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Buddhist Art of East Asia

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Seckel ■ Buddhist Art of East Asia

Center for East Asian Studies
Western Washington University

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Translated by Ulrich Mammitzsch

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Buddhist Art of East Asia

by

Dietrich Seckel

translated by Ulrich Mammitzsch



Western Washington University

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Translator's Preface

The publication of an English translation of a work which was originally published thirty years ago requires some explanation. Professor Seckel's work has not only stood the test of time remarkably well, it has also remained the only attempt to date to provide a systematic survey of East Asian Buddhist art. This emphasis on the basic principles of this art constitutes the value of this study and ensures at the same time its relevance for years to come. To be sure, many individual works of Buddhist art have become better known to us during the thirty years which have elapsed since the German original appeared in 1957. Many particular details have been uncovered by students as part of the rapidly expanding scholarship in Buddhist art. Mention should also be made of the advances in color photography and reproduction which has also contributed in a significant manner towards acquainting us with the Buddhist art of East Asia.

Professor Seckel himself has continued to make significant contributions to this process. His survey of the historical development of Buddhist art, *Die Kunst des Buddhismus* (German original 1962, English translation 1964) has appeared in several translations and has become a standard work in its field. Two of his more recent studies, *Jenseits des Bildes* [Beyond the Icon] (1976) and *Buddhistische Tempelnamen in Japan* [Buddhist Temple Names in Japan] (1985) have explored two significant aspects relevant for this art in greater detail.

Treasures of Buddhist art from storehouses of Buddhist art, most notable among them the cave temples of Tun-huang, have become much more accessible to us through both detailed studies and magnificent color reproductions. But this greater familiarity which details has not forced major revisions in the findings presented by Professor Seckel thirty years ago. The work has remained the only comprehensive study of the principles underlying the Buddhist Art of East Asia. The publication of an English version, it is hoped, will enable us to put into the hands of our students a reliable guide to this art.

I have attempted to keep the English rendition as close as possible to the German original. Professor Seckel has added a few short paragraphs on Korean art and occasional minor changes in the wording of the text wherever this was deemed necessary in the light of more recent scholarship. But these changes do not in any substantial manner alter both content and conclusions of the 1957 version. There

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are also a few updated additions to the biographical section. It is hoped that this English version of Professor Seckel's study will become a welcome addition to the ever-growing English-language literature on Buddhist art and that it will take a place of distinction within this literature.

*Ulrich Mammitzsch
Bellingham, Washington
February, 1989*

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Introduction

Buddhist art is that field of East Asian art which, generally speaking, is most alien to Western viewers and has therefore attracted relatively little attention until now. To enter into the spirit of this art is particularly difficult not only because it is based on a distinct religio-philosophical world view, but also because its artistic devices and expressions differ substantially from those of Western religious art. If we propose to explore the world of Buddhist art, we do so not only because this art comprises a wide field equalling in importance and achievements that of Christian art, but also because the Buddhist art of East Asia--as the many-faceted and vast creative expression of one of the great world religions--expresses artistic and religious values which make more detailed studies well worth the effort.

We should be sure from the outset, however, that we are basically not dealing with an art which should be enjoyed primarily because of its aesthetic values or which expresses its meaning directly through its forms and modes of expression; rather, we are dealing with works of art which are first of all intended to hold religious meaning and to serve Buddhist ritual, edification, and salvation. Originally all religious art serves this function; and it is unimportant to the faithful whether a cult image is aesthetically valuable or has the qualities of a great work of art. The oldest religious art found among primitive peoples may be said to have not yet separated the "religious" from the "aesthetic" function. Its works possess above all magic-symbolic efficacy. But the "beautiful" element in cult images is ever increasing--Greek sculpture shows this process most clearly--until in the classic creations of any great religious art both aspects are fused so intimately that religious and aesthetic functions support and intensify each other. Buddhist art represents one of the most impressive examples in world art to support this thesis, and it would be one-sided and unfair to view its works purely as documents of religious history.

More than Christian art, Buddhist art is shaped by cultic and ritual-magic functions. More than the later Chinese and Japanese secular art--which prefers not to take on the burden of philosophical ideas and of specific expressions of world

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views but rather aims more at conveying moods of nature and displaying decorative beauty--Buddhist art in all its details is full of profound meaning which is intelligible only to the initiated. It displays very clearly the strong East Asian preference for mysterious symbolism and sacred formalism. This renders it frequently esoteric-mystic and requires therefore not only thorough "theological" explanations but, first of all, excursions into the language of its esoteric-mystical symbolism.

Iconography in Buddhist art, together with Buddhist ritual, constitutes therefore a vast field of inquiry in its own right which is at least as important for an understanding of works of Buddhist art as is the case with Christian art. The treatment of Buddhist iconography in general and of East Asian Buddhism in particular, is a difficult but unavoidable part of our study. Fortunately, our task is made somewhat easier because we can draw on numerous Japanese and, in the case of India and Central Asia, even on Western pioneering studies.

Buddhism in East Asia means exclusively Mahâyâna Buddhism--the "Great Vehicle," frequently also called "Northern Buddhism"--whose teachings and cults constitute the basis of almost the entire religious art of East Asia. Whatever exists by way of Taoist art in China and Shintô art in Japan lags, as far as it is indigenous, either far behind the powerful and rich Buddhist art or has received its direct stimulating or modifying influence; as, for example, Taoist cult sculpture or the later types of Shintô architecture. Buddhist art in East Asia begins during its early period between the fourth and sixth centuries, i.e., soon after Buddhism had taken root in China and had begun to spread throughout the country. It reached its apex between the seventh and thirteenth centuries when both Chinese and Japanese civilization flourished, i.e., during the T'ang and Sung dynasties and the Nara, Fujiwara, and Kamakura periods, respectively; and it managed to continue until about 1550, particularly in its special branch of Japanese Zen art. During this later time begins the period of the epigoni and soon after that the period of final decay, as the philosophical power and cultural vigor of Buddhism wanes and a period of faithful preservation of an honored tradition, which is also marked by a lack of creative spirit, begins. During the centuries when East Asian Buddhism flourished--a time which we may well be justified calling East Asia's "medieval period" in spite of all the reservations about transposing such historical labels to other cultures and periods--the large esoteric-mystical schools of Chinese and Japanese Buddhism created a highly complicated system of sacred figures as visual expression of their many-faceted and comprehensive teachings. They also brought into existence a vast world of symbol-laden cult figures and cult paintings which, for the most part, are difficult to understand. But this complex world of images was soon substantially reduced by the rapid expansion of the theologically and philosophically simpler and more popular faith in the Savior-Buddha Amitâbha and, still later, by the rise of Zen--a school which did not attach great importance to cult images. It is this shift in the development of Buddhism which, among others, prompted Buddhist artists to turn to new spiritual goals and new artistic means.

The Buddhist art with its essentially and unmistakably East Asian character dealt with in this study evolved in China and Korea and was transplanted to Japan only a few centuries later, with Korea serving in part as a cultural bridge. It contained many Indian forms, particularly with respect to types of religious figures and modes of their formal representation. Both were soon absorbed and

transformed by the self-confident artistic spirit of China and Japan. As regrettable as this may be, we may, therefore, ignore the Buddhist art of India and that of the countries of Southeast Asia influenced by it. Nor do we trace the various ways in which the Indian inspiration reached East Asia--a process during which the Central Asian region played an important intermediary role. (This has been described in our general survey, *The Art of Buddhism*, published in 1964 by Crown Publishers, New York.) The art of Tibetan and Mongolian Lamaism remains also outside the scope of this book since this art constitutes a religious and cultural world of its own and displays marked differences from the Buddhist art of East Asia--differences which are quite noticeable in spite of the many links between Tibetan, Mongolian, and East Asian Buddhism, their shared Mahāyāna background, and their common descent from Indian traditions.

Generally speaking, we will be dealing with the Buddhist art of China and Japan, with appropriate attention given to that of Korea.

Though we will find that Korea frequently transformed Chinese imports by giving them an attractive Korean character, not too many noticeable creative contributions can be credited to her. However, Korea served an important historical function as faithful transmitter of Chinese--and therefore also of Buddhist--cultural values to a young and receptive Japan on its way to cultural maturity.

China--in contrast to her status in most other fields--is not a primary culture as far as Buddhism is concerned. She received decisive impulses from India but enriched the Buddhist tradition with significant contributions of her own. However, as far as Japan is concerned, China played the role of a mother culture to Buddhism and its art. She transmitted to Japan a system of religious thought and imagery which, despite its non-Chinese origin, had been firmly established and transformed in China.

In Japan this system was received, expanded, and perfected during successive waves of cultural imports and was gradually assimilated during several distinct historical phases. Japan benefited from the fountainhead of Chinese Buddhism and Buddhist art for several centuries--from the sixth to the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries--but it would be a serious mistake to assume that Japanese Buddhist art amounts to little more than a mere imitation of Chinese--or Korean--Buddhist art. The Japanese spirit--no matter how much inclined toward acquiring foreign elements and how much willing to be an eager disciple--has always quickly passed the learning and adopting phases and progressed to the phase of mastery and creative transformation of imports. More often than not, this was followed by independent further development and a distinctly new creativity. And though this Japanese creative urge is quite evident, in spite of all the inherent conservatism of religious art in the East, Buddhist art left only narrow limits for modifying the important Chinese figures and forms. This becomes even more apparent if emphasis is placed on principles and types of Buddhist art.

This fact is highly significant for the study and understanding of East Asian Buddhist art in general. We may even go so far as to call this restrictive impulse a fortunate coincidence, because much has been lost of the highest achievements from the flourishing period of Buddhist art in China. Innumerable buildings, cult figures and cult paintings have been destroyed as the result of wars, revolutions and natural catastrophies or because they fell victim to religious persecutions. The great anti-

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Buddhist persecution of 845, in particular--coming so soon after perhaps the greatest creative period of Buddhist art during the Tang dynasty--took a terrible toll. In numerous instances, Buddhist bronze statues constituting the noblest examples in material and artistic refinement were melted down for coinage. Those Chinese Buddhist sculptures surviving from the earlier truly creative centuries are basically limited to stone sculptures--frequently provincial in character though still of high artistic value--and to small bronze figures. These still constitute a sizable sampling and comprise many works which, because they have found their way into Western museums and collections, have thus become quite well known to us. But, as we know from other sources, they do not represent the really great and important works of Chinese Buddhist art. Cast in bronze or other precious metals, these were found in the cult images of the temples of the leading spiritual and political centers of Chinese Buddhism. Moreover, most of the ancient Buddhist paintings--wall paintings and picture scrolls--have practically vanished. As early as the thirteenth century, even the Chinese themselves knew the works of their greatest masters almost exclusively from hearsay or mere copies.

In the field of painting, the remarkable finds at Tun-huang offer at least some instructive examples, but it is Japanese Buddhist art that has preserved a wealth of representative examples, not only in painting but in all fields of Buddhist artistic production, including architecture. Much has been lost in Japan, too, but the Japanese tendency to faithfully preserve, collect and cultivate works of art, combined with an unusually strong sense of history and tradition, has had a very beneficial effect. As a result, much has been preserved in Japan--this storehouse of East Asian culture--even from the earlier period (say, 600 to 800) during which the Japanese were still the remarkably talented disciples of their continental teachers. These surviving examples permit direct suppositions about works which have been lost in China. We may perhaps even go so far as to claim that Japan frequently supplies direct physical substitutes for such lost works. And even during the following centuries, when Japanese Buddhist art acquired a distinctive flavor of its own, it still remained within the framework of the general world of forms and figures of East Asian Buddhist art to the degree that almost everything we can say about particular Japanese works also applies in basic ways to works of Chinese Buddhist art. What is represented in China only by severely damaged and scattered examples, is revealed in remarkable completeness and detail in Japan. And what has survived in China only in examples from more recent times--such as most architectural works--can be found in Japan to be represented by examples covering the entire range of its development from the earliest to the most recent times.

It seems, therefore, natural that we rely for illustrations primarily on Japanese material. If we were to study the relationship between the Chinese and Japanese artistic traditions in detail, we would have to pay more attention to the differences between them. But this study--and this should be emphasized from the very outset--attempts to describe the generally valid and typical elements of East Asian Buddhist art and therefore has little room for details and specific features of this art. Such individual comparisons and attempts to outline specific Japanese features compared with earlier Chinese and Korean models in architecture, sculpture, painting and ornamental design would be doomed to failure anyway, because it is impossible in most instances to compare the Japanese copies and their

corresponding continental originals. Strictly speaking, we are not even able to state with certainty how far the Japanese works substitute for, or replace lost continental works or how far they differ from them in their own peculiar way. This rather depressing dilemma in our field of study results from the shortcomings of the available material. However, there is much evidence to suggest that the Japanese examples are valid representatives of East Asian Buddhist art as a whole, at least in its general and most essential features.

This survey--quite preliminary and summary in nature--attempts to provide an outline of all relevant fields of artistic endeavor: the architecture of temple and monastery precincts, cult statues, ritual implements, paintings and many other items of a more decorative character. But these creations must be explained in their iconographic and symbolic meaning if we are to understand them properly. They also have to be shown in the context of their function in Buddhist cult and Buddhist religious life--an aspect which has been given only scant attention by Western observers until now. Such descriptions, in turn, require a knowledge of those basic teachings of Mahāyāna Buddhism which constitute the basis for the rise and essence of Buddhist art and which provide a wealth of clues for an understanding not only of its content and artistic imagery, but also of its underlying principles. Particularly important also is an understanding of its formative principles as applied to painting and sculpture. These represent attempts to translate Buddhist teachings and the religious experiences which gave rise to those teachings into visible form and to provide vital links between religious ideas and their visual expression. We will also have to raise the question of the technical and artistic means employed by the Buddhist artist to impart to these teachings religiously and aesthetically effective and convincing visible equivalents commensurate with basic Buddhist doctrinal principles. Our study will show that formal principles and artistic means display an inner congruence with the spiritual substance of Mahāyāna Buddhism and that, taken as a whole, Buddhist art not only accurately expresses Buddhist faith and thought but consistently unites content and form, religious idea and visual representation, and, last but not least, the Sacred and the Beautiful.

It would be tempting to pursue the question of similarities and differences between Buddhist and Christian art--particularly during the medieval period--and thus contribute to an understanding of the basic problems and typology of religious art in general, but this would go far beyond the scope of this book if we were to attempt to do so in more than a merely perfunctory manner. Such a comparison can only be attempted after both subjects are fully understood in their own and essential nature. With respect to Buddhist art, we are still far from that happy state of affairs.

The aspects of art history proper--description of the sequence of and relationship among the various individual processes as well as the changes in style--can only be touched upon, because this study is primarily systematic and typological rather than historic and genetic. Each approach can illuminate the other, since a systematic presentation of the typical features of an artistic tradition is impossible without insights into the process of their historical evolution, and since such insights will be continuously helpful in specifying, modifying, rounding out, and deepening any such presentation. In turn, however, a correct understanding of the historical sequence implies knowledge of the essential nature of the thing as well as the way it manifests itself as it evolves to its highest forms. Since the essence of the

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phenomenon under review here--the Buddhist art of East Asia--is as yet little familiar to us and since it represents also a rather complex, many-faceted and vast experience in time and space, we think it more urgent to provide first a sketch of the essential features of the world of Buddhist art rather than to enter into a detailed treatment of its history which in any event would require a volume of its own. We find it, therefore, equally impossible to discuss details, notably those of a controversial nature. Special studies and relevant literature are only occasionally cited because they are familiar to the specialists and will not be missed by the interested layman intent on gaining an overview. The latter, in particular, will benefit from the bibliography even though it does not include titles from the very valuable East Asian, notably Japanese, literature on the subject. The illustrations, too, are primarily meant to be informative and are limited to typical features. They should show and explain the most essential elements of this art with the help of characteristic and artistically significant examples. Given this general concept and the general limitations of this book, individual artistic elements and detailed interpretations of individual works cannot normally be given, regrettable as that may be. Research in these aspects of Buddhist art in East Asia still faces urgent and even elementary tasks. Strictly speaking, this attempt at a preliminary synthesis is quite premature. But we may find comfort in the fact that no field can be studied in detail and understood in its inner order unless a survey map, no matter how summary in nature, has been sketched.

I. Religious-Philosophical and Cultural Foundations

It was Śākyamuni's goal to free himself and ultimately also others from entanglement in this transitory and illusory world. Man, he thought, should end his attachment to a so-called reality which is nothing but an incessant stream of births, deaths, and new incarnations on higher or lower levels, and which is, therefore, full of suffering. Rather, he should strive to leave behind the relentless law of karma and the bondage to an imagined Ego. He should free himself from all concepts, images and definitions since these are but clouded reflections of reality. He should rise to that Absolute No-Thingness which is beyond all phenomena and intellectual concepts, and which grants to man final liberation in that perfect "extinction" resulting from a total rejection of the stream of suffering with its surges of error and illusion. This extinction, like the unfathomable and eternally unmoving depth of the ocean, rests beneath the illusory surface waves stirred by the winds of error. This highest goal--the entry into nirvāna--is a blessed state, a Summum Bonum and therefore is not nihilistic in nature, but rather is to be experienced as an overwhelming reality. Man ascends to it through various stages of meditation which gradually perfect his detachment from the phenomenal world and ultimately yield supreme insight and enlightenment.

This abrupt juxtaposition of "Nothingness" (nirvāna) and the painful, illusory world of phenomena (samsāra) displayed by early (Hīnayāna) Buddhism, is transformed in Mahāyāna Buddhism. This transformation had already begun a few centuries after Śākyamuni's death; it received its basic formulation primarily in the "Middle Way" teaching of Nāgārjuna and his successors and was eventually perfected philosophically in East Asia with the teachings of the Hua-yen (Kegon), T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) and Chên-yen (Shingon) schools. These schools postulated a

mutual relationship between the two worlds--the phenomenal and the one standing beyond all phenomena--and thereby restored the idea of an Absolute or an ultimate reality.

According to the teachings of the Tendai school, which formulated this new system most completely and most systematically, it is wrong to believe in the real existence of our world of illusions, but it is equally wrong to regard the world of phenomena as totally unreal because it has temporal existence and relative value, and is a preliminary step toward and reminder of the truly real. It is also wrong to emphasize only one of these two realms since the Absolute manifests itself in the phenomenal world which is, therefore, ultimately, nothing but this Absolute itself, and was called the "Thusness" (tathatā) or the "Buddha nature" ("Buddha essence," buddha-tā) of the world.

Only all these three truths together, in "perfect mutual interpenetration or fusion" of their different aspects of that one and same reality, constitute the "round, threefold truth."¹ All things, even the lowest and most fleeting, embody Buddha essence. Buddha land is everywhere. According to the teachings which evolved within the T'ien-t'ai and especially the Chên-yen schools as the East Asian form of Tantrism, the entire phenomenal world itself possesses absolute value. It becomes mystery and miracle which the esoteric teachings attempt to unlock for the clouded mind of man through magic means--by a complex system of magic rites, words (mantra), gestures (mudrā), symbols and images (pratimā), all of which are intended to lead to that ultimate, truly unfathomable reality which can only be expressed in silence.

These two basic Mahāyāna schools of East Asia are closely linked both historically and doctrinally. The T'ien-t'ai school derived its name from a mountain near Ningpo where its main monastery was located. Though based on Indian Mahāyāna thought, and relying particularly on the Saddharmapundarika-Sūtra (*Fa-hua-ching*, *Hok-ke-kyō* = Sūtra of the Lotus of the Wondrous Law), this sect originated in China ca. 580. It was brought to Japan from China in the year 804 by the Japanese monk Saichō (767-822; posthumous title, Dengyō Daishi), who had spent a lengthy period of study in China. He founded its splendid main monastery on Mount Hiei, which dominates the imperial city of Kyōto from the Northeast and provides magic protection for it. T'ien-t'ai's system was a "scholastic" synthesis of all the essential ideas in Buddhist philosophy which had emerged up to that time. It attempted to harmonize them, and bring them into a clearly structured order with its "Theory of the Five Phases." According to this teaching, Śākyamuni presented his teachings during five periods of his preaching life, gradually increasing the degree of difficulty to match the intellectual capacity of his audiences. The T'ien-t'ai sect also aimed at a grand synthesis in its religious life: Discursive thought (speculation), meditative vision (intuition), ascetic practices (discipline, practice), and ritual (liturgy) were equally stressed, and formed the pillars of an edifice which constituted the most consistently structured version of Mahāyāna. It aimed at avoiding all onesidedness and at being truly universal. No wonder that it had so profound an influence on art. Its influence was equalled only by that of the Chên-yen (Shingon) school and, during later times and in a diametrically opposite manner, by that of Ch'an (Zen) Buddhism.

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Related to the T'ien-t'ai school is the Hua-yen (*Ke-gon*, Sanskr. *Avatamsaka*) school, founded in China ca. 630 and brought to Japan around 750. Hua-yen teaches the mutual penetration of the Absolute and the Phenomenal and their ultimate identity in the "true Buddha essence." Both are only different aspects of one and the same reality and reflect each other in infinitely varied ways. As a consequence, the ultimate mystery may be perceived even in the most humble phenomena. The decisive importance of this recognition for the sublimation of the phenomenal world into art is obvious.

The Shingon school (*Chên-yen* in China, however mostly *Mi-tsung* = "secret school," corresponding to the Japanese term *Mikkyô* = secret teaching), also called "esoteric Buddhism," goes still further. It represents the East Asian form of Tantrism, the Vajrayâna or "Diamond Vehicle,"² but incorporated only to an insignificant degree the sexual teachings and practices characteristic of the Indian version. This teaching was brought to China around 720 by Indian missionaries and was introduced to Japan in 806 by the Japanese monk Kûkai (744-835; posthumous title, Kôbô Daishi). In Japan it found its vital monastic center, which still exists today, in a beautiful setting on Mount Kôya (south of Ôsaka). Kûkai is one of the great founding figures not only of Japanese Buddhism but of Japanese culture in general.

The Shingon school may be understood as the final, decisive step of Mahâyâna Buddhism in the direction of bestowing religious significance on the illusory world of phenomena. The Tendai (T'ien-t'ai) school--though still centered around the idea of the "empty" Absolute--had bestowed value on the world of samsâra as being entirely inseparable from the Absolute, while the Kegon (Hua-yen) school had rejoiced in the mystery of the mutual penetration of all things. This was only one step short of bestowing absolute value on the illusory world of phenomena itself and identifying it in itself as the ultimate *mysterium*. The very first philosophical tenet of the Shingon school therefore teaches that: "the things themselves are truth; form itself is principle."³ The ultimate insight into this "secret" is revealed to the practitioner only after he has made a gradual ascent in the degree of his maturity; but even then insight is only granted in esoteric isolation from ordinary life.

The world is an unfolding of the all-one Absolute, personified in the "Ur-" or All-Buddha Mahâ-Vairocana (*Ta-jih*, *Dainichi* = "Great Sun") (29) who is revealed in one of the basic scriptures of the school, the *Mahâ-Vairocana-Sutrâ*. He embodies himself at first in four other Buddhas--each ascribed to one of the cardinal directions and representing a special kind of wisdom--and, proceeding from these, in numerous Bodhisattvas and Vidyârâjas (see below, pp. 27 ff.), grouped around these four. These are all hypostases of different kinds of the highest, secret knowledge and thus of the highest degree of numinous power and compassion.

But Mahâ-Vairocana manifests himself also in all things and beings of the universe, from the most powerful down to the most humble. The innumerable worlds and world ages basic to Mahâyâna cosmological belief are here linked to an equally infinite number of Buddhas ascribed to each of them as their illuminators. Two strictly defined groups are distinguished among these Buddhas: the "ideal" group of the five wisdom Buddhas (*wu-chih-julai*, *go-chi-nyorai*; 6), i.e., Vairocana and four other Buddhas, among them Śâkyamuni and Amîtâbha; and the "historical"

line of the Buddhas of the past, present, and future already described in Hinayāna doctrine--i.e., the five (or more) predecessors of Śākyamuni, Śākyamuni himself and his successor in the next world age, Maitreya. In addition to incarnating itself into Buddhas and their manifestations, the Bodhisattvas and Vidyārājas, the Absolute (Vairocana) manifests itself also in deities (Devas). In Japan, even the national Shintō deities were incorporated into the Shingon pantheon by simply declaring them to be local avatāras ("descents," "footprints," "manifestations") of different Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Since the Sun Goddess Amaterasu was therefore regarded as essentially identical with Vairocana, the initial antagonism between Shintō and Buddhism was reconciled in the so-called honji-suijaku teaching, the teaching of "original ground (original state, body) and (secondary) vestiges." Japanese art received numerous important impulses from this view.

According to Shingon teachings, the believer is able to achieve his archetypal, mystic union with the All-Buddha, i.e., with the True Thusness of the Absolute, by means of a threefold practice: that of the mind, i.e., by a meditative vision (dhyāna) leading to an insight into the non-duality of samsāra and nirvāna; that of the true word, which contains the essence of all figures and of the Absolute represented by them (*chên-yen, shin-gon*, i.e., mantra, dhāranī: magic-mystic formulas, essential seed syllables like A, Hūm, etc.); and that of physical acts, i.e. formulaic symbolic gestures of the hands (*mudrā*, literally "seal"), which are quasi-corporealized mantras. Dhyāna, mantra, and *mudrā* are means enacted for achieving an identification of Buddha nature, Buddha word, and Buddha body with essence, word and body of the believer. These practices have the mystic-magical result of transforming the believer into the Buddha, who he in fact already really is. The believer can "achieve Buddha-hood in his very body,"⁴ just as the world as it exists--arising from the interplay of the "Six Great (Elements)," i.e., Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Empty Space, and Mind, which in turn are nothing but aspects of Vairocana--also already constitutes ultimate reality, at least to the awakened eye once it is freed from ignorance (*avidyā*).

According to such teaching, absolute emptiness is also absolute fullness, phenomenon is essence (even though a clouded essence, which is in need of correct interpretation and comprehension); the moment is eternity, and samsāra is nirvāna. Both aspects of the world penetrate each other and are ultimately identical even though they appear separated to human consciousness. Thus ending the erroneous Either/Or dichotomy, they are spoken of paradoxically as being neither one nor different (*pu-i, pu-i; fu-ichi fu-i*). This identity can only be recognized in its essence by virtue of a difficult mental act and a commitment of one's total personality, and in no other way. Yet there is a difference between the authentic, true reality (*paramārtha-satya; chên-ti, shin-tai*)--which is neither comprehensible nor describable, is without any specific qualities, and is pure noumenon (emptiness, *śūnya; k'ung, kû*; the unmanifested, *wu-hsiang, mu-sō*)--and the veiled, ordinary, relative phenomenal truth (*samvṛti-satya; su-ti, zoku-tai*) clothed in visible manifestations. Each embraces the other and both, together, constitute ultimately one single truth.

It is most important not to attach oneself to the objects and ideas of our "present" existence which are always trapped in the net of dualistic contradictions and biases. Rather, we must desire to take the liberating leap to the "other shore"--

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which takes us outside the pull of the magnetic field of the karma law. Only then can we recognize the limitations and temporal nature of all phenomena and all human thought; only from the vantage point of "emptiness," of supra-contradictoriness or non-duality (a-dvaitya) are all contradictions cancelled. Then everything is "empty," without, however, being totally void; all dualism has been overcome and the Absolute is recognized in the phenomena. However, transcendence, as understood by the most profound Buddhist schools, is only radical insofar as it goes beyond notions of immanence contained in the idea of the unity of the Absolute and phenomenal. Supra-duality is located beyond the alternatives of "immanent or transcendent," and beyond any unequivocal "yes" or "no", because either position would only lead us back into the entrapment of the world of samsāra. Only non-affirmation and non-negation--as well as recognition of the identity of affirmation and negation--can lead one out of such positive determination. Zen Buddhism expresses this idea in the famous first question of the Wu-men-kuan (Mu-monkan): "Does a dog also have Buddha nature?" The master's reply: "Wu (Mu)."⁵ This means: "yes" and also "no," or: neither "yes" nor "no"; the one alternative answer would by itself be just as wrong or as right as the other.

It is this basic unity of the Absolute and the phenomenal which makes possible a Buddhist art which represents the Absolute, Transcendent and Empty through visible images of all its manifestations, though this is not to be misunderstood as postulating pantheism. The oldest Buddhist art in India refrained from sensualizing this Absolute or the Buddha (who had entered nirvāna and left all phenomena behind) by means of tangible images taken from the world of phenomena. With the exception of illustrations of the sacred legends showing the future Buddha during his earthly career, it had limited itself to symbols such as the Tree of Enlightenment, the Wheel of the Teaching, the Footprint, or the Stūpa as symbols of entry into perfect nirvāna. Only with the new religious-philosophical developments which accompanied Mahāyāna's evolution out of the several early developments found within Hīnayāna could there develop a many-faceted art which comprehended, interpreted and visually represented the Absolute in all its different manifestations, including the most profound of these, i.e., the "Emptiness" shared by all of them.

Without so basic a turn toward the metaphysical--which was in sharp contrast to ancient Buddhism and its expressed rejection of all metaphysical speculation as ultimately futile and not leading to salvation--this art of Mahāyāna would be unthinkable. Moreover, the anti-mythological attitude of ancient Buddhism was just as untenable in the long run as was its anti-metaphysical attitude. This is true even though, according to Mahāyāna teaching, there exists a higher level of understanding where both metaphysics and mythology prove to be merely something preliminary, something adapted to limited human understanding. They make possible, however, the first steps leading to the ultimate level of understanding. Art, as representation of the Absolute, and containing all its preliminary and nonessential qualities, is therefore imbued to no small degree with truth and with a previously untapped power both to reveal religious truth and promote participation in true essence.

But something else also happened. Mahāyāna created for religious consciousness a number of personal-mythic hypostases of the Absolute and of its

incarnated or manifested forms. To these the believer could turn in loving devotion (bhakti) and cultic veneration (pûjâ). Aided by a visual representation he might even in a meditative vision identify himself with the Absolute because he possessed, hidden within himself like a seed kernel, the Buddha nature of all being, which needed only to be recognized in order to be realized. Though nirvâna was originally an "empty" state of enlightenment beyond "names and forms," it could now become an Absolute which, though still standing beyond names and forms, would also manifest itself in finite forms and become recognizable through them. Sacred figures, with the Buddha at their apex, might now also be objectivized and regarded as incarnations of the Absolute. This not only permitted I-Thou relationships, visions, and therefore also the rise of tangible images, but even required them. Historically, this change reflects the gradual adaptation of Buddhism to Hinduism (Vedânta) into which it was ultimately absorbed in India. Buddhism succeeded in retaining its own identity in East Asia, but only after it had absorbed strong Hindu elements and was ready to adapt to the various indigenous mythological traditions.

A crucially important precondition for the rise of a Buddhist art within the Mahâyâna tradition was the formation of a "pantheon," a world of religious figures of different degrees of sacredness and participation in the Absolute. Original Buddhism knew hardly more than a single central figure: that of the "Enlightened One" himself, who was at first not represented in human form. Next to him, but at a considerable distance, were a number of his disciples and his relatives, most notable among them his mother Mâyâ. The Buddha was originally a human being, a historical figure striving for his own salvation, who attained it by his own efforts and then proceeded to teach others. Later, however, his historicity lost all importance; he was elevated to the status of an absolute being (though not made into a deity) and then identified with the ultimate ground of being which only makes use of an earthly body as a temporary and illusory manifestation or incarnation in order to bring its blessed teachings to the unenlightened world.

This sort of incarnation is not unique but may repeat itself innumerable times in all worlds and all world ages. The number of Buddhas is therefore unlimited, and Mahâyâna doctrine further holds that the Buddha exists simultaneously in three bodies or levels of existence which are basically identical. The first of these is the dharma-kâya (cosmic body; *fa-shên; hosshin*), the Buddha as the Absolute. The second is the sambhōga-kâya (*pao-shên, hôshin*), the Buddha body acquired as the result of religious merit. This aspect of the Buddha appears to enlightened minds and also to those engaged in meditation as a being in radiant beatitude, i.e., for example, as the lord of a supra-worldly realm of bliss (103). Finally, there is the nirmâna-kâya (*ying-shen, o-jin*), the shadow, adapted or manifested body into which the Buddha incarnates himself; a body which he "specially fashions," or "emanates from within himself" in order to enlighten the world. At this level, among many others, is the body we perceive as the person of Śâkyamuni (17).

The last two bodies are also together referred to as rûpa-kâya, "form body." The Chinese-Japanese equivalent for this Sanskrit expression is *sê-shên (shiki-shin)*, "color body." The word *se*, or "form" and "color," refers to the bodies' visible manifestations, be they earthly-empirical or supra-mundane-visionary. These two bodies are differentiated even further so that the sambhōga-kâya is held to be the

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"body of true color," and the *nirmāna-kāya* the "body of transformed (manifested) color." Pictures may be made of these two bodies, while the *dharmakāya*, according to the strict teaching, is unmanifested, "without form and color," and is therefore not to be depicted.

Though neither art nor doctrinal speculation have been seriously restrained by this dictum, terms like "form" and "color" have not yet been sufficiently explored for their significance to comprehension of Buddhist art. Also problematical is the ideal of a threefold stratification of the world of sensual desires (*kāma-dhātu*; *yü-chiai*, *yoku-kai*). These comprise the earthly beings and deities of the first six heavenly spheres, who have already realized a certain degree of spiritualization. Next comes a world of pure form (*rūpa-dhātu*, *se-chiai*, *shiki-kai*), the first step into the higher world of enlightenment. Though still a world of forms, it is no longer one of the senses and corresponds to the level at which meditation occurs, as the second stage along the path to enlightenment. Finally, there is a world without form (*arūpa-dhātu*, *ârūpya-dhātu*; *wu-se-chiai*; *mu-shiki-kai*), which corresponds to the third step of the path to salvation, i.e., that of wisdom (*prajñā*). However, even these three worlds stop short of the threshold to *nirvāna*, which presupposes a rebirth back on the first or human level, even though the next two higher worlds had already led the believer far beyond the first level. This gradation of levels of existence and enlightenment, this ascent and descent among the realms of sensuous images and radical abstractions is a highly important principle for Buddhist art.

It is characteristic of *Mahāyāna*, and quite consistent with its basic metaphysical-religious attitude, that it places a number of compassionate beings between the incarnation of the highest Absolute in the figure of the Buddha and the sphere of human existence even though the Buddha is already seen as being present at all levels. These compassionate beings are intermediaries distributed among the various levels of existence and realms of activity. The three most important categories of intermediaries are *Bodhisattvas*, *Vidyārājas* and divine beings (*Devas*).

Though the idea of the *Bodhisattva* (Chin. *p'u-sa*, J. *bo-satsu*; beings "whose essence is enlightenment" [Zimmer]) was already known to early Buddhism, its application had been limited to Śākyamuni himself, i.e., to his existence prior to his birth while he was still dwelling in one of the heavens, and to his earthly life up to the moment of his enlightenment, which changed him from a *Bodhisattva* into a Buddha. In *Mahāyāna*, however, the *Bodhisattva* became a type of being who incarnates himself in numerous individual figures, so that we no longer speak of "the" *Bodhisattva*, i.e., Śākyamuni, but rather of "a" *Bodhisattva* as a sacred being of the highest level of enlightenment who had matured over the course of many existences and could gain entry into *nirvāna*, but who, out of his own free will and filled with compassion for the suffering world, has renounced his own salvation. Out of the inexhaustible fullness of his compassion and his merciful readiness to help and sacrifice for the sake of all sentient beings, he will devote all his powers for eons to come so that they may be advanced along the path of salvation.

The faithful may turn to such compassionate beings (42 ff.) in any need. In popular imagination the numerous *Bodhisattvas* of *Mahāyāna* have gained a function something akin to that of the Christian saints. According to doctrine, however, they are nothing other than different aspects or emanations of the infinite wisdom and compassion of the particular Buddha to whom they are ascribed; i.e., in

the final analysis they are also personifications of the Absolute but always as a particular variant and serving a specific function. They are intermediate and intermediating figures, and direct their spiritual energies both upward--by striving for highest enlightenment and Buddhahood--and downward--by attempting to convert all sentient beings and guide them along the path of salvation.

It is precisely because of their intermediary position that they have become so important for religious life and thought. Buddhist art faced and splendidly solved the difficult but very intriguing task of capturing in tangible images this dual nature in its inner unity. The ideal figure of Mahâyâna--the Bodhisattva as a self-sacrificing being indefinitely postponing his own salvation--is the opposite of the Arhat ("Venerable One"; *lo-han, rakan*, 91 ff., 127 ff.)--the ideal figure of Hīnayâna--who after great struggles reaches his goal of salvation by his own efforts at asceticism and meditation. The Arhat does not, however, feel the need to show others the path to salvation by such activities as teaching, rendering assistance and sacrificing himself for them. Mahâyânists find in this very attitude the kind of "egotistical" limitation and lack of all-embracing compassion, infinite devotion and universal salvation which prompted them to somewhat derisively label the path of the Arhat as the Hīnayâna, the "Lesser Vehicle." But they, too, recognized the Arhats as religious figures of great spiritual powers and as heroes in the quest of conquering worldly attachment. Art, too, has been greatly interested and successful in depicting them. Arhat and Bodhisattva have thus become two polar types in Buddhist art--the one in the human, the other in the supra-human, supra-worldly sphere.

In esoteric Buddhism, next to the Bodhisattvas came the Vidyârâjas, "wisdom" or "enlightenment" kings (*ming-wang, myô-ô*) who, like several other features of this tradition, may have originated in the Indian Śiva cult. They appear as terrifying, threatening, armed figures (69), conquering and destroying all spiritual darkness, ignorance and sin, and thereby aiding the salvation of the world. As manifestations of the penetrating, indestructible, diamond-hard and diamond-clear All-Wisdom of Vairocana, they are parallel to the Bodhisattvas; but in contrast to the latter--who represent the *numinosum fascinans*--the Vidyârâjas are figures expressing a diametrically opposed polarity, the *numinosum tremendum*.

A third important category of mythical beings in the Mahâyâna pantheon is that of the deities (Devas) (70 ff., 110). They, too, are supra-human but, in contrast with the Buddha and even with the Bodhisattva, they are not supra-mundane, not removed from the world of samsâra. Because it arose out of ancient Indian cosmology, Mahâyâna Buddhism has included a large number of Indian deities within its "pantheon," and has ascribed to them the roles of protectors of the teachings, the congregation, the sanctuaries, as regents of different divine worlds, heavenly and worldly spheres, or as dispensers of good fortune or helpmates in need and models of pure uplifting conduct. But in contrast to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, for whom the label "gods" or "deities" should be absolutely avoided (since that would imply a total misunderstanding of fundamental Buddhist teachings⁶), the Devas may legitimately be called deities, because they have not yet matured to the level of nirvâna, but are still part of the cycle of rebirths according to karma law, even though they live in the highest sphere of this realm and are infinitely superior to human beings with respect to lifespan, power, beauty, and spiritualized existence. But since entrance into nirvâna is only possible from the

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level of man, the deities, too, though only after eons, have to be reborn once more, and are therefore not immortal. Nor do they possess saving powers as do the Buddhas or Bodhisattvas, but rather are themselves in need of salvation, just as are the other categories of beings with whom they populate the Six Realms or Categories (deities, humans, Asura [Titan-like fighting demons], animals, hungry ghosts [Preta], residents of purgatory).

It is, however, understandable that these Deva figures came to hold great significance in cult and piety because of their nobility and power and the protective and helping functions assigned to them. They, like the Bodhisattvas, also came to play an important role in art. Even semi-divine and demonic beings from Indian--but occasionally also from Chinese and Japanese--popular religion, were accepted into Buddhism (31, 75 f., 78) and--like the ancient major Indian deities--were given a variety of special functions, though at a lower level.

Thus Mahâyâna absorbed and assimilated from the indigenous faiths and cults of the many countries which it conquered during the course of its history every imaginable kind of deity, rite, and religious idea; and by virtue of its comprehensive receptive and transforming powers gave rise to a hierarchy of figures, a vast "pantheon," which is of the highest importance to faith and particularly to art even though, according to Mahâyâna philosophy, these many figures were nothing but illusionary phantasmagoria without true reality. Just as East Asian Mahâyâna Buddhism contains almost every imaginable type or stage of development of religiosity--ranging from the highest and purest philosophical insight and mystic vision down to very gross superstitions--its art, too, embraces a fullness of figures of divergent religious meaning and spiritual status rarely ever encountered in other sacred arts of the world. These sacred beings enter the phenomenal world the more vigorously the more removed they are from the highest Buddha figures dwelling in the Absolute. Hence they display a great degree of concrete realism not only with respect to philosophical and religious conceptualization but also in their artistic representations, which display clearly defined personalities and tangible, near-human corporeality.

Finally, another dualistic factor contributed to the formation of an abundance of sacred figures in the world of Mahâyâna thought and art. There is, on the one hand, the "cosmological" view of karma law,⁷ of "Buddha nature," etc. This implies the idea that the painful effects of karma law as well as the blissful effects of the Buddha nature or absolute existence are not limited to the individual self but are immanent in everything and hold negative or positive meaning for the entirety of the world including all its causes and consequences, no matter how small and uncalculable they may be. On the other hand, quite in accordance with this basic metaphysical idea, Mahâyâna realized that the finite Ego, which finds it difficult to transcend itself, was powerless vis-à-vis these universal processes and needed help from above in order to rise to enlightenment and salvation. Salvation through one's own powers (tzu-li, ji-riki) as practiced by the Arhats of Hīnayâna, gave way under Mahâyâna to salvation by somebody else's powers (t'a-li, ta-riki): salvation by the merciful, helpful intervention of higher powers. All this meant, in the final analysis, salvation by the Absolute Being embodied in the figure of the Buddha.

The Absolute's representatives, those helpful saving beings, now became vastly important, and the more their miraculous powers were invoked, the more the

power of religious imagination bestowed upon them tangible, impressive forms, the more art was able and compelled to devote itself to creating images of these beings. This compassionate power manifested itself in a multitude of figures, but most prominently in Amitâbha (Amida) and Avalokiteśvara (Kuanyin, Kannon). It is in their images that Buddhist art has created its greatest and best works.

The richest unfolding of this Mahâyâna pantheon has taken place in East Asia in the comprehensive systems of the Chên-yen (Shingon) and T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) schools. These two have therefore also gained supreme importance for Buddhist art, particularly because they combined a complicated system of magic rites, symbols, and figures with a grandiose philosophical world vision of scholastic universality. They have given not only numerous stimuli and challenges to artistic creativity, but also matched an abundance of concrete images with a unique element of metaphysical spiritualization.

As an exact expression of the philosophical-religious ideas of Mahâyâna Buddhism, this art has two aspects. On the one hand, it participates in the Absolute, whose essence it seeks to comprehend through a spiritual-mystic act, which conveys it to the faithful. On the other hand, to the extent it is filled with mystic power, it also possesses a "magic" function and is filled with a genuinely numinous reality and efficacy. Viewed from a higher, purely philosophical vantage point which seeks "genuine truth," art is only a low preliminary stage along the path to the understanding of "Emptiness." Art remains attached to the phenomenal world where it cannot participate in the Absolute in its pure unclouded state.

This is why art is only a "popular" aid adapted to earthly levels of comprehension (*upâya-kauśalya*; *fang-pien*, *hō-ben*--corresponding to the term of "preliminary, counterfeit truth"). Those failing to attain the highest spiritual level need a pedagogical "trick" to make it possible for them to reach at least a preliminary understanding commensurate with their lower spiritual level. This lets them sense something of the more profound truth and to ascend thereby to a higher sphere of spiritual existence. The art of Buddhism therefore possesses the highest metaphysical value, because it truly shows and reveals the Absolute and Holy, or even may "contain" it. But at the same time it is also devoid of any metaphysical value, because it functions only at the limited preliminary level of tangible images, i.e., at a level which has to be transcended along the path to true essence and ultimate unity. The innermost goal of this art is its own destruction. In this goal we encounter one of those paradoxes prompting the believer to take that liberating leap into supra-dualistic "Emptiness" so typical of Buddhism and other essentially mystic religions.

This double aspect of Buddhist art reveals something of the essence of all art: art conveys in the phenomenal, in the "image," something that is basically beyond images, that is essential and transcendental; art makes the tangible transparent and links image and metaphysical interpretation without, however, being in a position to capture and show the transcendent itself. In Buddhist art these two aspects are particularly sharply separated. The main emphasis is put on the side of the Nontangible-Absolute and on allusions to its presence, while depiction and any implied acceptance of objects which exist in the phenomenal world are largely avoided. The real aim of this art is to point beyond all phenomena. Yet it always remains somehow attached to them, and is permitted to do so, because even

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phenomena share in the Buddha nature of all things; they share in something that is basically beyond images. This art would ultimately have negated itself, if it had not always remained linked to and dependent upon the earthly-phenomenal and empirical world. In part, this dependence involves the necessity to draw on the treasure of sensory experiences; in part, it involves art's magic-cultic as well as "pedagogical" and psychological functions. It also shares the philosophical conception of the nonduality of the phenomenal world and the Absolute without, however, being tied to that conception. All this clearly testifies to the intermediary position of art, particularly of religious art, in the spiritual sphere: it is open to all sides of the issue and embraces them in both an antinomic and synthetic manner.

II. Evolution of Buddhist Art

Buddhist art was sustained spiritually and materially by sects which originated in China during the period from the 5th to the 8th centuries. Some of them reached Japan shortly thereafter and continued to develop there. These sects owned most temple-monasteries and enjoyed official sponsorship by the court and usually also a sizeable following among the population at large. The label "sect" fits them poorly, because Buddhism knows no unified "church" with central authority and hierarchical structure from which these faith and cult communities could have broken off in heretical opposition. Rather, these sects gave more emphasis to certain sacred scriptures and their interpretation by great spiritual teachers and to certain monkish disciplines and cult traditions. They should, therefore, perhaps be called denominations or, more simply, schools.

Only during the course of time did they consolidate into regular organizations which co-existed in free competition with each other. They mutually tolerated each other, but also conducted lively religious-philosophical debates which were marred by hostile tension only whenever these schools allowed themselves to be dragged into the political-military quarrels of the secular authorities or whenever a new school managed to attract a large following and thus appeared as a threat to the others. Within the widely differing Buddhist schools numerous and frequently contradictory basic types of religiosity, and therefore also of religious art, have evolved. All have found room to live side by side with one another in the vast and varied edifice to which we normally apply the highly simplifying label of Buddhism.

During the first centuries of Mahāyāna Buddhism there existed about half a dozen such schools whose speculative teachings did not as yet exert any particular influence on art. The iconography of this earliest Buddhist art of East Asia therefore did not yet display the sectarian choices of subject and far-going, unwieldy and complicated iconographic differentiations of later times. Certain Buddhas and Bodhisattvas enjoyed great veneration and frequent artistic representation, as for example, the future Buddha Maitreya (42, 45 ff.), and (though we will not pursue this aspect any further) their depictions may serve as reliable reflections of the course Buddhist faith and piety were taking.

Out of this still many-faceted and open world of ideas and sacred figures emerged those schools which created the foundation for the religious thought and artistic work of the "high middle ages" in China and Japan. Next to the T'ien-t'ai (Tendai) and Chên-yen (Shingon) schools, the most important schools were the Ching-t'u (Jōdo, Amitābha) school and the Ch'an (Zen) school.

This is not the place to describe the external and internal history of these Buddhist schools in East Asia. Those interested in this history are referred to the works listed in the bibliography, particularly those by Eliot, Gundert, von Glasenapp, and Conze. The most comprehensive and yet shortest survey of Buddhism in Asia is H. von Glasenapp's book, *Der Buddhismus in Indien und im Fernen Osten*. Our bibliography also lists some works which provide information about the cultural historical backgrounds in India, China, and Japan. Since it should be clearly understood that it is not the task of this book to sketch the historical development of the Buddhist art of East Asia--which would be impossible without the inclusion of Indian and Central Asian Buddhist art and should perhaps be attempted at some later time elsewhere (see note on p. 3 of the Introduction)--we will only mention a few important cultural and religious facts essential for an understanding of the essence of this art. The maps of China and Japan and the chronological list are designed to facilitate access to this information.

Indian Buddhism had become known in China during the middle of the first century A.D. at the latest. After the Han period it advanced vigorously against both ancient Chinese cosmology ("universism") and Confucianism. This advance did not come without effort but was energetically promoted by the Six Dynasties, some of which were of non-Chinese origin. Buddhism enjoyed intensive support during the eight hundred years spanning the time from the 4th to the 12th centuries. In spite of occasional official persecutions and the continuous rivalry with Confucianism and Taoism it came to have a considerable, but never dominant, effect on China's intellectual life; as, for example, on philosophical thought (in logic, epistemology, and metaphysics), on poetry, art and the religious life of the people.

Buddhism initially entered China in both its major Indian variants--Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna--but Mahāyāna, as everywhere in East Asia, soon came to have the field all to itself. The doctrine of the Bodhisattva Amitābha and his Pure Land reached China relatively early (from about the fourth century on), to be followed soon after by the arrival of the missionary Bodhidharma, who laid the foundation for the Ch'an (Zen) school (ca. 530). Then came the founding of the T'ien-t'ai school and, relatively late, at the beginning of the 8th century, the Tantric form of Mahāyāna, the Vajrayāna (Mi-tsung, Chên-yen), which had already evolved in India as the secret school. I have not mentioned numerous other schools which were important for philosophical speculation and religious practice but less so for religious art.

Buddhism also took a very different attitude toward the two leading and diametrically opposed indigenous Chinese schools of thought, Confucianism and Taoism. Buddhism remained alien to Confucian ideas and was only too frequently despised and persecuted by Confucians because it remained aloof from their philosophical principles and the socio-ethical and political ideals derived from them. However, Buddhism shared many features with Taoism. Like Buddhism, Taoism espoused a mystic-dialectic philosophy of the Absolute. Taoism also opposed Confucian thought and its attendant life-style. While those who regard Chinese Buddhism as being basically a modified Taoism and as something far removed from its Indian prototype may go too far in their claims, it should be noted that there

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exists a close and profound relationship between the central Taoist concept of the Tao and the Buddhist notion of "Emptiness," or "Nothingness."

But Chinese Buddhism never severed its connections with its Indian sources as long as Buddhist teaching still flourished in India. Time and time again it received new ideas from India. Chinese Buddhism preserved these ideas, but also developed them further in its own particular fashion. From the beginnings of Buddhism in China to about the year 1000 contacts were maintained with the holy land of Buddhism by numerous Indian monks--who came to China as missionaries and as translators of Sûtras and also (from about 400) by many Chinese pilgrims who visited the holy places in India and returned with new teachings, scriptures, rituals, and images. This traffic followed the great caravan routes through Central Asia, but sometimes also the southern routes. The Central Asian sites of Khotan, Kucha, Turfan, Tun-huang, etc., which served as way stations between India--particularly Northwest India (Gandhâra)--and East Asia have yielded most important documents for the study of the transcontinental migration of Buddhism.⁸ Surviving monuments also clearly show the stages of the development of Buddhist art, notably in sculpture and painting.

The Buddhist art of China, however, does not simply stand at the end of a single evolutionary line running across inner Asia, but came to benefit directly from Indian sources in quite early times. During the first great flourishing period of Chinese Buddhism from the Six Dynasties to the T'ang, initial fragmentation and regional alien rule by Turkish dynasties (which were also generous sponsors of Buddhism) was ended by the T'ang reunification, which brought Chinese culture to its highest peak. There was a remarkable degree of creativity in all fields of culture which both radiated into and received stimuli from wide areas of Asia. The resulting Buddhist art reached its classic expression with the infusion of Chinese spirituality and sense of form, and became the model for all subsequent East Asian Buddhist art.

Unfortunately, only relatively few--and certainly not the most important examples--of this art have been preserved from these epochs. Aside from a few buildings (pagodas), there remain only the great north Chinese cave temples which have survived in their original sites: Yün-kang (455 until the middle of the sixth century), Lung-mên (end of the 5th century until ca. 700), and T'ien-lung-shan (from the second half of the 6th century and into the T'ang period). These are of crucial importance for the history of East Asian sculpture during its most fertile period. South China, too, played an important part in the development of early Buddhist art, but few original sites remain.

As far as painting is concerned, the importance of the wall and scroll paintings found in the cave temples of Tun-huang--a northwestern outpost of the Chinese empire (middle of the 4th century until about 1300)--can hardly be overestimated, since practically all the rest of ancient Chinese cult painting has been lost (most of it in the time of persecution during the 840s). Numerous important and splendid temple monasteries were erected all over China, but particularly in the T'ang capital of Ch'ang-an. These were full of marvelous art treasures and were the centers of intensive religious, philosophical, and liturgical life of the various faith and cult communities ("sects") in their pursuit of highly divergent spiritual ways. Few traces of this splendor have survived in the form of original monuments

because of massive anti-Buddhist persecutions (particularly around 845) and other catastrophes, but the strong, fertilizing effect of this Buddhist spiritual life on Japan demonstrates its greatness, breadth and vigor. Works of art from this period, particularly sculpture, surviving in China or in Western collections, testify to the great achievements of the early Buddhist art of East Asia.

The classic T'ang period, the Golden Age of China, was followed first by a period of decentralization into the territories of the Five Dynasties but soon after that by a new period of unification under the Sung Dynasty. This epoch--though tragically overshadowed during its second half by the invasion of the Jurchen and the loss of North China to them--may still be labelled the Silver Age of Chinese culture, during which Buddhist art not only survived, but witnessed a new, though final, great upturn in the painting of the Ch'an (Zen) sect. From about the year 1300, Chinese Buddhism experienced a decline, caused in part by its internal exhaustion, in part by the regeneration of Confucianism and--promoted by the Mongol (Yüan) dynasty--the strong impact of Lamaism which continued to expand until recent times, particularly in North China. Since the end of the Sung period, with very few exceptions, no significant Buddhist art has been produced.

Korea's role in the history of Buddhism and its art is for the most part that of an intermediary between China and Japan. Korea did produce characteristic works of her own, but it is not easy to define this distinctly Korean quality. Following a period during which northern Korea was a colony of the Han empire (until 303), three states--Koguryô, Paekche and Silla--existed side by side (until 668) and came to adopt Buddhism from China around 400. This meant that Korean Buddhist teaching, ritual, and art initially followed the example of the first great period of Buddhist culture in China, i.e., that of the Six Dynasties period and of the Northern Ch'i/Northern Chou Dynasties.

Unfortunately, only relatively few examples of the oldest Buddhist art of Korea have survived. After Silla had united the country under its rule in 668 (until 935), Korean culture and art came directly under the influence of the Chinese T'ang Dynasty, whose cultural influences extended beyond the confines of East Asia. A combination of political power and economic prosperity under Silla rule made possible the building of grandiose temple complexes whose grandeur is impressively demonstrated even today by the (restored) Pulguk-sa (Temple of the Buddha Realm) and the Grotto Chapel of Sôkkul-am, both from the middle of the 8th century. Architecture, sculpture, and ritual implements reached levels almost approaching those of T'ang art, as presumably did Buddhist painting, of which no examples have survived. It is during this period that the specifically Korean type of the pagoda was perfected, a type distinguished by the monumental simplicity of its stone block construction.

The flourishing of Buddhist culture and art continued during the following Koryô Dynasty (935-1392). But while up to this time the teachings and cult practices of the Avatamsaka School (Chin. *Hua-yen*, Korean *Hwa-om*) had dominated, the Meditation Sect (Chin. *Ch'an*, Korean *Son*, J. *Zen*) now came to the forefront, although it never attained the same importance in art as it did in the other two countries. Though we have few examples to judge from, Buddhist painting seems to have developed an attractive style in wall and scroll painting. Though somewhat imitative of Sung painting, it managed to achieve interesting variations of its own.

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But the general impression left by the Buddhist art of this period is one of limited creativity, and the end of the Koryo Dynasty also sealed the fate of Buddhist sculpture and art in Korea.

The last dynasty preceding Japan's colonial rule, the Yi Dynasty (1392-1910), based itself entirely on the political teachings and social ethics of Confucianism. In its cultural activities it followed totally the model of China's Ming and Ch'ing Dynasties, which also dominated Korea politically. Following the destructive incursions by the Tungus and Mongols, who had already plagued previous dynasties, the country suffered a major catastrophe during the 1590s as a result of the Japanese military campaigns under Hideyoshi. Innumerable works of older Korean art, particularly Buddhist art, perished during these events. During the Yi period painting was secularized in the Chinese mode, but ever since the Koryo Dynasty, Korea had produced characteristically Korean variations of Chinese painting styles as well as highly independent and important works in the fields of ceramics, lacquerware and other crafts.

Buddhism and its art have experienced a steadier development in Japan than in China and Korea. This development can also better be understood in its totality thanks to the fact that the most important buildings have been relatively well preserved. The Japanese people have led a nearly complete insular existence since their very beginnings and have been spiritually dominated by the native nature and ancestor-worship religion of Shintô. In the middle of the 6th century (552, but more likely as early as 538)--through Korean mediation but almost without preparation--they first encountered the mature and highly developed religion of Buddhism and the far superior ecumenical culture of the Chinese empire. The astonishing ability of the Japanese aristocracy, including the priesthood originating from it, to make this new and initially very foreign spiritual and intellectual world their own is well known. (The "people" came of age culturally, and hence as contributors to Buddhism, only many centuries later during the time of the rise of the bourgeoisie.)

A leading role in this adoption process was played by the imperial prince Shôtoku (574-622), who, as regent and pious Buddhist, contributed decisively to helping the new religion, its culture and its art take root in Japan. The oldest Buddhist temple not only in Japan but in East Asia, the Hôryûji near Nara (founded in 607), is mostly credited to his efforts⁹⁽¹⁾. It is still preserved with its essential original features intact. The sculptures of this period in particular, which correspond in style to the Chinese Six Dynasties period, have as their point of departure the "archaic," yet highly perfected, style of the great first phase in the Buddhist art of East Asia.

During the Nara period (named after the capital city built in the 8th century which followed in its layout the model of the Chinese imperial capital Ch'ang-an) Buddhism virtually became the Japanese state religion. Promoted with enthusiastic piety by the imperial house, the monks carried on a flurry of cultural and artistic activities to which we owe a rich treasure of precious works of art in all fields--architecture, sculpture, painting, and crafts. Today, Nara is still the most impressive site of this mature flourishing period of Buddhist art in Japan and still conveys the most intensive experience of this world of faith and art, even though the city itself has lost most of its ancient splendor. Art and Nara culture in general followed the

T'ang style, which by this time had reached its apex and had become the model for all of East Asia. Nara art so faithfully followed the T'ang pattern that the Japanese works may substitute to a large degree for lost Chinese works without, however, giving the impression of being mere copies.

These epochs of decisive, fundamental change were followed by the Heian or Fujiwara period. Heian is the name of the imperial residence founded at the end of the 8th century which we know under its modern name of Kyôto. Fujiwara is the name of the large, powerful aristocratic clan which practically ran the government and dominated cultural life from the middle of the 9th century to the end of the 12th century. During this period a synthesis between the Chinese-Buddhist and the native-Japanese spirit took place which resulted in the aesthetically refined culture, sustained by the dignity and grace of a high aristocratic society, which we encounter in the novel, *Tale of Prince Genji*, in lyric poetry, and particularly in works of art which rank among the most perfect realizations of human cultural aspirations.

Buddhism continued to be the dominant spiritual force and enjoyed the generous support of the leading families. In the large monasteries--notably in the vast mountain monasteries like those on Hiei-zan near Kyôto or Kôya-san (*san, zan* = mountain), but also in splendid temple precincts in the capital and its beautiful surroundings--new universal systems of thought and cult practices, like Tendai (Chin. *T'ien-t'ai*) and Shingon (Chin. *Chên-yen*) which had been brought to Japan from China by Japanese priests, continued to evolve. These new schools not only brought the world view of East Asian Mahâyâna to its apex, but also provided the most fertile ground for the art of the "high medieval period."

They also solved the long smoldering problem of the relationship between Buddhism and the ancient indigenous Japanese worship of nature, ancestor and state--Shintô--in a simple and harmonious fashion by interpreting the Shintô deities as incarnations or manifestations (*avatâras*, "descended traces") of Buddhist savior figures which constituted the original essence and true body of the native deities. This view not only enriched the Buddhist pantheon substantially but rendered its teachings more complex and its cult practices more difficult to fathom and truly understand.

Gradually, however, and strongly influenced by the slowly spreading feeling of decadence and of the doctrine of the "End of the Law" (*mappô*), i.e., of the final decline of our world age, a simpler piety arose which profoundly affected larger segments of the population. This piety focused almost exclusively on the Buddha Amitâbha (Amida) and derived strength and comfort from faith in his saving powers which could grant to believers rebirth in the blessed realm of his "Pure Land of the West." In China as well as in Japan, this movement maintained intimate links with other schools, particularly with the T'ien-t'ai from the beginning and well into the high stage of East Asian Buddhism. T'ien-t'ai had devoted intense veneration and specially structured meditative practices to Amitâbha. Only later did the Amitâbha schools split off from T'ien-t'ai because of their aversion to T'ien-t'ai's overly complicated speculative and liturgical system (which had become incomprehensible for the ordinary believer) and to its shift to such external aspects as justification by works and ostentatious religious displays.

In Japan this split took place primarily under the leadership of Hônen (1133-1212). A decisive turn away from speculation and meditation about Amitâbha to an

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ever simpler surrender in faith, i.e., a bhakti attitude, took place. It came to be held possible that even or perhaps especially the most depraved minds, could gain comfort and salvation. Finally, the mere invocation of the name of Amitâbha, even during one's dying moment, became sufficient to guarantee the believer's rebirth in the Pure Land of the West. Religious and artistic imagination depicted this blessed realm and its innumerable Bodhisattvas--among them Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin, Kannon) as Amitâbha's most prominent helpmate--and its overwhelming splendor and beauty in the most glowing colors (103). There were also paintings of Amida and his train of Bodhisattvas descending from on high and appearing to the believer on his deathbed (106) in order to welcome and guide him to this pure realm. Here the believer would be reborn as a small child inside a lotus flower and would mature to his final liberation in nirvâna. The almost fairytale-like poetic charm permeating all notions attached to the Pure Land may account for the fact that the Pure Land faith found the widest acceptance among the Japanese. Even today the Amitâbha schools have the largest following among the Buddhist schools of Japan.

This simple, strong piety which sought salvation in "faith alone" was also bound to appeal to the warriors (the samurai or bushi) who emerged as the dominant cultural segment of the population during the succeeding great age, the Kamakura period (1185-1336). The warrior class was in conscious opposition to the slowly decaying court aristocracy of Heian. It had created a new political and cultural center far away from the imperial capital in Kamakura, which today is still the most important site of Buddhist art in Japan next to Nara and Kyôto.

In their search for a vantage point beyond life and death, the warriors were eventually even more attracted to the vigorous Ch'an or Zen Buddhism which had come from China. Zen demanded strict discipline and untiring effort to advance along the path of self-realization and self-liberation "by one's own powers" (jiriki), and made meditation the center of religious life. Zen Buddhism constituted not only the very opposite of the Amitâbha faith and its blind trust in the saving "powers of some other" (tariki) but also of the speculative "scholasticism" and esoteric rituals of the T'ien-t'ai and Chên-yen schools. This contrast is so strong that the Zen school abandoned the religious approaches of these schools altogether. It declared all logical-discursive thought, all ritual acts, all customary ascetic discipline, all acts of faith in any saving powers as insubstantial compared to that moment of enlightenment (satori) which liberates one from all bonds and which may often occur quite suddenly. This enlightenment is achieved by one's own power. It is the result of incessant meditation and intuitive penetration of the existing world and ordinary life up to the moment when one experiences the ultimate ground of being.

Artistically, Zen had acquired its distinctive features in China during the T'ang and Sung periods. It found its clearest expression in ink painting--in China during the Sung period and in Japan during the Ashikaga or Muromachi period (1336-1573)--a period in Japan during which warrior and court cultures were reconciled. In the art of this period the Buddhist spirit found profound manifestation for the last time. But even though Buddhism did not inspire great creative achievements after the 16th century, its spirit entered many spheres of Japanese secular culture. Poetry, the tea cult, domestic and garden architecture, flower arrangement, and Japanese modern culture in general came to be widely

permeated by the Zen spirit. As a result, the distinctions between religious and secular culture and art were obliterated in many important fields.

The Buddhist art of East Asia may be divided into four major types: the art of the founding period; that of the scholastic-mystic Hua-yen, T'ien-t'ai, and Chên-yen schools; that of the Amitâbha faith; and that of Zen Buddhism. These types have tended to become dominant in that order, particularly in Japan. In China they tended to overlap. The first was dominant from the Wei until the early T'ang period in China, and during the Suiko and Nara periods in Japan. The second flourished during the T'ang and early Heian periods. The third overlapped the second period in China, but became dominant in Japan only after the middle of the Fujiwara period. The fourth rose during the Sung and the Kamakura/Muromachi periods, respectively. Since this last type, Zen art, holds a special position among the four, we will deal with it and its spiritual foundations in a separate and concluding final chapter.

III. Some Comments on Iconography

The disclaimer implied in the chapter heading is intended to make it clear that a well-rounded presentation of Buddhist iconography should not be expected here. Given the gaps in the study of this field such a presentation is still not possible today. A separate volume would most likely be required for an exhaustive treatment of the subject. However, some iconographical information is best provided in connection with the description of particular fields of Buddhist art, especially those of sculpture, painting, and cult implements, because the iconographical study of any art first asks for those objects to be depicted which already existed before the artist transformed them into works of art. But iconography touches on questions genuinely relevant to art history only when it deals with the way in which pre-existing objects find their artistic form. Any iconographic notion--for example, that of sacred figures like the Bodhisattvas or that of a holy scene--is in itself already shaped by religious and visionary "poetic" imagination, is itself already an "image." The artistic achievement of different peoples, ages, and artists is constituted largely by their creative approach to such given and frequently already pre-shaped objects, and the new, distinct, frequently individualistic interpretations they impart to these objects. Iconography is therefore basically inseparable from the artistic process.

Every iconographic system has its origins and its history. The world of figures and symbols of East Asian Mahâyâna Buddhism, for example, can only be truly understood if dealt with not in a merely descriptive manner resembling that employed for zoological-botanical systems which aim at complete listings of their individual components. Rather, this iconography can only be understood if the wide context of its different areas of origin, its growth within the individual schools ("sects"), the principles of its combination, structures, and evolution, in short, the "historical relief" of these numerous iconographical elements, is analyzed and made transparent.

In the Buddhist iconography of East Asia we would therefore have to first distinguish between original Indian Buddhist and pre-Buddhist Indian components. Secondly, we would have to include Hinduist components which later fused with the former and, finally, those components from West Asian cultures which may have

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entered Buddhist iconography. In addition, indigenous Chinese and, finally, also Japanese components would have to be included in such a presentation and their complicated historical stratification given due attention. As long as the preconditions for such a presentation are not met¹⁰--and we are far from this happy state of affairs in spite of some promising pioneering studies¹¹--it is only possible here to offer as a practical aid for orientation a survey of the most important iconographical characteristics of the major figure types found in Buddhist art.

Since every detail of a Buddhist image had profound, metaphysical-magical significance, artists had to be provided with a secure foundation and reliable aid for their work. Continuing the ancient Indian tradition of the *sādhanaś* and *śilpa-śāstras*, Buddhist artists were guided by books containing exact descriptions of all sacred persons and strict and detailed prescriptions for their depiction in cult images. These texts themselves were, in part, based on canonical *Sūtras* and other scriptures which occasionally put precise directions about their own images into the very mouths of these sacred figures. In a similar vein, books regulating every detail of ritual matters can be found. More popular and widely known even today are iconographical handbooks in scroll form which arrange all Buddhist figures in hierarchical categories and provide brief pictorial sketches of them. These handbooks contain information which, though vitally important to anyone interested in Buddhist art, are as yet barely accessible, nor have they to date been the subject of exhaustive studies.¹²

Almost nothing is yet known in the West about one highly interesting specific question: that of iconometry, i.e., the canon of proportions which prescribe different mathematical relationships for the individual figure categories, though such data is available in very minute detail from Indian texts dealing with art theories. The basic measuring unit is the width of a finger (Sanskrit: *angula*). Different multiples of this unit apply to the measurements of the parts of the body of a Buddha, a god, a prince, an ordinary man and their proportional relationships. We are therefore not dealing with a uniform system of proportions derived from observing natural human bodies and striving to make visible in aesthetic perfection the ideal measurements and proportions found by optical laws of a reality embodied in nature. Rather, we are dealing with symbolic measurements, established as norms of a purely spiritual and metaphysical nature on the basis of supra-sensory insights. These measures make visible and intelligible the categories of being and forms of manifestations entered into by the Absolute. These figure types and the levels of being they represent have been incorporated into concrete images with the help of the magic power of numbers and proportions.

Seemingly aesthetic-formal features of such works of art are, therefore, basically ontological statements and iconographically important signs. Only if these stipulated dimensions are correct (the same applies to their attributes and many other features), can the sacred "correctness" and potential powers of these images be guaranteed. This iconometric system of "abstract proportions" was generally applied in India and Tibet.¹³ Similar rules applied in East Asia too, though perhaps not everywhere and at all times with equal strictness. This is shown by various texts which, unfortunately, are still too little known. There has been no study until now to find out what proportions were applied in East Asia, how they are related to those

used in India and Tibet, and how far they have actually been applied in the works of art from different periods.

This holds true not only for proportions but applies to an even higher and more noticeable degree to other iconographical features. Beings at the different levels of existence distinguished by Buddhism are generally clearly identified not only according to body type, posture, movement, and expression, but also on the basis of jewelry, attributes, and symbolic signs. The Buddha (for example, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29, 97) is distinguished by the great austerity of his artistic representation, even though thirty-two major and eighty minor natural and supernatural attributes appropriate for an Enlightened One, or a spiritual world ruler, are ascribed to him.¹⁴ Among these the most important are: the protrusion on top of the head (*uṣṇiṣa*) as sign of highest enlightenment and the *ūrṇā*, originally the light-emanating, world-illuminating white lock of hair between the eyebrows (a crucially important spot in the Eastern practice of meditation) which was later simplified to a dot of light, and reinterpreted as an "wisdom eye."¹⁵ Additional attributes are the wheel of the law (*dharmacakra*) and other symbols on the palms of his hands and on the soles of his feet and the (counter-clockwise) swastika on his chest.

Other signs are in part physical signs of beauty and distinction, such as dark blue eyes, wide smooth forehead, softly rounded shoulders and extremities, smooth skin. Still others are derived from the Buddha legend. Elongated ear lobes are linked to the Indian custom of wearing heavy ear ornaments, but in their religious symbolism most likely are to be understood as signs of human nobility and higher wisdom. The short locks on his head, running clockwise, no longer grew after the Buddha had cut his hair prior to his taking up ascetic practices. There are other miraculous qualities, such as possession of forty teeth, arms extending to his knees in a standing position, webs between his fingers and toes (50), a mighty lion voice and a fine fragrance.

In art, only the most important of these signs are depicted, among them primarily the beautifully rounded ideal figure of the Buddha. He is also made to appear very austere in body pose and garment. A modest monk's robe, frequently leaving one shoulder, chest and arms partially exposed, succeeds in conveying a lofty majesty, a simplicity and a near absence of particular individualizing features which are so very appropriate for the embodiment of the Absolute. His body posture, too, is of the greatest simplicity. Usually he is seated in the yoga position with legs crossed under him but in some instances he may also be standing quietly.

Normally, the Buddha wears no appurtenances or ornaments. This "negative iconography" more than anything else makes him stand out from among all the other savior figures as something special, as the highest figure beyond compare. It is therefore frequently rather difficult to determine which Buddha is represented by a particular figure or painting in cases where written documents or other sources do not provide this information. Occasionally the *mudrās* may be helpful, but more frequently the *Bodhisattvas* and other accompanying figures attached to the Buddha or accompanying the Buddha provide necessary clues since they are exactly defined iconographically and, together with "their" Buddha, constitute fixed configurations. For example, *Avalokiteśvara* and *Mahā-sthāmaprāpta* belong to *Amitābha*, *Mañjuśrī* and *Samantābhadrā* to *Śākyamuni*.

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The only Buddhas bearing appurtenances are Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yao-shih, Yakushi), who grants healing from disease and carries a round medicine box or a fruit in his open left hand (20), and Vairocana (Ta-jih, Dai-nichi), who in some instances holds the wheel of teaching and, in addition to other jewelry, wears a splendid crown (29, 102). This might appear to contradict the very nature of the Buddha. The reasons for this deviation are numerous and by no means unambiguous. Common to them all is perhaps the notion that the original or All-Buddha (âdi-Buddha) appears as world ruler (cakravartin) and ruler of the universe or, perhaps, that he reveals himself in this royal, splendidly ornamented sambhōgākāya form on the level of the Bodhisattvas, i.e., in a figure adorned with Bodhisattva ornaments, since his real form, his dharma-kāya, is remote and beyond form.¹⁶ However, the crown itself is by no means mere ornament and sign of a ruler, but is also an ontological symbol and bears the images of the five "wisdom Buddhas" (see p. 8).



1* Sample Mudrās.

Next to Vairocana, Śākyamuni, Bhaiṣajyaguru and Amitābha (the "infinite, immeasurable [a-mita] splendid Radiance [ābha]," the Lord of the "Pure Land of the

West"), are depicted most frequently. All of them form a *mudrâ* with their hands. The most common *mudrâs* symbolize meditation, preaching, protection, or wish granting (1*). The specific Vairocana *mudrâ* is formed by enclosing the index finger of the left hand with the fingers of the right hand (29). According to one of the many interpretations, this *mudrâ* symbolizes the interpenetration of the One Absolute and the Five Elements of the world of phenomena. Bodhisattvas and some Devas, too, form *mudrâs*. The *mudrâs* are an important device by which the priests, particularly in esoteric Buddhism, establish a relationship with the essence of the numinous and ultimate world principle or even achieve a merger of identities with it.¹⁷ In a *mudrâ*, each individual finger has several meanings, such as the world elements (earth, water, etc.), the five wisdoms, etc.

Compared to the "ideation" Buddhas--the personifications of the Absolute--the earthly existence of the historical Buddha Śākyamuni plays a relatively minor role. He is most often depicted as a child--just after the seven steps he took immediately after his birth and, with one arm pointing to heaven and one to earth, he declared: "I am the most Exalted One in the Heavens and on Earth" (32)--or during subsequent decisive phases of his life: his departure into the wilderness; as a totally emaciated ascetic; during the moment of his enlightenment under the bodhi tree; during his first sermon; on his deathbed (the "entry into perfect *nirvāna*," *parinirvāna*), and in a few other scenes. Usually there are eight such scenes focused on individual figures or groups of figures (119).

The Bodhisattvas (24, 25, 53, 55, 57, 58, 66, 111, 114) are less austere and restrained in their appearance. They are depicted in more active and graceful poses and are covered with jeweled ornaments; their garments are draped into numerous folds and lines, but frequently Bodhisattvas appear dressed only in the Indian dhoti extending from hips to feet, and with jewelry at their necks, chests and arms, sometimes with a splendid crown on top of a raised hair style. All these are features derived from the figure type of the Indian prince (*rājā*).

Only Kṣitigarbha (Ti-tsang, Jizō)--who helps beings trapped in the cycle of rebirth in the six realms of the *samsāra* world, but particularly residents of purgatory and dead children--appears as the merciful figure of a monk with shaved head, priestly gown and staff whose six rings refer to the six realms (65). He has a rather complicated history, extending into pre-Buddhist times and originally may even have been an earth-goddess, as suggested by his name Earth-Womb-Storehouse. As a Bodhisattva, he is distinguished from ordinary monks (86) by *ūrnā* and halo.

Almost all Bodhisattvas also bear some appurtenance, such as the lotus flower (see below); a flask containing the *amṛta*-drink--the "sweet heavenly dew" or "nectar"; a *Cintāmani* Jewel, which grants all wishes;¹⁸ or a sword as symbol of irresistible, all-penetrating wisdom which cuts through the darkness of ignorance (*avidyā*). In Buddhist symbolism, weapons usually have such a positive meaning; they promote the good. Sometimes the Bodhisattva carries a sacred *Sūtra* in the form of a book scroll. Sword and *Sūtra* are ascribed to one of the most important Bodhisattvas, Mañjuśrī (Wên-shu, Mon-ju), the embodiment of highest wisdom. Common major symbols of Buddhism, such as the Wheel of Dharma (the world law of the teaching), the Vajra-Thunderbolt (see p. 167 f.), and others, occur regularly in connection with many of these figures. Almost all of the Bodhisattvas form symbolic gestures (*mudrâs*) with their hands.

Several of them also display abnormalities, such as multiple arms or heads. Multiple arms usually symbolize the many aspects of their numinous powers and the unlimited nature of their compassionate intercession. Best known are two such manifestations of Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin, Kannon): the Cintāmanicakra (Wish-granting jewel and Wheel-of-the-law) form (*J. Nyoi-rin Kannon*) with six arms (63, 112) of which four hold the wish-granting jewel, the wheel, the rosary, and the lotus flower)¹⁹ and the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Juichimen Kannon; 58, 62). On his own head the latter carries, like a crown, nine small heads. According to one of the many popular interpretations, three of these symbolize the main virtue of the Bodhisattva (compassion), three his holy rage over evil in this world, and three his joy over the good. They are all topped by a Buddha head (with uṣṇīṣa) depicting Amitābha, whose most important manifestation is Avalokiteśvara.

Most of Avalokiteśvara's pictures have therefore small Amitābha figures in the frontal part of his crown and are thus easy to identify (54). This Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara occurs in many forms and is the most popular figure of grace. His name, according to H. Zimmer, means "The Being Capable of Enlightening Insight" or, according to a Chinese reinterpretation, "The Lord Who Responds With Full Compassion To The Sounds Of Suffering Of The World." He is the Bodhisattva whom the religious imagination of Buddhism has endowed with the greatest variety of motifs, including even several drawn from non-Buddhist sources, particularly from popular legends. In China, only a few forms occur, but in Japan, at least thirty-three (of which, however, only six to ten are important in art) can be found.

It is frequently claimed (unfortunately even in academic studies) that in East Asia Avalokiteśvara appears in female form as the "Goddess of Mercy." He is also mistakenly likened to the figure of the Madonna. Such claims not only contradict the very concept of a Bodhisattva who, like all other dualities of the saṃsāra world, has also transcended the duality of the sexes,²⁰ they also contradict Avalokiteśvara's external appearance, because the overwhelming majority of the Kuan-yin images display no characteristic female features as real goddesses invariably do (74). Even in cases where Kuan-yin figures appear holding a child--as happens in later Chinese and Japanese works (but none much earlier than the 13th to 15th centuries)--these children are not their own. Kuan-yin is not a holy mother but a Bodhisattva who out of the vast store of his own compassionate powers may also grant children.

A Bodhisattva may, of course, also incarnate himself in female form. Particularly in China, a good many indigenous myths and legends speak of benevolent and self-sacrificing figures of young girls and motherly deities. These have merged into popular notions and pictures of Kuan-yin, but this is a secondary, relatively late stratum which overlays the original concept and is without relevance for classic Buddhist art. One should be more cautious in making claims about mother goddesses and similar female figures with respect to East Asian Buddhism because Śaktism, in contrast to India and Tibet, was practically unknown there. The classic Kuan-yin images (and those of the other Bodhisattvas) appear "feminine" to Westerners only as long as these observers are unfamiliar with the way in which the essential nature of the Bodhisattva is manifested. A Bodhisattva is suspended between male and female in a way which affirms as well as negates (in that characteristically Buddhist sense) both natures, and yet manages at the same time to neither affirm nor negate them.

It is one of the astonishing achievements of Buddhist art to have captured the supra-dualistic character of these figures in visual images; to have skillfully, and perhaps also consciously, made use of the pliable Indian body and facial types. Upon closer scrutiny, however, it will be noticed that the faces of Kuan-yin and of other Bodhisattvas are shaded--albeit ever so slightly--to the masculine side, frequently even displaying clearly marked but small mustaches (113). In general, they have the appearance of a princely ruler. This is perhaps linked to the notion that every being, in order to advance to the Bodhisattva level, would have to be born first not just as a human being, but as a male. However, only the figures of gods, i.e., figures below the level of Bodhisattvas, display clearly masculine features. Such obviously masculine beings include the World Guardians and Vidyârâjas who, though of equal rank with the Bodhisattvas, originated in the strongly masculine Śiva cult. The same applies to the female deities.

A most important Bodhisattva is Maitreya (Mi-lo, Mi-roku), who awaits his hour to become the Buddha, the illuminator of the future world age (42, 45-47), in the Tuṣita heaven from where Śākyamuni had also descended for his last earthly incarnation. His preferred posture, particularly in the early period, is that of waiting and meditation: one of his feet rests on his knee and his hand is raised to his cheek.²¹ There are also images which anticipate or, perhaps, indicate his true, timeless, essential nature and show him as the perfect Buddha.

Esoteric Buddhism, in particular, has created numerous Bodhisattva figures which are purely "theoretically" construed hypostases of ontological concepts, essential qualities or functions ("virtues") and aspects of the Absolute. For example, Ākāṣagarbha (J. *Kokūzō*, "Womb of Emptiness") is a personification of the unity of wisdom and compassion and of the highest wisdom of absolute emptiness (*śūnyata*). Prajñā-pāramitā (J. *Hannya-haramitta* or *-mitsu*) is a hypostasis of the highest wisdom, of "sophia," and is also called the "Mother of all Buddhas," but is only occasionally depicted as a female figure even though the world *prajñā* is of feminine gender. Both hold the usual wisdom symbols: Lotus, Sword, Scroll, etc.

Some Bodhisattvas are depicted riding animals symbolizing certain of their characteristics and powers or more general traditional Buddhist virtues: Mañjuśrī on a lion signifying strength and energy as necessary complements of wisdom;²² Samantābhadra (Pu-hsien, Fu-gen) on a six-tusked elephant--the symbol of strength, wisdom, and overpowering dignity.²³ Several Devas, particularly the Devas of the elements, also have animal mounts suitable to the qualities ascribed to them.

The Vidyârâjas ("Kings of Secret Wisdom"), like the terrifying manifestations of the Bodhisattvas (118), are also characteristic of esoteric Buddhism and are easily recognized by their raging-threatening expressions and belligerent stances, by their weapons (which are to destroy the darkness of illusion and the evil resulting from it), and usually also by their flame halos symbolizing the consuming fire of truth. Each of them is associated with a Buddha whose benevolent-destructive aspects they represent. For example, the Five Great Vidyârâjas (J. *Go-dai-myōō*) correspond to the Five Wisdom Buddhas. Particularly important among them is Acala, the Vidyârâja manifestation of the All-Buddha Vairocana who, though rarely depicted in China, can be found very frequently in Japan where he is known as Fudo-Myōō ("The Immovable, Unshakable Wisdom King" [69, 137]). To mention the numerous other Vidyârâjas--most of them hypostases of the kind referred to earlier--would go

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too far since every one of them requires detailed explanations. Related to them but of different origin--having evolved out of Chinese warrior heroes and Indian Yakṣas who serve as apotropaic gate guardians (dvarapālas)--are the "Two Kings" (Erhwang, Ni-ô). With terrifying and defensive gestures they stand guard on both sides of a temple gate. They may be counted among the Deva even though they have absorbed several features from esoteric Buddhism (79).

The gods, whose nature and origin has already been explained, are noticeably more realistic in bodily appearance and facial types, clothing, weapons and jewelry. They are beings--richly dressed and armed in Chinese fashion--who frequently hold some symbolic object in their hands, or are identified in other ways according to their character and functions.

Most important among them are the Twelve Gods of the Elements: sun (77), moon, earth, water, fire, etc., as well as the ancient gods Indra and Brahma, the Four World Guardians (Lokapāla; T'ien-wang, [Shi-] Tennô, "Heavenly Kings"), whose function is to guard the Buddha, the Buddha land, the sanctuary, the teaching, and the congregation from all four directions (70, 72). Each of them protects one of the world realms on the four sides of Mount Sumeru (see p. 61). Related to them is the youthful warrior figure of Wei-to (J. *Ida* [-ten]), who was particularly popular in China.

The Twelve Heavenly Generals serve in a similar capacity. They are attached to the Buddha Bhaiṣajyaguru as "body guards" and are, in the final analysis, merely astral deities, as symbolized by the fact that there are twelve of them (71). Semi-divine or demonic beings could also assume such protective functions. Among these are the "Eight Groups of Divine Beings" (J. *Hachi-bu-shu*)--originally Indian demonic beings, such as Yakṣas (low-ranking nature and local deities), Nāgas (snake demons), Garudas (bird demons as enemies of snakes), Gandharvas and Kinnaras (supra-earthly musicians, genii, "sirens")--who are in almost every instance clearly identified by animal emblems or other signs. We may also add to this group the Aśuras (75, 76), belligerent "titans," who are particularly interesting because of their three faces and their relationship to the Iranian Ahuras.²⁴

All these beings are attached to the entourage of Śākyamuni Buddha as protective guardians. Some of them were originally evil, man-hating demons and had been converted by the Buddha into pious, helpful beings who subsequently found the path to salvation for themselves in his service. This happened, for example, to the child-eating demoness Hāritī (J. *Karitei-mo*, *Kishi-mojin*), who was transformed by the wisdom and compassion of the Buddha into a goddess charged with protecting children and granting them to the childless, and who for this reason became the object of a popular cult (23*, 78). She is always depicted accompanied by one or several small children. As a figure fulfilling the desire for children, she represents--almost as frequently as Kuan-yin--the East Asian figure motif of the "Madonna"²⁵ and may even have influenced this variant form of Kuan-yin but apparently without being linked in any way to the Christian divine mother. Her material symbol is the red pomegranate with its many kernels--a widely used fertility symbol. She has risen in rank and, for all practical purposes, is treated as if she were on the same level as the real goddesses (Devīs). She occupies a place in religious life close to that of the goddess of good fortune, Lakṣmi or Śrī-Devī (J. *Kichijōten*), whose symbol is the wish-granting jewel (74). Both are depicted as

graceful women of the Chinese type, wearing the dresses and ornaments characteristic of the T'ang period. These almost divine figures have been "nationalized" and thus moved closer to the samsāra level than some normally higher-ranking beings of the pantheon. Numerous other auspicious pre- or extra-Buddhist deities have been taken into the Mahāyāna pantheon, including astral deities who are very prominent in astrology.

The categories of figures discussed so far share two "attributes" which symbolize their supra-human, numinous natures: throne and halo. We should remind ourselves at this point of the generally accepted meaning of these attributes, because in Asian cultures in particular, higher beings--such as royal princes--are entitled to a lofty throne seat. This applies of course especially to the Buddha as spiritual world ruler. His "diamond throne" (*vajrāsana*) is the immovable center of the world, symbolizing the transcendent, eternal, diamond-like, indestructible truth. The throne is held up by lions who symbolize awakening, preaching and invincible rule. The Buddha's throne is therefore called the lion throne (*simhāsana* [compare 39]).

It is often only a simple pedestal, but is more often than not a highly structured and decorated pedestal whose narrow middle part is supposed to imitate the central world mountain Sumeru (29, 31). Above it rises the lotus throne (*padmāsana*). Its lotus flower symbolizes enlightenment, purity, and the Buddha world and, more than any other, is properly the symbol of the Buddha, particularly in his transcendent bodies (*sambhōga-kāya* and *dharma-kāya*). Bodhisattvas are also placed, sitting or standing, on lotus pedestals because they are potential Buddhas. Vidyārāja, on the other hand, often have rock pedestals (69) or symbolic animals as their thrones.

Some Bodhisattvas may be seated on animals, like lions and elephants. These serve as "vehicles" (*vāhana*). However, lotus flowers, which are more appropriate for expressing a Bodhisattva's true nature, are placed atop these animals to serve as throne seats. Gods, strictly speaking, are not entitled to this symbol of highest perfection but numinous beings, frequently, though by no means always, came to be depicted on lotus blossoms parallel to their transformation into helpful, wise, and numinous beings. Just as often, however, they can be found with animals serving as their mounts. This is particularly true of the elementary deities, such as the water god on his water buffalo.

A corresponding order exists with respect to halos: Gods frequently, but by no means always, have halos, while beings of higher categories have them without exception. The halos of the Vidyārājas, in accordance with the function of these figures as fighters and with their rudimentary nature, usually consist of wildly flickering flames (69, 137). Perfectly round halos, which may also assume the form of a lotus, belong to perfected or nearly perfected beings. These are beings who have matured to wisdom and ultimate quietude and purity, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and also Arhats. Since the presence of halos is rooted in the notion or religious experience of emanating rays, halos may also assume the form of a flaming gloriola enclosing the lotus circle and surrounding the head or the body (or both) with their tender, gently rising curves which are joined at the top (for example 16, 23, 28).

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The subhuman demonic sphere is represented in the Buddhist world of beings by gnomelike figures (31) as, for example, those who squat below the Buddha throne or, as demons of the underworld, who help to hold it up. Historically, they may be counted among the *Yakṣa*. Other demons are trampled on as vanquished foes by the World Guardians (70). The grotesque elements within Buddhist mythology and art have found their home at this level and in the depictions of the world of pretas and of purgatory (123, 124).

Naturally, human beings (81-96, 127-134), i.e., Arhats, Buddha's disciples (particularly the group of the Ten Major Disciples), patriarchs and ordinary monks, pilgrims, donors, et al. are given much simpler iconographical treatment than supra-human or supra-worldly beings. The lack of such vital characteristics as *uṣṇīṣa* and *ūrnā* makes it possible (86) to easily distinguish between earthly monks and monk-like figures like that of the Bodhisattva *Kṣitigarbha* (65) or the Buddha himself (19-28), even though the latter is also portrayed as a type of monk. In addition to their simple robes and shaved heads, holy men can frequently also be identified by such priestly attributes as the alms bowl, priest's staff and scepter, rosary, and incense burner. In this particular context, these attributes symbolize no metaphysical dimension or numinous qualities. Rather, they are professional insignia and belong fully to the empirical-human sphere of life but retain a certain cultic-symbolic meaning apart from the individuals holding or using them.

Genuinely iconographical elements may be found in the images of Arhats. Arhats are often joined by companion figures and animals and can be distinguished by certain postures, *mudrās*, magic acts and, above all, very individual characteristics. In a way which would be unthinkable with respect to savior figures, they are depicted in a free and noncanonized manner largely of the artist's choice. This often makes identification of the individual Arhats very difficult, particularly in cases where written documents are missing. Since Arhats are already enlightened beings and therefore potentially beyond *samsāra*, they are depicted with halos (127). Such halos are usually not found in "earthly-historical" monk figures (130, 132). The specific worldly place of origin of these monks is frequently consciously indicated by imparting to them stereotypical "Indian" faces and clothing.

In Buddhist theology and art, sacred figures are rarely found alone. Rather, they are joined with other figures or are linked to them in belief and cult to form iconographically quite firmly established groups (21*, 17, 24, 25, 26, 39, 40, 98, 135). Each Buddha has attached to him one or, more frequently, two Bodhisattvas. In the esoteric schools, a *Vidyārāja* is also included. A group of protective and a group of venerating beings, including worshipping or sacrificing Bodhisattvas or *Apsaras*' (angelic heavenly beings) (33, 35, 36, 152), youthful adoring figures, and disciples may also accompany him. These accompanying figures are called the "relatives" or "entourage" (*parivāra*) of the central figure.

Bodhisattvas, *Vidyārājas*, *Devas*, and priests who serve as entourage to a Buddha may of course also become themselves the main figure of a group with an "entourage" of their own, or may form groups with figures of equal rank. All these are either ideal groups expressing dogmatic-metaphysical relationships among their figures (such as the Buddha-Bodhisattva Triads), are "historical" in nature and combine figures who have biographical/legendary links (such as *Śākyamuni* and his

disciples), or they unite their figures on the basis of descriptions found in the Sūtras. Every group or configuration represents a "Buddha-land," a sacred sphere. The images or paintings depicting them have the magic-sacral function of "realization." This is one of the basic iconographic ordering principles for groups of figures. The other is the maṇḍala.

Maṇḍala (*man-ta-la, man-da-ra*)²⁶ originally meant, "circle," or "ring," particularly that magic circle which provides the space for the invocation, summoning, veneration, and depiction of the deities. In the fully developed cults of India and East Asia, a maṇḍala is a geometric diagram, divided into several concentric or radial areas or chessboard-like fields. Beginning from some center as their common source, it is supposed to reveal in perfect clarity sacred beings in their metaphysical relationship with one another, and, hence, the inner law of the structure of the spiritual world. A maṇḍala thereby serves the faithful as an aid in meditation along the path to perfect enlightenment.

Maṇḍalas have been called "diagram-paintings for meditation" (von Glasenapp) and psychocosmograms (Tucci), because at the most profound level there is no distinction between the individual mind of the viewer and cosmic existence per se. Almost any deity or elevated being may form the center of a maṇḍala and be surrounded by appropriate figures. In a certain sense even those groups of figures or configurations mentioned above constitute a kind of maṇḍala, and, as a matter of fact, are often called maṇḍalas. Most important in Buddhist art is the pair of Maṇḍalas of the Two Worlds (7, 99, 100) as conceptualized by esoteric Buddhism, which has been most productive in designing ever new and minutely differentiated and classified symbolic figures and occasionally appears to have been under a veritable sort of compulsion to engage in such systematizing endeavors. But what would the Buddhist art of East Asia have been like without recourse to this almost inexhaustible source of intuition and inspiration?

The Maṇḍalas of the Two Worlds made the cosmic Buddha Vairocana, who is the foundation of all Being and all individual phenomena, their center. In one of the two worlds, that of the "Diamond World" (vajradhātu), the potential, not-yet-unfolded aspect of the world is represented as Absolute Wisdom which, directed inward, exists as pure, indestructible idea. The other world, the "Womb World" (garbhakōśa-dhātu), represents the actual aspect of the world, i.e., its dynamic unfolding into its myriad manifestations. It shows the world principle directed outward. It unfolds in compassion and constitutes the source (the womb) for that diamond aspect which is the true goal of salvation, the diamond or thunderbolt, vajra, being the symbol of ultimate reality and wisdom. One aspect is unthinkable without the other. Together, they signify that salvation is only possible if one's spiritual path leads through both aspects; i.e., this relationship must come to be dialectically comprehended by means of a meditative process of realization.

The relationship between the Absolute and its manifestations--the structure of the universe in its true being--is expressed in the form of a symbolic geometric pattern which allows for the arrangement of the numerous (over 400 in each) figures in both maṇḍalas. How this is done cannot be explained in a few words. The fields or circles of the maṇḍalas may be filled either with images of particular Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vidyārājas, etc., or with symbols representing them (vajra, wheel, etc.). Another alternative is to use modified Sanskrit letters (in the Siddham script)

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to represent the individual figures with their "seeds" (bija)--seed syllables of their magic-mystic formulas (101)²⁷ which are held to have existed forever. Uncreated, they are believed to contain the metaphysical essence and meaning and to constitute the natural symbols of these deities and ultimately to correspond to their images (pratimās), mantras and mudrās.

There are also pictures erroneously, or at least improperly, called "maṇḍalas" which depict a "Pure Land" (sukhāvati; ching-t'u; jō-do), a realm of bliss, ruled over by a Buddha, populated by innumerable Bodhisattvas and other sacred beings, and adorned with supra-earthly splendor and beauty. This "Pure Land" serves the believer as the preliminary location for his final maturing phase prior to entry into nirvāna. Such pictures often illustrate exactly the descriptions found in the Sūtras. Amitābha's Pure Land of the West has been most frequently depicted and has found a classic illustration in the Taema Maṇḍala, named after a temple near Nara (103). Strictly speaking, such pictures are "transformed manifestations," as indicated by the Chinese-Japanese term (*pien-hsiang; hen-sō*). They take something that is in its essence beyond form but reveals itself in visionary forms adapted to our earthly ability for visualization and conceptualization.

The third ordering principle applying to Buddhist figures places them within the context of particular events, i.e., those linked to historical anecdotes, holy scenes, or narrative descriptions. Three kinds of historical anecdotes are particularly important. First and foremost are those legends which came to attach themselves to the earthly life of Śākyamuni and his numerous previous incarnations. These are contained in the Lalitavistara and other texts and also in the Jātaka stories (30, 32, 119, 120, 122). The life story of the Buddha, from birth to enlightenment, and his life as a mendicant monk and preacher up to his entry into nirvāna, has been depicted in East Asian art in preference to the Jātaka stories which were very popular in the Indian cultural sphere (as, for example, in the reliefs of the Borobudur on Java). Emphasis is put on scenes of the birth and youth and on the subsequent major events of the Buddha's career. Usually four or eight of these scenes are depicted in reliefs on steles and cave walls or in paintings.

The second source for such narrative pictures are Sūtras, i.e., sermons which are put in the mouth of Buddha and which frequently contain lively, visionary descriptions of supra-worldly events and realms ("Pure Lands"). Some of the large number of such texts have served as important sources of inspiration for Buddhist art: above all, the Saddharma-puṇḍarīka-Sūtra (Fa Hua-ching or Lien-hua-ching, Hokke-kyō or Renge-kyō), the Book of "the Lotus of the Splendid Law," one of the basic texts of East Asian Buddhism. It provided the scriptural base for many other details but its central scene was repeated ad infinitum: a miraculous stūpa appears in which resides Prabhūtaratna, the Buddha of a previous age, with Śākyamuni at his side. This event provides the final proof for the truth of his teachings to the innumerable Bodhisattvas and other beings who are gathered around Śākyamuni to listen to his sermon.

Next in importance to this text are the Sūtras of Amitābha who, along with his train of Bodhisattvas (103-106), calls home the faithful to the "Pure Land" of the West, and the "Diamond" (vajra) Sūtras belonging to esoteric Buddhism which focus on Vairocana. These two groups of Sūtras have also provided crucial inspirations for Buddhist art.

But the depictions of Bodhisattvas and of nearly every other figure of the pantheon usually rely for their imagery on literary descriptions found in books especially devoted to particular figures and their legends. Also very popular was the book of the Sage Vimalakīrti (Wei-mo, Yui-ma) (84, 85), a man who matured during his mundane life to the highest insight into "Emptiness" and came therefore to be endowed with miraculous powers. He was visited on his sickbed by the Bodhisattva of Highest Wisdom, Mañjuśrī (Wen-shu, Mon-ju), and was able to best his visitor in a philosophical dispute on the innermost essence of the Buddha's teachings by the paradox of "a silence like thunder" (which anticipates later Zen sayings). His story is an expression of the Buddhist conviction that everyone, even laymen and children of samsāra, may mature to reach salvation, i.e., realize their essential "Buddha nature" in this life. The visit of Mañjuśrī with Vimalakīrti and their dispute has been a favorite subject for reliefs and paintings but also for groups of plastic figures. The Vimalakīrti figure is a special type of Buddhist sage with non-clerical garb and non-monkish lifestyle. He appears in a number of artistically important images.

But it is characteristic of the Buddhist art of East Asia that it displays a preference for selecting and isolating particular moments, individual persons or groups from their contexts and imparting to them the character of cult images removed from time and particular events. It makes them reside in an "Eternal Now." These kinds of pictures are, therefore, not easily recognizable as "illustrations" of certain Sūtra scenes.

Such considerations do not apply to the third kind of narrative representations, the biographical-historical pictorial chronicles which, with or without accompanying texts, narrate the lives of holy men, miraculous events, or the legendary story of sacred buildings and objects (125, 126). These descriptions usually employ the pictorial form of the picture scroll (*emakimono*). Such scrolls are very popular in East Asia but their use is by no means exclusively Buddhist. More will be said about them in the chapter on painting.

It is basic to our understandings of Buddhist art to realize that every detail of a Buddhist figure has iconographical value. This holds true--as we will have to show below--even for features which may be regarded as purely formal at first glance. It would therefore appear necessary to group and describe all the many symbolic signs which can be found in this vast world of images. One should, for example, also comment on symbolic colors which are more or less firmly prescribed for the individual figures and are fitted into a complicated array of strictly corresponding sets of directions, seasons, world elements, wisdoms, virtues, etc. These are derived in part from Indian and in part from Chinese world views and mostly fall into sets based on the number five.

Numbers, too, have high symbolic power. The East Asian mind was particularly predisposed for this kind of speculative endeavor and eagerly explored it by entering into the most complicated speculations and scholastic classifications. This can easily be ascertained from any Buddhist encyclopedia. It is impossible to comment here on all these facets, most of which are still not sufficiently studied. Some comments will be made later in the text whenever this seems to be

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appropriate. But a few comments on the central symbol of Buddhism, the lotus flower, should be added at this time.

This symbol is literally "central" because the lotus flower (28, 29, 33, 40, 100, 101, 103, 151-153, 163)--as throne of the Buddha--is located in the physical and spiritual center of the temple and also in that of the Womb World Maṇḍala which unfolds into the world in eight directions from its center occupied by Vairocana. According to ancient Indian mythology, the lotus stem is the world axis rising from the primordial waters on which the world floats. The lotus flower is, therefore, both cosmic symbol and symbol of the Absolute, and thus also symbol of the Perfectly Beautiful. Hence it came to form the throne of all enlightened beings, notably of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, whenever these beings did not appear in an earthly manifestation (such as Śākyamuni, who is for this reason often seated on a lion throne).

Just as the Buddha manifests himself in all worlds, the blossom of his throne unfolds into 1,000 petals on which, in turn, thousands of worlds appear, each illuminated and led to salvation by its own Buddha. On the bronze petals of the lotus throne of the Great Buddha of Nara (middle of the 8th century) these worlds and Buddhas are depicted in schematic engraved sketches. However, the lotus flower blossoms not only in cosmic infinity but also beyond time and space in the center of one's heart, in that innermost sphere of the self from which deepest enlightenment and liberation arise. The lotus flower thus becomes a symbol for the kernel of true essence which is identical with the Buddha nature and remains as unpolluted from all samsāra existence as the lotus' snow-white petals. The lotus grows out of murky waters but sheds all dust of the world without leaving any traces of this dust as it sheds drops of dew and water.²⁸

Architecture

General Plan of the Sanctuary

Buddhist sanctuaries and East Asian sanctuaries in general are not buildings but rather "precincts." Such precincts consist of several buildings of different shapes and sizes with different functions and rankings which in their sum total constitute the complete ensemble of a temple.²⁹ In its totality this ensemble is the result of a hierarchical structure joined to form a temple complex which is almost always also a monastery. Temple complexes do not consist of a unified building complex complete within itself but rather consist of groupings of individual buildings which are, however, arranged to conform to a definite plan. A typical basic plan in terms of numbers, type, shape, and arrangement of those individual buildings can be found underlying all Buddhist temple precincts but allows certain variations with respect to numbers and size of the components as well as to their spatial disposition. Such variations reflect particular Buddhist teachings, historical periods, or in part also the topography of a particular site.

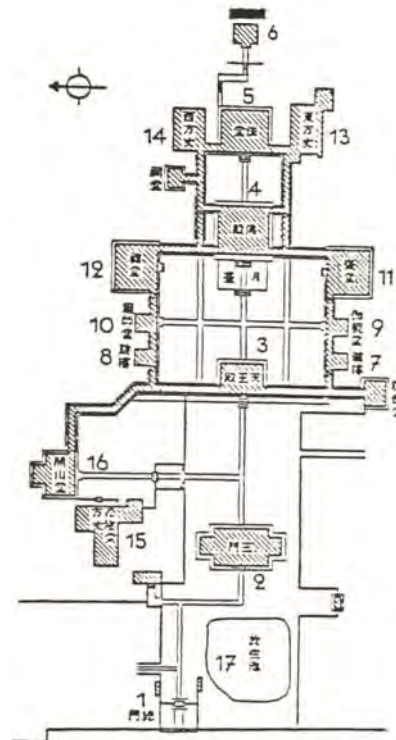
In East Asia a sacred precinct is normally aligned along a central axis. This holds true for Buddhist and Taoist precincts just as it does for the precincts belonging to China's state cult and "universism" and for Shintô "shrines" in Japan. Even imperial palaces and burial complexes--both essentially also sacral compounds--follow this basic pattern. This central axis frequently consists of a long sacred path leading in graduated stages from the outside, the "world," deeper and deeper into the innermost part of the sanctuary. It reaches its final destination in the inner sanctum where it comes to rest. To the believers on their pilgrimage along this sacred path every step, every stage, signifies an increasing detachment from the profane world and an ever increasing inner purification or degree of holiness. The movement from the outside to the interior corresponds to--or at least contributes decisively to--a personal spiritual process of spiritual advancement. But the path of the *linea sacra* leads not only from the "outside" to the "inside." It also leads "upward." It is an ascent to ever higher stages and levels of existence and ever purer spirituality. After the highest and innermost point (in a spatial as well as in a religious sense) has been reached,³⁰ the return to the world can begin. But the returning pilgrim finds himself now in a spiritually transformed state. This spatial-spiritual order of the Buddhist sanctuary and the sequence of its buildings and

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images in their religious significance has been described by Erwin Rousselle in a profound and attractive study.³¹

The central axis of East Asian sanctuaries, and also that of practically all the region's architectural complexes--including the secular ones--usually runs from south to north, with variations wherever special conditions require them. According to Chinese cosmology or, better, cosmosophy--called universism by de Groot³²--the architectural axis represents the axis of the earthly world, which, in turn, is in alignment with the cosmic axis and is linked to the basic polarity of Yang and Yin. This polarity, in turn, is divided into a complex system of correspondences between directions, elements and potentialities, between yearly and daily periods and many other such entities. In the case of Buddhist temples, symbolic ideas taken from Indian cosmology are included (Mount Sumeru as world axis, etc.). The south-north axis undoubtedly also owes its prominence to geographic and climatic factors.

