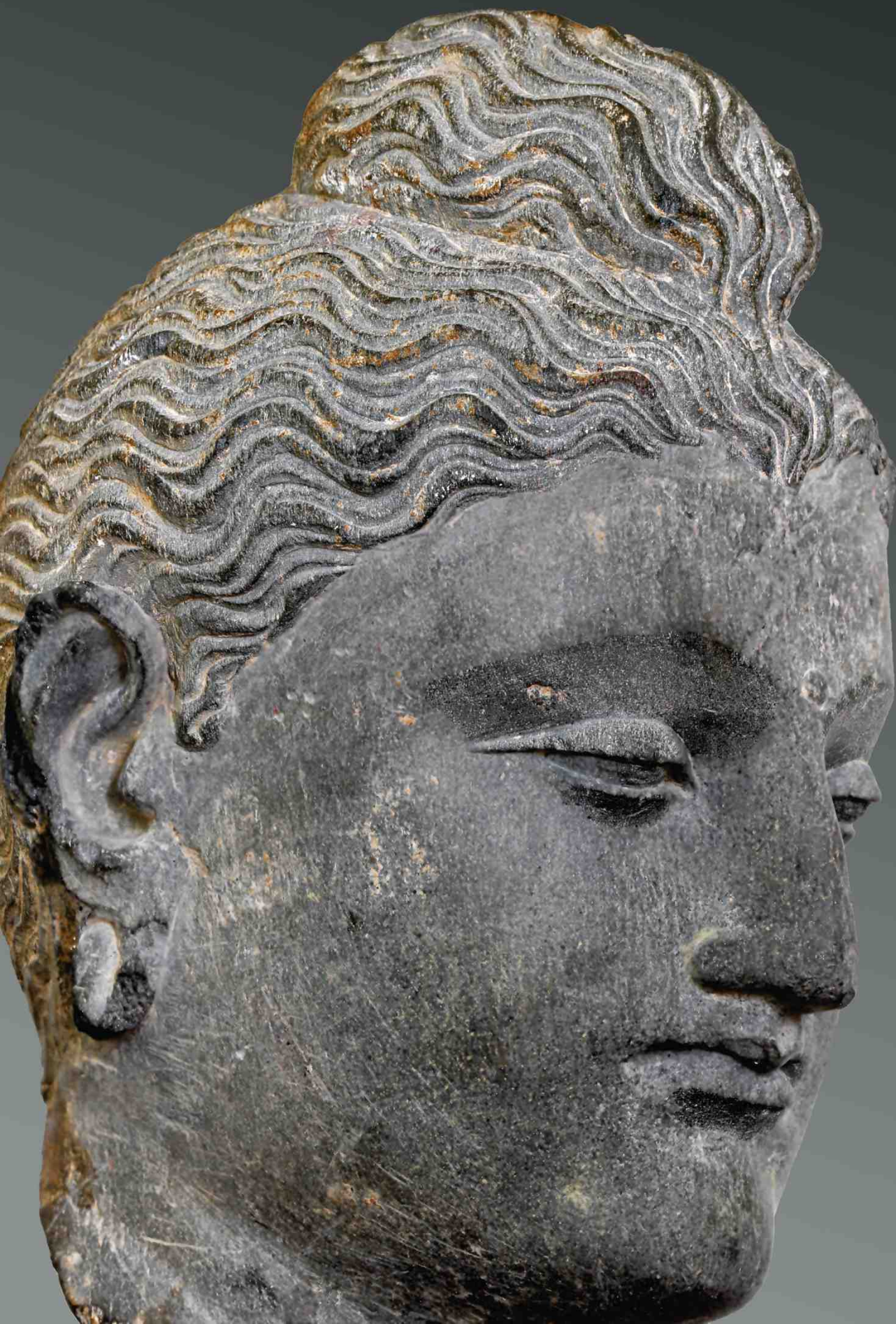


Christophe **Hioco**



Christophe Hioco



Christophe Hioco Gallery
+33(0)1 53 30 09 65 / info@galeriehioco.com
By appointment
72 rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré - 75008 Paris

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

Director of the Asian Art Association in London.

Member of the Advisory Committee of the Parcours Asiatique of the Parcours des Mondes

w w w . g a l e r i e h i o c o . c o m



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 Jain Indian sculptures, especially that from the major artistic periods: Gupta (4th-6th c), Pâla (8th-12th c, Bihâr region) and Chola sculpture.

Vietnamese art also plays a major role in the collection, with two main fields: extremely rare bronzes from the Đông Sơn culture and ceramics from the 1st to 6th centuries as well as the Ly and Trần 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:

- Asia Week New York, 13 - 21 March, 2015;
- Le Parcours des Mondes : Paris 8 - 13 September 2015;
- Asian Art in London, 5 - 14 November, 2015;
- Brussels Antiques and Fine Arts fair - BRAFA, 23 - 31 January, 2016.



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.

Head of Buddha

Grey schist
Ancient region of Gandhara
Circa 2nd century
Height: 25 cm or 9 ⅝ in



The basin in the centre north part of Pakistan, where the city of Peshawar lies today, used to bear the name of Gandhara. Prior to the Islamic period it was the location of a brilliant artistic school which successfully combined multiple influences. Orientalist would refer to this school of art as Greco-Buddhist. This aesthetic spread throughout western Central Asia from the extreme northern points of Pakistan, to Afghanistan, down to the southern part of the ex-soviet Islamic confession republics. This art movement peaked between the 2nd and 3rd centuries. Islamic invasions gradually crushed it as they moved into the area throughout the 7th and 8th centuries.

Although the religion was already by then nearly five hundred years old, Gandhara art was the very first to present a diversified Buddhist iconography. While ancient Indian art was aniconic, avoiding to give the Buddha an image, around the 1st century, artist in this north-western part of the sub-continent dared to represent the “Blessed”. Orientalist used to link the depictions of the Buddha Shakyamuni with the emergence of the “Great Vehicle” (Mahayana). Historical sources confirm that most Gandharian stone or stucco reliefs can be linked to the Theravada and to the Mahayana vehicle.

According to the scriptures, as a great man (mahapurusa), the Buddha bore distinctive marks (laksana), but only two were retained by artists: the cranial protuberance (ushnisha) and a cluster of hairs at the bottom of the forehead between the two eyes (urna). The pierced ears with a lobe deformed by the weight of jewels indicated his ancient princely rank. These art conventions were adopted by all subsequent Buddhist schools. They are clearly displayed in the head discussed herein. The canon presiding over the representation of the Buddha in Gandharan art was inspired by the Greco-Roman cliché depictions of young gods with idealised and emotionless features such as Apollo. The cult of these gods was in fact widely spread in the oriental part of the Mediterranean. The canon was however not stereotyped and the depictions experienced numerous variations depending on regions, specific workshops or perhaps periods of time. This can be clearly seen when examining Buddha heads in the large public collections of the British museum and the museums of Lahore and Peshawar.

This Buddha head is characteristic of Gandharan art at its peak. The proportions of the face have avoided excessive geometrization which can be seen in so many heads either too square, or too oval, or too round. The arch formed by the eyebrows merges into the bridge of the nose. The semi-closed eyes are the visual representation of the meditating holy person and the small mouth with a fleshy lower lip all contribute to this harmonious ensemble. The elegant and well groomed hairstyle is noteworthy with its numerous thin waves. These features are only found in the most accomplished pieces. This sculpture can be associated with the heads of complete Buddha statues such as the seating Buddha from Sahri-Bahlol in a private Japanese collection (Kurita, 1998, p.140, pl. 3VI) and two standing Buddhas in the Peshawar Museum (Lyons-Ingolt, 1957, no 215; inv.P.M.3144, Pakistan, 2010, no 66). This piece can also be compared to stand alone heads as the one in the Peshawar Museum (Lyons-Ingolt, 1957, fig.271).

