We Are Connected: Highlights from the USC Pacific Asia Museum Himalayan Collection

Wall Texts and Object Entries

Title Wall

Heading: We Are Connected: Highlights from the USC Pacific Asia Museum Himalayan Collection

Gallery Wall Text:

We live in a world teeming with beings, things, and forces of all sorts. *We Are Connected* offers you an opportunity to explore the various ways in which inhabitants of the Tibetan Plateau, the Himalayas, and Inner Asia relate to each other as well as to the animals, plants, mountains, and spirits around them through art and material culture. This focus on the ideas and practices of interconnectedness calls attention to compositions, motifs, and artistic media unique to Tibetan, nepales, Bhutanese, Mongolian, and related Indian and Chinese cultural regions while reexamining the region's rich visual art traditions through the lens of environmental humanities.

The USC Pacific Asia Museum is home to a significant collection of materials from the greater Himalayan region encompassing both objects of ethnographic interests and outstanding examples of painting, sculpture, and other categories of fine arts. The objects selected for this exhibition, many on display for the first time in decades, illuminate what it means to live together as humans. They show how people on the Tibetan plateau and beyond envision coexisting with other sentient beings, nonliving matters, invisible forces, and gods who are believed to inhabit and personify the natural world. In these works, interconnectedness was articulated through physical or symbolic interactions between different beings. The viewers were often active participants in these interactions as they handled and looked at these objects in religious rituals and communal activities. When depicting contact and bonding in images, artists and patrons invariably embraced an openness to think big and a willingness to give up seeing themselves as unique and all-important. The people of the Himalayas have long understood the benefits of detachment from their own exceptionalism on the roof of the world, integrating these lessons into their ways of life with imagination and purpose.

In learning about a distant, unfamiliar part of the world, this exhibition also invites you to think more deeply about how we are connected to each other as well as to our surroundings and inner spaces. Curiosity about others is a step toward self-discovery.

We Are Connected is curated by Sonya S. Lee, Professor of Art History, East Asian Languages and Cultures, and Religion in USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts, and Sciences. The exhibition is presented in conjunction with *Gateway to Himalayan Art*, organized and sponsored by the Rubin Museum of Himalayan Art in New York City. Special thanks go to Dr. Karl

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Gateway Object



Tombstone for no. 1

Hevajra and Nairatmya

Tibet, 18th-19th century

Bronze

In Loving Memory of Krishan Singh by his Wife Sneh

2005.5.1AB

A: figurine; B: stand

Gallery Object Label:

The esoteric Buddhist deity Hevajra, alongside his consort Nairatmya, was the meditational deity of the Sakya tradition in Tibetan Buddhism. Representing two deities in sexual embrace, known as “Father and Mother” or *yab-yum* in Tibetan, is one of the quintessential expressions of interconnectedness in the arts of the Himalayas. Highly symbolic in meaning, images of male-female couplings are a manifestation of the mind of enlightenment. The male, Hevajra in this case, represents active compassion or method for all beings, whereas the female, Nairatmya, stands for transcendent wisdom. Their consummation thus symbolizes the union of compassion and wisdom, the overcoming of duality, and the resulting state of bliss that characterizes the attainment of awakening.

Panel A

Heading: Cosmos

Gallery Wall Text:

The five works in this section are outstanding examples of *thangkas*, Tibetan hanging scrolls painted with mineral pigments on cotton cloth. This type of painting has long been the medium of choice for artists and patrons to experiment with distinctive compositions that boldly imagine humans as part of a vast universe full of myriad kinds of beings, transcending time and space. In these works, humans are shown to exist in a system of interconnected hierarchy where powerful Buddhist deities reign supreme. At the same time, they are offered the means by which to transform themselves into buddhas and bodhisattvas. The *thangkas*, in short, affirm the fundamental Mahayana Buddhist belief that all beings are capable of spiritual advancement, through self-practice and/or with the help of other enlightened beings.



