



The cult of Jizō reached Japan during the mid-eighth century, and even today he is worshiped as the helper of all in trouble, especially the weak or suffering. His blessings are beseeched for expectant mothers, young children, travelers, soldiers, and those doomed to an existence in hell.

This example shows a seated figure; one bare foot rests on a pedestal, the other is pendant. Jizō holds in his left hand the burning jewel (*nyoi-shu*), which responds to all wishes and illuminates the darkness of hell. The right hand once held a long pilgrim's staff (*shakujō*). The figure itself can be dated to the middle Kamakura period, but the metal mandala and lotus base are probably of Muromachi age (1392–1573). The beautiful image, classically formulated, is imbued with the gentle idealism typical of Kamakura sculpture. HAL

JIZŌ

Japanese, Kamakura period, 13th century

Lacquered wood with traces of gold

h. (to top of halo) 34 in. (86.4 cm.)

Gift of Yozo Nomura on his 60th birthday, 1930 (2865)

GAL 16

Carved Wooden Standing Figure of "Jizo" (Kshitigarba) (#2565.1)

Gift of Mrs. Theodore A. Cooke, 1959

Wood, lacquered, with cut-gold (kirikane) and brushed gold decoration. Metal staff, 48" high, including pedestal, possibly several pieces of wood, joined, crystal(?) inlaid as urna

12-13th C. (Late Heian or early Kamakura Per)

Gallery 16

ARTIST: Anonymous.

SUBJECT: Iconography; Standing figure, on lotus pedestal. Bald-headed, youthful human face (like a young monk). Elongated ear loops and inset crystal(?) for urna in center of forehead.

Robe decorated with gold fret pattern and jewel design. Left hand holds sacred gem (wish-granting jewel), right hand holds Khakkara (alarm staff) with 6 rings, used to warn insects out of his path. Jizo is a Bodhisattva who protects women, children, all sufferers and those who have fallen in Hell. With the jewel he illuminates his path to rescue those most suffering (ie in hell). Like jall Bodhisattvas, he rejected nirvana (extinction) in order to remain to help living beings. Jizo took the physical appearance of a monk. Together with the Kwan Yin, Jizo is present in this age (between historical Buddha

Shak vamuni and future Buddha. Maitreya, remaining to give aid. This image may originally have been an image of a disciple of the Buddha, rather than Jizo. Indications of this include evidence that the feet were originally slipped and the robe which falls from the right shoulder like a disciple's. New hands, barefeet, a staff and jewel added in the 17th C. made this an image of Jizo, who is traditionally shown barefooted. Feet wearing shoes have replaced the previously added barefeet (during restoration in the 1970s). There is no reason why you should not regard the piece

as a Jizo, but for exhibition purposes it may be wise to indicate that the feet belong to a disciple and not a Jizo.

The urna (crystal in forehead) emanates light of wisdom. Jizo is the only Bodhisattva who appears in the world as a monk; he differs from monks in having urna, halo and jewel.

MEDIUM AND TECHNIQUE: Carved wood, possibly several pieces, joined coated with lacquer and designs painted on or laid on in cut gold (kirikane).

STYLE: Slender, youthful figure, elegant and graceful. Faint smile on peaceful face. Realistic facial features. Human looking with full cheeks, softly modelled eyes and eyebrows, lips painted with red. Iconographic features which are super human include the crystal in