



This Naga (water snake) Queen, together with a similar statue of a Naga King, once flanked the entrance to one of the temples in the vicinity of Ungaran, near Semarang. This mythical royal couple appears within the open jaws of fantastic animals whose forms have been completely dissolved into cloud-like curls.

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Ancient Indonesian art treasures in the Djakarta Museum

The Museum Pusat or Central Museum, located on the west side of the Medan Merdeka (Freedom Square) in the center of Djarkata, is the largest and finest museum in Indonesia. Originally established by the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences (founded 1778), the whitewashed building, which the local population has affectionately named Gedung Gadjah or Elephant House after the bronze statue standing in front of it, became the National Museum of Indonesia after the country gained its independence. Here has been assembled a unique collection of Indonesian cultural relics, ranging in date from the remote period of prehistory to modern times. There are rich collections of prehistoric artefacts in stone and objects from the Bronze Age. There is an unusually fine collection of Chinese and South-East Asian ceramics, and a large and colorful assemblage of costumes, utensils, musical instruments, models of ships and buildings, all of which illustrate in a vivid manner the great diversity of the cultures of the many ethnic groups which together constitute the population of the Republic of Indonesia. Most distinguished of all is the large collection of stone statues and bronzes of the Hindu-Javanese period (8th - 15th century).

Before proceeding to Central Java to visit the world-famous temples of Prambanan and the plain of Kedu, a visitor to Indonesia can acquaint himself with the culture which built these great temples, by first viewing the artistic creations of smaller size within the Djakarta Museum. Although they may lack the monumental proportions of the temples, the smaller statues and bronzes often combine modest size with the most exquisite artistic quality. As befits the national museum of the country in which this culture flourished, the collections of ancient Indonesian art of the Djakarta Museum are without parallel anywhere else in the world.

In addition the Djakarta Museum has a fine numismatic collection. The Library of more than 350,000 volumes is the oldest in the country. It consists mainly of books dealing with the history, cultural anthropology, languages, archaeology, and literature of Indonesia and neighboring countries.

Although many elements of the ancient arts of Indonesia originated in India, the culture of the Indianized kingdoms of the archipelago had its own characteristics and a marked individual flavor which made it clearly distinguishable from anything ever created by the



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These two representations of the four-armed Hindu God Vishnu were excavated near Tjibuaja, north of Krawang (Western Java). They are the earliest examples of Indianized art from Indonesia and are part of a large stylistic group which had its ramifications all over South-East Asia. It clearly shows the influence of the South Indian Pallava style.





A conspicuous feature in the decoration of the roof of Tjandi Bima, the largest remaining temple on the plateau of Dieng (Central Java), are representations of human heads, placed in arched frames which diminish in size as one rises. This head from one of the higher stories, measures 26 cm. in height. The inclination of the face, which is slightly bent forward, is a sculptor's device to make these faces more visible for the spectator who stands at the foot of the monument.

Indians in their homeland. The ancient Indonesian culture, of which the Barabudur and the Lara Djonggrang temples of Central Java are the most famous remains, is most commonly referred to as Hindu-Javanese. This term could perhaps be called appropriate insofar as it stresses the dual source of this culture. Yet it is also apt to cause confusion, for although Hindu traditions played a prominent role in the process of the transmission of Indian culture to the Indonesian archipelago, Hinduism was by no means the only decisive factor. The spread of Buddhism was of equal, if not of even greater importance. Moreover, although the name Hindu-Javanese would suggest that this ancient culture was strictly confined to the island of Java, it actually spread into several other islands of the archipelago. At one time or another it penetrated into Sumatra, Kalimantan (Borneo), Sulawesi (Celebes), and Bali.

Not long after the last waves of immigrants from the mainland of South-East Asia had brought the ancestors of the present-day Indonesians to these islands, Indian culture, following in the wake of trade, began to penetrate into the archipelago. The spread of Hinduism and Buddhism merely gave new momentum to a cultural current which may have started to flow as early as prehistoric times. The first stages of the spread of Indian ideas, traditions, arts, and techniques in Indonesia are completely lost in the mist of history.

It is highly likely, however, that the western part of Java, which was to witness centuries later the arrival of the first Portuguese and Dutch merchantmen, was also one of the first regions of the archipelago to be drawn into the orbit of Indian civilization.

The earliest tangible archaeological evidence of the Indianization of the Indonesian islands dates from the fifth century of our era. It consists of a number of huge boulders, inscribed with the name of a King Purnavarman, who ruled over a kingdom named Tārumā. The name of this kingdom may have been preserved to the present day in the name of the Western Javanese river Tji Tarum. Near Krawang, on the same river, lies the village of Tjibuaja, the place where the earliest artistic remains of an Indianized culture have been excavated. Near this village, two stone statues, representing the Hindu God Vishnu (Fig. p. 3) were found on two different occasions within a few years of each other. The largest of these two statues is closely related in style to a fragmentary sculpture found near Kotakapur on the island of Bangka. It is carved in a provincial style, examples of which are found, with all kinds of local variations, in widely separated parts of South-East Asia. black, basalt-like stone from which the other statue is carved (Fig. p. 3 right), does not seem to be found in Indonesia at all. The possibility exists, therefore, that this rather crudely carved statue was imported from elsewhere.





This magnificent representation of the Hindu God Vishnu, measuring more than two meters in height, belongs to a group of statues recovered from the ruins of Tjandi Banon, a temple in the immediate vicinity of Barabudur. It represents the highest artistic achievement, inspired by Hinduism, of the sculptors of Central Java.