A pilgrim arriving from the south and passing through a number of gates will thus gradually enter the temple complex (2*). The buildings, arranged along the axis, face him frontally. In East Asia their broad side therefore always faces south. At one of the highest places is enthroned the main cult image with its back to the north; behind it the sacred precinct is bordered by a protective wall, a sacred grove,

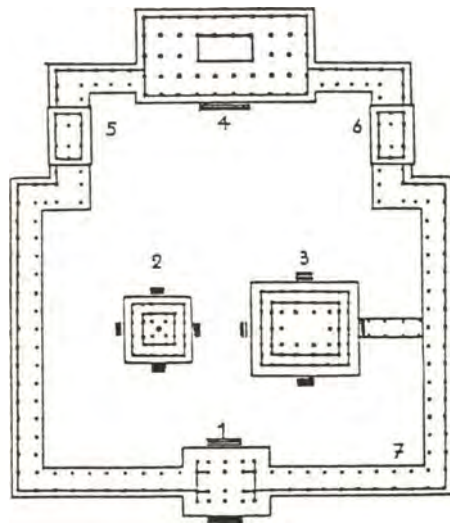


2* Ground plan of a Zen monastery building of the Chinese type (Mampukuji near Kyôto).

and a mountain slope. In palace complexes, this position is occupied by the emperor and his throne in the audience and ceremony hall. The Buddha, too, is regarded as a world ruler (cakravartin), and his sanctuary is treated as an image of the spiritual mystic cosmic empire whose "empty" ground embraces him from behind.

A second structural principle for such precincts consists of an arrangement which has the main buildings, joined by symmetrically arranged side buildings, lining the central axis. This, too, follows the arrangement of the imperial palace and was obviously inspired by it. The result is a series of building complexes, each running at a right angle to the central axis and consisting of a dominating central structure flanked by wing structures. The principle of the axial arrangement is therefore complemented by those of symmetric balance and mirror image. This use of a dominating central block and two lateral links is both differentiated into individual elements and bound into a uniform pattern and seems to reflect ancient Chinese world views in spatial-symbolic form. In particular, it seems to echo the division of the primordial Unity or Absolute into the polar potentialities, Yang and Yin, whose interaction gives rise to the world and its cyclical movements. This symmetric axuality as a cosmic symbol is found in other cultures as well.

A third principle is employed to form subcomplexes: The buildings are not simply lined up along the axis or symmetrically arranged in relation to it, but rather are grouped in more or less complete, separate complexes. These are frequently surrounded by walls, fences, or corridors which join them as clearly defined groups and, at the same time, set them apart from neighboring groups (3*/4*). However,



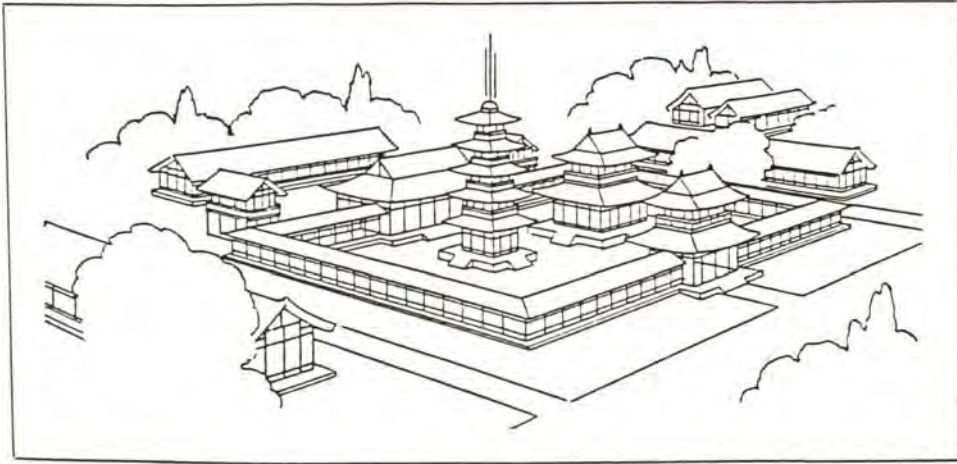
3* Plan of the central precinct of the Hōryūji.

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the presence of such elements as linking corridors and side passages or passages leading through the central hall itself preserves an overall cohesion. In a manner characteristic of East Asia, a large temple precinct is thus composed of several precincts or court yards. These are joined lengthwise and sideways and traversed by the *via sacra*. The axis bestows unity because its progression fuses all these self-contained building complexes into one, while its own rhythmic pattern is derived from the structured alignment of these complexes.

What, then, are the individual buildings, forming the temple precinct? Putting aside all less important structures, particularly those which merely serve the purely economic activities of the monastery, we must primarily consider the following structures, in the sequence of their position from the entrance at the southern gate to the last of them in the north: 1. An exterior gate serves as entrance to the entire precinct; it is also called the "main gate," or "great southern gate;" 2. A "central" gate marks the entrance to the inner, main or nuclear precinct; 3. Inside this gate is located the most prominent building, the Buddha Hall, where the main cult image and its accompanying figures are venerated. In China, this hall is called the *ta-hsiung-pao-tien*, "Treasure Hall of the Great Hero" (the Buddha here is considered as World Ruler), or simply the *ta-tien*, "Great Hall." In Japan, this building is usually called *kon-dô*, "Golden Hall" (because of the gold-covered cult figures and splendid interior); 4. In Chinese temples it is frequently preceded by The Hall for the Four Heavenly Kings and for the Future Buddha, Maitreya; 5. Behind the Buddha Hall there is the Sermon Hall or Dharma Hall where sacred scriptures are interpreted and disputations and general meetings are held; 6. Behind this hall are often found the living quarters of the abbot, and occasionally the extensive residential halls of the monks. This section corresponds to the living quarters of the emperor in Chinese palaces, which are also located north of (i.e., at the rear) of the last "official" hall. Another arrangement, popular particularly in China, places the living quarters of the monks at both sides of the temple yard; 7. Of particular importance to the central precinct are the pagodas, whose number and locations may vary (see below); 8. Finally, the inner group of the main buildings is joined by two pavilions for bell and drum symmetrically arranged to the left and right. One of them may also serve as a repository for sacred scriptures (*Sûtras*, etc.)

Many of these buildings are connected by covered walkways or enclosed by them, i.e., are joined to form yards or courts. Outside these buildings, which are closest to the central axis in larger temple precincts, we also find clusters of other buildings whose emplacement follows no particular pattern: the Meditation Hall, the most important structure in a Zen monastery; chapel-like halls for the performance of special rites or for the veneration of particular Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other beings, usually Arhats and sponsors of the sanctuary (mostly priests who had founded the temple or monastery), and for the performance of initiation ceremonies; and storage buildings to house sacred scriptures, cult implements, requisites for festivals, and art treasures. All these also are part of a complete complex. The special halls or chapels and the living quarters, in turn, may constitute secondary precincts--each with its own axis, gates, and enclosures and joined to the central precinct in a more or less strict manner.



4* Reconstruction of the original plan of the Hōryūji central precinct.

Since Buddhist temples were frequently also designed for study and education--the official name of Hōryūji near Nara, for example, is *Hōryū-gakumon-ji* = "Study Monastery for the Promotion of Buddhist Teaching (dharma)"--or carried out extensive charitable work, buildings serving such practical purposes were loosely grouped around the central cult buildings.

The Buddhist temples of East Asia adopted in their architectural conception both the basic form as well as many of the details of the layout of ancient Chinese palaces and residences. Their original Indian form had created two rather different architectural types. The first was the Vihāra (or Sanghārāma), consisting of a central yard or room with one or more stūpas at its center, lined by cells and occasionally placing a sanctuary on the side opposite to the entrance. The second type was the Caitya Hall which had its nave supported by columns and a free standing stūpa placed in the "apse" as ritual center. Both types can be found as free-standing structures and as cave temples carved out of cliff rocks.

Neither the Vihāra nor the Caitya Hall could simply be transplanted to Chinese soil and be created with Chinese architectural means. For this reason, and also because the more elaborate cultic requirements of Mahāyāna--primarily its veneration of cult images--called for different types of buildings, Buddhists eagerly made use of the already existing forms of Chinese palace complexes and palace halls. Though these originally served different purposes and had different meanings, they could easily be adapted to suit Buddhist purposes.

In some instances, the form of the Indian cave temple, transmitted via Central Asia (Turfan, Tun-huang, etc.), was adopted in China as in Yün-kang, Lung-mên and many other places. But these, too, basically differed from Indian Vihāras and Caitya halls. They are mostly votive chapels filled with huge numbers of sculptures and are not architectural monuments in the strict sense of the word, even

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though their structural elements (beams, etc.) imitated their forerunners in stone, and frequently provide unexpected information about lost details concerning the technique of ancient temple construction. The only Indian free-standing building type still preserved in East Asian temples is the pagoda. Though corresponding to the Indian stūpa, it has, as we will see, also been strongly sinicized.

The basic type of a temple complex³³ described above has naturally been subject to many modifications depending on historical period and particularly on the special teachings, cult practices and disciplines of the various Buddhist schools or "sects."³⁴ This is not the place to describe these variants in detail, but a few points important to the entire temple complex should be mentioned. Of particular importance is the fact that temples may be aligned in an east-west, rather than a south-north pattern. This is the case with those dedicated to Amitābha, the Lord of the "Pure Land of the West." Their cult halls and Amitābha's statue face the pilgrim approaching them from the east with compassion and as if emerging from the "other shore." In other cases, the strict axiality and firmly symmetrical order of the buildings could only imperfectly be carried out in the particular location of the sanctuary, since Buddhism tended to prefer remote and mountainous sites. Though in such instances the spatial order was largely determined by the topography, a central axis—even if only an imaginary one—was emphasized and the *via sacra* (in open nature often given larger dimensions) was in every instance retained as the backbone of the entire complex. The total architectural effect could therefore be the result of an attractive, albeit frequently accidental and asymmetrical order determined by the natural features of the site. In precincts composed of largely independent buildings, the effect depends to a large degree on the harmony, distances and dynamic tensions between these individual buildings. The conformity to plan and strictness of arrangement, which is hidden in temples placed in broken terrain, is openly exposed in those temple complexes constructed on level terrain or in the cities, where their compact symbolism of a harmonious world order inspired by the Chinese genius for systematic planning and organization is fully revealed.

Important changes might occur in the mutual relationship and the spatial arrangement of the Buddha Hall and the pagoda—the two types of buildings most important in a religious sense (5*). Both embrace the essential substance of the Buddha. The pagoda holds Buddha relics while the Golden Hall serves as shrine containing the Buddha image. Depending on the weight a school or particular cult practice or historical period placed either on the cult of relics or on the veneration of images, ranking and position of the pagoda vis-à-vis the Golden Hall were bound to change. The oldest temple precincts (ca. 600-750) are preserved in Japan, and still reveal the basic structure of their continental prototypes. In this type of precinct the pagoda is placed on the central axis within the inner precinct in front of the Golden Hall (Shitennō-ji, Ōsaka; and also in the earliest precinct of the Hōryūji, which was excavated during the early 1940s). During the succeeding stage, which followed soon after, the pagoda was placed on the transverse axis of the inner yard, side by side and of equal rank to the Golden Hall (Hōryūji) (1). This is the so-called Kudara ("Korean") plan.

These two main buildings came to be more imposing in their design as the temple precincts themselves began to unfold in ever increasing grandeur. The pagodas not only became bigger but often doubled in number. A solitary pagoda no

longer served as solitary central monument. Rather, we now find a pair of pagodas flanking the center of the temple precinct symmetrically on both sides. As a result, pagodas attained greater external prominence even though their significance declined somewhat in the process of this duplication. At first, the two pagodas remained within the innermost nuclear precinct; i.e., inside the middle gate and the enclosing corridor. They were, however, soon moved to the outside: at first only to a spot between the middle gate and the external southern gate, but later even outside the latter so that their status was reduced to little more than that of monumental door posts (5*).

Though pagodas built in later Japanese temples retained high cultic rank and were objects of intensive veneration, they were reduced more and more to the level of a mere *nobile officium*. Finally, they were omitted altogether or at best retained merely as symbolic monuments or for the purposes of achieving an architectural and aesthetic balance and rhythm, particularly since they no longer served a religious function in the cult of relics. This happened chiefly in the temples of the Zen and Amitābha sects. Neither sect, though each otherwise fundamentally differed from the other, any longer put special emphasis on the veneration of relics and mystic-symbolic rituals.

In China, the pagoda by and large underwent a similar change in its position but more frequently retained a favored position in later times. It remained at the extreme northern end of the temple axis and, whenever possible, on elevated ground or on a terrace. Also popular were groups of pagodas of symbolically significant numbers and arrangements. Pagodas also gained an important new meaning and correspondingly wider distribution in connection with the concepts of geomancy (*feng-shui*). Though grounded in an essentially Taoist universism, geomancy's symbolism was also adopted by the Buddhist temples. Pagodas came, therefore, to be most intimately linked with open landscapes, and graced many places fortuitously as their crowning building. (More on the essence, development and structure of the Buddhist pagoda will follow below.)

The integration of the Founder or Donor Halls into the temple complex was subject to interrelated, yet opposite changes. While officially held to be subsidiary elements, and ranked as mere marginal phenomena in the spatial layout of the precinct, such halls gained a degree of cultic importance, particularly in the Amitābha sects in Japan, where they were shifted to the inner yard and placed adjacent to the Buddha (in these instances Amitābha) Hall of the transverse axis. They even came to surpass the Buddha Hall in size. Founder or Donor Halls also assumed an important position in Zen temples. In Zen, as in Amitābha Buddhism, the human founder of the school or temple, the patriarch or master, had gained an entirely new status. However, in Zen temples the Founder or Donor Halls never became the center of the complex. They remained confined to a temple yard of their own adjoining the central axis (2*, No. 16).

In its overall appearance, a Buddhist temple complex presents itself, as does every architectural complex in East Asia, as expanded over a wide area. The effect of this horizontal expansion is enhanced by the relatively loose, spacious grouping of the individual buildings, so that modern architects may refer to such layout as a kind of system of pavilions; it is, however, primarily conditioned by the limited height of East Asian buildings. Many of the buildings have only one story.³⁵ Even in cases of

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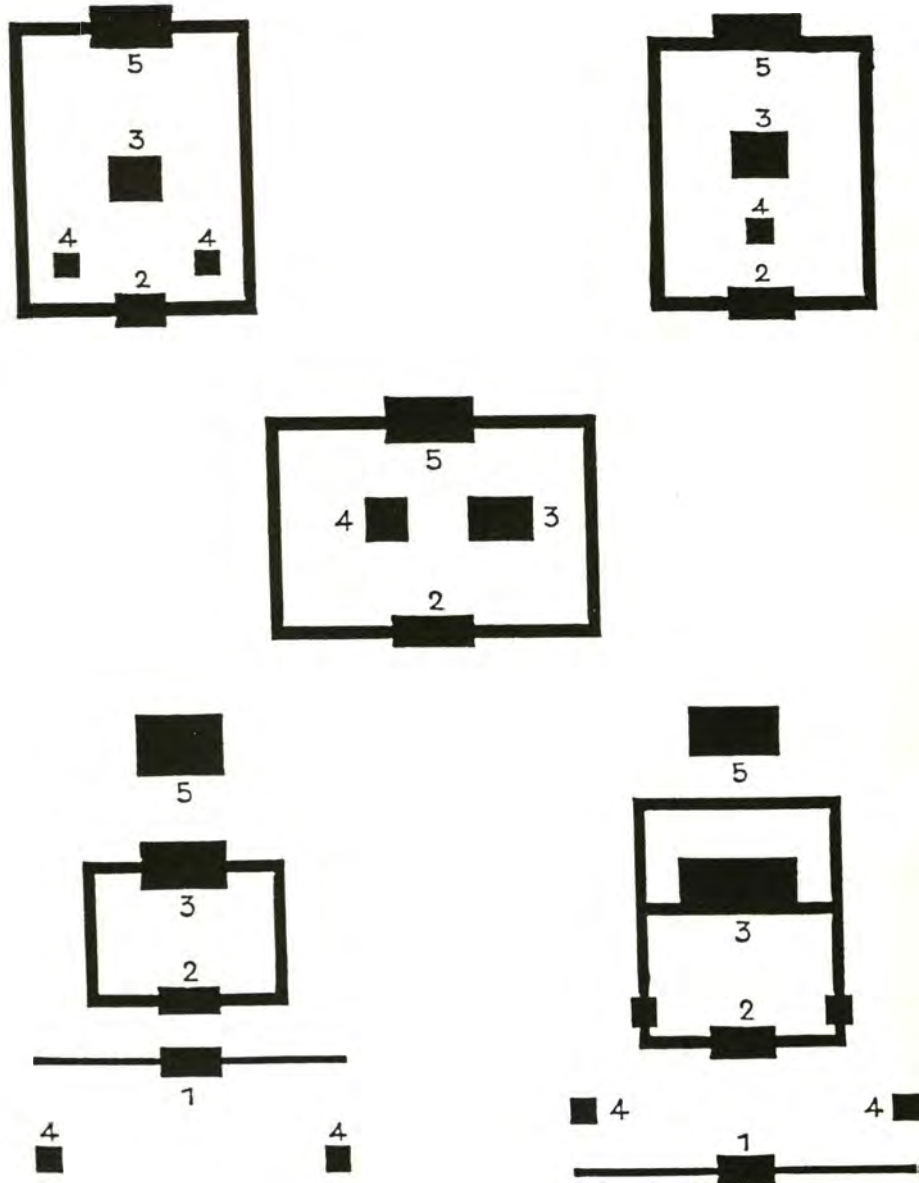
double-roof buildings or even of the rare multi-storied temple halls, width usually dominates over height, but this does not rule out monumentality of appearance, as is demonstrated by the huge halls of some of the leading temples (the Hall of the Great Buddha in the Tōdaiji in Nara for example). This holds true even for smaller buildings, though their monumental appearance is more internal than external.

The generous spatial layout of the temple complexes by itself shows the intent to attain monumentality. In such instances the free space between buildings is not empty but formed space. It contributes to the overall architectural design, and that part of the space which comprises the sacred path is permeated by a dynamic, religiously significant sense of direction. Horizontality of design tends to tie such architectural complexes to the soil. Only pagodas and--to a much lesser degree--the mostly two-storied bell and drum pavilions, are actually buildings of pronounced vertical character. The pagodas, with their slender, proud, and spirited striving for height, enter into a charming interplay with the broadly structured, low, and yet massive halls and walkways in their vicinity. In many instances such architectural groupings achieve a maximum of symmetric or asymmetric balance (1). Pagodas are essentially towering, resting, radiating "signs," three-dimensional monuments in space, and not so much creations of spatial art itself. Hence they represent one of the basic polar motifs of architectural design while the temple complex as a whole embodies the other, the "way," as opposed to the sign.³⁶

The individual halls combine both. As three-dimensional architectural entities and as shrines for housing cult images, they are "signs," i.e., self-contained points of destination and concentration of the cultic progression (of the inner, spiritual as well as the outer "procession"), and constitute the hearts of building complexes. On the other hand, many of them are located along the axial course and may also be regarded as transition zones leading to the adjacent yards and halls. The two cosmic directions, vertical and horizontal, as well as the two categories of space and time are, therefore, most intimately joined in a Buddhist temple, but, in accordance with the expressed religious intent, at the same time also transcended.

The same holds for the forms of movement inherent in the temple: the purposeful movement along the axial path also contains the motif of ascent, the category of height. Circular movement during the ritual of circumambulation is also present, because both this movement and the axial path lead back to their beginnings, since the axial path also implies a "return." This transcendence takes place primarily at the empirical level. Its "ground" and ultimate meaning is to cancel all movement and all directional determination in the "emptiness" of nirvāna. The Tao, the "way" of the world and of life, is, according to the *Tao-te-ching*, also the absence of movement, and this is at the basis of all world existence and world events. It constitutes the very essence of the Tao. The sanctuary displays internal movement and yet is also beyond movement. It has its "empty" central point in the figure of the Buddha.

The overall impression and the basic character of the Buddhist temple is revealed in exemplary manner not only in those large complexes found on level ground and in the spacious residential cities of medieval China and Japan, but also in those temple complexes integrated into a mountainous landscape. In the latter



5* Development of the ground plan types of Buddhist temples.

case, however, ground plans evolved which were no longer absolutely symmetric-axial but had their *via sacra* gradually ascend to the mountain top or the innermost recesses of a precipitous valley. They progress from their low-lying and horizontal entrances to the height of the mountains. Their architectural design frequently culminates in crowning a mountain summit, as in the case of the famous four sacred mountains of Buddhism in China (P'u-t'o-shan, Chiu-hua-shan, O-mei-shan, Wu-t'ai-shan), which are dedicated to the four great Bodhisattvas (Avalokiteśvara, Kṣitigarbha, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī). Surrounding the empire to the east, south, west, and north, they bestow protection and blessings on it.

But even in cases where temple monasteries blend into densely forested mountain valleys or sacred groves and are almost hidden in them, a marvelous harmony between the natural and human worlds is achieved which is an expression of that closeness to nature and nature mysticism which is inseparable from East Asian religiosity. Many landscape paintings show temple complexes hidden deep in mountain ravines. This location symbolizes their removal to a mist-shrouded sphere of mystic world renunciation. Such immersion into the deepest, most numinous recess of secret inner space is part of the essence of Buddhist or East Asian sanctuaries in general. Every one of them contains within itself such an innermost center which constitutes the point--hidden from casual view--where its very heart is located and which marks both the goal of one's quest and the center point from which everything radiates in an outward direction.

This applies equally to sanctuaries located in cities. They, too, strive for harmony with nature. The trees--in many instances quite old and venerable--in the temple yards, the parks encircling the entire precinct, and the lovingly cared for gardens--large or small--with their quiet ponds, rocks and plants filling every part of the precinct, all create the kind of natural environment which for East Asians and particularly East Asian Buddhists is inseparably linked with sanctuaries and a life dedicated to spiritual goals.

Individual Buildings

Almost every building type which constitutes one of the components of a temple complex may appear on a modest, medium-sized, stately or even grandiose scale while at the same time retaining a certain basic form which is, of course, modified in a variety of ways. In all this we encounter a general characteristic of architectural design in East Asia: the existence of a somewhat limited number of basic forms combined with a tendency to typify and even standardize them (for example, in Japanese residential architecture) but at the same time endow them with a wealth of variations. This keeps them from lapsing into sterile formalism and allows them to achieve a pleasing balance between freedom and restraint.

A temple gate may be nothing more than a wall gate covered by a simple roof. It may also, and preferably, be a portal building resembling a hall, usually with one central and two side passages, built on the principle of an axial center and its symmetrical flanks. These often rather monumental gate buildings usually have a wide overhanging double roof in the manner of temple halls, which they therefore resemble very closely. In most instances, however, their "upper story" and its small circumambient gallery have no practical but only a formal-decorative function. Characteristic for Buddhist temple gates, and East Asian gates in general, are the

inscription tablets, usually placed above the central passage where they are shaded by the upper roof. They proclaim the name of the temple^{36a} in characters either painted in plain black or in color or carved and gilded. These inscriptions were often the work of famous calligraphers or high-ranking personalities, occasionally even emperors, and were done in various calligraphic styles. The donation of such inscriptions was considered a good and pious deed. Many of the other buildings also bear inscription tablets, which usually state their purpose or their religious significance, i.e., "Buddha Hall," "Sermon Hall," "Meditation Hall," etc. In East Asia this custom of displaying the names of buildings on tablets extends far beyond the confines of sacred architecture into the courtly and private spheres.

Temple gates are also very often characterized by the larger-than-life figures of the two gate guardians (Dvarapālas; Erh-wang, Ni-ô; see above, p. 30) which are located on the ground floor to the left and right of the central passage. These threatening guardian demons keep all evil powers from entering and protect the threshold to the temple path which leads the faithful to levels of gradually higher sanctification. Temple gates have been given such prominent features because this passage across the border between the profane-empirical "world" and the sacred-cosmic-meditative sphere of the sanctuary, or between the samsāra and the nirvāna (Buddha) worlds is of crucial importance. Buddhist sanctuaries are often called "Buddha Lands" or "Buddha Kingdoms" (Sanskrit *buddhakṣetra*), i.e., spiritual spheres of a higher order, reached by the faithful through meditation or ritual practices. They were meant to manifest the "Buddha Nature" of all phenomena in its pure form as it manifests itself to the enlightened eye.

We will provide greater detail about the two major basic elements of the temple precinct, the hall and the pagoda, later on. At this point we must reiterate that the two appear in numerous variants, and that there is, for example, no crucial structural difference between a small chapel and a giant monumental hall. Halls fairly similar in external design may nevertheless serve different functions (as shrines for the major cult images or as meeting and lecture halls). The latter, together with the pagoda, constitute the embryonic form of the Buddhist temple, predating in their appearance even the rise of cult images. Those halls and pagodas located along the central axis or aligned with it are typical for a temple precinct and of decisive importance for the overall impression it makes. Since they house the numinous powers embodied in the cult figures (main hall), the relics (pagoda), and the sacred teaching (lecture hall), they rank highest among all temple buildings and therefore are given an especially monumental or decorative design.

Among the buildings of secondary importance serving liturgical purposes are corridors, bell and drum pavilions, or special chapels for the cults of different figures of the pantheon. They "assist" the main buildings. Other buildings are of vital importance for the religious life and the monastic path to enlightenment. These include meditation halls or chapels with their initiation platforms. Finally, some structures serve such routine functions as the residential, economic and administrative activities of the temples or their charitable activities for pilgrims and needy people. These buildings are all given the label "secondary," not because they are of secondary importance in the life of the temple but because they are normally located outside the compact central complex along its central axis. Individual buildings of particular importance may be located on the central dividing line of the

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precinct or close to it. These include residences for abbots and monks, the meditation hall and the refectory (2*).

The bell and drum pavilions (3*/4*)--they should not be called "towers" because they have little resemblance to such structures³⁷--are usually just two-storied buildings with square or almost square bases. The large bell or drum is suspended in the second story. Such pavilions are set apart from the low corridors which often are linked to them by their greater height. They can hold their own against the larger and broader halls because of their slender vertical proportions.

The covered corridors (3*/4*) enclose the individual inner courtyards of the temple precinct in rectangular fashion. They are walled off on the sides facing away from the courtyards but are kept open towards their interior by rows of widely spaced posts. In cases where they are being used to link larger buildings with one another and with their peripheral corridors, they are merely covered on top but kept open on both sides. They serve the important function of walling off the sanctuary--or at least its central precinct--from the outside and of joining it into a world of its own; i.e., of shaping a sacred area or *temenos*, while at the same time subdividing the total complex into individual compartments (precincts, courtyards) and forming "paths" to bind the entire complex together. They serve, therefore, simultaneously as enclosing frame and circulatory tract.

Special chapels generally follow the hall type. Sometimes they are centered buildings with an octagonal plan (8*), but structurally they are still halls and are labelled as such. They are sometimes named "Round Halls" or "Octagonal Round Halls" in order to emphasize their character as centralized buildings, and to exploit both the symbolic value of circles as images of perfection, and the profound and multi-faceted symbolic meaning of the number eight in Buddhism (and in East Asia in general). In building plans, *maṇḍalas* and elsewhere, the number eight stands for the eight directions of the compass and the eight world regions of ancient Chinese cosmology. Octagonal chapels, always of moderate dimensions, frequently form the focal point of a particular temple precinct or courtyard, and--because of their harmonious proportions--constitute a particularly attractive type of Buddhist architecture. In some respects they are related to the polygonal pavilions so popular in China, from which they may even have evolved. Next to them we should mention the pagoda as a particularly important type of centralized building. Pagodas may be square, polygonal or, occasionally, round. But pagodas are not connected with the hall type of building.

With the exception of octagonal chapels, the smaller buildings, as mentioned before, follow the normal form of a hall except in cases where a specific purpose necessitates a special form, as in the case of chapels for the five hundred Arhat (Lohan, Rakan) which are particularly popular in China, though only in relatively late times. To accommodate all five hundred, the usually life-size statues had to be placed on multi-level platforms along walls or on rectangular shelves in the interior of the halls leaving only small aisles between them.³⁸

Another important special building is the repository for sacred scriptures (the complete Tripitaka and other Buddhist literature) which were housed in lacquered boxes on shelves in small chapel-like rooms with a cult figure at their centers. In China, such rooms are often found in the upper stories of hall buildings. A special form of repository is the revolving Sûtra library, usually in the form of a polygonal

shrine. The numerous volumes of canonical writings it contained were considered to have been read, once a full revolution of the shrine had been completed. By completing many turns, an individual could acquire considerable religious merit in a fairly comfortable manner.

The Initiation Chapel--other than in cases of ordinary halls temporarily prepared for this special purpose--is distinguished by a high platform which fills almost the entire inner space and is accessible through steps on its sides. On this platform the consecration of monks of various grades takes place. Such platforms, built of stone, could also be found in a special sacred precinct laid out under the open sky. Occasionally, wooden platforms were temporarily erected in the temple yard in front of the main building and resembled the open stages used for cult dances during major festivals.

Finally, the Meditation Halls were also given special forms to fit special purposes. Externally, these had the appearance of simple halls. Their interior contained an open central space, surrounded on all sides except the entrance side by a raised platform which provided sitting and sleeping space for the monks who spent the larger part of day and night in meditation. Meditation Halls are extremely austere and self-contained. They are congenial to the spirit of Zen Buddhism which developed the mature form of this building type.

The Meditation (Zen) Hall serves also as living quarters--at least during certain times of the day. We will ignore those residential and service quarters and other rooms of the monastery which hold no great significance for Buddhist art (with the exception of a later form in Japan mentioned in the last chapter), but a few comments should be made about the ancient storage buildings. A few examples of these have been preserved in Japan, where they may even have originated. They are primitive block houses built with triangular beams. While the base of these triangular beams forms the smooth interior wall, their top faces outward. The beams touch each other, therefore, only with the edges of their base. During the hot and humid summer, when the wood expands, the gaps between the beams were closed. This prevents or limits the intrusion of moisture dangerous to the contents of the building but allows for the admittance of dry, pure, and preserving air during the dry fall and winter when the gaps reopen.

In the case of the most famous of the buildings of this kind, the Shôsôin of the Tôdaiji temple in Nara, the storehouse contains imperial utensils donated to the temple in the middle of the eighth century and the cult implements used during the inauguration of the huge bronze figure of the Great Buddha (in 752). This treasure of precious articles in pure T'ang style, numbering in many thousands, has been miraculously preserved virtually intact. These items are the more precious since they were produced at the height of the Nara period and represent the Japanese version of T'ang culture. They may even be largely of Chinese origin. In any event, they provide comprehensive samples of Chinese craftsmanship of the T'ang period which, with the exception of ceramics and metal objects, cannot be found anywhere else. The objects consist in part of Buddhist utensils and in part of offerings of secular implements to that temple.

Elsewhere, too, numerous works of Buddhist art from earlier centuries--particularly cult implements, robes, paintings, sacred scriptures and historical documents--have been preserved for no other reason than that they have been

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placed in storage buildings of such primitive yet ingeniously functional construction. The Japanese have always been concerned with the preservation and protection of ancient objects. This is quite in contrast to the Chinese, who have been much more wasteful and careless and occasionally even reckless in handling their cultural legacy, because of their unshaken confidence in the inexhaustible creative powers of their unbroken tradition. Invaluable and irreplaceable treasures, particularly of Buddhist art, have thus been lost to mankind, and we must be grateful to the Japanese that they have preserved so many Chinese works or at least works which have faithfully preserved the Chinese style. (This is the reason why in this book Japanese works seem to dominate in such a seemingly inappropriate manner.)

Japanese temples frequently display another characteristic element: a Shintô shrine, usually of modest size and dedicated to one of the native deities (*kami*) who protects the temple. Such *kami* were regarded as *avatâras* (incarnations or "descended traces") of the Buddhist figures venerated in the temples and as protectors of the sanctuary. They are products of the Buddhist-Shintô syncretism (*honji-suijaku* theory) characteristic of Japan's medieval period and have their counterparts in the Buddha chapels, pagodas, and cult implements which were once part of Shintô shrines but which were banned after 1871 during the great purification of Shintô from all Buddhist accretions.

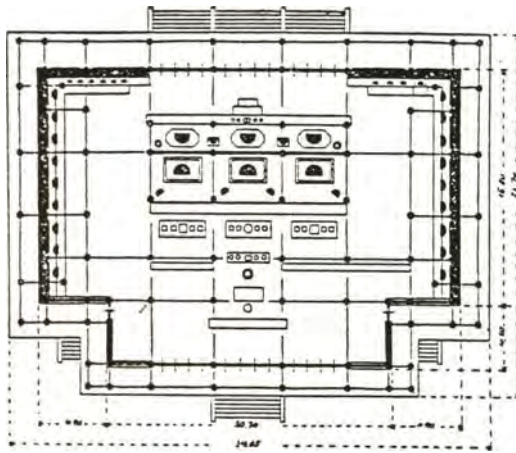
Temple Halls

The so-called "hall," an inadequate Western gloss of the original term,³⁹ constitutes the basic type of East Asian building from which all individual types--residential dwellings, palace halls, temple halls, even the pavilions--are derived. Exceptions include the pagoda, which has a separate foreign origin, the *p'ai-lou* (memorial gate in China), the *torii* (Shintô shrine "gate" in Japan), the tomb complexes which are unique forms of cult monuments, and a variety of structures whose forms are determined by their technical functions, such as bridges, city walls, and other defensive structures.

The basic form of the hall originated in ancient China⁴⁰ and, via Korea, was transmitted to Japan, where it existed side by side and, during the course of time, came to fuse with a similar building type of Malay-Polynesian-Southeast Asian origin--the Shintô shrine and house building, which already existed there. But in the Buddhist sphere, the Chinese hall has always been preserved in nearly pure form, even in Japan, though it was subject to some gradual evolutionary and innovative changes in structure and style. The native Japanese Shintô and residential structures, though influenced in some points by the Buddhist-Chinese design, remained in vital points independent of it. The Buddhist cult architecture of Japan, however, always displayed a distinctly "Chinese" face, because every few centuries, occasionally even every few generations, new waves of cultural influences crossed over from China, and were followed by periods of Japanization of lesser intensity. A description of this Japanese development and of the changes taking place over the centuries within the Buddhist architecture of China itself would require too many details to fit this account. Consequently, we will confine our comments to general and typical features.

East Asian halls (2,3)--as a general building type--owe their shapes essentially to the techniques of wood construction. Though massive stone buildings

can be found in China (but not in Japan) and occasionally may even display such features as tunnel vaults, they remained a marginal phenomenon. The halls are therefore of post-and-beam construction, with widely overhanging roofs, i.e., structures consisting of supporting elements (columns, beams, posts) which are joined at their upper ends by simple or multiple crossbeams over the length and depth of the building. This skeletal structure holds up both the inner roof and the brackets jutting outward in several layers to support the roof overhang (6a-c*/7*).⁴¹ The roof rests on this post-and-beam frame. Because the climate required protection against sun and rain, but perhaps also for aesthetic reasons, the roofs jut out as much as several feet or even yards at a shallow and elegantly curved angle beyond the outermost row of posts. The posts may stand on individual foundation stones or the entire building itself may rise from a stone terrace (3). The latter type is preferred for Buddhist temples.



6a* Main Hall of
the Hsien-t'ung-ssu,
Wu-t'ai-shan, Shansi.

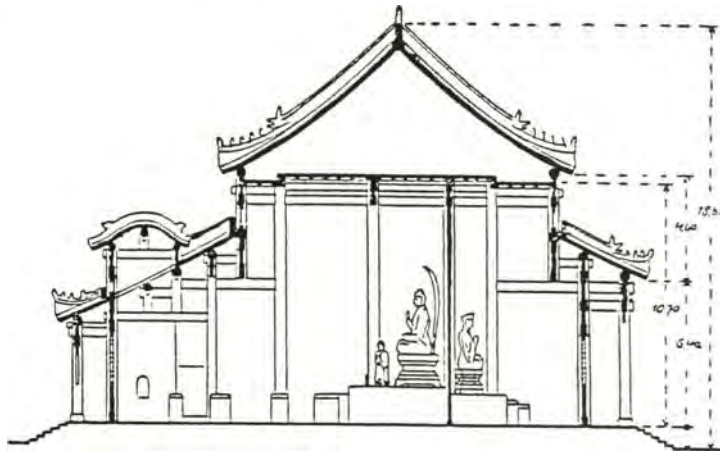
It is characteristic of post-and-beam construction that the walls have no supporting function. They may consist of light brick, of crisscrossed reeds covered with clay, or of a thin layer of boards between the posts. These walls may be present or absent according to need and desire. In most instances they are replaceable by doors and windows (mostly winged doors and latticed windows). In some cases, the entire front of the building--in East Asia normally the longest side and the eave, i.e., not the gable side of the roof--are pierced by doors, thus assuring that degree of communication between inner and outer space so important to the East Asian sense of space. The Japanese house has carried this principle to its extreme point.⁴² In China, solid brick walls play a definite yet usually marginal role. They are normally found along the narrow, gable side of the buildings, i.e., in places which attract the least attention because the viewer ordinarily faces the broad side of the edifice.

China has produced a large number of significant multi-storied halls of highly monumental, but occasionally also surprisingly graceful design. Technically speaking, they are also of wooden post-and-beam construction, and thus represent a remarkable achievement of the carpenter's craft. Many of these buildings were

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intended to house colossal cult statues. Others have special chapels or libraries in their upper floors. In Japan, large multi-storied halls have almost never been built. The huge hall of the "Great Buddha of Nara" is only an enlarged version of the normal type of hall. Most likely multi-storied halls were avoided because of the threats posed by typhoons and earthquakes, but perhaps also because the Japanese had in general no taste for monumental buildings.

The basic plan of a Buddhist temple hall (3; 6a*) consists normally of an oblong rectangle with outer and inner rows of columns. The inner columns are grouped around the "altar"--a platform for the cult figures--and the rectangular inner room designed for the performance of rituals. This room is usually defined solely by the inner row of columns and only in rare instances by walls and doors. The outer columns surround the inner columns on all four sides, but the little space between the inner and outer columns creates a narrow pathway which frequently also has a ritual function; i.e., for the solemn circumambulation of the sanctuary (*Skr. pradakṣina*) which is widely practiced in Asia (and may also be found in non-Asian countries). Outside the exterior row of supporting columns--but still beneath the overhanging roof--space is left for circumambulating the building on the stone terrace or on a narrow wooden veranda attached to the temple hall. These walkways are frequently railed off by beautiful and richly decorated balustrades of stone or wood, often with relief decorations. Steps leading down the terrace or veranda to the temple yard are placed in the middle of all four sides, but are most noticeable on the front side.

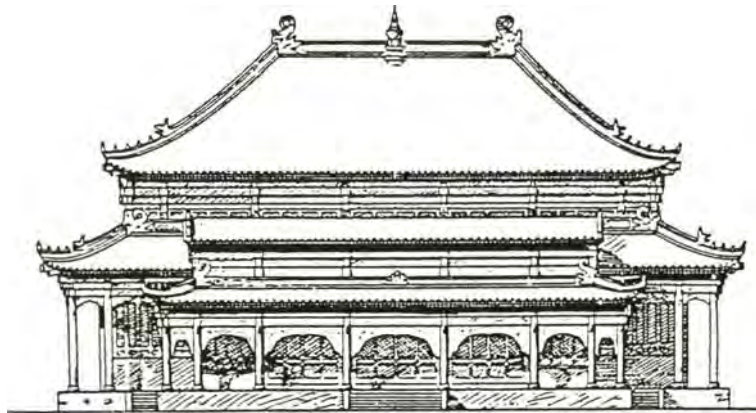


6b* Hsien-t'ung-ssu (Wu-t'ai-shan, Shansi).

This normal plan may be modified in many ways. The interior space may be divided into several subsections, and the corridor doubled in width or widened to some degree. The entire system may even be easily transposed from a rectangular plan into a polygonal plan. Frequently, walls of thin board are placed between the inner columns at the back corners, screening off the altar platform. They have no structural tectonic significance, but provide a surface to hold paintings which,

together with the cult figures, form an iconographic ensemble and provide a backdrop for these figures resembling a wall screen. In China, such walls frequently separate two groups of cult figures; one facing south while the other figures, with their backs to the former group, face north, i.e., in the direction of the figures of the adjacent hall (6b*). For this reason, but also because of its free-standing position and its alignment to the axis running through the entire temple precinct, a temple hall normally also has doors opening to the rear. A hall is, therefore, both a self-contained cult room and a way station along the sacred path. It marks a destination in its own right and a stage along the path to a higher destination.

Temple halls usually stand alone and are linked to other buildings, if at all, only by corridors. They basically unfold in all directions (1, 2, 3), as is demonstrated by the external circumambient path, the doors, and steps allowing access from all four sides, and by the eaves of the roof which protrude equally on all four sides. In this respect the temple hall is a truly three-dimensional entity, but it is also strictly integrated into the axial plan of the total complex and derives its major effects from its relation to this axis, the axis's cross-sections and its flanking courtyards. Still, the most important side is the front (14), i.e., the broad side facing south. The building is primarily designed to be viewed from this side because all its forms and proportions have been formulated with reference to it. The same holds for the cult figures.



6c* Hsien-t'ung-ssu (Wu-t'ai-shan, Shansi).

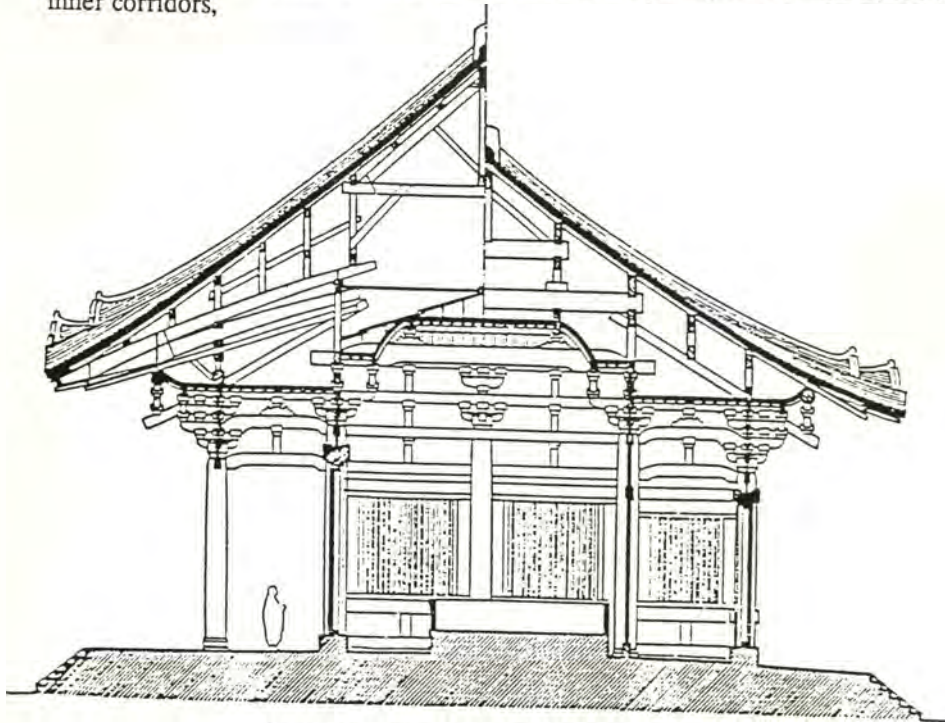
East Asia has, however, never witnessed the evolution of a dominating facade precisely because of the above-mentioned principle that the structure should unfold in all four directions. This principle fuses in a peculiar manner with those requiring orientation along a directional axis and a frontal orientation. Each balances and enters a state of harmonious tension with the other. To a certain degree the building may be called a "sculpture," but not in the sense that massive volumes are molded or stereometric spaces defined by solid surfaces. Rather, East Asian halls of all subtypes are always functionally articulated structures and never

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solid massive buildings (with the exception of the relatively rare massive vaulted buildings).

This is clearly revealed by their ground plans (6a*), which consist almost entirely of supporting rows of posts and, at best, of a few modest walls (6b*/7*). The posts are free-standing. Slightly below their top ends crossbeams are fitted into them. Their capitals appear cube-shaped. Above them the bracketing structure (16-19*, 8) juts out in varying interlocking patterns which resemble the branches of a tree. The bracketing extends to both sides; outward to support the overhanging roof, and inward to help to sustain the inner ceiling (9). The posts carry only part of the load. The major burden, particularly the external one, is handled in a different manner. The inner ceiling rests on strong crossbeams (which frequently bridge the free space) or it is suspended from the woodwork of the roof. The external overhang of the roof is supported by a complicated system of crossbeams anchored high into the woodwork of the roof and by posts standing on them. Frequently, particularly in Japan, the principle of leverage is applied, with the fulcrum on the outermost support (7*).

The interior rooms frequently allow for an unobstructed view of the woodwork of the roof with its impressively strong crossbeams and the tight rows of slanting rafters. Usually, however, interior rooms have flat ceilings which are raised at the center to form a canopy over the holy of holies (6, 9). In China, lantern domes (consisting of squares piled on top of each other across the corners and diminishing in size towards the top), and fake domes are also popular. Genuine domes occur only in the massive buildings mentioned above, but even they are not visible from the outside. Central compartments, frequently raised well above the inner corridors,



7* Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji, Nara.

are supported in a manner reminiscent of aisles by the lower post-and-beam framework of the corridors. This also serves a structural purpose. It does not so much deflect pressures from above, as it prevents the high central posts from tilting. At the same time these posts can carry the weight of the lower half of the overhanging roof structure.

It should be kept in mind that we are dealing with a structure evolved from the technique and spirit of wood frame architecture.⁴³ Despite the monumentality it is capable of generating, this structure is always characterized by its light and transparent qualities. It is also typical that the skeleton structure is not, or only rarely, covered up. Rather, it is normally freely exposed and even made use of in subdividing the walls. Since the walls only fit in between the structural elements and are thinner than these, posts and beams are not only prominently visible from the outside, but also from the inside. It may even be claimed that the exposed structure and the pure architectural framework possess *eo ipso* a "decorative" function. The wall surfaces in their proportional divisions⁴⁴ may bestow to the enclosed space and to the entire building a particular rhythm, and their wealth of individual structural elements (crossbeams, roof beams, inner roof structure) and the lavish attention they have received may provide to the eye an attractive interplay of forms.

A special role is played by bracketing. Bracketing is indispensable to provide support for the roof overhang; it is also fully made use of for its decorative potential in a way that is characteristic of East Asian buildings. The illustrations (8, 9; 16*-19*) allow us to forego detailed descriptions. They make evident how complicated but also how logically functional and, at the same time, organic such supporting systems are, and what high artistic charm they exude. More than any other parts of the buildings, the bracketing reflects the changes in style within East Asian architecture. The proportions of the individual elements, their contours, and certain decorative embellishments allow us to date these buildings fairly accurately.

The development of bracketing can best be followed through the Buddhist architecture of Japan since it offers--in uninterrupted sequence--all phases of style from very early times (around 600) until the modern era. Buildings still surviving in China come predominantly from the period of the 15th through the 18th centuries.⁴⁵ Examples from earlier periods are extremely rare in China, making it necessary to reconstruct them from literary and pictorial documents and from Japanese buildings of the 7th to 13th centuries. It remains uncertain how far the latter reflect intermediary Korean and certain specifically Japanese characteristics rather than Chinese prototypes.

The roof itself may be considered the most typical, artistically the most beautiful, and architecturally the most significant element of any building. It imparts a special quality and makes the buildings seem typically "East Asian." There are five basic roof types in East Asian architecture which are used for both Buddhist and other edifices. These are: 1. The lean-to roof, which leans on the wall surfaces (1, 4; 6b*/c*) and is mostly used for the roofs of the lower floor inserted under the main roof of the building or on the open corridors enclosing the buildings; 2. The saddle-roof with gables on the short sides of the building (4*); 3. The hip-roof (3; 6c*), with four sides dropping off from an elongated horizontal ridge following the long axis of a building to all four rain gutters; 4. A special variant of no. 3 is the

pyramid or tent roof (5, 13; 8*, 11*), with all edges coming together in a single apex. This roof form is typical for centered buildings with square or polygonal plans, and so also for pagodas. In the case of round buildings, it assumes the form of a tent roof; 5. A roof called Irimoya by the Japanese (1, 3, 4, 15; 4*) is characteristic of East and Southeast Asia. It results from the fusion of a four-sided hip-roof with a smaller saddle or gabled roof inserted into the former from the top. Two small gables linked by the ridge surmount the lateral slopes of the hip-roof, and from the bases of these gables four roof ridges run to the corners of the eaves. This is an exceedingly decorative, spatially balanced and lively roof form which offers interesting vistas from all sides, and clearly and impressively conveys that "plastic" unfolding of the structure in all directions so characteristic of the temple hall. It joins two elementary roof forms in an ingenious manner to form a harmonious synthesis and thereby intensifies their charm.

A hierarchy exists among the main roof types. The most distinguished of these types, found on buildings of the highest rank, is the hip-roof. Next is the Irimoya (hip-and-gable) roof, also very frequently used for temple halls of important rank. Finally, the least distinguished of them, and found in the simplest buildings of a temple complex, is the saddle roof. This ranking does not, of course, establish an absolutely rigid standard. All five roof types, or at least three or four of them, may be combined in the same building (4), or may be distributed among different buildings of a closed complex linking these various buildings into a larger unit. In both instances a richness of forms is created which avoids any monotony.

Particularly frequent is the combination of the Irimoya roof with a lean-to roof attached at a slightly lower level to all four sides of the structure (2, 4; 4*, 6b/c*; compare 11, 13) to protect both the inner corridor and the outer platform. This roof should perhaps better be identified as a rudimentary hip-roof from which the upper part of the hall with its crowning Irimoya roof emerges, thus creating the impression of a two-storied building. However, the inner room usually rises up to the upper roof (6b*) and only in exceptional cases is there a clerestory (upper wall with windows). To be sure, in China--though very rarely in Japan--there exist genuine two-or three-storied hall structures, but their upper floors are not piled as tightly on top of each other as are the two roofs of the regular double-roofed hall. In cases where multi-storied halls have an approximately square or a polygonal base of modest proportions, they merge into the type of the multi-storied pavilion--erroneously also labelled "tower."

Buddhist temples and other buildings of distinction are usually covered with tiles (2, 3, 4, 5). In Japan we also find attractive, simple, and yet elegant shingled roofs (13, 14) consisting of thick layers of wooden or, preferably, bark shingles. Though the shingled roof originated in indigenous Shintô and domestic architecture, it has also become part of Buddhist buildings. Copper roofs are also known in Japan and particularly in China. The tiled roof is most prevalent. Slightly concave flat tiles and semi-cylindrical hollow tiles are used, with the latter bridging the gaps between the flat ones--a combination popularly called "monks and nuns." The very prominent ribs formed by the round tiles are perpendicular to the eaves. Thus the East Asian tiled roof displays lively surfaces with a glittering play of light and shadows and an attractive shifting of perspectives.

The fully round end pieces of the tiles at the eaves display relief decorations of vine and flower motifs. Lotus flowers are preferred in Buddhist temples, but Chinese characters or other symbols may also be used. These decorative end tiles are important sources for tracing the history of ornaments. Their styles also allow the dating of destroyed buildings at sites where frequently only such tiles or tile fragments have been left in the ground. It is well known that in China such tiles were frequently given a colorful glaze of yellow, blue, green, or purple, but as permission to have colored roofs was a privilege granted by the emperor, silver-grey tiles with their muted gloss predominated. In Japan, which normally has eschewed lively colors in its architecture, only the silver-grey tiles are customary.

The application of painted colors to such structural elements (20*) as posts and beams has been much more subdued in Japan and is largely confined to a warm red and some green, gold-yellow, or white colors, to which gold-plated bronze mountings are added. As a matter of fact, after emancipation from Chinese models, application of color was increasingly abandoned in Japan in favor of a reliance on the beauty of the untreated Japanese wood. Chinese architecture, in contrast, employed much livelier and varied colors, just as it made use of richer decorations of stone, metal, wood and ceramics.

The same difference between the two countries applies specifically to sculptured or molded roof decorations. In China, the roof beams, eaves, and ridges are more often than not populated by all kinds of grotesque figures of animals, demons and deities mostly fashioned of colored glazed ceramics and, in some instances, of metal. In Japan, however, this was almost never the case. Though we may sometimes find decorative tiles with devil masks, bronze phoenix figures (4), fishtail-like end pieces and the like on roof edges, the Japanese did not like to have the austere beauty of roof lines and surfaces crowded with baroque decorations. Although such elaboration appears to have become common in China only in relatively recent times, the enjoyment of a wealth of forms and colors is a trait peculiar to Chinese art as a whole and is only occasionally restrained by a preference for strictness of form and monochrome works (as, for example, in Sung ceramics). A typical roof ornament for Buddhist buildings is the gilded Cintamani Jewel. Cast in bronze and frequently surrounded by a halo of rays, it often crowns the top of the pyramid or tent roof of an octagonal building (5, 8*).

All East Asian roofs share two common features: the pronounced overhang of the roof, which has no comparable counterpart in European architecture; and the curvature of the roof surfaces and edges, which is also virtually absent in other cultures. The overhang was necessary to protect the wooden and clay walls of the buildings and the external corridors from the heavy rainfall in a monsoon climate. An overhanging roof was also desirable as a protection against the strong sun, and because of the preference of East Asians for muted, indirect lighting in the interior rooms. Such extreme overhangs were only possible because wood was used in that particularly skillful way characteristic of East Asian roof construction. To achieve similar effects in stone construction would be unthinkable. The degree of roof projection varies in different regions of China. In the north (6b/c*), this projection is--for reasons of climate and regional preference--much smaller than in the south. In Japan, the roof overhang always juts out considerably beyond the main body of the building (13, 14, 15). The 480 centimeters (measured diagonally, 600

centimeters) of roof overhang of the Chinese Tang-style (middle of the 8th century) Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji in Nara (3, 7*) perhaps represents an extreme case since the total length of the hall is not more than about 31.5 meters and its width about 15 meters. But this extreme case shows the capabilities of this building technique and the importance attached to the design of the roof, which contributed significantly to the majestic impression of the hall.

The concave curvature of the roofs of South China is more intense, vivid and inspired than those of China's north where the roofs display a certain heaviness and reserved dignity. The south prefers graceful, dynamic, even baroque forms, whose pointed eave corners rise almost vertically upward. In this respect, too, Japan occupies an intermediate position and has imparted to the curvature of the roofs a peculiar touch.

The difference between the length of the roof and the body of the structure caused by varying degrees of overhang establishes an entirely different artistic relationship between main structure and roof. If the roof protrudes only slightly, the structure appears more massive, its body more prominent and more as an equal partner than in cases where it is almost hidden under the protruding roof and appears to be no more than an unassuming support of this dominant main part of the building. Even minor differences in the relation between roof and building have noticeable effects, as, for example, in the case of the older and later forms of an octagonal chapel (8*).

The curved roof evolved in China only relatively late, most likely not before the end of the Han period, but at the latest very soon after that. Until that time, as revealed by numerous pictorial documents (cf. 9*), we find only straight roofs. But this evolution is not important for Buddhist architecture, which developed fully only during the following centuries. There is no agreement over the reasons which may have prompted the Chinese to design this beautiful but technically difficult roof structure. Clearly, however, it was very important to them. The "tent hypothesis," which claims that this roof form was derived from the nomadic tents of Chinese antiquity, must be categorically rejected. The Chinese have never been nomads, and at least two thousand years had elapsed between this conjectured nomadic period and the appearance of the roof curvature. It is also questionable whether the impact of the dynasties of nomadic origin which ruled China or parts of it could have been that profound.

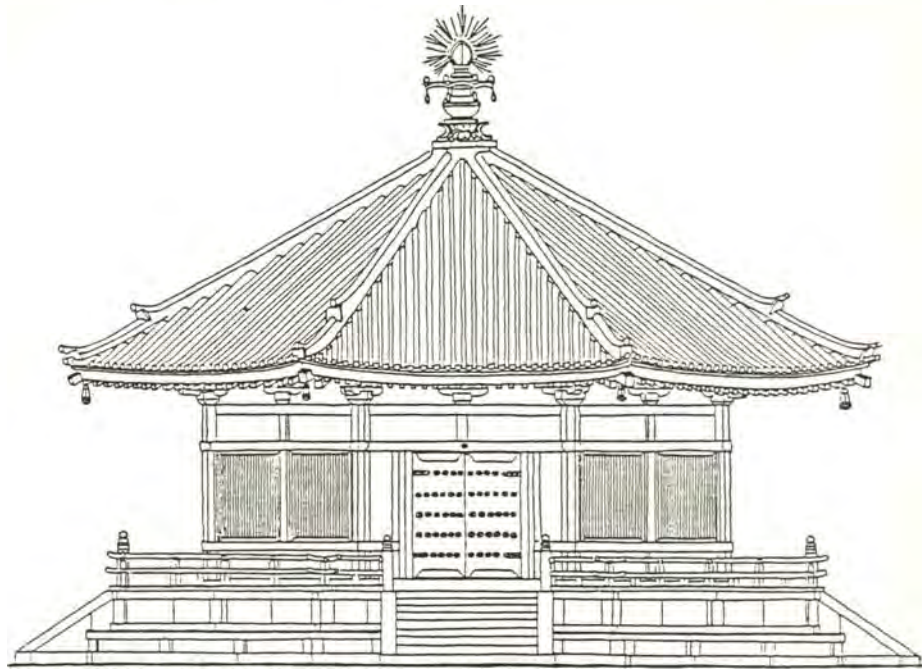
More attention is due to the thesis that the concave curvature of the roof may have been necessary not only to allow for easy drainage during heavy rainfalls (hence the increasingly steeper angles of the upper roof parts) but also to admit sufficient light inside even given the monsoonal climatic conditions which made the protruding roof necessary in the first place (therefore the flattening or even upward tilting of the lower parts and eaves of the roof). In the case of the hip and hip-and-gable roofs--where two curved roof surfaces meet at a right angle at the corners--such upward curvature of the eaves would come about naturally.⁴⁶ It is highly likely that the Southeast Asian and Indonesian native architecture, which still employs rather prominent roof curvatures, influenced the neighboring south Chinese architecture. In the south the climatic reasons for roof curvature were also much more present than in the drier north.

Aesthetic considerations may also have played a part. The desire to create lively and elegant contours--for plastic pliability of forms, for a light roof which appears to float above the equally light post-and-beam construction--are impulses which can also be found in the other arts of China. The unusual beauty of these roofs argues against a purely technical derivation of one of the most ingenious inspirations in all East Asian art. The roof curvature serves also the important artistic function of counterbalancing the predominant horizontality of both the layout of the temple compound and the structure of the East Asian hall. With its leisurely rise from the nearly horizontal overhang, emphasized by the plane of the roof tile spars, the incline of the roof gradually tends towards the vertical. This increases an effect which, though noticeable in the posts, would not succeed by its own momentum.

The gradual transition of the roof's curvature from the horizontality of its lower parts into the more prominent verticality of its upper part mediates between those two major directions, between those cosmic coordinates to which in China all world experiences, ideas, and concepts come to be related. This mediation, this harmonious fusion, obviously takes place in both directions, and it is simply impossible to decide whether such a roof rises from below or descends from above. Its movement may be read in both directions. It seems to float by its own power and appears to rely only slightly on the support offered by the lower structure. This "floating" effect--open to all possible directions, including the four sides or cardinal points--creates a "mean" which defies any particular fixation and constitutes perhaps the most profoundly East Asian and at the same time Buddhist aspect of this roof type. One is tempted to claim that it is impossible to imagine another roof form to be more appropriate for expressing the innermost essence of a Buddhist sanctuary.

This roof protrudes on all sides over the building structure and thanks to its curvature, reaches out beyond itself into free space. Under it can be found the inner room, which is not defined by solid heavy walls. The space shadowed by the roof accommodates, first of all, the circumambient outer corridor resting on a terrace. Steps make it possible to approach, ascend to, and, finally, enter this space (2, 3, 7*). The corridor is located entirely under the roof and closely follows the outline of the structure, but it is also part of the undefined outer space, and thus constitutes the transition between exterior and interior. The building structure opens through several wide doors to this corridor. Thus the interior space, the corridor and the exterior space are all linked. The latter in turn is formed into a temple yard--an enclosed precinct, tightly structured and marked off from the profane worldly sphere outside (1).

Finally, the compartments of the interior of the hall are nowhere abruptly separated from one another. The interior aisle and the sanctuary merge more or less openly into each other (6a/b*, 7*); only in relatively rare cases, where the cult figures are enclosed in a shrine, do we find an adytum, a truly inaccessible sanctuary. Such openness, incorporating all these transitions forms a kind of fluctuating continuum. This is a basic feature of East Asian architectural design and corresponds to a deep layer of the East Asian as well as of the Buddhist world view. The basic idea of non-duality, the "mean," has found here its symbolic expression in space, just as that same cosmic idea contributes to a feeling of all-embracing unity which also forms the background of East Asian nature poetry and painting. This



8* "Dream Hall" (Yumedono) of the Hôryûji near Nara. Octagonal chapel. Upper picture: present state, dating from 1230. Lower picture: reconstruction of the original shape from ca. 739.

design for the hall was certainly not created by Buddhist ideas, but had its origin in similar spiritual attitudes which also came to form part of the Buddhist world view.

No matter how open to the surrounding space the interior of Buddhist temples may be, no matter how much this interior space is integrated into the totality of the surrounding outer space in a variety of ways, and no matter how much the character of the temple's frame structure (and not solid mass) may contribute to the effect described above, this effect should not be regarded as something needed to support a particular function of the building. The interior space of East Asian temples, in contrast to that of Christian churches and Islamic mosques, was not originally intended as a meeting room for a congregation of believers. If at all, it assumed this function only during relatively late times and only for certain denominations with popular mass appeal, particularly those of the "Pure Land of Amitâbha," which created large congregational halls where many hundreds could find room at the feet of gigantic round pillars. Under ordinary circumstances, temples are shrines housing images and chapels for their veneration, for the performance of rituals, and even for the practice of meditation.

Their interior space (6, 7) is, therefore, basically not designed for human beings, but for the Absolute represented in the cult image. A building is erected for and around this cult image. The "congregation," if this is a proper term for the multitudes gathered in the temple yards on the occasion of particular celebrations and festivals, remains outside. Buddhist temple halls, in spite of the great importance attached to their exterior appearance, are nonetheless essentially interior spaces; they are tight shells enclosing the ultimate and innermost center--the "heart"--of the sanctuary. The distinct character and artistic expressive powers of their spatial effects impress much less than those of Christian churches. Buddhist space, in a certain sense, is neutral. It is silent, and leaves the act of revelation to the cult images. In the best cases, it only supports this act of veneration as a subordinate companion, as do the decorations lavished on this space.

Another characteristic feature of all Buddhist temple rooms points in the same direction. The design of light effects is intended to admit light only "accidentally" through openings of low doors and windows. Admittance of light through the upper parts of the structure, which would be quite feasible in a purely technical sense (between two roofs, for example), is almost never employed. The manipulation of light is not an independent factor in the design of the space or a factor intensifying the experience of space. Rather, daylight is as much as possible kept out of the interior, so that a deep, quasi-formless twilight is created. The golden and richly colored cult images are illuminated by the mild light of candles and muted indirect light drawn from the outside. As a consequence, they seem to glow mysteriously, like manifestations from the abyss of "Emptiness."

Spatially as well as spiritually, the cult figures form the center of the temple hall, which exists only for their sake. They are placed on flat pedestals or table-like raised platforms (6, 7, 31), located exactly or approximately in the middle of the hall. These platforms should, therefore, perhaps not be called altars because they are not primarily tables for sacrifices, containers of relics, or something of that sort, but instead represent the central world mountain Sumeru which, according to Hindu mythology, forms the world axis and is surmounted by numerous layers of heavenly spheres. Such daises are therefore also called "Sumeru terraces" (hsü-mi-t'an;

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shumi-dan), and frequently imitate in their tiered structure the strange shape of that world mountain which is believed to be widest at the bottom and the top and narrower in graduated steps towards its waist.

Since the pedestal used as throne of the Buddha figures symbolizes the center of the world, the ceiling of the roof above it corresponds to heaven,⁴⁷ particularly its central area which usually takes the shape of a canopy or cupola (6, 9). Below this level, another canopy (38), richly decorated with carvings, paintings, inlays or gold, is frequently suspended above the heads of the cult images whose halos rise in a gentle tilt at their tops and are fitted into the available space. Canopy and ceiling (or ceiling acting as canopy) signifying heaven are just as widespread and important in East Asia as in Europe. A stylized lotus flower is usually placed at the center of the canopy (37, 38, cf. 33) where it serves as a kind of heavenly mirror image of the lotus forming the Buddha seat, and in some cases even has a metal mirror at its center (37).

The ceilings of halls or chapels are frequently important artistic works of interior design in their own right and display great sculptural variety and high artistic charm, particularly since they are usually divided into numerous small sections and painted with ornamental decorations (6, 7, 9, 38). The focus of the artistic design of such rooms is located in their upper part. The lower parts are kept very simple and draw the eye towards the images with their appurtenances and symbolic adornments and towards the wall paintings iconographically related to them. The richly painted structural elements--posts, beams, ceiling--are occasionally also decorated with lacquer, inlays of mother-of-pearl, and metal. The garments and halos of the colorful figures and the cult implements display a rather narrowly prescribed number of ornamental motifs (20*), predominantly arabesques of vines, leaves and flowers, rosettes, etc., interspersed with angelic heavenly beings, mythical animals or clouds, all presented in a manner designed to create an impression of unity and harmony.

These spaces, at least insofar as they retain the classic forms evolved during the T'ang period, convey a sense of unity. Certain basic motifs permeate the entire room and join into a luxuriant, organic fabric of flowing lines and variegated colors full of organic vitality and animated by a flowery beauty of lines which is, however, never purely abstract.

A peculiar coloring technique, called *ungen* by the Japanese and widely used in painting, contributes substantially to this effect. The surface of ornaments (20*) are not colored uniformly, but instead are divided into several parallel or concentric stripes. In a number of graduated shades moving from dark to light, they are colored with varying degrees of intensity so that they merge imperceptibly into each other. For example, moving from the outside to the inside, the petal of a flower would be colored white, light pink, dark pink, red, purple, and dark blue; or white, pale green, light green, dark green, and black. In some instances two such graduated scales of colors may be found on one and the same ornamental object. With the help of this technique, which is also regularly employed in cult paintings (109), the impression of an intricate brocade pattern is achieved. At the same time a certain life-like three-dimensional effect results from this shading of colors. Plant forms and even the more abstract cloud motifs are thus made to appear as organic entities surging with vitality. The gentle transitions between the stripes of color

prevent any harsh clashes and vigorous contrasts, and thus approximate the colorful but always harmoniously blended interplay of colors found in nature. Yet this happens not in a naturalistic fashion but by means of a free, almost musically imaginative play of colors.

This luxuriant, almost confusing, wealth of colors and forms is further enhanced by jewelry consisting of carved figures and ornaments. In the midst shine the cult figures--Bodhisattvas and, above all, Buddhas whose plain golden surfaces glow in dignified quiescence. The very absence of the glittering play of ornaments and the ultimate simplicity and silence of their "Emptiness," beyond "form and color" generate such a powerful impression precisely because of the expressive power of this extreme simplicity. The statues, their accompanying figures and the wall paintings form an iconographical whole. The larger wall surfaces are frequently adorned with large paintings depicting Buddha figures and Buddha groups (21*), Bodhisattvas and other sacred beings, "paradise" scenes, maṇḍalas (compare 7), etc. Occasionally, even the posts marking the innermost space are painted with such figures (6, 7). All join to form a large maṇḍala in whose plan even the structural elements of the hall may participate as symbols of the dimensions of space.

Information about such components as the original arrangement of the wall paintings, the scrolls used during certain rituals, the wall screens, portable altars and cult implements may be obtained from old pictures which show all of them in the organic and functional relationship prevailing during cult performances. Japanese illustrative picture scrolls (emakimono) of the medieval period are particularly valuable as sources for viewing and understanding the interior decoration of such temples.

From the classic types of the T'ang period which spread throughout East Asia and which have been preserved in a few examples in Japan as, for example, the Tōshōdaiji near Nara (3), or can still be reconstructed, temple interiors changed in two opposite directions. In China, there was a move towards an ever increasing wealth of decoration until this lavishness was so overdone that its vulgar splendor overloaded and smothered architectural structure. In Japan, however, except for individual cases imitating the Chinese pattern, the architectural structure came to be even more openly displayed in its unadorned, pure form. It was allowed to manifest itself vigorously and to reveal its natural decorative properties, particularly during the Kamakura period.

Even in Japan, only a few temple halls have survived the centuries since the flourishing period of Buddhist art in their original and complete form. In China still fewer have survived. For this reason we should be thankful for surviving sculptures contemporary with the lost architecture. These, together with a few contemporary paintings and utensils, give us a sense of what the original ensembles in their entirety may have looked like. Because the entire ensemble was a truly comprehensive work of art (Gesamtkunstwerk) imbued with unearthly splendor and an aura of mysterious sacredness leading ultimately to Emptiness and Nothingness, individual works of art can only be truly understood in the total context of this religious world of ideas and moods and with reference to the particular artistic forms and atmosphere responsible for presenting them and generating their profound impact. This is especially true for the cult images which--all too often stripped of their pedestals and halos--are viewed by us in the cold and pathetic

loneliness of bare rooms built perhaps centuries later, or even worse in the sterile atmosphere of museums (compare 27 with 28).

The minute details of the rich decoration of the temple rooms are not the only components serving the purpose of veneration of these cult figures. These rooms truly come alive during the cult performances, their effect heightened by Sûtra recitations, the sound of bronze bells or gongs and, above all, hymns sung by a choir of priests. These rites are further enhanced by the burning of incense and of the most beautiful and simplest gifts of flowers placed day in and day out even in the most modest chapels and on the smallest domestic altars.

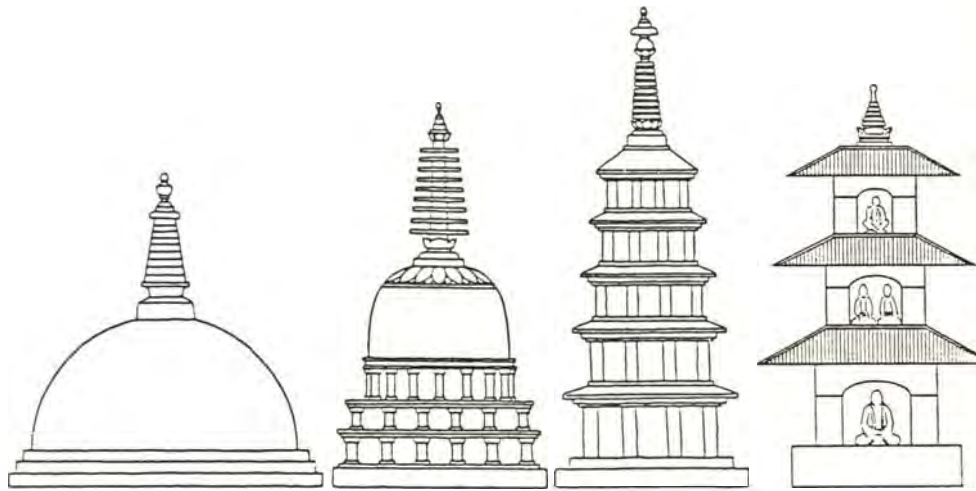
Pagodas

The pagoda, the "most sacred of Buddhism's sanctuaries" (de Groot), evolved from the ancient Indian, pre-Buddhist stûpa,⁴⁸ which perhaps is a form of tomb monument of high antiquity similar to the tumulus type found in many cultures. The ancient Indian princely tomb is a large, hemispheric hill rising from a low base and topped by a small ornament consisting of a pole holding up one or more flat umbrellas, the symbol of nobility. By very early times this tomb had already evolved into a type of memorial monument and was adopted by Buddhism as an important sacred symbol, originally even as the focal point of a sanctuary. It served both as monumental tomb or reliquary for the mortal remains of the (or a) Buddha and other holy personalities and as marker at the most important sites of Śākyamuni's earthly activities: the place of his birth, the Bodhi tree under which his enlightenment took place, the site of his first sermon, and the spot where he entered into parinirvāna; i.e., the final, perfect nirvāna. The stûpa has always played a central role as symbol of parinirvāna and therefore of the absolute state of salvation.

The close link between the stûpa and the sacred person of the Buddha, i.e., any Buddha, and the relics representing him has been maintained until the present. The pious early sponsor of Buddhism, Emperor Aśoka (B.C. 274-237/232) reportedly had 84,000 stûpas erected over Śākyamuni's relics, which were scattered throughout the empire (the number 84 having symbolic meaning). The pagoda later became an almost indispensable part of any temple or monastery and, strictly speaking, each should house a relic. But this is by no means true in every instance, even though sacred texts and formulas--as part of the world-body of the Buddha--are included in the concept of a relic (śarīra), and may bestow on a pagoda their numinous substance. Stûpas, and later also pagodas, were venerated by the ritual of a circumambulating procession (pradakṣiṇa) and a wide variety of sacrificial offerings and acts (pūjā).

Indian stûpas could be free-standing structures like those which can still be seen in their original, exactly reconstructed form in Sāncī (particularly stûpa I, 3rd-1st centuries B.C., with its 18-meter high tumulus) or could form the center of a cult hall. East Asian pagodas by no means appear only as separate buildings but also in the form of free-standing central pillars in cave chapels (Yün-kang, et al.) which can be circumambulated. We also find pagodas in a variety of sizes and shapes inside temple halls or private rooms, where they are used as shrines housing statues, as reliquaries, incense vessels, or votive offerings. Both inside and outside temple complexes, pagodas may be found serving as grave markers, small chapels, posts bearing inscriptions of Sûtra texts or symbolic letters (Siddham). They also appear

in Chinese and Japanese gardens. Pagodas may be regarded as ubiquitous symbols of Buddhist religion in general. Their numerous special and derived forms cannot be reviewed in detail at this point. Many of these forms resulted from exaggeration of one or the other of the pagoda's essential features at the expense of others.



9* Development of the pagoda from the Indian stûpa (schematic).

The formal evolution of the hemispheric tomb monument into a towerlike pagoda had already begun during pre-Christian times in India. This is proven by surviving stûpas in the Caitya halls (in Bedsâ, for example, around 175 B.C.; in Kârli during the first century B.C.) and by representations in reliefs. Of particular importance is an inscription describing the stûpa tower erected by the pious emperor Kaniska (reigned 78-ca. 100, or 128-ca. 150, or 144-ca. 166 A.D.) which, together with its thirteen-story wooden base above a square foundation, is reported to have reached a height of 200 to 300 meters. Its foundations, measuring ca. 87 meters across, have been found.

On the basis of such inscriptions and from pictorial representations found in the early Buddhist art in China, as, for example, those in the caves of Yün-kang (5th century A.D.), we may surmise the following stages in the evolution of the pagoda (9*). The multi-layered base of the stûpa was stretched upward. The horizontal layers resulting from this process were faced with pilasters and came more and more to resemble the stories--usually odd numbered--of a tall building. The top element also became more elongated by being given a larger number of discs or rings (frequently nine). Ultimately, this resulted in a slim, pointed top element, measuring about one-third of the total height. In a reverse process, the original main body of the stûpa, the hemisphere, shrank in size until nothing more remained than a rudimentary, barely visible, hemispherically shaped object resembling an overturned flat bowl at the base of the top element of the pagoda. The top of the

pagoda was occasionally crowned by a canopy-like disc reminiscent of the umbrella ornament of the ancient stûpa. At its very apex was placed a Cintâmani Jewel.

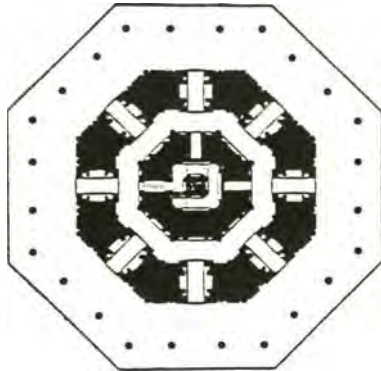
Other changes took place in addition to this increase in height. The form of the base, originally round, had already begun to undergo changes in India. In East Asia it became predominantly polygonal or square. The cornices which had appeared in these lower parts of the structure accompanying the walls and "stories" finally assumed the form of roofs which, depending on the building material--stone or wood, or both combined--protrude more or less prominently. The final result of these three metamorphoses (stretching, alteration of base, evolution of cornices and roofs), whose internal logic we will clarify later, is represented by the Japanese square pagodas with their overhanging roofs and high top ornaments (1, 11*). These are based on certain Chinese prototypes and represent in every respect the opposite pole to the ancient Indian stûpas, though remaining essentially the same type of building: a free-standing, centrally located, "sculpted" relic and memorial monument, venerated by ritual circumambulation and other such ceremonies because it contained the metaphysical essence of the Buddha and the Buddha world through the physical or symbolic presence of relics.

This surprisingly logical evolution did not, however, take place in an entirely endogenous fashion. No pagodas of the "East Asian" type were built in India. It even remains open to question whether Kaniska's towerlike structure already so closely resembled a pagoda that its shape needed only to be copied and handed down. It may also be questioned whether the transition from the round Indian stûpas to the storied towers rising on a polygonal or square base can, as is generally assumed, be traced to protective structures erected over stûpas and other sacred objects. In any case, the decisively new prototype appeared for the first time in East Asia rather than in India. Chinese architecture is bound to have contributed something to its form. One ancient Chinese building type which appears a likely candidate because it was the only towerlike structure to exist in China, was the multi-storied watch tower endowed with a rectangular or square base. With its widely overhanging roofs and encircling small galleries in each story this building appears in pictorial representations and clay models of the Han period. Multi-storied pavilions, usually rising above a polygonal base, are related to these towers and have always been prominent in Chinese architecture. It therefore appears possible or even likely that the East Asian pagoda is the result of a synthesis between the Indian stûpa--already being stretched into a shape resembling a tower and articulated into stories or at least layers--and this Chinese type of tower.

The oldest depiction of the Chinese pagoda available to us can be found on reliefs in the cave temples of Yün-kang and Lung-mên (5th-6th centuries; cf. 9*), where the square storied tower with widely overhanging roofs is already fully developed. Its beginnings are, therefore, most likely to go back even further. In China, this type has been developed in highly different ways, including regional variants. Numerous transitional forms relate the stûpa-like shapes (particularly for smaller pagodas serving as grave markers, incense holders, or relic shrines) to the tall, multi-storied tower-like structures.

Storied pagodas display a strong tendency to have polygonal bases. Moreover, these polygonal bases have so many sides that they approach the circular

form of the Indian prototypes. Particularly in the case of older pagodas (Sui and Tang periods), they reveal a tendency toward a curved, parabolic overall contour reminiscent of Indian forms (*Śikara*) (10). Most Chinese pagodas are built of brick but may be embellished by pieces of sculptured stone and are occasionally even covered with richly colored glazed tiles. Medium sized or smaller pagodas are also often made entirely of stone or metal (iron, bronze); this also applies to miniature pagodas of stone, crystal, wood, terracotta, or cloisonné.



10* Pagoda Liu-ho-t'a near Hangchou.

The most monumental Chinese pagodas, however, are built entirely either of bricks, in which case they have only small cornice-like protruding rooflets, often with stone imitations of wooden brackets, or have only an inner brick core surrounded by an outer ring of wooden galleries and widely protruding roofs. The ground floor is sometimes noticeably taller than the upper floors, which are frequently packed so tightly atop each other that they should be more accurately labelled ring zones (10). The buildings are always topped by a mast to which several discs or rings of stone or metal are attached (cf. 1, 13, 9*, 11*). From the top of this mast are (or were) suspended chains extending to the corners of the uppermost roof with bells attached. Their sound, triggered by every breeze, was designed to proclaim the sacred words of the teaching far and wide. The same purpose was originally served by having pagodas illuminated by numerous lamps, since pagodas were regarded as "Lighthouses of the Doctrine."

Most Chinese pagodas have a massive central core which extends all the way to the top. Around this core, but still inside the outer wall of the pagoda, staircases are attached, spiralling upward in clockwise fashion for the purpose of ritual circumambulation. Sometimes these cores are hollow, and house at their center a free-standing Buddha which can be circumambulated. Small, tunnel-like corridors lead from this central hollow core to the four or eight sides at each floor level (10*). Additional corridors, niches, or even small chapels for Buddha statues or reliefs may be carved out of the massive body of the building. The pagoda is clearly a fully three-dimensional entity unfolding to all sides from a center or core. Both are closely confined and frequently literally closed off, as pagodas contain no empty space per se, but only contain hollowed out, i.e., quasi-sculpted space.

The core is formed by the Buddha statue or the central pillar which, rising from the foundation, soars the entire height of the building and carries at its end the top decoration. The relics are usually contained within this central pillar. Four Buddha images, attached to it at the four cardinal points, face the outside world through the radial corridors emanating from the pillar. The Buddha statue, or the Buddha-body in the form of relics (physical or spiritual, i.e., Sûtra texts and sacred formulas) may be substituted for the core pillar and have the same symbolic meaning. From this core or heart encapsulating it, "Buddha nature" radiates in all directions into the world and dispenses its blessed powers everywhere. For this reason, many pagodas also have relief figures of Buddhas on the outer surfaces of their walls. These are the Buddhas of all worlds revealing themselves in meditative-visionary acts.

Chinese pagodas display an extraordinary variety of forms. All of these, however, can be traced back to a single basic type; all are composed of certain common elements and observe strict rules. These rules apply, for example, to the number of the polygonal sides and the floors. With rare exceptions pagodas have an even number of sides but an uneven number of floors, and, correspondingly, of rings at the top. The even numbers are based on the linkage of the pagoda to the world directions and cosmic cycles. The four cardinal directions and four lesser directions total eight. Subdivided further, they become sixteen. When related to the phases of the moon and constellations of the stars, they become twelve. The fact that the vertical structure, which represents the world axis rising to the sky, is given an uneven number of floors--3, 5, 7, 9, 13--is the result of its relationship to the yang principle, i.e., heaven, sun, height, light, creative-positive principle. Even numbers correspond in Chinese cosmology to yin, i.e., the earth, moon, depth, darkness, receptive-negative principle.

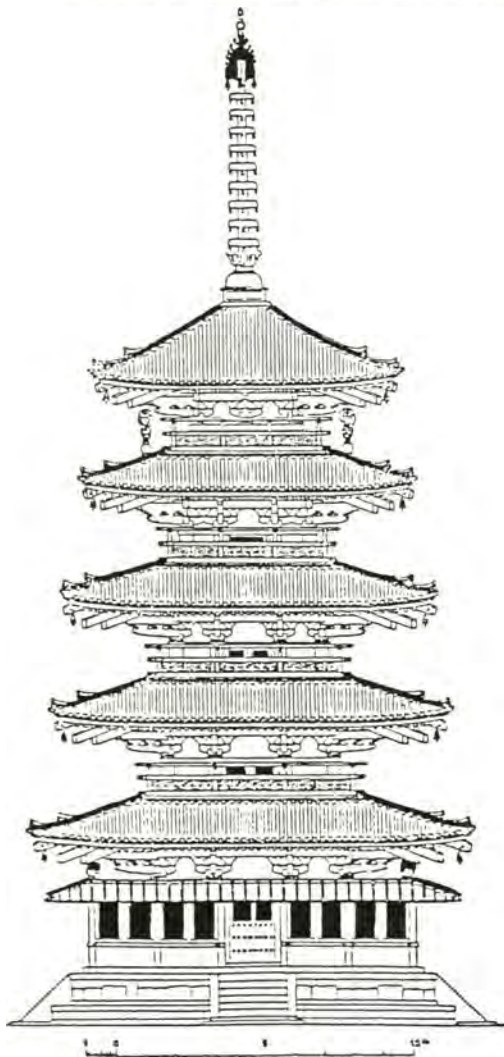
Within this cosmic system, and especially within Taoist geomancy (the theory and practice of *feng-shui*, "Wind and Water"), the pagoda has gained a profound significance far beyond the Buddhist sphere. Many pagodas in China are designed to exert a favorable influence on the *feng-shui* relations of a certain locality or of an entire region by virtue of the bliss radiating from them; hence their harmonious integration into a great variety of landscapes, which were frequently enhanced, completed and crowned by them.

Japanese pagodas, on the other hand, do not have this extra-Buddhist significance, or have it only indirectly, because of the general beneficial effect any Buddhist sanctuary is believed to have on its surroundings. In all other essential features, however, they follow the Chinese model, but retain distinct special characteristics of their own.

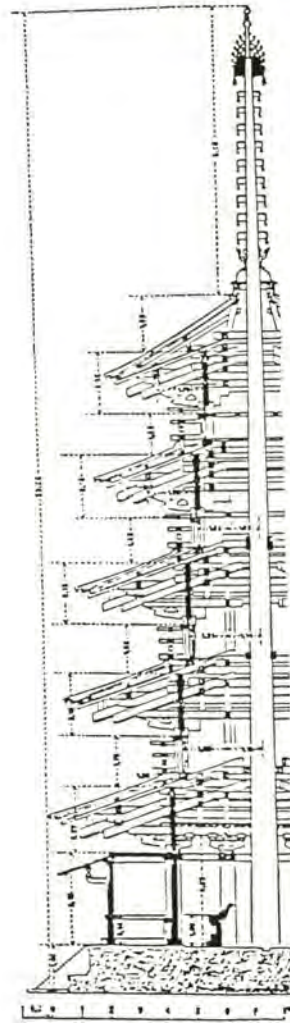
It appears that during the period when Chinese Buddhism first entered Japan, during the 6th-8th centuries, a particular pagoda type was adopted in preference to all others. This type may have been more common or influential at that time in China or in that region of China which was the main source of Japanese Buddhism in this period. It reached Japan either via Korea as intermediary⁴⁹ or by a direct route. The dominant form was a storied and galleried pagoda built exclusively of wood (1, 11*, cf. 11), with a square base and most often with five, but frequently with three, or occasionally seven or nine stories, and with widely

protruding roofs. Such pagodas were crowned by a high bronze top, usually with nine rings and a kind of halo and one or two Cintâmani Jewels above the latter.⁵⁰ It should be noted that Chinese pagodas of this type still found today were built much later. They have massive brick cores which, however, are never found in Japan. Polygonal pagodas also existed in Japan, though apparently rarely and exclusively with an octagonal base. Only one such example has survived.

To erect polygonal buildings in stone or brick was easy, but to build them in wood--the only material employed in Japan--was much more difficult. A certain Japanese aversion to stone or brick architecture may have played a part in all this, but it was highly characteristic of the spirit of Japanese culture for the Japanese to have selected only two or three pagoda subtypes from the rather wide variety available in medieval China and to have never significantly diverged from them.



11* Pagoda Liu-ho-t'a near Hangchou.



12* Pagoda of the Hōryūji near Nara.

Despite their eagerness to learn and readiness to embrace Chinese models, the Japanese always retained a selective distance from their mentors. The Chinese models for these main types of Japanese pagodas must be among the earliest to have evolved, because we already find them depicted in the Yün-kang and Lung-mên reliefs (5th-6th centuries), even though perhaps in a simplified form (9*). A mere fifty to one hundred years later, the highly complex pagoda of the Hōryūji near Nara (1, 11*) had already been erected in its fully developed form, and this type has never been substantially changed or surpassed.

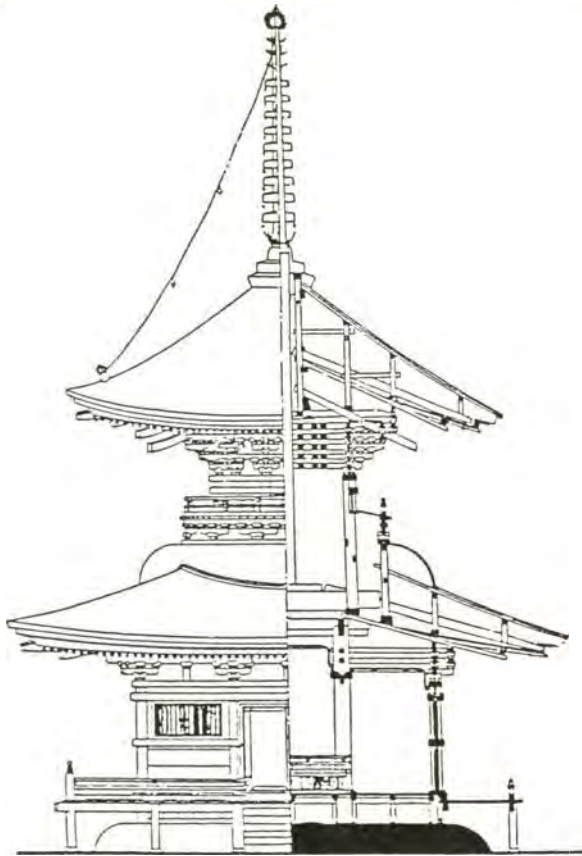
The most important distinctive feature of the Japanese wooden pagodas is their central or "heart" pillar (12*). It is likely that this pillar structure was not invented in Japan or Korea, but was borrowed from China, where it was preserved only in rudimentary form. Comparable to a gigantic mast, the heart pillar stands on a foundation stone lowered deep below the surface. Its primary functions are to hold the very tall and very heavy bronze ornament at the top and to relieve the wooden structure of that ornament's weight by shifting it to the foundation stone. The square or octagonal stories which rise above the ground story with its solid wooden posts are not structurally attached to the central pillar at all. They encircle it and allow it sufficient room so that its light swaying movements during typhoons or earthquakes do not threaten the entire complicated structure.⁵¹ Such pagodas have therefore been able to survive even serious catastrophes for many centuries in remarkably good shape. Lightning and fire have been their real enemies.

The diagrams show their structure in detail. The stories are layered in strictly repetitive patterns slightly tapering in the upper stories. They are overshadowed by very widely protruding and elegantly curved roofs which are usually covered with tiles or shingles, and less frequently with copper plates. All the upper floors are quite low and are never accessible, through staircases. Their interiors are a confusing array of beams, posts and rafters. Only the ground floor of the pagoda is accessible. It forms a narrow, yet intimate and carefully fashioned chapel room, with four Buddha figures or groups of figures surrounding the central pillar on all sides. The walls and posts of this room are covered with paintings of the many figures of a maṇḍala or with other figures from the pantheon. The very small exterior wall surfaces frequently display painted Buddha figures which correspond to the reliefs found in Chinese pagodas (these paintings have vanished almost everywhere, but can be seen in old illustrations). The function of radiating from a central core and the "identity" of building core, relic, and Buddha figures are the same as in China because the relics--almost like seed kernels covered by several layers of precious vessels--are normally placed in a hollowed-out part of the foundation stone from which the heart pillar arises. These relics may occasionally also be found at the top of the heart pillar in the hemispheric element--a vestige of the ancient stūpa or tumulus--or in the crowning Cintāmani Jewel at the top. In any case, they are always located at a vital point of the building.

In addition to the multi-storied tower-like pagoda there exists in Japan--and very likely also once existed in China--a special type referred to by its Japanese name as the Tahōtō (13, 13*). *Tō* (Chin. *t'a*) means stūpa, pagoda; *tahō* (Chin. *to-pao*) corresponds to the Sanskrit word *Prabhūta-ratna* ("many treasures"), and refers to the name of that primordial Buddha who, according to one of the basic texts of

Mahâyâna, the Saddharma-a-pundarika-Sûtra (Fa-hua-ching, Hokkekyô, "Lotus of the Wonderful Law"), appeared seated in a precious stûpa and granted the Buddha Śâkyamuni the place at his side (Chapter 11; compare the frequent occurrence of a pair of sitting Buddhas in Buddhist sculpture). This derivation belongs to the "open," the generally accessible, Buddhist teaching.

The hidden teaching, the so-called esoteric Buddhism, traces this pagoda type to the Indian "iron stûpa." The patriarch Nâgârjuna (second century A.D.)--the originator of the fundamental Mahâyâna teaching of the Middle Path with its central concept of śûnyatâ (emptiness) and its basic assertion of the non-duality of samsâra and nirvâna--is said to have fervently venerated this pagoda for seven days.



13* Tahôtô. Ink on paper.
Ishiyama-dera near Kyôto.

As a consequence, he was permitted to enter it and thereupon received a revelation of the ultimate truth from the sacred figures residing inside the stûpa. All this apparently reflects a meditative and visionary experience. From about the 8th-9th centuries on, the application of the term Tahôtô in esoteric Buddhism to this stûpa and pagoda form reflects perhaps a later stage. It is frequently called simply hôôtô, treasure pagoda, with reference to the "jewel" of the true teaching. It has become the mystical symbol of the ultimate truth gained by meditation which is also embodied in the figure of the Âdi-Buddha Vairocana whose image--surrounded by

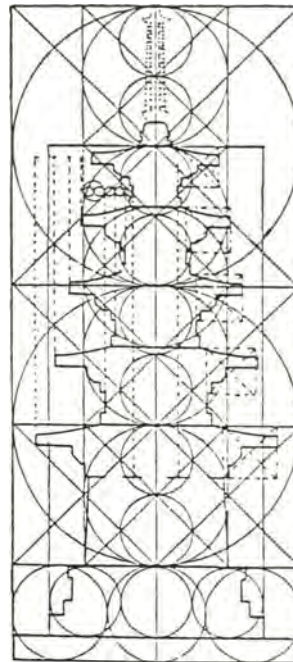
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four other Buddhas--always occupies the center of such pagodas (6). This pagoda's shape, as indicated by the legend mentioned above, was more reminiscent of the ancient Indian stûpa than of the storied pagoda. On a square, lower roofed structure, which at times encloses a circle of inner posts, rises the upper part of a flattened hemisphere covered with smooth white plaster. This element is derived directly from the hemispheric body of the Indian stûpa. Above it, on a round "neck" with a small non-functional gallery, rests the widely overhanging upper roof with its highly complicated bracketing-and-rafter system which follows the transition from



14* Tahôtô: Ink on paper.

15* Korean stone pagoda from Paekche (Kudara), ca. 7th century.



circle to square. The roof and its crowning ornament, consisting of a tall mast, have the normal shape. The central pillar begins only above the chapel in the "lower floor," which, in fact, is the only floor. There the central Buddha figure, placed on its "Sumeru mountain" pedestal, takes the place of the pillar--a fact which presumably is to be understood as an actual physical substitution.

Older pictures (for example, the well-known painting "Nâgârjuna Opening the Iron Stûpa" in the Fujita collection, Ôsaka⁵²) and, above all, the forms of the Tahôtô used as cult symbol--be it as relic shrine, tomb marker, Vairocana symbol in mañdalas and elsewhere⁵³--display beneath the single roof an openly visible cylindrical body with doors (14*). The broad, square form of the lower part may have evolved later, and perhaps only in Japan, probably not before ca. 1000 A.D. or still later. This may have necessitated the addition of another roof. The lower part, including the roof, should perhaps be regarded as having been created for cultic (circumambulation) as well as for climatic-technical reasons. Designed to protect the wall of the originally round central body, it rendered that body superfluous.

Below the simulated "dome" remained only a group of posts, arranged in a square or circle, which forms the inner ring of the chapel. (Some experts also tend to explain the transformation of the Indian stūpa into a four- or multi-cornered tower as the result of a fusion of the stūpa with a protective structure.) In this manner, a building type came into existence which, though not or no longer found in China, is represented in Japan by a number of outstanding albeit relatively late examples (from the Kamakura period and later) which rank among the most distinct and charming creations of East Asian architecture.

The architectural effect of a Buddhist temple complex is primarily determined by three factors: the disposition of space and the rhythm of the entire complex; the large hall buildings; and the pagodas (1, 4*). Of these three, only the pagodas achieve their prominent role by emphasizing the vertical dimension in contrast to the wide, massive and earthbound effect of the other buildings. This vertical effect is accomplished through their extremely focused, almost pointed, pillar-like shape which, in turn, focuses the structure toward an innermost core from which its spiritual energy radiates outward. This characteristic feature is joined by a second; a seemingly effortless surging effect comparable to the flight of a bird. This effect is achieved through the slender shape of the tower-like structure punctuated by its roofs and, finally, through the pagoda top which seems to aspire to ever greater heights. However, this vertical surge is, in turn, restrained by numerous horizontally arranged elements, so that dominating vertical and retarding horizontal lines are brought into harmony with each other.

This proud, yet dignified balance between a thrusting vertical and a restrained, radiating horizontal quality is found in almost all pagoda types. However, great differences mark their individual character and temperament. Even within the Chinese tradition, pagodas came to display a variety of qualities: some are solid and massive, others graceful and slender (both qualities carried almost to their extremes). Some appear austere and monumental, others playful and decorative. Many of the most graceful, lavishly decorated pagodas were built during later centuries, and found sympathetic response on the part of Europeans practicing the chinoiserie of the Rococo style which shared similar tastes. Pagodas also reflect the differences between northern and southern China by being stricter and more austere in the north and more lavish in design in the south. But they all share common features (10, 11) which distinguish them clearly from Japanese pagodas. They impress one as being more "plastic," as if modelled and sculpted from a manipulable, homogeneous mass. We leave unanswered the question whether the choice of brick walls and of hewn masoned stone as preferred building materials is the cause or effect of this general appearance.

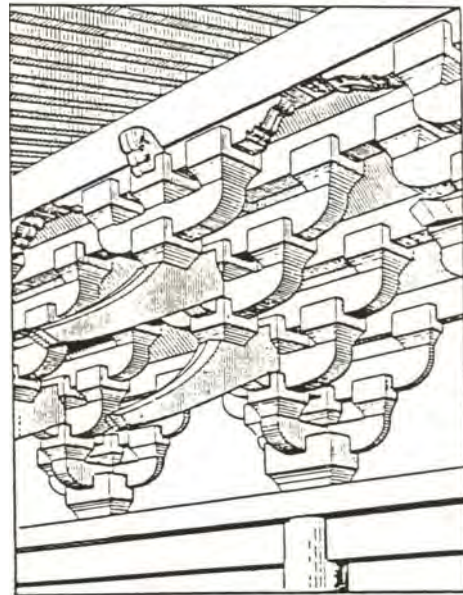
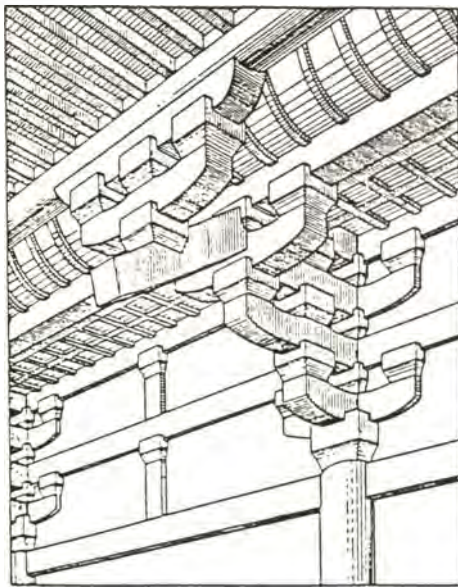
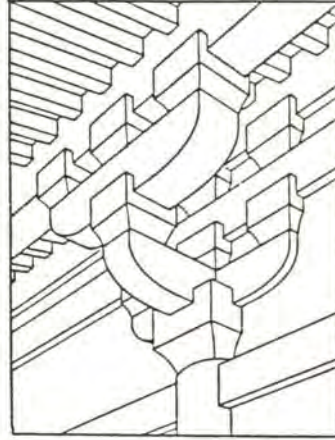
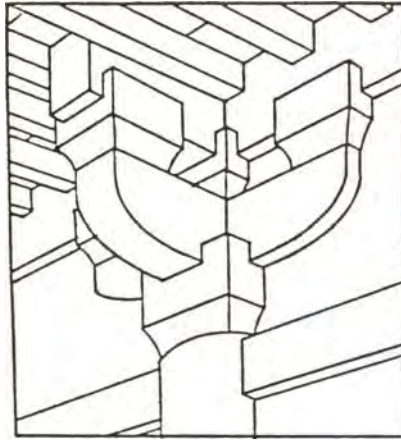
Japanese pagodas (1, 12) are bracketed, jointed and structured buildings displaying a varied and highly differentiated articulation of component elements. With their stories hidden under widely protruding roofs, they do not convey the impression of a compact mass as constituting their primary ingredient. But even wooden multi-storied Chinese pagodas (11) appear more massive, plastic, rounded, and self-contained than wooden Japanese pagodas of roughly similar design. The latter always appear more structured and less weighty, but frequently also more tightly constrained in form. Still, Japanese pagodas, like the best of their Chinese counterparts, possess a majesty tempered by charm and a monumentality inspired by

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an adherence to a noble beauty of form. They display a highly harmonious balance both within themselves and with their physical environment.

Iconology of Buddhist Architecture

As in all sacred art, aesthetic values clearly do not exist for their own sake but serve to convey religious meaning. However, they do so not only in the sense that they establish the highest attainable impressive framework for religious ideas by



16*-19* Bracketing in Japanese temple buildings.

generating a general "mood" for them. Rather, first and foremost they embody specific ideas and notions in architectural form, i.e., they turn them into visible words. By making statements of clearly defined and expressible content with the help of architectural means they themselves become vehicles conveying meaning.⁵⁴

Religious and in part also secular buildings may therefore (not only in East Asia) become subjects of an "iconology" of architecture. This field of research has become very preeminent in recent scholarship in art history, and has given a vital impulse to the study of medieval European architecture. Iconology asks questions about the ideas and meanings represented in a building and its parts, either symbolically or through literal resemblance between the original prototype and its architectural representation. Sedlmayr referred to "architecture as representative art." Questions are also asked about the meaning and significance of particular architectural forms, about the consequences resulting for the design of the whole or parts of a building and about the relationship between the sculpted or painted decorative images in their various locations within a building and the manner in which this location is directly determined by their individual meaning or is the result of placing the images in a suitable context. Buddhist architecture would offer a highly productive field for such inquiries, but we still know too little about its iconology and can at present only provide a few hints as to its nature.

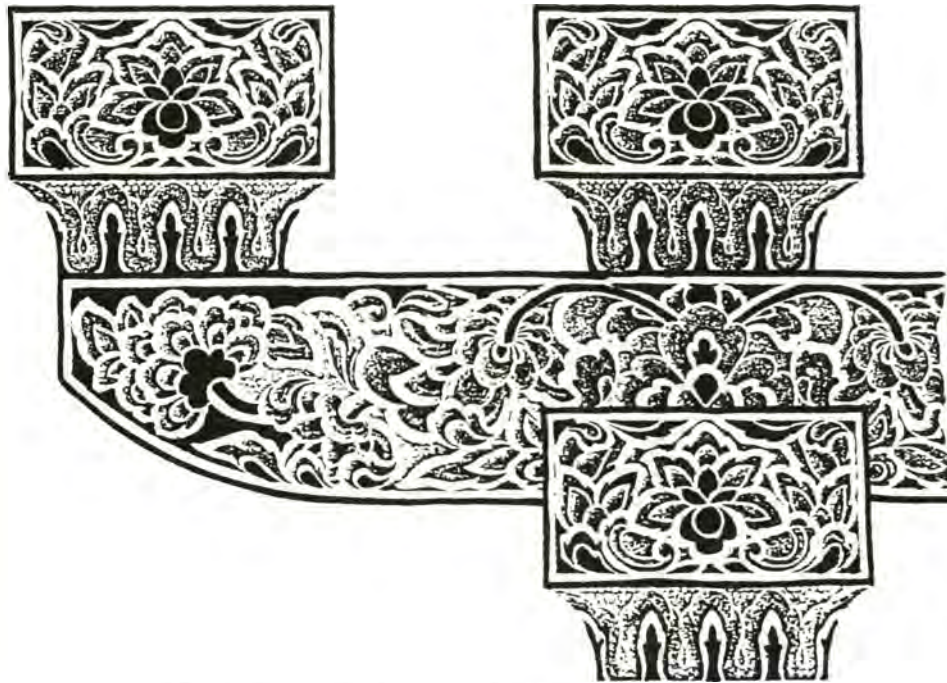
Let us resume our comments on the pagoda, which provides an example particularly well suited to illustrate the nature of iconological treatment. Because a pagoda contains relics; i.e., the body of the Perfected One in his essence, it represents the Buddha in the state of nirvāna, and itself becomes a symbol of nirvāna. It embodies the innermost essential nature of the Buddha, and points to the inexpressible Absolute in the form of a symbol. But at the same time it also "contains" the Absolute by virtue of a physical identity between the architectural body and the Buddha body. The anthropomorphic form of the Absolute is the Buddha viewed and depicted as a person. This Absolute Buddha is called Vairocana in esoteric Buddhism, and his figure is made the center of the Tahôtô (6). Conversely, he may also be represented by the Tahôtô symbol (14*).

