

A HANDBOOK FOR UNDERSTANDING  
JAPANESE TANGIBLE PROPERTIES:  
JUYO BUNKAZAI – AN ARMOR  
PERSPECTIVE

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ANDY MANCABELLI

# JUYO BUNKAZAI: An Armor Perspective

Many people seem to be stumped by the various systems that the Japanese government and private organizations have devised for the designation of importance of cultural items. It is perhaps best if one starts at the top and understands the term Bunkazai and its significance before going any further. The main focus of this article is to define the term Bunkazai and put it into perspective with relation to other designations appointed by various organizations.

## What is a Bunkazai?

The term “BUNKAZAI” has two main variables made up of three characters.

(Diagram A)

- 1 文
- 2 化
- 3 財

(Diagram B)

文化 – Bunka = culture

財 - Zai= Assets, property etc.

文化+財=文化財=Cultural Property/asset

The first variable is “BUNKA-”. This term basically means Culture (Diagram b). The second variable is “-ZAI”. This term basically means Property, Asset, etc. Joined, the term becomes: BUNKAZAI , meaning cultural asset/property.

This is the most important to understand that the term BUNKAZAI addresses a public designation of Japanese artifacts and can ONLY be applied by government agencies. As its definition implies, the property or asset is something that BELONGS to the public, thence the term “cultural property”. This term may be used to designate cultural properties at city, prefectural and national levels: city bunkazai, prefectural bunkazai or National Bunkazai.

The term “JUYO” basically means Important.

(Diagram C)

重要 = Juyo = Important

重要+文化財=重要文化財=Important cultural property.

Therefore when we combine the two together to make JUYO BUNKAZAI the meaning becomes “Important Cultural Properties”. As stated above, BUNKAZAI are designated at city, prefectural, and national levels, however the term JUYO BUNKAZAI is used ONLY at the NATIONAL level.

### **What's the Difference?**

One of the most important things to consider about designation systems in Japan is the degree of importance placed on the item by an issuing body as well as the reputation and affiliation of the issuing body. Bunkazai are items that are significant culturally, historically and artistically to a body of people generally denoted by geographic and cultural boundaries that are relevant to the tangible item. Keep in mind that as a bunkazai is something that represents the PEOPLE, it is important to the public.

With JUYO BUNKAZAI, the **Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA)** which is an agency under the **Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MONBUSHO)**, is responsible for determining which items qualify for this designation. The Agency for Cultural Affairs has an advisory council known as the Council for Cultural Affairs with a Subdivision on Cultural Properties, which selects and designates important cultural properties. This council is made up of people who have been trained at post-graduate levels in their field of specialty, and who are able to do the research necessary to designate a property. Properties in different media will have different committees made up of people specializing in the relevant subject matter. It is the duty of the national government of Japan to designate and see to the preservation and protection of cultural properties so nationally designated such as JUYO BUNKAZAI. It is the duty of local governments to designate and select important cultural properties other than those designated by the national government.

The agency for cultural affairs defines cultural properties as:

“.....important cultural assets of the Japanese people which have been created and nurtured over the course of Japan’s long history and preserved and handed down to the present generation. They are indispensable for an understanding of the history, tradition and culture of Japan and at the same time form the basis for the development and advancement of future culture.”(ACA 2002)

Whether or not a tangible item becomes a cultural property and on what level is determined generally by how it relates to the following:

1. Historical Importance on the national level
2. Artistic Importance on the national level and
3. Cultural importance on a national level

Likewise, the Prefectural and City level designations are determined by government authorities (namely the local Board of Education) who are educated in and specialize in the appropriate areas and who work with established academics to determine whether something holds indispensable importance to the prefecture or city, historically, artistically, and culturally.

The nomination process for attributing (tangible) BUNKAZAI, is approached with a simple scientific method.

1. The nominator asks the question. Does this item satisfy the criteria of having historical, artistic, and cultural importance indispensable to a body of people at said level?
2. Then the nominator, makes a hypothesis: “This armor is important because it was owned by Honda Tadakatsu, is a distinguishing work of art, and because of this is a standard for Japanese culture.” Therefore it should be granted a JUYO BUNKAZAI designation.
3. The next step is to test the hypothesis. This involves lots of research. The research must be done professionally by historians, historical archeologists, or ethno-historians who specialize in the scientific methodology which will build a case for the nomination. If somebody who is not trained in the methodology and procedures tries to complete this process three things will result:
  - They will not be able to construct a proper nomination based on facts and methodology that sifts through facts vs. uncorroborated evidence as to the history and importance. They will not be able to sort out the truth from the fiction.
  - Because they have no formal training, a government advisory council will be less likely to consider the nomination.
  - They will waste a great deal of time and effort.
4. Once the hypothesis is tested and the facts are determined, they are reviewed by the advisory council at said level and the item is turned down or designated a cultural property.
5. The most frequent cause for an item’s nomination is the lack of factual evidence to support an item’s historical importance. All too often, letters and documents must be taken with a grain of salt in terms of their association with a particular historical figure or event. It is not uncommon throughout history for people to falsify documents for the purpose of profit. An armor, sword, vase, etc. can be sold many times over as being

“THE one owned by my great great great grandfather, Honda Tadakatsu, I am his descendant and therefore it is true.” It takes more than this to make an item a BUNKAZAI at any level.

