

**The exhibition of masterpieces from private collections
displayed at the Bangkok National Museum from
the 6th March-6th April 1968**

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In the Journal of Archaeology (Vol. 2 No. 2) I have discussed early Hindu images discovered in Thailand and the art specimens of the Srivijai period from private collections displayed at the Bangkok National Museum from the 6th March - 6th April 1968. Now the objects of the Lopburi style will be described.

It is generally accepted that the artistic influence from Cambodia spread into the north-eastern and central parts of Thailand at the same time as her political power from the 11th down to the middle of the 13th century A.D. There arose then in these areas a school of art which resembles closely the characteristics of the Khmer school in Cambodia but still differs from its foreign prototype in minor details. This school of art in Thailand is called the "Lopburi School" after the name of the town of Lopburi in the central part of the country which is believed to have been an important Khmer stronghold, at least in the late 12th and early 13th century. At the present time Khmer works of art found in Thailand and those of the Lopburi school are loosely classified as "Lopburi Art." Therefore

some of the Lopburi art specimens may antedate the 11th century A.D. above-mentioned.

The first stone statue to be here described is a torso of Uma, the consort of Siva, one of the greatest Hindu gods. It is 1.10 m. high and was discovered by its present owner, H.R.H. Princess Chumbhot of Nagara Svarga, at Aranya Pratet in the eastern province of Prachinburi on the Cambodian frontier. This torso can be identified because of her large shoulders which show that the goddess has two arms on each side (fig. 1). The image is beautifully carved in accordance with the Indian conception of beauty. She is wearing a robe with several graceful folds hanging down in front of the body. Judging from her style by comparing the workmanship to that of the Khmer art, this torso probably dates to the first half of the 7th century A.D.

The following two bronze statuettes (figs. 2 and 3) may be mentioned together. They were both discovered at Prakhonchai in the province of Buriram in the north-eastern part of Thailand and now belong to H.R.H. Prince Bbanubandhu

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Yugala. The first one (fig. 2), 39 cm. high, probably depicts a divinity with a crown in the form of many lotus leaves on his head. His face shows a gentle smiling expression. He is standing in a triple flexion which might denote his anteriority to the following image (fig. 3). His two hands seem to have held some attributes which are now missing. His gown is very short. Judging from the style this image may be attributed to the late 7th or 8th century A.D. The next image (fig. 3), 63 cm. high, portrays Maitreya Bodhisattva who can be identified by the symbol of a small stupa on the front part of his top-knot. This part of the hair is arranged in a large cylindrical form with a flat top, covered by small superimposing rings of hair but the lower part is composed of neatly combed hair. The face is square with a rather austere countenance. The god has his eyes open and has a rather flat nose and double lips. His body is rather short and stout compared to that of fig. 2. He is also standing in an erect position, without the triple flexion. His two hands probably hold two attributes: a lotus in the right hand and a sacred water vase in the left one. His gown is short with a flap of cloth on the front part of the body. This bronze statuette probably dates to the 8th century A.D. It is a great pity that images which belong to this large group of bronzes discovered

at Prakhonchai, Buriram, were mostly smuggled out of the country. Only a few of them have gone into private collections in Thailand and none have been obtained by the Thai National Museums.

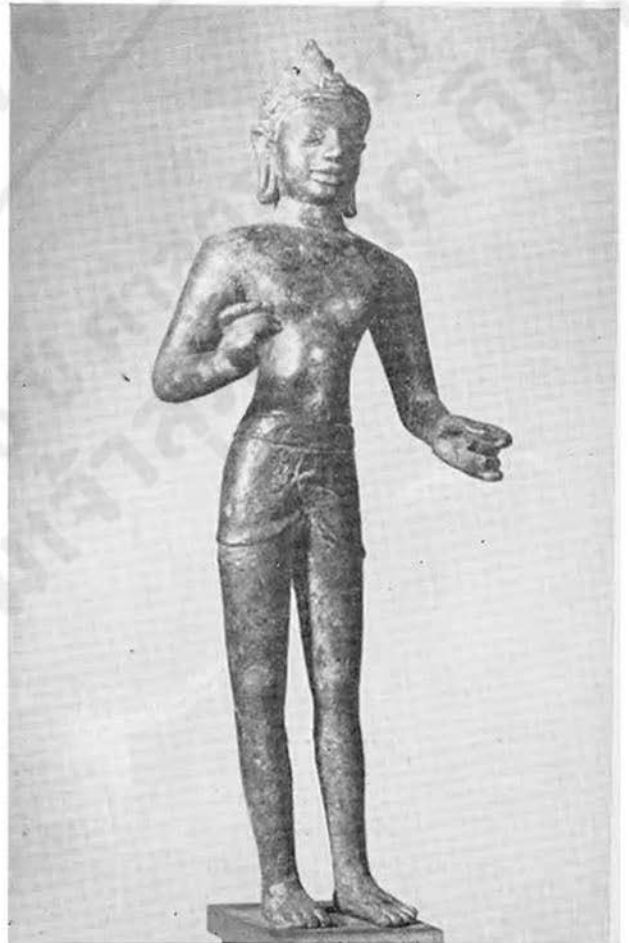
We now come down to a beautiful bronze image of the Buddha seated in meditation under the protection of the Naga (serpent), 52 cm. high including pedestal (fig. 4). This image now belongs to M.C. Piyarangsit and Sanidprayurasakti Rangsit. It can be divided into three distinct sections: the Buddha, the head of the Naga and the coil of the latter which is used as the base of the former. This Buddha typically belongs to the Khmer Bayon style (late 12th - early 13th century A.D.). His head and the protuberance on top are covered by small hair curls held in place by a small band on the forehead. The face of the Master is square with a rather gentle expression. He is wearing a robe which leaves the right shoulder bare following the fashion of the Indian Pala style which entered into Khmer art during the Bayon period, viz. a hem of the robe from the end of the cloth over the left shoulder of the Buddha passes over the left wrist and then extends across the left thigh. The upper end of the lower garment of the Buddha forms a relief and a rather decorated line at the waist of the Master. He is seated in a folded-leg fashion which is characteristic of the Khmer



1. Uma

Stone. Height 1.10m. Found at Aranya Prater,
Prachinburi. Lopburi style. First half of the
7th century A.D.

