English

The Museum of the Imperial Collections,
Sannomaru Shozokan

皇居三の丸尚蔵館

Exterior view of the Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan (east side)

◉ *Colorful Realm of Living Beings*. Itō Jakuchū. Edo period, 18th century. Four scrolls from a set of 30.

The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan

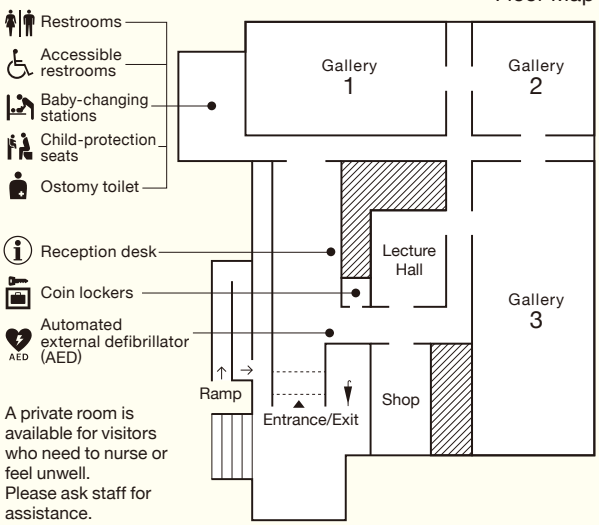
The Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan, opened in November 1993 in the East Gardens of the Imperial Palace. The Museum was established to conserve, study, and make accessible a collection of paintings, calligraphy, decorative arts, historical materials, and other works that had been passed down through generations of the Imperial Household and donated to the nation in 1989 by His Majesty, the Emperor Emeritus, and his mother, Empress Kōjun. The collection has since continued to grow through donations from other members of the Imperial Family.

The name Shozokan derives from an archaic term for an ancient government office that was charged with the preservation and management of the emperor's property. As the Museum was built on the site of the former Edo Castle's *sannomaru*, or third bailey, it was named the Sannomaru Shozokan.

In 2019, construction began on a new facility with expanded storage and exhibition spaces. In 2023, responsibility for the Museum's management and operation was transferred from the Imperial Household Agency to the National Institutes for Cultural Heritage (NICH). The new facility partially opened in November of that same year, fully opening in November 2026.

The Museum seeks to preserve and pass on the cultural properties inherited from the Imperial Family, while also showcasing the Imperial Household's cultural legacy, for the benefit of an ever-wider public.

Floor Map



Photography Guidelines

Photography policy varies by exhibition. Please refer to Museum signage for details. For exhibitions that allow photography, please note the following are prohibited: video, panoramic photography, flash, tripods, selfie sticks. Please refrain from lingering when taking photos.

Visitors with Hearing Impairments

A communication board is available at the reception desk to allow visitors to communicate in writing (English and Japanese). Please inform a staff member if you wish to use it.

Service Dogs

Guide dogs, assistance dogs, and hearing dogs are welcome inside the Museum.

The Museum primarily houses works that were passed down through generations of the Imperial Family. The collection also includes works related to the Imperial Household and the culture of the imperial court.

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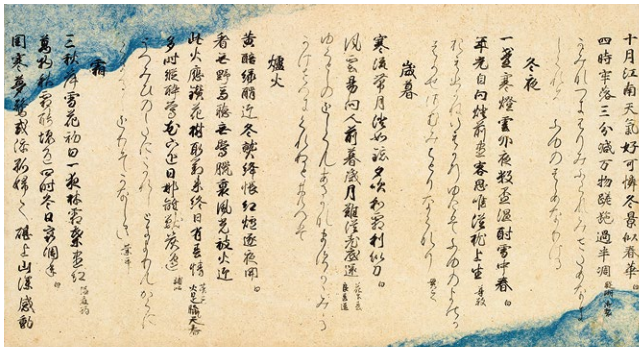
Imperial Heirlooms

Among the most notable holdings are works that were preserved by the Imperial Family during the Edo period (1603–1868) or earlier. These include the National Treasure *Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing* (*Kumogami Version*), a masterwork of Heian-period (794–1185) calligraphy formerly held at the Kyoto Imperial Palace, and Kanō Tan'yū's folding-screen pair *Scenes from the Tale of Genji*. These works give viewers a sense of the vibrant court culture that once flourished around the Kyoto Imperial Palace.



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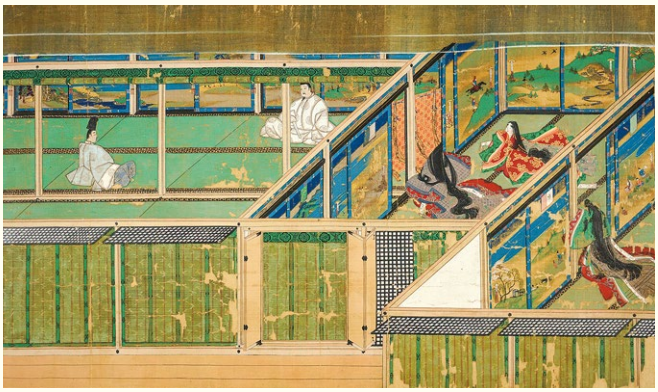

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Works Presented to the Imperial Family

The Museum's collection is also notable for works presented to the Imperial Family by temples, shrines, and former aristocratic and ruling families from the Meiji era (1868–1912) onward. These include National Treasures such as *Tracing Copy of Letters, Known as Sangluantie*, a work that preserves the calligraphy of the 4th-century master Wang Xizhi; Takashina Takakane's monumental narrative handscrolls *Illustrated Miracles of the Kasuga Deity*; Kanō Eitoku's magnificent folding screen *Chinese Lions*; and Itō Jakuchū's renowned set of paintings *Colorful Realm of Living Beings*. The collection also includes works presented to the Imperial Family by Hōryūji Temple, known as the Hōryūji Treasures, as well as a celebrated 14th-century sword known as "Wakasa Masamune," which was handed down by the Tokugawa shogunal family.

