

INTERFLOW OF ART BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

ASUKA PERIOD (538-644)

PROF. Hajime Nakamura wrote in 1961: 'As Buddhism originated in India, most of the Japanese regard India as their spiritual motherland.' It began in 538 when the first Buddhist images and *sūtras* were sent to Japan by the Korean kingdom of Paekche. These votive images had experienced influences of the great traditions of India, Central Asia, China and were given Korean modes of expression. In 552 the King of Paekche gifted a gilt bronze image of the Buddha to Emperor Kimmei of Japan, along with the words: 'This doctrine is the most excellent among all doctrines. . . it leads on to a full appreciation of the highest wisdom.' The same kingdom deputed to the Japanese Emperor monks, a nun, a Buddhist image-maker and an architect in 577. In 584 a stone image of Maitreya the Buddha-to-be arrived from Paekche. Buddhist images were made as an offering to cure the illness of Emperor Yomei in 587. More monks and a painter arrived from Paekche in 588. Painters, sculptors, monks and scholars brought with them ideograms, new ideas, and noble ideals of human relationship. Civil war followed the death of Emperor Yomei. During one of the battles Shotoku vowed to build a temple to the Caturmahārājika, if he won. Empress Suiko succeeded in 593 and Shotoku was appointed Regent. He gave lectures at the palace on the three classics of Buddhism: *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa*, *Mālādevī-simhanāda-sūtra*, and *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*. In 597, Prince Asa of Paekche came to Japan as a master-painter. In 604, Shotoku promulgated the Seventeen-Article Constitution wherein the Triratna (Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha) were a fundamental factor, for the well-being of all beings. Buddhism became the grassroots of good government and high morality. Tori Busshi was the first sculptor of Japan. In 606 he set up a great Buddha and an embroidery at the Gangoji temple. Empress Suiko was highly pleased and decorated the sculptor.

Prince Shotoku spread the splendour of Buddhism in the Land of the Rising Sun by constructing several Buddhist monasteries, among which the Horyuji, 'The Temple for the Flourishing of Dharma' (Dharma-varadhana-vihāra) near the

city of Nara, is the most ancient wooden building in the world. Its mural paintings were modelled after those found in the monastic universities of India. Its great Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to which the centuries have given a rich dark patina evince a particular purity of line, surface and decoration, and a desire to see humanity, flesh and blood, fused in most abstract of deities. The Horyuji Monastery has yielded one of the most ancient Sanskrit manuscripts of the Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī in the Gupta script. Avenues, trees, play of the curves of the roofs, roofs like a great heron's wings resting among trees, lend it an impression of calm and serenity, embodying and reflecting a unity of the history of Asia. Horyuji is a unique repository of the earliest Buddhist art of Japan, including monumental bronzes, shrines painted in lacquer, sculptures and paintings that evince older continental traditions. A bronze statue of Bhaiṣajyaguru was consecrated at Horyuji in 607, which had been vowed several years earlier to cure the illness of Emperor Yomei. In the same year, a scholar was sent to China to study Chinese culture.

To pursue the *sūtras* in seclusion, Prince Shotoku was attracted by the Ikaruga hamlets far away from the Imperial capital. Here he started the construction of his palace and the Horyuji temple, whose sheer splendour captured the hearts of all men. The multiple buildings of the austere dormitories for the monks, the *kondo* or golden hall, *kodo* or *sūtra* auditorium, with their woodwork painted bright cinnabar red, the roof tiles scintillating in the sunlight, gilded surfaces glittering against the sky, wind-bells hanging from the eaves singing melodiously as swung by gentle breeze, the nine golden rings atop the towering pagoda, the buildings vast in scale: all evoked wonder and awe. Away from the din and turbulence of everyday life, confronted by profound beauty a devotee could visualize the unstained purity of the human spirit. The octagonal Yumedono or 'Dream Hall' today commemorates the site where Prince Shotoku once lived. The roof ornament in gilded bronze is the *cintāmaṇi* jewel with beams of light radiating in all directions, resting on a lotus flower and a vase (*kalaśa*) covered with a canopy. It symbolizes this sacred hall as a centrum whence radiates the divine force of Dharma. In the hall stands an image of Avalokiteśvara modelled after Prince Shotoku, which was given his body length. In his hands rests the flaming *cintāmaṇi*, the emblem of the Bodhisattva's power of liberation. In 623 Tori Busshi's Triad of Śākyamuni, accompanied by two Bodhisattvas, was enshrined in the Horyuji so that Prince Shotoku might reach the 'Land of Bliss'.

The *kondo* or golden hall of the Horyuji is adorned with murals whose style has close affinities to that of India. Its special importance lies in reflecting the

artistic achievements of seventh century India. In the years 643-646, 648-649, and 657-661 the entourage of the Chinese envoy Wang Hsuan-ts'e copied the frescoes on the walls of monasteries in India. Later on these paintings were compiled in 40 fascicules. Some of them were taken to Japan by the Korean artist Honjitsu, and they are said to have been the models for Horyuji murals.

The earliest preserved painting of the first half of the seventh century is the Tamamushi Shrine which has scenes of the worship of the sacred relics of the Buddha, sacrifice for a stanza, sacrifice to a hungry tigress, Mount Sumeru: self-sacrificing deeds of the Bodhisattvas earned them the merits of their karma to Buddhahood. The root texts are the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* and *Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra*. Buddhism, a religion of peace and moral grandeur, contributed to far-reaching political, social and spiritual advance. Its ascendance was a victory of novelty over tradition whose grass-root customs, popular cults, practices and deities were merged into the new Dharma. It was a challenge to the latent intellectual capabilities of Japan, an opportunity for potential literacy and an impressive asset to cultural outflow.

Statues of the Guardian Kings of the Four Directions (Caturmahārājika) stand on the main altar of the Horyuji. The figure of Virūpākṣa is inscribed with the name of the sculptor Yamaguchi no Okuchi who was commissioned to carve an image in 650. These figures are distinctive in style in the schematic design of the garments, a tendency to natural proportions, and free hanging draperies.

A beautiful wooden sculpture of Avalokiteśvara at the Horyuji temple dated to about 660 shows a development in modelling.

The paintings of those reborn in paradise, on the base of the Tachibana Shrine, are the most Indian of any in Japan. They present a seductive charm with their freer postures, expressive faces, and languid eyes.

Painter Motozane made a copy of the Buddha's Footprints while in China. These had been brought to China from India by Wang Hsuan-ts'e. A stone at the Yakushiji shows this Buddha-pāda.

Remarkable life-size clay sculptures of the Twelve Yakṣa Generals of Bhaiṣajyaguru in Shin Yakushiji are the culmination of the art of the Nara period. A gilt bronze head of Bhaiṣajyaguru, originally the main image of Yamada-dera is 98.3 cm, dated to 685, is now in the Kofukuji at Nara. It must have been a monumental image of majestic proportions.

The Hasedera plaque of 686 representing Śākyamuni and Prabhūtaratna Buddhas follows the T'ang style. It pictures the 15th chapter of the *Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-sūtra*'s conception of the eternity of Dharma and of the infiniteness of the Buddha. The middle panel has the manifestation and teaching on Mount Gṛdhrakūṭa.

Sugiyama speaks of Gupta influence on the two Bodhisattvas, Sūryaprabha and Candraprabha, flanking Bhaiṣajyaguru in the triad at Yakushiji monastery. He opines that the contrapposto seen in these statues goes back to the images of the Gupta period carved in India. In 697 the monumental gilt bronze statue of Bhaiṣajyaguru, 255 cm high, was enshrined in the Golden Hall of the Yakushiji, Nara. It is the basic *yoroku* size of sculpture, one of the most popular sizes, two and a half metres for seated figures and twice that for standing ones. They represent the unification of idealization and realism in sculpture. The faces of all the three statues are of wonderful modelling, though the original gilding has peeled off. The triad were to cure the pains of illness and to relieve emotional pressures. The main image is a spiritual rendering of the human form as well as an idealized expression.

