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Reliefs of Visions or Displays of Transmundane Realms in Gandhāran Buddhist Art

Significance of a Panel Relief with Śākyamuni



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Introduction

While more than a century and a half has passed since works from ancient Gandhāra and related areas captured the attention of Western researchers and while many questions remain unanswered with controversies unresolved, a wealth of new research has been forthcoming. Some of the discoveries relate directly to the holdings of the Museum of Art and Archaeology, providing increased understanding of controversial issues and, more specifically, of both dating and interpretation. It is the purpose of this article to offer insight into the meaning and significance of a bas-relief panel in the museum's collection (Fig. 1). This panel, of black mica schist, was given to the museum in 1967 by Mary and Leland Hazard, in memory of Governor and Mrs. James T. Blair. Created during the apogee of the Buddhist tradition of circa the second half of the second and third centuries C.E., this unique relief belongs to a corpus of relief and stele sculptures that are classed as visions or displays of heavenly realms. In these symmetrically ordered Gandhāra sculptures, the images are presented hierarchically, focused on an image of a Buddha seated on a large lotus dais. He is attended on his immediate right and left sides by a pair of Bodhisattvas, who are frequently shown standing on lotus flowers.

The lotus is a universally understood symbol in Indic culture, occurring in the earliest extant examples of Buddhist sculpture in South Asia. Lotuses were used symbolically as auspicious symbols of purity and of transcendence or transcendental rebirth. From the second century C.E., lotuses became widely used throughout Gandhāra for daises in paradise-scene imagery.¹ In the Gandhāran tradition, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, which can, as a general guideline, be iden-



Fig.1. Relief with an image of Śākyamuni seated in *padmāsana* (lotus pose) and displaying *dharmacakra mudrā* (gesture of teaching). Gandhāra, second century C.E. (dated year five), grey schist, H. 51.3 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (67.137), gift of Mary and Leland Hazard, in memory of Governor and Mrs. James T. Blair. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.

tified with the Mahāyāna movement, are those shown standing or seated on a lotus dais, or on a stool or plinth on a lotus, as in the museum's relief, where the Buddha and two Bodhisattvas are positioned on lotuses. Unfortunately, it remains difficult to determine the identities of most of the Buddhas in the corpus and their heavenly realms.

Unlike the others in this grouping, for which the names of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas remain controversial, for the Museum of Art and Archaeology relief, the Buddha image is identifiable as an image of Śākyamuni because of his position beneath the earthly *bodhi*, or enlightenment tree of Śākyamuni (*pīpal; aśvattha; Ficus religiosa*). The Bodhisattva images are identifiable as Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara for they are the primary Bodhisattvas attending Śākyamuni in early Mahāyāna imagery. Although part of the greater Indic cultural sphere, Gandhāra always retained a special identity within it. Despite distinctions, its Buddhist artistic forces were not isolated, incorporating the forces of the South Asian cultural sphere along with forces external to the vibrant, northwestern-cosmopolitan culture during the first several centuries of the Common Era. The museum's relief panel reflects the influences of these varying and inspiring traditions.

Geographical and Political Considerations

The name Gandhāra refers to an area in the North-West Frontier Province of modern Pakistan centered on the Vale of Peshawar. This great basin of land, fertile and well watered by the Kabul and Swat Rivers and known for its fecundity, stands in contrast to the arid mountain and hill ranges that surround it (Fig. 2). The area served as a primary gateway to South Asia, linking broad overland and Indus River corridors for communication and the movement of peoples, goods, and ideas. The term greater Gandhāra has become widely used in recent times to refer to the Peshawar Valley and to its neighboring regions, which include sectors of Afghanistan to the west, the Swat River valley and other river valleys to the north, and the Taxila area to the east of the Indus River. Given the region's strategic location, vitality, and productivity, it is not surprising that over the millennia, it was also subjected to political change and upheaval, as various groups, often in tribal associations, entered, settled in the area, and took control.

Gandhāra is identified in historical records of the sixth century B.C.E. as a province of the Persian Empire. Following a brief period under Alexander the Great in 327 B.C.E., it came under the control of the South Asian Maurya Dynasty, at which time Buddhism was introduced to the region. The Mauryas were followed by groups from Central Asia: the Graeco-Bactrians, Sakas, and Indo-Parthians. The period from circa the first through the middle of the fifth centuries C.E., considered a "golden" age for Gandhāra and Gandhāran Buddhism,

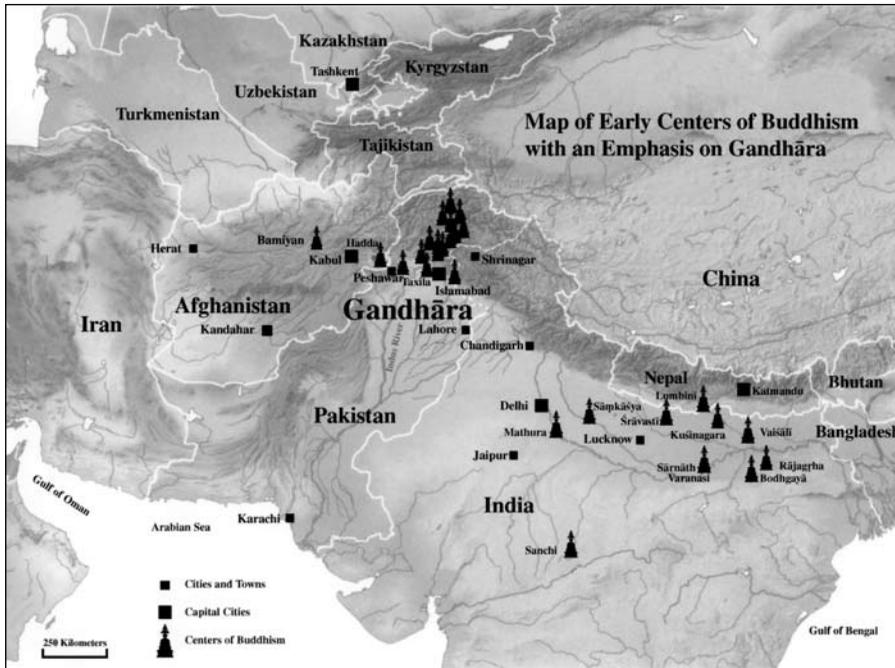


Fig. 2. Map showing early Buddhist sites with an emphasis on Gandhāra. Map by author.

began with the incursions in circa 75 C.E. of another group from Central Asia known as Kushans, a once nomadic confederation of tribes that had moved in from the ancient Bactrian region of Afghanistan.

Buddhism and Buddhist Art

While the primary source for knowledge of Buddhism in Gandhāra is its artistic evidence, the primary source for the history of the philosophy and the Buddha, the individual who is regarded as its founder, is Buddhist literature. The biographical information, originally passed down by oral tradition, was first committed to writing about four hundred years after the Buddha’s death. The literary records indicate that the historical Buddha, known by the name Śākyamuni, “sage of the Śākya clan,” was born circa 563 B.C.E. His family was the ruling (*kṣatriya* or reigning caste) Śākyas or Lion Clan from the northeastern

region of the South Asian subcontinent, now part of the modern state of Nepal. Śākyamuni died circa 483 B.C.E., at approximately eighty years of age.

