



The terracotta army was buried with the First Emperor of Qin.

pan was closed to the West for the majority of its history, and this allowed Japanese art to remain relatively consistent and traditional. As with China, the history of Japan is one of succeeding dynasties, with each one leaving its mark in a series of succeeding styles. Also, as with China, Buddhism was imported to Japan and became an important focus in the traditional arts. The strength of Japan's artistic traditions remained even when the country became more open to Western cultures. During the rise of the Impressionist movement in Europe, Japan sent a group of artists to study in France. These artists returned to Japan and introduced the ideas they had encountered in the West, and so, for a short time at the end of the nineteenth century, there was a group of artists in Japan who used linear perspective and the colors and subjects of Impressionism. However, what is noteworthy is that the Japanese soon rejected these ideas and returned to the isometric perspective and flat areas of color favored by Japanese traditions. Although Japanese artists created excellent works in painting, architecture, crafts, and sculpture, it is for their printmaking that Japanese artists are best known in the Western world. Japanese prints had a profound influence on Western art, as French artists began to imitate the prints that they began to collect in the late nineteenth century. The flat colors and overhead viewpoint of these prints were adopted by many French artists during this period.

## African and Oceanic Art

Some of the historic traditions of African art have already been discussed in our survey of Western art. As a result of the relationships between Egypt and the Mediterranean world, the ancient arts of northern Africa are often incorporated into the history of Western art. Usually the art of sub-Saharan Africa is treated separately from that of northern Africa because of the regions' very different histories. A close look at all areas of the continent reveals that impressive art traditions emerged in west, central, east, and southern Africa quite early. Some of the oldest examples are cave paintings in what is now Namibia, painted in c. 23,000 BCE. In West Africa, the Nok civilization emerged in c. 500 BCE. Located in what is present-day Nigeria, this impressive civilization produced fantastically life-like terracotta sculptures, many of which were probably portraits of political and religious leaders. It is possible that the early Nok civilization had an influence on later cultural groups such as the Yoruba.

Another important historical tradition from Nigeria relates to the Benin Kingdom (founded c. 900). Much of the remaining art from the Benin Kingdom was produced in association with a rich life at the royal court. Cast bronze portrait heads were intended for ancestral