



8 Oct. (Thu.) - 15 Nov. (Sun.), 2026

Remarks:
*The exhibits may be changed due to various reasons without notice.
*The order of exhibits in this list do not necessarily correspond to the order of exhibition.
*Names in square brackets [] indicate the collections holding the works. Unless otherwise noted, all works are in the collection of The Tokugawa Art Museum.
*Some works will be exhibited only during periods A or B:
<A>: 8 October - 27 October, 2026
: 28 October - 15 November, 2026

Introduction

As containers for holding objects, boxes have long been a familiar presence in human life. At the same time, they have also at times held special meaning or served important roles.

In regions blessed with high-quality materials, beautiful boxes have been crafted using a variety of artistic techniques. In Japan, in addition to the form and design of the boxes themselves, the history associated with them and the traces of how past generations have cherished and handled them are also passed down as valuable attributes. Boxes serve as the foundation for the preservation of cultural properties and at the same time stand as witnesses to their history.

This exhibition endeavors to bring boxes—which have long played a vital behind-the-scenes role—into the limelight. We hope you will take this opportunity to reflect anew on the beauty and functionality of these boxes, which have been safeguarded and passed down hand-in-hand with the artworks they contained, as well as on the role they have played in the continuous effort to preserve cultural properties for future generations.

Part 1

The History and Evolution of Boxes

From pencil cases and small storage containers to furniture and even built structures such as houses, “boxes” in their variety of forms have always been a familiar presence in our lives.

When we think of boxes, we tend to picture rectangular objects made from wood panels, but this form is actually a relatively recent development. Earlier forms, such as baskets woven from vines, plant stems, and bark, date back to prehistoric times. Among the earliest rectangular boxes found in Japan were wood and stone burial caskets of the Yayoi period through the Kofun period (approximately the first millennium BCE to the 6th century CE). From the mid-Heian period (ca. 10th century) onward, as tools and techniques improved, Japanese boxes evolved into various forms, with wooden board becoming the primary material.

1 *Wamyō-ruijūshō* Japanese Dictionary.
Edo period, 1617.
Provenance: The 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.
[Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya]

2 *Man'yōshū* Ancient Poetry Anthology.
Edo period, 17th c.
Provenance: Honju-in Shimousa, mistress of the 3rd lord of Owari, Tokugawa Tsunanari.
[Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya]

3 *Wakan-sansai zue* Encyclopedia with Illustration.
Edo period, 1713.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.
[Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya]

4 Copy of Chapter Sawarabi, Yadorigi and Azumaya from the *Illustrated Tale of Genji*, one of three handscrolls.
By Tanaka Shinbi.
Shōwa period, 1935.

5 Various Monsters Moving around in the Midnight (copy), one of two handscrolls.
Edo period, 18th-19th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

6 **Important Cultural Property**
Scenes of a Kabuki Performance, one of two handscrolls.
Text: Traditionally attributed to Karasumaru Mitsuhiro.
Edo period, 17th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

7 *Zushi* Miniature Shrine for *Shari* Buddha's Relics.
Nanbokuchō period, 14th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

8 Tea Canister, *marutsubo* round jar type, stoneware.
China, Yuan-Ming dynasty, 14th-15th c.
Box: Japanese cedar.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

9 Tiered Food Box, *aoi*, paulownia and chrysanthemum crests design, *maki-e* lacquer.
Momoyama-Edo period, 16th-17th c.
Provenance: Tokugawa Ieyasu.

10 Medicine Cabinet, chrysanthemum scroll design, *maki-e* lacquer.
Edo period, 17th c.
Provenance: Reisen-in Chiyohime, wife of the 2nd lord of Owari, Tokugawa Mitsutomo.

11 Coffey, autumn grass design, mother-of-pearl inlay and *maki-e* lacquer.
Momoyama period, 16th-17th c.
Provenance: the Lee Yu-kuan family.

Part 2

The Structure of Boxes

Of all the wooden boxes in Japan, the most common are made from paulownia wood. These emerged around the 16th century, spurred by the widespread adoption of large rip-saws—which made it possible to cut big logs lengthwise—and planes, which facilitated flat, smooth surface finishing.

The development of sharp tools and the resulting technical advancements in the Edo period led to a particularly diverse range of box designs from that time onward. The balancing of structural strength, aesthetic beauty, and time and cost required for production resulted in the creation of boxes of various shapes and materials.

