

Imperial Visit by Emperor Go-Mizuno-o

In order to further cement the position of the Tokugawa shogunate, Princess Masako, one of the daughters of the second Shogun, Hidetada, became the consort of the reigning Emperor, Go-Mizuno-o, in 1620. The castle was repaired in 1619 in preparation for this event, and the Princess set off from the Nijo-jo Castle on June 18, 1620, in procession with an enormous retinue for the Imperial Palace. In September 1626, the Emperor Go-Mizuno-o made an Imperial Visit to the Nijo-jo Castle, at the invitation of the retired second Shogun Hidetada and his son, the third Shogun Iemitsu, who both came to Kyoto for the five-day imperial visit. For this event, the castle was repaired and expanded to its current size, starting in 1624. The keep tower, the Gyoko-goten Palace for the Emperor, and the Honmaru-goten Palace were constructed for the festivities. Stunning wall paintings were created by painters of the Kano School, the official painters to the Shogunate. During the Imperial visit, there were performances of Noh theater, waka (classical Japanese poetry) composition gatherings, traditional music performances, horseback riding, and Court kemari (a Court ball game). After the imperial visit, the Gyoko-goten Palace and several other buildings were dismantled. The keep tower and the Honmaru-goten Palace were later destroyed by fire. The Ninomaru-goten Palace serves as an important reminder of this, the high-point of the Castle's history. 1634 was the last time that a Shogun stayed at Nijo-jo Castle until 1863, and, during this period, the castle went into a long period of decline.

Enthronement Banquet for Emperor Taisho

The enthronement of the Meiji Emperor's heir, the Taisho Emperor took place in 1915 in the Ceremonial Hall of the Kyoto Imperial Palace. After the ceremonies at the Imperial Palace, a banquet attended by Imperial officials, foreign dignitaries invited to the enthronement, and the Prime Minister was held at the Nijo-jo Castle, which had become an Imperial Villa after the Meiji Restoration. A number of new buildings were added to the Castle for the festivities, all of which were later dismantled with the exception of the Minami-mon (South Gate).

UNESCO World Heritage Site Nijo-jo Castle Restoration Fund

Request for Cooperation

Kyoto City began a full-scale restoration of the Nijo-jo Castle in 2011. This is the first major repair work done since the Castle was built, and represents a massive investment in the future of the Castle and preservation for future generations. Kyoto City has established the World Heritage Nijo-jo Castle Owners' Fundraising Campaign and we would welcome any assistance that you might wish to give.



“Matsutaka-zu (Painting of a pine and hawk),” Ohiroma Yon-no-ma (Fourth Room)

[Access]
Kyoto Municipal Subway:
“Nijo-jo mae” Station
City bus: “Nijo-jo mae”

[Hours]
◆Entry
8:45 to 16:00
(closes at 17:00)

Nijo-jo Castle Office

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Former Imperial Villa

NIJO-JO CASTLE

WORLD HERITAGE SITE

Nijo-jo Castle has kept watch over the vicissitudes
of the Tokugawa family and changes in Japanese history.





