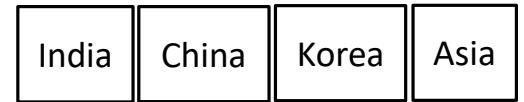


New Duties for Old Deities

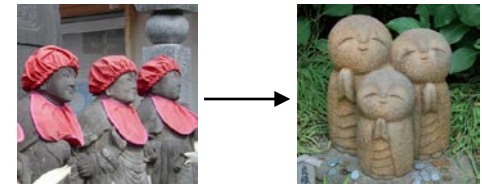
① Importation
(fierce to gentle)



② Domestication
(fierce to gentle)



③ Cutification
(gentle to cute)



④ Commercialization
(for all facets of life)



THE EVER-CHANGING FACE OF JAPAN'S RELIGIOUS LANDSCAPE
THE DOMESTICATION, CUTIFICATION, AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF RELIGIOUS ICONS

ABSTRACT

THE PANTHEON OF GODS in Japan continues to grow in modern times, just as it did in bygone centuries. In the last five decades, Japan's religious institutions and religious-goods industry have devised new roles and new iconography for age-old Buddhist divinities. Some of the newer forms are derived from older manifestations, but some are entirely new. This story focuses on two of Japan's most beloved saviors – Jizō and Kannon – and the new “modern” roles they play in memorial services for miscarried, stillborn and aborted children; in staving off dementia in the elderly; in granting sudden and painless death to senior citizens who don't want to burden their families or don't want to die from a long unpleasant illness; and in providing dedicatory services for deceased pets. The central concern of these new roles is death. This aligns well with the economic base of Japanese Buddhism, which for centuries has revolved around the provision of mortuary services. More and more temples are catering to modern social concerns. By introducing old gods in new formats to address changing social needs, funerary Buddhism has remained an integral part of Japan's contemporary religious landscape.

ANOTHER FOCUS OF THIS LECTURE is to highlight the accelerating speed at which Japan is domesticating and cutifying its myriad deities and ritualistic landscape. Commercial sales of religious goods by the secular retail sector are also expanding into all new product lines.

Historical Precedents, Non-Denominational Worship, Overlapping Functions. This is a story about continuity (old) and change (new). Jizō and Kannon were introduced to Japan from mainland Asia by at least the Nara period (710-794). Both appear in many different forms to alleviate the suffering of the living and the dead. The two share many overlapping functions, e.g., both protect the Six Realms of Karmic Rebirth (Six Jizō, Six Kannon) and both are patrons of motherhood and children (Koyasu Jizō, Koyasu Kannon). Their worship is widespread and embraced by nearly all schools of Buddhism and folk religion. They are also the two main attendants to Amida, the central Buddha of Japan's Pure Land school (among the largest denominations in Japan today). Jizō and Kannon come in countless forms – from the Cough-Stopping and Splinter-Removing Jizō to the Cloth-Ripping and One-Prayer Kannon. Many of these forms originated in the last five centuries and are unique to Japan. It is important to note that both Jizō and Kannon straddle the divide between the Buddhist and Shinto camps – an “artificial” divide that was created by the Japanese government when it forcibly separated the two camps in the Meiji period (1868-1912). A number of new forms have appeared in the last fifty years, as explored below.

In Burma (Myanmar) in 2015, three co-owners of a bar created a promotional advert of Buddha wearing headphones. They were jailed with three-year terms by the right-wing pro-Buddhist Burma government – “sacrilege sacrilege” screamed the government.

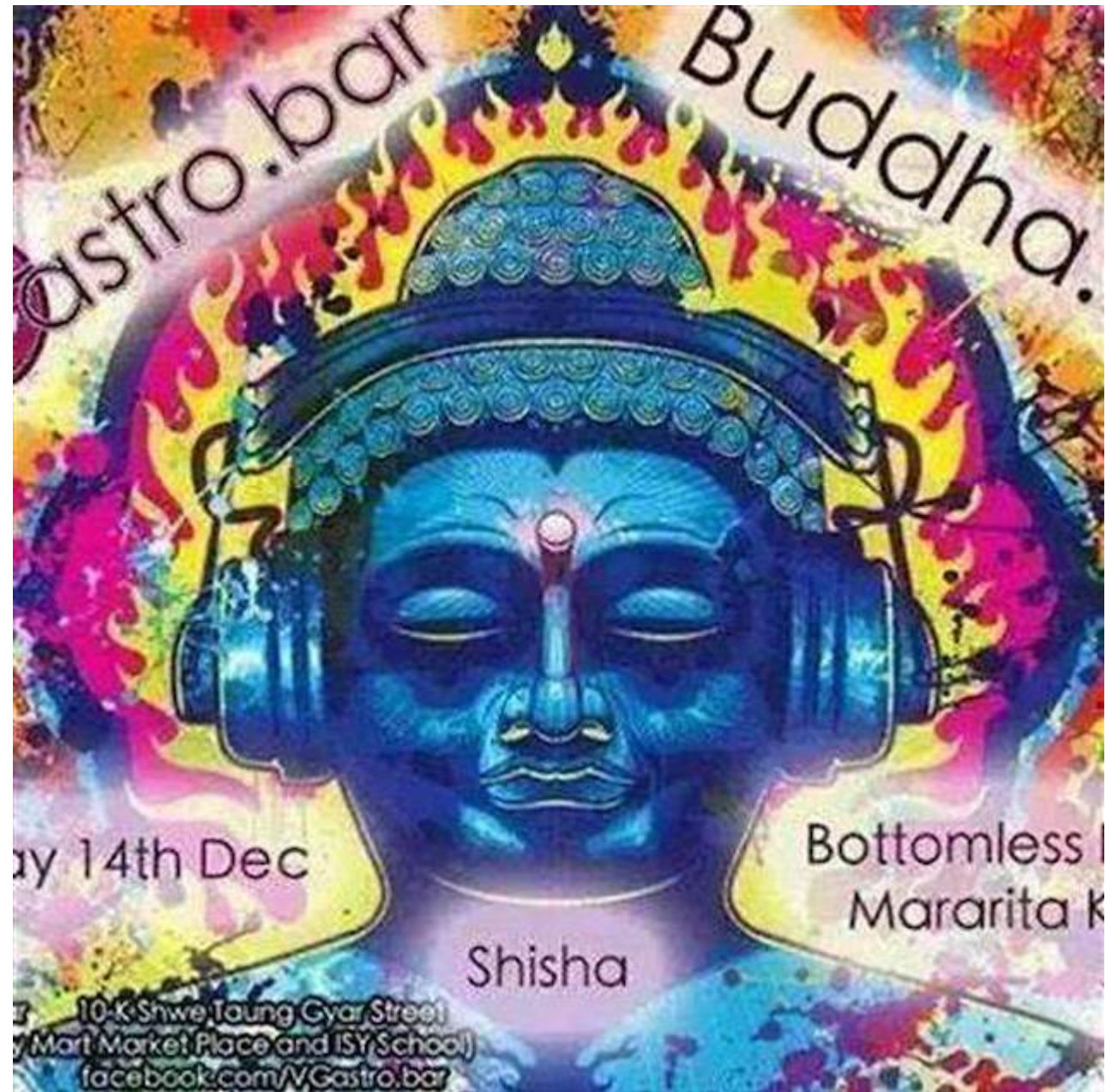
In Japan, however, using Buddhist icons for commercial purposes is normal.

In Japan you can buy Buddha soap, Buddha stick-on notes, Buddha beer, and candy Buddha cigarettes.

Religion is not an issue in Japan. Religion is commercial here, not political. For centuries, the main sources of income for Buddhist temples were funerals & death management. That is rapidly changing in modern times. New concerns (e.g., Alzheimer's, abortion, prolonged illness, incontinence, loss of beloved pets) are being addressed by temples & shrines, both to tackle modern social issues and to remain economically viable. Japan's religious institutions are both religious and commercial – and no one in Japan is upset. Why not? Could companies from Christian nations use images of Jesus Christ to sell candy or alcohol or soap and get away with it, with no negative feedback or outrage?



<https://gawker.com/three-jailed-in-myanmar-for-posting-image-of-a-buddha-w-1692317287>



JAPANESE RELIGIOUS GOODS: MODERN COMMERCIAL GOODS IN JAPAN



Big Buddha
Nose Shit Candy



Big Buddha
Cookies



Big Buddha
Steamed Buns



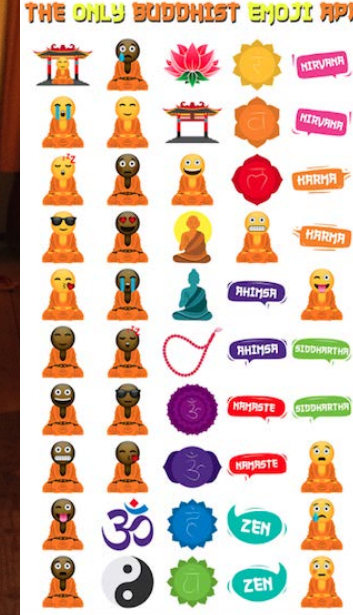
Big Buddha
Purin Custard



Big Buddha
Steamed Buns



Face-Washing
Jizō Soap Stone



Big
Buddha
Beer



Big Buddha
Beer

CONTEMPORARY JAPANESE RELIGIOUS GOODS, 3D ART, MIXED REALITY, BEATBOXING



Tokyo temple mixes Buddhism with beatboxing to attract younger, more diverse crowd

www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/08/23/national/buddhism-meets-beatboxing-at-tokyo-temple/



Train In Japan Decorated With Thousand-Armed Kannon Limbs Hanging From Carriage Ceiling

<https://designyourrust.com/2019/07/train-in-japan-decorated-with-thousand-armed-kannon-limbs-hanging-from-carriage-ceiling/>

The special remodeling of a single-carriage train marks the completion of restoration work at the Kannon Hall at [Ninnaji Temple](#), a UNESCO World Heritage site that is now open to the public.