The place where a Buddha attains the highest enlightenment (bodhi-maṇḍa) --the "diamond" seat (vajrāsana) under the Bodhi tree--is a firmly defined numinous area. It is the world center and rests on the very foundations of the cosmos. This applies equally to the throne of Vairocana and to that of any other Buddha. The center of the pagoda--be it a Buddha figure or the central pillar containing relics and therefore embodying the very essence of the Buddha--constitutes the axis of the cosmic-spiritual world. The widespread idea of the world pillar or world tree (*axis mundi*) may have played a role in this. In the center of the axis also stands Mount Sumeru. As pedestal of the Buddha throne, it constitutes the center of a temple hall and frequently also of a pagoda. The pagoda and its stories obviously represent the world mountain divided into several stories or terraces and containing numerous heavenly spheres.

The stories of a pagoda and the rings of its top ornament represent several worlds aligned on top of each other: Deva and Bodhisattva worlds which may be interpreted as cosmic levels of existence and at the same time as levels of consciousness, enlightenment, maturity, and perfection. Viewed under the aspect of time, they may also be considered as stages along the path to perfection. Such a

building may, therefore, also be called a "psychocosmogram" (Tucci),⁵⁵ just like the maṇḍala. The fact that it depicts both the world structure extending upward to the highest spheres and the central axis of this world may explain why the pagoda has become elongated during the course of its metamorphosis. The evolution of highly structured roofs could perhaps be based on an attempt to represent the various divine and Buddha palaces located in different cosmic spheres, because it is obvious that every floor of a fully developed pagoda--its pillars, beams, windows and enclosing veranda--represents an abbreviated form of such a palace and therefore requires a roof of its own.

Vairocana--as well as other hypostases of the Absolute, or All-Spirit, or whatever this Ultimate Reality may be referred to--is enthroned on an eight-petalled flower in the center of the maṇḍala from which all differentiations unfold by a process of radiating and subdividing in all directions. The pagoda, with the Buddha or the relic pillar as its center, is therefore also a maṇḍala transposed into an architectural form. Its building plan is identical with that of the maṇḍala, not only with respect to the central Buddha figure or groups of figures and the painted interior room related to them, but even in the architectural elements themselves, most notably in the number, dimensions and arrangements of the pillars. These are related to certain groups of sacred beings, or heavenly spheres, or even spiritual potentialities, and follow the pattern of four or eight plus center, making a total of five or nine.



20* Ornamental Painting on Architectural Elements.
Phoenix Hall (Hôôdô) in Uji, near Kyôto.

It is possible that the transition from the circular shape of the stūpa to the square or polygonal pagoda may be explained as the result of the radial pattern, geometric partitioning and geographic-cosmic arrangement suggested by the maṇḍala. This, like the other two innovations in the evolution of the pagoda--its increase in height and the evolution of stories and roofs--may also have an iconological explanation. The maṇḍala is a comprehensive world image. This image has been realized in buildings in a variety of ways, as, for example, in the splendid Borobudur of Java, to mention only the best-known structure of this kind in all Asia. The pagoda is also a place for the meditative viewing of a maṇḍala comprising all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Such activity is appropriate both in essence and meaning only in that particular cosmic center and in a building which represents the spiritual cosmos.

In contrast to the pagoda, whose form most likely has been shaped from the very beginning by its representative-symbolic meaning, the East Asian hall does not, as far as we know, have a particular symbolic meaning. Rather, such meaning is acquired by its use in varying contexts. Various cosmological systems might be suggested when a building is used for religious instruction or for social and state building complexes (as were Chinese residential and palace buildings). The hall's symbolic meaning is therefore not given a priori as is the pagoda's but is acquired as the occasion warrants, either by virtue of what a hall contains (certain cult figures with clearly defined iconographic meaning), by the events taking place inside the hall (certain cult performances or religious exercises), by the symbolism imposed on its design and its individual elements, or by a combination of some or all of these factors. Preexisting individual shapes and elements characteristic of a particular building type may be given later interpretations, or the shape of the buildings may change in accordance with the particular symbolic meanings they are to "depict." The latter has only rarely happened with respect to the East Asian temple halls because of the strong inherent conservatism of their design and their nearly universal potential uses.

A temple hall may become a "Buddha land" simply through the presence of a Buddha and his companions. All its architectural elements, together with the iconographic arrangement of the sculpted or painted sacred beings, may form a maṇḍala, just as pagodas do. The Sumeru terrace of the "altar" on which the cult figures are placed serves in this instance also as world symbol, and the temple itself is a world mountain.⁵⁶ The lotus flower of the Buddha throne with its stem--which is also the world axis--extends down to the bottom of the primordial waters on which the world rests. The hall's ceiling or the canopy suspended from it may be an image of heaven. The mirror⁵⁷ placed on the core of its central lotus flower may be a sun-like counterpart of the primordial lotus below. The Buddha, as center and core of the universe and personalized image of its true reality, is enthroned between the upper and lower lotuses. The sacred figures--sculptures and paintings alike--constitute in their totality the picture of a "Pure Land," of a visionary realm of bliss with a Buddha, manifesting himself in his sambhoga-kāya form, as its lord.

Since these "Pure Lands" with their sacred assemblies and their overwhelming splendor are described most poetically in the Sūtras, such temple halls are at the same time also "illustrations" of such texts. What the Sūtras describe for the spiritual eye, the temple halls depict for the physical eye. An entire temple

building--down to the last details of its decorations--together with the surrounding garden and its ponds, may therefore be an exact illustration, or even an earthly realization, of the Pure Land of Amitābha. A splendid example is the Phoenix Hall in Uji near Kyōto (4). In this particular instance, the significance of the envisioned realm has also required an adaptation of the architectural design, so that the central temple building and its two wing buildings modify the normal type of the hall to approximate the palace of Amitābha as it is depicted in numerous paintings (103).

However, not only the individual temple hall, but the entire temple complex is a symbolic representation. The "path" of the faithful through the entire precinct has to be understood as a supra-empirical passage through ever higher levels of being and spheres of bliss, and the sequence of the buildings as an image of the world structure. The spatial order of this sequence also has the function of representation and reproduction and follows a "cosmo-magic building principle" (Heine-Geldern). In almost all cultures symmetric axiality dominates whenever a city, palace or sanctuary is understood to be an image of a cosmic order. Earthly events, but particularly cultic events, are understood as repetitions of cosmic processes.⁵⁸

Since the world may also be seen in the image of the All-Buddha, just as in the case of the pagoda which is understood as world stūpa centered in the Buddha body, the entire temple complex may be regarded as an image of the body or the face of the Buddha. The gate "below" is his lower body; the Buddha hall is his heart; and the lecture hall is his head. These are the three centers of the body according to East Asian teachings; they play an important role in the practice of Taoist meditation, in medicine, and elsewhere. Two symmetrically flanking pairs of buildings are regarded as the Buddha's arms and legs. Alternatively, the gate is likened to his mouth, the Buddha hall to his nose, the lecture hall to the top of his head, and the side buildings to his eyes and ears. Strangely enough, this obviously secondary interpretive symbolism has even been applied to Zen temples, even though Zen is highly skeptical of such symbolism.⁵⁹

In these iconological analogies of meaning,⁶⁰ the ideas of three great religious traditions are linked or even fused. First, there is the ancient Chinese cosmology, dominant throughout East Asia, with its teachings of Yang and Yin, the five or nine world directions (four and eight plus the center) and its complicated system of universal correspondences. Second, there is Indian cosmology, going back to Vedic times and adopted by Buddhism, with its notions of Mount Sumeru, the hierarchy of worlds and heavens, etc., its ordering schemes in the form of maṇḍalas, and its archetypal symbols like the lotus. Third, there are the specifically Buddhist notions, many of which originated from non-Buddhist Indian sources and only partially took on new meanings such as the maṇḍalas, the notions of the Pure Land, the hierarchical world structure, etc. Generally speaking, the world symbols of Mahāyāna add new shadings of meaning, reinterpretations and further elaborations of ancient ideas and images but do not create something specifically new. Accordingly, the iconology of Mahāyāna architecture contains a store of ideas which were derived from a good many traditions. But while all these ideas and their symbolic realization in buildings, figures, rituals, and signs may originally have had a somewhat worldly, "secular" flavor, Buddhism, no matter how much it made use of such ideas and forms available from the general repertoire of these cultures, made

them serve a world view which essentially transcends "images" and strives to enter the realm of no-images (nirvāna, "Emptiness," "Nothingness"). According to this world view, that which is truly essential begins only at a level beyond all world stages, divine heavens, and even all highly sublimated manifestations of the Absolute in the form of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and the symbolic signs representing them. All such tangible visions and representations possess only temporary and insubstantial validity. If judged by strictly "theological" criteria--though not by the standards of popular faith--no matter how great their importance for doctrine, cult and architectural and pictorial design, these repositories of iconological meaning are stripped in a peculiar manner of their corporeality and literal meaning. This iconology transcends itself into "Emptiness." Its true power of expression is realized only after it has transcended all formulations and all forms.

Sculpture

Categories and Functions

Sculptured images constitute the real nucleus of every Buddhist temple precinct and its individual halls and chapels because they represent, in anthropomorphic form, that ultimate reality which inspires Buddhist religion. This reality can only be defined negatively, as Nothingness, as "Emptiness." It embodies itself in the Buddha or the Buddhas as its highest possible manifestation, but also unfolds itself into a hierarchy of figures whose graduated form of descent symbolizes the entry of "Buddha nature" into the empirical world. These lesser beings may also assume special functions, such as protection against evil powers. They are, therefore, arranged inside the sanctuary in a strictly hierarchical spatial order related to the central Buddha.

The typical result is a well-structured and firmly centered configuration consisting of a larger or smaller number of images, depending on the size and rank of the temple or the individual building within the entire temple precinct or on the particular iconographic program. These stand, as mentioned before (p. 61), on a "Sumeru Terrace," which is regarded as world axis and world center. The spiritual and physical center of the platform is occupied by that figure to whom the sanctuary or individual building is dedicated (17, 28), and which is called the main cult image (pen-tsun, hon-zon). In the main halls of the temples this is usually a Buddha, but can sometimes be a Bodhisattva (52), Vidyârāja or Deva, or even a group of such figures.

Several figures of equal rank are frequently grouped together. One of them assumes a dominant role or at least is *primus inter pares*, and is therefore placed in the middle. For example, in the case of the Five Wisdom Buddhas, Vairocana is given the center position and put on a slightly raised pedestal (6). In the case of the popular Three-Buddha-Groups, Śākyamuni is flanked by Amitābha and Bhaiṣajyaguru (the former to his right, i.e., to the West, and the latter to his left, i.e., to the East, in accordance with the "geographical," or, better, the iconographic location of their paradises). Also encountered is the "historical" triad of Dipamkara, Śākyamuni (center) and Maitreya, the Buddhas of the past, present, and future. Finally, there is the "ontological" triad of Vairocana, Locana, and Śākyamuni as a reflection of the hierarchy of dharma-kāya, sambhoga-kāya, and nirmāna-kāya.

But most common are groups of figures surrounding a Buddha, with representatives of other categories of beings arranged symmetrically around it. A typical pattern or grouping emerges. In the center would be a Buddha with a Bodhisattva to his right and another to his left. The latter have a strictly defined "theological" relationship with the Buddha. This central triad (17) is called the *santsun* (J. *san-zon*) or "The Three Holy Ones" (Persons), a term which has often been erroneously translated as trinity, even though it bears not the slightest relationship to the Christian trinity in either doctrine or in iconography. The most common triad is composed of Amitâbha, Avalokiteśvara and Mahâsthâmaprâpta (24), but Śâkyamuni with Mañjuśrî and Samantabhadra, and Bhaiṣajyuguru with the sun and moon Buddhas (22, 49) are also rather common. Triads may also be joined by figures of monks representing the original community of disciples turned in veneration towards the three sacred figures (24, 21*). Their number varies. They are placed somewhat behind the three figures or surround them in the form of a circle or semi-circle. Finally, the configuration may be completed by the Four Heavenly Kings (Lokapâla, world guardians) who stand at the four corners of the platform representing the world mountain and guard it against evil powers by assuming a threatening stance with respect to the four cardinal directions. These four are either all placed at the corners with their backs to the center or they all face the viewer standing in front of the group. In the latter case, the two figures in front strike active poses and display lively gestures and facial expressions while those in the back, given calm poses, radiate concentrated power. In China these Four Heavenly Kings are often given their own hall.

Additional figures may also be found on the platform, but they have no or only secondary relationships to the major cult images. One such example are the statues of great patriarchs of the different schools of Mahâyâna (88) or of the donors of the particular sect to which the sanctuary belongs. Depending on the figure serving as major cult image, the choice of the accompanying figures--called its "retinue" (*parivâra*; *chüan-shu*, *ken-zoku*)--changes.

These configurations frequently form maṇḍalas, particularly if viewed in the context of a design which includes the entire building and its parts, most notably its pillars. We should bear in mind that maṇḍalas may not only take the form of pictures or drawings but may also assume corporeal and even architectural forms (6). The size of the figures within a group depends on their religious rank and level of existence. The Buddha is largest; the Bodhisattva and Devas are somewhat smaller; while the figures of monks and founders are smallest. This makes obvious that the principle of "hieratic scaling," which is found in all religious art of the archaic and medieval type, also dominates the design of these configurations.

Most statues in such groups display a solemn quietude which symbolizes that the higher sacred beings are in the state of nirvâna. Monks are shown in poses of veneration or meditation. The central Buddha is usually, but by no means always, depicted in a seated position. Bodhisattvas are also sometimes seated. More frequently, they stand in a pose which allows them to be slightly turned toward the Buddha. Monks usually appear standing, frequently in the prayer pose with folded hands, while the patriarchs are preferably shown either in the seated meditative pose (86) or with their hands forming a mudrâ or holding an attribute, such as a rosary, incense vessel, or Sûtra scroll. Among all these figures the silence of sedate

wisdom and holiness prevails, and this impression is heightened to one of perfect quietude and remoteness in the figure of the central Buddha.

The world guardians are shown in an entirely different manner. Their poses are belligerent. This belligerence is further enhanced by active gestures and threatening facial expressions. They carry protective armor and weapons and direct this defensive power towards the outside world (cf. 73). However, even this surging power has its spiritual source in the concentrated, awesome stillness of the Buddha in the heart of the group, i.e., in the center of the world represented by the sanctuary.

All other figures of gods (Devas) find their place as distinguished protectors of the Buddha world and as promoters of the doctrine and helpmates of mankind. Most are found in the main hall, placed at the greatest distance from the enlightened, detached Buddha, who is immersed in his undefined state, because they still belong to the realm of *samsāra*. Closer to the Buddha are the spiritually advanced Arhats (91 ff.). Closer yet are the Bodhisattvas, who have achieved the highest wisdom. In this manner the configurations create a "crescendo of religious significance" (Rousselle); the metaphysically founded and mythologically constituted relationships among these figures, the hierarchy of their levels of existence, and their specific saving functions are clearly expressed in these spatial arrangements.

But this order may also express itself in sculptured images in a different, hidden manner. A small figurine, frequently made of precious metal, may be inserted into the interior of a hollow figure to impersonate the sacred figure to which the larger sculpture is theologically-iconographically linked. For example, a figurine of Avalokiteśvara may be placed in the interior of an Amitābha figure, or vice versa. Such figures are called Buddhas-inside-the-body (*t'ai-nei-fo*, *tai-nai-but-su*). They are hidden from view and frequently have only been discovered by inquisitive modern researchers or during restoration work. Though invisible, they have always been present in some magical sense and their numinous power is believed to have made the larger figure into a truly effective image of the numen by the very presence of these figurines.

Incidentally, figures held to be especially sacred--particularly if they are part of an esoteric cult--are often wrapped in several brocade covers and concealed in locked tabernacles. These are the so-called "secret Buddhas" (*pi-fo*, *hi-but-su*) (43). The fact that they are hidden from view has no adverse effects on their sacred presence. On the contrary, to uncover them would be to profane them, and would strip them of their religious powers.

In place of figures in the interior of a statue we may find other vehicles of sacred power--such as handwritten or printed Sūtra texts, or mantra formulas (*dhāraṇī*) which are inserted into a statue and constitute its spiritual core. Even small silk replicas of internal organs were detected in a famous Śākyamuni figure, which is derived from an ancient Indian and particularly sacred image, in the *Seiryōji*, near Kyōto. A cult figure attains its sacred efficacy and its full transformation from a mere artifact into a physically present numen only as a result of such hidden items and through the recitation of certain mystic "seed syllables" (*bīja*) containing the Absolute (such as *a*, *hum*, *om*) during the consecration of the individual parts of its body. Once in place, figures were also magically made to come "alive" by having their "eyes opened" (*k'ai-yen*, *kai-gen*) during a consecration

ceremony by painting in the pupils of their eyes. The brush with which the pious Japanese emperor Shōmu performed the eye-opening ceremony for the Great Buddha of Nara in 752 A.D. has been preserved in the Shōsōin.

Part of the consecration of a cult figure is frequently, but not invariably, a votive inscription (41) which may be found on the pedestal, on the halo or in the interior of the figure. If complete, such a votive inscription gives the name of the figure, the name of the temple, the model which inspired the image, the spiritual purpose of its creation (such as the salvation of the donor, the recovery of his father from disease, the welfare of the country), the name and rank of the donor, the date of the image's consecration, and perhaps the name of the artist. Sometimes even the dimensions and weight of the image and the quantities of materials used in its manufacture are given. These inscriptions may also be augmented during later times to describe repairs, the image's remodeling or removal to another temple. Such inscriptions are ideal source material for art historians, but unfortunately are not too numerous.

Still, there are a great many works, themselves dated or exactly datable by other means, which help to establish a reliable sequence for tracing the development of particular styles, and inscriptions often provide valuable sociological, religious or historical information about the personality of the donor or the purpose of the donation. In some instances we even learn something about the fate of an individual image. The donors are frequently not only mentioned in the inscriptions, but their figures appear either in separate spaces of steles or cave walls, or as a member of a configuration or group of sculpted figures, in which case the donor's statue is usually turned towards the main cult figure in a pose of prayer. The same is true of paintings. In most instances the sculpted figures of the donors are executed in a highly stereotyped manner. The craftsmen may have kept a regular stock of these figures on hand and simply individualized them by the addition of the donor's name. In some cases artistically important reliefs of groups of donors forming festive processions are found on the walls of large cave sanctuaries, particularly in the cases where these had royal benefactors. Occasionally, as in late medieval European painting, we may also find entire donor families portrayed; but usually such portrayals bear little physical resemblance to their putative models.

A Buddhist cult figure should never be taken in isolation because it is always related to other figures in several respects. Theologically, it is part of the Buddhist pantheon, and plays a role both within Buddhist doctrine and in the total iconographic program of the sanctuary. Formally, it is part of a particular configuration within the context of the temple's architectural design. We would capture only a part of a figure's total impact if we did not also take into account all that which points beyond the limitations of the figure's physical appearance and integrates the figure into its surroundings. Only in this manner is the image really rendered complete.

Such elements constituting inseparable parts of a figure are pedestals (especially the lotus flower throne [28, 29] which holds up the figure at the center of the world as if it were floating on an open bowl) and halos (17, 23, 28, 29, 42, 69), which may assume the most divergent forms but are always meant to be the magic, multi-colored or golden "Buddha light" emanating from the sacred figure and

symbolizing the world-illuminating power of absolute wisdom and of the "Buddha nature." These halos are usually circular; they may be designed for the head, but frequently a second is added for the trunk of the body; a third halo enclosing the entire figure (including the other two halos) may also be found. Halos round out these figures to bestow upon them ultimate perfection, even in cases where they emanate from those figures in the form of flaming aureolas.

In statues still possessing their original pedestals and halos (17, 28, 29), which are, after all, indispensable parts of the whole and by no means mere attachments, the utmost in harmony is achieved. And it is within the context of this harmony that the individual forms of the figure itself--its contours, the particular shape of its body and garment, its attributes--find their proper place and full expressive power. The halo accomplishes the transition to the canopy (38), which is suspended like a crown above the cult figures but frequently may just be represented by the richly decorated ceiling of the hall or by a lotus flower at the center of the ceiling. (In both instances the formal character and sacred function of a canopy is preserved.)

It is by means of the canopy that the cult image is integrated into the context of the entire building, but the image transcends even the building with the help of the Sumeru terrace. This terrace is located in the center of the hall--not always as a geometric fact but definitely in spiritual intent. To this center the figure is linked by virtue of its plastic volume, proportions, position in space, colors, and spiritual quality, and at the same time it bestows on this center the highest religious consecration and ultimate perfection.

It is essential to remember that a main cult figure and the figures in its immediate vicinity normally stand about 1.5 to 3 meters above ground level, and so are viewed from a position slightly below. To compensate for this low vantage point, standing figures are frequently given a slight forward tilt. The tilt of the head of many larger seated figures may perhaps also be explained the same way. Any attempt to read more into this particular posture by presuming that it is meant to have the figures turn toward the faithful in an act of benevolence may be going too far. Something comparable occurs in only a number of rather precisely detailed pictorial representations, most notable among which are works significant for the iconography of scenes linked to Amitābha (see pp. 22, 137 f.).

There are, however, instances where the cult figure seems to be set apart from the temple room by being confined to a separate shrine which serves to encase and protect the sacred "core." But this shrine itself is no less integrated into the architecture of the hall, or at least attached to it, than would be the pedestals, halos and canopies of figures standing freely in a hall. For such figures, the entire building constitutes the core casing. But the figure is never isolated and locked away in these shrines. Its sacred efficacy penetrates the spatial confinement--be it tabernacle or temple hall--and emanates its illuminating rays into the world. Firm links even exist between the various halls throughout the entire temple precinct. These arise from the total iconographic program formed by the relations among the images established within the sequence of halls along the sacred path. For example, in China these relationships find their spatial symbolic expression in the position of the guardian deity Wei-t'o or of Kuan-yin at the northern or back wall of the temple. Such figures turn their backs to the main cult images, but by facing north, i.e., in the direction of the adjacent "higher" hall, they establish a connection with the cult

images housed in that hall (6b*). These links, however, usually remain hidden and are accessible only to those who follow the sacred path with proper spiritual insight and participation in the process of spiritual advancement.

No general statements can be made about the proportional relationships between the cult statues and the temple halls and chapels. The two elements frequently fit harmoniously apparently because of conscious planning, but just as often any resulting harmony may be rather accidental. Quite frequently, the figures appear to be too large for the narrow and low rooms they occupy. In such instances, however, it should be ascertained whether we are dealing with the original rooms or later constructions, or whether the figures were really created for these particular rooms or were placed there at a later time. In many cases the spatial harmony appears to us to be disturbed by the large number of statues crowding a particular hall. Most of these have been added over the course of the centuries and were placed in these halls without any efforts to assure their harmonious integration into the given space and existing figure groupings.

This is most frequently the case in halls where for reasons of piety and "accumulation of merit" a sizeable number of figures have been grouped together, as, for example, in halls containing the Thousand or Three Thousand Buddhas, i.e., those of all world-spheres and world eons which are to be understood as fictitious and partial manifestations and multiform projections of the Universal or Absolute Buddha. These often minute figurines are prone to occupy every vacant spot of a temple building, including even its wooden structural frame. Also of the same type are the several hundred figures accompanying the Thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara as embodiments of his infinite transformability and compassion. These are simply lined up on long pedestal stairs, rather than in some artistic order expressing a hierarchical order. The same applies to the group of Five Hundred Arhats who do not form real groups either. Particularly in China they are even given their own chapel, where they stand in tight formations on regular pedestals placed along the walls and in other locations within the chapel. In Japan their stone figures are often found standing free in the temple precinct. In these cases the cultic center of higher-ranking cult images—to which these figures should have a mandated relationship—is missing. Statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas found in such halls have apparently been placed and exchanged at random and seem to have been unable to assert a dominant presence of their own in view of the large number of Arhat figures. The impression made by such groups is quite different from those in which the canonical group of 16 or 18 Arhats occupy a flanking position at the short sides of the hall facing the center from the left and right, respectively. They articulate a clear, visible relationship to the main group, preferably dominated by a Śākyamuni figure. In the other instances, the aesthetic order and harmony of forms is subordinated to the need for a maximum of sacred or even magic power. Quantity, though religiously justified, replaces quality.

At the opposite extreme from these "rows of figures" or "crowds of figures" we find single figures used as cult images in smaller sanctuaries or in special chapels within the larger temple complexes (53) dedicated to individual Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vidyārājas, and Devas. Inside these more intimate spaces they are also frequently enclosed by a tabernacle, a niche or some other device. A special case is that of portrait figures which in Buddhist art almost always appear as cult

images, even in cases where they have a secular appearance. In most instances the portrait figures are those of founders of temples or sects, or of patriarchs of great importance for a particular doctrinal or cult tradition (86). Laymen, however, may also receive ritual veneration in this manner either because they have promoted Buddhism in a general way or because of their meritorious service for the particular sanctuary, as was the case with Japanese Prince Shôtoku (574-622; see p. 20; pl. 95). They could also belong to the house of the temple founder or patron and are therefore, the recipients of "requiem rites." It should be noted that non-Buddhist ancestral cults left a strong imprint on these practices.

The figures placed inside a building and described up to this point are distinguished from another genre rather common in East Asia: wall sculptures, carved out of natural stone in cave temples and therefore firmly locked in their place. The latter are mostly found on the continent and only rarely in Japan, where stone sculptures in general play a minor role largely because of the lack of suitable material, but perhaps also because the Japanese simply did not like stone sculptures.

The famous cave temples of China are at Yün-kang, Lung-mên, and T'ien-lung-shan (for their dates see p. 18). There were also cave monasteries along the silk routes crossing Central Asia, such as those at Tun-huang and Turfan. Many of them hold a vast number of such sculptures (most of them made out of clay). But here, too, we find the same typical alternative: either in the form of firmly defined, hierarchical groups centered both spiritually and literally around a main cult image (25) or in the form of loose clusterings of every imaginable type of figures and rows of figures as an expression of a zealous piety stimulated by the large stone surfaces of the caves. Figures of the latter type completely cover the walls of such sanctuaries in a highly irregular manner as if revealing a *horror vacui* (34). Contained among these masses of figures are numerous smaller coherent groups, but these are generally obscured by the confusing tangle of figures or have only recently been isolated from the conglomeration of figures in one of two ways. The first of these is robbery. Many figures or their heads have been vandalized for the purpose of selling them and are today the prized possessions of Western collections, where they are perforce viewed in isolation from their original context. Sometimes, though still in place, they have been separated from their context and discovered in their particular beauty with the help of isolating photographs. But only the original configurations represent iconographic systems. Other assemblies of figures represent mere accumulations of those Buddhist figures held to be particularly beneficial for a specific purpose.

There are numerous masterpieces among these groups found in China's caves and also among the many widely scattered and hidden individual figures they contain. But the majority of cave sculptures are provincial and more craftsmanlike in character (I should add that I will later qualify this evaluation in one important point). Nevertheless, by and large it appears that the art of cave sculpture has succumbed to mass tastes. In size, these sculptures may range from gigantic down to minute, even in the same cave.

In contrast to figures integrated into a temple building or hewn into the stone of cave temples, free-standing figures play practically no role at all in the Buddhist art of East Asia. There never developed an appreciation of figures presented as

isolated phenomenon in open space, placed under the open sky in the vast expanse of a city square or exposed in some other prominent open spot and unfolding in its own corporeality. Perhaps this is because East Asia lacked a corresponding humanistic image of man with its specific approach to life, the human body and space expressing itself in such free-standing figures.

On the other hand, figures are never so intimately tied to architecture that they are totally integrated into the building and thus appear as inseparable elements of the total design. Buddhist art in East Asia lacks therefore also an architectural sculpture in the strict sense of the term, except for the small, purely symbolic decorations found on posts and beams, roofs, pedestals, pillars or balustrades which draw on every imaginable motif, such as animals, plants, heavenly and demonic beings. The figures most likely to be linked to the design of the chapel are Buddhas, world guardians, and other figures. Frequently, they have nearly or totally full-bodied figures but usually are found in relief form on the central pillars or in the niches of the outer and inner walls. As already indicated, in an iconological sense they also belong to the "body" of such architectural world images. Similar figures may also be found on ground floors and portals of pagodas or on Sûtra and dhâranî pillars, with similar iconological meanings.

Small Buddha shrines may also be considered as free-standing pagodas or chapel-like stone monuments. These are usually boxlike roof-covered tabernacles, standing on pedestals and composed of stone slabs. Their openings are guarded on the left and right by world guardians. Occasionally they are crowned by dragons. On the interior back wall of such tabernacles is placed a full-bodied or relief Buddha configuration, while the inner and outer walls may also be covered with engraved Bodhisattvas, Devas, Apsarasas, ornaments and, particularly, also with figures of donors and with votive inscriptions. Such shrines constitute an intermediary stage between free-standing, outward-looking monuments and intimate chapels which house cult images as the core of an inner sanctuary. Outdoor sculptures are primarily Buddha and Bodhisattva figures of stone frequently found on graves, along the *via sacra* of temple precincts, predominantly as votive figures, or at crossroads where they are placed to perform magical functions. But in the totality of East Asian Buddhist sculpture, outdoor figures are of very minute significance. If a monumental figure is actually found under open skies, like the famous Great Buddha (Amitâbha) in Kamakura, closer investigation reveals that it, too, originally had been placed in a spacious temple hall long ago destroyed by a tidal wave from the nearby ocean.

Monumental sculptures in the sense of free-standing, widely visible, oversized figures do therefore scarcely exist. On the contrary, it is a characteristic preference in Buddhist sculpture to put very large, even gigantic images inside a sanctuary and even to confine them in relatively undersized rooms where they can hardly achieve their full aesthetic effect. But size can be a sign of devotion, and confinement within a small space was perhaps intentional. The very contrast between the surroundings and the confined image allows the image to appear as the embodiment of the cosmocratic power, all-encompassing mercy and world-permeating wisdom of the Buddha which exceeds any earthly vessel and impels the faithful into a state of veneration. Large figures of this kind may be found in the Chinese cave temples mentioned earlier and in Japanese sanctuaries of later

periods. They impress by their technical achievements, but their sheer size is itself a statement about the universal nature of the Buddha as world-embracing "Great Being" and spiritual world ruler. Compared to him, all other Buddhas are merely derived, reflected and transformed manifestations. However, such large figures remain relatively rare, if only for economic reasons. The Buddhist cult figure found its fully adequate embodiment in a moderate-sized format which varied according to changing conditions but always fit harmoniously into similarly scaled buildings and groups of related figures.

The predominantly wooden architecture of the temple halls, which ruled out monumental architecture in the European sense, imposed clearly defined limitations. These could perhaps be stretched as, for example, in the Great Buddha Hall of the Tōdaiji in Nara, but could never be ignored at will. On the average, Buddhist cult figures are at least life-size, occasionally a little smaller, but are normally enlarged to something more than life-size, without (except for those special cases noted above) reaching the kind of colossal dimensions which would totally overwhelm the viewer. For a Buddha, the height of sixteen feet was considered to be the normal monumental size because in Buddhist legend one of the many miraculous physical signs was the number 16--the square of four, the original Vedic number standing for totality and thus a symbol of completeness and perfection in esoteric Buddhism. Particular contexts imposed many exceptions to this rule. In spite of their impressive size, most Buddha figures remain accessible to the pious for devotional identification (28).

On the other hand, the art of small figurines was cultivated with tender care, not the least because it served numerous tasks. The small figures inside cult statues have already been mentioned, as have the small figures of the Thousand Buddhas and similar groups. There is a certain predilection for suspending on pillars in the interior of temples, plaques with small Buddha figures in high relief. These are the so-called suspended Buddhas (*J. kake-botoke*). But the most important function of such figurines was to provide images for private worship. Bronze or wooden figures between twenty and thirty centimeters in height--some occasionally taller--are often found on house altars and in small tabernacles. Very small, even minute shrines were created to serve as house altars and frequently also as objects of veneration during travel. These portable, light and easily installed miniature shrines with their open doors painted on both sides or adorned with reliefs look like miniature triptych altars. Many of these are attractive objects with delicate carvings, but a large number are of cheap, ordinary quality because they were designed to satisfy the needs of larger groups within the population who could not afford more expensive versions.

We may include among these images Buddhist (but also Taoist) figurines of stone, wood, ivory, jade, porcelain--predominantly Chinese ones of the Ming and Ch'ing periods--which, though not deeply religious works, nonetheless deserve a better reputation than that foisted on them by Western amateur collectors of being mere bric-à-brac. In passing, we should mention that Buddhist motifs also appear in more recent times (since the 16th-17th centuries) in the applied arts--particularly in ceramic and lacquerware decoration, and in Japan primarily in swordguards and netsuke.

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Miniature sculptures were also used for group scenes composed of several or many figurines depicting episodes such as Śākyamuni's miraculous birth (30) from the side of his mother as she was grasping a branch in the palace garden or the Buddha's deathbed scene, his so-called "Entering Into Nirvāna," as found, for example, in the ground-level chapel of the Hōryūji pagoda. In the latter scene, numerous small clay figurines, each about twenty to thirty centimeters in height, surround the reclining figure of the dying Buddha. The entire scene is placed in front of a rather nondescript mountainous landscape, also made of clay.

Here Buddhist sculpture serves a narrative-illustrative function but, we should add, this role is rare and limited to miniature sculpture. The proper medium for this function is, of course, relief sculpture, which was extensively used in the cave temples of China. It is also not uncommon in such buildings as stone pagodas, but no outstanding works have been found. Narrative reliefs predominantly depict stories from the Buddha legend, including the Jātakas (stories from previous existences of Śākyamuni) or scenes from the myths of the different Bodhisattvas and deities. These were embellished by an ever livelier pictorial imagination. Extensive depictions of a Buddhist "paradise," like the Pure Land of Amitābha, covering entire walls, such as the one from Hsiang-t'ang-shan (now in the Freer Gallery in Washington, D.C.), are rare.

In the cave temples there are numerous such narrative reliefs sculpted from the stone walls but individual figures or groups are dominant. Their treatment ranges from low to nearly full relief and may even extend to fully rounded figures standing against walls. Large, multi-figure stucco reliefs also occur. Carved versions of wall paintings constitute yet another variant. High-reliefs are not popular in East Asia. Nothing comparable to Borobudur in Java has been created. Strictly speaking, relief figures are merely normal three-dimensional figures projected onto a flat surface rather than works conceived from the outset as true reliefs. Beautiful examples of works of the latter kind do occasionally appear, as, for instance, in the famous cave sanctuary of Sōkkul-am (J. *Sekkutsuan*) near Kyōngju in South Korea (ca. 750). These were carved on the stone slabs lining the walls of an earthen grotto. In this sanctuary, a free-standing central Buddha is surrounded by Bodhisattva and Arhat figures. These reliefs represent the mature T'ang style dominant at that time and constitute perhaps the most important surviving works of the Buddhist relief art of East Asia (57).

Also attractive are the reliefs of hammered metal (24). These are relatively numerous in Japan but represent a type originally evolved in China. Common during the Suiko and Nara periods, they were used on domestic altars and served to complete the decorations on the interior walls and doors of tabernacles. They appear either as individual figures and groups of figures, but also as "Thousand Buddha" figurines and similar types.

Another important field for relief sculpture in stone, metal, wood and other materials are the halos of cult figures (17, 151, 152). With few exceptions, these halos do not portray particular figures but are only of symbolic and ornamental character. However, they frequently include small figures of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas or Apsarasas'. These show an attractive transposition of fully round sculptures to the medium of low and high relief. Similar reliefs can be found on cult

implements (154 f.). Even sculpted figures may themselves carry relief figures or scenes on their surfaces. There are larger than life-size stone Buddha figures which are almost completely covered with scenes from the Buddha legend and "paradise" scenes executed in very shallow relief. There are even small bronze statues with a few groups of such figures attached to them. All these are intended to be tangible expressions of the doctrine that Buddha body and Buddha world are not separate entities.

An especially important field of relief sculpture, particularly during the oldest period of Chinese Buddhist art, are the stone votive steles (41). These have been preserved in large numbers and are of great historical importance because they often bear inscriptions allowing them to be dated exactly. The front and frequently also the back of these steles include niches containing groups of figures executed in strong relief, surrounded by a halo and crowned by a canopy. The two narrow sides of such steles as well as their bases and upper parts also carry relief carvings or line engravings, particularly of donor figures, but illustrations of the Buddha legend or of Sûtra texts, executed in flat (low) relief, also occur.

The depth of a relief is in many instances dependent on the hierarchic level of being represented by the figures. Often Buddhas are in high relief, being nearly fully three-dimensional in their niches, while Bodhisattvas and world guardians are more shallow. Apsarasas and human beings, like monks and worshippers, are carved still more shallowly, while the donors are done in flat relief--without or nearly without rounding--or just in mere line engravings. Obviously, then, adoption of a particular sculptural technique is not primarily based on artistic considerations and even less on a desire to create a spatial illusion, but rather is determined by iconographic considerations. Furthermore, variations in the depth of reliefs should not be linked directly to phases of stylistic development.

The back and the two narrow sides of a stele usually contain similar flat reliefs or engravings. Consecrating inscriptions, frequently of considerable length, may be found on all four sides. The iconographical programs of steles, with the exception of that of the rather stereotyped main groups, are quite varied. They include a number of narrative scenes and generally follow a particular Sûtra text. These scenes are depicted in a manner ranging from utmost simplicity to most lavish ostentation. Such steles primarily date from the Wei through T'ang periods. They appear to have been less popular during preceding and succeeding periods. Those extant are almost exclusively found on the continent. In Japan, where stone sculptures played almost no role at all, they are missing altogether, with the exception of a few imported examples. But steles bearing inscriptions enjoyed great popularity as vehicles for preserving important documents and texts displaying calligraphic masterpieces at all times throughout East Asia; among these are many of Buddhist content. They are, however, only occasionally adorned with relief sculptures and do not belong to the field of sculpture.

Another popular form of sculpted monuments, particularly in China, are inscription or memorial pillars. In most instances, these are octagonal stone columns with richly decorated bases and tops. They also frequently have one or several intermediate layers or "roofs" which cause the entire structure--no doubt intentionally--to resemble a pagoda. On the smooth surfaces of the pillars are engraved Sûtra texts, magic formulas (dhâranî), consecrating inscriptions, and the

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like. They are also frequently decorated with sculptures executed in bas relief or relief and embedded within shallow niches. These relief figures, just like those found in pagodas, radiate their beneficial powers in all directions. Such monuments are charming works of sculpture, frequently well-proportioned and executed with outstanding craftsmanship.

Reliefs are also widely found on foundations, cornices and tops of stone pagodas, on pedestals of statues, on terraces and balustrades of temple halls and in many other places in need of symbolic ornamentation. (In Japan this tendency was muted, since Japanese tastes emphasized the austere beauty of line and surface over abundant surface sculpture.) In addition to the usual flower, garland and cloud motifs of Chinese art and China's ever-present symbolic animals (dragons, etc.), we frequently encounter such typically Buddhist symbols as the lotus and lion, along with divine and semi-divine beings such as Apsaras', Gandharvas, and Yakṣas used as guardians and decorative motifs even on relatively low-ranking monuments.

A certain type of mask, the procession mask, may be mentioned as a last category of Buddhist sculpture which has for a long time gone unnoticed in the West (76, 77). The famous, highly expressive Bugaku masks have been used in Buddhist cults for musical and dance performances during big temple festivals for about 1200 years and are today still so used in Japan, where a large number of them have been preserved. Most of the types originated in China and in Central and West Asia. These masks and the plays in which they are used were of non-Buddhist origin, and became part of the Buddhist cult only as secondary elements which enriched and intensified ritual performances. They may perhaps also have been used because they were believed to have magical efficacy, as, for example, the power to induce rain.

But Buddhism has also produced its own kind of masks which were worn during solemn processions by the carriers and followers of the main cult image. These masks mostly represented such protective deities as Devas and related deities of a more demonic character. Some bore a grotesque but others a calm and dignified expression, just as found on the statues and paintings of the same types, though they occasionally departed from them in iconographically interesting ways. Bodhisattva masks were also very common in processions designed to demonstrate how the faithful were welcomed at the moment of their deaths into the Pure Land of the West by Amitābha and his holy retinue. Amitābha himself, as one who had entered nirvāna, was not represented by a living person but rather by a cult statue. This explains why no Buddha masks other than those belonging to the sphere of the Nô play exist. But here, too, they are rare exceptions.

As far as we know, procession masks have survived only in Japan but were presumably also used in China during the Wei through T'ang periods, and found their way to Japan at that time. Nô masks, fully developed from the 15th century on, are purely Japanese creations, though they have been strongly influenced by the older Buddhist masks. They can no longer be counted as Buddhist sculpture in the proper sense, both formally and historically. The same holds for Chinese theater masks from more recent times. These are made of brightly painted and lacquered papier-mâché, cover the entire head, and are used in popular but edifying Taoist and Buddhist "mystery plays."

Materials and Techniques

Buddhist sculptures are fashioned from virtually the same materials as their European counterparts--stone, metal (primarily bronze), wood, and clay. But there is one material unique to them--lacquer.

With few exceptions, stone sculptures (23, 25, 41, 42, 53, 57, 82, 83) occur almost exclusively on the continent. (In Japan some may be found in grottoes or on cliffs but are limited in number and importance.) Particularly in China, a variety of beautiful stone materials like marble, limestone, and sandstone were available and were used not only for the wall figures in the cave temples (Yün-kang, Lung-mèn, T'ienlungshan, Hsiangt'angshan, etc.) but also for temple statues. The most important surviving works of China's ancient Buddhist sculpture are made of stone, since the works from earlier periods and larger-sized works made of other materials have almost all perished. (On small-sized bronze sculpture see below.)

Many seemingly free-standing stone figures found in our museums, however, were originally more or less fully round sculpted wall figures in cave temples. Even the popular votive stele were made of stone. In Europe, Chinese miniature stone sculptures became particularly well known and were at times the object of an almost overly intensive interest on the part of collectors. Such figures of sacred and legendary beings were made of jade (nephrite and jadeite), the favorite stone of the Chinese which had been almost mystically venerated since earliest times, or, more frequently, of the soft, easily shaped steatite (soapstone). Ivory was also very popular. All such miniature figures come from later and even from recent times, and rarely exude any of that profound spirit of Buddhist art which pervades the ancient stone statues of the classical period.

In many instances (perhaps even always), these ancient stone figures had their surfaces coated with gesso; occasionally, at least in more recent times, paper was used as grounding material. The figures were then painted with bright colors and frequently also partly gilded. Most surviving pieces bear only remnants or traces of such colors and gold; but in some instances large painted or gilded areas are hidden underneath layers of dirt. On large figures, technical devices, such as holes for plugs used to tighten the ropes which, following the folds of the garments, held the plastering in place, can still be seen. The coating has fallen off in most cases, and the figures today reveal only their stone cores, except for those which were later given a new, thick and uninspired surface covering. Most Western critics tend to overlook this fact and charge that certain figures are cumbersome and are flawed because of their crude surface modeling which is, in turn, taken as indicative of provincial craftsmanship of lesser quality. It should be conceded, however, that a good many of these mass-produced sculptures do represent a modest artistic level, even if allowance is made for their present dilapidated state.

The most valuable material--excepting the occasional use of gold for small or miniature sculptures--was bronze. Because bronze was so precious and works of bronze were in constant danger throughout the centuries from fire or from deliberate melting down for commercial considerations, few bronze works of large size have survived in China. We have to go to Japan, much more conservative in some matters, in order to locate perfect examples of the classic East Asian bronze sculpture.

Buddhist statues, other than those of larger format which had to be put together from several pieces, were cast with the lost wax (*cire-perdue*) method and, as a rule, were fire-gilt through the application of an amalgam of mercury and gold to the heated piece. This would allow the gold to chemically combine with the surface of the bronze after the mercury had evaporated. The Chinese masters of the Tang period and their talented Japanese disciples had outstanding expertise in bronze casting, and the best of their surviving works (17-22, 44, 49, 52, 60) can be called perfect examples of its kind. The loss of most early monumental bronze sculptures in China is partly compensated by the numerous attractive miniature bronzes (16, 18, 19) of Buddhist figures and groups of figures whose purpose and historical significance has already been discussed.

In addition to cast images, embossed metal sculptures (24) can also be found in Buddhist art. Reliefs of modest size, already mentioned, were made by embossing bas reliefs into thin sheets of copper, bronze or silver over carved, solid metal blocks (such blocks have survived). Such plates were subsequently mounted on wooden boards. This was an easy and cheap technique and particularly suited for the mass production of devotional and votive works for popular and private cults.

Metals other than bronze, particularly iron, were also used from at least the sixth century on for the manufacture of Buddhist statues. But many of the relatively few surviving cast iron figures do not convey the impression that this material was particularly suited for this purpose nor do they give signs of any higher artistic inspiration. It should, however, be noted that the figures were originally polychromed over a coating of gesso. Among the surviving works only a few Arhat figures and heads from the Sung to the Ming period (93) are truly significant.

Clay and lacquer sculptures are among the most important works of Buddhist art. Clay sculptures were most popular in the Central Asian sanctuaries, and soon found their way from there into China and Japan as an easily mastered and cheap technique to create cult figures of even larger sizes. Both countries already had a pre-Buddhist tradition of using clay sculptures as tomb figures. Buddhist clay sculptures were produced by two methods. One way was to cast such figures into negative wooden molds. The other, predominant in East Asia (26, 56, 70, 73), consists of applying layer after layer of clay over a wooden core or wooden frame. The latter is wrapped in straw or hemp to allow the clay to adhere to it. Each layer must dry in the open air before the next can be applied. Bits of straw and paper and, in the outer and finer layers, thin animal hair and plant fibers, are mixed into the clay to make it hold together. The final surface is given a coating of finely textured gesso of burnt white shell mixed with mica powder. This not only adds lustre but quickens the drying out process and reduces the harmful effects of humidity. Colors and gold are applied over this coating. More delicate individual parts or freely protruding parts of the figures, such as fingers or seams and corners of garments, are usually supported from within by bronze foil or wires (73) to which the layers of clay are attached.

Clay sculpture was apparently popular only during the Tang and Nara periods. Few examples have been found from later periods other than miniature sculptures. But during the classical period many masterpieces of life-size clay sculpture were created with this technique. We can only speculate about the

reasons why it fell out of use. Perhaps these figures were too easily broken and too vulnerable to humidity. It is also possible that the soft modeling of this style no longer corresponded to later stylistic ideals.

Related to sculptures made of unfired, air-dried loam or clay are those made of fired clay. These were used not only as architectural decorations, particularly as roof ornaments, but occasionally also as larger and weightier cult sculpture. There are, for example, reliefs containing individual figures and groups of figures made by this technique. The fact that they are gilded, indicates that these works held a certain sacred value. The most famous works of fired and glazed clay are the magnificent Arhats from I-chou (91, 92) which are counted among the most important spiritual achievements of East Asian sculpture in general. Later on, even porcelain figures of Buddhist beings, though possessing a charm of their own, were held in only the same modest esteem as those miniature sculptures carved from steatite or ivory, mentioned above.

Lacquer sculptures (*chia-chu*, *kan-shitsu*) constitute perhaps the most peculiar technique of East Asian image making (58, 86, 87, 89). Here, too, the figure is fashioned over a wooden core or frame, occasionally also over a clay core, around which several layers of cloth soaked in the juice of the lacquer tree are wrapped until the figure has been given its basic form. Surface details are then fashioned with the help of a thick paste of lacquer mixed with different powders and fibers, while protruding parts are supported by internal wires and similar devices.

After the successive layers of lacquer have dried the solid core or "skeleton" is often removed. At best a simple supporting frame is left inside the figure. The result is an image of remarkable size yet with extraordinarily light weight and great strength which, owing to the marvelous properties of East Asian lacquer, is immune to such destructive influences as humidity, chemical decomposition, and destructive pests. The surface is either painted in various colors or gilded by the application of gold foil onto the still moist outermost layer of lacquer.

Like clay sculpture, lacquer figures occur almost exclusively during the T'ang and Nara periods, though their origin can be traced back into the Six Dynasties period. They also enjoyed a certain revival around 1300. Their importance during the T'ang and Nara periods may perhaps have resulted from the fact that their light weight and great stability made lacquer figures particularly suitable for portable images used in processions, but this was perhaps not the only reason for their popularity and certainly does not explain the sudden discontinuance of this particular technique. Economic factors may have played a part in this. Lacquer is an expensive material. Vast quantities of it were needed for large figures, and the procedure itself was very time-consuming. But artistic considerations must also have been involved. Lacquer and clay provided ideal media for the subtly rounded plastic style of that period, and it is certainly no accident that bronze sculpture, which lent itself to the same treatment, also experienced its greatest flourishing during that time. Later on, different styles required that other materials and techniques be brought to the forefront.

Generally speaking, stone, bronze, clay, and lacquer appear to have been the predominant materials during the earlier phase from the Wei through the T'ang (in Japan from Suiko through the Nara) periods. Later, these all appear to have yielded more and more to wood, probably at least in part for economic and

technical reasons. In Japan, where the entire development of sculpture can be studied thanks to the wealth of surviving works, it is very evident that the preference for wood is intimately linked, from early Heian times (ca. 800), to a reduction of expenditures and to a gradually evolving method of division of labor within large workshops which resulted in more skillful handling of so difficult a material as wood. The use of wood, however, required also a new sense of form which could exploit the sharp edges naturally produced by wood carving, as opposed to the previously dominant rounded-off style.

It is difficult to ascertain whether similar changes occurred in China. There, even stone sculptures, which usually followed changes in style quite closely, show no such sharp break. This is perhaps a result of the fact that the Chinese sense of form tends to be more "plastic" and for this reason gave rise to a style softer and fuller than that of the Japanese. Still, conditions in China remain confusing to us. From the end of the T'ang period (after 900), however, wood seems to have been more widely used there, too. To draw conclusions based on Japanese works about the older, now mostly lost, Chinese wood sculpture is no longer permissible, because the period during which wood carving flourished in Japan coincided with the period during which that country entered into its first great phase of cultural independence from China in all fields.

Wood sculpture, as we encounter it in its most perfect form in Japan from the late 9th to early 10th to the 13th century (27-29, 45-48, 59, 61 ff., 88-90, and others), mainly employed two techniques. In the older technique the entire figure was carved from a single block. After this had been done, peripheral small elements like hands, individual fingers, corners of garments, or attributes were attached. The other technique relied on assembling a figure from numerous individual parts (*yosegi*). In addition to savings in material, this technique had the advantage of avoiding undesirable effects caused by the "working" of the wood. It also made it possible to overcome limitations to the size and shape of statues imposed by the size and shape of naturally grown wooden blocks on which the former technique relied. Another advantage of the second technique was that it facilitated division of labor, speed and production.

The master craftsman would make an exact plan based on a detailed list of measurements for the proportions of the individual parts of the figure. We know as yet very little about such proportions, but they played an important part in East Asian and also in Indian art (cf. p. 24). A number of blocks were first roughly shaped by assistants in accord with this plan and then assembled into a hollow conical or cylindrical shape roughly corresponding to the outlines of the sculpture. The details were first sketched and then carved onto the individual blocks after they had been disassembled. Finally, the figure was given its final assembly and its parts glued together. Small individual details were carved after this process had been completed. Additional elements, such as pieces of clothing, were then attached to the figure.

This technique made it possible to reserve the work of applying the finishing touches for the master craftsman and artist. All the preparatory phases of the work could be done by assistants without detrimental effect on the quality of the finished sculpture. But a certain danger of lapsing into a somewhat mechanical way of executing these figures was always present. Mistakes could, however, easily be

corrected simply by replacing the faulty part. Thuja, the wood of the sandarac tree, was the preferred wood, but cryptomeria (Japanese cedar), cherry, camphor and keyaki (*Zelkova acuminata*) were also used. Fragrant sandalwood was often employed for the most valuable figures, while boxwood could be used for small-sized figures.

Wooden figures were normally given a surface treatment. They were either painted after being given a base of gesso and then decorated with gold (a technique we will describe in the section on painting), or they were covered with cloth soaked in lacquer and, atop still another layer of lacquer, covered with gold foil. However, no surface treatment was applied when a particularly valuable wood, like sandalwood, was used. In such cases, the sculptors confined themselves to the application of light red coloring for lips, black for hair and pupils, and delicate gold ornaments on the garments.

Attributes and body ornaments were often made of metal (43, 63), particularly since the 13th century but also in earlier times; semi-precious stones (73) or rock crystal were often used for the eyes, to give the figures a livelier appearance. This was accomplished by the following procedure. After the head had been carved it was split vertically from left to right just in front of or behind the ears, or in both places; the facial mask was then hollowed out until the eye openings could be pierced and the crystal eyes inserted from the inside. A piece of gold foil with a painted-on pupil was attached to the back of such eyes, and the head then put together again. Subsequent surface treatment was applied to cover any trace of the splitting procedure.

East Asian wood carving reached a particularly high level in Japan. We do not know much about its Chinese counterpart--which has only become truly accessible to us since the Sung period--but it is clear that it had come to play a dominant role by about the year 800. Though the beauty of the grain of carved wood disappears under the surface treatment, all these works convey a profound understanding of the natural material which the Japanese forests provided for artists in varieties of superior quality. Though the differences between a bronze (44, 49), a lacquer (89), and a wooden figure (47, 48, 90) were not very obvious in East Asia because surface treatment and gilding tended to obliterate them and because iconographical types ruled out major variations, they become clearly visible upon closer examination (60, 61).

Sculptural Morphology

Buddhist figures of different religious rank in the pantheon are clearly differentiated by their poses and degree of movement. The Buddhas remain in that absolute state of cool and remote quietude which symbolizes the state of nirvāna. But even at this level certain distinctions can be found. The Buddha immersed in meditation, seated, with his legs folded under him and his hands forming the samādhi-mudrā (28), displays the highest quietude imaginable for a human figure in an awake state. Buddhist art has created in this pose a perfect archetype.

A Buddha in an identical pose but forming a different mudrā such as that of teaching (24), or that of protection or wish-granting (17), has begun to act; he begins to speak to the believer through the symbolism of the mudrā. But the element of activity arising from this mudrā is still only minimal; its effect remains quiet, gentle,

and calming. This slight agitation is merged with and negated by the pervasive serenity of the pose--a very effective way of intensifying the impressions of these figures.

Buddhas depicted standing erect almost without exception show no movement of their heads and trunks, arms and legs. But the very fact that the figure is standing gives it a more "active" pose. Frequently, if not always, a standing pose represents the Buddha walking the earth or manifesting himself in a vision as *nirmâna-kâya* or *sambhoga-kâya*; i.e., as the historical Buddha Śâkyamuni, as Amitâbha appearing to the believer on his deathbed, or as some other Buddha. The standing pose is more active than the sitting pose. Through these differences in poses Buddhist art symbolizes distinctions between levels of being and forms of manifestation. Such seemingly purely formal features, which are easily mistaken for formal conventions, therefore have iconographic value and religious significance.

Such symbolic forms or formulas are never left to the free flight of the artist's imagination. Rather, it was the artist's task to impart to these rigidly defined entities as "tangible a presence" as possible, and to point through them to that state which, as the ultimate ground of being, transcends all images. To have achieved this paradoxical unity of "Emptiness" and powerful presence is one of the most admirable achievements of Buddhist art, especially for so "earthy" an art as sculpture, whose best works have nevertheless resolved this paradox in astounding fashion. A vital element in this realization of a religious archetype based on a religious idea transcending all ideas, images and representations, are these imperious and yet disinterestedly lofty poses of the Buddha statues. They are simultaneously strictly formal and yet at ease, possess inexpressible quietude and also tremendous, though hidden, power. These images, even more than the sacred texts, allow us to experience in a most compelling way what a Buddha truly is.

By necessity, a Buddha's pose must be frontal, with a strictly vertical central axis and perfect or nearly perfect symmetry. Such frontality and symmetric axiality intrude least into the "world" and into empirical/phenomenal space. If these figures were allowed to turn--no matter how slightly--or to move their extremities, their effect would be drastically different. Frontality is the pose of sacredness. It is the symbolic representation of the remoteness of the Absolute and of its majesty which dominates but does not become active itself. To the believer, the Absolute manifests itself out of the profundity (depth) of "Emptiness." It accepts veneration without turning into a responding "Thou." Conceptually and in the manner in which it symbolizes space, this "Other" is firmly linked to the vertical architectural symmetric axis of the sanctuary. The Buddha figures owe their monumentality and convincing powerful effect essentially to this pure and strict symmetry. It is, therefore, inadmissible to view them from some angular perspective. None of its forms is designed to accommodate such perspective which does not allow any of them to speak to us and from which they are never (or at least only accidentally and therefore quite improperly) seen if encountered in their normal settings.

The Bodhisattvas, the next lower category of beings, are intermediary figures. They belong to both the realms of *nirvâna* and *samsâra*, and so have much more of the "world" about them or assume more of its burden than do the totally remote Buddhas. Formally, their poses express their close doctrinal relationship to the Buddha. The slight turn of the two Bodhisattva figures in a triad (24, 25) toward the

central Buddha figure usually involves a kind of contrapposto including variable positions of their arms; this attitude can only be understood in terms of their integral relationship to the central figure. Though the individual Bodhisattva figures stand asymmetrically and have abandoned strict frontality, the paired figures on both sides of the Buddha figure cancel out their individual asymmetries by serving as each other's mirror image. The resulting composition of the triad, though permeated by muted dynamic tensions, comes to rest in a balanced and unshakable equilibrium. Great care is also taken to ensure that the group has clearly defined limits and that the formal direction of all movements (poses of bodies and extremities, the lay of the garment folds, etc.) converges towards the center. The outer arms of the Bodhisattvas are, therefore, left pointing downward, while their inner arms are raised towards the Buddha. Wherever the group has been enlarged, this pose is assumed by the outermost figures (25).

But whenever a Bodhisattva stands alone and is himself the main cult image (honzon), he normally assumes a strictly frontal and axial pose (compare 52, 58 with 24, 25, 40). Wherever this is not the case, we may assume that his pose has been carried over from his role as an accompanying figure of a Buddha, or that an accompanying figure has been belatedly elevated to the rank of a main figure. Therefore a strict or loose attitude (pose) is not to be taken as a direct symptom of a "strict" or "loose" sculptural style. Such purely formal features as the S-shaped curve of the body of a standing Bodhisattva, the bend of a sitting Bodhisattva, the turning of the head and the raising of the arm towards the Buddha, document an ontological more than a psychological or emotional relationship between the Bodhisattva and "his" Buddha within the hierarchy of levels of existence and being. But the idea of the Bodhisattva as a being of merciful compassion dispensing infinite favors out of his infinite compassion also implies such a high degree of loving surrender and mercy that, though the ontological aspect dominates, the psychological aspect is bound to be much more prominent than in the case of the Buddha figure. This idea has found its perfect symbolic form in the specific and singular Bodhisattva pose.

We speak of poses because we should not speak of movement in the true sense, despite certain apparent movement of the body, head and extremities. Bodhisattva figures, too, stand or sit in a composed manner without ever becoming truly active. They never seem to focus on any particular object as the result of some mental impulse; rather, they define, through their pose, their own essence and the essence of their relationship to the Buddha. Hence the peculiar and charming effect suggested by their poses of suspension in or beyond either quietude and movement.

This union of quietude and movement appears in a slightly different manner among a doctrinally related group of beings, the Vidyārājas (ming-wang, myō-ō, such as Acala=Fudō). Though these beings have a manifestly demonic presence, they normally (but by no means always) assume a calm pose. Their pose is full of concentrated power. It is charged with energy which threatens to erupt any moment so as to destroy evil, the darkness of illusion, and thus sin (69). Vidyārājas and Bodhisattvas are related as opposites in polarity, but the "Buddha nature," though expressed differently in both, also constitutes the base of ultimate reality for both. Beneath their apparent movement the Vidyārājas display that same profound quietude in which compassionate activity hides itself without seeming to "do" anything.

Devas (70, 71, 79, 80), except when they appear as main cult images or accompany main figures and hence also assume calm poses (74, 78), can perform genuinely purposeful and expressive actions when they carry out the function of world guardians, Heavenly Generals, and Gate Guardians. This is because they are still part of the *samsāra* sphere, even though they belong to the ranks of supra-human beings. Their artistic representation can therefore tie them more intimately to empirical reality, particularly with respect to pose and movement, than those types referred to above. Their function is to protect the Buddha, his teaching, his community, his sanctuary, and the world in general. They appear, therefore, on the periphery of either the altar platform or the sanctuary as splendidly armed and armored warriors with fiercely threatening facial expressions and frequently in highly active poses. Because such activity is directed toward the outer world, the inner pressure toward symmetry is relaxed to a degree unknown elsewhere in Buddhist cult sculpture. But in the final analysis, even extremely active poses only serve as antipole to that Buddha quietude from which the being and actions of these figures arise. But even in cases where divine or semi-divine beings are depicted in the act of veneration, most notably the Apsaras' (J. *hiten* or *tennin*), they are frequently shown in lively, graceful floating, flying or dancing poses. While they are so treated as early as in the "archaic" art of the Wei and Suiko periods (35), Bodhisattvas do not begin to receive a more mobile treatment of their bodies and extremities until late T'ang or early Sung, and even then are never presented in poses as active as those of the Devas. A more quiet, lyrical type of deity is the Devī (goddess), such as Śrīmahādevī (J. *Kichijōten*), the bestower of riches and good luck, who appears as an elegant lady, richly attired and gentle in her attitude.

Figures from the human sphere, such as disciples, Arhats, patriarchs, or pious laymen (24, 26, 81-96), are generally presented turning in devout veneration towards the Buddha or in poses of meditation, prayer or cultic performance. Though obviously earthly figures, they are permeated by the self-contained assurance possessed by those who have matured to great wisdom by means of a profound insight into the nature of reality, or who have overcome attachment through ascetic practices. The poses of such figures, depending on their iconographical relationships, are either frontal, particularly for portrait statues (86), or slightly turned to the side. They are either completely quiescent or show only the barest hint of movement or activity. Though they are not truly active, they also lack that pronounced "empty" silence of the Absolute and, formally speaking, that pronounced frontality and symmetry displayed by supra-mundane sacred beings and their configurations.

Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Arhats and monks are also often depicted in the state of meditation--that spiritual-physical state most important in Buddhist teaching and practice. This is the archetypal state for one who has either become a Buddha or is striving for Buddhahood. Its perfect remoteness and profound silence symbolize the Absolute. This state becomes, therefore, the standard against which all postures, states, or modes of behavior are measured. The degree to which any figure of the hierarchy approaches this state of perfection or deviates from it indicates in every instance the place in the order of being which this figure occupies. Devas never appear in the state of meditation because of Buddhist teachings that entry into *nirvāna* is impossible from the level of the deities but can only be attempted from

that of human existence. For men, especially monks, meditation begins as a daily exercise, performed according to established rules, and designed to achieve that singular state of mind and body which allows one to enter the path of salvation.

Man is able to advance up the ladder of the minutely differentiated stages of meditation as far as his individual capacity and degree of maturity will take him. But even if one were to attain the necessary maturity for entry into nirvāna in this present life, like the Arhats are supposed to have done, one would remain in the realm of samsāra until the moment of final extinction. Man is not yet a Buddha, but his meditative pose is no longer merely a form of spiritual exercise and a point of departure. Rather, it exhibits that fulfillment characteristic of a being which has achieved its goal or is very close to doing so. All this becomes very evident if we compare depictions of meditation among historical or quasi-historical monks and Arhats to those of Buddhas (86, 127, 128).

To a certain degree, the Bodhisattvas stand outside of the sequence of mediating types and are rarely depicted as immersed in meditation, presumably because emphasis is placed on their compassionate, unselfish activities. But these activities, too, flow out of their enlightenment and reflect something of the remoteness and quietude of the highest meditation without whose fruit of wisdom the Bodhisattvas could not have become what they are and which--as the most profound ground of being of their essence and activities--illuminates their essence and activities at all times and in all places. Buddhist art deserves the highest admiration for its success in allowing us to sense in this profound radiance the loving compassion of the Bodhisattvas which distinguishes them from the Buddha as well as from monks or Arhats.

In Buddhist sculptures we do not encounter mere temporary expressions, psychological characterizations or more or less faithful depictions of practical religious acts. Rather, we encounter an internal and external "disposition," the essence of a sacred person. An ontological statement is made; not so much by means of attributes of an iconographic nature, by body postures, mudrās of meditation, or by means of realistic depictions of concrete physical characteristics, but rather by means of a total definition of these figures through the unified design which this state of meditation imposes on them down to the minutest detail. In viewing these figures we see and understand directly and immediately what meditation is, because this is unmistakably revealed to us by their artistic realization. There is no need to read such figures in a manner analogous to the manner in which we might attempt to understand a text by deciphering its individual words.

Much has still to be done to gain a more detailed understanding of this phenomenon which is so important for Buddhist religion and art. For example, from the perspective of formal criteria it should be clarified whether and how Buddhist art gives technically exact descriptions of the different types and degrees of meditation or the phases of an individual act of meditation on the basis of existing prescriptions or doctrinal schools. The way in which the variant meditative poses and states are already differentiated within the categories of monks and Arhats suggests that such description may indeed already have been attempted at this level. A description of the historical and psychological background of meditation in general and its links with the practice of Yoga in particular would go far beyond the

scope of this study. That we encounter in this pose one of the basic attitudes and archetypes of Asian religiosity is demonstrated dramatically by the fact that it already occurs in the depictions of seated divine figures on the seals of the early Indus civilization.

In cases where different figures are joined in groups, the unifying principle is not just some mutual interaction or an arbitrary rule of artistic composition but a common inner relationship to a spiritual state forming the very ground of being for all of them. This relationship is crystallized in tangible form in the quiet harmony of the figures of a particular group. There may be a more active mood on its fringes, but the group is firmly held together in its core by uniformly applied lines of composition--contours, body and garment lines, and geometric patterns. Within this assemblage, poses and movements are graduated from the immobile center formed by the Buddha figure to which all the other figures are related doctrinally and formally. The power with which these statues have been sculpted fills the group with an intense life of its own and confronts the viewer with the tremendous presence of the world order which unfolds in the archetypal images of these sacred figures.

But as we know, Buddhist figures are not only spiritually and formally linked to the other figures in such groups but also to the room in which they are placed. This raises the question of how Buddhist statues relate to these rooms. The answer may be found in the comments made earlier on their poses and movements: a genuinely three-dimensional unfolding into the space surrounding the physical borders of the figures occurs to only a negligible degree. The divine and protecting figures are perhaps the only figures which direct their attention away from the center in order to defend the sacred sphere against the outer realm of the "world." But even they always remain bound to the sacred circle to which they belong and which is the source of their activity. The other figures rest completely within themselves but are formally linked to the temple room through their attached elements (thrones, halos, canopies, etc.), though in only a quasi two-dimensional manner: their frontality has the effect of presenting them as being in a rather shallow space where they appear as essentially two-dimensional or at least relief-like images. The main plane of their bodies is projected onto the rear wall or some imaginary background plane. Their visual effect therefore depends largely on their silhouettes, i.e., on their linear outer contours rather than on the volume defined by them (22, 23, 25, 28, 40, 52; compare 24). Here we see again the high value of the line as the definer of meaning and expression of form in all of East Asian art including even the three-dimensional medium of sculpture.

This dominance of line also helps explain the strong role of relief forms in East Asian art. The contours and internal forms of the figures only express their intended meaning if viewed frontally. Any angled view, which allows the improper intrusion of the third dimension, destroys the relationship between the forms and the peculiar beauty of the flow of their lines. This beauty rests on their being lifted out and beyond their empirical connection with a particular room. They are placed into an ideal space whose nature is no longer determined by the laws of three-dimensionality. The muted glow of the gilded surfaces and the rich splendor of the colorful ornaments of the figures and the temple's interior make vital contributions

to this effect by dissolving, to a certain degree, the solid volume, the firm definitions and the material weight of these figures. They become nearly dematerialized, stripped of spatial limitations, and transparent.

But it would be erroneous to assume that because of their moderate spatial expansion and two-dimensionality Buddhist sculptures had no relationship at all to the space surrounding them. Their peculiar effect is due precisely to their withdrawal from the third dimension, i.e., the dimension of phenomenal, illusory existence, because their power emanates into this world out of the core of their spiritual concentration without, however, becoming physically active. Such images are, therefore, not speaking directly to the viewer, rather they confront him "indifferently," even though in a higher sense an ultimate metaphysical unity exists between them and the viewer. They speak "above" him and yet for the sake of his salvation. They radiate their "Buddha light" from the quiet darkness of the temple hall into the whole world. They are free from ties to empirical space, but also free from pure two-dimensionality (as found in archaic art) because they have transcended this and all other alternatives and have reached the state of "Emptiness" which can be labeled neither transcendent nor immanent because it combines and yet transcends both. Without reference to this paradoxical-dialectic basic attitude of Mahâyâna none of its works of art is intelligible.

This attitude found its perfect tangible embodiment in the Buddha and Bodhisattva statues of the mature period. These are fully defined in space and yet seem outside space. They have volume and yet appear almost transparent. They are present and yet remote. It is, therefore, risky to make one-sided statements about them or about Buddhist works of art in general. Any such statements would have to be negated by a statement exactly contrary in nature. The "emptiness" (in the strictly Mahâyâna sense of the word) thus created makes visible that which is essential and can no longer be spoken of. We may well be justified in raising the question if this is not true with respect to all great art, though particularly religious art, and if, therefore, Buddhist art possesses particularly paradigmatic value because this intent constitutes such a conspicuous element of this art.

This basic world view also determines the way the human body is treated. Though this treatment is not based on empirical knowledge of anatomy, it may nevertheless be claimed that the Buddhist artists of East Asia understood the structure and function of the human body in all its essential aspects and knew how to make its living forms serve their creative intentions. They never turned the organic human body into a perfect vehicle of an ideal of human beauty or anthropomorphic divinity, but also never negated it in the way early medieval Western art did. The body is present, is accepted and used as an instrument for imparting religious meaning without, however, ever trapping the Buddhist artists into becoming preoccupied with it. The body is given volume, even substantial volume, and is obviously made quite deliberately a part of the total artistic formula, but it is at the same time treated in a manner to make the anthropomorphic figures appear light and "floating." They appear to be in gentle retreat from their own corporeal presence, because their volume does not surge from within by displacing imagined or real space and because their physical mass appears to be peculiarly dematerialized (22, 23, 28, 29, 40, 46, 58, 64). It is permeated by weightlessness and

seemingly freed from the laws of gravity, as is characteristic of the "subtle" body created in Yoga exercises and in meditation. We have already pointed to analogous features in the movements and relationships of the figures to their surrounding space.

Once the archaic stage had been left behind, body movements in mature Buddhist art (from the 7th or 8th century on) are quite natural or, at least, do not contradict natural movements (24, 55-57, 68). It is precisely the unassuming matter-of-factness with which these movements are displayed that makes them such convincing vehicles for expressing a religious view which has left nature far behind without, however, radically and ascetically divorcing itself from it. This is quite in line with the basic Mahāyāna teachings about the relationship between nirvāna and samsāra: they do not exclude each other but neither do they merge into one. Just as the phenomenal world "is as if it were not," the figures of Buddhist art, too, have their human organic bodies as "if they had them not." Just as nirvāna is inherent in all samsāra existence and is only visible in it and through it, the "empty" Buddha nature dwells in those bodies on which it has to depend in order to manifest itself.

Many figures are very beautiful (28, 42, 46, 48, 57), and this beauty is somehow magically enhanced by their supernatural nature, but their bodies, poses, motions or self-contained quiescence also contribute significantly to it. It does not matter that the Buddhist artists do not stick to anatomical details to any significant degree. They standardize human forms into ideal shapes which are occasionally determined by iconographic rules (23, 44, 47, 49). This is quite in line with the religious function of this art, since Buddhism sees in the body only a symbol of essence and not a visible phenomenon. This is true not only of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, but also of the much more active, mobile, and therefore organically more strongly modeled figures of the Devas and similar beings. And the play of their very pronounced muscles and joints is also subject to the restraining impulses arising from religious ideals (70, 73). The fact that they appear rather baroquely realistic to Western observers does not invalidate this claim, because Westerners tend to be inclined to focus only on one particular aspect of East Asian phenomena.

Buddhist images reveal a few characteristic peculiarities in their treatment of details of body structure and function. We are likely to notice, frequently even with a little uneasiness, a certain plumpness of the body shapes, particularly among the figures of highest level, i.e., Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Their bodies are given a massive volume which only faintly displays articulations indicating the organic functions of their parts (22, 23, 58, 66). The forms of the trunk as well as the head tend toward spherical and those of the extremities to cylindrical forms (49, 60). The joints are smoothly padded and therefore lack emphasis as functionally important points in the organic structure and mechanism of the body, even though they are frequently marked by indented lines, as, for example, along the wrists. The Buddhist sculptor does not penetrate to the skeletal structure and the linkages of its joints, but instead attempts to give a total and convincing image of the human body as a unified structure which not only meets all religious-iconographic requirements but is also aesthetically effective.

In the case of beings on the highest level, these iconographic requirements make necessary a high degree of abstraction from the organic-functional realities of the empirical human body, i.e., the depiction of certain generalized ideal forms.

These do not, however, idealize the living body in the Greek manner nor, on the other hand, do they permit the abandonment of the body in favor of an anti-realistic supra-worldliness. Rather, this idealization causes the number of form elements to be reduced and their treatment to be stereotyped. In the case of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, these elements may even become nearly "geometrized"--a fact which becomes evident by observing the shape of the basic volumes of their bodies or the curves which appear on chests and bellies and also on the lines running from the nose to the eyebrows (28, 47, 48, 49, 61).

But in spite of the clarity resulting from such treatment, the figures manage to display extraordinarily soft, in some instances almost dough-like forms. Arms and hands (50) cover underlying structures of bones and joints so thoroughly that a smooth flow from body part to body part is achieved. This, in turn, gives the entire figure the appearance of a unified structure sustained by a flexible rhythm of its own. Its individual parts are no longer consciously noticed as such, nor is there any functional articulation. While this rhythmic flow is noticeable in the outlines of the body and the garments of seated or standing Buddha figures (22, 23) and has much to do with the effect of complete quietude they produce, the Bodhisattva figures, which may assume different and even slightly active poses (24, 54, 55, 57, 68), show more of this flow permeating the body itself. Characteristically, the slightly forward thrust of hip and belly is accompanied by a corresponding backward inclination of the upper part of the body. In mature Buddhist art, Bodhisattvas display a sort of contrapposto which is missing only when Bodhisattva figures are main cult images and must assume an erect and axial pose (52, 58). This contrapposto (the term is a misnomer) originated in Indian art, where since ancient times the tribhanga, or "thrice bent" pose, was customarily used for numerous figure types. It is not anatomically "correct" in the way classical European art demanded and cannot be expressed in mathematical formulas; for example, the position of the legs and feet is only slightly influenced by the twist of the trunk. Nevertheless, the effect of this pose is rather pronounced and imparts to a figure a marvelous vitality and charm.

But their charm really arises from the religious nature of these figures, and not from their idealization of the forms of the human body. Masterly use is made of the body and its possibilities, but the image is not dependent on or even tied to organic principles. The formal play of the tribhanga pose may occasionally even assume something akin to a dancing movement (55). The pose of the head--upright or slightly inclined--and that of the arms fit harmoniously into the overall rhythm. But we have to bear in mind that the positioning of the arms and hands, no matter how essential for the total artistic impression, is iconographically determined and should not be understood as being primarily a matter of physical posture and aesthetic charm. The hands of the Bodhisattvas are soft and often seem virtually boneless. Their flexible, bent figures speak the language of the mudrās in a refined and noble, and occasionally also quite affected manner. The hands of the Buddhas (50), however, though also full of the expressive powers of the mudrās, lack the peculiar charm of the Bodhisattvas' hands. It is not the purpose of the Buddha images to express the charm of merciful compassion; they aim at solemn grandeur and majesty, are remote from the world but full of grace. Their innate mercy, tenderness and grace are hidden behind this grandeur and majesty and become

openly manifest only in the Bodhisattvas, who are mediators between the Buddha and the world of suffering beings.

The farther we descend on the scale of beings, the more attention is paid by the Buddhist sculptors to the structure and functions of the body. Many of the Devas have an almost Bodhisattva-like appearance, but their samsāra links are mainly expressed through a more realistic depiction of their garments. Their heads, too, seem more earthly and worldly. Deva expressions are not as remote and spiritualized as those of the Bodhisattvas. This becomes very evident if we compare both types side by side (52, 58, 74). The same contrast is sharply revealed in the figures of the belligerent deities (70, 73). The entire body of such a figure, down to the finger tips and hairs, is filled with an expressive dynamism which is at times kept more restrained by a nearly rigid pose of concentrated power, but may occasionally also be unleashed in a furious rage. Their bodies are treated more freely. Organic details, like muscles, sinews, and veins on the foundation of a more or less clearly defined skeletal structure are worked out with great diligence to properly serve their iconographic functions. The same holds for tensions and movements, which are expressed through extended, strutting and belligerent poses of the legs or the aggressive grasping and stretching of the arms, all of which represent most powerfully expressive exaggerations. The same attention to detail is also found in the masterful design of the faces. Eyes, eyebrows, cheeks, lips, and frequently screaming open mouths are of frightening vivacity and reveal considerable mastery over body forms and their expressive language.

It is only the application of the full use of very specific artistic means which enables the Buddhist sculptors to do justice to their task without slavishly imitating nature. The range of this art is admirable. It allowed Buddhist artists to create simultaneously and with equal mastery such opposite types as those belligerently expressive deities or the Vidyārājas, who in many ways resemble them, and the calm Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. In Buddhist terms, these contrasts are not real because both share a final common ground and only differ so strongly at the phenomenal level. Buddhist art has succeeded in suggesting that inner unity hidden beneath all these external contrasts.

The difference in the treatment of the body between human figures (81-96) like monks (primarily Arhats), priests and laymen and the Buddha and Bodhisattva types is of another sort. Human figures lack the Bodhisattvas' aura of supra-worldly grace. Their unassuming appearance actually puts them nearer to the Buddha figures, who despite their metaphysical elevation, are still basically depicted as simple Indian monks. But closer investigation reveals crucial differences. Human figures, even those remaining completely inactive, are treated with much greater attention to anatomical structure, primarily of heads and hands but also of the body, which is highly noticeable under the garment which veils it. Their skulls and facial features are more strongly individualized, even in cases where the pose of meditation produces an expression of detached calm and maturity. Many of these figures are portraits of real persons, idealizing portraits intended to capture the essence of their personality as they exist or could exist in the historical world.

The home of the Buddhas is, on the other hand, the supra-personal and supra-historical world. A comparison of the figures of a Buddha and a monk, which at first glance may appear to the Western observer to be extraordinarily close to

each other, reveals a fundamental difference (22, 23, 28, 86), even in works from approximately the same period. The head of the Buddha has a perfectly regular oval or spheric shape, and, with the exception of the *uṣṇīṣa*, which is a purely iconographical symbol, all the individual features of the Buddha face are modeled in a perfectly symmetrical and stereotyped ideal fashion. They are fashioned in a way which smoothes all uneven spots on their surfaces. The heads of monks, on the other hand, display a variety of irregularities to indicate that these are beings who are still part of the earthly sphere of *samsāra*. The contours of the skull, the curvature of the eyebrows, the nose, and wrinkles between nose and mouth, the mouth itself are not only different in the sense that there are superficial stylistic variant forms, individual to individual, but because all such individuals belong to a different level of existence and therefore reflect a different attitude towards empirical reality.

The body of a monk, though closer to the supra-empirical realm by virtue of its meditative or venerating pose, is still treated as a time-bound, individual phenomenon, while the body of a Buddha is treated as a symbol of the Absolute. This distinction is maintained down to the minutest formal feature, as even a cursory glance at garments or hand poses will confirm. The human figures indicate also various specific human age groups in rich and delicate variations, whereas there are no images which distinguish between young, middle-aged or old Buddhas. The same applies to the Bodhisattvas, though they appear to be slightly more youthful than the Buddhas. This, however, is not an empirical youthfulness but rather a symbol for a particular spiritual state of being.

Differentiation, though within narrow limits, begins with the Devas, but only the Arhats and monks fully enter the empirical flow of time. They are physically a part of this flow even though they have either spiritually already left it behind or are striving to do so in order to enter into that timeless Buddha nature which already shines from within these figures no matter how short of perfection they may be. In one case (86), the expression of meditation on the face of a monk combines in a marvelously delicate manner with the effects of his blindness. Thus his whole being seems to be suspended in some intermediary realm between external blindness and inner enlightenment. His earthly limitations and empirical appearance and fate are gently transcended into the Buddha nature which is already beginning to permeate his bodily form and somehow helps elevate lifelike depiction into the sphere of higher ideality.

Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, monks and also certain Deva types, though quite different from the demonic figure types, are also profoundly different from each other in their psychic expressions. The Buddhas actually display no expression at all, because they are beyond the realm of all psychic stirrings. Their "expressionlessness" is still extremely eloquent; i.e., in a non-psychological, but rather ontological sense as the manifestation of the absolute ground of being. In its emptiness all expressions and meanings are contained. True, it is possible to distinguish between Buddha figures originating from different sects and periods and those based on different teachings, cults, types of piety and general outlook on life. There are those who appear distant, coolly majestic, solemn, nobly refined, or mildly compassionate. But these differences are overwhelmed by the tremendous weight

of their common ontological statement which manifests itself in that universal expression of perfect neutrality.

The facial expressions and body poses of the Bodhisattvas, on the other hand, allow us to sense their role as intermediary expressing their compassionate kindness towards the suffering world. This intermediary role and compassion are the form and fruit of supreme wisdom and partake in the absolute essence of the Buddha nature. But these figures only let us sense their Buddha nature implicitly. They do not make it really visible and tangible because its external manifestations are but a very faint reflection of its essence. The "smile" (47, 48) is not accompanied by any identifiable change in their facial expressions which could link them to the imperfect samsāra world. However, compared to the face of the Buddha, their features are perceptibly animated. Although they turn to and approach the sphere of the phenomenal world and its emotions they are kept aloof from and are never made to succumb to it--by virtue of a detached remoteness.

The Devas, though sometimes displaying a calm and lofty character, are one step closer to earthly phenomena. This is revealed by their expressions. They make visible that decisive step which marks the crossover from the state of liberation into the realm of samsāra. While displaying a powerful and benevolent majesty and combining it with a worldly fullness and gravity--occasionally even with a touch of sadness--they reveal that lack of spiritual alertness which is an unmistakable sign that they still fall short of that crucially important enlightening wisdom. A careful comparison of the heads of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Devas from identical periods and equal artistic levels makes these differences very clear (22, 23, 29; 47, 48, 65; 74, 77, 78).

The belligerent divine types (world guardians, heavenly generals, etc.; 70 ff., 79) share with the Devas their participation in the samsāra world. Though clearly supra-human, they are not supra-worldly. But it is characteristic of Buddhist art that even their demonic outbursts remain within the imaginary circle of actions sacredly bound and related to the highest center, the Buddha, and the mandate originating from it. Though their expressions may, therefore, be highly intensive, this intensity is also always visibly restrained.

A similar point could be made about the Vidyārājas. But the difference which exists between their wildly demonic, even frightening expressions and that of the divine warriors exists *mutatis mutandis* between the expressions of Bodhisattvas and Devas. We encounter in both cases the parallel distinctions in levels of existence and enlightenment. The Vidyārājas, as embodiments of the ultimate, all-permeating, most secret wisdom, display, in Anesaki's formula, "expression in suppression," "eloquence in silence." Even in these terrifying beings, the *numinosum tremendum* also always manifests the *numinosum fascinans*--a hidden kindness and compassion revealing their true Buddha nature. The power of both the benevolent and the terrifying sacred beings is only sensed below the surface. Their energy is unleashed in a manner mild enough for human hearts to bear. The Tao-te-ching's (4th cent. B.C.; chapters 4 and 56) passage "Radiance subdued, adapted to the worldly dust" is frequently quoted to characterize this particular quality.

Human faces--regardless of the spiritual levels attained by the monks and the Arhats--lack that glow from within and that beatified "smile" which symbolize non-attachment to the world. Their expressions are in most instances permeated by the

solemnity of profound spiritual struggles, frequently also by the primordial force of world renunciation, and occasionally by joy at the attainment of enlightenment. The Arhats may even display an occasional touch of grotesque humor which also expresses their inner sovereignty and freedom. In the great Arhat series (of 16, 18, or even 500 figures) Buddhist art has succeeded in expressing nearly all characterological types and numerous variants of expression of the *homo religiosus* in an authentic, psychologically extremely revealing form, which has as yet hardly been appreciated.

But all these figures and faces, no matter how impressive, do not proclaim the same truth as do the faces of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas which reflect the fact of their effortless possession of the highest truth and their attainment of the final state of liberation in nirvāna arising out of this truth. Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are, in turn, distinguishable from each other by the fact that their expressions make it very evident that the former have absolutely attained this blessed state, the state of parinirvāna, and are therefore elevated above all "expression," all activity and all empirical forms, while the latter, for the time being, belong to this state only potentially in their innermost essence, but have not yet entered it in actuality. It is this state of "not-yet" arising, as it does, from a free decision to intervene compassionately in the suffering world and the state of "but already" implicit in it as its potential fruit which we sense in the distinct Bodhisattva expression. There is a simultaneousness and a dialectic unity of "infinitely compassionate response and sublime, knowing indifference to his eternal task" on the part of the Bodhisattva. Buddhist art would seem to have succeeded to a degree we can hardly overestimate in capturing these very subtle religious distinctions in meaningful and convincing images through the medium of the human figure and the possibilities offered by its forms and expressions.

The independence of the Buddhist artist from the conditions of empirical reality mentioned above had important consequences for the entire manner in which the human body was treated. It also made possible the creation of figures with several heads and arms and "abnormal" supernatural body signs (*uṣṇīṣa*, etc.). Surprisingly, these figures do not appear as abstruse, grotesque or repulsive as one might expect. Their multiple extremities, whether in repose--as in the case of the six-armed form of Avalokiteśvara (63)--or in ecstatic movement (as in the case of certain beings of esoteric Buddhism), appear "natural" as if plausibly integrated into the organic structure of the body. This is so because the structural laws of anatomy were always only observed, even with respect to normal human figures, as long as the religious function of the figure and the artistic means suitable for its realization required or permitted their observance. In the West the figures of the Buddhist pantheon frequently had the reputation of being exotic and bizarre, but a quick glance at our illustrations reveals how little this applies to East Asia. There, out of a profoundly humanistic spirit, artists have always shied away from extreme distortions of the human image even in cases where it served only as a symbol for supra-human and supra-worldly truths.

Finally, Western observers may be inclined to ask about the role of the nude figure in Buddhist sculpture. The completely nude body does not occur at all, with the exception of particular cult figures such as that of Kṣitigarbha (Ti-tsang, Ji-zō)

which were draped with real items of clothing; some even had wigs of real hair and their bodies were fashioned in a rather standardized, doll-like manner so that they can hardly be considered as works of art. The nude figure is rather rare in East Asian art, including painting. There are many reasons to explain this fact but we are unable to discuss them any further in this context. Nudes occur only in places where their presence would be natural and appropriate for the themes to be illustrated, as, for example, in working or bathing figures or in erotic scenes depicted in certain Chinese and Japanese woodblock prints. But even in these instances the totally or partially dressed figure was considered to be more attractive. In religious art, nude figures appear most conspicuously as denizens of hell (124) and among demonic or semi-divine beings of low ranks (31, 70 lower picture). But the semi-clothed figure is very important. Many Bodhisattvas, Vidyârâjas and similar figures (25, 52, 58-61, 66, 69, 75) wear only dhoti of varying lengths and long scarf-like pieces of clothing, in addition to rich jewelry on their nude upper body and arms. The Indian model is retained here down to the smallest details. Even the massive soft body structure, which we may mistakenly view as being fat and phlegmatic, is ultimately perhaps also of Indian origin. Bodhisattvas, above all, represent the type of the Indian prince transposed into the spiritual realm. Similarly, the Buddha (22, 28, 29) retains the appearance of the Indian mendicant monk. After the early phase, during which his body was entirely covered by a richly folded garment, he also appears only partially clothed. Usually his chest and one shoulder are left bare and his garment--the robe of a monk--frequently veils the body only so thinly and tightly that it is not only visible but the Buddha almost appears to be naked.

However, truly nude Buddha figures do not occur in East Asia. The Buddha appears with bare upper body only as a child (Buddha after his birth; 32), and even then his dhoti extends to his knees or feet. One arm is raised; the other points down to earth. This is the pose in which he proclaims his mission to save the world. Such figures have always been used during a ritual performed on Śâkyamuni's birthday (April 8). For Bodhisattvas and Vidyârâjas, semi-nudity is of considerable importance. It bestows upon them a kind of ideality and, on the other hand, serves to provide them with exact characteristic features. Nudity is treated completely differently in the case of Bodhisattvas than, for example, in the case of Temple Guardians (Dvârapâla), as it expresses the particular essence of both figure types. In both cases naturalistic treatment is absent but in the case of the former the body forms are stylized to produce an effect of graceful smoothness and softness. In the case of the latter, they are used to convey a sense of heightened dynamic tension without, however, divorcing them significantly from their organic substance. Anatomically speaking, muscles and sinews are frequently found in the wrong places, but they still produce the "right" effects. A more naturalistic design of the naked body parts can be found in the case of monks (87) and of similar figures who had spiritual distinction and inner wisdom but not physical strength and beauty bestowed upon them as symbols of a supra-human or supra-worldly essence.

The normal type is, therefore, the half or fully clothed figure. It may be generally claimed that a rather natural, lifelike relationship exists between body and garment. The garment follows the body, covers it more or less, but always allows it to be perceived in its natural form, with the exception of the archaic sculptures of the Wei style in China and Japan (16, 17, 42). Even in cases where nothing of the

body itself, other than head, arms and feet, is visible under a wide, richly folded monk's robe, the artist usually excels in conveying a sense of the body, its volume, its pose and movements with the help of the garment. We encounter here a remarkably unforced, natural relationship between body and garment in which either the one or the other may assume the leading role, but the two never clash or ignore or negate each other. This typifies the "mean" position in which all possible alternatives, tensions and contrasts have already a priori been surmounted without effort. That "clash" between body and garment, which is characteristic of large parts of European art, hardly ever occurred in East Asia.

The function of garments is therefore found, first, in their contribution to the creation of convincing sacred figures and in the construction of their corporeality. East Asian art generally conceptualizes the body in unity with the garment, so that body and garment occur simultaneously rather than in the manner of a naked body which has then been covered by a garment. The notion--cultivated in Europe by the Greeks and also found in more recent art--which sees the naked body as the true body in its authentic state and as the purest and most suitable vehicle for ideal artistic forms is alien to East Asia. The role of the garment is, in the second place, defined by the specific characteristics of the individual types of beings and involves therefore also clear iconographical distinctions.

The Indian-style garment of a Bodhisattva is entirely different from that of a Deva whose dress or armor follow certain Central Asian and Chinese models so closely that such figures may serve as almost ideal documentations for the history of costumes and weapons in those areas. A divine world guardian is modeled after a Central Asian-Chinese armed warrior (70). A goddess, like Śrī-devī (74) resembles a Chinese lady dressed according to the fashion of a particular period, in physical type, pose, garment, hair style, and jewelry. All this demonstrates the fact that these figures belong to the samsāra world in spite of their supra-human character. It is, therefore, not permissible to speak of them as representing attempts to humanize the divine. Bodhisattvas and Buddhas are elevated into an ideal sphere by virtue of their peculiar dress and jewelry or, in the case of the Buddha, by virtue of his complete lack of jewelry. Indian body, garment and jewelry types--coming, as they did, from the holy land of Buddhism and serving Chinese and Japanese alike as distant yet piously venerated models--imparted to these figures *eo ipso* a kind of classic, ideal form far removed from the stock of ideas and treasures of forms found in China's and Japan's original secular and national environment.

The third function of the garment is to make visible as intensively as possible the essence and the spiritual state of the different sacred beings with the help of a genuinely artistic expressive play of forms to supplement the iconographic characteristics of these garments. Though still in the service of the figure as a whole, the garments can still be seen as an independent vehicle of stylistic traits traceable from period to period. It is particularly characteristic of East Asian art that such stylistic changes are almost exclusively expressed through the medium of the free play of lines formed by the folds, seams, and corners of the garments. It has been claimed with good reason that the lines of the garments assume the same role in East Asian sculpture as the brush lines do in painting and calligraphy.

It remains to be exactly analyzed with the help of specific examples how the essence of a Buddha is expressed in the flow of the lines of his robe--which are

totally calm, clear, relaxed and yet filled with melody and rhythm (22, 23, 25, 28)-- and how the circular movement of these forms, constantly returning to themselves and thus focused on a central point, corresponds to the poses of these figures as a whole and the state of mind they symbolize. The livelier, more flexible, more graceful, and more expressive flow of the garment folds found on figures of Bodhisattvas (52, 55, 57, 58, 60, 61, 65) expresses their essential nature. Drapery is intensified into raging, tension-filled, powerful and active dimensions whenever Devas and similar figures of a belligerent character have to be created (69, 73, 80).

It could also be shown, for example, that crucial differences exist between the stylistic treatment of a Bodhisattva and an apparently rather similar female or male Deva figure with respect to the forms of their garments, and that such differences parallel those of all the other design features. For Deva types all the features are somewhat "earthier," i.e., closer to the human sphere. They have more of the quality of our empirical sphere and less of that of an abstractly spiritualized realm (52, 55, 58, 74, 78).

At a more general level, it may be stated that the more or less two-dimensional, largely decorative-symbolical lines dominate with respect to the garments of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and Vidyârâjas, while for beings of the samsâra world, such as gods, demonic beings and human beings (78 ff.), garment folds assume a much more plastic, three-dimensional and also materially more precisely characterized form, which is quite in harmony with their more realistic, life-filled, but as yet spiritually unemancipated corporeality. Also very revealing is a comparison between the strictly stylized, regular, nearly geometric-ornamental play of the garment folds of the Buddha figures (22 f.) and the entirely different, more randomly lifelike pattern of the robes of monk figures (86). This distinction is not yet as clearly visible at the earlier archaic stage of development with its generally dominating archaic style (16, 17, 42) but, beginning with the period of maturity since the early Tang period (7th century), these stylistic levels have been clearly differentiated. As we have already shown, features corresponding to differences in the treatment of garments may also be observed in the treatment of body poses and facial expressions.

All this may lead us to an insight crucial for an understanding of Buddhist art. If we review our statements about general figure types, poses and movements, about relationship to the third dimension, treatment of body and garment, etc., it becomes evident that as we are descending the ladder of the Buddhist pantheon the more we encounter realistic depiction, fullness of detail, corporeality, and activity which reaches out into the world. In short, we encounter an ever-increasing "realism." The different figure types occur simultaneously but the Western observer is prone to perceive the obvious differences in style as style phases following each other in historical sequence, i.e., to transpose these ontological states into historical categories and not to recognize the primarily "iconographical" values of those stylistic features.

Experience has shown that we arrive at totally erroneous dates if we follow the assumption that more active figures, depicted in more lifelike corporeality and garments, are more recent than quiescent, idealized, more strongly abstract figures with fewer naturalistic details. This is not to say that Buddhist art did not experience historical changes in style which allow us to date individual figures with a

considerable degree of accuracy. (I will have more to say about this in a later chapter.) As a matter of fact, it is Buddhist sculpture which reveals such changes with exemplary clarity. But these changes take place at a level below the differences among figure types which are determined by their religious categories of existence maintained across the sequences of historical phases. Within these types we find a relatively high degree of stability and continuity which may easily mislead the uninitiated into assuming that the East knows no historical changes. Such changes do occur. But in art, as elsewhere, the principles (if not laws) of historical processes, and particularly the relationship of each present to its past, i.e., to tradition, is somewhat different than in the West.

The Buddhist Sculptor

If we attempt to answer questions about the artists who created the Buddhist images, we must assume that conditions were similar to those of the European medieval period. Sculptors were primarily craftsmen in the employ of religious institutions, most notably of temples and monasteries and their workshops. In most instances they remained anonymous. We are more likely to learn the names of the priests who were responsible for the correct iconographic design and, hence, the religio-magical efficacy of the images. These priests are often erroneously identified in the sources as the creators of those works in the sense that they had actually fashioned them. Particularly in China, where artists are usually deemed worthy of being mentioned in the official historiography only if they were painters or calligraphers who fit the definition of the classical Chinese artistic *literati* ideal, sculptors are rarely ever mentioned or at best are referred to only in passing. It is typical that one of the very few masters mentioned in the official chronicles of the Six Dynasty period, Tai Kuei (4th century), was both a painter and musician. And several sculptors of the T'ang period are only mentioned because they had built their reputation primarily as painters. Other sources, local and temple chronicles, devotional books and inscriptions also yield little or no information about sculptors even in cases where they provide detailed information about the date, size, weight and material of those large images which attracted more than ordinary attention, constituted the true center of a temple building and provided the reason for its construction. We must be aware that the "makers" of an image identified by name on consecrating inscriptions were frequently not its real creators, but rather sponsors or donors.

The situation is somewhat different in Japan. The first great sculptor, Tori Busshi (Busshi means "Buddha master"), was a descendant of immigrant Chinese. He enjoys a well-deserved fame as the creator of the main cult image (17) of the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji (early 7th century) and therefore as the father of Buddhist sculpture in Japan. Beginning with him down through the Kamakura period with its great wood carvers, the names of many masters appear in historical sources, inscriptions and signatures. These individuals should, however, not be regarded as artistic personalities in the Western sense, but more as workshop directors, heads of certain schools and leading representatives of particular artistic traditions. Their fame was based on craftsmanship, and they were closely linked to particular religious institutions and aristocratic sponsors. They emerged into the

limelight, while the vast number of their anonymous workshop assistants and the many, mostly obscure, provincial sculptors remained anonymous.

These protagonists could only rise to prominence after the immigrant Chinese and Korean teachers, who dominated the early periods, gradually lost their importance and finally disappeared altogether--a process which began as early as the 8th century during the Nara period. It is well documented that important images of the early period were created by Chinese or Korean masters, or by Japanese disciples working under their direction. We know that the portrait statue (86) of the Chinese abbot, Chien-chen (J. *Ganjin*, 688-763)--who had been invited to Japan with great fanfare and who had lost his eyesight during the long drawn-out and dangerous voyage--was created by one of the Chinese artists who had accompanied him. Many of the other Buddhist sculptors may have been monks who had artistic talent and expertise in various crafts.

But the leading masters of medieval Japan whose names are known to us were not members of the clergy or were so only pro forma. One of the greatest among them was Jōchō (died 1057), the creator of the refined, aristocratic, mature classic style of the courtly Fujiwara period (28). He was the founder of the first major independent woodcarving workshop from which all important later workshops descended or branched off. He was an artist who received commissions from all quarters but primarily, of course, from temple-monasteries and the court aristocracy, and was therefore by no means an "independent artist." He could cope with all those commissions only by means of a form of division of labor applied to the carving process which I have described above. He was the first to be awarded the rank of a Buddhist priest as an honorary title--a fact which demonstrates the rise in social prestige of these craftsmen-artists.

A large number of great masters were active during the Kamakura period. Each had his own individual style and also tended to sign his works, albeit not in very conspicuous places (usually in the hollow interior of the statues). Such signatures are somewhat different from and rather more personal than, for example, the official consecrating inscription engraved on a statue (17) which identifies Tori as its master creator. The documents identify the carvers of the images, and (occasionally even ahead of them) the painters who applied the figure's surface coating, which was of crucial importance just as it was in gothic wood-carved figures.

This does not mean, however, that it is easy to compile a reliable list of all the works of the greatest master of the Kamakura period, Unkei (ca. 1153-1224), on the basis of such source material and more general stylistic criteria. Among the statues which are more or less reliably ascribed to him (29, 88-90) are some of the most outstanding works of Buddhist sculpture in all of East Asia. These works have been praised because of their technical expertise as well as their inspired vitality and religious spirituality. Unkei's father, Kōkei, had also been a great master who had made basic contributions to the evolution of the Kamakura style. His son and grandson managed to continue his school for a while until Buddhist sculpture suffered a gradual decline.

Such traditions of particular families, workshops and schools, created and maintained in part by natural descendants and in part by the general practice of adopting talented disciples, were extremely important for the steady development of Buddhist sculpture and many other fields of art. Sustained by this steady flow of

tradition, important masters could rise like waves above the average level without seeing the continuation and future impact of their legacy jeopardized. Of course, these conditions also favored a certain trend toward mechanical reproduction and mass production. This did not, however, pose the same threat to artistic creativity so evident in modern times, because these culturally vigorous earlier periods still mainly relied on individual creative personalities. The master in charge of producing a sculpture put his own stamp more or less clearly on all work done in his workshop, even though not every, perhaps not even a single one of these works should be regarded as an authentic creation or as the free expression of his personal style in the modern sense. The high quality of the major products of a workshop reflects the decisive influence of the master with respect to design and adjustment and it is he who put the finishing touches on these works. Such personal finishing touches may frequently not even have been necessary, because the master had raised the work of the entire workshop to such high levels that every member and every individual piece of work was permeated by his individual style. We should perhaps visualize this relationship as being similar to that prevailing within an outstanding orchestra whose achievements are neither exclusively those of its conductor nor those of its individual musicians but arise from the creative atmosphere generated by its leader joining both leader and musicians in a common creative venture.

Men of "original genius" in the modern sense, therefore, did not exist or did so only very rarely. They appeared, if at all, in much more recent periods, as, for example, a poor mendicant monk who up to now has been little known in the West and was only recently discovered in Japan. He called himself Mokujiiki Shōnin (The Honorable Plant Eater or Vegetarian, 1718-1810). As a sign of his gratitude and in fulfillment of a vow, he would leave carved wooden figures (94) wherever he had been given shelter. A large number of them have been preserved in remote rural areas. The inspiration for these figures may have come from rural folk-art to which we owe carved dolls and figures of goddesses of fortune, etc., of great charm. It may also be found in the style and particular sculpting techniques of Shintō cult images. But these works do reveal a truly outstanding, though naive, original talent which had broken away from the long since ossified official tradition of Buddhist sculpture. They are also permeated by a scurrilous humor arising from the world-transcending and smiling wisdom of a mendicant monk. This humor does not spare even the Bodhisattva figures, but it never profanes them.

