
Sōtō Asian Art

禪藏



Shisou Marked Silver Inlaid Standing Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, Late Ming

Estimate Period: 17th Century

Height: 37.0cm, Weight: 4400g

Introduction

介紹

Soto Asian Art specialises in Chinese, Indian, Himalayan-Tibetan and Southeast Asian art from the 8th to 16th centuries.

A specialist Asian art dealer with a strong emphasis in gilded bronze, copper, and ancient stone sculptures. Our collection consists of, Yixing teaware, Vietnamese incense beads, Indian cairn sandalwood, ceramics, cloisonne ware.

Build upon over 30 years of experience in Asian art. Our collection is tailored for investors, collectors, institutions, scholars in private sales, private client management, and dedicated personalise services in Asian Art.

Soto Asian Art only handles the finest pieces for our collection.

Sōtō Asian Art

禪藏

Team

團隊

Li H.Kei

Founder, 創辦人

Mr Li H.Kei is an impassioned collector. With over 30 years devotion in Asian art, his know-how and practical expertise go beyond theoretical understanding.

—

**Sōtō Asian
Art**

禪藏

Jason Li, 李浩川

Director, 主任

Mr Jason Li, manages overall operations, business and relationship development within Soto Asian Art. Jason graduated with dual Master Degrees (MSc) from Aston University, and Imperial College London, U.K.

Collection

珍藏

—

Sōtō Asian
Art

禪藏



Shisou Marked Silver Inlaid Standing Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, Late Ming

Estimate Period: 17th Century

Height: 37.0cm, Weight: 4400g

**Shisou Marked Silver Inlaid Standing Bodhisattva
Avalokitesvara, Late Ming – 17th Century (1)**

石叟銀絲鑲嵌銅觀世音菩薩立像, 晚明時期 17世紀

Shisou (石叟) (~1628 / ~1644) was born and lived during the Chongzhen reign periods (崇禎年), of the late Ming Dynasty. A Buddhist monk from Fuzhou, Fujian province; known for his skill in smelting and craftsmanship in sculpture works of art. At the time, Shisou was a renowned bronze sculpture artist (銅塑第一名手) among aristocrats with his finest works displaying a degree of naturalness and simplicity. Shisou preferred native copper from the Kingdom of Siam (present-day: Thailand) as his starting ingredient and red bronze ingat (mixture of copper and gold) (風磨銅) for all his finished works. The native copper is smelted, refined and purified twelve times; the final decomposition produces a highly dense pure red bronze ingat (風磨銅), heavier than ordinary copper with the red bronze ingat surface exhibiting a soft colourful brilliance - a unique feature among all Shisou finest works.

**Sōtō Asian
Art**

禪藏

As a skilled artisan, Shisou has crafted various exquisite Buddhist works of art and related objects through the use of fine red bronze ingat (風磨銅). Among all Buddhist deities' works of art, the grooved silver inlaid Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanyin) (挑槽銀絲鑲嵌銅觀音像) is considered as the most illustrious.

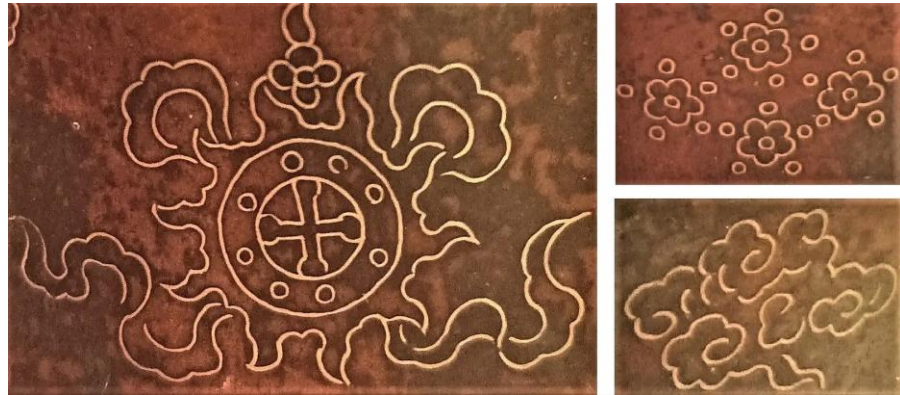
There is no historical literature detailing the further background and detailed accounts of Shisou, his existence remains a mystery; scholars and collectors can only reference Shisou as a Buddhist monk from Fuzhou and a renowned bronze sculpture artist.

Shisou unique styling and craftsmanship ended with his death, as he has no discipline. His finest works signify the lost art of sculpturing in Chinese Works of Art, as it is both rare and precious due to their exceptional fine details and the premium quality of bronze being used. Only a finite number of Shisou works are displayed in prominent museums, which include Palace Museum Beijing and the British Museum. With Shisou works continue to play an influential role in the field of Chinese sculpturing, the British Museum has acclaimed Shisou as "China's Greatest Artist" (中國最偉大的藝術家).

Shisou would first outline visual patterns that mimic the Chinese auspicious cloud (雲紋), followed by different patterns on the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanyin) surface. Finely grooves would be incised from the recently drawn outline, with each silver inlay thickness of a "human hair" (嵌上幼如人髮的銀絲) inserted in the grooves of the overall pattern. Each silver inlay inserted in the groove trough is consistent with the surface height of the bronze ingat body (unique craftsmanship in all Shisou finest works). When gently touching the surface of Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara (Guanyin) with an index finger where silver inlay intercepts with the bronze ingat body, it should remain perfectly smooth and consistent with the surface.