As the number of practitioners and movements grew, Buddhism spread from the northeastern area along the transportation and communication routes to other centers of population in South Asia and, subsequently, throughout Asia. By the end of the first millennium B.C.E., Buddhism in the northwest had long coexisted with and pragmatically incorporated beliefs and practices associated with non-Buddhist beings, some familiar from the Hindu pantheon, some from the Graeco-Roman pantheon, and others from popular religious milieus, such as *yakṣas* (spirits of nature; *genii loci*). Like the other great traditions of the South Asian subcontinent, Buddhism used preexisting conventions in imagery to great advantage in translating religious and metaphysical ideas into an enduring visual language.²

It was from Gandhāra that Buddhism was transmitted across Central Asia to China, Korea, and Japan. The commercial routes, known as the “Silk Road,” were especially active during the first several centuries C.E., linking the Roman West with China. Unquestionably, the largest numbers of extant sculptures, produced by this very influential South Asian Buddhist tradition, are from greater Gandhāra.³ Many are of schist, a slate-like stone found in great abundance in the region, although stucco became increasingly popular after the third century.

Problems in the History of Art and Archaeology

The history of Western interest in Buddhist antiquities began at the time of British influence in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and of the founding of The Asiatic Society in 1784 at the behest of Sir William Jones and others (Fig. 3). At a time when British India’s dominion included all of India as well as Afghanistan and lower Burma, this interest was further developed with the creation of the Archaeological Survey of India in 1861 under the British colonial administrator Sir Alexander Cunningham (Fig. 4).⁴ Archaeological efforts have been ongoing throughout greater Gandhāra from the mid-nineteenth century until the present time, some disrupted by political circumstances. Many of these excavations have been international and collaborative among the governments and institutions in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the United States, Great Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Japan.

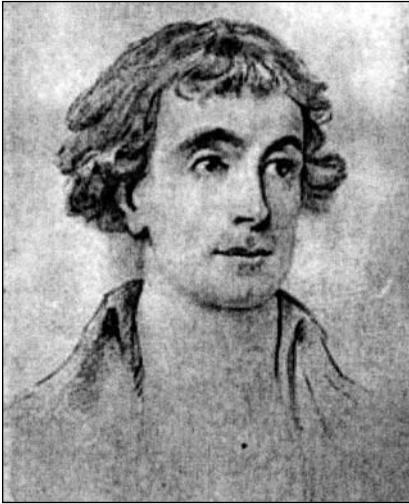


Fig. 3. Portrait of Sir William Jones. Circa last quarter of the eighteenth century. Archaeological Survey of India. Photo: ©Archaeological Survey of India, (http://asi.nic.in/asi_aboutus_history.asp).



Fig. 4. Portrait of Sir Alexander Cunningham. Circa early twentieth century. Archaeological Survey of India. Photo: ©Archaeological Survey of India, (http://asi.nic.in/asi_aboutus_history.asp).

Current levels of knowledge and recognition of the vibrant history of Buddhism in ancient Gandhāra and its related regions are primarily the result of detailed collations of data from a multiplicity of disciplines. Increasingly sophisticated scientific and archaeological practices and methods of analysis are providing opportunities for a more accurate and complete understanding. Unfortunately, researchers are still faced with the discouraging necessity of working with records from the early phases of exploration. The inadequacies of early documents are especially problematic in the reconstruction of monastery complexes and iconographic programs. Time and the elements, the quarrying of monuments for building materials as well as the re-cutting, degradation, and relocation of the statuary in antiquity, have all contributed to the challenges, as documented in a site photograph from Sahrī-Bāhlol, mound C, taken in 1911 at the behest of the excavation director, Sir Aurél Stein (Figs. 5 and 6). Given these factors and the methodological limitations of early surveys, reports, and photographic records, it is not surprising that the problems encountered in reconstruction and evaluation have proved even more intractable than anticipated. Furthermore, for Gandhāran images, the lack of identifying inscriptions and precise dating remains a major challenge. At the same time, phases of



Fig. 5. Site photograph of Sahrī-Bāhlol, mound C from the southwest. Stein excavation, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, 1911–1912*. Photo: © The British Library Board, India Office Collections 1006/2, Serial no. 1101.



Fig. 6. Image of Sir Aurél Stein from a detail of a site photograph. Dura Europos, February 1929. Photo: Public domain, wikipedia.org. Aurél Stein (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/f/f2/Aurél_Stein.jpg).

development are identifiable through the analyses of changes in technical skill in sculpting, the shifting emphasis on subject matter, typological distinctions in imaging, and increased iconographic complexity.

Early Artistic Developments

Sculptures from the earliest phase of development of circa the late first century B.C.E. through the first quarter of the second century C.E. are made up largely of stelae and bas-relief images, highlighting subjects based on the mythological and legendary events from the past lives and final earthly life of the historical Buddha, Śākyamuni. For the majority of these works, which frequently incorporate both earthly and non-earthly beings, the subject matter is well known. In an early stele from the Museum für Asiatische Kunst, Berlin, the two Hindu deities Brahmā and Indra, in a tripartite relationship with the Buddha, entreat him to teach (Fig. 7). Brahmā is presented as an ascetic; Indra as a royal figure with a turban and jewelry. A number of separately carved images of royal devotees and of the Buddha remain from this early period, although these early Buddha images are few in number when compared with later periods (Fig. 8). The repertoire also includes narrative images of the turbaned Bodhisattva Siddhārtha (Śākyamuni prior to enlightenment). These images are distinguished by their headdresses and jewelry. Examples of these



Fig. 7. Stele with image of Śākyamuni seated in *dhyāna mudrā* with Indra and Brahmā. Swat, circa first century C.E., green schist, H. 39 cm, W. 40 cm. National Museums Berlin, Prussian Cultural Foundation, Asian Art Museum, Art Collection South-, Southeast-, and Central Asian Art, Berlin. Photo: Jürgen Liepe.



Fig. 8. Upper fragment from image of Śākyamuni Buddha. Probably Butkara, Swat, ca. first century C.E. H. 41.5 cm, W. 30.5 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (79.96), gift of Mr. Eric Neff. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.



Fig. 9. Relief sculpture of the Buddha Maitreya as a Bodhisattva. Gandhāra, ca. second–fourth century C.E., schist, H. 49.5 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (86.28), gift of Alan and Ann Wolfe. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.

are a departure-from-the-palace scene, as well as a number of independently sculpted images of the next future earthly Buddha Maitreya, “Benevolent One,” shown also as a Bodhisattva and exemplified by a sculpture in the museum’s collection (Fig. 9).

Narrative relief panels were originally installed in sets on the bases of varying sizes of *stūpas* (mortuary structures). Numerous examples of the type make up an important part of the museum’s collection.⁵ They incorporate modes that are traditionally South Asian along with those that show Greek-influenced features consistent with the Buddhist tradition of Gandhāra at the time of their creation. The subject matter spans the period from the Buddha’s conception until his death and includes mythological, legendary, and historical figures, as well as figures representing spirits of nature.⁶ Many once belonged to standard sets, which conventionally included the myth of Queen Maya’s dream of the white elephant, the departure from the palace, the Buddha’s enlightenment, his teaching in the Deer Park and mendicancy, and his death (Figs. 10–17).

