

## **Tsurugaoka Museum, Kamakura**

The Tsurugaoka Museum, Kamakura, is the cultural hub of Tsurugaoka Hachimangu. Its exhibition program focuses on the culture and history of the shrine and the city of Kamakura, from shrine festivals to medieval art. The museum is located next to the Heike Pond on the western side of the grounds and is housed in a square building designed by Sakakura Junzo (1901–1969), a protégé of the pioneering Modernist architect Le Corbusier (1887–1965).

The building was originally constructed as the Museum of Modern Art, Kamakura, which opened in 1951 and was the first public museum of modern art in Japan. The establishment of an ambitious and forward-looking art museum in Kamakura so soon after the devastation of World War II was part of the city's cultural revival program, a movement driven in those years by a group of local literati. Their efforts bore fruit, and the museum remained a fixture on Kamakura's cultural scene until 2016, when the prefecture's lease expired and the land the museum was built on had to be returned to Tsurugaoka Hachimangu.

The shrine chose to keep the building, which was renovated extensively before reopening in 2019. It is now designated an Important Cultural Property. The renovated museum retains Sakakura's design, with a central courtyard that lets in natural light, an L-shaped exhibition hall on the second floor, and a covered first-floor terrace that opens onto the pond. The museum gift shop sells items related to the shrine and Kamakura, and the adjacent building houses a cafe where a section of the trunk of the Great Ginkgo is on display. The 1,000-year-old tree stood next to the shrine's stone staircase until it toppled in 2010.