

JANUARY TO MARCH 2016

NEWSLETTER



KYOTO NATIONAL MUSEUM

Vol. 128

Feature Exhibitions

Going Ape for the Year of the Monkey

Legendary Blades

Meibutsu and Other Outstanding Japanese Swords

Imperial Treasures

Hina Matsuri and Japanese Dolls

Feature Exhibition

Going Ape for the Year of the Monkey

December 15, 2015–January 24, 2016, Gallery 2F-1 to 5

2016 is the Year of the Monkey according to the Chinese Zodiac. This zodiac system, which is also used in Japan and other places in Asia, features a cycle of twelve animals. In honor of the Year of the Monkey, the Kyoto National Museum is bringing out a variety of paintings and decorative art objects with representations of this zodiac animal.

The most frequently seen monkey in Japan is the indigenous Japanese macaque (*nihonzaru*). With their pink faces, grey-brown fur, and short tails, macaques are instantly recognizable, appearing in various forms of traditional Japanese culture. In the mid-Edo period (1615–1868), such illustrious artists as Itō Jakuchū (1716–1800) and Soga Shōhaku (1730–1781) painted these monkeys with idiosyncratic charm. Works by Mori Sosen (1747–1821), the renowned master of macaque painting, are a special highlight of this exhibition.

Another kind of “monkey” found in Japanese and Chinese art is the gibbon (*tenagazaru*), which is actually a kind of long-armed, long-legged ape. Though indigenous to China, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, it became a common subject matter in medieval Japanese ink painting.

Also on view are handscrolls featuring monkey characters, lacquered *netsuke* (decorative toggles) with extraordinary monkey designs, and other works from Japan and China showing the prevalence of this creature in East Asian culture.

(By Inami Rintarō, Associate Curator of Illustrated Handscrolls Paintings; translated by Melissa M. Rinne)

Feature Exhibition

Imperial Treasures

January 26, 2016–February 21, 2016, Gallery 2F-1 to 5

Kyoto was the capital of Japan for a thousand years and remains home to its rich imperial court culture. Kyoto temples house many significant artworks associated with emperors and the aristocracy. Especially important among them are temples known as *monzeki*, which were headed by imperial princes and princesses or by the sons and daughters of elite courtier families. These high-ranking temples retain the material culture and customs of the court even into the present day.

This exhibition features portraits of historical emperors and members of the court, imperial calligraphy, buddhist paintings handed down in *monzeki* temples, and large scale paintings that decorated temple interiors. Other works on view include idealized images of Chinese emperors, screens depicting the brilliance of imperial processions, and exquisitely decorated objects exemplifying the elegance of court life.

(By Suekane Toshihiko, Curator of Metalware; translated by Melissa M. Rinne)



Monkeys by a Waterfall, detail
By Nagasawa Rosetsu



Ojime (Bead) in the Shape of a Monkey
By Kaigyokusai Masatsugu
Kyoto National Museum



National Treasure
Toiletry Case with Pines and Camellias
Kyoto National Museum,
exhibit in Gallery 1F-6, on view February 2–
March 13, 2016



Important Cultural Property
Portrait of Emperor Gouda
Daikaku-ji Temple, Kyoto

Imperial Visit to Nijō Castle,
right screen, detail

Feature Exhibition

Legendary Blades

Meibutsu and Other Outstanding Japanese Swords

December 15, 2015–February 21, 2016, Gallery 1F-2

The imperial capital of Kyoto has since ancient times been home to the workshops of countless master swordsmiths. Many of the most famous blades that they forged have survived through the centuries, appearing in various episodes throughout Japanese history.

This exhibition features some of the most renowned such swords in Japan, many of them counted among a small number of blades known as *meibutsu* (literally, “famed objects”), meaning the best of the best. Among those on view is the *meibutsu* katana blade shortened from a *naginata* known as Honebami Tōshirō (“Bone-Gnawing Tōshirō”), which is owned by Toyokuni Shrine and has been designated as an Important Cultural Property. Its name comes from a story about when the wielder of this sword sliced through bone even though only pretending to cut his opponent. Also on view is the *meibutsu* katana named Yoshimoto Samonji (Important Cultural Property, owned by Kenkun Shrine), which was taken as a trophy by warlord Oda Nobunaga (1534–1582) after his critical victory at the 1560 Battle of Okehazama. Other highlights include the katana named Yoshiyuki (owned by the Kyoto National Museum), said to have been used by Sakamoto Ryōma (1835–1867), and other famous blades that bespeak dramatic histories. These swords allow us to delve back into Japan’s rich and tumultuous history while viewing the extraordinary technology and craftsmanship of some of its finest smiths.

(By Suekane Toshihiko, Curator of Metalware; translated by Melissa M. Rinne)



Right: **Tachi Sword, named Hizamaru**
Important Cultural Property, Daikaku-ji Temple, Kyoto
Left: **Tachi Sword, named Higekiri**
Important Cultural Property, Kitano Tenmangu Shrine,
Kyoto, on view December 15, 2015–January 17, 2016

Feature Exhibition

Hina Matsuri and Japanese Dolls

February 27–March 21, 2016, Gallery 1F-2

The Japanese Doll Festival, or Hina Matsuri, is a holiday that takes place each year on the third day of the third month. In honor of this celebration, the Kyoto National Museum presents its annual exhibition of outstanding Japanese dolls. Hina, Goshō, Kamo, Ishō, and mechanical Karakuri dolls are among the types on view.

The Doll Festival originated as a purification rite known as Jōshi no Sekku, which took place around the third day of the third month each year. Dolls originally functioned as *katashiro*—inanimate substitute representations used to draw away impurities and malevolent spirits from actual people. These representations could then be floated away or otherwise destroyed, taking human pollutants with them.

