

National Treasure Hall

Statue of Kendatsuba

National Treasure

Kendatsuba is one of the Eight Kinds of Mythological Beings, depicting a musician originally serving in the paradise of the Hindu god Indra. After being incorporated into the Japanese Buddhist pantheon, the musicians performed the same function for Taishakuten, a ruler of one of the heavens in Buddhist cosmology. The musicians are also regarded as servants of Jikokuten, one of the Four Heavenly Kings, in addition to being deities of medicine and guardians of children and Buddhist teachings.

This Kendatsuba is depicted with its eyes closed and wearing the skin of a lion as a headdress. This work is dated to 734 and was made by the hollow-core dry-lacquer sculpting technique.