



Arts from the Rooftop of Asia- Tibet, Nepal, Kashmir

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Tara. Nepalese, XIII-XIV century. Gilt copper, semi-precious stones, and paint, height 20 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Louis V. Bell Fund, 66.179

Tara, the gentle consort of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion, here is shown with a third eye on her forehead, and one on each of her palms. Her right hand is in the gesture of charity, her left in the gesture of argument. At her left shoulder is her symbol, the *padma* or full-blown lotus. This statuette's sophisticated grace and elaborate but elegant decoration are typical of Nepalese art.



Gem-studded objects, golden sculptures, and paintings in vibrant colors make up a small exhibition that can be seen in the Far Eastern Treasury until fall. They are works of art produced in and around Tibet, Nepal, and Kashmir, ranging from the seventh to the nineteenth century in date; drawn mainly from the Museum's collection, many of them have not been on public view for several decades. Their juxtaposition shows not only their individual, distinctive styles but also the crosscurrents that influenced the art of these three Himalayan countries.

Since early times the kingdoms of Kashmir, Nepal, and Tibet have had close contact with one another and with their large neighbors, India and China, for their position on the slopes of the mighty Himalaya, the tallest mountains in the world, exposed them to the traffic of trade and pilgrimage that funneled through the mountain passes. Merchants, pilgrims, monks journeyed freely from one country to the next, from one temple to another, bringing with them not only their wares and icons but also artistic styles and religious thought.

The most powerful influence was Buddhism, which was made the state religion in India by Emperor Asoka (272–236 B.C.) He is said to have given his daughter in marriage to the king of Nepal and to have visited the Katmandu valley, where he caused stupas to be built.

In the propagation of Buddhism, Kashmir played an important part. The famous seventh-century Chinese monk Hsüan-tsang said of Kashmir, where he spent two years studying the sacred scriptures: "This country from remote times was distinguished for learning, and their priests were all of high religious merit and conspicuous virtue as well as marked talent and power of clear exposition of doctrine; and though the other priests [i.e. of other countries] were in their own way distinguished, yet they could not be compared with these, so different were they from the ordinary class."

Having invaded both Nepal and China, the Tibetan King Srong-tran Gampo obtained in marriage the daughter of the Nepalese king in 639, and in 641 the daughter of the Chinese emperor. Both princesses were ardent Buddhists and carried with them religious images and objects from their countries: it is said the Nepalese princess brought to Tibet a begging bowl of lapis lazuli that had once belonged to Lord Buddha and a sandalwood image of Tara, the Saviouress. The princesses later were venerated as incar-

nations of the green and white Taras, two of the most popular goddesses in Tibet and Nepal.

From the seventh century on, when Tibet became unified, Kashmiri images, scholars, and artisans exerted great influence on that country. The eminent Indian teacher Padmasambhava (about 750–800), who firmly established Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet, is said to have traveled several times from Tibet to Kashmir to procure Buddhist texts and Kashmiri craftsmen. The Tibetan scholar Rinchen-sangpo (958–1055) three times went to Kashmir in search of craftsmen. Great monasteries in Guge, in western Tibet, contain bronzes and wall paintings of undoubted Kashmiri origin.

By this time an extraordinarily complex form of Buddhism had developed in Tibet. There are two main schools of Buddhism: the Hinayana, dedicated to the proposition that each person has to work out his own salvation, and Mahayana, which proposed salvation for the masses through the intervention of Bodhisattvas, divine beings who, out of compassion for the suffering of mankind, refuse to enter *nirvana* (extinction of all worldly desires) until all sentient beings have been saved. A late form of Mahayana Buddhism, Tantric or Vajrayana Buddhism, was introduced into Tibet in the seventh century. There the





UPPER LEFT

Buddha. Kashmiri, VI-VII century. Gilt bronze, height 4 inches. Anonymous loan, L 1971.9.1

The Buddha is seated on a simple double lotus throne in the position of meditation, with his right hand in the gesture of charity. The statuette distinctly reflects the Chinese style of the Northern Wei dynasty in the fifth and sixth centuries, which was an interpretation of the compact forms and clinging drapery of the Indian Gupta style. This piece probably once belonged to a Tibetan owner, since the face is covered in “cold gold,” with the lips painted red and the hair blue.

