





FROM AESTHETIC TO DIVINE

Gauchet Asian Art 2018



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WORKS OF ART & SACRED FIGURES

Although the historical Buddha, Prince Siddhartha Gautama, native of India, lived about 2,500 years ago, Buddhism is widely viewed as one of the most modern of all existing religions. Increasing fascination toward the peaceful philosophy of Buddhism in the West and over the world is mainly due to a growing need to deepen one's spiritual experience.

Occasional encounters between the Buddhist world and Western civilization occurred for thousands of years, such as the Greco-Buddhist syncretism which flourished between the 4th century BC and the 5th century AD.

It is important to understand that the early popularity of Buddhism, which rooted in India and was passed down by oral tradition before being written down about four hundred years later, was mainly due to its nontheistic, non-dogmatic, nonviolent individual practice rather than institutional membership and obligations. It then had a very inclusive and tolerant approach of earlier religious cults which still applies today.

As we can appreciate the extraordinary images made of wood, stone, bronze, lacquer and ivory, wherever Buddhism travelled in Asia, it brought its art, a sensibility molded from a deep-rooted humanism. From India the essence of this refined awareness spread all

over Asia, reaching Sri Lanka to the South, Afghanistan, Central Asia, Tibet and Mongolia to the North, Burma, Thailand, Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam to the South-East, and as far as China, Korea and Japan.

Buddhist art always endeavored to render the serene and peaceful expression of spiritual awakening on physical supports. Among the Tibetan tradition, the production of Densatil monastery illustrates perfectly this objective. Located in the high mountains of Central Tibet, it was founded at the end of the 12th century and flourished as one of the cornerstones of Buddhist art throughout Tibet, reaching its peak at the turn of the 15th century.

Entirely destroyed in the second half of the 20th century, it was then assumed that none of its art had survived but some rare relics saved by devotees, military personnel and other explorers is now spread around in private collections and cultural institutions. We are proud to contribute to the reassembling of this sanctified sanctuary by exhibiting a magnificent exemplar of these closely guarded relics.

*Bianca Massard & Jean Gauchet
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HEAD OF FASTING SIDDARTHA

*Gray Schist
Height: 11 cm*

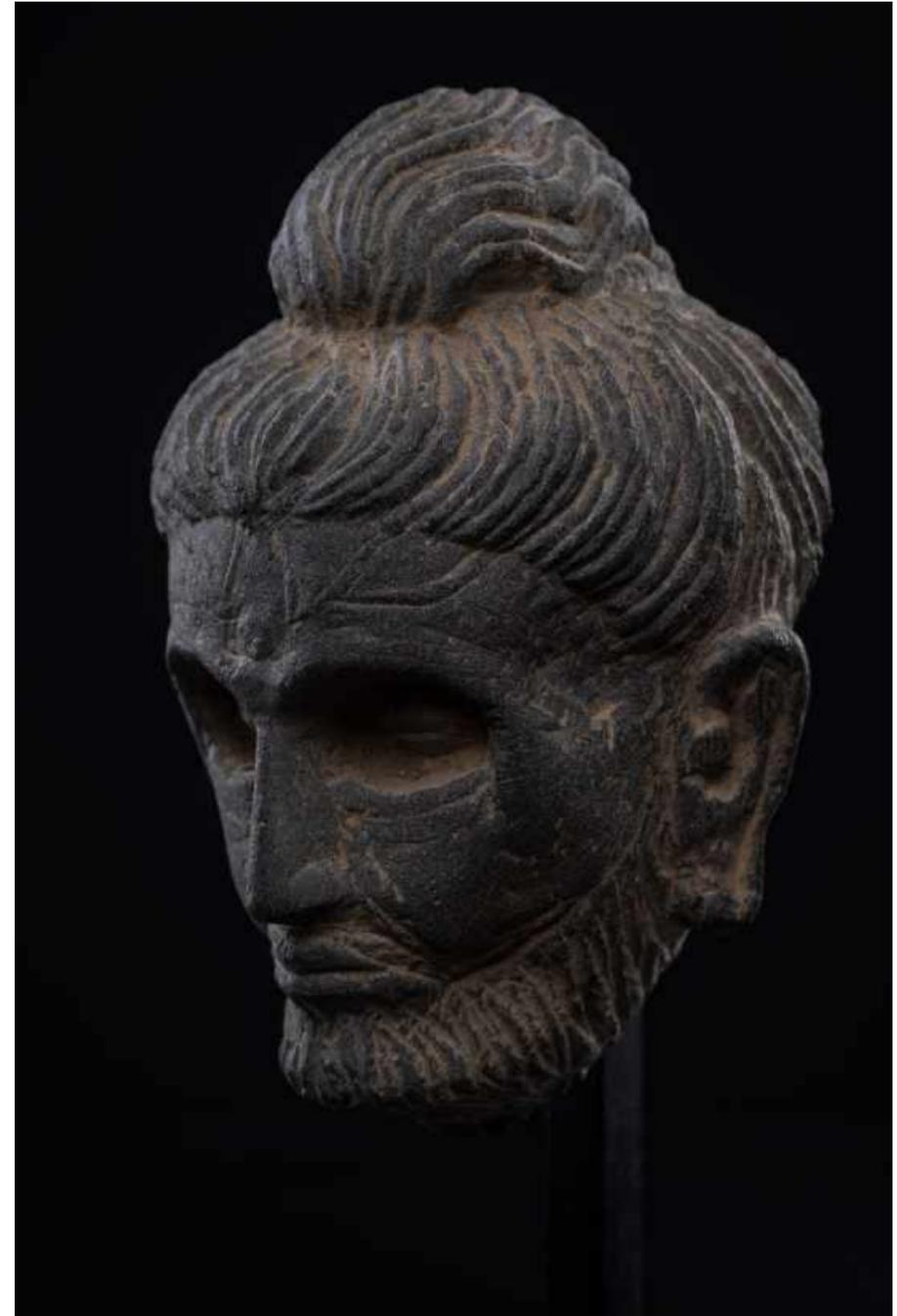
Ancient region of Gandhara, Kushan period, 2nd-3rd century

This emaciated face belongs to the Buddha-to-be Siddhartha before his Awakening while he practiced extreme austerities. As told in his life story, after his departure from his father's palace and renouncement to the world he studied under the guidance of different masters. As he could not find with them the Liberation he was searching for he left to lead an ascetic life near the Nairāñjana river during six years. Feeding only on one grain of rice per day, his body became so emaciated that one could see his nerves and subtle channel under his skin.

This impressive sculpture illustrates this very moment. With long hair tied in a topknot and a beard, in the manner of a yogi, the bodhisattva has hollow eyes surrounded by dark rings and his skull appears under his skin. Veins are visible on his brow, surrounding a fading urna.

This type of realistic representations originated from the Gandhara region. The face and hair treatment are typical of this Greco-Buddhist tradition.





Provenance:
Formerly in an Italian private collection gathered in the 80's

For a similar head sold at auction, see Christie's New York, 18 march 2015 lot 4012

2

A HAND OF BODHISATTVA MAITREYA

*Gray Schist
Length: 21 cm*

Ancient region of Gandhara, Kushan period, 2nd-3rd century

Each finger and nail are carefully carved, modelled from real life and holding a wrapped wreath.
A pair of beaded bracelets encircle the wrist.





Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (South of France)

*For a similar hand see Himalayan Art Resources
(Item no.61561)*

3

BODHISATTVA PROBABLY MAITREYA

*Gray schist
Height: 51.5 cm*

Ancient region of Gandhara, Kushan Period, 2nd-3rd century

The bodhisattva - possibly the future Buddha Maitreya - stands in contrapposto haloed on a high lotus pedestal (partly erased).

Clad in a long pleated dhoti with thick folds and wearing an uttariya draped around the left shoulder, he is adorned with a heavy necklace, a rope with amulet boxes across his chest reminding the sacred thread, earrings, bracelets and anklets. The upper part of his hair is tied in a top-knot forming an ushnisha covered with beaded threads forming a web, the lower part of his hair falling onto his shoulders. He has a round urna in between his arched eyebrow and wears a wavy mustache.

The right hand would have displayed an abhayamudra and the left hand probably held a kamandalu.

