

## **The Museum Collection**

The Kyoto National Museum has an extensive collection that numbers over 14,000 works amassed over the more than 120 years of its existence. Roughly half of these are owned by the museum, including around 30 works designated as National Treasures and about 200 deemed Important Cultural Properties. Even more works with these designations have been entrusted to the museum on long-term loan, primarily from temples and shrines.

Despite its considerable holdings today, when the museum was re-designated a national institution after World War II, it held only about 2,500 works. The majority of these were on loan from Kyoto temples and shrines, with 831 works of art (individual or sets) being owned by the museum. Thereafter, 120 works of art were transferred from the Tokyo National Museum and approximately 400 additional cultural properties that had been purchased by the Agency for Cultural Affairs from temples and shrines were added to the collection. The museum also received major donations of exceptional collections from prominent individuals or their families, such as those of lawyer Moriya Kozo (1876–1953), diplomat Suma Yakichiro (1892–1970), and Ueno Riichi (1848–1919), co-founder of the Asahi Shimbun newspaper.

The collection contains works ranging from the prehistoric Jomon period to the late Edo period (1603–1868) and beyond. Particularly noteworthy are works that represent the elegant culture of the court, as Kyoto was the capital of Japan for much of the nation's history, as well as works of religious and especially Buddhist art, as many of the leading temples were located in or around the capital. The thriving arts of the townspeople and artisans from the medieval to early modern periods are also well represented. Individual galleries are devoted to genres such as archaeological artifacts, ceramics, painting, sculpture, calligraphy, textiles, metalwork, and lacquer. Important works from China, Korea, and other parts of Asia are also occasionally on exhibit.