

Galerie Hioco

Monumental Buddha head (P654)



What do we like in this sculpture?

- Its incredible face: so particular and unique, with an almost tribal style.
- Its monumentality: a work of impressive size, quite exceptional given the material.
- It is a rare example of the late Haripuñjaya style, when the Mon kingdom had already been conquered by the Thai kingdom of Lanna.

I. Detailed description

Head of Buddha (P654)

Stuccoed terracotta

Thailand

Circa 14th century, Late Harīpunjaya style

H. 41 cm or 16 1/8 in

This large head of Buddha in stuccoed terracotta, undoubtedly coming from a monumental sculpture, is characteristic of the Mon kingdom of Harīpunjaya, located in the north of Thailand and whose capital was Lamphun.

The kingdom of Haripuñjaya was founded in the 8th century by a dynasty of Mōn emigrants from Lop'burī - where the artistic tradition of Dvāravatī was flourishing. It lasted until 1292, when Lamphun was taken by the Thai of the Lanna kingdom.

The art of Haripuñjaya is the original combination of artistic contributions from Dvāravatī, expressed especially in stone works, and the Khmer kingdom of Lop'burī. This art thus gives rise to sculptures of exceptional expressiveness.

It is interesting to note that this head, which probably comes from the Lamphun region, marks a break with the provincial mannered style developed in the region. Indeed, the relative naturalness of this head attests to the change of creative spirit imposed by a new order of artistic values that occurred in 1292. This beautiful head is undoubtedly one of the best examples of the art of Haripuñjaya in the 14th century when Lamphun still maintained its position as the cultural capital of Lanna, before being finally supplanted by Chiang Mai.

We find on this piece the expressive character of the Mōn features: the broad face with the forehead widening at the level of the temples framed by large ears with drooping lobes, the high and well-defined cheekbones, the broad nose and the very full lips edged with a thick double line. The eyes, inlaid to recreate the effect of the pupils, are slightly bulging and the upper eyelid is lowered.

Finally, the hair, delimited by a border characteristic of this art of Haripuñjaya and still partially visible, is made up of spiky conical curls that were traditionally modeled separately and then applied. The back of the head is in the round, and the curls of the headdress appear there, smaller. This detail shows that the complete sculpture, probably in brick and stucco, may have been leaning against a wall, but was probably also in the round.

II. Image of the piece – front view



III. Image of the piece – left three-quarter view



IV. Image of the piece – left profile view



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V. Image of the piece – back view



VI. Image of the piece – right profile view



VII. Image of the piece – right three-quarter view



VIII. Provenance: in all transparency!

. This piece comes from a private Belgian collection, acquired more than twenty years ago from the renowned Jan and Marcel Nies Gallery (by repute).

. We are always very cautious and diligent about the provenance of the artworks we offer. Ensuring the seriousness and reliability of the information given by the former owners is one of our priorities and we then guarantee this origin by engaging our responsibility.

. In order to reinforce this guarantee, we systematically verify that these artworks have not been registered as missing or stolen. As Interpol has granted us the right to directly consult their database of stolen or reported items, we verify by ourselves and issue a certificate attesting to this.

