

arte fam

a way to enlightenment



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“ a way to Enlightenment”

The main theme in the 3 major religions of Asia, Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism, is the escape from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. This salvation or spiritual awakening can be attained by building enough 'spiritual or religious merit'. The fabric of statues and temples contributed to someone's merit, auspicious for the karma of a person. It was even possible to offer his own spiritual/religious merit to another; it was common that a person commissioned a statue or a painting for his family or teacher as an act of gratitude. The sculptures or monuments were often a help for meditation and in this way a motivation in the striving for enlightenment.

Driven by passion and curiosity of mind, Farah Massart began to travel intensively to Asia after her studies. Gradually she acquired the love and interest for Asian antiques. After 15 years of business management experience, she took some major steps in reorienting her life and decided to devote her passion to Asian Art. Having obtained her degree of South East Asian and Indian art at Soas London, she started in 2011 as a dealer in her gallery in Knokke. She sells now to private collectors throughout the world. Each year Famarte participates at international events and fairs, such as Asian Art Brussels and Cologne Fine art.

This catalogue represents a selection of art from Southeast Asia, India and the Himalayas.

All the art objects have been substantially researched, a certificate of authenticity and written documentation will always be provided.

Farah Massart - Famarte



1

Head of Buddha Shakyamuni

Gandhara, Hadda region
circa 4-5th Century
Stucco with traces of pigment
H26cm
Provenance: private collection Japan

The earliest known Buddha images were produced in the Mathura style of Central India and the Gandhara style of what is now Pakistan and Afghanistan. At that time Gandhara was ruled by the Greeks from the colony of Alexander the Great in Bactria (northern Afghanistan), and it was in response to this Hellenistic influence that the first images of Buddha in human shape were created. The influence of the Greco-Roman aesthetic is visible here in the realism of the facial expression.

Finely lidded eyes beneath arching eyebrows, a fine aquiline nose, gently smiling soft lips and a prominent urna on his forehead characterize this head of the Buddha.

Like other Gandhara stucco images, this head was originally richly polychromed, traces of red pigment remain on the lips, the eyes and the urna.

The sculpture of Hadda is known for the use of materials such as stucco and plaster. Because of the soft modelling, stucco sculptures appear very sensitive and spiritualised.

The face was shaped from a mould. Examples of such moulds have been found in excavations at Gandharan sites, which indicates that such figures were manufactured at the monasteries where they were installed. The hair and other features were modelled by hand.



2

Varaha and the earth goddess Bhudevi

India, Kashmir

8-9th Century (Karkota dynasty)

Limestone

H10.5cm

Provenance: private collection HK since 1990

Varaha wears a short dhoti with belt that is hanging near to the ground. A long necklace with pattern falls from both shoulders to cross the lower part of the legs. This is an unique feature that is clearly influenced by the long necklaces of the Gandhara bodhisattva.

Varaha is the incarnation of Vishnu. Following the standard Central Indian schema of the Gupta period, this Varaha is depicted with the powerful body of a human figure, combined with the head of a tusked boar. The garland he wears is also consonant with his position as an incarnation of Vishnu.

The kingdom of Kashmir was an important center of painting, stone sculpting and metal casting from the 6th tot the 12th C. Situated at the hub of major trade routes, Kashmir assimilated many of the artistic currents of that time. The artistic tradition of Kashmir was inspired by the Greco-Buddhist art of the Gandhara region. Artists continued to be influenced by the classically inspired, naturalistic representation of the human body.



3

Ritual Object

Cambodia/Vietnam

7th-8th Century

Bronze

H9.5 cm

Provenance: private collection Belgium



4

Knife with Horse handle and seal

Cambodia, Angkor Vat period

12th – 13th century

Bronze and iron

L.21 cm

Provenance: private collection Germany, acquired in the 1980s

A horse served as the handle for a circular seal and an iron blade.

The horse is shown with folded legs. The horse is cast by the lost –wax process.

The iron blade is forged.

A Khmer character within a circle forms the seal itself.

