**Heian Jingu Shrine and Gardens**

Heian Jingu Shrine is a 5:8 scale replica of the emperor’s palace in Kyoto as it would have been over one thousand years ago. The extensive Japanese gardens surrounding the shrine are also open to the public.

The two-story Otenmon Gate leads into a vast, walled courtyard, enclosing several ornate buildings. The complex is modeled on the State Hall of the Imperial Palace, or Chodoin complex, where the emperor presided over state affairs. The large hall directly across from the Otenmon Gate is the Daigokuden. It replicates the building that housed the imperial throne.

To the left, beside the Byakkoro Tower, is the entrance to the shrine’s gardens. The path leads through four different areas, each showcasing the taste and design features of a different historical period. The narrow winding paths, delicate flowers, and double-petaled weeping cherry trees of the South Garden evoke the Heian period (794–1185), and the elegantly crafted wooden structures centering on a large pond in the East Garden were popular during the Edo period (1603–1867).

The Heian period (794–1185) lasted nearly 400 years and was one of the great flowerings of art and culture in Japanese history. Heiankyo, what we now know as Kyoto, was founded in the eighth century, and remained the seat of the emperor until 1868. The government moved to Tokyo in 1869.

Heian Jingu enshrines Emperor Kanmu (737–­806), the first emperor of the Heian period (794–1185), and Emperor Komei (1831–1866), the last emperor to rule from Heiankyo (Kyoto). The shrine was built in 1895 to coincide with celebrations marking the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of the city.