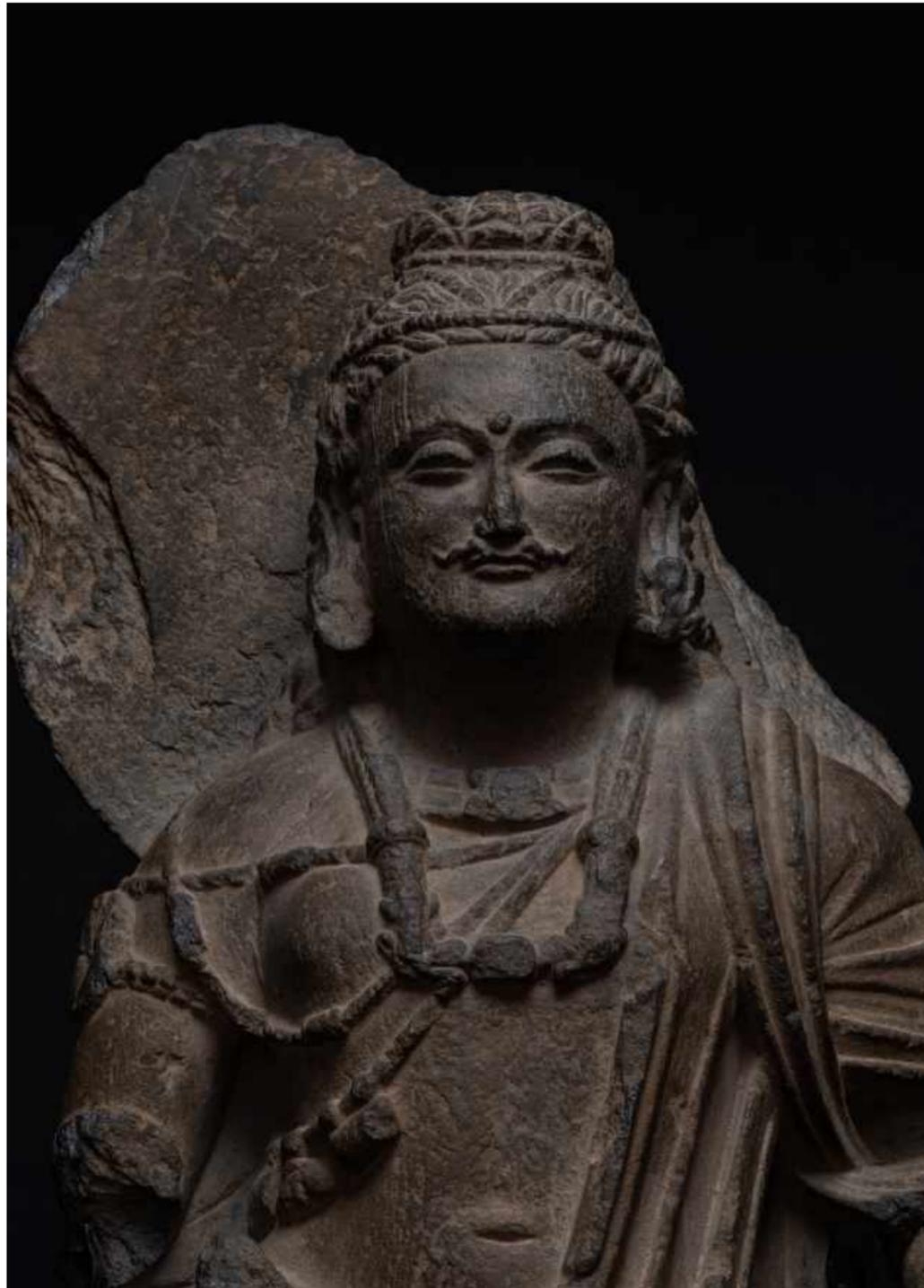


M. ALEXANDRE NICOLAI

Provenance :
*Alexandre Nicolai (1864-1952)
Bordeaux*

Lawyer at the Bordeaux court of appeal, he also was an active member in several learned societies and scholarly associations and was head of the secretary general commission of the Bordeaux Archeological Society and treasurer in the Gironde Historical Archive.





For a similar drapery and pedestal style, compare to a figure in the British Museum published in W. Zwalf: A Catalogue of the Gandhara Sculpture in the British Museum, London. 1996. p.42. fig.60

*See also the Bodhisattva Foucher, Musée Guimet, Paris
Gandhara and Mathura are important center of Buddhist art of the Kushan Empire and well-known for having innovated the Buddha image but also for the peculiarities of Bodhisattva iconography.*

As for Maitreya iconography, the Ancient region of Gandhara has produced hundreds of sculptural representations of the deity, distinct from the Mathura school in their style and iconographical features.

According to Foucher (A. Foucher, 1918, Vol. II, p.232), the original form of Maitreya in Gandhara sculpture is a strictly ornate version of the deity Brahma. In addition to Foucher, Soper (A. Soper, 1959, p.217) has also suggested that the Maitreya image type may have been borrowed from the iconography created for the god Brahma, and that both represent the quintessence of Brahmanism. Therefore, the characteristics for the image of Maitreya lie in two important symbols: the bow-knot and the kamandaly (water pot) in addition to the Bodhisattva ornamentation.

Even if the chronology of Gandhara's sculpture is one of the most controversial, we acknowledged that no independent figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas were found in the first period (1st-2nd century), and they are normally required for placing in niches around the stupa and perhaps on the temple walls (Shellgrove, 1978, p.102)

Symbolism and signification of the iconographical features

Regarding the specific iconographical features of the Maitreya images, the nimbus around the head presents the character as a divine being.

The ushnisha defines him as being a Great being (Skt. Mahapurusha) in the same manner as the Buddha.

The « top-knot » hair style, separated from the head by a tiny band has to be related to the shape of ushnisha of the Buddha images from Gandhara and it differs from the so-called « bow-knot » type seen in many of the sculptural images of Maitreya from this region.

4

A RARE ROCK CRYSTAL FIGURE OF BODHISATTVA

*Carved in smokey rock crystal
Height: 15 cm*

Ancient region of Gandhara, Kushan period, (3rd-4th century)

The figure is carved with his hair in « top-knot » type above a serene face, the round urna between the eyebrows, the eyes downcast and wearing the dothi, the uttariya looped around the left shoulder adorned with jewelry.

The right hand performs the Abhayamudra while the left holds the kamandalu.

This representation is strictly similar to the Gandhara images of the Bodhisattva Maitreya.

Objects carved in rock crystal were popular among both the Hindus and the Buddhists from the ancient times right through Mughal period. The clear and glass like or sphatikam were regarded as precious stones and recommended for the fashioning of images and lingae.

See The stone sculpture of India : a study of the materials used by Indian sculptors from the 2nd to the 16th century

From the Kushan period see the carved goose found in Taxila, Gandhara (1st CE) now at the British Museum, under the accession number 1867,0427.2

A reliquary stupa at the Art Gallery NSW, Sydney under the accession number 287.2007.a-j

The Guennol Collection, Vol. 3, The Brooklyn Museum, p. 83





Provenance :
Private UK collection, London early 1970s
Jonathan Tucker Antonia Tozer Asian Art, London, 2017
Private French collection, Paris



5 A RARE STANDING TARA

*Carved wood.
Height: 101.5 cm*

Nepal, Kathmandu valley. Early Malla period, 13th-14th century

This graceful goddess Tara stands in a delicate tribhanga stance atop a circular base (possibly a lotus), her hips gently swinging to the right. Her left arm is extended to her side while her right hand would have been raised in abhaya mudra.

She wears an elaborate five-petals crown with disk earrings, a long dothi and a stylized sash draped across her hips and falling between her legs.

The face bears a serene and peaceful expression with arched eyebrows and elongated half closed eyes sculpted in contemplative stance. The ridge of her nose is slightly curved and her mouth is delicate, with small full lips give a faint smile.

The muscular thighs and arms and the large shoulders as well as the stiffness of the overall position with only the left leg slightly bent forward witness an early carving style from Newar artists.

This standing form of Tara was made in Nepal as early as in the 12th century, though stylistically she retains much of the 8th century Kashmir influence.



Provenance:

Private French Collection, Paris, 1970

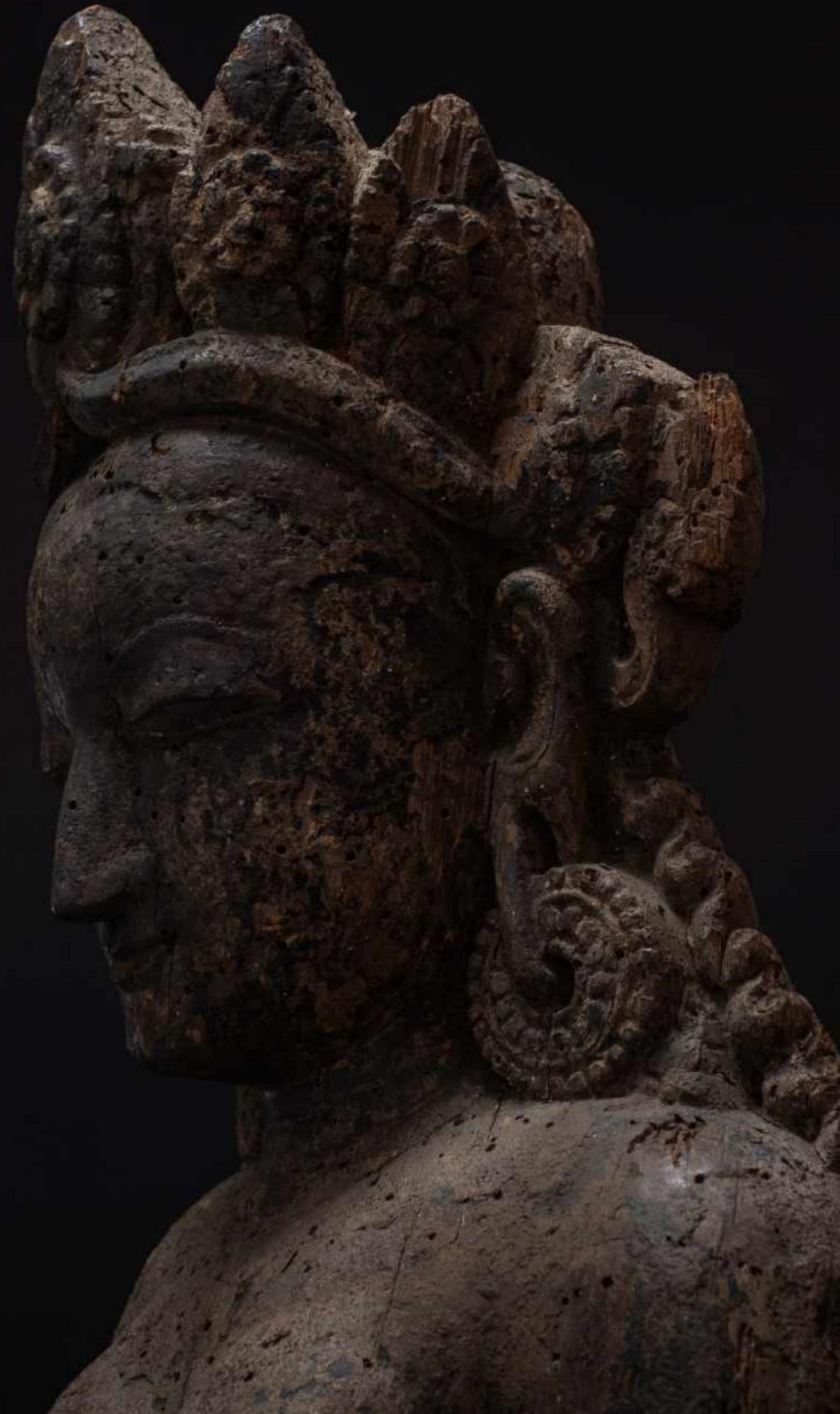
The arms free of any clothing, the piece of wood connecting the left hand to the body and the extremely narrow junction between the upper and lower body, right above the hips, are all signs of a quite early Malla carving.

Although of slightly later dating, we can compare our sculpture to the wooden Tara in the Art Institute of Chicago (acc. Number 2014.1035) especially the very fine facial features and aquiline nose.

