectural objects of viewing, but also as sites for tourism and community activities. In order to promote the use of such structures while harnessing their value as cultural property, there is a growing movement to establish a protection and utilization plan, develop an approach for public utilization, and carry out maintenance accordingly.

The Former Residence of the Maeda Family is located in Komaba Park in Meguro City, Tokyo Metropolis. The residence consists of Western and Japanese buildings built by Marquis Maeda to serve as his Tokyo home. Marquis Maeda was the sixteenth head of the Maeda family of the former Kaga domain. In 2013, the building was recognized for its value in showcasing the life of dignitaries in the early Showa period (1926 – 1989) and was designated an Important Cultural Property.

The Western building with a British-style, stately design housed the Museum of Modern Literature, Tokyo until 2002. While it remained open to the public after the museum's closing, a protection and utilization plan was established in 2015 in order to make more active use of the building, and maintenance work was conducted for its public utilization. Construction work was carried out in parallel with the construction work for preservation, repair, and seismic strengthening since 2016, and was completed in October 2018. The enhanced exhibits and a restored interior allow visitors to immerse themselves in the history of the Maeda family. The building now also has meeting rooms and a pantry so that it can be utilized as an event venue. Through a variety of events, it is expected that people will become more acquainted with and further utilize the structure.



**Former Residence of the Maeda Family
(Western Building)**
(Photo: Courtesy of the Tokyo Metropolitan Government)

Historic Site and Natural Monument

Yashima

Monuments such as historic sites are maintained and utilized through various methods so that people can have a deeper understanding of their history, culture, and nature on site, while retaining their value as cultural property.

Yashima is a vertically long peninsular lava plateau situated northeast of the center of Takamatsu City, Kagawa Prefecture. The name “Yashima,” meaning “roof island,” is derived from its shape resembling a roof. Yashima Castle is one of the ancient mountain castles mentioned in *Nihon Shoki*. The lava plateau is made of an andesite rock known as sanukite that has survived erosion. Based on its value as a vestige of igneous activity linked to the formation of the Sea of Japan, Yashima was designated a national Historic Site and Natural Monument in 1934.

The castle gate relics and castle walls remain in good condition. Maintenance work is conducted to preserve and utilize the relics of the castle wall area, a site iconic of the castle ruins. Based on studies, the castle gate and castle walls were repaired and reconstructed using ancient restoration methods while also conducting some reinforcement work. The castle gate which could not be restored on site was created by computer graphics. Maintenance work incorporated AR and VR technologies, with the aim of enabling visitors to have an authentic experience of the ancient landscape. It is thought that such maintenance work will serve as a new precedent for maintenance of many other historic sites and monuments. The castle is part of community building efforts and is expected to undergo further advances.



Stone-stacking work



**Restored stacks of stones and
computer-generated gate**

Important Tangible Folk Cultural Property

Kishimi Stone Bath

Kishimi Stone Bath, located in Kishimi, Tokuji, Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture, is said to have been built by the Buddhist priest Chogen Shonin during the Kamakura period (1185 – 1333). Stones are heated by burning firewood inside a chamber made of stacked stones. After removing the ashes, wet straw mats are laid to make a heated air bath. In early July every year, the stone bath is prepared on the anniversary of the death of Chogen Shonin, known as “Ishiburo Kaisanki.” Prior to bathing, bathers pray to a statue of Chogen Shonin enshrined in the resting room, according to custom.

The facility currently belongs to Yamaguchi City and is maintained and managed by the local Kishimi Stone Bath Preservation Society. In the past, the Society prepared the bath at irregular intervals upon receiving advance reservations. However, it was decided that the bath would be prepared at regular intervals with the belief that this will contribute to the bath's maintenance and management. The Society has been commissioned to prepare the bath once a month since September 2018. The bathing sessions are publicized on websites and other means.

During the ongoing trial phase, between ten to twenty people have participated each time, with more people gradually participating from other communities, including areas outside of Yamaguchi Prefecture. It is hoped that the bathing sessions will continue to attract people and evolve further. Going forward, efforts will be made to utilize the stone bath safely and sustainably while collecting the necessary maintenance data, and contribute to raising awareness about protection of cultural property.



**Important Tangible Folk Cultural
Property Kishimi Stone Bath**

Utilization of Cultural Properties

Important Cultural Property (Fine Arts and Crafts)

Purchased Cultural Properties Exhibition/ New Designation Exhibition

In order to provide substantial opportunities for the appreciation of Important Cultural Properties, the Agency for Cultural Affairs makes items available for a range of exhibitions.

Every year, at museums in various areas, the Agency for Cultural Affairs holds an exhibition of “New Treasures of the Nation” to showcase recently purchased fine arts and crafts. In fiscal year 2018, this exhibition took place at the Tokushima Castle Museum.

In addition, an exhibition of “Newly Designated National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties” showcasing newly designated art works is held every year at the Tokyo National Museum.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs intends to actively continue to plan and promote exhibitions of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties inside and outside Japan.



