



Ushnisavijaya and the Celebration of Old Age (Bhimaratha Ritual)

Date

Dated by inscription 1775

Medium

Copper; Technique: Repoussé

Description

This exquisitely crafted gilded repoussé plaque depicts a special birthday celebration common to the Kathmandu Valley known as the Chariot Ritual. It is practiced by both Hindus and Buddhists when an elder reaches the age of seventy-seven. The festivities include the elder riding through the city on a chariot accompanied by the performance of various religious services in front of a sacred stupa. To commemorate the birthday, Buddhists are also required to commission the construction of a

stupa. However, if unable to build a full-size stupa, the family can sponsor a small three-dimensional or hammered metal sculpture or a painting of a stupa, of which this is an example. The presence of Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, at middle left and a monkey at the bottom left identify this stupa as likely representing a specific site, the famous Swayambhu Stupa of Kathmandu. A dedication inscription along the base dates the work to 1776.

Dimensions

17 1/2 × 11 1/8 × 3 5/8 in.