Provenance: Private collection, Japan, acquired in the 1990s.

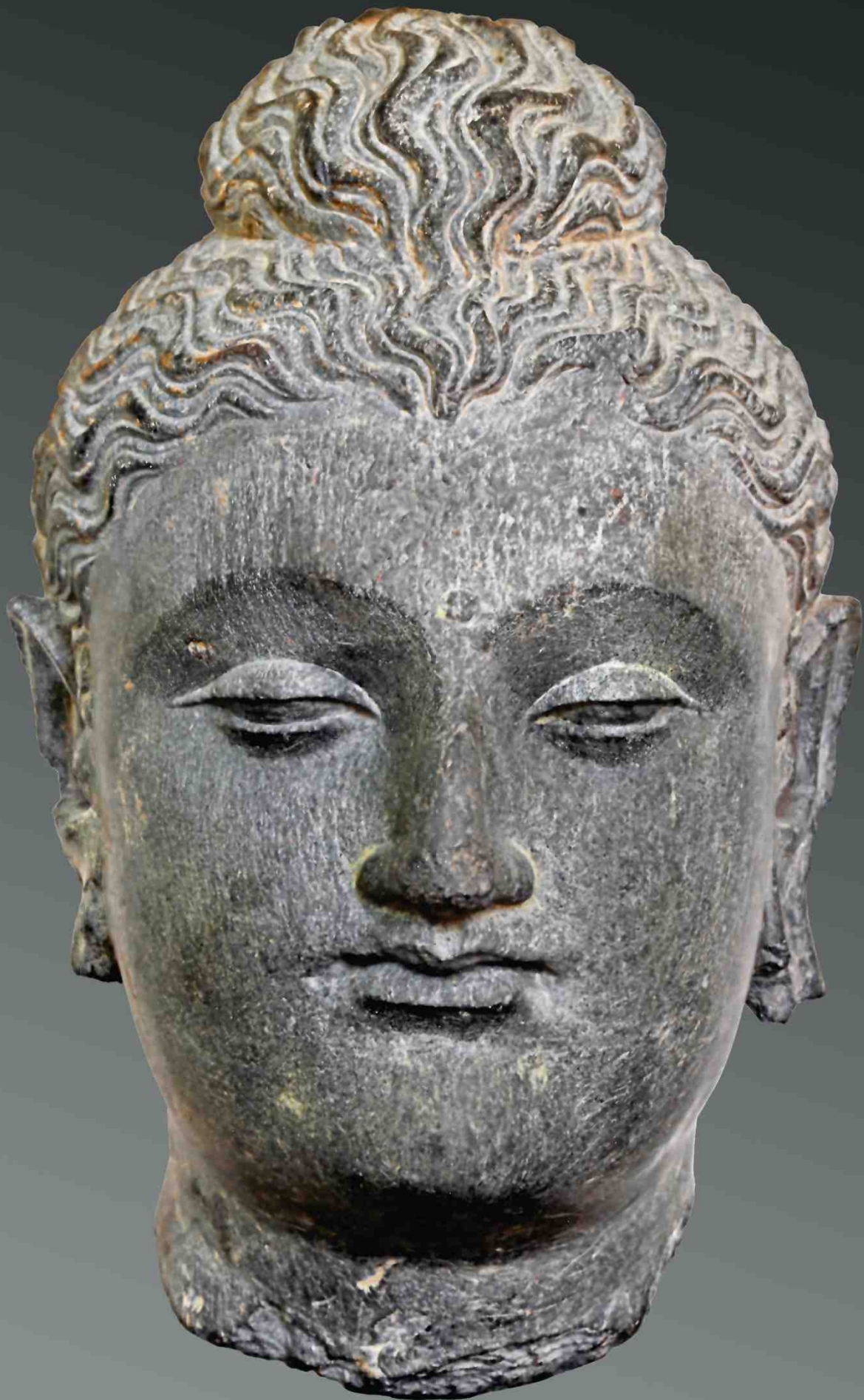
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097025.

Bibliography:

Isao Kurita, *Gandhāran Art I, The Buddha's life story (Ancient Buddhist Art Series)*. Japan, 1988.

Isley Lyons – Harald Ingolt, *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*. New-York: Pantheon Books, 1957.

Pakistan. *Terre de rencontre Ier-VIe siècle. Les arts du Gandhara*. Paris: R.M.N.-Musée Guimet, 2010.



Buddhist Reliquary Stupa

Schist

Ancient region of Gandhara

2nd - 3rd century

Height: 79 cm or 31 ¼ in

Three sides of the rectangular base are decorated with lotus flowers while the fourth has two niches, each with a depiction of Buddha Shakyamuni. Each deity is seated in the lotus position in dhyanasana meditation. Both are the image of the Gandhara Buddha, characterized by profound serenity. Their clothing has obviously been influenced by classic Mediterranean sculpture. The same is true of their hair, represented by gracefully waving lines that end in a bun to symbolize Buddha's cranial bump. Above the pedestal circles a large checkerboard



section and above that several sections of floral or geometric designs. The domed top is finely sculpted with three rows of petals. The harmika is crowned with several circular platters forming a parasol.

After the cremation of the historic Buddha, his relics and ashes were given to eight kings who came to pay their final respects. These kings then placed them inside stupas in various regions of India. Under the reign of Ashoka, the great protector of Buddhism who ruled during the 3rd century B.C., the cult of the stupas grew, with worshipers circling clockwise around them.

A stupa evokes the architecture of the cosmos. With the exception of a small inaccessible cavity to hold relics or objects, there is no open space inside. It is undoubtedly the most popular monument in Asia. Its origin lies in the Indian subcontinent but followed the spread of Buddhism, reaching well into the Far East. Gandhara stupas were decorated with bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the lives of Buddha, with rich iconography and a style not typical of the region. This exceptional piece is large in size and finely sculpted with precision and naturalism. The perfect balance between the four geometric shapes contributes to the aesthetics of the piece. Its historic aspect is every bit as remarkable.

Provenance: Private collection, France, acquired in the late 1970's.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090098.

Bibliography:

For a closely related stupa now in the Indian Museum Calcutta, see Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, p. 133, fig. 8.8.

Lerner and Kossak, *The Lotus Transcendant*, p. 74, n° 637

Ikuro Hirayama, *Gandharan Art from the Hirayama Collection*, p. 206 - 210

David Jongeward, *Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries*, p. 76 - 79.



Lotus shaped medallion

Schist

Ancient region of Gandhara

1st - 4th century

Height: 31 cm or 12 ¼ in

Emerging from mud and reaching up to the purest form of light, the lotus flower has been associated with Buddhism from a very early time in the antiquity. In later times, postdating this object, the image of the lotus flower was the subject of many interpretations and speculations and a Sutra was written bearing its name. It is therefore no surprise that in early Indian art, as early as the 2nd century B.C., one would find this blooming flower motif on the banisters which bordered circumambulation walks around reliquary stupas. The lotus motif also appears in Mathura art (1st to 3rd centuries) contemporary of Gandharian art and belonging to the same Kusana Empire.



