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Nezu-Museum 根津美術館

Nezu Kaichirō (根津 嘉一郎) was an avid collector of Japanese and Asian art. His collection ranged from calligraphy to paintings, ceramics and textiles.

History

He was born in 1860 in Yamanashi prefecture to the landowner and oil merchant Nezu Fujiemon. Kaichirō went to Tokyo to study Chinese studies and became a statesman who served in the village council, the country council, the prefectural assembly and later was elected as a member of the House of Representatives.

He made his fortune through stock investment. In 1905 he became president of the Tobu Railway Company and bought the land of the later museum in 1906.

Nezu Kaichirō didn't want all the pieces he collected for himself only, but wanted to show them. After his death in 1940 his son, Kaichirō Jr. established a foundation to open a museum to meet his fathers' desires.

The museum already opened in 1941 on the grounds of the former Nezu family residence. During World War II Kaichirō Jr. saved the exhibits to place outside of Tokyo. However, in the Bombing of Tokyo the galleries together with the garden and the teahouse were destroyed by fire.

In 1946 the museum opened again in temporary buildings exhibiting the saved art.

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The museum is named after its initiator, Nezu Kaichirō.