### **Other Designations**

The previous section was dubbed “What’s the Difference?” This not only referred to the highest level of designations in Japan which are BUNKAZAI but to also distinguish between BUNKAZAI and other designations done by private individuals and organizations.

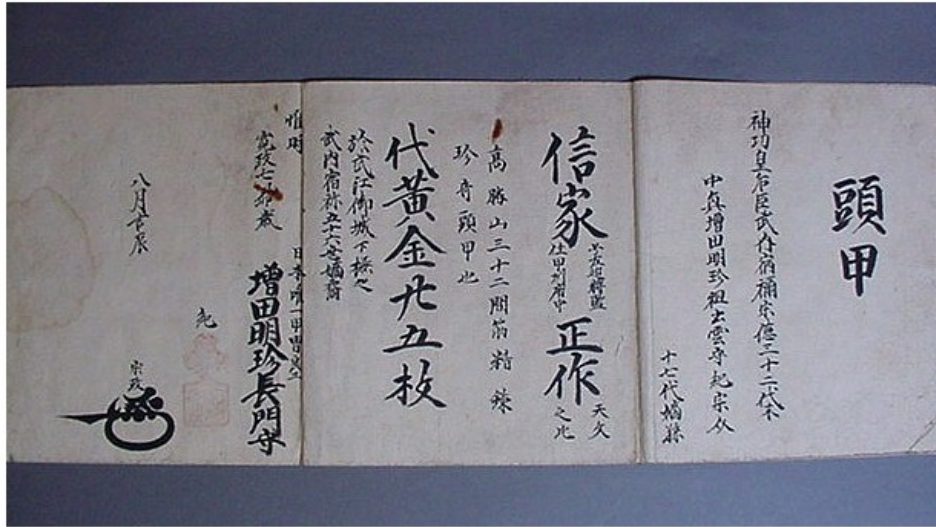
It is first important to note that there is an enormous difference between BUNKAZAI designations and designations given privately. Designations and attempts to legally protect cultural properties began in Japan in the late Meiji period as a response to industrialization and the destruction and sale of many cultural resources. On the other hand, Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples have traditionally been curation facilities for collections as well. Prince Yamato’s Kusanagi sword being preserved at Ise shrine is a great example. From a collector’s perspective the legendary Benkei is said to have been a sword collector; Hideyoshi a chawan collector. Truly, throughout Japanese history it is evident that certain items are valued. This is perhaps concordant with Japan being traditionally an animistic society which is a spiritual philosophy with a premise that “things” have *mana* or spiritual energy. Certainly there were individuals who collected, and who knew a great deal about makers and items of interest. Even historically, interest in particular items was generated by their historical importance, such as the famed TATE NASHI yoroi (located at Kanda Jinja) which was thought to have a mana or spiritual power by members of the Takeda clan.



(Picture 1)

The famed “Tate Nashi” yoroi or “Armor that needs no shield”, is an heirloom of the Takeda clan that is designated as a Juyo Bunkazai and as a Koku Ho. It resides at Kanda Jinja in Yamanashi Prefecture. (taken from MeishoTakeda Shingen)

Curios and artwork were often traded and exchanged as monetary instruments in lieu of gold, rice, or favor. It would certainly not have been uncommon for ancient Japanese to falsify a story about a particular item to increase its potential value for the recipient. Because of this, there came a necessity for a third party to verify the authenticity of certain pieces. Some families arose, which produced papers of authenticity such as the Matsuda Myouchin family for armor, and the Honami family for sword authentication. In such instances, authentication was done, maker recorded and value attributed. This history behind the appreciation of antiquities in feudal Japan is the ancestor of the modern appreciation societies. It is very important to understand this history before explaining the difference between PUBLIC and PRIVATE organizations. The motives behind the existence of private authentication organizations, was, is and always will be business oriented.



