



## Religion case, object 3. Prayer-Beads

### Date

1600-1700

### Medium

Olive stone

### Description

This piece is on display at the Southwark Heritage Centre and Walworth Library, 145-147 Walworth Road, London Se17 1FZ. Buddhist prayer beads or mala. 21 red-brown beads, each sculpted into the body of a laughing Buddha. Prayer beads are used to count the number of times that a mantra is recited whilst meditating. Mala are typically formed of 18, 27, 54, or 108 beads. Some practitioners use malas of 21 or 28 in prostrations. As this one has 21, it suggests that it was used for doing prostrations. In the museum notes there is a comment saying: In the 19th century they were sometimes known as "Chinese Rosaries" as a way of indicating their similarities with prayer beads from other cultures. This piece does not have a label written by the original collectors, Richard Cuming and his son Henry Syer Cuming, who built up their collection in the family home in Walworth, South London. Perhaps that description might have come from one of the people who collected the prayer beads.

### Dimensions

Object/Work: 410 mm