Amida 92.193
Artist/Culture: Koei (Unkei IX), Japanese
Date/Period: 1472 (Muromachi Period)
Place: Shikoku Island, Japan
Medium: Wood with traces of polychrome
Dimensions: 53.3 x 45.1 x 41 cm

This temple sculpture was created by Koei Unkei, a master of the Muromachi period. Koei depicts Amida, the Amitabha Buddha, with tightly curled hair and loose flowing robes. The gleaming white stone on the figure’s forehead represents the universal brightness that emanates from the Buddha’s enlightened state. Amida is the Japanese name of the Amitabha Buddha, who rules over the Paradise of the West, believed to be a heavenly place where the souls of Buddhists who have transcended the cycle of death and rebirth reside. Amida is the central figure of Jodo, or Pure Land Buddhism, a movement that became popular in Japan during the 12th century. Pure Land Buddhists believe that through faith and repeatedly reciting Amida’s name, anyone can escape earthly suffering.
Bibliography

Object Specific Information
N 576 .H7 A85 Ready Ref.
CB 367 .C57 1991
N 8193.2 .A3 c44 1984

General Surveys of Japanese Art
N 5300 .G25 2005
N 7350 .S7 2014 Reserve
N 5300 .H68 1999

Buddhism
BQ 130 .P75 2014 Ref
BQ 5100 .J367 1990

General Japanese References
N 7350 .A375 1996
DS 821 .C62 1988 Ref
DS 835 .M4 1992
DS 805 .J263 1993 Ref

Pure Land Buddhism and Amida/Amitabha
BL 1035 .I43 1998
N 8193.3 .P8 H43 2017
BL 473 J67 1993

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 resources, use keywords such as “Hindu,” “India,” and “sculpture” in the online catalog and in periodical indexes. Once you find a few relevant titles, pay attention to the subject headings to identify similar materials. Examples of useful subject headings are:

- Buddhism
- Buddhism in art
- Amitabha (Buddhist deity) Art
- Art, Buddhist Japan

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 713-639-7323 or Hirsch@mfah.org