

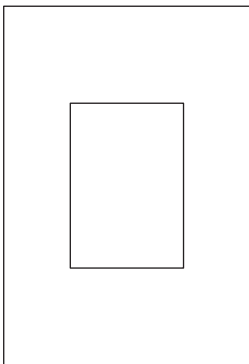
Japan Courts and Culture

Large Text Labels



Japan through European Eyes

Early prints and books reveal how Japan was imagined during the country's period of isolation. Later diaries and photographs capture first-hand the earliest British royal encounters with Japan.



Xogun, Empereur du Japon, c. 1673

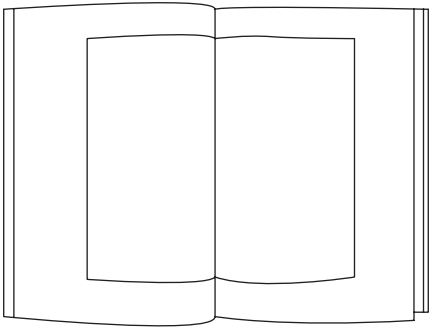
Nicolas de Larmessin I (1632–94)

This portrait confuses Japan's military ruler, Shōgun Tokugawa Ietsuna (1641–80), with the emperor. It is a work of European imagination, featuring a Middle Eastern-style turban and ornaments derived from costume books or prints of 'exotic' lands. Few foreigners had seen the shōgun's face – but the urge to represent him demonstrates the allure of this inaccessible country.

Etching and engraving

Probably acquired by George III

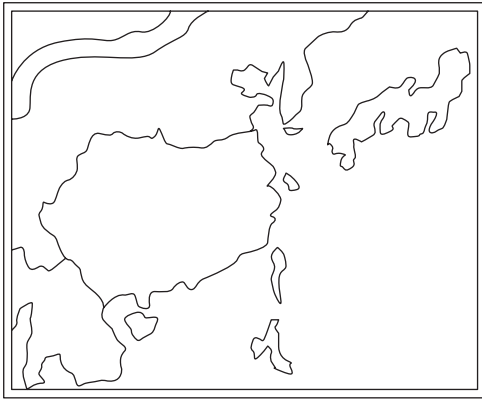
RCIN 618824



The History of Japan, 1727, 2 vols
Engelbert Kaempfer (1651–1716)

This was the most comprehensive European account of Japan until the nineteenth century, and the first published in English. Kaempfer was a surgeon at the Dutch trading post in Japan, and made extensive notes on its history, culture and botany. The plates reproduce Japanese woodblock prints, including the first plans of Edo and Kyoto in European literature.

Possibly acquired by Queen Caroline
RCINs 1074485–6



A New Mapp... w.th the Isles of Iapon, 1670

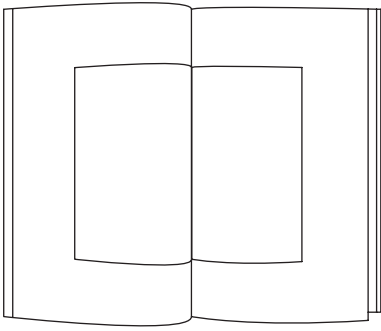
Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–77)

The islands of Japan appear at top right, but their placement is not accurate. Wenceslaus Hollar, who produced the map, never visited Japan and probably derived his etching from an earlier volume by Athanasius Kircher, who also had not visited the country.

Hand-coloured etching

Probably acquired by Queen Victoria

RCIN 802529



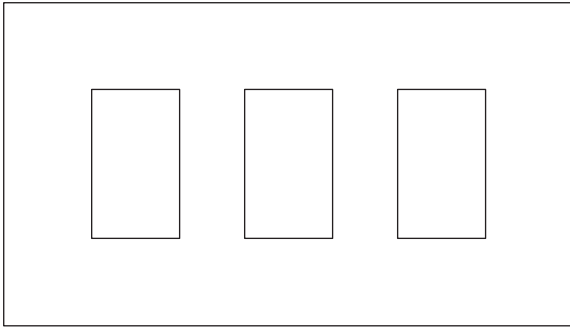
La Galerie agreable du Monde ... Japon et Païs d'Eso, 1729

Pieter van der Aa (1659–1733)

From 1641, Dutch merchants in Japan were confined to the tiny island of Deshima in Nagasaki Bay. They were only permitted to enter the mainland during their annual procession to pay homage to the shōgun.

Acquired by Queen Victoria, 1874

RCIN I021721.c

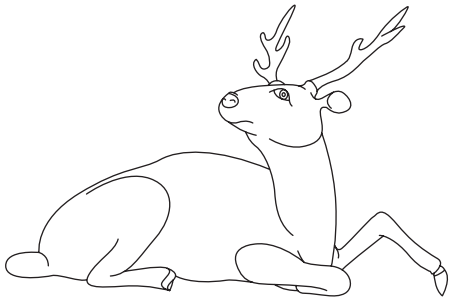
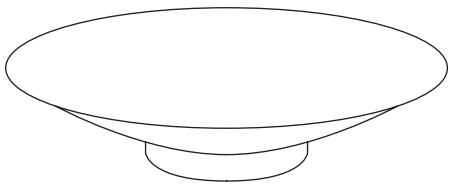


Japanese Ambassadors, 1862

Leonida Caldesi & Co., P. Biegner & Co and Meltzer

The first Japanese visitors to Britain included an embassy sent to re-negotiate commercial agreements in 1862. They arrived just as the fashion for collecting **cartes-de-visite** of public figures reached its height. For the first time, photographs of Japan's elusive samurai class became widely available to the British public.

Acquired by Queen Victoria and the Princess of Wales (later Queen Alexandra). RCINs 2914637, 2915301, 2915302



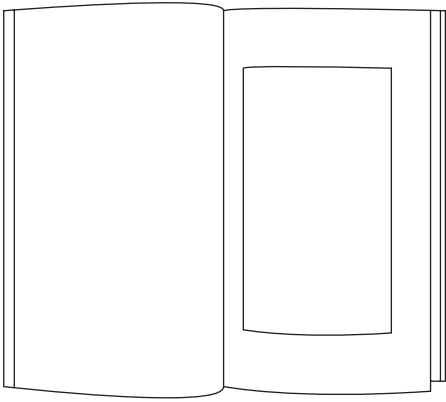
Cup for saké (sakazuki) and stag, c. 1850–65

Early contact between Japan and Britain was not without conflict. These gifts were sent to Queen Victoria as a sign of peace after the nations exchanged fire at Kagoshima in 1863. The elderly couple on the **saké** cup represent enduring harmony. The deer, considered a divine messenger, is engraved and burnished with the spotted hide of the sika deer of Japan.

Wood; red, gold and silver lacquer; silver,
patinated silver alloy, bone, enamel

Given to Queen Victoria by Shimazu Tadayoshi,
daimyō of Satsuma domain, 1865

RCINs 26154, 41631



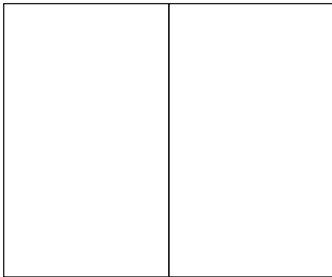
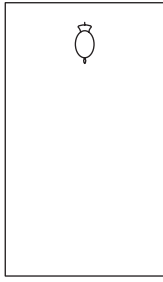
Tales of Old Japan, 1871, 2 vols

Algernon Bertram Mitford (1837–1916)

For many Britons, **Tales of Old Japan** provided the first glimpse of Japanese life beyond government accounts. While interpreter at the British Legation, A. B. Mitford recorded folk tales and customs such as marriage, ritual suicide and sword-making. Heavily edited to appeal to western audiences, his **Tales** presented a romantic view of 'Old Japan' untouched by modernisation.

