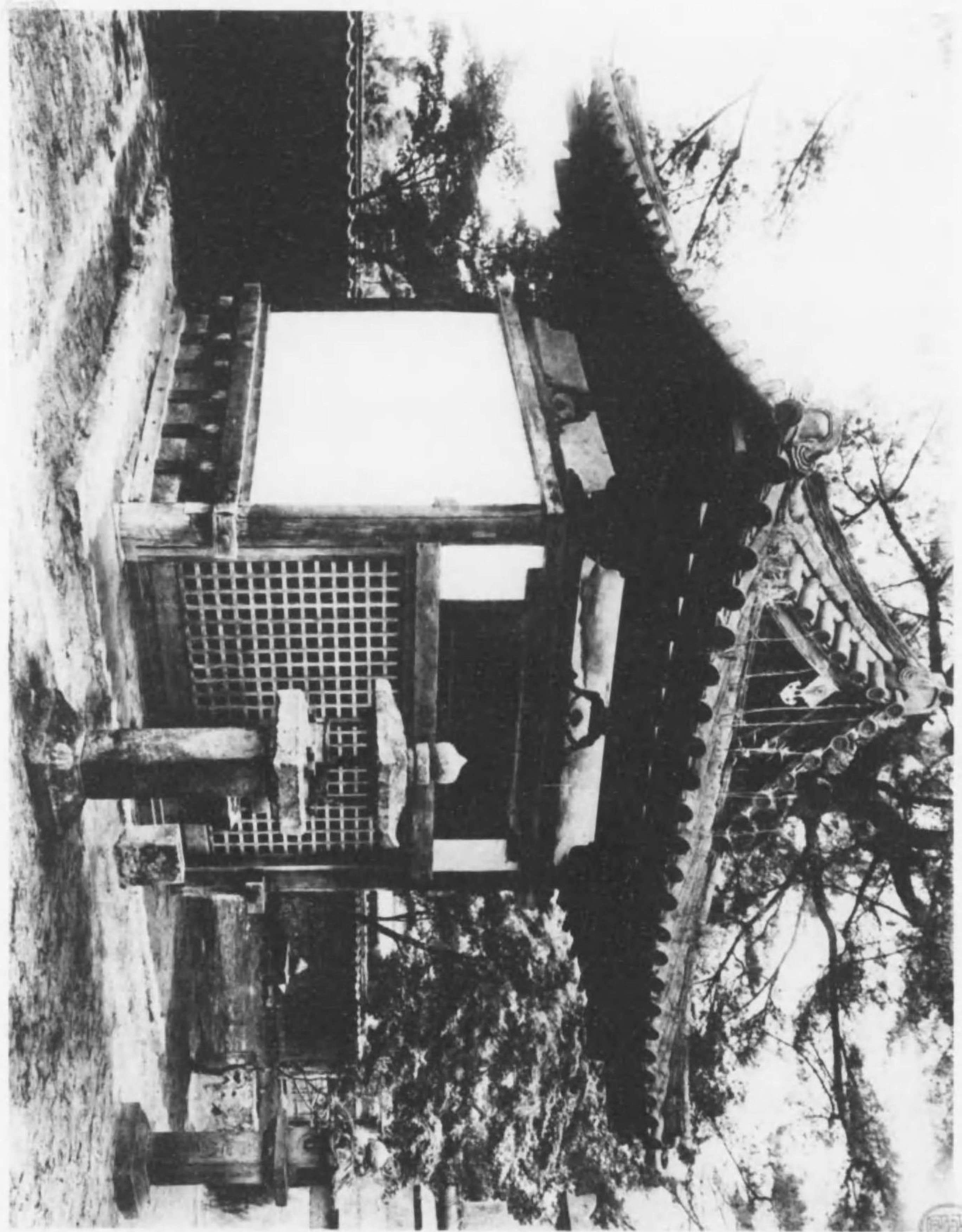


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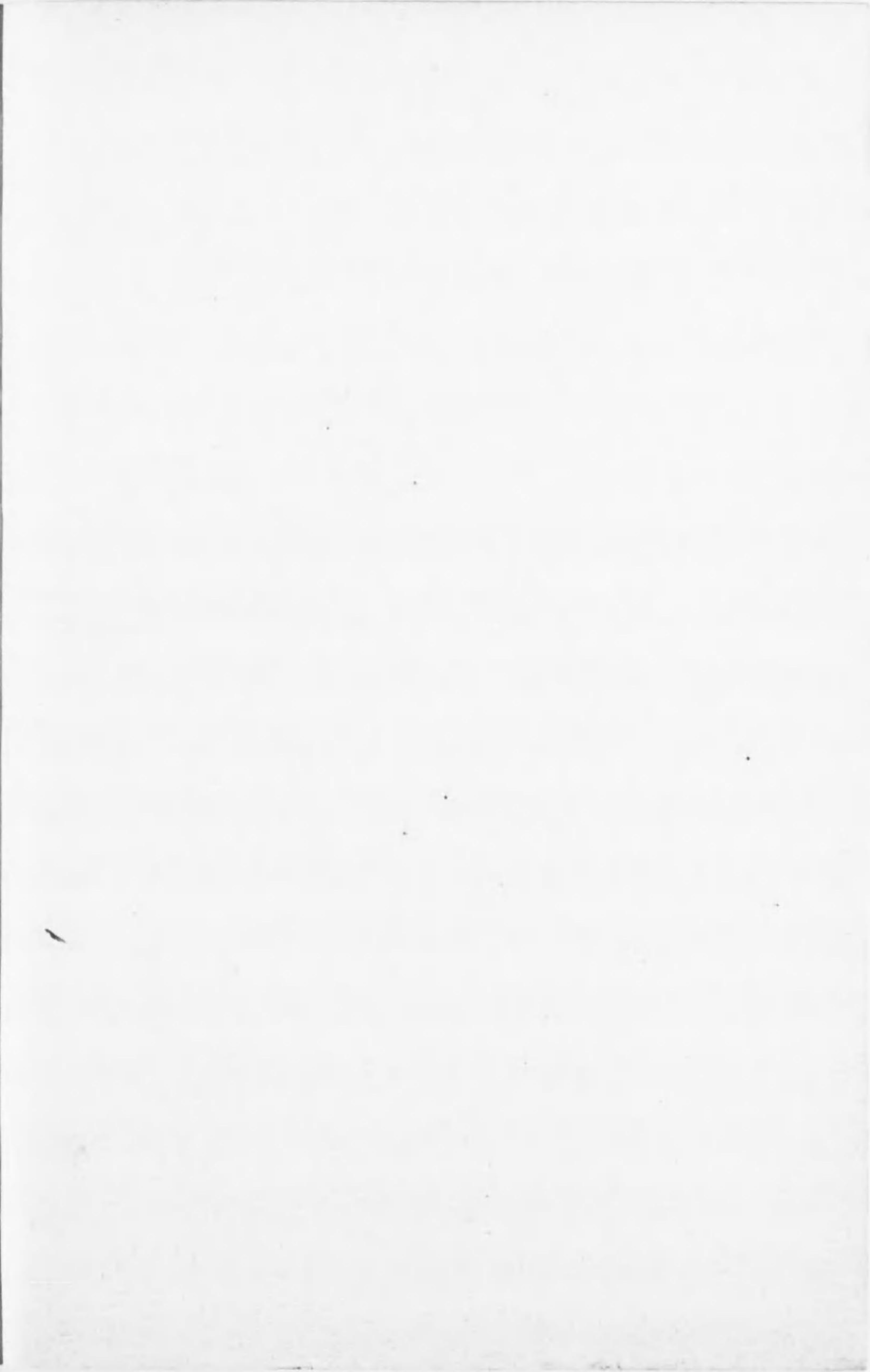


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CATALOGUE
OF
ART TREASURES
OF
TEN GREAT TEMPLES OF NARA
VOLUME TWENTY
THE SHINYAKUSHIJI TEMPLE

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ART TREASURES OF TEN GREAT TEMPLES OF NARA

VOLUME XX

THE SHIN-YAKUSHIJI TEMPLE

The Shin-yakushiji temple, otherwise called Kō-yakuji or Kōyakushiji, is situated on the old site in Nara. Tradition says that the temple was founded by the Empress Kōmyō who offered up prayers for the recovery from serious ill of the Emperor Shōmu and a sacred vow to erect a temple to be dedicated to the principal image of Yakushi-Nyorai. Since the erection, the temple took rank with the other great temples of Nara and was contributed often by the Imperial court. Even after the time when capital was transferred to Nara, the temple was likely in a favourable state under the cordial patronage of the Imperial court for a good while, but its prosperity began to decline towards the later times of the Heian epoch. About the beginning of the Kamakura period the time of restoration came at last and not only many of the buildings were newly erected but the ruined ones, too, were greatly repaired at the same time. At present the temple belongs to the Kegon sect of Buddhism under the Tōdaiji temple.

