

54. LOKESHVARA

Xeo Da site, Luu Nghiep An village, Tra Vinh Province, 7th century
Stone, H: 91.4 cm × W: 42 cm × D: 22.8 cm
Museum of Vietnamese History, Ho Chi Minh City, BTLS 5531

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Emma Bunker, "Pre-Angkor Period Bronzes from Pra Kon Chai," *Archives of Asian Art* 25 (1971-72): 67-76; Robert Mowry, "An Image of Maitreya and other Angkor Prakhonchai Bronzes," *Orientalism* 16, no. 12 (December 1985): 33-44.

The four-armed bodhisattva Mahakaruna Lokeshvara (great compassionate Lokeshvara) offers protection from danger, which may account for his enormous popularity in much of Southeast Asia. A number of bronze *bodhisattvas* of similar age and iconography were found at the site of Pra Khon Chai, Thailand.⁵¹ The larger of those images share with this work the arrangement of the hair, a similarly proportioned face, and incised *sam-pot*, though as works in bronze, they did not have the armature, an element that places this piece relatively early, no later than the seventh century.

He holds a rosary in his upper right hand and a book in his upper left; his lower hands probably held a water vessel (*kendi*) and a lotus bud. A small Amitabha Buddha adorns his elaborately arranged hair. The face is elegantly depicted, with the continuous brow, full lips, delicate nose, and thin moustache set within a perfectly oval face. The elaborately

arranged hair, adorned with a small Amitabha Buddha, and the curved ears, with their long earlobes, frame the face. The hands are exquisitely modeled, with the first two fingers touching the thumb and forming a space in which the other two attributes, possibly of some precious material, would have been set.

LITERATURE

Louis Malleret, *L'Archéologie du Delta du Mekong*, vol. 4, 1963.