

Maki Odo Temple

The three statues in this treasure hall are some of the finest examples of wooden Buddhist statuary in Japan—all National Treasures thought to have been carved in the Heian period (794–1185). The centerpiece is an image of Amida Nyorai, 216 centimeters tall and made from several large sections of Japanese cypress. Faint remnants of the original gold leaf that covered the bare skin can be seen against the black lacquered base coat. Guarding the figure are four armored devas, standing on grimacing ogres. On the right is a rare standing image of Fudo Myo-o, whose fearsome expression is meant to frighten people into accepting salvation. At over 250 centimeters, it is one of the largest wooden statues of this Buddhist figure in Japan. On his back is a flaming sacred phoenix, probably an addition from the Edo period (1603–1867). In addition, he holds a sword used to cut through ignorance. He is one of the Five Great Wisdom Kings of Esoteric Buddhism, as is the figure sitting on the water buffalo on the left—Daiitoku Myo-o. The very lifelike animal contrasts with the exaggerated physical nature of the king on its back, with his six faces, arms, and legs. In contrast to many other major temple images, there is no definitive record of where or when these superb statues were made.