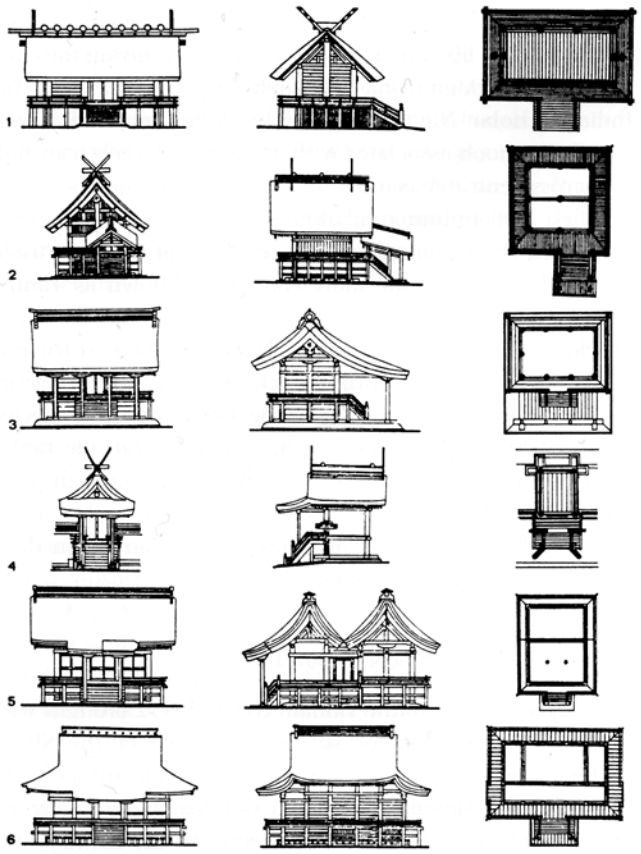
katsuogi, logs intended to weigh down the roofing material, originally thatch, today the bark of the cypress tree. Extending up from a point near the ends of the roof are two thin-sawn boards with gold-leaf ornamentation. These are *chigi*, originally extensions of the outermost rafters at each end of the gable, and a common feature of shrine architecture. A similar motif at the Izumo shrine appears as two Xs sitting on the ridgepole. Ise displays a Japanese taste for the look of aging wood. The buildings are beautiful when new, and also as they darken with time, until after twenty years the grey, weathered wood is replaced to renew the *iwakura*. Many later shrines, following the example of Buddhist temples, were painted red.

The shrine at Izumo, on the west coast in Shimane prefecture, may possibly predate Ise. The Izumo *taisha*, (grand shrine), is dedicated to Ōkuninushi no Mikoto, reputedly a fifth- or sixth-generation descendant of Amaterasu's brother Susano-o no Mikoto, who gave aid to Ninigi upon his descent from heaven. When Susano-o was banished from heaven for outraging his sister, he descended to Izumo, where he slew an eight-tailed dragon that had eaten eight of the nine daughters of an old couple who lived there. In one of the dragon's tails Susano-o found a magnificent sword, known as Kusanagi (Grass Cutter), which he gave to Amaterasu, who in turn ultimately gave it to Ninigi as one of the *Sanshu no jingi* of his imperial regalia. Ōkuninushi no Mikoto is credited with the introduction of medicine, fishing, and sericulture.



62 Shinto shrine types. Façades, side views and ground plans, left to right: 1. *shinmei* (shrine at Ise); 2. *taisha* (shrine at Izumo); 3. *nagare* (Shrine of Kamo in Kyoto); 4. Kasuga (Kasuga Shrine in Nara); 5. Hachiman (Usa Hachima Shrine, Oita prefecture); 6. Hie (Hie Shrine at Shiga). (From *Oriental Architecture*, Electa Editrice, Milan, drawings by Studio of Enzo di Grazia, after Ōta Hirotarō.)

The main hall at Izumo (Fig. 61) is said to be modeled on the palaces of the early Yamato rulers. Its size, which is considerably greater than the *honden* at Ise, is sometimes attributed to its palace prototype and sometimes explained by the idea that at some point Izumo was given the responsibility for governing religious affairs, while Ise oversaw secular matters. Raised on round piles set directly into the earth, the Izumo *honden* comprises two square bays with eight pillars framing the enclosing walls and a central pillar. The whole unit is surrounded by a veranda and capped by a curved, gabled roof. The staircase leading to the veranda is off center and the entry door pierces the gable end of the structure in the right-hand bay. This configuration of elements is known as ***taisha zukuri***, and is thought to be the oldest of the known architectural shrine styles. The Izumo *taisha* has not had the same history of rebuilding as that of Ise, and the present buildings at the shrine date, by and large, from 1744, although the Izumo *honden*, like Ise, has always retained its ancient style.