Tombstone for No. 2

Buddha Shakyamuni with Arhats

Central Tibet, late 14th-15th century

cotton; silk; pigment

Museum Purchase with Funds Provided by Anonymous Donor

2005.8.1

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

In Buddhist traditions across Asia, the arhats are considered the original disciples of the historical Buddha Shakyamuni, who had attained enlightenment on their own and decided to safeguard the Buddhist Law in the human realm until the coming of the Future Buddha Maitreya. Pictorial representations of arhats as sage monks, often with exaggerated features, became widespread in China by the tenth century and were introduced to Tibet a few centuries later. This thangka marks a notable transition in the development of this theme, when the number of arhats accompanying the Buddha was expanded from sixteen to eighteen. The two additional figures, Dharmatala (also known as Dharmatrata) and Hvashang, were not depicted with fixed iconographic traits until later. In this work, there are seventeen monk figures that can be identified as arhats but none of them have the distinguishing features associated with Hvashang,

who was typically depicted as a jolly man with a large belly not unlike Budai in East Asia. Dharmatala, who appears above the two guardian kings in the lower right-hand corner of the thangka, is portrayed as a layman wearing a turban and also with a fly whisk, a vase, a tiger escort and backpack with texts, all attributes associated with the Chinese monk Xuanzang.



Tombstone for No. 3

Eleven-faced, Eight-Armed Avalokiteshvara

Northern China or Amdo region, late 18th century

ink; cotton

Museum Purchase

1989.7.1

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

Avalokiteshvara is one of the most popular deities across the Buddhist world. In this work, the bodhisattva is represented with features from both Chinese and Tibetan traditions, notably the overall feminine appearance that is unique to the former and the eleven-headed form of the latter. The multiple arms symbolize Avalokiteshvara's boundless compassion and ability to save myriad beings in different places instantaneously. Another distinctive aspect of this thangka is the choice of a large stupa inscribed with words as the setting for the main deity. Written in gold ink against a dark red background, the text can be identified as the *Ushinishavijaya Dharani* in Ranjana script, a Buddhist incantation commonly recited by devotees to wish for longevity and favorable rebirth. The composition was based largely on a template preserved in two prints that Bertold Laufer acquired in either northern China or the Amdo region during the Blackstone Expedition of 1908–1910.



Tombstone for No. 4

Krishna Yamari and Vajravetali

Kham Region in Eastern Tibet, 18th century

cotton; pigment; gilt

Gift of David L. Kamansky in honor of Zelma Long and Phillip Freese

2000.36.8

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

In Vajrayana Buddhism, each deity is a complex, composite personality with multiple aspects and facets. In the present case, Krishna Yamari is a manifestation of Yamantaka, a wrathful form of Manjushri, the bodhisattva of wisdom, that conquers death. He is shown in a dark blue body with three faces (the main one being a buffalo) and six arms, holding the skull cup and a flaying knife as a pair symbolizing the obliteration of ignorance (with the knife) and attainment of wisdom (through the blood in the skull cup). Krishna Yamari's consort Vajravetali wraps her light-blue body around him forming a blissful union. Encircled in wild flames, both deities stand triumphantly atop a buffalo representing Yama, the lord of death who in turn tramples over a naked man. Manjushri himself appears at the very top center of the painting alongside two lamas. Nine other wrathful deities with consorts form a circle around the central group of figures against rows of verdant hills and a rare glimpse of snow-capped peaks. The work exemplifies the painting style of Kham in Eastern Tibet.



