

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Exploring Their Origins & Roles in Japanese Death Rites & Funerary Art

The Thirteen Buddhist Deities (Jūsanbutsu 十三仏) are a purely Japanese convention. The standardized group of thirteen emerged in the mid-14th century, but in its formative years (12th & 13th centuries), the group's composition varied significantly and included only ten, eleven, or twelve members. Today's standardized group includes five Buddha 仏, seven Bodhisattva 菩薩, and one Myō-ō 明王. The group is important to all schools of Japanese Buddhism. Even today, the thirteen are invoked at thirteen postmortem rites held by the living for the dead, and at thirteen premortem rites held by the living for the living. As shown herein, the thirteen are associated with the Seven Seventh-Day Rites 七七齋, the Six Realms of Karmic Rebirth 六道, the Buddhas of the Ten Days of Fasting 十齋日仏, the Ten Kings of Hell 十王, the Secret Buddhas of the Thirty Days of the Month 三十日秘仏, and other groupings. The Thirteen Buddhist Deities are an emerging field of study both inside and outside Japan. They encapsulate Japan's readiness to adopt continental ideas and to reshape those ideas to better fit Japan's own religious milieu. In particular, they provide early examples of Japan's medieval *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 paradigm, wherein local deities (*suijaku*) are recognized as avatars of the Buddhist deities (*honji*). This classroom guide is unique in three ways: (1) it provides visual evidence that the thirteen are configured to mimic the layout of the central court of the Womb World Mandala 中台八葉院; (2) it offers four methods to easily identify the individual deities; and (3) it presents over 70 annotated images, arranged chronologically and thematically, from the 12th to 20th century.



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• family name then given name
• the terms god, deity, and kami
are equivalent herein
• web links are underlined



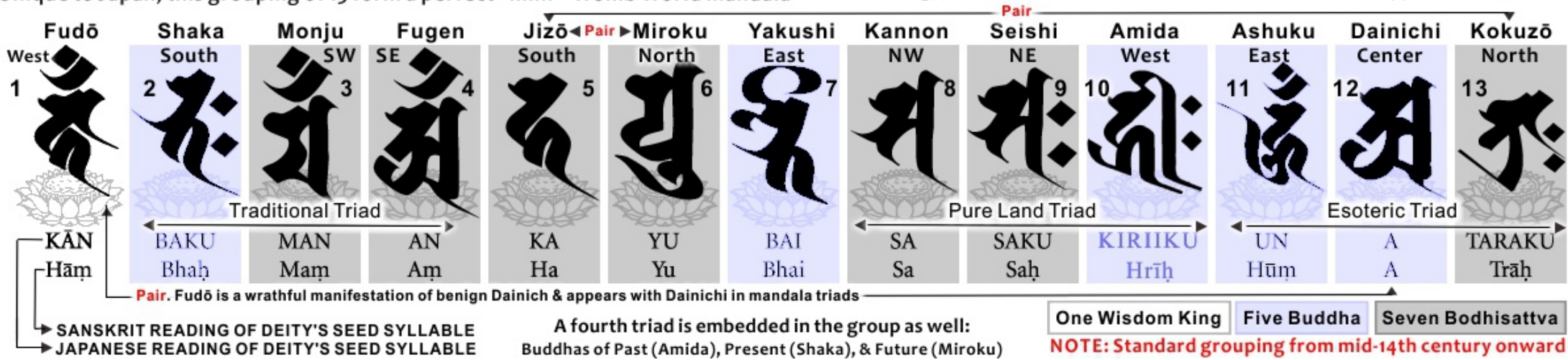
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Slide 1. TABLE OF CONTENTS. Condensed Visual Guide to Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities (Jūsanbutsu 十三仏). Cover photo shows modern piece for the family altar (butsudan 仏壇), used during Obon お盆 memorials (login = guest) for ancestors and deceased family members and at other special times when praying for living relatives or oneself (see Slide 59.) ■ ABOUT AUTHOR. Mark Schumacher is an independent researcher who moved to Kamakura (Japan) in 1993 and still lives there today. His site, The A-to-Z Photo Dictionary of Japanese Religious Statuary, has been online since 1995. It is widely referenced by universities, museums, art historians, Buddhist practitioners, & lay people from around the world. The site's focus is medieval Japanese religious art, primarily Buddhist, but it also catalogs art from Shintō, Shugendō, Taoist, & other traditions. The site is constantly updated. As of August 2018, it contained 400+ deities & 4,000+ annotated photos of statuary from Kamakura, Nara, Kyoto, & elsewhere in Japan. I am not associated with any educational institution, private corporation, governmental agency, or religious group. I am a single individual, working at my own pace, limited by my own inadequacies. No one is looking over my shoulder, so I must accept full responsibility for any inaccuracies. I welcome feedback, good or bad. If you discover errors, please contact me. I rely on Chinese, Japanese & English sources. I cannot read Korean, Tibetan, Sanskrit, or Central Asian languages, so I must consult secondary sources of scholarship to underpin my findings. ■ RESOURCES. To learn about the individual deities, see the A-to-Z Photo Dictionary of Japanese Religious Art or Japanese Architecture & Art Net Users System or Digital Dictionary of Buddhism (login = guest). ■ KEYWORDS. 十三仏・十三佛・十王・七七齋・七七日・中有・中陰・六齋日・六道・十齋日仏・三十日秘仏・本地垂迹・兵範記・中有記・預修十王生七經・地藏十王經・佛說地藏菩薩發心因緣十王經・弘法大師逆修日記事・下学。

Slide Two -- Thirteen Buddhist Deities in a Nutshell

Unique to Japan, this grouping of 13 form a perfect "mini" Womb World mandala

Japan's grouping of 13 is not arbitrary. It is built upon Buddhist concepts from India (seven seventh-day rites), from China (ten kings of hell), and from Japan (mandala cosmology). It features "denominational triads" that aim to appeal to the masses.



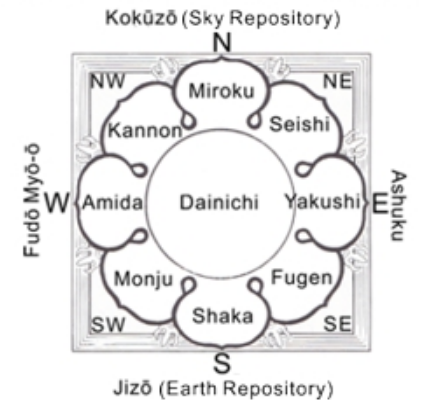
Slide 2. IN A NUTSHELL. Any study of Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities begins with a dilemma - there is scant textual evidence about the thirteen until the 15th century, making their study largely speculative. This guide therefore focuses on the "visual record," presenting the oldest known artwork of the group during its formative period in the 12th & 13th & 14th centuries. Any study of the thirteen also requires an upfront caveat, for the term 十三仏, or 十三佛, is often mistakenly translated as "Thirteen Buddha" - the group includes five Buddha 仏, seven Bodhisattva 菩薩, and one Myō-ō 明王. Japan's thirteen are a purely Japanese convention. They are not mentioned in the Buddhist Canon. Although the term 十三佛 (Thirteen Buddha) appears in 23 different texts in the Buddhist Canon, its usages show no known correlation with Japan's thirteen. The latter preside over thirteen postmortem memorial rites that start on the 7th day after death & continue until the 33rd year after death (see Slide 3). The standard grouping appeared around the mid-14th C. after undergoing nearly two centuries of transition from 10 to 11 to 12 to 13 members. The group was popularized in the 15th C. & linked to both postmortem rites for the dead & premortem rites for the living. Despite the speculative nature of this topic, the group's raison d'être can be convincingly shown via extant art. Here is a case where art seems to predate texts. Above seeds adapted from Shingon.org. Images in right column by Schumacher.

ORIGIN THEORIES

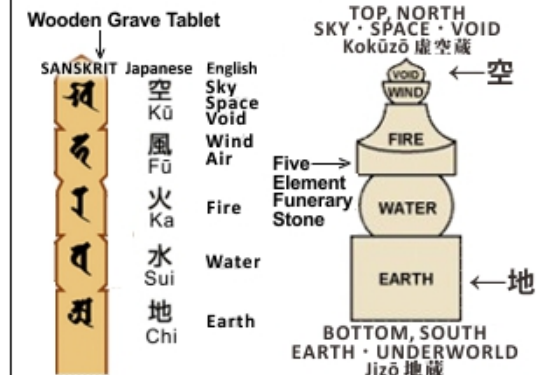
Theories 4, 5, and 6 are the most convincing (in my mind)

- Based on karmic rebirth (reincarnation) & death management. Both sprang from early Indian Buddhism, wherein the dead wander in a liminal realm for 7 weeks, or 49 days 七七日 (login = guest), undergoing judgement at the end of each 7-day period. On the 50th day, the dead are reborn in one of 6 Realms of Karmic Rebirth. Living descendants hold memorial services at 7-day intervals during these 49 days in the hopes the deceased will not be reborn in an evil realm. HENCE: 7 Weeks + 6 Realms = 13.
- Folklore scholar Yanagita Kunio 柳田國男 (1875-1962), in his work Ishigami Mondō 石神問答, tried to link the thirteen to Japan's Jūsanzuka 十三塚 (thirteen memorial mounds). Elsewhere, the number of thirteen-storied pagodas peaked in the Kamakura era, in tandem (it seems) with the development of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities.
- Based on the Ten Directions 十方 (four cardinal points, four intermediate directions, zenith & nadir), plus the Buddhas of the Three Ages 三世佛 (past, present & future), who are Amida (past), Shaka (present), Miroku (future). Total = 13.
- Based on the Jūsandai-in 十三大院 (thirteen great courts) of the Taizōkai mandala 胎藏界曼荼羅 (Womb World Mandala).
- Based on the layout of the Chūdai Hachiyō-in 中臺八葉院 (central court of the Womb World Mandala), with Dainichi Buddha in the center, surrounded by four other Buddhas, four Bodhisattvas, & four directional guardians. Total = 13. See chart at right.
- Based on astrotheology. Writes Steven Hutchins (p.96): "The emphasis on the number seven can only derive from the Seven Planets of the Ancients (Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn) from which we get our days of the week. Thirteen designates the 13 moon cycles in a year. The 13 Buddha Rites stem from an ancient form of astrotheology - a theology founded on the observation of the heavenly bodies. Thus, the deceased's journey from death to reincarnation in the 13 Buddhist Rites embodies the grander motions & cycles of sidereal time." Note: Many civilizations were aware of the need to add an intercalary month - a 13th month - to make the year align with the seasons.

THIRTEEN MAPPED TO WOMB WORLD MANDALA



The north-south axis of the above "mini" mandala - Kokuzō (N) & Jizō (S) - corresponds to the top-bottom axis of five-element funerary stones (gorintō 五輪塔) & wooden graveyard tablets (itatōba 板塔婆 or sōtōba 卒塔婆). Kokuzō's name includes 空 (sky / space / void). Jizō's name includes 地, meaning "earth."



Slide Three -- Conclusions Up Front, Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

MODERN

Composition of Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities	Suijaku 垂迹 Local Manifestations		Honjibutsu 本地仏 Original Sources		死後の儀式・追薦 追善・追福・冥途		Gyakushū 逆修		Ennichi 縁日		Related Groupings (see notes below)		
	China's Ten Kings of Hell		13 Buddhist Counterparts		Postmortem Rites		Premortem Rites		Holy Day		十齋日佛	三十日秘仏	八守護仏
											10 Days Fasting	30 Secret Deities	8 Protectors
India's Seven Sevens 七七日 Reflecting ancient beliefs from India on transmigration / reincarnation. After wandering for 49 days (seven sevens), the dead are sentenced on day 50 to rebirth in one of six karmic realms. Influence of Seven Planets & the Seven Big Dipper Stars. Seven Weeks + Six Karmic Realms of Rebirth = 13.	1	Shinkō-ō 秦広王, 秦廣王	Fudō Myō-ō 不動明王	7th day 初七日	16th day, 1st month	28th	--	--	28th day				
	2	Shokō-ō 初江王	Shaka Nyorai 釈迦如来	14th day 二七日	29th day, 2nd month	30th	30th day	30th day	--				
	3	Sōtei-ō 宋帝王	Monju Bosatsu 文殊菩薩	21st day 三七日	25th day, 3rd month	25th	--	25th day	25th day				
	4	Gokan-ō 五官王, 伍官王	Fugen Bosatsu 普賢菩薩	28th day 四七日	14th day, 4th month	14th	14th day	14th day	14th day				
	5	Enma-ō 閻魔王	Jizō Bosatsu 地藏菩薩	35th day 五七日	24th day, 5th month	24th	24th day	24th day	24th day				
	6	Henjō-ō 變成王, 變成王	Miroku Bosatsu 弥勒菩薩	42nd day 六七日	15th day, 6th month	5th	--	5th day	--				
	7	Taizan-ō 泰山王, 泰山府君	Yakushi Nyorai 薬師如来	49th day 七七日	8th day, 7th month	8th	8th day	8th day	--				
China's Ten Kings of Hell 十王 Ten Kings combined with India's 7-7. China adds three kings & rites. China & Japan pair kings with Buddhist deities.	8	Byōdō-ō 平等王	Kannon Bosatsu 観音菩薩	100th day 百々日	18th day, 8th month	18th	18th day	18th day	18th day				
	9	Toshi-ō 都市王	Seishi Bosatsu 勢至菩薩	1st year 一周忌	23rd day, 9th month	23rd	23rd day	23rd day	23rd day				
	10	Gotōtenrin-ō 六道轉輪王	Amida Nyorai 阿弥陀如来	3rd year 三回忌	15th day, 10th month	15th	15th day	15th day	15th day				
Japan's Esoteric Buddhism 真言・天台 Three more kings, Buddhist deities, & postmortem rites added; deities added form a Shingon triad; also Jizō = Emma.	11	Renge-ō 蓮華王	Ashuku Nyorai 阿閼如来	7th year 七回忌	15th day, 11th month	4th	--	4th day	--				
	12	Gion-ō 祇園王	Dainichi Nyorai 大日如来	13th year 十三回忌	28th day, 11th month	28th	28th day	28th day	28th day				
	13	Hōkkai-ō 法界王	Kokūzō Bosatsu 虚空蔵菩薩	33rd year 三十三回忌	13th day, 12th month	13th	--	13th day	13th day				
Japan's Thirteen Deities were likely concocted by Japan's Shingon school.		Japan alone created a group with 13 kings & 13 Honji	RED BLOCK = Denominational Triads	Standardized 14th Century	Standardized 15th Century	Modern Holy Day	8 of 10 See Slide 4	Only Fudō missing See Slides 61-62	8 of 8 See Slide 63				

Slide 3. CONCLUSIONS UP FRONT.

Four don't conform to modern dates ↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑↑

Download chart in [Excel](#) || [Adobe PDF](#)

1 Japan's 13 Buddhist Deities are a clever way to appeal to the largest possible congregation. The group's deities include:

- a Traditional triad featuring Shaka (Historical Buddha), a Pure Land Triad featuring Amida, and an Esoteric Triad featuring Dainichi.
- b A fourth triad is embedded as well -- the Buddhas of Three Ages 三世佛 -- featuring Amida (Past), Shaka (Present), Miroku (Future).
- c The three remaining deities (Fudō, Jizō, Yakushi) are among Japan's most beloved divinities.
- d Jizō & Miroku are paired (Jizō represents the Future Buddha Miroku); Jizō is also a popular member of the Pure Land school.
- e Jizō & Kokūzō are paired (Jizō as earth / matter and Kokūzō as space / void). This is unequivocally linked to China's five elements.
- f The Jizō and Kokūzō pairing is also unequivocally linked to Japan's five-tier memorial graveyard stones and wooden graveyard tablets.
- g Fudō and Dainichi are paired. Fudō is a manifestation of Dainichi. The two share the same holy day.
- h Yakushi and Ashuku are paired (perhaps); both are lords of the Eastern Paradise

2 The 13 Buddhist Deities were created by the Shingon school. There is no conclusive textual evidence, but all fingers point to Shingon.

- a The Dual World Mandala (composed of the Diamond World and Womb World mandalas) is especially important to the esoteric Shingon school.
- b The Womb World Mandala has "13 great courts" 十三大院. Mapping the 13 Deities into the central Womb World Court yields a coherent group. [See Slide 2.](#)
- c Among the 13 Deities, the first (Fudō) & last three (Ashuku, Dainichi, Kokūzō) are revered primarily by Shingon & play key roles in mandala cosmology.
- d The moon is another big indicator. The "moon meditation" (GACHIRINKAN 月輪觀) is perhaps the most critical meditation practice in esoteric Buddhism.
- e In the esoteric Diamond World Mandala 金剛界曼荼羅, the divinities are often shown seated in the circle of a full moon.
- f As argued herein, the 13 Buddhist Deities are also likely derived from the 13 cycles of the moon (the intercalary 13th month).

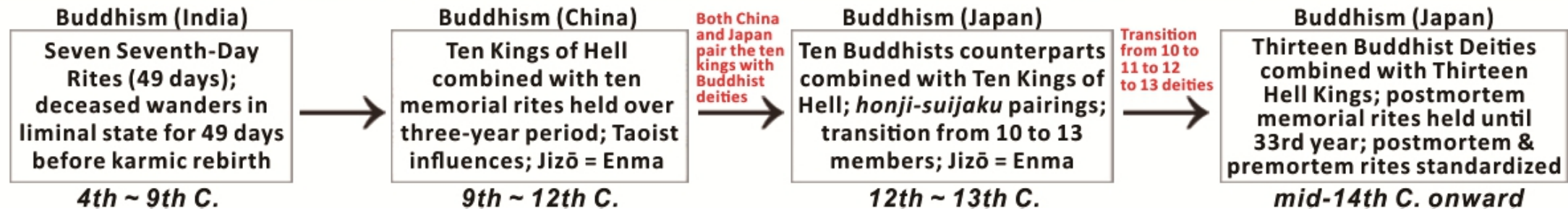
3 Sources for the Topmost Chart

(a) Scripture on Jizō & the 10 Kings 佛説地藏菩薩發心因縁十王經, late 12th C., the earliest text that pairs the 10 Kings with Ten Buddhist deities; considered an apocryphal Japanese text; (b) Kōbō Daishi Gyakushū Nikkinokoto 弘法大師逆修日記事, early 15th C; Japanese text listing the 13 Buddhist deities, postmortem dates & premortem dates; (c) Kagakushū 下学集, 1444, a Japanese text listing the 13 postmortem & premortem dates; (d) Jūsanbutsu Honji-Suijaku Kenbetsu Shaku 十三本地垂迹簡別釈 of early Edo (??); date unknown. (e) Hutchins has correlated the deity lists in most of these works in his book [Thirteen Buddhas](#). (f) 10 Days of Fasting in 10th-C. (??) Ten Purifying Days of Jizō; (g) Secret Buddhist Deities of 30 Days of the Month, a 10th-C. group from China that appears in 14th-C. Japanese texts; (h) Eight Buddhist Zodiac Protectors; popularized in Edo era (1603 - 1867). They appear in the 1783 [Butsuzō-zu-i](#) (p. 70) 佛像図彙; (i) [Sūtras & Texts on Jizō](#).

SPECULATION. The 13th-14th centuries ushered in Buddhism for the commoner (Pure Land, Zen, Nichiren). The older esoteric Tendai school, meanwhile, was nearing the peak of its power. Tendai's arch rival, the Shingon school, was hence under pressure to retain its followers, and so it concocted the group of 13 Buddhist Deities, largely to counteract the growing popularity of the Pure Land, Zen & Nichiren schools & the rising power of Tendai. Amida (Pure Land) faith was [perhaps] the driving force in the adoption of China's 10 Kings of Hell & their linkage with 10 Buddhist deities. The 10 rites for the dead, based on China's 10 Kings, became a standard part of funerary rites in Tendai, Shingon, Pure Land, Zen & Nichiren traditions. Shingon added three more deities, kings & rites (extending until the 33rd year after death) to remain relevant. The number 33 is associated with Kannon, a member of the 13. The number 33 involves the forms Kannon takes to save believers, as described in the [Lotus Sutra](#). Today there are many 33-site pilgrimages to Kannon. As for Ancestor Worship in Japan, 33 years marks the point when, says Hutchins pp. 64-65: "the deceased's spirit passes from 'distant' to 'remote' & they become a full-fledged ancestor of the household." After 33 years, the dead are considered ancestral spirits. Buddhist rites are stopped. Today, death rites vary widely in Japan, but the 33rd year is still crucial.

Slide Four. Seven Seventh-Day Rites & Ten Kings of the Underworld

THE BASICS -- HISTORICAL ROOTS OF JAPAN'S THIRTEEN BUDDHIST DEITIES



Slide 4. SEVEN SEVENTH-DAY RITES & TEN KINGS OF THE UNDERWORLD.

The *Shichi-shichi-nichi chūin* 七七期中陰 (seven X seven = 49 days between death & rebirth; login = guest) can be traced back to India. The term appears in the 4th-C. AD *Yogaçāra bhūmi-śāstra* 瑜伽師地論 (login = guest); T.1579.30.282b1. The concept played a pivotal role in the 8th-C. *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. The seven-sevens also appear in Sanskrit & Pali texts of the 3rd & 4th C. AD (eg, *Mahāvastu*, *Nidanakatha*, *Lalitavistara*, & *Mahabodhi Vamsa*). The latter work says the Historical Buddha fasted for 7 weeks (49 days) after attaining enlightenment.

JAPANESE PRECEDENTS: ■ 687 AD, 100th day memorial, *Nihon Shoki* 日本書紀; held at five temples for Emperor Tenmu 天武天皇.

■ 735 AD, seven seventh-day rites 七七齋 mentioned by Emperor Shōmu 太上天皇 in the imperially commissioned historical record *Shoku Nihongi* 續日本紀. ■ 757 AD, 1st year memorial 周忌, *Shoku Nihongi*; held for Emperor Shōmu 太上天皇 at Tōdaiji. ■ 11th-C. *Shōryōshū* 性靈集 (scroll 7), 3rd year rites for Kūkai; text also mentions 7th week & 1st year rites. By the end of the Heian era (794-1185 AD), there is textual evidence of memorial services connecting the 49 days with specific Buddhist deities, e.g., diary of Taira no Nobunori 平信範 (1112 - 1187) entitled *Hyōhanki* 兵範記. ■ **FOR MORE:** See [Karen Gerhart, pp. 19-26.](#)

China's Ten Kings (Jūō 十王) appear in the *Scripture on the Ten Kings* 佛說預修十王生七經, compiled in China sometime in the 9th or early 10th C. AD. The dead undergo trials by the ten, with the first seven kings covering the crucial seven-week (49 day) period, followed by three more trials on the 100th day, the 1st year, & the 3rd year after death. The 100th day, 1st year, & 3rd year rites are found in the Chinese Book of Rites, said to be the work of Confucius (551-479 BC). The ancient term for the 100th day rite was 卒哭 (scroll 21). The ancient terms for 1st year and 3rd year rites were 小祥 & 大祥 (scroll 37). Writes [Hutchins \(p.52 & p.115\)](#): "*The Scripture on the Ten Kings* says that release [for the dead] can be obtained if the grieving family sends offerings to each of the Ten Kings at the appropriate time. Further, it was thought to be even more beneficial to send offerings to the Ten Kings on one's own behalf while still living. In China, such offerings were made as far back as the 9th C. in the form of ten fasting days. Thus, this scripture promoted both postmortem & premortem rituals." [Teiser \(1994, p. 53\)](#) notes that Taoist texts show the ritual of ten fasting days may have existed as far back as the 6th C. Both China & Japan (seemingly in tandem) "paired" the Ten Kings with Buddhist Deities, but the pairings show no known correspondence. Likewise, China/Japan (seemingly in tandem) paired Jizō 地藏 & Enma 閻魔 (lord of hell).

