
THE S. S. HOWLAND COLLECTION OF BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS
ART IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM.

BY

IMMANUEL M. CASANOWICZ,

Aid, Division of Historic Archeology.

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The collection was made by Mr. Howland during his travels abroad, which extended from Iceland to Burma, and loaned to the Smithsonian Institution, by which it was deposited in the United States National Museum. Most of the objects were obtained by him from their original possessors. Besides the objects herein described, Mr. Howland's deposit includes also several valuable Oriental manuscripts.

INTRODUCTION.

THE FOUNDER OF BUDDHISM.

Buddhism arose at the end of the sixth or beginning of the fifth century B. C. as a schism or reformation of Brahmanism in India. Its founder, known by the names of Gautama, Sakyamuni, and Buddha, was Siddhartha, son of Suddhodanna, of the family Gautama, rajah, or chieftain, of the Sakya clan, who were settled in the Ganges Valley, at the foot of the Nepalese Himalayas, about a hundred miles to the north of Benares, with Kapilavatsu as capital.

The simple facts of the founder's career, so far as they can be freed from the mass of legends woven about his person, are as follows: Siddhartha, who was of a meditative turn of mind and deeply impressed with the vanity and misery of life, retired from the world at the age of 29, after ten years of married life. This is called the "Great Renunciation." For six years he led the life of a recluse, devoting himself to the study of the various systems of philosophy and theology of the times, and to severe ascetic practices, without finding in either a solution of the riddle of existence. In his thirty-fifth year he passed through a second mental crisis. While sitting in meditation under the famous Bo-tree (a species of *Ficus religiosa*) at Buddha Gaya, he attained to the state of a Buddha—that is, of an "enlightened one," or "awakened one"—having found the cause of the evils of life and the way of deliverance from them.

For forty-five years Buddha went about from place to place in the valley of the Ganges, proclaiming his good tidings and gathering around him a small band of faithful followers, the earliest members of his afterwards famous order. He died peacefully in the midst of his disciples in his eightieth year at Kusinagara, the modern Kasia in the district of Gorakhpur.

BUDDHA'S DOCTRINES (DHARMA).

The substance of the teaching of Buddha is expressed in the "Four Noble Truths": (1) Existence is bound up with sorrow; (2) the causes of sorrow are our affections and passions; the craving for life and its pleasures, which result in new birth; old age, sickness, and death. For the present life of the individual is not the first one. Innumerable births have preceded it in previous ages. The attachment to life and its pleasures produces a new being, and the moral character of the actions of the former existences fixes the condition of the new being. This is called the law of cause and effect, or *Karma*. It is the aggregate result of all previous acts, in unbroken succession from the beginning of existence, which, in the Buddhist conception of man, constitutes his character, his real self, his soul, as it were. This alone endures when an individual existence has come to an end, tending to form, as a kind of transmigration of character, a new sentient being, whose nature, condition, and fortune it determines. Individuals are merely the present and temporary links in a long chain of cause and effect. Each link is the summarized result of the various activities of all that have gone before, and is, in its turn, part and parcel of all that will follow. By the theory of Karma, Buddhism explains the mystery of fate in the apparent unequal distribution here of happiness and woe, entirely independent of moral qualities. What a man reaps, Buddhism teaches, that he must himself have sown, as whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. (3) The cessation of sorrow by suppression of desire and passion; (4) the way to deliverance by the Eightfold Path: (1) Right views, (2) right resolutions, (3) right speech, (4) right conduct, (5) right way of earning a livelihood, (6) right endeavor, (7) right thoughts, and (8) right meditation.

The moral code of Buddhism is comprised in the following ten prohibitions: (1) Not to kill or even injure any sentient being, (2) not to steal, (3) not to commit adultery, (4) not to lie or use any manner of improper speech, (5) not to use intoxicating drinks, (6) not to take repasts at improper times (i. e., after midday), (7) not to attend dances, plays, and public spectacles, (8) not to wear costly raiment and garlands or use perfumes, (9) not to use large seats and beds, and (10) not to receive gold or silver.