The blade has a rounded end, suggesting that it did not serve as a weapon, but as a tool.

References: Emma C.Bunker and Douglas Latchford, Adoration and Glory.

The golden age of Khmer Art, p.348-349



5

An inscribed Stele with a seated Buddha

India, Bihar

Pala period, circa 10th Century

Phyllite

H17.5 cm

Provenance: Mr Steve Finkelman USA

Mr Michael Phillips USA

A fine polished phyllite stele depicting the Buddha seated in dhyanasana on a double lotus throne which is beautifully carved in detail with a row of pearls. He is wearing a smooth sanghati covering one shoulder and accentuating the contours of his body.

The Buddha sculpture is very vividly modeled and stands out beautifully against the incised background, suggesting a temple and decorated with stupas. The top of the stele is framed with leaves of the Bodhi tree. Buddha is sitting in deep concentration and meditation.

A two-line inscription below the double lotus base might indicate the donor's name ("this is the gift of...") or a Buddhist credo. The language is probably Sanskrit, the script proto-Bengali.



6

Revanta

India

Pala period, 11th Century

Black basalt

B61xH43 cm

Provenance: private collection Canada

Art Loss Register Certificate: S 00021601

Published: The Future Buddha, the cultural heritage of Asia,
Marcel Nies Oriental art, Antwerpen, 2009, p.30-31.





6



Revanta is the youngest son of the Hindu sun god Surya and his wife Sanjna. He is a divine hunter and king of the Guhyakas.

Revanta was a very popular figure in Bihar during the Pala period, as several stone representations have been found. By the 10th Century in East India and Gujarat Revanta became the patron deity of horse traders, warriors and horses, and is thought to protect mankind against the dangers of the forest, which may explain his increasing popularity.

This relief depicts Revanta hunting, seated on a horseback, preceded and followed by Danda and Pingala, marching in the same direction. In the background are two of Revanta's attendants, one bearing a parasol, the other approaching the god with a wine jar in his hand. Revanta wears a dhoti and a girdle and has high boots similar to those of his father Surya. He gathers his reins in his left hand and holds a cup of wine in his right. One figure carries a bow and arrows and a number of animals are being trampled beneath the horses' hooves. In the relief's lower register is a hunting scene, accompanied by dance and music. From left to right are a running deer, an attendant carrying a dead boar on his shoulders, a musician, a dancer, three drummers and a man playing cymbals. Music was an essential element of the hunt in ancient India.

This relief was probably placed in a niche on the external wall of a temple dedicated to the sun god Surya. The Pala kings between the 8th-12th century founded a great number of sanctuaries, Bodhgaya, Nalanda and Kurkihar, and created one of the richest artistic traditions of Asia. The elaborate rendering of the ornaments of Revanta is characteristic of Pala sculpture of the 11th Century. This relief is sculpted with a lot of dynamism and action, the hunt is in progress. The figures and animals are distributed over different registers, this creates animation and a keen visual perception. The use of hard dark basalt is also typical of this period. This relief is a beautiful representation of a mythological subject and also served as a record of a princely past.



7

Shiva family

India, Madhya Pradesh
11th Century, Chandella dynasty
Reddish sandstone
H60cm
Provenance: private collection Germany

Shiva is represented as a powerful and convincing god with lively expression. He is surrounded by his vehicle the bull, Nandi, and his son Ganesha. It is possible that the couple on top represents Shiva and Parvati.

In his left arm Shiva holds a three coiled snake; the three coils of the snake symbolize the past, present and future. Wearing the deadly snake like an ornament signifies that Shiva is independent of time and death. He was originally conceived with four arms and three attributes, two are now missing. The god's lower left hand was holding the waterpot (Kamandalu), it is said to be made from a dry pumpkin and containing amrit (nectar). Indian Yogis and sages are seen to carry the Kamandalu as an item of basic necessity. The carrying of the Kamandalu shows the yogic nature of Shiva. The god's upper right hand was holding the trident (trisula), symbol of creation, protection and destruction. The right lower hand of Shiva was in the varada mudra (giving or blessing).