**Shisou Marked Silver Inlaid Standing Bodhisattva
Avalokitesvara, Late Ming - 17th Century (2)**

石叟銀絲鑲嵌銅觀世音菩薩立像, 晚明時期 17世紀



Sōtō Asian

Art

禪藏

Shisou would first outline visual patterns that mimic the Chinese auspicious cloud, followed by different patterns on the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara surface. Fine grooves would be incised from the recently drawn outline, with each silver inlay thickness of a “human hair” inserted in the grooves of the overall pattern. Each silver inlay inserted in the groove trough is consistent with the surface height of the bronze ingat body (*unique craftsmanship in all Shisou finest works*).

(*Shisou Marked Silver Inlaid Standing Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara - Soto Asian Art Collection*)

When carefully examining each silver inlay within the pattern, each fine silver inlay should remain consistent, unbroken, precise, and clear; the overall pattern should not be interrupted by multiple small silver inlay breaks or poor craftsmanship of indistinct silver inlay as the piece would be considered as one of many counterfeits of Shisou related works. If the presence of silver inlay thickness is closer to a mammal “swine or hog hair” (棕毛) and mechanically blunt; the surface is uneven where silver inlay intercepts with the bronze ingat body, the piece would also be considered as common counterfeits of Shisou related works.

Shisou would meticulously incise his signature mark either at the lower body or at the base in all his Buddhist deities' works of art; he would by no means incise his mark at the main body (centre front or centre back). When examining the two-character signature mark “石叟”, the characters are incised with silver inlay in regular characters. Shisou signature mark incises in ancient seal script (Chinese pre-date 1st millennium BC) (篆書字體) or official script characters (隸書字體), the piece would be considered as common counterfeits of Shisou related works. If the piece is dated alongside Shisou signature or his signature mark contains more than two characters, such as “Made Shisou” (石叟製), the piece would also be considered as one of many counterfeits of Shisou related works.

Collection

珍藏

**Shisou Marked Silver Inlaid Standing Bodhisattva
Avalokitesvara, Late Ming - 17th Century (3)**

石叟銀絲鑲嵌銅觀世音菩薩立像, 晚明時期 17世紀

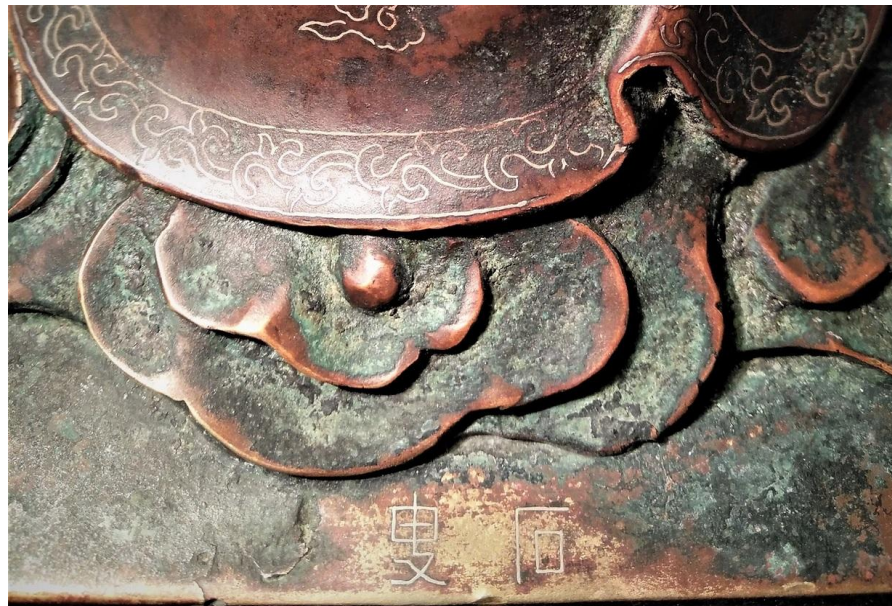
The silver inlaid Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) (挑槽銀絲鑲嵌銅觀音像) is among Shisou finest works of art, it exhibits the highest level of craftsmanship both in fine details and the premium quality bronze being used. Elegantly standing elevated on the four-legged base above the sea clouds (雲海), displaying eloquent and vivid expressions, its down casting eyes looking down the world with infinite love and compassion.

—

**Sōtō Asian
Art**

禪藏

Wearing a flowing robe and a veil on top of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Guanyin) head; covers her hair and drapes over her shoulders with her right hand holding a bottle downward containing nectar water, the divine nectar of life, and compassion and wisdom, with the left hand folded above the right. The surface of the red-bronze ingat body is meticulously incised with grooved silver inlaid in complex changeable patterns, the presence of thick layers of patina on the exterior surface exhibiting wonderful depth and mellow glow. On the back of the four-legged base, it is incised with the two-character signature mark “石叟”, it is a masterpiece from a renowned bronze sculpture master artist, carrying a level exquisitely in fine details while displaying a degree of naturalness and simplicity.



The two-character signature mark Shisou “石叟”, the characters are incised with silver inlay in regular characters

(Shisou Marked Silver Inlaid Standing Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara - Soto Asian Art Collection)

Contact

聯絡

Soto Asian Art, 禪藏

Private viewings are conducted by appointment.

We are only able to accommodate viewings of artworks in a secured off-site facility in Central and Causeway Bay, Hong Kong.

Those wishing to make an appointment may send an email to **info@sotoasianart.com**, alternatively, an appointment can be made by phone **(+852) 93219101** or by WeChat (微信) **sotoasianart**.

Website: www.sotoasianart.com

Email: info@sotoasianart.com

Phone: (+852) 93219101

WeChat, 微信: sotoasianart

Line: sotoasianart

Sōtō Asian
Art

禪藏



微信, QR Code



All images and content © Soto Asian Art

Text copyright © Soto Asian Art. Unless indicated otherwise, all images courtesy © Soto Asian Art. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any storage or retrieval system, without prior permission from the copyright holders and publishers.