The goal is the *Nirvana*. In this life a passionless calm, beyond reach of temptation, through the extinction of the great passions, such

as lust, hatred, anger, envy, and delusion. By thus uprooting all desire, and by perfect detachment from life and its attractions, cessation of the renewal of existence will be attained.

According to the Buddhist doctrine the historical founder of Buddhism was only one of the many Buddhas who appear in this world at intervals of many ages, and any one can become a Buddha—that is, attain to the way of salvation for himself and others—by practicing self-denial and contemplation.

THE BUDDHIST COMMUNITY (SANGHA).

The Buddhist community in the strict sense consists of an order of monks and nuns (*Bhikkhus* and *Bhikkhunis*) who, as a rule, live in monasteries and are vowed to celibacy, poverty, and obedience. But already in Buddha's lifetime it was found impracticable for all his adherents to retire from the world and join the order. On these lay-believers only the first five of the ten injunctions quoted above are obligatory. Among the virtues recommended to the masses are reverence of parents and teachers, care for wife and children, submission to authority, control over self, patience, forbearance, humility and contentment, almsgiving, respect for the life of sentient creatures, and care for the welfare of all living things.

Buddha, his doctrine, and the community form the triad of Buddhism, and the formula of confessing fellowship with Buddhism is: I take my refuge in the Buddha, in the Dharma, and in the Sangha.

HISTORY OF THE SPREAD OF BUDDHISM.

Already at the death of Buddha the number of Buddhists seems to have been considerable. About the middle of the third century B. C., during the reign of Asoka, Buddhism began to spread all over India. Towards the end of the eleventh century A. D. it was entirely suppressed in India itself, the land of its origin. But it had been adopted by the kings of Ceylon in the third century B. C. From thence and the south of India it was carried, in the fifth and seventh centuries A. D., to Burma, Siam, and the Javanese archipelago. It entered China about 70 A. D. and spread from thence to Korea in the fourth century A. D., and to Japan in the sixth century A. D. It is the established religion of Nepal and Tibet, and has adherents among the Mongols and Kalmucks on the lower Volga and the Buriats of southern Siberia. Wherever Buddhism went it was modified by the national characteristics and inherited beliefs of its converts, so that its fundamental doctrines were often overshadowed, sometimes destroyed, and it developed into strangely inconsistent and even antagonistic beliefs and practices. At the same time it everywhere exercised a profound influence, both on the moral and religious life of the peoples and on their art and architecture.

Buddhism is divided into two great schools—the southern school in Ceylon, Burma, and Siam, called the “Lesser Vehicle” (*Hinayana*), which is assumed to have preserved the original teachings of Buddha in greater purity and simplicity; and the northern school in central and eastern Asia, called the “Greater Vehicle” (*Mahayana*), which adopted many popular elements of mysticism and magic. Each of these schools is subdivided into many sects.

THE COLLECTION.

1. BUDDHA, STANDING ON THE LOTUS UPON A PLATFORM, WITH AN AUREOLE.—The figure is made of teak, gilded, and studded with colored stones; the platform is of wood, carved, painted, and gilded, and likewise studded with colored stones; the aureole is inlaid with pieces of looking-glass, surrounded by a rim of open carved work, terminating in a bird, perhaps the *Garuda*, the mythical bird of India, or the sacred goose (*hanza*). Measurements: Height of the figure, 3 feet 10 inches; height of the platform, 2 feet 4 inch; width, 3 feet; depth, 3 feet 6 inches.—Burma. (Plate 1, Cat. No. 216137, U.S.N.M.)

Buddha is generally represented as a beardless young man. The head is surmounted by a protuberance (*Ushnisha*), being the “hump of perfect wisdom.” The hair is arranged in short curls, resembling sharp points, which tradition interprets to represent snails which once came out to shelter Buddha’s head from the rays of the sun. A precious stone in the form of a bead (*Urna*) is on the forehead. The ear lobes are pierced and long, sometimes touching the shoulders. The arms are long, which with the Hindus is a mark of noble birth. The robe is thrown over the left shoulder, leaving the right one free. He is either standing, the attitude of teaching, or sitting with crossed legs, meditating, or reclining, passing away into the *Nirvana*. The throne (*padmasana*) upon which he sits or stands is formed of the fully opened lotus flower, the symbol of purity and perfection. Behind the head is often displayed a nimbus or halo, frequently in form of a fig leaf, in remembrance of the tree under which he attained to Buddhahood.

