

Ningyō to pray for children's growth

Doll culture in Japan developed out of rites to protect children against misfortune and to pray for their happiness. With the passing of time, the simple dolls used in those rites gradually became more ornate, giving rise to the today's typical style of Japanese dolls as seen in Hina Ningyō of the Hina Matsuri festival.

Katashiro
Considered to be the archetypes of
dolls in Japan



Dairi-bina (Imperial couple)

These are the main dolls used in the Hina Matsuri festival celebrated on March 3rd to pray for the happiness of girls. Here, Dairi refers to the palace which the Emperor resides in. Accordingly, Hina Ningyō (Girls' Festival dolls) representing the Emperor and Empress are called Dairi-bina. Dairi-bina generally depict the Emperor and Empress of the Edo period, while the clothing worn by the dolls shown here is designed after that worn by the current Emperor and Empress during palace rite in 2019.

A similar day of celebration is held for the growth of male children on May 5 (Tango no Sekku). Models of armor and dolls of heroes are put on display for the festival. Hero dolls that are particularly popular include Momotarō and Kintarō, both known for possessing super-human strength and for having saved the people by overcoming monsters.

Momotarō



GREETINGS

The traveling exhibition "NINGYŌ: Art and Beauty of Japanese dolls" was prepared as a successor to our highly popular traveling exhibition "The Dolls of Japan: Shapes of Prayer, Embodiments of Love." Under the title NINGYŌ, which means "human shape" in Japanese, the doll culture that has been cultivated over the long history of Japan will be introduced through a total of 67 carefully selected dolls, divided into 4 sections: "Ningyō to pray for children's growth," "Ningyō as fine art," "Ningyō as folk art," and "Spread of Ningyō culture."

The fact that dolls are an indispensable part of our daily lives is not limited to Japan, but the diversity of dolls and their delicate craftsmanship, backed by a deep love of dolls, could be said to be the characteristics of Japanese doll culture. This exhibition presents a comprehensive introduction to Japanese doll culture, from Katashiro and Amagatsu, which are considered to be the archetypes of dolls in Japan, to local dolls that reflect the climate and anecdotes from across the country, to dress-up dolls that are beloved in Japan today as doll toys, and scale figures that are highly regarded around the world. We appreciate that each doll on exhibition would be warmly welcomed all over the world, and that many audiences would experience the charm of Japanese dolls.

The Japan Foundation



The Embassy of Japan in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Japan Foundation and the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina have co-organised the exhibition 'NINGYŌ: Art and beauty of Japanese dolls.'

The doll culture has spread throughout Japan's long history with the many wishes and thoughts. The 67 dolls will show visitors the history of Japanese dolls, their magnificent decorations and fine handicrafts, which differ from period to period, and take the audiences into the world of beautiful Japanese dolls as a part of Japanese culture.

Take your time and enjoy looking at each doll, which may or may not be the same as dolls from Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that this exhibition of Japanese dolls will help to promote cultural exchange between Japan and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Embassy of Japan in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Embassy of Japan

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NINGYŌ

Art and Beauty of Japanese dolls



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National Museum of
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