

INDEPENDENT ADMINISTRATIVE INSTITUTION  
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## LACQUER-PERMEATED DOCUMENTS

FROM THE NARA

CAPITAL SITE

I

English Summary

NARA, 2005

PUBLICATIONS ON HISTORICAL MATERIALS,  
VOLUME LXIX, SUPPLEMENTUM

## English Summary

### 1 Preface

The multi-volume publication, *Lacquer-Permeated Documents from the Nara Palace and Capital Sites*, is a compilation of lacquer-permeated documents recovered from archaeological sites of the Nara palace and capital, with the current volume being the first in the series.

Lacquer-permeated documents are pieces of scrap paper (no longer needed after being used once or twice as documents) which are utilized as lids for vessels containing lacquer. Because lacquer becomes unusable, through hardening on contact with air and gathering dust, the liquid lacquer surface is covered closely with paper serving as a lid. Whereas paper ordinarily decomposes when buried in the soil, paper used in this manner as a lid is preserved by the lacquer adhering to it, and accordingly remains without eroding. Because it was common to use scrap paper, such as disused documents, as lids, it is possible to recover paper documents through excavation. The writing cannot be discerned with the naked eye because of the lacquer adhering to the surface. But by shining infrared light, which passes through the lacquer film, traces of ink are observed from the light reflected by the paper's surface.

This report is the first compilation of lacquer-permeated documents recovered from ancient capital sites. Accordingly, a summary is presented first of the overall progress of research on these materials, focusing on lacquer-permeated documents recovered from ancient capitals.

Lacquer-permeated documents were first recognized and reported for the Nara capital site. In the 68<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation conducted at the Nara palace site by the Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute in July 1970, two items were discovered in East Second Ward, in the western gutter of an inter-ward street, at a point on the eastern side of Block 6, East Second Ward on Second Street, and were reported in September of that year and again in the following year (1971) as being lacquer fragments bearing written characters. This was the start of the history of research on lacquer-permeated documents, which can be divided broadly into three periods.

The first period was from the 1970 discovery up to 1978. At about the same time as the discovery at the Nara palace site, in the 9<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation at the Taga castle remains in Miyagi prefecture, large numbers of lacquer-permeated documents were recovered from within the central administrative precinct. This was in August of 1970. But these materials were not recognized at the time as paper, but were treated instead as leather products. Subsequently, in 1973, a document resembling a tax register was recovered during the 21<sup>st</sup> Archaeological Investigation at the Taga castle site, and was reported the following year. This was the first such material to be reported for Taga castle.

As cognizance of the discovery of this type of material deepened, such finds were recognized one after another from the Nara capital and Taga castle sites. But at the

time the documentary value of these items was not yet clear, and this was a stage of simply reporting the discoveries as they occurred.

With the progress of research in this area, however, the items recovered from the 9th Investigation at Taga which had been regarded as leather objects came to be recognized as lacquer-permeated documents. The results of that investigation were made public in 1978, and in the following year an excavation report was published. At that stage, in addition to recognizing that these items had been preserved as paper lids for lacquer vessels, a new research stage was entered with the spread of the technique of using infrared video cameras. The time from this point on can be regarded as the second research period. Abundant materials from the Taga castle became available, and the main focus of research in the second period, in terms of both quantity and quality, was on fortified government offices of the Tohoku region. At the same time, at ancient capital sites such as Nara and Nagaoka as well, discoveries were increasing. But in comparison with the Kantō and Tōhoku regions, for which reports on lacquer-permeated documents were published for the Taga castle site (Miyagi prefecture), the Akita castle site (Akita), Kanoko C site (Ibaragi), Shimotsuke provincial headquarters site (Tochigi), etc., relatively little attention was given to lacquer-permeated documents recovered from ancient capital sites at this time.

With the year 1995, however, on the occasion of the discovery of documents similar to registers of the *so* tax (a tax in kind, levied against land allotments), a reexamination was undertaken by the Nara National Cultural Properties Institute of materials which had been recovered up to that time. At about the same time, lacquer-permeated documents were also recovered from a total of three locations in the Nagaoka palace and capital sites in 1994 and 1995. From the accumulated results of these investigations, the need to examine the place of these materials within the framework of the ancient capitals became evident. In this regard research may be considered to have entered a new stage, with the time from the mid 1990s seen as the third period of research.

