

## **Japan Association Montessori**

—An academic research organization registered with the Science Council of Japan—

Japan Association Montessori Office

Tomisaka Christian Center Bldg. 2

2-17-41 Koishikawa, Bunkyo-ku

Tokyo 112-0002

URL: <http://www.montessori-org/>

Email: [montessori1968@nifty.com](mailto:montessori1968@nifty.com)

Postal transfer account: 00110-7-71777

### **The Roots of Montessori Education**

Maria Montessori, a graduate of the University of Rome Medical School, was one of the first women in Italy to get a medical degree. In 1907, she opened a small school called Casa dei Bambini (Children's House) in an impoverished district of San Lorenzo, Italy. Based on her success with children with physical and cognitive disorders, Dr. Montessori established a method of education with special emphasis on early childhood, advocating teaching through scientific observation.

Dr. Montessori discovered that children are naturally programmed to grow and develop, and that the only role of adults in teaching should be to watch over their charges. Montessori education provides an environment that supports and promotes the inherent ability of children to learn through activity.

During its century of existence, there was a period in which Montessori education was not widely practiced. In the 1960s, in the USA, the method was given legitimacy through verifications in psychological and medical fields, and now schools based on the methods used at Casa dei Bambini can be found throughout the world.

## History of Japan Association Montessori

Montessori education was first introduced in Japan in the now-defunct *Yorozuchoho* newspaper on January 11, 1912, proof that it was already drawing attention during the Meiji Era. Unfortunately, the Montessori method fell out of favor as the social climate in Japan shifted towards militarism. It was a time when child-centered education with an emphasis on independence was not well received.

The Japan Association Montessori (JAM) was founded in 1968. Its basis was the 1965 founding of the Umeda Children's Home (Kodomo-no-ie), by Petro Heidrich, a professor at Tokyo's Sophia University, and the Montessori Study Group, made up of professors of the Education Department of Sophia's Faculty of Literature. Association Montessori Internationale (headquartered in Amsterdam, The Netherlands) approved JAM as a friendship organization. In 1996, JAM was registered with the Science Council of Japan, and has been recognized as one of its academic research organizations since the Council was reorganized in 2005.

## An Outline of the Japan Association Montessori Organization (current as of March 2015)

1. Office: Tomisaka Christian Center Bldg. 2, 2-17-41 Koishikawa, Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo 112-0002
2. Board of Trustees: 26 trustees, 2 auditors
3. Members: About 900 (including individuals and organizations in Japan, and overseas members)
4. Branches: 10 (Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Tokyo, Hokuriku, Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku, Kyushu)

### Activities

1. Annual nationwide Japan Association Montessori Conference
2. Publication of the academic journal, *Montessori Kyoiku* (Montessori Education)

3. Regular meetings of the Board of Trustees and All-Japan Board of Trustees made up of regional branch representatives
4. Regular general meeting (held during the annual conference)
5. Licensing of and support for Montessori educator training institutions

#### Member Benefits

1. Discounted fee to attend the annual conference
2. Complimentary copies of the JAM journal, *Montessori Kyoiku* (in Japanese)
3. Discounts on Montessori-related books
4. May present at the annual conference
5. May submit articles to *Montessori Kyoiku*
6. JAM will introduce families to kindergarten facilities run by JAM members.