Purchased Cultural Properties Exhibition
“New Treasures of the Nation”



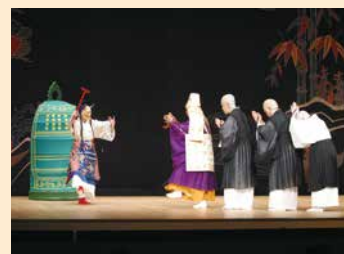
Gallery talk at Purchased Cultural
Properties Exhibition “New Treasures
of the Nation”
(Venue: Tokushima Castle Museum)

Important Intangible Cultural Property (Performing Arts)

Special Appreciation of *Kumiodori*

The Agency for Cultural Affairs subsidizes successor training projects which are conducted by performers’ groups of traditional performing arts such as *Nohgaku*, *Ningyo Joruri Bunraku*, and *Kabuki*, which are designated as Important Intangible Cultural Properties. Since it is the appreciation of the audience that can ensure the transmission of such performing arts to the future, the Agency for Cultural Affairs also supports a performance project which aims to provide the public with more opportunities to enjoy them and to feel the attractiveness of them.

Kumiodori, an Important Intangible Cultural Property, is a singing and dancing drama which has been transmitted in Okinawa Prefecture. Even though it is the compilation of sophisticated music, dances, and arts and crafts techniques of the Ryukyu Kingdom period and it is a traditional performing art that has value for its importance in art and in the history of performing arts, it had not been known outside Okinawa. Thus, since fiscal year 1995, the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society and the Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education have provided special opportunities to appreciate *Kumiodori* for six areas outside Okinawa every year. They are good opportunities for people to appreciate *Kumiodori* with elaborated commentaries.



(Photo: Courtesy of Traditional Kumiodori
Preservation Society)

Important Intangible Cultural Property (Craft Techniques)

The Japanese Artistry and Beauty Exhibition

The Agency for Cultural Affairs holds an exhibition, which is entitled “The Japanese Artistry and Beauty Exhibition: Important Intangible Cultural Properties and the people who sustain them” every year with a view to showing the public *waza* of important intangible cultural properties and to introduce skills that sustain them.

The aim of this exhibition is to increase people’s understanding of the protection of cultural properties through a broad-ranging display of ceramics, textiles, lacquer works and other traditional craft techniques that have been designated as Important Intangible Cultural Properties, along with tools and materials for production that are indispensable for the embodiment of these craft techniques, which have been specially selected as Conservation Techniques for Cultural Properties.

Representative works by holders of *waza* of Important Intangible Cultural Properties (known as Living National Treasures) and holding groups of such properties, along with related materials and other items, are displayed mainly from among the Agency’s collection. Documentary films are also shown, planned and produced by the Agency, illustrating craft techniques.



(Venue: Fukushima Museum)

Communicating information about Cultural Properties

Cultural Heritage Online

“Cultural Heritage Online” is a portal site that enables people to search for and browse information on cultural heritages in Japan, regardless of their official designation. The site is operated in collaboration with a number of galleries, museums, municipal governments, and other groups. This site aims to create a whole list of cultural heritage in Japan, which contains various cultural properties, be it designated or undesignated, tangible or intangible, with the cooperation of museums and local governments for the collection of such information.

The site consists of a Gallery, which shows users photos of cultural heritages, and a Cultural Heritage Database, which enables users to search for information about all kinds of cultural heritages. Gallery users can browse cultural assets by age and field, as well as those related to specific cultural heritages using associative retrieval, as well as search and identify those using maps. The Cultural Heritage Database allows users to perform full-text searches, including searches by the institution storing the cultural heritage or searches by description.

Furthermore, it has thematic contents, such as information of museums and galleries, notifications, and event information, in addition to “World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage” and “Intangible cultural properties seen on video.”



Cultural Heritage Online (image of website)
<http://bunka.nii.ac.jp/>

Activities for Promoting and Raising Awareness for the Protection of Cultural Properties



文化財保護強調週間
Cultural Properties Protection Week

Logo for the Cultural Properties Protection Week

Cultural Properties Protection Week

(November 1 to 7 every year)

Every year, the week from November 1st to 7th is the Cultural Properties Protection Week. During this week, various events are held across the country with a view to giving the nation’s people opportunities to become familiar with them, such as a special opening of historic structures and displaying of fine arts and crafts, walking around cultural properties, performance of traditional performing arts in the public, with the cooperation of owners, local governments and municipal boards of education.

In 2010, commemorating the 60th anniversary of enforcement of the Law, the Agency selected a logo out of the public proposals so that the people can become more familiar with the Cultural Properties Protection Week.