In this medallion, the fine details of the flower are well rendered: a double row of petals harmoniously blooming around the pistils of the central floral receptacle. The absence of any opening for an axis or rod at the centre of the medallion, precludes the possibility of this medallion having been one of the umbrellas often seen over the numerous reliquary stupas in the Gandhara region.

The remains of a similar tondo can still be seen today decorating the walls of the monastery of Jaulian in Taxila, ancient capital of Gandhara, and an important archaeological site north-west of the current Islamabad. On this piece, two holes on the front are matched

by two slits on the back indicating the earlier existence of a stand. It is however unlikely that this would have been the original mounting system. As for the Jaulian lotus, this relief would have been stuccoed onto the wall.

This medallion should also be related to one at the British Museum presenting a female triton in its centre (Inv. OA 1949.7-18.47; cf Zwalf, 1996, I, p.253, no 343; II, p.9), to a row of six others, each displaying a putto, in the photographic archives of MNAOR in Rome (nr. 1179-1180) and one more medallion reproduced by Kurita I. (1190, II, fig. 651).

Provenance: *Private collection, Belgium, acquired in the 1970s.*

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097080.

Bibliography:

Isao Kurita, Gandhārian Art II (Ancient Buddhist Art Series). Japan, 1990.

Wladimir Zwalf, A Catalogue of the Gandhāra Sculpture in the British Museum, 2 vol. London, British Museum Press, 1996.



Devi

Terra cotta

India, state of Uttar Pradesh

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

Height: 79 cm or 31 ¼ in

Demurely tilting her face away from the onlooker, the youthful goddess (Devi) is standing gracefully, confident of her beauty, on a simple square pedestal. Her facial features are superbly executed, her hair is tightly wound in a bun at the back of her head, and arranged in little curls over her forehead. A diadem with a single large oval ornament further embellishes her forehead. This ornament probably depicts a gold plaque inlaid with an enormous gem.

The Devi's upper body with taut and full breasts is bare except for a small triangular flap of cloth on her left shoulder, which enhances the sensuality of the image. Her rounded hips are wrapped in an almost transparent textile (candataka), which clings to her lower body as if wet.

An undulating drapery cascades over her left hip. The modeling of the sculpture reflects in every detail the Gupta ideal of supreme beauty. Since both hands, which possibly held at least one attribute, are missing, the identity of the goddess must remain speculative.



This sublime figure is one of only a handful of known complete large-scale terracotta depictions of a female deity from Gupta India. A pair of the River Goddesses Ganga and Yamuna, discovered in the Shaivite temple of Ahicchatra in Uttar Pradesh, has been long considered the apex of terracotta art produced under the Gupta rulers.

The subtlety of workmanship, technical perfection and admirable refinement of this Devi are almost unrivalled and make this exquisite sculpture one of the masterpieces of Gupta art, the Golden Age of Classical India.

Provenance: Private collection, Belgium. Private Collection Hong Kong.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00028973.

TL-Analysis (CIRAM, Certificate 0607-OA-13R). CT-Scan (Dr.M.Ghysels, Certificate 070620-1).

Bibliography:

Amy G. Poster. *From Indian Earth: 4000 Years of Terracotta Art*. Brooklyn Museum.

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

L'Age d'or de l'Inde Classique, L'Empire des Gupta, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 2007, p. 176 -179 and 226 - 227.

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



Bust of Gandharva

Terra cotta

India, state of Uttar Pradesh

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

Height: 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 çaiava - 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.

TL-Analysis (Oxford Authentication Ltd.) X-ray (Ciram)

Bibliography:

Amy G. Poster. From Indian Earth: 4000 Years of Terracotta Art. Brooklyn Museum.

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

L'Age d'or de l'Inde Classique, L'Empire des Gupta, Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, 2007, p. 176 -179 and 226 - 227.

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



Head of Goddess

Pink sandstone
Northern India
Circa 8th - 10th century
Height: 28 cm or 11 ⅛ in

This imposing head is carved in pink sandstone, a very typical material of the state of Uttar Pradesh in Northern India. From one quarry to another the color can vary from a beige pink to a fairly strong red as is the case with this piece. The absence of any iconographic element precludes any dating, even approximate.



The head with its pouting smile displays heavy ear ornaments in the shape of opened flowers. This hairstyle is found on many female statues. The hair is pulled back into a bun which partially disappears into the background stele and is bordered by an openwork garland. The latter bears pendants which have been brought back to the top of the forehead ending with little attached floral elements.

It can be compared with a Sarasvati previously in the Pan Asian collection (Pal, 1978, p.60-61, no 17) optimistically dated to the 5th century. It can also be compared to a Yamuna in the national museum of Delhi (Inv. 68.53, In the Image of Man, 1982, p.114, no 72).

Provenance: Private collection, France.
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097029.

Bibliography:

In the Image of Man: The Indian Perception of the Universe through Two Thousand Years of Painting and Sculpture. London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1982.

Pratapaditya Pal, *The Sensuous Immortals.* Los Angeles: Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1978.



Cakreshvari

Sandstone

India

11th century

Height: 105 cm or 41 ¾ in

The goddess wears long sleeves and a necklace with a short chain. This jewelry existed in medieval times but was unusual. However, this conclusion should be tempered by the fact that certain sites, such as Khajuraho, whose temples reflect a somewhat royal and prestigious local style, are overly represented in documents. Each region had its own traditions.



It is interesting, nevertheless, to read notice 67, page 181 of the catalogue on Jain Art from India, *The Peaceful Liberators* by P. Pal, L. A. 1995. Chakreshwari is a goddess linked with the Jain Rishabhanatha, in turn linked with the Vaishnava cult. This is borne out by the praying Garuda on the bronze piece described by P. Pal, here bearing the goddess.

The crown, the typical headdress of Vishnu (and other masculine deities such as Indra), reinforces this pan-religious relationship, such syncretic trends being very frequent during medieval times.

Cakreshvari's mount is Garuda. In this image, Garuda is represented in human shape, carrying the goddess on his shoulders. Cakreshvari wears the high kirita type of crown and carries the cakra or wheel. Her Jain affiliation is indicated by the presence of three seated Jinas above her head. The central Jina is logically Rishabhanatha.

Provenance: Private French collection, piece acquired in 1987.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091666.

Exhibited: "Step of Liberation, 2500 years of Jain art and Religion". Etnografisch Museum, Antwerpen. 26 May to 15 October 2000.

Published: Catalogue of the exhibition: nr 88, page 163.

Bibliography:

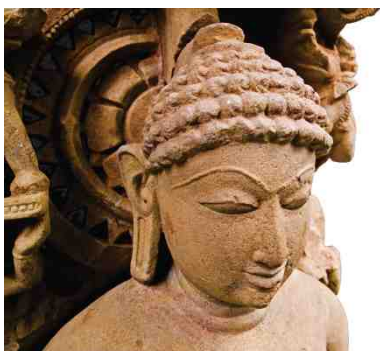
Pratapaditya Pal, *The Peaceful Liberators*, 1995, p181, notice 67.



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.