The Ten Kings arrived in Japan in the late Heian era (794-1185). Says [Duncan R. Williams \(p. 231\)](#): "The ten memorial rites for the dead, based on belief in the Ten Kings, were developed in Japanese apocryphal sūtras (login = guest) & later became a standard part of funerary rites in Shingon, Tendai, Zen, Jōdō, & Nichiren traditions. Paintings depicting the Ten Kings judging the dead were used for ritual or didactic purposes at times when the ancestral spirits were thought to return to this world." Artwork of the 13 Buddhist Deities appeared in Japan in the late 12th C. But texts referring to the 13 Deities do not appear until the Muromachi era (1392-1573). According to [Ueshima Motoyuki](#) 植島基行 (1975), it is unclear when the 13 Deity Rites were first used. In the Muromachi era, however, Ueshima says offering tablets (*kuyōhi* 供養碑) to the 13 Deities were built all around Japan. Ueshima believes these were built for the performance of *Gyakushu Kuyō* 逆修供養 (reverse performance benefits; aka "premortem" rites) by ordinary folk. *Gyakushu*, aka *yoshu* 預修, is performed while one is still alive to accrue benefits for oneself after death. In postmortem rites (*Tsuizen Kuyō* 追善供養) for the dead, the deceased only acquires 1/7th of the benefits, while the performer acquires 6/7th. In the *Gyakushu*, the performers acquire the full 7/7 benefits for themselves. For this reason the ritual is also called *Shichibu Kentoku* 七分全得. For more details on rituals involving the 13 Deities, see [Karen Mack's Notebook](#). Elsewhere, [Watanabe Shōgo](#) 渡辺章悟 (1989, p. 210) estimates that, across Japan, there are more than four hundred medieval monuments (*ihin* 遺品) dedicated to the 13 Deities. Many of these are catalogued online by Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄. The 12th/13th C. *Scripture on Jizō & Ten Kings* 佛說地藏菩薩發心因緣十王經 (see [Tripitaka CBETA](#)) is the oldest text that pairs the kings with ten Buddhist deities. It is considered a Japanese text but its precise origin is unknown. In medieval times, China too "paired" its ten kings with Buddhist deities (Slide Five), but the China / Japan pairings show no correspondence. The Jizō = Enma link likely occurred in China before Japan. By the mid-14th C., Japan had added three more deities, three more kings, & three more memorial rites (i.e., 7th, 13th, 33rd years). These new deities and rites are found only in Japan. The thirteen likely originated with Japan's Shingon school, but they were widely appropriated by other schools.

Slide Five. Ten Kings / Judges of Underworld, Baodingshan, Dazu, China Carved between 1179 & 1249 AD. Buddhist counterparts (*honji* 本地) of the Ten Kings (*suijaku* 垂迹 = local manifestations) are carved in the niches above the ten kings, clearly showing early Chinese examples of *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 (i.e., pairing Buddhist deities with local gods).

Scholars suggest that *honji-suijaku* pairings originated in China in the Sung Dynasty (960-1279 CE) and were unrelated to the Ten Kings of Hell at that time. Such imagery entered Japan by at least the early 12th century, well before the development of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan, but it no doubt influenced ten-king imagery in Japan. Says scholar **Caroline Hirasawa**: "It is difficult to find exact Chinese parallels or precursors to the type of *honji*-ten kings imagery and doctrinal formulations that took shape in Japan. A scene in the monumental stone carvings at Baodingshan 宝顶山, dating from the twelfth century, for instance, shows ten buddhas and bodhisattvas in medallion-like halos presiding over a tableau of Jizō, the ten kings, and hell. Although the iconography appears similar to that found in Japanese images of the kings, seven inscriptions in the hell section of the carvings indicate a different context. Calling for contemplation of ten Buddhist divinities to avoid ten hells, these inscriptions allude to rites performed on ten days over the course of a month, as described in texts collectively known as *Dizang pusa shizhairi* 地藏菩薩十齋日 (Jp. *Jizō bosatsu jissai jitsu*). Likewise, while the carvings visually coordinate the Buddhist divinities with the ten kings, the combinings do not correspond to any known groupings in Japanese texts or images of the kings. Note: Two *Dizang pusa shizhairi* texts discovered at Dunhaung (S. 2567 and S. 2566 in the Stein collection in the British Library) are compared with Japanese groupings in Arami 2002."



QUOTE: Caroline Hirasawa, page 24, *The Inflatable, Collapsible Kingdom of Retribution*

Monumenta Nipponica 63/1 50 pages, 2008 Sophia University

Slide 5. Ten Kings of Underworld & Jizō Bodhisattva, 12th century, Baodingshan, China. Carved between 1179 and 1249 AD. Buddhist counterparts to the kings are carved in the niches above, clearly showing early Chinese examples of *honji-suijaku* (i.e., pairing Buddhist deities with local gods). The Chinese pairings, however, show no known correspondence to Japanese pairings. **PHOTOS:** [Art and Archaeology](#) ||| [Eric Henry](#). **SOURCE:** [The Inflatable, Collapsible Kingdom of Retribution: A Primer on Japanese Hell Imagery and Imagination](#), Monumenta Nipponica, Vol. 63, No. 1 (Spring, 2008), pp. 1–50, by Caroline Hirasawa. She says conceptions of hell, originating in India, picked up new attributes and finer delineation as they migrated across China and Korea to finally arrive in Japan. Writes Hirasawa (p. 2): "Although the chronological development of notions of hell in Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist thought on the subcontinent is difficult to determine, the sparse descriptions in early texts clearly contain seeds of later elaborations. In Chinese translations of Indian sutras and commentaries that circulated widely in Japan, hell functioned as part of an immense cosmology. Its contours varied greatly from text to text."



Amida Triad
Shaka Triad

**Slide Six, Standard Grouping
Ten Kings of Hell and Their
Ten Buddhist Counterparts**
十仏十王図 絹本 著色 掛幅

**13th century
Hanging Scroll
Ink and color on silk
Cartouche Style
Nara National Museum, Japan**

Image: H = 95.5 cm, W = 39.6 cm
Mount : H = 172.2 cm, W = 43.6 cm

The Ten Kings of Hell (smaller figures) are shown alongside their Buddhist counterparts (larger figures). The cartouches list the memorial day each presides over.

The Nara National Museum web page provides scant information about this piece.



Amida & Gotōtenrin-ō
3rd Year

Seishi & Toshi-ō
1st Year

Miroku & Henjyō-ō
42nd Day

Kannon & Byōdō-ō
100th Day

Yakushi & Taizan-ō
49th Day

Jizō & Enma-ō
35th Day

Fugen & Gokan-ō
28th Day

Shaka & Shokō-ō
14th Day

Fudō & Shinkō-ō
7th Day

Monju & Sōtei-ō
21st Day

Slide 6. Ten Kings & Ten Buddhist Counterparts 十仏十王図, 13th Century. Cartouche Style, Standard Grouping. **PHOTO:** [Nara National Museum](#) & [Identifications](#). Says [Hirasawa \(p. 26\)](#): "As correspondences of originals (*honji* 本地) to manifestations (*suijaku* 垂迹) settled into standard formulae, the importance and size of the *honji* increased. This reached an extreme in a 14th-century painting of a colossal Jizō appearing to stand directly on top of Enma's head [see [Nihon no Bijutsu 日本美術](#), No. 313, Shibundō, 1992]. In another, later medieval cult, three buddhas associated with esoteric Buddhism joined the ten *honji* of the kings. Eventually the *suijaku* completely fell away from the iconography, leaving only images of the thirteen buddhas for mortuary rites, without visual references to judgment in hell."

Slide Seven Non-Standard Grouping

Ten Kings of Hell (*suijaku* 垂迹) & Ten Buddhist Counterparts (*honji butsu* 本地仏)

二尊十王十仏図 or 十王十本地仏図

Two Honored Ones, Ten Kings, and Ten Butsu

Amida Triad

Shaka Triad

Kamakura Era (1185-1332)

Treasure of Okayama Prefecture, Kiyama-ji Temple 木山寺 (Shingon)

Painting on Silk, H = 121.2 cm, W = 56 cm

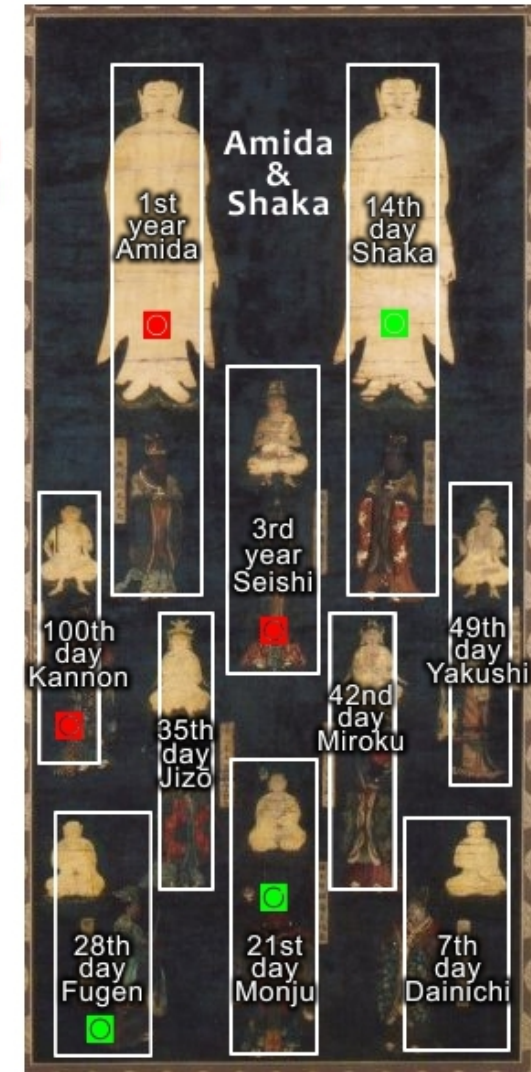
A non-standard grouping with unusual positionings (two large Buddha at top). All ten Buddhist deities appear in white. Eight of them appear below the two large Buddhas at the very top. In the bottom two-thirds of the painting, we see representations of the Ten Kings of the Underworld -- eight kings appear larger than their Buddhist counterparts. The cartouches list the postmortem memorial days each presides over, which extend from the first week after death to the third year. The pairing of these memorial days with the Ten Buddhist Deities is also non-standard, with Dainichi presiding over the memorial service on the 7th day, Amida on the 1st year, and Seishi on the third year. This is a very unusual and interesting work.

Fudō, a member of the standard group, is missing. In this painting, Fudō has been replaced by Dainichi. Let us recall that Fudō is a manifestation of Dainichi.

This painting was likely commissioned by an adherent of the Pure Land School, which advocated the unity of the teachings of Shaka and Amida -- the "two honored ones." Interestingly, the owner of this painting, Kiyama-ji Temple, is today affiliated with the Shingon school. I'm not sure, but perhaps the temple was affiliated with the Pure Land School back in the Kamakura period.

The poor quality of the photo makes it hard to identify the deities exactly. My best guess is shown at right.

At this early time, the configuration of deities and postmortem rites and pre-mortem rites were not yet standardized, but a general pattern is clearly at play.



Slide 7. Ten Buddhist Deities and Ten Kings of Hell, Kamakura Era, non-standard grouping. Treasure of Okayama Prefecture. 絹本著色遣迎二尊十王十仏図。

Painting on Silk. PHOTO: Okayama Prefecture. RESOURCES: Takeda Kazuaki 武田和昭 discusses this painting in Reconsideration on the Genesis of Jūsanbutsu Paintings of the Thirteen Buddhas, Jūsanbutsu zu no seiritsu saikō: Okayama, Kiyamaji zō jūō jū honjibutsu zu o chūshin to shite 十三仏図の成立再考: 岡山・木山寺蔵十王十本地仏図を中心として. Published 1994 by Mikkyō Bunka 密教文化 188, pp. 29-60. Takeda traces the evolution of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities as follows: ten kings with ten buddhas; ten kings with eleven buddhas; eleven buddhas (the kings vanish); & finally, thirteen Buddhas.

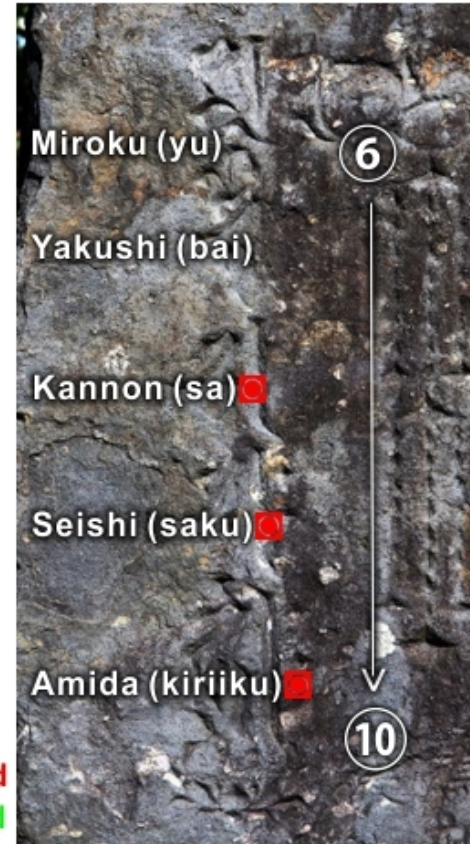
Slide Eight. Shaka & Ten Buddhist Deities 釈迦・十仏・種子・板碑
Ten Buddhist Deities Symbolized by Sankrit Seed Syllables
Fudō-in Ato 不動院跡, Katori City 香取市, Chiba, Japan



This memorial stone is important evidence that the *honji-suijaku* pairing of the Ten Buddhist Deities (*honji*) with the Ten Kings of Hell (*suijaku*) was largely standardized by this time. The centrality of Shaka as the main *honzon* 本尊 (principal deity) suggests this stone was commissioned by an adherent of the Zen school, which reveres Shaka (the Historical Buddha) over all other Buddhas. From the Kamakura era onward, memorial stones featuring the Ten Buddhist Deities (manifestations of the Ten Kings) often gave centrality to Amida. A few examples of this appear later in the slideshow, in the "Non-Standard Groupings" section.

INSCRIPTION:
為現世安穩後生善処前亡、
後滅成等正覺故也、
永味(和)五(1379)己未三月日、
一結衆敬白」

■ Amida Triad
■ Shaka Triad



Slide 8. Ten Buddhist Deities Representing the Ten Kings of Hell, 1379 CE, standard grouping. Shaka in center. Fudō-in Ato 不動院跡, Katori City 香取市, Chiba, Japan. H = 165 cm, W = 132 cm. PHOTO: [Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄](#).



Slide Nine
Ten Judges of Hell
Jizō at center

Carved in the
Late 12th Century or
Early 13th Century

Usuki Magaibutsu
白杵石仏
Usuki, Ōita

National Treasure
of Japan

The colors are still quite impressive. The artists of that time made paints by mixing mineral powders with plant-based adhesive. The rectangular hole under Jizō was probably used to hold sutras or other sacred documents.

Jizō appears without a six-ring staff (a customary attribute) while sitting in the half-leg pose (Hankazō 半跏像), making this statue of Jizō quite unique.

Slide 9. Ten Judges of Underworld with Jizō (in center). Late 12th Century. Stone statues at Usuki, Ōita, Japan. **PHOTO:** [JapanTravel](#). Says [Hank Glassman](#), pp. 18–19: "The idea that Jizō and Enma (lord of the world of the dead) are different manifestations of the same entity stems from the Japanese practice, well established by the time of the composition of [The Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings](#), of drawing equivalencies between Buddhist deities and local ones.....The equivalence between Jizō and Enma was one that was extremely well known and widely cited in premodern Japan in both text and image. In Chinese and Korean paintings of the ten kings, Jizō was often accorded a central position. What is quite different in Japan is that Jizō is represented at the court of Enma, the fifth and greatest king, where he pleads on behalf of the deceased.....The immense popularity of Jizō in medieval and early modern Japan was fueled in large part by the belief that Jizō was the best advocate for the sinner being judged before the magistrate Enma, since Jizō was in fact the alter ego of this terrifying and intimidating judge. This relationship, described in [The Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings](#), is made explicit in Japanese paintings of Enma or Jizō [[Slides 10~11](#)].



Slide Ten.
Ten Judges of Underworld and Enmei Jizō 延命地藏 (central image)
Enmei Jizō = prolonger of life, protector of souls in hell

Kamakura Era (13th century)
Nōman-in Temple 能満院, Nara, Japan
H = 100.9 cm, W = 51.5 cm

Jizō as lord of the Ten Judges of Hell, along with two female attendants 善悪二童女, representing wholesome and unwholesome karma, and two Kushōjin 俱生神. The latter two deities are attached to one's right and left shoulders after one's birth. One records only bad behavior, while the other records only good behavior. They deliver their accounts to Jizō (aka Enma 閻魔) when the deceased undergoes judgement in the underworld. The Japanese believe the Kushōjin stand on our shoulders from the moment we are born until the moment we die, keeping careful accounts of our actions. This belief was transmitted to Japan from China.

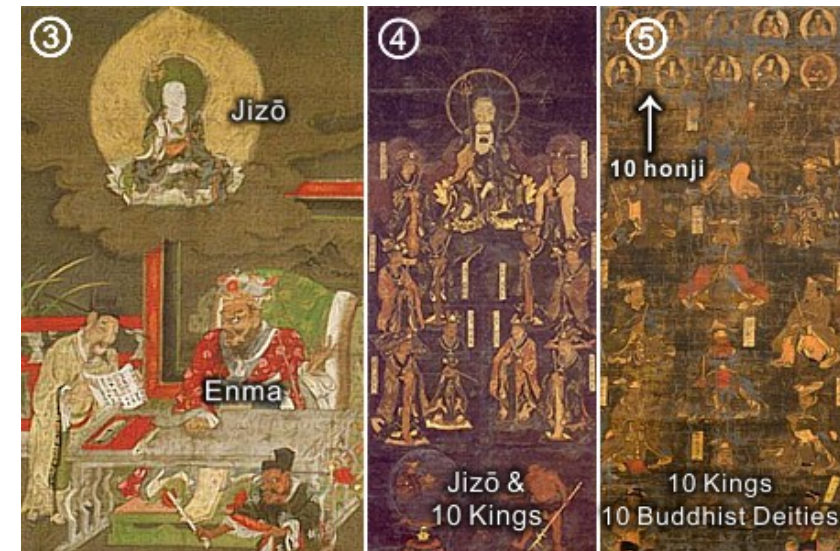
KOREA, Late 14th Century
Jizō (Ksitigarbha) and Ten Kings of Hell
Seikado Bunko Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan
地藏十王図. No dimensions given by source

← PHOTO: 日本の美をめぐる, No. 48, April 8, 2003, p. 37



Slide 10. Says [Hutchins \(p. 55\)](#): “Although the Ten Kings were not originally conceived as Buddhist deities, Jizō was often a central figure in many of the pictures and artworks of the Ten Kings imported to Japan in the early Heian period. To be able to understand this, we need to take into consideration Jizō’s interpretation as an alter ego of King Yama 閻魔 (Jp. = Enma), the lord of the world of the dead. In many of the paintings of the courts of the Ten Kings produced in medieval Japan, Jizō is often superimposed above the fifth court of hell to demonstrate his role as the twin of King Yama. Such an association suggested that other kings could also potentially be seen as manifestations of Buddhist deities, and this view was made explicit in [The Scripture on Jizō and the Ten Kings](#). Like the earlier [Scripture on the Ten Kings](#), it outlines the journey of the deceased’s spirit through ten courts of purgatory. The real importance of this text for our study is that it appears to be the earliest written record that pairs the Ten Kings with Buddhist deities. This is commonly referred to as an example of *honji suijaku* 本地垂迹 — a kind of assimilation process where the Ten Kings are seen as traces (*suijaku*), or alternative incarnations, of the original Buddhas (*honji*).”

1. Ten Kings & Jizō. Nōman-in 能満院, Nara. Kamakura era. PHOTO: 日本の美をめぐる, No. 48, 2003, p. 37.
2. Ten Kings & Jizō. Seikado Bunko Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan. Late 14th century. PHOTO: [Zenheart](#).
3. Jizō appearing above Enma, Jōfuku-ji 浄福寺, Kyoto. 14th C. PHOTO: 日本の美術, No. 313, 1992
4. Jizō with Ten Kings of Hell, Ryukoku Museum 龍谷ミュージアム, Kyoto. 15th C. PHOTO: [Ryukoku Museum](#).
5. 10 Kings & 10 Honji, Zuiun-ji Temple 瑞雲寺, Kanazawa. 15th C. PHOTO: [Kanazawa City](#).

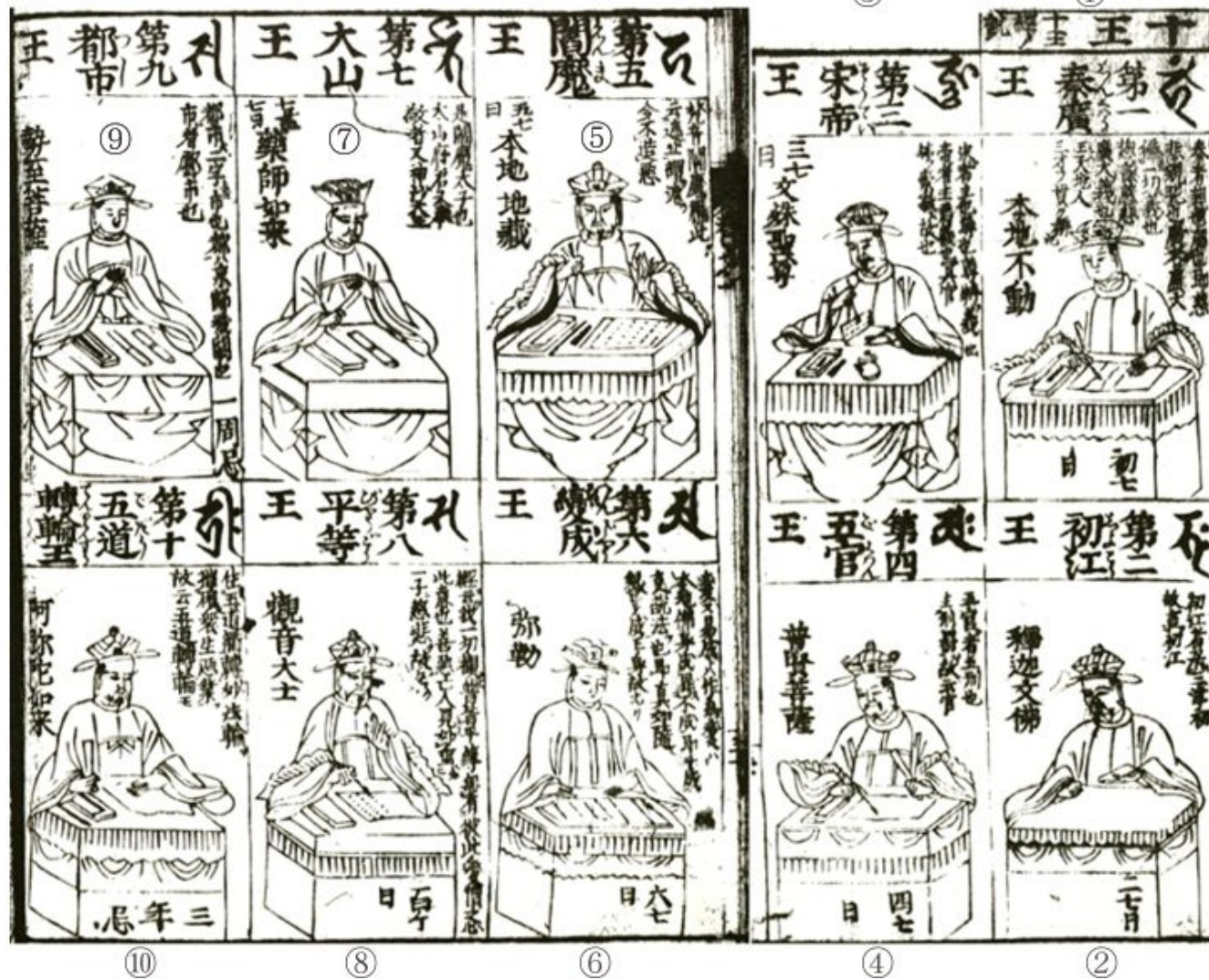




Slide 11. Six Realms & Ten Kings 六道十王図, Gokuraku Jigoku zu 極樂地獄図, 16th–17th century, Chōgaku-ji Temple 長岳寺, Nara Prefecture, set of ten scrolls. Writes Hirasawa (p. 26): "The ten kings, each with its *honji*, line up across the top of the scrolls, representing the process of judgment through time. Vast scenes of hell and the six realms below the kings evoke a spatial cosmology, subject to the temporal framework of judgment, and the scrolls conclude with a bridge leading from Abi hell (阿鼻地獄, lowest hell, hell of no interval) directly to a raigō 来迎 ("greeting") by Amida and his entourage, welcoming sinners to the Pure Land. According to Takasu Jun 鷹巢純, these images do not merely patch together two traditions; they reconfigure and reinvigorate them as a mandatory circuit through hell that ends in salvation -- and that audiences can experience vicariously." **PHOTO:** Nara Women's University Academic Info Center.



