

## Outline of “Japan Heritage” Program

### I. Background for creating “Japan Heritage” program

- The Act on Protection of Cultural Properties has been the basis for cultural properties administration in Japan to date, i.e. classifying cultural properties according to types, such as national treasure, important cultural property, historic site, place of scenic beauty, natural monument and etc. and thereby promoting preservation and utilization of cultural properties on a more or less an item by item basis under specific regulations.
- On the other hand, perceiving various regional cultural properties as a whole, without regards to the types, and recognizing those under a certain theme or narrative/story is shown to be beneficial in promoting preservation and utilization of cultural properties in the regions more effectively. Therefore, the Agency for Cultural Affairs is recommending local communities to formulate basic schemes for historic and cultural properties. Unfortunately, only 38 municipalities have formulated such schemes as of August 2014. Furthermore, only a few of those municipalities that have formulated such schemes are successful in utilizing the same and seeing concrete results. Judging from the foregoing, the program has not yet gained sufficient recognition amongst local communities.
- On another front, potential of local cultural properties to serve as the core for community renovation and economic revitalization has become apparent as witnessed in the cases of World Cultural Heritage registered sites. Momentum to utilize cultural properties enterprisingly in community revitalization programs is building up.
- There are numerous excellent tangible and intangible cultural properties in various parts of Japan. Adding values to cultural properties, such as tying those to local narratives and putting in place a structure to publicize the attractions, as well as implementing an integrated community renovation program that is linked to industrial development, tourism promotion and human resources development of the local community (including neighboring regions) is proving to contribute towards revalidating identity awareness among local residents, to promote branding of the community and eventually leading to renovation of region as a whole.

- While municipalities are encouraged to develop programs that enterprisingly utilize cultural properties aimed at attaining the foregoing goals, the government needs to implement measures that support those highly-motivated municipalities.
- To this extent, designating narratives passed down through generations in a region based on unique regional histories and traditions as “Japan Heritage” and establishing a scheme that supports locally initiated programs that comprehensively utilize those attractive tangible and intangible regional cultural properties that constitute essential elements in the narratives would be very beneficial.

## II. Primary objectives of Japan Heritage

Prior to formulating the scheme for Japan Heritage, a fact-finding survey was conducted on 10 cases of municipality initiated precedent regional renovation programs that utilized regional cultural properties. Based on issues identified from the survey, the following objectives were identified as effective in regional revitalization through utilization and publicity of cultural properties.

- (1) Identify cultural properties scattered about in a region and package those cohesively in a story.
  - Comprehensively identify legacies and cultural properties of diverse nature scattered about in a region and cohesively package those in a story without regards to the classification or designation under Act on Protection of Cultural Properties. This will facilitate clarification of ties of cultural properties to the regional histories, culture and/or climate and thereby making it possible to discover hitherto unrecognized attractions of the region.
- (2) Organize and utilize regional legacies and cultural properties cohesively for the region.
  - Comprehensive development on both hard and soft aspects, i.e. organizing exhibition, seminars, workshops and similar functionalities, providing directional and explanatory signage and other guidance devices or recruiting and educating guides can facilitate visitors to more deeply understand ties of legacies and cultural properties to regional histories though keener perception of experiencing a story.
  - In addition, implementing a comprehensive program to promote deeper understanding and nurture love for home province, such as taking it up in regional school education and at lifelong learning institutions and similar, would be beneficial.
- (3) Strategically and proactively publicize the narratives pertaining to cultural properties

within Japan and abroad

- As evidenced at some World Cultural Heritage sites, brand impact for been recognized as a World Cultural Heritage, combined with an easily understandable story, can arouse interest to the region itself and serve to motivate many people to visit the World Cultural Heritage site.
- Compiling a story based on regional history that tie-in with various legacies and cultural properties of the region makes it easier to publicize attractions and climate unique to the region. This will not only serve to spread awareness of the region in other parts of Japan and abroad, but also promote understanding and cooperation among the local residents.
- In addition, making optimum use of existing resources, such as sister-city affiliations and overseas representative offices, as well as implement effective publicity, not only within Japan, but also overseas in English, Chinese, Korean and other foreign languages relevant to each region would be helpful.

