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Jérôme Ducor

► **To cite this version:**

Jérôme Ducor. Buddhist Japonisme : Emile Guimet and the Butsuzō-zui. Japanese Collections in European Museums, Vol. V - With special Reference to Buddhist Art - (JapanArchiv: Schriftenreihe der Forschungsstelle Modernes Japan; Bd. 5, 5., 2016. hal-03154274

HAL Id: hal-03154274

<https://hal.science/hal-03154274>

Submitted on 28 Feb 2021

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EAJIS Section 4a: Visual Arts
Japanese Buddhist Art in European Collections (Part I)

BUDDHIST JAPONISME: EMILE GUIMET AND THE *BUTSUZŌ-ZUI*

Jérôme DUCOR*

The nucleus of most collections of Japanese Buddhist artefacts in Europe developed during the Meiji period, which happened to be contemporary with the so-called “Japonism” (or Japonisme) movement in art history. We can therefore say there was at that time a “Buddhist Japonism” trend in Europe. Its most representative figure is Emile Guimet (1836-1918). During his trip in Japan (1876), he collected material items – around 300 paintings, 600 statues, and 1000 volumes of books – most of them made available because of the anti-Buddhist campaign of that time¹. In addition, Guimet was also interested in the intangible heritage of Japanese religions, and while in the country he personally conducted a unique survey on the subject (see Girard). Afterwards, he was to encourage the study of Japanese religions through exhibitions, conferences, and various publications issued by the Guimet Museum, founded in Lyon (1879), and later moved to Paris (1889). The height of Guimet’s plan was reached on 21st of February 1891, when two Japanese Buddhist clerics from the Shinshū denomination celebrated the *Hōonkō* 報恩講 ceremony at his museum, using the ritual attires and implements from its collections.

After Emile Guimet’s death and the premature one of his son Jean Guimet (1880-1920), drastic changes affected his beloved museum of world religions. It was decided firstly to limit the scope of the Guimet Museum to the Near East, the Far East and Egypt, and secondly to strictly separate those artefacts of purely artistic value from those of more specific religious interest². Thus began what Bernard Frank would call “the long wreck of the Founder’s collections”, while the Guimet Museum itself became one of the world’s leading museums of Asian arts³.

Fifty years passed until Frank rediscovered the importance of Guimet’s collection of Japanese Buddhist sculptures and displayed part of it – about 180 pieces – in the Annex of the Guimet Museum, under the title “Le bouddhisme japonais : figures, symboles et croyances” (1968). While giving his courses at the Collège de France, Frank’s attention was also drawn to the *Butsuzō-zui* and he eventually established a triple link between this work, its translation by Hoffmann, published in von Siebold’s *Nippon*, and Emile Guimet⁴.

The *Butsuzō-zui* 佛像圖彙 (*Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Images*) was first published in 1690 by Gizan 義山 (1648-1717), a polygraph monk of the Pure Land School. It includes more than 700 clearly labelled images, comprising 611 figures and 96 ritual

* Ethnography Museum of Geneva and universities of Lausanne and Geneva. My deep thanks to Dr Helen Loveday for improving my English.

¹ Most of the books are recorded in a manuscript catalogue written by Guimet himself, but the paintings and statues cannot all be traced (Ducor 2014a).

² Decision by the Museum’s Board (“Comité-Conseil”) on December 23, 1920. See *Le Musée Guimet (1918-1927)* (AMG, Bibliothèque de vulgarisation, T. 48; Paris, 1928), p. 10.

³ Frank 1991a, p. 92a; Frank 1991b, p. 392.

⁴ « Panthéon bouddhique et société japonaise : les données iconographiques et leurs sources » (1980-1981) : Frank 2000, p. 72. Cf. Frank 1986, p. 21; 1988, p. 18-19.

implements⁵. This editio princeps was followed by a second edition published in 1783 by the painter Tosa Hidenobu 土佐秀信, who added 118 deities⁶.

The first edition is in four volumes, numbered according to the *genkōritei* system (元亨利貞). The first volume (7 double pages) includes a preface, a bibliography and an index. The three other volumes - the illustrated encyclopaedia itself - are further numbered from one to three (卷之一, 二, 三). Volume one (29 d.p.) covers the main Buddhist deities: Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, Myōōs and Gods. Volume two (18 d.p.) shows all the other deities, including the Gongens. And volume three (23 d.p.) presents the historical figures (Arhats and Masters), as well as ritual implements and a colophon signed by Gizan.