PLATE 1 NAMMON (South Gate)

With four posts and tile-roofed in *Kiritsuma* style.

Stepping into the precincts through the South Gate, you see a bell-tower to the right, the Jizōdō Hall and Kōyakushidō Hall to the left and stand in front of the Main Hall.

The South Gate is of the Kamakura times, rendered in *kiritsuma* style with four square posts which were connected each other with *kōryō* (beams) and have *masuhijiki*. Along with the East Gate of the temple, this Gate is one of the old examples belonging to the so-called *kabukimon*-gate style which was in vogue since the Kamakura epoch. The curves and mouldings of the connecting-beams (*Kōryō*) shows us the *tenjikuyō*

manner. Generally speaking, its structure conforms to the architectural regulation of that time, and in comparison with the East Gate, its whole appearance is wanting in gravity in some degree, but on the other hand, it surpasses in lightness owing to its rather high roof and its fine scale of architectural details.

PLATES 2-7 MAIN HALL (or KONDŌ)

Single storied and tile-roofed in *irimoya* style.

Stepping into the grounds through the South Gate, you see the Main Hall in front. The building is short in height and has a simple structure, having a roof of gentle slope and simple bracket-system of big *masuhijiki*. The interior of the Hall is divided in two parts, the inner chancel (*naijin*) and the outer chancel (*gaijin*). The structure of the inner chancel belongs to a very rare kind of style; all pillars are settled bare and the whole inner structure below the roof is utterly disclosed and plainly constructed; the ridge pieces and the plates are settled on *masu* and *hijiki* (beams) upon the principal rafters on the large *kōryō* (connecting-beams), besides, there is nothing like the wall between the *kashiranuki* (upper braces) and *ketahari* (beam-plates). The pillars are coloured and decorated with *hēsōge*-patterns as much as with buddhist images and the decoration are likely of the date of the Kamakura epoch. Generally speaking, the whole structure is simple indeed. It is surely said that it belongs to the Nara style, when we see its grand scale of architectural details, especially the types of big *masuhijiki*.

In the centre in the inner chancel there is an unusual round platform on which the principal image and others are installed. The ground within the Hall has been paved over with tiles since the Kama-

kura epoch, but it was probably the earth floor during the Nara period. Notwithstanding that the Main Hall is regarded as the original building of the Tempyō era there is a question whether it be original or not, because its inner construction without any ceilings is not the regular manner as the temple-building of that time. Besides, the history concerning to this Main Hall tells us nothing but the fact that the Hall was once destroyed by storm on the 30th of August, in the 2nd year of Ōwa (962) and then it repaired under the Imperial order. From the architectural point of view, we feel inclined to assert the fact that this was not originally built as a temple but as a Lecture Hall. Be that as it may, comparing with any other extant buildings in the Tempyō-style, for example, with the Main Hall of the Tōshōdaiji or with the Sangatsudō of the Tōdaiji, this Hall has kept much its former appearance. Though simple in construction and wanting in gravity, this is worthy to estimate highly above all in point of the remarkable excellency in its good proportioned construction as much as in its gentle appearance of sloping roof.

PLATES 8-12 YAKUSHI-NYORAI

Seated statue and wooden. Without colouring.
Height, 6 ft. 2½ in.

The principal image of Yakushi-Nyorai of 93.7 inches in height stands on the centre platform in the Hall and it is made of single wood-block (probably of *hinoki*), except the wrists. The wooden nimbus looking like double aureoles is plated with goldfoils and adorned with the divine-tree decoration, with a *hōshu* on the top and six *kebutsu* seated respectively on a small lotus-pedestals. Each *kebutsu* appears in a form of Yakushi-Nyorai, holding a medicine-pot in hand. The pedestal, too, is of wood and executed in a square *senjiza*-type with the shape of hanging skirt. Gold-foil covered all over the surface of the skirt as much as over the surface of the nimbus are likely the later modification. Seeing the image, you will appreciate its plumpness of body as well as some plain but powerful effect of work, the characteristics peculiar to the sculptures of single wood-block. From its clear-

