

## Room 6: Calligraphy

### Ancient Records of Hōryūji Temple

**N-18: *Kokon mokurokushō* (Record of Hōryūji and Biography of Prince Shōtoku)**

A monk at Hōryūji Temple, named Kenshin, compiled this record in two volumes in the first half of the 13th century. The scrolls contain legends and records pertaining to the life of Prince Shōtoku and the history of Hōryūji Temple.

**N-21: *Bettoki* (Records of the Head Administrators of Hōryūji Temple)**

This record, which consists of three volumes in total, concerns administrators posted at Hōryūji Temple. It records the names of these administrators and the events that occurred during their tenures.

**N-22: *Kagenki* (Records of the Functions and Events at Hōryūji between 1305 and 1364)**

This record was maintained by the monks at Hōryūji Temple from 1305 to 1364. It focuses on matters pertaining to building administration and annual functions.

## Room 6: Textiles

### Ancient Canopies

This gallery is currently exhibiting ancient ornamental canopies made of silk. These kinds of canopies can be traced back to the parasols of ancient India, which were used to shade nobility and later came to symbolize noble figures in general. Canopies are thus often hung above sculptures of Buddhist deities to emphasize their exalted status. The current exhibition includes canopies from the 7th and 8th centuries that were preserved until modern times at Hōryūji Temple and the Shōsōin Repository (at Tōdai-ji Temple) in Nara Prefecture.

#### **N-31: *Silk Canopy; Nara period, 8th century***

This canopy was thought to have belonged to Prince Shōtoku, an influential figure in spreading Buddhism in Japan and the founder of Hōryūji Temple. It consists of three pieces of silk dyed a vibrant red and sewn together to form a nearly square rectangle.

#### **N-319-26: *Canopy Fragments; Asuka-Nara period, 7th-8th century***

These fragments are from an ornamental valance that was hung around the perimeter of a canopy. The valance consisted of triangles sewn over a long, pleated section. The pattern reflects influence from Tang-dynasty China.

#### **I-336-30, 31: *Pendent Canopy Decoration; with scrolling grapevine arabesque design on red ground; Asuka-Nara period, 7th-8th century***

These acute triangular ornaments were created in the 7th or 8th century.

#### **I-337-51: *Pendent Canopy Decoration; with bird in dotted intersecting diagonal lines on red-brown plain-weave silk ground; Nara period, 8th century (passed down at the Shōsōin Repository)***

This pendent ornament, along with the remaining works, were passed down at the Shōsōin Repository. The ornament is U-shaped with compound-weave patterning on the border fabric. The bird pattern was created by repeatedly pressing a stamp coated in hot, melted wax onto the fabric. During the dyeing process, the waxed areas remained undyed, creating a pattern when the cloth was finished.

#### **I-337-166, 167: *Pendent Canopy Decoration; brocade with karahana floral design on yellow ground; Nara period, 8th century (passed down at the Shōsōin Repository)***

Compound-weave patterning was used to create the stylized floral motifs, called *karahana*, that appear on these fragments. Literally translated as “Tang flower,” *karahana* were derived from a stylized lotus flower in a circular arrangement and were a popular design element during China’s Tang dynasty (618–907).

**I-337-231: *Pendent Canopy Decoration; brocade with flower, bird, bead, and interlocked circle design on purple ground; Nara period, 8th century (passed down at the Shōsōin Repository)***

Birds and flowers are depicted inside a geometric pattern of overlapping circles. The compositional choice of placing birds around flowers, foreshadows a pattern that became popular during Japan's Heian period (794–1192).

**I-337-232: *Pendent Canopy Decoration; brocade with floral design on pale brown ground; Nara period, 8th century (passed down at the Shōsōin Repository)***

This textile fragment features compound-weave patterning forming two types of stylized floral motifs (*karahana*) in an alternating design. A close look at the petals reveals subtle gradations of light and dark green, attesting to the painstaking techniques used to render the pattern.