

Room 4: Furnishings

N-88: Box with Legs (*Karabitsu*); Phoenix Roundels in Mother-of-Pearl Inlay

Karabitsu are storage boxes that have legs, raising the base above the floor. Phoenixes in roundels are rendered in pieces of shell inlay and scattered all over the black lacquer surface. The shell pieces reflect light and create shimmering, bold designs that stand out against the glossy, black lacquer.

N-90: Box; Auspicious Flower, Butterfly, and Bird Design in Gold and Silver on Lacquered Leather

This is a lid for a box, which is now lost, made from lacquered leather. The surface shows patterns of flowers and leaves in gold and silver. The butterflies on the top surface and the long-tailed bird on the side make for lively decorations.

N-90: Lacquered Leather Box

The lid for this box is larger than the base and fits completely over it. The box was formed by pressing leather against a wooden mold. Then, the leather was covered with linen and finished with layers of lacquer. Lacquered leather was popular during the Nara period, though production declined in the Heian period because this material was easily deformed.

N-116: Marbles; *Hitori-mizutori-dama*

According to the Hōryūji records, these marbles and the *Cubic Marbles* (N-117) were treasured possessions of Prince Shōtoku when he was a child. They are attached to a net-like braid, suggesting that they were worn as an accessory.

N-117: Cubic Marbles (*Ishinatori-dama*)

These are known as Prince Shōtoku's treasured possessions together with another set of round marbles (N-116). These cubic marbles, currently housed in a carved lacquer container, may have been used for playing a board game.

N-118: Flower-Shaped Dish

This is a small dish in a six-petal shape with a low base. It is made from gilded cast bronze while the bottom of the inner surface is coated with clear lacquer. According to a record from the late Edo period, the round and cubic marbles (N-116 and N-117) were placed on this dish.

N-92 Light Stand with Painted Decoration

This light stand consists of a base, shaft, and light-reflecting plate. The metal ring would hold a simple oil lamp and its height could be adjusted. The round, vertical plate has traces of white paint, which was applied to better reflect the light. The plate features a painting of three children, including one dozing on a desk.

N-86: Stationary Table; Design of plovers in *maki-e* lacquer

This table was used to display books, a writing box, or poem slips. The surface has gold-powder decoration (*maki-e*) of plovers flying around pine trees on sand banks. Similar designs are found in other works, suggesting this scene might refer to a site associated with a famous poem.

N-78 Ink Slab

N-79 Ink Slab

An ink slab is used for making liquid ink by grinding an ink stick with water. A brush could then be dipped into the ink for writing or painting. Both of these ink slabs are stoneware with wave-like patterns on the surface. N-79 has a lacquered wooden frame and was reportedly used by Prince Shōtoku.

N-96—N-98: Needle Cases with Ivory Carvings

These cylindrical containers with lids are made of ivory carved on a wheel. They are decorated with motifs such as birds, animals, and flowering plants rendered in a technique called *bachiru*. *Bachiru* refers to an ivory-carving technique in which the surface of the ivory is stained with color and then carved to create designs with the contrasting white ivory underneath.