Acquired by Queen Victoria, 1871

RCINs 1085239, 1085198



Letters to Queen Victoria, 1869

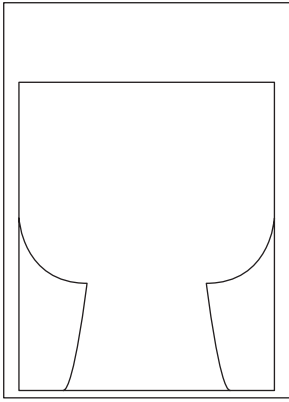
Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh (1844–1900)

Queen Victoria's son, Prince Alfred, was the first foreign royal visitor to Japan. After his arrival, he wrote to describe the 'beautiful landscape' and 'charming little palace' in which he stayed. Crucially, the Japanese government showed him 'the greatest civility and attention', an important gesture in the early years of diplomatic contact.

RA VIC/ADDA20/1294 and 1296, and facsimiles



7



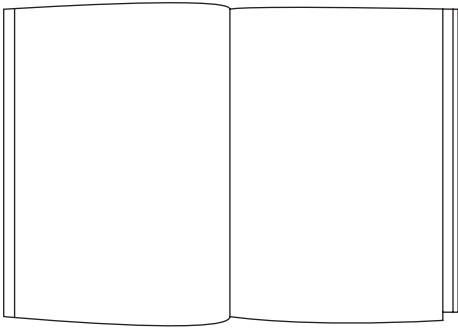
Chiushingura, or the Loyal League, 1880

Frederick Victor Dickins (1838–1915) (trans.)

The play **Chūshingura** is based on the real-life tale of 47 samurai who avenged the death of their master. Its themes of bravery and unerring loyalty made it one of the most popular stories in Japan. This translation includes blue-coloured woodblock prints by Japanese artists, printed on Japanese paper.

Acquired by Queen Victoria, 1887

RCIN 1085226



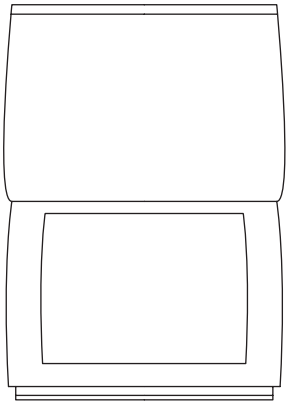
Diary, 20 October–12 November 1881

Prince George of Wales (1865–1936)

Prince George of Wales (later King George V) visited Japan as a naval cadet in 1881, when he was 16. ‘It is a beautiful night, a dead calm & you can see [Mount Fuji]’, he wrote on his arrival. The prince’s diary records rickshaw rides, eating with chopsticks and trying on samurai armour. Before leaving, the young prince was tattooed with a dragon and a tiger.

Facsimile

RA GV/PRIV/GVD/1881

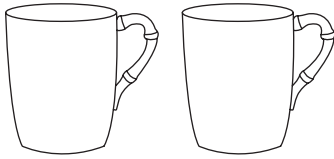


The Cruise of HMS Bacchante ..., 1886

John Neale Dalton (1839–1931)

This account of Prince George's time in Japan was compiled by his tutor using the prince's diaries and letters. Anecdotes of 'exotic' customs appear alongside comparisons to familiar British scenes. The gardens at Nara resembled 'the quieter corners of Greenwich Park' – yet the deer found here are 'sacred'. The result is a romanticised yet comprehensible version of the country.

Given to the Duchess of York by the
Duke of York (later King George V), 1895
RCIN 1191274



Tea or coffee pot and pair of cups, 1880–81

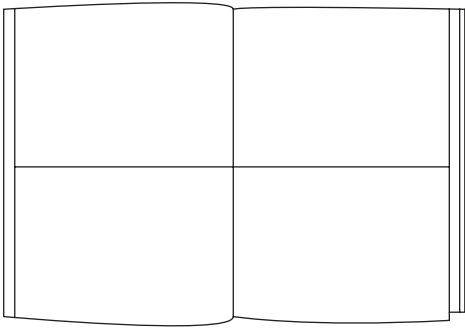
Shōbi (Jomi) Eisuke I (1839–99)

Prince George and his brother, Prince Albert Victor, bought this set in Japan in 1881, when they visited numerous ‘curio’ shops stocked by well-known metalworkers. Clearly created for the tourist market, the vessels combine European tea ware shapes with Japanese inlay and motifs from nature.

Copper alloy, gold, silver

Given to the Prince of Wales by Prince George of Wales, 1881

RCINs 54952, 54953

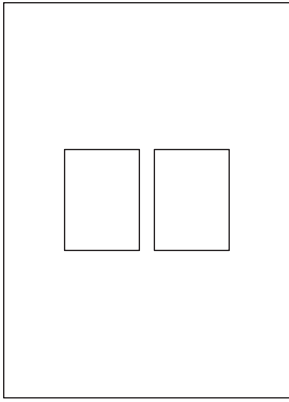


The Cruise of HMS Bacchante ..., c.1881

Felice Beato (c.1834–1907), Baron von Stillfried (1839–1911),
Uchida Kuichi (c.1844–75) and others

These peaceful landscape scenes evoke an untouched country. They serve both as a personal memento of Prince George's visit in 1881 and as a generic view of Japan akin to the popular travelling albums of the day.

Probably given to King George V by John Neale Dalton
RCIN 2580920



Princess Alexandra of Edinburgh, 1889

Eduard Uhlenhuth (c.1853–1919)

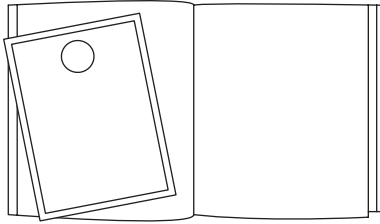
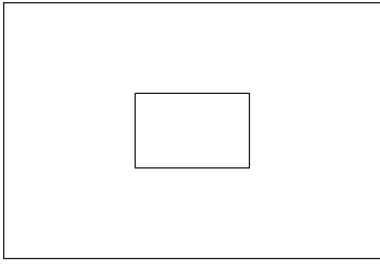
To Europeans, kimono represented a nostalgic ideal of Japan, especially after western dress was adopted at the Meiji Court in 1871. These playful photographs show Princess Alexandra, granddaughter of Queen Victoria, in a kimono-style garment. Clothes of this kind were popular props for fanciful Victorian studio portraits.

Albumen prints

Probably given to Queen Victoria by Prince Alfred,

Duke of Edinburgh, 1889

RCINs 2904828–9



Diary, 1890 and Japanese Scene, 1891

Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught (1850–1942);

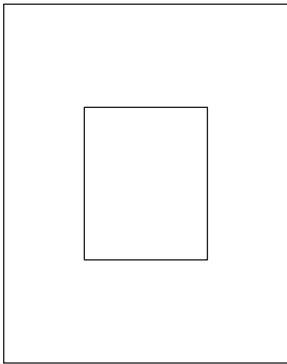
Hughes & Mullins (active 1883–c.1914)

Queen Victoria's son, Prince Arthur, visited Japan as a tourist with his wife in 1890. Their exuberant joint diary includes pressed flowers, hand-coloured photographs of **geisha** and the menu from a dinner at the Imperial Palace. On their return, the couple performed a Japanese-inspired **tableau vivant** for Queen Victoria.

