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# Japan Screen Topics

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## RESTORING ANCIENT TREASURES

76 feet 2 min. 07 sec.

1. (TEMPLE) Past and present merge together in Kyoto, Japan's former capital, where ancient temples and shrines are preserved amid the hustle and bustle of a modern city.

At the National Museum in Kyoto, ancient art treasures from all over Japan are brought together for restoration. The most up-to-date methods are used to breathe new life into objects already hundreds of years old.

2. (X-RAY) First, X-ray photographs are taken of smaller wooden objects to detect hidden faults. The photographs reveal signs of woodworm or areas where the quality of the wood has deteriorated with age.

3. (WRAPPING) Handled expertly by qualified technicians, the objects are then wrapped in protective paper and locked into a gaschamber where the woodworm is driven out. The recent development of such methods may have come just in time to save these priceless treasures from irreparable damage.

4. (MANUAL WORK) And now, the renovation work can begin, under carefully regulated conditions of temperature and humidity. Harmful ultra-violet rays are excluded in the special lighting facilities.

5. (INJECTION) Larger objects receive injections of insecticide, and the staff of more than a hundred specially-trained experts spare no minute detail in replacing broken or lost parts.

6. (PORTRAIT) This portrait of the 12th century General Yoritomo, made in silk some 700 years ago, is restored by replacing weak spots with specially treated silk.

7. (PAINTING) Paintings, such as this 11-century-old Mandala, are photographed to check for signs of wear.

And so, with expert care and attention, Japan's rich cultural heritage can come to life once again to bring its beauty to the eyes of future generations.

#### PERFORMING FISH

55 feet 1 min. 32 sec.

1. (BUILDING) At the Aburatsubo Marine Park some sixty kilometres south of Tokyo, the fish prove that they are no ordinary fish, as they perform incredible feats for curious visitors.

2. (2+4 BUTTON) Order a simple calculation, and this little chap will...sooner or later...come up with the answer. Subtraction, though, is apparently still a little too much for him.

3. (GROUP OF FISH) Meanwhile, this group puts in some practice at crossing an under-water road, obeying red or green lights in perfect formation.

4. (PUSH BUTTON) Scales are no problem for a fish with an ear for music. This one finds the correct note as instructed, and a new type of water-music is under way.

Here and at two other locations in Japan, fish are trained for up to three months to perform such unusual stunts, attracting tourists away from other more traditional sites.



5. (FISH & SHRINE) Line this fish's palm with silver, and he'll enter an aquatic shrine to fetch a traditional fortune-telling symbol. In this case, good luck is assured, proving that there's more to Japanese fish than meets the eye....

#### A COUNTRY HOLIDAY

68 feet 1 min. 53 sec.

1. (CITY) In this increasingly urbanised age, opportunities for Tokyoites to catch a glimpse of life outside the city are becoming rare. In many parts of Tokyo the only signs of greenery are squeezed in amongst vast residential areas.

2. (COUNTRY) But now, here in the countryside of Saitama Prefecture, just north of the capital, a local hotel offers city dwellers the chance to experience life as it is lived on the land.

3. (FAMILIES) After a night in the hotel, families set out together to discover things in their natural state for perhaps the first time in their lives. Autumn's seasonal mushrooms are the order of the day, and it's every man for himself as these youthful adventurers hunt for their midday meal.

As well as offering parents and children an instructional kind of holiday, the enterprising hotel claims that it is also helping local farmers to hold on to their land. In recent years a steady decrease in rural populations, together with a growing ignorance of simple farming techniques, have become matters of great concern in Japan.

4. (MUSHROOMS/DISH) At the end of the morning, the produce of the hunt is brought together for young and old alike to enjoy a delicious barbecue meal.

5. (VEGETABLES) After lunch, visitors can work together with local farmers to pick fresh vegetables for home consumption....

6. (RICE-CAKES) ....or pound newly harvested rice to make rice-cakes, a traditional autumn activity for country folk.

And so, even in this day of heavy industry and advanced technology, city dwellers can once again learn to appreciate the value of the rural way of life.

MASAHIRO KIKUTA, MASTER FLUTE-MAKER

156 feet 4 min. 20 sec.

1. (FLUTES) Bamboo flutes in Japan date back as far as thirteen centuries. Today, more than 200 different types are used at ancient ceremonies and festivals throughout the country, each type having its own significance and its own part in a particular ceremony.

2. (FLUTE-MAKER) Masahiro Kikuta is the fifth in a line of master flute-makers in Nagoya.

The flutes are made of a special kind of bamboo taken from under the roofs of old thatched farmhouses, where open fires have dried out the bamboo and given it its distinctive colour. The best flutes are made from bamboo which has been used in this way for anything up to a hundred years.

Each stem can provide only one or two flutes, which must be perfect in width and straightness.

3. (REASURING) First, Mr.Kikuta must make a simple row of holes along the barrel of the flute. The holes are marked at traditionally fixed intervals, with the skilled manual precision of a craft which is in danger of dying out as customs change and sources of suitable bamboo diminish.



4. (DRILLING) Jealously guarding his craft from the onslaught of electricity and automatic technology, Mr. Kikuta performs all the steps of the operation by hand. After drilling the holes, he then burns the edges smooth, using methods and tools passed down unchanged from generation to generation.

5. (FLUTE) And already, a primitive flute has taken shape.

6. (CARVING) After carving out areas around the holes to make the flute easier to play, Mr. Kikuta then files the barrel down with sharkskin to provide an even surface. Sharkskin has traditionally been used in Japan for this function, while craftsmen elsewhere might use sandpaper.

7. (SCRAPING) Next, the quality of the flute's tone must be refined. Mr. Kikuta prepares a mixture of lacquer and polish powder, which he applies to the inside of the barrel.

8. (FILING-STICK) When the lacquer is dry, it must be filed smooth to produce just the right pitch in the flute. This is the most important step in determining the quality of sound which the flute will eventually produce, since a smooth, straight barrel will give a clear and even tone.

9. (DECORATING) Now simple craft and a musical ear give way to fine art, as the flute is decorated with thin strips of wistaria bark applied with a hot iron and sealed to the barrel with a paste made of egg white.

10. (LACQUER) Several coats of lacquer give a strong, durable finish. Lacquer has been used in Japan for centuries to strengthen as well as beautify articles made of wood.

11. (LEADWEIGHT) Finally, a lead weight is inserted at one end to give the necessary balance....

...and the flute is now complete and ready to be played. But the story doesn't always end here. Like violins, the best flutes improve with age. Sometimes it takes as long as 150 years before an instrument can attain its prime and render its finest notes---far outliving its creator.

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