

Room Four: Buddhist Implements

N-242 Stupa-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.

N-300 Box

This object was originally a box, although the lid no longer exists. This box is woven from arrowroot bark, was dyed red using brazilin, a pigment obtained from the tropical sappanwood tree, and was coated in lacquer. The bamboo can be seen around the edge of the opening. The box was used to store *Kesa* (Priest's Robe) (N-35).

N-279 Bowl

This kind of bowl was used by monks for offering food and drinks to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It was made using the so-called "dry lacquer" technique, in which layers of cloth were repeatedly pressed against a mold and affixed with lacquer to shape this bowl, a bit like papier-mâché. This technique was also frequently used to make Buddhist sculptures during the 8th century.

N-278 Bowl

This wooden bowl is coated in lacquer, wide below its opening, and has a narrow bottom, although its overall shape is gentle. The bowl is said to have been used by Bodhidharma, who was closely associated with Prince Shōtoku in Japan.

N-14 Box for the *Buddhas' Names Sutra*

This simple, long rectangular box made of wood and coated in black lacquer with an *inrō-butazukuri* lid was used to hold three volumes of the *Buddhas' Names Sutra*, delivered to Hōryūji Temple in 1141. The inscription on the back of its lid mentions the date 963, but the style of the calligraphy is closer to the style of the late Heian or Kamakura period, indicating it must have been made around this time.

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

predating the Nara period.

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. The pagodas once held printed Buddhist chants known as *dhāraṇī* inside the cylindrical holes under the vertical shaft (*sōrin*) in the upper section of the stupas, though all the texts were lost from the forty-eight stupas in the Collection of Hōryūji Treasures.