



Japan in the Meiji Era. The collection Heinrich von Siebold

From 13 February to 11 August 2020

The Meiji era covers the period from 1868 to 1912 in Japanese history. This was a time when the feudal state was developing into a modern super power, when Japanese society was changing and opening up to the world. This still-unknown country aroused great interest in Europe. Heinrich von Siebold, the son of the doctor and famous researcher on Japan, Philipp Franz von Siebold, travelled to Japan as a teenager and spent most of his life there. Heinrich von Siebold donated his collection of Japanese objects to Emperor Franz Josef for the k. u. k. Natural History Museum and was therefore granted the title of a baron. Today, this donation forms part of the core inventory of the Weltmuseum Wien East Asian collection.

The history of this collection has been reconstructed and recreated in the exhibition Japan in the Meiji Era, based on three historical object photographs from the nineteenth century. The exhibition also presents the results of the joint research project with the National Museum of Japanese History.



Who is Heinrich von Siebold?

Heinrich von Siebold (1852–1908), son of the doctor and famous researcher on Japan Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866), travelled to Japan as a teenager and spent most of his life there. He was hired as an interpreter at the newly founded Austro-Hungarian embassy in Tōkyō. This was during the transition from the Shogunate to the Meiji period (1868–1912) and the new policy of opening up the country. During the Meiji Restoration, Japan's formerly military-oriented society changed from a feudal state to a modern superpower, with the Tennō as the head of the state. The social upheaval meant that many of the cult and everyday objects of the previous Shogun period were no longer needed, thus passed into the possession of collectors like Heinrich von Siebold. He wanted to sell his extensive collection, but in the end left it to Emperor Franz Joseph I for the k. u. k. naturhistorisches Hofmuseum in 1888. The collection was inventoried in the anthropology and ethnography department. Heinrich von Siebold received a title of nobility for the donation. The exhibition follows the collection's journey to the Weltmuseum Wien.

About the exhibition

The exhibition will present the results of a joint research project with the National Museum of Japanese History. Japan in the Meiji Era is based on three historical photographs from the nineteenth century, which show how the collection was set-up at the family's private residence. A film reconstructs this set-up using the object mapping technology, giving an impression of the original installation. At the same time, the objects will be displayed in five exhibition rooms and presented with a current assessment of the historical value of a Meiji-era collection. A symposium on Heinrich von Siebold and his collection will take place in March 2020.

HEINRICH VON SIEBOLD – BIOGRAPHY

1852	born as the fourth child of Franz von Siebold and his wife Helene, née von Gagern (1820-1877), in St. Martin/Boppard on the Rhine
1866	death of his father, Philipp Franz von Siebold (1796–1866)
1869	visits Japan for the first time and begins to study Japanese
1873	Vienna World Fair; together with his brother, Alexander, he works as a translator for, among others, the Iwakura Mission in Vienna
1874	first purchase of ceramics and metal artefacts from the H. von Siebold Collection by the Imperial Museum of Art and Industry
1875	publishes <i>Etwas über die Tsutschi Ningio</i> , in: <i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens</i> , no. 7, 13-14, and <i>Das Harakiri</i> , in: <i>Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens</i> , no 10, 26–28
1876	a fire in his house in Japan destroys many objects in his collection
1877	excavations at the Omori shell midden, Tokyo
1879	publishes <i>Notes on Japanese Archaeology with Especial Reference to the Stone Age</i> , Yokohama, Tōkyō
1881	publishes <i>Ethnologische Studien über die Aino auf der Insel Yesso</i> , in: <i>Zeitschrift für Ethnologie</i> , Berlin
1882	becomes an Austrian citizen
1883	the Heinrich von Siebold Collection is sent at Erbach Castle near Ulm (in southern Germany)
1885	Franz Heger, formerly curator and now director of the Anthropological-Ethnographical Dept. of the Imperial Museum of Natural History, visits Erbach Castle, Ulm, with a view to acquiring the collection (entries in his diary)
1888	first gift of pottery from the Rukyu Islands to the Imperial Museum of Natural History (sent with the frigate <i>Aurora</i> , W. Swoboda Collection)
1889	knighted by Emperor Franz Joseph after donating a collection of 5,000 objects to the emperor
1893	Heinrich von Siebold and Franz Heger install the Japanese Gallery at the Imperial Museum of Natural History



- Heinrich accompanies Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Este during his visit to Japan
- 1896 returns to Europe
- 1897 his final collection is exhibited in a former chemical laboratory, Maxstrasse Wurzburg
- 1898 marries Euphemia Carpenter, and buys Freudenstein Castle, Bolzano
- 1905 parts of his collection are purchased by the Imperial Museum of Art and Industry (today the MAK) in Vienna
- 1908 Heinrich dies at Freudenstein Castle, Bolzano
- 1909 his third collection is sold and auctioned off by "Au Mikado", Vienna
- publication of his book Ph. Fr. von Siebold. Der Erforscher Japans – sein Leben und Wirken, Leipzig



EXIBITION PROGRAMME

International Symposium: More Insights into the Heinrich von Siebold Collection
9 to 10 March 2020

In the context of the exhibition Japan in the Meiji Era, Weltmuseum Wien and the National Museum of Japanese History (NMJH) are organising an international symposium focusing on the Heinrich von Siebold Collection. The collection documents a turning point in Japanese history and provides interesting insights into material and culture from a historical perspective.