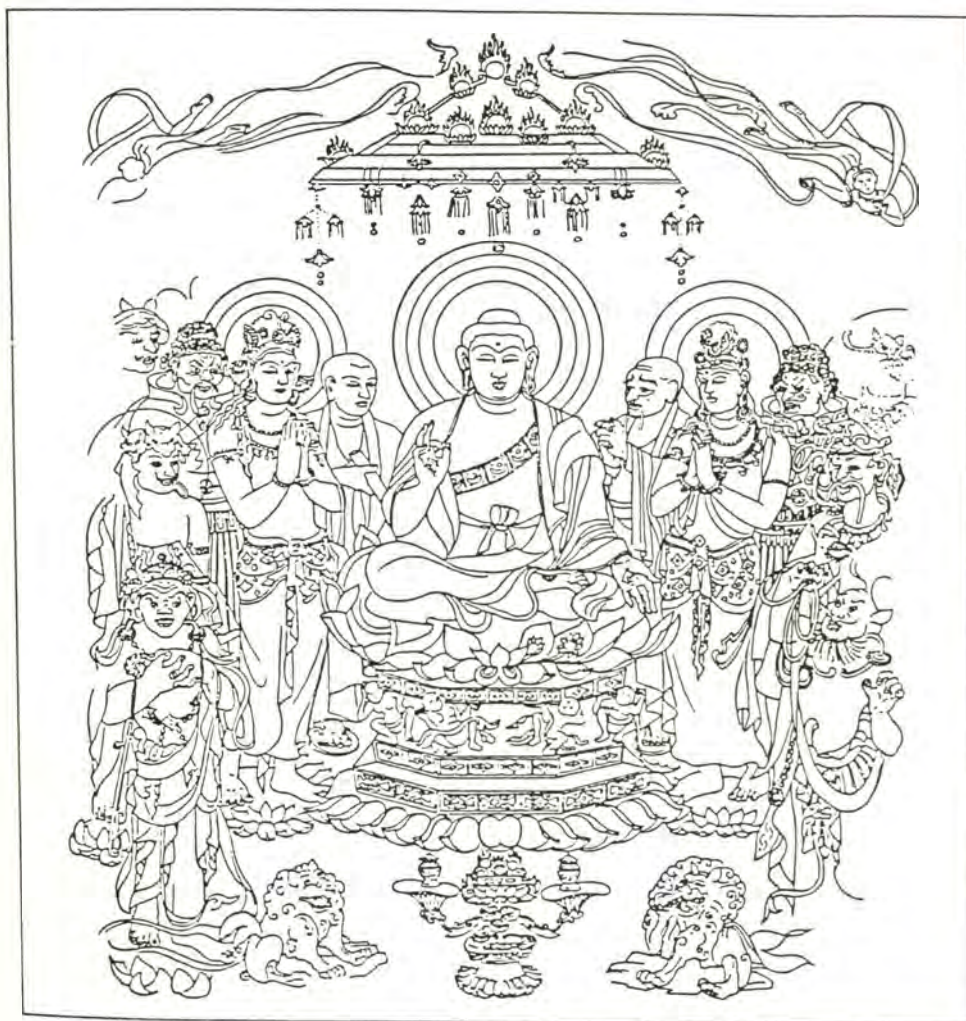
Painting

Buddhist sculpture and Buddhist painting are most intimately related. We may claim with some justification that paintings transpose three-dimensional figures onto a two-dimensional plane. This transposition was greatly facilitated by the fact that most sculptured works, as already mentioned earlier, are strongly tied to a two-dimensional plane. Principles of composition and other matters are similar and the aesthetic problem of the laws specific to each of these two fields of artistic endeavor has never been brought into sharp focus in East Asia to the degree this was done in Europe, if for no other reason than that the question of an "imitating" depiction of reality was not of crucial importance.

The distinction between the two is also less precise in another respect: cult figures or groups of figures such as free-standing sculptures in a temple room frequently emerge into their full three-dimensionality from a painted background and constitute therefore only one, albeit the most prominent, part of the entire iconographic "scene" which involves an intimate fusion with the other decorative elements and paintings of the interior of such temple halls (26). All elements act together as parts of an artistic continuum. In a religious sense it makes no difference whether a sacred figure is painted or sculpted. Much of what has been said in the previous chapter remains therefore valid here. For example, poses, movements, and expressions of individual figure types vary according to their level of existence, as does the treatment of bodies and garments and the relationship between them. The same holds true for the relationship of artistic forms and empirical reality in general. Once we have provided a survey of picture types, iconographical themes and technical procedures, we will, therefore, be free to turn our attention to the means of expression characteristic of painting: to the question of how painting, as a two-dimensional art, solves the problem of the third dimension, to the methods of composition, the treatment of lines and colors and the special contribution which painting has made to provide visual representations of the Buddhist world of ideas and images.⁷⁶

Picture Types and Themes

The most important Buddhist paintings in ancient times--now, unfortunately, for the most part destroyed or heavily damaged--are wall paintings found in temple halls, cave sanctuaries, or chapels of pagodas. Though East Asia never possessed the wealth of wall paintings found in the cave temples of Central Asia, pictures from places like Turfan or Tun-huang can contribute significantly to the iconographic, compositional and stylistic reconstruction of lost paintings. In particular, the "Thousand Buddha Grottoes" (Ch'ien-fo-tung) in Tun-huang, which was the westernmost outpost of Chinese art, still display today a representative sample of the kind of paintings (and, in part, also sculptures) used to furnish such sanctuaries. They come closest to giving us an impression of the original variety of paintings and the abundance of their forms and colors.



21* Diagram of a wall painting in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji.

These paintings are mostly from the 5th to the 10th centuries, i.e., from the classic period of Buddhist art. Walls and ceilings are entirely covered with paintings, large hieratic compositions, narrow friezes, pictures of legendary figures and events, and a wealth of symbolic adornments. Nothing like this survives in China proper. In Japan a few more examples have been preserved from the classic period, but they, too, are scarce. Still, these remnants may serve, though not as substitutes, but at least as a basis for an imaginative reconstruction of lost continental models for which we have also extensive descriptions in literary sources, like the "Li-tai Ming-hua-chi" (Report of Famous Paintings in Historical Sequence) by Chang Yen-yüan (A.D. 847) who describes the wall paintings in the large temples of Ch'ang-an (modern Hsi-an), the splendid capital of the T'ang empire.

Several fragments of Chinese wall paintings, either from temples in China proper or from Central Asian sites, have found their way into Western collections. But many of these are either of provincial character or come from relatively late periods (i.e., after 1300). We lack, for instance, a sufficient number of original examples of the masterworks of the T'ang period. Only the best wall paintings in Tun-huang give us a true impression of the uniqueness and achievement of the art of classic Chinese wall paintings on the Asian continent.

It was Japan, however, which until recently provided the most important and oldest examples of a transplanted tradition of temple wall paintings in the famous works in the "Golden Hall" (Kondō) of the Hōryūji near Nara, which date from the end of the 7th or the beginning of the 8th century (98, 107; 21*). These works were most likely either done by Chinese or under Chinese direction and, no doubt, resemble their contemporary Chinese models very closely. It is, therefore, even more regrettable that they were destroyed or disfigured beyond recognition by water during a fire, caused by negligence, which broke out in January 1949 while facsimile copies were being made and restoration work on the building was going on.⁷⁷

The main function of wall paintings was, of course, to provide a cultic and edifying depiction of sacred truths and sacred images joined in a most intimate union of spirit and mood with the sculpted cult figures on the central Sumeru terrace. These paintings thus contributed to the original organization and decoration of the sanctuary, particularly since they were always integrated with painted decorations of an ornamental character covering the entire temple hall. The predominant themes for wall paintings and sculptures alike were sacred groups (21*) of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and such accompanying figures as Devas and Arhats. Such themes are found in the works in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji which embody the highest levels of spiritual attainment ever depicted in wall paintings. The vital contribution of wall paintings to the consecration of sanctuaries is to turn them into a "Buddha Land," where the sacred figures convey their powerful presence within the visionary revelation of their "Pure Lands."

The large number of sculpted Buddha figurines already mentioned--the 1,000 or 3,000 Buddhas of the various cosmic chiliads--correspond to those painted on the walls or beams of temple halls; they also "illustrate" the Miracle of Śravastī, exhibiting the Buddha's mysterious power of multiplication. Most important are the mandala diagrams (7) which are usually located to the left and right of the cult image platform, and occasionally also on the back wall behind the platform. These represent the opposite pole to the almost amorphous massing of the small Buddha

figurines, i.e., they provide a most strictly geometric arrangement of a metaphysical-symbolic character. The central configurations follow a genuinely pictorial formative principle but one which by virtue of its strict regularity brings this form of composition close to that of the maṇḍalas.

The maṇḍalas were usually painted, just like ordinary wall paintings, in colors on a primed surface, and in the form of large scrolls (for example, 3 x 3.5 meters), and occasionally also as linear paintings done in gold on blue or purple silk. Generally speaking, all the paintings in a temple room, together with the cult figures, all furnishings, and even the painted walls and doors of the altar shrines, constitute a maṇḍala system whose figures or symbolic signs may even be distributed over other architectural elements, particularly the free-standing interior pillars.

Legendary or visionary "event pictures" or narrative sacred scenes may be considered as a second important group of themes. Among these we find, for example, the eight major events of Śākyamuni's earthly life, including the scene of his entry into nirvāna, which appears to have been a favorite theme of murals as well as kakemono or hanging scrolls (119). He is shown as a golden figure lying on his bed under flowering trees, surrounded by the mourning representatives of all levels of existence ranging from the Bodhisattvas to tiny beetles.

Visions of the Pure Land of Amitābha and its splendors (103) also belong to this group. Among these the scene showing Amitābha descending with a large entourage of Bodhisattvas to welcome a believer at the moment of his death and guide him to a blessed rebirth in the Pure Land (*J. Amida-raigō*; 106, 109) is particularly important. The Pure Land was not depicted in paintings alone: occasionally it is also represented by an entire sanctuary, its temple buildings, gardens and ponds, cult figures, and fittings (4). In an anticipatory vision, the pious individual is made to feel transported to the supra-mundane splendor of the Pure Land of the West as it appeared to religious imagination and was described in glowing colors by various texts. In this sense, such paintings or architectural structures are "illustrations" of Sūtras or representations of higher worlds.

At the other extreme are scenes of judgment passed on sinners and of their torture in purgatory which also frequently appear on temple walls; occasionally only the Ten Judges of Hell are depicted.

There is a remarkable scarcity of pictures from religious history of the sort known in Christian art, with its numerous wall paintings illustrating Old and New Testament stories or legends of the saints. This is because Mahāyāna art, like the doctrine itself, values "historical" events less highly than "spiritual" events. It therefore concentrates on the sacred figures as spiritualized representatives of the Absolute and on powerful demonstrations of certain basic teachings.

Among the surviving narrative pictures, the wall paintings of Tun-huang depicting Jātakas (legends from earlier existences of the Buddha and his good deeds) are the most common, and we may assume that many more such paintings existed during the flourishing period of Buddhist art. Inspired by such narrative pictures from Buddhist legend, many series of scenes from the lives of great personalities of East Asian Buddhism were painted, like those from the life of the Japanese Prince Shōtoku (574-622). Others depict the lives and works of men who embodied the ideals of a certain school in an exemplary manner. The individual events are often distributed along a single vertical picture plane where the sequence

of events is depicted as occurring along a garden path winding its way through a landscape, which usually provides the scenic background.

Thematically, those wall paintings showing portraits of popular priests and patriarchs are closely related to these biographical pictures. They usually occur in groups or rows of five, seven, eight, etc., but are not primarily dedicated to the memory of great individual personalities. Rather, they use these figures to represent the tradition of a certain doctrine or cult as it evolved from one age to another, from its Indian origins, or even its history throughout the entire Buddhist world. In the latter cases the movement from India, the land of origin, to Central Asia, China and to Japan could be shown. Just as in sculpture (see p. 86 ff.), portraits in painting essentially have a cultic function. The rows of patriarch portraits on the temple walls surrounding the central Buddha and Bodhisattva figures belong therefore to the "entourage" of the central figure or figures and, formally speaking, are part of the groups. Closely linked to such systematic arrangements of figures are the figures of donors which, though placed in inconspicuous places, are also included in that sacred sphere, the "Buddha Land" constituted by the sanctuary and, particularly, by the personal presence of the figures of sacred beings wherever they appear to the mind open to a visionary experience.

Second in importance are the kakemono, or hanging scrolls, which are usually mounted on brocade. Because most wall paintings were destroyed, hanging scrolls constitute the bulk of material surviving from early centuries and hold the highest religious and artistic rank among them. But such kakemono did not serve as permanent cult images in the temples or did so only in exceptional cases. This function was reserved for the sculpted images or the murals. Buddhist kakemono may perhaps be called portable substitutes for sculpted images because they were only removed from storage and displayed in the temple halls for special rites or for use outside of the temple where sculpted images were not available and where the presence of the numena they represented could create a temporary sanctuary, a sacred precinct, a Buddha Land.

Special rites might be held within the framework of the official cults in the temples and their side rooms, as, for example, certain ceremonies honoring individual sacred figures during which their image served as main cult image. They would also occur on memorial days for patriarchs and other important personalities of Buddhism, during religious ceremonies in commemoration of Śākyamuni's entrance into nirvāna and other key events and, finally, during such important ceremonies as the abhiṣeka ceremony (an initiation rite)⁷⁸ and during rituals of exorcism. The Vidyārājas, combating all evil and providing blessings, were usually at the center of exorcism rituals.

The other type of special rituals were held at the request of or for the benefit of individuals and groups in private residences and palaces, as, for example, on the occasion of entering the clergy, during supplication rituals for the recovery of sick persons, at death-beds and as "soul masses" for the departed, or during personal services in front of a sacred image in the private room of a priest. Paintings frequently served as part of daily private rites carried out on domestic altars or during travels, and played a role similar to that of miniature figurines. They were

occasionally also placed at the center of grand state ceremonies in the imperial palace. Such rituals were most likely inspired by Chinese models and were held rather frequently in Japan. On such occasions the wildly demonic Go-Dairiki-Bosatsu (the Five Bodhisattvas of Great Powers; 22*) were venerated in order to assure peace and blessings for the empire.

Kakemono were suspended on walls or free-standing frames. Small altar tables--frequently made of lacquerware and equipped with the usual cult implements (see p. 165 ff.)--together with a seat for the priest, were usually placed in front of these frames. Occasionally, when an entire group or row of sacred figures was being venerated, several pictures were hung side by side and each furnished with an altar of its own. All these pictures constituted an iconographic, cultic, and artistic whole, so that we are justified in calling them triptychs or picture cycles. In cases where the Five Hundred Arhats were depicted we may occasionally even encounter one hundred of such "portraits" (each containing five figures; 129).

This use of kakemono inside and outside of temples is depicted in clear detail in Japanese hand-scrolls (emakimono), which are an invaluable and inexhaustible historical source.⁷⁹ Japanese classical literature--particularly the novels and court diaries of the Fujiwara period--also provide numerous descriptions of these rites in lively detail. The tokonoma (the picture alcove of the Japanese house) evolved from the practice of displaying a Buddhist picture on the wall with the cult implements placed on an altar in front of it. The ikebana (the flower arrangement as a secularized flower offering) and the incense vessel are still placed in such niches in front of the kakemono; but other factors also contributed to its evolution (15).

The Amitâbha faith gave rise to a custom which holds particular importance for art: a raigô picture (or screen), showing the Lord of the Pure Land of the West approaching with an entourage of his Bodhisattvas (106). This was placed near the death-bed of a believer, so that he could turn to it in faith during his last moments. Long threads were usually attached to the hands of the Buddha figure and were held by the dying individual. This put him in direct magical contact with the saving power of the Buddha. These threads were white, black, red, blue, and yellow--the five traditional Chinese symbolic colors--which in esoteric Buddhism signified the fivefold wisdom of the Enlightened One. Occasionally such graphic scenes, originally the product of religious imagination, were in turn transformed into ritual events when liturgical plays in the form of processions were performed in temple precincts. Masked priests and laymen (see p. 91) acted as Bodhisattvas, while Amitâbha, who had entered nirvâna, was represented by a cult image carried in the procession. Such processions and plays are still performed in Japan.

Textile pictures form a special group of the kakemono type. These were rather common in earlier periods, but only a few examples have survived. The first type of them was done in embroidery (108), employing an extremely refined technique. Such textile kakemono constitute genuine "needle paintings" done entirely in a painterly manner. They were usually created as pious offerings by nuns and noble ladies and show individual figures or complex groups and display the highest standard of manual dexterity and aesthetic refinement. They served either as regular cult images, just like other kakemono, or as wall hangings in place of wall paintings.

Such paintings were also reproduced as tapestry. The extremely complicated, colorful compositions and minute patterns of such works are frequently of the highest technical perfection and achieve genuine pictorial effects. Unfortunately, only a few fragments of such works have survived. The best known of them is a silk tapestry, the so-called Taema Maṇḍala (copy: 103-105) in the Taema Temple near Nara, a depiction of the Pure Land of Amitābha, presumably dating from the eighth or ninth century. It is possibly even of Chinese origin or at least closely imitates excellent T'ang models.

Also related to the painted kakemono are majestic embroidered or painted banners which were hung from or between pillars during religious celebrations. They display single large figures but frequently also pictures of a narrative character arranged in rows from bottom to top. The best surviving examples are the pieces discovered in Tun-huang. Ordinary kakemono could also be used as banners if hung from vertically held poles. They were carried in this manner in processions by individual pilgrims or by mendicant monks.

Finally, mention should be made of folding screens (*J. byōbu*) bearing pictures of Buddhist figures which were also used during religious rituals. A favorite subject for such screens were the Twelve Devas (Deities of the Elements) who would be painted on a pair of screens with six panels each, surrounding the main cult image of the Buddha as a protective guard. The pictorial style of these screens not only shows no substantial difference from that of the kakemono but usually also resembles their format very closely. Buddhist as well as secular screens occasionally bear narrative pictures illustrating legends and events from religious life (temple festivals, etc.). These cover the entire screen surface with a coherent composition.

The topics dealt with in all these portable pictures used in rituals, whether kakemono, banners, screens, or embroideries, are in part identical with those of the wall paintings which they had to replace on particular occasions. But judging by the few surviving wall paintings, they evidently went beyond them. In particular, the proportion of narrative and scenic pictures appears to be larger.

Scenes from the Six or Ten Worlds, i.e., the ten spheres of existence of sentient beings ranging from purgatory (123) to the sphere of deities and, ultimately, to that of the Buddhas, as well as hell fire (124) and paradise scenes, for example, are occasionally depicted in greater detail, in regular picture sequences. The number of topics is also expanded by the inclusion of legendary stories from the history of particular schools or "sects" and their holy men. Pictures illustrating parables are also added as, for example, that of the Three Sages Tasting Vinegar, which shows Confucius, Lao-tzu, and the Buddha tasting vinegar from the same vessel. The same vinegar appears to taste differently to each of them. This is an allegory of the East Asian conviction of the ultimate identity of the three (and other) teachings.

Finally, the range of themes is also larger because the individual figures and groups of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vidyārājas, Devas, etc., are depicted in more diverse iconographic variants (i.e., forms of incarnation or religious functions) which can, of course, not be described here. But all these additional themes do not change the fact that the portable pictures, too, are basically nothing but a kind of functional adaptation of wall pictures and in part also of sculptures for different purposes. Portraits (130 ff.) confirm this judgment. Even in their kakemono form, priest and

patriarch portraits--whether, as in the case of the former, showing more or less contemporary likenesses or, as in the case of the latter, idealizing portraits based on tradition and legend--serve as main cult images during memorial services or are displayed on temple walls whenever the presence of the depicted individual is required as part of a particular liturgical and iconographic program. In this way the sacred act is brought into a living relationship with its origins through the individuals venerated as the bearers of the doctrinal and ritual tradition of the particular school.

Only occasionally do portrait pictures emerge as intimate, truly individualized portraits. An example is that of the modest and pious, nature-loving Japanese priest Myō-e who is shown in the middle of a forest meditating in the branches of a tree (134). This picture is distinguished from those shown in the hieratic official cult portraits, which usually depict the holy men "in cathedra" and with the insignia of their rank, by its entirely unceremonious, yet still solemn and profound pose. Also unusual is the strong emphasis on nature, which usually plays a very insignificant role in classic Buddhist paintings and normally appears only where it is iconographically required; as, for example, in a certain version of Avalokiteśvara appearing in a rocky landscape by the seaside (112), or, very popular in Japan, in the theme of "Amitābha Coming Across the Mountains," in which the hilly landscape in the foreground becomes a symbol of the illusory "foreground" world of *samsāra* (105).

But landscapes came more and more to lose this subservient function and became both direct expressions of the religious experience of the world and symbols of its totality. This process began much earlier in East Asia than in Europe, both in absolute terms and in terms of a relative internal evolution. The secular art of landscape painting, which began to flourish from the middle of the first millennium, entered more and more into the Buddhist sphere until, finally, in the painting of Zen Buddhism, pictures of nature, as essential vehicles for religious meaning, became more important than the cult images.

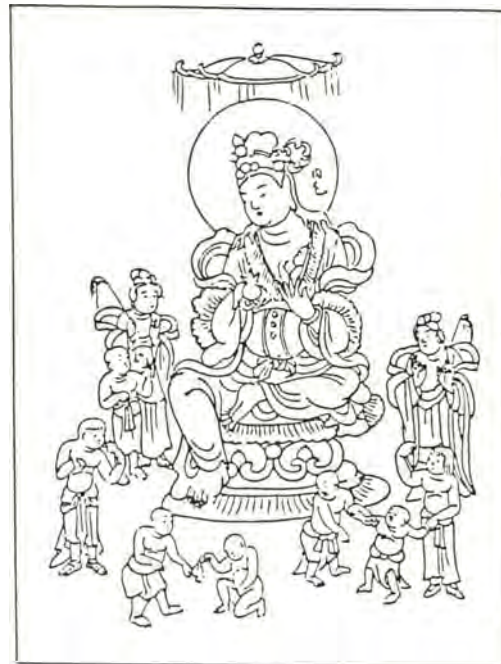
In the sphere of classic religious painting some of the more "worldly" narrative pictures, particularly illustrations of legends (119 ff.) and depictions of the different realms of existence, already offered numerous occasions for including landscape scenes. And in the narrative picture format par excellence--the *emakimono*--landscapes assumed a vitally important function not only with respect to topic and mood but also with respect to composition. Landscape, however, still only played a subordinate function and not yet an independent role as an essential, perhaps even the most essential, form for expressing the Buddhist world view.

In Japan, nature intruded even into the strictly cultic, symbolic world of the *maṇḍala*, namely in the *maṇḍalas* of medieval Buddhist-Shintō syncretism. These show a Shintō shrine in an idyllic landscape and above, suspended in the realm of the Absolute, the figures of the Buddhist sacred persons whose descended traces (*avatāras*) the Shintō numina (*kami*) were considered to be during this period. The emotion-filled, pious and lyrical, nativist sense of nature, so typical of the Japanese, has found attractive expression in these pictures. This sense of nature not only gave rise to a special type of architectural cult precincts, as mentioned above (see p. 50), but also produced Shintō images of the *Kami* in sculpture and painting under Buddhist influence. The latter still closely resembled native traditional types from the sphere of the imperial court with respect to pose, dress and ornament. This

parallels an earlier process in China where Buddhist cult images had a similar effect on the indigenous religious realm and where Taoist divine images, though not derived from Buddhist images, received some inspiration from them.



22* Kongō-ku. Scroll, ink on paper.



23* Hârîti. Ink on paper.

The other major type of the East Asian picture scroll, next to the kakemono, the emakimono (hand-scrolls unfolding horizontally), also found wide application in Buddhist painting in three forms: firstly, as illustrated or otherwise decorated book scrolls bearing sacred texts; secondly, as collections of iconographic model drawings; and thirdly, as narrative pictures. The first kind is dealt with in the next chapter, since it belongs to the field of calligraphy and book decoration. The other two will be discussed below.

The collections of iconographic model drawings (*zuzō-shō*), which have been preserved in large numbers in Japan, held extraordinary importance for their authors and users and still do for modern researchers. They are compendiums of every imaginable Buddhist figure type. These rather voluminous works of 10, 50, 100 and more long horizontal scrolls were prepared by priests of the esoteric schools and provided a stock of models for study as well as for the depiction of the complicated and strictly regulated figures of the Buddhist pantheon which would have hardly been possible without such "reference works." Such drawings also exist as single sheets, occasionally in large format (22*) and mounted as kakemono, but are normally found in emakimono, i.e., in the form of horizontal book scrolls. This, however, refers only to their external form. The internal form of such collections is

the album or catalogue, defined as a compilation of similar, but formally unconnected pictures, which may, however, also be found in independent versions.

Such collections of iconographic model drawings contain every available, dogmatically correct depiction of sacred figures ranging from the Buddhas on down to the lower categories of beings. They are executed mostly in skillful ink line drawings but occasionally are also given a light coloration (23*). Written explanations, particularly on the symbolically important colors, as well as directions for the proper liturgy are also added. The drawings could serve painters and sculptors as models for the depiction of particular figures which had to be correct in every detail because this alone assured their efficacy.

The drawings also enabled monks to study these sacred beings and immerse themselves in their significance, their miraculous saving powers and the Absolute manifested in them. In some instances, religiously and artistically talented priests succeeded in creating independent designs of their own, and thus managed to infuse new life into an iconographic tradition which was always in danger of succumbing to ossification. However, such instances always remained exceptions which were justified as being the result of special inspiration (137).

These pictures transmit both the archetypal patterns of the sacred figures and particular individual works of art, frequently those which priests or their predecessors had seen in China during their studies and whose saving powers they wanted to transmit to Japan by virtue of exactly fixed images so that they would also benefit Japan. The works reproduced in these sketches, some of which even reveal Indian and Central Asian elements, are by no means restricted to paintings or drawings but also include sculptures.

The originals of such archetypal pictures were done in different techniques, at different times, in different regions and perhaps were also based on different local monastic teachings and artistic traditions; furthermore, their reproductions or the models on which they were based came to enter such collections during different periods. These facts explain the noticeable stylistic differences even between drawings which appear side by side on one and the same scroll. The pictures thus projected onto one level and placed next to each other actually represent a richly graduated historical relief. This vast and highly interesting material, which must have had its counterpart in China, still awaits analysis by modern research. It is indispensable for any serious study of the history of religion and iconography. It also represents a beautiful and rich treasure of examples of the East Asian art of drawing.⁸⁰

The narrative emakimono are distinguished from all picture types mentioned up to now in two respects: First, in contrast to the wall paintings and movable pictures already introduced, emakimono are in no way linked to the sanctuaries or related to their architecture, to the cult figures they contain or the rituals performed in them as is the case to varying degrees with the former two types. Second, and also in contrast to most specimens of the other two categories, they are essentially narrative pictures. Because their scroll format is potentially unlimited in length and continues without interruptions, it creates a space-time continuum in which a narrative, historical, epic or dramatic story can unfold. This painting type has nowhere else been taken to its logical conclusions to the degree this was done in East Asia.

But this potential has not always been fully exploited. Sometimes individual pictures, such as long sequences of sacred figures and groups of self-contained scenes, merely follow each other and are at best only superficially held together by a common landscape background (122). Such isolated parts are frequently also separated by textual passages.

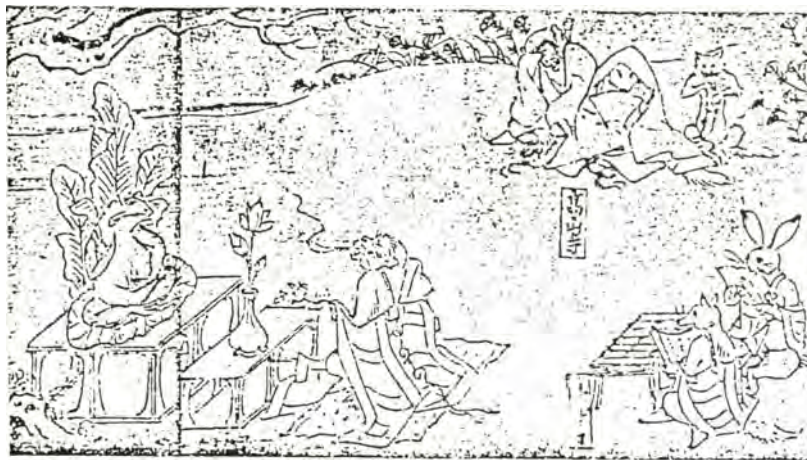
The true nature of the emakimono manifests itself only where related processes unfold before us in the sequence of their individual, continuously merging phases. Frequently such pictorial strips are several meters in length and tell genuine picture-stories. Depictions of the Buddha legend or from "church history" are rare. More frequent are illustrations of events from the history of individual sects. The majority are stories and legends concerning the founding of temples, miraculous events and mystical experiences, and, most commonly, the life stories of great priests. (Scrolls with secular themes, equally numerous, are left aside here.)

These pictorial narratives have dual origins. One may be seen in the frieze-like wall picture strips which in the cave temples of Tun-huang, for example, depict Jātaka stories. The other is found in the illustrated Sūtra scrolls. One such work, the "Kako-genzai-inga-kyō" (see p. 155), has been preserved in Japan but is purely Chinese in type. Aside from their religious content, the emakimono also convey a tangible impression of the cultural and, particularly, the cultural and devotional life of the medieval period. But this was hardly their original intent. Rather, these Buddhist pictorial chronicles and pictorial biographies were regarded as sacred documents, as reliable reports of high antiquity, of the particular saving and miraculous powers of a temple or of the exemplary lives and works of holy men, primarily those of the founders of Buddhist sects. They contain, of course, no historically objective presentation in the modern sense, but rather reports of such numinous events as the miraculous manifestation of the Buddha power in response to fervent pleas of the faithful (125). Their aim is to demonstrate the all-pervading absolute Law (dharma) in order to promote faith.

In Japan such pictorial narratives are often called *engi-emaki*. *Engi* is the term for a fundamental concept of Buddhist teaching, i.e., that of "arising from conditional causation" (*pratīya-samutpāda*), and the pictorial narratives are referred to by this term because they are intended to point out the innermost, true, indestructible and inescapable interdependence of all things and events. Such pictures were intended, first of all, to preach. Next to this, they may also have been used for personal instruction and edification as priests and monks slowly and solemnly unfolded them during quiet hours or in the presence of high ranking visitors, viewing them at a leisurely pace to allow these stories to make the reader share fully in the events they depict. The picture scrolls with scenes from purgatory (124) or the realm of the Hungry Ghosts (*preta*; 123) may have been powerful visual sermons illustrating the detailed descriptions of such realms in the edifying literature which they accompany. They even show us demonic-grotesque aspects of Buddhist painting and do so in a manner which, like their successors, the late 18th to 19th-century ghost pictures, is not without a certain element of humor amidst the gruesome ambience.

Emakimono may consist of single picture scrolls of constant height (between 20 and 40 centimeters) but varying lengths. The majority of them are series of scrolls, each at least four to five meters in length, whose number may go as high as

fifty in some special cases. This difficult picture format, whose individual passages are only gradually revealed as the scroll is unfolded from right to left, has been employed in a very skillful manner by East Asian painters not only to achieve a lively flow, frequently full of thrills and suspense, but also to show or suggest an almost incredibly wide pictorial space which seems to expand beyond the confines of the scroll itself. This effect is achieved on a small pictorial surface through forms of composition which defy the limitations of the picture surface and challenge the viewer's imagination by suggesting a vaster space beyond. Landscapes or buildings are useful vehicles for the creation of continuity of the pictorial space as medium for the progression of the events in time.



24* Satirical cartoon of a Buddhist ritual.

In early (pre-Sung) Chinese painting this picture type may have been more common than implied by the number of surviving examples. Most of such material, including its most important surviving examples, has been preserved in Japan, and this makes it appear that the Japanese were the first to have fully understood and applied the possibilities of this epic pictorial form. The emakimono has also found in both countries a number of highly important missions outside of the Buddhist sphere as secular narrative pictures reporting historical events or illustrating classical works of literature. The secular and the sacred frequently merged. Leaving aside the splendid pure landscape emakimono which play a leading role in Chinese and Japanese painting, this picture type may be seen as representing within the entire tradition of Asian painting the vitally significant border zone between the sacred and profane spheres (126).

Sacred themes occasionally reach into the profane world or profane themes enter the sacred world in one way or the other even within the Buddhist sphere. Such is the case with a Japanese pictorial scroll from the early 14th century which describes homosexuality in Buddhist monastic life. Homosexuality was widely spread in Japanese society and was not considered as offensive. The picture was created in

the very monastery where it is still kept today. Still another example is a famous series of pictures from the 12th century which are traditionally, but without clear evidence, ascribed to a high-ranking clergyman, Kakuyū (Toba Sōjō, d. 1140). These are a number of humorous and lively animal scenes rendered in witty monochrome ink line drawings. Some show monkeys, foxes, hares and frogs as Buddhist priests and believers. A drawing of a "mass," celebrated by a monkey in front of a frog representing the Buddha, was obviously intended to be a parody or caricature (24*). But since there is no doubt that these drawings originated within monastic circles, we are compelled to regard them as a form of self-criticism, adding a charming touch to Buddhist art, which generally tends to be more solemn and austere.

Examples of genuine travesty may, of course, also be found, but only in very late times. These, however, impart to the solemn or lofty substance of their subjects a profanely trivial form which does not suit it. Such is the case, for example, in Japanese woodcuts or paintings of the 17th and 18th centuries, where the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra appears as a city courtesan riding an elephant, or Kṣitigarbha is shown as a dancing and flute-playing boy wearing a giant lotus leaf as pilgrim hat. It is difficult to assume that such depictions were intended to ridicule the Buddhist religion and that they, therefore, aimed at effects akin to those found during the Reformation or Enlightenment in Europe. They are much too innocently playful for that. However, it is clear that the religious element is no longer being taken very seriously, and that we are dealing with a late phenomenon typical of a secularizing culture (cf. 35*).⁸¹

Techniques

Depending on the nature of the surface employed, Buddhist paintings may be divided into murals or wall paintings done on stucco or wood, and into movable pictures done on cloth (usually silk) or paper. In terms of material employed to paint the pictures, either ink drawing or ink painting or coloring is employed for both types of painting, while gold serves as an intensifying decorative element. Several other special techniques are also employed, but they all are only of marginal importance.

Since wall paintings (26, 98, 107) are found predominantly in wooden buildings where walls, if existent, are only partially made of masonry, the plaster covering the walls in such buildings has to serve as the base for such paintings. Wherever these walls are inserted between pillars, their surfaces of thin frame or lattice grids were covered with several layers of loam of increasingly finer texture towards the surface. This applies both to the nature and the treatment of the clay itself and to the texture of the substances mixed in with the clay for greater stability. The inner layers usually show admixtures of chopped straw while the outer layers have thin hemp fiber or animal hair mixed in with the loam. Oil and mainly glue made of seaweed were occasionally used as binders. The outermost layer, which provided the actual picture surface, consisted of finely textured white gypsum, fired shell chalk, smooth textured clay or similar materials.

The total thickness of such walls, based on the example of the Hōryūji, is only sixteen centimeters for wall surfaces 3.30 meters in height and either 2.60 or 1.5 meters in width. It is truly amazing that such walls have withstood the earthquakes

and the vicissitudes of the humid monsoon climate for over 1,200 years. Wooden walls, once their slits had been carefully pasted over, were given the same white surface coating which was also applied directly onto the natural, roughly hewn wall surfaces of Central Asian and West Chinese cave temples.

Paints were made of the customary mineral non-water soluble pigments like iron oxide, ocher, malachite, and cinnabar in pulverized form. The black substance for ink was derived from the soot of pine or oil while the white substance, used for surfacing the walls and also frequently mixed with other colors, was made of fired chalk powder from crushed mollusk shells. A few vegetable-based dyes were also used. All pigments were frequently mixed with white to make them more opaque. Thinned vegetable glue was used as binder and was mixed with the pigment powder by kneading it very carefully into the mass immediately before applying the paint.

Paint was applied on either moist or dried plaster. In neither case, however, is the result a genuine fresco as is often incorrectly said, because no chemical reaction took place between the picture surface and the pigments. Rather, this technique resembles more that of *tempera* and is therefore rather vulnerable. Such pictures are easily rubbed off or washed off. The pigment particles also tend to peel off the surface with the passage of time. This is one reason for the scarcity of old wall paintings in East Asia.⁸² The specific character of the coloration is the result of this technique and of the mineral, opaque character of most pigments. We always find colors covering circumscribed areas with flat, clear color hues. This hides the individual brush strokes, but produces an effect of great purity and radiance which sustains a warm harmony in spite of the wealth of colors employed. The same technique was applied to the coloring of movable pictures. In both picture types, gold plays an important role which we will discuss later. Beginning with the Sung period, gold was usually applied in wall paintings over slightly raised stucco lines, to represent, for example, pieces of jewelry, the seams of brocade garments and the like.

For wall paintings, the stages of the painting process may have been as follows: On the basis of iconographical model drawings (see p. 125) or other patterns, a kind of stencil was prepared in thin ink lines on sheets of paper. The outlines of the figures were transferred from it onto the wall by either of two techniques. The backside of the stencil was covered with charcoal dust and the lines traced with the application of light pressure onto the surface to be painted. Another technique consisted of producing dotted lines on the surfaces by puncturing the stencils with needles and applying charcoal dust through the holes. Such drawings with needle holes have actually been found in Tun-huang. The needle method could also be used to obtain several copies of a pattern simply by piling several sheets of paper on top of each other. For symmetrical Buddhist configurations half of the work of stencil-drawing could be saved by folding the sheet along its symmetric axis.

The use of such stencil-drawings would have made it possible for Chinese models to have been brought to Japan directly and exactly. It also became possible to apply the same drawing in several different places. For example, the measurements of the recently uncovered, rather dilapidated murals of Bodhisattvas in the Hôryûji pagoda were found to be almost exact duplicates of those in the Golden Hall, and must therefore have come from the same models. Once the

transfer process was completed, the light charcoal lines were reinforced with black or red ink and the proper colors applied. The outlines appear to have occasionally also been scratched into the surface.

Langdon Warner, in his *Buddhist Wall Paintings*, reports that at Tun-huang he has found in large complex wall paintings traces of the compass lines with which the halos had been outlined and of the vertical, horizontal and diagonal lines which were perhaps drawn with the help of strings and constituted a set of coordinates whose intersections marked essential points of the composition. In such instances, the use of stencil drawings--whose size set rather definite limits--could be dispensed with altogether or be restricted to particular details of the total composition. We should perhaps also assume that skilled draftsmen and important artists did not follow their models unthinkingly but produced independent designs, particularly since all forms had been so standardized. However, the degree of artistic freedom exercised by them should not be overestimated.

Painting on prepared wooden surfaces should also be considered in a technical sense as being part of wall painting. Such painting is found not only on walls, but also in figure shrines, on halos, canopies, and as decoration on architectural elements (20*). The application of colors to wooden, clay or lacquer figures is basically not different from their application to walls.

In Buddhist painting, and in East Asian painting in general, normally only aqueous binders were used. The most common among them was a glue made of seaweed or other organic substances. Binders containing fats were hardly ever used. But a kind of oil painting appears to have been in use during earlier times, i.e., during the Sui, T'ang, Asuka and Nara periods, respectively, for particular purposes. This was the so-called *mitsuda* or *mitsudasô* technique (Chin. *mi-t'o[-seng]*), which we encounter in the bowls and boxes found in the Shôsôin Treasure House in Nara (8th century) and in the paintings of figures and decorations on a tabernacle in the Hôryûji (Tamamushi shrine, ca. 600; 120 f.). The latter is most likely of continental origin, but it is still unclear whether the technique of *mitsuda* painting was employed in this particular instance or, as was by no means unusual, the painting was done with colored lacquer. Lacquer was an ancient Chinese medium which was also used for Buddhist implements. *Mitsuda* painting employs a mixture of light yellow or white lead oxide (as a drying agent) and vegetable oil. This mixture was given different colors through the addition of pigments, mainly red, yellow, and green. The use of oil as binder distinguishes this technique from that of lacquer painting, but the results of the application of the two techniques may often be mistaken for each other. The term *mi-t'o-seng* or *mitsudasô* is obviously a phonetic rendition of the Iranian word for lead oxide, *mirdâsang*. This mineral, along with many other products, was imported to China from Persia.⁸³ This is not surprising since Iranian influences on religion and art were not unusual given the kind of relations with the Iranian world prevailing during that time.

The techniques used for movable pictures (*kakemono*, *emakimono*, partitioning screens, banners, etc.) relied on the same ink and many of the same pigments used for immovable pictures. The transfer from stencils is also likely to have occurred rather frequently. But the surfaces on which pictures were placed differed. Silk was mainly used for *kakemono* and banners but paper was employed

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for emakimono, though there were exceptions in both categories. The silk surface was frequently given a dark tone in order to provide a quiet background for the brighter colors. It is unlikely that the brownish tone of the silk resulted solely from age and the fumes rising from candles and incense, and that the pictures were originally much brighter. Colors were used in the same manner as for wall paintings. Opaque application of almost jewel-like radiance was preferred.



25a* Samples of cut-gold decoration (kirikane) on Buddhist paintings.

This radiance was further increased by the rich application of gold. However, this was not in the form of gold in the background, but rather took the form of ornaments and jewelry lavished on the sacred figures. In general, the color of gold was held to be expressive of the body and essence of enlightened beings. There were two methods used simultaneously for its application: The first was painting with gold powder (99, 101, 110, 113 f., 135) mixed with glue and applied in more or less thick layers which made possible freely drawn lines and a smooth covering of surfaces. The other method served to complement and enhance this painted gold surfacing, which had a dull finish, by the attachment of bright ornaments cut out of gold sheets (*J. Kirikane*; 110 ff., 25*). Kirikane could also be applied directly onto a colored background (25*). This is an incredibly difficult technique, but is typical of East Asian--and apparently especially Buddhist--painting and sculpture. Extremely thin gold foil reinforced by a layer of silver, is cut into straight, extremely narrow, frequently almost stringlike strips, which are then glued onto the surface. The flexible strips make it possible to follow every curve. Star- or blossom-shaped ornamental motifs are put together from tiny, square, rhombic or triangular pieces which are cut from the longer gold strips during the gluing-on process itself, as it proved impossible to cut out curved lines or patterns in advance.

Unlike gold painting, the cut-gold technique was confined to purely linear patterns or to patterns consisting of combined dots, but this limitation was largely overcome by unusually imaginative invention of ever new patterns of the most complicated kind. All parts of a Buddhist painting which are intended to appear particularly bright or to shine with splendor are executed in, or at least enriched by, kirikane. This holds particularly true for the circular lines and rays of the halos, the ornaments of the garments or the minute veins on the flower petals of the lotus throne, each of which, as stated by the *Amitâyur-dhyâna-Sûtra*, sends off innumerable rays. Sculptures, too, frequently were given lavish kirikane ornamentation to enhance their surface coloring.

This procedure surely originated in China but, with the exception of Tun-huang, very few examples seem to have survived there. Remnants of kirikane ornamentation were recently found on the original colored surface painting of

wooden sculptures from the Sung period owned by museums in Amsterdam and Boston. In Japan, kirikane was used from the Asuka period to the end of the Kamakura period and even later, primarily by families of craftsmen specializing in this work, but reached its apex during the second half of the Fujiwara period.

Strangely enough, the gold background, so important in old European paintings and mosaics, plays no role at all in East Asian sacred paintings, but is important in secular paintings, particularly in such decorative genres as album leaves, painted fans, screens and sliding doors, and is found more frequently in Japan than in China.

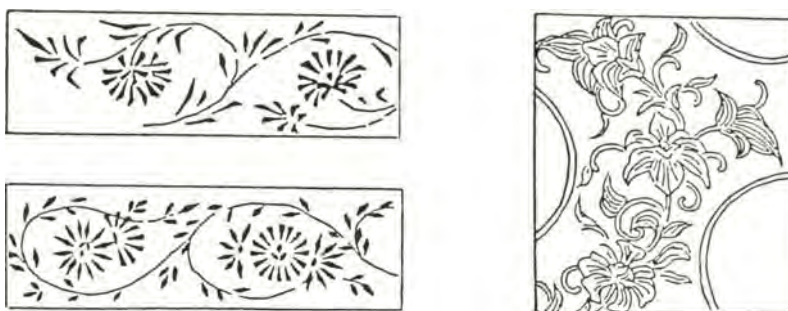


25b* Samples of cut-gold decoration (kirikane) on Buddhist paintings.

While speaking of the decorative effect of Buddhist pictures--leaving their meaning to be clarified later (p. 182 ff.)--and of their intricate interplay of colors and gold, we should not ignore the splendid silk brocades on which they are mounted and which add the final artistic touch to them. It is this total effect of the pictures--amounting to a veritable work of craftsmanship--which was integrated into the total ambience during ritual performances by merging it with the garments of the priests, the precious cult implements, the gold-decorated lacquer tables and chests, the warm-golden, incense-clouded light of the candles, and all the other elements forming part of such rituals to create an all-embracing mysteriously sacred atmosphere.

Just as gold decoration is treated in Buddhist paintings in the same predominantly linear and ornamental manner characteristic of this art in general, lines executed in black ink had to be pure, unmodulated (in East Asian terms "iron-wire") both for contour and interior lines (22*; 107, 110) in order to fit properly into the rigid structure of these pictures (excepting parts of lesser importance). Only in later times were these lines allowed to display moderate variations in thickness. Line drawing executed in black ink (or, occasionally, in color) lines provide rigid frames for the application of colors. These colors contribute so much to the total impression that black and white reproductions are never able to do justice to them.

While in cult pictures the ink lines are more or less limited to the function of defining the iconographic-symbolic line structure, full freedom was gained only later in the art of Zen Buddhism by exploiting the possibilities of calligraphic expression and painterly shadowing (139-146). To be sure, the play of ink lines was given freer reign in narrative pictures than in sacred images because the former employ a more painterly, looser technique frequently reminiscent of water-color painting (123, 124). But since the artistic characteristics of such narrative pictures essentially originated in the secular sphere, they do not present something unique to Buddhist painting. "Classic" cult paintings, however, truly have the character of line drawings while in ink painting, which began to be developed during this time, a distinction between their drawing and painting functions is hardly possible.



25c* Samples of cut-gold decoration (kirikane) on Buddhist paintings.

Purely linear drawings in black and white exist in large numbers, predominantly in the form of the iconographic model sketches already mentioned above (22*, 23*), and in part as votive drawings, frequently produced in numerous copies, as pious exercises and offerings. It was only a small step from such drawings to the kind of linear drawings which were reproduced in large numbers by way of woodblock printing (see p. 158).

Finally, another important field of drawing is the maṇḍala which was very often, but by no means exclusively, executed in detailed gold drawings on black, dark blue, or purple silk. We will add further remarks on a more specifically decorative kind of drawing executed in gold lines on a dark colored ground in connection with our comments on the art of the book (p. 154).

Elsewhere in Buddhist art, pure line drawings found a common and attractive use as engravings in stone or metal. Such engravings cannot be classified as relief art. They clearly belong within the art of drawing. The lyrical, musical beauty of Buddhist line drawings, their mature purity and coolness detached from all earthiness and phenomenal diversity, becomes evident in a very impressive manner in both figural and ornamental motifs (136). Such engravings can be found on the halos of stone or bronze figures but also on their pedestals--as, for example, on the petals of the lotus flower which forms the seat of the Great Buddha of Nara--

and on the votive steles which were very popular in China. In the latter case, such engraved line drawings are most likely found on the base, the back side and sometimes also the two narrow sides of the stele.

Famous paintings were also engraved on steles to preserve them for posterity. Long lost masterworks by outstanding painters of the Tang period such as Wu Tao-tse have been preserved in this manner, albeit in a shadowy and simplified form resulting from this technique, which reduces such pictures to purely linear and hence more or less simplified versions. Another purpose of such engravings was to allow these pictures to be copied at will by taking rubbings from them. Such copies could then be mounted as kakemonos, or pasted to walls and screens.

Pictorial Methods

The composition of Buddhist paintings is generally extremely simple, and only a few traditional types of composition exist. The basic composition consists of a seated or standing individual statue-like figure (97). Its poses, gestures and attributes, pedestal and halo follow the same principles governing sculpted images (compare 29 with 102). Just as in sculpture, groups of figures emerged quite early. The most elementary of such groupings consists of a central main figure with two accompanying figures symmetrically aligned at its sides. Usually these figures are a Buddha and two Bodhisattvas. But even where several such figures appear (21*), their number remains limited and their arrangement simple and easy to understand. In no case do we find such rich and artfully balanced compositional patterns as were frequent in Italian Renaissance painting.

A favorite arrangement for relatively complex groups shows the figures aligned around the central main figure in a circle open at the front. In such alignments, the more important secondary figures are prominently placed to the right and left of the central figure while the less important figures remain modestly in the background or occupy the marginal foreground positions. These groups always depict iconographically related figures whose relationships are subject to strict laws, so that the identification of a single figure frequently provides clues sufficient for identifying the entire group.

Large numbers of figures occur only in a very few picture types (103, 106, 119), but whenever they do occur they are always carefully arranged and, in spite of their large numbers, the figures remain very clearly ranked in accordance with their religious significance. Such pictures include depictions of the preaching Śākyamuni, Amitābha's paradise, or of Amitābha and his entourage coming from across the mountains and, finally, also certain "historical" scenes. The latter are relatively rare and, whenever they do occur, as in Śākyamuni on his deathbed entering into nirvāna (119), offer a quiet, eternalized picture of a particular sacred moment. They therefore resemble static circles of figures rather than narrative depictions of events. The latter were the exclusive preserve of the emakimono, except for legendary scenes depicted in single pictures or series of pictures.

The basic type of composition, whether of individual figures or groups, is thoroughly static in character and attempts only rarely and relatively late to dissolve the static arrangement into a dynamic event, creating between the individual figures not only a spiritual relationship but also one of action and movement. This is in full

accord with the meaning of this art which attempts to reveal the Absolute in its timeless validity. The spiritual relationship and higher unity of these figures is more clearly experienced in this quiet and seemingly unrelated juxtaposition. Such arrangements are frequently only one step removed from the two-dimensional schematic diagrams of the maṇḍalas. Their composition is, therefore, determined by the purely spiritual principle of symmetry.

Asymmetric compositions, which are often regarded as typical of East Asian art, evolved only relatively late. They had no role in the earlier phases and least of all in Buddhist art. The central axis was crucial both for temple precincts and groups of cult figures. It was understood as the world axis in architecture, sculpture, and painting alike. Every picture is powerfully dominated by it. All secondary figures are distributed in a regular fashion both around the main figure occupying the central axis and over the entire surface of the picture.

We may go even further. Not only the axis, but even the "absolute" center of the picture, i.e., the intersection of its vertical and horizontal axes, is frequently strongly emphasized, preferably being located in or near the heart or the body center of the main figure. The location of this point may vary from the chest to the lower part of the body. In the case of figures seated in the meditative pose, it is located at the point where the ankles of the crossed feet meet. It may also be found slightly below the navel in the vital center which is so important as the seat of spiritual powers, both for meditation and the arts of East Asians.^{71a,85} In some instances, this spot is marked by the central brooch of an ornamental belt. The center of the picture is also often located in the attribute held in front of the body, or in the hands forming a mudrā in front of the chest. This central point may occasionally not be found at the geometric center of the entire picture but only in the center of the main figure (including, however, its throne and canopy). In such cases, the location is determined rather precisely. This principle of intersecting axes has found its purest geometric form--related to the square or to the circle with eight radii--in the maṇḍala.

It is crucial for understanding the artistic aspects of such paintings to realize that the figure is never viewed in isolation but always in the most intimate relationship with its throne, its halo and its canopy. All these individual elements come alive only in this larger context, and all proportions and distances are calculated on the basis of the total design--just as sculpted cult figures, together with their pedestals, halos and canopies, are integrated into the space of the temple.

The preference for strict frontality is linked to these laws of composition. It is the rule which is applied at least to all central main figures. The frontal pose is the pose of quietude, majesty and sacredness. It is a pose which is self-contained and complete, immovable and unapproachable, beyond time and, because it is captured in two-dimensional form, also beyond space. A figure in such a pose is, in its innermost essence, full of activity and capable of radiating its infinite miraculous powers for the salvation of the world. Though quite common, turning movements of the body or even of the head alone, occur most often in secondary figures or in main figures only if they belong to a level below that of the Buddha.

Freer body postures and movements, resulting in participation in space and entry into the flow of time, which imply entry into saṃsāra, occur only at lower levels beginning with that of the Bodhisattva in whose compassionate deeds the

potential activity and emanation of the Buddha is actualized (98, 106, cf. 24). We frequently encounter a turning of the entire figure into a three-quarter profile to the right or the left. This, however, if not merely the result of the more "spatial" manifestation of these figures, may also be explained purely by considerations of composition: A good many of the Bodhisattva figures have evolved as secondary and accompanying figures of central Buddha images. In their flanking positions they were turned towards the main image and thus contribute to the group's orientation towards the center (21*). This slightly turned pose was perhaps later applied to isolated images of Bodhisattvas, unless we are dealing with works which were originally side images of triads and have survived as isolated figures.

But there are also regulations in the iconographic handbooks according to which certain figures had to turn their heads to one of the cardinal points. In pictures, such movement could be shown as a turning to the left or right. The fact that Amitābha normally (but with some exceptions) appears in the raigō pictures approaching from the left is most likely also an indication of the Western direction ascribed to him because Buddhist images should normally be thought of as facing south.

Certain changes in the picture composition become noticeable as we descend on the scale of existence: The composition becomes less structured, the diagonal pose (which, for example, is almost always employed in painted portraits of priests) more pronounced, and the element of movement more dynamic. This process parallels that in sculptures. Yet the demonic figures displaying these features to the fullest are frequently more nearly frozen into rigid poses than truly moving in space and time. Even the higher-ranking Vidyārājas, though displaying the strongest inner tensions, do not assume highly active poses except during a relatively late phase of their development. Being is dominant over Becoming, the Eternal over the Transitory, or rather, the former includes the latter within itself. We might, therefore, perhaps better call it movement in rest or movement neutralized by immobility as we have already had occasion to do with respect to the temple precincts and religious sculptures.

Genuine movement in painting does not appear until the late medieval period, i.e., in China (as far as the evidence indicates) during the Sung period and in Japan (where this process can be traced very clearly) during the late Fujiwara and Kamakura periods. These were periods during which art tended to become generally more realistic and subjective. In the religious sphere this is revealed by a tendency toward a faithful surrender on the part of the believer to the Buddha and a compassionate descent on the part of the Transcendent. This two-directional flow replaced objective cult performances or meditative transformations as bridges across the distance between the faithful and the transcendent holy beings. There was a striving for union with the sacred powers which was sustained by subjective experiences of bliss and actions of fervent faith.

For this reason there appeared more active and less rigidly structured compositions reaching out more freely into space and time. The earliest of these were the Amida raigō pictures (106), where both the subject matter and the nature of Amitābha devotion required such compositions, and the heightening of movement during the evolution of this picture type can be traced step by step. Initially, the pose of Amitābha is still frontal and the Bodhisattvas, regularly

distributed throughout the picture, descend in an arrangement which is almost symmetric and only slightly off center. Later on, the composition becomes asymmetric and a diagonal movement from the high and the rear to the low and the front appears. The dynamic nature of their movements is gradually increased as the figures change from a slow and solemn to a rapid descent. An important artistic device was discovered to convey this movement: the clouds on which the sacred figures descend. They convey not only a sense of movement but at the same time enhance the dreamlike quality of the picture.

The quiet frontal appearance of the Amitābha triad survived, particularly in the solemn pictures of Amitābha Coming Across the Mountains (105), but diagonal movement also soon appeared in paintings showing solitary Amitābha figures. He is no longer shown in the statuelike frontal pose which was always maintained in Buddha pictures, but turned three-quarters to the front, depicting him approaching in compassion the faithful believer invoking his name. His feet rest on two lotus flowers: These flowers provide an additional way of symbolically showing his approach because, as tradition has it, a lotus flower would grow at every step taken by an Enlightened One.

Standing figures as such have a more active character than sitting ones, and it is revealing that standing figures occur predominantly among Bodhisattvas (and still more among Devas), but seldom among Buddhas. The opposite is true of seated figures with their timeless immovability. The Buddhas who appear standing are Śākyamuni, who is the earthly incarnation of the Absolute Buddha and therefore relatively more phenomenal and active, Bhaiṣajyaguru, who has a unique function as provider of special assistance in case of illness, and Amitābha, the active savior fulfilling his vow. But Vairocana, the Absolute Buddha in the most radical sense, as a matter of principle never appears in a standing pose.

The Bodhisattva figures intensified their movements as time went by and tended to approach the faithful with ever more active displays of their compassionate natures (114). Vidyārājas, too, shed their restraints so that, for example, Acala (Fudô) and his companions are depicted rushing along surrounded by a flaming cloud of fire. More complex groups of figures, like the older circular arrangements around the main figure, lose their rigidity and break up into asymmetrical groups moving diagonally across the picture plane. However, it is typical that the main figures always continue to be placed right on the central axis of the picture and that marginal figures are given symmetrical frontality so that the entire picture is still held in a two-dimensional and quietly balanced state. This principle asserts itself with great persistence even in cases where a general tendency towards dissolving quietude into movement dominates. The newer principles of composition therefore never come into general use, and throughout the following centuries the tradition of the older, strictly frontal figures or groups remained valid side by side with them.

The typical Buddhist composition usually unfolds in an entirely two-dimensional fashion. It is therefore not spatial. Insofar as being-in-space and acting-in-space mean an existence in the world of phenomenal reality, which to the Buddhists is the world of illusion and samsāra, such a composition is also not realistic. But in contrast to the creations of primitive art, these figures do not stand

"beyond" space in a world "as yet" two-dimensional. Rather they rise beyond the alternative of two- or three-dimensional space. They are neither in a state of two-dimensionality nor in one of three-dimensionality, but exist in a kind of spaceless state. This imparts to them also a timeless quality because they are removed from the flow of time into an "Eternal Now"⁸⁶ which includes all present, past and future, just as spacelessness includes all dimensions. They are, therefore, embedded in the infinite background of undefinable emptiness from which they radiate in spiritualized loftiness without, however, completely entering the present world.

Buddhist painting has, therefore, generally refrained from making use of the achievements in spatial representation made during the Han and T'ang periods, which are particularly evident in landscape painting. Almost without exception, Buddhist paintings employ a dark picture background and, wherever backgrounds with defined features appear, they tend to look like the paradisiac realms of the Pure Land (103), which display their palaces as backdrops for a firmly delineated pictorial space. Their "perspective" joins everything in a clearly and firmly circumscribed but imaginary space and brings together the more or less parallel depth lines of the right and left half of the picture in mirror-like fashion on the central axis. This effect only occurs in East Asian art and only in depictions of such imaginary space (except in cases where later European influences are felt). This strictly centralized and therefore "systematized space" is a truly "symbolic form" and is used to visualize an ideal as opposed to an empirical space. Unlike modern European art, it has no concern for a mathematically exact perspective which creates the illusion of being a "correct" depiction of the optical impression. It does not regard such a construction as a triumph of scientific empiricism irrespective of its "symbolic" character. On the contrary, space was to be characterized as the supra-empirical, visionary sphere of liberation, particularly through its strict regularity and self-contained integration, which differs notably from all other East Asian representations of space.

Space is here not depicted with respect to its compatibility with the optically perceived empirical space of nature in the conventional sense but, as in any art of the "medieval" type, in its compatibility with a vision rooted in its own laws inaccessible to any empirical perception and verification. The possibility that the "central perspective" in the pictures of the Pure Land may (though this is not yet proved) historically be traced to late Hellenistic-West Asian patterns transmitted through Central Asia would perhaps explain its origin but not its meaning nor the fact that it was only this particular picture type which adhered to a spatial scheme so fundamentally un-East Asian in character.

It was very characteristic of the use of an undefined empty picture ground in Buddhist painting that "Amitābha Coming Across the Mountains" (105) normally does not appear in front of or between the mountains, but behind them and set against the empty picture ground so as to symbolize his position beyond the Here and Now and behind the horizon of everything phenomenal. A shift from pure and spatially undefined frontality to a forward direction, into space and, accordingly, to a place in front of a concrete background usually occurs only with figures from lower levels beginning with Bodhisattvas, as in the case of Avalokiteśvara placed in a rocky landscape by the sea shore (112). But even then, the departure from pure frontality is never particularly emphasized. In any event, the figures in such

paintings never step out of our world and realm of existence in order to enter undefined or supra-sensual space nor do they "rise" into it. Motion is always in the opposite direction, involving a descent from the world beyond towards us and into the superficial world of phenomenal existence, but without the sacred figures ever divorcing themselves entirely from their infinite ground of being.

This treatment of space is of course found primarily in the most important picture type, the cult images proper. Picture types emphasizing narrative content (119, 122-125) or portraits (132) adhere to the rules customary for depicting empirical space in East Asia. They establish a stage of relatively shallow space in which the figures and objects are arranged without any, or at least without consistent, reduction in size. They are also not subjected to alignments for viewing them at particular levels or from fixed points, but manage to provide a clear overview of the situation or event. The preference for a high horizon, i.e., for a pronounced downward view from a high vantage point, favors such an arrangement and such overall views.

Under these circumstances space remains open to all directions. Its borders remain fluid because all optical centering, any isolation of fixed spatial cones or "optical pyramids" from the infinite space continuum, is avoided. East Asians view the procedure applied in Western perspective painting as artificial and arbitrary. They see it as an impermissible intrusion of the viewer into the picture, as a senseless and meaningless dissection of the totality of the world, and as an impermissible effort to force this space-time continuum into a rigid state as it flows incessantly before the background of Nothingness.

However, in spite of this avoidance of Western perspective, or perhaps because of it, the impression of three-dimensionality is always convincing even though two-dimensionality always asserts itself. But any sense of three-dimensionality tends to lose itself in the spacelessness of the empty picture ground. Yet within the "stage" established for the figures and objects of a particular picture, spatial relationships are clearly evident. Concrete objects such as implements, buildings or landscape elements, constitute firm reference points and delineate directions for the activities of the figures. Lines indicating depth normally run at oblique angles and are parallel to each other. As the result of an optical illusion, they appear to us to converge towards the foreground of the picture as if following a "reverse perspective." The parallel course of the lines, however, is not always quite consistent, i.e., lines do not display a uniform angle throughout the picture with respect to the picture frame.

This procedure for depicting the space of the empirical world, which we could only present here in its barest outline, is not specific to Buddhist painting which, on the contrary, is unique in that it does not employ this method for its most important picture types. Rather, it employs an entirely different system either of spacelessness or of imaginary, idealizing construction of space for representing all supra-empirical realms. The spirit of Buddhism does permeate, however, representations of empirical space in that they, as in all East Asian painting, do not confine objects in a space which merely serves as their "container," i.e., they are not rigidly fixed in space nor tied to a particular "position." Hence there is no perspective with fixed viewpoints and vanishing points and no opposition of subject and object. All objects and even space itself glide and float. Even time itself is part

of this process. Behind all depictions we always sense that groundless ground, that spaceless space and that timeless time of Emptiness from which everything emerges but for a fleeting moment and into which it ultimately will be reabsorbed. And even though in the cult pictures the numina manifest themselves in an illusory fashion, they do so in a manner which does not reveal their ephemeral character as viewed against the ground of being but rather in the form of their unchanging and indestructible essence which is part of this very ground itself.

The question concerning three-dimensionality in composition corresponds in the depiction of individual figures and objects to the question of their plastic modelling. As is well known, East Asian painting in general did not employ cast shadows and body shadowing prior to the 17th through 19th centuries when it came under European influence. It would be erroneous, however, to conclude that it was satisfied to treat bodies entirely in a two-dimensional manner. The problems of corporeal roundness, of light and dark shading, and even that of superimposing different layers and making the deeper parts visible as if seen through veils, were given their fair share of attention not only in ink paintings with their wealth of shadings and tones (140, 146), but also in the more linear figure and landscape paintings (97, 107-110, 116, 127).

All this is in accord with the comments made above on "two-dimensional" qualities, i.e., that this "two-dimensional" quality is not one that falls short of or below a command of three-dimensional space, but rather one that has gone beyond it. Modelling is, therefore, by no means timidly avoided or out of reach because of a lack of expertise. Rather, it is left unemphasized, so that objects almost seem to be without earthly gravity and to not have claimed any particular space. Spacelessness permeates all bodies and objects and renders them weightless, clear and transparent, and thus enables them to penetrate each other. Transparency and weightlessness are also characteristic features of East Asian landscape painting. These traits are quite compatible with that characteristic forcefulness of line-drawing and ink-values which allow the spiritual substance of landscapes to shine through so clearly.

Buddhist painting is also capable of bestowing roundness on its figures and of making visible the plastic quality of its body forms by means of gentle gradation of tones. But this modelling procedure is relatively rare and appears to have been mostly limited to the unclothed parts of the body (110). But even in these instances, it is always done so lightly that the full weight of their volume does not interfere with the impression of weightlessness. Rocks and similar features in cult paintings (127), and particularly figures and landscape elements in scenic pictures (122, 124, 135) are frequently given a loosely applied shadowing which only hints at an optical impression of reality without, however, competing with it. Yet such elements always manage to remain convincing because they do not fall short of or below the threshold of realistic depiction but rather go beyond it. The painting is free to either deny or confirm this impression of corporeality. It may do both simultaneously and thus present to us something which not only reminds us of reality but may even unlock its meaning for us while at the same time remaining remote from it and, in its innermost essence, having no share in it.

The presence of such paradoxes characterize this art as truly Buddhist. On the one hand, it achieves an appropriately modelled effect which allows the images

of the sacred figures to impress the eye; on the other hand, it manages to "decorporealize" these bodies and make them appear transparent and visionary.

Buddhist painting has developed a special method to achieve this result: the so-called reversed shading (*J. kaeriguma*) method. A three-dimensional body is darkened at its rounded parts, but lightened up towards its depressions or margins. This reverses the normal distribution of shadows and presents them in a manner contrary to the way they appear to our eyes (97, 113). This method was never consistently employed and was applied primarily to the bodies and still more frequently to the garments which, as a consequence, frequently look like veils.

An alternative method popular in older paintings which was applied to body forms and garment folds made each fold increasingly darker towards its crest and lighter at the lower levels where the folds emerge from the darker crests of the neighboring folds crossing them. In other words, parts which should appear darkest to the perceiving eye were made to appear lightest. The result is a stripe-like shading which emphasizes the abstractly musical interplay of lines and avoids any indication of heavy body-weight without, however, lapsing into two-dimensionality.

Shading is, therefore, not applied according to the actual distribution of light and darkness in the empirical-phenomenal world but in a non-realistic, schematic manner. This imparts to the total composition a strong artistic unity which is free from ties to empirical appearance and rests entirely within itself and the world of spiritual forms. It is characteristic of this painting that, generally speaking, it achieves an autonomy of artistic expression derived solely from the Buddhist artist's incredible freedom from the bonds of an object-laden empirical world. A Buddhist artist is free from the empirical world without, however, negating it altogether.

The same technique is employed by Buddhist painters in their treatment of the halos of sacred figures (108, 114, 127, 135) and the petals of the lotus flowers (113) forming a lotus throne; they are frequently lighter on their lower parts and darker towards their tips. Similar shadowing is also used for clouds carrying sacred figures (109).

With the help of such shadowing--the term modelling appears to be hardly appropriate--Buddhist painting not only manages to strip these figures of their realistic appearance and weight, it also imparts to them a marvellous softness and tenderness of form and color that makes them appear to be filled with an inner glow radiating mysteriously both from their physical bodies and their entire sphere. This is quite in line with the sacred texts which frequently speak about the radiance of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas emanating from all the pores of their bodies to illuminate all the worlds. It is this aura which contributes perhaps most prominently to the visionary character of the Buddhist figures, particularly those of the highest levels. The lower we descend the scale of existence, the more we encounter figures with a firmly modelled tangibility. This is frequently done by mere nuances, but these are sufficient to clearly distinguish the picture of a Deva or patriarch from that of a Buddha or Bodhisattva (compare 110, 117, 130 with 102, 112).

The shadowing, or better, the brightening mode employed in Buddhist painting --aiming at visionary and mystic transparence--is not only determined by artistic considerations and religious experiences and visions but also has a strict philosophical foundation which took shape under the particular influence of the Avatamsaka (Hua-yen, Kegon) school. Its central concept is that of the universal

mutual interpenetration of all phenomena and of the empirical with the absolute aspects of the world. These only appear to be distinguished from each other as long as our spiritual maturity has not yet reached the level of a Bodhisattva. This transcendence based on universal interpenetration is envisioned and poetically described as a "super-world" filled with the immeasurable splendor of light and jewels. It has to be a world of light because only rays of light can penetrate each other without displacing or overshadowing each other. In the absence of shadows, the separation into individual objects and alternative intellectual viewpoints is overcome and a general transparency and mutual penetration is achieved which also maintains individuality and order. Spatial perceptions are transcended because any empirical space depends for its comprehensibility on the separate existence of objects, which, in Kegon teaching is cancelled by their mutual interpenetration.⁸⁸ This shadowless shining world of the Dharma (dharma-dhātu) should not be understood as an abstraction or a symbol but as a concrete religious experience. It can hardly be better visualized in an artistic representation than in the way attempted by Buddhist painters. While remaining within the limits set by their technical possibilities they manage with the help of their kaeriguma procedure and of light and ray aureoles to dissolve all spatial objectivity, weight, and self-containment of objects and make them transparent without, however, having them dissolved into a complete fusion which would only lead to formlessness and absolute identity of everything with everything else, but not to an "interpenetration."⁸⁹

Whatever has been said in the preceding two sections dealing with position and modelling about the ways Buddhist painting solved fundamental problems confronting painting in general, i.e., that of the third dimension, confirms our earlier interpretation of architecture and sculpture. Though the interpretation of the latter two may have appeared in some instances to be rather arbitrary or at least unverifiable, painting offers us clear self-interpretations of how Buddhist art perceived body and space. This testimony is also of value for interpreting other fields of Buddhist art. This is made possible because the inner relationships and parallels between sculpture and painting in Buddhist art are so close and the number of laws peculiar to only one of these two fields so insignificant. Moreover, the conceptions of space in a given artistic tradition manifest themselves in similar fashion in painting, sculpture and architecture, and elucidate each other.

Even the line, in almost all East Asian art the basic structural element, keeps any Buddhist figure at a safe distance from our tangible and yet illusionary world where, to the ordinary eye, things crowd and overshadow each other. This is possible because the lines are generally very light and delicate and frequently appear to lack nearly all corporeality and substance. To be sure, the contours impart to the visible forms a certain corporeality and succeed in doing this with a remarkable degree of sensitivity (107, 110, 116 f.)--such as, for example, in instances where an arm may appear round and alive merely by virtue of its contours. But at the same time an effort is made to desensualize the lines so as to avoid using them merely as a means for capturing the objective substance in the service of realistic depiction. Their distinct artistic logic is maintained and made to help realize a spiritual vision in which the eternal is captured in pure form.

But this is a vision which is not hostile to phenomena. If it were, it would have to stay away from images altogether or to rely on abstract symbols. But this

vision both recognizes and uses visible forms--even if only in an extremely sublimated manner and without being ensnared by them. We encounter both marvels of pure and spiritual forms in the best Buddhist pictures and an art of the line of such tremendous sensitivity that it approaches a degree of exactness and perfection just short of the dissolution of forms and their transition into the formless absolute. It is, therefore, more than a merely conventional metaphor to refer to the melodic patterns of these lines. Like a melody, they, too, perform their task without any necessary relationship to some "content." They are formulated to reflect the content's objective substance but do so as beautiful and pure curves in the sphere of spiritual vision and supra-objective feeling. Yet they retain the full immediate force of the sensuous charm or, at least, ornamental magic, of both the forms and the fullness of life raised to a spiritualized level.

Buddhist paintings place a crucial emphasis on lines, even though these lines frequently appear to be quite weightless, unassuming and seemingly lacking in emphasis. They also possess that infinitely meaningful and silently eloquent "expressionlessness" which characterizes all representations of the highest levels of existence. The manner in which the curve of a garment or the contour of a shoulder, arm or hand flows--no matter how unselfconsciously this may happen--is filled with such profound meaning that an understanding of these paintings and sculptures depends largely on the correct perception of these lines. The objects will remain silent to a viewer who lacks sensitivity to the play of lines.

But lines are also the essential organizing element of the picture composition. The individual elements of compositions, just as those of groups of sculpted figures, are held together less by a common flow of movement or a tight formation of the group than by an extremely refined play of lines (21*, 109). These lines even bridge empty spaces. They move from figure to figure or from individual figures to their thrones (102) and make all figures part of a unity permeated by the flow of various dynamic forces. This web of lines extends through a two-dimensional plane, or at least within a shallow spatial zone parallel to the picture plane without, however, seizing depth or opening it. This makes possible the pronounced linearity of such pictures.

But even within individual figures--particularly in their garments--a complex interlocking of lines takes place. All lines either flow around a static center in quiet circular movements or in a steady rhythmic forward and backward flow (97, 135). Alternatively the lines reach out and surround the figures in long wavelike patterns (110, 114). The garments are not joined to the body by any objective relationship but rather through the flow and pattern of the lines. The contours of the halo and of the cup-shaped lotus flower holding the figures impart to them their ultimately defining shape while simultaneously allowing them to radiate their form into infinite and undefinable realms (113).

The most characteristic function of the line is to "call forth" the sacred figures from spheres beyond definition and to hold them in the magic circle of its form, and it accomplishes this task with determination, exactness and perfection. But it does not confine form tyrannically within a cage of lines and does not jealously set it apart either from other forms or from the "beyond form." The line always remains "open" and allows itself to be freely overflowed by that which goes beyond the line itself and all imposed limitations. It achieves the utmost in form but does so with

modesty while keeping the observer fully conscious of the temporary and insubstantial nature of even the most perfect form.

Once this characteristically paradoxical and metaphysical nature of the line in Buddhism has been understood, its "ornamental" character may be emphasized. The Buddhist line is far more than ornamental in the conventional sense. One of the secrets of East Asian, especially Buddhist art, is that it succeeded in making any form appear, along with its objective content and ideal meaning, as a purely decorative and yet nobly spiritualized ornament. Moreover, in addition to the qualities mentioned above, this decorative function of the line is attained or at least enhanced by a strong standardization. Fixed line motifs, formulated once and for all into what may also be called line symbols or formulas, are repeated over and over again and are only subject to certain variations. Standardized formulas have not only been evolved for hands, eyes, parts of garments, but certain types of lines have even been reserved for different categories of beings.

With only slight exaggeration one may even claim that it is frequently possible to determine the category of being to which a figure belongs solely from the character of the lines found in a particular segment of that figure. Buddhas would display very cool, utterly calm and dematerialized lines (102) while Bodhisattvas would have a livelier, more flexible and charmingly persuasive flow of lines (114). Vidyārâjas have either dynamically agitated or strict and sometimes even tense line forms (137) but Devas display more sensuous, fuller and luxurious webs of lines (117).

Yet all these lines, with few exceptions, belong basically to the type of line dominant in Buddhist art: the so-called iron-wire lines. These are smooth lines of different but always consistent and even thickness which are devoid of shading or expressive swelling. They form firm, long curves which clearly delineate the contours of any form. Their application conveys the impression that one is "cutting into metal." This line is "abstract" or "absolute" and both highly musical and decorative in its effect. The earlier the period, the stronger and more vigorous this line. Gradually it becomes livelier, finer, and more subtle, only to slowly give way during the late period of classic Buddhist painting (Sung and Kamakura) to a new type of line of irregular thickness. This new line is softer and yet more vigorously modulated. It is less abstract and ornamental and makes richer use of the possibilities offered by the flexible brush. It is only during this later time that the supposed eighteen types of lines⁹⁰ which were developed in China and then adopted in Japan became popular for the depiction of garments, particularly for figures at the lower levels of existence.

It would, however, be erroneous to view these two types of lines simply as belonging to two successive stages of development and to speak of wholesale replacement of a "linear" by a "painterly" style phase. Both continued to co-exist for a long time even though the strictly linear paintings go back to earlier periods.

The modulated ink line evolved in China in close relationship with calligraphy. The basic form of Chinese calligraphy was perfected during the Han and Chin periods, and its technique has subsequently been transferred to painting where it was vigorously promoted during the T'ang period. Wu Tao-tse is the man credited with this artistic surge which came to be so immensely important for all of East Asia. In his works (or works ascribed to him which can no longer be identified

with any degree of certainty; 97) the ink line can already be found applied to Buddhist paintings too, but this style does not appear to have been generally adopted. If it had been, the domination of the "iron line" could not have been as universal as it was at that time.

Both line types frequently occur in the same picture. In such cases, the strict wire lines are reserved for painting figures and the looser ink lines for natural shapes, like rocks or trees (112, 119, 122, 129). This practice produced an inner graduated scale of picture elements, a "relief" showing prominent major forms and accompanying marginal phenomena on the basis of a hierarchy of rank and essence, extending even to the details of line technique among the concrete objects of the world of *samsāra* and the hypostases of the sphere of *nirvāna*. This shows how wrong it would be to interpret such formal features simply as belonging to successive historical style phases when, in fact, they are merely features showing different levels of style.

Color performs two main functions in Buddhist art: One is objective and symbolic--ontological; the other psychological and aesthetic. Detailed treatment of the rather complex color symbolism is still impossible due to the lack of sufficient preliminary studies, but we should be aware that basically a particular color is present in a particular location first and foremost because it has a doctrinally determined and objectively fixed symbolic meaning. This meaning is described in the collections of iconographic rules and regulations and takes precedence over any aesthetic considerations.

Though the use of colors is rooted in a full-fledged metaphysics of color linked to Eastern cosmology, the peoples of East Asia, always very sensitive to colors, have never stripped them of their sensual magic for the sake of abstract formalized considerations. Colors are an important element of sacred beauty, first of all, simply as rich and joyous feasts for the eye, but also because they are intimately linked with transcendence and are therefore highly sublimated and spiritualized no matter how great their sensual appeal.

The "representational value" of colors, i.e., their participation in the more or less illusionist reproduction of real objects in colors characteristic for them (their actual colors or colors modified by gradations of light and shadow) is almost entirely negligible in Buddhist painting, except in cases where concrete objects of the earthly world are depicted in narrative pictures. The "intrinsic value" of colors dominates throughout, i.e., the specific character of each color as such has ornamental and aesthetic value, whose expression has a direct, intense psychological effect. It may assume an important role in the composition of a picture because its color components are selected entirely according to artistic criteria. All this may be completely independent of the "correct" coloration of the depicted objects.

The symbolic value of a color, i.e., the fixed religious, social, political or other meanings of a color, cannot be captured either as "representational" or "intrinsic" value because it is neither a natural quality of the particular objects depicted nor is it characteristic of the particular color as such. Rather, this symbolic meaning is attached to or bestowed on an object so as to enable it to make a statement about something that is not otherwise directly accessible to the senses. To understand the meaning of such a statement we cannot rely on our eyes alone but must add knowledge based on convention and tradition.⁹¹ In Buddhist art this

symbolic value is highly significant and is also most intimately tied to a color's intrinsic value for ornamental, expressive and compositional purposes. These color values express themselves with particular purity whenever the mode of painting--as is typical for Buddhist art--prefers to make use of more or less two-dimensional elements which are firmly defined in a linear fashion rather than to rely on devices which create spatial illusions or create impressions of solid objects through the play of light and shadow.

The role of colors in Buddhist painting is second only to that of line. The general impression colors convey is that of a deep, dark warmth combined with jewelled splendor and a richness of color tones. But these rich colors usually do not appear in large, clearly circumscribed areas, but rather are woven into highly complicated patterns which, in combination with the gold decorations, create the effect of a precious ancient brocade from which individual richly colored spots shine like scattered jewels.

This seemingly overly ornate and playfully aesthetic splendor of colors does succeed in creating an aura of mystical depth because in the best works the individual colors are applied in a manner that makes them yield a maximum of radiance or warmth but allows them also to preserve a state of muted harmony. The result is a web of colors which, in its unity of spiritual and sensual beauty, can only be compared to the musical sphere. Here every note expresses itself, but there are also accords and occasional dissonances; individual elements are not fused into an undifferentiated sound, yet submit as free and individual members to the order of the entire composition without competing among each other or vying for prominence. In this respect, colors are akin to the line which also modestly serves the purpose of expressing spiritual truths.

It is surprising how successfully different and "theoretically" dissonant colors are sometimes brought into harmony with each other and how--regardless of the density of the web of colors and wealth of hues--colors remain light and frequently even ethereal, an effect to which the "reversed shadowing technique" makes substantial contributions. The colors penetrate each other but do not get in each other's way. Each of them maintains its full individuality while constituting in their totality a well assembled order. And, given all the emphasis on the deliciousness and preciousness of the substance of colors, they are always made to appear as though immaterial. Its frequently bewitching sensual effects notwithstanding, the play of colors remains always remote from the phenomenal world.

Lines and colors are, therefore, clearly distinguished. Lines never submerge in a "painterly" surge of colors, but remain intimately linked to each other. The colors themselves are given a peculiarly linear structure by means of the so-called *ungen* method which has already been described in connection with the decorative elements in architecture (p. 62). The raigō triptych on Kōya-san⁹² offers a clear example for the use of this technique even though in this instance it is limited to the parts identical in color, i.e., particularly to the garments and to the clouds on which all figures are placed (109). This technique cooperates with the "reverse shading" to render the individual parts of the forms lighter towards their margins so that the impression of a three-dimensional rounding, seemingly illuminated from within, is achieved. Clouds also seem to move more intensively because of this device.

Ungen (cf. 20*) transforms uniform and smoothly colored surfaces into bunched stripes of varying tones. Its parallel strips of color reinforce the rhythm of the contours and make a significant contribution to the interweaving of the forms of the whole. In this manner the threat of fragmentation and unrest is avoided by having neighboring colors or color tones unified or at least systematically variegated and made to join in an overall harmony. The gradual transitions are an effective device for avoiding any harsh clashes and vigorous contrasts of strongly differing basic color tones while the striplike arrangement of the individual tones creates an orderly and clarifying gradation within this harmonious shifting play of lines, surfaces and colors. All this is animated by an artistic design whose peculiar features we have already observed on several occasions. It is free from any attempt to capture objects realistically or to create the illusion of imitating reality, but at the same time possesses a sensuous optical vision and a lively taste for decorative use of forms.

The nearly always dark picture ground is vital to the total effect of the colors. This dark ground is more than a mere symbol of "Emptiness" from which the sacred figures emanate. It also has the aesthetic function of helping the various colors to fully unfold their intrinsic values by contrasting them with each other. At the same time it joins them--as organ point and most profound "ground," so to speak--and leads them back to an ultimate unity, no longer clearly definable and beyond all colors, from which they all seem to emerge. According to the Buddhist principle of universal representation, all five basic colors (white, black, green/blue, yellow, and red) are contained in every single one of them. Yet, they are all also merely manifestations of a sole, primordial color which is beyond definition and which ultimately signifies the Absolute, the true nature of Dharma, and Emptiness which can and should be visualized in every existing phenomenon, no matter what its particular color or form.

Only if we are aware of this fundamental concept in Mahāyāna Buddhism will we correctly understand the variety of colors found in its pictures, both in their metaphysical transparence and as mystic paradox. We will come to understand the importance of gold as "true color" (see p. 149 f.), of the blackness of ink as "containing all colors," and of the empty white ground in ink painting. In these three primordial colors the variety of colors we encounter in the phenomenal world has been reduced to an ultimate existential ground where they all have been transcended.

The individual spheres of existence are clearly distinguished by their coloration. The higher a sacred figure ranks, the simpler and more sweeping the coloration. Many of the Buddha images rely for their sublime effect on the contrast between this transcendent simplicity and the rich fullness and splendor of the Bodhisattvas. The latter, in turn, display the spiritualized wealth of Buddhist colors most impressively while the colorful ornaments of the Devas have occasionally something of a merely luxurious quality about them and are thus reminiscent of the world of *samsāra*. The Vidyārājas display the demonic aspect of colors with their dark, frightening glow which is occasionally punctuated by bursts of brighter colors. They are in sharp contrast to the profound calm of the other figures but also rise from the ground of that primordial color which potentially contains the entire spectrum within itself.

The figures of the human sphere, above all the Arhats and patriarchs, are usually given entirely different and "earthier" colors than the sacred figures. The transition from the world beyond into this world of colors becomes clearly evident upon inspection of a number of examples. Coloration is frequently the decisive element in symbolizing the innermost essence of the various figure-types. The doctrinal and emotional meaning of a Buddha, a Bodhisattva, a Vidyârāja can be gauged a priori from his colors not only because of their symbolic language but also because of their direct artistic impact.⁹³

In some large scenic pictures, colors have a pronounced effect on the character of the mood evoked by the spiritual substance of the depicted event. A picture showing "Śākyamuni's Resurrection from the Golden Coffin" is kept entirely in the minor color key of gold and brownish violet tones, while a raigō picture (106) expresses the hope for a redeeming rebirth into the radiant realm of Amitābha by a marvelous concert of happy, bright tones in which even gold achieves an entirely different expressive character.

This sacred world of color may be contrasted to that of profane paintings with their joyous but superficial, though more realistic display of colors. In narrative pictures, this profane realm frequently intrudes into the sacred sphere. It became more and more dominant after the decline of classic religious painting and after having already paralleled its development for a long time. The coloring in more recent painting is based in good measure on it. These two basic types of East Asian color design may be distinguished from a third type which was present in both religious and secular painting but was strongly promoted by Zen art. This was ink painting which, lacking a particular color of its own, but "containing all colors," ultimately joined the other two forms. East Asian art has therefore managed to combine within an impressive artistic range and spiritual polarity both a passionate love for colors and an almost equally strong love for black-and-white paintings, i.e., it has succeeded in combining an intensive love of life and of the world with a mystic-ascetic attitude which sees through this samsāra beauty and leaves it behind.

The gold of the Buddhist figures, both in sculpture and painting, constitutes in sensual-aesthetic and subjective-psychological terms a marvelously harmonious enhancement and crowning of the shining and mysterious interplay of colors. But its use is ontologically founded on the teachings about the Buddha-light which, in golden rays, emanates from every Buddha and not only floods all worlds with its splendor but makes it possible for them to shine forth at all and be constituted as manifestations of the "Buddha essence." The importance of the role of gold is, therefore, based on mystic-visionary experiences of light known to all mystics. It also rests on its profound symbolic meaning, and on the "abstracting" remoteness of the highest sacred beings representing the Absolute which is beyond the sphere of concrete reality and its fragmentation into multi-colored phenomena. At the same time, it possesses high decorative value as precious adornment.

As one of the avenues through which the Transcendent manifests itself, gold is properly the element indicative of the essence of the Buddhas, and in many instances also of the Bodhisattvas. But while it may appear as a "color" linked to their corporeal appearance, as "color beyond all colors" it represents the Absolute directly. The Sūtras frequently mention the pure, clear golden color of the body and

face of a Buddha. One of the 48 vows of Dharmākara-Bodhisattva, the later Amitābha-Buddha, proclaims to the beings to be reborn in his realm that they will all share in the same color--gold. Gold symbolizes the cancellation of all colors, and, according to Buddhist usage, also of all the qualities accessible to the senses. This one "transcendent color" is elevated into the mystery of the ultimate fullness of being.

Gold is also called a "natural" or "innate" color. This means that it is the genuine, appropriate, perfect, and unchangeable color in contradistinction to silver which, because it becomes discolored when exposed to air, is called the "clouded" or "discolored" metal. The two metals can, therefore, serve as symbols of nirvāna and samsāra respectively.⁹⁴ By having gold cover the entire body and frequently also his garment, the Buddha is elevated by virtue of this ultimate simplicity far above the multiple voices of the choir of the other colors into the realm of emptiness, which is filled with the unlimited potential of being and yet transcends it.

Only gold may be called the fully valid symbol of this emptiness, because its "colorlessness" or "supra-colorness" and ultimately valid unity embraces at the same time an infinite variety of colors and fullness of splendor. In its precious simplicity it has a mystic meaning. It emerges from the figure of the Buddha in his state of perfect quietude as the visible manifestation of his unlimited potential. Golden rays are an expression of his hidden saving powers. The other beings, particularly those at levels below that of the Bodhisattva, still remain more or less trapped in the superficially colorful and color-bound phenomenal world. These empirically realistic "samsāra colors" constitute the lowest stage of an ontologically determined order. Above it rises the elevated and sacredly transformed mystic world of colors in which supra-human and supra-mundane beings like Devas, Bodhisattvas, and Vidyārājas appear and where gold begins to play a part. The apex, and at the same time the "ground" of this hierarchy, is formed by the pure gold of the Buddha understood as manifestation of Absoluteness.

In addition to this ontological meaning, gold holds a secondary meaning, i.e., that of an element of the sacred splendor (shōgon) which plays an important role in all fields of Buddhist art, as we will explain in greater detail below (p. 183 ff.). In this function, its use is predominant among the Bodhisattvas and the divine figures below them, who are often lavishly endowed with golden jewelry. But this splendor never appears overdone because it represents a harmonious intensification of the splendid appearance of these figures and because it does not attempt to merely please the eye or stimulate the visionary imagination. Its numinous glorifying beauty possesses a profoundly metaphysical meaning and religious solemnity.

The Buddhist Painter

All these religious and artistically so important paintings were by no means, or only rarely, the creations of outstanding individual artists in the modern sense. Our comments on the Buddhist sculptors (see p. 113) apply in all basic points to the painters as well. Painting, however, generally holds in East Asia a higher place on the scale of the social rankings of the arts. It was considered a noble art; as such, educated men and aristocrats could embrace it as dilettantes, but bring to bear full technical and artistic expertise.

Even professional painters themselves frequently belonged to a higher social stratum than sculptors. It is possible to demonstrate that leading masters of Japanese cult painting were members of the court aristocracy just as were the many priests who played a crucial role in the creation of cult paintings by assuring their doctrinal-iconographic accuracy. In China, too, professional painters of high social rank were commissioned by the imperial court and leading temples. Only somewhat later do families and schools of artists of non-aristocratic origin appear. In Japan, where this phenomenon can be traced more accurately, this occurred toward the end of the twelfth century.

We should also not underestimate the contributions made by foreign painters. In China, these were mostly of Central Asian origin. The early painters who introduced the first iconographic and stylistic picture types were Central Asians who brought with them the forms established in India and transformed in Turkestan. Later, during the T'ang period, artists like Wei-ch'ih I-seng came from Khotan. His very peculiar style has only recently become a little better known to us. In Japan we find numerous Chinese and Korean architects, sculptors, artisans, and painters who transmitted to their eager Japanese students the large stock of picture types, techniques and stylistic forms which the continental art of the Six Dynasties and the T'ang period had produced. Below the leading, socially high-ranking personalities worked an army of artist-craftmen who may be assumed to have been allowed only a small degree of creative initiative. Individual priests are, therefore, often considered to have been the real originators of particular Buddhist pictures, but modern students still have a difficult time in determining their exact contributions. The Japanese imperial court and the large monasteries each had their own "Painting Office" (*edokoro*) in which large numbers of assistants and apprentices were employed under a strictly regulated division of labor based on common religious ties, traditions and ideals of craftsmanship. They worked under the direction of a few masters who may be considered to have been the real creators of the works of art. We know that such cooperatives, corresponding exactly to our medieval workshops, were hereditary in families of specialists in surface priming, draftsmanship, coloring, cut-gold work (*kirikane*), and mounting. But even the painters of noble descent who worked outside of these family-based cooperatives followed essentially the same artistic principles and techniques. All this led to the emergence of a circle of cult painters so narrowly prescribed and homogeneous that the division of labor did not prevent the evolution of a very uniform style. The individual artist generally remained, therefore, quite inconspicuous, even in cases where he was a person of remarkable talent and high prestige.

Workshop operations based on strict iconographic rules and stylistic traditions naturally gave rise to strongly standardized works and frequently put obstacles in the path of the work of freer and more imaginative artistic genius. But these constraints also saved Buddhist painting from undergoing individualistic fragmentation and arbitrary innovation and promoted an impressive inner unity and certainty. But disregarding those conditions which apply to any "medieval" artistic enterprise, the power of the individual personality was generally revealed in East Asia through the manner in which the impersonal or supra-personal aspects of this art were handled, the manner with which it represented the typical, and to what degree the creative artist, no matter how modestly he exercised his individual

preferences, was in touch with the essence of the matter at hand and with the metaphysical ground which "embraces him from behind" (Nishida).⁹⁵

Though "there exists no Ego" in art and craftsmanship, as an ancient Japanese text declares, it would be incorrect to assume a total uniformity of design and a stifling restraint on artistic imagination. Variations and new creations were given a certain leeway but were also kept within firm limits. Moreover, inspiration and vision occasionally resulted in certain innovations which, because they seemed to come from a transcendent source, were by virtue of this fact not only justified but even required. Still, such toleration was only granted to a few priests with appropriate spiritual authority. Only minor changes in detail and, above all, merely gradual changes in composition, line and color were left as possible individual contributions by artists in the employ of the court or the temples.

Such changes allow us to follow both the particular character of a painter--or at least of his school--and, more clearly, changes in style over the course of history. But it was just this power of type and tradition, as Binyon has commented, which confronted the artist with the lofty charge to do justice to his task and to match the level reached by his predecessors. This focused his energies by keeping him from engaging in a frantic search for individual and novel achievements no matter at what cost. Only in this manner could the depth of the given topics be probed and their meaning exhausted by seeing them embodied in ever new versions just as the vigor of an old tree is embodied in ever new blossoms.

The names of important Buddhist painters in China and in Japan have been handed down. In Japan we are even able to establish at least a tenuous link between a few of the surviving pictures and artists' names. But it remains extremely difficult to capture the personality of the painters and their works with any degree of clarity. We are, therefore, even more inclined to refrain from mentioning their names within the framework of this study since such an effort, even in the best of cases, would not yield much more beyond their names.

Moreover, traditional attributions are frequently highly questionable. For example, a large number of Buddhist paintings are traditionally ascribed to the great T'ang painter Wu Tao-tse (ca. 700-760 [97]), who was undoubtedly an outstanding pioneer and is venerated as the greatest figure of East Asian painting; but it is virtually impossible to form an adequate impression of his original works. We are not even in a position to vaguely estimate the degree to which the numerous later copies of his works--some reputedly done by him but known to us only through references in literary sources--depart from the originals.

Even in Japan, where a rich tradition has been preserved about such leading medieval families of cult painters as the Takuma family, serious doubts have been raised in academic studies about the authenticity of these family genealogies. Even the undoubtedly historical personalities of medieval Japanese cult painting remain very shadowy figures. All this changes with the rise of Zen painting, particularly since the Sung period in China and the Ashikaga period in Japan. From now on we encounter an art born out of a personal world view and original inspiration. We come to know a number of outstanding masters not only as real persons but also by impressive individual and authentic works.

Calligraphy, Printing and Graphic Arts

Calligraphy and Decorated Manuscripts

In East Asia writing is linked particularly closely to painting. Buddhism, too, cultivated calligraphy. This is not the place to discuss the calligraphic achievements of Buddhist priests, even though they included some of the outstanding masters of calligraphy, because that would more properly be part of a history of calligraphy, the most valued and highest-ranking art form of East Asia. Buddhist epigraphic work, such as inscribed tablets on temple buildings, inscription steles, consecrating inscriptions on statues or paintings, etc., is basically similar to epigraphic work in general. Mention should, however, be made of two items which played an important role in Buddhist culture and art: the Sûtra scrolls, with their calligraphy, illustrations and decorative elements, and the symbolic-magic characters.

The sacred scriptures of the Buddhists, first and foremost among them the Sûtras, were translated in China from Sanskrit into Chinese over the course of several centuries and transmitted in handwritten copies. To produce copies of such books in one's own handwriting or to commission a calligrapher to produce a copy was considered one of the most meritorious of good works. Numerous beautiful manuscripts were produced, particularly during periods when culture flourished, and presented to temples as votive offerings. But this was not the only purpose of such copies. We have already referred (p. 83) to the fact that copies of Sûtras were placed inside cult images to bestow efficacy upon them. A different purpose was served by Sûtra copies enclosed in decorated pottery or metal tubes. These, together with Buddhist figures and cult implements, or mirrors and coins, were buried in so-called sûtra mounds in order to preserve the sacred teaching from the world catastrophe which was to accompany the imminent end of time or of the law (*mo-fa* or *mo-shih*, *mappô* or *masse*). They would then be available for the new world age when they would be proclaimed by the Buddha-to-come, Maitreya.

But Sûtra copying was by no means always limited to the texts alone, no matter how meritorious in a religious and how perfect in an aesthetic sense they may have been. The scrolls were often also elaborately decorated. Among the surviving available material, the Japanese Sûtra scrolls of the 12th century constitute perhaps the apex of this art. Not only was precious, dark (mostly blue) colored silk

or paper used, but the writing was done with golden or silver characters. All components of a Sûtra scroll--the external cover (28*), the buttons at both ends of the rolling stick, the silk ribbons, etc., and also the boxes in which they were kept--are, in material, color, and decoration, particularly splendid.

Every scroll was adorned at its beginning, immediately preceding the text, with a "frontispiece" (*J. mikaeshi-e*) (135).⁹⁷ Such frontispieces are still virtually unknown in the West. The most frequent types are drawn in gold and silver, and are predominantly linear in character, with only the most delicate application of shading. Such pictures may contain a wealth of figure groups and scenes whose precise meaning is often not easily ascertained, as there is not always a direct relationship between the picture and the contents of the particular scroll. The subjects are mostly sacred configurations of the usual kind, but they are not frozen into the usual hieratic poses and are, therefore, much livelier in appearance. We also find groups of hermits and all sorts of other figures, usually embedded in a landscape which is loosely sketched in a delicately decorative manner. The linear art of these drawings is of marvelous grace. They exude the spirit of a peaceful and joyous faith, but with that slightly melancholic touch so typical of Buddhism, and late Heian Japanese court culture in particular. These works originated in the aesthetically highly refined sphere of the court, since at that time there were no other culturally significant social strata capable of producing or subsidizing such richly developed religious art.

Very famous are the Sûtra scrolls (*Heike-Nôkyô*, 1164) which the noble Taira family donated to the Itsukushima Shintô Shrine--then still under strong Buddhist influence--on Miyajima island near Hiroshima. These scrolls reveal the true splendor of craftsmanship which the secular court lavished on these holy scriptures. They show rich gold and silver decorations and a wealth of colors, all applied with great sophistication and dignity in the purely Japanese style (the so-called *Yamato-e*, "Japanese painting," in contradistinction to *Kara-e*, the style adopted from China).⁹⁸ Only a few examples from China seem to have survived, such as the picturesque *Vimalakîrti* scene (dated 1118), done in gold on purple silk, owned by the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

The series of *kakemono* in the *Chûsonji* (north of Sendai in Northern Japan) displays a sort of pious playfulness. Its surfaces are almost entirely covered by drawings of pagodas. These drawings owe their particular charm to the fact that their lines consist of tiny golden characters of a Sûtra text. The pagodas are surrounded by colorful, loosely scattered groups of figures and landscape sketches. Even sacred figures are sometimes depicted by lines made up of written characters. Such works were also clearly intended as full-fledged votive offerings, and there is little doubt that they also existed in China.

A peculiar type of Sûtra copy should be mentioned in passing. These are the folding fans with Sûtra passages inscribed on them which have been preserved in different Japanese temples but are particularly numerous in the *Shitennôji* in Ôsaka. On each of the vertical fan stripes is written a line of the text in characters which shrink in size towards the bottom part where the fan narrows. We know that solemn rituals were performed during which large numbers of participants executed such pious writing exercises on fan paper. It may strike Westerners as peculiar that these texts would run across decorative colored drawings previously applied to the paper

surface. East Asian taste came to favor black ink calligraphy which seemed to be suspended on and in front of a surface decorated with a colored sketch. We should keep in mind that Chinese letter stationery and Japanese sheets or scrolls with poetry employed a similar device and that some of these were produced by means of woodblock printing as early as the 12th century. Such pictures had nothing to do with the sacred texts themselves, but rather consisted of highly secular and often amusing genre scenes from the life of the court nobility and commoners which may perhaps be related to contemporary tales.

Long horizontal scrolls with continuous illustrations of Sûtra texts also exist but were not too common; otherwise more copies would presumably have survived. As a matter of fact, this type is represented by only one single work, the *Kakogenzai-inga-kyô* (122), of which several incomplete scrolls have survived from several different versions, which are, however, almost identical in style. These fragments show no signs of their age, even though they are 8th-century works (one is dated 735). They are presumably Japanese, but are executed in a style adopted from the Chinese style of the Six Dynasties or early T'ang periods and may, therefore, legitimately be considered as representative of Buddhist illustrative painting in China, as is the case with respect to many other works which have been preserved in Japan. The text, written in admirable T'ang-style calligraphy, is placed in the lower register of the scrolls and narrates the life-story of the Buddha, including his earlier existences. These led him through innumerable rebirths to the level of a Bodhisattva and then to the fruition of Buddhahood after his final rebirth in our time and world. Of the words in the title, *kako* means past, *genzai* present, *inga* cause and effect, or rather "fruit" in the sense of the karma law. Above this text every scene is illustrated in a continuous undivided picture strip which shows groups of figures placed in a landscape of very little spatial depth and composed of natural elements having the appearance of stage props. This is a work of great charm and is filled with the spirit of simple faith, its "primitive" character notwithstanding.

Historically speaking, this work still belongs to the "late archaic-early classic" phase, just before the mature T'ang took the decisive step in the direction of that fully developed mode of expression which became the model or at least the point of departure for all art that followed. This unassuming and charming work is, therefore, of inestimable historical value as one of the very few surviving examples of the earliest Buddhist painting style. A few comparable pieces exist among the wall paintings and temple banners made of painted cloth found in Tun-huang. It also has special importance as representing an early phase--now almost entirely lost--of the illustrated hand-scroll (*emakimono*), with respect to the interesting manner in which its technique of composition combines the categories of space and time (see above).

Later Buddhist *emakimono* usually contain little text. They predominantly offer illustrative-narrative scenes from the history of various sects or sanctuaries and from the biographies of individual priests. They do not really belong to the art of sacred books and were, therefore, already discussed in connection with Buddhist painting (p. 127). Still, this picture type is basically a "book," and such works frequently served as votive offerings just like the Sûtra scrolls. The crucial difference between the two was that picture scrolls could not be used as sacred "instruments," i.e., as cult implements.

Writing with deliberate artistic appeal has frequently served monumental functions in Buddhist sanctuaries. The inscription tablets on temple buildings have already been mentioned (p. 85), but inside particular buildings, too, large tablets or long vertical banners with impressive, decorative writing, often done in gilded characters, can be found on pillars and walls. In temple yards or groves there are steles or pillars serving as memorial or votive stone monuments which bear Sūtra texts, consecrating inscriptions, sacred formulas or the like. These have been chiselled by stone masons into the stone with great skill to faithfully transcribe handwritten models provided by calligraphers. Even in wild and remote mountain regions one may encounter monumental, even gigantic, inscriptions which have been carved into rocks or cliffs as pious votive offerings. Frequently, these appear in conjunction with sacred figures, and provide the name or names of donors as well as the exact date. In this manner a particular site, as, for example, near a waterfall, becomes a sanctuary adorned by the lively and yet spiritualized play of forms characteristic of Chinese writing.⁹⁹

The symbolic Siddham letters have already been described (see p. 33). These represent a field of Buddhist art which has so far been given little attention. They possess both important religio-magical meaning and high aesthetic qualities. In addition to their dominant religious meaning as written mantras, i.e., as "words" containing sacred essence in a mystical sense, they also possess a pronounced graphic, expressive and decorative value and hence form a special field of calligraphy which is of fundamental importance for the entire artistic life of East Asia. These letters often replace the Buddhist sacred figures to whom they are related, most frequently in maṇḍalas (99), but also on halos, cult implements, etc. They appear frequently in paintings where they usually can be found above the heads of the respective figures. In such instances, they are occasionally executed in a flowing calligraphic style using black ink. They may also appear independently, for example, engraved, etched or affixed on large round metal discs. Most common are paintings (101) or needlework of the normal type and format whose subject is a single such letter in black, white or, preferably, gold, surrounded by the radiance of a halo. This letter hovers on a lotus flower and captures the viewer with its magic charm. These examples make it perfectly clear that such letters not only symbolically indicate a Buddha or another Buddhist entity, but represent them "personally," in the mystic body of their "word."¹⁰⁰

Printing and Graphic Arts

We have already mentioned the copying of texts as a meritorious work. This work is not merely a pious exercise, involving nothing more than the scribe's concentration on the Buddha word while he is writing the text, nor does it merely involve a quest for the highest attainable beauty and perfection in one's labor arising from a belief that only such perfectly executed works have genuine spiritual value. Rather, at the bottom of all this beauty and perfection is the belief in the magic efficacy of the sacred and efficacious words of the Buddha. To repeat these words as often as possible would not only better the chances for achieving one's own salvation but would also enlighten the entire world.

