

## IN BUDDHIST TEMPLES

### II. KIYOMIDZU

**K**IYOMIDZU is not only a popular Buddhist temple but it is one of the most picturesquely situated in Kyoto. When the maple turns to crimson, the grounds of Kiyomidzu present a beautiful sight. He who then strolls in Kiyomidzu grounds not only refreshes his artistic sense but can study many aspects of popular Buddhism. It is one of the twenty-five places sacred to Hōnen Shōnin and is also one of the thirty-three sacred to Kwannon, the goddess of mercy. Two great Korean lions guard the entrance and at each side of the gate are two great Ni-o. At the entrance of every great Buddhist temple we find these guardian Ni-o. Ni-o means "two kings" and the two kings are the great Brahmanic gods, Brahma and Indra. They are the keepers of the temple gates and are colossal figures with great muscles and fierce expression. They are clad only with a loin cloth and flowing scarf. They are placed on each side of the temple entrance enclosed in a kind of cage. The one on the right, Indra painted green and with open mouth as if uttering "Ah!", represents the *Yo* or male principle. Brahma painted green with closed lips as if uttering "Um!" represents the *Yin* or female principle. Indra represents command and Brahma resolve; Indra, the outgoing breath, Brahma the in-drawing. Pilgrims address prayers to the gods and cast little paper spit balls at them and believe that if the pellets stick to the figures, the prayers will be heard. Some of the Ni-o statues are very splendid.

After passing by these great gate guardians we emerge into a temple compound, and after climbing up stone steps, we find a pagoda dedicated to Dainichi (Vairochana-Buddha) and some small temple buildings, the library, and the abbots'

residence; and from the balustrade there is a magnificent view of the city of Kyoto.

The main temple is large, one hundred and ninety feet long, built in the so-called palace style, and it is dedicated to Kwannon, the image of which is shown only once in thirty-three years. It is not so much the altar within as the great platform without or stage for the holy dance that claims attention, for it projects out over a deep gorge crowded with maple-trees, fifty-four feet above the ground. According to tradition, it was while standing on this platform that there arose in the mind of Hideyoshi a vision of the conquest of Korea and China. In ancient times there were frequent cases of devotees jumping down the precipice from the platform, believing that if their prayers had been heard they would not be injured by the fall.

It is on this platform in front of one of the temple rooms that I noticed a kind of jug, not very large, containing some fluid. I asked one of the temple priests what it was, and he told me that the jug contained the tea offered to Kwannon and that people with sickness dipped out some of it into a bottle and took it home to use as a medicine,—like a miniature Lourdes.

Kwannon in whose honour this temple was built is that form of her called the Jū-ichi-men or eleven-faced Kwannon. This is a translation of one of her titles "Samantamukha" meaning "the all-looking," the god or goddess who looks every way in the effort to save souls. This Kwannon has also one thousand hands and shows the desire she has to reach out to save everyone in every possible way. In each hand is a Buddhist emblem, a wheel, a rosary, a lotus, a rope, a bowl, an incense burner, and many others, and in the top pair of hands figures of the Buddha.

The legendary origin of the temple is told to have been in the following manner: In the reign of the Emperor Kōnin,

A.D. 770-781, a devoted monk called Enchin lived in a temple in Yamato province. On account of instruction received in a dream, he went to the river Kidzu and near there found a golden stream. Tracing it to its source he came to a small hut where was seated an aged man dressed in white robes. In reply to questions, this old man whose name was Gyoei, said, "For two hundred years I have been here praying to Kwannon and waiting for you to come and take my place for a while in order that I may make a journey to a distant province. Take my hut for your home and from the yonder log make an image of Kwannon. In case my return should be delayed until after it had been completed, then you must also build a shrine in which to install the image." As Enchin assented to these propositions, the old man started out on his journey. Afterwards, Enchin found a pair of shoes lying on the ground near by, which indicated that the old man was a manifestation of Kwannon himself. Though Enchin was anxious to fulfil his promise, he was unable even to move the log itself. For years he gazed at it in dismay, when at last in 783, a noted General named Tamura-marō, while on a hunting expedition to get meat for his sick wife, pursued a stag to the neighbourhood of the hut. Hearing from Enchin all that had happened, he became so interested in the story that he hastened home to repeat it to his wife. She said to him that the slaying of animals on her account would serve only to increase her guilt and its punishment, while the making of the image would be a meritorious deed that would surely bring its reward. So the noble pair united in helping Enchin carve the image from the sacred wood which had been prepared by Gyoei or rather by Kwannon himself. This statue is now the principal object of worship in the temple.

