

= Heian Palace =

The Heian Palace was the original imperial palace of Heian kyō (present day Kyoto) , the capital of Japan , from 794 to 1227 . The palace , which served as the imperial residence and the administrative centre of for most of the Heian period (from 794 to 1185) , was located at the north central location of the city in accordance with the Chinese models used for the design of the capital .

The palace consisted of a large rectangular walled enclosure , which contained several ceremonial and administrative buildings including the government ministries . Inside this enclosure was the separately walled residential compound of the emperor or the Inner Palace . In addition to the emperor 's living quarters , the Inner Palace contained the residences of the imperial consorts , as well as certain official and ceremonial buildings more closely linked to the person of the emperor .

The original role of the palace was to manifest the centralised government model adopted by Japan from China in the 7th century : the Daijō-kan and its subsidiary Eight Ministries . The palace was designed to provide an appropriate setting for the emperor 's residence , the conduct of great affairs of state , and the accompanying ceremonies . While the residential function of the palace continued until the 12th century , the facilities built for grand state ceremonies began to fall into disuse by the 9th century . This was due to both the abandonment of several statutory ceremonies and procedures and the transfer of several remaining ceremonies into the smaller scale setting of the Inner Palace .

From the mid Heian period , the palace suffered several fires and other disasters . During reconstructions , emperors and some of the office functions resided outside the palace . This , along with the general loss of political power of the court , acted to further diminish the importance of the palace as the administrative centre . Finally in 1227 the palace burned down and was never rebuilt . The site was built over so that almost no trace of it remains . Knowledge of the palace is thus based on contemporary literary sources , surviving diagrams and paintings , and limited excavations conducted mainly since the late 1970s .

= Location =

The palace was located at the northern centre of the rectangular Heian kyō , following the Chinese model (specifically that of the Tang dynasty capital of Chang 'an) adopted already for the Heijō Palace in the earlier capital Heijō (in present day Nara) , and Nagaoka kyō . The south eastern corner of the Greater Palace was located in the middle of the present day Nijō Castle . The main entrance to the palace was the Suzakumon gate (35 ° 0 ' 49 " N 135 ° 44 ' 32 " E) , which formed the northern terminus of the great Suzaku Avenue that ran through the centre of the city from the Rashomon gate . The palace thus faced south and presided over the symmetrical urban plan of Heian kyō . In addition to the Suzaku Gate , the palace had 13 other gates located symmetrically along the side walls . A major avenue (Ōji) led to each of the gates , except for the three along the northern side of the palace , which was coterminous with the northern boundary of the city itself .

= History =

The palace was the first and most important structure to be erected at the new capital of Heian kyō , where the court moved in 794 following Emperor Kanmu 's order . The palace was not completely ready by the time of the move , however : the Daigokuden was completed only in 795 , and the government office in charge of its construction was disbanded only in 805 .

The grand Chinese style compounds of Chōdō-in and Buraku-in started to fall into disuse quite early on , in parallel with the decline of the elaborate Chinese inspired ritsuryō government processes and bureaucracy , which were gradually either abandoned or reduced to empty forms . The centre of gravity of the palace complex moved to the Inner Palace or Daijō , and the Shishinden and later even the Seiryōden overtook the Daigokuden as loci for the conduct of

official government business .

In parallel with the concentration of activity within the Dairi , the Greater Palace began to be regarded as increasingly unsafe , especially by night . One reason may be the prevalent superstition of the period : uninhabited buildings were avoided for fear of spirits and ghosts , and even the great Buraku @-@ in compound was thought to be haunted . In addition , the level of actual security maintained at the palace went into decline , and by the early 11th century only one palace gate , the Y?meimon in the east , appears to have been guarded . Hence burglary and even violent crime became a problem within the palace by the first half of 11th century .

Fires were a constant problem as the palace compound was constructed almost entirely of wood . The Daigokuden was reconstructed after fires in 876 , 1068 and in 1156 despite its limited use . However , after the major fire of 1177 which destroyed much of the Greater Palace , the Daigokuden was never again rebuilt . The Burakuin was destroyed by a fire in 1063 and was never rebuilt .

As of 960 , the Dairi was also repeatedly destroyed by fires , but it was systematically rebuilt and used as the official imperial residence until the late 12th century . During periods of rebuilding the Dairi following fires , the emperors frequently had to stay at their secondary sato @-@ dairi (???) palaces within the city . Often these secondary palaces were provided by the powerful Fujiwara family , which especially in the latter part of the Heian period exercised de facto control of politics by providing consorts to successive emperors . Thus the residences of the emperors ' maternal grandparents started to usurp the residential role of the palace even before the end of the Heian period . The institution of rule by retired emperors or the insei system (?? , insei) from 1086 further added to the declining importance of the palace as retired emperors exercised power from their own residential palaces inside and outside the city .