Closeup



Slide Twelve

1690 CE

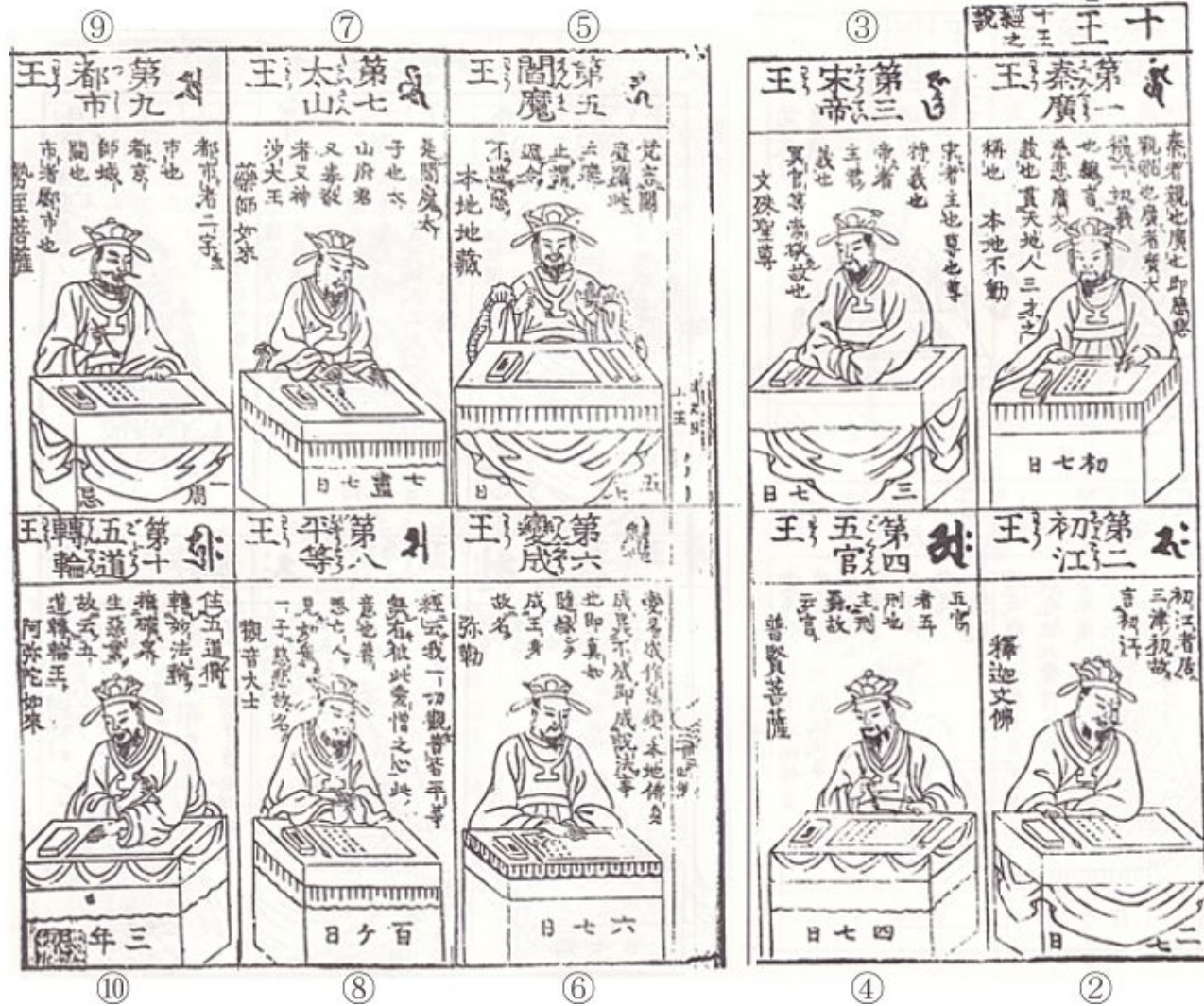
TEN KINGS/JUDGES (JŪ-Ō 十王) OF UNDERWORLD

As appearing in the *Butsuzō-zu-i* 仏像図彙 (Collected Illustrations of Buddhist Images). Published in 1690, aka Genroku 元禄 3. The images shown here include each of their names, shuji 種字 (seed syllables), brief descriptions, honji 本地 (name of their Buddhist counterparts), and postmortem memorial timeframe after death.

#	NAME OF HELL JUDGE	HONJI 本地 BUDDHIST COUNTERPART	MEMORIAL RITES	PROBABLE ORIGIN
1	Shinkō-ō	Fudō Myō-ō	7th day	India's Seven Seventh-Day Rites
2	Shokō-ō	Shaka Buddha	14th day	
3	Sōtei-ō	Monju Bosatsu	21st day	
4	Gokan-ō	Fugen Bosatsu	28th day	
5	Enma-ō	Jizō Bosatsu	35th day	
6	Henjō-ō	Miroku Bosatsu	42nd day	
7	Taizan-ō	Yakushi Buddha	49th day	
8	Byōdō-ō	Kannon Bosatsu	100th day	Chinese Pure Land Influence
9	Toshi-ō	Seishi Bosatsu	1st year	
10	Gotōtenrin-ō	Amida Buddha	3rd year	
Three more judge-honji pairings were added in the mid-14th century. They are Japanese innovations, yet don't appear in the <i>Butsuzō-zu-i</i> .				
11	Renge-ō	Ashuku Buddha	7th year	Japanese Esoteric Buddhism
12	Gion-ō	Dainichi Buddha	13th year	
13	Hokkai-ō	Kokūzō Bosatsu	33rd year	

The first seven are said to signify India's Seven Seventh-Day Rites
 The next three are said to signify China's Pure Land faith.
 The last three are said to reflect Japanese Esoteric Buddhism.
 There is at least one other variant of the last three pairings (11~13).
 · Renjō-ō 蓮上王 · Bakku-ō 拔苦王 · Jion-ō 慈恩王

Slide 12. Ten Judges of the Underworld. From the Japanese text *Butsuzō-zui* 仏像図彙 (Collected Illustrations of Buddhist Images), 1690 CE (Genroku 元禄 3).



Slide Thirteen

1783 CE

TEN KINGS/JUDGES (JŪ-Ō 十王) OF UNDERWORLD

As appearing in the Zōho Shoshū Butszō-zui 増補諸宗仏像図彙 (Enlarged Edition Encompassing Various Sects of the Illustrated Compendium of Buddhist Images); published in 1783.

The images shown here include each of their names, shuji 種字 (seed syllables), brief descriptions, honji 本地 (name of their Buddhist counterparts), and judgement timeframe.

#	NAME OF HELL JUDGE	HONJI 本地 BUDDHIST COUNTERPART	MEMORIAL RITES	PROBABLE ORIGIN
1	Shinkō-ō	Fudō Myō-ō	7th day	India's Seven Seventh-Day Rites
2	Shokō-ō	Shaka Buddha	14th day	
3	Sōtei-ō	Monju Bosatsu	21st day	
4	Gokan-ō	Fugen Bosatsu	28th day	
5	Enma-ō	Jizō Bosatsu	35th day	
6	Henjō-ō	Miroku Bosatsu	42nd day	
7	Taizan-ō	Yakushi Buddha	49th day	
8	Byōdō-ō	Kannon Bosatsu	100th day	
9	Toshi-ō	Seishi Bosatsu	1st year	
10	Gotōtenrin-ō	Amida Buddha	3rd year	
Three more judge-honji pairings were added in the mid-14th century. They are Japanese innovations, yet don't appear in the <i>Butszō-zu-i</i> .				
11	Renge-ō	Ashuku Buddha	7th year	Japanese Esoteric Buddhism
12	Gion-ō	Dainichi Buddha	13th year	
13	Hokkai-ō	Kokūzō Bosatsu	33rd year	

The first seven are said to signify India's Seven Seventh-Day Rites. The next three are said to signify China's Pure Land faith. The last three are said to reflect Japanese Esoteric Buddhism. There is at least one other variant of the last three pairings (11~13).
 • Renjō-ō 蓮上王 • Bakku-ō 拔舌王 • Jion-ō 慈恩王

Slide 13. Ten Judges of the Underworld. From the expanded version of the *Butszō-zui* 仏像図彙 (Slide 12), published in 1783 and entitled *Zōho Shoshū Butszō-zui* 増補諸宗仏像図彙 (Enlarged Edition Encompassing Various Sects of the Illustrated Compendium of Buddhist Images). [View digitized version.](#)

Condensed Visual Guide to Japan's 13 Buddhist Deities © 2018 Mark Schumacher

Ten, Eleven, Twelve, Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan
NON-STANDARD
GROUPINGS

12th, 13th, and 14th Centuries
The Transition from Ten to Thirteen Deities

Arranged chronologically and thematically

**Slide 14. Non-Standard Groupings of the Ten, Eleven, Twelve,
and Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan. 12th, 13th, & 14th Centuries**

Slide Fifteen. Sanskrit Seeds and the Japanese Mandala

To decipher the earliest extant Japanese artwork of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities, one must know approximately twenty-five Sanskrit seed syllables as well as basic mandala cosmology. All below seeds (except for Aizen Myō-ō and Hannya Bosatsu) have appeared in non-standard groupings of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities.

Womb World Mandala

Five Buddha, Diamond World Mandala

	 アク aku Fukūjōshū 不空成就 North, Air, Wind	
 キリーク kiriiku Amida 阿彌陀 West, Water	 バン ban Dainichi 大日 Center, Sky/Void	 ウン un Ashuku 阿闍 East, Earth
	 タラク taraku Hōshō 寶生 South, Fire	

Three Dainichi Triads

 ウン un Aizen Myō-ō 愛染	 バン ban Dainichi 大日	 カンマン kanman Fudō Myō-ō 不動
---------------------------------------	-------------------------------------	--

Five Elements

SANSKRIT	JAPANESE	ENGLISH
𑖀	空 Kū	Sky Space Void
𑖄	風 Fū	Wind Air
𑖇	火 Ka	Fire
𑖃	水 Sui	Water
𑖆	地 Chi	Earth

Gorintō 五輪塔 5-element Stone Stele

Itatōba 板塔婆 Wooden Grave Tablet

DAIMOND WORLD MANDALA

 ウン un Gōzanze Myō-ō 隆三世	 バン ban Dainichi 大日	 サトバン satoban Kongōsatta 金剛薩埵
--	-------------------------------------	---

WOMB WORLD MANDALA

 カンマン kanman Fudō Myō-ō 不動明王	 アーク āku Dainichi 大日	 ジニヤ jinya Hannya Bosatsu 般若菩薩
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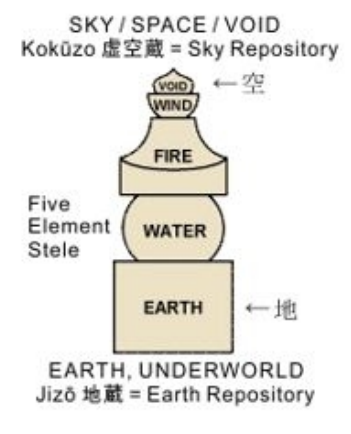
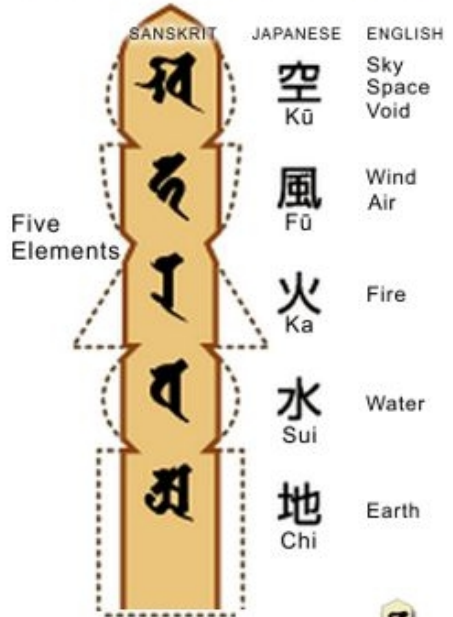
Dainichi Womb World

 アーク āku	 アーンク ānku	 ア a
-----------------------	-------------------------	-------------------

Dainichi Diamond World

 バンク bānku	 バン ban	 バン ban
-------------------------	----------------------	----------------------

Slide 15. Sanskrit seed syllables (shuji 種字) involving Dainichi and other Buddhist deities in the Womb and Diamond World mandalas. The mandala (pronounced "mandara" in Japan) is especially important to Japan's Shingon and Tendai schools of esoteric Buddhism (mikkyō 密教). The most widely known mandala form in Japan is the Ryōkai Mandala 兩界曼荼羅, translated as the Dual-World Mandala. It is composed of two separate mandala -- the Taizōkai 胎藏界曼荼羅 or Womb World mandala (Skt. = Garbhadhātu), and the Kongōkai 金剛界曼荼羅 or Diamond World mandala. (Skt. = Vajrahātu). At esoteric temples, the Diamond mandala is hung on the east axis to the main altar, while the Womb mandala is hung on the west. The Thirteen Buddhist Deities were created as a mini mandala set to pray that one would not be reborn in a lower realm racked by hellish pain. **SEED SOURCE:** Tobifudō Shōbō-in 飛不動尊 正宝院.



Iatoba 板塔婆 or Sōtoba 卒塔婆
何なりて其種子戒名回忌施主名

Slide Sixteen -- Sanskrit Seed Syllables for the Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan (plus others)

<p>Ichiji Kinrin 一字金輪 40+43+6+11 ホロン kinrin</p>	<p>12. Dainichi Ban 十二大日(金) Ban Daimond World ban</p>	<p>8. Kannon Sa 八観音 サ sa</p>	<p>4. Fugen An 四菩薩 アン an</p>	<p>1. Fudō Kan 一不動 カン kan</p>
<p>Shōten 聖天(雙身) ギヤク shōten</p>	<p>Womb World 同(胎) 洞(五美具足) Änku アインク 12. Dainichi a+ä+an+ak+ak A</p>	<p>9. Seishi Saku 九勢至 サク saku</p>	<p>5. Jizō Ka 五地藏 カ ka</p>	<p>1. Fudō Kanman 同(不動) カンマン kan + man</p>
<p>Shōshuku 聖宿(通樓宇) ノ shōshuku</p>	<p>13. Kokūzō Taraku 十三虚空藏 タラク taraku</p>	<p>10. Amida Kiriiku 十弥陀 キリク kiriiku</p>	<p>6. Miroku Yu 六弥勒 ユ miroku</p>	<p>2. Shaka Baku 二释迦 バク shaka</p>
<p>Kichijō 吉祥 シリー kichiyo</p>	<p>Daihannya 大般若種子二種 マチンク 24+25 daihan + man</p>	<p>11. Ashuku Un 十一阿闍 ウン ashuku</p>	<p>7. Yakushi Bai 七藥師 ハイ(ハイ) bai</p>	<p>3. Monju Man 三文殊 マン man</p>

十三佛種子其他
数字は字母の番号

Slide 16. Sanskrit seed syllables (shuji 種子) for Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities. **SEED SOURCES:** 潮音寺 ||| Tobifudō Shōbō-in.



Slide Seventeen. Non-Standard Grouping of the Thirteen Deities Configured as a Mini Womb World Mandala 4 + 4 + 5 = 13

- (A) four devas (shitennō 四天王) guarding the four cardinal directions.
- (B) four bodhisattvas (shibosatsu 四菩薩) guarding the four semi-directions.
- (C) five wisdom buddhas (gochi nyorai 五智如來), consisting of the four buddhas of the four directions (shihō shibutsu 四方四仏) plus Dainichi Buddha in the center. These five are linked closely to concepts of the five elements, five directions, and other mandala cosmology.

Kaifuke-ō, Hōtō, and the four Shitennō disappear from the group once it is standardized in the mid-14th century. Tenku Raion (= Ashuku) and Muryōju (= Amida) remain in the standard group.



Slide 17. Non-standard grouping, 1182 CE. One of the oldest representations of the thirteen in Japan. Tsutsuno 筒野, Iizuka City 飯塚市, Fukuoka. H = 146 cm. Dainichi at center. This memorial stone is the centerpiece of a three-stone set. The thirteen are represented by their Sanskrit seed syllables and placements as found in the central eight-pedal court (Chūdai Hachiyō-in 中台八葉院) of the Womb World Mandala. In the top row, Dainichi sits in the center surrounded on both sides by two other Buddhas. In the middle mandala section, all thirteen Sanskrit seeds and placements conform to the Womb World Mandala. At the bottom are Three Gongen (権現 avatars) of Mt. Hiko, confirming that *Honji Suijaku* 本地垂迹 concepts were already employed at this early date. The Sanskrit seed for 𑖀 (Ah) is given special importance in Esoteric Buddhism. It represents the origin of all vowels, the basis of speech, and the "essence of all things." It is the object of the AJIKAN 阿字觀 meditation ritual, one of the key rituals in Esoteric Buddhism. The inscription reads 勸進僧圓朝、奉立石躰、五智如來像、彦山三所権現、八葉曼荼羅梵字、現世末代行者修理、養和二年 (1182 CE)、歳次、壬寅、八月初四日、壬子、時正中。 **PHOTO:** [Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄](#). He catalogs hundreds of memorial stones at [13 Buddhist Deities](#) ||| [Stone Buddhist Statues](#) ||| [Itabi](#).

Testing the Mandala Theory

Slide Eighteen Non-Standard Grouping

Late 12th century

Usuki Magaebutsu 臼杵磨崖仏
Furuzono Sekibutsu 古園石仏
Usuki 臼杵, Ōita Prefecture
National Treasure of Japan

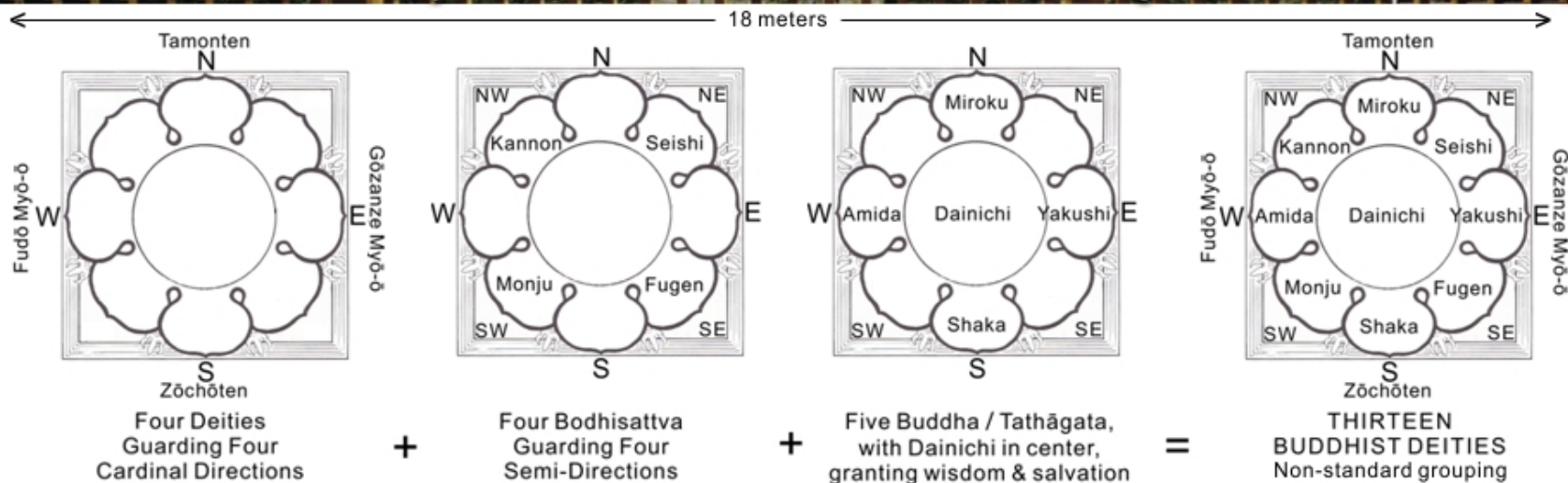
This stone-carved set of Thirteen Buddhist Deities is one of the oldest extant representations of the group in Japan. Three of its members are non-standard -- Tamonten, Zōchōten and Gōzanze. These three were dropped from the standard set, which emerged by the mid-14th century.

Missing from standard group:
Jizō, Kokūzō, Ashuku

Jizō can be found in a nearby grotto surrounded by the Ten Kings of the Underworld (see Slide 9 for image).

PHOTO OF STONE CARVINGS:
National Treasures of Japan
日本の国宝, July 13, 1997
(a Japanese magazine).

Were the Thirteen Buddhist Deities conceived originally as a mini-mandala? To test the theory, I used the layout of the Womb World Mandala's central court, the Chūdai Hachiyō-in 中台八葉院. The correspondence with mandala cosmology is nearly 100%. The positions of Shaka and Miroku are the sole snags -- Shaka (Buddha of the Present) typically appears in the North; Miroku (Buddha of the Future) in the Northeast. These snags can be convincingly eliminated (as explained in this paper).



Slide 18. Late 12th Century. Non-standard grouping. Stone carvings in Usuki, Ōita, Japan. The Four Deities Guarding the Four Cardinal Directions typically refers to the Shitennō 四天王, but at Usuki, only two of the four (Tamonten and Zōchōten) make their appearance -- the other two (Kōmokuten and Jikokuten) are missing. They have been replaced by Fudō Myō-ō and Gōzanze Myō-ō, two protector deities closely associated with Dainichi and Esoteric Buddhism. The Diamond World Mandala, for example, features a Dainichi Triad (Dainichi Sanzon 大日三尊) that includes Gōzanze, while the Womb World Mandala features a Dainichi Triad that includes Fudō. Here we see a creative blending of the dual-world mandala. Dainichi is in the center (suggesting esoteric origin). Jizō is missing, but can be found in a nearby grotto surrounded by the Ten Kings of the Underworld (see Slide 9 for image). Although the origin (date, sponsor) of the Usuki carvings is clouded in uncertainty, most locals say they were commissioned by a rich man after his daughter died to save her from rebirth in an evil realm. Standard mandala positioning verified using the *Mandara Zuten* 曼荼羅図典, 1993, published by Daihorinkaku 大法輪閣. [More on Usuki.](#)



Slide 19. Late 12th century. Non-standard grouping. Usuki Magaibutsu 臼杵石仏 Stone carvings in Usuki, Ōita (Japan) after their 1980-to-1994 repair (compare to next photo). These thirteen statues might be the prototype for the Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan. PHOTO: Japanese magazine *National Treasures of Japan* 日本の国宝, July 13, 1997. Deity names and English text added by Schumacher.



