

Intangible Heritage in Nara , Japan

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Vast majority of buildings in Japan are made of wood. Virtually all temples and shrines in Japan are wooden structures. This means traditional carpentry plays a great role in preserving and maintaining authenticity of wooden architecture in Nara. Carpentry plays a great role in preserving traditional wooden architecture in Japan. Restoration itself provides researchers and restorers with a rare opportunity to study the building technology. Deep understanding of wood is crucial to be a master carpenter.

[case studies]

Toshodaiji Temple restoration

Yakushiji Temple west tower reconstruction

At the same time, all rituals both sacred and secular are closely associated with the building layout or design. For example, *Shunie* ritual in Todaiji Temple lasts more than 1,200 years without interruption. Good understanding of *Shunie* is necessary for the good understanding of Temple itself.

Urban structure of historic Nara based on the Buddhist belief and underlining Shinto religion. Location of sacred mountain of Mt. Kasuga and more domestic mound called Mt. Wakakusa symbolizes the micro cosmos of ancient Nara dwellers.

[case studies]

Shunie ritual in Todaiji Temple

Mt. Kasuga and Mt. Wakakusa

Living historic town itself is the amalgamation of tangible and intangible heritage within herself. Nara was characterized by its deer park. Co-existence with local animals is a base of daily life of Nara citizens. Local festivals such as *Zizobon* in summer punctuate the seasonal change of the life in Nara. Newly created social events also give sensitive flavor of intangible heritage in Nara.

[case studies]

Deer in Nara

Zizobon festival in summer

Old rituals such as *Wakamiya On-matsuri* and newly introduced social events such as *Tokae*

With these examples, it is clearly stipulated that intangible heritage in Nara is an indispensable part of historic Nara and the activities is still evolving to strengthen the ancient image of historic Nara where tangible heritage plays a role of performing stage of the intangible heritage.

