

RESEARCH REPORT OF NARA NATIONAL CULTURAL
PROPERTIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE, NO. 45

**NARA YAKUSHIJI MONASTERY COMPOUND
EXCAVATION REPORT**

SURVEYS ON EXCAVATIONS CARRIED
OUT BETWEEN 1954 AND 1985

ENGLISH SUMMARY

NARA NATIONAL CULTURAL PROPERTIES
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ENGLISH SUMMARY

I. INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes the excavation studies made over the period of the past nearly 20 years on the grounds of the Yakushiji (薬師寺) Monastery, located in Nishinkyō-chō, Nara. From 1968, studies have been carried out nearly every year, with the major purpose of contributing to the reconstruction and improvement of the monastery complex. In the initial stages, these excavation studies were organized primarily by Kinki University and by the monastery itself, with cooperation from the Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute. From the latter half of fiscal 1971, the primary responsibility for the excavation studies passed to the hands of the latter Institute. Among the numerous temple excavation studies with which the Nara National Cultural Properties Research Institute has concerned itself over the years, those carried out within the precincts of the Yakushiji Monastery have been the largest in scale and have also been carried out over the longest period of time. The results of these studies at the Yakushiji Monastery have been extremely significant and have greatly contributed to research on this ancient monastery as well as to the planning for the reconstruction of the monastery complex. As the first requisite for such planning is a more accurate understanding of the way things were at the time the monastery was originally constructed, these excavation studies have been an important means to approach this goal. They have not only enabled us to know clearly the locations and floor areas of the buildings, the spaces between support posts, and the original state of foundations and floor platforms, they have also made it possible for us to have a better idea of many of the buildings' other structural forms and details. The work of reconstructing the monastery compound began with the Golden Hall (*Kondō*) and progressed to the West Monks' Quarters, the West Pagoda, the East Monk's Quarters, and the Main Gate. In each instance, the remains of the building foundations unearthed in the excavation studies were in good condition, and care was taken to assure their further preservation through specially devised work projects. At the site of the original Golden Hall, concrete piles were emplaced between the original foundation stones and floor support beams were laid between them in such a way that the floor of the reconstructed Golden Hall is 80 cm above that of the original building. In the case of the West Pagoda, the so-called *shinso* (support stone for the central post) remains in its original position, and the original floor platform also remains for the most part in good condition. RC piles, 1.1 meter in diameter, were emplaced near each of the four corners of the original floor platform. These were then connected by cross-beams constituting the "foundations" for the reconstructed pagoda and supporting its 600-ton weight. As in the case of the reconstructed Golden Hall, the reconstructed floor platform is approximately 80 cm higher than the original, thus permitting the original floor platform and surrounding remains to be preserved in good form.

II. HISTORY OF THE YAKUSHIJI MONASTERY

1. Establishment of the Monastery

The Heijō-kyō (Nara) Yakushiji Monastery, located at the intersection of the 6th east-west *jō* avenue and the 2nd north-south *bō* avenue in the western or "right" sector (*ukyō*), of the ancient Nara capital, has handed down much of the cultural heritage of the Nara period, including the monastery's East Pagoda and the bronze images of *Yakushi Nyorai* (the "healing buddha") and his two attendants, which are the monastery's *honzon*, or main objects of reverence.

An earlier Yakushiji, built in the Asuka region before to the establishment of the capital at Nara, owed its beginning to a vow to build a monastery in honor of *Yakushi Nyorai* made by Emperor in the year Temmu 9 (680), as an expression of his fervent

hope for the recovery from illness of his wife, who later reigned as Empress Jitō. Although she seems to have fully recovered, Temmu's own health took a turn for the worse and he died six years later, in 686.

The *Nihon shoki* records that at the beginning of the year Jitō 2 (688) this original Yakushiji Monastery hosted a great public ceremony known as a *mushadaie* (無遮大会). It may not be incorrect to infer that this ceremony marked the completion of the original Yakushiji's Golden Hall and *honzon*. The site known as "Moto Yakushiji" in present-day Kidono-chō, Kashihara-shi, is without question the site of this original Yakushiji, judging from its age and scale. There are archaeological remains of a Golden Hall and an East and West Pagoda.

2. Construction of the Yakushiji Monastery in Heijō-kyō

Historical records tell us that the building of the original Yakushiji was nearly complete by the year 707. However, after the capital was formally moved from Fujiwara-kyō (in the Asuka region south of Nara) to Heijō-kyō (Nara) in 710, with the notable exceptions of the Gubukuji (Kawaharadera) in Asuka and the Hōryūji in Ikaruga, the Yakushiji and most of the other major temples in the former capital region, including the Daianji (Daikandaiji) and Gangōji (Asukadera), were moved to the new Heijō capital.

The *Yakushiji engi* records that the Yakushiji monastery compound was transferred to Heijō-kyō in the year Yōrō 2 (718). Excavations have brought forth from a well in the northern part of the Heijō-kyō monastery compound *mokkan* (wooden slabs for written annotations) bearing the characters for the year Reiki 2 (716), together with tiles of the "Moto Yakushiji style" and red pottery (*hajiki*) typical of the early Nara period.

In the spring of Yōrō 3 (719) two apprentice monks (*shisei*) were for the first time placed under the supervision of the director of the Yakushiji construction work; in the summer of that year the monastery became a formal place of residence for ordained monks; and in the winter of the same year Empress Genshō made a contribution of gold and silver, ceremonial implements, cloth, and rice. Construction work is thought to have made considerable progress during the Yōrō year-period (717–723).