In addition to the *taisha* and *shinmei zukuri* configurations of Shinto *honden*, three more official Shinto types (and a few subsidiary ones) were developed in the succeeding Heian period, bringing Shinto architecture much more in line with developments in both Buddhist architecture and that of the aristocratic palaces (Fig. 62).

Buddhism

Buddhism evolved out of the teachings of one Shakyamuni, who lived in northern India in the fifth century B.C.E. Born a prince, he subsequently abandoned his privileges in order to search for the true nature of being. He came to understand this after many years of meditation and privation under a bodhi tree, and after his Enlightenment he set out to teach what he had discovered to others. The teachings of the Buddha (Enlightened One; JAP. *butsu*) are characterized as the **Dharma** (Law; JAP. Hō), and the teaching of them the Buddha characterized as the "turning of the wheel of the Law." As his first sermon took place in a deer park, these creatures have ever since symbolized throughout the Buddhist world the first sermon and the commencement of the turning of the wheel of the Law.

Shakyamuni's teachings were based on the age-old Indian concept of interdependent origination—or karma (JAP. *go*). That is, each moment arises out of a multitude of causes and conditions and in turn conditions the next moment. Thus the soul is repeatedly reincarnated and the nature of those reincarnations is created by karma. If one's karma is bad, then the soul will have a lowly reincarnation, perhaps even subhuman. If one's karma is good, then one will have an improvement in

the next incarnation, perhaps even being elevated into the ranks of the gods. It was the Buddha's particular understanding, however, that this whole karmic cycle of birth, death, and rebirth, and the entire universe that it supposedly supported (that is, the universe we exist in), was in fact a great and self-perpetuating illusion. It is the goal of the Buddhist practitioner to break through these illusions and the endless cycle of reincarnation and realize the true nature of things thus achieving true bliss—or **nirvana**, which is often equated with emptiness.

However, it was realized that it could in fact take many lifetimes for the individual to achieve the understanding that would allow him or her to pass into nirvana. The Buddha himself formulated the Four Noble Truths: 1. life is suffering, 2. the reason for suffering is desire, 3. liberation from suffering comes from the cessation of desire, and 4. there is a path that one can follow to free oneself from desire. This path was the Eightfold Path, which consisted of right understanding, purpose, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, awareness, and concentration. The individual who follows this path closely will ultimately achieve Enlightenment and release into nirvana.

In northern India, followers of Buddhism formed themselves into a community during the Buddha's lifetime, which further evolved and expanded after his death. Those who chose, like the Buddha's disciples, to live separate from the world and not as householders became an important component of this community. From these monks and nuns, who were the core of the community, came the teachers who proselytized the message of Buddhism. However, the majority of the community always existed as laymen and women. By the beginning of the first millennium C.E., Buddhism was actively spreading beyond the confines of India into Central Asia and subsequently was to arrive in China by no later than the second century C.E. By the fifth century it had infiltrated to the Korean kingdoms, and by the sixth century it had finally arrived in Japan.

In each case, Buddhism made a terrific impact, especially with the elites of these nations, and quickly the newly established Buddhist communities founded rich and powerful—and not infrequently royally and imperially sponsored—temples, monasteries, and convents. It has been theorized that one of the concepts of Buddhism that attracted Indian and Central and East Asian rulers and their elites to Buddhism was not simply the persuasive elegance of its belief system, but also a particular aspect of it—the concept of the *chakravartin*, or universal ruler. Probably derived from an ancient Indian concept of kingship, within Buddhism the *chakravartin* came to represent a secular version of the Buddha. Therefore, a ruler could be recognized by a Buddhist community as a *chakravartin*, and for all the Buddhist faithful that ruler would thenceforth be recognized as having a kind of divine right to rule. In return, the ruler would protect and foster Buddhism within his domain.

Many different varieties of Buddhist which will be introduced in the succeeding pages. However, some notion of hierarchy is a useful starting point. Most importantly, there is the Buddha, meaning the so-called Historical Buddha Shakyamuni (JAP. **Shaka**). Just below the Buddha are the **bodhisattvas** (JAP. *bosatsu*), who are great beings that have achieved Enlightenment but have resolved not to enter nirvana until every last being has achieved that same state. To these must be added a whole host of other manifestations of the Buddha and bodhisattvas, in addition to the gods and creatures of ancient Indian cosmology. The gods in particular, usually drawn from the Vedic pantheon of ancient India, quite often are converted to Buddhism and become its protectors.

