

WORLD HISTORICAL CITIES



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113 cities from 64 countries and regions
(As of June 30, 2017)

Model Initiatives on the Preservation of Cultural Properties and their Use at Nijo-jo Castle



Kara-mon Gate: repaired in 2013



Repair work on the Kara-mon Gate

Marking the beginning of the Edo Period, Nijo-jo Castle was built in 1603 by Tokugawa Ieyasu, the first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate, in order to protect the Kyoto Imperial Palace and to provide a residence for the shogun while in Kyoto. The Edo period was in stark contrast with the outbreak of fighting at the end of the Muromachi period in 1467 which erupted into the Onin War, lasting 11 years in heart of Kyoto, and afterwards leading to the Sengoku period, an age of continuous warfare. However, this all changed when the age of civil wars ended after the Siege of Osaka Castle, and Japan entered a rare era of peace for more than 250 years without any domestic wars. Naturally because of this Nijo-jo Castle is thought to be a symbol of peace.

150 years ago, in 1867, the fifteenth Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, made the declaration of intention to return political power to the Emperor at Nijo-jo Castle. This action moved Japan one step forward towards the modern era.

Nijo-jo Castle throughout its history has never been a place of war or fighting. Furthermore, it was not damaged during the Second World War, and even now a large portion of the castle buildings retain the same appearance as in the Edo period.

In the Meiji period, the castle was used as a villa called Nijo Rikyu for the imperial family and in 1939 it was bestowed by the Ministry of the Imperial Household to Kyoto City. Currently, the castle is owned and managed by Kyoto

City. The castle grounds cover an area of 275,000 m² and can hold 7 baseball stadiums. The whole area is designated as a historical site with great historic and academic value based on the Cultural Properties Protection Law, and includes 28 buildings, from the Ninomaru-goten Palace 6 of which have been designated National Treasures, as well as the 1,016 painted screens by Kano School painters which have been designated Important Cultural Properties, and the Ninomaru Garden which has been designated as a place of special scenic beauty. In addition, the site was registered as a UNESCO World Heritage in 1994. Thus, it is duty of Kyoto City to preserve this property important to the history of humanity, pass it to the future generations, and transmit its value to people inside and outside Japan.

Accordingly, Kyoto City is promoting the use of the castle by combining tourism, craftsmanship (monozukuri), and landscape planning, as well as maintaining its value as a cultural property. Regarding the relocation of the Agency for Cultural Affairs Kyoto, by respecting the value of cultural properties and fully promoting their use, the city has been implementing initiatives to document Nijo-jo Castle as a model case for the compatibility of preservation and use in cultural properties, as well as using Nijo-jo Castle to contribute to the understanding and promotion of Japanese culture.

As to initiatives related to preservation, Kyoto City is continuing to implement a 20-year full-scale renovation project which began in 2011 on the historic structures located on the grounds of the castle, including the 28 buildings designated Important Cultural Properties. It is the largest renovation project since Nijo-jo Castle's foundation by Tokugawa Ieyasu, and more than 10 billion yen is necessary to complete the project.

In order to gain funds for the repair and to raise awareness on the significance of the preservation of cultural properties, Kyoto City has established the World Heritage Nijo-jo Castle Owner's Fundraising Campaign. So far nearly 400 million yen has been raised.

At present, preservation and restoration work is in progress on wall paintings in the Ninomaru-goten Palace which are Important Cultural Properties, as

well as plans to permanently preserve works from degradation and damage by replacing wall paintings with reproductions. The original paintings are now kept in the 400th Anniversary Gallery opened to celebrate the 400th anniversary of establishment of Nijo-jo Castle and showcased 4 times a year in exhibitions that have widely gained public favor.

As to the use, Kyoto City has been implementing initiatives in order for visitors inside and outside Japan to feel close to cultural properties and to understand their value and charm. Annual examples of this are the Sakura Festival held in the spring to enjoy the beauty of cherry blossoms. This festival also includes tea ceremony events for the enjoyment of tea. Another example is the two month long Nijo-jo Castle Festival held in the autumn.

Furthermore, Nijo-jo Castle accepts applications for wedding ceremonies from couples living in Japan and around the world. The ceremony is held inside the castle's cultural properties or gardens. This program is called World Heritage Nijo-jo Wedding and it is extremely popular, so much so that around 50 weddings are held every year.