Let’s make a fire!
(Nishitokyo City, Tokyo Metropolis)
(Photo: Courtesy of Nishitokyo City Board of Education)

Fire Prevention Day for Cultural Properties

(Every January 26th)

Since January 26 is when the mural paintings at the *kondo* main hall of Horyuji Temple were destroyed by fire (in 1949), the “Fire Prevention Day for Cultural Properties” was set on this date. The Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Fire and Disaster Management Agency, prefectural and municipal boards of education, fire departments, owners of cultural properties, and local residents cooperate to organize an annual fire prevention campaign for cultural properties throughout the country centered on this date with a view to protecting them from fire, earthquakes, and other kinds of disasters.

The sixty-fourth Fire Prevention Day for Cultural Properties on January 26, 2018 at Jodoji Temple in Onomichi City, Hiroshima Prefecture was attended by the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs and the Vice-Commissioner of the Fire and Disaster Management Agency. A large-scale drill was carried out, with participation of the Onomichi firefighting association, the Onomichi City Fire Brigade, and the Jodoji Temple Self-Defense Fire Brigade.



Sixty-fourth Fire Prevention Day for Cultural Properties, Fire Prevention Drill
(Jodoji Temple)

Efforts for the Protection of Cultural Properties by Local Authorities

Enactment of Ordinances for the Protection of Cultural Properties

As with the national government, local governments also enact ordinances for the protection of cultural properties under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties and designate local cultural properties. Such local governments preserve and utilize their cultural properties, subsidizing expenses necessary for management, repair, and exhibition of them.

In addition, prefectural boards of education have committees for the guidance of cultural properties protection, that inspect cultural properties and provide owners with instructions and advice on the protection of cultural properties.



Stationing place No. 1 of Gonohe Town Fire Company Important Cultural Property by Aomori Prefecture
(Photo: Courtesy of Aomori Prefectural Board of Education)

Preservation and Utilization of Buried Cultural Properties

Many buried cultural properties that can tell us the irreplaceable local history remain in every region of Japan. Approximately 6,000 experts are employed by local governments and municipalities for the preservation arrangement, the implementation of excavation surveys, and the preservation and utilization of sites in connection with development projects.

Each local government is engaged in building a community and training human resources through the utilization of buried cultural properties, such as improvement of preserved sites, display of earthenware vessels discovered during excavation, and dissemination of findings of its history and culture.



Utilization event at historic site Gossakaito Archaeological Site (forging workshop)
(Photo: Courtesy of Awaji City Board of Education)

Preservation and Utilization of Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings

The system of Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings was established in 1975 in order to maintain the historic and cultural character of local towns and villages. In this system, municipalities designate Preservation Districts and develop preservation plans.

The national government classifies Important Preservation Districts from among those Preservation Districts. Within the Important Preservation Districts, municipalities promote their own plans to maintain historic towns and villages, while the national and prefectural governments give financial assistance and technical instruction to preservation projects executed by municipalities.



Preservation District for Groups of Traditional Buildings: Hamashozumachi-Hamakanayamachi, Kashima City
(Photo: Courtesy of Kashima City, Saga Pref.; Photo by Tamura Osamu)

Comprehensive Preservation and Utilization of Cultural Properties and Town Planning

The Agency for Cultural Affairs supports the establishment of the “Regional Plan for the Protection and Utilization of Cultural Properties,” an action plan for the preservation and utilization of regional cultural properties, as well as tourism planning centered around cultural properties under the Plan’s concept. The Agency works with the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to certify “Plans for the Maintenance and Improvement of Historic Landscapes.” Regions whose plans were certified are eligible to receive intensive supports for town planning that takes advantage of their historic landscapes.



Basic Scheme for Historic and Cultural Properties fieldwork in Asago City

Preservation and Utilization of Cultural Landscape

A local government or municipality investigates the area and formulates a preservation plan with a view to preserving its cultural landscape, which has been formed by the livelihoods of people in a local community and the local geo-cultural features.

When selected as an Important Cultural Landscape by the national government, the national government offers technical and financial supports for an improvement project conducted by the local government while the local government is engaged in projects to preserve the landscape in which people live and work and to transmit it to the next generation.



Rural landscape around Lake Ibanai
(Photo: Courtesy of Higashiomi City Board of Education)

Comprehensive Project for Promoting the Use of Cultural Properties

Japan has rich and diverse cultural heritage in each local region, which collectively constitutes its nationwide *takara* treasure. In recent years, people have begun to recognize the role of cultural heritage in contributing to the revitalization of communities, as well as appropriately preserving heritage and passing them along to the next generation. Based on plans formulated by local governments, the Comprehensive Project for Promoting the Use of Cultural Properties aims to support comprehensive efforts utilizing local cultural heritage, such as (i) holding of traditional events and performing arts for the public, (ii) training of successors, and (iii) activities to familiarize people with classical arts and performances. These projects foster cultural promotion and revitalize local communities.



