



National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties

The National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties (CPCP) aims to improve information infrastructures and develop new ways and opportunities to utilize cultural properties in a manner that allows people of all ages and regions to feel closer to Japan's cultural heritage.



OMI Yoshimasa
Director General
National Center for the
Promotion of Cultural
Properties

Promoting model projects and developing content that enables people to come into contact with cultural properties

The CPCP works with businesses and various groups to enable more people to enjoy rich experiences with cultural properties. It does so by utilizing advanced technology to develop reproductions of cultural properties and digital content (8K images, etc.). It also develops educational programs to facilitate the appreciation of cultural properties. CPCP reproductions and content are utilized across Japan in hands-on displays at museums and galleries and art appreciation programs at schools, for example.



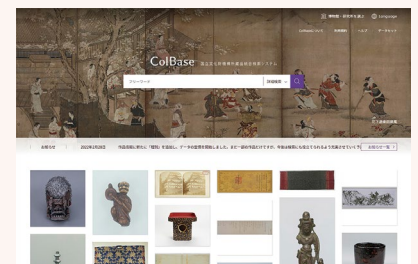
An art appreciation program using reproductions

Promoting the lending of items in the collections of NICH

The National Institutes for Cultural Heritage's collection includes cultural properties with connections to Japan's regions. The CPCP runs the Loan Promotion Project, an initiative to lend these cultural properties to regional museums across the country. The Project covers the costs of object transportation, etc. and also provides support for the staging of exhibitions about the history and culture of each region. Through this initiative, the CPCP promotes the display of cultural properties from NICH's collection in regions that previously had limited opportunities to encounter this cultural heritage owing to their location and so on. The initiative also helps to convey the charm and value of this precious cultural heritage more widely while ensuring it can be passed down to future generations.

Consolidating the digital resources and databases regarding cultural properties

The CPCP runs ColBase (Integrated Collections Database of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage; <https://colbase.nich.go.jp/>), a platform that enables users to search across the collections of the four national museums, the two research institutes and The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan, and e-Museum (<https://emuseum.nich.go.jp/>), a platform that provides high-resolution images and explanations (in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean) of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties in the aforementioned collections. We also handle requests from museums wishing to use digital resources.



ColBase

Consultation and technical support concerning the preservation of cultural properties

The CPCP offers consultation services, advice, research assistance and technical support as needed regarding display and storage environments at museums, and we also conduct basic research into how to manage and improve these environments. We also support curators or other administrators engaged in preservation activities at museums by holding practical workshops and courses that furnish participants with the knowledge and technical abilities needed to display and store cultural properties in an appropriate environment.

Cultural property fundraising activities

The CPCP works to ensure that our cultural heritage can be passed down safely to the future generations. To this end, we seek to expand our supporter base by raising awareness of and garnering support for this work. Out initiatives to raise funds from individuals, companies and organizations include implementing project-based donation campaigns and running the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage Donation Portal Site (<https://support-us.nich.go.jp/>).



National Institutes for Cultural Heritage Donation Portal Site



Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center

The Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center (CHDRMC) was established on October 1, 2020, with the goal of protecting a diverse range of cultural heritage from frequently occurring disasters



KOHDZUMA Yohsei
Director
Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk
Management Center

The CHDRMC undertakes various initiatives based on its three core missions of (1) reducing disaster risk to safeguard our cultural heritage, (2) building systems and developing technologies to save disaster-hit cultural heritage as quickly as possible, and (3) providing support for salvage operations for cultural heritage when disasters occur.

Our 5 main initiatives

Establishing Regional Disaster Risk Management System

We make it a goal to establish a regional disaster risk management system for cultural heritage in each prefecture of Japan. We hold meetings for exchanging opinions and sharing information with other organizations in the field of cultural heritage, including local governments, museums, libraries, universities, research institutions, investigation network of historical documents, and so on.



Surveying a disaster-hit building

Preparing Guidelines for Disaster Risk Management for Cultural Heritage

We prepare guidelines for salvage and first aid of damaged cultural heritage.

Developing of Technologies for Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management

We develop technologies for ordinary storage and exhibition of cultural heritage and for emergency salvage of damaged artifacts.



Conducting emergency repairs of disaster-hit materials

Public Awareness

We raise awareness and spread knowledge on cultural heritage disaster risk management through providing instruction, advice, training and so forth for domestic and international.

Collecting and Utilizing Information

We collect information on cultural heritage disaster risk management, e.g. disaster cases and advanced risk management measures. We are also building a database for cultural heritage disaster risk management and examining ways to utilize collected information to improve the functionality of Japan's cultural heritage disaster risk management system.



A booth at a disaster-prevention event



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.



FUJIWARA Makoto
Executive Director
Tokyo National Museum

The Tokyo National Museum (TNM) is the oldest museum in Japan, with 2022 marking the 150th anniversary of our founding. Our history traces back to 1872 (Meiji 5) and the staging of an exhibition under the auspices of the Ministry of Education at the Taiseiden Hall of Yushima Seido, a former Confucian temple in Tokyo, an event that marked the inauguration of the Ministry of Education Museum, TNM's predecessor.

Our collection comprises around 120,000 tangible cultural properties from Japan and other Asian regions, including numerous National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties. It is our mission to convey the charms of these cultural properties to a global audience while also ensuring they are passed down safely to future generations.

From here on, we will remain true to the role and mission we have fulfilled over our long history by steadfastly undertaking our core tasks as a museum, including the collection and preservation of cultural properties, research, and the staging of exhibits. While exploring ways to conduct museum activities in a sustainable manner, we will endeavor to grow further as we stride towards the future.

Exhibitions * See Tokyo National Museum's website for the latest exhibition information.

●TNM Collection Exhibitions

Following a name change on April 1, 2025, Tokyo National Museum's Regular Exhibitions are now known as "TNM Collection Exhibitions." This change reflects TNM's commitment to deepening our engagement with our collection and nurturing it for future generations as an "Innovative Museum Co-Created by All, Seamlessly Connecting the Past and Future." Around 3,000 collection items and works on long-term loan are on display at any given time in our newly-renovated Room 11 (Sculpture) and elsewhere in the Japanese Gallery (Honkan), as well as in the Heiseikan, the Asian Gallery (Toyokan), The Gallery of Horyuji Treasures and Kuroda Memorial Hall, with these cultural properties encompassing a wide range of genres, including Japanese and Eastern archaeology, art, crafts, and historical materials. Specially-planned thematic exhibitions are also held as part of the TNM Collection Exhibitions.



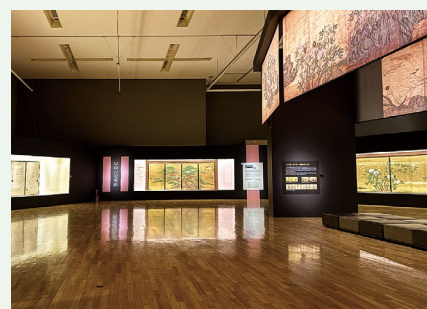
The TNM Collection Exhibitions key visual



Honkan Room 11 (Sculpture) following renovation work

●Special Exhibitions

Special exhibitions are held to share the results of our research and to meet visitor interest. With a focus on Japanese and Asian art, we hold a number of highly-significant exhibitions that reflect our role as a national museum. We also stage exhibitions at overseas museums and so on.



Special Exhibition Commemorating the 1150th Founding Anniversary of Daikakuji
Treasures of Daikakuji: From Imperial Villa to Buddhist Temple
(January 21-March 16, 2025)

Acquisition, Conservation, and Restoration

The Museum seeks to create a comprehensive display of Asian cultural properties with a focus on Japan through the acquisition of works of art by purchase, donation, and loan. We also carry out a variety of collection management measures to allow deteriorated objects to be safely exhibited in the future.

