

# glorious gandhara

LIFE STORY OF BUDDHA ETCHED IN STONE



# GLORIOUS GANDHARA

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Ministry of Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage  
Government of Pakistan

# CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	6
FOREWORD	8
PREFACE	9
INTRODUCTION	10
LIFE STORY OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA	13
BUDDHA'S CONCEPTION	14
Maya's Dream	14
Birth of Prince Sidhartha	16
Bath of the Prince Siddhartha	17
Horoscope of Prince Siddhartha	19
EARLY LIFE	20
Prince Siddhartha in School	20
MARRIAGE	22
Competition of Sidhartha for Marriage	22
THE GREAT DEPARTURE	28
Renunciation of palace life	28
Meeting with Ascetics	31
Attack of Mara	34
PARINIRVANA	35
The Great Enlightenment	35
Instigation of Buddha	36
First Sermon	37
The Miracle of Saravasti	38
Legend of Hariti and Panchika	48
MAHAPARINIRVANA	54
Death of the Buddha	54
The Cremation of the Buddha	56
Distribution of the Relics	57



LIFE STORY OF BUDDHA ETCHED IN STONE



Grey Schist, 3rd Century A.D. Peshawar Museum

# GLOSSARY

**Ananda:** One of the Shakyamuni Buddha's Ten Great Disciples, and the Buddha's cousin. He was first in hearing the Buddha's words. As he had excellent memory, he memorized the Buddha's sermons, which were later recorded as sutras.

**Anjalimudra:** (Pali) To join the palms in a reverential gesture of respect.

**Arhat:** (Sanskrit) The perfected disciple; one who has completed the discipline required to attain liberation.

**Ashoka:** A Buddhist monarch of 300 B.C., the third emperor of the Mauryan Dynasty, who unified most of India under his rule and fostered the dissemination of Buddhism. It is said that the Third Council was held during his reign. Ashoka set the model for many other rulers who sought to govern in accordance with Buddhist philosophy.

**Avalokiteshvara:** One of the principal Bodhisattvas in the Mahayana Buddhist tradition; personifies boundless compassion.

**Bodhi:** (Sanskrit and Pali) Enlightenment; the spiritual condition of a Buddha or Bodhisattva.

**Bodhisattva:** One moved by compassionate zeal to aid fellow beings, hence willing to postpone his or her own entrance into Nirvana to this end.

**Bodhi tree:** Sacred fig tree (*Ficus religiosa*), under which the Buddha attained enlightenment.

**Brahma:** One of the three major deities of Hinduism, along with Visnu (Vishnu) and Siva (Shiva). Adopted as one of the protective deities of Buddhism.

**Brahman:** The highest of the Four Castes in ancient India at the time of Shakyamuni. They served Brahma, with offerings; the keepers of the Vedas, i.e. priestly caste.

**Buddha:** The Illumined One. The main title of the founder of Buddhism after his Enlightenment.

**Chakra:** Dharma wheel

**Contemplation:** Abstract contemplation. There are four levels through which the mind frees itself from all subjects and objective hindrances and reaches a state of absolute indifference and annihilation of thought, perception, and will.

**Deva:** Literally, "shining one". An inhabitant of the heavenly realms.

**Dhamma** (Pali) Sanskrit form: Dharma: The Universal Truth; The Teachings and the inner practice of the Teachings of Buddha; Essential quality and factual reality.

**Dhyana:** Meditation, concentration.

**Enlightenment:** Complete elimination of all negative aspects of the mind and perfection of all positive qualities.

**Gotama:** Gotama in Pali, Gautama in Sanskrit. The surname of the Shakya clan into which Shakyamuni was born. Another name for Shakyamuni.

**Jainism:** A religion founded by Nataputta, who was a royal clan of the Nata tribe in ancient India at the time of Shakyamuni. Its basic doctrine is non-materialistic atheism.

**Jataka Tales:** Stories or legends about Buddha's birth or previous forms of existence.

**Kanthaka:** The young Buddha's favourite horse.

**Kapilavatsu:** The capital of the Sakya kingdom. The king of Kapilavatsu was Suddhodana, who was the father of Shakyamuni. The present-day Kapilavatsu is in Nepal.

**Kasyapa:** Sk. Kassapa (Pali) Main disciple of the Buddha.

**Ksatriya:** Ksatriya in Sanskrit, Khattiya in Pali. The second of the four Indian Castes at the time of Shakyamuni, they were the royal caste, the noble landlord, the warriors and the ruling castes.

**Kusinara:** Kusinara in Pali, Kusinagara in Sanskrit. The village where Shakyamuni Buddha died.

**Lumbini Park:** The birthplace of Shakyamuni Buddha, which lay between the state of the Shakyas and the Koliyas.

**Magadha:** One of the four great kingdoms (i.e. Magadha, Kosala, Varnasi, and Avanti) in ancient India. The capital of Magadha was Rajagharha. The King of Magadha, Bimbisara became the follower of Shakyamuni.

**Mahakashyapa:** (Skt) Mahakassapa (Pali) The Dharma heir and most prominent disciple of Shakyamuni Buddha. The First



Patriarch in the Zen Buddhist tradition, he was responsible for convening the first Buddhist council after the death of the Buddha.

**Mahamaya:** The mother of Shakyamuni. She was the Koliyan Princess and married to Suddhodana. She died seven days after giving birth to Shakyamuni.

**Mahaparinirvana:** Beyond Nirvana, the state into which one who has attained Nirvana passes at death.

**Maitreya:** (Skt), literally means friendly and benevolent. He will be the next Buddha in our world. He is now preaching in Tusita Heaven. He is usually represented as the fat laughing Buddha.

**Mara:** The personification of evil and temptation.

**Meditation:** The process of becoming deeply acquainted with one's own mind.

**Mudra:** (Sanskrit) Hand gesture, essential element in Buddhist iconography.

**Rahula:** He was one of the Ten Great Disciples of Shakyamuni. He was the first in esoteric practices and in desire for instruction in the Law. He was also the son of Shakyamuni Buddha.

**Rajagarha:** Rajagaha in Pali, Rajagraha in Sanskrit. The capital of the ancient kingdom of Magadha in India, which was the centers of culture at the time of Shakyamuni. The first monastery called the Bamboo Grove Park was built by the elder Kalanda and King Bimbisara of Magadha in Rajagarha.

**Renunciation:** The attitude of complete detachment from the experiences of samsara, seeing that there is no true pleasure or satisfaction to be found within it.

**Sakya:** The tribe or clan into which the Buddha was born

**Sangha:** (Pali) On the conventional (sammati) level, this term denotes the communities of Buddhist monks and nuns; on the ideal (ariya) level, it denotes those followers of the Buddha, lay or ordained, who have attained at least stream-entry.

**Shakyamuni:** (Skt.) The founder of Buddhism. He was born as the Prince of Sakyans, and was called Siddhartha Gautama. At the age of 35, he attained supreme Enlightenment and became the Buddha and was called Shakyamuni.

**Siddhartha:** (Sanskrit) Siddhartha (Pali). The given name of Shakyamuni when he was born to the King Suddhodana. The name means "wish fulfilled".

**Stupa:** (Sanskrit) Originally, a tumulus or burial mound enshrining relics of a holy person such as the Buddha or object associated with his life.

**Suddhodana:** Pure Rice Prince, the father of Shakyamuni, ruled over the Sakyans at Kapilavatthu on the Nepalese border.

**Tathagata:** (Pali/Skt.) Literally, "one who has become authentic (tatha-agata)," an epithet used in ancient India for a person who has attained the highest religious goal. In Buddhism, it usually denotes the Buddha, although occasionally it also denotes any of his Arahant disciples.

**The Three Jewels:** Or the Triple Gem, i.e. the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, which are the three essential components of Buddhism. They are the objects of veneration. Buddhists take refuge in them by pronouncing the threefold refuge formula, thus acknowledging themselves to be Buddhists.

**Tusita Heaven:** The fourth devaloka in the Realm of Desire. Its inner department is the Pure Land of Maitreya who like Shakyamuni and all Buddhas is reborn there before descending to earth as the next Buddha in our world.

**Urna:** (Sanskrit) The jewel or small protuberance between the eyes of a Buddha Rupa or statue representing the 'third eye of spiritual vision'.

**Uruvela:** A town in Magadha where Shakyamuni attained his enlightenment and Buddhahood in the woods along the Nairanjana River.

**Ushnisha:** (Sanskrit) The protuberance at the top of the head of a Buddha, representing the flame of supreme enlightenment.

**Vajrapani:** (Skt.) "Bearer of thunderbolt". An attendant on the Buddha, who has status of a Bodhisattva.

**Yaksa:** The demons in the lower realm, like the Ghost Realm. They are evil, malignant and violent. They live on earth or in air.