2. BUDDHA, SITTING IN MEDITATION.—Bronze and incrustated around the forehead with colored stones. Height, 2 feet 5 inches.—Burma. (Plate 2, Cat. No. 216126, U.S.N.M.)

3. BUDDHA, SEATED UPON A LOTUS.—Carved of teak and gilded. Height, 3 feet.—Burma. (Plate 3, Cat. No. 216131, U.S.N.M.)

4. BUDDHA, RECLINING (passing into Nirvana).—Made of alabaster, gilded and incrustated with colored stones. Placed on carved and gilded wooden stand. Length of figure, 2 feet 5 inches. Measurements of stand: Length, 3 feet; width, 1 foot 8 inches; height, 11 inches.—Burma. (Plate 4, Cat. No. 216130, U.S.N.M.)

5-7. THREE FIGURINES OF BUDDHA, representing him in the usual attitudes: Standing or teaching, sitting in meditation, and reclining, or passing into Nirvana. Bronze. The seated figurine is, like No. 2, incrustated around the forehead with colored stones. Measurements: 13 inches, 10½ inches, and 10 inches, respectively. (Plate 5, Cat. Nos. 216127-216129, U.S.N.M.)

8. BUDDHA, SEATED UPON THE LOTUS THRONE, which is supported by two lions, the emblem of the Sakya clan, with the nimbus in form of a fig leaf in the back, and attended by Bodhisattvas and disciples, comprising altogether fifteen figures. Bodhisattvas, in the teaching of the northern or Mahayana schools of Buddhism, are preexistent or future Buddhas. It is the belief of the Buddhists that these teachers of mankind appear upon earth at long intervals and the doctrine which they all proclaim is the same. With each there is a period in which the doctrine flourishes, then a gradual decline, then it is completely overthrown, till a new deliverer appears and once more establishes the lost truths. The last Buddha of this age of the world after Gautama will be Maitreya, "the loving one." The term Bodhisattva is, however, often applied to those Buddhist teachers who distinguished themselves by learning and piety. The Bodhisattvas are usually represented as young men wearing crowns or richly ornamented turbans with a round nimbus and decked with bracelets, necklaces, and breast chains. They are also often provided with some distinguishing emblem or attribute, such as a lotus, a sword, a small pagoda, a book, etc., and they ride animals, as lions, elephants, tigers, etc. Made of wood, lacquered and gilded. Inclosed in a black lacquered shrine which is adorned with ornamental bronze clasps and fittings and gilded inside. The doors of the shrine on the inside are painted in colors with figures of *Nios* or temple guards, which are sometimes placed on both sides of the first portal of a Buddhist temple in Japan. The shrine is said to date from the sixteenth century A. D., and to have come from the Vara temple. Measurements of the shrine: Height, 2 feet 4 inches; width, 2 feet; depth, 1 foot.—Japan. (Plates 6 and 7, Cat. No. 216133, U.S.N.M.)

9. BUDDHA, STANDING IN A SMALL PAGODA and attended on either side by saints seated upon lotuses. The pagoda as well as the lotuses are supported by mythical animals, which rest on an elaborately carved pedestal. Wood, carved, lacquered, and gilded. Inclosed in a black lacquered shrine, the interior of which is gilded. Measurements of the shrine: Height, 12½ inches; width, 11 inches; depth, 7½ inches.—Japan. (Cat. No. 216134, U.S.N.M.)

10. BUDDHA, OR A BODHISATTVA, seated upon the lotus throne, which is supported by mythical animals. Wood, carved and gilded. Inclosed in a round shrine, lacquered in antique red, with bronze decorated folding doors, beautifully carved base, and gilded inside.

Measurements: Height, 15 inches; diameter of the base, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches.—Japan. (Cat. No. 216135, U.S.N.M.)

