

II. BUDDHIST ALTARS, ADORNMENTS, AND SYMBOLS

- A. Identify the central figure and major parts of the altar and know their meaning.
(Pages II-1, II-2)

Do the following:

- _____ 1. Stand before your altar and identify the adornments and symbols.
(B-1a; CS-1a) (Pages II-3, II-4, II-5, II-6)
- _____ 2. Write or discuss about the meaning of the flower, candle, incense burner, and rice. (B-1b) (Pages II-7, II-8)
- _____ 3. Draw a picture of an altar and write a brief explanation identifying the major adornments and accessories. (CS -1b)

Do two of the following:

- _____ 1. Bring flowers to the temple and offer them at the Sunday Service.
- _____ 2. Make own obutsudan and a brief explanation (Pages II-9, II-10)
- _____ 3. Be responsible for caring of your home altar for the course of the program. (B-1d) (Pages II-11, II-12, II-13, II-14, II-15)
- _____ 4. Do a brief service daily before your family altar. (CS-1c; B-3c)

- B. Recognize the different types of central altar symbols (Gohonzon).

Do the following:

- _____ 1. Know that there are different types of central altar symbols (Gohonzon) and tell about them in your Dharma School class. (Amida Buddha statue, scroll of Namu Amida Butsu, scroll of Amida Buddha) (Page II-16)

- C. Learn the meaning of certain Buddhist Symbols

Do two of the following:

- _____ 1. Look for the various Buddhist symbols at the temple. (Dharmacakra, Lotus, Wisteria, etc.) (Pages II-17, II-18, II-19)
- _____ 2. Make a Dharmacakra by folding paper (Page II-20)
- _____ 3. Make a stamp or stencil of the Wisteria, lotus or Dharmacakra and print note cards. (Page II-21)
- _____ 4. Make a Bodhi leaf print (Page II-22)

REFLECTION: I go before the altar with deep gratitude because....

Buddhist Shrine

This is a simple explanation of the history and significance of the shrine:

A. History and Significance of the Shrine:

In the ancient times of Sakyamuni Buddha the center of mediation or devotion was not used and it was not necessary because of the presence of Buddha himself. However, after the passing of Buddha people wanted to show their devotion to Amida Buddha and this expression of reverence that people have within their hearts serves as a central focal point in expressing devotion to Amida Buddha.

The use of the shrine developed greatly during the spread of Buddhism in Japan and especially in the last several hundred years. The decorative scheme became highly developed so that it became a part of Buddhist art of Japan.

B. Central Shrine Piece: The Image of the Amida Buddha, The Holy Name and the Statue of the Amida Buddha.

The image of Buddha as the central shrine piece reminds us of what we may someday become. It stands for Enlightenment. The image of Amida Buddha is usually depicted standing with eyes half-closed, with right hand up making a circle with the index finger and thumb, and with left hand palm upward as if to scoop something. The whole statue as seen from the side is leaning forward slightly. All these have symbolic meaning. The gentle facial expression reflects unbound wisdom, knowledge, compassion and love. The statue having the eyes half-open and half-closed shows that half of the vision is directed internally for self-reflection. The right index and thumb forming a circle depicts complete harmony. The left hand palm upward signifies the idea that Buddha is going to save all; in other words, the love and compassion of Buddha saves all beings. The statue leaning forward means that Buddha's compassion is not static or just "sitting around" but that Buddha's compassion is active and reaches forward to touch all beings.

Use an Obutsudan, flannel board or drawing to explain the component parts of the Obutsudan.

Visit different temples. Bring a friend to the temple. Discuss different churches in the community. Make an Obutsudan out of shoe box, paper box, or draw an obutsudan.

Buddhist Shrine

Shrine Symbols

The figure of Amida Buddha, the Buddha of Infinite Wisdom and Compassion occupies the central position on the shrine. In some temples and home shrines, instead of the statue, a scroll bearing the Japanese characters, *Namu Amida Butsu*, meaning "I place my faith in Amida Buddha," or a picture of Amida occupies the central position.

The adherents of Buddhism do not worship the figure of Amida Buddha, but bow their heads in reverence before the Wisdom and Compassion of Amida which the statue symbolizes.

In many of the larger temples the shrine is more elaborate. On the right, facing the shrine, is hung a scroll bearing the image of Shinran Shonin (1173-1262) the founder of the Jodo Shinshu or the Pure Land Sect. On the left hangs a picture of one of the Chief Abbots, a descendant of Shinran Shonin. Besides these, there may be other symbols, such as a scroll depicting the image of the masters who contributed the most to the development of the teaching of salvation through the power of Amida's Wisdom and Compassion. Amida Buddha alone is the object of worship and these figures are placed on the altar out of respect and thanksgiving for the contributions they made to the teachings.

Adornments (Shogon)

The shrine (chancel) is composed of many symbols besides the main object of our worship. From the elaborate and fine overhanging adornments (yoraku) symbolizing the wonderful trees, down to the huge altar lamp (rinto), each of these symbols has its own original meaning. However, the altar in its entirety is man's effort to create the beauty of harmony, depicting the realm of Jodo or the pure realm. The various articles have their basis in the many sermons of the Buddha (Sakyamuni), especially in the three basic sutras of Jodo Shin Buddhism.

Light Offering

Light symbolizes the Wisdom of Buddha which drives away the darkness in man's mind. In Shin Buddhism this is directly related, for the name of Amida Buddha. Buddha Amitabha, depicts light of unobstructible power.

In the shrine there are various kinds of light offerings, including the traditional candlelight and many lanterns.

Incense Burning

Incense is burned as one's willful participation in a religious observance or to pay homage to Buddha. The original meaning in Buddhism was one's effort to purify one's self as he approached a person or object of reverence. The burning is symbolic of the extinction of impure thoughts and the fragrance drives away unfavorable odor, which again means one form of purification. As to the number of times one may offer the incense, Shin Buddhism requires only once. However other denominations may require more than once.

Burning of incense is done in the following manner:

- A. Take two or three steps before the incense burner, bow lightly.
- B. Walk to the incense burner, take a pinch of incense powder, and place it in the incense burner over the burning incense sticks or charcoal. (This should be done once only, and it is not necessary to bring the incense to your forehead.)
- C. Bow in homage to Amida Buddha in gassho.
- D. Take two or three steps backward, bow lightly, and return to your seat.

Floral Offering

Flowers are also offered on the shrine. They are symbolic of the wonderful trees which are listed as one of the splendors of Jodo.

Flowers should be kept fresh at all times. Flowers with thorns or unusual odors should not be offered.

IDENTIFYING THE ARTICLES ON THE SHRINE

ACTIVITIES

A. Purpose

To experience duplicating a pre-arranged arrangement of objects.

Materials needed

Objects familiar to children: flowers, candles, fruit.

Directions

1. Teacher places three objects in a row on the table.
2. She gives each child a set of the same three objects.
3. She asks children to place their objects in the same order as hers are placed.
4. Teacher changes objects and order for variety.
5. Discuss its importance and significance.

Other ways and other materials

Simplified -

Use two objects.

More challenging -

Use four-five objects.

B. Purpose

To identify and add the missing part of a "What's missing" lotto card.

Materials needed

"What's Missing" lotto game

Directions

1. Teacher will give each child a game board.
2. Teacher will hold up small card and ask children: Look at your game board and see if _____ is missing from it.
3. Teacher gives card to child who needs it to complete his/her picture.
4. When all game boards are completed children will return cards to box. Draw all of the articles on the shrine.