ABOVE

Vishnu group. Kashmiri, VIII century. Bronze with inlaid silver eyes, height 11 inches. Anonymous loan, L 67.81.3

Vishnu the Pervader, who preserves and restores the universe, is one of the gods of the Hindu trinity. Here he stands in the subtle thrice-bent pose called *tribhanga*, characteristic of Indian sculpture. One pair of hands holds his attributes, the conch and the lotus (now missing); the other pair rests on the heads of personifications of his weapons, the mace and discus. The tiny figure between his feet probably represents the earth goddess Prthivi.

The spout on the side of the base served as a draining device for the ceremonial pouring of liquid over the images. Repeated wiping has worn smooth the group to a golden glow.



new religion incorporated elements of the older, native, shamanistic religion, Bön. It is this fusion of Tantric Buddhism and Bön, commonly called Lamaism, that forms the core of the religious belief linking the art of Tibet, Nepal, and Kashmir.

Indeed, most of the art of these skytop regions—surrounded by snow-covered peaks, barren and rugged plateaus, narrow valleys, and subject to extremes of cold and heat—is religious. Practically every object from the highest to the humblest reflects religious thought and contains religious symbolism. The symbolism and iconography are, however, often bewilderingly complex. Through the ages the peoples of India have conceived the universe as inhabited by innumerable spirits, some of whom dwell in the high Himalaya. Hinduism has many gods. Chief among them are Brahma the creator, Siva the destroyer, Vishnu the preserver, and the goddess Devi, who has many forms. Buddhism has its Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and arhats (literally, “venerable ones”). The Lamaist pantheon not only absorbed the Hindu and Buddhist gods, but added countless deities of its own, including apotheosized kings and lamas numbering into the thousands.

Three main types of deities are peculiar to Lamaist art: deities with multiple heads, arms, and legs, suggesting their far-reaching supernatural powers; *dharma-pala*, terrifying or wrathful deities, “Defenders of the Faith,” designed to frighten or repel enemies of Buddhism; and *yi-dam*, tutelary gods, frequently shown in sexual union with their consort. Some of the gods can be identified by their body position, their gesture, their color, or their attributes (the objects they carry); others are not easy to determine.

Like the gods of Buddhism and Hinduism, the art forms and techniques of the Himalayan countries evolved, for the most part, from Indian prototypes. Stylistically the main influences were the art of north and northeast India, especially the classic style of the Gupta period (about 320–500) and the more elaborate styles of the Pala and Sena period (about 730–1197). The elegant, roundly modeled, and finely executed Gupta style can be clearly detected in a seventh-century Nepalese Padmapani (page 394), as well as in two eighth-century Kashmiri bronzes made of a soft, glowing alloy high in copper, tin, and zinc, which resembles something between brass and gold: the beautiful Vajrasattva illustrated on the back cover and the subtly curved Vishnu group at the left.

Beginning in the ninth century, the Pala-Sena style of Bengal and Bihar, with its emphasis on detail and

intricate decoration, was the dominant influence in Kashmir and Nepal. The art of Nepal is distinguished by superb copper and bronze sculpture of fine workmanship. Metal images are often decorated with masses of precious and semiprecious stones, successfully achieving a sumptuousness of color and richness of overall effect seldom found elsewhere; the statue of Tara on page 380 is a masterpiece of Nepalese art.

From Nepal and Kashmir principally, and from such other Himalayan regions as Ladakh ("Little Tibet") and the Punjab hills, the Pala-Sena tradition reached Tibet. There it intermingled with the artistic traditions of Central Asia and China, and the resultant form spread back to China, Central Asia, and the countries of the Himalaya to become the typical Lamaist style. As A. K. Coomaraswamy has said, "There is in fact a common Lamaist art which extends from the thirteenth century onwards, from Nepal, through Tibet into China, of which the creations are iconographically similar, and only to be distinguished by the gradual change of style which corresponds to the local ethnic conditions." An example of the internationalism of this period's artists is the Nepalese A-ni-ko (1244–1306), one of the most celebrated artists of his time. At sixteen already famous for his skill at metal sculpture, A-ni-ko was summoned to Tibet by the king to head a contingent of eighty craftsmen from Nepal who erected a golden stupa. Later, A-ni-ko served Kublai Khan in China, where he painted portraits of the Mongol imperial family and was in charge of metal-casting ateliers. He made innumerable images for the Mongol emperor, including many for the Lamaist monastery of Ta-tu in Peking.