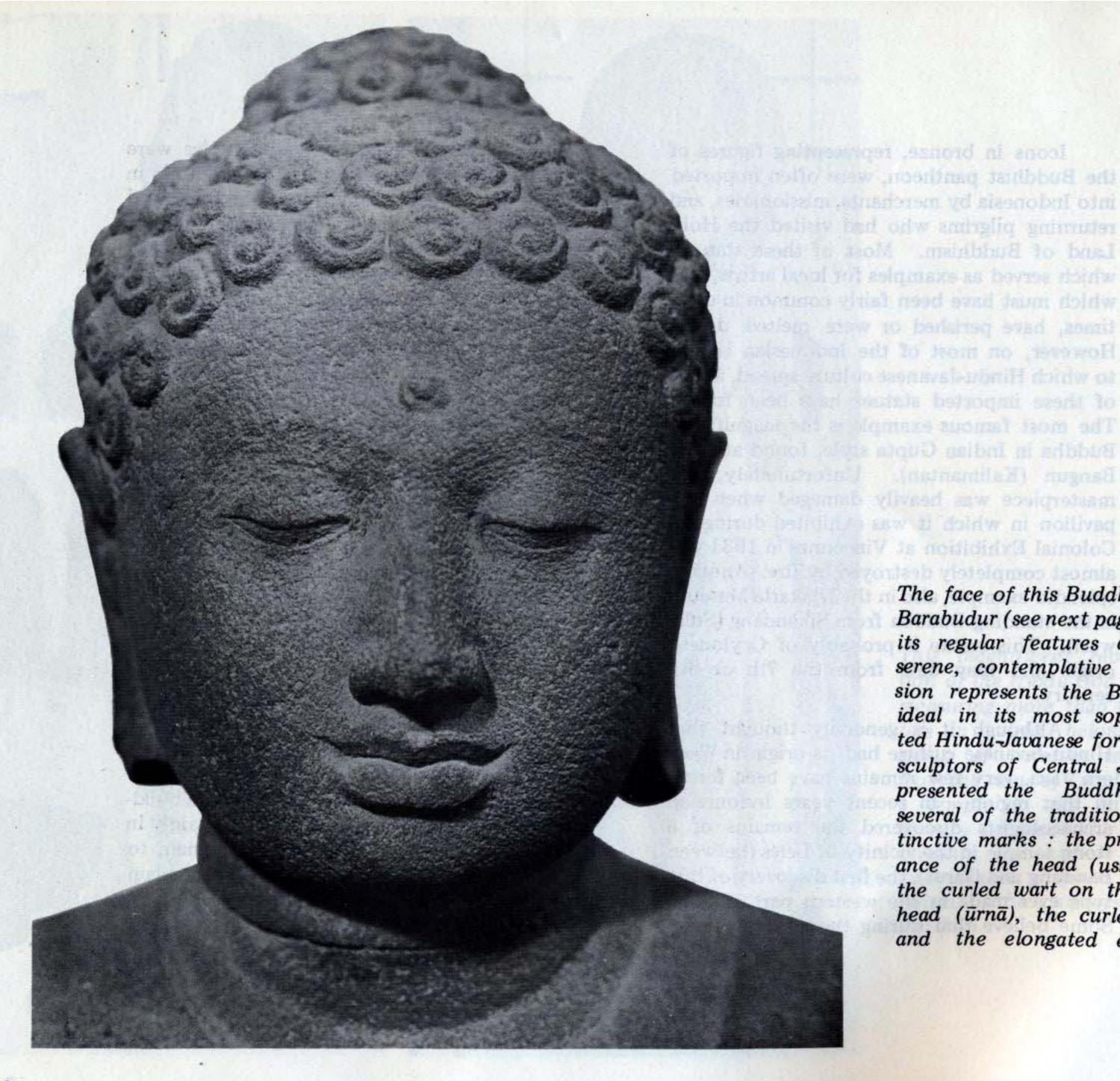
Icons in bronze, representing figures of the Buddhist pantheon, were often imported into Indonesia by merchants, missionaries, and returning pilgrims who had visited the Holy Land of Buddhism. Most of these statues, which served as examples for local artists, and which must have been fairly common in early times, have perished or were melted down. However, on most of the Indonesian islands to which Hindu-Javanese culture spread, a few of these imported statues have been found. The most famous example is the magnificent Buddha in Indian Gupta style, found at Kota Bangun (Kalimantan). Unfortunately, this masterpiece was heavily damaged when the pavilion in which it was exhibited during the Colonial Exhibition at Vincennes in 1931 was almost completely destroyed by fire. Another splendid example, also in the Djakarta Museum, is the standing Buddha from Sikendeng (Sulawesi). This statue is probably of Ceylonese origin and may date from the 7th or 8th century.

Although it is generally thought that Hindu-Javanese culture had its origin in Western Java, very few remains have been found in that region. In recent years Indonesian archaeologists discovered the remains of a stone temple in the vicinity of Leles (between Bandung and Garut), the first discovery of this type ever made in the western part of Java. Some believe that during the early stages of

Hindu-Javanese civilization all temples were built in wood, even though later examples in stone do not betray any trace of architectural elements which imitate carpentry. Another possibility is that the stones of the Western Javanese temples were carried off by the local population to be used for domestic purposes. Many stones of the temple at Leles had been recarved into tomb stones for a nearby Islamic cemetery.

