













CATALOGUE
OF
ART TREASURES
OF
TEN GREAT TEMPLES OF NARA
VOLUME ONE
THE HORYUJI TEMPLE
PART I

THE OTSUKA KOGEISHA
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ART TREASURES OF TEN GREAT TEMPLES OF NARA

VOLUME I

THE HÔRYŪJI TEMPLE

PART I

THE HÔRYŪJI TEMPLE

The Hôryûji temple, the oldest monasterial institution extant in this country, has rendered great services to the cause of Japanese culture and the very name inspires us with reverence. It stands in a small village of Hôryûji, Ikoma-gôri, about seven miles to the south-west of Nara. The exact date of its foundation is not given in any authentic records, but it is the very fane erected some thirteen hundred years ago (c. 607 A.D.) by the sage-prince Shôtoku-Taishi and the Empress Suiko to pray for the happiness of their deceased father Emperor Yômei's soul. A number of Buddhist temples arose at that time, but none has survived except the Hôryûji temple. Moreover, the temple contains such sculptural treasures as Yakushi and Shaka triads (in the Kondô) and Kwannon (in the Yumedono Hall), all dating from the time of prince Shôtoku. The architecture, as we see at present, is believed by some to be the original of the time of the erection, while others think it the reconstruction of the Wadô era (708-714 A.D.), the original, according to these writers, having been destroyed by fire in 670. The dispute has not yet been settled, yet it is certain that the temple is the oldest extant wooden building in the world. Indeed none can deny that it is miraculous for a wooden structure to last for twelve or thirteen hundred years.

We have seen that the Hôryûji temple is the repository of our ancient culture and arts. But it is more than that: it contains typical works of nearly all epochs of Japanese arts, Nara, Heian, Kamakura, Muromachi and Tokugawa periods. We

may truly say that it represents the civilization of this country as a whole.

The Hôryûji consists of the Saiin or Western Precinct and the Tôin or the Eastern Precinct. The former being the Hôryûji proper contains the Kondô, the Five-Storied Pagoda and other subsidiary buildings. The latter lying six hundred yards to the east of the Saiin is the site of Prince Shôtoku's Ikaruga Palace and is otherwise called the Jôgûôin. The Hôryûji temple enjoyed the patronage of successive emperors and has been the centre of popular worship. Hence they had no difficulty in repairs of several times and the minutest care is now taken for its preservation.

PLATE 1 VIEW OF THE HÔRYŪJI TEMPLE

Enter the precincts by way of the South Gate (Nandaimon) and you find yourself in front of the Middle Gate (Chûmon) guarded by images of two Deva Kings with the Main Hall (Kondô) and the Five-Storied Pagoda soaring high above the roofs of the enclosing Cloister. The view of this sacred fane will take you back to the age of Prince Shôtoku, who founded it at the beginning of the seventh century.

PLATE 2 THE KONDÔ OR MAIN HALL

Height, 52 ft. 7 in.

PLATE 3 THE INTERIOR OF THE KONDÔ (SOUTH)

PLATE 4 THE INTERIOR OF THE KONDÔ (EAST)

PLATE 5 THE INTERIOR OF THE KONDÔ (NORTH)