Regarding the ornamentation, a comparable image of the same period - though made of copper - can be seen in Indo-Tibetan Bronzes. This Tara statue presents similarities with the present sculpture, especially concerning the tiara, the earrings, the dhoti with the sash and the tribhanga.

A Carbone 14 test from QED Laboratoire, France comes with this lot

Von Schroeder (1981), Indo-Tibetan Bronzes, 88F p.344-345, 13th c. Tara



6

FIGURE OF SEATED GANESHA

*Bronze. Dark patina. Gilt traces
Height: 11 cm*

Cambodge, Angkor period, 13th century

The elephant-headed god is represented seated with four hands holding attributes among which one of his broken tusk. Dressed only with a pleated sarong secured by a large decorated belt and folding under his belly, his head is crowned with a tiara and he is adorned with a necklace, bracelets, anklets and armbands. A snake going from his left shoulder represents the sacred thread (Skt. *yajñyopavīta*) passing under his protruding belly, symbol of abundance and the digestion of all good and bad deeds.





Provenance:

*Formerly in the Marcel et Chantal Gerbe Collection.
Gathered In the United States in the 80's*

Son of Shiva and Parvati, Ganesha, the god of wealth and abundance, is an auspicious and revered Hindu deity. He removes obstacles (vighna) and protects his worshipers

A comparable 13th century bronze can be seen in the National Museum of Cambodia's collection in Phnom Penh (Inventory n°Ga5987)

7

SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

*China, Ming dynasty, circa 15th-16th century
Patinated bronze*

Height: 33.5 cm

Seated in vajrasana upon a double lotus base, clad in the monastic garment, the historical Buddha Shakyamuni performs the gesture of taking the earth as witness (Skt. bhumisparshamudra) with his right hand while his left rests in contemplation upon his lap. This representation evokes his victory over Mara (Skt. maravijaya) one of the famous episode of his life most often represented.

With typical Chinese stylistic features such as the plump cheeks, double chin and full lips, he displays all the marks of a Great Being, namely the ushnisha or cranial protuberance, the small curls of hair, the elongated earlobes, the three lines on his neck, the half-closed eyes and the enigmatic smile. Both his shoulders are covered by the samghati and the antaravasaka appears folded under his breast, a manner of representing him inherited from Chinese and Central Asian tradition. The rim of his folding robes is engraved and the points of the lotus petals are turned into a scroll pattern. This fine bronze presents traces of red lacquer.

Provenance:

*Formerly in a French private collection (South-Eastern France)
Gathered between 1970 and 1980 on the French art market*







8

**A PAIR OF SMALL FIGURES
OF BODHISATTVAS**

*Gilt bronze and marble stand
Height: 4.5 et 5 cm
China, Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907)*

Cast in mirror image, the figures are each seated on a tiered lotus base, with one arm resting on the raised knee, one figure holding a covered jar and the other holding a whisk. Both characters are wearing a thin dhoti and heavy necklaces. The hair is ornate with tiaras.



Provenance :
Formerly in the Marcel et Chantal Gerbe Collection.
Christie's New-York, 2/12/1989, lot number 37

A large group of similar seated Bodhisattvas in the Idemitsu Museum of Arts, Tokyo is illustrated in "Ancient Chinese Art in the Idemitsu Collection, 1989, pl. 347"

9

A BRONZE FIGURE OF AMITAYUS BUDDHA

*Gilt-bronze and repoussé copper
Height: 21.5cm*

*China, Qianlong mark and period.
Dated Gengyin year, corresponding to 1770*

Cast seated in dhyanasana on a rectangular plinth, Amitayus rests with his hands in dhyanamudra.

Dressed with a simple dhoti and a scarf passed across his torso over the left shoulder leaving the right uncovered he is adorned with earrings, beaded necklace, armbands and bracelets. With his hair partly loose and partly tied in a voluminous topknot adorned with a jewel his face wears a meditative expression. The Buddha is backed by a separately cast flaming mandorla and the front of the plinth bears an inscription reading *Da Qing Qianlong gengyin nian jingzao* ("Respectfully made in the gengyin year during the Qianlong period in the Great Qing dynasty", corresponding to 1770)





Provenance :

Formerly in a French private collection (South of France)

According to Marsha Smith Weidner in 'Cultural Intersections in later Chinese Buddhism', 2001:

Amitayus, or Wuliang shou fo in Chinese, is of supreme importance in China because he is believed to be the Buddha who bestows long life. His Chinese name alone would support this notion, for "wuliang shou" means "boundless longevity". His presence was a must on imperial birthdays during the Qing dynasty. As auspicious and celebratory objects, images of Amitayus could clearly also perform noniconic functions (...). Thousands of Amitayus figures were given, for instance, to the mother of the Qianlong emperor during her sixtieth, seventieth, and eightieth birthday celebration. (...) The Qianlong emperor not only commissioned Amitayus images, he also received them as gifts. On one birthday, he was given 19,934 statues of this Buddha (1).

(1). Such volume of production can be explained by casting methods. Reusable molds allowed production of large series of images. See Ulrich Von Schroeder, Indo-Tibetan Bronzes Hong Kong: Visual Dharma publications, 1981), 536.

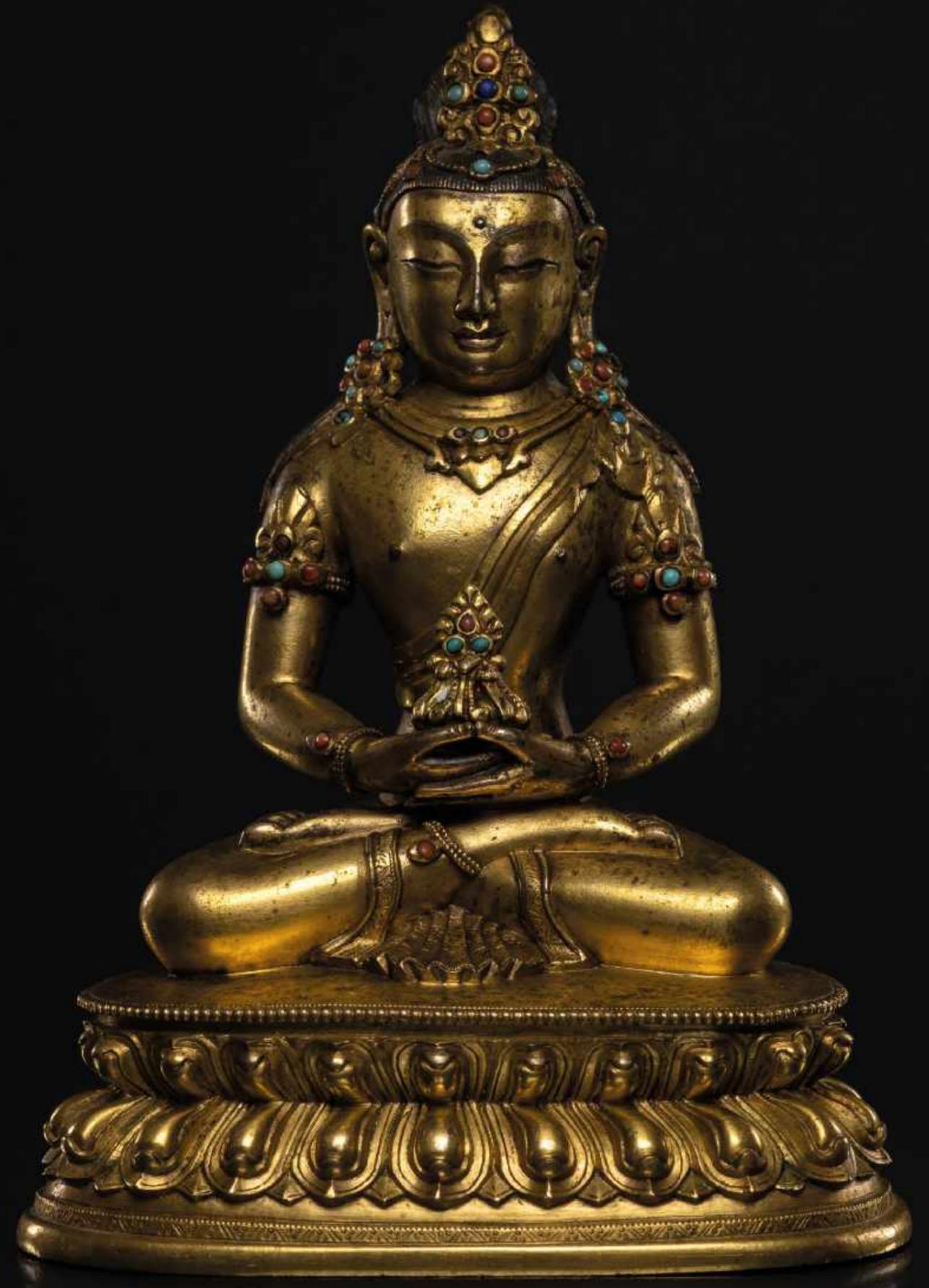
A MAGNIFICENT GILT-BRONZE FIGURE OF AMITAYUS