Whatever the cause of the absence of stone temples in Western Java, the earliest monuments of Hindu-Javanese culture that have survived are all to be found in Central Java. Among the earliest examples is a group of small temples situated on the remote Dieng Plateau, which is the marshy, debris-filled crater of a long-extinct volcano. These temples are the remains of a secluded Holy City, dedicated to the worship of the Hindu God Siva. The largest of the existing temples is known as Tjandi Bima, and one of the many heads which decorate its roof is now in the Djakarta Museum (fig. p. 4).

During the 8th, 9th, and the early years of the 10th century, the Javanese displayed a feverish activity in the field of temple building. Hundreds of temples were built, mainly in the vicinity of the village of Prambanan, to the North-East of Djokjakarta, and in the plain of Kedu, to the North-West of the same city. The exact relationship between the different



The face of this Buddha from Barabudur (see next page) with its regular features and its serene, contemplative expression represents the Buddhist ideal in its most sophisticated Hindu-Javanese form. The sculptors of Central Java represented the Buddha with several of the traditional distinctive marks: the protuberance of the head (ushnīsha), the curled wart on the forehead (ūrnā), the curled hair, and the elongated earlobes.

The Buddha statues of Barabudur are all of the same type and are differentiated only by the symbolic gestures of their This statue, one of hands. three which were transferred from the monument to the Djakarta Museum, represents Buddha Amitabha, the Lord of the Western Paradise. He can be recognised by the "meditating" gesture of his Statues representing hands. this Buddha are placed in the niches above the galleries on the west side of the monument.



dynasties which ruled over Central Java during these centuries is still not entirely clear. Equally uncertain is to whom which of the many monuments should be attributed, for the exact religious affiliation of these rulers remains obscure. However, one cannot escape from the impression that the cult of Siva and the Buddhist Law existed peacefully together. There may have been a certain amount of religious competition, for one seldom has to go far from a major monument of one creed before one discovers a sanctuary dedicated to the other. Just as the largest Buddhist complex near Prambanan, the Tjandi Sewu, has the Sivaitic Lara Djonggrang temples as its neighbor, so did the Barabudur, the greatest monument of Buddhism in the Plain of Kedu, have the Tjandi Banon in its immediate vicinity. Of this last temple, dedicated to the Gods of Hinduism, only the ruins survived into the early years of this century. Now even its last remains can hardly be located, but its magnificent sculpture, transferred to the Djakarta Museum (fig. p. 6.), is eloquent proof of the fact that even the greatest monument of Buddhism had a worthy Hindu counterpart nearby.

The crowning achievement of the Buddhists of Central Java, built at a time when the powerful dynasty of the Sailendras dominated the region, is the terraced sanctuary Barabudur. The architectural vision on which this

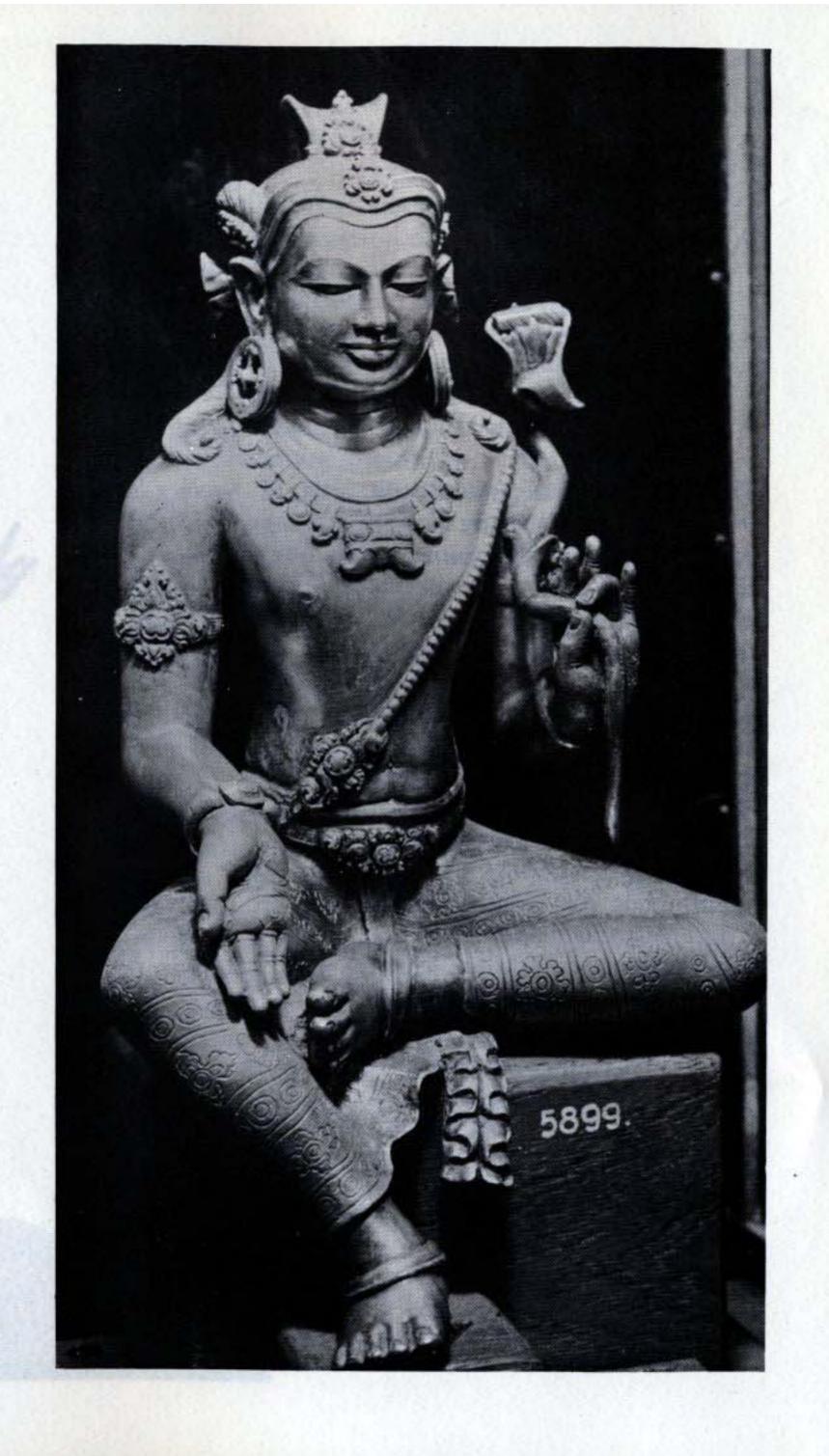
monument is based was not a single idea, but a brilliant combination of at least three different concepts. It is at the same time a stupa, a replica of the Cosmic Mountain (Meru), and a mandala, all merged into one harmonious structure. Its main walls and balustrades are decorated with an almost endless succession of sculptured reliefs which illustrate the holy texts of Javanese Buddhism. The reliefs can be viewed in situ, but of the hundreds of Buddha images which were placed in the niches crowning the walls of the galleries and inside the stupas of the round terraces of the higher storeys, three are now displayed in the entrance porch of the Djakarta Museum (fig. p. 8-9). Their dignified beauty and spiritual distinction epitomize the sophisticated creed of the Buddhists who built this unique monument.

