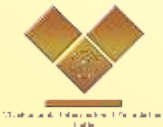




A PHOTO EXHIBITION ON
INDIA-JAPAN: ECHOES OF CULTURAL FRIENDSHIP
BY PROF. SHASHIBALA & SWAMINATHAN GURUMURTHY



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INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION
Collective Wisdom United Voice



VIVEKANANDA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION

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VIF is an independent, non-partisan institution that promotes quality research and in-depth studies and is a platform for dialogue and conflict resolution.

It strives to bring together the best minds in India to ideate on key national and international issues; promote initiatives that further the cause of peace and global harmony; monitor social, economic and political trends that have a bearing on India's unity and integrity; analyse the causes for social and ethnic conflicts leading to extremism and offer policy alternatives; interact with civil society and offer institutional support for exchange of ideas and interaction among conflicting groups; critique public policy and the working of democratic institutions and constitutional bodies; and evolve benchmarks for good governance and efficiency in public institutions.

These are objectives that fall under a broad head called 'nation-building' and often come within the purview of universities and institutions of higher learning. Unfortunately, for reasons best known to those who manage them, these academic bodies have not been able to attend to these tasks. This neglect, it seems, is in some way responsible for the perceived failure of representative bodies and the prevailing inefficiency in the government sector. VIF believes that many of these institutions – which are central to our democratic existence – cannot be expected to work better, unless academia, think tanks and civil society engage with them and critique them on a regular basis. Given its deep and abiding commitment to the deepening of democracy and to the emergence of a strong and self-reliant India, VIF has embarked upon quality research and scholarship in a host of areas in the hope that such studies will improve governance, strengthen national security, integrate India's foreign policy to the nation's long-term objectives and bring about much-needed functional efficiency in parliament and other representative bodies and in public institutions.



INTERNATIONAL BUDDHIST CONFEDERATION

Collective Wisdom, United Voice

International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) is global umbrella Buddhist body headquartered in New Delhi, India.

Established under the patronage of the supreme Buddhist religious hierarchy, it currently has membership drawn from 39 countries, of over 320 organisations, both monastic and lay, that include world bodies, national and regional federations, orders, temple bodies and monasteries, international organizations, institutions, etc.

United under the motto, “**Collective Wisdom, United Voice.**” The IBC aims to make Buddhist values and principles a part of the global discourse by presenting a united Buddhist Voice in issues that concern all humankind.

IBC stands for transparency, inclusiveness and a balanced representation of various traditions, gender, bodies both monastic and lay, and emerging Buddhist Dhamma around the world for including both Sangha and laity in its governing structure, IBC has been hailed by the international media as a forward looking, inclusive, credible and action-oriented World Buddhist Umbrella Body.

IBC also stands for the enshrinement of holy relics, and the preservation, development and promotion of Buddhist heritage worldwide, especially the holy sites of Bodh Gaya in India, where Buddha attained Enlightened Awakening, and Lumbini in Nepal, his birth place.

MISSION STATEMENT

To gather the collective wisdom of Buddhists around the world to speak with a united Buddhist voice; to make Buddhist values part of global engagement while working to preserve and promote Buddhist heritage, traditions and practices.

Tokyo Foundation

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INDIA-JAPAN: ECHOES OF CULTURAL FRIENDSHIP

The history of cultural friendship between India and Japan goes back to AD 552 when Japan began to drink from the Indian spring of culture, sharing the Buddhist ideals of wisdom and compassion, faith and sacrifice, purity and enlightenment. Its contacts with 'the Land of the Moon', i.e. India resulted in ushering in of a new era. Since then Buddhism has remained the core and culmination of our friendship and will continue for generations to come.

The indigenous name of Japan- 'Nippon' meaning "The Land of the Rising Sun", comes from the Sanskrit Buddhist sūtra of the 'Golden Light of the Sun', *Suvarṇa-prabhāsa*. The Sun is venerated in daily recitation of *Gāyatrī* mantra in India.

Japan drew its first constitution based on the Buddhist principles of Panchaśīla. The Sanskrit *dhāranī* of *Uṣṇīṣavijayā* was recited for its sanctification. *Triratna*- Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha thus gave a humanized face to the administrative system in Japan. The constitution was promulgated by Prince Shōtoku Taishi- the 6th-7th century devout Prince often known as the Ashoka of Japan. During his time hundreds of Sanskrit Buddhist sūtras were brought from China in Chinese translations from Sanskrit. Thus foundation of a later Japanese civilization was laid in the monasteries like Hōryūji where Prince Shōtoku Taishi used to meditate, deliver lectures and write commentaries on Buddhist sūtras. Their philosophy offered a sense of harmony between man and nature, and among themselves. Buddhism was consummated, gave vitality, refined their religious and aesthetic sentiments, opened up new horizons and paved a way for political unification and consolidation.

Japanese- the descendants of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu no Omikami turned their energies from tombs to temples, embraced Buddhist philosophy, studied its art and architecture, created paintings and sculptures and performed rituals and ceremonies on special occasions. Walls were raised dividing the sacred space from the worldly din and to build splendid temples with vermilion colored pillars and white walls, grey tiled roofs backed by pure blue sky, white sand in the gardens and

green pines, serving as peaceful resorts. Sound of the temple bells reverberate the hearts. Smoke of incense offered at the temples spreads the fragrance of dharma. Beautiful gardens are laid down to welcome the devotees to the world of the divine. These temples and monasteries enshrine Buddhas and Bodhisattvas presenting a compassionate gaze for humanity. The Great Buddha at Tōdaiji symbolizes national unity and integrity. Its consecration ceremony was presided over by the Indian monk-scholar Bodhisena. His brush is still kept at Shōsoin monastery.

Kichijō gekka is a festival which was celebrated first at Tōdaiji monastery in Japan in eighth century to worship Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī- the goddesses of intellectual and financial powers, as a pair which became an annual celebration. Sarasvatī is the only deity who was known to the Japanese even before Buddhism reached there. The goddess of plentitude of food in India- Annapūrṇā is Uke-mochi-no-kami in Japan. Rice cultivation went from India to Japan. The Japanese word *uruchi* for rice come from '*vṛīhi*' in Sanskrit meaning rice. Monk Ganjin carried Buddhist *Materia Medica*, the ritual of initiation and Indian sugar technology from China to Japan.

In early ninth century, the great monk scholar, Kōbō Daishi went to China to study Buddhism and brought a number of scriptures from there. He invented a new script for Japan- Hiragana on the basis of Sanskrit sound sequence- *a, i, u, e, o, ka, ki, ku, ke, ko.....* This led to democratization of education. Till today the Japanese begin their life with learning Hiragana script. Kōbō Daishi was the first Japanese to give training for writing Sanskrit mantras, *dhāraṇīs* and seed syllables. Later it was developed as one of the most refined art forms known as Shittan calligraphy. The first public school was opened by Kōbō Daishi. Sage Jiun Sonja, the last of the traditional Sanskrit scholars of Japan undertook an encyclopedic work of Sanskrit texts in 1000 fascicules, *Bongaku-shinryo* in the 18th century. Tradition says that Goddess Sarasvatī had herself appeared to the sage to initiate him into the mysteries of the divine language.

Thus the Dharma of the Buddha penetrated deep into their minds. Sūtras began to condition their thought, notions and expressions. Buddhist philosophy with its transcendental value systems inspired the poets and artists. Their thought was nurtured by transcendental ideals and values. Their visual expressions became deeply moving. Japan became the land of devotion to action, grandeur of thought and depths of philosophy expressed in the beauty of gardens, Haiku poetry, painters' brush and vibrations of Zen. Devotion of the Japanese people for Buddhism makes them pilgrims to tread on the footsteps of the Buddha.

Buddhism became the dynamic force for running the state and the society. Symbols and abstractions gradually nourished the soul of Japan. Devotees in the temples can be often seen with rosaries in their hands turning their beads and chanting. There are many kinds of rosaries, some are with 108 beads. The number 108 became sacred to the Japanese. Temple bells are rung 108 times on a New Year. 108 strokes signify casting off of 108 evil passions purifying hearts filling them with hopes. Uniquely Buddhist dishes are vegetarian. Vegetarian cuisine is known as sushi. Some monasteries still serve vegetarian food called devotion cuisine especially in Kyōtō.

