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.

Number of Designated Cultural Properties

(as of August 1, 2019)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paintings</td>
<td>National Treasures 162 items, Important Cultural Properties 2,031 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sculptures</td>
<td>National Treasures 138 items, Important Cultural Properties 2,715 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crafts</td>
<td>National Treasures 253 items, Important Cultural Properties 2,469 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calligraphies, Books</td>
<td>National Treasures 228 items, Important Cultural Properties 1,916 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
<td>National Treasures 62 items, Important Cultural Properties 774 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archeological artifacts</td>
<td>National Treasures 47 items, Important Cultural Properties 647 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical materials</td>
<td>National Treasures 3 items, Important Cultural Properties 220 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal</strong></td>
<td>National Treasures 893 items, Important Cultural Properties 10,772 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structures</td>
<td>National Treasures (289 buildings) 226 items, Important Cultural Properties (5,033 buildings) 2,497 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>National Treasures 1,119 items, Important Cultural Properties 13,269 items</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The figures for Important Cultural Properties include National Treasures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Important Intangible Cultural Properties</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
<td>Individual Recognition No. of designations 36 items, No. of holders 51 persons (51)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craft Techniques</td>
<td>Individual Recognition No. of designations 39 items, No. of holders 59 persons (58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>Individual Recognition No. of designations 75 items, No. of holders 110 persons (109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Important Cultural Landscapes 221 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings 64 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection</td>
<td>Selected Conservation Techniques 118 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holders</td>
<td>Preservation Groups 46 items 55 holders, 37 items 39 groups (34 groups)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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).
Protection of Cultural Properties Logo
This logo invokes the image of an arch, 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, 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.

Cultural Properties

Schematic Diagram of Cultural Properties

Tangible Cultural Properties
- Structures
  - Fine arts and crafts
    - Paintings, Sculptures, Crafts, Calligraphies, Books, Documents, Archeological artifacts, Historical materials
- Intangible Cultural Properties
  - Drama, Music, Craft techniques, etc
- Folk Cultural Properties
  - Tangible Folk Cultural Properties
    - Clothes, tools and implements, houses, and other objects used in connection with intangible folk cultural property
  - Intangible Folk Cultural Properties
    - Manners and customs, folk performing arts, and folk techniques that are related to food, clothing, and housing, to occupations, religious faith, and annual events, etc

Intangible Cultural Properties
- Important Intangible Cultural Properties
- Intangible Cultural Properties that need measures such as documentation
- Items especially in need of preservation and utilization

Folk Cultural Properties
- Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties
- Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties
- Registered Tangible Folk Cultural Properties
- Intangible Folk Cultural Properties that need measures such as documentation
- Items especially in need of preservation and utilization

Monuments
- Historical sites
  - Shell mounds, Ancient tombs, Sites of palaces, Sites of forts or castles, Monumental dwelling houses
- Places of Scenic Beauty
  - Gardens, Bridges, Gorges, Seashores, Mountains
- Animals, Plants, Geological and mineral formations

Historic Sites
- Important Historic Sites
- Special Historic Sites
- Places of Scenic Beauty
- Special Places of Scenic Beauty
- Natural Monuments
- Special Natural Monuments
- Registered Monuments

Cultural Landscapes
- Important Cultural Landscapes
- Landscapes that have evolved in association with the modes of life or livelihoods of the people and the geo-cultural features of the region.
  - Terraced rice fields, Mountain villages, Waterways

Groups of Traditional Buildings
- Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings
- Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings
- Post towns, Castle towns, Farming or Fishing villages

Buried Cultural Properties
- Cultural Properties buried in the ground

Conservation Techniques for Cultural Properties
- Techniques necessary for the restoration and preservation of Cultural Properties

Important items
- Designation
- Registration
- Selection

Items of especially high value
- Designation
- Selection

Items especially in need of preservation and utilization
- Designation
- Selection

Especially important
- Selection
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**
  - Important Cultural Properties established

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

- **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**
- **Expansion of a system for Buried Cultural Properties**
- **Expansion of a system for 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**
- **Expansion of a system for 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**

- **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**
  - Folk materials renamed Folk Cultural Properties; establishment of a system for designation of Important Tangible Folk Cultural Properties and Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties
### 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Investigation</td>
<td>Request for investigation of cultural properties by the owner or the local government head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigative Committee of Specialists</td>
<td>Request for investigation of cultural properties by the owner or the local government head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology</td>
<td>Consultation of cultural properties with the owner or the local government head.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation / Selection / Registration</td>
<td>Announcement in the Official Gazette Notification to owner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Designation / Registration Certificate issued</td>
<td>Certificate issued to the owner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 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 Mei-do hall, Senju 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 Rangoon 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.)

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

### 1996 Amendments

- Establishment of a system of Registered Cultural Properties

### 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
- Expansion of a system of Folk Cultural Properties
- Expansion of system of a Registered Cultural Properties

### 2018 Amendments

- Establishment of a planning system for cultural property protection and utilization
- Development of structure for participation of diverse inheritors
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 1934, the building was recognized for its value in showing 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 2017, 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.

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.

Kishimi Stone Bath

Kishimi Stone Bath, located in Kishimi, Toyuki, 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 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.

