

Heian Buddhist Sculpture: Assimilating Foreign Trends and Indigenous Beliefs
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December 6, 2013

Heian Period (794-1185)

794 CE Establishment of the new capital Heian “Capital of Peace and Tranquility” (modern Kyoto) by Emperor Kanmu (r. 781-806)

Two New Schools of Buddhism

- Tendai (C. Tiantai) – established by Saichō (767-822)
- Shingon (C. Zhenyan, “True Word” school) – established by Kūkai (774-835)

Important Historical Figures

- Fujiwara no Michinaga (Michinaga of the Fujiwara clan; 966-1027)
- Fujiwara no Yorimichi (Yorimichi of the Fujiwara clan; 992-1074)
- Genshin (942-1017), who wrote *Ojōyōshū* (Essential Teachings of Rebirth)
- Jōchō (d. 1057)
- Kōshō (act. ca. 990-ca.1020)

Important Terms

- *honpa shiki* (“rolling-wave” pattern)
- *ichiboku zukuri* (Single-block wood construction)
- *kami* (Shinto gods and goddesses)
- *kamon* (spiral-pattern)
- *mappō* (Period of the Final Dharma)
- *natabori* (hatchet-carving)
- *raigō* (Welcoming Descent of Amida)
- *yōsegi zukuri* (joint-wood block construction)

Key Heian-period (794-1185) works featured in the lecture

Early Heian (9th-10th century) statues, single-block wood construction (*ichiboku zukuri*):

- * Seated *Fudō myōō* (Sk. Acala, “The Immovable Radiant King”), **Tōji**, Kyoto.
- * Seated Yakushi nyorai (Sk. Bhaiṣajyaguru, Buddha of Medicine or Healing), **Shin Yakushiji**, Nara prefecture.
- * Standing Yakushi nyorai, **Jingoji**, Kyoto.
- * Standing Jūichimen Kannon bosatsu (Sk. Ekādaśa-mukha, Eleven-headed Kannon bodhisattva), **Kōgenji**, Shiga prefecture.
- * Standing Jūichimen Kannon bosatsu, **Hokkeji**, Nara.

- * Shaka nyorai (Sk. Śākyamuni), **Murōji**, Nara prefecture.
- * Seated Male *kami*, **Matsunoo Shrine**, Kyoto.
- * Seated Hachiman triad: Hachiman and two female *kami*. **Yakushiji**, Nara.

Middle Heian (10th-11th century) hatchet-carving (*natabori*) statues:

- * Standing Shō Kannon bosatsu (Sk. Avalokiteśvara), **Tendaiji**, Iwate prefecture.
- * Standing Jūichimen Kannon bosatsu, **Gumyōji**, Kanagawa prefecture.

Late Heian statues (11th-12th century), in the joint-wood construction (*yosegi zukuri*):

- * Seated Amida nyorai (Sk. Amitabha Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Light), in the **Phoenix Hall (Hōō-dō)** at **Byōdō-in**, Kyoto. Master carver: Jochō. Patron: Fujiwara no Yorimichi. c.1053.
- * Seated Amida nyorai, **Hōkongō-in**, Kyoto.

Further Reading:

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McCallum, Donald F. "Heian Sculpture at the Tokyo National Museum: A Review Article. Part I." *Artibus Asiae*, vol.35, no. 3 (1973): 278-292.

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Yiengpruksawan, Mimi Hall. "The Phoenix Hall at Uji and the Symmetries of Replication." *The Art Bulletin* 77, no. 4 (Dec., 1995): 647-72.

** A-to-Z Photo Dictionary of Japanese Religious Sculpture and Art

<http://www.onmarkproductions.com/html/buddhism.shtml>

A free-online site, regularly updated by independent scholar Mark Schumacher, which provides an extensive resource on Japanese Buddhist sculpture and art.