RA VIC/ADDA15/8445 (diary) and RCIN 2810107 (carbon print)

Courtly Visits

As royal and imperial bonds grew stronger in the early twentieth century, numerous official visits were made, including by the heirs to the British and Japanese thrones.



Crown Prince Hirohito in London, 1921

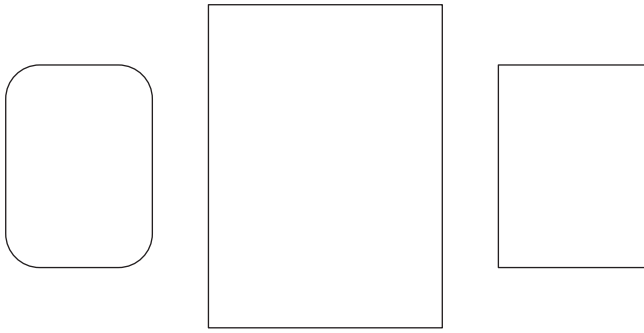
Richard N. Speaight (1875–1938)

Crown Prince Hirohito was the first heir to the Japanese throne to visit Britain. This photograph shows the prince (far left) next to the Prince of Wales before a dinner at St James's Palace. It became the first published image of the prince on tour in civilian clothes rather than military uniform.

Gelatin silver print laid on card

Probably acquired by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

RCIN 2809048

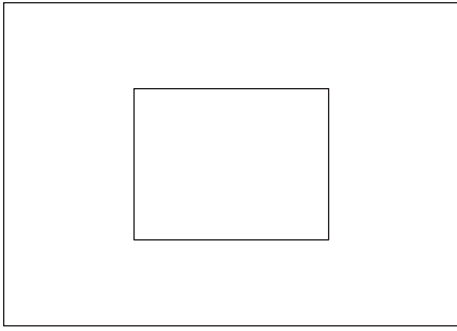


Ceremonial for the Visit of Crown Prince Hirohito, 1921

When he visited Britain in 1921, Crown Prince Hirohito enjoyed a six-course State Banquet including lamb cutlets served ‘à l’Orientale’. A military band played excerpts from Puccini’s **Madame Butterfly**, a tragic opera about a Japanese-American romance. In his toast, King George V praised the partnership between ‘our two Island Empires’.

Ink on card, and facsimile

RA MRH/MRHSOV/MIXED/I20/63, 77, 79



The Prince of Wales's visit to Japan

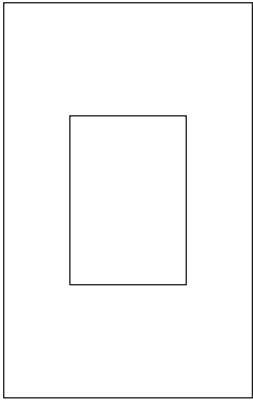
16 April 1922

The Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII) spent four weeks in Japan in 1922. He arrived in April, having been advised it was the best month to see the cherry blossom. The official visit included a banquet at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, tours of Shintō shrines and the unveiling of the Allied War Memorial at Yokohama.

Gelatin silver print

Acquired during the current reign (1952–)

RCIN 2000493



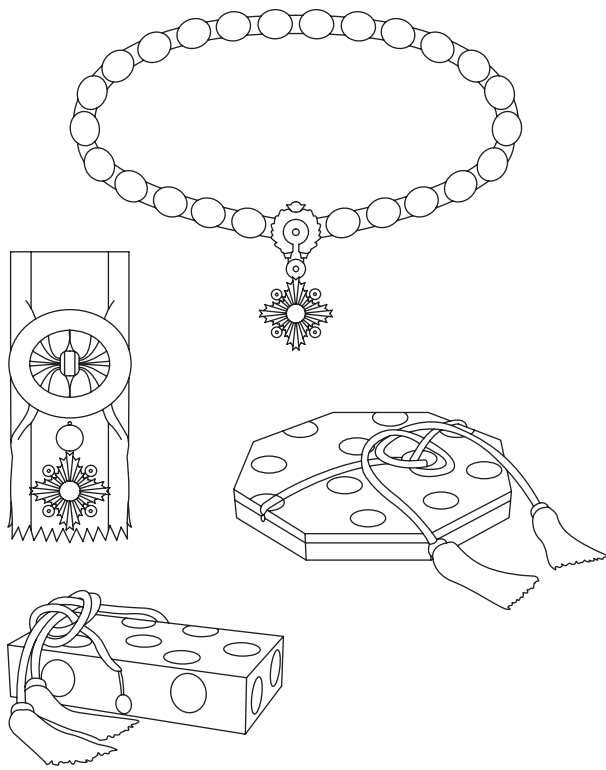
**The Prince of Wales and Crown Prince
Hirohito at Tokyo Golf Club, 19 April 1922**

As a respite from official engagements, the Prince of Wales played a round of golf with Crown Prince Hirohito. The Japanese prince carefully mirrored the casual, athletic dress of his British counterpart. This double portrait helped reinforce the story of blossoming friendship between the two young heirs.

Gelatin silver print

Acquired during the current reign (1952–)

RCIN 2000448



Order of the Chrysanthemum, 1911–18

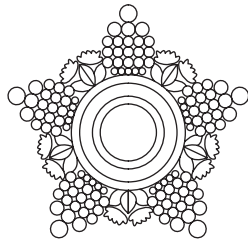
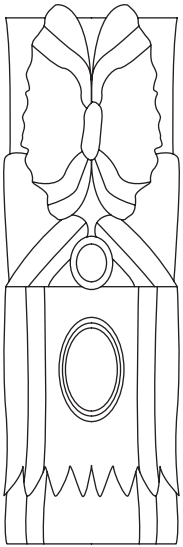
Osaka Mint

Emulating the courtly traditions of Europe, the Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) established a system of honours. Japan's highest decoration, the Supreme Order of the Chrysanthemum, was instituted in 1876. The collar comprises chrysanthemum flowers with gold links bearing the letters 'mei' and 'ji' for Meiji.

Gold, enamel, silk, lacquer, wood

Given to King George V, 1911; and the Prince of Wales, 1918

RCINs 441562, 441659, 442247, 4422537



Order of the Precious Crown, c. 1905

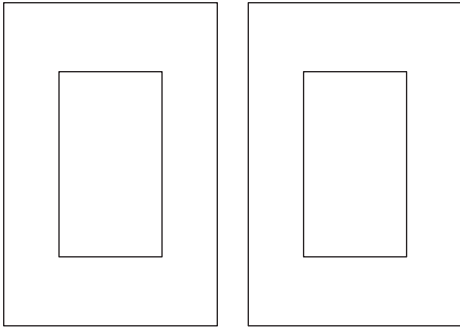
Osaka Mint

The Order of the Precious Crown is the highest Japanese honour for women. At the turn of the twentieth century, it was awarded to members of the British Royal Family to strengthen ties between the two nations. The badge incorporates a crown topped by a bird of paradise, as worn by ancient empresses.

