

# The Who's Who of Japanese Deities

And how to identify them in Japanese art

# The Hierarchy of Deities

- Buddhas (J: nyorai 如来)
- Bodhisattvas (J: bosatsu 菩薩)
- Wisdom Kings (J: myōō 明王)
- Celestial Beings (J: tenbu 天部)

There is always an exception.

# Six Realms of Rebirth (J: rokudō 六道)



- Of celestial beings (J: tendō 天道)
- Of humans (J: jindō 人道)
- Of ashuras (J: ashuradō 阿修羅道)
- Of animals (J: chikushōdō 畜生道)
- Of hungry ghosts (J: gakiō 餓鬼道)
- Of hellish beings (J: jigokudō 地獄道)

# Bosatsu 菩薩

- Enlightened beings
- Delay Buddhahood
- Ministers/guides (to non-enlightened beings)
- Princely garb
- Jewelry and ornamental bands



# Triad (J: sanzon 三尊)



- Attendants to a buddha
- Left-right arrangement: Yakushi triad
  - Nikkō bosatsu 日光菩薩 and Gakkō bosatsu 月光菩薩

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# Kannon bosatsu 観音菩薩

- Avalokitesvara
- Male/female
- Associated with compassion
- Exceptionally popular
- Attendant to Amida nyorai
  - To his proper left
- Buddha in crown (J: kebutsu 化仏)
- Thirty-three forms (J: sanjūsanshin 三十三身)
- Six Kannon (J: Roku kannon 六観音)





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Shō kannon  
聖観音  
Sacred Kannon  
Hellish Beings



Senju kannon  
千手観音  
Thousand-armed Kannon  
Hungry Ghosts



Batō kannon  
馬頭観音  
Horse-headed Kannon  
Animals



Jūichimen Kannon  
十一面観音  
Eleven-headed Kannon  
Ashuras



Juntei Kannon  
准胝観音  
Pure Kannon  
Humans

Nyoirin Kannon  
如意輪観音  
Wish-fulfilling Kannon  
Celestial Beings

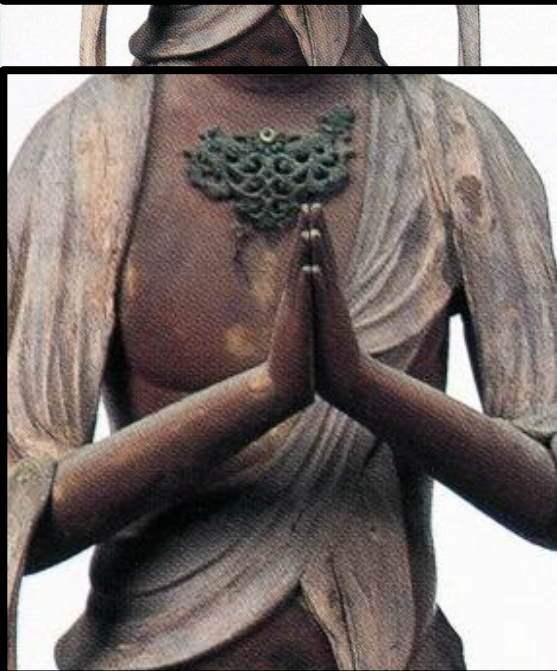




# (Dai)Seishi bosatsu 勢至菩薩

- Mahasthamaprapta
- Associated with wisdom
- Attendant to Amida nyorai
  - To his proper right
- Water jar (J: suibyō 水瓶)  
in crown
- Mudra of respect  
(J: gasshō-in 合掌印)

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# Jizō bosatsu 地蔵菩薩



- Ksitigarbha
- Associated with salvation
- Attendant to Amida (occasionally replaces Seishi)
- Monk-like appearance
  - Bald head
  - Simple robes
  - Lacking ornamentation
- Wish-fulfilling jewel (J: hōju 宝珠)
- Staff (J: shakujō 錫杖)
  - Rings in finial
- Six Jizō (J: Roku Jizō 六地蔵)

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# Jizō and the Hells



- Deceased souls judged by Ten Kings (J: Jūō 十王)
- Jizō as intercessor/savior



# Sai no kawara 賽の河原



- Jizō: protector of children
- Young children who predecease their parents
- Stack riverbed stones
- Possible origin of red bibs

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# Monju bosatsu 文殊菩薩

- Manjushri
- Associated with wisdom
- Attendant to Shaka nyorai
  - To his proper left
- Sword in right hand
- Scroll or lotus in left hand
- Seated on lion

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# Fugen bosatsu 普賢菩薩



- Samantabhadra
- Associated with practice
- Attendant to Shaka nyorai
  - To his proper right
- Often forms the gasshō-in
- May also hold a scroll, lotus, or scepter
- Seated on six-tusked elephant

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- Attendant to Shaka nyorai
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- Seated on six-tusked elephant



# Miroku bosatsu 弥勒菩薩

- Maitreya
- Buddha of the future
- Ministers to beings in the Tusita Heaven
- Pensive posture (J: hanka shiyuizō 半跏思惟像)
  - Right leg crossed over left knee; left leg pendant
  - Hand to cheek
- Also has a buddha form (stay tuned...)

