



SEATED PORTRAIT OF A ZEN MASTER

\$2,480

c. 1800 • Japan • Wood • Collection #CFC253

W: 13.5" D: 6.75" H: 18.0"

This 19th century Japanese sculpture likely portrays an accomplished teacher of Japanese Zen Buddhism. Developed from wood with a polychrome finish, this monk is expertly carved with realism in the face and flowing robes with drapery folds cascading over his body. He sits with both hands placed in his lap, and likely once held onto ritual objects.

The Zen master is seated on an elegant tall-back chair decorated with gilt carvings, floral brass hardware, and a painted seat cushion. The gilt pattern features flowing vines and lotus flowers, symbols of enlightenment and purity. Continued...



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Traditionally, monks are not allowed to use high and luxurious chairs such as the one shown here. However, in order to demonstrate the importance and preciousness of the Dharma, teachings were conducted on elevated surfaces like these. Portraits and sculptures of famous religious teachers or monks were common in Zen Buddhist temples to honor the transmission of knowledge, which leads us to believe that this figure was likely modeled after an existing Japanese monk.

Minor fading and losses to polychrome finish.