Lids

12 Incense Container, folding fan shape, blue and white with overglazed enamels.
China, Ming dynasty, 17th c.
Boxes: paulownia and Japanese cedar.
Provenance: the 2nd lord of Owari, Tokugawa Mitsutomo.

13 Tea Scoop, named “Tazu”, bamboo.
By Sugiki Fusai.
Edo period, 17th c.
Boxes: fir and paulownia.
Provenance: the 12th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Naritaka.

Box Construction

14 Tea Caddy with handle, stoneware.
China, Southern Song-Yuan dynasty, 13th-14th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood and rosewood.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

15 Tea Caddy, named “Yokota”, *katatsuki* square-shouldered type, Seto ware, glazed stoneware.
Edo period, 17th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood and paulownia.
Provenance: the 2nd lord of Owari, Tokugawa Mitsutomo.

Cords

16 Incense Container, wooden clappers shape, fans and Chinese characters design, blue and white.
China, Ming dynasty, 16th-17th c.
Boxes: paulownia.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

17 Small Inkstone Box, boat and drafting maple leaves design, *maki-e* lacquer.
Muromachi period, 15th-16th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

18 A Pair of Tea Caddies, papier-mache on wood and bamboo, black lacquer.
Made by the 1st Sumiyama Yōho.
Edo period, 18th-19th c.
[Private Collection]

Materials

19 **Important Cultural Property**
Tea Bowl, named “Fuyugare”, Oribe type, Mino ware.
Edo period, 17th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: the Okaya family.
Donated by the Okaya family.

20 Incense Container, swan shape, porcelain.
The Netherlands, 18th c.
Box: Japanese cedar.
Incense Container: Provenance: the Okaya family.
Donated by the Okaya family.

21 Portable Tea Box with utensils for tea ceremony, braided rattan.
China, Qing dynasty, 17th-18th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

Part 3

The Functionality of Boxes

Boxes have served various roles throughout their long history. From a practical standpoint, they protect their contents from impact and damage, and facilitate the organization, classification, and transport of items. On the other hand, because a box and its lid function to create a physical barrier between its interior and exterior, the act of placing something inside a box constituted separation or even concealment of its contents from the outside world, in some cases conferring authority or value to the contents through this act. Boxes containing objects of worship served the solemn role of isolating the sacred from the profane, thereby demonstrating the sanctity of their contents through their use.

Furthermore, details of the provenance, transmission, authentications and appraisals of a box's contents can also be recorded directly on the box itself as inscriptions that convey parts of the object's story to the present day.

Protect

22 Arrows, bamboo and feather.
Edo period, 18th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: the Tayasu Tokugawa family.

23 Tea Caddy, named “Yomogi”, *nodate* type, Seto ware.
Edo period, 17th c.
Boxes: paulownia.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

Adorn

24 Sutra Case, chrysanthemum scroll design, mother-of-pearl inlay on black lacquer.
Korea, Goryeo dynasty, 13th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

25 Sutra Case, *Hokke Mandara* design, *maki-e* lacquer.
Kamakura-Nanbokuchō period, 14th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

26 **Important Cultural Property**
Covered Box, auspicious motifs from poem “Palace of Longevity,” *maki-e* lacquer.
Kamakura period, 13th-14th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

Organize

27 Tea Bowl, known as “Yōhen Tenmoku,” *tenmoku* type, oil-spot glaze, stoneware.
China, Jin dynasty, 12th-13th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood and paulownia.
Provenance: Aburaya Jōgen, Aburaya Jōyū, Tokugawa Ieyasu and the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.

28 Record of Inheritance of Tea Utensils from the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao to the 2nd Mitsutomo.
Edo period, 1651.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

29 Flower Vase, named “Kine-no-ore”, *kinuta* fulling block shape, bronze.
China, Yuan-Ming dynasty, 14th-15th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood and paulownia.
Provenance: Asano Yoshinaga, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.

[Reference Work]
Lacquered Box for Tea Bowl known as “Hakutenmoku”.
Edo period, 18th c.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

30 List of Tea Ceremony Utensil Treasures of Owari Tokugawa Family.
Edo period, 1728.
Provenance: the Owari Tokugawa family.

Carry

31 A Pair of Liquor Bottles, figure under the tree design, blue and white.
China, Ming-Qing dynasty, 16th-17th c.
Box: Lacquered wood.
Provenance: Tokugawa Ieyasu.

