

= Kangiten =

Kangi @-@ ten (Japanese : ??? , " God of Bliss ") is a god (deva or ten) in Shingon and Tendai schools of Japanese Buddhism . He is generally considered the Japanese Buddhist form of the Hindu elephant @-@ headed god of wisdom , Ganesha and is sometimes also identified with the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara . He is also known as Kanki @-@ ten , Sh? @-@ ten (?? , " sacred god " or " noble god ") , Daish? @-@ ten (" great noble god ") , Daish? Kangi @-@ ten (?????) , Tenson (?? , " venerable god ") , Kangi Jizai @-@ ten (?????) , Sh?den @-@ sama , Vinayaka @-@ ten , Binayaka @-@ ten (?????) , Ganapatei (????) and Z?bi @-@ ten (???) .

Kangiten has many aspects and names , associated with Vajrayana (Esoteric Buddhist , Tantric , mantrayana) schools , Shingon being one of them . Although Kangiten is depicted with an elephant 's head like Ganesha as a single male deity , his most popular aspect is the Dual (-bodied) Kangiten or the Embracing Kangiten depicted as an elephant @-@ headed male @-@ female human couple standing in an embrace .

= = Names = =

Kangiten inherits many names and characteristics from the Hindu god Ganesha . He is known as Bin?yaka @-@ ten , derived from the epithet Vinayaka ; Ga?abachi or Ga?apati (Ganapati is a popular epithet of Ganesha) and Ga?wha (Ganesha) . Like Ganesha , Bin?yaka is the remover of obstacles , but when propitiated , he bestows material fortunes , prosperity , success and health . In addition , Bin?yaka is said to be of evil nature , creator of discord and dispute and leading people towards immoral ways .

Sh? @-@ ten or ?ryadeva indicates his association with good luck and fortune .

The name " Kangi @-@ ten " , generally implied to the Tantric embracing deity icons , is venerated as giver of joy and prosperity . The Dual Kangiten icon called Soshin Kangi @-@ ten (" dual @-@ bodied god of bliss ") is a unique feature of Shingon Buddhism . It is also called Soshin Binayaka in Japanese , Kuan @-@ Shi ten in Chinese and Nandikeshvara in Sanskrit .

= = Iconography and depictions = =

Kangiten is often represented as an elephant @-@ headed male and female pair , standing embracing each other in sexual union . The genders of the pair is not explicit , but hinted in the iconography . The female wears a crown , a patched monk 's robe and a red surplice , while the male wears a black cloth over his shoulder . He has a long trunk and tusks , while she has short ones . He is reddish @-@ brown in colour and she is white . She usually rests her feet on his , while he rests his head on her shoulder . A variant form called " Shoten Fondly Smiling " form , both of them gaze into each other 's eyes , smiling intently . She wears loose garments , while he wears tight ones . Sometimes , they are cloaked in a single garment . In another variant , " Embracing Shoten Looking Over the Shoulder " , as the name suggests , the couple look over each other 's shoulders . The iconography represents unity of opposites (coniunctio oppositorum) . Though they are separate figures with contrasting iconographies and genders , however they share the common name " Kangiten " and are engrossed in an intimate embrace , indicating their nonduality . The non @-@ dual is further stressed by sexual indicators like the feet @-@ on @-@ feet or the single garment .

Shoten may be also depicted as male alone . The deity figure (s) is / are portrayed as elephant @-@ headed , with two , four , six , eight or twelve arms . However , his images are rarely displayed in public . When depicted as a male , Shoten is generally four @-@ armed , holding a radish and a sweet (modak) . He may also hold a mace , a sword , a cup of ambrosia or have two of his front arms folded . The six @-@ armed aspect of Kangiten is described carrying a knife , a fruit bowl , a discus in his left hands and a club , a noose and his broken tusk in his right .

