

1 Present Status of Museums in Japan

Definition and Classification of Museums in Japan

The Museum Act stipulates that museums are “organizations with the purpose of collecting and preserving (including nurturing) materials related to history, the arts, folk customs, industry, natural science, etc., exhibiting them, providing them for use by the general public on the basis of educational considerations, conducting necessary work in order to contribute to education, research, recreation, etc., and in addition undertaking surveys and research relating to these materials.”

Museums in Japan can be classified in various ways, such as by type of museum, by founder, and by legal status. By type of museum, broadly speaking, there are general museums (museums with both humanities and natural science sections), history museums (including archaeology, folklore, etc.), art museums, science museums (including science halls and planetariums), zoos, botanical gardens, aquariums, and so on.

According to the FY 2005 Social Education Survey of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT), there are a total of 5,614 museums in Japan. By type of museum, the breakdown is 3,200 history museums, the highest number, followed, in order, by 1,087 art museums and 474 science museums.



Edo-Tokyo Museum

Founders and Operators of Museums

By founder, museums in Japan can be classified as having been established by the state (national), independent administrative institutions, local governments (prefectures, municipalities, etc.), general incorporated associations or general incorporated foundations, private entities and others. According to the FY 2005 Social Education Survey, there are 129 museums established by the state, 68 by independent administrative institutions, 4,023 by local governments, 603 by general incorporated associations or general incorporated foundations, and 791 by private entities and others.

Japanese museums adopt various management methods. For example, while some are managed directly by their founders, others are operated by designated managers, that is, the founder consigns the management to a designated group or organization.

At present, the management of major national museums is carried out by Independent Administrative Institutions. For example, the National Institute for Cultural Heritage, an independent administrative institution, manages the Tokyo National Museum, Kyoto National Museum, Nara National Museum, and Kyushu National Museum. By delegating the task to an Independent Administrative Institution, business and financial management can be conducted according to corporate management methods, and efficiency, quality improvement, and autonomous business management are ensured.

In the case of public museums (where the founder is a local government), as a result of a revision of the Local Autonomy Law in 2003, a designated management system began in which the founder can also consign management to a private enterprise, such as a designated company or nonprofit organization, and an increasing number of museums are conducting management that utilizes the know-how of private enterprises.



The National Museum of Western Art, Tokyo

Legislation Relating to Museums

In Japan's Social Education Act, museums are defined as organizations and facilities that contribute to social education. Matters relating to setting and operation are stipulated in the Museum Act, which was enacted on the basis of the spirit of the Social Education Act. However, museums in the Museum Act are defined as those that have been established by local governments, general incorporated associations or general incorporated foundations, religious corporations, and juridical persons stipulated by Cabinet Order (Japanese Red Cross Society, Nippon Hoso Kyokai (NHK)) and that have received registration according to the provisions of this act. Museums established by the state or by Independent Administrative Institutions cannot become registered museums, so many are designated as museum-equivalent facilities. The main legislation relating to museums in Japan is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Legislation Relating to Museums

Name	Summary
Fundamental Act of Education	Gives provisions relating to the definition and position of school education and social education in Japan.
Social Education Act	In accordance with the spirit of the Fundamental Act of Education, gives provisions relating to the position and establishment of museums as organizations of social education.
Museum Act	On the basis of the spirit of the Social Education Act, gives provisions relating to the registration of museums, the business of museums, curator qualifications, the establishment of public and private museums, museum-equivalent facilities, etc.
Enforcement Regulations of the Museum Act	On the basis of the provisions of the Museum Act, gives provisions relating to the certification of curators, the designation of museum-equivalent facilities, etc.
Favorable Standards Relating to the Establishment and Operation of Public Museums	Gives provisions on standards for public museums, such as number of days open to the public, exhibition area, number of materials, securing curators, etc.
Other	National Institute for Cultural Heritage Act (matters relating to national museums); regulations of prefectural boards of education relating to the registration of museums; prefectural and municipal ordinances on the establishment and management of public museums; etc.

Classification Based on the Museum Act

In terms of their legal status, museums in Japan can be classified as registered museums, museum-equivalent facilities, and museum-like facilities. Their respective definitions, conditions, etc. are shown in Table 2.

Registered museums are given preferential treatment with regard to the real estate acquisition tax, fixed asset tax, and so on. In addition, it is easier for them to receive donations, because donors to registered museums are granted preferential treatment in the tax system. Furthermore, public museums can receive subsidies.