At one point during the early part of the 10th century the center of political as well as religious activity seems to have shifted from Central to Eastern Java. Whether this move was dictated by political considerations or natural calamities is unknown, but it seems to have happened rather suddenly, for several of the hundreds of monuments which had been erected in Central Java were not even finished before they were deserted and left unattended. The roofs and spires collapsed when earthquakes shook the foundations, and ashes or other debris from the ubiquitous volcanoes

This bronze statue, measuring 96 cm. in height, is the largest metal image ever tobe found intact in the Indonesian archipelago. It was discovered by farmers bathing in a river near the village of Lewatan, a few miles from Tegal on the northern coast of Central Java. The eyes have been inlaid with silver and the lower lip is cast in gold. This type of inlay was frequently used in India, for example at Kurkihar, not far from Nālandā, which was the main center of Buddhist learning in India. This skillfully, cast figure of the Hindu God Siva exemplifies, together with the stone statues from Tjandi Banon (see p. 6), the superb artistic sensitivity of the Javanese sculptors of Hindu images.







p. 12 (Left):

This silver coated bronze representation of the four-armed Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, measuring 83 cm. in height, was excavated at Tekaran, near Solo, as early as 1885. During the century which has elapsed since its discovery no other piece in the same technique and of comparable size has come to light.

p. 12 (Right):

Cast in solid silver and measuring 28 cms. in height this fine figure seems to represent Siddhaikavīra, one of the youthful forms of the Bodhisattva Manjuśrī. It was excavated at Ngamplak Semongan near Semarang in 1927. The blue lotus supporting the holy scripture, the gesture of charity of the right hand, and the necklace decorated with animal claws are iconographic features associated with this figure in Indian Buddhism. Although there can be little doubt that this figure was cast in Java, it closely resembles Indian prototypes from the Northern Indian region of Nālandā.

Buddha seated in the "Western" manner and executed in a style resembling that of this figure have been spread all over South-East Asia and the Far East by pilgrims preaching the Buddhist Law. Cast in bronze which has been covered with a thick layer of gold leaf, this statue (H. 35 cm.) may date from the 9th century. It was found in the village of Patimuan near Sidaredja in the vicinity of Tjilatjap, a harbor on the southern coast of Java.