Tombstone for No. 5

Padmasambhava and the Nyingma Refuge Tree

Central Tibet, late 19th-early 20th century

cloth; pigment

USC Pacific Asia Museum

In Loving Memory of Krishan Singh by his Wife Sneh

2005.5.42

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

This thangka is representative of a painting genre in Tibet known as the “refuge tree” or “refuge field,” which depicts the transmission lineage of a given teaching or school in a tree-like arrangement. The present example belongs to a particular cycle of teachings and practices within the Nyingma School known as the Longchen Nyingtik, in which the great Indian master Padmasambhava allegedly conferred on the Tibetan kings during the eighth century and was discovered by the visionary Jikme Lingpa in the 18th century. In the painting, Padmasambhava is depicted with his consort inside a palatial structure at the center of the tree, while the primal Buddha Samantabhadra, the ultimate source of the Longchen Nyingtik teachings, appears at the very top of the central axis in a deep blue body with his consort Samantabhadri in pure white. There are three large platforms extending from the tree trunk, each with gurus and deities of varying numbers standing on top. The one in front of Padmasambhava is the largest, featuring thirty-nine figures in four rows. To the practitioner, the work would provide him with a comprehensive vision of all the teachers in his direct lineage as well as the deities with whom the teachings were associated. The images help explain the relationship between masters and their deities by showing how knowledge and ritual instructions were passed down in a schematic way. The painting was thus a tool of practice and an object of veneration in which the practitioner could take refuge.



Tombstone for No. 6

Yamantaka-Vajrabhairava Mandala

Tibet, circa 1725

color; cloth

Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jesse L. Greenstein

1996.8.6

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

Like the other thangka related to Manjushri Bodhisattva in the exhibition, this work features Vajrabhairava, another manifestation of Yamantaka the conqueror of death, with his consort Vajravetali. The couple appears prominently in the center of the painting's lower half as well as in the innermost mansion of the mandala in the work's upper half alongside eight other Yamantaka emanations with consorts. Vajrabhairava's terrifying form entails thirty-four arms and sixteen legs as well as nine heads, including the central one as a buffalo and the serene human face of Manjushri at the very top. His overwhelming power is expressed through the animals and human figures being crushed underneath his many feet. This thangka was meant to be an aid for the initiated practitioners to visualize a symbolic conquest of death with Vajrabhairava as one of the central meditational deities. Such practices were central to the Geluk School for which this painting was created.

<u>Panel B</u>

Heading: Play

Gallery Wall Text:

People across the Himalayas gather at Buddhist monasteries and other venues regularly for festivals, religious ceremonies, and communal celebrations. Objects of different types are used on these occasions to facilitate communication between humans, ancestors, and deities through art, music, dance, and storytelling. The works featured in this section highlight a wide range of

designs in the form of fantastical plants and mythical creatures. Images of flying dragons, multi-headed serpents, and wild foliage adorn the surfaces of musical instruments, ritual implements, accessories and costumes worn by dancers and actors, and are found on temple structures. Their presence infuses the setting with liveliness and playfulness. Similarly, the choice of making these objects out of durable and uncommon materials such as human bones, adds to their perceived power in connecting beings across different realms.





Group Label Object Nos. 7, 8, and 38

7 Base Tibet, 18th to 19th century silver 2” H x 3.875” W x 4.75” D USC Pacific Asia Museum Museum purchase 2001.20.1	8 Skull cup Tibet or Nepal, 19th Century human skull bone; brass; coral USC Pacific Asia Museum From the Collection of Harold and Jane Ullman 1991.67.36	38 Bone Apron Nepal, 18th Century human & animal bone; cloth; paint USC Pacific Asia Museum Gift from the Nancy King Collection 2001.1.45

Gallery Object Label:

Objects made of human bones are an integral part of Himalayan material culture. They serve as a powerful reminder of death and impermanence. Buddhist lamas often asked to have their skulls preserved after their death, so that the oval upper section of the cranium could be made into a cup for use in rituals by their followers. As seen in Object No. 8, the concave interior of the skull was expertly fitted with a thin sheet of metal for holding liquid. The apron with carved bone ornaments is another example of utilizing the power of human bones to engage with spirits. It was worn by Buddhist lamas in shamanistic dances intended to chase away ghosts and demons. The participants, empowered by the attire, transformed themselves into the wrathful deities

depicted in the bone carvings, many of whom were likewise adorned with accessories made of human skulls and bones.








