



## Maitreya, Buddha of the Future, (After models designed by Zanabazar (1635–1723))

### Date

late 18th - early 19th century

### Medium

Gilt copper alloy with pigment

### Description

Maitreya, the Buddha of the Future, recognizable by the stupa in his hair, is a special focus of worship among the Mongols. The promise of the coming of a new age, which the Buddha of the Future would usher in, was especially appealing to them, and they linked this story with their aspirations to reestablish the glory days of the Mongol Empire. The focus of the annual Maitreya Festival procession in Urga (present-day Ulaanbaatar) was a statue of Maitreya made by the great sculptor Zanabazar (1635–1723), a public object of veneration that would have been well known to Mongolian artists. This graceful

sculpture closely follows Zanabazar's Nepalese-inspired Maitreya compositions, characterized by a soft sleekness of form broken by a subtle asymmetrical linear pattern of cords and sashes. The gentile contrapposto pose accentuated by the flare of the hem of his clinging drapery, the tiny antelope skin draped over his left shoulder, and the unusually tall pile of hair to accommodate the stupa on his head are all hallmarks of Zanabazar's design.

### Dimensions

12 3/4 x 4 3/4 x 3 in.