

Greeting

Oji Town is situated in the north-western part of the Nara Basin, on the border with Osaka Prefecture. This area has long served as the gateway to Nara, as the Yamato River—into which all the rivers of the Nara Basin converge—flows from here into the Osaka Plain. Supported by this favourable geographical setting, human settlement can be traced back to the Late Yayoi period (c. 1st - c. 3rd century CE), and as early as the Asuka period (c. 6th century - 710 CE), Buddhist temples were already being established. Over the centuries, Oji has been shaped by a rich and dynamic history, including the development of traditions associated with Prince Shōtoku, the formation of a distribution hub linked to water transport on the Yamato River, and the opening of the first railway line in Nara Prefecture.

This exhibition, organised with the cooperation of Oji Town, marks the 100th anniversary of its incorporation as a town and presents the diverse cultural heritage nurtured in Oji—a place through which countless people and goods have passed. The exhibits include artefacts excavated from Yayoi and Kofun-period (mid-3rd - late 6th century CE) sites and ancient temple remains, objects representing various forms of belief, including devotion to Prince Shōtoku, as well as materials related to transportation and distribution. In addition, the exhibition introduces recent initiatives undertaken in Oji Town to preserve and actively utilise its cultural properties. We hope that encountering this “collection” representing Oji will offer visitors an opportunity to reflect on the significance of passing on cultural properties that embody the history and culture of a region.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere gratitude to the owners of the exhibited objects, the officials of Oji Town, and all those who have contributed to the realisation of this exhibition.

January 2026

Nara Prefecture Historical and Artistic Culture Complex

Chapter Introductions

The Beginnings of Oji

The place name “Oji” first appears in historical records from the Heian period (794-1185 CE). However, this area—long regarded as a strategic point for transportation—already had settlements during the Late Yayoi period (c.1st-c.3rd century CE). Through archaeological sites and artefacts discovered within the town, it is possible to gain insight into the early stages of human activity in Oji.

Prince Shōtoku and Bodhidharma

The history and culture of Oji Town are deeply connected with worship of Prince Shōtoku. The town is home to Darumaji Temple, associated with the legend that Prince Shōtoku met Bodhidharma, as well as the Taishi Road, believed to have been the route of Prince Shōtoku's funeral procession. This section introduces objects related to the veneration of Prince Shōtoku alongside outstanding examples of Buddhist art preserved at Darumaji. It also highlights the monks, artisans, and political authorities who were involved in the creation of Buddhist images and the reconstruction of the temple.

Many Forms of Prayer

In addition to materials associated with worship of Prince Shōtoku, Oji Town preserves a wide variety of objects and practices born of religious belief. These range from fine examples of Buddhist art to customs closely connected with everyday life. Particular attention is given to Mount Myojin, located at the western edge of the town, which has long served as a site of diverse forms of worship. This section presents the many expressions of faith that have shaped the historical and cultural landscape of Oji.

A Crossroad of People and Goods

The Yamato River, which flows along the northern edge of Oji Town, has been used as a transportation route since ancient times. During the Edo period (1603-1868 CE), when river transport flourished, numerous boats travelled between Nara and Osaka, and the Kamenose area developed into an important logistics hub. With the advent of the modern era and the opening of the first railway line in Nara Prefecture, Oji experienced further growth. This section focuses on Oji's role as a centre of transportation, distribution and gateway to Nara.

Oji Collection

— People Come and Go, a Living Culture —

January 31 - March 15, 2026

- The work numbers agree with those in the catalogue and the galleries, but not necessary with the order of display.
- Some of the exhibits or the display periods may be changed as circumstances require.
- Except for certain items, the objects on display are normally not open to the public.
- Key to marks on illustrations:
 ◎ = Nationally Designated Cultural Property,
 ○ = Nara Prefecture Designated Cultural Property.
 ■ = Oji Town Designated Cultural Property.