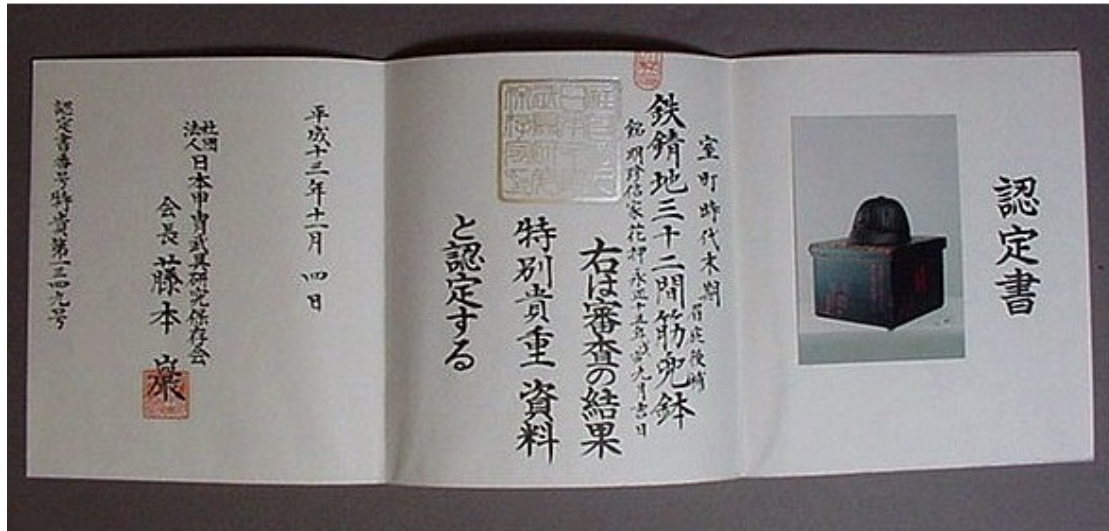
(Picture 2)  
 The appraiser Myouchin Munemasa of the Matsuda Myouchin appraised this kabuto-mempo set in 1796 as being made by Myouchin Nobuie of Koshu Fuchu in the Muromachi period. He sets value at 25 pieces of gold.(Taken from Japanese Armor History Volume 2)

## **Private Study Groups**

Private groups which devote a great deal to the study and understanding of Japanese antiquities are found just about everywhere in Japan. From a couple of old guys with the same interest in old pipes, to a local chapter of the Society for the Preservation of Japanese Art Swords, to the yearly meeting of the Japanese Arms and Armor Society, interest abides in the hearts of many. Two eras; the end of the feudal age, and the period of occupation of US troops in Japan saw hundreds of thousands if not millions of Japanese artifacts exported from Japan. Because of this, collecting of Japanese artifacts became global. Artifacts that had been “stockpiled” for literally thousands of years due to isolation, tradition, and closed door policy were now on the market. There is no doubt that fakes and good reproductions abounded as a result of the ‘trinketization’ of Japanese folk art. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, collection of Japanese artifacts became more competitive than ever due to the global exports. The rise of societies for the study of antiquities occurred for several reasons:

1. With increased investment cost people needed to know what they were buying
2. There were more people with an interest in the antiques and the studies of their origin
3. There was a need for a group that would authenticate antiquities

The national government; The Agency for Cultural Affairs is not involved with the economy surrounding antiquities. Therefore it does NOT issue authentication papers. It only REGISTERS items which have been put through the nomination process mentioned previously. Therefore, private organizations had to make efforts to study and understand antiquities and produce certificates. Private societies provide a service and fill that gap for private citizens with art objects that MAY NOT qualify for PUBLIC designation or BUNKAZAI status. In this way an educated insight may be provided to collectors about a particular piece, and with a certificate of authenticity the value of said piece increases.



(Picture 3)

This Kabuto Hachi was given “Tokubetsu Kicho” rating by the Nihon Kachu Bugu Kenkyu Hozon Kai which judged the signature and date to be a genuine Nobuie manufactured in 1518. No matter which level of designation this kabuto received, just the verification of its true age makes it important and monetarily valuable, as very few signed and dated kabuto exist from this period. Please note that this hachi was indeed genuine before receiving papers. The armor society just reconfirmed this (Courtesy Boris Markhasin)

Private organizations have created various grading systems for the designation of artifacts. The Nihon Kachu Bugu Kenkyu Hozon Kai or Society for the Preservation of Arms and Armor is one such private organization that provides certificates of authenticity and prints a well researched magazine for the study of armor and associated historical pieces. Their system is similar to other organizations throughout Japan in that it has a tiered system of designation. Generally societies use a system that consists of:

1. Kicho/Hozon
2. Tokubetsu Kicho/hozon
3. Juyo
4. Tokubetsu Juyo

I did not include “FAILURE” as a designation because technically it is not. It is just an item that is bypassed for papers. Variations of this tiered system will exist amongst various organizations, and it is further important to note that societies revise the way in which they designate items on occasion. For example, previously the NKBKHK and NBTHK used Kicho and Tokubetsu Kicho in their system, however perhaps because KICHO means PRECIOUS and JUYO means IMPORTANT there was ambiguity and therefore TOKUBETSU KICHO SHIRYO (armor society) and KOSHU TOKUBETSU KICHO (sword society) was change to : KOSHU TOKUBETSU for armor and TOKUBETSU HOZON for swords. Confusing? Keep in mind there are two main armor societies and two main sword societies in Japan, and their respective systems have slight variations.

