



## (Japanese) Clouds

### Origins:

I think these clouds are a perfect example of woodcarving: the style, design and form fit gouges so well. But what really blows me away is that what I am doing here owes everything to original carvings created in AD 1053..!

At that time Japan already had a sophisticated tradition of carving that went on for some centuries after. In 1053, master carver, Jōchō, had finished creating a whole series of bodhisattva figures seated or standing on clouds in the Byōdō-in temple, Kyoto, Japan (in what is now called the [Phoenix Hall](#)).

Jōchō is without doubt one of the greatest woodcarvers that ever lived. It's a great privilege to sample just a little of his work. The originals are fully 3 dimensional; here we just play in high relief.



The way of the clouds is a brilliant, very adaptable design; I used it in my 'Lark Ascending' music stand, which you can see on my own website [here](#), and a grave marker, which you can see [here](#).

### Wood:

The original cloud carvings are in a dark wood and I think look lovely. So don't think you have to bleach: Cherry or Mahogany would give you lovely clouds. And if you do want white clouds, start with a whiter wood: Limewood, Basswood, Sycamore, Maple for example, and you'll find the bleaching more successful.

## **Liming wax:**

fills the grain (pores) of open-grained woods: Oak, Mahogany etc. It won't give any effect on hard, close grained woods like Cherry or Maple.

## **The Book:**

is actually a catalogue for a 1982 exhibition of the same name at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth and at the Japan House Gallery, New York. There are many other books out there!

*The Great Age of Japanese Buddhist Sculpture AD 600-1300*

Nishikawa Kyotaro and Emily J. Sano

Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth.

Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number:82-82805

ISBNs: Cloth 0-912804-07-6; Paper: 0-912804-08-4

## **Tools:**

This carving uses simple, quite common carving tools. These were very useful,, though many others would substitute:

- Gouge #3, 6, 9 x 1/4, 1/2, 3/4in. (6, 14, 20mm)
- Gouge #4, 7 x 3/4in. (20mm)
- Gouge #5 x 5/8in. (16mm)
- Gouge #10 x 3/8, 1/2in. (10, 14mm)
- Shortbent Gouge #3 x 1/4, 3/8, 1/2in. (6, 10, 14mm)
- Shortbent Gouge #6 x 5/8in. (16mm)
- Shortbent Gouge #7 x 1/2in. (14mm)
- 60° V tool x, 3/8in. (10mm)
- Skew chisel x, 3/8in. (10mm)

## **Other tools:**

Carving knife, calipers; triangular punch; carving gloves (see WW.tv).

## **Dimensions:**

Thickness of wood 1.5in. 40mm.

Maximum width:

- Big cloud: 18in (260mm)
- Left cloud: 9.5in (240mm)
- Right cloud: 9in (225mm)

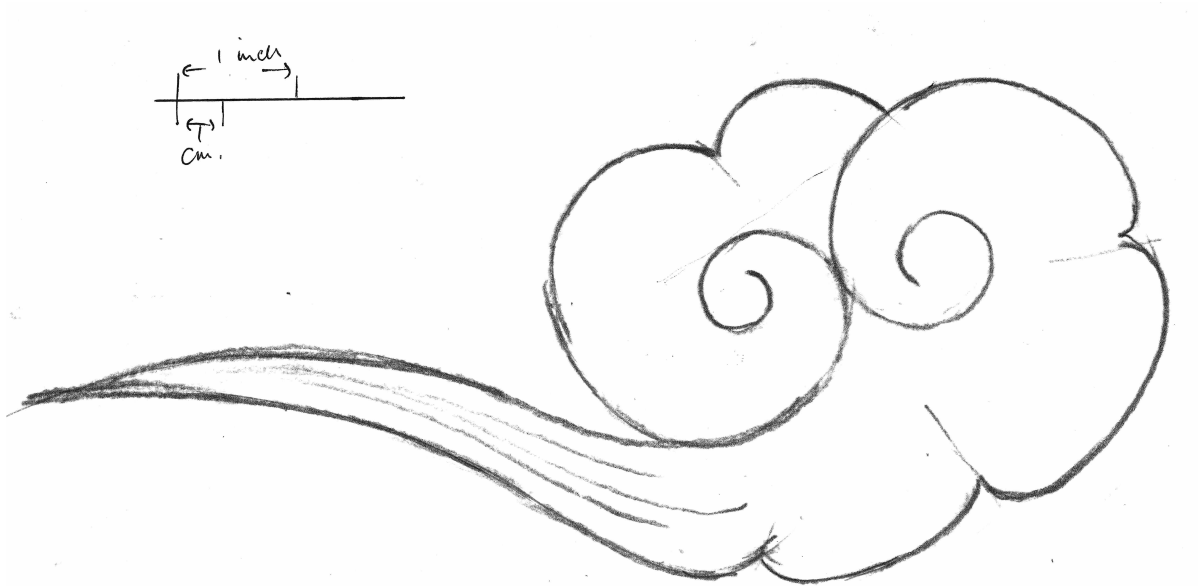
Adjust the size to the wood you have.