The results of reexaminations made during the third period of materials recovered from the Nara palace and capital sites were published yearly in the *Annual Bulletin of Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute*. But the information thus became dispersed throughout issues for several years of the *Bulletin*, and due to limitations on length there were materials that could not be included. In addition, with advances in recent years of infrared photography using digital cameras, it has become necessary to publish images with higher resolution. Against this background, publication was undertaken of this comprehensive compilation of the research results regarding lacquer-permeated documents recovered from the Nara palace and capital sites.

## 2 Archaeological features

This report contains lacquer-permeated documents recovered from the following eleven investigation precincts.

### (1) Block 16, East First Ward on Third Street (32<sup>nd</sup> Archaeological Investigation)

The 32<sup>nd</sup> Archaeological Investigation, conducted in 1966, excavated the southeast

corner of the Nara palace site and Block 16 in East First Ward on Third Street. A single lacquer-permeated document was recovered from Pit SK 3995 in Block 16.

Block 16 and its southern neighbor Block 15 were used throughout the Nara period as a single unit, where large-scale buildings stood in orderly fashion. From the nature of these features it may be inferred that Blocks 15 and 16 were not an individual's residence, but a government office lying outside the palace precinct, or a facility serving the function of a detached palace.

**(2) Southeast corner, Nara palace site (32<sup>nd</sup> Archaeological Investigation, Supplementary Excavation)**

The Supplementary Excavation to the 32<sup>nd</sup> Archaeological Investigation was conducted in 1966, at a location contiguous with the northwest portion of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Archaeological Investigation's excavation precinct. Two lacquer-permeated documents were recovered from an east-west ditch, SD 4100A.

In addition to the southern portion of the Nara palace's Great Wall, two buildings and two ditches were detected among the features in this investigation precinct. Ditch SD 4100 flows from west to east along the inward side of the Great Wall. It divides broadly into two phases, with the lower strata labeled SD 4100A, and the upper strata SD 4100B. Approximately 13,000 *mokkan* (wooden documents), mainly related to work evaluations made by the Ministry of Personnel Affairs, were recovered from SD 4100A. Among items bearing dates, whereas there are old examples dating to Jinki 5 (728), the bulk concentrate in Jingo Keiun era (767-770), with the most recent from the first year of the Hōki era (770).

**(3) Block 6, East Second Ward on Second Street (68<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation)**

The 68<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation, conducted in 1970, excavated Block 6 of East Second Ward on Second Street. Two lacquer-permeated documents were recovered from Ditch SD 5780, the western gutter of an inter-ward street of East Second Ward. As other inscription-bearing materials recovered from this ditch, there were 79 *mokkan*, plus coins including Wadō kaichin and Mannen tsūhō examples. Among the *mokkan* are items bearing place names written in the manner followed from the start through the first half of the Nara period, but as these were in association with artifacts from the latter half of the period, such as the Mannen tsūhō coins, it is thought that the ditch was in use throughout the Nara period.

**(4) Block 10, East Third Ward on Eighth Street (93<sup>rd</sup> Archaeological Investigation)**

The 93<sup>rd</sup> Archaeological Investigation was conducted in 1975, investigating East Third Ward on Eighth Street (the northeastern district in the vicinity of East Market). There were nine lacquer-permeated documents recovered from Ditch SD 1155, the southern gutter of the interblock boundary street separating Blocks 9 and 10, plus two additional fragments bearing no ink inscriptions. Whereas these items do not fit together, they are thought to be originally from the same document. The two legible items among these are included in this report. In addition to these items from inscription-bearing documents, a large paper lid for a lacquer vessel was discovered. This had been fitted to a *magemono* container (a round or oval box made from a thin strip of wood bent into

a loop, and fitted with a wooden bottom), used for transporting and storing lacquer.

