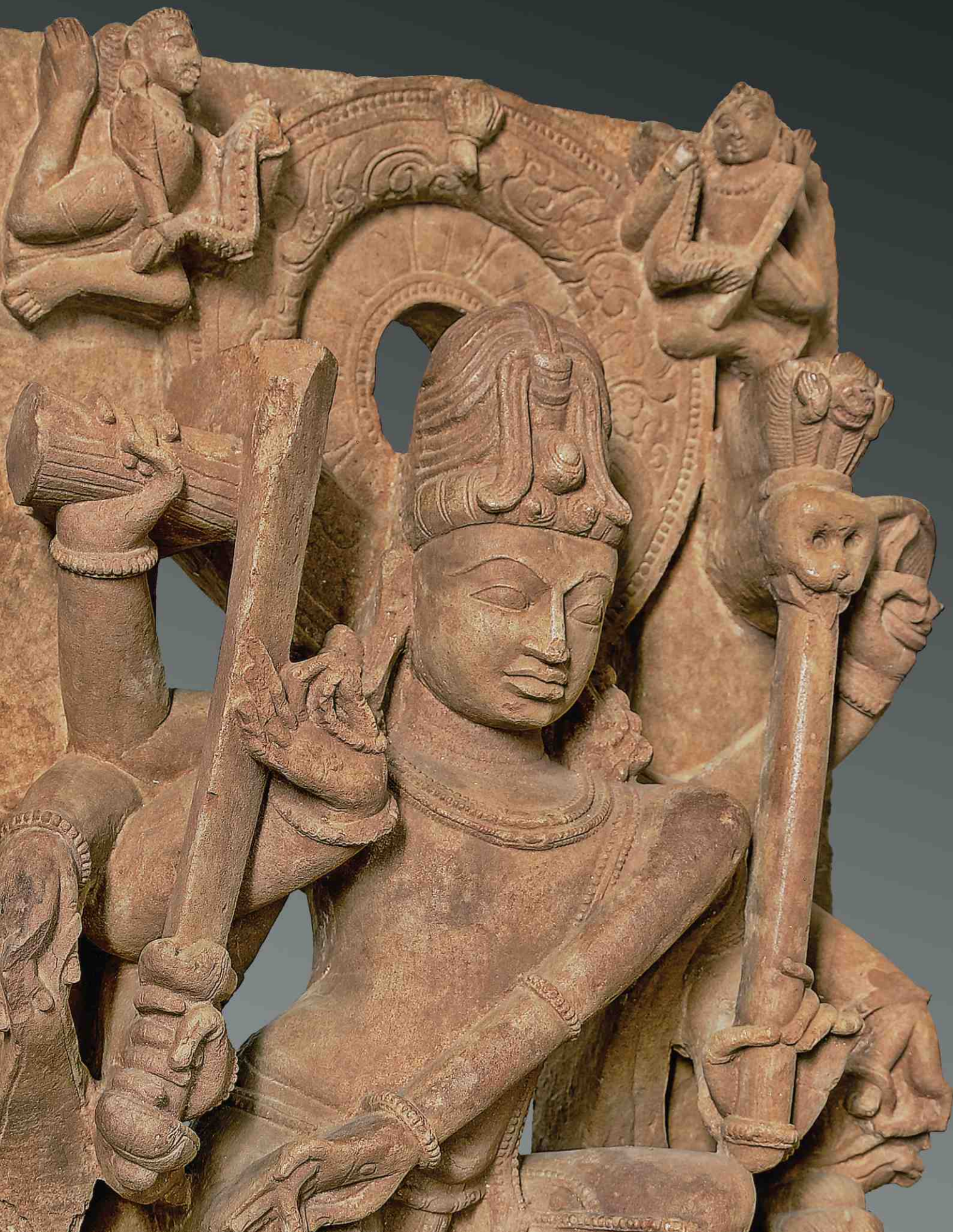


Christophe **Hio**co



Christophe **Hioco**



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Memberships: Syndicat National des Antiquaires, The Belgian Royal Chamber of Antiques and Art Dealers, the Asia Week New York Association, Inc. and the Asian Art Association in London.

www.galeriehioco.com



Galerie Christophe Hioco is located in the heart of Paris in the 17th arrondissement near the Parc Monceau, it's just a 3-minute walk from the Musée Cernuschi. It takes pride in its unfaltering focus on the originality, provenance and authenticity of the pieces it acquires.

This requires extreme specialization. This is why Galerie Hioco has focused its expertise on Hindu and Buddhist and J  in Indian sculptures, especially that from the major artistic periods: Gupta (4th-6th c), P  la (8th-12th c, Bih  r region) and Chola sculpture.

Vietnamese art also plays a major role in the collection, with two main fields: extremely rare bronzes from the D  ng Son culture and ceramics from the 1st to 6th centuries as well as the Ly and Tr  n dynasties.

It is through participating in the world's most prestigious international art shows that Galerie Christophe Hioco has become a respected resource sought out by a vast number of collectors and experts:

- Asian Art in London, 30 October - 8 November, 2014;
- Brussels Antiques and Fine Arts fair - BRAFA, 24 January - 1 February, 2015;
- Asia Week New York, 13 - 21 March, 2015.



Above all else, Christophe Hioco has been a passionate collector. His unbridled enthusiasm for antiques stretches as far back as he can remember. He became interested in Asian art more than twenty years ago when his career with J.P. Morgan gave him the opportunity to live in Asia, first in Tokyo and later in Singapore. That is where he became knowledgeable about Eastern Asia and India, confirming his expertise in ancient art by numerous trips throughout the region.

Then twelve years ago, in London, he decided to give his life over to his passion and work in antiques while continuing as a collector as well. Which is why all the pieces presented by Galerie Christophe Hioco were initially acquired through the eyes of a collector, and applying the same stringent rules of selection used by the world's leading museums. Careful attention is paid to the originality, quality, provenance and authenticity of pieces acquired. Christophe Hioco never hesitates to seek the opinion of independent experts recognized in their field, or to systematically use the latest, most sophisticated scientific methods to confirm the authenticity and integrity of the pieces proposed. Buying pieces from Western collections, some built up several decades ago, is an extra guarantee of their excellent provenance.

The uncompromising approach and personal assurance which stands behind every piece acquired has enabled Galerie Christophe Hioco to build lasting relationships of unquestioned confidence with the leading collectors and museums around the globe.

Stupa Railings (Vedika)

Mottled pink sandstone

India, Mathura

Kushan period, 1st – 2nd century

Height: 83, 62, 64 cm or 32 $\frac{3}{4}$, 24 $\frac{1}{2}$, 25 $\frac{1}{4}$ in

The Kushans, a nomadic tribe from Central Asia, ruled Northwest Afghanistan to parts of North India from the 1st to the 3rd century AD. During their reign, Buddhism flourished and a distinctive art style evolved in North India, largely Buddhist.

From the first century BC, the stupa (a reliquary mound) became one of the primary objects of worship of the Buddhist devotee. Representing the Buddha, the dome-shaped stupa is a solid edifice that one worships by circumambulating the structure, always keeping the monument on one's right. A stone railing (vedika) demarcates the path around the stupa, the outer decor of the railing uprights with representations of semi-divine beings, while the reliefs on the inner railing often include tales (jatakas) of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni's life.

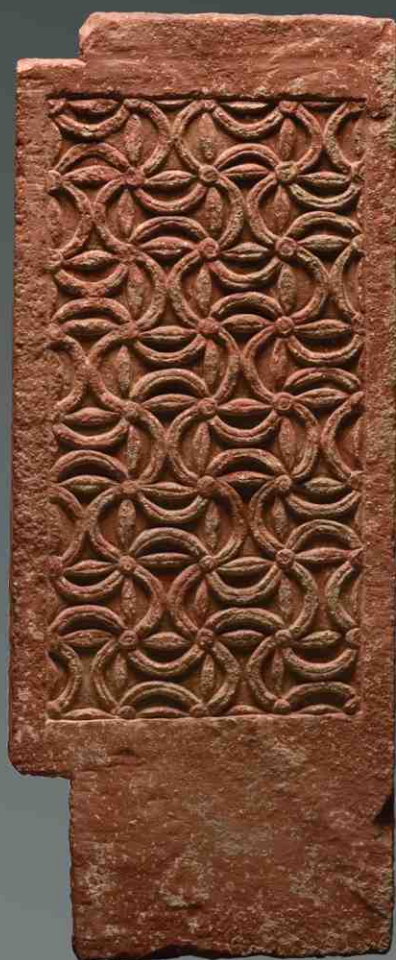


These three stone carvings probably formed a portion of these railings, as the crossbars connecting the railing uprights. Often the horizontal railing stones were simple finished stones, but the artists who carved the double-sided elements of this railing seem to have been intent on creating a lush overall pattern. The patterning suggests a familiarity with woodworking, as the lattice designs suggest openwork screens. These panels prefigure the elaborately carved stone windows (jali) so favored by the Mughals, who ruled the Mathura region fifteen hundred years later.