Group Label Objects nos. 9–12, 39, 40

9 Crown Tibet, circa 1700 copper; gilt 7” H x 7.5” DIA Gift of David L. Kamansky 2002.20.5	10 Mask in the Shape of Mahakala Tibet, 19th century wood; paint; leather 12.5” H x 9” W x 7” D Gift of Robert Bentley and Neptune Smythe 1986.103.7	11 Ritual Horn with Dragon Head Tibet, 18th to 19th century copper; brass; turquoise 3.75” H x 2.25” W x 16.25” D Gift of Mr. Kent Tobey in honor of his grandson, Noah Ginsberg 2001.14.1	12 Ritual Horn with Dragon Head Tibet, 18th to 19th century copper; brass; turquoise 2.375” H x 1.875” W x 16.5” D Gift of David Kamansky in honor of Carolyn Ahmanson 2001.13.5	39 Snow Lion Dancer Tibet, 20th Century fabric, wood, silk, pigments. A: 17” H x 4.625” W x 5.625” D; B: 14” H x 4.125” W x 2.5” D; C: 3.125” H x 0.625” W x 0.375”; D: 1” H x 5.” W x 5.5” D	40 Wrathful Mask Dancer Tibet, 20th Century Silk, wood, paint, cotton, varnish,. Metal 19” H x 9.75” W x 5.375" D USC Pacific Asia Museum Gift of Kolla Landwehr Foundation 1988.74.10

				USC Pacific Asia Museum Gift of Kolla Landwehr Foundation 1988.74.23 A: doll, B: mask; C:spearhead; D: stand	

Gallery Object Label:

Cham ritual dances help bring Himalayan communities together through the drama of body movement, music, and role-playing. These performances typically take place in the courtyard of a Buddhist monastery, where monks wearing colorful costumes and masks follow highly choreographed movements of the deities they portray. The dance is intended to celebrate a famous teacher or a body of teachings, drive away negative forces, and bring blessings to the community.

The two papier-mâché figurines represent dancers in the middle of a *cham* performance, one wearing a mask as a snow lion and the other assuming the role of Sengge Dradok, one of eight manifestations of Padmasambhava with a blue, angry face. The dragon-headed horns, the crown in brass, and the mask in the shape of Mahakala were part of past ritual performances.





Group Label Objects no. 13–14

13 Traveling Shrine (gau) Eastern Tibet, probably Kham, 18th-19th century silver; gold; copper; woven ties 7.5” H x 5.75” W x 2.5” D Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Maurice Beugelmans 1992.21.1AB	14 Kubera on Lion Tibet, 15th century bronze 5.5” H x 4” W x 2.5” D Gift from the Nancy King Collection 2001.1.6

Gallery Object Label:

Known as *gau* in Tibetan, traveling shrines or amulet containers are ubiquitous across the Himalayas and in South Asia. At home the *gau* is kept on an altar, whereas when traveling, the owner fastens it to the belt. The owner's personal deity (exemplified by Object no. 14) is wrapped in silk and can be seen through the container's central window. The container's ornate front, decorated with eight auspicious symbols against an intertwining floral ground, showcases the fine metalwork tradition of Kham in Eastern Tibet.





Group Label for Objects 15–16

15 Traveling Shrine (gau) with a Seated Lama Figurine Tibet, early 1920s bronze; copper Figure: 1.5" H x 1.125" W x 0.75" D; Box: 2" H x 2" W x .875" D Gift of Mabel Kay 1969.1.75AB	16 Ritual Box with Lid Tibet, 2nd half of 19th century Wood, silver, pigment 6.125" H x 11" W x 9.75" D Gift of Donald & Lynne Alschuler etc. in Honor of David Kamansky 2004.4.1AB

Gallery Object Label:

The small amulet set was donated to the Pacific Asia Museum in 1969, marking the beginning of its Himalayan Collection. Most of the objects in the collection were acquired through the collective efforts of a group of dedicated museum supporters and donors under the leadership of David Kamansky, museum director from 1977 to 2003. The richly decorated silver ritual box was a gift to the museum made in honor of Mr. Kamansky in 2004 commemorating the central role he assumed in the formation of this collection.






