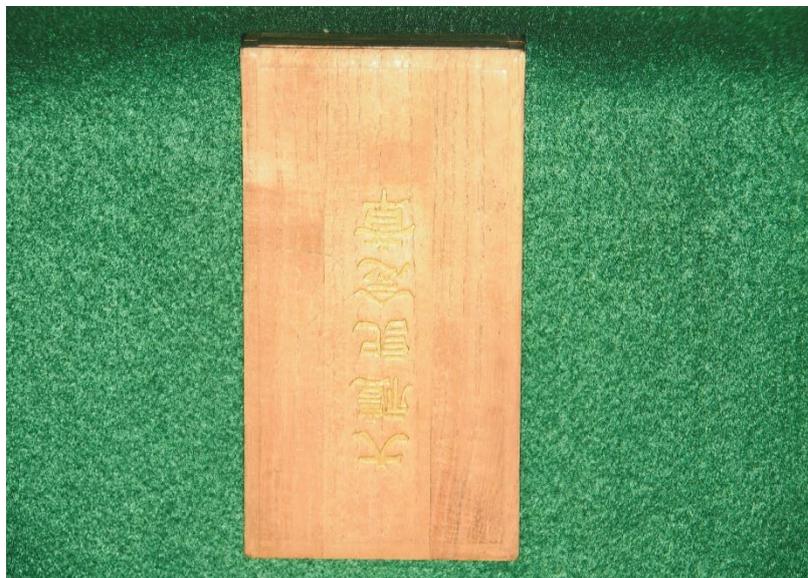


**JAPAN ~ TAISHŌ ENTHRONEMENT COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL 1915 IN  
ORIGINAL WOODEN FITTED EMBOSSED CASE OF ISSUE**

The circular, 30mm diameter silver medal has an ornamental swivelling suspension. On the obverse is a gilt chrysanthemum crest – (symbol of the Imperial family) – crossed branches of mandarin orange and cherry, and two banners left and right, inscribed “Banzai” (May the Emperor live ten thousand years).



The top line on the reverse is inscribed with two characters, “tai-rei”, meaning enthronement followed by three lines of characters, “ki-nen-sho” / “tai-sho-yo-nen” / “ju-ichi-gatsu” – Grand

Taishō Medal ~ Balsa Wood Embossed Case Of Issue

Enthronement Commemorative Medal Taishō 4<sup>th</sup> Year 11<sup>th</sup> Month (November).

The ribbon is white with a central wide red stripe and narrow red stripes either side towards the edges. Attached to the ribbon are hook and eye fittings.

The medal is contained in an original balsa wood case of issue – 112mm x 64mm x 22mm – embossed in gilt characters, “tei-rei-ki-nen-sho” (Enthronement Commemorative Medal). The inside of the lid is similarly inscribed in ink characters. There is also an original paper certificate/wrapper issued with the medal.

The Taishō Enthronement Commemorative Medal 1915 was instituted by Imperial decree on the 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1915. It was awarded in November of that year to those who attended and officiated and the accession ceremony. Emperor Taishō reigned from 1912 to 1926. He was rarely seen publicly, and retired from public duties in 1919 due to physical and mental health problems. When Emperor Taishō died he was succeeded by his son Hirohito.

Emperor Taishō

The Emperor Taishō (31<sup>st</sup> August 1879 – 25<sup>th</sup> December 1926) was the 123<sup>rd</sup> Emperor of Japan, according to the traditional order of succession, reigning from the 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1912 until his death in 1926. The Emperor’s personal name was Yoshihito. According to Japanese custom, during

the reign the emperor is called the (present) Emperor. After death he is known by a posthumous name that, according to a practice dating to 1912, is the name of the era coinciding with his reign. Having ruled

during the Taishō period, he is posthumously known as “The Taishō Emperor” or simply “Emperor Taishō”.