In the year Jinki 3 (726), an image of Shakyamuni was commissioned as a means for expediting the recovery from illness of the retired Empress Genshō. At the same time copies were made of the Lotus Sutra and a *saie* (齋会) ceremony was held. It is thought that the Golden Hall was completed and the images of *Yakushi Nyorai* and his attendants installed by this time, at the latest.

The East Pagoda is the only building for which a date of construction is clearly recorded. Both the *Fusō ryakki* and the *Shichidaiji nempyō* record that construction of this pagoda was completed on the 29th day of the 3rd month of the year Tempyō 2 (730). In the case of the original Yakushiji in Fujiwara-kyō, Buddhist relics (*shari*) were deposited under its East Pagoda, while in the case of the new Heijō-kyō Yakushiji they were deposited under the West Pagoda. This indicates that the West Pagoda of the Heijō-kyō Yakushiji Monastery was probably completed earlier than the East Pagoda.

In the year Tempyō 7 (735), repeated readings of the Daihannya Sutra were carried out at the Yakushiji and also within the palace and at the Daianji, Gangōji, and Kōfukuji. Prior to the completion of the Tōdaiji, the four above-noted monasteries were the four large functioning monasteries of the new Heijō capital.

According to the *Shoku Nihongi*, in the year Tempyō-kampō 1 (749), gifts of silk cloth, cotton, flaxen cloth and rice were made to the various monasteries upon the emperor's command. The first-listed among the recipients were the Daianji, Yakushiji, Gangōji, Kōfukuji and Tōdaiji, followed by the Hōryūji, Gubukuji, and Shitennōji.

Many points are still unclear regarding the building of the Yakushiji Monastery in the Fujiwara and Heijō capitals. To what extent buildings and Buddhist images were moved from Fujiwara-kyō to Heijō-kyō – and in particular the question of whether the

presently existing East Pagoda and the bronze images of *Yakushi Nyorai* and his attendants in the Golden Hall were moved or were newly constructed — have long been important issues of dispute in architectural and art history. At present, there is no proof that the East Pagoda was moved. As for the *honzon* images of *Yakushi Nyorai* and his two attendants, there are two theories: one, that they were made as the *honzon* for the original Yakushiji and later moved to the Heijō capital; and the other, that they were newly made in the Heijō capital around the Yōrō and Jinki year-periods (717–729).

3. Monastery Grounds and Buildings

The Heijō capital's Yakushiji Monastery was located at the intersection of the 6th *jō* and 2nd *bō* avenues in the western or “right-hand” sector (*ukyō*) of the city. The South Gate opened onto Rokujō avenue, and the north-south center line of the monastery compound corresponded to the center of the lane located one *chō* east of Nibō avenue. According to the *Ruki* (流記), the monastery grounds in the Nara period covered 10¼ *bō*, but the later-written *Yakushiji engi* records that “at present the grounds cover 12 *chō* [same as *bō*] within an enclosure,” showing that the grounds expanded during the Heian period. The layout and size of the monastery compound's main buildings have become fairly clear as a result of the excavation studies made in recent years. The original foundations have been ascertained for the following structures: the Golden Hall, the West Pagoda, the East and West Monks' Quarters and parts of the Refectory, the South Gate, the Main Gate, the Surrounding Corridor, a part of the Lecture Hall, the Belfry, the Sutra Depository, and “Cross Hall” (so named because of its shape). The excavation study of the Surrounding Corridor carried out in 1985 revealed evidence of a simple corridor that had preceded a more complex “double corridor.” Outside the area of the present temple grounds, an excavation study has been made of a part of the original west wall of the monastery compound.

4. The Yakushiji During the Heian Period

In the year Enryaku 3 (784), the capital was moved from Heijō-kyō (Nara) to Nagaoka-kyō, and in the year Enryaku 13 (794) it was further moved to Heian-kyō (Kyōto). The Yakushiji and other major monasteries remained, however, in Nara.

As a result of a petition presented to the emperor by Prince Naoyo (or Tadayo) in the year Tenchō 7 (830), a stately *saishōe* (最勝会) ceremony took place in the Yakushiji Monastery in the third month of each year.

At present, an area outside the South Gate is occupied by a Shinto shrine known as the Hachiman Jinja. It appears that the area of the shrine originally extended south of Rokujō avenue. It is recorded that during the Kamyō year-period (889–897) the Yakushiji's head monk, Eishō *daihōshi*, arranged for the shrine to be established there as the “spiritual protector” (*chinju*) for the monastery.

In the spring of the year Tenroku 4 (973), the Yakushiji suffered a great fire. The fire started from the Cross Hall, and in its course the Refectory, Lecture Hall, Monks' Quarters, Surrounding Corridor, Main Gate, South Gate, Sutra Depository, and Belfry were also lost. It should be considered a miracle that the Golden Hall and the East and West Pagodas remained. The Lecture Hall was rebuilt by the head monk Chōzen and by the year Jōgan 3 (978), when the *saishōe* ceremony was again held, the reconstruction work was virtually complete, although the Lecture Hall at that time still had only a temporary roof. The Main Gate was rebuilt by head monk Heichō in 986, and the South Gate was rebuilt by the monk Zōyū between 1006 and 1013. The Surrounding Corridor is thought have been reconstructed in the early 11th century, though its walls and such details as lattices and side gates remained incomplete. At Zōyū's behest, the Refectory was rebuilt during the 7 years between 999 and 1006, and the “Cross Hall,” from which the fire had originated, was rebuilt in 1005. The writing of the *Yakushiji engi* in 1015

was probably meant to be a way of commemorating the monastery's reconstruction.