PLATE 6 THE CEILING OF THE KONDÔ CHANCEL

WITH ITS SLANTING PROPS

PLATES 7-8 THE BRACKET-SYSTEMS OF THE

KONDÔ CHANCEL

PLATE 9 A DOOR OF THE KONDŌ

PLATES 10-12 AN ORNAMENTAL CARVING, A ROOF-TILE AND THE FUKUZŌ STONE

PLATES 13-14 THE BRACKET-SYSTEM OF THE KONDŌ APPENTICE

Inside the Middle Gate we stand in the enclosure with the Pagoda on the left and the Main Hall on the right. The latter is a two-storied building. The intercolumnar space in the upper storey is lessened by 13 Japanese feet, which lends itself to the effect of height as well as stability of the structure. The deep-projecting eaves are given with a tilt, which adds to graceful lightness as of a bird going to fly. They are supported on the so-called *kumogata* brackets, which in turn rests on *sarato* crowning a pillar with an outward curvature of profile called the entasis. The arrangement of pillars is six along the front and back and five along each side in the lower storey and five along the front and back and four along each side in the upper storey. The interior of the Main Hall is divided into two parts, the *naijin* and the *gwaijin*. The *naijin*, which corresponds to the chancel, is the inner compartment surrounded with pillars, four along the front and back, and three along each side, and is provided with a platform in the middle, on which are installed a host of the most remarkable Buddhist images—the Shaka triad in the centre flanked by the Yakushi and Amida triads, all encircled by the Four Guardian Gods of Buddhism etc. The walls of the *gwaijin* or a sort of ambulatory are depicted with the Four Buddhist Paradises and Buddhist divinities. These mural paintings together with the graven images are intended to reproduce the splendours of the Buddhist Elysium. The construction of the interior is of the same style as that of the exterior, making use of the same kind of compound brackets. Plate 7 represents one such at the corner and Plate 8 another in between. The ceiling of the *naijin* is coffered and is supported by a series of slanting under-props (*shirin*), which rise nearly straight from the walls. Whereas the *gwaijin* is without any such props, although it has a coffered ceiling. These sunken panels are all decorated with polychrome floral

designs and the space between *shirin* props is also brightly painted with *hōsōge* designs. The material used in the building is exclusively *hinoki* (Japanese cypress) wood, which is painted red both in the exterior and in the interior, except for green-painted *renji* windows and balustrades. The roof is recorded to have been retiled in May, 1229, but apparently this was not the only occasion. However, we still see that it retains the old style of *shikorobuki* roofing as in the Tamamushi Reliquary. An old roof-tile said to belong to the original roofing is represented in Plate 11. The same decorative *motif* is used in the design of a metal carving on the gable shown in Plate 10. The appentice, being a later addition in order to protect the Kondō proper, has a different kind of brackets illustrated in Plates 13 & 14. The Fukuzō Stone in Plate 12 is a large round stone placed on the floor in the north-eastern corner of the hall. In an old record of the temple *Kokon-Mokuroku-Shō*, there are two accounts of the Stone, one explaining it as a covering of the place where treasures have been buried invoking for divine protection, the other as a mark of the spot where prayers used to be offered. It is not improbable, however, that under this all the ceremonial implements and valuable articles used in the consecration ceremony have been interred after the service. As to the date of the architecture, some ascribe it to the reign of the Empress Suiko (593-629), others think it a reconstruction after the fire during the regime of the Emperor Tenchi (662-672). They have not yet come to a final conclusion. Still it is undeniable that it preserves the earliest type of Buddhist architecture in this country and is in all probability the oldest extant wooden building in the whole world.

PLATES 15-18 YAKUSHI NYORAI

Seated Statue. Bronze. Height, 2 ft. 4 in.

PLATES 19-20 THE MANDORLA OF YAKUSHI NYORAI

Bronze. Height, 2 ft. 7½ in.

PLATE 21 THE DAIS OF YAKUSHI NYORAI

Wooden. Coloured. Height, 1 ft. 9 in. (upper part), 4 ft. 5 in. (lower part).

This statue of Yakushi formerly occupied the central position in the Main Hall. The history of its consecration is given in the text inscribed on the mandorla. Prince Shōtoku and the Empress Suiko founded this temple in (607 A.D.) in the earnest supplication for their father Emperor Yōmei's recovery from his serious illness and the present image of Healing Buddha was dedicated as the principal deity for worship. It is designed in the Chinese style of the Northern Wei Dynasty (386-534), but even in China such an exquisite bronze piece surviving from these early years has never been preserved. So we may rightly consider this one of the most precious art treasures in the Orient. Being the oldest statue in the temple and produced for such a purpose, it used to stand in the centre of the platform and was held in great reverence. The dais made at the same time has lost much of its original beauty, yet what little remains of the bright painting is indicative of its superb decoration at the beginning.

PLATES 22-27 ATTENDING DEITIES TO YAKUSHI NYORAI

Standing Statues. Bronze. Height, 1 ft. 9 in. (Nikkō), 1 ft. 9½ in. (Gakkō).

The Shizaichō of 747 A.D. has no reference to these Attendants to Shaka, Nikkō and Gakkō. Neither has the inscription on the back of the mandorla anything to say about it. Moreover the type of the mandorla suggests that it properly belongs to a single deity. All this seems to indicate that the central deity was produced first and the attending deities were added as an after-thought. A remarkable feature of the pieces is the elaborate decoration shown in the border of the robes, scarves and skirts, double rows of bead ornament arranged symmetrically and beautiful knots tied in front. In their large eyes, thick lips and necks, and plump limbs, they appear to point to the workmanship of the Suiko period (593-629), whilst the refinement witnessed in flowing lines and the treatment of folds rendered less sharp suggest that they belong to some later period near the Nara regime (710-794). Another thing which attracts our notice is that in their

ornamental diadem Gakkō has a statuette of a standing deity and Nikkō of a seated deity; these are the images of Kwannon, not proper as Attending Deities to Yakushi—a further proof that the statues are later additions. In the treatment of eye-lids and hair the two works present more points of dissimilarity.