Provenance: Private collection, Hong Kong, acquired in the 1980s.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00042716.

Francine Tissot, Gandhara, Librairie d'Amérique et d'Orient, Ed Maisonneuve, 1985, Planche XI p. 174.

Amina Okada, Sculptures Indiennes du Musée Guimet, Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 2000, p. 25.



Vajradhara

Gilded brass
Tibet
16th century
Height: 19 cm or 7 ½ in

In the complex religious pantheon of Tibetan Buddhism, Vajradhara is considered to be the supreme divinity by the Sa-skyapa and Bka'-brgyud-pa monastic orders. His iconography represents him with his hands crossed in front of his chest in the canonic gesture called *prajñālinganābhinaya mudra*, "the embracing gesture of the prajña", that is to say of the goddess, who is the reflection of the god and the symbol of wisdom. The attributes held by the deity - the thunderbolt (vajra, masculine symbol) and the bell (feminine pole) - underline this sexual complementarity.



This piece presents decorative elements from both traditions. For instance, the jewelry, the tiara and the armbands, are in the Nepalese tradition. But the subtle "flowing drapery" across his legs takes up a typical Chinese pattern. This lovely, artful synthesis is a foreshadowing of the "eclectic classicism" of the era of the fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682). Most authors consider pedestals such as the one here, with its edged broad petals, to be characteristic of the 16th century.

Provenance: Private collection, Netherlands.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00089999.

Vajrasattva, formerly Philip Goldman coll, London (von Schroeder, 1981, vol. 2, p 117, n° 117 E.

Maitreya, formerly Dr and Mrs K Egloff coll, Ermatingen, von Schroeder, 1981, vol. 2, p 121, n° 121 G.



Indra

Bronze with traces of gilding
Nepal, Katmandu valley
14th century
Height: 11 cm or 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in

This charming character is seated in the royal relaxation posture (mahârâjalîlâsana), the right leg is raised, the hand is resting on the knee. The left hand, set on the ground at the back of the thigh is holding the end of a lotus rod (Padma) of which the flower blooms at shoulder height. Two elements are used to identify the deity. The lotus has a small "diamond-lightning" (Vajra), attribute of Indra, king of the gods. In addition, the tradition gives him the royal diadem (mukuta), here decorated with a jewel surrounded by floral scrolls.



Indra, the Brahman god was incorporated by Buddhism at a lower level of his religious pantheon. In Newari countries, syncretistic trends will give him an important place, especially as bringing the fertilizing rain during Indra Jatra, festival bringing together Hindus and Buddhists every year in Kathmandu. These festivities in their current forms back to the 17th century, as the sovereigns want to bring together the two sectarian religions around the dynasty.

Provenance: Private collection, Europe.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S000911739.

Ulrich Von Schroeder, Indo-Tibetan bronzes, Hong-Kong 1981 and 1990, p 54 E and H.



Phagpa Lokeshvara

Wood with broad traces of gilding

Tibet

Second half of 17th century

Height: 24.7 cm or 9 7/8 in

This statuette represents the famous Arya-lokesvara that is conserved in the Phagpa Lhakhang, in the Red Palace of the Potala monastery-palace in Lhasa, the traditional residence of the Dalai Lamas. The original, dating from antiquity, was reportedly sculpted by a Nepalese craftsman. After many adventures, it was placed in its present location in 1645. Ever since the fifth Dalai Lama (1617-1682) restored its position as a place of pilgrimage, Lhasa has attracted a never-ending flow of pilgrims. It is very possible that some copies of the Arya-lokesvara of the Phagpa Lhakhang came about after its transfer and new consecration, but most predate it by several centuries and are proof of its veneration.



All these statues have the same characteristics: a tall three-pointed tiara with, at its center, a small image of Arya Avalokitesvara himself, cubic ear ornaments and a general silhouette that evokes the Nepalese aesthetics of the 11th-12th century.

Provenance: Private collection, Europe; acquired in New York, 15 December 1990.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091675.

Valrae Reynolds - Amy Heller - Janet Gyatso, Catalogue of the Newark Museum of Tibetan Collection, Vol. III : Sculpture and Painting. Newark : The Newark Museum, 1986, p. 89.

Ian Alsop, « The Phagpa Lokeshvara of the Potala », Orientations, vol. 21, n° 4, April 1990, pp. 51-61.

Gilles Béguin, Art ésotérique de l'Himalaya. La donation Lionel Fournier, Paris : RMN, 1990, pp. 24-25

Gilles Béguin, Art sacré du Tibet. Collection Alain Bordier. Paris : Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint-Laurent – Suilly la Tour : Editions Findakly, 2013, pp. 96-97.

Ulrich Von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet, Vol. II : Tibet and China. Hong Kong, Visual Dharma Publications, 2001, pp. 820-825.



Dancing Divinity

Gilt-copper
Nepal,
Late 16th century
Height: 26 cm or 10 ¼ in

A parcel red-lacquered gilt-copper embossed plaque depicting the Hindu god Shiva in his dancing aspect Natarâja, "King of the Dance", also sometimes called Nataraja, "Lord of the Dance", dancing on a lotus-shaped base and surrounded by a halo of flames. Wearing a dhoti, it is adorned with jewellery and scarves. In a frenzied dance, the god creates and destroys worlds. Their existence to the God last only for a moment, but each world has a long term in his own time. Note the frontal eye, one of the characteristics of the god.



This plaque comes perhaps from a sanctuary pediment. The access of many places of worship in the Kathmandu Valley are surmounted by a metal wall pediment, sometimes hammered over its entire surface, sometimes as here, decorated with small plaques and riveted, representing the god honored in the sanctuary but also deities from his entourage.

Royal or private donations and zealous devotee from cultural associations (guthi) will cover the Kathmandu valley with countless religious foundations throughout the recent Malla period (1482-1768). This seductive element can be dated from the last phase of this period, made even more decorative yet by the whirling motion of the sides of the scarf.

Provenance: Private collection, France, acquired in 1994.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091678.

Mary Slusser (1982, vol. II, fig. 129, 140, 199, 559).



Vishnu

Ivory

Nepal, Kathmandu Valley

First half of 18th century (recent Malla period, 1482-1768)

Height: 10.5 cm or 4 ¾ in

The god Vishnu, standing, holds his main attributes in his four hands: the conch, the chakra, the mace and the lotus blossom. The semi-anthropomorphic bird Garuda, his steed, kneels before him in adoration.

Along with Vishnu's ten descents of salvation (avatars), the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley especially venerated the hypostases (vyuhas) of the god. This cult considers that the supreme form of the divinity is inaccessible to the believer who can only achieve four secondary forms,



which are sorts of projections of the supreme principle. The vyuhas are represented as the god in his main form, holding the same attributes but in a different order. Thus, here the conch and the lotus blossom are reversed left-to-right, while the chakra and the mace, held in the rear hands, are in the correct positions. On Newar town squares, you will often see short pillars with one of the vyuhas on each of their sides; for Vaishnavite followers, this makes them the equivalent of the lingams with faces of Shiva tradition.

Nepalese ivory objects are rare. Two masterpieces are a statuette of Bhringi, Shiva's assistant, playing the drum and also a mirror handle, both on display at the National Museum of Kathmandu (Waldschmidt, 1969, n° 65 and 66); there is also a comb at the Los Angeles County Museum (Pal, 1985, p. 127, dated 1725).

