

INDIAN, HIMALAYAN  
AND SOUTHEAST ASIAN  
WORKS OF ART

NEW YORK, 20 MARCH 2019

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PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)

601

**A GILT-BRONZE FIGURE OF VAJRVARAHI**

NEPAL, KHASA MALLA KINGDOM, 13TH-14TH CENTURY

4¼ in. (10.8 cm.) high

\$30,000-50,000

**PROVENANCE**

Spink & Son, London, 22 April 1999

This remarkable and rare gilt-bronze figure of Vajravarahi is executed with the greatest possible detail for a sculpture of its size. The powerful deity's sharp teeth and sow's head are clearly articulated, as are the features of her skull crown, beaded festoons, severed heads, petite fingers and toes. The distinct mode of craftsmanship indicates that this was created in the Karnali Basin (what is now Western Nepal) during the reign of the Khasa Malla dynasty which spanned from sometime in the twelfth to the mid-fourteenth century.

Scholarship on this very distinct style of sculpture is limited, but extant examples compiled by Ian Alsop and Gautama Vajracharya demonstrate a style distinguished by its ornamentation, petite yet weighty physiognomy, and extravagant gilding. The figure's bodies are modeled with compact, yet graceful features. More particularly, the high arch of Vajravarahi's eye-brows, which nearly meet the hairline, are shared among female figures attributed to the Khasa Malla Kingdom, such as the Prajnaparamita in the Pritzker

Collection, illustrated by Ian Alsop in "The Metal Sculpture of the Khasa Malla Kingdom," *Orientalia*, June 1994, fig. 10, and a bronze image of Green Tara in The Walters Art Museum (acc. no. 2002, 54.3012). The Pritzker example and the current work also share the unusual feature of a painted red base.

Little is known about the Khasa Malla Kingdom aside from the insights derived from the evidence of artistic patronage and their occasional raids of the Kathmandu Valley. The consensus among scholars is that this devoutly Buddhist Kingdom was born from a tribe led into the Karnali Basin by their first king, Nagaraja in the twelfth century, and that the kings who succeeded him maintained a positive relationship with the Western Tibetan subjects under his control, as evidenced by gifts to Tibetan temples. The present sculpture is an exemplary piece of this short-lived kingdom.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24491.



**Figure a:** Prajnaparamita, West Nepal/West Tibet, 13th-14th century, gilt copper alloy, 15 cm., Pritzker Collection (<https://www.asianart.com/articles/khasa/10.html>)



**(back view)**





602

**602**

**A SMALL BRONZE FIGURE OF  
JAMBHALA**

TIBET, 15TH CENTURY

2¾ in. (5.9 cm.) high

\$6,000-8,000

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's New York, 17 September 1999, lot 75

With a mongoose disgorging jewels in hand, this figure of Jambhala conquers avarice and bestows wealth. His plump physique denotes the prosperity he enjoys. Note the attention to the details of the mongoose, whose body wraps around the backside of the figure.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24483.

**603**

**A BRONZE VAJRA**

TIBET, 15TH CENTURY

5 in. (12.7 cm.) long

\$6,000-8,000

This ritual object, known as a *dorje* in Tibetan, has its roots in the thunderbolt yielded by Indra in the Vedas. In the Tibetan Buddhist context, the ubiquitous symbol takes on the meaning of strength and immutability. The present thunderbolt-sceptre includes lotuses supporting a central column surrounded by eight arched prongs, emerging from *makara*-heads flanking a bulbous central grip. The style closely resembles those created during the Ming dynasty, particularly Yongle and Xuande period iterations; see a Yongle-marked example in the Beijing Palace Museum, illustrated in *Cultural Relics of Tibetan Buddhism*, Hong Kong, 1992, pl. 131-1.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24481.



603

604

**A GILT-COPPER FIGURE OF INDRA**

NEPAL, 15TH-16TH CENTURY

3¼ in. (8.2 cm.) high, including tang

\$8,000-12,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, France, acquired in 1995,

by repute

Christie's Paris, 13 June 2013, lot 55

The short tang at the base of this small figure indicates it may have been part of a larger arrangement. See, for instance, a similarly-sized fifteenth-sixteenth-century figure of Sarasvati, seated on a lotus base that slots into a larger lotiform aureole, in the collection of the Museum of Fine Arts Boston (acc. no. 68.750), illustrated by Pratapaditya Pal in *The Arts of Nepal - Volume One: Sculpture*, Leiden, 1974, figs. 240-241.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24495.



604

605

**A GILT-COPPER REPOUSSÉ PLAQUE OF MANJUVAJRA**

TIBET, 13TH CENTURY

4¾ in. (12.1 cm.) high

\$5,000-7,000

**PROVENANCE**

Astamangala Gallery, Amsterdam,

22 March 2007

This hammered-metal plaque depicts Manjuvajra in a helmet-like crown with triangular petals and similar triangular arm bands, as is common among early Tibetan paintings from the twelfth and thirteenth century; see a painting of Vairochana at the Cleveland Museum of Art dated to the second half of the twelfth century for reference (acc. no. 1989.104). Wall paintings in the same style, such as the well-known image of Amitabha, in the Gosum Lhakhang at Shalu Monastery are firmly dated between 1290-1303, providing context for this style in Tibet.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24496.



605

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENEYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)



606

606

**A BRONZE FIGURE OF SHADAKSHARI LOKESHVARA**

TIBET, 14TH-15TH CENTURY

5¾ in. (14.6 cm.) high

\$10,000-15,000

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's New York, 20 September 2006, lot 158

The present example of Shadakshari Lokeshvara, associated with the pervasive six-syllable mantra *om mani padme hum*, is ornamented with semi-precious stones. The square face is also a mark of its Tibetan origin, while the proportionate physique and simple lotus base surrounded with beaded rims point to a relatively early date of creation.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24475.

607

**A SILVER-INLAID BRONZE FIGURE OF**

**BUDDHA SHAKYAMUNI**

TIBET, 15TH CENTURY

5¾ in. (13.6 cm.) high

\$8,000-12,000

**PROVENANCE**

Property of the Alsdorf Foundation; Sotheby's New York,  
26 March 1998, lot 290

The historical Buddha, depicted here as the sage of the diamond throne (Tib. *thubpa dorje den*) is seated atop a double-lotus base, displaying the *bhumisparshamudra*, or earth-touching gesture, in recognition of his defeat of Mara and his achievement of enlightenment. Bodhgaya, the site where Shakyamuni attained enlightenment, was originally referred to as Vajrasana, and Himalayan sculptors often used the *vajra* as a visual symbol for this location.

The sculpture is emblazoned with a dedicatory inscription in Tibetan *Uchen* script: *This image of Shakyamuni was erected by the patron Konchok Peldzin, chiefly for the welfare of his parents. With this merit, may all sentient beings swiftly achieve Buddhahood. Auspiciousness!*

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24480.



607

608

**A BRONZE FIGURE OF NAMPAR GYALWA  
(TONPA SHENRAB)**

CENTRAL TIBET, TSANG ATELIER, 16TH CENTURY

7¼ in. (18.4 cm.) high

\$12,000-18,000

**PROVENANCE**

Sotheby's New York, 21 September 1995, lot 161

The founder of the Bon tradition is depicted here as Nampar Gyalwa or Completely Victorious, as described in chapter fifty of the *Ziji*, the essential biography of Tonpa Shenrab. This style of tightly-rendered lotus-petals with bead-like flourishes attributed to an atelier in South-central Tibet (Tsang Province). The inscription written in Tibetan *Uchen* script around the base of the sculpture which reads: *The present [image], benevolent king Nampar Gyalwa, on account of his kind fatherliness, composed the two teachings of the long-life vase and feminine and masculine principles. May all sentient beings be set upon the path to omniscience.*

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 57073.







