

## V. The Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

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### 1. Inscribed item

#### A. *Nohgaku* theatre (能楽)

##### 1) Heritage information

History, background: *Nohgaku* theatre had its heyday in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but actually originated in the eighth century when the *Sangaku* was transmitted from China to Japan. At the time, the term *Sangaku* referred to various types of performance featuring acrobats, song and dance as well as comic sketches. Its subsequent adaption to Japanese society led to its assimilation of other traditional art forms. Today, *Nohgaku* is the principal form of Japanese theatre and has influenced the puppet theatre as well as Kabuki.

##### 2) Relevant information

Year of inscription: 2008

##### 3) Practitioners

See Annex B-3

##### 4) Relevant events

Performance held at National Noh Theatre and others.

##### 5) Explanation

Often based on tales from traditional literature, *Nohgaku* theatre integrates masks, costumes and various props in a dance-based performance. Moreover, this theatre requires highly trained actors and musicians. *Nohgaku* encompasses two types of theatre: Noh and *Kyogen*, which are performed in the same space. The stage projects into the audience and is linked by a walkway to a “hall of mirrors” backstage. In Noh, emotions are represented by stylized conventional gestures. The hero is often a supernatural being who

takes on human form to narrate a story. The distinctive masks for which Noh is renowned are used for the roles of ghosts, women, children and old people. *Kyogen*, on the other hand, relies less on the use of masks and is derived from the humorous plays of the *Sangaku*, as reflected in its comic dialogue. The text is written in ancient language and vividly describes the ordinary people of the twelfth to sixteenth centuries.

#### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Japanese Classical Drama and Modern literature”, 1999, Izumi Shoin.

#### **8) Safeguarding measures**

In 1957 the Japanese Government designated *Nohgaku* as an Important Intangible Cultural Property, which affords a degree of legal protection to the tradition as well as its most accomplished practitioners. The National Noh Theatre was founded in 1983 and stages regular performances. It also organizes courses to train actors in the leading roles of the *Nohgaku*.

\*For other relevant information, see Chapter II. 1. National inventory.

### **B. *Ningyo Jōhūri Bunraku* puppet theatre (人形浄瑠璃文楽)**

#### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: Ranking with *Noh* and *Kabuki* as one of Japan’s foremost stage arts, the *Ningyo Jōhūri Bunraku* puppet theatre is a blend of sung narrative, instrumental accompaniment and puppet drama. This theatrical form emerged during the early Edo period (ca. 1600) when puppetry was coupled with *Jōhūri*, a popular fifteenth-century narrative genre. The plots related in this new form of puppet theatre derived from two principal sources: historical plays set in feudal times (*Jidaimono*) and contemporary dramas exploring the conflict between affairs of the heart and social obligation (*Sewamono*). *Ningyo Jōhūri* had adopted its characteristic staging style by the mid eighteenth century. Three puppeteers, visible to the audience, manipulate large articulated puppets on the stage behind a waist high screen. The genre

acquired its present full name *Ningyo Johruri Bunraku* – in the late nineteenth century, a period in which the *Bunrakuza* was a leading theatre. Today, the pre-eminent venue is the National *Bunraku* Theatre in Osaka, but its highly reputed troupe also performs in Tokyo and regional theatres. Approximately 160 works out of the 700 plays written during the Edo period have remained in today's repertory. Performances, once lasting the entire day, have been shortened from the original six to two or three acts.

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2008

## **3) Practitioners**

See Annex B-3

## **4) Relevant events**

Performance held at National *Bunraku* Theatre and others.

## **5) Explanation**

From a projecting elevated platform (*yuka*), the narrator (*tayuh*) recounts the action while a musician provides musical accompaniment on the three-stringed spike lute (*shamisen*). The *tayuh* plays all the characters, both male and female, and uses different voices and intonations to suit each role and situation. Although the *tayuh* “reads” from a scripted text, there is ample room for improvisation. The three puppeteers must carefully co-ordinate their movements to ensure that the puppet's gestures and attitudes appear realistic. The puppets, replete with elaborate costumes and individualized facial expressions, are handcrafted by master puppet makers.

## **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file

## **7) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Japanese Classical Drama and Modern literature”, 1999, Izumi Shoin.

## **8) Safeguarding measures**

*Ningyo Johruri Bunraku* was designated Important Intangible Cultural Property in 1955. Nowadays, it attracts numerous young performers, and the

aesthetic qualities and dramatic content of the plays continue to appeal to modern audiences.

\*For other relevant information, see Chapter II. 1. National Inventory.

### C. *Kabuki* theatre (歌舞伎)

#### 1) Heritage information

History, background: *Kabuki* is a Japanese traditional theatre form, which originated in the Edo period at the beginning of the seventeenth century and was particularly popular among townspeople. Originally, both men and women acted in *Kabuki* plays, but eventually only male actors performed the plays: a tradition that has remained to the present day. Male actors specialized in women's roles are called *onnagata*. Two other major role types are *aragoto* (rough style) and *wagoto* (soft style).

#### 2) Relevant information

Year of inscription: 2008

#### 3) Practitioners

See Annex B-3

#### 4) Relevant events

National Theatre and *Kabuki Za*, etc.

#### 5) Explanation

*Kabuki* plays are about historical events and moral conflict in relationships of the heart. The actors speak in a monotone voice and are accompanied by traditional instruments. The *Kabuki* stage is equipped with several gadgets, such as revolving stages and trapdoors through which the actors can appear and disappear. Another specialty of the *Kabuki* stage is a footbridge (*hanamichi*) that extends into the audience. Important characteristics of *Kabuki* theatre include its particular music, costumes, stage devices and props as well as specific plays, language and acting styles, such as the *mie*, in which the actor holds a characteristic pose to establish his character. *Kesho*, the particular make-up, provides an element of style easily recognizable even by those unfamiliar with the art form. After 1868, when Japan opened to Western influence, actors strove to heighten the reputation of *Kabuki* among the upper classes and to adapt the traditional styles to modern tastes. Today, *Kabuki* is the most popular of the traditional styles of Japanese drama.

## 6) Information resource

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

## 7) Survey study project carried out by scholars

Refer to “Index of Japanese Classical Drama and Modern literature”, 1999, Izumi Shoin.

\*For other relevant information, see Chapter II. 1. National Inventory.

## D. Akiu no *Taue Odori* (秋保の田植踊)

### 1) Heritage information

History, background: “Akiu no *Taue Odori*” is cultural heritage transmitted today with its dances begun in the late seventeenth century in the region, wishing for an abundant harvest of the rice cropping. The rice is a principal foodstuff to Japanese since old time. Therefore, its abundant harvest was a really serious wish to them, quite differently from today’s circumstances. The weather immeasurably affects the rice cropping or agriculture in general. As affect of the weather is unavoidable, they prayed for a good harvest by simulating an annual process of the rice cropping before actual cultivation. In an entire process of the rice cropping, *taue*, i.e. transplanting of seedlings, is especially important; they first seed rice plant in a small section, and when seedlings grow a little, they transplant seedlings onto a wider rice field filled with water. Such transplantation is a traditional knowledge for the prevention of pests and the alleviation of temperature changes.

“Akiu no *Taue Odori*” is a simulation dance for an abundant harvest in order to pray for it, believing that a previous celebration of a possibly abundant harvest of the year may secure an actual good harvest in autumn. The people has sophisticated the dance and developed it to a more spectacular performing art. Becoming a spectacular performing art, it has been transmitted from generation to generation by the people in the communities. Until the early twentieth century, it was performed on every January 15<sup>th</sup> in each community. Because of such an entertaining element as a beautiful appearance in addition to praying for an abundant harvest, they were often invited by other

neighboring communities to perform there. The number of dancers at that time allegedly transcended fifty.

Later, the opportunity of invited performance of “Akiu no *Taue Odori*” declined in number, the season of performance shifted from a severe winter to April or May or to autumn, and the number of dancers dropped to approximately ten. However, it has continued to be performed every year up to-day.

Area: Akiu Town, Taihaku-ku, Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: “Akiu no *Taue Odori*” is a folk performing art transmitted by ordinary local people for a long time and still performed to-day. The transmitters’, or practitioners’, groups of the performance and the people living in those communities are proud of it before other communities’ groups or societies, and they consider it to be one of their own distinctive cultures. The transmission and the performance of “Akiu no *Taue Odori*” in front of the public would reconfirm the identity of the transmitting groups and communities.

Preservation association

Association for the Preservation of Akiu no *Taue Odori*

Address: 35, Baba Azamachiminami, Akiu-machi, Taihaku-ku, Sendai, Miyagi-ken, 982-0244, Japan

The Association was established in 1972 for the preservation and transmission of the performance. It currently has ninety-two members and regularly trains successors for the public performance in the community every year and at any other place throughout Japan at the request.

- activities: The Association give intensive lessons for one week in every April or December to each community. In a certain community it gives lessons to pupils for four months at a local elementary school for the popularization. It also holds the public performance at a local theatre at the request of the Sendai City administration, in addition to the performance within the community every year.

## **3) Practitioners**

It has been transmitted by the people in the three communities of Akiu Town within Taihaku-ku, Sendai City, Miyagi Prefecture, located in the northern part of the main island of Japan.

#### **4) Explanation**

“Akiu no *Taue Odori*”, i.e. the ritual dance for the rice cropping in the Akiu Town, has been transmitted by the people in the three communities, and is one of so-called “folk performing arts” openly performed as an annual event in this region. It belongs to the category of ‘Dengaku’ among folk performing arts regarding the rice cropping.

The music for this rice cropping dance is played with big and small drums, flutes, and songs. The dancers are two or four males, depending on a case, as facilitators, and currently about ten females. Females are well dressed up with colourful and fashionable *kimono* and wear a headdress decorated with artificial flowers. Dances are performed outdoors by females aligning in a line, or sometimes in two lines depending on the space and the number of dancers.

The repertoires transmitted to-day are six to ten depending on communities. Each repertoire begins with blessing terms by facilitators who appear from both ends of a line. Dancers perform to the music, alternatively holding fans or sticks with bells on it according to a repertoire. The choreography of these dances reminds people there of the rice cropping. During dances they pray for the best harvest, believing that thus celebrating an abundant harvest in advance may make it true in that autumn; the dance is to bless people. The performance is characterized with facilitators’ progressing and its quite beautiful dances.

#### **5) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **6) Safeguarding projects**

The transmission faced the crisis of distinction because of the change of people’s consciousness, the decrease in invitation from other neighbouring communities, the performance season’s shift from cold winter to spring or autumn in the transmitting community, and the fewer and fewer dancers under the social major transition. In these circumstances, however, the transmitters endeavoured to succeed and transmit the performance as one

characteristic culture which could strongly combine the people of the communities.

Indication of the importance of “Akiu no *Taue Odori*” by people outside the community reinforced their endeavor to transmit it. The modern academic researches on folklore and folk performing arts began in the early twentieth century in Japan. Researchers were also interested in “Akiu no *Taue Odori*”; they went there for constant researches on it, made clear the importance in the history of Japanese performing arts and its folkloric characters, and insisted upon the importance to transmit it to the future. Such outcomes of researches motivated successors very much to continue to transmit.

#### **7) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **8) Safeguarding measures**

The local government of Miyagi Prefecture designated it as intangible cultural property of Prefecture, and in 1976 the National Government designated it as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. Such designation as cultural property means an official recognition of the importance of the performance. Thus, indication of the importance by non-transmitters or by non-transmitting communities motivates the transmitters very much to continue their transmission.

Indication of the importance as mentioned above has a significant impact upon not only performers but also the people who sustain transmission. “Akiu no *Taue Odori*” is also sustained by many people inside and outside the community who understand activities of transmitters and support the transmission and the public performance of it. Participation of more and more supporters is indispensable to better transmission to the future.

- a. Safeguard measures by Sendai City: The administration of Sendai City, that was Akiu Town at that time, carried out video recording projects for the preservation and transmission of “Akiu no *Taue Odori*” with the subsidies from the National Government and Prefecture in 1970s. This recording is useful to the transmitters as an instruction material for their successors and for themselves, which enables them to secure the transmission of it more. The administration also subsidizes to the

Association for the Preservation of Akiu no *Taue Odori* every year for the preservation and transmission of it.

- b. Measures by Miyagi Prefecture: The local government of Miyagi Prefecture supports the recording project at the request of the Association or the Sendai City administration. It also subsidizes to the Association every year. It further regularly organizes the Local Festival of Folk Performing Arts for the purpose of the preservation and popularization of them.
- c. Measures by the National Government: The National Government supports recording and documentation projects at the request of the Association, the Sendai City administration, and the local government of Miyagi Prefecture. It also subsidizes “Hokkaido and Tohoku Blocks Folk Performing Arts Festival” and “Urgent Research on Folk Performing Arts in Iwate Prefecture”, both of which are held by the local government of Miyagi Prefecture, for the purpose of the preservation, transmission, and popularization of folk performing arts.

## 9) Community involvement

Before its’ designation, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a preservation organization.

In making the nomination to be inscribed on the Representative List, the Government has attained all the consents and full cooperation from the communities or groups concerned and local government where the element is located.

## E. *Chakkirako* (チャッキラコ)

### 1) Heritage information

History. background: As the people of this community introduced dances which were popular in other local communities, *Chakkirako* allegedly began by the mid-eighteen century at latest and was performed by girls as seen today. Some of the dances resemble those performed in the twentieth to fourteenth centuries. The community transmitting *Chakkirako* is located at the tip of the

peninsular and developed as a town of a fishery harbour as well as a military port since the twelfth century. It is also a harbour from a storm for civil ships of other areas. The repertoires transmitted today are six, as generally called *Chakkirako*. Some of them were popular dances in the twelfth to fourteenth centuries, and others were created in the early seventeenth century. Mariners visiting the harbour demonstrated dances of other local communities, and the people of this community transformed them with their ideas into the dance to mainly celebrate a happy new year. Only in the early twentieth century its aspect of praying to a deity was emphasized while dancing. Girls wore a shrine-style *kimono* at that time. Back to the basics later, they resumed to wear a colorful *kimono* to-day. Until the late twentieth century, *Chakkirako* was performed by the limited people of the small community. Then, people in the surrounding communities have also participated in its transmission and open performance.

Area: Nakasaki and Hanakure Districts, Misaki, Miura City, Kanagawa Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

• activities: Today, *Chakkirako* is certainly performed to the public on January 15<sup>th</sup> every year. Therefore, the performers concentrate on practices and rehearsals from one week before the day. Elderly women instructed girls, and thus it is transmitted from generation to generation.

## **3) Practitioners**

*Chakkirako* is a folk performing art transmitted by ordinary local people for a long time and still performed to-day. Its music and dances retain old performing arts which were once popular in local communities. Through this performance can be found the Japanese sentiment on performing arts which was gradually formed up for a long time. The background of the transmission and the performance of *Chakkirako* indicate the interaction between a local community and performing arts.

It has been transmitted by girls and elderly women of the limited community of Misaki in Miura City. The transmitters of *Chakkirako* are currently twenty-

five. The transmitters', or practitioners', groups of the performance and the people living in those communities are proud of it before other communities' groups or societies, and they consider it to be one of their own distinctive cultures. The transmission and the performance of *Chakkirako* before the public would reconfirm the identity of the transmitting groups and communities, and thus contribute to the continuity of those groups and communities.

#### **4) Relevant events**

The Association accepts invitations to perform, not only at local events, but also at Folk Cultural Festivals or other events, as well as introducing it on television and in newspapers. This aims to ensure the value of *Chakkirako* as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property for the Japanese people and to promote the enthusiasm of transmission for future generations.

The board of education of Miura City organize the Miura City Hometown Performing Arts Festival and invite the preservation organization to participate in the festival for the promotion and utilization of their property, and also they held *Chakkirako* Exhibition in 2008 for further understanding and awareness of *Chakkirako*.

#### **5) Explanation**

*Chakkirako* is one of performing arts transmitted by the local people openly performed as an annual event or a festival in the community. Among folk performing arts, it belongs to the category of '*furyu*' with colourful costumes and disguised dances.

The dance of *Chakkirako* is performed on January 15<sup>th</sup> every year at the shrine, indoors or before the houses of the community in order to celebrate a happy new year and pray for a bountiful catch of fish, an abundant harvest and prosperity of each family.

In *Chakkirako* sing five to ten women at the age from 40s to 70s while dance ten to twenty girls at the age from 5 to 12 to the songs. Some lyrics of the songs derive from popular ones of the twelfth to the fourteenth century, and others from traditional ones of the early seventeenth century. The girls are well dressed up with colourful *kimono*, which are worn on the New Year's Day or other special celebration days.

The girls dance face to face in two lines in the four repertoires out of six. They dance in a circle in another repertoire, and dance face to face or in a circle in the remaining one. They dance with one or two folding fans in their hands in the five repertoires.

In one of the face-to-face dances they dance with a thin bamboo of twenty-five centimetre length in each hand, making light sounds by clapping these two bamboos. This performing art was named *Chakkirako* after the sound of this clapping; it sounds to the people *Chakkirako*, and became popular in the mid-twentieth century. No musical instruments are used in *Chakkirako* except for these bamboos.

#### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

The transmission faced the crisis of perishment because of the change of people's consciousness, the decrease in the number of children, and also decrease of the population by moving out to other communities under the major social transition. In these circumstances, however, the transmitters endeavoured to succeed and transmit the performance as one characteristic culture which could strongly combine the people of the communities.

Indication of the importance of *Chakkirako* by people outside the community reinforced their endeavour to transmit it. The modern academic researches on folklore and folk performing arts began in the early twentieth century in Japan. Researchers were also interested in *Chakkirako* after it was performed to the public in Tokyo in 1931. The outcomes of their researches made clear its importance in the history of Japanese performing arts and its folkloric characters, motivating successors very much to continue to transmit it to the next generation.