Furthermore, we ensure that deteriorated cultural properties can still be exhibited safely in future by enhancing gallery and storage environments, improving display and transportation methods, and conducting condition assessments and conservation treatments.



Cleaning of a Japanese zither (*koto*) in preparation for a thematic exhibition

Education

To provide a better museum experience for visitors, we offer opportunities for a diverse range of people to get to know the museum, and we help them to develop a deeper understanding of Japanese and Asian culture. By collaborating with schools and developing volunteer activities, we strive to establish a pioneering model for engaging museum projects while promoting effective educational programs that reflect our role as a leading museum in Japan.

○ Providing learning opportunities

Gallery talks, seminars, lecture series, workshops, interactive exhibits such as the Japanese Culture Plaza, Kids Day, and other exhibition-related events

○ Collaboration with schools

School programs (art appreciation programs, work experience programs, and programs for visually impaired students) and teacher training

○ Partnerships with universities

Campus Members System, internship programs for graduate students, and internships in collaboration with Tokyo University of the Arts Graduate School

○ Volunteer activities

Assistance for educational activities, visitor information, guided tours, and the creation of worksheets

○ Universal accessibility

Tactile tools, Braille pamphlets, sensory maps, the provision of voice recognition services, the “TNM Art Guide” application, and videos introducing the museum (English)

* Some programs have been moved online.



Children enjoying touchable exhibits in the Family Gallery



Videos introducing the museum (English)

Research

We conduct research on cultural properties originating in Asia, with a focus on Japan. Research outcomes are reflected in the museum's collection, and in our collection and exhibition activities. Research is partially supported by Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research and other grants for cultural activities. We also conduct annual research projects in cooperation with researchers and experts from Japan and overseas.



Special Research: Calligraphy

Brief History

- 1872 : Opened as the Museum of the Ministry of Education on the occasion of Japan's first public exposition, held by the ministry in the Yushima Seido, Tokyo.
- 1875 : Transferred to the Ministry of the Interior. The museum had eight exhibition categories at this time: natural products, agriculture and forestation, industrial technology, art, history, education, religion, plus army and navy.
- 1882 : Moved to the present location, a site formerly occupied by the headquarters of Kan'eiji Temple.
- 1889 : Reorganized as the Imperial Museum under the supervision of the Imperial Household Agency.
- 1900 : Renamed the Tokyo Imperial Household Museum.
- 1909 : Hyokeikan opened.
- 1923 : Former Honkan building destroyed in the Great Kanto Earthquake.
- 1925 : Natural history collections transferred to the Tokyo Museum of the Ministry of Education (present-day National Museum of Nature and Science) and other institutions.
- 1938 : Present Honkan building opened.
- 1947 : Transferred to the Ministry of Education and renamed the National Museum.
- 1952 : Renamed the Tokyo National Museum.
- 1964 : The Gallery of Horyuji Treasures (inaugural building) opened.
- 1968 : Affiliated with the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Toyokan opened.
- 1984 : The Shiryokan (the Research and Information Center) opened.
- 1999 : The Gallery of Horyuji Treasures (current building) and Heiseikan opened.
- 2001 : Became the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum, Tokyo National Museum.
- 2007 : Integrated into the Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage as the Tokyo National Museum.



KYOTO NATIONAL MUSEUM

The Kyoto National Museum collects, preserves, manages, and exhibits cultural properties, while also conducting research and educational activities. It focuses on cultural properties from the Heian period to the Edo period, a time when Kyoto was the capital of Japan.



MATSUMOTO Nobuyuki
Executive Director
Kyoto National Museum

Kyoto prospered as Japan's capital and cultural center for over a thousand years, from the relocation of the capital at the end of the eighth century to the Meiji Restoration in the late nineteenth century.

The Kyoto National Museum was established in 1897 (Meiji 30) in the Higashiyama district of Kyoto, an area steeped in the city's history and traditions. Since then, while functioning as a core institution for the preservation and transmission of Kyoto's tangible cultural properties, the museum has also worked to disseminate the value and appeal of Japan's traditional culture to a wide audience, both nationally and internationally.

Even during the difficult times of recent years, we have endeavored to maintain a robust range of activities while deepening our response to globalization and the spread of information technology in a manner that takes modern lifestyles and SDGs into consideration. Going forward, we will continue to improve ageing facilities as we build a museum that everyone can appreciate and enjoy as a center for education and lifetime learning, a nexus of exploration and creativity, a place of leisure, and a tourist destination.

Exhibitions * See Kyoto National Museum's website for the latest exhibition information.

●Collection Galleries

The Collection Galleries in the Heisei Chishinkan Wing, which opened in September 2014, include thematic galleries for ceramics, archeological relics, paintings, calligraphy, decorative and applied arts, and sculpture. By showcasing some of the finest pieces from the museum's 20,000 objects (including works on long-term loan), the galleries enable visitors to experience some of the most outstanding examples of Kyoto's unique cultural heritage. The objects on display are also changed periodically, so visitors can expect to see different objects on subsequent visits.



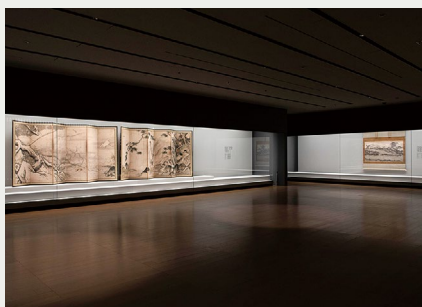
Exhibitions in the Collection Galleries



●Special Exhibitions

We hold large-scale exhibitions that utilize almost all of the Heisei Chishinkan Wing's galleries. With a focus on Kyoto culture, these exhibitions feature treasures from across Japan and from overseas.

* Please note that due to the current closure of the Meiji Kotokan (Main Hall), the Heisei Chishinkan Wing is being used alternately for both Special Exhibitions and Collection Exhibitions.



Special Exhibition: The Legend of Sesshū: Birth of a Master Painter
(April 13–May 26, 2024)



Special Exhibition: Hōnen and Pure Land Buddhism
(October 8–December 1, 2024)

Collection, Preservation, and Conservation of Cultural Properties

Since the museum's establishment, numerous treasures from historical temples and shrines have been entrusted to the Kyoto National Museum. Meanwhile, the number of cultural properties in the collection has increased yearly through purchases and donations, with a focus on art or archaeological items related to Kyoto culture. These cultural properties must be conserved and preserved appropriately so that they may be enjoyed and appreciated long into the future. Established in 1980 as Japan's first comprehensive conservation facility for cultural properties, the Conservation Center for Cultural Properties undertakes this conservation work using scientifically proven technologies and materials.



Conservation work underway in the Conservation Center for Cultural Properties

Educational Activities

We undertake a variety of activities via our exhibitions, website, and outreach to schools in order to help people learn more about the museum's exhibitions and collections, and to stimulate interest and concern for cultural properties.

- **Activities held to enhance understanding of exhibition themes and exhibits**

The museum holds various lectures and seminars, including the Saturday Lectures and Commemorative Lectures, and it operates volunteer-run Hands-on Carts (featuring interactive educational materials) and workshops. It also distributes worksheets and the "Museum Dictionary," as well as provides audioguides for young people.

- **Activities held to stimulate interest in cultural properties**

The museum organizes summer lectures, symposia and other lecture events. It also stages special introductory exhibits and it arranges school visits by "Cultural Property Sommeliers" using high-resolution reproductions of artworks (Cultural Properties School Outreach Classes). Furthermore, it develops and distributes online content.