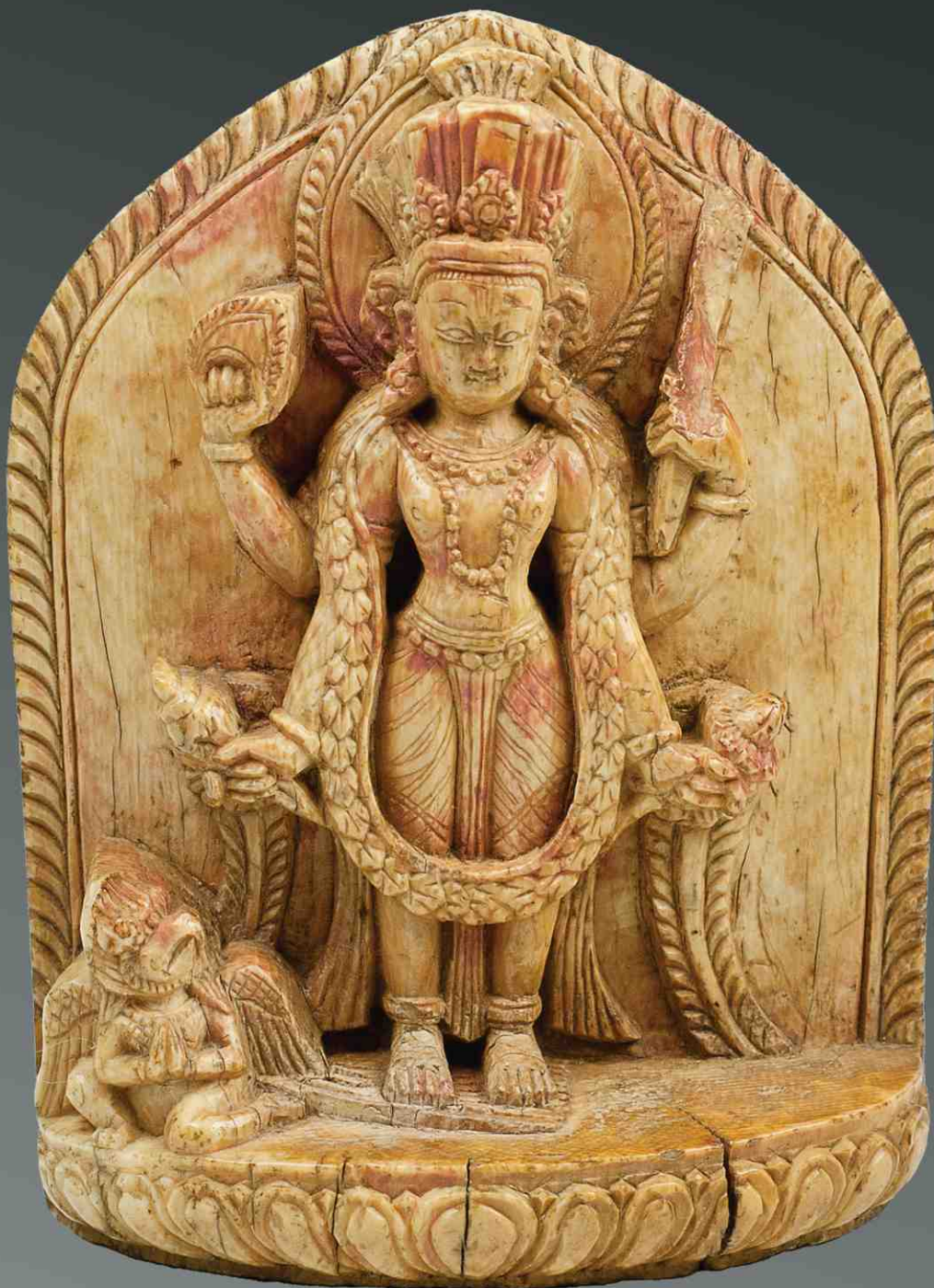
Kathmandu Valley has always been an active transit point for trade between the Ganges Basin and the high Tibetan plateaus, especially in the recent Malla period. Foreign policy of the rulers of Kathmandu and Patan focused on making the trade routes safe. Ivory, the most precious of all materials, came from the Terai, where large herds of elephants were found. It was also sculpted in Tibet. One example is an ancient bracelet (13th century) presented by Sotheby's (New York, 16 September 1999, p. 82, n° 94).

Provenance: The James and Marilyn Alsdorf Collection, Chicago, acquired before 1996. On loan to the Art Institute of Chicago since 1996.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091666.

Pratapaditya Pal, Art of Nepal, Los Angeles : Los Angeles County Museum of Art – Berkeley-London : University of California Press, 1985.

Ernst and Rose Waldschmidt, Nepal. Art Treasures from the Himalayas. London : Elek Books, 1969. Buddha.



Perfume burner

Bronze

South China

1st - 2nd century A.D.

Height: 8.5 cm or 3 ¼ in; Diameter: 9 cm or 3 ¾ in

In the form of a feline ready to pounce, this perfume burner is enriched by a very beautiful patina. The bixie (in Chinese) is a mythical animal that has the body of a feline, a lion's head, horns and a long beard. The base at the summit of its back very probably held a wick that was lit to burn perfume or incense. It is likely to be a prophylactic funerary object, the nghê being an auspicious animal that accompanied the deceased into the next world and protected him from all dangers.



In China, the bixie may also be considered as an exorcising animal (the ideograms composing the word in Chinese literally mean «avoid evil»). Following early Chinese sculptural traditions of winged celestial beasts, it can bear a pair of wings, which makes it rather similar to the tianlu (another mythological animal that brings good fortune and which has only one horn).

It may have been adopted from Mesopotamian art, through Persia and Bactria, as a consequence of the extensive trade relations initiated during the Han period (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.). The word «chimera» is particularly used by western scholars to refer to the bixie and tianlu. It is equally interesting to underline the hypothesis according to which this piece, dated to the 3rd - 4th centuries, was also assimilated with an ink stand, with its base intended to hold writing instruments. A few similar pieces were uncovered in Hunan and in Guangxi in China. For a comparable chimera, please refer to: *La voie du tao, un autre chemin de l'être*, Grand Palais, Paris, 2010, p. 183.

Provenance: Lan Huong Pham Collection, Switzerland.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091655.

X-ray + analysis by scanning electron microscopy 1107-0A-04B-18.

L'Empire du Dragon, Chefs-d'œuvre du Musée du Henan en Chine, p. 121-122.



Short Sword

**Bronze
Vietnam**

Dong Son Culture, circa 2nd century BC – 2nd century AD

Length: 40 cm or 15 ¾ in

This short sword with an anthropomorphic handle is exceptional in more than one way: in its rarity while we only know a few ones in the Dong Son sculpture and by the sculpture that ornaments its hilt. Archaeologists are used to call this short sword as "Nui Nua sword", because a very similar Dongsonian one was found in Nua mount of Thanh Hoa province. It is now exhibited in the Museum of Thanh Hóa, a city in the North Central Coast region of Vietnam.



The rarest feature of this sword is its representation of a woman, identifiable by her long sarong. Men, for their part, wore short loincloths. These anthropomorphic pieces effectively played a precious role in furthering knowledge of apparel in times past. The sarong is decorated with spirals and hatching, both very typical of Dong Son bronzes. One can also distinguish a belt with a band of cloth. Another interesting detail is the axe held in the right hand. If women are regularly represented in Dong Son iconography, if only because of the role they played throughout the centuries – let us mention the legend of Au Co, spouse of King Long Quan, considered being the founding and protecting mother of the country – it is very rare to find feminine figures carrying weapons.

Even if there is a heavy archaeological patina, the face is highly expressive. The details are finely worked and great emotion streams out, through the wide eyes that dominate a narrow face, which inscribes itself harmoniously in the lines of the sword. Jewellery was very important for Dong Son men as much as for women. This woman is wearing a heavy necklace and large earrings. Even more impressive is her high headdress in a cone shape that brings to light the great mastery of the Dong Son bronze smiths.

The force of the object and the richness of its decoration suggests a ritual (or sacrificial) use during important events or ceremonies, that seem to have been very frequent in Dong Son society, if we judge by the numerous representations of dancers and musicians on ritual objects such as drums, situlas and knives.

Provenance: Private collection, Belgium.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091781.

