

4 Passing Traditional Local Culture on to Future Generations

Chiba



The Sixteen Kominkan of Kisarazu City, Chiba Prefecture

Gathering and Publishing of Folktales



Kisarazu is a city in Chiba Prefecture facing Tokyo Bay with a population of 120,000, and it has an industrial area which is rapidly modernizing.

Amidst these changes, there has been interest in the folktales that are passed down through the generations and that are a lively part of the local culture. Several Kominkan held a variety of courses on this topic, and this quickly became a project that was taken up by all sixteen of the Kominkan in the city.

Citizens organized a "Kisarazu Folktale Publication Project," and the Kominkan served as the secretariat for this effort and provided comprehensive support for the activities.

As a result of the project, more than 1,000 folktales were gathered by listening to more than 170 elders. These folktales were compiled in two published volumes called *Folktales of Kisarazu*.

5 Connecting in Order to Think about a Sustainable Future for the Community

Okayama



Kyoyama Kominkan, Okayama City, Okayama Prefecture

Kyoyama District ESD Festival



In Okayama City, many education and learning activities centered at Kominkan and aimed at moving towards a sustainable society are taking place.

As one component of this effort, every year the Kyoyama Kominkan hosts the "Kyoyama District ESD Festival" in which local people are able to enjoy themselves while learning and exchanging with one another not only about environmental issues, but on issues such as international exchange, co-existence of different cultures and human rights that are important for a sustainable society.

In addition to research presentations by elementary and junior high school students, public discussions concerning various community development themes, and film viewings, the variety of activities coordinated under the leadership of the Kominkan include a café for tasting foreign foods, a Kimono fashion show by foreign residents, and many others.

This festival helps various people to form bonds across generations and has become an opportunity for schools, nonprofits, volunteer groups, and other local organizations to connect with one another.

Note: ESD stands for "Education for Sustainable Development."

6 Youth Activities

Niigata

The Six Kominkan of Tokamachi City, Niigata Prefecture

Tokamachi Youth Course



Tokamachi is a city of population 62,000 that is not only an area that experiences great snowfall, but one that produces silk textiles and Japan's top brand of rice, Uonuma Koshihikari.

Every year since 1953, the Kominkan in the city have held a youth course targeting local youth (ages 18-35). Learning activities are held 30 times over the course of a year centering on specific skills, with the goal of enabling the youth to make friends, enhance their understanding, and contribute to the community.

A theme of interest to the youth is chosen, and

each year a course is established. The youth also participate in the broader society by making snow sculptures as part of the snow festival and planning activities to interact with children in the community.

Through this project, learning based outside the school system and Kominkan projects that bring together members of the community of the same and different generations are realized.

7 Collaboration with a Local University

Nagano

Niimura Kominkan, Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture

Information Exchange Meetings with a Local University

Niimura Music Festival at Matsumoto University



Matsumoto City in Nagano Prefecture is known for its active Kominkan, including those of autonomous Kominkan. One of these active Kominkan, Niimura Kominkan, is located in the suburbs of Matsumoto City, and its special characteristic is its collaboration with Matsumoto University, located within the community.

Once a month, an information exchange meeting is held with members representing Matsumoto University, the Kominkan, other social education facilities, social welfare facilities, and the Niimura community-based organizations and associations, and concrete discussions are held concerning how the university and Kominkan can collaborate effectively. Matsu

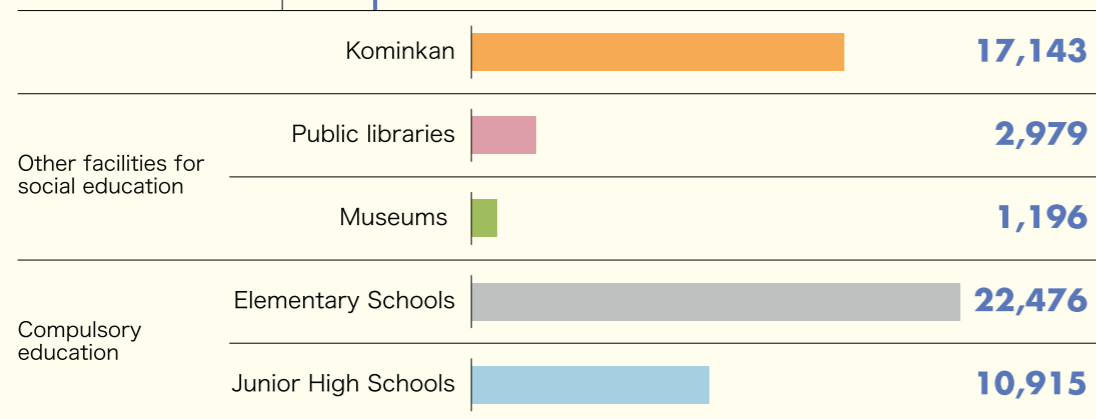
moto University and the Kominkan alternate responsibility for the secretariat for the meetings.

The university has developed a curriculum that emphasizes interaction between students and the community and participation in the society, and the Niimura Kominkan and its main projects are managed through cooperation among university professors and students.

Each summer, on the outdoor stage at Matsumoto University, a Niimura Music Festival takes place - an example of an event in which many people from outside the community visit to participate and which has become firmly rooted in the community.

Kominkan by the Numbers

Number of Kominkan:
17,143



*The data for social education facilities is from 2005; however, that of the elementary schools and junior high schools is from 2008.