**Yasodhara:** The wife of Siddhartha Gautama. She later became a nun (Bhikhuni).

# FOREWORD

This book is an enthusiastic effort to give a pictorial depiction of Gandhara as an important part of our cultural heritage. Reason being, despite the vagaries of centuries, Gandhara region preserved a lot of the heritage in craft and art visible even today in Pakistan. This book has innumerable historical vignettes that interweave Gandhara and Buddhism in a very appealing way. The scope of this book concentrates on Buddha's life, Buddhist architecture and the analyses aim to build a comprehensive account of themes, styles and chronologies of the Buddhist monuments. The emphasis is to describe the visual, descriptive presentations and processes in Buddhist architecture without dwelling inordinately on its structural or technical aspects. This publication reflects that the very earliest examples of Buddhist art are not iconic but aniconic images and were popular in the sub continent even after the death of Buddha. This is because the Gautama Buddha himself did not sanction personal worship or making of images. That is why the earliest artistic tributes to the Buddha were abstract symbols indicative of major events and achievements in Buddha's life.

I hope this well crafted piece of information would guide, encourage and attract more Buddhist tourists to benefit from the journey of piety and faith.

Senator Pervez Rashid  
Federal Minister  
M/O Information, Broadcasting & National Heritage

# PREFACE

The most lasting imprint that a civilization left on Pakistan is the Gandhara civilization. Gandhara means the 'land of fragrance' and very true to its meaning the fragrance lasts to this day. For well over two thousand years, the ancient lands of Gandhara served as the veritable holy land for Buddhist monks and devotees alike for pilgrimage from all over the world. Though very few Buddhists now live in Pakistan, the remains of their religious establishments still exist. They are preserved and protected as an important part of our tangible cultural heritage. Today Taxila and Takht-e-Bahi are the two most important monumental Gandharan monasteries which now stand inscribed on the World Heritage List as protected sites under 1970 UNESCO Convention.

In order to introduce Buddhist cultural heritage of Pakistan to the Buddhists in particular and to the world in general, this coffee table book is the first ever attempt to cover all important events and phases of Gautama Buddha in a chronological order from our Gandhara heritage collections in Pakistan. Pakistan firmly believes in sharing this cultural heritage with the world without compromising on its ownership.

## Acknowledgements

I am profoundly grateful to the Department of Archaeology and Museums for providing the photographs and details. My special gratitude to Habibullah Khan Khattak for his tireless efforts and meticulous detailing of events in a chronological order. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Mahmood ul Hasan, Nazir Ahmed, Syed Intikhab Alam, Muhammad Tehseen in planning and supervising and of course the publisher Shafic Sultan and Muhammad Abbas for their keen interest in the printing of this book. I owe thanks to Muneeb Ibrahim, Muhammad Yabub, Saadia Yaqub and Saud Mirza for helping in the process of selection, proof reading and editing. My profound gratitude to Mr. Mashhood Ahmed Mirza, Joint Secretary, for his personal supervision and minutely revising and reviewing the book and for getting printed this important book. Last but not the least, I am highly indebted to Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Minister for Information, Broadcasting and National Heritage, for his keen interest and support in the publication of this book.

Dr. Nazir Saeed  
Secretary

Islamabad  
February 28, 2014



# INTRODUCTION

Pakistan has been the cradle of Buddhist art and culture and the second holy land of Buddhism for well over a thousand years. The religious faith has marked the most significant epoch in the history of the cultural and social evolution in the subcontinent. Indeed, it has been one of the greatest spiritual experiences the world has ever seen and which has left behind one of the finest manifestation in the domain of art and culture.

A philosophy of life propounded by its founder Gautama Buddha, soon became the religion of the subcontinent, influencing the life and imagination of the people. Gradually spreading across the entire Orient. Even today, it is a dominant faith in various countries of the world including Sri Lanka, Mayanmar (Burma) Thailand, Tibet, Mongolia, China and Japan, and its followers form the third largest group among the religious communities of the world.

The advent and development of Buddhism owes a great deal to the ancient land of Pakistan. It was here that the religious activities reached its climax through well-organized missionaries and ultimately made it a world religion.

The land of Gandhara where the celebrated faith evolved, is more or less a triangle about 100 kilometers across east to west and 70 kilometers from north to south, on the west of the Indus river. It is surrounded on three sides by mountains. It covers the vast areas of today's Peshawar valley, the hilly tracts of Swat (Udyana), Buner and the Taxila valley. The name 'Gandhara' is found for the first time in the Rig-Veda, the sacred ancient hymns of the Hindus. The name also appears in some Persian inscriptions, particularly in the Behistun inscription (528-486 B.C.), and in the inscription discovered from the ruins of the Susa Palace in Persia (An archeological site belonging to 6th century B.C.).

The Gandharan people served Persian overlords for well over two hundred years when, in 327 -26 B.C., the territories were taken over by the Greek legions under Alexander the Great for a short time (20 years). The Greek invaders held the town

of Ora in Swat, Pushkalawati (Modern Charsadda) and the areas around the Indus river basin of Hund. Alexander is said to have stayed in Taxila for one month.

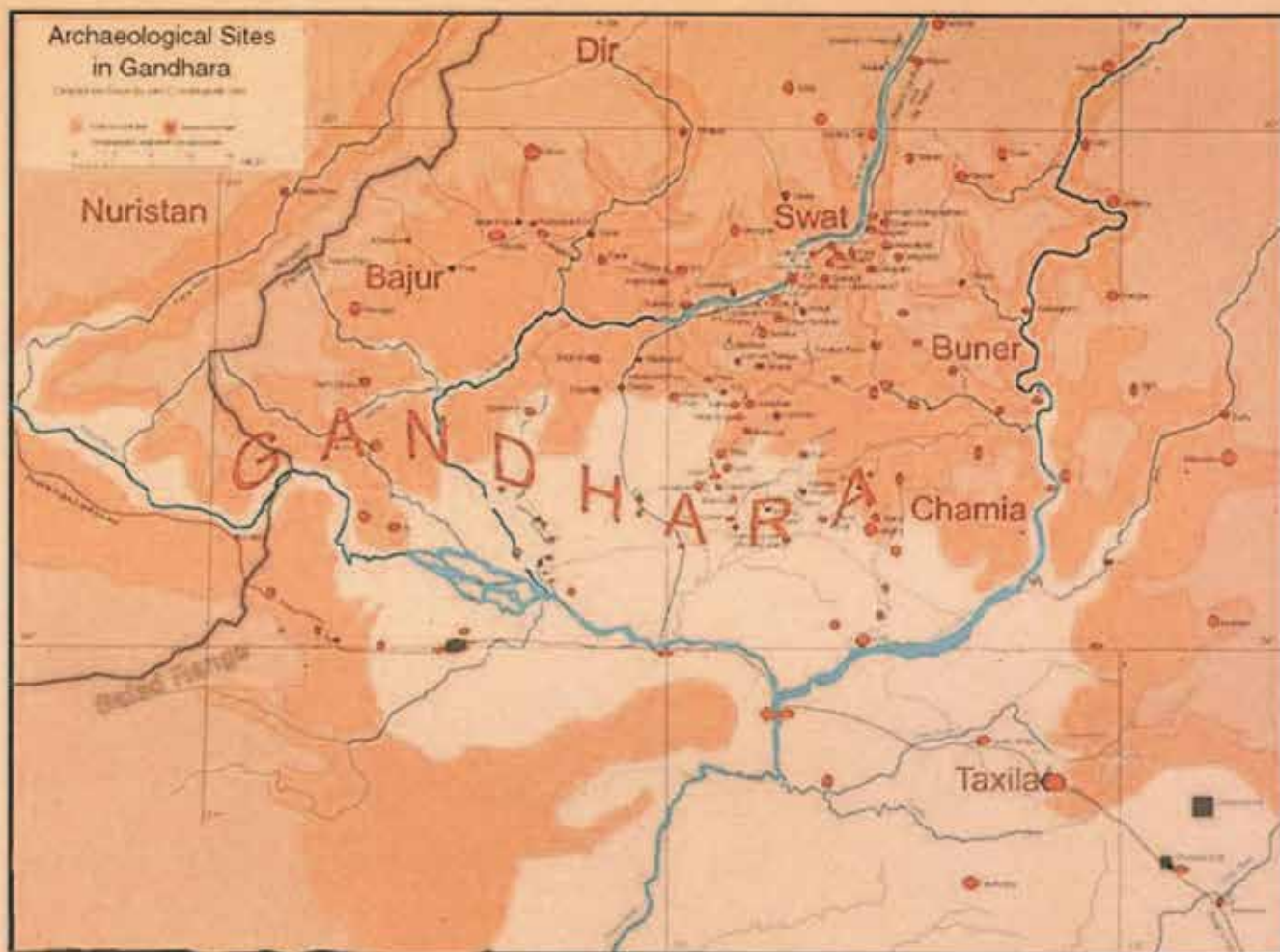
It was during the long reign of the grandson of Chandragupta, the celebrated Asoka (272 -237 B.C.), that Gandhara became the veritable centre of Buddhism. The king was himself converted to the faith and became its ardent and enthusiastic patron. During his long reign he built numerous stupas and monasteries throughout Gandhara, in Shahbazgarhi, Mansehra and Taxila. While at Shahbazgarhi and Mansehra are located his famous rock edicts, Taxila has the honour of possessing the earliest known stupa named the 'Dharmarajika'.

