

## About Hansen's disease

Hansen's disease is a chronic infectious disease caused by *Mycobacterium leprae*.

Not all cases of *Mycobacterium leprae* infection result in Hansen's disease. Nowadays, only a few people develop the disease.

Nor does the disease progress rapidly once contracted.

The primary symptoms are skin lesion, and loss of sensation.

Before effective drugs were developed, the disease often resulted in disfigurement and left serious disabilities even when it was in remission.

The disabilities and disfigurement caused stigma and discrimination.

Now, effective drugs are available. With early detection and treatment, the disease can be cured with no aftereffects.

## The history of Hansen's disease in Modern Japan

Hansen's disease has a long history in Japan, and this history has been accompanied by various forms of discrimination. The Japanese government began to take measures against Hansen's disease with legislation in 1907, but the purpose of this law was not treatment. Rather, it aimed to quarantine sufferers in a sanatorium.

People with Hansen's disease who came here were prohibited from leaving. They were also required to perform labor, and were subject to punishment if they tried to leave or if they disobeyed staff. The marriage between people with Hansen's disease was recognized, but the married couple were not allowed to have children.

The nation eventually strengthened the legal measures and many sufferers were kept for life under total quarantine in the sanatorium. Social movements to find sufferers in different regions of Japan and send them to the sanatorium also expanded.

After the Second World War, despite the fact that an effective treatment was discovered, the nation did not make concerted attempts to reintegrate people with Hansen's disease into society, and society was unaccepting of survivors of the illness. There was no place for the survivor to stay but in the sanatorium, and thus their state of isolation was continued. For this reason, survivors have worked hard for many years to be allowed to continue living in the sanatorium.

In 1996, the law was finally abolished, and in 2001 a court ruling found the nation guilty of the violation of survivors' rights with its policies. In the wake of this lawsuit, the situation of the survivors has changed greatly in recent years. On the other hand, people who have recovered from the illness are aging and the numbers of survivors is decreasing.

Now, the daily lives and the health care of residents are not exclusively confined to the sanatoria, and survivors who have reintegrated into society expect medical care without misunderstanding or prejudice from the sanatorium. For this reason, how to make the continued existence of the sanatorium possible, and how to reconnect survivors to their families and society, has become a major issue

## Information

**Hours of Operation** : 9:30 - 16:30 [last admission :16:00]

**C l o s e d**:Mondays (or Tuesday if Monday is a National Holiday), during the New Year's holiday, the day following a national holiday, and museum re-arrangement days

**A d m i s s i o n**:Free

※Please refrain from eating and drinking in this building.



### Access

#### ■By Bus

1. About 10 minutes by the bus for "Kumegawa Station North Exit" from the south exit of Kiyose Station on the Seibu Ikebukuro Line. Get off of the bus at the stop "Hansen's disease museum".
2. About 20 minutes by the bus for "Kiyose Station South Exit" from the north exit of Kumegawa Station on the Seibu Shinjuku Line. Get off the bus at the stop "Hansen's disease museum".
3. About 10 minutes by the bus for "Kumegawa Station North Exit" from Shin-Akitsu Station (JR Line). From the bus stop "Zensho-en Mae", it is about a 10-minute walk.

#### ■By Train

About 20 minutes walking from Shin-Akitsu Station (JR Line).

#### ■By Car

About 30 minutes from Tokorozawa IC (Kan'etsu Expressway).

## The National Hansen's Disease Museum

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URL <http://www.hansen-dis.jp>

Thanks to Otemae University's Kathryn Tanaka for assistance with this pamphlet.

## About The National Hansen's Disease Museum

### Purposes

The National Hansen's Disease Museum was established as part of the national effort to erase the stigma associated with Hansen's disease and to restore the respect of people affected by the disease by building a space for public edification and dissemination of correct information regarding this disease. The efforts are based on the "Statement by the Prime Minister Concerning a Swift and Comprehensive Solution to the Hansen's Disease Issue," and the eighteenth article of the "Law on the Promotion of Issues Related to Hansen's disease."