**609**

**A SILVER-AND COPPER-INLAID BRONZE  
FIGURE OF MILAREPA**

TIBET, 15TH-16TH CENTURY

4½ in. (10.5 cm.) high

\$20,000-30,000

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's New York, 20 September 2002, lot 94

Milarepa is depicted in his classic pose, holding his hand to his ear as if listening to the 'echoes of nature,' alluding to his gift as a singer and poet. Seated in *lalitasana* on a double-lotus base, holding a skull cup in his left hand and with his right hand raised to his ear, his face slightly tilted in a benign expression, the eyes and lips inlaid in silver, Milarepa dons a copper-inlaid yogic band across his right shoulder. The masterfully-inlaid metals of Eastern-Indian origin took a firm hold in Tibetan sculptural styles and remained popular through the sixteenth century.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24472.



**610**

**A SILVER- AND COPPER-INLAID BRONZE  
FIGURE OF MILAREPA**

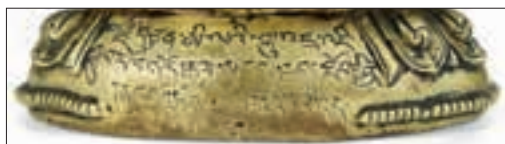
TIBET, 15TH-16TH CENTURY

4¼ in. (10.8 cm.) high

\$20,000-30,000

**PROVENANCE**

Sotheby's New York, 26 March 2003, lot 72



(detail of inscription)

The present figure's proper-right hand, cupped behind his ear, identifies him as the Buddhist saint, Milarepa, whose melodious enlightened verses echoed through the Tibetan landscape. Silver-inlaid eyes capture an alert attitude cultivated through years of meditation. His modest cotton robe, decorated with a simple motif and a copper-inlaid meditation strap, is reminiscent of Indian textiles and metalwork. All of these details are shared by an example published in *Art Sacré Du Tibet: Collection Alain Bordier*, Paris, 2013, p. 173, fig. 87. The present sculpture is inscribed in Tibetan *Uchen* script with the following: *This sculpture of Milarepa was erected in reverence by Sanggye Zangmo for the accomplishment of the practitioner Sogyel Sanggye.*

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 12204.



611

**611**  
**A SILVER- AND COPPER-INLAID BRONZE  
FIGURE OF USHNISHAVIJAYA**

TIBET, 15TH-16TH CENTURY

6½ in. (16.5 cm.) high

\$20,000-30,000

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's New York, 25 March 2004, lot 145

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24474.

**612**  
**A BRONZE FIGURE OF SHADAKSHARI  
LOKESHVARA**

CENTRAL TIBET, TSANG ATELIER  
16TH CENTURY

13¾ in. (34.9 cm.) high

\$30,000-50,000

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's New York, 27 March 1996, lot 25

Shadakshari Lokeshvara, an emanation of the bodhisattva of Compassion, is the physical embodiment of the ubiquitous mantra *om mani padme hum*. The square face, ornamentation, proportions, and style of tightly-rendered lotus-petals with bead-like tips often attributed to an atelier in South-central Tibet (Tsang Province). A bronze figure of Vajradhara likely from the same atelier can be found at the Rubin Museum of Art (acc. no. C2005.37.1). The figures are the same size, both made from the same alloy and have a similar patina.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24471.



612

**621**

**A BRONZE FIGURE OF GREEN TARA**

TIBET, 16TH-17TH CENTURY

4½ in. (10.8 cm.) high

\$5,000-7,000

**PROVENANCE**

Eleanor Abraham, New York, 1 April 2014

Green Tara is depicted in a provincial style with simplified ornaments and upright posture. The deeply patinated goddess of liberation is ungilded, cast in a dark metal alloy. Compare the crown style with niches for inlaid stones, distinctive facial expression, lithe limbs, and double-petaled base to a bronze figure of Manjushri dated to the seventeenth century, see U. von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 493, fig. 140F.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24484.



621



622

**622**

**A POLYCHROMED WOODEN FIGURE  
OF SARASWATI**

TIBET, 17TH-18TH CENTURY

5 in. (12.7 cm.) high

\$6,000-8,000

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired in the 1990s, by repute  
The Scholar's Vision: The Pal Family Collection;  
Christie's New York, 20 March 2008, lot 419

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24482.

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)

623

A BRONZE FIGURE OF AMITAYUS OR MANJUSHRI

NEPAL, THAKURI PERIOD, 11TH CENTURY

5½ in. (14 cm.) high

\$30,000-50,000

PROVENANCE

Christie's New York, 17 October 2001, lot 52

The present figure either depicts Amitayus, the bliss-body of the *tathagata* Amitabha, or the bodhisattva of wisdom, Manjushri. The figure is adorned with the standard six ornaments, and is seated in *dhyanasana* atop a cushioned platform adorned with lions. These qualities would identify him as Amitayus, but the tiger-claw necklace is characteristic of Manjushri.

The current work displays strong characteristics of Nepalese ateliers, as such the rich coppery tone and throne design. Strong influences of the contemporaneous Pala tradition from Northeast India are also strongly articulated, including the

tripartite crown and tubular limbs. The ribbons of fabric or *samkhatras* that secure the figure's crown regularly appear in late Licchavi period sculpture, but later became standard, corroborating the attribution of this rare sculpture to the transitional Thakuri period.

For two nearly identical examples, see **figure a**, from the collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and **figure b**, sold at Christie's New York, 21 September 2007.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24492.



**Figure a:** Manjushri, an Emanation of Amitabha Buddha, 11th–12th century, Nepal (Kathmandu Valley), H. 5¼ in. (13.4 cm), Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Cynthia Hazen Polsky, 1984, 1984.491.6



**Figure b:** Christie's New York, 21 September 2007, lot 167, sold for \$73,000





**624**

**A BLACK STONE STELE OF  
CHAKRASAMVARA AND VAJRAVARAHI**  
NEPAL, 17TH CENTURY

10 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (27.6 cm.) high

\$10,000-15,000

**PROVENANCE**

Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim  
Christie's New York, 12 September 2012, lot 542

**EXHIBITED**

On loan to the Hofstra University Museum of Art,  
1968/69-2011  
New York, Hofstra University Museum of Art,  
"Fragments of Eastern Religions," 6 July-25  
September 1983; and "Focus on India,"  
18 April-6 May 1979

Chakrasamvara and his fierce consort Vajravarahi, important deities of the highest class of yogic practice in Newar Buddhism, are depicted here in *alidhasana* with four faces and twelve hands, striding atop supine figures. The multi-headed tutelary deity Chakrasamvara holds various attributes with his many arms radiating around him, the principle arms holding a *vajra* and *ghanta* and the uppermost draping a tiger skin over his back.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24494.





**625**

**A PAUBHA OF SUKHAVATI LOKESHVARA**  
NEPAL, DATED BY INSCRIPTION TO 1836 (SAMVAT 956)  
Image 29½ x 26% in. (75 x 67.5 cm.)

\$10,000-15,000

**PROVENANCE**

Property from the Estate of William H. Wolff; Sotheby's  
New York, 2 June 1992, lot 258

Sukhavati Lokeshvara is seated at the center of this narrative painting, a work dedicated to the happiness of its viewers and the world. It tells the story of the King Birakusa, queen Alindra, and Indra. The King from Benares had more than a thousand wives, but could not have a child. After consulting with an astrologer, the king invited his male subjects to copulate with his wives in the hope of attaining an heir. The announcement was heard by Indra who came to the palace in the guise of an old Brahmin (see the curly-haired figure to the proper-right of the *makara*) and chose Queen Alindra. When she turned down Indra's proposal, he revealed his true form and gifted her a medicine that would give her a son. Thereafter, she gave birth to Prince Birakusa who, although unattractive, was strong, brave and skilled. The Prince won over his princess, despite his appearance, by exhibiting his many talents.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24497.

PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENEYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)

626

A SILVER- AND COPPER-INLAID BRONZE FIGURE OF  
BUDDHA SHAKYAMUNI

KASHMIR OR WESTERN TIBET, 10TH-11TH CENTURY  
7½ in. (19 cm.) high

\$30,000-50,000

PROVENANCE

Private collection, London, by 1981, by repute  
Sotheby's New York, 24 September 2004, lot 57

LITERATURE

U. von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 133, fig. 23B

The present figure of Buddha Shakyamuni stands in a slight *tribhanga* with his right hand forward-facing in the refuge-granting gesture and the left clutching the folds of his billowing *sanghati*. His lips appear pursed, matching the fullness of his pendant earlobes and large almond-shaped eyes. Traces of blue pigment remain on his curl-topped *ushnisha* and the remnants of cold gold indicate that it once covered his body. The brassy metal alloy, and manner of modeling the rounded face with wide, silver-inlaid eyes, is reminiscent of Kashmiri prototypes that began appearing at the turn of the eighth century. Moreover, the figure's profile, upon which a straight line can be drawn from the forehead to the tip of the nose, is attributable to Kashmiri convention. As such, the proportions and rendering of the facial features closely resemble a standing Kashmiri buddha attributed by inscription to the first half of the eleventh century or earlier at the Cleveland Museum of Art (acc. no. 1966.3).

The present sculpture, with its graceful and restrained representation, differs from the early masterpieces of Kashmir which are defined by exaggerated features. As with many bronzes of this type, it is unclear whether the present sculpture was created in Kashmir or in the Kashmiri ateliers of Western Tibet, as the Kingdoms of Guge and Ladakh had close commercial ties with Kashmir during the period of the second dissemination known as the Tibetan Renaissance (c. 950-1200 CE).

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24487.



Cover and illustration from Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 133, fig. 23B



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)

627

A BRONZE FIGURE OF VAJRADHARMA LOKESHVARA

WESTERN TIBET, 10TH-11TH CENTURY

7 $\frac{3}{8}$  in. (18.6 cm.) high

\$25,000-35,000

PROVENANCE

Sotheby's Parke-Bernet, New York, 14-15 June 1977, lot 16

Sotheby's, New York, 28 October 1991, lot 124

Christie's New York, 22 March 2011, lot 464

LITERATURE

U. von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 149, fig. 26G

Vajradharma Lokeshvara, depicted here opening a lotus flower, is identifiable by his distinctive attributes: the effigy of Amitabha on the central petal of the crown; the antelope skin draped over the proper-left shoulder; and the peacock vehicle. These attributes are a precise description of this form of Avalokiteshvara of the Vajradhatu Mandala in the *Sadhanamala*, a Sanskrit compendium of Tantric meditational texts. Therein, Vajradharma Lokeshvara is described with pupils "dilated with joy," and this artist achieved just that.

As indicated by the inscription "*Lha Nagaraja*" in Tibetan *Uchen* script on the lower recto of the base, this fine figure of Vajradharma Lokeshvara belonged to the monk Lhatsun Nagaraja, son of the ruler of Western Tibet, Lama Yeshe Od (950-1040). Rob Linrothe and Christian Luczanits have provided insight into the collecting habits of individuals and institutions in Western Tibet during the tenth–twelfth centuries (see R. Linrothe, *Collecting Paradise*, Rubin Museum of Art, New York, 2014). Nagaraja is amongst a few Tibetan individuals identified as collectors. Both Nagaraja (r. 998-1026) and Shiwa Od, royal preceptor of the Guge Kingdom (1016-1111), had their names inscribed upon collected sculptures, either as an indicator of ownership or as a sign of devotion.

The wide eyes, high-arched brows, simple necklace and armbands, aureole, and stepped base are all attributes of the Kashmiri idiom imported to Western Tibet. Attributes including the sharp nose, inset chin, and floral garland all closely resemble larger sculptures found at Alchi Monastery in Ladakh; see C. Luczanits in *Collecting Paradise*, fig. 2.42, p. 138. A large painted wood sculpture of Vajradharma in the same style can also be found at Ropa monastery, once the heart of the Western Tibetan Kingdom of Guge (see C. Luczanits, "Early Buddhist Wood Carvings in Himachal Pradesh," *Oriental Art*, Volume 27, No. 6, June 1996, fig. 13, p. 75).

The present figure was originally part of a larger set of figures that make up a three-dimensional mandala. Multiple published figures from this set are adorned with the same inscription: two in private collections, depicting Vajrakarma and the deity Nagaraja (Chaofu Collection, HAR item no. 57863); and two Pancharaksha goddesses at Shakyamuni Temple in Chitkul, Kinnaur District, Himachal Pradesh; see S. Laxman S, "Buddhist Bronzes from the Hindustan-Tibet Road: An Appraisal of Recent Discoveries," *Oriental Art* XLVI (1), p. 73-77.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24490.



Cover and illustration from Ulrich von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 149, fig. 26G



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENEYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)

628

A BRONZE TRIAD OF MANJUSHRI, VAJRAPANI,  
AND PADMAPANI

WESTERN TIBET, 12TH CENTURY

6 in. (15.2 cm.) high

\$18,000-25,000

PROVENANCE

Hardt & Sons, New York, by repute

The earliest bodhisattvas of the Buddhist pantheon, referred to as the Three Lords, are depicted here in a triad. Manjushri stands center with his standard book and sword, Vajrapani flanking his proper-right and Avalokiteshvara on his proper-left. The triad became standard in the nascent years of Mahayana Buddhism and integrated into the expanded Vajrayana Buddhist pantheon.

Though many extant examples are published, little scholarship is focused on this type of early Tibetan sculpture, which schematizes and dramatizes aspects of earlier Indian Buddhist prototypes. The treatment of the crown and *jatas* in particular, standardized in Buddhist and Hindu Pala-period sculpture by the eleventh century, are distinctively elongated on each of these figures. Compare the present example to a very similar bronze illustrated as **figure a**, below.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24489.



**Figure a:** "Vajrapani, Manjushri, Padmapani, Western Tibet; dated 12th century, Brass, H. 0.177m," U. von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 176, fig. 32B



PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)

629

A SILVER-INLAID BRONZE FIGURE OF VAJRADHARMA  
LOKESHVARA OR RAKTALOKESHVARA

WESTERN TIBET, 11TH CENTURY

5¼ in. (13.3 cm.) high

\$30,000-50,000

PROVENANCE

Christie's New York, 21 September 2005, lot 87

Donning a five-*tathagata* crown and seated in *vajrasana*, the present figure is ornamented with simple earrings, a pendant necklace, and *dhoti* decorated in a modest textile pattern. As both Vajradharma Lokeshvara and Raktalokeshvara are described in the *Sadhanamala*, a Sanskrit compilation of meditation texts, with the same appearance opening a lotus flower, it is not possible to determine which figure the artist intended to represent.

The peacock vehicle (an indicator of his buddha family association) which distinguishes Vajradharma from Raktalokeshvara within the *Sadhanamala* is not a reliable indicator of the deity's identity, as the peacock vehicle is omitted in more than one context. The present work was likely created in Western Tibet at the height of Kashmiri influence in the region; the period of the second dissemination known as the Tibetan Renaissance (*circa* 950-1200 CE).

The style of depiction, with voluminous ribbons amplifying tight waists, pronounced bellies, and tubular limbs, closely resembles murals in caves such as those at Ropa and Tsaparang, surrounding the Sutlej River which was once the heart of the Western Tibetan Kingdom of Guge. This sculpture closely resembles a clay sculpture in Ropa's Translator's Temple, illustrated in photographs from The Western Himalaya Archive Vienna. For a nearly identical bronze figure of Raktalokeshvara attributed to the tenth or eleventh century, see **figure a**.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24488.