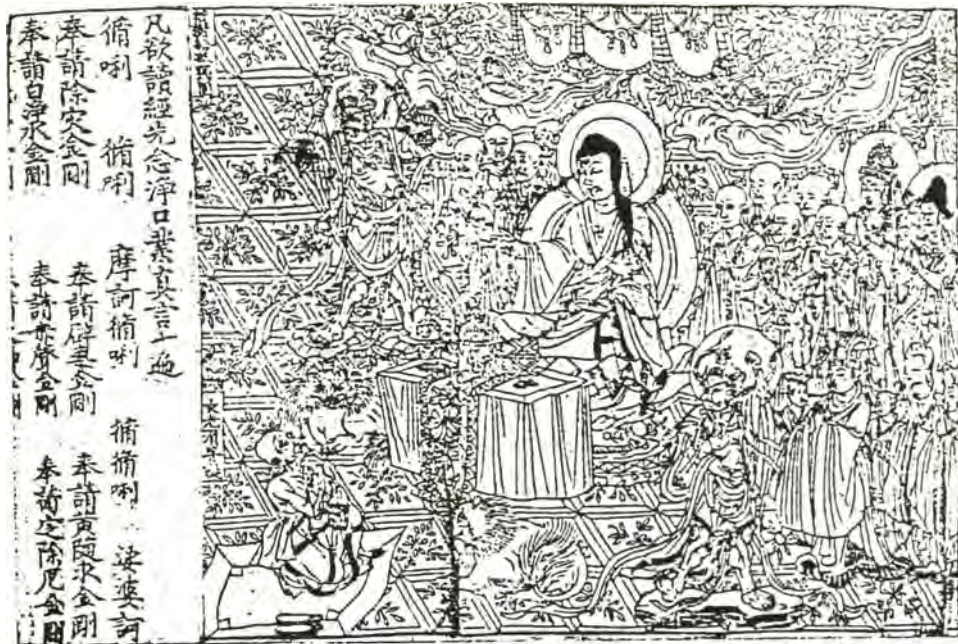
Something akin to this also applies to pictures of sacred beings. Many persons in East Asia, including laymen, take vows to produce, for example, one

thousand Kuanyin pictures executed in ink drawings. This idea of the salvation-promoting multiplication of texts and pictures was certainly a vital stimulus for using graphic techniques for Buddhist purposes. The desire to propagate the doctrine by having sacred books and pictures distributed as widely as possible provided a further powerful motivation. Only woodblock printing could fulfill this function since no other graphic techniques were known in East Asia.

Block printing was very old in China. It was derived from the art of producing stamps and seals dating back to pre-Christian times but is also related to the ancient practice of making rubbings from stone engravings with ink and paper, as a way of multiplying texts and pictures. The classic books of Confucianism were chiselled, as early as in the 2nd century A.D., onto large stone tablets under the supervision of official text editors, and were thus not only permanently preserved but could also be duplicated on demand.

Seals, used everywhere in East Asia, also play an important role in the Buddhist sphere. It is popular with the faithful to acquire small folding books prepared for no other purpose than to have the large square or round seals of temples stamped in them. These seals show the name of a particular sanctuary in the highly ornamentally stylized characters of the ancient Chinese so-called seal script. The fees collected for this service generate a substantial income for the more popular temples. These seal marks also serve as amulets and are at the same time quite attractive as graphic patterns in their own right.

It was only a small step to enlarge these seals into wooden tablets the size of book pages. Therefore, woodblock printing developed very early in East Asia, by the 7th century at the latest. It is also no accident (or at least a very revealing one) that the oldest surviving printed book in the world is a Buddhist work which, among numerous other objects of incalculable cultural and historical value, was found in 1907 by the British archaeologist Sir Aurel Stein in the chamber of a cave temple in Tun-huang; it had been hidden there since 1035. The book bears a colophon dated 5/11/868, which also gives the name of the printer or, more likely, the sponsor (26*).¹⁰¹ It is a scroll more than 5 meters long and 28 centimeters wide, and consists of numerous sheets, each printed separately and subsequently glued together. The text runs in vertical columns from right to left. Its frontispiece, showing the preaching Buddha surrounded by Bodhisattvas and monks, is coincidentally also the oldest surviving woodblock-printed picture in the world. Text and picture both display a mastery of fine, flexibly cut lines forming a complicated web of forms, all of which suggest a long preceding period of development and, therefore, a still earlier origin for East Asian printing. Much earlier than in Europe, printing was also widely spread in the form of bound block-printed books. Buddhist scriptures were not only printed in individual texts but also in encyclopedic collections. A very early edition (supposedly 972) of the entire Chinese Tripitaka, the Buddhist Canon, was printed in China in a vast number of volumes, or rather booklets, and this editing work has been continued ever since. The most recent of these efforts is the modern complete Tōkyō edition in 100 volumes (*Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, 1924-1932). Innumerable printing blocks of such old editions of sacred scriptures were kept on shelves in temple halls or in special library rooms and made



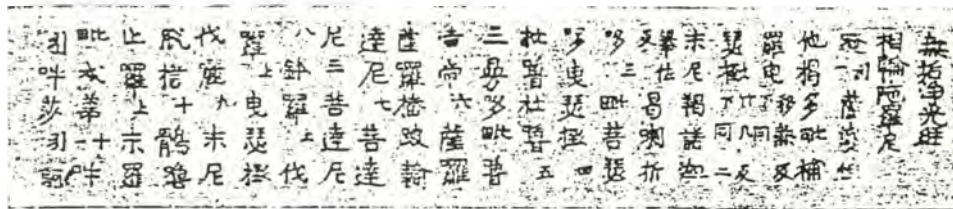
26* Title picture and opening text passage of a Sûtra scroll, dated 868.

available for new printings just like their forerunners, the handwritten Sûtra scrolls. In the Korean temple Hae-in-sa no less than some 80,000 double-faced blocks for this purpose can be seen today.

That printing in East Asia is older than the scroll from the year 868 is proved by other important Buddhist documents which, as far as we can tell, are the second oldest printed materials in the world¹⁰² (next to a Sûtra text from the first half of the 8th century discovered in the Korean pagoda of the Pulguk-sa temple near Kyôngju). These have been preserved in Japan, but are certainly representative of a general East Asian custom. They are narrow strips of paper (27*) bearing several lines of magic formulas (dhârâni) in Chinese characters. Most likely they were printed from cut metal plates as the form of the characters appears to differ in some details from those found in woodblock printing. No less than one million of these strips were printed. Such figures appear to be believable in view of the fact that in the Hôryûji alone many thousands of them have been preserved (single ones also in Western collections). These were produced at the order of Empress Kôken as a pious act in 764 and during the following years. They were placed inside small pagodas of turned wood and distributed among the ten most important Buddhist temples so that their magic power could eradicate the sins of mankind.

In the interior of statues are found not only handwritten but also printed dhârâni, Sûtra texts, etc. (cf. p. 83). Such prints do not, however, belong to Buddhist art proper, but to the larger world of Buddhist culture which was strongly dominated by cultic thought. But the early development of text printing occurred in conjunction with an equally early development of woodblock pictures. The oldest securely dated example of such illustrations, the title picture of the Tun-huang scroll

from the year 868, is most intimately linked to a printed text. The earliest printing method, still rather popular today, consisted of the use of simple wooden stamps to print Buddhist devotional pictures. A fixed, usually very large number of these were printed as pious exercises, in fulfillment of vows, or as good luck charms on certain days or during certain periods. The temples distributed them among the faithful or sold the prints to them--a practice still followed today. Such pictures were also hidden inside cult statues as "Buddhas inside the body" (see p. 83). A spectacular instance are some high-quality Bodhisattva prints from the early Sung period (10th century) which, together with many other votive offerings, were discovered in the famous Śākyamuni statue (Seiryōji, Kyōto) brought back from China by the Japanese monk Chōnen in 987 A.D.



27* Paper strip with magic formulas (dhāraṇī), ca. 765/770.

From early times, pictures printed from seals or larger wooden plates were also colored by hand. Numerous early examples of these have been found in Tun-huang. Occasionally larger, more carefully executed and colored pictures having the character and format of regular paintings are mounted as hanging scrolls (kakemono) and may serve as cheap substitutes for paintings. In most instances, individual figures of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vidyārājas, etc. are depicted (138). Other examples show groups of many figures and complex scenes, including even such complicated compositions as the so-called Taema Maṇḍala, the Pure Land of the West ruled over by Amitābha (103).

Hand-colored woodblock prints were also used relatively early for the reproduction and duplication of older emakimono with Buddhist themes (for example, the Yūzū-Nembutsu-Engi print of 1390-1414). But many of these colored leaves are not actually genuine graphic works. Their printed outlines served only as technical aids for producing large "editions" of such devotional pictures more conveniently and cheaply: the printed lines were frequently completely painted over, i.e., deliberately hidden, and had to be retraced with ink on top of the colors. Particularly popular or miracle-working cult statues were also depicted in such woodblock prints and taken home by the faithful who deposited them on domestic Buddhist altars or glued them to posts or walls as good luck charms.

The Japanese ukiyo-e colored block prints, which evolved much later, occasionally, though not too frequently, employed Buddhist themes, as, for example, in the woodblock prints of the birth and death of Śākyamuni by artists like Hishikawa Moronobu (1618?-1694) and Nishimura Shigenaga (1697-1756).¹⁰³ These, like the older Buddhist woodblock prints, may actually be simplified

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reproductions of famous paintings. Ukiyo-e artists did not limit themselves to individual sheets (among them also those in a parodizing vein; 35*), but have illustrated entire blockprint books with Buddhist themes. Even Hokusai worked on such commissions during his later years, though with little success.

Another type of Buddhist picture print of considerable importance and even of great practical value for art historians are the multi-volume iconographic handbooks repeatedly compiled throughout the centuries. Such compilations correspond to the medieval *zuzô* compilations (see p. 125) and are largely based on them. Divided into several larger sections, they depict the innumerable Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Vidyārâjas, Devas and related deities, and patriarchs. Representative examples of each of these figure types are frequently arranged in special groups. Special appendices hold illustrations of cult implements, symbols, *mudrâs*, etc. in simple line sketches reproduced with the help of woodblock prints and provide more or less detailed and more or less competent explanations. They provide, therefore, indispensable, albeit by no means always reliable, aids for iconographical research.¹⁰⁴

Ritual Implements

Ritual implements and other utensils and objects used to adorn the sanctuaries and to accompany rituals are still little known to us even though they not only possess great religious and symbolic significance but are also among the most beautiful and interesting works of East Asian craftsmanship.¹⁰⁵ Depending on the purpose for which they are used, these implements may be: 1. part of a temple's furnishings and accessories of cult figures; 2. robes and symbolic or rank insignia of priests; 3. cult implements in the narrower sense of the word, used during performances of rituals on altars in direct relationship to the cult images; 4. reliquaries; 5. those sepulchral monuments which are more symbolic than architectural in character.

1. Temple Furnishings and Cult Figure Accessories. Sanctuary furniture directly linked to architecture and cult statues has already been mentioned in previous chapters. Such objects consisted of decorations of the inner space around altar platforms, pedestals, halos, and canopies of particular figures or groups of figures (28, 31, 38). Even during the classic period of Buddhist art, when ornamentation had not yet degenerated into mere splendor for its own sake, all figures were abundantly ornamented. But this was done with dignity and restraint. The most prominent forms of such decoration included ornamental as well as figurative carvings, inlays (of wood, metal, mother-of-pearl), affixed metal surfaces (such as flat, pierced ornamental strips or hammered relief plates), and also decorative painted surfaces. The dominant impressions are generated by the luxuriantly colored painted patterns, applications of black and red lacquer and, above all, the lavish use of gold.

Relatively few such works from the classic period of Buddhist art have been preserved. Most renowned is the bronze-covered figure pedestal (38) for the main cult statue of Bhaiṣajyaguru Buddha (Yakushi) in the Yakushi-ji in Nara. It not only displays noble proportions, but also marvelous decorative motifs which show remarkable resemblance to Hellenistic ornamental designs. These may in fact have reached Japan via China which had preserved elements of the "late ancient Buddhist art of Central Asia" (von Le Coq). Several motifs used in older Buddhist ornamental designs in China from the Wei to the T'ang (in Japan from the Asuka to

Nara) periods can be traced in a nearly continuous line right across the continent to Near Eastern, Byzantine, and Hellenistic forerunners.¹⁰⁶ I should hasten to add that this in no way supports the Hellenocentric theory for the origin of Buddhist art.

Figure pedestals (28, 29, 31, 58, 69), particularly lotus pedestals, are frequently masterpieces of wood carving. They are beautifully proportioned and divided into numerous layers, each with its own symbolic meaning. Collectively these layers represent Mount Sumeru, the world-center according to Indian cosmology. The pedestal is, therefore, narrowest at its waist and widest at the top and bottom. Each pedestal's proportions and total dimensions are closely related to those of the halo, and both, in turn, are related to those of the figure itself. This was always found to be the case in those (unfortunately not too frequent) instances where the original ensemble has been preserved or reconstructed.

The artistic splendor of the halos' basic forms and motifs (18, 19, 24, 28, 29, 42, 52, 57, 151-153) cannot even be approximately described here.¹⁰⁷ Both head and body halos are round or radially shaped. They frequently form circles narrowing at the top in the manner of the Cintāmani jewel (151) or they circumscribe a standing figure shaped like a boat. (The mandorla frequently found in Christian art is a different phenomenon.) Rays or small flames may emanate from the halos, or the halos themselves may consist entirely of lively flame and cloud forms (28, 69). Some of the greatest triumphs in Buddhist artistic design can be found in these halo types, where the motifs may be either carved or cast in shallow relief or where the entire halo forms a work of masterly open-work carving, partly done in the round. Small figures in more or less prominent relief may frequently be found on the surface of these halos. These are primarily of two types: firstly, there are Buddhas depicted as main figures, who either represent forerunners during previous eons of the Buddha or miraculous manifestations of the Buddha in the innumerable worlds which exist beyond our own (18, 52). Secondly, there are "angelic" Bodhisattvas (not at all comparable to Old Testament or Christian angels) venerating (pūjā) the Buddha and offering flowers, incense, music and dance to him (152). They, and the Apsaras' resembling them, are frequently, but imprecisely, called "flying heavenly beings" and the like. Such small figures are usually absent from the halos of Bodhisattvas and Vidyārājas where they are replaced by flower and vine motifs in the former case, or by flame gloriolas in the latter. Exceptions to this rule are the most simple, almost undecorated ring-shaped halos which are also generally used for Devas and holy men (Arhats).

In our chapter on architecture, we have already described the fine craftsmanship which went into the design of the canopies or the temple ceilings substituted for them, all of which possess a wealth of ornamental beauty. Some of them, as, for example, the halo of the Amitābha triad in the Tachibana shrine of the Hōryūji (ca. 700), deserve to be called absolutely perfect (152, 153).

Such shrines or tabernacles are an important part of the temple's furniture if they contain the main cult image or other figures venerated there together with the main figure. They usually have the form of a simple shrine with doors at the front and a canopy-like crowning roof. Their interior walls and doors, in some instances



28* Outer cover of a Sūtra scroll. Gold painting on dark blue paper.

even their outer walls, are painted with figures which, together with the cult figure contained inside the shrine, form an iconographic program. Rich ornamental motifs, frequently in lacquerwork, decorate the exterior. These shrines were popular for use in private domestic cultic observances and, in those cases, contain miniature figures. The Amitābha triad mentioned above is still standing in its original Tachibana shrine, which once belonged to a lady of Japan's highest court aristocracy.

Similar in structure, but a little older (Asuka period), is the famous Tamamushi Shrine (150) in the Hōryūji. Its name means "gold beetle shrine" because the areas between the metal-fittings of ornamental openwork were originally covered with the iridescent wing covers of these beetles (*Chrysochroa elegans*). The shrine contains very important, well-preserved and also technically remarkable paintings (see p. 131) on its exterior surfaces. The entire shape of such shrines reproduces the structure of a temple hall in a simplified and stylized, usually elongated manner designed for display on an altar. Some details are imitated so faithfully that particular shrines may provide important clues for the history of Japanese temple architecture.

Tabernacles occur also in miniature form for domestic use and as portable altars for travelers. Frequently, they measure only a few centimeters in height. Wood, preferably precious wood suitable for miniature carving, such as boxwood, is the most widely used material, but shrines made of metal can also be found. The miniature figures in the interior of such tabernacles occasionally are charming examples of exceptional craftsmanship in carving. The exterior is kept very simple and maintains, quite appropriately in view of its purpose, the shape of a simple box with folding doors.

Among the furnishings of temple interiors we also have to count various adornments attached to posts and beams. Long floating banners are usually made of painted or embroidered silk but also of openwork of gilt bronze. There are also the so-called keman (165) which are openwork gilt or painted oval plates made of bronze, wood, and occasionally of leather. These are decorated with plant or flower patterns, or figures of legendary birdmen (Gandharvas) and worshipping Bodhisattvas. They hang above or next to altars, are affixed to posts and cross beams, and may be regarded as transformed flower garlands. Curtains of brocade and colored silk frequently contribute to the decoration of the cult room. They have the function of veiling the cult image or rendering it only partially visible, i.e., of creating inside the sacred precinct of the cult hall yet another innermost sanctum.



29* Metal pendant on the lance of one of the Four Heavenly Kings in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji.

But even such objects of great decorative value do not have this mere ornamental function as their only objective. Rather, this ornamental function is pervaded, justified and transcended by a religious significance. In all highly developed religious art, and in many instances even in that of primitive peoples, adornment and decorative beauty are vehicles of numinous powers and meaningful symbolism. The enjoyment of ornamental play and sensual splendor, no matter how naively displayed as the apparent center of attention, should not be mistaken for secularization or aestheticism (cf. p. 186).

A more practical function is served by other pieces of furniture. These include short- or long-legged tables on which are placed the holy books used during psalm-like recitations or the utensils needed in front of the cult images; low altar platforms for the performance of certain special rituals; and armchairs with high backs and frequently covered by a canopy for abbots or other leading priests. These Buddhist dignitaries are seated on such chairs in a meditative pose, i.e., with their legs crossed under their bodies and hidden under their wide robes (cf. 132). Such furniture is usually made of simple lacquered wood, but more lavishly designed and decorated pieces may also be found, particularly among the altar tables, which may include in their design Rococo-like curved and graceful legs and fine inlays of

mother-of-pearl. In China elaborate carvings of the much-favored red lacquer can be found.

2. Priestly Robes and Insignia. An important role in the total impression made by a temple hall was played by the robes of the priests who filled the hall during the performance of cult ceremonies. Robes could be made of simple yellow, grey, brown or black material or could be a sort of lavishly decorated brocade stola (*J. Kesa*) and similar garment worn during the services in front of the cult images by those higher ranking priests who were entitled to them. Old brocade pieces from priestly garments were later used for mounting picture scrolls or as covers for precious utensils, such as those used for the tea ceremony. In this way many such pieces were preserved for surprisingly long periods of time. Even the most precious cult garments consisted of small pieces of material sown together in rectangular patterns. This was intended to recall the robes made of rags which were worn by the mendicant monks in early Buddhism.

Another important relic from the ancient tradition of mendicant Buddhist monks is the alms or rice bowl. In medieval East Asia, as demonstrated by numerous well-preserved pieces made of beautiful iron, bronze or lacquered wood found in temple treasures, these were functionally designed objects of noble simplicity with their nearly hemispheric shape slightly narrowing at the rim and totally devoid of decoration.

Buddhist priests were equipped with additional symbolic emblems or insignia of rank, such as the rosary, priestly staff, scepter, and flywhisk. The rosary¹⁰⁸ consisted of a symbolically significant number of wooden, ivory, stone or crystal beads, and served to keep count of prayers or invocation formulas, recitations of sacred passages or cultic exercises. The number of beads varies from between 16 to 18 to 108 or 112, according to the individual Buddhist schools using the rosary. The long priest's staff (cf. 65) has a metal top, frequently containing a miniature stupa, with six rings symbolizing the six realms of existence. Their rattling sound, according to the original interpretation, was intended to warn all animals off the path of the monk so that he would not unknowingly or unintentionally kill even the lowest creature. It also allowed him to attract the attention of residents during his begging trips without making it necessary for him to voice his request. The scepter consists of a gently curved flat piece of wood, bamboo, animal horn or metal, 30 to 100 centimeters in length, with a "cloud-shaped" widening flat shovel-like top. It is the ancient Chinese scepter (*ju-i, nyo-i*), originally perhaps a weapon but reinterpreted in Buddhist terms and later changed into a good luck symbol. The flywhisk serves to scare off flies and symbolizes the driving away of all evil. It consists of a short handle and long strands of white hair.

We are not devoting more time to these objects because they are of only marginal importance in Buddhist art. Nevertheless, they are frequently attractive thanks to their craftsmanship, and are important for understanding the iconography of portraits of priests and other works of art.

3. Ritual Implements. Ritual implements proper, i.e., those used to venerate holy beings during the performance of rituals in front of their images, may be divided into two main groups: vessels for sacrificial offerings and cult symbols.

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They were primarily developed by esoteric Buddhism, which imbued them with profound mystical significance.

There are six main ritual offerings: scented water, scented powder (which also takes the form of ointments), flowers,¹⁰⁹ incense, food, and the light of lamps. Each of these parallel different spiritual achievements and virtues in a manner which varies widely in the various Buddhist schools. For example, the offerings may correspond to the six pāramitās: compassion, observance of the commandments, equanimity, striving, enlightenment, and supreme wisdom. Or they may symbolize generosity, moral discipline, patient compassion, energy, meditation, and enlightenment. These six offerings may be supplemented by flower garlands, hymns, dances, and cultic plays. Buddhist craftsmanship has created vessels for these sacrificial offerings which are usually of simple but often noble and dignified design.



30* Sounding plate (kei).

Bowls for water and food, flasks for holy water (166), boxes for incense and scented powder, incense basins, flower vases, lamps and candlesticks form the complete set of ritual implements. Some pieces come in pairs arranged on both sides of the altar. The most frequent arrangement, even for later pieces of porcelain, consists of an incense vessel placed in the center and flanked by a pair of flower vases and a pair of candle holders. The latter were usually made of copper, bronze or brass and occasionally inlaid with symbolic motifs or mystic letters (Siddham; see p. 156). However, most of them were either entirely without decoration or were given only a very restrained ornamentation. This restraint leaves an impression of overwhelming austerity, solemnity and perfect craftsmanship. It allows these implements to share both an inner relationship and equal status with the cult figures of the sacred beings whom they serve. During later periods, however, they were frequently endowed with lavish or even overly rich decoration as, for example, in the carved lacquerware of the Ming and Ch'ing periods.

The ritual implement with the greatest variations in form is the incense vessel. It may appear in the shape of an open bowl or chalice placed on a high pedestal, or in that of a mountain having several peaks with openings between them through which incense could rise. Such incense vessels are sometimes made of glazed ceramic. Incense burners with long handles are not found on altars in front of cult images, but are held by officiating priests and could be carried during processions (131). A special offering of incense might involve pouring incense powder onto a round place to form a maṇḍala or symbolic letters (Siddham)

representing certain sacred figures. Such round plates could occupy the center of a many-petaled open lotus flower resembling the pedestal of images. Many such implements are preserved in the Shôsôin in Nara and elsewhere. Incense vessels of monumental dimensions, such as giant bronze cauldrons bearing votive inscriptions, can be found in front of temple halls--monuments of piety imparting vigorous accents to these courtyards.

Lanterns underwent an evolutionary process which took them beyond the sphere of the temple interior and immediate use in the cult. To be sure, lanterns are found, frequently in large numbers, both in cult rooms and in the corridors of temple precincts. But they play their most important role when found in monumental sizes, made of bronze or stone, lining the paths of temples, as the focal point of temple yards or accompanying graves in cemeteries. Lanterns accumulated in large numbers over the course of centuries at such sacred spots as pious offerings by the faithful. They frequently bear detailed inscriptions.

Lanterns were characteristically designed with quadrangular, sextagonal or octagonal head pieces to hold oil lamps or candles. Such head pieces, in turn, rested on tall, round or polygonal pedestals. The whole ensemble is covered by a projecting roof with a decorative top--making this basic shape resemble that of a pagoda. Monumental masterpieces of stone masonry and metal casting may be found among these temple lanterns. The most important of them, a work from the middle of the 8th century which has miraculously survived, stands in front of the hall of the Great Buddha in the Tôdaiji at Nara (154). It is distinguished by its harmoniously proportioned dimensions and beautiful grid panels carrying reliefs of Bodhisattvas playing musical instruments (155). Though this work was surely patterned on Chinese prototypes of the Tang period, none like these have survived in China. Normally, these lanterns were made of stone. Lanterns have continued to play an important role right up to the present in garden architecture. Their origin as religious objects should caution us against regarding these as merely decorative enrichment.

The ritual symbols used in esoteric Buddhism are placed on the altar either in a lying or standing position and are held and handled by priests during the course of ritual performances in different, mostly symbolic and therefore minutely and strictly prescribed ways. The most important of these implements is the Wheel of the Teaching or of the Law (dharma-cakra; 158, 32*).

Originally an Indian disc-like throwing weapon, it later became the sign of a ruler, and hence appropriate for the Buddha. It is also a sun symbol, and above all, became the symbol of the doctrine "set in motion" by the Buddha's act of "Turning the Wheel of the Law," which began with his first sermon at Sarnath and illuminated the world like the sun. At the heart of all this is the widespread ancient symbolism of the wheel for cosmic cycles of the world and life itself. The Vajra symbol (101, 156, 157, 160, compare 73, 14*), the ancient thunderbolt of Indra and other deities, which is also called the diamond scepter, symbolizes in esoteric Buddhism both the Absolute and Emptiness as the indestructible, ultimate reality which is just as indestructible as a diamond. It penetrates everything and destroys evil but itself



31* Frieze with vine motif on the upper rim of the pedestal of the main cult image in the Yakushiji, Nara.

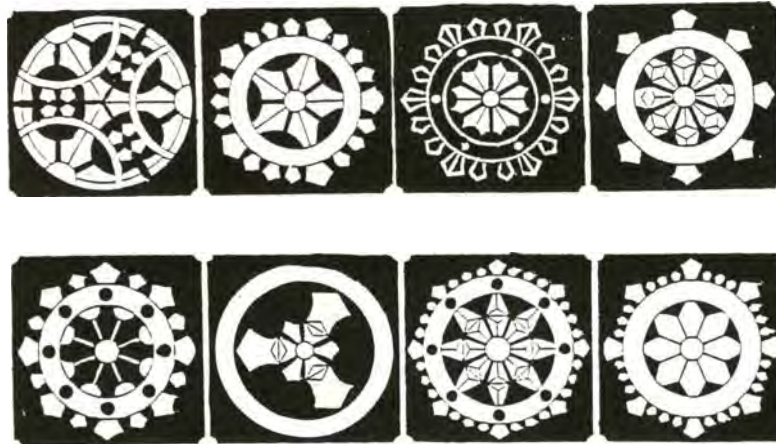
cannot be penetrated, split or destroyed. The vajra also symbolizes the "bodhi mind," the innermost unchanging essential nature of all existing beings who have to be liberated and made to realize this true "bodhi mind" during the process of enlightenment. Vajras are made of metal (usually bronze) and take the form of a short club with a bulge in the middle and sharp-edged prongs at both ends. The number of these prongs differs: one prong symbolizes ultimate metaphysical unity; three prongs its three-fold manifestation in body, speech, and mind; five prongs point to the five wisdoms and the five Wisdom Buddhas corresponding to them. Prongs of many-pronged vajras are bent towards the central axis in a claw-like fashion. As tangible realization of śūnyatā, the quintessential metaphysical concept of Mahāyāna Buddhism, the vajra serves as the central cult symbol of that school of Buddhism which gave Buddhist art its most fertile impulses.

The counterparts of the vajras are the bells (frequently with many-pronged vajras as handles) (157) symbolizing the phenomenal world, according to the scheme of the Diamond and Womb Worlds depicted in the pair of mandalas. As transitory and illusory as the phenomenal world, the sounds of the bell vanish; but seen from another vantage point, the vajra-bell is considered to be the symbol of awakening and enlightenment. The sexual-magic school of esoteric Buddhism, Śāktism, understands vajra and bell as symbols of the male and female principles.

We should stress at this point that every esoteric (and not just esoteric) Buddhist symbol may be interpreted in a variety of ways depending on its context, the particular school using it, or the doctrinal tenet it is intended to symbolize. As a matter of fact, it may be called one of the fundamental principles of such mystic symbolism that it is so multi-faceted and multi-layered that its symbols have to be interpreted in a variety of ways. The predilection of the East Asian mind for combination, classification and interpretation (including mystification) has been allowed to run wild in this particular area in such a confusing manner that we should refrain at this point from attempting to describe and explain Buddhist symbolism. We arrive here at a borderline beyond which our quest for specific information

should not carry us, but we should at the same time be mindful of the fact that this border should not be drawn too narrowly.

Another important cult symbol is the "eye opener," a metal object resembling a one-pronged vajra but with a small pearl at each end. It evolved from an Indian instrument used during eye operations for cataracts and is thought to open the spiritual eye of the initiate to the saving truth. There are many other symbols, but they do not play as important a role as works of creative craftsmanship as those described above.



32* The Wheel of Dharma as motif in family crests.

Mention should be made, however, of the "Seven" or "Eight Treasures" because they are frequently placed on altars or depicted in Buddhist paintings as favorite ornamental motifs. The Seven Treasures are the most valuable treasures of a world ruler (cakravartin): They are the elephant, horse, wish-granting jewel, a beautiful consort, a good minister, a good general and the wheel (to symbolize universal rule). The "Eight Treasures," which also belong to the world ruler and have been ascribed to the Buddha in his role as spiritual world ruler even more frequently than the seven, are: the umbrella (a canopy being the symbol of a sovereign), two fish (symbol of fertility and expansion), a conch shell (for its victoriously penetrating sound), the lotus flowers (the symbol of the purity and perfection of essential nature unsoiled by the mud of the world), the jar (for the drink of immortality, or holy water), the unending knot (of infinite life), the victory banner, and the Wheel of Dharma. One or another of these often appears as a decorative motif on late Chinese porcelain. The wheel symbol, like all these signs deriving from very ancient Indian notions, is also found in Buddhism in the form of a swastika which, running counter-clockwise, frequently appears on the chest, palms, or soles of Buddha figures. In East Asian maps or city guides it serves usually as a topographic sign for a Buddhist temple just as Western maps use the sign of a cross to mark the location of a church.

Several musical instruments are also part of the ritual performances and have occasionally been shaped in an artistically attractive manner. Closely related to the altar objects and cult symbols mentioned above are various sounding boards and gongs (162-164, 30*), and sound basins which are struck with wooden sticks or hammers. The number of beats, their rhythm and the sound itself all have deep symbolic meaning.

The sound basins have the simplest design. They are plain hemispheric bronze or brass bowls resting on a cushioned frame. They are struck with cloth-covered wooden sticks or, in the case of small basins, with thin metal rods. Characteristically Buddhist instruments are the drums made of woody gourds or wood and furnished with wide, mouth-like openings. These rest on cushions and when struck emit a hollow, deeply resonant, yet dry sound. More elaborate designs can be found on gongs and sound boards suspended on wooden or metal frames. These may be simple sounding stones--an ancient Chinese kind of chime--but are more commonly made of bronze. They not only have beautiful shapes and proportions but are also attractively adorned, usually with symbolic lotus flowers. Their frames may be of simple lacquered wood, but occasionally are also lavishly executed works of art in their own right.

Bells are the main instruments found outside the temple halls. Small bells with clappers activated by the wind hang from the eaves of temple halls and pagodas, and their sound proclaims the true doctrine to the world. But most of all, any sanctuary worthy of the name has a large temple bell (167). Usually these bells hang in their own free-standing towers or bell pavilions, but could also be incorporated in the galleries. Frequently splendidly monumental, these very heavy bronze bells are struck from the outside by a wooden beam horizontally suspended at their side. Their deep, sonorous and long vibrating, characteristic sound is one of the most impressive experiences a visitor may have in a temple precinct. It contributes more intensively than virtually anything else to the peculiar mood of "emptiness" which is the goal of meditative Buddhist mysticism.

Bells are among the most refined large-scale works of Buddhist art, and derive their artistic vigor from their plain and austere shape, nobly simple design, and the economy and dignity of their ornaments. Ornaments are frequently limited to the "heads" (usually consisting of three-dimensional dragon figures) from which the bell is suspended, and to the point where the bell is struck (where a lotus flower is placed). Occasionally there is also an ornamental stripe along the lower rim. The rest of the bell's surface, divided into rectangles by narrow stripes, is left empty. Some bells, particularly in Korea, are distinguished by charming floating Boddhisattva figures cast in low relief and by more lavish decorations in the form of blossoms and vines. Both types, the simple and the elaborate one, are most likely derived from ancient Chinese models.

The rows of wart-like protrusions on the upper exterior of East Asian bells are supposed to be there for acoustic reasons. From an artistic point of view they contribute substantially to the liveliness of the object by providing a contrast to the smooth portions of the surfaces of the bells. Inscriptions are common. These are valuable because they contain exact information about donors and dates, though their purpose was certainly not to provide future generations with historical data. Rather, it was to allow the blessed and liberating sound of the bell to proclaim the

name of the donor of the pious offering and his religious merits to all realms of the world—even to purgatory where the sound comforted the suffering and kept alive their hope that they, too, might finally travel the path to salvation.

The counterparts of the bells are large drums or gongs. These are found inside the cult halls or, like the bells, are housed in separate, towerlike pavilions. Frequently the frames from which they are suspended are artistically more important than the gongs themselves. Their lavish gilt or painted carvings resemble the halos of the cult figures. Bells and gongs are sounded in connection with performances of rituals, but also in order to mark certain times of the day or night. Particularly important are the 108 strikes which are intended to erase the 108 sins, or, more appropriately in the Buddhist sense, obstacles to enlightenment (*kleśa*), and to drive away all powers which are hostile to the doctrine and block the way to liberation. The sound of drums, just like that of bells, comforts and blesses all beings, even those suffering in purgatory, leading them onto the path of salvation.

Regular musical instruments, like flutes, drums, string instruments, etc., also serve the cult. Though frequently of attractive artistic design, they are not properly part of our subject, primarily because they are also used outside the Buddhist sphere. They may be heard during the sacred masked dances (*bugaku*), which are of non-Buddhist origin but are included as offerings in Buddhist ritual. These dances have been an essential part of the grand temple festivals for many centuries, at least in Japan, where virtually everything adopted from the China of the T'ang period has been preserved with surprising faithfulness. The musical element in Buddhist rituals should not be overlooked. It contributes substantially to the religious meaning and atmosphere of the ritual, and no one who has ever listened to the hymns of Buddhist monk choirs, reminiscent of Gregorian chants, and akin to the sound of the bells, has failed to be profoundly impressed.

Among the most important elements of rituals are recitations of sacred scriptures. The actual texts of these scriptures, whether in the form of scrolls written in beautiful calligraphic style and richly decorated with pictures and other ornaments, or in the modest form of bound volumes, are ritual objects in their own right or instruments used for venerating the Buddha. But the sacred words are only brought to life during solemn recitations in the style of psalmody. For such occasions the scriptures are spread out on special small reading tables. At any other time they are kept in lacquered boxes, frequently covered with gold lacquer, mother-of-pearl inlay and metal ornament decorations. Such Sūtra boxes and chests and the receptacles for priestly robes, scepters and related objects are among the most important examples of medieval lacquerware. By comparison, the world-famous masterpieces of the Chinese and Japanese secular lacquerware are only relatively recent latecomers.

4. Reliquaries. As the Buddhists understand it, the sacred word is also a sacred body: A mystic syllable or sequence of syllables—whether recited or written—may contain the entire essence of a Buddha, Bodhisattva or Vidyārāja. For this reason Sūtra texts or dhāranīs may be made the nucleus of a cult statue which allows the statue to attain its numinous efficacy (see above, p. 83). The Buddha body is also present in relics (*śarīra*), and these, as we have already seen in the case of

pagodas, play an important, if not dominant, role in Buddhist sanctuaries and their rituals.



33* Stone gorintô.

Small wonder that precious reliquaries, preferably in the shape of pagodas or related shapes, have been dedicated to such relics during all periods. The most popular form was the tahôtô (see p. 70f). Another favorite was the gorintô which was also popular as the shape of tombstones. It consisted of a pagoda-like arrangement of superimposed cubic, spherical, pyramidal, semi-spherical and pearl-like shapes as symbols of the five world elements: earth, water, fire, air, and empty space (159). Small boxes, flasks, and similar receptacles made of precious material, such as gold, silver or rock crystal, could also serve as reliquaries (159). Occasionally, creative artistic imagination and exquisite craftsmanship found outlets in other shapes (161). These, however, are still suggestive of the pagoda shape. Reliquaries are either placed on the altars of special relic chapels fitted into the temple precinct, or they are lowered into the ground below the altar during consecration ceremonies. The importance of the relics enclosed in the central foundation stones of the pagoda has already been described earlier (p. 70).

5. Grave monuments. Pagodas and pagoda-like shapes of stone or metal, above all the gorintô, may also appear as tombstones (33*) and even constitute their most important type. Symbolizing, as they did, the embodiment of the Buddha, they were appropriate receptacles for his historical or spiritual body. Therefore, they were also considered befitting for those of the dead who were assumed to have entered Buddhahood through enlightenment and liberation. Next in frequency are simple slab-like stone steles placed on pedestals. Relatively rare were tomb sculptures. The most common type are figures of the Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha (Titsang, Ji-zô) who, as helpmate for all those suffering in the nether world, was quite appropriate for serving this function.

In East Asian countries, Buddhism was most commonly responsible for funeral rites and continues in part to be so; cemeteries are, therefore, still predominately Buddhist in character. Because of the preponderance of only a few

types of grave monuments with strictly regulated forms and proportions, Buddhist cemeteries are distinguished by their great uniformity. Despite a certain tendency to monotony, the result contrasts favorably even for modern tastes with that aggregation of hollow tastelessness frequently disgracing our cemeteries. Grave monuments, in the simple monumentality of their traditional limited repertoire of types, represent an achievement of Buddhist art which should not be slighted. The spirit of Buddhist art lives in them just as it does in the cult figures and temple buildings. Their common inner inspiration is clearly evident.

Surveying the works of Buddhist craftsmanship which served as furnishings for Buddhist sanctuaries and as ritual implements during cult performances, we notice a certain polarity. On the one hand, these objects are distinguished by their solemn simplicity and profundity; on the other hand, they are objects bearing lavish, occasionally overly rich ornamentation (cf. 167 and 161). While their quality depends on the degree of expertise displayed in the sheer mastery of the materials employed and on the power of the basic shapes produced, it depends also on the great technical virtuosity and on the free play of melodious ornamentation.

This polarity permeates the entire world of Buddhist art and life. The Buddhas, remote in the emptiness of nirvāna, and their solemn undecorated figures, have been simplified to the point of abstraction. But they are confronted by lavishly decorated Bodhisattvas and deities placed within the full splendor of the supra-earthly realms of bliss. The idea of "Emptiness" is confronted by the wealth of a beatified reality which revels in beauty. The motive of ascetic meditation aiming at ultimate essence is confronted with the motive of "accumulating merit" through veneration, offerings, and accumulating treasures. In order to symbolize that which is ultimately real and most sacred, nothing can be too simple and "abstract." The symbol must be reduced to the utmost possible simplicity of its essential core. But for the purpose of veneration, nothing is too splendid and precious. The two aspects do not contradict but rather complement each other, each saving the other from an overly rigid one-sidedness. The abstract bestows metaphysical depth on the concrete. The concrete bestows on the abstract the vibrant wealth and fullness of the real and supra-real play of forms. In terms of Mahāyāna teaching, both aspects, though not identical, are also not quite non-identical in their ultimate essence.

Ornamental Motifs

Ornamentation assumes an important role in objects produced for ritual purposes. For this reason a few comments are appended here about this important field of East Asian, specifically Buddhist, art which so far has attracted little attention. It extends beyond the art of mere implements to that of Buddhist architecture whenever a building or its contents display sculptured and painted decoration of cult images whose garments, jewelry, and attachments (halos, etc.) are frequently strewn with ornamental elements, but also to painting. Technically speaking, ornaments may be executed in metalwork (such as cast, engraved, applied or inlaid ornaments), wood carvings, mother-of-pearl and other inlays, colored or gilded lacquerware, or painted surfaces. The fields of Buddhist art identified above share not only techniques but also decorative motifs. We may distinguish between three basic groups of such decorative motifs, each characterized by that superb

beauty of line and lively surface texture for which East Asians appear to have particular talents.

1. Geometric-abstract motifs. That is, systems of lines and surfaces occurring, for example, as patterns on the robes of Buddhist figures in sculptures and paintings (25*) or as lattice work, which is richly developed in East Asian architecture. The surface design occurring on large bells may also be included in this group (167). A special form is constituted by the wave, volute and spiral line patterns covering the surfaces of halos (17, 151) which represent the light aureoles of the sacred beings. But this kind of decoration is clearly less prominent than the following group.

2. Nature motifs. These consist predominantly of plants and flowers but animals have also occasionally been used. Most prominent among the latter are symbolic animals, like lions, elephants, peacocks, phoenixes and dragons which are either of Indian-Buddhist or ancient Chinese origin. The same is true of plants. Some, like the lotus, were brought by Buddhism from India to East Asia. Others come from the rich repertoire of Chinese nature motifs with their own complex pre-Buddhist symbolism.¹¹⁰ These Chinese flower and vine motifs dominate the ornamental decorations of Buddhist art to a high degree. The fully and splendidly developed T'ang ornamental style, in particular, displays an overabundance of almost corporeal organic life, yet manages it with the kind of restraint which yields classic perfection. The T'ang decorative style exerted a more dominant influence during all later periods than the more abstract ornamentalism of the archaic Wei style (43; 29*) which had dominated the early phase of Buddhist art in East Asia with its austere and cool beauty.

This T'ang ornamental style was transported from China to Korea and further on to Japan where it was, at least in the Buddhist sphere, only slightly modified and expanded. The objects of basically Chinese origin, dating approximately from the first half of the 8th century, which have been preserved in the treasure storehouse Shōsōin in Nara, comprise the richest surviving collection of this international classic ornamental style and represent it in its purest form. The major plant motif, aside from that of the lotus, consists of arabesque-like intertwining vines with inward and outward curling stems, leaves, and blossoms, from which new leaves and flowers branch off (163, 165; 20*, 25*, 28*, 30*). Placed between such arabesques or constituting independent ornamental motifs in their own right are forms which we may call lotus-palmettes. But the most important truly Buddhist symbolic plant motif has been the lotus flower with its infinitely varied patterns of petals and leaves. Among the innumerable examples, a surprisingly large number are of outstanding noble beauty--a beauty which is either of austere loftiness or of gentle elegance (153).

3. Buddhist Motifs. In contrast to the first two groups of motifs which are predominantly of non-Buddhist origin or were at least not limited to Buddhism alone, there is a group of purely Buddhist symbols. These have already been described: the wheel of the doctrine, the swastika, the stūpa, the wish-granting jewel, the diamond thunderbolt (vajra), and many more. Together with their symbolic function they also serve as decorative motifs, either independently or as

elements of complex ornamental patterns. They may appear on a vast array of objects and are executed in every available technique, even in instances where one would not expect them--such as Japanese family crests displayed on garments and utensils (32*).

In the total repertoire of Buddhist ornaments a kind of historical stratification may be seen. Many motifs originated either in India or China, and a few were added by the Japanese after they accepted the entire store of Indian-Chinese motifs. In addition, there is a sizeable number of motifs of more or less clearly Hellenistic inspiration. These, as already mentioned, had found their way to East Asia from Bactria and Northwest India via Central Asia. There are also some of pure Sassanid origin which, though originating during a substantially later phase of development, also made their way to East Asia via Central Asia. The *Hōryūji* in Japan, for example, has preserved a seemingly typical Sassanid piece of silk from the 7th century which does, however, betray its East Asian origin by such peculiar features as the Chinese characters woven into it. After the early phase of East Asian Buddhism, during which foreign elements were readily adopted, such influences receded and, beginning with the mature T'ang period, the stock of motifs of essentially Indian and Chinese origin described above had consolidated. But Buddhism, which had penetrated most of Asia and had become the vehicle for far-reaching cultural contacts and the receptacle for numerous cultural traditions, displays its universal character particularly clearly in the array of its decorative motifs.¹¹¹

In all religious art, there is an imprecise borderline between those motifs which are an inherent part of the content of a particular work, are therefore iconographically relevant, and may serve as carriers of symbolic meaning, and those which are intended for purely ornamental purposes. This is perhaps so because in all cultures ornamental motifs were derived largely from meaningful symbolic images and signs. On the other hand, true symbols, such as the lotus flower, wheel of doctrine, or vajra, for example, may also play a strong ornamental role (69).

But the borderline between representative and ornamental functions is also imprecise for another reason. In East Asia there exists a preference for ornamentalizing the forms of concrete objects. For example, garments streaming in the wind and scarflike stripes may be turned into a melodic play of lines serving the obvious purpose of decorating a large surface, and thus developing a highly ornamental value of their own (152). East Asian art in general tends to view the objects which it depicts in terms of their purely formal values and, without weakening their natural vitality to any degree, tends to stylize them with cipherlike or ornamental formulas. This feature characterizes the secular art of all periods as well but may be observed particularly in Buddhist art, which puts so much emphasis on the spiritualization and sublimation of phenomenal and empirical forms.

The following brief sketch may suffice to indicate the composition and design principles of Buddhist ornamental art. The three kinds of motifs described above are usually combined. A favorite combination is one consisting of natural and symbolic motifs and serving as the main design adorning a geometrically decorated surface. Other favorites are medallion- or rosette-shaped centralized motifs framed by secondary motifs inside a bordered field. Radial patterns inside such fields may

also be found. Tight arrangements of ornaments to cover surfaces are frequent and occasionally create the impression of arabesques without, however, approaching the complicated interlacing patterns of that form of Islamic ornamental art. Generally speaking, a relatively simple and manageable order prevails even in cases where forms abound.

Three elementary types of arrangement stand out: the centralizing type, usually a field with a central rosette; the surface-covering type, characterized by a certain *horror vacui*; and the ribbon-like type, preferably in the form of ornamental lining stripes with continuous geometric patterns, wave-like vines and similar motifs. Symmetry generally dominates without ever becoming rigid, for the simple reason that all ornamental shapes already have a certain inner movement of their own which is, however, always restrained to a mild flow and softened to create a calming total effect. This movement arises essentially from the natural vitality of many of these motifs, but their peculiar "plasticity" may also be due to their immanent formative power. This creates modulated surfaces, which often produce the illusion of three-dimensionality, bestowing an organic freedom on such surface-bound patterns (28*).

Graphic devices, such as curved lines patterned after organic forms, overlapping lines, etc. all contribute to this effect. But, above all, it is produced by shadowing and coloring techniques (entirely non-naturalistic, of course). Coloring is multi-faceted, often graduated like a rainbow and divided into stripes and layers (20*) according to the *ungen* method described above (p. 62). But no matter how rich the interweave of colors and the wealth and variation of forms, certain restraints are strictly observed. Gold is lavishly used but the resulting effect is always one of dignified and somber beauty. Only during the late periods was there degeneration into vulgar overindulgence. The norm was to aim for a clarified and restrained variety, a harmonious balancing of opposite forces, a vitality refined into nobility of form, a play of forms rising out of a natural enjoyment of beauty, yet spiritualized in something supra-real. In all these respects Buddhist ornamental art is not only of truly classic quality, but is also a genuine and appropriate expression of the Mahāyāna spirit.

Formative Principles

Buddhist art, particularly in sculpture and painting, faces the paradoxical task of attempting to capture in visible form a reality that is basically non-visible. It must transcend manifest forms and yet preserve them and even fill them with deeper meaning. This is rendered more difficult by the fact that the phenomenal world--even though it represents and manifests the Absolute--is itself regarded as lacking substance and all its forms are viewed as being ultimately without substance. However, the peculiar nature of form itself comes to the aid of Buddhist art at this point. Form as visible image in the world of phenomena serves as a means for defining something otherwise undefined and undefinable. Form aims at differentiation and clear determination but--particularly in East Asian eyes--must have qualities which enable it to rise to a level beyond all distinctions. It has to include something from the infinite as part of its finite presence, allow itself to be embraced by the metaphysical ground and yet to remain "open" to that ground, i.e., avoid turning into shackles and operating as something that limits rather than defines and thereby remains bound to the shallow realm of existence.

Form, particularly in religious art, has to go beyond itself in the very act of attaining its highest fulfillment. In essence and meaning, form arises from formlessness and returns to it. It returns to that undetermined state, to that emptiness, which is the ground of all forms. The best works of Buddhist art have met this challenge by employing particularly purified and spiritualized forms in order to achieve that radical transcendence so characteristic of Buddhism. They manage to transform that "Emptiness" into manifestations which are experienced visually, and bestow religious efficacy on them without, however, going too far in tying these manifestations to the phenomenal or crossing the fine line between the sacred and the profane--a danger to which all "realistic" or "humanist" religious art succumbs only too readily.

Buddhist art has pursued two paths to create such forms: the path of the sacred art of the early and high medieval ages and that of later Zen art. We will first look at the fundamental formative principles underlying sacred art, particularly sculpture and painting, i.e., the abstracting, symbolic, and decorative principles.

These are true principles since they constitute the basis of all individual formative processes. All three are linked intimately with each other and all are sustained by the strong powers of visionary experiences.

The Abstracting Principle

All Buddhist art is subject to the dialectic of the opposing processes of spiritualization and sensualization. It has not only to follow both but at the same time rise above them. Buddhist art can never be completely successful in this endeavor because, as art, it must pursue the sensualization of its objects. Yet in this pursuit a basic tenet of Mahâyâna Buddhism--that of the non-duality of nirvâna and samsâra--does not require complete attainment of sensualization, because Mahâyâna acknowledges the phenomenal aspect in both its relative and transcendental absolute value. Still, wherever this art attempts to show absolute transcendence in the Buddha figures, it reaches a degree of abstraction, i.e., of denaturalization and desensualization, not attained by any other religious art except that employing only pure symbols. It is characteristic of Mahâyâna art that it refrains from employing pure symbols. Rather, and in accordance with Mahâyâna teachings, it enters into the phenomenal world and--like any religious spirit resisting the radical denial of images and doing so by its own impulses--relies on human images and personifications. But Buddhist art does not create divine figures by means of an idealizing and heroicizing intensification of the beautiful human body. It neither aims at perfect representations of the body's manifestations nor does it attempt to ascetically overcome and negate the living organic body. Rather, Buddhist art imparts to its sacred figures a truly impersonal, supra-real generality without, however, negating their near-human personalities and soulful qualities. This shows clearly that the Mahâyâna world view is not dualistic.

That this view is also removed from pantheistic immanent beliefs, is shown with equal clarity by Mahâyâna art. This art does not simply show given phenomena or indicate spiritualized reality in its simple unreflected presence, nor does it make the divine visible in it. Nor does this art attempt to intensify any given phenomenon and to elevate the spirit immanent in it to the level of noble manifestation; rather, it always allows us to sense "the other side," but not in a one-sided manner. It allows us to sense that "Emptiness" and radical transcendence which is at the heart of all phenomena without, however, abandoning the phenomena entirely or depriving them of all value. Buddhist art has avoided the limitations and dangers of purely literal and purely abstract expressions by its ability to avoid binding the Sacred and Transcendent to human and earthly forms and standards and by its ability to "dehumanize" its highest, personified figures without making them entirely non-human.

Bodhisattvas, but also the Buddhas who, according to the doctrine of "Nirvâna without rest,"¹¹² are basically empty and remote, participate in the human-earthly realm because they radiate their universal compassion throughout the universe. They participate in it also insofar as something of the essence of the Absolute is present and alive in all phenomena. We should add to this the notion of the different levels of existence. All spheres of life, from the Buddha downward, contain a graduated reflection of purest being. This being--in more or less pure form--becomes phenomenal and causal. Buddhist art faces the task of making

visible these graduated levels and of bestowing on the Absolute a form which allows it to be accessible to the senses. It also had to take the Absolute--embodied in the Buddha--and project it into the phenomenal world despite its remoteness and basic transcendent, non-dual nature. A totally abstract form located in an absolute Beyond would be unable to accomplish this. The abstractions found in Buddhist art have always retained a certain "openness", actively pointing towards the human and phenomenal aspects of the Absolute's strictly closed nature, but whenever the Buddha and his manifestation appear in the human sphere this happens as movement from the sphere of transcendence into the "here," and not from "here" towards the transcendent. In Buddhist art, too, the forms of these figures also approach us "from the other side."

This holds true particularly for the highest sphere, that of the Buddha, whose primordial figure remains in the motionless remoteness of the meditative pose. Bodhisattvas, as beings of the next lower level--by virtue of their compassionate activities and their different incarnations--are already deeply involved with the phenomenal world, but remain free from any entanglement with it because of their spiritual advancement. Their figures are therefore not as abstractly remote as those of the Buddhas, but neither do they enter the realm of terrestrial immediacy and near-human corporeality occupied by the beings at the next lower level, the deities.

The deities remain below that crucial threshold of transcendence. They are tied to the karma cycle and perform their tasks in the world of phenomena. This hierarchy of existence--extending from the highest and purest distance and remoteness to tangible, concrete proximity, from the coolness of nirvāna to the warmth of near-human figures--is continued in the figures of the Buddha's disciples and the patriarchs. They represent the human sphere proper, albeit in a heroically intensified realism. The Arhats show similar but not quite identical features. They have already reached nirvāna in this life by virtue of their own power of enlightenment. They have overcome rebirth, i.e. they have advanced directly from the human sphere to the Absolute without, however, already having left the former. They are therefore depicted in a quite human rather than abstract manner. But their images are directly and dramatically intensified at this human level so that the supra-human, mythic and, preferably, even grotesque features given to them elevate them into a state of detachment from the mundane world.

In spite of its consistent use of anthropomorphic elements, Buddhist art has little interest in the human body or its real or divine nature. To be sure, figures of full, weighty corporeality and idealized beauty do appear, but their beauty means something fundamentally different than, for example, that of Greek divine images. The ideal nature of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas does not entail an enhancement on the level of human-organic and given natural forms. Rather, it is the result of abstraction--of processes which isolate their figures, make them remote, and denaturalize them. The body and garment types of the Indian models of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, i.e., the "classic" forms of body and garment types in East Asia, contribute to this process insofar as they place the figures into an "alien" sphere and help them escape the kind of historicization which occurred in China with respect to body and facial types, dresses and ornaments of almost all the other figures of the pantheon.

The really decisive processes of de-corporealization and abstraction--really decisive because by necessity born out of the spirit of Buddhism--can already clearly be observed as having taken place at the point of origin itself. The Indian Buddha figures--inspired by the Gandhâra art which, in turn, was influenced by late Greco-Roman models--became more and more divorced from the sensuous and naturalistic qualities of the Gandhâra figures and came to display "absolute" or "abstract" forms--for example, in their body and facial forms, garment folds, etc. Here, as in Buddhist art in general, the apparently natural forms arise not from observation and enjoyment of naturally given objects, but rather from insights based on enlightened vision and sacred tradition. The goal of Buddhist art--in painting more than in sculpture--is to capture spiritualized figures whose essential natures are divorced from their bodies and neither rest within them nor ascetically deny them. Their bodies are thus neither in themselves perfect vessels or shackles for their spirit but rather quiet and remote transcended manifestations. This may explain the peculiarly floating and remote appearance of these otherwise frequently rather massive figures with their carefully modeled physical features. Human physical characteristics cannot be at the center of attention in the artistic expression of a world view which regards any form of life as really existing only insofar as it represents a shadowy form of the All-spirit and as a temporary crystallization of the Universal Consciousness.

The same holds for nature and landscapes. Though many splendid painted landscapes serve as Sûtra illustrations, they always represent a purely spiritual symbolization of some jewelled paradise whose very essence denies their participation in "nature," just as the bodies of the figures are meaningful only insofar as they avoid any "real" embodiment. Wherever individual natural objects--such as animals, trees, or flowers--appear, they either have symbolic meaning (as do elephants and lotuses) or they provide the background for some important moment in the life of the Buddha or some other legend. This rule does not, of course, apply to the narrative paintings and their strongly secularized stock of formal elements.

All of the above may be summarily referred to by the abbreviated formula of "abstracting principle" which accounts for some of the most characteristic features of the highest types of Buddhist sacred figures. It explains their lack of corporeality and gravity, their lack of three-dimensionality, the strongly two-dimensional impression they make in spite of their tangible presence as objects accessible to the senses; their non-sensuous and remote aura despite their explicit visual definition and beauty. Their quiet and calm harmony is the expression of a perfection which consists of their own "a-nihilation," their total remoteness, their "distance" and yet numinous presence, their supra-personal objectivity and their untouched, timeless resting-in-themselves. All this expresses the essence of the "Buddha nature" of this world as "la toute-puissance de l'abstraction métaphysique et du détachement," as "la force de la spiritualité."¹¹³

The Symbolizing Principle

The religious-philosophical foundation of Buddhist art necessitates the creation of symbols. While the oldest Buddhist art in India could only employ mere aniconic signs as its Buddha images, these signs, such as the footprint, wheel of law, Bodhi tree or stûpa, were independent of the actual figure of Gautama. Once

Mahāyāna art had moved in the direction of personal representations of the Buddha, it was forced to create actual images side by side with symbolic signs. This difficult task was made even more difficult by the fact that the Buddha was no longer merely or, perhaps more accurately, preferably the historical human founder of the religion, but instead had become a hypostasis of the Absolute. Buddhist art was faced with the task of creating personal archetypes to capture Absolute Being symbolically and hold it in the world of visible forms with the help of certain signs.

These archetypes came also to be basic models valid for all times of all the hierarchically graduated types of being in which the Absolute manifests itself. We may even regard the very conception of these archetypes as the products of Buddhism's symbol-creating religious thought and vision. But such archetypes did not arise from such interpretive studies into the essence of reality, as Goethe's "Urphänomen" or the ideal types of classic art, but rather are "established" or "revealed" from the realm of transcendence. Their meaning had, therefore, to be firmly established by certain arbitrary symbolic signs. From this necessity arose the vast system of Buddhist symbolism whose detailed description is the task of iconography. It may be claimed that such symbols tend to become mere but indispensable distinguishing signs and props for visual imagination, their ever-present significance for speculation, cult and religious experiences notwithstanding. One may even be justified in claiming that the great variety of sacred entities, particularly within esoteric Buddhism, can only be captured and clearly distinguished with the help of such pictorial representations and visible signs. This clarifying, discriminating, cultic-minded "labeling," clearly defines a limited number of the sacred figures from the vast number of images either latent in religious imagination or theoretically derived as hypostacized entities by theological speculation. Without such definition the vast number of such images could easily lapse into formlessness. This is why such clarifying dogmatic-cultic definition and "labels" constitute a highly important formative principle of Buddhist art.

Certain types, such as Devas and particularly world guardians and similar protective deities but also Arhats, are depicted in a strongly "realistic" manner compared to Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. This realism is not imitative, but rather symbolic, because it is based on religious inspiration and metaphysical insight and not on acceptance of a given reality. It is anti-anthropomorphic and aims at capturing the supra-human as well as supra-mundane in tangible formulas. But all this precise fixation in tangible symbolic images aspires to an archetypal, supra-empirical level which transcends all concrete images. Symbolism is thus closely related to "abstraction." Another factor placing symbolism close to abstraction is its characteristic tendency to rely on a simplifying concentration which focuses on firmly established formulas.

Such symbols not only serve to delineate and define images. Especially in esoteric Buddhism, they are also magico-mystical formulas possessing crucial numinous powers. Even small deviations from the prescribed forms could change the meaning or even destroy the cultic powers and efficacy of the image. For this reason, a most scrupulous exactness is necessary lest the image become an "equation with wrong figures" (Tucci).¹¹⁴ We are dealing here with creative achievements only in a narrower sense because the symbolic elements--such as body postures and characteristics, attributes, colors, etc.--are first and foremost meaningful signs

attached to the figures. They are a language which has been determined a priori and employs a number of formulas which may be selected according to circumstances.

Nevertheless, the achievements of the artists should not be underestimated. This is the case for two reasons. First, the substance of the artist's task and thus his major responsibility tended to make him select from among a repertoire of formulas. Second, such art not only required mastery of this, strictly speaking, still pre-aesthetic language of symbols but also its artistic integration into convincing personal images. This took the artist far away from a mere conglomeration of slavishly codified elements no matter how ritually efficacious each of them might be if encountered alone by itself. The best works of Buddhist art have been able to achieve an artistically convincing interplay of the outer forms of sacred figures and their symbolic signs. This has allowed all signs or formulas to assume lively artistic forms and all forms to become powerful expressive vehicles for Buddhist truths. We have already shown the strongly symbolic elements in architecture and the symbolic powers of such artistic techniques in sculpture and painting as, for example, with respect to surface and spatial relations, treatment of body and garment, lines, colors, and the use of gold.

These observations answer the obvious question of whether we are dealing here with real art or merely with a symbolic language of cult and ritual which is beyond aesthetic considerations, because its ideas were predetermined and their application purely mechanical. Further answers will be obtained from an investigation of the third formative principle which, in the absence of a better term, we will call "decorative principle," and which I should like to analyze more precisely because its importance has still not been sufficiently appreciated to date.

The Decorative Principle

Even the casual observer of Buddhist works of art, whether buildings, sculptures, paintings or ritual implements, will notice the substantial role played by decorative elements. East Asian art has a strong tendency to impart decorative value to all artistic forms and to give them a pleasing or festive "ornamental" appearance. To the East Asians, ornamental elements, understood in a more profound sense, frequently bestow to works of art their supreme charm. It is well known that we tend to appreciate even natural forms for their ornamental value in an entirely spontaneous manner. We never deal with "mere" form alone. That would be impossible. Every form also possesses expression and meaning so that the distinction between form and content is nothing but an arbitrary intellectual distinction which can become detrimental for an understanding of art. After all, the so-called content must be embodied in particular form and has no reality independent of it. Any change of form, be it ever so slight, would also change content and meaning. Form creates and completes meaning. In the religious sphere it may even attain a kind of magic function. Without correct form there will be no objectively important manifestation of essence and no efficacy in cultic performance. In this instance, form or formula--fixed in a stereotypical manner in order to perform this function--converge with symbols. Insofar as form and formula rise to a certain degree above the level of the phenomenal world, leave behind its corporeal weight and proximity, and transport the represented object to a sphere of

greater purity and general validity, they also get very close to the "abstracting" principle.

Buddhist artists, therefore, have attempted to impart to their sacred figures a transcendent beauty. They have sought to attain this goal not only by making physical beauty stand for spiritual beauty or by relying on a highly abstract ornamentalizing treatment of composition, line play and coloration, but also by depicting an abundance of jewelry and a wealth of colors with minute and delicate craftsmanship. In particular, the numerous canonical symbols and attributes could be employed with "aesthetic" playfulness to increase the decorative beauty of their figures.

The other elements of this splendid beauty were largely taken from the numerous enthusiastic descriptions found in the sacred scriptures detailing the supra-earthly splendor of the sacred figures and their realms. Jewels and precious metals always play a dominant role in such texts. Nearly all things of the other worlds seem to be fashioned of them. We hear of jewel trees and ponds of precious stones; palaces and pagodas abound in precious objects, and even the sacred figures themselves radiate all the colors of the "Seven Treasures." These Seven Treasures--mentioned time and again--are highly significant for Buddhist art because they are the way this art can convey a sense of the splendors of this paradisaical world. The Seven Treasures are gold, silver, emerald, crystal, agate, coral, and a kind of mother-of-pearl. In addition, the seven symbols of the world ruler (cakravartin)--which are ascribed to the Buddha--are identified with the Seven Treasures. Furthermore, the label Seven Treasures, in an analogous, spiritualized sense, is also applied to the seven achievements of a religious life or the seven spiritual virtues. Thus, visible-concrete and sensuous-ornamental elements are sublimated and abstracted: Both opposing poles are linked or, rather, equated by their symbolic meanings.

Bodhisattvas and Devas above all others partake in this wealth of precious materials. Both bridge the worlds of the sensuous and the supra-sensuous; the former by virtue of their free compassionate minds and the latter by virtue of their high, but not altogether transcendent, level of existence. Buddhas are treated differently. They appear as radiant beings but in an ultimate transcendent simplicity beyond the splendor of any decorative jewelry and its wealth of individual forms; they are elevated and rendered remote by the color of gold alone--a color which resides beyond all individual colors and yet exceeds them all in depth and splendor: Gold is the "embodiment of the Highest and the most precious of the Holy" (Hetzler). Though pictures showing Buddha figures wearing garments covered with fine ornaments and seated on splendid thrones are not unknown, they remain relatively rare. Only in special cases which are theologically justified do Buddhas wear crowns (see p. 26).

Adornment of sacred figures and their realms--we know that temples are earthly replicas of these blessed realms--are not only based on attempts to illustrate the sacred scriptures and their visionary descriptions but also rooted in a particular religio-artistic idea of great beauty and depth. Wherever in East Asian (especially Japanese) literature on the history of art the decorative splendor of the Buddhist precincts and figures is referred to, the term *shōgon* (Chin. *chuang-yen*) appears.¹¹⁵ This term is of central significance because it provides an instance where the

vocabularies of religious and aesthetic life intersect. The essence of Buddhist art can only be understood from the vantage point of this intersection.

Shô means "festive, noble," and also "wealth of splendor." *Gon* means "sacred," also "sober, festive, awe-inspiring." Both words together give the sense of "sanctification through a wealth of splendor." The term *shôgon* corresponds to the Sanskrit term *alamkāra* which has the original meaning of "suitable or making ready for a purpose" and, more specifically, "to put into the state of holiness and numinous efficacy by magic means." In India, the meaning of "to adorn" has only evolved as a secondary connotation of *alamkāra*.¹¹⁶ The Indian word's ritual-instrumental meaning is still implicit in the East Asian Buddhist term *shôgon*. It is therefore important that we pay attention to this very ancient component in evaluating the importance of beauty for the sanctification of temples and cult images.

But *shôgon* is also an equivalent for the Sanskrit word *vyûha* which has the following meanings: "distribution; ordering the parts of a whole; individual description; form, manifestation, appearance; structure, group, multitudes."¹¹⁷ To these are closely joined the following meanings: beautification, ornament, beautiful order. But the meaning of the word is "not a beautiful order for the sake of ornamentation, but rather a filling of the abstract emptiness [i.e., the 'desert'] of [absolute] reality with variety. It may occasionally also be equated with individualization or individual objects."¹¹⁸ All things of our world down to the most insignificant are, therefore, all *vyûha* (*shôgon*). They adorn the absolute dharma world in perfect mutual harmony. They are the "treasures with which the universe adorns itself" (Goethe).

In this context the term *hua-yen* (J. *kegon*) should be mentioned. It corresponds to the Sanskrit term *gandha-vyûha* or *avatamsaka* (*gandha* = fragrance; flowers of different kinds; *vyûha* = decoration, beautiful order; *avatamsaka* = garland, flower decorations). In the center of the *Avatamsaka-sûtra* (*Hua-yen ching*; *Ke-gon-kyô*) rises the mystic tower (*stûpa*) of *Vairocana* which is decorated with great splendor and embraces numerous other towers. It represents both the universe spreading out before us with all its individual objects but simultaneously also the unity and mutual interpenetration of the absolute and relative aspects of existence, which have transcended beyond duality to "emptiness."¹¹⁹

From its point of departure the term *shôgon* has been comprehended in an ever more metaphorical and spiritualized way and has also been systematized in almost scholastic fashion. At the basis of all this is the idea that the Buddha body and the Buddha realm, which are in a certain sense not different from earthly human bodies and worldly empires, though the two realms are by no means simply identical, are "decorated" both by acts of religious merit such as ascetic discipline, meditation, wisdom and good works, and by the compassionate effect of the "Buddha nature" in the world, just as the physical body may be decorated by gold and jewels.¹²⁰ The *sambhoga-kâya* of a Buddha is sometimes even called the *shôgon* body.

This idea is not alien to Christian thought, but in Asia it was taken not merely metaphorically but also quite literally. Ancient Indian thought, which is built into Buddhism, regards qualities, relations and acts, and even virtues, as substantial. They are attached to man like pieces of jewelry and are therefore even transferable. This is why transfer of merit to others is an important religious act in Buddhism.

Beyond that they are also regarded as independent potentialities of transcendental reality.¹²¹ The pious Buddhist earns the highest merit if he decorates Buddha images, Buddha temples, and "Buddha fields" with every imaginable treasure and in this manner "perfects his own Buddha field." Thus *shōgon* takes its place among the other offerings and sacrifices as a path to salvation, and the decorative splendor of the Buddhist works of art derive a still deeper meaning. As a matter of fact, works of art in Buddhism perform one of their most important functions as votive offerings.

In its concrete application within the artistic world, the word *shōgon* applies above all to the various decorative elements which impart to temples and cult images their aura of sacred noble beauty: crowns, jewel garlands and metal decorations, canopies, and cult implements. It is therefore also simply a technical term in Buddhist art. But it is always based on the idea of creating a mysterious atmosphere permeated and sanctified by other-worldly as well as worldly beauty, by means of a wealth of jewelry. This aesthetic magic intensifies and deepens the experience of the numinous. But the reverse process also happens: the enjoyment of beauty and splendor is spiritualized and sanctified, because all these beautiful objects are not only "merit-compiling" offerings, but are also pointing to Ultimate Reality and its "Emptiness," to the absolute wisdom, compassion and beauty of the Buddha.

The Absolute stands beyond all manifested forms no matter how splendid or beautiful, and whenever Transcendence assumes the garb of visible manifestations, even these necessarily poor reflections of the highest being into objects appear to the human eye as if of immeasurable beauty and splendor. But this numinous beauty, no matter how noble and overwhelming, still lacks essence. It is "empty" and, therefore, only a preliminary crutch.¹²² It is but one of the many steps along the path to that state of ultimate liberation brought on by a complete "extinction" of perception and consciousness. This splendid and colorful world of beauty owes its peculiar depth to a dialectical paradox, i.e., to the antinomy between the realm of highest meaning, phenomenal fullness and power of experience on the one side and the principle of lack of essence and definition on the other. This inherent dialectical paradox leads to a state of non-duality--or rather ultimate unity--of phenomenal fullness and "emptiness."

The *Vimalakīrti-nirdēsa-Sūtra* (Yuima(kitsu)-kyō), which is of fundamental importance in Mahāyāna Buddhism, states that it is the exemplary Bodhisattva deed and highest objective of the pious Buddhist to practice the truth of non-becoming and non-dying while the body is surrounded with beauty and splendor. This leads to the realization that all Buddha lands by their very nature are forever in a state of nirvāna, i.e., are empty and formless, and yet capable of revealing to sentient beings Buddha lands of various kinds. The truth will be known that all things are pure, i.e., "empty" and yet, in accordance with the emotions of sentient beings, act to adapt themselves to earthly and hence impure states of being.

Buddhist art accomplishes the manifestation of the empty and formless but, because of *shōgon*, it sees to it--in observance of doctrinal tenets--that these manifestations do not remain in a state of pure abstraction and unapproachable absoluteness and distance from the human world and that their perception does not remain locked in a world-negating, icon-rejecting asceticism. Rather, the empty and

formless reveal themselves in grace and beauty, i.e., adapt themselves to human emotions and powers of comprehension. Many texts refer to this as the "Buddha grace" of Universal Being. But this beauty is removed from the earthly, naive, and unenlightened beauty of our directly given and experienced world. It has experienced suffering and enlightenment. "Coming from the other shore," it interprets everything in a more profoundly beautified and beatified manner. Its highest unfolding and fulfillment lead beyond itself to its own negation.

We would, therefore, be mistaken if we were to regard the splendidly decorated, colorful works of mature and late Buddhist art as the creations of an aesthetic sense lapsing into the throes of decadence and as proof for the secularization of sacred art. Undiscerning Western scholarship is prone to do so whenever flawed criteria are applied. (It might even be profitable to follow the reverse process and--*mutatis mutandis*--interpret certain phenomena of European art from the point of view of the shōgon idea.) Could a mentality which had degenerated into aestheticism and fallen into a superficial secularism have produced such great masterworks of religious art? We must learn to recognize the dialectic which permeates all of Buddhist art between the passionate enjoyment of beauty on the one side and the deep insight into the profundity and sadness of the world and recognition of the lack of essence and fleeting nature of even the greatest beauty on the other.

This art opens itself in two directions: To being in and of itself, i.e., to transcendence beyond the human world; but also to the psychological aspect, i.e., to the religious experience. Both share a common order. Buddhist art can make this relationship explicit. It is simultaneously ontologically objective and psychologically subjective.¹²³ Aesthetic experience as subjective-spiritual function derives its real meaning and content only by virtue of its ontological significance and blissful efficacy. The transcendent, in turn, is experienced in its true bliss only through its manifestation in beauty. Between the seemingly mutually exclusive formative principles of abstraction and decorative fullness, between de-sensualization and sensualization there exists, therefore, a dialectical relationship which leads beyond both, or which, given the notion of non-duality, transforms them into one. The third principle, the symbolic mode, plays an intermediary role in this relationship which is open to both aspects.¹²⁴

The Visionary Principle

If the highest realm of existence or absolute transcendence reveals itself in its full overwhelming and supra-sensuous glory during a moment of meditative-mystic experience, this revelation is called a vision. Visionary elements play a decisive role in Buddhist art because they are the unifying factor for all three formative principles. Religious visions show their effect on all three--the processes of "abstracting," of forming archetypal images and signs, and of bestowing sacred ornamentation. Such effect may tend to be more spiritualizing or sensualizing and places the symbolizing principle on a middle ground where it mediates between the two.

The visionary element protects Buddhist art against the ever present danger of dragging the sacred down to the realistic or ordinary and near human level. It keeps it from burdening the sacred with the weight of earthly reality or trivializing

its rich beauty into merely material splendor. It keeps the sacred figures from becoming too tangible and yet allows them to leave infinity and reveal their splendor in that intermediary sphere which points from the "there" to the "here" and the "here" to the "there." This intermediary quality is of great importance both for religious experience and sacred art (but by no means for sacred art alone). Its illuminating and floating qualities can be identified in the most detailed formal features of Buddhist figures and pictures. They belong to the most poignant impressions conveyed by works of this art. One of the greatest achievements of Buddhist artists is to have dissolved and spiritualized by means of this visionary principle all the material means employed to depict the Sacred.

Different visionary elements may be distinguished as the basic factors underlying Buddhist art. The sacred scriptures of the Buddhist canon as well as the vast edifying literature are full of poetic descriptions. They frequently display an unrestrained power of imagination in the description of supra-sensuous miracles which they aim to make accessible to the senses. Art, with its limited power of visualization, has often been hard pressed to follow these poetic flights but has gone to the limits of its possibilities in conveying a sense of the immeasurable beauty, vastness and infinity of the sacred world. Its imagery is therefore close to that of phantasies or fairy tales. Naturally, painting can go further in this direction than sculpture or architecture, but even buildings and their decorations contribute to this effect.

If poetic imagination is the first form of the visionary element, dreams are the second. The revealing and formative powers of dreams are also found in the religious scriptures. There are numerous reports of an artist having had a vision of sacred figures in a dream,¹²⁵ and occasionally departures from the iconographical standard are justified by references to such dreams. The faithful in general and the artists in particular frequently regarded daydreams or ecstatic visions as revelations from a higher source, i.e., as objective realities which should, therefore, be captured with the greatest possible fidelity in tangible images.

Many Buddhist paintings and sculptures and even some standard iconographic types may be traced to such origins. Artistic traditions continuing over centuries were wont to attach themselves to such visionary archetypes. In such instances, for example, legends would be told that the first artist in such a tradition had ascended by supernatural powers to those regions where the particular envisioned sacred figure resided and that he had returned to earth after carefully viewing his subject in order to be able to create a true and faithful image of it. All later representations are then considered replicas of this original image.¹²⁶ One of the many reasons for the strictness of the iconographic tradition is revealed here: The absolute authenticity of the archetype is guaranteed by virtue of the fact that it had been revealed in a vision.

Another form of the visionary experience which came to be important in art is the meditative vision. Particularly in esoteric Buddhism, the image of the sacred figures is conjured up with the help of a systematically evolved technique. The aim is to realize the identity of the essence of one's own Ego with that of the particular manifested form of the Absolute. But it should be remembered that, strictly speaking, any such meditative vision always took place only at a relatively low level of the spiritual world. It occurred in the "world of pure form" (*rûpadhātu*) which,

though above the "world of sensual desires" (kâmadhâtu) and showing things in a supra-sensual, mystic-miraculous revelation, will soon be left behind as one proceeds along the meditation path to another, purely spiritual "world without form" (arûpadhâtu) and, ultimately, to total extinction (nirodhadhâtu = nirvâna). This notion of form, meditative vision and, finally, transcendence of form, is of basic importance, particularly for art.

It is often difficult to decide from what source a visionary image originated, but this is religiously and metaphysically unimportant because all such experiences basically arise from the same numinous reality and are only different reflections or visions of one and the same entity. Moreover, even these differing visions are interrelated in a variety of ways. Poetic imaginative narratives could be traced to visions and meditations. The latter, in turn, may have been stimulated by literary descriptions and frequently were perhaps purely literary creations. Meditations could merge into dreamlike visions, and, finally, artistic images in which visions or literary descriptions have found concrete embodiment. These could, in turn, engender visionary or meditative experiences of their own.

The result of all this is a complicated web of relations and influences stretching across several intellectual layers. For example, images may make generous use of gold and other artistic means to symbolize the mysterious Buddha light which, as described in the Sûtras, emanates from all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and illuminates all worlds. Ultimately we may interpret this light as a visionary phenomenon. Almost all mystically oriented religions employ light phenomena as part of the revelation of the Holy. But we also know that the Buddha light appears to believers not only as a dreamlike vision during moments of bliss, but also realizes itself within them as the innermost experience in meditation after a long drawn-out mental training.¹²⁷ At that point the believer does not merely envision this light but actually becomes this light. He generates it from within himself as soon as he fully realizes the identity of his Ego with the Buddha nature and understands that it has existed since times without beginning. Naturally, artists have made use of such encounters and experiences in their depiction of the Buddha light. It is, therefore, quite possible that what appears to us in works of art as only externally beautiful and exalted splendor or even mere pomp may actually hold a multi-layered internal religious significance.

Functions of Buddhist Works of Art

No religious work of art exists for its own sake; none intends merely to bring enjoyment or realize beauty no matter how important these two functions may be. Every single work has a clear purpose. It must provide a service, fulfill a task, have some use or play a particular role in a faith's ceremonials and in religious life. It is essentially a means for achieving spiritual goals and has, therefore, an instrumental character. This instrumentality takes a visible form, pictorial or abstract; it is embodied in a picture, a building, or a symbol which invests and transmits meaning. A numinous power is made present; the invisible is made visible and comprehensible. A supra-sensual reality is thus made accessible to the senses of the believer and made to help him secure his salvation.

These functions of representation, communication and realization may be served in very different ways. The content of the message may also be equally varied. Because the intended meaning transcends all those images which a work of art is bound to employ, all religious art faces a profound paradox. This is particularly true for Buddhist art. We have already reviewed the general character of the religious truth it was supposed to embody. But the instrumental ways in which the different types of Buddhist works of art display these truths have been little studied to date and can be indicated here only in a preliminary and tentative way. Obviously, not every single type of work has a definite purpose of its own while, on the other hand, one particular work may have several functions. As a matter of fact, the latter may even be the rule. Consequently, we should be aware that in most cases where these functions have been isolated and labeled we are actually dealing with different aspects of one and the same phenomenon, though it often presents itself with infinite variations. Functions also change over time and according to the religious doctrine (school, "sect") they serve, but this historical component must remain outside our review and be subordinated to the more enduring and typical factors.

Cult Objects

First and foremost, Buddhist pictorial works, statues as well as pictures, are cult objects. Just as is the word "cult" itself, the term "cult object" is a very ambiguous one. By "cult object" we simply mean some figural work representing a

sacred being who is considered somehow to be present in this image. In some sense he dwells in it or reveals himself through it in either a real or symbolic sense, receiving devotion from the believer, who turns to it in faithful surrender. An identity between sacred entity and image or at least the image's ability to convey a message about the sacred entity's existence and essence is presupposed. The cult object, therefore, has ontological character and may legitimately be the object of a liturgic act. This raises a question about the precise nature of the relationship between the sacred person and its image, the degree of substantiality possessed by Buddhist works of art,¹²⁸ and the relationship between the believer and the depicted sacred being itself on the one hand and with its image on the other. No simple answers to all these questions are possible.

There is plenty of evidence to show that Buddhist works of art--sculptures and paintings alike--somehow convey the personal, even corporeal, presence of a numen, and that they "contain" something of its essence. This notion, in particular, is presupposed by the consecration ritual of the "eye-opening" (cf. p. 84), and by the magical act bestowing life on a particular work of art, primarily performed by way of sacred formulas (mantras). These ceremonials transform a dead artifact into a living, holy being capable of receiving veneration and dispensing mercy. The custom of depositing small "heart-images" or sacred scrolls inside cult statues (cf. p. 83) should also be remembered. This was supposed to impart to them sacred, essential substance and efficacy. The equivalent act in architecture was to enshrine relics in the heart of the pagoda (p. 70 ff.). This transformed the pagoda from a mere physical or symbolic monument into a genuine cult object in which the sacred entity physically resided and which could therefore become an object of veneration.

Many reports mention miracle-working images or those in which a transcendent being had embodied itself or which had been fashioned on the basis of images revealed in a vision and thus made possible the transmission of that being's numinous powers. Such images were frequently kept tightly locked away ("Secret Buddhas"), so that the powers inherent in them would not be squandered. But even if these images were not visible and could, therefore, not become objects of a religious experience, they and their powers were factually and objectively "present."

The transmission of the transcendent powers of certain Indian images to China was the decisive motive for the production of copies (see p. 216). There can be no doubt that we encounter in these instances a transmission of sacred substance in and by means of an image; i.e., a duplication for the purpose of creating an ontological identity. Images which, according to Indian tradition, were of miraculous origin, i.e., either "not made by human hands" or linked to the most sacred places of Śākyamuni's earthly existence, were copied down through the centuries because authentic duplicates had magical qualities attached to them. This ontological identity and "accuracy" of cult image copies was guaranteed by the reproduction of strictly prescribed iconographic signs, symbols, and attributes, none of which could be arbitrarily changed, and by the images' system of proportions (iconometrics, see p. 21) which was independent of the position and visual angle of the viewer, i.e., was non-perspective. These proportions not only do not take the viewer into account but in many cases could not be perceived at all by the viewer as, for example, in cases where he looks at these images from a low vantage point. But they exist objectively. It is crucial for us to realize that Buddhist images possess an

independent, self-contained objectivity and even have incorporated in themselves something of the essence of the sacred beings. The Buddhist artist was charged with the highly "instrumental" function of faithfully transmitting the Absolute into the sphere of visual perception.

Cult images thus have the character of magically real objects, embodying the particular sacred entities.¹²⁹ However, we also know that images of a sacred being, particularly those of the Buddha, were ultimately regarded as something quite illusory, temporary, unsubstantial, and as mere signs and aids (*upâya*; *hōben*), possessing no reality for those who had spiritually matured. In the end, they were just as illusory as all other tangible, conceptual and visual images. In the final analysis, cult images could at best possess the indicative function of symbols or signs with meanings resting in their ability to point beyond themselves. Under these circumstances images are no longer "identical" with particular holy persons but merely "signify" them. Even the holy persons themselves are mere personifications or hypostases which point to something that is nonpersonal, intangible, and absolute. We may perhaps go so far as to speak of a "graduation of signs" or of a nonidentity of the first and second (perhaps even multiple) degrees. This would be quite in line with Buddhist thought which regards every possible intellectual position *eo ipso* as something temporary and in need of being overcome in an infinite sequence of progressions.

This dual nature of cult images reveals, on the one hand, a dialectic typical of Mahâyâna Buddhism--that of the relationship between *samsâra* and *nirvâna*. On the other hand, there is an equally characteristic sequence of stages of interpretive levels: the belief in an identity between the transcendent personality and the cult image and the corporeal presence of the former in the latter which can only be maintained as long as higher stages of enlightenment have not yet been reached. The higher the degree of enlightenment, the less substance the image holds and the closer to the truth the believer has advanced, the less he has to depend on visual aids. The result is a web of several possible levels of interpretations. According to Mahâyâna dialectic, the different notions of the image as "real" and "unreal" may simultaneously all be correct (or incorrect). What may be valid synchronically for various schools or cult communities may also be valid diachronically with respect to an individual's attaining of religious maturity. It is, therefore, impossible to arrive at binding decisions on such matters, particularly in view of the fact that Buddhism lacked a central authoritative institution to settle them.

In any event, such one-sided decisions would have been at odds with fundamental Buddhist convictions and Eastern thought in general. An "iconoclastic controversy" would have been quite impossible, even though individual schools of Buddhism tended to hold definite opinions about those questions. Esoteric (Tantric) Buddhism's magic of images and signs on the one hand, and Zen Buddhism's skepticism concerning all pictorial or objective conceptualization on the other represent the extreme positions. The question whether cult images properly deserved *adoratio* or merely *veneratio* is closely linked to the question of the "reality" of images and to the philosophical interpretations of reality. As a matter of fact, Buddhism was unable (and probably unwilling) to solve this dilemma in principle, lest the process of spiritual maturing in the minds of the faithful might be impeded.

The "reality" of cult images depends decisively on the spiritual attitude, the religious-metaphysical conviction or the maturity of the believers who view and venerate them. The subject joins, therefore, in constituting that reality, and cult images combine both objective-ontological and subjective-religious aspects. The term "religious" refers here to the attitude of the believers toward the venerated numen or the impersonal Absolute for which the cult images stand. The cult itself also has both an "objective" and a "subjective" aspect. It relates, on the one hand, to a personal or objective entity and aims at objective, frequently magical, effects. On the other hand, the ritual acts are manifestations of a spiritual attitude generated by the believer within himself. They lead him to perform spiritual operations through which he undergoes a series of mental transformations. These transformations are by no means solely dependent on faith in the automatic efficacy of the *opus operandum*, but require active, responsible cooperation in the process of one's own enlightenment and salvation as indispensable and, on occasion, even decisive elements.

Veneration and Offering (pûjâ)

Two parallel paths to salvation have been pursued by Buddhists: veneration (Sanskrit *pûjâ*; Chin., *kung-yang*, J. *ku-yô*) and meditation (*dhyâna*; Chin. *ch'an [-na]*, *Zen [-na]*). The two paths are intimately linked and reinforce each other. Both are also closely related to the cult image of the sacred entity which serves both as the object of veneration as well as of meditation. *Pûjâ* means veneration, adoration, homage. The Chinese-Japanese equivalent expression, *kung-yang/ku-yô*, means to offer in veneration something nourishing to honorable persons (parents, ancestors, teachers, priests), to the Three Treasures (the Buddha, his Teaching, and his Community) or to any sacred being from whom the believer expects something or with whom he desires to enter into a mystical relationship. Veneration may also be directed toward a Buddha sanctuary as a whole.

The sacrificial offerings may take the form of practical help--food, clothing, medicines, money--or of enjoyable and decoratively effective but, above all, symbolically significant items--flowers, incense, scented water, lamps, jewelry, banners, canopies and, of course, especially images. Everything belonging to the realm of *shôgon* (p. 183 ff.) serves this function of *pûjâ*. The offerings do not have to be of a material nature alone but may also consist of acts of veneration presented as sacrificial offerings,¹³⁰ particularly the cultic rituals inclusive of dancing, singing, and instrumental music (see the chapter on ritual implements).

The symbolic meaning of these offerings and acts has been systematized in a scholastic manner. Flowers, for example, symbolize compassion, the highest virtue of a Bodhisattva. Incense, with its fragrance spreading everywhere, stands for the all-permeating dharma world of absolute reality. Light symbolizes the destruction of the darkness of illusion by the world-illuminating Buddha light. The six offerings: scented water, fragrance, flowers, incense, food, and light are considered analogous to the six *pâramitâs*, the six perfections of the Bodhisattva: charity, moral purity, equanimity, vigorous striving, meditation, wisdom.

The *ku-yô* offerings and acts are also personified as *Ku-yô Bosatsu* (Bodhisattva practicing *pûjâ*) which appear not only in the halos of Buddha figures and in the decorations of canopies or temple halls (28, 36, 103, 106, 109, 152, 155)

but also occupy a particular place in the complicated world diagram of the esoteric-Buddhist Dharmadhātu Mandala (Kongōkai Mandara). In this context, eight of them are found at the margins of the central field occupied by the Buddha Vairocana in his *sambhoga-kāya* form (Birushana). They occupy an inner and an outer zone in groups of four each. The Flower, the Incense, the Fragrance and the Light Bodhisattvas are located in the outer zone while the Garlands, the Enjoyment (Play), Song, and Dance Bodhisattvas can be found in the inner zone. "They are all regarded as indestructible entities . . . They are meant to indicate the act of adoration and veneration of Vairocana whose manifestations they are; or, in other words, Vairocana, the 'world spirit', adores himself through these different emanations of his own spiritual powers, while these indestructible beings simultaneously venerate by their acts the true spiritual unity and source of all emanations."¹³¹ These cultic acts and offerings also represent the basic characteristics of many branches of art; they are, so to speak, prototypes--essential elements of art in ideal form as found in the spirit of the Absolute.

Every imaginable work of art has been presented as a *kuyō*, or pious donation, in gratitude for compassionate grace received or as a merit-creating deed for one's own salvation or for the salvation of others, particularly of deceased parents. Individuals took vows to donate or decorate temples or pagodas, to commission a certain number of pictures of a particular sacred figure or to paint them personally. Such pictures or drawings could number in the thousands. Particularly meritorious was the offering of the sacred word, i.e., the reciting or copying and donating of Sūtra texts, for the purpose of venerating the Three Treasures, the promotion of the doctrine, the salvation of the deceased, or the attainment of one's own perfection.

The search for one's own perfection was, according to higher levels of understanding, the crucial act. Sacrifices, offerings, or acts of veneration were not presented primarily for the delight of the holy beings or in order to influence them on behalf of one's own particular purposes but rather as acts of self-renunciation and for the sake of one's salvation. In Buddhist language, one sought to "compile merits" or to "create good karma." The "offering" of such merits to promote the salvation of others--understood in a material sense--and the magic efficacy of such offerings naturally also played a significant role, but only on the "lower" level of interpretation. Most important in *pūjā* is the mental attitude of sincere veneration and the act of making a serious effort to advance on one's own along the path to salvation. Only this attitude, according to the doctrine, makes the offering truly effective. It alone gives assurance that the numen venerated in the cult image as its visible manifestation will be reached and encountered in a true experience.

The artist is also expected to assume that attitude of veneration while creating an image. He should "pay threefold homage in every stroke of the chisel and in every line of the brush" to the "Three Treasures"--Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha.¹³² The act of artistic creation, born out of both the ego-transcending quietude of the heart and the meditative insight into the essence of things, is itself a cultic performance. A valid cult image can only be successfully created if executed in a pious and prayerful manner.

Perhaps the most frequent function of a Buddhist work of art, regardless of its type, content, spiritual level and artistic quality, is to serve as a votive offering.

This function is based on the concept of pūjā and on the doctrine of merit and karma. Everything from the most modest offerings and simplest implements to the most grandiose cult figures, precious paintings, and monumental, richly furnished and decorated temples may be presented in veneration as pious gifts to the Buddha or other sacred beings. The numerous donor "portraits"--frequently with consecrating inscriptions listing year, month, and day of their completion and name and rank of the individual--prove how much this function was dominant not only for Buddhist sculptures and paintings, but also for buildings and other monuments.

Sacrifice, which was never as prominent in Buddhism as in Brahmanic-Hindu sacrificial mysticism, was predominantly understood in a symbolic-spiritualized sense--at least at the highest level of interpretation. As we have seen, this does not rule out a number of lower levels where sacrifice is understood in much more material terms. True, its magic efficacy was often the main purpose of ordinary believers and certain schools, and sacrifices frequently provided an opportunity for donors to demonstrate power, prestige and wealth. Works of art, therefore, also functioned as symbols of power and stately representation. Frequently the naive intent to make one's own sanctuary look as impressive as possible may have played a part in instances where founders or congregations turned their sanctuaries into objects of parochial fervor and competitive spirit.

We should not pass over in silence the fact that in China the manufacture of bronze statues might at times also become a form of capital investment, making it necessary on several occasions for the government to intervene in order to stop the supposed economic disorder resulting from this kind of immobilization of metal for coinage. In such instances the government ordered cult figures to be melted down so as to put the metal back into circulation, or allowed their casting only on a limited scale.¹³³ But, all other considerations notwithstanding, spiritual purposes were dominant as far as sacrifice and pious offering were concerned. The *shōgon* idea, so important for Buddhist art, shows a most intimate relationship with the spiritual meaning of offering and veneration.

Meditation

The ultimate goal to be achieved through all forms of veneration, the liberating insight into the timeless non-duality between the self of the believer and "Buddha nature" can, however, only be attained by means of meditation. As a matter of fact, meditation is an indispensable precondition for securing the proper effect from acts of veneration. Buddhist meditation, which we cannot describe here,¹³⁴ progresses in a long series of steps to an ever purer vision which is more and more radically released from tangible samsāra elements. It begins, however, quite concretely with visual images of the sacred figures built up in a systematic way by revealing every detail as, for example, in the sixteen-step vision of Amitābha and his Pure Land.¹³⁵ Cult images are most effectively used in this process. The detailed descriptions of the sacred beings in the Sūtras, their revelation in supra-mundane realms, and the pictorial representations based on them are valuable aids in stimulating and supporting meditative visions. A believer may even imitate the postures and the mudrās of the cult images in order to better be able to identify himself with them. The aim is to grasp the powers, virtues and wisdom symbolized

in these representations by signs and attributes and ultimately, with their help, to realize the hidden, veiled "Buddha heart" within himself.

As we have seen during our review of the relationship between representations and the sacred beings actualized in them, this relationship and, together with it, the degree of reality attached to cult images depend on the degree of spiritual maturity attained by the faithful. This maturity, in turn, determines the manner in which these images are viewed. Whenever images are used in meditation, the two elements of identification--numen and its picture--are completed by a third element, the essential nature of the faithful. The faithful are expected to realize the essence of the images within themselves and make their essence come alive within themselves through a process of meditative transformation. Strictly speaking, artists, too, are expected to follow this process. Disregarding for the moment the mechanized workshops described earlier, an artist was held to be capable of creating images in the proper manner only by projecting an inner spiritual reality experienced by himself through a process of meditation from within himself and through himself into these images, thereby reproducing the preexisting paradigm.¹³⁶ Buddhist works of art are, therefore, not creations of individual personalities expressing their character and their experiences; they are "not self-sufficient products of creative acts but are functionally determined utensils of a sacred psychological act."¹³⁷ Postures, mudrās, attributes of cult images--including the cult symbols representing them (vajra, lotus, wheel of teaching, stūpa, etc.)--even the "seed syllables" (bīja) containing the essence of cult images, are not merely iconographic characteristics and dogmatically significant signs. They are also specific aids for an extremely refined psycho-physical meditation technique.

An important role is also played by visions which are often linked to meditation to a degree which makes the discipline of meditation and the role of visions virtually indistinguishable. The ultimate goal of meditation, however, is to go beyond all visions and cult images and to dissolve the figures originally evoked as aids to meditation into "nothingness," into the realm of no-images, where ultimate insight and liberation alone are possible. The more spiritualized, the more "abstract" cult images or symbols are, the higher their rank and value. Initially so full of essence and power, the images ultimately fulfill their true function only by transcending all functions altogether.

Instrument (yantra)

This does not, however, render images superfluous, because only rarely can the pious reach the highest goal directly. They usually reach this goal only or, perhaps better, most assuredly, with the help of cult images and cult symbols. In veneration (pūjā), meditation, and in all other religious acts these objects are indispensable points of departure and necessary means, tools, and implements for the achievement of higher levels. In Indian Buddhist and non-Buddhist cults they are called *yantra*.

Heinrich Zimmer has defined *yantra*, a term of fundamental importance in East Asian Buddhism, in his book *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild* (Berlin, 1926; compare his *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, New York, 1946, and later editions, p. 140 ff.), as "an apparatus purposefully constructed to fulfill psychic-sacral as well as magic functions" (*ibid.*, p. 26), as "a tool to effect the

identification (samādhi) of viewer and vision" (*ibid.*, p. 25) and to cancel the duality of cult symbol and believing soul. Yantras assume different forms in order to carry out this function. But since all these forms are congruent in their spiritual essence, they can stand for each other. Their external form is "of secondary importance to the role of imagination in the act of veneration," i.e., to the meditative visualization or "unfolding of the image" (dhyāna) which makes use of this "implement" as an aid (*op. cit.*, p. 183). The end may be purely spiritual but the "implement" may initially assume the form of a linear-abstract schematic order, such as a geometric drawing consisting of circles, triangles, etc. Subsequently, symbolic signs may be employed for the sacred figures (cult symbols, Siddham letters) or diagrams filled with their depiction as in the figural maṇḍalas and, finally, "representational" personalized cult images (pratimā) may be used. Architectural sanctuaries may combine several or all of these yantra types (see above, p. 74 ff.).

The faithful are expected to evoke the supra-sensual images of the sacred beings within their own minds in an act of meditative veneration. To produce a cult image or populate the abstract-linear yantra with personal images also amounts to a summoning or evocation of a metaphysical relationship with the numen or numina. The cult image is a spatial concretization or materialization of that visionary image. Only in this way can it function as yantra and become "a magic vehicle for the individually differentiated manifestations of the Divine or the Absolute through which the unevolved-unvisible presents itself to the inner eye of the faithful" (*op. cit.*, p. 42, 119). In the case of linear yantras or symbolic signs reverse processes of reduction may take place during the act of veneration. The variety of forms and figures of the yantra are merged or reduced, through meditation, to an unevolved central point which will ultimately also vanish. The faithful are expected to understand themselves as this unevolved center. Unfolding and reduction of images are two reciprocal processes in which the dual aspect of the world is both experienced and transcended. The yantra provides a crucially valuable aid in this process--the nonfigural yantra even more than the figural one because the "disassembly" of the latter is more difficult.

One case in which a directly identifying relationship between the believer and a sacred figure is achieved with the help of a figural-schematic diagram, i.e., a maṇḍala, is the abhiṣeka ritual in esoteric Buddhism which constitutes a kind of mystic initiation. The person to be initiated has to throw a flower onto a horizontally unfolded maṇḍala while blindfolded. He will receive his spiritual name from the figure on which the flower comes to rest because he has been visibly found to be in a mystic relationship with that sacred being. A flower coming to rest on the central figure of Vairocana, the Original or Universal Buddha, is considered to be a particularly auspicious sign.⁷⁸

In addition to this higher, more spiritual function of the yantra in the dhyāna process as a means of evoking some tangible manifestation of the Absolute with which the believer may identify himself or which he is at least able to venerate, the character of the yantra always includes, at a lower level, a "practical" application as magic instrument for attaining more mundane purposes--good fortune, health, long life, children, good harvests, etc., and for promoting the spiritual progress of the deceased or for banning evil powers. It can be demonstrated that Buddhist cult images have been used for all these purposes, and these purposes often provided the

reason for commissioning such images. It is difficult even to envision how the history of Buddhist art could have taken the course it did without these rather mundane motivations.

Devotion

The functions of cult images described above were "objective" in their aims. An image and the sacred person meant by it were instruments for attaining practical results, such as assuring salvation or a particular ontological relationship between the believer and the Absolute. This realization was experienced by the believer as a vision, enlightenment, wisdom, experience of identity with the Absolute, and required his personal intensive participation. But its essential component was not a spiritual-emotional experience and not something "subjective" in that particular sense.

Things were quite different in cases where the image was a devotional image, i.e., served the personal, private edification of the believer and was related primarily to his individual religious sentiments. In these instances, the images attempted to show the sacred being in its human dimensions and held almost lyrical emotional value. Such devotional images, as far as we can see at this point, do not seem to have played an essential role in Buddhism--at least none which would be comparable to that of the Pietà or similar images in Christian art. This is not to say that during the veneration of a cult image, and the act where the believer turned in complete trust to a helpful sacred being, the subjective-emotional element of devotion does not enter the "objective" processes of pūjā. Furthermore, meditation could hardly have been possible without intimate spiritual involvement with and loving devotion (bhakti) to the venerated and magically or meditatively evoked numen.

This element is perhaps strongest in the sphere of Amitābha pietism, where we encounter a faithful trust in the saving "powers of another" (ta-riki, see p. 28) which far transcends the "own powers" (ji-riki) of any individual. Works of art inspired by this piety come closest to possessing the character of devotional images. The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Kuan Yin, Kannon) comes closest to being a nearly all-powerful dispenser of compassion and was venerated in the spirit of personal, emotional devotion. Such devotion is clearly reflected in the "lyricization" of his images.

Sculptured or painted depictions of the Amitābha triad, paintings of Amitābha's Pure Land or the raigō scenes (57, 58) fulfill still another function as "mystery pictures." This term refers to pictures depicting a numen not in its existential presence as a cult object worthy of adoration, but rather in a mythic sacred act of archetypal and exemplary character. They may depict the holy event in its historical context, but will also present it in its supra-temporal, eternal, non-dimensional state as an act capable of being repeated at any time by way of cultic imitation "as an image archetypal and forever valid" which exists in an "enduring moment embracing past and future."¹³⁸

"Mystery images" relate primarily to the goal of salvation, which is experienced by cultic or venerating acts in anticipatory fashion as part of the present, but has also a strongly "objective" character. It is typical of "mystery images" that they frequently isolate a particular mythic event from its epic-cyclic

context. This event is then shown in the main portion of the picture while the other scenes are often used to fill adjacent marginal areas with explanatory pictorial narratives (103).

The pictures inspired by the Amitābha faith mentioned above conform in many respects, particularly in the latter, to this definition. The raigō event and the rebirth in the Pure Land of the West were the archetypical act of salvation. It constantly repeated itself during holy moments and flowed out of Amitābha's compassionate vow to save all creatures. The faithful kept experiencing this act anew and even acted it out in ritual processions. All these were "historical" events insofar as the Sūtras describe them as mysterious happenings which had taken place in the past. But this past is made timeless, and these events are considered the eternal fruit of Amitābha's vow and of his way to salvation which was cast into a sort of "biographical" legend.

In this sense the scenes from the legend of the life of Śākyamuni Buddha are also historical. Aside from their illustrative character, however, they predominantly serve as cult images in a manner typical of "mystery" pictures. Scenes like Śākyamuni's solemn sermons, surrounded by Bodhisattvas, deities, monks and believers, for example, or "Śākyamuni Entering into Perfect Nirvāna," i.e., his deathbed scene, in which all kinds of living creatures gather around him--appearing not only in paintings (119) but also in groupings of figurines--isolate crucial moments from sacred history with its archetypical character and perpetuate them for all eternity by dehistoricizing them into symbols of Buddhist salvation in general. Such scenes serve as the main cult images during the memorial rites on Śākyamuni's death day and--as clearly indicated by their name "nirvāna pictures"--focus on the central idea of Buddhism. Likewise, the figure groups of the nirvāna scene in the pagoda of the Hōryūji are most closely linked to the relics (śarīra) which constitute the mystic center of the monument and the cult devoted to it.

As we have already seen from our analysis of the function of cult images, participation of the believer himself in veneration and meditation is of vital importance. The believer experiences during such moments a profound realization of his liberating goal which permeates and transforms his entire being. This, too, is a feature found in "mystery" cults. Pictures of historical and legendary events are thus elevated and intensified and acquire a timeless dimension. As a result, their narrative mode does not have pointed anecdotal highlights or otherwise "interesting" features springing from the fertile imagination of individual artists. The artist's personal imagination has to be restrained as much as possible in order to avoid interpretations of the sacred theme which would be too subjective and "secular."

Commemoration and Tradition

Another important task of Buddhist works of art is to commemorate important events and leading personalities within the Buddhist tradition, be they historical in our sense or not. Even portraits of disciples and patriarchs or scenes from their spiritual lives may serve as ordinary cult images, but are at the same time also vivid vehicles for traditions which bestow a numinous presence and power upon events long past and on mythicized personalities. These works of art make them appear to be "present" and, like bridges resting on strong foundations, link over the centuries the present cult and religious life to the origins of the doctrine. They do

this in a direct manner which does not aim at achieving a historical distance but rather at a cultic presence. These commemorative and transmitting functions are served in particular by the chronicle-like narrative pictures, temple legends and pictorial biographies which have survived in the form of numerous *emakimono*.