# Quiz

via the poll function

\*Note: you may have to move the poll on your screen  
so you can see the images



1



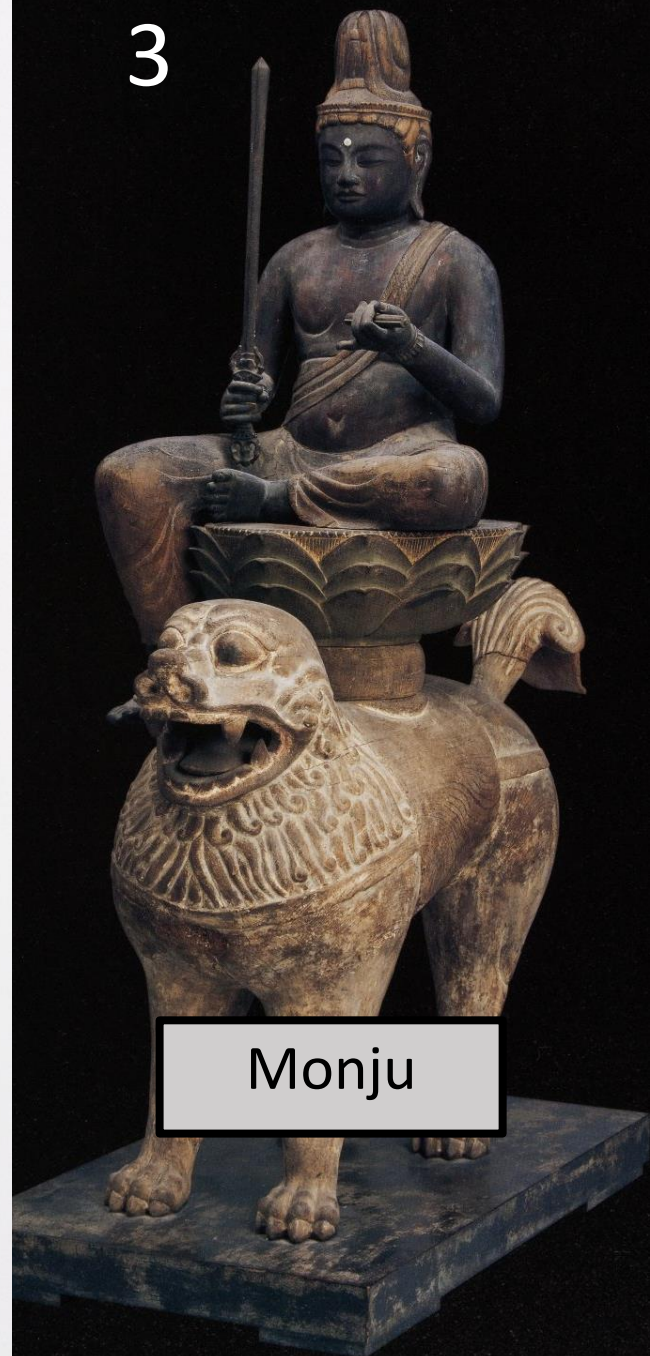
Miroku

2



Jizō

3



Monju

# Sites

- Kannon bosatsu – Yakushiji 薬師寺 (Nara), Sangatsudō 三月堂 at Tōdaiji 東大寺 (Nara), Kiyomizudera 清水寺 (Kyoto), Sanjūsangendō 三十三間堂 (Kyoto)
- Roku Kannon – Daihōonji 大報恩寺 (Kyoto)
- Jizō bosatsu – Kōryūji 広隆寺 (Kyoto), Shin'yakushiji 新薬師寺 (Nara)
- Monju bosatsu – Daikōji 大光寺 (Miyazaki), Saidaiji 西大寺 (Nara)
- Fugen bosatsu – Okurashūkōkan 大倉集古館 (Tokyo), Sanjūsangendō 三十三間堂 (Kyoto)
- Miroku bosatsu – Chūgūji 中宮寺 (Nara), Kōryūji 広隆寺 (Kyoto)

Questions  
via the Q&A function

Thank you for joining us today!

Our next virtual lecture, which will cover buddhas, will take place on August 27, 2020, at 7 pm PST.

Hope to see you there!

Please take a moment to complete the digital lecture questionnaire via the poll function. If you would like to comment on today's programming, you may do so through the Q&A function.

Further questions can be directed to my [michaelvanhartingsveldt@gmail.com](mailto:michaelvanhartingsveldt@gmail.com)