Minamoto Yoritsune is recorded to have lodged at the "Moto Yakushiji" in the Asuka region in the eleventh month of Manju 2 (1025), when it still seems to have maintained its status as a monastery. It is recorded that in the year Kaho 2 (1095) three small Buddhist relics (*shari*) were discovered in a bronze receptacle found at the site of the Moto Yakushiji's East Pagoda. It is thought that by this time not only the East Pagoda but other buildings as well were in an abandoned or ruined state.

The *Shichidaiji nikki* and the *Shichidaiji junrei shiki*, which were written around the end of the 11th century, give overall descriptions of the Yakushiji Monastery in Nara following the "Tenroku reconstruction," noting the following structures: Golden Hall, East and West Pagodas, Lecture Hall, Refectory, *Tōin* (唐院), and Octagonal Hall in the Eastern Precinct (東院).

5. The Yakushiji after the Middle Ages

In the Kamakura period, much effort was put into the reconstruction and repair of monastery buildings, including those at the Tōdaiji and Kōfukuji in Nara which had been burned in the course of military campaigns.

In the case of the Yakushiji, repairs were undertaken by a monk of the Kōfukuji named Engen. Given the existence of a number of flat roof-end tiles bearing the inscription "Ninji Yakushiji *mizu-tora*" (仁治薬師寺壬寅), it is thought that this repair work on the two pagodas was done around 1242, corresponding to the year Ninji 3, which in turn corresponds to the year *mizu-tora* in the Chinese cyclical calendar. In the year Kenji 3 (1277), the West Pagoda was hit by lightning and caught fire, but the fire was put out before much harm was done. The presently-existing Eastern Precinct Hall (*Tōindō*) was built in the year Kōan 8 (1285), and the inside *shōji* paintings at the adjoining Hachiman Jinja were redone in the year Einin 3 (1293). There are many different types of tiles from the Kamakura period. Especially large numbers of tiles have been excavated from the vicinities of the Golden Hall and the West Pagoda. These facts stand as testimony to the frequent repairs carried out on the monastery compound.

In the Muromachi period (1333–1573), successive disasters meant that the monastery compound fell more and more into disrepair.

The halls and pagodas were damaged by a large earthquake in 1361 and by a typhoon in 1445. The rebuilding of the Golden Hall following these disasters found progress difficult and was suspended during long periods. In the autumn of 1528, most of the main buildings were burned during fighting between the Tsutsui and Ochi clans; the East Pagoda and the Eastern Precinct Hall barely escaped the flames.

A *banshō hajime* ceremony marking the beginning of the reconstruction of the destroyed Golden Hall took place in the year Kyōroku 4 (1531), but it was not until 1545 that the posts for supporting the ceiling were in place, and it was not until 1557 that work around the roof eaves was carried out. At that time the exterior roofing still seems to have been of a temporary sort; in the year Keichō 5 (1600), it was tiled through a donation from the lord of the Kōriyama Castle, Masuda Nagamori.

III. PROGRESS OF EXCAVATION WORK

Excavation studies within the precincts of the Yakushiji Monastery date back to before the Second World War, when a survey of the top of the foundation platform of the West Pagoda was undertaken by the Nihon Kobunka Kenkyūjo. An excavation survey of the South and Main Gates was undertaken in 1954 and was the first to clarify the monastery compound's original north-south axis and the relationship between the South Gate and Rokujō avenue. It was thus the first survey to clarify details of the monastery compound as a whole. The earliest excavation survey carried out in connection with plans to restore the Yakushiji Monastery to its original appearance was a survey carried

out at the site of construction work on a small storehouse for monastery treasures, near the northeast corner of the Lecture Hall. The exact locations and times of this and the subsequent excavation surveys are given in Table 1 and Figure 1.

A 1968 survey was carried out to the east of the East Pagoda. This survey established the existence of a rain trough (*amaochimizo*) along the west side of the Surrounding Corridor, as well as tufa facing-stones (*hame-ishi*) along the eastern facing of this corridor sector's foundation platform. Evidence of the former locations of sets of three foundation stones aligned east to west showed that at least the eastern sector of the Surrounding Corridor had been a "double corridor." It was also learned that this Surrounding Corridor was not connected to the Golden Hall but extended farther north and connected with the Lecture Hall.

The survey carried out in fiscal 1969 included 6 structures: the Golden Hall, the West Pagoda, a portion of the Surrounding Corridor, the Lecture Hall, the Belfry, and the Refectory. The tufa raised ceremonial stage on the south side of the foundation platform of the Golden Hall was found to be still in good condition. It was ascertained that there had been steps at three locations along the south side, while on the east side there was only one flight of steps, attached to the center of the foundation platform. On the north side, at a position approximately 0.9 meter inside the edge of the foundation platform of the present building, excavations revealed horizontally-laid slab-like stones known as *jifuku-ishi*, which supported the outward-facing decorative stones around the foundation platform of the original building. Excavation work on the east side also provided specific evidence of the ways in which the original foundation platform was altered in the making of the foundation platform of the present building.