Two different kinds of performers are required in *Chakkirako*: (i) female dancers who are under twelve-year old; (ii) senior female singers who are around 70 years old. The Association makes following efforts to secure performers.

- a. Cooperation with local primary schools: Efforts are made to keep a close contact with local elementary schools to allow them to take time off school for practice and performing days. On their graduation day from elementary schools, the Association will present letters of appreciation to dancers in front of all children as they will finish as dancers with graduation.
- b. Recruitment of singers: Aiming to ensure the preservation and transmission of Chakkirako to future generations, efforts are made to invite the past dancers or mother of dancers who are in an appropriate generation to join and practice as a singer.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The local government of Kanagawa Prefecture designated it as intangible cultural property of Prefecture in 1965. The National Government designated it as Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1970 for which a measure should be taken for recording and documentation, and later as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1976.

Such designation as cultural property means an official recognition of the importance of the performance. Thus, indication of the importance by non-transmitters or by non-transmitting communities motivates the transmitters very much to continue their transmission.

Indication of the importance as mentioned above has a significant impact upon not only performers but also the people who sustain transmission. *Chakkirako* is also sustained by many people inside and outside the community who understand activities of transmitters and support the transmission and the public performance of it. In the twentieth century *Chakkirako* was transmitted by not only the limited families but also by people of the community who regarded it as important. Participation of more and more supporters is indispensable to better transmission to the future.

- a. Safeguarding measures by the National Government: In 2000, the Association of Preservation of Folk Performing Arts in Kanagawa Prefecture recorded the nine elements of Folk Cultural Property including *Chakkirako*. This video production was partly subsidized by the National Government, and the recorded documentary film is now well-preserved.
- b. Measures by the Board of Education of Kanagawa Prefecture:
  1. The Board of Education subsidizes holding organizations of designated elements of cultural property by the National Government or prefecture, including the Association for the preservation of *Chakkirako*, to cover the cost of daily maintenance and activities for the transmission.
  2. The Board of Education encourages holding organizations to participate in cultural events or Folk Cultural Festivals to promote further awareness of and to utilize their cultural property such as *Chakkirako*.
- c. Measures by the Board of Education of Miura City:
  1. The Board of Education holds a visiting tour to the locations of cultural property in cooperation with the Association for the Preservation of *Chakkirako* on 15<sup>th</sup> January every year. It is one of their efforts to raise citizens' understanding and awareness of their hometown history and culture and to deepen their love for the hometown and for cultural property.
  2. The Board of Education subsidizes holding organizations of designated elements of cultural property for the maintenance and presentation of the elements.
  3. They introduce *Chakkirako* on the web site in Japanese, Chinese and English languages. <http://www.city.miura.kanagawa.jp/sho-gaku/tyak-irako.html>

## **10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them

including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

## **F. *Daimokutate* (題目立)**

### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: In the tradition, said to have begun in the early seventeenth century, each young person takes the role of one character from tales about wars in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. *Daimokutate* is a performing art where young people read aloud in turn the lines for each character in a tale without background music.

The repertoire of *Daimokutate* performed for the past one hundred years consists of two tales about the feud between the Genji and Heike clans which actually happened in Japan in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. These stories have eight and ten characters. Recently *Daimokutate* with fewer characters are often performed.

From the seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries, *Daimokutate* was transmitted by the twenty-two families in the Kami-fukawa community. The twenty-two families recognized the Yahashira Shrine as their guardian and constituted a community. The eldest son recognized as the heir of each family performed *Daimokutate* on the eve of the festivals of the Yahashira Shrine at the age of seventeen. Performing *Daimokutate* is a sign of formal admission to the community of the twenty-two families.

Since the twentieth century, in addition to the twenty-two families, people who worship the Yahashira Shrine have also participated in the transmission and the public performance of *Daimokutate*. If there is no young man exactly seventeen years of age in the community, these days a senior young man assumes the role instead.

Area: Nara City, Nara Prefecture

### **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of *Daimokutate*

465 Kami-Fukawa-cho, Nara, 632-0102, Japan

▪ Activities: For the performance on October 12<sup>th</sup> every year, the Association for the Preservation of *Daimokutate* decides performers for that year in August, gives them lessons every Sunday, and has rehearsals on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup>. On request, it holds special performances outside their community: namely, participation in the “Kinki, Tokai and Hokuriku Blocks Folk Performing Arts Festival” held in Kyoto in 1959 and the “All Japan Folk Performing Arts Festival” held in Tokyo in 1962.

### **3) Practitioners**

The traditional performance has been transmitted by the people in the Kami-fukawa community, Nara City, Nara Prefecture, located in the middle of mainland Japan.

*Daimokutate* is a performing art transmitted down to today by ordinary Japanese for many years, and still performed, reflecting the Japanese sense of performing arts. The Japanese concept of confirmation of a community can be found in the background of the transmission and the performance of *Daimokutate*.

There are currently fifty-seven bearers of *Daimokutate*. Members of the transmitting group and their local community recognize *Daimokutate* as part of their own excellent, distinctive culture, and take pride in it in relation to other groups and communities. Participation in the performance of *Daimokutate* once meant approval of admission to the community. Even today the transmission and the performance of *Daimokutate* allow the group and community to reconfirm their own identity, and reinforce their continuity.

### **4) Relevant events**

The “Kinki, Tokai and Hokuriku Blocks Folk Performing Arts Festival” and “Urgent Research on Folk Performing Arts in Nara Prefecture” are conducted by Nara Prefecture, and the “All Japan Folk Performing Arts Festival” held in Tokyo in order to conserve, transmit, and disseminate folk performing arts.

### **5) Explanation**

*Daimokutate* is one of the performing arts transmitted by the people of a community and performed at festivals in the community. It is further classified into the sub-category of 'story-telling and blessing performance.'

The stage is installed outside the main hall of the Yahashira Shrine in the community; a wooden board of 1.8 meter squares with a straw-made mat on it is placed within an area of approximately 3.6 meters wide and 4.5 meters deep delineated with bamboo fences of approximately 1 meter in height.

After seven o'clock in the evening, an old man guides to the stage young men singing in a line, wearing samurai clothes, and holding bows in their hands. They stand on the stage, leaving space between them, and face the centre with their backs toward the fence. When the old man calls the name of a character in a tale, the young man taking that role reads aloud a long script with a distinctive accent and intonation. No specific acting can be seen. Calling on the young men one by one, approximately twenty-six scripts are read aloud in turns. Then, one young man advances to the centre and rhythmically stamps his feet. Finally all say together the celebratory remarks, and they are guided again off the stage by the old man while singing in a line. It takes approximately one hour in total.

*Daimokutate* is a performing art carried out by a person who takes the role of a specific character and simply reads aloud with almost no acting. Currently in Japan there are no performing arts similar to this. This performing art is important in that it reminds us of the image of performing arts existing in Japan from the twelfth to around the seventeenth centuries.

*Daimokutate* constitutes of a long script with a kind of melody. Roles in the tale are assigned to young men in August, two months before the public performance, so that they can completely memorize their respective scripts; they practice under the instructions of former performers every Sunday. Every night from October 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, they gather and practice intensively. On the morning of the performance day, they make the stage and prepare for the actual performance before the public at night.

The community of Kami-fukawa which has transmitted *Daimokutate* is located deep in the mountains, and life was severe. Stronger solidarity and more

mutual cooperation were required of this community than of other communities. Thus, *Daimokutate* is recognized to be indispensable for the local solidarity, and hence it has been transmitted from generation to generation to the present day, and performed every year.

#### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

*Daimokutate* was transmitted by twenty-two families in the Kami-fukawa community from the seventeenth to the late nineteenth centuries. The eldest son recognized as the heir of a family performed *Daimokutate* at the age of seventeen. After the twentieth century, however, the transmission faced the risk of disappearance because of the change in people's consciousness, the decrease in the size of families, and movement to other communities in the context of the larger social transition. In these circumstances, however, the remaining people in the community have endeavoured to carry on and transmit *Daimokutate*.

When people outside the community pointed out the importance of *Daimokutate*, local endeavours to transmit it were reinforced. The modern academic research on folklore and folk performing arts began in the early twentieth century in Japan. Researchers were also interested in *Daimokutate*, and they went to the area in 1948 to start full-scale research on it. On the advice of the researchers, the local people performed *Daimokutate* that year at another shrine in Nara City, that is, outside their community for the first time. Then, many more people could recognize its importance in the history of Japanese performing arts and its folkloric characteristics. Such recognition by researchers motivated successors greatly to continue their transmission efforts.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to "Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature", 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The local government of Nara Prefecture designated *Daimokutate* as Intangible Cultural Property of Nara Prefecture in 1954, and the Government of Japan designated it as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1976. The designation as cultural property means an official recognition of the importance of *Daimokutate*. Thus, recognition of the importance by people not involved in the transmission, or from outside the transmitting community, greatly motivates the bearers to continue their transmission.

The administration of Nara City carried out a video recording project for *Daimokutate* in 2005, cooperating with the local government of Nara Prefecture at the request of the Association for the Preservation of *Daimokutate*. This recording is useful to the Association as instruction material for successors and valuable to researchers and protection administration staff as documentation of transmission.

- a. Measures by Nara Prefecture: The local government of Nara Prefecture supports public performances outside the community by the Association for the Preservation of *Daimokutate* at the request of the Association or of Nara City, and carries out recording and documentation projects. It also carries out, whenever necessary, research projects on folk performing arts.
- b. Measures by the National Government: The National Government carries out recording and documentation projects at the request of the Association for the Preservation of *Daimokutate*, Nara City, and Nara Prefecture.

## **10) Community involvement**

In making the nomination, the Government has attained all the consents and full cooperation from the communities or groups concerned and local government where the element is located.

## **G. Dainichido Bugaku (大日堂舞楽)**

### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: At the beginning, allegedly, people learned *bugaku*, *i.e.* a kind of dance performing art, brought by professional musicians from the then Capital City in the early eighth century. Later, Dainichido Bugaku has gotten its

unique features in its repertoires, musical instruments, and dancing style through sophistication by the local people.

Japan has the ritual dance and music, called *bugaku*, that is one of traditional performing arts. It was a performing art brought about to Japan via the ancient China or the Korean peninsula from the fifth to the ninth century, and later sophisticated, developed, and finally Japanized in its long history; it was performed at a rite or a banquet in the imperial palace. While *bugaku* has been transmitted at the political centre of each age by professional performers, it gradually permeated widely into local areas in the course of a long history of Japan, and ordinary residents in local areas learned it. As a result, *bugaku* was introduced into local festivals or events, rooted there, and respectively transformed into locally distinctive performing arts. According to a legend of Dainichido, it originates from *bugaku* performed by professionals from the then Capital City on an occasion of reconstruction of Dainichido, *i.e.* the shrine pavilion, in the early eighth century. From this legend it was later named Dainichido Bugaku. While it was transmitted in Hachimantai Town, however, it acquired new features in its repertoire, musical instrument and choreography, not found in *bugaku*.

Area: Osato, Azukizawa, Nagamine and Taniuchi districts in Hachimantai, Kazuno City, Akita Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of *Dainichido Bugaku*

16 Dounoue, Hachimantai, Kazuno-shi, Akita-ken, 018-5141, Japan

The Association for the Preservation of Dainichido Bugaku was established in 1952 for the purpose of the transmission of Dainichido Bugaku by the people of the four transmitting communities. The Association undertakes training programme of successors, or repairing and production of masks, costumes and other utilities.

▪ **Activities:** The Association for the Preservation of Dainichido Bugaku regularly gives lessons to the performers of this ritual dance. In addition to the

Shrine Festival on every January 2nd, it holds the public performance, wherever appropriate, at the request of the National Theatre in Tokyo or other organizations. The Association also undertakes academic researchers in order to transmit Dainichido Bugaku, training programme of successors, maintenance of costume and tools, and so on.

### **3) Practitioners:**

Dainichido Bugaku is a folk performing art transmitted by ordinary people in Hachimantai Town of Kazuno City, Akita Prefecture, positioned in the northern part of the main land of Japan. The transmitted repertoires are nine in total, and they are divided among the four communities for the transmission. Inside each community the elderly transmit its assigned repertoires to the younger and children. Thus, Dainichido Bugaku has been transmitted from generation to generation by the people of the four communities to-day. It is a kind of intangible cultural heritage collectively transmitted by a local community. Moreover, people are proud to perform the ritual dance. Performing the ritual dance deepens people's sense of affiliation to a local community and reinforces their identity. The performers are eager to transmit what they have inherited from the ancestors to successors.

### **4) Relevant events**

It holds the public performance, wherever appropriate, at the request of the National Theatre in Tokyo or other organizations. The Association also undertakes academic researchers in order to transmit Dainichido Bugaku, training programme of successors, maintenance of costume and tools, and so on.

### **5) Explanation**

Dainichido Bugaku is dedicated to the deity on the stage set inside Dainichido on January 2<sup>nd</sup> with a prayer for the happiness of the year; performers successively dedicate with background music of flutes and drums. It has been transmitted by the people of the four communities, *i.e.* Osato, Azukisawa, Nagamine, Taniuchi, in Hachimantai Town. Those people are recognized as assuming the special role in the transmission of the performing arts.

Dainichido Bugaku is repeatedly performed for a long time from the dawn to noon of January 2<sup>nd</sup> every year, according to the fix performance order. After

the people dedicate Dainichido Bugaku at the fixed site in each of the four communities, they proceed to Dainichido in a line. On the stage set inside Dainichido they together dedicate the nine Bugaku; in some of those Bugaku they put a head of *shishi* (an imaginary lion) on; in some they put a mask on; in others children perform. Thus, the style of Dainichido Bugaku has some variations, reflecting the local features.

Many of the residents in Hachimantai Town gather around the stage on this occasion every year, since Dainichido Bugaku is also significant to people other than the performers in that it prays for the happiness of a new year and let them reconfirm the identity with a local community.

Thus, Dainichido Bugaku reflects the history, culture and climate of Japan, and has a great meaning to today's Japan from the social and cultural viewpoints.

#### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

Although Dainichido Bugaku has been transmitted to-day by the people of the four communities, it sometimes had the crisis of perishment. The Meiji Restoration, for example, is a grave political upheaval. People faced a social disturbance and Dainichido Bugaku had to be suspended. Moreover, there occurred a theft of the masks used in its performance and a fire of Dainichido itself. The full performance at Dainichido by the people of the four communities had not been carried out for approximately sixty years. Meanwhile, the people had continued discussion and tried to find out a solution for the transmission. Their efforts for the transmission were possible because Dainichido Bugaku was the spiritual core for the solidarity and union of those people.

The indication of the importance of Dainichido Bugaku by people outside the communities further motivates them to the transmission. The modern academic researches on folklore and folk performing arts began in the early twentieth century in Japan. Researchers were also interested in Dainichido Bugaku; they went there for constant researches on it. Recommended by those

researchers the people of the communities participated in the Festival of Folk Performing Arts in Tokyo organized by the protection committee for the cultural property, which was later converted into today's Agency for Cultural Affairs, and successively performed Dainichido Bugaku before the audience in 1955. Thus, the outcomes of those researchers made clear its importance in the history of Japanese performing arts and its folkloric characters, and many people including the performers recognized it. The indication of its importance by the researchers motivated successors as well as performers very much to continue to transmit Dainichido Bugaku.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to "Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature", 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The local government of Akita Prefecture designated it as intangible cultural property of Prefecture in 1964, and the National Government designated it as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1976. Such designation as cultural property means an official recognition of the importance of Dainichido Bugaku. Thus, indication of the importance by non-transmitters or by outside-communities motivates the transmitters very much to continue their efforts.

At the national level, the national government subsidizes (i) the repairing and purchase of costumes, musical instruments and tools: (ii) researching and publishing reports: (iii) producing audio-visual recordings, at the request of the Association, Kazuno City and Akita Prefecture.

At the city level, Kazuno City gives the Association approximately fifteen hundred dollars every year since 2005. It will continue to do for the secure transmission of Dainichido Bugaku.

At the association level, it purchased new costumes, produce audio-visual recordings and publish journals on its recordings with the support of the National Government, Akita Prefecture and Kazuno City for the three years from 1977. Moreover, it purchased new costumes with the support of the National Government, Akita Prefecture and Kazuno City in 2000, and of the National Government in 2001; it did new tools with the support of the National Government in 2006.

## 10) Community involvement

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

## H. *Gagaku* (雅楽)

### 1) Heritage information

History, background: *Gagaku* is a collective name indicating the three types of performing arts: (i) *Kuniburi no Utamai*, which is composed of ancient songs and dances originating in Japan; (ii) those originating from the Asian continent, which came to Japan from other Asian countries via ancient China and the Korean peninsula from the fifth century through the ninth century and became refined in a Japanese style; (iii) *Utamono*, which is the vocal music that emerged in the tenth century, under the influence of music from abroad. The distinctive form of *Gagaku* was shaped through the history and culture of Japan, and has been transmitted down through the ages.

*Kuniburi no Utamai* had been formed up around the tenth century with original Japanese songs and dances long before foreign music and instruments were brought into Japan in the fifth century. While the dance and music that came via the continent use only musical instruments, *Kuniburi no Utamai* is mainly composed of songs and played just partly with a Japanese harp and Kagura flute. The choreography of *Kuniburi no Utamai* is simple but noble and grave.

