

Room Four: Buddhist Implements

N-242 Pagoda-Shaped Reliquary

This pagoda-shaped vessel was used to enshrine the relics of the Buddha Shakyamuni.

An inscription on the back of the platform indicates that it was made in 1138. It is thought to have been kept at the Reliquary Hall at the Eastern Precincts of Hōryūji Temple.

N-70 Sutra Desk, Decorated with tortoiseshell

From the Collection of Hōryūji Treasures, *Box with Green Glass and Pearl Inlay Decoration* (N-89) containing *Lotus Sutra Written in Minute Characters* (N-7) were allegedly kept atop this low sutra desk. The tabletop is made from rare materials such as black persimmon wood and spotted bamboo. The legs are ornamented with thin sheets of animal horns or tortoiseshells painted with birds and plants.

N-89 Box, With green glass and pearl inlay decoration

This box is recorded in the *Inventory of Hōryūji Temple's Eastern Precinct* of 761 as having been given to the temple in 742 by the wife of Emperor Shōmu, Tachibana no Konakachi. It reportedly contained *Lotus Sutra in Minute Characters* (N-7) and was kept atop *Sutra Desk, Decorated with tortoiseshell* (D-70). The edges are decorated with alternating ornaments of pearls and green glass beads.

N-300 Box

This box originally had a lid, which is now lost. This box was woven from arrowroot bark, dyed red using brazilin, a pigment obtained from the tropical sappanwood tree, then coated with lacquer. Bamboo can be seen around the edge of the opening. The box was used to store *Kesa (Priest's Robe)* (N-35).

N-284 Buddhist Scepter

This implement shaped like a backscratcher was used to correct posture and behavior in Buddhist ceremonies. This one is made of the horn of a water buffalo, and the small claw-like upper part and slender overall appearance are characteristic of scepters up to the Nara period.

N-286 Abbot's Baton

This is originally a fan-shaped baton with animal-hair placed between two wooden pieces, though animal hair on this work is now completely lost. Prince Shōtoku reportedly used this when he gave a sermon. The handle is shaped like a bamboo.

N-241-1 Hyakumantō (One Million Miniature Memorial Pagodas)

Following an uprising led by Fujiwara no Nakamaro in 764, Empress Shōtoku (reigning from 764 to 770) had a total of one million of these three-tiered miniature wooden stupas made and distributed to ten major temples in Nara and surrounding areas to pray for national stability and the eradication of sin.