Kaidenma Dance performed at the Nobeoka City Local Performing Arts Festival
(Photo: Courtesy of Nobeoka City Board of Education)

From Japan's Properties to

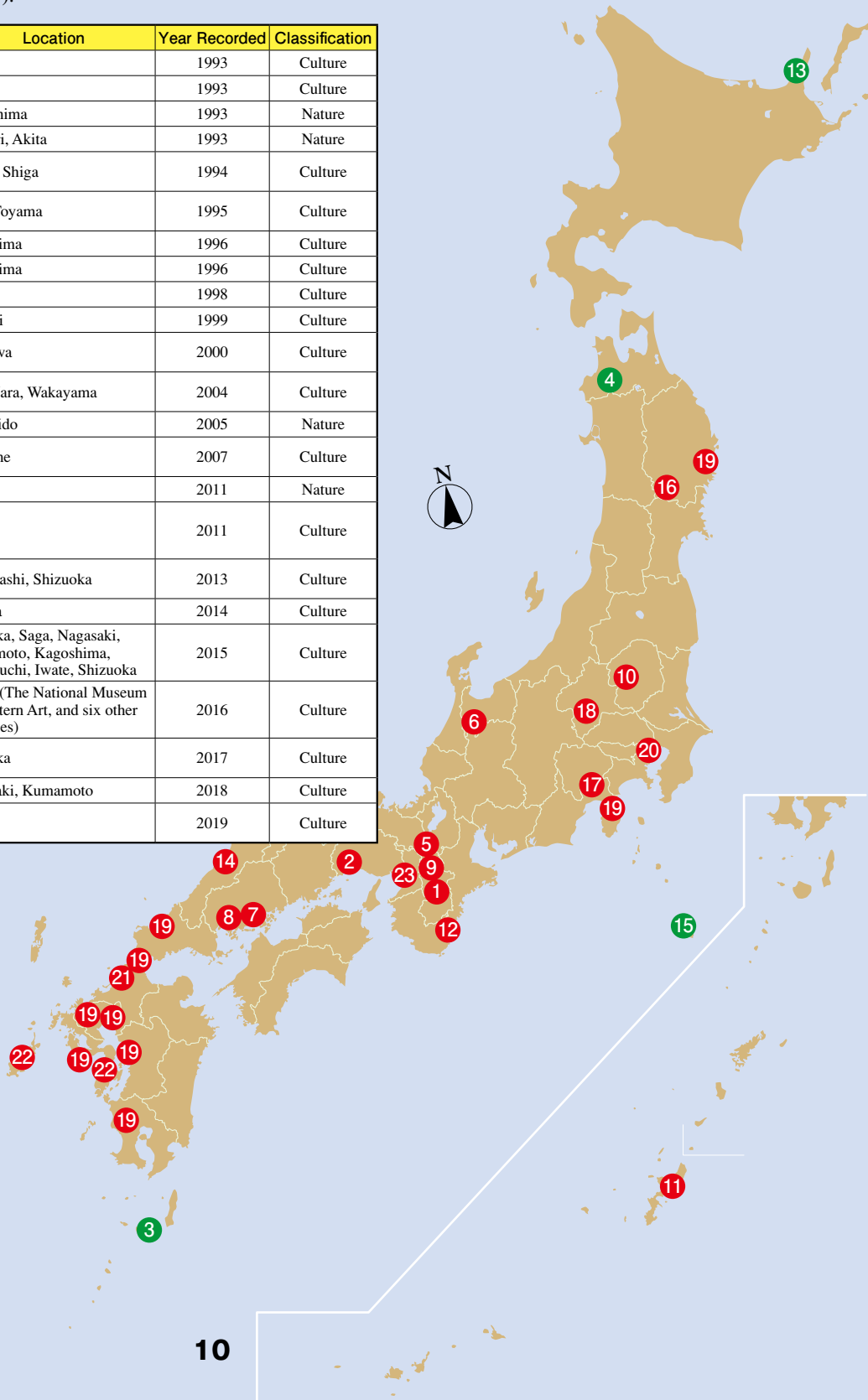
World Heritage

Protection of the precious heritage of humanity for future generations

In 1972 UNESCO adopted the World Heritage Convention at its General Conference in Paris. The purpose of the convention is to encourage international cooperation and support with a view to protect all humanity cultural and natural heritages, which have outstanding universal value, from damage, destruction and other threats.

Today, 1121 properties are inscribed on the World Heritage List in total, including 19 cultural and 4 natural properties of Japan (as of August 2019).