It would be misleading to consider this work a mere catalogue of images. The preface states that by learning about both the names and characteristics (名相) of the deities, one will pay respect to their sacred images (靈像) and chant their venerable names (尊號). In addition, in the colophon, Gizan explains why most of the images have been provided with a text about their origin (*in'yū* 因由), generally using a quotation from the Buddhist scriptures: learning their names and characteristics together with their origins will develop the pure faith (淨信) of people until they eventually reach Buddhist awakening (菩提) (fig. 1-2). The importance of those quotations is that the canonicity of the images is thereby matched by the canonicity of the corresponding scriptures, no less than 86 of them being listed in the bibliography included in the first volume⁷. This explains why the *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Buddhist Images* does not open with an image of a Buddha as might be expected, but with that of Fu Daishi 傅大士, the protector in the Far East of Buddhist scriptural libraries⁸. By so doing, the author also avoided having to choose a specific Buddha to open the book - Śākyamuni, Amida or Vairocana? - thus maintaining the trans-sectarian tone of his work. Still, this highlighting of a Chinese layman is sometimes understood as an error of iconographical systematization⁹, and even when Hidenobu published his enlarged edition, he felt the need to add an eulogy to the universal Buddha Vairocana as a frontispiece¹⁰.

The second, enlarged edition is comprised of five volumes, simply numbered from one to five. Volume one (8 d.p.) reproduces the first edition's preface and bibliography - with some reordering of the books' titles - and a new index together with an introduction by Hidenobu. In volume two (21 d.p.) are found the same Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, with some artistic improvements: for example, the image of Śākyamuni leaving the Mountains now faces the inside of the book and not the outside. The insertion of additional illustrations by Hidenobu begins with the section on Myōōs, and the section on Gods runs over into volume three (24 d.p.) as well as volume four (19 d.p.). Towards the end of that volume starts the part on historical figures, which in turn continues into volume five (19 d.p.); this concludes with the same ritual implements and colophon as the first edition. The new images include a few groups, such as the Eight Protectors of One-life (一代守本尊), the Thirteen Buddhist Deities

⁵ Copies of it at the library of Ryūkoku University (Kyōtō), etc. It has been reproduced by Itō (1987). This editio princeps was reprinted in 1752, a copy of which - from the bibliophile Ernest Satow's collection - is kept at the Cambridge University Library (Hayashi & Kornicki, n° 285).

⁶ Reproduced by Khanna (2010). A copy from the Satow collection is also kept at the Cambridge University Library (Hayashi & Kornicki, n° 287).

⁷ Besides canonical Buddhist scriptures, it comprises some apocryphal sūtras and secular texts. See Hattori; Khanna, p. 18-21; Hoffmann, 160-162.

⁸ See Loveday, p. 228 sq.

⁹ Sueki, p. 44.

¹⁰ Quoted from *The Seals and Elementary Bodies of the 108 Venerated Ones* (一百八尊法身契印) by Śubhakarasiṃha and Xiying (T. 18, 877, p. 335c).

of Afterlife (十三佛), the Twelve Aspects of Amida's Light (十二光佛), etc. Iconographical differences can also be noticed between the two editions, as in the case of the Shichi-Fukujin¹¹, or the Bodhisattvas Nikkō and Gakkō that were shown as buddhas in the editio princeps and now wear bodhisattva clothes. Similarly, in the group of the “Seven Kannon” (七觀音), Shō-Kanzeon alone was presented standing in the first edition but is seated in the second one (fig. 3-4). Finally, some roles have been modified: while Byakue-Kannon was mentioned as the main one (中尊) of the Thirty-three incarnations of Kannon in the editio princeps (fig. 5), this is no longer the case in the second edition.

This second edition played an important role in the discovery of Japanese religious iconography by the West as it was this one which was translated into German by Johann Joseph Hoffmann, under the title *Pantheon von Nippon*, a study of it being published in 1852 in the monumental *Nippon* by Philipp Franz von Siebold¹².

During his travels in Japan in 1876, Guimet endeavoured to collect statues of all the figures of the Japanese Buddhist pantheon, in the same way that he was doing for the pantheons of Greek and Roman antiquity as well as Egypt. However, it is not clear whether he used von Siebold's *Nippon* at the time. In fact, “Le panthéon Bouddhique de Nippon” was mentioned in French as early as in 1859¹³, and the Guimet Museum holds a copy of von Siebold's work, but it is not clear whether Emile Guimet purchased it before his trip, as it bears the seal of the Guimet Museum in Lyon (1879-1889), as well as that of Alphonse Pinart (1852-1911), whose book collection was mainly dispersed in 1884, eight years after Guimet's trip. Nevertheless, Guimet was made aware of the *Butsuzō-zui* at the very least during his stay in Tōkyō, as it was mentioned to him by Abbot Yuiga Shōshun 唯我韶舜 in his written description of the Sensōji temple¹⁴. By the time Frank redisplayed Guimet's “Buddhist Pantheon” in the Annex (1991), he had found a 1796 copy of the enlarged edition of the *Butsuzō-zui* in the museum's library, a copy which has now been shown to have been purchased by Guimet himself while in Japan¹⁵. It seems clear that Guimet used this book as a shopping list during his trip: this is suggested by the concordances between the *Butsuzō-zui* and Guimet's statues published in Frank's catalogue¹⁶, though the latter does not analyze the full collection but only the 222 pieces on display at the Annex, not all of which were acquired during Guimet's travels¹⁷. However, it is surprising that Guimet himself never mentioned the *Butsuzō-zui*, unlike the collector William Anderson, who, by 1886, not only quoted the “*Butsuzō-zui*” – “A collection of Buddhist divinities” – but even reproduced various plates of it (fig. 6)¹⁸.