After the death of Asoka in 237 B.C., Gandhara passed on successively to foreign rulers. The first of these were the Bactrian Greeks, (190-90 B.C.), followed by Scytho-Parthians (90 B.C. to 64 AD.), Kushanas (64-241 AD.), Sasanians (241-358 AD.), and Kidara Kushanas (358-560 AD). Finally in 465 AD, the White Huns or Ephthelites swept over the entire Gandhara, destroying whatever came in their way including the Buddhist religious establishments.

For over a thousand years, Buddhism prospered in Gandhara as a dominant religious faith. The influence of Greco-Roman architecture can be found in the remains of the dwellings uncovered at the Bhir mound at Taxila, in the shape of well-planned city of sirkap at Taxila and the fabulous stupas and monasteries.

The coins minted and circulated in Gandhara normally had Greek legends on their obverse and Kharoshthi on reverse but in rare cases the legends were in Brahmi. The Brahmi script was also used for writing the sacred books of the Buddhists.

Similarly, the objects de art, vessels, jewellery and other objects of daily use, either imported or made locally, were typically Greek in form, and appearance, showing the assimilation of Greco-Roman elements with local tradition.



Archaeological site map of Gandhara





# LIFE STORY OF GAUTAMA BUDDHA

The details of the life of the historic Gautama Buddha are obscured by a veil of legends and myths, though the primary incidents of his life and the central theme of his religion, as preserved in the Buddhist literature, are clear enough to provide a coherent picture. It has been recorded that Gautama Buddha was the son of Suddhodana, a petty ruler of Magadha in Southern Behar. He was born in 566 B.C. At the time of his birth, it was prophesied that he would renounce the world on seeing a sick man, an old man and a corpse. To avoid the situation, the royal father planned the life of young prince in such a way that he should not have to go out of the palace, and every effort was made to hide world's miseries from him. When the king saw his son's meditative turn of mind, he married him at the age of sixteen to a beautiful girl named Yasudhara. However, he preferred solitude and thoughtfulness and paid little attention towards the luxury and entertainments which his royal father had provided for him. At last, at the age of twenty-nine, he decided to leave home in quest of Truth. In the darkness of night he rode away towards the forest where he discarded his royal rubies and ornaments, cut his long hair with his sword and became an ascetic. During his early wanderings, he practiced rigid austerities and resorted to various kinds of self-tortures. For six years he lived in this manner and was reduced to a skeleton. Yet real knowledge he was seeking eluded him. Ultimately, he realized that self mortification was not the way to achieve the enlightenment. Therefore, he gave it up and accepted the food from a maiden named Sujata who had gone there to worship a tree deity. After taking a bath in Narinjana river, he sat under a pipal tree at Bodhgaya. Here at the age of thirty five, he attained the Enlightenment. The event raised Gautama from the status of Bodhisattva to that of a Buddha. He then set out to preach the doctrines of his philosophy and in the Deer Park of Sarnath (Modern Banaras) delivered his first sermon which was termed in Buddhist terminology the setting in motion the wheel of the Dharma. The simple but universal truth explained by the Buddha appealed to the minds of the people and gradually his following increased.

A year after the Event, Suddhodana heard of his son's glory and invited him to visit his capital Kapilavastu. The Buddha

accordingly came to his parental home. Suddhodana paid homage to his son, as he was now a holy man. To his wife Yasodhara he looked more glorious in the monk's robe than in the princely apparel. She threw herself at his feet. Hundreds of Sakya rulers and other elite of the kingdom joined the religious fold. Sometimes, he performed miracles to support his claim which often displeased and annoyed the Brahman Hindus. Indeed, they had foreseen in him their own condemnation and the age-old, complicated and forsaken system they had evolved for the common man.

When the Buddha attained the age of eighty years, he felt that his end was at hand. He proceeded to Kusinagara (State in Northern India) and asked his disciple Ananda to spread a cloth on the ground between two Sala trees. He was born between two Sala trees in the Lumbini gardens, and was to die in a similar state. He lay down and gave his last admonition to thousands of monks who had assembled there to have a last glimpse of their master. He uttered his last words: Now monks! I have nothing more to tell you but that all that is compassed is liable to decay. Strive after salvation energetically, it was in the month of May the year 486 B.C., that the Buddha passed away. His remains were cremated with royal honour and divided into eight parts to be deposited into the stupas erected in the eight different parts of the Subcontinent.

# BUDDHA'S CONCEPTION

## Maya's Dream

King Suddhodana was ruler of Magadha in Southern Bihar in the border region of India and Nepal, with its capital at Kapilavastu. His wife Queen Maya Devi or Mahamaya saw a strange dream at night while asleep at her palace somewhere in 624-623 B.C. The years of conception and birth of the prince have been given different in different sources. She saw that the Bodhisattva descended from the Tushita heaven and assumed the form of a noble white elephant. He approached her from the north side with a white lotus in his silver col-

oured trunk. He moved thrice around her couch and then entered her womb. She revealed her dream to the king the next day. The king invited sage Asita who also was an expert astrologist to interpret the dream. The Sage explained that the queen had conceived a son who will become either a power monarch or a Buddha.



In this panel, Queen Maya is seen reclining on her bed at night, in a closely guarded room





Another view of the dream as conceived by an unknown Gandharan artist



Sage Asita is explaining the dream, while King Suddhodana and Queen Maya attentively listen to him.



## Birth of Prince Sidhartha

Queen Mahamaya carried her baby for almost ten months. She wished to deliver her first baby at her parents' home at Devadaha city. The king in fulfillment of her desire made elaborate arrangements to make the journey of the queen as comfortable as possible. During the journey from her palace to her parents' home she wanted to stay for taking rest in a beautiful Lumbini garden. It was there in this garden that the queen felt the labour pain. She stretched out her hands to get hold of a branch of a sala tree. She delivered her child while standing under the tree in the same position in the 623 B.C.



A view of the birth scene of the future Buddha



**Birth of Sidhartha**  
Princesses Mahamaya holding a branch of Sal tree in the Lumbini Garden.  
Prince Siddhartha, the Bodhisattva (the future Buddha) emerges exactly from the same place of her body, head erect and carrying special marks on his body. Gods hurry towards her to receive the baby.



## Bath of the Prince Siddhartha

Prince Siddhartha could already stand on his own immediately after his birth. The little Bodhisattva walked seven paces and announced his future importance in a lion's voice, 'in the entire world I am the chief and that I will take no more birth again'. As per legends, he was given bath by his maternal grandmother and maternal aunt, while gods Indra and Brahma poured water over the child.

Right - A view of the seven steps of Prince Siddhartha, the future Buddha



Gods Indra and Brahma pouring water on the newly born prince at the time of his first bath. This Grey Schist panel of 3rd century CE is preserved in Peshawar Museum

## Queen Maya and the Prince Siddhartha return home



The newly born prince Siddhartha was safely brought back to Kapilavastu from the Lumbini garden. To celebrate this auspicious occasion excellent arrangements were made. A royal procession bedecked with singing and dancing men, women and the funsters accompanied the baby prince traveling through the highly decorated road. The panel is an excellent example of the creation of action; the effect is full of feeling of movements.