	Name Recorded	Location	Year Recorded	Classification
1	Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area	Nara	1993	Culture
2	Himeji-jo	Hyogo	1993	Culture
3	Yakushima	Kagoshima	1993	Nature
4	Shirakami-Sanchi	Aomori, Akita	1993	Nature
5	Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto (Kyoto, Uji and Otsu cities)	Kyoto, Shiga	1994	Culture
6	Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama	Gifu, Toyama	1995	Culture
7	Hiroshima Peace Memorial (Genbaku Dome)	Hiroshima	1996	Culture
8	Itsukushima Shinto Shrine	Hiroshima	1996	Culture
9	Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara	Nara	1998	Culture
10	Shrines and Temples of Nikko	Tochigi	1999	Culture
11	Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu	Okinawa	2000	Culture
12	Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range	Mie, Nara, Wakayama	2004	Culture
13	Shiretoko	Hokkaido	2005	Nature
14	The Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape	Shimane	2007	Culture
15	Ogasawara Islands	Tokyo	2011	Nature
16	Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land	Iwate	2011	Culture
17	Fujisan, Sacred place and Source of Artistic Inspiration	Yamanashi, Shizuoka	2013	Culture
18	Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites	Gunma	2014	Culture
19	Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining	Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima, Yamaguchi, Iwate, Shizuoka	2015	Culture
20	The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement	Tokyo (The National Museum of Western Art, and six other countries)	2016	Culture
21	The Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region	Fukuoka	2017	Culture
22	Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region	Nagasaki, Kumamoto	2018	Culture
23	Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan	Osaka	2019	Culture



World Cultural Heritage



Fujisan, Sacred place and Source of Artistic Inspiration
Photo: Courtesy of Fuji City



Buddhist Monuments in the Horyu-ji Area
Photo: Courtesy of Horyuji Temple



Historic Monuments of Ancient Nara
Photo: Courtesy of Nara Prefectural Board of Education



Tomioka Silk Mill and Related Sites
Photo: Courtesy of Gunma Prefecture



Himeji-jo
Photo: Courtesy of Himeji City



Shrines and Temples of Nikko
Photo: Courtesy of Nikko Toshogu Shrine



Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining
Photo: Courtesy of The World Heritage Council for the sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution



Historic Monuments of Ancient Kyoto
(Kyoto, Uji and Otsu cities)
Photo: Courtesy of Motorikyu-Nijojo Office, Kyoto City Hall



Gusuku Sites and Related Properties of the Kingdom of Ryukyu
Photo: Courtesy of Okinawa Prefectural Board of Education



The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement
Photo: Courtesy of The National Museum of Western Art



Historic Villages of Shirakawa-go and Gokayama
Photo: Courtesy of Shirakawa Village Board of Education



Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range
Photo: Courtesy of Wakayama Prefectural Board of Education



The Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region
Photo: Courtesy of The World Heritage Promotion Committee of the Sacred Island of Okinoshima and associated sites in the Munakata Region



Hiroshima Peace Memorial
(Genbaku Dome)



The Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape
Photo: Courtesy of Shimane Prefectural Board of Education



Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region
Photo by Higurashi Yuichi; Photo: Courtesy of Nagasaki Prefecture



Itsukushima Shinto Shrine
Photo: Courtesy of Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education



Hiraizumi - Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land
Photo: Courtesy of Kawashima Printing Co. Ltd.



Mozu-Furuichi Kofun Group: Mounded Tombs of Ancient Japan
Photo: Courtesy of Sakai City

Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage was adopted at the UNESCO General Conference in October 2003, and came into force in April 2006. Japan became the third state party to the Convention in June 2004. There are 178 States Parties to the Convention as of August 2019.

This Convention stipulates that the States Parties take measures for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in their territories, for example by identifying elements of intangible cultural heritage within their territory and making inventories of them. It also stipulates international safeguarding measures, including the establishment of the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (Representative List) and the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding (Urgent Safeguarding List) in order to increase awareness of intangible cultural heritage and promote intercultural dialogue.

Today 429 elements are inscribed on the Representative List in total, including 21 elements in Japan (as of August 2019).

In November 2018, at the thirteenth session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage held in Port Louis, Mauritius, “Raiho-shin, ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes”, nominated by Japan, was inscribed on the Representative List. This was an extended nomination, combining nine Raiho-shin events that are nationally designated as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties with “Koshikijima no Toshidon,” which was inscribed in 2009.

More than a decade since its entry into force, discussions are underway on reviewing the implementation of the Convention. Japan, which has been making efforts domestically to safeguard intangible cultural heritage from early on, is contributing to such discussions.

Japan's Intangible Cultural Heritages
Inscribed on the Representative List (21 items)

Name	Year Inscribed
Nohgaku theatre	2008
Ningyo Johruri Bunraku puppet theatre	2008
Kabuki theatre	2008
Gagaku	2009
Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu	2009
Oku-noto no Aenokoto (Ishikawa Pref.)	2009
Hayachine Kagura (Iwate Pref.)	2009
Akiu no Taue Odori (Miyagi Pref.)	2009
Chakkirako (Kanagawa Pref.)	2009
Dainichido Bugaku (Akita Pref.)	2009
Daimokutate (Nara Pref.)	2009
Traditional Ainu dance (Hokkaido Pref.)	2009
Kumiodori	2010
Yuki-Tsumugi	2010
Mibu no Hana Taue (Hiroshima Pref.)	2011
Sada Shin Noh (Shimane Pref.)	2011
Nachi no Dengaku (Wakayama Pref.)	2012
Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese	2013
Washi: craftsmanship of traditional Japanese hand-made paper	2014
Yama, Hoko, Yatai, Float Festivals in Japan	2016
Raiho-shin, ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes	2018

Raiho-shin, ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes

*Group of ten Raiho-shin events which are nationally designated Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties



Noto no Amamehagi
(Wajima City and Noto Town, Ishikawa Pref.)