PLATES 28-29 SHAKA NYORAI AND ATTENDING DEITIES

PLATE 30 SHAKA NYORAI

Seated Statue. Bronze. Height, 2 ft. 10 in.

PLATES 31-32 ATTENDING DEITIES TO SHAKA NYORAI

PLATE 33 AN ATTENDING DEITY (LEFT) TO SHAKA NYORAI

Standing Statue. Bronze. Height, 2 ft. 11¼ in.

PLATE 34 ATTENDING DEITY (RIGHT) TO SHAKA NYORAI

Standing Statue. Bronze. Height, 3 ft. ¼ in.

PLATE 35 THE MANDORLA OF THE SHAKA TRIAD

Bronze. Height, 5 ft. 9½ in. Breadth, 5 ft. 3½ in.

PLATE 36 THE MANDORLA OF AN ATTENDING DEITY (LEFT) TO SHAKA NYORAI

Bronze. Height, 1 ft. 10 in. Breadth, 1 ft. 7½ in.

PLATE 37 THE DAIS OF THE SHAKA TRIAD

Wooden. Coloured. Height, 4 ft. 3½ in.

This statue of Shaka is installed on the central dais of the Kondō. A full account of its dedication is given in the inscription on the reverse of the mandorla. In the thirtieth year of the Empress Suiko's reign (623 A.D.) Prince Shōtoku fell ill. His Consort and sons prayed for his recovery and proposed to cast this image of Shaka. Before its completion, however, both the Prince and his Consort died, and it was finished in the following year. The sculptor was Kuratsukuri-no-Tori. The technique of this work is that of the Chinese style of the Northern Wei Dynasty. But the piece bears a striking resemblance to the foregoing Yakushi in general treatment, except that this is of a triad type with a corresponding screen-panel, while that is attended with no deities and has a mandorla shaped like a flaming, pointed jewel. Here the mandorla has around the ridge a series of oblong holes, thirteen

in all, intended for the insertion of ornamental statuettes of flying Buddhist angels—a feature to be seen in some works in the cave temples at Lungmen, China. Now the comparison of these two works tells a striking progress they made in the execution of general contours, free and dexterous use of lines, and perfect freedom with which floral scrolls are rendered in the mandorla of Shaka: the art of sculptors has undergone a complete change. It is natural that Tori, the sculptor of such a dignified piece well worthy of the central deity of the Kondō, should have been held in great esteem as the master of the time, although he was descended from a Chinese artist naturalized in this country.

PLATES 38-41 AMIDA NYORAI

Seated Statue. Bronze. Height, 2 ft. 1½ in.

PLATES 42-43 THE MANDORLA OF AMIDA NYORAI

Bronze. Height, 2 ft. 8½ in.

PLATES 44-47 THE DAIS OF AMIDA NYORAI

Wooden. Coloured. Height, 1 ft. 9 in.

PLATES 48-49 AN ATTENDING DIETY (RIGHT) TO NYORAI

Standing Statue. Bronze. Height, 1 ft. 9½ in.

PLATES 50-52 AN ATTENDING DEITY (LEFT) TO AMIDA NYORAI

Standing Statue. Bronze. Height, 2 ft.

PLATE 53 THE DAIS OF THE AMIDA TRIAD

Wooden. Painted. Height, 4 ft. 10½ in.

According to the inscription engraved on the back of the mandorla there was the original Amida triad, which was stolen during 1097. Thus the dais was left alone for a long while until in 1231 recasting was begun by Kōshō, son of the renowned sculptor Unkei, and was finished in the following year. Documentary proofs, however, contradict the account: the stolen image seems to be a different one. At any rate the present piece was modelled in the style of Prince Shōtoku's time, probably taking the Yakushi of the Kondō as its model. In size, form and technique, and even in the type of the mandorla, there is a striking coincidence. However, the spirit of the times betrays itself in the Unkei-like realistic treatment to be seen in the suave expression of the deity etc. In

the attending Kwannon the new Kamakura style is even more pronounced. The smaller dais of the triad dating from the same period is decorated with landscape designs in colours, but the other larger one like those for Yakushi and Shaka goes back to the time of the foundation of the temple. The small statue in Plates 50-52 said to represent Seishi Bosatsu is undoubtedly Shō-Kwannon as is shown by its form, attribute and pose in general. Perhaps it has been substituted for the lost Seishi attending the Amida. Its style is that of typical Asuka workmanship, wonderfully suave in the execution of face and pose, and exquisite in the flowing rhythm of lines—perhaps the best expression of the Asuka technique and ranking first of all statuettes preserved in the Hōryūji temple.