The History of Nijo-jo Castle

Nijo-jo Castle has witnessed some of the most important events in Japanese history in the 400 years since it was built. The castle was completed in 1603 on the orders of Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder and first Shogun of the Tokugawa Shogunate (1603-1867). Tokugawa Ieyasu unified Japan after a long period of civil war, and ushered in a period of over 260 years of peace and prosperity. The government that Ieyasu established lasted for fifteen generations, and was one of the longest periods of stability and prosperity in Japanese history. Japan was unified under the rule of the Tokugawa family after the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600, and in 1603 Tokugawa Ieyasu was appointed Seii-Taishogun (usually shortened to just Shogun - see [5] below), by the Emperor. After receiving his appointment, Ieyasu came to Nijo-jo Castle to announce his appointment to the feudal lords. Nijo-jo Castle was thus the stage for the announcement of the beginning of one of the most important periods in Japanese history. The Castle served as the Kyoto residence of the Shogun on the very rare occasions when he visited the Imperial Capital. When the Shogun was not in residence, the Nijo Zaiban samurai guards, who were dispatched from the Shogun's capital at Edo (present day Tokyo), were garrisoned at the castle. In 1614, Tokugawa Ieyasu departed from and returned to the castle in triumph from the Siege of Osaka Castle, which ended the line of the Toyotomi family, which ruled Japan before the Tokugawas. This cemented the position of the Tokugawas as the political rulers of Japan. A large-scale renovation was begun in 1624, during the reign of the third Shogun Iemitsu, in preparation for an Imperial Visit by the Emperor Go-Mizuno-o in 1626. This visit served as a statement of the wealth and stability of shogunal rule. In 1867, the 15th Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu summoned the senior vassals from 40 domains who were resident in Kyoto to the Ohiroma of Ninomaru-goten palace and announced the end of Tokugawa rule, and the returning of political control to the Emperor. This ushered in the Meiji Period, during which Japan developed very rapidly from a feudal society into the modern democratic nation that we know today. The Nijo-jo Castle thus staged the opening and closing ceremonies of the last period of feudal rule, as well as being the starting point of the creation of the modern Japanese State. The 400-year-old buildings of the Ninomaru-goten Palace, the Kara-mon Gate and the Ninomaru Garden, are unique survivals from one of the golden ages of Japanese architecture and design, the early Edo period, known for its ornate architecture and magnificent interiors.

Restoration of Imperial Rule



In 1867, the end of the political rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate and the restoration of power to the Emperor was proclaimed at Nijo-jo Castle. At the end of 18th century, the arrival of overseas delegations demanding the opening of Japanese ports forced the Shogun to sign treaties bringing an end to approximately 200 years of Japanese isolation from the outside world. The Shogun decided to seek approval for these treaties from the Imperial Court, which caused considerable confusion since it questioned the authority of the Shogun. Samurai mainly from southern Japan plotted to bring an end to the Tokugawa Shogunate and to return political power to the Emperor by force. In response, the 15th Shogun, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, summoned senior vassals from 40 domains who were resident in

Kyoto to the Ohiroma of Ninomaru-goten Palace on October 13, 1867, and solicited their opinions. On the following day, the Shogun announced his intention to return his political authority to the Imperial Court, which was accepted by the Emperor on October 15, 1867. Although there was some resistance, including outbreaks of warfare, Edo Castle was handed over to the new Imperial Government without bloodshed in the spring of 1868, marking the end of the Tokugawa period and the beginning of the modernization of Japan. Political power was thereby restored to the Emperor, and the Meiji period began. Thus, this is known as the Meiji Restoration.

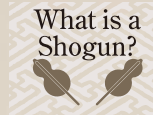
Chronological Table of Nijo-jo Castle

- 1601 | Ieyasu Tokugawa assigns the daimyos (Japanese feudal lords) of Western Japan to construction on Nijo-jo Castle.
- 1603 | Nijo-jo Castle is completed (present Ninomaru area) and Ieyasu enters for the first time.
- 1750 | In August, the keep tower is lost to fire by a lightning strike.
- 1867 | In October, the senior retainers of various clans gather in Ohiroma of Ninomaru-goten Palace. Yoshinobu announces his intention to restore imperial rule.
- 1884 | The castle becomes Nijo Rikyu (Nijo Imperial Villa).
- 1915 | The state ceremony for the coronation of the Taisho Emperor is held. The main banquet hall was constructed in preparation for the great feast (location of the present Seiryu-en) and the Minami-mon (South Gate) was added.
- 1939 | The Imperial Household Ministry grants Nijo-jo Castle to the City of Kyoto.
- 1994 | Nijo-jo Castle is registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list.
- 2011 | Nijo-jo Castle undergoes full-scale restorations.



Ieyasu Tokugawa

What is a Shogun?



Rule by the Imperial Court was formalized in the 4th century, with the first permanent imperial capital established at Nara in 694. When the first samurai government was established in Kamakura in 1185, actual political rule was taken over by the samurai, with the Emperor maintaining his position as the head of state. The head of the Kamakura samurai government was granted the title of Seii-Taishogun, later abbreviated to just Shogun. The Shogun was a very ancient court appointment dating back to the 8th century and roughly equivalent to a generalissimo, or commander-in-chief. The appointment was originally temporary, lasting for the duration of military campaigns to suppress the rebellious provinces in northeast Japan. After 1192, it became a permanent position given to the political ruler of Japan and was held by three samurai governments: the Kamakura shogunate (1185-1333), the Muromachi shogunate, which ruled from Kyoto (1336-1573), and the Edo (Tokugawa) Shogunate (1603-1867). Nijo-jo Castle was the symbol of Tokugawa shogunal authority in the Imperial Capital.