Miyakojima no Paantou
(Miyakojima City, Okinawa Pref.)



Yuza no Koshogatsu Gyoji
(Yuza Town, Yamagata Pref.)



Yonekawa no Mizukaburi
(Tome City, Miyagi Pref.)



Mishima no Kasedori
(Saga City, Saga Pref.)



Yoshihama no Suneka
(Ofunato City, Iwate Pref.)



Satsuma-ioujima no Mendon
(Mishima Village, Kagoshima Pref.)



Akusekijima no Boze
(Toshima Village, Kagoshima Pref.)

Promoting International Exchange and Cooperation

International Cooperation

With a view to protecting cultural heritage that is the common heritage of humanity, Japan works together with other countries and international organizations, and collaborates on (i) research exchanges, (ii) conservation and restoration projects, and (iii) training of experts.

Law on the Promotion of International Cooperation for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Abroad

“The Law on the Promotion of International Cooperation for the Protection of Cultural Heritage Abroad” was enacted in June 2006. This law stipulates, for Japan’s international cooperation on cultural heritage, (i) the duties of the government and research institutions, (ii) the reinforcement of ties among related bodies, and (iii) the formulation of basic guidelines. The law establishes in Japan a system for cooperation and facilitates effective promotion of international cooperation on cultural heritage through reinforced ties among related organizations.

International Cooperation for Cultural Heritage

In order to provide emergency support for cultural heritage damaged by natural disasters and war, Japan provides support for conservation and restoration programs by partnering with cultural heritage preservation organizations overseas. In addition, Japan promotes international cooperation through capacity building of young experts and those specializing in the protection of cultural heritage by implementing training focusing on those in charge of protecting cultural heritage in the Asia Pacific region. Furthermore, in 2006 the “Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage” was launched with domestic government bodies, research groups, NGOs, and other groups. The consortium carries out research, collects and provides information, and constructs a network between each domestic research group.



Institutional Exchange Project Related to Transfer of Archeology Techniques in Myanmar

(Photo: Courtesy of Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)



Workshop in Fiji

(Photo: Courtesy of Cultural Heritage Protection Cooperation Office Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU))

International Communication

Ancient Japanese Art Overseas Exhibition

International communication through cultural properties contributes to advances in mutual understanding and communication between each of our cultures. The Agency for Cultural Affairs introduces the excellent cultural properties of Japan. In order to deepen the understanding of Japanese history and culture, and to promote international cultural communication, the Ancient Japanese Art Overseas Exhibition has been held continually since 1951, and features important cultural properties and national treasures.

In addition, since 1996, in addition to an exhibit in Europe, the Asian Friendship Ancient Japanese Art Exhibition is also held in Asia to mark fifty years since the end of World War II.

In fiscal year 2018, the exhibition “KIZUNA: Japan/Wales/Design” was held at the National Museum Wales in the United Kingdom, “Masterpieces of Edo Paintings and Prints” at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Russia, “ROSETSU—Ferocious Brush” at Museum Rietberg in Switzerland, and “Jomon—Birth of art in prehistoric Japan” at the House of Culture of Japan in Paris in France.



Fiscal year 2018 Ancient Japanese Art Overseas Exhibition “Masterpieces of Edo Paintings and Prints”

(Venue: Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts)

Stories of the land born from the voices of history.

Certified Japan Heritage in 2015 (18 heritages)

1 Educational Heritage from Early-Modern Japan (1568-1868): The Origins of Academics and Decorum	10 Dekansho-Bushi: Hometown Memories Passed Down in Folk Songs
2 Kaka Denka: The Silk Story of Gunma	11 The Dawn of Japan: Women in the Asuka Period
3 Takaoka: Flourishing Folk Culture Under the Rule of the Maeda Family of Kaga	12 A Site for Purifying the Six Roots of Perception and Healing the Six Senses: Japan's Most Dangerous National Treasure and Temple and a World-Famous Radon Hot Spring
4 The Noto Peninsula: Where the Light Dances	13 Tsuwano Then and Now: Exploring the Town of Tsuwano Through the One Hundred Landscapes of Tsuwano
5 Wakasa Province: A Cultural Heritage Linking the Sea to the Ancient Capital	14 A Miniature Garden City from the Middle Ages Built Around the Onomichi Channel
6 Gifu: An Ancient Castle Town with the Spirit of Nobunaga's Hospitality	15 Henro: The Pilgrimage Route and 88 Temples of Shikoku
7 Saiku: The Palace of Saio -the Imperial Princess Prays	16 The Western Capital of Ancient Japan: Exchange Hub with East Asia
8 Lake Biwa and Its Surroundings: A Water Heritage Site of Life and Prayer	17 The Frontier Islands of Iki and Tsushima, Goto: The Ancient Bridge to the Continent
9 A Walk through the 800 Years History of Japanese Tea	18 The Culture of the Sagara Family: 700 Years of a Conservative Yet Innovative Spirit in one of Japan's Richest Remote Regions



