



TOKYO NATIONAL MUSEUM

13-9 Ueno Park, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-8712

<MEDIA ONLY>Tel:03-3822-1111 Fax:03-3822-0086 (PR Office)

PRESS RELEASE

In commemoration of the completion of Tokyo Branch (Betsuin)

Special Feature

National Treasure *Kichijoten* from Yakushiji

Tuesday, July 27 - Sunday, August 22, 2004

Hyokeikan, Tokyo National Museum (Ueno Park)

***Kichijoten* (Beauty Goddess, *skr*: Sri-mahadevi) has
alighted in the Hyokeikan Building!**

**An ample beauty reminiscent of a Tang China belle is
there to be admired.**

Special Feature during the Summer period only.

Kichijoten (National Treasure), one of the rare and most magnificent Buddhist paintings of the Tempyô era (710-794), will be specially exhibited at the Tokyo National Museum to commemorate the establishment of the Tokyo Branch of Yakushiji, one of the 'Six Important Temples' (Rokudaiji) of Nara.

Originally, *Kichijoten* was imported into Buddhism from Hinduism, being known as Laksmi, the goddess of beauty and prosperity. This painting is likely to have been the central worshipping piece, if not its important element, of Japanese Buddhist rituals during the Nara period (701-794). She has crescent-shaped eyebrows with full cheeks, and moves leisurely and gracefully in a striking multi-layered attire, like a Chinese beauty of the Tang period (618-907). Though, a sacred gem on her left hand and her transparent shawl fluttering gently in the wind as she walks suggests her heavenly nature. Its renderings not only delicate and elegant, but also infused with a stately Buddhist serenity of its own, the painting radiates a special charm.

Paintings dating back to the Nara period are a rarity even in Japan. Invaluable as a Buddhist painting, its opulent and noble spells are delightful to the eye indeed.



(Above)
National Treasure *Kichijoten*
Nara period, 8th century
Yakushiji, Nara

(more)

HOURS : 9:30 ~ 17:00 Fridays until 20:00, Saturdays and Sundays until 18:00
(Last entry is 30 minutes before closing time.)

Open Daily

Organizers: Tokyo National Museum, Yakushiji

Regular Admissions: Adult: 420 yen (210 yen), University/College Student: 130 yen (70 yen)

*Free for people over 65 years old; High school students and under (ID required for proof of age)

*Free for disabled persons (ID required)

[Related lecture and event]

Lecture (in Japanese only)

August 7 (Sat.) 13:30 ~ 15:00 (door opens at 13:00) Heiseikan Auditorium

“History and Culture of Yakushiji”

Lecture by YASUDA Eiin (Lord Abbot of YAKUSHIJI, The Headquarters of HOSSO Buddhism Sect)

Limit 340 seats (advance booking is required)

How to Join : Put you name, address (with zip code), daytime phone number and age on the reply-paid postcard with your name, address (with zip code) on the reply-card (each person needs to book individually with one reply-paid postcard) and send it to address below by July 23 (Fri.), 2004.

Send to:

Lecture and Educational Events (RE: Kichijoten)

Education Department

Tokyo National Museum

13-9 Ueno Park, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-8712

Gallery Talk by Yakushiji Priests

A priest from Yakushiji talks about *Kichijoten*.

(walk-in basis, Free with Museum admission)

Schedule: July 29 (Thu.), August 1 (Sun.), 5 (Thu.), 12 (Thu.), 15 (Sun.), 19 (Thu.)

Start at 11:00, 12:00, 13:00, 14:00, 15:00 (approximately 20 minutes for each talk)

Meet at the Hyokeikan entrance hall

Talk will be given by:

OTANI Tetsujo (Deacon of YAKUSHIJI)

July 29, August 1, 5, 15, 19 (* only at 11:00 and 12:00 on the August 19)

KATOH Choin (Deacon of YAKUSHIJI)

August 12

MATSUKUBO Kasyu (Subdeacon of YAKUSHIJI)

August, 19 (* only at 13:00, 14:00, 15:00)

**For More Information and Photo request, please contact with:
Public Relations and Press (ATTN: Kito), Tokyo National Museum
TEL: 03 - 3822 - 1111 (switch board) FAX: 03 - 3822 - 0086**