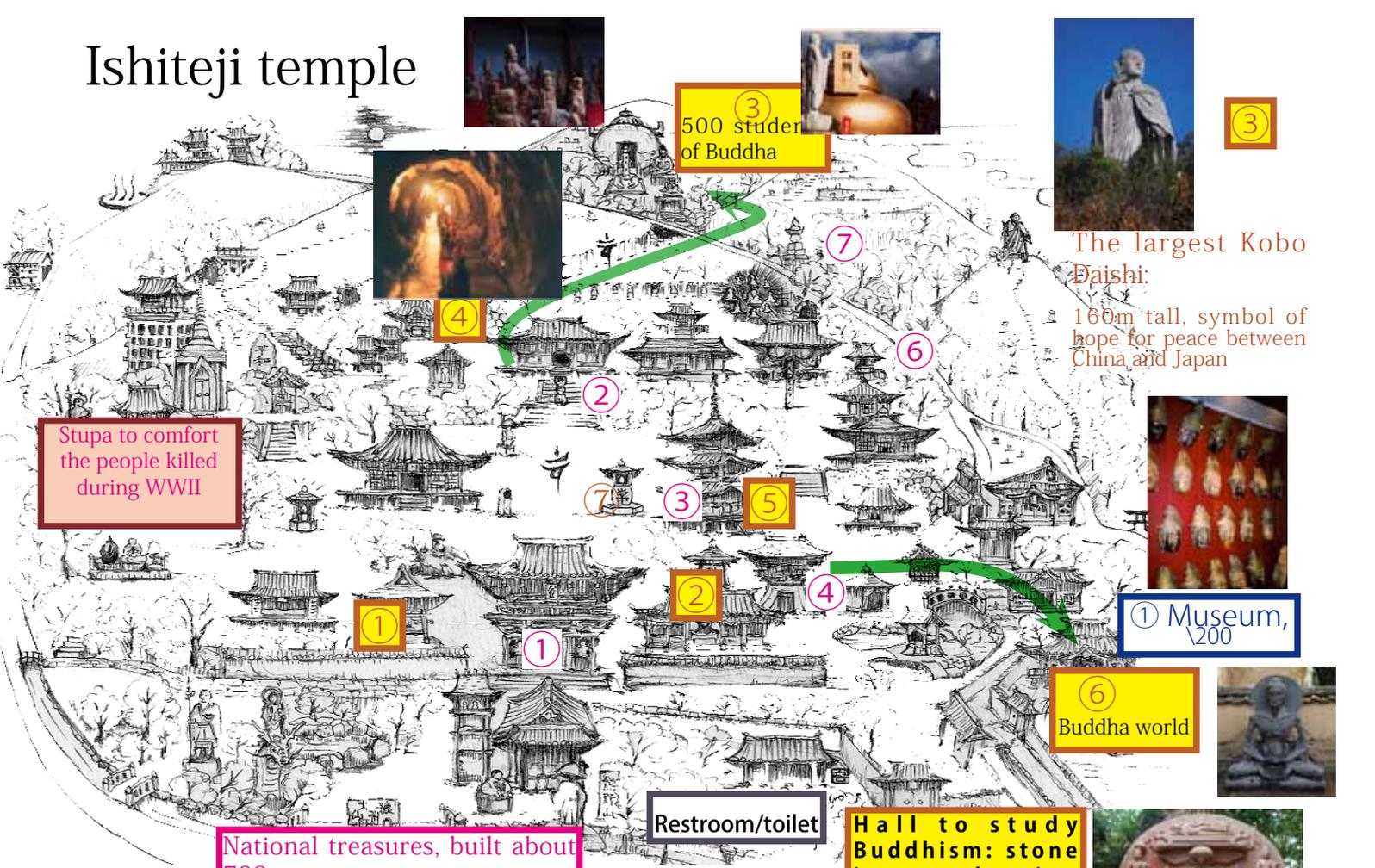


Ishiteji temple



③ 500 stupas of Buddha



③

The largest Kobo Daishi:

160m tall, symbol of hope for peace between China and Japan



④

Stupa to comfort the people killed during WWII



① Museum, 200

⑥ Buddha world



National treasures, built about 700 years ago.