The Lady Tachibana shrine stands on the altar of the Horyuji, and it is generally dated to 710. It represents the culmination of the bronze technique. The paintings on the sides of this shrine 'seem more Indian than either Japanese or Chinese' (Robert Treat Paine).

Taima-dera was founded late in the seventh century at the foot of Mt. Nijo with a statue of Maitreya as the main image. The present clay figure of Maitreya and the dry-lacquer figures of the four Lokapālas date from around 710. The axis of the temple was changed to accommodate a large *maṇḍala* as the main image. The Taima Maṇḍala is based on the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra*. It represents, for instance, the five *dhāraṇās* of the *Gheraṇḍa-saṃhitā* and other texts on Yoga. The *pārthivī dhāraṇā*, *āmbhasī dh.*, *āgneyī dh.*, *vāyavi dh.*, and *ākāśī dh.* are concentrations on the five elements.

Around 711 new materials and techniques were introduced from China: the technique of using a wooden armature and making the statue with wet clay. The clay permitted the *bussshi* 'Buddhist sculptors' to produce finely modelled forms. The aesthetic intuition and mastery of the materials resulted in the perfection of undulations in the drapery folds, visible muscular structure, more powerful expression and realistic forms. This wave of stucco sculpture had Indian origins. The stucco techniques of India reached oasis temples of Central Asia, Tun-huang, Maichishan, and metropolitan cities in China, and finally Japan in the eighth century.

NARA OR TEMPYO PERIOD (711-781)

In 710 the capital was shifted to Nara which was laid out with broad streets, palaces and temples on the pattern of Ch'ang-an, the capital of China. This period is called Nara after the city or Tempyo after the famous regnal period (729-48) in which the Daibutsu was made.

The earliest clay images are the four groups of figures of 711 in the pagoda of Horyuji. They illustrate the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha on the north, sacred relics on the west, paradise of Maitreya on the south, and the discourse of Vimalakīrti and Mañjuśrī on the east. The statues of the Two Guardians in the central gate were also sculpted in 711. The polychrome clay image of the *nirvāṇa* of the Buddha shows his physician Jivaka. Kneeling in front, he took the Buddha's pulse and announced his passing away. In these scenes the imagery has descended from the abstract to the real.

In Japan, Sarasvatī (Benten or Benzaiten in Japanese) figures along with Lakṣmī in the eighth century. In the annals of the Todaiji monastery it is said that the first ceremony of *Kichijo-gekka* celebrating the worship of Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī was held for the first time in the year 722. This may well be the year in which the two images were first consecrated. Ever since, the *Kichijo-gekka* has been an annual celebration at the Todaiji at Nara. The Todaiji image of Sarasvatī belongs to the 'serene' (*śānta*) type in contrast to the 'violent' (*krodha*) manifestations of divinities. The *śānta* aspect is reflected in the modelling of the graceful narrow eyes and placid lips. This Sarasvatī image originally had eight arms, out of which five arms survive, with none of the original attributes. Her eight hands once held the bow, arrow, sword, trident, axe, *vajra*, *cakra* and noose. The image was a casualty of the catastrophic fire that broke out in 954. Both the images were reduced to whitish clay colour, revealing that they were of unbaked clay. The height of Sarasvatī is six and a half feet.

Dry lacquer statues of the Eight Classes of Beings from the middle Nara period in the hall of Kofukuji were done with sensitivity. The eight were: deva, nāga, yakṣa, gandharva, asura, garuḍa, kinnara and mahoraga. They were for the divine protection of the State. The five-storeyed pagoda was completed by 730, and the images for the West Golden Hall were begun in 734. Images of Śākyamuni flanked by Mañjuśrī and Sāmantabhadra, the aforesaid Eight Classes, the statues of Brahmā and Indra, and several others formed an impressive array in the hall.

The Hokkedo was put up by 733 for priest Roben. It was sanctified by Amoghapaśa Lokeśvara, Brahmā and Indra, the Four Lokapālas, and the Two Door-guardians or Nio. In 743 a vegetarian feast was held at the temple for reverence to the *Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra*. The sculptures of Brahmā and Indra show a harmony between spiritual peace and physical form.

Tempyo 'Peace under Heaven' was meant to be an era of peace, but political conditions were not stable. Hirotsugu led an uprising against the central government. The *Avatamsaka-sūtra* was invoked to suppress the rebellion.

Twenty days after the recitation of the Avatamsaka, Hirotsugu was captured and executed.

In 740 Emperor Shomu saw a colossal Rocana at Chishikiji near modern Osaka. He said 'we have the most sincere desire to create one ourselves' (as recorded in the Shoku Nihongi Annals).

Floating in a sea of verdant woods is the golden ornament of the imposing roof of the Daibutsu-den 'Hall of the Great Buddha' of the Todaiji monastery. Daibutsu-den enshrines the *virāt rūpa* of Rocana, in the form of a gigantic statue, in the national temple of eighth century Japan. Emperor Shomu had vowed to raise this statue to a height of 48 feet to symbolize the power of the profane and the profound. Twelve years and immense materials were spent in casting the Daibutsu. On 9 April 722 it was consecrated in a sumptuous ceremony, which was presided over by Bodhisena, the first historic Indian to have visited Japan. He was a brahmin of the Bhāradvāja *gotra*. Inspired by Mañjuśrī, he went to China to Wu-tai shan mountains sacred to Mañjuśrī. On Imperial invitation, he arrived in Japan in A. D. 736 where he was warmly welcomed. The people knew him as the Baramon (Brahmin) Archbishop. On 25 February 760 he entered in eternal *samādhi* and his disciple Shuei (*Taisho Shinshū Daizokyo* 51: 987a) wrote: 'On his death we felt as though the main prop of the house were broken and we deplored we could hear his virtuous voice no more.... His wisdom, vast as the ocean, always pours over us without ever being dried up.' In this Todaiji temple consecrated by the Brahmin Archbishop, we can view an expressive range of Nara sculptures of Brahmā, Indra, Four Lokapālas, Sūrya, Candra, Sarasvatī and Śrīlakṣmī which have escaped the ravages of fire. In front of the Great Buddha Hall stands the 8th century octagonal bronze lantern adorned with musicians of heaven on its grilled openwork amid florid array of cloud patterns and swirling drapery. The world's largest statue in the world's largest wooden building was intended to express a spirit of devotion in all its grandeur and magnificence and at the same time to give concrete embodiment to national solidarity of all classes of the population. It was a major step towards the democratization of Dharma.

To this day the Todaiji and other monasteries and museums of Japan have masks which were used in the Bugaku or Gagaku dance and music which was introduced to Japan by Bodhisena. There are the masks of Baramon (Brahmin), Garuḍa, Sagara nāgarāja, Yakṣa, Indra, Brahmā, Sūrya, Kubera, Agni, Vasiṣṭha ṛṣi, Īśvara, Lakṣmī and others, used in dances performed in temples and in the Imperial Palace at banquets. These forms have been preserved as ceremonial dances for national celebrations. Some of the musical pieces pertain to Bairo or

Bhairava. I had the pleasure of listening to Japanese sacral music at Ann Arbor, Michigan (USA) and was charmed by the depth of its perceptivity.