4 Abare Festival (Noto Town)



14 Area of the Former Fukui Residence, Onomichi City (Memorial Hall of Literature)

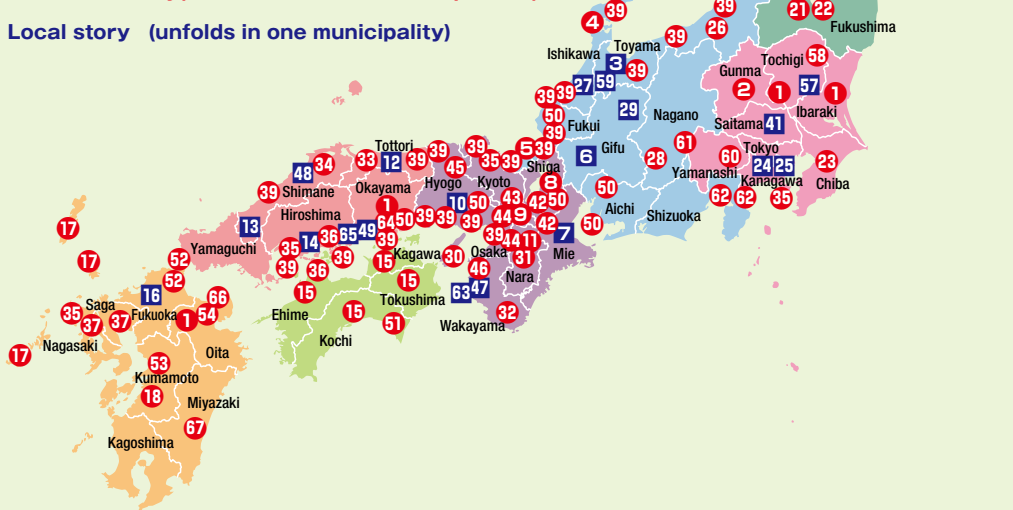


21 Sazaedo Hall



36 The site of Noshima Fort

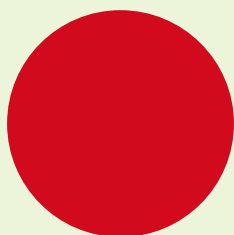
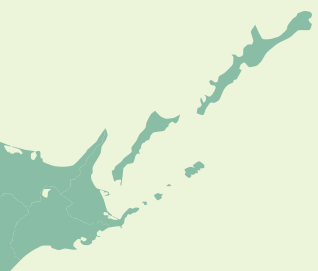
● Collective story (unfolds in several municipalities)
 ■ Local story (unfolds in one municipality)



Certified Japan Heritage in 2016 (19 heritages)

19 The "DATE Culture" Fostered by Masamune	29 Hida Takayama's Wood Artisans: 1300 Year-Old Lineage of Skill and Spirit
20 A Journey to Rebirth Amid the Sacred Nature of Dewa Sanzan	30 Awaji Island: Creation of Japan's First Island and the People of the Sea
21 Visiting 33 Kannon in Aizu: Witnessing Old Aizu Culture Through Pilgrimage	31 Yoshino, Birthplace of Japanese Afforestation: the Mutual Relationship Between People and Forest
22 The Canal That Ensured the Future of Asaka: Okubo Toshimichi's Last Dream and the Footprints of a Pioneer	32 Living with whales
23 An Edo Travelogue of Cities in Northern Chiba (Hokuso): Four Cities That Supported the Mega-City of Edo	33 Daisen Gyuba Ichi: Japan's Largest Livestock Market Born of Jizo Bodhisattva Worship
24 Isehara City and the Mt. Oyama Pilgrimage: Destination for the Faith and Leisure of Edo's Commoners	34 Izumo Tatara Chronicle: A Thousand Years of Iron
25 Kamakura: A Historical and Cultural Mosaic	35 The Four Dynamic Coastal Cities of Yokosuka, Kure, Sasebo, and Maizuru: Centers of Japanese Modernization
26 Kaengata Doki Jomon Pottery and the Snow Country Culture of the Shinano River Basin	36 Murakami Kaizoku: Japan's Largest "Pirate" group and their territory in the Geiyo Archipelago
27 Komatsu City and Its Culture of Stones: the Narrative of Gems	37 The Ceramics of Hizen: Birthplace of Japanese Porcelain Ware
28 The Old Trade Route of Kisoji: Preserver of the Mountain and Survivor of Time	

Historical properties preserved, then revitalized! The beginning of Japan Heritage.



