

Personal Possessions of Tokugawa Ieyasu

The collection of Tokugawa Ieyasu's (1542–1616) personal items gives a unique look into the retired shogun's daily life—ranging from walking sticks and medicine bottles to his personal hair combs. Ieyasu became shogun in 1603 and retired two years later, ceding official control of the shogunate to his son. Ieyasu then returned to Sumpu (now Shizuoka City), where he had spent much of his youth. Despite his retirement, Ieyasu continued to wield political influence until his death, personally handling most diplomatic and trade relations with foreign countries. His effects include many items and gifts from foreign dignitaries.

Kunozan Toshogu's collection contains many items from Ieyasu's personal study, such as tables, candleholders, inkstone cases, and writing brushes stained with ink. One can imagine Ieyasu bent over a low table with a candle burning, brush in hand, studying books on Eastern medicine or writing a letter.

Ieyasu was particularly interested in pharmacology, and prepared medicines for himself, his family, and his retainers. His effects contain a book on medicine from Korea, which he likely used as a reference. There are also several bottles that still contain powders that Ieyasu may have made himself, as well as a mortar and pestle and a knife for preparing medicines.

The shogun was also an outdoorsman and an avid falconer. Many statues of Ieyasu, including the one in Sumpu Castle Park, portray him with a hawk resting on his arm. The museum's collection includes walking sticks and a woven rush hat that he used for casual outings. There is also a portable inkstone case that he would have carried with him.

The collection includes many tea utensils. Most are cracked and worn from daily use—rather than hoarding the precious items that he would have used to entertain guests in his tomb, Ieyasu seems have given away all but his own personal items.

The total collection of 191 items has been designated an Important Cultural Property.