

*The Song of Kominkan*

**“The Morning of Freedom”**

*In this spring of peace*

*We are happy to make our hometown flourish again*

*When we gather at the Kominkan*

*Our hearts melt together in good company*

*Let's savor this morning of freedom*

*The flower of our hearts, our hometown, smells sweet*

*The charms of our hometown are revealed*

*When we gather at the Kominkan*

*Our chests are filled with hope*

*Let's drink from the beautiful fountain of culture*

*Working and living peacefully*

*We enjoy our days in our hometown*

*When we gather at the Kominkan*

*We pass time comfortably with friends*

*Let's develop the power for tomorrow*

Lyrics by YAMAGUCHI Shinichi

In July 1946, in an official notification from the Ministry of Education, “establishment of kominkan” was encouraged. In September of that year, through cooperation between government sector and citizens, the Central Federation for the Establishment of Kominkan, was formed.

The Federation and one of Japan's newspaper companies, the Mainichi Newspaper, received support from the Ministry and held a national contest to solicit lyrics for a “Song of the Kominkan” that would embody the ideals of Kominkan activities. The lyrics selected from 1,017 entries from across the country are these. This song continues to be sung by people involved with Kominkan.

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\*Years in this pamphlet stand for fiscal years in Japan.

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# Kominkan

Community Learning Centers (CLC) of Japan

 文部科学省 MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, CULTURE, SPORTS,  
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY-JAPAN

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# Kominkan means ...

Kominkan -community learning centers (CLC) of Japan- play a central role in delivering social education to all people in Japan.

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## Functions of Kominkan



**Kominkan develop people and communities by enabling people to gather, learn and connect.**

Note: Kominkan are social education facilities that have a base in law. "Social Education" in Japan covers the areas of adult education, community education, and education for children and youth that takes place outside of school.



# 1946: The Establishment and Spread of Kominkan

Kominkan, social education facilities based on the concepts of mutual teaching and learning and support for voluntary learning by local residents, were created in Japan after World War II, and were unique in the world at that time. In order to promote the spread of Kominkan, the government of Japan made efforts to institute a variety of supportive policies.



Photographs provided by TAKAHASHI Kunio

Just after the end of World War II, the Ministry of Education encouraged the establishment of Kominkan across the country as places where people could gather in their communities, and which would serve as bases for learning. The call of the national government to establish Kominkan was a good match for citizens' needs to learn new values and improve their lives. Although that time, following the loss in the war, was one of extreme poverty in Japan, Kominkan quickly spread across the country and became social education facilities that took root among residents.

The following are some of the reasons behind the successful spread of Kominkan.

- The national government made the position and role of Kominkan clear in Basic Act on Education and Social Education Act, and Kominkan therefore became an established part of a broader system.
- The national government set standards for establishing and managing Kominkan and provided financial subsidies for their construction.
- The national government established an official certification for the position of social education expert that was closely connected with the work duties at Kominkan.
- The national government cultivated organizations that would use Kominkan as a base for their activities.

During this period, popular activities at Kominkan included those to raise the position of rural women; enhance daily life through health and hygiene improvements related to kitchens, toilets and baths; and increase income through practical learning activity classes.

