

Statue of Buddha Amida



Wood, lacquer, gold leaf and crystal (eyes): Japan, c1m high, c1200CE

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The folds of the outer cloth are intricately carved and give a flowing sense to the robe. The hands are delicately carved and both show the same pose of forefinger touching the thumb of the same hand. Both palms are facing outwards, the right arm is raised the left is lowered. The hair has been depicted as a regular pattern of tightly packed curls.

The eyes are half closed and the eyebrows are emphasised, the face has a small but very delicately carved mouth. The figure has relatively small feet and stands on a ridged wooden plinth.

Traces of pigment and gold leaf are still evident on the carving.

There is a sense of flowing movement from the way the folds of the robe have been carved.

Overall there is a great sense of dignity and serenity conveyed by the carving.

According to the British Museum website¹ “The Buddha Amida (Sanskrit: Amitabha) was the principal deity in temples of the True Pure Land or Jōdo Shinshū sect”. It continues “Here, Amida holds his hands in a gesture that welcomes the souls of the dead faithful to the Pure Land (Sukhavati)”.

It comments on the way the sculpture was made as follows “As with many statues of this period, the figure is made using the *yosegi zukuri* technique, with a number of pieces of wood hollowed out and fixed together. The realistic eyes are made of crystal and inserted from the inside of the head before the statue was finished”.

¹http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/asia/w/wooden_figure_of_the_buddha_am.aspx