



## Sculpture - Head of the Buddha

Object: Sculpture

Place of origin: Java (made)

Date: early 9th century (made)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Stone

Credit Line: Given by the Walmore Collection

Museum number: IS.38-1988

Gallery location: Buddhism, Room 47f, The Robert H. N. Ho Family Foundation Galleries of Buddhist Art, case PL4

### Public access description

This head originally formed part of a large-scale image of Buddha Shakyamuni. It may date from the end of the Shailendra dynasty, which ruled Java between 760 and 830AD. The Shailendra rulers were strong supporters of Mahayana Buddhism and erected many Buddhist monuments in central Java, including the great temple complex of Borobudur.

### Descriptive line

Head of the Buddha Shakyamuni, stone, Central Javanese style, Java, Indonesia, early 9th century.

### Physical description

Head of Buddha Shakyamuni of carved stone.

### Dimensions

Height: 119 cm, Width: 58 cm, Depth: 30 cm, Weight: 290 kg

### Museum number

IS.38-1988

### Historical context note

The Sailendra dynasty, which ruled central Java from 760 until 800, was responsible for establishing Mahayana Buddhism in the region and for constructing a series of remarkable Buddhist monuments. The most spectacular of these was Borobudur, designed as a three-dimensional mandala (cosmological diagram). This and other monuments in the region were richly decorated with narrative reliefs and free-standing sculptures. This head is probably from a large scale seated Buddha image in this region. Early in the 9th century the Sailendras were displaced by the Sanjaya dynasty who, whilst allowing Buddhism to continue to flourish, instigated a Hindu renaissance symbolised by the construction of the great temple complex at Prambanan. The region fell into neglect with the move of the ruling houses to east Java in the 10th century.

### URL

<http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O24992/head-of-the-buddha-sculpture-unknown/>