In October 2016, a kick-off event for 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, the World Forum on Sport and Culture was held in the castle, and it was the first cultural project using the Ninomaru-goten Palace, a National Treasure. At the event guests were welcomed with a bonfire in front of the Kara-mon Gate, kemari (imperial court football game) in front of Kurumayose (carriage entryway), gagaku (Heian period music) played in the palace, a Noh play and Ikebana demonstration, all of which created a magical atmosphere recreating the culture of the Kanei Period. This event was well received by participants.

Moreover, making full use of its status and historical values, Kyoto City has been experimenting with new ways to utilize this cultural property by promoting the castle as a venue for MICE events, such as international conferences, cultural and artistic events, and parties for VIPs.

2017 marks the 150th anniversary of the Restoration of Imperial Rule (the return of political power to the Emperor from the Tokugawa Shogunate). This year is one of the best opportunities to encourage people who were not previously interested in Nijo-jo Castle

to understand the history surrounding the castle and its true value. Kyoto City is planning to develop further initiatives, such as illuminations at the Ninomaru-goten Palace and the hosting of symposiums.

As a result of these initiatives, the number of visitors has increased with the total number of annual visitors reaching almost 2 million. Kyoto City

is planning to continue to pursuing initiatives towards how to display the castle to the public and how to utilize it in order to discover the best balance between preservation and utilization.

Kyoto City is looking forward to welcoming visitors from all over the world. Please visit Japan, Kyoto and Nijo-jo Castle.

World Forum on Sport and Culture in October 19, 2016



Noh play in the Ohiroma of the Ninomaru-goten Palace with the Ninomaru Garden in the background



Ikebana performance in Kuro-shoin



Gagaku performance in Tozamurai

Introduction of Kazan City (Russian Federation)



Qaban Lake



The Kremlin



Bolaq canal

Kazan (Tatar: Qazan), a city in the Russian Federation, is the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan and an important port situated at the confluence of the Volga and Kazanka Rivers. It is one of the biggest religious, economic, political, scientific, educational, cultural and sporting centers in the Russian Federation. The Kazan Kremlin is a World Heritage Site and the city has the right to brand itself as the “Third Capital” of Russia.

The Kazan population is 1,216,965 people (as of 2016).

The origin of the city name

According to the generally accepted version, a sorcerer advised the Bolgars to build a city where upon a cauldron filled with water dug into the ground would boil without any fire. Finally, such place was found on the side of the Qaban Lake. This version is based on the supposition that the word “cauldron” is translated into the Ancient Bolgar language (as well as into the modern Tatar) as “qazan”. Allegedly, the name of the city is derived from this word.

The foundation of the city

Kazan was founded as an outpost at the northern boundaries of the Volga Bulgaria. According to the official version, accepted at the present time, the city was founded no less than 1,000 years ago. The reasons for such dating appeared during excavations on the territory of the Kazan Kremlin when a Czech coin (dated to the rule of St. Wenceslaus and minted, presumably, in 929-930, what makes it the earliest Czech coin) was found, along with debris of stonework and wooden city wall, craft objects and utensils (cover plate of the Hungarian type, woman’s necklace and others), as well as other artifacts less clearly dated. Experts from 20 Russian cities and 22 world countries were involved in the studying of finds relating to the age of Kazan.

Khanate of Kazan

In 1438, the Bolgar fortress was seized by the Khan of the Golden Horde, Ulugh Muhammad, and the city became the capital of the Khanate of Kazan. This period was marked by the developing manufacture of leather goods, pottery and weapons. Kazan had trade links with Moscow, Crimea, Turkey and other regions. After the seizure by the Tatar-Mongols, the territory of the Volga Bulgaria was included to the state founded by the Tatar-Mongols the Golden Horde. In the 13th and 14th centuries, Kazan experienced a period of growth, and the city became an important trading and political center as part of the Golden Horde. Development of the city was also due to its successful geographical location at the intersection



Ancient Tatar quarter



Copy of the carriage gifted by Catherine the Great



City Hall



Qol Sharif mosque



Soyembika Tower

of major trading routes, joining East and West. Russian chronicles began to mention Kazan in the 14th and 15th centuries. The city started minting its own coins with indication of the place of coining- “Bolgar-al-Jadid,” meaning “The New Bolgar”.

A series of conflicts with the Grand Duchy of Moscow resulted in the occupation of Kazan by the troops of Ivan the Terrible in 1552. Henceforth a major part of the city was destroyed, and the Tatars were made to move to the boggy sides of the Qaban Lake, laying the foundation for the Ancient Tatar quarter. After all the rebellions in the Kazan krai were stifled, the city entered into the new historic epoch as a part of the Russian state.