Ditch SD 1155 runs from east to west, flowing into the ditch (SD 1300) thought to be the eastern canal of the Nara capital. Other items recovered from SD 1155 include 25 *mokkan*, a wooden spoon painted with lacquer, a lacquered leather box, fragments of a lacquered hat, cloth used for straining lacquer, *haji* ware plates and bowls used as lacquer vessels, *sue* ware vases, *magemono* containers made of Japanese cypress, and brushes and spatulas used for applying lacquer, hence the presence of a lacquer workshop in the vicinity may be inferred.

**(5) Block 13, East Second Ward on Second Street (131<sup>st</sup> Archaeological Investigation, Sector 31)**

The 131<sup>st</sup> Archaeological Investigation, Sector 31, was conducted in 1982, and excavated Block 13 of East Second Ward on Second Street. One lacquer-permeated document was recovered from the artifact-bearing layer. Judging from the age of the ceramic vessel to which it was attached, it is probably from the latter half of the Nara period. Further, as an item related to lacquer, from the artifact-bearing layer of a neighboring sector, a fragment of a lacquered vessel with a floral and bird design drawn with a pin was recovered. This item is inferred to date from the end of the Nara to the beginning of Heian periods.

**(6) Block 6, East First Ward on Eighth Street (160<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation)**

The 160<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation was conducted in 1984, investigating Blocks 3 and 6 of East First Ward on Eighth Street. One lacquer-permeated document was recovered from the posthole of an embedded pillar building, SB 3190, in Block 6. The features detected in the excavated area divide broadly into four phases (A1, A2, B, C). Building SB 3190 is a structure from the latter part to the end of the Nara period (phase B), long in the east-west direction, and the lacquer-permeated document was recovered from the hole made in removing the pillar of its southwest corner.

**(7) Block 14, West First Ward on Eighth Street (investigated by Board of Education, city of Yamato Kōriyama)**

This investigation was conducted in 1984 by the Yamato Kōriyama municipal Board of Education. It was one of a total of five excavations, conducted from 1984 to 1986 by the Yamato Kōriyama Board of Education and the Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute, in Blocks 13 and 14 of West First Ward on Eighth Street. As for lacquer-permeated documents, there were 69 items recovered in Block 14, from Pit SK 2001 in the area investigated by the Yamato Kōriyama Board of Education. Of these 42 items are included in this report. In addition to inscription-bearing lacquer-permeated documents, large paper lids for lacquer vessels were discovered. These also had been fitted to *magemono* containers used for transporting and storing lacquer.

Archaeological features in the investigated sector divide broadly into four phases. Artifacts related to metal casting and to lacquer work were recovered, and the area is presumed to be a large workshop site. SK 2001 is a large-scale pit from the first half of the Nara period (phase II of the sequence of features). Other lacquer-working items recovered from it include a *sue* ware vase used as a lacquer jar, together with its lid,

and cloth used for straining lacquer.

**(8) Block 5, East Second Ward on Second Street (204<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation)**

The 204<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation was conducted in 1989. It was one of a series of excavations conducted from 1986 to 1989 in Block 5, East Second Ward on Second Street (the presumed site of Fujiwara no Maro's mansion) and in Blocks 1, 2, 7 and 8, East Second Ward on Third Street (the presumed site of Prince Nagaya's mansion). In the 204<sup>th</sup> Investigation, Block 5 of East Second Ward on Second Street, along with Second Street lying to its south, were excavated. One lacquer-permeated document was recovered from each of two moat-like ditches, SD 5300 and SD 5310, dug along Second Street.

Ditches SD 5300 and 5310, along with ditch SD 5100, were dug into the road surface of Second Street, extending east-west as moat-like features paralleling the northern and southern gutters of the street, and were the features yielding the large cache of wooden documents known as the "Second Street *mokkan*."

Ditch SD 5300 lies on the northern side of Second Street. Among dated items recovered from this feature there is one from Jinki 5 (728), with the remainder from Tenpyō 3-8 (731-736). Ditch SD 5310 is located in symmetric fashion to SD 5300, on the opposite side of Gate SB 5315, which sits at the midpoint of the southern face of Block 5 in East Second Ward on Second Street. Dated *mokkan* recovered from this feature are almost entirely limited to the year Tenpyō 8 (736). Ditches SD 5300 and 5310 are both features showing no signs of water flow.