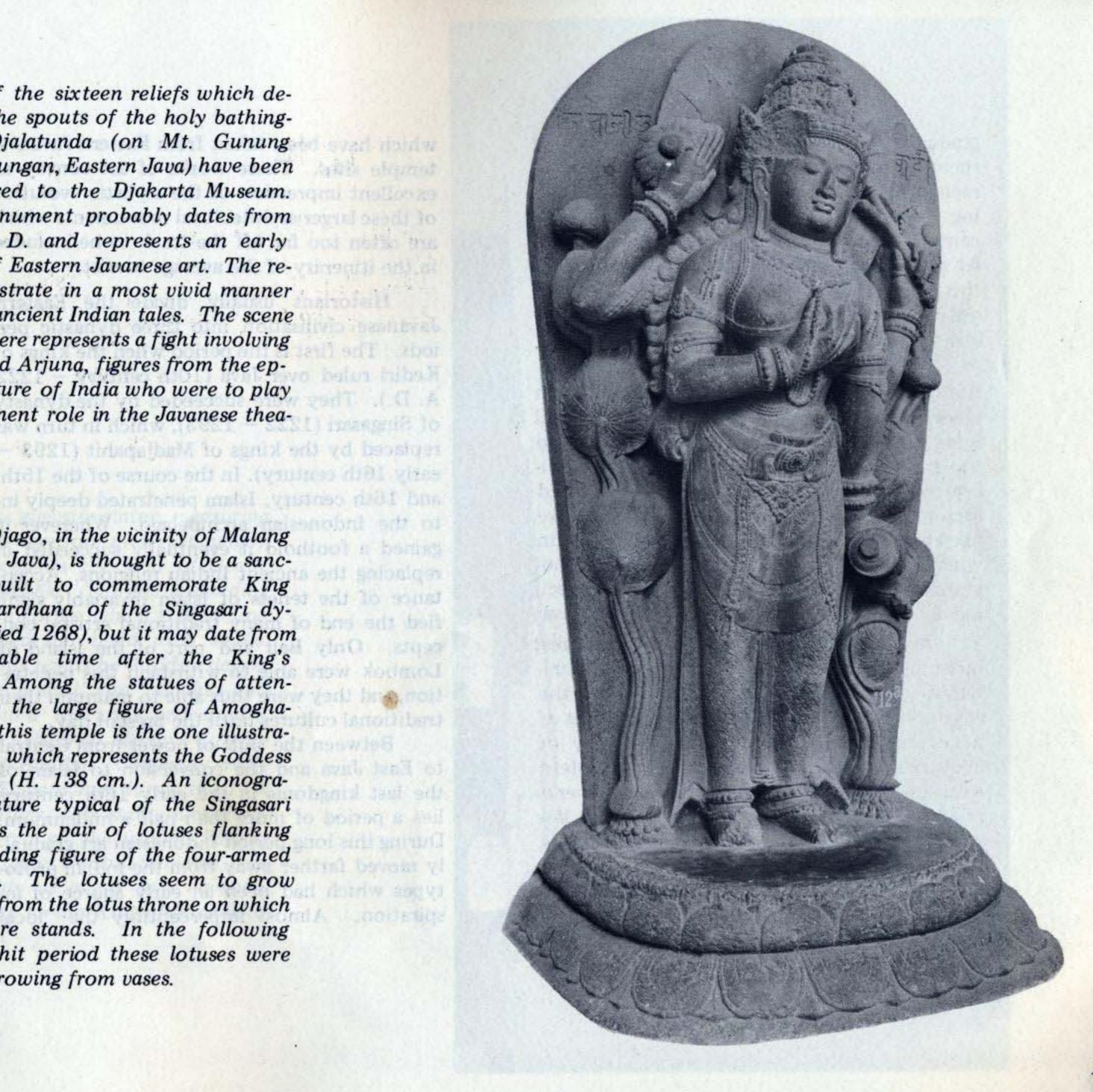




p. 14:

Some of the sixteen reliefs which decorate the spouts of the holy bathingplace Djalatunda (on Mt. Gunung Penanggungan, Eastern Java) have been transferred to the Djakarta Museum. The monument probably dates from 977 A. D. and represents an early phase of Eastern Javanese art. The reliefs illustrate in a most vivid manner various ancient Indian tales. The scene shown here represents a fight involving Bima and Arjuna, figures from the epic literature of India who were to play a prominent role in the Javanese theatre. replaced by the kings of Mudhandrit (1293

Tjandi Djago, in the vicinity of Malang (Eastern Java), is thought to be a sanctuary built to commemorate King Vishnuvardhana of the Singasari dynasty (died 1268), but it may date from considerable time after the King's death. Among the statues of attendants to the large figure of Amoghapāśa in this temple is the one illustrated here which represents the Goddess Bhrikuti (H. 138 cm.). An iconographic feature typical of the Singasari period is the pair of lotuses flanking the standing figure of the four-armed Goddess. The lotuses seem to grow directly from the lotus throne on which the figure stands. In the following Madjapahit period these lotuses were shown growing from vases.



gradually covered the monuments, reducing them to mounds and hills, which were soon reclaimed by Indonesia's lush and fast growing vegetation. It was only during the 19th century that these monuments were uncovered again, and it took until the beginning of this century before the first monuments were restored to something approaching their original splendor.

Although several successful reconstructions of temple sites have been carried out in recent years, the number of monuments still lying in ruins is very large. Many of these are too fragmentarily preserved to allow an accurate reconstruction. Statues and sculptured architectural fragments of these temples have been brought together in the Djakarta Museum, where the whole range of styles and iconographic types is represented by choice specimens, collected from all over Central Java.

A tourist's visit to most of the great monuments of Hindu-Javanese temple architecture in Central Java, is facilitated by the circumstance that practically all of the sites of major importance are close to the city of Djokjakarta. The later temples of Eastern Java, on the other hand, are dispersed over a much wider area, and are, as a rule, much less easily accessible to the modern traveller. It is, therefore, highly fortunate that the Djakarta Museum possesses a rich and varied collection of stone statues and architectural fragments

which have been taken from Eastern Javanese temple sites. These works of art convey an excellent impression of the stylistic evolution of these larger architectural monuments which are often too far off the track to be included in the itinerary of the average tourist.

Historians usually divide the Eastern Javanese civilisation into three dynastic periods. The first is the period when the kings of Kediri ruled over Java (10th century - 1222 A. D.). They were succeeded by the dynasty of Singasari (1222 - 1293), which in turn was replaced by the kings of Madjapahit (1293 early 16th century). In the course of the 15th and 16th century, Islam penetrated deeply into the Indonesian archipelago. Wherever it gained a foothold it eventually succeeded in replacing the ancient Indian religions. Acceptance of the tenets of Islam invariably signified the end of many traditional artistic concepts. Only Bali and part of the island of Lombok were able to withstand this penetration, and they were thus able to maintain their traditional cultures until the present day.

