



# Standing Jizo Bosatsu

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## On display

**Title/Description:** Standing Jizo Bosatsu

**Object Type:** Figure

**Materials:** Glass, Metal, Wood

**Measurements:** h. 365 x w. 210 x d. 170 mm

**Accession Number:** 1255

**Historic Period:** Kamakura period (1185 - 1333)

**Production Place:** Asia, East Asia, Japan

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This figure of a Buddha stands upon a lotus flower. The right hand holds a tall staff whereas the left arm is bent at the elbow with the palm stretched outwards. The figure wears a robe which has been delicately sculpted and painted with organic imagery. A gold necklace hung with coloured beads adorns the neck. The figure is depicted with eyes closed and facial features have been sculpted, lips painted red. The earlobes are depicted as stretched forming two oval holes on either side. An elaborately decorated screen stands behind the figure. The lotus flower rests upon rock-like shapes which sit upon a square base. The object is made from a variety of materials including gold, glass, crystal and other metals. The overall colour of the object is dark brown although some discoloration has occurred, especially on the lotus flower which is turning green in places. Some chips can be found on the edges of the flower and the tips of the fingers on the left hand are missing.

Hannah Thomas, 1997

TO-BE-REPLACED-WITH-A-GAP

A sense of meditative calm seems to emanate from within this serene Jizô Bosatsu. Dressed as a monk with a shaven head, Jizô stands on top of an open lotus blossom that is supported by jagged rocks. In his outstretched left hand Jizô holds a wish-fulfilling jewel (Sanskrit: *devanagari*) and in his right a staff with six rings, as he waits to be of assistance to those in need. The six rings, representing each of the six realms of existence (Japanese: *rokudo*), jingle to ward off evil spirits. This deity originated in India as Bodhisattva Kshitigarbha, Bodhisattva of the Earth Womb in Sanskrit, a saviour who can help to guide the faithful through the underworld to be reborn in the Pure Land. In Japan, Jizô is known to protect women, ailing children and travellers.

This early thirteenth-century sculpture is in remarkably pristine condition. The body was sculpted from cypress wood in the joined woodblock technique, which was perfected at the time of its creation. After completion, areas of the work were covered in *gofun* - a type of gesso - and then decorated with cut gold leaf (Japanese: *kirikane*). The painting on the face and body and the cut gold

leaf on the robes were applied when the work was created and have not been retouched. The eyes, made with inlaid rock crystal, are also original, as is the ornate metal mandorla decorated with glass embellished flaming jewels. The necklace might be a later addition, with the lotus and rock stand almost certainly dating to the Edo period (1615-1868). This work bears close similarities to the Jizô Bosatsu created by Zen'en (1223-1226) in the Rockefeller Collection, Asia Society, New York.

When Lisa Sainsbury saw the Jizô Bosatsu she immediately felt it was a 'must have'. Purchased in 2003, this exquisite sculpture was one of the last Japanese objects that Lady Sainsbury acquired. She felt that it would serve as a fitting protector for the entire collection in the Sainsbury Centre.

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Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, Founding Director, Sainsbury Institute for the Study of Japanese Art and Culture

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