



Meiji University Showcase

UNIQUE CONSTRUCTIONS OF JAPANESE BUDDHIST ARCHITECTURE IN AIZU

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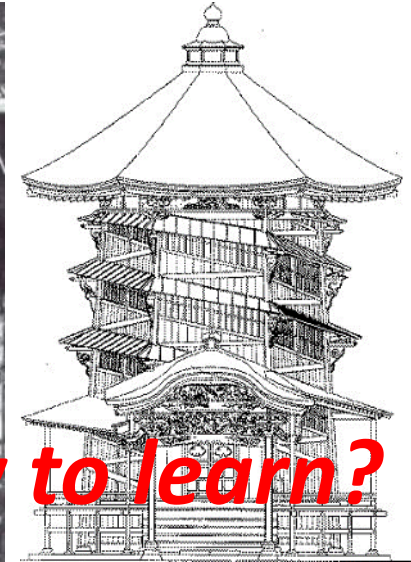


Introduction

□ **Unique Monuments of Japanese Buddhist Architecture in Aizu***

- *Particularities of Japanese sacred architecture genesis through the examples of selected Buddhist monuments in Aizu*
- *Unique constructions measurably deviating from the mainstream architectural traditions*
 - Keiryuji temple (Tachiki Kannon)
 - Sazaedo tower
 - Aizu-mura complex and Jibo Kannon

- **Transformation of architectural traditions in a country with long periods of autonomous development**



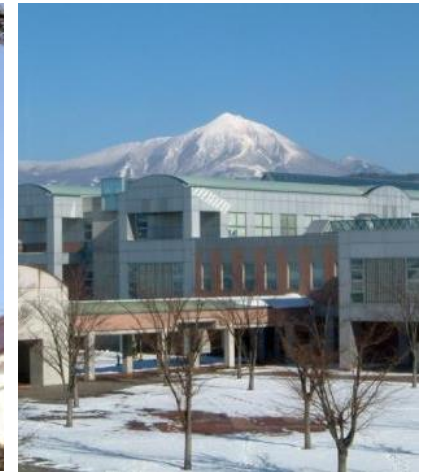
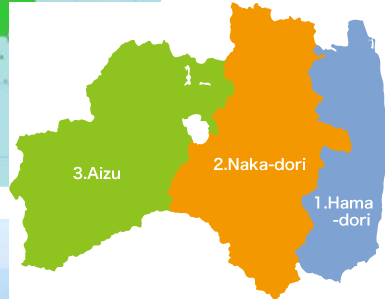
Why to learn?



Aizuwakamatsu 会津若松

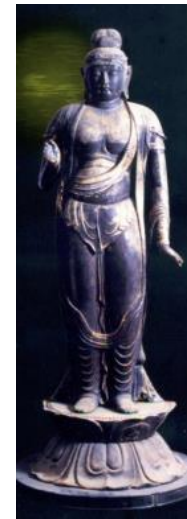


- ❑ *Fukushima prefecture*
- ❑ *Aizu: the land of Samurai traditions*
- ❑ *University of Aizu*



Polytheistic Traditions in Japan

- *Pervasion of Buddhism to Japan from China and Korea since around 552 AD*
- *607 Horyuji Foundation in Nara*
 - *Six Nara Schools of Buddhism*
(Jōjitsu, Hossō, Kusha, Rishu, Kegon, Sanron)
- *At that time the Shinto started further development in active mutually influenced co-existence with Buddhism*
 - *On the one hand, Shinto was considered as an independent way to belief and to cognition*
 - *On the other, Shinto was considered as a Buddhism “simplified” for common people*
- *Some competition with Confucian traditions favored by the powerful Fujiwara clan*



Polytheistic Traditions in Japan

- ❑ 620 First Buddhist temple Hoyoji in Aizumisato town (still existing)
- ❑ Through the history, the relationships between the Shinto, Buddhist and Confucian systems remained broadly balanced
 - The possible reason: each system finds its housing in social development and in world cognition process
- ❑ Japanese polytheistic tradition as a produce of rich and manifold natural environment.
- ❑ Together with monuments which established the mainstream traditions of temple interior and its outside environment (like **Sensōji** in Tokyo, **Horyuji** in Nara or **Kiyomizudera** in Kyoto) there were many specific constructions reflecting particularities of how Buddhism was being developed in Japan



Keiryuji Temple in Aizubange

- ❑ *Plastic artifact as a dominating architectural axe of the main hall*
- ❑ *Kannon statue – one of principal Buddha manifestations in the Japanese tradition*
- ❑ *Tachiki Kannon (Standing Buddha) isn't unique, but ...*