Between the shift of power from Central to East Java and the conversion to Islam of the last kingdoms in the early 16th century lies a period of more than half a millennium. During this long period Indonesian art gradually moved farther away from the Indian prototypes which had been an early source of inspiration. Almost imperceptibly the "local

This gigantic statue, measuring well over four meters in height, represents the God of Death, Mahākāla. The god is standing on a corpse which is placed on a pedestal lined with skulls. In his hands he holds a dagger and a skull cup. Snakes curl around his arms and ankles. His headdress displays a figure of a Buddha. Originally made in Eastern Java during the 14th century, this statue was transported all the way to Padang Rotjo in Central Sumatra, probably as a gift of a Javanese King to the King of Minangkabau.





and still the little of the little of the state of Bronze finials, probably used as ceremonial emblems, were a speciality of the Eastern Javanese metal casters. The Djakarta Museum has a collection of choice specimens of this type, showing a great variety of shapes. Here the naga (snake) motif has been combined with pointed shapes resembling the kris (the Javanese sword) or lance heads, to form a finial of great elegance and distinction.

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Three bronze objects - a holy water vessel (left), an oil lamp (center), and a priest's bell (right) - are other typical examples of the imaginative use of animal motifs by the East Javanese artists. The water vessel has a spout in the shape of a dragon-like snake, the oil lamp, surmounted by a small figure of a bird, has the completely stylized shape of a makara (fantastic aquatic animal) and the bell has a handle in the shape of a lion. Ritual objects and utensils of this type were cast in great numbers and many specimens, displaying an infinite variety of shapes and motifs, have been preserved.





The upper part of this most elaborate gold ornament (H. 13 cm.) shows a heavenly figure on horseback. Below him two dragon-like nāgas (snakes) flank a winged conch. On all sides leaf-shaped appendages are dangling from loops of gold wire. Although the exact use for pieces of jewelry of this type is not known, it is often assumed that they were originally part of the headdress of a Javanese nobleman of the 14th or 15th century.

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The inhabitants of Trawulan, the capital of the Kings of Madjapahit, liked to decorate the roofs and columns of their houses with terra cotta figurines. This cylindrical sculpture was once part of the decoration of a vertical post which ran through its hollow interior. Often the elegant decoration consists of heavenly nymphs sporting among the clouds in an infinite variety of dancing postures.



genius" began to assert itself, creating a culture which was, even more than that of Central Java, of an outspoken indigenous character. The temples of Eastern Java often lack the impressive monumentality and the superb harmony of ornament and architecture which characterize the monuments of Central Java. On the other hand, monumental stone sculpture flourished and attained, especially during the Singasari period, an artistic refinement which surpasses that of many of the arts of the preceeding centuries. The much more modest size of the temples no longer demanded that relief sculpture be executed on the massive and grandiose scale as that of the narrative scenes on the walls and balustrades of Barabudur and Lara Djonggrang. Yet it was often in the smaller type of sculpture that the genius of the Eastern Javanese sculptor could manifest itself most convincingly.

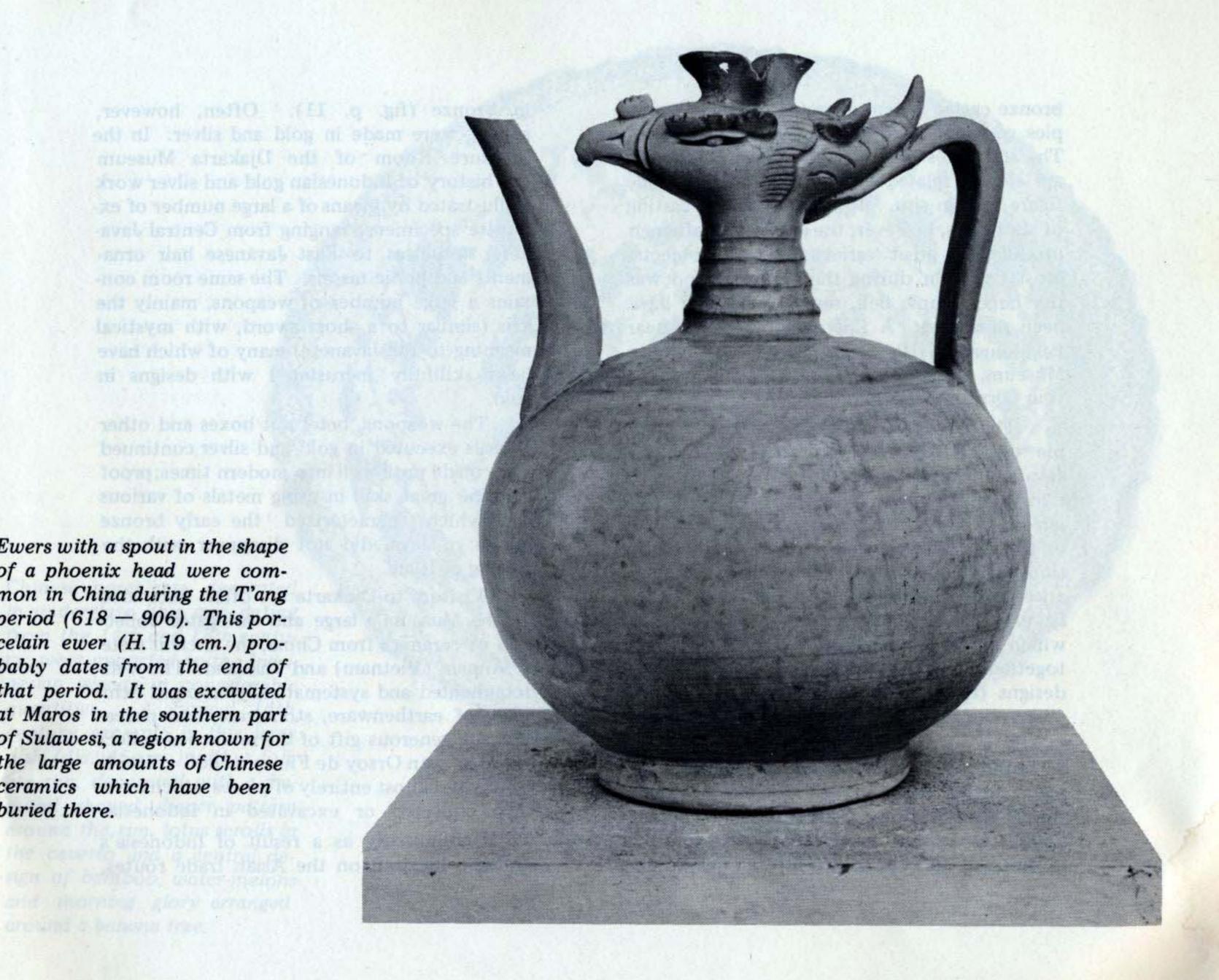
Already the earliest examples of Eastern Javanese relief sculpture, taken from the holy bathing place Djalatunda on the eastern slope of Mount Gunung Pennanggungan (fig. p. 14) show signs of a new stylistic development which was to become one of the most typical trends in Eastern Javanese art. Departing from the natural rendering of human anatomy of the Central Javanese artists, the sculptors of Eastern Java gradually distorted the anatomical shapes and proportions of the human body until they had created a new standard, charac-