The well known drama *Naru-kami* is based on the Nōh play *Ikkaku Sennin* in which a young Buddhist monk with supernatural powers violates the Buddhist commandments when distracted by a woman from his religious austerities. The legend is derived from the story of *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga* known in Japan as *Ekaśṛṅga-Ikkaku Sennin*, from *Mahābhārata* (3.110.23-113).

Tōdaiji and other monasteries keep the ancient masks of *Garuḍa*, *Brāhmaṇa*, *Nāgarāja*, *Indra*, *Brahmā*, *Sūrya*, *Yakṣa*, *Vasiṣṭha R̥ṣi*, *Īśvara* and *Lakṣmī* etc. for *Bugaku* or *Gagaku* dance and music in temples and palaces at banquets.

Sanskrit music has played a leading role in Japanese history of performing arts. A disciple of *Bodhisena* who was rescued by him on his way to China from a shipwreck was *Buddhasthira* had carried eight performances from *Champa*. They were frequently included in the court ceremonies after being performed during the consecration ceremony of *Daibutsu*

at Tōdaiji. In 767 Empress Shōtoku herself went to Yamashinadera to witness them. Three of the repertoires taken by him are still performed at the Imperial court of Japan- King *Pedu* of *R̥gveda*, *Kālavinka* and *Nāgarāja Sagara*. *Pedu* represents the *R̥gvedic* legends of *Aśvins* who give a white horse called *Ahihan-* vanquisher of serpents to them to trample on a poisonous snake. In 1874 twenty musical performances were selected for court ceremonies.

A suburban district of Tokyo is named *Kichijoji* town. *Kichijo-ji* means *Lakṣmī*. One can easily find towns like *Lakṣmī nagar* or *Śrī Nagar* in India. The *Gion* monastery in *Banshu* (*Hyogo Prefecture*) is *Jetavanavihar* established by a legendary Indian Buddhist saint *Hōdō* who is believed to have arrived in Japan in AD 646. The largest lake in Japan is named as *Lake Biwa* because its shape resembles *avīṇā*, the attribute of *Sarasvatī*.

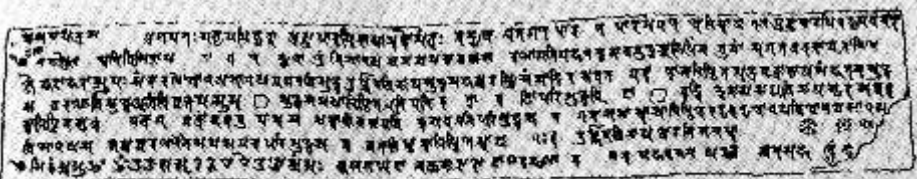
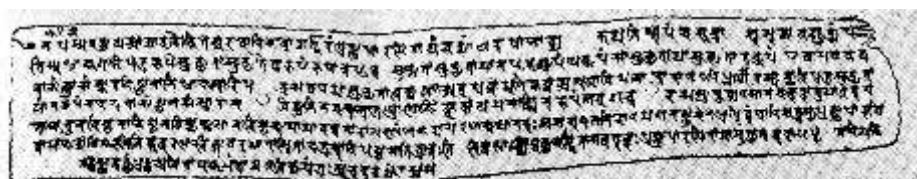
The main feature of *Gion* festival is a parade of 31 giant chariots (wheeled floats) through *Kyoto's* boulevards. Undoubtedly it is *Ratha yātrā*, looks like an exact copy of *Ratha yātrā* of *Jagannātha* temple in *Purī* in *Orissa*. The worship of constellations (*nakṣatra iṣṭi*) and of the nine planets (*nava-graha*) to ward off evil effects in life links India and Japan at a deeper level of thinking and believing.

Homa, the fire ritual, known as *Goma* in Japanese *shingon* Buddhist tradition, considered to be the highest expression of ritual practice, was transmitted from *Vedic India* through *China* during the rule of the *T'ang* dynasty in the 8th cen AD at the beginning of the *Heian* era in Japan. The ritual is an integral part of the contemporary Japanese religious life.

By Shashibala



Prince Shōtoku Taishi: The Aśoka of Japan gave a strong foundation to Buddhism; created the first constitution based on Buddhist ideals of *bahujana-hitāya bahujana-sukhāya* for gross national happiness. A Sanskrit dhāraṇī of Uṣṇīṣavijayā was recited for its sanctification and promulgation. The Prince wrote commentaries on Saddharma- puṇḍārika-sūtra, Vimalakīrti- nirdeśa- sūtra and Śrīmālā- simhanāda-sūtra giving rise to Japanese literature. He built a number of monasteries opening up new cultural dimensions and setting up a political system conditioned by values.



Sanskrit manuscript in Gupta script, taken from India for the consecration of the first institution of Japan.

The African National Congress of the 1980s drew its strength in Cape Verde as observed in the 1990s elections, from its membership of 7000, 50% of them being Cape Verdeans. The ANC's political strategy was to build a broad-based coalition of all the political forces in the country, including the Portuguese, the Portuguese-speaking, the black, the white, the mulatto, and the traditionalist. The ANC's political strategy was to build a broad-based coalition of all the political forces in the country, including the Portuguese, the Portuguese-speaking, the black, the white, the mulatto, and the traditionalist. The ANC's political strategy was to build a broad-based coalition of all the political forces in the country, including the Portuguese, the Portuguese-speaking, the black, the white, the mulatto, and the traditionalist.



Princess Shattouku Tetsuko

BUDDHIST TEMPLES

CENTRES FOR SPIRITUAL TRANSCENDENCE AND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Modern Japan is moving with speed causing noise and mental tension but there is a quest for silence and solitude in the minds of the people to find solace. Temples and monasteries are the best to find peace of mind and tranquillity in life. Most of them are built away from the din of the daily life in quiet places or on hill tops where one can rediscover the bond between nature and himself with their buildings nestling among trees or they are backed by lush green hills, deer may stroll around with leisure, clouds flutter in pure blue sky, priests walk past for prayer services and elegant pagodas rise to the sky.

A temple is an earthly copy of the celestial paradise of the divine on a reduced scale. Intricate systems of thought are encoded into its architecture. Two guardians called Niō stand on both the sides of the main gate protecting the sacred space as well as the devotees; a main hall of worship houses the main statue; a lecture hall is meant for discourses and rituals; pagodas rise to the sky elegantly, a tower keeps a bell for the monks. There are sūtra repositories, monks' quarters, memorial halls, ponds and gardens. A heavenly abode is a residence for innumerable celestial beings. Shinran a Japanese monk of twelfth century believed in togetherness of the Bauddha Dharma and *rājadharmā*. He said that they work together as the responsibility of

peace and benevolent rule lies with a ruler and Buddhist temples ensure divine protection to a state.

According to statistics compiled by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, there are 75,000 existing Buddhist temples there. Monasteries and temples are grand in scale like Hōryūji, Tōdaiji, Tōji etc. housing colossal statues like Daibutsu or non-descript small shrines like Hozanji near Nara. There are both- family run temples and National Treasures.

Gangoji was the first Buddhist temple built in Japan with the help of a Korean King to house the Great Buddha. It was made under the direction of Tori Busshi, the first Buddhist sculptor of Japan who was awarded great honours and social rank in the Imperial hierarchy.

Gion monastery meaning Jetavana in Banshu (Hyogo Prefecture) was established by a legendry Indian Buddhist saint Hōdō who is believed to have arrived in Japan in 646. Ryōsenji is a temple where a stone tower is believed to be the tomb of Āchārya Bodhisena from India.

The Seven Great Temples of Nara serve both as religious as well as academic centres- jñānodaya and dharmodaya. As centers of learning they belong to the Six Nara Schools of Buddhism- Tōdaiji, (Kegon School), Gangōji, (Sanron & Jōjitsu Schools), Saidaiji (Ritsu School), Yakushiji (Hossō School), Daianji (Sanron School), Kōfukuji (Hossō School) and

Hōryūji (Sanron & Hossō Schools). They do not merely confine to the designated schools. At all of them philosophy of all the six schools is studied. Earlier Sanron, Hossō, and Ritsu were more prominent but Hossō school gained prominence by late Nara era. Four of the seven temples- Kōfukuji, Gangōji, Daianji and Yakushiji were established outside Nara, but when the capital

moved to Heijōkyō - today's Nara city, these were shifted as well. By 11th century the Seven Great Temples constituted a pilgrimage route.