Monique Crick, Art ancien du Viêt Nam, Bronzes et céramiques, 5 Continents (Ed), Collections Baur, Musée des Arts d'Extrême-Orient, Genève, 2008.

Monique Crick (Ed), Viêt Nam, Collection vietnamienne du musée Cernuschi, Paris Musées et Editions Findakly, Paris, 2006.

Nancy Tingley, Arts of Ancient Vietnam, From River Plain to Open Sea, Asia Society, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Charles Higham, The Bronze Age of Southeast Asia, Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Dr. Nguyen Viet, The imaged Trung Ladies on the handle of a Dongsonian dagger", in Fine Art of Vietnam, vol 01.



Pair of Bangles

Bronze

Thailand

Bang Chiang culture, 5th – 3rd century BC

Diameter: 15 cm or 6 in

A rare pair of Bangles with a nice green patina is a good example of Bang Chiang ornaments, found in the tombs of the region. These bangles are ornamented by geometrical circles linked to each other.



Identified in 1924, the Đông Sơn culture was named after a site on the banks of the red River where its first traces were discovered at least 600 years BC. Highly sophisticated bronze casting skills were developed, mostly for the creation of drums, recipients, arms and ornaments. People of the Đông Sơn culture placed great importance in rites and ceremonies, and most burial objects had both a practical function a ritualistic symbolism. Clear proof of cultural and economic exchanges, Đông Sơn art not only influenced the Chinese provinces on which it bordered, but also a wide geographic zone that included Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia up to the eastern Sunda Islands.

Excavations were especially undertaken in Thailand and many bronzes were discovered around the village of Bang Chiang in Udonthani Province. As a result of this discovery in an area rich in prehistoric archaeological evidence, the name of Bang Chiang has become well known worldwide and synonymous with an important prehistoric culture.

We carried out an X-Ray analysis (0114-OA-40B-24) to confirm the excellent state of conservation.

Provenance: Private collection, Belgium.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S000901782.

Charles Higham, The Bronze age of South east Asia, Cambridge World archaeology, 1996.

Monique Crick, Art ancien du Viêt Nam, Bronzes et céramiques, 5 continents (Ed), Collections Baur, Musée des arts d'Extrême-Orient, Genève, 2008.

Monique Crick (Ed), Viêt Nam, Collection vietnamienne du Musée Cernuschi, Paris Musées et Editions Findakly, Paris, 2006, p.36.

Nancy Tingley, Arts of Ancient Vietnam : From River Plain to Open Sea, Asia Society, The museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



Ewer

Bronze

Vietnam

Giao-Chi era, 1st century BC - 3rd century AD

Height: 28 cm or 11 ¼ in

This pitcher with its spout shaped like a makara head from the Giao-Chi era (1st to 3rd centuries C.E.) is an exceptional object. Its basic shape is reminiscent of the Hu vases of the Han era, with a flaring foot and a paunchy body. The spout, for its part, is not classical. It is ornamented at its base by the head of a makara, a monster from the Indian pantheon. From its maw, in which four pointed fangs surround a set of crocodile teeth, erupts the nearly straight spout. The makara's short trunk, which relates it to the sea cow, is folded back upon itself. Its very bright eyes bring to mind those of a monkey, whereas the ears, stylised and certainly



ornamented by earrings, seem to be listening for the slightest sound. A line separates the animal into two parts that join at the eyebrow ridge, forming a slight hump. The top of the head is bedecked with spiralling elements in relief. The highly realistic materialisation of this aquatic animal, through details of extreme precision, makes the piece very dynamic. The handle is decorated with lotus buds and palmettes, borrowed from the Indian decorative vocabulary. The lid, attached to the handle by a loop that itself ends in animal paws, has a knob also shaped like a lotus bud.

This type of pitcher is already known in ceramic (Cernuschi Museum and the Brussels Museum) as well as in bronze (Metropolitan Museum), all with elephant heads and trunks. The presence of the makara in place of the elephant makes this piece unique: linked to Indian tradition, it refers to the kingdom of Champa, heir in Vietnam to Hindu beliefs and known at the time as Linyi, a kingdom on territory south of Đông Sơn.

One can compare this piece with the pitcher mentioned in the Cernuschi Museum work *Vietnam, Collection vietnamienne du musée Cernuschi* ('Vietnam, The Vietnamese Collection of the Cernuschi Museum'), 2006, p. 94, though its iconographical details are less refined than those of this pitcher, thus allowing a discovery of the influence of this type of creation on ceramics, produced on a larger scale, and an appreciation of numerous similarities in shape and detail.

Two other pitchers were exhibited as part of the Baur collections in Geneva in 2008 page 17 of the catalogue '*Art ancien du Viêt Nam, Bronzes et céramiques*'.

Provenance: Lan Huong Pham collection, Switzerland.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091653.

Monique Crick, Art ancien du Viêt Nam, Bronzes et céramiques, 5 Continents (Ed), Collections Baur, Musée des Arts d'Extrême-Orient, Genève, 2008.



Drums

Bronze

Vietnam

Dong Son's culture, 5th - 1st century BC

Height: 20 cm or 8 in and 14 cm or 5 ¾ in

These rare small drums with its magnificent green patina are without a doubt the most emblematic object of the Đông Sơn culture.

The centre of its plateau bears an eight-point star, in relief, which corresponds to the area which the drummer struck and also symbolized the sun. Chevrons and dotted circles nestle between the branches of the star. On a wider concentric band four stylized birds are found, with very long beaks, that can be considered to be waders. The outer edge of the plateau is composed of two rows of vertical crosshatchings, geometrical motifs that are typical of Đông Sơn culture. The body of the drum presents three sections, including a flaring base, a median zone with straight sides and a convex upper section called a torus. Vertical and diagonal crosshatching decorates the body of the object except for the foot, that has no decoration. Four double handles are attached to the torus and the middle section of the drum. This description corresponds to the category of drums called Type I, according to the classification by Franz Heger in 1902 – and which still holds sway today. (See Crick, 2006, p. 39-45, for a description of different categories of drums).

Identified in 1924, the Đông Sơn culture was named after a site on the banks of the Red River where its first traces were discovered at least 600 years B.C. Highly sophisticated bronze casting skills were developed, mostly for the creation of drums, recipients, arms and ornaments. People of the Đông Sơn culture placed great importance in rites and ceremonies, and most burial objects had both a practical function and a ritualistic symbolism. Clear proof of cultural and economic exchanges, Đông Sơn art not only influenced the Chinese provinces on which it bordered, but also a wide geographic zone that included Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia up to the eastern Sunda Islands. This Đông Sơn culture progressively morphed into Vietnamese art with Chinese tendencies, called Giao-Chi (or Han-Viet) as of the 1st century A.D.

Provenance: Lan Huong Pham Collection, Switzerland.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090106 and S00091713.

Monique Crick, Art ancien du Viêt Nam, Bronzes et céramiques, 5 Continents (Ed), Collections Baur, Musée des Arts d'Extrême-Orient, Genève, 2008.

Monique Crick (Ed), Viêt Nam, Collection vietnamienne du musée Cernuschi, Paris Musées et Editions Findakly, Paris, 2006.

Nancy Tingley, Arts of Ancient Vietnam, From River Plain to Open Sea, Asia Society, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.



Bronze Age Sword

Bronze blade; high-tin bronze hilt with meteorite iron inlay
Central Asia, Bactria – Margiana Archaeological Complex
Late Bronze Age, mid 2nd millennium BC
Length: 47 cm or 18 ¾ in

In the mid to late Bronze Age, circa 2300-1500 BC, large urban settlements controlled and participated in the trade passing through the vast plains and mountainous areas of Central Asia. The numerous sites in eastern Iran, northern Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan share a material culture commonly described as the Bactria – Margiana Archaeological Complex.



This splendid and exquisitely preserved sword has a double-edged bronze blade with a raised central line which extends through the centre of the hilt to the pommel. The actual hilt is a complex construction of a more refined, brass-colored tin-bronze adorned with a fishbone pattern. The gaps are inlaid with iron, which originates with all likelihood from a meteorite.

Due to its non-rusting properties ancient records refer to this rare material as “White Iron.” It apparently was so precious that in the palace records of Mari it was said to be worth eight times its weight in gold. Tin was almost equally as rare and had to be imported at great cost, as only small deposits were known in ancient times in Anatolia and the Zeravshan valley in present-day Uzbekistan.