C. Purpose

To reproduce an original arrangement of objects

Materials needed

Objects familiar to child: Articles on the Shrine

Directions

1. Teacher places three objects in a row on the table.
2. Teacher and children discuss how they are arranged.
3. Teacher gives each child a set of similar objects and covers her set.
4. Children are to place their objects in the original order.
5. Teacher uncovers her set and children can compare.

Other ways and other materials

Simplified —

1. Have children duplicate and arrangement
2. Use two objects.

More challenging —

Use four or five objects.

D. Purpose

To remember objects seen by playing a visual memory game.

Materials needed

Three familiar objects: Articles on the Shrine.

Directions

1. Teacher will put objects on table for free exploration.
2. Teacher will have children name and describe their properties: comb - black, you comb your hair with it, etc.
3. Teacher will continue this process until the children have labeled and described all items presented.
4. Teacher will place items in the center of table in a row and tell children they will play a game by closing their eyes while the teacher takes something away. When they open their eyes they are to tell what is missing.
5. She will take away a different object each time, always leaving two objects on the table.
6. All objects will be placed on the shrine

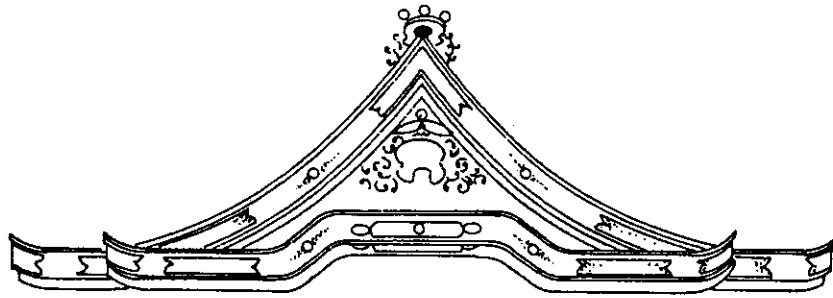
Other ways and other materials

Simplified —

1. Start with fewer items on the table.
2. Have the children feel the missing object with their eyes closed.
3. Give children a duplicate set of items and have them match the order of placement to the teacher's model.

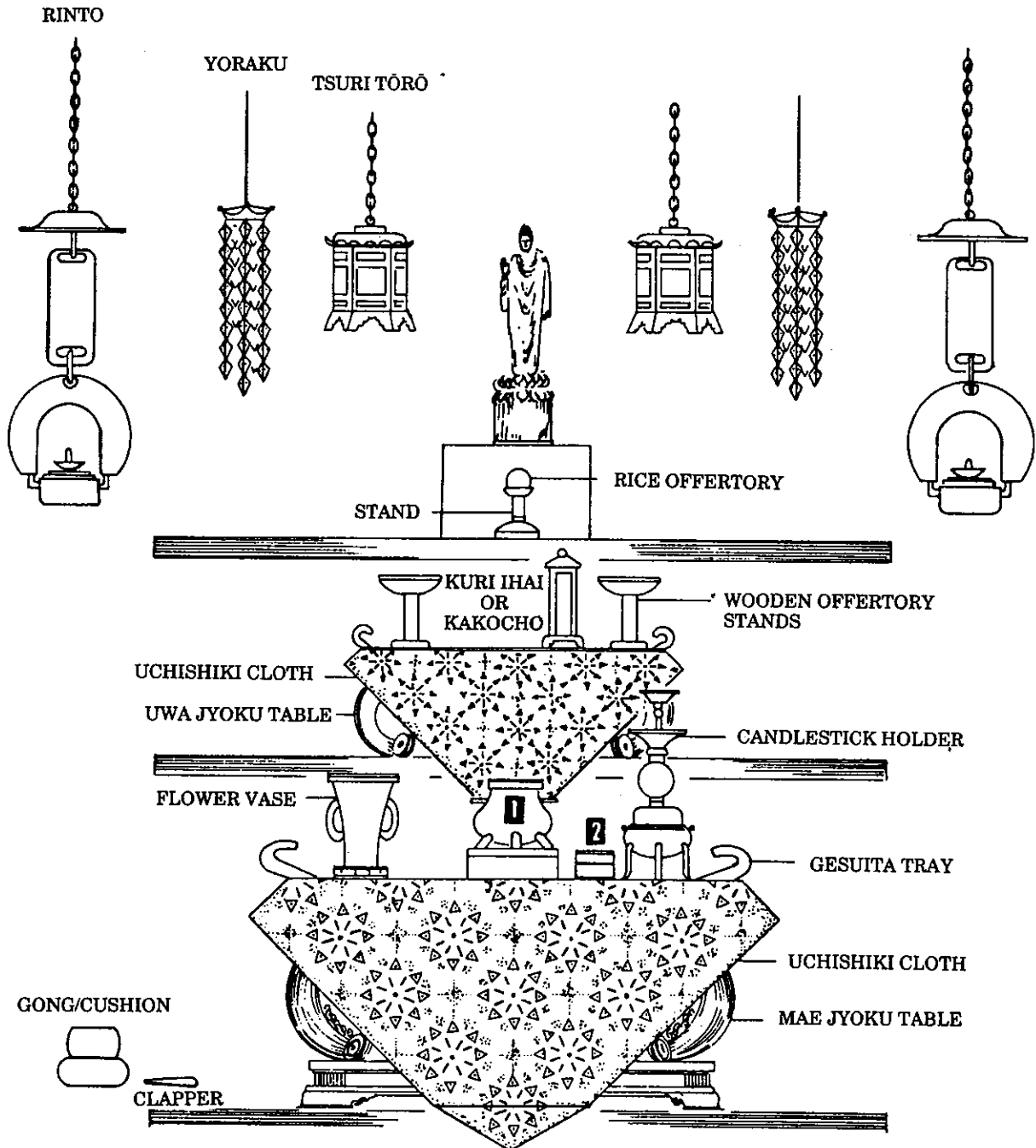
More challenging —

1. When eyes are closed, add one object and take away one. Then ask what is added and what is taken away.
2. Have more objects on the table to start with.
3. Take away more objects at a time: 1 object, then 2, 3, etc., and have children tell what is missing.

