



Projects of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage

The Undertakings of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage include:

1 Preservation and Transmission of Tangible Cultural Properties, and Utilization of Cultural Properties to Disseminate Japan's History and Traditional Culture Nationally and Internationally

(1) Collection and Preservation of Tangible Cultural Properties, and Transmission of Tangible Cultural Properties to Future Generations

As core institutions involved in the preservation and transmission of history and traditional culture, each museum collects objects according to its own individual collection policy to ensure that its collection is systematically and historically balanced.

We also work closely with the Agency for Cultural Affairs to encourage donations and long-term loans from private owners, utilizing the System of Enrolled Art Objects, for example, or by improving the inheritance tax system to make donations of objects easier.

Japan's cultural properties are the precious assets of the Japanese people. In order to pass on this heritage to future generations, we implement thorough management of items in the collections, and make efforts to improve the environments for these items while working systematically to conserve them, with those requiring urgent treatment given priority. This work is carried out through the coordinated efforts of NICH's conservators and professionals of conservation science as well as specialists (both internal and external) in the fields of conservation science and restoration technology, using both traditional techniques and modern scientific methods. Conservation studios and other facilities also recognize the need to protect cultural properties from natural disasters, and are working with the government to make further preparations.

■ Acquisition

We continually strive to acquire cultural properties through purchases and donations with the aim of: (1) building collections that are both systematically and historically balanced, and (2) preventing the dispersion of private collections and the export of tangible cultural properties from Japan. Furthermore, the four museums each accept long-term loans from temples, shrines, and private collectors in order to further enhance their distinctive regular exhibitions.

Number of Items in the Museum Collections

(Entries)

Total			Tokyo National Museum			Kyoto National Museum			Nara National Museum			Kyushu National Museum		
Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties
131,433	135	1,006	119,942	89	648	8,150	29	200	1,929	13	114	1,412	4	44

Nara National Research Institute holds 1 National Treasure and 5 Important Cultural Properties. (Figures as of March 31, 2021)

Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties	
National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties
1	5

Number of Items on Long-term Loan to the Museums

(Entries)

Total			Tokyo National Museum			Kyoto National Museum			Nara National Museum			Kyushu National Museum		
Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties
12,495	197	1,201	2,651	54	262	6,547	88	618	1,988	53	309	1,309	2	12

(Figures as of March 31, 2021)

■ Conservation and Restoration

Tangible cultural properties preserved in museum collections need to be conserved approximately once every 100 years. The Institutes carry out two levels of conservation work: minimal treatments that allow for the safe display and storage of the objects: and full-scale treatments, carried out systematically in accordance with the conditions of the objects.

(2) Exhibitions

We disseminate information both nationally and internationally to promote understanding of the history and traditional culture of Japan and other Asian regions. For this purpose, we hold attractive exhibitions and high-quality displays that reflect both visitor needs and the latest academic trends, while also taking into consideration the needs of international cultural exchange.

In addition, we constantly strive to make our museums more visitor-friendly and more in tune with 'new lifestyles' by setting flexible opening hours and creating multilingual and accessible environments, with extensive information for visitors to enhance the overall museum experience. We are also making improvements to museum management in response to visitor feedback.

■ Exhibitions

Each museum holds its own distinctive regular and special exhibitions to provide opportunities for visitors to engage with traditional art and archaeological objects, including National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties. We also collaborate with museums overseas to hold exhibitions that introduce a variety of cultures.

■Number of Visitors (FY 2020)

Total	Tokyo National Museum	Kyoto National Museum	Nara National Museum	Kyushu National Museum
800,183	375,575	170,494	122,452	131,662



Feature Exhibition, The Wild World of Kyuhaku (Kyushu National Museum) (June 2-July 12, 2020)



Thematic Exhibition, Japan and the World: 300 years of Global Exchange (Tokyo National Museum) (November 25, 2020-January 11, 2021)

(3) Education and Outreach Activities

To promote understanding of the history and traditional culture of Japan and other Asian regions, we provide a variety of educational programs, such as lectures and workshops, in cooperation with schools and other educational institutions, based on a consideration of 'new lifestyles.'

Furthermore, we work with universities to provide professional training and we support volunteer activities with the aim of further improving our educational programs. We also implement training programs for museum professionals, conservators, and others.

Finally, we actively utilize the internet to disseminate information about cultural properties, collect and display materials, and publicize details about exhibitions and educational activities to a domestic and international audience.



Find your favorite Kannon! (Kyoto National Museum) (July 23-September 13, 2020)



Collaboration with Nara City: Learning about World Heritage (Nara National Museum)

(4) Research on the Collection, Preservation, and Exhibition of Tangible Cultural Properties (namely fine and applied arts), and Educational Activities

We conduct surveys and research relating to the collection, preservation, and exhibition of tangible cultural properties, as well as educational activities, on a systematic basis; organize international symposia to which leading researchers are invited; arrange for NICH staff to work at overseas research institutes and attend international conferences; and conduct research while accumulating the latest information.

The results obtained from our surveys and research are publicized using a variety of methods, including publications and the internet, thereby contributing to the transmission of cultural properties to the next generation and to the promotion of Japanese culture.



