

Message from the Mayor

Kanazawa is blessed with an abundant natural environment and a beautiful historic cityscape that remains to this day. With a wide variety of traditional crafts that live and breathe in the daily life of its citizens, Kanazawa is without rival, even in Japan, as a city of handicraft. I believe that, in addition to carrying on this unique character of the city, Kanazawa has a responsibility as a "city committed to history" to breathe new life into the future.

The foundation for this was laid 420 years ago by the Kaga Maeda Clan that governed the region. While on the one hand avoiding war, successive domain lords from the Maeda Clan continued to promote lacquer work, metalwork, pottery, dyeing and other craftwork, as well as the tea ceremony, Noh drama, traditional Japanese music, and other performing arts. Not only has such craftwork that is tied to culture pushed its roots into the lives of the citizens and fostered magnificent skills and deep sensibilities toward beauty, but the fastidiousness of our artisans toward their craft and the innovative awareness that were developed in that environment have been inherited as the contemporary entrepreneurial spirit, resulting in the creation of a variety of high-value added industries in unique fields. In other words, since the feudal period, the workings of innovation have been added continually to tradition in a context of exchange with different cultures and industries, with the resulting accumulation of added value supporting the city.

In the future, Kanazawa intends to move forward as a city with a unique character that will not be buried by globalization, participating in exchange with a variety of cities around the world to contribute to the achievement of cultural diversity, and spreading that character both in Japan and overseas. We would also like to contribute actively to international cooperation and world peace through the promotion of craftwork and the development of human resources in developing countries, and other activities.

We truly hope for your consideration regarding the registration of the City of Kanazawa as a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network so that we may have such an opportunity. Thank you for your consideration.

UNESCO's Creative Cities Network

Tamotsu Yamade
Mayor, City of Kanazawa, Japan
Chair, Kanazawa Creative City Promotion Committee



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

(Introduction)

The City of Kanazawa recognizes the importance of being a Creative City in its vision for the 21st century, and based on its experience of developing through the link between culture and industry, and on the actual performance of its unique Creative City policy, aims for designation as a City of Crafts, and is determined to contribute proactively to cultural diversity and world peace as a member of the global network.

(History and Characteristics of Kanazawa)

The City of Kanazawa, a medium-sized city with a population of 450,000 people, has been able to pass the 420 years since feudal lord Maeda Toshiie established a castle town in peace, and is one of the few Japanese cities to escape damage from World War Two. This has allowed the city to cultivate its unique samurai culture, to develop, preserve, and continue its traditional culture, scenic cityscape, and style of living along with its unmatched craftwork, and to become Japan's representative city of traditional arts and crafts.




This unique samurai culture has become the underpinning for Kanazawa's current traditional culture (Noh, tea ceremony) and food culture, maintaining a high quality of life for Kanazawa's citizens. The mental and spiritual climate that has been developed throughout the history of Kanazawa produced a variety of thinkers, including Suzuki Daisetsu (D.T. Suzuki) and Nishida Kitaro.

(Kanazawa's Traditional Crafts)

There are currently 22 major types of traditional crafts, with a diversity that leads Japan, surpassing even Kyoto. The characteristics of these traditional crafts are described below.

- 1) The traditional materials and technology of the Kaga (the former name of Kanazawa) region were combined with advanced designs and techniques developed in Kyoto, carving out an original field that eventually became more highly valued than those in Kyoto.
- 2) There is a distinctive Kaga style of design which combines the pomp of the warrior culture with a subtlety born from the deep historical faith of the townspeople.
- 3) Up to the present day, artistic craftwork has been active in the daily lives of Kanazawa's citizens, and along with improving the quality of life, it gives play to the spirit of artistic production in industry as well. Even today, many craftworkers are active around the site of Kanazawa Castle, and the city boasts the highest number of holders of important intangible cultural assets (living national treasures) per capita in Japan in the field of traditional crafts.

