

Public Halls: Their Role and Architectural Features

In Japan, public halls (*kokaido*) play a role similar to that of town halls in some Western countries. These structures have been built throughout the country since the Meiji era (1868–1912), when they served as spaces for public meetings, social events, and displays of commercial and industrial goods. The social functions of the halls expanded in the Taisho era (1912–1926), when they were used as venues for lectures, concerts, and other public events. After World War II, the halls were used for educational purposes, such as hosting exhibitions about local history. This panel introduces the Old Public Hall of Hakodate Ward, as well as other heritage public halls.