

Standing Buddha (Thailand, Northeast Region, late 8th century)

Bronze, 29 1/8 x 6 1/2 x 5 5/8 inches (58.8 x 16.5 x 14.2 cm)

Accession Number: 2003.418

Though the practice of Buddhism originated in India, its influence rapidly dispersed, reaching southeast Asia by the 6th century. This standing Buddha has high cheekbones, full lips, and broad nose, which reflects the physical ideals of those that lived in Thailand in the 8th century, the Mon. Shown in the Dvarvati style, the Buddha is standing with both hands performing the vitarka mudra, a teaching gesture. Distinctive to this work is the symmetrically worn robe and the tight tier of curls that crown the figure head. According to tradition these curls were the result of a haircut following the Buddha's enlightenment. His large, turban like head is a symbol of expanded wisdom. His feet are conjoined as a result of the casting process, which involved the pouring of molten metal.



Before researching a work of art from the MFAH collection, it is helpful to view the work first hand. The information in books and journals will be more meaningful if you have taken advantage of the opportunity to inspect the object itself.

“Reference” books can be found on the library’s main floor, and “Ready Reference” books are behind the information desk. Other books can be obtained by asking at the information desk.

Object Specific Information

Museum of Fine Arts Houston Today (Spring/Summer 2004). (Page 1, 19) N 576 .H7 M423 2003/05 Ready Ref.

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. *Annual Report*, 2003-04 (Page 42) N 576 .H7 A2 2003/04 Ready Ref.

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Arts of Thailand

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Chaturachinda, Gwyneth. *Dictionary of South and Southeast Asian Art*, 2000. N 7300 .C53 2000

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Kerlogue, Fiona. *Arts of Southeast Asia*, 2004. N 7311 .K43 2004

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Somers Heidhues, Mary F. *Southeast Asia: A Concise History*, 2000. DS 525 .S65 2000

Coedes, George. *The Making of South East Asia*, 1966. DS 527 .C613 1966

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General Buddhist References

Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy, 1995 (s.v. "Buddhism.") B 41 .C35 1995 Ref.

Grove Dictionary of Art, 1996. (Vol 5, pages 87-93; 98-101) N 31 .D5 1996 v.5 Ref.

"Buddha" and "Buddhism." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1983. Vol. 3. AE 5 .E363 1983 v.3 Ref.

This reference guide is just the tip of the iceberg on helpful resources in the library's holdings. Many of the suggested resources above have their own **bibliographies**. Each of these may lead you to other resources that would also be helpful in your research here in the museum or in another library. To find additional resources, use keywords such as "Buddha" and "Thailand" in the **on-line catalog** and **periodical indexes**. Once you find a few relevant titles, pay attention to the subject headings to identify similar materials. **Examples of useful subject headings are:**

Sculpture --Thailand
Sculpture, Thai
Bronzes, Buddhist
Gods, Buddhist, in art
Asia, Southeastern Antiquities

For guidelines about writing it may be helpful to look at **Sylvan Barnet's *A Short Guide to Writing about Art***, which includes tips for looking, reading, and writing about art. Ask for it at the reference desk. At every stage of your work, please allow the **library staff** to help you. We can be reached at 713-639-7325.