## Horoscope of Prince Siddhartha

After the birth of the Prince, Rishi Asita was once again invited to the palace to foretell the future of the child. In this picture the sage is examining the special marks on the body of the baby and discussing with the king. He prepared a horoscope and interpreted it for the royal couple. He informed that the child would become a Buddha or, according to his physical characteristics, such as the Urna, the little whorl of the luminous hair between the eyebrows and the Ushnisha,

the protuberance at the top of the head might become a future universal monarch. This panel was found from Naogram and on display at Lahore Museum

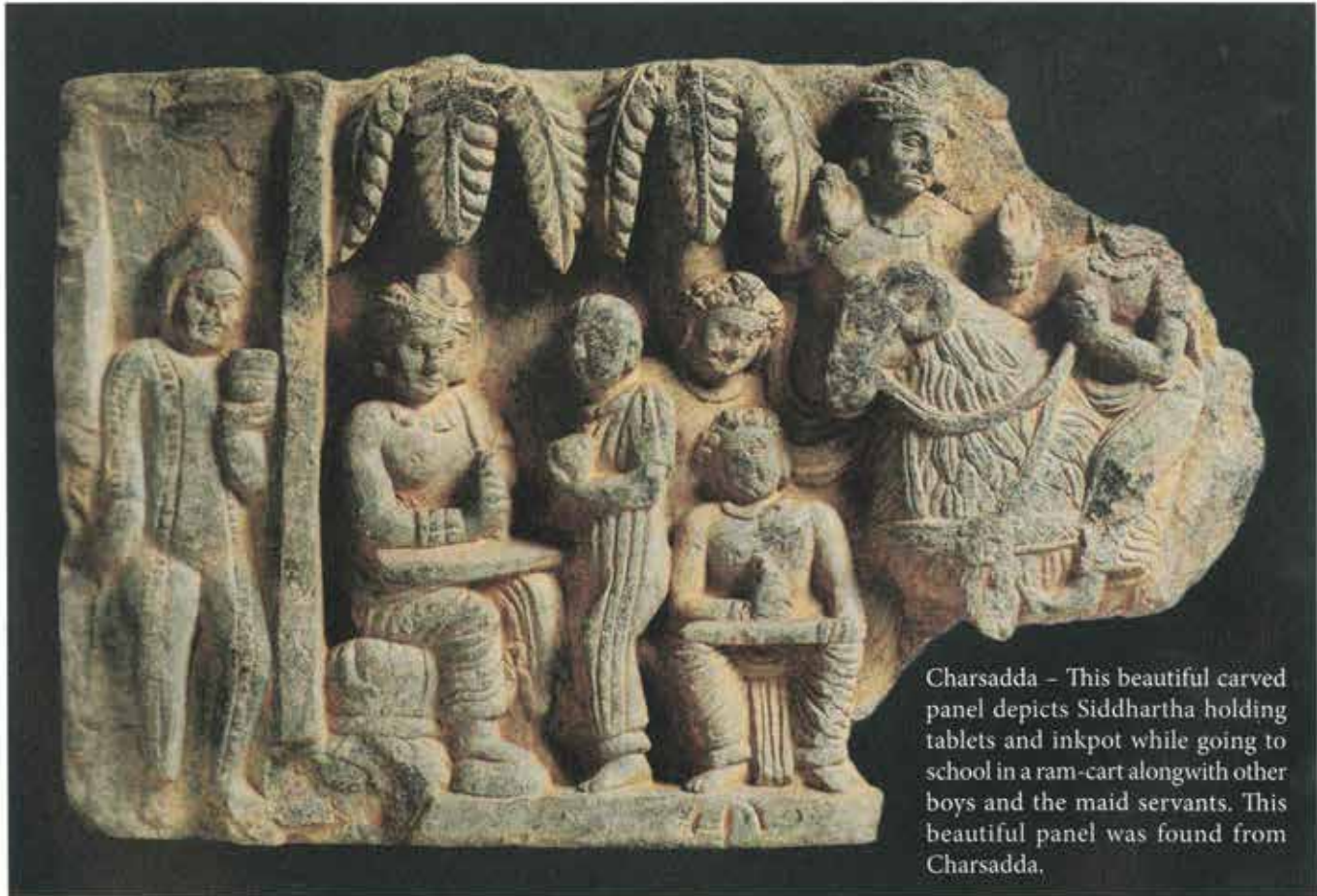


Interpretation of the body marks of Siddhartha by the wise man Asita, Naogram, 2nd-3rd century, light grey schist - Central Museum, Lahore

## EARLY LIFE

### Prince Siddhartha in School

The Prince was admitted to a school for formal education of the time by his royal father. Visvamitra was tasked with the job of training the prince in the art of writing. The prince was educated in the subjects then popularly taught and also trained in archery and wrestling.



Charsadda – This beautiful carved panel depicts Siddhartha holding tablets and inkpot while going to school in a ram-cart alongwith other boys and the maid servants. This beautiful panel was found from Charsadda.



Prince Siddhartha learning  
at his School. In this picture  
he is seen holding the tablet  
and writing on it with a pen.





## MARRIAGE

### Competition of Sidhartha for Marriage

The king, Suddhodhana wanted to arrange marriage of the prince at the age of sixteen years. He selected the beautiful daughter of Dandapani, who is said to be the chief of army of the kingdom. Dandapani wanted to give hand of his daughter Yasodhara to a brave soldier. For the purpose a competition was arranged where the winner would stand entitled to marry with Yasodhara. Siddhartha was persuaded by his father to take part in the contest. Amongst the contenders were step brother of Siddhartha named Sundaranand and cousin Devadatta. Siddhartha won the competition by winning all the contests including wrestling, lifting of the elephant, horse

riding, music, mathematics, chariot race and recitation of verses. On the final day of the grand competitions, Yasoddhara came to choose her life partner. She put a garland on prince Siddhartha as a token of her having selected him for marriage.

### Tournament & Wrestling



This is a frieze of a votive stupa with three competition scenes in the lower register. The first scene depicts wrestling, the second scene shows an archery competition, while the third scene shows the prince lifting the elephant. This beautiful freeze was found at and housed in Peshawar Museum



A broken panel depicting the King Suddhoddhana welcoming his victorious son, who had defeated all the candidates of the competition. The king is shown with folded hands under shadow of the umbrella. A decorated elephant is awaiting the Prince to ride on. The portion containing the picture of Siddhartha is missing. Peshawar Museum collection.





Siddhartha and Yasodhara holding hands circumambulate the sacred fire as per Hindu traditions. They are dressed in special dresses made for the marriage ceremony. In the picture, the parents of the bride are seen behind the couple. The water-pot in front of the bride, Yasodhara, contains the water with which her father had sealed the 'transfer' of his daughter to the royal house of the Sakays. This wedding of Prince Siddhartha and Yasodhara was found from Siri Behlol and presently housed in Peshawar Museum



Yasodhara the bride being carried to Prince Siddhartha's palace in a traditional carriage specially made for brides.





Life in the harem. The bride Princess Yasodhara offering a drink to Prince Siddhartha, but he is obviously seen oblivious to the worldly pleasures and clearly in a pensive mood. The charming, dancing and singing girls also could not draw attention of the Prince. This panel is preserved in Islamabad Museum



Princess Yasodhara in her harem recline on her couch, seen asleep. This rare panel is housed in Chakdara Museum



King Suddhodhana alongwith Prince Siddhartha and other dignitaries watching a plough match on a hot summer day. The tired oxen were dragging the plough in a tough competition and being beaten by the ploughmen to run faster. They were sweating and bleeding being hurt due to whipping. Birds were also seen devouring the insects in abundance. These scenes greatly confounded and depressed the Prince. He left the venue and retreated to a nearby secluded place.





After leaving the scene of the plough match, the Prince went to a secluded place for meditation under a jambu tree. In the picture, the prince is shown sitting under the tree. The shadow of the tree under which the prince was sitting was still on him, while the shadows of the other trees moved with the sun. King Suddhodana came to see his son. When he saw this scene, the king bowed and knelt in front of his son. Here the King Suddhodana is seen in barbarian dress. This rare panel of first meditation of the Prince is preserved in Peshawar Museum.

## THE GREAT DEPARTURE

### The Renunciation of palace life

When the king Suddhodana saw his son's meditative turn of mind, he married him at the age of sixteen to a beautiful girl named Yasudhara. However, he preferred solitude and thoughtfulness and paid little attention towards the luxury and entertainments which his royal father had provided for him. The ravages of poverty, disease, and even old age were therefore unknown to Siddhartha, who grew up surrounded by every comfort in a sumptuous palace. At the age of twenty-nine, he made three successive chariot rides outside the palace grounds and saw an old person, a sick person, and a corpse, all for the first time. On the fourth trip, he saw a wandering holy man whose asceticism inspired Siddhartha to follow a similar path in search of freedom from the suffering caused by the infinite cycle of birth, death, and rebirth. On his return to palace, the thoughtful prince became all the more pensive and melancholy. The noblest of the women waited with musical instruments on him. But these splendid instruments failed to delight or thrill him; the one desire of the saintly prince was to leave home in search of Truth.

