

Message

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The National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH) comprises the following institutions: four National Museums, two National Research Institutes for Cultural Properties, and the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI), which was established in 2011. This brochure presents an overview of the activities being undertaken by these seven institutions.

These institutions are located in different parts of Japan; each has its own unique characteristics, and the activities undertaken by each institution reflect the region in which it is situated. The Tokyo National Museum is a broadly focused museum located in the Tokyo metropolitan area. It takes a leading role in promoting Japanese and Asian culture worldwide. The Kyoto National Museum showcases the unique culture that developed in Kyoto over the course of its nearly 1,200 years as an imperial capital, from the eighth century to the nineteenth century. The Nara National Museum plays an indispensable role in the preservation and interpretation of Buddhist culture, while the Kyushu National Museum embodies a unique perspective that emphasizes Kyushu's status as a region that historically has had extensive cultural exchanges with other parts of Asia. The National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Tokyo, disseminates to the world knowledge that is the fruit of both fundamental research and cutting-edge, high-tech scientific research relating to cultural properties. The Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties is an important center for wide-ranging research on society in ancient Japan. The International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) is an institution engaged in promoting research aimed at safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the region through international collaboration.

While each of these institutions has its own important role to play, they also have a shared goal: – to contribute to a better understanding of Japanese traditional culture by preserving and researching cultural properties and by enabling as many people as possible to view these cultural assets under the best possible conditions and in the best possible environments. The National Institutes for Cultural Heritage thus has the important task of supporting the foundations of the administration of cultural property preservation in Japan.

The 25th General Conference of the International Conference of Museums (ICOM) will be held in Kyoto in 2019, and in 2020 the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will be held in Tokyo.

The General Conference of the International Conference of Museums (ICOM) is a major international cultural event which is held once every three years, with 3,000 museum professionals attending from around the world. At a meeting of the ICOM Advisory Committee held in June this year, it was decided that the 25th ICOM General Conference would be held in Kyoto. The holding of the ICOM General Conference in Kyoto represents a marvelous opportunity for promoting greater awareness of Japan's rich, multi-faceted culture and for furthering the effective, proactive utilization of cultural properties. We will be doing our utmost to ensure that this event is a resounding success, through close collaboration with the other participating organizations.

Along with the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games, cultural programs will be held throughout Japan. The aim of these cultural program is to demonstrate the power of not just sports, but also culture, to appeal to people throughout the world. 2020 can provide an opportunity to foster, in every corner of Japan, the use of culture as a bridge for communication with people in other parts of the world. The National Institutes for Cultural Heritage will be implementing a wide range of programs to help realize the goal of "putting culture and the arts at the heart of national development." While recognizing the reality of government finances, it is our responsibility to make the public aware of the importance of preserving cultural heritage and to enable more people to view and learn about it, since cultural heritage is intimately connected with our everyday life in contemporary Japanese culture.

Looking ahead, we at the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage will continue to carry out our work in full awareness of the important role that has been entrusted to us. We look forward to your continuous support in the future.