

INOUE, Taiki

On the Original Statues of the Rokuharamitsuji (Saikōji)

This article studies the central sculptural icons at Rokuharamitsuji (Saikōji), namely an *Eleven-Headed Avalokitesvara* image, three of the temple's Shitennō images (with the exception of the later added Zōchōten), and a *Seated Image of Yakushi*, and considers the circumstances that led to their creation. Needless to say, Rokuharamitsuji began as Saikōji, established by the mid Heian period priest Kōya. After his death, the temple was renamed Rokuharamitsuji and became a famous Tendai sect temple.

This article's rich originality stands as its most praiseworthy aspect. The author focuses on the fact that the creation of sculptures was carried out by a “Chishikiyui,” or Buddhist organization, and posits the participation of ancient regent families as patrons. He further clarifies that in terms of Kōya's Nenbutsu principle, Kōya used his knowledge and the sculptures' characteristics to ward off the spirits of the dead. Given, in particular, the geographical location of Saikōji and the state of affairs of the regent families at the time, it is fascinating to note that the author indicates that it was anticipated that the temple would have imperial tomb temple characteristics for the pacification of the nearby mausoleum of Fujiwara Takushi, a court lady of Emperor Nimmyō.

Previous scholarship had argued that the Jikokuten image was a copy of the image in Tōji's Lecture Hall, and this theory was the focus of attention from scholars. Here Inoue remarks on this theory but refocuses the discussion on the fact that Emperor Nimmyō commissioned the Tōji image rather than the relationship between Kūkai and those image which had been the focal point in the previous studies. Judging from the fact that both Kōya and the

style formation related to the Shitennô images were closely connected to the Tendai sect, the author goes on to suggest that the original image for the Saikôji figure, was the sculpture in the Jôshin'in at Mt. Hiei, also commissioned by the same Emperor Nimmyô. The author's interest also turns to the recipients of mudra and concluded that there was some acknowledgement that what the Emperor Nimmyô established should be respected as the canon. In other words, the Rokuharamitsuji sculptures should be positioned within the orthodox mainstream of Heian period sculptural history, and their formal models should also be understood as having orthodox validity.

This article is rich in new information and encourages a reconsideration of our views on the Rokuharamitsuji sculptures, and clearly indicates directions for future study in the area. Of course, the article includes a large number of hypotheses, but they are proven by both stylistic and documentary evidence, all constituting a strong and persuasive argument. While the article is not completely free of ideas outstripping argument, it is highly praiseworthy for its invigorating theories on Buddhist sculpture that reflect recent scholarly trends.

For these reasons we select this article as worthy of the *Bijutsushi* Article Prize.