PLATES 54-55 CANOPY IN THE CENTRAL COMPARTMENT OF THE KONDŌ

PLATES 56-57 CANOPY IN THE WESTERN COMPARTMENT OF THE KONDŌ

(Main Part) Width, 7 ft. 1 in. Depth, 6 ft. 2½ in.

PLATES 58-59 CANOPY IN THE EASTERN COMPARTMENT OF THE KONDŌ

(Main Part) Width, 7 ft. 11½ in. Depth, 6 ft. 3 in.

PLATES 60-63 ANGEL-MUSICIANS ATTACHED TO CANOPIES

PLATE 64 PHENIX BIRD AT TACHED TO A CANOPY

PLATES 65-66 OPEN-WORK ORNAMENTS OF A CANOPY

There are three canopies in the Kondō, of which the central one is a little larger than the rest and dates with the western from the time of the foundation of the temple, while the eastern a restoration of the Kamakura period. The two older canopies being of the same type consist of a double roof enriched on its edge with a series of heavenly musicians and open-work metal ornaments, the main portion carved and painted with bands of geometrical patterns, semi-circular, scale-like and triangular, and the lower portion a network of glass beads and tubes strung together with pieces of wood and fringed with small bells. The inside presents a coffered

ceiling supported by props projecting from side walls. We have a number of old canopies and their representations in painting, but they are mostly too elaborate or fantastic and do not preserve the old baldachin type, which the present specimens seem to suggest. The eastern canopy being a later copy of 1233 as is evident from the inscription is of a very inferior workmanship, though modelled on the western piece. Even its angel-musicians and phoenixes well copied from the original show something of Kamakura realism and are lifeless for the most part.

PLATES 67-70 SHITENNŌ (JIKOKUTEN)

Wooden Statue. Coloured. Height, 4 ft. 3½ in.

PLATES 71-74 SHITENNŌ (ZŌCHŌTEN)

Wooden Statue. Coloured. Height, 4 ft. 4½ in.

PLATES 75-78 SHITENNŌ (KŌMOKUTEN)

Wooden Statue. Coloured. Height, 4 ft. 4½ in.

PLATES 79-82 SHITENNŌ (TAMONTEN)

Wooden Statue. Coloured. Height, 4 ft. 4½ in.

PLATES 83 THE ORNAMENTAL CARVING OF THE ATTRIBUTE OF SHITENNŌ (ZŌCHŌTEN)

PLATES 84-86 THE NIMBUS OF SHITENNŌ (TAMONTEN & KŌMOKUTEN)

No mention is made of these statues of Shitennō in old records, but the nimbus for Kōmokuten is inscribed with the name of its artist Yamaguchi-no-Ōguchi, who flourished in the reign of the Emperor Kōtoku (645-654). The style follows that of the Northern Wei dynasty in China, not yet free from early sculptors' crudity which betrays itself in the angularity of parts passing from the front to the side and also in superimposed folds, similar repeated lines, shallow carving etc.—all showing that the art only recently passed into sculpture in the round and so retained some technical traits peculiar to the glyptic art of cave-temples and cliffs. The material used is camphor-wood, which is coloured and drawn with drapery. The use of cut-gold leaf here is the earliest in our art history. Gilt open-work metal ornaments are seen in the helmets and borders of drapery. The nimbuses are made of wood and metal. These works are the oldest Shitennō pieces extant in this country.

PLATES 87-91 KWANNON BOSATSU

Standing Statue. Wooden & Coloured.

Height, 6 ft. 10½ in.

PLATE 92 THE NIMBUS OF KWANNON BOSATSU

Height, 3 ft. 8½ in. Breadth, 2 ft. 10 in.