- **The museum works closely with educational institutions and organizes collaborative events**

Collaborations between the museum and the university sector include: the Campus Members System; lectures on East Asian civilizations by museum curators at Kyoto University's Graduate School of Human and Environmental Studies; the training of volunteers called "Kyohaku Navigators" and "Cultural Property Sommeliers"; support for teaching through the use of replicas; the holding of art appreciation events; and the holding of workshops for educators.

- **Support for volunteer activities**

The Education Department oversees the "Kyohaku Navigators" and "Cultural Property Sommeliers" programs, and the training of "Kyohaku Navigators" and "Cultural Property Sommeliers" volunteers.

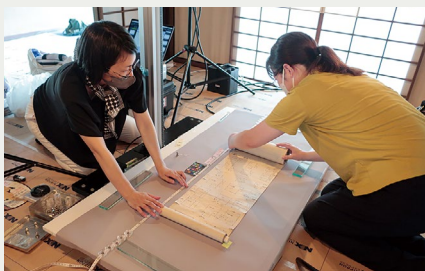


Hands-on Carts run by Kyohaku Navigators

Research

Since 1979, the museum has been implementing an ongoing survey of cultural assets owned by ancient temples and shrines in the Kinki region of Japan, centered on Kyoto. The results of these activities are published in our *Kyoto National Museum Shrine and Temple Inventory Reports*. Furthermore, we carry out research on objects including those within the museum's collection and loan works, and present these results in exhibitions and the publication *The Kyoto National Museum Bulletin*.

We also engage in international research projects, including the study of cultural properties and the staging of symposiums in collaboration with overseas museums and galleries.



Research underway at shrines and temples

Brief History

- 1889 : Established as the Imperial Museum of Kyoto under the supervision of the Imperial Household Agency Ministry
- 1897 : First exhibition held (May 1)
- 1900 : Renamed as the Imperial Household Museum of Kyoto
- 1924 : Donated to Kyoto City; renamed as the Imperial Gift Museum of Kyoto
- 1952 : Transferred to the national government; renamed as the Kyoto National Museum
- 1966 : Establishment of the New Exhibition Hall
- 1968 : Affiliated with the Agency for Cultural Affairs
- 1969 : The Main Hall, Main Gate, ticket booth and fences are designated as an Important Cultural Property as the former Imperial Museum of Kyoto
- 1973 : The Saturday lecture series starts
- 1980 : Conservation Center for Cultural Properties is established
- 1997 : A special ceremony is held in October to mark the 100th anniversary of the Museum's founding
- 2001 : The South Gate is renovated as part of the 100th Year Anniversary Hall construction project
The Museum becomes the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum, Kyoto National Museum
- 2007 : Integrated into the Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, as Kyoto National Museum
- 2009 : Reconstruction begins on the former exhibition hall
- 2013 : Construction of Heisei Chishinkan Wing (new exhibition hall) is completed in August
- 2014 : Heisei Chishinkan Wing opens in September
- 2017 : A special ceremony is held in May to mark the 120th anniversary of the Museum's founding



NARA NATIONAL MUSEUM

The Nara National Museum collects, preserves, manages and displays cultural properties, while also conducting research and providing educational programs. Its focus is on Buddhist art and the cultural properties of Nara.



INOUE Yoichi
Executive Director
Nara National Museum

Since its opening in 1895, with the support of temples and shrines of the Nara region, the Nara National Museum has been engaged in collecting, preserving, and conducting research and offering educational programs on cultural properties with a special focus on Buddhist art. Through these activities, the museum has introduced to the public the high artistic value and historical background of Japanese Buddhist culture, unique for its syncretism with indigenous beliefs.

We celebrated the 130th anniversary of our opening on April 29, 2025. To mark the occasion, we have released the New Nara National Museum Declaration with a focus on the next 130 years. From here on, we will strive to achieve the Declaration's three goals, namely: "Convey the charms of Nara's rich nature, history and culture to a wide audience within Japan and overseas while transmitting Nara's true value to the future"; "Become a hub for Buddhist art research and help people throughout Japan and across the world to learn about Buddhist art"; and "Transcend our status as a 'kind' museum to be a place where 'everyone can become kind'."

Exhibitions * See Nara National Museum's website for the latest exhibition information.

●Exhibitions from the Permanent Collection

The Buddhist Sculpture Hall features "Masterpieces of Buddhist Sculpture", exceptional Buddhist statues representative of the history of Japanese sculpture from the Asuka to the Kamakura period, dating from around the seventh century to the mid-fourteenth century. The Ritual Bronzes Gallery connected by a corridor features fine works of Chinese ancient bronzes. The West Wing houses "Masterpieces of Buddhist Art", which introduces the essence of Japanese Buddhist art through selected items of painting, decorative art, calligraphy and artifacts. We also hold feature exhibitions connected to traditional Nara festivals like Kasuga Taisha's Wakamiya On-Matsuri festival (December) in winter, and Tōdai-ji Temple's Omizutori water-drawing festival (March).



Displays in the Exhibitions from the Permanent Collection
Important Cultural Property
Kongō Rikishi (Un-Gyō and A-Gyō)
(Kinpusenji Temple, Nara)

●Special Exhibitions

We hold 2–3 large-scale special exhibitions each year themed on Buddhist art and traditional culture. Of particular note is *The Annual Exhibition of Shōsō-in Treasures*. Held each autumn, this exhibition offers the only chance to view these representative treasures of ancient Silk Road culture.



Special Exhibition Celebrating the 1,250th Anniversary of Priest Kūkai's Birth
KŪKAI: The Worlds of Mandalas and the Transcultural Origins of Esoteric Buddhism
(April 13-June 9, 2024)

The Collection, Preservation, and Restoration of Cultural Properties

We strive to collect tangible cultural properties, which are profoundly valuable assets for the people of Japan, through purchase, donation and loan. Most Japanese cultural properties are made of extremely fragile materials like paper and wood, so one major issue is how to ensure these objects can be passed down to future generations. We take proactive steps to preserve our cultural assets by keeping our galleries and storage rooms air-conditioned around the clock while constantly monitoring for pest infestations or changes in temperature and humidity levels, for example. Furthermore, our Conservation Center undertakes the systematic conservation of National Treasures, Important Cultural Properties and other cultural assets. The results of these activities are published in the *Conservation Center Conservation Report* and reflected in "Newly Conserved Cultural Properties," a thematic exhibition from the permanent collection.



Standing Namubutsu
Taishi (Prince Shōtoku)

Educational Programs

We promote a variety of educational programs to impart upon audiences an understanding of the importance of cultural properties. We also stage lectures and run programs for schoolchildren, for example, and we strive to improve our hands-on workshops and develop new educational programs that make cultural properties accessible to a wider audience.

○ The Narahaku educational workshop space CHIEHIROBA

Hands-on workshops are held at CHIEHIROBA every day the museum is open. Here, visitors can touch replica works and take quizzes about Buddhist icons, etc.

○ Programs for students

We offer classes on world heritage for elementary, junior-high and high school students, live online programs for school groups, object explanations for children, and workshops.

○ Lectures and seminars

Public lectures, Sunday Talks, and seasonal lecture series.

○ Cooperation with universities and colleges

Campus Members System, special art appreciation events for campus members, joint lectures with Nara Women's University and Kobe University, and joint workshops with Nara University of Education

○ Promotion of volunteer activities



Daily Workshop: Touch and Explore the Wood of Buddhist Statues!



Daily Workshop: Let's Touch the Buddha!