**Figure a:** "Raktalokeshvara, Western Himalaya; dated 950-1050 AD; Copper, H. 0.152m," U. von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 153, fig. 28E





PROPERTY FROM THE ESTATE OF BARONESS EVA BESSENYEY  
(LOTS 601-640 AND LOTS 719-724)

630

A BRONZE FIGURE OF VAIROCHANA

KASHMIR OR WESTERN TIBET, 10TH-11TH CENTURY

8½ in. (20.6 cm.) high

\$30,000-50,000

PROVENANCE

Carlo Cristi, New York, 27 March 2004

The *tathagata* Buddha Vairochana, the lord of Akanistha Heaven, performs the teaching gesture or *dharmachakramudra*, seated in *vajrasana* atop a double lotus base supported by a stepped platform. The figure's wide eyes, arched brows, tall crown, simple ornamentation, lobed belly, dual petal-shaped lotus base and flaming aureole identify this sculpture as either of Kashmiri or Western Tibetan origin. The profile of the present figure matches the Kashmiri style of modeling quite closely, wherein a straight line can be drawn from the forehead to the tip of the nose; while the tiered, square base is more common among Western Tibetan bronzes. The assimilation of artistic style from Kashmir into Western Tibet in the tenth-eleventh century, as well as the presence of Kashmiri artists in Western Tibet, make it difficult to determine provenance with certainty. Compare the present example to a figure of Maitreya attributed to a Kashmiri artist working in Tibet, in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, illustrated as **figure a**, below.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24486.



**Figure a:** "Ascetic Bodhisattva Maitreya, Kashmir schools in Western Tibet, dated 11th century; Brass, H. 26cm," U. von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 160, fig. 44A



**645**

**A RED SANDSTONE STELE OF DANCING GANESHA**

CENTRAL INDIA, 10TH-11TH CENTURY

24½ in. (62.2 cm.) high

\$40,000-60,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Italy, by 1972

Acquired in the European art market, 14 June 2017

Ganesha is depicted here dancing atop a lotus, holding his goad, conch, tusk and bowl of sweets, his trunk curling playfully to his left, and a *naga* wrapped around his belly, flanked by musicians. Although there are countless representations of Ganesha dancing, the present type is perhaps the most dynamic and graceful. With his hips swayed and his right foot slightly raised, his pose echoes that of his father's dancing form, Shiva Nataraja. Ganesha's dance, however, has a childlike quality that contrasts with the cosmic destruction of Shiva's Nataraja form. With his dance, Ganesha carries away all obstacles; his rotund belly reinforces his powers to shower his devotees with abundance.

This representation seems to have captivated the sculptors of Central India as demonstrated by the array of fine and lively examples produced between the eighth and eleventh centuries. The S-shape formed by the present figure's robust yet supple limbs and accentuated by negative space, very closely resembles that of an example in the Denver Museum of Art dated to the tenth-eleventh century (acc. no. 1968.24), while Ganesha's finely arched brows and narrow headdress are comparable to a tenth-century example illustrated by P. Pal in *A Collecting Odyssey: Indian, Himalayan and Southeast Asian Art from the James and Marilyn Alsdorf Collection*, 1997, p. 60 and 287, cat. no. 70, and subsequently sold at Christie's New York, 22 March 2011, lot 42. The present work, made from a single block of soft sandstone is a dynamic figure that surely belies the heaviness of its composition and represents a well-executed example of its type.





**646**

**A BLACK STONE STELE OF SURYA**  
NORTHEASTERN INDIA, PALA PERIOD  
11TH CENTURY

23¼ in. (59.1 cm.) high

\$8,000-12,000

**PROVENANCE**

Louis Kaufman (1905-1994) Collection,  
Los Angeles  
Acquired by the current owner from a public sale,  
California, 1 September 2016

The sun god Surya stands below beaded garlands and *gandharvas* on a lotus base, both hands holding fully bloomed lotuses, wearing a *dhoti*, and adorned with a tall, narrow crown. Flanked by Rajni and Nisrabha, celestial figures and protectors, all of the surrounding figures are mounted on Aruna's seven-horsed chariot beside Surya. A similar example can be found in the Seattle Art Museum (acc. no. 45.59), illustrated by P. Pal in *The Arts of Nepal: Part 1*, Leiden, 1974, pl. 255.

The American violinist Louis Kaufman was one of the most influential classical musicians of the twentieth century. Together with his wife Annette, also an accomplished musician, the Kaufmans donated much of their large art collection to the National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C. and other cultural institutions.

THE PROPERTY OF AN EAST COAST COLLECTOR

**647**

**A BLACK STONE STELE OF VISHNU**  
NORTHEASTERN INDIA, PALA PERIOD  
11TH-12TH CENTURY

26½ in. (67.3 cm.) high

\$18,000-25,000

**PROVENANCE**

Estate of Avery Brundage  
Purchased from Frank Caro, New York, 1978

Vishnu stands in powerful *samabhanga*, holding a mace and discus in his upper hands and a conch shell and a lotus bud in his lower hands, flanked by Lakshmi and Sarasvati. Behind the female divinities are smaller figures known as *ayudha purushas*—anthropomorphic forms of the weapons Vishnu wields. Vishnu is richly adorned with elaborate jewelry, including anklets, a festooned triple-banded belt, a thick sacred thread or *yajnopavita*, bracelets, armllets, necklaces, earrings and a tall cone-shaped crown adorned with triangular petals.

646



647



**659**

**A BRONZE FIGURE OF BLACK JAMBHALA**  
TIBET, 12TH-13TH CENTURY

4¾ in. (12.1 cm.) high

\$20,000-30,000

**PROVENANCE**

The Cheng Huan, S.C. collection, 1980s, by repute

Kalajambhala or Black Jambhala holds a mongoose, disgorging jewels as a reminder that generosity yields abundance. As the destroyer of snakes, the mongoose symbolizes the destruction of greed. Kalajambhala is a wealth deity popularized in Tibet by Bari Lotsawa (b. 1040) and the Kashmiri teacher Shakyashri Bhadra. The greenish metal alloy, flat lotus petals, and large effigy of the present figure are indications of its early Tibetan origin. A very similar Kalajambhala dated to the twelfth century is illustrated by Ulrich von Schroeder in *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 179, fig. 33D.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24456.



PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE HONOLULU COLLECTION

660

**A SILVER- AND COPPER-INLAID BRONZE  
FIGURE OF VIRUPA**

TIBET, 14TH CENTURY

4¾ in. (12.1 cm.) high

\$40,000-60,000

**PROVENANCE**

The Pan-Asian Collection (Christian Humann),  
by repute  
Robert Hatfield Ellsworth, by 1997  
Christie's New York, 22 March 2000, lot 58

**LITERATURE**

C. Reedy, *Himalayan Bronzes*, University of  
Delaware Press, 1997, pp. 202 and 215f, fig. C171

This masterwork of Tibetan craftsmanship depicts the accomplished Indian master or *mahasiddha*, Virupa, who is credited with performing many extraordinary deeds, such as parting the waters of the Ganges. In reaction to being refused service at a tavern, he simply prevented the sun from setting in demand of more alcohol at which point the local king, highly concerned, settled his bill in order to free the sun. Virupa is depicted here with his right arm raised in the threatening gesture of *tarjanimudra*, ordering the sun not to move. The inscription, as translated by Chandra Reedy, alludes to this story:

*"Salutations to the one with the dark red body who makes dangerous persons shake, who holds the skull of immortality in the left hand, who sits in the manner of the king of all, who holds up the sun. Auspiciousness."*

The figure is carefully articulated in the round with finely detailed hair at the back. Compare the present with a closely related figure of Virupa, with his right hand lowered instead of holding the skull cup, provided as **figure a**, as well as two examples in the Berti Aschmann Collection, illustrated by H. Uhlig in *On the Path to Enlightenment*, Zurich, 1995, cat. nos. 122 and 123.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 20403.



