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Japanese art: Finding beauty in the everyday

Art and nature in harmony: reviving the regions of Japan

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Lecture summary

Japan's regions have been cultivating cultures and cuisines for centuries. Local speciality products or *tokusanbutsu* play an important role in cultural life, but they're equally vital in securing each region's economic and political strength.

In this lecture, Kathryn Hunyor examines how Japan's isolation for many centuries, keeping all foreign influences at bay, allowed the cultivation of a unique culture, producing outstanding works of art; how the arrival of Americans and Europeans brought Japan and its arts and crafts into the wider world; and how the collapse of Japan's postwar economic boom impacted on the nation's cultural activity, forcing hardship on many rural and regional communities.

Kathryn explores how in the 21st century struggling Japanese communities have fought back, using culture to revive dying towns and regions blighted by heavy industry, and producing social and economic turnarounds by combining traditional skills with arts tourism, local festivals and cutting-edge exhibitions.

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Further Reading in English

1. Kerr, Alex. *Lost Japan*, 2015 (updated)
2. Kitagawa, Fram. *Art Place Japan: The Echigo-Tsumari Triennale and the Vision to Reconnect Art and Nature*, 2015
3. Pilling, David. *Bending Adversity, Japan and the Art of Survival*, 2014
4. Takashina, Shuji. *The Japanese Sense of Beauty*, 2018
5. Yanagi, Soetsu. *The Beauty of Everyday Things*, 2019