

# Minamata Disease Municipal Museum



## Dear visitors to the Museum

The Minamata Disease Municipal Museum opened in January 1993 with the aim of providing people with an opportunity to understand correctly how Minamata Disease broke out, developed and has been dealt with. Our sincere wish is that, by generating wider awareness of what occurred back then, we never let such a tragic incident of pollution happen again. The museum also plays a vital role as a special archive for housing valuable learning resources to be passed on to future generations.

While over two decades have passed since the museum opened, the supreme court of Japan ruled that the central and Kumamoto prefectural governments were responsible for not preventing the expansion of Minamata Disease. Two remedies for victims were provided before and after the ruling. In addition, livelihood support programs for fetal and infantile Minamata Disease patients along with restoration and revitalization initiatives have been launched based on the Minamata-Ashikita Regional Promotion Plan. However, various disputes regarding Minamata Disease remain unsolved.

The museum has been through a major renovation for the first time since its establishment. This is part of our efforts to help children, who bear the future on their shoulders, gain a better understanding of the issues based on an enhanced set of exhibitions.

We have also reaffirmed our determination to focus on our role as an information center for Minamata Disease, and to also serve as a support base for Minamata citizens who value the environment, lives and human rights. By doing so, we hope to contribute in every way we can to addressing global environmental challenges.

We would truly appreciate your continued support and encouragement.

## MUSEUM GUIDE

- Opening hours 9:00~17:00 (Last entry 30 minutes before closing)
- Closed Mondays (the following day if it is a national holiday) · New Year's Holiday
- Admission fee Free
- Parking Free (Space available for 15 buses and 272 passenger vehicles)  
※Disabled parking available.
- Address 53 Myojin-cho, Minamata City, Kumamoto Prefecture 867-0055  
TEL 0966-62-2621 FAX 0966-62-2271  
URL <http://www.minamata195651.jp>

- Museum tour(30 to 60minutes) : Groups must make reservations in advance.
- Storytelling Sessions(60minutes) : Audiences have an opportunity hear the firsthand personal experiences of the victims of Minamata Disease. (Free of charge for groups of 10 or more only. ※Reservations necessary)



Manabino-oka is the name given to the area housing the Kumamoto Prefecture Environmental Center, Minamata Disease Archives and the Minamata Disease Municipal Museum



### Access

- By car  
It takes 2 hrs from Kumamoto, Kagoshima and Miyazaki, 1 hr and 20 min from Hitoyoshi.
- By Kyushu Shinkansen bullet train  
To reach Shin-Minamata, it takes about 60 min from Hakata, about 25 min from Kumamoto, and about 30 min from Kagoshima-Chuo.
- By Orange Railway  
To reach Minamata, it takes about 60 min from Yatsushiro and about 100 min from Sendai. (※It takes about 5 min from Minamata station by car.)
- A public bus is available from the Shin-Minamata Station and Minamata Station to the Minamata Disease Municipal Museum Stop(1 min walk).



# 2nd Floor Exhibition Room Guide

The Minamata Disease Municipal Museum is a place where people “learn about the past and how to turn those lessons into hope for the future”. We hope everyone will use this as an opportunity to think and act on what kind of future they desire.

- 1階**
- **Library and Reading Room**  
Here you can have access to books on Minamata disease, scrapbooks and video materials.
  - **Administrative Office**  
Visitors can borrow videos on Minamata Disease for free.
  - **Lavatory**
- ※Entrance is only on the 2nd floor.



## I The Fertile Sea and a Major Chemical Company



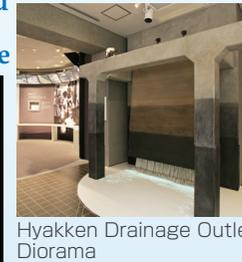
**1.The Fertile Sea**  
The residents of Minamata, an area rich in fish resources, lived off the bounty of the sea.



## 2.Major Chemical Company Chisso Corporation and Minamata City

Chisso Corporation was born in Minamata, and as it grew, the city prospered and developed into an industrial city.

## II The Outbreak and Expansion of Minamata Disease



## 3.Official Recognition of Minamata Disease

This tranquil fishing village first witnessed abnormalities in cats and birds, after which people started coming down with severe symptoms of an unknown cause. This was the first officially recognized case of Minamata Disease.

## 4.Uncontrolled Factory Effluent



Efforts were made to discover the cause, but in an era where economic growth took precedence over all else, appropriate measures were not taken.



## 5.Expansion of Damage

## 6.Distressed Victims

Many victims suffered as a result of delays in addressing the problem.

## III Damages Caused by Minamata Disease and Compensation

### MINAMATA DISEASE IS NOT CONTAGEOUS.



## 7.Health Damages Caused by Minamata Disease

This diagram explains the spread of Minamata Disease in terms of its symptoms and victims.

## 8.Victim's Struggles for the Compensation and the Certification System

## 9.Social Damages Caused by Minamata Disease

The victims' battle for certification and compensation for their suffering at the hands of Minamata Disease continues to this today.



## 10.Putting Yourself in Patients' Shoes

~ Simulations of Health Damages ~

## 11.Environmental Restoration and the "Moyai Naoshi" (Reuniting) Program



People want Minamata to return to the way it was through the regeneration of the environment and emotional reconciliation. The people and the government have joined hands to work toward this goal.

## 12.Eternal Memories



## IV Message from Minamata

We hope what you have seen and learned here will help you think about your own future.



## 13. Minamata as an Environmental Model City

## 14. Lessons Learned from Minamata's Experiences and the Promotion of Cooperation

## 15. The Minamata Convention on Mercury