Slide Twenty Non-Standard Grouping Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan National Treasure of Japan

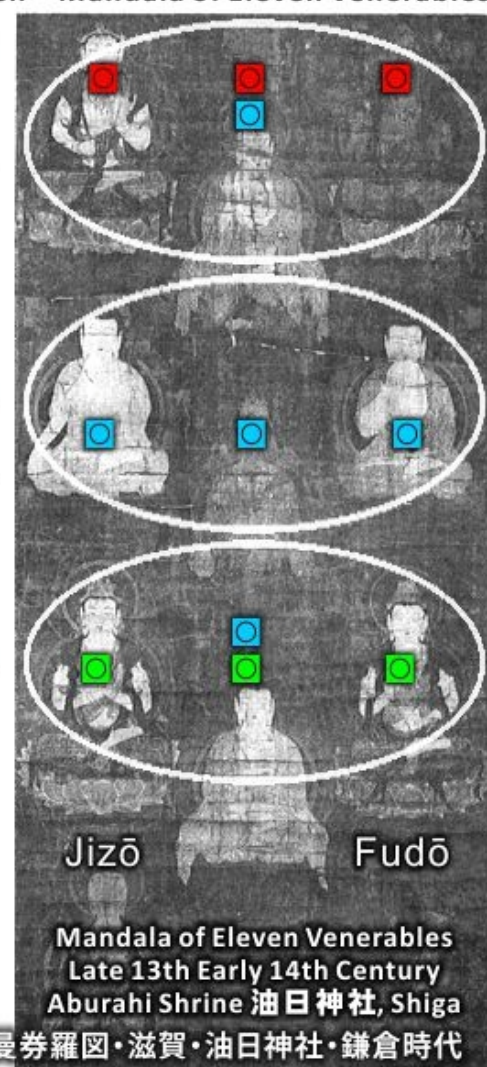
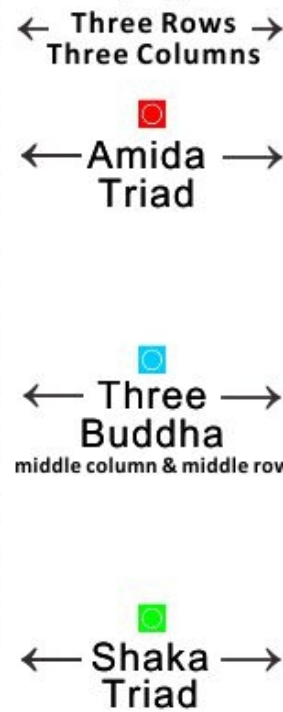
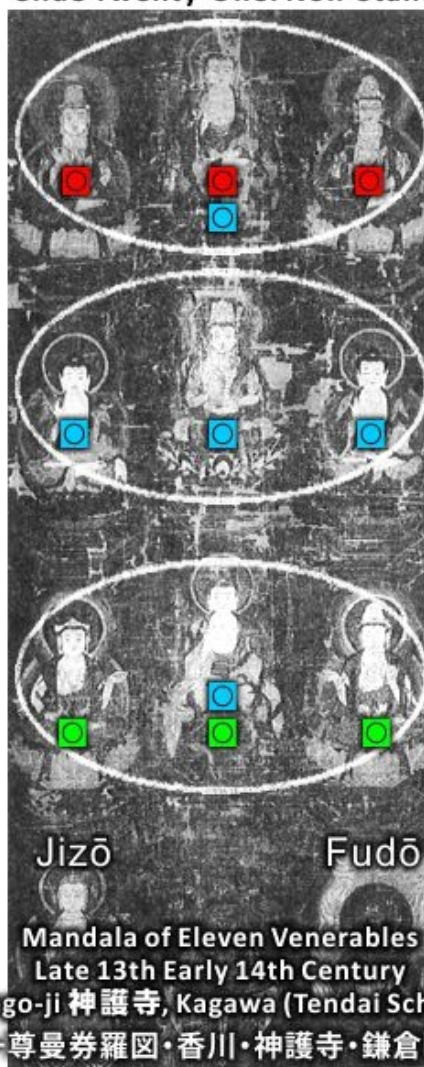
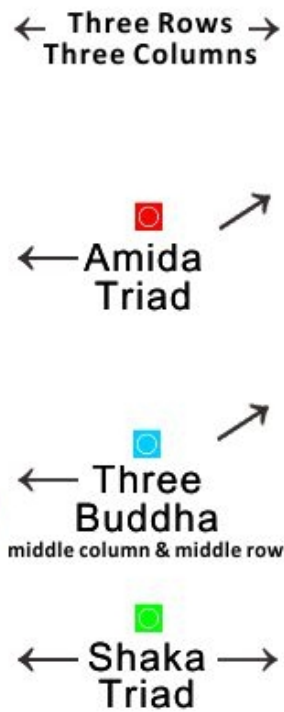
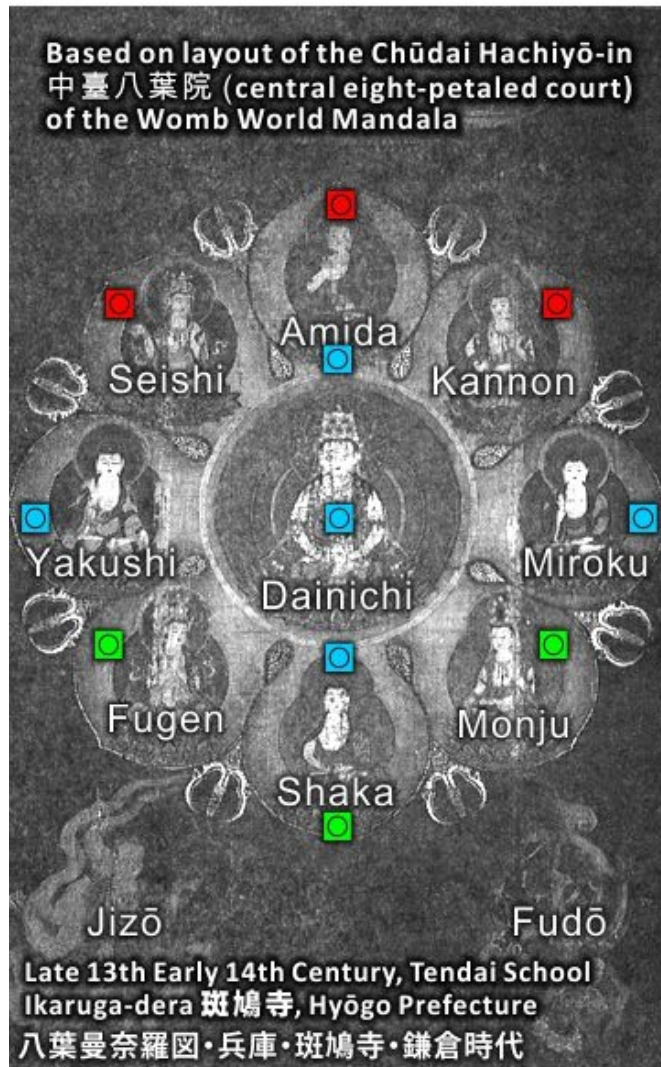
Carved in Late 12th Century
Usuki Magaibutsu 臼杵石仏

Stone carvings in Usuki, Ōita, shown here before their restoration (which occurred between 1980 and 1994). These thirteen statues might be the prototype for the Thirteen Buddhist Deities, although the Usuki grouping of thirteen includes three non-standard members (Tamonten, Zōchōten, and Gōzanze Myō-ō). Dainichi is in the center (suggesting esoteric origin of this grouping). Jizō is missing, but in a nearby niche, one finds carvings of Jizō surrounded by the Ten Kings of the Underworld (made in early Kamakura era). Most local people say the Usuki carvings were commissioned by a rich man after his daughter died to save her from rebirth in an evil realm.

Slide 20. Late 12th century. Non-standard grouping. Usuki Magaibutsu 臼杵石仏.

Stone carvings in Ōita (Japan), shown here before their restoration. **PHOTO:** [This J-Site.](#)

Slide Twenty-One. Non-Standard Grouping of Eleven • Mandala of Eleven Venerables



Slide 21. MANDALA OF ELEVEN VENERABLES. The Ten Kings of Hell (see Slides 5~13) do not appear in this piece, but the *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 pairing of the ten kings (*suijaku*) with ten Buddhist counterparts (*honji*) is implicit. Here we see only the ten Buddhist counterparts (the kings disappear). The only new member (the 11th member) is Dainichi Buddha, who appears here at the center of a three-column, three-row mandala format. This suggests an esoteric origin – either Tendai or Shingon – and in the above example, it happens to be Tendai. **PHOTO:** Takeda Kazuaki 武田和昭, Concerning the Origins of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities: Their Development from the Mandala of Eleven Venerables, pp. 22–24, *Jūsanbutsu zu no seiritsu ni tsuite: Jūichison mandara zu kara no tenkai* 十三仏図の成立について：十一尊曼荼羅図からの展開. Mikkyō Bunka 169 (Feb. 1990). Also see Takeda's 1994 article Reconsideration on the Genesis of Jūsanbutsu Paintings of the Thirteen Buddhas, *Jūsanbutsu zu no seiritsu saikō: Okayama, Kiyamaji zō jūō jū honjibutsu zu o chūshin to shite* 十三仏図の成立再考: 岡山・木山寺蔵十王十本地仏図を中心として. Published by Mikkyō Bunka 密教文化 188, pp. 29–60. Also see Takeda's 1997 article Iconographic Development of the Ten Kings' Sūtra: Centering on the Illustrated Ten-Kings' Sūtra Paintings of Hirokawa-dera in Osaka, *Yoshujūō shōshichikyō no zuzōteki tenkai: Ōsaka Hirokawadera zō jūō kyō hensōzu o chūshin to shite* 預修十王生七経の図像的展開: 大阪・弘川寺蔵十王経変相図を中心として. Published by Museum 547, pp. 5–27. Takeda traces the general evolution of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities as follows: ten kings with ten buddhas; ten kings with eleven buddhas; eleven buddhas (the kings vanish); and finally, thirteen buddhas.

Slide Twenty-Two Non-Standard Grouping of Eleven

Mandala of Eleven Venerables · Eleven Buddhist Deities
十一尊曼荼羅図 十一仏図

Early 14th Century

Formerly a treasure of Jingo-ji Temple 神護寺, Kyoto
Now at Tokyo National Museum 東京国立博物館
Painting on Silk, H = 110.3 cm, W = 50.5 cm

The eleven deities shown here are all members of the
Thirteen Buddhist Deities -- only Ashuku and Kokūzō
are missing.

Ten of the eleven represent the *honji* (original identity or
original ground) of the Ten Kings of Hell, who are not shown
in this painting. The kings represent the *suijaku* (manifested
trace or local manifestation). See Slides 4 ~ 13 for more
on the *honji-suijaku* 本地垂迹 paradigm, which rose to
prominence in Japan in the 11th and 12th centuries.

The only new member here (the 11th member) is Dainichi, who
appears at the pinnacle (middle of top row, top of middle column).
This suggests a Shingon origin, as Dainichi is the central deity of
Japan's esoteric schools. Jingo-ji Temple is in fact a Shingon temple.



Slide 22. **PHOTO:** Tokyo National Museum. For more on the Mandala of Eleven Venerables and its impact on the evolution of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities, see Takeda Kazuaki 武田和昭, Concerning the Origins of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities: Their Development from the Mandala of Eleven Venerables, pp. 22–24, *Jūsanbutsu zu no seiritsu ni tsuite: Jūichison mandara zu kara no tenkai* 十三仏図の成立について：十一尊曼荼羅図からの展開. Mikkyō Bunka 169 (Feb. 1990). Also see Takeda's 1994 article Reconsideration on the Genesis of Jūsanbutsu Paintings of the Thirteen Buddhas, *Jūsanbutsu zu no seiritsu saikō: Okayama, Kiyamaji zō jūō jū honjibutsu zu o chūshin to shite* 十三仏図の成立再考：岡山・木山寺蔵十王十本地仏図を中心として. Published by Mikkyō Bunka 密教文化 188, pp. 29–60. See also Takeda's 1997 article Iconographic Development of the Ten Kings' Sūtra: Centering on the Illustrated Ten-Kings' Sūtra Paintings of Hirokawadera in Osaka, *Yoshujūō shōshichikyō no zuzōteki tenkai: Ōsaka Hirokawadera zō Jūō kyō hensōzu o chūshin to shite* 預修十王生七経の図像的展開：大阪・弘川寺蔵十王経変相図を中心として. Published by Museum 547, pp. 5–27. Takeda traces the general evolution of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities as follows: ten kings with ten buddhas; ten kings with eleven buddhas; eleven buddhas (the kings vanish); and finally, thirteen buddhas.

Slide Twenty-Three Non-Standard Grouping

1306 CE

Twelve Buddhist Deities on a six-sided memorial stone. Known as the Hozuki Rokumenseidō 保月六面石幢. Takahashi City, Okayama, Japan. H = 265 cm.

Fudō appears twice on this memorial stone. Dainichi and Ashuku are missing.

INSCRIPTION SIDE ONE

右沙弥西信并結儀西阿、從初七日、
至十三年相当、口彫刻仏菩薩、十二尊像、
為証大菩提之指南、敬啓白

INSCRIPTION SIDE TWO

衆生若聞名、難苦得解脱、或遊戯地獄、
大悲代受苦

INSCRIPTION SIDE THREE

大勢至菩薩、示現月天子、普照四天下、
成就衆生願

INSCRIPTION SIDE FOUR

一念弥陀仏、即滅無量罪、現受無比樂、
後生清淨土

INSCRIPTION SIDE FIVE

敬禮虚空蔵、能滿諸勝願、獲得無尽藏、
寿命俱 (月三) 劫

INSCRIPTION SIDE SIX

嘉元二二 (四) 年 (1306) 十月廿四日、
願主沙弥西信、結儀西阿、大工井野行恒敬白
一持秘密呪、生生而加護、奉仕修行者、猶如箭御梵



Slide 23. 1306 CE. Non-standard grouping. Twelve Buddhist Deities on a six-sided memorial stone (Hozuki Rokumenseidō 保月六面石幢; H = 265 cm). Takahashi City, Okayama, Japan. Fudō appears twice; Dainichi and Ashuku are missing. Three triads appear -- the Shaka Triad (Shaka, Monju, Fugen), the Amida Triad (Amida, Kannon, Seishi), and the Buddhas of Three Ages (Amida = past, Shaka = present, Miroku = Future). Says Steven Hutchins (Masters Degree, SOAS, 2013) in his book Thirteen Buddhas (pp. 75~76): "The inscription shows that the pillar was constructed for rituals connected to twelve Buddhist deities, and Kawakatsu alleges that it was likely used for premortem offerings as opposed to memorial services for the deceased. But what else can be surmised from this monument? Yajima asserts that the connection of the Buddhas with the period of time extending to thirteen years reveals an intermediate stage of development between the Ten Kings and the Thirteen Buddhas. In other words, this pillar indicates a 'transitional period' where the selection of Buddhist deities started to exceed beyond ten, but had not yet reached the fixed order of what would later become the Thirteen Buddhas." **PHOTO:** [Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄](#). See his index pages here: [Thirteen Buddhist Deities](#) ||| [Stone Buddhist Statues](#). Also see Kawakatsu Seitarō 川勝政太郎, 1969, *Jūsanbutsu shinkō no shiteki tenkai* 十三仏信仰の史的展開 (Evolution of Jūsannbutsu Faith), Journal of Ōtemae College 大手前女子大学論集, no. 03, pp. 94-111. Also see Yajima Arata 矢島新. 1990. *Gunma-ken ka no butsuga kara: Numatashi Shōkakuzō Jūōzu to Jyūsanbutsu Seiritsu no Mondai* 群馬県下の仏面から: 沼田市正覚寺蔵十王図と十三仏成立の問題 (Ten Kings' Art and the Origins of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities: Shōgaku-ji Temple, Numata City). Bulletin of Gunma Prefectural Women's College 群馬県立女子大学紀要, No. 10, pp. 63-73.



Slide Twenty-Four Non-Standard Grouping

1329 CE
Ten Buddhist Deities
Symbolized by Sanskrit Seed Syllables
Amida in Center

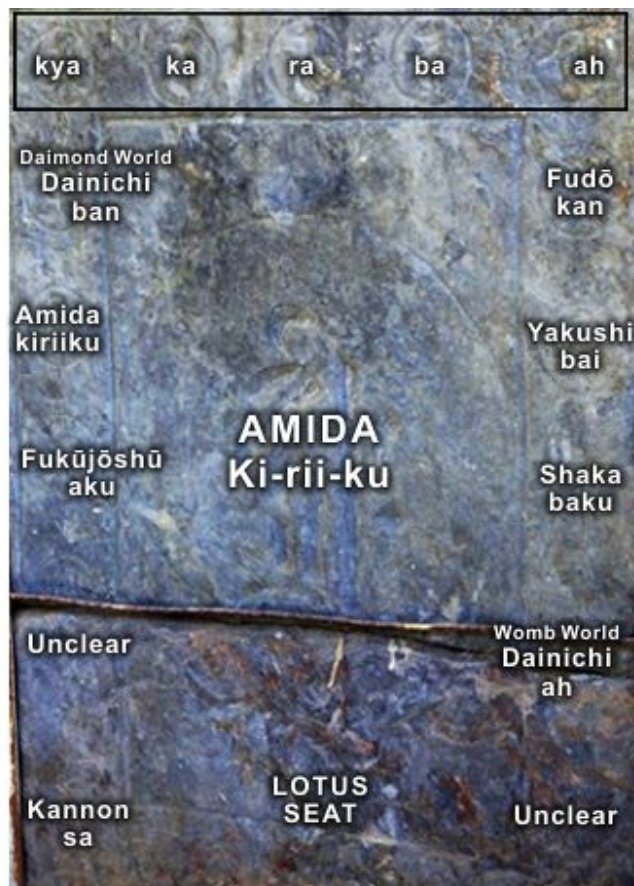
Dairyū-ji Temple 大龍寺
 Katori City, Chiba, Japan
 Stone stele (itabi 板碑) made of black mica
 H = 100 cm, W = 48 cm

This grouping has unusual placements and members (e.g., two Dainichi, one Fukūjōshū). It is important evidence that the *honji-suijaku* pairing of the Ten Buddhist Deities (*honji*) with the Ten Judges of Hell (*suijaku*) was not yet standardized at this late date.

The inscription reads:
 光明遍照, 十方世界, 念佛衆生,
 攝取不捨, 右志為先妣幽靈往生
 極樂也, 嘉曆四年(1329), 己巳,
 八月正中.

Name of Temple Patron	Anniversary of day/year after death	Posthumous Name	Special Seed	Five Elements
ITATŌBA				

ITATŌBA. Seeds for the five elements are found commonly on long pagoda-shaped wooden tablets called Itatōba 板塔婆 or Sōtōba 卒塔婆, which are found in Japanese graveyards to pray for the deceased at specified intervals of time.

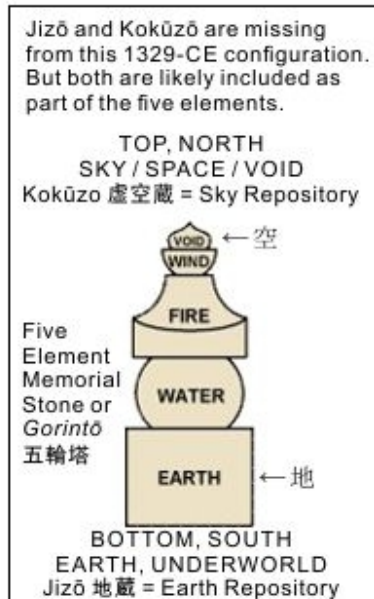


Five Sanskrit Seed Syllables for Five Elements

SANSKRIT SEED	𑖀	𑖄	𑖙	𑖚	𑖔
JAPANESE READING	Kū 空	Fū 風	Ka 火	Sui 水	Chi 地
FIVE ELEMENTS	SKY	WIND	FIRE	WATER	EARTH
Shape in 5-Element Stupa	JEWEL	HALF MOON	TRIGONE	SPHERE	SQUARE

← Sanskrit Seeds for Five Elements (Sanskrit reading)

← Ten Buddhist Deities with Amida in center. Japanese reading of Sanskrit seed shown below deity name.



Slide 24. 1329 CE. Non-standard grouping. Ten Buddhist Deities represented by their Sanskrit seed syllables, which appear along the right and left sides. It includes two Dainichi and one Fukūjōshū. Stone stele. H = 100 cm, W = 48 cm. Dairyū-ji Temple 大龍寺, Katori City, Chiba, Japan. The large seed in the middle represents Amida. An additional five seeds appear at the top of the stone -- they represent the five elements. To this day, the five elements are a common motif on long wooden graveyard prayer tablets in Japan. This stone stele is important evidence that the *honji-suijaku* pairing of the Ten Buddhist Deities (*honji*) with the Ten Judges of Hell (*suijaku*; see Slides 3~13) was not yet standardized at this late date. PHOTO: [Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄](#) ||| [Tobifudo Shōbō-in 正寶院](#).

Slide Twenty-Five Non-Standard Grouping

1345 CE
Thirteen Buddhist Deities
Symbolized by Sanskrit Seed Syllables

Jikōji Temple 慈光寺
Tokigun 比企郡
Tokigawa-machi ときがわ町
Saitama Prefecture, Japan
H = 150 cm, W = 40 cm

This memorial stone shows the
Ten Buddhist Deities along with three
esoteric manifestations of Dainichi.
Ashuku and Kokūzō are missing.

The Ten Buddhist Deities are the
Buddhist counterparts (honji) of the
Ten Judges of the Underworld.
See **Slides 3~13** for more on the Ten Kings.

For reasons unknown, Fugen appears
before Monju (normally Monju is #3).

INSCRIPTION

但□楽□転大□致□乃至□不捨
康永四年(1345)二月
右者造立□道・可□□之敬文

□ = Unable to read
script due to erosion



Slide 25. 1345 CE. Non-standard grouping, with three esoteric manifestations of Dainichi.

Tokigawa-machi, Saitama, Japan. Ashuku and Kokūzō are missing.

PHOTO: Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄. His site catalogs hundreds of stone memorials.

Slide Twenty-Six. Jūnison Shuji Mandara 十二尊種字曼荼羅
Twelve Buddhist Deities Symbolized by Sanskrit Seed Syllables
Enmeiji 延命寺, Sakatashi City 酒田市, Yamagata Prefecture, Japan



Non-Standard Grouping
1359 CE, H = 85 cm, W = 85 cm
Missing Dainichi and Kokūzō



Slide 26. 1359 CE. Non-standard grouping. Enmeiji 延命寺, Sakatashi City 酒田市, Yamagata Prefecture, Japan. Twelve Buddhist deities symbolized by their Sanskrit seed syllables. Says Steven Hutchins (Masters Degree, SOAS, 2013) in his book Thirteen Buddhas (pp. 78~80): "Another example that further illustrates this transitional period [*editor: from 10, to 11, to 12, to 13 deities*] is a stone memorial located in a Shingon temple in Yamagata prefecture called Enmeiji 延命寺. The inclusion of twelve deities suggest a movement towards the Thirteen Buddhas, but the centrality of the Amida triad in this monument indicates that this could also be looked on as Ten Buddhas with Amida as the main honzon -- the Amida triad counting as one single Buddha. The appearance of Kongō Satta provides another problem for researchers attempting to link this monument with the Thirteen Buddha Rites. **Kawakatsu** says that although the addition of Ashuku is consistent with a general transition towards the Thirteen Buddhas, he is at a loss to explain why Kongō Satta should be included. One possibility is that the Sanskrit inscription for Kongō Satta could have been mistakenly transmitted instead of Dainichi's." **Mark here.** Kongō Satta appears in a Dainichi Triad in the Diamond World Mandala, so Kongō Satta's appearance can be justified. Inscription = Unable to find it on web. **PHOTO:** This J-site. Also see **Kawakatsu Seitarō** 川勝政太郎. 1969. *Jūsanbutsu shinkō no shiteki tenkai* 十三仏信仰の史的展開 (Evolution of Jūsanbutsu Faith), Journal of Ōtemae College 大手前女子大学論集, no. 03, pp. 94-111.