The Japanized dance and music which had been derived from the Continent consist of an instrumental tune, *kangen*, which developed from such Asian music and dances that reached Japan via ancient China and the Korean peninsula during the four hundred years from the fifth century through the ninth century, and was shaped by the history and culture of Japan, and (b) *bugaku*, the ceremonial dance to this tune. The Japanization is the process as follows: (i) the configuration of performance consisting of those derived from China, Central Asia, and India and those from the Korean peninsula: (ii) the selection of foreign music instruments and the formation of the smaller

chamber music ensembles. Those used here are wind instruments (*Sho*, *Hichiriki* and *Fue*), strings (*Biwa* and *So*), percussion instruments, and others.

*Utamono* is the vocal music that was newly formed around the tenth century in Japan under the influence of music from abroad. Some of its lyrics are Japanese folk songs and some are ancient Chinese poems.

In the tenth century the performing arts from the Asian continent were sophisticated and Japanized while new *Utamono* and new repertoires of *Bugaku* were composed under the influence of performing arts from abroad; the form of today's *Gagaku* was being established. Moreover, the style of acting and the performance space were also being set. Area: All over Japan.

*Gagaku* is performed mainly at ceremonies or banquets at the Imperial Palace. It is also performed in National Theatres or other venues throughout Japan on request so that the general public can enjoy it.

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association:

Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency

1-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-0001, JAPAN

*Gagaku* has been defined since very early times as a performing art which has been performed on the occasion of official ceremonies since very early in Japanese history. At that time, *Gagaku* performers were in charge of performance and teaching as officials of a governmental institution. Although the name of the institution, number of members, and occasion of performance has varied from time to time according to changes in society, the tradition has been basically transmitted to date. Today's Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency is the successor to this long tradition. To give official status to performers of *Gagaku* is a reflection of Japan's long history and tradition.

• Activities: The Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency holds free *Gagaku* concerts in Spring and Autumn every year at the Imperial Palace and annually at the National Theatre. Furthermore, if requested, the *Gagaku* group will perform in the regional areas of Japan and pamphlets are distributed to the audiences to help increase their understanding of *Gagaku*. It

is also performed overseas upon the request of Ministry of Foreign Affairs or others.

### **3) Practitioners:**

As a traditional performing art transmitted over more than a millennium, *Gagaku* has been designated as an Important Intangible Cultural Property of Japan since 1955, and the members of the music department of the imperial household agency are recognized as the bearers of this intangible cultural property.

*Gagaku-ryo*, i.e. the department of *Gagaku*, was set up as a national institution by the enactment of the year 701. The Imperial Court aimed at establishing a centralized State under the rule of written laws and regulations, known as *Ritsu-Ryo Kokka*. Historians think that *Gagaku* was incorporated into the national system as an essential part of official ceremonies. In 752, for example, these performing arts were performed at the ceremony to bring the soul into Great Buddha statue in the temple of Todai-ji, which has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1998.

The Department members recognize *Gagaku* as part of their precious cultural heritage transmitted from their ancestors. *Gagaku* is the oldest tradition among the Japanese traditional performing arts. The Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency is widely recognized as the authentic transmitter of the tradition. The transmitters recognize *Gagaku* as their own unique culture of which they can be proud before their contemporaries in Japan and throughout the world. The transmission and performance of *Gagaku* contribute greatly to raising the holding community's sense of identity and continuity.

Thus, *Gagaku* has been transmitted from generation to generation for a long time, developed corresponding to the politics and the surroundings of each time, and constantly recreated.

### **4) Relevant events**

The performance at the National Theatre is an annual event. The Theatre keeps recordings of the performances for safekeeping and, if required, they will be made available to the general public. The National Theatre enthusiastically chooses rare and grand performances to help raise the profile

of *Gagaku* which gives further meaning to the traditions and increases awareness and understanding of *Gagaku*.

### **5) Explanation**

*Gagaku* is one of the Japanese performing arts, which are expressed by playing musical instruments, with long, slow songs and dance-like movements, and performed at ceremonies or banquets at the Imperial Palace or in a theatre, such as the National Theatre in Tokyo.

*Gagaku* consists of (i) *Kuniburi no Utamai*, (ii) the Japanized dance and music which had been derived from the Continent, and (iii) *Utamono*. The substances or repertoires have been created in the history and culture of Japan and become distinctive.

The history of *Gagaku* illustrates very well how Japan has transformed culture from abroad and sophisticated them as part of our own culture. The performing arts transmitted to-day varies from those originating in ancient Japan to Japanized, sophisticated and developed ones derived from abroad. In this sense, *Gagaku* is the crystallization of the culture created by the society and history of Japan.

### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

### **7) Safeguarding projects**

The individual members who compose the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency in charge of the transmission of *Gagaku* are mainly descendants of specific families who occupied such posts as a family profession. Although the tradition of *Gagaku* faced difficulties several times because of the decline of the Imperial Court and the aristocracy, who were patrons of *Gagaku*, and because of political turbulence and conflicts, certain families in Kyoto, Osaka, and Nara have kept the tradition, and do not let it cease. In the latter half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Musical Department of the Imperial Household Agency was established, incorporating musicians from several localities, and this was the predecessor of the Musical Department of the Imperial Household Agency.

The Imperial Household Agency has established the seven-year training programme for the purpose of nurturing the young *Gagaku* artists. Trainees study five days a week and learn about performance methods and theory. After passing the graduation examination, trainees will be employed as Imperial Household *Gagaku* artists. The Imperial Household Agency cooperates with production of CDs and DVDs in order to promote and increase the understandings of *Gagaku*.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Japanese Classical Drama and Modern literature”, 1999, Izumi Shoin.

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

As a traditional performing art transmitted over more than a millennium, *Gagaku* has been designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property of Japan since 1955. The history of *Gagaku* illustrates very well how Japan has transformed culture from the Continent and sophisticated it as part of Japan’s own culture.

*Gagaku* Division of the Ministry of Imperial Household was established in 1870 to unite *Gagaku* artists residing in Kansai (western areas of Japan) and in Edo(the former name of Tokyo). This Division became what is now known today as the Music Department of the Imperial Household Agency. This history demonstrates the efforts made by the national government to preserve and help maintain the skills by employing skilled artists as government officers as early as the beginning of the Meiji period.

In terms of the equipment, the Japanese government subsidizes the cost of repairing and procuring equipment and costumes for *Gagaku* as required. It also invests in artisans who have skills to make musical instruments and costumes and it also researches the availability of raw materials for making them. If the skill is proven to be necessary to preserve, the government regards it as a “Selected Conservation Technique”. For example, the skill required to repair *Gagaku* wind instruments was already selected as “Selected Conservation Technique”. The Government has recognized two persons as the bearers of this technique, and the training of successors, improvement of this technique, and documentation projects are under way.

At the national level, the state trains performers of *Gagaku* and employs them as Government officers. They have responsibilities to preserve and transmit their skills to future generations. The Government regards *Gagaku* as Important Intangible Cultural Property under the Law for the protection of cultural properties. The Agency for Cultural Affairs cooperates with the Imperial Household Agency for the preservation and transmission of *Gagaku* to future generations.

## **10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

### **I. Hayachine *Kagura* (早池峰神楽)**

#### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: Hayachine *Kagura* is cultural heritage transmitted to the present day from the fourteenth or fifteenth century by the people who worshipped the Hayachine Shrine. Hayachine *Kagura* has over seventy pieces in its transmitted repertoire, and its dances, together with characteristic music, are considered very beautiful.

For a while after its beginning, Hayachine *Kagura* was transmitted and performed only by holy officers of the Hayachine Shrine. From the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century, however, those holy officers also transmitted it to neighbouring farmers and townsmen, and gradually performed it together.

Iwate Prefecture, where the Hayachine Shrine is located, is a cold region, and life was difficult there. The local people worshipped Mt. Hayachine as a deity and wished for a better and more secure life, relying upon the power of a deity. In order to meet their expectations, the bearers of Hayachine *Kagura* regularly visited communities, taking with them a *shishi*'s head as a symbol of the power of the deity Hayachine, and blessed the people by demonstrating the power of the deity through the performance of *kagura*.

Hayachine *Kagura* was transmitted by holy officers of the Hayachine Shrine from the fourteenth to the late seventeenth centuries, and performed not only inside the community but also in other places at the request of believers. By the end of the seventeenth century, such performances were widely demanded. In order to meet the demand, the people of those communities, in addition to the holy officers, also participated in the transmission and performance.

Area: Hanamaki City, Iwate Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of Hayachine Kagura

29-38 Sotokawame, Ohasama-machi, Hanamaki-shi, Iwate-ken, 028-3202,  
Japan

The association was established in 1969 by a local community. Now, it has 34 members. Beside of annual performance, they hold special performances inside and outside of Japan by requests. The association conducts periodical and extra practices and training for the successors.

- **Activities:** Members of the Association continue the effort to carry on the performance through periodical or extra practices throughout the year. Besides the annual main performance at the Great Festival of the Hayachine Shrine, they hold periodical performances in early January, August, the autumn season and late December. In teaching the dance of Hayachine *Kagura* to the pupils of elementary and junior-high schools, they seek to transmit the tradition. When requested, the association gives special performances at the National Theatre in Tokyo, in Hanamaki City, in Iwate Prefecture and in some cases abroad.

## **3) Practitioners:**

In the early twentieth century it ceased to be performed in many communities. Currently, however, it has been transmitted from elder to younger generations by local people of two communities at Ohsako Town in Hanamaki City, Iwate Prefecture, and is performed on the eve and on the day of the Great Festival of

the Hayachine Shrine on August 1<sup>st</sup> every year, which venerates nature, including Mt. Hayachine.

Hayachine *Kagura* is a folk performing art transmitted for a long time and still performed by ordinary Japanese people. The repertoire is derived from Japanese history and traditional culture, such as the Legend of Japan and war chronicles, and reflects the Japanese sense of performing arts. Moreover, the Japanese concept of deity and nature is seen in the background of the transmission and performance of Hayachine *Kagura*.

#### **4) Relevant events**

The City held the “All Japan Kagura Festival in Hayachine” in 1996 and 2006. Twenty groups of local *Kagura* throughout Japan participated in the festival and performed their own characteristic *Kagura*. There were more than 10,000 attendees from all over Japan in each festival and it was very effective for the dissemination and promotion of Hayachine *Kagura*. It has also been performed in Hanamaki City Culture Hall.

The prefecture holds the “Iwate Prefecture Folk Performing Arts Festival” and the “Iwate Prefecture Youth Folk Performing Arts Festival” for transmission and dissemination of Hayachine *Kagura* and other folk performing arts in the Prefecture.

The national government supports the “Hokkaido and Tohoku Blocks Folk Performing Arts Festival” and “Urgent Research on Folk Performing Arts in Iwate Prefecture” organized by Iwate Prefecture aiming at the transmission and dissemination of folk performing arts.

#### **5) Explanation**

Hayachine *Kagura* is one of the traditions known as “folk performing arts,” transmitted by people of a community and seen at a festival or an annual event in the community. Among folk performing arts, Hayachine *Kagura* is further classified into the sub-category of ‘*kagura*,’ in which a performer disguises himself as a deity.

Hayachine *Kagura* is a folk performing art expressed through the ritual dance of performers with masks of a deity on their faces, accompanied by instrumental music such as rhythms of big drums, in order to receive the blessings of a deity.

The music for this *Kagura* is played by a big drum, small cymbals, and a flute along with songs. The stage is approximately 3.6 m<sup>2</sup> large, and players of a big drum and cymbals seat themselves at the centre front of the stage with their backs toward the audience. A tapestry approximately 2 meters high is hung at the back, behind which is a dressing room. There are one to five dancers, depending on the piece. They appear onto the stage, lifting up the lower edge of a tapestry.

The transmitted repertoire consists of approximately seventy pieces, composed of ritual dances, one featuring deities as protagonists, one with a theme of the Japanese legends of ancient time or war chronicles of medieval time, and one of a *shishi* (a lion-like imaginary animal), i.e. the deity of the Hayachine Shrine itself.

This one-day *Kagura* begins with six ritual dances, then approximately five dances expressing a deity as a protagonist or telling some stories, and finally ends with the dance of a *shishideity*. As a whole, the content is meant to demonstrate the majesty of the deity of the Hayachine Shrine and to bless the people. Its dances, together with characteristic music, are considered very beautiful.

## **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

## **7) Safeguarding projects**

Hanamaki City (at the time Osako Town) published old scenarios and records and produced documentary film with subsidies from National and Prefecture Government from FY1977 to 1979. These documents are utilized in practice and training for the successors to ensure the transmission. Also, the city established the “Centre for Preservation and Transmission of Hometown Culture” in 1981 and “Kagura House” in 1994.

On request from the association and Hanamaki City, Iwate Prefecture supports documentation projects. The prefecture holds the “Iwate Prefecture Folk Performing Arts Festival” and the “Iwate Prefecture Youth Folk Performing Arts Festival” for transmission and dissemination of Hayachine *Kagura* and other folk performing arts in the Prefecture.

The National Government conducts the documentation project at the request of the association, Hanamaki City and Iwate Prefecture. It supports the “Hokkaido and Tohoku Blocks Folk Performing Arts Festival” and “Urgent Research on Folk Performing Arts in Iwate Prefecture” organized by Iwate Prefecture aiming at the transmission and dissemination of folk performing arts.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

Designated by the Government as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1975, it is currently recognized as one element of important cultural heritage which widely reflects the transition of the Japanese life style. Then, in 1959, Hanamaki City, then known as Ohsako Town, designated it as an intangible cultural property of the city under its regulations for the protection of cultural property, and in 1976 the Government designated it as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property. Such designation as cultural property means an official recognition of the importance of Hayachine *Kagura*. Thus, when the importance is pointed out by those not involved in transmission, or those from outside communities, the bearers themselves are greatly motivated to continue transmission.

#### **10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

### **J. Hitachi Fuyumono (日立風流物)**

#### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: It is said that, in the middle of the Edo period (1603-1867), a traveling entertainer visited this area and taught inhabitants how to produce and operate puppets. Later, people who had learned and improved the

manipulation technique began to perform puppet theatre on a float presented during a festive event at the Kamine Shrine. Since then, the puppet theatre has been transmitted from generation to generation in this area.

Area: Hitachi City, Ibaraki Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of Hitachi Hometown Performing Arts

Hitachi Kyodo Hakubutsukan 5-2-22, Miyatacho, Hitachi, Ibaraki-ken,  
317-0055, Japan.

Association for the Preservation of Hitachi Hometown Performing Arts was established in 1957 for the purpose of preserving and continuing the tradition of the Hitachi Furyumono.

- **Activities:** They conduct annual event, as well as the association undertakes several efforts to pass on the event to future generations by training successors; and by maintaining and procuring floats, puppets and other equipments for the event.

## **3) Practitioners:**

There are four floats in this festival, one from each of the four communities of Kita-machi, Higashi-machi, Nishi-machi, and Hom-machi. These communities are sustainers of the Kamine Shrine.

Hitachi Furyumono is a community event administered by general agreement of the local residents. The skills and arts to produce and manipulate puppets, however, have been transmitted for a long time from parent to the eldest son only, in specific families within a community as a secret process. Thus, repertoires have been transmitted down to the present day.

## **4) Relevant events**

Hitachi Furyumono is a float parade held on the occasion of Hitachi *Sakura Matsuri*, i.e. the Hitach cherry blossom festival, held on the second Saturday and Sunday in April, and the Great Festival at the Kamine Shrine held once in seven years.

## 5) Explanation

A puppet theatre is performed on a float called “Furyumono,” which means literally “an elegant object”. The event is held on the occasion of the May Great Festival at the Kamine Shrine, which is worshiped in the communities, or on the occasion of the Hitachi *Sakura Matsuri*, *i.e.* the cherry blossom festival, in April. While the Great Festival at the Kamine Shrine is currently held once every seven years, in the past it is said to have been held once every several years as agreed by the four communities, Kita-machi, Higashi-machi, Nishi-machi, and Hom-machi, each of which has their own float.

On the occasion of the Great Festival, each community presents one float, and thus there are four floats in total as part of the entertainment. On the occasion of the Hitachi cherry blossom festival held every April, each community presents one float in turn.

The Furyumono float is a space to welcome and worship a deity and has a castle-like model house installed on its top. The house has five layers, and each layer can open side to side from the centre. A puppet theatre emerges there, and the play can begin.

Everything on the float is manipulated by rope, and three to five puppet masters are required to manipulate one puppet. They work together, each taking charge of one part: face, body, arm, or leg. On each layer, all of the masters required for the puppets on that layer are present, and groups of them manipulate their respective puppets. In addition, sound-makers are also on the float; when the sound-maker beats the clappers, the music and the play simultaneously begin.

On the occasion of the Great Festival the people on the four floats compete with each other to test their skills and arts of puppeteering; as a result, transmission of the best techniques has been encouraged. This is a festival involving the entire community, with full cooperation of the people, as supporters of the Kamine Shrine. It is one of the best examples of a festive event featuring very sophisticated theatre.

## **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

## **7) Safeguarding projects**

“The Committee for safeguarding and transmission of Hitachi Furiyumono” was established with involvement of “Association for the Preservation of Hitachi Hometown Performing Arts”, “Hitachi Municipal Board of Education” and “East Japan Railway Company”. The Committee implemented a project to repair and preserve the equipment for the event with support from “East Japan Railway Culture Foundation”.

## **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

## **9) Safeguarding measures**

At local associations and local government level, Hitachi City partly subsidizes the cost of displaying floats, training in puppet manipulating techniques, as well as the management costs of the Festival to help maintain the event for future generations.

At the national level, government partly subsidizes the projects for repairing or procuring equipment for the events held by the Association for the Preservation of Hitachi Hometown Performing Arts or Hitachi City.