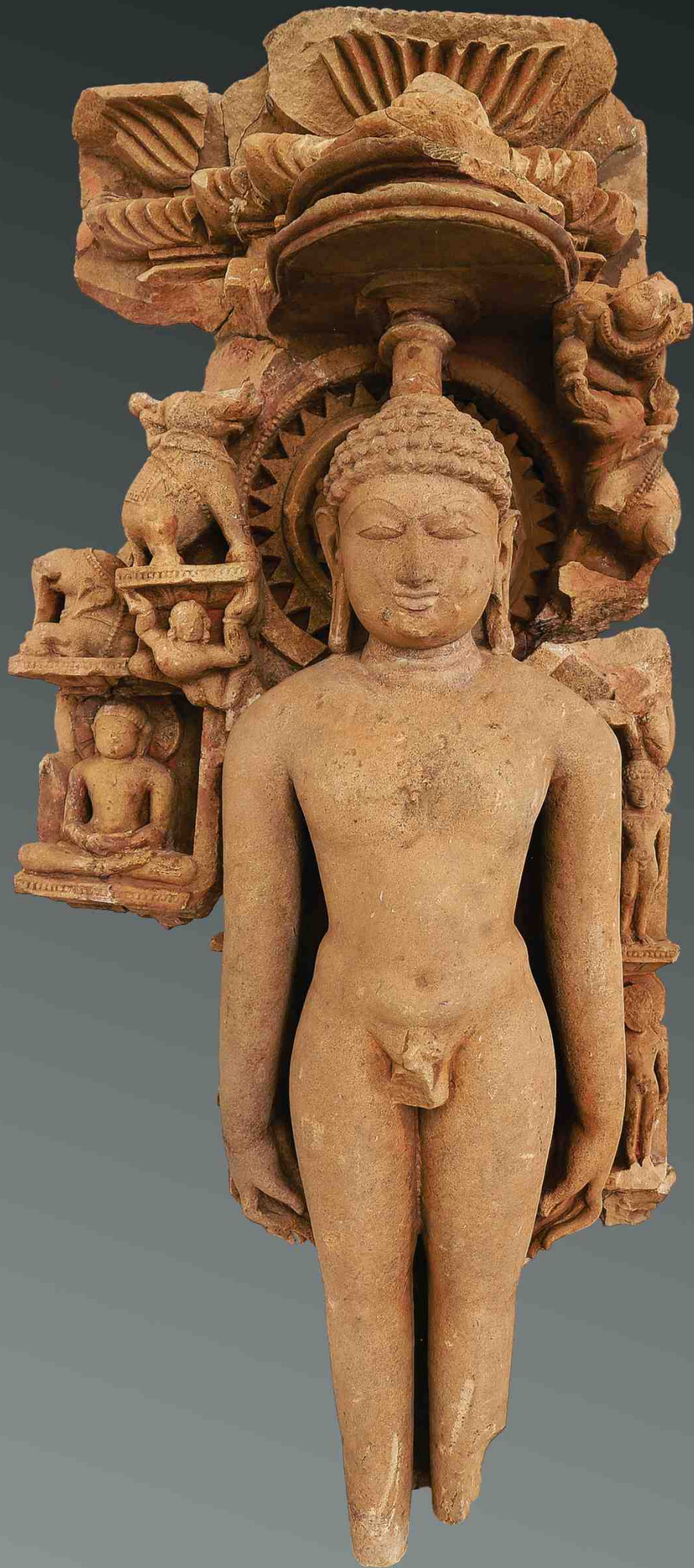
Provenance: *Private collection, France. In the same family for more than 30 years.*
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090110.

Bibliography:

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.



Stele of Vishnu

Grey schist
Eastern India
Pala period, 11th - 12th century
Height: 96 cm or 37 7/8 in

A high relief stele depicting a four-armed iconic form of Vishnu standing in samapada (literally 'without bending'), the stone cut away behind him to separate the deity from the crowded background. This a magnificent representation of Vishnu Vasudeva, supreme god, wearing a three-pronged, tall crown topped by an amalaka. He is adorned with elaborate jewelry and embellished with a vanamala (long floral garland) reaching his knees.

The God holds a gadha (mace) budding with foliage in his upper right hand, the lower right forms varadamudra (granting favors), a tiny lotus in the centre of the palm. In his upper left hand, he holds a cakra (disc), symbol of absolute completeness, and in the lower left a conch. His lower hands rest on lotus flowers in full bloom the curving stems of which grow out from



the base, and echo the tribhanga posture of his two female consorts who stand on either side. On Vishnu's right is Lakshmi holding a fly whisk, symbol of royalty and happiness, while on his left is Sarasvati playing her vina, both wearing similar crowns to Vishnu.

Vishnu is standing on a pedestal decorated with lotus flowers. Beneath his feet, carved on the front of the base is Garuda, the half-human, half-animal steed of the god Vishnu, flanked by three diminutive devotees on one side and one on the other. 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. The relief is set within an arch carved with tiny avatars of Vishnu: Vamana, Narasimha, Varaha (the boar), Rama and Balarama. Sumptuous ornamentation decorates the dhoti of the second god of the Trimurti.

This magnificent stele is in excellent condition and is admirable in its highly elegant fluidity and movement. Compare to two similar examples: the Vishnu Vasudeva, 11th-12th century, Pala Era, J.W. Alsdorf collection and the one from The Avery Brundage Collection at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco published in Susan L. Huntington and John C. Huntington, *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pala India (8th-12th centuries) and Its International Legacy*, Dayton, 1990, pp. 163-164, fig. 36.

Provenance: Private Collection California, acquired 1970. European Collection, acquired from Sotheby's New York, 19 March 2008.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097028.

Exhibited: California State University, Hayward, Museum of Anthropology Temporary Exhibition, 1986.

Bibliography:

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 and John C. Huntington, *Leaves from the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pala India (8th-12th centuries) and Its International Legacy*, Dayton, 1990.

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



Bodhisattva Maitreya

Bronze with extensive silver inlay
North-East India, Bihar or Bengale
Pala period, 10th - 11th century
Height: 14 cm or 5 ¾ in

Maitreya, the “benevolent” Buddha is depicted here as a bodhisattva, richly clad and adorned with jewels as an Indian Prince. It is in this appearance that he resides in the heaven of thirty three gods, awaiting the next cosmic period when he will reincarnate as a Buddha, marking the start of a golden age. No matter how he is depicted, Maitreya’s attributes remain the same: the water phial and the stupa in his headdress.



The Bodhisattva is sitting in repose, his left leg dangling (vamardhaparyanka). The position of his hands, held out in front of his chest, suggests he is holding the Buddhist wheel of life (dharmacakra mudra), as well as holding the extremity of two lotus stems, no longer present on the piece today. In this type of iconography, the lotus flowers, blooming at the level of his shoulders, would have each supported one of the two attributes of godliness. Here only the water phial, although damaged, remains apparent.

In spite of its corrosion, this piece is a good example of the quality of Pala metallic statuary at its peak. Throughout this dynasty the visual effects evolved to more and more pronounced shapes. Here this evolution has not yet begun. The figure is executed following the earlier styles of the 7th and 8th centuries: an elegant posture with just a slight sway of the hips, a subtle outline of the muscles, calves barely apparent just below the fabric of the robe. It does not display the dryness of a later date Maitreya figure discovered in Antichak, district of Bhagalpur in Bihar (Huntington, 1984, fig. 194). But many fine silver inlay give the work a unique character. It can be closely related to a similar size bodhisattva, possibly Avalokiteshvara, at the British Museum (Inv 1958-12 15-1. Béguin, 1977, p.12, no 6).

Provenance: *Private collection, Belgium, since the 1980's.*
Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097078.

Bibliography:

Gilles Béguin (Ed.). *Dieux et démons de l'Himâlaya*. Paris: RMN, 1977.