Keiryuji Temple in Aizubange



- *8 meter height Keiryuji Kannon is special since the figure is made from the tree with roots that are still in the soils*
- *Thus, the main hall surrounds the Tachiki fixed tree based figure*
- *Good illustration of the Japanese architectural tradition*
 - *The building and the nature are not only the connected elements, they are believed to be at one*

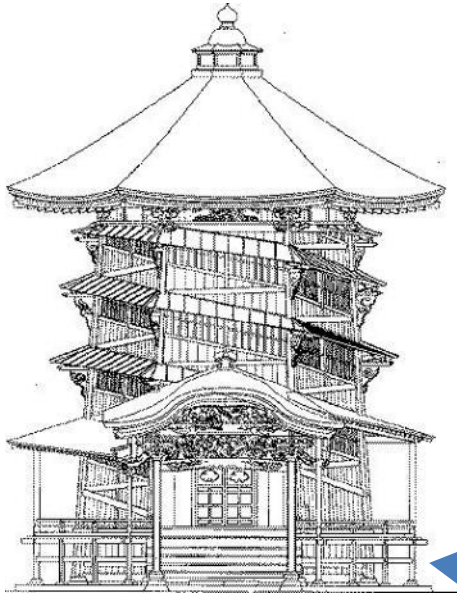


Double Spiraled Sazaedō

- *The main tourist attraction of Aizuwakamatsu is the **limoriyma** hill and the **Byakkotai memorial***
 - ***Byakkotai** – a famous squadron of young samurais of the Matsudaira clan which were struggling against the Emperor Meiji army and died in the last days of the Boshin war in 1868*
- *However there is another fascinating monument*



Double Spiraled Sazaedō

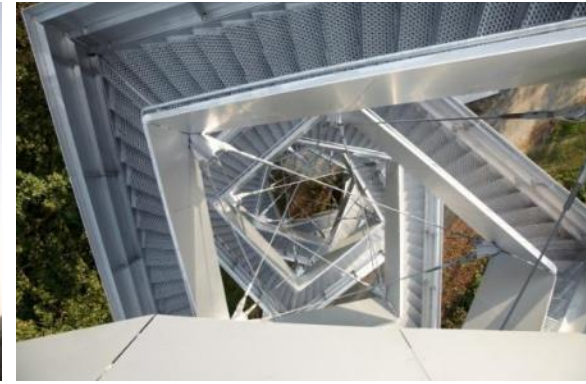


- ❑ The wooden Buddhist temple **Sazaedō** with a double spiraled staircase inside
- ❑ Visitors climbing up don't meet those who go downstairs
- ❑ This Figure shows the reconstruction made by Kobayashi Bunji (Tokyo University)



Western Connections

- *The idea wasn't novel but probably it was the first implementation in Japan (1796)*
- *Precursors:*
 - *Chambord Castle, France (1547)*
 - *Maximilian Palace in Graz, Austria (1499),*
 - *Rundetaarn tower in Copenhagen, Denmark (1642)*
 - *Panoramic tower in Styria, Austria by Terrain: loenhardt&mayr studio (2010)*
- *Construction strongly corresponds to its metaphysic matter*



Saikoku Kannon Pilgrimage Connection



- Some important facts about Sazaedō:
 - This Edo period monument was created in order to store the Buddha Amida statue and the 33 images of Kannon which were the replicas of the statues from the 33 temples along the famous pilgrim route Saikoku Sanjusansho Junrei (Saikoku 33 Kannon images Pilgrimage), the oldest Kannon pilgrimage in Japan (~718 AD)
 - Poor people from the province at Japan North-East were able to simulate (in one day) the 2000 miles pilgrimage without long, expensive and even risky journey to the southern parts of Honshuu and repeat the route again as many times as they wish



Conclusion

***Unique Constructions of Japanese Buddhist Architecture in Aizu,
Meiji Showcase Talk at the WC2 Meeting at Meiji University, Tokyo,
Japan, 31/03/2015***

- *In different historical periods (including the Heian period and the rising of Japanese Buddhism, the Edo period and even the modern times) many sacred monuments in Japanese regions (Aizu serves as an example) conquered researchers' attention due to their non typical architectural and compositional concepts*
- *Learning such monuments leads us to better understanding of particularities of Japanese religious and cultural tradition development as well as to learning their temporal transformations*

