

**Eastern Golden Hall**  
**Statue of Yuima Koji**  
**National Treasure**

Yuima Koji (known as Vimalakirti in India) is the central character in the *Vimalakirti Sutra*, a seminal text of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition and a foundational sutra for Kofukuji Temple, whose name derives from the text. The sutra describes how Yuima attained the highest levels of insight without abandoning his life as a householder, and in debate, bested all of the greatest disciples in the Buddha's entourage. This included the bodhisattva Monju (Manjushri), a sculpture of whom is displayed together with this work. For these reasons, Yuima Koji has long served as a role model and inspiration for Buddhists across Asia.

The sculptor Jokei created this statue in 1196 from assembled blocks of Japanese cypress using the sculpting technique known as *yosegi-zukuri*. It was decorated by the painter Koen. Yuima is represented as an old man showing the effects of illness and old age. He sits with legs in the full lotus position on a rectangular pedestal decorated with a relief carving of lions and peonies. Behind him stands a screen resembling a wooden rack with fabric draped over it. Yuima wears a soft cloth cap on his head, and a sash over plain robes. His left hand is held in a fist at chest height, while the right rests on his knee with the palm facing up and the index and middle fingers extended. Since it was meant to depict a real person rather than a Buddha or celestial being, this statue is an exceptional example of the new, highly realistic styles of Buddhist portraiture that were being imported from China and put to use by Nara-based sculptors during the early Kamakura period (1185–1333).