

### **Horse Trappings**

Horses were brought from Korea to Japan in the fifth century, and quickly became indispensable to the Yamato court (300–710). These elaborate gilt-bronze horse trappings and ornaments were brought from Korea, where similar items have been unearthed at royal tombs. It is also thought that the first people to raise horses for use in battle in Japan were of Korean heritage, who emigrated with the promise of safety during Korea's wars among the Baekje, Silla, and Goguryeo kingdoms from the fourth to the seventh centuries.

It seems horses were never brought to Okinoshima for ceremonies, so these particular objects are perhaps a testament to the potent symbolism of this animal. Indeed, in Shinto, horses are considered as transport for the deities. Today some shrines have resident white horses dedicated to the deities, sometimes real but more often statues.