Finch & Co



INDIAN BRONZE OF THE BODHISATTVA AVALOKITESHVARA

AN EASTERN INDIAN BRONZE OF THE BODHISATTVA AVALOKITESHVARA
HIS RIGHT HAND DISPLAYING A GESTURE OF CHARITY. ORIGINALLY HAVING AN AUREOLE, A SUPPORT FOR ATTACHMENT STILL SHOWING TO THE BACK
9TH - 10TH CENTURY
SIZE: 9CM HIGH, 7CM WIDE – 3½ INS HIGH, 2¾ INS WIDE

LITERATURE

THE BODHISATTVA AVALOKITESHVARA IS ALSO KNOWN AS PADMAPANI BECAUSE HE HOLDS HIS PRINCIPAL ATTRIBUTE OF THE LOTUS (PADMA) IN HIS HAND (PANI). AVALOKITESHVARA MEANS 'ALL SEEING LORD' AND HE IS ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR, OLDEST AND ARCHETYPAL OF ALL BODHISATTVAS.
EXHIBITING THE CORROSION CHARACTERISTIC OF BURIED METAL THIS BRONZE IS PROBABLY FROM BIHAR IN EASTERN INDIA. REGARDED BY TIBETANS AS THE MOTHERLAND OF BUDDHISM, NALANDA IN BIHAR WAS THE MOST IMPORTANT CENTRE OF BUDDHIST RELIGION AND LEARNING FROM THE 7TH CENTURY UNTIL ITS DESTRUCTION IN THE EARLY 13TH CENTURY. A LARGE HOARD OF BRONZES WAS DISCOVERED AT THE SITE INDICATING THAT THE PATRONAGE OF THIS MAJOR MONASTIC CENTRE PROMPTED ARTISTS TO SET UP WORKSHOPS TO PRODUCE IMAGES FOR LOCAL NEEDS AS WELL AS VISITING MONKS, SCHOLARS AND PILGRIMS FROM ALL OVER ASIA. THESE SMALL SCULPTURES WERE MADE TO CATER TO A MARKET FOR MEMENTOS OF PILGRIMAGE.