

59. LOKESHVARA

Dai Huu, Quang Binh Province, 10th century
Bronze, H: 64 cm × W: 24.6 cm × D: 14.8 cm
Museum of Vietnamese History, Ho Chi Minh City, BTLS 1289

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In addition to the stone figure illustrated here, see examples of bronze images from Pra Khon Chai, Thailand; 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.

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For illustrations of Sinhalese Avalokitesvara images, see Nandana Chutiwongs, *The Iconography of Avalokitesvara in Mainland South East Asia* (New Delhi: Indra Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Aryan Books International, 2002), plates 22A–27B, and also for a discussion of Avalokitesvara in Campa, 289–322.

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For an Indonesian example, see Jan Fontein, *The Sculpture of Indonesia* (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1990), 210–11.

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For a discussion of the Yunnanese bronzes in relation to Southeast Asia, see Chutiwongs, *The Iconography of Avalokitesvara in Mainland South East Asia*, plates 179, 323–34.

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Baptiste, in Baptiste and Zephir, eds., *Trésors d'art du Vietnam*, 203–4.

Both bronze and stone images of the four-armed bodhisattva Mahakaruna Lokeshvara (Great Compassionate Lokeshvara) are among the earliest Buddhist images found in Southeast Asia; some date to the seventh century.¹³ (cat. no. 54) Mahakaruna Lokeshvara's attributes, the *pustaka* (book), *akshamala* (rosary), *kamandalu* (ewer), and *padma* (lotus), and the Amitabha Buddha in his headdress identify him. He offers protection from danger, which may account for his enormous popularity in much of Southeast Asia.

By the eighth through ninth century, a tall thin image wearing a long *dhoti* had developed, probably a result of influence from Sri Lanka, where numerous images of Lokeshvara dating to the eighth through tenth centuries have been found.¹⁴ The perception of the bodhisattva's protective qualities seems to have been the reason for its popularity in Sri Lanka and also the reason that these images are found in Thailand, Indonesia, and Champa.¹⁵ This type of image spread as far as southern China, where legend suggests it was the patron deity of Yunnan from the seventh century. The prototype of the Yunnanese image could come

from a number of Southeast Asian countries, Champa being geographically the closest.¹⁶

This sculpture was found in 1923 being worshipped at a temple near the Cham Buddhist site of Dai Huu (findspot of the Buddha, cat. no. 57).¹⁷ Elaborate jewelry adorns his upper torso, and the height of the headdress suggests a date later than a number of the other works of this type found in Viet Nam.

LITERATURE

Nandana Chutiwongs, *The Iconography of Avalokitesvara in Mainland South East Asia*, 2002; Jean Boisselier, *La Statuaire du Champa: recherches sur les cultes et l'iconographie*, 1963; Pierre Baptiste and Thierry Zephir, eds., *Trésors d'art du Vietnam: la sculpture du Champa v–xv siècles*, 2005.