11. BUDDHA, seated upon an hexagonal pedestal, holding in his left hand the alms bowl. Wood, carved and gilded. Inclosed in a black lacquered shrine, the interior of which is gilded. The shrine is said to date from the fifteenth century A. D. and to come from the Temple of Matsuma at Yamato, Japan. Measurements of the shrine: Height, $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches; width, 2 inches; depth, 1 inch.—Japan. Cat. No. 216136, U.S.N.M.)

12. TWO BUDDHIST SAINTS (*Arhats*).—The term arhat, also arahat, rahat, arhan, and rahan (Sanskrit, arhant), is applied to those disciples and followers of Buddha who have attained the highest degree of perfection and need not be born again; especially to one of the original five hundred disciples of Buddha. Buddhist temples usually contain numerous images of saints, to whom offerings of flowers, incense, candles, etc., are made. Of teak. Height, 2 feet.—Burma. (Plate 8, Cat. No. 216132, U.S.N.M.)

13. TWO BUDDHIST MONKS, HOLDING BEGGING BOWLS.—Carved on teak plaques. Buddhist monks shave their heads and wear a yellow robe. They get their living by begging each morning from house to house, when they collect rice and fruit enough for the morning and midday meal, as their rule forbids them eating after midday. The equipment of a Buddhist monk consists of a begging bowl (*patra*) and fruit bag, a rice spoon, a ewer, or water vessel (*uda patra*), a staff (*pinda*), a razor, a sewing needle, and a waistband. Measurements: Height, 2 feet; width, 1 foot $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches.—Burma. (Plate 9, Cat. No. 216147, U.S.N.M.)

14. PAIR OF ORNAMENTAL BEGGING BOWLS.—Carved of wood and inlaid with pieces of looking-glass. Measurements: Height, $11\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter, 16 inches.—Burma. (Plate 10. Cat. No. 216138 U.S.N.M.)

15. BUDDHIST SACRED BOOK.—Written on palm leaves, which are held together between two boards by a cord passed through them. The writing is done by means of a sharp stylus, and then ink is rubbed over so as to make the markings with the stylus visible. The sacred Scriptures of the Buddhists are called the "*Tripitaka*"—i. e., three baskets, because the palm leaves on which they were written were arranged in baskets as receptacles. Others explain the term as symbolical of the transmission of the teachings of Buddha through a long line of teachers and pupils, as baskets are handed on at excavations from workman to workman. The sacred language of the southern school is Pali; of the northern school, Sanskrit. The Buddhist Scriptures are divided into three parts: The *Vinaya* ("guidance") contains all that relates to the Order of Monks; the *Sutras* ("threads"—i. e., discourse), the exposition and elucidation of the doctrines of Buddhism; and the *Abhidharma* (expansion, or enlargement of the doctrine), a detailed

discussion of the philosophical basis of the doctrine. Measurements: 16 inches by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches.—Burma. (Plate 11, Cat. No. 216139, U.S.N.M.)

16. PRAYER WHEEL.—Consisting of a metal cylinder through which passes a wooden handle forming its axis. Around this axis a long strip of paper is rolled, inscribed with sacred sentences or invocations. A piece of metal fastened by a string to the cylinder facilitates the turning of it. Prayer wheels are used especially by the Buddhists of Tibet. The most usual invocation inscribed on the rolls in prayer wheels consists of the words: "Om! Mani padme! Hum!"—i. e., O jewel in the lotus flower! The lotus, which is otherwise the symbol of purity and perfection with Buddhists, is here employed in allusion to Avalokiteshvara, or Padmapani, the present Dhyani-Bodhisattva. In the theology of the northern school of Buddhism each earthly Buddha (Manushi-Buddha) has his mystic or spiritual counterpart, or Dhyani-Buddha in one of the heavens or the world of forms. Each of the Dhyani-Buddhas again has his Dhyani-Bodhisattva, who, after the passing away or the Nirvana of the human Buddha, becomes his representative on earth until the appearance of a new Buddha. Padmapani is considered as the Dhyani-Bodhisattva of Amitabha, the Dhyani-Buddha of Sakhya muni. By the Tibetans he is held in special veneration as the protector and patron of Tibet. He is believed to have appeared on earth from a lotus flower for the deliverance of mankind. The Tibetans believe that his descent and incarnation in the Dalai Lama, the head of Tibetan Buddhism, takes place by the emission of a beam of light.