Table 2 Classification Based on the Museum Act

Classification/definition	Founder	Conditions, etc.
<p><i>Registered museums</i></p> <p>Registered museums are organizations with the purpose of collecting and preserving (including nurturing) materials related to history, arts, folk customs, industry, natural science, etc., exhibiting them, providing them for use by the general public on the basis of educational considerations, conducting necessary work in order to contribute to education, research, recreation, etc., and in addition undertaking surveys and research relating to these materials; they are registered in the museum register.</p>	<p>(1) Local governments</p> <p>(2) General incorporated associations or general incorporated foundations</p> <p>(3) Religious corporations</p> <p>(4) Juridical persons stipulated by Cabinet Order (Japanese Red Cross Society, NHK)</p>	<p>(1) Must appoint directors and curators.</p> <p>(2) Must have the museum materials necessary to achieve the objectives stipulated by act.</p> <p>(3) Must have the curators and staff necessary to achieve the objectives stipulated by act.</p> <p>(4) Must have the buildings or land necessary to achieve the objectives stipulated by act.</p> <p>(5) Must be open at least 150 days a year.</p> <p>Note: Registered by prefectural boards of education.</p>
<p><i>Museum-equivalent facilities</i></p> <p>These are facilities that engage in work similar to the work of museums and are registered as facilities equivalent to museums.</p>	No restrictions	<p>(1) Must appoint staff equivalent to curators.</p> <p>(2) Must have the materials necessary to achieve work that resembles the work of museums.</p> <p>(3) Must have the special facilities and equipment necessary to achieve work that resembles the work of museums.</p> <p>(4) Must be open at least 100 days a year.</p> <p>Note: Facilities established by the state or independent administrative institutions are designated by the Minister of MEXT; other facilities are designated by prefectural boards of education.</p>
<p><i>Museum-like facilities</i></p> <p>These are facilities that engage in work like that of museums; they do not receive registration or designation.*</p>	No restrictions	None

*This is the definition not in act but in the Social Education Survey conducted by MEXT.

Process of Museum Registration

In order to become a registered museum, the founder must prepare the necessary documents on the basis of the “Regulations Relating to the Registration of Museums” stipulated by each prefectural board of education and submit an application; the prefectural board of education concerned will conduct screening and registration. The process of museum registration is shown in Diagram 1.