Slide Twenty-Seven. Haguro Jūsanbutsu Dō 羽黒十三仏堂
 Thirteen Buddhist Deities Symbolized by Their
 Sankrit Seed Syllables, Inzai City 印西市, Chiba



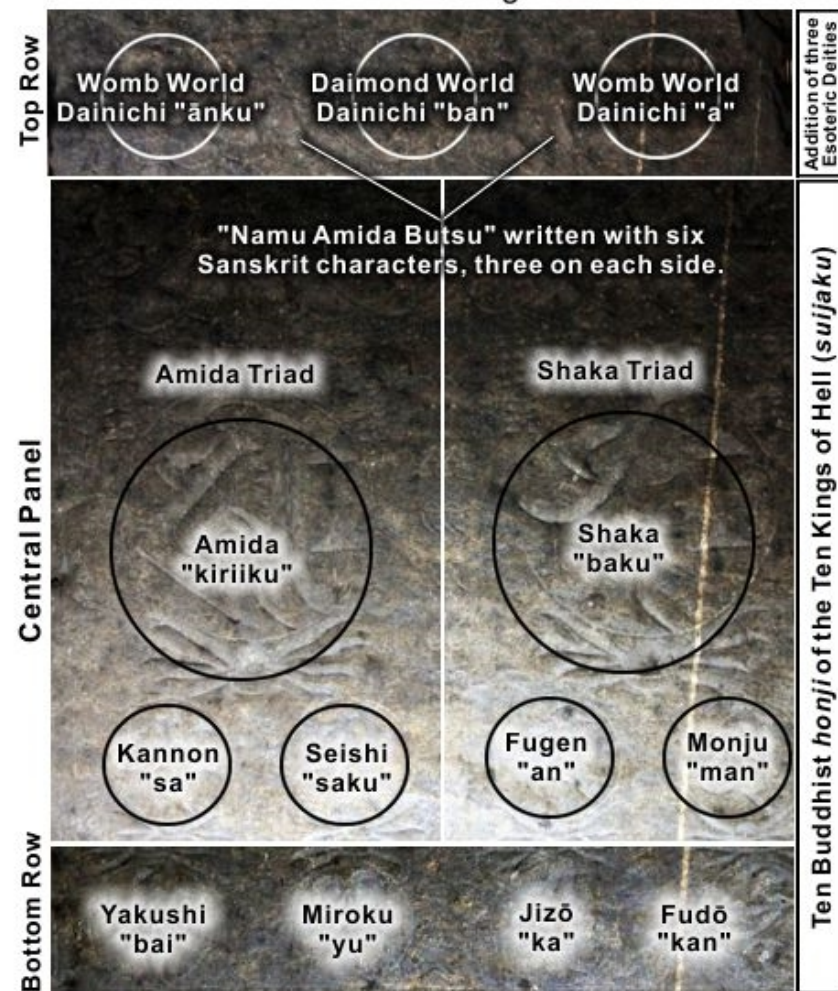
Non-standard configuration of the Ten / Thirteen Buddhist Deities. It highlights three triads (Dainichi Triad, Amida Triad, Shaka Triad). Ten of the deities are the Buddhist manifestations of the Ten Kings of the Underworld. The other three are esoteric representations of Dainichi.

This memorial stone is important evidence that the *honji-suijaku* pairing of the Ten Buddhist Deities (*honji*) with the Ten Judges of Hell (*suijaku*) was largely standardized by this time. What is unusual here is the arrangement of the deities. It differs greatly from the standard format. Also, this stone confirms that the members of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities were still showing regional variations in the late 14th century. In the standard grouping, the last three deities are Ashuku, Dainichi, and Kokūzō. But here, the last three are three esoteric manifestations of Dainichi.

The inscription reads:

右意趣者、沙弥道妙、并妙一尼、為逆修善、
 根所奉造、立石仏也、依之現必、咸七分全、
 得之報当、定生九品、浄土之台、乃至法界、
 有縁無縁、一切衆生、平等利益、永和四年、
 戊午、卯月日

Non-standard grouping
 Dated 1378 CE, H 117 cm, W 97 cm
 Missing Ashuku and Kokūzō



Slide 27. 1378 CE. Non-standard grouping. Thirteen Buddhist Deities symbolized by their Sanskrit seeds. Haguro Jūsanbutsu Dō 羽黒十三仏堂, Inzai City 印西市, Chiba, Japan. H = 117 cm, W = 97 cm. Here we see the ten Buddhist manifestations (*honji*) of the Ten Kings of the Underworld (*suijaku*), with the addition of three manifestations of Dainichi. This memorial stone is important evidence that the *honji-suijaku* pairing of the Ten Buddhist Deities with the Ten Judges of Hell was largely standardized by this time. What is unusual here is the arrangement of the deities. It differs greatly from the standard format. Also, this stone confirms that the Thirteen Buddhist Deities were still showing regional variations in the late 14th century. In the standard group (which emerged in the mid-14th century), the last three are Ashuku, Dainichi, and Kokūzō. But here, the last three are esoteric manifestations of Dainichi. PHOTO: Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄.



13
**Diamond World
 Dainichi
 "bānku"**

Slide Twenty-Eight Non-Standard Grouping

1397 CE
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan
Symbolized by Sanskrit Seed Syllables

多福院 十三仏種子石塔婆
 Tafuku-in 多福院, Ishinomaki City, Miyagi, Japan
 H = 212 cm, W = 45.5 cm

This memorial stone shows the Ten Buddhist Deities along with three esoteric manifestations of Dainichi. Ashuku and Kokūzō are missing. This memorial stone is important evidence that the *honji-suijaku* pairing of the Ten Buddhist Deities (*honji*) with the Ten Judges of Hell (*suijaku*) was largely standardized by this time. Also, this stone confirms that the members of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities were still showing regional variations in the late 14th century. In the standard group (which emerged in the mid-14th century), the last three deities are Ashuku, Dainichi, and Kokūzō. But here, the last three are esoteric manifestations of Dainichi.

INSCRIPTION

應永二二年、丁丑、十一月九日
 牧山住僧伝灯大阿闍梨位、
 刑部頼禅六十八歳為逆修敬白

Sanskrit seeds involving the sound 𑖆 (A; pronounced Ah) are given special importance in Esoteric Buddhism. "A" represents the origin of all vowels, the basis of speech, and the "essence of all things." It is the object of the AJIKAN 阿字觀 meditation ritual (aka ANJIKAN 𑖆字觀), one of the key rituals in Esoteric Buddhism. Here "AN" is stylized to look like a figure seated in meditation.



"an"
 (Sanskrit seed) ←



Slide 28. 1397 CE. Non-standard grouping. Thirteen Buddhist Deities symbolized by their Sanskrit seeds. Tafuku-in 多福院, Ishinomaki City, Miyagi, Japan. H = 212 cm, W = 45.5 cm. Here we see the ten Buddhist manifestations (*honji*) for the Ten Kings of the Underworld (*suijaku*), plus three manifestations of Dainichi. This memorial stone is important evidence that the *honji-suijaku* pairing of the Ten Buddhist Deities with the Ten Judges of Hell was largely standardized by this time. Also, this stone confirms that the Thirteen Buddhist Deities were still showing regional variations in the late 14th century. In the standard group, which emerged in the mid-14th century, the last three are Ashuku, Dainichi, and Kokūzō. But here, the last three are esoteric manifestations of Dainichi. Sanskrit seeds involving the sound 𑖆 (A) are given special importance in Esoteric Buddhism. "A" represents the origin of all vowels, the basis of speech, and the "essence of all things." It is the object of the AJIKAN 阿字觀 meditation ritual, one of the key rituals in Esoteric Buddhism. All this suggests Esoteric origins.

PHOTO: Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄.

Condensed Visual Guide to Japan's 13 Buddhist Deities © 2018 Mark Schumacher

Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities
STANDARD
GROUPING
(mid-14th century onward)

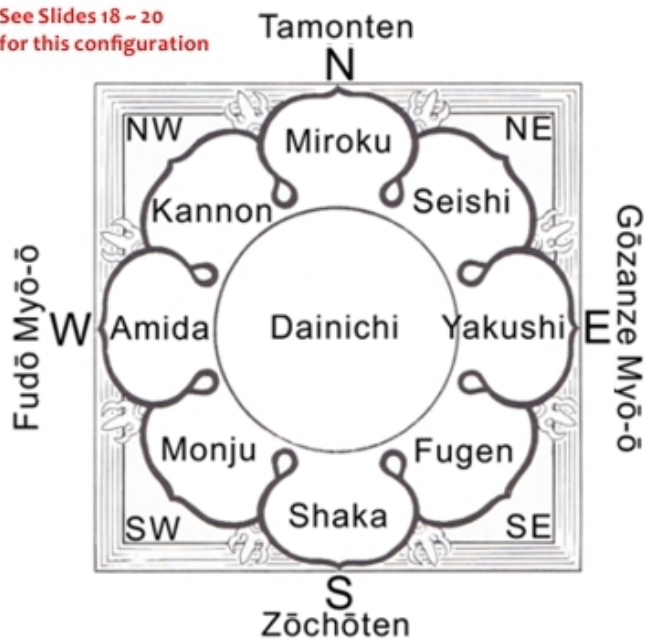
+

Identifying the Thirteen
COMMON ART FORMATS
Arranged chronologically and thematically

Slide 29. Standard Grouping of Japan's 13 Buddhist Deities.

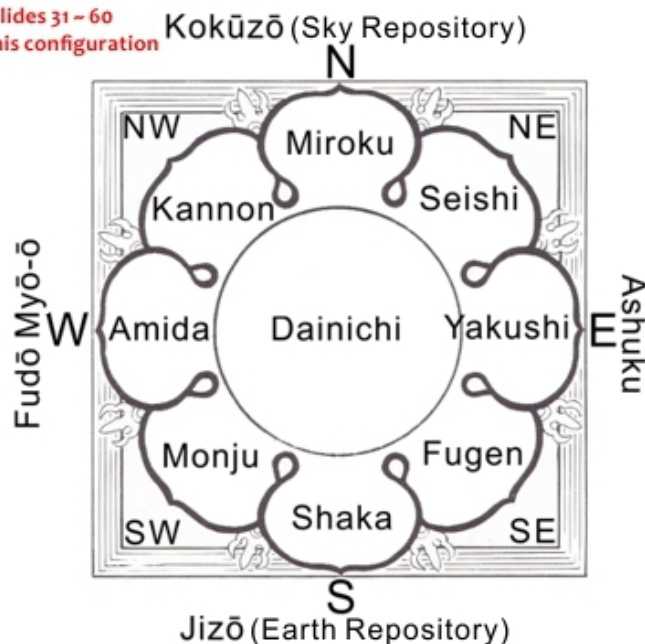
Usuki Thirteen, Late 12th Century Japan
Thirteen Buddhist Deities
NON-STANDARD GROUPING

See Slides 18 ~ 20
 for this configuration



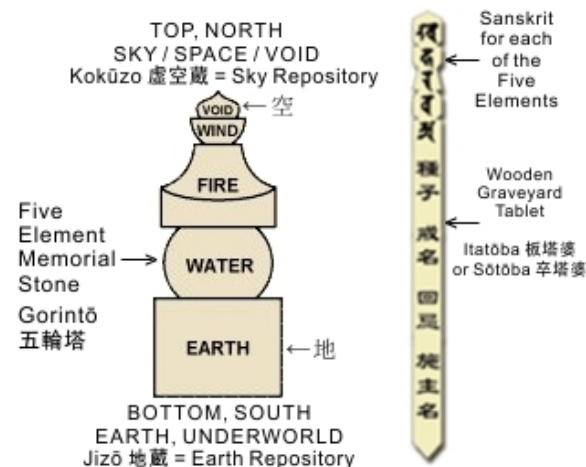
Mid-14th Century Onward Japan
Thirteen Buddhist Deities
STANDARD GROUPING

See Slides 31 ~ 60
 for this configuration



JUST A COINCIDENCE ?

The north-south axis of the standard format -- with Kokūzō (N) and Jizō (S) -- corresponds to the alignment of five-element funerary stones (gorintō 五輪塔) and also to long pagoda-shaped wooden tablets (Itatōba 板塔婆 or Sōtōba 卒塔婆), which are found in Japanese graveyards to pray for the deceased at specified intervals of time. Kokūzō's name includes the word for sky/space/void 空. Jizō's name includes the word for earth 地.



Slide 30. Mandala Pattern. Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities include (A) five buddha with Dainichi at center; (B) four bodhisattva guarding four semi-directions; and (C) four deities guarding four cardinal directions. 5 + 4 + 4 = 13. Except for Miroku (normally NE) and Shaka (normally N), the deities are placed properly. Along the north-south axis in both non-standard and standard groupings, Miroku (N) is the Buddha of the Future, while Shaka (S) is the Buddha of the Present. In the standard format, Miroku is joined by Kokūzō (sky repository) in the north and Shaka by Jizō (earth repository) in the south. This Kokūzō/Jizō pairing is a popular old pairing largely forgotten in modern times. And in early scriptures, Jizō comes from the south. Jizō is also aligned with Miroku on the north-south axis, as Jizō vowed to remain among us doing good works until Miroku's return as the Buddha of the Future. In the standard group, Ashuku is placed in the east, for Ashuku is lord of the eastern paradise Zenke 善快. Similarly, Amida is placed in the west, for Amida is lord of the western paradise Gokuraku 極樂, while Yakushi is situated in the east, for Yakushi is lord of the eastern paradise Jōruri 淨瑠璃. Also, Ashuku and Fudō appear on the east-west axis along with Dainichi. This is befitting, as Ashuku (E) appears in a Dainichi triad in the Diamond World mandala, while Fudō (W) appears in a Dainichi triad in the Womb World mandala. In Japanese esoteric Buddhism, the Diamond World mandala is hung on the east axis to the altar, while the Womb World mandala is hung on the west. **CHART LAYOUT** = Womb World Mandala's central eight-pedal court (Chūdai Hachiyō-in 中台八葉院).

Slide Thirty-One -- STANDARD GROUPING, COMMON ART FORMATS

①

THREE BUDDHA CENTER

Dainichi in Center

②

ZIGZAG

Dainichi is 12th Deity

③

LINEAR Bottom-Up

Fudō at Bottom

④

DENOMINATIONAL

PURE LAND STYLE AMIDA IN CENTER

CORRESPONDENCE TO WOMB WORLD MANDALA
Kokūzō (Sky Repository)

Jizō (Earth Repository)

THREE BUDDHA Variation

Dainichi in Top Row, Center

ZIGZAG Variation

Dainichi is 11th Deity (below Kokuzō)

LINEAR Variation Top-Down

Fudō at Top

ZEN STYLE SHAKA IS LARGEST **TENDAI STYLE DAINICHI IN CENTER**

SHINGON STYLE DAINICHI IN CENTER
Kōbō Daishi at bottom

Gorintō
五輪塔 → 5-element Stone Stele

SANSKRIT	JAPANESE	ENGLISH	DEITY
空	空	Sky Space Void	Kokūzō & Dainichi
風	風	Wind Air	Shaka
火	火	Fire	Fudō & Shaka
水	水	Water	Amida
地	地	Earth	Jizō & Ashuku

Deity associations from esoteric traditions in Japan.

Itatōba
板塔婆 → Wooden Grave Tablet

Slide 31. Standard Grouping, Common Art Formats.

Methods to easily identify Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities.

THREE BUDDHA CENTER PATTERN

Standard Grouping
Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Slide 32. Three Buddha Center Pattern. Standard Grouping.
Three Buddha in middle column and three in middle row.



Slide Thirty-Three

THREE BUDDHA CENTER PATTERN

1373 CE. Mantoku-ji Temple 萬徳寺

Obama City, Fukui Prefecture, Japan, H = 113.1 cm, W = 52.4 cm

STANDARD GROUPING

One of the oldest extant paintings of Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Depicts three Buddha in the middle column and three Buddha in the middle row. Two triads or *sanzon* 三尊 are also prominent (Amida Triad, Shaka Triad). Miroku Bosatsu (Buddha of the Future) is portrayed as a Buddha, for Miroku is colored in white, as are the other five Buddha. Dainichi is positioned in the center, suggesting this painting was commissioned by a Shingon or Tendai adherent. But this does not mean Dainichi is the omnipotent figure. There is no supreme being or absolute power of any kind in Japanese religious cosmology. Each of the thirteen deities herein has a specific salvific function, one aimed at saving the living and the dead from rebirth in an evil realm.

Ten of the deities are the *honji* 本地 (Buddhist manifestations) of the Ten Kings of the Underworld. The Ten Kings are the *suijaku* 垂迹 (local manifestations). Three esoteric deities (Dainichi, Ashuku, and Kokūzō) were then added to the ten to form this grouping of thirteen. The addition of three esoteric deities strongly supports the notion that the Shingon school played the preeminent role in developing this group and the premortem and postmortem rites associated with it. We might also speculate that the Thirteen Buddhist Deities were created as a multi-denominational grouping that would appeal to the greatest number of people. Amida, for example, would appeal to adherents of the Pure Land schools; Dainichi to those of the Shingon and Tendai schools; and Shaka to Zen adherents and nearly all other schools.

** Note on Classification
 Buddha = Amida, Ashuku, Dainichi, Shaka, Yakushi
 Bodhisattva = Jizō, Kannon, Kokūzō, Miroku, Monju, Seishi
 Rājas (fierce spirits) = Fudō Myō-ō

Kokūzō (Sky Repository) and Jizō (Earth Repository) are on same axis, at top and bottom. This is indicative of five-elements theory. Other correspondences to the five elements are also shown at right.



Slide 33. 1373 CE. Three Buddha Center Format, Standard Grouping. Mantoku-ji Temple 萬徳寺, Obama City, Fukui Prefecture, Japan. H = 113.1 cm, W = 52.4 cm. Depicts three Buddha in middle column and three Buddha in middle row. One of the oldest extant paintings of the thirteen in Japan. Dainichi wearing crown (a common esoteric representation). **PHOTO:** Obama City.



Slide Thirty-Four

**THREE
BUDDHA
CENTER
PATTERN**

**STANDARD
GROUPING**

Modern
Gallery Tenjiku, Japan

Scroll Size
H = 140 cm
W = 38.5 cm

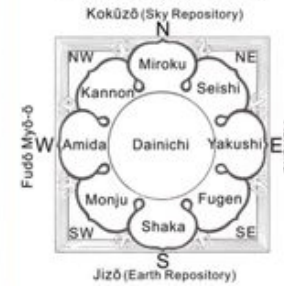
Painting Only
H = 53 cm
W = 25.5 cm

Same format / layout
as prior slide



Five Buddha in mandala-like pattern, but the directional axis is odd and the placements do not conform to standard placements of the thirteen in the central court of the Womb World Mandala.

**Thirteen Buddhist Deities
STANDARD GROUPING**



Kokūzō (Sky Repository) and Jizō (Earth Repository) are on same axis, at top and bottom. This is → indicative of five-elements theory.



Amida Triad

Shaka Triad

Slide 34. Modern. Three Buddha Center Pattern, Standard Grouping. H = 53 cm, W = 25.5 cm (painting only). Gallery Tenjiku, Japan. Same format/layout as prior slide. Depicts three Buddha in middle column and three Buddha in middle row. The Shaka Triad and Amida Triad are also prominent. **PHOTO:** item.rakuten.co.jp

Slide Thirty-Five
THREE BUDDHA CENTER
 Cartouche Style, Standard Grouping
 Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

1553 CE. Anyōji Temple 安養寺, Tsuyama City, Okayama, Japan. H = 109.0 cm, W = 57.4 cm

Depicts three Buddha in the middle column and middle row. Three triads (*sanzon* 三尊) are also prominent. Dainichi is positioned in the middle of the top row, next to Kokūzō -- a variation on the Three Buddha Center pattern, in which Dainichi is normally positioned in the center of the middle column. This variation suggests the painting was commissioned by a Shingon or Tendai adherent who wished to highlight a Dainichi Triad, one that would be just as prominent as the Amida Triad and the Shaka Triad.

Another plausible reason for placing Dainichi next to Kokūzō involves five-element memorial stones (*gorintō* 五輪塔). The topmost piece of the *gorintō* represents sky/space/void. Both Kokūzō and Dainichi represent this element. Kokūzō's name, for example, includes the word for sky/space/void 空. Kokūzō is also known as the "Sky Repository." As for Dainichi, the Diamond World Mandala equates Dainichi with sky/space/void. Thus, this variation shows a creative sensibility that draws upon five-elements theory & mandala cosmology.

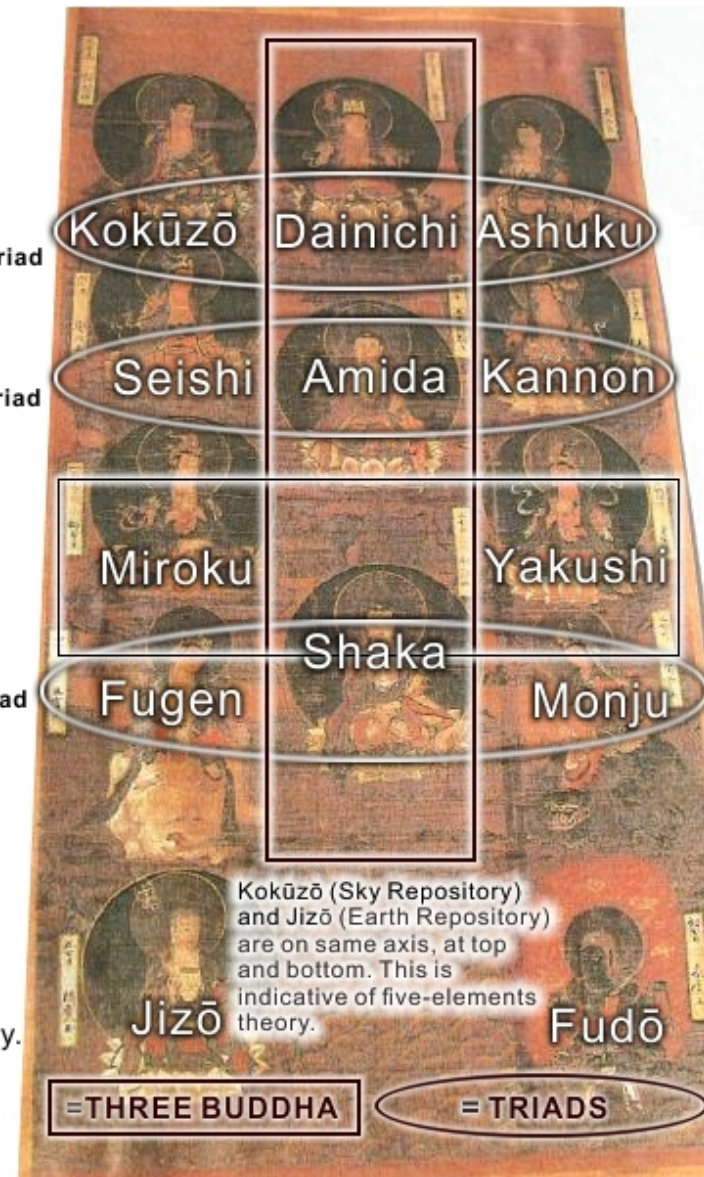
**** Note on Classification**

Buddha = Amida, Ashuku, Dainichi, Shaka, Yakushi
 Bodhisattva = Jizō, Kannon, Kokūzō, Miroku, Monju, Seishi
 Rājas (fierce sprits) = Fudō Myō-ō

Dainichi Triad

Amida Triad

Shaka Triad



Slide 35. 1553 CE. Three Buddha Center Pattern with slight variation. Cartouche Style, Standard Grouping. Anyōji Temple 安養寺, Tsuyama City, Okayama, Japan. Prefectural Treasure. H = 109.0 cm, W = 57.4 cm. Three Buddha in middle column and in middle row. Dainichi is placed next to Kokūzō in the top row -- this is a slight variation of the Three Buddha Center Pattern, wherein Dainichi is normally positioned in the center of the middle column. **PHOTO:** e-tsuyama.com

ZIGZAG PATTERN

Standard Grouping
Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Slide 36. The zigzag pattern is one of the most popular formats for paintings of Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities.



Zigzag Pattern Standard Grouping

Early-mid 14th Century
H = 95 cm, W = 37 cm
Okayama Prefectural Museum, Japan

There are a handful of artistic formats for the Thirteen Buddhist Deities, but the zigzag pattern (along with a zigzag variant; to be discussed shortly) is perhaps the most common.

The zigzag pattern is a quick trick to properly identify the deities.

