

Shichi Fukujin – Seven Gods of Luck and Good Fortune

(Ritual researched, written and presented by Maria in Sydney and presented by Samantha in Nowra on Friday 5th December 2014.)

Shichi Fukujin: are the Seven Gods of Luck and Good Fortune in Japan. Shichi means seven, fuku means luck, and jin means god

Each one of them symbolizes a virtue: Honesty, Fortune, Dignity, Amiability, Longevity, Happiness and Wisdom.

The Seven Lucky Gods of Japan are an eclectic group of popular deities whose origins stem from Indian, Chinese and Japanese gods of fortune and settled in Japanese Folklore Gods. They were chosen from Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoist and Shinto gods or saints, and believed to have been grouped together around 17th century.

Japan (Ebisu), *Shinto Tradition*

India (Daikokuten, Bishamonten, and Benzaiten) *Hindu Pantheon*

China (Hotei, Jurojin, and Fukurokuju). *Taoist – Buddhist Traditions*

According to the Japanese legend, they travel in a ship called *Takarabune* which is filled with treasures and comes from sea to bring fortune and prosperity to everyone. It is said that if you leave a picture of the

Shichi Fukujin below your pillow on the night of the last day of the year, you will be lucky and have good fortune the whole New Year

The Seven Gods of Luck and Good Fortune are:

Ebisu 恵比須

Also known as Yebisu, he is the God of Fishing, Shipping and Commerce and is the only one to have his origins in Japan. Ebisu is very popular among the people who works in the food industry (farmers and sailors) as is commonly presented wearing formal court clothes or hunting robes. He is often presented with a fishing rod in his right hand and a large red sea bream under his left arm. *The virtue he represents is Honesty.*

Daikokuten 大黒天

Originally, he was a Hindu warrior deity named Mahākāla and once introduced in Japan he became the God of Wealth and Prosperity. He is well known for his happy-looking smile and is often presented with a bag on this shoulder filled with money and a magic mallet standing on two bales of rice. *The virtue he represents is Fortune.*

Bishamonten 毘沙門天

Also originally from Indian Buddhism, Bishamonten is the God of Warriors (not war) He is also a God of Defense Against Evil. Almost always dressed in armour with a fierce look and standing over one or two demons symbolizing the defeat of evil. In one hand he has a weapon to fight against evil influences and suppress the enemies. On the other hand he holds a treasure pagoda or *stupa*, which is his main identifying attribute. The virtue he represents is Dignity.

Benzaiten 弁財天

The only female of the Shichi Fukujin is Benzaiten (a.k.a Benten) and is originally the Hindu goddess of water. In its Japanese representation, she is the Goddess of Arts and Knowledge. Her common form is a beautiful woman dressed in a flowing Chinese-style dress and playing the biwa, sometimes the flute. *The virtue she represents is Joy.*

Fukurokuju 福祿寿

Brought from China's Taoist-Buddhist traditions, Fukurokuju is the God of Wealth, Happiness, and Longevity. Represented with an elongated forehead and long moustache, he is usually represented with customary clothes of a Chinese scholar, holding a walking stick with a scroll tied to it. He is the only one from the seven that has the ability to revive the dead. *The virtue he represents is Longevity.*

Hotei 布袋

From Chinese beliefs, Hotei (a.k.a Budai) is the God of Happiness and Abundance. He is supposedly based on an actual person, a Chinese hermit Budaishi (d. 917) He is represented as a Buddhist monk with a smiling face and a prominent belly, holding a sack and a wooden staff, usually seated or sleeping in his bag. Outside Japan, he is known as "Laughing Buddha". *The virtue he represents is Happiness.*

Jurōjin 寿老人

He is the God of Wisdom and is commonly presented as an old man wearing a hat with a long white beard holding a knobbed walking staff with a scroll tied to it. He is often confused with Fukurokuju, as both are presented in a very similar way, though in Jurōjin a black deer always accompanies him as a messenger and as symbol of longevity. *The virtue he represents is Wisdom.*

Japanese Elements

The Japanese culture uses earth, water, fire, wind, and void as five worldly elements. They derive from the Buddhist religion. Japan uses kanji characters to explain each element, which each can be applied to both outdoor objects and bodily features. The five elements are, in ascending order of power, Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, and Void.