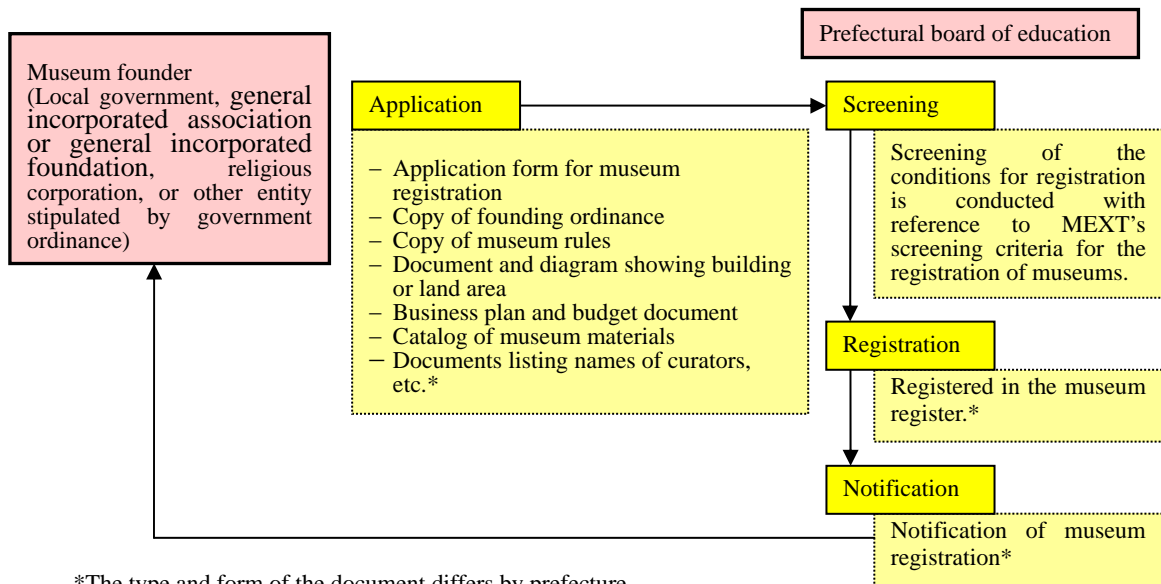


Diagram 1 : Process of Museum Registration

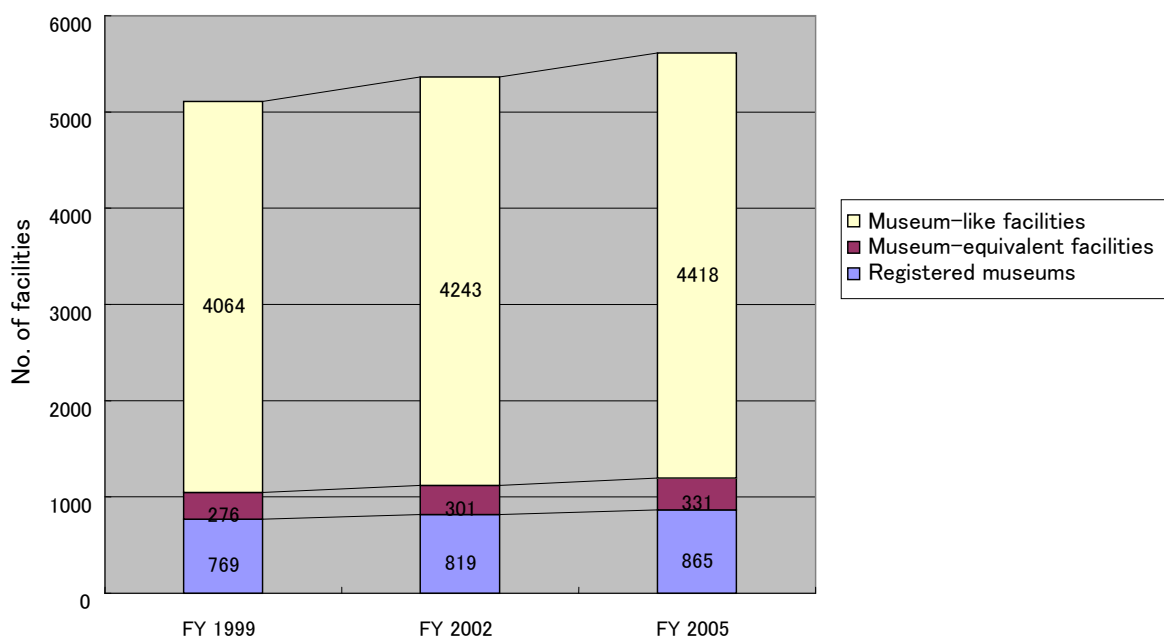


Discovery Park Yaizu

Present Status of Museum Registration

According to the FY 2005 Social Education Survey, there are 865 registered museums, 331 museum-equivalent facilities, and 4,418 museum-like facilities in Japan. This Social Education Survey is implemented every three years. Trends in the number of museums by legal status, including the FY 1999 and FY 2002 survey figures, are shown in Diagram 2. The number of museums in Japan is on an upward trend, and the number of facilities in all three categories—registered, museum-equivalent, and museum-like—is increasing.

Diagram 2 : Trends in Number of Museums by Legal Status



Definition of Curator

The Museum Act stipulates that a curator is a “staff member with specialized knowledge” who “handles specialized matters concerning work relating to the collection, storage, and exhibition of museum materials, research, and other tasks.”

In addition, according to the Museum Act, it is possible to appoint assistant curators to assist the work of a curator. It is stipulated that a person who can enter university according to the provisions of the School Education Act has the qualifications to become an assistant curator.

Acquisition of Curator Qualifications (Certification)

It is possible to acquire curator qualifications by the following methods:

1. Completing necessary courses at university

- (1) Acquiring credits at university for courses related to museums stipulated by a MEXT ministerial Ordinance and graduating with a Bachelor’s degree.
- (2) Attending university for at least two years, acquiring at least 62 credits, including credits for courses related to museums, and working as an assistant curator for at least three years.

2. Passing a qualification examination

- (3) Graduating from university with a bachelor's degree and passing a qualification exam.
- (4) Attending university for at least two years, acquiring at least 62 credits, working as an assistant curator for at least three years, and passing a qualification examination.
- (5) Acquiring an ordinary teaching license, working as a teacher for at least three years, and passing a qualification examination.
- (6) Working as an assistant curator for at least five years and passing a qualification examination.

3. Receiving certification without an examination

- (7) Acquiring a master's or doctor's degree and receiving certification without an exam.
- (8) Working in a university for at least two years as a professor, assistant professor, or lecturer for courses relating to museums and receiving certification without an exam.
- (9) Working as an assistant curator for at least 10 years, being recommended by a prefectural board of education, and receiving certification without an exam.