As it developed in India from around 410 B.C.E. to c. 500 C.E., Buddhism divided into three principal traditions out of which all the schools of Buddhism in Japan have evolved. The earliest of these has come to be termed by the later strains as the **Hinayana** ("Lesser Vehicle"; JAP. Shōjō). It developed the basic concepts of the Buddhist community, both monastic and lay, and also gathered together all the sutras and writings into the first the Buddhist canon—the "Three Baskets" or Sanzō (SKT. Tripitika). By the end of the first century B.C.E., however, growing dissatisfaction with what was perceived as the selfish pursuit of only one's own enlightenment led to a new Buddhist philosophy, which has come to be characterized as the **Mahayana** (Greater Vehicle; JAP. Daijō). This new tradition focused on the liberation of all living beings. During the early centuries C.E., Mahayana philosophy was formulated by the Indian scholar Nagarjuna and his followers, and it was Buddhist schools associated with it that were largely transmitted across Central Asia into China and Korea in the first half of the first millennium C.E., although there were also some important Hinayana schools. The third great Buddhist tradition is the Mantrayana, more commonly known as **Tantric** Buddhism (JAP. Kongōjō). The tantric philosophies began developing out of the Mahayana in India by at least the mid first millennium C.E. **Tantra**, in fact, refers to a literary genre distinct from the sutras. While the latter are the collected words of Shaka Buddha's earthly manifestation, the tantra are the words of the celestial Buddhas transmitted through visions to great earthly masters. These tantric schools reached China soon after their formulation in India, and from there spread to the rest of East Asia.

Buddhism's Introduction to Japan

Paekche's embassy to the Yamato court of 552 brought with it Buddhist scriptures or sutras, an image of the Shaka Buddha, and various ritual implements. Unfortunately the same year a terrible epidemic broke out throughout the archipelago, and its cause was interpreted to be the wrath of the native deities at the incursion of this foreign doctrine, and Buddhism was officially proscribed by Emperor Kimmei (r. 540–71). The small temple that had been erected for Buddhist worship was burned down, and its image was broken into pieces and thrown into the Naniwa Canal in what is now present-day Osaka.

In 584, in the reign of Kimmei's successor Bidatsu (r. 572–86), emissaries from Paekche again brought Buddhist gifts, this time an image of Shaka and also one of the Future Buddha, **Miroku** (SKT. Maitreya). Within Buddhist cosmology as it had developed by the sixth century, Shaka was only the latest of innumerable Buddhas who over countless millions of years had manifested on the earth in order to spread the Dharma. As we are still in the age of Shaka, Miroku exists in the Tosotsu (SKT. Tushita) heaven as a bodhisattva until the age of his Buddhahood, when he will descend to the earth. He is therefore either represented as a meditating and youthful bodhisattva awaiting his Buddhahood, or as a **Buddha** already, newly enthroned. Miroku was the focus of a saviour cult that was popular across Asia, particularly in the fifth and sixth centuries. Indeed, nowhere perhaps more than in Korea, where the image of the youthful, meditating Miroku becomes one of the most recognizable of Buddhist icons.

When these new Paekche images arrived, Soga no Umako asked for the images and sent a man by the name of Shiba Tatto, a Chinese immigrant who worked for the horse-trappings guild, to scour the country for Buddhist practitioners. A former monk was found, and three young women, including Tatto's daughter, became nuns. However, when Umako tried to persuade the emperor to accept Buddhism as a national religion, the leader of the Mononobe clan destroyed Umako's new-built temple, burnt the Buddha images, and had the nuns stripped and publicly flogged. The *Nihon shoki* records that a pestilence once again broke out, causing its victims to feel as if they were being consumed by fire, as the Buddha images had been. The emperor therewith relented the proscription and allowed Umako to practice unmolested, but not to proselytize.

Three years later in 587, during the reign of Emperor Yōmei (r. 586–88), the Soga clan, Prince Shōtoku, and the Ōtomo (hereditary imperial bodyguards) made their bid for power against the anti-Buddhist Nakatomi and the Mononobe, who oversaw the national armory. Although the Soga/Shōtoku faction ultimately won this civil war, Emperor Yōmei did not long survive it, and in 588 Umako's nephew Sushun ascended the imperial throne (Umako's sister had been a consort of Emperor Kimmei). As mentioned in the previous chapter in connection with his suspected burial in the Fujinoki Tomb, in 592 Sushun was assassinated—because he objected to this uncle's interference in government affairs. Sushun's sister Suiko then ascended the throne, Umako was appointed her chief minister, and Prince Shōtoku acted as both her regent and heir apparent.

