

## Room Six: Textiles

### Large Twill-Weave Ikat Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Kanton-Ban*), Ancient Metal Banner Fittings, and Bottom Sections of Banners

The current exhibition features a large twill-weave, ikat Buddhist ritual banner (*Kanton-ban*), which measures over 12 meters in length. Also on display are metal fittings for other ritual banners dating back to the Asuka (593–710) and Nara (710–794) periods.

#### **N-24: Large Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Kanton-Ban*)**

This twill-weave, ikat silk banner is over 12 meters in length and is thought to have been a special banner originally accompanied by a canopy. Most likely, it corresponds to a banner listed in an inventory of Hōryūji temple, compiled in 747, that was used in a ritual for the one-year anniversary of Empress Genmei's passing in 722. Currently, the uppermost part consists only of warp threads, although originally it featured a vibrant red ground in compound weave, with each end section decorated with gilt-bronze metal fittings and tassels. The uppermost part of the central section is an ikat textile. Round gilt-bronze fittings are also found along the border, making this one of the most ornate ritual banners of ancient Japan.

#### **N-59-1.2: Hanging Ornaments**

These metal fittings from the late 6th to 8th century are rarely exhibited. As mentioned in the description of N-24, ancient banners used to feature v-shaped metal fittings that were not only decorative, but also added weight to prevent the banner from fluttering in the wind. Unlike many other ancient Buddhist statues and gilt-bronze objects, these fittings were carefully preserved over the centuries together with the accompanying textiles and are almost entirely free of rust. Remarkably, these objects have been maintained in nearly pristine condition for over 1,300 years.

**N-319-41: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg"**

**N-319-43: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg"**

**N-319-114-1: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg" with Linked Hexagons**

**N-319-83-1: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg"**

**N-319-84-2: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg"**

**N-319-85: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg"**

**I-336-27-2: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg" with Paired Dragons and Four-Petal Flower Roundels**

**N-319-99-4: Fragment of Buddhist Ritual Banner (*Ban*): "Banner Leg"**

Buddhist ritual banners, called *ban*, were displayed at Buddhist temples. The *ban* are divided into three sections named after their resemblance to the shape of a person. The top, middle, and bottom sections are called the "head," "body," and "legs," respectively. The banner fragments currently on

display are mainly the bottom sections, or "legs," and are made of plain-weave silk.