

Trams and the Revitalization of Kyoto

This is one of Japan's earliest electric trams. It operated in Kyoto and was powered by hydroelectricity. Trams were introduced in Kyoto in 1895, the same year Heian Jingu was built. This tram was one of the original streetcars that operated between Kyoto Station and the Heian Jingu area.

The installation of the tramline and the foundation of Heian Jingu were planned to coincide with the Fourth National Industrial Exhibition, a large exposition hosted in Kyoto (near Heian Jingu). These projects were part of a larger revitalization project and were timed to mark the 1,100th anniversary of the founding of the ancient Heiankyo capital. The projects were launched to celebrate Kyoto's heritage and combat the economic difficulties and fall in population that the city experienced after the seat of the emperor was transferred to Tokyo in 1868 at the beginning of the Meiji era (1868–1912).

Trams served Kyoto until 1961. This tram was donated to the shrine after it was taken out of service and serves as a symbol of the revitalization efforts of the late nineteenth century.