

# BUDDHISM IN EAST ASIA



## JAPAN, KOREA and beyond

p. 125-203 BUDDHIST ART

## BUDDHISM\_KOREA AND JAPAN

Korea and Japan both inherited Buddhism from China.

This gives us some insight into the types of Buddhism entering Korea and Japan. We looked at China last week.

Buddhism entered Korea in the 4<sup>th</sup> century but it was nearly two centuries later when it got to Japan.

In addition to images of the Buddha, wooden architecture and sectarian divisions, Korea and Japan inherited a written language and Confucian social system from China.

## BUDDHISM\_KOREA AND JAPAN

Known as **Shinto in Japan**, shamanism with its beliefs in astral divinities, nature spirits and the power of wandering ghosts or spirits of the dead influenced Buddhism in Japan.

The second millennium featured the emergence and growth of the meditative schools of Chan and Zen.



In Korea, Son Buddhism, build on local traditions, remains Korea's most successful form of Buddhism.



In these sculptures we see a youthful sturdy Buddha with a high degree of abstraction as was typical of Korean art. These, from the 6<sup>th</sup> century were mass produced and once brightly colored.

## BUDDHISM\_KOREA

Korea from the 1<sup>st</sup> century to 668 is called the Three Kingdoms period.

It was during this period Buddhism developed.

The primary goal of Three Kingdoms period Buddhist art was to express spirituality rather than physical presence.

The more abstract Korean images capture a greater transcendent, spiritual character than Chinese figures.

You may remember this statue from last week—  
Guanyin, bodhisattva of  
mercy, 12<sup>th</sup> century,  
China.  
Note the similarities.



*Buddha*, Korea, early 7<sup>th</sup> century,  
Three Kingdoms period.



## BUDDHISM\_KOREA

The most distinctive images is a more abstract, seated, contemplative bodhisattva, with one leg crossed over the other and fingers at the cheek were very popular.

Thought to be Maitreya, awaiting his eventual rebirth to save the world.

Remember him from weeks previously?

Also, when I use the word “abstract” here it means the figure is not as realistic or naturalistic as other images we’ve seen. Can you see that the hair and robes seem stylized and less realistic?



Buddha, Korea, 14<sup>th</sup> century bronze

## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_SILLA

Excavations of the Silla capital from around 668-935, reveal some of the splendor that was once one of East Asia's three greatest cities.

Anapchi Pond, is a man-made lake surrounded by pavilions and temples. More than 15,000 Buddhist objects have been recovered.

