



The Tokyo Metropolitan Edo-Tokyo Museum is scheduled to be closed for major renovations until 2025.

International Exchange Program

International Exchange Exhibition Opens in Paris



Contemporary Famous Rabbits, Complete, ca. 1872-73

A Japanese Bestiary: Living with Animals in Edo-Tokyo (18th – 19th century)

November 9, 2022 (Wednesday) –
January 21, 2023 (Saturday)

One of the projects our museum is carrying out during its closure was holding *A Japanese Bestiary: Living with Animals in Edo-Tokyo (18th – 19th century)* in Paris, in partnership with The Japan Cultural Institute in Paris (Maison de la Culture du Japon à Paris).

The theme of this exhibition is the relationships between animals and the people of Edo-Tokyo. It explores, through 112 works from our collection in a broad range of genres — prints, lacquerware, textiles, toys — how humans and animals coexisted and the history of those relationships. This exhibition is the first to introduce works from our collection on a large scale in France. The theme of living with animals is one that Parisians seemed to feel a close connection with as they enjoyed the exhibition.

Our museum's curators wrote the explanations of the exhibits, which were published, with color plates, in the exhibition catalogue (entirely in French).



The exhibition in process.

The 2022 Japan-China-Korea International Symposium on Museum and Exhibition Held in Seoul

On September 5, 2022, the Japan-China-Korea International Symposium on Museum was held at the Seoul Museum of History, in the Republic of Korea. Since 2002, our museum, the Capital Museum of China and the Shenyang Palace Museum and the Seoul Museum of History have been taking turns holding annual symposia. The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted that series, but the symposia resumed this year, for the first time in three years. Unfortunately, the Capital Museum participated remotely, and the Shenyang Palace Museum was absent. Our museum's representatives, however, went to Seoul for the symposium and were able to revive old relationships.

The theme of the symposium this year was "Urban Museum and Future Strategy," and each of the museums made presentations on the measures they had taken when confronted with the pandemic and their planning for the roles that they should play from now on. Those presentations were followed by lively exchanges of views.

The Seoul Museum of History also held an international exhibition organized with our museum, *Scenes Around Sumida River in Edo Tokyo*, from September 7 to October 23. As in the featured exhibition *1784, Ordinary days in Seoul* held at our museum in 2019, this exhibition came

about as the result of research exchanges between both museums. The *Scenes Around Sumida River* exhibition introduced, through objects from our collection, the lifestyles and culture in the Sumida River area in the early modern period. The regard that the people of Edo had for the Sumida River was similar to the feelings of the people of Seoul about the Han River, which flows through their city, so that it seemed very familiar to them. Our museum plans to continue these valuable activities, to make further progress on international exchanges between museums.



Panel discussion with remote participation



The *Scenes Around Sumida River in Edo Tokyo* international exchange exhibition

Provided by the Seoul Museum of History

A Newspaper Event a Hundred Years Ago Celebrating 10,000 Miles: The Railway Race

Text by Nitta Taro, Curator



Railway Race Sugoroku, 1925, Osaka Mainichi Newspaper

In 1924, the *Osaka Mainichi Newspaper* (*Osaka News*), predecessor of today's *Mainichi Newspaper*, and the *Tokyo Nichi-nichi Newspaper* (*Tokyo News*), which was affiliated with it, carried out a project in their pages, entitled "Celebrating 10,000 Miles: The Railway Race." In connection with the railways in Japan having reached that monumental point in their development, the two newspapers each selected five reporters and had them compete. The challenge was to set out from their defined starting points, in Osaka and Tokyo, travel all the rails in the country in relay fashion, and see who could return to the starting point sooner.

Between the announcement of the race on August 2 and its start on August 20, the newspapers reported on the process of deciding on the requirements for carrying it out, in their pages. The Ministry of Railways supported the contest, and during that period, three judges, including the Railway Minister, Sengoku Mitsugi, were chosen. The Railway Bureau also created a diagram of the trains that the competitors would take and advised them on routes. It further announced that it had arranged for each station's staff to certify the competitors' arrival, recording the date and time when each got on and off the train and applying a seal confirming that information.

Starting with the August 21 morning edition, the newspapers carried a series of articles by the reporters in the race. They not only reported on their pressing competition, but also described the weather and natural features of each region they visited and their famous places and products. Their readers shared an interest in taking part and, to expand popular knowledge of the railways, a poll was also carried out among the readers. The race ended with *Osaka News* the winner, arriving at its starting point on September 28. *Tokyo News* made it about a day later in this forty-day battle.

Next, the 1925 New Year's issue of the *Osaka News* carried the "Railway Race Sugoroku Game Board" shown in the photograph. The *sugoroku* board, a game similar to snakes and ladders, includes the features of places on all the railway lines in the country. The rules published with it stated that the player would roll the dice to proceed; when the player passed through a station, the judge would give the player a

card with the station name on it. (Cards with the station names were printed below the game board.) The rules were similar to regular *sugoroku* in that, for instance, if a player landed on a major station, he or she had to miss a turn. The game successfully recreated the railway race, on paper.

The race and the board game were media events, events the mass media held to generate a changing state of affairs in society. This competition held by the two newspapers was followed by another media event in 1926, a newspaper poll of readers to select "Japan's New Eight Scenic Places," which received nearly a hundred million votes, more than the total population of Japan at the time.



Detail of the Railway Race Sugoroku