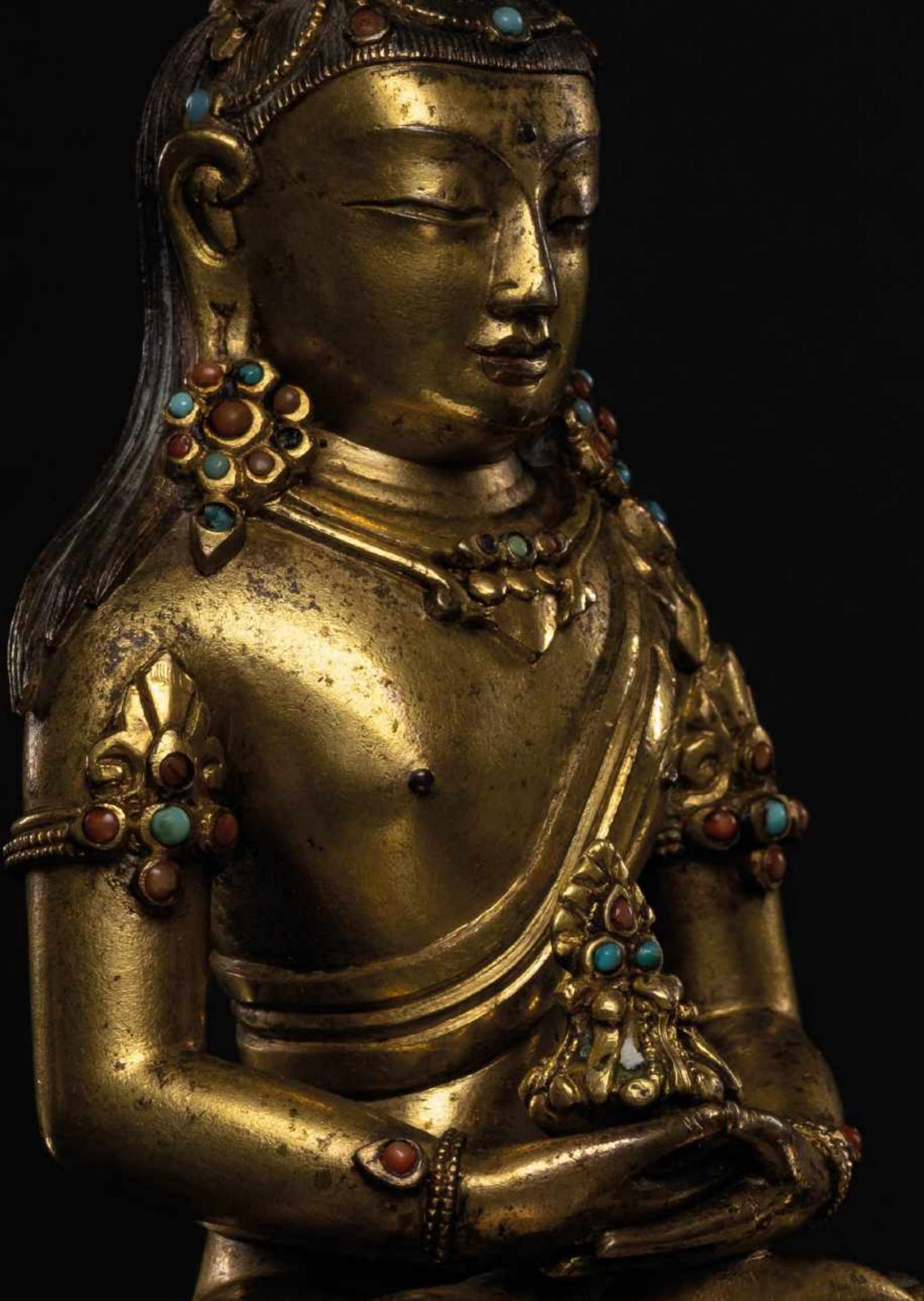
*Gilt bronze and semi-precious stone inlays
Height: 17.5cm*

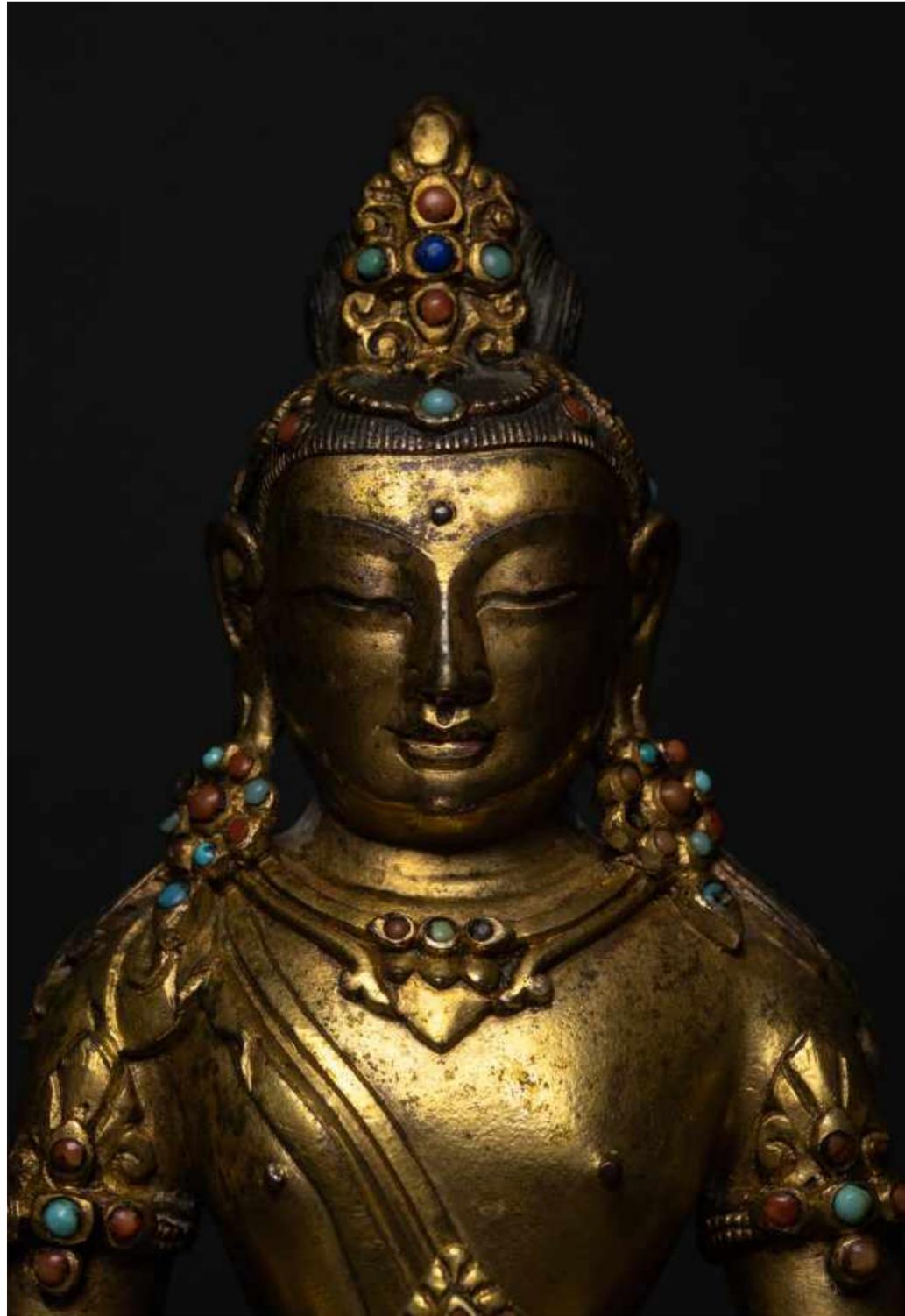
Dolonnor, Inner Mongolia. 18th century

Heavy casted bronze covered with a fine yellowish orange gilding, the divinity is seated in vajrasana, on a double lotus base. His hands in dhyana mudra support a longevity vase filled with amrita and he wears a pleated dhoti, a scarf covering the left shoulder and is adorned with fine turquoise and coral inlaid jewellery. The hair is pulled in high chignon and secured with further jewellery with locks flowing down over his shoulders. The face bears a serene expression, with the eyes half closed and a fleshy mouth still displaying traces of ancient red polychromy.

This gilt-bronze figure of Amitayus is of particularly high quality casting, the details of the faces, jewellery, robes and base rendered with a distinct quality greater than typical mass-produced 18th century gilt-bronze Buddhist figures, suggesting that it may have been created for use in an Imperial temple







¹ Himalayan Art Ressources (item no. 10319)

Amitayus (Infinite Life) is another name of Buddha Amitabha (of Infinite Light), Lord of the Lotus family presiding over the Western Pure Land (Sukhavati). In Tibetan Buddhism, he is a sambhogakaya aspect devoted to longevity and rites ensuring a long life. Beside his fame in Tibet, Amitayus is also very popular in Mongolia as well as in China.

Very similar bronze examples possibly coming from the same workshop are published in Himalayan Art Ressources, item number 10319 and 33815 which belongs the British Museum Collections¹. This sculpture displays the same type of lotus petals with round curly ends, very similar jewellery, inlays and an ornamented chignon. Although both figures show many comparable features, we will outline that the present sculpture displays richer earrings and upper arm bracelets. Also note the fine chiselling of the band below the lower lotus row, a type of repetitive pattern which we often encounter in Mongolian gilt bronze pieces of good calibre.

*Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (Paris)*

HEAD OF THE LOKAPLA VIRŪPĀKSA, GUARDIAN OF THE WEST

*Gilt bronze and semi-precious stones inlays
Height: 24cm*

Tibet, Densatil. 15th century

This most refined masterpiece represents the head of one of the four Lokapāla, the Guardian kings of the World, according to the Buddhist tradition.

Of mongoloid appearance, bearing an enigmatic smile, he wears an elaborated crown with ribbons. With its elongated eyes and a slight frown, this fire-gilded copper face displays a strong expression of might.

Cast in one piece using the lost-wax technique, this head shows a particular refinement and a great artistic mastery.

The front leaf of the crown shows delicate inserts of semi-precious stones within a pattern of flames and foliage and a garuḍa eating a snake.

Between two rows of pearls, stones are also inserted on the band of his tiara above small curls of hair, an aesthetic element highly prized by Tibetans. Two locks of hair are wrapped around his ears.

The back of his head reveals an elaborated lamellar helmet typical of those worn by Tibetan warriors. The bowl of the helmet has foliage patterns and is topped with hangings ribbons and the finial supporting Amitābha, Lord of the Lotus family and Buddha of the West.

The presence of the latter connects our head to this direction, allowing us to identify him as Virūpākṣa (Tib. *mig mi bzang*), Guardian King of the West. According to the sources this name could either mean "the one with particoloured eyes" or "with a threatening look"¹.

Of Nepalese-Tibetan style, this head are doubtlessly connected to the Densatil production of the 15th century.