Exhortation

Portraits and pictures about great men and events in history or even about the life and teaching of the Buddha himself or those works which make Arhats and patriarchs come alive with the help of idealizing portraits (86 ff., 127, 130) in a most impressive manner were clearly intended to confront the faithful with valid models of spiritual conduct. Their function is to exhort--either to encourage or to warn--and thus serve an exhortative function. But not only works of this kind "encourage the good and warn against the bad" (in the words of a well-known formula). Many other works of art--ranging from cult figures and wall paintings in temples to depictions of human, supra-human and sub-human worlds--serve the same purpose. Paradise pictures (103) are effective in a positive and scenes of purgatory (124) in a negative way. The latter belong to the picture cycle of the "Six Realms of Existence." These Six Realms are the arena for the karmic cycles of the *samsāra* world which Buddhists are to leave behind. Some themes are clearly didactic, as, for example, the painting of "The White Path Between the Two Rivers," i.e., the narrow path leading from earthly-human existence to the pure land of Buddha passing between the threatening rivers of water and fire--allegories for greed and rage. The large numbers of parable pictures belong to the same category. As a matter of fact, almost every Buddhist work of art *inter alia* is supposed to preach and thereby guide the believer along the right path. As stated earlier, different functions overlap and the wealth of meaning becomes visible only when this multitude of functions is taken into account. These didactic functions, together with the role of images as missionary and propaganda tools, were highly important particularly during the early periods of Buddhism in China and Japan. But even in later times sculptures, portraits, and woodblock prints were something akin to a *biblia pauperum* for the predominantly illiterate masses.

Definition and Representation--World Image

Whenever, in statues and paintings, sacred groups appear either by themselves or in the complex groupings of the "Pure Lands" or the diagram-like order of the *maṇḍalas*, whenever events from the Buddha's lives or other legends are depicted, whenever the various realms of existence are presented, these works of art perform the function of showing, presenting, depicting, making visible elements of Buddhist teaching. The intent is to show either the supra-empirical world not accessible to the ordinary eye or the structure of the empirical world in a manner which shows it in its true essence. This essence is to be made visible without being veiled or clouded by non-essential features.

Since this truth has been laid down in the sacred books and has been poetically described there as the revelations of the Buddha, i.e., has already been artistically pre-formed, the image assumes the role of an "illustration" even in cases where such function is not immediately obvious. The image always depicts a world existing at a higher level or, rather, our world is seen under a higher aspect and the image offers a pictorial representation of it in those terms. It aims at making this

world and its sacred persons come alive, which means that this function merges into that performed by the cult images, that of giving a mystic-magic personal presence to the numina.

The Buddhist sanctuary with all its images constitutes a supra-empirical sphere where the sacred beings are present and where the faithful could feel transported into the "Pure Land" or the "Buddha Realm." This Realm is projected, as it were, to earthly levels in the form of the sanctuary and evoked there by veneration and meditation. This sphere is constituted wherever even small domestic or ambulatory altars are erected, wherever kakemono are suspended, or rites or meditation are performed. Under all of those circumstances a temporary sanctuary has been constituted as a Buddha land (buddha-kṣetra), i.e., a spiritual realm realized by one who has attained Perfect Enlightenment and where he, appearing in supra-mundane splendor, teaches all sentient beings and prepares for their final salvation all those who have been reborn in this Buddha land according to the degree of their spiritual advancement.

This holds true particularly for the temple proper, for its entire layout, as well as its individual cult halls and pagodas. We have already seen (p. 74 ff.) that the temples, down to their last details, depict and "realize" projections of the world structure, i.e., that they are world images or world symbols. This world image may be realized in figural, geometric-abstract, symbolic-cipherlike or architectural forms. One form may stand for the other, and all kinds of art works, even cult implements and cult symbols, may serve as vehicles for this meaningful language.

The temples also assume a number of other functions. They provide the setting for rituals and serve as "implements" for cult performances. One may even go so far as to characterize them as liturgy turned into tangible form. Their symbolic structure may be the object of meditation. The spatial unfolding of their exterior axis, the *via sacra*, represents the internal way of the process of maturation and enlightenment. Finally, as a whole and in their parts, they are offerings to the Buddha, his Teaching, and his Congregation--i.e., to the Three Treasures--or to individual sacred persons, dedicated as acts of veneration intended to promote the more or less spiritually conceived bliss of the faithful.

Ritual Value and Artistic Value

Looking back over the numerous fields of Buddhist artistic endeavors and the different genres which we have described, it becomes clear that all these creations, which may be highly different from each other, fulfill one or the other particular religious purpose or even several such purposes at the same time. It is also clear that these works cannot be understood without knowledge of their particular functional value, their concrete role in the religious life of Buddhism, no matter whether this role be practical and tangible or symbolic and spiritual.

Does this raise doubts about their character as works of art and about their aesthetic value? Does this even degrade them to the status of something at best enjoyable but not really necessary? Is it possible that an image may be capable of rendering the services expected from it and yet be still valuable and useful to the believer if it merely conforms to iconographic prescriptions and is mechanically suited for its functional tasks, but has no artistic value and rank? Are excellent

works of art better instruments of salvation than mediocre or bad ones? What, after all, is the relationship between ritual value and artistic value?

Meaning, "content" and function are, no doubt, given prominence in Buddhist art to a degree which modern man is barely able to conceive. It is certainly not all that significant in the eye of the ordinary believer whether the cult images he venerates or donates possess true aesthetic value. After all, East Asia, too, has enjoyed widespread manufacture of devotional trash. But a tradition of solid craftsmanship with high standards of taste has survived into recent times and has managed to impart even to more modest works a faint glow of the great, outstanding creations of the past. This means that even these more modest works never, or rarely, degenerate into mere kitsch. Though the average believer may not be conscious of the problem, it is of basic importance to our understanding not only of Buddhist but of any religious art.

Leaving aside the consideration, valid for any art, that content and form mutually determine each other and that in the final analysis, any work of art constitutes an inseparable whole, there are reasons to claim that craftsmanship and artistically valuable design in Buddhist works of art were by no means a matter of indifference, particularly with respect to their religious functional value. In presenting these reasons very briefly we take for granted the simple but never to be forgotten fact that in all artistic creations, including religious ones, a very elementary, entirely naive sense of form and beauty--man's natural playfulness, so to speak--expresses itself.

There are good reasons which prompted the creators of Buddhist works of art to make them so beautifully and carefully. Moreover, this fact was quite in line with the wishes of their sponsors. An artistically inferior and technically deficient image or cult implement would not only lack the seriousness of genuine devotion and true sacred power, it would also fail to be a suitable vehicle for religious meaning and expression and might even constitute an offense against the holy being to which it was offered in veneration. Because it lacked sufficient artistic power of expression it would be incapable of revealing its intended meaning. An integration of different signs and formulas is indispensable for creating a unified meaning, but such an integration can only be successfully accomplished in a truly living work of art whose formal perfection is more than merely a bonus without a value of its own.

Valuing the artistic achievement in religious art and applying aesthetic criteria to it is by no means--as is frequently assumed today--merely an approach of modern aestheticism, but goes to the very heart of the subject at hand. However, these criteria must be derived from the subject matter itself and not from external points of view. To be sure, the people of the times during which these works of art were created certainly judged them by aesthetic criteria, but aesthetic values at that time had not yet attained independent status nor were they considered as being of primary importance.

A Buddhist work of art also could not "function" as a yantra unless its ritual correctness attained formal perfection. The absence of ritual correctness or its formal perfection would mean failure to achieve its functional purposes in an "ontological" as well as in a "psychic" sense (cf. p. 186 f.). This latter aspect, the emotional impact and mood of a work of art, its value as an aid to the venerating and meditating attitude of the believer, is vitally dependent on its aesthetic

appearance. Nor could its ontological meaning be truly comprehended if an image did not speak to the faithful with great potency, with the magic charm of its manifestation in a beautiful, perhaps even overwhelmingly beautiful form. This required full mastery of all suitable artistic means. Only works filled with such beautiful harmony can be symbolic images of Perfection and Absoluteness. Only perfect forms point beyond all forms and serve the highest goal: salvation.

Moreover, outstanding artistic achievements were acts of pious service and merit-creating deeds. The ethos of masterly craftsmanship not only had its own value and rewards but resulted also from the belief that only the best could be considered as truly adequate and admissible for representing the Holy. The glory of the Buddha, his teachings and his congregation could only be served by something truly outstanding and splendid, something which required true sacrifices not only in term of money and material but also in devotion and physical efforts.

This expenditure, which in ancient times could be quite compatible with true artistic quality, was, to be sure, frequently linked with the desire to promote the glory and prestige of the donors. Great periods in religious art have always attached high value for ostentation to their works. This value was not, however, mere empty conspicuous waste, but was intended to realize the particular ideals of artistic beauty prevailing at that time. These ideals, in turn, were most intimately joined to the ideal values of religious life, or, rather, only they were deemed capable of translating these values into tangible symbolic forms. Divergence from these values is a phenomenon of modern decadence.

The demand that a Buddhist work of art--regardless of its genre--should possess as much beauty as possible arises from the *shōgon* idea. It requires that convergence of sacred and aesthetic values which is so crucial for an understanding of Buddhist art. It also arises from something which we may call the "*imago* concept," i.e., from the nature of a work of art as a depiction and visualized projection of supra-mundane realms and from its character as an *imago mundi* in general. Moreover, these spiritual objects could only be successfully represented symbolically if their pictorial depictions at least tried with all the means at their disposal to allow the viewer to sense a beauty which lies beyond all sensory perception. Finally, these works have the task of leading in the right direction the visionary-meditative powers of imagination of the viewer whom one is even tempted to call the user of the work of art. The traditional viewer was, however, a person who did not yet know the sense of detached distance toward the work of art which is so characteristic of the modern viewer. All this is to say that a *summa pulchritudo* belongs to the *ens realissimum* and *summum bonum*. This holds true for Buddhism as well though in a peculiar way. In this sense the aesthetic value, particularly of the highest figure, the Buddha, is of genuinely metaphysical significance.

Beyond any of its specific individual meanings, every Buddhist work of art is a general symbolic-figural expression of the Buddhist world view in the sense in which all artistic creations are expressions of a world view. The more importance a work of art holds as an aesthetic phenomenon, the better suited it is to represent this world view and to transmit it to the mind in forms created for the eye. Here, too, it becomes obvious that the aesthetic value of beauty does not merely serve as an aid to the various religious functions of Buddhist works of art and to their realization and effectiveness. This aesthetic value is also, in its own right, a function

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of religious works of art, and a very crucial one at that, because their main task is to represent religious content adequately, and this can only be done with the greatest possible artistic perfection. The fact, however, that even the highest beauty of Buddhist works is "without essence" does not cancel the importance of their aesthetic value. It only confirms the specifically Buddhist meaning of beauty: though intended to point beyond itself to that ultimate "Nothingness," beauty had to be taken to the very limits of perfection to accomplish its task.

Stylistic Changes

The systematic-typological analysis of Buddhist art offered in the previous chapters should be followed by a detailed treatment of its historical development in which the individual character of particular works, artists and periods and the full range of the surviving works is given due attention. Limitations of space rule this out, and such treatment would only make sense if the material, which is relatively little known in the West even among persons interested in art, could be accompanied by numerous illustrations. However, neither historical development nor changes in style should be ignored entirely. A few comments should, therefore, be made and pictorial material appended which attempts to offer visual impressions of a few typical examples.

Concepts of Time and History

Changes in style over time should be mentioned if for no other reason than that current opinion in the West is still characterized by the outdated view that East Asian cultures are essentially stationary, knew no historical development and exhausted themselves in steady, seldom altered repetitions of traditional patterns in thought, action, and the arts. How erroneous such opinions are can nowhere be demonstrated more clearly than in art, where works may be dated in most instances with the same accuracy as those of the West as belonging to certain centuries, half centuries or even decades, if only one is familiar with the language of their styles and if certain methodological principles are observed. The language of these styles, however, is more subtle and muted. Changes do not appear as dramatically as in the West. A number of reasons could be given to explain this fact which are just as valid for art as for other spheres of East Asian spiritual and social life, and may be traced to fundamental psychological peculiarities and philosophical convictions of those peoples.

In the East, the binding force of established patterns of order, thought, and form is very strong, and East Asians as a whole tend more toward the typical than the individual. In East Asia the human personality unfolds and completes itself primarily by representing a given type. Perfect embodiment of such a type is praised as high achievement. Individual patterns and original variations are not the primary goal but at best a welcome addendum.⁹⁵ To match the model of the ancestors is

sufficient to win fame. Originality is not recognized as a value in its own right but only as something which has gone beyond the model type and is measured in terms of it. This something extra is, however, welcomed as it contributes to a living tradition and is even necessary if only to avoid slavish imitation.

Every period may be said to have the same relationship to its predecessor. No period purposely attempts to achieve something basically new, to move away from established traditions or perhaps even to evince bitter hostility toward them. Rather, it regards itself as a wave in the flow of tradition. This flow continues and brings forth something new at every turn but normally in an uninterrupted linkage to its source. The past is never completely done with and superseded, but remains present, even if occasionally only rather latently. Anything new must relate to the past and continue to build on it. The past is, therefore, somehow always present, and the future is never an adventure into totally uncharted darkness. History means something different than it does to us, and the frequently raised question as to whether East Asians actually knew how to experience and think in historical dimensions can by no means be answered in the simple alternative of yes or no. A sense of time basically different from that of the West forms the background to East Asia's experience of history.

Time, particularly historical time, does not extend in linear fashion from a beginning to an end, from an origin to a goal. There is no chain of irretrievable and, therefore, uniquely precious moments. Rather, time is a cycle of changes in which everything returns and nothing is ever lost or forgotten. All changes of time are experienced against the metaphysical ground of Timelessness, of Nothingness, of Emptiness, and hence as temporary waves on the surface of the eternally unmovable depth of the ocean. In all time-specific historical phenomena the Time-Transcendent is felt just as strongly as the infinite "ground" which lies behind the world of unfolding space. Different modes of experience are therefore "synchronic" in character. Forms of thought, religious conviction, artistic styles (even in one and the same person and even more so in specific historical periods) run parallel and constitute an uninterrupted connection with the past, which enjoys the sacred status of an absolute model, and a continuous flow into a living tradition.

But to continue also means to create something new. It would be erroneous to conclude that the veneration of ancient models results in a mere backward orientation of the intellectual horizon or in epigonous decadence and stagnation. No doubt, something new is never something "entirely new" and unheard of. Usually it consists only of slight variations on or an enrichment of traditional elements. These partial innovations can still express, quite distinctly and unmistakably, the spirit of an age, the soul of a people, and the uniqueness of a creative personality. Though in East Asia the amplitude of historical changes is less drastic and the scope of individual development and expression more limited in several respects than it is in the West, innovations exist just as they do in any other living tradition. Art historians must become aware of the typical and abiding elements and of certain peculiar structural laws. Since the emphasis on such typicality of expression is so strong in East Asia, the art historian would be well advised to put together, first of all, a total view of the subject on the basis of its consistent representative characteristics, because only against the background

formed by these will individual and historical phenomena become visible and intelligible as variations of these general features.

Main Stylistic Phases

Our systematic-typological description of the basic features of Buddhist art is based on what we may call the mature or classic Buddhist art of China and Japan, from the Sui/T'ang to the Sung dynasties in China (ca. 580-1280), and from the Hakuho/Nara to the Kamakura periods in Japan (ca. 700-1330; cf. the chronological tables). The art of preceding periods, though highly significant and even fundamentally important, was still "archaic" in character. Its possibilities had not yet fully unfolded. On the other hand, the art following the classic periods is, despite several impressive achievements, epigonous and demonstrates that in both countries the intellectual vigor of Buddhism had already declined. (The art of Zen Buddhism, it is true, reached its apex during these later periods, but since it followed its own artistic paths it will be dealt with in a separate chapter at the end of this book.) We can distinguish, of course, between several stages of development during these six hundred years of the flourishing period of Buddhist art, even though certain common dominant basic features overlapped all these styles.

The mature Buddhist art of China is divided into an "early classical" (Sui and early T'ang periods), a "high-classic" period (middle and late T'ang) and a "late classic" phase (Sung period). Japanese Buddhist art follows this evolution only up to about the middle of the T'ang period (corresponding to the Nara period) and thereafter largely follows its own independent path leading up to the two classical ages of the Fujiwara and Kamakura periods, with the latter again inspired in part by the late classical Chinese art of the Sung period. In Korea a similar development took place between ca. 670 and 1400, i.e., during the unified Silla and Koryŏ periods. The entire development of Buddhist art, from its first flourishing to its waning periods, forms a consistent, historical process which not only may be, but rather must be, understood in its entirety by following its course step by step. We are not dealing here with expressions of a particular intellectual substance in ever new and different forms, but primarily with the evolution and gradual verification of a few given prototypes, i.e., the more or less constant types of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Devas, etc., as they had already been defined by "theology," sacred literature, and earlier artistic images.

Except for certain limited periods there is material in all spheres of Buddhist art which is dated with sufficient precision to write a well-documented history of stylistic changes. Even for the early centuries of the Six Dynasties Period in China (ca. 420-580) and the Asuka or Suiko period in Japan (ca. 550-645) we have a wealth of works dated either by inscriptions or other documents. But we should keep in mind that the real masterpieces of classical Chinese (but not Japanese) art--particularly the main cult images and paintings of the great sanctuaries in the cultural centers of the flourishing periods--have been lost, and that students of Buddhist art must rely in many instances on provincial and inferior works. Fortunately, many works of superior quality, directly inspired by Chinese models, have been preserved in Japan so that the Japanese material can and must make up for the losses suffered in China. The least unfavorable situation with respect to China exists in the field of small-sized metal sculptures and in some fields of stone

sculpture. The sequences of changes in style may, therefore, best be followed and documented through example from Chinese and Japanese sculptures which reveal an impressive consistency of stylistic evolution. In the following pages we will attempt to provide a picture of these stylistic changes, if only of their major phases.¹³⁹

What preceded this development and what indigenous artistic traditions confronted the initially foreign and imported Buddhist art in China and Japan? In China, the Han period had created a highly characteristic, highly stylized language of artistic forms tending towards an elegant but strict ornamentalization. Han had not, however, advanced beyond a comparatively modest level in the field of sculpture, the very field in which Buddhist art later excelled. Figure painting already possessed substantially richer formal means, and we have still to ascertain how far it may have influenced the evolving early forms of Buddhist art. But outside these art forms, Buddhist art found no indigenous traditional elements of comparable attainment to which it could have attached itself (important monumental animal sculptures of the Han period were unsuitable), and thus Buddhism had initially largely to depend on the foreign models from its areas of origin. Nevertheless it managed to produce even during its first centuries in China a basic style which was thoroughly and unmistakably Chinese.

In Japan, Buddhist art was adopted as part of the Chinese-Buddhist cultural heritage and encountered a virtual vacuum. During the centuries preceding this great transformation, there existed no works of art beyond some handicrafts and archaic, though charming and highly expressive, clay tomb figures in human and animals form (*haniwa*). There was no art of a more sophisticated kind which could have either served as foundation for a Japanese Buddhist art or as its rival. As late as in the middle of the sixth century, Japan was still at an essentially prehistoric level of development. It entered its historical era with fresh and unspent powers and was fortunate enough to do so under the guidance of China, a civilization rich in experiences and traditions, which could also point to significant though still archaic achievements of its own in the field of Buddhist art. Korea, a cultural extension of China, acted as intermediary or connecting link. This explains why the first Buddhist style, that of the Six Dynasties Period, quickly found a pure and fully resonant echo in the Japan of the Asuka/Suiko period which had just been awakened to a higher cultural consciousness.

The style of the Six Dynasties Period, particularly that of the Northern Wei (386-535), is of fundamental importance in art history because the oldest surviving Buddhist images in East Asia were created during this period. Except for rare pieces from the fourth century and the recently discovered isolated Buddha relief in a West Chinese tomb chamber from about the year 300,^{139a} these images are mainly from the first half of the fifth century. Older, large-sized works once existed but are now lost. Literary sources and historical considerations point to a beginning for the creation of Buddhist figures no later than the beginning of the third century. From the second half of the fifth century on, we possess a rich store of wall figures in temples and a wealth of individual stone or metal figures in both countries; in Japan even wood sculptures have survived.

At the beginning of this period, the influence of Central Asian models and of the Indian works with strong late classical (provincial Roman) features, which had inspired them, is still very noticeable. The Chinese bronze figures of this time (18) usually have rounded, smoothly modeled body forms, and nearly mathematical curves to indicate the folds of their garments, which cling tightly to the body. On the whole, they display a peculiar hybrid mixture of smooth elegance and rather dull schematic patterns at the expense of spiritual expression.

In contrast, the first truly Chinese style in Buddhist art, called simply Wei Style (the term covers somewhat imprecisely the time of the Northern, Western and Eastern Wei and some other dynasties), was probably already emerging. The Wei Style either abandoned the foreign elements or changed them into a new, very distinct style. This style retained certain archaic features (16, 17, 30, 34, 42-45): The bodies of the figures are rigid like columns, or flat like boards; they are sometimes overly slender, though occasionally quite plump; only their heads seem to have genuine volume, yet even these are given stereotyped spherical or oval shapes. Garment and body are not treated as independent entities, but the body either disappears behind the garment or its stereometric forms are merely accentuated by the tightly clinging garments. The garments are quite flat and their folds form thin layers. These folds appear "ironed" on. The contour and fold lines of the garments are solid and firm, but are cut with a strict elegance. Their nearly abstract ornamental patterns frequently form an integral part of the geometric overall outline of the figure and observe the laws of symmetry. Typical for the Wei/Suiko style are the fin-like garment ends and seams which sometimes reach out like flickering flames or appear like windblown shapes frozen in their movement. All sculptures, including cast metal figures, appear as if carved out of a single block or engraved into a rigid surface, and not as if modelled from a plastic mass and conveying the impression of round forms emerging from the body. It is this "cut" quality which constitutes the peculiar charm of this style. The play of the lines of the garments is frequently rather lively, but its "graphic" dynamism is always restrained by the tight, even rigid quality of the lines, by the hieratic pose of the figure, and by their dominant spirit of ascetic remoteness. The figures' expressions, too, have an aura of loftiness permeated by quiet gentleness and compassion. This loftiness is only occasionally dissolved in a typical "archaic smile" which, in the best examples, radiates an entrancing aura of supra-mundane bliss without, however, exhibiting genuine "expressions" (47, 48). But many figures attain a certain precocious grace in spite of the strictness of their design. This shows that even this early stage is already far removed from the preceding primitive stage. All of the figure types display this sort of schematic formality and abstract beauty. Hierarchies of beings or levels of existence, as far as they appear in this art at all, are distinguished from one another more by iconographic signs than by formal design.

Following this early phase and beginning during the Northern Ch'i/Sui and the Hakuho periods, a more mature Buddhist art slowly developed. Initially, however, this new stage is still rather timidly expressed (20, 22, 40, 51 ff., 60). The figures gain in body volume. Their legs, hips and shoulders begin to bend and come alive. Their extremities are slightly parted from the trunk and the garments are given a softer flow, but still cling to the body, which is more roundly molded and only occasionally retains the former archaic flatness. The rigid schematicism begins

to melt. Straight, razor-sharp forms become curved and wavelike--without, however, as yet attaining an organic and realistic corporeality. Folds of garments, for example, still appear to have been applied as linear curves onto the rounded parts of the body, and even often appear incised into it. They still closely follow the smoothly modeled, tight surfaces and thus generate the impression of an inseparable unity between body and garment. While their beauty is no longer geometrically abstract, it still has a predominantly ornamental, albeit flexible linear rhythm. The contours of the figures are integrated into large soft rounded curves. The expression of the faces is softened, the rigid smile begins to blossom into a more *genuine feeling* but often has a slightly "arrogant" air.

This art conveys the impression of a budding flower which has not yet opened. The figures combine shy grace with cool beauty. Many anticipate the majesty and monumentality of the following period. Now that the artistic means are handled more freely, clearer distinctions than before are made between different figure types. Bodhisattvas are now unmistakably distinguished from Buddhas by being given more physical detail and livelier movements, as, for example, the S-curved line of the tribhanga pose which is only seemingly a contraposto. A Bodhisattva may also display a more graceful play of lines, wear richer jewelry and have a less remote expression.

This "budding" art unfolds during the great high classical T'ang art (which is echoed in Japan by Nara art) with full vigor and monumentality (23-26, 55, 57, 58, 70, 72, 73, 86, 87, 155). The bodies gain more natural proportions than before and frequently display the massive volume which should be understood as symbolizing dignity and majesty. This new urge for organic modeling, though entirely different from that of Greek art (which was based on the study of nature), nevertheless displays a complete and free mastery of the use of the human body as an instrument of artistic design which does, however, aspire to supra-natural forms. The extremities move freely and frequently reach out into space in dancing or belligerent poses, whereas before they had remained more or less confined inside an imaginary circle. The garments now cover or enclose the realistically shaped body in natural fashion. They drape it as gravity might determine, but without hiding it or following its contours slavishly. The garment has now become an independent partner of the body. An inner unity between the organic and the aesthetic form of body and garment has been achieved which permeates both. The strict, cool melody of the earlier garment lines and body contours now achieves a noble fullness and natural power and follows a relaxed and loosely flowing rhythm which remains, however, still subject to higher laws of harmony. The garments retain their ornamental charm despite the heightened functional, as opposed to the earlier schematic, treatment.

All the forms of this phase, from monumental sculptures to the smallest ornaments, give the impression of following innate formative laws. Their shapes extend into space or unfold in flat surfaces but always in a uniformly vigorous flow from a living center of energy. All these forms, from the largest parts of the body down to the smallest garment fold, have a soft yet never effeminate plasticity. At the same time, they succeed in indicating, to a certain degree, the material substances of which they are made. This new proximity to nature should not, however, be called naturalistic but rather "idealistic," even though this term in the strictest sense is not quite suitable to Asian phenomena. The figures--as Buddhist

figures--radiate their numinous powers into the world while resting profoundly and firmly within themselves, with the exception of figures like world-guardians serving active functions.

The expressions of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas may appear duller or less spiritual in comparison with those of the earlier styles, but these must be understood as expressions of self-contained majesty and of the fullness of absolute wisdom, essence and compassion. Correctly understood, Rilke's words "deep and slow like an animal" (in *'Buddha': New Poems*) may be applied to them. For the first time Deva and other types display dynamic and demonic expressions. For the first time human figures come to display earthly personalities depicted as discrete individuals, but permeated and formed by a pervading religious spirit.

At this point, there arose in Buddhist art the distinction between beings at different levels of existence, because only now had all the means of corporeal, "realistic" or "idealistic" depiction and of calmly detached or vigorously active expression become available. Without these the earlier, more or less strictly uniform stylistic patterns could not dissolve into the rich variety of forms corresponding to the religious hierarchy of figure types. It was only now possible for several "styles of types" to coexist. But all these were based on and sustained by the common style of the period. What had developed by this time was the first universal basic style to reach full maturity and to become capable of realizing its varied potentials. The entire further development of Buddhist art in China and Japan took this style as its point of departure and binding standard.

If, ignoring the intermediary phases, we now proceed to trace further developments in China, we encounter the Sung style (66-68, 91 ff.) as the next clearly distinguished stage. Compared to the flat and linear Wei style and to the plastic T'ang style, this style may be labeled "painterly." The massive bodies with their tight, firm, and smoothly modeled surfaces, on which folds of the garments, jewelry, etc., appear like surface waves, are now more differentiated, more loosely defined, even hollowed out (e.g., garment folds). The still rather restrained poses of the T'ang figures are less rigid and artificial, and by now have become more easy, natural and even playful. The result of all this is a lively surge and retreat of plastic surfaces and abrupt changes from light to dark; a play of forms which lures the eye from form to form without, however, allowing it to be captured by any particular form. This quality may be considered typically "painterly."

All these contrasts blend into a dynamic unity which is in sharp contrast to the earlier thrust for a quiet orderliness of alternating flat and plastic forms. This is joined by a heightened realism, particularly in the priest and Arhat figures. The Bodhisattva figures appear somewhat weak, almost feminine, and occasionally possess a rococo-like delicacy.¹⁴⁰ The Buddhas, on the other hand, are only slightly touched by these changes which, limited by the law of stylistic types, left their full impact on figures at the Bodhisattva or lower levels. The new style became fully effective only where the figure type permitted or demanded it.

This phase is occasionally overshadowed by the onset of decadence. In North China, since the early 10th century under the rule of the Liao and then Chin dynasties, there appeared an archaizing style which apparently looked back to the patterns of the T'ang and even pre-T'ang periods. This was followed by a final decline into epigonic work and mere imitation which ultimately lapsed into

uninspired mass production. This began to happen during the Yüan and Ming dynasties. However, particularly during the early years, quite a number of remarkable works were still created. But if the majority of figures are compared to works of classic or late classic art, it becomes evident how schematically body and garments had come to be treated and how faces had turned into stereotyped masks. Only among images of Arhats, which permitted an occasionally grotesque realism, could original works still be found (93). Unfortunately, almost the only surviving figures in Chinese temples are from this period of decadence, because older pieces have for the most part been lost or have not yet been discovered.

From the 6th century on the Buddhist sculpture of Korea at first followed rather faithfully the stylistic phases of China's Six Dynasties period, particularly the so-called Wei style and the styles of the Northern Ch'i and the Sui Dynasties which followed the former in close succession. The early phase is primarily represented by numerous small-sized bronze statues, but also by some larger works as, for example, the two outstanding figures of the sitting Bodhisattva Maitreya (Korean *Mirok*) in the Seoul National Museum which are among the most beautiful works of East Asian art. Parallel to this metal sculpture, there developed a stone sculpture which for the most part used granite as its material and over the centuries developed an often somewhat plump yet monumental form which became characteristic of Korea.

The Chinese T'ang style became the guiding model after 668 once the Silla Dynasty (668-935) had established the first unified Korean state. Silla had its political and cultural center in the South, in the capital of Kyôngju and its surrounding area. The grotto sculptures of Sökkul-am or the few surviving large bronze Buddhas of this period (e.g., in the Pulguk-sa), together with miniature sculptures, provide impressive evidence that the Korean variant of this style was distinguished by a certain austerity, solemn weightiness and quiet restraint. As long as Buddhism remained a living cultural force in Korea, i.e., until the end of the Koryo Dynasty (935-1392), this style continued in its canonical forms, but without perceptible development of styles resembling those of contemporary China or showing an independent evolution of its own.

Until the end of the Nara period (ca. 800), the development of style in Japan faithfully followed the Korean and later the Chinese developments, without, however, creating mere imitations. Thereafter, Japan went its own way. This was mainly the result of the interruption of regular official contacts with China. A stronger degree of Japanese cultural independence manifested itself thereafter in many other facets of life, but predominantly in poetry and fiction, as the country began to build its own classic medieval culture, a process which began around 900 and intensified from 1000 on until into the 13th century. First came the Fujiwara period with its center at the imperial court. It was succeeded by the Kamakura period which was dominated by two centers--the court and the eastern capital of the warrior nobility. After the end of the Nara style, a peculiar transitional style, the so-called Jôgan style (named after a reign period), emerged. It is characterized by a preference for plump and massive figures; individual forms are rigid, harsh and show pronounced ornamental traits. This may be regarded as a kind of hardened version of the T'ang style, but its best works display a remarkable vigor combined with austerity and solemnity which is clearly distinct from the lavishness of the T'ang style (27, 61 f.).

The Tang/Nara style, which favored bronze, clay, and lacquer as materials for its sculptures, had remained an essentially plastic style which continued to shape its figures as if modeling them from clay, even where they were chiseled from stone or carved from wood. By comparison, this new Japanese Jōgan style displays characteristics of a genuinely sculpting style, and its evolution coincides with a growing preference for wood as the material from which its sculptures were fashioned.

The Fujiwara style is entirely different (28, 74). Though also inspired by the art of wood-carving, it approaches this material with more tender hands and with a delicate sense for smoothly modulated surfaces. It gently restrains three-dimensional tendencies without, however, returning to an entirely two-dimensional approach (something that would be quite unthinkable in the wake of the Tang/Nara style). The forms no longer seem to be surging vigorously from a core, but are made to blend smoothly into each other in soft, tender transitions. Though the ornamental play of body and garment lines is far more linear than in the Tang/Nara style, there is no turn to the strongly decorative, non-natural character of "archaic" art. A nobly restrained simplicity and delicacy and a tender beauty of elegant coolness is typical of this style, which does, however, easily succumb to formal schematicism or epigonal emptiness.

To overcome this danger, the Kamakura style--arising from a more vital, warlike age--turned vigorously to nature's reality, and was inspired in this thrust by the Nara style which had also been vital, monumental and relatively close to nature. A kind of renaissance took place which reached back to classical models across the immediately preceding style phase which, in turn, had itself been a variation of the same classical model, but one which had evolved in an "idealistic" direction toward a predominantly smooth surface-modulating approach to forms. Now a higher degree of "realism" and of plastic energy came into vogue.

All this was stimulated by the Sung style, since cultural relations with China had been revived. This revival had also led to the spread of Zen Buddhism, which was to play such an important role in Japanese culture and art. But the Sung style was never accepted as completely as the Tang style had been during the Nara period because Japan had by now become much too sure of its own artistic identity for something like this to happen again.

The Kamakura style (29, 65, 78, 80, 88-90) testifies to an intensive observation of living forms which were vigorously grasped in accordance with their natural characteristics. This is particularly evident in the natural, irregular fall and three-dimensional corporeality of the garment folds, which bestowed on all figures an unmistakably distinct, vigorous and yet spiritualized expression. This is particularly true for their bodies, postures and movements, faces and hands, but also for every last fold of their garments. All those features are permeated by a common rhythm which is no longer predominantly abstract, decorative or symbolic, but is rather an emanation of physical and spiritual vitality.

It goes without saying that this style is far removed both from the literal naturalism of the West and from the idealism derived from that naturalism. We have already discussed the intellectual foundation of an art which occupies the middle ground between realism and non-realism, and which does not bestow physical form on the divine, but rather spiritualizes the earthly and corporeal. The

farther removed from the illusory *samsāra* reality a figure is, the less validity the features of the Kamakura style can have. A Buddha (29) still displays traditional schematic forms to a higher degree. But even here a closer look reveals a stronger "realism" and liveliness, particularly in individual facial features and garment folds. The entire figure radiates that intensity, inner vitality, power and majesty so characteristic of the Kamakura style. Naturally, this style found its major field of application in depicting figures from the human sphere--Arhats, priests, pious laymen--who were also congenial to the Sung style. It goes without saying that this period brought portraiture to a culmination. At the same time it intensified its depiction of demons even beyond the levels reached by the T'ang/Nara style to create figures of unsurpassed expressiveness.

The last important stylistic phase of Buddhist sculpture in Japan is that of the Muromachi or Ashikaga period (ca. 1330-1580). However, the sculpture of this period, just as in China, came to be dominated by increasingly rigid, imitative and emptily epigonic works. Still, a number of very important and distinctive works were created during this period, primarily in portrait sculpture. There was no further elaboration of realism in the treatment of details, but rather an almost stereotyped schematizing, which integrated all detailed forms into larger patterns without relying on traditional formulas and also shunned all archaizing tendencies (96). But these works remained isolated individual achievements, as did a few good images of the Tokugawa period (69, 94). A style as a truly valid expression of the age could no longer emerge from the Buddhist artistic tradition. It arose, almost in opposition to this tradition, in the sphere of Zen Buddhism, beginning with the Kamakura period, but especially during the Muromachi period (and in China since the Sung period) as Zen came more and more to permeate all artistic creativity. But Zen's major influence was on painting rather than sculpture.

It would be desirable, or even necessary, to show the development of style in painting as well as in architecture or cult utensils and ornamental art, but this development cannot as easily be demonstrated in these areas as in sculpture. This could only be done by relying on numerous illustrations offering minute details. Furthermore, questions about the significance of individual styles as expressions of the prevailing spirit of the period could be raised. But such questions could only be answered in a detailed history of Buddhist art which would include all formative forces of the different periods and their relationship to and influence on the Buddhist world of ideas. Such details cannot be provided here. But we should caution against all hasty attempts to view the particular style of the T'ang or of the Fujiwara and the Kamakura periods as specific expressions of distinct religious beliefs and metaphysical ideas, such as the relationship between the Absolute and the empirical-phenomenal world, or of varying perceptions of the nature of the Buddha and other sacred figures. In the absence of preliminary, very thorough and critical studies of these matters, we do not dare to answer such questions and have, therefore, confined our comments to the presentation of the general intellectual foundations on which all styles of Buddhist art are based. But a few basic comments should be made on the historical development of Buddhist art and the problems art historians face in studying its changes in style.

Some Methodological Questions

Anyone attempting to write a comprehensive history of Buddhist art in East Asia and to integrate it into the larger historical context would have to explore its roots beyond the East Asian limits of time and geography to its country of origin, India. The origin of the image of the Buddha and of that of other types should be explored. The migration of the Indian models to East Asia and the intermediary stops, of which those in present-day Afghanistan and in Central Asia (Bāmiyān, Khotan, Kucha, Turfan, Tun-huang, etc.) are of crucial importance, should be examined. We cannot delve into the origin of images of the Buddha or of the Bodhisattva or any of the other types or into the detailed iconographical questions relevant to these issues.^{140a} All this is properly part of the history of Indian religion and art, and those attempting to describe the basic features of the Buddhist art of East Asia may take the existence and the iconographically fixed appearance of the different figure types for granted, except for those which evolved in East Asia.

Somewhat different is the question of the formal modifications of these Indian elements as they entered East Asian art. They continued to display substantial remnants of their original styles and thus remained for a time part of the emerging East Asian canon of forms though they gradually began to disappear as they became ever more fully amalgamated into the form language of East Asian Buddhist art. It would also have to be shown in detail what these foreign style elements looked like, where and when they appeared, to where they spread, and how long they survived. These questions cannot be discussed within the framework of this study, if only because this complicated process would require extensive illustrations. A close scrutiny of the historical development which led to the evolution of the truly East Asian (and this means initially Chinese) style, following its own original bent despite numerous foreign influences, would also have to critically assess the balance between foreign and indigenous elements.

It is undisputed that Chinese Buddhist art received numerous stimuli from abroad. This is part of its history, particularly during its fertile and fundamental periods of development during the Six Dynasties and the T'ang periods. Chinese Buddhist art was part of a network of almost universal cultural relations with the non-Chinese World, extending particularly to India and beyond India and Central Asia, as far as the Middle East. We could, for example, without difficulty trace the path of certain Indian Buddhist figure types and style forms within the Northwest Indian-Afghanistan Gandhāra culture, where they received late Hellenistic and some Iranian influences over a great number of intermediary stages as they came to be incorporated into the Chinese art of the Six Dynasties and the T'ang periods. We might confidently claim that many of the lavish forms and classic elements in the figures of T'ang sculpture originated in the Gupta art of India (ca. 320-600). But even this would touch only individual phenomena within the vast complex of East Asia's Buddhist art and would by no means "explain" these phenomena. "Influences" rarely explain the course of a historical evolution of such breadth, duration and importance. Each individual influence requires the readiness of a recipient, who will only adopt what he needs and is able to use for the unfolding of his own self with its own historical roots. Such a recipient will adopt and usually also transform foreign elements by his own initiative and powers.

This is precisely what happened in China. Hardly any works of China's Buddhist art, with a very few clearly limited exceptions, should be called pure copies of Indian works. Specifically Chinese elements which are the results of indigenous creative powers of tremendous breadth and depth are evident everywhere. But even in those exceptional cases where Indian-Central Asian models were copied, the degree of influence exercised by these models is limited for another reason. Most such models were world famous monuments of particular numinous importance from areas where Buddhism originated. They were copied more or less faithfully because the act of copying them was recognized as beneficial. The efficacy of the copy required that the iconographical features be carefully maintained, because their numinous powers mainly rested in these features. The artistic form, the "style" of these images, was of far less interest and entered China almost surreptitiously.¹⁴¹

We should, therefore, caution against one prevailing opinion that, in the final analysis, it was Hellenistic and, therefore, Western art which truly awakened and fertilized the religious art of India and, through it, also that of East Asia, so that in every T'ang Buddha we could still sense the Greek style of rendering garments. It is true that faint echoes or reminiscences of Hellenism do exist--though by no means everywhere--but they are embedded in a total structure which is profoundly different in artistic design and spiritual attitude. Mahâyâna art and religion may even be called the very opposite of all Hellenistic and, in several respects, even all Indian notions. Along the route from their point of origin in the West to their final destination in the East, even those relatively few Hellenistic and Late Antique elements which exercised any influence at all were reshaped to the same degree and in the same direction (i.e., toward desensualization and transcendence) as they were in Christian art. They were made to serve an entirely different spiritual content and even turned into their very opposites. We may note parenthetically that more recent studies have shown that those late Hellenistic style forms which influenced the Northwest Indian Gandhâra art and especially that of Bâmiyân (Afghanistan), which was so crucially important for their transmission to Central and East Asia, were far more frequently provincial Roman works, particularly from Syria (Palmyra, etc.) than Hellenistic ones, with Bactria furnishing supplementary elements.

Another question arises in connection with this analysis of style changes: Do typological similarities exist between the course of the East Asian and Western evolutions of style? It may have been noticed and perhaps resented that we used terms like archaic, early, high, and late classic. Is it permissible to apply such categories which have evolved in connection with Western phenomena to non-Western historical materials? Does their application imply claims of a parallel evolution or even possibly a general immanent law inherent in all such historical processes? Certainly not, at least not with such crude directness.

Nevertheless the Wei/Suiko style, for instance, displays a number of features which are typical of any archaic style and one which we also encounter in the Greek art of the sixth century B.C. or in Romanesque art. The changes in style from T'ang to Sung share certain features with those occurring in the art of early classic Greek to Hellenistic times. Moreover, changes from the Japanese Fujiwara to the Kamakura style may be compared to those from high Gothic to late Gothic art, or possibly to those from the early Renaissance to the Baroque, depending on which

aspects one examines. But none of this involves genuine and essential similarities between the two civilizations. The spiritual foundations of the two and the nature of their creativity, as, for example, the way in which they deal with the reality of nature, are too different. Above all, none of these European total processes truly parallels the total process of the changes which took place in East Asia.

The grand evolution from "archaic" to "classic" and "late classic" styles was nevertheless just as irreversible in East Asia as it was in Europe. In view of its historical role and the general character, no one will doubt that T'ang art, like T'ang culture in general, had truly classic qualities. It was classic in the double (historical and normative) sense that it had a certain style which may, on the one hand, be characterized as the apex of a long evolutionary process, while at the same time it established ideals of perfection and models of essence and norm. By contrast, the Sung style reveals obvious characteristics of a late phase including historicizing and archaizing tendencies. This cannot, however, be asserted with equal validity for the Kamakura style in Japan, even though it chronologically parallels the Sung style.

The equation nowhere fits, therefore, quite properly, and we have to be satisfied by saying that certain sequences of styles are similar in nature and direction to certain sequences of European changes in style, and that in both areas the direction is generally the same and the changes irreversible. Given the entirely different preconditions, there existed a remarkable basic similarity of forms and similarity of sequence between the two civilizations. That this was the case should not be ignored. It may have been the result of factors shared by all mankind and a consequently similar relationship between typical mental attitudes and creative potential. But we must also keep in mind the differences of spiritual content and its formal expressions, and must pay attention to the unique structure of the total East Asian development. For these reasons an uncritical application of European categories to East Asian art should be avoided.

The phenomenon of "levels of style," already touched upon several times, should also caution us against a too direct application of Western notions about the uniform, quasi-linear, nature of the logic of evolution. That is to say, the style of a Buddhist work of art depends largely on the particular level of existence to which that figure-type belongs, while type styles are primarily statements of iconographical relevance (cf. p. 118).¹⁴² The linear sequence of style phases is, therefore, interrupted or at least modified by style-determining factors which cut across sequences in time. True judgments can only be obtained by observing the interaction of type-styles and period-styles.

Both factors might almost be graphically represented within a system of coordinates. A third component may be the fairly distinct national styles of China and Japan, whose different essential features have still not been ascertained so clearly and methodically as to allow us to formulate them precisely. A fourth component involves the "layers of traditions," i.e., the fact that in one and the same work, such as a Japanese Buddha or Bodhisattva sculpture of the Kamakura period, a basically Indian iconographic-symbolic foundation has superimposed on it a Chinese design of the figure type, the garments etc. and that finally this Chinese type is modified by the specific Japanese sensitivity to forms as revealed in the treatment of all particular features of this sculpture.

The basic types of sacred beings remain relatively consistent despite their modification by period styles. Historical changes in style involved only more or less peripheral alterations. In East Asia the definition of a period style has far less validity as a guarantor of uniformity over an entire epoch than is frequently the case in Europe. Several styles may coexist during approximately the same period (22-26, 49, 55-58, 60, 70-73, 84, 87) and frequently even within the same group of figures or in the same painting. We are prone to transpose these from ontological into historical categories, and hence misunderstand them as period styles. This may result in errors of dating particular works or, in case of works which have been accurately dated, in puzzled statements among specialists about the "prematurely realistic" or "belated archaic" features of these works.

Realism in Buddhist art first and foremost symbolizes the ontological character of a sacred being. The higher the degree of a figure's metaphysical reality, the less realistic or naturalistic its image, because the formal features of the image make an ontological statement about the figure they depict. If a period tends generally to a more realistic treatment of forms, as was, for example, the case during the Kamakura period (29, 65, 78, 80, 88-90), it will also tend to allow the types of beings at the lower levels to play an avant-garde role for those at the higher levels. The reverse is true in case of a phase favoring an idealizing style. In these cases type-style may be superseded by period-style.

The picture presented by particular style phases is made even more complicated by the fact that in East Asia, as everywhere else, a leading art which evolved in one of the great centers may be found side by side with a provincial, "outmoded" art. In these situations, the spatial-geographic components of art interact with its temporal-historical dimensions, because provincial art usually follows older models. This is even more the case in the vast expanse of the Chinese empire than in the limited space of the Japanese archipelago, whose early and vigorously centralized political-social structure not only made the formation of a unified style possible, but favored it. In Japan all important stylistic phases, in a continuous tradition, have been shaped in the Yamato core region in and around Nara and Kyôto, and have radiated from there into the more distant centers. But in China, a number of local style traditions can be found coexisting from the very beginning, so that certainty about the place of origin of a particular work of art is just as significant for evaluating its place in art history as is its date. The one may often make it possible to determine the other, render its determination more reliable or force certain modifications in dating.

The inter-penetration of type style and period style occurred in East Asian art in realms far beyond the sphere of Buddhist art. For example, in both painting and calligraphy, a number of technically as well as artistically different styles have been cultivated side by side during the last 1500 years. These have included "linear" and "painterly" styles--both "static" and "dynamic". Both have frequently been used by the same artist, depending not only on the content, purpose, formal and functional context of individual works, but also on the artist's mood and the usage dictated by tradition.¹⁴³ It remained possible to select different styles, though never as arbitrarily as, for example, in the fashion of the historicism of our 19th century artists. This is because in East Asia all these styles have remained living elements of the tradition.

Such freedom of choice, such a polyphony of potential styles--which all remained available at the same time--offered a wealth of nuances between two opposite poles, especially in the more recent centuries. The result was a web of styles, frequently rather complicated, and thoroughly confusing to Western students, who are used to linear concepts of time and to mutually exclusive modes of thought. In the West, we at best barely recognize local variants of style, different historical lines of development, or the co-existence of the styles of several generations living at the same time (Pinder's "non-contemporaneity of contemporary phenomena").¹⁴⁴

Buddhist art, however, does not have such wide choices of style as does the secular art of East Asia. In Buddhist art, the type of figure largely determines the style, and all these type styles can only vary within the framework of a set of well-defined possibilities and without substantial mutual overlapping. However, such "subterranean" changes of period style do occur. They permit these images to retain the qualities of a living tradition while at the same time retaining the spiritual message regardless of the time or frequencies of such changes. All figure types focus on the sacred symbol of the Buddha. The Buddha symbol, in spite of certain concessions to contemporary tastes, is neither "archaic" nor "modern," but remains, according to Mahâyâna doctrine, "uncreated" and remote from all changes in form. All forms bear the mark of the period of their genesis, but these are canceled in the ontological vision of the timeless ground of all change symbolized by the Buddha in and of himself.

The Art of Zen Buddhism

Introduction

The basic principles of Zen Buddhism¹⁴⁵ were expressed long ago in the following terse formula:

A special transmission outside the scriptures;
No dependence on words and letters;
Direct pointing to the self of man;
Seeing into one's nature and the attainment of Buddhahood.
(Tr. by *D. T. Suzuki*)

These lines define the difference between Zen and other Buddhist schools: first of all, negatively, a disdain, generally speaking, for all dogmatism and metaphysical speculation and for all teaching traditions and faith in the letter of scriptures; second, positively, a direct insight into the nature of the world and one's own self. This was to be obtained without the mediation of sacred scriptures, interpretations, rites, magic cultic acts (as in esoteric Buddhism) and without the invocation of compassionate helpmates (like Amitábha). Rather, this insight was to be obtained exclusively through one's own efforts by following the path of meditation (*dhyāna*; *ch'an[na]*; *zen[na]*) and growing personal maturity, and was to be realized in the form of a direct, concrete experience. This experience, gained either suddenly or by a gradual process of spiritual growth, leads to the final goal of enlightenment (*satori*), to the achievement of Buddhahood, i.e., to an entirely unreflected insight which stirs one's entire personality to its greatest depths, liberating, enlightening and transforming it. Man realizes that his true essence is basically nothing else but the "Buddha-nature"; that all the disparate things of the world of phenomena, even the lowest among them, are basically not different from (though by no means identical with) the one and the same Absolute or "Void."

✓ *Satori* is, therefore, "pure experience,"¹⁴⁶ a most direct insight into the basically rather simple essence of things, a direct comprehension of things as they are. This essence cannot be expressed in words. It can only be hinted at, frequently in a form which scorns all logic and "reason," and is, by necessity, paradoxical. But it is precisely from these bonds of logical-discursive thought that man should free

himself by taking the liberating leap into the realm of the Totally Different which is, however, not something with the qualities of a "beyond" and basically not something "other" or special but, rather, is simple reality itself. This is what we encounter and what we are expected to view with penetrating yet open eyes which focus on the essence of things. It is repeated time and again that Zen instruction hides nothing and keeps nothing secret, that it contains no "mystic" elements. The essence of things is right before our eyes. We only have to learn how to perceive it in its elementary simplicity.

These views and practices have found their expression in innumerable statements and acts of the great Chinese and Japanese Zen masters down through the centuries, but not in well-thought-out sermons and dogmatic writings, firmly established opinions and theories, vigorous disputations and intellectual edifices reaching into transcendent realms. Rather, very simple everyday events, very ordinary things, entirely spontaneous utterances and acts in our world were believed to provide the impetus to open one's spiritual eye and make one aware of one's essential nature and the way to realize one's Buddha nature.¹⁴⁷ As a matter of fact, if one is unburdened and unbiased by preconceived notions and mental associations, everyday events are better suited than anything else to provide direct access to truth. The aim of the enlightened vision is not to view something entirely new but rather to take a new look at something familiar and always at hand.

Acolytes are prepared for this vision not by the study of Sūtras and commentaries or by dogmatic texts, nor are they prepared through systematic instruction or cult traditions. Instead, sudden impulses, frequently quite strange and apparently arbitrary, are given to them by profoundly experienced masters, intended to do nothing more than initiate their own independent process of enlightenment. Hence, the personal contact, the spark between master and disciple, gives the decisive impulse in bringing about the enlightening experience. From these contacts, we witness occasionally in Zen the evolution of something akin to a tradition. This is not a tradition of instruction in sacred scriptures, but rather (as expressed in the opening quote) that "special transmission" referred to by the Chinese term signifying an orally transmitted story, a biographical, anecdotal or legendary report, a transmission from person to person or communication in general, but also and primarily the "transmission by mind to mind," i.e., without the use of intermediary devices and frequently just in the form of a silent mutual understanding.

According to one story, which points to the very beginnings of Zen, Śākyamuni did not provide an answer to a very profound question from his disciples but merely lifted a flower in silence. Only his disciple Kāśyapa understood and indicated to the master his understanding by nothing more than a smile. This sort of "special transmission" is usually illustrated by such stories or occasionally also by apparently scurrilous or grotesque anecdotes about the meetings and conversations between old Zen patriarchs and their disciples, through which the latter, still trapped in darkness and confusion, have been led to a clear understanding, a liberating insight. These stories, sayings, enigmatic questions and surprising and frequently paradoxical answers and all-inclusive non-answers have come to serve many generations of Zen disciples. They are known as *kung-an* (*kô-an*; "Meditation Problems"); and their apparently nonsensical and contradictory nature stimulated

those searching minds, which had already been prepared for the final leap, allowing them to suddenly solve all the questions puzzling them.

Once a monk had seen through the world and its illusions (including the illusion of all religious teachings, no matter how beautiful and profound), he would be beyond all determinations and contradictions, including that of life and death. "On the edge between life and death you possess the great freedom." In the final analysis, it was again to simple, concrete reality that his attention was redirected, but with a new vision resulting from a spiritual transformation which was more intensive and only now truly valid. "A master said: Before one studies Zen, mountains are mountains and rivers are rivers. But when one has gained insight into the truth of Zen through instruction received from a master, then mountains are no longer mountains and rivers no longer rivers. But still later, once one has truly reached the realm of quietude, then mountains are again mountains and rivers again rivers."¹⁴⁸ In its tremendous elemental power, its totally personal, self-realized directness and independence of enlightenment, and in the cool, ascetic simplicity of its intellectual style, Zen is very close to the primordial forms of Buddhism that preceded the formation of the many-faceted scholastic-metaphysical system and of those traditions of doctrines and cults and mythologizations which are characteristic of Mahâyâna. However, in its philosophical view, which is based on the idea of the non-duality of samsâra and nirvâna, of the "void" and all the consequences linked to these ideas, Zen is genuinely a part of the Mahâyâna tradition.

Zen is nevertheless distinguished clearly and unmistakably from all the other schools within this comprehensive "vehicle" which offers room for the most varied views. It should not, therefore, come as a surprise that Zen art, too, is entirely different. Hence we are not only justified but even obligated to view Zen art as a phenomenon in its own right. Even though it reached its full maturity at a relatively late time, during the Sung and Kamakura/Muromachi periods, Zen art was by no means merely the lineal successor to "classic" Buddhist art. Rather, Zen art, full of vigor and new creative genius and filled with life as was Zen itself, gradually assumed a leading role, while the older art gradually lost its vigor and finally settled at the level of a merely epigonic art.

Nature and Function of Zen Works of Art

It would be possible to demonstrate the special character of Zen art merely by presenting it as the exact opposite of classic sacred Buddhist art as long as we remain conscious of the fact that both variants of Buddhist art, all the differences between their individual paths notwithstanding, arise from a common ground and pursue the same religious goal. Their opposition is purely dialectic and is ultimately cancelled, just as all contradictions and dualisms are cancelled in Buddhist thought. The path taken and the means employed by Zen art are, however, of an entirely new kind because they arise from a religious "method" different in principle and, consequently, also from an equally different view of art.

Above all, there prevails within Zen a profound skepticism about any possibility of arriving at a pictorial representation of transcendence and about any attempt to capture with human means the Ultimate in a form "approaching us from the other side" and to express it in its very own language. Zen is skeptical about all affirmative statements in general, and about the sensual power of religious art and

its beauty of form, color, and particular ornaments. It is also skeptical about all richly developed cult forms which have been intensified and beautified through art. Even symbolic signs are seen as hiding ultimate reality rather than revealing it, and as lacking directness. Zen art takes as its point of departure the "now," the given "facts" and ordinary things; it makes them transparent and shows its essential non-duality with the Absolute.

Zen art seeks to capture ultimate reality with the same passion as earlier Buddhist art. Zen, too, has as its liberating goal the attainment of "Buddhahood." Works of art proclaim this goal in their particular ways, but in Zen this happens in an intuitive vision which penetrates to the heart of a given reality, be it object, man, or landscape, and realizes essential non-difference of all these things from the Buddha-nature. Such vision leads therefore to liberation, to enlightenment. A new kind of symbol comes into being which is very close to that found in Goethe's view: The simple phenomenon as such reveals ultimate meaning, and, if viewed properly, "the particular contains also the general within itself." Thus the simple phenomenon becomes a "symbolic instance" whose artistic representation reveals in the particular object something general, without, however, "thinking of the general or without pointing to it." Yet "in the image the idea remains always infinitely effective and unattainable and would remain unexpressible even if expressed" in any available language. Finally, every individual object in our world is a symbol because "it is the thing itself without being the thing--an open secret."¹⁴⁹

The symbol in classic Buddhist art is, however, not an overt but a hidden, coded secret. It should, in Goethe's terminology, rather be called an allegory, because it presupposes a knowledge of the special meaning imposed on the sign by tradition. It is not intelligible by and in itself. By contrast, in Zen art we are not dealing with symbols "of" something which are determined in detail and are exactly formulated.¹⁵⁰ Rather, every picture, regardless of its content and form, is as such a symbol for the totality of being and for the indivisible realization of truth. However, what most profoundly distinguishes Zen art from Goethe's notion is its radical-ascetic inner tendency toward the non-image; its orientation toward an ultimate meaning which can no longer be captured and shown in any individual phenomenon or "image." The ultimate consequence of this art is the empty, white paper which is occasionally displayed in Japanese tea rooms. Here the image of the phenomenon and the image as phenomenon are ultimately abandoned.

In this instance a picture acquires an entirely different kind of reality. It becomes something very tentative, something basically lacking in essence and losing all "objective" qualities in the sense of possessing a numinous presence, cultic efficacy or magic substance. Zen should generally be understood as a rejection of all "magic" in religious life as well as in cult and art, and, likewise, as a form of demythologization. A work of art is no longer a "yantra." It is no longer a cult object representing the numinous in the form of a mythic personality or even "containing" it and exerting magic efficacy by virtue of this fact. It ceases to be a functional means, but instead serves as a stimulant for personal spiritual training and inner concentration, or it is a document of a spiritual tradition or testimony of a vision and insight that has been achieved. A certain Zen monk may, therefore, be said to have acted entirely within the Zen spirit when he smashed a Buddha statue and burnt it to warm himself.

Art also loses most of its official character; it becomes personal and intimate. The subjective side of religious art is thus strengthened. The older Buddhist art, particularly that of esoteric Buddhism, was predominantly meant to be "objective," but the rise of Amitābha art, which was essentially inspired by the experience of a believing soul, had caused a considerable increase of the "subjective" element even though to different degrees. The older schools of the Amitābha faith in China and Japan still valued prayers to all kinds of savior figures. Rites, offerings, and meditation were aided by images. The Jōdo-Shin sect which emerged in Japan from these older schools rejected all these paraphernalia and concentrated entirely on the faithful surrender out of the innermost depth of the soul to the savior Buddha alone. This school, therefore, no longer provided a fertile soil for a creative sacred art of its own but merely altered the traditional art forms to accommodate its own beliefs.

This process is completed by Zen. But at the same time Zen moves in the reverse direction. Subjective-personal attitudes and achievements become decisive and are, therefore, allowed to unfold freely because the objective-ontological process, the enlightened transformation, is believed to take place beyond all generally binding forms. But from the original spiritual power of this movement there also arise entirely new possibilities of visualization and form-creation. These, in turn, make possible the creation of a distinct and great art in its own right, primarily because the artists of this school turned passionately to the existing world and derived from it infinitely varied and original inspirations. Something objective, ontological--the Buddha-nature of all things--is also implied by Zen pictures, but it is not presented in objectively valid formulas, symbols, or hypostasized personifications of universal validity. It is only indicated with the help of simple, yet revealing hints and in entirely personal forms of expression, just as the achievement of enlightenment takes place within the monk in an entirely individual, unregimented, and even unpredictable manner.

The Zen artist is no longer bound to a certain number of given tasks and themes, except in the production of the furnishing of Zen temple interiors which largely continued the older tradition of workshops. He is no longer the highly skilled specialist for iconographically complicated images which had to be created according to strict patterns and canonical rules by craftsmen aiming for artistic perfection. Rather, he is a monk who had himself undergone Zen training and who expresses his world and existential views on the basis of his very own religious experience in an entirely personal manner and in sovereign freedom. He is no longer a professional artist, firmly bound to artistic traditions and social hierarchies and working for particular patrons. Rather, he is a dilettante or amateur in the fullest original meaning of these terms, particularly when he was a genius. A good number of these monk-artists may be called geniuses, as for example, Mu-hsi (Mu-ch'i, ca. 1210-1275) in China or Sesshū (1420-1506) in Japan.¹⁵¹ The thoroughly individual, creative person who consciously pursues his own way which he has found in his own innermost depths was, therefore, able to unfold much more freely and vigorously in Zen art than in the classic sacred art, which left much less leeway for the individual artist as an ingenious individual. Religious enlightenment, propelled by personal inspiration, sought out tangible equivalents and artistically adequate expressions which might or perhaps even should be quite new and unconventional.

In this context, Buddhist art may be said to have become, perhaps for the first time, "expression," though not, or at least not predominantly, in the sense of expressing the experiences, moods and character of a creative individual, but rather in the sense of an ontological insight shaped by an unmistakably individual personality and the experiences of this individual at his own and most original level. This personal statement may be made with the help of the most varied subject matter and is not restricted by the framework of an existing, objectively fixed, dogmatically determined and generally valid iconography.

The subject matter itself therefore became relatively less important, though by no means irrelevant. In principle, everything might become a worthy object for this art just as any particular everyday event could provide the stimulus for the ultimate enlightenment of a Zen monk. Even though there does exist a Zen iconography, it is, as we will show, basically different from that of classic Buddhist art. More importantly, none of the monk artists was obligated to adhere to its themes or to any of its rules in their creative work. If he chose to do so, this happened within the stream of that "special transmission" and not because it was held that only a certain manner of representation would guarantee ontological identity between picture and intended object and consequently the former's magical spiritual efficacy.

This relativization of objects went hand in hand with relativization of forms. Formal structure, observance of canonical principles or arrangements, supra-personal perfection and supra-empirical beauty no longer count, because all direct personal experience of the Absolute, if measured against the comprehensive, supra-personal, even "scholastic" systems, is to a certain degree alienated from or indifferent to form. In its artistic expression, this personal experience defies all explicit statements or representations, whether in words, symbols, or clearly and bindingly defined figures. It creates a new kind of language and a new form for itself. But this form is profoundly different; it employs other means and finds its highest form of expression in silence.

If a religious art culminates in silence, if it is skeptical of all fixed languages of form, if its works no longer possess any magic-cultic functions, then it has no longer anything to do with *pûjâ* (see p. 192) and, in its inner meaning as well as its external manifestations, is also removed from the *shôgon* concept. Zen contrasts the cultic splendor of *shôgon* with an ascetic sobriety and a simple, austere matter-of-factness which takes great pains to avoid blocking the Ultimate-Essential and access to it by displays of ritual elaborations and of the artistic images serving them. To offer expensive sacrifices and splendid works of art is just as unessential to the Zen monk as is any cultic act or faith in the saving powers of some other being. Even though Zen includes some cult practices and even cult pictures and implements, these objects are considered more as concessions (*hoben*) or, at best, a useful frame (setting) for a spiritual life whose true center is far beyond all such devices.

It is characteristic of Zen art that its creative potential, its most distinctive achievements are not to be found in this field. As a matter of fact, even Zen pictures used in ritual are frequently not sanctified and lofty in subject, but rather intimate-personal in character. Occasionally they even resort to gross exaggerations in order to express unmistakably the particular Zen view about sacred figures. We

should, therefore, not accuse Zen of having anti-ritual and iconoclastic tendencies. Instead it has left the ritual sphere much too far behind to assume a rigid negative stance toward it. Dogma, cult and pictures are not needed but they are also not rejected because, though irrelevant with respect to what really matters, they may be tolerated as well as ignored. Rejection of any one-sided position, much less its polemical and intolerant defense, is the only attitude truly appropriate to the spirit of Zen.

Works of art retain only three functions in the world of Zen. They serve, first, to preserve the memory of great founders and saints and to make visible the chain of the Zen tradition, of its transmission from master to disciple in the figures of the bearers of this tradition. Secondly, these pictures provide model personalities and so have a stimulating effect on their viewers. Zen pictures have been called "pictures of encouragement."¹⁵² Finally, and most importantly, these works of art, with all their variations and rather freely chosen subject matter beyond all particular purposes, may express the world view of Zen through narrative-anecdotal scenes from the life and history of the Zen sects, through depicting venerable ideal figures, through symbolic and parable-like pictures, or by projecting a profound view of nature and even of things used in everyday life.

As part of this vision and identification with the intended object, an experience of mystic unity takes place which is, however, different from that centered in the traditional cult images. What matters is not the presence of numinous persons or symbolic objects or the magical identity between the image and its subject. Instead, the picture becomes a sign that satori has taken place in its creator, that the non-duality of samsāra and nirvāna has been realized and that the barriers between object and subject--the viewing as well as the creating subject--have disappeared. Identity is realized no longer as a result of the intermediary function of the image and by means of its help, but totally independently from it. The image only indicates what has taken place in the mind of its author. It may perhaps point others in the right direction and impel them toward an insight of their own. Any picture will, therefore, have a more intensive expressive power the deeper the spiritual insight of its artist.

Architecture and Gardens

All the changes discussed so far occurred primarily in the field of painting which became more and more the leading Zen art form. A peculiarly Zen sculpture as such does not exist, since the images still needed for the traditional cult followed essentially the time-honored paths. It is perhaps worth mentioning that the figure type of the Arhat, of the Zen patriarch Bodhidharma and related figures, including also that of Zen abbots, was particularly popular and was the only figure type which was given truly significant and not merely conventional-epigonic form in sculpture. This happened to a still greater degree in painting. Cult implements could not undergo further creative development, given the peripheral role rituals played in Zen.

Next to painting, only architecture and the art of gardens were predominantly influenced by the spirit of Zen but not in every instance. To be sure, there are vast temple complexes (2*) displaying strict patterns of order which at first glance appear to contradict Zen and its skepticism as compared with all traditional cults.

But they owe their existence either to the fact that the ancient Chinese ground plan proved to be quite persistent or that these were older temples which were only later (in China since the tenth century) taken over by Zen monks. Moreover, many original Zen temples differ in several points and in a very characteristic fashion from other precinct plans, even in cases where they followed the general pattern.¹⁵³ Following the directions given by the Chinese Zen patriarch Huai-hai (died 814), the "Buddha (image) Hall" (fu-tien, butsu-den) was dropped in favor of the "Dharma Hall" (fa-t'ang, hat-tô) or at least given less prominence. The large Meditation Hall (ch'an-t'ang, zen-dô), which had become the real center of religious life of the monastery was either given the choice location at the end of the central axis north of (i.e., "above") the Dharma Hall or came to occupy a well-defined special precinct of its own. (The interior of these halls has already been described on p. 49 ff.).

It was quite in line with primeval Buddhist ideas that these two buildings, the Meditation Hall and the Dharma Hall, should be the heart of the Zen monasteries. In the former, the monks perform their difficult yet vital mental tasks and in the latter, they encounter the master and the word of the Buddha. Ritual performances are less significant than these activities but do not disappear entirely. The same is true of Buddha images and their halls. To venerate the Buddha is both the duty and desire of Zen monks. Moreover, many Zen monasteries never were and are still not merely monastic institutions for meditation and teaching but are also public religious institutions with communities of believers attached to them. Even today many families in Japan still identify themselves as belonging to the Zen sect as their traditional "denomination." These quasi-official buildings of the Zen temple follow traditional architecture in all their basic features. Only those students pursuing more specialized studies, therefore, will have to concern themselves with particular features of these buildings. The individual structural forms of these buildings (bracketing [19*] etc.) were decisively influenced by the style of the Sung period which was adopted in the Japanese buildings of the Kamakura/Muromachi periods and has been preserved until today. But in spite of the highly decorative complexity of this style, and in spite of its frequently lavish architectural design, the atmosphere in Buddhist temples that are purely Zen is much cooler, austere, and ascetic than in other sanctuaries.

Furthermore, it is characteristic for many Zen precincts that the nuclear group of buildings aligned along the central axis is frequently surrounded with numerous smaller or even minute precincts, each equipped with a chapel and living quarters for abbots, guests, monks, but also for secular personalities who may retire permanently to a Zen monastery during old age or for limited shorter periods of time as spiritual retreats. Each of these dwellings has attached to itself gardens of various sizes. The most important Zen monasteries in Japan (for example, the Daitokuji in Kyôto) provide outstanding examples of this kind of temple architecture.

These residential and meditation precincts may be traced back to the ancient Indian tradition of tightly clustered grottoes and cottages occupied by individual monks and associated with a central assembly and teaching hall. In buildings and gardens of this type, which are parts of the "mother monastery" in organizational and economic matters but otherwise lead a quiet existence of their own behind walls or hedges, the Zen spirit has expressed itself in a particularly pure form. They are

among the most important and most impressive creations of Buddhist art which we encounter today. They have provided one of the most important places for the cultivation of the Japanese tea ceremony and some still do so today. The tea room (chashitsu, chaseki), created exclusively for the tea ceremony, represents the most perfect architectural realization of Zen. Such buildings no longer have an iconology. However, even though they no longer "depict" a higher "world," they still possess a metaphysical-religious meaning, but one which can no longer be expressed in conceptual terms. In their quietude and their silence, Emptiness reveals itself directly.

The living quarters of Zen priests are no longer primitive hermitages. Rather, they not only resemble the dignified but simple and natural living quarters of the aristocracy, but also incorporate some features of the Japanese farm house. Ideally, the latter displays a certain rustic, though aesthetically refined, simplicity in material and design. Since in China Zen Buddhism was unable to become as influential as Confucianism and Taoism, the Chinese Zen residential buildings and gardens were not as uniquely refined in spiritual and aesthetic terms as they were in Japan.

In Japan, residential architecture achieved its fullest maturity in the Zen monasteries during the 15th and 16th centuries when it was sustained by the strict and austere Zen spirit, including that permeating the tea rooms. But in the final analysis it had evolved from the residences of the nobility of the Fujiwara period. Considerably simplified and modified by Zen, this residential architecture has remained the model for the later type of middle-class residence right down to the present. Essential features of the Zen spirit have survived in these residences and have continued to shape the mood of the Japanese and their lives.¹⁵⁴

Japanese houses are particularly distinguished by the straight-lined simplicity of their post-and-beam structure, with a functional design directly revealed by the emphasis given to the almost ascetically empty wall and door surfaces, by the natural simplicity and the muted colors of wood, floor mats and wall covering. The room is religiously as well as aesthetically focused on the wall niche (tokonoma), containing a picture scroll and flower arrangement. Originally this served as the sanctuary of the house, as the sacred space for holding ancestral and Buddha pictures. The cool and yet intimate mood of such rooms is, therefore, very conducive to quiet spiritual absorption. Finally, such rooms are also in intimate communication with nature. This communication is achieved by means of a smooth transition from inner to outer space made possible through movable sliding doors over the entire width of the house. This link with nature is not at all in conflict with the intimacy of the inner space but rather tends to intensify it. But the self-contained character of these rooms never entails seclusion. Even withdrawn and meditating individuals leading a life of solitude will always feel the presence of the totality of the world.

The experience of nature, the world, of the essence of things in their fullness as well as in their "emptiness" is accomplished most intensively through the gardens. These possess a quasi-metaphysical character and are just as much Zen works of art as are ink paintings, and just as much products and signs of insights obtained through meditation since they provide impetus and help to obtain such insights. The Zen gardens and the secular gardens of the more recent middle- and upper-class

residences in Japan inspired by the Zen spirit put their main emphasis on a firm, vigorous structure of carefully arranged rocks and stones in which the essence of the world, i.e., its unchangeable quality in the midst of all changes, is symbolized in its purest form. Second to be emphasized are sober, quiet evergreen trees and shrubs, moss and other plants. Finally, there is the water of small ponds, streams and water falls, frequently represented only by pure white sand surfaces, since only the symbolic and suggestive value of water is regarded as essential.

Bright lawns and colorful flower beds are alien to these gardens. They do include blossoming trees and shrubs which, each in their own season, enliven the sobriety of the gardens with their grace and fleeting colors. Because of these very qualities they touch the heart more deeply. The Zen garden is a symbolic landscape, akin to an ink painting, which expresses its meaning directly. Its structure is most strict, yet never schematic; its appearance suggests effortlessness and spontaneity. Zen gardens are places for meditative contemplation and not for relaxation, play or social activities. For all their simplicity, the Zen gardens exude a rich abundance of life and inner strength. They compel the viewer to immerse himself in them and to open himself to their quiet yet powerful, sometimes almost melancholic language. They lead him to the heart of things, to the essence of the world, and to the emptiness beyond all dualism.

The Zen garden which is most profoundly Zen in spirit is that of the Ryōanji monastery in Kyōto. It consists only of a few groups of stones with a little moss, scattered loosely, yet most deliberately, over a wide, empty, rectangular field of white sand, and resembles a black and white ink painting translated into the language of nature. It is an impressively grandiose work "abstracting" natural-phenomenal reality, filled with the spaceless and timeless emptiness of absolute being and yet conveying in entirely simple terms the presence of things, so that nothing more can or should be said about it than that there are stones, moss, and sand.

Related to the art of gardens are the arts of flower arrangement (ikebana), residential architecture, and the tea ceremony with all its associated ceramic, bamboo, metal, and lacquer utensils. These constitute a highly important field within East Asian craftsmanship, and reveal the far-flung and profound influence of the Zen spirit. But the Zen spirit has also influenced many other forms of Japanese aesthetic expression and artistic creation: the lyricism of the seventeen-syllable short poem (haiku), for example, or certain physical-spiritual, meditative exercises like sword fencing and archery.

The claim is well justified that the Zen spirit and Zen mood have permeated and formed Japanese culture, particularly in its aesthetic aspects, to a degree which is paralleled by few other spiritual forces. Everywhere the ideals of purity, simplicity, quietude, maturity are given the highest rank, both as attitudes whence creative endeavor and personal activities arise, and as psychological factors which have had extraordinary power in shaping the Japanese personality. A deep feeling for nature and things is revealed everywhere in artistic creations and artistically performed physical actions which have been influenced by Zen.

Most of all in the tea ceremony, there is an insight into "things," into the essence of the world and its emptiness, which is expressed in all its simplicity, directness and quietude. The Zen spirit embodies itself in perfect purity, in utensils

which seem to be merely functional-practical, perhaps even entirely unassuming or, in their coarseness, even "un-beautiful," such as a sturdy iron water kettle, or a coarse earthen tea cup (168, 169). Such things are, therefore, just as much Buddhist works of art as are the buildings and pictures of Zen monks. The values aimed at in the tea ceremony, i.e., functionality, purity, simplicity, sobriety, austerity, strictness and nobility of form, are joined with the sobriety of remoteness from the world, and with that quiet melancholy derived from the fleeting nature of things. These are at once highly aesthetic, moral and religious values. Zen's integration of various life manifestations through its power to intuit the nature of the world and existence was and is one of its most characteristic and greatest cultural achievements.¹⁵⁵

Painting: Iconography

The iconography characteristic of Zen flows with inner necessity from Zen's ideas about the role of art and the subject matter which art is supposed to depict and which is worthy of depiction.¹⁵⁶ We disregard the existence of traditional and, therefore, mostly quite conventional cult images and other picture types which Zen temples retain in their cult halls. In importance and stature, these pictures rank far below those creations in which the Zen spirit has found its highest visual expression and which are decidedly different from those in the world of traditional Buddhist painting.

To begin with, the majority of picture types is different. In contrast to the earlier dominant type of the sacred-cultic wall paintings and the larger, dignified temple scrolls, we now find intimate modest-sized pictures as the most prominent type. Small or medium-sized kakemonos are most common, as are album leaf paintings, emakimonos (predominantly landscape paintings), and the movable doors and wall screens found in monastic residential quarters. Often the externally most unassuming pictures are most important, particularly those used in the Japanese tea cult as the so-called tea pictures (*cha-gake*). Though by no means without exception, these frequently meet the Zen ideals of profound simplicity and depth.

Whenever Zen paintings depict sacred figures, these figures have an entirely different meaning and appearance from those of classic Buddhist art. As in early Buddhism, the Buddha, though understood as the embodiment of the Absolute and depicted as dwelling in ultimate remoteness, rising majestically above all human or earthly phenomena, becomes a striving human being, who achieves enlightenment through difficult struggles and is depicted in a mundane and psychologically convincing manner. To take an important example from Chinese Sung paintings which, fortunately, are preserved in great numbers in Japanese collections: Liang K'ai (early 13th century) has created one of the most moving depictions of religious man advancing from the abyss of desperation to liberating insight in his famous ink painting of "Śākyamuni Returning From the Mountains" (139,141).¹⁵⁷ The Buddha is now again primarily Śākyamuni, the earthly-historical founder of the religion, the great model and archetype of the monk who achieves salvation through his own efforts to gain enlightenment by meditation. Metaphysical-scholastic Buddhism had demoted Śākyamuni to a mere manifestation on a relatively low level (*nirmāna-kāya*) of the real, true, absolute Buddha (*dharmakāya*). It is perhaps no accident that the most magnificent surviving cult image of Śākyamuni, with two Bodhisattva figures at its side and perhaps based on an original by the Tang painter genius Wu

Tao-tse (97) is in the possession of a Zen temple. There was still room for him, the founder, the master, the model in Zen cults because he was the source of Zen's "special transmission."

The other Buddhas--Vairocana, Amitâbha, etc.--either appear not at all in the world of Zen or at best as untypical remnants of older cult traditions. Those Bodhisattvas who are still depicted decline in numbers and in status and appear in a lyrical, humanized vision. A most perfect example is in a triptych depicting the white-robed Avalokiteśvara (Kuanyin), crane and monkey mother by the Chinese Zen monk Mu Hsi (early 13th cent.--ca. 1270; 140, 142). Here, as elsewhere in Zen art, the sacred figures are embedded into nature in an entirely new manner, so that they appear as individual entities growing organically out of nature. Nature is no longer mere background, stage prop or symbolic addition but, rather, is the essential element of the picture and an equal and on occasion even more intense basis for the interpretation of true reality than the sacred figures themselves. Most cultic-iconographic-symbolic elements have been stripped from these figures. Their being is reduced to its real core and made visible from a vantage point profoundly immersed in the totality of the world.

It does not matter if the Buddha or Bodhisattva Essence takes the form of sacred persons or creations of nature. The sacred figures are no longer hypostases of an Absolute in the old sense. Rather, they are real or imagined signs for true reality, just as are animals, plants, stones or landscapes. In Zen paintings Bodhisattvas sometimes look like ascetics and rather ragged hermits stripped of all supra-earthly splendor, i.e., of the element of *shôgon*. They come close to the Taoist *hsien* (*J. sen*) types, with their often rather grotesque supra-human and supra-mundane qualities. To regard this change as a secularization would be mistaken. We are now dealing with a logical consequence of the teaching of the non-duality of *samsâra* and *nirvâna* and of the conviction that the essence of things is also, and particularly, revealed in the unassuming and nonspectacular. Here--and this is a remarkable event--the difference or even contrast between sacred and secular pictures disappears, but this does not mean that the sacred is secularized. Rather, even the apparently most secular pictures acquire religious-metaphysical meaning.

This new view of the sacred person also meant that Zen art no longer had any room for the other categories of supra-human beings who had been part of the older Buddhist pantheon--the *Vidyârâjas*, *Devas*, etc. Zen art did, however, retain an interest in yet other figures who were regarded as prototypes of the Zen disciple: Arhats (*Lohan*, *Rakan*) who may be said to have become the favorite figures of Zen art (91-93, 127-129). These embody the aspirations of totally liberated and spiritually advanced human beings to leave the here and now of the *samsâra* world and enter directly into the supra-mundane realm of *nirvâna*. The much older tradition of Arhat pictures not only continued, it may even be said to have reached its apex in Zen art.

Taoist elements are ubiquitous in Zen, particularly in its nature mysticism. In iconography, too, there frequently appears to be little difference between a Taoist *hsien* and an Arhat. While the one strives for union with the Tao, the other strives for *satori*, the ultimate insight into Emptiness. Zen art has, therefore, also included Lao-tzu, the "patriarch" of Taoism, among its venerated figures and has

depicted him--as in the famous ink painting by Mu-hsi--as an Arhat-like monk type, as an authentic Zen saint of grandiose ugliness.

Because their wisdom exceeds all normal standards, arising as it does from the six supra-sensual capacities (pâramitâs) leading to perfect wisdom, Arhats also display miraculous spiritual powers. These have made them objects of veneration as outstanding examples of the monkish life and as protectors of the Buddhist teachings who had been commissioned by Śâkyamuni himself. Around each of these figures arose legends or myths (129). Though Zen Buddhism was not the first to give rise to all this, Zen adopted these traditions and--as strange as this may sound at first--cultivated an intense Arhat cult, because Arhats were particularly important to it. This cult, however, no longer served the function of securing magic effects and identification with a worshipped figure but merely that of venerating spiritual predecessors and patrons. Finally, and perhaps more in the proper spirit of Zen, Arhat pictures may also have served as aids in meditation and as models for emulation.

All this explains the important role which Arhat figures play in Zen art, both in painting and in sculpture. Sculptors had to furnish images for Arhat halls, which frequently housed as many as 500 of these figures. Beginning with the older tradition of portraits of the sixteen Arhats (preserved only in copies) by Kuan-hsiu (832-912) and by Li Lung-mien (died 1106), a number of works, some quite important, can be traced through the following five to six centuries.¹⁵⁸ Particularly important in Japan is the picture of 500 Rakan by Minchô (1352-1431). The manner of their presentation, as that for Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, has nothing hieratic, cultic-magic or representative about it, but rather proceeds directly to the personal spiritual essence of the Arhats to produce profoundly penetrating images of the internally liberating, spiritually advanced *homo religiosus*, frequently exaggerated into a numinous-grotesque figure.¹⁵⁹

While the Arhats, so much venerated in Zen, were among the older or even oldest figures in Buddhism, new figures which had previously been unknown also enter Zen iconography. The most important of these was Bodhidharma (abbr. Dharma, Chin. *Tamo*, J. *Daruma*), the founder of Chinese Ch'an (=Zen),¹⁶⁰ who came to China from India, most likely around 500 A.D. Elevated to a supra-human level by later legendary accounts, he was the great first patriarch of the line of Chinese and Japanese Zen patriarchs that continues until today. He, too, is practically an Arhat and appears in pictures (143), mostly vigorous black-and-white ink paintings, as a simply dressed, undecorated monk with a powerful, almost violent look in his oversized eyes. However, this is not merely an arbitrary "expression" but is based on a legend which in its extreme character is typical of Zen. Angry over the fact that he had once fallen asleep during meditation, the patriarch cut off his eye lids and threw them to the ground. From them--and here the legend takes a milder turn--the first tea plant sprouted. (Tea originally served the monks as a stimulant during their day-and-night-long meditations, and tea drinking in general, and the tea ceremony in particular, originated in Zen monasteries.)

Bodhidharma is also depicted in some legendary scenes from his life: As he crosses the Yangtze River on a reed, as he sits for nine years in meditation before a wall until his legs atrophied,¹⁶¹ and in a scene with a monk, who wanted to become his disciple but had remained unnoticed for a long time, and who finally chopped off

his arm as a sign of his determination and presented it to the master. These stories in turn confirm the grim seriousness of the Zen spirit. Correspondingly forceful is the power of brush and ink with which the great painters--Sesshū, for example--have depicted such figures and scenes on the basis of their own Zen experience.

But Zen has also its scurrilous and humorous side. It can reveal, using a different manner, the inner superiority of the enlightened man, of those who are removed from the errors of the world, and of those who have matured enough to transcend the dignified seriousness of a would-be higher, infallible wisdom. Those historical, semi-historical or legendary figures, in particular, who embody true wisdom while appearing as odd, half-crazed or quietly joyous beggar monks, seemingly simple in spirit, have enjoyed the special attention of Zen painters. There are many pictures of Han-shan and Shih-te (*J. Kanzan* and *Jittoku*), for example. These roaming fellows, filled with an irrepressible gaiety (145), were historical personages. Han-shan lived near a Zen monastery during the seventh century as a hermit and poet, and Shih-te, a foundling, was employed in the kitchen of this monastery. They were good friends and conversed about questions of poetry and religion in a gay, playful manner unintelligible to others. Though "perfect fools in Buddha,"¹⁶² they were superior in every important aspect to any men of great book learning. They were, therefore, considered to be incarnations of Mañjuśrī and Samantabhadra, the Bodhisattvas of highest wisdom. Han-shan is usually depicted holding a blank sheet of paper and a brush, because he could read the unwritten book of existence and so needed no text, and Shih-te with a kitchen broom with which he sweeps away the dust of doubt and worldly cares which are obstacles to true enlightenment. Some of the greatest artists have shown masterful skill in their handling of these two truly authentic Zen figures.

Related to these, and even more popular, is Pu-t'ai (*J. Hotei*; 144) who was also a historical Chinese mendicant monk (ca. 900), "who roamed the country free from want and with a gay spirit, and who was regarded by his contemporaries as an incarnation of the future Buddha Maitreya. In his pot-bellied smiling figure, Zen art depicts the joyfulness of the free spirit who laughs in the face of the busy seriousness of life. In Japan this jolly priest with his full shoulder bag who loves children later became one of the Seven Benevolent Genii."¹⁶³

With such images a new spiritual dimension was added to the world of Buddhist art. This only became possible because Zen asserted radical independence from all ties and rules and gained that inner freedom which became so characteristic for its world view, life style and artistic creativity. Pictures like those of Pu-t'ai or Han-shan and Shih-te no longer have the character and function of cult images, while those of Arhats or of Bodhidharma, not to mention those of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, could still remain the focus of rituals, even though in Zen they had long outgrown their cultic significance.

The same holds true for portraits (132 f.). As in classic painting, portraits were vehicles of traditional values, were links in the chain of personalities regarded as patriarchs and may also have had a cultic function in the veneration of these patriarchs as, for example, on memorial days.¹⁶⁴ But the picture of a Zen master (*chinsō*) primarily serves another function. Such a picture was given to a disciple by the master depicted, usually with a personal dedication written on the picture, as soon as the disciple had matured to full enlightenment. The disciple would hang the

picture in his room to win spiritual strength from the encouraging presence of his master. In such cases the portrait is, therefore, a certification of success in having achieved a state of maturity, a kind of spiritual certificate or even diploma. It was a visible expression of the master-disciple relationship and thus of that "special transmission" which is of such vital importance in Zen, because it leads by way of an existential, frequently silent encounter to a spiritual breakthrough and ultimate enlightenment.

Since some of the painters of these portraits were themselves disciples of the master depicted, these works originated from the spirit of an intimate circle of perfectly congenial minds. Perhaps for this very reason, they may be counted among the most important images of religious men to come out of the East which has given us so many other images of *homo religiosus*.

Those encounters between master and disciple, during which the decisive spark was frequently transmitted, became the subject of a genre indigenous to Zen art, the *kung-an* (*kô-an*) or *men-ta* (*mon-dô*) picture, in Japan commonly called *zenki-zu*. A *kung-an* or *men-ta* is a statement by a Zen master, usually entirely paradoxical and in the form of a "logically" meaningless question akin to that story about the Buddha nature of the small dog mentioned earlier (p. 10). The aim is to jolt the mind of the struggling disciple and help it break through the entrapment by normal discursive thought and categories. The answers, which usually are "non-answers," may also consist of surprising actions or even curses or beatings or "a kind of lion roar, a suddenly shouted 'ka' or 'katsu' (Chin. *ho*) which, like a shout from the Buddha sphere, is designed to awaken the slumbering mind."¹⁶⁵

The Zen tradition consists in large parts of collections of such statements, dialogues and "problem-anecdotes" (Gundert) which have served for centuries as problems for meditation. Such apparently paradoxical Zen insights have also found their way into poems. No wonder that these themes, because of their liveliness and the great spiritual force of the participating personalities, have also greatly stimulated the imagination of painters, particularly since Zen art does not wish to provide symbolic representations of a metaphysical world, but instead derives its actual powers directly from Zen life and Zen experience and from the atmosphere of a personal religious encounter.

The pictures referred to here depict such encounters and dialogues by integrating the persons involved, usually only the master and his disciple, into natural surroundings and by presenting the scene with dramatic effect.¹⁶⁶ A subgenre of these pictures shows everyday situations in which the monk achieves enlightenment, frequently after prolonged and apparently futile efforts which have, however, gradually prepared the ground for it. The final impetus is frequently given by an accidental jolt, which under normal circumstances would have remained without importance as, for example, in an instance when silence is broken by a pebble hurled against a hollow bamboo stem as a monk sweeps the path to his cottage. He is fully absorbed in his innocent everyday work and, therefore, entirely relaxed, open, and ready for the unexpected, almost no longer hoped for, sudden emergence of the fruit of enlightenment from his slowly and quietly maturing innermost unconscious being (painting by Kanô Motonobu: 147).

From among this group of Zen Buddhist "event pictures" (*zenki-zu*) we may single out those which depict certain symbolic actions or scenes of basic "historical" significance, such as the burning of the Buddha statue by Tan-hsia (see p. 224), Hui-neng destroying the now superfluous Sûtra scroll (146), or the meeting and conversation between Bodhidharma and Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty that must have been quite confusing to the latter.¹⁶⁷ In these pictures, which remain mostly unintelligible without commentary, the "special transmission," with all its personal directness growing out of actual life situations and religious communication, has found its realization. They are, therefore, counterparts to the narrative pictures of classical Buddhist art, which deal primarily with the official, generally known Buddha legend and related topics in their canonical versions, and had cultic character because of their use in rituals.

Many of these "historical" pictures also have a high paradigmatic value, particularly the parable pictures. There is a famous Japanese ink painting showing a man trying to catch a slippery fish with a gourd. Equally famous are the many pictures of monkeys who reach for the reflected image of the moon in the water (which is sometimes not even clearly indicated), and who overlook the real moon (which almost never appears in the pictures). Both are easily understood parables for the wrong methods with which an unenlightened man attempts to reach the truth (cf. 144).

Their positive counterpart is the popular series of the "Ten Buffalo-Herding Pictures"¹⁶⁸ which symbolize the stages of enlightenment. There are two versions, both by well-known Zen masters of the Sung period, Ch'ing-chü (Sei-kyo) and K'uo-an (Kaku-an). In the former, a dark buffalo becomes whiter from picture to picture and, finally, invisible. At the end there appears, as the symbol of the ultimate insight, an empty black circle.

In the other, better known version, the transformation occurs in the following stages:

- (1) The bewildered anxious search of the herdsman for his lost buffalo (meaning that craving and fear arise from ignorance about the true nature of the world);
- (2) He discovers its footprints (the beginning of the insight, through the study of the teaching, so that man can discover the path leading to the truth at least from a distance);
- (3) He sees the buffalo (insight into the essence of things and of his own self which are both essentially the same);
- (4) Catching the buffalo (the resisting power of the world of phenomena which has to be tamed);
- (5) Leading the buffalo by a rope (the truth, now securely grasped, can no longer be lost as the result of illusion);
- (6) Riding home on the back of the buffalo, who walks freely and securely, accompanied by the herdsman playing the flute (the sure, joyous quietude of enlightenment; everything happening spontaneously);
- (7) Having forgotten the buffalo, he is alone at home (a consciously formulated "insight" has now become superfluous; since the desired

- essential stage has been reached, the ontological transformation has been accomplished);
- (8) Both buffalo and man disappear; an empty circle remains (meaning all duality has been dissolved in the ultimate clarity; "everything is empty");
 - (9) Return to the origin; blossoms at a stream (the simple existence of things; there is no longer a need to speculate over the essence of their existence);
 - (10) Strolling through the market (in the unassuming figure of Pu-t'ai: free from desire, joyous, beyond the world, not flaunting his wisdom, the enlightened man mingles with the people, all of whom will reach Buddhahood).

It is characteristic that the empty circle does not appear here as the symbol of final wisdom. The mere realization of "emptiness" is not the true goal; there has to be a turning back to the "world," a realization that even the ordinary everyday phenomenon has Buddha nature, an insight which sees "mountains again as mountains and waters again as waters." Now, however, they are no longer capable of entangling and misleading the mind as they were at the level of samsāra. It is only at this stage that the highest state of liberation has been achieved, from which flows that direct, unerring action and life so vitally important to Zen.

Pure symbols, whose meaning is not embodied in concrete objects, are still frequently met in the world of Zen, but they are no longer favored to the degree they were in esoteric Buddhism, because their symbolism is different (see p. 224). In contrast to the usually complicated variety of difficult signs in esoteric Buddhism, Zen confines itself to a few signs which are almost self-evident. First and foremost among them is an empty or black circle¹⁶⁹ which, here as well as in some other cultures, is the symbol of the completeness of being and highest insight and at the same time of Emptiness. Another favorite is the numerical sign One (a horizontal line) as symbol of non-duality. Also particularly common is the character *Wu* (*Mu*): "Not" or "Naught" (34*) which does not, however, mean a simple negation that could easily be misinterpreted by Westerners in nihilistic and pessimistic terms, but rather points to the ultimately inexpressible, yet absolutely positive Reality.

In those ciphers, reduced to their most simple forms, Zen art has stepped resolutely into the realm of abstraction which, nonetheless, expresses the most concrete aspect of true reality. But is such cipher language still art? Those who have observed how profoundly experienced Zen masters have put these characters and ink circles on paper with the full vigor and force of their personalities, in their sovereign freedom and certainty, and those who remember that calligraphy is the highest and most difficult of the East Asian arts¹⁷⁰ which demands the full commitment of the individual, will have no doubts that such symbols can be perfectly valid, directly artistic expressions of religious insight.

Such examples of pure calligraphy, which reproduce Zen sayings, verses or *kō-an* in vigorous and spiritualized brush strokes, make up a large part of Zen art if for no other reason than that they are an important link in the flow of tradition. They express in a most direct manner the personality and spiritual aura of great Zen masters. They may be found--mostly in the form of the *kakemono*--primarily in the

rooms for the tea ceremony which are permeated by the purest Zen spirit, and they speak more powerfully there because of the ascetic and yet aesthetically refined simplicity of these tea rooms (15). Their expressive language--individual, free, sovereign, flowing in a lively rhythm, personal, and yet at the same time supra-personal--provides a revealing contrast to the magic-symbolic Siddham letters of esoteric Buddhism which are similarly stylized into works of art (101), but which, in their impersonal, timeless, "objective" validity and the cool perfection of their form resulting from it, constitute immobile hieratic cult formulas of mystic-magic potential.

Symbolic ciphers (circles, etc.) and calligraphic works mark one pole of Zen art where it presents itself as devoid of any concrete objects. Nature pictures--pictures of animals, plants, flowers, fruits, and landscapes--represent the other pole, because such pictures open themselves resolutely to simple, given reality, to the "mountains and waters" of that Zen phrase quoted earlier. But what is actually meant here is not nature as the empirical phenomenal world or as revelation of divine powers but as nirvāna reality which reveals itself to the opened eye in samsāra reality. Thus the artist's interest in nature is no longer naturalistic-imitative or idyllic-poetic or pantheistic, but rather metaphysical in the strict Buddhist sense.

In Zen, however, this interest arises from the most concrete subject matter, making it so clearly transparent that "Emptiness," which is simultaneously its origin and destination, is realized. The nature pictures of Zen are rooted in an incredibly close, intimate familiarity with living reality, but they elevate this reality to a kind of "abstraction" even to reducing it to ciphers (and thereby meeting the written character halfway). In a peculiar way such abstraction does not rule out an equally strong degree of substantiality and sense of ontological power, but rather guarantees their presence. In this pure vision of objects and reality, all dualism disappears, including that between fullness and emptiness and that between the plurality of the phenomena and the unity and simplicity of their metaphysical ground (148, 149). Such works represent the apex of the long and impressive development which the art of depicting nature in East Asia, accessible to us in its earlier stages only in faint echoes, had taken since the T'ang period. All the profound love of the East Asians for living reality has entered into it. Just as in the case of the world view of Zen in general, its art, too, was strongly influenced by Taoism, with whose forms of thought and expression it has a close relationship.¹⁷¹

Compared to traditional nature paintings which already served largely as vehicles for cosmosophic thought (and were not at all purely secular), Zen art appears to be even more strongly spiritualized. We will later comment on the means of expression employed in this art, but compared to classic Buddhist cult paintings, Zen art clearly advances into the "world," a world which was actually only now opened as a new domain for the religious art of East Asia. This is the reason for the disappearance of the separation between the secular and the sacred in true Zen art. Zen was capable of abolishing this distinction because it was able to show the Absolute directly in "ordinary" and simply given objects, i.e., to show nirvāna in samsāra. Cult paintings, however, actually depicted only a supra-nature of paradisaical character, and wherever nature motifs were used, these were trees, flowers, or animals stylized into fairy-tale-like forms and frequently imbued with a

well-defined symbolism. Whenever landscapes appear, they are Buddha or Bodhisattva "fields" transformed into numinous realms. The earthly world, as depicted, for example, in the raigô scenes of Amitâbha (which within classic art contain the most extensive landscapes), is meant as samsâra-like counter-world to the true, beatified world of the "pure land" and not as the bearer and revealer of true reality itself (105). Zen art, however, depicts nature in the here and now with that simple objectivity and powerful directness in which the "thing itself" expresses the Buddha nature of the world in convincing silence.

Landscapes, in particular, become vehicles for expressing this new understanding of nature and existence. Those interpretive and formative powers with which the essence of nature in its entirety was comprehended, illuminated and made to reveal the deepest insight have perhaps never been excelled or ever even been equalled by any other form of landscape painting. The world-wide fame of East Asian painting rests to a large part on these works (149), not only on the landscapes but also on the extremely simple pictures of animals, plants, flowers, fruits--pictures whose seemingly isolated objects reveal that totality of the world and that reason for existence which Zen art is capable of displaying in all its manifestations, no matter how unassuming they may be.

Painting: Formative Principles

Zen has also pursued quite new ways of artistic expression. These were new, however, only within the traditions of Buddhist painting and not in absolute terms. There existed in China, at least since the T'ang period, a great tradition of landscape painting created by outstanding masters and spiritually nourished primarily by Taoism. There also existed a sophisticated tradition of ink painting which had evolved a vast store of technical and artistic principles. This tradition had long been represented by the imperial academy, cultivated in China's official secular art. It would, therefore, be mistaken to simply equate Zen painting and landscape painting or Zen painting and ink painting.¹⁷² It should also be noted that Chinese Ch'an in its flourishing period during T'ang times had obviously not yet found the kind of profound and wide expression in art works as it did during the Sung period and, later on, in the Muromachi period of Japan.

It was only during the Sung period that the general development of Chinese nature painting and ink painting reached that degree of maturity and virtuosity which enabled both to become adequate media for expressing the Zen spirit. Both provided ideal vehicles for Zen and, in turn, themselves rose to the heights of their potential as the result of this encounter. They were, however, by no means confined to Zen themes and Zen circles. Secular painters, too, came under the spell of their potential for spiritual profundity and power of expression.¹⁷³ On the other hand, neither did Zen art remain confined to monochrome ink paintings.¹⁷⁴ The Arhat pictures and portraits of priests, so characteristic of Zen painting, are predominantly, but not exclusively, executed in vivid colors and in a technique which clearly follows the traditions of earlier Buddhist cult paintings. Zen's most distinctive and highest creations were, however, no doubt the ink paintings of the Sung and Muromachi periods. These were also the last periods during which the Buddhist art of East Asia flourished.

How does the Zen painter treat the object he intends to depict, how does he perceive and form both the natural objects, as they present themselves, and the objects of his imagination? (For the following, 148 and 149 provide typical examples.) The objects are not depicted "objectively," explicitly and completely according to optical reality, but are evoked by means of drastic abbreviation and reduction to their indispensable and essential elements. This is not to say that Zen painting tends towards subjectivism, sketchiness, improvisation or impressionism, even though the pictures frequently originated in sudden inspirations. Rather, we are dealing with filtered essences extracted from the infinite number of experiences of the mind, the eyes and the hands, which attempt to make statements in concentrated form about the Ultimate and True. They do so in full awareness of the preliminary and unessential nature of such efforts, and that may be the very reason for their success.

Even though the artist, in attempting to "say as much as possible with as little as possible" (Grosse), shows only "one corner"¹⁷⁵ of things, he means their totality which is always "present." We may even go so far as to claim that by following this approach he was bound to be more successful than if he had attempted thoroughly detailed depictions, because the latter would always remain mere fragments without, however, having the artist admit this openly. Such an approach would, therefore, seem unwise on the face of it. Any apparent "perfection" would only block our view of ultimate reality. A system of clear and complete forms designed to capture and define the essence of the world--in art as well as in religious life--would turn out to be not an aid but rather an obstacle and a limitation to a spontaneous understanding of the world.

Here lies one of the most important differences between classic cult painting and Zen painting. In the latter, that which is not depicted has to be seen and sensed together with that which is depicted. The painter does not suggest something definite which only happens to be left unstated. Rather, he suggests reality in its totality and shows true essence in the few, frequently unassuming objects which he presents to us. These objects, properly understood, reveal more than they are by themselves. Every one of them stands for the totality of being. The right understanding of the world (satori) "does not point to something which lies beyond itself; rather, it is knowledge of a particular single object and at the same time the knowledge of the reality which, so to speak, lies behind this object."¹⁷⁶

Such art "requires the surest touch and the clearest idea." It simultaneously presupposes a perfect understanding of the subject as well as a perfect mastery of the means for its expression, which can only be obtained by the highest concentration and meditative contemplation. These artists must, "in order to condense the essence of an object as well as the inner vision of the painter, to the highest perfection, break through by skill to freedom, by knowledge to spontaneous action."¹⁷⁷ The objects to be painted are captured in their inner essence by a manner of painting sustained by the full powers of an individual who nevertheless is trying to transcend himself. The painting arises both out of the free play of a sovereign mind and out of a strict matter-of-factness and self-discipline. It captures the innermost depth of these objects with terse, yet powerful and accurate strokes. Objects acquire an immense concreteness and density, yet also are rendered transparent and spiritualized.

Thus Barlach could speak of a strange "reality and unreality of things" in Chinese art,¹⁷⁸ a characterization which is particularly applicable to Zen art. Both aspects of the world permeate each other (see p. 143), and any objective form, no matter how definite it may appear before us, becomes a "formless form." To depict this with the effortlessness of full maturity and freedom as if it were something quite ordinary and natural, is regarded as the highest achievement in all Eastern art influenced by the Zen spirit. Such works attain that level of the miraculous which allows us to sense absolute Emptiness.¹⁷⁹ Such works can only be produced after mind and heart have been emptied, when a state of Ego-lessness (Chin. *wu-wo*; J. *mu-ga*, also *wu-hsin, mu-shin*) has been reached. Only a perfectly detached freedom of self, purified of all object- and goal-oriented thoughts and feelings, of all conscious reflections and intentions involving one's self permits a supra-conscious devotion to the objective task and captures the essence of the world. It makes an Other, an Id, speak with the help of an Ego. The best Zen pictures appear, therefore, not to have been painted by someone in particular at all, no matter how much they are rooted in a personal vision and existential experience. Their real meaning is not to offer "a section of nature, viewed through a particular temperament." Their Ego-lessness cancels the dualism of subject and object and allows person and object to "permeate" each other. Something like this is perhaps also intended to happen between the viewer and the picture.

The objects are stripped by this art of their firm, harsh, heavy materiality. They are "abstracted" or shortened into "ciphers" without, however, losing any of their reality and their ability to radiate an aura of life. On the contrary, the latter is intensified by use of forms which aim at the essence of things to a much higher degree than would have been possible if the artists had merely attempted to reproduce reality to the best of their ability. While Zen pictures are thus removed from the empirical world of object-bound phenomena, they are still overflowing with a most concrete sense of reality.

To us, "concreteness" and "abstraction" are mutually exclusive. They are contradictions or, at least, opposite poles in a field of tension, but they can be united in East Asian art, and by no means in Zen Buddhist art alone. They frequently appear united a priori because Zen art does not allow those antitheses to separate in the first place, but always manages to have already transcended them through the attainment of an enlightened state of mind. Zen art reflects the "Non-differentiation," the mutual penetration of *samsâra* and *nirvâna* as the two aspects of one and the same reality. This is "Reality" itself. The simple nature of things is intended to be made visible, or at least be hinted at, as simply and directly as possible. For this reason pictures of natural objects¹⁸⁰ which show "nothing but ordinary things" are, therefore, also, or even especially, suited to make valid statements about reality.

But as demonstrated above, sacred persons and spiritual encounters and awakenings are also depicted in a manner which captures their innermost essence and often presents it with great dramatic effect. All this is done with ever new forms because such pictures were never tied to routine formulas. They are always inspired by forms of expression arising from minds in an original state of enlightenment (139, 143, 145, 146). As in all Zen paintings, however, these objects are basically ciphers which point to something else, to something which is really meant merely by virtue

of the intensity and terseness with which these ciphers are depicted. The subject matter of a picture is, therefore, not a preformed vehicle with a predetermined content. Rather, it can be freely chosen and may even be given new meaning as circumstances warrant. It only provides the occasion, pretext, first and last stimulus pointing in the direction of something which belongs to another category of being, but which can only be indicated with the help of such "ciphers of transcendence" because any "other" level is itself only sensed in the concrete objects which we encounter in everyday life.