The period of extreme austerities, undertaken in the Buddha’s struggle to find the right path to enlightenment, although well known from independently sculpted images, is less frequently incorporated in the standard sets (Fig. 12). This is true also of the relief from the period after enlightenment when he is preparing to set the wheel of the law in motion. In this example (Fig. 13), the wheel is partially shown behind the central column on the Buddha’s proper right. While panels showing the Buddha’s first sermon in the Deer Park are included in many series, the museum’s example is unusual because of the manner in which the wheel is presented. It is shown not as a motif on the front of the dais, but to the side on the top of a pillar, as if completing the process depicted in the previous relief (Fig. 14; cf. Figs. 13 and 14). In these carvings, Buddha images are generally surrounded by many attendants.⁷ Often included among the attendants is his most faithful companion, Vajrapāṇi (having in hand a *vajra*, an attribute sometimes described as a thunderbolt) (Figs. 11 [top, beside the umbrella], 13 [to the Buddha’s left], 15, and 17 [standing by the head of the Buddha]). Vajrapāṇi is frequently presented bearded and, on occasion, wearing an animal skin in a manner that recalls the Graeco-Roman, semi-divine Hercules, as seen in a fragment from a relatively large relief (Fig. 15).

Not uncommon are various miracles performed during the Buddha’s mendicancy, which are found in the Jātaka stories (traditional tales and commentaries).



Fig. 10. Relief showing the Dream of Queen Maya and two meditating Buddhas. Gandhāra, first–fourth century C.E., schist, H. 18 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (82.372), gift of Dr. Richard Nalin. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.



Fig. 11. Relief showing Prince Siddhārtha leaving the palace, often referred to as the Great Departure. Probably from Butkara, Swat, ca. late first or second century C.E., gray schist, H. 72.5 cm, W. 62.5 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (77.282), gift of Mr. Eric Neff. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.



Fig. 12. Relief showing the emaciated Prince Siddhārtha and the Buddha performing the miracle at Śrāvastī. Gandhāra, ca. second century C.E., schist, H. 24 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (82.465), gift of Alan and Ann Wolfe. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.



Fig. 13. Relief of the Buddha meeting the five mendicant monks. Probably from Swat, ca. second century C.E., micaceous schist, H. 23.5 cm, W. 49.5 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (80.202), gift of Mr. Alan D. Wolfe. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.



Fig. 14. Relief showing the Buddha's first sermon in the Deer Park. Gandhāra, ca. second or third century C.E., schist, H. 35 cm, W. 45.5 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (96.4), gift of Françoise and Vincent Brown. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.



Fig. 15. Fragment of a relief showing Vajrapāṇi. Gandhāra, ca. second century C.E., schist, H. 18 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (82.397), gift of Dr. Richard Nalin. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.

Fig. 16. Fragment of two relief panels showing the Miracle of Fire and a *yakṣī*. Probably from Sikri, ca. second century C.E., gneiss, a type of metamorphic rock of different colors, H. 46 cm, W. 28.5 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (76.165), gift of Dr. Samuel Eilenberg.





Fig. 17. Relief showing the death (*parinirvāṇa*) of Śākyamuni. Gandhāra, ca. second–third century C.E., schist, H. 31.7 cm. Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Missouri (82.302), gift of Dr. Richard Nalin. Photo: Jeffrey Wilcox.

The Museum of Art and Archaeology’s fragment, which includes Kāsapa and one of his brothers on one side and a *yakṣī* (spirit of nature) within the remains of a beaded frame on the other, is, however, unusual, in that it attests to a refinement in sculpting and illustrates subjects of importance during the late Graeco-Parthian or early Kushan period (Fig. 16). A relief showing the death of the Buddha (*parinirvāṇa*) is, of course, important to any series (Fig. 17). The post-*parinirvāṇa* relief panel that inspired this article (Fig. 1) may have been part of a similar set or false gable, designed to emphasize the transcendent nature of the Buddha following his death, while at the same time incorporating both earthly and heavenly elements. Unfortunately, unless other similarly configured pieces are identified, the date (which appears to be second century) and the original details of its installation cannot be determined.

Relief panels from both early and later phases of production were central to the function of *stūpas*. From pre-Buddhist times dome-shaped reliquary

monuments, which varied in size, were erected to house and honor the remains of learned teachers and sages. In the Buddhist tradition, relief panels were installed around the bases of larger installations in a clockwise manner, in accordance with the direction the practitioner would move when paying homage to the remains of the Buddha. A photograph of the Mañikyāla Stūpa shows the monumentality of the larger *stūpas* in Gandhāra (Fig. 18). In monastery complexes, the large central *stūpa* would be surrounded by additional smaller ones, installed to house the relics of honored members of the Buddhist community, as with an example from the Indian Museum, Calcutta (Fig. 19). At a time when most people could not read or write, the *stūpas* served as eloquent and vivifying expressions of the Buddhist law (*dharma*). The law provided the precepts or guiding principles for seeking the spiritual advancement that offered release from *samsāra*, the countless rounds of rebirth that were dependent on one's *karma*, the effect of former deeds performed in this or in a previous life.⁸

Later Artistic Advancements and Related Concepts

Over the centuries and among certain groups, Śākyamuni Buddha, originally viewed as a historical being, came to be seen as one in a succession of earthly Buddhas of the past and of the future.⁹ With the developing movement that



Fig. 18. Photograph of the Mañikyāla Stūpa as it stands today. Village of Mañikyāla, ca. 50 kilometers east of Taxila, earliest phase of development, second century B.C.E., stone. Photo: Peter Oszvald. © Art and Exhibition Hall of the Federal Republic of Germany.



Fig. 19. Small *stūpa*. Gandhāra, ca. end of second or third century C.E., stone, H. 140 cm, plinth area: 70 sq. cm. Indian Museum, acc. no. (for 1991) 142, serial 711. Photo: Courtesy of the Indian Museum.



Fig. 20. Standing image of a Buddha, probably Śākyamuni. Gandhāra, ca. end of second or third century C.E., dark gray schist, H. 140 cm, W. 48 cm. Central Museum, Lahore, no G-381 (old no. 740). Photo: Courtesy of the Central Museum, Lahore.

came to be called Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle), Śākyamuni was further conceived of as a transcendent entity, a force with an existence beyond the material universe. These changes in conception are documented in the evolutionary changes seen in the art. While the importance and production of biographical relief panels were sustained stylistically from about the end of the first or early second century C.E., image treatment became more conventionalized, and within that convention more naturalistic and technically more refined. In conjunction with these changes, the iconography became increasingly more complex.

Developing from earlier antecedent conventions, hundreds of half-life-size, life-size, and colossal images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were sculpted from individual blocks of schist during the second and third centuries C.E. They represent the tradition's most unprecedented and spectacular achievement. This burgeoning of independently sculpted image making included a multiplicity of uniquely Gandhāran stylistic and iconographic conventions that reflected the religious and cultural crosscurrents of the region at this time and were specifically reflective of developing Mahāyāna beliefs and practices. Most of the independently sculpted Buddha images are thought to be images of Śākyamuni, as exemplified by the highly refined, late second- or third-century image in the Lahore Museum (Fig. 20). While Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are dressed in the South Asian manner of the period, Bodhisattva images are set apart from Buddha images by their princely accouterments of dress (*bodhisattvābharaṇa*): jeweled necklaces, amulet cases, armbands, and earrings. Although ultimately leading to the extensive, highly codified Mahāyāna pantheon of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas that are familiar today, the identification of many Gandhāra school sculptures remains problematic. Given that these images cannot always be identified with assurance, it is useful to consider them by type.