From Kublai Khan down to Ch'ien-lung (reigned 1736–1796), several Chinese emperors were strong supporters of Lamaism, known in China as the "Yellow Religion" because of the dominant Ge-lug-pa or Yellow Hat sect. Lamaist images were produced in China not only for the many temples there but for export as well. In fact, many of the "Tibetan" sculptures in this exhibition were made in China. Two Chinese interpretations of Avalokitesvara (called Kuan-yin in China), god of mercy, one of the most worshiped deities in the Far East, illustrate the difference between simple, non-Tantric representations and the many-limbed Tantric variety especially favored in Lamaist art: a beautiful gilt-bronze statuette of the twelfth century (near right) was probably made in the province of Yünnan, which, with Szechwan, borders eastern Tibet and felt Lamaist influence early; and an elaborate statuette (far right) that is likely to have

LOWER LEFT

Kuan-yin. Chinese (Yünnan province), XII century. Gilt bronze, height 19¾ inches. Gift of Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, 42.25.28

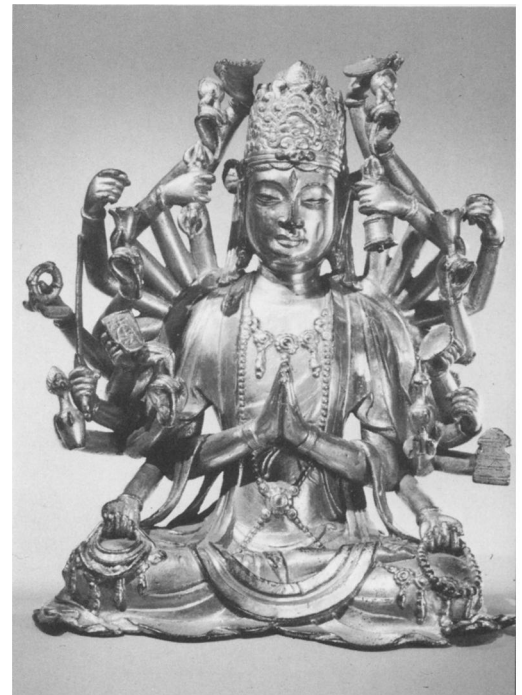
This slender, columnar statuette illustrates the style typical of the provinces at the western border of China, which reflects some influence of Tibetan as well as southeast Asian art. Its overall effect is one of childlike innocence. A similar piece in the San Diego Museum is inscribed as having been made in Yünnan, and can be dated to the twelfth century.

This is a representation of the most worshiped divinity in Mahayana Buddhism — Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion, the Lord of Mercy. Avalokitesvara is known in Tibet as sPyan-ras-gzigs (pronounced "Chenrezi"), in China as Kuan-yin, in Japan as Kannon. The statuette's right hand is in the "fear not" gesture and the other in the gesture of charity.

LOWER RIGHT

Kuan-yin. Chinese, XI-XII century. Gilt bronze, height 8¼ inches. Rogers Fund, 56.223

Here the Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion is shown in a typical multi-limbed Lamaist form. His primary hands are in the gesture of adoration, while the others hold Tantric symbols, such as disks of the sun and moon, lotus buds, thunderbolt, bell, a seal with the Chinese characters for "grand auspiciousness," ambrosia vases, rosary, and the noose that binds all evil and saves the soul from the ocean of illusion.



Manjusri. Temple hanging (tanka). Tibetan or Chinese, XVII century. Appliqué of various Chinese silks and silvered and gilded leather shapes on satin ground, embellished with couched silk cord and embroidery, 155 x 92 inches. John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 15.95.154

Manjusri, the Bodhisattva of Transcendent Wisdom, is arrayed as a prince and flanked by his attributes, the sword and book of wisdom. His lotus throne is borne by a roaring lion, symbolizing the voice of the Law. There is a lovely small-scale landscape below: adorned with deer and birds in flowering trees, it has a lotus pool in the center, suggesting the pure life of Buddhism rising from the mire of the world.



been made in Szechwan in the eleventh or twelfth century.