## **10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

## **K. Koshikijima no Toshidon (飫島のトシドン)**

### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: Koshikijima no Toshidon is an annual event transmitted in Koshikijima (Koshiki islands) belonging to the Kyushu Region, *i.e.* the

southwest region of the Japanese Archipelago. Japan has a distinctive practice that on an occasion of change, such as the beginning of a year or transition of seasons, a being of a peculiar appearance with a mask or a straw raincoat visits houses and blesses families in a community. This custom derives from the Japanese fundamental folk faith that a deity regularly visits a community from a world other than ours such as the netherworld etc. Koshikijima no Toshidon is one of such events known as *raiho-shin*, i.e. a visiting deity, and also known as a ritual of the oldest style. Toshidon has been transmitted on Lower Koshiki Island, which is located in the southernmost part of these islands. They have a common faith that a deity of a peculiar appearance, called Toshidon, visits the human world on the night of December 31. This simple and innocent faith has sustained the Toshidon practice on Shimo-Koshikijima as an annual event, transmitted from generation to generation up to the present time, and thus it is recognized as part of their cultural heritage collectively transmitted by the community.

Area: Shimo-Koshiki Town, Satsuma-sendai City, Kagoshima Prefecture

## 2) Relevant information

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of Koshikijima no Toshidon

819, Teuchi, Shimo-koshiki-cho, Satsuma-sendai, Kagoshima-ken, 896-1601,  
Japan

The association was established in 1977 by a local community in Shimo-Koshikijima where the ritual has been transmitted. The association undertakes several efforts to transmit Koshikijima no Toshidon to future generations by training for the successors, and by maintaining and producing such equipment as masks and costumes.

- **Activities:** Workshops should be organized to teach the origin and history of Toshidon in the local community. Workshops can include some reports of surveys on the transmission situation of *Raiho-shin* events for visiting deities throughout Japan, or some results of academic study to further mutual understanding among similar events and to raise motivation for transmission.

### **3) Practitioners:**

Toshidon has been transmitted on Lower Koshiki Island, which is located in the southernmost part of these islands. Shimo-Koshikijima is a tiny isolated island with an area of 66 kilometer squares. The communities, namely Sesenoura, Aose, Katanoura, Teuchi, have transmitted Toshidon. Men who live in the community are eligible to disguise themselves as Toshidon. The role of Toshidon is not open to anybody; it is limited to men living in each community. People in these communities preserve this important role in the way they themselves play it. Playing the role of Toshidon themselves reinforces a sense of identity and continuity.

### **4) Relevant events:**

Koshikijima no Toshidon is classified as an annual event for *raiho-shin* performed in the same season or on the same calendar day every year.

### **5) Explanation**

Toshidon deities visit families with children at night on New Year's Eve. The appearance of Toshidon is frightful, with a big peculiar mask, wearing a straw raincoat, a black cloak and old clothes. The mask of Toshidon has a big, pointed nose, and horns and fangs like a demon's face. The mask and costume are decorated with leaves of plants indigenous to the south of the Kyushu Region, such as *Trachycarpus fortunei* or *Cycas revoluta*.

Men in the disguise of Toshidon visit houses where children live, shouting loudly together. As the legend says that the deity Toshidon is mounted on a horse without a head, these men visit houses while making sounds of neighing and hoofbeats. The number of Toshidon varies from community to community; it is approximately two to five. A squad of Toshidon knocks on doors and walls, calling the names of children in front of a house where they live, and thus urging them to open an entrance. Once they successfully enter a house from a gate or a veranda, they sit down face to face with the children and their families, scolding the children, admonishing them not to be mischievous, and preaching at them to be good, as they have been previously informed of the behaviour and manners of those children by their parents. Children get upset and run away at first, but finally they listen to the Toshidon with respect. Such interaction between Toshidon and children is quite significant to a community;

children gradually develop a sense of affiliation to their community on Shimo-Koshikijima through a dialogue with Toshidon, while parents watching these children reconfirm their identity and affiliation to a community through the visit of Toshidon.

After they sufficiently preach to the children, the Toshidon bring the children nearer to them and give them a huge ball-like rice cake. This rice ball is called *toshi-mochi*, literally meaning a rice cake of a year. Only with this gift can children grow one year older in peace. After finishing this series of actions, they move backward to the outside without showing their backs to anybody and proceed to the next house.

Koshikijima no Toshidon is an annual event featuring rich symbolization, signifying deities through the distinctive masks, costumes and sounds of visiting, and is associated with a strong sense of the transition of time at New Year's Eve. The ritual is repeated every year at a fixed time and schedule in the faith that the visit of Toshidon opens a new year; it is representative of the *raiho-shin* (i.e. visiting deity) events which reflect Japanese folk faith and the concept of a deity that at the beginning of an year or on the occasion of a seasonal transition comes to bless people, or that only a visit of a deity can open a new year.

#### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

Although the roles of Toshidon are played by men from the villages between the ages of 20 to 50, the association invites younger boys in junior or senior high school to participate in the ritual as well, in an assistant position also wearing the Toshidon costume. This is one of the efforts for transmission of the ritual to future generations.

Aiming to ensure the transmission to future generations, training seminars should be targeted to men in the Town who may play the role of Toshidon. In a program, how to move, how to talk with children and how to produce Toshidon masks should be taught.

Equipment for making Toshidon masks or costumes should be repaired or procured in order to produce the technical infrastructure necessary for the transmission and presentation.

Pamphlets on this ritual should be edited and distributed in order to raise awareness of Toshidon and Intangible Cultural Heritage among the public.

Documentation should be complemented by producing new documentary films which record detailed contents of the Toshidon ritual and by collecting old photographs or texts transmitted within the community concerned. The documentation will be used to transmit the tradition to future generations and as academic materials.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The Government fully subsidized the production of a documentary film and explanatory document from 1977 to 1978, on the occasion of the designation of Koshikijima no Toshidon as an “Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property.” The thirty-minute film taken by 6-milimeter movie recorded the conditions surrounding transmission of Koshikijima no Toshidon.

#### **10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

### **L. *Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu*: techniques of making ramie fabric in Uonuma region, Niigata Prefecture (小千谷縮・越後上布)**

#### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: During the Edo period(1603-1867) bolts of *jofu* from Echigo were also used as tax payment and tribute to the Tokugawa shogunate. In the latter half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the techniques for producing fine, lightweight *jofu* reached even higher levels of development with the concept of

weaving with a highly twisted weft thread to create a beautiful crinkled or crepe-like surface known as *chijimi*. Techniques for producing these textiles were passed down from generation to generation and formally became known as *Ojiya-chijimi* and *Echigo-jofu*.

*Ojiya-chijimi* and *Echigo-jofu* has a long history. Ramie weaving began in ancient times around Uonuma region in Niigata Prefecture, and we have a remains presumably dated back to the eighth century. In the seventeenth century it was dedicated to Tokugawa Shogunate. As suitable to the hot and humid summer of Japan, clothes made of ramie weaving have been a favorite of many people in various classes for centuries. Thus, those textiles have been constantly produced as a cultural pride for the people of the community, and its producing technique has been transmitted from generation to generation until today. The production area is such a heavy snowfall area as closed by snow during a half of a year, and hence its production technique makes a good use of its distinctive nature and climate.

During its long history, *Ojiya-chijimi* and *Echigo-jofu* has sometimes been on the verge of disappearing entirely. This began with the outbreak of the Second World War, when people were forced to leave their work as weavers either temporarily or permanently. Again, after the war, under the influence of a rapidly-changing society, the labour-intensive techniques of textile production were abandoned. Added to this, young people left the local area for work or other reasons, and eventually the situation deteriorated to the point where the techniques were barely being kept alive by elderly people in the 60-80 age range. Then, led mainly by local people and drawing on the talents of a small number of master artisans, activities were set up to train practitioners in the techniques. The Ojiya Textiles Association and the Shiozawa Textiles Association, which were located in various parts of the textile-producing area of Niigata Prefecture, joined forces and decided to protect and transmit this intangible cultural heritage themselves.

Area: The Uonuma region of Niigata Prefecture (formerly Echigo), in the northwest of Japan's main island of Honshu

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 9)

Preservation association

The Secretariat of the Holding Group is located at:

Shiozawa Textile Industry Association, 107-1, Mokuraiden, Minami-Uonuma city, Niigata Prefecture, 949-6435, JAPAN

The members of the group live mainly in the Uonuma region of Niigata Prefecture (Southwestern Niigata Prefecture)

The Association for the conservation of techniques for *Echigo-jofu*, *Ojiya-chijimi-fu* group was established in 1955. Observing the Law for the protection of cultural properties, the Association group undertakes several programmes to transmit the traditional techniques and to contribute to cultural enrichment by safeguarding and improving traditional techniques of “*Ojiya-chijimi*, *Echigo-jofu*”, encouraging close communication among the persons concerned, contributing to the improvement of the techniques and training and hiring successors for their techniques.

▪ Activities: The Association group undertakes; Research on the techniques, training for successors, quality control of the products, presentation and distribution of the products, and other programs serving the goal of the association.

### **3) Practitioners**

The Association for the conservation of techniques for *Echigo-jofu*, *Ojiya-chijimi-fu* was recognized as the skill holding group of designated “*Ojiya-chijimi*, *Echigo-jofu*”. The technique is transmitted by the Association which currently consists of 69 members.

Only 30-40 bolts of hand-spun, hand-woven *chijimi* and *jofu* textile meeting the conditions of designation of Important Intangible Cultural Property “*Ojiya-chijimi*, *Echigo-jofu*” are produced per year now. Although the entire area used to be involved in this work, it is now practiced mostly by elderly craftspeople. The art of hand-spinning ramie thread is facing a particularly severe shortage of successors. The problem is that, despite the patient labour demanded by this delicate work, it does not provide a living income. Nevertheless, the practitioners have struggled desperately to pass this intangible cultural heritage on to future generations.

#### **4) Relevant events**

Dialogue among ramie-producing cultures has already begun with the Asia Ramie Conference held in 2002 at the Karamushi Craft Museum, located in the ramie-producing region of Oonuma County, Fukushima Prefecture, which provides material for “*Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu*”. People involved in ramie cultivation and textile production, as well as botanists, from Japan, China, Korea, and other countries, attended the conference, where they were able to exchange scientific information, and deepen their knowledge of each other’s textile cultures.

In 1995 edited was a forty-year anniversary book on the designation system of important intangible cultural property owing to the efforts of the people concerned; the history of efforts of the people who protected intangible cultural heritage was documented. Moreover, in Tokyo in 2005 held was a special exhibition on the transmitted technique of “*Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu*” as the fifty-year anniversary of the designation system of important intangible cultural property; works by the Association were displayed and various productions were practiced on the spot before the visitors for the dissemination of them.

The exhibition titled “*The Skills and beauty of craftsmanship in Japan – Important Intangible Cultural Properties and the People who support Them*”, a project to collect and display works produced by holders and holding groups, is held at museums and galleries throughout Japan.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs has held the exhibition “The Skills and beauty of craftsmanship in Japan – Important Intangible Cultural Properties and the People who support Them” every year since 1997. Works of “*Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu*” are displayed in the exhibition every year, giving the people of Japan a chance to learn about this heritage. When the exhibition was held in 2007 in Niigata Prefecture, which the location of *Ojiya-chijimi* and *Echigo-jofu* production, the members of the Association perform some production process on the spot before visitors. The pamphlets were also distributed on that venue in order to introduce this intangible heritage so that many people would know its history, substance and the status quo.

#### **5) Explanation**

The Uonuma region of Niigata Prefecture (formerly Echigo), in the northwest of Japan's main island of Honshu, has been known since ancient times for production of textiles made from ramie (*Boehmeria nivea*). High-quality ramie cloth (*jofu*), woven with very thin thread made from fibers taken from the stalks of ramie plants, is extremely lightweight and was used for simple garments worn during Japan's hot and humid summer.

The materials and techniques used to produce high-quality, lightweight ramie textiles known as *Ojiya-chijimi* and *Echigo-jofu*, has been developed under its distinctive climatic conditions and transmitted from generation to generation in the long history of the community.

The *yukizarashi* method is well-known as a unique part of the production process, in which the woven textile is spread on the snow, and bleached by the ozone released as the snow evaporates.

The traditional ikat (*kasuri*) designs are made from threads that were tied before dyeing. They feature various colors in geometric patterns or abstract patterns of plants, or combinations of these. These traditional patterns are still being used by people today, who bring a contemporary sense to the traditional designs.

## **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

## **7) Safeguarding projects**

The Association strongly recognizes "*Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu*" as its own cultural heritage and makes every effort to preserve and transmit them. Sophisticated manufacturing of those textiles, process with traditional tools and distinctive utilization of snow are required for the designation as important intangible cultural heritage in this case. It is needless to say that the people of this Association shall fully understand the meaning of their own intangible cultural heritage, cooperate each other and respect mutual skills. Because they are determined to transmit to the next generation what they have inherited from the ancestors, they make every effort to widely disseminate it and hold a workshop for it. The community has constantly recreated a sense of

identity and continuity through the conservation and transmission of this important intangible cultural property.

In 1980-81 the Agency for Cultural Affairs made a film documenting the craft technique of *Echigo-jofu* with a full cooperation of the community. Since then, the community has actively cooperated with the recording and documentation of this intangible cultural heritage. Some of them were already submitted to UNESCO as a reference.

## **8) Safeguarding measures**

In 1955, "*Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu*" was designated as an Important Intangible Cultural Property. The making of "*Ojiya-chijimi, Echigo-jofu*" is a complex, detailed process. The process must meet specific conditions in order to qualify for Important Intangible Cultural Property status. These conditions have been carried on and transmitted by the Association and the people involved up to the present.

### Conditions of Designation

*TEUMI* (Hand-twisted ramie thread): Ramie fibers are split by fingernail and shredded into very fine threads. Further manipulated and moistened by the hands and mouths of threadmakers, the ends of each strand are twisted together to form a continuous thread. An additional tight twisting of the weft threads gives *Ojiya-chijimi* its characteristic crepe texture. This work takes place during cold winter months when the humidity from snow keeps the ramie threads pliable.

*TEKUBIRI* (Hand-tied ikat (*kasuri*) threads): Skeins of ramie thread are bound with cotton thread in a predetermined pattern before being immersed in a dye vat. This method of hand-tying is known as *tekubiri*. The bound areas resist the dye. When untied, placed on a loom, and woven into a fabric, the *kasuri* pattern emerges.

*IZARIBATA* (Use of a body-tension loom): Utilizing a simple body-tension loom (*izaribata*), the weaver sits on a wooden plank raised slightly off the floor with her legs outstretched underneath the loom. Her foot is slipped into a sling that manipulates a bent, wood lever attached to string heddles. A cloth beam (*chimaki*) is then placed against the weaver's abdomen and secured by a strap

that is brought around the small of the back. In this position the loom becomes an integrated extension of the weaver's body. She can achieve subtle adjustments to warp tension by simply shifting her weight. An extremely high degree of skill is required to weave ramie thread as fine as human hair without the thread breaking.

*YUMOMI, ASHIBUMI* (The SHIBOTORI finishing method): The woven cloth is soaked in hot water and rubbed to remove any starch (*yumomi*). Afterwards, the cloth is soaked again in hot water and washed by trampling or massaging it with one's feet (*ashibumi*). This process softens out the creases in *jofu* cloth and gives *chijimi* cloth its beautiful crepe-like texture.

*YUKIZARASHI* (Snow bleached): Wet lengths of ramie cloth are placed on top of snow-covered fields. For ten to twenty days the textiles are exposed to the bleaching properties of sunlight, which is intensified by the white snow. The cloth is further lightened by the penetration of ozone ions from the melting snow.

## 9) Community involvement

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

## M. Oku-Noto no Aenokoto (奥能登のあえのこと)

### 1) Heritage information

History, background: "Oku-noto no Aenokoto" is a ritual performed in Suzu and Wajima Cities, and Noto and Anamizu Towns of Housu County, which are located on the Noto Peninsula on the Sea of Japan. This is a ritual to worship a deity of the rice field who will promise good growth and an abundant harvest of rice.

This ritual is performed twice a year, in December after the rice harvest, and in February before planting, by each housemaster at his own house. In the December ritual, he gives thanks for the harvest; he welcomes the deity of the rice field into his house, serving a bath, and offering food. In the February ritual,

he prays for an abundant harvest; he again serves a bath, offering food, and finally seeing off the deity from his house to the rice field. In the course of a whole ritual, the housemaster behaves as if an invisible deity of the rice field were actually there in front of him.

This is an agricultural ritual, reflecting the underlying culture of everyday life among the Japanese engaged in rice cultivation.

Area: Suzu City, Wajima City, Noto and Anamizu Towns in Housu County, Ishikawa Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of Oku-noto no Aenokoto

Okunoto Ko-ikiken Jimu Kumiai, 10-1-1, Sue, Miimachi, Wajima, Ishikawa-ken, 929-2372, Japan

The Association was established in 1976 for the purpose of preserving and keeping the tradition. The association undertakes several efforts to hold Oku-noto no Aenokoto twice a year regularly, to pass on to future generations by training successors and to raise the awareness of the general public.

▪ **Activities:** The town of Noto regularly holds seminars for making sweet sake, which is considered to be an essential item to offer to a deity of the rice field at Oku-noto no Aenokoto.

## **3) Practitioners**

“Oku-noto no Aenokoto” is a ritual transmitted over generations by agricultural households in Suzu and Wajima Cities, and Noto and Anamizu Towns of Housu County, located on the Noto Peninsula, as an indispensable agricultural ritual for continuing their rice farming.

## **4) Relevant events**

A ritual performance of Oku-noto no Aenokoto is performed at the Botanical Garden of Noto Town to more widely spread information about the ritual. Noto Town also holds a seminar about the history and significance of Oku-noto no Aenokoto.