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.

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.
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.”

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

**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.

**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.
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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.
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).

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

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

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

Hiraizumi – Temples, Gardens and Archaeological Sites Representing the Buddhist Pure Land
Photo: Courtesy of Shimane Prefectural Board of Education

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Iwami Ginzan Silver Mine and its Cultural Landscape
Photo: Courtesy of Shimane 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
Intangible Cultural Heritage


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.

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

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

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

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
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.

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.
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
2. Kakaa Denka: The Silk Story of Gunma
3. Takaoka: Flourishing Folk Culture Under the Rule of the Maeda Family of Kaga
4. The Noto Peninsula: Where the Light Dances
5. Wakasa Province: A Cultural Heritage Linking the Sea to the Ancient Capital
6. Gifu: An Ancient Castle Town with the Spirit of Nobunaga’s Hospitality
7. Saiku: The Palace of Saio -the Imperial Princess Prays
8. Lake Biwa and Its Surroundings: A Water Heritage Site of Life and Prayer
9. A Walk through the 800 Years History of Japanese Tea
10. Dekansho-Bushi: Hometown Memories Passed Down in Folk Songs
11. The Dawn of Japan: Women in the Asuka Period
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
13. Tsuwano Then and Now: Exploring the Town of Tsuwano Through the One Hundred Landscapes of Tsuwano
14. A Miniature Garden City from the Middle Ages Built Around the Onomichi Channel
15. The Frontier Islands of Iki and Tsushima, Goto: The Ancient Henro: The Pilgrimage Route and 88 Temples of Shikoku
16. An Edo Travelogue of Cities in Northern Chiba (Hokuso): Four Cities That Supported the Mega-City of Edo
17. Komatsu City and Its Culture of Stones: the Narrative of Gems
18. The Old Trade Route of Kiso: Preserver of the Mountain and Survivor of Time
19. Sazaedo Hall

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

Certified Japan Heritage in 2016 (19 heritages)

1. The “DATE Culture” Fostered by Masamune
2. Hida Takayama’s Wood Artisans: 1300 Year-Old Lineage of Skill and Spirit
3. A Journey to Rebirth Amid the Sacred Nature of Dewa Sanzan
4. Visiting 33 Kannon in Aizu: Witnessing Old Aizu Culture Through Pilgrimage
5. The Canal That Ensured the Future of Asaka: Okubo Toshimichi’s Last Dream and the Footprints of a Pioneer
6. An Edo Travologue of Cities in Northern Chiba (Hokuso): Four Cities That Supported the Mega-City of Edo’s Commoners
7. Ishihara City and the Mt. Oyama Pilgrimage: Destination for the Faith and Leisure of Edo’s Commoners
8. Kamakura: A Historical and Cultural Mosaic
10. Komatsu City and Its Culture of Stones: the Narrative of Gems
11. The site of Noshima Fort
12. The “DATE Culture” Fostered by Masamune
13. Hida Takayama’s Wood Artisans: 1300 Year-Old Lineage of Skill and Spirit
14. A Journey to Rebirth Amid the Sacred Nature of Dewa Sanzan
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19. Kamakura: A Historical and Cultural Mosaic
Historical properties preserved, then revitalized! The beginning of Japan Heritage.

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).

### Certified Japan Heritage in 2017 (17 heritages)

- Even Edo is not as busy as Esashi in May: The town made prosperous by herring
- The Kitamae-Bune Sea Routes: Ports and Residences Built on the Dreams of Brave Seafarers
- Kishu Yuasa’s Soy Brewery: Japan’s First Soy Sauce
- Kurashiki and the Story of Fiber: East Meets West through the Planting of Cotton
- Tango Chirimen Textile Road: A 300-Year History of Weaving Silk Crepe Textiles
- The Old Silver Mine Carriage Road and Road of Ore: Bantan’s Highway with a History of 1400 Years
- The Sunset in the Sacred land of Izumo: Sunset Created by the Gods
- Six Ancient Kilns: Japanese Ceramics Born and Raised in Japan
- Takenouchi Kaido/Yokooji: Japan’s Oldest National Highway with a History of 1400 Years
- The Kitamae-Bune Sea Routes: Ports and Residences Built on the Dreams of Brave Seafarers
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### Certified Japan Heritage in 2018 (13 heritages)

- Kamikawa Ainu in Coexistence with Kamuy: Traditional World of the Gods at the Foot of the Daisetsuzan Mountain Range
- Safflower Culture Supported by Yamadera
- Utsunomiya, Home of Oya Stone - Discover an Underground Adventure-
- The Future Envisioned by the Meiji Aristocrats: Pioneering Nasunogahara
- Inami Woodcarving Museum Born from the Chisels of Master Carpenters
- A Landscape Interwoven with Vineyards: Kyoto District, Yamanshi Prefecture
- Fallen Starts from the Jomon era: Journey Back Thousands of Years to the Obsidian Mines of the Jomon people
- Okayama, the Birthplace of the Legend of Momotaro: Ancient Kibi Heritage Conveying Tales of Demon Slaying
- Monuments of Ancient People - Scenic Ancient Burial Mounds in the Southern Land of Miyazaki
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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.