### Departure

At last the prince decided to leave the palace. At this juncture, everyone in the palace including the Princess Yasudhara and other dancing girls and female attendants were overpowered by sound sleep which distorted the gestures of their limbs. Siddhartha got up and cast the last glance at his wife and went out. He awoke the groom, the swift-footed Chandaka, and said, "Bring quickly the horse Kanthaka". I desire to depart hence today to reach deathlessness. Then the Yaksas bowed down their bodies and bore Kanthaka's hoofs off the ground with the tips of their hands. The city gate houses, which were closed with gates furnished with heavy bars and which could not easily have been forced even by elephants, opened noiselessly of their own accord as the prince passed along.



The Yaksas lifting up the hoofs of Kanthaka off the ground to avoid noise. It is said that all the gates of the city which were closed with heavy bars and could not have been forced even by elephants opened of their own accord on arrival of the prince to let him pass.





In the upper part of this panel, Prince Siddhartha and his wife are seen together watching dances and listening music before his departure from the palace. In the lower part all the dancers and musicians are seen exhausted and sleepy. Princess Yasodhara is also shown asleep, while the Prince is apparently leaving his bed. This panel was found from Jamrud in Khyber Agency and now housed in the National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi



The return of Kanthaka, the horse of Prince Siddhartha to the palace alongwith princely belongings being handed over to the princess. The princess is visibly upset and turns her face to show her anger and grief on departure of the prince.



Kanthaka, the horse kissing the feet of his master Prince Siddhartha while departing from him as Kanthaka was given in charity during exile by Siddhartha. This panel was found from Sikri is now preserved in Lahore Museum



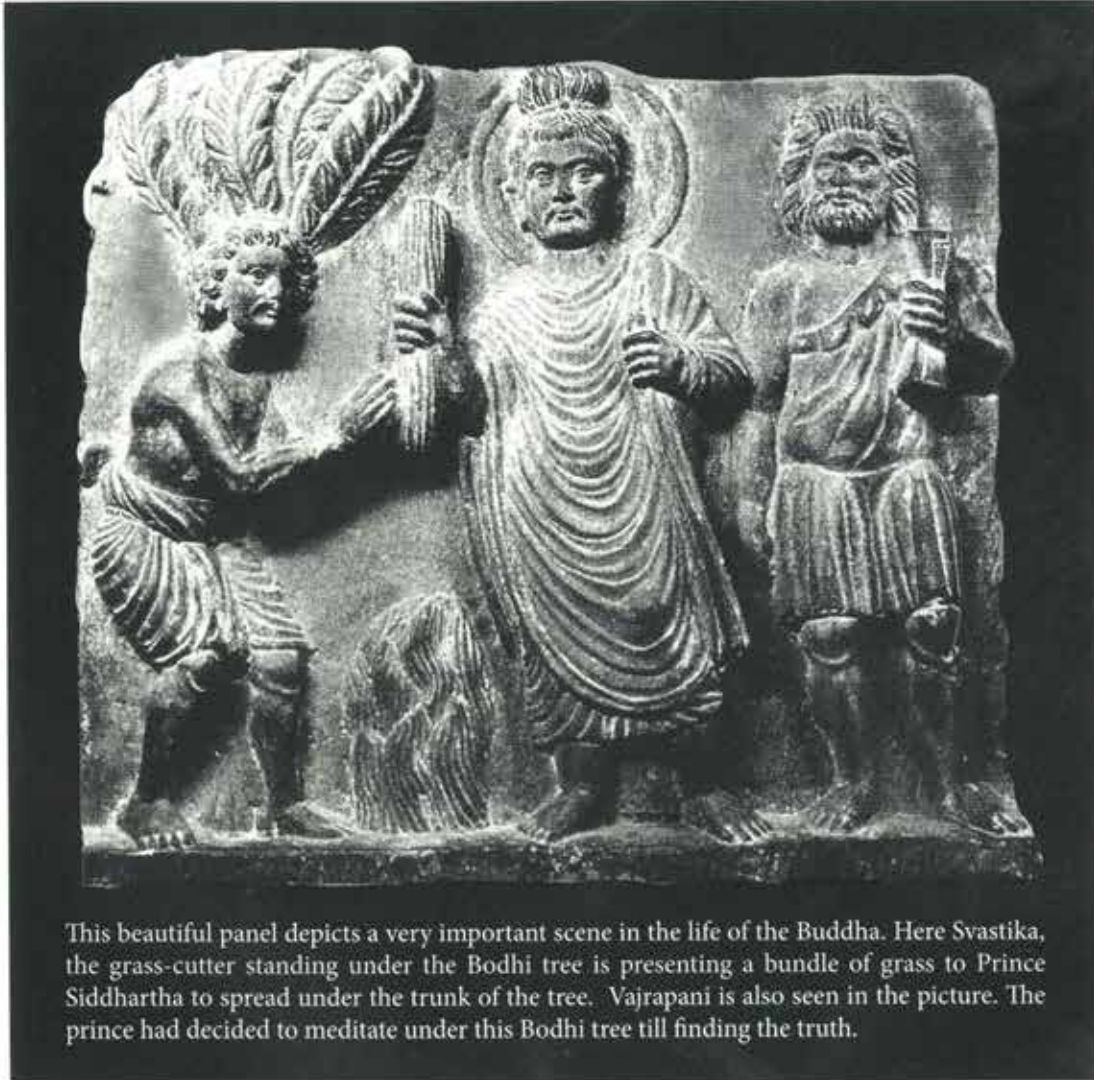
## Meeting with Ascetics



The Brahman is sitting in his straw hut and the Buddha along with Vajrapani ("Bearer of thunderbolt". An attendant on the Buddha, who has status of a Bodhisattva ) standing outside consulting him on ways and means to reach the ultimate truth.



The Buddha had a meeting with the Brahmins to solve his personal problems. But they could not satisfy him so he decided to solve the matter by himself. The five Brahmins that the Buddha had consulted are seen in this panel.



This beautiful panel depicts a very important scene in the life of the Buddha. Here Svastika, the grass-cutter standing under the Bodhi tree is presenting a bundle of grass to Prince Siddhartha to spread under the trunk of the tree. Vajrapani is also seen in the picture. The prince had decided to meditate under this Bodhi tree till finding the truth.



### Fasting exercises

Prince Siddhartha undertook extraordinary austerities by starvation and many other kinds of fasting which are very difficult for an ordinary man to perform. For full six years he carried on the exercises and made his body emaciated so that only skin and bone remained. Yet these lengthy and difficult exercises paid nothing substantial to him for enlightenment he wished to acquire. Therefore, he gave it up and accepted the food from a maiden named Sujata who had gone there to worship a tree deity. After taking a bath in Narinjana River, he sat under a pipal tree at Bodhgaya. Here at the age of thirty five, he attained the Enlightenment.



A master piece created by an indigenous sculptor of Gandhara. To produce replicas of the fasting Prince Siddhartha, attempts were made by different artists yet just two of these excellent depictions are found that are in Lahore Museum appears to be the first, the one found in Takht-i-Bahi monastery and the other found from Sikri, Mardan both going back to 2nd – 3rd century CE.

## Attack of Mara

During his meditation under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya, he undertook extraordinary austerities starving and fasting for full six years. This exercise made his body emaciated so that only skin and bone remained. At this juncture, Mara (The personification of evil and temptation ) thought that his power in the world would be seriously impaired if Siddhartha obtained the supreme knowledge and subsequently lead others to salvation. As such, he used all possible means to persuade Siddhartha to give up the quest. He tempted him with power and pleasure, commanding his own daughters to disport themselves before Siddhartha. The future Buddha refused to oblige Mara. Mara was enraged and collected his army of followers who stood around him in various forms carrying lances, clubs and swords in their hands having the faces of boars, asses and camels to frighten Siddhartha. However, Siddhartha was not at all alarmed and frightened. Eventually, Mara and his followers went away dejected.

Mara's furious soldiers  
ready to attack the  
meditating Siddhartha  
Lahore Museum





## PARINIRVANA

### The Great Enlightenment

After the lengthy starvation and fasting and the unsuccessful attack of the Mara, the future Buddha realized that the lengthy and difficult exercises paid nothing substantial to him for enlightenment he wished to acquire. He, therefore, decided to take up the supreme, immovable cross-legged posture with his limbs massed together like the coils of the sleeping serpent, saying, 'I will not rise from this position on the ground till I achieve the completion of my task.' At the moment of the

fourth watch when the dawn came up and all that moves or moves not was stilled, the great Seer reached the stage which is known of alteration, the state of omniscience. When he knew this truth, the earth swayed like a woman drunken with wine, the quarters shone bright with crowd and mighty drums resounded in the sky. Then for seven days, free from discomfort of body, he sat looking into his own mind, his eyes never winking.