## Japanese Clouds, after Jōchō 1:

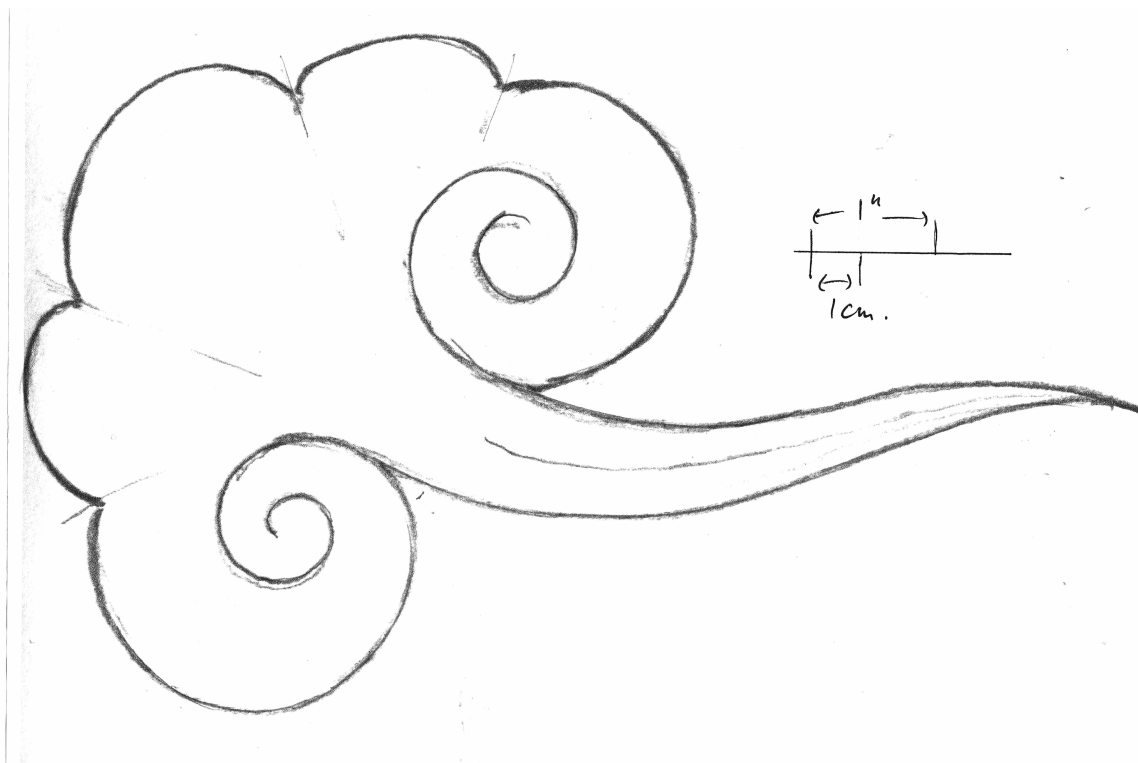
Working Drawings by Chris Pye

I'd encourage you to design and make your own clouds. Cover your wall!

### 1 Left Cloud:



### 2 Right Cloud:



3 Main Cloud:

