

Bodhisattva's with many Heads in Ancient Southeast Asia

DEV DUTTA G. ANGAL

THE NUMISMATIC SOCIETY OF INDIA, VARANASI

INDIA

Email Address: ndapune_b3@yahoo.com

Abstract: Lord Gautam Buddha himself travelled in Southeast Asia and conducted number of sermons to spread his thoughts. Subsequently, his Shravakas, Pramahas & Bodhisattva played important role in developing Buddhism in China, Japan and entire Southeast Asia. By exchanging ideas, rituals and beliefs from Hinduism and Buddhism, Pramahas developed religion in tune with the needs of the society and natural environment. Undergoing the changes due to adoption of Mahayanism, Lord Gautam Buddha's image was worshiped in Southeast Asia. In tune with the belief of Hinduism for God having more heads, hands being stronger, it seems that the Bodhisattva with many heads and hands might have emerged and practiced for worship. Over the years, the author collected many different idols with many heads, hands and postures. Out of the collection from his cabinet, the author presents about 12 different idols of Bodhisattva from the regions of Nepal, Thailand, Cambodia & China. The study will reveal new light on belief in Buddhism. The study may also reveal knowledge of era of these artefacts and the need to produce them for the worship of Shravakas or Pramahas.