Outline of Japan Heritage

1) The Mission of Japan Heritage

Heritage is a connection to our past: a legacy of our cultural and natural history, and an invaluable source of inspiration to pass on to future generations.

The Agency for Cultural Affairs’ Japan Heritage aims to promote our unique cultural traditions, encourage use of our national cultural properties, and to revitalize regional economies.

Japan’s tangible and intangible cultural properties have been preserved through narratives based on unique regional histories and traditions.

By recognizing these stories as Japan Heritage, the Agency plans to promote these historical legacies and to provide comprehensive support so that this heritage may be effectively preserved and maintained.

2) The Primary Objectives of Japan Heritage

- To recognize the narratives that bind Japan’s regional cultural properties
- To maintain and use these regional cultural properties in a cohesive manner
- To strategically and effectively promote the narratives pertaining to cultural properties within Japan and abroad

Previous Administration on Cultural Properties

Designate and preserve each property as a ‘Site’

- Ancient Armor
- National Treasure, Important Cultural Properties
- Shrines, Temples
- Castle
- Historic sites
- Places of Scenic Beauty
- Archaeological Sites
- Intangible cultural heritage, Folk cultural heritage
- Traditional Performing Arts

Focus on “Preservation”

- Effect: Fails to communicate area’s appeal

Japan Heritage

Link each narrative, region and Cultural Property to promote Japan Heritage

- Ancient Armor
- Shrines, Temples
- Castle
- Archaeological Sites
- Traditional Performing Arts

Focus on “Site Utilization”

- Effect: Local branding promotion and regional identity recognition
3) Criteria for Japan Heritage Designation

Japan Heritage designation is based on three criteria:

- Historically unique traditions or customs that have been passed on for generations.
- A clear theme that supports the area’s appeal and that is represented at the core of the narrative. This can include cultural properties such as structures, archaeological sites, sightseeing spots, and local festivals.
- Inclusion of a narrative, rather than simply a summary of regional history and a description of local cultural properties.

Japan Heritage status is divided into two categories:
1. Local Category: A narrative pertaining to one city or village
2. Collective Category: A narrative pertaining to several cities or villages

4) Application Requirements for Japan Heritage Designation

The Agency for Cultural Affairs will annually solicit applications at the prefectural level.
1. An applicant may be a municipal government. Applications under the Collective Category may be submitted jointly in the name of all relevant cities or municipal governments. If the municipal governments are in the same prefecture, the prefecture may apply on their behalf.
2. Each application must include at least one nationally-designated tangible or intangible Cultural Property. Locally recognized or unrecognized cultural properties that are part of the narrative may also be included.
3. Site submissions for the Local Category must meet at least one of the following conditions:
   - A municipal government that has formulated The Basic Scheme for Historic and Cultural Properties or Plan on Maintenance and Improvement of Traditional Scenery.
   - A municipal government with submissions that have been included on the World Heritage List Nominations or its Tentative List.
Japan Heritage Designation Process

5) Designation Processes

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.

6) Review Criteria

There are three criteria for Japan Heritage designation.

1) Narrative describes the distinct historical features of the area as well as supporting the appeal of Japan as a whole.
   ※ In specific terms, a comprehensive review of applicants is judged by the following points:
   (1) Interest: Narrative should encourage and develop visitors’ interest in the area
   (2) Originality: Narrative reveals new insights and information about the area.
   (3) Appeal: Narrative is easily and clearly understood without specific knowledge
   (4) Uniqueness: Narrative has exceptional aspects not found in other areas of Japan
   (5) Local: Narrative includes unique local culture

2) A concrete strategy with a future vision of how an area can develop while taking advantage of its cultural properties.

3) Efforts are coordinated to revitalize the local areas through Japan Heritage, such as strategic and effective domestic and international promotion of the narratives
7) The Number of Stories for Japan Heritage Designation

The government has estimated that the number of annual foreign tourists to Japan will reach 20 million by the year 2020. In preparation for 2020 and that year’s Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, it is ideal that Japan Heritage sites be designated throughout Japan to attract tourists and revitalize different regions and multiple local economies.

It is important that the number of Japan Heritage sites be limited in order to maintain brand image and integrity. Therefore, the Agency for Cultural Affairs plans to award Japan Heritage designation to a maximum of approximately 100 sites by 2020. The Agency also plans to provide monetary support for Japan Heritage through a fund administered by the Japan Arts Council called “The Japan Heritage Promotion Project.”

8) “The Japan Heritage Promotion Project” Initiatives

1. Promotion and Training: nationwide Japan Heritage coordinators, multilingual website, brochures, a community of volunteer guides
2. Publicity and Education: presentations, exhibitions, workshops, symposiums, and public relations events aimed at domestic and foreign audiences, Japan Heritage Expert certification
3. Research and Study: information gathering and documentation related to potential Japan Heritage sites
4. Equipping Sites for Public Use: directional and explanatory signage, lavatories, and benches
The Japan Heritage logo

9) About the Japan Heritage logo

The Japan Heritage logo was designed by Taku Sato. The red circle symbolizes Japan, and the group of thin lines that appear as a vertical lattice, spell out the word Japan Heritage. This group of lines creates a surface and expresses a shift of perspective towards a connectivity of the narratives and cultural properties that lead to Japan Heritage.

![Logo](image)

10) Official use of the logomark

1) Media organizations such as newspapers, television, and magazines
2) Applicants who have already been designated Japan Heritage
3) Councils and affiliated bodies that receive subsidies from the Japan Heritage Promotion Board can use the logo freely for the purpose of marketing, informing and encouraging further understanding and appreciation of the Japan Heritage narratives.
4) Owners and caretakers of designated cultural properties and any associations, enterprises and individuals that are connected to areas of the narratives.
5) Other organizations or individuals that are recognized by the Review Board can apply to the councils (please refer to no.3 above) and use the logo freely for the purpose of marketing, informing and encouraging the further understanding of the narratives of Japan Heritage.

