

## Kushi Kanzashi Museum

Around 400 traditional hair accessories are on display at the Kushi Kanzashi Museum, from a collection of over 4,000. The collection includes *kushi* combs and elaborate *kanzashi* hair ornaments from the Edo period (1603–1867) through the Showa era (1926–1989). Many of the accessories were custom-made for wealthy clients by artists including Ogata Korin (1658–1716), the father of the Rinpa style of painting which features subjects from nature (such as flowers) on gilded backgrounds.

The collection highlights the influence of social change on Japanese fashion. Early combs made of tortoiseshell (a banned import during the Edo period) could cost as much as a house, and were a statement of wealth. As architectural styles became more complex and decorative during the Edo period, hairstyles became larger and more ornate. But as Japan modernized in the Meiji era (1868–1912), hair ornaments became smaller and less showy as women adopted more European hairstyles. The collection continues to the post-war years, when new materials like celluloid made it possible to offer ornate hair accessories reasonably.

The museum also has a display of portable writing sets (*yatate*) from the Edo period, formerly owned by high-ranking samurai and wealthy merchants. Many of these were custom-made from wood, metal, or ivory, with intricate carvings and inlays.

The museum building is designed to resemble a traditional *kura* warehouse, with a larger-than-life *kanzashi* comb on the front.

The Kushi Kanzashi Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. (The museum is closed on Mondays and Fridays.)