The two, broad typological groupings are the *brāhmaṇa*-Maitreya type and the Siddhārtha-Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi type. The *brāhmaṇa*-Maitreya type, shown with the hair on the crown of the head drawn up and secured into some type of topknot, is repeatedly depicted holding a *kamaṇḍalu*, water jar or flask, in the proper left hand, as exemplified by an image from Sikri in the Central Museum, Lahore (Fig. 21).¹⁰ The Siddhārtha-Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi type is adorned with a turban and shown with the proper left hand placed on the hip, or holding a lotus or floral wreath, as seen in an image from Sahrī-Bāhlol and now in the Peshawar Museum (Fig. 22).



Fig. 21. Standing image of Maitreya as a Bodhisattva. Sikri, ca. second half of the second or third century C.E., schist, H. 132 cm. Central Museum, Lahore, no. G129. Photo by author.



Fig. 22. Image of a Wreath-Bearing form of Avalokiteśvara. Sahri-Bāhlol, mound B, ca. second half of the second or third century C.E., gray schist, H. 129 cm, W. 44.5 cm, D. 12.7 cm. Peshawar Museum, no. 1428. Photo by author.

Maitreya and the *Brāhmaṇa*-Maitreya Type

Belief (*śraddha*) in Maitreya as a Bodhisattva and as the next future earthly Buddha has been a major feature of Buddhism since the earliest recorded periods in Buddhist history, and all Buddhist movements universally accept him. The first reference to Maitreya is found in the *Sutta Nipāta*, one of the oldest texts of the Pāli Canon, where he is identified as one of the Brahman ascetic Bāvāri's sixteen disciples, who are converted to Buddhism by Śākyamuni.¹¹ Although not identified by inscriptions on images, Maitreya's importance in Greater Gandhāra has been well recognized from the early part of the twentieth century, when serious research efforts to understand the Buddhist traditions and art of the region began to develop. Additionally, several informative related images from the period are inscribed with the name of Maitreya and show him standing or seated holding a flask. They include the contemporary, central Indian, Mathura school image from Ahichchattrā, and from Gandhāra, the coins of Kaniṣka I, who reigned from circa 127–140 CE.¹² Inscribed "Metrago Boudo," the coins of Kaniṣka I are particularly informative, as the images, although abstracted, are shown displaying *abhaya-mudrā* (gesture of reassurance) with the proper right hand while holding a flask (*kamaṇḍalu*) in the proper left hand. In reflection of the sculpted imagery at that time, they are nimbate, and adorned with earrings, necklaces, bracelets, and a topknot of a *brāhmaṇa* (a member of the priestly or sacerdotal caste), as in the Museum of Art and Archaeology's relief (Fig. 9).¹³

In the Gandhāran tradition, four types of topknot fashions were being used for Maitreya by the second century: a double loop, a rondure or *uṣṇīṣa*-like bun, a *kaparda* (tresses spiraling upward like the top of a shell), and a square knot (*nodus herculeus*).¹⁴ While the *kaparda*, rondure, and double-loop types were used from the first century, the Knot-of-Hercules, derived from Graeco-Roman images of the Greek god Apollo, was not introduced for Maitreya images and other image types, such as Brahmā, until approximately the middle of the second century (Figs. 23 and 24).¹⁵ This style of topknot adorns the image of Maitreya in the Museum of Art and Archaeology's panel (cf. Fig. 1 with Figs. 23 and 24). As an ideal of youthful male beauty and intellect, classical Greek images of Apollo adorned with a *nodus herculeus* hairstyle became very popular in Rome, especially during the time of Hadrian who ruled from 117 to 138 C.E. (Fig. 25; cf. Figs. 23–25).



Fig. 23. Detail of the image of Maitreya seen in Figure 21.



Fig. 24. Head from an image of a Bodhisattva, probably Maitreya. Sahrī-Bāhlol, mound A, ca. second half of second or third century C.E., gray schist, H. ca. 30 cm. Peshawar Museum. Photo by author.



Fig. 25. Detail of an image of the Greek god Apollo standing as an archer. Discovered in central Italy in the late fifteenth century, ca. 120–140 C.E., copy of a bronze original of 350–325 B.C.E., white marble, H. 224 cm. Vatican Museum, Rome. Photo by author.

In Eurasian societies, the popularity of the square knot throughout the millennia reflects its practical functionality (the greater the stress placed on it the more tightly it binds) and also its apotropaic value of averting evil, which had accrued to it over time in Greek and Greek-influenced societies. Symbolically, by the Roman period, it was considered binding for eternity. In Greek culture the name, *nodus herculeus*, seems to have been derived from its use as the knot that secured the forelegs of the magically impenetrable Nemean lion's skin worn by the Greek hero Herakles.¹⁶ In Western culture, the *nodus herculeus* hairstyle became increasingly popular after the end of the fourth century B.C.E. for images of Apollo in his capacity as the divine protector of young men during their transition into maturity. His presence in this form was believed to assure the successful achievement of the new status. In other capacities, Apollo also offered prophetic wisdom, healing, and purging of malevolent forces.¹⁷ It seems probable that his idealized form and functional capabilities inspired the borrowing of this hair fashion for Maitreya.

Avalokiteśvara and the Siddhārtha-Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi Type

A great deal of speculation remains as to the time and place for the development of ideas related to Mahāyāna Buddhism and to the rise and dominance of Avalokiteśvara as the most popular embodiment of the Mahāyāna Bodhisattva ideal (Fig. 22).¹⁸ In contrast to his acknowledged importance among both lay and monastic communities, and the enormous numbers of images created over the millennia, the details of Avalokiteśvara's emergence at the beginning of the Common Era in Gandhāra remain largely illusive. Even his name, a compound of Sanskrit terms, is problematical, as specialists have not been able to agree on how to interpret it, although it is often given as the "Looking-down Lord," who, like the historical Buddha, is characterized as a model of Compassion.¹⁹ Notwithstanding these issues, early Mahāyāna literature supports the opinions of Giuseppe Tucci, John Rosenfield, and others that Avalokiteśvara was developed out of the essential nature of Śākyamuni, as found in his biography.²⁰ In a sequenced process, seemingly, the active, altruistic characteristics of Śākyamuni, in his former lives and final earthly life as a Bodhisattva, were first attributed to the Bodhisattva Mahāsattva ("having a great essence"), who subsequently served as a prototype for the fully developed Avalokiteśvara.²¹

The lotus attribute and the presence of a diminutive crowning image of a Buddha (*bimba*; generally of Amitābha Buddha) in the headdress are the standard methods used for the identification of images of Avalokiteśvara and Padmapāṇi, the “Having a Lotus in Hand” form of Avalokiteśvara. Unique to the greater Gandhāran tradition, a wreath, as a symbol of victory and immortality, has been added to the list of attributes (see Figs. 22 and 26). Turbaned Bodhisattvas with a lotus blossom in the left hand, which began to appear in the art of Gandhāra in conjunction with developing Mahāyāna beliefs, have been universally accepted as Padmapāṇi. Although images of the Wreath-Bearing Bodhisattva had been identified as images of Avalokiteśvara by some prominent researchers during the early decades of the twentieth century, acceptance of this name remained controversial.²² Major factors in the controversy were the lack of identifying inscriptions, its uniqueness to the Northwest, and an early misunderstanding

of the wreath, which was misidentified as a purse.²³ Now, increasing numbers of highly regarded scholars accept Wreath-Bearing Bodhisattva images as images of Avalokiteśvara.

