

Thematic Exhibition

The World of Japanese Falconry

November 12 (Sat.) - December 15 (Thu.)
2022

Exhibition Rooms of
Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya

Foreword

Falconry, a form of hunting using tamed falcons and other raptors to capture prey, was popular among emperors, aristocrats, and warriors in Japan from ancient times to the Edo period. The name—*taka-gari* or "falcon hunting" in Japanese—differs from other types of hunting in that the falcon is not the bird being hunted, but the one doing the hunting. In addition to the ritualistic aspect of falconry, such as making formal offerings to a superior or bestowing on a subject either the hunting falcon or the captured birds, the special techniques of raising effective hunting birds and obtaining control of territories appropriate for such hunting were also essential elements of the sport.

This exhibition explores the world of *taka-gari* by spotlighting the people and places that were central to the practice of falconry in Japan.



1 THE WORLD OF FALCONRY

Exhibit No.1 - 14

Falconry is a form of hunting that utilizes falcons, hawks, or other raptors to capture prey. In Japan, falconry was enjoyed by emperors, noblemen, and warriors since ancient times. In ancient times, falconry was a favorite pastime of the emperors and nobility and was practiced mainly in autumn and winter. In the medieval period, as the warrior class came to power, falcon hunting became an activity of the samurai, and it took on additional importance as a martial art. In the Edo period, the practice became less exclusively associated with the autumn and winter seasons, as feudal lords came to enjoy the hunt when touring their domains or during their travels to and from the capital at various times of the year.

Falconry, or *taka-gari*, was also a frequent subject of *waka* poetry, which often employed the term not only in reference to the activity of hunting with birds, but also for the numerous other allusions that could be made to concepts that shared the same phonetic reading.

2 BIRDS AS GAME, GAME FOWL AS FOOD

Exhibit No.15 - 17

Today, the thought of poultry generally brings to mind chicken, but before the Edo period, a wide variety of wild birds were eaten, including cranes, pheasants, and geese. Game fowl caught by this mode of hunting were also served to guests or presented as gifts. Cranes were especially prized among hawks' prey. This section examines the rich food culture of game fowl in the Edo period.



Gomakichi, who is both a manga artist and active falconer, provided a newly written manga and messages for this exhibition.

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3 PEOPLE AND PLACES OF THE HUNT

Exhibit No.18 - 31

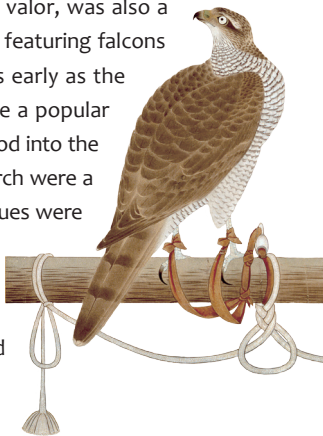
In the Edo period, falconry was practiced at sites called *takaba*, or “falconry grounds.” In the Kanto area, the Tokugawa shogunal falconry grounds were located around Edo Castle and surrounded by grounds authorized to the three cadet branch families, or *gosanke*. Also, within the Owari domain were designated falconry grounds for the daimyo himself, as well as separate areas where only specific vassals, such as the chief retainers of the Naruse or Takenokoshi families, were permitted to hunt. The management of hunting grounds and their use was an important component of land governance during this period.

Taka-gari was not a solitary activity, and the daimyo’s hunting party necessitated the involvement of numerous people in supporting roles, including trained falconers, officials and villagers providing logistical support, and others with the necessary skills for these outings. This section introduces the falconry grounds of the Owari domain and the various individuals who played a part in the local hunting practice.

4 THE FALCON'S IMAGE

Exhibit No.32 - 49

The falcon, with its associations with strength and valor, was also a symbol of authority and military prowess. Paintings featuring falcons and other birds of prey were produced in China as early as the Tang Dynasty (618–907), and in Japan, falcons were a popular painting subject from the end of the Muromachi period into the Edo period. Paintings of falcons leashed to a pole perch were a particularly popular motif. Advanced training techniques were also required during these times not only to acquire the knowledge needed to practice the activity of falcon hunting, but also to train exceptional hunting birds that would be desirable as gifts to be presented to the shogun and other high lords.



November 19 (Sat.) - 27 (Sun.), 2022

Masterpieces Collection Room No.5

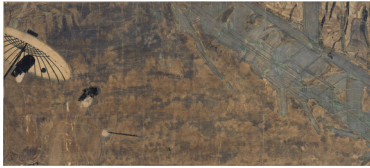
Special
Exhibits

National Treasure

**Two Scenes of
The Tale of Genji Illustrated Scrolls**

**Chapter "Yomogiu (A Waste of Weed)"
Chapter "Kashiwagi (The Oak Tree) II"**

The National Treasure *Tale of Genji* Illustrated Scrolls are not only the oldest surviving text version, they are also the oldest surviving illustrated edition of the tale, which has long time been beloved by so many people. This year, "Yomogiu (A Waste of Weeds)" and "Kashiwagi (The Oak Tree) II" are on display.



Chapter "Yomogiu"



Chapter "Kashiwagi II"



◀ Explanation of the scenes of
15 chapters of "The Tale of Genji Illustrated Scrolls"



The Tokugawa Art Museum



Hōsa Library, City of Nagoya



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