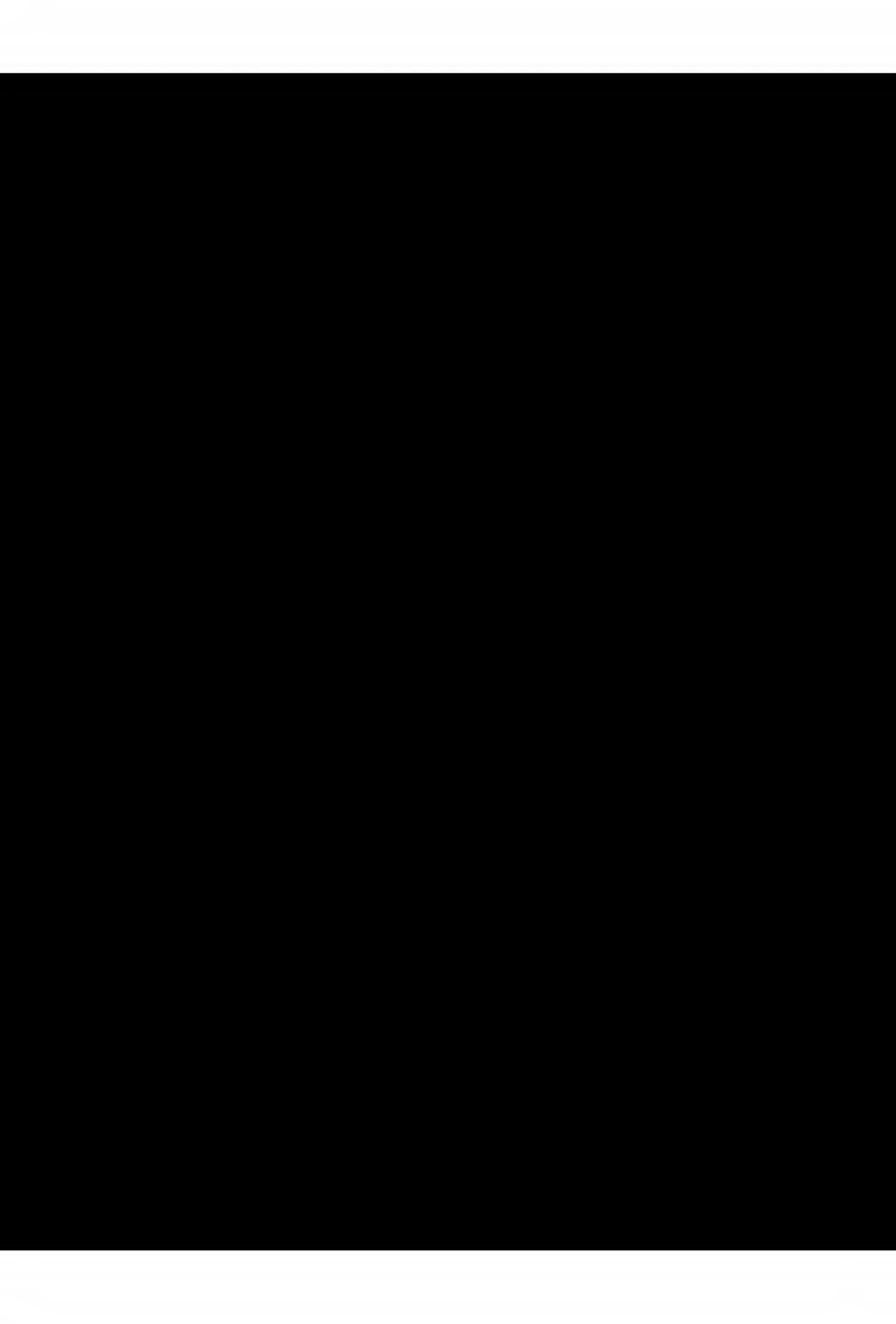


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SHAKAMUNI BUDDHA

This statue of Shakamuni Buddha, now designated a Japanese National Treasure, dates from the Northern Sung period (960-1126). According to the history of the Seiryō-ji temple where it is enshrined, it is a replica of a sandalwood statue, representing the physical likeness of Shakamuni Buddha, which was carved in India during the Buddha's lifetime and brought to China in the fifth century. The Japanese priest Chōnen (938-1016) of the Tōdai-ji in Nara, who saw the original statue while he was in China to study Buddhism, had a copy made to bring back with him to Japan, where it was enshrined as the principal image at the Seiryō-ji in Saga (western Kyoto) and became the center of a great cult of Shakamuni worship.

Courtesy of the Seiryō-ji and the Kyoto National Museum.