Group Label for Objects 17, 18, 41, 42

(To be on display after the Rubin show ends)

17 Stupa Central Tibet, 13th-14th century bronze, turquoise, jade 9.75” H x 5” DIA Museum Purchase with Funds Provided by The Collectors' Circle 2005.43.1	18 Prayer Wheel Tibet, 19th century silver; brass; wood; leather; conch shell; 15.5” H x 3.75” DIA Gift of David Kamansky in memory of Nina G. Bushnell. 2001.13.4	41 Vajra Tibet, 16th century bronze; gilt 4.5” H x 1.5” D USC Pacific Asia Museum Gift of David Kamansky in honor of Zelma Long 2001.13.3	42 Bell (Ghanta) Tibet, 18th century gilt; bronze 7” H x 3.25” DIA USC Pacific Asia Museum Gift of Zelma Long and Phillip Freese 2001.17.1

Gallery Object Label:

These are some of the most recognizable objects associated with Himalayan art and cultures. Buddhist devotees across the region use them regularly to care for others through compassionate, symbolic actions. The prayer wheel provides an expedient way of gaining merits and fulfilling wishes. With each rotation equivalent to reciting an invocation (mantra), the user can accumulate numerous recitations quickly by turning the wheel repeatedly. Walking around the stupa, a monument representing the Buddha’s presence in the world, is another form of devotional practice that enables practitioners to honor the Buddha and bring blessings to their loved ones. The vajra and bell are used together as a pair during prayers and rituals to signify the union of method and wisdom, the two key aspects of the enlightened mind.



Tombstone for No. 37

Dragon robe

Tibet; China, early 18th century

Silk; cotton

67” H x 66” W

USC Pacific Asia Museum

Gift of Robert Bentley and Neptune Smythe

1986.103.28

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

This yellow brocade dragon robe was made for a Tibetan aristocrat to wear during communal celebrations and festivals. It was decorated with Buddhist symbols and the motif of a dragon chasing the flaming pearl in multiple iterations. The primary fabric is imperial-quality warp-faced broken-twill satin, brocaded with continuous supplementary silk wefts. The dragon bodies and scales are brocaded with gold foil sparsely wrapped around a pale pink silk core. The collar trim and primary fabric were likely made in early 18th-century China and assembled in Tibet, whereas the lining was probably replaced in the 19th century.

<u>Panel C</u>

Heading: Out of the Ordinary

Gallery Wall Text:

Animals and humans are inextricably bound to each other. This interconnectedness is not limited to one lifetime. In Buddhism, it is believed that humans can become animals and vice versa in a system of transmigration driven by karma. Treating all sentient beings with compassion is thus a key lesson for all followers of the Buddha. Accepting animals as part of everyday life and ethics

is one way of putting this lesson into practice, knowing that killing a sheep would incur negative karma and one might consequently be reborn to face a similar fate. Imagining animals as manifestations of powerful forces in life and acknowledging one's vulnerability in their presence is another way of exercising compassion. In the material culture of the greater Himalaya region, these ideas are embodied in a wide range of animal images that shape the look of domestic spaces. Garuda, Ganesha, and other deities in hybrid bodies fill portable shrines and domestic residences as icons for personal devotion. Their zoomorphic attributes are often evoked in a variety of objects in unexpected ways. The continued relevance of animals in Himalayan societies underscores the benefits of engaging creatively with our nonhuman co-inhabitants of this planet.



Tombstone for No. 19

Table

Tibet, 15th to 17th century

wood; mineral pigment

22" H x 32" W x 15.5" D

Museum Purchase with funds provided by the Collectors' Circle

2003.37.1

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

This work is representative of a type of table of medium height (up to 25 inches) that was typically placed in front of the thrones of important lamas in their private apartments at a monastery or in front of raised seats of noblemen in the chapels of their residences. Exemplifying a decorative style marked by deep carving and a somewhat bulky appearance, this table belongs to an earlier phase of development in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as its dating has been confirmed by radiocarbon analysis.