京都・建仁寺 MRで風神雷神が動き出す。
In partnership with the Kyoto National Museum, hakuholdo-VRAR's "MR Museum in Kyoto" applies a mixed reality experience to Kennin-ji's sacred artwork.
<https://news.microsoft.com/apac/features/mixed-reality-museum-kyoto-unique-insight-centuries-old-japanese-artwork/> and <https://video.mainichi.jp/detail/video/5737738071001>



CHINA NEWS. Digital caves are a revelation for tourists - and offer respite for ancient historical sites. Jane O'Brien explores how 3D recreations can be even better. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-20802947>

WHY IS JAPAN SO “DOWN TO EARTH” WITH RELIGION?

A story about continuity (old) and change (new)

OLDEN TIMES

1. Late to the party on mainland Asia. Japan imported its writing system, architectural techniques, metal-work techniques, sculpture, philosophies including Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Chinese Yin-Yang mysticism, Hinduism, the rituals and spells of Esoteric (Tantric) Buddhism, and then combined all that with Kami-Buddha combinatory worship, pre-Buddhist mountain worship, Kannabi Shinkō 神奈備信仰 (the idea that mountains are the home of the dead and of agricultural spirits), shamanistic beliefs, animism, and ascetic practices.
2. Longstanding tradition of “combinatory” religious belief in Japan, but with some hiccups along the way.
3. Longstanding tradition of adopting foreign deities and then transforming the attributes and functions of those deities to make them more “Japan-like.”
4. Longstanding tradition of subduing and taming foreign gods, and converting / domesticating them into the Japanese pantheon.

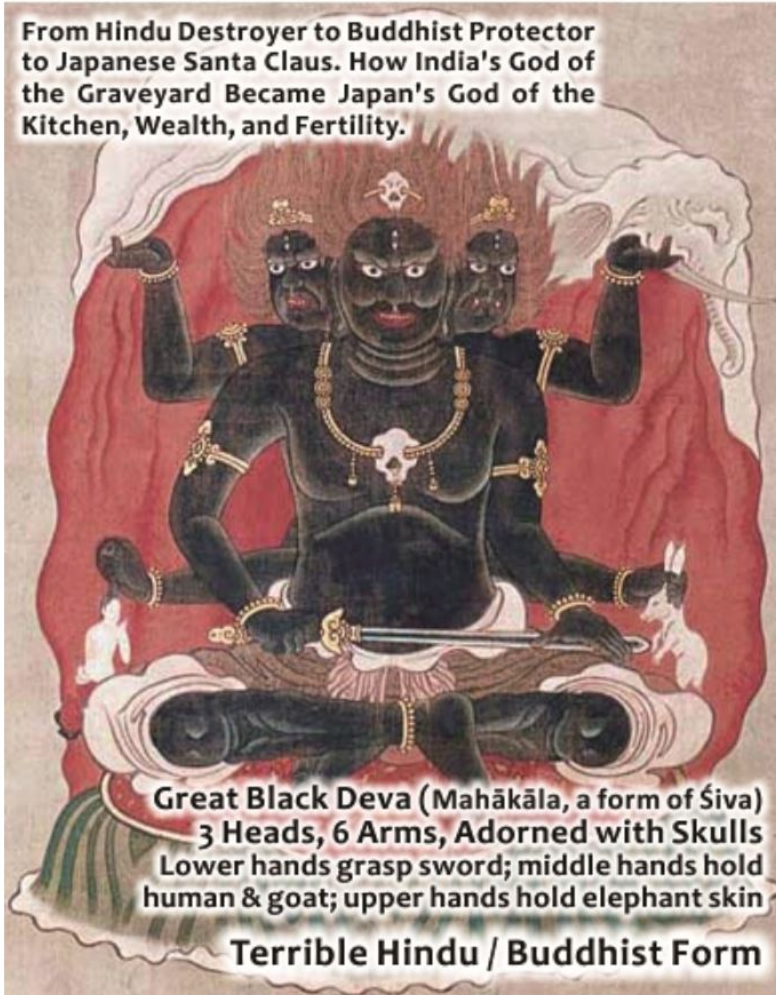
MODERN TIMES

1. Since the Edo era (1615-1867), the introduction of the printing press, the introduction of Western science, and modernization, the longstanding traditions of olden times have increasingly gained steam – today changes are occurring at incredible and increasing speeds. Japan’s historical penchant for “importing” foreign deities and concepts and adopting them to Japan’s own needs continues unabated – at a faster speed of transmission nationwide.
2. Accelerated transformation of the gods and their attributes.
3. Accelerated transformation of the gods and their duties.
4. Accelerated **domestication** of foreign and local gods.
5. Accelerated **cutification and commercialization** of the gods.
6. To remain viable, temples and shrines must adapt to the times.
7. To remain viable, temples and shrines must adapt to changing social needs.

Starting with the Edo era (1615-1867), the importance of secular art has forever surpassed that of religious art. Buddhist sculpture continued in a downward spiral, and the influence of institutionalized Buddhism plummeted.

SUBDUING & TAMING & DOMESTICATING FOREIGN DEITIES

From Hindu Destroyer to Buddhist Protector to Japanese Santa Claus. How India's God of the Graveyard Became Japan's God of the Kitchen, Wealth, and Fertility.



Great Black Deva (Mahākāla, a form of Śiva)
 3 Heads, 6 Arms, Adorned with Skulls
 Lower hands grasp sword; middle hands hold human & goat; upper hands hold elephant skin

Terrible Hindu / Buddhist Form

Slide Two -- Concepts, Keywords, About the Author



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Condensed Visual Classroom Guide
 Daikokuten Iconography in Japan



Ten = Deva

Dai = Great

In = Stamp

Koku = Black

Daikokuten Stamp 大黒天印

utterly transformed and domesticated →



Cloth Hat

Magic Mallet

Treasure Sack

Jovial Potbellied Dwarf

Peasant Garb

Wish Granting Jewel

Rice Bales (i.e., wealth)

Benign Japanese "Santa" Form

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Slide 2. Concepts, Keywords, About the Author. Over the centuries, Daikokuten's demonic Hindu / Buddhist origins & forms – his “dark side,” his Śiva side – have been largely stripped away & forgotten in Japan. This guide attempts to retrace his mysterious transformation from demonic to benign. Various forms of Śiva were “imported” into Japan starting in the early 9th century. These forms will be examined herein. Some of the most important are: ■ Mahākāla. Sanskrit meaning “Great Time” or “Great Black.” A “terrible form” of Śiva and alter ego of the benign Daikokuten. Transliterated 摩訶迦羅. Pronounced “Makakara” in Japan. Translated 大黒天 / 大黒神 / 大黒天神, meaning “Great Black Deity.” Pronounced “Daikokuten / Daikokushin / Daikoku



Slide Six -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan

OLDEST EXTANT ARTWORK OF ŚIVA (aka MAHĒŚVARA, MAHĀKĀLA, DAIKOKUTEN)



Slide 6. Japan's Santa-like Daikokuten is a benign and utterly domesticated form of Hindu god Śiva. One of India's "holy trinity" (creator / preserver / destroyer), Śiva presides over an endless

Slide Seventeen -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan
OLDEST EXTANT STATUES • STANDING • HUMAN-LIKE • BENIGN FORM

Date estimates for oldest statue (fig. 1) range from the mid 10th C. to late 12th C.



①
Oldest Standing Statue
 11th - 12th C.
 Kanzeon-ji Temple 観世音寺, Dazaifu, Fukuoka. Late Heian. H = 171.8 cm. ICP. Wood (cinnamon 楠木). Ichiboku Zukuri 一木造 (single-block carving). Oldest icon of standing Daikoku. Stern face. Wears hakama & shoes.



②
Okuninushi
 12th C.
 Miwa Shrine 大神神社, Sakurai, Nara. Late Heian. Wood. No size given. Said to depict Okuninushi. Stern face. Wears eboshi, hakama, and sandals.



③
 13th C.
 Kōfuku-ji Temple 興福寺, Nara. Kamakura era. H = 93.8 cm. Wood. Stern face. Wears eboshi, hakama, kariginu, and boots.



④
 13th C.
 Matsunō Dera 松尾寺, Yamato Kōriyama, Nara. Kamakura era. H = 82 cm. Wood. Stern face. Wears eboshi, hakama, kariginu, and boots.

Does cap symbol have a special meaning?



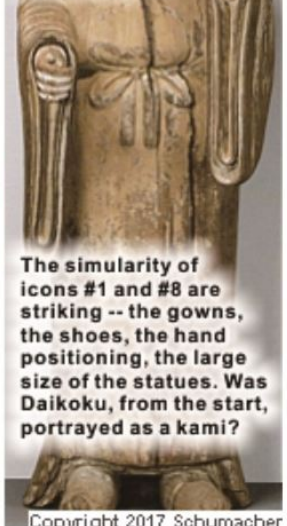
⑤
 1301 CE
 Hiezan Enryakuji Temple 比叡山延暦寺, Ōtsu (near Kyoto). 1301 CE. H = 76 cm. ICP. Painted Wood (cypress 檜). Yosegi Zukuri 寄木造り (joined-block carving). Stoic face. Wears eboshi, hakama, and kariginu. Barefoot.



⑥
 1276 CE
 Saidaiji Temple 西大寺, Nara. 1276 CE. H = 82.7 cm. Wood. Made by Zenshun 善春. Stoic face. Wears eboshi, hakama, kariginu, & sandals.