No.	Marks	Title	Year	Collection	1/31 ~ 2/23	2/25 ~ 3/15
The Beginning of Oji						
1		Artefacts Excavated from Kotaki/Kusurii Site	Paleolithic-Yayoi period	Oji Town		
2		Artefacts Excavated from Funato/Nishinooka Site	Yayoi period, 1-2th century	The Museum, Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture		
3		Artefacts Excavated from Iwandaike-kita Burial Mound	Kofun period, late 6th century to early-7th century	The Museum, Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture		
4		Artefacts Excavated from Hatakeda Burial Mound	Kofun period, early 7th century	The Museum, Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture		
5		Roof Tiles Excavated from the Saianji Temple Site	Asuka period, the 630s Asuka period, late 7th century	Oji Town		
6		Artefacts Excavated from the Kataokaoji Temple	Asuka-Muromachi period, early 7th century to 15th century	The Museum, Archaeological Institute of Kashihara, Nara Prefecture		
7		Roof Tiles with a Tradition of Excavation from the Site of Kataokaoji Temple	Asuka period, 7th century	Nara National Museum		
8	◎	Gilt-bronze Inscription of Tokuso and Others (text explaining reasons for making a Buddhist statue)	Asuka period, dated 694 (Jito tenno 8)	Horyuji Temple, Ikaruga Town		
Prince Shōtoku and Bodhidharma						
9	○	Stone Pagoda and Reliquary Excavated from Darumaji Temple	Kamakura period, 13th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
10		VR Video: Important Cultural Property-Memorial Pillar of Darumaji Temple	Modern period, dated 2026 (Reiwa 8)	Nara Prefecture Historical and Artistic Culture Complex		
11	■	Statue of Seated Thousand-Armed Kan-non (Sahasrabhuja)	Nanbokuchō period, 14th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
12		Portraits of Bodhidharma and Prince Shōtoku	Edo period, 17th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
13	■	Instructions for a Painting of Prince Shōtoku	Kamakura period, 14th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		Rotation
14		<i>Shuinjo</i> (vermillion-seal certificate) of Tokugawa Ieyasu	Edo period, dated 1602 (Keicho 7)	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
15		Ridge Tag from the Former Main Hall of Darumaji Temple	Edo period, 17th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
16		<i>Oni</i> Roof Tiles (decorative roof tile shaped like a goblin)	Edo period, dated 1605 (Keicho 10)	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
17	○	Ridge Tag of Hojo of Darumaji Temple	Edo period, dated 1667 (Kanbun 7)	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
18	◎	Painting of Reclining Buddha	Heian period, 12th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
19		Painting of Xuanzang Accompanied by the Sixteen Guardian Deities	Nanbokuchō period, 14th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
20		Painting of Kan-non Bodhisattva (Avalokitesvara)	Edo period, 17th century	Darumaji Temple, Oji Town		
Many Form of Prayer						
21		Painting of the Kasuga Shrine and Kōfukuji Temple Mandara	Muromachi period, 15-16th century	Kudojinja Shrine, Oji Town		
22		Painting of Reclining Buddha by Myō-yō Kokan	Edo period, dated 1695 (Genroku 8)	Eifukuji Temple, Oji Town		
23		<i>Ema</i> (Votive plaque)	Edo-Showa period, 19th to 20th century	Nara Prefecture Museum of Folklore		Rotation
24		Map of Hirume Daijingu Shrine in Yamato (Nara)	Edo period, dated 1830 (Bunsei 13)	Japanese History Laboratory, Graduate School of Humanities, The University of Osaka		
A Crossroad of People and Goods						
25	■	Seals and Stamps of Fujii-don'ya (transport company)	Edo-Meiji period, 17th to 19th century	Private collection		
26		Marked <i>Hanten</i> (Traditional Work Jacket) of the Matuura Group Marked <i>Hanten</i> (Traditional Work Jacket) of the Kajima Group	Meiji period, 19th to 20th century	Private collection		
27		Souvenir Postcards of the Kamenose Landslide	Present day, dated 1932 (Showa 7)	Oji Town		
28	■	License Plate D51895	Present day, dated 1944 (Showa 19)	West Japan Railway Company		