

# New buddha on display at the museum

A Buddha on loan from The Dhammapadipa Temple in Edinburgh is being exhibited as part of *Theravāda Buddhism*, a new display opening on 16 September at the National Museum of Scotland, which highlights religious practices and living traditions in South and Southeast Asia and Scotland.

The Buddha was designed and made in Thailand in 2013, then later gifted to The Dhammapadipa Temple in Edinburgh where it is now used in their garden meditation room. The image takes inspiration from the Phra Phuttha Chinnarat (Great Victorious Buddha), one of the most revered Buddha images in Thailand.

Alongside the loan, the display showcases 40 objects from National Museums Scotland's South and Southeast Asian collection, dating from the 2nd century AD to the present day.

The Theravāda tradition is one of the oldest forms of Buddhism. As one of the two main branches of the faith, it remains strong in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. The objects on display include amulets, relics, statues, and votive offerings, all of which were and are used by Buddhists in their everyday religious practice.

A set of 19th century spinning gongs from Myanmar will be displayed as part of the immersive display. Audio recordings of the gongs will provide visitors with a sensory experience, representative of the sound of visiting a temple.

Rosanna Nicolson, Assistant Curator of West, South and Southeast Asia at National Museums Scotland, said: "This thought-provoking display is the result of partnerships with members of the Buddhist community in Scotland, and is an opportunity to share some exciting objects from our South and Southeast Asian collections with our visitors. The objects on display chart the history and influence of the Theravāda Buddhist tradition across the world, including its role in Scotland today."

Newly acquired contemporary amulets from Thailand will be going on display for the first time. These are hugely popular today and are a continuation of a long tradition of devotional gifts and offerings.

Chairperson of The Dhammapadipa Temple, Kachen Gerdphol, said: "We are delighted that a Buddha from our temple is on display at the National Museum of Scotland for visitors to appreciate and enjoy. It has been very interesting for us as a group being involved in the creation of this display, visiting the National Museums Collection Centre and seeing so many beautiful objects. Moreover, assisting with ancient dialects that required multi-layered translation was very rewarding knowing it will provide help for future generations' understanding of these old items."

Theravāda Buddhism has been developed collaboratively with Edinburgh Buddhist Studies, an interdisciplinary research network at the University of Edinburgh. The display runs until 9 June 2024.



Monks from Edinburgh's Dhammapadipa Temple welcome a buddha to the National Museum of Scotland. PHOTO Duncan McGlynn



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