

Fourth and Fifth Centuries

The items that are found inside a *kofun* burial mound can be used to estimate the age of the tomb. Items commonly found in *kofun* from the mid-third to fourth century include comma-shaped stone beads called *magatama* and ceremonial bronze mirrors. By the fifth century, iron helmets, armor, and tools were more common. This shift is believed to reflect both the growth of metalworking technology and a change in cultural values concerning religion and warfare.

The museum has many fifth-century artifacts on display, including several examples of large circular bronze mirrors excavated from a *kofun* in the nearby city of Ibaraki. Slabs of raw iron called *tettei* and sets of iron armor are also on display. Since iron had to be imported from overseas at the time, its burial was a staggering display of wealth.

Terracotta figures called *haniwa* that adorned the outside of the *kofun* are displayed throughout the museum. Their designs grew more elaborate over time, starting from simple cylinders and jugs and progressing to more complex images of real-world objects such as people, animals, and buildings. One of the museum's prized artifacts is a large, house-shaped *haniwa* from the fourth century. The 70-centimeter structure is a representation of a raised-floor residence with a gabled roof and even has a small bed inside. The exterior has traces of red paint and is engraved with a pattern of shields. Given the attention to detail, it was likely modeled on the real home of a noble family, providing priceless information about architecture at the time.