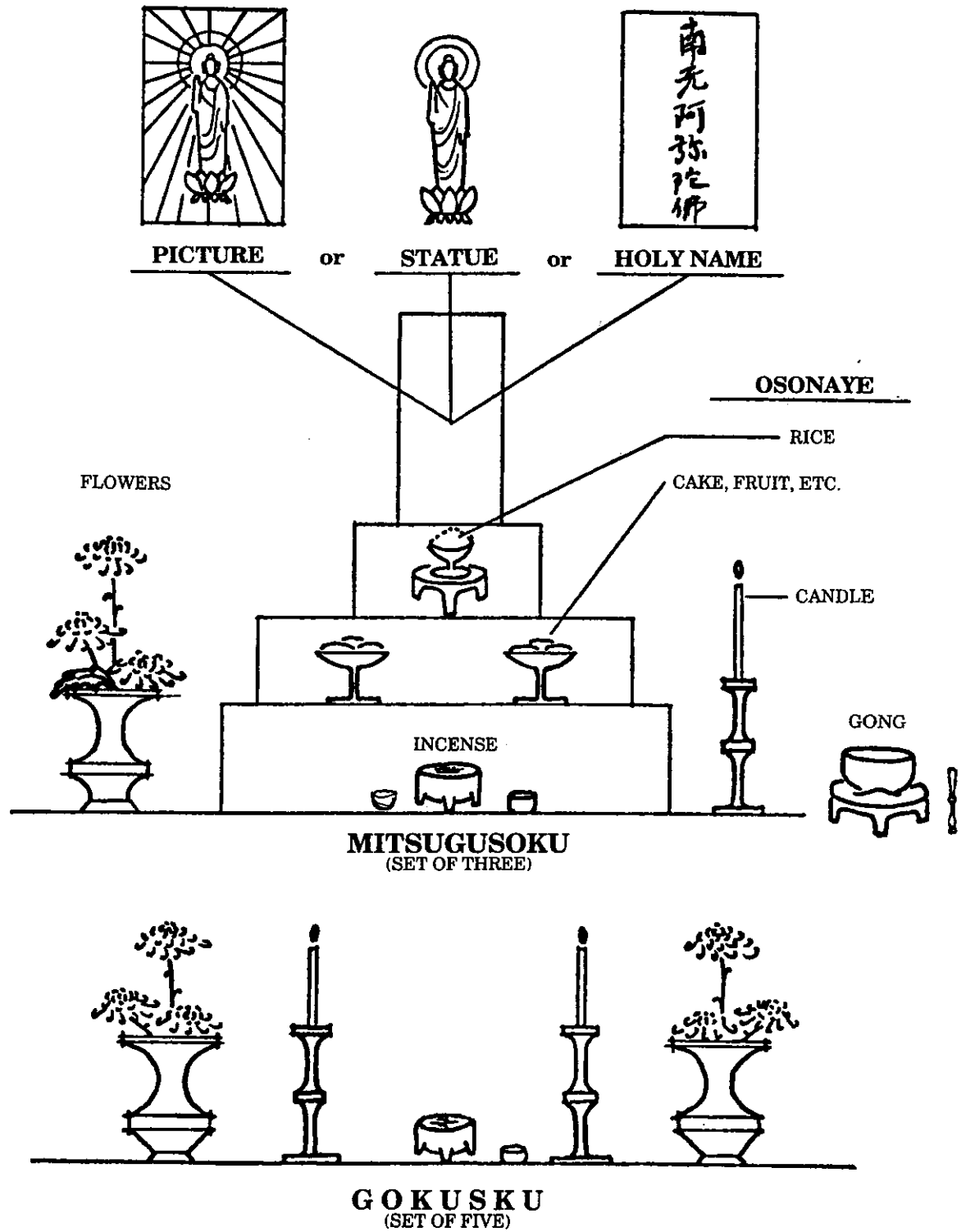


SHRINE LAYOUT

- 1** (BRONZE) CENSER
- 2** INCENSE BOX



ARRANGEMENT OF THE SHRINE



Symbols - Flowers, Offerings, Candles, Incense and Gong

Purpose:

To familiarize the students with the Buddhist Symbols and meanings.

Materials:

1. Flowers: The flowers upon the shrine exhibit one of the most beautiful and yet most transient of the forms of nature. See that fresh flowers have been offered. Since flowers are symbolic of transiency, artificial flowers should not be used.

2. Offerings (Osonaye): The osonaye is made in thanksgiving. Rice has become the traditional main offering. As it was the staple food in Japan, it became the practice to offer the first portion of each day's rice to the Obutsudan. Other customs regarding offerings on important Buddhist occasions developed. They include:

New Year	— Omochi (okagomi)
Ohigan	— Odango
Hana-Matsuri	— Sweet tea and flowers
Obon	— Somen and things customarily connected with the Thanksgiving season and harvest such as cucumber, eggplant, peaches, melons, etc. (Kyuri ya nasubi ya momo suika...)

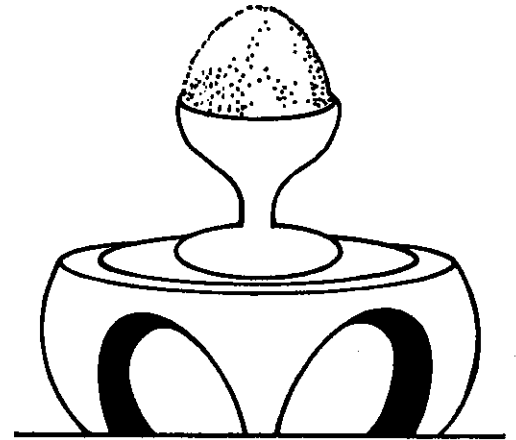
Offerings of Ohatsu are made in the sense of giving the first of the season to the Buddha. Other offerings, made to present the best or the most important items, may include the first slice of a birthday cake, presents received, pay checks, and letters.

3. Candles: The candle is used as an offering and symbolizes the light of Truth which illuminates the darkness. No one can see things in the dark but when the light is on everything becomes clear. In this way the candle is a reminder that Buddha's wisdom and compassion will show us clearly everything that is to be known about life and His Light will always shine brightly to guide us through each day. Light the candles and douse the match by fanning it or pinching it (not by blowing).
4. Incense: The incense we burn in front of the shrine reminds us that everything must burn away all our selfishness and put our whole trust in Buddha by reciting the Onenbusu—Nama Amida Butsu.
5. Gong: The gong is used during the service and the main significance of its use is in calling attention at the beginning of a sutra chant and in dividing the sutra into portions. Only those familiar with the sutras and the proper punctuation points should use the gong.

Symbols - Flowers, Offerings, Candles, Incense and Gong



Flowers are pretty.
We like to give them to
Amida Buddha.



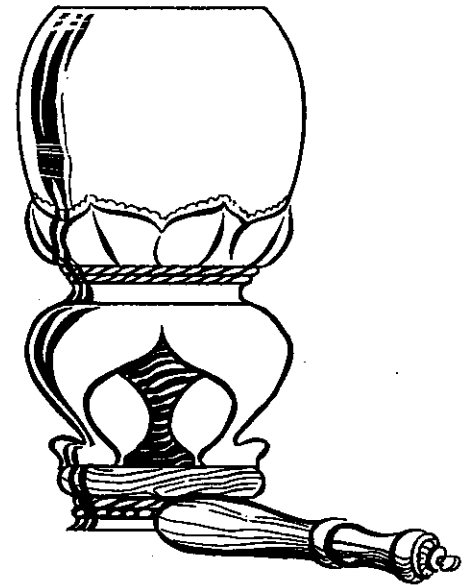
This is our offering of rice to
Amida Buddha.
It is our way of saying thank you
to Amida Buddha.



We Gassho and say:
I put my faith in Buddha.
I put my faith in Dharma.
I put my faith in Sangha.
Namu Amida Butsu.



The light of a Candle
takes away darkness.
The light of Amida Buddha's love
keeps our hearts bright and happy.



This is the Gong
We use it when we chant the Sutras.