**(9) Sairyūji temple remains (228<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation)**

Sairyūji was a temple built at the end of the Nara period by Empress Shōtoku. The 228<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation was conducted in 1991, and excavated the refectory in the northeast portion of Sairyūji's temple precinct. To the west of the refectory, Pond SG 530 was in existence from before Sairyūji's construction, but this was found to have been filled in and converted to a prepared plot when the refectory was erected. Three fragments of a lacquer-permeated document were recovered from the fill used to prepare the plot.

**(10) Eastern extension of the Nara palace site (243<sup>rd</sup> Archaeological Investigation and 245<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation, Sector 1)**

The 243<sup>rd</sup> Archaeological Investigation and 245<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation, Sector 1, were conducted in 1993, excavating the western part of the East Palace Garden, located in the southern portion of the palace precinct's eastern extension. One lacquer-permeated document was recovered from a well, SE 16030. Archaeological features detected in the investigation divide into seven phases, from A to G. Well SE 16030 was dug in phase D during the Jingo Keiun era (765-770), and was in use until phase F in the Hōki era (770-780). The lacquer-permeated document was recovered from within the well shaft.

**(11) Nara palace site, southern portion of the presumed site of the Office of Rice Wines and Vinegars (259<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation)**

The 259<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Investigation was conducted in 1995, excavating the

southern portion of the government office precinct to the east of the Imperial Domicile, which is presumed to be the site of the Office of Rice Wines and Vinegars, and part of the road running east-west within the palace that lay immediately to the south. One lacquer-permeated document was recovered from Ditch SD 11600, the southern gutter of the inner palace road. The find was accompanied by the recovery of 2,808 *mokkan* from the same ditch, bearing dates that fall mostly between Hōki 4 (773) and Enryaku 3 (784). From an examination of their contents, they are related to the Tōgūbō (the household administrative office for the crown prince) of Imperial Prince Yamabe (who later became Emperor Kanmu), during the period he served as crown prince, together with some *mokkan* related to the Kōgō gūshiki, the household administrative office of Kanmu's empress, Fujiwara no Otomuro.

### 3 The circulation of lacquer and lacquer-permeated documents

As noted above, lacquer-permeated documents are pieces of scrap paper that were used as lids for vessels containing lacquer. But not all lacquer containers were fitted with paper lids. In order to consider the historiographic value of lacquer-permeated documents, it is necessary to ascertain at what stage paper was used as a lid in the process linking the production of lacquer and its consumption.

First, in the stage of obtaining lacquer, incisions are made into a lacquer tree, and the sap is scraped up as it oozes out. At present, the collected sap is placed in a *magemono* trough, though it is not clear what type of vessel was used in ancient times. The freshly collected liquid is called *ki urushi*, raw lacquer, which must then be refined. This procedure is called *kurome*, and the refined lacquer *kurome urushi*. The refining is sometimes done at the locus of production, and sometimes at the site of consumption as represented by ancient capitals.

For transport from the point of production to the consumption site, lacquer was sometimes put in long-necked vases of *sue* ware, and sometimes in large *magemono* containers. After being carried to the site of consumption, it was stored until time of actual use, and sometimes this was done in the same vessels used for transport, and sometimes by placing it in very large storage jars. At the point of consumption it would be portioned out in small *magemono* containers or vases, and sometimes further divided into small bowls and plates.

The stages just described link the production of lacquer and its consumption, with vessels being used at each stage in accordance with a particular function, but paper lids were used only with *magemono* containers and small bowls. Vases for transport were fitted with plugs of wood, cloth, or straw, so paper lids were not used. When it came time to use the lacquer, the plug would often be stuck fast, and vase would be broken at the neck to remove the contents.

The reconstructed diameters of paper lids fall into large (30-35 cm diameter), medium (20-25 cm), and small (15 cm or less) groups, as regulated by the diameters of the vessels. Roughly speaking, large and medium sized items are presumed to be for transport and storage, and small ones for division into individual portions.

