

II. Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory

1. National Inventory

A. Inventory Information

There are three national inventories;

- 1) Important Intangible Cultural Properties,
- 2) Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties,
- 3) Selected Conservation Techniques

*For the details, see Annex.B-1

*Database of the inventories is also available in the following website;

http://kunishitei.bunka.go.jp/bsys/index_pc.asp

In addition to the national inventories, 47 Prefectures, and approximately 1,740 Shi-Cho-Son (市町村, Cities, Towns, Villages) has their own inventories. These inventories are made according to the national Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties. The numbers of the designated properties of prefectures and Shi-Cho-Son are as follows (as of May 2013);

Categories	Prefecture	Shi-Cho-Son	Total Number
Intangible Cultural Property	171	483	654
Intangible Folk Cultural Property	1,628	6,245	7,873
Selected Conservation Techniques	34	25	59

*General outlines of some local properties can be found in the following website;

<http://bunka.nii.ac.jp/jp/region/index.html>

However, these inventories are individually managed by each prefecture, namely Shi-Cho-Son, and therefore national government does not grasp the whole situation. Thus, below is the information regarding national inventory.

B. Designated Heritage

B.1) Categories

(1) Intangible Cultural Property

Intangible Cultural Property under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Property, is defined as “drama, music, craft techniques, and other intangible cultural products, which possess a high historical or artistic value for Japan.”

Two fields among Intangible Cultural Property are;

- i) performing arts
- ii) craft techniques

The following are the examples of Important Intangible Cultural Properties among above mentioned fields.

i) Performing Arts

-Gagaku (雅楽) *Gagaku* refers to music and dance that came to Japan from China and Korea around the Nara Period (710-793 AD), and to music and dance which developed in Japan based on those, as well as to ancient music of Japan. *Gagaku* has been performed chiefly at ceremonies at court or at shrines and temples.

-Nohgaku (能楽) *Nohgaku* flourished in the Muromachi Period (1392-1573). It consists of a combination of Noh, which expresses dramatic content through highly condensed and formalized movements to the accompaniment of flutes sand drums, and humorous *Kyogen* plays.

-Ningyo-Johruri Bunraku (人形浄瑠璃文楽) *Ningyo-Johruri Bundaku*, which flourished in the 18th century, grew out of an older tradition of puppet theatre. The *gidayu-bushi* story teller is accompanied by *shamisen* music, while the characters are played by puppets. Each puppet is manipulated by three

handlers, who work together to produce delicate, sensitive expressions of emotion.

-Kabuki (歌舞伎) *Kabuki* began in the early Edo Period (1603-1868) through the innovative combination of various existing forms of music and performing arts. It is distinguished by *onna-gata* (male actors performing female roles), formalized movements, and picturesque stage sets, and became immensely popular among the common people during the Edo Period.

-Kumi Odori (組踊) *KumiOdori* was established as a performing art in Okinawa during the reign of the Ryukyu dynasty in the early 18th century. Drawing on performing arts from both Japan and China, it tells a story through speech, song, and dance to the accompaniment of Okinawa's distinctive traditional music.

-Music (音楽) Of Japanese traditional music, the following items have each received individual recognition: “*Shaku-hachi*” (playing the bamboo recorder), “*So-kyoku*” (music accompanied by the 13-stringed instrument called *So*, or to the three-stringed *shamisen*). Among the wide variety of *shamisen* music such as “*nagautasongs*”, “*nagautashamisen*”, “*nagautanarimono*”, “*gidayu-bushi johruri*”, and “*gidayu-bushi shamisen*”, separate designations have been made for the techniques of singers and of *shamisen* players. The unique music of the Okinawa Prefecture region is also designated as “Ryukyu Classical Music”. Collective recognitions include the designation of “*Gidayu-bushi*”, “*Tokiwazu-bushi*”, and “*Itchu-bushi*”, and recognition of highly-skilled singers and *shamisen* players who belong to preservation organizations as Holders.

-Buyo Dance (舞踊) Individual recognition for *buyo* has been given to “*Kabuki Buyo*” (a dance technique which grew out of *Kabuki*, and later came to be performed independently), which was designated, and those who embody an outstanding level of skill have been recognized.

