

Guidelines for the Handling of Japanese World War II Artifacts

Please note that we accept requests from the residents of the following 10 States only; Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, North Dakota and Wisconsin.

To check the Embassy/Consulate-General with jurisdiction over your place of residence, please click [here](#).

1. Japanese World War II artifacts, **copies or descriptions of them**, may be sent to the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago (**For swords, or any other weapon, please refer to number three in ‘Important Notes’**) in order to investigate the possibility of returning the artifact to the original owner or his/her family. **Photographs** of the artifact would be the most appreciated if you wish to keep the artifact in the event the original owner or his/her family cannot be located, or do not wish for the return of the artifact.
2. If you find any writing or letters on the artifact, please include photographs of the writing large enough to read. Also, please include a detailed description of when, where and how the artifact was initially obtained by you or your acquaintance. Such information might be helpful to us in identifying the original owner.
3. Upon receipt of the artifact, we will transfer it via diplomatic pouch to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare of the Japanese Government, which deals with the return of WWII-related artifacts. This government agency in Tokyo will examine the artifact to identify the original owner.
4. With the help of the local government in the area of the artifact’s origin, the Ministry will try to locate the original owner or his/her family. **This process may take an extended period of time, possibly over a year, as more than sixty years have passed since the end of the War.**
5. If the search is successful, and the original owner or his/her family hopes to receive the artifact, the Ministry will return the artifact through the local government. The sender will be notified from the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago when the artifact is returned.
6. If their search is not successful, the sender will be notified as such from the Consulate General of Japan at Chicago.

*** Important Notes ***

1. We cannot assist you in any way if you seek any monetary compensation or expect to receive any reward or other forms of compensation (such as free/subsidized trip to Japan) either from the recipient or from the Japanese Government.
2. If you wish to hand-deliver the artifacts to the original owner or his/her family yourself at your expense, please let us know in advance. This is especially important if you wish to return the artifact **ONLY IF** the artifact is hand-delivered by you. (Sometimes the recipient wishes to remain anonymous, and prefers that the artifact be returned through the government.)
3. If the artifact is **a sword or any other type of weapon**, please send **ONLY** the photographs and other detailed information, **NOT** the artifact itself. By the requirement of the Firearms and Sword Control Law, we cannot ship the weapon.

Firearms and swords may be returned to an original owner or his/her family only if the following requirements are met:

- A. The original owner or his/her family has been located.
 - B. Both the sender and the recipient disclose contact information (address, etc.) to each other. Shipping and handling of firearms and swords can only be done between the sender and recipient. **The Consulate General of Japan can never be involved in shipping and handling of firearms and swords.**
 - C. Even if the original owner or his/her family is located, some recipients may not want to receive the artifact because of the complicated procedure involved in handling firearms/swords in accordance with Japanese law.
4. If you are interested in estimating the value of your artifact or determining the origin, please consult with an art museum, art dealer, or a University near you. The Consulate General of Japan only deals with the return of WWII artifacts.

For further questions, or to send the artifact or its copies, please contact:

Attn: General Affairs
Re: Japanese World War II Artifacts
Consulate General of Japan Olympia
Centre, Suite 1100
737 N. Michigan Avenue
Chicago, IL 60611
(Phone) 312-280-0400

Thank you very much for your goodwill.