cut eyes, nose, mouth and both hands, or from its breast and belly executed in heavy modelling, or from its cunningly shaped draperies, you will conceive the gravity peculiar to the image of this kind. You could easily realize such grave impression in the image of Miroku in the Tōdaiji temple or at the image of Yakushi-Nyorai, the principal image of the Akishinodera temple, but the present image stands first before others in this point. Besides, we can find the following characteristics in this image: the powerful effect of its facial expression with eyes open and clear-cut features, its plumpness of body, the thick modelling to its abdominal region above all, and the depiction cunningly done to the complicated plaits of draperies hanging down from about the left hand to its abdominal region. Even though this image appears so grave and graceful as the other images of the Tempyō era, it is surely said that the image must be of the date of the Jōgan era, because it has the severe taste peculiar to the images of this date. When we compare this to the image of Miroku in the Tōdaiji or to the Yakushi-image in the Akishinodera which were completely executed in the Jōgan-style, we cannot help to conceive the same characteristics common to them. If the image would be of the Jōgan era, it is natural to think that it cannot be the principal Yakushi-image of this temple of the original time.

The nimbus, too, is worthy to notice. We can hardly find such a nimbus like this elsewhere, decorated with a divine tree bearing a *hōshu* at the top and six *kebutsu* on side.

JŪNI-SHINSHŌ (Twelve-Escorts)

Standing statue and coloured. Clay.

PLATES 13-15 BAIRA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 2 in.

PLATES 16-20 INDARA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 2 in.

PLATES 21-23 BASSETSURA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 4½ in.

PLATES 24-27 ANTEIRA TAISEŌ

Height, 5 ft. 2 in.

PLATES 28-30 SHINTATSURA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 5 in.

PLATES 31-33 SHŌTORA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 6½ in.

PLATES 34-37 SANTEIRA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 4½ in.

PLATES 38-39 MAKORA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 5½ in.

PLATES 40-42 BIKATSURA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 4½ in.

PLATES 43-45 ANIRA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 1½ in.

PLATES 46-48 MEKKIRA TAISHŌ

Height, 5 ft. 5½ in.

These twelve escorts are arranged around the principal Yakushi-image on the round platform (*shumidan*) in the Hall. The eleven images among them are made of clay and the rest one (the illustration missing), the image of Gubira-Taishō, is of wood by later work. Here illustrated works are made in a regular way of clay-work which runs as follows: to begin with, a skeleton is constructed with wooden material (*hinoki-like*) as a ground core of image, and its main part corresponding to the body of image is wrapped with thin straw-mats, and then, clay mixed with *susa* (straws cut into pieces) are roughly plastered on the surface; and secondly, fine clay mixed with much of mica and *susa* are applied to the surface; and lastly, the whole surface thus made is finished with chalk and fully painted with colours such as ultramarine, verdigris, vermilion, brown, and others; or, sometimes, gold-foils and decoration in India-ink are applied to some parts of the surface. But, to all appearance of the present images, such colouring on the surface is almost entirely faded. Yet, obsidians inserted to the eyes of each image are visible now. Every pedestal consists of a rock-like pedestal and a wooden square pedestal like a chopping-board. Recently, on the occasion of repairing, the inscription in India-ink written on the reverse side of the square pedestal of the Indara-image was found by chance (Plate 19, 20). Owing to corruptions of wooden ground, we cannot read completely the meaning of the passage, but we can scarcely understand the fact that the

image was originally made in the hope of reposing the souls of deceased parents and of the happiness of the Imperial Household. Although the history of these images are not clearly known, the inscription tells us, even though not completely, of the motive of production of these images, besides, the style of letter too is indeed the style of the Nara epoch. Besides, judging from the letters of scribbling written by the side of the inscription, it is not too much to say that the images were surely made in the Tempyō-Shōhō era and not in later date after that at least. The facts that the style is of that date and the images is of 'clay' make us consent to this conclusion. Surely, the sight of these images remind us of those of the same date, especially of those Shitennō-images in the Kaidanin Hall of the Tōdaiji. Each of them is made of clay and has an appearance of distorted features with anger state under arms. But there are some differences between them as regards their types. You could easily notice the fact that each of the images illustrated here has an appearance of light posture and slender figure as well as a small head. Not only the expression of movement but the angry features are much intenser than those of the images in the Kaidanin. This difference depends on the circumstances that to make a group consisting of 12 images there was needed as much varied expressions without fail. From the view point of the *motiv*, there is the other difference between them. The Shitennō-images must have been made with the intention of making images of guardian deities, so, each of them must be finished as static as possible in spite of its expression of excited features. For instance, the image of Zōchōten has an appearance expressing much of a state of high-spirited and serious mind above all, but, with respect to the essential effect of production, no one can deny the fact that it is finished just as much static as in the rest three. On the contrary, the effect of movement is given to each of these escorts-images as much as possible. Each stands there, opening his breast, bending his waist, stretching the hands, shaking the fist up or down, or spreading the fingers threateningly. The anger state of mind reveals

