

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			Nara National Research Institute for 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	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties
132,866	135	1,009	120,812	89	649	8,526	29	200	1,947	13	114	1,581	4	46	1	5

Nara National Research Institute holds 1 National Treasure and 5 Important Cultural Properties. (Figures as of March 31, 2023)

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
12,592	197	1,204	2,668	54	260	6,587	89	619	1,937	54	311	1,400	2	14

(Figures as of March 31, 2023)

■ 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 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 2022)

Total	Tokyo National Museum	Kyoto National Museum	Nara National Museum	Kyushu National Museum
2,296,052	1,247,750	245,489	279,613	523,200



Feature Exhibition, *Tanegashima*
(December 13, 2022– February 12, 2023)
(Kyushu National Museum)



150th Anniversary Thematic Exhibition
Communicating and Connecting: The History of Public Relations at TNM
(September 27– November 6, 2022)
(Tokyo National Museum)

(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.



Appreciation guides and worksheets (in multiple languages) (Kyoto National Museum)



The Nara Prefecture and Oita Prefecture Online Exchange and Learning Program for Elementary School Students (Nara National Museum)

(4) Research on the Collection, Preservation, and Exhibition of Tangible Cultural Properties, 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.



Determining the composition of a glass object owned by the museum with a handheld X-ray fluorescence spectrometer.
(Kyushu National Museum)

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

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.

Museum Education in Asia Today: Case Studies from National Museums of Korea, Singapore, and Japan
(hybrid format; February 4, 2023)
(Kyoto National Museum)



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

We endeavor to unlock the hidden charms and values of cultural properties so they can be utilized to provide rich experiences and learning opportunities. We will also strive to faithfully transmit this cultural heritage to future generations while finding new ways to utilize these treasures to promote regional revitalization and tourism.



Museum of the Future: An interactive display of Japanese art that utilizes digital technology and high-resolution reproductions
(National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties)

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.



The 16th Public Lecture: "Intangible Cultural Properties and Visual Documentation"
(Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)



Researching Kōfuku-ji Temple's archives
(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.



An on-site analysis of building coloring materials using portable analysis equipment
(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.



A meeting with collaborators of 'Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding' project (Maldives) (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.



The 56th Public Lecture
(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 resources 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.



Cultural property management training (photographing cultural properties)
(Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

(6) Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Initiatives

Disaster risks vary, from potential mega-earthquakes, to flood-causing torrential downpours that have become almost annual over recent years. We strive to protect and salvage cultural heritage from diverse yet ever-repeating disasters, both by constructing systems for coordination and collaboration in advance, and by providing the necessary support from specialist expertise during and after an emergency. Our projects include formulation of guidelines for salvage activities and disaster risk management, technological development for disaster-resilient display methods and storage environment for museums, and educational efforts to develop local specialists on cultural heritage disaster-risk management.



Salvaging paper materials
(Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center)