Formerly the temple tradition called this image Kudara-Kwannon *i.e.* Kwannon brought from Kudara, a small kingdom in the ancient Korea, and some believed it to represent Kokūzō-Bosatsu from the inscription on the pedestal. But some years ago the discovery of its diadem with a Kwannon statuette in it led to its identification as Kwannon. The present piece makes with two other Kwannons preserved respectively in the Chūguji nunnery and the Yumedono Hall of the Hōryūji three great masterpieces of the Suiko Period. Comparison with other contemporary statues and their prototype, stone sculpture in China, reveals that our trio have not yet extricated themselves from the technical restrictions due to the use of stone as material. Thus their rigid pose, superimposed folds of drapery etc. are all reminiscent of cliff engravings, knowing nothing of later suavity and freedom. We may therefore call these the simplest of our wooden statues, but this does not imply that they are of crude and poor workmanship. Far from it. Look at the extraordinary slenderness with apparently stiff and baggy skirts. It is replete with wonderful perfection in execution under the disguise of extreme simplicity. The nimbus is provided with a support representing a bamboo pole, typical of contemporary works and suggesting the material for original props of mandorlas.

PLATES 93-94 BISHAMONTEN

Standing Statue. Wooden & Coloured.

Height, 4 ft. 1 in.

PLATES 95-96 KICHIJŌTEN

Standing Statue. Wooden & Coloured.

Height, 3 ft. 10 in.

A Buddhist sutra "Konkōmyō-Saishō-Kyō" requires for prayers to be offered for the order and tranquility of the state the installation of Shaka in the middle with Bishamō and Kichijōten on either side as objects

of worship. These statues of Bishamon and Kichijōten produced for the purpose were dedicated in December, 1078. The art of ornamentation in the Fujiwara period is remarkable in the lavish use of brilliant colours and the cut-gold leaf decoration. The latter technique may be witnessed in the then-popular "seven-treasure designs" on Bishamon's shoulders and in the favourite "tatewaku designs" on Kichijōten's sash. The carving is somewhat stiff, but it may have been the natural result of the difficult task to harmonize the strength of Bishamon with the beauty of Kichijōten.

PLATES 97-98 SHŌ-KWANNON BOSATSU

Wooden Statue. Coloured. Height, 6 ft. 4 in.

This statue of Kwannon comes from the earlier Fujiwara days. A delightful expression of innocence lights up youthful features; skirts are simply rendered and carved shallow; the hair being arranged in the typical T'ang manner, as yet has no locks hanging from a rather low top-knot in the style of the Fujiwara period. The whole is covered with colours and cut-gold leaf is applied in large floral designs. The pedestal and mandorla belong to the same date and are coloured without any use of gold, a characteristic at the beginning of the Fujiwara times.

PLATE 99 SHŌ-KWANNON BOSATSU

Standing Statue. Wooden. Height, 5 ft. 5 in.

The standing figure, though simple, is a specimen well-proportioned rarely to be met with. It is a work of the earlier Fujiwara period, free from the later feminine taste of that age.

PLATES 100-101 MIROKU BOSATSU

Seated Statue. Wooden. Height, 2 ft.

The present image of Miroku was originally en-

shrined in the Sankyōdō as the main deity for worship on the special occasion of *Yuishiki* exposition. Its pedestal, mandorla, attribute *etc.* are mostly later restorations. The deity is represented with a large top-kot in the T'ang style, noble brows, eye-lids showing the outline of sockets, bright, clear eyes with their tails not very long and the body slender and full of serenity. The general workmanship points to a period when the art of wooden sculpture has not yet attained perfect dexterity, at the same time being relieved of conventionalism—the end of the Nara or the beginning of the Heian period. As an image of Miroku of the standard type it is the oldest extant specimen, and unique in the whole range of Buddhist sculpture in having the carved representation of the pupil of the eye.

PLATE 102 FUGEN-EMMYŌ BOSATSU

Standing Statue. Wooden & Coloured.

Height, 3 in.

PLATE 103 THE MANDORLA OF FUGEN-EMMYŌ BOSATSU

Wooden & Coloured. Height, 3 ft. 3 in.

The deity being the object of worship in the supplication for happiness and longevity appears to have been produced in great numbers in olden times, but its representations either in painting or sculpture have been very rarely preserved. This image and the one installed in the Kondō of the Kōyasan monastery are the only two wooden statues coming down from the earlier Heian period. They are both carved out of a single block modulated with a severe and rough wave-like technique. The mandorla contemporary with the image has lost its bright colouring executed on the thick coating of Chinese white. The attributes are nearly all later restorations.

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