-Representative Crafts

Name	Overview
Kaga-yuzen silk dyeing	<p>Kaga-yuzen silk dyeing has maintained a high level of brand value ever since Miyazaki Yuzensai, the father of Yuzen silk dyeing, began adding colors to the monochrome Kaga Umezome dyeing.</p> 
Kanazawa gold leaf	<p>Ever since clan founder Maeda Toshiie gave orders for the manufacture of gold leaf, this art has continued to develop, and currently constitutes 99% of all gold leaf manufacturing.</p> 
Kanazawa lacquer ware	<p>The technology was passed down from lacquerers Igarashi Doho and Kiyomizu Kyube who served at the clan's workshop, and has been further developed.</p> 

(Contemporary Crafts)

The City of Kanazawa actively and continuously supports craftwork from both the cultural and financial standpoints. The city hosts international arts and crafts competitions and collaborates with United Nations agencies to stimulate arts and crafts in developing countries.

The City of Kanazawa is striving to place emphasis on craftwork and stimulate the craft industry from a variety of angles in cooperation with industry, including in terms of budget, and though there has been a tendency in recent years for Kanazawa's general accounting budget amounts to decrease, the trend toward increase of Kanazawa's craftwork-related budget continues.

Of particular note regarding the development of human resources is the fact that in less than a year following the end of World War Two, the City of Kanazawa founded the Kanazawa College of Art and is working for the development of successors, an indication of the spirit and culture of the city with its promotion of scholastic culture and desire for peace.

In addition, efforts are also being made to take on the new challenge of combining traditional craftwork with contemporary industry and high technology to develop products and popularize them overseas.

The cultural policies of the City of Kanazawa are multifaceted and forward-thinking, and the ratio of culture-related expenditures (culture and art/cultural assets) in annual expenditures for the City of Kanazawa is approximately 3% to 6%, in contrast to the average of under 1% for Japanese municipalities as a whole.

(Kanazawa's Creative Economy)

If the workings of innovation are not added, tradition will become nothing more than the handing down of what has already been done. Scholastic culture stimulates the economy, increasing added value, and a developed creative economy in turn supports scholastic culture. Kanazawa was born from this link between culture and industry.

The spirit of artistic production made possible Kanazawa's own industrial revolution from the cams and rods technology of the Edo Period to the textile industry and the textile machine industry, making Kanazawa home to many niche top companies that have developed in close alliance within the region. Currently, there are companies active in the area of multimedia content and other new fields as well.

The highly sensitive consumer market that has developed in the context of cultural investment by these companies and the high quality of life of Kanazawa's citizens with their taste for craftwork, have given birth to a creative economy through the unique link between Kanazawa's culture and economy.

The City of Kanazawa is already moving forward with the development of a creative city, with businesses, citizens, and the government joining hands to unite public and private in the effort. Moreover, the Kanazawa Creative City Promotion Committee, consisting of members of government and craft organizations, business groups, and citizen groups, was organized to work on the recent application to be designated a City of Crafts.

(Conclusion)

For the following reasons, the registration of the City of Kanazawa as a member of UNESCO's Creative Cities Network would be significant for Japan, for Asia, and for the cities of the world and their citizens as well.

- 1) The registration of a City of Crafts in Asia, and in Japan in particular, would contribute to the achievement of cultural diversity that UNESCO promotes.
- 2) Kanazawa would be able to be a representative of human scale and medium-sized cities, which are the majority of the world's cities.
- 3) Because Kanazawa is a city that engages in craftwork and handwork that does not consume a large quantity of fossil fuels, it could contribute to the development of the UNESCO network from an environmental standpoint as well, an issue that has a global scale.
- 4) By further developing its unique Creative City policy through the network, Kanazawa would be able to contribute to the stimulation of craftwork in the world, and in developing countries in particular, and consequently to the achievement of world peace.

Kanazawa is committed to participate with other UNESCO creative cities in such areas as exchange of artists at markets, development of creative tourism opportunities for network members to experience, exchange of handicraft technique to enhance design of innovative technology among UNESCO creative cities member.

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