

Ancient Kumamoto — History as Told by Written Records

March 15 – May 6, 2024

- Closed: Tuesdays, March 29, and April 26
- Hours: 9:30 a.m.–5:15 p.m.
- Venue: Kumamoto Museum of Literature and History
2-5-1 Izumi, Chuo Ward, Kumamoto, Kumamoto Prefecture

Organized by the Kumamoto Museum of Literature and History,
Kumamoto Prefectural Library

Admission
FREE

Catalogue
Booklet
FREE

Visitors who
post on social
media will receive
an original gift
from the museum

A Long-Awaited
Homecoming:
Written Records Return to
Kumamoto after a
1,300-Year
Sojourn to Nara

Wooden tablet "Soldier Register,
Third Mashiki Regiment, Higo Province" 723
Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties (3/15~28)

Wooden tablet "Tax (chō), floss silk,
Ashikita District, Higo Province"
Found at the Heijō Palace site
8th century Nara National Research Institute
for Cultural Properties (3/30~4/8)

National
Treasure

National Treasures Coming to Kumamoto! Wooden Tablets from Japan's Historic Capital!

An exhibition of ancient writing from Kumamoto! History speaks for itself as we travel 1,300 years into the past!

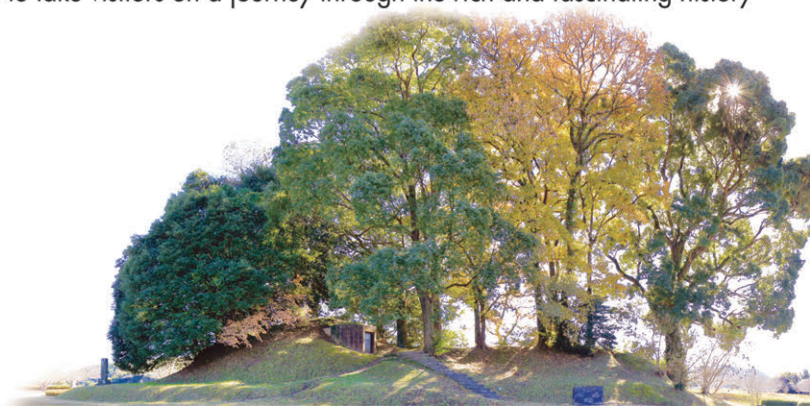
Kumamoto's adoption of Chinese characters was spurred by its interactions with powerful states at home and abroad. Scores of wooden tablets bearing writing from Kumamoto have been discovered along foreign trade routes and in Japan's historic capital Nara. These tablets offer clues as to how the use of Chinese characters spread through the region, and many of them have been designated National Treasures or Important Cultural Properties. Writing samples found on wooden tablets, pottery, stone monuments, and Buddhist scriptures have revealed that Kumamoto was home to a flourishing culture of literacy during this period. The exhibition examines those inscriptions together with early literary references to take visitors on a journey through the rich and fascinating history of ancient Kumamoto.



くまもと文学・歴史館
Kumamoto Museum of Literature and History
2-5-1 Izumi, Chuo Ward, Kumamoto, Kumamoto Prefecture



Supported by the Agency for Cultural Affairs Government of Japan in the fiscal 2023



Sightseeing Map of the Suizenji Area

A guide to the majestic springs and rich culture of beautiful Kumamoto

30 minutes from Kumamoto Station on the Kumamoto City Tram; 20 minutes from the Kumamoto Castle area



1 Kumamoto Museum of Literature and History

The museum traces the "memory of Kumamoto" through its history and literature. Visitors can use the museum's digital database to view manuscripts by the famous novelist Natsume Sōseki (1867–1916) as well as other materials in the collection.

2 Kumamoto Prefectural Library

3 Kumamoto Children's Book Forest

Designed by Tadao Ando.
Opening this spring!



4 Garden of the former Hosokawa residence in Sunatori

The Hosokawa family were the historic lords of the Kumamoto domain. The garden they created at this site utilizes natural underground springs. The wife of one of the lords chose to spend her twilight years here in the latter half of the 19th century.



5 Japanese banana tree garden



6 Kase River and Lake Ezu

This location was selected to be one of "Heisei Era's 100 Famous Springs." Nearly 570,000 tons of clear spring water flow into the river each day.



7 Pillar base stone from Higo's historic provincial temple (on the grounds of Kumanonimatsu Shrine)

In 741, Emperor Shōmu ordered the construction of provincial Buddhist temples across Japan. The pagoda at this site was 60 meters tall.



8 Former Residence of L. L. Janes

The building is the oldest extant example of Western architecture in Kumamoto Prefecture. It was built in 1871 by Japanese carpenters for the American educator L. L. Janes, an influential figure in Kumamoto's modernization.



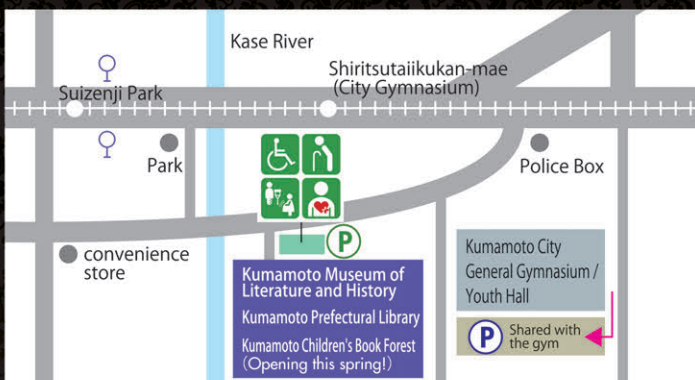
9 Suizenji Jojuen Garden (Suizenji Park)

A designated Historic Site and Place of Scenic Beauty. The garden was created in the latter half of the 17th century by the powerful Hosokawa family, the historic lords of the Kumamoto domain.



10 Former Oe Residence of Natsume Sōseki

One of several houses in Kumamoto that the famed modern writer lived in. Beginning in 1896, he lived in Kumamoto for four years and three months while teaching English.



Transport :

30-40 minutes by limousine bus from Aso Kumamoto Airport in Mashiki Town
30-40 minutes by tram from JR Kumamoto Station
20 minutes on foot from JR Shinsuizenji Station
5 minutes on foot from the Suizenji-Koen-Mae (front of Suizenji Park) / Kenritsu Toshokan Iriguchi (Prefectural Library entrance) bus stop or Suizenji-Koen-Mae (front of Suizenji Park) bus stop
5 minutes on foot from the 19 Shiritsu Taiikukan-mae (front of municipal gymnasium) tram stop
Parking is at the back of the Kumamoto City Municipal Gymnasium (shared with the gym).
Bicycle parking is on the north side of the library.



2-5-1 Izumi, Chuo Ward, Kumamoto,
Kumamoto Prefecture
TEL 096-384-5000 FAX 096-385-4214
<https://www2.library.pref.kumamoto.jp/bunreki>

Kumamoto Museum of Literature and History Search