

# Kitanagoya City Museum of History and Folklore: The Showa Era Lifestyle Museum



The Kitanagoya City Museum of History and Folklore (also known as the Showa Era Lifestyle Museum) was established in Aichi Prefecture with the purpose of preserving the daily life experiences of the Showa era. The museum's main focus is on fostering nostalgic experiences and memories of the middle Showa era (the period of Japanese history corresponding to the reign of Emperor Showa, from December 25, 1926 through January 7, 1989).

With a collection of over 100,000 daily life necessities from those times, the museum hosts over 40,000 visitors every year. One look at the exhibit prompts visitors to remark, "Wow, that really takes me back to that age!" Visitors are provided with nostalgic feelings and sentiments and encouraged to actively share their memories.



The Showa Era Lifestyle Museum features objects from the past with the power to evoke nostalgia.

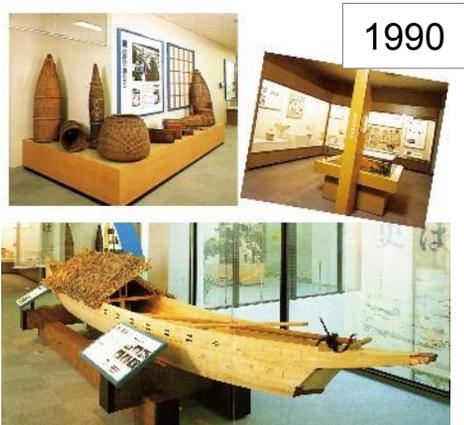


The Kitanagoya City Museum of History and Folklore opened in 1990. As the name implies, this facility was created for the lifelong learning of local history starting from the Jomon period (about 5000 BCE) and lifestyle trends including occupations and customs from the Meiji era (1868-1912) to the Showa era (1926 -1989).

Three years after the museum opened, a program was begun to supplement its collection with materials from everyday lives in the Showa era, with a focus on the decade from 1955 to 1964. This marks the beginning of our present way of life. This period of dramatic change in general lifestyle includes the appearance of electric appliances such as the televisions, refrigerators, and washing machines, which were considered the most wanted items by the ordinary people at that time.



Tokyo Tower under construction



1990



2020



People's lifestyles changed dramatically.



### The Showa Era Lifestyle Museum

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Hours: From 9:00am to 5:00pm

Admission Fee: Free

# Museum-Welfare Collaboration

## Care for the aged through the cooperation of museums, welfare organizations, and the medical field

Assembling this new collection and creating exhibits of these materials has deepened the museum's relationship with visitors, especially with local senior residents. New opportunities were created for lifelong learning through museum-welfare collaboration with public welfare agencies.



### Introduction – The Japanese Association of Museums

Following the development of senior learning programs in 2003, the Japanese Association of Museums promoted initiatives in 2004 and 2005 to create a museum that is welcoming to all.

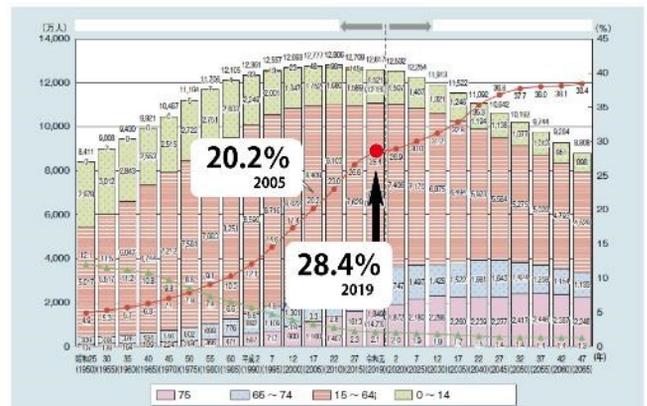
Case studies and surveys were carried out to determine how senior citizens typically interact with museums. Verification of non-infrastructural projects then began, employing case studies of reminiscence (recollection) methods and elderly volunteers.

### Introduction – The Basic Law on Measures for the Aging Society

Measures dealing with the graying of Japan's society included the 1995 enactment of the Basic Law on Measures for the Aging Society and a Cabinet decision in 2012 on the basic principles. Both decisions incorporated a commitment to cope with Japan's aging society, with a focus on securing opportunities for lifelong learning, providing a variety of learning opportunities, promoting senior citizens' participation in social activities, and establishing a foundation for volunteer activities; the case can be made that museums have a vital role to play in achieving these goals.