⑦
 Toji Temple 東寺, Kyoto Kamakura era, Shingon
 ⑧
 Male Kami 男神像
 11th C., H = 212 cm
 Izusan Shrine 伊豆山神社
 Shizuoka



The similarity of icons #1 and #8 are striking -- the gowns, the shoes, the hand positioning, the large size of the statues. Was Daikoku, from the start, portrayed as a kami?
 Copyright 2017 Schumacher

Slide Twenty -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan
OLDEST EXTANT STATUES • SITTING • HUMAN-LIKE • BENIGN



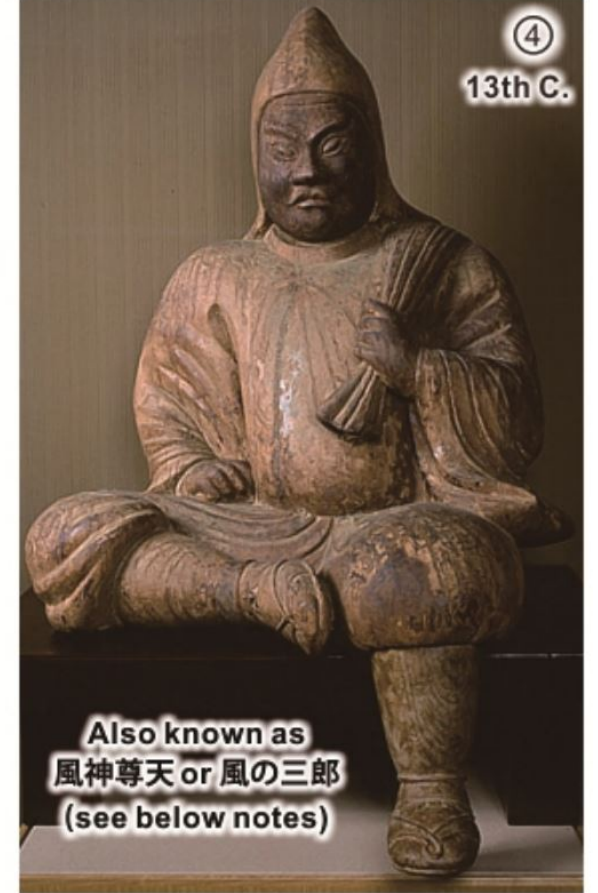
Oldest Sitting Statue ①
 11th C.
 Also known as 金運の神 (kami who brings wealth)
 Kongōrin-ji Temple 金剛輪寺, Shiga. 11th C. CE, H = 73.5 cm. ICP. Wood (cypress 檜). Ichiboku Zukuri. Wearing armor, helmet, holding treasure bag 金囊 and treasure club 宝棒. Seated on rock, half-leg pose; right leg pendent. Not normally shown to public.



②
 13th C.
 Kiyomizu Dera 清水寺, Kyoto. Late Heian to early Kamakura era. H = 76 cm. Wood (cypress 檜). Yoseki Zukuri. Wearing gowns of nobleman and four-cornered crown. Holds treasure bag and treasure club. Seated on lotus leaf, half-leg pose; left leg pendent. Not normally shown to public.



③
 13th C.
 Saidai-ji Temple 西大寺, Nara. 1276 CE. Wood. Kind face. Dressed in hunter's garb, wearing zōri 草履 (sandals) & eboshi 烏帽子 (cap). Holding treasure bag. Clenched fist on right hip. Seated in half-leg pose; left leg pendent. This tiny statue was found inside another Daikokuten statue measuring 82.7 cm in height. This latter statue appears on **Slide 17, Fig. 6**.



④
 13th C.
 Also known as 風神尊天 or 風の三郎 (see below notes)
 Fukuchizan Shūzen-ji 福地山修禪寺, Shizuoka. 13th C. CE. Wood (conifer 針葉樹), H = 120 cm. Stern face. Dressed in hunter's garb, wears funny hat. Seated in half-leg pose; left leg pendent. Like figures #2 & #3, it is one of Japan's oldest icons of a seated Daikokuten WITHOUT armor.

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Slide 20. Oldest Japanese statues of seated form, generally associated with the Tendai school. Details on this form are found in the *Record of Buddhist Practices Sent Home from the Southern Sea* 南海寄歸内法傳 [2.54.125.0209b23-24] by Chinese monk Yijing 義淨 (635–713). Yijing says Mahākāla (Daikokuten) protects temples & nourishes monks. Wooden icons of the god are



Slide Twenty-Two -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan
DAIKOKUTEN'S CURIOUS LINK TO KUBERA, THE INDIC GOD OF WEALTH

Tangled Web of Affinities: Kubera / Pāñcika / Hārītī / Jambhāla / Bishamonten / Daikokuten / Mahēśvara (aka Śiva)



①
9th C. CE



②
2nd-3rd C. CE



③ 5th-6th C. CE



Jambhāla (Kubera)
10th-11th C. CE



Śiva as a dwarf, 5th C. CE



← Daikokuten →

Saidaiji Temple, Nara. 1276 CE.
See Slide 20 for details.



Saidaiji Temple, Nara. 1504 CE.
See Slide 21 for details.

Kubera, Hindu God of Wealth, India. 9th century (?), Stone, H = 42.5 cm (incl. base). Kind face. Seated in pose of "royal ease" rinnōza (輪王坐), i.e., right knee raised and the other folded in front of the body; holds money bag and bowl (of wine?). Large stomach signifies prosperity & worldly comfort. Nimbus (halo) signifies divine status.

Pāñcika, Buddhist God of Wealth. Gandhara, Pakistan. 2nd to 3rd centuries. Stone. H = 46.4 cm. Haloed, wearing turban, seated above a drinking scene, and surrounded by children, which suggests his usual pairing with Hārītī (his consort).

Kubera, Hindu God of Wealth. Uttar Pradesh, India. 5th-6th Century. Sandstone, H = 22.5 cm. Seated in pose of "royal ease." Holds money bag and bowl (of wine?). Large stomach signifies prosperity & worldly comfort. Nimbus (halo) signifies divine status.

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Slide 22. Japan alone transformed the demonic Mahākāla into the jovial, lovable Daikokuten. Why? The prevailing theory claims Mahākāla (Daikokuten) was conflated with Kubera 俱吠羅, the

Slide Twenty-Seven -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan
OLDEST EXTANT STATUES ATOP RICE BALES • HOLDING MALLET • PUDGY

Japan's Santa Claus form emerged in the early 14th C. CE



①

Wish →
Granting
Jewels

Hokkeji Temple 法華寺, Nara. 1319 CE. H = 27.5 cm. Painted wood. Oldest extant statue of Daikoku seated on rice bales, holding a magic mallet and treasure sack. The auspicious wish-granting jewel is engraved on the mallet, the rice bales, and his clothing. Wearing cap (eboshi 烏帽子). Sitting in half lotus posture (hanka), right leg pendant.



②

Amanosan Kongō-ji Temple 天野山金剛寺, Osaka. 1336 CE. H = 82 cm. Wood. Known as Hashiri Daikoku 走り大黒天 (Running Daikoku), for his left leg is stepping forward. Fiberscope analysis shows the name of the sculptor as Keishun 慶春.



③

Formerly at Tōdai-ji Temple 東大寺, Nara. Now owned by Agency for Cultural Affairs. 1347 CE. H = 90 cm. Wood, crystal eyes. By Kaiken 快兼. ICP. Stands on bales of rice, holds magic mallet & treasure sack. Wish-granting jewels & other auspicious symbols adorn clothing & sack.



④

Hase Dera 長谷寺, Kamakura. 1412 CE. H = 62 cm. Wood. Ichiboku Zukuri 一木造 (single-block carving). The temple's placard says the Muromachi-era (?) text 大黒天神法式 equates Daikokuten with Ōkuninushi. Daikokuten was in fact conflated with Ōkuninushi around the early-to-mid 14th century. See Slide 34.



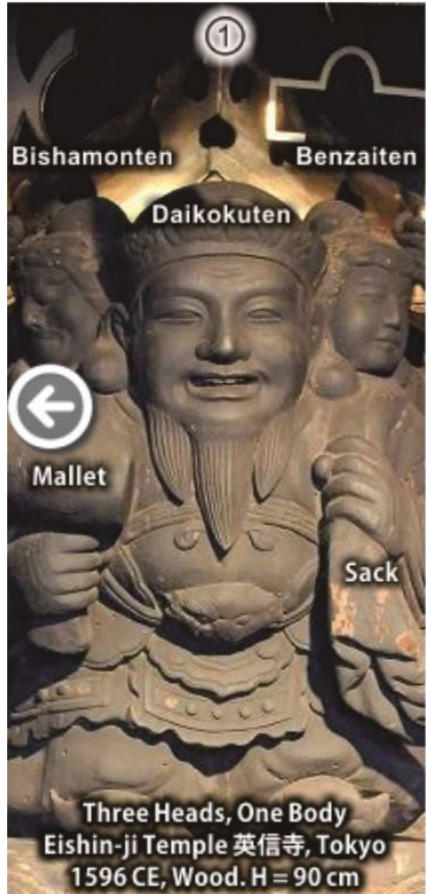
⑤

Kongōrinji Temple 金剛輪寺, Aichi-gun, Shiga. Muromachi era. H = 155 cm. Wood. Yosegi Zukuri 寄木造り (joined-block carving). Wearing crown shaped as wish-granting jewel. Although not extremely old, this statue shows that the deity's warrior aspect did not disappear suddenly.

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Slide 27. Oldest statues of Daikokuten holding magic mallet & treasure sack, standing/sitting on rice bales. Who first conceived him like this is unknown. By at least the early 14th C. CE, Daikokuten was fused with *kami* Miwa Daimyōjin 三輪大明神, aka Ōmononushi 大物主命, aka Ōkuninushi 大国主命 (Slide 35). The Miwa *kami* was perhaps the supreme *kami* of the early Yamato

Slide Twenty-Nine -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan
THREE-FACED SANMEN DAIKOKUTEN • 1 BODY, 3 HEADS, 6 ARMS



Three Heads, One Body
 Eishin-ji Temple 英信寺, Tokyo
 1596 CE, Wood. H = 90 cm



One Head, Three Faces, One Body
 Hōsen-ji Temple 養泉寺, Tokyo
 Late Edo era, Wood. H = 36 cm



One figure, three identities.
 Daien-ji Temple 大円寺, Tokyo.
 Muromachi era, Wood, H = 45 cm
 Sits in half-lotus position; holds
 purse & club; wears armor &
 helmet; this equates to Daikokuten.
 Fierce face equates to Bishamonten.



