Bronze ‘ge’ Axe (Yunnan or Vietnam)  

Description:

“This type of ge Bronze Dagger was a typical weapon for the Dian and Đông Son Kingdoms (Yunnan province in South China to the Red River valley in North Vietnam). They were handled by means of a short wooden stick and were held in one hand as for an axe.

Symbolism: Both sides of the dagger are identical, showing two panels filled with stylised human figures, the main part is in the upper section of the ge (the tang) and a secondary panel is on the blade itself below the hilt. The central symbol depicts a human frog shaped figure with a two-branched horn over the head. The frog form also symbolises the revered image of Woman - the Mother. In this case, she is accompanied, on either side, by figures of helpers or children, who are depicted with onion-shaped heads. These images confirm the importance of Mother Goddess worship and prayers for fertility and good health.

Such symbolism of the era has been observed on other weapons found in Batatai (Yunnan) where the Birthing Mother is shown complete with her vagina (Fig. 1). Opposing spirals are a recurrent theme on the blades of this type of ge axes; on our example (cat. 27) one finds them at the top as well as on the onion-shaped heads; opposing spirals refer to the dualistic nature of all things (seasons, life and death,
destruction and regeneration, etc...)."


- Origin: China, Vietnam
- Region, Province, City: Yunnan Province in South China to Red River Valley in North Vietnam
- Culture, Dynasty, Period: Dian and Dông Son Kingdoms. Late bronze age to Iron age
- Date:
  - Circa 4th Century BC
  - 2nd Century BC
- Material: Bronze
- Height (cm): 25.3
- Stand: This item comes mounted on a custom made metal socle

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