1. Gate
2. Main hall
3. Stupa Syaka Buddha
4. Ring hall
5. Homa hall, Fuduo Myouou
6. God of birth Kariteibo
7. Five stone elements

Restroom/toilet

Hall to study Buddhism: stone images and tea (see next page)



①



③



④



⑤

Yellow numbers:

1. Ring for peace, by giving goods to others
2. To offer incense and candles
3. Chinese designed Kobo Daishi, founder of this temple's teachings, was taught in Seian, China, 1200 years ago.
4. Cave with 88 Jizo-Buddhas, place to practice Buddhism
5. Bags of soil from each of the 88 temples, we touch them to connect with the sadness and happiness of the pilgrims and the fruits/results of their pilgrimage.
6. Buddha museum: you can learn about Buddha's life and Buddhism through stone images carved by three famous Indian sculptors, while having a nice cup of tea. Entrance fee is 200 yen, tea included.
7. The master of this temple visited the following places of battle/struggle, in Japan: Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Okinawa and Tiran; in Asia: Korea, China and Burma. He did so to sympathize with the dead and apologize to them, because as Buddhists they weren't able to stop it

The second cave to 15 big buddhas Mandara where to get the mind of Buddhas.



⑤



⑦



Hall to study
Buddhism: stone
images and tea

Birth of Buddha

Born as a prince, named Gotama, during an age of battle

Around 2400 years ago, during the age of the 16 kingdoms, Gotama was born as prince of the Syaka tribe in the village of Runbini. The Syaka tribe was located between two large kingdoms: Kosala and Magada. Syaka was very small and belonged to Kosala, so the king of Magada told Gotama: "if you obey me and conquer Kosala with my elephant army, you will receive a lot of wealth." To this Gotama answered: "I would enjoy freedom without money more than battle and killing while being wealthy."

Time past and Kosala eventually killed the whole Syaka tribe, but many people who followed Gotama and abandoned their house and life survived because they were Buddhists.

Pleasure Taste life

Gotama's biography tells us that he was given a house for summer and another for winter, with servants so he would want for nothing because he had everything. He was very happy that there was nothing wrong in (t)his world, until one day he snuck out from under his father's watchful eye and escaped the castle. Gotama saw the wretched, the old, the sick and the dead people and was disappointed that we, beings, would get sick, old and die and this against our will and endeavors. After witnessing this he never got joy out of life again and abandoned house and life to get eternal life.

This story teaches us that we pursue pleasure as our main goal, but there is another purpose in life, one beyond pleasure, one which pleasure won't let us attain and that is to be "free of soul".

In the very old Samyutta sutra, the God Verochana (who is considered to be a 'bad' God) says: "We, all beings, have our goal and we get the most pleasure when we attain our goal." to this the God Sakka (who is considered to be a 'good' God) answers: "Patience is more rewarding." In the oldest sutra, the Suttanipata, it is said: "We are beings that need to consume/eat others." I guess we are beings that prefer consuming pleasures/goals than realising our purpose.

Struggle People are bumping into each other like fish jumping and crashing in little water

Buddha says: "not only I, but all people are struggling, just like fish bumping into each other in little water." People are rushing to get what they want, without sympathy for others, who are just like them. When people get what they want they are satisfied, when they don't they are disappointed, get angry or hurt others. To "survive" people are willing to consume the lives of others.

To be Buddhist, one must be against "Myouri", which means: status and possessions, in other words not wanting power over others and always craving more.

I wonder, was Gotama so anxious about our struggle for existence that he felt guilty in taking pleasure. In fact, Gotama took up his sword to kill the enemies of his family and fellow men, but couldn't use it, because he knew that the pain of others is his pain.

After his death, when no pupils were aware of Gotama anymore, a Buddhist leader shouted: "An-atman!" which literally means no-atman or there is no atman, figuratively this can be interpreted as there is nothing continuing beyond one's self. In other words Sunyata that is Rupa, which means: empty (Sunyata) is all matter that can be perceived by the five senses (Rupa).

In my opinion, Gotama wouldn't agree with these new ideas, because they wouldn't prevent the killing in this world. Gotamah shouted: "Please draw the arrow you can't find!"

Temptation given by the King of Magada

The king of Magada said: "I'll give you my elephant army and wealth if you attack Kosara." Gotama answered: "I feel sad taking up arms, I know the pain of others when I injure them, I know the pain in people when they are fighting, robbing and killing each other. I'll live without fighting, robbing and killing, with my mind free from desire, anger, selfishness and pleasure; with the knowledge that if we live together, without discord, there will be more happiness.

History repeats itself, just like the Syaka tribe was surrounded by bigger nations, Japan is situated between the USA, Russia and China.

The ancient Buddha teaches us that we must not use arms to get welfare or take goods for ourselves without sharing them with others.

Awakening , pulling out the arrow

Buddha says: "I roamed everywhere and visited many teachers hoping to find a safe place to no avail. There is no place that isn't occupied by killing, robbing or fighting. When I was sinking down into despair and hopelessness I suddenly found an arrow, hard to discern, attached to everyone's heart, which power makes people rush in all directions.

If we reach our goal, we are satisfied, but if we don't, we are disappointed, get angry, kill others and sink into despair. By



withdrawing the arrow, we are freed from struggle and never suffer again."