### Missions

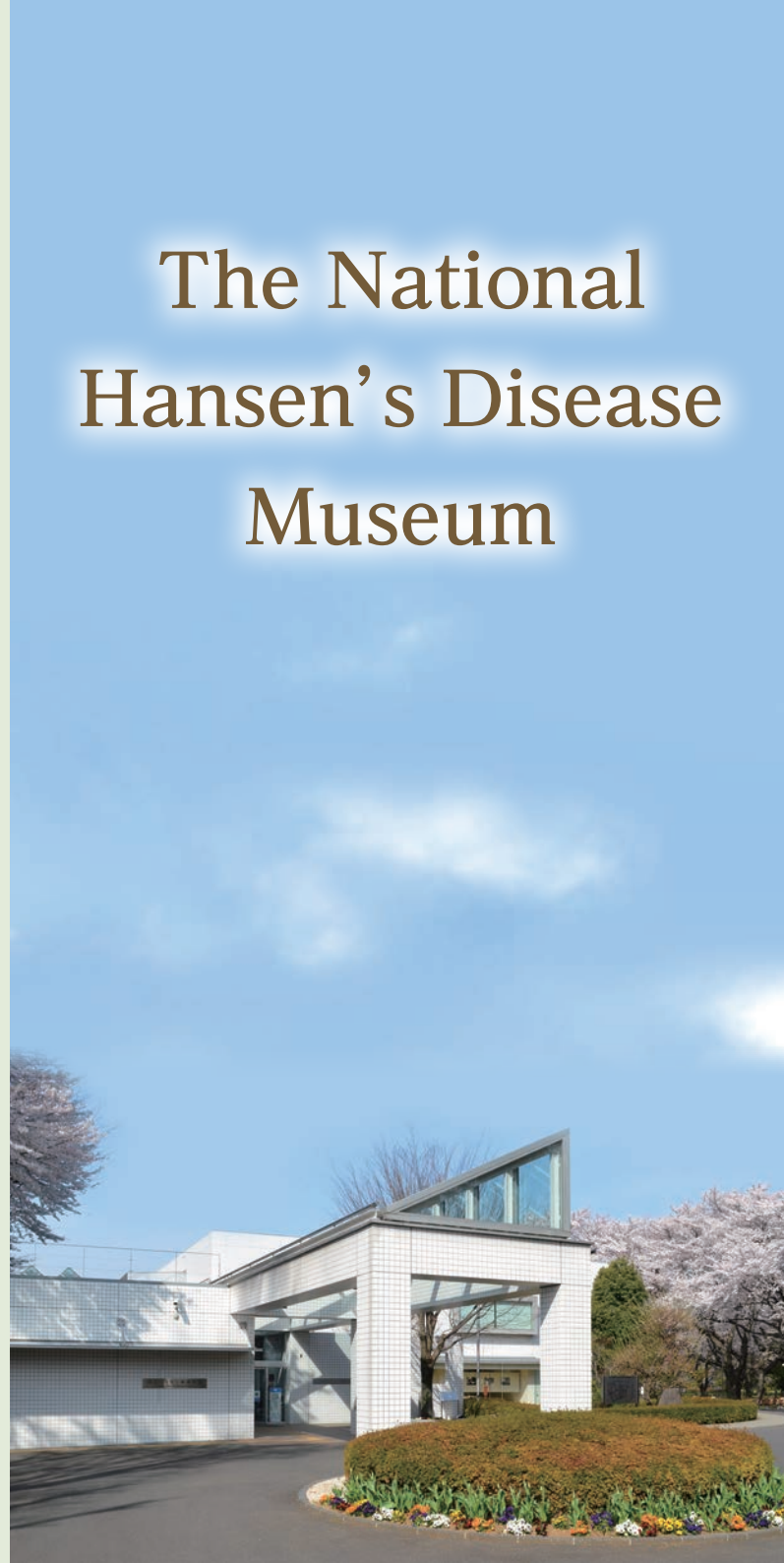
- To promote the disseminate information and awareness about Hansen's disease.
- To erase the stigma, discrimination of, and social exclusion against people affected by the disease.
- To learn and teach from the long history of stigma and discrimination against Hansen's disease with a focus on the errors of the segregation policy, and to relate the sufferings, hardships, and legacies of people fighting against the illness.
- To restore the respect of those who have suffered difficulties and hardships due to Hansen's disease, and to nurture the spirit of respect for human rights.
- To realize the social integration of people affected by Hansen's disease.