Each revolution of the cylinder counts as an uttered prayer, provided that the turning is done slowly and from right to left, the latter in order to follow the writing which runs from left to right.

Besides the small hand-prayer wheels, usually measuring from 3 to 5 inches in height and from 2 to 3 inches in diameter, there are some of large size permanently set up near temples and monasteries to be turned by each person passing by them; or on gables of houses, or over the hearth, where they are twirled by the wind or smoke. Sometimes a wheel is fixed to the bed of a stream and kept in motion by the current, thus praying night and day for the owner. Measurements: Height, $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches; diameter, 3 inches.—Burma. (Plate 12, Cat. No. 216140, U.S.N.M.)

17. PAIR OF TEMPLE LAMPS.—Open fretwork. On the top is the receptacle for oil in shape of a dish, from which fig leaves are suspended. The whole has a kind of aureole as a background and is surmounted by Ganesa, the Hindu god of sagacity with the elephant head, who also found a place in the Tibetan pantheon. Made of bronze. Measurements: Height, 3 feet 9 inches; diameter of the base, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches.—Tibet. (Plate 13, Cat. No. 216141, U.S.N.M.)

18. **TEMPLE DRUM.**—Mounted on a vase-shaped wooden stand carved, gilded, and studded with colored stones. Drums or bells are put up in front of Buddhist temples, on which the priests strike to announce the hours of prayer. The worshipers also strike them to invite the presence of the deity. Drums are likewise used in Buddhist worship to accompany the chanting of the priests. Measurements: Height, 2 feet 6 inches; diameters, $14\frac{1}{2}$ and 11 inches.—Burma. (Plate 14; Cat. No. 216142, U.S.N.M.)

19. **HOWDAH, OR SADDLE OF THE SACRED WHITE ELEPHANT.**—Carved of wood, and gilded. The rare white elephant, properly of a pale reddish-brown color, with a few white hairs, is considered in East India as a sacred animal. Some Buddhists venerate it as an incarnation of the various Buddhas. Also some Bodhisattvas are represented riding elephants. The elephant is also considered an emblem of royalty, and forms a most imposing feature in every ceremonial procession of an Indian potentate. Measurements: Height, 2 feet 8 inches; length, 4 feet; width, 2 feet 7 inches.—Burma. (Cat. No. 216143, U.S.N.M.)

20. **CABINET OF THE KING OF BURMA.**—Carved open woodwork, gilded and inlaid with pieces of glass. Measurements: Height, 8 feet; length, 3 feet $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches; width, 1 foot 11 inches.—Burma. (Cat. No. 216144, U.S.N.M.)

21. **SADDLE OF THE KING OF BURMA.**—Covered with red velvet and embroidered in gold. Measurements: Length, 2 feet; width, 1 foot.—Burma. (Cat. No. 216146, U.S.N.M.)

22. **BED OF THE KING OF BURMA.**—Carved open woodwork, gilded and inlaid with glass pieces. Measurements: Height, 3 feet 1 inch; length, 6 feet 6 inches; width, 3 feet 6 inches.—Burma. (Cat. No. 216145, U.S.N.M.)

23. **WOODEN CARVED FIGURE HOLDING GONG.**—Gongs are used in Buddhist worship to make known the presence of the worshiper, and also as introductory to prayer. Height, 4 feet.—Burma. (Cat. No. 216148, U.S.N.M.)

24. **WOODEN CARVED FIGURE.**—Height, $16\frac{1}{2}$ inches.—Burma. (Cat. No. 216149, U.S.N.M.)

25. **KWANTI, THE CHINESE GOD OF WAR.**—Made of wood, lacquered and gilded. Height, 2 feet.—China. (Plate 15, Cat. No. 216150, U.S.N.M.)