**Figure a:** "Mahasiddha Virupa, Tibet; dated 13th-14th century, Brass, H. 0.130m," U. von Schroeder, *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 468, fig. 128C



THE PROPERTY OF A DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

**661**

**A SILVER ALLOY AND BRONZE FIGURE OF  
WHITE TARA**

TIBET, 17TH CENTURY

7¼ in. (18.4 cm.) high

\$25,000-35,000

**PROVENANCE**

Purchased in Europe, 1990s, by repute

This ornate image of the goddess of long life offers blessings with her proper-right hand, and holds a blossoming lotus in her proper-left hand. Her *dhoti* is decorated with the ubiquitous lotiform motif, underscoring her power to unearth vitality from a bed of mud. The artist has achieved a lifelike suppleness that evokes the liturgical language which describes Tara as radiating with the beauty of a young woman.

The heavily ornamented style of this silvered sculpture matches the seventeenth-century figure of White Tara from the Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection at Asia Society, New York (acc. no. 1979.52). The present sculpture is inscribed with the following, written in Uchen script around the lower portion of the lotus base:

*Homage to the bestower of life and wisdom, powerful, immortal one, with her two legs resting on a lotus. May myself and others achieve happiness as enjoyed by the supreme gods and asuras, by the virtue of erecting this in order to fulfill the intention of the victorious teacher, the beholder of perfect wisdom, to perfect the mind of the mother goddess.*

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24460.



(back view)



662

**A PAINTING OF A MANJUVAJRA MANDALA**

CENTRAL TIBET, NGOR MONASTERY

SECOND HALF OF THE 16TH CENTURY

Image 16 x 13 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (40.6 x 33.4 cm.); support 16 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$  (42.6 x 35.3 cm.)

\$120,000-180,000

**PROVENANCE**

Frederick Keppel & Co, New York, by 1940, according to label

The six-armed, three-headed image of the meditational deity Manjuvajra, the esoteric form of Manjushri, sits at the center of his celestial palace surrounded by eighteen retinue figures, as described in the Secret Assembly or Guhyasamaja Tantra. The Manjuvajra mandala originated with the commentarial tradition by the Indian pandit Jnanapada on the Guhyasamaja Tantra, translated in the eighth century. The mandala is the forty-fourth in the *Gyude Kuntu*, a compilation of texts explaining the significance of mandalas and initiations of the Sakya tradition. The mandala is further associated with the Ngor subschool of the Sakya tradition established by the Great Ngor Abbot, Kunga Zangpo (1382 – 1456), and the school is credited with the preservation of seven mandala rituals including Guhyasamaja, Hevajra, Chakrasamvara, Vajrayogini, Vajrabhairava, Sarvavidya and Mahakala.

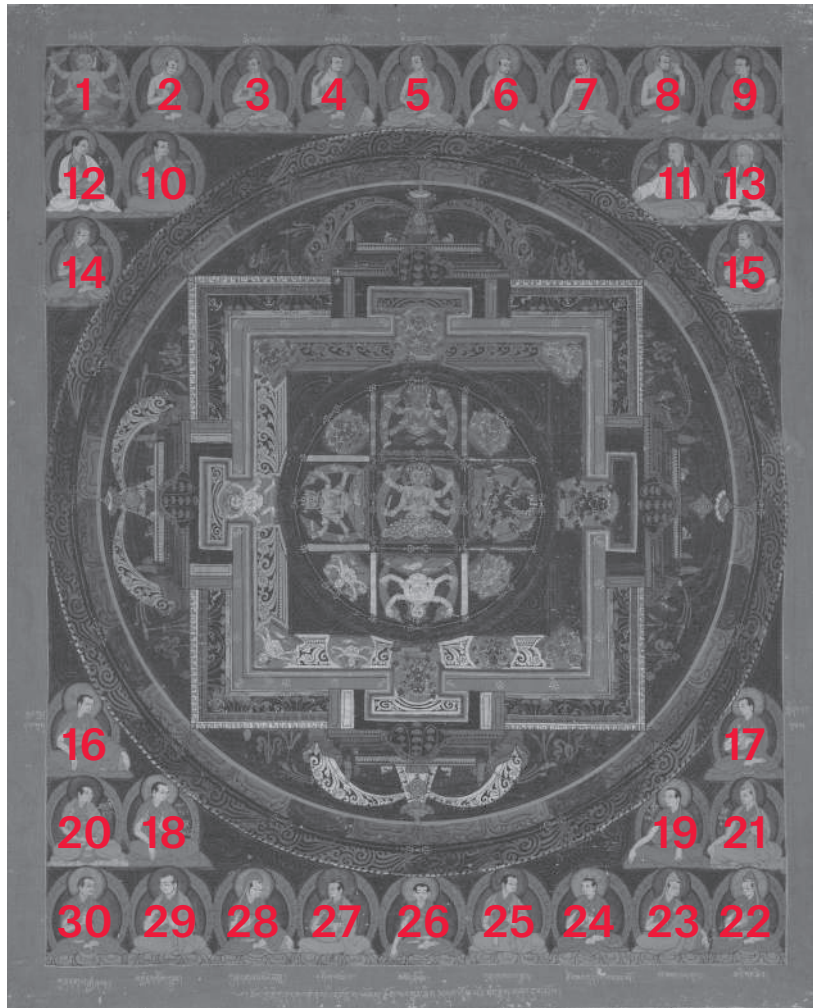
The lineage of transmission, depicted here in the form of labeled portraiture, is recorded in the Collected Works of Amye Zhab Ngawang Kunga Sonam (1597–1659), the twenty-eighth Sakya throne holder and one of the great polymaths of the Sakya tradition. The last identifiable lineage holder depicted is the Tenth Ngorchen, Konchok Lhundrub (1497–1557). According to convention, the figure seated to his proper-right—the unknown figure Kunga Gyeltsen—must be his student. The lowermost inscription indicates that the painting was created after the death of that student: *May the enlightened intent of Kunga Gyeltsen be thoroughly perfected! May I and all sentient beings be taken under his care!* With this information, the painting can be dated to the second half of the sixteenth century. The complete lineage is outlined on the following page.

The painting epitomizes the Beri style, the Newar legacy upon Tibetan painting styles demonstrated by the Sakya tradition. The relationship between Newar artists and Sakya patrons was developed by the twelfth century, a result of a connection formed at the Yuan imperial court between the renowned Newar artist Anige, and the Sakya lama Phakpa Lodro Gyeltsen (1235-1280), Kublai Khan's first Imperial Preceptor. Recognizable Newar styles of representation including the use of registers, the color palette with strong red and blues; the quintessential vegetal scrollwork motif (referred to in Tibetan as "tree-leave cloud design"), and the petal-like crown; all visible in the earliest known Sakya-commissioned thangka depicting Amoghasiddhi from the twelfth century (Philadelphia Museum of Art, acc. no. 1994.148.609).

The present work, created four hundred years later than the well-known Amoghasiddhi, present the same stylistic and iconographic idiom. Paintings from Ngor Monastery in Central Tibet, such as the current work, exemplify the preservation of the Beri style from the fifteenth century onward (see D. Jackson, *The Nepalese Legacy in Tibetan Painting*, Rubin Museum, New York, 2010, p. 99). Compare the current work with a fifteenth-century Hevajra mandala at The Metropolitan Museum of Art (acc. no. 2015.551); which depicts figures with similar countenances and ornaments which surround the mandala, as well as the bold color palette.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24514.





- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Manjuvajra                                   | 16. Kunga Drakpa  |
| 2. Buddhashrijnana                              | 17. Tashi Pel   |
| 3. Dipamkarabhadra                              | 18. Kunga Sonam (13th century)                                      |
| 4. Shrideva                                     | 19. Khampa Dorje Pel  |
| 5. Vimala Gupta                                 | 20. Lama Drakpa Pel   |
| 6. Rinchen Dorje                                | 21. Kunkyen Gangpa  |
| 7. Rinchen Drakpa                               | 22. Lodro Gyeltsen (b.1294-d.1376)                                  |
| 8. Paindatika (11th century)                    | 23. Zhonnu Lodro (b.1358 - d.1412)                                  |
| 9. Nyen Lotsawa (11th century)                  | 24. First Ngorchen, Kunga Zangpo (b.1382 - d.1456)                  |
| 10. Nang Kaupa (aka Darma Sengge; 11th century) | 25. Fourth Ngorchen, Kunga Wangchuk (b.1424 - d.1478)               |
| 11. Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (b.1092 - d.1158)      | 26. Sixth Ngorchen, Gorampa Sonam Sengge (b.1429 - d.1489)          |
| 12. Sonam Tsemo (b.1142 - d.1182)               | 27. Seventh Ngorchen, Konchok Pelwa (b.1445 - d.1514)               |
| 13. Drakpa Gyeltsen (b.1147 - d.1216)           | 28. 22nd Sakya throneholder, Lotsawa Jampai Dorje (b.1485 - d.1533) |
| 14. Sakya Pandita (b.1182 - d.1251)             | 29. Tenth Ngorchen, Konchok Lhundrub (b.1497 - d.1557)              |
| 15. Pakpa Lodro Gyeltsen (b.1235-d.1280)        | 30. Kunga Gyeltsen (identity unknown)                               |





663

**663**

**A PAINTING OF WHITE TARA**

TIBET, 18TH CENTURY

Image 17¾ x 12¾ in. (45.1 x 31.4 cm.)

\$8,000-12,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Philadelphia, mid-20th century, by repute

The female buddha of longevity and liberation sits amidst an open landscape, with auspicious gaze. Painted in the New Menri style, with Tashilhunpo-style clouds (three-lobed, green and white, with shaded recesses) this painting demonstrates a clear Chinese influence in its landscape, particularly in the blue and green mountain-form rocks in the foreground. The verso bears the following inscription, written in Tibetan *Ume* script: *By the all virtuous support of this life bestowing image of White Tara, may you swiftly achieve the state of the life bestowing goddess.*

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24501.

**664**

**A PAINTING OF BUDDHA AMITABHA**

TIBET, 18TH-19TH CENTURY

Image 24¾ x 16 in. (63.2 x 40.6 cm.)

\$4,000-6,000

The present painting depicts buddha Amitabha residing in the pureland of Sukhavati, surrounded by the eight great bodhisattvas. Buddha Shakyamuni and Bhaishajyaguru, the Medicine Buddha, float atop the clouds, supported by lotus flowers. This painting is executed in a New Menri style, defined by its symmetrical composition, gradient blue sky, and mixture of cloud styles, and was likely created in Central Tibet.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24459.



664

**665**

**A PAINTING OF A SIMHAMUKHA MANDALA**

TIBET, 18TH CENTURY

Image 24¾ x 15¾ in. (61.9 x 40.3 cm.)

\$20,000-30,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, California

The lion-faced goddess Simhamukha is a *dakini* whose ferocious appearance halts and repels all negative forces and obstacles. Depicted in a hexagram representing the union of the male and female principle, she is surrounded by curved knives and skull cups filled with blood. An animal-headed retinue figure sits in each of the four cardinal directions aligned with the walls of the surrounding palace. On the bottom register of the painting are a four-faced Mahakala; the lords of the charnel ground; and a four-armed Mahakala devouring a heart. Padmasambhava, closely associated with the goddess, is depicted along the top register, accompanied by buddha Amitabha and an unidentified lineage holder. After originating in northern India, Simhamukha became most popular with the Nyingma or old school of Tibetan Buddhism, a tradition initially propagated by Padmasambhava. The color palette, style of flames, and small vegetation atop the landscape indicate an eighteenth century date of origin for this well-executed painting, when the influence of Chinese landscape painting on Tibetan thangka was its most pronounced.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24511.





# THE POPULARITY & IMPORTANCE OF PANJARNATA MAHAKALA IN THE STUDY OF TIBETAN ART

Tibetan art is known for repeating and replicating the same figures in painting and sculpture. This is understandable when most of the figures are derived from religious texts and Buddhist narratives. The totality of figures can be generally separated into two broad subject categories; teachers (real and mythical) and deities (peaceful or wrathful). In the category of wrathful figures, the subject of Panjarnata Mahakala was often depicted in painting, and often very well, with many excellent examples in museums and private collections around the world. What explains the multitude of finely painted Mahakala Panjarnata thangka, and why might it be important for the study of Tibetan art?

Panjarnata, meaning 'Lord of the Pavilion,' is classified by function within Tantric Buddhism as a protector deity, and within the different Tibetan Buddhist traditions each school had a principal protector. For the Sakya Tradition, founded in 1073, Panjarnata was in the past and remains today, the principal idealized protector of the school. Subsequent to its founding, the Sakya sect was patronized by the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty of China and enjoyed prestige and power. During that time, many fine examples of Panjarnata were created for ritual use and gift exchange. Because of the dominance, popularity and power of the Sakya school, many sub-schools were spawned with their own prosperous and powerful monasteries and administrations. Examples of these are the Shalu, Jonang, Bodong, Ngor, Tsar and Dzongpa establishments. Those monasteries became powerful because of broad patronage from wealthy donors and strategic alliances often through marriage between the powerful patron families. For example, the hereditary Khon family of Sakya was related by marriage to the Kushang family of Shalu, the Gyantse royalty and to the Maharajas of Mustang and Sikkim.

At various times since 1073 these Sakya-influenced, but administratively independent, schools and monasteries wielded great power and wealth. Based on that wealth, many excellent works of art were created from the twelfth century to the present. Being doctrinally related, many of those great works of art were depictions of Panjarnata Mahakala, the shared protector for all those wealthy monastic houses and related patron families.

This painting of Panjarnata conforms to an established standard in Buddhist hierarchy and the placement of figures in the composition. The placement follows the common adage for such paintings: 'Big to small, top to bottom, left to right, and inside to outside.' Panjarnata is the large oversized central figure with a glaring, slightly sideways, wrathful expression. At the top center is a blue deity figure accompanied by the two historical figures of Mal Lotsawa Lodro Drag (born in the eleventh century) and Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158). The last two represent the human lineage of teachers.

Descending on the left side are Bhutadamara Vajrapani, blue, with four arms, and Shri Shmashana Adhipati in the appearance of two dancing skeletons. Descending on the right side are Ekajati holding a vase and Shri Devi with four arms, riding atop a donkey. Bhutadamara is the meditational deity (*ishtadevata*) and the latter three are additional but lesser protector deities within the Sakya tradition. Alternately, the 'Tsang' matrix of related religious traditions can be used to refer to the religious streams originating from or relating to the Sakya school and traditions which almost all are based in the Tsang Province of Central Tibet. In the lower third of the composition are five figures known as the Five Activity Protectors. These five, referred to in the liturgies, are a family with a mother, father, and three wrathfully agitated children who as a group function as the special attendants, or servants, to Panjarnata.

Scattered throughout the composition, regardless of the hierarchy of the principal figures, are very small depictions of monks, warriors, black hat dancers, black men and women. In the mass of red and maroon flames surrounding Panjarnata are the forms of birds, dogs and wolves. All of these additional depictions represent the outermost of the retinue of the entourage of Panjarnata. The most important figures are the largest, and the smallest are the least important. The more important of the secondary figures are read from top to bottom. The more important of the subjects are placed on the left side.