Directions for Making the Shrine (Obutsudan)

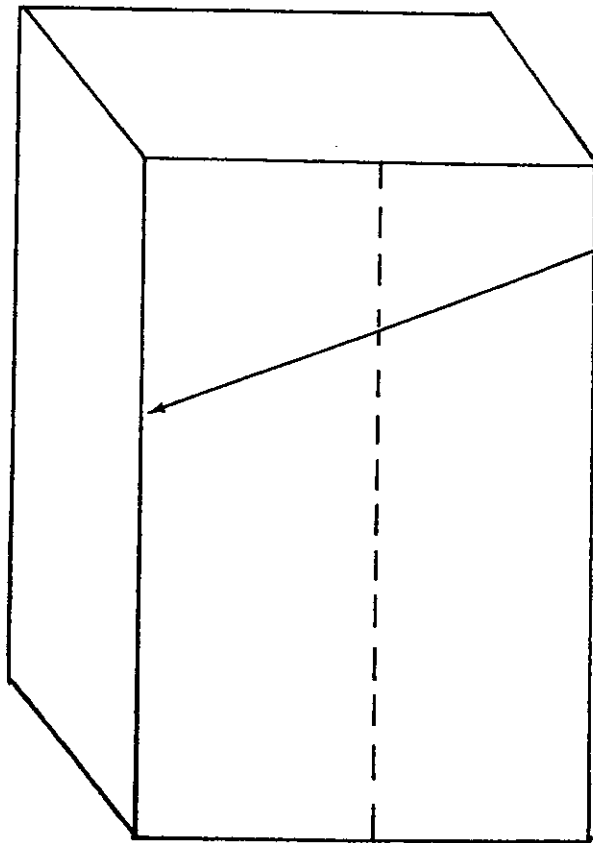
Materials:

1. Shoe Box
2. Contact Paper: Yellow, Black
3. Scissors
4. Ruler
5. Picture of Amida Buddha

Note:

Plan on this taking approximately 2 Sundays

Project: Obutsudan



1. Cut along dotted line.

2. Put masking tape along edges.

3. Cover inside with yellow contact paper.

4. Cover outside with black contact paper.

5. Put Amida Buddha's picture inside.

Simple Obutsudan

Materials - Kamaboko Boards (4)
Craft glue
Sandpaper
Wood stain
Paint brush
Black card stock – approx. 2 3/4" X 5"
2 small hinges w/screw (found at hobby shops)
Screwdriver
Portrait of Amida or Myogyo

Directions -

1. Prep boards by sanding and staining
2. Glue two boards together on their long side, forming center piece
3. Stack the remaining two boards (wings) on the center piece
4. Mount hinges on the outside edges of wings to the outside edge of center piece, so that the Obutsudan can be closed
5. Center and glue card stock to center piece
6. Center and glue the portrait to the card stock.

Family Obutsudan

Purpose:

To acquaint the student with the family Obutsudan and the care of it.

Materials:

Obutsudan, flowers, candles, incense, offering, cookies, candy, fruits, etc.

Flannel board and cut outs

Picture of Incense Burner

Procedures:

1. Explain simply in your own words about the family Obutsudan.

The Family Shrine (Obutsudan)

The family shrine is the heart of the Buddhist home. Because this is so, we must pay homage to our shrine in every way possible. It should be kept as beautiful as possible. It should never show signs of neglect or carelessness. The best flowers available should always be offered and each altar piece kept in proper position. (If a student in the Dharma School has no family shrine, he should be helped in obtaining an omyogo from the Temple.)

2. To prepare the family shrine for a service, the following points should be remembered:
 - a. Opening of the Shrine
 - b. Flowers
 - c. Offerings (Osonaye)
 - d. Candles - Light the candles
 - e. Incense
 - f. Gong
 - g. Closing the Shrine
3. Give a demonstration of where each item goes by using an Obutsudan drawing.
4. Practice in the classroom.

A Place for the Buddha (at home)

Purpose:

To learn that the Buddha and his teachings should be remembered not only on Sunday but everyday. To help achieve this objective, have children make their own shrine to use and care for at home.

Materials:

Story for the children to read
Directions for making shrine
Directions for making flower vases
Letter to parents

Presentation:

Talk with the children about making their own home shrine for the Buddha.

Is it necessary to have the home shrine as elaborate as the one at the temple?

Explain to the class that for our purposes, we shall only make a shrine and a flower holder.

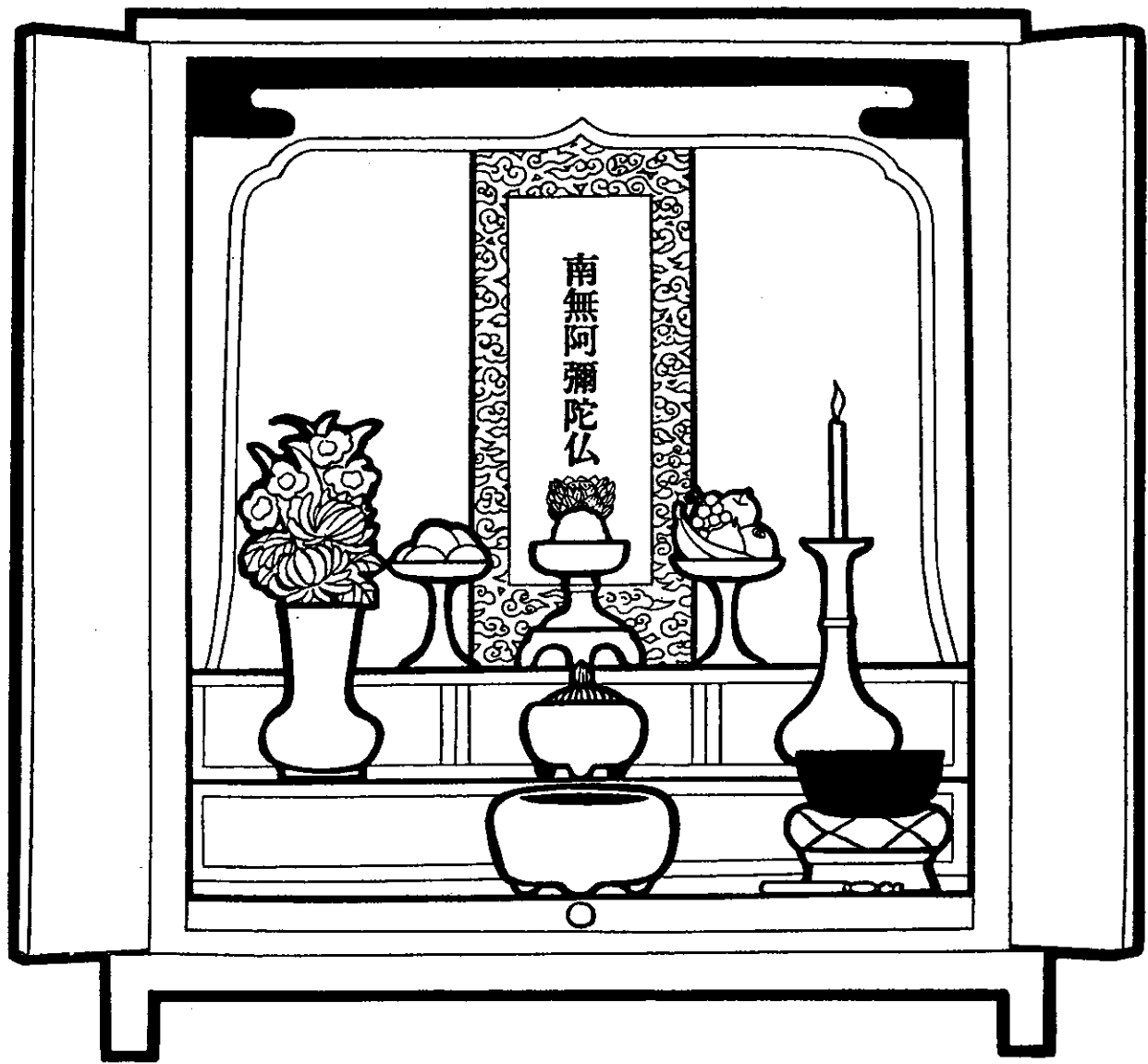
Discuss some important things to be remembered about the shrine at home. (To keep it clean, to offer fresh flowers, to gassho to the Buddha with gratitude).

Caution children not to use candles or burn incense unless with parents.

There is a place in your home that is sacred. It is the little spot holding the obutsudan. You can stand before the obutsudan each day and recite the Nembutsu.