However, the one word that confuses people the most is JUYO, which as mentioned above means “important”. Don’t feel bad if it hasn’t set in yet, because I’m not done and at this point even many Japanese collectors do not understand the difference. JUYO is generally the highest rating given by a private organization. However, in some instances such as the sword societies where tens of thousands of JUYO TOKEN (important swords) exist, there was the need to make another class to further distinguish more important swords; there are over ten thousand swords in this class as well. The top level that the Nihon Kachu Bugu Kenkyu Hozon Kai (NKBKHK) designates is JUYO BUNKA SHIRYO which means.

(Diagram D)

重要 – Juyo - Important

文化 – Bunka - Culture

資料 – Shiryo - Item

This designation is NOT to be confused with JUYO BUNKAZAI, though it resembles the public designation greatly. Unfortunately, many people often misunderstand not only the designation system, but the system of importance placed on particular items. It is a gross misrepresentation of an item to call it a JUYO BUNKAZAI when it has only received a private level designation and not even achieved the lowest level of public designation. Hopefully the comparisons below will help the reader to understand differences between privately designated JUYO BUNKA SHIRYO (and other private JUYO designations) and JUYO BUNKAZAI.

#### JUYO BUNKA SHIRYO (private designation)

1. Issuing body is PRIVATE and issues papers
2. Designating body is made up of collectors, laymen, and people who are interested in the study of antiquities.
3. Designation system is ARBITRARY
4. Papers are issued primarily for BUSINESS purposes and value attribution
5. Process for designation from submission to decision lasts MINUTES.
6. Very little research is done on each item, and no research is submitted with item to shinsa.
7. Number of items of this level – MANY
8. IMPORTANCE based on few criteria.
9. SCOPE is macro; interest is on a macro level.
10. Not protected legally by any authority – may be exported outside Japan
11. VALUE is ARBITRARY

#### JUYO BUNKAZAI (public designation)

1. Issuing body is PUBLIC record – no papers are issued
2. Designation body is constructed of academics specifically trained in the area of expertise needed to review the nomination.
3. Designation system is SCIENTIFIC based on a set of credentials that each item must fulfill to be considered.
4. Papers are not issued, and designation is for the purpose of PROTECTION and CONSERVATION.
5. Process of nomination can take years.
6. Immense research must be done on each item and a well organized proposal must be submitted preferably by individuals professionally trained in the subject area.
7. Number of items at this level VERY FEW
8. IMPORTANCE based on a very rigid set of criteria all of which must be fulfilled.
9. SCOPE is MICRO on an individual basis but concerned with how the item affected Japan on a MACRO level
10. Protected legally by an elaborate system of laws and regulations – may NOT be legally exported from Japan – punishable by hard labor.
11. INVALUABLE



(Picture 4)

This Kantei Sho was issued by an individual appraiser. Though, the author places great confidence in the ability of this appraiser, please keep in mind that with individual authentication, the validity of papers are only as good as the authority of the appraiser. Papers such as this can be very good estimates if issued by an authority as the authority puts his/her name on the line in signing. Interestingly the appraiser has stamped this certificate with orange ink reading “JUYO”.

### Putting Juyo Bunkazai into Perspective

One way of understanding the difference between public JUYO BUNKAZAI and private JUYO items is by looking at the number of them in existence. There are literally tens of thousands of *privately* designated JUYO armors and swords. Within the *public* Bunkazai legal categorization system, Armors and swords fall into the category of “Applied Arts”, subdivision of “Tangible Cultural Properties” (see diagram below). After approximately 100 years of designating JUYO BUNKAZAI the Agency for Cultural Affairs reported in 2002 that:

“The national government began to designate fine and applied art objects in 1897 with the enactment of the Law for the Preservation of Ancient Shrines and Temples. Under the present Law for the Protection of Cultural Properties, 10,036 objects have been designated including 850 objects

have been designated National Treasures (KOKU HO) as of June 1, 2002. The custody and repair of National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties are carried out by their owners or by appointed custodial bodies (local governments and other organizations appointed by the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs to take proper care of designated cultural properties). A breakdown by ownership shows that approximately 60% of the National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties (fine and applied arts) are owned by Buddhist temples and Shinto Shrines.” (ACA, 2002)

Table 7 Number of Fine and Applied Art Objects Designated as National Treasures and Important Cultural Properties by Period (as of June 1, 2002)