A few yards from Yakushiji is the Toshodaiji monastery, where the aura of Classical times lingers to this day. It was built for the Chinese Bhikṣu Ganjin who had been invited to Japan in 753 to strengthen monastic discipline in the opulent monasteries of Nara. He succeeded in giving birth to forces which were to correct laxities and extravagances. The severity, calm and purity of Ganjin's character is reflected in his realistic statue. The array of statues in the kondo of this temple expresses the power and grace of the pantheon, with Rocana seated in the centre, the origin of all in the cosmos. The wooden figures of Brahmā, Indra and the Four Lokapālas make an imposing phalanx of statues. When I visited the *stūpa* of Ganjin in September 1970, alongwith Swami Omanand Sarasvati, at the door stood a lady who later disclosed herself as Mrs. Fusano Okada, the wife of a textile magnate. While we circumambulated the *stūpa* and pondered over the flown centuries, Mrs. Okada gazed at us, absorbed in a reverie. As we came out of the door, we presented her a sandal incense-stick. Prof. Chikyo Yamamoto interpreted her innermost thoughts: 'She is so happy to see an Indian priest. It is in ten thousand years that one may have this pious privilege.' So deeply was she moved that she composed a poem on the spot. Memories of eighth century Nara became alive in a sacral realism of the present.

The largest dry-lacquer statue of the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, 18 feet high, is in the Toshodaiji which was founded in 759, and where Ganjin lived till his *nirvāṇa* in 763. Its majestic proportions exuding power, the thousand arms remind of the *Puruṣa-sūkta* of the *Ṛg-Veda*.

The *vīṇā* under its Japanese form *biwa* is an integral characteristic of the Japanese Sarasvatī. The most ancient *biwa* known today is preserved in the Shosoin Repository, dating to 757 A. D.

The Shin Yakushiji houses the clay statues of the twelve Yakṣa-mahāsenāpatis of Bhaiṣajyaguru. They have been dated to 760. Once, when the renowned photographer Mr. Ogawa shone a spotlight on the head of one of the statues, it caused the violent, wrathful face to appear as if it were floating up out of the darkness. The light emphasized the wide open eyes, the flaring nostrils, the tensed tendons of the face, a violent expression, and an iron will to root out sin. The *manyu-sūkta* of the *Ṛg-Veda* came alive in it.

Sculpting projects continued at the Horyuji till the late eighth century. The clay statues of Brahmā, Indra, Four Lokapālas were housed in the refectory, and belong to the 760s. They evince the beautiful touch of the artist and are

exquisitely rendered. Refinement of modelling and beauty of their facial expressions remind of T'ang Buddhist sculptures.

The Saidaiji monastery was constructed to house the Four Lokapālas in fulfilment of a vow of Empress Shotoku taken in 764. Four bronze statues were commissioned to quash the rebellion of Nakamaro Fujiwara, based on the *Suvarṇa-prabhāsa-sūtra* which teaches that the Four Kings favour a ruler who governs the nation properly. None of these statues remains today, except the demons beneath their feet. Only a wood-core dry lacquer polychrome statue of Lakṣmī, datable to about 790, exists by coincidence.

In 770 Empress Shotoku had one million mini-pagodas made, each with a Buddhist *dhāraṇī* wood-printed on paper. The technique of wood-block printing must have come from China. Wang Hsuan-ts'e had brought stamped pictures from India in 660.

Empress Shotoku ordered in 767 that the worship of Lakṣmī be held in all the provincial temples (*kokubunji*) to 'bring peace, timely rains, good crops and happiness to the people'. The first special service was held at Yakushiji in 770. The painting used in this service has survived. It is painted in varied colours on hemp, with complicated lines, a sensitive rendering of transparent gauze garments, and it emphasizes feminine beauty.

EARLY HEIAN OR JOGAN PERIOD (782-897)

The Jingoji temple in Kyoto has many sculptures in Jogan style. It was founded around 800 and its main image of Bhaiṣajyaguru was of heavy proportions.

In 804 Kobo Daishi sailed to China in quest of the 'ornamental heart of mystery' of Esoteric Buddhism, Shingon or Mantrayāna. It was the new denomination which had gained vogue in the Imperial metropolis of T'ang China which was the golden epoch of ever-new glory on the secular and spiritual planes. Indian teachers, at the Imperial court and in monasteries, lent resplendence to the times. Their sonorous recitation of *mantras* in Sanskrit accompanying gorgeous tāntric rites emanating from the philosophical subtleties of Mantrayāna was the new dimension that had attracted the young Kobo Daishi (then known as Kukai) to Ch'ang-an the cultural centre of Asia. It was here that Kobo Daishi met his master Hui-kuo (746-805), the patriarch of Esoteric Buddhism in China. Hui-kuo was a disciple of Amoghavajra (Chin. Pu-k'ung, 705-774) who had inherited the Dharma from Vajrabodhi (d. 741). Master Hui-kuo was highly esteemed as the successor to Amoghavajra.

When Kobo Daishi called on his guru-to-be, Hui-kuo was full of joy and assurance that the great Mantrayāna had a glorious future. This dramatic

encounter is narrated by Kobo Daishi himself: 'I called on the abbot in the company of five or six monks from the Hsi-ming Temple. As soon as he saw me he smiled with pleasure and joyfully said, "I knew that you would come; I have waited for such a long time. What pleasure it gives me to look upon you today at last. My life is drawing to an end, and until you came there was no one to whom I could transmit the teachings. Go without delay to the altar of *abhiṣeka* with incense and a flower." I returned to the temple where I had been staying and got the things which were necessary for the ceremony. It was early in the sixth month then that I entered the altar of *abhiṣeka* for primary initiation.'

Kobo Daishi mastered all that Hui-kuo had to offer, as one would 'pour water from one jar into another'. The final instructions of Hui-kuo to Kobo Daishi were: 'Now my existence on earth approaches its term, and I cannot long remain. I urge you, therefore, to take the maṇḍalas of both realms and the hundred volumes of the teachings of the Diamond Vehicle, together with the ritual implements and these objects which were left to me by my master. Return to your country and propagate the teachings there. When you first arrived, I feared I did not have enough time left to teach you everything, but now I have completed teaching you, and the work of copying the *sūtras* and making the images has also been finished. Hasten back to your country, offer these things to the court, and spread the teachings throughout your country, to increase the happiness of the people.'

Hui-kuo had the Twin Maṇḍalas drawn for him by the famous painter Li-chen assisted by more than ten other artists. They were polychrome. They found full efflorescence and fruition in their new milieu. Though the original paintings of the maṇḍalas brought by Kobo Daishi are now lost, but from them were painted the Takao Maṇḍalas in 824 in gold and silver lines on purple damask silk in polychrome. These are now preserved at the Jingoji monastery.

Kobo Daishi studied Sanskrit under the Indian teachers Prajñātāra and Muniśrī. He learnt the calligraphy of *bījas* and *mantras* which are still an integral part of Shingon.

Versed in the new learning, endowed with treasures of books, holy images, ritual implements, Kobo Daishi reached his country in the tenth month of 806. This was the beginning of a new age in Japan. Kobo Daishi towers over the culture of his land. Alphabet, architecture, bridge-building, painting, democratization of education, poetics and profound philosophical thought: all bear the impress of his deep insights and intimate commitment to the human condition. The life of Kobo Daishi is pervaded with Sanskrit, from the Sanskrit script to its multi-dimensional expressions. He wrote commentaries on Sanskrit

bījas or symbolic syllables, for example, *Unji-gi* 'Signification of *hūm*'. The Sanskrit alphabet symbolized the profound to Kobo Daishi. He elaborates on it in his *Hizo hoyaku* 'The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury':

[I take refuge] in the Silent One (Mahā Vairocana) who is
 KA [*kārya*], CA [*cyuti*], TA [*tanka*]
 TA [*tathathā*], PA [*paramārtha-satya*], and YA [*yāna*].