Number of Kominkan Employees:
52,230

Kominkan Director:	16,486
Kominkan Chief Coordinator:	17,127
Other employees:	18,617

Number of Courses Offered Annually at Kominkan:

472,697

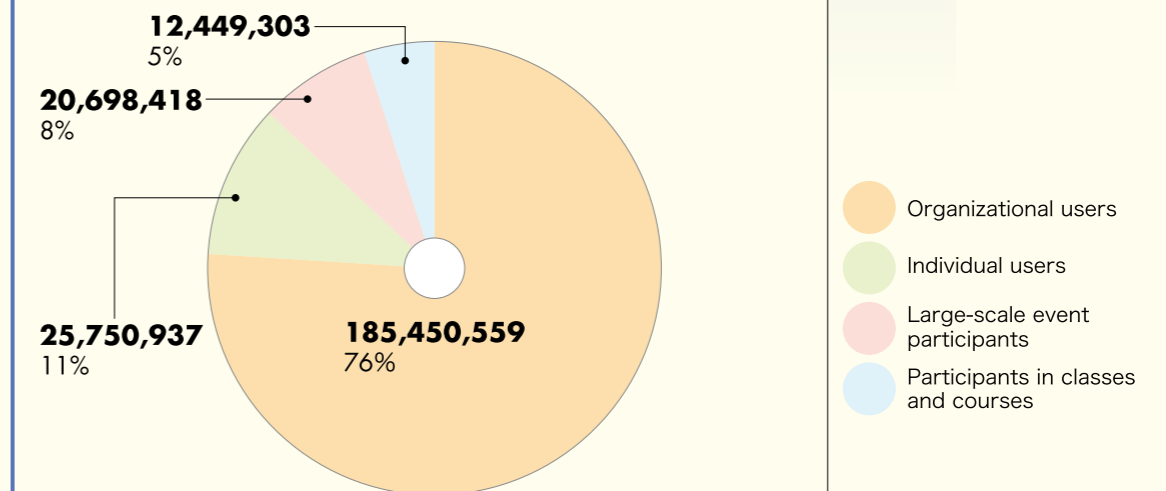
Learning activities at Kominkan can be broadly divided into those which the Kominkan initiates and those which are initiated by organizations or individuals who use the Kominkan.

The numbers represented here are those for courses that Kominkan plan and hold on their own. A "course" can have various forms-from a single occurrence to several meetings, to an education program held over an entire year

Annual Number of Kominkan Users

244,349,217

Annual users amount to approximately double the population of Japan. The percentage of each type of user is indicated in the chart.



Breakdown of Kominkan Users by Type

Numbers are from the 2005 Social Education Survey. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan conducts a "Social Education Survey" every three years. Data gathered includes the numbers of Kominkan, libraries, and museums, the numbers of users and the content of their activities.



Kominkan within the Law

Aims of Education

In the Basic Act on Education, the aims of education are stated as: “Education shall aim for the full development of personality and strive to nurture the citizens, sound in mind and body, who are imbued with the qualities necessary for those who form a peaceful and democratic state and society.” The concept of human development which is the aim of social education is expressed.

(Basic Act on Education, Article 1)

Aims of Kominkan

The purpose of Kominkan is stated as: “Kominkan shall provide the people living in specific areas such as a city, town or village with education adapted to meet the demands of actual life and implement academic and cultural activities. Kominkan shall contribute to the cultivation of residents, improve health, develop character, enliven daily culture, and enhance social welfare.”

(Social Education Act, Article 20)

Definition of Social Education

Under the Social Education Act, social education is defined as: “Systematic activities of education (including physical education and recreation), primarily for out-of-school young people and adults, other than such educational activities as are conducted as part of the curriculum in accordance with the School Education Act.”

(Social Education Act, Article 2)

Autonomous Kominkan

Besides Kominkan established by municipalities such as cities, towns, and villages, there are cases in which residents contribute money and establish and manage facilities that serve functions similar to Kominkan. These types of Kominkan we refer to as “autonomous Kominkan,” and according to a recent survey, there were as many as 70,000 in the country.



Photographs provided by Ayacho Autonomous Kominkan of Miyazaki Prefecture and Autonomous Kominkan in Matsumoto City, Nagano Prefecture



Management

Under the Social Education Act, Kominkan are designated as a part of the governmental social education administration in the municipalities of cities, towns, and villages.

Management Principles

·Rooted in the Community

Kominkan are managed making use of a variety of relationships within the community.

·Expertise

In every activity, expert care is taken to incorporate social education perspectives.

·Public Character

Kominkan are managed as places which are open to all, regardless of age, gender, profession, or other characteristics. In addition, profit-making activities, religious activities, and political activities are prohibited.

Special Characteristics of Management

·Establishment of a Kominkan Steering Committee

With the guidance of the director, a Kominkan steering committee is established that includes residents and which analyzes and makes decisions about the various activities planned and implemented by the Kominkan.

·Implementation of Evaluation of Management

Each Kominkan must evaluate its management and, based on the evaluation, devise necessary measures to improve the management situation.

·Provision of Information Concerning Management

Each Kominkan must not only deepen understanding among residents and others concerning its activities, but pro-actively provide information concerning the Kominkan's management in order to promote collaboration and cooperation.

Budget

In principle, Kominkan activities must be conducted within the budget of the municipality (city, town, village). However, in some cases, participants must shoulder a small financial burden, such as a participation fee.

Facilities

The upkeep and management of the Kominkan building is the responsibility of the municipality.

Standards for the Establishment and Management of Kominkan

In order to promote the healthy development of Kominkan, necessary standards for their establishment and management have been set by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan. The current standards (based on a 2003 Ministry notice) include the following items:

- Target area
- Collaboration with various organizations and institutions and use of information and communication technology (ICT)
- Function as a base for family education assistance in the community
- Promotion of volunteerism and participation in the society
- Collaboration with schools, families and community
- Management based on local conditions
- Staffing
- Facilities and equipment
- Internal evaluation of activities and public disclosure of evaluations