As seen above, the stage of lacquer production and the type of vessel to which lacquer-permeated documents were fitted must be inferred from the shape and size of these materials.

The problem of the source of scrap paper used as paper lids for the vessels will now be addressed. This will be done by the type of archaeological site in which they are found.

For sites at the level of provincial headquarters (*kokufu*), offices managing documents and those using large amounts of lacquer are both limited. Accordingly, it is common for the agent disposing the document and the agent using the lacquer to be one and the same. It may also be inferred that this agent is closely linked with the facility where the document was discarded. In other words in each case the agent may be inferred to have been linked with the state. As an alternative, there might also be documents that were discarded at the district (*gun*) level, and used with lacquer containers that were presented to a state facility.

In contrast, the situation at ancient capitals was much more complicated. First, in the case of *sue* ware vases being used for transporting lacquer from distant regions, scrap paper would be used only in the portioning out of lacquer in bowls and *magemono* containers. In other words, it would be limited to small-sized items. As the paper lids are fitted at the capital, they are highly likely to have been discarded by some facility at the capital, such as a central government agency, an aristocratic household, or a temple etc. In considering the route through which a document once discarded becomes supplied as scrap paper, cases in which it is discarded by a government agency directly linked with a lacquer workshop are possible, as are those in which scrap paper, discarded by a government agency, follows a prescribed route into the open market, and is then procured for use through purchase.

Next, a different set of possibilities must be considered in the case of *magemono* containers being used for transporting lacquer from distant regions. At the time the lacquer is brought to the capital, there would be a paper lid attached at the place of origin. The possibility that it was supplied by a regional government office is high. A document discarded in a remote region would thus be used as a paper lid, and brought to the capital together with the lacquer and its container. Subsequently, as the lacquer is used, the paper lid is probably replaced with another one. For the latter, a document discarded at the capital would be used. In any event, documents discarded at the capital would be used when the lacquer is portioned out from the container used for transport into bowls.

Based on the above consideration, aspects of the lacquer working process and the source of scrap paper will be reconstructed for each of the cases recorded in this report.

#### **(1) Block 16, East First Ward on Third Street**

It is presumed that a government office lying outside the palace precinct, or a facility serving the function of detached palace, was located at this site. Accordingly, it is difficult to suppose that a large-scale lacquer workshop would have been maintained in

the vicinity. It is likely that the paper lid was used for a small-scale piece of lacquer work, such as the making or repair of furniture, that would be performed at a detached palace or similar facility, and discarded at the site. As it cannot be thought that large amounts of scrap paper were procured for the lacquer work, the paper used as a lid was perhaps one that was conveniently nearby at the time, or had been brought in from the outside by a workman.

### **(2) Southeast corner, Nara palace site**

The Ministry of Personnel Affairs and the Council for Religious Affairs are believed to have existed in the vicinity. Accordingly, in this case as well it is difficult to suppose a lacquer workshop being nearby, and the paper lids for lacquer containers uncovered here would have been from lacquer work of a temporary nature.

### **(3) Block 6, East Second Ward on Second Street**

Considering the conditions of the vicinity in which lacquer-permeated documents were recovered, in the first part of the Nara period the mansion of Fujiwara no Maro is thought to have included Block 5 of East Second Ward on Second Street, and in the latter part of the Nara period the Nashihara no Miya palace was maintained there. As it is difficult to suppose that a large-scale lacquer workshop would be run in such a location, it is thought rather that small-scale lacquer work, such as the repair of furniture on the premises, was conducted. Regarding the procurement of scrap paper, rather than being supplied in large amounts, it is likely that scrap paper conveniently near to the work site was used, or that workmen used scrap paper they brought in from the outside.

Looking at the contents of the recovered lacquer-permeated documents, one of the two concerned rice land, and the other being used initially as a tax register for an area in either the eastern or western half of the capital, and subsequently being used as a document dated Hōki 2 (771). This type of document would have been under the administration of the Ministry of Financial Affairs, which accordingly would be the source of the scrap paper.