Susan L. Huntington. *The « Pāla-Sena » Schools of Sculptures*. Leyde: Brill, 1984 (*Studies in South-Asian Culture*, vol.X).



Ganesha

Bronze
Eastern India
Pala period, c. 10th century
Height: 8 cm or 3 ¼ in

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.

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 lizard, 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.

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

Bibliography:

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.



Shiva Nataraja

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 Nataraja, 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, Europe.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00090120.

Bibliography:

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



Stele of Surya

Sandstone

India, Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh

10th - 11th century

Height: 35 cm or 13 ⅞ 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.



Chintamani Lokeshvara

Polychrome wood
Nepal, Kathmandu Valley
15th century
Height: 67 cm or 26 ½ in

This version of the Avalokitesvara Bodhisattva is not described in Indian Sanskrit texts on the divinity and therefore is not listed by the great iconographer Marie-Thérèse de Mallmann. Its iconography is characteristic of the Pietist developments of the Newars, represented emblematically in a painting of the early 17th century (col. part.) published by P. Pal in 2003.

In his lowered left hand, the god holds a branch of a tree of wonders, Kalpavriksha, bearer of jewels and with his right hand he offers a gem to his followers.

The iconography is an adaptation of one of the oldest images in Indian art representing tree nymphs (yaksi) holding the end of a branch. Newar artisans carved representations of supreme elegance on the columns (tunala) of the facades of the most ancient monuments still in existence (13th-14th c). This theme was later adopted by Buddhism, represented as the gesture made by Queen Maya, the mother of the future Sakyamuni Buddha, at his birth.



Cintāmaṇi Lokeśvara remains a rare piece of iconography. It is believed to be found on one of the columns of the facade of Uku Baha Monastery (Patan).

Carbon-14 dating determined this piece is from the 15th century. Remarkably well-conserved, as confirmed by x-ray analysis, its extreme refinement makes it highly attractive.

Provenance: *Private French collection, piece acquired before the year 2000.*

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00089912.

Bibliography:

Pratapaditya Pal, Art of Nepal, LACMA, 1985, pages 114 & 115, n° S 36.



Buddha Shakyamuni

Gilt Bronze
Tibet
15th century
Height: 28 cm or 11 ⅛ in

Shakyamuni is depicted here in his most iconic representation, seated legs tightly crossed, soles turned upwards, his left palm upward in his lap while the finger tips of the right hand delicately touch the ground, thus calling the earth to witness its fair right to enlightenment. This gesture of “calling the earth to witness” (Bhumisparsha mudra) occurs as Mara, both God of the unwholesome pleasures of mundane life and God of death, attempts to distract the future Buddha from his meditation through various actions which include sending his intimidating and monstrous soldiers. Shakyamuni in the Bhumisparsha mudra, symbolising his accession to Buddhahood, became a frequent representation from the 11th century onward.



The impressive figure presents certain noteworthy characteristics. First and foremost, the unusually shaped pedestal. Most figures are featured on a stand with a double row of lotus petals; less frequently is there only one. Here this single row, well delineated on the bottom sits below a “platform”. Although extremely rare, such pedestals appear in all periods but most known examples occur in the 16th century. We will refer to two figures of the Rietberg Museum in Zurich (Uhlig, 1995, p. 170-172, no 114 and 115). The large petals with minimal flaring on their lower part, quite stylish at the end of the 15th and during all of the 16th century support our dating assumption.

An unexpected detail: the monastic robes of Buddhas of this period are most frequently bordered with a more or less ornate motif. Here the robe is understated, simply a line revealing the right shoulder.

This is a common feature on the oldest Tibetan figures (11th to 13th century), which were directly inspired by Indian art but made of brass and left ungilt (Von Schroeder, 2001, vol.2 p.1095, no 282D; p. 1148, no 301B). This feature, appearing in this figure can be seen as an intended archaism, a fashionable trend at the end of the 16th century and the beginning of the 17th century, following the significant development of Chinese influences.

As for the features of the face, they appear as both heavily stylised but also quite freely inspired by Chinese Buddhist statues of the Yuan period (1279-1368), specifically the slightly heavy chin appearing here. This piece is characteristic of the Tibetan production at its peak, harmoniously blending Chinese and Tibetan elements. The figure has retained its bottom plate decorated with a double vajra.

Provenance: Private French collection, piece acquired in 1974.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097026.

Bibliography:

Ulrich von Schroeder, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, 2 vol., Hong Kong : Visual Dharma Publications, 2001.

Uhlig, Helmut, *On the Path of Enlightenment. The Betty Aschmann Foundation of Tibetan Art at the Museum Rietberg Zürich*. Zürich : Museum Rietberg, 1995.



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.

Bibliography:

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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.

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



Stele of Padmapani

Black stone
Nepal
14th century
Height: 25 cm or 9 ⅝ in

Padmapani, "lord of the lotus", is the principal bodhisattva of mercy. It is also called Lokeshvara or Avalokiteshvara "the light from above". As the servant of Buddha Amitabha, it is always wearing on its crown a small representation of that one.



It holds a long-stemmed lotus in its left hand while its right hand in varadamudra position "palm forward", is a sign of granted favors.

The delicate stele is standing on a lotus flower, in a light tribhanga pose. Hayagriva and Sudhanakumara, two divinities, are crouched on either side of the statue.

The ornaments are openly presented on this bodhisattva, which is decorated with many jewelry products as bracelets, anklets, earrings with floral patterns, a pointed crown and a bead-studded and sacred necklace, which represents its caste status.

Provenance: *Private collection, France.*

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097030.

Bibliography:

Nancy Tingley, Celestial Realms, The art of Nepal, Crocker Art Museum, Sacramento, California, 2012.

Suzanne Held, Gilles Béguin, Nepal, Vision d'un art sacré, Edition Hermé, 2002.

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Seated Buddha

Hight-tin Bronze

Thailand

Dvaravati style, Prakon Chai, 7th - 8th century

Height: 11 cm or 4 ⅜ in

The Shakyamuni Buddha is depicted seated in the lotus position, his feet tightly locked with the soles turned upwards, his hands on his lap in the meditation mudra (dhyanamudra). The pierced and drooping earlobes have been distorted by the weight of heavy jewels indicating his princely rank. As a monk, he is dressed with an undergarment (antaravasaka) the lower part of which can be seen at the bottom of his calves, and with an overgarment which covers his shoulders and flares gently at the wrists. The pedestal is in the shape of a blooming lotus. A protruding metallic piece at his back, indicates that this figure stood out against a carved background.



This famous figure, published by S. Little, is characteristic of the identifiable aesthetics of the Mon-Dvaravati period. The structure of this State is not known, presumably, more than a centralised State, it was a confederation of urban centres linked to international trade and controlling surrounding countryside. This territory became a political power at the end of the 6th century controlling large sections of today's Thailand. In the south, it survived until the 11th century as a particularly prosperous region until it was reclaimed by the Khmers. In the North, the principality of Haripunjaya survived until the end of the 13th century. Theravada Buddhism prevailed in the local religious life. The Mahayana vehicle and Hinduism were little known. Two iconic sites offer a good understanding of the visual arts of this civilisation. The site of Prakon Chai, in the East of the country, revealed several bronze figures, certain of which, as for this subject piece, were disseminated by the auctioneer Spink & Son Ltd. in the seventies and early eighties. In this trove the Mon-Dvaravati pieces featured alongside pre-Ankorian figures of the Prei Khmeng style (8th century). As for the Sri-Deb site (Si Thep), in the center of the country, it produced an ensemble of exclusively Hindu sandstone figures of superior quality, of a very original style but with a questionable dating (7th - 11th century).

