

Reihokan Museum

The Reihokan, or Repository of Sacred Treasures, is the main museum at Ninnaji. Located just east of the central path that leads from the Gate of the Guardian Kings to the Main Hall, it stores and displays statues of Buddhist deities, paintings, sutra scrolls, letters, and other valuable artifacts acquired by Ninnaji throughout the temple's long history. Highlights among these are statues of an Amida Triad that date back to the temple's founding in the ninth century, and an eleventh-century painting of Kujaku Myo-o, the Peacock Wisdom King. Both are designated National Treasures.

Indicative of Ninnaji's historical status as an institution closely affiliated with the imperial court are the many documents hand-written by emperors and addressed to abbots of the temple, a post held by members of the royal family until 1867. These writings speak especially to the central role the temple played in the religious life of the Kyoto aristocracy during the Heian period (794–1185), a time of great cultural flourishing in Japan.

The reinforced-concrete structure evokes ancient Japanese storehouse architecture, and was designed by architect Kataoka Yasushi (1876–1946). The building was completed in 1927 and is a registered Tangible Cultural Property. The Reihokan is open to the public during two semiannual Meiho-ten exhibitions, held for approximately 50 days beginning April 1 and October 1 every year.