

Miniature Koto

This stringed instrument is a miniature version of a Japanese native koto known as a Yamato *goto*, which developed from the Chinese zither. Most characteristic of this koto is the shape of the head, a flared “kite tail.” It was discovered at the same ritual site on Okinoshima as the miniature loom, also on display at the Shimpokan. The strings of the miniature koto actually make sound. A similar koto is also one of the Divine Treasures at Ise Jingu, the main shrine for venerating the ancestors of the imperial family. This suggests that the rituals performed on Okinoshima preceded similar *ritsuryo* ceremonies that later took place under a more centralized system of governance in the eighth century.