Some characteristic formal principles for expressing the world view of Zen arise from this way of depicting objects. Generally valid statements about these principles are much more difficult to formulate than those valid for cult paintings because every work presents its own, always special object in an artistic language which is always the very distinct language of a particular, very individual, creative personality. This is characteristic of Zen paintings and puts them in sharp contrast to sacred cult paintings which follow an established "theological," iconographic, and artistic canon, and allow therefore for fairly valid general descriptions.

The form of Zen pictures is essentially an "inner form" born of the phenomenon--the object to be depicted and the meaning attached to it--as well as the essence of the creative personality. It is not given a priori (dictated by a firmly established system of ideas and imposed on the objects and on the creative impulse of the artist). There are, therefore, no laws governing form and no grammar of formulas but, at best, certain habits which may, however, always be ignored. As a matter of fact, Zen painters try deliberately to make their compositions appear accidental, loosely structured, sometimes even playfully unselfconscious and effortless, so that the label "composition" seems almost inappropriate for their creation (139, 144-149).

Given this absence of rules, a higher law of forms, difficult to formulate, expresses itself. Its inner artistic logic is so compelling that not even the most minute detail may be moved without changing the whole or even placing it in jeopardy altogether. It is immaterial that this "accidental" quality is most carefully achieved, consciously or not. In any event, it is impossible to determine whether it is one or the other and, given the Zen premises, there is no a feasible alternative anyway. The seemingly accidental quality is a priori in harmony with the essence and rhythm of things in general. It is for this very reason that the "accidental" appears as something that could not be any different from the way it happens to be.

Such a style of pictorial composition, almost by necessity, has to shun the principle of symmetry and all its consequences--axiality, frontality, strict definition of picture planes. Its preference for isolated objects and the "one-corner-style" results in a predilection for asymmetry or at least a veiled symmetry with polarized tensions and a dynamic balance in place of the stable balance of the classic cult paintings. Zen pictures also exude an air of balance, quietude and certainty but do so from a more profound level, one which appears to exist beyond or below that of the phenomena depicted. There is a clear intent to point beyond that which is seen in the picture to something that is not and can no longer be depicted.

This dynamic balance is not only noticeable in pictures of human figures (144, 145, 146) but even more clearly in pictures of natural objects. These

frequently depict only a single object which thrusts with daring asymmetry into the picture plane. A tree, a branch or a sprig of blossoms, for example, is placed "accidentally" in a part of the picture which is seemingly chosen at random but is, of course, the only "right" part. Landscapes (149) also demonstrate how Zen painters, or secular painters stimulated by Zen, tend to dissolve the strict axuality and parallelized compositions which had dominated older landscape paintings, particularly in China. All this is combined in many highly significant works with a strong mobility of both the objects themselves and the composition of the individual shapes, down to the smallest ink line (139, 143-146). These tendencies, incidentally, were not actually invented or even monopolized by Zen art. They were already known to artists of secular paintings and others, but Zen art adopted them because they were so well suited to its character and needs. It is from Zen art that these techniques, reinforced and imbued with new meaning, have influenced secular painting and enriched it.

From the vantage point of this principle of an ever newly gained, spontaneous "inner form," of a merely suggested profundity, of an "accidental order, of dynamic composition and equilibrium but, above all, from the basic conviction of Zen about the futility of all discursive exposition and detailed depiction, and of the superiority of the suggestive transmission of an intuitive insight, we gain a better understanding of that "sketchy" quality of many (but not all) Zen pictures (144-146, 148 ff.). While cult paintings present their objects completely and, for magic-ritual reasons, are not allowed to omit even the minutest detail, Zen painters emphasize only the most characteristic elements in which the true life and essence of an object is concentrated, and reveal it in its radiating vibrancy.

Zen art presupposes an active participation on the part of the viewer. Following the hints provided by the picture, he has to find out what the picture really means by his own efforts. The cult images expect him to surrender himself to their firm and perfect guidance and to realize the manifestation of the beatified figures step by step, to "get hold" of their presence and to establish contact with the Absolute (or its individual manifestation) represented by them. Zen rejects such a pre-fabricated, all-prescribing guidance and practical direction of the spiritual process. Zen pictures, particularly those extremely abbreviated ones in which Zen painting found its perfect form, take the viewer up to an extremity beyond which they themselves remain silent. But this act of making visible and conscious these ontologically rooted limits of the phenomenal per se and thus indicating that this borderline can be crossed, constitute perhaps the most significant achievement of both pictures and viewers inspired to engage in a spiritual quest. The "sketchy" quality of Zen pictures is, therefore, something entirely different from the way Westerners understand this term; it is an abbreviation concentrating on the innermost essence of things which we can only sense instinctively. It is also a self-limiting recognition of a borderline. But this recognition is inspired by the goal of crossing this threshold and doing so in a most radical sense.

Zen pictures tend, therefore, toward the "non-finite." They have their home in that realm. Nothing proves this more clearly than their relationship to space. Zen pictures prefer the "absence of confining frames."¹⁸¹ In positive terms, they aim at an openness, fullness, spaciousness, liveliness of atmosphere, a universal permeation of the existential and phenomenal realms, and a dynamic infinity of the

picture space which belong to the basic characteristics of East Asian paintings in particular and to the East Asian world view in general (139, 140, 144, 148, 149). All this can be most fully experienced in landscape paintings.

Yet this depth of space, though intensely present, is rarely clearly defined in its dimensions. We encounter an un- or supra-dimensional, a-perspective non-space, an absence of specific locale which, though including everything of the "Here," allows us to sense that state of transcended distinctions, of non-duality, an emptiness which constitutes the ground for the "Here" and "There." The picture ground is usually not a "back"-ground which can be objectively defined and located. Rather, it is "ground" *per se*. It makes no statement about what, how and where it is, and for this reason possesses such a powerful force of expression, one arising from silence and not from muteness (148).

In contrast to cult paintings, the picture ground in Zen paintings is not pushed back as if to provide a dark, neutral canvas for the sacred figures shining forth from it. Rather, it is activated, has a bright, light atmosphere which carries on a dialectical dialogue with the picture contents emerging from it and is their active, frequently even dominant partner. The phenomena emerge from this picture ground and, though defined, are not cut off but remain joined to it. The tension-filled relationship between the objects depicted and the empty picture ground also points to the relationship between the plurality of the phenomenal world and the simplicity of absolute Emptiness. But no matter how powerfully this polarity is brought out in these pictures, to the enlightened mind it has already been cancelled *a priori*.

Just as Zen religious thought does not recognize any real dualism, these pictures, too, show the realm of the objects they depict as merging imperceptibly into that of the empty ground from which they emerge. They seem at times to remerge into it like dreams and shadows, but this ground always manages to shine through their transparency. Here, too, a final limit is approached so that we may sense something that is infinite and beyond all antagonism.

In all the creative acts we have mentioned so far, Zen painters display an unerring certainty of world perception and pictorial realization of the world. Thus direct and convincing clarity and power arise from a sovereign certainty of spiritual penetration of essence which has left all doubts behind. Every element in the composition, every brush stroke, every ink tone is put exactly in the right place no matter how loose, how accidental the formal structure may appear. This certainty, which the Zen-inspired individual also displays in all other spheres of his life, has to be appreciated even more since it has been acquired through acts of freedom and independent daring, and always arises from a spontaneous, thoroughly personal impulse leading to direct, unreflected-upon action. The creators of the cult images, on the contrary, were not only allowed to follow the long proven, generally binding regulations and methods but were fully expected to do so. Their equally infallible certainty comes from a firm, metaphysically grounded bondage; that of Zen painters from an equally metaphysical freedom.

In Zen there is no hardening into set forms valid once and for all times because there is also no hardening into the security of the finality of set truths, dogmas, and interpretations which are believed proven for all times. Zen forms are, therefore, always "open" and "tentative." In every one of his creative acts the Zen

artist has to rely time and again on himself alone. He owes everything to the tremendous power of spontaneity, to that ultimate, totally liberated originality with whose help satori is attained and whose visible proof each Zen picture represents.

This directness with which the object is grasped and represented makes Zen pictures frequently appear sober, austere, unpolished and ascetic, occasionally perhaps even violent and grotesque. They do not excel by their perfect play of forms, aesthetic splendor and beautiful decorative charm. They aim for the greatest simplicity in materials, technique, choice of objects, and artistic means. This simplicity, incidentally, does not preclude a perfect, even virtuoso mastery of craftsmanship but rather presupposes it. It is full of the most minute formal nuances and succeeds in creating optical equivalents for that world view seeking to penetrate to the simple heart of things. However, this does not give rise to a disregard for form or arbitrariness of choice but rather to highly perfected forms which, though relying on a certain repertoire of typical artistic devices, are original creations in every instance. That is to say, they follow an "individual law" arising from both the essence of the particular "matter at hand" and the essence of the personality understanding and giving form to it.

The formative powers of the Zen artist are not less but rather more severely tested than those of artists producing cult paintings. Though we are not dealing with beauty in the traditional sense, if only because the artists may have consciously shunned it and because their works were no longer linked in function to *pûjâ* and *shôgon*, Zen paintings with all the modesty and austerity of the language of their forms are sustained by a formative power equal to their meaning, and this imparts to them a greatness and profundity unexcelled in all of East Asian art.¹⁸²

The most magic devices relied upon by Zen painters are brush and ink. We have already characterized the relationship between the strict, "wirelike" and the loose, modulating ink lines within the tradition of classic cult painting (p. 145). In the more typical forms of Zen painting,¹⁸³ the ink line, which had played a minor role in cult painting, now assumes the major role. Zen paintings do not, however, stop at a predominantly linear use of ink, but add that infinitely rich art of ink tones and shadowing in painterly fashion on which the fame of East Asian painting is largely based. Brush and ink, technically speaking, make it possible to arrive both at drawing precise forms in clear, sharp and rhythmically expanding and contracting exterior and interior lines, and at a "wet" interplay of broad surfaces and ephemeral tones or dot-like spots of varying depth.¹⁸⁴ This makes it progressively more difficult to arrive at a clear distinction between ink "painting" and ink "drawing" as this art realizes its own true nature.

Furthermore, the ink technique is also suitable for expressing opposite moods and dynamic states between the poles of absolute rest and quietude (142, 148) and of rapid and vigorous movement (143, 146). Through the interplay of such states, frequently in the same picture, an extremely rich and differentiated pictorial texture is created which combines vigorous formal structures and evanescent moods (139). The nuances achieved by masterful ink painting techniques are so varied that it was customary in East Asia to claim that works done in ink, though monochrome, contained "all five colors." The suggestive powers of ink paintings are great, and this fact in particular was bound to recommend this style of painting to the Zen artists

(even though they, as mentioned above, did not invent it and were also not the only ones to use it).

One of its sources was calligraphy, cultivated since antiquity and technically sharing the same foundation, which demanded an infallible accuracy of eye and hand. Like ink painting, calligraphy had to be executed on absorbing paper or silk "alla prima" which ruled out any later corrections. But above all calligraphy and ink painting have in common the fact that both permit and even require a direct "graphological" expression of the creative personality. Both are, therefore, a perfect match for the needs of Zen artists. Like calligraphy, ink painting, too, offers a rich scale of possibilities between the poles of a strict, regular, exact treatment and one that is free and loose and permits a sovereign exercise of enormous, even demonically expressive force. It is characteristic of the Zen spirit that it tends toward the latter pole rather than to the former without, however, shunning it altogether.

In calligraphy and painting but also in the arts of the garden, flower arrangement and tea, the same artist, depending on both intent and occasion, may employ side by side the cursive, sketch-like suggestive style (*sô*), the strict, correct style (*shin*), and the loose, more flexible style which maintains a relaxed transition ground between strictness and freedom (*gyô*). The looser, less restrained style has greater suggestive powers even though it grasps and reproduces the object far less exactly. It employs the greatest degree of abstraction, but if this abstraction is the result of a genuine grasp of reality, it does not lead away from the essence of things but rather directly to their very heart. Moreover, it also leads through and beyond them, which is the very effect Zen artists hope to achieve.

But this abstraction is not radical. It always leaves itself open to the world of objects no matter how much it strips these objects of their gravity and material substance. It does not turn away from them but elevates or transcends them without, however, stripping them of their reality. Here, too, ink painting approaches calligraphy, because the latter had also moved from originally pictorial signs imitating objects to linear-abstract ciphers which never, however, entirely lost their character as eidetic images. The cipherlike ink painting and the image-like characters meet each other halfway and can, therefore, over and over again be combined harmoniously in one and the same work.

In contrast to the abstract-decorative lines of cult paintings, the freely modulating and shadowing ink lines are closer to reality and life, both objectively and personally. Objectively, they follow to a much higher degree material forms and their appearance. Their spiritualization and focus on the essential nature of the objects notwithstanding, they continue to identify the "object" and can and will remain very close to living reality. Ink lines are also closer to reality and life by being a direct expression of the individual artistic personality as it emerges in its unique qualities. This personality provides the medium through which the supra-personal reality is infused into expressive forms. They, unlike the forms of classic cult paintings, are not elevated and ultimately cancelled by making them generally valid and transcendent by virtue of their abstract, typical and decoratively formalized qualities.

For all their ability to capture reality in individually expressive forms, ink paintings aim beyond the personal as well as real aspects into the sphere of

transcendence. This art leaps, so to speak, directly from an innermost and highly personal state of mind into the "Buddha Nature" and experiences during this process the insight that both are actually one and the same. We encounter an objectivity spiritualized and essentialized into emptiness or nothingness from a most personal experience and sudden intuition. No other artistic means could be more suitable for this task than the ink paintings with their ability to realize satori-like the "Absolute Presence" by means of their direct and yet sublimating, time-bound and yet time-transcending qualities. While the lines of cult paintings, for all their gentle flow, have the tendency to harden into timeless and closed forms, here the lively and mobile ink lines are pronouncedly transitory artistic means and become meaningful only in the sweep of their movements--both during the process of painting and, later on, during the act of thoughtful viewing. This artistry imparts to the depicted objects a certain fleetingness and freedom pointing to a realm beyond all limitations and flowing into Timelessness or Absolute Presence; i.e., it contains in itself, or at least hints at, a perfection leading to Ultimate Essence but reaches it with means other than the "eternal line" of classic painting.

In contrast to this line, which always limits itself to defining forms and bodies, the ink line, wherever it is allowed to be itself, indicates by means of its expanding and contracting flow the contours and at the same time the corporeal substance of the depicted objects. It suggests a high degree of plasticity of the objects, of lively movement and, simultaneously, even an atmosphere suspended around them (143, 144). Ink washes may add to these effects but not in every instance. Definition of form, realization of substance, and calligraphic-rhythmic line patterns come together in one single process.

Furthermore, the swelling and thinning of the ink lines helps to blur the boundary between line and surface and, in contrast to the strictly defining contour lines, achieves a gliding transition. We may, therefore, also say that while the linear technique of cult paintings approaches the form from the outside and describes and defines it, ink painting approaches form from the inside, and from an act of an identifying vision of object and essence. The former establishes boundaries and is more "dualistic"¹⁸⁵ than the latter which, in one synthetic act, presents the objects in their totality and transforms them at the same time into images of expressive rhythm flowing in a creative moment from the artist's personality.

This makes it possible to speak, in a Zen sense, of a "non-duality" of ink image and object on the one hand, and of ink image and creative personality on the other, and ultimately, of object and personality (even though such notions are basically beyond rational formulation). This makes obvious the crucial, object-transcending function of the ink line. The Zen spirit would have hardly been able to express itself so directly and perfectly through any other artistic medium.

The abbreviated formula "ink line" includes ink tones in most, or at least in the most important cases, if for no other reason than that both are technically so closely related. To be sure, ink tones may display an artistic value of their own which is independent of the linear treatment of ink. There is no need to comment at this point on the nearly incredible skill with which East Asian painters handle ink tones. As an artistic means they are applied with equal power to symbolize objects and to create non-objective moods. More than any other means the ink tones are suited to indicate the transgression of empirical barriers and the non-duality of

essence and phenomenon. Ink tones, no matter how suggestive to our imagination, usually have no representational, imitative-illusionist significance whatsoever, such as, for example, in reproducing darker or lighter objects, or supplying realistic-optic illumination or shadowing in a Western sense. Rather, they have to be understood as a purely artistic-functional, if you will, "abstract" formative means in the service of direct spiritual statements (145, 148, 149).

The fundamental polarity of black and white constitutes one of the most distinct properties of ink. In East Asia, especially in Buddhism, all colors and hence all phenomenal objects of the *samsāra* world, are contained and at the same time transcended either in blackness or in a white ground. Deep, perfect black indicates in the symbolic language of Zen (p. 237) the "ultimate overcoming and negating of all distinctions" which becomes the "highest absolute affirmation, that ultimate freedom" which "Ch'an (Zen) masters ascribe to enlightenment."¹⁸⁶ But in Zen pictures, even the contradistinction of black and white is transcended and a new higher level is reached which, in its dialectic dimension, is beyond forms and colors. Thus, the black/white of ink painting is of equal rank in meaning with the gold of cult painting even though the latter represents the opposite end of the color scale and is rooted in an entirely different religious perception.

The black-white tension has a peculiar "spatial" effect within the undimensional picture world of this art. The strong gradation of ink tones and the prominent impact of the graphic-linear forms or surface dottings of intensive blackness make us experience the darker parts as approaching, advancing towards us, and the lighter parts as retreating and, finally, seemingly vanishing in the white ground (148, 149). The "spatial" effect which dark black or light gray grounds can achieve merely by their own "absolute" value is frequently a source of amazement, particularly since it is achieved without the presence of any three-dimensional-objective structure in a measurable picture space--or at least with only the barest hint of the presence of such a structure. Every object, even the world itself, becomes transparent and reveals a "depth" no longer merely optically manifest but rather metaphysical. None of the tones produces this effect alone by itself. This happens rather in relation to all the other tones of the picture and to the ground on which they all stand and with which they enter into a dialogue.

The lively dialogue between black and white, positive and negative, advancing and retreating, present and non-present, speaking and non-speaking, points beyond all opposites to that which is really meant--the realm in which all dualism is canceled. But what it is that is meant is not elaborated on, described or represented. Ultimately, there is no longer any talk at all--and we should remind ourselves that the detailed depiction of well-defined objects in pictures is also a form of talk and a communication within the realm of empirical coexistence--but only a silent indication of the Absolute unveiling itself in its truth. Talk corresponds to *samsāra*, silence to *nirvāna*.

A picture like the "Persimmon Fruits" by Mu Hsi (148),¹⁸⁷ perhaps the purest and most radical of all Zen pictures in existence, is filled with a tremendous, all-pronouncing silence--that "thundering silence" of which the Zen masters speak when they quote the crucial passage of the *Virmalakīrti Sūtra*. East Asians hear this silence above all in the things and creatures of nature, and most clearly in the simplest of them. If man immerses himself in them--in vision, poetry, and painting--

he is close to the essence of the world, the Buddha essence, and he answers all doubting, nagging questions in a silent detachment gained from that knowledge of emptiness, of non-duality, in which all opposites vanish and ready-made answers would only shackle the enlightened mind.

Is the world a dream?
Does it have substance? Tell!
Neither substance,
Nor a dream, as far as I know.
A Something, a Nothing, in One.



Chronological Chart

CHINA (Dynasties)

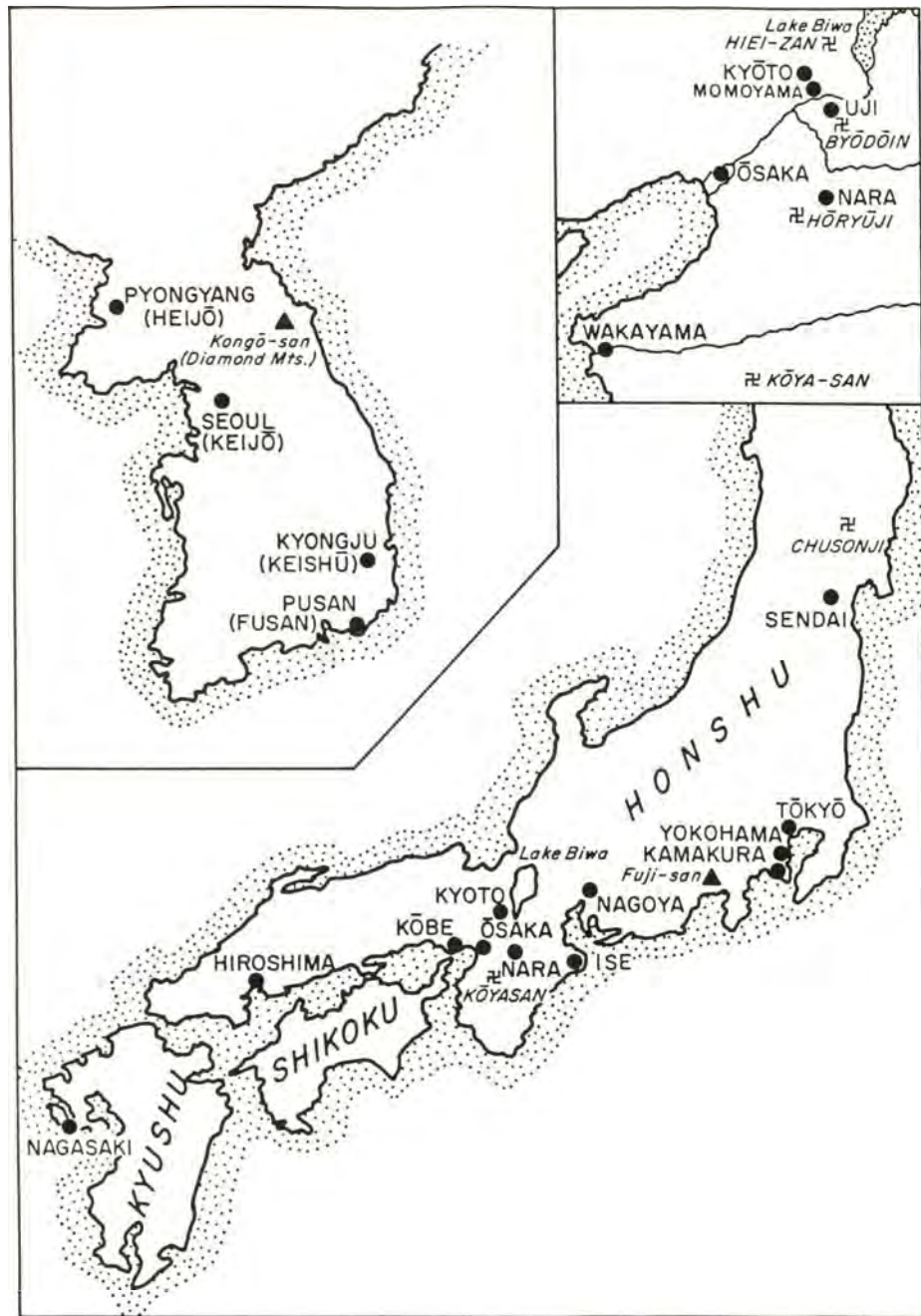
| | | |
|--------------------|------|----------------|
| Shang-Yin | ca. | 1500-1028 B.C. |
| Chou | | 1028- 481 B.C. |
| Warring States | | 481- 221 B.C. |
| Ch'in | | 221- 206 B.C. |
| Han | B.C. | 206- 220 A.D. |
| Three Kingdoms | | 221- 265 A.D. |
| West and East Chin | | 265- 420 |
| Six Dynasties | | 386- 588 |
| Northern Wei | | 386- 535 |
| Northern Ch'i | | 550- 577 |
| Sui | | 589- 618 |
| T'ang | | 618- 906 |
| | | |
| Five Dynasties | | 907- 960 |
| Liao (Khitan) | | 937-1125 |
| Northern Sung | | 960-1126 |
| Southern Sung | | 1127-1279 |
| Chin (Jurchen) | | 1115-1234 |
| Yüan (Mongols) | | 1280-1367 |
| Ming | | 1368-1644 |
| Ch'ing (Manchus) | | 1644-1911 |

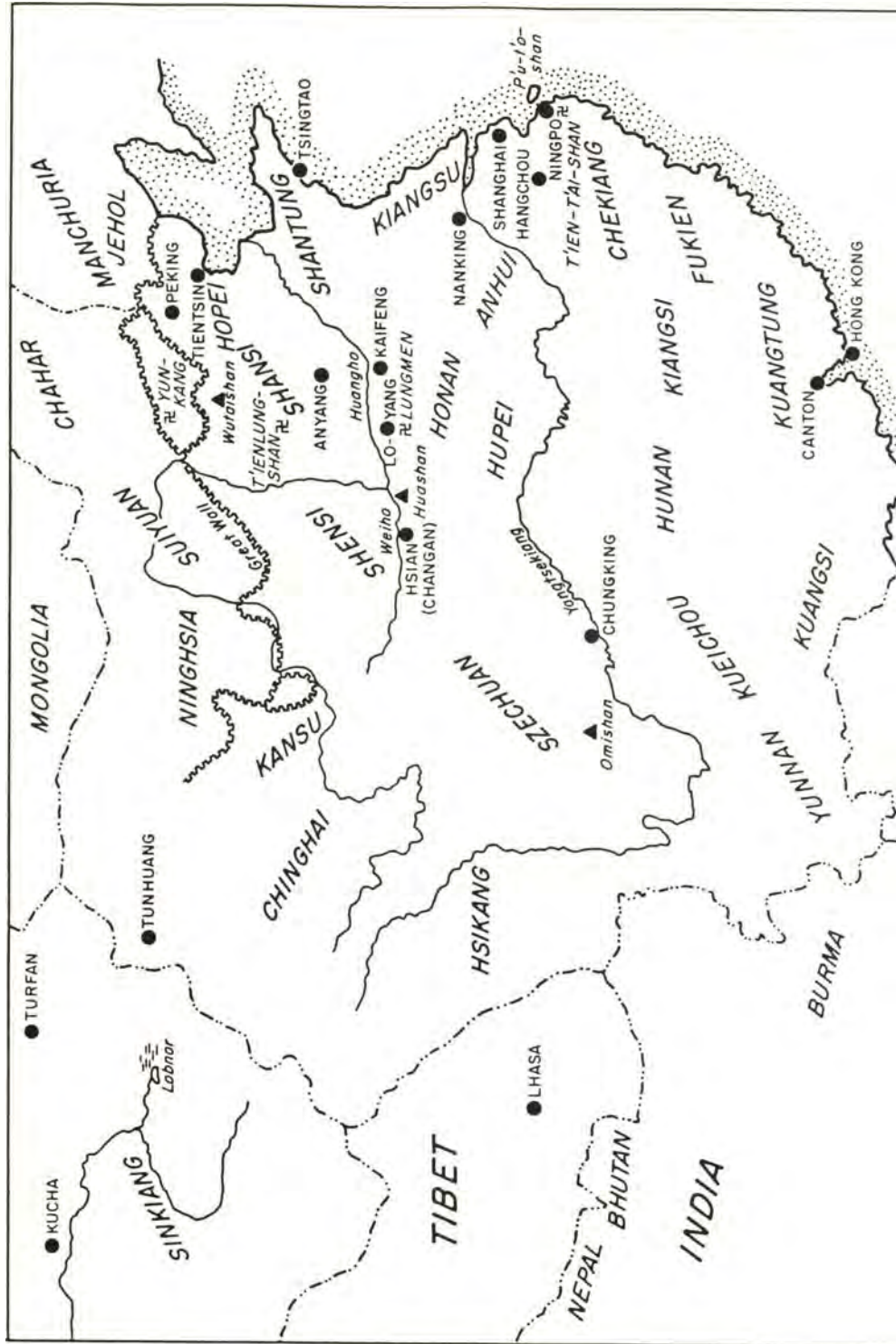
JAPAN (Periods)

| | |
|----------------------|---------------|
| Jōmon-Period | 4th/3rd |
| Millennium--ca. | 200 B.C. |
| | |
| Yayoi and Tumuli | ca. 200 B.C.- |
| Period | ca. 550 A.D. |
| | |
| Asuka (Suiko) | 552- 645 |
| Hakuhō | 645- 710 |
| Nara (Tempyō) | 710- 794 |
| Heian (Jōgan, Kōnin) | 794- 897 |
| Fujiwara | 897-1185 |
| | |
| Kamakura | 1185-1333 |
| Muromachi | 1333-1573 |
| Yoshino | 1333-1393 |
| Ashikaga | 1393-1573 |
| Momoyama | 1573-1603 |
| Edo (Tokugawa) | 1603-1868 |

KOREA

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| Lolang (Naknang, Rakurō; Han colony) | 108 B.C.-313 A.D. |
| Koguryō (Kokuri, Koma) | ? B.C.-668 A.D. |
| Paekche (Kudara) | ? B.C.-663 |
| Silla (Old Silla) | ? B.C.-668 |
| Unified Silla (Shiragi) | 668 A.D.-935 |
| Koryō (Kōrai) | 935 -1392 |
| Yi (Li, Ri) | 1392 -1910 |





Abbreviations

| | | |
|--------------|---|---|
| <i>BEFÉO</i> | = | <i>Bulletin de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient.</i> Hanoi/Paris. |
| <i>BK</i> | = | <i>Gedächtniskatalog der Ausstellung altjapanischer Kunst.</i> Berlin, 1939; Tôkyô, 1939. |
| <i>HJAS</i> | = | <i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.</i> Cambridge, Massachusetts. |
| <i>JAOS</i> | = | <i>Journal of the American Oriental Society.</i> Baltimore. |
| <i>MN</i> | = | <i>Monumenta Nipponica.</i> Tôkyô. |
| <i>NJT</i> | = | <i>Nanto Jûdaiji Taikyô (Ôkagami).</i> See bibliography under "Catalog." |
| <i>OZ</i> | = | <i>Ostasiatische Zeitschrift.</i> |
| <i>OZ NF</i> | = | <i>Ostasiatische Zeitschrift. Neue Folge.</i> |
| <i>ZDMG</i> | = | <i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft.</i> Leipzig/Wiesbaden. |

A picture source is provided for every number in the Explanation of Text Figures. I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to museums, publishing houses and authors at home and abroad for generously permitting the use of their pictures or books, particularly to the curators of the museums in the USA whose personal approval I was able to obtain during a Fulbright stay and who provided highly valuable and friendly assistance in a variety of ways.

The text figures 5*, 9* (4) and the maps of China and Japan were prepared by Dr. P. A. Riedl, Heidelberg.

D. Seckel

Notes

1. Wilhelm Gundert, *Japanische Religionsgeschichte*, Tôkyô/Stuttgart, 1935, p. 62.
2. Detailed description in H. v. Glasenapp, *Buddhistische Mysterien*, Stuttgart, 1940.
3. Gundert, *op. cit.*, pp. 65 ff.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 69.
5. Heinrich Dumoulin, tr. and annot., "Das Wu-men-kuan oder, 'Der Pass ohne Tor,'" *Monumenta Serica* (Journal of Oriental Studies of the Catholic University of Peking) 8 (1943), pp. 41-102 (quote 49); new Engl. ed., *MN Monographs* No. 13, Tôkyô, 1953, p. 9.
6. Cf. H. v. Glasenapp, "Buddhismus and Gottesidee," *Abhandlungen der Mainzer Akademie, Geistes- und sozialwissenschaftliche Klasse* 8 (1954).
7. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Second Series (Kyôto: 1933), pp. 241 ff.; new ed. London, 1950, pp. 261 ff.
8. Cf. the titles listed in the bibliography under **Central Asia**. Maps showing relations between China and Central Asia and India and marking the travel routes of Chinese pilgrims--Fa-hsien, Hsüan-tsang, I-ching, etc.--are in Albert Herrmann, *Historical and Commercial Atlas of China*, Monograph Series 1, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard-Yenching Institute, 1935, Maps 30/31, 34/35, 37, 38/39.
9. The life and personality of Prince Shôtoku--mythically exalted and mystically beatified as time went by--and his lasting impact on many aspects of Japanese culture is presented by Hermann Bohner, "Shôtoku Taishi," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens (OAG)*, Suppl. Vol. 25, Tôkyô, 1940. This study includes numerous translated source materials and excursions into Japan's cultural history.
10. The summary studies on Mahâyâna iconography available to date are totally inadequate and in part even unreliable, including the best known, Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, Oxford, 1914; second, somewhat improved ed. 1928. Genuine advances only appear possible on the basis of far-ranging and thorough pioneering studies by Japanese Buddhologists and art historians. On the names of Buddhist figures and the general

- iconographical terminology, cf. the bibliography's reference works and general studies of the history of Buddhist religion. Sanskrit-Chinese-Japanese equivalents are given in Getty, Glasenapp, Gundert, Krause (supplementary volume to *Ju-Tao-Fo*); Sanskrit-Chinese equivalents in Rouselle and in the dictionaries of Eitel, Soothill-Hodous, Hackmann; Sanskrit-Japanese equivalents in *Hôbôgin*. Cf. also the section "Terminology of Buddhism," etc., in S. Howard Hansford, *A Glossary of Chinese Art and Archaeology*, London, 1954, pp. 32 ff.
11. Particularly valuable are the series of essays by E. Rouselle on "Typische Bildwerke des buddhistischen Tempels in China" (see bibliography); see also the studies by de Visser, Smidt, etc.
 12. Cf. the translation of one such Japanese handbook by J. Hoffman (1852!) which remains the only one available to date.
 13. Cf. H. Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild*, Berlin, 1926, pp. 149 ff.; especially pp. 157 ff. Cf. Berthold Laufer, *Das Citralakshana. Nach dem tibetischen Tanjur herausgegeben und übersetzt*, Leipzig, 1913. *Dokumente der indischen Kunst*, 1: *Malerei*. W. S. Hadaway, "Some Hindu 'Silpa' shastras in their relation to South Indian scrolls," *OZ* 3 (1914/15), pp. 35-50; G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls I* (Rome, 1949), pp. 291 ff. Cf. D. Frey, *Grundlegung zu einer vergleichenden Kunstwissenschaft*, Innsbruck/Wien, 1949, pp. 27 ff. The fact that in Tibet the width of the finger of a donor could be made the measuring unit of a cult image so that an identification and "consubstantiation" between the image and the person sponsoring it and meditating over it takes place (Tucci I, 296), may easily suggest that something akin to this is involved throughout East Asia wherever the creation of an image is spoken of in terms of having taken place "in accordance with the body" or "as image" of a founder. The most famous of these cases is the Avalokiteśvara figure in the "Dream Hall" of the Hôryûji in Japan ("Yumedono-Kannon"), which was not only donated by Prince Shôtoku but was supposed to have even been made by him to match his own body height and which, on the basis of this tradition, was popularly referred to as his "self-portrait." We should recall that Shôtoku was considered to be an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara so that this identity of proportions could be regarded both as a projection of the essential identity of the sacred figure and its incarnation and as a guarantee of the essential efficacy of the image.
 14. They are listed in Coates and Ishizuka, *Hônen the Buddhist Saint*, Tôkyô, 1930, pp. 365 ff.
 15. This third eye--a genuine eye, horizontally placed on the forehead--found in some tantric figures of the rank of Bodhisattva and below (but never in Buddhas) is something quite different and originates in the sphere of Śiva myth and cult.
 16. Cf. Lucian Scherman, "Buddha im Fürstenschmuck," *Abhandlungen der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, Philosophisch-historische Abteilung N.F.* 7 (1932); Paul Mus, "Le Buddha paré," *B.E.F.E.O.* (1929); E. Rouselle (see note 11), new edition, p. 78.

17. Cf. the *Si-do-in-zu* (see bibliography).
18. Three such pointed pearls arranged in the form of a pyramid symbolize the triratna ("Three Treasures"): the Buddha, his Teaching, and his Community.
19. The thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara (J. *Senju-Kannon*) represents an extension of this principle although his figures display not a thousand, but only dozens of arms.
20. For evidence from the doctrinal literature concerning the cancellation of sexual distinctions in the state of samādhi (state of meditation), cf. *Monumenta Serica* VI (1941), 64; and for its appearance on a lower level of existence: *MN* I/1 (1938), 195; f. also H. Beckh, *Buddhismus* 2, Sammlung Göschel 770, 2nd ed. (1920), 109. This distinction has already disappeared in the so-called world of (pure) form (rūpadhātu) and among the higher ranking deities; f. Ui, *Bukkyō Jiten* Tōkyō, 1938, 345; and still more so in the sphere to which the Bodhisattva belongs.
21. The label *Nyoirin-Kannon*, frequently used for Japanese figures of this type, has to be rejected. The identification as Maitreya is by no means certain. Cf. Max Wegner, "Ikonographie des chinesischen Maitreya," *OZ N.F.* 5 (1929). Since a similar pose is displayed by the "Bodhisattva" Śākyamuni, i.e., Prince Siddhārtha before he entered the path of enlightenment, frequently a tree--the future tree of enlightenment--is shown bending over him. There exists a theological and iconographical similarity, or even "archetypal" identity, between him, who has been chosen to be the Buddha of our age, and Maitreya, chosen to be the Buddha of the future age. The pose of both is also similar in images depicting them as earthly incarnated Buddhas, i.e., as nirmānakāya: They are seated in European fashion with their feet either side by side or crossed at the joints. The latter type also occurs in images showing Maitreya as Bodhisattva.
22. The lion also symbolizes the power of Buddhist teaching. Buddha is compared to the lion: Just as the lion awakes his cubs with his roar, the lion roar of the teaching awakens man in a spiritual sense. The lion also performs an important function as guardian in front of temples.
23. The elephant is also a favorite symbol because the (future) Buddha entered the womb of his mother in the form of a white elephant. There is also a popular simile that the Buddha blazes an "elephant trail" through the jungle of the confused and deluded samsāra world and thus opens the path to salvation. His six tusks signify the subjugation of the six sources of temptation (five senses and volition or thought, respectively). On the other meanings and mythological foundations of the Indian elephant symbolism see the Index of H. Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization* New York, 1946; also Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia* 1 (New York: 1955), 160 ff.
24. Willibald Kirfel, *Die dreiköpfige Gottheit*, Bonn, 1948. For details of the iconography of the Hachibushu, D. Seckel, "Buddhistische Prozessionsmasken in Japan," *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens (OAG)* 76 (Hamburg, 1954).

25. Dietrich Seckel, "Kariteimo. Die 'buddhistische Madonna' in der japanischen Kunst," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens (OAG)* 36, Teil A, Tōkyō, 1943.
26. There are more detailed comments on the Maṇḍala in most books on East Asian Buddhism, among others, in v. Glasenapp, *Buddhistische Mysterien*; for India see Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga*, pp. 94 ff. A general introduction is in G. Tucci, *Teoria e Pratica del Mandala* (see bibliography). On the Maṇḍala of the Two Worlds, see also Anesaki, *Buddhist Art*, pp. 38 ff., 45 ff. Pictures in Anesaki and Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*; further in the *Katalog der Ausstellung altjapanische Kunst* (Berlin: 1939). We are unable to comment on the parallels postulated by C. G. Jung in several of his writings between Asian (also Taoist) maṇḍalas and the maṇḍala-like drawings produced by his patients. It seems that, the well-deserved recognition of the value of his teachings about the collective unconscious and the archetypes and their consequences for the study of religion and art notwithstanding, the differences between the phenomena he compares should not be overlooked to the degree Jung does. (Richard Wilhelm and C. G. Jung, *Das Geheimnis der Goldenen Blüte*, München, 1929; new ed. Zürich, 1948; C. G. Jung, *Psychologie und Religion*, Zürich/Leipzig, 1940; new ed. (1942); "Traumsymbole des Individuationsprozesses," especially chapter 3: "Die Mandalasymbolik," in *Psychologie und Alchemie, Psychologische Abhandlungen* 5, Zürich, 1944; "Zur Empirie des Individuationsprozesses," *Gestaltungen des Unbewussten, Psychologische Abhandlungen* 7, Zürich, 1950, 93-186, with 17 illustrations; "Über Mandalasymbolik," *ibid.*, 187-235, with 54 illustrations.
27. Lucian Scherman, "Siddha. Sanskrit Letters as Mystical Symbols in Later Buddhism Outside India," in *Art and Thought*, ed. K. Bharata Iyer [Coomaraswamy-Festschrift], London, 1947, 55-62. *Bija* also has the meaning of element, principle, source, origin, truth as cause of being; the content of Absolute Consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna) as "seed," i.e., ground and origin of all phenomena (Soothill-Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, 426); cf. T. Yura, "Bewusstseinslehre im Buddhismus," *Mitteilungen der OAG* 25, Teil A, Tōkyō, 1932, 23. Such a syllable constitutes the essential part of the mantra of every sacred being. Cf. van Gulik, *Siddham*, see bibliography.
28. Occasionally a certain similarity between the Lotus Flower and the Heavenly Rose in Dante's work has been noticed (H. Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga*, p. v; Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*; R. Guardini, *Vision und Dichtung*, Tübingen-Stuttgart, 1946, 51 ff.; C. G. Jung, "Über Mandalasymbolik," in *Gestaltungen des Unbewussten*, Zürich, 1950, 202. On lotus symbolism, see H. Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia* 1, pp. 158-230; ("Myths and Symbols"), etc., index; William E. Ward, "The Lotus Symbol: Its Meaning in Buddhist Art and Philosophy," *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* XI/2 (December 1952). Cf. also concerning the Taoist sphere and the psychology of the unconscious, Richard Wilhelm and C. G. Jung, *Das Geheimnis der Goldenen Blüte* (München, 1929); new ed. Zürich, 1948.

29. The East Asian terms for the temple-monastery are Chin. *sse* (or *ssu*), Sino-J. *Ji* (J. equivalent *tera*, *-dera*). A particular precinct of such complex is called Chin. *yüan*, J. *in*; a small monastery, a special precinct inhabited by only one or a few monks, a "cottage" within or outside of a larger temple monastery is called Chin. and J. *an*. Temples are frequently also called Chin. *shan*, J. *san* ("mountain") and not only in cases where they are located on a mountain, a hill, or at least in a natural landscape. See note 56. On terms used for the various halls see note 39.
30. In East Asian landscapes, particularly in paintings including temples, the temples are preferably located at the remotest corners of narrow gorges and at the same time on the highest point of the pilgrim's path winding its way across the picture space; i.e., at a point where the realm not to be entered begins and loses itself in the misty clouds and the white background. In such pictures the spiritual aspects of the dimension of depth are also related to height which symbolizes the numinous sphere of remoteness. The pictorial space moves more and more from the foreground of the "world," the "here," into this depth and height and thus acquires its peculiar structure. This is one of the interesting clues for an interpretation of these buildings derived from the way East Asian paintings depict them.
31. Erwin Rousselle, *Die typischen Bildwerke des buddhistischen Tempels in China*, see bibliography.
32. J. J. M. de Groot, *Universismus. Die Grundlage der Religion und Ethik, des Staatswesens und der Wissenschaften Chinas*, Berlin, 1918. See also Alfred Forke, *Geschichte der alten chinesischen Philosophie*, Hamburg, 1927; Forke, "Die Gedankenwelt des chinesischen Kulturkreises," in *Handbuch der Philosophie*, also separately München, 1927; F. E. A. Krause, *Ju-Tao-Fo. Die religiösen und philosophischen Systeme Ostasiens*, München, 1924.
33. In East Asia referred to as "Seven-Building Monastery" (Chin. *ch'i-t'ang chia-lan*, J. *shichi-dô ga-ran*; *chia-lan* and *ga-ran*, respectively, are the shortened, or rather mutilated forms of the Sanskrit word *sanghârâma*: "garden for a monk's community," "monastery precinct"). The "Seven Buildings," regarded as the core of the precinct, vary depending on school and time period; those listed above under no. 2-8 are usually included but individual buildings may be replaced by other buildings which are of particular importance to the individual schools involved.
34. The question of what types of Buddhist temples exist for particular religious functions, like so many other questions in this field, can still not be answered satisfactorily. At this point only a short and tentative listing of such temple buildings is provided. Their functions do, of course, overlap occasionally, and each also belongs to rather different spheres of a precinct's life and activities. These types are: main and central temple of a "sect" or "subsect"; branch temples of such temples; monastery temple proper; small solitary temples (which frequently evolve into famous sanctuaries); temples marking the sites of miraculous events; pilgrimage temples; tomb temples; memorial temples (for patriarchs, etc.); donor temples mainly for representative purposes; guardian temples to ward off demonic powers; official state temples for the protection and advancement of the country, etc. (The

- problem of the symbolic significance, i.e. the "iconology," of temples and temple buildings, is dealt with below.)
35. The terms "one-storied, two-storied, and three-storied" are used in an East Asian sense. A one-storied building is one on ground level, a two-storied building has an upper floor on top of a ground-level floor, and a three-story building has two upper floors. The English (but not the American) usage may be misleading in some cases.
 36. Dagobert Frey, *Grundlegung zu einer vergleichenden Kunstwissenschaft. Raum und Zeit in der Kunst der afrikanisch-urasiatischen Hochkulturen*, Innsbruck/Wien, 1949; also in *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte* (1949). On East Asian architecture see pp. 76-80 and pp. 109-116.
 - 36a. The names given to temples are highly interesting and deserve detailed studies (which have yet to be done). They require more detailed explanations than those provided here. These names may refer to the name of the place where the temple is located, to the name of the reign period during which it was founded, to the purpose it served, to a miraculous event or important personality to which it owed its existence, but also to important terms of the Buddhist doctrine and its numerous sacred figures and symbols. Names may express a spiritual desire or auspicious phrase or refer either to a typical experience of nature which is held to be symbolic in character or to poetic similes. Something akin to the patrocinium of Christian churches is found in Buddhism only in cases where an entire temple (and not just a single hall or chapel of such temple) is dedicated to a particular Buddha, Bodhisattva, etc. Though this does occur frequently, such beings are really not "saints." See my recent study on Japanese temple names: D. Seckel, *Buddhistische Tempelnamen in Japan*, Stuttgart, 1985; short survey in *MN* 40/4 (1985), 359 ff.
 37. The building type of the tower is represented by the pagoda which is, however, never a bell tower and is also in some other respects basically different from the Western campanile or church tower in meaning, function, and building form.
 38. Because of this arrangement such halls are called in China *t'ien-tzu-t'ang*; i.e., a hall in the form of the sinogram for rice paddy (which shows a square divided into four small sections).
 39. Chin. *t'ang*, J. *dô*: originally a stately building raised as the main building on a specially prepared platform; also reception hall of an ancient Chinese noble home or palace; also ancestral hall and later applied to Buddhist and other cult buildings. A similar term frequently used in the same sense is Chin. *tien*, J. *ten* (-den). The names of the different halls of a temple are formed with either one of these two (for example, *ch'an-t'ang*, *zen-dô* = Meditation hall; *fo-tien*, *butsu-den* = Buddha hall). Entire temples are called *t'ang* (*dô*) if they consist essentially of a single hall as do many of the branch temples of larger temples. A high-rise building is called *lou* in Chin., *ro* in J. ("pavilion," "tower"); for example, *chung-lou*, *shu-rô* = bell "tower." For the designations of pagodas see note 48.
 40. The house foundations excavated in Anyang, the capital of the Shang dynasty (second half of the second millennium B.C.), reveal the basic form of the hall

and suggest a construction method similar in essential points to that used in late antiquity and today, Herrlee G. Creel, *The Birth of China*, 3d ed., New York, 1954, 61 ff., Fig. 1.

41. The oldest temple buildings in East Asia, preserved in nearly original form despite numerous restorations, are the Golden Hall, Pagoda, and Middle Gate of the Hôryûji near Nara (7th to early 8th century). Their wooden posts display a prominent bulge (entasis). This bulge is still found in posts from the 8th century but disappears completely after 800. Whether this bulge was derived from Hellenistic forerunners, with intermediary stages in Korea, China, Central Asia and Iran or northwest India, respectively, remains unclear at this time. Though we are able to trace such a migration almost without gaps for East Asian ornamental features of the 5th through the 8th centuries, this is an entirely different matter.
42. Tetsuro Yoshida, *Das japanische Wohnhaus*, Berlin, 1935; 2d ed. Tübingen, 1954.
43. This makes it possible to take apart such wooden structures piece by piece for restoration work and, after rotten parts have been replaced, to reassemble them; this procedure is still customary in Japan today and we owe to it the remarkable preservation of wooden buildings since the 7th century. Frequently, however, major or minor changes in bracketing and especially in roof construction have taken place. (On these changes see particularly Soper's book listed in the bibliography.)
44. Mathematical proportions also have great significance (and are presumably also symbolic in nature) in East Asian architecture, though we know practically nothing about them. One example is provided by 15*; others are in F. Baltzer, *Die Architektur der Kultbauten Japans*, Berlin, 1907, 306 (so-called Tahôtô pagoda type) and Chûta Itô: *Nippon kenchûku no kenkyû I Tôkyô*, 1942, p. 21 (two temple gates). In Japanese residential houses the standard measurements are provided by the length of the tatami mat and are applied throughout the building as a uniform module principle. This practice is several centuries old (Yoshida, *Wohnhaus*, see note 42, pp. 51 f., 121 f., p. 184).
45. The earliest surviving Chinese temple buildings are the Kuanyin-kô of the Tu-lo-ssu of 984 (Soper, *Evolution*, illustr. 30) and a building of the Ta-fokuang-ssu on Wu-t'ai-shan of 857 (Soper, "Hsiang-kuo-ssu," *JAOS* 68 (1948), 36.) Recently, a still older temple building has been discovered in Shansi (Nan-chan-ssu), presumably dating from 782. But these are isolated and relatively late cases.
46. Individual house models (deposited in tombs) and house depictions from the Later Han (2nd century B.C.) show the beginnings of curvature; on the other hand, all the architectural forms of the Yün-kang caves from the second half of the 5th century still have straight roofs. The Hôryûji and the Tamamushi shrine (see p. 1, 150), dating from the 7th century (but following slightly older continental models) have fully developed curved roofs. It is possible that the "belated" retention of the straight roof can be explained by its location in North China and that curvature occurred in South China earlier and may perhaps even have originated there.

47. Alexander C. Soper, "The 'Dome of Heaven' in Asia," *Art Bulletin* 29 (1947), 225-248. Cf. Karl Lehmann, "The Dome of Heaven," *Art Bulletin* 27 (1945), 1 ff.
48. *Stûpa* originally meant knot of hair, then vertex or summit, and generally hill, pile, tumulus. The dialect form *thûpa* (> Hindi *tôp*) is the root of the English "tope." The etymology of the term *pagoda* is unclear. The word may have come about as the result of a metathesis from the Ceylonese *dâgaba* which corresponds to Sanskrit *dhâtu-garbha* (Pâli: *dhâtu-gabbha*) = world womb, reliquary; or it could be derived from *bud-kûtâgâra* = Buddha tower. Both explanations are unsatisfactory. In East Asia the pagoda is called Chin. *t'a* (< *t'ap*), J. *tô*, with specifying words added for the various types. The term Chin. *p'u* (t)-*t'a* also occurs (usually written phonetically). It is supposed to be a sinicized transcription of "Buddha" and hence an abbreviation of *bud-kûtâgâra*. Phonetic renditions of Sanskrit *Stûpa* are also the words Chin. *su-t'a-p'o*, J. *so-tô-ba* (shortened and adapted to *tô: tôba*). The use of the terms "pagodas" for the Buddha figurines with nodding heads--pseudo-East Asia bric-a-brac--is sheer nonsense.
49. Korea basically has two types of pagodas: the predominantly wooden multistoried pagoda and the solid stone pagoda of medium or smaller size, with protruding flat roof plates at every story and frequently also bedecked with richly sculptured decorations. This type, though occasionally also found in China and Japan, is especially characteristic of Korea; see 15* with proportional scheme (cf. note 44).
50. Boerschmann, *Pagoden* I (see bibliography), p. 194 ff.
51. The widely-held opinion that the central post is suspended from the top of the building structure and is given free play in an indentation of the foundation stone is justified only for a few pagodas of very recent date (17th-19th century). Obviously this is a late, but statically quite ingenious invention.
52. O. Kümmel, *Die Kunst Ostasiens*, Berlin, 1922, fig. 33; O. Fischer: "Die Kunst Indiens, Chinas und Japans," *Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte* IV (Berlin: 1928), pl. 447.
53. With slight variations but unmistakably identical basic form, the *tahôtô* appears also as *gorintô*, see p. 177.
54. Günter Bandmann, "Ikonologie der Architektur," *Jahrbuch für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* (1951), 67-109. Bandmann, *Mittelalterliche Architektur als Bedeutungsträger*, Berlin, 1951, with extensive bibliography. Hans Sedlmayr, "Architektur als abbildende Kunst," *Sitzungs-Berichte der österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, philosophisch-historische Klasse* 225, 3. Abhandlung, Wien, 1948. Sedlmayr, *Die Entstehung der Kathedrale*, Zürich: 1948 and 1950. The conceptual distinction between iconography and iconology cannot be discussed here. On the iconology of Asian architecture: Robert Heine-Geldern, "Weltbild und Bauform in Südostasien," *Wiener Beiträge zur Kunst- und Kulturgeschichte Asiens* 4 (1930), 28-78, with extensive bibliographic references to comparable phenomena in other cultures; Dagobert Frey, *Grundlegung* (see note 36). In India architectural structures designed to imitate either the structure of the world or of supraworldly

- spheres are called *pratibimba*, i.e., reflecting image, depiction of real objects (Benjamin Rowland, *Art and Architecture of India*, [1953], 273). "All such Oriental structures symbolize the multi-layered link between eternity and time" (Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia* [1955], 286). See also Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple*, 2 vols., esp. Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1946, 19 ff. and 161 ff.
55. Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls I* (Rome: 1949), 318. A comprehensive survey is provided by A. B. Govinda, "Some Aspects of Stûpa Symbolism," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art* 2 (1934); and 4 (1936) for India and Ceylon.
 56. The fact that Buddhist temples are so frequently called "Such-and-such mountain" [-*shan*, -*san*] (see above, note 29) is perhaps not only the result of their topographic location and intimate relationship to the particular landscape but also may have been derived from this cosmological symbolism.
 57. Alexander C. Soper, "The 'Dome of Heaven' in Asia" (see note 47), p. 246. One such bronze mirror at the Kanzeonji (Kyûshû, Japan) even has in relief on its back side the Chinese symbols of space and time arranged in a circle around the central Sumeru mountain and the four oceans; see *Kanzeonji Taikyô* Tôkyô, 1934, pl. 46. On the symbolism of East Asian mirrors see Schuyler Cammann, "Significant patterns on Chinese bronze mirrors," *Archives of the Chinese Art Society of America* 9 (1955).
 58. Cf. Bandmann, *Iconologie* (see note 54), 83.
 59. Shinkô Mochizuki, *Bukkyô Daijiten* II (1911), based on a Japanese Zen dictionary of the 18th century.
 60. Cf. the catalogue of the exhibition *Symbolisme cosmique et Monuments religieux*, Paris: Musée Guimet, 1953. It gives samples of all cultures of the world in which such an iconology plays a role.
 61. See Rousselle's important work cited in note 31.
 62. A remarkable piece has been preserved in Japan in the Chûgûji (near the Hôryûji): a Mañjuśrî figure (*Monju-Bosatsu*) of 1296 which consists of nothing more than a papier-mâché cover around several Sûtra scrolls and booklets, packages of granulated relics and incense. This figure represents the most important surviving example of a papier-mâché technique which appears likely to have been rather widespread. *Chûgûji/Hôkiji Taikyô*, Tôkyô, 1940, pl. 17-23 with explanations.
 63. Siegfried Behrsing, "Der Heiligenschein in Ostasien," *ZDMG* 103, N.F. 28 (1953). A detailed typology of all existing forms based on a work by the Japanese scholar Ishida Mosaku. Halos may be executed in stone (always in shallow ornamental or sculpted relief or linear engraving, occasionally with painted smooth surfaces); metal (cast relief or pierced work in sheet metal; also engravings on smooth surfaces); wood (shallow or deep relief carving or pierced carving, occasionally unfolding very freely, both painted and/or gilded); also painted ornaments on wooden surfaces. Small, fully round figures of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas or Apsarasas are frequently attached to the halos.
 64. D. Seckel, *Buddhistische Prozessionsmasken in Japan*, see note 24.

65. Friedrich Perzynski, *Japanische Masken. Nô und Kyôgen* 2, Berlin/Leipzig, 1925, 170 (with illustrations).
66. Karl With, *Chinesische Kleinbildnerei in Steatit*, Oldenburg, 1926.
67. Tôshôdaiji, Nara: 8th century; perhaps of Chinese origin. Picture: Nanto Jûdaiji Taikyô (see bibliography), vol. 22, plate 37.
68. There exists another process employing a negative mold to produce the parts of lacquered figures. The parts are then fitted (for example, sewed) together.
69. Langdon Warner, *The Craft of the Japanese Sculptor*, New York, 1936, 36 f. The invention of this technique is here erroneously ascribed to Unkei, ca. 1153-1224, but it is at least 200 years older.
70. Cf. Dagobert Frey, "Zum Problem der Symmetrie in der bildenden Kunst," *Studium Generale* 2 (1949), 268. In contrast to other figure types, a turn of the body and incline of the head is extremely rare in Buddha figures and limited to strictly defined exceptional cases as, for example, Amitâbha turning to the faithful or the Śâkyamuni-Prabhûtaratna group. These are either scenic events based on literary descriptions or manifestations of later, more popular and emotional forms of faith, and it is always the nirmâna-kâya or sambhoga-kâya which appears in this posture and never the (absolute) dharma-kâya.
71. Some typical poses other than those showing them standing or seated with crossed legs are characteristic of the freer nature of Bodhisattvas who are closer to the human sphere: first, a somewhat looser seated pose with legs crossed and one foot placed more or less freely in front of the lower part of the other leg, or below it and frequently emerging from the gown. Both feet of the Buddha figures are always placed on the thighs with their soles turned upward. There is another seated pose with one leg hanging down and the other crossing it at knee level; one hand then grasps the ankle of the foot and the other rests on the knee of the raised leg with the fingertips just touching the cheek (45). This is the typical pose of the Bodhisattva Maitreya, the future Buddha awaiting his hour (also of Śâkyamuni prior to his becoming a Buddha). Other Bodhisattvas and some gods also display seated poses with one leg dangling down, but in these instances the other foot is placed directly next to (but not on top of) the thigh (so that the raised lower part of the leg comes to rest in a horizontal position), or the knee is bent high and the foot thus comes to rest on the seat. This posture is also found among figures sitting on the floor. Frequently an arm is made to lean on the knee near the elbow--a pose of "royal ease" (Sanskrit *râjalilâ*; 68) which leaves the other arm dangling loosely. Kneeling positions do occur, but are relatively rare and are found primarily among the figures accompanying Amitâbha as they approach a believer on his deathbed in greeting and venerating poses. Dancing poses are only found in Bodhisattvas and Apsarasas (which are often rather difficult to distinguish); placed on clouds, they surround a Buddha and offer sacrifices and cultic acts to him in veneration. Music and dance are particular parts of those acts. Such figures may also display various kneeling poses.

These variations of pose are missing in Buddha figures as a matter of principle. The only variant form, specifically the Buddha's, is a seated pose

in the "European" manner but it is relatively rare and was only popular during earlier, i.e., pre-T'ang times; it is used only for Śākyamuni figures, because Śākyamuni is a Buddha belonging to the empirical human world. Wherever the "European" manner of sitting is combined with crossed feet we encounter most likely, but not always, the figure of Maitreya (but again only or almost always only during that earlier period). The reclining figure is found only in sculptured and painted depictions of Śākyamuni's death; this pose is very rigid and resembles a standing figure placed in a horizontal position.

Specific poses belong mostly to certain figure groups, individual figures or their variants, i.e., they are iconographically fixed and not left to the flight of individual artistic imagination. Freer, more active poses should not automatically be interpreted as reflecting an artistically less restrained treatment.

- 71a. This reflects a characteristically East Asian basic pose expressing a basic personal state; on this state, cf. Karlfried Graf von Dürckheim, *Hara* (literally "belly"). *Die Erdmitte des Menschen*, München/Planegg, 1956. Cf. also p. 141 and note 85. On the tribhanga, see B. Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, 2nd ed., p. 133.
72. Anesaki, *Buddhist Art*, bibliography, p. 36.
- 72a. Heinrich Zimmer, *The Art of Indian Asia I*, New York, 1955, p. 183.
73. A Buddha with splendid crown and other jewelry is an exception that has a particular justification (cf. p. 50).
74. Osvald Sirén, *Chinese Sculpture I*, London, 1925, p. XXIV.
75. Yanagi, Sôetsu, "Mokujiki Gogyô Shônin," *MN* 6 (1943), p. 202 (with illustrations and additional literature).
76. For technical reasons this chapter can only be inadequately illustrated. Buddhist painting can only adequately be presented on large plates and in detailed reproductions. For a comprehensive review and critical investigation of Japan's wall painting in its entirety (including lost but documented works), see Tanaka, *Shigehisa: Nippon hekiga no kenkyû*, Ôsaka, 1944 [Shôwa 19]. For publications of the Turfan and Tun-huang paintings, see bibliography. For some illustrations from Tun-huang, see also O. Sirén, *Chinese Painting*, Part I, Vol. 3, with detailed texts in Vol. 1 (London: 1956), pp. 61 ff., 85 ff.
77. Report: Dietrich Seckel in *Asiatische Studien* 3 (Bern: 1949), pp. 48 ff. and 144 ff. Short notice by A. C. Soper in *Oriental Art* 2 (1949), p. 67.
78. Erwin Rousselle, "Ein Abhiṣeka-Ritus im Mantra-Buddhismus," *Sinica-Sonderausgabe* (1934 and 1935). A shorter description in Helmuth von Glasenapp, *Der Buddhismus in Indien und im Fernen Osten*, Berlin/Zürich, 1936, pp. 279 ff.; more detailed in H. v. Glasenapp, *Buddhistische Mysterien* (Stuttgart: 1940), pp. 114-126.
79. *Nippon Emakimono Shûsei*, 22 vols. Tôkyô, 1929-32. Examples: III 74; VII 63; VIII 54-56; XIV 13; XV 70, 77; XVI 14, 23, 67, 92; XVII 77 (parody); XXI 70.
80. Takakusu Junjirô, et al., eds., *Taishô Shinshû Daizôkyô Zuzô* (Engl. title: *The Tripitaka in Chinese, Picture Section*), 12 vols. Tôkyô, 1932 ff.

81. The travesty may occasionally only be apparent: Suzuki, *Essays III* (London, 1953), p. 303, explains that "Samantabhadra as courtesan" could perhaps be regarded as an embodiment of sensual love treated as foreshadowing the spiritual love of a Bodhisattva. It is also possible that we are dealing with the legend of a certain incarnation.
82. Genuine frescoes can be found, for example, in the Central Asian cave temples, but only in floor paintings. Clues, both welcome and unwelcome, about the chemical composition of the pigments of the Hōryūji wall paintings were detected during the 1949 fire disaster. The chemical changes made it possible to ascertain those original pigments which had remained unknown during earlier investigations. For a short report, see the essay referred to in note 77. Detailed comments on the pigments of the Tun-huang wall paintings in L. Warner, *Buddhist Wall-Paintings*, Cambridge, Mass., 1938, p. 9. Cf. also the chapter on technique in W. Ch. White, *Chinese Temple Frescoes*, Toronto, 1940, pp. 25 ff.; *Ibid.*, pp. 14 ff., for a list of the most important Chinese wall paintings, including those in Western collections (with bibliography).
83. Berthold Laufer, *Sino-Iranica*, Publication 201, Anthropological Series 15:3, Chicago: Field Museum, 1919, p. 508. For a survey of the pigments used in East Asian painting, see Rokurō Uemura, "Studies on the Ancient Pigments in Japan," *Eastern Art* 3 (1931), pp. 47-60. This is a detailed technical study which includes samples of the various colors.
84. Dietrich Seckel, "Kirikane. Die Schnittgold-Dekoration in der japanischen Kunst, ihre Technik und ihre Geschichte," *Oriens Extremus* 1 (1954), pp. 71-88.
85. E. Rousselle, "Seelische Führung im lebenden Taoismus," *Chinesisch-Deutscher Almanach* (1934), p. 26 f. on the three "currents" and three energetic "fields" in the human body: center of the forehead, heart, center of the belly. The essay also appeared in *Eranos-Jahrbuch* [1933], pp. 135 ff. Cf. note 71a.
86. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Third Series, Kyōto, 1934, pp. 58 ff.; new ed. London, 1953, p. 76 f. Compare the ideas of the contemporary Japanese philosopher Kitarō Nishida on space and time centered around the term of the "Eternal Now": Robert Schinzinger, "Über Kitarō Nishidas Philosophie," *MN* 3 (1940), pp. 28-39, particularly pp. 33 ff. See also K. Nishida, *Die intelligible Welt*, translated and with an introduction by R. Schinzinger (Tōkyō, 1958). Engl. ed., *Intelligibility and the Philosophy of Nothingness* (Berlin, 1943).
87. Erwin Panofsky, "Die Perspektive als 'symbolische Form'," *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, Leipzig/Berlin, 1924-1925, 1927, pp. 258-330. Ludwig Bachhofer, "Die Raumdarstellung in der chinesischen Malerei des ersten Jahrtausends n. Chr.," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, N.F. 8 (1931), pp. 193-242. (Demonstrated particularly in pictures from Tun-huang.)
88. Suzuki, *Essays III* (see note 86), p. 59 f.; new ed., p. 71 f. and elsewhere. The central concepts are rendered as "universal interpenetration" and "general fusion."

89. According to Wolfgang Schöne's terminology, *Über das Licht in der Malerei*, Berlin, 1954, p. 55, these phenomena in Buddhist painting are *Eigenlicht* (self-luminous) and *Sendelicht* (emanating light). Both terms come under the larger term *Offenbarungslicht* (revealing light), in contradistinction to the *Fremdlicht* (extraneous light) or *Beleuchtungslicht* (illuminating light) as used in post-medieval European painting--originating in a natural, artificial or sacred *Leuchtlicht* (shining light). These questions applied to East Asian painting would point to interesting parallels in medieval European painting, but also to essential differences. Schöne's comments on the nature of gold and color, the absence of shadows and modelling in medieval painting, and his discussion of the metaphysics of light in medieval times are also significant for a comparative approach.
90. Cf. Otto Fischer, "Achtzehn Stilarten der chinesischen Figurenmalerei," *OZ* 8 (1919-1920), p. 85; Henry P. Bowie, *On the Laws of Japanese Painting* (1911); new ed. New York, 1954, pp. 63 ff. and plates XLI ff.; Benjamin March, *Some Technical Terms of Chinese Painting* (Baltimore: 1935), pp. 42 ff. and plates VI/VII. Raphael Petrucci, *Encyclopédie de la peinture chinoise* (Paris: 1918), translation with comments of the painting manual "Mustard Seed Garden"; most recent (not satisfactory) translation and comments: Mai-mai Sze, *The Tao of Painting*, Bollingen Series 49, 2 vols. New York, 1956.
91. Hans Jantzen, *Über Prinzipien der Farbengebung in der Malerei, Kongress für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, Berlin, 1913; Report: Stuttgart, 1914, pp. 322-327. Reprinted in *Über den gotischen Kirchenraum' und andere Aufsätze*, Berlin, 1951, pp. 61-67. Erich von den Bercken, "Über einige Grundprobleme der Geschichte des Kolorismus in der Malerei," *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst, N.F.* 5 (1928). Cf. Th. Hetzer, *Tizian, Geschichte seiner Farbe*, Frankfurt, 1935; 2nd ed., 1948; also W. Schöne (see note 89), with further bibliographic references.
92. Detailed color reproductions in *Pageant of Japanese Art* (see bibliography) I/18; Yashiro, *Art Treasures of Japan* (see bibliography) I/195 and many other publications.
93. Good color reproductions are in the Japanese art journals *Kokka* and *Bijutsu Kenkyū*; also in the loose plate collection *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryō* (Tōkyō: 1938-); in K. Moriya, *Die japanische Malerei*, Wiesbaden, 1953 and in more recent Japanese publications.
94. Soothill-Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, London, 1937, pp. 196-197. See above, p. 18 f. on the term *nīpa-kāya*. Cf. also the Great Sukhāvati-vyūha, trans. by F. Max Müller in *The Sacred Books of the East* 49/II, Oxford, 1894, p. 3 and p. 12. See D. Seckel, "Das Gold in der japanischen Kunst," *Asiatische Studien* 12 (1959), pp. 82 ff.; Engl. title, *Gold in Buddhist Art*, pp. 83-94.
95. Robert Schinzinger, "Das Problem der Persönlichkeit in Japan," *Nachrichten der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasien* 65, Tōkyō, 1943. Cf. Schinzinger, "Japanische Philosophie," *ibid.* 32A, Tōkyō, 1942, p. 15. On "Non Ego," see Hermann Bohner, "Shōtoku Taishi," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens*, Suppl. Vol. 15, Tōkyō, 1940, p. 770 f., p. 775 (from a text of the builders' guild).

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96. Laurence Binyon, *Painting in the Far East*, 3d ed., London, 1923, p. 147.
97. In particular, many beautiful examples are preserved in the Chûsonji temple (north of Sendai in Northern Japan); see *Chûsonji Taikyô* 3, Tôkyô, 1941; Yamato-e Dôkôkai, ed., *Chûsonji Kyô-e*, Tôkyô, 1938.
98. Kenji Moriya, *Die japanische Malerei*, Wiesbaden, 1953, pl. 51 (in color).
99. An example from the Diamond Mountains in Korea is depicted in F. M. Trautz, *Japan, Korea und Formosa*, Orbis Terrarum, Berlin, 1930, pl. 238.
100. For a picture of a Mandala pair with symbolic letters in place of the figures see M. Anesaki, *Buddhist Art in its Relation to Buddhist Ideals*, Boston/New York, 1915, pl. 16; A. Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*, Cambridge, Mass., 1935; 2nd ed. (New Delhi: 1972), fig. 32/33. Cf. plate 99 of this study.
101. Aurel Stein, *Serindia* 4, Oxford, 1921, pl. C (=100); explained in vol. 2, p. 893 and 1088. The sacred text is printed, in the words of the sponsor, for free distribution in order to keep the memory of his parents alive. There are repeated statements by the Buddha, scattered throughout the Sûtra text, to the effect that those who copy the text and spread the teaching will acquire infinite merit; and that wherever the sacred scripture is kept the Buddha is present (word, sacred scripture = sacred person, sacred body). Cf. Thomas Francis Carter, *The Invention of Printing in China and its Spread Westward*, New York, 1925, 41 ff.; 2d ed., rev. by L. Carrington Goodrich, New York, 1955, 56 ff.
102. Carter, *op. cit.*, 33 ff.; 2d ed., 46 ff.
103. Julius Kurth, *Geschichte des japanischen Holzschnitts* 1, Leipzig, 1925/29, pl. 21, text 306 ff.
104. Though not specific to Buddhism the woodblock prints--sheets and books--are very useful for studying Buddhist culture and art because they depict temple precincts in their entirety, and usually include the surrounding landscape, in sketched versions. Such sketches are very valuable for the reconstruction of the original precincts even though they are lacking in details. These prints are either on single sheets which pilgrims took along with them because they were believed to contain something of the sacred substance of the sanctuary or, in the case of books, because they were a kind of Baedeker travel guide describing and showing all important buildings and other notable sights of a town or area. Paintings, too, provide valuable source material for our knowledge about early Buddhist architecture, particularly about buildings since lost or substantially altered during later times.
105. For a beautiful selection of examples see Otto Kümmel and Ernst Grosse, "Ostasiatisches Gerät," *Die Kunst des Ostens* 10 (Berlin, 1925), pl. 17-36.
106. Itô Chûta, "Asuka-moyô no kigen ni tsuite," [On the origin of the ornaments of the Asuka period] in Itô, *Nippon Kenchiku no Kenkyû* [Studies on Japanese Architecture] 2, Tôkyô, 1942, 387 ff. (in Japanese); also in Ito, *Hôryûji*, 9th ed. Ôsaka, 1942, 171 ff. (with location map).
107. Cf. the essay by S. Behrsing cited in note 63.

108. Willibald Kirfel, *Der Rosenkranz. Ursprung und Ausbreitung*, Walldorf/Hessen, 1949. (Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte des Orients, Heft 1.)
109. The art of flower arrangement (ikebana) evolved in Japan from the Buddhist flower offering. The oldest ikebana style types still preserve the complicated, strictly axial, towering structure of the solemn flower arrangements on the Buddhist altar. But simple lotus blossoms are also inserted into slim vases and placed on altars. These were frequently given a lasting form by fashioning them in gilt metal.
110. Ferdinand Lessing, "Über die Symbolsprache in der chinesischen Kunst," *Sinica* 9 (1934); 10 (1935).
111. East Asian music has a similar universal historical significance. It remained just as little confined to the Buddhist sphere as ornaments, but was sustained by the flow of the larger cultural and historical Buddhist traditions. West and Central Asian forms are still preserved in Japanese court and cult music and dances. Cf. Hans Eckardt, "Asiatische Musik," *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* 1, ed. Friedrich Blume, Kassel/Basel, 1949-1951, columns 750-753; Kenneth Robinson and Hans Eckardt, "Chinesische Musik," *ibid.*, 2 (1952), columns 1195-1216; "Japanische Musik," *ibid.*, columns 1720-1753.
112. Apratisthita-nirvâna is "the state of a Buddha who, though forever liberated from samsâra, has not yet entered the state of eternal rest, because out of his supreme wisdom and infinite compassion, he wishes to work incessantly for the sake of all sentient creatures. This dynamic, active, altruistic nirvâna is the true and highest nirvâna." H. v. Glasenapp, *Der Buddhismus in Indien und im Fernen Osten*, Berlin/Zürich, 1936, 64.
113. René Grousset, *Bilan de l'histoire*, Paris, 1948, 157 (on the great Buddha of Lung-mên); *Bilanz der Geschichte*, Zürich, etc., 1950, 144.
114. Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* 1, Rome, 1949, 291.
115. Oda, Tokunô, *Bukkyô Daijiten* (see bibliography), 771 f.; Mochizuki Shinkô, *Bukkyô Daijiten* 3, pp. 2607 ff. I am using in this and a number of other instances the Japanese form of the term because it is preferred in the Japanese literature on the subject; Other terms, too, have become known in the West only or predominantly in their Japanese form. Several Sûtras and tracts have the term *shôgon* in their title. See *Hôbôgirin, Fascicule Annexe* (Tôkyô: 1931), 187, 201, 307, 319, 357, 446, 585, 818, 1050, 1375, 1604. The last work (*Ta-ch'eng chuang-yen ching-lun, Dai-jô shô-gon kyô-ron*; Nanjô No. 1190) is edited and translated by Sylvain Lévi, *Asanga: Mahâyâna-Sutrânlankâra, Exposé de la doctrine du grand véhicule selon le système yogâcâra*, 2 vols., Paris, 1908-1911.
116. J. Gonda, "The Meaning of the Word Alâmkara," *A Volume of Eastern and Indian Studies Presented to Prof. F. W. Thomas . . .*, Bombay, 1939, 97-114.
117. William Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, new ed. (1899); reprint: Oxford, 1951, 1041.
118. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, Second Series, Kyôto, 1933, 132; comment on and explanation of the illustration, 184; reprint (London: 1950), 151 and 206: "Not only . . . the monkeys and the stork [on the Kuan-yin-Triptych by Mu-hsi], but the bamboos, the trees, the rock, the water, the

- meanest grass in the crannies, and the vines overhanging the crags--are they not, each in its way, the so many vyûhas embellishing the Dharmadhātu in which the Bodhisattva has his abode?" Cf. *Essays*, 3d Series, 129 n.; reprint, 148 n.
119. D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, 3d series, Kyôto, 1934, 49, 97 and 107 ff.; 129 n.; reprint London, 1953, 74, 123 ff., 148 n. (see also Index).
 120. Mochizuki, *Bukkyô Daijiten* 3, 2607 f. and Oda, *Bukkyô Daijiten*, 771: A list of several systems for classifying possible acts of shôgon is outlined in Dietrich Seckel, "Grundzüge der buddhistischen Malerei," *Mitteilungen der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 36 C (Tôkyô: 1945), 61, n. 77.
 121. Helmuth von Glasenapp, "Entwicklungsstufen des indischen Denkens," *Schriften der Königsberger Gelehrten Gesellschaft, Geisteswissenschaftliche Klasse*, Jahrgang 15/16 (1940), Heft 5. In Brahmanism the offering, for example, is a substantial entity, just as are mantras, hymns, and even sacred meters. From this basis the Buddhist concept of the "transfer" of one's own religious-moral merits to others (for the sake of their spiritual bliss) becomes more intelligible, and many figures of Buddhist iconography which otherwise seem to be purely abstract constructions thus appear less peculiar.
 122. This beauty also belongs to upâyâ-kauśalya (J. *hōben*, see p. 152 above), as does all Buddhist art, and in one of the shôgon groups we actually find the hōben-shôgon in the sense of adorning the Buddha body and Buddha land with the hōben of the Bodhisattva's deed by which he leads the unlightened beings to salvation. All the Bodhisattva deeds (and even more those of lesser beings) are regarded as merely preliminary "furnishings," as adornments of the surface of the Buddhist teachings, but do not constitute their essence (Seckel, *Grundzüge*, 66, n. 87; based on Oda, *Bukkyô Daijiten*, 772).
 123. The symbolic gestures (mudrâ), as Rouselle emphasizes, "Typische Bildwerke" (see bibliography), *Sinica* 7 (1932), 70, n. 2, are both vehicles of magic effects in the cosmos (i.e., "ontologic") and aids for man which enable him to generate the proper spiritual attitude for the religious act within himself (i.e., "psychic"). See also *ibid.*, p. 110 with n. 4 on meditation: colorful visions of paradise are, philosophically speaking, "without value," but do possess value as meditation symbols and psychological aids. But, because they evoke and, in a sense, create numinous realities, they thus constitute true reality. And if, as claimed by the sacred scriptures, meditation of a Buddha transforms the empirical world into a transcendent Buddha world, this, too, is an "objective" event. The depiction of this Buddha world and its figures is therefore not mere "imagination" or "metaphor" ("image") or even "symbol," but establishes reality--a reality which, in a final, paradoxical climax, is transcended into "emptiness."
 124. The same mediating role has been established for ritual implements (see p. 307).
 125. For example, in the case of the 16 Arhats of Kuan Hsiu (=Ch'an Yüeh, 832-912) in the Takahashi collection (most likely replicas); Otto Fischer, "Die Kunst Indiens, Chinas und Japans," *Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte* IV, 2d ed. Berlin, 1928, 609.

126. Cf. Max Wegner, *OZ N.F.* 5 (1929), 4 and 61 with reference to Maitreya sculptures. Well known also is the legend of the creation of the first Buddha image (described and with source passages in William Cohn, *Buddha in der Kunst des Ostens*, Leipzig, 1925, XXXI ff.). This was not a vision in the strict sense of the word but was nonetheless a miraculous happening. The same degree of prestige as that enjoyed by revealed archetypal images was enjoyed by replicas of real images seen and copied by Chinese pilgrims in the holy land of India. These became the objects of their own regional traditions throughout East Asia. See Benjamin Rowlands, "Indian Images in Chinese Sculpture," *Artibus Asiae* 10 (1947), pp. 5-20.
127. Cf. Rousselle, "Typische Bildwerke," *Sinica* 6 (1931), pp. 288 ff. for a detailed description of these meditation processes. On the relationship between meditation and vision in Buddhism see Heinrich Hackmann, *Laienbuddhismus in China* (Gotha/Stuttgart, 1924), pp. 322 ff.
128. Dagobert Frey, "Der Realitätscharakter des Kunstwerks," *Kunstwissenschaftliche Grundfragen* (Wien, 1946), pp. 107-149.
129. Magic identity between the depicted and intended, real or ideal object, is a frequent motif in East Asian anecdotes about artists (the dragon physically ascending to heaven from the picture; the ideal horse mounted by the ghostlike sponsor of the picture; Wu Tao-tse's entering the landscape he painted, etc.). We encounter here a more profound idea than is found in anecdotes of the type of the "grapes of Apelles" which, incidentally, can also be found in East Asia.
130. However, they, too, have a more pronounced object-like character according to Indian-East Asian views than they do in the West; see p. 184 and n. 121.
131. M. Anesaki, *Buddhist Art* (see bibliography), p. 41 f. Compare the respective articles in the Buddhist dictionaries, *Bukkyō Daijiten* by Oda and Mochizuki (see bibliography). The Japanese terms for the *kuyō-bosatsu* are listed in Seckel, *Grundzüge der buddhistischen Malerei*, pp. 38 ff. Those "inner" Bodhisattvas emanate from the central Vairocana and venerate the four other Buddhas surrounding him; the "outer" four, in turn, emanate from these four Buddhas and venerate Vairocana in the center. Emanation and return to origin, revelation and self-contemplation and self-veneration of the Absolute as shown in this cycle point to the ultimate inner unity of reality.
132. Soothill-Hodous, *Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms*, p. 2.
133. *Hōbōgirin* (see bibliography), 3me fasc., p. 214. Wolfram Eberhard, "Chinas Geschichte," *Bibliotheca Sinica* 1, Bern, 1948, p. 212; cf. p. 220 f.
134. Friedrich Heiler, *Die buddhistische Versenkung*, 2nd ed., München, 1922; Edward Conze, *Buddhist Meditation*, London, 1956; Cf. also the general surveys on Buddhism listed in the bibliography. Among these, Beckh's study deals with meditation in a particularly detailed manner.
135. "Amitāyur-dhyāna-Sūtra," trans. by J. Takakusu, *Sacred Books of the East* 49, Oxford, 1894. Summary and explanation in C. G. Jung, "Zur Psychologie östlicher Meditation," *Symbolik des Geistes, Psychologische Abhandlungen* 6, Zürich, 1948, pp. 447-472. See also de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan* I, Leiden, 1935, pp. 328 ff. A beautiful example of an Amitābha meditation described in detail and following literary-pictorial images can be found in the

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- Chinese work *Lung-shu ching-t'u-wen* by Wang Jih-hsiu, translated by Heinrich Hackmann in *Laienbuddhismus in China*, Gotha/Stuttgart, 1924, pp. 123 ff. The *Amitâyur-dhyâna-Sûtra* states, "If one imagines the Buddha in one's heart, this heart itself is the Buddha."
136. G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls I* (see bibliography), p. 290. The statements made here apply beyond the borders of Tibet to all the areas of Mahâyâna.
137. H. Zimmer, *Kunstform und Yoga im indischen Kultbild*, Berlin, 1926, p. 102.
138. P. Urban Rapp, O.S.B., *Das Mysterienbild*, Münsterschwarzach, 1952, quote on p. 72 f. A prototype is, for example, the late Hellenistic Mithras relief. We disregard here the problems specific to Christian mystery pictures.
139. More detailed comments on the development of style can be found in the studies by Bachhofer, Cohn, Glaser, Minamoto, Sirén et al., listed in the bibliography.
- 139a. Richard Edwards, "The Cave Reliefs at Ma Hao, II," *Artibus Asiae* 17:2 (1954), pp. 103-129. The oldest dated Buddha figure in East Asia (a gilded bronze) from the year 338 is now in the Avery Brundage collection (San Francisco) reproduced in O. Fischer, "Chinesische Plastik," *Artibus Asiae* 9 (1946), p. 277, plate 62, and elsewhere. Special attention to the particularly important early phase of Buddhist sculpture in China is given in Ludwig Bachhofer, "Die Anfänge der buddhistischen Plastik in China," *OZ NF* 10 (1934); Benjamin Rowland, "Notes on the dated statues of the Northern Wei dynasty and the beginnings of Buddhist sculpture in China," *Art Bulletin* 19 (1937), pp. 92-107; Hugo Münsterberg, "Buddhist bronzes of the Six Dynasties Period," *Artibus Asiae* 9 (1946); and 10 (1947); Hugo Münsterberg, "Chinese Buddhist bronzes of the T'ang period," *Artibus Asiae* 11 (1948); Sherman E. Lee, "Five early gilt bronzes," *Artibus Asiae* 12 (1949).
140. It is only now that the type of Kuanyin (Kannon) reinterpreted as a female appears; p. 28.
- 140a. A few important works on these problems are: A. K. Coomaraswamy, "The invention of the Buddha figure," *OZ NF* 1 (1924), pp. 51 ff.; Coomaraswamy, "The Indian origin of the Buddha image," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 46 (1926); and "The origin of the Buddha image," *Art Bulletin* 9 (1926-1927), p. 287. O. C. Gangoly, "The antiquity of the Buddha image: The cult of the Buddha," *OZ NF* 6 (1930), pp. 265 ff. J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, *The 'Scythian' Period. An Approach to the History, Art, Epigraphy and Palaeography of North India from the 1st Century B.C. to the 3rd Century A.D.*, Leiden, 1949, including discussion of the origin and early development of the Buddha image. Benjamin Rowland, "Chinese sculpture of the pilgrimage road," *Bulletin of the Fogg Art Museum* IV/2 (March 1935); Rowland, "A revised chronology of Gandhâra sculpture," *Art Bulletin* 18 (1936), pp. 387-400; and "Buddha and the Sun God," *Zalmoxis* 1 (1938), 69-84; "Gandhâra and Late Antique Art: The Buddha image," *American Journal of Archaeology* 46 (1942), pp. 223-246; "Gandhâra and early Christian art: Buddha Palliatus," *ibid.*, 49 (1945), pp. 445-448; "A note on the invention of the Buddha image," *HJAS* 11 (1948), pp. 181-186. Lucian Scherman, "Die ältesten Buddha-Darstellungen des Münchener Museums für Völkerkunde," *Müncher Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst NF* 5 (1928), pp. 274-290; 6 (1929), pp.

- 147-166. Alexander C. Soper, "The Roman style in Gandhâra," *American Journal of Archaeology* 55 (1951), pp. 301 ff. Ernst Waldschmidt, "Die Entwicklungsgeschichte des Buddhabildes," *OZ NF* 6 (1930), pp. 265 ff. Reference should also be made to the more comprehensive works listed in the bibliography (under **India: History of Art and Central Asian Art**), particularly those by Coomaraswamy, Foucher, von Le Coq and Rowland.
141. Benjamin Rowland, "Indian images in Chinese sculpture," *Artibus Asiae* 10 (1947), 5-20; Otto Kummel, *Die Kunst Chinas, Japans und Koreas* (Wildpark/Potsdam, 1929), p. 33 f. The similarity between the Hôryûji wall paintings and those of Ajantâ is also usually exaggerated.
142. In India and Tibet a correlation between the category of being and the relationship among body measurements can be documented. This may have also been applied in East Asia. For comments on iconometry see above, p. 24.
143. A typical case is, for example, The Eighteen Styles of Chinese Figure Painting (Cf. the essay with this title by O. Fischer, see n. 90).
144. Wilhelm Pinder, *Das Problem der Generation in der Kunstgeschichte Europas*, Berlin, 1926.
145. The nature of Zen Buddhism cannot be discussed in detail. We only provide a few hints helpful for an understanding of Zen art. More detailed information can be found in the works listed in the bibliography, particularly in those by Suzuki.
146. Suzuki, *Die grosse Befreiung* 3, Konstanz, 1947, p. 185.
147. In the double meaning of the word to realize: making real and gaining insight; here: making real through insight.
148. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism*, First Series, London, 1927, p. 12; here quoted from Suzuki, *Die grosse Befreiung*, p. 14.
149. Quoted from Ferdinand Weinhandl, *Die Metaphysik Goethes*, Berlin, 1932, pp. 283-91. We should also point to Goethe's word (going far beyond its original reference to the natural sciences): "One should not look for anything behind the phenomena--they themselves are the teaching [lesson]." "Betrachtungen im Sinne der Wanderer," in Goethe, *Gesammelte Werke*, Jubiläums-Ausgabe (1912-1932), vol. 39, p. 72.
150. Zen art, particularly painting, uses a great number of symbols, notably from the natural world, but most of them have much older meanings generally valid in East Asia, and are not specific to Zen.
151. The difference and, frequently, the contrast between professional and amateur artists (with the latter being at least equal to the former in training and talent) affects wide areas of East Asian art, particularly painting. Because they rise from greater creative freedom, the more important achievements are often those of amateur artists. Zen art is in a certain sense in opposition to the "official" art of the academy and court painters, but in China and Japan a good many of these were so strongly inspired by the Zen spirit, even if they were not members of Zen monasteries, that their works may be counted among valid works of Zen art. It is generally characteristic of Zen art that its effects are noticeable in various spheres of social and cultural life, and that it did not isolate itself in esoteric fashion in spite of the

- strictness of its spiritual requirements. This is also one of the reasons why Zen art could overcome the barriers between sacred and secular art (see p. 231 f.).
152. W. Speiser, *Meisterwerke chinesischer Malerei*, Berlin, 1947, p. 29.
 153. It should be pointed out, however, that in many instances these features were not or could not be fully realized.
 154. Cf. Tetsurō Yoshida, *Das japanische Wohnhaus*, Berlin, 1935; 2nd ed. Tübingen, 1954; Jirō Harada, *The Lesson of Japanese Architecture*, London, 1936; new ed. (1954). Werner Blaser, *Tempel und Teehaus in Japan*, Olten/Lausanne, 1955. Arthur Drexler, *The Architecture of Japan*, New York, 1955.
 155. Cf. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism and its Influence on Japanese Culture*, Kyōto, 1938; Eugene Herrigel, *Zen in der Kunst des Bogenschiessens*, 2nd ed. München/Planegg, 1951; Kakuzō Okakura, "Das Buch vom Tee," *Insel-Bücherei*, 274.
 156. Ernst Grosse, *Die ostasiatische Tuschmalerei*, Berlin, 1923, with a classic introduction to the nature of Zen-inspired ink painting; W. Speiser, *Meisterwerke* (see note 152) with detailed explanations of Chinese painting. Cf. also the general literature on East Asian art, especially on painting, listed in the bibliography.
 157. The interpretation of this rather common picture type varies: One group of scholars (predominantly Japanese) assume that Śākyamuni is depicted after he had attained the highest enlightenment under the bodhi tree at the end of his six-year ascetic phase, i.e., already as Buddha, while almost all Western interpreters hold that the moment between recognition of the futility of asceticism and the steps toward the bodhi tree, i.e., the moment prior to enlightenment and attainment of Buddhahood, is intended. The question is too complicated to be dealt with at this time. The former interpretation appears to be more likely to be correct. Compare the interpretation of the frontispiece by Suzuki in *Essays II*.
 158. More detailed information in the work by de Visser, "The Arhats . . .," listed in the bibliography.
 159. On the meaning of this grotesque element compare Rousselle, "Die typischen Bildwerke . . ." (see bibliography), *Sinica* 8 (1933), 66.
 160. A critical examination of his biography is Heinrich Dumoulin, "Bodhidharma und die Anfänge des Ch'an-Buddhismus," *MN* 7 (1951), 67-83.



35* Bodhidharma (Daruma) changing clothes with a courtesan.
Okumura Masanobu.

161. This fact explains the popular figures made of papier-mâché, such as those called *Daruma*, which have almost become toys in Japan. They have a semispherical lower part in place of legs, and resemble our stand-up dolls. Snowmen are called *yuki-daruma* in Japan, i.e., "snow daruma." Later parodies (see p. 129) have also dealt with the patriarch, as for example a woodcut by Okumura Masanobu (ca. 1708) showing with great effect how Daruma and a courtesan have exchanged clothes (35*) or another by Harunobu lampooning a well-known Daruma legend by showing a girl crossing a river while standing on a straw just as that saint did crossing the Yangtse-Kiang. (R. Bernoulli, *Ausgewählte Werke ostasiatischer Graphik*, Plauen, 1923, plate 35.) Nor did other Zen figures escape such parodying treatment: The Japanese painter and colour-print artist Katsukawa Shunshō depicted Hanshan and Shihte as two girls, one carrying a love letter, the other an ordinary broom (Anesaki, *Buddhist Art*, plate XLV). An illustration is inserted at this point. Its caption reads: 35* Bodhidharma cartoon. Woodcut by Okumura Masanobu.
162. W. Speiser, *Meisterwerke*, p. 20, provides further details.

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163. E. Grosse (see note 156), 47. Cf. Speiser, *Meisterwerke*, p. 21. In detail: E. Rousselle, "Typische Bildwerke . . . III," *Sinica* 6 (1931), 238 ff. As the "pot-bellied Buddha" he has become one of the most popular figures, particularly when accompanied by (usually six) small children. This type also occurs in sculpture, particularly in small figurines.
164. Portraits, as memorial or ritual images, still appear in Zen temples in the form of sculptures, and numerous important works may be found among them.
165. W. Gundert, *Japanische Religionsgeschichte*, Stuttgart/Tôkyô, 1935, p. 101.
166. Examples would require too many explanations. These may be found in the books by Suzuki listed in the bibliography, some with illustrations. Cf. also Ohasama-Faust (see bibliography).
167. See Suzuki, *Essays* I, London, 1927, p. 316; II, London, 1950, p. 157, on the illustration; I, p. 175; and III (London: 1953), p. 304.
168. A detailed explanation is in Suzuki, *Essays* I, London, 1927, pp. 347 ff. (with illustrations). It is conceivable that the numerous charming and idyllic Chinese pictures of this subject are derived from this sequence of parable pictures. If that were the case, these would not be secular idyllic scenes but rather religious symbols (cf. Grosse, plate 15). It is of course not necessary that *all* such pictures arise from this particular context.
169. In some Chinese Ch'an sects a number of circle symbols were used to represent different aspects of existence and corresponding stages of enlightenment. (A solid black circle stood for the all-in-one Absolute, a black circle around a white center for the Absolute's appearance in the relative-phenomenal world, etc.) Other ch'an interpretations rejected even such abstract symbols as mere popular aids (hōben). See Heinrich Dumoulin, "Die Entwicklung des chinesischen Ch'an . . ." (see note 186), p. 54 f. and pp. 59 ff.; Engl. ed., p. 19 f. and p. 25 f.
170. Cf. Chiang Yee, *Chinese Calligraphy* (London, 1938); 2nd ed. (1954); Lucy Driscoll and Kenji Toda, *Chinese Calligraphy* (Chicago, 1935); Yang Yu-shun, *La calligraphie chinoise depuis les Han* (Paris, 1937). For a short outline cf. Seckel, "Ostasiatische Schriftkunst," *Form und Technik* 3 (Stuttgart, 1953), n. 7.
171. The East Asian term for landscape (picture), Chin. *shan-shui* (J. *san-sui*), means "mountains and waters" (cf. p. 398). These are not arbitrarily chosen representatives of nature in its entirety but symbolize the two basic potentials of the world and life as seen by ancient Chinese Taoist belief, Yang and Yin: the mountains--firm, strong, surging, male, aspiring to Heaven--correspond to Yang; water--flowing, yielding, pliable, horizontal, female, close to earth--to Yin. These polar potentialities are reflected in the pictorial structure of East Asian landscapes down to the most minute details.
172. The fact that this has not been given sufficient attention is my only basic reservation about Grosse's classic interpretation of Zen painting. Much of what he says on iconography and symbolism has general validity in East Asia.
173. Cf. L. Bachhofer, "Chinesische Landschaftsmalerei vom 10. bis 13. Jh.," *Sinica* 10 (1935), p. 11; W. Speiser, *Meisterwerke*, p. 20 and p. 42.

174. Frequently a very light coloring (mostly pale blue-green and brownish-pink) is employed without, however, abandoning the basically black and white character of the paintings.
175. On the term "one-corner style," which is a reference to a saying of Confucius (Lun-yü = *Analects* VII, 8), and should be taken with a grain of salt, see W. Speiser, *Die Kunst Ostasiens*, pp. 223 ff., and *Meisterwerke*, p. 42. There is also a reference to the "one corner" in a prominent place in Zen literature: in the introduction of the *Pi-yen-lu* (*J. Heki-gan-roku*); see W. Gundert, "Die Nonne liu bei We-schan," in *Asiatica*, Festschrift Friedrich Weller (Leipzig: 1954), p. 189; Cf. W. Gundert, "Bi-yän-lu"; cf. W. Gundert, "Das zweite Kapitel des Pi-yen-lu," *Oriens Extremus* II/1 (1955), 33. Bd. 1 München, 1960, 37 f.
176. Suzuki, *Essays* II, London, 1950, 30.
177. W. Speiser, *Meisterwerke*, 29 and 19.
178. *Barlach im Gespräch*, Insel-Verlag, 1948, 18.
179. Oscar Benl, "Seami Motokiyo und der Geist des Nô-Schauspiels," *Abhandlungen der Mainzer Akademie, Klasse der Literatur*, Jahrgang No. 5 (1952), p. 138.
180. Of these we can unfortunately show only two, though outstanding, examples (148 and 149). Numerous additional illustrations, particularly of landscapes, are in Grosse and the other works on East Asian painting.
181. The key term of the book by Tsuneyoshi Tsudzumi, *Die Kunst Japans*, Leipzig, 1929.
182. The fact that this freely creative inspiration of the true Zen artist--particularly of the grand old masters of the Sung and Muromachi periods--has converted into a consciously systematized solid school technique both in secular and even court painting (in Japan above all by the Kanō school) belongs to another chapter. This was partly the result of a growing superficiality and secularization of religious painting, but in part also of a growing spiritual enrichment and deepening of secular art. It was in this manner, too, that the Zen spirit entered the secular cultural sphere (Cf. p. 235 and n. 151). Genuine Zen spirit survived until the 18th century, particularly among Japanese painters, whose creative work was patterned along the lines of Bashō's perfected haiku (Buson, et al.). This tradition is called *haiga* (painting in the haiku spirit) and had a close artistic and technical relationship to *zenga* (Zen painting). The painters of this school, Taiga in particular, characteristically produced highly lively, sketch-like depictions of Arhats which emphasized their grotesque and scurrilous aspects (Cf. with respect to sculpture, Mokujiiki Shōnin, p. 231).
183. The greater prominence of modulating lines coincides historically with the freer and more dynamic design in the sculpture of the Sung and Kamakura periods (see p. 216, 218).
184. For a brief description of this technique see Grosse, *op. cit.*, p. 30, and also most of the other studies of East Asian painting. Particularly characteristic and done with great virtuosity is the application of a deep black wet ink to a still not completely dried light-colored sketch or surface tone. The form of objects is frequently more nearly suggested than delineated (f. 149). The East Asian special terms for this technique are: Chin. *p'o-mo*, J. *ha-boku* =

"broken ink" and Chin. *p'o-mo* (different sinograms), J. *hatsu-boku* = "splashed ink." The two terms are not clearly distinguished and appear to have had different meanings at different times. In T'ang China the terms certainly did not yet imply a washing technique (John A. Pope, "Sinology or art history," *HJAS* 10 [1947], 414-416) while in the Japan of the 15th century (*Sesshū*, for example) it is clearly understood in the latter sense.

185. This term must be understood as merely relative. We have shown (p. 143 f.) how the precise lines of cult painting could still transcend their own limitations. But this transcending tendency does not belong a priori to its characters and never invalidates the strictness with which it defines forms.
186. Heinrich Dumoulin, "Die Entwicklung des chinesischen Ch'an nach Hui-neng im Lichte des Wu-men-kuan," *Monumenta Serica* 6, Peking, 1941, pp. 40-72, quote 61; in English, *The Development of Chinese Zen after the Sixth Patriarch in the Light of Mumonkan*, trans. Ruth Fuller Sasaki (New York, 1953), p. 28.
187. See my detailed interpretation in *Nachrichten der Gesellschaft für Natur- und Völkerkunde Ostasiens* 77 (1955), pp. 44-55; also in *Einführung in die Kunst Ostasiens* München, 1960, pp. 345-365; a few statements from this article have been included in this chapter. The concluding 31-syllable poem by an unknown Japanese poet is taken from the anthology *Kokin-waka-shū* of 905. My interpretation of it is based on a German translation in Wilhelm Gundert, ed., *Lyrik des Ostens* (München, 1952), p. 425 ("The key dogma of Mahâyâna Buddhism, rendered literally in Tanka form," p. 595). The original text is as follows:

Yo no naka wa
 Yume ka, utsutsu ka?
 Utsutsu to mo
 Yume to mo shirazu:
 Arite nakereba.

Bibliography

The bibliography is intended to introduce to those interested in the history of East Asian culture, religion and art primarily those works which will be useful for further individual study. For this reason important areas of Buddhist culture and art which are outside the scope of this book, like India and Central Asia, have been given detailed attention. Many of the general books contain comprehensive bibliographies of their own. East Asian publications are only mentioned if they are basic collections of picture material; journal articles only in a few exceptional cases. Specialized studies are cited in the notes.

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Explanation of Text Figures

- 1*. Sample mudrās (accord. to Mochizuki, *Bukkyō Daijiten* I). Buddhist figures primarily display the following Mudrās: 1. Vajra-Mudrā (J. *chiken-in*), gesture of Maha-Vairocana in the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala. 2. Samādhi-Mudrā (J. *hokkai-jō-in*), "Dharma-World Meditation Gesture." 3. Amitābha-samādhi-Mudrā (J. *Mida-jō-in*), gesture No. 2 as formed by Amitābha-Buddha. 5. and 15. Two forms of the Dharmacakra-Mudrā (J. *seppo-in*, *temborin-in*), preaching of the Doctrine, Turning of the Wheel of Teaching. 7. Abhaya-Mudrā (J. *semui-in*), "Absence of Fear." 8. Varada-Mudrā (J. *yogan-in*), "Wish Granting." 9. Anjali-Mudrā (J. *kenjisshin-gasshō*), "Unshakable Heart" = "Mind of Thusness (bhūta-tathatā);" Greeting and Veneration. 10. Vajra-anjali-Mudrā (J. *kongō-gasshō*), Firm Faith ("diamond-like") and pious veneration.
- 2*. Ground plan of a Zen monastery of the Chinese type (Mampukuji near Kyōto). The most important buildings: 1. Outer gate 2. Inner gate (sammon) 3. Hall of the four heavenly kings 4. Buddha hall 5. Dharma hall 7. Bell pavilion 8. Drum pavilion 11. Refectory 12. Meditation hall 13, 14. Living quarters of the abbot, guest rooms, etc. 16. Memorial hall for the founder of the monastery (17. Pond).
- 3*. Plan of the central precinct of the Hōryūji. 1. Middle gate. 2. Pagoda. 3. Golden hall. 4. Sermon hall. 5. Sutra pavilion 6. Bell pavilion 7. Corridor. No. 5 and 6 were originally outside of the corridor; cf. text figure 4* and plate 1. (accord. to Soper, *The Evolution of Buddhist Architecture in Japan*.)
- 4*. Reconstruction of the original plan of the Hōryūji central precinct. Cf. text figure 3*. (accord. to Soper, *op. cit.*)
- 5*. Development of the ground plan types of Buddhist temples. 1. Great southern gate 2. Middle gate 3. Golden hall 4. Pagoda(s) 5. Sermon hall
Top right: Shitennōji, Ōsaka; top left: Yakushiji, Nara; center: Hōryūji; bottom right: Tōdaiji, Nara; bottom left: Daianji, Nara.
- 6 a-c*. Main Hall of the Hsien-t'ung-ssu, Wu-t'ai-shan, Shansi. Height: 18.6 m., width (front): 34.65 m., depth: 25.7 m. Ming period (?). (accord. to

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- Boerschmann, *Chin. Arch.* I 26.) (66: roof-tress construction omitted, see 7*.)
- 7*. Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji (cross-section), Nara. Compare plate 3. On the right side: the presumably original, Chinese-type roof-construction; on the left: roof structure later changed according to Japanese building practice. (Accord. to Soper, *op. cit.*)
- 8*. "Dream Hall" (*Yumedono*) of the Hōryūji near Nara. Octagonal chapel. Upper picture: present state, dating from 1230, lower picture: reconstruction of the original shape from ca. 739 by Asano Kiyoshi (Accord. to *Bukkyō Geijutsu* No. 4, 1949.)
- 9*. Development of the pagoda from the Indian stūpa (schematic). From left to right: Indian stūpa, nearly original form; Indian stūpa, more recent form; Chinese stone pagoda; Chinese pagoda with overhanging roofs made of wood (after relief representation in a cave temple from Yün-kang). Further step: Chinese-Japanese wooden pagoda; see text figure 11*. (Accord. to Ito, *Architectural Decoration in China* I, Tōkyō 1941.)
- 10*. Pagoda Liu-ho-t'a near Hangchou. Plan at ground level. 22.5 m across (excluding circumambient corridor). Height of the 13 floors: 84 m. 1152-1156, later restored. (Accord. to Boerschmann, *Pagoden*, plate 270.)
- 11*. Pagoda of the Hōryūji near Nara. Side view. Compare plate 1. Height: 33.5 m. Width of the ground floor: ca. 10 m. Height of the bronze top: 9.6 m. Veranda with protective roof at ground level added later. (Accord. to Baltzer, *Architektur der Kultbauten Japans.*)
- 12*. Pagoda of the Hōryūji near Nara. Sectional view. Compare text figure 11* and plate 1. (According to Baltzer, *op. cit.*)
- 13*. Tahōtō of the Ishiyama-dera (near Kyōto). Side view and sectional view. Compare plate 13.
- 14*. Tahōtō. Ink on paper. Ishiyama-dera near Kyōto. Fujiwara period. (Accord. to Kōno-Trautz, *Der Grobe Stūpa auf dem Kōya-san.*) In the central field of a maṇḍala drawing, copying a drawing brought from the T'ang capital of Ch'ang-an by Kōbō-Daishi in 806. The Tahōtō, drawn in its original shape with a cylinder-shaped main part, symbolizes in the maṇḍala the cosmic Buddha Vairocana--hence the Lotus pedestal, the vajra attribute and the flame halo.
- 15*. Korean stone pagoda from Paekche (Kudara), ca. 7th century. With outlines of proportional relationships. (Accord. to Yoneda, *Chōsen Jōdai Kenchiku no Kenkyū*, 1944.)
- 16*-19*. Bracketing in Japanese temple buildings. 16*,
 17*: Schematic drawing of some simple bracketing types.
- 18*. Golden Hall of the Tōshōdaiji (Nara period), after Chinese models of the T'ang period.
- 19*. "Chinese Style" (Karayō) of the Kamakura period, after Chinese models of the Sung period. (Accord. to Soper, *op. cit.*) Cf. plates 8, 9.
- 20*. Ornamental painting on architectural elements. Phoenix Hall (Hōdō) in Uji, near Kyōto (cf. plate 4), 1053. Motifs of Chinese origin (T'ang style), yet slightly "japanized." Colors: red, blue, green, brown, black, white. (Accord. to Amanuma, *Nippon Kenchiku-shi Zuroku*, I.)

