

## **Room 6: Calligraphy**

### **Buddhist Sutras of Ancient India and Japan**

#### **N-8-1 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 they were replaced by paper. The round edges of dried palm leaves were cut to form rectangles, and ruled lines were added for writing. These pieces are among the oldest extant examples of palm-leaf manuscripts.

#### **N-8 Transcription of the 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 text.

#### **N-11 Fragment of the Sutra of the Wise and Foolish (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 alternative name *Ōjōmu* (lit. “Great Shōmu”) implies that it was brushed by Emperor Shōmu, though the handwriting suggests otherwise.

#### **N-14: Sutra of the Buddhas’ Names**

The *Sutra of the Buddhas’ Names* preaches that a person may repent for their sins by 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 colophons, a monk named Ryūkei held a ceremony in 1141 commemorating the one-year anniversary of the death of his mentor, Rinkō Taishi. This sutra was read aloud in this ceremony and offered to the temple afterwards.

## **Room 6: Textiles**

### ***Ban* Ritual Banners with Inscriptions**

Stately banners called *ban* were hung in Buddhist temples and decorated the premises for rituals such as memorial services for the deceased. This exhibition includes banners with inscriptions that tell us when, and sometimes for what purpose, these banners were created.

#### **N-27-1: Fragment of *Kanton-ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

This fragment has an inscription that reads, “seventh year of the Wadō era,” which corresponds to 714. Old, dated works are very rare, making this fragment valuable in research.

#### **N-319-7: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

This banner, thought to date to the 7th century, has an inscription that reads “Ōkubo,” the name of the man who donated it to Hōryūji Temple.

#### **N-319-12: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

This banner is inscribed with a date – the twentieth day of the second month of 692 – and a text noting that it was donated in prayer.

#### **N-319-8: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

The inscription on this banner suggests that it was created to pray for a deceased man by the name of Yamabe. The inscription also tells us that the individual who donated this banner to Hōryūji Temple did so in the hope of being reunited with the deceased Yamabe. The donation was made on the sixth day of the third month of 721.

#### **N-319-9: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

Yellow banners were used specifically to pray for the souls of the dead. The

inscription on this banner tells us that it was donated to Hōryūji Temple on the twentieth day of the eleventh month of 719 by Toyoko, the daughter of a Buddhist nun by the name of Dōka. It was meant as a prayer for the repose of this nun's soul.

**N-319-10: Fragment of *Ban* (Buddhist Ritual Banner)**

The inscription on this banner reveals that the wife of a certain Yamabe donated this banner to Hōryūji Temple in 723 as a prayer for the repose of a deceased individual.