Three Heads, One Body, Covered by Sack
 Daizōkyō-ji Temple 大蔵経寺
 Fuefuki City, Yamanashi
 Late Muromachi, Early Edo, Wood
 No height given

Daikokuten, Bishamonten, & Benzaiten originated in the Hindu pantheon. All are members of Japan's Seven Lucky Gods.



Fierce & Gentle Forms of Kōjin
 Copyright 2017 Schumacher

Slide 29. Mahākāla / Daikokuten's (M/D) demonic form (Slides 11–15) never achieved the popularity of his benign human form (Slides 16–21). Around the 16th C. CE, his demonic & benign forms were “reconnected” in a new configuration known as Sanmen Daikokuten (SMD) 三面大黒天, which fused three deities into one – M/D, Bishamonten 毘沙門天 (Skt = Vaiśravaṇa) & Benzaiten 弁才天 (Skt = Sarasvatī). This form is specific to Japan. Unknown who created it, but most legends involve Saichō 最澄 (767–822). See Slide 19 for legends. This form protects warriors & the three treasures (Buddha, Buddhist law, community of believers). It shares affinities with Kōjin 荒神 (fig. 6 above), Japan's god of the kitchen fire. Today both are considered identical, for icons of SMD placed in kitchens are called Kōjin. By the Edo era, the main pillar of the home (often near the kitchen) was called Daikokuhashira 大黒柱. SMD rose to popularity in the war-torn Muromachi era. Warlords Tokugawa Iyeyasu 徳川家康 (1543–1616) & Toyotomi Hideyoshi 豊臣秀吉

Says Iyanaga Nobumi:
 “This triad confirms the mythical associations between Mahākāla, Vaiśravaṇa (Kubera, Pāñcika) & Sarasvatī (Sri-Lakṣmī)—associations that are not apparent but underlie the evolution of these deities across India, Central Asia, China & Japan.”

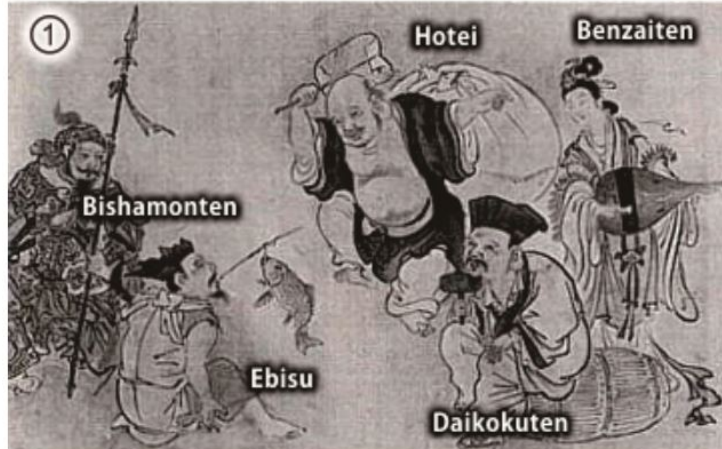
Slide Forty-Three -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan
 MODERN CARTOONIZATION, COMMERCIALIZATION, CUTIFICATION



Slide 43. Daikokuten is one of Japan's most widely recognized & cherished divinities. Artwork of the pot-bellied, jovial, human-like deity are everywhere, showing him alone, paired with Ebisu (Slide 34), or grouping him with Bishamonten & Benzaiten (Slides 28–29) or with the Seven Lucky Gods (Slide 31). As the god of wealth, luck, business success, marriage, and agriculture (rice, food, kitchen), he serves today as the mascot for countless commercial & religious groups (e.g., on cell-phone straps, toys, candy, temple/shrine amulets, votive tablets). His horrific Hindu/Buddhist origins – his “dark side” – has been largely stripped away & forgotten (albeit the dark side is still rarely shown in images of Mahākāla; see Fig. 13). In his utterly tamed modern form, Daikokuten is a harmless, charming, & comic character, one who travels long distances to bring happiness to all -- much akin to the West's Santa Claus (benign, fat, bag of gifts).
SOURCES (last access Sept. 2017): (1, 2, 3) Shusse Daikokuten 出世大黒天 (God of Worldly Success), Muromachi Era, Wood, H = 113 cm, Kiyomizu-dera 清水寺, Kyoto. Repaired 2007 by Kyoto Traditional Arts College 京都伝統工芸大学. See [Asahi Shimbun](#) (Sept. 5, 2007). The temple sells a Daikokuten cell-phone strap (Fig. 3). (4, 5) PC-created images based on extant Edo-era statues (e.g., Fig. 5 depicts statue in Slide 39, Fig. 7). By [Muukufu](#). (6) Modern. Nagono ナゴノ & Mai-ame Kōbō まいあめ工房. (7) Modern. See [Rakuten 楽天](#). (8) “Rub Me” Daikokuten 触る大黒天, Hase Dera, Kamakura. Late 20th C. “Rub Me” statues are well worn, as the faithful rub the statue (e.g., knees, arms), then rub the same part of their body, beseeching the deity to heal their ailments. Photo Author. (9) By [Fujita Yō-oku](#) 藤田耀徳 (b. 1955), H = 11.5 cm. [Photo here](#). (10) Stone, H = 5 meters, late 20th C., Ryūgenzai Kudoku-en 龍源山功德院, Yufu, Ōita. See [YouTube](#). (11) Japan's largest Daikokuten. Made 2005, H = 20 meters, 8.5 tons, Mt. Myōgi 妙義山, Nakanodake Shrine 中之嶽神社, Gunma. [Shrine web site](#). (12) Modern tattoo of Sanmen Daikokuten (Slide 28). (13) Mahākāla. Modern. by Sotonomichi. Also see artist's blog.

JAPAN'S SEVEN LUCKY GODS = Already Cartoon-Like in 17th C.

Slide Thirty-One -- Condensed Visual Guide to Daikokuten Iconography in Japan
DAIKOKUTEN & JAPAN'S SEVEN GODS OF GOOD FORTUNE



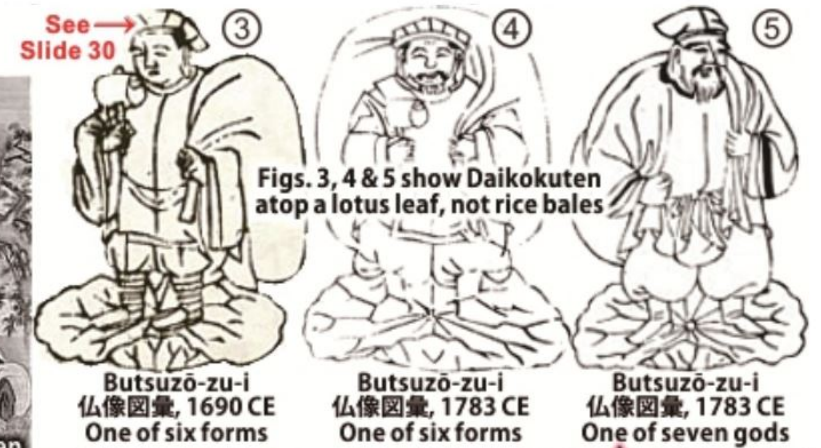
One of the oldest drawings; an abbreviated assemblage of the group. By Kanō Tanyū 狩野探幽 (1602-1674).



One of the oldest paintings of all seven in the standard set. By Kanō Yasunobu 狩野安信 (1613-1685).



Shichifukujin
七福神



老 壽 酒 美 惠	天 之 祥 吉	天 門 之 沙 魁
Jurōjin	Ebisu	Kichijōten
宮 玉 船	袋 布	天 之 黒 大 天 之 財 辨
Hotei	Daikokuten	Benzaiten

Butsuzō-zu-i 仏像図彙, 1783 CE. Non-standard set.
 The 1690 & 1783 versions of this text show non-standard sets.



Standard sets (L) by Tosa Mitsusuke 土佐光祐 (1675-1710) and (R) by Tosa Mitsuyoshi 土佐光芳 (d. 1772)



Fukurokuji is missing from this set. In his place we find the female deity Kichijōten.
 In modern times, however, Kichijōten is no longer a member of the Seven Lucky Gods. In her place we find Fukurokuju.
 Her conflation with the more popular goddess Benzaiten is one probable reason for her removal from the group. Today the group of seven includes only one female, Benzaiten.

Slide 31. Seven Lucky Gods (Shichifukujin 七福神). One is native to Japan (Ebisu), three from India's Hindu pantheon (Benzaiten, Bishamonten, Daikokuten), & three from China's Folk-Daoist-Buddhist traditions (Fukurokuju, Hotei, Jurōjin). The group's origin is unclear, but it likely sprang from Mt. Hiei (bastion of Daikokuten worship & Tendai faith in Japan). Says Graham (p. 110):

BENZAITEN, ONE OF THE SEVEN LUCKY GODS OF JAPAN

One from Japan, three from Chinese Buddhism, three from Indian Hinduism.

Like Daikokuten (prior photos), Goddess Benzaiten has been tamed and domesticated. Today the patron of all things that flow (e.g., water, poetry, music, literature)

↓ Old Benzaiten (8 arms, warrior deity, defender of nation) ↓



↓ Modern Benzaiten (two-armed beauty playing biwa) ↓



BISHAMONTEN, ONE OF THE SEVEN LUCKY GODS OF JAPAN

One from Japan, three from Chinese Buddhism, three from Indian Hinduism.

Like Daikokuten & Benzaiten (prior photos), Bishamonten has been tamed & domesticated. Today the Lord of Treasure & Wealth, Patron of Warriors, Guardian of the North.