After a fire in 1177 , the original palace complex was abandoned and emperors resided in smaller palaces (the former sato @-@ dairi) within the city and villas outside it . In 1227 a fire finally destroyed what remained of the Dairi , and the old Greater Palace went into complete disuse . In 1334 Emperor Go @-@ Daigo issued an edict to rebuild the Greater Palace , but no resources were available to support this and the project came to nothing . The present Kyoto Imperial Palace is located immediately to the west of the site of the Tsuchimikado Mansion (???? , tsuchimikadodono) , the great Fujiwara residence in the north @-@ eastern corner of the city . The Jingi @-@ kan , the final standing section of the palace , remained in use until 1585 .

= = Greater Palace (Daidairi) = =

The Greater Palace (??? , daidairi) was a walled rectangular area extending approximately 1 @.@ 4 kilometres (0 @.@ 87 mi) from north to south between the first and second major east @-@ west avenues (Ichij? ?ji (????) and Nij? ?ji (????) and 1 @.@ 2 kilometres (0 @.@ 75 mi) from west to east between the Nishi ?miya ?ji (?????) and ?miya ?ji (????) north @-@ south avenues . The three main structures within the Greater Palace were the Official Compound Ch?d? @-@ in (???) , the Reception Compound Buraku @-@ in (???) and the Inner Palace (?? , dairi) .

= = = Ch?d? @-@ in = = =

Ch?d? @-@ in was a rectangular walled enclosure situated directly to the north of the Suzakumon gate in the centre of the southern wall of the Greater Palace . It was based on Chinese models and followed Chinese architectural styles , and archaeological evidence from earlier capitals shows that this building complex was present in earlier palaces and had a remarkably stable design from the 7th century onwards .

= = = = Daigokuden = = = =

The main building within the Ch?d? @-@ in was the Daigokuden (???) or the Great Audience Hall , facing south at the northern end of the compound . This was a large (approximately 52 m (170 ft) east to west and 20 m (65 ft) north to south) Chinese @-@ style building with white walls ,

vermilion pillars and green tiled roofs , intended to host the most important state ceremonies and functions . The southern part of the Chōdō-in was occupied by the Twelve Halls where the bureaucracy was seated for ceremonies according to strict order of precedence . The Heian Jingō shrine in Kyoto includes an apparently faithful reconstruction of the Daigokuden in somewhat reduced scale .

It was in the Chōdō-in that Accession Audiences were held , the emperor was supposed to preside over early morning deliberations on major state affairs by the bureaucracy , receive monthly reports from officials , hold New Year Congratulations and receive foreign ambassadors . However , the practice of the morning deliberations ceased to be followed by 810 as did the monthly reports . Foreign ambassadors were no longer received for most of the Heian period , and the New Year celebrations were abbreviated and moved into the Dairi by the end of the 10th century , leaving the Accession Audiences and certain Buddhist ceremonials as the only ones held in the Chōdō-in .

=== Buraku-in ===

The Buraku-in was another large rectangular Chinese style compound , situated to the west of the Chōdō-in . It was built for official celebrations and banquets and used also for other types of entertainment such as archery contests . Like the Chōdō-in , also the Buraku-in had a hall at the central northern end of the enclosure overseeing the court . This hall , the Burakuden (大蔵殿) , was used by the emperor and courtiers presiding over activities in the Buraku-in . However , like the Chōdō-in , the Buraku-in also fell gradually into disuse as many functions were moved to the Dairi . Its site is one of the few within the palace area that has been excavated .

=== Other buildings ===

Apart from the Inner Palace , the remaining area of the Greater Palace was occupied by ministries , lesser offices , workshops , storage buildings and the large open space of the Banqueting Pine Grove or En no Matsubara (延の松原) to the east of the Dairi . The buildings of the Council of State or Daijōkan (太政官) were situated in a walled enclosure immediately to the east of the Chōdō-in , laid out in the typical symmetrical plan of buildings opening to a courtyard in the south . The palace also housed the Shingon-in (真言院) , apart from Tōji and Saiji , the only Buddhist establishment permitted within the capital . Its placement right next to the Inner Palace shows the influence of the Shingon sect during the early Heian Period .