¹ Mallmann (1986), p.452 ; Béguin et Drilhon (1984)





Provenance:

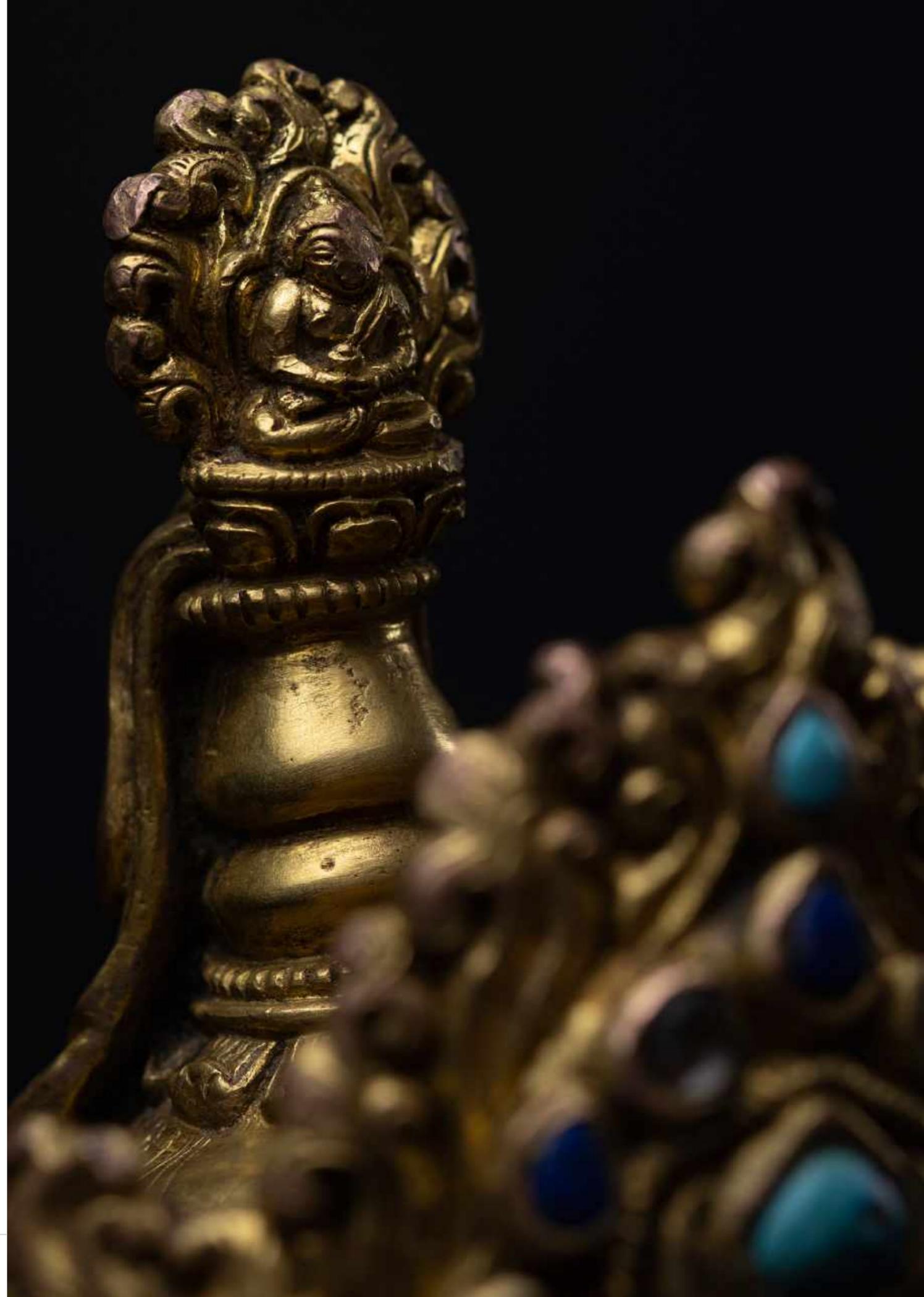
Formerly in a UK private collection

Strongly resembling masterpieces can be seen on the Densatil photographs taken by Mele and Tucci in the 1940s as well as in the collections of Musée Guimet in Paris and the Capital Museum in Beijing.

Densatil (Tib. gDan sa mthil) is a monastery of the Kagyü school of Tibetan Buddhism founded in the 12th century by the great master Phag mo gru pa (1110-1170). During the 14th and 15th century a noble family connected to this particular school had political control over Tibet. Under their rule the great chapel of the monastery was stuffed with rich artistic production comprising eighteen reliquaries where their religious and political leaders were buried. These monumental reliquaries were surrounded by lavishly ornate gilt copper sculptures among which we found our Lokapāla. As explained by Ulrich von Schroeder⁽²⁾

These statues were cast by Newar craftsmen in a style adapted to Tibetan taste. Yet, since the Lokapāla were artistic figures imported from Chinese tradition these statues correspond to the Sino-Tibetan style executed by Nepalese artists.

² Von Schroeder (2001), *Buddhist sculptures in Tibet*, vol. II p. 1010



The striking resemblance and stylistic similarities between our head and the statues shown on both the Densatil photographs and the identified statues from the museum collections doubtlessly connects this sculptural element to those of the famous monastery.

References

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- de MALLMANN, Marie-Thérèse, 1986, *Introduction à l'iconographie du tântrisme bouddhique*, Adrien Maisonneuve, Paris

- von SCHROEDER, Ulrich, 2001, *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, II vols., Visual Dharma Publications, Hong Kong

Images

1 - Densatil. Photo by Pietro Francesco Mele, 1948, (courtesy of Ulrich von Schroeder)

2 - Virûpâksa. Cuivre doré, incrusté, art sino-tibétain, XV^e siècle, musée Guimet, Paris (cliché R.M.N.).



1



2

VAJRADHARA WITH HIS CONSORT

*Bronze with silver and copper inlays
Height: 13 cm*

Sino-Tibet, 15th century

Sitting with his legs crossed in vajraparyāṅka upon a double lotus seat is the primordial Buddha Vajradhara (Tib. *rdo rje 'chang*). Incarnation of all the Buddhas, the great "Vajra bearer" is usually described with a blue complexion like pure lapis-lazuli.

With one face and two hands, his crossed arms hold a vajra and a bell. Ribbons of multi-coloured silk float around him and he wears a dhoti. He is adorned with the precious crown, the earrings, the necklaces, and all the variety of precious ornaments of the sambhogakāya. On his lap seats his consort embracing him with her legs and arms. Adorned with the bone ornaments, her left hand holds a skull cup while her right brandishes a curved blade here missing.

The statue presents a high level of precision in its details. The elaborated five points crown has a central petal in the shape of a lotus flower, the hair - partly tied in a bun - is topped by a half-vajra, and ribbons swirls around his ears. The long dance scarf wrapped around his shoulders and arms is engraved with foliage design and fall down to his knees.

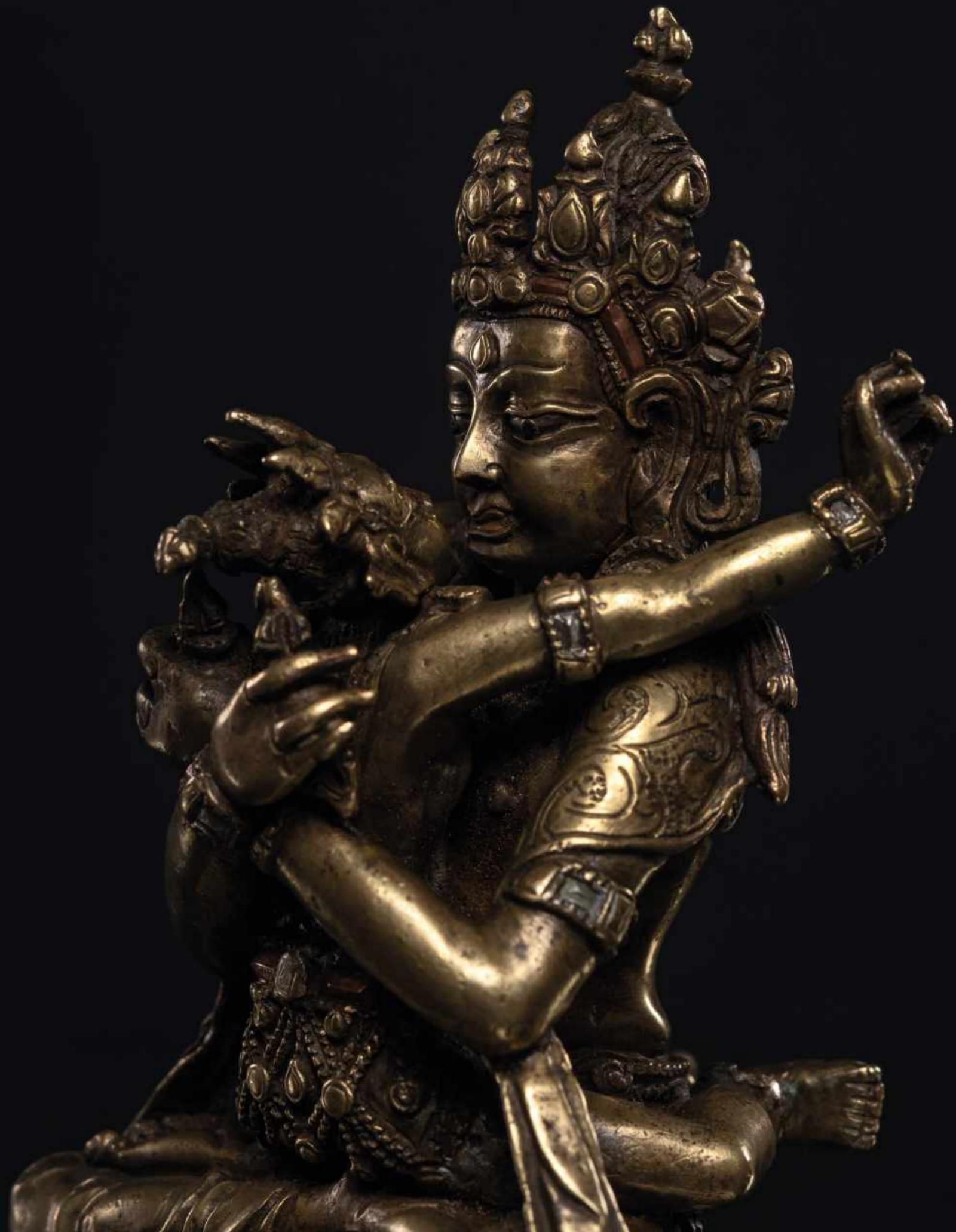
Cast in copper alloy, the statue is inserted with silver and copper inlay visible in the eyes and lips of the deity, the jewelry and some elements of the garment such as the belt.

