

Two Sino-Tibetan Gilt Bronze Statues of Lamas.

Bronze Buddhist sculptures have regularly led the Asian Art market, as these durable objects frequently feature fine detail and carry significant religious significance, making them popular with practitioners and collectors around the world. Amongst these sculptures, Sino-Tibetan works have proven especially popular in the West, as this branch of Buddhist teaching is especially prominent due to the reputation of the Dalai Lama. Michaan's Auctions is proud to offer **Two Sino-Tibetan Gilt Bronze Statues of Lamas** (\$2/3,000) in our February Gallery Auction, held on Friday, February 16th.

This lot features two bronze figures of Buddhist priests (lamas). The first is a painted lama in the seated

position, with his right hand raised in the vitarka mudra and his left hand across his waist. He is wearing the distinctive pointed hat of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, which includes tails that extend down to his shoulders. He wears long robes, with multiple layers and highly ornate collars. He stares straight ahead with a stoic expression.



The second figure is also a seated lama, dressed in a scholar's hat and priest's robes, also with his right hand in the vitarka mudra. He is wearing the fan-shaped Zolu hat of a general monk popular in Tibetan monasteries and wears long, layered robes. The lama looks straight ahead, with eyes painted white and lips painted red; his right-hand rests on his waist as he sits on a three-tiered book-shaped plinth, emphasizing his status as a scholar.

Bronze sculptures such as these fine examples are meant as devotional objects within the home. In contrast to earlier religious traditions, particularly in the Mesopotamian Valley, which viewed the statue as an embodiment of the god, Buddhist sculpture tends to function similarly to stained glass windows or crosses in the Christian religion. That is to say, the sculptures are meant to remind viewers of

important religious stories or to become the object on which one can focus during prayers or meditative practice.

The Gelug school, represented by both lamas and especially known for their pointed hats, is the most recent of Tibet's four schools of Buddhist thought. Emphasizing a unique definition of emptiness, this is the tradition from which the Dalai Lama originates, and is led by three monasteries in the southern region of Chinese Tibet. These monasteries, the Ganden, Drepung, and Sera, represent the largest and most prestigious of Tibetan Buddhist educational institutions, where monks have read and debated scriptures since the early 1400s.

The other statues, representing a scholar, further emphasize the intense nature of Buddhist religious study that is undergone at these monastic institutions. This study is central to the

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ordination process, lamas memorize numerous long passages and certain sects require the spoken repetition of important phrases over 100,000 times. Religious debate is also prioritized amongst the monks, who must demonstrate substantial knowledge of Buddhist religious theory to become ordained.

Two Sino-Tibetan Gilt

Bronze Statues of Lamas (\$2/3,000)

will be offered at Michaan's Auctions February Gallery Auction on Friday, February 16th, which features fine diamonds in excellent condition in addition to notable examples from the

Fine Art and Asian Art departments. The auction is led by the jewelry department, which will be offering an unmounted pear-cut 2.45 carats colorless diamond and an unmounted pear-cut 2.96 carats colorless diamond. Also included in the sale is a lithograph by Grant Wood, an Arnaldo Pomodoro hanging sculpture, and a jade insert table screen.

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