Furniture makers in Central Tibet procured wood from poplar trees in local forests near urban centers at Lhasa and Shigatse. They seldom used raw material from other regions with extensive forests such as Kham and Kongpo due to difficulties in transporting large tree trunks to places in high altitude.



Tombstone for No. 20

Storage box

Tibet, 18th century

leather; paint; brass

5.875” H x 19” W x 8.75” D

Gift of David L. Kamansky

2003.55.12

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

This chest was made during the period from the late 17th to 19th centuries, which came to be known as the Classic Period in the history of Tibetan furniture. The decorations were often inspired by gifts that Tibetan lamas brought back from their journeys to the Manchu court in Beijing and elsewhere in China. In this work, the design featuring flying dragons holding jewels in their claws inside an expanded quatrefoil frame was an adaptation of a similar décor commonly found on carved lacquer and porcelain made in China during the late Ming and early Qing periods. Another source of artistic impetus came from silk textiles, which might have inspired the idea of creating surface textures that resemble reptile scales using gilt gesso work.







[These six works, 21-23, 26, and 36, are part of the same assemblage with 19 and 20. Tombstone object labels only.]





Group Label for Objects 25, 27–29

25 A Blue and White Stem Cup with Sanskrit Inscription, China, 1736-95, porcelain, glaze 5.5”H x 6.25" DIA Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Snukal 1996.44.24	27 Printing Block with Relief Carving of Khyung (Garuda) and Sanskrit and Tibetan Mantras Tibet, 19th century wood	28 Garuda India or Nepal, 17th to 18th century wood; gilt; paint 12” H x 7.75” W x 4” D Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Snukal 2000.34.45	29 Covered Vessel Tibet, early 19th century copper; silver gilt overall: 4.25” H x 5.875” W x 3.25” D; Lid: 1.375” H x 2.375” DIA; vessel: 3.5” H x 5.875” W x 3.25” D

	overall: 9” H x 7 5/8” W x 3/4 in D Gift of the Jim and Jeanne Pieper Collection 2020.6.4		Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Snukal 1998.67.21AB

Gallery Object Label:

The wood sculpture from Nepal presents an anthropomorphized portrayal of Garuda that is typical in South Asia. His characteristic wings are echoed in the handles of the gilt silver vessel. The representation on the printing block marks Garuda’s notable transformation into a horned, eagle-like bird known in Tibetan culture as *khyung*. The deity’s role as a fierce protector of the Buddha, especially when guarding against native serpent spirits, is indicated by Garuda’s subjugation of a snake using its beak and claws. His body is covered with *mantras*, short syllables or phrases in Sanskrit and Tibetan recited by devotees to invoke the deity’s power. The prints made from the block were intended as amulets to ward off diseases associated with snakes or water-related calamities. The blue-and-white porcelain stem cup exemplifies a different usage of *mantras*, this time as seed syllables representing the Eight Great Bodhisattvas.



Tombstone for No. 25

Blue and White Stem Cup with Sanskrit Inscription (see above)

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

This fine porcelain stem cup was part of a large set of utensils used for conducting rituals inside imperial palaces during the Qianlong reign of Qing-dynasty China. On its exterior are eight sacred Sanskrit alphabets known as seed syllables, each representing one of the Eight Great Bodhisattvas: in the order of appearance around the bowl, Manjushri, Maitreya, Kshitigarbha, Akashagarbha, Samantabhadra, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara, and Nivarana-viskambhin. In Tibetan Buddhism, these bodhisattvas are often grouped together as attendants for major Buddhas such as Vairochana, Shakyamuni, and the Buddhas of Five Directions. The tradition of incorporating the eight seed syllables into the design of Buddhist ritual utensils for use by the Chinese imperial court began in the Ming dynasty. Under the Manchu rule, high-ranking lamas

from Tibet oversaw the design of religious images and objects in imperial workshops such as the ones in Jingdezhen where this stem cup was likely made.