The key is to locate Dainichi. This is actually quite easy, as Dainichi is usually the only Buddha wearing a crown. Dainichi is also the only Buddha with hands forming the Mudra of Six Elements (Chiken-in 智拳印). In this mudra, the index finger of the left hand is clasped by the five fingers of the right. This mudra symbolizes the unity of the five worldly elements -- earth, water, fire, air/wind, and sky/space/void -- with a sixth element, which is spiritual consciousness.

In the mandala artform, which is of special importance to Japan's esoteric schools (Shingon, Tendai), the five elements are considered inanimate. This equates to the Womb World Mandala. Only by adding the sixth element -- mind, perception, or spiritual consciousness -- do the five become animate. This equates with the Diamond World Mandala. Phrased differently, there is "unity" only when the sixth element is added. Without the sixth element, ordinary eyes see only the differentiated forms or appearances.

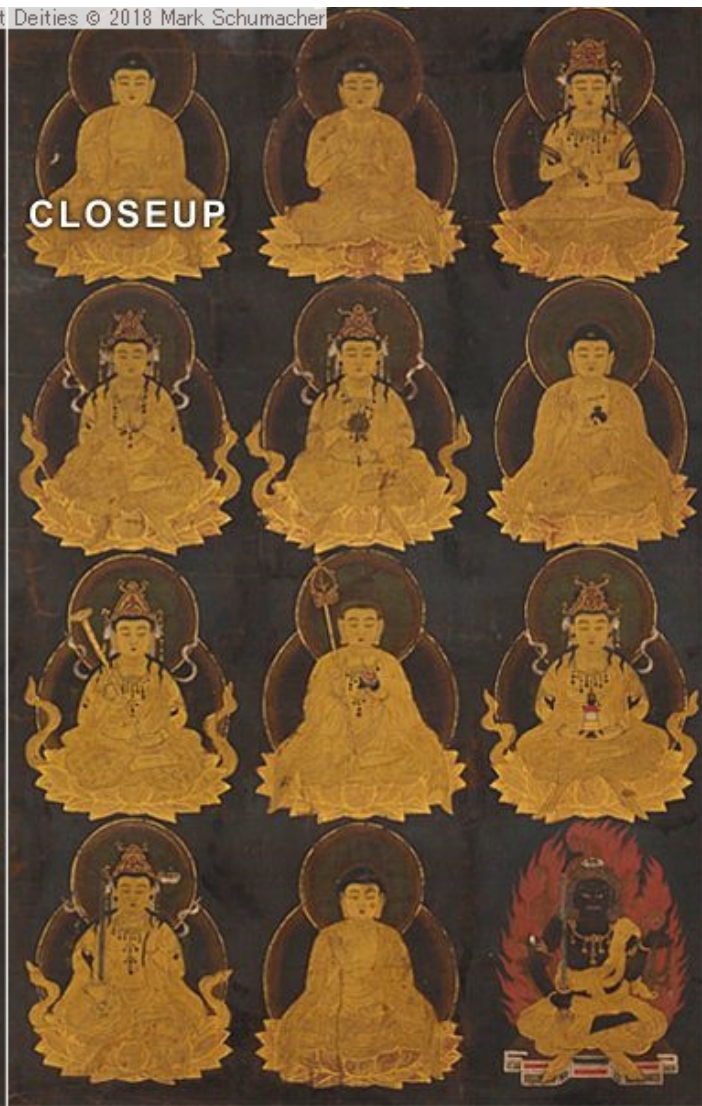
Slide Thirty-Seven



Slide 37. 14th Century. Zigzag Pattern, Standard Grouping.

H = 95 cm, W = 37 cm. Okayama Prefectural Museum, Japan. Prefectural Treasure.

PHOTO: kenhaku.pref.okayama.jp or [see larger photo from museum.](#)



Slide Thirty-Eight Zigzag Pattern Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Muromachi Era (1337 to 1573)
H = 100.8 cm, W = 41.7 cm
Hyōgo Prefectural Museum of History

There are a handful of artistic formats for the Thirteen Buddhist Deities, but the zigzag pattern (along with a zigzag variant; to be discussed shortly) is perhaps the most common.

The zigzag pattern is a quick trick to properly identify the deities.

In this particular painting, all the deities (except Fudō) are colored white. White represents pureness and divinity. It is also the color of death -- the deceased is often dressed in a white gown during funerals. White is also the color worn by pilgrims during pilgrimages. Death in Japan is considered a pilgrimage to the underworld, where one undergoes judgement by the Ten Kings of Hell and is thereafter sentenced to either a higher or lower karmic rebirth.

NOTE: Sadly, I do not know when the deceased were first dressed in white, or when pilgrims first began wearing white robes. If these traditions developed in tandem with the Thirteen Buddhist Deities, this would be a powerful finding.



Slide 38. Muromachi Era, Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping.

H = 100.8 cm, W = 41.7 cm. Hyōgo Pref. Museum of History.

PHOTO: hyogo-c.ed.jp

Slide Thirty-Nine

Zigzag Pattern Variation, Standard Grouping

Kamakura Era, H = 170 cm, W = 60 cm

Reference Center of History and Foklore 歴史民俗資料館, Sakai Town, Ibaraki, Japan

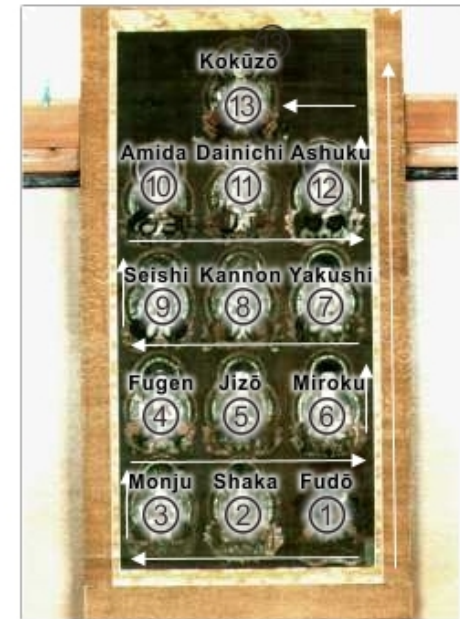
Formerly installed at Hiraizumi Chūsonji Kongō-in Temple 平泉中尊寺金剛院 and reportedly used in postmortem rites.

This is a slight variation of the zigzag pattern, for Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō at top. This contrasts to the standard configuration, in which Ashuku is #11 and Dainichi is #12. Although their positions have been swapped, we cannot assume the same swap in the memorial service each presides over. Ashuku would still preside over the 7th-year rite, while Dainichi would still preside over the 13th-year rite -- see Slide 3.

Why the swap? One plausible reason may lie with the theory of five elements, five-element memorial stones, and five-element wooden graveyard tablets. In each case, the topmost piece represents sky/space/void. In esoteric traditions, Kokūzō and Dainichi both represent sky/space/void.

Kokūzō's name includes the character 空, meaning sky/space/void. Kokūzō is also known as the "Sky Repository." As for Dainichi, the Diamond World Mandala equates Dainichi with sky/space/void.

This popular zigzag variation (with Dainichi below Kokūzō) might be a reflection of these connections.



Slide 39. Kamakura era. Zigzag Pattern Variation. Standard Grouping. Variation = Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō (i.e., Dainichi and Ashuku have swapped positions). Sakai Town, Ibaraki Prefecture, Japan. H = 170 cm, W = 60 cm. I question the validity of this early dating given the sub-standard info and photo provided by the source. **PHOTO:** town.sakai.ibaraki.jp



Slide Forty Zigzag Pattern Variation Standard Grouping Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

1497 CE

Tōfukuji Temple 東福寺, Kyoto

No dimensions given by temple

This is a slight variation of the zigzag pattern, for Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō. This contrasts to the standard zigzag configuration, in which Ashuku is #11 and Dainichi is #12.

Tōfukuji is a Shingon temple. Miroku Bosatsu (the Buddha of the Future) is colored white like the other five Buddha.

Although the positions of Ashuku and Dainichi have been swapped, we cannot assume the same swap in the memorial service each presides over. Ashuku would still preside over the 7th-year rite, while Dainichi would still preside over the 13th-year rite -- see Slide 3.

Why the swap? One plausible reason may lie with the theory of five elements, five-element memorial stones, and five-element wooden graveyard tablets. In each case, the topmost piece represents sky/space/void. In esoteric traditions, Kokūzō and Dainichi both represent sky/space/void. Kokūzō's name includes the character 空, meaning sky/space/void. Kokūzō is also known as the "Sky Repository." As for Dainichi, the Diamond World Mandala equates Dainichi with sky/space/void.

This popular zigzag variation (with Dainichi below Kokūzō) might be a reflection of these connections.



Slide 40. 1497 CE. Zigzag Pattern Variation. Standard Grouping. Variation = Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō (i.e., Dainichi and Ashuku have swapped positions). Tōfukuji Temple 東福寺, Kyoto, Japan. Tōfukuji is a Shingon temple. Miroku Bosatsu (the Buddha of the Future) is colored white like the other five Buddha. **PHOTO:** www.toufukuji.or.jp/original7.html

Slide Forty-One Zigzag Pattern Variation Standard Grouping

1553 CE, Graveyard Memorial Stone

Shideharabochi 榎原墓地

Ikomagun Heguri chō 生駒郡平群町

Nara Prefecture, Japan

H = 173 cm

The name of each deity is carved in the stone next to its individual head.

This is a slight variation of the zigzag pattern, for Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō at top. This contrasts with the standard configuration, in which Ashuku is #11 and Dainichi is #12.

Although their positions have been swapped, we should not assume the same swap in the memorial service (i.e., Thirteen Buddhist Rites) each presides over. Ashuku would still preside over the 7th-year rite, while Dainichi would still preside over the thirteenth-year rite -- see Slide 3.

What might be a plausible reason for this swap? The answer may lie with the theory of five elements, five-element memorial stones, and five-element wooden graveyard tablets. In each situation, the topmost piece represents sky / space / void. Both Kokūzō and Dainichi represent sky / space / void. Kokūzō's name includes the word for sky / space / void 空, and Kokūzō is known as the "Sky Repository." As for Dainichi, the Diamond World Mandala equates Dainichi with sky / space / void. Thus, this variation perhaps shows a creative sensibility that draws upon five-elements theory and mandala cosmology.

The inscription reads:

天文廿二年 (1553) 癸丑三月十五日道乘坊
為造新三郎逆修道阿弥妙泉乃至法界普利



Slide 41. 1553 CE. Zigzag Pattern with slight variation. Standard Grouping. Variation = Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō (i.e., Dainichi and Ashuku have swapped positions). Graveyard memorial stone. Shideharabochi 榎原墓地, Ikomagun Heguri chō 生駒郡平群町, Nara Prefecture, Japan. H = 173 cm. PHOTO: [Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄](#). Also see [blog.goo.ne.jp](#) or [this J-site](#) for more photos.



Slide Forty-Two Zigzag Pattern Variation Standard Grouping Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

1556 CE
Gokuraku-ji Temple 極楽寺
Fukui Prefecture, Japan
No dimensions given by temple

This is a slight variation of the zigzag pattern, for Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō. This contrasts to the standard zigzag configuration, in which Ashuku is #11 and Dainichi is #12.

Gokuraku-ji is a Tendai temple.

Although the positions of Ashuku and Dainichi have been swapped, we cannot assume the same swap in the memorial service each presides over. Ashuku would still preside over the 7th-year rite, while Dainichi would still preside over the 13th-year rite -- see Slide 3.

Why the swap? One plausible reason may lie with the theory of five elements, five-element memorial stones, and five-element wooden graveyard tablets. In each case, the topmost piece represents sky/space/void. In esoteric traditions, Kokūzō and Dainichi both represent sky/space/void. Kokūzō's name includes the character 空, meaning sky/space/void. Kokūzō is also known as the "Sky Repository." As for Dainichi, the Diamond World Mandala equates Dainichi with sky/space/void.

This popular zigzag variation (with Dainichi below Kokūzō) might be a reflection of these connections.



Slide 42. 1556 CE. Zigzag Pattern Variation. Standard Grouping. Variation = Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō (i.e., Dainichi and Ashuku have swapped positions). Tendai temple Gokuraku-ji 極楽寺 in Fukui Prefecture, Japan. **PHOTO:** city.obama.fukui.jp



Slide Forty-Three Zigzag Pattern Variation Standard Grouping

1590 CE Memorial Stone, H = 185 cm
Shōbō-ji Temple 正法寺, Shijōnawate City
四条畷市中野本町, Osaka, Japan

This is a slight variation of the zigzag pattern, for Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō. This contrasts to the standard configuration, in which Ashuku is #11 and Dainichi is #12.

Although their positions have been swapped, we cannot assume the same swap in the memorial service each presides over. Ashuku would still preside over the 7th-year rite, while Dainichi would still preside over the 13th-year rite -- see Slide 3.

Why the swap? One plausible reason may lie with the theory of five elements, five-element memorial stones, and five-element wooden graveyard tablets. In each case, the topmost piece represents sky/space/void. In esoteric traditions, Kokūzō and Dainichi both represent sky/space/void. Kokūzō's name includes the character 空, meaning sky/space/void. Kokūzō is also known as the "Sky Repository." As for Dainichi, the Diamond World Mandala equates Dainichi with sky/space/void.

This popular zigzag variation (with Dainichi below Kokūzō) might be a reflection of these connections.

The smaller stone is a six-character Amida memorial stone reading "Namu Amida Butsu." Dated to 1536 CE. H 163 cm x W 86 cm.

Heavenly Canopy
Often hung over coffin during funerals



The inscription reads:
奉造立十三佛逆修念佛講一結
天正十八季(1590)庚子
諸衆八十一人同本願觀海上人
六月八日敬白

Slide 43. 1590 CE. Zigzag Pattern with slight variation. Standard Grouping. Variation = Dainichi is located directly below Kokūzō (i.e., Dainichi and Ashuku have swapped positions). Shōbō-ji Temple 正法寺, Neyagawa City, Osaka, Japan. Stone. H 185 cm. Next to it is a six-character Amida memorial stone. H 163 cm x W 86 cm. PHOTO: [Kawai Tetsuo 河合哲雄](#). For more photos, [see this J-site](#).

Slide Forty-Four

Zigzag Pattern, Standard Grouping Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Ōtsu-e 大津絵 are small paintings produced for travelers and pilgrims by artists in Ōtsu Town, which is close to Kyoto and to Lake Biwa, two of the most popular pilgrimage locations of Edo-era Japan. Ōtsu-e are generally unsigned and undated. They began appearing in the early 17th century and soon became widespread. Ōtsu-e cover a wide range of topics, from religious themes to popular stories, humorous figures, and kabuki actors.



1. Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Ōtsu-e 大津絵

Edo Era (1600-1868 CE)
Ōtsu City Museum of History, Japan
H = 55 cm, W = 22 cm



2. Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Ōtsu-e 大津絵

Edo Era (1600-1868 CE)
Machida City Museum, Tokyo
No dimensions given

3. Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Ōtsu-e 大津絵

Edo Era (1600-1868 CE)
Private Collection
Momose Osamu 百瀬治氏
No dimensions given



Slide 44. Zigzag Pattern, Standard Grouping

1. Ōtsu-e, Edo era. Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping. **PHOTO:** [Ōtsu City Museum of History](#) 大津市歴史博物館.
2. Ōtsu-e, Edo era. Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping. **PHOTO:** [Machida City Museum, Tokyo](#) 町田市立博物館蔵
3. Ōtsu-e, Edo era. Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping. **PHOTO:** Momose Osamu 百瀬治氏 Collection, [HiHuMi Art](#).
4. Learn more about Ōtsu-e at [JAANUS](#).

Condensed Visual Guide to Japan's 13 Buddhist Deities © 2018 Mark Schumacher

LINEAR PATTERN

Standard Grouping
Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Slide 45. Linear Pattern

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan



Slide Forty-Six
Linear Pattern
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Kamakura Era (1185–1333)
Jūrin-in Temple 十輪院, Nara, Japan
No dimensions given by temple

Jūrin-in Temple is a Shingon temple founded in the Kamakura period. Known as a funerary temple.

All of the deities (except Fudō) are colored white. Four Buddha are easily identified by their black hair, while all the other deities (except Fudō) wear crowns, including Dainichi Buddha.



I'm not sure, but I believe the scroll shown at left is either a modern reproduction or a skillful restoration of the original Kamakura-era painting at Jūrin-in Temple.

Why? Because the image at right claims to be a modern reproduction. In my mind, the original most likely looks like the reproduction shown at right.

Both are the same, showing a linear pattern. But the one shown at right is more believable, given time's detrimental impact on color pigments and the quality of the extant artwork.



Slide 46. Kamakura Era. Linear Pattern. Standard Grouping. Jūrin-in Temple 十輪院, Nara, Japan. Jūrin-in is a Shingon temple founded in the Kamakura period. Known as a funerary temple. **PHOTOS:** jurin-in.com; f For the more believable reproduction, [see this J-site](#).

Slide Forty-Seven
THIRTEEN
BUDDHIST
DEITIES
OF JAPAN

STANDARD
GROUPING

1414 CE
Baiyū-ji Temple
梅遊寺,

Bungotagada City
豊後高田市, Ōita
Japan

H = 119 cm, W = 70 cm



Slide 47. 1414 CE. Reverse Linear Pattern. Standard Grouping. Baiyū-ji Temple 梅遊寺, Bungotagada City 豊後高田市, Ōita, Japan. H = 119 cm, W = 70 cm. Top-down linear pattern, starting with Fudō in top right corner. PHOTO: [Kawai Tetsuo](#) 河合哲雄. His site catalogs hundreds of memorial tablets.



Slide Forty-Eight
Linear Pattern
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

1515 CE
Woodblock
Saitama Prefectural Museum of History and Folklore
H = 85.7 cm, W = 35.3 cm

Although the low quality of this photo makes it difficult to identify the deities, one can easily see a crowned Dainichi sitting in position #12. Since Fudō sits in position #1, we can confidently call this a linear pattern.



Heavenly Canopy 天蓋
often hung over coffin at funerals

13
Kokūzō

12 11 10
Dainichi Ashuku Amida

9 8 7
Seishi Kannon Yakushi

6 5 4
Miroku Jizō Fugen

3 2 1
Monju Shaka Fudō

Slide 48. 1515 CE, Linear Pattern, Standard Grouping.

Saitama Prefecture Museum of History & Folklore, Japan. PHOTO: city.kuki.lg.jp

DENOMINATIONAL PATTERNS

Standard Grouping
Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Slide 49. Denominational Patterns of Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities.

Amida (Pure Land), Dainichi (Shingon–Tendai) or Shaka (Zen) are portrayed larger than the other deities or positioned in the center of the painting.



Slide Fifty
Denominational Pattern
Pure Land Style, Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

AMIDA at center,
larger than the others

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California

15th century

Raigō-zu 来迎図 (welcoming descent)
of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and goldleaf on silk
Image: 38 1/8 x 16 3/8 in. (96.8375 x 41.5925 cm)
Mount: 69 3/4 x 25 5/8 in. (177.165 x 65.0875 cm)
Far Eastern Art Council Fund (M.2000.32)

Followers of Pure Land Buddhism believe that upon death
Amida and retinue will descend from Amida's Western
Pure Land (西方極樂淨土) to earth to welcome and escort
the devotee back to Amida's Paradise.

Three triads still intact despite the unusual positionings
(Dainichi triad, Shaka triad, and Amida triad)



Slide 50. 15th century. Pure Land Style. Standard Grouping. Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA). A type of Raigō-zu 来迎図 (welcoming descent) painting of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan. Amida at center, larger than the others. Followers of Pure Land Buddhism believe that upon death, Amida and retinue will descend from Amida's Western Pure Land 西方極樂淨土 to earth to welcome and escort the devotee back to Amida's Paradise. Here the Raigō format is used to portray the Thirteen Buddhist Deities descending with Amida. Three triads are still intact despite the unusual positionings (Dainichi triad, Shaka triad, and Amida triad). PHOTO: [LACMA](#).



Slide Fifty-One PURE LAND STYLE AMIDA AT CENTER

Standard Grouping Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Late Edo-era (perhaps)
Image: H = 92.5 cm, W = 47.2 cm
Mount: H = 172.5 cm, W = 61.0 cm

Raigō-zu 来迎図 (welcoming descent)
painting of Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Three triads still intact despite the
unusual positionings (Dainichi triad,
Shaka triad, and Amida triad)

Followers of Pure Land Buddhism believe that upon death
Amida and retinue will descend from Amida's Western
Pure Land (西方極樂浄土) to earth to welcome and escort
the devotee back to Amida's Paradise.



Slide 51. Late Edo era perhaps, but no date given by source. Pure Land Style. Standard Grouping. Welcoming-Descent Style (Raigō-zu 来迎図). Size (painting only) = H 92.5 cm X W 47.2 cm. PHOTO: auctions.yahoo.co.jp. Sadly, the prior link no longer functions, as the piece was sold and the online page deleted. However, searching [Yahoo Auctions](https://auctions.yahoo.co.jp) for 十三仏 yields other interesting images of the thirteen.



Slide Fifty-Two
**PURE LAND STYLE
 AMIDA AT CENTER**

Standard Grouping
 Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Modern

A type of Raigō-zu 来迎図
 (welcoming descent) painting of the
 Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Also includes the theme of
 Twenty-Five Bodhisattvas
 (Nijūgo Bosatsu 二十五菩薩),
 who descend from heaven with
 Amida to the death bed of the devotee
 and then lead the deceased back to
 Amida's Western Pure Land.

Three triads still intact
 despite the unusual positioning
 (Dainichi Triad, Shaka Triad,
 and Amida Triad)



Image: H = 65 cm, W = 30 cm
 Mount: H = 134 cm, W = 48 cm



Slide 52. Modern. Pure Land Style. Standard Grouping.

Welcoming-Descent Format (Raigō-zu 来迎図).

Also includes the theme of 25 Bodhisattvas (Nijūgo Bosatsu 二十五菩薩).

PHOTO: oparaq.com



Slide Fifty-Three
SHINGON STYLE
 Dainichi Larger Than Others
 Kōbō Daishi at Bottom

Standard Grouping

Japan's
Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Ofuda 御札 (votive slip)

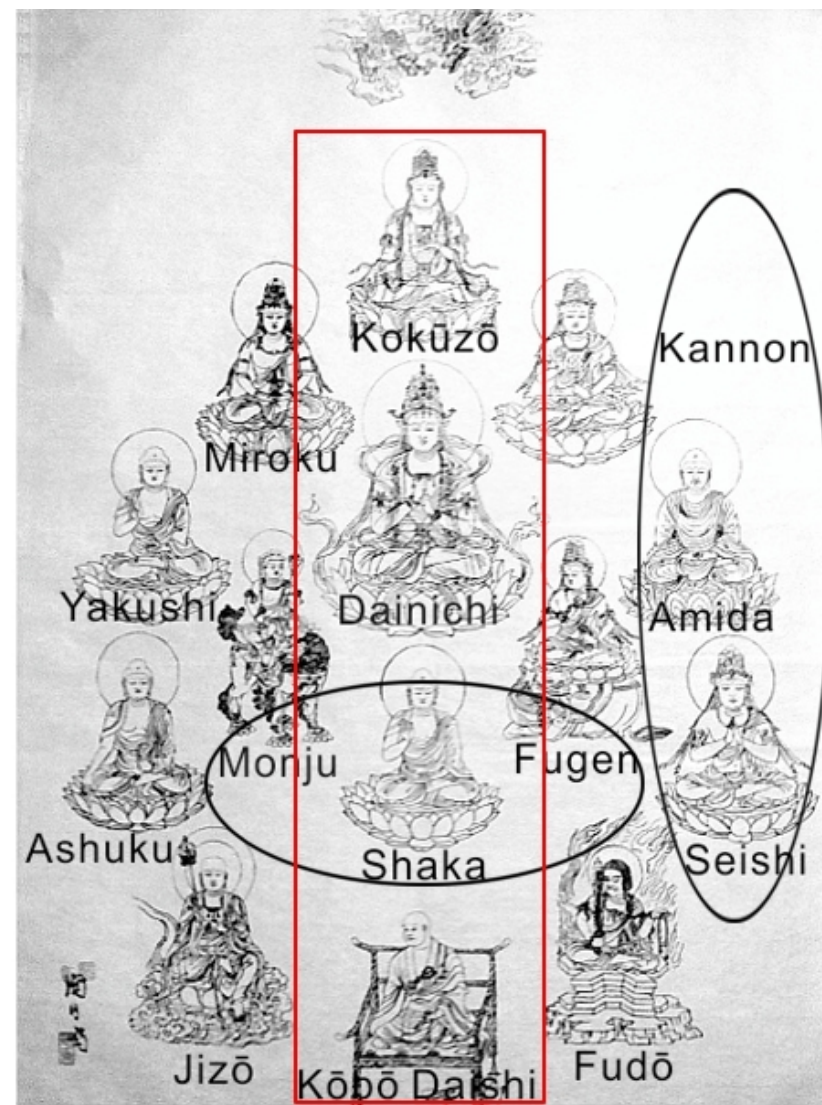
Edo era

Two triads still intact
 despite the unusual positioning
 (Shaka Triad and Amida Triad)

A third "inventive" triad (red box)
 shows Kokūzō, Dainichi, and
 Kōbō Daishi in central column.