The five elements are called "gogyo" but they may also be represented as "godai," which means five great.

The godai system is associated with Buddhism and likely has its roots in Hinduism. Godai is a compound word, go, meaning five, and dai, meaning great. Godai therefore means five great, or more loosely, the five great elements or forces.

In this system the elements are the building blocks of the universe. Everything is composed of a unique balance of some or all of the five. This was actually a fairly common idea in the old world. The Babylonians, Greeks, Chinese, Hindu, Buddhist, Janist, Chinese, Japanese, Tibetans, and Medieval Alchemists all had their own systems of elements, usually a set of five, although the Alchemists had eight.



EARTH

Chi – Earth

Chi □ *Chi* or *tsuchi*, meaning "Earth", represents the hard, solid objects of the world. The most basic example of *chi* is in a stone. Emotionally, *chi* is predominantly associated with stubbornness, stability, physicality, and gravity. It is a desire to have things remain as they are; a resistance to change. In the mind, it is confidence. When under the influence of this *chi* mode or "mood", we are aware of our own physicality and sureness of action.

The earth is hard, solid, and stable. It resists movement and change, and therefore represents the unchangeable, the fundamental. Living on the surface, we tend to forget that the earth is also very deep, reaching for miles down below, and it's rich with resources.

WATER

Sui - Water

Sui □ *Sui* or *mizu*, meaning "Water", represents the fluid, flowing, formless things in the world. *Sui* can be associated with emotion, defensiveness, adaptability, flexibility, suppleness, and magnetism.

Water represents fluidity and adaptability. Water is soft, but it can also be focused into something powerful. Think about drinking from a dripping faucet or a fire hydrant. It's all the same stuff, but the effect is quite different. So often people are so set in their ways and stuck in their own ideas (like a stubborn rock) that they fail to adapt to new situations. If you become like water you can adjust to suit the times.

If you pour water into a vessel, it will take the shape, filling it as completely as it can. In human terms it figures out every aspect of the "vessel" or situation it's in. It doesn't huddle in a corner and ignore the other side of the jar. People can be so intent on their own tiny experience that they refuse to "flow" into the rest of the situation and learn what more there is.

FIRE

Ka - Fire

Ka □ *Ka* or *hi*, meaning "Fire", represents the energetic, forceful, moving things in the world. Animals, capable of movement and full of forceful energy, are primary examples of *ka* objects. It represents drive and passion. *ka* can be associated with motivation, desire, intention, and an outgoing spirit. Besides the obvious examples of heat and flame, lightning can also be thought of as an extension of *Ka*.

Fire is forceful, destructive, full of energy and movement. It can also represent a change of state. Fire starts and changes quickly, and is hard to predict, just like a real fight. In Buddhist philosophy fire is the mover and changer in the world.

Fire is often thought of as negative because of its destructive power. But fire produces light, which symbolizes insight and enlightenment, and it produces drive, intention, and passion, which we can use to accomplish great things.



WIND

Fu – Wind

Fū □ *Fū* or *kaze*, meaning “Wind”, represents things that grow, expand, and enjoy freedom of movement. Aside from air, smoke, and the like, *fū* can in some ways be best represented by the human mind. Mentally and emotionally, it represents an “open-minded” attitude and carefree feeling. It can be associated with will, elusiveness, evasiveness, benevolence, compassion, and wisdom.

Wind is free, loose, and insubstantial. It is carefree and evasive.