One day there was a very poor little Buddhist girl who was invited to the home of another girl. In the home of the other girl was a large, shiny obutsudan. How the poor little girl wanted to have such a beautiful obutsudan. She cried herself to sleep that night. But during the night she had a dream. In this dream a gentle voice spoke to her saying, "You must remember that it is not the size of the obutsudan nor the richness of it that is important. It is the spirit of the person who stands before it. Buddha is happy just to know you are faithful."

When the poor little girl awakened the next morning, she felt very happy. She took a little picture of the Buddha from a calendar. She pasted in on a clean piece of paper. Little flowers from the yard were carefully put in front of the picture and there was the most precious little obutsudan that she ever saw.



The family shrine is like the temple shrine...only smaller. It is also a beautiful reminder serving us in everyday worship at home.

My Obutsudan

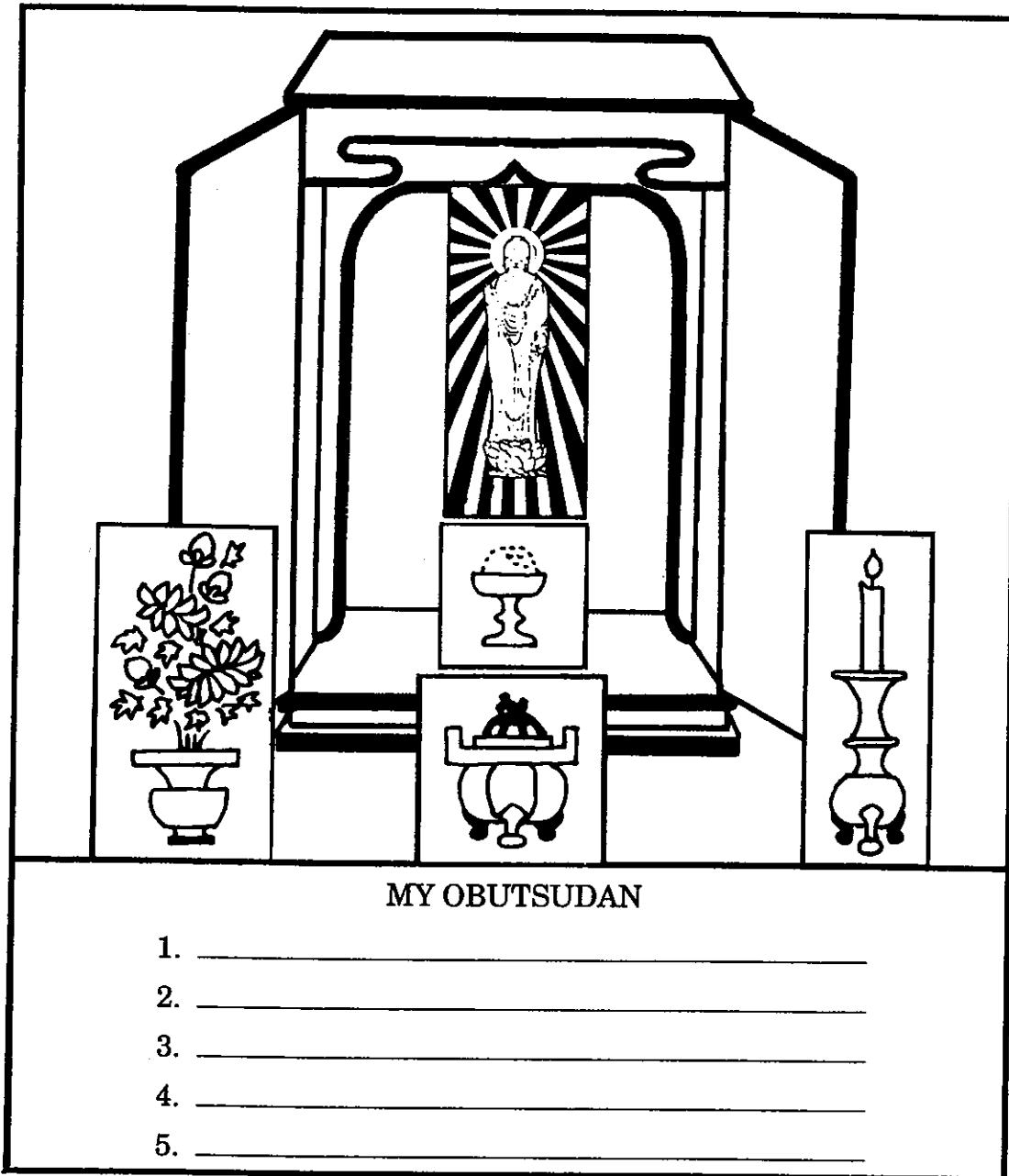
1. AMIDA BUDDHA

- offer rice to say "thank you."
- I burn incense and say "thank you."
- I offer beautiful flowers and say "thank you."
- I light the candle and say "thank you."

NAMU AMIDA BUTSU

Teacher: Color, cut and paste flowers, candle, etc. in place. Cut out the obutsudan and paste on a piece of cardboard.

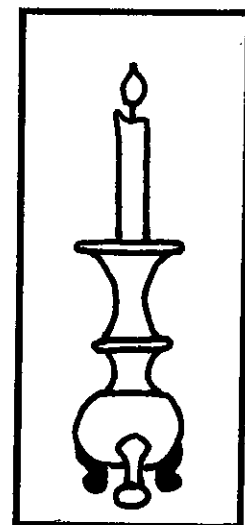
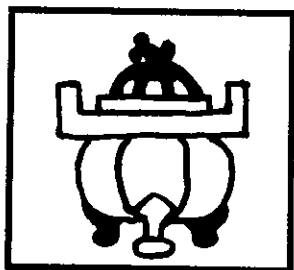
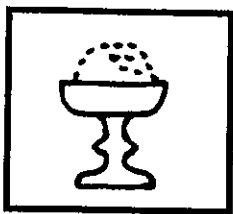
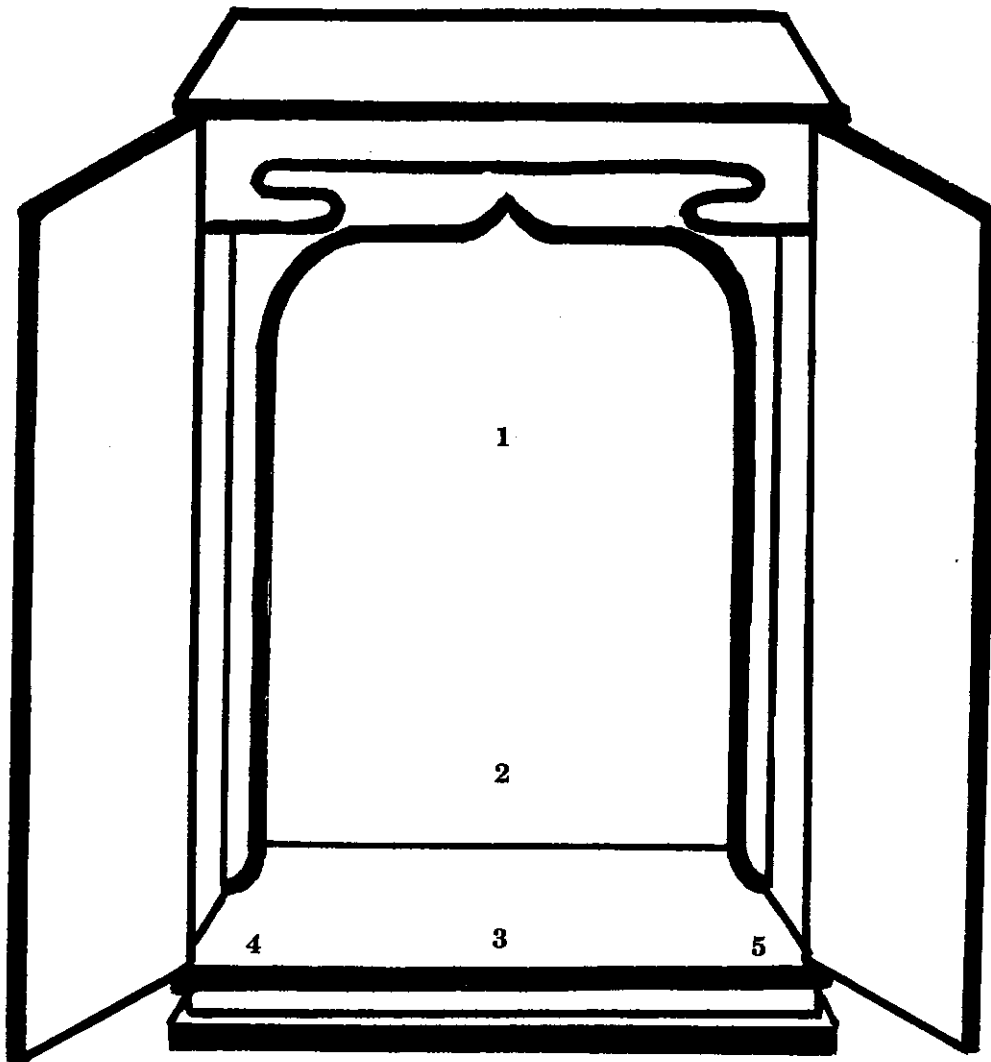
(see below)



