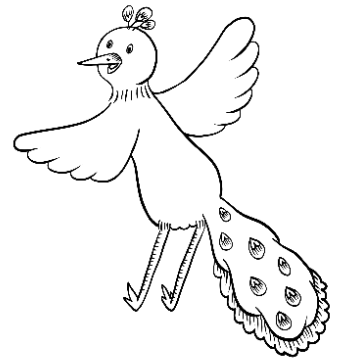


Shapes and Forms in the Buddha's World:

Interpreting, Expressing, and Connecting

July 23, 2025 (Wed) - August 31, 2025 (Sun)



1. Copy — Reproducing the Buddha's Form!

The key detail in these ink-and-brush Buddha drawings is the paper itself. It's called oil paper, which is paper treated with oil to make it translucent. By layering oil paper and tracing over it, even someone who was not good at drawing could copy the form of a Buddha they were seeing for the first time.

The Iconography of Bishamonten, One of the Twelve Devas

If you look closely, the paper is brown.
That's one of the characteristics of oil paper.

The horizontal lines on the paper are fold marks.
It's now mounted as a hanging scroll, but back then, it was carefully folded and stored.

Take a close look at the area near the Buddha's left shoulder.
The faded lines show where the oil on the paper repelled the ink.
The character for "vermillion" is like a note saying, "Use vermillion here!"



See if you can find other color notes. They show that the original model had color.

The Peacock Wisdom King

There are many images of a Buddha riding a peacock, called the Peacock Wisdom King.

Try to find Buddha figures that resemble the line-drawn Peacock Wisdom King.

Did you find ones with a similar shape but different colors? The forms were copied from the line-drawn originals.

You'll also notice different portrayals of the Peacock Wisdom King. Long ago, monks traveled to China to study. When they returned, they brought back line drawings of Buddha figures like these.



2. Share—A Textbook for Learning About the Buddha!

In the past, people studied the Buddha's form by looking at model images.

These served as references when creating statues or Buddhist paintings.

These carefully copied Buddha drawings were important study materials for learning about the Buddha.

Album of Buddhist Gods and Goddesses

(Wrathful Deities)

When you unroll the wound up scroll...

There's row after row of fearsome faces! Red and blue bodies, surrounded by flames!

The forms may vary, but they all represent the same Buddha: the Wisdom King Fudō.

Alongside drawings of the Wisdom King Fudō in various forms, there are written explanations too—it's like a Wisdom King Fudō encyclopedia!



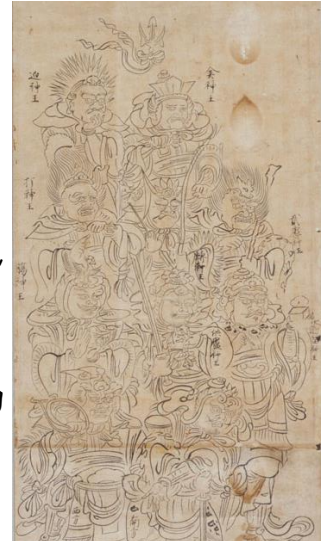
The Iconography of the Sixteen Benevolent Gods

When you unroll the wound up scroll...

You'll see lots of Buddhas packed closely together.

How many can you count? Look closely at their faces, what they're holding, and what they're wearing—you'll notice small differences.

By studying this, people learned how to draw scenes of Buddhas gathering together.



Iconography of the Takao Mandala

In these two display cases, both images are of the *Takao Mandala*.

Are they the same or different? The answer is: both!

Both were created to pass down the very old and precious *Takao Mandala*—so in that sense, they're the same.

But because they were made in different periods for different purposes, the style, lines, and paper are different.

Compare them and see!



3. Spread — Learn and Create!



Besides the line drawings copied from originals, people also used paintings connected to revered monks or famous old artworks as models.

By carefully copying and passing down the Buddha's form, these precious images spread across distant lands and into the future.

The Mandalas of the Two Realms

In these paintings, you'll see squares and circles.

Packed with large and small Buddhas, they form a two-piece set.

Can you spot Buddhas that match the forms you've seen earlier in this exhibit?



The *Taima Mandala*

The colors are different, but both have small square paintings around the edges and a large one in the center.

The forms of the Buddhas are similar too.

These are copies of a famous painting originally made in the Nara period (710-794), reproduced in the Kamakura and Edo periods (1192-1333 and 1603-1868 respectively).

The shapes and forms of the Buddha have spread over hundreds of years, passed down from one generation to the next.



The Wisdom King Fudō with Two Child Attendants

Flames, a blue body, and a fierce face—that's the Wisdom King Fudō.

Throughout this exhibit, we've seen many different forms of the Wisdom King Fudō. What other versions of the Wisdom King Fudō can you find?

There should be some in the *Takao Mandala* too.