Buddha, Silla Dynasty, MET

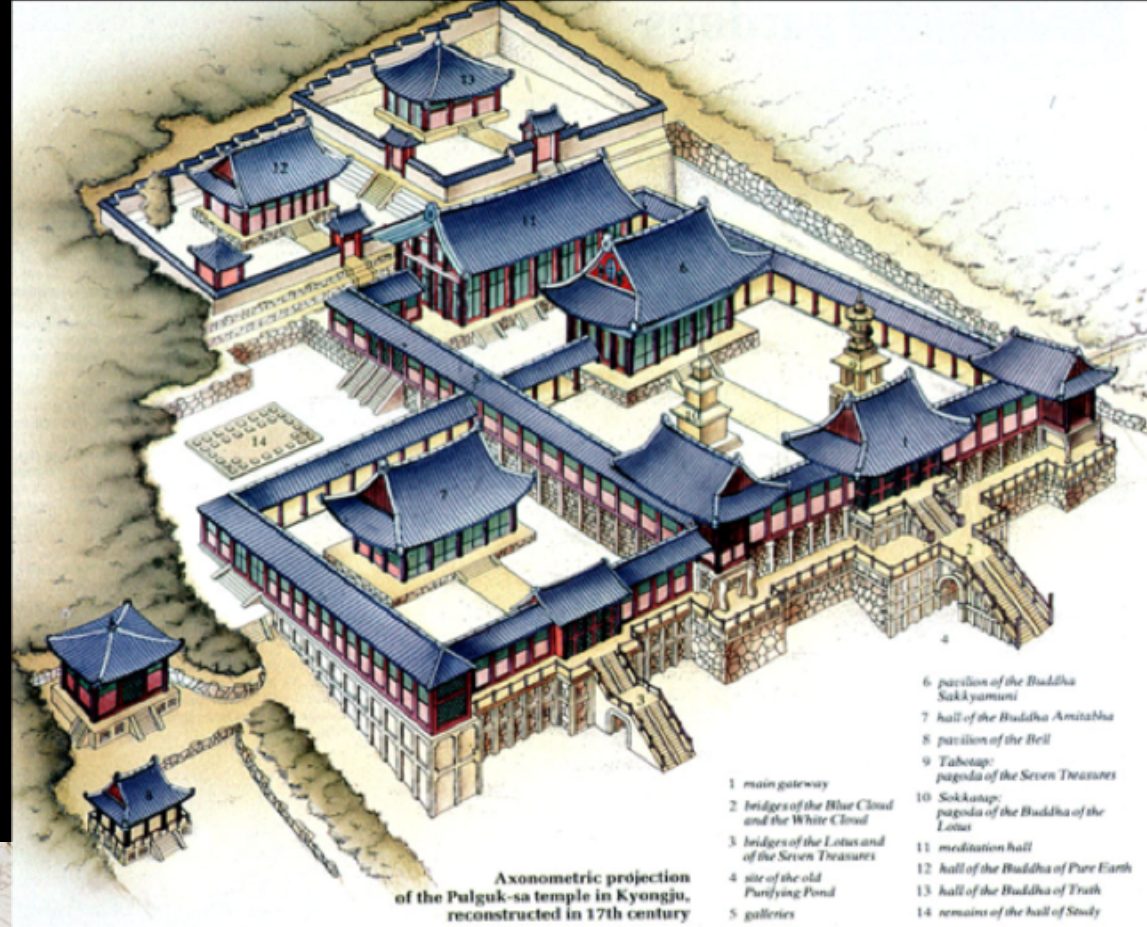




## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_SILLA

The Korean wooden temple repeats the basic forms of the Chinese sources.

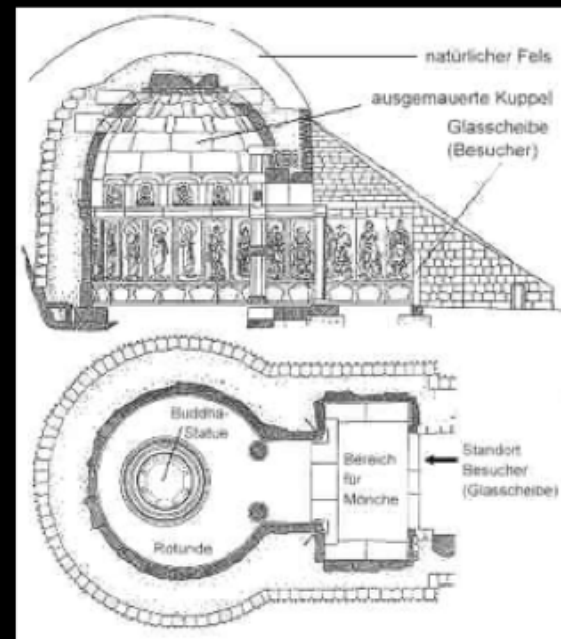
As with all of Korea's early building, these were damaged by Mongol attacks. They are being rebuilt.



Korean Temple Pulguksa

## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_SILLA

Not far from Pulguksa is a small monument of cut stones, a replica of traditional Buddhist rock-cut cave shrines. Begun in 751 it took 25 years to complete. The shrine consists of various set of guardians, including four lokapalas, arhats, monks, bodhisattvas (a rare 11 headed Avalokiteshvara), and various other figures all arranged around a central Buddha figure.