Here the alphabet is the dharma-maṇḍala, evolving (KA), involving (CA), majestic (ṬA), Suchness (ṬA), the Ultimate Truth (PA), and the absolute Vehicle (YA) on which all are being carried.

In the Twin Maṇḍalas is mirrored the realm of Shingon or Mantrayāna infused with Hindu deities. It is a complex empyrean populated with gods and *ṛṣis*, spirits and furies, the inexhaustible beauties, potentialities, activities and mysteries of the world transformed into celestial personages. Here is the deep link of *mantra* with the arts: by sacred gestures (*mudrā*), wealth of symbolism, liturgy, music, incense and song we return to art. Hundreds of deities of Indian origin are represented in the Twin Maṇḍalas of Japan, representing abstractions of thought and recondite *mikkyo* or esoteric doctrine around Vairocana 'the Great Light'. This great art is *koreru ongaku* or 'frozen music' of manifest forms, awaiting one who has attained the summit, the *himitsu shogon shin* or the 'Ornate Heart of Mystery'. They inspire a sense of hidden meaning into the onlooker. Kobo Daishi has said, 'People can be made to feel truth by means of forms and colours.'

The outermost quarter of the Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala shows several Hindu deities, for example, Gaṇapati or Vināyaka. The Japanese names of Gaṇapati are Binayaka, Shoden and Kangiten. Binayaka is the most usual appellation in the *Hizoki*. Kangiten (Nandikeśvara) denotes the god of happiness, prosperity, and well-being. Shoden can be rendered into Sanskrit as Āryadeva. Besides, specific manifestations have individual names. There is a lovely illustration of this Gaṇapati with an axe (Fig.1) and a radish in a 9th century scroll, kept in the Daigoji monastery at Kyoto, drawn in 821 A. D.



Fig.1
 Gaṇapati with an axe

Gaṇapati is still worshipped in Japan. At the Jingoji monastery of Takao a special temple is consecrated to the esoteric Twin Gaṇapati and every year a worship is held in his honour. In other Mantrayānic monasteries too special shrines are dedicated to Gaṇapati. Homes in Koyasan are hallowed by Gaṇapati. On the last day of my stay at Koyasan, I sat on a bench for the bus to the railway station. Curiosity took me inside the shop and there was a graceful image of a standing Gaṇapati in white wood. My repeated entreaties to the shop-owner to give it to me only evoked smiles and polite bowings. Alas for my vain desire! The overflowing bounty of the grace of Gaṇapati still glimmers in the adoring hearts of Japan.

The Trimūrti of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara appears in the outer quarter of the Taizokai or Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala. Brahmā with four faces (Jap. Bonten) (Fig. 2), Nārāyaṇa (Jap. Naraen-den) on a Garuḍa (Fig. 3), Umā and Maheśvara (Jap. Umā-hi and Daijizai-ten) each of them riding on a separate bull (Fig. 4) in the drawings of Ken-i (A.D. 1030) are the purity of line and the rhythm of grace. How very Japanese they are, in their bold and charming strokes! Umā has her hair tied back like a daughter of Japan, with the perfume of the earth still lingering about her.

Sarasvatī or Benzaiten appears with a *vīṇā* or *biwa* (Fig. 5), sprung from the very soil of Japan. The Japanese representations of the Gods express a deep respect for the dignity of the human form, a love of purity and a vivid feeling for life. According to a Japanese text: 'Sarasvatī is the compassionate Mother of all sentient beings. Her virtuous merits pervade the three thousand worlds. She bestows treasures. She is wondrous wisdom. She grants longevity and happiness. As she presides over music and eloquence, she is also called "Beautiful-Sound Devi". As she is a goddess of profit, virtues and knowledge she is also known as *Guṇa-devī*. She grants desires to those who pray for treasures or profits, eloquence or music, dexterity or wisdom.'

In Japanese paintings and woodcuts we find the representation of several *brāhmaṇa* sages, for example, Vasiṣṭha, Aṅgiras, Gautama, Atri, Bhṛṅgu. Here are line-drawings of Vasiṣṭha (Fig. 6), Aṅgiras (Fig. 7) and Atri (Fig. 8) with their consorts from the Taizokai maṇḍala of A. D. 806.

After Kobo Daishi had established the monastery at Koyasan, in A. D. 823 he was given control of the Kyo-o-gokoku-ji 'Temple for the Protection of the Country through the Noble Dharma', popularly termed Toji or Eastern Temple. This was the establishment of Mantrayāna in the capital of Japan itself. The 21 statues in the lecture hall at Toji arranged in a maṇḍala paradigm are an impressive monument to a ceremony that was performed in the 9th century for



Fig. 2
Brahmā with four faces



Fig. 3
Nārāyaṇa on Garuḍa



Fig. 4
Umā and Maheśvara, each of them riding on a separate bull



Fig. 5
Sarasvatī with a Viṇā

the well-being of the country. Among them are the imposing statues of Brahmā, (Plate 1) Skanda Kārttikeya, Sarasvatī and others, besides deities of ferocious appearance whose profound and mysterious sculptures radiate irresistible power. This monastery has preserved the oldest Gyodo masks employed in ceremonial dances. To name a few; the masks for Brahmā, Indra, Sūrya, Kubera, Agni, Vasiṣṭha and Īśvara.



Fig. 6
Vasistha (Jap. Basu-sen)



Fig.7
Angiras and consort



Fig. 8
Atri and consort

Till recent times, Koyasan forbade the presence of women, while Muroji welcomed them and thus was destined to be a more popular place for pilgrimage, known as the 'Koya for women'. There is a large image of Maitreya Buddha on the face of the cliff on the road which leads to this temple. While it reminds us of its prototypes at Bamiyan, it is a delicate line engraving on the cliff. The central image of Śākyamuni at Muroji is flanked by Bhaiṣajyaguru and Kṣitigarbha on the left and by Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara to the right. The Muroji temple was famous

for the maṇḍala of Indra as the lord of rainfall, painted on a wooden wall at the back of the main sanctum. On numerous occasions prayers have been offered for rain during serious droughts. In A. D. 824 Japan's most accomplished rain-maker Kobo Daishi performed *pūjā* for rain which was a resounding success. The holy lake at Muroji is shaped like the Siddham-nagari letter *vaṃ*

representing Vairocana, the prime principle of the universe: for crossing over from *samsāra* into *nirvāna*.

The Jūni-ten 'Twelve Devas' were featured on sets of paintings or sculptures, as well as in the Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala. They govern the ten points of the compass (E, S, W, N, NE, SE, SW, NW, zenith and nadir) and the two luminaries Sun and Moon. They are Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Īśāna, Brahmā, Pṛthivī, Sūrya and Candra. There is a beautiful set of the Twelve Devas from the Saidaiji Temple at Nara.

Fudo Myoo or Acala Vidyārāja is the main deity of Japanese *homa* (*goma*). He is surrounded by flames and is a manifestation of the power of Vairocana. He is very popular in Japan. The Red Acala of Myooin of Koyasan sits on a rock with a background of flames, indignation glares from his eyes to terrify away all evil. His esoteric name Vajrānala reminds of the epithet of the cosmic form of Lord Kṛṣṇa *vajrānalārka-dyutim aprameyam* in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

HEIAN 2, FUJIWARA PERIOD (898-1184)

The Fujiwara family, whose regency continued from the ninth century up to the twelfth, were prolific builders of temples. The greatest builder among them was Michinaga. In 1019 he began the construction of a wide hall to enshrine nine large images of Amitābha and named it Muryoju-in which was focused on the Sukhāvati doctrines of meditation on Amitāyus. In 1022 the main Golden Hall and the Hall of Five Vidyārājas (Godaido) were completed and the entire monastery was named Hojoji. In 1030 his daughter Shoshi (988-1074) built a sub-temple in Hojoji. In its meditation hall she enshrined Amitābha with four acolyte Bodhisattvas: Avalokiteśvara, Mahāsthānaprāpta, Kṣitigarbha and Nāgārjuna. The main image of its Golden Hall was a ten-metre statue of Mahavairocana, flanked by Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru, Mañjuśrī, Maitreya, Brahmā, Indra, and the four Lokapālas. The Hojoji became the supreme monument of the Fujiwara regents, and exerted tremendous influence on the architecture, statues and paintings of later times. The genius of the sculptor Jocho at the Hojoji was so distinguished that he was honoured with a Buddhist title. In his sculpture the tranquillity of the Absolute harmonizes with the compassion (*karuṇā*) for the finite.

