

**Amida** by Koei (Japanese, Muromachi Period, 1472)

**Accession Number: 92.193**

Carved Wood with traces of polychrome, 21 x 17 ¾ x 16 1/8 inches (53.3 x 45.1 x 41 cm)

This hollow, carved wood sculpture of Amida Nyorai (Buddha) with a piece of glass or crystal inlaid in the forehead was created by the Japanese sculptor Koei in 1472. It is the only known work by this artist, who was an adherent of Pure Land Buddhism.

Before researching a work of art from the MFAH collection, it is helpful to view the work first hand. The information in books journals will be far more meaningful if you have taken advantage of the opportunity to inspect the object itself.

Suggested sources for better understanding this particular piece are given below. "Reference" books are found on the library's main floor, and "Ready Reference" books are behind the information desk. Other books can be obtained by asking at the information desk.



**Object Specific Information**

Landay, Janet. *Museum of Fine Arts, Houston Visitor Guide*, 2000. (Especially pages 248-249)

N 576 .H7 A85 2000 Ready Ref.

Levenson, Jay. *Circa 1492: Art in the Age of Exploration*, 1991.

CB 367 .C57 1991

Pal, Pratapaditya. *Light of Asia: Buddha Sakyamuni in Asian Art*, 1984. (Especially pages 304-5)

N 8193.2 .A3 C44 1984

**Guides to Thinking about Buddhist Art**

Barnet, Sylvan and William Burto. "Thinking about Buddhist Ritual Objects." *Orientations* 35, no. 1 (2004): 67-9.

[located in file at reference desk]

Addiss, Stephan. *How to Look at Japanese Art*, 1996.

N 7350 .A375 1996

**General Surveys of Japanese and Buddhist Art**

*Gardner's Art through the Ages*. 12<sup>th</sup> ed., 2005. (Especially Chapters 8 and 27)

N 5300 .G25 2005 Ready Ref.

Honour, Hugh & John Fleming. *The Visual Arts*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 1999. (Especially Chapter 6)

N 5300 .H68 1999 Ready Ref.

Lee, Sherman E. *A History of Far Eastern Art*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed., 1994.

N 7336.L43 1994 Ref.

**General Buddhist and Amitābha References**

*Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1995 (s.v. "Buddhism.")

B 41 .C35 1995 Ref.

*Grove Dictionary of Art*, 1996. (Vol 5, pages 87-93; 115-116; 118)

N 31 .D5 1996 v.5 Ref.

Jordan, Michael. *Encyclopedia of the Gods*, 1993. (s.v. "Amitabha.")

BL 473 .J67 1993 Ref.

### ***Buddhist Art and Iconography***

- Frédéric, Louis. *Buddhism: Flammarion Iconographic Guides*, 1995. BQ 5100 .L6 1995 Ref.  
(Especially page 134-145)
- Jansen, Eva. *The Book of Buddhas*, 1990. (Especially page 41) BQ 5100 .J367 1990 Ref.
- Zwalf, W. *Buddhism: Art & Faith*, 1985. N 8193 .A4 B8 1985

### ***Pure Land Buddhism and Amida***

- Baker, Sharon. "The Three Minds and Faith, Hope, and Love in Pure Land Buddhism."  
*Buddhist - Christian Studies* 25 (2005): 49-65. *Academic Search Premier* (accessed July 6, 2007).
- Takeda, Ryusei. "The Pure Land Buddhist Notion of Faith." *Buddhist – Christian Studies* 14 (1994): 43-53.  
*JSTOR* (accessed July 6, 2007).
- Unno, Taitetsu. *River of Fire, River of Water*. New York: Doubleday, 1998. [Houston Public Library]

### ***General Japanese References***

- Collcutt, Martin, et. al. *Cultural Atlas of Japan*, 1988. DS 821 .C62 1988 Ref.  
(Especially pages 104-17).
- Japan: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. 2 Vols., 1993. DS 805 .J263 1993 Ref.
- Meyer, Milton W. *Japan: A Concise History*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, 1993. DS 835 .M4 1992

### ***Japanese Religious Art and Temples***

- Grossman, Nancy et.al. *Art of Japan*, 2005. N 7352 .C52 2005
- Japanese Art*. New York: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1933. N 7350 .E6  
(s. v. "History," "Periods of Art," "Art," "Japanese Sculpture," and "Wood-carving")
- McCallum, Donald F. *Zenkōji and its Icon*, 1994. NK 7984 .A1 M4 1994

This reference guide is just the tip of the iceberg on helpful resources in the library's holdings. Many of the suggested resources above have their own **bibliographies**. Each of these may lead you to another resource that would also be helpful in your research here in the museum or in another library. To find additional books, use keywords such as "Buddhism" and "Japan" in the **on-line catalog**. Keep in mind that some keywords might be transcribed in Japanese; you should try both in your search. For example, while "Jodo" and "Pure Land Buddhism" are synonyms, a search using both terms may yield different results. Once you find a few relevant titles, pay close attention to subject headings to find similar books.

**Examples of useful subject headings are:**

*Buddhism*  
*Art, Asian –Exhibitions*  
*Art, Buddhist*  
*Amita□bha (Buddhist deity) –Art*  
*Gods, Buddhist, in art*

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at **Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing about Art***, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk.

At every stage of your work, please allow the **library staff** to help you. Contact us at 713-639-7325.