Castle Guide Map



Photo spot



Cafe



Shop and cafe

8 Seiryu-en Garden

This garden was laid out in 1965, using some of the buildings, trees, and stones from the garden of the Kyoto mansion of the wealthy Suminokura merchant family. Seiryu-en Garden is a fusion of Eastern and Western styles. The Japanese garden features two teahouses, the Koun-tei and the Waraku-an, and is complemented by the lawns of the Western-style garden.



Koun-tei



9 Nijo-jo Castle Painting Gallery

The original wall paintings from the Ninomaru-goten Palace are on display here, allowing visitors to view the paintings up close. The exhibitions change quarterly, and the museum is open 240 days a year.



1 Higashi Ote-mon Gate (East Gate)

This is the main gate to the Castle. It is thought to date back to 1662. When the castle was first built, the main gate was a yagura-mon (two-storey gate) much like the current one. The gate was altered for the visit of the Emperor to a one-storey gate, so that no-one would be able to look down upon the Emperor from above, a long-standing taboo in Japan.



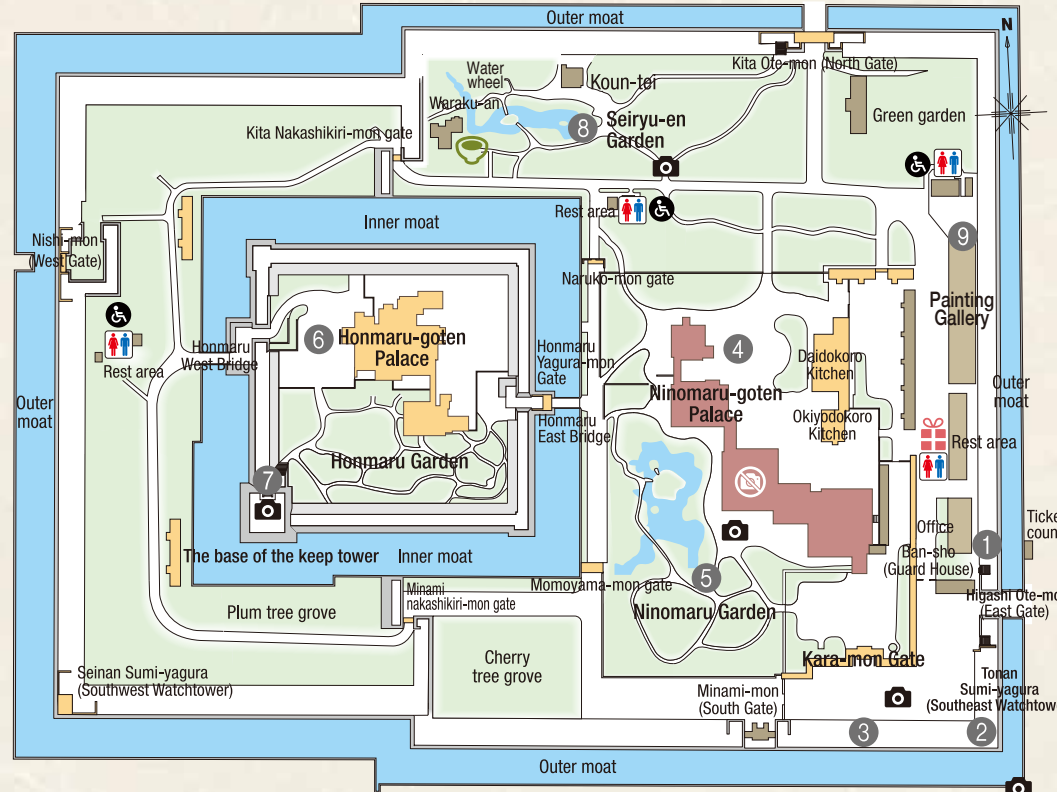
7 The base of the keep tower

A five-storey keep tower, with 6 floors inside, used to stand at the south-west corner of the Honmaru. The keep tower was moved here from the Fushimi Castle in southern Kyoto. In 1750, the tower was struck by lightning and burned down. It was not rebuilt, but the stone ramparts on which it previously stood still remain and provide expansive views of the Honmaru-goten Palace, Honmaru Gardens, and the city of Kyoto.