MY OBUTSUDAN

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

My Obutsudan



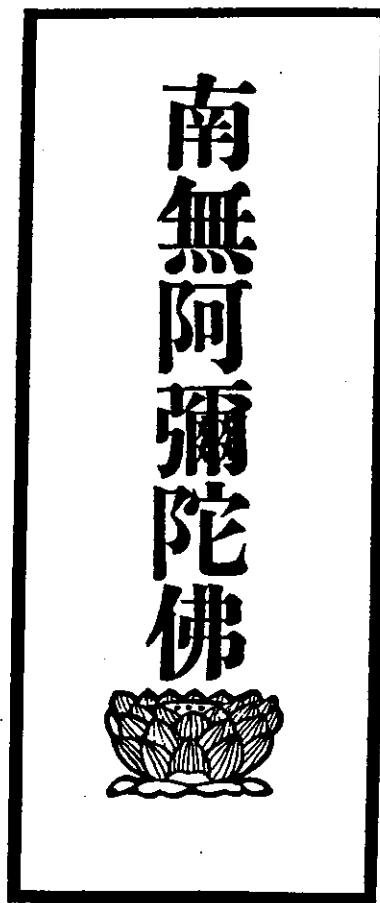
II. BUDDHIST ALTARS, ADORNMENTS AND SYMBOLS

THE BUDDHIST ALTAR

Different Types of Shrines

The central figure of the shrine is _____.

Three symbols of Amida Buddha that can be found in Shinshu temples are the _____ of Amida Buddha, a picture scroll of Amida Buddha or a scroll with _____ printed in kanji.



Symbols-Shrine Image, Gold Wisteria Crest And Dharmacakra

Purpose:

To familiarize the students with the Buddhist symbols and their meanings.

Materials:

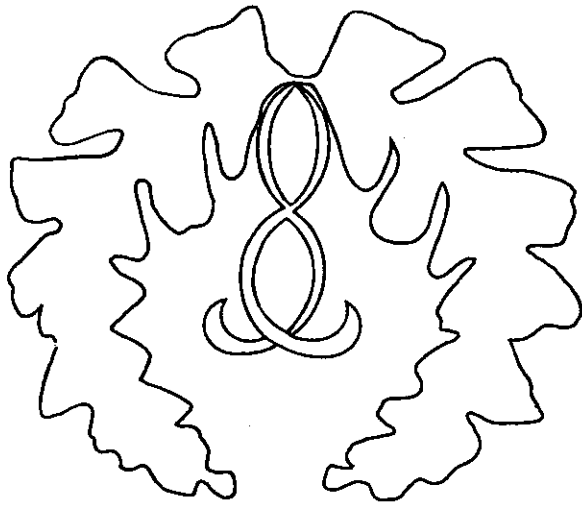
1. Statue or Image of Amida Buddha
2. Picture of Wisteria crest
3. Picture of Dharmacakra

Procedures:

1. Review Central Altar Image in previous lesson.
2. Explain the following simply:
 - a. Gold: In shrine decoration the gold color is used for the reason that gold is un- tarnished with age, and, in a like manner, Buddha's teaching is forever pure and untarnished.
 - b. Crest: The double wisteria forming a circle is the family crest of Shinran Shonin, therefore is the official crest of the Jodo Shinshu Denomination of Buddhism. The wisteria vine in full blossom hangs gracefully towards the earth. We Buddhists, just as the wisteria, must express feelings of humility and humbleness before the shrine of Amida Buddha.
 - c. Dharmacakra (The Buddhist Wheel): The Dharmacakra, The Wheel of the Law, the Wheel of Righteousness, or the Wheel of Life is one of the well known and accepted symbols of Buddhism. A few years ago this symbol was adopted as one of the official symbols to be used by the Buddhist Churches of America as the Buddhist symbol. Historically, this design existed in the time of Sakyamuni Buddha and it denoted authority. When Sakyamuni Buddha gave his first sermon to the five disciples at Benares Deer park, this sermon became known as the sermon which started "the rolling of the teaching (Dharma)." The wheel is symbolic of this event.

The turning of this wheel means to preach or set in motion the Buddha's doctrine. The circle represents all encompassing Wisdom. The spokes are the rules of Right Conduct and their equi-length is Justice. There are eight "varying aspects of life (gain, loss, fame, ignominy, praise, blame, happiness and sorrow)." The hub represents the Modesty and Thoughtfulness. The axle represents the Dharma on which the wheel of life turns in constant birth and rebirth. When the wheel becomes the true "Wheel of Righteousness," it becomes steady; this represents Nirvana.
3. Have students color the symbols. and write a few words to explain the symbols.