It was in the beginning of the Edo period (1615–1868) that such ritual objects were transformed into luxurious figurines used to decorate interior spaces. At the time, there was a practice among girls from samurai or courtier families of gathering on the third day of the third month for *hiina asobi* (lit., doll play) theme parties, at which they would play house and make gifts of dolls. The *hina* dolls exhibited today during the Doll Festival combine the talismanic qualities of *katashiro* with the elaborateness of dolls gifted by members of the elite. Even within the limited category of *hina* dolls, there are many variations. Some Edo period examples are named after the

with which they are associated, as in the Kan’ei dolls (*kan’ei bina*, named after the Kan’ei era, 1624–1645) or Kyōhō dolls (*kyōhō bina*, after the Kyōhō era, 1716–1736). The *jirōzaemon bina* dolls are named after a Kyoto doll maker, Jirōzaemon, who is credited with their design. The Kokin dolls (*kokin bina*) were made in Kyoto instead of Edo, while the courtier dolls (*yūsoku bina*) faithfully represent the costume and hair conventions of the aristocracy. The extensive range of dolls in this exhibition offers you the opportunity to look carefully at differences in their details, including facial expressions, gestures, and costumes.

In modern day Japan, it has become increasingly rare to see any *hina* doll displayed in private residences, much less the large, elaborate altars featured here. We hope that this exhibition gives a glimpse into the doll-related traditions that are so deeply embedded in traditional Japanese culture.

(By Yamakawa Aki, Senior Curator of Textiles; translated by Melissa Rinne)



Kokin Dolls
Kyoto National Museum

3F-1 Ceramics

Ceramics of Japan and Asia

Tenmoku: Chinese Brown- and Black-Glazed Tea Ceramics

January 2–March 13, 2016

3F-2 Archaeological Relics

Japanese Archaeological Artifacts

January 2–March 13, 2016

2F-1 to 5 Feature Exhibition

Going Ape for the Year of the Monkey

December 15, 2015–January 24, 2016

Imperial Treasures

January 26–February 21, 2016

2F-1 Illustrated Handscrolls

Handscrolls of Popular Stories: The Fart Scroll (*Fukutomi zōshi*) and *Otogi zōshi*

February 23–March 21, 2016

2F-2 Buddhist Paintings

Spring Equinox and the Pure Land

February 23–March 21, 2016

2F-3 Medieval Paintings

The Beauty of Medieval Landscape Painting

February 23–March 21, 2016

2F-4 Momoyama–Edo Paintings

Paradise of Birds and Flowers

February 23–March 21, 2016

2F-5 Chinese Paintings

Chinese Albums, Handscrolls, and Fan Paintings from the Suma Collection

February 23–March 21, 2016

1F-1 Sculpture

Sculpture of Jizō (Ksitigarbha) and the Ten Kings of Hell

December 15, 2015–March 21, 2016

1F-2 Feature Exhibition

Legendary Blades: *Meibutsu* and Other Outstanding Japanese Swords

December 15, 2015–February 21, 2016

Hina Matsuri and Japanese Dolls

February 27–March 21, 2016

1F-3 Calligraphy

Elegant *Kana* Calligraphy and *Waka* Poetry

December 15, 2015–January 24, 2016

Refined Imperial Calligraphy of Early Modern Japan

January 26–February 21, 2016

Diaries and Records

February 23–March 13, 2016

1F-4 Textiles and Costumes

Auspicious Motifs in Japanese Textiles

December 15, 2015–January 31, 2016

Costumes of the Japanese Court

February 3–March 13, 2016

1F-5 Feature Exhibition

Guardian Lions and Lion-Dogs

December 15, 2015–March 13, 2016

1F-6 Lacquerware

Lacquered Tablewares for the Elegant Banquet

December 15, 2015–January 31, 2016

Furnishings of Emperors and *Monzeki* Temples

February 2–March 13, 2016

ADMISSION

Adult ¥520 (¥410)

Univ. Student ¥260 (¥210)

Admission is free for youths of high school age and below.

Fees in parentheses are for groups of 20+

These fees are for admission to the Collections Galleries only. Special Exhibitions require separate admission fees, which include admission to the Collections Galleries.

HOURS

9:30 am– 5:00 pm (Entrance until 4:30 pm)

CLOSED ON MONDAY

When Monday is a national holiday, the museum remains open on Monday and closes the following Tuesday.

Partially closed during the following dates:

March 15–21, 2016

The sculpture gallery and feature exhibition room (1st floor) and painting galleries (2nd floor) are open for viewing. The 3rd floor galleries and other 1st floor galleries are closed for exhibition installation.

March 23–April 10, 2016

Outdoor exhibits are open for viewing. The galleries are closed.

We apologize for the inconvenience.

ACCESS

Via JR or Subway

Get off at Kyoto Station. From bus platform D2 in front of the station, take City Bus #206 or #208 to "Hakubutsukan Sanjusangendo-mae" bus stop. One-minute walk to the Museum.

Via Keihan Railway

Get off at Shichijo Station. Walk east along Shichijo/Nanajo Street (about seven minutes) to the Museum.

Via Hankyu Railway

Get off at Kawaramachi Station. Walk east over the bridge to the Keihan Railway Gionshijo Station. Take Osaka-bound Keihan train to Shichijo Station. Walk east along Shichijo/Nanajo Street (about seven minutes) to the Museum.



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Upcoming Exhibitions

Special Exhibition **The Art of Zen: From Mind to Form**
April 12–May 22, 2016