The shape of the hilt suggests a production date in the 15th-14th century BC.

Provenance: Private collection, Germany.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00064429.



Palanquin Finials

Bronze
Khmer,
Angkor Wat style, 12th century
Height: 24 cm or 9 ½ in

The bas-reliefs of Angkor Wat, of the Bayon and of the contemporaneous Banteay Chmar temple depict a fascinating array of conveyances for transport. From archaeological finds we know that these chariots, palanquins, and howdahs (benches mounted on elephants) were elaborately decorated with fittings in a variety of materials: bronze, silver, gold, and combinations of these. Frequently, these fittings were in the shape of a naga, a multi-headed cobra.



The naga is one of the defining design features of Khmer art. Its popularity was probably related to its protective function. In Khmer architecture it appears on the so-called naga balustrades flanking the causeways to the major temples, on corners and roofs of temples, as well as on narrative reliefs.

Fittings in bronze, occasionally gilt, were unearthed from sites all over the Khmer empire. This pair of finials with a three-headed naga is a particularly fine and well-preserved example. The elegant shape and restrained ornamentation suggest that the pair was produced in the first half of the 12th century. A very similar three-headed naga finial is in the Musée Guimet, Paris.

Provenance: Private collection Hong Kong since the 1980s; Castor-Hara, Paris, Arts d'Asie, 12th December 2010, lot 323.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00052934.

Helen I. Jessup and Thierry Zéphir, Sculpture of Angkor and Ancient Cambodia - Millennium of Glory, New York: Abrahams, 1997, fig. 80, p. 227.



Dvâravatî Buddha

Bronze

Thailand

c. 8th - 9th century, Dvâravatî school (late 6th - early 11th centuries)

Height: 22 cm or 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

This Shakyamuni buddha is making the instructing gesture (vitarka mudra) with both hands. While extremely rare in India, this iconography is found frequently in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. It is said to protect from storms and the perils of the sea. Statuettes of this sort were given as ex votos before or after dangerous sea travel. A variation of the double vitarka mudra, the double kataka mudra, is found in the Mon-Dvaravati culture.



Since World War II, numerous Dvaravati-style bronze pieces have been found in consecration mounds and hidden away. Those from Prakon Chai district are the most well-known.

This statuette displays the main characteristics of the style: arched eyebrows that come together, a flattened nose and full lips, an elongated body with flowing muscles, pronounced knees and pectorals. The monastic robe (antaravasaka) and the mantle (kashaya) are close to the body, as is characteristic of Indian art of the Gupta period (4th- 6th centuries).

Provenance: Property of a European collector, acquired in the 1970's/1980's.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091672.

Pierre Baptiste et Thierry Zephir, Dvâravatî: aux sources du bouddhisme en Thaïlande, National Museum of Bangkok, 2009.

Pierre Dupont, L'Archéologie mène de Dvâravatî, 1959.



Seated Buddha

Bronze with traces of gilding
Sri Lanka
Anurâdhapura period, 10th century
Height: 11 cm or 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ in

According to a common iconography in Ceylon, as in all countries dependent of Theravada Buddhism, Shakyamuni Buddha is shown seated in the noble attitude (Virasana), meditating with the hands in the tread (dhyana mudra). The monastic robe (samghati) leaves uncovered his right shoulder. A flame (siraspata) particularly developed overcomes the head. The cabochon in the center was used to receive a gem.



The absence of neck, the round face with stylized lines and the shape of the siraspata can be found on many statues of Buddha, one of which was discovered in 1983 at the Girikandaka Vihāra of Tiriyaaya (Trincomalee district) and another one in 1968, at Veragala Sirisangabo vihāra near Ällaväva (Anuradhapura district).

Provenance: Private collection, Europe.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091686.

Bronzes Bouddhiques et Hindous de l'Antique Ceylan, Chefs-d'œuvre des Musée du Sri Lanka, Guimet 1991.

Ulrich Von Schroeder, Indo-Tibetan bronzes, Hong-Kong 1981 and 1990, p 54 E and H.

Ulrich Von Schroeder, Buddhist Sculptures of Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, Visual Dharma Publ., 1990.



Pichvai

Pigments on fabric

India, Rajasthan

Circa 19th century

Dimensions: 260 x 240 cm or 102 ½ x 94 ½ in

Created on fabric, pichvai - "that which is hung behind" in Sanskrit - are unique paintings as rich in colour as Rajasthan. They are used as backdrops in temples by the members of the Hindu sect Pushti Marg. The first pichvai date from the 18th century and most come from Gujarat and Rajasthan. Certain models also come from the Deccan Plateau.



Pichvai portray either episodes from the life of Krishna as an incarnation of the god Vishnu, or scenes of adoration for this deity within the temple. Unlike the adoration of certain gods, Krishna was not adored in public but in private temples built like spacious palaces. These paintings are meant to be changed either daily, seasonally, or for specific rites or religious feasts, depending on the subject of the piece.

The hindu religious movement Pushti Marg was founded by Vallabhacharya (1478 - 1532), who introduced a type of adoration devoted to Krishna or Shrinathji, considering that this was the most complete incarnation of Vishnu. Krishna, always presented with blue skin, was born in Mathura from one black hair of Vishnu. He is the son of prince Vasudeva and Devaki, while Balarama, his brother, was born from one white hair of Vishnu, the second god of the hindu Trimurti. Considered to be the eighth avatar of Vishnu, he is mainly depicted in one of four forms: as a child, shepherd, seducer or flute player.

This large pichvai is the perfect illustration of this pictorial art. The scene is of the Dana Lila: in the foreground, the Jumna River is covered with lotus flowers and full of fish. Just above, a servant offers water, the symbol of fertility, to a beggar. The main scene depicts Krishna, Balarama and their friends exacting a toll from cowherds, the gopis, who are taking milk to Mathura. The jewellery, of unspeakable beauty, is immediately recognizable and very fine. The colours, sparkling and varied, have retained their glory and are proportional to the ritual paid to Krishna: one of unequalled wealth! During the "India: 5,000 Years of Art" exhibit at the Petit Palais Museum in Paris in 1978-79, a pichvai from the Delhi Museum depicting a very comparable scene was presented.

Provenance: Private collection, France.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091658.

P. Banerjee, The Life of Krishna in Indian Art, National Museum New Delhi, 1978.

Desmond Peter Lazaro, Materials, Methods and Symbolism in The Pichhvai Painting Tradition of Rajasthan, Mapin publishing.

Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, Rajput Paintings from the Ramesh and Urmil Kapoor Collection, Norton Simon Museum, 2004.



Shakyamuni Buddha

Black stone
India
Pala era, 11th century
Height: 71 cm 28 in

Stele depicting Shakyamuni Buddha after his victory over Mara, the demon of death. The art of the Pala-Sena dynasties, which flourished in Bihar and Bengal from the 8th to the 12th century, created many Buddhist steles specifically illustrating the victory of Buddha over the demon Mara (Maravijaya). In Pala art, the iconographic popularity of this episode, a decisive one in the life of The Blessed One, should obviously be linked with the historic site of Bodh Gaya in Bihar.



Seated in the vajraparyankasana position under the Tree of Enlightenment (Bodhi) - only one branch of which is visible - Buddha lowers his open right hand toward the ground, palm turned inward, in the earth witness gesture (bhumisparsa mudra), his left hand resting in his lap. His face is full and rather round, his chin jutting and his eyebrows arched and touching in the form of a "V". His half-closed eyes indicate that he is meditating. He displays the traits characteristic of Buddhas: the whorl of hair (urna) in the middle of the forehead, the cranial protuberance (ushnisha) covered with ringlets, the distended earlobes and the "beauty" folds in the neck. His halo, in the form of a horseshoe, is decorated with two

concentric bands (one smooth, the other bordered with flames suggesting the light that radiates from his being). The lines of Buddha's body are smooth, especially the parts that worshipers could touch.

