



A wood figure of an esoteric Buddhist deity, Aizen Myōō (Sk. Rāgarāja), with a fierce expression and six arms in flowing robes finely decorated in gold kirikane (thin cut strips of gold) with geometric designs, seated on a lotus base with a mandorla of flames behind

The head has a vertical third eye on the forehead and wears a crown of a lion head.

The chest is bejewelled with a metal munakazari (pectoral ornament) with semi-precious stone beads.

Japan 17th century Edo period

Dimensions:

Figure, stand and mandorla: H. 34.5cm x W. 17cm x D. 17cm (13½" x 6¾" x 6¾")

Figure: H. 14cm x W. 12cm x D. 10cm (5½" x 4¾" x 4")

Aizen Myōō is one of the Wisdom Kings (Myōō) of esoteric Buddhism and is worshipped as the protective deity of love who could assist relationships between men and women as well as those amongst families.

Like other Wisdom Kings, Aizen Myōō assumes a fearsome appearance to teach and convert nonbelievers with rage and passion. There are some variations in depictions of this deity, but most commonly Aizen Myōō is portrayed as a seated figure in red with three eyes and flaming hair, wearing a crown of a lion's head which represents his ability to save all beings by defeating evil in a fearful manner. He is usually depicted with six arms, holding attributes such as a bell, a vajra, a closed lotus flower, a bow and an arrow; they correspond to the Six Realms of Reincarnation (Rokudō) into which a

soul can be reborn: hell, hungry ghosts, animals, Asura (demigod), humans and heaven. The six hands of Aizen Myōō, therefore, remind the viewer of the deity's ability to save and assist all souls in any of these realms.

n.b. Both the left and right 'middle' arms are repaired from the elbow forward.

The base maybe later in date to the figure and most of the lotus leaves have been replaced.

The top left-hand section of the mandorla has had a small amount of repair to an old crack.

Each hand would have originally held one the following symbols of power. The thunderbolt, a bell, bow and arrow, and a lotus flower. These are now missing.