## 5) Explanation

“Oku-noto no Aenokoto” is an agricultural ritual transmitted from generation to generation in Suzu and Wajima Cities, and Noto and Anamizu Towns of Housu County, all of which are located on the Noto Peninsula on the Sea of Japan, in order to worship a deity of the rice field. As people in Suzu and Wajima Cities, and Noto and Anamizu Towns of Hosu County have long lived by rice-farming, the deity of the rice field is considered an important one who promises good growth and an abundant harvest of rice.

This ritual is performed twice a year, after the rice harvest, and before planting, by each housemaster at his home. In December after the harvest, he welcomes the deity of the rice field from the rice field into his house and offers hospitality, giving thanks for the harvest in the course of a ritual. In February before planting, he offers hospitality and sees the deity off to the rice field, praying for an abundant harvest in the course of another ritual. Guessing from these performances, “Ae” (or “Aé”) can mean hospitality while “koto” a ritual.

In December a housemaster begins to prepare food from early in the morning to welcome the deity, and puts straw bags containing seeds for the next spring in the *toko no ma*, a narrow space at the side of the room for flowers and calligraphy, or under the *kami-dana*, an inner shrine installed high on a wall. In the afternoon, he prepares a bath and pounds *mochi*, a ball-like rice cake. The deity of the rice field is said to get ready to leave the rice field when he hears the sound of *mochi*-pounding. In the evening the housemaster dresses himself up in *kami-shimo*, a formal Japanese garment, and goes to the rice field taking a *kuwa* (spade), a *chochin* (lantern), and a *sensu* (folding fan), with him in order to welcome the deity. In the rice field, he cultivates it with *kuwa* three times, speaks to the deity of the rice field with grateful remarks for its protection during that year. Then, he shows the deity the way to his home by lighting the way with the *chochin* or directing it with the *sensu*. His family is waiting for the deity at the gate.

The housemaster shows the deity into a guest room, lets it rest a little, and then serves a bath for it. He helps it to wash as if it were actually in front of him in the bathroom, asking if the temperature of the water is comfortable. After the bath, he seats the deity on straw bags of seeds in the *toko no ma* or under the

*kami-dana*, and offers it two meals. Because a deity of the rice field is sometimes regarded as consisting of a couple, two dinners are served.

The menu is *ama-zake*, sweet sake as an aperitif brewed from new rice, a bifurcated radish, abundant steamed rice with red beans, *mochi*, and a whole fish, provided with chopsticks made from a chestnut tree. As it is said that the deity of the rice field has bad eyes, the housemaster describes each dish as he serves it. After dinner, he moves the straw bag of seeds to a higher position inside a box room or in an earthen-floor space. It is said that the deity of the rice field rests in this bag or inside the *kami-dana* until the following year. Then, families eat the dinner served to the deity.

In February of the new year, the same ritual takes place again; a housemaster serves a bath for the deity, provides it with food, and sees it off to a rice field. In the rice field, a housemaster cultivates it with *kuwa* three times, with prayers for an abundant harvest in autumn.

There are some differences in detailed contents or procedures from family to family, but we can find such common features as welcoming the deity of the rice field at an important stage of rice-growing, offering it hospitality, and finally seeing it off. By performing this ritual, the safety and sustainability of the rice cultivation in this area can be assured, and identity and continuity can be confirmed among the people of this area.

## **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

## **7) Safeguarding projects**

### **(1) Production of a documentary film**

The Government subsidized the production of a documentary film entitled “Okunoto no Aenokoto: – Folk culture associated with Japanese rice farming cultivation” which shows detailed rituals and efforts to ensure its continuing recognition by children and future generations as part of the cultural heritage of Japan. The films are distributed to many related organisations and widely utilised.

### **(2) Preparing the survey report**

The Japanese government and the Ishikawa prefectural government partly subsidized the cost of the Survey Report entitled “Oku-noto no Aenokoto – Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property” which was produced by the Association and this is distributed to libraries of Ishikawa prefecture and widely utilised.

(3) Publishing of guide books

Ishikawa Prefectural Government has published guidebooks entitled “Guidebook of Intangible Cultural Properties” and details of the history of Oku-noto no Aenokoto are introduced in it. These guidebooks are distributed to Junior High Schools in Inshikawa Prefecture so that the value of this Intangible Cultural Property will be widely known to younger generations.

**8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

**9) Safeguarding measures**

After the Second World War, the number of families who perform the ritual decreased with the decline of the rice farming population in this area. However, efforts to ensure the continuity of the ritual have been made with the establishment of the Association for the Preservation of “Oku-noto no Aenokoto” in 1976 and have been designated since 1977 as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property.

**10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

**N. Sekishu-Banshi: papermaking in the Iwami region of Shimane Prefecture**

(石州半紙)

**1) Heritage information**

History, background: Sekishu-Banshi is the technique, handed down in the Iwami region in western Shimane Prefecture, of producing handmade *washi* paper in the half-sheet size known as *hanshi*. Papermaking had already begun in Iwami by the early 10<sup>th</sup> century, and by the Edo period (1603-1867), paper of the “hanshi” size produced in Sekishu was popular among Osaka merchants for use in account books, and the name “Sekishu-Banshi” became widely known.

A 10<sup>th</sup> century document notes that paper was already being produced in Iwami at that time, and by the Edo Period (1603-1867), the two ruling clans in the area monopolized sales of the paper, and encouraged its production among the farmers. Paper made in Sekishu became prized by merchants in the major city of Osaka for use in account books, and the name became widely known.

The technique was passed down as a side business by generations of local farmers, but in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the practice had largely died out, due to the availability of industry made paper and resulting decline in demand for *washi*, and to the aging of the local population. Papermaking gradually became the work of specialists, and in 1967, the Sekishu-Banshi Craftsmen’s Association was formed for the purpose of preserving and handing down the traditional techniques.

Area: The area is currently known as Misumi-cho in Hamada City, in western Shimane Prefecture. Shimane is located in the western part of Japan’s main island, Honshu, and, until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the area was known as Iwami-no-kuni, also called Sekishu.

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 9)

Preservation association: Sekishu-Banshi Craftsmen’s Association

957-4 Furuichiba, Misumi-cho, Hamada-shi, Shimane-ken, 699-3225, JAPAN

All of the members live in this area, and the holding group office is located in the home/workshop of one of the members. The association was recognized as the holding group. Currently, the members of the holding group and the members of their four families are mainly responsible for passing on this traditional technique.

The Association is made up of artisans who possess the techniques of making Sekishu-Banshi.

- Activities: Since 1970, the Association has held annual seminars and classes for the preservation and transmission of skills to future generation, teaching the method of cultivating *kozo*, paper making skills, and the maintenance of paper quality to meet the criteria for designation. Members of the Association and their families, papermaking students and regional and local government staff attend the seminars.

The workshops have been held annually since 2003 for non-experienced people to teach the cultivation of *kozo* and papermaking skills. The documentation of Sekishu Banshi records was prepared and published in 2001. Also, the exhibition titled “Craftsmen of Sekishu-Banshi” was held at Sekisho Art Museum in Hamada City in 2006.

### **3) Practitioners**

Currently the members of the Association and members of their four families play a central role in handing down the techniques to several young successors who are studying the craft. The members of the group regularly make other types of paper, but the Sekishu-Banshi techniques are the foundation of their papermaking tradition, and they take pride in their commitment to refining and passing on their craft. Thus, this community recognizes this technique of Sekishu-Banshi as an utmost part of its own cultural heritage.

### **4) Relevant events**

The Sekishu-Banshi Craftsmen’s Association and the city of Hamada have promoted exchanges with the Kingdom of Bhutan regarding handmade papermaking techniques, by inviting technical trainees to Japan, and sending instructors to Bhutan. In addition, Japan has cooperated with the Republic of Uzbekistan in its ongoing efforts to revive Samarkand papermaking. What should be noted about these endeavours is that their aim is not to transfer the papermaking techniques of Sekishu-Banshi to other cultures, but to improve the traditional papermaking techniques of each.

Since 1996, the Government has held annual exhibitions of “*Japanese Artistry and Beauty – Important Intangible Cultural Properties and the People who Sustain Them*” at various museums and galleries in Japan. The exhibition

shows collected works produced by holding groups for Important Intangible Cultural Properties, including the Sekishu-Banshi Craftsmen's Association.

### 5) Explanation

Sekishu-Banshi is the technique for producing handmade *washi* paper, in the half-sheet size known as *hanshi*, which has been passed down in the Iwami region (also known as Sekishu) of western Shimane Prefecture.

Using the locally-grown paper mulberry (*kozo*), this Sekishu-Banshi is made from the mulberry fibre according to the unique Japanese method of hand-filtering known as *nagashi-zuki*. The most distinctive feature of Sekishu-Banshi is its extraordinary durability, produced through traditional methods using the natural materials grown in the region. The unique method of processing the raw materials makes this the strongest paper produced in Japan. The *kozo* plant of the mulberry family provides the raw material for papermaking. In the process of extracting the inner bast from the mulberry branches, the gerrnish part of the bast lying between the outer black bark and the internal white part of the bast is retained. Usually, this part of bast is considered to contain too much impurity which means not completed cellulose fibre and much hemicellulose and others. Also in Sekishu-Banshi making process, the impurity is retained as much as possible. Furthermore the fibres of the layer are longer than the fibres of inner white part. The combination of long fibres with impurity which function as good adhesive, makes Sekishu-Banshi extraordinary strong and durable.

The papermaking technique unique to Japan is known as *nagashi-zuki*. The *kozo* fibres are immersed in water mixed with mucilage extracted from the root of the *tororoaai* plant. The mucilage makes the fibres suspend evenly in the water, after which the fibres are filtered and formed into sheets using a laid called a *su*, held in place by a wooden frame called a *keta*.

The *kozo* plant is ready for harvesting three years after planting, and, after it is cut, the stump sprouts again the following spring, and can be harvested in one year. Locally grown Sekishu *kozo* and other natural materials, in combination with the unique production method, are used to produce this amazingly durable paper. In addition to being an example of the diversity of intangible

cultural heritage, the production process of Sekishu-Banshi is also a good model of sustainable development.

#### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

After the Second World War, the lifestyles of Japanese people changed greatly under the influence of Europe and North America. At the same time, mass production of industry made paper spread, demand for handmade washi paper plummeted, and the number of artisans decreased dramatically. Faced with this situation, the artisans who produced Sekishu-Banshi themselves organized the Sekishu-Banshi Craftsmen's Association in order to preserve the traditional techniques. For more than 40 years, they have devoted their efforts to passing on these techniques to future generations. These days it is impossible for the members of the Sekishu-Banshi Craftsmen's Association to make a living solely from the production of Sekishu-Banshi. Although the members of the Association produce other forms of washi as well, the techniques of Sekishu-Banshi remain for them the foundation of their papermaking craft and a source of pride.

Since 1971, the Government has partly subsidized the cost of seminars and classes to transmit the skills to the future generation organized by the Association. The Agency for Cultural Affairs partly subsidizes the cost of training for successors by the Association through the program entitled "Agency for Cultural Affairs project to support human resources training in arts organizations / Securing human resources in the traditional performing arts and other fields (training project)". One person was chosen to participate in the program each year in 2002, 2004 and 2006. The Government subsidizes the cost of papermaking workshops organized by the Association through the "Training skilled people to preserve the tradition" program. The Agency for Cultural Affairs produced a 35mm film of Sekishu-Banshi papermaking in 2001. This film is 34 minutes in length and recorded the skills of the craft.

#### **8) Safeguarding measures**

The Sekishu-Banshi Craftsmen's Association, as the community concerned, was recognized as the holding group of the technique of Sekishu-Banshi designated as an Important Intangible Cultural Property of Japan in 1969 under the law for the Protection of Cultural Property. The techniques and the production process for Sekishu-Banshi as a designated Important Intangible Cultural Property are defined by the following criteria:

- 1) *Kozo* only must be used as the material.
- 2) The traditional production methods and paper-making equipment must be used.
  - i). The bark is separated according to the *nazekawa* process, and plant or soda ash used in the boiling. (The *kozo* must be harvested in winter, the bark steamed off, and the outer bark stripped with a knife. The process of retaining the greenish part of the inner bast is called *nazekawa*. Afterwards, the inner bast is boiled in an alkali liquid to dissolve the substance holding the bundles of fibre together so that they can be separated.)
  - ii). Chemical bleach must not be used. Filler must not be added to the paper material.
  - iii). The fibres must be beaten manually, or by an equivalent method. (The *kozo* fibres are beaten thoroughly with an oak stick, to separate the fibres. The fibre should separate into individual strands.)
  - iv). *Neri*, mucilage extracted from the *tororoaoi*, must be used in the *nagashi-zuki* papermaking process. Sheet forming must be done using a bamboo laid *su*.

Shimane Prefecture and Hamada City partly subsidize the cost of projects implemented by the Association for the transmission of these skills to future generations.

Hamada City fully subsidized the cost of constructing the "Sekishu Washi Kaikan" (Sekishu Japanese-Paper hall), that serves as the venue for classes to train successors in the craft of making Sekishu Washi, including Sekishu Banshi. The Sekishu Washi Kaikan opens on September 28, 2008.

## 9) Community involvement

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

## O. Traditional Ainu Dance (アイヌ古式舞踊)

### 1) Heritage information

History, background: The Ainu people used to live in a vast area including Hokkaido, the northern part of Honshu, the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin. Currently, however, most of them live mainly in Hokkaido, and its population is estimated at approximately twenty-four thousand. Allegedly the Ainu culture of today's style was formed up approximately in the twelfth or thirteenth century. People at that time lived by fishing, hunting and gathering, and they also traded with other areas. In this way of life, the Ainu people have developed such a creed as they believe in deities which are omnipresent at anything related to their lives, namely the nature (the sun, rain, water, fire etc.) including animals and plants. Thus, they often conducted prayers and ceremonies in their daily life. The Traditional Ainu Dance can be performed at these prayers and ceremonies or banquets. 'Iyomante,' for example, is the biggest ceremony with the Traditional Ainu Dance for sending a deity disguised as a bear back to heaven. The Ainu people believe that a deity comes down to the human world in disguise of an animal or a plant which is a gift from the deity to be eaten by the human beings. Once people have physically eaten it up, they thank the remaining spirit of this invisible deity for its gift and hold a ceremony to send it back to heaven. During the ceremony people sing and dance. One of the features found in the Ainu performing arts is the imitation of calls and movements of animals and birds. During the ceremony of 'Iyomante' people repeatedly imitate calls and sounds accompanied with its movements of a bear, and words are inserted in such repetitions. On the other hand, performing arts which are privately performed in an Ainu daily life contain lullabies, improvisatory lyrical songs, incantations with melodies, and

songs accompanied with movements of labours by several persons in a daily life.

Area: The entire Hokkaido area, the northern area of Japan.

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association: Hokkaido Federation of Preservation Associations for Traditional Ainu Dance

The Ainu Association of Hokkaido, Kaderu 2.7 Building 7F,  
Kita 2, Nishi 7, Chuo-ku, Sapporo, Hokkaido, 060-0002, Japan

The Hokkaido Federation of Preservation Associations for Traditional Ainu Dance is the unification of the 17 Ainu dance preserving associations in 15 different cities and towns of Hokkaido.

▪ **Activities:** The Federation coordinates the activities of respective associations to ensure that the Ainu Traditional Dance will be preserved and transmitted to future generations. The Seventeen Preservation Associations for Traditional Ainu Dance groups exist in 15 different cities and towns in Hokkaido and work for preservation, transmission to future generation and also repairing and procuring the equipments and costumes.

## **3) Practitioners**

The Traditional Ainu Dance is transmitted by the seventeen preserving associations established in fifteen cities and towns where the Ainu people live.

## **4) Relevant events**

The Traditional Ainu Dance is performed at important ceremonies and banquets to the Ainu people and also in their daily life, through which the Ainu people reconfirm the identity and deepen a sense of continuity. Currently, in addition to such ceremonies as mentioned above, the Traditional Ainu Dance is demonstrated at newly projected festivals and events. It is one element of the intangible cultural heritage transmitted from generation to generation and is continuously developed and reproduced according to the situations of each era.

The Hokkaido Utari Association is organized by the Ainu people in Hokkaido and the Association holds annual Ainu Cultural Festival at various locations in

Hokkaido to increase the understanding of Ainu culture. Hokkaido Prefecture fully subsidizes the cost of Ainu Dance performance at the festival. The Ainu Cultural Festival is held in Hokkaido and in other parts of Japan to increase awareness and understanding of Ainu Culture and Ainu Dance.

### **5) Explanation**

The title 'Traditional Ainu Dance' is defined as dances and songs transmitted widely among the Ainu people in Hokkaido located in the northern area of Japan; on some occasions they are performed together, and on other occasions independently. This is one of the so-called "folk performing arts".

Those dances and songs are derived from the life and religion of the Ainu people, and can be generally categorized into (i) dances which are performed at ceremonies and banquets in local communities, and (ii) those performed privately in daily lives. Some dances imitate calls and movements of animals, some are religious or entertaining, others are improvised. Neither of them is accompanied with musical instruments. They are performed along with songs and handclaps of dancers and participants on site.

The traditional style of the Ainu dances is a big circle of many participants, proceeding right-handed with some fixed movements and singing together. They sing the same song together or in turns, otherwise they sing in a responding way between a chorus leader and the others. Some of those traditional songs are polyphonic; several women sit on a floor in a circle in surrounding a lid of a wooden container, make a rhythm in beating the lid, and sing the same melody with one sound successively delayed. Because there are currently many opportunities to perform it apart from a daily life, some dances and songs have been formed up as independent repertoires in paying due attention to the traditional performing style. As overviewed, they are (i) the imitation of calls and movements of animal, namely 'crane dance', 'fox dance' and 'swallow dance': (ii) the imitation of insects, namely 'grasshopper dance': (iii) the ritual one, namely 'sword dance' and 'bow dance': (iv) the entertaining one: (v) the improvisatory one.