As a part of the Russian state

After Ivan the Terrible seized the city in 1552, building began on a new, white-stone Kremlin.

In the 17th century, the city experienced the economic growth, craftsmen quarters and the first manufactures were founded, and in 1708, Kazan became the capital of the vast Kazan province. During the rule of Peter the Great, the city was one of the most important industrial and administrative centers in the country: a tannery and the Kazan cloth manufactory were built, and in 1718 the Kazan Admiralty was founded producing various types of ships.

Since the 1760’s, the urban development of Kazan became more systematized, resulting in the appearance of wooden pavements and bridges across the Bolaq and the Kazanka. By the end of the 18th century, the total population of Kazan was almost 22,000 people, and with the suburban settlements more than 40,000, 10% of whom were Tatars.

Having developed the Ancient Tatar quarter, the Tatar population began to inhabit the adjacent territories. Thus, a chain of events led to the appearance of the New Tatar quarter.

In 1766, by the order of the empress Catherine the Great the city began to be ruled by the elected city дума. Particularly rapid development and building-up of quarters started after the empress’s visit to Kazan in 1767, when she herself lifted all the previous restrictions to construct stone mosques and Tatar public buildings, as well as after her historic decree of 1773 “About the tolerance of all confessions” thanks to which grateful Kazan citizens nicknamed her “tsarina-granny.” She also presented the city with a galley and

a carriage. The galley was lost in a fire, but the carriage was preserved in the original and a copy was even installed on the Bauman pedestrian street.

In 1781, a Tatar city hall appeared, and in 1791 a permanent theatre. During the second half of the 19th century, the Kazan infrastructure was noticeably changed: the city acquired one of the first Russian omnibuses (1854), gas (1874) and electric (1897) lighting, third Russian horse tramway (1875) and one of the first electric tramways (1899), telegraph (1859) and telephone (1881) services. In 1874, the city was provided with water supply. 1896 was the year of the opening of the direct railway service between Kazan and Moscow.

From the Soviet period to modern times

In the 20th century, the city was faced with great changes. It became one of the centers of the Revolution.

On the 27th of May 1920, the Tatar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (TASSR) was created with its capital in Kazan. During the 1930’s the city was intensively industrialized, its population grew, and the part of the city located on the other northern side of the Kazanka River was extended and it even could be compared with the historical southern part.

During the Great Patriotic War, Kazan was a place of evacuation for major plants, and it became temporary scientific “capital” of the Soviet Union with the Academy of Science moved there from Leningrad and Moscow. It gave a chance to create the Kazan Scientific Center just right after the war.

After the Great Patriotic War, the city continued its active development and became one of the biggest industrial, scientific and cultural centers of the country. Its population increased to more than double, and in 1979 exceeded 1 million people.

In 1990, Kazan was declared the capital of the sovereign Republic of Tatarstan, and in 2005, it celebrated its Millennium, marked by the creation of the Kazan Metro, the Millennium Bridge and a number of other facilities.

The city continues to be a venue for many sporting events: it was the host of the World Summer Universiade in 2013, the World Fencing Championship in 2014, the Aquatics Championship in 2015 and other international competitions of various levels. Now Kazan is preparing for the organization of the 2017 FIFA Confederations Cup and the 2018 FIFA World Cup.

Opening of the League of Historical Cities (LHC) Picture Books Exhibition Series!

An exhibition titled “League of Historical Cities (LHC) Picture Books” was held at the Kyoto City International Community House- kokoka from May 2-30, 2017. This exhibition is the first in a series of planned exhibitions aimed at using picture books to help residents and visitors become more interested in historical cities.

The first phase of the exhibition introduced books in a reference room setting from the Netherlands (Amsterdam & The Hague) and Germany (Cologne), with the aforementioned cities from both countries participating as members of the League of Historical Cities.

Using picture books, such as the Miffy series, which although created in the Netherlands is a

rabbit character very familiar in Japan, and German works featuring realistically drawn fairies and birds, readers were able to experience other cultures. Kokoka has approximately 2,000 picture books and later phases are planned to feature books from Pakistan, Iraq, Ghana, South Africa, Australia, and the United States.

It is thought that through this exhibition series, visitors will be able to experience the languages, lifestyles, and cultures of people from around the world. If you have the opportunity to visit Kyoto during the exhibition series, we encourage you to browse through this extensive collection of picture books.