Gold, enamel, pearls, silk

Given to the Princess of Wales (later Queen Mary), 1905

RCINs 441068, 441069



Prince and Princess Takamatsu, 1930

Herbert Vandyk (1880–1943)

The Emperor Shōwa's younger brother stayed at Buckingham Palace in 1930, and he and his wife carefully selected their wardrobe to project an image of modern monarchy. These autographed portraits show the prince in western-style uniform wearing the star of the Royal Victorian Order, given to him by King George V. The princess wears the latest Parisian fashion.

Gelatin silver print mounted on card

Probably given to King George V and Queen Mary

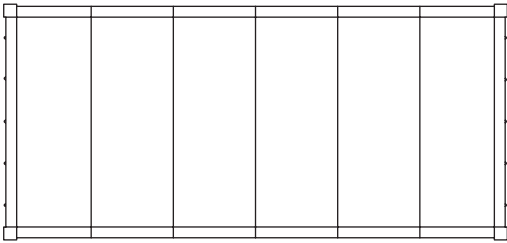
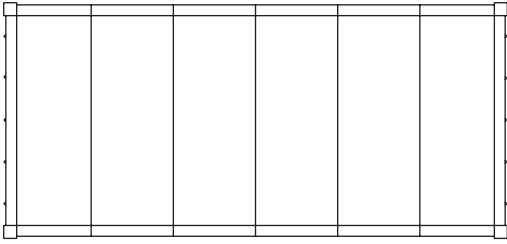
RCINs 2905573–4

Travel

Japan's seclusion came to an end in the 1850s, and the country returned to direct imperial rule in 1868. The new Emperor Meiji (1852–1912) encouraged rapid modernisation along western lines.

Members of the British and Japanese royal and imperial families soon made their first diplomatic visits. Queen Victoria's son, Prince Alfred, was the first royal visitor to Japan. Imperial gifts of the highest quality – such as swords, textiles and screen paintings – entered the Royal Collection for the first time.

As artists began to travel between the two nations, Japanese craftspeople displayed metalwork and enamel at international exhibitions with considerable success. Works by them and by Imperial Household Artists were choice gifts for British jubilees and coronations.



Pair of screen paintings (byōbu), 1860

Itaya Hiroharu (1833–82)

These screen paintings formed part of the first diplomatic gift from Japan to Britain in almost 250 years. Their subtle, lightweight hinges allow an uninterrupted image. Together they represent the changing seasons: the right is filled with pine and maple trees in warm autumnal tones; the left shows Mount Fuji amid the freshness of spring cherry blossom.

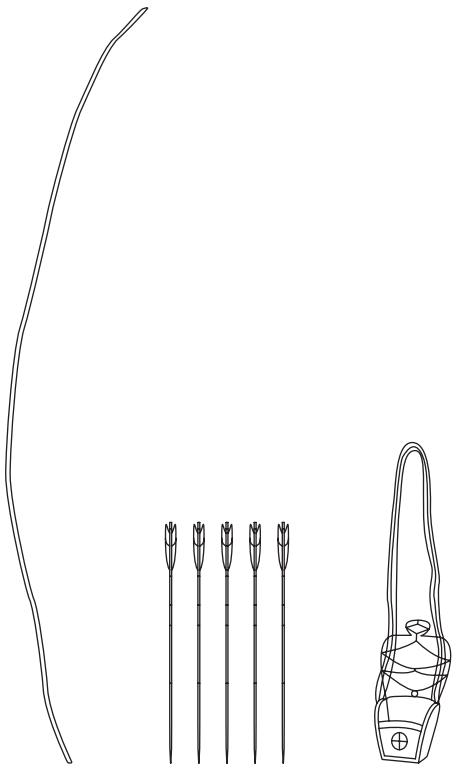
Ink, colour and gold on paper, with mount of silk brocade, ebonized wood and brass

Given to Queen Victoria by Shōgun Tokugawa Iemochi, 1860

RCINs 33530, 33544



8



**Bow (yumi), arrows (ya)
and quiver (ebira), 1912–22**

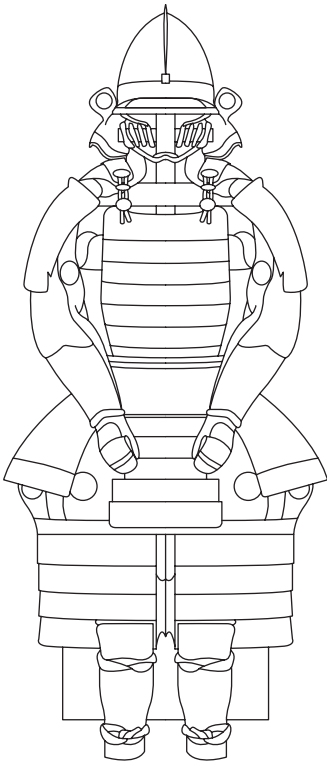
After the Tokugawa shōguns brought peace to Japan in 1615, the samurai class maintained their warrior spirit through archery practice (**kyūdō**). This set was a gift from Prince Shimazu Tadashige, son of the last feudal lord of the Satsuma domain, and bears his family crest.

Bamboo, rattan, lacquer, deerskin, wood, ivory,
gold foil, steel, feathers, silk

Given to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

by Shimazu Tadashige, 1922

RCINs 79906, 79915, 79914



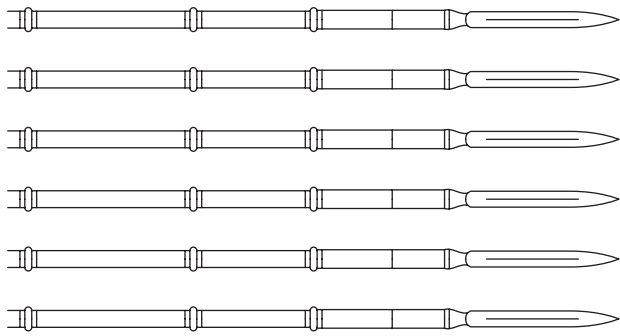
Armour (dōmaru), 1600–1750

This style of armour was prized by the samurai for its lightness and flexibility. The torso covering wraps easily around the body and fastens at the side, and there are no cumbersome shoulder or neck protectors. At the back is a fitting to support a banner with the family crest: in battle, this flag identified friend from foe.

Steel, iron, lacquer, gilt bronze, gilt-copper alloy, silk,
horn, doe-skin, leather

In the Royal Collection by 1910

RCIN 64124



Spears (yari)

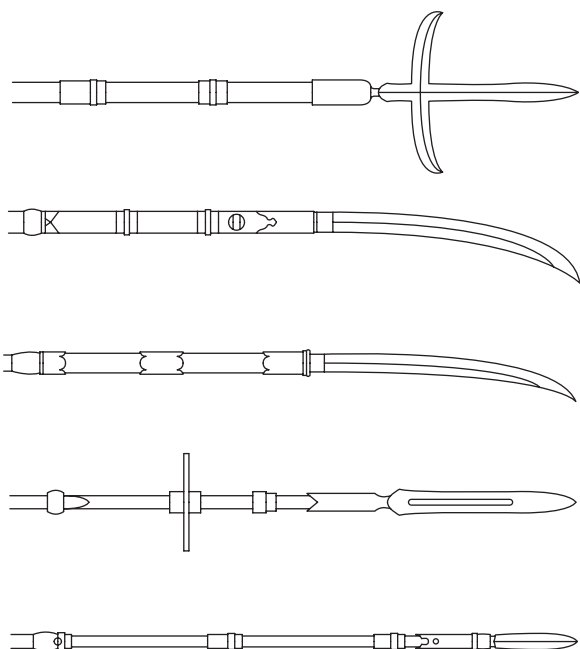
1750–1850 (blades); 1800–50 (mounts)

Glittering spears decorated with hundreds of tiny pieces of mother-of-pearl were carried by a feudal lord's entourage during processions to pay homage to the shōgun.