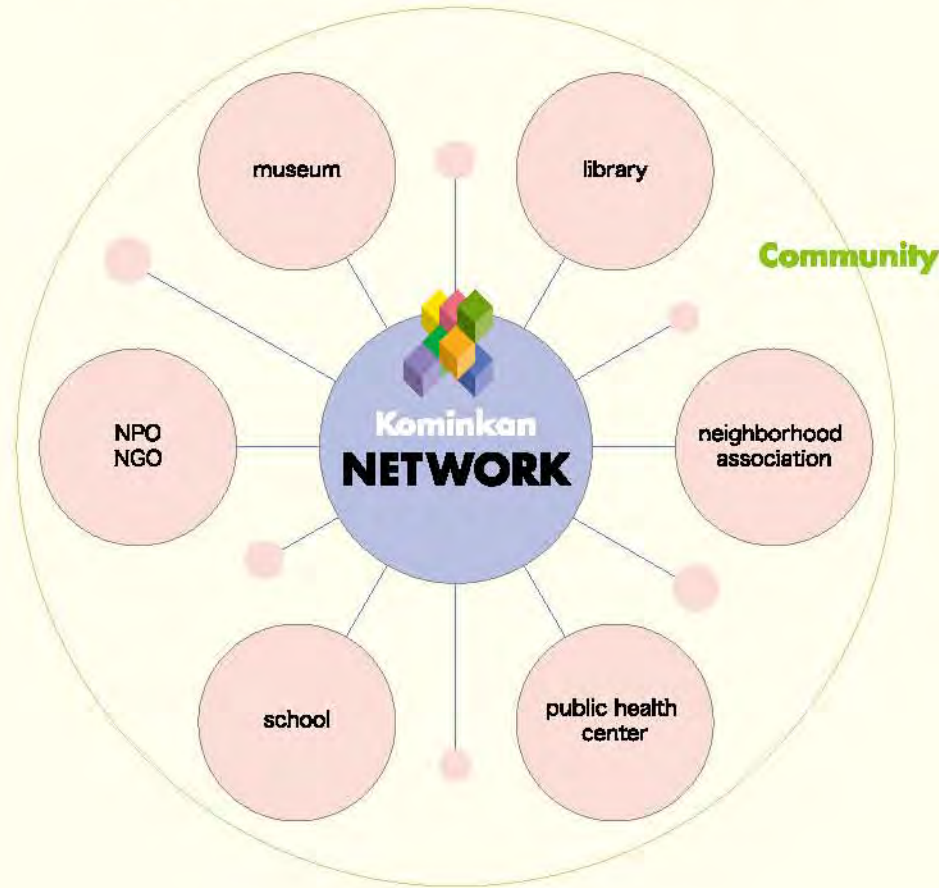




# Kominkan Activities and Case Studies

There are approximately 17,000 Kominkan in Japan. The majority of Kominkan offer such things as space for classes and meetings, reading rooms, kitchens, Japanese-style rooms with tatami mats or tea ceremony rooms, day-care facilities, audio-visual rooms, and sports facilities.

The Kominkan pursue their activities in tandem with schools and other social education facilities (libraries, museums); social education organizations; nonprofit organizations (NPOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and other citizens' groups, and related government institutions.



Note: Museums and libraries are social education facilities like Kominkan. Both have been provided clear status within the law, with museums under the Museum Act and libraries under the Library Act.

Example



## Collaboration with Schools



### Yayoi District Kominkan, Saiki City, Oita Prefecture

#### "Yu Yu Club" ("Fun Fun Club")



Saiki City is a regional city of population 80,000 blessed with access to the sea and mountains and a mild climate.

The Yayoi District Kominkan coordinates the relationship of three elementary schools in this district of the city with community senior citizens' clubs.

Once a month at each elementary school during the after school hours, the schools' students and senior citizens enjoy playing traditional games, making handicrafts, and engaging in light sports activities - such things as playing with bamboo propellers and wooden stilts, and making straw

sandals. In response to school requests, senior citizens also sometimes act as instructors during the regular school day.

As a result of these activities, adults and children have started to greet one another more frequently and inter-generational exchange has become more active in the community. For children, these are opportunities for new experiences, while senior citizens express that they feel happy to be needed - which is connected to increasing their enthusiasm for life.

Note: This is one example of the national "Program to Promote After-School Classes for Children" aimed at providing children with safe and comfortable places to go after school and on the weekends.



## 2 Learning Skills to Promote the Revitalization of Hometown Industry

Hokkaido



### Oketo Town Kominkan, Hokkaido

#### Entrepreneurship Education



As a result of the decline of the lumber industry, the population of Oketo Town has been slowly decreasing from the peak of 13,000 achieved in 1962.

As one component of community development aimed at addressing this decline, the Oketo Town Kominkan has established a course in entrepreneurship and is reviving the area's traditional skills in wood processing. Education to foster entrepreneurship became an important component of the town's social education plan. As an outgrowth of these efforts, a unique type of woodworking called "Oke craft" has been

developed. Using the local spruce trees, everyday items such as furniture, dishes, and chopsticks as well as decorative accessories have been produced, and are generating high expectations.

The Kominkan collaborated with the library in this entrepreneurship education. The library cooperated with information useful for reviving local industry, including providing a mobile library.

Products are now for sale, and some people now earn their living through this industry.

## 3 Connecting, Learning and Gathering Around the Theme of the Local Environment

Tokyo



### Fussa City Kominkan, Tokyo

#### Nature Observation Club



The city of Fussa is a bedroom community of Tokyo with a population of 60,000.

The Fussa City Kominkan established a project to enable residents to learn about the nature, history and culture in the nearby community through direct experience of parks, rivers, and hills around the city.

Among these efforts, the "Nature Observation Club" course has been held for over 20 years, offering a club for observing birds, plants and insects. The Kominkan invites expert lecturers familiar with nature in the city, and through

observation, people increase their understanding of mechanisms and activities in nature. People who participated in the program over many years at the Kominkan developed expertise on these subjects.

Later on, a group of these participants gathered together to establish a nonprofit organization called the "Natural Environment Academy," which is expanding opportunities for the activities of environmental education leaders.