(1) Japanese Art Objects

Period	pictures	sculpture	applied arts	calligraphy	classical books ancient documents	archeological specimens	historical materials	Total
Paleolithic						8		8
Jomon (ca 10,500 BC -ca 400 BC)						84		84
Yayoi (ca 400 BC -250 AD)						89		89
Kofun(Tumulus) (ca 250 -ca 500)						148		148
Late Kofun (ca 500 -ca 600)			4					4
Asuka (ca 600-710)		118	25	2	5	7		157
Nara (710-794)	13	116	132	201	33	67	1	563
Heian (794-1185)	150	1,415	321	474	135	72		2,567
Kamakura (1185-1333)	692	686	947	539	319	19	12	3,214
Nanbokucho (1333-1392)	126	61	254	98	97	5	1	642
Muromachi (1392-1573)	269	90	213	73	41	2	16	704
Momoyama (1573-1615)	120	10	142	13	21		7	313
Edo (1615-1868)	239	12	138	50	26	1	51	517
Modern (1868-)	35	6	1				11	53
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,644</b>	<b>2,514</b>	<b>2,177</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>677</b>	<b>502</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>9,063</b>

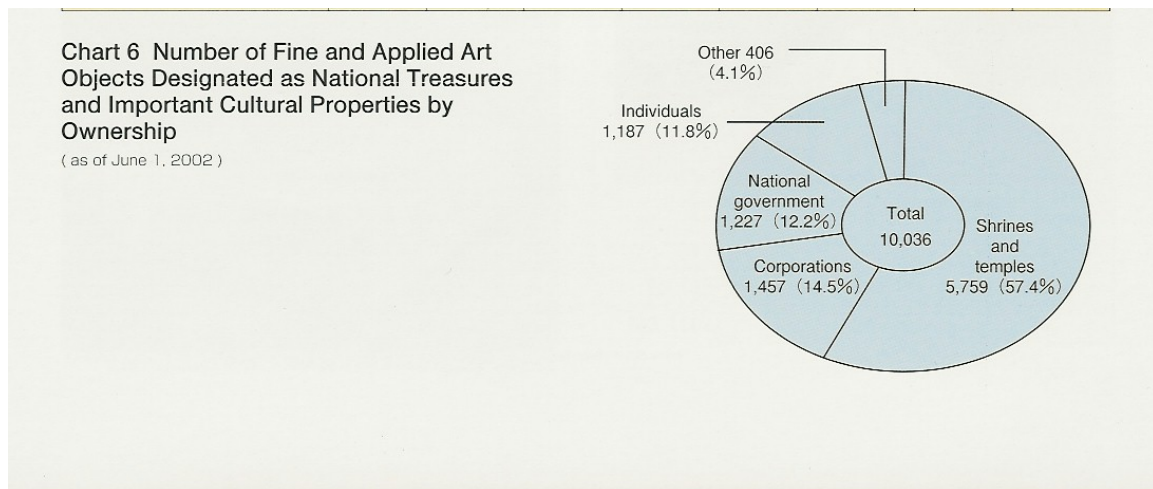
Note: The division of periods here differs from that in Japanese political history

### (Diagram E)

This diagram taken from “An Overview of Japan’s Policies on the Preservation of Cultural Properties 2002”, shows us the breakdown of Japanese cultural properties by type and period. The total is 9,063 because it does not include the tangible cultural properties of foreign manufacture which numbered 973 for a total of 10,036 in 2002. Japanese applied arts only number 2,177 which includes swords, armors, fittings, pottery etc.

In 2002 there were 10,036 fine and applied art objects designated as JUYO BUNKAZAI and KOKU HO which are defacto Juyo Bunkazai. Japanese fine and applied arts are broken down into: pictures, sculpture, applied arts, calligraphy, classical books and ancient documents, archeological specimens, and historical materials. Armors generally fall into the category of “Japanese Applied Arts”, however, so do swords, pottery, saddles,

pipes, chopsticks etc. The total amount of Japanese applied arts designated as JUYO BUNKAZAI as of 2002 were 2,177 with a majority of them dating from the Late Kofun through the Kamakura period. Of the remaining 747 JUYO BUNKAZAI and KOKU HO dating from the Nambokucho period onward within applied arts we must keep in mind that 60% of them belong to Shrines and Temples, and according to the Agency for Cultural Affairs only 11.8% belong to individuals. So, approximately 82 JUYO BUNKAZAI within “applied arts” are owned by individuals. This is an approximation based on the Agency for Cultural Affairs Statistics as of 2002 (Monbusho, 2002). To further put this into perspective, take into consideration that those 82 items represent the Nambokucho period, the Muromachi period, Momoyama, Edo and Modern (of which there is only one item listed). It would be unfair to estimate without further research the amount of armors represented in this number. However, I can imagine that it would be very few since armor only represents a very small portion of Japanese applied arts. I cannot think of any examples of JUYO BUNKAZAI armors owned by individuals. The only ones I can think of are owned by shrines or temples.