Tōji was built as the temple of national defence by means of king's doctrine. It stand with Saiji on the other side of the gate of the then capital city- Kyoto to guard it. In 823 Kōbō Daishi, the founder of the Shingon sect was appointed as head priest of Tōji, and the temple became one of the most important Shingon temples. He built its Lecture hall in 825 to perform a ceremony for national well-being. It houses 21 statues arranged in a maṇḍala paradigm- Brahmā, Indra, Kārtikeya, Sarasvatī, Achala and others radiating irresistible power. The main image is of the Healing Buddha, Yakushi Nyōrai.

Daianji has a temple dedicated to Sarasvatī. Studying Sanskrit and Practicing Shittan still prevails there. When Emperor Temmu's wife Empress Jito was suffering from a life-threatening disease he vowed to build a temple dedicated to the Buddha of Healing for her recovery in the eighth century called Yakushij. Tōdaiji is the national temple of Japan symbolizing national solidarity of all classes and democratization of Dharma. Acharya Bodhisean was invited as officiating priest for the ceremony. He was the first Indian to reach Japan in 736 and given honor of consecration of Daibutsu. Bodhisena was the chief officiating priest for the ceremony while his disciple Buddhasthira played Sanskrit music accompanied by dance which he had brought from Champa.



Hōryū-ji- the oldest extant monastery meaning 'dharma-vardhana-mahā-vihāra' was built by Prince Shōtoku Taishi where he used to go for meditation and delivering lectures. It served as a university, an institute of music and arts, a free hospital, a *pun̄ya-kṣetra* and an *archanā-kṣetra*, a place for merit making and praying and for training priests. It preserves invaluable treasures of Japanese history and culture.



The Buddha of spiritual and mental Healing- Bhaiṣajyaguru (Jap. Yakushi Nyōrai) at Hōryū ji monastery, the first Buddhist statue of Japan sculpted by Tori Busshi, commissioned for a fast recovery of Emperor Yomei from illness. This marks the beginning of Healing cult in Japan based on the philosophy of Bhaiṣajyarāja-sūtra (Jap. Yakushi-kyō) brought to Japan from China, translated into Chinese during the Eastern Ch'in dynasty (AD 317-420) first by Śrīmitra.



Chandraprabha (Jap. Gakkō) at Yakushiji flanks Bhaisajyaguru (Jap. Yakushi Nyorai) with Sūryaprabha (Jap. Nikkō) on the other side as a symbol of eternity- śāśvatī.



Tōji is the temple of national defence. It was built along with Saiji in AD 796 by an Imperial edict at the gate of the then capital city- Kyōto to guard it.



Gate of Honganji temple where Shinran (1173-1262), the great monk who founded Jōdō sect rests. He said in 'The True Teaching, Practice and Realization of the Pure Land Way' that the Buddhist Dharma and secular ruler work together for the good of the people. The ruler is responsible for peace while Buddhist temples ensure protection to the state. The conceptual framework promotes values.



Dharma Hall (Jap. Hatto) at Nanzenji temple is a large lecture hall meant for lectures, readings and temple ceremonies. As a deeply spiritual place, Nanzenji is one of the most important Zen temples in Japan of the Rinzai sect.



Shomyoji temple in Yokohama built by Hojo Sanetoki (1224-1227) with its amazing garden that represents the 'Land of Perfect Bliss' - heaven on earth.



Monk Ippen Shonin (AD 1234-1289) devoted his life preaching the importance of the practice called nembutsu- *nāma-smaraṇa*- reciting the name of Amitābha, the saviour. He gave up his family and possessions to travel throughout the country and founded Ji Shu sect of Pure Land Buddhism.



Portrait and signatures of the Indian scholar Śubhakarasiṃha from a ninth century scroll from Japan

Śubhakarasiṃha (AD 637-735), a king of Uda, gave up his kingdom and took the spiritual path. He was a teacher at Nalanda university and had arrived at Ch'ung-shan, China in AD 706. He was one of the three missionary monks who had carried the tradition of esoteric Buddhism to China from where it was taken to Japan. Two others were Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra. Dengyōdaishi, a Japanese scholar went to China to study philosophy and practiced meditation. He met a disciple of Śubhakarasiṃha, Aśvataṃtra, a Tantric teacher. Śubhakarasiṃha stressed that a mantra in spite of being transcribed as accurately as possible could never be as efficacious as those written in the original Sanskrit script. So the masters wrote a form of Brahmi script that seems to have been widely used in India.



Projection of interior life in meditation:

Bijakṣara-maṇḍala of Mahākaraṇāgārha from Japan

The Vajradhara and Mahākaraṇāgārha-maṇḍalas form the core in Japanese Esoteric Buddhism to translate profound levels of meditation and emergence of the world from the Great source. As a psycho-physic representation of the universe, they are used as a projection of interior life in meditation, a movement from multiple facticity of existence at the lowermost level to a focused concentration at the highest point. It also leads to realization of the outflowing enlightenment or penetration away sphere of existence. Mahākaraṇāgārha-maṇḍala unfolds from its unitary center to the diversity of its extremes in the twelve sections. In ritual and symbolic form, the mystical circle is often drawn or painted on walls or on scrolls to be hung inside the Shingon temples.



Brahmā (Jap. Bonten), the Lord of earth enshrined in the sermon hall of Tōji monastery. It is one of the twenty one statues arranged in a maṇḍala paradigm sculpted for ceremony performed for well-being of the country in the ninth century.



Indra- the Vedic Lord of Heaven from Lecture Hall of Tōji monastery



Chhatra Vināyaka



Dhanur Vināyaka



Mālya Vināyaka



Binayakaten

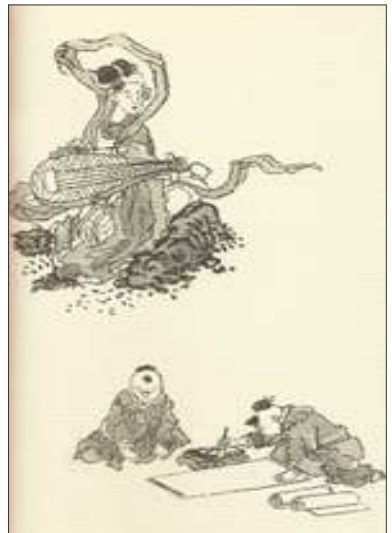


Gaṇeśa



Khadga Vināyaka

Manifestations of Gaṇeśa called Binayaka-ten, Shōden and Kangiten in Japan,
the lord of good luck.



Sarasvatī known as Benzaiten in Japan, the goddess of wisdom, longevity, happiness, virtues and the mother of speech has manifested in Japanese Buddhism in many forms. Her earliest presence in Japan is seen in the Seven Lucky Gods sanctifying every home. The first ceremony to venerate Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī was held at Tōdaiji in AD 722 as Kichijō gekka. Quite a few temples are dedicated to her. Annual homa is a regular feature in many monasteries



Varuṇa: the lord of waters



Sun rides a chariot driven by horses according to the Purāṇic tradition. Depicted here is a line drawing of Sun God (Jap. Nitten) from Mahākaruṇāgarbhamaṇḍala, Sun riding a horse from Sun temple, Konark and a wheel of his chariot also from Konark.



Yama, the Lord of Death



Humanity waiting for the judgement of his deeds written by Chitrugupta



Suffering represented by a scene of hell



Hungry ghosts representing desires

Transcendence in life from humanity to divinity is represented in Japan through maṇḍala-psychophysical representation of the universe. By virtue of good deeds a human being crosses the four lower levels of existence which are psychological states of mind. Sufferings is represented by scenes of hell, deluded desires by hungry ghosts, instinctual state of fearing the strong and bullying the weak by animals and a state of anger and urge of domination by demons. A human has to suppress them all to reach the ultimate level of Devas.



Siddham letters as objects of worship "a" for Agni and "i" for Indra, are written in siddham as seed syllables for the two deities

12 Vedic deities are still worshipped in Shingon temples in Japan. They are: Īśāna, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirriti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Vaiśravaṇa, Brahmā, Prithivī, Āditya and Chandra. On top are their seed syllables written in Sanskrit, placed on lotus seats and encircled by halos because they are also objects of worship.