### III. Scheme for Japan Heritage

#### 1. Outline of Japan Heritage

- The Agency for Cultural Affairs designates unique regional histories, traditions or customs that have been passed on for generations through narratives as “Japanese Heritage”. Regional community is expected to take initiative to cohesively organize and utilize those tangible and intangible cultural properties that constitute essential elements in the narrative and strategically publicize its Japan Heritage within Japan and abroad, aiming to revitalize the region.
- The National Heritage program can be described as cultural version of the “Cool Japan Strategy”. It is not intended to render new values to cultural properties, nor is it intended to impose new regulations.
- Therefore, it is not a measure to introduce a new system under the Act on Protection of Cultural Properties and has no hierarchical relationship with World Cultural Heritage, i.e. designation as Japan Heritage is not a prerequisite condition for application for World Cultural Heritage registration nor would Japan Heritage designation inhibit application for World Cultural Heritage registration.

#### 2. Story recognizable as Japan Heritage

- Designation of a story as Japan Heritage shall be based on the following three criteria (Cultural properties by themselves cannot not qualify for Japan Heritage.):
  - Pertains to unique traditions or customs, stemming from historical developments

- and regional climate, which have been passed on for generations in a region.
  - A story must have a clear theme at its core that features cultural properties, such as structures, archaeological site, sightseeing spots, local festivals and etc., which can be used to communicate the attraction of the region to outside the region.
  - Simple explanatory descriptions of regional history or values of local cultural properties will not suffice. The narrative needs to have a story.
- Story to be constructed with explanatory descriptions that can be understood and evoke interest even by people having no specialized knowledge in regional history or cultural properties.
  - There are two (2) categories for the stories: “Local Category” for which a narrative pertains to one city or a village, or “Collective Category” for which a narrative pertains to several cities or villages.
3. Cultural properties essential to a story
- Any and all tangible or intangible cultural properties passed down through generations in the region can qualify for inclusion, including locally designated or not yet designated cultural properties.
  - As Japan Heritage is recognition of a narrative that pertains to cultural and traditions of Japan, at least one nationally designated or selected tangible or intangible cultural property must be included.
  - All constituent cultural properties to be carefully evaluated for relevancy to the story. A document listing all constituent cultural properties to be compiled and submitted in order to verify that the cultural properties are essential to the story.
4. Japan Heritage designation application process
- (1) Applicant
- Applicant shall be a municipal entity, i.e. a city, a town or a village. Application to the Agency for Cultural Affairs shall be via the prefecture in which the applicant is located.
  - Application under Collective Category shall be submitted jointly in the names of all relevant municipal entities as a general rule. Application to the Agency shall be via the prefecture in which the representative municipal entity is located. Notwithstanding the above, if all relevant municipal entities are located within the same prefecture and the prefecture provides liaison and coordination functions, the prefecture may apply on behalf of the municipal entities (applicant).
  - If there are multiple applications filed within one prefecture, applications shall be

prioritized by the prefecture prior to forwarding the applications to the Agency.

(2) Conditions for Japan Heritage application

- In accordance with the intent and objectives of Japan Heritage program, a municipal entity applying shall meet one of the following conditions: (i) a municipal entity having formulated a Basic Scheme for Historic and Cultural Properties or a Plan on Maintenance and Improvement of Traditional Scenery, (ii) a municipal entity having a World Cultural Heritage constituting asset or (iii) a municipal entity having a World Cultural Heritage Tentative List listed asset or a World Cultural Heritage candidate asset.
  
- Reasons for stipulating the foregoing conditions are as follows:
  - Municipal entity meeting any one of the above listed conditions already has a comprehensive grasp on cultural properties located within its region. Consequently, base material to build up a story for Japan Heritage is already in place.
  - Organization to utilize comprehensively identified cultural properties is available.
  - There is a tradition of community development by cherishing cultural heritage and it would be relatively easy to adapt such efforts to regional revitalization.
  