In 794 when Kyoto was founded, Tamura-marō followed the Emperor of the time to the new capital and gave his

house for building a shrine which was then called Kwannonji and which still remains under the name of Tamurado. The images that are installed on the sides of the principal one are Shōgun Jizō Bosatzu and Shōteki Bishamon, both being the workmanship of Enchin. It is said that when Tamura-maro's army was sent to subdue the rebellious provinces in the north-east these images appeared before it to lead the way. The marks of the arrows shot by the enemy are said to be still visible on them. On one occasion when the Emperor Kwammu was ill, he was restored to health through the prayer of Enchin who came to the Imperial palace for that special purpose. As a reward the Emperor gave to Tamura-maro a building which was to be transformed into a Buddhist temple at Kiyomidzu. As the ground chosen was steep and uneven it seemed impossible for a large building. One stormy night, however, a number of stags came out and with their horns levelled the ground. In 807, the Emperor Heijo gave Tamura-maro one of his palace buildings, which was transferred to Kiyomidzu, and the Emperor named it Otowa-san. The building was unfortunately destroyed by fire in 1708, and the new one standing in its place was raised by Tokugawa Iyemitsu two years later.

The small temple halls in the enclosure remind one at every step of Buddhist worthies, for each one is dedicated to those associated with the history of Buddhism. The Amida-do is dedicated to Amida; in the Hokke-Sammaido are enshrined Kwannon, Bishamon, and Jizo; the Kaisan-do contains statues of Tamura-maro, his wife, Taka-ko, Gyoei, Enchin, and the great royal patron of Buddhism, Shōtokutaishi; the Kyōdo or library has Shakamuni seated on the lotus, having Fugen, god of love, on his right on the elephant, and Monju, god of wisdom, on the left on the lion.

At the Amida Hall may be seen a statue of Hōren Shōnin, said to be carved by himself, and small *ofudas* or

prints of the saint may be purchased. He is here, as generally depicted in priest's robes, holding a rosary, his gentle and benign face looking out at one serenely as he tells his beads. Back of this building there is an open shed where in several tiers are many small carved images of Jizo. It is believed by some that women with sick babies pray to the Jizos, and when they are healed give tokens to the Jizos; but according to the temple attendant this is not the case. On the contrary the baby has died and when the sorrowing mother comes here, she picks out that figure which to her mind most resembles the lost one and bestows upon the Jizo some article which belonged to the dead child, a cap or a bib, and perhaps a rosary, with the child's name written upon the bib; for Jizo is the guardian of little children in the after-world.

Jizo is a most popular god. He is generally represented as a Buddhist priest with shaven head with a halo and holding in his left hand a gem and in his right a staff. In the centre of his forehead is an illuminating boss. He is especially venerated as the guardian of dead children. When they go to the underworld, the compassionate Jizo befriends them and chases the demons away. Lafcadio Hearn writes in his *Glimpses of Unfamiliar Japan* most charmingly of Jizo. He says:

“Little piles of stone are placed upon his pedestal. It is said that these little towers of stones are built by child-ghosts for penance in the Sai-no-Kawara which is the place to which all children after death must go. And the *Oni* (demons) come to throw down the stone-piles and to frighten and torment the children. But the little souls run to Jizo, who hides them in his great sleeves and comforts them. And every stone one lays upon the knees or at the feet of Jizo with a prayer from the heart helps some child-soul to perform his long penance . . . The real origin of this custom of

piling up stones before the images of Jizo is not known to the people. The custom is founded upon a passage in the famous sutra, *The Lotus of the Good Law*: 'Even the little boys and girls who in playing erected here and there heaps of sand with the intention of dedicating them as stupas (dedicatory mounds) to the Buddhas, they have all of them reached enlightenment' . . . The stones heaped about the statue are put there by the people for the sake of the little ones, most often by mothers of dead children."

In the cemeteries is frequently seen Roku-Jizo, a group of six Jizo. Their faces look alike, but each figure differs from the other by the attitude and emblematic attribute. The first holds an incense burner; the second, a lotus; the third, a pilgrim's staff; the fourth, a rosary; the fifth stands in the attitude of prayer with hands joined; the sixth bears in one hand the *shakujō*, the mendicant monk's staff with six rings attached to the top of it, and in the other the mystic jewel by virtue of which all desire may be attained. This last is the most familiar representation of Jizo and often stands by himself as headstone of a grave under which probably sleeps calmly a dead child.