Deities of time and space with their names written in Sanskrit in Siddham



Taradaya



Thursday



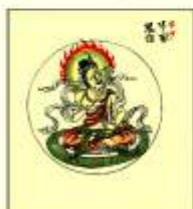
Friday



Purvaphalguni



Ashleṣā



Pūrṇā



Ādrā



Mṛgaśīrṣ



Rohini



Jyēṣṭhā



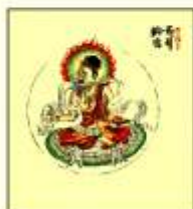
Aśvini



Svātī



Citrā



Haṣṭā



Pūrvaṣāḍhā



Kṛttikā

PERFORMANCE OF *HOMA/HAVANA* IN SHINGON TEMPLES CALLED GOMA IN JAPAN

Homa, the Vedic fire ritual, known as Goma in Japanese Shingon Buddhist tradition, considered to be the highest expression of ritual practice, was transmitted from Vedic India through China during the rule of the T'ang dynasty in the 8th century AD at the beginning of the Heian era in Japan. The ritual is an integral part of the contemporary Japanese religious life. During the long history *homa* has been refined and integrated into the ritual tradition of Buddhist Tantra. A large variety of rituals are present within the tradition. The training sequence of a Shingon priest culminates with *homa*. The pervasive impact of Shingon is known by the presence of Tantric ritual and symbolism through Japan today.

Following are the most common four types of homas:

- **Śāntika (Sokusaiho)**- to calm the calamities as war, f a m i n e , diseases, accidental death and natural disturbance.
- **Pauṣṭika (Zoyakuho)**- to increase or extend happiness and prosperity
- **Vaśīkaraṇa (Kushoho)**- to invite the protection and compassion of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas
- **Ābhicārika (Gofukuho)**- to conquer evil



Performance of fire ritual -
Vedic Homa called Goma in Japan



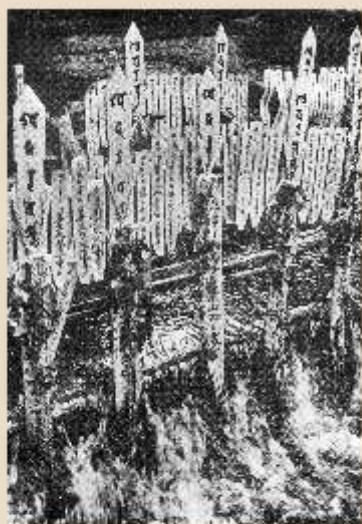
A table laid down for Goma/homa



Leaves used in Goma/homa ceremony



Ritual implements for
Goma/homa ceremony



As much as we think of the world as a flat, horizontal plane, it is not. The world is a sphere, and the shape of the sphere is the shape of the world. And the shape of the world is the shape of the universe. The world is a sphere, and the shape of the sphere is the shape of the universe. The world is a sphere, and the shape of the sphere is the shape of the universe. The world is a sphere, and the shape of the sphere is the shape of the universe.



Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (Jap. Senju Kannon)- Reflections of the Rigvedic concept of Puruṣa sūkta (10.90) wherein the universal Puruṣa has a thousand heads, eyes and feet. The idea has dominated the religious mindscape of East Asians ever since it was first painted by an Indian monk and presented to the T'ang Emperor of China in AD 618-649. He has thousand arms and thousand eyes on each palm to help all and illuminate all with the light of wisdom.

DHYĀNA TO ZEN: THE PATH OF INNER QUEST

The philosophy of dhyāna became Zen in Japan- a product of Chinese and Japanese soil from an Indian seed. It has penetrated into the Japanese life laying emphasis on stern spiritual discipline. Over the past nine centuries it has become a warm reality of Japanese culture. Its influence on their arts and taste, attitudes and perceptions, the masters of garden design, tea ceremony and flower arrangement, pottery and poetry, Noh plays and swordsmanship, architects, painters and sculptors has been pervasive.

The practitioners go to Zen monasteries to learn self-reliance, physical and spiritual discipline, refinement and advancement through concentration, purity of mind and essentiality, inner quest, patience and obedience. It is steeped in its fundamental concepts of śūnyatā and simplicity, beauty and purity, harmony and grace; it advocates futility of nonessentials, worldly trappings and human passions. The inner most wisdom becomes free from misconceptions and umains awakened. Action after meditation with an unwavering mind and soul is the Zen spirit.

Dhyāna is followed by samādhi. It is the control of subtleties of mind. It demands perseverance and confidence. Mind becomes purer and gets illuminated. Zen abhors media. Its ideals can be transmitted from mind to mind and learnt through insight. Zen instills a craving to come to light from darkness "*tamaso mā jyotirgamaya*".

Zen became widespread among the samurais. Many if them studied Zen which prepared them for going to the fields of war with an approach to instability of life like a crescent reflected on the waves of the ocean of existence. Indian Sages like Droṇa were great masters of the art of war. Samurais believe in 'ken zen ichi' meaning sword and Zen are coactive- *śāstre śāstre ca kauśalam*. The dictum is echoed in the following stanza:

*Agrataś chaturō vedāḥ prṣṭhataḥ saśaram dhanuḥ/
Idam brāhmam idam kṣātram śāstrādapi śāstrādapi//*

A parṇa kuṭi of India has become the estheticism of simplicity in a Zen tea room. Tea ceremony comprises of harmony, reverence, purity and tranquility.

Fundamentally science and Zen spiritualism have no points to contradict as Zen is a religion of realization, realization of isness of what is happening around us; this isness of things is science. Science has no place for blind faith and superstitions; Zen also detests all that had gained ground to some extent after propagation of esoteric sects like Tendai and Shingon.

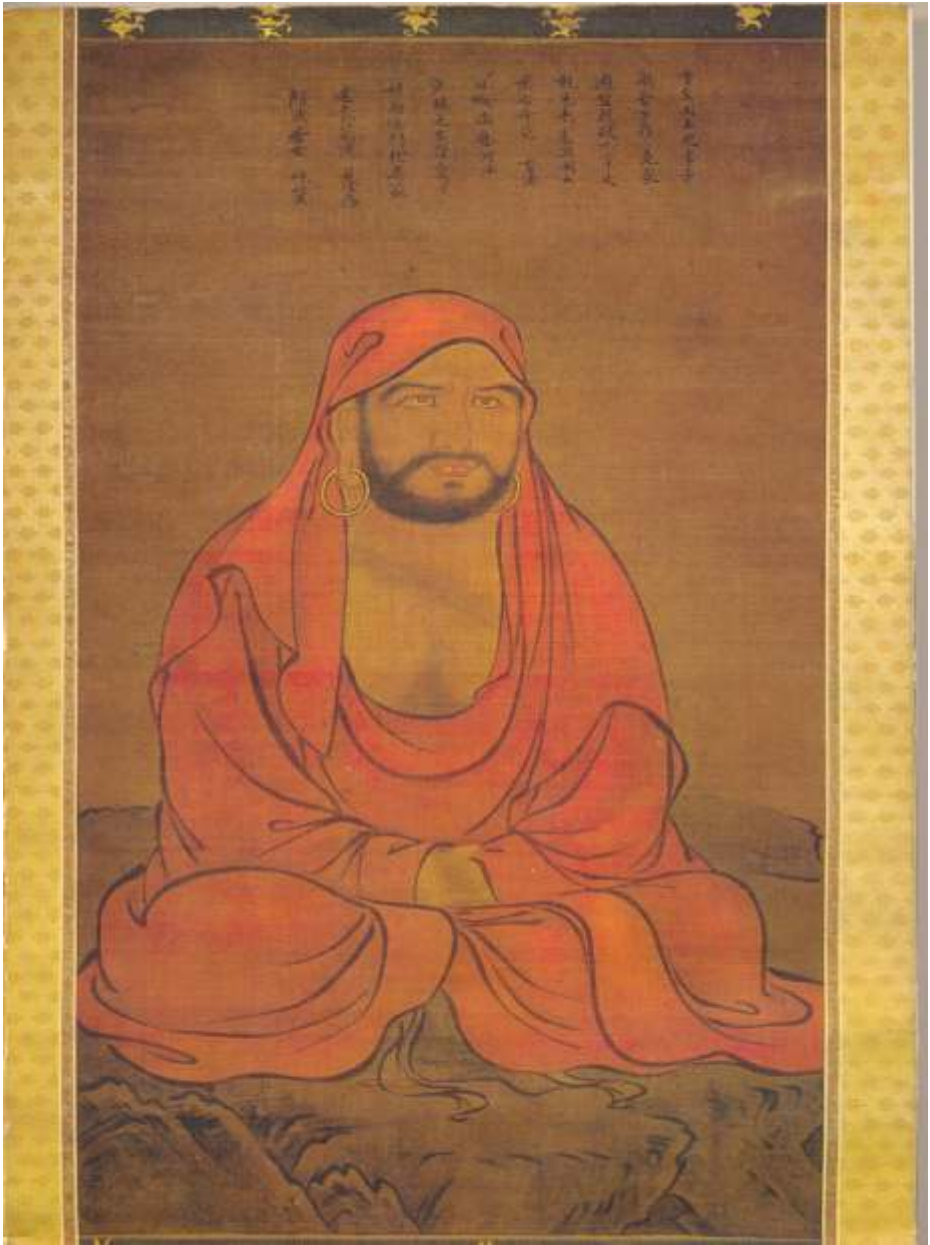
Seven fundamental characteristics of Zen are: asymmetry, simplicity, austere sublimity, naturalness, subtle profundity, freedom from attachment and tranquility. There is no sequence, each of them is equally important- aloneness, familiarity, refinement, inwardness, commonness, minimalism, purity and Śūnyatā. Asymmetry means imbalance,