in the hairs mostly which are finished in a flame-like shape. They look down upon their enemy, some putting the heads to the right or some to the left and fluttering their fin-like sleeves in the wind. Every one stands alone on his pedestal with a high-spirited mind, but at the same time, they stand there on the platform as if they are guarding and protecting the principal image uniting their efforts. The above are the characteristics of these images. With respect to their whole appearances, the expression of movement or activity is undeniable, however, there is something stiff about the limbs. Probably, such stiffness is mainly due to the inconvenient construction of its ground core, that is, the simply constructed wooden core of image is too frail to bear the weight of massive clay, still less the thin axle-trees applied to the legs of image, therefore, it is natural that the details such as the limbs of image could not be freely finished as a matter of fact. Yet, such stiffness is not worth blaming as a hindrance to the good result of the image. Above all, the result of each of the Mekkira, the Bassetura, or the Shintatsura is worth praising. As regards the results in details, the effect of the head is splendid. The artist, making the best use of clay, gave to each head a different expression of anger state of mind respectively. Its pathetic look moves us deeply. Moreover, we can understand the wonderful craftsmanship at the hair, the lie of hair, or at the hair-border; and its dressed hair are so exquisitely finished just as they are. Seeing these works, we cannot help to admire the excellency of the clay-work technique in the Tempyō period.

PLATES 49, 51 ELEVEN-HEADED KWANNON

Standing Statue and Wooden.

Height, 6 ft. 5½ in.

PLATES 50, 52 DITTO

Height, 5 ft. 9½ in.

There are two images attending to either side of the principal image in the Hall. The image to the left has been misnamed Gekkō-Bosatsu (Plate 49) and the one to the right Nikkō-Bosatsu (Plate 50), but either of them is to be called as the image of Eleven-Headed Kwannon as a matter of fact. The

Gekkō-image is of single wood-block and the other is a kind of systematised *yaschi* statue. The colour designs are visible fairly on the skirt of the former, while the latter retains scarcely any colours. Excepting the attributes they are almost original including even their nimbus and pedestals. On the halo the gold-foil patterns and on the nimbus the arabesque design in gold-foil are visible. The original colouring of the Nikkō-Bosatsu is mostly faded and its body is recoated with gold-foil. The small eleven heads on the top and the hands are remedied more or less, and some portions of draperies to be hanged down from the hand are entirely lost. The nimbus is original one on which the arabesque patterns are fully painted. At the pedestal some repairings are visible. The style of each is of the Heian era, but the Gekkō-image is a little older than the other in point of the date. The earlier Heian style is conceivable at the portly body or at the fold-lines of skirt finished in the so-called *honpa* (rolling waves) style. In comparison with any genuine image dated from the earlier Heian epoch, this image's fine and good-proportioned form make us think that the image might be the work about the Heian epoch or of the earlier times of the Fujiwara epoch at least. Its gentle look and its plump body, or its moderate curves of fold-lines assorted with simple and complex lines, or its grace and self-composed appearance call even the Nara style to our mind. Most of wooden nimbus made in the time when single wood-block statue was in vogue, were commonly decorated with arabesque designs in full colours, but the patterns of this nimbus (Plate 51) are put in gold-foils instead of colours. These patterns tell us fully the taste in those old days.

The other image of Eleven-Headed Kwannon, wrongly called Nikkō-Bosatsu, is of the later Heian epoch, and it may be safely said that the result of this image is poorer than that of above-mentioned image. Its rather small head, thin body, poor features, its hands and fingers, especially its powerless and monotonous lines of draperies—such are the remarkable marks of this image. Though as it

is, its lovely and slender standing posture is worth appreciating. The type of nimbus (Plate 52) is nearly the same as the other's.