Registration: info@weltmuseumwien.at

Admission: free

Meeting point: WMW Forum

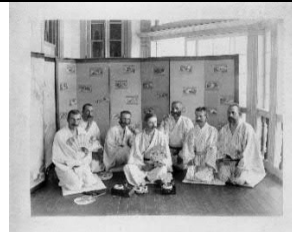
PRESS PHOTOGRAPHS

Press photographs are available in the press section of our website free of charge, for your topical reporting: www.weltmuseumwien.at/presse/

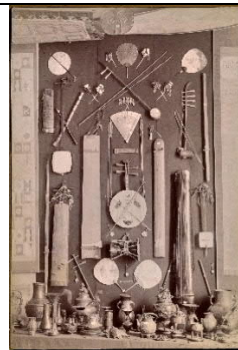
Heinrich Freiherr von Siebold in Japanese dress
1897
© Siebold-Archiv Burg Brandenstein



Franz Ferdinand (middle) und Heinrich von Siebold
(2. from right) in Japan
1893
© KHM-Museumsverband



The photographs show a presentation of Heinrich von Siebold's collection from about 1883, at his sisters residence near Ulm in southern Germany
© Siebold-Archiv Burg Brandenstein



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© Siebold-Archiv Burg Brandenstein

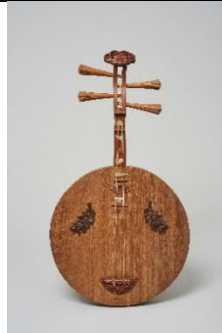


The photographs show a presentation of Heinrich von Siebold's collection from about 1883, at his sisters residence near Ulm in southern Germany
© Siebold-Archiv Burg Brandenstein



月琴

Gekkin (Moon lute)
(Four-stringed Chinese lute Ch. yueqin)
Workshop: Ishimura Minosuke (Shakusai)
Tokyo, after 1872 and before 1882
Wood, jade
© KHM-Museumsverband



団扇

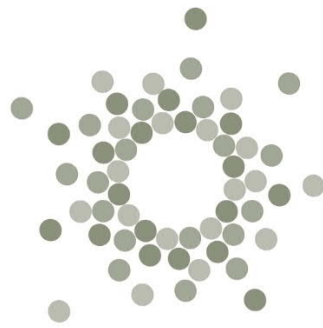
Fan
Late Edo (1600–1868) to Meiji period (1868–1912),
before 1882
Paper, bamboo, pigments, mica
© KHM-Museumsverband



華鬘

Keman
Edo- (1600–1868) to Meiji period (1868–1912), before
1882
Gilded copper
© KHM-Museumsverband





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色絵布袋形合子

Colored small lidded container in the shape of Budai (Jp. Hotei)

Late Edo to early Meiji (1600 – 1812) middle to latter half of the 19th cent., before 1882

Hizen ware

Collection Brandenstein-Zeppelin family

© Siebold-Archiv Burg Brandenstein



縄文時代の石器

Stone tools

Late Jōmon period (14000 – 950 BCE)

Stone

© KHM-Museumsverband



阿弥陀三尊像

Amida Trinity

Standing Amida Nyorai statue: Muromachi period (15th to 16th cent.), wood and gold foil

Left attendant statue: made by Kōkei, Edo Period (17th to 18th cent.), wood with gold paint (body) and gold foil (clothing),

Right attendant statue: made by Shikibu-shō, Edo period (17th to 18th cent.), wood with gold paint (body) and gold foil (clothing)

© KHM-Museumsverband



龍置物

Ryū okimono (Dragon figurine)

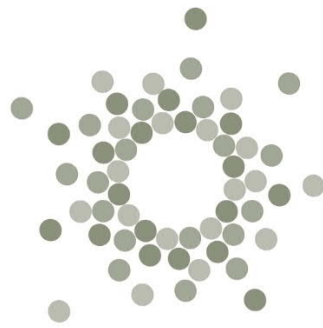
Artist: Kimura Toun. Inscription: "Aged 69" "Cast by Toun", Edo (Tokyo)

Edo period (1600–1868)

Bronze, silver, crystal

© KHM-Museumsverband





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剣酢漿草散唐草文蒔絵挾箱

Makie lacquered traveling box (hasami bako) with a scattered sword wood sorrel arabesque pattern

Latter half of Edo period (1600–1868)

Wood, lacquer, metal

© KHM-Museumsverband



色絵百仙人図沈香壺

Vase with the motive of one hundred hermits

Early Meiji period (1868-1912), before 1882

Kutani Porcelain

© KHM-Museumsverband



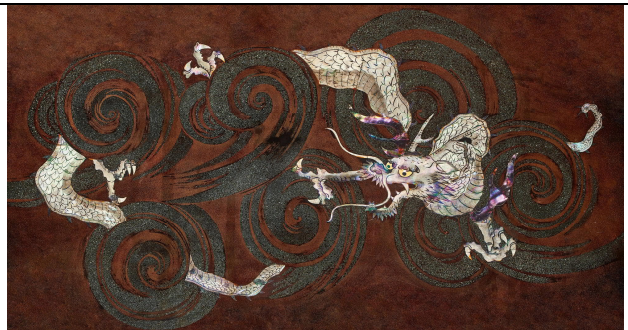
龍虎螺鈿刀掛

sword stand with tiger and dragon motive (detail)

Late Edo period (1600-1868) until early Meiji period (1868-1912), before 1882

Wood, lacquer, mother of pearl, metal

© KHM-Museumsverband





OPENING HOURS

MUSEUM & CAFÉ

Daily except Wednesday
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

LIBRARY

Monday to Wednesday
10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Thursday
10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

TICKETS

Adults	€ 12
Reduced*	€ 9
Children and adolescent*	free
Annual Ticket	€ 44
Annual Ticket U25	€ 25
Group Ticket p.p. *	€ 9

* [Information on ticket prices](#)

Your Weltmuseum Wien ticket admits you to the Imperial Armoury of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna which is located in the same building as the Weltmuseum Wien.

Online Tickets: shop.khm.at/tickets

CONTACT FOR YOUR VISIT

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