From very early periods in Western culture, laurel garlands were used as auspicious and decorative elements at festivals and on architectural monuments. In Gandhāra, wreaths of laurel are thought to have been worn by Graeco-Parthian royalty during the first century.²⁴ A wreath of gold laurel leaves, not unlike a wreath in the J. Paul Getty Museum, was recovered in the Peshawar area (Fig. 27).²⁵ In Gandhāran art, in addition to serving as an attribute for Avalokiteśvara, symbolic of victory and immortality, wreaths are depicted on the heads of various individuals and can be considered a version of a crown.²⁶ Wreaths adorn female divinities such as Māyā, the mother of Śākyamuni, and her attendants, as well as dwellers in transmundane realms. Wreaths also occur in some scenes or displays of paradise, suspended above the head of a Buddha (Fig. 35). A number of these wreaths are carved as floral crowns of laurel.



Fig. 26. Detail of the left hand of the Wreath-Bearing form of Avalokiteśvara seen in Figure 22.

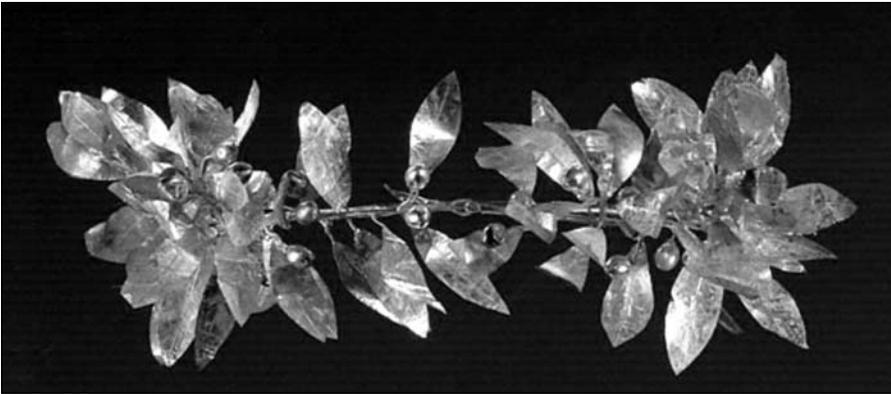


Fig. 27. Laurel wreath. Greece or Europe, ca. 300–100 B.C., gold, D. 26.3 cm (from front to back), 34 cm (from side to side). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Malibu, California, no. 92.AM.89. © The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Malibu, California.

Throughout the Greek-influenced regions during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, laurel wreaths and garlands had become part of a universal, symbolic koine, understood, in a general sense, to refer to concepts of honor, victory, and immortality. The types of materials selected were often imbued with meaning and were sacred to a particular Greek or Roman deity. The specific values were understood in relationship to the contexts in which they were used. Laurel, an evergreen symbolic of victory and immortality, was sacred to Nike and Eros. Throughout these periods, to suggest divinely sanctioned and stable authority during periods of political upheaval, images of Nike bearing a crown of laurel were used on jewelry, coins, relief panels, and monumental architecture, from the Mediterranean region, across western Asia, and into South Asia as far as Taxila, on the eastern side of the Indus River. Given the parallel values of the lotus and the laurel, it does not seem surprising that, in addition to its value as a symbol of victory, immortality, and divinely sanctioned authority in Western culture, the crown or wreath of laurel was borrowed and given a similar symbolic position of importance in the Buddhist visual language of cosmopolitan Gandhāra.

The stylistic and iconographic characteristics discussed in relationship to the large, individually sculpted images of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are replicated in the scenes or visions of transmundane realms, such as on the museum's panel (Fig. 1). Scenes such as this provide invaluable data for interpretation and the



Fig. 28. Image of a Buddha seated on a lotus pericarp with exposed tenon for insertion into a base. Gandhāra, perhaps the Peshawar region, ca. third century C.E., schist, H. 96 cm, W. 42 cm. National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi, inv. no. NM 1968.664m (after 2002, no. 6). Photo: Courtesy of the National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi.

reconstruction of larger iconographic programs, composed of individually sculpted pieces that were originally installed around the walls of monastery complexes and that exist in no other form.²⁷ These replications are well illustrated when comparisons are made among three sculptures—an image of a large teaching Buddha seated on a lotus pericarp with exposed tenon for insertion into a base, a relatively large relief of a lotus dais mortised on top to receive a tenon from a Buddha image, and the Buddha found in the museum’s relief panel (Figs. 1, 28–30). These characteristics also become readily apparent when one compares the Maitreya image from the Lahore Museum with the Maitreya image from the museum’s relief panel (Figs. 21 and 31) and the Avalokiteśvara image from the Peshawar Museum with the Avalokiteśvara image from the same panel (Figs. 22 and 32).

Buddha and Bodhisattva Images in Relief and Stelae Carvings

The period, from circa the second through the fourth century, which is distinguished by the sculpting of hundreds of large, freestanding schist images, is also distinguished by the creation of reliefs and stelae sculpted with visions or displays of paradisiacal realms as reflections of growing Mahāyāna beliefs and practices. While some relief and stelae paradise scenes are relatively limited and others complex, all exhibit a number of common features (cf. Figs. 1, 33–35).



Fig. 29. Relief of lotus dais, mortised on top to receive a tenon from a Buddha image. Sahri-Bāhlol, mound D, ca. first half of the second or third century C.E., gray schist, H. ca. 25.4 cm. Peshawar Museum (originally case 60). Photo by author.



Fig. 30. Detail of Buddha image from the panel seen in Figure 1.

The presentations are hierarchical and symmetrical. Characteristically positioned either beneath a floral canopy or in an architectural setting, these visions or displays, as indicated above, are dominated by an image of a Buddha. The Buddha image is seated on a lotus dais in *padmāsana* (lotus posture or “lotus-seat”) and displays *dharmacakra mudrā* (gesture of teaching; “setting the wheel of the law in motion”). In a number of examples, a floral or jewel diadem is suspended above the head of the Buddha (Figs. 34 and 35).

Invariably, the Buddha image is attended by a primary pair of complementary Bodhisattvas emanated by him as manifestations of his *karuṇā* (infinite



Fig. 31. Detail of the image of Maitreya from the panel seen in Figure 1.