Please look at the Japan Heritage website for further details on how to apply.
Story 1

TITLE: Educational Heritage from Early-Modern Japan (1568-1868) – The Origins of Academics and Decorum

AREA: Mito, (Ibaraki Prefecture), Ashikaga (Tochigi Prefecture), Bizen (Okayama Prefecture), Hita (Oita Prefecture)

SUMMARY
In Japan, even prior to the introduction of a modern educational system, lessons in reading, writing, arithmetic, and etiquette were taught to the upper-class bushi (samurai class) as well as to commoners. This high standard of education owes much to the widespread introduction of clan schools, regional schools, and private schools where people could study regardless of rank or class. These institutions played an important role in the nation’s Meiji-era shift from a feudal society to a modern one. The country’s long-standing focus on the cultivation of scholarship and decorum is an important cultural asset and is widely recognized as instrumental to the success of Japan’s modernization.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Kodokan: The former Clan School of Mito (1841-1872, Mito City)

Ashikaga Gakko: The oldest academy of Japan (15c-1872, Ashikaga City)

Shizutani Gakko: The former School for common people of Okayama Clan (1670-1870, Bizen City)

Kangien: The Private Academy established by Tanso Hirose (1817-1897, Hita City)
Story 2

TITLE: Kakaa Denka: The Silk Story of Gunma
AREA: Kiryu, Kanra, Nakanojou, Katashina, Gunma Prefecture

SUMMARY

Jyoshu (present-day Gunma Prefecture) was at the center of Japan’s thriving silk industry in which women supported their households by silkworm raising, and by producing filature and textile. From the Meiji Era to the end of World War II, many women were employed in silk factories or as silk weavers. The Jyoshu man was proud of his spouse and affectionately termed her “The Best Wife In the World.” Thus, the image of the “kakaa denka woman” (a wife who controls the house) became popularized and now symbolizes a hard-working woman who takes an active role in the home or workplace. Visiting silk factories or traditional houses of silkworm production evoke images and memories of the dedicated women who supported Japan’s development.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Nagairyu Sericulture school: The school for sericulture method unique to the district (1887, Katashina Village)

Gotoh Orimono: Textile factory where the dyeing technology was improved (1870, Kiryu City)

Tomizawake Jutaku: Large sericulture farmhouse in the latter half of Edo period (End of 18c, Nakanojo Town)
TITLE: Flourishing Folk Culture Under the Rule of the Maeda Family of Kaga
AREA: Takaoka, Toyama Prefecture

SUMMARY
The city of Takaoka has thrived in the area of commerce and industry, and boasts a rich, unique culture cultivated by the local merchants, passed down from generation to generation. Upon the decommissioning and eventual destruction of Takaoka Castle under the One Castle Per Province Law, the townspeople grew anxious about the future prosperity of the town. To quell these anxieties, the ruling class of the Kaga Domain (present-day Ishikawa Prefecture and Western Toyama Prefecture) employed strategic political policies to revitalize Takaoka’s local economy and transform the area into a town of industry and commerce. As Takaoka continued to gain further attention for its lacquerware and metalwork products, it also became widely known for its fertile land and good port access, which would place the area at the center of the commercial goods trade - handling anything from rice, cotton, and fertilizer. As a result of this, Takaoka acquired the moniker of the “Kitchen of Kaga”.

The merchant class also donated their wealth to the revival of the city, leading to the creation of lavish festivals and a rich local culture. Takaoka has continued to thrive as an industrial town, and even to this day, you can see the history of Takaoka’s old merchant roots reflected in the town’s infrastructure, architecture, craftsmanship and local festivals.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Takaoka Mikurumayama: A traditional festival in Takaoka still celebrated nowadays; held on the 1st May every year
Takaoka Castle Site: Even till this day, the fortifications where Takaoka Castle once stood are still beautifully preserved (1609-1615)
Yamachosuji (Important preservation district of historic buildings: A street lined with storehouses made with thick mud walls a material used to effectively protect from fire-damage)
Story 4

TITLE: The Noto Peninsula where the Light Dances
AREA: Nanao, Wajima, Suzu cities; Shiga, Anamizu, Noto towns, Ishikawa Prefecture

SUMMARY
For centuries, the Noto Peninsula which juts out into the Sea of Japan, was at the center of cultural exchange. This allowed the peninsula to develop its distinctive culture with numerous local matsuri (festivals). The most celebrated among them are the Kiriko Festivals with their illuminated lantern parade floats. In summer, around 200 districts are lit with tall kiriko lantern floats, and residents of old farming and fishing villages form processions in which they carry mikoshi (portable shrines) and kiriko, which can weigh up to 2 tonnes each and reach heights of 15 meters. These floats compete for the honor of being judged the most fierce and spirited and the festival’s origins can be found in Gion-shinko faith and in Japan’s summer purification rites. The Noto Peninsula is the only region in Japan where such a large number of lantern festivals take place. A summertime visit to the region would not be complete without encountering one of these festivals experiencing the spiritual presence of the Japanese kami (gods.)

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Abare-Festival (Noto)  Minazuki-Festival (Wajima)
Saikai-Festival (Shiga)  Horyu Tanabata Kiriko
**Story 5**

**TITLE:** A Cultural Heritage Linking the Sea to the Ancient Capital  
**AREA:** Obama, Wakasa, Fukui Prefecture

**SUMMARY**  
The province of Wakasa was situated along the Sea of Japan’s coastline in what is now Fukui Prefecture. It is called *miketsukuni* and played an important role in providing foodstuffs such as sea salt, mackerel, and other marine products to the ancient, landlocked capital of Nara and Kyoto. The Wakasa's role as a source of supplying the foodstuffs led the development of unique culinary culture. The coastal hub of Wakasa also connected the sea trade from China and Korea to the inland trade routes. The coastal hub of Wakasa also worked as a joint connecting the sea routes from China and Korea to the inland routes from capital of Nara and Kyoto. Local ports and castle towns sprang up and flourished along this route. Traveling tradesmen brought with them festival customs, entertainments, and Buddhist culture that soon spread far and wide into rural farming areas and fishing villages. This ultimately resulted in distinct cultures and customs evolving in the different villages and hamlets. The ancient thoroughfare is now called the *saba-kaido* (Mackerel Road) and here visitors can experience nature, eat delicious traditional foods, attend festivals, as well as view traditional houses and roads that hearken back to the earlier days of great prosperity.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- **Saba Kaido**: The main road linking Wakasa and the former Capital conveying foods and culture (Obama City, Wakasa Town)
- **Wakasa-nuri Lacquer**: The sleek and stately lacquerware inherited for 400 years (Obama City)
- **Omizuokuri**: The historical rite that recounts the strong ties between Wakasa and Nara since ancient times (Obama City)
Story 6

TITLE: “Nobunaga’s Omotenashi (Japanese hospitality spirit)” : The Sengoku Castle Town where the spirit is still alive-Gifu