PLATES 53-55 KŌYAKUSHI-NYORAI

Standing Statue of Bronze.

Height, 2 ft. 4½ in.

It is said that the image was once the principal image of the Kōyakuji temple, the predecessor of the present Shinyakushiji temple. The name Kōyakushi-Nyorai comes from this tradition. This is made of bronze, but the gilt-gold is entirely come off. Its features have a charm of archaic smile peculiar to the sculptures in the Asuka period and the hair-board, eye-brows, nose and skirt fold-lines are sharply carved out. But its good proportioned posture, its smoothy outline and comfortable fold-lines give us somewhat different impression from that of the image of the Asuka-style proper. The details are finished with great care. Judging from the smooth and unrestrained craftsmanship it must be the work of the beginning of the Nara period, succeeding nearly to the Asuka period. But it has not so much of the taste of Tang style as the other contemporary works, for instance, as the principal Yakushi-image in the Main Hall or as the Shō-Kwannon-image in the Tōindō Hall of the Yakushiji temple, and if it has any, that is but its traces. It is reasonable to think that the form of this image originates mainly in the genuine native taste of the preceding age.

PLATE 56 THOUSAND-HANDED KWANNON

Standing Statue, wooden and painted.

Height, 3 ft. 7½ in.

It is made of single wood-block and painted. Its body and lotus-pedestals are of cherry tree and all the hand-ends are of *hinoki* (Japan cypress). Cherry tree was in use in place of *hinoki* for making the single wood-block statue at times in early Heianchō, perhaps, it is because that cherry tree is similar to China cedar (*Dan-tree*) or to *hinoki* in point of colour tone, lustre and hardness. Wooden image in general brings its charm into full play when its fine proper grain surface is to be seen as it is. It

is a matter for regret that this image is painted all over. Of all petals of lotus-pedestal there are four original petals (the rest are likely of the Kamakura epoch), one of which has the inscription bearing the date of the first year of Tenroku (670). Its style surely proves the date. At first sight it is very doubtful to name it Thousand-Handed Kwannon, for its form is so different from the regular type of him. Its posture is clumsy, its hands are too long to its short body. Its features, the plaits and fold-lines of skirt resemble to the Eleven-Handed Kwannon illustrated in Plate 49. The whole appearance impresses us as naïve but moderate grace peculiar to the image of the earlier Fujiwara epoch. It finds its way out of the unrestrained technique of the Jōgan era.

The nimbus is a relief work and has the design of three *hōshu* on the top as well as the arabesque patterns all over its surface. The nimbus has somewhat different appearance from the image, so there is a question whether it is really the original one or not. But a great disparity of date between the two works—the image and the nimbus, is not though of.

PLATE 57 FUDŌ-MYŌWŌ AND TWO ATTENDANTS

Standing Statue. Wooden and Coloured.

Height, 5 ft. 1½ in.

Each image is composed of several blocks and coloured. The wooden and coral-lacquered nimbus had been crushed in pieces in certain old times, but as its original pieces are put on a board at present, it scarcely keeps its former appearance as you see in Plate 57. Each of them seems to be of the same hand. Referring to the Fudō-image, the body is finished in a moderate modelling and its whole effect is rather gentle for its angry look. Smoothly looked plaits are shallowly finished. The draperies executed in some degree in the so-called *honpa* (rolling waves) style or a kind of stiff fold-lines remind us of the later Fujiwara style. But its characteristic hard effect makes us feel as if it might be of the Kamakura style.

PLATES 58-64 PICTURE OF NIRVANA

Kakemono. In Colours on Silk.

Length, 6 ft. 3½ in. Width, 5 ft. 5½ in.