In Suiko's reign (593–629), Buddhism took full root amongst the elite of Japan, quickly growing to a position of prominence that remained unchallenged for the next thousand years. Shōtoku, who died in 622, was a leading figure in promoting the adoption of Buddhism. As regent he took a leading role in the sinification of the court, but he also did a great deal to integrate Buddhism into his governmental reforms. Soga no Umako and Shōtoku are perhaps the most important Buddhist patrons of the Asuka period (552–645). Umako's support in particular became as lavish as it was conspicuous. He founded the Asukadera (known today as Gangōji or Angoin), the first full-fledged Buddhist complex to be built in Japan. Shōtoku founded the Shitennōji (in the environs of present-day Osaka) and the Wakakusadera, later renamed Hōryūji, in the area that would become the capital city of Heijō (later Nara).

By the reigns of Tenmu (r. 673–86) and Empress Jitō (r. 686–97), the idea of Buddhism as the nation's protector was being publicly pronounced, and this empowerment of the Buddhist community accelerated with the move from Fujiwara to Heijō, where centers for the six schools of Buddhism that flourished in Japan were established. The first of these was the **Sanron** (Three Treatises), introduced to Japan c. 625 and based on the Mahayana philosophy developed by Nagarjuna and his disciple Aryadeva in the early centuries C.E. The second was the **Jōjitsu**, introduced from Paekche, as was the Sanron with which it soon merged. The third was the **Hossō** (SKT. Yogacara; CH. Faxiang), introduced about 650 by the monk Doshō, who had studied in China, and which espoused a Mahayana philosophy that argued the ultimate existence of the mind (i.e., that the mind is not part of the illusion of the rest of existence). The fourth school, **Kusha**, appeared about the same time as Hossō and took as its basis the Mahayana philosophy of the Indian Vasubandhu (fourth century), which focused on the analysis of phenomena through the Buddha's vision, including the ordering of the universe. The fifth school, **Kegon**, was based on the *Kegonkyō*, or *Garland sutra* (SKT. *Avatamsakasutra*; CH. *Huayanji*), which focuses on Shaka as a manifestation of the supreme, universal Birushana (SKT. Vairocana) Buddha (see below). The Kegon school became particularly prominent, developing elaborate rituals that appealed to the monarchy. And the sixth school was the **Ritsu** (SKT. Vinaya; CH. Lüzong).

The Vinaya also forms one part of the Buddhist canon—the Three Baskets or Sanzō—and includes the texts that lay down the rules one must follow in life, whether as a monk, nun, or householder, in order to work towards Enlightenment. The Vinaya school as it developed in China and Japan focused on early, Hinayana Buddhist philosophy and particularly that which translated the Buddha's teachings into codes by which one should live one's life. Ironically as it claimed to hold to an earlier form of Buddhism, it was in fact the last of the six to be introduced from China, by the Chinese monk Jianzhen (JAP. Ganjin) in 754.

During the reign of Shōmu (r. 724–49), Buddhism and its works became the focus of not only the court, but the entire government and aristocracy. In 741, and again in 743, he decreed the establishment of a monastery and a nunnery in each province. However, for Shōmu, the *Kegon sutra* was the authoritative Buddhist text, and likewise the Kegon the authoritative Buddhist school. In 743, he ordered the construction of a national temple to house the Kegon school, the Tōdaiji, and the creation of a colossal Birushana Buddha to

serve as its principal image. Unlike Shaka and Miroku, Birushana is not an earthly manifestation of Buddhahood. In fact he is its quintessential essence, and all other Buddhas, bodhisattvas, and deities are merely emanations and aspects of him. Normally, he is configured at the center of a group of five Buddhas, the other four being his emanations to the four directions. On a secular level Birushana served as an apt metaphor for the relationship between the emperor and his provincial governors and officials.