Group Label for Objects 30–35

30 Ewer Tibet, Circa 1650 clay; copper; enamel; shell USC Pacific Asia Museum Museum purchase with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lydman and the Collectors' Circle. 1995.14.2	31 A Purple and Blue Glazed and Metal Mount Ewer, porcelain, glaze, metal China, 17th to 18th century 20.25” H x 5.375” DIA; Cover: 1.5” H x 5” DIA Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Victor Martin 1975.7.4AB	32 Elephant Tibet, 14th to 15th century copper; gilt overall: 3”H x 3 7/8” W x ¾” D Gift of David Kamansky in honor of Ashley Lehman 2001.13.7	33 Ganesha India, 16th to 17th century bronze; copper 3.5” H x 2.25” W x 2” D Gift of Sally K. Wenzlau 1989.60
34 Untitled, photograph by Shana Dressler	35 Untitled, photograph by Sudharak Olwe,		

from the Ganesha Festival in Mumbai, 2004 framed: 25 1/8" H x 30 3/4" W; image: 15 3/8" H x 22 1/4" W 2009.17.2	from the Ganesha Festival in Mumbai, 2004 paper and ink 20" H x 24" W 2009.18.1		

Gallery Object Label:

Ganesha is a popular Hindu deity who is also worshipped by the Buddhists for good luck and success. Presented in a chubby body with an elephant head and four arms, including one that holds his own broken tusk, the bronze sculpture exemplifies a figural style in which his trunk curves upward forming a circle. The focus on the trunk's dynamic movement is also evident in the depiction of the elephant in the gilt copper ornamental plaque from Tibet as well as in the two ewers, each with a playful sprout. Known for his power to overcome obstacles, Ganesha is celebrated at annual festivals across India and in Nepal where communities come together for devotion, tradition, and enjoyment. The photograph captures the lively atmosphere of the Ganesha Festival in Mumbai in 2004.



Tombstone for No. 31

A Purple and Blue Glazed and Metal Mount Ewer (see above)

Online Object Entry (On PAM website; to be accessed via QR code on tombstone)

This type of ewer was a utilitarian vessel commonly found in Mongolia and Tibet for pouring milk or storing butter. As seen in Object No. 30, a typical example was made of clay, metal, and shell. In China, these vessels were often rendered in ceramic form that came to be known as *duomu hu*. The Chinese version retains much of the original design, with a cylindrical shape punctuated with a few characteristic traits such as a sprout that resembles an elephant trunk, a mouth that is shaped like a monk's cap, and the knob for the metal lid fashioned into a squatting

beast. These ewers were specially made as presents from wealthy patrons in Qing-dynasty China to Tibetan Buddhist lamas. Its subtle bluish purple was one of the monochrome glazes that attained great popularity during the Kangxi reign (1662-1722).

Parting Object



Tombstone for No. 24

Ice Buddha No. 1 (3/12), by Gade
Photograph by Jason Sangster
Color digital print, 2006; Lhasa, Central Tibet
Framed: 37 ½" H x 25 ¾" W; image: 31" H x 19 ¼" W
USC Pacific Asia Museum
Gift of Charles T. Townley
2021.1.6

Gallery Object Label:

This photograph by Jason Sangster (b. 1975) captures a moment in the short life of an artwork by the Tibetan artist Gade (b. 1971). The artwork was a sculpture of the Buddha carved out of ice. Gade placed the work into the Lhasa River, and through Sangster's photographs, the ice sculpture is documented as it slowly melted away. Gade has stated: "The idea behind this ice Buddha was to express the Buddhist notion of reincarnation. From nothing to something and then back to nothing; water turns into ice and ice slowly turns back into water; this is a kind of reincarnation. In the process of melting, the shape is constantly changing; it is a state of impermanence."