The transcendental nature of Buddha is underlined by his position seated on a double row of lotus flowers resting on a "lion throne" (simhasana). On the front of the throne, between the two lions and framed by small columns, is the Wheel of Law, another sign of Buddha's pre-eminence. This Wheel of Law is also found on the palm of his hands and the sole of his feet. The base and back form an architectural decor with an ensemble of arches and garlands, in turn framed by two stupas. The presence of two stupas on many steles, such as this one, cannot be explained. One possible interpretation is that these stupas represent the Buddha of the past and the Buddha of the future.

The gentleness and strength of the lines, as well as the relatively sober decoration of the stele, make it possible to date this work to the 10th or perhaps 11th century, based on its characteristic Pala aesthetics.

Provenance: Private collection, Europe; acquired in London, 15 December 1993.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090109.

Pratapaditya Pal, Art from the Indian Sub-continent. Yale University Press. New Haven and London in association with The Norton Simon Art Foundation.

Vincent Lefèvre and Marie-Françoise Boussac, Chefs-d'œuvre du Delta du Gange – Collections des musées du Bangladesh, Paris, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, 2007.

Susan L. Huntington, The Pala-Sena Schools of Sculpture. E.J. Brill. 1984.



Shiva Biksatana

Red sandstone
India, Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh
10th - 11th century
Height: 38 cm or 15 in

Very finely carved holding a damaru behind his head, adorned with various necklaces, the bearded face tilted upwards with cleft chin, bow-shaped mouth and almond-shaped eyes framed by gently arching brows, the hair in thick locks and arranged on his head in a bun.



The present work depicts Shiva in the form of the beggar Bhikshatana (literally, "wandering for alms"). After he severs Brahma's head in a disagreement, Shiva atones for his error by taking on the form of the wandering mendicant Bhikshatana, carrying Brahma's skull as a begging bowl.

While the iconography of Bhikshatana changes considerably with location and date, he is almost always depicted nude. In one sense, his lack of clothing evokes the humility of his mendicant status; conversely, it is also his most erotic form. Women who looked upon Bhikshatana were said to have been irrevocably smitten with the Lord.

Provenance: Collection of Alice Boney, New York and Tokyo. Distinguished Private Collection, acquired from Sotheby's New York, 2 June 1992.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090111.



Stele of Vishnu

Grey schist

India

Pala period, circa 11th century

Height: 94 cm or 37 ½ in

A magnificent representation of Vishnu Vasudeva, supreme god, wearing the royal tiara (kirita). Vishnu can be identified by the symbols he holds in his four hands: the mace in the raised right hand, the chakra in the raised left hand, the lotus in the lowered right hand and the conch in the lowered left hand. The head of the god is surrounded by an oval halo decorated with lotus petals.

To the right of Vishnu is Lakshmi, his wife and the goddess of good fortune, holding a fly-whisk, the symbol of royalty and happiness. To his left is Sarasvati, goddess of knowledge, wisdom and the arts, who can be recognized by the vina.



Vishnu is standing on a pedestal decorated with lotus flowers. On either side of the god are two lions, standing on their hind legs and on the back of a crouching elephant. On the lower part of the stele are Garuda - the half-human, half-bird steed of the god Vishnu - and a female divinity, both worshipping the god. At the top of the stele is the kirtimukha, the mask whose role is to provide magical protection. On either side of this mask are two Apsara with flower garlands.

Vishnu is wearing a long dhoti which falls in parallel folds to his ankles. It is held at the waist by a decorated belt. We can also see the richness and finery of jewellery of unspeakable beauty on his chest, arms and ears. This magnificent stele, still in excellent condition, is admirable for its flowing and elegant composition.

From the 8th to the 12th century, the states of Bengal and Bihar produced sculpture in black and grey stone, essentially Buddhist under the Pala sovereigns (8th to 11th century), then Hindu under the reign of the Sena, of Brahman origin (11th and 12th centuries). It was specifically under the Pala and Sena reigns that the great university of Nalanda reached its peak of glory, attracting thousands of students from numerous countries to the largest religious and scientific teaching complex of its time.

Provenance: Private collection, Austria.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090114.

Vincent Lefèvre and Marie-Françoise Boussac, Chefs-d'œuvre du Delta du Gange — Collections des musées du Bangladesh. Paris, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, 2007.

Susan L. Huntington, The Pala-Sena Schools of Sculpture. E.J. Brill. 1984.



Stele of Vishnu

Sandstone
Northern India
Circa 12th century
Height: 61 cm or 24 ½ in

This richly decorated stele depicts Vishnu, the second god of the Hindu trimurti, surrounded by servants and worshipers. The god is standing in the samapada position. He once had four arms, but only three remain. In his raised right hand, Vishnu holds a mace, remarkably carved and richly decorated. With his lowered right hand, he is making the gesture of giving, or varadamudra. Finally, his lowered left hand holds a conch shell, the symbol of creation and the ritual attribute of the god.



This representation follows the Indian code of beauty, with a strong but supple chest, wide shoulders and a narrow waist. His body is covered with heavy jewelry carved with delicacy, including the Brahma knot. His head is crowned with a royal hairdo, or kirita, also richly decorated and standing out against a lotus-shaped aura.

At the right of Vishnu, at the top of the stele, are Brahma and Sarasvati seated. Brahma is depicted with a round stomach below the primordial three heads of the god.

The rounded shape, the supple positions and angular hips, along with the refined, intricate sense of detail, are all characteristic of the period. The mastery of the craftsmanship makes this stele an exceptional piece that underlines the power of this god.

Provenance: Gordon Rollins Collection, United States, 1960's/1970's.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090150.

Anuna Okada, Sculptures indiennes du Musée Guimet, p. 189-191.
Pratapaditya Pal, Indian Sculpture, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, p. 288 - 289.



Ambika

White marble
India
Western Rajasthan
12th century
Height: 96 cm or 37 7/8 in

A superb sculpture of Ambika portrayed in a curving triple-bend stance, the tribhanga, which accentuates the waist and thighs. With her left arm, Ambika holds a child on her hip. Her other hand, which is broken off, probably held a mango tree branch. The halo is decorated with a floral design and her highly sophisticated hairdo includes pearls and precious gems covering her hair. Her face is round, with full lips, almond-shaped eyes and well-defined eyebrows. Her jewelry is rich and wondrous: chain and pendant necklaces falling over her breasts, a bracelet on her right upper arm. Around her waist is a broad belt with finely carved beads hanging from it. All the precepts of Indian beauty - which extols full, sensual shapes - are perfectly depicted in this sculpture.



The welcoming aspect of the piece indicates that it is probably Jain rather than Hindu. In Hindu iconography, Ambika is considered to be the "Great Goddess" and usually appears to be fierce.

Ambika was born from the rays of light emitted by the three major gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, all in one. She symbolizes cosmic energy and fights the forces of darkness. She is also called Durga or Mahisanardini. She rides a lion and can be depicted seated or standing on the back of this animal.

Provenance: Private collection, Asia.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00092344.



Shiva Nataraj

Red sandstone
Northern India
Pratihara period, 11th Century
Height: 63 cm or 24 7/8 in

Beautiful stele of Shiva Nataraja in the chatura-tandava pose. It is the 107th step in the 108 step dance of Shiva Nataraj, just before he launches into destruction. Shiva as Nataraja is the cosmic dancer and is the master and source of all the dance forms and performs the tandava, the dance in which the universe is created, maintained, and dissolved. The chatura tandava pose is that where the right leg is firmly placed on the apasmarapurusha (ignorance) and the left leg is raised half way into the air shortly before being stretched out as the nataraja tandava pose.



Shiva's hair is dressed high in jatamukuta and his long, matted tresses, usually piled up in a knot, loosen during the dance and crash into the heavenly bodies, knocking them off course or destroying them utterly. A thin sash runs around the waist. The costume consists of short drawers worn with an elaborate girdle decorated with a floral clasp in front. He wears a tiara with fillet, several ear-rings and a chain of flowers on each shoulder, yajnopavita, necklace, udarabandha, spiral armlets, bracelets, rings and anklets. The stoic face of Shiva represents his neutrality, thus being in balance and is surrounded by flames which represent the manifest Universe.

