Akisato Ritō (fl. 1780-1814)
Japan
Famous Places in the Capital (Miyako meisho zue)
1804, Edo period (1600-1868)
woodcut book
33.2 x 18.1 cm
Gift in Memory of the Quinn Family of Sedalia, Mo.
1986.0097.a,b

Essay by Ye-Gee Kwon

By the eighteenth century, Japanese people traveled around the country and visited famous places (*meisho*) for recreational and religious purposes, despite restrictions imposed by the government. As many Japanese were fascinated with seeing famous historic and religious sites through travel, printed gazetteers and guidebooks providing detailed records and pictures of these famous places were commonly produced. The guidebook *Famous Places in the Capital* in the collection of the Spencer Museum of Art includes illustrations and written facts about popular places, both religious and secular, in Kyoto. Located in the central part of the island of Honshū, Kyoto was Japan's imperial capital from 794 to 1868, functioning as the political, historical, cultural, and religious hub filled with temples, shrines, imperial palaces, villas, tombs, bridges, and pagodas. Originally published in a six-volume set in 1780, *Famous Places in the Capital* was widely available to potential travelers, who consulted the volumes before their excursions. This book was republished many times, and the copy in the Spencer Museum of Art dates from 1804.

Many of the selected sites in *Famous Places in the Capital* include Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines. In the book, most of the pictures of temples and shrines are spread across two facing pages in horizontal compositions. The page on view illustrates a bird's-eye view of Tōji temple, which shows the expanse of the precinct while carefully depicting and labeling each

building. Tōji has been regarded as one of the most celebrated and significant temples in Kyoto due to its connection to the remarkable monk, Kūkai (774-835). Kūkai, posthumously known as Kōbō Daishi, is most commonly revered as the founder of the Shingon denomination of Esoteric Buddhism in Japan. He emphasized the transmission of *mikkyō*, or "secret teachings," of the esoteric Dainichi Nyorai (Cosmic Buddha) who embodied and preached *dharma* (truth or teachings of the Buddha) that practicing Buddhists pursued through rituals, imagery, and texts.

Kūkai was born in 774 in a village in Sanuki (present-day Kagawa) prefecture on the island of Shikoku. In 804, Kūkai joined an envoy to China and visited the Chinese capital of Chang'an (present-day Xi'an), then the center of Esoteric Buddhism. There, he studied under the Chinese prelate named Huiguo (746-805), and was ordained as the eighth Patriarch of Shingon (Ch. *Chenyen*) Buddhism. When he returned to Japan in 806, Kūkai brought a vast array of texts, scroll paintings, and other ritual implements that enriched the textual, material, and visual culture of Shingon Buddhism in Japan. As a religious leader and public figure, Kūkai not only administered important temples, including Tōdaiji, the central temple in Nara, and Tōji in Kyoto, but also established his own monastery, Kongōbuji, at Mount Kōya. He died at Mount Kōya in 835 at the age of sixty-two. When his followers opened the tomb to put in the emperor's decree to bestow Kūkai the posthumous title Kōbō Daishi in 921, they found him still sitting in meditation and his flesh warm. Because of this legend, devotees still venerate him as a popular "living saint," remaining alive in eternal meditation on Mount Kōya.

This "living saint" Kūkai contributed to converting Tōji, a state temple in the capital, into a center of Shingon Buddhism. In 796, Tōji, literally meaning Eastern Monastery, was founded as a state-sponsored Buddhist monastery in Kyoto, along with Saiji (West Monastery). Emperor Kanmu (r. 781-806) intended these two temples in the new capital of Kyoto to substitute and

rival the clergy of the national monasteries in the old capital of Nara. Emperor Kanmu's death, however, disrupted the completion of Tōji. In 823 the Emperor Saga (r. 809-823), the son of the Emperor Kanmu, ordered Kūkai to complete the construction and manage the temple. The succeeding ruler, Emperor Junna (r. 823-833), also approved Kūkai's authority to be in charge of Tōji. Emperor Junna permitted Kūkai to use the temple exclusively for Shingon students and forbade monks of other schools to reside there. From then on, Kūkai devoted himself to developing Tōji as a Shingon temple, renaming the temple Kyōōgokokuji (Nation-Protecting Lord of the Sūtras Temple).

The pages depicting Tōji in *Famous Places in the Capital* present the temple layout based on Kūkai's vision. When Kūkai was given charge of Tōji in 824, the only major building to have been completed there was the Golden Hall (*kondō*). The Golden Hall refers to the principal hall housing the most sacred images in Buddhist temples. Shown in the lower right section of the left page of the book, the Golden Hall, the second-story building with double roofs, is the largest structure in the temple compound. In the print, the building is described with greatly detailed architectural elements, including masonry foundations, wooden pillars, hipped-gable roofs, windows, and doors. A fire destroyed the original building in 1486, damaging other structures in the temple. The Golden Hall presented here was rebuilt in 1603, and it still exists. The Golden Hall houses, as a main object of worship, a large wooden sculpture of the seated Yakushi Nyorai, Buddha of Medicine and Healing, flanked by his two bodhisattva attendants, Nikkō (Sunlight) and Gakkō (Moonlight). Shortly after his appointment, Kūkai added a Lecture Hall (*kōdō*) and a pagoda to the temple precinct. Moreover, he intended to fill these buildings with icons reflecting esoteric concepts and ritual requirements.

