

Arts of Asia Lecture Series Fall 2013
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**Early Buddhist Sculpture in Japan:
Continental Models and Local Innovations**

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1. Introduction of Buddhism in Japan

Official introduction

- *Nihon shoki* (*Chronicles of Japan*, 720 CE)
- *Gangōji engi* (*Legendary Account of the Origins of Gangōji*, 747 CE)

Other ways of transmission

2. Buddhist iconography

Main deities portrayed in early Buddhist sculpture:

- Śākyamuni (J. Shaka), the Historical Buddha
- Bodhisattva (J. Bosatsu)
 - Kannon (Sk. Avalokiteśvara), bodhisattva of compassion
 - Seishi (Sk. Mahāsthāmaprāpta), bodhisattva of wisdom
- Meditating Bodhisattva = Maitreya (J. Miroku), the Buddha of the Future

3. Major Collections of Early Buddhist Sculpture

- Buddhist temples, especially Hōryūji (Nara Prefecture)
- “Forty-eight Buddhist Deities” donated by Hōryūji, currently in the Gallery of Hōryūji Treasures, Tokyo, hereafter 48 TNM

4. Asuka Period (ca. 550-650 CE)

The myth of Prince Shōtoku, aka Prince Umayado (574-622 CE)

The Soga Clan and Asukadera, the first large-scale temple

- Asukadera’s Great Buddha and Tori Busshi (sculptor of Buddhist icons)

Soga-Tori style

- Shaka Triad – Golden Hall, Hōryūji’s Western Compound
- Buddha Triad dated 628 – Tokyo National Museum
- Seated Buddha # 145 – 48 TNM
- Standing Buddha #149 – 48 TNM
- Standing Bodhisattva – Hōryūji Museum (Great Treasure Hall)
- Yumedono Kannon – Yumedono Hall, Hōryūji’s Eastern Compound

Other works

- Kudara Kannon – Hōryūji Museum
 - Kebutsu* (transformed Buddha) in the crown
- Four Heavenly Kings (J. Shitennō) – Golden Hall, Hōryūji’s Western Compound
- Meditating Bodhisattva – Kōryūji (Kyoto)

Continental sources:

China: Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534 CE)

Korea: Three Kingdoms Period (ca. 5th-7th CE), especially Paekche

5. Hakuho Period (ca. 650-710 CE)

Early Hakuho (650-670 CE): Transition from Asuka to Hakuho style

- Meditating Bodhisattva #156 – 48 TNM
- Standing Bodhisattva #165 – 48 TNM
- Standing Bodhisattva #166 – 48 TNM

Boyish group

- Standing Buddha #153 – 48 TNM
- Standing Kannon #179 – 48 TNM
- Standing Bodhisattva #188 – 48 TNM

Middle Hakuho (670-690)

- Standing Kannon #176 – 48 TNM
- Buddha Head – Kofukuji Treasure House

Late Hakuho (690-710)

- Yumechigai Kannon – Horyuji Museum
- Amida Triad (Tachibana Shrine) – Horyuji Museum

Continental Sources:

China: Sui Dynasty (581-618 CE)

Korea: Three Kingdoms Period (ca. 5th –7th CE), especially Silla

Suggested Readings:

McCallum, Donald. "Korean Influence on Early Japanese Buddhist Sculpture." *Korean Culture* 3.1 (1982): 22-29.

----- "The Earliest Buddhist Statues in Japan." *Artibus Asiae* 61.2 (2001): 149-188.

----- "Tori-Busshi and the Production of Buddhist Icons in Asuka-Period Japan." In *The Artist as Professional in Japan*. Edited by Melinda Takeuchi, 17-37. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004.

----- *The Four Great Temples: Buddhist Archaeology, Architecture, and Icons of Seventh-Century Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009.

----- *Hakuho Sculpture*. Lawrence: Spencer Museum of Art and the University of Kansas, 2012.

Suzuki, Yui. "Temple as Museum, Buddha as Art: Horyuji's Kudara Kannon and Its Great Treasure Repository." *Res* 52 (2007): 128-140.

Washizuka, Hiromitsu. *Transmitting the Forms of Divinity: Early Buddhist Art from Korea and Japan*. New York: Japan Society, 2003.

- Indicates Buddhist sculptures.