Regarding the lotus seat, the central part of the two rows of facing petals is ornate with scroll pattern and the upper edge of the lotus is marked with lines of dots representing the stamen of the flower. This style is typical from the 15-16th century production.





*Provenance:
Formerly in a Swiss private collection (Geneva)*



།སངས་རྒྱལ་འཕགས་པའི་བཟུང་བཞེངས།།

Sans rgyas rdor 'chang maitri vajra bzhengs
"The Buddha Vajradhara, made by Maitri Vajra"

This Tibetan inscription in *dbu can* alphabet is engraved in the front of the statue

Although written in Tibetan alphabet "Maitri Vajra" is a Sanskrit name, its Tibetan correspondence being Byams pa rdo rje. The mention of a Sanskrit name does not necessarily designate a foreigner since many Tibetan Buddhists used and still use Sanskrit version of their name.

No trace of an artist named Maitri Vajra was found and the only existing character who could correspond as Byams pa rdo rje would be a 15th century Sakya master named Mus srad pa Byams pa rdo rje rgyal mtshan (1424-1498). No account of his life being available we cannot ascertain the identification of this character which remains an hypothesis.

Yet, from a stylistic perspective it would not be impossible considering the fact that this sculpture represents a fine example of the inlaid copper alloy tradition which developed in Tibet until the 16th century when it progressively disappeared due to the use of painting the faces of the deities with "cold gold".

Comparable images: <https://www.tbrc.org/#!rid=P318>
Von Schroeder (2008), 108 Buddhist statues in Tibet, p.22

References:

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13

THE GODDESS ŚABARI (TIB. རི་ཁྲོད་མ། RI KHROD MA)

*Gilt-bronze
Height: 15 cm*

Tibet, 16th century

This fire gilded copper alloy statue represents a dancing female deity. Of semi-wrathful appearance she is dressed only with the charnel ground ornaments, holding a human figure clad in long robes in her right hand and a staff in her left. Traces of orange pigments can be seen on her hair.

Based on these two attributes she can be identified as Śabari (Tib. *ri khrod ma*), "the mountain hermit", one of the eight deities surrounding the yidam Hevajra¹ connected to the tradition of Dombi Herkua².



¹ Mallmann (1986), pp. 327-28

² Von Schroeder (2001), vol. II, p. 1266



In a 17th century text drawn from the complete works of the first Paṅ chen bla ma Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570-1662) entitled "The four maṅḍala of the nine deities of Hevajra"³ she is described as follow :

"To the South-East is Ri khrod ma (Skt. Śabari), with a bhikṣu in her right hand and holding a mendicant staff (Tib. 'khar gsil, Skt. khakkara) in her left. [...] She has one face, two hands, three eyes, pointing fangs and yellow hair beautifully standing on an end. Naked, she is adorned with the five bone ornaments, her head crowned with the five dried skull tiara, and wears the garland of fifty dried skulls. With her left leg stretched in the half vajra dancing posture she stands amidst blazing wisdom fire."

A 16th century Sakya lineage thangka⁴ depicts Hevajra in union surrounded by the eight goddesses. Śabari is represented in the lower left corner corresponding to the South East.

Provenance :

Formerly in a French private collection (Paris)

No similar statue has been found, neither among the publications of Ulrich von Schroeder nor in the Himalayan Art database. The only comparable examples cast in metal are three- dimensional maṅḍala represented as lotus flowers. Two of these are visible in *Buddhist Sculptures in Tibet*, respectively a 12th century Pāla production and a 15th century Yongle piece⁵. Besides, two dancing goddesses from a private collection are encountered on the HAR website but they are described as "belong[ing] to a Lotus Mandala depicting the two central figures in embrace and accompanied by Eight Goddesses."⁶

All the descriptions available, whether in Western languages or Tibetan sources, mention this goddess as part of a group and not as an independent deity. Therefore, it appears most probable that our statue belongs to a set representing the Hevajra maṅḍala. Yet, considering its important proportions (15 cm height), she could not belong to a lotus maṅḍala but rather to a large three dimensional representation of the Yidam's heavenly abode. Moreover, the precision of the details (necklaces' beads, folding ribbons, flower ornaments...), the treatment of the face and the elegant body proportions denote the work of a skilled artist.

A production of such importance indicates a wealthy and prestigious commissioner, probably a great monastery or imperial patron. If related to Dombi Heruka's tradition this statue could belong either to the Sakya or the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism since the later inherited many practices from the first. Strongly Tibetan in its stylistic features, our statue could also have been produced in China during the 16th century.

³ Paṅchen bla ma 01 Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (199?), "Kyai rdor lha dgu'i dkyil 'khor bzhi" in *gSung 'bum* vol. 2 [bKra shis lhun po?], pp. 51-56

⁴ Himalayan Art Resources, item no. 444, <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/444>

⁵ Von Schroeder (2001), vol. I p. 304 103A and vol. II p. 1266 351A-B

⁶ Himalayan Art Resources, item no. 23557, <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/23557>



Himalayan Art Resources (Item no. 23557)

BRONZE BUST OF BODHISATTVA VAJRAPANI UNDER A PEACEFUL ASPECT

*Bronze (copper alloy)
Height: 18 cm*

Tibet, Ladakh Kingdom, 14th century

This fragmentary statue represents the bodhisattva Vajrapani adorned with the five-pointed crown, of which two are missing.

The Western Tibet faces are figured by heavy eyelids and a sharp eyebrowline, overcome by the urna, an oval face with a small chin and a small pointed nose.

Wearing princely jewelry once inlaid with stones, his arms (partly missing) along the body presume that he was performing peaceful mudra.

Vajrapani is one of the first bodhisattva represented although most of them are figured fierced and wrathful, since he represents the energy and enlightened mind of the Buddhas.

Under his peaceful aspect, he is represented as a bodhisattva holding a lotus supporting a vajra.¹

Provenance

Formerly in a French private collection (Paris)

Bibliography

Prem Singh Jina, Cultural Heritage of Ladakh Himalaya, p.230

¹ Cf. Bunce, Fredric W.; op. cit.: 397



BRONZE STUPA

*Cast Bronze
Height: 11 cm*

Tibet, Kadampa style. 13th century

This typical Tibetan stupa usually named "Kadam stupa" is an adaptation of the Parinirvana stupa (Tib. *mya ngan mchod rten*) the eighth stupa commemorating the life of Shakyamuni Buddha.

It has a characteristic bell-shaped dome ornate with two lines and resting upon a double lotus basis in staggered rows, a twelve-sided balcony-like harmika with ornaments, thirteen discs piled up under a parasol and a lotus bud top.

Although most of the comparable examples date from the 12th to 13th century, a resembling stupa from the 16th century is visible in the Essen collection¹. The basis of the stupa remains sealed.

Provenance :

Formerly in a United-States private collection



¹ Essen & Thingo (1989), *Die Götter des Himalaya*, I-19, p.49

A GILT-BRONZE HAND OF THE SHAKYAMUNI BUDDHA

Tibet, 16th century

Length: 14 cm

This gracious and elegant fragment from what would have been a large figure has wonderful detailed fingernails and is covered in a fine warm colored gilding.

The position strongly suggests that this left hand would have been in *dyana mudra*.

An old cold gilded restoration at the very center of the hand's palm suggests that the present hand could have been holding a bowl. It would therefore allow us to identify its owner as *Bhaishajyaguru*, the medicine Buddha or the historical Buddha *Shakyamuni* sometimes represented holding an alms bowl.



Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (South of France)

DEVOURING VAJRA DĀKA

*Beige stone
Height: 4.5 cm*

Tibet, 17th century

Of fierce appearance, this deity squats on a lotus base, his prominent belly reaching the ground, holding his hands crossed in front of his chest and his head turned upward with his mouth wide opened. Named the "Devouring adamantine Dāka" (Tib. *za byed rdo rje mkha' 'gro*) the canonical text describes him as follow¹: "Of dark blue complexion, with one face and two hands crossed in front of his heart holding a vajra in his right and a bell in left. He has three eyes, yellow hair streaming upward, a gaping mouth and he is adorned with all the bone ornaments, precious stones and the eight great snakes. With a tiger skin as a lower garment he sits amidst a mass of wisdom blazing fire".

These representations are used for purification rituals where the deity is visualized devouring all the defilements and negativity of the practitioner. Often, the basis is hollow, covering an incense pot where embers and coal are burning. This stone statue works as a lid covering a vessel, most probably an incense burner. The detail of the carving shows us the bone ornaments such as the dried-skulls necklace, tiara and the bracelets and armbands and the long scarf covering the shoulders.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Paris)



¹ « *Za byed rdo rje mkha' 'gro'i sgo nas sdig pa sbyong ba'i cho ga* » in *Sa skya bka' 'bum*, vol.14 p.219 - 222

18

A SANCAI-GLAZED SQUARE DISH

*Glazed ceramic
13cm x 12cm*

China, Liao Dynasty (907-1125)

The interior is moulded with a central flowerhead, below the petal-moulded, flared sides are decorated with a stylised flower pattern. The dish is glazed overall in green, amber and cream colours, falling in an irregular line on the unglazed underside.

Provenance:
Formerly in an Italian private collection

For a similar square dish see Christie's Pavilion sale, 6th April 2005 lot 106



SANCAI GLAZED CERAMIC CANDLE HOLDER

*Glazed ceramic
Height: 15.7 cm*

China, TANG Dynasty (618-907)

This ceramic consists of a cylindrical candle holder formed with a foreigner on an elephant.

The arms of the character are holding a circular drip pan, all raised on a cylindrical base and covered with a splash glaze of green, ochre and cream color.

Vividly glazed in the three typical colors forming the Sancai group, the elephant caparisoned with an elaborate gear and holding on his back the candleholder supported by a seated figure showing a very curious expression. The figure's large and wide opened eyes as well as its beard tends to help identify it as a foreigner probably from central Asia or the Middle East.