The major temple constructed under the influence of the style of Hojoji was the Byodo-in. In 1052 Yorimichi dedicated the image of Vairocana as the principal object of worship. The next year, he dedicated the Amitābha Hall, now called Phoenix Hall (Jap. Hoodo), which recreated the Pure Land of Amitābha in tangible form. The central image has the rich glow of gold, its beautiful lotus

seat retains its brilliant original colouring, and on the pedestal is a disk inscribed with Sanskrit *mantras* in the Siddham form of the Nagari script. The pillars, bracketing, ceiling and other woodwork is decorated in appealing coloured designs. The upper part of the walls have fifty-two adoring Bodhisattvas in wood, floating on clouds.

Kiyohira from a branch of the Fujiwara family dedicated the Chusonji in 1126 to ensure the peace and prosperity of the nation and to lead the souls of victims of the earlier Nine Years' and Later Three Years' Wars to the Sukhāvati Pure Land. The main image was of Śākyamuni, besides a *sūtra* repository which had the complete *Tripitaka* written in gold and silver on indigo paper. Its bronze bell hung in the bell house weighed 300 kilograms. Chusonji was to rival the glories of the capital Kyoto. The white colour Ekākṣara Cakravartin has a charm of features in its life-like realism.

In 1013 Genshin commissioned the painting of a 'Maṇḍala of Welcome to Amitābha's Paradise of Sukhāvati,' known for short as *Raigo* in Japanese. It is the descent of Amitābha, Bodhisattvas and monks from paradise to welcome dying supplicants. (Plates 2, 3) It was inspired by Genshin's reading of *sūtras*, millions of recitations, copying *sūtras*, and making Buddhist images. The Raigo paintings on the door of the Phoenix Hall are of the Genshin school and vividly executed. The Phoenix Hall paintings served as models for subsequent Raigo depictions. Yamagoshi Raigo or paintings of an outsized Amitābha encouraging the supplicants from beyond the Western mountains became a preference for their rapid motion. Popularity of the Raigo pictures led to Raigo representations in wood. In 1045, Prince Atsuakira (d. 1051) enshrined Raigo statues.

Shokai, a monk who practised lotus meditation at the Kofukuji, made the Shokai maṇḍala in 989. It was 'woven from lotus fibres' indicating that it was a tapestry. Tradition says that later on lotus flowers appeared from the fibres and they were copied as an addition to the outer border. This maṇḍala is based on the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra*. Against a background of temples, lotus pond, is a dominant Amitābha with Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthānaprāpta. On the left-hand border are the sixteen ways to meditate as preached by Buddha to Vaidehī the mother of Ajātaśatru.

Japan has preserved the tradition of model books for accuracy of iconography in the icon-rich theogony of Mantrayāna or Shingon. The earliest model book is the Gobushingan which was drawn under the personal supervision of Śubhākarasimha who was in China from 716-735 till his death at the age of 99 years. This has Sanskrit captions, with drawing indications in Chinese. Kakugen, who lived 1000-1065, has left drawings of *homa-kunḍas*.

The Indian monk Sūryayaśas (1017-1073) wrote the *mantras* of deities in Sanskrit and drew illustrations of 428 *mudrās*. One of the outstanding iconographers of Japan is Shinkaku (1117-80) who wrote his *Besson-zakki* in 57 scrolls with text and over 300 illustrations. Shocho (1205-1281) wrote a vast compendium *Asabasho* in which ritual and iconography (in colour) are treated at length, running into 228 scrolls. Dhyānabhadra the Indian teacher has left 291 illustrations of demons causing illnesses, with Sanskrit *mantras* to ward them off. From the 12th century, by the inspiration of Emperor Shirakawa and his guru Kakuyū, commenced an un-interrupted tradition of iconographic model books.

KAMAKURA PERIOD (1185-1332)

The Kamakura period was a crucial turning point in the history of Japan. In the long bloody war of 1180-85 Yoritomo (1147-99) defeated his rivals and established the capital of his military government (*bakufu*) at Kamakura away from Kyoto. In this turmoil, an innovative style of Buddhist sculpture arose under the brilliant sculptor Unkei (died 1223). He was born in a *busshi* family, who had produced statuary for Buddhist monasteries for generations of master and disciple. The burning of the Kofukuji and Todaiji monasteries by the Taira chieftain in 1180 aroused the antipathy of the nation as these two temples had been the pride of Japan since the eighth century. This tragedy came as a shock to Kokei, and his son Unkei, and to other Nara *busshi*. Unkei had the *Lotus Sūtra* transcribed at this time to petition Buddha's grace. Seven of the eight scrolls of this *Lotus Sūtra* commissioned by Unkei have survived. The shafts of the scrolls were made from the wood of the charred pillars of the Todaiji. Unkei was the chief sculptor at the Jorakuji monastery and also worked at Kofukuji. Unkei was living with and working for battle-scarred warriors in a simple and virile atmosphere. Overflowing with vitality, he was shaping a stirring and heroic style. He was endowed with a richly creative spirit and he fast created a sculpture appropriate to the age of warriors. His sculptures of the patriarchs of the Hosso sect or *cittamātratā* sect were based on the *Vijñānavāda* of Maitreya, Asaṅga, Vasubandhu and Dharmapāla. The statue of Maitreya with lacquer and gold leaf over wood at the Kofukuji displays the developed style of Unkei, so perfectly formed that we can sense that he had penetrated to the very depths of his art. The statues of Vasubandhu (Jap. Seishin) and Asaṅga (Jap. Muchaku) completed in 1208 at the northern circular hall of the Kofukuji are strikingly imaginative portraits. As we gaze at them, we want to cry: here at last is real sculpture. They are the greatest of his masterpieces. These two great masters of Buddhist thought stand life-size, as if alive, impressive in the

simplicity of their handling, in the natural hang of the garments, and their eyes with a realistic sparkle.

In 1191 Shoga drew the paintings of the Twelve Gods at the Toji monastery. The twelve are: Indra, Agni, Yama, Nairṭi, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Kubera, Īsāna, Brahmā, Pṛthivī, Sūrya, and Candra. (Plate 4) They are standing figures in profile. They are drawn with a fluency of line which buckles and fluctuates from broad to thin. They reflect a new type of iconography and stylistic changes.