Chinese influence is also noticeable in the feeling for landscape and the decorative motifs in Tibetan tankas—scroll paintings or votive banners—of the fourteenth century and later. The archaistic T'ang and Sung "blue and green" landscapes, enlivened by exquisite gold drawing, dominate these paintings, and their borders are invariably made of fine Chinese brocades of the Ming and Ch'ing dynasties (the fourteenth through nineteenth centuries). One of the most important and unusual Lamaist tankas in the Museum's collection is illustrated at the left: it is a seventeenth-century temple hanging of Chinese silk appliqué, with couching and embroidery, showing Manjusri, god of wisdom, on his vehicle, the lion, with his two attributes: the book of wisdom and a sword to cleave ignorance.

Tankas are, in fact, one of the two main art forms in which Tibet and Nepal (where they are called *patas*) excel. They are usually painted on cotton and in some instances paper, sized and rubbed smooth. Ground mineral and vegetable colors are used, often with gold pigment, achieving a gemlike vibration of tones. Among the most popular subjects are stories of the Buddha's various lives, called the Jataka tales from the Sanskrit "*jata*" meaning "born" (pages 389, 392, and 393).

The other major art form of the Himalayan countries is "bronze" sculpture, which includes objects of copper and brass. Bronzes are usually cast in the *cire perdue* or lost-wax method, like the turquoise-studded Tibetan Vajradhara reproduced on the cover of this Bulletin, which illustrates how the Pala-Sena idiom had developed into an even more highly decorative type, or the brilliantly gilded four-headed Brahma on a gander (right). A frequently used technique is *repoussé*, in which the forms are hammered out of sheet metal: a good example is the thousand-

Brahma. Lamaist, XVIII century. Gilt bronze and paint, height 6 inches. Lent by Charmion von Wiegand, L 69.77.1

Four-headed Brahma, the creator, is riding his vehicle, the celestial gander. He holds his symbols, the flaming wheel and ambrosia vase. The piece is brilliantly gilded and the faces painted in the Tibetan technique of “cold gold” and colors.

armed, eleven-headed Avalokitesvara, achieved in bas-relief and intricate openwork (page 386).

More often than not metal images are gilded by one of two methods. The first is known as “hot gold” or fire gilding: a mixture of mercury and dissolved gold is applied to the bronze; the image is then heated over a bed of smokeless charcoal to evaporate the mercury, leaving a coating of gilt. The second method, called “cold gold,” seems to have been developed rather late in Tibet and applied to pieces there regardless of their country of origin. In the “cold gold” technique, the skin of the images is covered with matte gold paint (sometimes over already gilded pieces). Often brows and pupils are then painted black, eyes white, lips red, and hair blue. The sixth- or seventh-century Buddha on page 382 is an early example that has received this late decorative treatment, while a group of sixteen arhats shows the “cold gold” painting of faces typical of eighteenth-century Tibet (below).

The pictures on the following pages illustrate more examples of the brilliant and fervid art produced in the countries beneath the snowy peaks of the great Himalaya — arts from the rooftop of Asia.



Arhat, one of a group of sixteen. Chinese, XVIII century. Gilt bronze, painted in “cold gold” and colors, height 5½ inches. Lent by Paul E. Manheim, L 1971.25.12

Arhats are men who have attained enlightenment and are no longer subject to rebirth. They possess transcendent knowledge and powers of sight and hearing, and the ability to work miracles for mankind. The one illustrated is Pindola Bharadvaja, who holds an alms bowl and a book of the sacred scriptures. It is not always possible to identify representations of arhats specifically: from sixteen their number grew to eighteen, then 108, then 300, and then 500, and their disciples numbered in the thousands.



Avalokitesvara. Nepalese, XVII-XVIII century. Copper repoussé set with semiprecious stones, height 15 inches. Bequest of Kate Read Blacque, 48.30.19

Here the Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion is represented in a typically elaborate Tantric form known as the Thousand-armed and Eleven-headed Avalokitesvara. The multiplication of his faculties symbolizes the infinitude of his compassion. The main figure is flanked by two tiny attendants and representations of eighteen-armed Durga, the Goddess, slaying the buffalo demon.

The repoussé group is skillfully hammered out of several pieces of copper and joined together. The crowns and mandorlas are inset with various semiprecious stones.