Kokūzō & Dainichi both
 represent sky / space / void / north,
 so we should assume Kōbō Daishi
 represents earth / matter / south.

No dimensions or
 location given by source



Slide 53. Edo era. Dainichi / Shingon Style. Standard Grouping. Mandala-type configuration. This is an *OFUDA* 御札 (votive slip of paper distributed by temples as charms or talismans). Kōbō Daishi (founder of Japan's Shingon school) at bottom. Dainichi appears larger than the others. Temple art (no location or date given); probably Edo era. **PHOTO:** [this J-site](#)

Slide Fifty-Four -- Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities



H = 151.5 cm, W = 66.6 cm



Slide 54. Modern. Shingon Style. Standard Grouping. Dainichi in center.

Kōbō Daishi (founder of Japanese Shingon) appears at bottom.

The Five Buddha (plus Miroku) clustered at center.

PHOTO: ankado.jp/SHOP



Slide Fifty-Five
Shingon Style
 Thirteen Buddhist Deities
 Dainichi at center
 Wooden Butsugan 仏龕 (tabernacle)
 Modern
 H = 18 cm

Jizō and Fudō at bottom.
 Kōbō Daishi (founder of Japan's Shingon school) in right door, Fudō in left door.



Wooden Butsugan 仏龕, H = 18 cm, 諸尊仏龕
 7th century (China's Tang Period 618–907)
 Treasure of Kongōbu-ji Temple (head temple of Shingon Buddhism in Japan)

← The two small modern Buddhist shrines (Butsugan 仏龕) shown above were clearly designed to mimic the famous Butsugan that Shingon founder Kūkai 空海 (774 - 835 AD; aka Kōbō Daishi) reportedly brought back from China in the early 9th century. It is a designated National Treasure of Japan. It depicts the myriad Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

Zen Style
 Thirteen Buddhist Deities
 Shaka at center
 Wooden Butsugan 仏龕
 Modern
 H = 15.5 cm, W = 14 cm

Shaka Triad (Shaka, Monju, Fugen) is prominent. Amida Triad and Dainichi Triad are also still intact, despite the usual positioning.



Slide 55. Modern. Shingon Style & Zen Style. Standard Grouping.

PHOTOS: [Shingon Butsugan](#) // [Zen Butsugan](#) // [Kongōbu-ji Treasure](#).



Slide 56. Modern. Shaka / Zen Style. Standard Grouping. Shaka at bottom-row center.

Next to Shaka are Monju and Fugen; the trio form a Shaka Triad, just as Amida, Seishi and Kannon form an Amida Triad, and Kokūzō, Dainichi and Ashuku form an Esoteric Triad.



Slide Fifty-Seven
Zen Style
Shaka at Center

Standard Grouping

Modern

Dainichi Triad

Shaka Triad

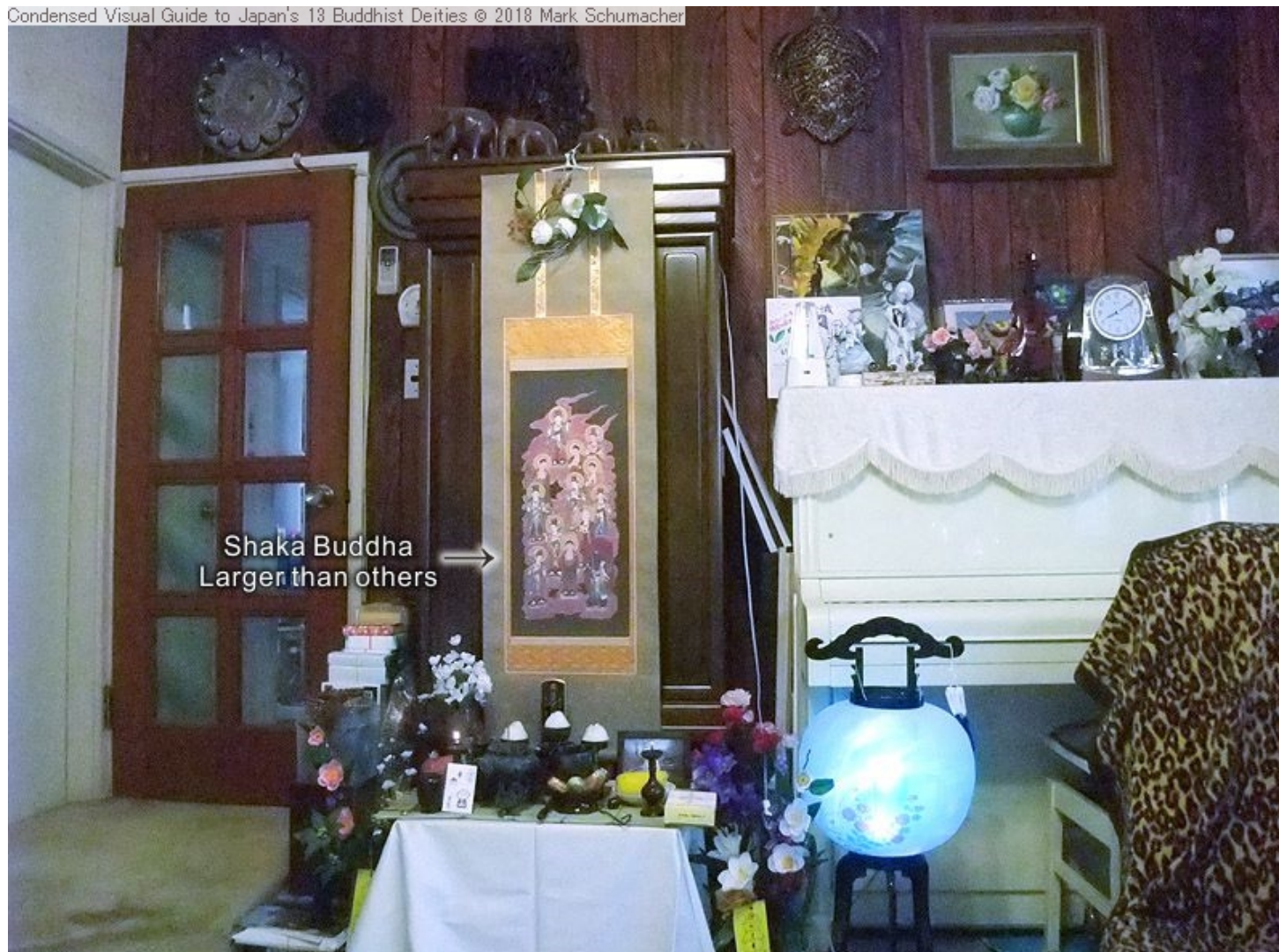
Amida Triad

No dimensions given by source.

Slide 57. Modern. Shaka / Zen Style. Standard Grouping.

Shaka Buddha at center. Dimensions unknown.

PHOTO: Taihou. View more art here.



Shaka Buddha
Larger than others

Slide Fifty-Eight
Zen Style
Shaka at Center

Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

MODERN

Slide 58. Modern. Shaka / Zen Style. Standard Grouping.

Shaka at bottom, larger than the others.

Scroll of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities hung in front of family altar during the July / August Obon お盆 period.

PHOTO: d.hatena.ne.jp.



FRONT Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

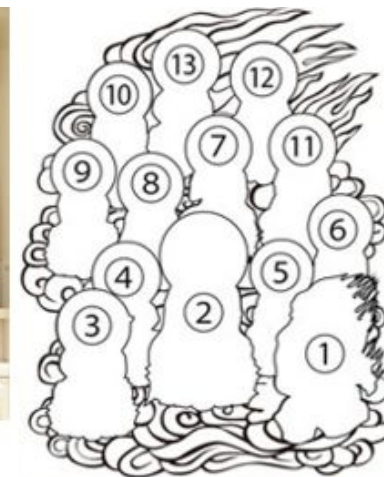


Slide Fifty-Nine
Modern Tablet of Japan's
Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Zen Style
Shaka at Center

For display on the family
altar (butsudan 仏壇).

H = 185 cm
W = 135 cm



- ① 不動明王
- ② 釈迦如来
- ③ 文殊菩薩
- ④ 普賢菩薩
- ⑤ 地藏菩薩
- ⑥ 弥勒菩薩
- ⑦ 薬師如来
- ⑧ 観世音菩薩
- ⑨ 勢至菩薩
- ⑩ 阿弥陀如来
- ⑪ 阿閼如来
- ⑫ 大日如来
- ⑬ 虚空蔵菩薩



BACK

Slide 59. Modern. Shaka / Zen Style. Standard Grouping. Piece for the family altar (butsudan 仏壇). H = 18 cm.
Used during Obon お盆 and other special times when praying for one's ancestors or living relatives or oneself.

In this piece, Shaka Buddha (Historical Buddha) is portrayed larger than the others.

PHOTOS: butuzou-world-shop.com



Slide Sixty
Japan's Thirteen
Buddhist Deities

1783 CE
Thirteen Buddhist Deities as they appear in the Zōho Shoshū Butsuzō-zui 増補諸宗仏像図彙 (Enlarged Edition Encompassing Various Sects of the Illustrated Compendium of Buddhist Images); published 1783. The images include their names, their positioning from one through thirteen, and their judgement timeframe.

No mention is made of their association with the ten / thirteen Kings of Hell -- the Judges of the Underworld have disappeared entirely.

Nonetheless, the 1793 Butsuzō-zui still retains two pages devoted to the Ten Judges of the Underworld, in which their *honji* (Buddhist counterparts) are listed.

The Thirteen Buddhist Deities do not appear in the 1690 Butsuzō-zui.

Slide 60. 1783 CE. Thirteen Buddhist Deities as they appear in the *Zōho Shoshū Butsuzō-zui* 増補諸宗仏像図彙 (Enlarged Edition Encompassing Various Sects of the Illustrated Compendium of Buddhist Images); published 1783. **PHOTO:** [View digitized version \(frames 71 & 72\)](#). The images include their names, their positioning from one through thirteen, and their judgement timeframe. No mention is made of their association with the Ten Kings of Hell -- *the Judges of the Underworld* - who have disappeared entirely (see Slides 4 ~ 13 for more on the Ten Kings). The *1783 Butsuzō-zui* includes two pages (frames 60 & 61) devoted to the Ten Judges of the Underworld, in which their *honji* (Buddhist counterparts) are listed. Above English translations and numbers by Schumacher.



Slide Sixty-One OTHER RELATED DEITY GROUPINGS Secret Buddhist Deities of the 30 Days of the Month Sanjūnichi Hibutsu 三十日秘仏

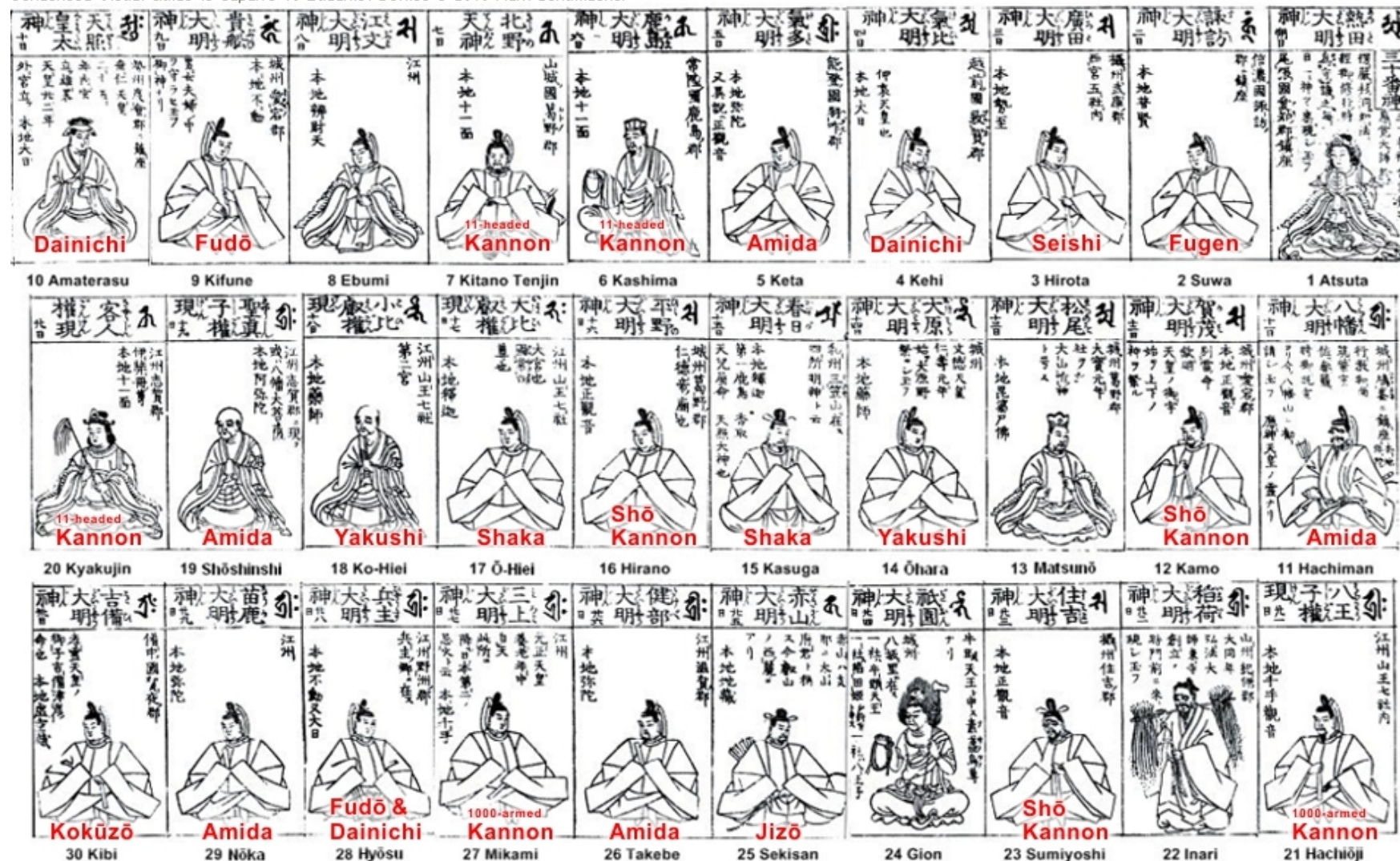
Deities shaded in gray (and red text) are members of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities. Fudō alone is missing.

Did the development of the Sanjūnichi Hibutsu influence the development of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities? There is great overlap in the dates chosen for their worship. Which group came first, or did they develop in tandem?

IMAGES FROM:
Zōho Shoshū Butsuzō-zui
増補諸宗仏像図彙 (Enlarged
Edition Encompassing
Various Sects of the
Illustrated Compendium
of Buddhist Images);
published 1783.

ENNICHI 縁日 (SACRED DAYS).
The Thirty Secret Buddhist Deities still serve today as the primary source for the ENNICHI 縁日 (holy days) of Japan's most beloved Buddhist divinities. The premortem rites to the Thirteen Buddhist Deities typically occur on their Ennichi holy days. This overlap between the thirty deities and thirteen deities suggests that the two groups developed in tandem, or that both were based on some earlier tradition.

Slide 61. 1783 CE. Secret Buddhist Deities of the 30 Days of the Month 三十日秘仏, 1783 version of the Butsuzō-zu-i 仏像図彙 (Illustrated Compendium of Buddhist Images). The Butsuzō-zu-i was first published in 1690. Both the 1690 and 1783 versions include this grouping of thirty, with twelve of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities appearing in both. Only Fudō is missing. What is curious is that the Thirteen Buddhist Deities as an independent group DO NOT APPEAR in the 1690 version -- only in the 1783 version (frames 37 ~ 42). This suggests that the 13-deity grouping had not yet become popular. Did the development of the 30-deity grouping serve as the basis for the 13-deity group? There is much overlap in the dates chosen for their worship. Which group came first? Did they develop in tandem? For standard pairings with the kings of hell, judgement timeframes, and postmortem / premortem rites, see Slide 3.



Slide Sixty-Two OTHER RELATED DEITY GROUPINGS

Sanjūbanshin 三十番神

Thirty Kami Tutelaries
of 30 Days of the Month

Ten of the Thirteen
Buddhist Deities
appear as *Honji*
(shown in red).

Did the development
of the Sanjūbanshin
influence the development
of the Thirteen Buddhist
Deities? There is great
overlap in the dates
chosen for their
worship. Which group
came first, or did they
develop in tandem?

IMAGES FROM:
Zōho Shoshū Butsuzō-zui
増補諸宗仏像図彙 (Enlarged
Edition Encompassing
Various Sects of the
Illustrated Compendium
of Buddhist Images);
published 1783.

Slide 62. 1783 CE. Sanjūbanshin, Thirty Kami Tutelaries of the 30 Days of the Month 三十番神, from the 1783 version of the Butsuzō-zu-i 仏像図彙 (Illustrated Compendium of Buddhist Images). The Butsuzō-zu-i was first published in 1690. Both the 1690 and 1783 versions include this grouping of thirty kami, with ten of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities appearing as *honji* (original ground, original identity) in both. Only Ashuku, Miroku, and Monju are missing. What is curious is that the Thirteen Buddhist Deities DO NOT APPEAR in the 1690 version -- only in the later 1783 version. This suggests that the 13-deity grouping had not yet become a popular grouping. Did the development of the Sanjūbanshin influence the development of Thirteen Buddhist Deities? There is great overlap in the dates chosen for their worship. Which group came first, or did they develop in tandem? **PHOTO: 1783 version (frames 37 ~ 42).**



Slide Sixty-Three

OTHER RELATED DEITY GROUPINGS

Eight Buddhist Guardians of the Zodiac *Ichidai Mamori Honzon* 一代守本尊

Stone, early 20th century.
Located in my private garden, Kamakura.

This grouping of eight appears in the 1783 version of the *Butsuzō-zu-i* 仏像図彙, and is an Edo-era grouping that reportedly sprang from the Thirteen Buddhist Deities (for it includes eight of the thirteen). These eight Buddhist deities are associated with the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac calendar. Each deity is associated with a specific Zodiac animal and serves as the protector (guardian, patron) for all people born in that animal year. Among the eight, four guard the four cardinal directions while the other four guard the four semi-directions (the latter four are each associated with two animals, thus covering all 12 zodiac creatures).

Slide 63. Eight Buddhist Guardians of the Zodiac, known as the *Ichidai Mamori Honzon* 一代守本尊. In my private garden, Kamakura, early 20th century. This grouping of eight appears in the 1783 version of the *Butsuzō-zu-i* 仏像図彙 (frame 70). It is an Edo-era grouping that reportedly sprang from the Thirteen Buddhist Deities (for it includes eight of the thirteen). These eight Buddhist deities are associated with the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac calendar. Each deity is associated with a specific Zodiac animal and serves as the protector (guardian, patron) for all people born in that animal year. Among the eight, four guard the four cardinal directions while the other four guard the four semi-directions (the latter four are each associated with two animals, thus covering all 12 zodiac creatures). **PHOTOS:** Mark Schumacher. For standard pairings with the kings of hell, judgement timeframes, and postmortem / premortem rites, [see Slide 3](#).

8 = Kannon, 13 = Kokūzō, 3 = Monju, 4 = Fugen, 9 = Seishi, 12 = Dainichi, 1 = Fudō, 10 = Amida

あなたの一生を守護下さる十三仏の生まれ歳守り本尊

<p>子ね 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【観世音菩薩】</p>  <p>8 おふさ観音</p>	<p>丑うしとら 寅とら 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【虚空蔵菩薩】</p>  <p>13 大安寺</p>	<p>卯う 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【文殊菩薩】</p>  <p>3 安倍文殊院</p>	<p>辰たつみ 巳み 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【普賢菩薩】</p>  <p>4 長岳寺</p>	<p>午うま 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【勢至菩薩】</p>  <p>9 長弓寺</p>	<p>未ひつじさる 申さる 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【大日如来】</p>  <p>12 円成寺</p>	<p>酉とり 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【不動明王】</p>  <p>1 宝山寺</p>	<p>戌いぬ 亥い 歳生まれの人</p> <p>【阿弥陀如来】</p>  <p>10 霊山寺</p>
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大和十三仏霊場会

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ご朱印満願の方にプレゼントされる守り本尊のお姿が入った肌守りセット(9体セット)



肌守りの裏面見本

Slide Sixty-Four

OTHER RELATED DEITY GROUPINGS

Modern flyer for the Yamato Pilgrimage to Thirteen Sacred Sites for Thirteen Buddhist Deities 大和十三仏霊場 in Nara. This pilgrimage was established in 1982. Here we see the Eight Buddhist Guardians of the Zodiac (Ichidai Mamori Honzon 一代守本尊). This grouping of eight appears in the 1783 version of the *Butsuzō-zu-i 仏像図彙*, and is an Edo-era grouping that reportedly sprang from the Thirteen Buddhist Deities (for it includes eight of the thirteen). Each of the eight is associated with a specific Zodiac animal(s) and serves as the protector (guardian, patron) for all people born in that animal year. The flyer encourages people to complete the 13-site circuit, and in return, will reward the pilgrim with a nine-stamp collection of eight deities plus a ninth stamp showing all thirteen.

Slide 64. Modern-day flyer for the Yamato Pilgrimage to the Thirteen Buddhist Deities 大和十三仏霊場, Nara. This pilgrimage was established in 1982. Standard Grouping. Here we see the Eight Buddhist Guardians of the Zodiac (Ichidai Mamori Honzon 一代守本尊). This group of eight appears in the 1783 version of the *Butsuzō-zu-i 仏像図彙* (frame 70). It is an Edo-era grouping that sprang from the Thirteen Buddhist Deities (for it includes eight of the thirteen). These eight Buddhist deities are associated with the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac calendar. Each deity is associated with a specific Zodiac animal and serves as the protector (guardian, patron) for all people born in that animal year. Among the eight, four guard the four cardinal directions while four others guard the four semi-directions (the latter four are each associated with two animals, thus covering all 12 zodiac creatures). SOURCES: Flyer Image /// Site List/// Date Established.

EXTANT ART OUTSIDE JAPAN

Standard Grouping Japan's Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Slide 65. Extant Artwork Outside Japan.

This visual guide was inspired by a posting on the [JAHF \(Japan Art History Forum\)](#).

This guide, befittingly, is dedicated to all the museum curators, art historians, art collectors, scholars, students, and others who are JAHF members.