Steel, lacquered wood, mother-of-pearl

Given to Queen Victoria by Shōgun Tokugawa Iemochi, 1860

RCINs 71797–98, 71802–4, 71807



Spears (yari) and polearms (naginata)

1550–1850 (blades); 1850–60 (mounts)

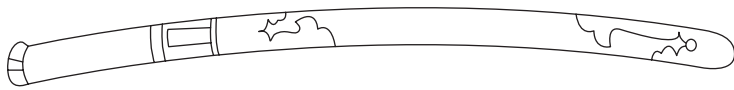
Wielded with a cutting motion, polearms were used by foot soldiers as an effective weapon against massed ranks of infantry or cavalry.

Steel, iron, wood, rattan, copper alloy, lacquer, gold, mother-of-pearl

Given to Queen Victoria and Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh,

1860–69

RCINs 62619, 62620, 71616, 71661, 62617



Short sword (koshigatana)

c. 1550 (blade, Hirotsugu);

1650–1750 (mounts)

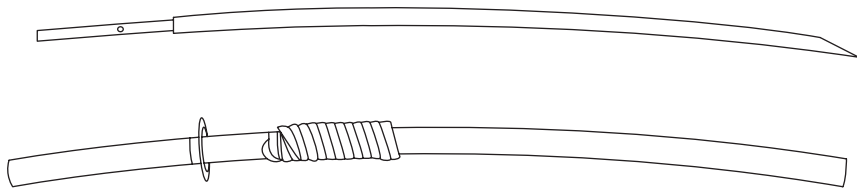
This is the first documented Japanese sword in Britain. It arrived in 1813, when it was thought to be ‘A Curious Old Sword of one of the Moorish Kings of Spain’. The impressive fittings suggest it was mounted for export – boars, phoenixes and monkeys appear in a relief metalwork style known as **sawasa**, which was popular with the Dutch East India Company.

Steel, lacquered wood, copper alloy (**shakudō**), copper, gold, silver

Given to the Prince Regent (later George IV) by James Duff,

4th Earl Fife, 1813

RCIN 72783



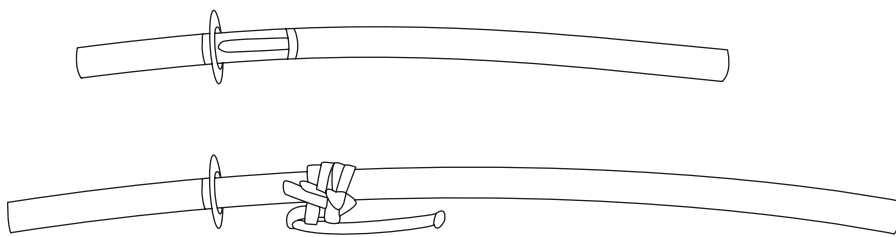
Sword (katana), 1860

Fujiwara Yasutsugu

Steel, lacquered wood, copper alloy (**shakudō**),
gold, mother-of-pearl, ray skin, silk

Given to Queen Victoria by Shōgun Tokugawa Iemochi, 1860

RCIN 62623



Matched swords (daishō)

1300–50 (**katana**, Rai Kunimitsu);

1700–1800 (mounts, Hon'ami family)

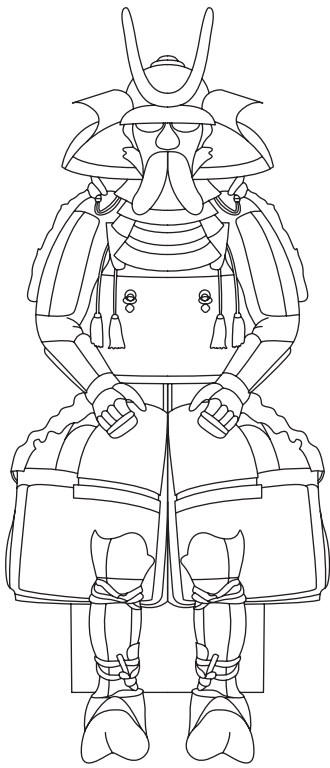
Steel, lacquered wood, gold, copper alloy (**shakudō**), silk, ray skin

Probably acquired by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh

RCINs 72786, 62627



9



Armour (dōmaru), 1537–1850

Myōchin Nobuie (c.1504–54);

Myōchin Munetora (c.1820–1868)

Elements of two or three armours have been combined to create this impressive diplomatic gift. The outstanding 62-plate helmet, made in 1537, is signed by Myōchin Nobuie, who was part of a prolific school of armourers stretching back to the twelfth century.

Iron, lacquer, copper alloy (**shakudō**), gilt copper, gold, enamel, silk, leather, doe-skin, horsehair, bear fur

Given to Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh by the Emperor Meiji, 1869

RCIN 61765



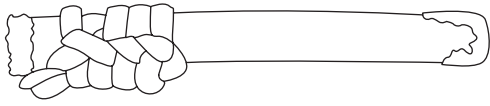
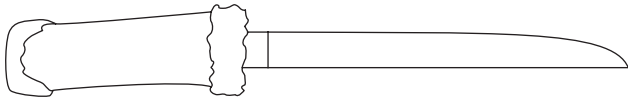
Face mask (sōmen), 1700–1800

Fearsome masks with wrinkles and thick eyebrows gave warriors an intimidating appearance. The protective throat piece also absorbed sweat, which drained from a hole beneath the chin.

Iron, lacquer, hemp, leather, horn, silk, horsehair

In the Royal Collection by 1910

RCIN 37816



Dagger (tantō)

c. 1500 (blade, Kanehisa);

1868–71 (mounts, Chikanori II)

The Emperor Meiji had many ancient blades, some as old as the Nara period (710–794), lavishly remounted for diplomatic gifts. He is said to have designed the fittings for this knife (**tantō**) himself. The flowering cherry blossoms on the scabbard are the finest quality gold **makie** (sprinkled) lacquer.