terised by the broad shoulders, slender bodies, and elongated arms which are typical of the wajang-kulit figures of the Javanese shadow play.

The texts which had provided the inspiration for the Central Javanese narrative reliefs were imported from India and were, in all probability, accessible only to the happy few who had mastered the intricate rules of literary Sanskrit. The story of Rama was illustrated for the first time on the balustrade of the Lara Djonggrang temple, dedicated to Siva. Perhaps the most durable contribution which Indian civilisation made to the culture of Indonesia was its great epics, the Mahabharata and the Rāmāyana. The resurgence of "local genius" also manifested itself in translation into Javanese of these two great epics, providing the Javanese with an inexhaustible source of heroic tales which the Javanese appropriated to the extend that they were no longer aware of their foreign origin.

The empty niches in the walls of temples, or the tantalizing discovery, near the main temple of the Tjandi Sewu complex, of a life-size finger in bronze, clearly suggests that our present impression of Hindu-Javanese sculpture is incomplete and one-sided. Of the considerable number of large bronze statues which must have existed when Buddhism flourished in Central Java, not one has been preserved. The superb skill of the Indonesian

Ewers with a spout in the shape of a phoenix head were common in China during the T'ang period (618 - 906). This porcelain ewer (H. 19 cm.) probably dates from the end of that period. It was excavated at Maros in the southern part of Sulawesi, a region known for the large amounts of Chinese ceramics which have been buried there.



bronze caster is demonstrated by many examples of smaller size in the Djakarta Museum. The statuettes of the Central Javanese period are closely related in style to the large stone figure still in situ. In addition to the casting of statuettes, however, the Javanese craftsmen produced a great variety of ritual objects. Most common during the earlier period was the large temple bell, several of which have been preserved. A fine example, found near Pekalongan in 1960 and now in the Djakarta Museum, can be dated by its inscription to a year corresponding to 905 A. D.

The playful fantasy and the inexhaustible decorative imagination of the Eastern Javanese bronze caster found expression in richly ornamented staff finials and bronze lamps, of which the Djakarta Museum possesses a most impressive collection. The profusion of ornament, often of a tropical exuberance, is organized with superb skill into orderly patterns, reticulated bands and garlands which hold the functional parts of the lamps together in an endless variety of shapes and designs (fig. p. 18).

To the Indians the Indonesian archipelago was a region where gold and silver was to be found. Although not particularly rich in these costly metals, the Indonesians have always had a strong taste for them. Sometimes, the use of these metals was limited to the inlay of eyes or lips into an image cast in bronze (fig. p. 11). Often, however, statues were made in gold and silver. In the Treasure Room of the Djakarta Museum the history of Indonesian gold and silver work is illustrated by means of a large number of exquisite specimens, ranging from Central Javanese statuettes to East Javanese hair ornaments and pubic tassels. The same room contains a large number of weapons, mainly the kris (similar to a short sword, with mystical meaning to the Javanese) many of which have been skillfully incrustated with designs in gold.

The weapons, betel nut boxes and other utensils executed in gold and silver continued to be made until well into modern times; proof that the great skill in using metals of various sorts which characterized the early bronze casters of Java, did not disappear with the coming of Islam.

Visitors to Djakarta are often fascinated by the Museum's large and variegated collection of ceramics from China, the ancient state of Annam (Vietnam) and Thailand. The well-documented and systematically arranged exhibit of earthenware, stoneware, and porcelain — a generous gift of the renowned collector E. W. van Orsoy de Flines (1886 — 1964) — consists almost entirely of pieces which have been collected or excavated in Indonesia.

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Undoubtedly as a result of Indonesia's strategic location on the Asian trade routes,



the wares of the Chinese potters became known in the archipelago at an early date. The ceramics of the Han dynasty (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.), which have been found in Indonesia were all excavated. The total lack of Chinese tomb figurines and traces of human remains indicates that these ceramics were not used for their original Chinese purpose of mortuary gifts. Among the Han ceramics, which are usually found in Western Java, Southern Sumatra, and on the west coast of Kalimantan, there is a jar bearing a stamped inscription which contains a date correspond- . ing to 48 B.C. It is the most ancient dated object excavated in the archipelago, antedating the earliest rock inscriptions from the Western Javanese Indianized kingdom Tārumā by half a millennium.