Research and Survey Activities

We consider research into cultural properties to be the most important activity supporting the foundations of the Nara National Museum as a research institution. In particular, by conducting research into the temples and shrines of the Nara region and promoting their preservation and utilization, we endeavor to enhance our culture and ensure the transmission of our cultural heritage to future generations. Research findings are reflected in the museum's special exhibitions, exhibitions from the permanent collection, and exhibition catalogues, for example, and are also published periodically in the *Bulletin of the Nara National Museum* (*Rokuon zasshū*), *Nara National Museum News*, and research reports, etc. Furthermore, reference materials collected through research are available to the public at the Buddhist Art Library.



Researchers at work

Brief History

- 1889 : Established as the Imperial Museum of Nara under the supervision of the Imperial Household Ministry
- 1895 : Opened to the public (April 29)
- 1900 : Renamed as the Imperial Household Museum of Nara
- 1914 : Establishment of the Shōsō-in Department
- 1947 : Supervision transferred to the Ministry of Education
- 1950 : Affiliated with the Committee for the Protection of Cultural Properties
- 1952 : Renamed as the Nara National Museum
- 1968 : Affiliated with the Agency for Cultural Affairs
- 1973 : Opening of the West Wing
- 1980 : Establishment of the Buddhist Art Library
- 1995 : Celebration of the museum's centennial anniversary
- 1998 : Opening of the East Wing
- 2001 : Becomes the Independent Administrative Institution National Museum, Nara National Museum
- 2002 : Opening of the Conservation Center for Cultural Properties; main building's repository reopened as the Ritual Bronzes Gallery
- 2007 : Integrated into the Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, as the Nara National Museum
- 2010 : Main building renamed as the Nara Buddhist Sculpture Hall
- 2016 : Nara Buddhist Sculpture Hall reopened after restoration (April 29)
- 2025 : Celebration of the museum's 130th anniversary
Nara Buddhist Sculpture Hall renamed as Buddhist Sculpture Hall

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.



TOMITA Jun
Executive Director
Kyushu National Museum

Our museum opened its doors on October 16, 2005 with a focus on mapping the formation of Japanese culture within the context of Asia's history. Located in Dazaifu, an ancient city that occupies a key place in Japan's historical and cultural narrative, we conduct our activities in close cooperation with Fukuoka Prefecture. We constantly endeavor to provide new and exciting experiences through a "journey through time" that explores the dramatic history of how Japan developed through exchanges with the outside world.

Though the situation surrounding cultural properties and museums is ever changing, our mission remains constant: to protect and communicate the precious cultural heritage passed down by our ancestors. From here on, we will continue striving to be a safe and friendly museum that everyone can enjoy.

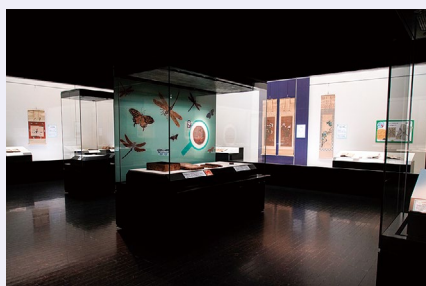
Exhibitions * See Kyushu National Museum's website for the latest exhibition information.

● Cultural Exchange Exhibitions, Feature Exhibitions, Special Displays, and Tours

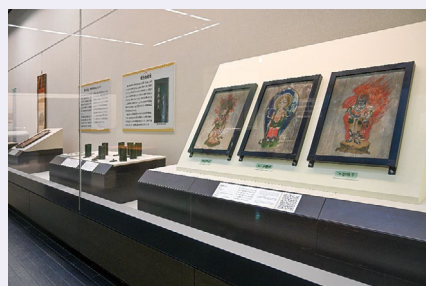
Aside from constantly rotating exhibits, our permanent Cultural Exchange Exhibition also plays host to Feature Exhibitions, Special Displays and Kyuhaku Tours. All of these are centered on specific themes that offer visitors fresh content and perspectives with every visit, as well as interactive displays that enable them to experience history with all their senses.

● Special Exhibitions

Special Exhibitions are planned and staged to ensure they are thoroughly enjoyable, not only for newcomers but also for people familiar with the exhibition themes.



Kyuhaku Summer Tour: Collecting Insects at a Museum
(July 30-September 1, 2024)



Featured Exhibition
The Treasures of Hitoyoshi Kuma
(October 22-December 15, 2024)



Special Exhibition
Haniwa
(January 21-May 11, 2025)

Acquiring, Storing, and Conserving our Collection

● Acquisitions

In line with our mission, Kyushu National Museum constantly seeks to enrich our collection of items relevant to the history of cultural exchange between Japan and the rest of Asia. We also work with temples, shrines, and private collectors who may wish to donate or store their collections with us. They generously permit us to use these objects to further enhance our exhibitions.



Assorted *haniwa* figurines



Wakizashi sword, signed "Tenta"

●Storage

Located in the center of the building, our museum's purpose-built storage rooms ensure that our collection is insulated by the double-walled structure of the rooms, shielding them from direct contact with the elements. Our building also uses a heating, ventilating, and air conditioning (HVAC) system that maintains constant temperature and humidity levels within the storage area. Further, the ceilings and walls of the storage area are made from Japanese cedar sourced locally from Kyushu, while the floors are made of Japanese beech from Hokkaido. These types of wood function as moisture buffers, providing an additional, non-mechanical method of regulating humidity.

In addition, our museum makes use of three types of seismic isolators to stabilize the building in the event of earthquakes, reducing the amount of seismic energy transferred into the building and thus keeping our collection safe.

●Conservation

Our museum has a dedicated conservation studio that is divided into six rooms, including a paper-making room and rooms for conserving calligraphy and ancient documents, paintings, sculpture and large-sized artifacts, archaeological relics, and lacquerware. Here, experienced conservation staff work alongside specialists in the relevant fields of research to determine the best course of action for conserving each artifact. We are also equipped with state-of-the-art instruments, including an X-ray CT machine and an X-ray fluorescence spectrometer, which help us better analyze the objects we are to conserve.

Educational Outreach and Exchange

●Educational Outreach

○ Ajippa (Interactive Exhibition Gallery)

This is a unique exhibition gallery where visitors of all ages can get up close and personal with Asian and European cultures with which Japan has had historical interactions. Ajippa develops activity kits and programs for visitors to experience the museum in a more interactive setting. We also work with other educational institutions to develop educational programs.

○ Exhibition-related activities

These include programs to help visitors understand exhibits; YouTube videos introducing exhibits; the introduction of the “NaviLens GO” exhibition guide system; the development of in-house workshops; and the production of Sensory Maps

○ Programs designed specifically for overseas visitors and visitors with disabilities

○ Kyupack—a series of supplementary tools for classroom-based teaching based on our museum collection

○ Kyuhaku Caravan—a mobile version of Ajippa that brings our museum to schools

○ Campus Members System—strengthening our ties with educational institutions, such as universities

○ Museum Talks and Kyuhaku in 3D: Deep Dive Discoveries

○ We support a diverse range of volunteer activities, including gallery tours and behind-the-scenes “Backyard Tours”, facility environment improvements, and workshops



The Kyuhaku Caravan outreach program



The Calm Corner, a space for visitors to rest and calm down

●Local and International Exchange

○ We engage with the community by planning outreach activities with local businesses and organizations, as well as providing rental facilities

○ We have partners all over Asia

○ We offer international symposiums and lectures

Research

In addition to conducting research on artifacts to reveal their role in the cultural exchange between Japan and the rest of Asia, we also conduct scientific analysis on cultural properties for conservation and restoration purposes. The results of these studies are collected, stored and actively utilized in our exhibitions. Such research is conducted with financial support, such as from the Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research provided by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.