The Traditional Ainu Dance is closely connected to the life and religion of the people and helps us infer the origin of performing arts.

### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

In terms of the projects for protect and preserve Ainu Intangible Folk Cultural Property, Hokkaido Board of Education has organized classes for preserving Ainu traditional performing arts as well as Ainu language and other traditions since 1981 with the subsidy by the National Government. The project for producing Ainu Dance films are also conducted by the Hokkaido Board of Education between 1986 and 1989 with subsidy by the National Government. Also Hokkaido Board of Education conducted an investigation of Ainu Dance between 1990 and 1992 and its report was completed and published. The National Government subsidized for the project.

In regard to the projects by Municipalities without national subsidy, 13 cities and towns subsidize the cost for preservation and transmission of Ainu culture. 8 cities and towns subsidize for the associations for preservation of Ainu Traditional Dance.

The projects by Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture based on the Law for the Promotion of Ainu Culture, “High level practical seminars” are held to nurture instructors of Ainu Dance, as well as the foundation subsidizes “Domestic Cultural Exchange program” which aim to invite practitioners of Ainu culture to provide opportunities to study, view and experience the Ainu Dance in various parts of Japan.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The effort to preserve and transmit Ainu culture began in 1970s by Ainu people. Hokkaido Prefecture and Cities in Hokkaido, where most of Ainu people live, developed safeguard measures and made records of various Ainu cultures in some case with financial support by National Government. Transmission of Ainu Culture, such as a Traditional Ainu Dance was well

documented through these projects and in 1984 the Traditional Ainu Dance was regarded as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property.

Nowadays, following measures are taken to preserve and transmit the Traditional Ainu Dance and the Ainu Culture.

The law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture and for the Dissemination and Advocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture;

In 1975, this law was established and enacted in view of maintaining and preserving the Ainu culture which is the pride of Ainu people. The law aims to promote Ainu culture, to ensure a better understanding and respect for the culture and to contribute to the development of cultural diversity within Japan. The Foundation for Research and Promotion of Ainu Culture (FRPAC) was also established in 1975.

Based on this law, the National Government and local governments in Hokkaido subsidize the Foundation's work of training successors, undertaking publicity and the promotional activities of Ainu traditions.

#### **10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

### **P. Yamahoko, the Float Ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival (京都祇園祭の山鉾行事)**

#### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: The ceremony is said to have its origins in the Gion "ghost ritual" of the tenth century, when a ceremony to propitiate and entertain the gods developed from the ritual. Since that time, it has been passed down through the generations uninterrupted by district residents and has become an important element in the continuation of the districts and unifying the residents. And in the course of being passed down through the

generations it has gradually developed into an urban festival with strong elements of display for the entertainment of others.

In Japan, there is a way of thinking according to which even gods which bring down calamity can be changed into protective deities through respectful worship, and rituals for the appeasement of these gods of calamity are carried out in various places. The Gion Festival is also that sort of festival, and the floats, are one of the devices for the appeasement of the Plague God, who brings calamity. The “poles” (*Shingi*), which beckon the Plague God, and the orchestras and children’s dances meant to entertain him, as well as the decorations on the floats are all meant to be just such devices.

Area: Kyoto City, Kyoto Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2009

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association: Foundation for Gion Festival Preservation Associations

554, Yamabushiyamacho, Nakagyo-ku, Kyoto, 604-8156, Japan

The foundation was established in 1923 aiming at the preservation and transmission of the Float Ceremony of Kyoto Gion Festival.

• **Activities:** To conduct the annual Kyoto Gion Festival, the foundation implement the following activities; (1) coordination of the administration, (2) restoration and maintenance of floats and of their decorations, (3) maintenance of equipment, (4) training for successors and (5) research on tapestries or other decorations.

## **3) Practitioners**

The thirty-two aforementioned Cultural Preservation Associations form the nucleus of those who carry out the ceremony, but the ceremony is sustained by the participation of many people outside the district residents as well. For example, there are the artisans who assemble the floats each year, and then disassemble them at the conclusion of the procession. And those who perform in the orchestras are formed around a core group of district residents. These individuals and groups have maintained their relationships with the Cultural Preservation Associations for many years, and work in their established roles.

While they participate in the ceremony, they also bear the responsibility for transmitting the techniques for constructing the various floats.

#### **4) Relevant events**

There are various ceremonies related to the float ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival which take place throughout the month of July, but at their core is a ceremonial procession of thirty-two *yama*-style floats, bearing platforms with mountain-shaped decorations, and *hoko*-style floats with symbolic “poles” towering far above them.

#### **5) Explanation**

The float ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival is carried out in the ancient capital of Kyoto, located slightly west of Japan’s central region. A ceremony of the Yasaka Shrine in Higashiyama Ward, the ceremony is carried out by the so-called *yamahoko*, or float-producing, districts in the middle of Kyoto. There are many customary ceremonies to pray for protection from epidemics in the early summer in Japan, and this is one of those ceremonies. There are various ceremonies related to the float ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival which take place throughout the month of July, but at their core is a ceremonial procession of thirty-two *yama*-style floats, bearing platforms with mountain-shaped decorations, and *hoko*-style floats with symbolic “poles” towering far above them.

The ceremony has been maintained collectively by *Choshu*, the residents of *Cho*, who live in the homes facing onto the streets that make up the self-governing districts. The *Choshu* are responsible for the ceremony, and the floats belong to those districts. There are thirty-two such districts possessing floats, and the float ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival has been transmitted within these districts for many years. Today, each district has its own Cultural Preservation Association, and these carry out the float ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival faithfully every year, and seek to transmit the custom to the next generation. These Cultural Preservation Associations have also combined their efforts to create The Foundation for Gion Festival Preservation Associations, as an organization to take the initiative in protecting the entire float ceremony as intangible cultural heritage.

Today's large *yama*- and *hoko*-style floats can be subdivided into five types of designs. There are six *hoko* floats, seventeen *kakiyama* floats, three *hikiyama* floats, four *yatai* floats, and two *kasa* floats. They reflect the basic festival float designs that can be seen in places all over Japan.

From the opening ceremony on July 1 which marks the beginning of the festival, the lottery on July 2 that determines the order of the floats in the procession, and the actual construction of the *yama*- and *hoko*-style floats, through the decoration of the floats and their subsequent unveiling at the district meeting halls on the eve of the procession, to the float procession itself on July 17, the entire ceremony is organized around the *yamahoko* float-producing districts. However, as mentioned above, the participation of people living around the *yamahoko* districts has been important at every turn ever since the Edo period (1603-1867). And since the float ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival is a paradigm example of an urban festival in which the participation of people living around the festival districts is important, it is indispensable for understanding the origin and evolution of Japan's summer festivals.

#### **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

The research project on history of the Gion Festival was conducted fully subsidized by Kyoto City in 2007. The research project on the decoration of floats was conducted fully subsidized by the Foundation for Gion Festival Preservation Associations.

The National Government partly subsidizes the restoration or maintenance of floats itself and its decoration which are used every year. In contrast to the newly designed decorations, this national support is aimed at large-scale maintenance. Granting this support, restoration and maintenance must be carried out keeping same design and by same techniques. The cost of the support is shared by the National Government, Kyoto Prefecture, Kyoto City and the Foundation.

The National Government fully subsidizes the training seminar on musical accompaniment for the festival targeted to pupils of elementary and junior high schools.

In 2004, the National Government fully subsidized the construction of a Data Base on float decorations made of cloth before 1868. In 2006, the National Government fully subsidized the production of a documentary film on construction techniques for the floats and measurement of wooden parts of the float. The production of a documentary film for complete recording of Gion festival in 2007 was also fully subsidized by the National Government.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The Float Ceremony of the Kyoto Gion Festival has been designated since 1979 as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property, because it has very long history more than five hundred years and it is one of the greatest festive events not only in size but also in aesthetic and historic meanings.

Safeguarding measures by Preservation Associations:

Financial Support for Restoration or Maintenance of Floats themselves or Decorations;

(a) Kyoto Prefecture, Kyoto City and Preservation Association are sharing the procurement cost of newly designed decorations of the floats made of cloth at little expense. Introduction of newly designed decorations for the floats reflects the enterprising spirit of local people.

(b) As the floats towed in Gion Festival are gigantic constructions, they often require some maintenance after just one parade. Kyoto Prefecture, Affiliated organizations of Kyoto City and Preservation Associations are sharing the cost of urgent maintenance of the floats at little expense.

#### **10) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government

gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

## **Q. Kumiodori, traditional Okinawan musical theatre (組踊)**

### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: The words used in the story-telling come from the language of ancient Okinawa. The rhythm of the lines is based on traditional poetry, and the distinctive intonation of the Ryukyu scale. Dances and actions are based upon the physical movements of a pythoness at traditional rituals in ancient Okinawa. Male actors perform all the female roles. Traditional techniques and characteristics unique to Okinawa can also be seen in the methods of hair-dressing, costumes, equipment and tools used on stage. Kumiodori has approximately 70 dramas today. The contents are concerned with legends or the history of Okinawa.

Kumiodori was first performed in 1719 in the Ryukyu Kingdom to welcome the envoy of the Chinese emperor. It was created and transmitted under the protection of the Ryukyu government and prospered as the official performing art of the Kingdom. Because it was originally created to be performed at official events of the kingdom, its main themes were loyalty and dutifulness.

After the Meiji Restoration in the late 19th century, Ryukyu became a prefecture of Japan, and no longer received support from the Ryukyu Kingdom; Kumiodori began to be performed for ordinary citizens, so that the performers could earn a living. Even under difficult times during and after World War II, people in Okinawa managed to transmit Kumiodori, finding relief and mental support in the songs and dances under the harsh conditions of life. In 1972, when Okinawa was returned to Japan from the U.S., Kumiodori was designated by the Government as Important Intangible Cultural Property and the bearers of Kumiodori were given recognition.

Area: The southernmost prefecture of Japan is Okinawa, where Kumiodori has been transmitted. It is located approximately fifteen hundred-kilometres away from Tokyo, toward the southwest. It consists of one hundred sixty islands including Okinawa Island, spreading from the south edge of the Kyushu region

of Japan to the northeast ocean of Taiwan.

In these geographical conditions, maritime transportations were developed among these islands in old times. A lot of overseas trade with neighbouring countries was so active that wealth and power were gathered. The Ryukyu Kingdom was then formed in 1429. These led to the development of a unique distinctive culture in the context of Asia including Japan's mainland and China. The Ryukyu Kingdom was converted into Okinawa Prefecture during the Meiji Restoration in the nineteenth century and has become a part of Japan since then.

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2010

Community involvement: See below 8)

Preservation association:

Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society

National Theatre Okinawa

4-14-1, Serikyaku, Urasoe-shi, Okinawa-ken, 901-2122, Japan

The members of the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society have acquired high performing skills, and are eager to train successors. The Government recognized them as bearers of the arts and skills of Kumiodori. Currently, there are about 60 members. 2 among them have been recognized as supreme bearers, known as Living National Treasures. They have a central role in training successors, and work in collaboration with the national and local governments, schools and the National Theatre of Okinawa to promote Kumiodori.

• **Activities:** The Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society is engaged in the promotion of Kumiodori, the training of successors, and the revival of dramas that were discontinued in the past. New performances with freer themes have been created today while keeping the traditional style of Kumiodori. They have been well received by the audience with a contemporary sensibility. In this way, Kumiodori has adapted to changing times and circumstances, and has continued to be recreated.

Today, Kumiodori can be enjoyed all year round. The National Theatre

Okinawa was built for the purpose of continuing the transmission of Kumiodori, and through detailed research on the performance history of Kumiodori, it provides the best stage mechanics suitable for its performance.

### **3) Practitioners**

When Kumiodori was designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property, the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society was formed to secure its transmission. The members of the Society are proud of Kumiodori, eager to transmit it, and maintain the high standards of their skills. The people of Okinawa respect this Society, and recognize Kumiodori as an important cultural heritage created by their ancestors.4) Relevant events:

Besides a regular performance carried out by the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society every year, Kumiodori is performed in Okinawa throughout the year, for example, at the National Theatre Okinawa, which was opened in 2004. The National Theatre Okinawa conducts workshops in collaboration with the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society to train successors for the transmission of the knowledge and skills of Kumiodori. The young successors have a chance to perform throughout the year in order to exhibit the skills they have acquired.

### **4) Explanation**

Kumiodori is a type of musical composed of speech, music and dance, and dance-like movements. It is a comprehensive performing-art based on Okinawa's traditional music and dance, but elements from mainland Japan like Nogaku or Kabuki and also from China are incorporated. During a performance, songs accompanied mainly by a three-stringed instrument portray events as well as the emotions of the characters.

Kumiodori is a performing art that developed in the history and climate of Okinawa, and serves as a symbol of Okinawa, both socially and culturally. For the people of Okinawa, to see Kumiodori, or to perform in it, strengthens their sense of affiliation to the community. Kumiodori has continued to evolve, incorporating foreign elements from Asia and the Japanese mainland, while surviving many difficult conditions. Because of this, it is an important cultural heritage, indispensable for a deeper understanding of Okinawa. It is also a significant example the study of cultural interrelations between the Japanese

mainland, Asian countries and Okinawa.

The old language used in Kumiodori is no longer understood, except by the elderly. Kumiodori plays a central role in preserving this extinguishing language, as well as transmitting literature, performing arts, history, and ethical qualities to this day, both in Okinawa and other prefectures of Japan.

In addition to classical works, the themes of which are loyalty and filial duty in Confucianism, a modern element has been added to the themes and choreography of many new works. Traditional and contemporary elements support the transmission of Kumiodori.

People in Okinawa have protected and preserved Kumiodori regardless of political upheavals and cultural interactions. From a social point of view, therefore, the survival of Kumiodori means that it has served as a symbol of Okinawa and strengthened people's sense of affiliation to their community for a long time.

#### **5) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **6) Safeguarding projects**

Throughout the year, the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society conducts many performances at the National Theatre Okinawa and other theatres. It also works to ensure that many spectators can appreciate and enjoy Kumiodori.

Training of successors began by the Society in 1973; a year after Kumiodori was designated as Important Intangible Cultural Property. It has led to significant results, and the Society is acquiring more new members who have received training.

Because Kumiodori has always been performed in Okinawa, it is not well known in other areas. Therefore, the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society began working to make the performance more widely recognized. A special performance runs 6 times a year. It explains the history and culture of Okinawa, as well as the points to appreciate Kumiodori, to obtain the

understanding of those watching for the first time. In addition, the Society works to revive many performances that had not been acted for a long time.

The production and repair of Kumiodori equipments and tools cannot be ignored when transmitting Kumiodori. Therefore, the Government has selected these as Selected Conservation Techniques, and accredited the preservation organization involved. In 2004, the National Government established the National Theatre Okinawa, as a base for traditional cultural exchanges with the Asia-Pacific region. It has also made use of Okinawa's geographical and historical aspects, as well as making efforts to preserve Okinawa's traditional performing arts beginning with Kumiodori.

The National Theatre Okinawa serves as an important pillar for the following: exchange programmes with the Asia-Pacific region, the recording and displaying of performances, the collection of materials, research, training, and performances of Okinawa's old performing arts. The National Theatre Okinawa cooperates with the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society to provide performances and training throughout the year.

#### **7) Safeguarding measures**

Okinawa prefecture provides subsidies for the Society's activities, such as training of successors and projects to promote Kumiodori. The prefecture also provides appropriate guidance and advice. A staff member in charge of intangible cultural property from the Okinawa Board of Education attends the training and any other promotional activities, and provides explanations. In this way, Okinawa prefecture always provides advice for the Society on successor training and any other problems, as well as promotional activities.

In 1972, the National Government designated Kumiodori as Important Intangible Cultural Property. It assists in the Society's successor training and promotional activities, as well as accrediting holders and cooperating to ensure preservation and succession. Those with top skills as Kumiodori musicians or performers are individually recognized as bearers of Important Intangible Cultural Property, known as National Living Treasures, and the government offers support towards the training and polishing of skills that these people need.

To avoid unruly changes in the performing art, the following requirements were set upon its designation.

1. The majority of the actors and those associated with the performance of Kumiodori must be members of the Traditional Kumiodori Preservation Society.
2. Acting and stage direction must be based on traditional style.
  - a. Words must be based on traditional style.
  - b. Appearance (costumes, wigs, make-up) must be in traditional style
  - c. Actors must play all female roles
  - d. Stage settings and props must be in traditional style

## **8) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

## **R. Yuki-tsumugi, silk fabric production technique (結城紬)**

### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: One of the reasons for the continuous refinement of this technique to produce qualified silk pongee fabrics is that the fertile lands in a warm climate of this area, where mulberry trees can grow well, are suited for the sericulture. Some researchers point out that the local mentality is the reason for the persistent observance of the tradition; the people tend to protect their own lands inherited from their ancestors and to succeed to the occupations of their parents.

In modern times, due to the rapid changes and the westernization of Japanese lifestyle, opportunities to wear kimono have decreased. However, there are still many Japanese, especially women, who are very fond of kimono. Kimono can be worn as formal attire at ceremonial occasions, as well as less formal, social events. It can be said that kimono is a traditional Japanese costume. The existence of Yuki-tsumugi can help to continue the customs of this tradition, and pass them down to future generations.

Although Yuki-tsumugi had been known as a specialty by the Edo era (1603-1867), even today, the production of pongee fabrics continues to have an important social function of supporting the lives of the people of the community through the sericulture industry. The empty cocoons after the hatch of moths cannot be spun into qualified yarn. Together with the deformed cocoons, they are made into silk floss which is raw material of yarn for Yuki-tsumugi. This recycling process of materials has a socially significant meaning in today's society.

