

SECTION 8 TRANSMISSION OF WAKA POETRY

A series of imperial poetry anthologies, from the *Kokin wakashū* to the *Shin-shoku kokin wakashū*, were compiled from the Heian period to the Muromachi period over the course of the lifespans of twenty-one emperors. They were esteemed as exemplifying the pinnacle of *waka* poetry in each respective era and being selected for inclusion in an imperial poetry anthology was the ultimate honor for any poet. Although imperial *waka* anthologies ceased to be compiled from the medieval period onward, the passion for *waka* poetry on the part of successive generations of emperors did not wane and poetry gatherings for the new year (the *waka gyokai hajime*), monthly poetry gatherings, and other events continued to be held. As a result, many imperial calligraphies of *waka* poetry have been passed down over the generations.

SECTION 9 GAGAKU MUSIC AND BUGAKU DANCE

Gagaku is a general term for formal music and dance transmitted from China and Korea that was performed at court rituals and temple memorial services. The imperial court established a specialized department known as the Gagakuryō (Bureau of court music) that was charged with conducting training in these forms. Members of the nobility learned musical instruments and dance as a familiar form of cultivation and performed it at celebratory banquets. From the Heian period onward, the emperor learned to play stringed instruments such as the *biwa* (lute) and *sō* (zither), as well as the *shō* (mouth organ) and *yokobue* (*ryūteki*) flute, and enjoyed ensemble playing. However, percussion instruments, such as the *kakko*, *taiko*, and *shōko* drums, as well as wind instruments, such as the *hichiriki*, were the specialization of musicians of the Gagakuryō.



SECTION 10 INCENSE

Fragrant woods such as aloeswood, agarwood, sandalwood, and others were precious items imported to Japan from Southeast Asia and in the Heian period, the aristocracy held a monopoly on these items. Incense made from grinding these into fine powders and mixing them with a binder in various customized blends became a popular pastime among the nobles, as attested in scenes in *The Tale of Genji* narrative. From the Muromachi period onward, the traditional incense ceremony, which focused on enjoying the scents of the fragrant incense woods themselves directly, took shape, although the creation of blended incense continued among the nobility. In the incense ceremony, which reached its peak in the Edo period, specific pieces of incense wood were given names derived from *waka* poetry and narrative literature, and among them were even fragrant woods that received names from the emperor, known as *chokumei kō*.

SECTION 11 COURT COSTUME

Since ceremonies within the imperial palace from the Heian period onward were conducted while sitting on *tatami* mats that were placed on a wooden floor, the robes of the emperor and the aristocratic classes were broad in width and developed into beautiful garments with long trains that trailed beautifully behind. The men's *sokutai*, which evolved from the transformation of the dress of the Chinese court nobility of the Tang Dynasty, and the women's twelve-layered robes (*jūni-hitoe*), consisting of the *itsutsuginu* (five layering robes), *karaginu*, and *mo* (train), were perfected in the mid-Heian period. The latter Heian period also witnessed the development of the practice of *emondō* (the "Way of Formal Dress"), a technique for dressing beautifully in the *kowashōzoku* robes, which were treated with starch to create stiffness and straight lines in the robes.



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Thematic Exhibition
Celebrating the Accession of the New Emperor



The Imperial Household and the Transmission of Courtly Elegance



Continuing unbroken since ancient times, the Japanese imperial family has at times served as the political backbone of the government and at times been trapped in the interstices of internal civil wars, tossed about on the waves of history.

However, at the same time, it has continually born the central role of the transmission of traditional Japanese culture, starting with the various special events and ceremonies of the imperial court, featuring *waka* poetry, calligraphy, incense, *gagaku* music, and other cultural practices. Presented in conjunction with the accession of the new emperor scheduled for May of 2019, this exhibition introduces the various aspects of the distinctive culture cultivated at the Japanese imperial court through calligraphic and painted works, interior furnishings and accessories, textiles, and other objects.

Hōsa Library Exhibition Rooms 1 & 2
From April 14 (Sun.) to June 2 (Sun.), 2019

SECTION 1 CALLIGRAPHIES AND THE PORTRAITS OF THE EMPEROR

There are very few images depicting the figures of emperors and most surviving portraits picture them in exclusive dress, such as the ceremonial court attire known as *kōrozen gohō* or in their everyday wear called *ohiki nōshi*. Also, in the cases of cloistered emperors who entered the priesthood after abdication, some are depicted dressed in the *kesa* robes that were formal monks' garb.

Calligraphies written in the hand of an emperor are called *shinkan*. The successive generations of emperors learned from the leading scholars of their respective eras and acquired significant knowledge and refinement. As a result, one can find superior grace and wisdom in their calligraphic traces.