↓ Old Bishamonten (2 arms, warrior, defender of nation) ↓



Tamonten atop demon, 7th century, Horyuji Temple, Nara. Japan's oldest extant statue of Tamonten. National Treasure. H = 134.2 cm.



Tobatsu Bishamon, ICP, Heian Era. Wood (Kusu), H 160 cm, Ichiboku Zukuri, Kanzeonji Temple, Dazaifu City, Fukuoka Prefecture. Photo courtesy Dazaifu Museum.



↓ Modern Bishamonten (two-armed pudgy, santa-like protector) ↓



click any image to enlarge

1. Modern poster image found at Myōryūji Temple 妙隆寺 in Kamakura. The temple also sells shikishi 色紙 with this image. Myōryūji Temple is the 7th site on the Kamakura Pilgrimage to the 7 Lucky Gods.
2. Ivory Bishamonten in the collection of Andres Bernhard (Rapick) in Italy.
3. Modern Bishamon amulet available for purchase at our sister site.
4. Stone statue in private garden in Kamakura City, Early 20th Century.



Ebisu, Daikokuten, Benzaiten, Bishamonten, Jurojin, Fukurokuju, Hotei
Click here for hundreds of Japanese cartoons of the Seven Lucky Gods

JIZŌ AND KANNON – Two of Japan’s Most Popular Buddhist Saviors.

Transformations Extraordinaire. Jizō and Kannon were introduced to Japan around the 7th-century CE.

Today there are hundreds of different forms of Jizō and Kannon in modern Japan.

Most forms trace their origins to the last 500 hundred years. Today we look at four of the “most modern” new forms.

1. Aburakake Jizō 油懸地藏. Oil-Covered Jizō, Greasy Jizō.
2. Agonashi Jizō 鰐無地藏. Jizō Without a Jaw; Heals Toothaches.
3. Ajimi Jizō 嘗試地藏 (also read Kokoromi). Food Tasting Jizō.
4. Amagoi Jizō 雨乞い地藏. Jizō Begging the Sky for Rain. Also known as Ama Koi Jizō 雨恋地藏 (Jizō Who Loves Rain). The latter often appear as large boulders inscribed with kanji for Jizō; used in rain rituals. See Farmers Jizō for more forms related to agriculture.
5. Anzan Jizō. 安産地藏. Safe child-birth, easy delivery.
6. Asekaki Jizō. 汗かき地藏. Sweating Jizō. Excretes white sweat if good things are about to happen, and black sweat when bad things are foreseen. A modern manifestation of Jizō in Japan.
7. Battlefield Jizō. See Shōgun Jizō below.
8. Botamochi Jizō ぼた餅地藏. Rice-Ball Jizō.
9. Chūji Jizō 忠治地藏 (aka Kunisada Chūji Jizō). Cures palsy.
10. Daigan Jizō 大願地藏菩薩. Great Vow Jizō (C = Dāyuan Dizàng).
11. Danda Jizō 檀陀地藏. One of Six Jizō, assists those in Hell Realm.
12. Doroashi Jizō 泥足地藏. Muddy-Feet Jizō.
13. Enmei Jizō. 延命地藏. Longevity Jizō. One of Six Jizō, assists those in the Hell Realm.
14. Farmers & Peasants Jizō. Various forms of Jizō to reduce the toils of the poor peasants.
15. Hadaka Jizō. 裸地藏. Naked Jizō.
16. Hanakake Jizō 鼻欠け地藏. Noseless Jizō.
17. Harahoge Jizō はらほげ地藏. Blow Hole Jizō.
18. Hara-Obi Jizō 腹帯地藏. Belly Girdle or Belly Band Jizō. Said to grant easy birth to pregnant women.
19. Hawaii Jizō. Guardian of Fishermen and Swimmers.
20. Hibō Jizō 被帽地藏. Hatted Jizō, with head covered.
21. Higiri Jizō. 日限地藏. Time-Limiting Jizō.
22. Hitaki Jizō. 火焚地藏. Fire Kindling Jizō. Patron of Firemen. Also called Kuro Jizō 黒地藏 (Black Jizō) or Hifuse Jizō 火伏地藏.
23. Hōju Jizō 宝珠地藏. One of Six Jizō. Realm of Hungry Ghosts.
24. Hōin Jizō 宝印地藏. One of Six Jizō. Realm of Animals.
25. Hōkō-ō Jizō 放光王地藏. Esoteric. One of Six Jizō. Deva Realm.
26. Hōroku Jizō ほうろく地藏. Earthenware Jizō. Cures head ailments.
27. Hōsho Jizō 宝母地藏. One of Six Jizō. Asura Realm.
28. Hōshō Jizō 宝掌地藏. One of Six Jizō. Realm of Hungry Ghosts.
29. Hōyake Jizō 頬焼地藏. Jizō With Burnt Cheeks.
30. Hyakudo Mairi (See Wheel Jizō)
31. Jiji Jizō 持地地藏. One of Six Jizō. Human Realm or Asura Realm.
32. Jizō Bon (Jizō Festival). Annual confession ceremony held Aug. 24.
33. Jizō Ennichi 縁日. The 24th day of each month is sacred to Jizō.
34. Jogaishō Jizō 除蓋障地藏. One of Six Jizō. Human Realm.
35. Kamihari Jizō 紙張地藏. Paper-Pasted Jizō.



Jizō often appears cute in modern Japan. Zenkōji Temple (Nagano). Photo courtesy this J-site



Zenkōji Temple (Nagano). Photo courtesy this J-site

This is a story about continuity (old) and change (new). Jizō and Kannon were introduced to Japan from mainland Asia by at least the Nara period (710-794). Both appear in many different forms to alleviate the suffering of the living and the dead. The two share many overlapping functions, e.g., both protect the Six Realms of Karmic Rebirth (Six Jizō, Six Kannon) and both are patrons of motherhood and children (Koyasu Jizō, Koyasu Kannon). Their worship is widespread and embraced by nearly all schools of Buddhism and folk religion. They are also the two main attendants to Amida, the central Buddha of Japan’s Pure Land school (among the largest denomination in Japan today). Jizō and Kannon come in countless forms – from the Cough-Stopping and Splinter-Removing Jizō to the Cloth-Ripping and One-Prayer Kannon. Many of these forms originated in the last five centuries and are unique to Japan. It is important to note that both Jizō & Kannon straddle the divide between the Buddhist and Shinto camps – an “artificial” divide that was created by the Japanese government when it forcibly separated the two camps in the Meiji period (1868-1912). A number of new forms have appeared in the last fifty years, as explored below.

Kannon Sampling →
← Jizō Sampling

TRADITIONAL FORMS

- 6 Kannon
- 11 Headed Kannon
- 33 Forms of Kannon
- 1000 Armed Kannon
- Batō Kannon (Horse Headed)
- Byakue Kannon (White Robed)
- Esoteric (Tantric) Forms of Kannon
- [Feminized Forms of Kannon](#)
- Fudarakusen (Kannon’s Paradise)
- Fukūkenjaku (Never Empty Lasso)
- Guze Kannon (Prince Shōtoku)
- Gyoran Kannon (Fish Basket)
- Hatakiri Kannon (Cloth Ripping)
- Henge Kannon (Esoteric Forms)
- Hitokoto Kannon (One Prayer)
- Jibo Kannon (Loving Mother)
- Juntei Kannon (Mother of All Deities)
- Jūichimen Kannon (Eleven-Headed)
- Kanzeon or Kanjizai (aka Kannon)
- Kebutsu (small image attached)
- Koyasu Kannon (Child Giving)
- Kudara Kannon (Korea), 7th C.
- Kumen Kannon (Nine Headed)
- Kuse Kannon, Kuze Kannon
- Maria Kannon (Christian)
- Miracle Stories About Kannon
- Nyoirin Kannon (Omnipotent One)
- Roku Kannon (Six Kannon)
- Ryūzu Kannon (Dragon-Riding)
- Sanjūsanshin (33 Forms of Kannon)
- Senchū Yūgen Kannon (Calms Raging Sea)
- Senju Kannon (1000 Armed)
- Shō Kannon (Sacred, Non-Esoteric)
- Six Kannon (Esoteric)
- Suigetsu Kannon (Water-Moon)
- Tara Bosatsu (Female Manifestation)

MODERN FORMS

- Big Kannon Statues (Attract Tourism)
- Bokefuji Kannon (Stop Dementia)
- Dōbutsu Kannon (Pet Cemeteries)
- Fure-ai Kannon (“Touch Me” Kannon)
- Karamatsu Kannon (Safe Delivery)
- Mizuko Kannon (Abortion)
- War Dead Kannon (Patroness)

RELATED PAGES

- 28 Legions Serving Kannon
- Amida Triad (Kannon)
- Kannon Photo Tour
- Kannon Photo Tour (Asuka)
- Kannon Pilgrimage Kamakura
- Kannon Pilgrimages Nationwide
- Kannon Statues eStore
- Maria Kannon (Christianity)
- Objects / Symbols / Weapons
- Patrons of Motherhood



Mizuko Jizō and Mizuko Kannon = Water Child Jizō, Water Child Kannon

Mizuko Jizō 水子地蔵 and Mizuko Kannon 水子観音

Mizuko means “water child” or “water baby” and refers to miscarried, stillborn, or aborted children. The term is not old. It first appeared in the 1960s to address the concerns of a large number of women who had undergone abortions after WWII, when economic hardship and uncertainty were rampant. The Mizuko forms of Jizō and Kannon, along with Mizuko rites known as Mizuko Kuyo, were introduced around this time to help women and parents deal with the emotional pain. The most common Mizuko form in Japan today shows either Jizō or Kannon surrounded by infants or holding one in their arms. In one touching tradition, votive statues of Jizō are purchased by sorrowing parents who have lost a child due to miscarriage, sickness or abortion. These are then installed somewhere in the temple compound. Parents deck the icons in red hats and bibs, and sometimes toys or stones, in the hopes that Jizō will cloak their dead child in his mercy. The color red is said to ward off illness and is linked to themes of healing, fertility, gestation, childbirth, infant death, children’s limbo, and the unconnected dead. Sometimes the decorations are gifts from rejoicing parents whose child has recovered from illness. The Mizuko Kuyo rite has already been extensively researched by Japanese and non-Japanese scholars.