Area: Area surrounding Yuki City in Ibaraki Prefecture and Oyama City in Tochigi Prefecture (Chikusei City, Shimotsuma City and Yachiyo Town in Ibaraki Prefecture: Shimotsuke City and Ninomiya Town in Tochigi Prefecture), which are located along the Kinu River approximately 70 kilometers north of Tokyo. All members of the bearing body live in these communities, and the office of this bearing body is set up within the Board of Education in Yuki City, Ibaraki Prefecture.

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2010

Community involvement: See below 10)

Preservation association: 'Association for the Preservation of Honba Yuki-tsumugi Weaving Techniques' is the bearing body established in 1976 and officially recognized under Article 71, paragraph 2, of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Property and mainly composed of craftsmen.

• Activities: The Association for the Preservation of Honba Yuki-tsumugi Weaving Technique constantly aims for the preservation and transmission, and through this aim, its unity is strongly identified. The traditional skills are transmitted through their activities of exchanging their skills, training for young generation, demonstration and promotion of the skills, thus leading to their continuity to the future. Such activities have important meaning for the people who transmit Yuki-tsumugi of which they are proud of; they are strongly supported by the local community of Yuki City, Oyama City, and local governments of Ibaraki and Tochigi Prefecture.

## **3) Practitioners**

Currently, approximately 130 members, who have been directly engaged in

spinning, dyeing and weaving for a long time, transmit this technique. All of them live their lives in this area as farmers, and silk weaving is their second job. The office of the Association is set up within the Board of Education in Yuki City, Ibaraki Prefecture.

The traditional techniques to produce Yuki-tsumugi have been transmitted by the members of the Association for the Preservation of Honba Yuki-tsumugi Weaving Technique. They have been directly engaged in maintaining the high standards of spinning, dyeing and weaving that have been passed down from generation to generation for a long time within the community. They recognize Yuki-tsumugi as a very important cultural property and strongly believe that it is their vocation to preserve and transmit it to the future. Moreover, they are very proud of 'Yukitsumugi'.

With the introduction of chemical fabrics, and the development of machinery for spinning, those who bear the technique of Yuki-tsumugi have declined in number; hand-made fabrics take a lot of time, but very unprofitable. There were 171 members in the Association for the Preservation of Honba Yuki-tsumugi Weaving Technique in 1976, but at present, the number has decreased to 128. Nevertheless, the members continue with their efforts to preserve this tradition.

#### **4) Relevant events:**

Ibaraki Prefecture held a special exhibition 'Tsumugi: beauty and skills of silk' in 2001 at Tenshin Memorial Museum of Art, Ibaraki. Tochigi Prefecture held a special exhibition 'Yuki-tsumugi: skills and beauty of tsumugi textiles' in 2004 at the prefectural museum. Works of Yuki-tsumugi were widely displayed in the respective exhibitions.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs has held 'The skills and beauty of craftsmanship in Japan Important Intangible Cultural Properties and the people who support them', exhibition every year since 1997. This exhibition, which takes place at two locations in Japan each year, has shown all works from holders or holding groups for designated Important Intangible Cultural Properties since the system of designation and recognition began. Works of Yuki-tsumugi are included in the exhibition every year, giving the people of Japan a chance to learn about this heritage.

## **5) Explanation**

It has been mainly transmitted by the inhabitants of Yuki City and Oyama City, both of which are along the Kinu River and approximately 70 kilometers north of Tokyo. From the seventeenth century, the pongee fabric of this area became known as 'Yuki-tsumugi' and was produced in large amounts. The main feature of Yuki-tsumugi is that the traditional production technique for pongee fabric is used: spinning silk floss into yarns by hand, weaving the yarns with a back-strap loom, and making ikat (kasuri) patterns by hand-tying. The fabric is light and warm with a characteristic stiffness and softness with fine and ingenious design patterns. It is known as a representative of Japanese pongee fabric.

Only the finest fabric, made by members of the bearing body of the technique, the Association for the Preservation of Honba Yuki-tsumugi Weaving Technique, following the requirements for the designation can be termed as a work of Important Intangible Cultural Property.

## **6) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

## **7) Safeguarding projects**

The 'Association for the Preservation of Honba Yuki-tsumugi Weaving Techniques' undertakes the following measures for the preservation and promotion of traditional techniques of Yukitsumugi, cooperating with the 'Preservation Association for the technique of Yuki-tsumugi: an intangible cultural property': 1) holding workshops on Yuki-tsumugi technique: 2) training for transmitters of the skills for Yuki-tsumugi: 3) demonstration and promotion of the skills.

The 'Preservation Association for the technique of Yuki-tsumugi : an intangible cultural property' organizes 1) seminars on spinning technique, 2) seminars on the preservation of indigo dyeing and 3) competitions and selling of the works made by the techniques, to promote the important traditional techniques of Yuki-tsumugi. Yuki City, Oyama City and related cities and towns financially contribute to the management of the 'Preservation Association'.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs purchases works made by the traditional craft techniques for preservation and promotion. Nine works of Yuki-tsumugi have been bought by the Agency since 1957.

#### **8) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The National Government designated Yuki-tsumugi as Important Intangible Cultural Property in 1956 for its high artistic value, and the precious techniques needed for this art, its significant position in the history of industrial arts, and cultural characteristics of the community.

The provisions of the Law for the Protection of Cultural Property require the official recognition of a bearer or a bearing body of such Intangible Cultural Property. The requirement for its designation defines especially distinctive handiwork and the use of traditional tools among the processes. By setting these requirements, the transmission of this tradition is secured.

The requirements for the designation:

- 1) A yarn should be spun by hand out of silk floss. A hard twist yarn cannot be used;
- 2) To make an Ikat (kasuri) pattern, the skein should be tied only by hand before the dyeing process;
- 3) A back-strap loom should be used

The Ibaraki Prefecture established the ‘Textile Industry Guidance Service’ in the ‘Ibaraki Prefectural Industrial Technology Center’ while Tochigi Prefecture established the ‘Tsumugi Technique Support Center’ in the ‘Tochigi Prefectural Industrial Technology Center’. Both centers hold programs related to the transmission of Yuki-tsumugi.

#### **10) Community involvement**

The Japanese Inventory includes those elements designated as “Important Intangible Cultural Property” or “Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property” or selected as “Selected Conservation Techniques” under the “Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties”. Responsible for designation and selection of these under the Council for Cultural Affairs are the Subdivision on Cultural Property and its subordinate organizations. They consist of experts on

intangible cultural heritage, practitioners, and representatives of associated groups, and they investigate and examine candidate elements.

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

The Subdivision on Cultural Property and its subordinate organizations are also investigating and examining our candidate elements for the Representative List. In making the nomination, the Government has attained all the consents and full cooperation from the communities or groups concerned and local government where the element is located.

## **S. Mibu no Hana Taue, ritual of transplanting rice in Mibu, Hiroshima**

(壬生の花田植)

### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: ‘Mibu no Hana Taue’ is an agricultural ritual in which people worship the deity of rice fields, and pray for a good growth and abundant harvest of the rice crops for the year through ploughing fields, and transplanting rice seedlings.

The Mibu community, located in a mountainous area of Western Japan, has developed and transmitted “Mibu no Hana Taue.” Both the Mibu and neighbouring Kawahigashi communities have been areas of rice cropping for a long time

‘Mibu no Hana Taue’ is an agricultural ritual carried out on a specially reserved rice field by habitants of the Mibu and Kawahigashi communities together in a vibrant way every year. It is said to have declined during the Meiji period. Later, however, people became eager to pass it on the future generation as a valuable element of cultural heritage, and the ritual has become quite active up to today. Therefore, the people in both communities consider the ritual as part of their own cultural heritage.

'Mibu no Hana Taue' dates back to before the Edo period, and has been transmitted from generation to generation. The people in the Mibu and Kawahigashi communities have gathered every year to transplant rice seedlings at the season of rice transplantation when rice cropping enters its crucial stage. It inevitably gives them a sense of identity. The ritual assures an abundant harvest in these communities. As a result, it gives them a strong sense of continuity.

Area: Kitahiroshima Town, Yamagata County, Hiroshima Prefecture

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2011

Community involvement: See below 9)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of Mibu no Hana Taue

245-1, Mibu, Kitahiroshima-cho, Yamagata-gun, Hiroshima-ken, 731-1515,  
Japan

• **Activities:** In order to pass down the knowledge and skills concerning 'Mibu no Hana Taue', practice sessions of the ritual's songs and music are held regularly for the pupils at Mibu Elementary School. Many of the current Saotome and music players also come from these practice sessions.

The Association for the Preservation of Mibu no Hana Taue organizes a Children's Dengaku Team for the fifth graders of neighbouring Mibu Primary School and teaches them music and songs of Hana Taue. Before the annual Hana Taue, the team performs the music and songs near the rice fields. This is a good occasion to train successors. Since 1976, Kitahiroshima Town has subsidized successor training, cattle feeding and equipment repairs.

## **3) Practitioners**

'Mibu no Hana Taue' has been transmitted mainly by the people of the Mibu and Kawahigashi communities in Kitahiroshima Town, Yamagata County, Hiroshima Prefecture. In the event 'Mibu no Hana Taue', people engaged in rice cropping in the Mibu and Kawahigashi communities welcome the deity of rice fields. In the presence of the deity, they plough the rice fields and transplant the rice seedlings. The event has assured safe rice cropping and an abundant harvest in these communities for a long time.

The farmers and local people of the Mibu and Kawahigashi communities have preserved and transmitted 'Mibu no Hana Taue' as an agricultural ritual. The elderly called Sambai are in charge of a smooth execution of the entire ritual. They are familiar with the songs and music for rice planting, and belong to the Association for the Preservation of Mibu no Hana Taue. Some even say that the deity of rice fields rests upon them.

'Mibu no Hana Taue' is an agricultural ritual transmitted from generation to generation by the people living in the Mibu and Kawahigashi communities, whose main occupation is rice cropping. It dates back to before the Edo period. Although it once declined during the Meiji period, an organization was set up to transmit the practice to future generations as a valuable element of cultural heritage. The protection measures taken by Hiroshima Prefecture in 1959 and the National Government in 1976 have also contributed to its transmission.<sup>4)</sup>

Relevant events:

The Association for the Preservation of Mibu no Hana Taue participated in the Chugoku Shikoku Block Folk Performing Arts Festival in 1983. Aiming to further disseminate the ritual, the Association shows music and songs for 'Mibu no Hana Taue' on many other occasions including an event in Washington, USA.

#### **4) Explanation**

'Mibu no Hana Taue' is carried out on the first Sunday of June every year after actual transplantations in the community are completed. Villagers gather at a large rice field, specially kept in reserve for the ritual. The deity of rice fields is welcomed, and a series of agricultural works such as ploughing, preparation for the transplantation and the actual transplantation are demonstrated in the presence of the deity.

On the day of the ritual, villagers bring more than a dozen cattle to Mibu Shrine to be dressed with elaborately decorated saddles called Hanagura and a colourful necklace. The cattle are then equipped with agricultural implements called Manga, and pulled into the rice field, following a man with a sacred stick in his hand. The man who manages the first cattle in line is called Omouji or Omouji-zukai. He skilfully controls the cattle to plough the rice field. This is an honourable role in 'Mibu no Hana Taue.'

When most of the ploughing is completed, girls called Saotome begin to prepare for the transplantation. They wear colourful dresses, and hats called Suge-gasa. They take the seedlings that grow at the edge of the rice field and put them into a case called Naebune while singing a song under the conduct of an elder man, called Sambai.

After the ploughing and preparation for the transplantation are completed, a man called Eburitsuki begins to level the rice field with an implement, called Eburi. It is said that the deity of rice fields rests on Eburi.

Transplantation begins in the presence of the deity. Saotome aligned with Sambai transplant the seedlings one by one, walking backwards. While the Sambai sings a leading song, locally considered as a parent song, with lengthwise-cut bamboo called Sasara in his hands, Saotome sing another song, locally considered as a child song. Eburitsuki and the person who carries the seedlings in Naebune follow Saotome, and level the rice field as the seedlings are planted. A musical band follows them, and plays the drums, flutes, and small gongs accompanying the songs of Sambai and Saotome.

Once the transplantation is completed, Eburi is placed upside down in some water, and three bunches of rice seedlings are put on it. Some say that the deity of rice fields resides in this Eburi, while others say that the deity launches from it and goes back to the heavens. In this way, an abundant harvest of rice can be expected.

#### **5) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **6) Safeguarding projects**

Documentary films were produced by Hiroshima Prefecture in 1979 and by Chiyoda Town in 2000. Besides recording detailed features of 'Mibu no Hana Taue', the film introduced the efforts of transmission to the younger generation. Related facilities in Hiroshima Prefecture used the distributed films widely.

Research reports were compiled by the Agency for Cultural Affairs in 1969, by Hiroshima Prefecture in 1978 and by Kitahiroshima Town in 2000. These reports were distributed to the libraries throughout Hiroshima Prefecture and have been used for the transmission.

Kitahiroshima Town established the Hall for Preservation and Transmission of Folk Performing Arts in the Geihoku Area in 1983. The hall is used for the dissemination of folk performing arts in this region by showing documentary films or displaying old equipment for the arts.

#### **7) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **8) Safeguarding measures**

‘Mibu no Hana Taue’ has been designated as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property since 1976.

At the Town level, in the Division for Lifelong Learning of Kitahiroshima Town Board of Education, staff are assigned for the protection of cultural property based on the regulations for the protection of cultural property of Kitahiroshima Town. The Town established the Hall for Preservation and Transmission of Folk Performing Arts in the Geihoku Area in 1983 for the dissemination of folk performing arts in this region, by showing documentary films or displaying old equipment for the arts.

At the prefectural level, the Division for Cultural Affairs was established in the Hiroshima Prefectural Board of Education, and staff are assigned for the protection of elements of intangible cultural property based on the regulations for the protection of cultural property of Hiroshima Prefecture.

#### **9) Community involvement**

The Japanese Inventory includes those elements designated as “Important Intangible Cultural Property” or “Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property” or selected as “Selected Conservation Techniques” under the “Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties”. Responsible for designation and selection of these under the Council for Cultural Affairs are the Subdivision on Cultural Property and its subordinate organizations. They consist of experts on

intangible cultural heritage, practitioners, and representatives of associated groups, and they investigate and examine candidate elements.

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and have enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

The Subdivision on Cultural Property and its subordinate organizations are also investigating and examining our candidate elements for the Representative List. In making the nomination, the Government has attained all the consents and full cooperation from the communities or groups concerned and local government where the element is located.

## **T. Sada Shin Noh, sacred dancing at Sada shrine, Shimane (佐陀神能)**

### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: The current style of 'Sada Shin Noh' was formed allegedly in the early seventeenth century. Apart from the numbers newly added in the early seventeenth century, it is said that its ancient style has been performed as early as the fifteenth century.

The people of the community have performed 'Sada Shin Noh' to become blessed by the tutelary deity of the community through a regular re-enactment of its power. From the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, it was performed by those who worshipped the community deity by profession. After the mid-nineteenth century, the public joined in the performance.

Area: Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture

### **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2011

Community involvement: See below 9)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of Sada Shin Noh

73 Sadamiyauchi, Kashima-cho, Matsue-shi, Shimane-ken, 690-0331, JAPAN

The association was newly established in 1952, succeeding the old association established in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It undertakes several efforts for the conservation and transmission of 'Sada Shin Noh' by training successors and opening the performance to the public. Those who are in charge of the transmission of 'Sada Shin Noh' are first, the members of the Association for the Preservation of Sada Shin Noh. They are ordinary citizens engaged in respective jobs, but they practice regularly and have acquired the traditional performance formula. They bear a direct responsibility to perform it in a traditional style in public.

- Activities: The Association for the Preservation of Sada Shin Noh holds a practice session in which skilled people instruct the youths in Gekuden of the Sada Shrine every Tuesday night from June to September every year. Elementary school pupils, who are expected to be future successors, also participate in these regular practices.

### **3) Practitioners**

It has been transmitted by people in Matsue City, Shimane Prefecture, located in the western part of the Japanese main island. The people who worship Sada Shrine as a tutelary presence are eager to transmit 'Sada Shin Noh' to the future. They have practiced diligently to acquire the skills needed for their performances, and have been publicly approved by the people of the community.

'Sada Shin Noh' has been transmitted from generation to generation by the people of the community. The people become blessed through the re-enactment of the power of the tutelary deities, and it is believed that the entire community would be secure if the people worship and respect these deities.

The transmitting group and community consider 'Sada Shin Noh' as one of their own distinctive cultures of which they are proud. By transmitting and performing it in public, it offers them an opportunity to renew a sense of identity with the community and society, thus contributing to its continuity.<sup>4)</sup>

Relevant events:

Every year the Association holds annual practices every Tuesday night from June to September at Kagura Hall in Sada Shrine. Several primary school pupils

participate in the practice. Following the main performance in September in Sada Shrine, the Association holds additional performances in neighbouring shrines from October to November. It also holds public performances at National theatres or theatres in other localities upon request.

The Shikoku and Chugoku Block Folk Performing Arts Festival and Urgent Research on Folk Performing Arts in Shimane Prefecture are held by Shimane Prefecture, for the purpose of the preservation, transmission, and popularization of folk performing arts.

#### **4) Explanation**

‘Sada Shin Noh’ is a performing art expressed by the people’s dance-like movements to musical instruments such as drums to re-enact the power of the deity with which the people are blessed. It is always performed on September 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> every year on a special stage, called Gakuden, constructed within the precincts of the Sada Shrine which is the tutelary presence of the community.

During these two days at Sada Shrine, people replace the rush mats, called Goza, with new mats on which the deities seat themselves. The replacement re-enacts the deities’ power.