This figure displays pronounced ethnic features: double arched joining eyebrows, a heavy nose and a small pouting mouth, all common and typical details of Dvaravati statuary. The semi-closed eyes are the sign of deep inner meditation. The facial features bring to mind a famous standing Buddha at the national Museum in Bangkok (Baptiste-Zephir, 2009, p.218, fig 2).

Provenance: Spink & Son Ltd., London (1980s); Michael Phillips, Los Angeles (since 1980's).

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

Bibliography:

Philip Rawson, *The Art of Southeast Asia*, Thames and Hudson Ltd., London, 1967, p. 136.

Pierre Dupont, *L'archéologie mène du Dvaravati*, École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Vol. XLI, Paris, 1959.

National Museum Bangkok, *Dvaravati Art — The Early Buddhist Art of Thailand*, Bangkok 2009, p. 148 -149, fig. 20.

Staatliches Museum fuer Voelkerkunde Muenchen, *Weiter als der Horizont — Kunst der Welt*, Muenchen, 2008, fig. 118.

Pierre Baptiste et Thierry Zéphir, *Dvaravati aux sources du bouddhisme en Thaïlande*, Musée Guimet, Paris, 2009, P. 21 and 240.



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" (Uśnisa), 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 Collection.

Michael Phillips Collection, Los Angeles, since 2011.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00092556 and C14 analysis.

Published:

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 bronzes, originality and influences

The Đông Sơn culture was identified in 1924 thanks, notably, to the archaeological digs undertaken by Louis Pajot, on the eponymous site of Đông Sơn, a small village in the Thanh Hoa province, situated in northern Vietnam. Principally originating in the Red River valleys, along the Ma and Ca Rivers, the Đông Sơn culture produced, from at least 600 BCE, a very sophisticated bronze metallurgy, essentially in the form of drums, recipients of various shapes, weapons and ornaments.

The anchorage of the Đông Sơn culture in South-East Asia is worthy of mention, as well as, from the north, the penetration of Chinese influence as from the 2nd century BCE. Proof of undeniable cultural and economic exchange, Đông Sơn art not only influenced, for its part, neighbouring Chinese provinces, but also a large geographic zone including Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia and reaching the Sunda Islands where some drums (called mokko) — though more recent — are decorated in a similar fashion to Đông Sơn bronzes.

The Đông Sơn culture progressively became Sino-Vietnamese art called Giao-Chi. Vietnamese, because the metal itself and certain stylistic characteristics remained; Sino, because it is obvious that in this case the North imported its shapes and stylistic modes. The quality and interest of the historic Đông Sơn and Giao-Chi (or Han-Viet, according to a somewhat exacerbated terminology) bronzes are founded in the extraordinary confluence of two great civilisations that, far from being in opposition, united in the quest for beauty.

How can we be sure of the authenticity and integrity of bronze objects?

Given the growing interest in artworks, and more specifically in Asian art, there is a risk of some being fakes or of objects having been considerably restored, making them unacceptable for collections. Dongson bronzes are no exception, especially in view of the growing number of Western as well as Vietnamese collectors.

So how can these risks be eliminated?

It obviously starts with a vigilant selection of the people from whom we buy artwork. It is also necessary to make sure the provenance is reliable and satisfactory. This entails a visual inspection to be sure that its iconography is consistent with its presumed period, as well as to detect any restoration, problems of patina or anything that doesn't seem logical.

It is also essential to back up this initial examination with scientific analyses, the only way to ensure that the objects offered to the clientele are quality objects of confirmed integrity. The first scientific verification we carry out systematically for bronze objects involves an examination by x-ray. In the past, this has enabled us to detect masterful replications of bronze pieces as well as outrageous restorations.

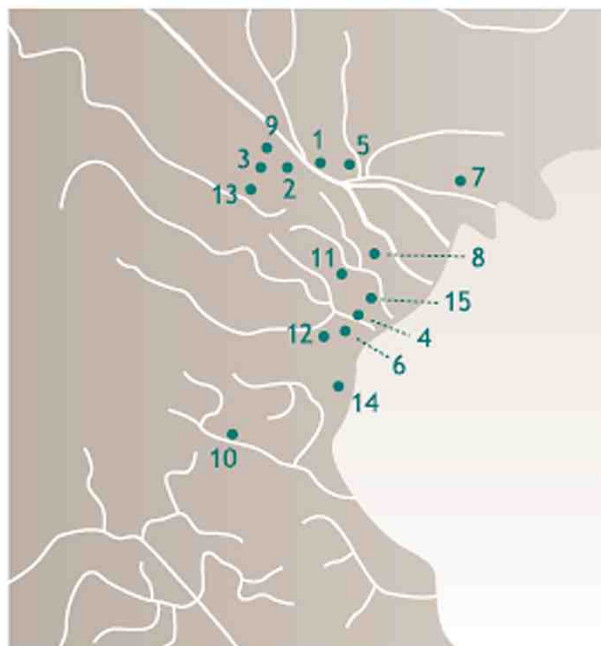
More in-depth examinations can also be carried out if necessary, either to confirm our initial conclusions or in view of the complexity or value of the piece.

- Analysis of the composition of the alloys, and comparison of the results with our data base, to see that their composition concurs with the presumed period of the object. Let's take the example of a Dongson ladle with a person represented on its handle. It was necessary to determine whether the person had been added on at a later date. A ladle decorated with a person would have much more value than one without. Analysis of the alloy of both parts of the piece - the ladle and the decoration - makes it possible to affirm or refute the piece's integrity and ensure the buyer of its quality.
- Another risk can come from restoration by touching up the patina. Infrared examination can be used to identify any difference between touched up areas and areas of natural corrosion.
- An additional inspection can be made using scanning electron microscopy.

Through a combination of applying rigorous acquisition criteria based on our expertise in this field and carrying out scientific analyses, we can offer our clientele optimum assurance of a piece's authenticity and integrity. This also explains why a large number of our pieces end up in the world's leading museums.



The main Bronze Age Đông Sơn sites



- 1 - Đông Dau
- 2 - Thanh Den
- 3 - Go Mun
- 4 - Quy Chu
- 5 - Co Loa
- 6 - Đông Sơn
- 7 - Viet Khe
- 8 - Chau Can, Xuan La
- 9 - Lang Ca
- 10 - Lang Vac
- 11 - Hoang Ha, Song Da
- 12 - Quang Xuang, Nong Cong
- 13 - Ban Thom
- 14 - Đông Hieu
- 15 - Ngoc Lu

Short Sword

**Bronze
Vietnam**

Dong Son Culture, 3rd – 1st century BC

Length: 40 cm or 15 ¾ in

Daggers make up some of the most famous bronze objects of the Dongson culture. They were used either as a weapon or as an utensil and were worn at the waist of the nobles or tribal chiefs. Some of these daggers, such as this one, were longer than others, which is why they could be classified as short swords. There were two main types of dagger in Dongson culture:

- Type A, with a pointed blade, is shaped like a long bamboo leaf and has a buffalo horn shaped handle with a spiral motif at its end. These handles can be classified into three categories: the T-shaped handle, an onion-shaped handle, or a handle with a human or animal figure at its end.
- Type B has a pointed triangular blade and is decorated with geometric shapes.