Vinayaka are also depicted in two most important Shingon mandalas , Vajra @-@ dhatu and Garbhakosa @-@ dhatu . The mandalas generally have more than 1 Vinayaka figures . The

Vinayakas are elephant @-@ headed , carry emblems such as radish and axe and are seated on lotus pedestals (padmasana) , the sign of divinity . The Vinayakas are generally positioned as guardians of the directions and serve as protectors against demons and evil . The central figure of the mandalas is Vairocana , one of the Five Great Buddhas , whose incarnation the Vinayakas are considered in this configuration .

Kangiten may also be depicted symbolically by symbolic syllable called shuji or bija or by symbols such as an umbrella , garland or bow and arrow in mandalas .

= = Origins and texts = =

Kangiten first emerged as a minor deity in the Japanese Buddhist pantheon in the eighth @-@ ninth centuries CE , possibly under the influence of Kukai (774 ? 835) , the founder of Shingon Buddhism . The Hindu Ganesha icon travelled to China , where it was incorporated in Buddhism , then journeyed further to Japan . Kangiten 's early role in Shingon , like most other Hindu deities assimilated in Buddhism , is of a minor guardian of the twin mandalas . Later on , Kangiten emerged as besson , an independent deity . Kangiten appears in numerous Japanese besson guides , compiled in Heian period (794 ? 1185) . While it includes rituals and iconographic forms like the early Chinese texts , it introduces origin myths of the deity to justify the Buddhist nature of the Hindu Ganesha .

Early images show him as with two or six arms . The paintings and gilt @-@ bronze images of the Dual Kangiten with explicit sexual connotations emerged in the late Heian period , under the Tantric influence of Tibetan Buddhism where such sexual imagery (Yab @-@ Yum) was common . The rare Japanese sexual iconography was hidden from public eye , to abide with Confucian ethics . Kangiten has now become an important deity in Shingon .

The origins of the Dual Kangiten have perplexed scholars for years ; there is no concrete evidence about the inception of this form . It is first found in Chinese texts , related to Chinese Tantric Buddhism , which was centred on the Buddha Vairocana and propagated by the three great masters ?ubhakarasi?ha , Vajrabodhi , and Amoghavajra . The Dharanisamuccya translated to Chinese by the monk Atigupta (Atikuta) in 654 CE describes a ritual to worship the Dual Kangiten ; the same ritual was replicated by Amoghavajra (705 ? 774) in his ritual text Daishoten Kangi Soshin Binayaka ho . Amoghavajra describes Soshin Kangiten as a deva , who grants one 's desires and a trayaka , the protector against evil and calamity . It details rituals and mantras to gain favour of the Dual Kangiten as well as the six @-@ armed Shoten . In another text by Amoghavajra , Soshin Kangiten is called a bodhisattva . This text categorizes the worshippers into three : the highest can learn inner secrets , the middle can read this text and the lowest should just accompany a higher worshipper in rituals . It describes rituals to gain four siddhis (" powers ") , namely of " protection , of gain , of love and of subjugation " . Rituals to appease Kangiten are described to gain three material things : kingship , prosperity and sufficient food and clothing . The text especially prescribes wine , the " water of bliss " as an offering to Kangiten . A minor text " Ritual of Sho Kangiten " (861) by Poi @-@ jo @-@ je Chieh @-@ lo describes the mandalas of Kangiten .

Bodhiruci (trad . 572 ? 727) has written two texts (dated c . 693 ? 713) that narrate about Vinayaka . In one of the texts , Vinayaka teaches a host of deities and demons a one @-@ syllable mantra , followed by a description of a ritual dedicated to the Dual Kangiten , which is also found in Amoghavajra 's Daishoten Kangi Soshin Binayaka ho . Vinayaka 's demon followers promise the deity to grant of wishes of beings , who repeat the one @-@ syllable mantra . In the longer version of the previous text , Bodhiruci elaborates of the Vinayaka story and enlists many rituals to propitiate the Dual Kangiten as well as the four @-@ armed form of the deity . It also has rituals to entice , gain wisdom , destroy foes etc . Besides the usual list of rituals , mantras and iconographical descriptions of the deity , ?ubhakarasi?ha (early 8th century) in text , predating Amoghavajra but post @-@ dating Atigupta composed in c . 723 @-@ 36 , equates Kangiten to Shiva and associates " the Hindu king " Vinayaka with Avalokiteshvara (Kannon) .