The survey of the west pagoda was carried out along the western edge of its foundation platform. In an earth-fill outside the foundation platform was found a mixture of burnt earth and charcoal together with large quantities of burnt tiles and fragments of clay images which are thought to have been buried at the time of the reconstruction following the destruction of 1528. The exterior decoration around the foundation platform indicates that this platform was of the "high-rank" *danjōzumi* type; as in the case of the Golden Hall, there were no vertically-placed narrow *tsuka-ishi* stones interspersed between the *hame-ishi* facing-stones. Vestiges of steps were found in the center of the foundation platform's west side. Outside the platform, small round stones known as *tama-ishi* were placed in close juxtaposition constituting a narrow walkway known as an *inubashiri*, outside of which was a rain trough. It was also discovered that the northern sector of the Surrounding Corridor connected to the center of the east and west sides of the Lecture Hall. There were also discovered portions of an *inubashiri* and rain trough near the southeast corner of the Lecture Hall's foundation platform. In all of these places, the remains were covered by accumulated dirt including burnt earth and charcoal. A survey was also made of the Refectory site; however, the remains had been worn away so much over the years that nothing could be identified except the heaped-up earth (*hanchikudo*) that had formed the core of the foundation platform.

The 1970 survey was carried out along the northern side of the Lecture Hall and the southern side of the Refectory. The excavations revealed the remains of steps at approximately the center of the northern side of the Lecture Hall, as well as of a walkway extending northward from the base of these steps and paved with flat river stones. The original measurements of the Lecture Hall foundation platform were found to be 43.5 m from east to west and 22.5 m from north to south. An *inubashiri*, paved with *tama-ishi*, was found to adjoin only the inner wall of the Surrounding Corridor.

The 1971 survey was carried out for the purpose of clarifying the dimensions of the Refectory. Excavations revealed the rain troughs along the western and northern side of the foundation platform, as well as slabs of tufa stones in their original positions at the southeast corner. It was determined that the Refectory's foundation platform

measured 47.2 meters from east to west and 21.7 m from north to south.

Approximately 20 m east of the Refectory site, compacted earth from the foundation of another building was discovered. This building was determined to have been a monks' lodging, with a foundation platform measuring 40 m from east to west. Then, in the area between this monks' lodging and the northern sector of the Surrounding Corridor, further excavations identified a Sutra Depository.

During the second half of fiscal 1971, an overall survey was made of the Golden Hall site. The building of the Golden Hall's foundation platform in the Nara period did not entail any digging but only the alternate emplacement of layers of clay and sandy soil atop the already-existing ground level. The original foundation stones were of granite and diorite and the majority showed evidence of having been through a fire.

Holes for the foundation stones were dug, and the stones emplaced, after the earth for the foundation platform had already been built up part way; the foundation platforms were then completed by additional building up and hardening of the constituent earth. The *jifuku-ishi* along the base of the foundation platform were made of tufa and remained virtually in their entirety on all four sides. However, no *nobe-ishi* large flat stones were left on the top side of the foundation remains. The *hame-ishi* facing-stones were of tufa and many remained, especially along the south side where they remained entirely in their original positions, though their upper parts were discolored from fire. *Tsuka-ishi* between the *hame-ishi* were not used. A large volume of artifacts was excavated from the soil that had accumulated around the foundation platform. Most of these were roof tiles, but there were also pieces of pottery, metal manufactures, and fragments of dry-lacquer Buddhist images. The larger part of the tiles were from the Kamakura period or later. Among the metal manufactures were decorative objects with grapevine patterns (*budō karakusamon*) and eggplant-shaped bells with line engravings of lotus petals.

The next survey, begun in 1974, was carried out on the supposed site of the West Monks' Quarters, west of the Refectory. Remains were found of some of the larger-size monks' apartments (so-called *taibō*), some of the smaller cells (*shōshibō*) for novitiates and younger monks, and some of the small subsidiary structures (probably used as storage sheds) occupying part of the space between the rows of *taibō* and *shōshibō*. The low "foundation platform" for the monks' quarters consisted of rows of flat *tama-ishi*, each measuring some 20 cm in diameter. The parallel rows of *taibō* and *shōshibō* were built upon this common foundation platform. The rain trough surrounding the foundation platform was simply dug into the earth without any stone pavement. The roof-ridge of the row of *taibō*, extending in an east-west direction, was aligned with the center roof-ridge of the Refectory. It was possible to clearly distinguish the remains of partition between *taibō* from Apartment 1 to Apartment 7. These apartments seem not to have been identical, but to have exhibited certain differences, such as between the use of flooring and its absence (i.e., dirt floors). These monks' quarters were lost to fire in the year Tenroku 4 (973), and were not reconstructed subsequently. Numerous pieces of pottery, including some pieces of Chinese porcelain, were discovered, especially from the floor of the apartments near the middle of the row. Most of the unearthed pottery consisted of reddish baked clay ware (*hajiki*) or black earthenware, usually in the form of bowls and plates. There were also found a few examples of grey-glazed ceramics, which were likewise items for daily personal use. These finds provided important results from the point of view of the dating of pottery types.