- 21*. Diagram of the "Pure Land of Maitreya Buddha" (Miroku-jōdo), a wall painting in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji. Height: ca. 330 cm. Beginning of the 8th century. (Accord. to Naito, *The Wall-Paintings of Hōryūji*, pl. 11.) Center: The Buddha; to his left and right: 2 Bodhisattvas; between them but farther to the back: 2 monks. Around them: 4 Devarājas (world guardians) and other protective deities; upper part: 2 Apsarasas. Compare plate 98.
- 22*. Kongō-ku. Scroll, ink on paper. Height: 376 cm. Kōya-san, Japan. Approx. 1200. (Accord. to BK 49.) Kongō-ku is a Bodhisattva of wrathful appearance who, together with four other such entities, protects all countries and the Three Treasures (the Buddha, his Teaching, and his Community). In his crown are the Five Wisdom Buddhas (compare plate 6), on his forehead the Third Eye, in his hand the Wheel of Dharma.
- 23*. Hāriti. Ink on paper. Height: ca. 30 cm. Ninnaji, Kyōto. Second half of the 12th century. (Accord. to *Taishō Daizōkyō Zuzō* III.) On Hāriti, see p. 30. This drawing is one of the iconographical sketches (zuzo) collected in the "Besson Zakki" in 57 long scrolls (emakimono). Compare plate 78.
- 24*. Satirical cartoon of a Buddhist ritual. From the first of the long scrolls with sketches and cartoons of animals and men traditionally (but erroneously) ascribed to "Bishop" Toba Sōjō. Ink on paper. Height: 30 cm. Kōzanji (near Kyōto). First half of the 12th century. (Accord. to *Nippon Emakimono Shūsei* 17.)
- 25*. (a-e). Samples of cut gold decoration (kirikane) on Buddhist paintings. From the 10th to the 14th centuries. (Accord. to *Kokka* 560/561.)
- 26*. Title picture and opening text passage of a Sūtra scroll (Vajracchedikāprajñā-pāramitā-Sūtra). Woodblock print on paper. Height: 28 cm, length of the scroll: ca. 5 m. Found in Tun-huang. British Museum. Dated 868/V/11. (Accord. to Aurel Stein, *Serindia* IV.) The Buddha, seated on the Lotus Throne, a table with offerings in front of him, is preaching to the monk Subhūti seated on a carpet. He is surrounded by Bodhisattvas, monks, two protective deities, an adoring king with his retinue and two lions. Above him are a canopy and two floating Bodhisattvas with offerings. On the chest of the Buddha is the left-running Swastika. This is the world's oldest surviving printed picture.
- 27*. Paper strip with magic formulas (dhāraṇī). Block print on paper, ca. 6 x 33 cm. Hōryūji near Nara. Approx. 765/770. (Accord. to *NJT* VII.) The formulas consist of Sanskrit syllables written with Chinese characters used phonetically (i.e., without consideration of their meaning). Possibly printed from metal blocks. Second oldest surviving print. The oldest printed book-text has since been discovered in Korea (ca. 751).
- 28*. Outer cover of a Sūtra scroll (outer side of the beginning section of the scroll). Gold painting on dark blue paper. 26 x 23 cm. Chūsonji, Northern Japan. 12th century. (Accord. to *Chūsonji Kyō-e*, ed. by the Yamato-e Dōkōkai, Tōkyō, 1938.) Upper left the title of the scroll: "Dai-Hannya-Kyō (= Mahāprajñāpāramitā-Sūtra), scroll 122."
- 29*. Metal pendant on the lance of one of the Four Heavenly Kings in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji. Height: ca. 12 cm. Middle of 7th century. (Accord. to

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- NJT* I.) Typical of the ornaments of the Asuka or Suiko style in Japan, which is based on the Chinese Wei style.
- 30*. Sounding plate (kei). Rubbing on paper. Original made of gilded bronze. Length ca. 12 cm. Kudara-dera (Kinki Region), Japan. 12th century. (Accord. to Hirose, *Nippon Dôkei no Kenkyû*, Tôkyô, 1943.)
- 31*. Frieze with vine motif on the upper rim of the pedestal of the main cult image in the Yakushiji, Nara. Bronze (originally gilded). Height: ca. 13 cm. Approx. 726. (Accord. to *NJT* XIII.) Compare plates 22 and 31.
- 32*. The Wheel of Dharma as motif in family crests. From an album on Japanese family crests.
- 33*. Gorintô. Stone. Height: ca. 1.5-2 m. The 5 parts-cubicle, sphere, pyramid, semi-sphere, and pointed pearl-symbolize the 5 elements earth, water, fire, air, empty space. The corresponding Siddham letters are frequently engraved on them. This symbolism refers also to the teaching of the metaphysical body of the Buddha, etc. Particularly frequent as grave monument and, in smaller sizes, as reliquaries (comp. plate 159).
- 34*. The Chinese character *WU* (J. *MU*) = NOT. Ink on paper. Written by the Zen master Hsin-yüeh (J. *Shin-otsu* or *-etsu*), 1639-1696. He was born in K'ang-chou, came to Japan in the year 1677 and founded a Zen monastery of the Ts'ao-tung(Sô-tô) sect in Mito. Important calligrapher, ink painter and seal carver.
- 35*. Okumura Masanobu (1686-1764): Bodhidharma (Daruma) changing clothes with a courtesan. To the right her maid (*kamuro*) who carries a priest's whisk for him. Black and white woodcut from a series of 12 travesty prints ("Ukiyo Fûzoku Okashii Kotobukuro"). 26.7 x 36.5 cm. Ca. 1708. Chicago, Art Institute. (Accord. to *The Clarence Buckingham Collection of Japanese Prints: The Primitives*, Chicago, 1955.)

Explanation of Plates

1. The central court of the Hôryûji near Nara. Wooden structures, tiled roofs. Left: Golden Hall (Kondô): ground surface area: ca. 14.5 x 10.8 m., height: 16 m. Right: pagoda (tô), height 33.5 m. (bronze top: 9.5 m). Behind both is the middle gate (chûmon). Presumably erected during the late 7th century (after 670). (Based on *Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte*, IV.)

The picture was taken from the lecture hall facing south. Viewed from the middle gate, the main entrance, the Golden Hall would be on the right and the pagoda on the left. Both buildings were later fitted at ground level with an outer aisle covered by its own roof to protect the wall paintings. This makes both appear rather wide at the bottom. Recently these oldest surviving wooden buildings in the world were thoroughly renovated: A fire in the Golden Hall (January 1949) had destroyed almost all wall paintings in the interior, but the building itself was only partially damaged.

2. Golden Hall (Kondô) of the Hôryûji near Nara. Cf. pl. 1. (Based on *Nippon Bijutsu Ryakushi*.)
3. Golden Hall (Kondô) of the Tôshôdaiji, Nara, as viewed from the southeast. Wooden structure, tiled roof. Length (front): 27.6 m; width (depth) 14.4 m; height: 15.5 m; roof protrudes ca. 4.8 m (in the corner diagonals ca. 6 m) beyond the outer posts. 2nd half of the 8th century. (Based on *NJT XXI*.)

The temple was built by a Chinese abbot (a portrait statue of him is shown in pl. 86) invited to Japan, and follows the model of Tang architecture. The posts display a slight entasis (such as those of the Hôryûji). The woodwork is painted red; the roof tiles are silvery grey.
4. Phoenix Hall (Hôdôdô) of the Byôdô-in temple, Uji near Kyôto. Wooden structure, tiled roof. Width of the central building ca. 15 m, height 15 m (roof originally flatter); total width (including both wing buildings) ca. 49 m. 1053. Cf. text, p. 78.

5. Northern Octagonal Chapel (Hokuen-do) of the Kôfukuji, Nara. Wooden structure, tiled roof. Length of one side: 4.8 m; height (including platform and top ornament): 16 m. 1208.
6. Interior of the Tahôtô of the Kongô-sammai-in on Kôya-san, Japan. Wooden structure decorated with color paint. On the altar the five Wisdom Buddhas, with Vairocana (Dainichi) at the center. Distance between the inner posts ca. 1.8 m. Founded in 1223 (based on Tanabe, *Nippon Kenchiku* 29).
7. Interior of the Main Hall (Hondô) of the Kanshinji near Ôsaka. Wooden structure, decorated with color paint. First half of the 14th century. (Based on Tanabe, *Nippon Kenchiku* 6.)

In the background to the right is the altar with the cult statues; in front of them a low altar table with ritual implements, priest's seat and stand for bronze gong (see pl. 164 and fig. 30*). Between the posts the Diamond Mandala--the Womb Mandala is located exactly opposite--color-painted on a wooden board (width of the board ca. 2.2 m). On the posts: painted medallions with Buddhist beings.

8. Bracketing of the Sammon (gate building) of the Zen temple Tofukuji, Kyôto. Wooden structure, painted dark red and golden yellow. Beginning of the 15th century.
9. Ceiling of the Golden hall (Kondô) of the Shingon temple Tôji (=Kyô-ô-gokokuji), Kyôto. Wooden structure, 1599-1605.

The more ornate system evolved from a construction system ca. 1,000 years older (cf. text figures 16-19). Main temple of the Shingon sect originally founded in 823 by Kôbô Daishi; destroyed during the wars of the 15th century and rebuilt during the Momoyama period.

10. Pagoda of the Sung-yüeh-ssu, Sung-shan, Honan province. Brick structure, 12-cornered, 15 stories; dated by inscription 523, later restored. (According to Sirén, *Sculpture chinoise*, II.) The curved contour imitates Indian models.
11. Octagonal wooden pagoda in Ying-chou-fu, North Shensi. Founded 1056. (According to Sirén, *Histoire des arts anciens de la Chine*, IV.)
12. Three-story pagoda of the Yakushi-ji, Nara, ca. 730, height: 33.6 m.

This pagoda, unique in Japan, not only has an open gallery at each story (cf. pl. 1), but also a covered veranda with its own intermediary roof so that it conveys the impression of being a six-story building. The alternating main and intermediary roofs produce a rich and graceful rhythm. The four-winged top ornament made of bronze also displays an unusually rich design and outstanding craftsmanship. It is covered on its surface by floating Apsarasas on a cloud gloriola.

13. Tahôtô of the Ishiyama-dera near Kyôto (near Lake Biwa). Wooden structure, shingle roof (packed cypress bark), bronze top. Height: 15.5 m. Around 1200. (According to Trautz, *Japan*.)
14. Donor's chapel (Kaisandô) of the Zen monastery Eihoji, near Nagoya (Japan). Wood. Shingle roof (as in pl. 13). Perhaps middle of the 14th

century (after Tanabe, *Nippon Kenchiku* 6.). Dedicated to the Zen abbot Muso Kokushi (Soseki; 1271-1346). The room housing the portrait statue of the abbot enshrined as a cult image is located behind this front part of the building which serves ritual purposes.

15. Tearoom, "Okujaku-tei," Kyôto. Wood, plastered walls. Ceiling: reed on bamboo poles; tatami (floormats); sunken fire pit. Ground floor plan, including picture niche (tokonoma), ca. 7.3 sq. m. (width of the back wall 2.7 m.). On this wall an inscription plate with the characters oku-jaku = remember former times. Built ca. 1587, within a residence of the regent Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598), and moved ca. 1615 to the temple precinct of the Nishi-Honganji in Kyôto. (According to Yoshida, *Das japanische Wohnhaus*.)

Sculpture

16. Maitreya(?) Buddha, gilded bronze. Height 62 cm. Dated 536/IV/9; from Chihli province. Philadelphia University Museum (based on photograph by the museum). Abhaya and varada mudrâs. Nimbus with lotus petals, halo with flame motifs.
17. Śâkyamuni Buddha with two Bodhisattvas. Main cult image of the Golden Hall (Kondô) of the Hôryûji. Bronze; height of main figure (not including drapery): 85 cm; height of side figures: 90 cm; height of halo: 175 cm; height of pedestal 75 cm. Dated 623; created by Kuratsukuri-no-Tori = Tori Busshi. (According to *NJT* I.)

Flame halo with 7 Buddhas, Śâkyamuni's predecessors in earlier world ages, arranged around the inner round lotus and ray nimbus behind the head and the elongated halo behind the Buddha's body. Above his head, but still on the halo, the Cintâmani jewel. Above the entire group a large canopy. The inscription engraved at the back of the halo states that the group was created in 623 by the Buddha image-maker (busshi) Tori on orders by the reigning Empress Suiko for promoting the salvation of Regent Prince Shôtoku, the empress' nephew, who had just died a short time ago.

18. Śâkyamuni Buddha on the Lion Throne. Gilded bronze. Height: 36 cm. Dated 484. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art. (Photograph by the museum.)

The throne is an imitation of Mount Sumeru. On the pedestal below are two protective deities (dvarapâlas). Halo is missing. Example of the style preceding the "Wei-style."

19. Seated Buddha. Gilded bronze. Total height ca. 20 cm. China, ca. 600. Kansas City, Rockhill Nelson Gallery. (Photograph by the Museum.)

Unusual form of the pedestal which also replicates Mount Sumeru.

20. Bhaisajyaguru (Yakushi) Buddha. (Traditionally called "Kô-Yakushi" = Incense Buddha. Gilded bronze. Height: 73 cm. Hakuho period, early 8th century. Formerly Shin-Yakushiji, Nara.

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21. Head of the Yakushi figure, pl. 20.
22. Bhaisajyaguru (Yakushi) Buddha. Main cult image of the Yakushiji, Nara. Bronze, originally gilded. Height: 255 cm. Ca. 726. (According to Cohn, *Buddha in der Kunst des Ostens*.)
Halo replaced in 1635. Cf. plates 31, 49, text figure 31.
23. Śākyamuni Buddha. Grey limestone. Height: 80 cm. Kyôto, Fujii Yuriu-kan. Dated 639/VII/1. From Shantung. (According to Sirén, *Sculpture chinoise*, III.)
Right hand abhaya, left hand varada mudrâ. On the fringes of the halo seven Buddhas (f. pl. 17). Created for a high-ranking official under Emperor T'ai-tsung.
24. Amitâbha with Avalokiteśvara and Mahâsthâmaprâpta (Amida Buddha with the Bodhisattvas Kannon and [Dai-] Seishi). Hammered copper relief, perhaps originally gilded; 38.7 x 31.5 cm. Tôkyô, National Museum, 8th century. (According to Harada, *Examples of Japanese Art*, 1934.)
Kannon figure (with Buddha figure in crown) to the right, Seishi (with flask) to the left. In the background two monks, the Buddha's major disciples.
25. Buddha with four Bodhisattvas. Sandstone; height: ca. 120 cm. Rock temple T'ien-lung-shan (Shansi), cave 18, second half 7th century. (According to *Bukkyô Geijutsu*, No. 9, 1950.)
26. Tun-huang, Ch'ien-fo-tung ("Thousand Buddha Caves"): figure group and wall painting in cave 120 G (Pelliot) = 111 A (Stein). Figures (slightly larger than life-size): painted unfired clay; paintings: tempera. Tang period. (Photograph Langdon Warner, with the kind help of the Fogg Museum of Art, Harvard University.) The central Buddha figure occupying the center of the altar niche is visible on the far left side of the picture; looking from left to right the following figures appear: A monk (one of the two major disciples of the Buddha, a Bodhisattva (the halos of these two figures and that of the Buddha are painted on the wall) and a world guardian (without halo). On the wall behind them and on the ceiling more Bodhisattvas. The rim of the niche is marked by a relief of lotus petals--one of the most popular Buddhist ornamental and symbolic motifs. On the ceiling of the anteroom (right) the "Thousand Buddhas." The mural on the right side depicts the "16 Amitâbha visions"--this makes it likely that the main figure of the chapel is also Amitâbha.
27. Śākyamuni Buddha. Seated wooden figure with remnants of surface painting. Height: 110 cm. 9th century (Jogan period). Muroji near Nara. (According to BK.)

Most representative work of the Jogan style. The treatment of the garment folds displays the "rolling wave" technique characteristic of this style: an alternating pattern of shallow valleys and bulky ridges separated by sharp edges. f. pl. 61.

28. Amitābha (Amida) Buddha. Main cult image of the Phoenix Hall (Hōōdō) of the Byōdōin, Uji near Kyōto. Wood with a layer of gold leaf on coat of lacquer. Height of the figure: 295 cm. 1053, by Jōchō. (According to *Nippon Bijutsu Ryakushi*.)

The outer flame-like part of the halo is not contemporary but follows the style of the time. Small figures of Bodhisattvas playing instruments are inserted into the halo and the adjacent walls. Halo and canopy of gilded carved wood. Cf. pl. 38.

29. Vairocana (Dainichi) Buddha. Wood with coating of gold leaf on lacquer. Height ca. 100 cm. Enjōji, Nara. 1175 by Unkei (signed). (According to *Nippon Bijutsu Ryakushi*.)

Originally placed in a Tahōtō (pagoda of the type shown on pl. 13), cf. also pl. 6. A work by the young Unkei.

30. Śākyamuni's birth. Group of figurines (arbitrary arrangement). Gilded bronze. Height of the standing figure ca. 20 cm. 7th century. Tōkyō, National Museum (originally in the Hōryūji; donated to the Imperial Household by the temple in 1878).

The child, the future Buddha, is born from the right side of his mother Māyā at the moment she reaches up to a blossoming branch during a walk. The court ladies--actually heavenly beings (Apsarasas)--are kneeling in veneration, ready to bathe the child (hence the flasks in their hands); the same scene is shown on pl. 32.

31. Pedestal of the Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi) figure, Yakushiji, Nara. Side view. Bronze. Height: 150 cm, width (front) 540 cm, depth: 258 cm. Around 726. Cf. pl. 23. (According to *NJT XIII*.)

Particularly remarkable are the gnomelike demons (Yaksas) in a kind of underworld caves and the decorations based on the forms of T'ang art and, through it, on some aspects of Hellenistic art. (Cf. text figure 31*.) The (dragonlike) tiger at the bottom, which symbolizes the West, is one of the four Chinese mythical animals symbolizing the four directions.

32. Birth of Śākyamuni and other legends from his childhood. Shallow relief on the back of a limestone stele. Its front shows a standing figure of the Buddha. Height ca. 120 cm. China, 6th century. Philadelphia, University Museum (photograph by the museum).

On the right upper corner the birth scene (cf. pl. 30); a court lady receives the child. On the left the baby wrapped in cloth is held by his nursemaid. Below the simultaneous birth of the foal which was later to carry the prince from the palace to the wilderness following his decision to leave the secular life. The tree is the future tree of enlightenment. In it appears a dryade (Yakṣi). In the lower left corner the first bath of the child (nursemaids with water flasks; cf. pl. 30). The Snake King spreads his nine heads over the entire scene in a gesture of protection (cf. pl. 41). In the center, the "First Seven Steps," during which lotus flowers blossomed under

the feet of the boy child. After taking the seventh step, he raised his right arm to heaven and, with his left hand pointing to earth, proclaimed: "I am the First and Greatest in the world; this is my last birth (before reaching the goal, i.e., Nirvāna); I shall put an end to the suffering of birth, old age and death."

33. Flying heavenly beings (*Apsarasas*, J. *hiten*) supporting a lotus flower. Ceiling relief in cave 9, Yün-kang, North China. Stone, 5th century. (According to Mizuno, *Unkō Sekibutsu-gun.*)
34. Wall in cave 11, Yün-kang. Stone reliefs (paint renewed during later times). 5th century. (Accord. to Mizuno, *Unkō Sekibutsu-gun.*)

In the central panel a line of standing Buddhas; above and below numerous niches containing Buddha and Bodhisattva figures, each surrounded by smaller accompanying figures.

35. Floating *Apsarasas*. Stone relief on the ceiling of a cave temple at T'ien-lung-shan. Six Dynasties period, ca. 5th-6th centuries. Height: 79 cm. Fogg Museum, Cambridge, Mass. (Photograph by Museum.)
36. Flute-playing Bodhisattva. Wood; height (excluding halo): 17 cm; attached to the canopy above the main cult image of the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji (cf. pl. 17). 7th century. (According to *NJT I.*)
37. Lotus flower with halo of rays on the chapel ceiling of the Hokke-dō (also Sangatsu-dō) of the Tōdaiji, Nara. Wood, painted and gilded, 8th century (from a picture postcard).

The round discs are bronze mirrors whose hidden back sides are covered with relief decorations.

38. Canopy of the Amitābha figure of the Phoenix Hall (Hōōdō) in Uji, near Kyōto. (Cf. pl. 28.) Gilded wood carving; panels of the inner sides: lacquer work with inlays of mother-of-pearl; panels on the ceiling: painted colors. 1053, by Jōchō workshop. (According to *Kokuhō Kenzobutsu I.*)
39. Amitābha (Amida) Triad in the Tachibana altar shrine in the Hōryūji near Nara. Bronze. Height of the main figure: 34 cm. Ca. 700.

Tachibana is the name of the wife of a high-ranking nobleman and mother of a later empress. The triad, donated by her to the Hōryūji, was her private devotion and cult image. The shrine generally resembles the Tamamushi Shrine (pl. 150). The figure group is a masterpiece of the Hakuho style, marking the transition from the archaic Suiko to the mature Nara style. Screen wall and halo are depicted on plates 152 and 153. The surface of the bottom plate has a shallow relief of waves, lotus leaves and flowers, representing the lotus pond in Amitābha's Pure Land (cf. pl. 104 b) from which the blossoms holding the triad grow. Together with the Buddhas and the venerating heavenly beings on the rear wall, the group is a realization in concentrated form of the Amitābha paradise.

EXPLANATION OF PLATES 311

40. Domestic altar group. Bronze. Height: 22 cm. China, Sui Dynasty, 599. Kansas City, Rockhill Nelson Gallery (on loan from Laurence Sickman; photograph by museum).
 In addition to the Buddha-Bodhisattva-Triad, two monks (the major disciples Ānanda and Kāśyapa), two dvārapālas (guardian deities warding off evil), two Yakṣas (gnomelike demons) who hold up a reliquary or incense vessel. In the front two lions (symbolic animals belonging to the Buddha, who flank his throne--simhāsana).
41. Stele. Limestone. Height ca. 180 cm. China, dated 529. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photograph by the museum). In the niche a Buddha (most likely Śākyamuni) with two Bodhisattvas, two disciples and two lions (cf. pl. 39); in the halo the seven small seated Buddhas of the past. To the left and right two guardian deities, four floating Apsarasas playing musical instruments and offering veneration, and two meditating Buddhas in small niches (Śākyamuni and Maitreya?). Above: two rows, each with 8 Buddhas, perhaps representing the "Thousand Buddhas." In the uppermost part is the Buddha as newborn child, bathed and protected by the nine-headed snake king (cf. pl. 32). The top ornament consists of intertwining dragons. Below the central niche two Bodhisattvas (most likely Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī) seated on their mounts (elephant and lion); to their right and left adoring figures. In the lowest register founders on horseback and in carts. Scattered throughout inscriptions with the names of donors. In the lowest part a detailed consecration inscription with date.
42. Maitreya (Mi-lo, Miroku). Marble. Height: 63 cm. From Sian-fu, Shensi Province. Hayasaki Collection, Tōkyō(?). Dated 497.
 The right arm would have been raised, with the right hand touching the cheek, as in pl. 45.
43. Head of the Avalokiteśvara in the "Dream Hall" (Yumedono) of the Hōryūji near Nara. Wood, gilded. Height of the entire figure: 179 cm. 7th century. (Accord. to Glaser, *Ostasiatische Plastik*.)
 The statue is intimately linked to the Crown Prince and Regent Shotoku (d. 622) and is supposed to correspond to his height. The prince was regarded as an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara (Kannon). Even its creation the figure had always been kept locked away as a "Secret Buddha" (hibutsu) until the year 1884--a fact which accounts for the excellent state of preservation of this work of solemn grandeur. The crown--executed in pierced gilded bronze sheet--is a masterpiece of the craftsmanship of the Asuka period. It has a lotus rosetta in the center and a Cintāmani jewel--a symbol of the Buddhist teaching--on a crescent moon shape at the top.
44. Head of a Bodhisattva. Accompanying figure of the Śākyamuni cult image in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji. Cf. pl. 17. (Accord. to *NJT* I.)

- 45-47. Maitreya (Mi-lo, Miroku). Seated wooden figure, originally with colored and gilded surfaces and metal jewelry. Height: 138 cm. Chûgûji near Nara. 7th century.

Waiting pensively in the Tuṣita heaven is the future Buddha Maitreya, destined to enlighten the next age. It is also possible that this figure shows Prince Siddârtha, the later Buddha, in a pose of meditation. The frequent designation of it as Nyorai Kannon is nonsense; cf. plates 63, 113. The two hair knots were originally covered by a metal head ornament. The figure also wore a metal necklace, as is customary for Bodhisattvas.

48. Head of a standing Bodhisattva. Camphor wood, gilded lacquer covering. Height of the entire figure: 78 cm. Hôryûji. Around 700. (Accord. to *NJT* VI.)

The body of the figure is slender and rigid in the archaic style. This pose, as well as the type of garment and jewelry, belong to the Asuka style, while the marvelously soulful face anticipates a more mature stage.

49. Head of the "Sunlight Bodhisattva" (Nikko Bosatsu). Accompanying figure of the Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi) Buddha (pl. 22), standing on this left side. Bronze, originally gilded. Height of the figure: 312 cm. Yakushiji, Nara. Around 726. (Accord. to *NJT* XIII.)

Cf. the Avalokiteṣvara statue of the same temple, plates 52 and 60.

50. Buddha hand. Hand of the Bhaiṣajyugara (Yakushi) figure in the Shin-Yakushiji, Nara. Wood. More than twice life-size. Ca. 800-850. Abhaya-mudrâ ("absence of fear"). (Accord. to *NJT* XX).

51. Standing Bodhisattva from Nan-hsiang-t'ang, South Honan. China. Limestone. Height ca. 190 cm. Northern Ch'i Dynasty, 550-577. Philadelphia, University Museum (photograph by museum).

52. Ārya-Avalokiteṣvara (Shô-Kannon). Bronze. Height: 188 cm. Yakushiji, Nara. Early 8th century. Cf. pl. 60. Halo later addition, pedestal in original form.

53. Standing Bodhisattva Padmapâni (= Avalokiteṣvara, Kuanyin, Kannon). From Ch'ang-an. Limestone with remnants of colored surface paint. Height: 249 cm. Northern Chou Dynasty, ca. 570. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photograph by museum).

Padmapâni means "holding a lotus"; the figure holds in the raised left hand a (now somewhat damaged) lotus stem with bud, flower and seed-vessel--a symbol of the fusion of past, presence, and future in the timeless "Emptiness" compared to which they, as do all empirical phenomena, lack real essence.

54. Standing Avalokiteṣvara. Bronze, originally gilded. Height: 83 cm. Ca. 675. Kakurinji near Kôbe ("Kakurinji Kannon").

Above the forehead in the head ornament a seated Buddha figure: Amitâbha, of whom Avalokiteṣvara is a kind of manifestation; serves as most frequent and clearest means of identifying this Bodhisattva.

55. Standing Avalokiteśvara. Gilded bronze. Height: 35 cm. T'ang period, 8th century. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art (photogr. by museum). The figure, as frequently is the case, holds a flask with Amṛta, the Indian nectar, in one hand.
56. Bodhisattva, kneeling in a pose of veneration. From Tun-huang, grotto 143. Painted, unfired clay; pedestal restored in parts. Height: 122 cm. T'ang Dynasty, 8th century. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art (photogr. by museum).
- The Bodhisattva was presumably part of an Amitābha triad. His two main companions frequently occur in this pose, particularly in triads showing Amitābha descending (J. Amida-Raigō) to meet a dying believer; cf. pl. 106. The figure is presumably Mahāsthāmaprāpta (J. *Dai-Seishi*).
57. Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin, Kannon)? Stone relief. Height: 192 cm. Cave temple Sokkulam (Sekkutsuan) near Kyōngju (Keishū), Southeast Korea. Around 750. (Accord. to Glaser, *Ostasiatische Plastik*.)
58. Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin; Jūichimen-Kannon). Lacquer figure (kanshitsu), hollow with light wooden interior frame; gilded. Height: 209 cm. Shōrinji near Nara. Late 8th century. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryō* IV.) Explanation: p. 28, cf. pl. 59.
59. Nine-headed Avalokiteśvara. Sandalwood, unpainted. Total height: 39 cm. Hōryūji. 721 (recent dating). (Accord. to *NJT* VI.) Masterpiece of woodcarving in precious wood, following model of of T'ang woodcarvers; probably made in China. Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin, Kannon) with 9 heads (instead of 11) extremely rare: in addition to the face of the figure and the seated figure of Amitābha in meditation above it, small heads visible in the picture--each in turn with a head of Amitābha above it, with another Amitābha head at the rear of the head; and as ninth head, the crowning Buddha head (damaged). Cf. pl. 58, 62.
60. Detail of figure in pl. 52. (Accord. to *NJT* XIII.) Cf. pl. 61.
61. Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Jūichimen-Kannon). Detail. Sandalwood, unpainted (with the exception of a few small areas). Height of entire figure: 100 cm. Hokkeji, Nara. 9th century. (Accord. to *NJT* XIX.) Example of masterly wood-carving, to be compared with the equally excellent bronze-work in pl. 60; f. pl. 62.
62. Head of the eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara (Jūichimen-Kannon). Detail. Cf. pl. 61.
63. Cintāmani-cakra-Avalokiteśvara (Nyoirin-Kannon). Wood, originally with painted color surface, and ornamented with gold. Height: 58 cm. Kanshinji near Ōsaka. 12th Century. (Accord. to *BK* 7.)

The six arms with different attributes or making various gestures (*mudrās*) indicate the infinite, varied compassion and mercy of the Bodhisattva. Right side: wheel of dharma, lotus flower; left side (attributes

- missing); Cintāmani jewel (held before the chest) and rosary (in the hand pointing downward). Halo missing. Cf. plates 112, 113.
64. Standing Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva (Ti-tsang, Ji-zō). Wood, painted and metal ornaments. Eyes of crystal. Height: 64 cm. Kamakura period, 13th century. Niitsu collection, Niigata prefecture. (Accord. to *BK*.)
Iconographical explanation: p. 27.
65. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva (Ti-tsang, Ji-zo). Wood, painted and with ornamental cut-gold patterns. Height: 89 cm. Nara, Museum (from the holdings of the Roku-Haramitsuji near Kyōto). Perhaps by Unkei, around 1200.
Halo missing; attributes: priest's staff and Cintāmani jewel. Cf. pl. 114, 115.
66. Standing Avalokiteśvara. Wood, painted and gilded. Height: 186 m. Sung period, late 12th century; painted coating renewed in 1349 (accord. to inscription). Kansas City, Rockhill Nelson Gallery (photograph by museum).
67. Head of a Bodhisattva. Wood. The ūrnā of the forehead--perhaps crystal--is missing. Approximately life-size. Sung period. 12th century. Cleveland, Museum of Art (picture postcard by the museum).
68. Seated Avalokiteśvara. Wood with relatively well preserved original coating (recently discovered under a Ming layer of paint): gold for the nude body parts, red for the garments and blue-green for decorative motifs, and geometric patterns in cut gold (kirikane). Height: 107 cm. Perhaps 12th century, late Sung. Amsterdam, Museum van Aziatische Kunst. (Photogr. made available with kind permission of the Museum.)
The figure is seated in the Mahārāja-lilā pose, the pose of "royal ease," typical most of all for the Sung period. A realistic rock pedestal representing Mount Potala, the seat of the Bodhisattva, should be supplemented. The small Amitābha figure at the front of the crown is missing as is the ūrnā--perhaps of rock crystal--from the forehead. A small moustache is painted above the upper lip, so that the figure is not to be regarded as female. The wealth of kirikane ornaments (which have been well preserved in many parts of the figure) is somewhat belated proof that this technique was used not only in Japanese but in Chinese sculptures as well; the same sort of kirikane ornaments (though less refined and rich) have been discovered on a second similar figure in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.
69. Acala Vidyārāja (Fudō Myōō). Wood, painted. Height: 60 cm. Tōshōdaiji, Nara. Around 1700 by the priest Tankai. (Accord. to *NJT* XXII.)
On the iconography see p. 29. On the Mount Sumeru pedestal (see pl. 18, 19) with its inward and outward steps the wheel of dharma appears twice. Cf. pl. 158.
70. The Heavenly King Virudhaka (Zōchō-ten). Clay, color paint, with gold decor. Height: ca. 160 cm. Tōdaiji (Nara), Kaidan-in (Initiation Chapel). Late 8th century. (Accord. to *NJT* XVIII.)

- One of the Four World Guardians. Eyes of obsidian, inserted. Cf. pl. 72.
71. One of the Twelve Divine Generals (Jōni Shinshō). Unfired clay with colored coating. Height: 167 cm. Around 750. Nara, Shin-Yakushiji. (Accord. to *NJT*.)
The Twelve Divine Generals are a group of protective deities of Indian origin who play an important role in Buddhism. They accompany Yakushi Buddha (Bhaiṣajyaguru) and stand around his central cult image in a circle.
72. Head of Jikoku-ten (Dhṛtarāstra), one of the Four World Guardians or Heavenly Kings (Lokapāla). Unfired clay, with color and gilded coating; eyes of obsidian. Height of the entire figure: 164 cm. Late Nara period (second half of the 8th century). Nara, Tōdaiji (Kaidan-in = Initiation Chapel). (Accord. to Glaser, *Ostasiatische Plastik*). Cf. plates 70, 117.
The figure holds a sword, tip downward, in front of his body and tramples on a gnome-like demon.
73. Vajrapāni (Shikkongō-jin = Kongō-rikishi). Clay, richly painted; eyes: dark semi-precious stones. Height of the entire figure: 167 cm. Tōdaiji, Nara (Hokkedō = Sangatsudō). 8th century. (Accord. to *Bukkyō Geijutsu* No. 7, 1950.)
Protector of Buddhist teaching dharma, he wields the thunderbolt (vajra). Particularly well preserved since the tabernacle holding the figure was only rarely opened until recent times. Colors: skin is flesh-tone; armor, and decorations are green, blue, dark red, brown, etc.
74. Śrī Devī (Kichijō-ten). Wood with color paint and kirikane decoration. Height: 117 cm. Hōryūji near Nara, Kondō. Consecrated 1078. (Accord. to *NJT* I.)
Goddess of Good Fortune and Wealth, depicted as a noble lady in the Chinese costume of the T'ang period. Together with a figure of Bishamon-ten (Vaiśravaṇa) and a central Śākyamuni figure, she forms a triad venerated during rituals to assure the well-being and prosperity of the empire.
75. Asura. Hollow lacquer figure (kanshitsu), painted. Height: 150 cm. Kōfukuji, Nara. 734. (Accord. to *NJT* XIV.)
One of the Hachibushu (representative of the Eight Classes of semi-divine beings, protective companions of Śākyamuni), originally joined to a Śākyamuni statue of the temple. Garment pattern repainted during the 13th century.
76. Procession mask: Asura. Wood, painted color. Hōryūji. Presumably 1138. (Accord. to *NJT* VI.) Three-faced mask; cf. pl. 75.
77. Procession mask: Sun god (Sūrya, Nitten). Wood, painted. Tōji, Kyōto. Not later than ca. 1000. (Accord. to *Nippon Kokuhō Zenshū* 63.)

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78. Hariti (Kariteimo, Kishimojin). Wood, painted. Height: 44 cm. Onjôji (Miidera) near Kyôto. 13th century. (Accord. to *Nippon Kokuhô Zenshû* 35.) Cf. p. 30 and text figure 23.
79. Dvârapâla (gate guardian). Lacquer sculpture (Chin. *chia-chu*, J. *kanshitsu*). Height: 58 cm. Sung period or slightly earlier. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photogr. by museum).
80. One of the judge kings of purgatory. Wood, painted. Height: 100 cm. Ennôji, Kamakura. Perhaps 13th century (from a picture postcard).
Assistant to the ruler of the "purgatory," Yama-râja = Emma-ô. In "Chinese" dress; holds tablet and brush to compile the register of sins committed by one who is condemned to rebirth in purgatory and to determine his punishment.
81. Meditating monk. Unfired clay. About life-size. T'ang period? In a grotto temple in Tun-huang. (Accord. to Pelliot.)
Not an important work of art but an impressive depiction of the Buddhist believer in the state of meditation. Still in its original site in this once-flourishing center in the heart of Asia which was so important in transmitting Buddhist art and culture.
82. Young monk. Sandstone relief on the wall of Cave No. 19 in Yün-kang (near Ta-t'ung-fu, Shansi). 5th century. (Accord. to Mizuno, *Unkô Sekibutsugun*, Ôsaka, 1944.)
83. Old Monk. From Yün-kang Cave No. 18. The head is found high on the rounded wall of the cave temple amidst venerating Bodhisattvas at the side of a giant Buddha. Tiny in size compared to this Buddha.
84. Vimalakîrti (Wei-mo[-chieh], Yui-ma[-kitsu]). Wood with lacquered (kanshitsu) and painted surface. Height: 92 cm. 9th Century. Nara, Hokke-ji. (Accord. to *NJT*.) Iconographical explanation: see p. 35.
85. Head of the Vimalakîrti, 9th century. Pl. 84.
86. Abbot Chien-chen (Ganjin). Hollow lacquer figure (kanshitsu), color-painted coating. Height: 80 cm. Second half, 8th century. Tôshôdaiji, Nara (photogr. *Propyläen-Kunstgeschichte*, vol. IV).
Chien-chen was invited to Japan to establish a temple-monastery, the Toshodai-ji (cf. pl. 3), to introduce monastic discipline and to perform authoritative initiation rites. After several futile attempts, though he, having gone blind in the meantime, finally managed to reach Japan in 754 with a few of his disciples. He died in Japan in 763 at the age of 76. The portrait statue, depicting the blind priest in the state of meditation and ritually venerated as image of the temple's founder, reputedly was created by one of his Chinese disciples. The claims in older studies that the figure is made of papier-mâché have been shown to be in error.
87. Buddha disciple. Hollow lacquer figure (kanshitsu), painted. (Paint renewed around 1200.) Height ca. 150 cm. 734. Kôfukuji, Nara. (Accord. to *NJT*.) Cf. pl. 89.

One of the Ten Major Disciples of Śākyamuni who frequently form his entourage and, as in this particular instance, originally surrounded a Śākyamuni cult image.

88. Asanga and Vasubandhu (Chin. *Wu-cho* and *Shih-ch'in*; J. *Mu-chaku* and *Se-shin*). Wood, painted. Eyes: rock-crystal. Height: 186 cm. By Unkei, 1208. Nara, Kōfukuji. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Ryakushi*.)

Asanga (who lived in India probably in the 4th century), just like his brother Vasubandhu (who, according to recent studies, actually was not his brother and lived during the 5th century), is one of the authoritative patriarchs of Mahāyāna teaching. Vasubandhu is the author of one of its basic books, the *Abhidharmakośa*. Both may be regarded as being "equally at the center and apex of the history of Buddhism in India" (v. Glasenapp). These are two of the most splendid imagined portraits in East Asian art; they characterize the two patriarchs according to their names: Asanga, *Wu-cho*, *Mu-chaku*, means "not being attached to anything, divorced from earthly ties." Vasubandhu, *Shih-ch'in*, *Se-shin* means: "to be closely related to the world." Asanga (on the right) holds a reliquary vessel draped in a bag; the object held by Vasubandhu is lost. Cf. pl. 90.

89. Head of the Buddha's disciple on pl. 87.
 90. Asanga (*Muchaku*), head of the figure on pl. 88. (Accord. to *NJT*.)
 91. Arhat (Lohan, Rakan). From I-chou, Hopei province. Fired clay, color glazed (cream-white, green, yellow-brown). Height: 102 cm. Liao-Chin Dynasty, between 10th and 13th centuries (most likely 12th century). Kansas City, Rockhill Nelson Gallery (photogr. by museum). Cf. explanations to pl. 92.
 92. Arhat (Lohan, Rakan). From I-chou (Hopei). Fired clay, glazed green, yellow-brown, and cream-white. Height: 107 cm. New York, Metropolitan Museum. Perhaps 12th century. (Accord. to *Propyläen-Weltgeschichte*, vol. IV.)

Together with the figure on pl. 91 this belongs to a series of perhaps at least 16 or 18 figures of which other pieces or fragments are now held by various European, American and Japanese collections. Dating is, therefore, difficult; estimates ranged for a long time from T'ang to Ming. A spectrochemical and spectro-photometric analysis of the clay and glazing of the Lohan-figure in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston which belongs to the same series established clear differences from the materials used in Ming ceramics but did not necessarily attest a date somewhere in the T'ang period (Sung and Yüan samples were not analyzed); cf. William J. Young, "Some Notes on Shōsō-in, T'ang and Ming Pottery," *Far Eastern Ceramic Bulletin* 1 (1949), No. 6. Stylistic and iconographical factors and the discovery of coins in the interior of the Boston figure datable from 118 B.C. to A.D. 1107 (Young, p. 60) indicate (contrary to Young's opinion) a date in the 12th

century. A similar conclusion had also already been reached by Leopold Reidemeister (*OZ NF* 13, 1937, pp. 161-168).

93. Head of an Arhat (Lohan, Rakan). Cast iron. Height: 27 cm. Ming period (1368-1644). Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photogr. by the museum).
94. Arhat (Lohan, Rakan). Wood. Height: 77 cm. By Mokujiki Shōnin, 1801. Mingei-kan (Museum of Folk Art), Tōkyō. Cf. text, p. 115.
95. Prince Shōtoku (Shōtoku Taishi, 574-622) at the age of seventeen. Wood, painted surface. Height: 58 cm. 1069 (dated by inscription in the interior of the statue). Hōryūji near Nara. (Accord. to *NJT*.)

The prince holds a fan-shaped scepter. Since this is a cult image, it is kept in a tabernacle. Cf. pl. 131.

96. Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1435-1490) as a Zen Monk. Wood, painted. Height: 85 cm. Ashikaga (Muromachi) period, perhaps end of the 15th century. Kyōto, Ginkaku-ji. (Accord. to Glaser, *Ostasiatische Plastik*.)

Yoshimasa governed 1443-1474 as eighth Shogun of the House of Ashikaga and then retired to a temple he had built for himself at Higashiyama (East Mountain) near Kyōto. He became a monk and turned particularly to cultivating such arts as painting, Nō drama, the tea ceremony, and garden design, in the spirit of Zen. Of the palace buildings, the Ginkaku--once a building dedicated to the performance of the tea ceremony but transformed into a temple--and the famous garden have been preserved until today.

Painting and Graphic Art

97. Śākyamuni Buddha. Scroll. Color on silk. Height: 145 cm. Tōfukuji, Kyōto. Perhaps Sung period. (Accord. to *Pageant of Chinese Painting*, 2nd ed. Tōkyō, 1941.)

Most likely trimmed on all sides. Central picture of a triptych (right side Mañjuśrī; left side Samantabhadra-Bodhisattva). According to tradition, a work by the greatest of Chinese painters of the Tang period, Wu T'ao-tse (ca. 690-750); actually, however, a later Chinese copy. Degree of departure from the original cannot be ascertained. Nonetheless one of the very few large-size Buddhist paintings of China from the older period which have survived.

98. Amitābha with accompanying figures. Wall painting (tempera). 330 x 260 cm. Beginning of the 8th century. Hōryūji near Nara, Kondō (Golden Hall). 1949 almost entirely destroyed by fire. (Accord. to Moriya, *Die japanische Malerei*, with kind permission of the publisher Brockhaus, Wiesbaden.) Cf. pl. 107.
99. Maṇḍala of the Womb World (Garbhakośadhātu-Maṇḍala, J. *Taizōkai-Mandara*). Gold-painted scroll. Japan, 17th century. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts. (Accord. to Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography*.)

The other picture shows the Maṇḍala of the Diamond World (Vajradhatu, J. Kongokai). In both maṇḍalas the Buddhist beings--with Vairocana at the center--are represented by Siddham letters. Cf. pl. 100, 101. Explanation of the maṇḍalas: p. 33.

100. Centralfield of the Maṇḍala of the Womb World (cf. pl. 99). Scroll, color and gold on silk. 1693. Kyôto, Tôji (main temple of the Shingon sect). (According to Coomaraswamy, *op. cit.*)

Vairocana, in the center of the central lotus flower, is surrounded by four Buddhas and four Bodhisattvas. Between the flower petals are Vajra symbols. Cf. pl. 102.

101. The Siddham letter A. Scroll, color and gold on silk. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts. Japan, 15th century. (From Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography.*)

The mystic primordial syllable A symbolizes the cosmic Buddha Vairocana in the form he assumes in the Maṇḍala of the Womb World (garbhadhātu). The letter, as the figure of the Buddha himself, is treated as a cult image, with halo and lotus throne resting on a vajra symbolizing the world axis.

102. Vairocana (Ta-jih, Dai-nichi) Buddha. Scroll, color and gold on silk. Height ca. 150 cm. Fujiwara period, ca. 12th century. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photogr. by the museum). Cf. pl. 29. In his crown the Five Wisdom Buddhas, cf. pl. 6.

103. The "Pure Land of the West" of Amitâbha. Scroll, color on silk. 190 x 190 cm. Cologne, Museum für ostasiatische Kunst.

Late copy (perhaps after 1500) of the so-called Taema-Mandara, the main cult image of the Taema-dera near Nara from the 8th/9th centuries, executed in tapestry work. Very exact reproduction of the original or one of its early copies.

- 104a. Detail from pl. 103: The central group, consisting of Amitâbha--depicted in the teaching pose with the mudrâ of "turning the dharma wheel," his major companions Avalokiteśvara (Kuanyin, Kannon; to the right) and Mahâsthâmaprapta (Ta-shin-chih, Dai-seishi; to the left) and numerous unnamed Bodhisattvas.

- 104b. Detail from pl. 103: Rebirth in the Lotus Pond of the Pure Land. At the foot of the major group (pl. 104a) is the "Jewel Pond" of the Amitâbha paradise. Most of the faithful accepted by the Buddha in his Pure Land are reborn as small naked children from lotus flowers. Those of the higher categories (rebirths are hierarchically graduated according to the merits accumulated during their previous existences) have already matured to the state of Bodhisattvas and wear their garments, jewelry and halos. They are allowed to offer their veneration on the upper terrace, directly before Amitâbha's face, while those reborn at a lower state as naked children of undetermined sex

perform a dance in his honor on a stage accompanied by Bodhisattvas playing musical instruments.

105. Amitābha Coming Across the Mountains (*yamagoshi-amida*). Triptych. Colors and gold on silk. 101 x 83 cm. 13th century. Kyōto, Konkaikōmyō-ji. (Accord. to Moriya, *op. cit.*, with kind permission from the publisher Brockhaus, Wiesbaden.)

To the right and left, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprapta (Kannon and Seishi): the former offers to the believer a lotus throne in whose flower the believer will be reborn in the Pure Land (cf. pl. 104b). Such pictures were placed near the deathbeds of believers. Long five-colored strings emanating from the hands of Amitābha (their remnants are recognizable as shadows on the picture) were placed in their hands to establish a physico-magical contact with the saving Buddha.

106. Amitābha with Bodhisattvas appearing to the believer on his death-bed ("Amida-Raigō"). Three scrolls, colors on silk, cut-gold decoration (*kirikane*). Central picture 210 x 210 cm, side pictures 210 x 105 cm. Perhaps originally a folding screen. Kōya-san, Japan. 12th century. (Accord. to Moriya, *Die japanische Malerei*, with kind permission of the publisher Brockhaus, Wiesbaden.) Cf. pl. 109 and explanations to pl. 105.
107. Avalokiteśvara (Kuan Yin, Kannon). Detail from the picture of the "Manifestation of Amitābha (Amida)," pl. 98. Wall painting (tempera). Height of the section ca. 82 cm. Golden Hall (Kondō) of the Hōryū-ji. Beginning of the 8th century. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryō* III.)
108. Bodhisattva. Detail from a multi-colored embroidery depicting Śākyamuni's sermon to Bodhisattvas and monks. Total size: 207 x 158 cm. Height of the section: ca. 35 cm. Kanjuji, Kyōto. Perhaps 8th century, possibly a Chinese work. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryō* III.)
109. Detail from pl. 58: Bodhisattvas playing musical instruments; kin = koto (zither or harp in the front; biwa [lute] on right side). The Bodhisattva to the left holds a tall banner.
110. Yama-Deva (Emma-ten). Detail. Scroll, colors on silk, cut-gold decoration (*kirikane*). Total height: 113 cm, height of the section: ca. 45 cm. Kanchi-in, Kyōto. 11th century. (Accord. to *BK* 23.)

Originally the Vedic God of death. In Buddhism one of the twelve elementary gods, at the same time supreme judge of purgatory. Rides on a water buffalo and holds a staff with human skull. Companion: a "heavenly lady" and a demonic servant. Yama is also depicted as grim king of the judges (similar to pl. 80), but fundamentally he is an incarnation of the Buddha Essence and also, therefore, appears as a friendly figure.

111. Avalokiteśvara. Scroll. Colors on silk. 107 x 59 cm. Dated 968. From Tunhuang. Washington, Freer Gallery of Art. (Photography by museum.)

Avalokiteśvara holds a willow branch and a nectar flask--two of his most frequent attributes. In his room is a small Amitābha figure. Above a

- canopy, below an altar with incense stand and vases. To the right and left Bodhisattvas (kuyō-bosatsu = pūjā-bodhisattva, accord. to accompanying text) making offerings. Below the donor and his family.
112. Cintāmani-cakra Avalokiteśvara (Nyoirin-Kannon). Scroll. Colors on silk. Cut-gold decoration (kirikane). Height: 102 cm. 14th century. Tōkyō, Dan Collection. (Accord. to *BK*.) Six-armed manifestation of the Bodhisattva. Cf. pl. 63. Enthroned on a rocky mountain rising as a clearly delineated island from the restless ocean (island and ocean symbolizing absolute truth and the illusionary play of phenomena, respectively). This motif is here unfolded into a rich mountain landscape creating the appropriate mood.
113. Detail from pl. 112.
114. Ksitigarbha Bodhisattva (Ti-tsang, Jizō). Scroll. Colors on silk, cut-gold decoration (kirikane). Height: 95 cm, Tōkyō. Mitsui Takaharu Collection. First half of the 14th century. (Accord to *BK*.) Cf. pl. 64, 65.
115. Detail from pl. 114.
116. Maitreya Bodhisattva (Miroku Bosatsu). Scroll. Colors on silk. Height of the section ca. 30 cm. Late Fujiwara period, 12th century. Ikoma (Nara Prefecture), Hōzanji. (Accord. to *NJT*.)
- The section, together with pl. 117, is included to convey an impression of the art of line-drawing in Buddhist painting. The attribute held in the hand is a lotus stalk.
117. The World Guardian Jikoku-ten (Dhrtarāstra). Scroll. Height of the section: ca. 44 cm. Late Fujiwara period, 12th century. Nara, Kōfukuji. (Accord. to *NJT*.) Cf. pl. 72 and the comments on pl. 116.
118. Horse-headed Avalokiteśvara (Batō-Kannon). Scroll, colors and gold (kirikane) on silk. Height: 166 cm. Fujiwara period, 11th century. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photogr. by museum).
- Batō-Kannon is derived from the Indian deity Hayagriva (cf. R.H. van Gulik, "Hayagrīva. The Mantrayānic Aspect of Horse-Cult in China and Japan," *International Archiv für Ethnologie*, vol. 33, Suppl., 1935). In esoteric Buddhism this figure is one of the six manifestations of Avalokiteśvara. These are ascribed to the Six Realms of Existence (p. 14) as helpmates and saviors, in this case the realm of animals. (Among the others are the Cintāmani-cakra and the Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara.) In addition to its symbolic role in the mythological context (sun horse, etc.) the horse here also symbolizes the merciful powers of the Bodhisattva who untiringly speeds through all world regions and so is at work everywhere simultaneously. This form of the Bodhisattva, though terrifying in appearance, is merciful in nature and effect. It is also related to the Vidyārājas (Ming-wang, Myō-ō). Eight arms with attributes or mudrās. Three faces, the one in the middle with the head of a horse above it. Body color: a somber red.
119. The Death of Buddha Śākyamuni. ("Entering Nirvāna.") Scroll. Colors on silk. 222 x 173 cm. Cologne, Museum für ostasiatische Kunst. Dated 1392.

Japanese copy of a Chinese original traditionally ascribed to Wu Tao-tse (see comments on pl. 97). The Buddha is lying under Śāla-trees surrounded by mourning representatives of all categories of beings ranging from Bodhisattvas and deities down to tiny insects or worms. In the upper part appears Mâyâ, Śâkyamuni's mother, who had died only seven days after his birth and who dwells in one of the numerous heavenly spheres.

120. Jâtaka legend. Painting on the Tamamushi Shrine (pl. 150). Lacquer on wood. Height: 65 cm. 7th century. Hôryûji near Nara. (Accord. to *NJT*.)

In one of his earlier incarnations the later Buddha Śâkyamuni had such compassion for a mother tiger suffering starvation that he jumped off a cliff and thus acquired the highest religious merit through this sacrifice worthy of a Bodhisattva. In this still archaic style picture the event is divided into three phases: disrobing (see detail, pl. 121), fall, being devoured. One of the very few original paintings from this early period. In spite of its "primitive" style, it possesses great formal charm.

121. Detail from pl. 120 (accord. to *NJT*).
 122. The Sûtra of Cause and Effect. Section of a long scroll (emakimono). Color on paper. Height: (=width of the scroll) 26 cm. Total length: 115 cm. Tôkyô, Prince Kuni Collection. 8th century. Copy based on Chinese models from the early T'ang period. (Accord. to *BK 56*.) Japanese title of the Sûtra: Kako-genzai-inga-kyô. Several such scrolls are preserved in Japanese collections.

123. Thirsty ghosts (preta). Section of a long scroll (emakimono) entitled "Gaki-zôshi." Colors on paper. Height: 27 cm, total length of the scroll: 541 cm. Okayama (Western Japan), Sôgenji. Around 1200. (Accord. to Moriya, *Die japanische Malerei*; with kind permission of the publisher, Brockhaus, Wiesbaden.)

The thirsty ghosts are refreshed by pious people offering them water in front of a Buddhist image.

124. Scene in Purgatory. Section from a scroll of the emakimono "Kasuga Gongen Reikenki." Colors on paper. Height ca. 40 cm. Original: Tôkyô, National Museum (formerly owned by the Imperial Household). 1309. Illustration based on an 1807 copy. (Accord. to *Nippon Emakimono Shûsei III*.)
 125. Dream vision in a temple. Scene from scroll no. 5 of the emakimono "Ishiyama-dera Engi." Ink and colors on paper. Height: 33 cm. By Awataguchi Ryûkô (around 1430/40). Owner: Ishiyama-dera near Kyôto. (Accord. to *Nippon Emakimono Shûsei*.)

The work narrates the story of the temple and miraculous events associated with it. Here a noble lady receives a wish-granting jewel (cintâmani) from a Bodhisattva during a dream while asleep on an improvised bed on the terrace of a temple hall.

126. Priest Ippen pilgrimage. Scene from scroll No. 1 of the emakimono "Ippen Shōnin Eden." Ink and colors on silk. Height: 37 cm. By En-i, 1299. Owner: Kankikōji, Kyōto. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Ryakushi*.)

Ippen (died 1289, i.e., ten years before the picture was made), the founder of a new sect of simple piety, spent his entire life travelling through all the provinces of Japan doing missionary work. The pictorial biography (in 12 scrolls) therefore takes the viewer through all the regions of the country and at the same time through all the stages of Ippen's life. It is distinguished by its particularly rich and loving treatment of landscape.

127. Arhat. Scroll. Colors on silk. Height: 108 cm. Ōsaka, Murayama Collection. China, Yuan period (around 1300). (Accord. to *Pageant of Chinese Painting*.)

The Arhat is seated in a cave, so deeply immersed in meditation that several birds have built a nest in the palms of his hands and have descended onto his garment.

128. The Arhat Panthaka (detail). Scroll. Ink and colors on silk. Height of the entire picture 94 cm; of the section ca. 30 cm. China, ca. 13th/14th centuries. Freiburg i.Br., Städtische Sammlungen. (Accord. to Kümmel, *Die Kunst Ostasiens*.)

A dragon is nestled against the right knee of the seated arhat and looks up to him, expressing the tremendous power of the wisdom of an Enlightened One which can tame cosmic forces.

129. Ascent of an Arhat to Heaven. Scroll, now framed. Ink and colors on silk. Height ca. 160 cm. By Chou Chi-ch'ang, dated 1178. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts (photogr. by museum).

It is not clear whether the Arhat performs the final entry into Nirvāna or is merely engaged in levitation (the act of making one's own body rise into the air by means of magic powers). Arhats were believed to have the ability to overcome natural laws through "command of their own bodies at will." Below are four additional Arhats (recognizable by tonsure and robe) and two princely adorers. The picture is taken from a series of originally 100 paintings, each depicting 5 Arhats, from the Zen temple Daitokuji in Kyōto. The temple still owns 82. Approximately half of all these pictures are by Lin T'ing-kuei.

130. Śubhakarasiṃha (Shan-wu-wei, Zem-mu-i), patriarch of the T'ien-t'ai school, 637-735. Scroll, colors on silk. Height: 162 cm. Ichijōji, Hyōgo Prefecture, near Kōbe. 12th century, but after older models. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryō* III.)

From a series of 10 ideal portraits. Śubhakarasiṃha (something like "Exalted Lion") was a Central Asian Prince, who became a priest of esoteric Buddhism and worked in China as translator of basic Sūtras (for example, the Vairocana-Sūtra). One such sacred scroll is held by him in veneration before his forehead. Next to him--a rather rare feature--is the Lokapāla (World Guardian) Vaiśravaṇa (Bishamon-ten), one of the Four Heavenly

Kings. As guardian of the North he is a special protector of the T'ien-t'ai- (Ten-dai-) monastery on Mount Hiei north of Kyôto and his presence is apparently evoked by the patriarch with the help of a mantra. The picture is dominated by the intense cinnabar color of the robe.

131. Prince Shôtoku (cf. pl. 95). Scroll; ink, colors and gold on ink. Height: 113 cm. Approx. second half of the 13th century. Kyôto, Ninnaji. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryô* II.)

The prince is shown offering incense for the souls of his parents, i.e., observing the cardinal virtue of filial piety. Above his court dress he wears a loosely fitting monk's stole. Such portraits served as cult images during Shôtoku memorial services.

132. Portrait of the Japanese Zen abbot Shôichi Kokushi (1202-1272). Scroll. Color on paper. 239 x 135 cm. Tôfukuji, Kyôto. By the Zen monk and painter Minchô (1352-1431). (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryô* V.)

Realistic representative portrait of the founder of the Tôfukuji, one of the most important Zen monasteries. The portrait's resemblance to the founder's features is convincing despite the time difference of 150 years and is most likely based on a tradition faithfully kept up by the monastery. An ink sketch of Shôichi by Minchô showing him in a relaxed pose is reproduced in Grosse, *Die ostasiatische Tuschmalerei*, 73/74.

133. Portrait of the Zen abbot Nanso-e (1185-1343). Section. Scroll, colors on silk. Total height: 120 cm. Height of the section: ca. 25 cm. Tôkyô, Kumita Collection. Beginning of the 14th century. (Accord. to *Bijutsu Kenkyû* 137.)

The abbot is sitting on a chair in a quietly dignified pose with his hands folded. (Cf. pl. 132.)

134. The Japanese monk Myô-e (1173-1232) meditating in a tree in a forest (section). Scroll, colors on silk. Total height: 146 cm. Height of the section: ca. 36 cm. Kôzanji, Kyôto. Approx. 1230 by the priest Jônin. (Accord. to *Kyôto no Butsuga*.)

The figure of the monk, who was a simple and nature-loving man and who founded the mountain temple Kôzanji, is shown amidst a dense forest and appears totally merged into the life of nature around him. On a branch on the right are his rosary and incense vessel; to the right of the base of the tree trunk are his wooden sandals.

135. Frontispiece of a Sûtra scroll. Gold painting on dark blue paper. Ca. 26 x 22 cm. Chûsonji (Northern Japan). 12th century. (Accord. to *Chûsonji Kyô-e*, ed. by the Yamato-e Dôkôkai.)

A Buddha with two Bodhisattvas appears to several ascetics in the wilderness. One of them receives an enlightening ray from the urnâ of the Buddha.

136. Apsarasas. Engraving on a fragment of a bronze halo. Height of the section: ca. 20 cm. 8th century. Nara, Tôdaiji. (Accord. to picture postcard authorized by the temple.)

The Apsarasas--angelic heavenly beings, frequently depicted as resembling Bodhisattvas, are commonly shown floating about on the halos of Buddha figures making offerings and in the act of veneration.

137. Fudô Myôô (Acala Vidyârâja). Scroll, ink drawing on paper. Height: 91 cm. By the priest Shinkai. Dated 1282. Daigoji near Kyôto. (Accord. to *Nippon Bijutsu Shiryô*.) Cf. pl. 69.
138. The Bodhisattva Ksitigarbha (Ti-tsang, Ji-zô) helping children in the underworld. Hand colored woodcut. Height: 44 cm. Approx. 18th century. Cambridge, MA: Fogg Museum of Art (photogr. by museum).

On the banks of the river along the path to purgatory dead children are forced by demons to pile up pebbles. The Bodhisattva helps them to ease their lot. For this reason small pyramids of pebbles are erected in front of Jizô images in Japan.

139. Śâkyamuni Returning from the Mountains. Scroll. Ink on silk, lightly colored. Height: 118 cm. Tôkyô, Hinokara collection. By Liang K'ai (first half of 13th century). (Accord. to *Bijutsu Kenkyû* 134.) For comments, see n. 157.
140. White-robed Avalokiteśvara (Kuanyin, Kannon). Scroll. Ink on silk, with light color tone. Height: 172 cm. Daitokuji, Kyôto. By Zen priest Mu-hsi (13th century). (Accord. to *Bijutsu Kenkyû* 129.)

Central picture of a triptych. Side pictures: left: stalking crane, right: monkey mother on a tree (both perhaps originally an independent pair of pictures and only joined later). Cf. pl. 142.

141. Detail from pl. 139.
142. Detail from pl. 140.

The detail of the head disproves the widespread erroneous assumption that such a Kuan-yin figure should be regarded as female. Rather, the transcendence of sexual characteristics is unmistakable even in this late depiction.

143. Bodhidharma (Ta-mo, Daruma). Scroll, ink on paper. Height: 95 cm. Nanzenji, Kyôto. By the Zen monk and painter Kei Shoki (= Shôkei), ca. 1450-1520. (According to Kümmel, *Die Kunst Ostasiens*.)

On Bodhidharma, the founder of East Asian Zen Buddhism, see p. 233 of this book.

144. Pu-t'ai (Hotei). Scroll. Ink on paper. Height: 80 cm. Tôkyô, Katô collection. By the Japanese Zen priest and painter Mokuan (ca. 1300-1345). (Accord. to *BK* 73.)

The mendicant monk Pu-t'ai, full of free and easy humor, is considered to be an incarnation of the future Buddha Maitreya. A favorite figure in Zen Buddhism, he is shown pointing to the moon to show that one should turn to the real moon, and not to its shifting reflection in the water. (The moon is the symbol of ultimate truth.) (Cf. p. 234)

145. Han-shan and Shih-te (Kanzan and Jittoku). Scroll. Ink on paper. Height: 100 cm. Tôkyô, Tsugaru collection. Ascribed to Shûbun (first half of the 15th century). (According to Kümmel, *Die Kunst Ostasiens*.)
On the two figures, see p. 234. Shûbun is one of the founders of Japanese ink painting in the Zen spirit. He was a monk in the leading Zen monastery, Shôkokuji in Kyôto, as was his pupil Sesshû (pl. 149).
146. The Zen patriarch Hui-neng (Enô) tearing a Sûtra scroll. Scroll. Ink on paper. Height: 72 cm. Tôkyô, Mitsui Collection. By Liang K'ai (first half of 13th century). (Accord. to *Pageant of Chinese Painting*.)
On the meaning of the picture see p. 223. Hui-neng, the Sixth Patriarch of Zen Buddhism (after Bodhidharma), lived 637-712. The picture has recently come to be regarded as an early Japanese copy, but is considered very close to the original.
147. The Chinese Zen monk Hsiang-yen (J. *Kyô-gen*, 9th century), sweeping the garden. Ink and light colors on paper. Height 199 cm. By Kanô Motonobu (1476-1559), Tôkyô National Museum. (Accord. to Harada, *Examples of Japanese Art in the Imperial Household Museum*.) For explanatory comments, see p. 235.
148. Kaki fruits (persimmons). Scroll. Ink on paper. Height: 36 cm. Kyôto, Daitokuji. By Mu-hsi (13th century). (Accord. to *Pageant of Chinese Painting*.) Cf. main text p. 238, 248.
149. Sesshû (1420-1506): Landscape (1495). Scroll, ink on paper. Height of the entire picture (whose upper three fifths are taken up by accompanying texts): 149 cm. Tôkyô, National Museum. (Accord. to Harada, *op. cit.*)

Ritual Implements

150. Tamamushi shrine. Wood with metal fitting and lacquer paint. Height: 233 cm. Hôryûji. 7th century. (Accord. to *NJT* III.)
Domestic altar, imitating a temple similar to the Hôryûji. Interior spaces of the pierced fittings (cf. pl. 120) originally covered with outer wings of iridescent beetles (*Chrysochroa elegans*). (Hence the name Tamamushi Shrine.) Painted pictures: upper part: Bodhisattvas, lower part: Jâtaka scenes (from Śâkyamuni's previous existences), veneration of relics, etc. Cf. pl. 120, 121. The Śâkyamuni (?) Triad (bronze statuettes), originally on the upper level, were stolen as early as the 13th century.
151. Halo of the Bhaisajyaguru-(Yakushi-) Buddha in the Golden Hall of the Hôryûji. Bronze. Height: 80 cm. Dated 607 (but possibly made ca. 700). (Accord. to *NJT* I.)
Lotus flower with rays emanating from its center, surrounded by lotus vines. Inner circular halo surrounded by flame gloriola in which seven Buddhas on lotus thrones appear. (Cf. comments on pl. 17.)
152. Halo and screen of the Amitâbha-(Amida-) Triad of the Tachibana Shrine (pl. 39). On the screen proper are venerating Bodhisattvas or Apsarasas;

upper part: small Buddhas under canopies--all focused on the central Amitābha.

153. Detail from pl. 152.

154. Temple lantern in front of the Great Hall of the Tōdaiji, Nara. Bronze. Height: 462 cm. Approx. 752.

Octagonal; on latticework and doors (height: 118 cm) reliefs of Bodhisattvas dancing and playing musical instruments. On the shaft a lengthy inscription: Sūtra text referring to the blessings accruing from the offering of candles, flowers, and incense.

155. Detail from pl. 154.

156. Three-pronged Vajra (J.: sanko). Gilded bronze. Ca. 20 cm long. Hōryūji near Nara. Early Fujiwara period (11th century)? Cf. pl. 160; text, p. 167.

157. Bell with five-pronged Vajra handle (goko-rei). Grey bronze (byakudō). Height: ca. 20 cm. Tōkyō, National Museum (from the Hōryūji). Ca. 9th century. (Accord. to *NJT* XI.)

Ritual implement of esoteric Buddhism with magic-symbolic meaning. Cf. text, p. 167 f. and pl. 156, 160.

158. Wheel of Dharma (dharma-cakra). Gold plated bronze. 13.5 cm. across. Formerly Ostasiatisches Museum, Berlin. Japan, 13th century. (Accord. to Kümmel-Grosse, *Ostasiatisches Gerät*.) Cf. text p. 167.

159. Reliquary in the form of a Gorintō. Rock crystal. Height: 7 cm. Chūgūji near Nara. 13th century. (Accord. to *Chūgūji-Hokiji Taikyō*.)

On the gorintō see text figure 33*. The relics (śarīra), resembling crystal pearls, are found inside the sphere.

160. Vajra. Ornamental inlaid work of mother-of-pearl in black lacquer on wood, applied to an altar platform. Length: ca. 25 cm. 12th century. Chūsonji (Northern Japan). (Accord. to *Chūsonji Taikyō*.) Cf. pl. 156.

161. Reliquary (shari-tō). Gilded bronze. Height: 37 cm. Saidaiji, Nara. Kamakura period (13th century). (Accord. to *NJT* XXIII.)

The reliquary has the form of a hanging lantern, but resembles in several of its features a pagoda in the form of a gorintō. (Cf. pl. 159; tō = pagoda.) In this instance it is used as a reliquary. The relics (of Śākyamuni) are contained in a bronze vessel inside the gilded bronze sphere. Top ornament: Cintāmani jewel of rock crystal with lotus pedestal and flame halo. Small bells hang from the roof just as they do from real temple and pagoda roofs.

162. Gong Stand. Bronze. Height: 97 cm. Kōfukuji, Nara. 8th century (with the exception of the gong; see pl. 163). (Accord. to *NJT* XIV.)

The dragons--four altogether--are a typical Chinese and not originally Buddhist motif.

163. Gong. (Detail from pl. 162.) Bronze. 24 cm across. Later substitute (13th century) for the original gong or a sounding stone.

The striking surface in the center is in the form of a lotus (cf. the bell, pl. 167, and the sounding board, text figure 30*) surrounded by two ring zones bearing lotus and other flower motifs of a Chinese type.

164. Frame with sounding board. Sounding plate (kei): gilded bronze; frame: wood with black lacquer coating. Height: 64 cm. Formerly Ostasiatisches Museum, Berlin. Japanese, 14th century. (Accord. to Kümmel-Grosse, *Ostasiatisches Gerät.*) Cf. text figure 30*.
165. Decorative plaque (keman) to be hung in a temple hall. Gold plated bronze. Width: 28 cm. From the Chûsonji (Northern Japan); Kyôto, Museum. Perhaps first half of the 12th century.

For the use of these plates, see p. 164. Major motif: two Kalavinkas, legendary birds of Indian origin with human heads which appear in Buddhism as residents of a Buddha's "paradise" and as offering gifts to the Buddha. Around them are blossoming vines of a Chinese type. Combination of pierced silhouette work and shallow relief with interior engravings.

166. Two water flasks (Sanskrit *kundikā*) for use in rituals. Bronze. Height: 25.5 cm (left) and 30 cm (right). Hôryûji. Uncertain date, perhaps 8th century. (Accord. to *NJT* VI.)

Remarkable is the archaically stylized human head holding the spout of the bottle on the right side. A rare motif.

167. Temple bell. Bronze. Height: 135 cm opening 90 cm across. Kôfukuji, Nara. Dated 727. (Accord. to *NJT* XV.)

Second oldest dated bell in Japan. Relatively modest size. Suspended at the so-called "dragon head" and struck from the outside at the lotus disc with a horizontally suspended wooden beam.

168. Drinking cup (chawan) for the tea ceremony. Raku ware; earthenware with thick reddish glaze. By Kawakami Fuhaku (1717-1809). Height ca. 10 cm. Tôkyô, private collection. (Accord. to Harada, *A Glimpse of Japanese Ideals.*)
169. Water kettle (chagama) for the tea ceremony. Cast iron. Height: ca. 20-25 cm. (Inside the circle the Chinese character for "small.") (Accord. to Harada, *op. cit.*)



1. The central court of the Hōryūji near Nara.



2. Golden Hall (Kondō) of the Hōryūji near Nara.



3. Golden Hall (Kondô) of the Tôshôdaiji, Nara, as viewed from the southeast.



4. Phoenix Hall (Hôdô) of the Byôdô-in temple, Uji near Kyôto.



5. Northern Octagonal Chapel (Hokuen-dô) of the Kôfukuji, Nara.

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6. Interior of the Tahôtô of the
Kongô-sammai-in on Kôya-san, Japan.



7. Interior of the Main Hall (Hondô)
of the Kanshinji near Osaka.

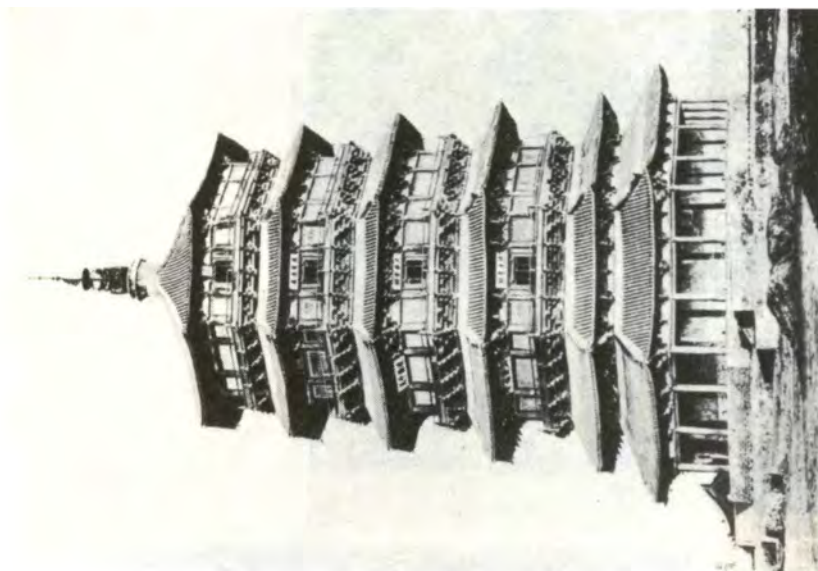
PLATES 333



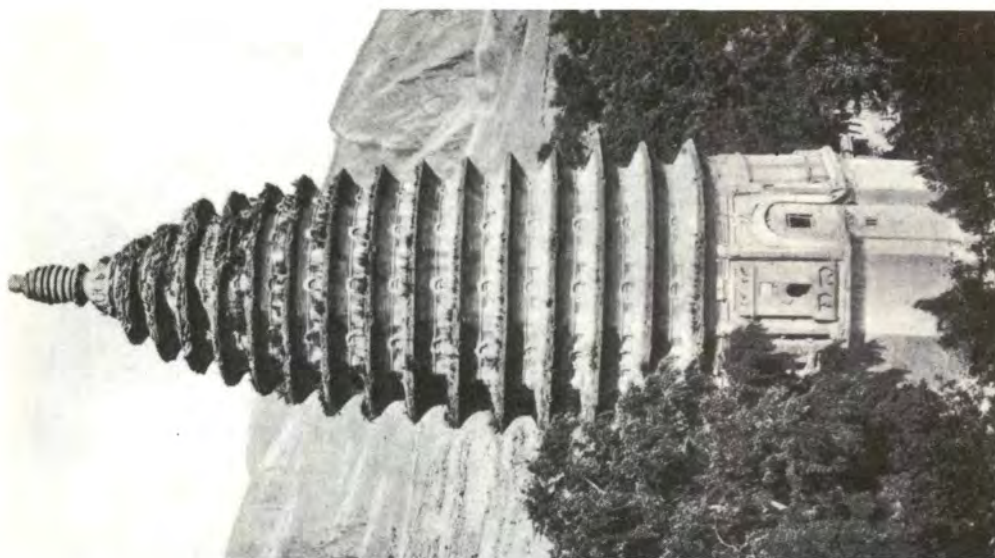
8. Bracketing of the Sammon (gate building) of the Zen temple Tofukuji, Kyoto.



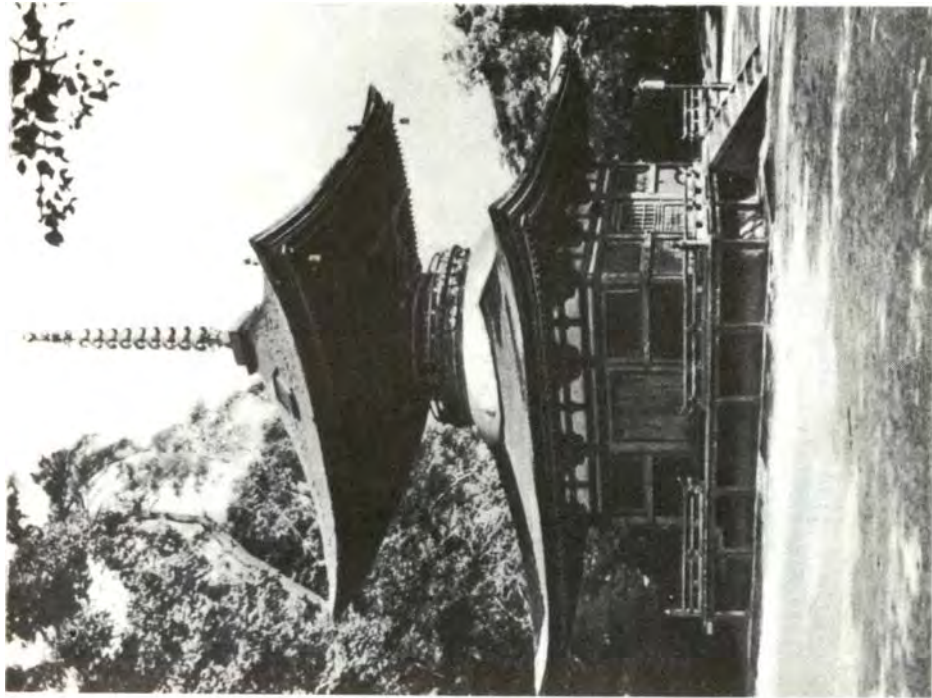
9. Ceiling of the Golden hall (Kondō) of the Shingon temple Tôji (= Kyōgokokuji), Kyoto.



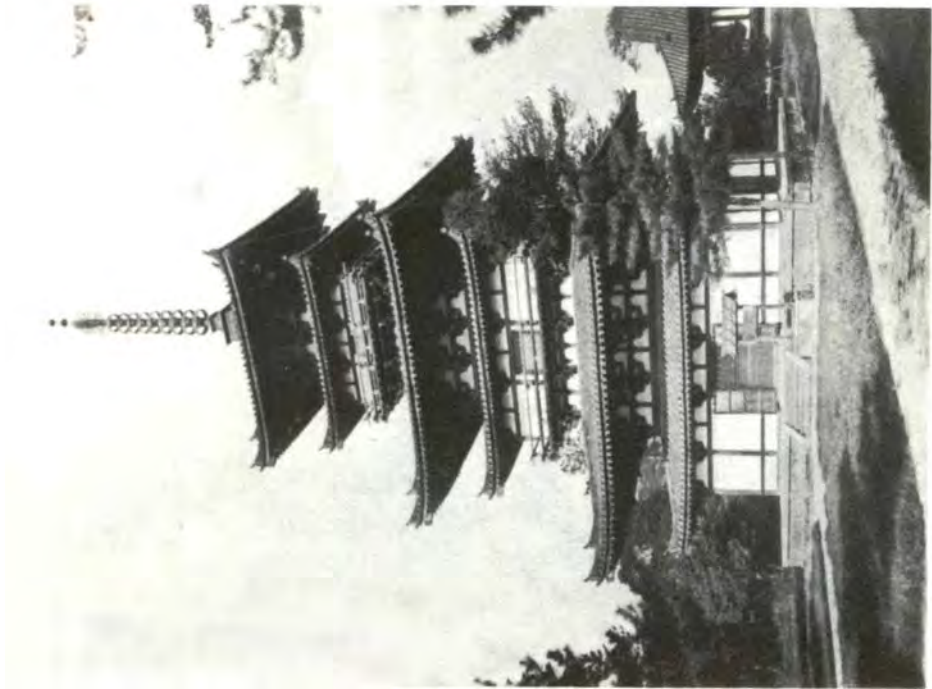
11. Octagonal wooden pagoda in Ying-chou-fu, North Shensi. Founded 1056.



10. Pagoda of the Sung-yüeh-ssu, Sung-shan, Honan province.



13. Tahôtô of the Ishiyama-dera near Kyôto.



12. Three-story pagoda of the Yakushiji, Nara, ca. 730, height: 33.6 m.



14. Donor's chapel (Kaisandô) of the Zen monastery Eihoji, near Nagoya (Japan).



15. Tearoom, "Okujaku-tei," Kyôto.

BUDDHAS
AND
BUDDHA
GROUPS



16. Maitreya(?) Buddha, gilded bronze.



17. Main cult image of the Golden Hall (Kondô) of the Hôryûji.



18. Śākyamuni Buddha on the Lion Throne, 484. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art.



19. Buddha, ca. 600. Kansas City, Nelson Gallery.



20/21. Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi) Buddha.
Formerly Shin-Yakushiji, Nara.



22. Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi)
Buddha, ca. 726.



23. Śākyamuni Buddha, 639.



24. Amitābha with Avalokiteśvara
Tōkyō, National Museum.



25. Buddha with four Bodhisattvas.



26. Tun-huang, Ch'ien-fo-tung ("Thousand Buddha Caves").



27. Śākyamuni Buddha.



28. Amitābha (Amida) Buddha.
1053, by Jōchō.



29. Vairocana (Dainichi) Buddha.
1175 by Unkei (signed).



30. Śākyamuni's birth. 7th century. Tôkyô,
National Museum.



31. Pedestal of the Bhaiṣajyaguru (Yakushi)
figure, Yakushiji, Nara. Around 726.



32. Birth of Śākyamuni and other legends from his childhood.



33. Flying heavenly beings (*Apsaras*, J. *hiten*) supporting a lotus flower.



34. Wall in cave 11, Yün-kang. 5th century.



35. Floating Apsaras. Stone relief on the ceiling of a cave temple at T'ien-lung-shan, ca. 5th-6th centuries. Fogg Museum.



37. Lotus flower with halo of rays on the chapel ceiling, 8th century.



36. Flute-playing Bodhisattva. Golden Hall of the Hôryûji, 7th century.



38. Canopy of the Amitâbha figure of the Phoenix Hall (Hôdôdô) in Uji, near Kyôto.



39. Amitābha (Amida) Triad in the Tachibana altar shrine in the Hōryūji, ca. 700.



40. Domestic altar group, 599. Kansas City, Nelson Gallery.



41. Stele, limestone. China, dated 529. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

BODHI-
SATTVAS



42. Maitreya (Mi-lo, Miroku), dated 497.



43. Head of the Avalokiteśvara in the "Dream Hall" (Yumedono) of the Hōryūji near Nara, 7th century.



44. Head of a Bodhisattva. Accompanying figure of the Śākyamuni cult image in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji.



45-47. Maitreya (Mi-lo, Miroku).





48. Head of a standing Bodhisattva, around 700.



50. Buddha hand, ca. 800/850.



49. Head of the "Sunlight Bodhisattva," around 726.



51. Standing Bodhisattva from Nan-hsiang-t'ang, 550/577. Philadelphia, University Museum.



52. Ārya-Avalokiteśvara (Shō-Kannon), early 8th century.



54. Standing Avalokiteśvara, ca. 675.
Kakurinji near Kōbe.

53. Standing Bodhisattva Padmapāni, ca. 570.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



55. Standing Avalokiteśvara.



56. Bodhisattva from Tun-huang,
8th century. Cambridge, Mass.,
Fogg Museum of Art.



57. Avalokiteśvara (Kuan-yin, Kannon?), around 750.



58. Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, late 8th century.



59. Nine-headed Avalokiteśvara, Hōryūji.



62. Head of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara (Jūichimen-Kannon).



60. Detail of figure in pl. 52.



61. Eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara, pl. 62.



63. Cintâmani-cakra-Avalokiteśvara.
Kanshinji near Osaka, 12th Century.



64. Standing Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva,
13th century.



65. Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva (Ti-tsang, Ji-zô),
around 1200.



67. Head of a Bodhisattva, Sung period.
Cleveland, Museum of Art.

66. Standing Avalokitešvara,
late 12th century.
Kansas City, Rockhill Nelson Gallery.



68. Seated Avalokitešvara, late Sung. Amsterdam, Museum van Aziatische Kunst.

VIDYARAJA



69. Acala Vidyârāja (Fudô Myôô), around 1700. Tôshôdaiji, Nara.

DEITIES



70. The Heavenly King Virudhaka, late 8th century.



71. One of the Twelve Divine Generals (Jûni Shinshô), around 750. Nara, Shin-Yakushiji.



72. Head of Jikoku-ten (Dhṛtarāstra), second half of the 8th century. Nara, Tōdaiji.



73. Vajrapāni (Shikkongō-jin = Kongō-rikishi), 8th century.



74. Śrī Devī (Kichijō-ten), 1078.



75. Asura, late 8th century. Nara.



76. Procession mask: Asura, 1138.



77. Procession mask: Sun god (Sūrya, Nitten).
Tôji, Kyôto ca. 1000.



78. Haritî, 13th century.



79. Dvârapâla (gate guardian). Sung period or slightly earlier.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



80. One of the judge kings of purgatory.
Ennôji, Kamakura, 13th century.

ARHATS
AND
MONKS



81. Meditating monk, T'ang period? In a grotto temple in Tun-huang.



82/83. Young monk, in Yün-kang (near Ta-t'ung-fu, Shansi), 5th century.



84/85. Vimalakirti, 750/800.
Nara, Hokke-ji.



86. Abbot Chien-chen (Ganjin), second half, 8th century. Tōshōdaiji, Nara.



87/89. Buddha disciple, late eighth century.
Nara, Kōfukuji.



90. Head of the figure on pl. 88.



88. Asanga and Vasubandhu, 1208. Nara, Kofukuji.



91. Arhat, 12th century. Kansas City, Rockhill Nelson Gallery.



93. Head of an Arhat. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

92. Arhat, 12th century. New York, Metropolitan Museum.



94. Arhat, by Mokuji Shônin, 1801. Mingei-kan (Museum of Folk Art), Tôkyô.



95. Prince Shôtoku, 1069.



96. Ashikaga Yoshimasa, perhaps end of the 15th century. Kyôto, Ginkaku-ji.

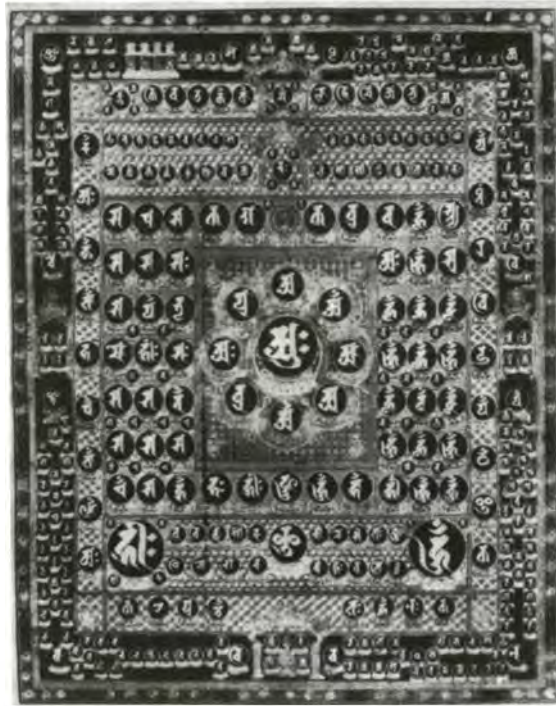
BUDDHAS AND
BUDDHA GROUPS



97. Śākyamuni Buddha, perhaps Sung period.



98. Amitābha with accompanying figures, beginning of the 8th century. Hōryūji near Nara, Kondō (Golden Hall).



99. Maṅḍala of the Womb World, 17th century. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



100. Central field of the Maṅḍala of the Womb World, 1693. Kyōto, Tōji.



101. The Siddham letter A, 15th century. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



102. Vairocana (Ta-jih, Dai-nichi) Buddha, ca. 12th century. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



103. The "Pure Land of the West" of Amitābha.
Cologne, Museum für ostasiatische Kunst.



104a,b. Details from pl. 103.



105. Amitâbha Coming Across the Mountains, 13th century. Kyôto, Konkaikômyô-ji.



106. Amitâbha with Bodhisattvas appearing to the believer on his death-bed ("Amida-Raigô"), 12th century.



107. Avalokiteśvara, detail from pl. 98.
Hōryūji, Nara.

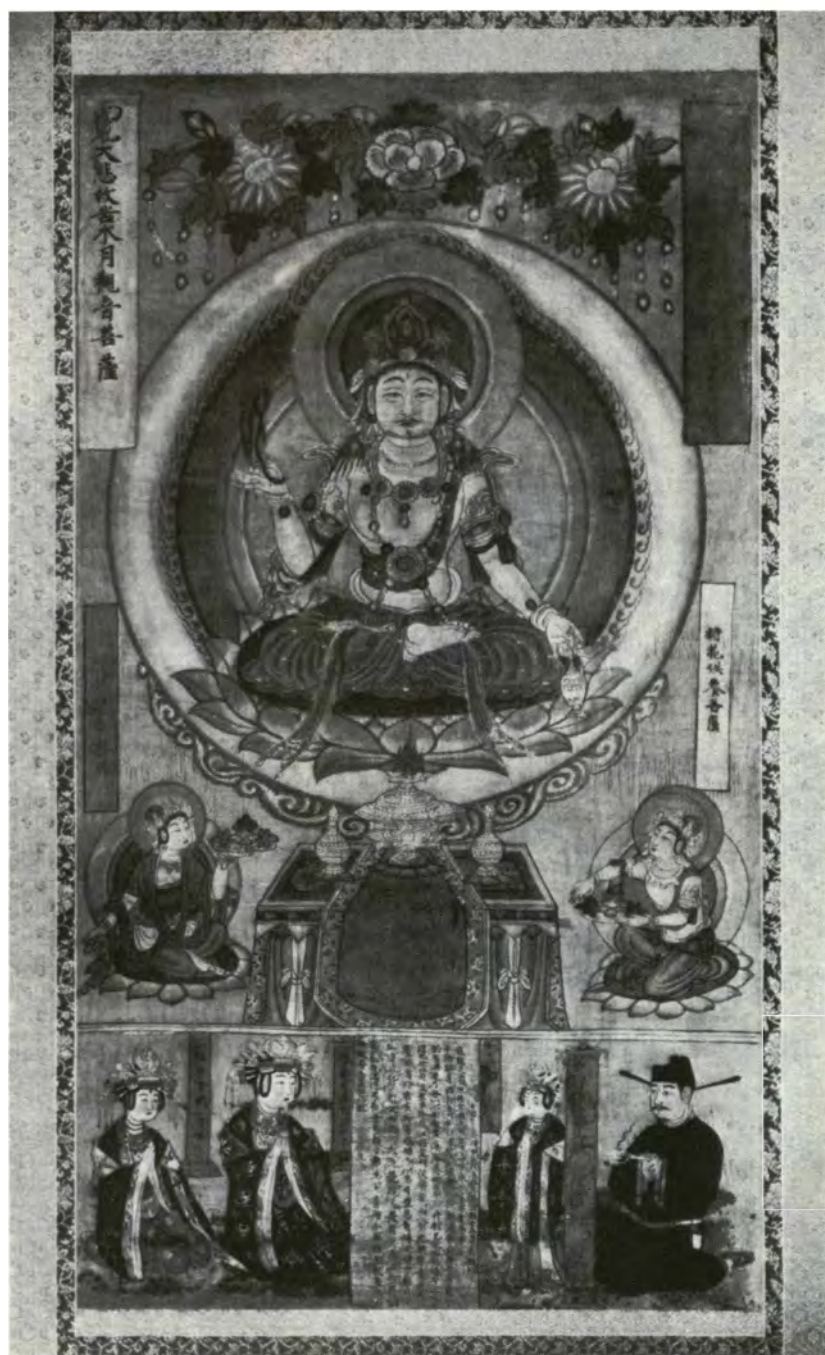


108. Bodhisattva, detail from a multi-colored embroidery,
Kanjuji, Kyōto, perhaps 8th century.

**BODHI-
SATTVAS
AND
DEITIES**



109. Detail from pl. 58. Bodhisattvas playing musical instruments.



111. Avalokiteśvara, 968. From Tun-huang. Washington, Freer Gallery of Art.



110. Yama-Deva, 11th century.



112/113. Cintāmani-cakra Avalokiteśvara, 14th century. Tōkyō, Dan Collection.



114/115 Kṣitigarbha, first half of the 14th century.



116. Maitreya Bodhisattva (Miroku Bosatsu), 12th century. Hōzanji (Nara Prefecture).

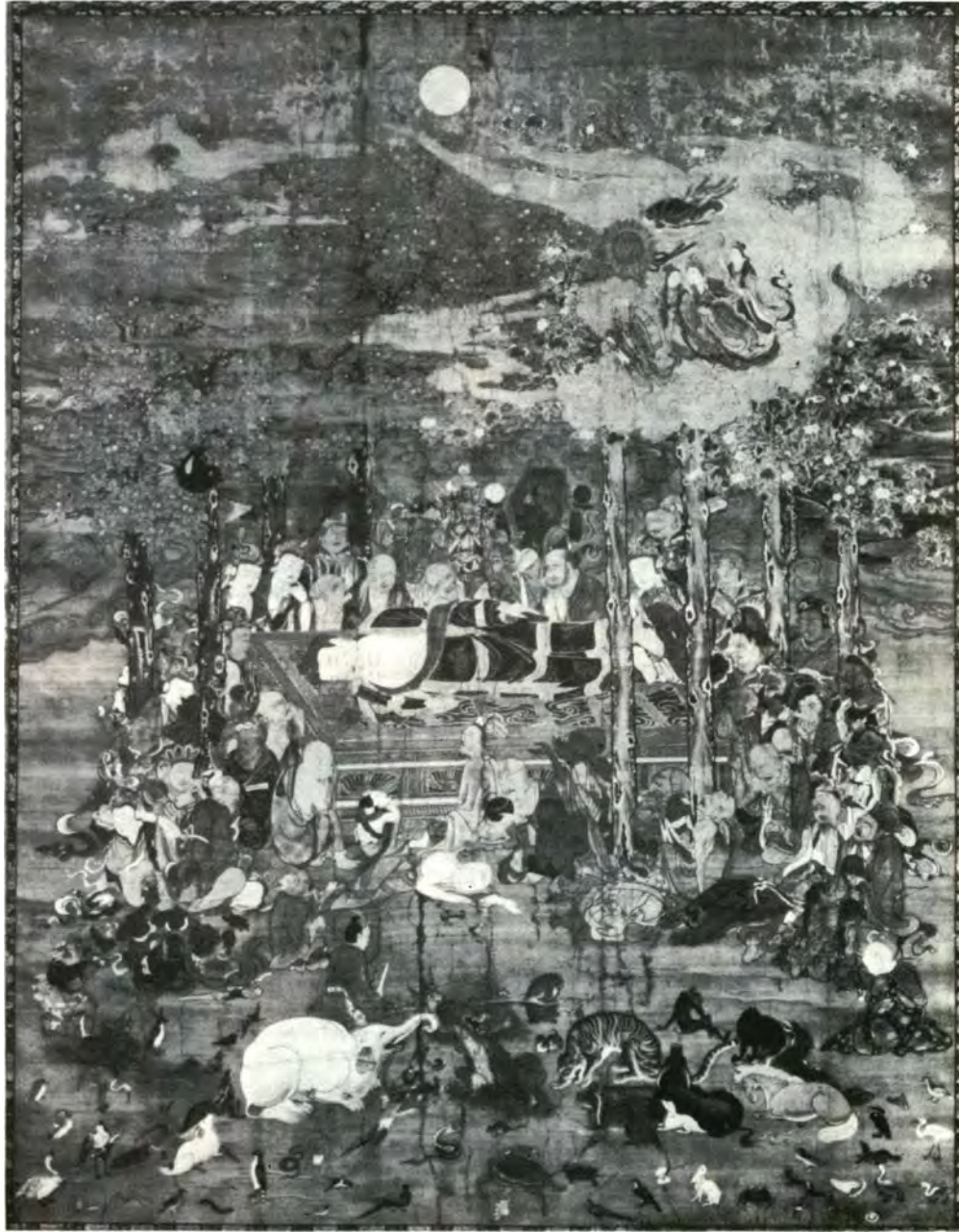


117. The World Guardian Jikoku-ten (Dhrtarāstra), 12th century. Nara, Kōfukuji.



118. Horse-headed Avalokiteśvara, 11th century. Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.

NARRATIVE PICTURES



119. The Death of Buddha Śākyamuni, 1392.



120/121. Jātaka legend. Painting on the Tamamushi Shrine, 7th century.
Hōryūji, Nara.



122. The Sūtra of Cause and Effect, 8th century.



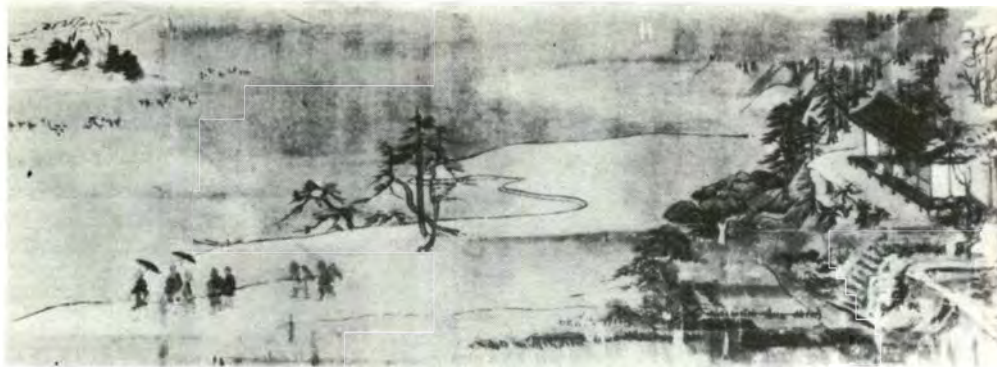
123. Thirsty ghosts (preta), around 1200.



124. Scene in purgatory, 1309.



125. Dream vision in a temple, 1430/40. Ishiyama-dera, near Kyôto.



126. Priest Ippen pilgrimage, 1299. Kankikôji, Kyôto.

ARHATS AND MONKS



128. The Arhat Panthaka, China, ca. 13th/14th centuries.
Freiburg i.Br., Städtische Sammlungen.

127. Arhat, China, around 1300.
Osaka, Murayama Collection.



129. Ascent of an Arhat to Heaven, by Chou Chi-ch'ang, dated 1178.
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts.



130. Śubhakarāsimha, patriarch of the T'ien-t'ai school, 12th century. Ichijōji, Kyoto.



131. Prince Shōtoku, second half of the 13th century. Ninnaji, Kyōto.



132. Portrait of the Japanese Zen abbot Shōichi Kokushi, by the Zen monk and painter Minchō (1352-1431).



133. Portrait of the Zen abbot Nansō-e, beginning of the 14th century.



134. The Japanese monk Myō-e, ca. 1230.

SKETCHES AND GRAPHICS



135. Frontispiece of a sūtra scroll, 12th century. Chūsonji.



136. Engraving on a fragment of a bronze halo, 8th century. Nara, Tōdaiji.



137. Fudô Myôô (Acala Vidyârâja) by the priest Shinkai, 1282. Daigoji near Kyôto.



138. The Bodhisattva Kṣitigarbha (Ti-tsang, Ji-zô) helping children in the underworld. Hand colored woodcut, ca. 18th century. Cambridge, Mass., Fogg Museum of Art.

ZEN PAINTING



139/141. Śākyamuni Returning from the Mountains, by Liang K'ai (first half of 13th century). Tōkyō, Sakai Collection.



140/142. White-robed Avalokiteśvara, by Zen priest Mu-hsi (13th century). Daitokuji, Kyōto.





本師以二目觀
 曼雅不持
 龍性空以平布
 已財和浪云臨
 見此及靜大昨
 指端方作帶相

道經元化地息塵
 平生持法淨心定
 三昧忘我契真因
 兩手張陀曾田觀

143. Bodhidharma, by the Zen monk and painter Kei Shoki (= Shōkei), ca. 1450-1520. Nanzenji, Kyōto.



144. Pu-t'ai, by the Japanese Zen priest and painter Mokuan (ca. 1300-1345). Tōkyō, Katō Collection.



145. Han-shan and Shih-te, ascribed to Shūbun (first half of the 15th century). Tōkyō, Tsugaru Collection.



146. The Zen patriarch Hui-neng (Enô) tearing a Sûtra scroll, by Liang K'ai (first half of 13th century). Tôkyô, Mitsui Collection.



147. The Chinese Zen monk Hsiang-yen sweeping the garden, by Kanô Motonobu (1476-1559). Tôkyô National Museum.



148. Kaki fruits (persimmons), by Mu-hsi (13th century).
Kyôto, Daitokuji.



149. Landscape, by Sesshu (1420-1506). Tôkyô, National
Museum.

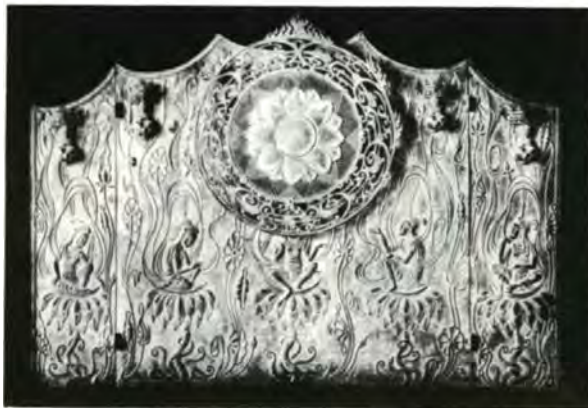
RITUAL IMPLEMENTS



150. Tamamushi shrine, 7th century. Hōryūji.



151. Halo of the Bhaiṣajyaguru-(Yakushi-) Buddha in the Golden Hall of the Hōryūji, dated 607.



152/153. Halo and screen of the Amitābha-(Amida-) Triad of the Tachibana Shrine, ca. 700. Hōryūji.



154/155. Temple lantern in front of the Great Hall, ca. 752. Tōdaiji, Nara.



156. Three-pronged vajra, (11th century)?
Hôryûji.



157. Bell with five-pronged vajra handle, ca.
9th century. Tôkyô, National Museum.



158. Wheel of Dharma, 13th century. Formerly
Ostasiatisches Museum, Berlin.



159. Reliquary in the form of a gorintô, 13th
century. Chûgûji near Nara.



160. Vajra ornament, 12th century. Chûsonji, Northern Japan.



161. Reliquary, 13th century. Saidaiji, Nara.



162. Gong stand, 8th century. Kôfukuji, Nara.



163. Gong from pl. 162, 13th century.



164. Frame with sounding board, 14th century.
Formerly Ostasiatisches Museum, Berlin.



165. Decorative plaque (keman), perhaps first half of the 12th century.
Chûsonji, Northern Japan.



166. Two water flasks for use in rituals, perhaps 8th century. Uncertain date. Hōryūji.



167. Temple bell, dated 727. Kōfukuji, Nara.



168. Drinking cup (chawan) for the tea ceremony, ca. 1717-1809. Tōkyō, private collection.



169. Water kettle (chagama) for the tea ceremony.

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