Encountering the Buddha: Art and Practice across Asia

On view October 14, 2017–October 2020, Freer|Sackler

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Step into a Tibetan Buddhist shrine, linger at a Sri Lankan stupa, travel with an eighth-century Korean monk, and discover remarkable objects in Encountering the Buddha. The exhibition draws upon the museums’ collections of Buddhist art from India, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Cambodia, Thailand, Indonesia, and Japan. By exploring new narratives and technologies, Encountering the Buddha invites visitors to reconsider Buddhist practices and concepts of beauty.

The Freer|Sackler gratefully acknowledges The Robert H.N. Ho Family Foundation as the exhibition’s lead sponsor. The exhibition features the Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room from the Alice S. Kandell Collection.

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The Historical Buddha
Central Tibet, 14th century
Gilt copper with pigment
Purchase—Friends of Asian Arts in honor of the 10th Anniversary of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery S1997.28

Detail, The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room from the Alice S. Kandell Collection
Photograph: 2010
Objects: Tibet, China, and Mongolia, 13th–20th century
Mixed media
Gifts and promised gifts from the Alice S. Kandell Collection
Right to left: Axe, skull club, and handcuffs, from a set of tantric ritual implements Tibet, Derge, 19th century Iron and silver The Alice S. Kandell Collection ELS2010.4.114.8, .9, .1

Initiation card (tsakali) Western Tibet, 15th century Opaque watercolor on paper Private collection LTS2015.2.60

Two celestial beings China, Kucha, Kizil, Cave 224 or 205, 6th century CE Gypsum plaster with pigment Long-term loan from the Smithsonian American Art Museum; gift of John Gellatly LTS1985.1.325.13

Medicine buddha Bhaishajyaguru Indonesia, central Java, 8th–9th century High tin bronze Gift of Ann and Gilbert Kinney Arthur M. Sackler Gallery S2015.25
Film still
The Texture of Practice: Sri Lanka’s Great Stupa
Filmmaker Stanley J. Staniski

Detail, The Tibetan Buddhist Shrine Room from the Alice S. Kandell Collection
Photograph: 2010
Objects: Tibet, China, and Mongolia, 13th–20th century
Mixed media
Gifts and promised gifts from the Alice S. Kandell Collection
Bodhisattva (bosatsu)
Japan, Heian period, late 12th century
Wood with gold leaf
Purchase—Charles Lang Freer Endowment
Freer Gallery of Art F1962.21a–c

Future Buddha Maitreya (Mile)
China, Hebei Province, Quyang, Northern Qi dynasty, 550–77
Marble with traces of pigment
Gift of Charles Lang Freer
Freer Gallery of Art F1911.411

Padmasambhava
Central Tibet, ca. 1700–1750
Gilt copper alloy, pearl and turquoise, traces of pigments on hair and face
The Alice S. Kandell Collection
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery S2014.18a–b

Maitreya
Kuber Singh Shakya (ca. 1881–1957)
Nepal, Patan, ca. 1950
Ink, jeweler’s rouge, red and black pencil on paper
Gift of Rudra Raj Shakya and family in memory of his father, Kuber Singh Shakya
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery S1998.1
Prajnaparamita
Cambodia, Angkor period, ca. 1200; Bayon style
Copper alloy
Gift of Ann and Gilbert Kinney
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery S2015.26