A further excavation site, selected because of its symmetrical positioning with respect to the site of the Sutra Depository, which had been studied in 1971, revealed the remains of the monastery's Belfry. Because the surface of its foundation platform had been severely eroded, it was impossible to locate the positions of the foundation stones and support posts. However, it was possible to estimate the size of the foundation plat-

form from the remaining evidence for locations of the no-longer-remaining *jifuku-ishi* surrounding the foundation platform, as well as from the tufa stone steps remaining on the west and north sides. The size of this foundation platform was found to be the same as that of the Sutra Depository.

In fiscal 1975, surveys were carried out north of the Refectory site, south and east of the North Gate site, and in an area of the Hachiman Jinja. The excavations north of the Refectory uncovered the overlapping remains of two buildings of so-called *hottatebashira* construction (with support posts emplaced in dug-out holes). Both dated from the Nara period. Judging from their locations, they may be thought to have been some sort of kitchen facilities (e.g., those known at the time as *ōiya*). Though the surveyed Hachiman area, lying somewhat to the north of the present Hachiman Jinja, is not strictly speaking within the Yakushiji monastery compound, the report on the excavations there, which uncovered a trough on the south side of Rokujō avenue, is included in this survey report.

In connection with the plan for the restoration of the West Pagoda, an excavation survey of the entire West Pagoda site was carried out in fiscal 1976. First, a survey was made of the surface of the foundation platform, and it was ascertained that two of the original rectangular post-supporting foundation stones left atop the foundation platform had been moved from their original positions and newly emplaced in burnt earth following the fire disaster of 1528. The support stone for the central pillar remained in its original position. Remains were found of all the holes for the four inner posts (*shitenbashira*) around the center post, as well as for the outer support posts (*gawabashira*). It was not possible to find concrete evidence for the sites of the foundation stones supporting *mokoshibashira* posts which surrounded the *gawabashira*. This was perhaps because the holes for the emplacement of these stones were relatively shallow. Upon removal of the burnt earth which had accumulated around the foundation platform, remains were found of a few of the *jifuku-ishi* and tufa *hame-ishi* from the exterior decorative facing around the foundation platform's base. On all four sides of the foundation platform there were steps. The stone pavement beyond the rain troughs continued on beyond the excavated area. Large numbers of fragments of burnt clay images were uncovered from the layer of burnt earth atop the foundation platform. Studies of these fragments indicated that they were from images originally placed around the base of the pagoda.

In fiscal 1977, surveys were carried out of the yet unsurveyed areas of the site of the row of smaller cells (*shōshibō*) in the West Monks' Quarters, as well as of the supposed site of the "Cross Hall." It was confirmed that the latter lay to the east of the former and that its scale was approximately the same as that recorded in the *Yakushiji engi*. This clarification of the position and scale of the "Cross Hall" has greatly contributed to research on the monks' quarters in the ancient period. A further excavation survey carried out during fiscal 1977 on the northern part of the site of the East Monks' Quarters revealed two buildings from the Nara period, a well from the Nara period, and three wells from the late Heian period. The Nara period well produced 233 *mokkan* (wooden slabs bearing annotations). Some display the date Reiki 2 (716), indicating the time of the Yakushiji Monastery's original construction.

A further excavation survey on the site of the East Monks' Quarters was carried out in August 1979, in which the sites of Apartments 1 to 9 were investigated in their entirety. Remains from Apartments 1 and 2 were well preserved, though the remains from Apartment 3 and those to the east of it were poorly preserved and had lost their foundation stones. The foundation platform surface was burnt red, indicating that the area had been destroyed by fire. The earthenware uncovered from the ashes above the surface were from the latter half of the 10th century, indicating that, as in the case of the West Monks' Quarters, the fire probably took place in the year Tenroku 4 (973). It was ascertained that neither of these two monks' quarters were subsequently reconstructed.

In fiscal 1981, a small-scale excavation area was designated as comprising the two shorter sides (i.e., east and west sides) of the site of the South Gate. Excavations revealed, on the east side, holes (with foundation stones missing) at the locations of the central posts and, on the west side, a horizontal stone slab (*ne-ishi*) that supported the central post. Tiles designed to cover the ends of corner rafters (so-called *sumigibutagawara*) were also found.

In fiscal 1982, a survey was carried out of the entire site of the Main Gate. Holes indicating the sites of 15 foundation stones were found — though none were found for posts on the west end — and it was possible to ascertain the Main Gate's ground area. It was possible to determine the dimensions of the foundation platform, and excavations revealed the foundation platform's exterior decorations on the south and east sides and rain troughs on the south and north sides. Especially important was the discovery of the base stones that supported the *Niō* images on both sides of the gate's central passageway.

In the course of the survey of three areas of the cloister carried out in fiscal 1984, it was found that there had once been a "single-corridor" construction predating construction of the later "double-corridor" with its center division. This finding threw interesting new light on the original construction plan for the monastery compound.

IV. SUMMARY

The excavation surveys carried out at the sites of such structures as the Golden Hall, the Pagodas, the Main Gate, and the Surrounding Corridor have greatly clarified the most important questions regarding the central core area of the Yakushiji monastery compound. No other large monastery built in the Nara period can offer, as the result of excavation studies, an equally detailed perspective on the original appearance of its compound. The results of these excavation studies have, needless to say, greatly contributed to the Yakushiji's ongoing projects for reconstructing its original monastery compound and preserving original remains. Below, we should like to summarize the most important results of the various surveys as well as some of the still unresolved problem areas.