The works presented to the Imperial Family also include many outstanding examples made by the finest artists of the modern era, created especially to commemorate special events and occasions related to the Imperial Household.

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1. *Marquetry Box* (Hōryūji Treasures). China, Tang Dynasty (7th–8th century).
2. ◉ *Collection of Japanese and Chinese Poems to Sing* (*Kumogami Version*). Vol. 1 (detail). Minamoto no Kaneyuki. Heian period, 11th century.
3. ◉ *Chinese Lions* (right screen). Kanō Eitoku. Azuchi-Momoyama period, 16th century.
4. ◉ *Illustrated Miracles of the Kasuga Deity* (detail). Takashina Takakane. Kamakura period, ca. 1309.
5. *Katana* (Sword), Named "Wakasa Masamune," Unsigned. Sōshū Masamune. Kamakura period, 14th century.
6. ◎ *Albums of Portrait Photographs, Commissioned by Emperor Meiji, 1879.* The Printing Bureau (Ministry of Finance) and others. Meiji era, ca. 1880.
7. ◎ *Vase with Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons*. Namikawa Yasuyuki. Meiji era, 1899.
8. ◎ *Cabinet with Chrysanthemums in Maki-e Lacquer and Mother-of-Pearl Inlay.* Kawanobe Itchō and others. Meiji era, 1903.
9. *Court Lady* (detail). Asahi Gyokuzan. Meiji era, 1901.
10. *Poppies* (left scroll). Tsuchida Bakusen. Shōwa era, 1929.
11. ◎ *Bugaku Dancer in the Role of the Warrior Ranryō'ō*. Unno Shōmin. Meiji era, 1890.
12. Bonbonnières. Taishō–Shōwa era, 20th century.

◉ = National Treasure ◎ = Important Cultural Property.

All works featured are from the Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan, and include those owned by the Museum as well as properties of the State of Japan.

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Works Commissioned by the Imperial Family

Imperially commissioned works reflect the Imperial Family's direct involvement in the promotion of the arts. These include *Albums of Portrait Photographs, Commissioned by Emperor Meiji*, *1879* (Important Cultural Property), which contains portrait photographs of some 4,500 members of the Imperial Family and senior government officials. Emperor Meiji also commissioned a group of works from Imperial Household Artists for the 1900 Paris Exposition, including *Vase with Birds and Flowers of the Four Seasons* by the cloisonné master Namikawa Yasuyuki. Another work commissioned by the Imperial Household is Kawanobe Itchō's *Cabinet* with *Chrysanthemums in Maki-e Lacquer and Mother-of-Pearl Inlay* (Important Cultural Property), which was produced in a workshop established within the Imperial Palace and is ranked among the "three great works of the Meiji era."

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Works Purchased by the Imperial Family

The collection contains numerous outstanding examples of modern art purchased by the Imperial Family at contemporary exhibitions and expositions. These include such works as Asahi Gyokuzan's celebrated sculpture *Court Lady*, shown in an exhibition at the Japan Art Association, and Tsuchida Bakusen's painting *Poppies*, shown at the 10th Imperial Art Academy Exhibition.

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Works Symbolizing the Modern-Day Culture of the Imperial Household

Beyond Japanese art, the collection includes works received by the Imperial Family from overseas during official engagements, including diplomatic gifts and tokens of goodwill from around the world. Their distinctive characteristics offer fascinating insights into the cultures of their countries of origin. Other objects that reflect the culture of the Imperial Household include silver bonbonnières presented to guests at events commemorating auspicious occasions and photographs documenting Emperor Meiji's regional tours around the country.

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Hours
Tuesday – Sunday: 9:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. (Last admission 4:30 p.m.)

Closures
Mondays (If Monday is a national holiday, the Museum will be open on that Monday and closed on the following non-holiday weekday.); year-end / New Year holidays; February 23 (The Emperor's Birthday); and between exhibitions (Closures subject to change.)

Admission
Admission fees vary by exhibition.

Please check the Museum website for the latest information concerning entry procedures, opening hours, closures, and exhibitions.
https://shozokan.nich.go.jp/en/
Official Instagram / YouTube: @shozokan_pr

1-8 Chiyoda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-0001
(East Gardens of the Imperial Palace)
Tel: +81(0)50-5541-8600 (NTT Hello Dial Service)

The Museum is located in the East Gardens of the Imperial Palace.

Getting Here

Ote-mon Gate
Subway: Approx. 5-minute walk from Otemachi Station (Exit c13a)
JR Lines: Approx. 15-minute walk from Tokyo Station (Marunouchi North Exit)

Access via other gates
(*except Mondays, Fridays, and other days/hours the East Gardens are closed.)

Hirakawa-mon Gate
Subway (Tozai Line): Approx. 10-minute walk from Takebashi Station (Exit 1a)

Kitahanebashi-mon Gate
Subway (Tozai Line): Approx. 15-minute walk from Takebashi Station (Exit 1a)

- **When the East Gardens are closed, visitors must enter through the Ote-mon Gate.** For the East Gardens' opening times and calendar, please check the Imperial Household Agency website.
- Bags are subject to a security screening. Please allow extra time when planning your visit.
- Use of motor vehicles or bicycles is prohibited in the East Gardens, and there are no car or bicycle parking areas on the grounds. Please use nearby parking facilities.

Front cover: Exterior view of the Museum of the Imperial Collections, Sannomaru Shozokan (southeast side)

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