-Engei (演芸) Individual recognitions among the *Engei* arts include: Classical *rakugo* (a story-telling art established in the Edo period (17th-19th

century), where a single narrator takes on the role of different characters to tell stories of everyday life of ordinary people, or comical tales), and *kodan* (in which an individual story-teller narrates stories about heroes and other tales, carrying on a tradition inherited from the middle ages). These are designated and those who embody an outstanding level of skill are recognized.

ii) Craft techniques

-Ceramics (陶芸) This is the technique of making ceramics, porcelain, stoneware, or pottery. Potter's clay is used as the main material. There are several ways of shaping the clay, including on a potter's wheel, slab-building, or hand-pinching. The objects is glazed if necessary, and then fired. Distinctive pottery techniques have developed in various regions of Japan based on the characteristics of local material and techniques.

-Textile (染織 : Weaving, Dyeing, Embroidery, and others) These are the techniques of weaving thread on a loom, dyeing using various materials, embroidery, and other techniques. The wide variety of textile materials in Japan reflects the climate of the various regions, and diverse dyeing and weaving techniques utilizing these materials have been passed down through the generations.

-Lacquer work (漆芸) In this craft technique, *urushi* (lacquer sap) collected from the *urushi* (lacquer) tree and refined, is used to make craft objects. Techniques include those which bring out the beauties of the lacquer itself, as well as "*Maki-e*", "*Raden*", "*Chin-kin*", and various other decorative techniques to elaborate lacquer work.

-Metalwork (金工) In this technique, the unique properties of metal, the fact that it can be melted, and its ductility, are utilized to make objects. The main metalwork techniques in Japan, namely casting, forging, and chasing, developed using the five major metals of gold, silver, copper, tin, and iron, as well as alloys made from combinations of these.

-Wood and Bamboo work (木竹工) The rich natural environment of Japan with its wide variety of trees and bamboo is reflected in this craft.

-Doll-making (人形) In ancient times, dolls were made as toys, or as religious objects, but in the early modern age, they came to be produced and appreciated as decorative objects, and became more sophisticated artistically.

-Paper-making (手漉和紙) The traditional techniques of paper making have existed in Japan since ancient times, using bark fibre from trees such as paper mulberry or *ganpi* as the material.

(2) Intangible Folk Cultural Property

Under the Law, “folk cultural properties” are defined as “manners and customs related to food, clothing, and housing, to occupations, to religious faiths, and to annual events; folk performing arts; folk techniques together with clothes, utensils, houses, and other objects used therefor, which are indispensable for the understanding of transition in the modes of life of the Japanese people.”

Among those properties, following categories are regarded as Intangible Folk Cultural Property;

- i) manners and customs
- ii) folk performing arts
- iii) folk techniques

*Among folk cultural properties, “apparel and other objects” used in “manners and customs,” “folk performing arts,” and “folk techniques” are recognized as Tangible Folk Cultural Properties.

The following are the examples of Important Intangible Folk Cultural Properties among above mentioned fields.

i) Manners and Customs

-Production and livelihood (生産・生業) Customs or ceremonies related to work or activities such as fishing or farming which support daily life.

-Rites of passage (人生儀礼) Ceremonies and events that mark some important stages in life, from birth to death.

-Entertainment & competition (娯楽・競技) Activities that have been carried on as entertainment in the course of everyday life, and games in which winning or losing is taken as a sign of good or bad fortune.

-Social life (knowledge of folk customs) (社会生活 (民俗知識)) Ceremonies which are carried on by social groups or which are based on traditional wisdom.

-Annual events (年中行事) Events which are held on an annual basis, traditionally repeated at the same season or date every year.

-Festivals (Beliefs) (祭礼 (信仰)) Events or customs related to religious beliefs of the people in Buddha or other gods, and shrine festivals featuring parade floats.

ii) Folk performing arts

-Kagura (神楽) *Kagura* is a general term for performing arts dating back to ancient times in which dances are performed to call the gods, and to pray for things such as a bountiful harvest and freedom from disease.

-Dengaku (田楽) *Dengaku* is a general term for folk performing arts related to rice cultivation, including performances by local people to pray for a bountiful harvest, and performances which carry on the tradition popularized by professional entertainers from the late Heian to the Kamakura period (12th century).