In the Lyon museum, the Japanese Buddhist artefacts were displayed in seven showcases and classified according to the six main schools: “Sin-gon” with the Tōji mandala beside it,

¹¹ Ducor 2014b.

¹² Von Siebold's 1796 copy of the *Butsuzō-zui* is kept at the Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde in München (Kraft, n° 37).

¹³ Jacquemart, Albert & Le Blant, Edmond: « La porcelaine de Chine, décor des vases » (*Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, T. 1, mars 1859), p. 216 and p. 219, n. 2. See also Lindau, Rodolphe: *Un voyage autour du Japon* (Paris, 1864), p. 38.

¹⁴ Girard, p. 135-136; Ducor 2014a, p. 26.

¹⁵ Frank 1991a, p. 27-28. Guimet's own catalogue called it “Figures bouddhiques du Japon” (Ducor 2014a, p. 24).

¹⁶ Sueki, p. 61-67.

¹⁷ For example, the Ugajin statue was acquired by Guimet Museum in 1963 only (Frank 1991a, p. 204, n° 122).

¹⁸ Anderson, William: *Descriptive and Historical Catalogue of a Collection of Japanese and Chinese Paintings in The British Museum* (London, 1886), p. ix, and plates 3-6, 11-13, 24.

“Hokké-siou”, “Ten-dai”, “Zën-siou”, “Gio-do” and “Sin-siou”¹⁹. This choice was clearly identified:

“A museum of religions being above all a collection of ideas, artistic and archaeological questions could only be given a secondary place. We have therefore first and foremost attended to the clarity of the demonstration. Dealing with each people in turn, we have carefully separated their beliefs and subdivided these further according to their main sects, whenever the precision of our information permitted us to do so. Within each of these divisions, we grouped together the various representations of the same deity”.²⁰

The *Butsuzō-zui* being trans-sectarian in nature, it is clear that this display according to the Japanese Buddhist sects did not ensue from it, but was rather the direct result of Guimet’s inquiry in Japan, where he personally met with the representatives of the six main Buddhist schools. The same order was retained when the collections were moved to the Paris museum (1889), but on a larger scale, with ten showcases (Nos. 4-13), and an additional two cases devoted to the suppressed “Riô-bou” sect (No. 2) and Buddhist ritual implements (No. 3)²¹.

Between 1894 and 1897, a significant change occurred in the group of ten showcases. The six Buddhist sects were condensed into six cases (Nos. 8-13), the four other ones now being devoted to the classical systematization of Japanese Buddhist iconography: “Boutsous” (No. 4), “Kouan-on Bosatsou” (No. 5) and “Bossatsous” (No. 6), “Mio-os”, “Tens”, and “Djins” (No. 7)²². Already at the time of the Lyon museum, its curator Léon de Milloué had written about a classification of Buddhist deities in descending order, in a chapter on Indian Buddhism²³. But what was his source of inspiration in the case of the Japanese Buddhist pantheon in Paris? There is no direct evidence that the *Butsuzō-zui* was used at that time. Indeed, this work presents the Buddhist images in the classic iconographical order, without explicitly explaining it.

This improvement must therefore have been suggested by a specialist whom I am inclined to identify as Toki (or Doki) Hōryū 土宜法龍 (1854-1923). From the autumn of 1893, this monk of the Shingon sect of Japanese Buddhism stayed for several months in Paris on his way back to Japan, after attending the first session of the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. Starting on the 5th of November, he visited the Guimet Museum daily and, on November 13th, he celebrated there the *Gohōraku* 御法樂 Buddhist ceremony in front of its Tōji mandala²⁴. Moreover, during five months, Toki Hōryū also provided his invaluable help in explaining the hand gestures (*mudrā*) of the *Shido-inzu* 四度印圖, a ritual book of Esoteric Buddhism that Guimet had been wanting for decades to translate into French and publish²⁵. The Archives of the Guimet Museum hold the manuscript of this demanding endeavour, perhaps by the hands of Léon de Milloué and his Japanese assistant Kawamura Sirō. But the Archives also hold with them the manuscript cards of an unpublished French translation of the texts accompanying the images of the *Butsuzō-zui*. Each of these cards bears a number that

¹⁹ *Musée Guimet, Catalogue des objets exposés* [by Léon de Milloué] (Lyon, 1880), p. 56-74. A special showcase was also devoted to the *Shichi-Fukujin*, those Seven Divinities of Happiness that were rather familiar to the Japonism world (*id.* p. 75-77).