### Introduction – An important role in an increasingly aging society

Japanese museums are forwarding themes such as "what museums can do for a graying society" and "museums in the era of the centenarians." Based on a 28% ratio of senior citizens, the fact is that many elderly people are visiting museums and seeking opportunities for learning. Given this situation, it once again becomes apparent that museum can play an important role in a society that is increasingly aging.



# Efforts at The Showa Era Lifestyle Museum

## Care for the aged through the cooperation of museums, welfare organizations, and the medical field

The Showa Era Lifestyle Museum hosts records and objects for the purpose of preserving the drastic change in lifestyle that occurred. The everyday items of the Showa era on display are precisely what jog visitors' memories and bring many a smile.

The museum's exhibits display electric appliances and other tools, confectionery and other food packaging, and other items used in Showa-era life. We often see family members and friends chatting excitedly together with expressions of happiness.

The reminiscence method adopted by Kitagoya City is a psychological and social approach to activate the brain and revitalize the mind and body. Visitors' discussions, anecdotes, and memories are prompted by nostalgic photographs and daily utensils. This recollection method involves listening to their thoughts and reminiscence with sympathy, and utilizing that feeling as a lens through which we can view the present and future.

### Nonpharmacological therapy for dementia

The method using recollections began in Europe and the United States in the 1960s, and research has advanced since then. In Japan, this method has been a tool used in providing care as a nonpharmacological approach to therapy for dementia, primarily in hospitals and long-term care facilities. However, there have been no cases of its use in care on a more local basis.

Thus, as a national model project, we have established a style for providing care for senior citizens by employing the reminiscence method in coordination with individuals in the welfare, education, and medical fields.

We use the Showa Era Lifestyle Museum and its materials as well as the former Kato family residence, an old Meiji-era home that has been registered as a national tangible cultural property. In 2002 the Reminiscence Center opened in the former Kato family residence.



Kato Residence  
National registered tangible  
cultural property



Kitanagoya City Reminiscence  
Center



This project was set up with authorization from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and following the construction of the Reminiscence Center facilities, Group Reminiscence officially began in 2002.

- Establishment of the Reminiscence Project Committee
- Hosting of the Reminiscence School
- Forming of volunteer groups to support the Reminiscence Project
- Appraisal of the project, and measurement of its results
- Development of teaching/learning materials
- Holding of Symposiums



At the reminiscence school

### **New roles for regional museums using reminiscence methods**

The reminiscence project is making use of various evaluation indices, including cognitive function, quality of life, and degree of withdrawal from society, with effects measured before and after participation in the reminiscence method school along with ongoing evaluations.

Currently, the reminiscence method is being used as an initiative to revitalize local elderly residents. We have put into practice the method for memory recollection and communication with the collaboration between the museum and welfare-related agencies advancing care for the elderly, prevention of dementia, promotion of health, and other aims. We named this effort the museum-welfare collaboration and made it one of the core aspects of our activities.

Beginning with the reminiscence method school where senior citizens discuss their recollections, participants maintain their health by continuing activities as members of the “Ikiikitai” (the association of the Reminiscence School graduates ) while also pursuing intergenerational exchanges with children. In the museum, members of the Ikiikitai are provided opportunities to play a role as museum educators in an intergenerational exchange workshop style.



Intergenerational exchanges with children

Our scope has expanded tremendously, first from avoiding the need for nursing care and preventing dementia, then to promoting good health, and now further to lifelong learning. Linking different generations, the reminiscence method leads to the development of human bonds, while expansion of the related activities fosters ties within the community, broadening networks and leading to greater manifestation of local residents' potential abilities (empowerment). Such is the regional reminiscence method of Kitanagoya City as it aims to cultivate a healthy and comfortable city.

## Reminiscence Kits

The Kitanagoya City Museum of History and Folklore lends out boxes filled with nostalgic items called “Reminiscence Kits.”



## Reminiscence to foster cross- cultural understanding

Reminiscence therapy is not only useful in the treatment of dementia and other mental illnesses, but can also be effectively used to foster and deepen cross-cultural understanding.



The United Kingdom  
 The United States  
 Africa  
 Senegal  
 Denmark  
 Japan



washboard