Most Type A daggers are found in the downstream part of the Red River and in the southern Tonkin regions (Ma, Chu and Ca Rivers), whereas Type B daggers are usually found in the upstream part of the Red River regions. Based on this dichotomy, without a doubt this dagger would be classified as Type A, with an anthropomorphic handle.

Figures on the handle were usually depictions of heroic tribal chiefs or eminent nobles. They could be either men or women, and in rare cases children. This dagger depicts a woman, which is somewhat exceptional. Her head is crowned with a high pyramid-shaped hat and her face is an elongated oval with a pointed chin. Her ears are adorned with large loop earrings and she has rings around her neck. She is wearing a robe, probably with a floral decor, and a wide belt. She stands erect on both legs, her fists on her hips. At the nape of her neck is a ring used to suspend the knife. On the waist and the front part are the imprint of cords, as well as on the legs of the female figure. These are not decorations but rather traces of the cording wound around this dagger's base.

These daggers were first found in the Nua Mountain region. That is why archeologists have called them "Nai Nua sword" and called the women depicted on them Lady Nai Nua. The force of the object and the richness of its decoration suggests a ritual or sacrificial use during important ceremonies that seem to have been frequent in Dong Son society. Similar daggers can be seen in the Museum of National History in Hanoi and in the Thanh Hoa Museum in Vietnam, as well as in the Huet Collection at the Musée du Cinquantenaire in Brussels. Galerie Christophe Hioco also presented a dagger with two female figures in its 2008 publication.

Microscope study revealed traces of abundant decoration and the fabric remnants present a texture that would correspond to the fabric that protected the dagger. The alloy, mainly copper and tin, is consistent with the composition of the bronze from this period. Its corrosion is proof of a long period underground. X-ray and ultraviolet detected no restoration, breakage or cracking and no painting over with pigments. The decoration on the handle was made of metals that contrasted in color with the alloy: traces of silver were found on the pyramid-shaped hat.

Provenance: Private collection, Belgium.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00091781.

Bibliography:

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



Daggers

**Bronze
Vietnam**

Dong Son Culture, circa 2nd – 1st century BC

Length: 22 cm or 8 ¾ in

Bronze daggers with human-figure handles were relatively common in Dongson culture. They belong to type A3 as presented in this catalogue (see Short Sword with Lady Figure Handle in the same catalogue, page 50). The dagger has a blade shaped like a bamboo leaf and the guard between the blade and handle is shaped like a buffalo horn.



The handle represents a male figure standing on straight short legs with his two long arms akimbo. He is naked except for a loincloth, a short rectangular flap on the back and front, decorated with a symmetrical design. On his head is a flat hat with a little indentation on one side. The man wears earrings and perhaps also a headband. His hair is coiled into two braids on his back. It's notable that the braid are joined together and curve toward his spine. The figure has a round-to-oval face. The nose is flat and the eyes are open wide. His chest is flat and has two small circles with central points.

In archaeology, there are two examples similar to this dagger. They are in Lang Ngam (Bac Ninh) and in Nui Deo (Hai Phong), both in Vietnam. This same type of dagger can also be found in many private collections.

The dagger is in good condition with green patina. The x-ray study made by CIRAM confirmed the physical health of the object except for some small restored places on the right arm, on either ends of the guard and on the right earring.

Provenance: Private collection, Belgium.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097032.

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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.*



Ritual axe-head

Bronze

Vietnam

Dong Son's culture, 3rd century BC – 1st century AD

Length: 13 cm or 5 ¼ in

The object is shaped like a battle axe but is so small that it couldn't really be used in battle. Normally, a Dongson bronze axe has a sort of head into which a wooden or bamboo handle can be inserted so it can be held and used. This handle is perpendicular to the axe head. Two holes are drilled on either side of the head so the handle can be held in place by pins. The axe blade was cast at the same time as the head and they form one body. The blade is shaped like a half-moon. Interestingly, the axe is asymmetric and the head isn't centrally positioned. That is characteristic of Dongson battle axes.



Both cheeks of the axe are decorated with an animal that looks like a crocodile. The crocodile is set inside a frame that follows the outline of the axe head. Crocodiles are often represented in Dongson bronze objects: on drums, situla, bracelets and especially belt buckles. For Dongson man, the crocodile was a mythical beast that could save him from other sacred aquatic animals.

This was probably a ceremonial axe used by shamans during Dongson ceremonies or festivities. It is a rare specimen from Dongson culture. A few were found in northern Vietnam from the late Dongson period (1st - 2nd centuries CE) but they are small and have no decoration (see axes, National Museum of Vietnamese History in Hanoi, no. 1737 and 1738).

Even more interestingly, a bronze Dongson drum was discovered recently in the Sepon region of Laos. This region is known for its copper mines, and this is one of the most important funerary sites in Southeast Asia, according to the renowned archeologist Charles Higham. This drum is decorated with a canoe filled with warriors as is often found in Dongson culture; one of the warriors is holding an axe similar to the one presented here. It is part of the collection of the National Museum of Laos in Vientiane. The date of this drum is about 3rd -2nd BCE.

This axe is in excellent condition with minor restoration. It is exceptional, both as concerns iconography and conservation. We subjected it to x-ray examination and analysis through a scanning electron microscope. The alloy's composition is characteristic of Dongson bronzes and its corrosion is consistent with having been buried for a long period of time in a humid environment. This made its corrosion more easy, leading to the patina of green malachite color.

Provenance: Private U.S. West Coast collection. Purchased in London from Alexander Goetz, 1995.

Exhibited: On loan to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts from 1996 to 2010.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097037.

Bibliography:

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.*



Ceremonial Spear-head

Bronze
Vietnam
Dong Son's culture, c. 2nd century BC
Length: 21 cm or 8 $\frac{3}{8}$ in

Native warriors from the Dongson region of Vietnam fought with axes. They were used as a weapon as well as a tool for chopping. Both axes and halberds were found together in Dongson tombs. Spearheads were also found dating from the oldest ages of these periods, along with axes and daggers, all of which were the classical weaponry of the Dongson warrior. According to archeologists, this spearhead is the type found in the Red River area of northern Vietnam. It has a central spine slightly thicker than the rest of the surface. In 1976, human remains were found in a Dongson cemetery, along with a similar spearhead. That spearhead was cast in a mold with two symmetric parts. Its central spine was also thicker, providing reinforcement.



One essential element that makes this piece rare is the richness of its decoration, which was carved into the clay mold used to cast the bronze. The artist first drew a border around the spearhead about 5 mm from the edge. The slightly rounded central spine split this border into two symmetric halves. Each half is richly decorated with human figures and crocodiles. The man is seated, naked, wearing a feather headdress similar to the feathered warriors seen in a canoes found on situla and drums (see the situla in the Galerie Christophe Hioco catalogue, "Bronzes from Vietnam: symbols of emotion", Object No. 16). The heads of these men face the throat of the spear while the crocodiles face the tip. Crocodiles are often represented on bronze objects (drums, situla and especially belt buckles) from the Dongson culture, being a sacred animal that could save people from other aquatic animals. This iconography is extremely rare and a similar spearhead is part of a California collection, with a feathered warrior sitting on a drum and surrounded by deer. Another is in the National Museum of Vietnamese History in Hanoi. An object so richly decorated could only be a ceremonial spear used by a tribal chief during shaman ceremonies or festivities. It probably dates from the 3rd or 2nd century BC.