26. **THE CHINESE GOD OF PEACE.**—Made of wood, lacquered and gilded. Height, 2 feet.—China. (Plate 16, Cat. No. 216151, U.S.N.M.)

27. **TWO JAPANESE PORCELAIN FIGURES.**—Represented as seated on rocks, the one holding lotus stalks with a vase at its side, the other with food vessels. Height, $14\frac{1}{2}$ inches each.—China. (Plate 17, Cat. Nos. 216152–216153, U.S.N.M.)



A STANDING FIGURE OF BUDDHA.

FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 740.



BUDDHA SITTING IN MEDITATION.

FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 740.



BUDDHA SEATED UPON A LOTUS.

FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 740.



BUDDHA RECLINING.

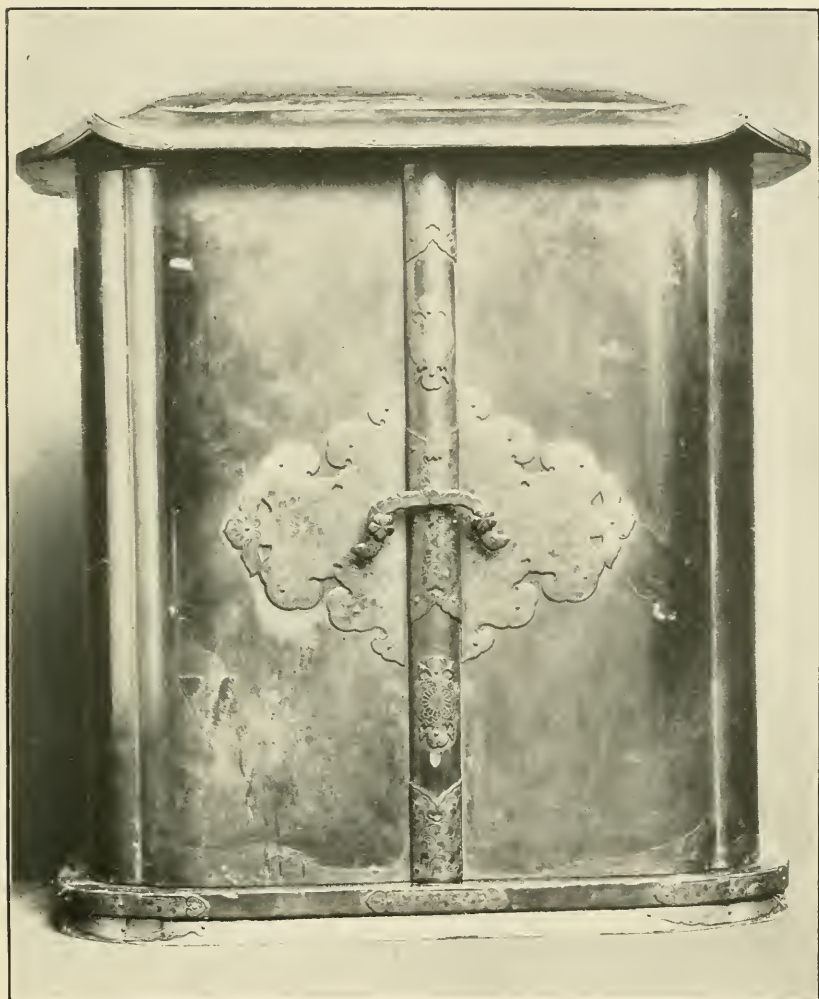
FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 740.



THREE FIGURES OF BUDDHA.
FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 741.



BUDDHA WITH ATTENDANTS IN SHRINE.
FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 741.



THE SHRINE CLOSED.

FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 741.



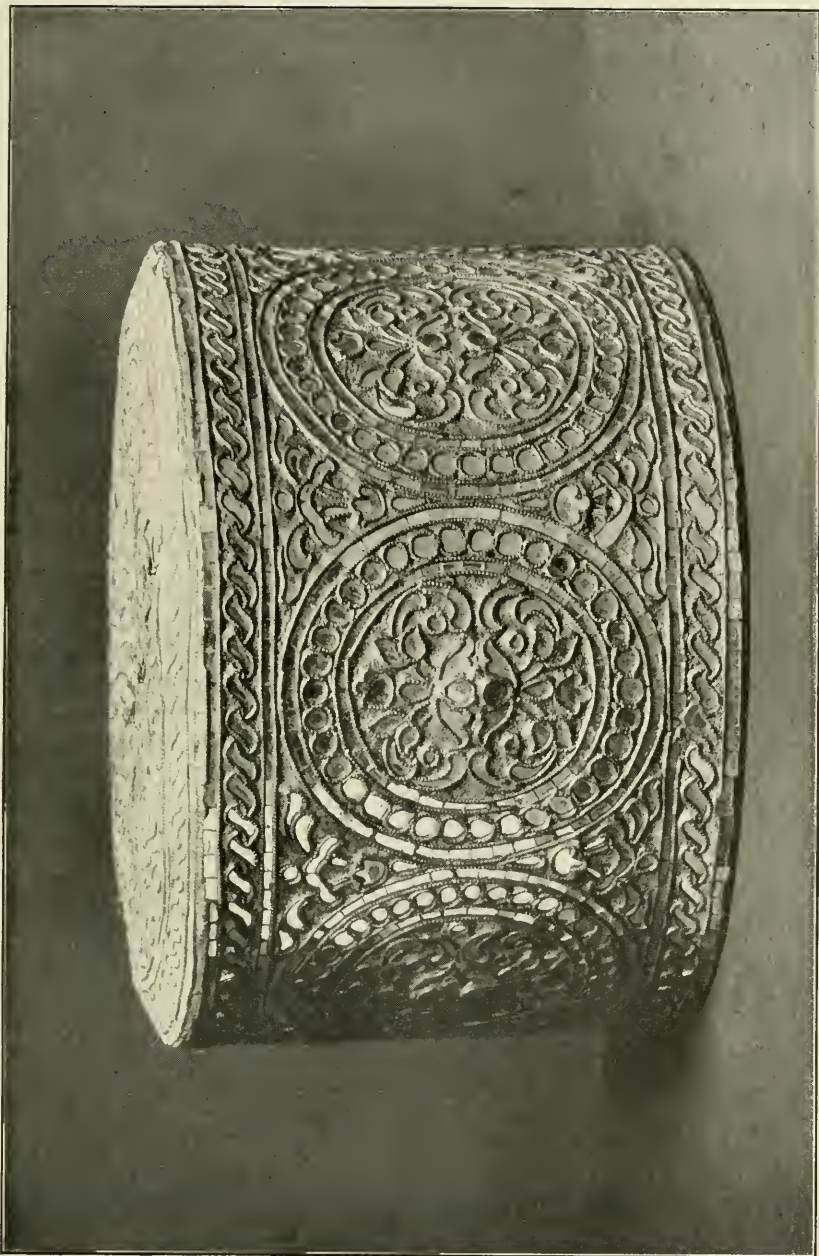
TWO BUDDHIST SAINTS.