VOID

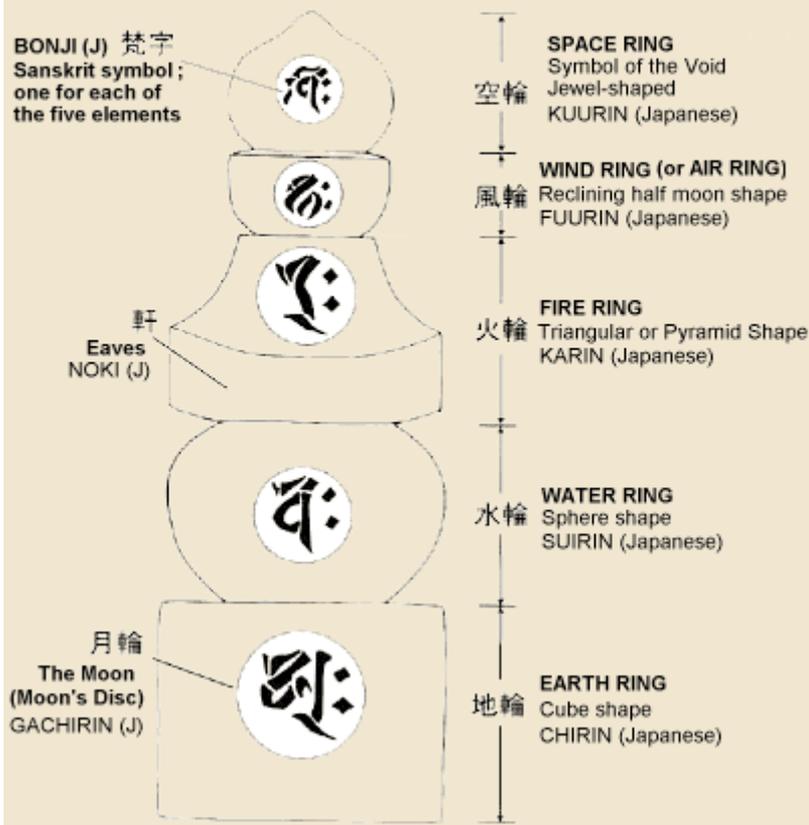
Ku - Void

Kū □ *Kū* or *sora*, most often translated as “Void”, but also meaning “sky” or “Heaven”, represents those things beyond our everyday experience, particularly those things composed of pure energy. Bodily, *kū* represents spirit, thought, and creative energy. It represents our ability to think and to communicate, as well as our creativity. It can also be associated with power, creativity, spontaneity, and inventiveness. *Kū* is of particular importance as the highest of the elements. A warrior properly attuned to the Void can sense their surroundings and act without thinking, and without using their physical senses.

To most of us in the western world, void means nothingness, like the “empty void of space.” Not so in the eastern traditions. Void for them means a lack of separation, or a complete union where everything and nothing are joined as one. It's connected to the idea of heaven.

The void is one of the great symbols of enlightenment in the eastern philosophies. Once you stop seeing false separation and illusions you can perceive the world as it truly is. From that position everything is connected, everything is the same, and there is no attachment to one thing or another. Everything just is.

五輪塔
GORINTOU - Five Ring Pagoda
 Overview of the main elements



The most common representations today of the five elements are found in Buddhist architecture. Many pagodas in Japan are of the godai style, meaning they have five tiers or levels. Each tier, naturally, represents one of the elements, beginning with chi (“earth”) at the bottom, and ending with ku (“void” or “sky”) at the top. Often, the spire at the top is also divided into five sections.

Japanese stone lanterns as seen in Zen gardens and Buddhist temples also represent the five elements. The bottom-most piece, touching the ground, represents chi; the next section, often shaped to look like a lotus flower, represents sui; ka is represented by the section encasing the lantern’s light or flame, while fu and ku are represented by the last two sections, top-most and pointing towards the sky.

Another common symbol of the five elements is the gorinto, a stone tower of modest size used mainly in Buddhist temples and cemeteries. It is composed from top to bottom of a cube, a sphere, a triangle, a crescent moon and something resembling a lotus flower,



Seven Lucky Gods/ Seven Gods of Fortune

5th December 2014

Cleanse Space

Purification /Incense

Casting the Circle

By the power of the dragons may this circle be blessed, cleansed, and sanctified.