irregularity and informality. By definition it means being uneven. It is implied in architecture, painting, flower arrangement and interior decor.

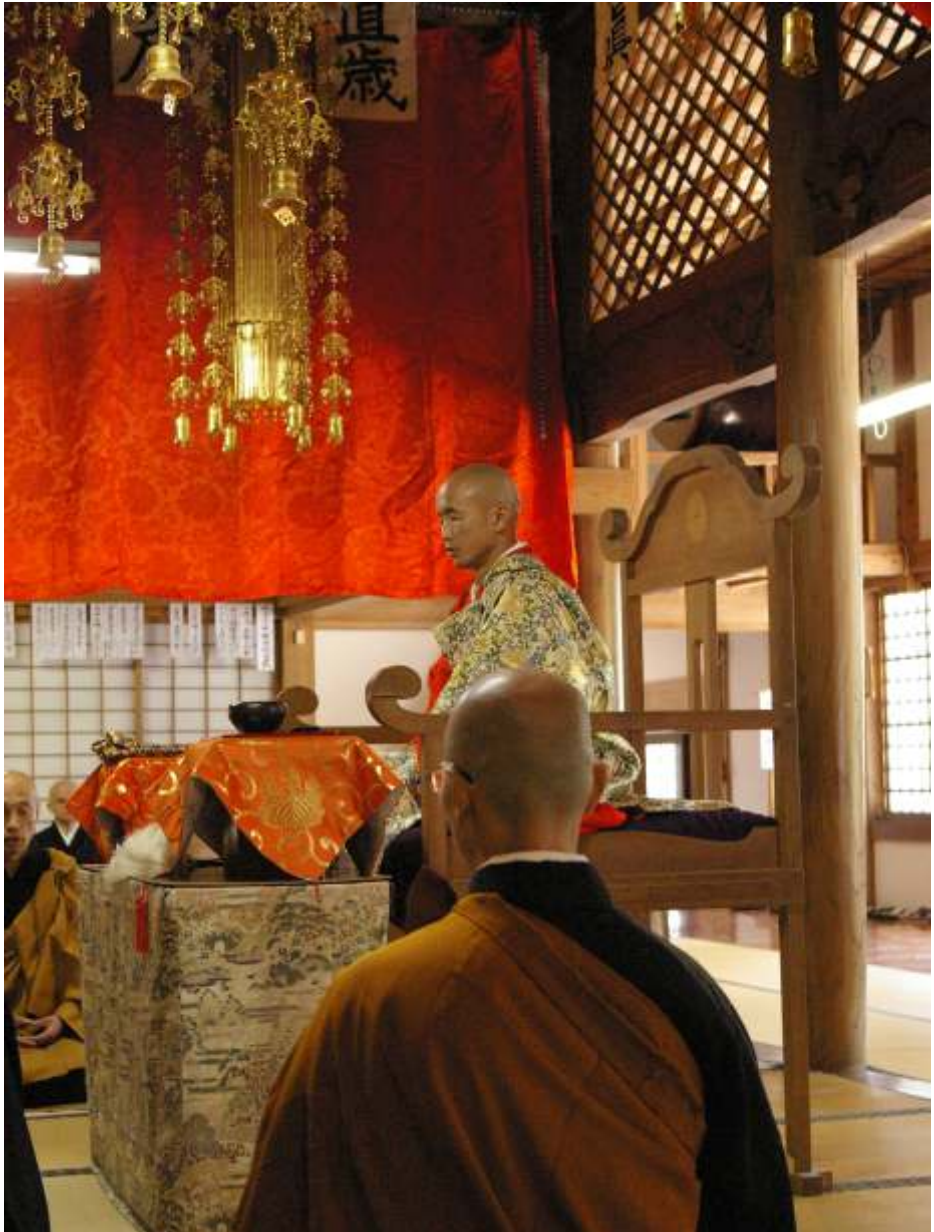
Śūnyatā is an appreciation of absolute poverty and non-attachment and purity means freedom from defilements. The concept of aloofness taken from the Laṅkāvatāra- sūtra leads to refinement of life, it needs pure and serene mind to enjoy its essence. It is followed in most of the forms of art like landscape gardening, tea ceremony and ikebana. Inwardness needs unperturbed mind. Minimalistic approach teaches expressing plentitude of form through least of means.

The essence of Zen training lies in practicing single-mindedly without aspiring for any

results. People from any walk of life aspiring for higher goals can go for training under a qualified monk or a lay teacher who has received sanction (inka) to get insight and peace of mind following a very strict time table, getting up at three in the morning working till nine O'clock at night, reciting sūtras, doing meditation, sitting on straw mats spread along the walls and carrying out other monastic responsibilities



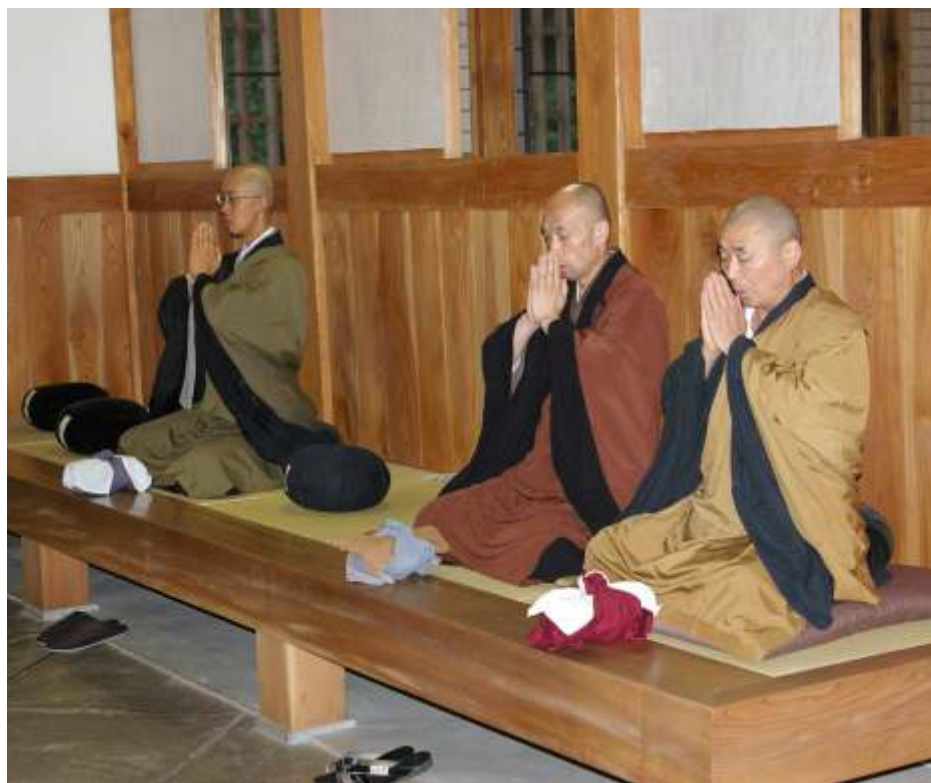
An Indian teacher from Kāñchīpuarm- Bodhidharma known as Bodai Daruma in Japan transmitted the philosophy of dhyāna from India to China from where it was carried to Japan by Japanese scholars. It was transformed as Zen which today has a following of 10 million, 21000 temples and has penetrated deep into the lives of the Japanese. Tradition records that Buddha handed over dhyāna to Mahākāśyapa. Later it passed on to Bodhidharma- the 28th patriarch.



