

Information release permitted as of:  
February 23, 17:00hrs Japan time

Kodaiji Zen Temple  
Android Kannon Production Committee

February 23, 2019

To all members of the press:

Press Announcement

The Unveiling of and Delivery of a Buddhist Sermon by  
Mindar - The Android Kannon (Buddha of Compassion)

The Android Kannon Production Committee, formed in September, 2017, by Kodaiji Zen Temple (Kyoto, Higashiyama Ward), hereby announces the successful completion of the android Kannon (Buddha of Compassion), named Mindar.

Various methods for representing images of the Buddha have been used to provide a foundation for people's religious beliefs. Images in sculptural relief evolved into freestanding statuary, and after centuries have now evolved for the very first time into an android representation of Kannon, the Buddha of Compassion. It is also the first Kannon to actually deliver Buddhist sermons.

This android Kannon speaks to the modern person, expounding on the essence of the Heart Sutra, the most universally familiar of all Buddhist scriptures. The quintessential meaning of the Buddha's teachings that have been compressed into the 262 Chinese characters that comprise the Heart Sutra are unlocked and explained by Mindar in simple straightforward language to make the sutra more accessible to people in the world today.

◇ Press release outline

- Greeting
- Installation description

(General overview, production of the Kannon, commentary on the sutra, the installation environment, translations (English and Chinese), music, creators of the android, creators of the projection mapping)

- Schedule for unveiling to the general public
- Questions and answers
- Closing remarks

Please contact public relations personnel for further details and inquiries:

Toshiko Hisasue or Yumi Isobe

Tel: (075) 561-9966

Fax: (075) 561-9966

Email: kodaiji-sp@kodaiji.com

## Android Kannon - Mindar

### ◆General description of the android Kannon - Mindar

After the death of the Buddha, his teachings were gradually spread by his disciples and other believers. No depictions of the historical Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) or other Buddhas were created until they began to appear in sculptural relief on the walls and architectural surroundings of stupas (commemorative monuments) and other Buddhist structures. It is generally accepted that freestanding sculptural representations of the Buddha appeared approximately five hundred years after his death, followed by a diverse evolution of Buddhist statuary.

Until then, Buddhism had been spread only through the transmission of Buddhist teachings. The advent of Buddhist statuary, however, allowed it to become more comprehensible and gain broader appeal. It is believed that this, combined with the fact that worshippers eventually looked to these images for the fulfillment of such personal wishes as for healing, entry into the Buddhist Pure Land, national peace, protection against evil spirits, and an overall comfortable life, is what led to the explosion in popularity that Buddhism would experience.

Two thousand years then passed without much fundamental change in Buddhist statuary taking place. Until now, that is, with our decision to create a new kind of Buddhist statue – one that can move and talk.

Kannon is a savior figure that offers spiritual relief, a Buddha of compassion that heeds our prayers and helps facilitate their fulfillment. This Buddha assumes many forms, and it is as an android that we sought a modern day expression of this Buddha – an android Kannon named Mindar.

We want this android Kannon to spread the teaching of how Siddhartha Gautama transcended the life-cycle sufferings of birth, old age, sickness and death, and to provide a sense of tranquility to people from the many anxieties they experience in modern-day life.

It was the participation of many expert professionals in the production committee of this project that allowed such a superlative Buddhist image to be realized. Two thousand years have passed since the appearance of the first Buddhist statuary, culminating now in the first image of Buddha to move and talk. The sermon it delivers is an easy to understand explanation of the essence of the Heart Sutra that has been tailored for people of today.

Understanding of the sermon is further facilitated by specially designed projection mapping images that are controlled by computer to move in synch with Mindar. The sermon is given in Japanese and subtitles appear in English and Chinese.

This android Kannon was created from a desire to provide people throughout the world with a sense of peace and tranquility and to transmit the heart of Buddhist wisdom.

◆Joint research by Osaka University and Kodaiji Temple

Plans exist for Osaka University and Kodaiji Temple to jointly conduct research using the android Kannon, Mindar.

The goal of this research is to further develop the system by confirming the principle that the dialog between the 2-dimensional humans appearing in the projection mapping and the android, with its machinery exposed, serves to enhance the presence of both, and to apply this to exploring means of expression for imbuing the android with an even greater sense of presence.

Kodaiji Temple will provide Osaka University with the environment for conducting such experiments combining projection mapping with the android.

Osaka University will research the principle that an enhanced sense of presence is achieved in both the humans appearing in the projection mapping and the android.

(Osaka University is not involved in determining the content of the sermon.)

■Installation Environment

Kyoka Hall size	85 m <sup>3</sup>
Equipment	2 4500-lumen prime-lens projectors on the ceiling 8 3300-lumen prime-lens projectors on the 4 walls
Replay environment	Video footage size: 4K multi-display
Audio	5-channel output (Ceiling 4-ch; Kannon 1-ch)

■Mindar Kannon

Dimensions	Height: 1,950 mm   Width: 900 mm   Depth: 900 mm
Body	Aluminum, other
Head, hands	Silicon (A-Lab original)
Movement	Air hydraulics

■Sermon

Time: Approximately 25 minutes  
Subtitles: English and Chinese in the projection mapping

◆Composition of the Android Kannon Production Committee

Android Kannon Production Committee

\*The diagram showing the composition of the committee has been omitted to conserve space.

◆Special unveiling to the general public

- Format Kyoka Hall at Kodaiji Zen Temple; seating only; limited capacity
- Open to Adults and children 13 and above (The content is considered too difficult for elementary school and preschool children)
- Dates March 8 (Friday) to May 6 (Monday); total of 60 days
- Times Several times per day
  - \*The room will be vacated after each session
  - \*No admittance once capacity has been reached
  - \*No entering or leaving the room once the session has begun
- Monetary Offerings are accepted and votive cards will be provided offerings
- Android Kannon special home page: <http://www.kodaiji.com/mindar/>

◆About Kodaiji Temple

Jubuzan Kodaiji (Rinzai School Kenninji Sect)

Kodaiji Temple is located north east of Yasaka Hokanji Temple at the foot of the Higashiyama Ryozen Mountains in Kyoto. It is officially called Kodaiji-jushozenji Temple. The temple was established in 1606 by Kita-no-Mandokoro (1548 – 1624) in memory of her late husband Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536 – 1598). Kita-no-Mandokoro was also known as Nene. She later became a priestess and assumed the name of Kodaiin Kogetsuni. In July 1624, Sanko Osho from Kenninji Temple was welcomed as the principal monk and the temple was then named Kodaiji. Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542 – 1616) (the first Tokugawa shogun) financed the construction of the temple, resulting in its magnificent appearance.

Many of the original structures were destroyed in fires. Those that remain are Kaisando (Founder's Hall), Otama-ya (Sanctuary), Kasatei (Teahouse), Shiguretei (Teahouse), Omotemon (Gate to Sanctuary) and Kangetsudai (Moon Viewing Pavilion), and they are designated as important cultural properties of Japan. The pond garden around Kaisando is said to have been designed by the great garden designer, Kobori Enshu, and is designated by the Japanese Government as a historical site and a place of scenic beauty.