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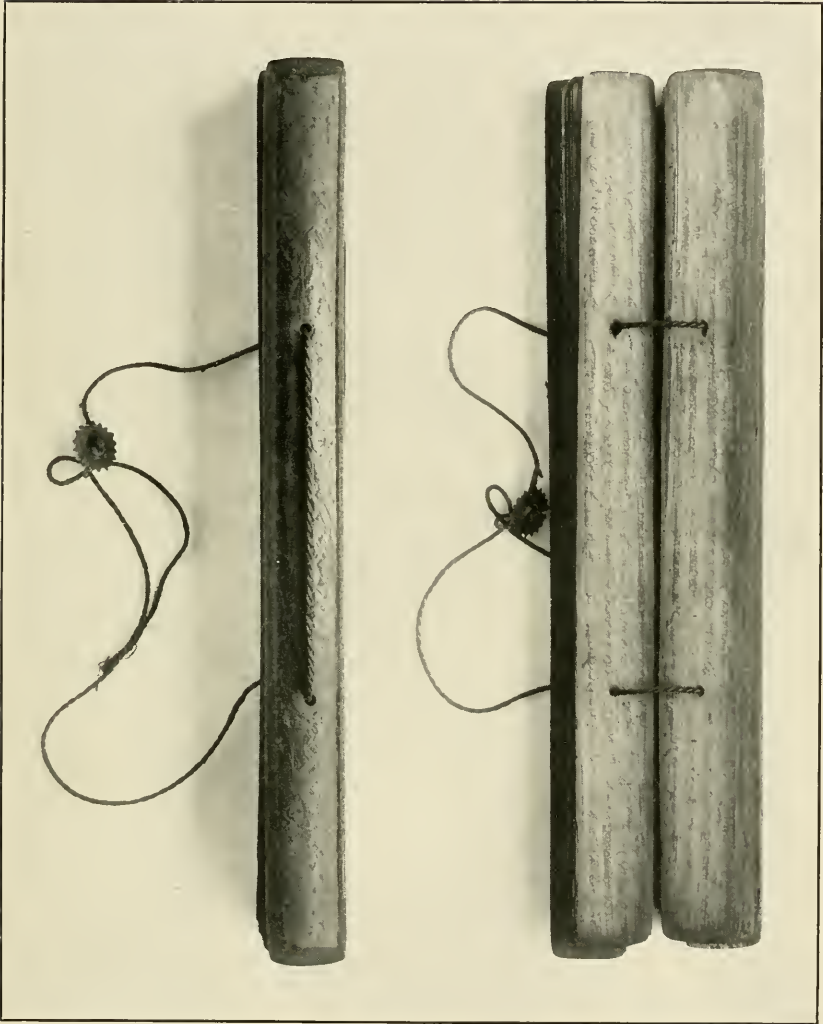


BUDDHIST MONK.

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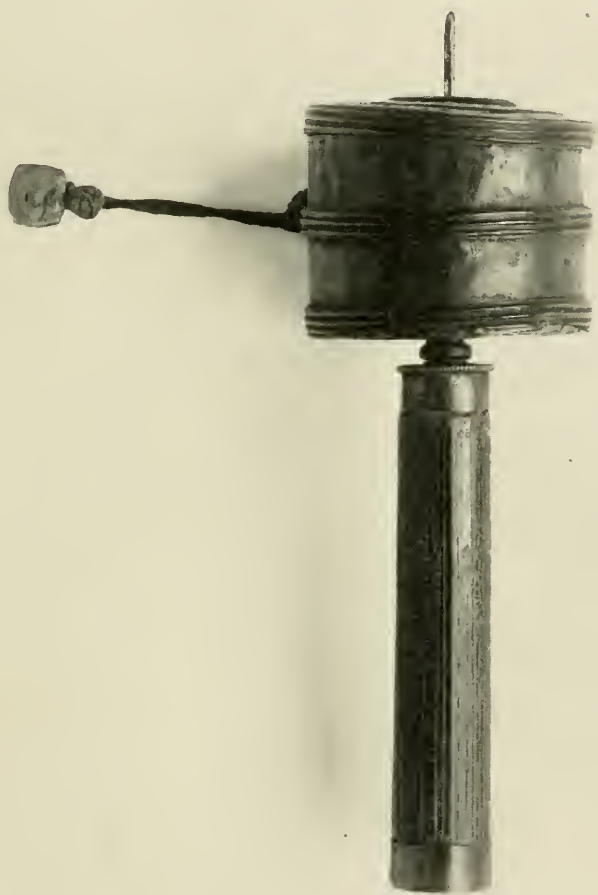


ORNAMENTAL BEGGING BOWL.
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BUDDHIST SACRED BOOK.

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PRAYER WHEEL.

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A PAIR OF TEMPLE LAMPS.

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A TEMPLE DRUM.

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THE CHINESE GOD OF WAR.

FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 744.



THE CHINESE GOD OF PEACE.

FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 744.



TWO JAPANESE PORCELAIN FIGURES.
FOR EXPLANATION OF PLATE SEE PAGE 744.