### Functions

- Education and edification
- Exhibition
- Collection and preservation
- Research and study
- Information center
- Management and services
- Planning and coordination

### History

- June 1993 | On the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Tōfū Kyōkai (literally,The Wisteria-Maple Association), the "Prince Takamatsu Memorial Hansen's Disease Museum" was established with a view to commemorating the lives of the people affected by Hansen's disease, and to appeal to society to never repeat the wrongs of the past.
- April 1996 | Abolition of the Leprosy Prevention Law.
- May 2001 | The plaintiffs won (in the Kumamoto District Court) in a lawsuit over the unconstitutionality of the Leprosy Prevention Law. The state revoked its right to appeal to a higher court and released a "Statement by the Prime Minister Concerning a Swift and Comprehensive Solution to the Hansen's Disease Issue". "The expansion of Hansen's disease museum" was incorporated in this statement.
- September 2006 – March 2007 | Temporarily closed for the construction of a new building and display production.
- April 2007 | Reopened as the "National Hansen's Disease Museum".
- April 2009 | The "Law on Promotion of Issues Related to Hansen's Disease" was enacted. Article 18 of this law advocates the "Establishment of the National Hansen's Disease Museum".





# Message from The National Hansen's Disease Museum

This building is a museum that survivors of Hansen's disease first created on their own initiative.

We have collected materials that serve as a demonstration of the kinds of lives led by sufferers, survivors, and people who have recovered from the illness. Through these displays, we hope that the same mistakes our society has made in the past will not be repeated.

Now, this has become a national facility, but it also plays a role in the recovery of people who have suffered from Hansen's disease and the restoration of respect to them.

From your visit, we hope that you learn that even if an illness changes a person's appearance, people have certain unalterable and inalienable rights, and we hope you think about these anew. We hope you will ask yourself, "Do I respect people, do I have a caring heart?" Change starts with you.



Audio Visual Hall

A place for survivor testimonies, lectures and movies, and other events.

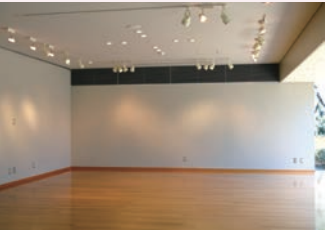
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- Information
- Promenade
- Audio Visual Hall
- Gallery
- Study Room



Study Room

This is a place for smaller workshops or lectures.



Gallery

Small displays are held here.

2F

- Exhibition Room
- 1. The history of Hansen's disease
- 2. Leprosarium
- 3. The proof of survival
- Special Exhibition Room
- Library



Exhibition Room 3

"The proof of survival"

These exhibitions show how people with Hansen's disease searched for meaning in their lives and how they survived despite the terrible fate to which they were condemned. It also offers visitors important information about how to live together with people affected by Hansen's disease.



Exhibition Room 1

"The history of Hansen's disease"

This room offers an overview of the history of Hansen's disease in Japan with a focus on government policy.