Steel, lacquered wood, gold, ray skin, silk

Given to Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh by the Emperor Meiji, 1871

RCIN 62631



10



Dagger (tantō)

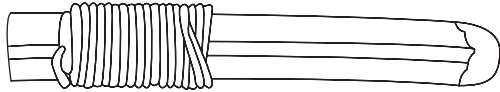
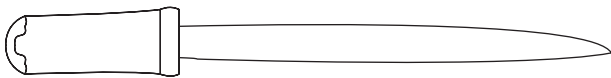
c. 1550 (blade, Tsunaie);

1840–70 (mounts, Yoshitsugu)

Steel, wood, copper, gold, silver

Acquired by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, 1869

RCIN 62625



Dagger (tantō)

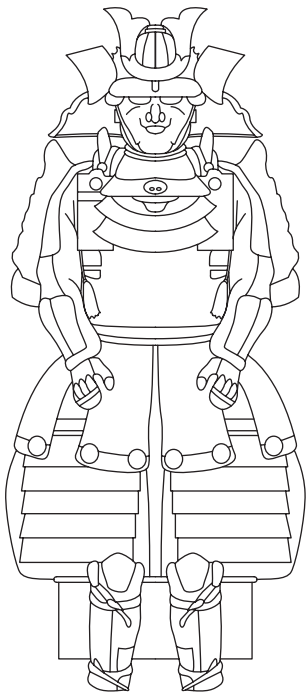
c. 1300 (blade, Rai Kunitoshi);

1750–1850 (mounts, Issai Tōmei)

Steel, lacquered wood, gold, copper alloy, silk, ray skin

In the Royal Collection by the early twentieth century

RCIN 62626

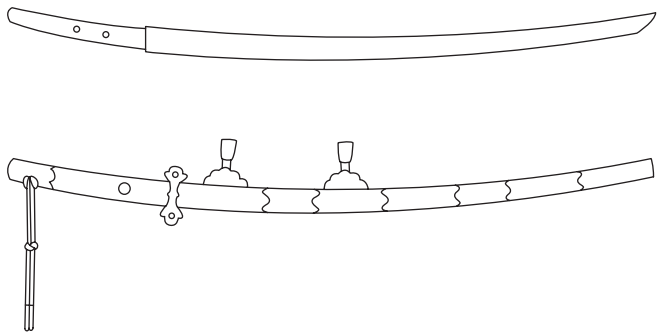


Armour (dōmaru), 1750–1850

This parade armour may never have been worn, but it would certainly have been displayed in a **tokonoma**, the alcove where seasonal objects are admired by guests. The style of the large shoulder guards harks back to the ‘Golden Age’ of the samurai in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

Steel, lacquer, gold, copper alloy (**shakudō**), iron, gilt bronze, gilt and silvered copper, cotton, silk, doe-skin, leather, horn
Possibly given to Prince George of Wales (later King George V) by the Emperor Meiji, 1881
RCIN 64125





Court-style sword (kazaridachi)

1421–44 (blade, Sakyōnosuke Yasumitsu); 1750–1850 (mounts)

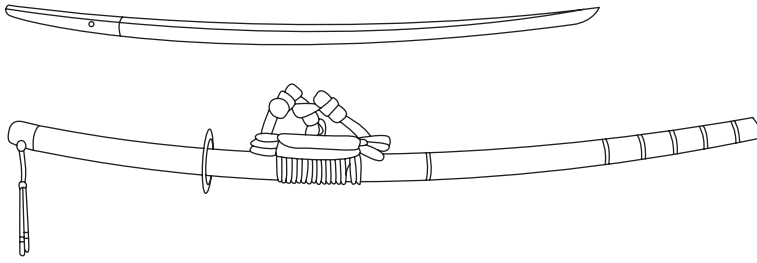
Elaborately mounted swords of this kind were purely ceremonial, carried by imperial courtiers and high-ranking samurai. The fifteenth-century blade was probably a family heirloom, with numerous fixing holes indicating that it has been remounted several times.

Steel, lacquered wood, copper alloy (**shakudō**),
turquoise, enamel, ray skin, leather

Given to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

by Count Matsudaira of Takamatsu, 1922

RCIN 62628



Sword (**tachi**), 1700–1800

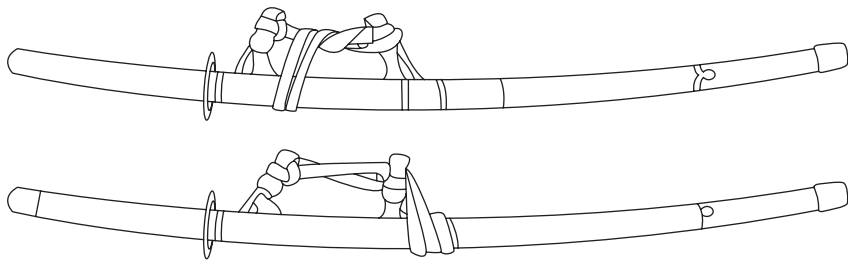
Gotō school (mounts)

Silk braiding around this scabbard is designed to prevent the expensive lacquer from rubbing against a warrior's armour. An elegant crystalline structure appears on the blade in a pattern known as 'drifting sand' (**sunagashi**). This effect is produced during the tempering process, when the blade is rapidly heated and then cooled to achieve a resilient core with a hard outer edge.

Steel, lacquered wood, copper alloy (**shakudō**), silk, leather

In the Royal Collection by 1952

RCIN 72787



Pair of slung swords

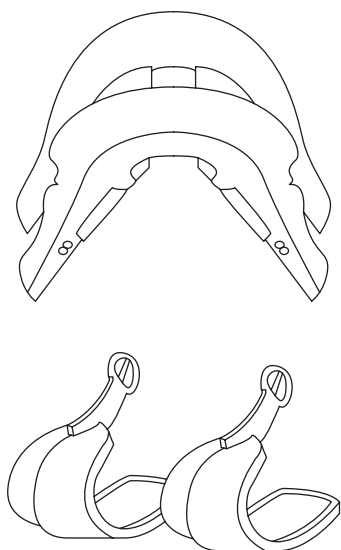
(itō-maki-no-tachi), 1860

Ishidō Korekazu (blades)

Steel, lacquered wood, copper alloy (**shakudō**), gold, silk, leather

Possibly given to Queen Victoria by Shōgun Tokugawa Iemochi, 1860

RCIN 62622



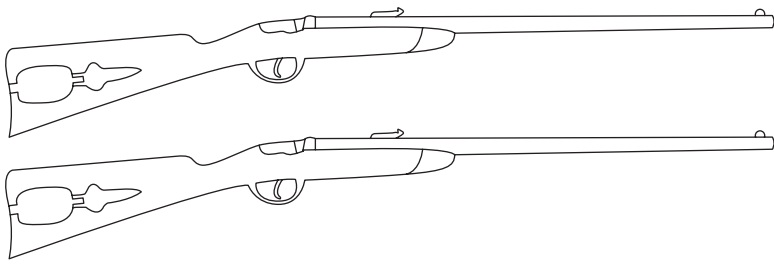
Saddle tree (kura) and stirrups (abumi), 1580–1650

Until the fifteenth century, warfare in Japan mostly took place on horseback. Mounted warriors stood up in combat on solid stirrups. The design of gourds and vines on this set suggests it dates from the Momoyama period (1573–1615), and so may have been part of the first diplomatic gift to Britain in 1613.

Wood, lacquer, lead, iron

Probably given to James I by Shōgun Tokugawa Hidetada, 1613

RCINs 71609 (saddle), 71610 (stirrups)



Pair of carbines, c. 1860–65

Daikuhara Munetake and Shishida Hidechika

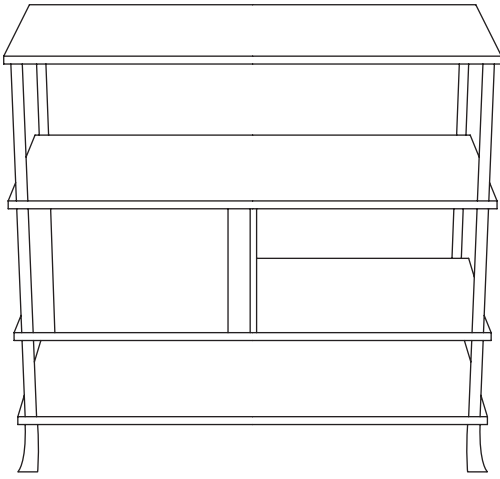
Firearms were unknown in Japan until 1543, when they were introduced by the Portuguese. On these rifles, the combination of a dragon in clouds and a tiger in bamboo signifies East and West. The guns were presented by Tokugawa envoys who came to Britain in 1865 to study the country's military technology.