Kaikei was a fellow apprentice with Unkei and he learnt the techniques of carving Buddhist statues from Kokei. People of his time hailed him as 'a man with almost no equal'. Kaikei and Unkei were competing in speed and skill. He was always looking for new horizons. During his youth, his signature was unusual in using the Sanskrit character *om*, pronounced *an* in Japanese. His signature read: 'The *kosho* (skilled artist) Kaikei of the Buddhist name An (written in Siddham script) Amida Butsu' or *om Amitābha Buddha*. His style came to be called the Annami style ('*om namah*' style). It was unique and overflowed with intellectual beauty and realism. This was his individual style, distinct from the Kei school. One of his early works is the Maitreya at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, sculpted in 1189. It is a wooden statue completely covered with gold, charming in its modulations in the draperies and its mundane directness of the Kamakura period. His style reached its perfection in the painted wood statue of Kṣitigarbha in the Todaiji, Nara. The brilliant carving of the robes and the expression on the face combines dignity with grace. The celebrated statues of the Two Guardians (Nio) of the Southern Main Gate of the Todaiji were carved in 1203 by Kaikei and Unkei. Rising to an imposing nine metres they are heroic statues. He carved the statues of the Ten Great Disciples of the Buddha (Jap. Jū Daideshi) at the Daiho-onji in Kyoto. They are full of charming daintiness, a beauty with which any one could feel intimate. Kaikei and Unkei are the most representative of those who created the sculpture of the Kamakura period.

The zenith of the Unkei-style sculpture found in the Kamakura region is the Kamakura Daibutsu, the colossal bronze image of Amitābha, 11.5 metres high. Its casting was begun in 1252 under the sponsorship of monk Joko. He raised funds among the people instead of donation by a rich potentate. The robes moulded in thick, deep folds create a vivid impression of flowing movement. The serene face has an expression of ineffable calm. Its size and workmanship mark it out as a prominent masterpiece. It is deservedly the symbol of Japan today, constructed by contributions of devotees of the Sukhāvati sect. Five

centuries ago, a tidal wave swept away its hall and since it has sat under the open sky. Despite its immensity, the statue has an aesthetic fluency. The statue gazes downward with an aura of divine compassion (*karuṇā*) while the devotees chant adoration to Amitābha 'Infinite Illumination', *namo Amida butsu*, so that there shines the light of illumination regained.

A statue of Sarasvatī (Jap. Benzaiten) was carved in wood in 1266 and enshrined in the Shrine of Music in Kamakura as the goddess of music. Her arms are positioned for playing a *vīṇā*. Its important feature is that a nude body is shown in sculpture. Nude statuary was popular in Kamakura. It bestowed earthly charms on heavenly beings. The Kamakura period had masks for Bugaku dance. These masks covered only the face, and were derived from India or Campā.

The popularity of the meditative Zen sect was swiftly growing during the entire thirteenth century. It was centred on Kamakura, where Zen temples were concentrated. This art had very distinctive features. The paintings of great masters were given much importance, as they were looked upon as the embodiment of Dharma. These paintings were called *chinzo*, in which absolute fidelity to the master's features was the prime requisite. The 'Red-Robed Bodhidharma' by an unknown artist in 1271, is a superb work, and registered as a National Treasure (Plate 5). It is one of the finest Buddhist paintings of the Kamakura period. It occupies a position of isolated grandeur in the evolution of Zen painting. The colophon in the painting reads:

He [Bodhidharma] was the youngest son of the King of Kāncī,
 And follower of Prajñātāra's eminent line.
 He came to China, and the strange five-petalled flower blossomed.
 The fragrant doctrine was transmitted on to Japan.
 The auspicious signs like sands of the river.

The Raigo paintings gained immense popularity in the Kamakura period. They showed the Descent of Amitābha across the mountains over a panoramic landscape. Amitābha and his two great Bodhisattvas were resplendent in gold. They were expressive of the devotees who embarked on the boat of Amitābha's vow to be 'able to cross over the turbulent sea of birth and death, and arrive at the shore of the Pure Land. The dark clouds of worldly passions will then hasten to clear away, for the enlightening moon of truth begins to shine' (Tannisho). These paintings show King Bimbisāra and his Queen Vaidehī's vision of the Paradise of Amitābha. Amitābha was sometimes accompanied by

INTERFLOW OF ART BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN

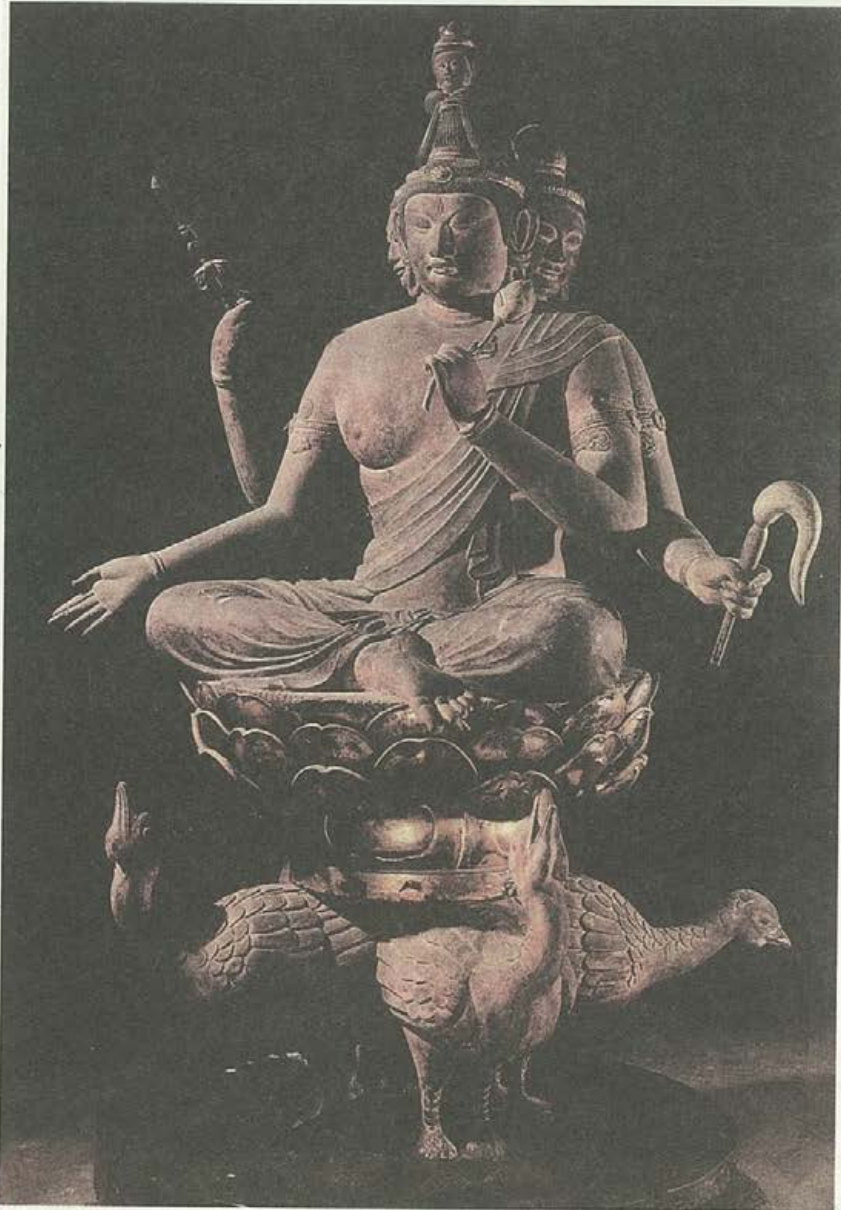


Plate 1 Brahmā (Jap. Bon-ten), a wooden statue in the Sermon Hall of the Toji monastery, Kyoto, 9th century



Plate 2 One of the Twenty-five Bodhisattvas on a cloud, in the Phoenix Hall of the Byodo-in. These Bodhisattvas come down from the Sukhāvātī Paradise, playing music and dancing, to welcome devotees at the time of their decease.

INTERFLOW OF ART BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN



Plate 3 Mantras written in Sanskrit placed on the lotus pedestal inside the image of Amitābha, in the Phoenix Hall of the Byodo-in monastery. It is dated 1053.