-Furyu (風流) *Furyu*, which means elegant and sophisticated, is a general term for folk performing arts in which groups of dancers in lavish attire carry on popular traditions from the 12th to 16th centuries. The dances are performed to pray for rain, for a rich harvest, or to honor ancestors.

-Katarimono & Shukufuku-gei (語り物・祝福芸) *Katarimono* and *shukufuku-gei* refer generally to performing arts in which a series of stories is told, or auspicious words are chanted on occasions such as New Year to pray for good fortune. This stems from the old Japanese belief that words spoken will be realized.

-Ennen & Okonai (延年・おこない) These performing arts carry on the tradition of grand performances that were held during religious ceremonies at large temples between the late Heian Period and Kamakura to Muromachi periods (12th -15th centuries).

-Torai-gei & Butai-gei (渡来芸・舞台芸) These include various performing arts that were brought to Japan from China and other countries in ancient times, as well as arts originally performed on stage, such as *Nohgaku*, puppet theatre, and *Kabuki*, that have been carried on as local folk performing arts.

-Others Other designations include traditions in which various performing arts are carried on collectively, and performed in succession, as well as others that cannot be classified into the categories above.

iii) Folk techniques

Techniques which have been carried on in close connection with activities related to production and daily life in a community, such as traditional occupations as well as clothing, food, and housing.

- **Production and livelihood** (生産生業)
- **Clothing, food, and housing** (衣食住)

(3) Selected Conservation Techniques

Techniques or skills necessary for the preservation of Cultural Property is defined as Conservation Techniques under the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties; “The Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology may select, as Selected Conservation Techniques, such traditional techniques or skills as necessary for the preservation of cultural properties and for which preservation measures need to be taken.”

Since most of the works of art and architectural structures in Japan are made of relatively weak materials such as wood, paper, and lacquer, they have been preserved through appropriate repairs carried out regularly over time. It follows that in order to preserve these intangible cultural properties for the future, specifically those designated Tangible Cultural Properties, highly competent craftsmen who are able to perform appropriate repairs on a regular basis are needed. Moreover, special implements and materials are also necessary for repair; hence, techniques for producing and making such tools and materials are needed. In addition, for Intangible Cultural Properties, techniques involved in producing and repairing musical instruments, costumes, and stage props are needed for the transmission and performance of performing arts. Similarly, techniques for making the tools used to produce objects, and techniques for the production of materials, are indispensable in the field of craft techniques.

The following are the examples of Selected Preservation techniques.

i) Conservation Techniques for Tangible Cultural Properties

-Roof-thatching (*kayabuki*) “*Kayabuki*” refers to the technique of thatching a roof using reeds or straw, such as *kaya* (*micanthus*) or *yoshi* (ditch reed). Thatch has been used throughout Japan since ancient times in a variety of structures ranging from private houses to temple and shrine architecture, and the technique has been passed down to the present day. Many different technical styles developed, with regional variations that are still carried on to produce the thatched roofing symbolic of the traditional landscape in Japan.

-Making brushes used in mounting (表具用打刷毛製作) These are the techniques used in making brushes which are indispensable for applying glue rapidly and evenly when backing a painting or piece of calligraphy on silk or paper (applying paper or cloth to the back in order to strengthen it), or when preparing a mount.

ii) Conservation Techniques for Intangible Cultural Properties

-Making and repair of wind instruments for *Gagaku* (雅楽管楽器製作修理) These are making and repair techniques for wind instruments used in the Important Intangible Cultural Property *Gagaku*, namely *sho*, *hichiriki*, the *ryuteki* recorder, *komabue*, and *kagurabue*.

-Producing and refining Japanese lacquer (日本産漆生産・精製) These are techniques for producing the materials indispensable for the art of making Japanese lacquer work. Lacquer trees are cultivated, then the lacquer sap is extracted from the trunk of the grown tree and refined.

B.2) Criteria

(1) Intangible Cultural Properties

Important items among intangible cultural properties are designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property according to the Law for the Protection of Cultural Property. At the same time, Japanese government recognizes as ‘Holders’ or ‘Holding Groups’ those who embody to an outstanding degree the relevant skills or crafts, in order to promote the transmission of traditional skills and crafts.

