

Structures Designated as Nationally Important Cultural Property

The Palace



Otsunegoten was built in 1924 as Prince Kuni's private residence. The total size of the building is 420 m². It was designed in the Irimoya (half-hipped roof) style, and partially in the Kirizuma (gabled roof) style by the Japanese architect Matsunosuke Moriyama and constructed by Toyokichi Yokomizo. It is a Japanese-style imperial architecture with a Taiwanese flavor.

The Small Dining Room is part of the original main building built in 1918. The total size of the building is 291 m². The construction specialists retained by the Prince's family designed it in the Irimoya style. Inside the building, one will find magnificent interior decorations, distinctive of the imperial architecture in the Taisho period.



The Kuni House



The carriage porch was completed in 1918 as the front entrance of the original main building, and has remained in the same place since its installation, even though the principal parts of the main building were destroyed due to fire. Princess Nagako of the House of Prince Kuni, who would become Empress Kojun, left the residence from this porch on her way to her wedding with the future Emperor Showa.

The Main Gate



Completed in 1918, the Main Gate is a Yakuimon-style gate in which both the main front pillars and the rear support pillars are covered by a single tiled roof with Sodebei lower walls extended to the right and left. It now serves as the university's main gate.



Nationally Designated
Important Cultural Property

Former Residence of Prince Kuni

University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo



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The former residence of Prince Kuni is the only existing Japanese-style principal residence of an Imperial Family member. Recognized for its "excellent design" and "high academic values" in light of the history of the Japanese imperial architecture, it was designated by the Japanese government as an important cultural property in 2017.

The designation includes *Otsunegoten* and the Small Dining Room, which are collectively called the Palace, the Main Gate, and the Carriage Porch as a supplement.

The Palace: Former Residence of Prince Kuni

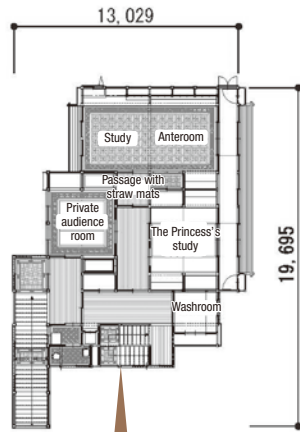
Otsunegoten and Small Dining Room



▲ Cusped-arch window in the private audience room



▲ Taiwanese-style ceiling in the private audience room



Otsunegoten, 2nd floor

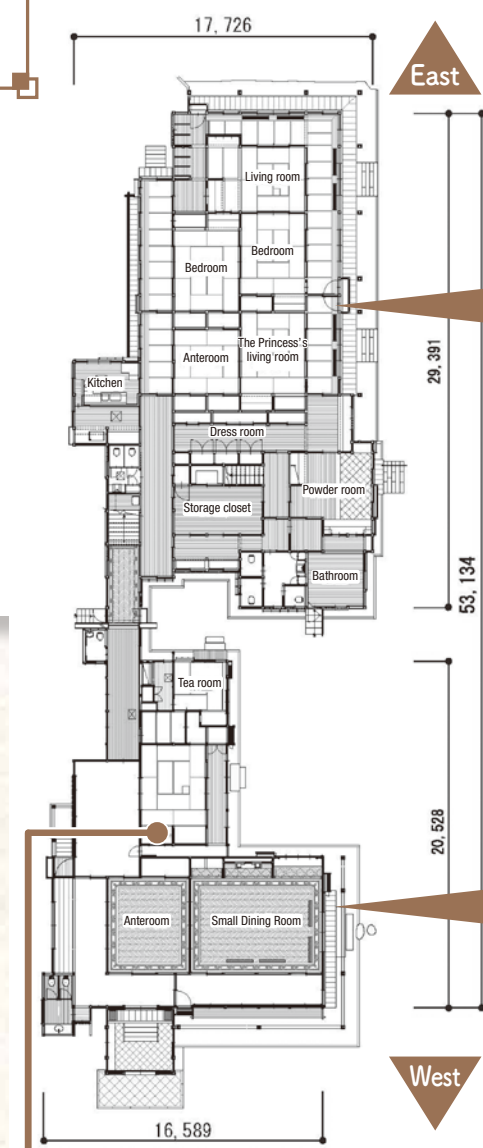
The second floor is characterized by a mixture of the Japanese and Western style architecture with Taiwanese elements added by the architect Moriyama. The zelkova boards used in the hallways on the south side and the camphor flooring in the private audience room remind us of the past. The study and anteroom still have beautiful parquet flooring as well as the shelves for books and records.