Fig. 32. Detail of the image of Avalokiteśvara from the panel seen in Figure 1.

compassion, a quality that constitutes one-half of Buddhahood), and his *prajñā* (transcendent wisdom, which is the other half of Buddhahood).²⁸ Each pair is composed of the two generic types of Bodhisattvas, the *brāhmaṇa*-Maitreya type and the Siddhārtha-Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi type. As with the larger figures, these figures typically stand *en face* wearing a *dhoti* and *saṅghāti*, and are nimbate and bejeweled.²⁹ At the back, additional paired figures, such as Indra and Brahmā, also attend the Buddha, while a devotee or devotees are sometimes included on areas at the lower front. This basic set of primary, tripartite, formal organizational elements, as exemplified by the Museum of Art



Fig. 33. Stele with an image of a Buddha seated in *padmāsana* (lotus pose) and displaying *dharmacakra mudrā* (gesture of teaching). Sahrī-Bāhlol, mound A, ca. second half of second or third century C.E., schist, H. 60.3 cm, W. 47.6 cm. Peshawar Museum, no. 158. Photo: After I. Lyons and H. Ingholt, *Gandhāra Art in Pakistan* (New York, 1957) pl. 254.



Fig. 34. Stele with an image of a Buddha seated in *padmāsana* (lotus pose) and displaying *dharmacakra mudrā* (gesture of teaching). Gandhāra, ca. third century C.E., schist, H. 79 cm, W. 58.5 cm. Caro Collection. Photo: John Rosenfield. Courtesy of John and Susan Huntington.



Fig. 35. Stele with image of a Buddha seated in *padmāsana* (lotus pose) and displaying *dharmacakra mudrā* (gesture of teaching). Mohammed Nari, ca. third–fourth century C.E., gray schist, H. 116.84 cm. Central Museum, Lahore, no. 1135. Photo by author.

and Archaeology's panel, has persisted within the Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition to the present time.

From its obscure beginnings, the early Mahāyāna movement developed into a major category of Buddhist beliefs and practices, which place emphasis on transcendent Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. The principle teachings of a text titled *Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka*, or *Lotus of the True Law* (customarily titled *The Lotus Sūtra*), are considered basic to all Mahāyāna thought, making it, perhaps, the single most important text in the Mahāyāna Buddhist canon.³⁰ Written over a period between circa 100 B.C.E. and 200 C.E., *The Lotus Sūtra* is considered essential to the education of all serious practitioners of Mahāyāna and is highly esteemed throughout Asia. In this *sūtra*, Śākyamuni, who had previously been viewed as a historical personality, is conceived of as a being who transcends all boundaries of time and space, an ever-abiding principle of truth and compassion that exists everywhere and in all beings. He is placed on the lotus, the cosmic flower, as exemplified by the museum's panel (Fig. 1).³¹

Problems in Identifying Scenes of Transmundane Realms

For both Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, the fundamental issue in identifying these scenes of transmundane realms, is the use of image types that belong to conventionalized classes of characteristics.³² Although many texts deal with the magical, blissful nature of non-earthly Buddhas' realms, these realms are only vaguely described as paradises of great perfection without specific details or individualizing characteristics.³³ It appears that, even during the earliest Buddhist period, some individuals, influenced by Brahmanical and Hindu ideas and by Indic cosmology, embraced the concept of transcendent realms. It was through Mahāyāna, however, that the associated ideas of transcendent realms were developed within the Buddhist tradition.³⁴ Given the power of a persistent desire to be reborn in some type of heaven, the concepts associated with transcendent realms and the Pure Lands of different Buddhas were theorized and with them the compilation of Mahāyāna *sūtras* and imagery.³⁵ Śākyamuni's Vulture Peak (Gṛdhrakūṭa) and the realms of the Buddhas Akṣobhya, Amitābha, and Vairocana were formulated by early Common-Era dates.³⁶ Although, by this period, it is probable that representations of the transmundane realm of Śākyamuni's Vulture Peak and the Pure Lands of non-earthly Buddhas, such as Akṣobhya, Amitābha, and Vairocana, would have become suitable subject

matter, the carvings in this classification are characterized by the multiplicity of common features cited above. Although the Pure Land of Akṣobhya Buddha in the East is thought to have preceded that of Amitābha (also known as Amitāyus) in the West, ultimately, rebirth in the Pure Land of Amitābha became the most desired.³⁷ With rebirth in the realm of Amitābha, one is guaranteed the attainment of liberation from *samsāra*, with its countless rounds of rebirths.

Controversies are generally focused on the Buddhas Śākyamuni and Amitābha and their realms, and on the two complementary types of Bodhisattvas, the *brāhmaṇa*-Maitreya type and the Siddhārtha-Avalokiteśvara-Padmapāṇi type. Avalokiteśvara had become recognized in early Mahāyāna treatises as a primary Bodhisattva in the transmundane realms of both Śākyamuni and Amitābha.³⁸ Whereas Maitreya served as the primary reflex for Śākyamuni, he did not serve in that role for Amitābha. For Amitābha, Maitreya was replaced by Mahāsthāmaprāpta (“he who has attained great strength”). If, as some researchers have suggested, some reliefs and stelae represent Sukhāvātī (visions or displays of Amitābha’s paradise), it is possible that some Maitreya-type figures are early representations of Mahāsthāmaprāpta.

The Museum of Art and Archaeology Scene in Relation to Other Examples

In the unique example from the Museum of Art and Archaeology’s collection, the Buddha image is seated on a large lotus dais beneath the earthly *bodhi* or enlightenment tree of Śākyamuni, leaving no doubt that the Buddha image is an image of Śākyamuni (Fig. 1). He wears the three garments of a monk (*tricivara*). His long locks of wavy hair are drawn up and secured in a rounded chignon referred to as an *uṣṇīṣa*, a term that originally signified the raised part of the coiffure or a turban knot. Ultimately, it came to be regarded as a topknot of enlightened wisdom or a kind of protuberance, signifying a state of omniscience and emblematic of a Buddha’s advanced knowledge and consciousness. Between the brows of his partially closed eyes can be seen a small boss referred to as an *urnā*, an auspicious mark of a great man. He holds his hands at chest level in *dharmacakra mudrā* (gesture of teaching; setting the wheel of the law in motion). His legs are folded and interlocked with soles upward.

Flanking him are two bejeweled Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara and Maitreya. They are dressed in the manner of the Buddha and stand on lotus pedestals.

Avalokiteśvara is shown wearing a turban and holding a wreath in his left hand and a bouquet of lotus flowers in his right. Maitreya, the next future earthly Buddha, is shown with the hair on the top of his head drawn up and secured as a square knot. In his left hand, he holds a *kamaṇḍalu*. His right hand is raised in *abhaya mudrā*, a gesture of reassurance or protection given to the devotee.

The figure behind the Buddha's left shoulder, who cannot be identified with assurance, holds a garland against his chest. The bearded figure behind the Buddha's right shoulder, shown holding a thunderbolt, is Vajrapāṇi. Two smaller standing figures on the lower left and right sides appear to represent monk devotees. The positioning of the image of the Buddha beneath a *pīpal* tree, the depiction of the two Bodhisattvas on lotuses, and the presence of Vajrapāṇi, the constant companion of the historical Buddha as seen in innumerable narrative relief panels, make indisputable the assessments that the Buddha is Śākyamuni and that the Bodhisattvas are Maitreya and Avalokiteśvara.³⁹

For other visions or displays of paradisiacal realms, there is generally not enough evidence to identify conclusively either the images or a literary reference, not only because of the conventionalization of the image types but also because most of these stele and relief carvings have not been studied in detail. Like many others, there is, for example, an unidentified stele in the Peshawar Museum, configured with the conventionalized tripartite arrangement of a Buddha flanked by a *jaṭāmukuta*-wearing Bodhisattva with a flask and a turban-wearing Bodhisattva with a wreath (Fig. 33). In contrast to the museum's panel, the Buddha is positioned beneath a magical jewel-bearing floral canopy inhabited by diminutive beings or floral spirits. Brahmā and Indra are depicted behind the Buddha's shoulders, while above the heads of the Bodhisattvas two smaller Buddha images are seated on lotus daises in *dhyāna mudrā* (meditation position) within pillared and domed structures.⁴⁰

From a private collection, an additional, unidentified example displays an architectural setting. In accordance with the conventions for paradise imagery, the Buddha is again flanked by a *jaṭāmukuta*-wearing Bodhisattva with a flask and a turban-wearing Bodhisattva with a wreath (Fig. 34). A second scene at the top depicts a Buddha who is seated on a more fully opened lotus with his hand raised in *abhaya mudrā*. The primary attendants of the Buddha in this upper register are Indra and Brahmā.

In contrast, a stele from Mohammed Nari, now in the Central Museum, Lahore, has been studied in depth, with a number of thoughtful articles published.

This intricately carved and complex display shows a Buddha image surrounded by a multiplicity of images and image types, including, in the upper right and left corners, other Buddha images, emanating or creating additional Buddhas (Fig. 35).⁴¹ The Buddha is positioned beneath a canopy composed of the magical jewel-bearing flowers of paradise, while a pair of *mālādhārās* (garland bearers) suspend a laurel crown above his head. The primary Bodhisattvas, conventionally adorned with a *jaṭāmukūṭa* and turban, hold beaded garlands as offerings to honor the Buddha instead of their more typical attributes.

Just as *The Lotus Sūtra* is arguably the most esteemed *sūtra* in the Mahāyāna canon, so Sukhāvātī, the paradise of Amitābha, is arguably the most popular of all Buddhist blissful realms.⁴² Composed during the first several centuries of the Common Era, the three texts associated with Amitābha—the *Larger Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra*, the *Smaller Sukhāvātī-vyūha-sūtra*, and the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra*—are all concerned principally with rebirth in one, final extraordinary realm, but they also carry the spiritual authority of Śākyamuni, because they are believed to contain the words of the historical Buddha.⁴³ In Sukhāvātī, one is free from the torment and unhappiness of other worlds and guaranteed to attain liberation from the suffering rounds of transmigration. While this stele from Mohammed Nari has been widely analyzed, discussed, and published for many decades, a consensus still has not been reached as to whether the central Buddha represents Śākyamuni or Amitābha.

Conclusion

During the creative, vibrant, and cosmopolitan milieu of the first several centuries of the Common Era, a wide range of decorative and symbolic elements was developed. Some, introduced from beyond the confines of greater Gandhāra, were borrowed by the Buddhist communities, modified, or transformed and used in accordance with their own developing beliefs and practices. Research recognizes relief and stele visions or displays of Buddhist paradises, such as the relief panel in the Museum of Art and Archaeology, as major regional testaments to this process and to emerging Mahāyāna beliefs and practices.⁴⁴ The research also provides new and valuable insights into some of the most nuanced, sensitive, and intractable problems in the history of Buddhism, the identities of Gandhāran Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with their developing multiple functions and incarnations. At the same time, the relief and stele carvings also serve as reminders

of the spectacular Buddhist communities that once flourished in the greater Gandhāra region and of the far-reaching impact they were to have on Buddhist communities beyond the South Asian subcontinent. The Museum of Art and Archaeology's relief panel is an extraordinary work because of its complexity and its pristine condition, offering an aspect of clarity to a number of enigmatic issues and significantly enhancing the ongoing process of scholarly research.

NOTES

1. From the earliest periods, lotus garlands were incorporated into Buddhist monuments as auspicious and decorative architectural elements. In Gandhāran narrative relief carvings, single stems and bouquets were given as offerings to honor the living Buddha. Often shown as long garlands draped around the base of a *stūpa* (mortuary structure) they were presented to honor and pay homage to his remains. See Carolyn W. Schmidt, "Aristocratic Devotees in Early Buddhist Art from Greater Gandhāra: Characteristics, Chronology, and Symbolism," *South Asian Studies* 21 (2005) pp. 25–45; Susan L. Huntington with contributions by John C. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India* (New York and Tokyo, 1985) p. 740.
2. J. C. Harle, "Buddhist Art: Cult Symbols and Architecture," in Errington and Cribb, eds., *The Crossroads of Asia* (Cambridge, 1992) pp. 43–46.
3. The earliest extant images of the Buddha are in stone and date from about the turn of the Common Era. The majority of early images of Śākyamuni, Maitreya as a Bodhisattva, and other unidentified Buddhas are from Gandhāra.
4. It was not until the 1906–1907 season of the Archaeological Survey of India that the then director of the Survey, Dr. David Brainard Spooner, published both site plans and photographic materials with his annual reports for the Survey.
5. Kurt Behrendt, assistant curator, Department of Asian Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, noted in a private conversation in 2008 that among the enormous number of the extant relief carvings no fewer than 121 sets have been identified or reassembled.
6. For the predominant role of *yakṣas* (genii loci) in the development of early Buddhist imagery, see Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, "The Indian Origin of the Buddha Image," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 46 (1926), pp. 165–170; Coomaraswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (reprint New York, 1985) p. 37; and Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas* (reprint New Delhi, 1980). See also J. E. van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, "New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image," *South Asian Archaeology* 1979 (Berlin, 1997) p. 378.
7. Pairs of Bodhisattvas as primary reflexes do not occur in early reliefs. At some point, circa second century C.E., Brahmā and Indra are displaced by a complementary pair of Bodhisattvas. See Carolyn W. Schmidt, "The Wreath-Bearing Bodhisattva: Ongoing Typological Studies of Bodhisattva Images from Sahri-Bāhlol," *South Asian Archaeology* 2001 (Paris, 2005) pp. 637–648, figs. 20, 23–25.
8. Huntington, *Art*, p. 140.