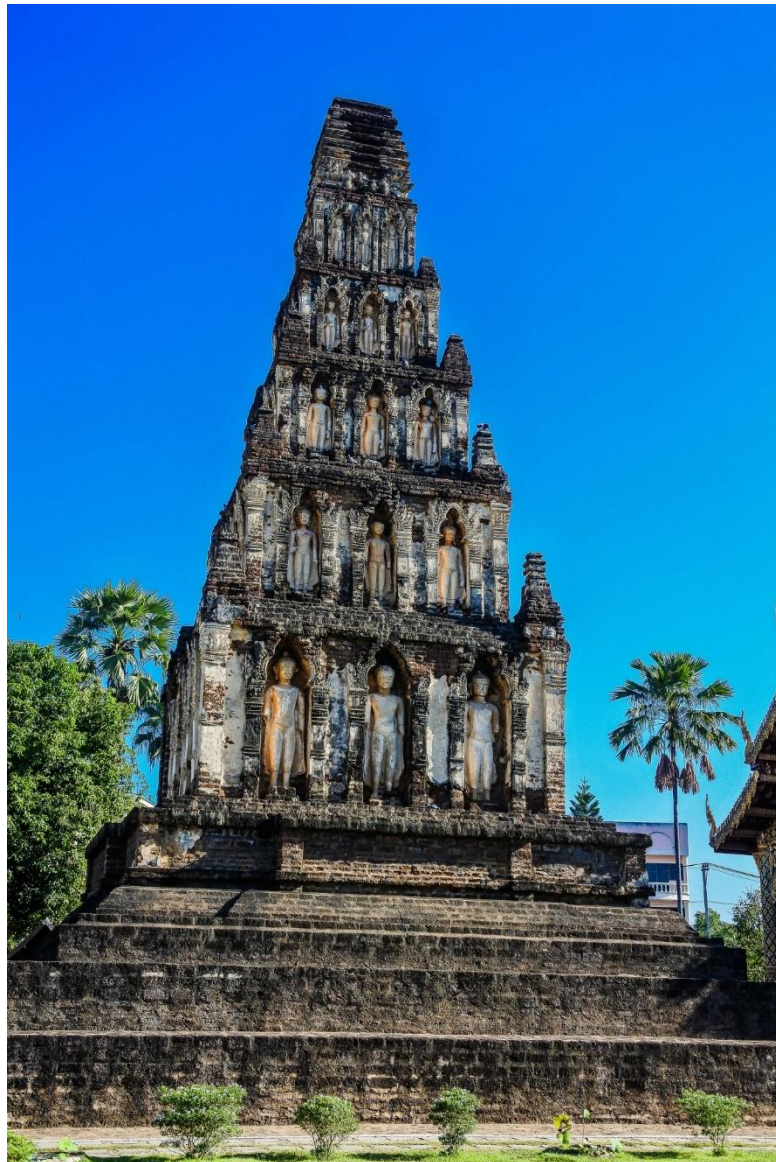
IX. Condition report: our scientific approach

This monumental head of 41 cm in height (or 16 $\frac{1}{8}$ in) is made of brick and terracotta, formerly entirely stuccoed and lacquered. The head is filled with an agglomerate of brick and stucco. Some losses are obvious but quite logical given its age and the known fragility of these protruding parts: the hanging end of the right ear is missing as is the upper part of the cranial protuberance, probably removable and flame-shaped, which was inserted into a deep cylindrical cavity. The spiky conical curls that were traditionally modeled separately and then applied have partly disappeared or been broken off. The face was covered with a layer of stucco as was traditionally done for Haripuñjaya terracotta works. This layer of stucco, which has partially disappeared here, was then covered with lacquer, of which there are still some very beautiful remains, mainly on the hairline and on the ears and mouth. Remains of vegetal elements are also visible around the nose and on the hair, in particular. No restoration has been detected on this impressive face.

Please note that since we are not conservators or restorers, it must be understood that any condition report we made is a subjective qualified opinion, even if we do our best efforts. Prospective buyers should inspect the piece to satisfy themselves as to condition.

XI. Our guarantees: for a serene acquisition!

- More photos will be sent to you on request.
- In case of purchase, we will establish an invoice that you can pay by bank transfer.
- You will receive our certificate of authenticity with the photo of the artwork, its detailed description and the mention of the provenance.
- We will define together the shipping modalities and we will take care of all customs formalities if you live outside of France.
- If you do not like the piece, we give you the possibility to return it to us and we will assist you with the resulting terms and conditions.



Wat Kukut,
stuccoed brick,
12th-13th century.
Lamphun, Wat
Chamadewi.