Below the minor temples is the waterfall, Otowa-no-taki. This water is famous for its purity and coldness, and it is believed that diseases of all kinds are cured by bathing in the fall. Behind sits an image of the popular god, Fudo, whose signification in Buddhist iconography is fully explained in an article appearing elsewhere in the present number of this magazine. Now two old women approached the Fudo with sticks of incense in their hands. Reverently they lighted the sticks and inserted them in the incense-holder. As the smoke of the incense ascended towards the face of Fudo, the old women bowed low, and then taking their rosaries passed them through the waves and curls of the incense over and over again. Again they bowed murmuring prayers, and then

with their rosaries clasped tightly to them, they turned and passed down the stone-steps. It was a touching little episode.

I was to see another that day before the altar of the god Zuigu who had a small temple building of his own where burned many candles and where the fumes of innumerable sticks of incense floated, I noticed a young woman pretty and well-dressed kneeling. Her head was bowed and she held a pink coral rosary in her hands. Then I remembered that Zuigu is the god who grants all desires. Pray to him, it is said, with trust and devotion, and he will not fail to give you the desire of your heart. Not the powerful remover of difficulties like the stern Fudo, but the kind bestower of good gifts is the smiling Zuigu. Where the two old women turned in their troubles to Fudo, the young girl had cast her desire before Zuigu. And yet are they not one and the same, all symbols of the one unity, the one Dharmakaya standing behind all? Whether in trouble one goes to Fudo, or in grief like the weeping mother to Jizo, or in the flush of youth for some worldly desire to Zuigu, or for help of all kinds to the merciful Kwannon, one is still offering worship to the one, to the Supreme Buddha of all.

However, it is of the symbol of the Buddha which we call the goddess Kwannon (in Sanskrit Avalokiteśvara) that we should think in Kiyomidzu; for it is in her honour that Kiyomidzu was raised, I write "her," for in Japan Kwannon is always considered a goddess; but in Indian Buddhism Avalokiteśvara is a man. In reality, Avalokiteśvara is sexless and represents the sexlessness of the Buddha. It is only among scholars that the original character of Avalokiteśvara is remembered, but popularly in Japan, the idea of mercy and pity seems to have a feminine aspect as it has also in China where Kwannon is worshipped as Kuanyin. Her female character comes out most prominently when she is represented as a child-nursing deity, Komori-Kwannon, and

in this one is strongly reminded of the Christian conception of Madonna. In fact, during the feudal days when Christians were persecuted by the Tokugawa government, Madonna was worshipped actually in the form of the Komori-Kwannon.

Kwannon has thirty-three temples in Kyoto and neighbouring provinces sacred to her, and Kiyomidzu is the sixteenth, and the Kwannon worshipped here is the Senju or Thousand-handed,—thousand-handed because each hand is a hand of help held out in love and pity to those who seek her aid in prayer. She is undoubtedly the most popular deity in Japan and worshipped by all sects as the aspect of love and mercy of THE BUDDHA.

Six or thirty-three representations of Kwannon are frequently mentioned. The six Kwannons are (1) Shō-Kwannon, the Holy One; (2) Senju, the Thousand-handed, (3) Medzu, the Horse-headed; (4) Jū-ichi-men, the Eleven-faced; (5) Nyo-i-rin, the Desire-yielding Wheel, who is easily distinguished by his seated position, with one knee raised and cheek pillowed as Hearn expresses it upon the left hand; and (6) Fukūkenjaku, one with “unerring rope,” who is generally depicted with a piece of rope in his left hand. The idea of the thirty-three Kwannons comes from a passage in the *Lotus of the Good Law* in which Kwannon is told to incarnate himself in different personalities according to the character of his object. But in his popular representations the original idea is all lost and he is seen clad in white robes, or carrying a branch of willow tree, or with a fish-basket, or simply with a halo around his head. The figure suggests more of the feminine aspect of the deity than otherwise.

As I passed through the old burying ground of Kiyomidzu, where were the graves of hundreds of faithful devotees of Kwannon, I found myself thinking of this—the One in the many and the many in the One. The popular mind loves to think of the Buddha in his aspect of the merciful Kwannon,



for this brings the god or goddess nearer to the human heart. So many do not understand this and think these people here who worship in Buddhist temples are idol-worshippers of many gods. Not so: whether they know it or not, and more know it than one would suppose, it is the One Buddha that they are worshipping—the One Buddha who looks down at them and is one with them, the Buddha Universal. Here at Kiyomidzu, he manifests himself as Kwannon, the Merciful One, Avalokiteśvara, the one who looks down from high. At Kiyomidzu well may one meditate upon the Buddha in this aspect of his and learn to know him as Pity, as Mercy, and as Love.

SEIREN (BLUE LOTUS)