Mizuko Kannon, Japan. Modern. Wood. H. 20 cm. Found in shop in Kyoto. Photo by author. Mizuko Kannon is typically surrounded by children or holding a child. This new version of Kannon draws on the iconography of much earlier manifestations of Kannon → known as Jibo Kannon (Loving-Mother Kannon), Koyasu Kannon (Child-Giving Kannon), and Maria Kannon (Mother Mary Kannon) – the latter is a Christian variant employed when Christianity was outlawed in Japan’s Edo era.



Ryō En Jizō, typically portrayed as a happy family with Papa Jizō, Mama Jizō and Baby Jizō (see photo slide 18). Ryō En means “match-making,” so this Jizō serves people looking for a good lifetime mate.

Below drawings from comic book named おじぞうさま (Daido Publications 大道社, Tokyo)
 Order the comic book -- #3 -- online at www.seihon.co.jp/CCP002.html (J-site only)



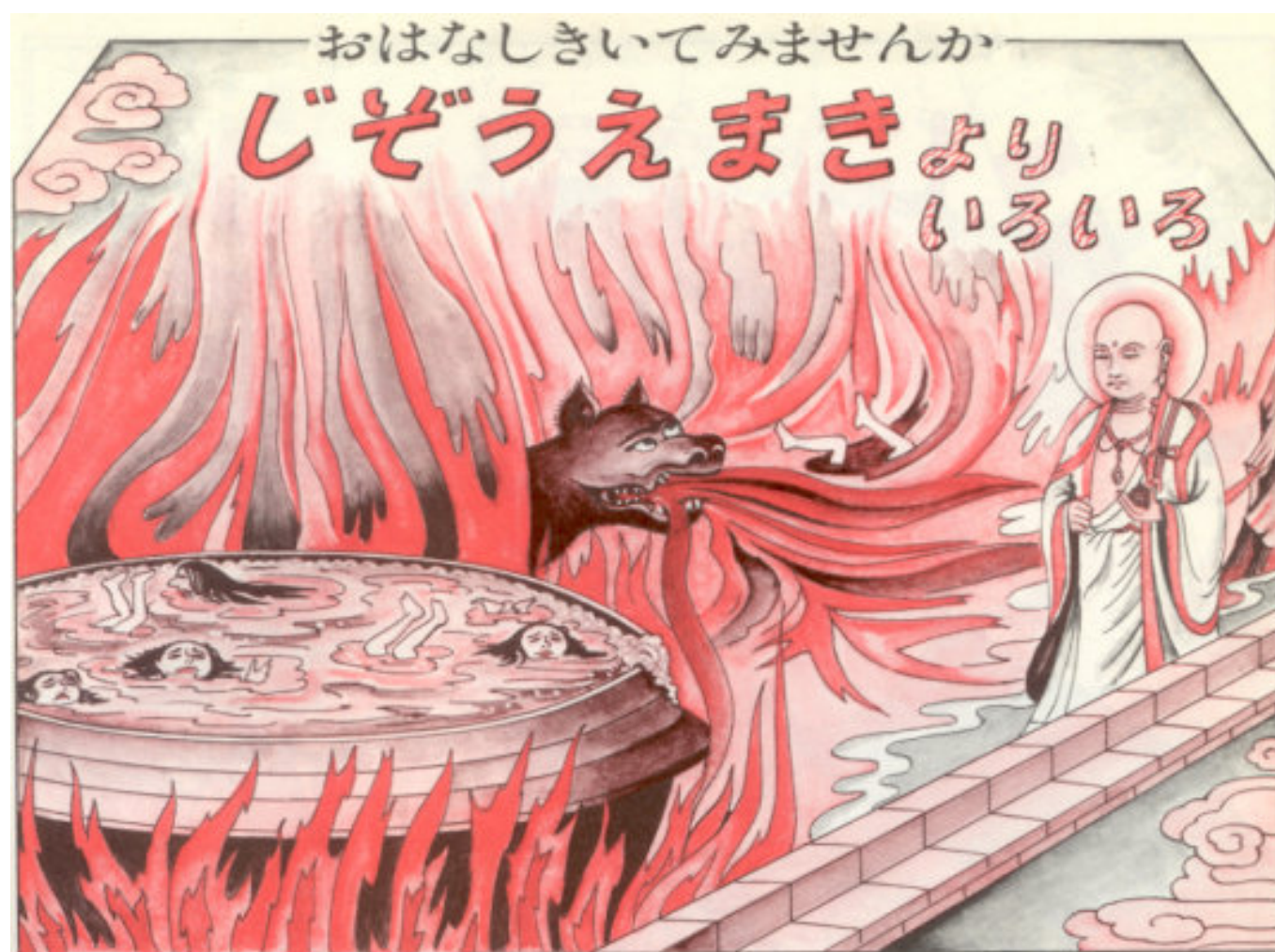
(L) Children Piling Stones of Prayer; (R) Demon Attacker.
 Saying prayers for father, they heap the first tower.
 Saying prayers for mother, they heap the second tower.
 Saying prayers for their brothers, their sisters, and all
 whom they loved at home, they heap the third tower.



Jizō Bosatsu Comes to the Rescue



Jizō says:
 "In this land of the shades,
 I am your father and your mother.
 Trust me morning and evening."



Hitaki (Kuro) Jizō 火焚地蔵. Fire-Kindling Jizō. Also known as Kuro Jizō 黒地蔵 (Black Jizō) or Hifuse Jizō 火伏地蔵. This is just one of many forms of Jizō known as the Migawari Jizō or Substitute Jizō (one who vicariously receives our injuries and wounds). According to Japanese legends, Jizō descends into the infernal regions to witness the punishments and tortures of condemned souls (e.g., sinners being boiled in large pots of water). Jizō is so pained by their agony that, for a time, Jizō assumes the role of their custodian (a soldier of hell or Gokusotsu 獄卒) and greatly reduces the intense heat of the purgatorial fires to lessen their torment. The work of controlling the fires made Jizō black with soot and smoke. This Jizō is also considered the modern patron of firemen. A famous wood statue of this Jizō, dated to the Kamakura period and standing 170.5 cm in height, is housed at Kakuonji Temple 覺園寺 in Kamakura. Kakuonji is one of 24 sites of the Jizō Pilgrimage in Kamakura. There are other similar forms of Jizō, such as the Hōyake Jizō 頬焼地蔵 (Jizō With Burnt Cheeks).



TRADITIONAL
Six Jizō 六地藏
Hase Dera, Kamakura



TRADITIONAL
Meigetsu-in,
Kamakura



六観音
TRADITIONAL SIX KANNON, 1224 CE
Daihō-onji Temple 大報恩寺 (Kyoto)



CUTE, MODERN, Available Online



CUTE, MODERN



CUTE, MODERN, Available Online

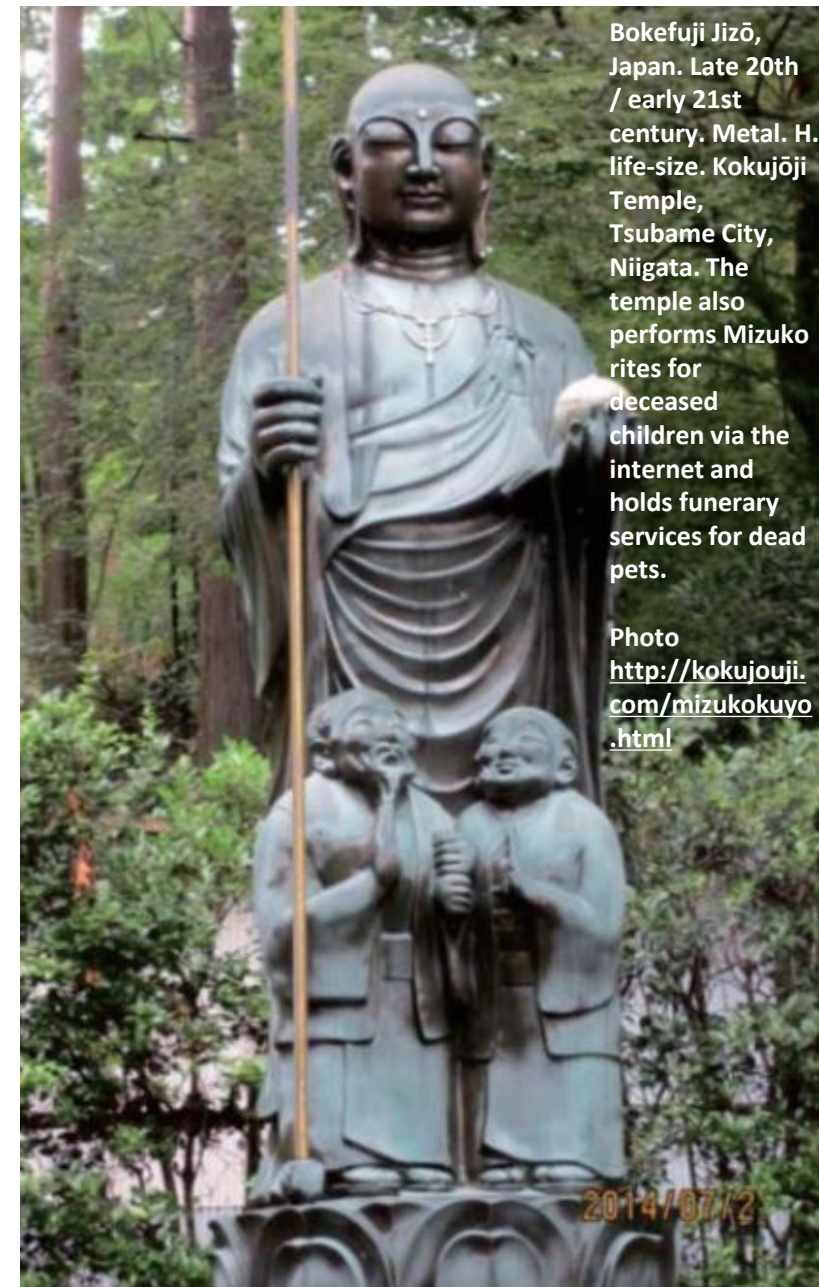
Roku Jizō (Six Jizō) or Six Kannon protect us all in the Six Realms of Karmic Rebirth. Often installed at busy intersections and in graveyards.