AREA: Gifu, Gifu Prefecture

SUMMARY
General Nobunaga, a great leader of the Sengoku (Warring States) Period aimed to unify Japan around his stronghold at Gifu Castle. While he certainly waged war, Nobunaga also focused his energy on creating a welcoming atmosphere for the retainers and officials who visited the castle town. He constructed a palace known as “Paradise on Earth” that he imbued with a charm never before seen in military castle architecture. Spectacular views welcomed visitors who could also enjoy Ukai (Cormorant Fishing) on the Nagara River. Nobunaga’s omotenashi seemed contradictory with his reputation as a cool-headed general. As a result, it fascinated his distinguished guests including the Portuguese missionary Luis Frois. Although the role of the castle has changed over time, the cultural foundation that Nobunaga laid thrives in the town and along the river, and it remains one of the area’s important cultural assets.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Gifu Castle Site: Domination Base of General Nobunaga(13-1600)

Kawaramachi: The townscape of houses with unique unvarnished wood latticework walls

Japanese Performing Arts on a boat: Performance integral to the cormorant fishing view

Nagara River Cormorant Fishing: Fishing method that has a history of more than 1300 years(702-present)
Story 7

TITLE: Saiku: The Palace of the Imperial Princess and the Spirit Of Ise
AREA: Meiwa, Mie Prefecture

SUMMARY
A Saio was an Imperial Princess who served Amaterasu-Omikami (the sun goddess) of the Ise Shrine on behalf of the Emperor and royal family. Saio existed from the late 7th – late 14th centuries and each successive princess spent her life as an intermediary between the realms of the gods and men. She lived in servitude to the kami (gods) and prayed for the country’s peace and prosperity.

The palace of the Saio was known as Saiku, and was situated near the entrance of the Grand Shrine of Ise. It is said that each Saio passed her life in elegance in a fashion similar to those of the elite in the capital of Kyoto. The remains of the palace and the surrounding area have long been protected and preserved by locals as a sacred site. Today the spirit and prayers of the Imperial Princesses live on at the original site of the nation’s only Saiku.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Saiku Site: Remains of the palace where Saio lived and the government office

Saio Woods: Symbol of Saiku that has been protected by the local people

Harai River: The river where Saio performed the purification ceremony
Story 8

TITLE: Lake Biwa and Its Surroundings: A Water Heritage Site of Life and Prayer
AREA: Otsu, Hikone, Omihachiman, Takashima, Higashiomi, Maibara cities, Shiga Prefecture

SUMMARY
Water has long been worshipped as a medium for purification and healing. When Buddhism arrived in Japan from East Asia, the Buddha of Healing, Yakushi-Nyorai, was worshipped for his radiant Eastern Pure Land “water paradise” teachings. Many temples and shrines were built facing the “water paradise” of Lake Biwa and they remain a major attraction today. Local people have long adhered to a strict set of regulations to protect the cleanliness of Biwa as their daily lives rely on its spring water and traditional mountain-fed water distribution systems.

The spectacular views of the shore and lakeside districts, overflowing with life, have long inspired art and gardens. Recently, these areas have also been attracting visitors who see in them a representation of the perfect harmony between humans and water. Here, one finds the essence of the rich history of Japanese “water culture.”

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Genkyu Rakuraku-en: The landscape garden and lord’s private palace located to the northeast of Hikone castle created in 1677(Hikone City)

Hieizan Enryakuji: Founded on Mt.Hiei by Saicho in 788 as the head temple of the Tendai sect of Buddhism(Otsu City)

Shirahige-jinja: Famous for the large vermilion lacquered torii (gateway) standing in the lake (Takashima City)

Suigo the Omihachiman riverside district: a registered Ramsar wetland and one of the three most popular wetland attractions in Japan(Omihachiman City)
TITLE: A Historical Walk through 800 Years of Japanese Tea
AREA: Minamiyamashiro Region(Uji, Joyo, Yawata, Kyotanabe, Kizugawa, Ujitawara, Wazuka, Minamiyamashiro), Kyoto Prefecture

SUMMARY
Tea was first introduced to Japan from China during the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In Kyoto’s Minamiyamashiro region, tea production techniques were established and different types of green tea were developed. These include the matcha used in the tea ceremony, sencha for daily tea consumption, and gyokuro, which is regarded as one of the finest grades of green tea in the world. For over 800 years, people living in this region have developed a wide variety of first-class teas and continue to be leaders in tea production and processing, while also continuing to make important cultural contributions to the lasting traditions of the tea ceremony, which has turn led to the development of Japan’s café culture. In this region, you can see the different developmental stages in the history of tea production through beautiful tea fields, rows of wholesale houses and festivals related with tea.

Main Cultural Properties of The Story

Fields of sencha planted across a landscape of rolling hills (19th c., Wazuka Town)

Meisui Kumiage-no-gi: Ritual in which water is drawn from the Uji River for the tea ceremony (Uji City)

Kamikoma tea wholesaler district: Merchants here exported their tea overseas via Kobe Harbor (19th c., Kizugawa City)

Tea bushes planted in straight lines up hillsides (19th c., Minamiyamashiro Village)
Story10

TITLE: Dekansho-Bushi: Hometown Memories Passed Down in Folk Songs
AREA: Sasayama, Hyogo Prefecture

SUMMARY
Tanba Sasayama flourished as a castle town during the Edo Period and is famous for *dekansho-bushi*, the traditional folk songs of that region. The song lyrics depicted the local climate, human nature, famous sights, and culinary specialties of the area. People here have cherished and treasured their landscape and culture throughout the ages by singing *dekansho-bushi*. To this day, local people continue to compose new lyrics for the over 300 *dekansho-bushi* and pass these musical traditions on to the next generation. Through these songs visitors can experience the traditional town atmosphere of Tanba Sasayama with its rows of old houses and charming streets.

**Main Cultural properties of The Story**

- **Dekansyo Bushi**: The folk song continues to be sing from Edo period that represents Tamba Sasayama
- **Sasayama Castle Site**: The famous castle which was built in 1609
- **Maruyama Village**: Thatched private houses reconstructed and used as B&B
- **Houmei Sake Brewing**: Shop that brewing sake (rice wine) with traditional way by Tamba Touji Brewer
Story11

TITLE: The Dawn of Japan: Women in the Asuka Period
AREA: Asuka village, Kashihara city, Takatori town, Nara Prefecture

SUMMARY
Japan was established as a state in the Asuka Period (592-710AD) during which time there were many female empresses. Many of these women made significant contributions to the artistic, religious, and political transformations of the time, including the founding the new capital, the establishment of diplomatic relations with neighboring countries, and the enactment of laws such as, the Taiho-ritsuryo (Taiho Code). Women created and honed new forms of expression in Japan in the fields of politics, culture, and religion. For example, women poets composed waka while at the same time female priests disseminated the lessons of the Buddha. Asuka represents the dawning of Japan as a nation state in which women actively flourished and whose achievements continue to influence life in contemporary Japan.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Den-Asukaitabukiomiya Palace Site: Palace of Asuka area (630-694, Asuka Village)

Garden Remains at the Asuka Capital Site: The garden of Asuka Capital (656-694, Asuka Village)

Mural of Takamatsuzuka Tomb: Mural paintings in the stone chamber (Late 7c-Early 8c, Asuka Village)

Fujiwara Palace Site: Palace of Fujiwara Capital (694-710, Kashihara City)
TITLE: A Site for Purifying the Six Roots of Perception and Healing the Six Senses ~Japan’s Most Dangerous National Treasure and a World-Famous Radon Hot Spring~

AREA: Misasa, Tottori Prefecture

SUMMARY
Mount Mitoku features a characteristic landscape that interweaves steep topography used as the training ground for mountain asceticism, with architecture which displays the syncretic fusion of Shintoism and Buddhism in its design and structure. The solemnity of the mountain has continued to inspire awe for 1000 years. Misasa Onsen serves as a place where visitors can purify their body and mind before a pilgrimage to Mount Mitoku. According to a local legend, the hot spring was introduced to a traveler on a pilgrimage to the mountain by a white wolf. 900 years after its discovery, Misasa Onsen continues to maintain close ties to the religious beliefs at Mount Mitoku. Current visitors purify their six roots of perception (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind) through a religious pilgrimage to the mountain’s sheer cliff, and come to embody a unique world through the healing of their six senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and spirit) at the therapeutic springs.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

![Mount Mitoku: Sacred mountain, heart of the rokkon shōjō (purification of the six roots of perception)](image1)

![Nageiredo Temple: Symbol of Mount Mitoku, its construction remains a mystery (late Heian period)](image2)

![Sanbutsu-ji: Main building from Edo period, start of the road to Nageiredo (National Treasure)](image3)

![Misasa Onsen: Major stop of the pilgrimage to Mount Mitoku, world-class radon hot springs (around 1164)](image4)
**Story13**

**TITLE:** Tsuwano Then and Now: Exploring the Town of Tsuwano Through the One Hundred Landscapes of Tsuwano  
**AREA:** Tsuwano, Tottori Prefecture

**SUMMARY**
Tsuwano was a castle town that developed along the Tsuwano River and is renowned for its natural beauty. It is home to the *Tsuwano Hyakkeizu* (The One Hundred Landscapes of Tsuwano), an Art Book by a local artist that captures imagery of Edo-period Tsuwano. The book depicts scenes and information about famous sightseeing spots, nature, traditional performing arts, customs, and daily life. Local people have continued efforts to protect the town from development and as a result, they have succeeded in preserving its traditional atmosphere. Visitors to Tsuwano can experience the contemporary scenery while comparing it to the depictions in the *Tsuwano Hyakkeizu* and imagining the scenes and lives of Edo period life.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- **Tsuwano Castle Site**: It’s original defensive stone walls are still present at a mountain top.
- **Egret dance of Yasaka shrine**: A dance with unique costumes, performed on streets (1542-)

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Tsuwano Castle Site: It’s original defensive stone walls are still present at a mountain top  
Egret dance of Yasaka shrine: A dance with unique costumes, performed on streets (1542-)
Story14

TITLE: A Miniature Garden City from the Middle Ages Built Around the Onomichi Channel
AREA: Onomichi, Hiroshima Prefecture

SUMMARY
Onomichi is a city facing the Seto Inland Sea that is surrounded by three mountains and many islands. The Onomichi Channel flows through the center of the city and has always acted as a route for culture, industry and people. Since the Middle Ages, this water way has been instrumental in making Onomichi the most important port in the Seto Inland Sea. Many temples, gardens, and houses were erected in the limited space between the mountains and the Onomichi Channel, and as a result, the miniature garden city with its intricate alleys and slopes still looks much the same today. The maze of alleyways and hilly landscapes offer glorious views and scenery within the confines of a small coastal town. Onomichi’s charms continue to attract many visitors.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Pagoda of Tennei-ji: Three-storied pagoda built in the Medieval Period (1388)

Miharashi-tei: The Japanese style inn founded on sightly location

Sumiyoshimatsuri: Traditional Fireworks Festival in the Onomichi Channel (19c-present)
**Story15**

**TITLE:** Shikoku Henro: The 88 Temples and Pilgrimate Route of Shikoku: the circular pilgrimate routes and the original pilgrimate culture  
**AREA:** Ehime, Kochi, Tokushima, Kagawa prefectures (57 cities, towns, and villages on Shikoku Island)

**SUMMARY**
The Shikoku Henro is a pilgrimage route of 88 temples that was established by the great Buddhist priest, Kukai (Kobo Daishi), over 1200 years ago on Shikoku Island. It is one of the world’s longest circular pilgrimage routes, extending some 1400 kilometers across Shikoku’s regions of Awa, Tosa, Iyo, and Sanuki. Pilgrims still make the journey on steep mountain roads, up long stone stairways, through pastoral countryside, along calm seashores and around remote promontories. Walking the paths, visitors can easily find other pilgrims journeying around Shikoku. This circular type of pilgrimage is different from those practiced under Christianity or Islam which focus on the voyage to and return from a holy place. In Japan, anyone can be a pilgrim regardless of nationality or religion, and all are sure to receive a warm hospitality from the locals. Walking the “Henro Route” and retracing the footsteps of Kukai (Kobo Daishi)—whether for the sake of a memorial, personal discipline, redemption, or health—is a spiritual journey and a rare opportunity to experience the culture of pilgrimage and of Shikoku Island.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

Chikurinji: The main hall of the 31st Temple National Important Cultural Property (8c, Kochi City)

Motoyamaji: The main hall of the 70th Temple, National Treasure (1300, Mitoyo City)

Kakurinji-michi: the pilgrimage route in Tokushima (Awa) (Edo Period, Katsuura Town)

Taisanji: The main hall of 52th Temple, National Treasure (1305, Matuyama City)
TITLE: The Ancient Capital of Western Japan  
～A Political Center of Cultural Exchange with East Asia～

AREA: Dazaifu, Fukuoka Prefecture

SUMMARY
Dazaifu was an important governmental district situated in Kyushu from the 8th to the 12th century. Moreover, it was a crossroads of culture, religion, and politics due to the influx and settlement of peoples from East Asia. Its location was ideal for the establishment of military facilities and for metropolitan development. As a result, it served as a base for military affairs and foreign diplomacy. Many religious structures and guesthouses can still be seen, and guests are reminded of the importance by the straight streets and grid-allotments around the National Historical Site that helped to define ancient Japan’s Western capital.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Kanzeon-ji /Kaidan-in: The most important temples in the Kyushu region (since the 7th century)

Mizuki Site: The remains of the embankment and moat, which protected Dazaifu (built in 664)

Kanzeon-ji /Kaidan-in: The most important temples in the Kyushu region (since the 7th century)

Dazaifu Tenmangu Shrine: The mausoleum for Sugawara no Michizane, who was a scholar, poet, and politician of the Heian era
Story17

TITLE: The Frontier Islands of Iki, Tsushima and Goto
~The Ancient Bridge to the Continent~

Area: Tsushima, Iki, Goto, Shinkamigoto District (Islands of Nagasaki Prefecture)

SUMMARY
Nagasaki’s islands, situated between the mainlands of Japan and Asia, have been an important hub for marine transportation and cultural exchange since ancient times. Ties with the Korean Peninsula were particularly strong. Iki Island capitalized on the power of its marine trade and built a kingdom and capital city during the Yayoi Era. Similarly, Tsushima Island gained a monopoly on trade and diplomatic affairs with Korea, and prospered as a hub for commercial activity and as an arrival point for official envoys. Although the area’s trading advantage has weakened over time, traces of past prosperity are still visible in the local homes, castle remains, and gardens. Vestiges of cultural interchange are evident in the islands’ culinary specialties such as shochu (a distilled spirit) and noodles. Throughout history, these islands have experienced considerable exchange with mainland Asia through repeated periods of conflict and interaction. Visitors to Iki and Tsushima Islands can readily feel the strong bond between countries and peoples that is unique to this region.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Kaneda Castle Site: An ancient, Korean-style mountain castle for national defense (667AD, Tsushima City)

Gravestones of Hinoshima: Graves from the medieval era (1400AD, Shinkamigoto Town)

Miiraku: The last domestic port of call for Kento-shi, the Japanese envoy to Tang Dynasty China (702-838 AD, Goto City)

Harunotsuji Site: The site of the capital of Ikikoku (circa 350-450 BC, Iki City)
**Story 18**

**TITLE:** “Sagara seven hundred years” gave birth the culture of the maintenance and the enterprising. ~ Richest “Kakurezato” in Japan - Hitoyoshi Kuma ~

**AREA:** Hitoyoshi, Nishiki, Asagiri, Taragi, Yunomae towns, Mizukami, Sagara, Itsuki, Yamae, Kuma Villages, Kumamoto Prefecture

**SUMMARY**
Lords Sagara's HitoyoshiKuma, It refused a foreign enemy invasion by taking advantage of the geographical advantage that has been surrounded by the steep mountain range that runs through Kyushu from north to south, Governance long-standing referred to as Japan history and rare "Sagara seven hundred years," it was carried out.
From the manor in which to people is formed is the spirit of the town development that together, shrines and temples and Buddhist statues group, together faith Kagura like, fun, culture to protect has been nurtured.
To have the the enterprising spirit is shrewd absorb the culture of the foreign at the same time, its own food culture and play, transportation network has been trimmed. Maintenance and enterprising, areas where evidence of culture that has been sublimated from both the spirit have survived are concentrated not in the other, is an area where it is possible to see the epitome of Japanese culture to now, Ryotaro Shiba is this land "We wrote the most rich Kakurezato "in Japan.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- **Hitoyoshi Castle Site:** The castle of Sagara's Family (1470~1868, Hitoyoshi City)
- **Kuma ken:** The roots of the rock, paper, scissors. A loser drinks shochu (Edo era, Hitoyoshi Kuma Area)
- **Kuma Shochu:** Traditional Japanese Distilled Spirit, Formed by rice and subsurface water of Hitoyoshi Kuma (1559~Today, Hitoyoshi Kuma Area)
- **Kuma River:** The one of the three best rapid streams in Japan In the Edo era, it was used for transportation by water to Yatsushiro (Hitoyoshi Kuma Area)
Story 19

Title: The “DATE Culture” Fostered by Masamune

AREA: Sendai, Shiogama, Tagajo cities, Matsushima town, Miyagi Prefecture

SUMMARY
DATE Masamune, the feudal ruler of the Warring States period (1467-1603) is widely known for his political and military achievements, but he was also an intellectual who led efforts to establish the city of Sendai as a cultural center. Masamune, with his competitive spirit towards Kyoto, aimed to revitalize the ancient culture rooted in Tohoku. His unique and sophisticated taste helped establish “DATE Culture,” which was based on local tradition but which also incorporated the luxury and brilliance of Kyoto’s Momoyama Culture, as well as influences from abroad. As a result, a never-before-seen Sendai culture blossomed through his efforts, and was passed on to later generations, including those in other parts of Japan. As the culture matured, its influence extended from the samurai class to ordinary people.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Osaki Hachimangū Shrine

Set of armor, gomai-do gusoku type owned by DATE Masamune

Hote matsuri festival, Hana matsuri festival in Shiogama jinja Shrine
**Story 20**

**TITLE:** A Journey to Rebirth Amid the Sacred Nature of Dewa Sanzan  
**AREA:** Tsuruoka city, Nishikawa, Shonai towns, Yamagata Prefecture

**SUMMARY**
Shugendo is a school of Japanese asceticism that was born amid the vast wilderness of the Three Mountains of Dewa called “Dewa Sanzan,” located in the center of Yamagata Prefecture. In Shugendo, it is believed that the three mountains have unique powers: Mt. Haguro is the Mountain of the Present that acknowledges the needs of present-day people; Mt. Gassan is the Mountain of the Past where ancestral spirits are able to settle peacefully within its natural grace; and Mt. Yudono is the Mountain of the Future, where hot springs gush forth from between its red boulders.

During the Edo period (1603-1868), a trip to Dewa Sanzan was popularized as “the journey to rebirth” due to the beautiful and sacred nature of the mountains. The tradition is continued to this day thanks to efforts by the local community to preserve this ancient Japanese practice of mountain and nature worship. The journey begins with 2446 stone steps at the base of Mt. Haguro, surrounded by cedar trees that are over 300 years old. The setting allows visitors to experience a sense of reverence and awe for nature, and to recharge their spirits.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- Gassan Shrine
- Yudonosan
- Hagurosan
**Story 21**

**TITLE:** Visiting 33 Kannon in Aizu: Witnessing Old Aizu Culture Through Pilgrimage

**AREA:** Aizu Wakamatsu, Kitakata cities, Minami Aizu, Shimogou, Nishi Aizu, Bandai, Inawashiro, Aizubange, Yugawa, Yanaizu, Aizu Misato, Mishima, Kaneyama towns, Hinoemata, Tadami, Kita Shiobara, Showa villages, Fukushima Prefecture

**SUMMARY**

Aizu was one of the first areas in Tohoku where Buddhist culture flourished following the absorption of the local folk religion, which was based on the worship of Mt. Bandai. The area is also called the “Buddhist Capital of Aizu,” due to the many Buddhist statues and temples that remain from the early Heian, Middle and Modern Ages.

Lord Hoshina Masayuki established the Aizu 33 Kannon Pilgrimage, greatly welcomed by Aizu’s people, and many additional 33-kannon pilgrimages have since been established. The Aizu 33 Kannon include a variety of settings, from stone statues situated in rustic mountains, to temples that house articles recognized as Japan National Treasures. Going on a pilgrimage to visit the 33 Kannon is still popular among the local Aizu people and the journey can be taken leisurely, with breaks at old post-towns and villages that flourished in surrounding temples. Travelers can experience the open-minded faith and hospitality of the Aizu people, just as pilgrims did in earlier times.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- Enichi Temple Site (Bandai Town)
- Sazae-do (Aizuwakamatsu City)
- Ouchi-juku (Shimogo Town)
Story 22

TITLE: The Canal That Ensured the Future of Asaka: Okubo Toshimichi’s Last Dream and the Footprints of a Pioneer
AREA: Koriyama city, Inawashiro town, Fukushima Prefecture

SUMMARY
After the Meiji Restoration, Lord Okubo Toshimichi hoped to provide relief to the impoverished samurai class and to modernize Koriyama’s Asaka area by creating new industries. He dreamed of developing the land in Asaka by building a canal from Lake Inawashiro on the west side of Koriyama. Okubo’s dream came true, albeit posthumously, with the completion of the Asaka Development and Canal Project.

Building the canal required cutting through the Ou Mountain Range, and it was a project that brought labor, materials, and technology from all over Japan as well as state-of-the-art technology from abroad. The effective use of the lake water enriched the local culinary culture with rice and carp. New industrial development followed with hydroelectric power plants on the canal, which supplied power to the textile mills that had been established. The cherry trees that line the canal remind us of the pioneer’s vision for future generations and of the area’s resulting diversity and harmony.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Inawashiro Lake
Numakami Electric Power Plant
Jurokkyo Floodgate
Kaiseikan
Story 23

TITLE: An Edo Travelogue of Cities in Northern Chiba (Hokuso): Four Cities That Supported the Mega-City of Edo
AREA: Sakura, Narita, Katori, Choshi cities, Chiba Prefecture

SUMMARY
Northern Chiba Prefecture, with its prosperous Pacific Ocean fishing towns and agriculture on the Kanto plain, provided goods to the city of Edo (present-day Tokyo) through the highway and canals developed by diverting the flow of the Tonegawa River. While supporting the livelihood and economy of Edo, the locales in turn absorbed Edo culture and developed into distinct cities: Sakura, a castle town; Narita, a town which flourished in front of Naritasan Shinshoji Temple; Sawara, a Tonegawa River town which developed into a transportation hub and is also located on the approach to Katori Jingu Shrine; and Choshi, a prosperous fishing port that was also frequented by beach-going tourists. The streets in the four cities are lined with old-fashioned houses and visitors can experience Edo-era atmosphere within a short distance from Tokyo. The cities are also located close to Narita International Airport and thus represent the Edo that is closest to the rest of the world.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Naritasan Shinshoji Temple

Cultureel centrum in Chiba Prefectural Sakura Senior High School

Traditional landscape in Sawara

Byobugaura cliff
### Story 24

**TITLE:** Isehara City and the Mt. Oyama Pilgrimage: Destination for the Faith and Leisure of Edo’s Commoners  
**AREA:**  Isehara, Kanagawa Prefecture

### SUMMARY

Mt. Oyama’s pilgrimage is a unique tradition developed by Edo craftsmen such as steeplejacks, in which pilgrims group together to jointly carry a large wooden sword. The pilgrims cleanse themselves in Mt. Oyama’s waterfall and then carry the sword up to the summit for its dedication. During the Edo period, the pilgrimage was frequently depicted in Kabuki performances and ukiyo-e woodblock prints, which piqued curiosity about the tradition.

The pilgrimage became very popular due in part to its government designation as a “short trip” which did not require permits for participation. As a result, the Mt. Oyama Pilgrimage recorded 20,000 pilgrims every year at a time when the total population of Edo was only 1,000,000.

The Mt. Oyama pilgrimage continues to this day thanks to the efforts of pilgrimage leaders. Participants can experience history in a natural environment preserved in an area surrounding Tokyo, and visitors to the summit may experience the same sense of awe and satisfaction as pilgrims of the past as they look down upon the scenery below.

### Main Cultural Properties of the Story

- **Oyama**
- **Oyama Aburi Shrine**
- **Ukiyo-e (Japanese woodblock prints) by Toyokuni Utagawa**
Story 25

TITLE: Kamakura: A Historical and Cultural Mosaic
AREA: Kamakura, Kanagawa Prefecture

SUMMARY
Kamakura developed rapidly as a city when Minamoto no Yoritomo established his capital there. He built the Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine. His new government, Kamakura Shogunate cut new passes called “kiridoshi” into the mountains in order to create entryways into the city, and founded large temples at the foot of its mountains. In the early Modern period, this center of historic importance and nostalgic longing for old samurai culture returned to the spotlight as a place of faith and leisure. Although in the late Modern period, many second homes have been built in the area, Kamakura has retained its historic character and beautiful natural environment. Currently, Kamakura (1185-1333) and Muromachi (1336-1573) period temples and shrines exist next to architecture and infrastructure from various time periods and styles, and many industries and events are imbued with the artistic culture left by famous literary figures. Present-day Kamakura is a cultural mosaic that recognizes and preserves the distinct historic influences that coexist harmoniously and form its storied history.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Bonbori Festival of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu Shrine
A Traditional Craft, “KAMAKURABORI”
Kamakura Museum of Literature
Koga Residence
TITLE: Kaengata Doki Jomon Pottery and the Snow Country Culture of the Shinano River Basin
AREA: Niigata, Sanjo, Nagaoka, Tokamachi cities, Tsunan town
Niigata Prefecture

SUMMARY
Eight millennia ago, the area along Japan’s longest and largest river, the Shinano, experienced climate change that led to its recognition as one of the snowiest areas in the world. This was the birthplace of pottery called “kaengata doki,” 5000 year-old vessels with four elaborate rim decorations that resemble a flame, a hallmark of Jomon-era pottery. The post-war artist Okamoto Taro quickly recognized the vessels’ artistic qualities and famously exclaimed “What on Earth is this?” upon first encountering the works.

The villages of the people who made kaengata doki are centered in the Shinano River basin and are among the country’s biggest and most concentrated. Visitors to the village sites may experience the region’s distinct scenery, seemingly unchanged for the past 5000 years. Many traditions that originated in the Jomon period are still practiced in the area, including methods to process and preserve food items from the mountains, river, and sea; the production of angin textiles, the development of manufacturing industries in the tradition of kaengata doki.

Kaengata doki, together with Ukiyo-e and Kabuki, represent the headwaters of Japanese culture.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Kaengata Doki from Sasayama-site (National Treasure)

Sasayama site

Mt. Yahiko/Mt. Kakuda
TITLE: Komatsu City and Its Culture of Stones: the Narrative of Gems
AREA: Komatsu, Ishikawa Prefecture

SUMMARY
For the past 2300 years, the people of Komatsu in present-day Ishikawa Prefecture have processed and polished gemstones using the most advanced levels of technology available to them. This tradition began during the Yayoi period with the creation of jasper beads. Some of Komatsu’s old beads are so sophisticated that it is difficult to recreate them even with the use of modern technology. As such, they were highly prized by the ruling kings of the Yamato period as symbols of power. Komatsu has also contributed to the discovery of various geological deposits including gold, copper, agate, opal, crystal, jasper, and tuff stone, in addition to deposits of clay used for local Kutani pottery. Komatsu is a community with an interchange of people, goods, and technology that has built its rich stone culture.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Jasper accessories (excavated from the Yokaichi site)

The stone arch bridges of Takigahara

Takigahara Quarry
TITLE: The Old Trade Route of Kisoji: Preserver of the Mountain and Survivor of Time

AREA: Nagiso, Agematsu, Kiso towns, Okuwa, Kiso, Otaki villages, Shiojiri city, Nagano Prefecture

SUMMARY
When the Warring States period (1467-1603) came to a close and the development of new towns had begun, the steep increase in demand for lumber to build castles, temples, and shrines caused reckless deforestation throughout Japan. By the start of the Edo period (1603-1868), the Kiso Valley and its surrounding areas faced a crisis when timber, its primary resource and backbone of the local economy, was depleted. In response, the overseeing Owari government enacted a forest preservation ordinance that restricted tree cutting, and effectively forced the people to create new local industries in order to survive. By the end of the Edo period, local products like Kiso lacquerware became popular and were distributed nationally due in part to the timely development of a highway system that included Kiso on the route to the popular pilgrimage to Mt. Ontake. Thanks to successful preservation efforts, Kiso is still known for its famed paulownia wood, the Kiso horse, and local crafts like Kiso lacquerware that gained national recognition during the Edo period.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

**Nakasendo**

**shoro-mon (a belfry gate) in Daitsu-ji Temple**

**Tsumago-juku**

**Potter's wheel in Nagiso**
Story 29

TITLE: Hida Takayama’s Wood Artisans: 1300 Year-Old Lineage of Skill and Spirit
AREA: Takayama, Gifu Prefecture

SUMMARY
Long ago, Hida was the only region in Japan allowed to fulfill its tax obligations by sending skilled wood craftsmen to the capital. Today, Takayama’s culture is still based on the scrupulous nature of the master woodworkers who utilized wood with a prowess and sensibility that was nurtured in Hida’s rich natural environment. Visitors to Takayama can witness shrines and temples from the Middle Ages existing among wooden buildings built by contemporary carpenters. Traditional wooden crafts are also available. These articles convey the skill and spirit of past Hida masters and the story of the Hida Takayama people who have coexisted with the forest for the last 1300 years.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Ichii Ittobori (wood carving)

Floats of Takayama Festival

Sanjunoto (three-storied pagoda) of Hida Kokubunji
**Story 30**

**TITLE:** Awaji Island: Creation of Japan’s First Island and the People of the Sea  
**AREA:** Awaji, Sumoto, Minami Awaji cities, Hyogo Prefecture

**SUMMARY**
In the Kojiki, (Records of Ancient Matter) Japan’s oldest existing written record of its history, the opening chapter begins with Japan’s creation myth, Kuniumi. It recounts the story of the birth of Japan’s first island. This special island is known today as Awaji. The tale includes mention of sea people called Ama who brought metal tools, salt-making techniques, and highly advanced navigational skills to the capital in support of the government and provincial kings of Japan’s Kansai region. Awaji, the largest island visible from kingdoms across the water, represents the historical narrative of the Ama central to the development of these ancient kingdoms.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- Izanami Shrine
- Gossakaito Site
- Matsuho Dotaku
Story 31

TITLE: Yoshino, Birthplace of Japanese Afforestation: the Mutual Relationship Between People and Forest

AREA: Yoshino, Shimoichi towns, Kurotaki, Tenkawa, Shimo Kitayama, Kami Kitayama, Kawakami, Higashiyoshino villages, Nara Prefecture

SUMMARY
The region of Yoshino in Nara Prefecture is the site of Japan’s first afforestation efforts, started 500 years ago. The country’s most successful man-made forest resembles a thick, dark green velvet and is adjacent to a primeval forest believed by the local people to be a home of the gods. Visitors will be greeted by the astonishing view of the two forests. They can also experience a food and lifestyle nurtured by the forests, and interact with the people who, in turn, care for and maintain them.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Natural forest and Artificial forest in Yoshino

Kinpusen-ji Temple

Nanadaru Hachitsubo

Yoshino Mikumari Shrine
Story 32

TITLE: Living with whales
AREA: Shingu City, Nachi Katsuura, Taiji, Kushimoto Towns, Wakayama

SUMMARY
For the Japanese, the whale was a special creature and the subject of worship. The people were in awe of the giants that swam the vast seas, but when whales occasionally beached, their carcasses were used for food and for tools, which supplemented the locals’ livelihoods. Later, the local people started hunting whales for subsistence. During the Edo period, descendants of the venerable Kumano suigun naval force living on the Kumano-nada Coast established whale hunting techniques and methods for distributing their catch. Whale hunting has been their livelihood since that time. Many reminders of whaling’s history can be observed in the area, from festivals and foods to whaling-related art.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

- Kawachi Festival
- Kuroshima
- Tomyosaki
- Whale Festival
**Story 33**

**TITLE:** Daisen Gyuba Ichi: Japan’s Largest Livestock Market Born of Jizo Bodhisattva Worship  
**AREA:** Daisen, Houki, Kofu towns, Yonago city, Tottori Prefecture

**SUMMARY**

Jizo Bodhisattva is believed to have appeared long ago on the summit of Daisen in Tottori Prefecture. From the end of the Heian period (794-1185), the Daisenji Temple became a destination for Jizo worshippers who took their cows and horses there in order to ask for divine protection for their livestock. This practice resulted in Daisen Gyuba Ichi, which, during the Edo period, was the largest livestock market in Japan. The market that was born of the Jizo faith expanded into the largest cow and horse market of the Meiji period (1868-1912). Old-fashioned lodges and houses such as the farm village of Tokorogo, line the stone-paved road to Daisen, reminding visitors of past eras. There are traditional local foods like Daisenokowa sticky rice, and practices of the Shinto ritual, mohitori shinji, that utilize Mt. Daisen’s water. The people of Daisen continue to live their daily lives in appreciation and respect for the mountain.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- Mt. Daisen, the highest in the Chugoku region, stands above a sea of clouds.
- Daisen-miyuki, a Buddhist ritual praying for the protection of the nation since 936
- The longest natural-stone-flagged approach in Japan to Ogamiyamajinja-okunomiya (shrine).
- Ogamiyamajinja-okunomiya (shrine); once the center of "Jizo (Ksitigarbha or guardian deity) worship".
Story 34

TITLE: Izumo Tatara Chronicle: A Thousand Years of Iron
AREA: Unnan, Yasugi cities, Oku Izumo town, Shimane Prefecture

SUMMARY
The Izumo region in Japan’s Shimane Prefecture is the only place in the world where the flame of the tatara, a traditional iron-smelting furnace, continues to burn. The region’s iron industry was a sustainable one; the mountains excavated for iron sand were turned into expanses of rice fields, and the charcoal that fueled the furnace was made from trees whose land was reforested. The iron trade brought literature and goods from all over Japan, fostering a regional culture as brilliant as Kyoto’s. Today, the Izumo region continues its tradition of iron making, a story begun by its predecessors 1000 years ago.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

An ancient legend is retold through Izumo Kagura dance
Smelting tamahagane (high grade iron)

Rice fields created after iron sand excavation
Kanayago-jinja Shrine
**Story 35**

**TITLE:** The Four Dynamic Coastal Cities of Yokosuka, Kure, Sasebo, and Maizuru: Centers of Japanese Modernization

**AREA:** Yokosuka city, Kanagawa Prefecture, Kure city, Hiroshima Prefecture, Sasebo city, Nagasaki Prefecture, Maizuru city, Kyoto Prefecture

**SUMMARY**
During the Meiji period (1868-1912), Japan as a modern state urgently needed to protect its waters and coastline and to compete with Western powers. To do so the government selected four ideal natural harbors that, at the time, housed quiet fishing villages, and rapidly established them as naval ports. Naval institutions and infrastructure such as water lines and rail access were installed while state-of-the-art technology and labor were poured into these ports, thus, the resulting four naval port cities helped to push forward Japan’s modernization. Currently, many facilities in the four cities remain in operation, reminding visitors of their storied roles while the old ports with their dignified histories continue to attract visitors.

**Main Cultural Properties of the Story**

- **Sarushima Battery (Yokosuka City)**
  Gun battery of Meiji era built on a natural island in Tokyo Bay

- **Maritime Self-Defense Force Kure District Inspector General Department Building (Kure City)**
  Old Kure district ('chinjufu') government buildings of brick masonry.

- **Sasebo Heavy Industries Co., Ltd. Sasebo Shipyard Facilities (Sasebo City)**
  Former Japanese Naval Shipyard Facility

- **Akarenga (Red Brick) Park (Maizuru City)**
  Red brick warehouse buildings of the former Maizuru Naval District
Story 36

TITLE: Murakami Kaizoku: Japan’s Largest “Pirate” group and their territory in the Geiyo Archipelago
AREA: Imabari city, Ehime Prefecture, Onomichi city, Hiroshima Prefecture

SUMMARY
Luís Fróis, a Portuguese missionary who visited Japan during the Warring States period (1467-1603), recorded that the Murakami Kaizoku was the country’s largest group of pirates. Contrary to the usual activities of pirates who loot ships for money and goods, the Murakami Kaizoku’s primary occupation was enforcing order for the safety and security of navigation, and ensuring orderly trade and distribution in the Seto Inland Sea. Their home territory of Geiyo Archipelago, which links the ports of Onomichi and Imabari, contains many remnants of their activities including clusters of castles where they lived. People can experience the rich past of the Murakami Kaizoku who controlled the navigational routes of the Seto Inland Sea by visiting the strategic archipelago.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

The ruins of Noshima Castle
Historical possessions of Noshima Murakami family
Bekku Oyamazumi Shrine
Hourakuyaki
TITLE: The Ceramics of Hizen: Birthplace of Japanese Porcelain Ware

AREA: Karatsu, Imari, Takeo, Ureshino cities, Arita town, Saga Prefecture, Sasebo, Hirado cities, Hasami town, Nagasaki Prefecture

SUMMARY
Hizen, in the northwestern part of Kyushu, is a place where the ingredients necessary for the ceramics industry are readily available within its rich nature: clay deposits; wood fuel from the mountains; and water from the river. This is where Japanese porcelain was born and the towns in this region were in friendly rivalries to develop their own unique styles. The porcelain ware was not only admired overseas, but also distributed throughout Japan and used for daily lives. In Hizen, the chimneys rising from the kilns into the skies and the tonbai walls made of re-used kiln bricks tell the story of thriving ceramic industries and of the unique porcelain works that continue to be created there. As the birthplace of Japanese porcelain ware, Hizen allows visitors to experience the CRAFTMANSHIP, creativity, and beauty that have been nurtured by history and tradition.

Main Cultural Properties of the Story

Nakaoyama

Japanese porcelain ware

Ookawachiyama

Kiln of porcelain site
Listen to the voices of history.
Stories emerge from the land and its people.
Cultural Properties shift from preservation to utilization!
Japan Heritage begins here.