Conceal

32 *Nagamochi* Carrying Chest, paulownia crest design, *maki-e* lacquer.
Momoyama-Edo period, 16th-17th c.
Provenance: Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.

33 *Aikuchi-goshirae* Sword Mounting for *Wakizashi* Short Sword known as “Monoyoshi Sadamune”.
Edo period, 17th c.
Boxes: paulownia and lacquered wood.
Provenance: the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao, and the 2nd Mitsutomo.

Document

34 Tea Kettle, concentric circle pattern, Ashiya type, cast iron.
Muromachi period, 16th c.
Box: lacquered wood.
Provenance: Takeno Jō'ō, Iseya Sōrin, Tokugawa Ieyasu, and the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.

Attribute

35 A Pair of Tea Scoops, named “Futari Shizuka”, bamboo.
By Sen no Sōtan.
Edo period, 17th c.
Boxes: Paulownia and Japanese cedar.
Provenance: the 12th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Naritaka.

Part 4

Made-to-order Boxes

Exceptional objects were traditionally fitted with their own custom boxes. Some boxes were specially designed to fit a particular object, while others were crafted to conform to certain general specifications consistent with the owner's preferred style. The customization of the boxes and the storage tags attached to them reflect the owner's aesthetic sensibilities and established conventions, embodying both individuality and standardization.

The modern era brought further new developments in boxes. Modern connoisseurs commissioned elaborate boxes for their treasure collections, showcasing the heights of their aesthetic sensibilities and discernment in their designs and materials.

Boxes were no longer merely containers for protecting the objects within; the boxes themselves became regarded as objects of appreciation. They reflect not only the quality of their exquisite contents but also the history of the passion they generated for themselves.

Tailored to the Contents

36 *Aikuchi-goshirae* Sword Mounting for *Tantō* Short Sword known as “Fudō Masamune”.
Edo period, 17th c.
Box: Lacquered wood.
Provenance: Tokugawa Ieyasu (attr.).

37 Incense Burner, named “Chidori”, porcelain with celadon glaze.
China, Southern Song-Yuan dynasty, 13th-14th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood, *nashiji*-lacquered wood.
Provenance: Tokugawa Ieyasu and the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.

38 Illustrated Album of *The Tale of Genji*.
Picture by Kiyohara Yukinobu; calligraphy by court nobles.
Edo period, 17th c.
Box: maki-e lacquered wood.
Provenance: Shinkō-in Katakō, wife of the 18th head of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshiakira.
[Private Collection]

Owners and Their Boxes

39 **Important Cultural Property** <A>
Bokuseki Calligraphy.
By Priest Xutang Zhiyu.
China, Southern Song dynasty, 1254.
Boxes: lacquered wood and paulownia.
Provenance: Kitamuki Dōchin, Hosokawa Yūsai, the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao, and others.

40
Bokuseki Calligraphy.
By Priest Zhuxian Fanxian.
Kamakura period, 14th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood and paulownia.
Provenance: the 7th Tokugawa Shogun Ietsugu and the 6th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Tsugutomo.

41 Tea Caddy, named “Sōmu”, *katatsuki* square shouldered type, stoneware.
China, Southern Song-Yuan dynasty, 13th-14th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood, quince and paulownia.
Provenance: Yamaoka Sōmu, the 5th Tokugawa Shogun Tsunayoshi, the 4th lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshimichi, and others.

42 Tea Bowl, named “Mishima-oke,” Mishima type, carved and inlaid decoration, Buncheong ware.
Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood and paulownia.
Provenance: Sen no Rikyū (attr.), Sen no Dōan, Shōkadō Shōjō, and the 1st lord of Owari, Tokugawa Yoshinao.

43 Tea Scoop, bamboo.
By the 4th of Omote-senke, Kōshin Sōsa.
Edo period, 17th c.
Boxes: Japanese cedar and paulownia.
Provenance: the Kii Tokugawa family.
[Private Collection]

44 *Waka* Poem on *Shikishi* Paper.
By Fujiwara no Sadaie.
Kamakura period, 13th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: Kōbori Enshū, Hotta Masamori and Mitsui Taizan.
Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Teshigawara.