Bokefuji Jizō ぼけ封じ観音 (Senility-Preventing Jizō)

A new type of Jizō, one who promises to prevent senility. The Japanese have the world's longest life expectancy. Most wish to live healthy lives and die quickly without suffering from dementia, cancer, or other long illness. Statues of the compassionate Jizō, with an old man and old woman praying at its feet, are now quite common. They first began appearing around the early 1980s, or perhaps slightly earlier. Statues of this new iconic form of Jizō are widespread. Kannon, another beloved deity, has been enlisted as a senility-preventing savior as well (see next slide). States of Kannon with an old man and woman at its feet are also widespread.



Above. Bokefuji Kannon Poster, Japan. Late 20th century. Cute temple poster hanging inside temple compound. Ōhirayama Kurayoshi Temple 大平山 金毘羅院. Kurayoshi City 倉吉市, Tottori. There is a pilgrimage to Bokefuji temples in this area. This temple is site twenty. Source: <http://darumapilgrim.blogspot.jp/2006/10/oohirayama-kurayoshi.html>



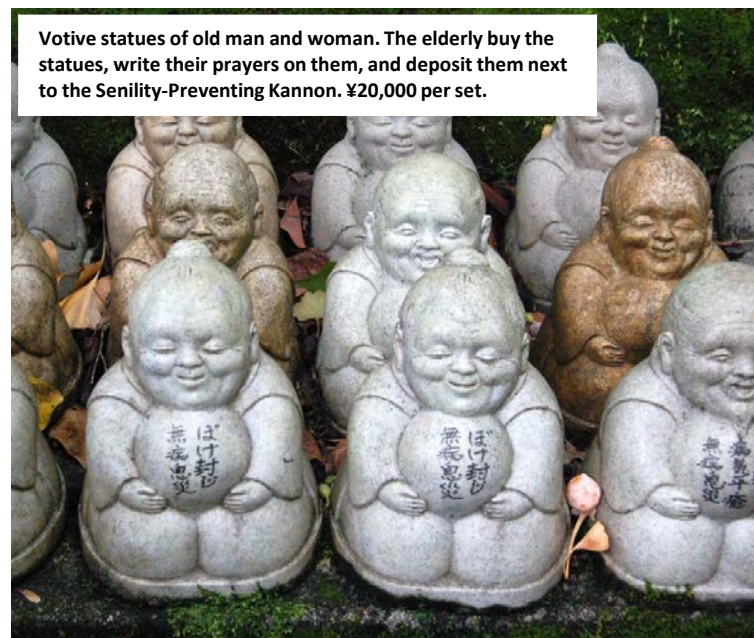
Bokefuji Jizō, Japan. Late 20th / early 21st century. Metal. H. life-size. Kokujōji Temple, Tsubame City, Niigata. The temple also performs Mizuko rites for deceased children via the internet and holds funerary services for dead pets.

Photo <http://kokujouji.com/mizukokuyo.html>

Bokefuji Jizō, Japan. Late 20th to early 21st century. Metal. H. life-size. Kōanji Temple, Tokyo. Photo <http://photozou.jp/photo/show/1075137/83795439>



Bokefuji Kannon ぼけ封じ観音 (Senility-Preventing Kannon), Japan. Circa 1988. Polyresin. H. approx. three meters. Imakumano Kannonji Temple 今熊野観音寺, Kyoto. Photo by author. This modern form of Kannon wards off dementia in the elderly and is commonly portrayed with an old man and woman praying at its feet.



Votive statues of old man and woman. The elderly buy the statues, write their prayers on them, and deposit them next to the Senility-Preventing Kannon. ¥20,000 per set.



Talismanic cotton pillowcase to ward off dementia, headaches, other ailments. Imakumano Kannonji Temple in Kyoto. ¥800 in price.

Bokefuji Kannon ぼけ封じ観音 (Senility-Preventing Kannon)

Bokefuji (warding off dementia) is another recent postwar addition to Japan's pantheon of gods, one that assigns entirely new roles to Jizō and Kannon. Writes scholar Mark R. Mullins, who is talking solely about Kannon: "Another new role for Kannon is connected to the 'graying' of Japanese society and the increasing concerns of the elderly about growing old, fears of senile dementia (and Alzheimer's disease), and long illnesses followed by an unpleasant death. Kannon's powers have been expanded to include the 'suppression of senility' (boke-fuji 呆け封じ), and s/he has become a central figure in Pokkuri-Dera ポックリ寺, or temples where the elderly -- those lacking adequate family support -- go to pray for a sudden or painless death. What distinguishes this Kannon from others are a pair of elderly male and female figures kneeling at its feet in a gesture of supplication. An entirely new medical role is thus being attributed to Kannon, who is here called the Kannon Who Heals or Prevents Senility (Bokefuji Kannon)." At Imakumano Kannonji temple in Kyoto, the fifteenth stop on a popular thirty-three Kannon pilgrimage circuit, a statue of this new form of Kannon, with an old man and woman praying at her feet, wards off dementia in the elderly. Busloads of senior citizens visit here daily to receive Kannon's protection and to buy a special pillowcase they can use at home. Bokefuji Kannon's role is performed by Bokefuji Jizō at other temples, such as at Kōanji Temple in Tokyo. Some temples offer variations. The Jizō-ji Temple in Gero City (Gifu), for example, features a version of Jizō known as Ganfuji Jizō (Cancer-Preventing Jizō).

Mark R. Mullins, The Many Forms and Functions of Kannon in Japanese Religion and Culture, Dharma World Magazine, April-June 2008 issue.

Story online at http://www.rk-world.org/dharmaworld/dw_2008ajmanyforms.aspx



Gōgaku Jizō, Japan. Late 20th century. Stone. H. 91 cm. In front of Ai no Kannon Dō Hall, near Kannawa Onsen, Beppu.
ぼけ封じ愛の観音堂前にある「合格地藏尊」



Bokefuji Kannon, Japan. Late 20th century. Gilded Wood. H. life-size. Inside Ai no Kannon Dō Hall, near Kannawa Onsen, Beppu. ぼけ封じ愛の観音堂内。
All three photos from http://drive-nikki.com/kannawa_spa.html



Ganbare Jizō, Japan. Late 20th century. Stone. H. 91 cm. In front of Ai no Kannon Dō Hall, near Kannawa Onsen, Beppu.
ぼけ封じ愛の観音堂前にある「がんばれ地藏尊」

Aging, sickness, and death are not the only themes involving religious icons. Others are just plain fun. Popular modern versions of Jizō include the Gōgaku Jizō, a cute form of Jizō wearing glasses and holding a book (left photo). Gōgaku means “to pass the examination.” This Jizō serves many young people who suffer through grueling periods of study to gain admittance to the best schools. Another cute version is known as Ganbare Jizō. He is depicted holding stacks of hard-earned money (right photo). Ganbare means “to try hard, work constantly, stick with it, hang in there.” This Jizō serves the many people who struggle to achieve monetary success. Yet another cute form is Ryō En Jizō, typically portrayed as a happy family with Papa Jizō, Mama Jizō and Baby Jizō (see photo slide 18). Ryō En means “match-making,” so this Jizō serves people looking for a good lifetime mate. This “cute” Ryō En version of Jizō is now widespread.

Pokkuri Jizō ぽっくり地蔵

Pokkuri Kannon, Other Pokkuri Deities

SUDDEN DEATH DEITIES

Pokkuri refers to “a sudden change from one state to the next,” or “the state in which an object suddenly breaks” or the state in which one dies “suddenly and unexpectedly without suffering from long-term illness.” Given Japan’s aging population (which has the world’s longest life expectancy), many elderly people wish to live happy and healthy lives and in the end – to die quickly without suffering from dementia, incontinence, cancer or long illness. Pokkuri could be loosely translated as “to pop off quickly.” Temples catering to the wish of a sudden death are mushrooming these days – although such places existed in earlier times.

Temples and cemeteries featuring Pokkuri Jizō and Pokkuri Kannon are found everywhere in Japan, as are Pokkuri representations of other popular deities like Benzaiten, Fudō Myō-ō, and the saint Kōbō Daishi. These representations are often very cute – reflecting the desire of temples to remain relevant in a world of manga, animation, and the Internet.

Some temples are using old artistic themes in interesting new ways. At Kōryūji Temple in Imabari City (Ehime), a life-size statue of Pokkuri Kannon is shown lying on her death bed, which is a clear reference to centuries-earlier artwork of the Historical Buddha on his death bed. Above Kannon’s head is an umbrella. People write their name on a slip of paper and attach it to the umbrella in the hopes they will die in peace.