Shiva's upper right hand holds a small drum shaped like an hourglass (damaru). A specific hand gesture (mudra) called damaru-hasta is used to hold the drum. It symbolizes sound originating creation or the beat of the drum is the passage of time. His lower left hand holds a sword which signifies that he is the destroyer of births and deaths and his mid left hand holds a aksamala (rosary) made of rudraksha beads which symbolizes concentration. Rudraksha malas have been used by Hindus and Buddhists as rosaries at least from the 10th century for meditation purposes and to sanctify the mind, body and soul. Shiva's mid left hand is in abhaya mudra (fearlessness gesture) with a serpent coiled around the forearm, the abhaya mudra is meant to bestow protection from both evil and ignorance to those who follow the righteousness of dharma. His other mid left hand holds a kapala danda (skull-club) that derives from the khatvanga (long skull-capped staff originally created to be used as a weapon). Most of the Shiva temples in south India have a separate shrine for Nataraja inside their temple premises. A separate hall called Nata mandapam is present next to the Nataraja shrine for the dance presentations.

Provenance: Private collection.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090120.

Rao, T.A. Gopinatha, *Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol.II, Part-I, Indological Book House, Varanasi, 1971 (Second Edition), P223-231.*

Govindarajan, Hema, *The Nataraja Image from Asanpat, article published in Dimensions of Indian Art Pupil Jayakar Seventy', Vol.I, ed. By Lokesh Chandra and Yotindra Nath, Agam Kala Prakashan, Delhi, 1986, p. 145.*

OHRJ, Vol.XLVII, No. 3, *Lord Shiva Nataraja: The Cosmic Dancer, P. 94-100.*



Stele of Vishnu

Grey schist

India

Pala period, circa 11th - 12th century

Height: 73 cm or 28 ³/₄ in

A magnificent schist stele of Vishnu Vasudeva, supreme god, wearing the royal tiara (kirita). Vishnu can be identified by the symbols he holds in his four hands: the mace (gada) in the raised right hand, the discus (chakra) in the raised left hand, the conch (shanka) in the lowered left hand while the lower right arm is in the outstretched boon-giving gesture (varada hasta). The head of the god is surrounded by an oval halo decorated with lotus petals.

Following the standard iconography for this type of depiction, flanking the figure of Vishnu are his two wives carved in dynamic postures, contrasting with the formal rigidity of his figure. To the right of Vishnu is Lakshmi, his wife and the goddess of good fortune, holding a fly-whisk, the symbol of royalty and happiness. To his left is Sarasvati, goddess of knowledge, wisdom and the arts, who can be recognized by the string instrument (vina). Two small figures next to the goddesses represent personified attributes of Vishnu.



Vishnu is standing on a pedestal decorated with lotus flowers. On the lower part of the stele are Garuda - the half-human, half-bird steed of the god Vishnu - and a female divinity, both worshipping the god. In the mid-section on both sides are rampant lions (vyalakas) atop elephants. The upper portion of the composition is surmounted by a monster mask (kala), flanked by two flying celestial creatures with garlands (vidayadharas). At the top of the stele is the kirtimukha, the mask whose role is to provide magical protection. On either side of this

mask are two Apsara with flower garlands. Vishnu is wearing a long dhoti which falls in parallel folds to his ankles. It is held at the waist by a decorated belt. We can also see the richness and finery of jewellery of unspeakable beauty on his chest, arms and ears. This magnificent stele, still in excellent condition, is admirable for its flowing and elegant composition.

From the 8th to the 12th century, the states of Bengal and Bihar produced sculpture in black and grey stone, essentially Buddhist under the Pala sovereigns (8th to 11th century), then Hindu under the reign of the Sena, of Brahman origin (11th and 12th centuries). It was specifically under the Pala and Sena reigns that the great university of Nalanda reached its peak of glory, attracting thousands of students from numerous countries to the largest religious and scientific teaching complex of its time.

Provenance: Private collection, Austria.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090118.

Vincent Lefèvre and Marie-Françoise Boussac, Chefs-d'œuvre du Delta du Gange — Collections des musées du Bangladesh. Paris, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, 2007.

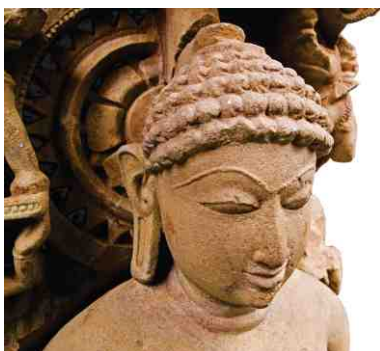
Susan L. Huntington, The Pala-Sena Schools of Sculpture. E.J. Brill. 1984.



Jina Tirthankara

Sandstone
India, Rajasthan or Gujarat
11th century
Height: 100 cm or 39 ½ in

Shown standing in Tadasana, both arms along the body, naked, serene face, curly hair, surrounded by two elephants and another Jain. We can recognize the Jina thanks to the Srivasta, long arms close to the body and hanging down to the knees (kayotsargamudrâ), a youthful body wearing no cloth. Its elongated lobes, tall genitals, curly short hair, and the cranial protuberance which are distinctive signs that attest of his superhuman status.



In the Jain pantheon, the Tirtankaras are at the top and are supported by a large number of gods and goddesses, the Yaksha and Yakshi.

Characteristic of northern India (Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan), this unique sculpture is distinguished by its beautiful patterned and the very high relief of the stele.

Jain art sculptures can sometimes lack of smoothness, however this one offer us a wonderful representation of a very dynamic modelling with remarkable smoothness. The artist behind this masterpiece was undoubtedly a genius to transcribe such a beautiful face, whose realism and serenity can only move us. The nakedness of the Tirthankara tells us that the statue belonged to a temple of the Digambara sect which adds to the classic vows of non-violence, truthfulness, honesty, chastity, poverty, obligation to beg for food and nudity in the quest for salvation.

Moreover, Jains stand still to avoid the destruction against animal creatures around them. Outside of North India, the Jain religion is practiced in the southern regions, namely, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka.

Provenance: Private collection, France.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090110.

Pratapaditya Pal, Indian Sculpture - a catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection, 1988.

Phyllis Granoff, Victorious Ones: Jain Images of Perfection, Rubin Museum of Art, New York, 2010.

Pratapaditya Pal, The Peaceful Liberators, Jain Art from India, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1994.



Bust of Gandharva

Terra cotta

India, state of Uttar Pradesh

C. late 5th - 6th century, Gupta period (around 320 - end of 6th century)

Length: 29 cm or 11 ½ in

During the Gupta period, the lower walls of Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas, whether made of stone or brick, were decorated with panels that told stories. Terra cotta panels are found in all the regions of the empire, but most particularly in Uttar Pradesh. In this state, two Hindu sanctuaries were studied in depth: one of the Vaishnavist sect - Bhitargaon (first half of the 6th century) - the other çaiva - Ahichatra (late 5th - early 6th century). Their highly diverse iconography illustrates the major religious themes described in the Puranas and narrative episodes taken from the two great Indian epics: the Mahabharata and the Ramayana.



Moldings depicting episodes from the life of Buddha Çâkyamuni also decorated the lower walls of the stupas which are numerous throughout modern Bangladesh and the Pakistani Sindh. Sometimes, as in Çrâvastî (Uttar Pradesh), a number carved in one of the lower cornerstones helped determine their order when they were laid.

The panels - made by “clay sculptors” (pustakara), a trade distinct from that of potters (khumbakara) and obviously from that of simple brick-makers (içtakâ vardhakin) - were inserted into the masonry wall. Here they are molded but they could also be sculpted. Most of these bas-reliefs were polychrome and therefore originally looked very different than they do today.

The winged god seen here is in too many pieces for us to be able to identify the religious affiliation of the temple to which it belongs. According to tradition, both the Hindu and the Buddhist heaven were populated by an infinite number of secondary deities (devatâ). Some of them, the gandharvas, toss flowers and jewels at the main characters of particularly holy episodes, miracles or preaching scenes. The character here can be connected to this specific group. Its craftsmanship is characteristic of terra cotta works from the second half of the Gupta dynasty.

Provenance: Private collection, France.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00092541.



Ganeshas

With his beloved elephant head and human body, Ganesha, the son of Shiva and Uma Parvati is one of the most endearing Hindu deities. In a well-known legend, Parvati asks her son to guard the door from all intruders while she privately bathes. Faithfully obeying her request he refuses entry to Shiva himself. Angered, Shiva cuts off his head. As an act of repentance and to appease his wife, Shiva promises to replace the head with the first creature he sees. As fate has it, the first creature he encounters, is an elephant.