Unsuccessful attack of Mara, Siddhartha attained enlightenment

## Instigation of the Buddha

Seeing that the world was lost in false views and vain efforts and that its passions were gross, seeing too that the law of salvation was exceedingly subtle, he set his mind on remaining immovable. Then the two chiefs of the heavenly dwellings learning that the Buddha's mind had taken the decision to preach tranquility, they were filled with the desire for the world's benefit, and shining brightly, approached him.

The chiefs requested the Buddha stating "O Sage, having yourself crossed beyond the ocean of existence, rescue the world which is drowning in suffering, bestow your excellence on others also". Thus addressing the great seer, they returned to the celestial sphere by the way they had come. The sage also pondered on the speech, the decision grew strong in him for the liberation of the world.



In the panel the two persons stated to be the chiefs of the heavenly dwellings are seen requesting the pensive Buddha to teach dharma. This panel of 2nd century CE in grey schist was found at Butkara in Swat and presently housed in Swat Museum.



## First Sermon

After obtaining the enlightenment and considering the request made by the two heavenly chiefs to rescue the world which is drowning in suffering and bestow his excellence on others also, the Buddha decided to address the five disciples who had left him when he had abandoned his austerities. They had taken shelter in the Deer Park at Saranath. The Buddha proceeded to Benaras and from there to the Deer Park where he preached his first sermon to turn the wheel of the law for the first time, known in Buddhist literature as the turning of the wheel of the law.



The Buddha's first sermon in front of five monks, 2nd -3rd century CE, light grey schist, Lahore Museum

## The Miracle of Saravasti

The Buddha after his enlightenment for the first time decided to display his miraculous powers. He performed at Saravasti in the presence of king Prasanjit and vast concourse of people, a double miracle of levitating while emitting, alternately, flames and waves or water according to some interpretation from the upper and lower parts of his body, and in multiplying images of himself upto the heavens and in all directions while he preached the law. He was flanked by Brahma on his right and Indra on his left, while the two Naga Rajas, Nanda and Upananda, created a wonderful lotus on the corolla on which the blessed one seated himself. Then by the magic power above his lotus he created another and on this one also a Buddha was seated with his legs crossed, and thus in front, behind and at the sides were all Buddhas.



Right - Miracle at Saravasti - Panel depicting the Buddha in preaching (Dharma Chakra Mudra) pose while angels are holding a garland above his head - Lahore Museum









Flames emanating from shoulders and water from the feet of the Buddha, during Miracle of Saravasti. The miracle of fire and water at Saravasti, unknown provenance, 3rd century CE, grey schist, Lahore Museum



Miracle of Saravasti – Buddha emanating other Buddhas surrounding him



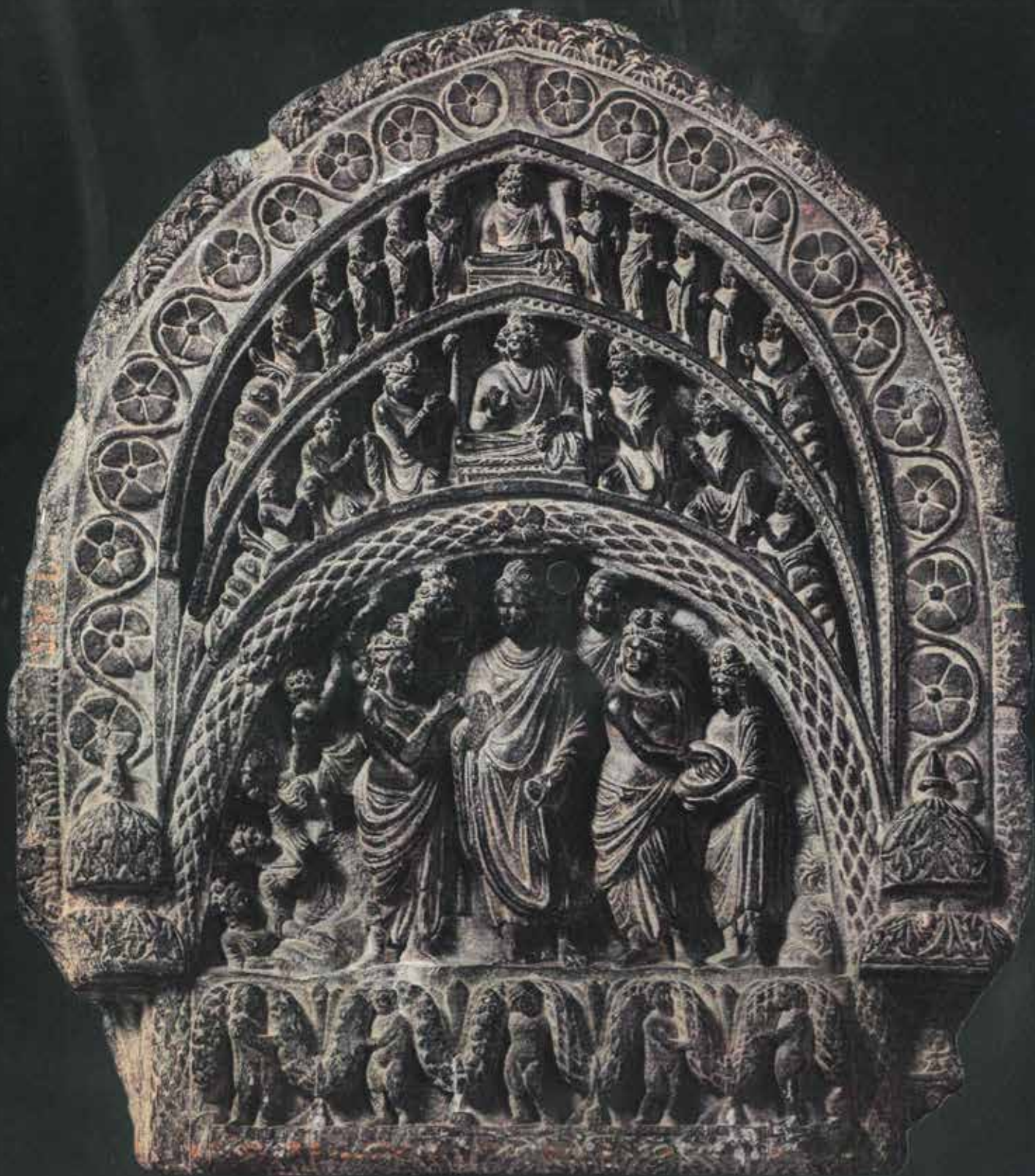


Stele depicting Buddha in Indrasala Cave with Khroshthi inscription, recovered from Mamane Dheri, Charsadda, dated 3rd century A.D., Peshawar Museum Collection.



Standing Buddha, holding  
the Alms Bowl, Takht-i-Bahi,  
(Exc 106-07) Schist, Peshawar  
Museum





The Buddha and the Naga Apalala, unknown provenance Gandhara, schist, Peshawar Museum

Standing Figures of Buddha in schist stone,  
Gandhara (3rd century A.D.)







Descent from the Trayastrimsas heaven. The queen Maya was reborn as a Deva (god) after her death in the Trayastrimsas, a heaven of thirty three gods. Buddha went there to preach his doctrine to Deva with other gods. It happened after the great miracle at Saravasti. After the performance Buddha came down by a triple ladder, accompanying the gods Indra and Brahma. The site of this miracle was Sankashya in Uttar Pradesh, India



King Udayana presenting Buddha's image to the Buddha – Buddha was presented his image made in Sandal wood by the King of Udayana. The Buddha disliked the idea and did not allow the worship of his image as it was against his teachings.



The King Naga Apalala – The King Naga Apalala and his wife were living in a pool in Suvastu river. They were used to and fond of floods periodically while the inhabitants of Swat were sick of it, so they requested Buddha to get them rid of it. The Buddha ordered Yaksha to block the water sources with rocks in the mountain for their safety from floods. The act terrified the King Naga who also went to Buddha, requesting for floods, as his living was linked to the flood water. Hence Buddha allowed a flood after an interval of twelve years, so he could get his food to subsist. The name of Swat is derived from the word river "Suvastu".