6 Honmaru-goten Palace and Gardens

The present Honmaru-goten Palace was moved here inside the inner moat of the Nijo-jo Castle in 1893, from the Katsura-no-miya Palace, which stood in the northeast section of the grounds of the Kyoto Imperial Palace. It is a very rare survival of the palace architectural style of an imperial princely family, and, as such, has been designated as an Important Cultural Property by the Japanese government. The Honmaru Garden to the south of the Palace was created on the occasion of a visit by the Emperor Meiji (1852-1912) and later redesigned. Pathways winding through the lawns and a hill in the southeast corner provide pleasant backdrops to enjoy the changing of the seasons.



2 Tonan Sumi-yagura (Southeast Watchtower)

The watchtowers at the four corners of the outer moat of Nijo-jo Castle were built as lookouts, and were normally used as armories. Many of the watchtowers were destroyed in a fire in 1788, and today only the southeast and southwest watchtowers survive.



3 Kara-mon Gate

The Kara-mon Gate stands at the entrance to the Ninomaru-goten Palace. Gate architecture is used to indicate status, with the Karamon gate representing the highest status, indicated by the cusped gable to the front and back of the roof, and the use of cypress bark rather than copper or tile for the roofing. The gate has four supporting pillars, and has magnificent and brilliantly colored carvings of cranes, pine, bamboo, and plum blossoms, symbolizing longevity. The carved lions protect the Palace. A 2013 restoration returned the gate to its former glory.



5 Ninomaru Garden

The Ninomaru Garden was redesigned by Kobori Enshu, the commissioner of works for the 1626 Imperial Visit. It is a classical Shoin-zukuri style garden, with a large Horai-jima island (symbolizing Paradise) flanked by a crane island and a turtle island, both metaphors for longevity. The garden was redesigned to be viewed from three different directions: from the Ohiroma and Kuro-shoin of the Ninomaru-goten Palace, and from the Gyoko-goten Palace (dismantled).



4 Ninomaru-goten Palace

The Palace consists of six connected buildings arranged in a diagonal line from the southeast to the northwest. The Palace has 33 rooms and over 800 tatami mats, and is decorated with paintings by the Kano School (replicas). Subjects include the Matsutaka-zu (pine and hawk), tigers, and leopards, all of which stress the authority of the Shogun, as well as cherry blossoms and other flowers representing the four seasons.

Ninomaru-goten Palace

The Palace consists of six connected buildings, and is archetypical of the *shoin-zukuri* architectural style, which was perfected at the beginning of the Edo period (1603 - 1867). The Palace is designated as a National Treasure since it is the only surviving example of a fortified palace complex. The interiors of the Palace are magnificently decorated with wall paintings by the Kano School, intricately carved transoms between the rooms, and exquisite metalwork fittings, befitting the Kyoto residence of the Shogun.

Photography is prohibited inside the palace for the protection of the tangible cultural property of the national treasure. Thank you for your cooperation.



1 Tozamurai Ichi-no-ma, Ni-no-ma, San-no-ma (First, Second and Third Rooms)

The first and largest section of the Palace, the *Tozamurai* served as waiting rooms for feudal lords when they visited the Palace. The first thing that the visitor to the Palace saw, the grandeur of these rooms, with their paintings on gold of ferocious tigers, was designed to express the authority of the Tokugawa Shogun. These rooms were also known as the *Tora-no-ma*, or Tiger rooms, for their wall paintings.



Chikurin-gunko-zu (Painting of bamboo and tigers), Tozamurai, Third Room

2 Shikidai (Reception Room)

The *Shikidai* reception room connects the reception areas of the Palace with the formal audience chambers, and it was here that visitors to the Castle would present gifts for the Shogun. Any business or messages for the Shogun were also first communicated here. This building is divided into a front section known as the *Shikidai-no-ma* (reception room) and a rear section called the *Roju-no-ma* (senior councilors' room). Feudal lords would meet with the senior councilors here. The pine trees are an auspicious metaphor for everlasting prosperity.