Inauguration of Ordination Hall at Hokyōji temple, May 2008. The tradition was initiated by Monk Ganjin in 8th Century AD when Emperor Shōmu and his queen were waiting for long for being ordained. When Chinese monk Ganjin could reach Japan after several attempts a special platform at Tōdaiji was constructed for him to confer precepts to Emperor Shōmu accompanied by four hundred other people.



Ordination ceremony at Hokyoji (May 2008)- sacrificing life for
Dharma to establish peace and harmony in the world



Monks at Hokyōji monastery devoted to the inner path seeking enlightenment, drawing on their knowledge, exploring the external universe of matter mirrored in the boundlessness of the internal realm of life- *aham brahmāsmi*, searching the ultimate reality of life minutely and logically, considering the relationship of the cosmos and human life to establish a rhythm in the course of life and daily existence.



Engakuji monastery played a key role in establishing Zen in Japan. A thatched roof of the pavilion induces an atmosphere for meditation. As said by monk Eisai Zen is conducive to general welfare and national security. In his words, "Outwardly Zen favors discipline over doctrine, inwardly it brings the highest inner wisdom".



A Zen garden at Jotenji (Hakata) which is abstract and symbolic, a starting point for meditation, crossing the sea of illusions- the dry sandy ripples of the ocean of existence- *bhava-sāgara* towards the shore of illumination. A pilgrim looks, feels and thinks in reverence silently.

SANSKRIT AS A MEDIUM OF TRANSCENDENTAL VALUES AND SECULAR ADVANCEMENT

Entry of Sanskrit Buddhist scriptures into Japan in AD 552 became their identification with the central axis of human advance. Japanese emperors longing for transcendental values embraced the tradition of sūtras written in Sanskrit as a core for national unity and integrity. Buddhism began to unroll unfathomed spheres of thought. Sanskrit was recognized as a divine language in which were written the sacred words of the Buddha which could lead to enlightenment. A host of secular technologies accompanied the new Buddhist order: writing, administration, weaving, metallurgy, calendar and architecture etc.

Upto the day a rich literary treasure of Sanskrit texts consisting of *dhāraṇīs*, *tantras*, *sūtras* and other texts has been kept in Japan for nearly 1400 years. Philosophical speculations opened up new avenues and horizons. The idea of bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya overwhelmed the minds to such an extent that the great Japanese Prince Shōtoku Taishi decided to carve out the first constitution of Japan, known as Seventeen Article Constitution based on the Indian ideals. A Sanskrit manuscript of Uṣṇīṣavijayā-dhāraṇī was taken from India for consecration of the constitution. Hōryūji monastery still yields the manuscript written in Gupta script. With the coming of a new political system conditioned by values the country began to emerge out of a clan to a state system.

Prince Shōtoku Taishi himself wrote commentaries and lectured on Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-sūtra, Śrīmālā-devī-siṃhanāda-sūtra and Vimāla-kīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra. These gave birth to Japanese literature. The sūtras can be heard in daily recitation of the Japanese up to the day. The

second milestone in the history of Japan as a state stands during the reign of Emperor Shōmu who used Sanskrit sūtras as a core to create a unified country and himself became a supreme monarch. During mid eighth century he dispatched Sanskrit sūtras to all the provinces and ordered for their recitation on fixed days and time.

The system of education saw a phase of democratization in the ninth century with creation of Sanskrit based alphabet invented by the monk scholar Kōbō Daishi. To achieve this historic democratization, he created Japanese Kana syllabary of fifty sounds: *a i u e o, ka ki ku ke ko*, etc. It was to spread education to the common man. The new syllabary was a revolutionary step in Japan's civilization; what was hitherto the prerogative of the predestined few, became the potential privilege of all. The entire alphabet was woven into a poem

wherein every syllable occurred once. This poem is called Iroha. It is based on the Mahāparinirvāṇa-sūtra.

The great monk Jiun Sonja, the last of the Sanskritists of Japan in the traditional style lived from AD 1718 to 1803. A saint of great learning and noble virtues, he stands unique in the history of Mantrayāna as the doyen of traditional Sanskrit studies in Japan, and in recognition thereof he was given the honorific title 'Sonja' which means 'ārya' or 'arhat'. Nobody else in Japan was given this honor.

The earliest surviving example of printed matter in Japan is 'Hyamanto darani'- 'Million Pagoda dhāraṇī', produced between 764 and 770 by the order of Empress Shōtoku as thanksgiving for the defeat of a rebellion. Emperor Shōmu (701-56) strongly promoted copying the entire Buddhist Tripiṭaka. Thus sūtra copying became a major industry in Japan. Wooden tablets called sotōbas written in Siddham letters are often found in cemeteries.

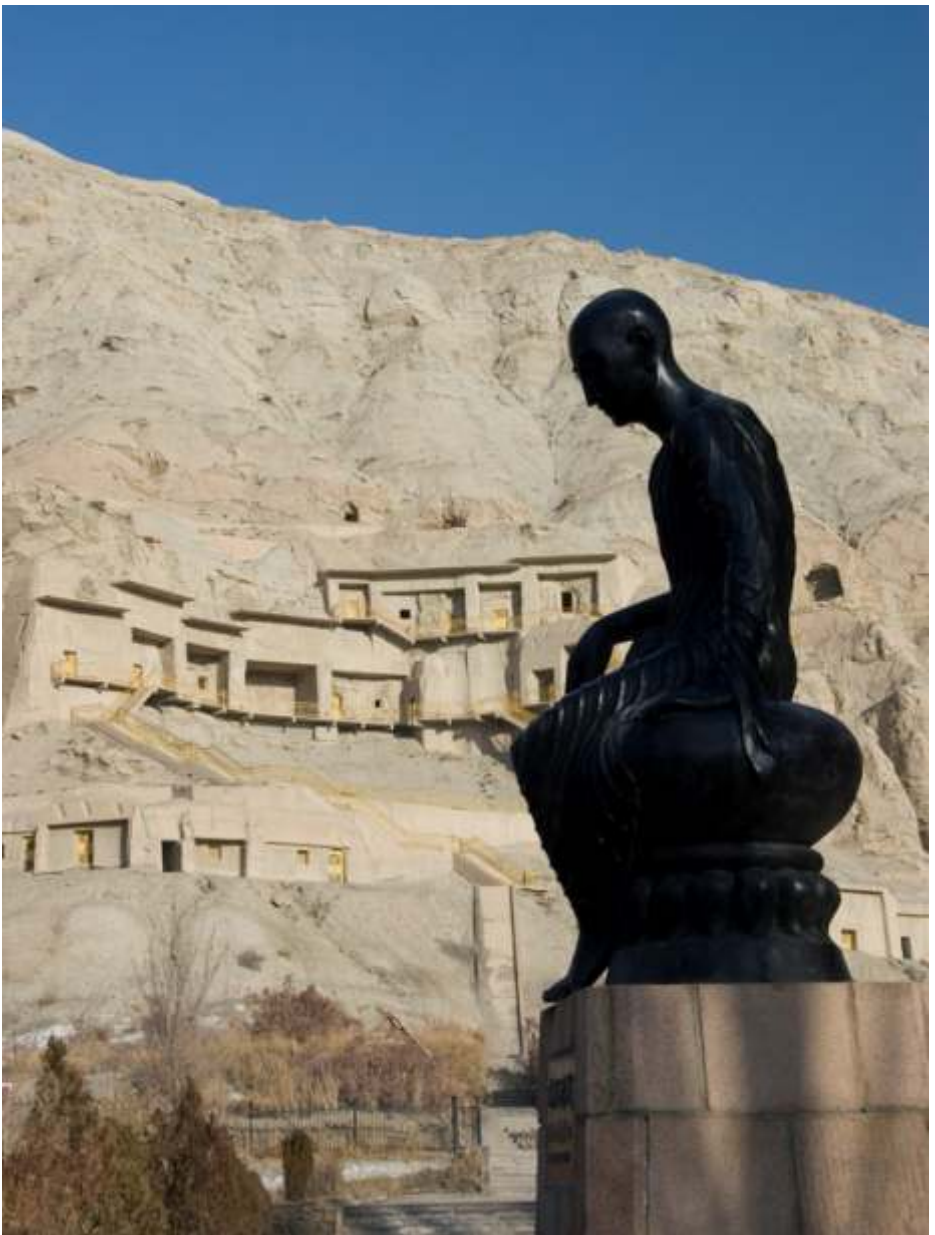


Indian script is sacred for Japanese. Its initial sound symbol 'a' is prime among all letters and the supreme immutable: *akṣarāṇām akāro 'smi* (Gītā 10.33).

