

## Room 6: Calligraphy

### Buddhist Sutras of Ancient India and Japan

#### N-8-1 *Hannya-Shingyō* (Heart Sutra) and *Dharani Mantra* in Sanskrit

These are palm-leaf manuscripts featuring Sanskrit transcriptions of the *Heart Sutra* and a mantra called the *Sonshō Dharani* (lit. “the victor’s chant”). In ancient India, palm leaves were used for Buddhist transcriptions before being replaced by paper. The round edges of dried palm leaves were cut to form rectangles, and ruled lines were added to aid the writer. These particular pieces are among the oldest extant examples of palm-leaf manuscripts.

#### N-8 Transcription of the *Hannya-Shingyō* (Heart Sutra) and *Dharani Mantra* in Sanskrit with annotations in Chinese

The palm-leaf manuscripts of the *Heart Sutra* and the *Sonshō Dharani* (lit. “the victor’s chant”) were carefully preserved at Hōryūji Temple for nearly a thousand years before being transcribed here by the monk Jōgon (1639–1702). Jōgon is known for founding Reiunji Temple in the Yushima district of Tokyo (then Edo) and was an expert on Sanskrit’s ancient Siddham script—the script used in the original manuscripts. He added explanatory notes and marks in red along with an afterword to aid in understanding the Chinese text.

#### N-14: *Butsumyō-kyō* (Sutra of the Buddhas’ Names)

The *Sutra of the Buddhas’ Names* preaches that if a person repents, their sins can be obliterated by the power of chanting the *nianfo* (*nenbutsu*) and remembering all the names of the buddhas. This version of the sutra consists of three volumes—one each for the past, present, and future—with each volume listing the names of a thousand buddhas. According to the colophon, in 1141 a monk named Ryūkei held a ceremony commemorating the one-year anniversary of the death of his mentor, Rinkō Taishi. At the ceremony, this sutra was read aloud in prayer and given as an offering to the temple afterwards.

#### N-11 Surviving Portion of the *Kengu-kyō* (Stories of the Wise and Foolish Sutra), Known as *Ōjōmu*

This fragment was sourced from a thirteen-volume transcription of the *Sutra on the Wise and Foolish*. The handwriting is more majestic and powerful than other transcriptions, and its name *Ōjōmu* (lit. “Great Shōmu”) implies that it was brushed by Emperor Shōmu. However, the text is not in his handwriting.

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this sutra translated by the Indian monk Bodhiruci (d. 535) is particularly well known. This version of the sutra consists of three volumes—one each for the past, present, and future—with each volume listing the names of a thousand buddhas. According to the colophon, in 1141 a monk named Ryūkei held a ceremony commemorating the one-year anniversary of the death of his mentor, Rinkō Taishi. At the ceremony, this sutra was read aloud in prayer and given as an offering to the temple afterwards.

## **Room 6: Textiles**

### **Exploring Various Techniques**

The current exhibition focuses on textiles made with decorative techniques other than weaving and dyeing, such as cord and braid making (*kumihimo*) and printing (*suri-e*).

#### **N-49-1: Obi Fragment, With glass and pearls**

This colorful obi was made by arranging a variety of colored threads in a gradation from light to darker colors. Multicolored glass beads and pearls were threaded through the braids in advance and then assembled together.

#### **N-50-1: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner), With arrowhead pattern**

This was part of a banner used for Buddhist rituals. Its pattern of arrowheads was made by braiding threads of different colors together.

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#### **N-319-14: Fragments of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

Only the lower edge of the middle section and four strips from the bottom section of this banner have survived.

#### **N-319-34: Fragments of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

These are fragments mainly of the lower edge of the middle section and the upper part of the lower section of a banner. Yellow banners were used in memorial services for the deceased.

#### **N-336-3a: Cloth, With painted butterflies on brown ground and inscribed with “Tōin”**

This brown silk cloth is adorned with two kinds of butterflies in ink and a pattern of clouds in between.

#### **N-336-4: Silk Gauze (*Ra*), With small circles and flowers in gold and silver printing on yellow ground**

This finely woven silk gauze (*ra*) with intersecting diagonal lines (*tasuki*) is imprinted with small six-petaled flowers in gold and silver.

#### **N-319-46: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner), With incense burner and candlestick design**

The pattern of this dark blue fragment of the lower section of a banner is referred to as an “incense burner and candlestick design,” but much remains unknown about what this pattern actually represented.

**N-319-52-2: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

Depending on the dyeing method and the number of times something is dyed with indigo, the color shows a great range of expression. This silk fragment of a banner is dyed in a light shade of indigo, which looks plain at first glance, but suggests profundity of textile dyeing.

**I-336-93: Embroidery, With dragons on striped ground**

This multicolored piece is made of plain-weave silk with colored threads, embroidered in horizontal lines in different colors with dragon motifs rendered in reverse stitching. The design – considered to be one of the oldest in Japan – shows strong similarities with those featured on metalwork from the Kofun period (circa 3rd–7th century).

**I-336-106 Embroidery, With bead roundels**

These fragments of embroidery in chain stitching originally formed the shape of a large roundel. This type of pattern originated in distant Western Asia, indicating large-scale cultural exchange in ancient times.

**I-336-108: Rug, With flowers on white ground**

These are the remains of a white Rug (made of so-called felt) decorated with floral patterns dyed in indigo, light blue, red, and light red that were pressed onto the base felt.

**N-319-115: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner), With alternating checkered pattern**

The checkered pattern of this banner is expressed with an ancient technique called *ukimon-aya*. The effect of diffused reflection of light created through simple repetition is interesting.

**N-319-117-1: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

These twill fragments of a banner are decorated with an even pattern of stripes inside squares and a zigzagging “mountain-path” design.