Steel, iron, mahogany, lacquer, brass, gold, silver

Given to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII)

by Shibata Takenake, 1865

RCIN 38453



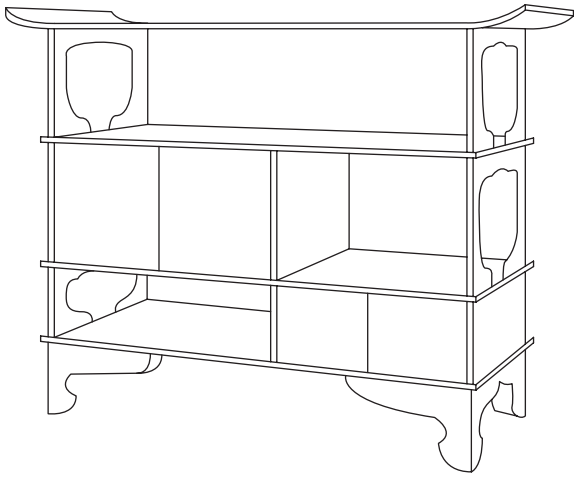
Cabinet with shelves (kurodana), 1850–69

This stand was designed to display cosmetic boxes, including equipment for tooth blackening, which was a mark of feminine beauty until the late Edo period (1615–1868). The bamboo motifs are auspicious since the plant can endure the severest weather – its stalks bend in the wind but do not break.

Wood, black and gold lacquer

Acquired by Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, 1869

RCIN 26050



Cabinet with shelves (zushidana), c. 1850–59

Furniture as it is known in the West was almost entirely absent from Japan before the Meiji period (1868–1912). The exceptions were asymmetrical open cabinets such as this. Prepared in matching sets for wealthy brides, they were accompanied by dozens of small cosmetic boxes, mirror stands and incense equipment.

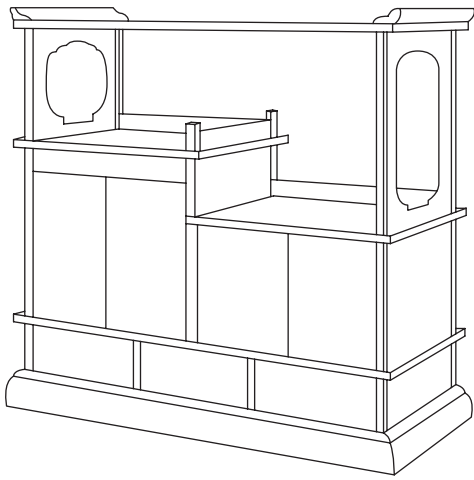
Wood, black and gold lacquer, silver gilt, silver, silk, paper

Given to Queen Victoria by Shōgun Tokugawa Iemochi, 1860

RCIN 10451



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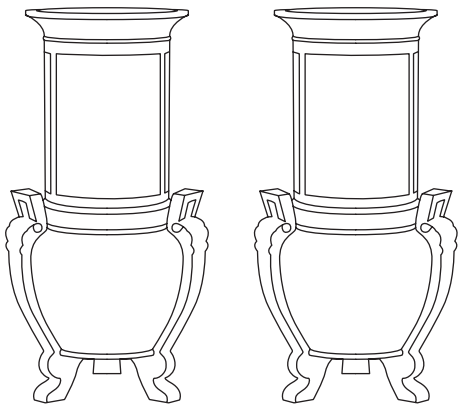
Cabinet with shelves (shodana), 1850–97

Early diplomatic relations were strengthened by the exchange of presents on important royal occasions. This Diamond Jubilee gift represents the changing seasons – summertime iris, morning glory and lilies appear beside autumn maple leaves and chrysanthemums. This combination evokes Buddhist and Shintō ideas about nature's cyclical rhythm.

Wood, black and gold lacquer, silver, gold

Given to Queen Victoria by the Emperor Meiji
for her Diamond Jubilee, 1897

RCIN 26044



Pair of vases, c. 1877–82

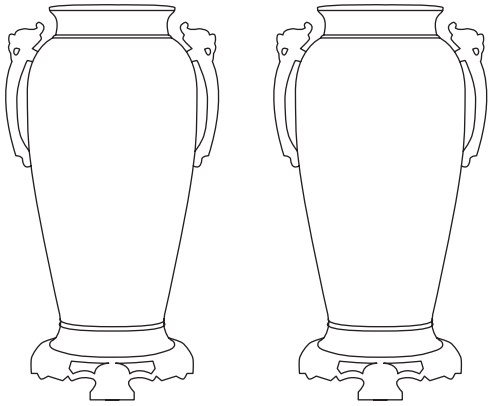
Kanazawa Bronze Company (est. 1877)

Intricate inlay techniques have been used to vary each bloom and fruit on these vases. The lemon skins are textured and stippled, the persimmon are highly polished and the lychee have been created from a complex pattern of gold and copper alloys.

Bronze, silver, gold and copper alloy (**shakudō**)

In the Royal Collection by 1934

RCIN 7797



Pair of vases, c. 1880–1900

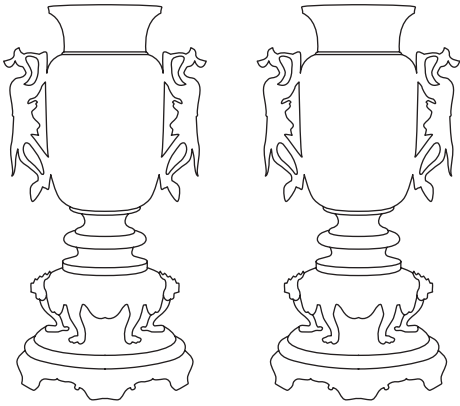
Japan; later additions by Hink & Sons

Morning glory bloom for only a short period each day. Their appearance here alludes to this brief blossoming, suggesting the beginnings of autumnal decay. Each has been delicately patinated and given stems of **shakudō** (a copper and gold alloy) and mottled silver leaves.

Bronze, copper alloy, silver, **shakudō**

In the Royal Collection by 1920

RCIN 7322



Pair of vases, c. 1880

These vases illustrate four dramatic scenes from the legend of Prince Yamato. Cast in deep relief, the hero defeats a demon boar by slicing off its tail with a sacred sword. Subtly coloured gold and silver inlays add miniscule details, including patterned textiles and individual pinecones.

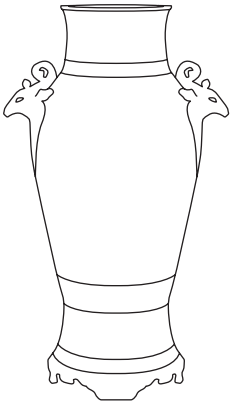
Bronze, gold, silver

In the Royal Collection by 1889

RCIN 7798



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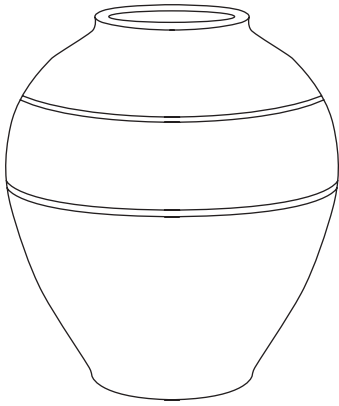
Vase, 1880–82

Cast bronze was traditionally used for Buddhist ritual items and utensils for tea gatherings. However, many metalworkers turned to creating decorative objects after the samurai were prohibited from carrying swords in 1876. This piece, with its subtly patinated surface and inlaid metals, was made for the Imperial Household – as shown by the chrysanthemum seal (**mon**) on the neck.