The picture of Nirvana of Kōyasan is the best-known of those in Japan, because it is the oldest as well as the best of all. Now, comparing this present picture with that of Kōyasan, from the point of view of the composition, we may find a great difference between the two pictures. In this picture Buddha, Bodhisattavas, Buddhist disciples and others are represented in closer order and in larger forms, and there are represented less persons but more beasts because of the balance with the limited width of picture plane. It is clear that this must be the later work in comparison with the picture of Kōyasan. Observing the expressions of figures in both pictures, we feel a certain composed, rather calm or dull mood or diffused feeling from the expressions of persons in the picture of Kōyasan, although they are making a show of bitter wailing. On the other hand, in the present picture, the gloomy feeling expressed in Bodhisattavas' eyes veils the effect of this picture in a melancholic mood. Half-opened eyes of Buddha have also a mood of pensive calmness, but they are suggestive of his wisdom and valour. In this picture, there are not used so beautiful coloured lines as in that picture, but lines of Indian ink only. We may find some traces of Sung style in this picture, therefore it may be safely said that this is a work of the Kamakura period, while the other is subdued by the Tang style. Its simple but delicate curve-lines give the picture a stringent effect and grave pathos. Lastly we find, in that picture, a simple, gentle and refined colouring peculiar to the picture in the Fujiwara period, and gorgeous designs, delicate patterns in cut gold-leaves (*kirikane*). On the other hand, in this picture, we find scarcely any patterns but fylot-patterns on Buddha's draperies. Its colours, too, imply a deep meaning and it appears to be a picture in India-ink. So, it is apparent this is a picture of Sung style. We must not overlook that this picture has a touch of freshness contrary to the common

pictures of Nirvana in the Kamakura times, which were mostly painted in an exaggerated and degenerated style.

PLATE 65 TWO SHAKUJŌS (CROZERS)

Length (the bigger one), 9 in ½.

Length (the smaller one), 9 in 1.

On the handle of the bigger one the letters of "Shinyakushiji" are carved. According to its inscription it was in use of the Holy Priest Gedatsu. The small one has no inscription, so its possessor's name is not known. Seeing the smaller, a pair of dragons, combined with neck and end of each, form an arc ring which suggests us the cosmos. This is indeed a wonderful design, though we often find elsewhere such design of crozier having a tower on its top or at the inside of circle. The design of the bigger one is not worth mentioning, its art is very rough and the strain of arc is gentle. It is supposed that both were made in the Kamakura period. Seeing the graceful form of the smaller, there is the trace of taste of the Fujiwara period.

PLATES 68-70 BELFRY AND BELL

Height, (Bell) 7 ft. 1½ in.

The belfry is situated on the east-southern corner of the precincts. According to the inscription on the tablet, it was built in the 2nd year of Kōan (1927) and it is the oldest of the extant belfries in the style like this. Small as its scale is, its form is very agreeable. Especially, its roof preserves the architectural characteristics of the Fujiwara epoch—the small *kiritsuma* gable, gentle slope of roof and the slight curve of the eaves. How refreshing its forms are in our sight. Its moderate projecting eaves give us a sense of stability for its rather high and slender structure. In point of form, this is a completely excellent building in this period as well as the three-storied pagoda in the Kōbokuji temple and the drum-tower in the Tōshōdaiji temple.

It is said that the bell was removed here from the Gangōji temple. Its swelling of girth the situation of its *stukiza* and other forms are like to those of the bell in the Myōshinji temple of Kyōto, which

has the oldest inscription and was made in the 2nd Year of Temmu (674). So it is supposed that they were made in the same year. Although there is no pattern on the edge of its top or its bottom and the relief pattern of lotus-flower on *stukiza* is finished so simple, yet we can feel more magnanimity in its form and in its width of size in *kesa* (scarf)-type in comparison with the bell of the Myōshinji. *Ryuzu* (hanger of bell) is also noteworthy.

PLATE 71 JIZŌDŌ HALL

Single-Storied. Tile-roofed in *Irimoya* Style.

Entering into the Southern Gate of the temple, you may find, on the left hand, Jizōdō Hall standing opposite to the Belfry and facing eastward. From the point of view of the style, it belongs to the middle of the Kamakura period. It is one *ken* square. This Hall, on such small scale, is very

important, because there are rarely left Buddhistic buildings on such a small scale, dating from the Nara-, the Heian- and the Kamakura period. Besides, its form is completely excellent moulding. The form of *Kaerumata* with designs is characteristic of this period and it owes its beauty to its small scale.

PLATE 72 TŌMON (EASTERN GATE)

Tile-roofed with Four Posts. In *Kiritsuma* Style.

Eastern Gate, as well as Southern Gate, is of a *Kabukimon* style which was built in the Kamakura period. But there are differences in their structures, exquisite or rough, and in their effects. This Gate is older than Southern Gate. It is important in the history of art because it is the oldest of extant *Kabukimon*, and it is supposed that it was made in the beginning of the Kamakura period.

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