He is adorned with heavy ear ornaments, double necklaces, armbands, a refined bejeweled dhoti secured with a sash and anklets. His face shows almond-shaped eyes and his hair is pulled into a high chignon secured by a bejeweled tiara. On either side of the base he is flanked by two kneeling devotees with hands folded in adoration. Two deities next to Shiva are standing in tribhanga.

Carved out of sandstone this work is a good example of the mediaeval school of sculpture during the Chandella kingdom. They ruled in Central India from the 10th till the 12th Centuries.



8

Standing Buddha

Thailand, Lopburi or Northeast Thailand
Mid 12th century
H22cm
Provenance: private collection Hong Kong

In central, eastern and northeastern parts of Thailand a style of art was found that has affinities with the Khmer art of Cambodia. This style is called Lopburi art in Thailand. It is believed that in the town of Lavo or Lopburi was an important stronghold ruled by a Khmer viceroy in the 11-12th Centuries.

The Khmer style in Lopburi followed the Mahayana Buddhist tradition.

The art of Lop Buri was still strongly influenced by the Khmer characteristics, but at the same time incorporated new ideas of Thai artisans. The physiognomy of the faces are depicted with a more human and friendly expression.

A standing crowned Buddha from Lopburi period, mid 12th century, wearing long, flowing monastic robes, scalloped at the hems and gathered in front with a jewelled belt.

Dressed like a king, the Buddha embodies the concept of the Devaraja (god-king), as an incarnation of the Divine on earth and by which the Khmer kings legitimised their sovereignty. The hands of this Buddha are held in the gesture of vitarka mudra (debate and discussion), reminiscent of Thai Buddha images of the preceding Mon-Dvaravati period.

Typical Khmer are the details of the face: square face, thick lips (reminiscent of the Bayon period), wide nose and eyebrows largely horizontal. The conical ushnisha is covered with a crown in the form of a lotus bud and topped by a gem.



9

Skanda on a Peacock (with snake below the peacock)

Southern India, Vijayanagara period, circa 14th century

Bronze

H 12cm

Original wooden base

Provenance: formerly Hans Sion [lived 1911 – 1998] Collection, owner of one of the largest beer breweries in Cologne, Germany. Originally acquired by himself during his travels in Asia in the late 1920s to early 1930s.

Art Loss Register Certificate S00100309

This bronze dates from the Vijayanagara period, the dynasty which ruled Southern India after the collapse of the Cholas in the 13th Century, till the mid 17th Century.

Skanda, the Indian god of war, is mounted on his peacock vahana. Skanda has four arms, holding his ritual weapons in his two upper hands, the two lower held in abhaya and varada mudra. The snake is hiding between the legs of the peacock.



10

Head of Buddha Shakyamuni

Thailand, Ayutthaya period

15th Century

Pink sandstone

H30cm

Provenance: private collection Japan since 1990

A superb pink sandstone head with typical stylistic character of the early Ayutthaya period: the curved eye contours, the fine nose and lips with accentuated corners in addition to the finely carved moustache and a clear hairline.

The Ayutthaya period (1350-1767) is regarded as the golden age of Thai art. Early Ayutthaya art shows influences of the Khmer and Sukhothai kingdoms, but later, Ayutthaya artists were also inspired by Japanese, Chinese, Indian, Persian and European art. Initially, Buddha images made of sandstone were sought after. Later larger sculptures were made of various materials such as bronze, wood or stucco. The Buddha images are characterized by a distinctive hair frame and incised lines above lips and eyes. Unfortunately numerous works of art from the Ayutthaya period were destroyed during the Burmese invasions in 1767.



11

Head of Buddha

Thailand, early Ayutthaya period
Circa 15th Century
Bronze
H15 cm
Provenance: private collection Germany

An exquisite small bronze head of Buddha Shakyamuni with an attractive smooth brown patina, the face with an intense spiritual gaze, with deeply arched brows above inlaid eyes, a straight nose and a full, slightly smiling mouth; the ear lobes long and sweeping and the hair and conical chignon covered with small curls. The ketumala in front of which a precious stone had been placed, has the lotus flower form.