Researchers at work

Brief History

- 1994 : Creation of the Committee to Investigate the Establishment of a New Concept-Based Museum (“the Committee”) by the Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA)
- 1996 : Selection of Dazaifu City, Fukuoka Prefecture as a potential location for the new museum tentatively named “Kyushu National Museum”
- 1997 : The Committee outlines basic plans for Kyushu National Museum
- 1999 : The Committee finalizes basic plans for Kyushu National Museum
- 2000 : ACA, Fukuoka Prefecture, and the Kyushu National Museum Promotion Foundation (“the Foundation”) finalize the basic architectural plans for the museum
The Expert Committee for the Establishment of Kyushu National Museum, formed by the ACA and Fukuoka Prefecture, draws up concept plans for the museum’s permanent exhibition
- 2001 : ACA, Fukuoka Prefecture, and the Foundation finalize the concept plans for basic exhibition design
The IAI National Museums establishes the Kyushu National Museum Project Office
- 2002 : ACA and Fukuoka Prefecture launch a three-year-long Construction Work phase
- 2003 : The IAI National Museums and Fukuoka Prefecture begin a two-year-long Exhibition Work phase
- 2004 : ACA, Fukuoka Prefecture, and the Foundation complete construction of the museum building
ACA, IAI National Museums and Fukuoka Prefecture officially announce the museum’s finalized name, “Kyushu National Museum”
- 2005 : Completion of the Exhibition Work phase
IAI National Museums establishes Kyushu National Museum
The museum opens to the public on 15 October
- 2007 : Kyushu National Museum becomes part of the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH)
- 2008 : Kyushu National Museum hosts the China-Japan-South Korea trilateral summit
- 2012 : Cumulative visitorship reaches 10 million
- 2015 : Kyushu National Museum celebrates its 10th anniversary
- 2017 : Cumulative visitorship reaches 15 million on 19 August
- 2020 : Kyushu National Museum celebrates its 15th anniversary
- 2025 : Kyushu National Museum celebrates its 20th anniversary



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.



SHIMATANI Hiroyuki
Executive Director
The Museum of the Imperial
Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan

In 1989, His Majesty the Emperor Emeritus and his mother Empress Kōjun gifted a number of artistic treasures to the nation. Sannomaru Shozokan was opened in the Imperial Palace East Garden in November 1993 to preserve, research and display these precious artworks passed down through the Imperial Family. Its collection grew thereafter following a bequeathment from the family of the late Prince Chichibu in 1996, from the late Empress Kōjun in 2001, from the family of the late Prince Takamatsu in 2005, and a gift from the family of Prince Mikasa in 2014, with the museum researching and displaying these new treasures too. In 2019, work began to expand the museum's storage and exhibition space and build a new facility in order to accommodate a more fulfilling range of activities. In October 2023, the museum's management and administration was transferred from The Imperial Household Agency to the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, with the museum subsequently becoming Japan's fifth national museum under its new name — “The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan.” The museum reopened some facilities on November 3, 2023, and it is scheduled to fully open in 2026.

Exhibitions

* The museum is closed until autumn 2026 for facility expansion. For the latest information, please visit the museum website.

●Exhibitions

The museum periodically stages thematic exhibitions to introduce a diverse selection of its representative artworks. With a focus on the precious treasures passed down through the Imperial Family, these displays present a broad overview of the Imperial Family's relationship with culture, as nurtured over a long history and molded by tradition. Furthermore, we offer explanatory captions and lists of works not only in Japanese, but also in English, Chinese and Korean for our foreign visitors and we also prepare and distribute leaflets to explain our collection in more detail.

We open until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays, with the last Friday evening of the month reserved exclusively for “after-hours, curator-led tours,” where our curators give talks to groups of up to 20 people.

*The museum is temporarily closed from May 7, 2025, due to work to expand our facilities.



A late opening leaflet



An after-hours, curator-led tour leaflet



Inviting Fortune: Auspicious Symbols in Japanese Art (January 4, 2025–March 2, 2025)

●Regional expansion

In FY 2019, construction began on a new facility equipped with suitable environments for display and conservation. It will be difficult to stage full-scale exhibitions at our museum until it fully reopens again, so in the meantime we are actively pursuing regional expansion in order to provide opportunities for more people within Japan and overseas to view our collection. To this end, we loan artworks to regional museums and galleries.

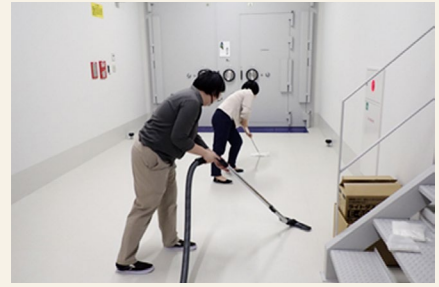


An opening ceremony at Hokkaido Museum of Modern Art

Preserving Our Collection

Our museum's Japanese name contains characters that refer to the official who was in charge of safeguarding the imperial treasures under Japan's ancient *ritsuryō* legal system. These characters were chosen for their association with storing things away carefully. Our collection encompasses a range of genres, including calligraphy, painting and decorative objects. It also covers a wide timeframe, from ancient times to the modern age, and it features many representative masterpieces from each era. This richly-diverse assemblage includes works passed down through Kyoto Imperial Palace until the early-modern era; art objects that came to the Imperial Family through a number of routes, including works produced to order from the modern era onwards, purchases, and gifts; and treasures that resulted from exchanges between the Imperial Family and other nations.

We are making improvements to our storage environments to ensure these precious objects can be stored appropriately and passed down safely to future generations. We also undertake conservation work, including emergency repairs.



Cleaning inside the museum

Educational Programs

●Educational programs

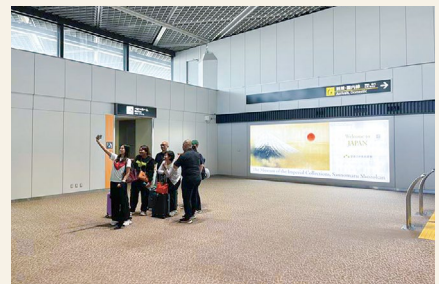
In order to communicate the charms of our museum to both Japanese and international visitors, we hold gallery talks, produce worksheets, and offer a variety of educational programs, including school programs for children. We also hold special lectures and workshops at regional venues.



A multilingual gallery talk (English)

●Attracting foreign visitors

Through our collection, we endeavor to introduce the Imperial Family's relationship with culture in an easy-to-understand way to our many visitors from other countries. We also try to contribute to cultural tourism by attracting more foreign visitors. To this end, we strive to improve our multilingual explanations, publicize our activities to an international audience, and develop tours aimed at overseas visitors, for example.



Putting up an advertisement at Narita Airport

Research and Survey Activities

Our museum conducts research into the Imperial Family's relationship with culture, mainly through the artworks in our collection. We also carry out research in cooperation with the Agency for Cultural Affairs, the Imperial Household Agency, and other museums and galleries within Japan and overseas. We publish our research results in journals, exhibition catalogues and exhibit guides, for example. Past research journals and catalogues are also available on our website.