'A' is calligraphed here by Kakuban (AD 1095-1143) emerging from a pristine white eight-petalled lotus, situated on the adamantine plane of the vajra. 'A' symbolizes wisdom, Vajra-power and lotus- purity.



‘Om svāhā’ written by a Japanese calligrapher



Kumārajīva - A famous Buddhist master of 4th-5th century, became a monk at the age of seven. Due to his intelligence and diligence, he mastered the spirit of Buddhism very well. He led 3,000 Buddhist followers to translate sūtras from Sanskrit to Chinese. Instead of meta-phrase he used free translation which made the scriptures easy to understand. According to recent statistics compiled by the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan, out of 75,000 existing Buddhist temples in Japan, 62,000 belong to the sects which are based on the Sūtras translated by Kumārajīva.



Wooden pieces of Diamond Wisdom Sūtra translated by Kumārajīva, unearthed at the time of excavation in February 2010 at Tenjinbata, Kamo, Takashima, by Committee of Education, Shiga Research Institution and copy right: Cultural Heritage Preserving Association, Education Department, Shiga Prefecture.

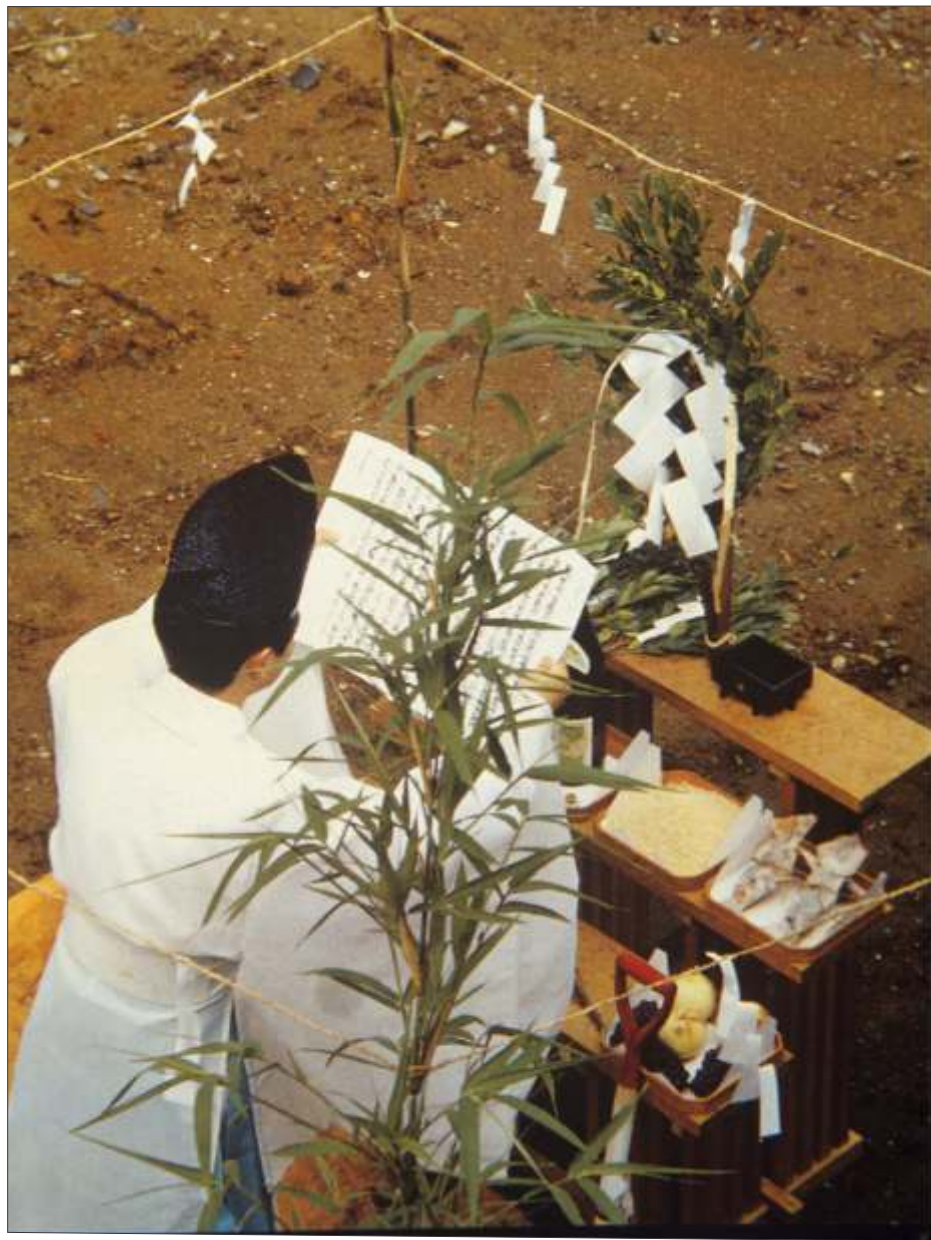


Sūtras translated by Kumārajīva written in Japan with Chinese ink and brush on thin wooden panels are sorted out for research at the Research and Compiling Section, Archaeological Museum, Azuchi Castle.

昔者菩薩爲大國王。常以四等育護衆生。聲動遐邇。靡不歎懿。勇亦爲王。處在異國。性貪無耻。以兇爲健。開士林歎。菩薩懷二儀之仁惠。虛誣謗。詭爲造端。興兵欲奪。菩薩國。菩薩群僚僉曰。寧爲天仁。賤不爲豺狼貴也。民曰。寧爲有道之畜。不爲無道民矣。料選武士陳軍振旅。國王登臺觀軍情。張流淚涕泣交頤曰。以吾一躬毀兆民之命。國亡難復。人身難獲。吾之通邁國境。咸康將誰有患乎。王與元妃處于山林。海有邪龍。好妃光顏化爲梵志。訛叉手箕坐垂首。靖思有似相屬。思詠舊君猶孝子之存慈親也。王與元妃處于山林。海有邪龍。好妃光顏化爲梵志。訛叉手箕坐垂首。靖思有似道士。惟禪定時。王視欣然。日探果供養。龍伺王行盜挾妃去。將還海居。路由兩山夾道之徑。山有巨鳥。張翼塞徑。與龍一戰。焉龍爲震。電擊鳥墮。其右翼遂獲還海。王採果還。不見其妃。悵然而曰。吾宿行違殃咎隣。臻乎。乃執弓持矢。經歷諸山。尋求元妃。覩有榮流。尋極其原。見巨獼猴而致哀慟。王愴然曰。爾復何哀乎。獼猴曰。吾與舅氏併肩爲王舅。以勢強奪吾衆矣。嗟乎。無訴子。今何緣翔茲山岨乎。菩薩答曰。吾與爾其憂齊矣。吾又亡妃。未知所之。猴曰。子助吾戰。復吾士衆。爲子尋之。終必獲矣。王然之曰。可。明日猴與舅戰。王乃彎弓擣矢。股肱勢張。勇遙悚懼。播徊迸馳。猴王衆反。遂命衆曰。人王元妃迷在斯山。爾等布索。猴衆各行見鳥病翼。鳥曰。爾等奚求乎。曰。人王亡其正妃。吾等尋之。鳥曰。龍盜之矣。吾勢無如今在海中大洲之上。言畢。鳥絕。猴王率衆由徑臨海。憂無以渡。天帝釋卽化爲獼猴。身病疥癰。來進曰。今士衆之多。其踰海沙。何憂不達於彼洲乎。今各復負石杜海。可以爲高山。何但通洲而已。猴王卽封之爲監衆。從其謀。負石功成。衆得濟度。圍洲累沓。龍作毒霧。猴衆都病。無不仆地。二王悵愁。小猴重曰。令衆病瘳。無勞聖念。卽以天藥傳衆鼻中。衆則奮鼻而興。力勢踰前。龍卽興風雲以攔天。日電耀光海勃怒。霹靂震軋動地。小猴曰。人王妙射。夫電耀者卽龍矣。發矢除凶。爲民招福。衆聖無怨矣。霆耀電光。王乃放箭。正破龍。龍被射死。猴衆稱善。小猴拔龍門。論開出門。妃天鬼咸喜。二王俱還本山。更相辭謝。謙光崇讓。會舅王死。無有嗣子。臣民奔馳尋求舊君。於彼山阻。君臣相見。哀泣俱還。并獲舅國。兆民歡喜。稱壽萬歲。大赦寬政。民心欣欣含笑。且行。王曰。婦離所天。隻行一宿。衆有疑望。豈況旬朔乎。還于爾宗。事合古儀。妃曰。吾雖在穢虫之窟。猶蓮華居于汙泥。吾言有信地其圻矣。言畢。地裂。曰。吾信現矣。王曰。善哉。夫貞潔者沙門之行。自斯國內。商人讓利。士者辭位。豪能忍賤。強不陵弱。王之化也。婦婦改操。危命守貞。欺者尙信。巧僞守真。元妃之化也。佛告諸比丘。時國王者我身是也。妃者俱夷是。勇者調遠是。天帝釋者彌勒是也。菩薩法忍度無極。行忍辱如是。