This enchanting head was created during the early part of Thailand's Ayutthaya Kingdom. The kingdom of Ayutthaya, established by King U Thong in 1350 in the Chao Phraya River basin to the north of Bangkok was, until the Burmese attacked and burned its capital in 1767, one of the richest and most enduring kingdoms of Southeast Asia, attracting innumerable merchants and other visitors, not only from other Asian countries but also from Europe as well. Colossal stone and stucco images of Buddha characterize the artistic creations of the early Ayutthaya period.



12

Seated Monk

Thailand
15th C AD, Sukhothai period
Gilt bronze
H 40x31x15cm
Provenance: private French collection

The monk casted in a very fine and thin alloy is seated in vajrayana (diamond position) on the base. His hands are folded in anjali mudra in front of his chest, with the fingers in a different length. The robe (uttarasanga) covers the left shoulder, leaving the right shoulder bare. The shawl (sanghati) is draped over the left shoulder with a long "fishtail" panel.

The monk is represented with a very strong inner life. He has half closed eyes, arched eyebrows, a hooked nose pointing to the earth, red pigment on the lips, very long earlobes, with his hair in big curls.

The Sukhothai period (13-15th C) is a brief period of independence after it became a vassal of Ayutthaya in 1438. This kingdom covered much of present-day Thailand, with the exception of the North and Northeast.

The artists created their own style, revealing the highest quality of the Thai cultural history.



13

Figure of Shakyamuni

Tibet

16th C AD

Gilt Bronze

H 12cm

Provenance: private Italian collection

The base is sealed and incised with a double vajra

Shakyamuni is depicted seated in dhyanasana on a double lotus throne dressed in a diaphanous robe, with elongated earlobes and his cobalt colored hair arranged in tight curls, his right hand in bhumisparshmdra, his left in a meditative gesture. His face has a serene expression, a small urna on his forehead, signs of a Great being on the soles of his feet. The hems and sleeves are incised with an ornate foliate pattern, The waist is accentuated by a line, the lotus flower base encircled by a rim of pearls. The base is sealed and incised with a double vajra.





14

Seated Buddha

Laos
17th Century, early era, late period (1520-1777)
Gilt lacquered bronze
H81xW58xD30cm
Provenance: private collection Germany

An impressive bronze Buddha seated in the classical Maravijya position (half lotus) position on an elementary base. The patina is a superb glossy dark brown color with remains of gilding and lacquer. The hair is cast in the uniquely Lao style of pointy spikes known as durian or thorn like curls, similar to the Thai school of Haripunchai. The ears on images of this type and period are of particular interest, featuring wide pits circling like conch shells and long slightly curved earlobes terminating towards the upper tips in a pointed fashion, probably the most interesting feature of this Lao period above others. The Sukhothai influence on this period of Lao images can be clearly seen across a number of features; the shoulders are broad and the chest is thick and solid as dignified as in the Sukhothai style and the nose has a distinctive aquiline shape. The eyes were originally inlaid with mother of pearl and with black sapphires for the pupils, as it was normally the custom. The usnisha is in the form of a lotus bud with four leaves, separately cast and removable.

This image has been cared for over centuries, never being buried, probably always kept within a temple. A Buddha of this size would possibly have been the predominant Buddha image within a Laotian provincial temple. The people of Laos, as in Burma, made all their images considerably heavy due to the thickness of bronze in the casting, not acquiring the expertise and finesse of their Thai counterparts. It is now almost impossible to find sizable Laotian Buddha images on the market due to a total ban of trading in images within Laos. Together with the fact that Laos unlike its neighbours Thailand and Burma did not cast images in the same quantity, probably due to population density topography and the fact that a lot of historic sites were lost forever during the US bombing.

The casting of this image would have been accompanied by a religious ceremony with Buddhist monks, this was generally the custom during the casting of larger images such as this one.