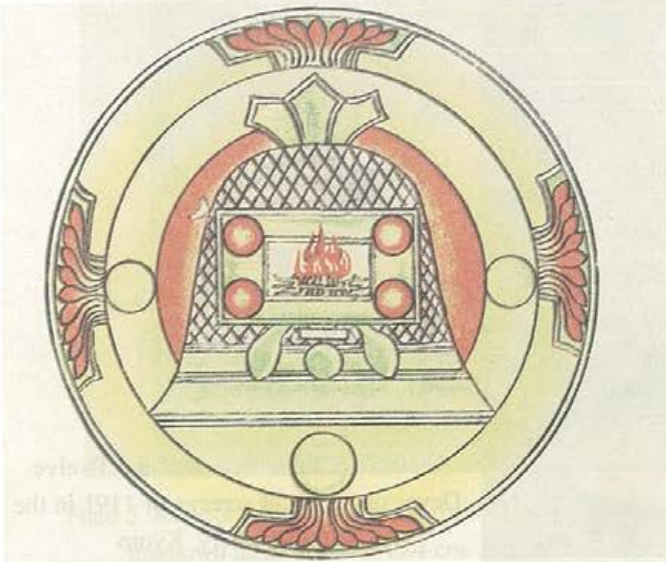


Plate 7 Kunda for homa in the Goma-ro-dan-yo, an 11th century manuscript illustrating the Nava-graha, Twenty-eight nakṣatras, and various types of kuṇḍas for homa



新
月天 (十二天所居のうも)

Plate 4 Candra as one of the Twelve Devas on a Pair of screens of 1191 in the Toji monastery, Kyoto

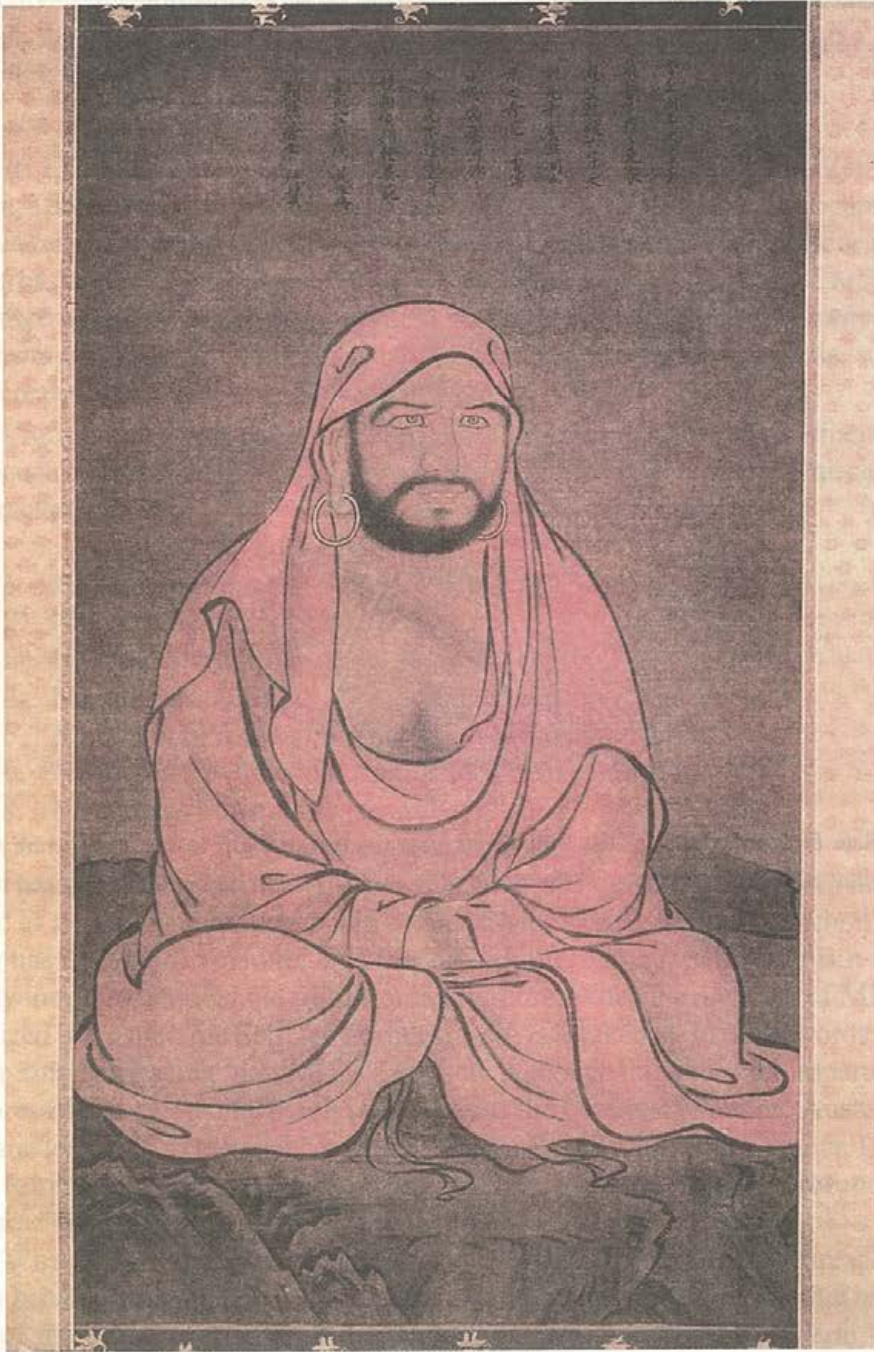


Plate 5 Red-robed Bodhidharma, painted on silk with ink and colours, in 1271 by an unknown artist, 104.8 x 46.4 cm. It is in the Kogakuji Monastery in Japan.



Plate 6 Iconography of the Rohiṇī nakṣatra for nakṣatra-iṣṭi in the 11th century manuscript Goma-ro-dan-yo. The name of Rohiṇī is written on the top right hand in Siddham letters of the 7th century.

Twenty-five Bodhisattvas, who personified the twenty-five steps of *samādhi*. After the thirteenth century, these Bodhisattvas became an orchestra and dancing troupe to greet a devotee awaiting rebirth.

NAMBOKUCHO PERIOD (1333-1391)

In 1333 the Japanese artist Mokuan went to China to paint in the Zen ink style. The Zen monks used ink sparingly and boldly. The pure ink monochrome was a reminder of the Zen dictum: 'Many colours blind your vision.' Eccentric figures, idealized landscapes, unfilled space, a suggested sense of artistic balance in an asymmetric composition reflected the Sanskrit *rūpam śūnyatā, śūnyatā eva rūpam*. These ink paintings, known as *sumie* in Japanese, were the creations of religious and serene minds.

The cultural forms that evolved in Zen had seven characteristics which are of equal significance and in their inseparability form a perfect whole. The seven characteristics are:

1. No rule, Asymmetry
2. No complexity, Simplicity
3. No rank, Sublime Austerity, Lofty Dryness
4. No mind, Naturalness
5. No bottom, Profound Subtlety, Subtle Profundity
6. No hindrance, Freedom from Attachment (*asaṅga*)
7. No stirring, Tranquillity (*śamatha*)

Hajuin calligraphed MU in grass style. MU appears in a well-known koan, used as an aid to attain Awakening. A monk once asked Master Chao-chou if a dog has the Buddha-nature. The Master simply retorted: MU 'no'. But this reply transcends 'no' in the word's ordinary sense. When the meaning of MU is realized truly, the True Self, the Formless Self, is awakened. In other words, far from simply meaning 'no', MU is Zen itself. Although this character imparts an impression of grotesqueness, it rather attains the quality of Sublime Austerity (characteristic 3), replete with strength, constancy and a masculine vigour. Both the form of the character and the tone of the ink express Subtle Profundity (characteristic 5).