Exhibition Room 2

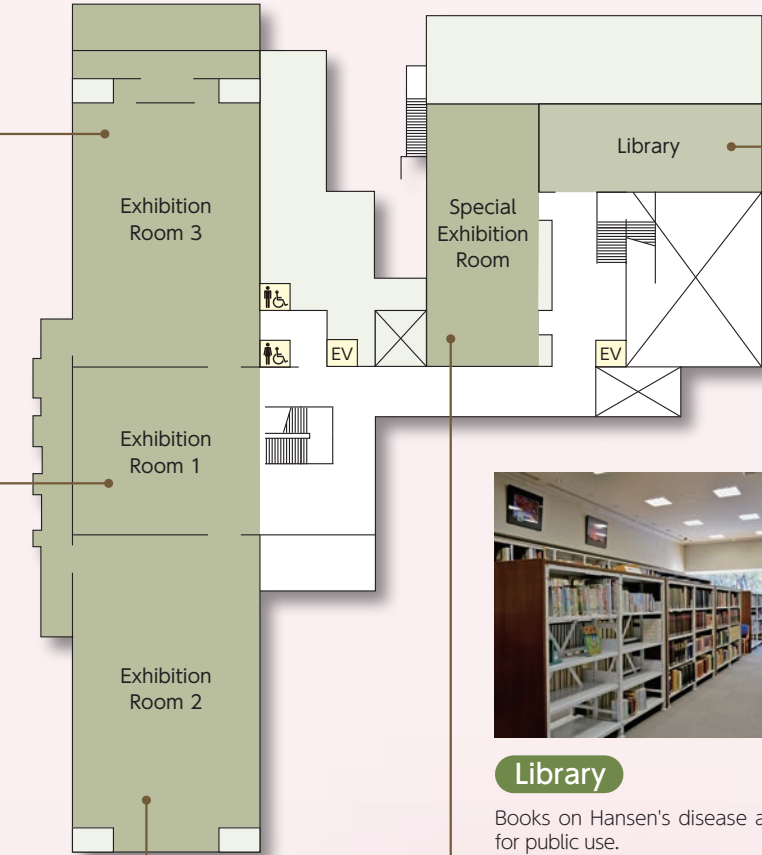
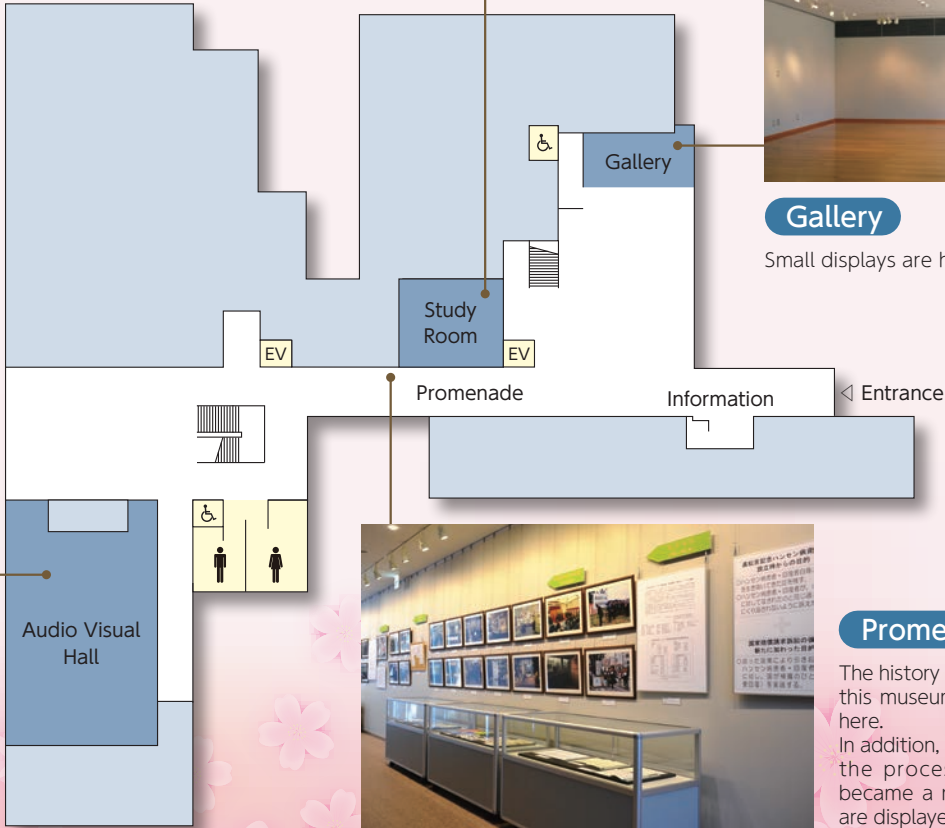
"Leprosarium"

This room displays the harsh circumstances people with Hansen's disease were forced to live within leprosarium, with a focus on the days before effective treatment was developed.

## Personal Testimonies

Visitors can listen to personal testimonies by survivors of Hansen's disease and persons concerned with Hansen's disease that are preserved in video recordings here.

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Library

Books on Hansen's disease are available for public use.

## Special Exhibition room

Special exhibitions on a wide variety of themes are held twice a year.