

Amida Nyorai (Skt: Amitabha Buddha)

Nyorai are Buddhas who have reached the highest stage of enlightenment. They are the principal focus of worship at Buddhist temples. This tranquil expression and simple clothing—a sign of priesthood—of this Amida Nyorai emphasize an elevated state of mind. The fearsome Four Heavenly Kings, known as Shitenno, guard the Buddha as he sits serenely upon a lotus-flower pedestal. Amida Nyorai is nearly always depicted sitting or standing on a lotus, because a fully blooming lotus represents enlightenment.

In Sanskrit, Amida is called "Amitabha," which translates as "infinite light." Amida is thus often referred to as the Buddha of Infinite Light. Another example of Amida Nyorai is the iconic, massive copper Daibutsu (Great Buddha) at Kotokuin Temple in Kamakura.

This wooden figure is 219 centimeters tall. An unnamed local sculptor is thought to have produced it in 1143. Like other large images produced during this period, this sculpture makes use of a then-new technique of carving several interlocking joined pieces of wood (*yosegi-zukuri*) rather than a single block.