The Collection Catalogue and the Bulletin of The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan (first issue), both published in FY 2024

Brief History

- 1989 : The Emperor Emeritus and the Empress Kōjun gift a collection of artworks to the nation
- 1993 : Sannomaru Shozokan opens in the Imperial Palace East Garden
- 1996 : The family of the late Prince Chichibu bequeathed the works to the nation
- 2001 : The Emperor Emeritus bequeathed the late Empress Kōjun's collection to the nation
- 2005 : The family of the late Prince Takamatsu bequeathed the works to the nation
- 2014 : The family of Prince Mikasa gifted the works to the nation
- 2019 : Reconstruction work begins on Sannomaru Shozokan
- 2023 : The first phase of construction work is finished
- The management and administration of the museum is transferred from the Imperial Household Agency to the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, with the museum renamed "The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan" (October 1)
- The museum partially reopens (November 3)
- 2025 : The museum is temporarily closed (from May 7) for the second phase of construction work to expand the facilities



TOKYO NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL PROPERTIES



SAITO Takamasa
Director General
Tokyo National Research
Institute for Cultural Properties

The Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties supports the work of the government in the administration of cultural properties by conducting various research, from basic and systematic to practical and advanced, into all kinds of cultural properties, both tangible and intangible. The Institute actively disseminates the results of this research both domestically and internationally. It also provides guidance and advice to regional public bodies and other stakeholders concerning the preservation of cultural properties. Furthermore, it pursues international cooperation projects related to the conservation of cultural heritage in Asia and other regions of the world, including international research initiatives, human resource development, and the transfer of conservation and restoration technologies.

The Institute's survey and research work currently focuses on several priority areas. Firstly, the Institute is working to develop archives of research results and basic data accumulated by the Institute over the years. Also, as a part of the Independent Administrative Institution, National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, the Institute aims to play an integral role in the area of conservation and preservation through research on the conservation, preservation and publication of museum materials. Furthermore, the Institute collects basic data, prepares visual records of intangible cultural properties from across Japan, and makes them available to the public, with a focus on festivals, performing arts, and traditional techniques.

In addition, the Institute houses the secretariat of the Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage, an organization that plays a central role in ensuring Japan makes a coordinated and effective contribution to the conservation of cultural heritage overseas.

We also serve as a regional hub for the East Japan region of the Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center in cooperation with its Head Office.

Organization

●Department of Art Research, Archives and Information Systems

The Department of Art Research, Archives and Information Systems collects, preserves, collates and publicizes information relating to cultural properties, and also undertakes research on the development of effective methods for the transmission of information, with the aim of expanding the scope of cultural property archives. At the same time, the Department also engages in issues of contemporary relevance when it comes to the study of cultural properties and art history research, for example. The Department also takes the results obtained in these activities as the basis for managing the information systems and public relations activities of the Institute as a whole.

●Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage

The Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage conducts basic research useful for the conservation and transmission of intangible cultural heritage, focusing in particular on Japan's intangible cultural heritage, which includes intangible cultural properties, intangible folk-cultural properties, and conservation techniques for cultural properties. Audiovisual documentation, a significant method for the conservation of intangible cultural heritage, is conducted and new methods of documentation are also investigated.

●Center for Conservation Science

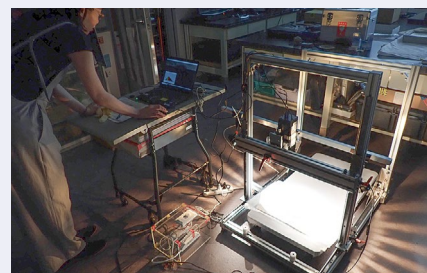
The Center for Conservation Science implements surveys of cultural property materials, construction and techniques, and collects information that contributes to a more in-depth understanding of cultural properties. In addition, it conducts research into the improvement of restoration materials and techniques and into maintenance management methods while also implementing activities relating to the adoption of new survey techniques. Moreover, the Center works closely with those who are actually engaged in the conservation and restoration of cultural properties and with the owners of cultural properties.



The symposium "International Collaboration in Art Archives and Libraries"



Conducting interviews about the production of wooden tubs used for soy sauce brewing in Sanuki



Analysis of a historical material using hyperspectral camera

●Japan Center for International Cooperation in Conservation

The Japan Center for International Cooperation in Conservation renders assistance to various countries in Asia and other regions of the world through cultural heritage conservation and restoration projects, including technical transfer and human resource development. It also promotes cooperative networks with other relevant institutions, domestic and international, by organizing seminars and meetings. Collection and dissemination of information on cultural heritage and its protection systems is another important task of the Center. The Center is commissioned to manage the secretariat for the Japan Consortium for International Cooperation in Cultural Heritage.



Technical cooperation for the conservation and sustainable development of Ta Nei Temple, Angkor

Seminars, Advice, and Guidance

The Institute conducts various training seminars and provides professional advice as well as technical guidance for the protection and utilization of cultural properties. These include the International Course on Conservation of Japanese Paper, annual training for museum curators in charge of conservation, advice on safeguarding intangible cultural properties, inspection assistance and advice on the museum environments, and investigation and advice concerning the conservation of cultural properties.

"Training for Museum Curators in charge of Conservation" was reorganized in FY 2021 in response to societal demands. The Basic Course and Advanced Course were established in tandem with the National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties. The Advanced Course is run by the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.



International Course on Conservation of Japanese Paper



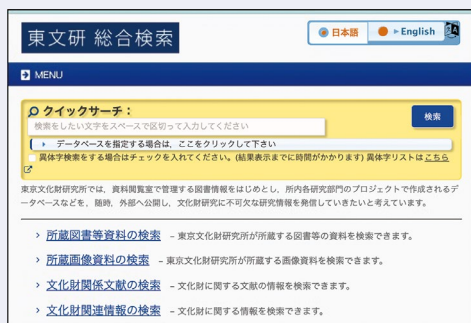
Training for museum curators (advanced course)

Graduate School Education and Public Lectures

The Institute provides the results of its research to the public with the aim of nurturing the next generation of experts and raising public interest. The Institute has collaborated with the Tokyo University of the Arts since 1995 and is in charge of its Preventive Conservation Course. In the public lectures, the Department of Art Research, Archives and Information Systems, and the Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage present their research achievements every year.

Dissemination of Research Information

The Institute actively communicates and publicizes the results of its different activities, including research studies and international cooperation projects, through academic conferences, workshops and symposiums, for example. It also updates its website regularly and it releases publications such as its 'Annual Report,' its 'Outline,' and 'Tobunken News.'



TOBUNKEN Research Collections
(<https://www.tobunken.go.jp/archives/>)

Brief History

- 1930 : Established as the Institute of Art Research, an auxiliary organization of the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts
- 1947 : Affiliated with the National Museum
- 1950 : Affiliated with the National Commission for Protection of Cultural Properties
- 1952 : Reorganized and renamed as Tokyo Research Institute of Cultural Properties
- 1954 : Renamed as Tokyo National Research Institute of Cultural Properties
- 1968 : Affiliated with the Agency for Cultural Affairs
- 2000 : Construction of new offices
- 2001 : Restructured as the Independent Administrative Institution, National Research Institute for Cultural Properties Tokyo
- 2007 : Integrated into the Independent Administrative Institution, National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, as Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties



NARA NATIONAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR CULTURAL PROPERTIES



MOTONAKA Makoto
Director General
Nara National Research Institute
for Cultural Properties

As an institution engaged in the comprehensive research of tangible cultural properties, Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties researches cultural heritage (such as historical materials and buildings) and conducts excavations, primarily at the Nara and Fujiwara Palace sites. We exhibit and publish the results of this research, for example, and we also carry out research and exhibition programs with the aim of preserving Asuka culture. The Institute also strives to gather and publicize data on archaeological sites through the “Comprehensive Database of Cultural Heritage in Japan.”