▲ The study on the second floor of *Otsunegoten*



◀ Fixtures reportedly used by Empress Kojun



Otsunegoten, 1st floor

The first floor is coordinated in the Japanese style. On the east side, there are five main rooms, surrounded on the south, north and east by corridors made of tatami straw mats. Tokonoma alcoves and staggered shelves are placed with other decorations typical of the traditional Japanese Shoinzukuri architectural style. Other traditional Japanese interior decorations, such as carved wooden panels as transoms and decorative nailhead covers, as well as high ceilings typically found in the Japanese imperial architecture, serve to enhance the elegance of the rooms. The ceilings of the Palace are decorated with reproductions of 78 paintings drawn by 43 famous Japanese artists. Sixty pieces can be seen on the ceilings of Prince and Princess Kuni's bedrooms. (The originals are now kept at the Tokyo National Museum.) On the west of the main rooms are the dress room, the powder room, and the bathroom. You can find the traces of the past days here and there although the building was refurbished after relocation so that it could be used for student activities.

Small Dining Room and Anteroom

The Small Dining Room has parquet flooring and the formal coffered ceiling is decorated with 18 drawings slightly larger than those in the *Otsunegoten* bedrooms. Along the wall on the east side are a Western-style marble mantelpiece at the center, a Chinese-inspired cusped-arch window on the right, and Japanese staggered shelves with upper and lower storages on the left. Members of the university community used to call it the audience room for years due to its magnificent interior decorations that reminds us of the imperial architecture in the Taisho period. In the anteroom, persimmons are skillfully drawn across the fusuma sliding doors on the south and east sides.



▲ The wall on the east side of the Small Dining Room

History of Former Residence of Prince Kuni and the University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo

- Late Edo period The suburban residence of the Hotta family from the Sakura domain, Shimousa Province (northern Chiba and western Ibaraki), was located on the university premises.
- 1875 The House of Prince Kuni was founded.
- 1916 Prince Kuni Kuniyoshi received the land in Hiroo to build his residence. Hiroo became an imperial estate.
- 1918 The main building, including the Small Dining Room and the Carriage Porch, was completed.
- 1918 The Main Gate was completed.
- 1919 The Western-style building was destroyed due to fire.
- 1924 *Otsunegoten* was completed in the site where the Western-style building was located.
- 1945 The land came under government control and the building became the possession of Daiei Motion Picture Company since the House of Prince Kuni lost its imperial status after the end of World War II.
- 1947 The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo obtained the building.
- 1948-54 The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo spent several years to purchase the government-controlled land.
- 1948 The University of the Sacred Heart, Tokyo was established under the new educational system.
- 1949 *Otsunegoten* and the Small Dining Room were moved to their present location from the original site where the University's Building No. 1 is now located.
- 1986 The Palace was restored to its original state.
- 1998 Britt Room and Kuni Gallery were created in Kuni House when Building No. 3 was built.
- 2000 *Otsunegoten* was designated as a Registered Tangible Cultural Property.
- 2001 The ceiling paintings in the Palace were placed in the custody of the Tokyo National Museum.
- 2016 The large-scale restoration and seismic reinforcement works were finished for the Palace and Kuni House.
- 2017 The Small Dining Room, *Otsunegoten* and the Main Gate, along with the Carriage Porch as a supplement, were designated as a Nationally Important Cultural Property.

Artistic highlights of the Palace

- ▣ Paintings on the ceilings, cedar doors, and fusuma sliding partitions, which were drawn by talented painters in the Taisho period
- ▣ Beautiful nailhead covers and handles of the partitions in the shapes of chrysanthemums, the symbol of the Imperial Family
- ▣ Different wooden transom panels with traditional fine carvings and handiwork for each room
- ▣ Precious wood used for room decoration and flooring
- ▣ Windows in different shapes
- ▣ Glass windows dating back to the days when the building was first constructed



▲ Formal coffered ceiling of the Small Dining Room



▲ South corridor on the second floor of *Otsunegoten*