²⁰ Translated from Milloué, Léon de: *Catalogue du Musée Guimet* (Lyon, 1883), p. x.

²¹ Milloué, Léon de: *Petit guide illustré au Guimet* (Paris, 1890), p. 124-161; *id.* (Paris, 1894), p. 112-156.

²² Milloué, Léon de: *Petit guide illustré au Guimet* (Paris, 1897), p. 196-240; *id.* (Paris, 1910), p. 149-179. Cf. Frank 1991a, p. 42-47.

²³ *Musée Guimet, Catalogue des objets exposés* (Lyon, 1880), p. 14-16.

²⁴ Boussemart, Anthony: « Un temple bouddhiste au cœur de Paris », *D’outremer*, p. 102-104.

²⁵ It was eventually published by the Guimet Museum in 1899 under the title of *Si-Do-In-Dzou, Gestes de l’officiant dans les cérémonies mystiques des sectes Tendai et Singon*. Cf. Ducor 2014a, p. 40-41.

has been added, together with the transcribed name of the corresponding personage, onto the copy of the *Butsuzō-zui* brought back from Japan by Guimet. It is thus legitimate to suppose that this translation attempt too was conducted under the expertise of Toki Hōryū. Not only was he a great scholar – he would eventually become abbot of the prestigious Ninnaji temple as well as patriarch of the Shingon sect – but he was also a specialist of the Buddhist pantheon, as attested by detailed study notes in Japanese in his own hand that are also kept in the museum’s archives, such as the one about Bodhisattva Ārya Tārā (阿利耶多羅菩薩), dated December 11, 1893.

On the whole, the *Butsuzō-zui* was instrumental in the *gathering* of Guimet’s collection of Japanese Buddhist statues, if not in the display of it. However, the global study of this book covering both its illustrations and its texts still remains to be written.

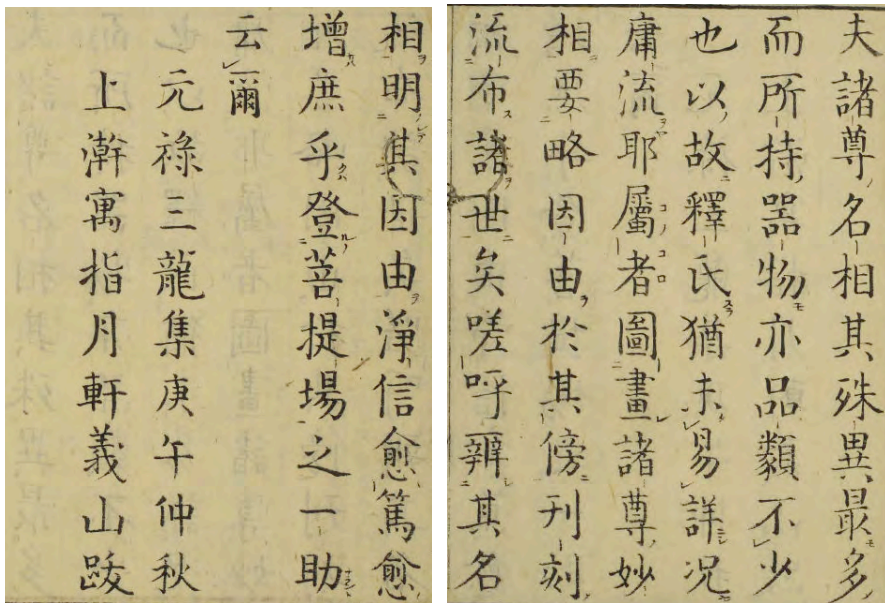


Fig. 1-2. Colophon of the *Butsuzō-zui* by Gizan



Fig. 3-4. Shō-Kanzeon in the 1st and 2nd ed. of the *Butsuzō-zui*



Fig. 5. Byakue-Kannon in the 1st and 2nd ed. of the *Butsuzō-zui*



Fig. 6. Śākyamuni's life according to the 2nd ed. of the *Butsuzō-zui* in Anderson's *Catalogue*

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