We examined this spearhead by x-ray and by studying a sample under a metallographic microscope and a scanning electron microscope. It was also studied under ultraviolet and infrared light to determine if there was any restoration. It confirmed the excellent condition of the piece with only minor restoration, intended to conserve the piece. This bronze has a layer of corrosion which developed over a long time, the alloy's composition being consistent with bronzes from this Dongson period. The corrosion, which is natural and helped create the olive green patina, is generally called noble patina in that there is no deformation or cavities, and forms a natural barrier to protect the metal. It's interesting to note that we found no traces of attachments nor holes, implying that this spearhead was simply held in place by friction.

Provenance: Private U.S. West Coast collection. Purchased in London from Alexander Goetz, 1995.

Exhibited: On loan to the Minneapolis Institute of Arts from 1996 to 2010.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097036.

Bibliography:

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.*



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.

Published: *Christophe Hioco, Vietnamese bronzes, The symbolism of emotion, Paris, 2010.*

Bibliography:

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



Metal Scales

High Iron Bronze

Cambodia

Pre-Funan Culture, 1st – 2nd century

Length: 24 cm or 9 ½ in

The scales consist of three objects: a stick with two hanging rings, a weight, and a basket-like disc to be suspended with rope. In principle the stick must have had a rope at its midpoint to suspend it from while weighing. In the laboratory the researcher found traces of fabric on the stick, either from a piece of clothing or from part of the bag the scales were kept in.



The weight is shaped like a droplet or a penis. On top of the weight, two men sit back-to-back in the Buddha position, their arms on their knees. They are naked except for loincloths and some spiral markings can be seen on their shoulders. They are linked to the weight. There is a bronze ring between the heads of the two figures; it's used to suspend the weight from the end of the balance stick.

At the other end of the stick would hang the round disc. It is shaped like a round sun in the center with rays branching out from it. The disc has eight small rings on its bottom side where a rope could have been run to hang it from the stick. In practice, the disc is too small to counterbalance the weight, so the scales may perhaps have been only symbolic or ceremonial.

The scales may be made of bronze with a high iron content. The three parts were cast using a lost-wax mold. X-ray images very clearly show traces of the wax used to mold the disc.

Such scales can be seen in the collections of the Barbier-Mueller Museum in Geneva, and those of Martin Doustar in Paris and Karim Gussmayer in Geneva. No archaeological context has yet been found for this kind of scales. Laboratory researchs confirmed the good condition of the scales except for some small crack repairs on the disc and on the stick. We can date such scales from around 1st - 2nd, putting it in the Pre-Funan Period.

Provenance: Private collection, Belgium.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097035.

Bibliography:

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

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.*



Musician

Bronze
Cambodia
Pre-Funan Culture, 1st – 2nd century
Height: 11.5 cm or 4 ¾ in

This represents a man sitting in a sort of chair with feet made of or wrapped in rope and the seat between two posts. The ring over his head was meant for hanging the object, either for use as a weight for scales or simply as a pendant. His hair is in long braids wound like snail shells. It's interesting to note that, in spite of the natural corrosion that accumulated over the years, those braids are still clearly visible.



The man is naked except for a loincloth, and his body is decorated with spirals characteristic of Dongson culture - Bandiang or Battambang style for the city in Cambodia near the great Tonlé Sap Lake. His shoulders, chest and legs are decorated. He's holding a wind instrument called a khen. It is made up of sort of woven pouch from which run several bamboo pipes. The instrument is actually a type of mouth organ found throughout Southeast Asia in the Bronze Age, in the Dongson and Dian cultures. The very fine impression of the woven seat of the chair leads us to conclude that this bronze was cast using the lost-wax technique.

The musician is covered by a thin green patina. Slight crazing on the arms and legs indicates the presence of iron in the alloy. X-ray analysis confirmed its excellent conservation, as both texture and density are uniform with no trace of breakage or restoration.

The shape of the musician's head doesn't resemble that of Dongson human figures. Likewise, his hairdo and sturdy build are more similar to those of central or southern Indochina, regions with close relations to Dongson and Bandiang cultures. It could be of pre-Funan culture dating from the 1st or 2nd century C.E. Excavations in the Lang Vac cemetery in Vietnam and Ban Chiang in Thailand, as well as Charles Higham's recent digs along the Mun River in northern Thailand, have unearthed numerous objects decorated with spirals. This would suggest a broader context for that culture to which these human figures might belong.

There are comparable pieces in several private collections. The first object of this sort was found in Laos by Mrs. Madeleine Colani, an archeologist from the French School of the Far East in Hanoi. It was made of bronze and represented a young man standing. That piece may be in the reserves of the National Museum of Vietnamese History in Hanoi. A plaster copy was made by Swedish archeologist Johan Andersen during his stay in Hanoi in 1937. The copy is kept in the reserves of the Museum of Far Eastern Arts in Stockholm. It should also be mentioned that an extremely similar piece, minus the musical instrument, is in the collection of Dr. Kurt Saxelmair in Munich, and was on display until recently at the Museum of Asian Arts in Berlin. This piece was shown in Martin Doustar's publication "Art of the Bronze Age in Southeast Asia" in 2013.

Provenance: *Private collection, Belgium.*

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097034.

Published: *Martin Doustar, Art of the Bronze Age in Southeast Asia, 2013.*

Bibliography:

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

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.



Breast Plate

Bronze

Vietnam

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

Height: 12 cm or 4 ¾ in

On this square plate – destined, according to some archaeologists, to protect soldiers' chests – figure highly remarkable symmetrical decorations, with relatively stylised motifs, representing the well-known boats typical of the Đông Sơn.



Each vessel carries feathered figures, seen in profile, that can easily be assimilated with soldiers. The centre of the plaque is ornamented by a geometrical double-hook motif surrounded by fish that are represented in a realistic fashion. Extremely similar double hooks decorate bronzes, basketwork and fabrics in tribal cultures of the Malay Archipelago. It is interesting to note that concentric designs were still used in the 20th century in embroidery and are still worn today by the Miao tribe of Northern Vietnam.

Cast using the lost wax technique, rather than by repoussé (as was long believed), this plate was found with others in the tombs of the region of the Đông Sơn village in the province of Thanh Hoa. As the plates were discovered next to weapons, they can be assimilated with attributes of masculine warriors. The holes, visible at each corner of the plate, are likely to have been used to attach the breastplate to a war tunic, at one and the same time an element of prestige and apophylactic object.

Provenance: Private collection, France.

Art Loss Register Certificate, ref. S00097033.

Bibliography:

Jean-Paul Barbier-Mueller, *Rêves de Collection, Sept millénaires de sculptures inédites – Europe, Asie, Afrique*, Somogy Editions d'Art, Musée Barbier-Mueller, Paris, Genève, 2003, p. 72.

Nguyen Viet (et alii), "Situles en bronze de Đông Sơn" in *Arts & Culture*, Somogy, Editions d'Art, Publications des musées Barbier-Mueller, Paris, Genève, 2006, p. 234 - 271.

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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.

Published: *Christophe Hioco, Vietnamese bronzes, The symbolism of emotion, Paris, 2010.*

Bibliography:

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



Cover:

Head of Buddha

Grey schist

Ancient region of Gandhara

Circa 2nd century

Height: 25 cm or 9 ⁵/₈ in

Back cover:

Ewer

Bronze

Vietnam

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

Height: 28 cm or 11 ¹/₈ in

GALERIE CHRISTOPHE HIOCO

72 Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré

75008 Paris - France

By appointment only

Tel. +33 (0) 1 53 30 09 65

info@galeriehioco.com



www.galeriehioco.com