RIGHT

A Grand Lama. Tibetan, XVIII century. Colors on cotton, 28 x 16 inches. Gift of Mrs. Robert W. de Forest, 31.128.1

The main figure is a Grand Lama of the Ge-lug-pa sect, easily identified by the yellow cap. The miraculous rainbow light that connects Manjusri, floating at the left, with the Lama shows that he is inspired by the God of Wisdom. The chief protectress of the Ge-lug-pa sect, Lhamo, is shown on horseback at the lower center. There is an inscription in Tibetan at the bottom.

LEFT

Marici. Chinese Lamaist, XVIII century. Gilt bronze, height of figure and chariot 7 inches. Bequest of John L. Cadwalader, 14.58.187

Here the goddess of light, Vajravarahi, known in Tibet as Marici, is shown in Lamaist form, with three faces (one in the shape of a sow's head) and eight arms. Accompanied by two attendants, she rides in a chariot drawn by a team of pigs. Her upper hands hold disks inscribed with the Chinese characters for moon and sun.

Vajravarahi means "adamantine sow." Legend has it that a certain abbess had an excrescence behind her ear shaped like a sow's head. A Mongol warrior wanted the abbess to show her protuberance, but when the warrior and his men broke into the monastery, they found only sows and pigs, led by a sow bigger than the rest. The warrior was so amazed at the sight that he stopped his men from pillaging — at which the animals became transformed into monks and nuns, and the large sow into the abbess herself.



Mahapratisara. Nepalese, XIII century. Colors on paper, 4¼ x 3¾ inches. Anonymous loan, L 1971.9.7

This is one of the five Pancaraksa or goddesses who cast spells, personifications of the Buddha guarding mankind from evil and disease. Mahapratisara's color is yellow, her location south, and she protects from physical danger and sin.



Detail of a Jataka-tale tanka. Lamaist, XVIII century. Colors and gold on cotton, width of detail 21 inches. Purchase, Mrs. W. Murray Crane Gift, 1971.24.1

This scene, set in a typical Chinese "blue and green" landscape, may allude to the story of an old man who was famous for his seamanship. A group of people persuaded him to join them on a journey so he might advise them in case there was trouble at sea. Soon the boat ran into a bad storm. It was tossed about and almost sank. The old man told the passengers to fill bags with sand and stones, and this weight kept the boat from capsizing. When they reached land, the sand and stones had turned to jewels. This detail shows men cutting down trees in order to build the boat, and the people in the boat with the bags.

Tsong-kha-pa. Chinese, XVIII century. Cloisonné enamel on copper, height 16¾ inches. Gift of Edward G. Kennedy, 29.110.79

Tsong-kha-pa (1357–1419) was the reformer who founded the Ge-lug-pa sect that soon became the dominant one of Tibetan Buddhism. He is dressed as a Ge-lug-pa monk, wearing their yellow hat, here decorated with red five-clawed dragons, traditionally associated with emperors in China. Among the other motifs are peony scrolls and bats, denoting wealth and happiness. His hands are in the gesture of "turning the Wheel of the Law," signifying preaching.

Amulet case, box, and brooch. Nepalese, XVII-XVIII century. Gold, pearls, and precious and semiprecious stones, length of box 6 inches. John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 15.95.173, 167, 93b

In these fine examples of inlaid gold filigree craftsmanship, semiprecious stones are not only used for decorative effect but also intricately carved to form the central motifs: Vishnu on his vehicle Garuda, the sun bird; a seated deity, a composite of Vishnu and Avalokitesvara, on a lotus throne; and an auspicious animal mask. They are typical of the predilection for gems and rich color combinations of Nepalese art.





LEFT

Mahakala. Tibetan, XVI-XVIII centuries. Colors and gold on cloth, 72 x 46½ inches. Purchase, Florance Waterbury Bequest, 69.71

The dominant figure is Mahakala, one of the Dharmapala, protectors of the faith. He stands on a prostrate human figure, and wears a crown of skulls and a girdle of severed human heads. He holds a chopper in his right hand and a skull cup in his left. Surrounding him are five forms of Yama, Lord of Death, in black, yellow, red, white, and blue, together with other deities and four lamas of the Ge-lug-pa (Yellow Hat) sect.