The central importance of Panjarnata paintings are related to their age, the wealth of the donors who commissioned the works and the skill of the highly-paid artists over the centuries. Because of the breadth of surviving fine Panjarnata paintings, it becomes possible to study a great variety of Tibetan painting styles by focusing on a single iconographic subject example – in this case, Mahakala Panjarnata. These examples have been repeated many times and in many different regional areas, providing a wealth of information and different compositions to compare for study and investigation.

The early examples of Panjarnata prior to the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries follow an Indian or Nepalese-influenced Tibetan style of composition. Early compositions are generally characterized as figures placed within strict vertical and horizontal registers and geometric structures. Following that period arose the greatly influential painting traditions of Mentangpa and Khyentse Chenmo of the late fifteenth century. These two artists abandoned the strict compartmentalization of the principal and secondary figures and adopted a floating landscape composition where the figures are placed against an imaginary landscape or open space. The figures are represented as more dynamic, with movement and realistic expression, likewise in the ornaments and dress. Landscape for the wrathful deity depictions is generally suggestive and minimalist. For the peaceful deities and human figures, landscape becomes abundant and varied in the differing painting styles based on the imagination of the artist. A distinction should be made between a painting tradition and a painting style: The first can have many different styles within the tradition and the latter unique to an individual artist or atelier and readily identifiable as a style.

The present Panjarnata painting belongs to the artistic style of a currently unknown artist of central Tibet that has followed in a mixed style of the two principal painting traditions of Mentangpa and Khyentse. The facial features, curled or flowing hair, ornaments, decorations and the small figure vignettes with cemetery scenes are all reminiscent of the Khyenri painting tradition. The robust and wild flames surrounding all the figures is a characteristic of the Mentangpa tradition. In general, the painting follows neither of these traditions or styles specifically because it is a fusion of the two with added and changed elements and characteristics that are unique to the changing times and the style and skill of this unique and unknown master artist.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24453.

Jeff Watt, 1-2019  
Himalayan Art Resources  
[www.himalayanart.org](http://www.himalayanart.org)







PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE WEST COAST COLLECTION

**666**

**A RARE BLACK GROUND PAINTING OF  
MAHAKALA PANJARNATA**

TIBET, 18TH CENTURY

33 x 21 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (83.8 x 56.2 cm.)

\$250,000-350,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Australia, by repute

Fire surrounds a dwarfish and big-bellied Black Lord of the Pavilion, who stands upon a prostrate human figure pinned down atop a lotus throne, which is barely visible through the masses of carefully-shaped flames that encircle each of the retinue figures who surround him. The viewer's attention is directly drawn to the bright white teeth that protrude in a fierce manner from the gaping red mouth of the deity and his three bulging red-tinged eyes. Atop his head sits a crown with five jewels and five smiling human skulls. His wild gold hair is topped with a vajra and tied with a small serpent resembling the one delicately-rendered around his belly. His heavy gold eyebrows and tufts of facial hair resemble his jewelry in their spiraling designs. The finely painted details of the jewelry, bone ornaments, protective staff, curved knife, blood-filled skull cup, and tiger-skin, were all clearly executed with the finest brush. Mahakala's garland of fifty severed human heads is also rendered with incredible detail, each expression distinct from the next and each hair defined. Compare these details to those in an example of Panjarnata Mahakala in the Rubin Museum of Art (see **figure a**).

The beauty and grandeur of the present painting, however, is not all contained within the central figure. This dynamic composition is a result of creative and expertly-painted details filling each and every space between the wrathful retinue of figures: animals emerge between flames, miniature necromancers, monks, and warriors appear in small vignettes, and implements among a feast of gruesome offerings fill the bottom of the canvas, all in harmony with the terrific mood of the painting. The artist of the present work managed to fit an extraordinary volume of figures, flames, symbols, and ritual representations into the composition, and the black ground creates an all-pervasive dark space from which these forms emerge and coalesce. The sheer number of elements packed into the painting and precision with which the mass of details is executed unquestionably makes this painting worthy of display among Tibetan masterworks.



**Figure a:** Panjarnatha Mahakala, Central Tibet; early 18th century, ca. 1720, Pigments on cloth, Rubin Museum of Art, C2001.1.4 (HAR 65004)





667

**667**

**A GILT AND POLYCHROMED BLACK  
STONE STELE OF MAHAKALA**

TIBET, 18TH CENTURY

7½ in. (19 cm.) high

\$10,000-15,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, United Kingdom, 1920s,  
by repute

Six-armed Mahakala, chief protector of the Gelugpa school of Tibetan Buddhism, holds a flaming *triratna* in a primary hand and stands on a supine Ganapati, illustrating his role as the wish-granting form of Mahakala. The reverse of the stele is cut out revealing the back of the figure modeled in the round, a device inherited from Indian Pala-period sculpture. The polychromy, which may be a later addition, adds vibrancy to this already animated figure.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24513.

PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE MANHATTAN COLLECTOR

**668**

**A GILT-BRONZE GROUP OF A HERUKA  
AND CONSORT**

TIBET, 18TH CENTURY

4½ in. (11.7 cm.) high

\$4,000-6,000

This wrathful male blood-drinker or *heruka* holds a curved-knife and skull cup around the body of his female consort. Together, they are meditational deities of the highest yoga tantra. The avian imagery common to Heruka figures of the Nyingma tradition like this has roots in Bon, the indigenous religion of Tibet.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24507.



668





**669**

**A BLACK GROUND PAINTING OF  
VAJRABHAIRAVA AND VAJRAVETALI**

TIBET, 18TH CENTURY  
20½ x 14⅝ in. (52.1 x 37.1 cm.)

\$6,000-8,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, California

Vajrabhairava is both a wrathful protector and a meditational deity. This small painting was likely made to initiate a practitioner into the esoteric transmission and to serve as a guide to these visualization practices.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24512.

**670**

**A PARCEL-GILT-SILVER FIGURE  
OF A DAKINI**

TIBET, 15TH-16TH CENTURY

Figure 4 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (10.9 cm.) high, associated  
gilt-bronze base 6 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (17.5 cm.) high

\$30,000-50,000

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired in the Hong Kong art market, 1995

The present figure, despite its small size, is finely cast in silver, with crisp details in the garland of skulls, jewelry, facial features, and the hair and crown. Certain details, such as the beaded jewelry, implements, crown, and the billowing sash are gilded, resulting in an exquisite contrasting effect, amplified by the inclusion of semi-precious stones.

Stylistically, the present figure can be compared with a gilt-silver figure of Vajrapani, formerly in the Pan-Asian Collection, and first illustrated by Pratapaditya Pal in *The Sensuous Immortals*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1977, p. 187, no. 113; both figures are cast in silver, but are gilded on the jewelry, crown, and drapery. The sharply incised facial features of both figures, with furrowed brows and nose and agape mouth, are also remarkably similar. Without their bases, the two figures are also approximately the same size. The Pan-Asian example retains a compressed double-lotus base consistent with fifteenth-sixteenth century Tibetan sculpture. The rich gilding, flame motif in the aureole, and trampled figures, suggest the base may be later associated.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24504.





PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE ASIAN COLLECTION

**675**

**A SMALL ZITAN FIGURE OF ARHAT BAKULA**

TIBET, 17TH-18TH CENTURY

3¾ in. (9.5 cm.) high

\$5,000-7,000

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired in the Hong Kong art market, 1990s,  
by repute

The present sculpture bears a carefully-carved inscription upon the verso of its rich *zitan* base, reading "*Homage to the arhat Bakula!*" The *arhat* or

elder, Bakula, is considered one of the direct disciples of the historical buddha Shakyamuni who swiftly achieved enlightenment and, therefore serves as example to devotees. He is depicted here according to standard iconography: as an ordained monk, holding a mongoose. He is propitiated for his ability to bestow basic material needs to those who have taken refuge. This small sculpture is likely to have been one of a larger set of *arhats*.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)),  
item no. 24463.