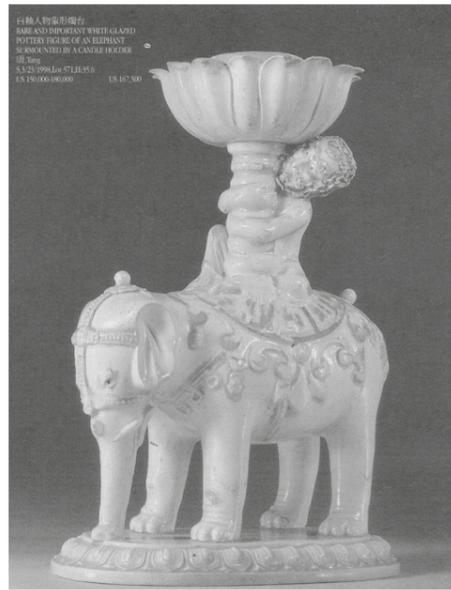


Provenance :

Formerly in the Marcel et Chantal Gerbe Collection.
Gathered In the United States in the 80's

A thermoluminescence test for QED laboratoire, France is
consistent with the dating of this lot.

Compare with a candle holder exhibiting a similar subject
of a foreigner atop an elephant but in white glazed pottery
Sotheby's New-York, 23rd March 1998, lot 571' (see image
above)



A similar sancai-glazed candlestick in the Gulbenkian Museum of Oriental Art, University of Durham, and formerly in the Macdonald Collection, is illustrated by W. Watson, *Tang and Liao Ceramics*, London, 1984, p. 72, no. 42. A slightly larger sancai-glazed example (29.4 cm. high), but incorporating large areas of blue glaze, is the Palace Museum, Beijing, and illustrated in *The Complete Collection of Treasures of the Palace Museum - 31 - Porcelain of the Jin and Tang Dynasties*, Hong Kong, 1996, p. 225, no. 207. A pair of candleholders of this form, but covered with a straw glaze, is illustrated by H. Tseng and R. P. Dart, *The Charles B. Hoyt Collection*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1964, pl. 62, and a single straw-glazed example from the Buffalo Museum of Science was included in the exhibition, *The Arts of the T'ang Dynasty*, Los Angeles County Museum, 1957, no. 225. These candleholders can be compared to bronze examples, such as the one in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Richard C. Bull, dated Six Dynasties, sold at Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, 6 December 1983, lot 21.



20

A MOULED QINGBAI CIRCULAR BOX AND COVER

*White glazed ceramic
Diameter: 10 cm*

China, SONG Dynasty, 12th-13th century

A white glazed covered box of circular shape, with domed lid, decorated with flowers on cover. The edges are ornate with vertical lines. The interior is also partially glazed.

Provenance:

*Formerly in the Marcel et Chantal Gerbe Collection.
Gathered In the United States in the 80's*



A PAINTED CIZHOU-TYPE PILGRIM FLASK

*Cizhou stoneware
Height: 20.5 cm*

China, late MING Dynasty, (1368-1643)

The bottle is well modeled with a circular body rising from a flared foot to a straight tall neck and two small handles on the rim.

The exterior is freely painted in dark brown touches depicting on one side two flowers and a branch of leaves, on the other side a little hare.

The details of the hare and the leaves are incised through the brown slip revealing the creamy-white underneath. The interior is also covered in creamy-white slip.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (South-Eastern France)



**BLANC DE CHINE
FIGURE OF A GUANYIN**

*White-glazed porcelain
Height: 44 cm*

China, QING dynasty (1644-1911)

Standing on a lotus base, carrying a basket containing fish and dressed in a long garment covering her body and falling on her bare feet, the bodhisattva is wearing a rich necklace, her hair pulled in a high chignon and secured with an elaborate tiara with an image of Buddha in the center.

Provenance:

*Formerly in the Marcel et Chantal Gerbe Collection.
Gathered In the United States in the 80's*

*Exhibited in the Sackler Museum « Generations Exhibit »,
Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C, September 1987
through March 1988*

*For a similar sculpture see Arts of Asia, March-April 1978
and P.J. Donnelly, Pl. 137 B*





A FINE AND RARE WHITE-GLAZED BOWL

*White-glazed porcelain
Diameter: 20.5 cm*

China, HONGHZI mark and period (1488-1505)

With deep rounded sides flaring slightly towards the rim, this bowl is covered both on the inside and the outside with a white glaze.

The base, also covered in white glazed, bares a six-character mark in underglaze blue within a double circle.



Provenance :

Formerly in a United-States private collection

*A similar bowl in the Arthur M. Sackler collections sold by
Christie's New-York, 24th March 2011, lot number 1643*





24

**AN UNSUAL BLUE-AND-WHITE
« LANDSCAPE » PEAR-SHAPED
VASE**

*White porcelain with blue and white decor
43 cm High*

China, Kangxi period (1662-1722)

Each side of these vase is painted in bright tones of underglaze blue with a figural scene, one of a scholar in a landscape, the other of two fishermen in a river landscape. Sprays of lotus flowers between them are positioned below each of the dragon loop and loose ring handles left in the biscuit and bearing traces of dark red pigment, with antiques on the neck and a ruyi band encircling the spreading pedestal foot.

Provenance :

*Formerly in the Marcel et Chantal Gerbe Collection.
Gathered In the United States in the 80's*

*For a similar blue-and-white Kangxi pear-shaped vase see
Christie's New-York, 20th March 2001, lot 232*



25

A MUGHAL-STYLE EWER AND COVER

*Translucent white jade
Height: 16 cm*

China, Qing dynasty (1644-1911)

The gently compressed globular body of this vessel is supported on a short foot, its thin walls very delicately carved in low relief with lotus flower petals, each containing different female Immortals riding animals including an elephant, a butterfly, a bat, a turtle and mythical creatures such as qilin and dragon.

The domed cover is similarly decorated with lotus petals and Immortals below a finial in the form of acanthus leaves supporting a bud. The handle is an openwork of branches, leaves and flowers and the spout modeled coming out of wavy waters. The stone is of a glossy translucent white color.

Provenance:

The collection of a former French Colony Politician (1918 - 1992), acquired during a travel to Asia in the 70's

*Compare with a white jade ewer in the Baur Collection, Geneva. (Cf. *The Baur Collection Geneva, Chinese Jades and other hardstones* by Pierre F. Schneeberger, edition 1976, plate B 125)*



Jade was the favorite form of art of the Qianlong Emperor (1736-1795) and during his long reign he proved to be an ardent collector. Not only did he collect ancient jades but he also commissioned new ones, which in turn were both in ancient style and modern designs, especially those named 'Hindustan' jades. Hindustan was part of the 18th century Mughal Empire (1526-1857) which in present days gave its name to stone carving such as Mughal-Style Jades. Such jades were brought to China through trade but also presented to the emperor as tribute gifts and presents from Qing Court Officials, especially once the emperor's fascination for these objects became known. The Mughal style of jade carving is identifiable by the fineness of the vessel, allowing the light to shine through the translucent jade, and the frequent use of the petal and other naturalistic motifs. The Qianlong emperor was so fond of these 'Mughal' jades that he commissioned lapidaries working for the Chinese court to make jade items in Mughal style. (Cf. Special Exhibition of Hindustan Jade in the National Palace Museum) The Chinese interest in Mughal-style carving thus gave rise to some exquisite interpretations of the Indian aesthetic including elements of Buddhist iconography.

The present teapot is a wonderful example of such interpretation with a combination of Chinese classical elements such as the waves and dragons near the spout, the overall shape and the stone itself, and other elements of the decor such as the female Immortal, the naturalistic spout handle and the overall construction of the ornamentation showing foreign influence.

26

A CELADON JADE « DRAGON » TRIPODE CENSER

*Carved celadon jade
Height: 19 cm
Length: 23 cm*

China, QING dynasty, 19th century

The compressed globular body is divided by two elaborated pierced handles, each modelled as a dragon head, resting gently on the broad mouth rim and supported on three cabriole legs emerged from lions heads.

The domed cover surmounted by a Guardian lion and her cub playing with a ball.

Provenance:

The collection of a former French Colony Politician (1918 - 1992), acquired during a travel to Asia in the 70's





27

A CELADON JADE « DRAGON » TRIPODE CENSER

*Carved celadon jade
Height: 17 cm
Length: 23.5 cm*

China, QING dynasty, 19th century

The compressed globular body of this censer is surrounded by two elaborated pierced handles, each modelled as a dragon head, resting gently on the broad mouth rim and supported on three cabriole legs.

The domed cover is topped with a reticulated stylized unicorn.

Beneath the body, a large stylized carved pattern of a lotus flower blooms between the three legs.

Provenance:

*The collection of a former French Colony Politician
(1918 - 1992), acquired during a travel to Asia in the 70's*



COPPER ENAMEL BOX

*Painted enamel on copper
Length: 15.5 - Width: 16.5 cm*

China, QIANLONG period (1736-1795)

Qianlong four-characters mark inside the cover

Of rectangular form box and cover are both decorated with the same scrolling foliage and flowers patterns, it opens to four separated compartments. A Qianlong four characters mark within a double square can be seen inside.



Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection

Although the piece is of different shape we suggest a comparison with a vase in the 'Complete collection of treasures of the palace museum' Vol 43 (Metal bodied enamel wares) plate 214 with blue ground plum blossom decorated vase. It shows the same style of red four characters Qianlong mark in a double square, the outside square with rounded corners and the characters painted in an emphatic fashion.

It can also be compared with plate 231, a water-chestnut-shaped box which inside compartments and small dishes are decorated with very similar gilt and color patterns on a blue ground.



29

DUANSTONE 'QIYANG' TABLE SCREEN

Carved stone

*Height: 50 cm
Width 34.5 cm*

China, 18th century

Deftly carved, utilizing the various colors of the layered stone, the scene represents the Mount Penglai, one of the five islands where the Immortals lived, in the Eastern end of Bohai Sea in Northeast China.

The mythical island of the Immortals is depicted with massive rocky cliffs, tall evergreens and leafing trees, pavilions rising from powerful scrolling and turbulent waves. A pair of cranes soars above the island amidst trailing clouds, an arrow vase rests at the side of a building with arrow reaching towards one of the birds.