An inscription in red ink on the back of the tanka, in Tibetan script, reads: "My humble salutations to the most loving, compassionate of all times — the past, present, and future — the great protector, Mahakala, the fierce god who is inseparable from my lama [guru]. To the Upper Tantric College, I present this tanka of the Great Protector, whose true spirit is ever present in the precious painting and is inseparable. To you [Mahakala] I pray that my good deeds be of service to all living beings from now until the time when all have achieved Buddhahood. May you, the Great Protector, always be near to us [never leave us] and help us to follow the path of righteousness."



UPPER RIGHT

gShin-rje (Yama). Tibetan, XVIII century. Gold, height 1¾ inches. Lent by Paul E. Manheim, L 1971.21.4

In this tiny piece, wrought in solid gold, Yama is shown with a bull's head. The Lord of Death's attributes are a skull-topped staff and a noose; he wears a garland of human heads and a chain necklace with his distinctive mark, the Wheel of the Law.

RIGHT

Two representations of Yamantaka with his consort. Lamaist, XVIII century. Gilt bronze with traces of polychromy, and wood, painted in gold, red, and brown; heights 6⅞ and 7½ inches. Bequest of William Gedney Beatty, 41.160.95; Bequest of Kate Read Blacque, 48.30.14

One of the eight Dharmapala or Defenders of the Faith, Yamantaka is a ferocious manifestation of Manjusri, God of Wisdom. The story goes that when Yama was ravaging Tibet, the people appealed to Manjusri to protect them, and, assuming the form of Yamantaka, he conquered the Lord of Death.

Here he is shown in typical Lamaist depictions — many-headed, many-armed, many-legged, surrounded by Tantric symbols, and trampling on animals, birds, demons, and Hindu deities.

The wooden statuette, a remarkable piece of carving, is painted gold to resemble a gilt bronze.



Gautama Buddha. Nepalese, XIV century. Gilt bronze with rubies, turquoise, and lapis lazuli, height 6¾ inches. Lent by Mrs. Vincent Astor, L 1971.27.1

The historical Buddha, Gautama Siddhartha (about 563–483 B.C.) was born in Lumbini, Nepal. Here he is shown with his left hand in the gesture of meditation, while his right hand touches the earth. This refers to an episode during his Great Enlightenment, when he called upon the Earth Goddess to support him during his successful efforts to overcome the assaults of the demon Mara.





A tanka of Jataka tales, and detail. Lamaist, XVIII century. Colors and gold on cotton, 39 x 29 overall. Gift of Joseph Heil, 1970.398.2

The Jataka tales — from the Sanskrit “*jata*” meaning “born”— are a collection of some 500 stories of the Buddha’s various lives. Each Jataka painting shows a large Buddha in the center surrounded by a number of small scenes set in a typical Chinese “blue and green” landscape. This is the central tanka of a group of nine, of which five are on exhibition; here the Buddha is flanked by his two chief disciples. The detail shows the newborn Buddha taking his first steps, with lotuses springing up where his feet had touched the ground.



Pavilion. Chinese, XVII-XVIII century. Gilt bronze, cloisonné, and enamel, height 7½ inches. Lent by Arthur J. Campbell, L 65.82.3

This double-roofed structure is typical of the type of Chinese architecture depicted in tankas of Jataka tales such as the ones illustrated here. This piece is brilliantly gilded, and decorated with cloisonné and blue enamel.

ON THE BACK COVER

UPPER LEFT

Vajrasattva. Kashmiri, VIII century. Brass with inlaid silver eyes and copper lips, height 6½ inches. Anonymous loan, L 67.81.4

This is a representation of the Primordial Buddha. Like the Supreme Buddha shown on the front cover, he holds the thunderbolt and handbell, symbols of the male and female aspects of life, compassion and wisdom.

LOWER LEFT

Bodhisattva. Tibetan, XVIII century. Gilt bronze, blue enamel, and semiprecious stones, height 9¼ inches. Lent by Mrs. Vincent Astor, L 1971.27.2