Wisteria



DHARMAKAKRA

1. RIGHT VIEW

2. RIGHT THOUGHT

8. RIGHT MEDITATION

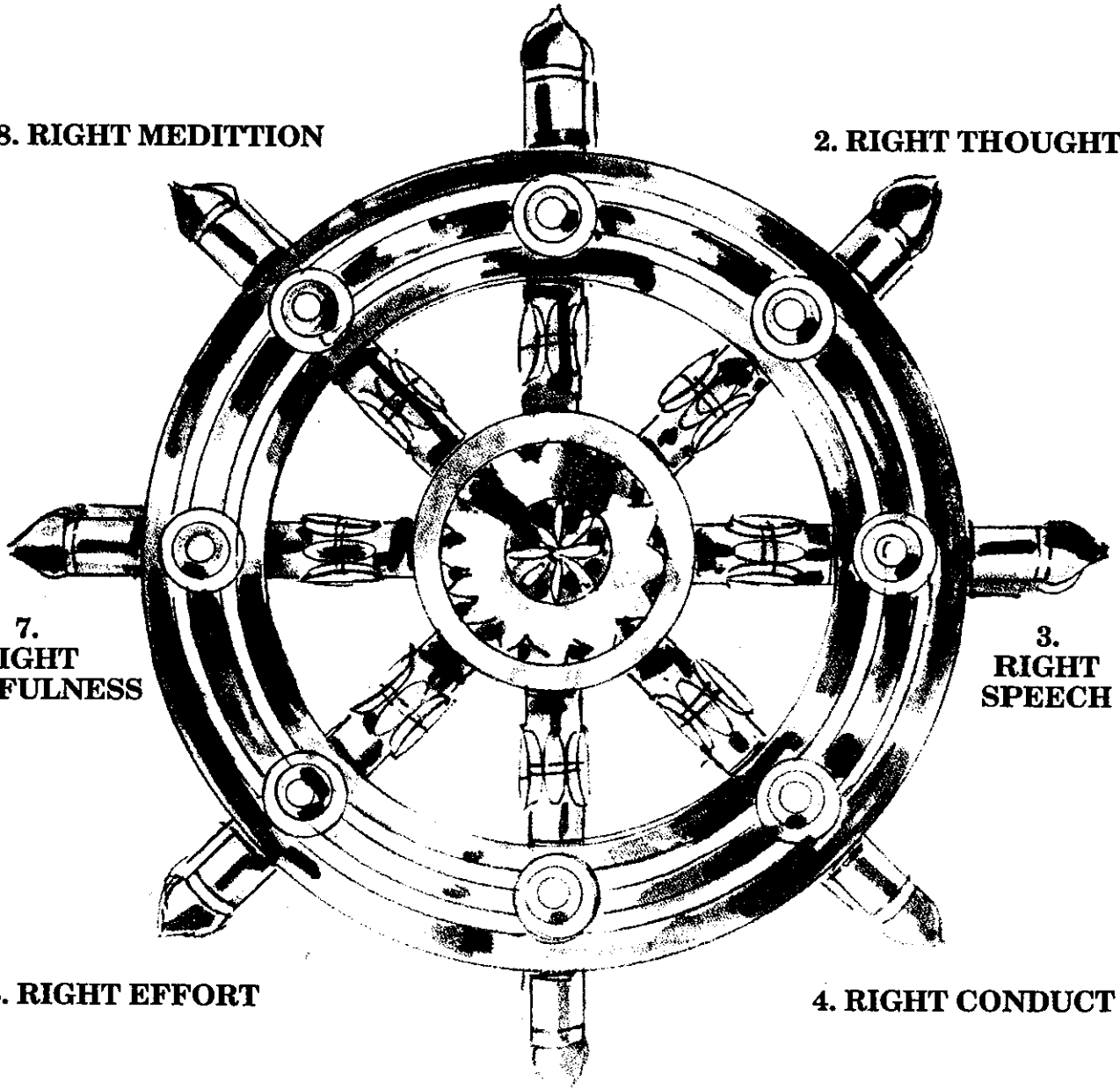
3. RIGHT
SPEECH

7. RIGHT
MINDFULNESS

4. RIGHT CONDUCT

6. RIGHT EFFORT

5. RIGHT LIVELIHOOD

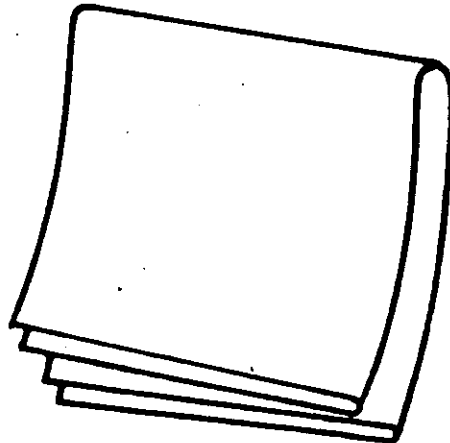


DHARMAKAKRA

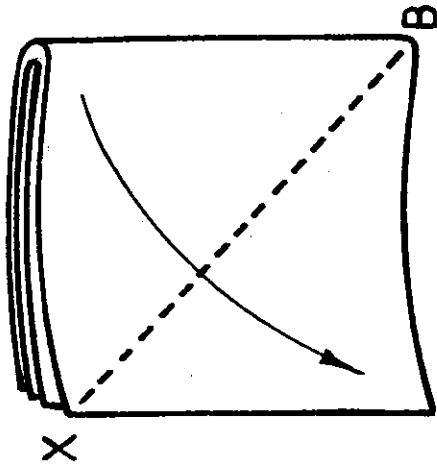
Dharmacakra - The Wheel of the Law.
Gautama Buddha set the Wheel of the Law in motion with his First Sermon in Deer Park near Benares, India.

Fold

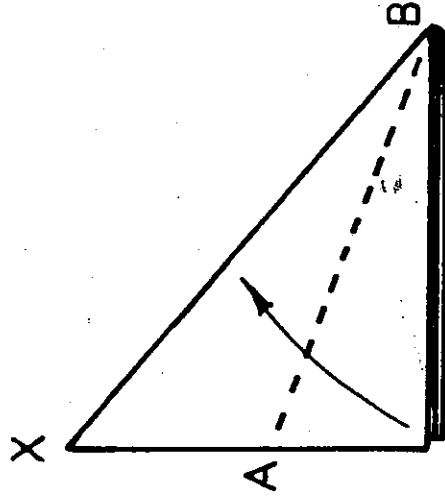
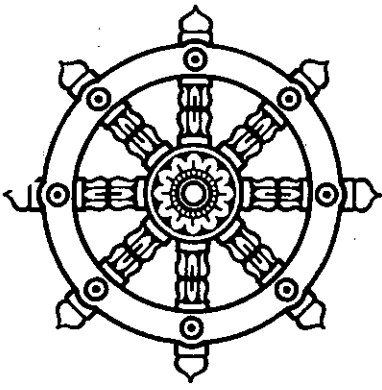
- ① Fold square origami paper in half with color inside and keep 'fold' on bottom.



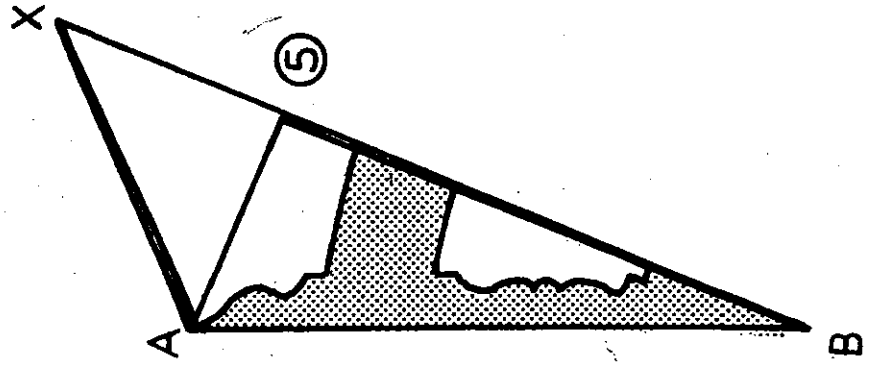
- ② Fold again in half from right to left.



- ③ Fold diagonally from right top corner down to left bottom corner.



- ④ Fold on line AB, bottom edge up to meet diagonal edge XB.



NOTE: Pattern at right is actual size for paper 5 3/4 inches square

Refer: MONKIRI - Japanese art of paper cut-out by Isao Honda

Lotus

Purpose:

To familiarize the students with the significance of the Lotus.

Materials:

Visual Aids:

Lotus used in the shrine

Picture of the Lotus

Picture of Buddha standing upon Lotus

Sectional drawing of how lotus grows in mud

Diorama of lotus growing in mud.

