

About the Asian Art Museum Temple Bell

The bell was made by Tachibana Kyubei for Daienji Temple in Tajima province, Japan, in 1532. Design and construction of the bell tower was made possible by the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Foundation with additional support provided by Hitachi America, LTD, in 2002.

The inscriptions on the bell include Buddhist texts and information about the bell's creation, such as the artist's name, date, and temple name.

The following verses are in raised text alongside the figures of the four guardian kings of the east, south, west, and north in the four squares that surround the bell. They come from the Nirvana Sutra and express the essence of that text.

*All things lack permanence
This is the law of birth and death
Extinguish birth and death
Cessation leads to bliss*

These larger inscriptions appear in raised text on the front and back of the bell in a single vertical line. They seem to rise up out of lotus blossoms.

*Praise Amitabha Buddha
Praise Avalokiteshvara Bodhisattva*

This text is carved into the bronze on the right side of the bell. This is chanted after reading a sutra aloud. Reading the sutra created merit and this invocation passes the merit on to other beings who are suffering so that they can attain liberation.

*We vow to confer our merit on all beings equally May
one and all attain awakened mind, be born in the land
of bliss.*

—Translations by Melissa Rinne, former associate curator of Japanese art, Asian Art Museum



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