The colossal granite Buddha gazes east across the valley.  
*Shakyamuni Buddha, Sokkuram, Korea*



## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_SILLA

Other colossal Buddha's, like this one at Sinheungsa, were built at this time period as part of a Zen Temple complex.





## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_KORYO

### The Koryo Dynasty (918-1392)

As political and religious problems marked the latter years of the Silla Dynasty, several centuries of imperial control and revival of Buddhist fortunes occurred during the Koryo Dynasty.

By 1200, a particularly Korean creation, known as **Son Buddhism**, combined aspects of the traditional discipline, meditation and study of sutras to form a Korean system, unique in Asian Buddhism that is still flourishing today.



The Korean word for Ch'an or Zen is Son.  
So, we are talking about an equivalent of the directions we saw in China.

## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_KORYO

Courtly Patronage of Koryo  
Buddhism resulted in refinement  
and elegance.

Unfortunately few examples exist.

However, this silk painting depicts  
Amitabha, his bodhisattvas and  
attendants. (typical of this time)

Delicate figures with haloes, the  
simple forms indicate the Korean  
style.

*Amitabha and Eight Great  
Bodhisattvas, 14<sup>th</sup> century, silk and gold  
on silk.*





## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_CHOSON

### The Choson Dynasty (1392-1910)

Later Korean Buddhist Art, especially after the Japanese invasion (16<sup>th</sup> century), became identified with 'folk art' tradition.

Hastened by the revival of Confucianism and anti-Buddhist courts, Buddhist art captured traditional, shamanistic traditions.

*The artwork is dramatic, colorful, with variety and imagination.*



## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_CHOSON

This later work reflects the Shamanistic culture

### Ten Kings of Hell.

What is awaiting those who fail to follow the path of salvation.

#### *King of the Hell of Darkness*

*This Korean version depicts the king dressed as a Confucian bureaucrat, surrounded by attendants. They are separated from the scene below which consists of gruesome tortures.*

*See this better in your book.*



*In this painting we see the King, largest in the center deciding the fates of the people who have been relegated to the lower realm, hell.*

## BUDDHISM\_AFTER DEATH

The theme transforms the Indian Buddhist view of judgment after death into a typically Chinese bureaucratic process.

Before being permitted to transmigrate into the next life, a soul is tried by a different king each week for seven weeks; it is sent to the eighth king on the hundredth day, to the ninth after a year, and to the tenth the third year after death.

Judgement of a person after death.





## BUDDHISM\_KOREA\_CHINA

Chinese Buddhists believed that after someone died, the Ten Kings of Hell would look at the good and bad deeds he had done in his life, and decide whether he should be reborn to a better life or a worse one.



*If you are aware of Medieval Christian images of heaven and Hell, you may notice some similarities here.*

*The painting above is by Bosch.*

## BUDDHISM\_JAPAN

Buddhism entered Japan as early as 535 from Korea, at a time when the Japanese were suffering from some of the same difficulties the Chinese had experienced a few centuries earlier, during the fall of the Han Dynasty.

Although the Japanese borrowed Chinese traditions, they also had different orientations and different needs.

Shinto deities and practices were appropriated into Buddhist ritual.

Japanese Buddhist art shifted with the intentions of various rulers...from focus on Jataka Tales to the Lotus Sutra to transcendent Buddha to earthly ones.



Illustrated legends of Kitano Tenjin Shrine,  
A set of 500 scrolls, 13<sup>th</sup> century.



## BUDDHISM\_JAPAN

By the end of Shotoku's death, over 40 Buddhist temples had been built in Japan.

The best known remains are Horyuji, outside the city of Nara.

Most of the Buddhism that Prince Shotoku (who brought Buddhism to Korea) supported derived from the Lotus Sutra but so completely did Buddhism become associated with the native Shinto that the two appeared at times to have merged.

Go to the next lecture to continue Japan and Southeast Asia.



Above: Dazaifu shrine with Shinto elements and Buddhist ones.

Below: a Shinto Torii, found as gates in Shinto shrines, suggests entering a sacred world.

