



Buddha Ratnasambhava with Wealth Deities

Date

early to mid-14th century

Medium

Mineral pigments on cloth

Description

Ratnasambhava, the buddha that presides over the southern direction, is one of the Buddhas of the Five Families, each associated with a cardinal direction. This painting is no doubt from a set of five, each depicting one of these buddhas. Ratnasambhava represents the jewel family. His various identifying characteristics include his yellow color, his hand gesture symbolic of giving, and his

horse vehicle, shown peeking out from either end of his lotus throne. This buddha and his jewel family are associated with wealth, and five forms of the wealth deity Jambhala are shown along the bottom of the painting. Early Tibetan paintings are strictly organized with each figure portrayed at a size and receiving a placement that reflects his or her relative importance. For instance, Ratnasambhava is the subject of the painting, and so he is the largest figure and placed at the center. He is richly bejeweled, with all of his jewelry raised and gilded, as is typical of Tibetan paintings of this subject and period. The bold color scheme, strong shading, and abundance of decorative details separates this work from earlier examples of this theme.

Dimensions

32 × 26 in. (estimated)