3 Ohiroma San-no-ma (Third Room)

The openwork carvings between the rooms in this and the other rooms of the *Ohiroma* are particularly noteworthy, being carved differently on either side of a single piece of cypress wood over 35cm thick. Also worth noting are the decorative metalwork fittings adorning the horizontal beams (*nageshi*) of the room. They are made of decorated and gilt copper, in the form of bouquets of flowers wrapped in paper as a gift.



Ohiroma, Third Room (transom)

4 Ohiroma Ichi-no-ma, Ni-no-ma (First and Second Rooms)

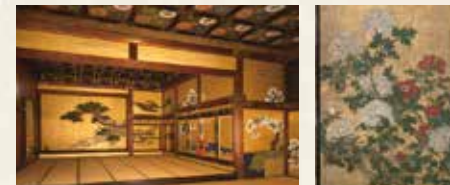
The *Ohiroma*, or Grand Hall, is the main section of the Palace, and contains the official audience rooms where the Shogun met with feudal lords and the Imperial Court nobility. The two main rooms are the First Room, which is the upper level room, and the Second Room, on the lower level. During audiences, the Shogun is believed to have sat in the First Room, facing south, as rulers in Japan traditionally did. The First Room is fitted with an alcove (*toko-no-ma*), where a triptych of hanging scrolls would have hung, and staggered shelves (*chigaidana*, to the right of the *toko-no-ma*), where works of art would have been displayed. There is an ornamental doorway, called a *chodai-gamae*, on the right side of the room (with the red tassels), and a writing desk alcove on the left side. These are characteristic components of the *shoin-zukuri* style. Wall paintings are by Kano Tan'yu.



Ohiroma where the "Restoration of Imperial Rule" was announced. View of First Room from Second Room

5 Kuro-shoin

This room was also known as the *Kohiroma*, or Smaller Grand Hall, during the Edo period, since it was used for official functions and was second only in importance to the *Ohiroma*. The Shogun met with high-ranking court nobles and with feudal lords with close ties to the Tokugawa family here, hence the more intimate nature of the architecture. The first and second rooms of the *Kuro-shoin* were also known as the *Sakura-no-ma*, or cherry blossom rooms, after the beautiful murals of cherry trees in full bloom. The changing of the seasons is incorporated into the paintings of this room. There is a light sprinkling of snow on the pine trees depicted behind the Shogun's seat, and the other paintings include plum and cherry blossoms. Plums flower in late winter, before the cherry blossoms in the early spring. The paintings are by Kano Tan'yu's brother, Naonobu.



Kuro-shoin, view of First Room from Second Room Kuro-shoin, Botan-no-ma

6 Shiro-shoin

These rooms in the *Shiro-shoin* were also known as the *Goza-no-ma* (literally sitting room) in the Edo period and it is believed that these three rooms were the Shogun's private quarters. Surrounded by ink wash paintings, the decorative scheme is very different from other parts of the Palace, creating an atmosphere of quiet calm. Themes of Chinese origin have been depicted, with a panoramic mural of the West Lake (a famous landscape in Zhejiang, China) in the First and Second Rooms, and famous figures from Chinese history and legend in the Third Room.

7 Ohiroma Yon-no-ma (Fourth Room)

It is said that weapons were displayed here when the Shogun was in residence. The *Matsutaka-zu* wall painting of a hawk perched on a massive pine tree is the most famous wall painting in the Palace, and incorporates features typical of the Momoyama period of the late 16th century.



Ohiroma, Fourth Room

8 Shikidai: Roju-no-ma (Senior Councilor's Room)

This room served as the waiting room for senior councilors. The paintings in the First and Second Rooms depict geese in the spring, summer, and autumn, with egrets and willow trees in a winter scene in the Third Room. Unlike the other rooms in the Palace, the wall section above the horizontal beams is white, creating a much more understated decorative scheme.



Shikidai, Roju-no-ma

9 Tozamurai: Chokushi-no-ma (Imperial Messenger's Room)

A very important room in the Palace, this was used when the Shogun met with messengers from the Imperial Court. The wall paintings here depict a refreshing early-summer scene of green maple leaves against a background of water.



