

The Shaka Triad

This gilt bronze statue of Shakyamuni, the founder of Buddhism, and his two attendant bodhisattvas Yakuo and Yakujo are works by Tori, a famous sculptor of Buddhist images. Tori was the most prolific sculptor of the Asuka period (593–710). He belonged to a hereditary guild of saddle-makers but came to cast bronze sculptures under the patronage of Prince Shotoku.

Shotoku passed away in 622. This figure, completed in 623, has an inscription on its back dedicating it to Shotoku. It was cast in Shotoku's image with the intention of curing his ailments. However, the prince died before its completion, so the statue was dedicated in his name with the hope that this would lead to his rebirth in the Pure Land.