

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 improving the inheritance tax system to make donations of objects easier.

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

■ Acquisition

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

Number of Items in the Museum Collections

(Entries)

Total			Tokyo National Museum			Kyoto National Museum			Nara National Museum			Kyushu National Museum		
Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties	Total	National Treasures	Important Cultural Properties
128,208	134	997	117,460	89	643	7,977	29	202	1,893	13	113	878	3	39

Nara National Research Institute holds 1 National Treasure and 4 Important Cultural Properties. (Figures as of March 31, 2018)

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
12,240	196	1,196	3,109	55	260	6,235	86	620	1,962	53	304	934	2	12

(Figures as of March 31, 2018)

■ 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 are constantly striving to make our museums more visitor-friendly by extending 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 2017)

Total	Tokyo National Museum	Kyoto National Museum	Nara National Museum	Kyushu National Museum
4,728,996	2,569,585	941,931	549,211	668,269



Kyoto National Museum: 120th Anniversary Commemorative Special Exhibition of National Treasures: Masterpieces of Japan (October 3-November 26, 2017)



Special Exhibition on the Occasion of the 130th Anniversary of Thailand-Japan Diplomatic Relations: *Japanese Art: Belief and Life* (at the National Museum Bangkok; December 27, 2017- February 18, 2018)

(3) Education

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.

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

We also utilize the internet to disseminate information about cultural properties, and publicize our exhibitions and educational activities through the collection, publication, and display of various types of information.



The Second Volunteer Festival (Nara National Museum)



Feature Exhibition: *Aquarium at the Kyoto National Museum: What Kind of Fish Can You Find?* - Gallery Talk (Kyoto National Museum)

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

We conduct surveys and research relating to the collection, preservation, and exhibition of tangible cultural properties, as well as educational activities, on a systematic basis; organize international symposiums 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.



Research on the preservation and utilization of underwater archaeological sites (Kyushu National Museum)

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

We loan items from our collections to museums in Japan and abroad, while giving consideration to the states of preservation of the items in question, so that they may be viewed more widely by both domestic and international audiences. We are also actively engaged in providing guidance and advice to other museums and in the exchange of information, as well as working to develop a disaster risk mitigation network for cultural properties.



International Symposium: "Reinventing Japanese Art Through Museum Experiences" (January 12–13, 2018; Tokyo National Museum)

(6) The Promotion of Cultural Properties

In July 2018, the National Center for the Promotion of Cultural Properties was formally established at the headquarters of the Independent Administrative Institution National Institutes for Cultural Heritage, to serve as the national center for the display and utilization of Japan's cultural heritage.

The Center will be focused on both the preservation and the effective utilization of cultural heritage. Besides working together with private-sector business enterprises and other groups to develop new ways of utilizing cultural heritage, the Center will also work to strengthen support for museums, art galleries, etc. in every region of Japan and in other countries, thereby creating new opportunities for people both in Japan and overseas to experience Japan's priceless cultural heritage.

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 as 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.



Cleaning oil stains – Research and practical implementation (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)



Field survey in the gardens of Hokkeji Temple, a designated site of Scenic Beauty (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 for the development of new techniques for cultural property research, making use of the latest scientific and technological developments, and 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.



Investigation of the plaster layer of the Takamatsuzuka mural paintings using terahertz imaging technique

(3) International Collaboration Relating to the Preservation of Cultural Heritage

We promote the acquisition and analysis of information from abroad regarding cultural heritage, and also promote cooperative programs for the protection of this heritage. Additionally, we create human resources development and technology transfer programs for the conservation and restoration of cultural properties. These programs involve training and the dispatch of specialists. All of the aforementioned endeavors—which are pursued while utilizing the knowledge, technology, and experience that Japan has 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 for the protection of intangible cultural heritage endangered by natural disasters and other threats, and promote protection of this heritage on an international scale. Through such activities for the protection of humanity's shared assets, we contribute to cultural exchange between countries and to mutual understanding.



International Symposium: "Global Perspectives on Intangible Cultural Heritage: Local Communities, Researchers, States and UNESCO" (International Research Center for Intangible Cultural Heritage in the Asia-Pacific Region)

(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 symposiums, 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.



51st Open Lecture: "The Path from Form and to Form" (Tokyo National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

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

While contributing to the enhancement of knowledge and techniques through the implementation of training tailored to the needs of local government authorities by making effective use of the results obtained in past surveys and research, we also undertake cultivation of 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.



Specialist training for cultural properties preservation staff: "Conservation Science IV (Archeological Remains and Stone-built Cultural Properties) Course" in progress (Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)

(6) National Task Force for the Cultural Heritage Disaster Risk Mitigation Network (CH-DRM Net), Japan

In order to safeguard cultural heritage from the various types of natural disasters that have been occurring so frequently in recent years, we enhance collaboration with participating organizations in the CH-DRM Net and local government authorities. We have been undertaking research on emergency treatments for disaster-affected cultural properties, and organizing awareness-raising activities to improve the general public's understanding of cultural heritage disaster risk mitigation. When a disaster occurs, we obtain the necessary information as quickly as possible through coordination with local government authorities and 24 participating organizations in Japan; working closely with the Agency for Cultural Affairs, we dispatch experts and provide information with the aim of minimizing the damage to cultural heritage. We provide advice based on our research into emergency treatments, and review these treatment methods as necessary, working to further strengthen cultural heritage disaster risk mitigation through the holding of symposiums and by organizing training activities and other programs for cultural heritage officials at local government authorities.



Training in the implementation of emergency treatments for water-damaged paper materials (Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties)