

Remarks on Buddha Images with the Left Hand in *Maravijaya* from the Hariphunchai National Museum, Lamphun, and the Sriksetra Archaeological Museum, Myanmar
SURASAWASDI SOOKSAWASDI

Faculty of Fine Arts

CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY

THAILAND

Email Address: tibetan07@gmail.com

Abstract: This study originated through questions about 9th - 10th century Buddha images with the left hand in the *maravijaya* or gesture of subduing Mara, such as the high relief sculpture in the Hariphunchai National Museum, Lamphun (HNM) and objects in the Sriksetra Archaeological Museum, (SAM) Myanmar. The methodology consists of a comparative study of artefacts from archaeological sites at Bagan in Myanmar and at Dvāravati site in central Thailand. Related Buddhist iconography and beliefs, particularly of the Vajrayana sect, were studied. The derivation of these images could be due to the Mon in Hariphunchai or Lamphun and the Pyu in Sriksetra who created this local iconography. The passive *mudra* of *panchamakara* (the ‘five-M-letters’) could be the inspiration for the left-hand gesture. It is also possible that a Tibetan deity, Nampar Gyalwa, could play an important role in the autonomous practices and local ceremonies of the left-hand *maravijaya* cult. It is probable that the cult was created because his power in subduing the evils is consistent with the Buddha’s power in subduing the Mara, which is so well-known and revered among Buddhist monks and laypeople in the region. The ancient Ari sect, Thēravāda-tantra Buddhism, which was active during the Bagan and Hariphunchai periods, may also be related to the dissemination of the cult. This assumption is supported by the latest interpretation of archaeological evidence found at Hariphunchai as ritual implements.