=== Inner Palace (Dairi) ===

The Inner Palace or Dairi was located to the north-east of the Chōdō-in , somewhat to the east of the central north-south axis of the Greater Palace . Its central feature was the Throne Hall . The Dairi encompassed the emperor's quarters and the pavilions of the imperial consorts and ladies-in-waiting (collectively , the Kōkyō) . The Dairi was enclosed within two sets of walls . In addition to the Dairi itself , the outer walls enclosed some household offices , storage areas , and the Chōwain (中務省) , a walled area of Shinto buildings associated with the emperor's religious functions , situated to the west of the Dairi itself , at the geographic centre of the Greater Palace . The principal gate of the larger enclosure was the Kenreimon gate (建礼门) , located in the southern wall along the median north-south axis of the Dairi .

The Dairi proper , the residential compound of the emperor , was enclosed within another set of walls to the east of Chōwain . It measured approximately 215 m (710 ft) north to south and 170 m (560 ft) east to west . The main gate was the Shōmeimon gate (尚美门) at the centre of the southern wall of the Dairi enclosure , immediately to the north of the Kenreimon gate . In contrast to the solemn official Chinese style architecture of the Chōdō-in and the Buraku-in , the Dairi was built in more intimate Japanese architectural style , if still on a grand scale . The Inner

Palace represented a variant of the shinden style architecture used in the aristocratic villas and houses of the period . The buildings , with unpainted surfaces and gabled and shingled cypress bark roofs , were raised on elevated wooden platforms and connected to each other with covered and uncovered slightly elevated passages . Between the buildings and passages were gravel yards and small gardens .

= = = Shishinden = = =

The largest building of the Daiiri was the Throne Hall or Shishinden (神武殿) , a building reserved for official functions . It was a rectangular hall measuring approximately 30 m (98 ft) east to west and 25 m (82 ft) north to south , and situated along the median north @-@ south axis of the Daiiri , overseeing a rectangular courtyard and facing the Shimeimon gate . A tachibana orange tree and a sakura cherry tree stood symmetrically on both sides of the front staircase of the building . The courtyard was flanked on both sides by smaller halls connected to the Shishinden , creating the same configuration of buildings (influenced by Chinese examples) that was found in the aristocratic shinden style villas of the period .

The Shishinden was used for official functions and ceremonies that were not held at the Daigokuden of the Chudai in complex . It took over much of the intended use of the larger and more formal building from an early date , as the daily business of government ceased to be conducted in the presence of the emperor in the Daigokuden already at the beginning of the ninth century . Connected to this diminishing reliance on the official government procedures described in the Ritsuryō code was the establishment of a personal secretariat to the emperor , the Chamberlain's Office or Kurōdōkoro (御内侍所) . This office , which increasingly took over the role of coordinating the work of government organs , was set up in the Kyōshōden (京尚殿) , the hall to the south @-@ west of the Shishinden .

= = = Jijōden = = =

To the north of the Shishinden stood the Jijōden (紫宸殿) , a similarly constructed hall of somewhat smaller size that was intended to function as the emperor's living quarters . However , beginning already in the ninth century , the emperors often chose to reside in other buildings of the Daiiri . A third still smaller hall , the Shōkyōden (尚書省) was located next to the north along the main axis of the Daiiri . After the Daiiri was rebuilt following a fire in 960 , the regular residence of the emperors moved to the smaller Seiryōden (清涼殿) , an east @-@ facing building located immediately to the north @-@ west from Shishinden . Gradually the Seiryōden began to be used increasingly for meetings as well , with emperors spending much of their time in this part of the palace . The busiest part of the building was the Courtiers Hall (御常侍所 , Tenjōnoma) , where high @-@ ranking nobles came to meet in the presence of the emperor .

= = = Other buildings = = =

The empress , as well as the official and unofficial imperial consorts , was also housed in the Daiiri , occupying buildings in the northern part of the enclosure . The most prestigious buildings , housing the empress and the official consorts , were the ones that had appropriate locations for such use according to the originally Chinese design principles (the Kokiden (皇極殿) , the Reikeiden (麗心殿) and the Jōneiden (貞心殿) , as well as the ones closest to the imperial residence in Seiryōden (the Kōryōden (康樂殿) and the Fujitsubo (藤原)) . The lesser consorts and ladies @-@ in @-@ waiting occupied other buildings in the northern half of the Daiiri .

One of the Imperial Regalia of Japan , the emperor's replica of the sacred mirror , was also housed in the Unmeiden hall (雲夢殿) of the Daiiri .

The present @-@ day Kyoto Imperial Palace , located in what was the north @-@ eastern corner of Heian @-@ kyō , reproduces much of the Heian @-@ period Daiiri , in particular the Shishinden and the Seiryōden .