Rathayātrā- a festival of pulling chariots moving the specific deities on special days with great devotion in Japan follows the Indian style in Hindu-Buddhist tradition.



A Shinto priest offering prayers for sanctification of the land demarked for building a house.



A Shinto priest offering prayers for a newly bought car.

India and Japan share many such similar spiritual roots.



A Bodhisattva with an empty seat to fly back to Sukhāvātī carrying the soul of the deceased from Byōdōin temple.



Spiritual roots of Japan: people praying for peace in water and to receive divine blessings



Effulgent Achala, the symbolic protector of Buddhism, incarnating Prajñā immovable for us, destroyer of delusions, with glaring angrily eyes for those who try to harm to Buddha's teachings, emerging out of flames of fire, reminds us of Lord Krishna as described in Bhagavad Gītā 11.17-
*Tejorāśim sarvato dīptimanantam! paśyāmi tvam durnirīkṣyate samantād
dīptānalārṅkadyutimaprameyam!*



Bodhisattva Suigetsu dreaming of an in-ternal conflict free world.

Hindu spiritual wisdom on forests and wildlife related to contemporary situation

Virata Parva, Chapter 29, Mahabharatam :

“The forest with the tigers cannot be cut down nor the tigers in the forest can be destroyed”. [Sloka 54]

“The tiger without the forest (to protect it) is easily killed. The forest without tigers in it (to overawe people) is easily cut down. The tiger therefore protects the forest and the forest the tiger”. [Sloka 55]

This expounds that the tigers protect Forests and Forests protect tigers and neither can exist without the other.



Contemporary facts

As the tiger population declined, forests were destroyed.

In 1900, there were 40000 tigers in India and the forest area coverage was 42%. Now there are less than 1800 tigers and the forest coverage has declined to 20%.

The White-men brought guns, which killed tigers in thousands and thus forests were destroyed.

Now we want to grow tigers and afforests!

Divine Exists Even in the Tiniest Atom of Universe

This profound truth is immanent in the spiritual streams which have originated in this ancient and sacred land. **The Hindu, Buddhist, Jain and Sikh texts teach that the Divine exists even in the tiniest atom of this universe.**

Hindu: In this creation, the Divine is immanent in earth, water, fire, air and space and in every tiniest atom of this universe. [Isavasya Upanisad]

Buddhism: Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Human beings -- all emerged only out of the vacuum of space. [Kalachakra Tantra]

Jainism: The pancha bhootas - earth, water, air, fire and space are not lifeless matter; they have aatma. [Bhagwan Mahavira in Achara Sutra]

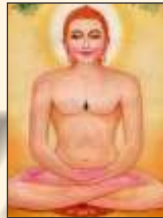
Sikhism: The pancha bhootas - earth, water, air, fire and space and all living beings are, Oh Bhagwan, only thee. [Guru Grath Sahib]



Adi Sankaracharya



Gouthama Buddha



Mahavira



Guru Nanak

The Hindu spiritual tradition is not anthropo-centric and therefore it does not regard this universe or the world was created for the enjoyment of humanbeings. In its perception, all aspects of the creation, all living beings, trees, plants or creepers, are equal to the humans and they are inseparably inter-dependent.

It is the inter-dependent relationship between humans and nature that preserves nature, family and society.

Concern for Living Beings

Paari gave his chariot to the survival of creeper

Paari Vallal, the legendary 9CE Tamil Chola king was one of the 7 patron kings ("Vallal") who supported poets and scholars. After the Dwaraka deluge, a group of refugees are believed to have reached Kashmir, while the other group set southwards. King Paari was believed to have reached Tamil Nadu as a refugee from Dwaraka, following the great sage Agasthya. He is said to have ruled the Parambu Nadu.



One day Paari was going around the hill in his chariot. Suddenly a strong wind blew and the king noticed a lone Jasmine creeper which was violently tossed in the wind. He asked his charioteer to move the chariot close to the creeper. He gently bent down and took the creeper wrapping it carefully around the chariot. He set his horses to roam freely and walked to his palace along with his charioteer.

Cow seeking justice

Manu Needhi Chozhan sacrificed his son on the complaint of a cow

Elara (also known as Ellalan or Manu Needhi Cholan, was a Chola king from the Chola Kingdom, in present day South India, who ruled a part of Sri Lanka from 205 BC to 161 BC including the ancient capital of Anuradhapura. The King of Justice, a Tamilian from the Chola country traditionally presented even by the Sinhalese. The Mahavamsa states that he ruled 'with even justice towards friend and foe, on occasions of disputes at law, and elaborates how he even ordered the execution of his son on the basis of a heinous religious crime of killing the calf of a cow.



Ellalan got the title Manu Needhi Cholan because he has executed his own son to provide justice to a Cow. Legend has it that the king had hung a giant bell in front of his courtroom for anyone needing justice to ring. One day, he came out on hearing the ringing of the bell by a Cow. On enquiry he found that the Calf of that Cow was killed under the wheels of his son's chariot. In order to provide justice to the cow, he killed his own son Veedhividangan by running his own chariot as a punishment to himself i.e. make himself suffer as much as the cow. Impressed by the justice of the king, Lord Shiva blessed him and brought back the calf and his son alive. He has been mentioned in the Silappatikaram and Periya Puranam. His name has since then been used as a metaphor for fairness and justice in Tamil literature. His capital was Thiruvavarur.

Considering all beings are equal

The great emperor Sibi who gave his flesh, blood and finally offered his own life to save a bird

King Sibi, was famous for upholding Dharma and keeping his word. Devas wanted to test him. One day a pigeon in great fright flew towards the king and, seeking shelter, settled on his lap. A hawk was chasing the pigeon. It soon landed before the king. King told the pigeon "Don't fear. You are under my protection". But the hawk told the king "Oh! King, give me my rightful prey as I am hungry" The king was in a dilemma. He had to be just to both. He told the hawk "As for your hunger I will give you meat of other animals. I have to protect this poor pigeon" But the hawk insisted on his rightful prey. At last, it agreed to relent, provided the king gave flesh from his own body, equal in weight to that of the pigeon. The king gladly agreed. Knives and scales were brought.



On one scale was the pigeon and on the other a big chunk of flesh from the king's body. The flesh proved insufficient and more and more flesh was removed from the king's body and put on the scale. But the scale on which the pigeon sat, weighed heavier. Now the king himself was ready to sit on the scale. Such sacrifice was not heard of before. A miracle occurred. The pigeon and the hawk resumed their real forms. They were Agni and Indra who had come to test him, to show to the world the true greatness of king Sibi. At the cost of his own life, he was ready to protect the weak and render justice, according to Dharma.

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Spiritual Roots of Japan

Taikichi and Aoyama

Taisho Tripitaka

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