During the performance of ‘Sada Shin Noh’, a ritual dancer performs with Goza in his hand. The Goza are purified by this dance. People consider that ‘Sada Shin Noh’ is indispensable to the re-enactment of the deities’ power.

‘Sada Shin Noh’ is also performed at other neighbouring shrines, whenever requested. The repertoire, choreography and music in ‘Sada Shin Noh’ are traditionally fixed. ‘Sada Shin Noh’ is accompanied by flute music, three types of drums and singing. The players sit down around the stage, and the dancers perform at the centre of the stage.

The repertoire performed in this performing art is classified into three categories. The first seven numbers belong to Category I. The performers do not wear masks, and perform the ritual dances with swords, holy wooden sticks, and bells in hand, depending on the number. In the ritual dance, Gozamai, the dancers perform with the rush mats for the deities in their hands in order to purify them before serving them to the deities. Category II has the

three ritual dances performed with a mask of an old man. It is said that these dances were performed in Kyoto in the early seventeenth century. Category III has twelve numbers called Shin Noh which are performed with a mask of a deity. Japanese myths are depicted through these dances.

This composition of dances is a typical example of Japanese performing arts. However, the main feature of 'Sada Shin Noh' is the dance of purification of the deities' seats. People believe that 'Sada Shin Noh' should be regularly performed in order to re-enact the power of the tutelary deities in the community. 'Sada Shin Noh' is natural and nothing special in the daily lives of the people around Sada Shrine who share the worship. 'Sada Shin Noh' is an interaction between people and the deities that supports and guarantees a rich and peaceful future for the people, their families, and the community, making the social and cultural functions of "Sada Shin Noh" significant.

#### **5) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **6) Safeguarding projects**

The Association for the Preservation of Sada Shin Noh compiled a textual documentation on Sada Shin Noh in 1979 and it has been used for the transmission.

Matsue City has supported the repair and procurement of the utensils for 'Sada Shin Noh' annually since 2005. Documentary records on Sada Shin Noh are displayed in the Matsue City Kashima Museum of History and Folklore for the dissemination of its importance.

Shimane Prefecture produces detailed video-recordings of all the repertoires of 'Sada Shin Noh'. The Prefecture established the Shimane Prefectural Centre for Ancient Culture in 1992 for the research of history and culture in Shimane Prefecture and dissemination of the results. The Centre made detailed video documentation on repertoires of 'Sada Shin Noh'. The Centre also made a popular edition of the video for a wider use. The Shimane Prefectural Museum established in 1959 changed to Shimane Museum of Ancient Izumo in 2007.

Since the establishment, the Museum organised a number of exhibitions on cultural heritage in the prefecture including Sada Shin Noh.

#### **7) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to “Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature”, 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **8) Safeguarding measures**

The people of the community have long regarded ‘Sada Shin Noh’ as an important performing art. Designated as Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property by the National Government in 1976, it has been widely recognized in Japan as an important element of the Japanese cultural heritage that indicates the transition of the Japanese lifestyle.

Matsue City makes subsidizations to ensure the transmission. It also spreads its significance to the public by displaying its materials and resources at the local museum.

The National Government subsidizes the Shikoku and Chugoku Block Folk Performing Arts Festival and Urgent Research on Folk Performing Arts in Shimane Prefecture, both of which are held by Shimane Prefecture, for the purpose of the preservation, transmission, and popularization of folk performing arts.

#### **9) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

### **U. Nachi no Dengaku, a religious performing art held at the Nachi fire festival (那智の田楽：那智の火祭りで演じられる神事芸能)**

#### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: Records show that Nachi no Dengaku ended twice. The first was in 1581, when all costumes and equipment were destroyed by fire, leaving no choice but to bring things to an end, but in 1599 Nachi no Dengaku was revived through the efforts of those involved. The second time was after

the expulsion of Buddhism from Japan during the Meiji Restoration, but local requests and the strong insistence of experts revived Nachi no Dengaku in 1921. Although it stopped, the equipment was saved thanks to those involved, and luckily a flute expert could remember the dances and flute music, so revival was possible. In line with this, masters who had taught Nachi no Dengaku made records in writing for certain transmission. They are housed in Kumano Nachi Shrine even today, and are being transmitted as an important material.

Practises are held in Kumano Nachi Shrine, one month before July 14th when Nachi no Dengaku is performed. As the Association members work, practices are held in the evening after work. Every year the Association films and photographs its public performances at the festival for their practices. The Association is also working towards better ways of transmitting by actively participating in Wakayama Prefecture's Folk Performing Arts Festival to motivate transmitters, and increasing the amount of practices.

Area: Nachi no Dengaku is transmitted in Nachikatsuura Town, Wakayama Prefecture. The town lies southeast of Wakayama Prefecture in central Honshu. A large part of the prefecture is the Kii Mountain Range, a mountainous area with 1000 - 2000m mountains spreading in every direction. The rough landscape is well developed, and because of that a form of deification emerged in ancient times, a belief that the mountains and waterfalls are gods or spiritual beings. After Buddhism was introduced people began to believe in the area as a place for Buddhist disciples. Nachi no Dengaku is a folk performing art with a deep connection to Kumano Sanzan, one of many sacred sites in the area that was established against such a historical background. It is performed on a special stage inside Kumano Nachi Shrine during annual festivities on July 14th.

## **2) Relevant information**

Year of inscription: 2012

Community involvement: See below 9)

Preservation association:

Association for the Preservation of Nachi Dengaku

Nachisan 1, Nachikatsuura-cho, Higashimuro-gun, Wakayama, 649-5301,  
JAPAN

Those who transmit Nachi no Dengaku are members of the Association for the Preservation of Nachi Dengaku who have acquired the art and perform it to the public. The Association was identified as a preservation organization when Nachi no Dengaku was designated as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1976 based on the Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties.

- Activities: Every year, the Association for the Preservation of Nachi Dengaku records its public performances and later uses the records for transmission. The Association also holds lessons and practices about a month before the festival. Following the practices, association members perform in Kumano Nachi Shrine during the festival, and public performances are also held at theatres and other prefectures upon request.

### **3) Practitioners**

Nachi no Dengaku is currently performed and transmitted by the Association for the Preservation of Nachi Dengaku. The head of the Association and some of the members are Shinto priests at Kumano Nachi Shrine, but in principle the Association consists of residents and natives of Nachisanku where Kumano Nachi Shrine is based. Originally the Association members were mainly groups of young men living in Nachisanku but as the number of young people in the area has recently decreased, OBs from the young men's' groups, or Nachisanku natives who have moved to the neighbourhood have become members, and are helping to transmit the element. There are currently 60 members, men in their 30s to 70s. Many work as businessmen in companies, or are owners (or owners' family members) of souvenir shops for tourists.

The flute, drum and Binzasara all have key roles in Nachi no Dengaku, and Association members who also transmit the element must know how to play them. Drummers will become drum teachers, and those who played the Binsazara will go on to become instructors. Because the flute is difficult to master, there is one Shinto priest on hand at Kumano Nachi Shrine who has experience performing Gagaku, a traditional type of Japanese music.

Nachi no Dengaku is performed during the Nachi Fire Festival. 12 giant torches attract the most attention and can only be carried by Association members.

Those who transmit Nachi no Dengaku have an important responsibility in supporting the festival as well.4) Relevant events:

Wakayama Prefecture periodically holds the "Folk Performing Arts Fair for the Kinki, Tokai and Hokuriku Regions" and Nachi no Dengaku was performed in 1954 and 1984.

#### **4) Explanation**

Nachi no Dengaku is a performing art expressed by the local people through ritual dancing to flute music and beating drums to wish for an abundant harvest of rice crops. The repertoires, manner of dance and music have been fixed through its long tradition.

It is performed on a stage of approximately 4m square, temporarily installed during a festival in "Kumano Nachi Taisha," a tutelage shrine in the region. The festival is known nationwide as the Nachi Fire Festival, and Nachi no Dengaku is recognised as an important tradition that is a key component of the festival.

Nachi no Dengaku is performed by one flute player, 4 drummers with drums around their waists, 4 players of "Binzasara," a musical instrument that is only used during Dengaku, and 2 others. The flute player performs at the side, while 8 to 10 performers appear on stage and dance in accordance with the drums and Binzasara. They change their formation in various ways, by swapping positions, dancing in a circle or symmetrically. There are 22 repertoires, each performed in 45 minutes.

The Binzasara is 8cm by 2cm, 1cm thick and is made by stringing together around 70 wooden plates. The dancer holds each handle of the Binzasara, and dances while making a sound by moving the wooden plates like a wave.

#### **5) Information resource**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and UNESCO ICH nomination file.

#### **6) Safeguarding projects**

Every year, the Association for the Preservation of Nachi Dengaku records its public performances and later uses the records for transmission. The Association also holds lessons and practices about a month before the festival. Following the practices, association members perform in Kumano Nachi

Shrine during the festival, and public performances are also held at theatres and other prefectures upon request.

Nachikatsuura Town supports annual successor-training projects carried out by the Association.

Wakayama Prefecture periodically holds the "Folk Performing Arts Fair for the Kinki, Tokai and Hokuriku Regions" and Nachi no Dengaku was performed in 1954 and 1984. The Prefecture also supports training projects for successors and repairing projects of tools etc. in 1979 and carried out its own video recording and documentation projects in 1982 and 1983. In 1965, Wakayama Prefecture designated costumes, utensils and related documents as tangible folk cultural property for their folkloric significance.

#### **7) Survey study project carried out by scholars**

Refer to "Index of Folk Performing Arts Research Literature", 2004, Iwata Shoin

#### **8) Safeguarding measures**

The Association for the Preservation of Nachi Dengaku was established in 1921 and became a Preservation Association following the designation of Nachi no Dengaku as an Important Intangible Folk Cultural Property in 1976.

The National Government finances the "Folk Performing Arts Public Performance Show" each year and Nachi no Dengaku was performed in 1963 and 2010. The Government also finances the "Folk Performing Arts Fair for the Kinki, Tokai and Hokuriku Regions" held in Wakayama Prefecture, and Nachi no Dengaku was performed there in 1954 and 1984. Performing in such shows motivates transmitters and is effective in making the value of Nachi no Dengaku and similar intangible cultural heritage more widely known. The Government also subsidizes training projects for successors and a project to repair tools carried out by the Association, and financed a video recording and documentation project in 1982 and 1983 conducted by Wakayama Prefecture.

Furthermore, the Government has designated the surrounding nature and other related cultural heritage which underlie the transmission and public performances of Nachi no Dengaku and given them necessary assistance. It designated a wild forest surrounding Kumano Nachi Shrine as a "Natural

Monument" in 1928, and "Nachi Fall," an object of worship, became a "Place of Scenic Beauty." The buildings of Nachi Shrine became "Important Cultural Property" and their courtyards "Historic Sites." In addition to the above, "Sacred Sites and Pilgrimage Routes in the Kii Mountain Range" were inscribed on the World Heritage List in 2004.

In 1965, Wakayama Prefecture designated costumes, utensils and related documents as tangible folk cultural property for their folkloric significance. Also, Kumano Nachi Shrine finances the Association for transmission and public performances at the festival each year.

#### **9) Community involvement**

Before the above-mentioned designation or selection, the Government surveys the communities or groups concerned and has enough dialogues with them including guidance on their activities for the preservation. The Government gets their consents at the time of designation as a holding group or a preservation organization.

### **V. Washoku, traditional dietary cultures of the Japanese, notably for the celebration of New Year**

(和食：日本人の伝統的な食文化—正月を例として—)

#### **1) Heritage information**

History, background: The basic knowledge and skills related to the element, such as proper seasoning of home cooking and its spiritual and wholesome aspects are called "Ofukuro-no-aji (taste of mother's cooking: home cooking)". They were handed down from parents or grandparents to the descendants at home. Elderly people in local communities have transmitted their own dietary culture to the younger generation. These spiritual and wholesome aspects, cultural knowledge and skills have been transmitted mainly by means of oral tradition and practice, while sharing mealtime and events together.

This knowledge and skills are constantly recreated in response to changes of the social environment such as influx of diverse cultures or technological development, but their underlying spirit and functions continue to prevail.

Area: It is practiced all over the territory of the State. It has basic common characteristics but has great diversity from Hokkaido in northern Japan, to Okinawa in southern Japan, responding to the wide range of geographical conditions and the differences of historical background. Use of diverse kinds of seafood, agricultural products and edible wild plants in the element created regional diversity, where local people have fostered the kind of traditional dietary culture unique to each region all over Japan.

Community: All Japanese. This includes families, local communities, grassroots groups, schoolteachers, cooking instructors and craftsmen. Notably in rural areas, numerous grassroots groups are active in preserving and transmitting knowledge associated with the traditional dietary culture particular to their specific locality and in the urban context, cooking instructors are also involved in supporting grassroots groups' activities.

## **2) Detailed information**

Year of inscription: Expected in the year 2013

Community involvement: Many local communities, groups and individuals have been voluntarily involved in planning the proposed safeguarding measures. Many have proposed safeguarding measures to the local governments and the Investigative Commission (see below 'Preservation association'). They intend to be involved in their implementation as instructors or practitioners on their own initiative.

Preservation association: To prepare the nomination of the element for the Representative List, an Investigative Commission was established.

Members, activities: The members of the Commission are representatives of local communities, groups, local governments, research institutions and experts who have been striving to preserve and transmit their dietary cultures which have been gradually weakened in the era of globalization.

Many local communities, grass roots groups and individuals exemplified above gathered and established a group named "Supporters Conference for *Washoku*" to support transmitting of *Washoku*. The group discussed what they should do and propose to monitor enforcement of safeguarding measures and any unintended result of inscription that might jeopardize the viability of the element.

## **3) Practitioners**

The practitioners of the element are all of the Japanese people. The bearers of the element are;

i) Families

Parents or grandparents transmit the element to their descendants at home. They teach children basic knowledge of the element including spiritual and health aspects and related manners. For example, to celebrate New Year, all members of a family get together and share Osechi. Each item of Osechi has a specific health related virtue and has an auspicious meaning, and elderly persons teach these to the children.

ii) Local communities

In local communities, elder persons or experts who have skills and knowledge about the element are the bearers of the tradition who transmit the element by means of leading community members in activities such as pounding rice cakes.

iii) Grassroots groups

Many grassroots groups have been established in order to preserve local dietary culture. They sometimes assume the role of transmitting the element on behalf of communities and the parents, especially in rural areas where the bond of local communities has been weakened, and in the urban context where opportunities to transmit at home are decreasing because single-family households are increasing.

iv) Schoolteachers and Cooking instructors

Schoolteachers, play a significant role in teaching the health related virtues of the element and supporting the transmission of the element to younger generations. In urban contexts, cooking instructors play a similar role.

v) Craftsmen

Craftsmen, who create utensils and special tableware used to serve *Washoku*, are also bearers of the element.

#### **4) Relevant events**

Many local communities, groups and individuals have made efforts in promoting the element through formal or non-formal education by participating actively in the movement called “Shoku-iku” (see below \*\*).

#### **5) Abstract**

*Washoku* is social practice based on a comprehensive set of skills, knowledge, practice and traditions related to the production, processing, preparation and consumption of food. It is associated with an essential spirit of respect for nature closely related to the sustainable use of natural resources. *Washoku* has developed as part of daily life and with a connection to annual events and is constantly recreated in response to changes in human relationship with natural and social environment.

Basic knowledge, social and cultural characteristics associated with *Washoku* are typically seen in New Year's celebrations when Japanese people immerse themselves in their tradition transmitted from generation to generation, thus reaffirming their identity and continuity. *Washoku* in New Year's celebrations are regionally rich in diversity, given that each province has its own historical and geographical specificity. People make various preparation to welcome the deities of the incoming year; pounding rice cakes, preparing special meals such as beautifully decorated dishes called Osechi, Zoni and Toso, using fresh locally available ingredients each of which has a symbolic meaning. These dishes are served on special tableware and shared by the family members, or shared collectively by the community members, ensuring peoples' health and social cohesion. This provides an occasion for elderly persons to teach the meanings contained in this social practice to the children.

In daily life, *Washoku* has important social functions for the Japanese to reaffirm identity, to foster familial and community cohesion, and to contribute to healthy life, through sharing traditional and well-balanced meals.

#### **6) Information resources (interview)**

Interview with Mr. Miyata, Chief Senior Specialist for Cultural Properties, Traditional Culture Division, Cultural Properties Department, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, and the nomination file to UNESCO.

#### **7) Safeguarding projects**

In recent years, there have been food related problems including the decline of traditional dietary cultures and issues concerning unhealthy dietary habits leading to obesity caused by socio-economic structural change and advancement of food globalization.

In 2005, the State established the Shoku-iku Basic Act that includes support for the transmission of traditional dietary cultures as described below;

- Government and local governments shall enhance, and disseminate knowledge about dietary cultures, and take other necessary measures in order to ensure transmission of the Japanese dietary cultures such as food related traditional events, etiquette, and the characteristic regional dietary cultures. –

Based on this Act, the government established a National Action Plan within which framework nation-wide events have been organized where many associations exhibit and introduce various local dietary cultures.

#### **8) Award received**

The national government has been granting an award to volunteer groups and individuals who contributed to promoting Shoku-iku movements.

#### **9) Safeguarding measures**

The Government has implemented counter-measures as described below;

- i) Encourage Shoku-iku movement
- ii) The Government selects some local specialities such as Zoni and supports them by making them known to public, in order to vitalize communities and supports cultural exchanges between communities.
- iii) The Government produced an introductory textbook and DVD that introduce the essence of the element.
- iv) The Government selects and promotes traditional handicrafts related to dietary culture in order to encourage the preservation and transmission of the related skills.