Brass, silver, copper alloy (**shibuichi**)

Given to Queen Victoria by the Emperor Meiji, 1882

RCIN 70174.1



Vase, 1900–10

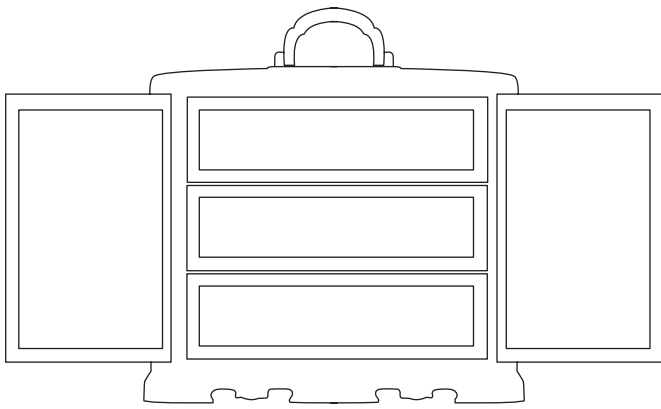
Firm of Nizaemon

The rusted surface and simple outline of this vessel represent the aesthetic **wabi sabi**. These Buddhist terms relate to rustic simplicity and the beauty that comes with age. Together, they show acceptance of life's fragility and imperfection. Cast iron neatly represents these concepts because it is naturally prone to discolouration.

Cast iron

Probably acquired by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

RCIN 42343



Miniature cabinet (kodansu), c.1880–1900

Komai Company (est. 1873)

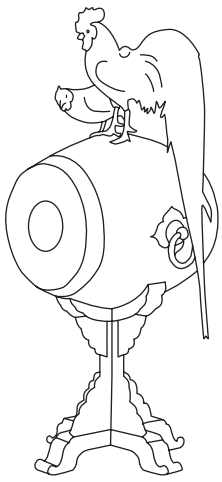
Complex patterns have been created by hammering dense designs of gold wire and gold leaf into a copper alloy ground. In places, the gold has been engraved to give a more dynamic, textured finish. The Komai Company was popular with European tourists, who flocked to its premises in Kyoto.

Copper alloy, gold

Purchased by Queen Elizabeth

(later Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother), 1941

RCIN 100753



Model of a cock on a drum (kankodori), 1929

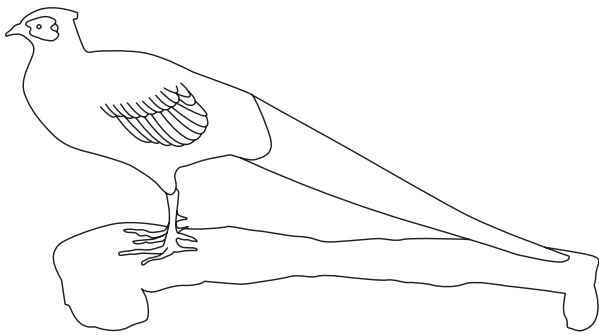
Japanese legend tells of a ruler who placed a drum at his gate to be sounded in the event of an attack or civic dispute. However, prolonged peace meant the drum fell into disuse, and birds began to live on it. The symbol of harmony between nations has been enhanced by engravings of cherry blossoms for Japan and roses for Britain.

Silver, partly gilded, copper

Given to Prince Henry, Duke of Gloucester

by Baron Sakatani Yoshirō, 1929

RCIN I7722



Inkstand, 1868–1912

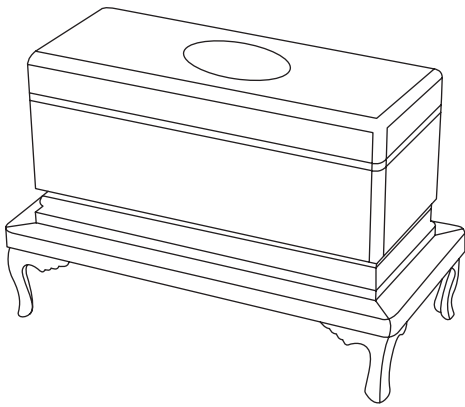
Attributed to Nemoto

The term in Japanese for enamelling is **shippō**, or ‘seven precious stones’, suggesting the brilliance of the colours achievable. Jewel-like enamels have been used to pick out the plumage of this silver pheasant’s head, wings and tail. The model has a small inkwell hidden in its back.

Silver, gold, enamel, ivory

Possibly acquired by King Edward VII

RCIN 17723



Casket and stand, 1922

Andō Company (est. 1880)

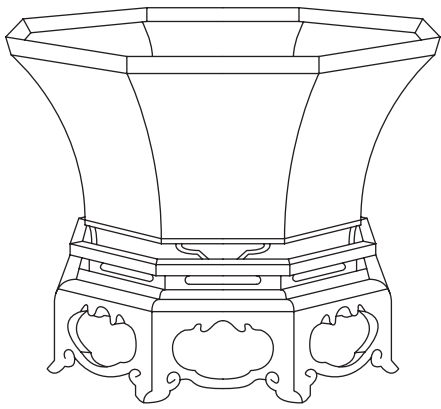
This casket mimics the shape of an eighth-century **sutra** box for Buddhist texts. However, the lid is decorated with the British royal coat of arms, using a painstaking enamel layering technique called **moriage**. A scroll within celebrates cherry blossom season, ‘when all nature joins in the national joy’.

Enamel, gilt bronze, copper, gold wire, silk

Given to the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VIII)

by the Mayor of Tokyo, 1922

RCIN 42593



Bowl and stand, c.1915

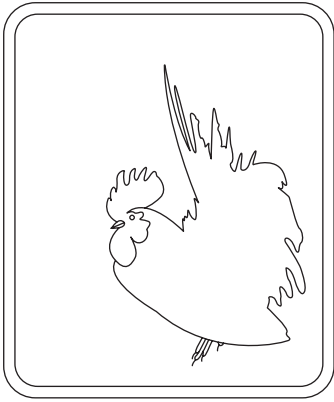
Andō Company (est.1880)

The Andō Company perfected an enamelling technique called **shōtai-shippō** ('backless enamel'), inspired by French examples. After building up an enamel design around a copper base, the copper was dissolved with acid, leaving a delicate form of semi-transparent panels.

Enamel, wood, copper

Probably acquired by the Prince of Wales
(later King Edward VIII), 1922

RCIN 41530



Tray, c.1910

Namikawa Sōsuke (1847–1910)

Entrepreneur Namikawa Sōsuke developed an enamel style resembling ink painting. His technique depended on high-quality enamels which would not bleed into each other during firing. The subtle details on this cockerel were achieved without using separating wires between each colour. In recognition of his skill, Sōsuke was appointed Imperial Household Artist in 1896.

Enamel, copper

In the Royal Collection by 1952

RCIN 8586



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