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## TEXTILES BOUDDHIQUES JAPONAIS | JAPANESE BUDDHIST TEXTILES

HELEN LOVEDAY

This is the twelfth in a series of volumes documenting the Asian art collections of Alfred Baur (1865–1951) housed in the Baur Foundation, Museum of Far Eastern Art, in Geneva. It gathers together for the first time a group of 121 Japanese Buddhist textiles dating from the 18th and 19th centuries bought by Alfred Baur in 1927. The assemblage differs from similar collections in the West in not featuring any examples of kimonos or the *kesa* costume worn by monks, concentrating instead on a type of textile that is not very well known outside Japan, the *uchishiki*, fabrics designed to cover temple altars. In spite of their small size, these cloths provide an important insight into the religious practices of the period as well as being testaments to the extraordinary skill of the Kyoto weavers. Like the *kesa*, they were made from lengths of sumptuous silk donated to a temple by the faithful. With their elaborate polychrome decoration, highlighted by gold or silver thread, they are exemplars of the most intricate and luxurious weaving and give tangible expression to the extent of the donor's faith. Detailed notes are preceded by introductory discussions of the history of silk weaving in Japan and the techniques and decorative motifs used, complete with glossary and bibliography.

**Helen Loveday** read Chinese at Oxford University, where she was awarded a doctorate with a thesis on ancient Chinese archaeology. She is at present a curator at the Baur Foundation, Museum of Far Eastern Art and holds courses on Asian art at Geneva University.