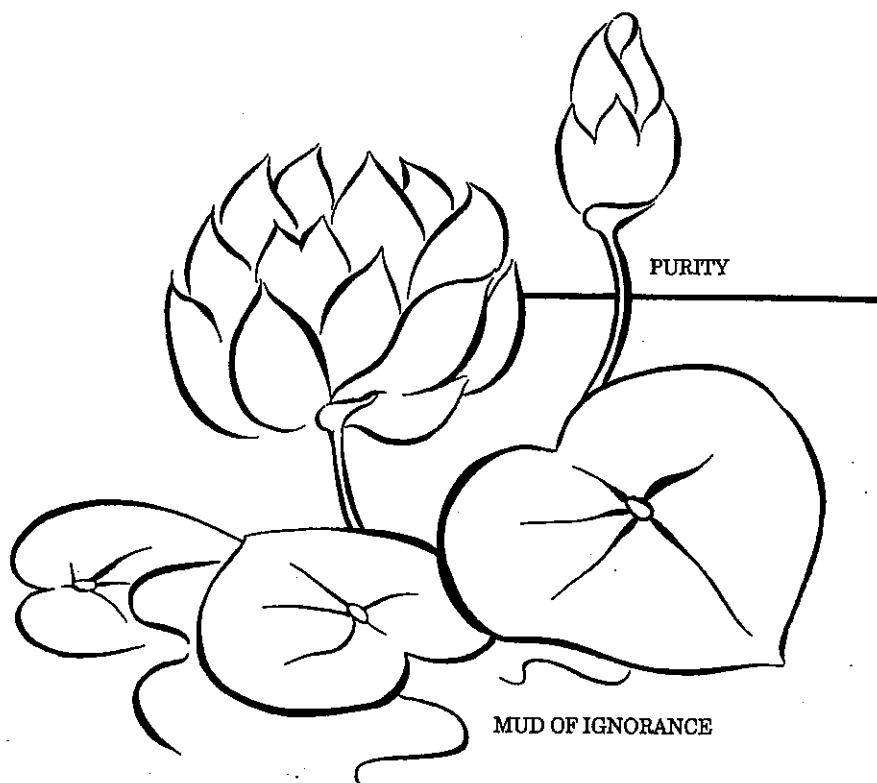
Presentation:

During the service did you notice the beautiful flowers in front of the obutsudan? We learned all about the flower offering didn't we? Let us not forget to offer fresh flowers all the time.

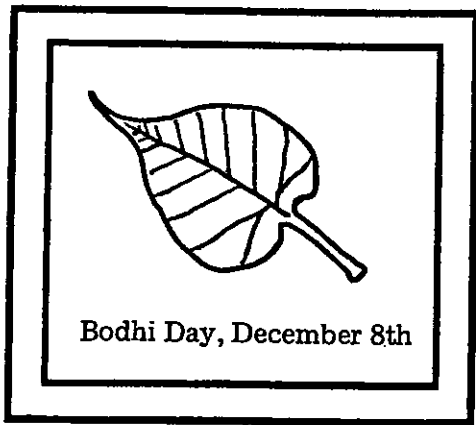
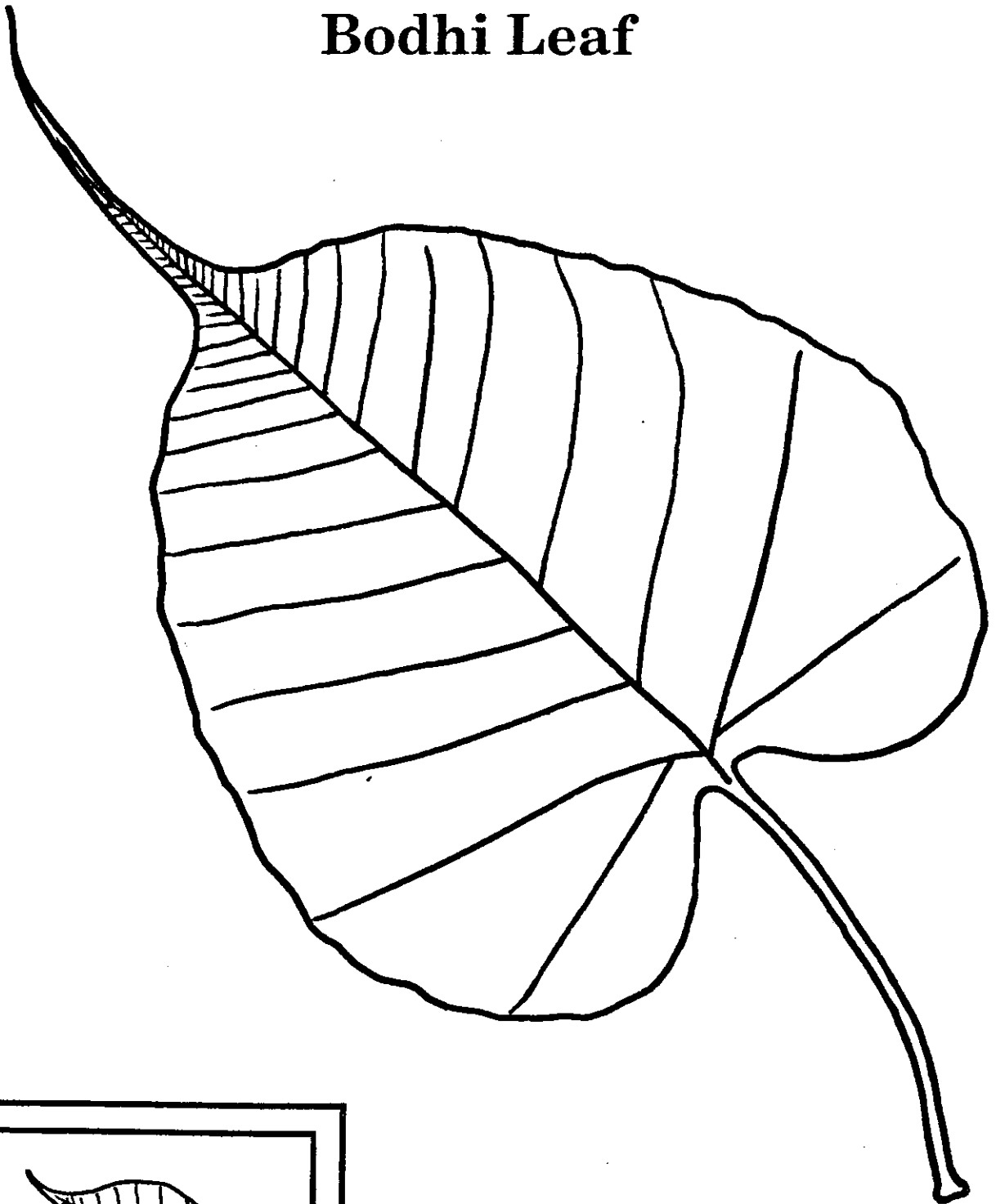
Did you know that to Buddhists the most precious flower is the Lotus? Look—here is a picture of Buddha standing upon a Lotus.

The lotus has its roots in the mud, comes up through the water, breaks through the surface of the water and makes a perfect blossom of beauty and purity to meet the first ray of sunshine. Now we, as Buddhists, should be just like the lotus and try to be as pure and beautiful in our hearts.

LOTUS BUDDHIST FLOWER



Bodhi Leaf



1. Color in the leaf.
2. Cut it out.
3. Mount and frame it.