Finch & Co

ASIAN CARVED IVORY AND ELEPHANT HAIR BUDDHIST SCRIBES MANUSCRIPT BRUSH

A SOUTH EAST ASIAN CARVED IVORY AND ELEPHANT HAIR BUDDHIST SCRIBES MANUSCRIPT BRUSH THE ENDS WITH STYLISED 'MAKARAS'

THAILAND OR BURMA

OLD SMOOTH DARK PATINA

18TH CENTURY

SIZE: 10CM HIGH, 12CM WIDE, 1.5CM DEEP – 4 INS HIGH, 4¾ INS WIDE, ½ INS DEEP

LITERATURE

BURMESE AND THAI MANUSCRIPTS ARE MADE OF EITHER PALM LEAF OR PAPER ALTHOUGH IVORY, STIFFENED CLOTH AND THIN SILVER, GOLD OR METAL SHEETS WERE ALSO USED. PALM LEAF MANUSCRIPTS WERE MADE FROM THE LEAVES OF THE TALIPOT 'CORYPHA UMBRACULIFERA'. THE LEAVES WERE SEPARATED FROM THE CENTRAL RIB, DRIED, SOAKED, RE-DRIED AND RUBBED SMOOTH. THE TEXT WAS THEN INCISED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE LEAF WITH A METAL STYLUS AFTER WHICH THE LEAF WAS RUBBED WITH CHARCOAL DUST OR LAMP BLACK AND THE SURPLUS BRUSHED OFF, WITH A BRUSH SUCH AS THIS EXAMPLE, LEAVING THE INCISED TEXT LEGIBLE. THE PALM LEAF EDGES WERE THEN USUALLY GILDED AND THE LEAVES STACKED AND THREADED ON STRING BETWEEN DECORATED WOODEN BINDING BOARDS. THE MOST USUAL SUBJECTS FOR THE TEXTS WERE THE LIFE OF THE BUDDHA, COURT PASTIMES AND BUDDHIST COSMOLOGY. BY THE NINETEENTH CENTURY THESE MANUSCRIPTS WERE OFTEN WORSHIPPED AS THE EMBODIMENT OF WISDOM RATHER THAN READ, BUT THEIR COMMISSIONING WAS STILL A PIOUS DEED BRINGING MERIT TO ALL ASSOCIATED WITH IT.