

【Chodo: Ii Family Furnishings and Household Goods】

The position of a daimyo family in Edo period (1603–1867) society was defined not just by titles, income, and political influence, but also by the finery of their everyday lives: a daimyo's household was filled with elegant combs, fans, cups, screens, and other accessories of their elevated status. These many personal and household items are collectively referred to as *chōdo*, and for a daimyo family, they were a medium for expressing taste, class, and personal refinement.

In the Edo period, a bride would bring an entire set of household articles to her husband's home. All the objects in the trousseau would be of identical design and would often bear the bride or bridegroom's family crest. The refined and artistic goods in this collection give a hint of the wealth displayed at weddings in the Edo period.

Tableware

Meals in the Edo period were served on individual standing trays called *kakeban*, upon which a variety of lacquered plates, bowls and cups were arranged. The lacquer was often colored red with cinnabar, a sign of wealth that also enhanced the visual appeal of each dish.

Toiletries and Make-up

Various grooming items were standard: washbasins, mirrors, combs, boxes for make-up, and other decorative items. Until the end of the nineteenth century, it was common practice in the upper classes for married women to blacken their teeth using a mixture of iron filings dissolved in vinegar. This practice, known as *ohaguro*, was thought to prevent tooth decay.

Palanquins

When traveling outside their residences, members of the nobility were often carried in a palanquin (or litter) by two or more bearers. For the samurai, the permitted dimensions and decorations of one's palanquin were determined by rank, and a daimyo's palanquin was lavishly constructed and decorated.

Calligraphy Boxes

In daimyo family life, people spent considerable time writing letters, poetry, and diaries. Boxes (*suzuribako*) for storing writing implements and an inkstone were sophisticated objects, some with designs or motifs referencing famous poems and some rich in gold and silver to reflect the owner's taste and artistic sense.

Board Games

Boards and pieces for games such as *go*, *shogi* (Japanese chess) and *sugoroku* (a kind of backgammon) were essential items in a bride's trousseau. Mastery of these three games was an important social skill for a member of a daimyo family.

Smoking Accessories

People of the Edo period smoked cut tobacco. A wooden tobacco box, or *tabako bon*, generally contained a pipe, cut tobacco, a ceramic container to hold live embers, metal chopsticks for using the embers to light the tobacco, and an ashtray.

Parlor Furnishings

From the Muromachi period (1336–1573) onward, decorative works of art and crafts from China were highly valued. In daimyo houses, hanging scrolls were commonly displayed in the decorative alcove (*tokonoma*) of the private sitting room, which often contained shelves for displaying other art objects.