Presentation of Elements

North: **'Chi'**, Element of earth, that which gives us substance and stability, lend your power to this rite, Hail and welcome

West: **'Sui'**, Element of water, that which is adaptable, flexible and fluid, lend your power to this rite, Hail and welcome

South: **'Ka'**, Element of fire, that which transforms and energies, lend your power to this rite, Hail and welcome

East: **'Fu'**, Element of wind, that which expands our freedom of movement, lend your power to this rite, Hail and welcome

Centre: **'Ku'**, Element of spirit, of heaven, sky and void, that which is composed of pure energy, power, thought and creative force, lend your power to this rite, Hail and welcome

Invite God and Goddess

Benzaiten: Goddess of the Arts and Knowledge, Goddess of joy.

Bless this circle with your presence, your guidance and wisdom. Welcome

Bishamonten: God of Warriors, God of Defence Dignity and Righteousness

Bless this circle with your presence, your guidance and wisdom. Welcome

Daikokuten: God of Wealth and Prosperity, God of the Harvest.

Bless this circle with your presence, your guidance and wisdom. Welcome

Ebisu: God of Candour, Wealth, Good Fortune and Fair Dealings.

Bless this circle with your presence, your guidance and wisdom. Welcome

Fukurokuju: God of Wealth, Happiness, and Longevity.

Bless this circle with your presence, your guidance and wisdom. Welcome

Hotei: God of Happiness and Abundance.

Laughing Buddha as you are also known Bless this circle with your presence, your guidance and wisdom. Welcome

Jurōjin: God of Wisdom and knowledge.

Bless this circle with your presence, your guidance and wisdom. Welcome

Intent

Tonight we give thanks and gratitude for what we have and we think of others and how we can bestow blessings to them, and ourselves

Grounding Exercise

Meditation

Offerings and Energy Raising

Pick a card; Write the persons name that you wish to give blessings too. Dance and say:

Repeat.....

Air so healing

Fire empowering

Water connecting

Earth manifesting

Closing the Sanctuary

Benzaiten: Goddess of the Arts and Knowledge, Goddess of joy, we thank you for

your presence, guidance and wisdom, we thank you for sharing your fortune and luck with us, go in peace till we meet again, hail and farewell

[Bishamonten](#): God of Warriors, God of Defence Dignity and Righteousness, we thank you for your presence, guidance and wisdom, we thank you for sharing your fortune and luck with us, go in peace till we meet again, hail and farewell

[Daikokuten](#): God of Wealth and Prosperity, God of the Harvest, we thank you for your presence, guidance and wisdom, we thank you for sharing your fortune and luck with us, go in peace till we meet again, hail and farewell

[Ebisu](#): God of Candour, Wealth, Good Fortune and Fair Business, we thank you for your presence, guidance and wisdom, we thank you for sharing your fortune and luck with us, go in peace till we meet again, hail and farewell

[Fukurokuju](#): God of Wealth, Happiness, and Longevity, we thank you for your presence, guidance and wisdom, we thank you for sharing your fortune and luck with us, go in peace till we meet again, hail and farewell

[Hotei](#): God of Happiness and Abundance, we thank you for your presence, guidance and wisdom, we thank you for sharing your fortune and luck with us, go in peace till we meet again, hail and farewell

[Jurōjin](#): God of Wisdom and knowledge, we thank you for your presence, guidance and wisdom, we thank you for sharing your fortune and luck with us, go in peace till we meet again, hail and farewell

Quarter release

'Ku', Element of spirit, of heaven, sky and void, we thank you for lending your powers to this rite, for connecting us to spirit, the creative energy force, go in peace, hail and farewell

'Fu', Element of wind, we thank you for lending your powers to this rite, for giving us the freedom of movement, go in peace, hail and farewell

'Ka', Element of fire, we thank you for lending your powers to this rite, for giving us energy and transformation, go in peace, hail and farewell

'Sui', Element of water, we thank you for lending your powers to this rite, for giving us flexibility, and adaptability, go in peace, hail and farewell

'Chi', Element of earth, we thank you for lending your powers to this rite, for giving us stability and substance, go in peace, hail and farewell

Closing the Circle

May this circle be open but unbroken, may the peace of the Goddess be ever in our hearts, merry meet and merry part and merry meet again

Meditation:

Close your eyes, take a deep breath, feel your feet growing roots burrowing deep into the earth, grounding you. Now imagine the earth's energy rising up through your feet, your knees, your torso, up your back, through your neck expanding to every part of your body, and out through the top of your head.