4. Other

- (10) Becoming a staff member of a museum, completing the course for museum staff implemented by MEXT, and acquiring credits.

Present Status of Curators

Method (1) above is the most frequent path for acquiring curator qualifications, accounting for about 99% of the total. About 10,000 students receive curator qualifications by this method every year.

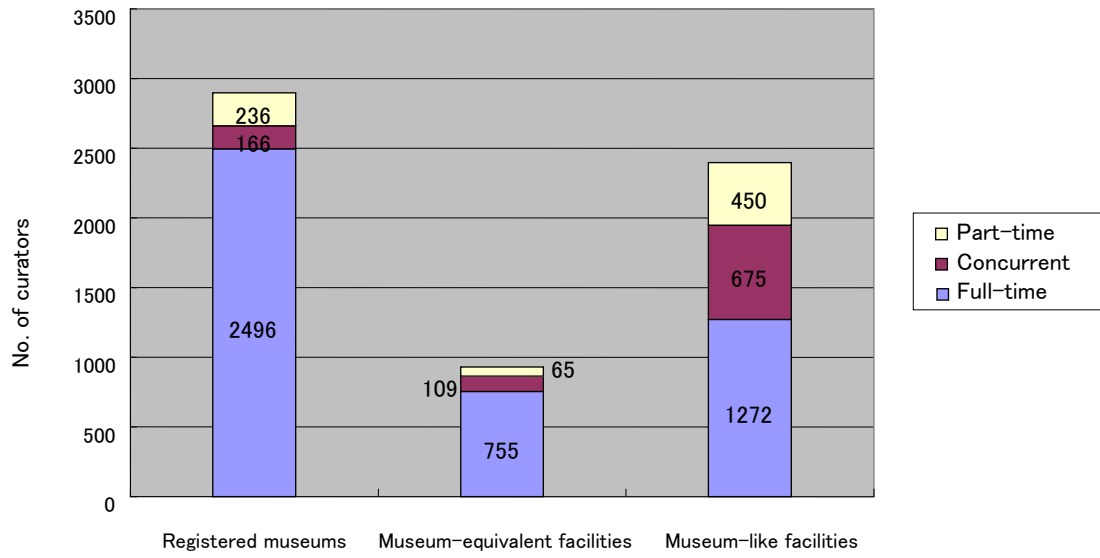
On the other hand, according to the FY 2005 Social Education Survey, there are just 6,225 curators at museums in Japan (registered museums: 2,898; museum-equivalent facilities: 929; museum-like facilities: 2,397). This is about 14% of the total number of 44,619 museum staff. By type of museum, history museums have 2,546 curators, art museums 1,889, and general museums 893. The present number of curators as of fiscal 2005 is shown in Diagram 3.

The ratio of the actual number of curators to the number of persons with curator qualifications is extremely low, showing that the opening is very narrow indeed.



The Kochi Prefectural Makino Botanical Garden

Diagram 3 : Number of Curators (FY 2005)



The Asahiyama Zoo

Museums related Institutions

Japanese Association of Museums

This is the only organization of museums which is committed to include all types of museums in Japan as its members. Its purpose is to conduct surveys, and researches, and provide advice and assistance for the promotion of museums in order to enhance lifelong learning of youths and adults, and to contribute to the development of Japanese culture.

As of March 2008, the association has 1175 institutions and 75 individuals as full members. It also has sustaining members which include firms related to museum display, facilities, machinery and tools.(45)

Its main activities include holding General Assembly of Museums in Japan, study meetings, undertaking researches, making guidance on museum operation and management, and publishing “Hakubutsukan Kenkyu (Museum Studies)”, a monthly journal which features research essays and reports concerning museum activities and information on exhibitions, and other publications related to museums. It also serves as the Secretariat for Japanese national committee of ICOM and communicates with the ICOM’s main office in Paris and provides information on ICOM to its members.
<http://www.j-muse.or.jp/>

Japan Association of Zoos and Aquariums (JAZA)

The purpose of the association is to promote the activities of zoos and aquariums in Japan through cooperation of related people, and to contribute to the development of culture, science and technology. More concretely, it aims to promote recreation, education and environmental education, preservation of species, and research/study.

Its main activities include research and study, holding conferences of zoo and aquarium directors and study conferences, preservation of rare animal species, education of and dissemination to the public regarding zoos and aquariums, and technology for the protection of aquatic life, and conducting qualification tests of fanciers and animal keepers.