- The conditions listed hereinabove shall be strictly applied to a Local Category application. Although it would be desirable for each of the participating municipal entities to satisfy one of the conditions, strict compliance will not be mandatory.

(3) Criteria for Japan Heritage designation

- Designation criteria shall be established based on the followings:
  - (i) Narrative pertains to distinct historical features of the region and can be instrumental in appealing attractions of Japan as a whole.
  - (ii) Applicant has a concrete strategy with a future vision of how the region can develop utilizing its cultural properties.
  - (iii) Efforts are coordinated to revitalize the local community through Japan Heritage, such as strategic and effective domestic and international promotion of the narratives.

(4) Designation process

- The Agency for Cultural Affairs designates Japan Heritage based on the judgement of the Japan Heritage Review Board, a board consisting of professionals from outside the Agency.
  
- Objective of Japan Heritage is to promote regional revitalization through enterprising use of tangible and intangible cultural properties, including unregistered cultural properties, and it is not intended as a new system under

the Act for Protection of Cultural properties. Therefore, the Japan Heritage Review Board shall not be placed under the Cultural Council.

- In addition, regional balance and multiplicity of the story should be also taken into consideration in the actual designation evaluation process.

(5) Number of designated Japan Heritages

- The Japanese government aims to increase the number of annual foreign tourists to Japan to over 20 million by 2020, the year in which the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games are scheduled to be held. Well balanced distribution of Japan Heritage sites throughout Japan would contribute in enticing these visitors to extend their tours to all over Japan, leading to revitalization of different regions and stimulating local economies.

- At the same time, imposing a limitation to the number of designated Japan Heritages will be beneficial in maintaining value and integrity of Japan Heritage as a prestigious brand.

- In consideration of the foregoing, designating approximately 100 Japan Heritage sites by 2020 is deemed reasonable and effective.

5. Subsidizing municipal entities

- (1) In the national government subsidized Japan Heritage program, the government extends support to participating municipal entities as follows:

(i) Promotion and training

- Assist municipal entities to promote transmission of information on Japan Heritage and train personnel involved with transmission of information.
- More specifically, dispatching Japan Heritage coordinators (tentative title), who will assist in publicity of Japan Heritage and facilitate cooperation between private and public sectors, production of multi-language websites and pamphlets on Japan Heritage and training of volunteer guides.

(ii) Publicity and training

- Provide support to presentations, exhibits, workshops or symposiums and other publicity and training programs organized by participating municipal entities.
- More specifically, hold Japan Heritage publicity media events in Japan and abroad, inaugurate Local Knowledge Certification programs and similar supporting programs.

(iii) Preparing sites for public use

- Support municipal entities to prepare sites for public use (enhancing explanatory and guidance devices to facilitate visitor understanding).

- More specifically, provide support to install directional and explanatory signage and other guidance devices, enhance and supplement surrounding environment with benches, lavatories and similar facilities, provision of alarm/firefighting/crime prevention and other emergency or disaster prevention systems and facilities and conducting seismic diagnosis.

(2) Considerations in implementing support programs

- After an application for Japan Heritage designation is approved, contents of programs to revitalize the region through Japan Heritage shall be carefully evaluated before support to participating municipal entities is extended.
- Support to participating municipal entity implemented programs shall be provided for a period of five (5) years and recipient shall be required to autonomously continue to implement regional revitalization measures thereafter.
- In implementing the Japan Heritage program, the participating municipal entity is required to formulate an intra-regional liaison and cooperative organization consisting not only of the department in charge of cultural properties, but including departments in charge of tourism, regional revitalization, as well as N.P.O.s, cultural property conservation organizations, chamber of commerce, tourist agencies and other private sector organizations.
- Participating municipal entity shall set a clear set of goals in implementing the program.
- Participating municipal entity shall properly monitor and verify progress made towards achieving the goals of the preceding paragraph and implement PDCA or other schemes to ensure further improvements. Participating municipal entity shall establish a system that ensures autonomous regional revitalization through Japan Heritage program.