Preparation of "Welcome to the Underwater Archeological Sites Handbook!", a pamphlet introducing our research on improving and expanding the system for safeguarding underwater archeological sites (a project carried out by Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties and Kyushu National Museum on behalf of the Agency for Cultural Affairs).

(5) Contribution to Museum-related Activities in Japan and Abroad

We actively loan our collections out for exhibitions at other museums within Japan and overseas based on a comprehensive consideration of conservation conditions and environments.

We also strive to exchange information with and provide specialist/technical guidance and advice to other museums and galleries within Japan and overseas.

International Symposium: "Creating a Global Museum Community through the Arts of Japan: Challenges in and after the Era of COVID-19" (2020 Curatorial Exchange Program for Japanese Art Specialists Abroad Planning Committee) (January 30, 2021)



(6) New Initiatives Concerning the Transmission of Cultural Heritage Through the Promotion of Cultural Properties

In July 2018, The National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties (CPCP) was formally established in the headquarters of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage to serve as the national center for the display and utilization of Japan's cultural properties. While carefully maintaining the right balance between conservation and use of cultural properties, the CPCP is committed to providing opportunities for people at home and abroad to learn about Japan's priceless cultural heritage.

The CPCP's core activities are as follows.

- 1) Promotion of model projects and development of content which enable people to come into contact with cultural properties
The CPCP collaborates with private and public organizations to create reproductions of cultural properties using advanced technologies such as virtual reality, augmented reality and 8K resolution video. These reproductions provide the public with user-friendly formats for interacting with and learning about Japan's cultural properties.
- 2) Promotion of the lending of items in the collections of national museums and provision of relevant advice
The CPCP pursues loan projects aimed at facilitating the display of cultural properties from national museum collections at museums and galleries across Japan. To this end, the CPCP bears the costs of object transportation and advertising, for example, and it also pursues initiatives aimed at conveying the appeal and value of our cultural heritage to a wider audience.
- 3) Promotion of the creation of cultural property digital resources and distribution of information throughout Japan and the world
The CPCP aims to improve the user-friendliness of NICH's digital resources by consolidating those currently maintained separately by each national museum and research institute. These resources are being consolidated into the "e-Museum" website, a website that presents high-resolution images of approximately 1,100 National Treasures and other important cultural properties from the collections of the National Museums, and "ColBase," a website that allows users to search all of the items in the NICH-affiliated institutions' collections.
- 4) Consultation, advice, and support concerning the preservation of cultural properties
The CPCP provides research assistance, consultation services, and general inquiry assistance regarding conservation environments of museums. The CPCP also holds workshops and seminars about storage environments and personnel development to give other museums a reliable resource for conservation-related issues.
- 5) In addition, as part of our fund-raising activities, we also implement initiatives to raise funds from a wide range of sources to support projects relating to the conservation and utilization of cultural properties.



Creation and utilization of a high-definition replica (Family Gallery TNM and "Art Tunes!" Present: Becoming Japanese Art—Round Two!)



National Museum Collection Loan Promotion Project (FY 2020): Koga Historical Museum, Visiting a national treasure, Senseki Takami statue and cultural assets related to Furukawa



A seminar on the survey and management of a conservation environment

2 Implementing Research and Collaborative Projects for the Protection of Cultural Properties and Overseas Cultural Heritage

We undertake the following types of surveys and research to contribute to the formation of the framework of knowledge and techniques required to facilitate the transmission of priceless cultural properties to future generations.

(1) Research Leading to New Ideas

We are engaged in undertaking fundamental and systematic research relating to cultural properties (including collaborative research and research-related exchange with other organizations, both in Japan and overseas) and also surveys and research that contribute to the preservation and effective utilization of cultural properties. The results achieved through these surveys and research have led to an increase in the amount of basic data available, facilitated the accumulation of academic knowledge, and provided the basic information needed to support the designation of cultural properties, while also contributing, at individual and collective levels, to the planning and establishment of cultural property preservation measures by national and local government bodies, as well as the evaluation of cultural properties.



Performance of a scaled-down (due to COVID-19) version of the Yudate Shishimai (Lion Dance) (Miyagino, Hakone Town, Kanagawa Prefecture) (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)



Survey of Matsue Shrine (Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture) (Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

(2) Basic Research for the Improvement of Research and Development Utilizing Science and Technology

We undertake the following types of research and development to support the development of research on the value and preservation of cultural properties:

- ① We contribute to the enhancement of the accuracy and effectiveness of cultural property survey methods through the promotion of R&D work such as the application of science and technology. We also contribute towards the clarification of the background (cultural, historical, and natural environment) against which cultural properties came into being, and the process of change in this background over time.
- ② As a core research center for research relating to cultural property preservation science and restoration techniques, restoration materials, and production techniques, we work to develop new cultural property research techniques that utilize the latest scientific and technological developments. We also promote cutting-edge surveys and research with the aim of fostering joint research and research-related exchange with other institutions both in Japan and overseas.



