

Room Four: Instruments

N-102: Seven-stringed *Qin* (Chinese Musical Instrument)

A masterpiece of the Tang dynasty, this *qin* has an inscription in the hollow of its base revealing that it was created in 724 in the Pengzhou area of Sichuan Province. Made of black-lacquered paulownia wood, it features thirteen circular marks in mother-of-pearl inlay as finger-positioning guides. Cracks that formed naturally on the lacquered surfaces of *qin* were admired aesthetically and given poetic names based on the patterns they formed. This *qin* features cracks in parallel lines, which were likened to ox hair, and cracks in spirals, which were likened to plum blossoms.

N-107: *Kodo* (Drum Shell), With painted decoration

This drum shell was probably used in early drama-dance performances, called *gigaku*. Two parallel ribs encircle the edges and mid-sections of the cups, and three parallel ribs encircle the center. The drum shell is decorated in floral motifs, including a lotus pattern in the center that is painted in gradations of color. Although most of the color has flaked off, what remains suggests the splendor of the original decoration, much like another drum shell (N-108) in the collection. These two pieces are valuable works from the Nara period (710–794). An inscription on the inside surface reveals that it was the “third drum” in the Eastern Precinct of Horyuji Temple.

N-105: *Oteki* (Horizontal Flute)

This type of flute was originally paired with a vertical flute (*shakuhachi*) to accompany a type of Chinese music and dance. This flute has seven finger holes and is made from two pieces of bamboo that are connected at a point between the finger holes and the mouthpiece. The body of the flute, except for the sections around the holes, has been tightly wound in bark from a cherry tree. The top end of the flute is plugged with beeswax, blue cloth with gold brocade is attached to one end, and vermilion lacquer has been applied as trim. This flute was kept in the Western Precinct of Horyuji Temple together with the *Seven-stringed Qin* (N-102) and other objects.

N-103: 6 Bridges for a *Koto* (Stringed Musical Instrument)

Bridges like these were used to tune stringed instruments, such as the *koto*. Judging by the shapes of these bridges, they were most likely made for a twelve-stringed, Korean-style *koto*. Shaped like little mountains with feet, a groove has been carved into the top of each one to lay the string on. Half-moon circlets have been carved out of their bases. Their surfaces were painted in red lacquer and finely cut gold leaf was used to create a design of leaves and add gold to the upper rims.