

Shobikan and Taiheikaku: Symbols of Kyoto's Revitalization

After the seat of the emperor was transferred to Tokyo in 1868, various efforts were made to revitalize the old capital of Kyoto. Expositions were held at different locations throughout the city from 1871 until the 1920s. The largest, the Fourth National Industrial Exhibition, was held in 1895 at the Kyoto Imperial Palace. Heian Jingu was founded in the same year to commemorate the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of Heiankyo (the ancient capital and one of the former names of Kyoto). In 1916, when the East Garden (Higashi Shin'en) was created, one of the exposition halls from the palace was moved to the shrine garden and named the Shobikan. Another imperial palace structure, the Taiheikaku bridge, was relocated to the garden at the same time.

The Shobikan, which stands on the edge of the pond, is primarily decorative and is not open to the public. The Taiheikaku is a covered bridge with a two-story pavilion in the center. It has a cypress-bark roof with Chinese-style (*karahafu*) gables, and the center pavilion is topped by a figure of a phoenix, a symbol of virtue and grace. Wooden benches inside the bridge are provided for leisurely enjoyment of the vista of the pond and garden.