15

Bhairava mask

Bhairava mask
Nepal, Newar
18th Century
Copper repoussé
H10.5xW10 cm
Provenance: private collection France

The powerful face of Bhairava in a ferocious expression with large bulging eyes beneath furled brows centered by the third eye . His open mouth is fierced in the center with fangs, encircled by a finely ornamented moustache and beard. His tiara is decorated with a border of skulls, inset with five cabochons amid petal borders. His flaming hair is arranged in rows of tight curls finely detailed in repoussé and centered by a crescent moon and a serpent.



16

Set of a Vajra and Ghanta

Tibet

18-19th Century

Gilt bronze

12,5cm-18 cm

Provenance: Acquired in China in the 1930s;
thence in the family by descent.

The bronze priest hand-bell decorated with swaying tassels around its shoulder, dharma wheels and small vajras, topped with the head of Vairocana surmounted by a half-vajra consisting of 4 prongs around a central rod, and the vajra similarly executed. The vajra is the male symbol of Compassion, always held in the right hand, the ghanta represents the female symbol of Wisdom (prajna), held in the left hand. Their union allowed to attain Enlightenment.



17

Bow (Yumi) of the Samourai

Japan

Edo period, late 18th-early 19th Century

Wood lacquered black, red and gold with bamboo

Provenance: private collection Japan



Bow (Yumi) of a high-ranking Samurai

Japan

Edo period, late 18th-early 19th Century

Wood lacquered red, copper and silk

Provenance: private collection Japan



18

Samourai helmets (Jingasa) with mon

Japan

Edo period, late 18th –early 19th Century

lacquered wood with original fittings inside

Diam.35cm

Provenance: private collection Belgium



19

Snow Lion

Mongolia

19th Century

Copper repoussé

L10xH5cm

Provenance: private collection Belgium



“Stupas... demonstrate the triumph of enlightenment’s wisdom over suffering’s ignorance. They are memorials... to the possibility of freedom from suffering for all beings. They signal the triumphal reality of a nature that enables beings to evolve to experience the ultimate fulfilment of perfect bliss, beyond death and unsatisfying life. Stupas stand as eloquent testimony to the higher purpose of life, beyond competing or struggling, getting or spending. Consciously or subliminally, they help turn people’s minds away from their frustrating obsessions and towards their own higher potential”

[Professor Robert Thurman, from the Foreword to *Buddhist Stupas in Asia: the Shape of Perfection*]

Stupa is a Sanskrit word that means “to pile up” and refers to the mound-like shape of the earliest stupas.

The stupa contained Buddhist relics or sacred items, typically the ashes of Buddhist monks or other important persons and was used as a place of meditation. The stupa, universal throughout Asia, evolved into more than just a reliquary monument. It has become an expression of the ideal of Enlightenment. Statues represent the Buddha’s body, Dharma texts his speech. Stupas are representations of the Buddha’s mind. They reveal the path to enlightenment, or how the mind can actualize its full potential and be transformed into enlightenment.

20

A five-tier turned pine wooden pagoda, with detachable finial, covering an interior cavity containing a block-printed paper dharani (charm) with text scroll.

The base contains a stamp from the temple.

22

These 2 fine seals have been carved from a single piece of sandalwood, in the form of a stupa. It is an example of a known series of seals used in the 19th century by senior Thai officials and senior monks. Senior monks used such seals to mark sacred texts (sutta) and other items so that they could be identified as belonging to their monastery. The slightly convex base retains traces of red seal ink and is carved elaborately with an insignia that incorporates a Hanuman figure amid Thai-style flaming foliage motifs.

20

Hyakumanto pagoda with associated dharani

Japan
19th Century
Wood
H30cm
Provenance: private collection Belgium



21

Reliquary stupa

Thailand
Rattanakosin period, 19th century
Sandalwood and Ivory
H20 cm
Provenance: private collection Belgium



22

Official's wooden Seals in the form of a stupa

Thailand
19th century
Sandalwood
H13cm, ø base 5,5cm;
H11.5 cm, ø base 4.5cm
Provenance: private collection Belgium



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