As seen in the print, the Lecture Hall is located behind the Golden Hall, serving as the center for teaching sutras and performing rituals. As the second largest building in the Tōji precinct, the Lecture Hall has a similar structure found in the Golden Hall, which consists of a masonry foundation, pillars, doors, windows, and a hipped-gable roof. In particular, the depiction of Lecture Hall's roof in the print shows some resemblance to that of the top roof of the Golden Hall. The building plan for the Lecture Hall was created in 825 by Kūkai, but was completed by 835, two and a half months before Kūkai's death. Not only did Kūkai design the setting of the Lecture Hall, but he also conceived the carvings of the twenty-one images to be installed in the hall. The nearly life-sized sculptures represent different Buddhist deities, such as Buddhas, bodhisattvas, Myōō (Wrathful Wisdom Kings), and Four Guardian Kings. At the center of this assembly, surrounded by other sculptures, is Dainichi Nyorai (Sk. Vairocana). These sculpted images are arranged on a low altar as a sculptural diagram reflecting Kūkai's *mikkyō* teachings. The fire of 1486 burned the original Lecture Hall and six of its sculptures. Fifteen of the original images survive, making this one of the best places in Japan to view ninth-century sculpture. Later, the building was rebuilt in 1491, closely following the original plan, and the destroyed sculptures were refashioned during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, imitating the appearance of the original statues. The earthquake of 1596 destroyed the Lecture Hall again. The building was restored two years later, and it stands still. Nonetheless, the Tōji Lecture Hall program of statues and its meaning was conceptualized by Kūkai and transmitted to his disciples.

As seen on the bottom left corner of the right page of the book, across from the Golden Hall and the Lecture Hall stands a five-storied pagoda, which was originally erected by Kūkai in 826. Rebuilt in 1644, the pagoda stands 58.4 meters high, making it the tallest structure in the Tōji complex. A pagoda, the concept of which was originally developed in India, worked as a

facility for preserving the Buddha's relics in a simple earthen mound. After Buddhism reached China, pagodas became tall, tiered structures, inspired by the Chinese watchtower combined with the Indian *stupa*, a mound-like structure containing Buddhist relics. From China, this architectural development spread to Korea and then to Japan. Unlike many pagodas in Japanese temples, the tall, tiered pagoda at Tōji has interior walls and pillars elaborately decorated with esoteric Buddhist imagery. Most Japanese pagodas cannot be entered and have undecorated interior spaces. In addition to the decorated walls and pillars, the Tōji pagoda houses Buddhist sculptures. In the print, the inside of the pagoda is hidden from view, and its lower part is obscured by trees. However, one can see five roofs with bells at each end and a finial decorated with rings, which characterize a Japanese pagoda.

To the left of the Golden Hall and the Lecture Hall, as seen in the print, another building directly related to Kūkai is a large, horizontal structure called Founder's Portrait Hall (*mieidō*), also known as the Hall of the Great Teacher (*daishidō*). This Founder's Portrait Hall was built to honor Kūkai, the most distinguished figure in Japanese Shingon Buddhism, thus signifying the Shingon heritage of the temple. Illustrated in the upper part of the left page of the Tōji image within *Famous Places in the Capital*, the Founder's Portrait Hall has an unusual form because it is adjoined to the Hall for Fudō Myōō (Immovable King of Light), who is considered a fierce manifestation of Dainichi Nyorai. While the Founder's Portrait Hall faces north, the adjoined Fudō Hall faces south. Moreover, the Founder's Portrait Hall has dual entrances and a roofed corridor leading out the west side. Located within a space separated from the Golden Hall and the Lecture Hall by high fences, the Founder's Portrait Hall is delineated by a gently inclined pyramidal roof that has a residential atmosphere, as shown in the print.

The fourteenth-century *Records of Tōji* (*Tōbōki*) recounts that Kūkai had reputedly lived in the Founder's Portrait Hall and used the adjacent Fudō Hall as his private room to enshrine the ninth-century sculpture of Fudō Myōō and worship the deity. According to legend, when Kūkai entered into eternal meditation in 835, this Fudō Myōō came out to the front of the gate and saw Kūkai off. A portrait sculpture of Kūkai, made in 1233 by Kōshō who was the fourth son of the master sculptor Unkei, was placed first at the Fudō Hall and later inside the Founder's Portrait Hall. With this sculpture as the focal point, memorial services have been held in the Founder's Portrait Hall since 1240. The entire building burned down in a fire in 1379. In 1390, it was rebuilt as a dual-purpose structure to house both the image of Kūkai on one side and the image of Fudō Myōō on the other side.[1] The adjoined structure of the Founder's Portrait Hall and Fudō Hall may have resulted from the lack of space within the Tōji temple ground. Nevertheless, the presence of the two sculptures of Kūkai and Fudō Myōō appears to have enhanced the sacred atmosphere of the Founder's Portrait Hall, thus intensifying the power of Kūkai.

Aside from the buildings, the page on view shows different kinds of trees and visitors to the temple in and around the Tōji compound. Men and women of all ages may have come to the temple to pray for their health, success, wealth, and happiness, or to enjoy beautiful scenery. As this page depicting Tōji indicates, the woodblock-printed guidebook, *Famous Places in the Capital*, presents many precincts of religious sites, including Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines, which attracted many Japanese visitors. The enthusiastic Japanese populace could get access to printed gazetteers and guidebooks, such as *Famous Places in the Capital*, at bookstores

[1] Both of these sculptures are known as hidden images, or *hibutsu*. A *Hibutsu* is a Buddhist image, which is ordinarily kept concealed. These two images are placed in miniature shrines, which open thier doors to the public at regular intervals. Openings may be seasonal, annual, or in cycles of seven, thirty-three or sixty years. In some cases, an image is never shown. The Tōji portrait sculpture of Kūkai is shown only on the twenty-first of each month on his memorial day. The Fudō Myōō sculpture was publically seen for the first time in the early 1950s on the occasion of restoration work on the Founder's Portrait Hall.

and commercial rental libraries. Although this type of guidebook could have been used for recreational purposes, the temples and shrines illustrated inside the book indeed reveal divine inspiration.

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