relaxed, hair organized in an orderly, though not geometrical, fashion, the face seems to be staring at no object in particular, and this is explained the function of the work. It presents an image of a deity who had attained the eternal composure of spiritual balance; he is the balance himself, therefore no sign of any worldly emotions.

The Amida Buddha sculpture was made of wood and covered with gold leaf and lacquer, the traditional material of Japanese sculpting. The wooden material gives the image of Buddha a sense of natural quality, almost as if creating an awe-demanding feeling in the viewer that an image of such mortal material like wood could contain the immense spiritual power of the most significant deity. The gold covering strengthens the mystical glowing effect of the Buddha, when placed in its original surrounding, that is, a temple with candle light.

Besides creating sensual perceptual connotations for the viewer, the material also determines to a great extent the style and technique adopted to create the work. The style of Amida Nyorai is typical of late Buddhist Japanese art; it is lacking the stylized elegance of the drapery carving used by Japanese sculptors during the earlier periods. Instead, the Kamakura sculpture borrows a tendency of natural and life-like representation, which probably results from the emotional intensity of the period of civil wars at that time. The body is still to a great extent stylized, though, the forms are rounded and highly volumetric, involving no relief but rather modeling as a technique of sculpting.

The surrounding of a work of art is a very important aspect of its function and validity as a created object. Most likely the sculpture would have been contained in a shrine, which means that soft, weak candle light would have surrounded it. It would necessarily create a blinking lighting for the Buddha, thus giving him a mystical and spiritual aura, in order to emphasize the underlying high level of metaphysical appropriate for viewing the object in itself and reaching for a state of religious experience as well. An important role for the statue’s overall impression is the fact that it is completed meant to be looked at from all sides, except for the back. In this way, the viewer can get the full effect of the work as three dynamically and life-like like object (for which contributes the fact that the sculpture is life size). Again though, there is a dubious quality to it, since the fortiﬁcation of wood and gold materials keep it from acquiring a strong animated quality.

The wood and lacquer sculpture of Amida Nyorai represents the image of Buddha, the main deity in Asian Religion. Its outer aspects, that is, style, technique, original placement