

## About Buddha Image

Hello, this is Kaneko, your navigator.

This is a continuation of yesterday's talk, clarifying questions about Buddhist statues.

In yesterday's talk, the Buddhist universe is divided into two major realms, the "Buddhist Realm" and the "Six Realms".

The higher "Buddhist world" includes "Nyorai" and "Bodhisattvas," while the lower "Six Realms" are the six worlds where humans reincarnate and are reborn after death: the Way of Heaven, the Way of Humanity, the Way of Shura, the Way of Damnation, the Way of the Hungry Demons, and the Way of Hell.

If you understand this worldview and the composition of God and Buddha, you can "distinguish the Buddha images". But again, this is not the worldview that the founder of Buddhism, Shakyamuni Buddha, originally intended.

The "Way of Buddha" can be divided into four groups:

They are: 1) the Buddha, 2) the Bodhisattvas, 3) the Myo-ohs, and 4) the heavenly bodies.

Since I discussed the Buddha and Bodhisattvas yesterday, I will explain Myoo and **Tenbu**.

Myôô is an incarnation of Nyorai, a Buddha image unique to esoteric Buddhism. He has a frightening, angry expression on his face in order to force anti-Buddhist people to follow him.

Here, esoteric Buddhism is the name for a group within the Buddhist sects, and is considered the secret teachings of Buddhism. This applies to the Shingon and Tendai sects, which advocate the living and becoming a Buddha rather than the afterlife.

Tenbu, written as "heavenly part," means "God" in Sanskrit, and there are said to

be more than 200 different kinds of gods from Brahmanism, Hinduism, and other pagan religions that have been incorporated into Buddhism. The heavenly part is also called heaven for short.

Let me explain this a little more clearly.

After the founder of Buddhism, Sakyamuni Buddha, was regarded as a god and was called Nyorai (如来), various interpretations were added, and other gods, in other words, Nyorai appeared.

The interpretation of Nyorai was further expanded to include Bodhisattvas, and with the emergence of Esoteric Buddhism, Myo-o, and the gods indigenous to India changed their forms and became the heavenly deities.

In Buddhism, Nyorai is the most important Buddha, so the Myoo and Tenbu, which were added later, are variations of Nyorai and are said to be guardian deities. It is thought that they encompassed the gods indigenous to India as protective deities of Buddhism.

They felt a big gap between themselves and Nyorai Buddha, so they created gods that were more familiar to themselves one after another.

Let us look at this in more detail.

There are three types of Nyorai: Shakyamuni Nyorai, the basis of Buddhism; Amida Nyorai, who leads to the Pure Land; Yakushi Nyorai, who heals the sick; and Dainichi Nyorai, the absolute being in esoteric Buddhism.

Originally, only those who practiced Buddhism could attain enlightenment, but around the 1st century B.C., Mahayana Buddhism was born in an effort to "save as many people as possible," and a number of tathagatas were conceived in addition

to the Sakyamuni Buddha. Including Vairochana Buddha, Maitreya Buddha, and Tathagata Buddha.

The representative of the Bodhisattvas is Kannon (Goddess of Mercy), who has a total of 33 forms, including the eleven-faced Kannon, who watches over all people with her eleven faces, and the thousand-armed, thousand-eyed Kannon, who gazes with a thousand eyes and saves with a thousand hands.

There are also "Maitreya Bodhisattva," the future Buddha who saves people on behalf of Buddha, "Jizo Bodhisattva," who travels the six roads to save people from suffering, "Monju Bodhisattva," and "Fugen Bodhisattva" are Bodhisattvas that gently accompany people.

The basic Myoo are "Fudo Myoo", "Vajrayaksa Myoo", and the other five great Myoo.

Since they are Buddhist images unique to esoteric Buddhism, Fudo Myoo is considered to be an incarnation of Dainichi Nyorai, the supreme deity of esoteric Buddhism. There are also statues such as "Aizenmyoo," which purifies lust into enlightenment, and others that follow the esoteric teaching that vexations are not obstacles to enlightenment, but are the fringes of enlightenment.

The heavenly section has more than 200 statues, including "Teishakuten," "Brahma," "Kichijoten," "Bishamonten," "Kongorikishi," and "Ashura.

It would be impossible to introduce them all, but Buddhism has grown over its long history while incorporating indigenous deities, and many Buddhist statues have been created as objects of prayer and symbols. I feel that the world of Buddhism is no less than that of Disneyland. I hope that your interest in and worship of Buddha images that you feel familiar with will lead you to walk the path of Buddhism.

The Buddhist sermon series was given by Hirokazu Kaneko . Translation and voice in English by Hirokazu Kosaka.