Buddha also says: "our life is like a big flood, its current is our desire and the driftwood is what we cling to so we don't drown. We turn it into attractive things such as gold or wellbeing and get attached to it. And so the next time we are attracted by those objects, because we see them as something we desire (Kama),

but in reality they are only colorless objects that our desire turned into attractive objects. After having constructed this self made attractive stage that we desire (Kama-mud-world) it is very difficult to escape it and be free, to see everything for what it really is: colorless/flat. Because this stage was built by our own desire and desire loves itself. Now we have to dissolve this stage (Kama world) we built and begin to see without desire and with the will to become conscious of the happiness of others. Don't have possessions or status, don't appropriate or forsake and don't raise or lower yourself.

Teaching saving everyone and feeling compassion

Buddha says: "the states I attained by pulling out the unseen arrow are 'Samo' and 'Santo': being friendly with others and calming down desire whenever, wherever, with whoever."

Many people came to see Buddha: people discriminated by race, job, birth, gender, wealth, power; people who were sold as servants, prostitutes, slaves and soldiers who killed innocent people. To them Buddha said: "We are the same, only our names are different. A person who does good is indeed a good person but a person, albeit being famous, who doesn't do good will never be good,"

Gotama is eager to join hands with everyone, even with his enemies and the insane. The reason for this can be found in the beginning of his learning journey, Gotama couldn't kill anyone as he felt the pain of the person he killed and that person's family as his own. He knew the pain caused by killing, robbing, envying, despising, suppressing, obeying, etc. for him there is no fence or border.

The rise and fall of Buddhism, new ideas: escaping from this world and the 'only looking' Buddhism

Gotama's thought that if we are in the state where the arrow has been pulled out, we would be satisfied with shaking every being's hand. Many people gathered around him hopeful that discrimination, poverty and violence would end and that they could enjoy being equal in a completely peaceful way.

After his death, when his immediate pupils had left, the main purpose changed. Many people who weren't suffering from a troublesome life were eager to learn how to escape the human form, in other words escape Samsara: the eternal rebirth cycle. The main aim of Sangas (monk community, temple) became how to conquer the fear of death, how to solve the next birth/the reborn-being.

Other successors tried finding answers in the ancient Upanisad teaching of Yajnavalkya, which states that there is one that exists behind the one looking, this one is named Atman. Atman is the only essential being in the universe and it exists everywhere, it fills the whole universe. Atman is one and many, nothing and everything, it can be anything it wants. The whole of Atman is called Brahman. This led to pupils neglecting their human bodies and existence. Their practice was that if they changed their desire for pleasure in this world to nothing, by abandoning this body, by not thinking, not wanting, not wishing, they would only be Atman. For them there wasn't anything important in this existence, they didn't want it.

In the 1st century there was a monk named Nagarjuna, who declared that matter (Rupa) is empty (Sunyata), because without our desire nothing will occur/happen. This stream in Buddhism is called 'Only looking'.

Nowadays monks pray for the wellbeing of the living and a good passage for the dead. These are things that Gotama never thought.

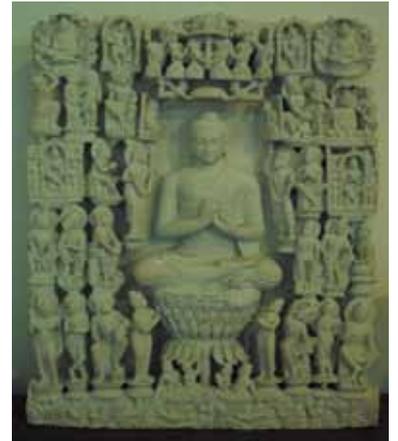
Future of Buddhism, the possibility of freedom from pain and attaining perfect happiness

Being a monk, I came in contact with a lot of people who were suffering in one way or another, be it through counseling, suicide prevention, providing food for refugees, inviting people to open up and talk to each other, letting the homeless stay in this temple or hearing people's war stories. One thing I learnt from this is that pain on earth is not only caused by a fear of death and what might happen after death. But more so it is caused by the struggle to survive, by illness, by wanting to keep one's family safe, by the loss of loved ones, etc.

For me, the answer for these struggling people is given in the Suttanipata-4-15 teaching: "Instead of fighting and robbing each other, pull out the arrow so our desire may be calmed, so we can be friendly with one another, wherever, whenever we may be." This is a short but powerful teaching.

The arrow is what drives us to desire, it is different for everyone, for some it loss, for others it is fear, happiness, wealth or the lack of it, etc. These differing drives lead to differing desires, which in turn lead us to fight and rob each other.