9. In different types of Buddhism, various numbers of Buddhas of the past are cited (Huntington, *Art*, p. 722).
10. Carolyn W. Schmidt, "Ongoing Typological Studies of Bodhisattva Images from Greater Gandhāra: Four Jaṭāmukūṭa Conventions for Images of the Maitreya-type," *South Asian Archaeology* 2007 (Oxford, 2010) pp. 316–318.
11. John M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans* (Los Angeles, 1967) pp. 232, 312, n. 72, citing the *Sutta Nipāta*; Lord Chalmers trans., *Harvard Oriental Series* 37 (Cambridge, 1932) pp. 197, 235–273, especially p. 239; Lamotte, 1988, pp. 775–777.
12. R. C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathurā* (Delhi, 1984) pp. 107, 202, 1235. For inscribed images, see Rosenfield, *Dynastic*, pp. 299–300, pls. 32, 54; Christian Luczanits, "The Bodhisattva with the Flask in Gandhāran Narrative Scenes," *East and West* 55 (2005) pp. 180–181; Huntington, *Art*, p. 155, fig. 8.34.
13. Luczanits, "Bodhisattva," pp. 180–181; J. Cribb, "Kaniṣka's Buddha Coins," *Journal of the International Association for Buddhist Studies* 3:2 (1980) p. 81; J. Cribb, "Kaniṣka's Buddha Image Coins Revisited," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology* 6 (1999–2000) p. 177.
14. Only three examples of the *kaparda* (tresses spiraling upward like the top of a shell) were found among the 188 images in the research corpus of 2007. Seemingly none were created before the late first or early second century. See Schmidt, "Ongoing Typological Studies" pp. 3–5.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 5–7.
16. A. M. Niegorski, "The Iconography of the Herakles Knot and the Herakles-Knot Hairstyle of Apollo and Aphrodite," unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, 1995, p. 66.
17. Niegorski, "Iconography," pp. 66, 161, 187, 200, 226–227; W. Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. John Raffan (reprint Cambridge, 1985) pp. 144–145, 211; J. E. Harrison, *Themis: A Study of the Social Origins of Greek Religion* (Cambridge, 1927) pp. 376–381, 439–444; J. Boardman et al., "Herakles," *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* 5 (1990) p. 185; M. Bieber, *The Sculpture of the Hellenistic Age* (New York, 1961) p. 63.
18. Carolyn W. Schmidt, "Evidence Suggesting the Simultaneous Development of Two Forms of Avalokiteśvara in Ancient Greater Gandhāra: A Preliminary Report," *South Asian Archaeology* 2003 (Mainz am Rhein, 2005) pp. 403–410.
19. *Ibid.*
20. Rosenfield, *Dynastic*, pp. 238, 243; Giuseppe Tucci, "Buddhist Notes: á propos Avalokiteśvara," *Mélanges chinois et bouddhiques* 9 (1948–1951) pp. 174–176; Carolyn W. Schmidt, "Ongoing Studies of Bodhisattva Imagery from Greater Gandhāra: Turban Ornamentation in the Form of Winged-Lion Plaques," *South Asian Archaeology* 2010 (Vienna, 2013).
21. John C. Holt, *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka* (New York, 1991) pp. 33, 45; Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography, Mainly Based on the Sādhnamāla and Cognate Tāntric Texts of Ritual* (Calcutta, 1968) p. 143; Tove E. Neville, *Eleven-Headed Avalokiteśvara. Chenresigs, Kuan-yin or Kannon Bodhisattva: Its Origin and Iconography* (New Delhi, 1999) p. 14; Schmidt, "Ongoing... Turban Ornamentation."
22. David Brainerd Spooner, *Annual Report of the Archaeological Survey of India, Frontier Circle* (Peshawar, 1909–1910, part 2) p. 25.

23. Carolyn W. Schmidt, "The Gandhāran Wreath-Bearing Bodhisattva: Further Typological Studies," *South Asian Archaeology* 1999 (Groningen, 2008) pp. 329–330, n. 16.
24. J. Marshall, *The Buddhist Art of Gandhāra* (Karachi, 1973) pp. 26–52.
25. The discovery of a laurel diadem was attested during a conversation in 1993 with Dr. Farzand Durrani, vice chancellor of Peshawar University. A wreath composed of gold laurel leaves was brought to his office in the Department of Archaeology a few years earlier by a local resident. The individual said that he had found it on his personal property and would return with the headdress, but he did not. It is assumed either that it was melted down for the value of the gold or that it made its way onto the antiquities market.
26. John C. Huntington, "A Gandhāran Image of Amitāyus' Sukhāvateḥ," *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 40 (1980) p. 668.
27. Sahrī-Bāhlol is the only site distinguished thus far by the recovery of both independently sculpted wreath-bearers and paradisiacal scenes that include a diminutive counterpart of this type.
28. Huntington, *Art*, p. 275.
29. Similar examples present the Buddha seated on a rectangular plinth, which is positioned on a lotus, while the two Bodhisattvas are each seated in a position of royal ease (*rājatilāsana*) on a stool, placed on a lotus, as in a relief from Loriyān Tangai, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. See Carolyn W. Schmidt, *Bodhisattva Headdresses and Hair Styles in the Buddhist Art of Gandhāra and Related Regions of Swāt and Afghanistan* (Ann Arbor, 1991) p. 396, fig. 294. See also her "Reliefs and Stelae from Sahrī-Bāhlol: A Typological Study," in *Migration, Trade, and Peoples*, Part II: *Gandhāran Art* (London, 2009) pp. 89–107.
30. B. Watson, trans. *The Lotus Sūtra* (New York, 1993) p. xix, x.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. xix, 5. For a reference to the dais, posture, and gesture, see E. D. Saunders, *Mudrā: A Study of Symbolic Gestures in Japanese Buddhist Sculpture* (New York, 1960) p. 122.
32. A 1998 study of visions or displays of transmundane realms included fifty-two relief carvings and stelae, nineteen of which include a wreath-bearing Bodhisattva. Of the nineteen, ten are from Sahrī-Bāhlol, six are from unidentified locations, and three are, respectively, from Loriyān Tangai, Takht-i-Bāhī, and Taxila.
33. Huntington, "A Gandhāran Image," pp. 657–658; H. Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism: A Survey with Bibliographical Notes* (Delhi, 1987) pp. 177–178.
34. Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 177.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
36. Huntington, "A Gandhāran Image," p. 657.
37. Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 178.
38. Schmidt, "Gandhāran Wreath-Bearing," pp. 323–327; Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, pp. 177–178; Huntington, "A Gandhāran Image," pp. 657–658. Depending upon the version, Avalokiteśvara is known from either the twenty-fourth or twenty-fifth chapter of *The Lotus Sūtra*. For dates, see Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 180. The name Avalokiteśvara also occurs in the *Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha*. The *Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha* is presumed to have been compiled, perhaps in the Gandhāra region, during the first and second centuries C.E. There is no doubt as to its existence before 200 C.E.

- (Nakamura, *Indian Buddhism*, p. 205). For a translation, see F. Max Muller, trans. *The Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha in Sacred Books of the East* (Oxford, 1894; reprint Delhi, 1985) vol. 49, part II, p. xxiii.
39. Schmidt, "Evidence Suggesting," pp. 407–409; Schmidt, "Gandhāran Wreath-Bearing," pp. 323–330, figs. 28.10–28.25.
 40. I. Lyons and H. Ingholt, *Gandhāra Art in Pakistan* (New York, 1957) pp. 120–121, fig. 254.
 41. Saunders, *Mudrā*, p. 9; Schmidt, "Gandhāran Wreath-Bearing," pp. 321–323; Schmidt, "Reliefs and Stelae," pp. 89–107. For thoughtful observations concerning the identity of this stele, see Huntington, "A Gandhāran Image," pp. 651–672; A. M. Quagliotti, "Another Look at the Mohammed-Nari Stele with the So-Called 'Miracle of Śrāvastī,'" *Annali dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 56.2 (1996) pp. 1–16.
 42. Luis O. Gomez, *Land of Bliss* (Honolulu, 1996) p. ix.
 43. *Ibid.*, *Land*, p. 95.
 44. Schmidt, "Gandhāran Wreath-Bearing," pp. 317–335; Schmidt, "Evidence Suggesting," pp. 403–410; Schmidt, "Wreath-Bearing," pp. 637–648.

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