



Amida Triad

Date

Kamakura period, late 12th or early 13th century

Medium

Hanging scroll (framed): ink and gold leaf on silk (kirikane)

Description

The Amida Buddha, the Lord of the Western Paradise, is seen here accompanied by the two Bodhisattvas in the front, Avalokitesvara and Mahasthamaprapta, and the two arhats on his sides, Ananda and Kasyapa. The effect of this painting is enhanced by the cut gold leaf technique called kirikane, which was particularly popular during the 12th century. The bright and delicate impression suggests the splendor associated with these deities of infinite compassion and boundless light. _____ Amida (Amitabha) is the principal Buddha for the Pure Land sect. According to Pure Land beliefs, simply calling on Amida's name is sufficient to gain rebirth into the Pure Land, where reborn souls dwell in the ideal environment for progressing on the path to enlightenment. The elaborate use of cut gold leaf and gold ink creates a shimmering effect that emphasizes Amida as the Buddha of Infinite Light. Depictions of Amida and attendants riding clouds are called raigo, literally "welcoming descent" paintings,

and represent the deities descending from heaven to welcome reborn souls into the Pure Land. This particular type of raigo painting is called Amida Goson, referring to the venerable group of five deities. In front of Amida, the bodhisattva of compassion Kannon Bosatsu (Avalokitesvara) holds a lotus blossom, while Seishi Bosatsu (Mahasthamaprapta) holds his hands together in a gesture of welcome. Beside Amida, Ryuju Bosatsu (Nagarjuna), an incarnation of Buddha's disciple Ananda, holds his hands together in a gesture of veneration. Jizo Bosatsu (Ksitigarbha), holds a staff in his right hand and a cintamani (wish-granting jewel) in his left. One of Japan's most popular deities, Jizo vowed to assist sentient beings in the Six Realms and has the ability to save souls from hell.

Dimensions

35 1/2 x 15 1/4 inches (90.2 x 38.7 cm)