In India, Ganesha is venerated as a popular guardian for doorways and gateways for he is known to be the great remover of all obstacles and the God of auspicious beginnings. He is also considered the god of wisdom and prudence. People praise his name when they begin a new journey and often writers would inscribe his name before putting their stories on paper.

Bronze
Eastern India
Pala period, c. 10th century
Height: 7.7 cm or 3 ¼ in

As usual, Ganesha is depicted with a slightly deformed body of a man with short legs and a highly protruding belly. Seated in lalitasana with his pendant foot resting on a lezard, the god is holding a mala, radish, and bowl of sweets in three of his hands with the fourth resting on the handle of an axe. An adorant is sitting at his feet. The peaked top and base with multiple protrusions are typical of Pala steles. It is not overly ornate, with a delicate, almost bare semi-circular molding to frame the god.

Phyllite
Eastern India
Pala period, 10th - 11th century
Height: 11.5 cm or 4 ¾ in

Ganesha is seated in lalitasana with his pendant foot resting on a lezard, holding a mala, radish, and bowl of sweets in three of his hands with the fourth resting on the handle of an axe, clad in a short dhoti with the folds hanging over the edge of the base and adorned with a beaded sacred thread and necklace, the face with curled trunk and downcast eyes flanked by wide ears, the hair arranged on top of the head in a short chignon. This representation is a haut-relief on a black stone stele. A comparable piece, but much larger, can be found in the Varendra Research Museum in Rajshahi and is shown in a work published by the Guimet Museum, "Chefs-d'oeuvre du Delta du Gange" by Vincent Lefèvre and Marie-Françoise Boussac.

Provenance: Private collection, Germany.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00092046 and S00092047.

Vincent Lefèvre and Marie-Françoise Boussac, Chefs-d'œuvre du Delta du Gange — Collections des musées du Bangladesh. Paris, Musée des arts asiatiques Guimet, 2007.

Paul Martin-Dubost, Ganesa, The Enchanter of the three Worlds. Project for Indian Cultural Studies, Publication VI, Mumbai 1997.

Susan L. Huntington, The Pala-Sena Schools of Sculpture. E.J. Brill. 1984.



Stele of Surya

Sandstone

India, Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh

10th - 11th century

Height: 35 cm or 13 7/8 in

This stele depicts Surya, the sun god of the Vedic pantheon. The divinity wears a tall, finely carved crown called karandamukuta. He holds a solar symbol in each hand and is kneeling. The god is wearing sumptuous earrings and a wide necklace. He is depicted in a chariot drawn by seven horses driven across the sky by the charioteer Aruna. Surya is surrounded by his four wives: Dawn and Dusk, Light and Darkness. There are also two Apsara with flower garlands at the top of the stele.



Surya is a Vedic god. Vedaism refers to the aryan civilization, a people organized into castes who imposed their power throughout ancient India through on complex rites based on magic words and gestures. The Vedas are the texts that codify these rites. Their teachings are transmitted from Brahman to Brahman and are considered to be the knowledge revealed to the wise. They are of capital importance in the development of religious and philosophical movements in India.

The temple of Konarak in Orissa is dedicated to Surya. The Bhaja Caves are also one of the oldest representations of the sun god, dating from the 2nd century B.C.E.

Provenance: Private collection, Europe.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091660.



Head of a divinity

Sandstone
Central India
Circa 11th century
Height: 41 cm or 16 ¼ in

This head, carved in sandstone, is very representative of the Indian statuary. The lines of the face are of a great sweetness. We find almond stretched eyes surmounted by slightly curved eyebrows. These features are typical and fit with the representation techniques already current under the Gupta period. It's the same for the treatment of the mouth, with the pulpy lower lip.



The divine status of this character, besides its smile of a surprising serenity, is underlined by the creature, can be a yaksha, which decorates the summit of the head. This creature has the aspect of a dwarf, endowed with a big head and with small members. His arms are based on the beautiful headgear of the divinity. He shows a wide mouth and spherical eyes, as well as big ears, deformed by heavy jewels.

This piece is very well-balanced, the creature and the headgear sharing the same proportions as the face of the divinity.

Provenance: Private collection, France.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091663.



Seated Buddha Amida

Lacquered and gilt wood

Japan

12th-13th century, late Heian - early Kamakura period

Height: 72 cm or 28 ³/₈ in

The sculpture depicts Amida (Indian: Amitābha), Buddha of Infinite Light or of the Western Paradise, seated in meditation. The belief that buddhas exist in other worlds and offer new teachings from those worlds allows an explanation for the appearance of new literature not spoken by Shakyamuni Buddha. Although he originated in northwest India, Amitābha was embraced in China, Japan, and Viet Nam.



Amida worship supplanted that of Maitreya in Japan beginning in the 8th century, though the Pure Land school, with its focus on the Buddha Amida, developed later. Worship of Amida relies on visualization and recitation of the nembutsu (veneration to Amida Buddha). The practitioner eliminates negative karma by repeating this phrase and if he repeats the nembutsu with complete devotion, achieves rebirth in Amida Pure Land.

The figure is made of wood, the preferred material for Buddhist sculpture in Japan, and is both lacquered and gilded. It was sculptured using the yosegi zukuri sculptural method: the figure is constructed from a number of equal-sized blocks of wood.

It sits on a complex lotus throne and is shown in deep meditation, with both hands clasped in Dhyāna-mudrā which symbolizes a quiet heart and concentration. This figure has a fleshy protuberance on his head known as a "nikkei" (Usnisa), snail shell-shaped curls and robes draped in the style in which the figure's shoulders are unexposed.

By comparison with dated examples in Japan the Buddha can be dated to the late Heian or early Kamakura period, c. 12th-13th century. The round, moon-like face has a gentle expression that is the characteristic style of the late Heian period, while the drapery pleats are some-what sharp with the occasional appearance of bent corners, an indication of the remains of an older style. The deep inward focus of his meditation and the calm equanimity of his posture are characteristic of Kamakura sculpture. The pedestal dates from the same period as the sculpture and their carved patterns are also in the standard style for the period. It may have originally been accompanied by two figures representing the Bodhisattvas Kannon (Avalokiteshvara) and Seishi (Mahasthamaprapta). Here too one can see echoes of ancient styles of Indian sculpture in the full three-dimensionality of the compact body and the symmetrical folds of the robes.

Provenance: Robert W. Moore - Michael Phillips Collection, Los Angeles, since 2011.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00092556.

Nancy Tingley, Buddhas, Sacramento: Crocker Art Museum, 2009, plate 22, p. 82-83.

Stephen Little, Images of Buddha from the Michael Phillips Collection, Hong Kong: ARTS OF ASIA, Jan-Feb 2013, p. 113, fig. 33.



Vietnamese Ceramics

Footed bowl
Han-Viet
Height: 18cm or 7 ½ in

Beautiful circular bowl based on a wide and flared foot. Serving as little handles, two Taotie masks stand at the ends of the bowl, whose rim is decorated with a ribbon. The bowl is cream-covered with green streaks on one side thereof. Another thicker ribbon is wrapped around the flared section of the foot.

Lime-pot
Tran dynasty
Height: 12cm or 4 ¾ in

Beautiful classical lime-pot with handle shaped like betel-liana. The piece is glazed with a cream cover finely cracked and a chocolate brown ring at the base of the foot.

Jar
Annam period
Height: 24cm or 9 ½ in

Beautiful cream-covered jar, which plays on subtle variations of shades, from cream to dark brown.

Bowl with handle
Annam period
Height: 12cm or 4 ¾ in

Circular bowl with straight neck and flared foot is provided with a rectangular handle pierced with a round hole. The bowl is cream-colored and contains green streaks and a fine crackling effect on one side.

Provenance: Private collection, Belgium.



Cover:

Shiva Nataraj

Red sandstone

Northern India

Pratihara period, 11th century

Height: 63 cm or 24 $\frac{3}{8}$ in

Back cover:

Short Sword

Bronze

Vietnam

Dong Son Culture, circa 2nd century BC – 2nd century AD

Length: 40 cm or 15 $\frac{3}{4}$ in

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