

I Outline of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage

The Independent Administrative Institution (IAI), National Institutes for Cultural Heritage was formed in April 2007 through the merging of the IAI National Museums (Tokyo National Museum, Kyoto National Museum, Nara National Museum, and Kyushu National Museum) and the IAI National Research Institutes for Cultural Properties (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties and Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties), all of which share the same mission: the conservation and utilization of cultural properties. The International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region also opened in October 2011, with The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan also established after the management and administration of Sannomaru Shozokan was transferred from The Imperial Household Agency to the NICH in October 2023. As a result, the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage now comprise a total of eight separate institutions. Furthermore, the National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties and the Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center (established within the NICH headquarters) carry out their respective tasks in close cooperation with each institution. Japan's cultural properties are the precious assets of the Japanese people. In order to preserve and utilize these properties more effectively and efficiently under unified management, our eight institutions and the two centers established in NICH's headquarters each play the following roles.

Headquarters	National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties	The Center strives to give everyone the chance to feel closer to Japan's cultural heritage. To this end, it develops new methods and opportunities to enable people to come into contact with cultural properties. It also promotes the lending of items in the NICH's collections and the consolidation of digital resources related to our cultural heritage. The Center also offers support for projects that aim to improve the environment for the display and storage of cultural properties.
	Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center	The Center strives to protect our diverse cultural properties from frequently-occurring disasters. To this end, it is building a cultural heritage disaster prevention framework to ensure that salvage operations are carried out swiftly and effectively through the cooperation of numerous organizations and experts when disasters actually occur.
	Tokyo National Museum	As Japan's foremost museum in the humanities field, Tokyo National Museum collects, preserves, manages, and displays cultural properties from across Japan and other Asian regions, while also conducting research and providing educational programs.
	Kyoto National Museum	The Kyoto National Museum collects, preserves, manages, and exhibits cultural properties, while also conducting research and providing educational programs. The focus is on works from the Heian period to the Edo period, a time when Kyoto was the capital of Japan.
	Nara National Museum	Nara National Museum collects, preserves, manages, and displays cultural properties, while also conducting research and providing educational programs. The focus is on Buddhist art and the cultural properties of Nara.
	Kyushu National Museum	Kyushu National Museum engages in the collection, preservation, exhibition, and research of cultural properties, as well as educational outreach, with a focus on Japan's history of cultural exchange with Asia.
	The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan	The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan collects, preserves, manages, displays, researches and provides educational programs about cultural properties, particularly those passed down through the Imperial Family.
	Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties	Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties conducts research on Japanese cultural properties, utilizing a variety of methods. In addition to publicizing and utilizing the results of this research, as a national center for international cooperation, the institute also facilitates global research into the protection of cultural heritage.
	Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties	In order to preserve and utilize cultural properties, the Institute conducts coordinated and comprehensive surveys across a variety of fields (including archaeology, history, architecture, gardens, and conservation) at various sites, including the Nara Palace and Asuka/Fujiwara sites, the great temples of Nara, and other ancient shrines and temples. At the same time, the Institute cooperates and advises on the conservation and utilization of both domestic and overseas cultural properties.
	International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region	This centre promotes research that contributes to safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the Asia-Pacific region, and also collects and disseminates information relating to international trends in the safeguarding of ICH.

Logo

concept "Linkage"

The logo design combines knotted cords with a shape resembling the DNA double helix. The "knotted cords" represent linkage between people and cultures (i.e. cultural heritage), while the "DNA" represents linkage between past, present and future (i.e. cultural transmission). The logo represents the core mission of the NICH, which is to foster an in-depth understanding of "cultural DNA" and transmit awareness of the importance of cultural heritage to people all over the world.



Brief History

1872: The Museum of the Ministry of Education (modern-day Tokyo National Museum) opens on the occasion of Japan's first public exposition, held at the Taiseiden Hall of Yushima Seido.

1895: The Imperial Museum of Nara (modern-day Nara National Museum) opens.

1897: The Imperial Museum of Kyoto (modern-day Kyoto National Museum) opens.

1930: The Institute of Art Research (modern-day Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties) is established as an auxiliary organization of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts.

1952: The Nara Cultural Properties Research Institute (modern-day Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties) is established as an auxiliary organization of the National Commission for the Protection of Cultural Properties.

1970: The Nara Cultural Properties Research Institute opens the Nara Palace Site Museum.

1975: The Nara Cultural Properties Research Institute opens the Asuka Historical Museum.

2001: The Independent Administrative Institution National Museum is formed through the merger of Tokyo National Museum, Kyoto National Museum and Nara National Museum. The Independent Administrative Institution National Research Institutes for Cultural Properties is also formed through the merger of Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties and Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.

2005: Kyushu National Museum is established as an Independent Administrative Institution National Museum and opens to the public.

2007: The Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH) is formed through the merger of the IAI National Museums and the IAI National Research Institutes for Cultural Properties.

2011: The International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) is established within the NICH.

2018: The National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties is established within the NICH headquarters.

2020: The Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center is established within the NICH headquarters.

2023: The management and administration of Sannomaru Shozokan is transferred from The Imperial Household Agency to the NICH, with The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan then opening to the public.

Organizational Chart (As of April 1, 2025)