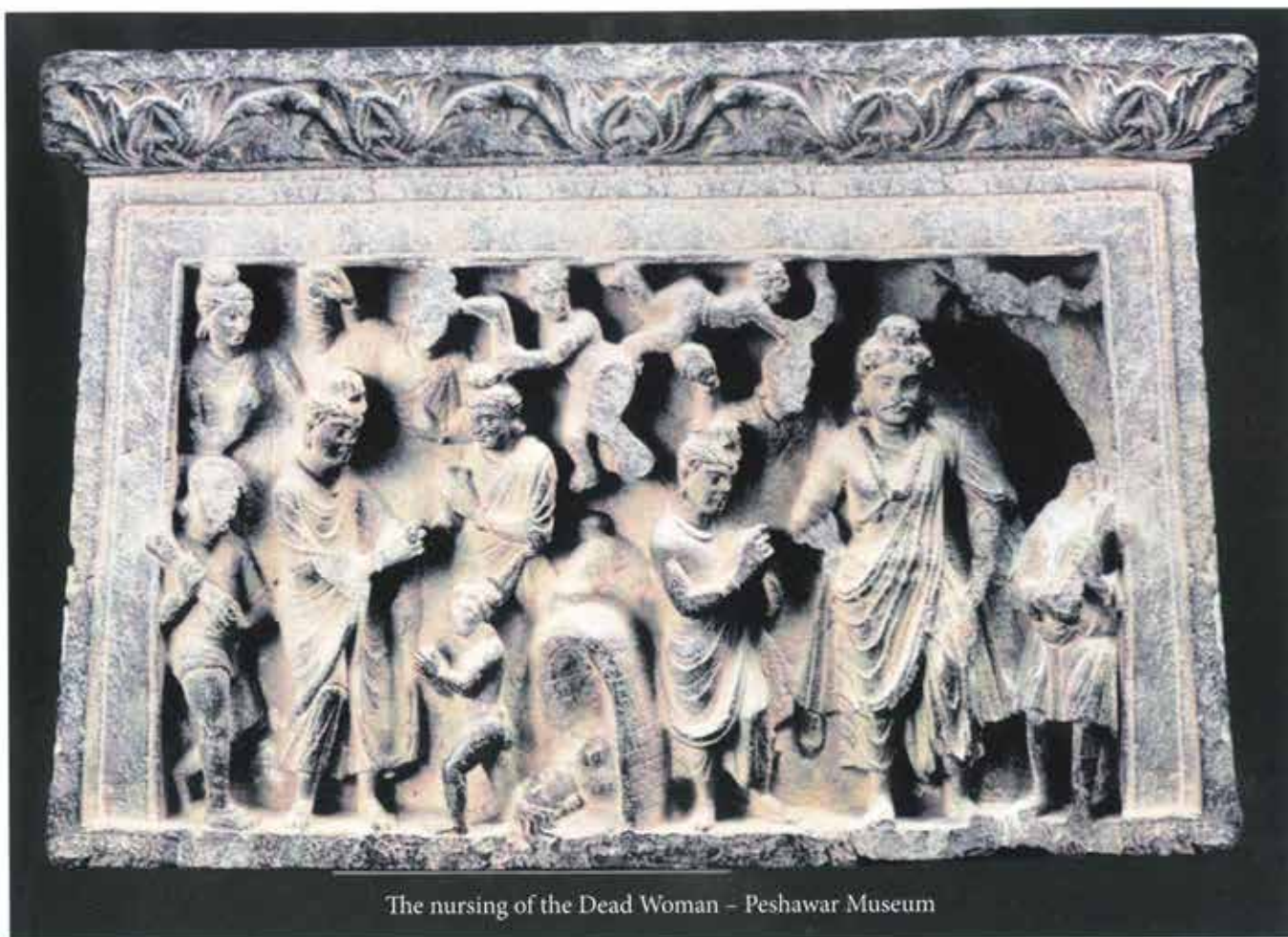


Offering Scene – Offering scene renunciation of Nanda, there are two figures scaled in the door way. Nanda (One of the Shakyamuni Buddha's Ten Great Disciples) is shown presenting a bowl to Buddha. The green schist high relief panel is a specimen of excellent craftsmanship from Nimogram, Swat.



The four keepers of the world offer the Buddha begging bowls – unknown provenance, 3rd century CE, Dark grey schist, Lahore Museum





The nursing of the Dead Woman – Peshawar Museum

There was a king who had many wives. The youngest of all was bearing a child. The senior wives who were jealous of her conspired against her. They bribed the palace Brahman to tell the king that the youngest wife was of ill omen and the child to be born would bring destruction to the king as well as his kingdom. Thus the terrified king buried her alive in a tomb in order to escape that destruction. In the previous births the mother and the child had acquired merits. Thus the child was born to her in the tomb after her death but she was still giving him milk from her breast. Sudaya, the child, lived for three years in it. One day the wall collapsed and the child came out

of it. He lived in the forest for three more years. The Buddha met the child when he was on the tour of that area and made him a monk who later converted his own father to the good Law. On the left the Buddha is standing with Vajrapani and the nude child before him with clasped hands in adoration. Above the child is probably the king who is adoring the Buddha. The bust of the dead woman can be seen in the open front of the tomb. Her left side is depicting as a Skelton while the right breast is represented round and full as if that of living woman. The panel is on display in Peshawar Museum.

## Legend of Hariti and Panchika

Hariti, a demon or the Yakshi, gave birth to five hundred children. In her former incarnation, she was the personification of the most dreaded disease, smallpox, and thus had made a vow to devour all the infants of Rajagirah. Everyday she ate some infants until the Buddha came to know of the menace. In order to teach her a lesson, he hid one of her beloved children under his alm bowl. She searched for her child from place to place, and found it when she reached the Buddha. She was very angry with the Buddha for his action. In answer to her accusations, the Buddha was amazed that she had been so perturbed about one of her five hundred children. How much more perturbed and grieved the parents would

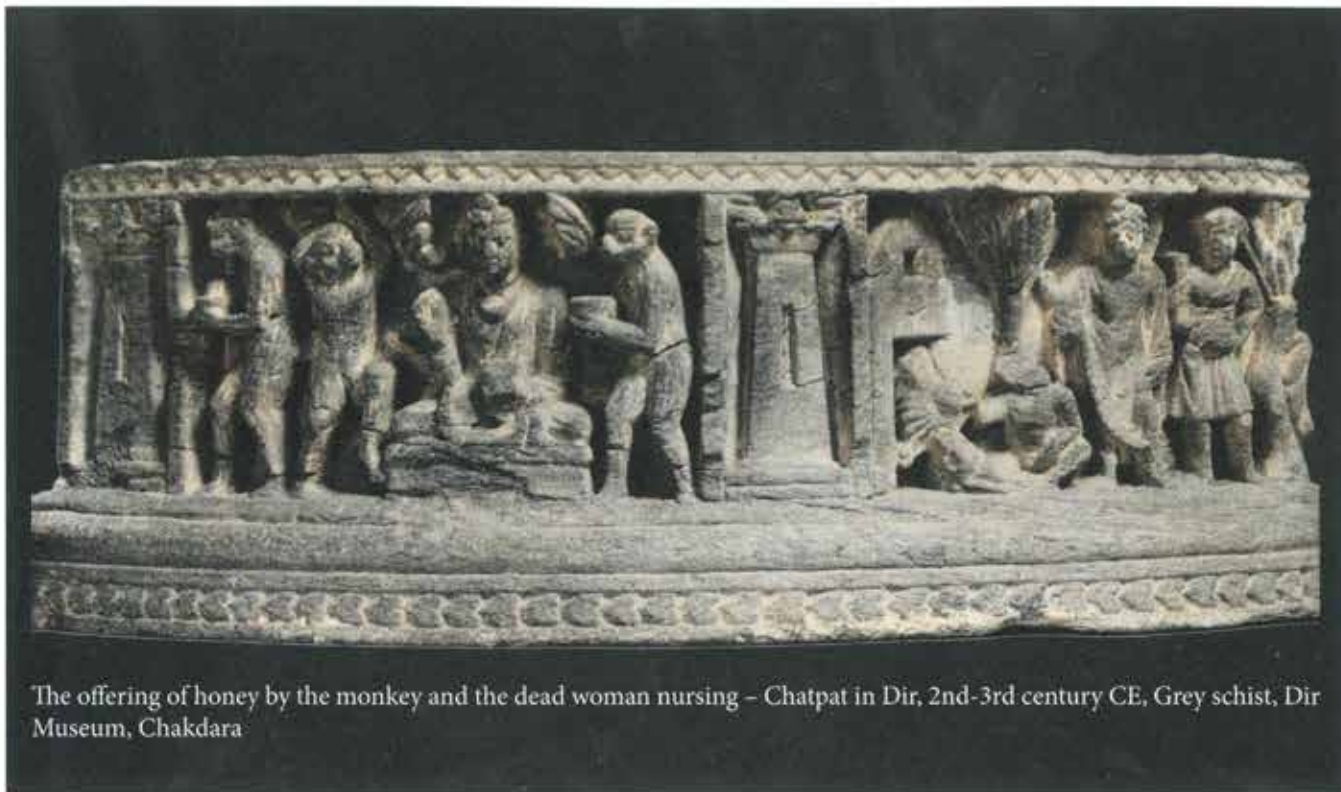
have been who had only one or two children whom she had devoured because of her cruel vow. Touched by these words, Hariti was ashamed of her deed, and was soon converted, but in her anxiety for her own children she asked the Buddha how they would be able to continue to exist in the future. The Buddha told her that she should not worry and promised that in every monastery there would be sufficient food available for her offsprings. That is why the image of Hariti is found in all the Buddhist monasteries, holding an infant in her arms and with three or five children around her knees. She has thus become the goddess of fertility in the Buddhist cult.