Prince Yoshihito was born at the Togu Palace in Akasaka, Tokyo to Emperor Meiji and Yanagihara Naruko, a concubine with the



official title of gon-no-tenj Taishō Enthronement Commemorative Medal 1915 (“lady of the bedchamber”). As was common practice at the time, Emperor Meiji’s consort, Empress Shōken, was officially regarded as his mother. He received the personal name of Yoshihito Shinnō and the title Hara-n-miya from the emperor on the 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1879. His two older siblings had died in infancy, and he too was born sickly. He contracted cerebral meningitis within three weeks of his birth, leaving him in poor health. As was the practice at the time, Prince Yoshihito was entrusted to the care of Marquess Nakayama Tadayasu, in whose house he lived from infancy until the age of seven. Prince Nakayama had also raised Emperor Meiji as a child. From March 1885, Prince Yoshihito moved to the Aoyama Detached Palace, where he was tutored in the mornings on reading, writing, arithmetic, and morals, and in the afternoons on sports, but progress was slow due to his poor health and frequent fevers. From 1886 he was taught together with 15-20 selected classmates from the ōke and higher ranking kazoku peerage at a special school, the Gogakumonsho, within the Aoyama Palace. Yoshihito was officially declared heir on the 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1887 and had his formal investiture as crown prince on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 1888. While crown prince, he was often referred to simply as Tōgu (a long-used generic East Asian term meaning crown prince).

In September 1887, Yoshihito entered the elementary department of the Gakushūin but due to his poor health he was often unable to continue his studies. He spent much of his youth by the sea at the Imperial villas at Hayama and Numazu to improve his health. Although a competent horseman he was unable to cope with higher levels of education and withdrew from the

Gakushūin before finishing the middle school in 1894. Having an aptitude for languages he had extensive private tutoring in French, Chinese and history. From 1898 Yoshihito began attending sessions in the House of Peers of the Diet of Japan to learn about the political and military concerns of the country. He also in the same year gave his first official receptions for foreign diplomats with



Obverse ~ Taishō Enthronement Commemorative Medal 1915

whom he was able to shake hands and converse. In October 1898 he travelled from Numazu Imperial Villa to visit bases of the Imperial Japanese Navy and in the following year to government offices, schools and factories.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> May, 1900 Crown Prince Yoshihito married the 15-year-old Kujō Sadako (the future Empress Teimei), daughter of Prince Kujō Michitaka, head of the five senior branches of the Fujiwara clan. She had been selected by the Emperor Meiji for her intelligence, articulation, pleasant disposition and dignity to complement Prince Yoshihito in the areas where he was lacking. The



Reverse ~ Taishō Enthronement Commemorative Medal 1915

Akasaka Palace was built between 1899 and 1909 in a lavish European rococo style to serve as the Crown Prince's official residence. The Prince and Princess had the following children: Prince Michi Hirohito 1901-1989

(future Emperor); Prince Atsu Yasuhito 1902-1953; Prince Teru Nobuhito 1905-1987; Prince Sumi Takahito 1915-2016.

In 1902, Yoshihito continued his tours to observe the customs and geography of Japan. When tensions arose between Japan and Russia, Yoshihito was promoted in 1903 to the rank of colonel in the Imperial Japanese Army and captain in the Imperial Japanese Navy. Although his military duties were ceremonial he undertook inspections of military facilities. In October 1907, the Crown Prince toured Korea accompanied by Admiral Tōgō Heihachirō, General Katsura Tarō and Prince Arisugawa Taruhito. It was the first time an heir apparent to the throne had ever left Japan. During this period he started to learn and study the Korean language, but never became proficient in its use.

On the death of his father Emperor Meiji on the 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1912 Prince Yoshihito succeeded to the throne. He was kept out of public view for health and neurological problems which made it difficult for him to undertake public functions. His health continued to deteriorate and he became less and less interested in politics and the Keeper of the Privy Seal and Imperial Household Minister took decisions on the Emperor's behalf. The two party political system that had been developing in Japan since the turn of the century came of age after the First World War giving rise to the nickname for the period, "Taishō Democracy", prompting a shift in political power to the Imperial Diet



Taishō Medal 1915 & Paper Certificate/Wrapper

of Japan and the democratic parties. After 1918, the emperor no longer attended Army or Naval manoeuvres, attending military graduation ceremonies, perform Shinto ritual ceremonies or even attend the official opening sessions of the Diet of Japan. He undertook no official duties after 1919 and the Crown Prince Hirohito was named prince regent on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 1921.

In early December 1926, the emperor contracted pneumonia and he died of a heart attack during the early morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> December, 1926 at the Hayama Imperial Villa, on Sagami Bay, south of Tokyo. His funeral was held at night, consisting of a four mile long procession in which

20,000 mourners followed a herd of sacred bulls and an ox-drawn cart containing the imperial coffin. Emperor Taishō's grave is in Tokyo, in the Musashi Imperial Graveyard in Hachioji. His son the Emperor Showa (Hirohito) is buried next to him.

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### Sources

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