(Diagram F)

This diagram shows the breakdown of ownership of all fine and applied arts. Only 11.8% of all tangible items are owned by individuals, or 1,187 items from all categories and all periods. (courtesy ACA 2002)

One would and should expect this to be the case because temples and shrines keep the best records of items which are donated and which positively verifies historical importance (one of the credentials). Further, personal donations from important figures were often purchased from famous artisans and donated to the shrine or temple in hopes of receiving favor in battle. Occasionally items would have been donated as thanks following a victory therefore artistic value is established as well as loads of cultural significance. Unfortunately most privately owned items have no corroborated evidence as to historical significance or have only poorly corroborated evidence. In most cases once

questionable historical evidence is thrown out, the pieces must stand on artistic virtues alone. Of items that have become JUYO BUNKAZAI based on artistic virtues alone, most of them became so because they are the best example of that artist's work and because that particular artist influenced the historical development of that particular art. I would expect no armors to be accepted on that merit alone since most armor was constructed anonymously and of those armors which were signed, most of them have many equivalent examples in terms of quality.

### **Case Study (NOBESAWA DAIMYO)**

Here we will look at a case study of an armor and its potential for being designated as a JUYO BUNKAZAI. The background for this armor has been well researched. It is associated with Mogami Yoshiaki and was given to the Nobesawa Daimyo in the late 1500s. The Nobesawa Daimyo was Yoshiaki's chief retainer and lord of Nobesawa castle in present Yamagata prefecture. Legend has it that the Nobesawa Daimyo was particularly large in stature and possessed unnatural strength. This armor was recorded by the Date clan in the 1630s when the Mogami family lost control of the domain to the Date clan. Particularly special note was taken of the armor's weight with a total recorded weight equivalent to 103 pounds. This is the heaviest recorded Japanese armor in history. The smithing is superb and unique, the artwork is shakudo and gold Goto school work, and the lacquer scroll work is of top quality. The fabric of the sleeves is of black velvet imported from overseas; an extremely rare attribute. This is the only known armor to have suneate with back plates as well. This armor was designated a cultural property of Sagae city in Yamagata prefecture because of the historical importance of this armor. The importance of the armor to the city is easy to understand. This armor was also included as a bunkazai of Yamagata prefecture since the historical importance of the owners of this armor is important to the whole prefecture. If you take into account the great artistry of the armor the importance becomes even more evident.



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74 延沢能登守着用鎧

市指定有形文化財

のべさわのこのかみちくようまとい

所蔵 廣谷常治  
時代 桃山時代

延沢能登守満延は最上義光の重臣で延沢城主として二万石を領していた。元和八年七月、最上家は改易となり、延沢城は仙台伊達藩が接収した。その際この鎧も伊達家によって持ち帰られた。以来長く同藩の者によって保存されていた。物重量四一・〇キログラム。巨漢であり、豪勇をもって鳴った満延の着用にあふさわしい鎧である。鎧の名称は紺総威黒塗切付札板五枚銅具足一具兜、広袖、籠手、臙当、佩盾付という。どっしりした中に華麗さをもつ桃山時代の鎧である。

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(Picture 5)  
The Nobsawa Daimyo's armor published in Sagae City's Bunkazai Catalog. Here it is a city level bunkazai. They took special note to mention it weighed in at 41kg (approximately 103.7 pounds).(Sagae Shi No Bunkazai)

Does this armor qualify as a JUYO BUNKAZAI? Perhaps, but we must first determine if it fulfills the three criteria.

1. Is it HISTORICALLY important to the development of Japan?  
-Yes and No. At the time it was made, Mogami Yoshiaki was one of the most powerful daimyo in Japan, and at his peak, was more powerful than Tokugawa Ieyasu. His chief retainer was also historically important to the Yamagata area, but to suggest this to Japan on the whole would be iffy. If it could be proven that the armor had been worn at a particular battle, then additional importance would be given. So this criteria is partially filled.
2. Is this ARTISTICALLY important to Japan?  
-Yes. This armor is the exemplary representation of top quality Momoyama era craftsmanship in smithing, lacquerwork, and fittings as well as fabrics. It is a one of a kind that is THE best example of such a piece. It also represents THE heaviest recorded Japanese armor. The fact that it is a one of a kind on so many levels makes it important from an art perspective.
3. Is this CULTURALLY important to Japan?  
-Yes. This armor attests the legend of Nobesawa as a Japanese folk hero who possessed extraordinary strength and size, in that it is the heaviest Japanese armor known and is quite large. This sort of armor says something about Japanese ethno-history and therefore is important.