From the same ditch yielding this lacquer-permeated document, at a point further downstream in Block 5 of East Second Ward on Second Street, where the feature is labeled SD 5021, the scroll rod of a tax register for Wadō 8 (715) for the province of Yamato was recovered, along with documentary *mokkan* concerning the purchase of lacquer. It is difficult to suppose that the tax register would have been thrown into the ditch in the form of a scroll. It is thought rather that after the tax register was no longer needed, the paper it was made from was reutilized and the scroll rod alone was discarded. The reutilization of paper from the tax register would conceivably include using the back side for writing, and would not be limited to use as paper lids for lacquer containers. But as it may be inferred from the accompanying *mokkan* that lacquer was used in the vicinity, it is possible to assume that the paper would have been used for the lids of lacquer vessels.

The lacquer-permeated document from Ditch SD 5780 in Block 6, and the tax register scroll rod from SD 5021 differ in age, and cannot be linked directly. But together they

show that in both the first and latter halves of the Nara period, somewhere in the vicinity there was a place supplying scrap paper from the Ministry of Financial Affairs.

**(4) Block 10, East Third Ward on Eighth Street**

This location is in the area neighboring East Market, and it is presumed that a lacquer workshop was nearby. Also, as the paper lid for a *magemono* container used for transporting and storing lacquer was recovered, it can be seen that lacquer was in use in large quantities.

In considering the supply route for the scrap paper used for the lacquer-permeated documents that were recovered, from the presumed proximity of the lacquer workshop to the East Market, it is possible that scrap paper was purchased at the market. For the paper lid, which bears no writing, fitted to the *magemono* container used for transporting or storing lacquer, it is possible that it was brought to the capital together with the lacquer from a distant region.

**(5) Block 13, East Second Ward on Second Street**

As the contents of the lacquer-permeated document recovered from this location are unclear, and the document itself was not associated with an archaeological feature, it is difficult to make any inference about the lacquer work process or supply route of the scrap paper involved. But as this location is immediately south of Hokkeji temple, with facilities such as detached palaces in the vicinity, it may be that the item was brought on the occasion of temporary lacquer work performed at a detached palace or aristocratic residence. The item's being attached to a vessel used for holding a small portion of lacquer, or perhaps as a palette, is consistent with this scenario of only a small amount of lacquer being utilized.

**(6) Block 6, East First Ward on Eighth Street**

The lacquer-permeated document was found still attached to a *magemono* container holding lacquer, from the hole made in removing the pillar of an embedded pillar building. The container is thought to have held lacquer used during the dismantling and renewal of the building. The lacquer container is believed to have been used when the lacquer was transported from a remote region, with a document discarded in that region used with the *magemono* container, and possibly carried together with it to the Nara capital.

**(7) Block 14, West First Ward on Eighth Street**

This location is the site of workshops closely connected with the West Market, and lacquer work was conducted here over a long period of time. Large numbers of lacquer-permeated documents were recovered, along with paper lids with no writing that were fitted to large *magemono* containers used for transport and storage.

The contents of the documents are varied. First, there are lists of names regarded as of the type found in household and tax registers, and documents related to rice and other grains that are thought to belong to tax reports (*shōzeichō*, financial reports submitted by regional government agencies), being official documents concerned with the administration of the *ritsuryō* state, plus portions of Buddhist sutras, and of annotations to the *Analects* of Confucius, etc. From the variety of documents included,

these items of scrap paper could not have all been discarded from a single agency.

As work was conducted continually at this lacquer workshop, large amounts of scrap paper would have always been necessary. It is not reasonable to think that it would have been obtained intermittently from various agencies. Judging from the location of the site, it is most easily thought that scrap paper would have been purchased at the West Market, located nearby, where all sorts of scrap paper gathered. In addition, it is possible that the large paper lids without writing were brought from the provinces together with the lacquer vessels.

**(8) Block 5, East Second Ward on Second Street**

*Mokkan* recovered from the same moat-like features yielding the lacquer-permeated documents are presumed to be related to the residence of Fujiwara no Maro, which is thought to have stood at Block 5 in East Second Ward on Second Street, or to the palace of Empress Kōmyō, believed to have been at Blocks 1, 2, 7, and 8 in East Second Ward on Third Street. Accordingly, it is not possible to consider a large-scale lacquer workshop being operated continually nearby. The lacquer-permeated documents are likely to have been associated with lacquer work performed within the palace or aristocratic residence.