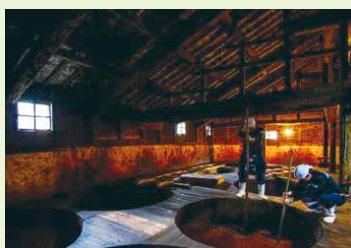
JAPAN HERITAGE

日本遺産

Japan Heritage

“Japan Heritage” refers to places or objects certified by the Agency for Cultural Affairs that tell a traditional story of the country’s culture through regional historical charms or special properties.

The region becomes the main actor in maintaining and utilizing in a comprehensive manner the tangible and intangible cultural properties overflowing with charms that are vital to telling the story and in promoting the stories strategically both domestically and abroad. By doing so, we aim to revitalize the regions where these sites and objects are located. There are currently 67 items certified as “Japan Heritage” stories (as of January 2019).



47 Soy sauce making



48 Sunset at Fumishima Island

Certified Japan Heritage in 2017 (17 heritages)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 38 Even Edo is not as busy as Esashi in May: The town made prosperous by herring | 47 Kishu Yuasa’s Soy Brewery: Japan’s First Soy Sauce |
| 39 The Kitamae-Bune Sea Routes: Ports and Residences Built on the Dreams of Brave Seafarers | 48 The Sunset in the Sacred land of Izumo: Sunset Created by the Gods |
| 40 Samurai Silk: Tsuruoka and Scenes of Early Modern Japan | 49 Kurashiki and the Story of Fiber: East Meets West through the Planting of Cotton |
| 41 Gyoda, town of Tabigura that continues to support Japanese kimono culture from the feet | 50 Six Ancient Kilns: Japanese Ceramics Born and Raised in Japan |
| 42 The Villages of Secret Arts: The Real Ninja of Iga and Koga | 51 From Forestry Railway to The Yuzu Road: The Scenery and Food Culture of Tosa’s Chugei Region |
| 43 Tango Chirimen Textile Road: A 300-Year History of Weaving Silk Crepe Textiles | 52 Kanmon “Nostalgic” Straits: Memories of Japan’s modernization frozen in time |
| 44 Takenouchi Kaido /Yokooji: Japan’s Oldest National Highway with a History of 1400 Years | 53 Two Millennia of Rice Cultivation: The Kikuchigawa River Basin |
| 45 The Old Silver Mine Carriage Road and Road of Ore: Bantan’s Industrial Heritage Route, Memories of Resource Rich Japan | 54 Yabakei Scenery: Traveling in the Sansui Scroll Painting of Nature |
| 46 Wakanoura Bay: A Treasure House of Scenic Beauty | |

Certified Japan Heritage in 2018 (13 heritages)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 55 Kamikawa Ainu in Coexistence with Kamuy: Traditional World of the Gods at the Foot of the Daisetsuzan Mountain Range | 52 In Travellers’ Footsteps on Ancient Cobblestone Roads: A Distant Edo Journey Following the Hakone Hachiri Route |
| 56 Safflower Culture Supported by Yamadera | 53 Eternal Relief: Heritage of Disaster Prevention Through the Memories of Tsunami and Recovery in Hirogawa |
| 57 Utsunomiya, Home of Oya Stone - Discover an Underground Adventure- | 54 Okayama, the Birthplace of the Legend of Momotaro: Ancient Kibi Heritage Conveying Tales of Demon Slaying |
| 58 The Future Envisioned by the Meiji Aristocrats: Pioneering Nasunogahara | 55 Japan’s Leading Port Town of Early-Modern Times: Tomonoura, with its Sepia Tones Enveloped in the Evening Calm of the Seto Inland Sea |
| 59 Inami Woodcarving Museum Born from the Chisels of Master Carpenters | 56 Kunisaki: Where Oni and Buddhas Coexist as One |
| 60 A Landscape Interwoven with Vineyards: Kyoto District, Yamanashi Prefecture | 57 Monuments of Ancient People - Scenic Ancient Burial Mounds in the Southern Land of Miyazaki |
| 61 Fallen Stars from the Jomon era: Journey Back Thousands of Years to the Obsidian Mines of the Jomon people | |



57 Underground Adventure



54 Okayama, the Birthplace of the legend of Momotaro



Protection of Cultural Properties Logo

In order to spread the basic regional protection activities of cultural properties to the nation, the “Cultural Property Protection Symbol” was selected through public invitation for designs made on the proclamation day of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties on May 30, 1966. It will be approaching its 50th year in use in 2016.

Published: September 2019

Edited and published by: Agency for Cultural Affairs, JAPAN

3-2-2 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo 100-8959

TEL +81- (0) 3-5253-4111 (main line)

URL <http://www.bunka.go.jp/english/index.html>

No article or any part thereof may be reproduced without permission in writing of the Agency for Cultural Affairs.

©Agency for Cultural Affairs 2019.9