The layout of the monastery compound and the dimensions of its structures have become quite clear not only with respect to the major halls and pagodas but also with respect to the area behind the central core area where the "Cross Hall" and monks' quarters (on three sides) were located. In the case of the Golden Hall, the West Pagoda, the Main Gate, part of the Surrounding Corridor, the West Monks' Quarters and the Belfry, the foundation platforms, holes for foundation stones, and outward-facing decorative stones around the foundation platforms remained to a great extent. However, at the sites of the West Monks' Quarters and the western sector of the Surrounding Corridor, the remains had undergone relatively large disturbances over the years. In the case of the Lecture Hall and Refectory sites, only the overall scales of the foundation platforms were ascertainable, and complete excavation studies were not made due to the fact that the central portions of the original buildings are occupied by presently-existing buildings and trees. While on the whole there are a large number of findings which coincide with information recorded in the *Yakushiji engi*, there are also several findings at variance, such as the estimation of the east-west extent of the Surrounding Corridor, according to the excavation studies, as 25 *ken*.

All of the buildings were built atop foundation platforms surrounded by outward-facing decorative stonework of tufa. The post-supporting foundation stones were of granite and floors were for the most part paved with cut slabs of tufa. Accounts in various historical materials mentioning the times when buildings were repaired or abandoned could in a great many cases be confirmed through remains *in situ* and/or through findings in the accumulated earth outside the foundation platforms. Nevertheless, a number of points remain unclear about the process by which the monastery compound as a whole was restored following the fire disaster of 973, including numerous problems

which remain unresolved even after consulting historical accounts.

Among the more notable results of the excavation surveys was success in the detailed restoration to its original outward dimensions of the main building of the original West Monks' Quarters. The original site had not been reconstructed or otherwise tampered with, and so remained in a good state of preservation after gradually becoming buried in the earth. Another notable result was the unearthing from the site of the Main Gate of four stones (known as the *niōzō daiishi*) that had served as the bases for the gate's *Niō* images.

Several interesting facts became clear regarding the Nara Yakushiji's original construction planning. For example, it became clear that the "double-corridor" construction of the Surrounding Corridor of later years had been preceded by a "Single-corridor" plan, while *mokkan* with the year inscription Reiki 2 (716) bear witness to the time when the construction work on the monastery compound was commenced. The finding that the Surrounding Corridor was apparently at first of a "single-corridor" type will, it is hoped, lend itself to future comparative studies in relation to such other large 8th century monasteries as the Daianji and the Kōfukuji. Although the number of unearthed *mokkan* is small, the finding of *mokkan* with the year inscription Reiki 2 is highly significant. The locations of these finds suggests that construction activities began following the erection of small temporary structures (used for supervising the construction work) behind the central area of the monastery compound. However, with respect to the question of whether parts of the monastery were moved from the Yakushiji Monastery in Fujiwarakyō (later known as the "Moto Yakushiji"), it was not possible to gain any definitive evidence that would help resolve the controversy. To what extent the Moto Yakushiji's building styles, characterized by *mokoshi* secondary roof-tier structures between the more prominent roof tiers was adapted to, or allowed to influence, the buildings at the Nara Yakushiji remains an issue for future deliberation.

The two-pagoda-style monastery complex is also to be found in the Korean peninsula, and it may be thought that this pattern at the Nara Yakushiji reflects such continental influence. Indeed, the excavation surveys at the Yakushiji allow us to point out various examples of influences from 7th and 8th century contacts with Korea and China. Future research on Nara period monasteries must necessarily be carried out taking other parts of Eastern Asia into consideration.

The excavations uncovered large numbers of roof-tile fragments and other decorative tiles (*sen*) dating from the ancient to the early modern period. Among these, some of the roof-end tiles may be thought to have been brought to the Yakushiji after use at the Moto Yakushiji. There were a large number of Tokugawa period *tomoe-mon* (interlocking comma pattern) roof-end tiles, which have helped to establish an overall picture of the various types of roof-end tile patterns used over the years at the Yakushiji Monastery and to give additional clues to the process by which its buildings were repaired or newly constructed. The chronology established for the Yakushiji roof-end tiles greatly contributes to the setting of similar chronologies, from ancient to early modern times, for roof-end tiles at the other large Nara monasteries. Besides roof-end tiles, examples have also been found of such so-called special-use tiles (*dōgugawara*) as "demon-face tiles" (*onigawara*), tiles to cover corner rafters (*sumikibutagawara*), and rafter-end tiles (*tarukisakigawara*).

Among the uncovered pieces of earthenware, those from the site of the West Monks' Quarters are especially noteworthy. It appears that the buildings on this site were simply abandoned after 973, preserving rather well their state following the fire in that year. Studies of the structural and other material remains has thrown light on a number of points including the likely number of inhabitants, types of food and their preparation within the monks' apartments, and the use of the front sections of the apartments as private "halls" where the monks venerated their own Buddhist images.

The excavations produced important new examples of metal fittings designed for

attachment to rafter ends. Such fittings had previously been known only at the Hōryūji and (as fittings specially designed for corner rafters) from the site of the Daikandaiji in Fujiwara-kyō.

Unearthed together at the same site were a number of metal and glass manufactures which are thought to have been attached to Buddhist banners to give them an air of heightened solemnity. These, too, are important finds which help clarify the nature of other similar manufactures among the goods contained in Nara's 8th century Shōsōin warehouse.

