

### **Jizo Bodhisattva Wooden Statue**

One of Amida (Sk. Amitabha) Buddha's main attendants, Jizo is one of the most popular bodhisattvas of the Pure Land (Jodo) School of Buddhism. This depiction, 156 centimeters in height and created in the tenth century, was carved from a single block of zelkova wood.

The figure is slender and elegant and wears the robes of a priest. The graceful lines of the carved drapery follow the brown and gray-black grain of the wood, and the drapery itself cascades like a waterfall—an effect enhanced by the lines of the wood grain. The use of wood with grain that is not straight is considered unusual. The work exhibits a constrained posture as the carver was working with, rather than against, the skew of the wood. The right arm appears to be held tightly against the body while the upper half of the body is distorted toward the right. These features suggest that the wood for the statue was obtained from an old tree, perhaps one thought to be sacred. The temple speculates that the wood may have been taken from such a tree that was damaged in a storm, possibly by lightning.

The origin of this depiction of Jizo is unknown, and, mysteriously, it is hollow inside. It is possible that further information about the statue resides within, such as clues to its origins, but no attempts have yet been made to explore that internal space.