As of June 1st, 2008, the association’s full members include 90 zoos and 67 aquariums. It also has 44 institutions as sustaining members.
<http://www.jazga.or.jp/>

Japan Association of Botanical Gardens (JABG)

The Japan Association of Botanical Gardens (JABG), founded in 1947, was certified as a incorporated association in 1966. It is contributing to the development of botanical gardens as well as to the nature protection and conservation of plant diversity by such activities as organizing research meetings and technical training courses, exchange of living plants and cultivation of endangered species. The membership covers 115 Japanese representative botanical gardens and additional 105 individual members.

Japanese Council of Science Museums

It was established for close communication and cooperation among science museums of natural history and science and technology types, general museums with natural history and science and technology departments, science centers, zoos, aquariums and planetariums and contribute to the promotion of museum activities.

Its main activities are holding study conferences, professional training of curators (in collaboration with The National Museum of Nature and Science), study visits to overseas science museums, and publication of News of Japanese Council of Science Museums.

As of June, 2008, the council has 235 institutions as full members. It also has 20 sustaining members which include firms related to science museum display, facilities, machinery and tools. Its office is located in The National Museum of Nature and Science.

<http://www.kahaku.go.jp/jcsm/>

Japan Science Museum Association (JASMA)

The association undertakes various activities to promote the cooperation among Science Museums, Science Centers and other museums which serve as local centers for the dissemination of scientific technology and to contribute to further development of science museums' activities.

Their activities include professional training (study trips to overseas museums, training professionals of Japanese science museums, etc.), cooperation among Science Museums and Science Centers (traveling exhibitions, supporting related projects, co-organizing events, etc.).

As of December, 2007, it has 184 member museums. The association has its office within the National Museum of Engineering Science and Innovation (Miraikan).

<http://www.miraikan.jst.go.jp/JASMA/>

The Japanese Council of Art Museums

It was founded in 1952 to support art museums in realization of their missions, their mutual cooperation and disseminate their activities in society.

In 1993 working groups were created were created to provide opportunities for curators in the same fields to exchange information and deepen relationships. In 2003, after 10 years of activity, the groups were dissolved, and under the project committee, 8 study groups were established, each of which is comprised of no more than 30 curators and working independently.

The study groups include 1. Conservation study group, 2. Education study group, 3. Information and resources study group, 4. Small-scale museums study group, 5. Study group for national indemnity system for the arts, 6. Website study group, 7. News study group, and 8. Designated manager system study group. In addition, there are two working groups, one on the casting of metal sculpture and the other on management of

original models is. The Council has also organized curator training programs and compiled an outline of disaster protection for art museums.

As of February, 2008, it has 350 full member institutions (8 national, 213 public, and 129 private) and 32 firms as supportive members.
<http://www.zenbi.jp/>

The Japan Association of Art Museums (JAAM)

The Japan Association of Art Museums(JAAM) was founded in December 1982, upon the proposal of The Yomiuri Shimbun and Nippon Television Network Corporation, with 35 museums to promote mutual cooperation of Japanese public art museums. Mr. Kawakita Michiaki served as the first chairman.

The Association's principle activities include 1. Organizing traveling exhibitions (20-30 exhibitions per year), 2. Granting the JAAM Grand Prize and Honorable Mention Award (for excellent exhibitions selected from those organized by JAAM or by the member museums), 3. Organizing overseas training programs (sending curators mainly of member museums to overseas art museums, universities and research institutes), 4. supporting art museum activities (providing financial assistance to individual researches, regional activities of art museums and collaborative projects of art museums), 5. Granting Catalogue and Article Awards (established in 1999 for outstanding exhibition catalogue articles and exhibition catalogues), 6. Publishing JAAM News (quarterly), 7. Conducting Art Kentei Test (annual, held at 5 places in various parts of Japan for Art Navigator qualification), and 8. Others (i.e. organizing an international symposium).

As of February 2008, it has 122 member museums. The Board of Trustees consists of representatives of the member museum and The Yomiuri Shimbun. The Association's office is located within the Tokyo Head Office's Culture & Sports Projects Bureau of The Yomiuri Shimbun.
<http://event.yomiuri.co.jp/jaam/>

Japan Planetarium Association (JPA)

In Japan, there are more than 300 planetariums. These numbers rank second in the world. They attract more than five million visitors in a year.

The Japan Planetarium Association aims, in communication and cooperation among members, to develop planetariums and to contribute to science education, dissemination of astronomical knowledge and creation of rich culture. It has 240 members in 2008.

Its main activities are holding general conference twice a year, organizing training meetings, conducting research and publishing an organization magazine.
<http://shin-pla.info/>