See this energy as a shaft of light continuing up towards the heavens fully connecting you to heaven and earth. If you feel any tension in your body gently direct the energy into the area feeling it relaxing you.

A mist gathers around you, encircling you, you feel its coolness on your face and before you, a path appears before you, you walk down the path and in the distance you see a light, walk towards it the light and as you get closer it gets brighter, and brighter.

you take another step and the mist clears, revealing a beautiful landscape, of land and sea, behind you are mountains and trees lush and green, full of life celebrating the power of the season, and in front of you a beach, white sand stretching for miles, you see the waves hitting the shore, you watch the ebb and flow of the water, its calming and soothing.

You look out into the vast ocean, and in the horizon you see something, wondering what it might be. You keep looking out watching it move closer and closer, you realise it's a boat with an open sail being assisted by the wind, moving slowly towards you. You walk down to the shore waiting to see who's in the boat.

As the boat approaches the shore you notice on the sail a red emblem and that there are seven people on board, and in their hands they are holding sacred objects, you realise it's the **ta-kar-burne**, the treasure ship, and the people on the boat are the gods and goddess of luck and fortune.

As the boat softly lands on the shore, the gods and goddess step out. They walk up the beach and stand before you; you greet them one by one,

Benzaiten is a beautiful goddess wearing a flowing dress playing her bi-wa, a musical instrument resembling a violin.

Bishamonten is the warrior god he is dressed in armour, he has a fierce look on his face, in one hand he holds his treasured pagoda, a multiple tiered tower, and in the other he holds a fighting weapon

Daikokuten is the god of harvest he is smiling at you and over his shoulder he carries a money bag, and in his hand is his magic mallet

Ebisu is the god of good fortune, he is dressed in hunting robes, he is holding a fishing rod in his right hand and in his left is a sea dream

Fukurokuju is the god of wealth, happiness and longevity he is the shortest of the group and is dressed in a scholars robe, his forehead is long and he large eyes and a long snow white moustache, he is holding a cane with the scroll of longevity tied to it.

Hotei is the god of happiness and abundance he is laughing, he is holding a wooden staff and fan, over his shoulder is the bag of fortune, and as he laughs his round belly shows the joy.

Jurojin is the god of wisdom he, his beard is white and on his head he wears a hat, the staff that he is holding knobby and attached to it, is the scroll of wisdom and worldly knowledge

They have come ashore to offer blessings, knowledge and prosperity for all who seek their wisdom and guidance, take a moment to connect with the gods and goddess

You may wish to ask how you could be of service, how you might bring luck and fortune to those you know, what gifts and blessings you could bestow on friends and family for the coming year, talk to them about your wishes and dreams or simply thank them for blessings in your own life

And when it is time I will call you back.....

The light of the sun begins to fade and you notice the sun is to setting over the horizon and night is near, you thank the seven gods, for their wisdom, knowledge, guidance and insight.

They turn and walk back down the white sand towards the boat, before they enter they say to you:

'Your true natural state of being is to live in harmony, in balance, in peace and abundance, celebrate all that is joyful, happy, dance, fill the world with blessings.'

They wave to you as they aboard the boat, the sail catches the wind, and it slowly turns and heads out towards the horizon you watch it go, slowly moving out of sight.

The sky is darker now and the stars are starting to peep through, the sun has set and the moon is rising you take a look around this place of ocean mist and lush mountains, and you start to head back up the path that led you down to the shore, knowing that at any time you can return to this magical place.

As you move up the path a mist gathers around you the further you go the thicker the mist becomes, until it surrounds you completely, its coolness is refreshing on your skin.

Continue down the path, until you find yourself back in this room, back in your chair, now wriggle your fingers and toes and when you are ready open your eyes.