When these characteristics permeate every aspect of human expression, they become alive and vital, vivid and refined in unique cultural forms, that bring about the union of man with the 'flower-heart' (*hana no kokoro*) and 'the universal heart'. The modern gadgetry of three-in-one derives from the 'Principle of Three' in Ikebana, namely, heaven, earth and man. Man is a

channel for the spiritual as well as the earthly: the three form the unbroken Three-in-one. They converge into endeavour in its twin aspects: the metaphysical and the practical, the trans-rational and the logical, the *prajñā* and *vijñāna* aspects of Buddhism. The 'Principle of Three' was expressed in flowers by Buddhist monks in Japan to reflect the profound meaning of *Karuṇā* or Compassion for *all* life and cosmic law of growth. Hereby flower-heart, man's heart and the universal heart were the deep expression of life. The 'artless art' was the Environment, touched by the breath of the spirit, its creativity.

India's austerity was Japan's elegance: minimum of lines to express plenitude of form. It is the aesthetic appreciation of stark poverty, of austere form, the *sannyāsa* of *rūpa*. Haiku is the incarnation of loneliness, of minimal words. The dusty leaf-hut of India is repeated in Japan as a hut with not a single particle of dust. Zen has transformed the primitive into an exquisite flower. The same is done by Japan to modern technology. The emptiness of the phenomenal world, called the ocean of existence or *bhavasāgara*, is the sand garden at Ryoanji, the *kare sansui* 'dry landscape', traversing the seas of illusion towards the shores of *satori* 'illumination' to cross over the sandy ripples of the ocean of existence.

MUROMACHI PERIOD (1392-1572)

Zen influence increased and paintings expressed the Zen ideal of union with the infinite. The Zen painter sought the 'truth' of a landscape in sudden enlightenment. After long contemplation he seizes inner truth in a sword-like stroke of the brush. The Zen artists turned away from accurate detail and remarkable imaginative depth was achieved in the economy of black ink, the *suiboku* (water ink) paintings. The *suiboku* art found its best in landscape painting. Mincho (1352-1431) painted 'The Hermitage by the Mountain Brook' with a lonely cottage over a stream, the solitary retreat of a Zen monk, in communion with nature. It was the ideal of the *tapovana* with towering cliffs, gnarled roots of the pine, the hut consciously over-emphasized, with a quality of mystery and awe.

Sesshū was a Zen priest who lived from 1420 to 1506. He brought *suiboku* painting to its fullest efflorescence. He is the greatest master of the *suiboku* style who captured the mists enveloping the hills, the whiteness of the sand, a Buddhist temple lost in the foliage, in the shimmer of his softer and warmer ink-tones. Zen aesthetics was the perception of beauty in the most lowly object, in the most humble type of work like the decoration of the ridge of one's humble straw roof.

CHIP BUDDHAS (KOPPA-BUTSU) OF ENKU (1632-95)

Enku was born as the son of an unknown farmer in central Japan. He entered a temple near his home and was given the Buddhist name Enku 'complete emptiness' (*śūnyatā*). He climbed Mount Fuji and prayed for the fulfilment of his vow to carve a hundred thousand Buddha images. The ground began to tremble, and the avatar of the mountain appeared and handed a hatchet to Enku. From gnarled and knotted timbers, from disfigured blocks he created images of sacred deities. At the back of several figures he wrote Sanskrit letters. He carved Garuḍas for protecting temples, Indra (Jap. Indara Taisho), Sarasvatī with attendants, Maheśvara and Buddhist deities. On the image of Sarasvatī carved in 1686 he wrote the poem:

Each day this mind grows purer,
The moon in the sky and myself
Round and full.

The sculptures of Enku sleep in tiny Shinto shrines and unattended Buddhist temples. They were a prayer for him, a form of meditation. Mind and hand united in spontaneous creativity. The *koppa-butsu* or tiny chip Buddhas were Enku's invention. They combined function and material, the concept and vow of his *lakṣapūjā*. The sinewy grain and swirling knot were allowed to play in inspiration and execution. It took him twenty-eight years to carve 100,000 images and by this time he was fifty-nine. The inscription on Enku's tomb at the Maitreya Temple in Mino Province says that he died in 1695. He asked a hole to be dug beside the river. The hole done, he sat in it, some one covered it with earth, and put a bamboo tube in the hole so that he could breathe. He had taken *samādhi*. Tall oak and cherry trees entwined with wisteria vines now stand at this spot of his *nirvāṇa*. People living in the village say that these vines will bleed if anyone cuts them.

Japan's art is *koreru ongaku* 'frozen music of forms'. A product of the Japanese soil from the Indian seeds of Bodhi, in an Indian hut with Japanese bamboos. In the graceful line and colour of Japanese paintings over the centuries the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, *devas* and *dharmarājas*, *grahas* and *nakṣatras*, *rāśis* and *ṛśis* gleam in aspects that range from serene enlightenment to ferocious combat with forces of evil and ignorance. Herein the Japanese painters and sculptors have concentrated their efforts in expressing in human terms a calm exterior and an intense introspection. Even the multiplicity of arms and heads is resolved into the rhythm of form. Here is the world of Indo-Japanese Art which, in the words of an eighth century inscription:

Calms us, gives us a tranquil mind
 Every vulgar shadow is dissipated
 And caprice is subdued.
 Joy, yes, and Harmony.

The Japanese Okakura Tenshin stayed at the home of poet Rabindranath Tagore in 1902. It led to the cultural renaissance of India. Out of his talks with the Indian poet, Tenshin crystallized his essay on *The Ideals of the East*, his first publication in English. Tenshin 'The Heart of Heaven' launched the idea 'Asia is one'. Havell, Tagore, Coomaraswamy responded. The pioneers of modern Indian painting, Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose, and others, used Japanese brushes and colours and reflected the diaphanous aura of Japanese paintings in their new creativity. The sketch manuals of Japanese iconography inspired the rise of Neo-Classical Indian art. The Sino-Japanese brush is an expressive instrument. It was invented by General Meng Tien who supervised part of the building of the Great Wall of China. Deer's hair covered with goat's hair: a responsive brush tipped with a fine point. It was to expedite the construction of the Great Wall to defend culture against the barbarians. Two thousand years later, India's visual culture came alive with Japanese brushes. Tenshin had said: 'Mind speaks to the mind. We listen to the unspoken, we gaze upon the unseen.' Likewise did Coomaraswamy say: 'It is the work of poets to make the heart free.' It was echoed in the researches of Coomaraswamy who found parallels for Vedic texts in Japanese art in his *Elements of Buddhist Iconography* published by the Harvard University in 1935. This cultural encounter left a deep impression on our national ethos. India linked freedom with Japan. Some of our revolutionaries sought refuge in Japan.

To comprehend the subtle mind of Japanese art, we may take the great monk poet Saigyō (1118-1190) who was 'a mind both obeying and at one with nature'. To him we and nature are companions, and a vast and subtle music speaks to us from nature. Saigyō identified himself with the inside-out of the Yoshino mountains, whose blossoms were a way into the inner depths, of journeying to the Himalayas:

Do the white blossoms
 On my mountain take the place of
 Snow on the holy Himalayas?
 I wish to enter the profound
 Inner depths of Mount Yoshino.

Saigyō means 'West-go' (*sai* 'West'+*gyō* 'go'), and his poems speak of his mind emptied of all darkness, moving closer to the mountains in the West. West means India. His name symbolizes his perennial pilgrimage (*gyō*) to India (*sai*), with the Moon a fellow pilgrim. The scrolls and statues, *sūtras* and poems were the mind language of Japan, the energy of illumination, journeying to find the pulsing of a heart dyed in the syntax of the Himalayas. (Plates 6, 7)

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