All these activities make a significant contribution to cultural heritage research, both nationally and internationally, and they have resulted in academic exchanges with China, South Korea and other countries across Asia. Furthermore, the Institute endeavors to develop new research technologies and methods to conserve, restore and maintain historical sites. We then provide guidance and training to local government specialists, for example, with these technologies and methods also utilized to protect historical sites across the world.

From here on, we hope to make further contributions to the conservation and utilization of cultural properties by pursuing interdisciplinary joint research in other fields, too.

●Department of Planning and Coordination

The work of the Department of Planning and Coordination is assigned to five sections: the Planning and Coordination Section, the Data and Information Section, the International Cooperation Section, the Exhibition and Public Engagement Section, and the Photography Section. These sections plan and organize professional training programs for cultural heritage workers at local government agencies and other organizations; organize data systems and enhance related databases; promote multilingualization in the sections; arrange international joint research projects and engage in international cooperation on archaeological sites; exhibit research results at the Nara Palace Site Museum; and carry out photography and the development of new technology.

●Department of Cultural Heritage

The Department of Cultural Heritage consists of the Historical Documents Section, the Architecture and Archaeological Features Section, the Cultural Landscape Section and the Site Management Section. These sections conduct special and comprehensive research in the following areas respectively: calligraphy, ancient books and historical documents; excavated written materials; historical and traditional architecture; archaeological features; cultural landscapes; and the management of archaeological sites and historical gardens. These research activities contribute to governmental activities concerning the protection of cultural properties, such as the designation, selection, registration, conservation and management of properties. The Department also collaborates with, and provides advice for, local public entities in regard to cultural property administration.

●Department of Imperial Palace Sites Investigations

The Department of Imperial Palace Sites Investigations was previously organized into 10 sections: five covering the Heijo area and five the Asuka and Fujiwara area. However, in FY 2024 each set of five sections was reorganized into two sections, namely Archaeology Section 1 and Archaeology Section 2, with staff from other departments also allocated to work concurrently in these two sections too. As with before, these sections continue to conduct interdisciplinary research based on excavational investigations of ancient palaces and temples located in each area. The results of this research are publicized through in-situ presentations, reports and exhibitions, for example.

[Department of Imperial Palace Sites Investigations (Heijo Area)]

This Department is in charge of excavation and research at the Nara Palace Site (Special Historic Site), where Japan's then-capital Heijō-kyō, the imperial palace and government offices were located in the Nara period (710-784). Systematic research has been in progress since 1959 and over one-third of the 130 hectare site has been excavated and surveyed so far. Finds at the sites of the palace and ancient temples (such as architectural remains, wooden tablets used for writing, earthenware vessels and ceramic tiles) have been verified with reference to historical records, with the Department's empirical research on the Nara period winning widespread plaudits. The Department also provides the results of its research on the Nara Palace Site to the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) as basic data to support the maintenance of the national Nara Palace Site Historical Park.



UnEarth2025: Latest Archaeological Surveys of Nara Palace and the Capital, a Feature Exhibition held at Nara Palace Site Museum (February 15-April 13, 2025)



This collection of *mokkan* wooden tablets from the Nara Palace Site was designated a National Treasure



Excavation of the Second Block, First Ward, Third Row Avenue, Left Capital of Nara Capital

[Department of Imperial Palace Sites Investigations (Asuka/Fujiwara Area)]

The Department is in charge of excavation and research in the Asuka and Fujiwara area, Japan's political, economic and cultural center during the period between the 7th and early 8th centuries when the Japanese state was coming into being. The sites in the Asuka district include palaces and residences of elite clans, the sites of temples such as Asukadera (the oldest Buddhist temple in Japan), a workshop that produced ancient coins and glass, a water clock, and various tombs. To the north lies the site of the Fujiwara capital, the first large-scale planned city in Japan, covering a vast area of more than five square kilometers. The interdisciplinary, empirical research being conducted based on the excavations of these sites in the Asuka and Fujiwara areas has made a major contribution towards helping to clarify the historical record of the Asuka period.



A survey of the eastern section of the Ishigami site

●Center for Archaeological Operations

The Center for Archaeological Operations consists of four research sections, which undertake practical research relating to the survey, research and conservation of cultural heritage, as well as providing training activities based on the Center's research results. The Conservation Science Section undertakes a wide range of research, from fundamental research to practical research, relating to surveys and analysis of the materials and structures of archaeological objects and the in-situ display of archaeological remains. The Environmental Archaeology Section undertakes research relating to the simulation of ancient environments and how animals and plants were used in the past, through surveys of and research on the remains of flora and fauna. The Dendrochronology Section uses the methods of dendrochronology to advance applied research on techniques for determining the age and origin of wooden cultural heritage items, and for determining how they were made. The Site Investigation Methodology Section develops surveying and measurement techniques, with a particular focus on the surveying and measurement of archaeological data, with the aim of furthering the development and effective utilization of methods for researching cultural heritage and archaeology. This Section also undertakes disaster archaeology surveys and research.



Elemental mapping of the "Snake" painting from the Kitora Tumulus mural paintings of the twelve animals of the zodiac (mercury)

●Asuka Historical Museum

The Asuka Historical Museum, a facility that showcases the history and culture of the Asuka Period, was established in 1975 following a decision made by the Japanese Cabinet. Besides the Museum's regular exhibitions, which have thematic displays relating to palaces, stone structures, tombs and temple sites, visitors can also see the reconstructed portion of the eastern cloister of Yamadadera Temple and objects excavated in and around this site. The Museum holds Special Exhibitions and Feature Exhibitions, with displays focused on the history and cultural heritage of the Asuka Period, displays that present the results of the wide-ranging research undertaken by the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties in an easy-to-understand way, and displays featuring photographs of cultural heritage items. The Museum also hosts lectures and participatory activities.



Exhibition Room 2 Yamadadera Cloister Remains

●International Academic Exchange

NABUNKEN contributes to international exchange and collaboration through activities such as joint research, expert exchange, conservation and restoration, support and training using our expertise and technology, and projects commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Furthermore, we also participate in international contribution projects related to cultural properties and conducted by other institutions such as ACCU (Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO).

The Institute's main projects include: (1) joint research with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences involving comparison of ancient capital sites; (2) joint research with the Henan Provincial Institute of Cultural Heritage and Archaeology, China on the artifacts excavated from kiln sites; (3) joint research with the Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology, China, on the artifacts of the Sanyan culture; (4) joint research with the National Research Institute of Cultural Heritage, Korea on the formation processes of ancient Japanese and Korean culture, as well as exchanges of personnel on excavation sites; (5) research, conservation, and restoration, undertaken with Cambodia's Authority for the Protection and Management of Angkor and the Region of Siem Reap (APSARA), at the Western Prasat Top site, as well as a human resource development project; (6) international dissemination of Japanese archaeology through online resources and publications, in collaboration with the Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Arts and Cultures (SISJAC) in the UK. We have also been commissioned by the Agency for Cultural Affairs to work on the Networking Core Centers for International Cooperation on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage Project and the Emergency International Contribution Project for Cultural Heritage.