The categories and criteria of recognitions of Holders and Holding Groups are as follows;

Holder:

Individual Recognition: Those who embody outstanding skill in performing arts designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property; those who possess outstanding skill in craft techniques designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property.

*Recognized Holders are popularly known as “Living National Treasure,” and the system for the protection of Intangible Cultural Property has become widely known through this familiar term.

Collective Recognition: Members of a group consisting of two or more people who together embody outstanding skill in the performing arts; or

members of a group of people who possess outstanding skill in a craft technique with unique characteristics shared by two or more.

Holding Groups:

Recognition of Holding Groups: group mainly consisted of holders of a technique which by its nature is not characterized by strong distinctions between individual holders

These three categories of recognition were devised in order to allow appropriate support measures to be put in place, suited to the skills to be protected. The categories apply as follows.

In Individual Recognition, Important Intangible Cultural Property are individually designated, and, for each technique, those holders who embody or possess the skill to an outstanding degree are recognized individually as holders.

Collective Recognition is also recognition of holders; however, this is not separate recognition of individual performers, but a collective recognition of a number of performers. It applies to cases where the designated Intangible Cultural Property to be protected. As with the performing arts of *Nohgaku*, *Kabuki*, or *Ningyo Johruri Bunraku*, of two or more specialized performers, such as puppet-masters who only act or manipulate the puppets, performers who only sing, or performers who only play musical instruments, each of whom displays individuality, and who work together as a whole. Not every performer involved with the particular artistic technique is recognized, rather, out of the many performers, those who possess outstanding skill in the technique are recognized. Holders who are so recognized become members of the group of holders.

Recognition of Holding Groups applies to cases where a technique, such as the preparation of pottery clay or gaze, is displayed by many craftspeople, and, although the technique requires a high degree of mastery, there is little need to display individual characteristic. Rather than recognizing each

holder individually, groups made up mainly of holders of such technique are recognized as Holding Groups. Regarding admission or resignation from membership, the independent judgment of each group is respected.

*For more details regarding the criteria, see Annex B-2.

(2) Intangible Folk Cultural Properties

Items that are especially important in understanding transition of Japanese lifestyles among intangible folk cultural properties are designated as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property according to the Law for the Protection of Cultural Property.

In contrast to intangible cultural properties, where designation of skills and recognition of holders or holding groups of such skills are carried out simultaneously, in the case of intangible folk cultural properties, there is only designation. This is because intangible folk cultural properties are in fact life styles and customs of ordinary people, and their transmission is tightly interwoven with their daily lives. Hence, in many respects, it would be impractical to specify successors to carry on these traditions. If a role in an annual festivity or folk performing art must be performed by a child, for example, the child must be replaced by another of the right age each year. Certain groups, however, are specified as “protection groups” carrying out activities for protection and transmission of the relevant Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property, and subsidies are provided for these activities.

*For more details regarding the criteria, see Annex B-2.

(3) Selected Conservation Techniques

The traditional techniques and skills that are indispensable for the preservation of cultural properties are at serious risk of extinction due to social and economic changes, decline in demand, and changes in industrial structure and social conventions. The national government has therefore selected techniques and skills which are particularly in need of preservation measures, as Selected Conservation Techniques, and promotes their preservation by recognizing individuals who have mastered the techniques and skills, and who have a thorough understanding of them, as holder, and

by recognizing as Preservation Organizations those groups that are dedicated to the preservation of Selected Conservation Techniques, and which are able to carry out appropriate projects for that purpose.

B.3) Designated heritage items:

B-4) Heritage associated items

For B.3~B.4, See Annex. B-3

B.5) Provisional designated items

Not Applicable

C. Reference materials

-The Agency for Cultural Affairs Office (2006), *Intangible Cultural Heritage: Protection System for Intangible Cultural Heritage in Japan*, Tokyo
(http://www.bunka.go.jp/bunkazai/pamphlet/pdf/pamphlet_en_05.pdf)

- The Agency for Cultural Affairs Office (2012), *無形文化財民俗文化財文化財保存技術指定等一覧*, Tokyo