679



680

PROPERTY FROM A PRIVATE HONOLULU COLLECTION

**679**

**A CARVED CONCH WITH GILT-BRONZE MOUNT**

TIBET, 18TH-19TH CENTURY

9¾ in. (23.8 cm.) long

\$8,000-12,000

**PROVENANCE**

Chak Galleries, Hong Kong, 1995

The conch shell, a symbol of the voice of the Buddha, represents the transmission of Buddhist teachings. This conch is both an auspicious symbol and a ritual implement in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. During ritual performances, it is used as a musical instrument and as a container for water. The elaborate decoration of real conch shells, such as the present example, became prominent in the seventeenth century.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24469.

**680**

**A BRONZE VAJRA AND A BRONZE PHURBA**

TIBET, 14TH AND 17TH CENTURY

5 and 9¾ in. (12.7 and 25 cm.) long

\$3,000-5,000

The *vajra* (Tib: *dorje*) symbolizes the male aspects of enlightenment often described as “skillfull means” and “compassion,” while also representing the adamant nature of Vajrayana teachings and the enlightened beings who transmit them. The *kila* (Tib: *phurba*) is an implement wielded to ward off demonic obstructions and to protect the Vajrayana Buddhist religion by those in pursuit of enlightenment. The three heads at its finial represent the deity Vajrakilaya, of whom this is an embodiment.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item nos. 24457 and 24458.



THE PROPERTY OF A CONNECTICUT COLLECTOR

**681**

**TWO PAINTINGS WITH ARHATS AND ATTENDANTS**

TIBET, 19TH CENTURY

Image 26½ x 19 in. (67.3 x 48.3 cm.)

27 x 18¾ in. (16.6 x 47.6 cm.)

\$4,000-6,000

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired in Beijing in 1993

(2)

These two paintings are from what was once a three-painting set depicting the sixteen *arhats*, the attendant Dharmatala, the patron Hwashang, and *lokapala* or guardian kings of the four directions. Each of these two depict six *arhats*, one attendant, and two *lokapala*.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item nos. 90313 and 90314.

THE PROPERTY OF A DISTINGUISHED GENTLEMAN

**683**

**A GILT-BRONZE FIGURE OF ELEVEN-HEADED  
AVALOKITESHVARA**

NEPAL OR TIBET, 14TH CENTURY

7 $\frac{1}{8}$  in. (19.4 cm.) high

\$25,000-35,000

**PROVENANCE**

Purchased in Europe, 1990s, by repute

The current work, depicting an eleven-headed, eight-armed emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, is executed in the iconographic form first described by the Indian Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna during the second century CE. The form was later popularized in meditational texts by the Indian pandits Bhikshuni Shri and Jowo Atisha, and thereafter absorbed into the essential iconography of Vajrayana Buddhism. The overall proportions including the slim waist and wide hips, the rectangular ushnisha, the U-shaped sash which falls above the knees, and exuberant use of inlaid stone and glass lozenges are all indicative of the Newar idiom, prevalent throughout Central Tibetan ateliers in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; while the square facial features and the wide lotus petals on the base of the sculpture are more commonly found in contemporaneous Tibetan sculpture.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24461.



(back view)





THE PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE WASHINGTON, D.C. COLLECTOR

**684**

**A GILT-BRONZE GROUP OF HEVAJRA KAPALADHARA  
AND NAIRATMYA**

NEPAL, 16TH CENTURY

5 $\frac{7}{8}$  in. (14.9 cm.) high

\$50,000-70,000

**PROVENANCE**

Christie's New York, 30 March 2006, lot 184

The skull-cup-bearing form of tutelary deity Hevajra stands in *pratyalidhasana* together with his consort Nairatmya. The deities of the highest yoga tantra dance upon a double-lotus trampling the Hindu deities Brahma and Shiva in their stride. His dangling foot is met with gestures of support by Indra and Vishnu, who are rendered in a much smaller scale, seated behind the tantric deities. The eight-headed, sixteen-armed Hevajra holds skull cups or *kapala* holding a variety of beings in each hand, including an elephant and the earth-goddess Prithvi in his primary hands. His proper-right hands hold a variety of animals while his proper-left hold a retinue of other Hindu deities.

Hevajra is the tantric manifestation of the buddha Akshobhya. His name epitomizes the adamant nature of Vajrayana teachings. This impressively complex and detailed gilt-bronze figure is an unmistakably Nepalese representation. Beneath its lustrous gilding is a bright copper casting, typical for craftsmanship from the Kathmandu Valley. The separately-cast base is also indicative of the artistic tradition. The plump physiques, facial features, and style of carefully-executed ornamentation are similar to a sixteenth-century image of Vajravarahi, illustrated by U. von Schroeder in *Indo-Tibetan Bronzes*, Hong Kong, 1981, p. 379, fig. 101C.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24466.



(back view)



689

**A RARE GILT-BRONZE GROUP OF SHRIKANTHA  
KAMAKALA AND GUHYAKALI**

NEPAL, 17TH CENTURY

5 $\frac{1}{2}$  in. (14.9 cm.) high

\$40,000-60,000

**PROVENANCE**

Acquired in the Macau art market, 1996

This rare form of Shiva is known as Shrikantha, "one with the beautiful throat." Shrikantha stands in *ardhaparyankasana* (one leg dangling), embraced by his consort Guhyakali in cosmic union forming a *kamakala*, or union of creative power.

The present group is among few extant works depicting the esoteric subject. The petite lotus petals and beaded rim of the rectangular base suggest a late-Malla date for this uncommon image. Compare the iconography and tantric ornaments with another seventeenth-century example of this esoteric figure in the Norton Simon Museum (acc. no. M.1979.91.S).

Himalayan Art Resource ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24419.



(back view)





PROPERTY OF A PRIVATE MANHATTAN COLLECTOR

**691**

**A PAUBHA OF MAHAPATINGKAH**  
 NEPAL, KATHMANDU, KEL TOLE, DATED BY  
 INSCRIPTION TO 1878 (SAMVAT 998)  
 Image 29% x 21% in. (75.3 x 54.9 cm.)

\$4,000-6,000

**PROVENANCE**

Private collection, Los Angeles, by repute  
 Bonhams New York, 11 September 2012, lot 162

The white bodhisattva of one thousand heads, arms and myriad eyes astride at center, is known in Sanskrit as Sitatapatra. Her proper-left five hundred legs on the left side suppress a host of worldly deities and animals, while her proper-right five hundred legs suppress a host of worldly plights, demons and animals. She is surrounded by retinue figures and at the bottom two lay men and three lay women kneel in propitiation. Two lines of

Newari script along the bottom register provide the date of the artwork, the place of creation, and the names of the man and the four family members responsible for the dedication of this paubha for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Himalayan Art Resources ([himalayanart.org](http://himalayanart.org)), item no. 24506.



THE PROPERTY OF AN ITALIAN NOBLEMAN

**692**

**A PAUBHA OF MAHAKALA**  
NEPAL, DATED BY INSCRIPTION TO  
JANUARY 1778 (SAMVAT 898)  
Image 42¾ x 27⅞ in. (108.5 x 71 cm.)

\$20,000-30,000

**PROVENANCE**

Duke Simone Velluti Zati di San Clemente  
(1926-2012), by repute  
Thence by descent to the present owner

Based on the inscription in the lower register, this *paubha* depicting Mahakala was commissioned by a family of thirteen in commemoration of their *puja* in the former Kingdom of Patan (present day Lalitapur, Kathmandu). It attests to the lighting of butter lamps; one thousand performances of water ritual; feeding of ten brahmin; worship of the Kumari; and dedication to the moon god. Each of the family members is depicted in the lower register and identified by name.