

Himeji Museum of Literature – Sightseeing Highlights

Designed by world-renowned architect Ando Tadao, the Himeji Museum of Literature offers a number of highlights. Enjoy a distant view of the Himeji Castle while strolling through the “Forest of Tales”.

■ Entrance

- ① Gate area behind Otokoyama Hill; sense of harmony with nature
- ② Approach to pathways
- ③ Spot with a full view of the museum grounds

■ South Building (South Wing)

- ④ Angular design – a minimalist combination of quadratic shapes (in contrast to the North Wing)
- ⑤ Corridor style inner stairwell that invokes a sense of extraordinariness
- ⑥ Showers of light from above...skylights at every turn
- ⑦ Glass walls transmit light and scenery from outdoors; sense of liberation

■ By the Courtyard

- ⑧ Stone wall with turtle shell pattern—follows design from the Hamamoto Residence
- ⑨ Ramp surrounded by the sound of streaming water...main building gradually comes into view
- ⑩ View of the Himeji Castle over the green hill
- ⑪ Water from the pond descends a flight of steps in the image of a cascade
- ⑫ Waterside resting area with view of artificial pond and garden landscape

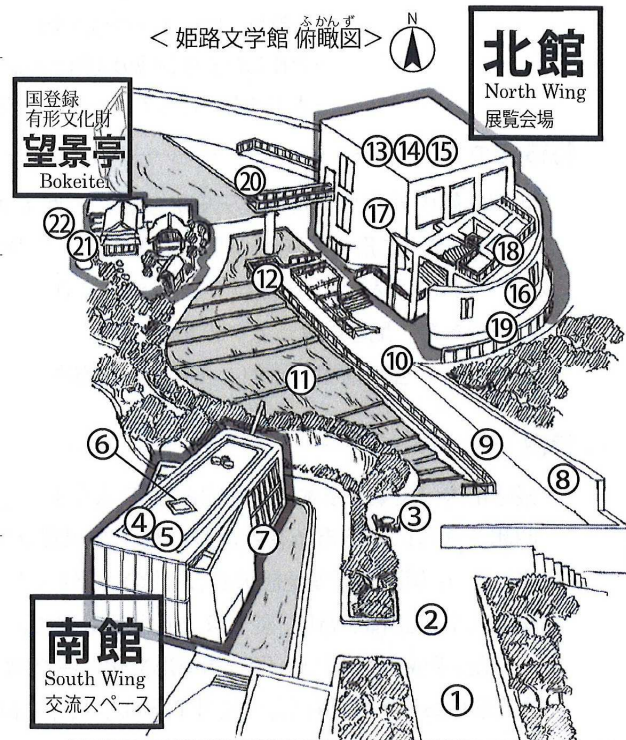
■ North Building (North Wing)

- ⑬ Geometric building merging cubic and cylindrical shapes
- ⑭ Three levels of dynamic interior space
- ⑮ Exhibition space connects seamlessly in an ascending spiral
- ⑯ Unique view of the White Heron (Himeji) Castle through the glass slits
- ⑰ Open structure of pillars and beams; staircases in multiple directions
- ⑱ Rooftop terrace with expansive view of the castle towers and town
- ⑲ Commune with nature at slope with view of green garden, bamboo forest
- ⑳ Observation deck standing over the manmade pond; enjoy a distant view of the Nagoyama Bussharito (stupa), a vibrant sunset, etc.

■ Bokeitei House (Hamamoto’s old residence)

- ㉑ Constructed with wood in the Taisho Era (now a Registered Tangible Cultural Property)
- ㉒ Hidden spot offering a sweeping view of the Himeji Castle, Ando’s architecture, and the residence’s traditional Japanese-style architecture.*

*view differs by season.



Features and Construction Data

◇ Feature 1

This site is located at the foot of Otokoyama Hill, approximately 500 meters Northwest of the Himeji Castle. “Otokoyama Hill” —which houses the Senhime Tenmangu Shrine—forms a geographical pair with “Himeyama Hill”, upon which the castle sits. The architecture also reflects this relationship:

- Harmony between the buildings, history, and natural environment
- Correspondence between the Museum and Castle
- Contrasting geometric structures of the North and South Buildings
- Alignment of the North/South Buildings, along with its combination with the pond and “Bokeitei House”, a National Registered Tangible Cultural Property.

◇ Feature 2

The North Building (North Wing) is situated such that the Himeji Castle can be viewed from both within and outside of the building. The design is that of an open cylinder encompassing one of two square shapes (each divided into 9 parts) that overlap at a 30-degree angle. The square shaped parts measure 22.5m per side, while the cylindrical component has a radius of 20m. The embrace of the cylinder binds the spaces together, giving the overall structure a sense of completeness. The pond as well as the sloped pathway are arranged to compliment this building’s placement. The South Building (South Wing) stands in front of the artificial pond. Its overall design can be described as an assembly of square and rectangular faces.

◇ Feature 3

Constructed in the Taisho Era, “Bokeitei House” was originally the secondary residence of a Himeji businessman named Hamamoto. It became a municipal property in 1958, and was used by citizens as a recreational spot and wedding hall. During the construction of the museum, it was decided that 1/3 of the original property would be preserved and maintained alongside the new Western style buildings. This portion was renamed “Bokeitei” (“scenic bower”) by Urasenke’s 15th SEN Soshitsu (Grand Master), and came to be a National Registered Tangible Cultural Property in 2009.¹

¹ Urasenke is one of the three main schools of Japanese tea ceremony.

The wooden structures from older times, paired with the museum building’s sleek and modern design brings about a novel landscape.

◇ Feature 4

A work of architecture by ANDO Tadao, the Himeji Museum of Literature has received high praises from architects both nationwide and abroad. It is currently listed in the Michelin Green Guide as one of 8 recommended tourist attractions in Himeji City.

North Building (North Wing)



Year of Completion: 1991
Total Floor Area: 3,815 m²
Levels: 3 floors above ground,
1 floor below ground
Structure: Steel-Reinforced Concrete

South Building (South Wing)



Year of Completion: 1994
Total Floor Area: 2,533 m²
Levels: 2 floors above ground,
1 floor below ground
Structure: Reinforced Concrete

Bokeitei House



Year of Completion: 1991
Total Floor Area: 444 m²
Levels: single story
Structure: Wood with
Tile Roof