**Buddha on the Vanaspati**

Buddha on the Vanaspatiis a distinctive Dvaravati-period statue, commonly found in central Thailand especially Nakhon Pathom and Lop Buri. It depicts the Buddha in the Attitude of Preaching standing or sitting on a mythical creature called Vanaspati. The Vanaspati is a creature that combines the features of three Hindu gods' vehicles. It hasthe beak-shaped mouth of Garuda, the mount of Vishnu; the ears and legs of abull, the mount of Shiva; and the wings of a swan, the mount of Brahma. The Buddha is flanked by two human figures.

The Thai word for Vanaspati is Phanatsabodi first used by Prince Narisara Nuwattiwong. He remarked that “…The creature underneath is similar to that on the doors of stone temples in Java. It was called Phanatsabodi by Dutch scholars…”

This type of sculpture is quite diverse. The mythical creature may have appeared as a winged and horned lion and monster face with huge fangs. The figures at the sides are probably the god Indra, Brahma, Bodhisattva, or Deva.

The statue of Buddha on the Vanaspati has been interpreted to represent the nobility of the Buddhaor Buddhist supremacy over Brahmanism or Hinduism.

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