From the West Pagoda site a large number of fragments of clay Buddhist figures were uncovered. By comparing these with the Buddhist figures at the base of the Hōryūji pagoda, it is possible to gain an overall idea of the original appearance of the similar assemblages of clay figures which once adorned the base of the Yakushiji's West Pagoda. Fragments of clay figures were also found inside the tenons (*hozoana*) cut into the base stones which supported the images of the Two Deva Kings (*Niō*) in the Main Gate. These were found to be fragments of the *Niō* figures together with fragments of an assemblage of 16 clay Buddhist images (*jūrokutai-butsu*) which had also been installed within the Main Gate.

The locating of monastery compounds, according to principles of urban planning, within the area laid out in a scheme of numbered square blocks (*jōbōsei*) making up the Japanese capital city was established at the time of the construction of Japan's first such capital city, Fujiwara-kyō, in the late 7th century. It had long been known, for example, that the sites of the "Moto Yakushiji" and of the Kidera within Fujiwara-kyō were more or less symmetrically located in the "right" (i.e., western) and "left" (i.e., eastern) halves, respectively, of the city. Both were located facing the Fujiwara capital's 8th east-west avenue (*Hachijō*) not very far — only 1 *jō*, or 4 *chō* — from the area of the emperor's palace.

In the 8th century Heijō (Nara) capital, occupying a position nearly symmetrical with that of the "left-capital" Yakushiji was the "right-capital" Daianji. Both were located along the 6th east-west avenue (*Rokujō*), at some distance — 3 *jō*, or 12 *chō* — from the palace. The other large monasteries whose construction was begun around the time of the founding of the new Heijō capital, namely, the Kōfukuji and the Gangōji, were in the so-called "outer capital" (*gekyō*) sector of the city, which was an extension toward the east attached to the northeast corner of the otherwise rectangular urban area, and were thus even further removed from the palace.

In other words, with the exception of the Kairyūōji which had already existed before the building of the Nara capital, and such later-built monasteries as the Saidaiji and Sairyūji erected in the latter part of the Nara period, no large monasteries were located north of the 5th east-west *jō* avenue or closer to the center north-south axis than the 4th *bo* avenue of either the "right" or "left" capital. This signifies that a part of the original urban planning philosophy for the Heijō (Nara) capital was to locate the residential zone for the nobility adjacent to the palace and to have the monasteries located beyond this zone.

While it is estimated that the area occupied by the "Moto Yakushiji" in Fujiwara-kyō was 6 *chō*, the new Yakushiji in Heijō-kyō occupied a much larger area of 10¼ *chō*. This represents not just an expansion of ground area but also suggests an expansion in the scale of the monastery's undertakings and personnel.

Still, relatively little is known with certainty about the area outside the Yakushiji's central core area, but if future excavation studies can clarify points about the outlying areas of the monastery precincts (such as the location of the *mandokoro* administration offices, presumed to be in the northern extremity), it will be possible to attain an even more accurate picture of the Yakushiji in ancient times.

YAKUSHIJI CHRONOLOGY

Period	Western Calendar	Japanese Calendar	Events in the Monastery's History
Hakuhō	680	Temmu 9	Emperor Temmu expresses his wish for the Yakushiji's construction (<i>Nihon shoki</i> , etc.)
	694	Jitō 8	The capital is moved to Fujiwara-kyō (<i>Nihon shoki</i>).
	697	Jitō 11	At the behest of various nobles and officials, Buddhist images are made to aid Empress Jitō's recovery from illness, and these are installed in the Yakushiji (<i>Nihon shoki</i>).
	698	Mommu 2	The monastery construction is nearly complete, and monks take up residence (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>). Dōshō is named head monk (<i>daisōzu</i>) in recompense for his officiating at ceremonies carried out on completion of the Amida embroidery in the Lecture Hall (<i>Shichidaiji nempyō</i>).
	701	Taihō 1	Hata-no-ason Mukohe and Kosobe-no-ason Yamaro are named officials in charge of Yakushiji construction work (<i>Shoku Nihongi</i>). By decision of the prime minister (<i>dajōkan</i>), officials with responsibility for the Daianji and Yakushiji are to be treated as an administrative division of <i>ryō</i> rank, and officials in charge of the construction of pagodas and <i>jōroku</i> -size Buddhist images are to be treated with the rank of <i>tsukasa</i> (<i>Shoku Nihongi</i>).
Nara	710	Wadō 3	The capital is moved to Heijō-kyō (<i>Shoku Nihongi</i>).
	716	Reiki 2	<i>Mokkan</i> related to the construction of the new Yakushiji in Heijō-kyō are inscribed with the characters for this year. (Four such <i>mokkan</i> have been excavated from the northern part of the East Monks' Quarters.)
	718	Yōrō 2	The Yakushiji is formally declared to be transferred to its new site at the intersection of Rokujō and Nibō avenues in the right sector of the Heijō capital (<i>Shoku Nihongi</i>).
	717-724	Yōrō year-period	The East Cloister (<i>Tōin</i>) is built in memory of Prince Kibi and Empress Genmyō (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	719	Yōrō 3	Two apprentice scribes are assigned to work under the official in charge of Yakushiji construction (<i>Shoku Nihongi</i>).
	722	Yōrō 6	A head administrator (<i>sōgō</i>) is assigned to live at the Yakushiji. A <i>Miroku</i> image is commissioned in memory of Emperor Temmu, and a <i>Shaka</i> image is commissioned in memory of Empress Jitō (<i>Shoku Nihongi</i>).
	730	Tempyō 2	The East Pagoda is completed (<i>Fusō ryakki</i>).
	747	Tempyō 19	The <i>Yakushiji sengijō</i> (from the year Jōwa 2) quotes the monastery's assets register-book on new contributions received in this year. The <i>Yakushiji engi</i> states that, around this year, "of the four pagodas [in the capital], two are at the Yakushiji."