Based on the fact that these criteria have been fulfilled at the city and prefectural levels of Bunkazai, it can be assumed that they would be *considered* against their relevance to the nation. This is how the Agency for Cultural Affairs reasons designation for Juyo Bunkazai nomination.



(Picture 6)

This publication on Yamagata prefecture's bunkazai series covers arms and armor. The Nobesawa Daimyo's armor is top left. Most of the items in this catalog are incomplete, partial, or have decayed. Many archeological artifacts are designated as important because they have scientific proof to back up their historical importance.

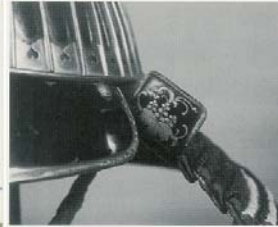


(Picture 7)

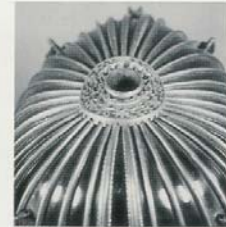
The craftsmanship of the lacquer and the Shikudo kanamono of the Nobesawa Daimyo armor is the best quality available at the time of manufacture. Therefore, strong artistic merits add power to obtaining JuyoBunkazai status.(Courtesy Yamabushi Antiques)

# 甲冑武具研究 137号

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〇先吹返しと繪地 舟紐部分は五七の刺が多い。近世的になりつつある繪地の魚行通し。



基兜八幡刺近 五三の柳筋草の海四形彫、長い四天筋が認められる。

を敷き、この時代としては未だ長く、丁鍔は内彫で花孔の形も長い。  
 天辺金物の縁は別の金物と同様に五三の刺と唐草を彫り、魚々子地の部分は黒漆の塗行とする。この手法は甲冑では桃山期後半の比較的上手の金物にまで見られるもので、以前紹介した鐵筋入授受の對丸(甲冑目録九)「二九 鐵筋入授受(武家伝承)」あたりを指し、例として、完全な江戸様式の甲冑になると見ることができない手法である。また肩庇や胸に彫りつけた魚々子地も同手法で処理されている(写真参照)。  
 胸は地味よりはやや青いながらも、厚手の地鉄を切付札とし、且股で斜め下方に直線的に開いた形の長いもので、後重胸を五個打つ「丸に五三の刺」一枚の体付刺を四個打つ。次返しは小さく、表面には五七の刺に唐草を配した金縁が施されている(写真参照)。  
 総体、先においても中世から近世甲冑への過渡期的特徴が顕著で、例えば金剛鍔の槍頭に通された猪目の形など、まさにこの時期を象徴するものであろう。  
 肩は前立拳二段、後ろ四段、長刺五段を四圓所の縫着で繋ぐ五枚刺で、過渡期特有の直線的な構成線を示し、兎手や脇の張りも少ない。襟番もあまり目立たぬよう工夫されている。肩紐は八間下段下り、刺・楕圓とも猪目の切付札を

大の糸で上口威とす。正胸の重厚の胴体である。高紐は神付板から出して、鉄筋上に通して前を出す懸垂式となり、金籠の刺は首めがを肩に付ける近世様となるが、未だ小輪は附されていない(写真参照)。  
 胸の金員起をみると、胸板はほぼ近世的な形で、高紐穴も四穴式となるが、脇板はやや山形で前後の立寄りが高く、上端を外側へ捻り返すなど未だ桃山期様式を残す形跡である(写真参照)。  
 後立拳部、立拳は前立三段、後立段、懸垂、肩土に掛り出した高紐、袖貫も三本(写真参照)



(Picture 8)  
 The Nihon Kachu Bugu Kenkyu Hozon Kai (NKBKHK) publishes a well researched magazine on armor. Issue 137 was dedicated to the Nobesawa daimyo armor. This armor is not papered by the NKBKHK and to do so would be a waste of time and money as it is already Bunkazai status.

