

ON THE INK DRAWING ON THE BASE OF THE STANDING DEVA OWNED BY HYŌGO PREFECTURE

SUZUKI Yoshihiro
(Nara National Museum)

The standing Deva (Jp. Ten) of the title (hereafter referred to as the statue in question) is a Heian-era work that was carved from a single block of wood (in the technique known as *ichiboku zukuri*) and conserved by the Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Bunkazai Hozon Shūrijo in 2007. This statue in question is very similar to the seated Śākyamuni at Kinpusenji in Nara (hereafter the Kinpusenji statue) in form, composition, technique and style. Moreover, at the base of both these statues the protuberance of the feet and trunk has been rendered in ink in a very similar manner. Considering the purpose of the creation of the paintings, the probability that the two statues were produced under the influence of the same artistic or theological vision is quite high. Thus, although the provenance of the two is different today, I will attempt to make some observations about the expressive representation and technique of the statue in question based on knowledge newly obtained in the conservation process in addition to the results of a dendrochronological investigation in order to consider the meaning and significance of its close resemblance to the Kinpusenji statue. The expressive representation of the work in question is marked by two chief characteristics. The first is its highly idiosyncratic, individualistic style. The starkly prominent representation of the area about the nose and eyes is based on the single-block-of-wood tradition of the early Heian period (9th century), but its uniquely individualistic expression can be understood as being an element of a regional, local style. The second characteristic is the expression of volume represented by its imposing frame. The expressiveness represented in its distinctive quality as a large-scale work closely resembles that of the Kinpusenji statue. Given the sense of an overwhelming corporality and the relaxation of tension indicated in the expression of the torso, the entire work suggests that it was created in the early Heian period, during the first half of the 10th century. In addition, the statue in question and the Kinpusenji statue share an expressiveness that might be termed a deformation of posture and a distortion in the sense of volume. Based on these factual observations, it is possible to hypothesize that the two statues were created at the same time in the same place. The hypothesis that they were produced in the Yoshino region of Nara is very likely correct. Moreover, according to the dendrochronological examinations of both statues (conducted by Nara Bunkazai Kenkyūsho), the wood (*hinoki*, a Japanese cypress) must have been harvested in the latter half of the 930s. This result does not contradict the assumption, based on stylistic grounds, of creation in the first half of the 10th century for both works. We may thus conclude that the work in question and the Kinpusenji statue occupy an important spot in the consideration of the historical development of single-block carving of the Heian period.