



7718 A wood figure of Yakushi Nyorai (Healing Buddha) seated in the lotus position (the posture of interior concentration) with a medicine jar held in the left hand, constructed in a single-wood-block technique (ichiboku-zukuri)

The head is adorned with crystals representing the byakugō (white spiralling hair) on the forehead and the nikkei-shu (red jewel on the protrusion on top of the Buddha's head).

Japan 14th century Kamakura period, 1321*

Dimensions: H. 36cm x W. 31cm x D. 23cm (14¼" x 12¼" x 9¼")

*An inscription on the base reads Gengo gan-nen, Shinyu, juni-gatsu yo-ka (8 December 1321).

Yakushi Nyorai (Bhaisajyaguru); the Healing or Medicine Buddha who offers medicine to people suffering from illness, and grants nourishment to the mind and body. As a Buddha who carries out the functions of a physician among the large number of Buddhas, he holds a medicine container in his left hand. This expresses his vow to cure mental and physical illnesses.

In contrast to Amida Buddha, who presides over the Western Pure Land of future rebirths, Yakushi Nyorai is the Buddha who grants practical benefits primarily in this life as the Lord of the Eastern Pure Land.

Both hands of this figure are rather uniquely positioned, close to each other, compared to the general

image of Yakushi Nyorai. A similar hand posture can be found in a Yakushi Nyorai figure from the Kamakura period, housed in Saikyo-ji temple, Otsu city in Shiga prefecture (Important Cultural Property). This figure is believed to have been moved from Hosho-ji temple in Kyoto to the current Saikyo-ji temple by Shinchi, the 9th abbot of Saikyo-ji, in 1590. It is now revered as a hibutsu (hidden Buddha) and is shown to the public only once a year on the 3rd February.

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