



6691 A gilt bronze standing figure of Amida Nyorai

Japan 13th/14th century Kamakura period

Dimensions: H, 8³/₄" (22cm)

Increased activity of the Jōdō sect from the early Kamakura period ignited great interest in the worship of Amida, resulting in a strong demand for devotional images. Bronze sculptures such as this one are thought to take their inspiration from a triad group of Amida and two attendant bodhisattvas enshrined at Zenkōji Temple, Nagano Prefecture. This model group was purportedly brought from the Korean kingdom of Kudara when Buddhism was introduced into Japan in the 6th century.

Belief in Amida as Lord of the Western Paradise rose in popularity during the late 10th century. Based

primarily on the concept of salvation through faith, it was not only a religion appealing to a broad range of people, but also a direct assertion of piety against the dogmatic and esoteric ritual of the more traditional Tendai and Shingon sects. In Amida's Western Paradise the faithful are reborn, to progress through various stages of increasing awareness until finally achieving complete enlightenment.

For a similar bronze figure see: Kamakura; The Renaissance of Japanese Sculpture, pp. 124/125, pl.38.