## Legalities

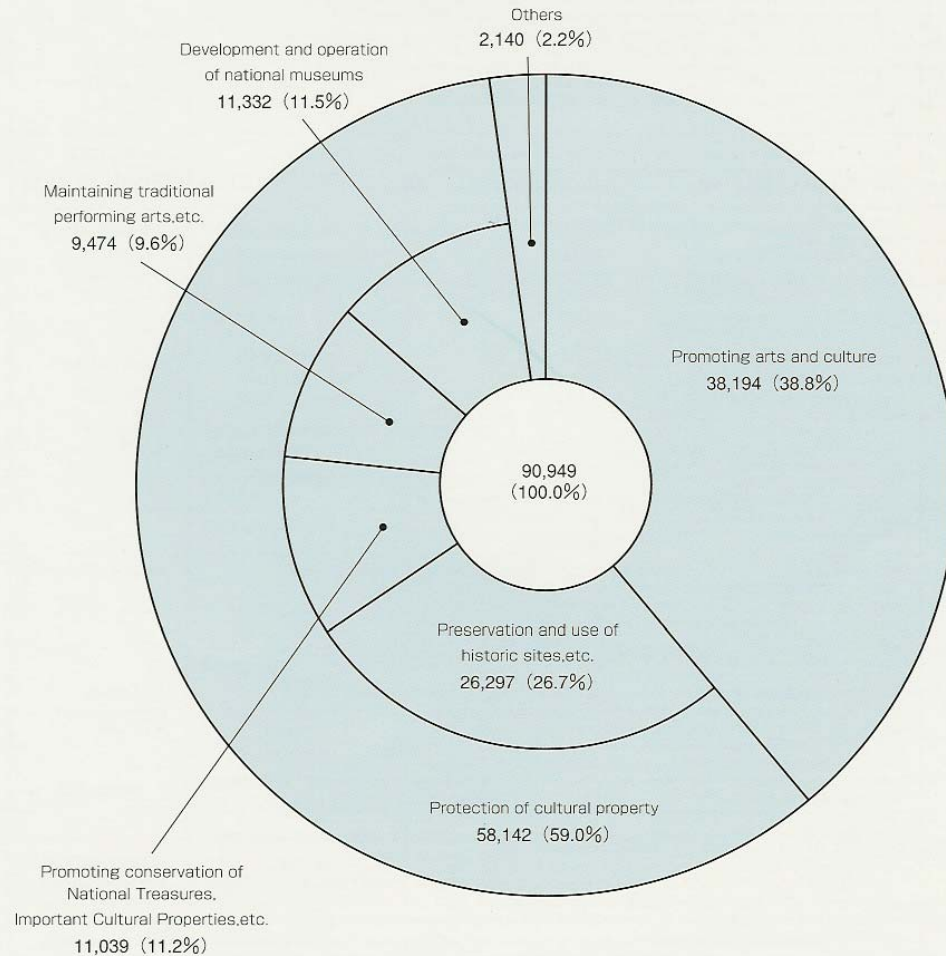
One big misconception is that JUYO BUNKAZAI can be sold for export. This is absolutely NOT true. JUYO BUNKAZAI are cultural PROPERTIES of Japan. They may not be sold outside the country. However, on very special and rare occasions they may be transported abroad for public display. If this happens special care must be taken and special curators must be present to oversee the items. Even within Japan it is the legal responsibility of owners to ensure protection and proper curation of cultural properties. The Agency for Cultural Affairs states in “The Overview of Japan’s Policies on the Protection of Cultural Properties” that:

“Permission is required for any alteration to the existing state of these designated cultural properties or actions that might affect their conservation. The national government prohibits their export abroad except when their display in exhibitions grants subsidies from the national treasury and provides other forms of support for the preservation or repair of designated cultural properties, and the Commissioner for Cultural Affairs may give necessary instructions about their custody, repair, and exhibition.”(Monbusho, 2002)

So, we see that there are great efforts made by the national government to maintain the state of and halt deterioration of JUYO BUNKAZAI. It is the policy of the Japanese government to prohibit export first of all because they are cultural properties of Japan and are invaluable to the nation as a whole, and secondly because they have a vested financial interest in these items. How is this so? The national government sets aside around 11,000 million yen each year specifically for the purpose of grant money that is given to owners of cultural properties. Thus they are at least in part as it sounds: Properties of the Government. Unfortunately there are no laws to prevent the export of prefectural and city designated BUNKAZAI, as enforcement of their care and ownership may only be enforced at the level of designation, and only nationally designated pieces can be protected by the national government and export restricted.

**Chart 3 Breakdown of the Agency for Cultural Affairs FY 2002 Budget by Genre**

(unit : million yen)



(Diagram G)

This diagram shows the breakdown of the budgetary spending that goes to the protection, conservation, and preservation of Important Cultural Properties for fiscal year 2002.

(Courtesy ACA 2002)

## Conclusion

In conclusion, there are many different organizations in Japan which study Japanese antiquities. There is a great history behind the study of antiquities in Japan. Over time it was necessary to develop a system to determine authenticity. There exist private and public designations of authenticity and relative value. Private designations, though similar to public ones, are not the same. Public designations of artifacts attest the degree of historical, artistic, and cultural importance to a body of people. Nationally important pieces known as JUYO BUNKAZAI or Important Cultural Properties are the most important tangible objects in Japan. KOKU HO are JUYO BUNKAZAI that are

especially important. There are very few armors designated as JUYO BUNKAZAI, and all or most of those are owned by shrines. JUYO BUNKAZAI are important to Japan and are illegal to export because they are CULTURAL PROPERTY of the nation, not of any individual.

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