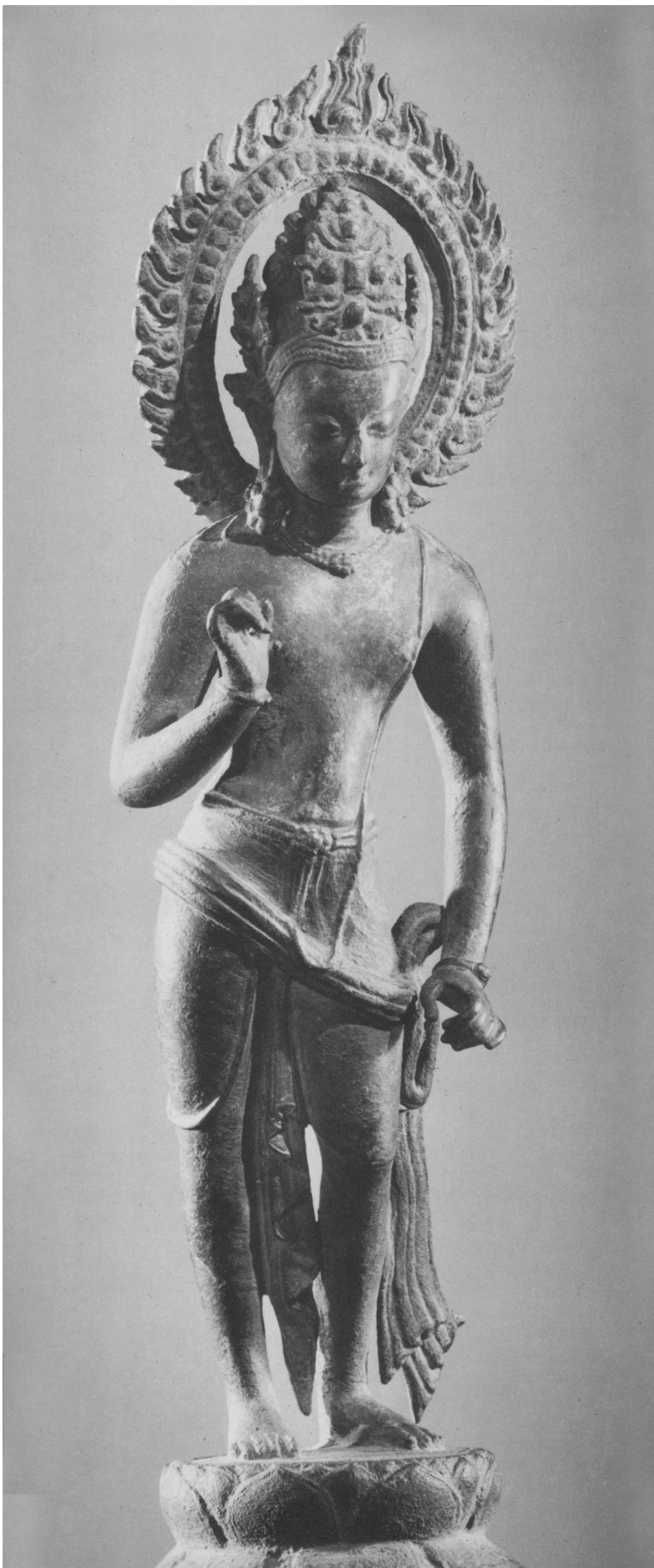
This may be the God of Wisdom, Manjusri. He is sitting in the meditative position, with his hands in an unusual version of the gesture of meditation: each of the index fingers is bent to meet the thumb. Lotus stems on his shoulders held his attributes: the book of wisdom on the left, and the sword to cleave ignorance (now missing) on the right. The image is brilliantly gilded, and the jewelry finely set with colorful stones.

RIGHT

Vasudhara. Nepalese, XIII-XIV century. Wood and polychrome, height 48 inches. Lent by Dr. Bertram Schaffner, L 1971.6

The Goddess of Wealth and Abundance is shown in a rare form, with four arms instead of the usual six. Her upper right hand is in the gesture of praising the Buddha; her upper left hand holds one of her attributes, a book.

The photographs of the following objects were taken by Bruce Pendleton: L 1971.9.1, L 67.81.3, L 69.77.1, 14.58.187, and L 65.82.3



Two statuettes of Padmapani. Both Nepalese. Left: VII century. Bronze with traces of gilding, height 15 inches. Anonymous loan, L 1970.10. Right: XIV century or earlier. Sandalwood with gilding and polychromy, height 6 inches. Rogers Fund, 47.108

Padmapani — the Lotus Bearer — is a form of Avalokitesvara, the Bodhisattva of Infinite Compassion. The sacred syllables *Om mani padme hum*, "Hail to the jewel in the lotus," are addressed to him. Images of sandalwood with original gilding, such as the one at the right, are extremely rare.