Spectrophotometric measurement of exposed dyed silk cloths (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

(3) International Collaboration for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

We promote the acquisition and analysis of information from abroad regarding cultural heritage, and also promote cooperative programs for its protection. Additionally, we implement human resource development and technology transfer programs for the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage. All of the aforementioned endeavors—which are pursued while utilizing the knowledge, technology, and experience that Japan has accumulated for the protection of cultural heritage—are contributions of international importance. Moreover, through cooperation with researchers and other specialists in the Asia-Pacific region, we conduct research and promote international collaboration for the protection of intangible cultural heritage endangered by natural disasters and other threats. Through such activities for the protection of humanity's shared assets, we contribute to cultural exchange and mutual understanding between countries.



International Workshop on the project "ICH's contribution to SDGs" (Tokyo National Museum, November 2019) (IRC)

(4) Collecting and Collating Information Relating to Cultural Properties, and Publicizing and Utilizing the Results of Surveys and Research

We are working to promote the digitalization of information relating to cultural properties and expand related specialist archives, as well as organizing public lectures and international symposia, and expanding the content included on the websites of the individual facilities that make up the NICH, with the aim of furthering the collection, collation and preservation of information relating to cultural properties, and of ensuring that such outcomes are widely publicized and disseminated. We are also working to expand the displays of survey and research results held at the Nara Palace Site Museum, Exhibition Room of Fujiwara Imperial Site, and Asuka Historical Museum of the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, so as to provide the general public with a more in-depth understanding of related areas.



54rd Public Lecture: "Pathway from Form, Pathway to Form" (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

(5) Provision of Training for, and Collaboration with, Local Government Authorities in Relation to Cultural Properties

We make effective use of results obtained from past surveys and research to contribute to the enhancement of knowledge and techniques through the implementation of training tailored to the needs of local government authorities. We also cultivate the core human resource that will play key roles in the preservation of Japan's cultural properties in the future, through collaborative education projects in conjunction with university graduate schools. After the Great East Japan Earthquake of 2011, we played a central role in activities conducted to rescue cultural properties at the request of the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Making effective use of this experience, we are also undertaking research projects and capacity building aimed at putting in place a nationwide system for coordination and collaboration so as to develop a network for safeguarding and rescuing cultural properties in the event of future large-scale disasters such as major earthquakes.



A workshop from the 'Preservation Science Course: Artifacts Made of Metal I' (Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

(6) Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Initiatives

The Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center was established in the head office of the Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH) on October 1, 2020. The Center is tasked with setting up a framework to protect a wide-range of cultural properties from frequently-occurring disasters in a manner that utilizes the broad network of organizations already active in the field of cultural heritage. To this end, the Center undertakes the following initiatives based on the three core missions of (1) 'Reducing disaster risk' in order to safeguard our cultural heritage, (2) 'Building systems and developing technologies' to save disaster-hit cultural properties as quickly as possible, and (3) 'Providing support for rescue operations' for cultural properties when disasters actually occur.

Initiatives

(1) Building regional disaster prevention frameworks

The Center is building regional cultural property disaster prevention frameworks in close cooperation with other institutions involved in the field of cultural heritage, such as local governments, galleries and museums, university research institutions, and local historical materials networks.

(2) Formulating guidelines for disasters

The Center is engaged in the formulation of guidelines to facilitate the swift commencement of cultural property rescue operations when disasters occur.

(3) Developing technologies related to the rescue, storage and display of cultural properties

The Center is engaged in the development of technologies for the regular storage and display of cultural properties and for the rescue of cultural properties when disasters occur.

(4) Raising awareness and disseminating information

The Center seeks to raise awareness and spread knowledge through the provision of instruction, advice and training, for example, and it also disseminates information about its activities to a wide audience both within Japan and overseas.

(5) Collecting and utilizing information related to cultural heritage disaster prevention

The Center collects information about cultural heritage disaster prevention and it examines ways to utilize this information to improve the functionality of Japan's cultural heritage disaster prevention system.



An on-the-ground survey of disaster damage



Producing a YouTube video entitled "Cultural Property Disaster Prevention 10 Years After the Great East Japan Earthquake" as part of activities aimed at raising awareness and disseminating information

3 New Projects

We are undertaking the following new initiatives, with the aim of properly exercising our policy implementation function as Japan's national center for museums and cultural property research, and of ensuring that we implement policies effectively and efficiently.

(1) Japan Cultural Expo

Taking advantage of the opportunity provided by the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs is joining forces with related local government authorities, cultural institutions, and other groups to organize the Japan Cultural Expo, which will showcase Japanese aesthetics and values both domestically and internationally. As part of the Japan Cultural Expo, art exhibitions, performing arts shows, and cultural and artistic festivals that embody the Japanese ideal of beauty will be held throughout Japan, making this the largest project of its kind ever implemented.

The NICH will also participate in the Japan Cultural Expo and we will organize special exhibitions, thematic exhibitions and events to promote the diversity and broad appeal of Japanese culture, both within Japan and overseas. These activities will also contribute to handing down and further developing Japanese arts and culture, and to further enhancing international understanding of Japan.



Logo for the Japan Cultural Expo