**(9) Sairyūji temple remains**

Lacquer was used in large quantities on the occasion of temple construction and repair, and in the manufacture of Buddhist statues and furnishings. It may be inferred that scrap paper was also used in quantity as lids for lacquer vessels. The three lacquer-permeated document fragments recovered at Sairyūji came from such a lid more than 30 cm in diameter. It may be presumed to have been fitted to a large *magemono* container used for transport or storage, indicating the use of lacquer in large quantity. Examining its contents, the document is related to the provisioning of food for workers on the occasion of Sairyūji's construction. The agency in charge of erecting the temple buildings, and making a repairing their furnishings, would also attend to the lacquer work, and can be presumed to have used some of its own documents as scrap paper.

**(10) Eastern extension of the Nara palace site**

It is not possible to suppose the existence of a lacquer workshop in this area. The lacquer-permeated document recovered here was probably associated with temporary lacquer work.

**(11) Nara palace site, southern portion of the presumed site of the Office of Rice Wines and Vinegars**

From the *mokkan* found in association with the lacquer-permeated document, it can be inferred that the Tōgūbō, the household administrative office of Imperial Prince Yamabe (later, Emperor Kanmu), and the Kōgō gūshiki, the household administrative office of Kanmu's empress, Fujiwara no Otomuro, were located in the vicinity. It is not considered possible for a lacquer workshop to have been nearby. The lacquer-permeated document found here can be judged from its shape to have been fitted to a bowl used for dispensing a small portion of lacquer or as a palette, and from the recovery of only one such item, it may be presumed to have been used for temporary

lacquer work conducted either at the Tōgūbō or the Kōgō gūshiki.

The contents of the document are of the type found in formal reports of tax revenues, which would not likely to have been discarded at either household administrative office. It is thought rather to have been brought in from the outside by a lacquer worker.

For each of the cases of lacquer-permeated documents recovered for the Nara capital and palace sites, the nature of the lacquer work and the supply route for the scrap paper have been inferred as above. It is possible to divide the places where lacquer work was conducted into four broad classes. The first consists of workshops where lacquer work was conducted continually, the second is sites related to construction, and the third comprises aristocratic residences or the palaces of the emperor or imperial family members, where small-scale lacquer work was conducted. The fourth class consists of temples where lacquer work was done.

Whereas cases (4) and (7) may be cited as belonging to the first class, (7) is the most typical example. Large paper lids fitted to containers used for transport and storage, as well as small paper lids attached to bowls, used for holding small portions or as palettes, were recovered. The contents of the documents used as scrap paper are varied, and when considered in conjunction with the site's location, it can be seen that they were obtained from the market, where scrap paper of all kinds would gather. It is also highly possible that the large paper lids were documents discarded and fitted to the lacquer containers in remote provinces, and brought together with them to the Nara capital.

For the second class, there is case (6). While generalizations cannot be drawn from a single example, as lacquer was surely needed in large quantities at construction sites, the recovery of a *magemono* container for lacquer transport and storage is fitting. The scrap paper attached to the vessel was possibly an item discarded in a remote province that was brought together to the Nara capital.

For the third class, cases (1), (3), (8), and (11) can be cited. Nearly all of the lacquer-permeated documents recovered are small fragments, and case (11) in particular is understood to be an item attached to a bowl used to portion out a small amount of lacquer, or used as a palette. This appears suitable for an instance in which temporary work was conducted. Perhaps scrap paper nearby at the time of the work was used for the paper lid, or possibly scrap paper brought in from the outside by a workman was utilized.

For the fourth class there is case (9), Sairyūji temple. Large amounts of lacquer were consumed at temples, and paper lids for lacquer containers would also have been needed in large quantities; in the case of Sairyūji, the agency conducting the lacquer work used a document in its own keeping for scrap paper.

In the above manner, in order to consider the historiographic value of lacquer-permeated documents, it is necessary to consider in comprehensive fashion the nature of the lacquer work involved, along with the size, shape, and contents of the documents themselves.

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