

Compare the hindu
and buddhist styles of
representing divinity



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Comparing the Hindu and Buddhist Styles of Representing Divinity Like the general concept with which sculptures of Japan's Heian period were treated, the 'Eleven-Headed Bodhisattva of Compassion' was sculpted using a special technique, known as 'yosegi' which gave most creation of the era, 794-1185 AD, its distinct characteristic. Being chiefly made of wood carved into a divine form which substantiates the Buddhist's perspective of enlightenment and boundless compassion, the sculpture of 'The Eleven-Headed Bodhisattva of Compassion' stands lightly upon a lotus footstool to imply humility of remaining on ground or at lower state to guide men towards salvation. It highly reflects the prevailing theme at the time in which Japan took pride in its genius through the fields of religion, philosophy, art, and rich literature. While the fundamental color of brilliance is perceived through the coating to designate in equilibrium the simplicity of brightness through wood carving, the Hindu sculpture has, among the revered gods Vishnu, Shiva, Krishna, and some others, on the contrary been worked using stone or hard rock medium to enhance the proper locus of the aspects with light. A rare sculpture of 'Vishnu' seated on a Naga coil under the five hoods of the serpent deity is stone-made. Found at the Nithyakalyanaswamy temple at Thiruvudanthai, the statue is said to date from the Vijayanagara period during the 17th century. Contrary to the standing position of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Vishnu is depicted sitting in a relaxed posture to signify an aura of meditative heights achieved. This 'Vishnu on Naga Coil' is well-adorned as opposed to the plain appearance of the Buddhist sculpture. Being considered as the 'Supreme god' in the Vaishnavite tradition of Hinduism, the symbolic statue reflects him as the all-pervading essence of all beings and this is a strong ground for sculpting Vishnu in a manner that

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exhibits details rich in adornments and are defined under perfect human features, except for bearing four arms. Not having any earth-related object by him suggests how Vishnu's state is one that is severely distant from men and this further indicates no sign of humility unlike in the case of the bodhisattva. Though his divinity radiates opulence of things by which he could sustain and govern the universe as the ' Preserver', the sculpture seemingly lacks the essence of purity. In one of the modifications made for the structure of Vishnu with the same serpent deity, the presence of Lakshmi, his consort, heavily coated with gold altogether gives a manifestation of extreme wealth and power. Its lavish creation of curves and lines inlaid on the golden stone medium occur to characterize immortal possession of authority and matter, transcending the significant idea behind misery or suffering, a major part in Buddhist principle of attaining pure divinity. Such design with Vishnu and similar Hindu gods mirrors the equivalent aspect in Indian culture of observing colorful festive traditions abounding in food, clothing, ceremonies, and other stuffs of various kinds. On the other hand, Though the ' Eleven-Headed Bodhisattva of Compassion' primarily consists of wood, the sophisticated carvings and the countenance which appears to possess a blend of gold and bronze external coating, aimed to bring about a wholly essential color, suggests subtle prominence while depicting the purpose of identifying a bodhisattva by nature. The smooth lines of the sculpture were fashioned such that the strokes exude a character with humble gesture, one with which no trace of rigidity can be detected. In the absence of conspicuous edges in its shape all throughout, the eleven-headed Kannon may be readily claimed to have been so intentionally brought to the gentlest of forms. ' Eleven-Headed Bodhisattva of

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Compassion' ' Vishnu' Seated on a Naga Coil Under the Five Hoods of the Serpent Deity Works Cited " Eleven-Headed Bodhisattva of Compassion (From Japan)." Creativity Resource for Teachers. 2011.

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