So instead of letting ourselves be driven by these selfish desires that separate us from each other, let's decide to only polish those arrows that will aim true, so that we can connect with each other again.



A summary of Buddha's life and Buddhism.

Buddha, whose name was Gotama Siddhartha, was a prince of the Syaka tribe and is the founder of Buddhism. He was a soldier, cast in a fixed role: to battle in Kshatriya (old India)

The Syaka tribe was small, so they had to rely on a bigger tribe, Kosala, but in the end they were killed by Kosala.

At that time there were 16 tribes/nations in east India, Magada, which was as big as Kosala, eventually conquered them all. This was the reason why Gotama had to fight or surrender to a big nation. The king of Magada invited Gotama to join him, with the promise of wealth and a strong army, but only if he fought Kosala. Gotama refused, but Kosala attacked Syaka anyway. At this point, Gotama decided to raise arms, but he felt the pain of his enemies and left the battlefield. He saw how everybody was fighting each other, as though fish bumping into each other in a pond with little water.

Gotama roamed everywhere to find peace and a teacher, to no avail. He fell sick and found an arrow, difficult to discern, that pierced him and pushed him towards everything it aimed at. It was that arrow that made him rush to his goals, crash into others and feel pain. If he pulled this arrow out, he would never run or sink into pain again.

This is how Gotama found his truth and teaching.

Buddha teaches us that it is our desire that leads us to war, struggle and robbing each other. So if we are without intent, still, without interests, focused on nothing, then we are in peace, we are friendly consciousness.

I think that if we have no intention/desire, we are empty, we will hit upon nothing and nothing will appear in front of us, we will be disillusioned from the world we live in. When we are empty, we are open to everything, we are able to recognize things for what they are and the truth of our intentions/desires becomes clear.

For example: I see people going hungry and begging for food, then there are different intentions that might appear.

1. kindness appears in me and I want to give them food, this is a good intention.
2. disgust appears in me and I only see the bad in the world and do nothing, this is bad intention.

Gotama also had various mindsets/intentions: good, bad, everything in-between and indifference. When he didn't have to go into battle with his enemies he enjoyed his life, when a battle would arise, he would have to make a choice: to kill or not to kill. But because of his kindness, which made him feel the pain of others, even if they were his enemies, he couldn't kill.

He was able to recognize his intentions, the bad ones: only thinking about his family and his possessions, and the good ones: thinking of others. He also understood that there were some intentions that he couldn't notice, he named these unconscious intentions/desires the "unseen arrow". He believed that if he could remove this arrow, and if everyone did so, no one would

rush to realise their intention/desires, so there wouldn't be conflict between us and we could live in peace and be friends with everybody, everywhere.

If there were no pain or fear, if we were free from these things, our arrows wouldn't collide and there wouldn't be conflict, so we have to change the direction of our arrows.

As long as one of us is suffering, we can't be happy, because your pain is my pain. This is what having a heart entails, it means that you feel the pain of others and as long as we feel pain happiness isn't possible.

We have to recognize our arrows and make sure that we aim them in the right direction and not at each other. This is the only way we can stop our struggling and suffering, by aligning our arrows we can live in harmony and happiness.

History of this temple.

This temple was built 670 Ad. on the ruins [of chain manor] of Houryuuji temple, old roof tiles were found underground that attest to this. Today we can only see the rebuilt buildings that were built 700 years ago.

First called "Anyouji", which means temple where we can receive eternal comfort/peace, the name was changed due to Emon Saburou's (hi)story and is now called Ishiteji, which means hand with stone.

1200 years ago, Emon Saburou lived 10km from here, he was a rich farmer with a big storehouse, who wanted to become wealthy. One day a dirty monk came and begged him for some food or a place to stay the night. Saburou felt pity for the monk but he was so occupied with earning money that he denied the monk's request. The monk left and soon after, Saburou's sons died one by one. Saburou, regretting his decision of not helping the monk was unable to work anymore. He abandoned his house and possessions and left to find the monk he once neglected.

This is the beginning of the 88 temple pilgrimage, Saburou was the first "Henro-man".

Saburou, not having any money, was forced to stay outside, with little to no food or pillow to lay his head. He begged for a place to sleep, to no avail. Suddenly the realisation hit him,

he had become the man he once denied, now he was the monk.

Not everyone denied him, some people said: "please come in, have some food and stay if you want."

When Saburou was dying, the monk he once denied appeared, it was Kobo Daishi. Kobo Daishi asked him what he wanted and Saburou answered: "I want to be reborn so I can save people." What Saburou meant by this is that if another beggar came, he could help him instead of denying him. And so Saburou was reborn with a closed hand, an Anyouji monk prayed and the hand opened, revealing a stone with the name of Emon Saburou written on it.