Lent by H.R.H. Princess Chumbhot
of Nagara Svarga.



2. Divinity

Bronze. Height 39 cm. Found at Prakhonchai,
Buriram. Lopburi style. 7th-8th century A.D.

Lent by H.R.H. Prince Bhanubandhu Yugala.



3. Maitreya Bodhisattva

Bronze. Height 63 cm. Found at Prakhonchoi,
Buriram. Lopburi style. 8th century A.D.
Lent by H.R.H. Prince Bhonubandhu Yugala.



4. Buddha under Naga

Bronze. Height with base 52 cm.
Lopburi style. 13th–14th century A.D.
Lent by M.C. Piyarangsit
and M.C. Sanidprayurasakti Rongsit.

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**5. Buddha descending
from Tavatimsa heaven**

Bronze. Height 71 cm. Lopburi style.

13th-14th century A.D.

Lent by H.R.H. Prince Chalermpol Dighamvara.



**6. Crowned Buddha in the attitude
of preaching**

Bronze. Height 87 cm. Lopburi style.

13th-14th century A.D.

Lent by Mrs. Prapai Viriyapan.





7. Palanquin hooks

Bronze. Height 19.5 cm. Found at Surin.
Lopburi style. 13th-14th century A.D.

Lent by the collection
of Mr. James H.W. Thompson

and Lopburi styles. The seven heads of the Naga and their perforated halo are superbly cast. The lateral six heads of the Naga are looking towards the central chief one. The uppermost ring of the three coils of the Naga is decorated with beads and inverted lotus leaves. This image of the Buddha seated in meditation under the Naga can be reckoned as one of the best of this small type of Buddha statues and dates around the 13th-14th century A.D.

The next bronze image is the crowned Buddha descending from Tavatimsa heaven, 71 cm. high (fig. 5) which belongs to H.R.H. Prince Chalermpol Dighamvara. This type of statue abounds in the Lopburi school. The Buddha wears a crown with a pointed top, a pair of ear-rings in the form of inverted lotus buds, a necklace and a belt decorated by pendants. All of these characterize the Khmer Angkor Vat and Bayon styles (12th-13th centuries A.D.). The face of the Buddha is square with an "urna" over the bridge of the nose. The eyebrows are more or less in a straight line and the expression of the Master is rather gentle. He is standing erect in the attitude of coming down from Tavatimsa heaven after he has converted his mother (vitarka attitude by both hands). This clearly shows the influence of the earlier Dvaravati art which had flourished in central

Thailand. The symbol of the Wheel of the Law also figures on the palm of each hand. The hems of the upper garment of the Buddha, which covers both shoulders, hang down from the two lifted forearms. They create an oblique line on each side of the lower part of the Buddha, at the end of which is a curve which marks the different lower front and back lines of the upper garment. Between these two lines can be seen the lower end of the lower garment which protrudes on each side and forms a sharp point. The central folds of the lower garment in front of the body of the Buddha are also decorated with designs. This motif again is derived from the Khmer Bayon art. This bronze image can therefore be attributed to the 13th-14th century A.D.

The next image is quite an interesting one. It portrays a standing crowned bronze Buddha with the right hand in the attitude of dispelling fear and the left one giving blessing (fig. 6). These contrary attitudes performed by the same Buddha might be attributed to Mahayana Buddhism. The statue is 87 cm. high and belongs to Nai Lek Viriyapan. The crown and ear-rings of the Buddha as well as the lower folds of the robe denote clearly the influence from the Indian Pala art but the necklace and the belt suggest the Khmer Angkor Vat and Bayon styles. This image can therefore be classified in

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the Lopburi style with Pala influence and its date is probably around the 13th-14th century A.D. The most interesting thing is that on the lower back part of this image there is an inscription consisting of many lines of text. Unfortunately most of them are worn away and cannot be deciphered properly. The inscription uses Khmer characters in the Pali language. The form of the characters might also date around the 13th-14th century A.D. The face of the Buddha shows the mixture of the Khmer and the Indian Pala styles. He also has a stylized Wheel of the Law on each palm of his hands.

The last item to be described in this Lopburi art included in the exhibi-

tion of masterpieces from private collections is a pair of palanquin hooks discovered at Surin in the north-eastern part of Thailand which belongs to the collection of Mr. James H.W. Thompson. This pair of bronze hooks, 19.5 cm. high, is one of the best ever found in Thailand. The palanquin was made of wood and these two hooks were used to hold a net on which a nobleman would sit. The hooks are cast in beautiful designs. Apart from the glowing flame-like motifs, each of them is decorated with a figurine of Garuda (the king of birds) holding a Naga (the king of serpents) in both hands. Their date is probably also around the 13th-14th century A.D.
