

Metal Cast with Real Human Organ: A Specific Religious Art in Thailand

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Abstract

Art in religion is an interesting issue. Many religious artifacts are accepted as master piece. In Buddhism, the art of metal case is of interest. In this short article, the authors present and discuss on an extraordinary artifact seen in Indochina, the metal cast with real human organ. The specific case study of metal cast of a local famous venerable that contains real incorruptible eyeball is hereby presented.

Keywords: Metal Cast, Human, Organ, Religion.

Introduction

Art in religion is an interesting issue. Many religious artifacts are accepted as master piece. In Buddhism, the art of metal case is of interest. The religion art might be presented in the form of architecture of religious holy places, such as church or pagoda. It can also appear in the form of small objects such as amulet.

In this short article, the authors present and discuss on an extraordinary artifact seen in Indochina, the metal cast with real human organ. The specific case study of metal cast of a local famous venerable that contains real incorruptible eyeball is hereby presented.

Case study from Thailand

In Thailand, Buddhist metal casts are widely seen. There are many locally made metal casts of Buddha and famous Buddhist venerable. Several kinds of metals including bronze, silver and gold are used for constructions of the metal cast. The decoration by precious gems might also be seen. However, the extraordinary case is the metal cast containing real human organ.

The most famous metal cast with real human organ at Wat Kakang, Pichit province Thailand. This metal cast sculpture was locally made by a local artisan. The aim is for worship. This cast was made after a cremation of a local famous Buddhist monk. The venerable is namely LaungphorPhit. After he died, he was incorruptible and when a cremation ceremony was set, his whole body expect both eyes were burnt by fire. The non – burnt eyeballs were collected and locally worshipped. The specific metal cast was constructed for containing the holy eyeball relics.



Figure 1. The famous metal cast with real human organ at Wat Kakang, Thailand

Discussion

Incorruptibility is an important specific belief in Indochina. The holy dead bodies of many Buddhist monks are kept and the art of coffins and ossuaries is very interesting [1-2]. The religion art for those cases are usually specially designed and have high artist value. Here, the authors present on a more extraordinary situation, metal cast with real human organ. In fact, this kind of art is very difficult. How to preserve the real organ for use as part of the artifact is very challenge. In the present case, the holy incorruptible organ is used as a material of the art. Therefore, the specific metal cast with real eyeball could be constructed. Until present, this metal cast has been displayed at the pagoda for many decades. The technique for designing of the cast is high and could be successfully done by a local Thai artisan. This can reflect this local wisdom in metal cast construction in Thailand.

Conflict of interest: None

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