Panchika was also a semi-divine and the war lord of the Yakshas. In addition to his military functions, he is depicted having a lance in his hand. He was the husband of Hariti, thus seated with her.

Panchika and Hariti with their kids, one standing in the middle. Their other kids are shown below





## MUDRAS (Preaching Poses)



Buddha in Meditation – two devotees in attendance. Panr, Swat, Schist, Swat Museum





Abhaya Mudra  
Reassurance posture

This photograph shows two standing Buddhist statues, likely from the Gandhara region, carved in grey stone. The statue on the left is shown in profile, facing right, with its right hand raised in the Abhaya Mudra (gesture of fearlessness). The statue on the right is shown in a three-quarter view, also facing right, with its right hand raised in the same gesture. Both figures wear robes with detailed folds and have serene expressions. The background is dark, and the lighting highlights the texture of the stone and the contours of the figures.



DHARMACHAKRA MUDRA  
(PREACHING POSE)







## MAHAPARINIRVANA

### Death of the Buddha

At an advance age of about eighty years or so, the Buddha together with a sizeable group of his mendicant-brothers went to the other side of the river Hirannavati to Kusinagara bend. Reaching the Sal-tree grove there, he instructed the venerable Ananda and said, 'Pray, Ananda, arrange for me the platform with its head to the north between the twin Sal-tree; I am tired, Ananda, will lie down.' Then the blessed one attained the first trance. Emerging from the first trance, he attained the second trance, and continued so on up to the fourth trance. Emerging from the fourth trance, the Buddha breathed his last at Kusinagara, a place in the Utter Pardesh on the 13th October, 483 B.C.



Seated Maitreya on the right and Parinirvana – Wah Collection from Taxila, Taxila Museum





The great nirvana of the Buddha Unknown provenance (formerly at the Guides' Mess, Mardan), 2nd – 3rd century CE, Peshawar Museum

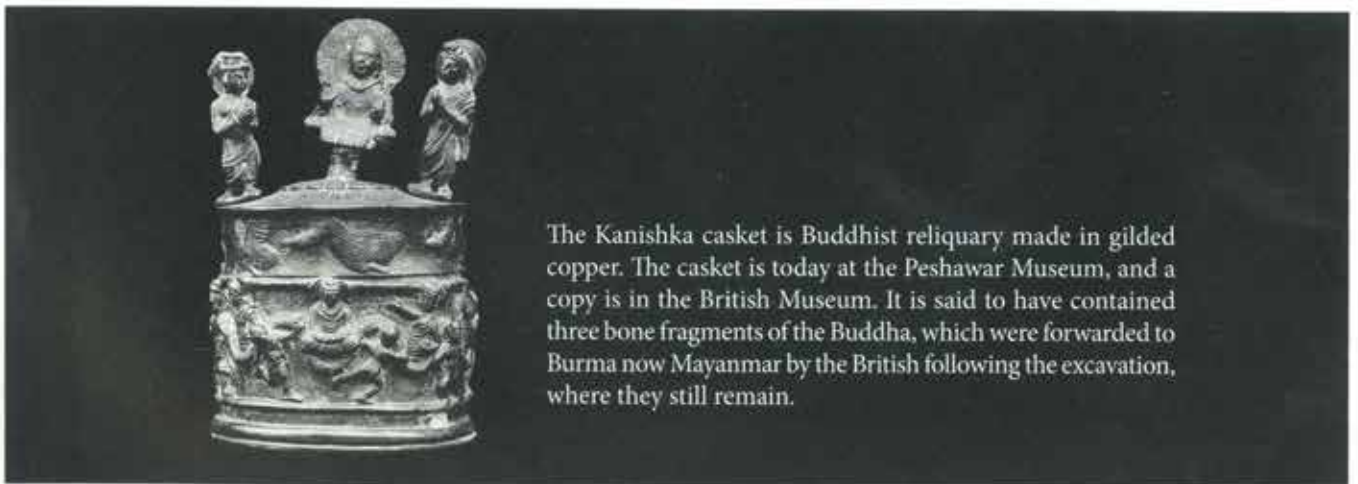
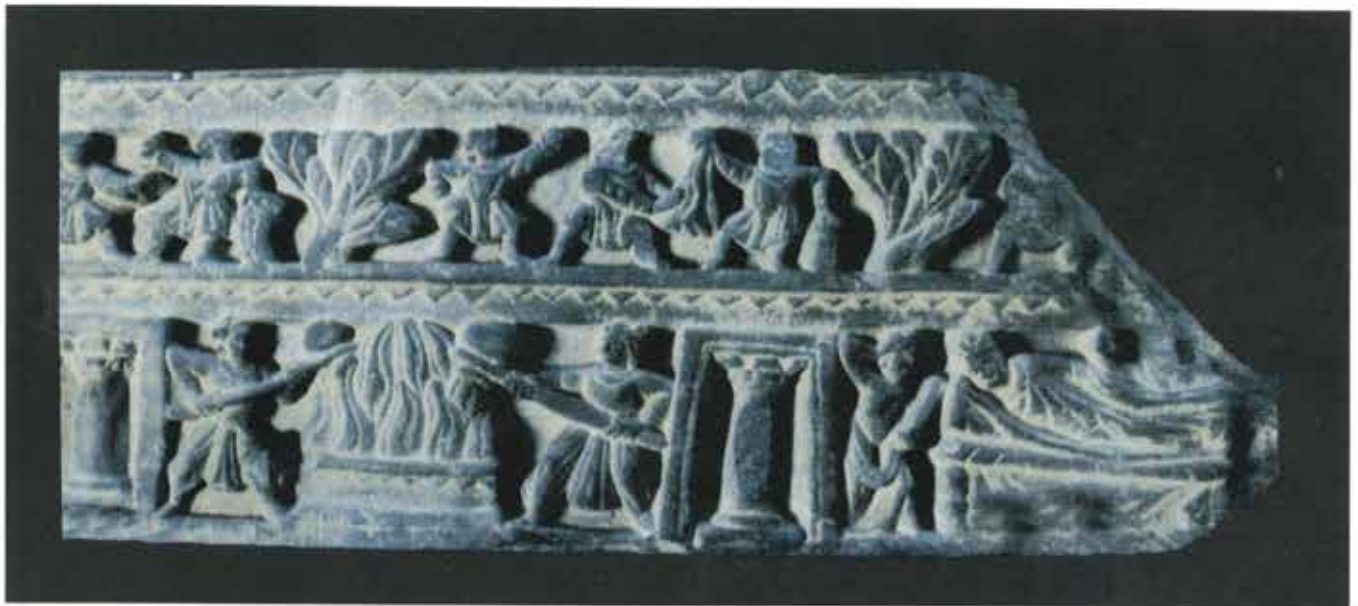


The Coffin

## The Cremation of the Buddha

After the death, the question of the disposal of his body was raised. Ananda, a close disciple of the Buddha is said to have asked him during the last hour what his wish was in regard to the disposal of his body, and he was instructed to leave the matter to the direction of the leading laymen of

the neighbourhood. Thus the neighbouring chiefs, the Mallas (Chieftans of Kushnagara) were charged with the conduct of the funeral ceremonies. The body was wrapped in five hundred pieces of cloth and placed in a coffin which was placed in receptacles.



The Kanishka casket is Buddhist reliquary made in gilded copper. The casket is today at the Peshawar Museum, and a copy is in the British Museum. It is said to have contained three bone fragments of the Buddha, which were forwarded to Burma now Mayanmar by the British following the excavation, where they still remain.



## Distribution of the Relics

After the body of the Buddha was cremated, the relics were divided into eight portions under the supervision of the Brahman Drona and then distributed among the eight communities whose claims the Mallas respected, and who built the stupas to enshrine the relics. However, none of these eight stupas are believed to exist now as they were opened and the relics were collected and further divided for enshrinement in new stupas during the reign of Asoka in the 3rd century B.C.



Relic Casket

