

## Cosmic Colors

One of the rarest sculptures in the museum's collection is the Cosmic Buddha, a standing Buddha made almost 1,500 years ago. The sculpture is carved with hundreds of figures, animals, buildings, and trees that together tell stories of the Buddha. To help people see these stories better, artists originally painted the Cosmic Buddha in five bright colors—blue, green, red, black, and gold—but these colors have rubbed off over the centuries.

### Buddha in Paradise

This scene, which appears on the chest of the sculpture, illustrates a Buddhist paradise. The Historical Buddha Shakyamuni (pronounced shah-kyah-moon-ee) raises his right hand as he begins to teach the residents of paradise.

### Activity

Take a journey into the past and color this scene from the Cosmic Buddha. Use the five colors that were available to ancient Chinese artists.



Learn more about the Cosmic Buddha:

<https://asia.si.edu/research/cosmic-buddha/>

**Buddha with the Realms of Existence and other Buddhist scenes**, Probably Henan Province, Northern Qi dynasty, 550–77. Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment, F1923.15

