

### **Shimpokan Museum**

The Shimpokan Museum stands on the grounds of Hetsu-miya, to the left of the main sanctuary. It was built in 1980 to house the artifacts unearthed during archaeological excavations on the island of Okinoshima.

### **Offerings from the Silk Road**

Offerings in the form of precious gifts were made to the deities of Munakata Taisha to pray for safe sea travel, along with objects from as far away as ancient Persia. The objects unearthed on Okinoshima give us a good understanding of the extent of trade between Japan and other countries, and of the importance placed on this island and its rituals by the Yamato court (300–710), which ruled over much of Japan.

The significance of Okinoshima came to light when research was conducted between 1954 and 1971, and more than 80,000 artifacts were excavated. Many were used for divine rituals over a period that spanned several hundred years, from the fourth to the end of the ninth century. These discoveries are all designated as National Treasures.

A few significant pieces include a pure-gold ring made in Korea c.520; a bronze mirror decorated with triangle motifs, animals and gods, made in China c.320; and glass from the Sasanian Empire in Persia (224–651).

The treasures found on Okinoshima are located on the first two floors. The third floor houses a collection of treasures given to the Munakata family and Munakata Taisha, including rare documents, ancient carvings, samurai armor and items from the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.