A survey of the eastern edge of Western Prasat Top Buddhist Terrace (seen from the southeast)

Brief History

- 1952 : Nara Cultural Properties Research Institute (consisting of the General Affairs Division, the Historical Research Division, the Architecture Research Division, and the Art Research Division) is established at 50 Kasugano-cho, Nara City, as an auxiliary organization of the National Commission for the Protection of Cultural Properties
- 1954 : Renamed as the Nara National Cultural Palace Site in Sakihigashi-machi, Nara City
- 1960 : The office of the Heijo Palace Site Investigations opened in the former Nara Place Site in Sakihigashi-machi, Nara City
- 1963 : Heijo Palace Site Investigation Division is established
- 1968 : Affiliated with the Agency for Cultural Affairs (established 1968)
- 1970 : Nara Palace Site Museum opened
- 1973 : Finance Section, Asuka/Fujiwara Palace Site Investigation Division, and Asuka Historical Museum established
- 1974 : Department of General Affairs and the Center for Archaeological Operations established
- 1975 : Asuka Historical Museum opened at Okuyama in Asuka Village, Nara
- 1980 : Art Research Division transferred to the Research Center for Buddhist Art, Nara National Museum
- Relocated to 2-9-1 Nijo-cho, Nara City. Heijo Palace Site Investigation Division and the Center for Archaeological operations are transferred together to the new site.
- 1988 : New headquarters building of Asuka/Fujiwara Palace Site Investigation Division built at 94-1 Kinomoto-cho, Kashiwara City
- 2001 : Restructured as the Independent Administrative Institution National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Nara
- 2007 : Integrated into the Independent Administrative Institution National Institute for Cultural Heritage, as the Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties.
- 2013 : Relocated to temporary premises located at 247-1 Sakicho, Nara City, while the original head office site is being redeveloped.
- 2018 : Following the completion of renovation work on the Institute's headquarters building, the Institute was relocated from temporary premises back to the renovated headquarters building

International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region



MACHIDA Daisuke
Director-General
International Research Centre for
Intangible Cultural Heritage in
the Asia-Pacific Region

At the 35th Session of the UNESCO General Conference in October 2009, approval was granted to Japan to establish an international research centre for intangible cultural heritage (ICH) in the Asia-Pacific region. After this approval, the Japanese government concluded an agreement with UNESCO in August 2010 and established the International Research Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region (IRCI) in Sakai City in October 2011 as a Category 2 Centre under the auspices of UNESCO (institution that contributes to the achievement of UNESCO's strategic objectives).

IRCI's objectives are to promote the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and its implementation and to enhance the safeguarding of ICH through instigating and coordinating research in the Asia-Pacific region. Today, many elements of ICH are endangered worldwide due to various factors, and the safeguarding of ICH is now undeniably an urgent issue. IRCI collaborates with universities, research institutes, museums, and NGOs in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region to promote research on the practices and methodologies of ICH safeguarding.

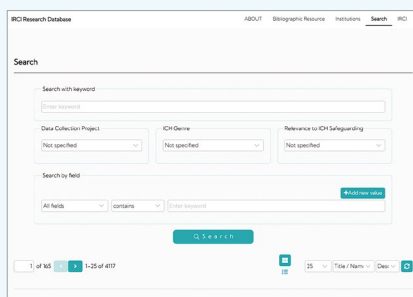
Two major activity focuses

●Promoting Research for ICH Safeguarding

Research plays an important role in promoting the safeguarding of ICH as it helps identify various issues in the field of ICH safeguarding and supports the development of effective strategies and safeguarding measures. To promote research for safeguarding ICH and strengthen researchers' networks in the Asia-Pacific region, IRCI organizes various events, such as workshops, international conferences, symposia, and online seminars, to discuss the latest trends and priority issues in safeguarding ICH.

IRCI systematically collects research information related to ICH through institutional collaboration and publishes the collected information on the IRCI Research Database. Also, the process of collecting information provides an opportunity to understand the current status and challenges of ICH research in target countries and regions.

Established in FY 2022, the Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding is a platform open to all interested parties and individuals for sharing information on ICH safeguarding and research. The Forum continuously hosts online research seminars and organizes various events and programmes such as international conferences and workshops to further invigorate ICH research in the Asia-Pacific region.



IRCI Research Database (Search page)



Asia-Pacific Research Forum for ICH Safeguarding International Conference, "New Frontiers of Research for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage"

●Research on the Safeguarding of ICH for Building Sustainable and Resilient Societies

In cooperation with researchers and experts in the Asia-Pacific region, IRCI conducts practical case studies from the perspective of ICH on various ongoing and interrelated issues, such as natural disasters, climate change, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). ICH deeply rooted within local communities brings people together and includes a variety of knowledge and practices that enable the sustainable use of the natural environment and ecosystems. Indigenous knowledge related to climate change adaptation and disaster risk management is also considered ICH. To promote community-based efforts in safeguarding and transmitting ICH, case studies implemented under this Activity Focus aim to highlight aspects of ICH that are significant for the sustainability and resilience of communities.



Visit to a community in the Angkor region as part of the "Intangible Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Cities and Communities" project (Cambodia)



A knowledge holder of medicinal herbs, Kyrgyzstan (©Rural Development Fund)

Cooperation and collaboration with research institutes

IRCI promotes research for safeguarding ICH in cooperation with universities, research institutes, museums, government agencies, and NGOs in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region. To date, IRCI has concluded memoranda of understanding with over 40 institutions to implement joint projects such as field research, collecting information, and organizing international conferences and symposia.

IRCI has also strengthened its cooperation with other organizations within NICH. In the case of the Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management project, for instance, the Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties and the Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Management Center have contributed to the project with their extensive experiences in the field of disaster risk management of ICH in Japan.

IRCI is further expanding its network and strengthening its cooperative ties with institutions within Japan and abroad to promote research for safeguarding ICH in the Asia-Pacific region.



Group interview with Baul practitioners (Manikganj, Bangladesh)

Cooperation with Sakai City to promote ICH

IRCI cooperates with Sakai City to promote and raise public awareness about ICH. For instance, panels introducing ICH and IRCI's activities are displayed at the Sakai City Museum, where IRCI is located. IRCI also cooperates in events, seminars and symposia organized by Sakai City for the general public to deepen their understanding of ICH.

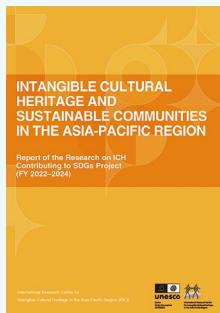


IRCI staff giving a lecture at Sakai City's Seminar for Understanding ICH

Communications and publicity



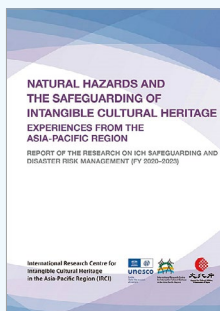
IRCI Brochure 2024-2025



Report of the Research on ICH Contributing to SDGs Project (March 2025)



Sustainable Research Data Collection for ICH Safeguarding: Focusing on Central Asia and Small Island Developing States - Project Report Part I (March 2025)



Report of the Research on ICH Safeguarding and Disaster Risk Management (March 2024)

IRCI disseminates information on its activities and ICH through various media channels. The IRCI Brochure is published annually in Japanese and English and distributed to UNESCO headquarters and field offices, Category 2 Centres, National Commissions for UNESCO, and research institutes and universities at home and abroad. Also, the IRCI website (<https://www.irci.jp/>), Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/IRCI.Official/>) and YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@IRCI.Official>) are regularly updated to inform a wide audience about the progress of IRCI's projects, publications, and public events.

Brief History

- Oct. 2009 : Establishment of IRCI authorized by the UNESCO General Conference
- Aug. 2010 : Agreement for the establishment of IRCI concluded between the Japanese Government and UNESCO
- Mar. 2011 : Agreement for the opening of IRCI concluded between Sakai City and the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage
- Apr. 2011 : Establishment of the preparatory office for IRCI
- Oct. 2011 : Official opening of IRCI
- Dec. 2018 : Agreement for the continuation of IRCI concluded between the Japanese Government and UNESCO
- Mar. 2019 : Agreement for the continuation of IRCI concluded between Sakai City and the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage