
MONUMENT OF HISTORY IN JAPAN OR COGNITIVE SYNERGY OF PLACES, LANDSCAPES, ARTS AND CRAFTS, TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS

A trip to the innermost essence of Japan¹

AFFELT Waldemar J. ¹

¹ Waldemar J. Affelt, Gdańsk University of Technology, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3274-5210>

ABSTRACT: The Japanese Cultural Agency is implementing the JAPAN HERITAGE project, which will result in a hundred thematic narratives on historical monuments. The applicant and beneficiary is a rural or urban municipality, but the nomination procedure also includes the Prefecture Office. It is stressed that this initiative does not compete with the UNESCO World Heritage List, nor does it introduce a new category of monument, so that there is no need to amend the Act of 30 May 1950 on the Protection of Cultural Property. Strategically, the project aims at social revitalisation by strengthening the sense of identity and intensifying domestic and foreign tourism. Every JAPAN HERITAGE narrative is a branded tourist product, and the tangible and intangible cultural property under legal protection illustrated by it are located in one municipality in the local category, or in many municipalities in a given prefecture, or even in several prefectures - in the collective category. The essence of the project is discussed using the example of narrative 019 'Date Culture initiated by Masamune'.

KEY WORDS: Japan Heritage, tangible and intangible cultural property, Masamune Date

Introduction

The issue of the protection of historical monuments in Japan is regulated by Act No. 214 of 30 May 1950, last amended on 30 March 2007². This legal act replaced the previous ones and introduced the notions of cultural property and intangible cultural property in accordance with the Hague

¹ Japan Heritage, page subtitle, [online]: <https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/en/index.html> (DOA: 30.05.2019).

² Law for the Protection of Cultural Property of May 30th 1950 [online]: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/japan_law_protectionproperty_entno.pdf (DOA: 30.05.2019)

Convention³. The latter concept at first referred to goods in danger of disappearance, but in the 1954 update, its scope was limited by adding a requirement for high artistic and historical value. The 1974 update of the Act, in view of the rapid process of changes in the Japanese lifestyle, extended the category of folk cultural goods to include their intangible dimension. Although they require documentation, their protection was abandoned by entering them in the register of monuments. Moreover, a completely new category of goods, namely conservation techniques, has been added. Although they do not have a material character (knowledge and skills), they are necessary to preserve material objects for future generations. Thus, the essence of intangible heritage has been recognized in Japan, and its carriers have been adequately protected long before the appearance of the UNESCO Convention⁴. Interesting is the case of particularly beautiful scenery, a category introduced by the Act of 1929⁵ on historical sites, places of picturesque beauty and monuments of nature. It equated their protection status with temples and shrines, but also included places visited by the emperor (removed from the list after 1945). This category of monument - and especially its aesthetic value - was included in the Act of 1950, which today is a significant difference between the Japanese and Polish law on the protection of monuments. In 1996, a new form of protection of cultural heritage was introduced by including it in the list of traditional buildings - the so-called registration. It complements the existing system of protection, i.e. its highest form, the so-called designation (national cultural good) and selection (prefectural cultural good) - ensuring moderate protection measures, such as recommendations of conservation services, notifications, guidelines, suggestions and advice. Owners of traditional buildings are expected to protect mainly the character of their façades. In 2004, this form of protection was extended to immovable tangible folk cultural goods. Also this year, the Landscape Act, the first law in Japan to establish the government's responsibility for land-use planning, was passed. In the same year, a new category of cultural goods was introduced - the Cultural Landscape, which includes such formations as e.g. rice terraces or groves in built-up areas. The 2008 Law on the Maintenance and Improvement of Historical Landscapes provides for various measures to protect the character of the historical landscape by extending financial support and tax incentives. It also discusses the relationship between the protection of cultural heritage and the promotion of tourism, which was already the subject of a framework law on the national promotion of tourism in 2006⁶. It also discusses the relationship between the protection of cultural heritage and the promotion of tourism. In view of the large disparity in domestic and foreign tourist traffic and a clear slowdown in the procedures of protecting further cultural property, the efforts of the state and local government administration are aimed at intensifying the domestic cultural tourism of the Japanese. At present, the national system operates in six categories of monuments:

³ The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its implementing rules and the Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, signed at The Hague on 14 May 1954.

⁴ UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, 17 October 2003. [online] <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20111721018>. (accessed 30.05.2019).

⁵ *Historical Sites, Places of Scenic Beauty, and Natural Monuments Preservation Law*, 1929.

⁶ *The Tourism National Promotion Basic Law*, 2006.

- important material cultural property: works of fine arts and crafts;
- important intangible cultural property: spectacular arts and crafts;
- important monuments: historical sites, places of picturesque beauty, natural monuments;
- important material property of folk culture;
- important intangible property of folk culture; - archaeological property (underground property).

The adjective "important" means the highest state and strict form of protection, but the protection of some goods may have a regional (prefecture: e.g. selected conservation techniques; area protection of a group of buildings) or local (commune: e.g. buildings) character, which gives a total of seventeen types of protection of cultural goods. Moreover, the Act of 1950 introduces the title of the Living National Treasury conferred on masters of arts and crafts, as well as masters of traditional Japanese theatre (Noh, Bunrak, Kabuki). The main objective is to protect Japanese traditions and ensure their continuation.

The latest innovation in the Japanese system of protection of monuments

Years ago, the Agency for Culture came up with an idea for Japanese Heritage, namely the JAPAN HERITAGE project. Municipalities were invited to participate and submit proposals. Unfortunately, by August 2014, 38 (out of a total of over a thousand seven hundred municipalities) applications had been submitted, only a few of which met the conditions. Meanwhile, it was assumed that "the value added to the value of cultural property, such as linking them to local stories and introducing a system for their dissemination, as well as the implementation of an integrated community revitalization program related to industrial development, promotion of tourism and human resources along with the development of the local community (and possibly neighboring communes) will contribute to the awareness and reinforcement of sense of identity amongst the residents. This also means promoting the place's brand, which will ultimately lead to the revitalization of the whole region."⁷ The project initiates a rural or urban commune and transmits its description to the prefecture. At the local level it is discussed, evaluated and possibly returned to be completed. The final decision is made in Tokyo by the Japan Heritage Review Board composed of professionals from outside the Culture Agency.

The essence of Japanese Heritage is a thematic story interpreting the values and significance of selected tangible and intangible cultural property, forming a collection of tourist attractions of one or more municipalities. The narrative should have the following characteristics:

- concerns unique past traditions or local customs that are passed down from generation to generation;
- has a clearly defined theme and concerns cultural property preserved in the municipality,

⁷ *Outline of "Japan Heritage" Program*, Agency for Cultural Affairs, March 2015, para 1, [online]: <https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/en/img/about/Outline%20of%20Japan%20Heritage.pdf> (dostęp: 30.05..2019).

such as buildings and moving objects, archaeological sites, places and landscapes of picturesque beauty, and local festivals;

- is not only a summary of regional history or a description of local cultural property, but creates synergistic added value as a holistic whole.

It is recommended to communicate this content in such a way that it is understandable to those without specialist training. The criteria for establishing such a narrative as the Legacy of Japan are:

- The narrative refers to different historical characteristics of the region and can be an instrument to build the attractiveness of Japan as a whole.
- The applicant has a vision of the development of the region and a concrete strategy for the use of cultural property under legal protection for this purpose.
- The project aims to revitalize the local community and effectively disseminate the historical monuments narrative in the country and abroad.

The status of Japanese Heritage includes two categories: local when the narrative refers to one municipality, and/or collective when it refers to several municipalities. Each nomination must include at least one national - or important - cultural good with the highest protection status.

On June 29, 2015, the First JAPAN HERITAGE Forum took place at the National Museum in Tokyo. The Minister and Deputy Minister of Education, Culture, Sport, Science and Technology presented the first eighteen certificates of Japanese Heritage, followed by a discussion panel with the Commissioner for Culture and a member of the Japanese Heritage Review Council. The first publications bearing the JAPAN HERITAGE logo were displayed at the exhibition stands. The titles of the winning narratives themselves show the diversity of their subject matter, territorial scope and character of representative cultural goods⁸. The second JAPAN HERITAGE national conference took place in October 2018, when 49 certified narratives had already been presented, and the third in May 2019, introducing sixteen more⁹. By 2020, it is planned to establish 100 JAPAN HERITAGE narratives. This is the year of the summer Olympics in Tokyo, with more than 20 million foreign tourists expected to come. Therefore, it is planned to publish multilingual materials promoting indigenous cultural goods covered by the project's narratives, making intensive use of the possibilities of electronic information and communication technologies. The Cultural Agency provides financial support for five years from the establishment of the narrative. This creates new qualified jobs for heritage sites, technical tourism infrastructure (parking lots, toilets, resting places, restaurants, facilities for the disabled, etc.) and information (signposts, information panels, metal three-dimensional models of the site for the blind, stone poles with the name of the outdoor facility etc.) and strengthens the souvenir industry.

⁸ See *Japan Heritage* [online]: https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/en/img/about/nihon_isan_pamphlet_english.pdf (DOA: 30.05..2019).

⁹ See <https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/ja/special/sp190606.html>.

The narrative 019 "Date Culture Initiated by Masamune"¹⁰

Date Masamune (1567-1636), feudal ruler of the Warring States period (1467-1603), is a well-known historical figure, mainly for his political and military achievements, but he was also an intellectual who founded the city of Sendai in the far from capital Tohoku region and made it a cultural center radiating towards its traditional centers in Nara, Kyoto and Edo.¹¹

His unique talents and refined taste resulted in the "Date Culture", which combined local tradition with the fashionable and luxurious glitter of Momoyama's capital city culture, without shirking the influence of Western Europe. As a result, the original Sendai culture flourished thanks to Date's efforts and was passed on to later generations, including other regions of Japan, and spread throughout society from the samurai class to ordinary people.

The Date Masamune Heritage Narrative of Japan is illustrated by fifty immaterial and tangible movable and immovable cultural property located in Miyagi Prefecture in the neighboring cities of Sendai, Tagajo, Shiogama and Matsushima. It is conceived as a kind of space-time cognitive system in which five zones can be distinguished:

Zone I: Date Masamune and Sendai domain culture: movable cultural objects No. 1-4, personally related directly to Masamune as relics - objects he owned and touched.

Zone II: Creation of Date Culture by Masamune: movable and immovable cultural objects No. 5-15 created during Date's lifetime and related to his activities.

Zone III: Spread of Date Culture in the domain of Masamune after his death, continued by his ancestral successors: various cultural property No. 16-23: 3 types of movable objects and 5 religious buildings, which were created by Date clan members, including successive Sendai rulers.

Zone IV: Spread of Date Culture throughout the country: various cultural property No. 24-35: 5 buildings and one landscape and 6 places of picturesque beauty.

Zone V: Spread of Date Culture among ordinary people: various cultural property No. 36-50: intangible heritage elements contained in 6 performing arts and 3 festivals and knowledge and skills necessary in 6 traditional crafts in Miyagi prefecture.

¹⁰ "DATE Culture" fostered by Masamune, [online]: <http://datebunka.jp/en/> (DOA: 30.05.2019).

¹¹ See *Masamune Date*, [online]: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masamune_Date (DOA: 30.05.2019).

Here is a list of these cultural goods (the numbers of goods are included in the description of the zones above), which form the designations of the story JAPAN HERITAGE No 019:

1. **Five-part black lacquered armour** and a helmet decorated with a gilded sickle of the *maetate* crescent, used by Date Masamune.
2. A **woolen purple *jinbaori* coat** with circles in five symbolic shinto colours and a gold-embroidered clan coat of arms (two bamboo sparrows flying in a circle of bamboo leaves), which has been the property of successive Sendai domain rulers since Date. (Figure 1)



Fig. 1 Sendai, rehearsal a week before Aoba Matsuri Festival 2019; the *jinbei* of the group performing the *Suzume-Odori* dance is inspired by the purple *jinbaori* coat of Date Masamune (cf. figure 2).
Phot. W. Affelt

3. **Artifacts** extracted from the Tomb Chapel of the Date Zuihoden Mausoleum in Sendai: a gold brooch in European style (import?), a letterbox decorated with gold varnish.
4. **Matsushima, a life-size sculpture** of the seated Date, was created on the 17th anniversary of Masamune's death on order by his widow, Yotokuin. It was placed in 1652 in the Zuiganji temple in Matsushima. It is said that DATE figure was recreated from the widow's memory and is considered the most realistic portrait of him, showing the lack of the right eye he lost in childhood. A survey of the object during restoration work in 2012 showed that real armour from the Fighting *Sengoku* States era (1493-1573) was used. (Figure 2)



Fig. 2 Matsushima, Zuiganji Temple Museum, a wooden sculpture of a figure of Date Masamune sitting in armour, from 1652, depicting him in a helmet with his favorite gold-plated half-moon *maetate* ornament. Photo: W. Affelt

5. **Place of the no-longer existing Sendai Castle** on the plateau of Aoba Hill overlooking the city. Only the base stones of the pillars of the old wooden structure indicate the location of the main *honmaru* building, which was demolished in the 1870s, after the castle was occupied by the government forces of the Meiji Restoration during the *boshin* war¹².
6. **A series of 1:100 scale drawings** depicting the *honmaru* and bailey of the *ninomaru* of the Aoba Fortress in Sendai, as well as the main buildings of the Sendai *kamiyashiki* domain rulers' residence in Edo. This is the only preserved view of these elevations.
7. **The "Phoenixes" painting** from the partition wall of the Great Hall in the *honmaru* of Sendai Castle, where Date ate his meals, is the only preserved piece of equipment in the building.
8. **Three folding screens** that decorated the interiors of Wakabayashi Castle, where Masamune spent the last years of his life after his abdication. The screen depicting open fans lying on the ground among plants is a version of a wall painting from Aoba Castle. The other two depict chrysanthemums and a pair of roe deer sitting in the middle of a clover. The paintings were made on a silver petal base and Masamune calligraphed his poems on them.
9. **Matsushima, Godaido Temple** - a small and modest building erected in 1604 by the efforts of Date in the original place from the 9th century. It houses the sacred images of the Kings of Five

¹² See Boshin War, [online]: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojna_boshin (DOA 30.05.2019).

Wisdoms. The temple stands on an island connected to the mainland by a wooden bridge with red banisters, whose deck is formed by logs spread over a distance. It is said that this solution used to make it impossible for women dressed in kimono to pass through. The interior of the building is available to the public only once every 33 years, and recently in 2006.

10. **Osaki Hachimangu shrine** built in 1604-1607 thanks to Date, which brought carpenters from Kyoto. The building is an example of the elegant Azuchi-Momoyama¹³ style of the capital city¹³; under a common roof covered with cypress shingle, there is the main *honden* sanctuary and the *haiden* prayer hall separated by *ishi-no-ma* corridor.

11. **The Yakushido prayer hall** in the Mutsukokubunji temple was constructed by Date in 1607 on the site of the former lecture hall. Inside, there is a miniature Zsushi shrine. Masamune brought in Senshu carpenters and craftsmen from Osaka Prefecture to perform these works. This is the second, besides the main Osaka Hachimang shrine building, example of a masterpiece of Momoyama period architecture in Sendai.

12. **Matsushima, a complex of Zuiganji Buddhist temples** erected in 1609 by Masamune, includes the main *hondo* building, the priests' kitchen and the corridor connecting them, and the rich decoration of the partition walls with 161 paintings made in various techniques, and in the front part with a gold leaf base. The door leaves and lintels are covered with carved panels. The paintings of the representative interiors are copies, but the panels have been puristically conserved, revealing a wooden substrate from underneath several layers of polychrome (Figure 3). During the renovation completed in 2018, an innovative anti-seismic stiffening of the building structure with diagonal braces between the columns and transoms was discovered inside the walls, which was innovative in the 17th century.



Fig. 3 Matsushima, Zuiganji Temple, Lotus Flower - carving decorative detail of the Sanctuary door after conservation. Photo: W. Affelt

¹³ See Azuchi-Momoyama [online]: <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azuchi-Momoyama> (DOA: 30.05.2019).

13. **Objects associated with a trip to Europe** during the Keicho period (1596-1615), brought from a mission that Masamune sent to the King of Spain and the Pope in 1613 to obtain permission to trade with Mexico (Nueva España). These are: the certificate of Roman citizenship issued to Hascura Tsunenaga (1571-1622), a crucifix and a portrait of Tsunenaga made in Europe and showing the attributes of his new religion, Christianity. The expedition lasted seven years, and after returning to Sendai there was a change in the political climate, the beginnings of persecution of Christians and the isolation of Japan, which was to last until the end of the Edo era.

14. **World Map of Konyo Bankoku Zenzu**, the original of which was created in Beijing in 1602 as a block print made by the Jesuit Matteo Ricci. Three copies have survived in Japan, and the one stored in the collection of the Prefecture Library of Miyagi in Sendai is complete and contains the producer's mark of the Society of Jesus.

15. **Date Manuscript** with best wishes for the city "*Counting on the Permanent Welfare of Sendai*", written in the style of Zen *waka* poetry, stored in the Sendai City Museum.

16. **The shrine of Toshogu** in Sendai, founded by Tadamune, Date's son, in 1654, includes 5 buildings decorated with gold-plated metal fittings. In his *hondo* there is a miniature chapel of Zushi richly decorated with a carving painted in bright colors, containing a statue of shogun Tokugawa Ieyasu. The Torii stone gate is the oldest of its kind in the prefecture.

17. **Zuihoden**, or the mausoleum of Date and the Kyogamine mausoleums of the Date family, which despite recognition as National Treasures as early as 1902, were completely destroyed during the air raids of the American air force in 1945. The first one was rebuilt in 1979 and the second one in 1985. During the reconstruction, Masamune's burial artifacts were discovered: a sword, a box for letters and ornaments, and the measurement of its remains allowed to determine the height of 158 cm.

18. **Matsushima, the mausoleum of Yotokuin** built for Megohine, the widow of Masamune, on the seventh anniversary of her death in 1660 by Tsunamune, grandson of Date. It is a place of prayer visited by many women, especially after 2009, when the conservation work was completed, which resulted in the building being as elegant as the Mausoleum Zuihoden.

19. **Matsushima, the mausoleum of the Entsuin Temple**, is dedicated to Mitsumune, grandson of Masamune and son-in-law of Sendai's second ruler, Tadamune. They were built in 1647 in the depths of a picturesque garden next to Zuiganji Temple. Inside, there is a horse figure of the tragically deceased Mitsumune, surrounded by the statues of seven of his vassals, who, as a token of their loyalty to their master, gave their lives after his death. The building is decorated with Western art motifs such as spades, clubs, diamonds, hearts, roses and so on.

20. **Shiogama, the Shiogama-yinja Shrine**, was initiated by Tsunamura, the fourth ruler of Sendai, in 1695. Construction work was completed in 1704 by Yoshimura, the fifth Sendai ruler. From time immemorial, this place has been particularly revered by the imperial court and the local noblemen as the seat of the deities of the Tohoku region, patrons of sailors, fishermen and pregnant women. Sea salt has also been produced here for centuries. Masamune participated in the local shinto rituals and ceremonies, which were continued by his successors.

21. **Collection of armour** belonging to the twelve successive rulers of the Sendai domain. They

resemble the five-part construction used by Masamune, which is characterized by durability, combat advantages, ease of maintenance and aesthetics. Most helmets are decorated with a gold-plated crescent, but in a more modest size than Masamune helmets.

22. **Bamboo teaspoons** for dosing powdered *macha* tea, sculpted by five successive Sendai domain rulers, starting with Masamune. These utensils, which are indispensable for tea ceremonies, have their own individual characteristics, which are given to them by the owners.

23. **Collection of thirty-five swords** of Sendai rulers traditionally offered to the Shiogama-yinja shrine at the beginning of their rule. The ceremonial set included three swords dedicated to each of the three deities here - Betsugu, Sagu and Ugu. The swords were engraved with the donors' requests and the producer's markings of the armourers were placed on them.

24. **Matsushima, the Kanrantei tea pavilion building** was originally built for Fushimi Castle in Kyoto, but Hideyoshi Toyotomi (1536-1598)¹⁴ gifted it to Date Masumune. Tadamune, the second ruler of Sendai, dismantled the object again and moved it to its present site. Set on the edge of a small peninsula, with an open front facing the bay, it is now a public teahouse and the only remnant of the once numerous buildings. Yoshimura, the fifth ruler of Sendai, named the pavilion the "Observatory of Wrinkled Waters". The partition walls are decorated with landscape paintings on a golden background. (Fig. 4)



Fig. 4 Matsushima, Kanrantei teahouse pavilion, moved from Kyoto by Tademuna, the second ruler of Sendai, serving as a villa for guests to observe the waters of the Gulf and the moon. Photo: W. Affelt

¹⁴ See Hideyoshi Toyotomi [online]: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hideyoshi_Toyotomi (DOA: 30.05.2019)

25 **Tsutsujigaoka Hill and Tenjin Sanctuary** among cherry and oak trees are an example of a place of picturesque beauty that has remained unchanged for more than three hundred years. There are stone steles with inscriptions of haiku poetry, referring to the visit of Matsuo Basho (1644-1694), a Zen monk and poet who travelled.

26. **Kinoshita and the Yakushido building** were erected by Masamune in 1607. Their surroundings with their numerous stone steles with inscribed haiku poems have been a place of picturesque beauty since 2015.

27. **Tagajo, the historical site of the 8th century Taga Castle.** Archaeological research has confirmed the existence of a hill on the plateau overlooking the town of Tagajo, the political center for the management of the province of Matsu in the south of the Tohoku region. The castle area was fortified by earth ramparts and two opposite gates led to it. Base stones of wooden columns were found, the layout of which allowed to determine the location and outline of the buildings. A hypothetical stratigraphy of the development of the whole spatial assumption was also worked out, exhibited on site. (Fig. 5)



Fig.5 Tagajo, a historic site of the 8th century castle. - In the foreground there is a metal model showing the phases of the development of the complex, then the reconstruction of the base stones of the column gate structure, in the distance there is a foundation platform of the main building with a similar arrangement. Photo: W. Affelt

28. Tagajo, the monument to Taga Castle is a stone stele discovered in the times of Tadamune, the second ruler of Sendai. A description of the renovation works carried out in the castle during the Nara period (733-754) is inscribed on it. This monument was taken care of and Tsunamura, the fourth ruler of Sendai, founded a pavilion protecting the stone block against climate influences. It aroused interest among scholars and the poet Basho dedicated a poem to it. (Fig. 6)



Fig. 6 Tagajo, a wooden pavilion erected by Date Tsunamura (1659-1719), protects the historic stele - the monument to the Taga castle. Photo: W. Affelt

29. **Tagajo, Tsubo no Ishibumi** is a place of picturesque beauty around the Taga Castle Monument, which offers a view of the opposite castle buildings on one side and the ocean on the other.

30. **Tagajo, Suenomatsuyama Hill**, is a place of picturesque beauty that inspired poets, writers and painters of the Edo era to find inspiration here. Limited by the sight of undone pines at the top and rows of tombstones at the foot of the hill, it is considered a symbol of romantic beauty. This was expressed by the poet Basho, who concluded in sadness the visual contrast between the graves and the twisted branches of the trees.

31 **Tagajo, Oki-no-i** is a national place of picturesque beauty disseminated by the poet Onono Komachi (834-880) and others. Tsunamura, the fourth ruler of Sendai, instructed local leaders to care for the condition of this corner, which today is a pond with a rocky "islet", overgrown with dwarfed pines, shrubs and a Japanese clone of *acer japonicum*. There is a road running around it.

32. **The Islet of Magakigashima** in the lagoon of Shiogama city is only 150 meters in diameter, but as a place of picturesque beauty from the earliest times is a theme of poetry. For example, Matsuo Basho in his diary from the travels of *Oku no Hosomichi* described the scenery of the island seen in the light of the moon.

33. **Oshima Island in Matsushima Bay** is an irregularly contoured rock formation with steep slopes, overgrown with pines¹⁵. Uninhabited, it contains traces of existence for generations, because Buddhist priests have been meditating here since the 9th century in hermitages cut out in the rock massif. This place of picturesque beauty in the rays of sunrise from the water was considered an emanation of the Buddhist Paradise - Pure Land. Basho and many other writers and artists immortalized their impressions from their stay in Oshima. (Fig. 7)



Fig. 7 Oshima Island in Matsushima Bay, a Buddhist priest from Zuiganji's temple immersed in meditation at the forefront of the archaic pavilion. Photo: W. Affelt

¹⁵ See Oshima Island na Google Map [online]: <https://www.google.com/maps/@38.3644462,141.062592,58m/data=!3m1!1e3>.

34. **The landscape of Matsushima Bay** is one of the three most beautiful landscapes of Japan according to Hayashi Gahō (1618-1688), a neo-confucianist and head of government education. The entire coastline of the bay and 262 islands constitute a place - this time very extensive one with an area of 9717 hectares - of picturesque beauty. (Fig. 8)



Fig. 8 Fukuura Island in Matsushima Bay; the low tide reveals an irregular outline of the rock and oyster habitats for which the site is famous. Photo: W. Affelt

35. **Matsushima, Tomiyama viewpoint** with Kannondo Temple and *bonsho* bell, which offers one of the four most beautiful views of the Bay. This place of picturesque beauty is associated with Sakanoueno Tamuramaro (758-811), the first shogun of the Heian period (794 A.D. - 1185), but a significant renovation of the temple was done at the request of Irohahime, the first daughter of Masamune, after whom the temple bell was named. Kawai Sora (1649-1710) writes about this place in his diary from the journey he made with Matsuo Basho.

36. **Noh Kagura dance** performed in Osaka Hachimang Temple in September. This ancient form of musical-vocal performance and dance exists thanks to amateur groups gathered around Shinto shrines, cultivating this intangible heritage. It was from this form of folk spectacle that the court theater Noh grew in the 14th century, and sublimated in the Edo period, taking over the style of costumes, melody and content of the performances.

37. **The Akiu no Taue Odori rice planting dance** cultivated in the city of Akiu is a preserved form of the Shinto ritual performed since ancient times in the Tohoku region to ensure a rich harvest. In its present form it has been known since the 17th century and performed by a team of 8 women

and two or four men accompanied by flutes, drums and bells. Inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2009, item 236.

38. **Osawa no Taue Odori** is an ancient ritualistic rice planting dance performed annually since 1981 in the village of Osaka, in August in the Yasaka Shrine. Tadamune, the second ruler of Sendai, granted permission to use the *mon* coat of arms of the Date clan "Bamboo and sparrows" on dancers' costumes, which are women's *santime* kimonos.

39. **Kawamae's Shishiodori and Kenbai dance spectacles** are performed in July at the Masamune's preferred fishing sites situated upstream the Hirose river. Yoshimura, the fifth ruler of Sendai, established this tradition by reviewing all forms of folk theatre in his domain, considering these performances particularly elegant. The performers were given the right to use silk curtains and the Kuyo-mon emblem on their costumes - a circle surrounded by 8 smaller circles.

40. **Shishiodori and Kenbai dance spectacles** from Fukuoka were transferred to Sendai from Iwate Prefecture, neighboring to the north in 1648, the first and, a few years later, the second, via the Ryuhoji Temple. Shishiodori comes from ancient India and tells the story of the famine caused by rice insects, which were infested by tens of thousands of deer. Hence, the horned mask is part of the costume. Kenbai - the dance of the devil's sword - requires a demon mask. Both dances are performed by eight men.

41. **Matsutaki Festival** (Donto-sai Festival) takes place annually in Osaka Hachimangu shrine on 14th January after sunset and lasts until dawn. Participants pray for the health, prosperity and well-being of their families in the new year, and New Year's decorations and amulets from the previous year are burned in a big fire in the courtyard, surrounded by men dressed only in white shorts. The ceremony is called *hadakamairi* - "visit a shrine while naked" and its description appeared in the Sendai event calendar around 1850.

42. **Tanabata Festival**¹⁶ is based on the Chinese legend of *Kikkoten* about two stars Kengyu and Shokujo. In Sendai since Edo it is customary to decorate the fronts of houses with bamboo leaf compositions. After the Meiji period, the whole bamboo branches decorated with traditional paper prayer strips with written requests, paper clothes and money pouches began to be exhibited. The festival takes place from 6 to 8 August each year and gathers crowds of spectators dressed in kimonos and yukatas, including many young people. (Figure 9)

¹⁶ See Tanabata [online] <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanabata> (DOA: 30.05.2019).



Fig. 9 Sendai, preparing the decoration for the Tanabata festival; attaching colourful strips of paper with written greetings to the top of a bamboo branch. Phot. W. Affelt

43. **Shiogama, rituals of the Shiogama-yinja Shrine:** Hote-matsuri festival is held on March 10 since 1682 to protect against the forces of evil and fire, and Hana-matsuri on the fourth Sunday of April from 1778 for a successful harvest and protection against drought. Both rituals are related to the indigenous people of *Ujiko*. The main attraction is the procession of the portable *mikoshi* sanctuary, weighing over a ton and carried by 16 men dressed in white, where the hardest part is to climb 202 steps up the steep temple stairs. The Hana Festival takes place during cherry blossoming, which is a pretext for *Hanami* - watching the flowering trees and contemplating their charm. (Fig. 10)

44. **Aoba Festival** in Sendai is a popular form of the Aoba-jinja shrine ritual, dedicated to Masamune and cultivated in its present form on the third Saturday and Sunday of May from 1985 to the 350th anniversary of the death of the founder of Sendai. The main attraction is the parade of several dozen of *yamaboko* - richly decorated platforms on circles sponsored by institutions and corporations, drawn by men along the main streets of the city. Among them, several thousand people of different ages perform *Suzume-Odori* - a dance of sparrows, imitating bird's waving and spinning, initiated in the early seventeenth century by the builders of Aoba Castle. The celebration begins with a procession of Date clan members dressed in white with shinto priests and a parade of men in historic samurai costumes with Date Masamune figure surrounded by vassals. (Fig. 11)



Fig. 10 Shioyama, city procession with a portable mikoshi chapel at the annual Minato Matsuri festival in 2018. Photo W. Affelt



Fig. 11 Sendai, the festival platform at Aoba Matsuri 2018; the moving image of Date Masemune floats and greets the audience with the sound of fanfares; below, against the violet background is the Date family monogram "Two Sparrows and a Bamboo", and on the blue pennants there is Kuyo-mon symbolizing 9 planets of Buddhist cosmology that affect nature and human destiny. Photo: W. Affelt

45. **The ofude writing brushes**, which Masamune designed in 1614 with the help of masters brought from Osaka. The representative Hagi Fude brush had a handle made of the lower woody part of the shoot of the locally cultivated blooming *Miyaginohaga* shrub (*Lespedeza thunbergii*). In the period of Meiji (1868-1912) *Goshiki Fude* became very popular - a set of five brushes with handles made of clover stems, pinewood, Japanese pampas grass, reeds and knotweed rhizomes.
46. **Tsutsumi ceramics** was originally named "Sugiyama", but when the development of Sendai in the Genroku period (1688-1704) caused an increase in demand for tea cups, potters began to build ovens in the wooded area of Tsutsumi-machi, hence the name of the local products. The decoration style with black and white glaze was called namako because it resembles the sea cucumber skin. Currently, there is only one Tsutsumiyaki Kenba Kiln factory, open to visitors.
47. **Ceramic tsutsumi dolls** made of clay which becomes white after firing, brightly painted in the style of ukiyo-e with a predominance of red color, whose production began in the Genroku period (1688-1704), thanks to the invitation of master Mannemon Kamimura from Edo by Tsunamura (1659-1719), the fourth ruler of Sendai. The peak of popularity fell in the period of Bunka-Bunsei (1804-1830), and now the thirteenth generation of potters produce these trinkets depicting famous kabuki actors, sumo players, or VIPs, but also carrying out orders for gift or thanksgiving figurines donated to shrines, or amulets of success.
48. **Hira silk fabric**, whose production was developed in Sendai in the middle of the Edo period. It was used to make luxury *hakama* trousers for kabuki actors, sumo wrestlers, or for the production of leather products. Rigid but elastic fabric is obtained by using raw, i.e. merely unwound but not stretched silk thread, moistened and strongly hit during the weaving of both the weft and the warp. The owners of Sendaihira & Co. Ltd, the Kodos- father and son, who know how to produce hira, were recognised as a Living National Treasure in 2002.
49. **Papier-mâché hariko products** - a technique invented by samurai Matsukawa Toyonoshin, vassal of the Date clan, during the Tenpo period (1830-1844). A typical product is an oval Daruma doll - a roly-poly doll in the image of a Dharma monk and the first Zen patriarch, with an indigo-coloured face and body paintings depicting a treasure ship or deity of good luck. It is a typical souvenir from Sendai, and at the same time a lucky amulet. (Fig. 12)
50. **Chests of drawers with tansu drawers** began to be produced in Sendai at the end of the Edo period, and the form of modern furniture was created in the Meiji and Taisho periods. The raw material is Zelkova serrata wood, i.e. Japanese elm, and the furniture is finished with a natural colourless varnish emphasizing the grain pattern. Metalwork fittings with a motif of a peony flower or a Chinese lion's head are made by hand. In 2015, the ability to produce tansu was recognised as a National Traditional Craft constituting an element of intangible heritage.



Fig. 12 The paper pulp figure of blue bearded Daruma with bushy eyebrows and big eyes is a typical souvenir from Sendai - an amulet to guard the prosperity of the whole family and household. Photo: W. Affelt

Fifty such different cultural and natural heritage sites are connected by a single narrative about the historical figure of Masamune Date and his achievements, the cultivation of tradition by his successors and the results of today - isn't this an example of Beautiful Harmony... After all, since May 1, 2019, the Japanese Empire has been in the era of Reiwa¹⁷. Certainly, it is a kind of Japanese Monument of History.

Summary

The common feature of the Japanese and Polish system of monument protection is the use of the same names of the basic values characterizing the monument, i.e. artistic, historical and scientific value. However, in Poland there is a lack of recognition for people with special skills that regards them as the Living National Treasure, and for places of picturesque scenery, whose main value is their unique aesthetic value.

The Japanese Cultural Agency has found a way to combine different categories of cultural goods

¹⁷ Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe informed on April 2, 2019 that the official translation of the name of the new Reiwa era in English is: "Beautiful Harmony". The inspiration for the first time is not the Chinese text, but the Japanese one taken from the eight-century *waka Man'yōshū* poetry collection, i.e. "Collection of ten thousand leaves".

- tangible and intangible, movable and immovable, places and landscapes, people and things, overground and underground property, ancient monuments and contemporary handicraft products - through a single thematic interpretation narrative. It can be assumed that a similar concept led to the success of Japanese cultural diplomacy, which resulted in the inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 2015 of a serial entry called "Sites of Japan's Meiji Industrial Revolution: Iron and Steel, Shipbuilding and Coal Mining" encompassing 23 sites in 11 locations across eight prefectures. In 2018, another serial entry, 'Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region', was made entailing 12 sites in two prefectures.

The stories of JAPAN HERITAGE are a "road map" through the endless abyss of past heritage, leading from object to object, from impression to experience, from exploring small objects to contemplating beautiful views and delighting in unique landscapes. In this way, the viewer can reach out to the deepest being of Japan, especially if he or she makes an effort to explore the acquired information and the sources of culture, its archetypes, myths, epics, poetry, rituals, theater, iconography, historical figures and events on his or her own. The Japanese heritage, understood in this way, is not a guide or "walking sightseeing tour" of the monuments, but an invitation to explore culture and its goods as an eternally living creation of man, cultivated and protected for the next generations. JAPAN HERITAGE instills the cognitive instinct into the Japanese, and a once begun journey through the entangled multicultural roots of a dynamic heritage may have no end, leading to other cultures - as in the case of the "Date Culture" narrative leading to India, China, the Philippines, Mexico, Spain and the Vatican - and back to the modern times, which, after all, are rooted in antiquity.

The legal status of monument protection in Poland does not include a proposal for an equally complementary subject of protection offered by JAPAN HERITAGE. Although the example discussed in detail in this article shows the essence of this innovative system of interpretation of heritage resources, it does not show its great diversity and complexity also in the political aspect of the so-called historical truth, as revealed by other narratives. This system was born many years before its first effects were announced in 2015. It is a novelty in state administration, since the right to take initiative was granted to the local community, i.e. grassroots bottom-up activism. There is an analogy to the Polish concept of a cultural park, however, our system lacks a clearly articulated idea of cultural holism, in which under one umbrella of the historical narrative all the phenomena of the past, both material and immaterial, movable and immobile, complexes of buildings and collections, views, panoramas and landscapes, antiquity and the present, would be included at the same time. *The national list of intangible cultural heritage* already includes 37 elements¹⁸. It is a good founding capital for connecting them with places, movable objects, etc.

In Japan, various cultural property have been united by a common narrative, which by definition cannot be an "illustrated history" or a "sum of historical descriptions". So what is JAPAN HERITAGE?

¹⁸ National list of intangible cultural heritage [online] http://niematerialne.nid.pl/Dziedzictwo_niematerialne/Krajowa_inwentaryzacja/Krajowa_lista_NDK/ (DOA: 20.10.2019).

Japan's heritage is a branded intellectual product, a product of creative industry, an innovative heritological concept that meets the needs of modern man, using information and communication technology to explore and present cultural goods.

Prefecture conservation offices in Japan generally report to educational departments and receive requests from local city heritage inspectors, but only the best-prepared ones receive their interest and support. In further proceedings. Incidentally, I consider the discussed "Date Culture" to be a model example, but it is difficult for a foreigner to evaluate two further criteria for evaluation of an application: a strategic concept for the management of a heritage resource and its surroundings, and a vision of social revitalization related to it, as well as a system for the promotion of a place for the development of tourism.

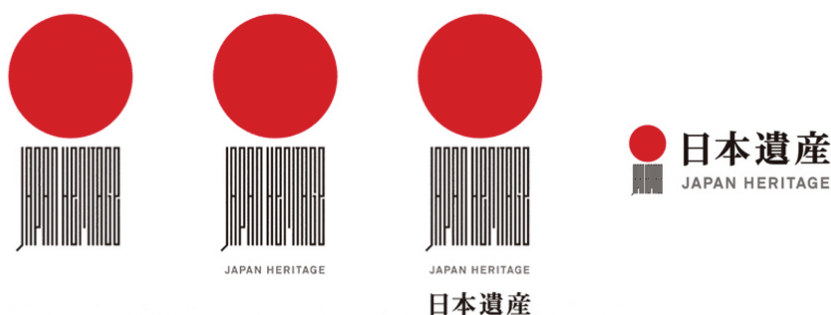


Fig. 13 The JAPAN HERITAGE logo was designed in 2015 by utility graphic artist Taku Sato (b. 1955, Tokyo). The red circle symbolizes Japan and the group of thin lines forms the name Japan Heritage. The sign expresses a change in the approach to narrative about cultural property through their networking thus co-creating the Japanese heritage. Photo: W. Affelt

The JAPAN HERITAGE project will be evaluated after five years of operation, i.e. after 2025. It may be worth waiting for these reports before a possible initiation of the Polish equivalent, i.e. a multidisciplinary and holistic cultural and socio-economic project called POLISH HERITAGE, which could become a lasting result of this year's celebrations of the 100th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Poland and Japan.



Fig. 14 Sendai, an individual version of the celebrating the Tanabata festival; a local joker placed two dressed up dogs on a moving platform made of a pram and decorated it with bamboo twigs with hanging mini lanterns, and in the back he positioned a miniature of a building reminiscent of a nativity scene from Krakow (Szopka). Phot. W. Affelt

PS. The author would like to thank Yukie Kumasaka and Mayumi Kikuchi for their help in organizing the stay in Matsushima, and Masumi Horino, curator of the Zuiganji Temple Museum, for giving permission to photograph the interiors of the temple and museum exhibits.

Bibliography

KAKIUCHI, E., *Cultural heritage protection system in Japan: current issues and prospects for the future*, National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 2014, p. 2, [online] <http://www.grips.ac.jp/r-center/wp-content/uploads/14-10.pdf> (access: 30.05.2019)

Websites

Azuchi-Momoyama, [online]: <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Azuchi-Momoyama> (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

“DATE Culture” fostered by Masamune, [online]: <http://datebunka.jp/en/> (access: 30.05.2019 r.)
Hideyoshi Toyotomi, [online] https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hideyoshi_Toyotomi (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

Japan Heritage, podtytuł strony głównej, [online]: <https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/en/index.html> (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

Japan Heritage, [online] https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/en/img/about/nihon_isan_pamphlet_english.pdf (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

Japan Heritage Portal Site, [online] <https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/ja/special/sp190606.html> (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

The Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and its implementing rules and the Protocol for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, signed at The Hague on 14 May 1954. [online] <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU19570460212> (access: 30.05.2019).

UNESCO Convention for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, Paris, 17 October 2003. [online] <http://prawo.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20111721018> (access: 30.05.2019).

National list of non-material cultural heritage [online] http://niematerialne.nid.pl/Dziedzictwo_niematerialne/Krajowa_inwentaryzacja/Krajowa_lista_NDK/ (access: 20.10.2019). Law for the Protection of Cultural Property of May 30th 1950, [online] https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/japan_law_protectionproperty_entno.pdf (access: 30.05.2019).

Masamune Date, [online] https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Masamune_Date (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

Oshima Island, [in:] Google Map [online] <https://www.google.com/maps/@38.3644462,141.062592,58m/data=!3m1!1e3> (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

Outline of “Japan Heritage” Program, Agency for Cultural Affairs, March 2015, para 1, [online] <https://japan-heritage.bunka.go.jp/en/img/about/Outline%20of%20Japan%20Heritage.pdf> (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

Tanabata, [online] <https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tanabata> (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

Wojna boshin, [online] https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wojna_boshin (access: 30.05.2019 r.)