Provenance:

*Formerly in a French private collection
(South-Eastern France)*

A LARGE CARVED 'LUOHAN' BRUSHPOT, BITONG

*Carved bamboo
Height: 18 cm*

China, 18th century

Masterfully carved on the outside in varying levels of relief depicting a continuous scene enclosing eighteen Arhats engaged in various activities. They rest within a mountainous landscape with pavilions amidst jagged rockwork and dense clusters of pine trees. The lower part of the scene exhibits additional Immortals on boats floating on a river.

According to the Chinese Buddhist tale, it was said that the Luohans, usually depicted in groups of four, five, sixteen, eighteen and five hundred, inhabited a peak beyond the stone bridge of Mount Tiantai of the Jiuhua mountain, in Zhejiang province.

The eighteen saints depicted on the present brush pot together with the carving of a stone bridge right below the central pagoda are all hints that the scene is actually depicting the eighteen sages crossing the bridge to get to the Buddhists Monks heavenly abode.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (South-Eastern France)







31 **PAIR OF SMALL INLAID
« BURGAUTE » LACQUER DISH**

*Burgauté lacquer with hard-stone inlays
Diameter: 14 cm*

China, KANGXI period (1662-1722)

Surrounded by six canted corners with flowerhead borders, these plates have a central part decorated in low relief with red and green lacquer and inlaid with mother-of-pearl and hardstones showing river landscapes within Burgauté lacquer.

*Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection
(South-Eastern France)*

*For a similar pair of dish Spink catalogue, Part II of the
collection of chinese porcelain and works of art formed by
the late George de Menasce, London 1972, pl 268.*





32

RECTANGULAR BLACK LACQUER AND GILT DECORATED TABLE

*Wood with black and polychrome lacquer
Length: 144 cm - Depth: 57 cm - Height: 83 cm*

China, 18th century, Qianlong period

Of rectangular shape, the table top is supported by a waist apron above four square section straight legs that terminate in hoof-shaped feet. It is painted all over with a dark brown lacquer with gilded designs on a red base. The latter appears in transparency in parts to create a three-color design. The top is decorated with a linear landscape panel depicting pavilions among a rocky mountain with trees. The sky is finely painted with clouds and flying cranes. The four sides of the top panel are decorated with a key-fret band. All four legs are decorated with lacquered flowers and all corners are completed with partially opened stylized *chilongs*.



Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Toulouse)

*Compare with a similar lacquer table in the imperial palace collection with a similar top landscape decor and colors
Ming and Qing dynasty furnitures from the Imperial palace collection. Vol II plates 96 and 104*



33

'A NINE DRAGON' NINGSHIA CARPET

*Embroidered silk
Length: 300 cm
Width: 185 cm*

West China, Ji Guang Ge mark, 19th century

Inscribed with three traditional Chinese characters, 'Ji Guang Pavilion' or Aurora pavilion, the carpet is woven throughout with nine five clawed blue dragons chasing the flaming pearl amongst clouds. The extremities are decorated with waves and rocks.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection



IMPERIAL 'DRAGON' BROCADE

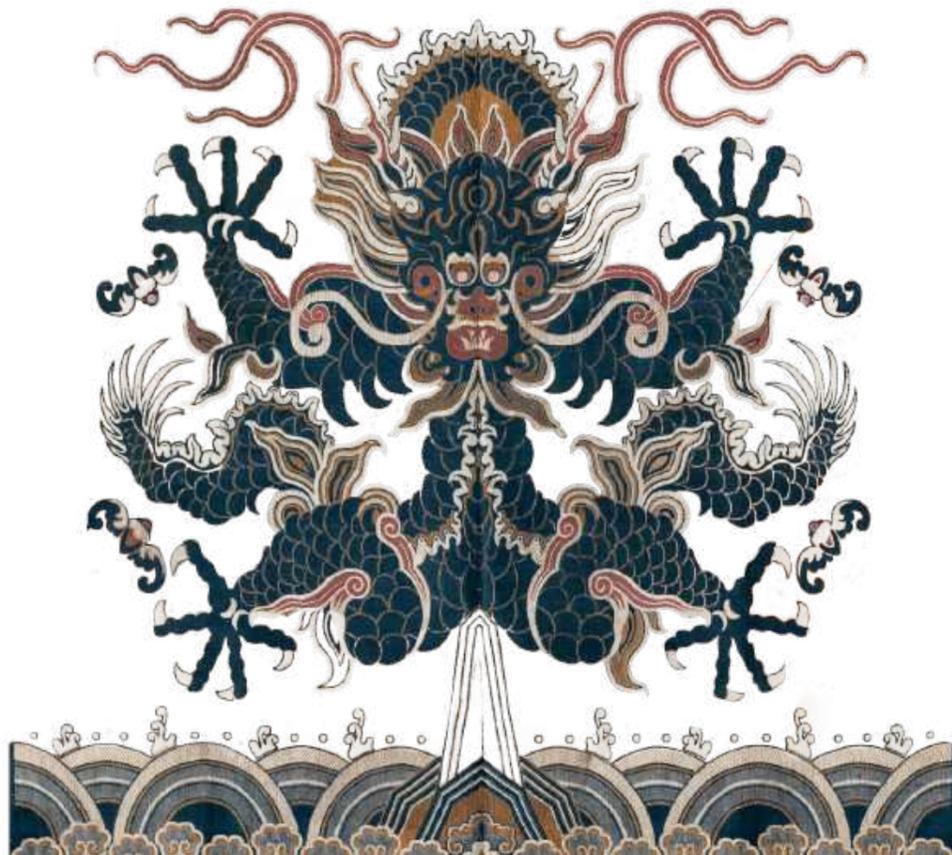
*Silk and gold thread
Length 350 cm
Width 130 cm*

China, late Ming dynasty 16th / 17th century

In the lower part of this brocade flies in frontal position a dark blue five-clawed double bodied dragon above rocks and waves. Above the dragon, the central part is decorated all over with four of the eight Buddhist auspicious emblems in blue red and beige tones on a gold color ground. It includes the banner of victory, which represents how Buddha defeated the demon Mara, obstacle to the spiritual progression. This demon in Buddhism, is synonymous to ignorance, desire and hatred. The banner is a reminder of the necessary victory over one's own mental poisons to be able to reach spiritual awakening. The Dharma wheel, symbol of the Buddha's teaching, it has eight spokes to represent Noble Eightfold Path. The conch shell symbolizes the deep and joyful sound of the Dharma teachings. The umbrella, symbol of royalty and commonly used to protect from the harm of the sun and heat symbolizes the protection from suffering and harmful forces. Bats and clouds surround the repetitive emblems pattern. The rims of the cloth are enhanced with cloud like motifs.

Provenance:

*Formerly in a French private collection (South-Eastern France)
Gathered between 1970 and 1980 on the French art market*



A LARGE IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 12.7cm*

Japan, 18th century

Tall figure representing a foreigner carrying a puppy on his right shoulder, making a face with a gaping mouth and wide opened eyes. Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch traders arrived in Japanese ports from the mid-sixteenth century, but only the Dutch were officially allowed to remain in Japan after the national exclusion policy was enacted in 1638. Netsuke figures of foreigners often depict them wearing unusual clothing such as pantaloons and ruffled shirts, wearing elaborate headdress, and carrying exotic animals. Unsigned

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)





37

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 8.5 cm
Japan, 19th century*

This netsuke represents a Gama standing on one foot, looking up with a winced expression, holding a toad on his shoulder with his left hand, his loose robe tied at the waist and with a sash of mugwort leaves. The ivory is slightly worn with a good patina. Unsigned

Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)

36

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 8cm
Japan, 18th century*

Carving of a bearded standing Sennin wearing a loose garb belted by a long sash at the waist emphasising his round belly. He holds a bundle on his back, a cape of leaves draped over his shoulders. The ivory is slightly worn with a good patina. Unsigned

Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)





38

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 8cm*

Japan, 1800

Chokwaro Sennin is portrayed standing, wearing a loose robe falling up to his knees and belted at the waist emphasizing the round belly, carrying the immortal beverage gourd on his back.

Unsigned.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)

39

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 7.2cm*

Japan, 18th century

Displaying an old standing man wearing a loose garb, his shoulders and hips covered by a cloak made of carved mugwort (*Artemisia*) leaves, holding his beard with his left hand, the right hand holds part of his garment.

The ivory is slightly worn with a good patina.

Unsigned

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)





40

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 3.9cm*

Japan, early 19th century

This carved skeleton with the rib cage completely pierced, his skull bearing a malicious expression, smiles showing a mouth with missing teeth. He is bent over a bucket from which mice are escaping. The ivory is slightly worn with a good white patina. Signature under the bucket.

Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)



41

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Length: 4.5cm*

Japan, 19th century

This snake is shown coiled in several tight loops, the head at the top and its tail trailing beneath. The slightly worn ivory is bearing a good patina and the eyes are inlaid. Unsigned.

Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)



42

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Length: 5.5cm*

Japan, 19th century

The scene represents a grazing horse standing in a typical attitude, the head lowered to the ground, its legs together and its tail sweeping around. A monkey holding a peach rests on his back. The well-worn ivory has a rich patina. Unsigned.

Provenance:
Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)



43

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Length: 4cm*

Japan, 19th century

The scene shows a water buffalo with her calf. Both laying with their legs drawn underneath them, the calf snuggles into her side. A rope halter runs over her back.

The well-toned ivory is slightly worn and the pupils are inlaid.

A two characters signatures is visible underneath.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)



44

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 6.7cm*

Japan, 18th century

The creature is represented seated, his left front paw laying on a stool, looking up and lifting his trunk ending in a curl.

The ivory is worn with a white patina.

Two characters signature under the front right paw

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)



45

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Length: 4.6cm*

Japan, 19th century

The scene depicts a monkey fighting an octopus, biting it as he tightly clutches it with both hands.

The ivory is very lightly stained and the octopus's eyes are inlaid.

Unsigned.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)

*For a comparable example, see Metropolitan Museum collection, Accession Number: 91.1.962
[<https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/59228>]*



46

IVORY KATABORI NETSUKE

*Carved ivory
Height: 6.7cm*

Japan, 18th century

The animal is shown scratching its ear with its back left paw in a realistic pause. His mane, tail and tufts of hairs are all curly.

The ivory is worn and with a white patina.

Two characters signature under the front right paw.

Provenance:

Formerly in a French private collection (Cannes)

Colophon:

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Gauchet Asian Art