

CIDOC 2015 Documenting Diversity – Collections, Catalogues & Context  
Techniques and methods of documentation  
**The issue of preservation management of sports documentation in Japan**

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Brief presentation (5 minutes)

### **Abstract**

This presentation will feature the preservation management of sports documentation in Japan. After the decision was made to award the Olympic and Paralympic Games to Tokyo in 2020, opportunities to look back on the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in 1964 from documentation of those days have increased. Therefore, a deeper understanding of the availability and existence of said documentation, which is spread across multiple locations, is an urgent issue. Many national and international sports tournaments and games have been held in Japan. However, it's not apparent how documentation, medals, uniforms and the competition equipment have been kept and preserved after the games because they haven't been treated as culturally important property or works of art that are historically significant.

Even in the Prince Chichibu Memorial Sports Museum, the national museum of sport, the creation of a list and digitization of its collection and documentation has been delayed due to a lack of budget and human resources.

With respect to these circumstances, we will report the issues and solutions of the preservation of sports documentation in Japan.

### **Background of issues**

Japan has played host to many national and international sports championships and games. Japanese sports materials consist of a wide variety of items, including medals, uniforms, sports gear and competition equipment. Bulletin reports of various athletic events, athletic event board members' letters or diaries, drawings of sports facilities,

posters, videos, images and audio files are also considered as culturally and historically significant. All of these materials are necessary for better understanding of historical sporting events, achievement and the spirit of athletes and development of sports in Japan.

The demand for the use of these materials is increasing after Tokyo was awarded the Olympic and Paralympic Games held in 2020. However, there are no clear records regarding the existence of this documentation. “Where are materials kept?” or “Who is taking care of sporting materials?” We currently don’t have much concrete information. As such, we are facing three key issues:

### **Issue 1: Continuous preservation**

It’s difficult to maintain a workable system to preserve sports equipment and documents because most of the management committees of international athletic events are temporary, and they seem to lack the concept of continuous preservation of sports equipment and documents. For example, the Olympic Games have been held three times in Japan: Tokyo (1964), Sapporo (1972) and Nagano (1998), but equipment or documents relating to these Olympic Games hasn’t been collected in one location. They are stored in museums or memorial halls of the host cities. Additionally, some materials are stored across multiple locations of the host cities, including city facilities, local ward facilities, private companies and individuals. The structuring of exactly what materials are available can’t be performed when they are spread across such a wide range of locations.

### **Issue 2: Perspective on the use of sports equipment and documents**

Sports materials seem to be treated as ‘single purpose messages or statements’ since they are simply considered as “something commemorative.” For example, in the bid process for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics, Japan tried to sell itself using “Omotenashi,” (Japanese sense of hospitality) but Omotenashi was actually the theme of the Tokyo Olympics 1964 as well. This can be seen in posters from the time at the Prince Chichibu Memorial Sports Museum and Library.

The official poster of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics is known for its beautiful design, using simple emblems and pictures, but there were other posters made as well. Those were for promoting citizens to join Olympic activities, such as cleaning the city and fundraising for the Olympics. This could also be considered as “Omotenashi.” Thus, there were many

kinds of posters for the Tokyo Olympics and they helped introduce the 1964 Tokyo Olympics from many different aspects, not only through the beauty of the design itself, but also by showing Omotenashi activities of the citizens.

### **Issue 3: Lack of budget and human resources**

In many Japanese sports museums, there are few professional staff members, such as curators, archivists, librarians, and staff for education or restoration. Therefore, many of them are not capable of organizing materials, cataloging and digital archiving. Because sport materials are considered as “something commemorative,” the curators do not try to actively investigate or collect sports materials, or acquire new knowledge of sporting history. Therefore, the importance of having professional staff at the museums is not fully appreciated, leading to sufficient financial resources not being made available.

### **Future Goals**

#### **1. The formation of a new multidiscipline research project for sports materials**

First, an investigation is needed into the sports materials that are now scattered and divided in order to discover where and how the materials have been preserved. A system is also needed in which museums, libraries and public record offices that have sports materials better cooperate and work on organizing, cataloging and restoring these materials. Furthermore, it is important to take a multidiscipline approach to researching sports materials from the contexts of art history, technological history and industrial materials.

#### **2. International collaboration between sports museums**

Japan is not alone in facing such tasks related to sports materials. Therefore, by cooperating with sports museums in other countries, we need to collect, share and send information. Since the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics will soon be upon us, now is the time that sports materials garner attention, and we should forge a network with sports museums both domestically and all over the world.