

Treasures of the Maeda Family: The Sonkeikaku Bunko

The Maeda Ikutokukai Gallery displays a selection of items from the Sonkeikaku Bunko, a repository of classical texts, historical documents, ornamental armor, campaign jackets, paintings, and other treasures collected by the wealthy Maeda family. The repository itself is in Tokyo, but because of the Maeda family's historical connection to Kanazawa, the Ishikawa Prefectural Museum of Art is permitted to hold and display approximately 400 of the repository's artifacts and fine art pieces.

The full Sonkeikaku Bunko collection comprises over 10,000 items, including 22 National Treasures and 77 Important Cultural Properties—a remarkable number for a single family to have gathered. The Maedas governed Kaga domain (now Ishikawa and Toyama Prefectures) from 1583 until 1871. Significant portions of the Sonkeikaku Bunko collection were amassed by the third lord of Kaga, Maeda Toshitsune (1594–1658), and by his grandson Maeda Tsunanori (1643–1724), the domain's fifth lord.

The Maeda Ikutokukai Gallery rotates items from the Sonkeikaku Bunko on a monthly basis. Displays may include some of the Maeda lords' numerous sets of armor, stirrups adorned with Kaga metal inlay, tea utensils, landscape paintings, calligraphy, and occasionally, the Hyakkō Hishō—a collection of samples and crafted items that illustrate decorative craft techniques. The gallery provides an opportunity to see these well-preserved treasures up close and to appreciate masterworks that were the pride of one of Japan's wealthiest samurai families.