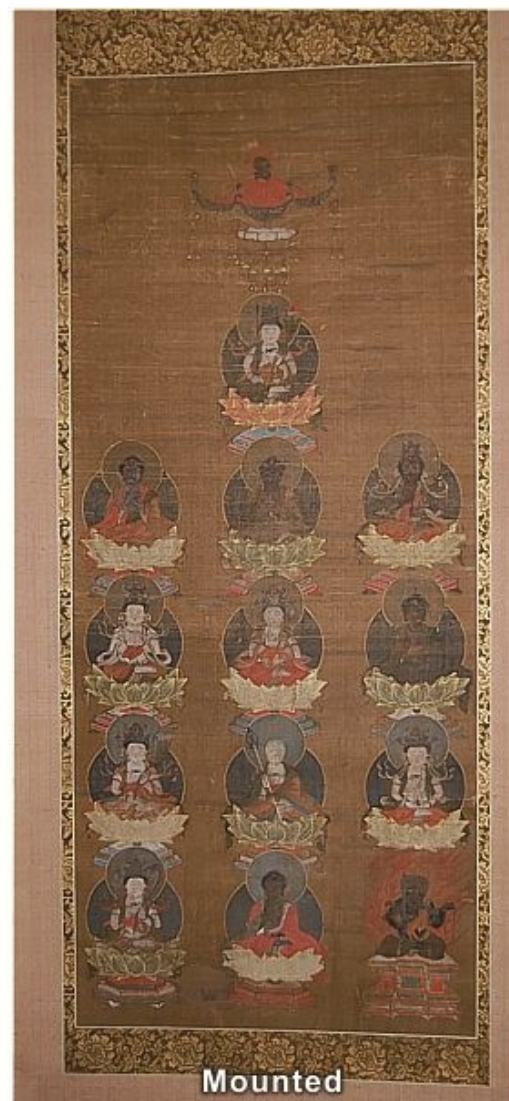


Slide Sixty-Six
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Private Collection
 Sue Cassidy Clark

Muromachi Era
 (1337 - 1573)



Slide 66. Sue Cassidy Clark, Private Collection.

Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping.

Muromachi Era (1337 – 1573).

PHOTO: Mark Schumacher



Slide Sixty-Seven
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

The Mary Griggs Burke Collection

Muromachi Era, 16th century

Framed picture; ink and color on paper

51.2 x 24.8 cm (20 1/8 x 9 3/4 in.)

Donated to the Minneapolis Institute of Art
by the Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation in 2015



Slide 67. 16th-century painting. **PHOTO:** Mary Griggs Burke Collection, donated to the Minneapolis Institute of Art by Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation in 2015. Also see Art Through a Lifetime.



Slide Sixty-Eight
Denominational Pattern
Pure Land Style, Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

AMIDA at center,
larger than the others

Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California

15th century

Raigō-zu 来迎図 (welcoming descent)
of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Hanging scroll; ink, color, and goldleaf on silk
Image: 38 1/8 x 16 3/8 in. (96.8375 x 41.5925 cm)
Mount: 69 3/4 x 25 5/8 in. (177.165 x 65.0875 cm)
Far Eastern Art Council Fund (M.2000.32)

Followers of Pure Land Buddhism believe that upon death
Amida and retinue will descend from Amida's Western
Pure Land (西方極樂浄土) to earth to welcome and escort
the devotee back to Amida's Paradise.

Three triads still intact despite the unusual positionings
(Dainichi triad, Shaka triad, and Amida triad)



Slide 68. LACMA 15th century. Pure Land Style. Standard Grouping.

Los Angeles County Museum of Art. A type of Raigō-zu 来迎図 (welcoming descent)
painting of the thirteen. Amida at center, larger than the others. **PHOTO: LACMA.**

This slide appeared earlier in the Denominational Pattern section (see Slide 50).



← Slide Sixty-Nine
Zigzag Pattern
Cartouche Style
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Nanboku-chō Era (1334-1392)
H = 38-1/2, W = 16-1/4 inches

Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art
Eugene, Oregon

← The cartouches list the
memorial day each presides over

Ten Kings of the Underworld and
Officials from the Six Boards of State

Korean Painting, 17th-19th century →
Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art



Slide 69. Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art, Oregon. Nanboku-chō era.

Cartouche Style. Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping.

PHOTO OF THIRTEEN: Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.

PHOTO OF TEN KINGS: Korean painting, Edo era, Jordan Schnitzer Museum of Art.



Slide Seventy
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

British Museum, London, England

Early Edo Era (17th century)

Ink and colors on silk
H = 98.5 cm, W = 39.8 cm

The British Museum web site gives conflicting information on the dating of this scroll. It first says the painting is from the 17th century, but then, later on, it says:

“Curator's comments: Probably by Tosa Mitsuhiro (15th century). Unattributed annotations in the specially interleaved Japanese Study Room; copy of Anderson 1886”

Heavenly Canopy
Often hung over coffin
during funerals



Slide 70. British Museum. 17th Century.

Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping.

PHOTO: britishmuseum.org. More photos [here](#).



Slide Seventy-One
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

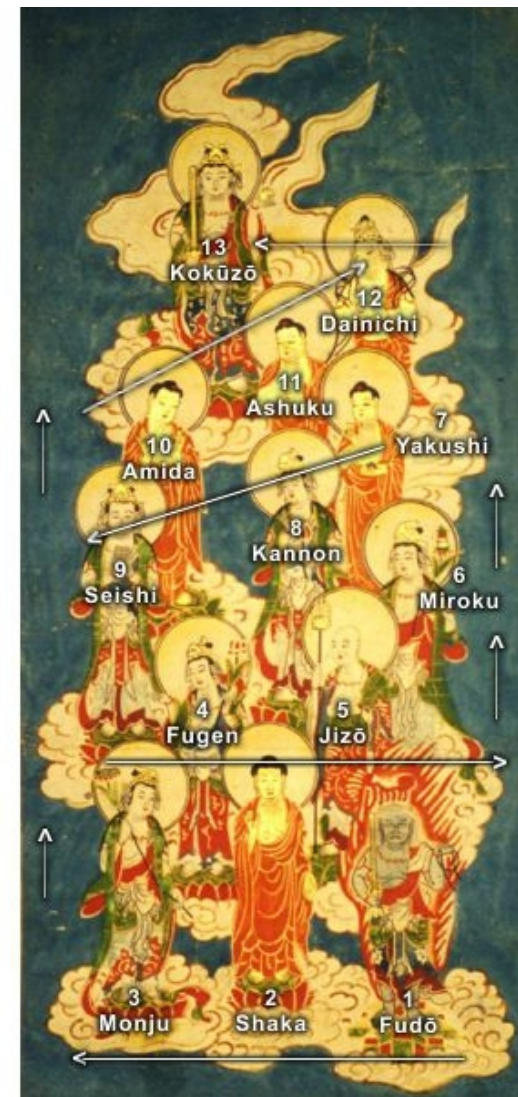
British Museum, London, England

19th Century

Hand-colored woodblock print
Mounted as hanging scroll
Beni-e 紅絵 on paper

Beni-e = black-line hand-colored woodblock print

H = 38.7 cm, W = 18.2 cm



Slide 71. British Museum. 19th century.

Zigzag Pattern. Hand-colored woodblock print, mounted as hanging scroll.

PHOTO: britishmuseum.org

Slide Seventy-Two



Zigzag Pattern Cartouche Style Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Muromachi Era (1337 - 1573)

*Hanging scroll, ink and colors on silk
Bequest of Joseph H. Heil*

Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
Accession # 74-36.13

Honji-Suijaku pairing of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities (*honji*) of Japan with the Thirteen Judges of the Underworld (*suijaku*). The cartouches list the names of the Thirteen Judges and the memorial day or year each presides over.

Miroku Bosatsu (Buddha of the Future) is portrayed as a Buddha, for Miroku is colored in white, as are all the other Buddha except Dainichi (who wears a crown; a common esoteric representation of Dainichi).

In the paintings explored thus far, Dainichi is often colored white, like the other Buddha. But not in this painting. This is most curious and deserves further study. Moreover, as one of the Five Wisdom Buddha (*gochi nyorai* 五智如来) of the Diamond World mandala, Dainichi corresponds to the color white.

SPECULATION. One plausible explanation is that both Dainichi and Kokūzō represent the element sky/space/void in five-elements theory. This affinity perhaps explains why Dainichi (#12) appears similar to (Kokūzō #13) in this painting.

Image only:
H = 100.97 cm, W = 39.7 cm

With mount:
H = 179.8 cm, W = 54.1 cm



Slide 72. Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas.
Cartouche Style, Zigzag Pattern, Standard Grouping.
Muromachi era (1337 – 1573).

PHOTO: Patricia Graham



Slide Seventy-Three
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts

Late 17th century

Ink and colors on silk
H = 31.2 cm, W = 13.4 cm

Woodblock/stencil print; ink on paper, with stenciled color

This print is very similar to the next piece from
the Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawaii

I used graphics software
to brighten the image →



Slide 73. MFA Boston. Late 17th century.

Zigzag Pattern. Woodblock/stencil print; ink on paper, with stenciled color.

PHOTO: mfa.org.



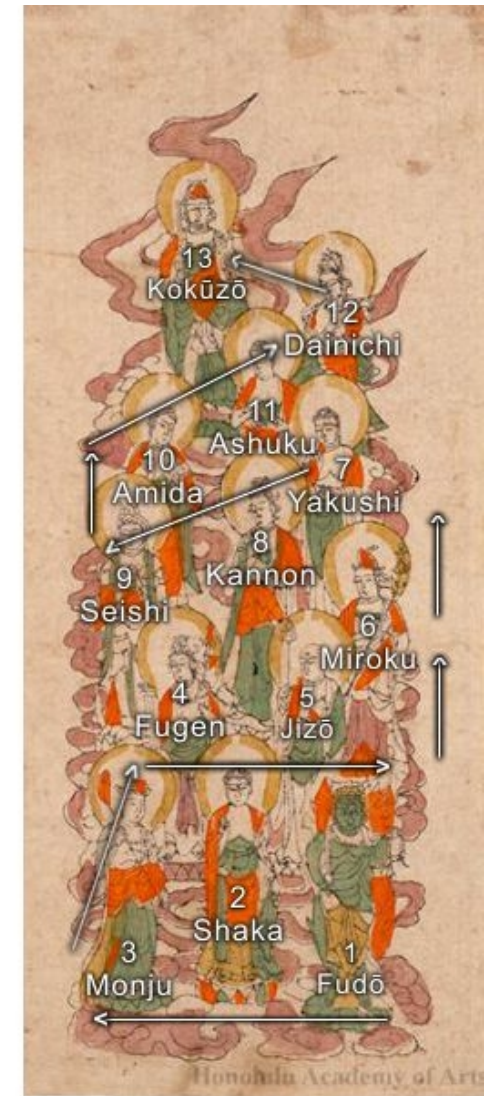
Slide Seventy-Four
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawaii
Jūsan Butsu Mandala 十三仏曼荼羅
Mandala of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Edo Era (1600-1868)

Hand-colored woodblock print
No dimensions given by museum

This print is very similar to the prior piece from the
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts



Slide 74. Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawaii. Muromachi era (1337 – 1573).

Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping. Hand-colored woodblock print.

PHOTO: honolulumuseum.org



Slide Seventy-Five Zigzag Pattern Variation Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Honolulu Museum of Art, Hawaii

Jūsan Butsu Mandala 十三仏曼荼羅

Mandala of the Thirteen Buddhist Deities

Edo Era (1600-1868)

Hand-colored woodblock print
No dimensions given by museum

Zigzag Pattern Variation = Dainichi and Ashuku have swapped positions. Why the swap? As discussed earlier in this report (in the ZIGZAG section), the most plausible reason involves the theory of five elements. In esoteric traditions, both Kokūzō and Dainichi represent the fifth (and topmost) element, which is sky/space/void. In my mind, that was the logic for putting Dainichi directly below or next to Kokūzō in the zigzag variation.

This particular print is therefore odd. The normal zigzag variation puts Dainichi directly below or next to Kokūzō. But here, in this print, the artist seems to have forgotten why Dainichi and Ashuku swapped places. In the standard zigzag, Ashuku is #11 and Dainichi is #12. In the zigzag variation, Dainichi is #11 and Ashuku is #12.



Slide 75. Honolulu Museum of Art. Muromachi era.

Zigzag Pattern. Hand-colored woodblock print of the Thirteen Buddhist deities.

PHOTO: honolulumuseum.org



Slide Seventy-Six
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Ōtsu-e 大津絵, 17th century

Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Hanging Scroll
Ink, color, and woodblock print on paper

H = 55 cm, W = 22 cm

Image only: H = 33.7 cm, W = 17.5 cm
With mount: H = 57.2 cm, W = 27.6 cm



Slide 76. Ōtsu-e, 17th century.

Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping. The Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York).

Hanging scroll; ink, color, & woodblock print on paper. **PHOTO:** metmuseum.org



Slide Seventy-Seven
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Ōtsu-e 大津絵

Modern

By Shiga-based artist Ichiren 一蓮

Ink and color on paper
No dimensions given



Slide 77. Ōtsu-e, Modern.

Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping. By Shiga-based artist Ichiren 一蓮.

PHOTO: d.hatena.ne.jp. To learn more about Ichiren, [click here](#).



Framed



Scroll mounted



Strap of Kokūzō

Slide Seventy-Eight
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping
Thirteen Buddhist Deities of Japan

Modern Art
Ōtsu-e 大津絵

Slide 78. Modern Ōtsu-e merchandise, available at the Ōtsu-e estore.

PHOTOS: [Framed Version](#) || [Scroll Version](#) || [Kokūzō Cell-Phone Strap](#)



Slide Seventy-Nine
Modern-day flyer for the Yamato Pilgrimage to Thirteen Sacred Sites for Thirteen Buddhist Deities 大和十三仏霊場, Nara.

← →
This circuit was established in 1982.

Eight Buddhist Guardians of the Zodiac (Ichidai Mamori Honzon 一代守本尊). This grouping of eight appears in the 1783 version of the *Butsuzō-zu-i* 仏像図彙, and is an Edo-era grouping that reportedly sprang from the Thirteen Buddhist Deities (for it includes eight of the thirteen). Each of the eight is associated with a specific Zodiac animal(s) and serves as the protector (guardian, patron) for all people born in that animal year. The flyer encourages people to complete the 13-site circuit, and in return, will reward the pilgrim with a nine-stamp collection of eight deities plus a ninth stamp showing all thirteen.



8 = Kannon, 13 = Kokūzō, 3 = Monju, 4 = Fugen, 9 = Seishi, 12 = Dainichi, 1 = Fudō, 10 = Amida

Slide 79. Modern-day flyer for the Yamato Pilgrimage to the Thirteen Buddhist Deities 大和十三仏霊場, Nara. This pilgrimage was established in 1982. Standard Grouping. Eight of the thirteen are also known as the Eight Buddhist Guardians of the Zodiac (*Ichidai Mamori Honzon* 一代守本尊). This group of eight appears in the 1783 version of the *Butsuzō-zu-i* 仏像図彙 (frame 70). It is an Edo-era grouping that sprang from the Thirteen Buddhist Deities. These eight Buddhist deities are associated with the twelve animals of the Chinese Zodiac calendar. Each deity is associated with a specific Zodiac animal and serves as the protector (guardian, patron) for all people born in that animal year. PHOTOS: [Flyer Image](#) /// [Site List](#) /// [Date Established](#). Also see [Slides 63~64 herein](#).



(仏さまの配置は「京都十三仏霊場本尊」の図によった。)

Slide Eighty
Modern
Zigzag Pattern
Standard Grouping

Thirteen Buddhist Deities
on the Kyoto Pilgrimage
to the Thirteen 京都十三佛霊場会

Ofuda 御札 (votive slip)



Slide 80. Modern.

Kyoto Pilgrimage to Thirteen Buddhist Deities 京都十三佛霊場会 (see here).

Zigzag Pattern. Standard Grouping. PHOTO: [This J-site.](#)



Slide 81. Kakuon-ji Temple 覚園寺, Kamakura.

Kakuon-ji Temple is the 11th site on the Kamakura Pilgrimage to the Thirteen Buddhist Deities. Inside the compound, there is a cave with stone carvings of the thirteen (date unknown; probably 20th century).

PHOTO by Schumacher. To learn more about this pilgrimage, see [this Japanese site](#).

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Slide 83. MANTRAS FOR ALL THIRTEEN

Source: <http://ameblo.jp/mangetsusai-anex/entry-111148505960.html>

1. 初七日 不動明王 正月十六日 酉年守護
のうまくさんまんだ ばざらだん せんだん まかろしゃだ そわたや うんたらたかんまん
2. 二七日 釈迦如来 二月二十九日
のうまくさんまんだ ぼだなん ばく
3. 三七日 文殊菩薩 三月二十五日 卯年守護
おん あらはしゃのう
4. 四七日 普賢菩薩 四月十四日 辰巳年守護
おん さんまや さとばん
5. 五七日 地藏菩薩 五月二十四日
おん かかか びさんまえい そわか
6. 六七日 弥勒菩薩 六月十五日
おん ばいたれいや そわか
7. 四十九日 薬師如来 七月八日
おん ころころ せんだり まとうぎ そわか
8. 百か日 観世音菩薩 八月十八日
おん あろりきや そわか
9. 一周忌 勢至菩薩 九月二十三日 午年守護
おん さん ざん さく そわか
10. 三回忌 阿弥陀如来 十月十五日 戌亥年守護
おん あみりた ていぜい からうん
11. 七回忌 阿闍如来 十一月十五日
おん あきしゅびや うん
12. 十三回忌 大日如来 十一月二十八日 未申年守護
おん あびらうんけん ばざらだどばん
13. 三十三回忌 虚空蔵菩薩 十二月十三日 丑寅年守護
のうぼう あかしゃ ぎやらばや おん ありきやまりぼり そわか

Slide 83. MERITS OF WORSHIPPING THE THIRTEEN

Source: <http://www.chisan.or.jp/chisanha/answer/>

1. 初七日忌 - 不動明王
功德-煩惱を焼き尽くし、迷いを断ち切り、信心を定めて強い力で導いてくれます
2. 二七日忌 - 釈迦如来
功德-説法によって煩惱や邪見（誤った信仰や考え方）を破り、正しい信仰に導いてくれます
3. 三七日忌 - 文殊菩薩
功德-分けへだてする愚かさを断ち、物事を正しく判断する智慧を授けてくれます
4. 四七日忌 - 普賢菩薩
功德-悟りを求める清らかな心、そして悟りをめざした実践行に導いてくれます
5. 五七日忌 - 地藏菩薩
功德-あらゆるものの苦しみをうけとめ、その苦しみに負けない力を授けてくれます
6. 六七日忌 - 弥勒菩薩
功德-すべてのものに対する慈しみの心を授けてくれます
7. 七七日忌 - 薬師如来
功德-心身の病苦を除き、苦しみや恐れを除いてくれます
8. 百日忌 - 観音菩薩
功德-世の中を広く観察し、すべての苦しみを除く、深い思いやりの心を授けてくれます
9. 一周忌 - 勢至菩薩
功德-我欲、執着を滅し、とらわれを除く心を授けてくれます
10. 三回忌 - 阿弥陀如来
功德-生死を離れた、安らかなる心を授けてくれます
11. 七回忌 - 阿闍如来
功德-何ごとにも揺らがない心と、怒りを離れた安らかなる心を授けてくれます
12. 十三回忌 - 大日如来
功德-生命の尊さを知らしめ、生まれながらにそなえている自身の清らかな心に気づかせてくれます
13. 三十三回忌 - 虚空蔵菩薩
功德-福德と智慧を授け、生命の根源に気づかせてくれます



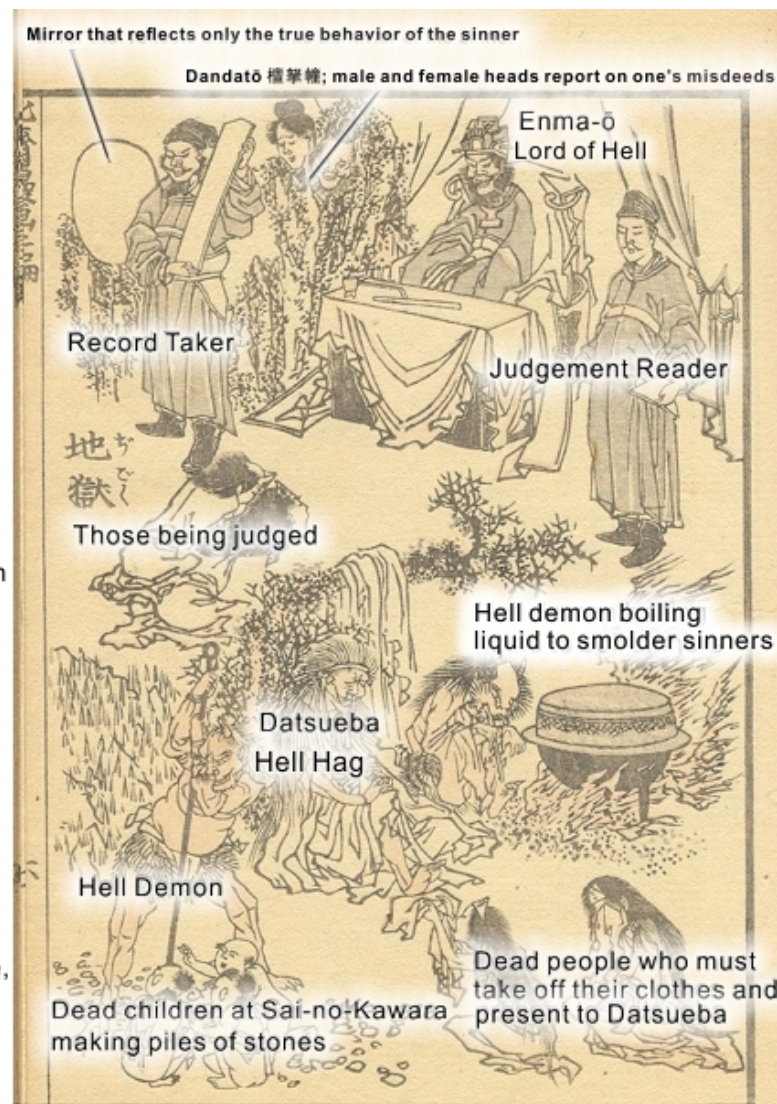
BONUS SLIDE

This playful depiction of hell cosmology from Japan's Edo era comes from Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849), one of Japan's most beloved artists.

From the Hokusai Manga 北斎漫画. The first volume in this 15-volume set was published in 1814 -- the final three volumes were published posthumously. This sketch comes from volume two.

Dandatō 檀拏檀. Two heads assist the kings during the trials of the deceased. The male head, known as Kaguhana 嗅鼻 (nose that sniffs misdeeds), is shown with mouth open, for he is reporting the misdeeds of the deceased. The female head, known as Mirume 視目 (eyes that see hidden faults), is often shown with mouth closed. The term *Mirume Kaguhana* is also a Japanese expression meaning "town gossip" or "loudmouthed busybody" of the neighborhood (aka 世間のうるさい耳目).

Old-woman hag Datsueba 奪衣婆 is often paired with an old-man named Ken'eō 懸衣翁. Datsueba forces the sinners to take off their clothes, and the old-man Ken'eō hangs these clothes on a riverside branch that bends to reflect the gravity of the sins. Various levels of punishment are performed even at this early stage. For those who steal, for example, Datsueba breaks their fingers, and together with her old-man consort, she ties the head of the sinner to the sinner's feet.



Mirror that reflects only the true behavior of the sinner

Dandatō 檀拏檀; male and female heads report on one's misdeeds

Enma-ō
Lord of Hell

Record Taker

Judgement Reader

Those being judged

Hell demon boiling liquid to smolder sinners

Datsueba
Hell Hag

Hell Demon

Dead children at Sai-no-Kawara making piles of stones

Dead people who must take off their clothes and present to Datsueba

Bonus Slide. By Katsushika Hokusai 葛飾北斎 (1760-1849). This woodblock print originates from an *Ehon* 絵本 (Old Illustrated Japanese Books). The prints in these books are woodblock prints, similar to separately published Japanese prints called *Ukiyo-e* 浮世絵 (pictures of the non-eternal world). *Ehon* books are often stitched in accordion-folded pages. One of the most famous Japanese artists of *Ehon* and *Ukiyo-e* prints is Katsushika Hokusai. This print originates from his *Hokusai Manga* (Hokusai's Sketches), a collection of sketches of various subjects published from 1814 onward. For more on Japanese hell cosmology, the legends of *Sai no Kawara* 賽の河原 (riverbed in the netherworld), Datsueba, and other hellish mythology, visit the [A-to-Z Photo Dictionary of Japanese Religious Art](#). ■ END OF VISUAL GUIDE ■