



FROM LEFT: *Buddha Preaching*, South Asia, probably Sri Lanka, 6th century, Copper alloy, H. 11 1/2 in. (29.2 cm); W. 2 3/4 in. (7 cm), Lent by National Museum, Bangkok, gift of Prince Damrong Rajanubhab (DR1), Photo: Thierry Ollivier; *Ganesha*, Central Vietnam, late 7th–8th century, Sandstone, H. 37 13/16 in. (96 cm); W. 19 1/8 in. (48.5 cm); D. 13 in. (33 cm) Lent by Museum of Cham Sculpture, Da Nang, Vietnam (5.1) Photo: Thierry Ollivier.

LOST KINGDOMS, FOUND AWE

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More than 3,000 years after his death a young Egyptian ruler held the museum world rapt with suspense and breathless anticipation. In 1976, The Metropolitan Museum of Art welcomed *The Treasures of Tutankhamun* to its hallowed halls and in doing so thrust the boy king into a kind of furious excitement normally reserved for rock stars rather than ancient royalty. This year, the excitement of curators and patrons has once again reached a fever pitch as the Met welcomes another celebration of ancient life. Behold the exotic mystique and majesty of *Lost Kingdoms*, a groundbreaking exhibit making its highly lauded, New York debut this spring.

A stunning collection comprised of one hundred and sixty pieces of Hindu-Buddhist sculpture from the 5th through 8th century, *Lost Kingdoms* is an enthralling, magical look into Southeast Asia in the first millennium. A collection of carved stone works - many of which were produced in

impressive, large-scale format; as well as pieces wrought in bronze, gold, silver, terracotta, and stucco create an exhibit as rich with beauty as it is laden with cultural importance. Among the ancient masterpieces, a sixth-century Cambodian piece entitled *Buddha Offering Protection*, the magnificent *Krishna Holding Mt. Govardhana* and a late seventh-century *Avalokitesvara* unearthed in the Mekong delta of Vietnam during the 1920s - a piece that is said to be, arguably, the most beautiful image of the Buddhist embodiment of compassion in Southeast Asia.

Dramatic and primitive, the pieces are primarily associated with the identifiable cultures of the "lost kingdoms" of Pyu, Funan, Zhenla, Champa, Dvāravatī, Kedah, and Śrīvijaya. Described as largely "understudied" by the museum, these are areas whose identities - and in some cases very existences - have come to light only through the contemporary epigraphic and archaeological findings of recent years.



Buddha Preaching, Central Myanmar,
6th century, Silver, H. 3 3/34 in. (9.5 cm);
W. 2 3/4 in. (7 cm); D. 1 15/16 in. (5 cm),
Lent by National Museum of Myanmar,
Yangon (4585), Photo: Thierry Ollivier



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: *Yaksha*, Central Vietnam, early 6th century, Sandstone, H. 26 3/4 in. (68 cm); W. 27 9/16 in. (70 cm); D. 6 5/16 in. (16 cm), Lent by Museum of Cham Sculpture, Da Nang, Vietnam (20.2), Photo: Thierry Ollivier; *Shiva's Footprints*, Northern Cambodia, Pre-Angkor period, Second half of the 7th–8th century, Sandstone, H. (incl. tenon) 6 5/8 in. (17 cm); W. 12 13/16 in. (32.5 cm); D. 12 13/16 in. (32.5 cm); Wt. 51 lbs (23.1 kg), Sculpture, Lent by National Museum of Cambodia, Phnom Penh (Ka.1756); *Lion Guardian*, Central Thailand, 8th century, Stucco, H. 22 13/16 in. (58 cm); W. 28 3/4 in. (73 cm); D. 15 3/4 in. (40 cm), Lent by Phra Pathom Chedi National Museum, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand (632/2519), Photo: Thierry Ollivier.

Weaving a gripping tale, the sculptures delve into the history of the first millennium to bring the people and customs of Southeast Asia into unprecedented light and focus. Through the exhibit, which will be on display through July 27th, one may witness the shared values, common beliefs and aesthetic core that pervaded the ancient region, all illustrated through a dramatically curated event unique in its ability to broadly define the modern political map of the region today.

The collection is a collaborative effort comprised of national treasures on loan to the Metropolitan Museum from the governments of Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia; contributions from France, the United States and the United Kingdom as well as the first-ever international artifact loans made by the government of Myanmar. In early previews, Metropolitan Museum Curator John Guy waxed enthusiastically on the exhibit's ground breaking significance, "*Lost Kingdoms*" unravels the process of Hindu-Buddhist evolution and history, tracking the movement of that culture through the first millennium. Many of the greatest works of art from Southeast Asia have been brought together here for the first time. Five years in the making, The Metropolitan Museum has brought forth

their considerable resources in order to bring this exhibit to fruition".

Further underscoring the importance of the event, Thomas P. Campbell, Director and CEO of the Metropolitan Museum says, "Exhibitions that provide this level of exposure to previously unfamiliar material of such significance come along very rarely... The majority of the important and breathtakingly beautiful works in *Lost Kingdoms* have never before traveled outside their source countries."

Other noteworthy, limited engagement exhibits currently at the Metropolitan Museum include: *Now You See It: Photography and Concealment* (through September 1, 2014), *Fabergé from the Matilda Geddings Gray Foundation Collection* (through November 27, 2016), *Goya and the Altamira Family* (through August 3, 2014) and *The Pre-Raphaelite Legacy: British Art and Design* (through October 26, 2014). In combination with the museums world-class, world-renown permanent collection, the limited engagement exhibits of the Metropolitan set the stage for what may be described as one of the most note worthy, historically important seasons of the museums illustrious existence. ✈