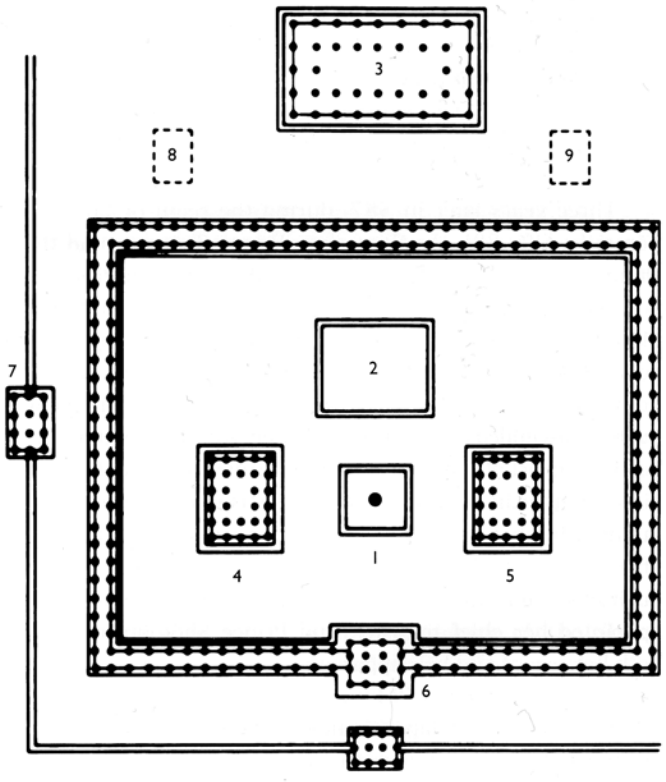
The production of this Buddha image and the temple to house it—Tōdaiji—became the major focus for the court, the clergy, and the nation in the mid-Nara period. The apogee of the Tōdaiji project came in 752, in the eye-opening ceremony. Prior to this rite, in a very public ceremony Emperor Shōmu presented himself before the Birushana image and humbly declared himself to be a servant of the Three Treasures of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Law, and the Community. Never again, until the end of the World War II, would a Japanese emperor, no matter how devout a Buddhist practitioner, come so close to setting aside the importance of his own divine descent. The precedent for Shōmu's policy of constructing a series of provincial Buddhist institutions, each linked to a central, mother temple in the capital, can be found in the policy of the pro-Buddhist interregnum of Empress Wu (r. 684–705) in China, who more than any other Tang ruler used Buddhism as a tool for controlling a country that considered it not only abnormal for a woman to hold the imperial throne, but that she had usurped it from her son. It is not at all surprising that Shōmu, with the Yamato house's enduring problem during these early centuries of maintaining their imperial authority, would look to the effectiveness of this example from China's recent past.

During the reign of Shōmu's successor and daughter, the Buddhist clergy gained such an influence at court that it was ultimately decided by the aristocracy that something would have to be done about it. Kōken, in fact, served as empress twice; during her first reign, from 749 to 758, she was known as Kōken, and during her second, from 764 to 770, she took the name of Shōtoku. She had as one of her closest advisers the monk Dōkyō of the Hossō school, and he attempted to persuade the empress to appoint him as her heir apparent. The leaders of the most powerful clans managed to block his ambitions, and, following the death of the empress in 770, forced Dōkyō into exile. Thereafter it became policy that no woman should hold the throne, a precedent that has been followed with only two exceptions down to the present day: Meishō (r. 1630–43) and Gosakuramachi (r. 1762–70). Further inspired by these events, the government began to consider rebuilding the capital elsewhere, away from Nara and the power centers of the six Buddhist schools.

Architecture

Following the civil war of 587, both Soga no Umako and Prince Shōtoku undertook the building of the first great Buddhist foundations. As mentioned, Umako built the Asukadera in the Asuka Valley, and Shōtoku built the Shitennōji in the region of present-day Osaka and the Wakakusadera on the outskirts of present-day Nara. Completed about 593, the Shitennōji has burnt to the ground many times in the course of the centuries, the most recent destruction taking place in World War II. In its latest incarnation, the temple was rebuilt in reinforced concrete on the original foundations and with an attempt to simulate the post-and-lintel construction of the old wooden structure.

Asukadera, begun about 588 and completed by 596, survived the decimation of the Soga clan in 645 and became one of the principal edifices of the first permanent capital, Fujiwara-kyo. When the capital moved to Nara, the Asukadera establishment moved there as well, into a new temple, Gangōji. The original edifice at Fujiwara became a subsidiary temple of the Nara establishment, and managed to survive the fire which seems to have destroyed much of Fujiwara in 711. However, it too was largely destroyed by fire in the Kamakura period (1185–1333) and was never rebuilt. Extensive excavations carried out in the 1950s uncovered the original foundations, roof tiles, and many interesting details of the temple.



1 pagoda
2 central *kondō*
3 *kōdō*
4 west *kondō*
5 east *kondō*
6 *chūmon*
7 west gate
8 belfry
9 sutra repository

63 Plan of Asukadera, Asuka.