Heian	889-898	Kampyō year-period	The Hachiman Jinja is built (<i>Ranshō shikō</i> , etc.).
	973	Tenroku 4	A fire originating from the Refectory destroys the Lecture Hall, the three Monks Quarters, the Surrounding Corridor, the Sutra Depository, the Belfry, the Main and South Gates (<i>Yakushiji engi</i> , etc.).
	979	Tengen 2	Completion of the tile roofing and of the lower parts of the reconstructed Lecture Hall (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	986	Kanna 2	Completion of the reconstructed Main Gate (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	989	Eiso 1	A typhoon destroys the upper part of the Golden Hall (<i>Fusō ryakki</i> , <i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	999	Chōho 1	Reconstruction of the Refectory is begun (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	1005	Kankō 2	Reconstruction of the Refectory is completed (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	1006	Kankō 3	Erection of support posts for the reconstructed South Gate; completion of the <i>Niō</i> images at the Main Gate (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	1009	Kankō 6	Completion of the reconstructed Cross Hall (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	1013	Chōwa 2	Completion of the reconstructed South Gate (<i>Yakushiji engi</i>).
	1014	Chōwa 3	The monk Hōsei becomes monastery intendant (<i>bettō</i>); during his term of service the Octagonal Hall is built in the <i>Tōin</i> precinct (<i>Shichidaiji nikki</i> , etc.)
	1095	Kaho 2	Buddhist relics are excavated from a pagoda site at the Moto Yakushiji (<i>Chūuki</i> , etc.)
	1096	Eichō 1	The Surrounding Corridor collapses in an earthquake (<i>Chūuki</i>).
	1140	Hoen 6	Ōe no Chikamichi visits the Yakushiji during a tour of the “seven great temples of the southern capital” (<i>Junrei shiki</i>).
Kamakura	1285	Kōan 8	Completion of the reconstructed <i>Tōindō</i> , commemorated by an inscription on a small wooden tablet (<i>munafuda</i>) attached to the central roof beam.
Muromachi	1361	Kōan 1 (northern dynasty)	Collapse of the Main Gate, Surrounding Corridor, and <i>Saiin</i> in an earthquake; damage also to the Golden Hall and the East and West Pagodas (<i>Kagenki</i>).
	1445	Bun’an 2	A typhoon causes the collapse of the Golden Hall and the South Gate. A temporary Golden Hall is erected (<i>Ranshō shikō</i>).
	1512	Eishō 9	Completion of the West Gate of the <i>Saiin</i> (inscription).
	1524	Daiei 4	Letters are prepared soliciting contributions for the reconstruction and repair of the Golden Hall and East and West Pagodas (<i>Sanetaka kōki</i> , etc.); the Golden Hall is rebuilt (<i>Jishi</i>).
	1528	Kyōroku 1	The Golden Hall, Lecture Hall, Main Gate, West

			Pagoda, and Monks' Quarters are lost to fire during a military encounter (<i>Ranshō shiki</i> , etc.).
	1539	Temmon 8	Numerous buildings are destroyed in a typhoon (<i>Jōge Kōmonjo – yōroku</i>).
Momoyama	1600	Keichō 5	The reconstructed Golden Hall is completed, and its roof tiled (inscription attached to central roof beam).
	1603	Keichō 8	The Hachimangū is reconstructed (inscription attached to central roof beam).
Edo	1644	Shōho 1	Repair of the East Pagoda (<i>Jishi</i> , etc.).
	1650	Keian 3	The West Gate of the <i>Saiin</i> is moved and newly emplaced as the monastery's South Gate (inscription); the Monjudō is moved and rebuilt on the West Pagoda site.
	1674	Empō 2	Erection of the reconstructed belfry (<i>Jishi</i>).
	1707	Hōei 4	An earthquake damages the Golden Hall and East Pagoda, as well as the gate and corridor of the Hachiman Jinja (<i>Saiindōkata shonikki</i>).
	1733	Kyōho 18	The foundation platform of the <i>Tōindō</i> is raised and the building is reconstructed to face westward (inscription attached to the central roof beam).
	1777	An'ei 6	Completion of repairs to the Golden Hall.
	1852	Kaei 5	The Lecture Hall is completed, and the bronze <i>Yakushi sanzō</i> images formerly kept in the <i>Saiin</i> are placed there.
Modern	1898	Meiji 31	Work is begun on taking apart and repairing the East Pagoda.
	1923	Taishō 12	Repair of the <i>Tōindō</i> .
	1945	Shōwa 20	The North and East Gates collapse.
	1952	Shōwa 27	Repair of the East Pagoda and South Gate.
	1976	Shōwa 51	Completion of the Golden Hall; rebuilding of the Belfry at a new location; rebuilding of a part of the West Monks' Quarters, corresponding in floor area to 6 apartments.
	1980	Shōwa 55	Reconstruction of the main building of the East Monks' Quarters.
	1981	Shōwa 56	Completion of the reconstructed West Pagoda.
	1983	Shōwa 58	Completion of the reconstructed Main Gate.