Pokkuri Jizō ぽっくり地蔵, Japan. Late 20th / 21st century. Stone. H. 91 cm. Saihōji Temple 西法寺, Yokote City 横手市, Akita. Photo from web. Similar statues appear at other locations, including Seiryūji Temple cemeteries 清流寺霊園墓地 in Fukuoka City (Kyushu) and Saga City (Saga). Pokkuri Jizō represents the wish of many to live happy and healthy lives and in the end – to die quickly without suffering. Temples catering to the wish of a sudden death are growing rapidly in Japan given its aging population. Photos: <http://www.saihouzi.com/gallery/a-03.html> and <http://www2.hp-ez.com/hp/seiryuji/page1> and <https://japantoday.com/category/features/opinions/praying-for-a-pokkuri-moment-no-muss-no-fuss> and <https://omamorifromjapan.blogspot.com/2014/04/>

Dōbutsu Shūgō Kannon 動物集合観音

A modern form of Kannon devoted to the care of suffering animals, one granting eternal rest to pets, one invoked in prayers for deceased pets at pet cemeteries. The modern use of Kannon as a patron of dead pets is not surprising. There are numerous antecedents. Batō Kannon (Horse-Headed Kannon), for example, an esoteric savior of those reborn in the realm of animals, was already well-known among the common folk in the Tokugawa period, when numerous farmers prayed to Batō Kannon for the safety and preservation of their horses and cattle. Today Kannon serves this role again at the numerous pet cemeteries that have sprung up around Japan in the past twenty years.



Dōbutsu Shūgō Kannon 動物集合観音, Japan. Late 20th / early 21st century. Metal. H. life-size. Sho-unji Temple 正雲寺, Yufu-shi, Oita. Photo by author. A modern form of Kannon devoted to the care of suffering animals, one granting eternal rest to pets, one invoked in prayers for deceased pets at pet cemeteries.

PHOTO: http://www.geocities.jp/graphic_journal09/daibutsu/044_shounj



Fure-ai Kannon ふれ愛観音 (Touch-Me Kannon)

Playful forms of Kannon are also appearing everywhere. One such manifestation is the Fureai Kannon, or “Touch Me Kannon.” It is meant to be touched or rubbed. The Japanese term FURE means to touch or interact with. Says longtime Japan resident Gabi Greve: “Since most Buddha statues are in temples or museums, you are not supposed to touch them. But for blind people, there is no way to SEE them. So Nishimura Kōchō (1915-2003), a famous modern sculptor and Buddhist monk, carved a Kannon statue and installed it in his temple, where anybody could come and pray to the deity while touching it. In Japanese, there is a play on words as well, for AI 愛 is the character for “love.” Such statues became so popular that within a few years many other temples put up this kind of ‘touchable Kannon,’ with other deities serving this role as well, such as Daikokuten (see adjacent photo). Today, “touch me” statues also serve as substitutes for physical pain. If one of your knees hurt, rub the statue’s knee, then rub your own knee. If you suffer from headaches, rub the statue’s head, then rub your own head.

See Gabi Greve’s web page
<http://darumamuseumgallery.blogspot.jp/2007/02/nishimura-kocho-nishimura.html>

PHOTO AT LEFT. Fure-ai Kannon ふれ愛観音 (Touch-Me Kannon), Japan. 1995. Iron. H. 106cm. HaseDera, Kamakura. Photo by author. This statue is a replica of the famous Fure-ai Kannon icon made by the monk-sculptor Nishimura Kōchō in 1991. “Touch Me” statues have become widespread since then. People pray to the deity while touching it.



PHOTO AT LEFT. Fure-ai Daikokuten ふれ大黒天 (Touch-Me Daikoku), Japan. Wood. Height 約 100 cm. Hase Dera, Kamakura. Photo by author. Date unknown, but most likely the late 20th century. “Touch Me” statues have become widespread in the last two decades. People pray to the deity while touching it.

BONUS SLIDE. JIZŌ PHOTO MONTAGE – MODERN FORMS

Top Row, Left to Right

1. Mizuko Jizō, Japan. Circa 1980. Stone. H. 40 cm. Hase Dera, Kamakura. Photo by author. Votive statues from sorrowing parents who have lost a child due to miscarriage, sickness or abortion. Parents deck the icons in hats, bibs and toys in the hopes that Jizō will deck their dead child in his mercy. Sometimes the decorations are gifts from rejoicing parents whose child has recovered from illness.
2. Mizuko Jizō, Japan. Circa 1980. Stone. H. 40 cm. Hase Dera, Kamakura. Photo by author.
3. Mizuko Jizō, Japan. Circa 1980. Stone. H. 40 cm. Hase Dera, Kamakura. Photo by author.
4. Gōgaku Jizō 合格地藏, Japan. Late 20th century. Stone. H. 91 cm. In front of Ai no Kannon Dō Hall 愛の観音堂, near Kannawa Onsen 鉄輪温泉, Beppu. Photo from web. A cute Jizō wearing glasses and holding a book. Gōgaku means “to pass the examination, to gain acceptance to a good school.” This Jizō serves many young people who suffer through grueling periods of study to gain admittance to the best schools. Photo: http://drivenikki.com/kannawa_spa.html.
5. Ganbare Jizō がんばれ地藏, Japan. Late 20th century. Stone. H. 91 cm. Same location as photo four. Photo from web. Another cute Jizō, this time holding stacks of hard-earned money. Ganbare means “to try hard, work constantly, stick with it, hang in there.” This Jizō serves the many people who struggle to achieve monetary success. Photo: http://drivenikki.com/kannawa_spa.html.

Middle Row, Left to Right

1. Bokefuji Jizō ぼけ封じ地藏, Japan. Late 20th / early 21st century. Metal. H. life-size. Kōanji Temple 高安寺, Tokyo. This new form of Jizō wards off dementia in the elderly and is commonly portrayed with an old man and woman praying at his feet. Photo: <http://photozou.jp/photo/show/1075137/83795439>
2. Bokefuji Jizō ぼけ封じ地藏, Japan. Late 20th / early 21st century. Metal. H. life-size. Kokujojji Temple 国上寺, Tsubame City 燕市, Niigata. The temple also performs Mizuko rites for deceased children via the internet and holds funerary services for dead pets. Photos: <http://kokujouji.com/mizukokuyo.html> and <http://kokujouji.com/pet.html>.
3. Pokkuri Jizō ぽっくり地藏, Japan. Late 20th / 21st century. Stone. H. 91 cm. Saihōji Temple 西法寺, Yokote City 横手市, Akita. Photo from web. Similar statues appear at other locations, including Seiryuji Temple cemeteries 清流寺霊園墓地 in Fukuoka City (Kyushu) and Saga City (Saga). Pokkuri Jizō represents the wish of many to live happy and healthy lives and in the end – to die quickly without suffering. Temples catering to the wish of a sudden death are growing rapidly in Japan given its aging population. Photos: <http://www.saihouzi.com/gallery/a-03.html> and <http://www2.hp-ez.com/hp/seiryuji/page1>

Bottom Row, Left to Right

1. Ryō En Jizō 良縁地藏, Japan. Late 20th century. Stone. H. 40 cm. Hase Dera, Kamakura. Photo by author. Three cute statues depicting papa, mama, and child (middle). Ryō En is loosely translated as "good family relations" -- the Jizō who helps find a good mate for life. This "cute" version of Jizō is now widespread.
2. Mizuko Jizō with child, Japan. Circa 1980. Stone. H. life-size. Hase Dera, Kamakura. Photo by author. Standard portrayal of Mizuko Jizō.

BONUS SLIDE. KANNON PHOTO MONTAGE – MODERN FORMS

Top Row (Left to Right), then Bottom Row (Left to Right)

1. Bokefuji Kannon ぼけ封じ観音, Japan. Late 20th century. Metal. H. approx. one meter. Imakumano Kannonji Temple. Kyoto. Photo by author. The fifteenth stop on a popular thirty-three Kannon pilgrimage circuit. This new form of Kannon wards off dementia in the elderly and is commonly portrayed with an old man and woman praying at her feet. Busloads of senior citizens visit here daily to receive Kannon's protection and to buy a special pillowcase they can use at home.
2. Mizuko Kannon, Japan. Modern. Wood. H. 20 cm. Found in shop in Kyoto. Photo by author. Mizuko Kannon is typically surrounded by children or holding a child. This new version of Kannon draws on the iconography of much earlier manifestations of Kannon known as Jibo Kannon (Loving-Mother Kannon), Koyasu Kannon (Child-Giving Kannon), and Maria Kannon (Mother Mary Kannon) – the latter is a Christian variant employed when Christianity was outlawed in Japan's Edo era.
3. Bokefuji Kannon ぼけ封じ観音, Japan. Late 20th century. Gilded Wood. H. life-size. Ai no Kannon Dō Hall 愛の観音堂, near Kannawa Onsen 鉄輪温泉, Beppu. Photos from web. Yet another representation of the Kannon who allays fears of senile dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Photo: http://drive-nikki.com/kannawa_spa.html
4. Bokefuji Kannon ぼけ封じ観音, Japan. Late 20th century. Cute temple poster hanging inside temple compound. Ōhirayama Kurayoshi Temple 大平山 金毘羅院. Kurayoshi City 倉吉市, Tottori. Photo by Gabi Greve. There is a pilgrimage to Bokefuji temples in this area. This temple is site twenty. Source: <http://darumapilgrim.blogspot.jp/2006/10/oohirayama-kurayoshi.html>
5. Dōbutsu Shūgō Kannon 動物集合観音, Japan. Late 20th / early 21st century. Metal. H. life-size. Sho-unji Temple 正雲寺, Yufu-shi, Oita. Photo by author. A modern form of Kannon devoted to the care of suffering animals, one granting eternal rest to pets, one invoked in prayers for deceased pets at pet cemeteries.
SOURCE: http://www.geocities.jp/graphic_journal09/daibutsu/044_shounji/index.html
TEMPLE Cost of headstones <http://shounji.or.jp/kiten.html>

THE END

The message seems clear – adapt to the times, address changing spiritual needs, remain relevant as society changes. Otherwise get swept into the historical dustbin.

Photos on last slide show two protective Jizō statues along the Kinubariyama Hiking Course in Kamakura.
Photos by Mark Schumacher.