[Reference Work]
Tea Ceremony Textbook of Sōwa School.
One of three books.
Edo period, 19th c.
[Private Collection]

45 Tea Caddy, named “Karamarutsubo”, *marutsubo* round type, stoneware.
China, Yuan-Ming dynasty, 14th c.
Boxes: Japanese cedar, lacquered wood, paulownia and persimmon.
Provenance: Katagiri Sekishū and Sadanobu.
[Private Collection]

46 Letter of Katagiri Sekishū Sadamasa, to Nagai Naoyuki.
Edo period, 17th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: Matsudaira Myōkan (Yasuyoshi).
[Private Collection]

47 Tea Bowl, Mishima type, stoneware.
Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16th c.
Boxes: lacquered wood and paulownia.
Provenance: the 7th lord of Matsue, Matsudaira Fumai Harusato.
[Private Collection]

48 Incense Container, design of Zhou Maoshu viewing a lotus pond, porcelain with underglaze blue.
China, Ming dynasty, 17th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: Matsudaira Fumai and the Okaya family.
Donated by the Okaya family.

The World of Kurafuda

49 Tea Bowl, known as “Shiro-tenmoku”, *tenmoku* type, glazed stoneware.
Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16th c.
Boxes: paulownia.
Provenance: Oda Nagayoshi, Nanzenji Konchi'in Temple, the 4th Shogun Tokugawa Ietsuna.

50 Thirty-six *Waka* Poems written on *Shikishi* Square Paper.
Box: paulownia.
Edo period, 17th c.
Provenance: the Iyo Saijō Matsudaira family.

51 Portraits of the New Six Immortal Poets.
Calligraphy by Prince Shinkei.
Picture by Kanō Tsunenobu.
Edo period, 17th-18th c.
Box: lacquered wood.
Provenance: the Echizen Matsudaira family.

52 Tea Kettle, gourd shape, iron.
Edo period, 17th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: the Kaga Maeda family and the Okaya family.
Donated by the Okaya family.

53 **Important Art Object**
Draft of *Waka* Poems.
By Emperor Gonara.
Muromachi period, 16th c.
Boxes: fir and lacquered wood.
Provenance: the Sendai Date family.
Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Teshigawara.

54 Charcoal Basket, autumn field design, *maki-e* lacquer.
Momoyama-Edo period, 17th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: Inoue Segai (Kaoru) and the Okaya family.
Donated by the Okaya family.

55 Tea Bowl, cylindrical shape, *shonzui* type, blue and white.
China, Ming dynasty, 17th c.
Boxes: paulownia and persimmon.
Provenance: the Sekido family and the Ogawa family.
[Private Collection]

56 Box for Buddhist Sutra known as “Chūsonji-kyō” and Kiyohira-kyō.”
Edo period, 17th c.
Provenance: Mitsui Takaharu and Nakano Chūtaro.
Donated by Mr. and Mrs. Teshigawara.

Boxes Shaped by Modern Tea Connoisseurs

57 **Important Cultural Property**
Tea Poem written on *Kaishi* Paper, known as “Kumano-rugaishi”.
By Fujiwara no Kintsune.
Kamakura period, 1200.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: the Katsuramiya family, Inoue Segai and the Okaya family.
Donated by the Okaya family.

58 **Important Cultural Property**
Tea Bowl, named “Shigure”, cylindrical shape, *raku* type, stoneware.
Edo period, 17th c.
Boxes: paulownia and lacquered wood.
Provenance: the Mitsui family, Hirase Rokō, Shimomura Saigyōan, Morikawa Jōshun'an and others.
[Nagoya City Museum]

59 Tea Bowl, named “Shiranami”, abstract design applied with *hakeme* brush, Buncheong ware.
Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16th c.
Boxes: lacquered paper, paulownia and lacquered wood.
Provenance: Fushimiya Jin'emōn, Asai Kyūtarō, Fukihara Kurōsaburō, Okaya Sōsuke and others.
Donated by the Okaya family.

60 Tea Bowl, named “Kyōgoku”, *kakinohta* type, stoneware.
Korea, Joseon dynasty, 16th c.
Boxes: paulownia and chestnut.
Provenance: the Kyōgoku family, Hirase Rokō, 3rd Takamatsu Teichū and others.
Donated by the Takamatsu family.

61 Scene of Chapter 10 “The Green Branch (Sakaki)” of *The Tale of Genji*.
By Ukita Ikkai.
Edo period, 19th c.
Box: paulownia.
Provenance: the Okaya family.
Donated by the Okaya family.

To coincide with this exhibition, the Tokugawa Art Museum published an exhibition catalog.

We hope you will also find it of interest.

THE TOKUGAWA ART MUSEUM
徳川美術館

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