Overview: In order to preserve humanity’s cultural heritage for future generations, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Culture and Natural Heritage was adopted by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1972. The countries which ratified the treaty have pledged to protect and preserve the World Heritage Sites within their borders.

As of July 2016, 20 sites in Japan have been added to the World Heritage List: 16 cultural sites and 4 natural sites. In addition, the category of “intangible cultural heritage” has been created to preserve oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, and festival events. Recently, UNESCO declared washoku (Japanese cuisine) to be an intangible cultural heritage.

The country’s mountainous geography and four distinct seasons mean that the physical environment of Japan can be harsh. The Japanese people have dwelt in harmony with this environment for millennia. The wooden architecture of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples, sacred and holy places for Japanese people, stands as a monument to this heritage of adaptability and harmony. From ancient times, Japanese have believed nature and all objects contain “神 - kami” (spirits). We hope that the beautiful photographs by Kazuyoshi Miyoshi will enable you to feel the reverence inspired by these carefully preserved sites.

(Photos ©Kazuyoshi Miyoshi/PPS): Jisho-ji (Ginkaku-ji) Temple, Kyoto; Kumano-kodo Ancient Path, Wakayama

About the photographer: Kazuyoshi Miyoshi was born in Tokushima Prefecture, Japan, and graduated from Tokai University. Shortly after graduation, he founded his own photo agency, and received the Kimura Ibei Award for his photography book Rakuen (Paradise). At the time, Miyoshi was the youngest photographer ever to receive the award.

Beginning with a visit to Okinawa at the age of 13, Miyoshi has traveled extensively to photograph to regions all over the world, including the Maldives, Tahiti, Africa, India, the Himalayas and Antarctic Pole. His works are included in the permanent collection of the George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film in the USA.

Miyoshi’s book of photographs, The World Heritage in Japan, was published in 1998. Since 1999, The Japan Foundation has purchased 67 photos (as of August 2012) from World Heritage Sites in Japan in order to promote Japanese culture. New photographs are added to the collection each time a new site is listed. The World Heritage Sites in Japan Photography Exhibition has been held in many locations throughout the world.

Since 2007, he has been photographing images of national treasure Buddha statues in Kyoto and Nara, as well as the Gosho Imperial Palace and the Katsura-rikyu Detached Palace in Kyoto. (Photos ©Kazuyoshi Miyoshi/PPS: Itsukushima-jinja Shinto Shrine, Hiroshima; Shiretoko, Hokkaido)

The exhibit is made available through the collaboration of the Japan-America Society of Greater Austin, Tokyo Electron U.S. Holding Inc., Dr. Nancy Stalker (Departments of Asian Studies and History, UT Austin), Taniguchi Architects, and the Japan Foundation.
Join us the opening reception on Thursday, April 6 at 6:30pm.

Japan-America Society of Greater Austin (JASGA) and Tokyo Electron U.S Holdings will jointly hold an opening reception for the World Heritage Photography from Japan. JASGA would like to express our appreciation for TEL’s generous support and partnership. We would appreciate it if you could fill out the Exhibition Survey form found in the front desk area.