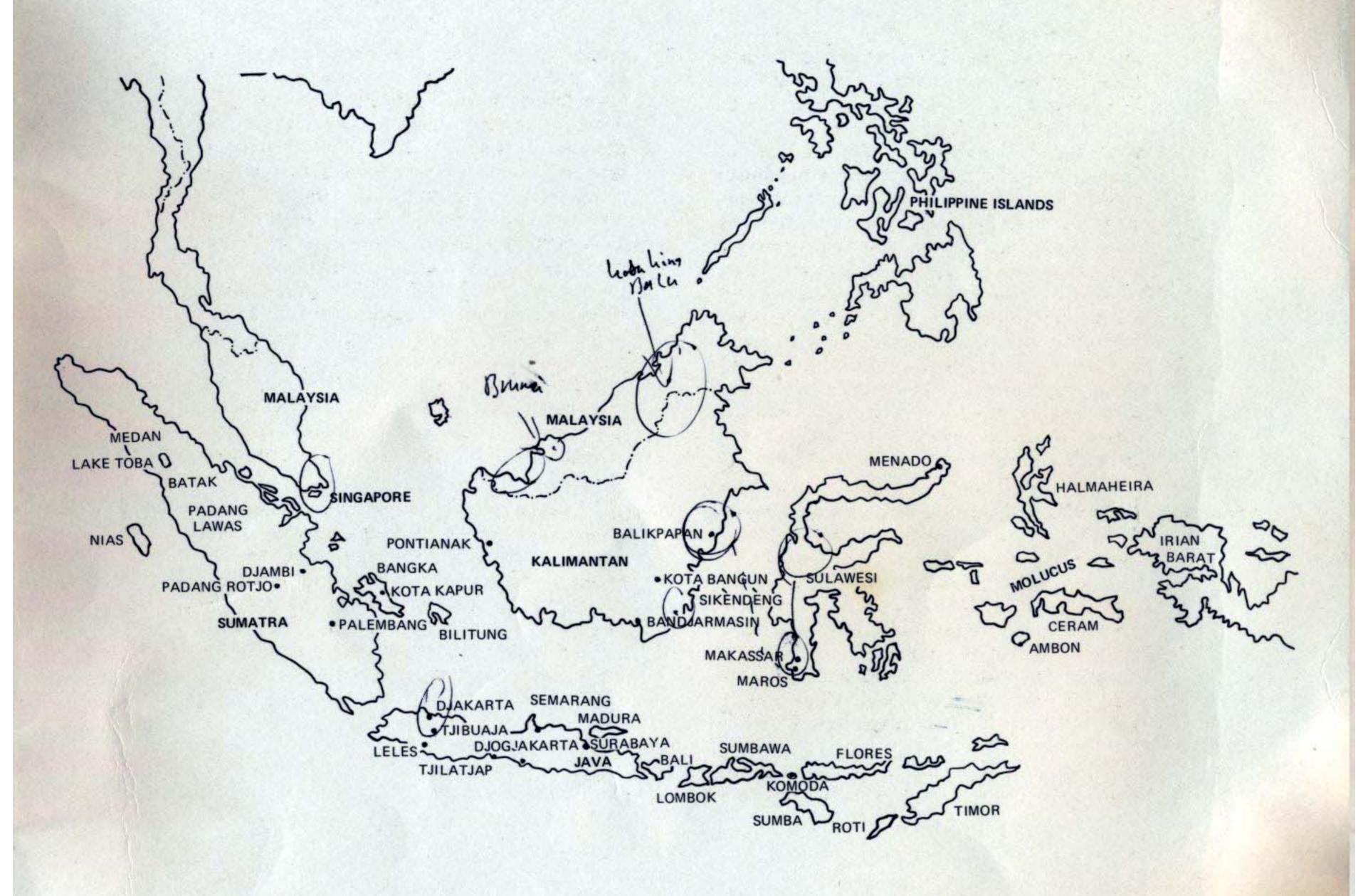
Although Chinese Buddhist pilgrims frequently made a stop in Indonesia on their way to India or during the return trip to China, very few Chinese ceramics of that period have been excavated in Indonesia. It was only during the T'ang period (618 — 906 A.D.), when the influence of the powerful Chinese Empire made itself felt all over Asia, that Chinese ceramics came to be imported into the archipelago in larger numbers. This T'ang pottery does not basically differ from those found all over the Asian continent.

Tenth century Yüeh ware and all of the most common types of Sung pottery are

found in Indonesia, but as a rule the quality is not as high as that of the pieces which have been found in China proper. Like Japan, Indonesia became a major importer of celadon bowls and dishes, by far the most common type of Chinese export ware found in the In addition to the celadons, archipelago. however, considerable quantities of 14th and 15th century blue and white came to Indonesia, especially to the rather remote islands in the eastern part of Indonesia such as Halmaheira. Often handed down as treasured heirlooms (pusaka), these pieces represent the same types as those which are found in the world-famous collections of the Ardebil Shrine in Teheran and the Topkapu Sarayi Museum in Istanbul. The Djakarta Museum possesses several splendid examples of this early type of blue and white porcelain.

Although these celebrated specimens are considered by many to be the mainstay of the collection, the great diversity of types and the excellent documentation of the lesser known provincial Chinese export wares are of special interest to the increasing number of students and collectors of Chinese export wares made for the South-East Asian markets.

sign of bambag water-melons



We wish to express our deep appreciation and thanks to the Curators and the Director of the Djakarta Museum, Mr. Sutaarga, for their kind and thoughtful assistance without which this pamphlet could not have been prepared.

INDONESIAN TOURIST BOARD

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