

Establishment of the Deer Mandala of the Kasuga Shrine in the Collection of the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts and the Kasuga Myojin Oracle

By TABUCHI, Kaho

These research notes take into consideration the beliefs and expressive features at the time the *Deer Mandala of the Kasuga Shrine* (hereafter the “Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts Version”) in our collection was created.

Because the Deer Mandala of the Kasuga Shrine depicts the legend of Takemikazuchi no Mikoto riding a shrine deer from Hitachi Province to Mt. Mikasayama, the mountain is frequently depicted, however, the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts Version does not have a background. The depiction of the shrine deer is unique, and underneath it one can see a large torii gate. The deer is facing forward, and light is radiating from a round mirror on top of a sakaki evergreen tree depicted in the lotus position.

The Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts Version features an ink inscription, with the oracle on the top and the *hotsugan bun*, or vow, on the bottom. The *hotsugan bun* reveals that Shogen, a Shinto priest from Kyoto, vowed to create this version as the principle image in November of 1406 (Oei 13). The oracle is that of Kasuga Myojin, and the phrase “house of evil thoughts” indicates that there was a scandal around the time the vow was made. Koryaku records show the occurrence of an impure incident related to the Kasuga Festival on January 21, 1406. It is conceivable that the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts Version was commissioned to exorcise the impurity of this event.

Considering the production process of the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts Version, we can infer that the above events are why it differs from other versions of the *Deer Mandala of the Kasuga Shrine*. Other than the ink inscription, details on the history of the Osaka City Museum of Fine Arts Version are unknown, however, it does serve as a hint into the backdrop of its production.

Artist-Monk Chosen/Mugen/Dokucho
— Rediscovering His Art and History (Continued)

By CHINEN, Satoru

This is a continuation of a discussion that aims to interpret the activities of Dokucho Shokyo (date of birth unknown – 1664), artist and monk of the Rinzaï sect of Zen Buddhism, published in issue No. 23 of this journal. It delves into artistic expressions in the *Illustrated Biography of Prince Shotoku* (three volumes, Eifukuji Temple collection) and the written tradition of *kotobagaki*, or the textual sections of illustrated scrolls, aiming to confirm that Mugen (Chosen) is the artist, and to verify the authenticity of the list of *kotobagaki* writers included in the illustrated biography. In search of the correct *kotobagaki* (picture scroll completion and offering) chronology, this discussion also offers the likelihood that it took place in 1649 (Keian 2) based on when the manuscript writers served in their posts. With the picture scroll commissioned by Retired Emperor Go-Mizunoo in mind, it also reports on the involvement of Nyosetsu Mongan, the chief priest of Eigenji Temple who was a close associate of Mugen, as well as data searches and new examples of works by Chosen and Dokucho.

Changes to Beiqi (Northern Qi) Dynasty Buddhist Image Trends in Yecheng
— Observations Based on Fieldwork Knowledge

By TABAYASHI, Kei

Buddhist images unearthed in Yecheng are recognized as the foundation for Northern Qi style in the later half of the Dongwei (Eastern Wei) dynasty, which in turn established the Northern Qi style upon influence from the outside. Also, because tree-shaped halos on Northern Qi images imply that they are derived from a seated statue of the Buddha half-inclined in meditation, it is conceivable that adoration for the Buddha is one of the elements that forms the bedrock of Northern Qi sculpture. In the early Northern Qi dynasty, around 550s, there were two schools of thought: radical and traditional, and in time, a school (Group A) that pursued integration in the same way as at the Bei(Northern)Xiangtangshan southern cave was established starting in the 560s. At the same time as the orthodox style, a school (Group B) that aimed for a unique sense of three dimensionality and group image expression came into being. Influence from the western regions was behind the changes to single images from the 560s, which prompted the introduction of decorative medallions, chiefly exerting formative design influence on Group B. The pedestal at the Hakutsuru Fine Art Museum is viewed as a standard work of the Group B school.