SECTION 2 THE EMPEROR'S RESIDENCE

The word *miyabi* (elegance/refinement/grace) comes from the word *miyako* (= the place where the emperor's palace and residence are located), suggesting a cultivated, metropolitan style of beauty that was associated with the imperial court. The grounds of the emperor's residence, which from the Heian period onward was called the *dairi*, housed a number of different palaces. Formal ceremonies were conducted at the Shishinden; ordinary, daily activities took place in the Seiryōden; and the empress and her ladies-in-waiting lived in the Kōkyū (rear palace). Each palace was outfitted with furnishings, paintings, and decorative art items appropriate to its respective function and additional decorations such as banners and curtains were added during certain formal rites.

SECTION 3 ACCESSION AND THE DAIJŌE RITE

The installation of a new emperor is marked by a rite of accession known as the *sokui-rei*. This ritual proclaims the accession to the imperial throne through the transfer of the Imperial Regalia, known as the "Three Sacred Treasures" (sword, mirror, and jewel), which together are the symbol of the imperial office. It is the custom for the emperor to attend wearing the *raifuku*,

which is of Chinese origin and is the highest formal ceremonial robe worn by the emperor and his various retainers. After the celebration of the accession ceremony, the *daijōe* rite celebrating the spirits of the imperial ancestors and giving thanks for the harvest is held. Traditionally, the *daijōe* was a ritual in which the emperor personally hosted the various ancestral spirits with offerings of food and alcohol in a grand-scale ceremony. The offerings used rice harvested from sacred fields in two counties to the east and west of the capital selected by divination and a new palace was constructed specifically dedicated to the ritual. The rite of accession and the *daijōe* ritual provided a clear confirmation, both internally and publicly, of the installation of the new emperor.

SECTION 4 ANNUAL FUNCTIONS AND CEREMONIES

From the beginning of the year to the year-end, over the course of four seasons and twelve months, the emperor lived a busy life of constant annual functions from morning to night. Starting from the *shihōhai*, held in the early morning of the first day of the New Year, through to the *tsuina* ceremony to drive out evil spirits and dispel disaster at the year's end, these annual functions numbered as many as 280 at the height of the Heian period. Forty different functions were held in the first month of the year alone. From the medieval period onward, the number of annual functions declined, but many were gradually restored in the Edo period through the economic support of the shogunate. The various annual events and ceremonies held at the imperial court also spread to the samurai and commoner classes with the passage of time.

SECTION 5 BIRTHS, COMING OF AGE CEREMONIES, AND LONGEVITY CELEBRATIONS

Congratulatory rituals were held for various life landmarks, such as the births of imperial princes and princesses and the coming of age ceremonies (*genpuku*) that celebrate their growth and maturity, or the celebrations of longevity (*sanga*) that were held to mark birthdays at each decade from the age of forty onward. The written records documenting the circumstances of these ceremonies reveal the ceremonial grandeur of these events.

SECTION 6 IMPERIAL OUTINGS AND ARRIVALS OF EMPRESSES

The emperor's official outings were referred to as *gyōkō*; outings of the empress and crown prince were known as *gyōkei*; and outings of retired emperors were called *gokō*. Of these, the processions of the emperor's *gyōkō* in particular comprised the ultimate level of formality, with numerous military officers escorting the imperial carriage, in which the emperor rode.

Emperor Goyōzei's imperial visit to the Jurakutei palace in the Momoyama period and Emperor Gomizuno-o's visit to Nijo Castle in the Edo period attracted particular attention among the residents of the capital of their time. Their magnificent processions impressed upon the people a sense of the arrival of a period of peace and the harmonious unification of court and shogunate.

The official arrival of the woman who was to become the empress at the imperial palace was called *judai*. Since the empress and empress dowager first entered the palace as court ladies, or *nyōgo*, their entrance to the palace as *nyōgo* (or *nyōgo judai*), in essence signified the imperial marriage. The procession that accompanied Masako (later known as Tōfukumon'in), who was the daughter of the second shogun Tokugawa Hidetada, when she entered the court was one of the grandest events to take place in Kyoto during the early Edo period, rivalling even the emperor's official visit to Nijō Castle (*nijōjō gyōkō*).

SECTION 7 OBJECTS CONNECTED TO THE IMPERIAL HOUSEHOLD

The objects that were owned by the emperor and items ascribed as having been created by the emperors were considered precious articles far beyond the ordinary. Compared to original calligraphies in the hand of emperors, objects connected with the emperors are even fewer in number, but have been highly regarded as irreplaceable objects and have been cherished as bringing honor and prestige to the households that owned them. Emperor Gotoba of the Kamakura period loved swords and summoned famous swordsmiths from the various domains and commissioned them to produce swords at the imperial palace. The one inscribed "Kiku go-saku" (Made by the chrysanthemum [i.e., the emperor]) and engraved with a chrysanthemum crest is a representative example of one such work.