The Dual Kangiten may also have been by the Hindu Tantric portrayal of Ganesha with consorts .

= = Legends = =

Numerous Japanese Buddhist canons narrate tales about the evil nature of Vinayaka . The Kangisoshinkuyoho as well as ?ubhakarasi?ha 's early Chinese text describes that King Vinayaka (Binayaka) was the son of Uma (hi) (identified with the Hindu Parvati , mother of Ganesha) and Maheshvara , the Buddhist equivalent of Shiva , father of Ganesha . Uma produces 1500 children from her either side ; from her left a host of evil Vinayakas , headed by Vinayaka (Binayaka) and from her right , benevolent virtuous hosts headed by the manifestation of Avalokiteshvara ? Senanayaka (" Lord of the army [of gods] " , identified with the Hindu god of war Skanda , the brother of Ganesha) , the antithesis of Vinayaka . Senanayaka would take many births as the elder brother (as in the Hindu tradition) or wife of Vinyanaka to defeat him . Then ?ubhakarasi?ha 's text says that as wife , Senanayaka embraces Vinayaka leading to the icon of the Dual Kangiten . In the Japanese pantheon , Kangiten is considered as the brother of Ida @-@ ten , identified with Skanda .

Another legend narrates that the king of Marakeira only ate beef and radishes . When these became rare , he started feasting on human corpses and finally living beings , turning into the great demon @-@ king Vinayaka , who commanded an army of vinayakas . The people prayed to the Avalokiteshvara , who took the form of a female vinayaka and seduced Vinayaka , filling him with joy (kangi) . Thus , he , in union with her , became the Dual Kangiten .

The Kukozencho tells that Zaijizai , Maheshvara 's consort , had a son named Shoten , who was banished from heaven , due to his evil and violent nature . A beautiful goddess named Gundari (Kundali) , took the form of a terrible demoness and married Shoten , leading him to good ways . Another tale narrates that Kangiten was the evil daughter of Mahaeshvara , driven out from heaven . She took refuge at Mount Binayaka and married a fellow male @-@ Binayaka , resulting in the Dual Kangiten icon . Japanese variants of the legend of the Dual Kangiten emphasize that union of Vinayaka (the male) and Vainayaki (the female) transforms an evil obstacle creator into a reformed individual .

= = Worship = =

Kangiten is considered to be endowed with great power . Kangiten is regarded as protector of temples and worshipped generally by gamblers , actors , geishas and people in the business of " pleasure " . Mantras are often prescribed in ritual texts to appease the deity and even to drive away this obstacle @-@ maker . Rice wine (sake) , radishes and " bliss @-@ buns " (kangi @-@ dan) are offered to the god .

While Kangiten is worshipped throughout Japan , H?zan @-@ ji on the summit of Mount Ikoma is his most important and active temple . Though the temple is believed to have been founded in the sixth century , it came in the limelight in the 17th century when the monk Tankai (1629 ? 1716) made the temple 's Gohonzon , a Heian period , gilt @-@ bronze image of the Dual Kangiten , the centre of attraction . In the Genroku era (1688 ? 1704) , Osaka merchants , especially vegetable @-@ oil sellers , joined Kangiten 's cult , attributing their success to his worship . Business people still continue to worship him at the sanctuary and figurines of the Dual Kangiten are found in shops around the temple . The central Dual Kangiten icon is kept under a phallic cover called the linga @-@ kosa , when not being worshipped .

Besides Shingon worship , as of 1979 , Kangiten 's worship was recorded in at least 243 Japanese shrines .