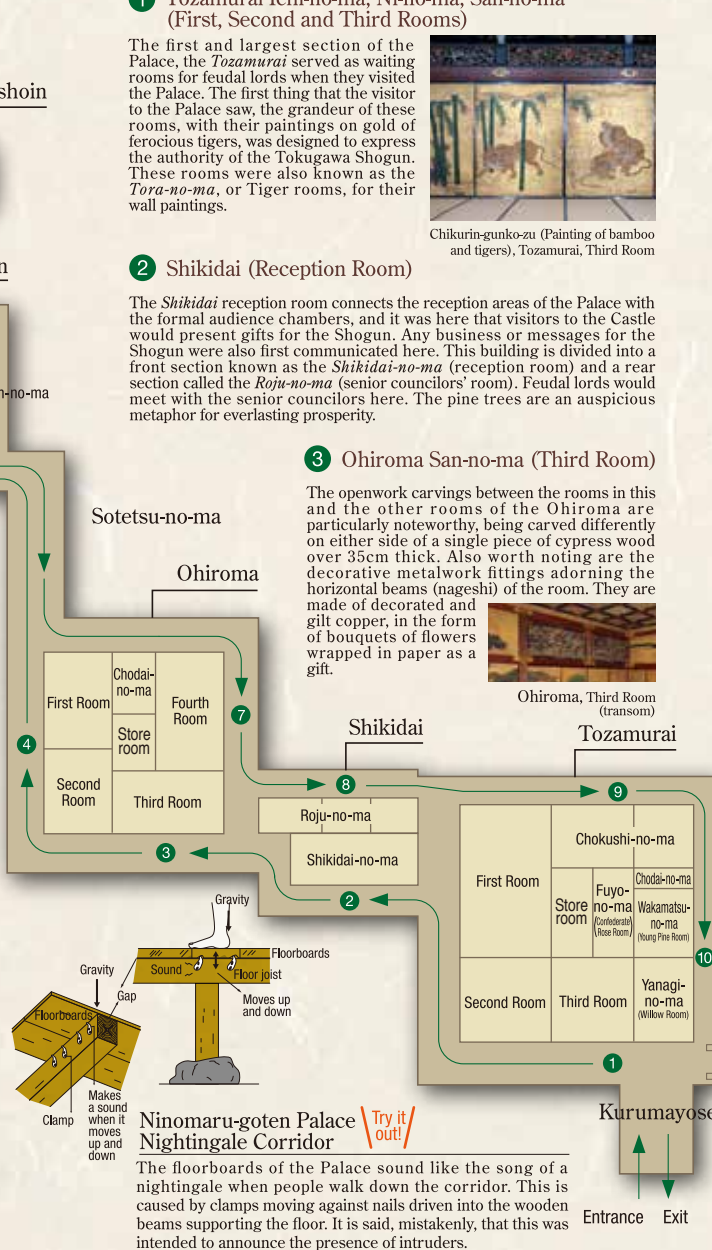
Tozamurai, Chokushi-no-ma

10 Tozamurai: Yanagi-no-ma (Willow Room)

Willow trees are depicted in this room, lending a sophisticated, aristocratic air to the space, which echoes the floral themes in the adjoining *Chokushi-no-ma*, *Fuyo-no-ma* (Cotton Rosemallow room) and *Wakamatsu-no-ma* (Young Pine Room).

Ninomaru-goten Palace Wall paintings

There are over 3,600 wall paintings inside the Palace, including many from the Kan'ei period (1624 - 1644). 1,016 of these paintings are designated as Important Cultural Properties. The Kan'ei period murals are by the young master painter Kano Tan'yu of the Kano School of painting, which enjoyed the patronage of the Tokugawa shoguns. They were painted when the castle was re-modeled for the Imperial Visit by Emperor Go-Mizuno-o in 1626.



Ninomaru-goten Palace Nightingale Corridor

The floorboards of the Palace sound like the song of a nightingale when people walk down the corridor. This is caused by clamps moving against nails driven into the wooden beams supporting the floor. It is said, mistakenly, that this was intended to announce the presence of intruders.