



Mahakala

Date

mid-14th to mid-15th century

Medium

Gilt copper alloy with inlays of semiprecious stones and pigment

Description

This bronze of the protector deity Mahakala presents him as “the Excellent One,” a particularly fierce form with a large head, gaping mouth, heavy coat and boots, and holding a large sandalwood club in both hands in front of his body. This figure relates stylistically to the great religious and artistic center Densatil Monastery, founded in the twelfth century in central Tibet. The monastery is famous for its monumental reliquary stupas, built

successively in the thirteenth through fifteenth century, which were elaborately and richly ornamented with gilt bronze statues inlaid with semiprecious stones. This monastery, documented by the Italian scholar Giuseppe Tucci on an expedition in 1948, was completely destroyed during the Chinese Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), and fragments of its great artistic heritage were scattered to public and private collections around the world.

Dimensions

Object size: 13 x 8 1/4 x 3 3/4 in. Object w/ Base/Mount size: 19 1/8 x 12 1/2 x 8 1/2 in. Base/Mount size: TBD