

Hindu Deities in Gandharan Art

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Extraordinary Hindu icons come from Gandhara . This may surprise some since the region is closely associated with Buddhist art from the many Buddhist shrines and monuments dotting the landscape . However Gandhara was not cut off from the heartland of early Hinduism in the Gangetic Valley . Trade, politics and cultural exchanges brought the two regions into social contact and this facilitated the implantation of religious ideas and exchanges . During the Kushan Period , Gandhara became a political part of the heartland. Both were integrated into the Kushan Empire that extended from parts of Central Asia through the Northwest of the subcontinent , into northern India and up to Bengal and the Narmada River.

It is not accidental that the Gandharan Hindu icons begin to date mainly from the Kushan Period and onwards. Icons of Indian deities - Hindu, Buddhist, Jain - start to be fashioned several centuries prior, but it is during the Kushan Age that a flowering of religious imagery occurred and that - importantly - early Hinduism was open to an exchange of ideas with outlying cultures. The age , often called the Pax Kushana, profited from a growing cosmopolitanism . Foreigners had been coming as conquerors, traders and settlers to parts of Afghanistan as well as Gandhara , and sometimes outsiders came even as envoys to regions in the subcontinent . Some of these embraced Hinduism and other travelers may simply have contributed towards a readiness for Hindus to travel from India into areas , such as Greater Gandhara , where they were far from centers of their own faith and traditions. Hindu traditions relating to rites, rituals and codes of behavior were encoded in Brahmanical texts used by the officiating Brahman priests .

Interactions between Gandhara and the subcontinent, especially with the bastion of Brahmanic culture , namely the town of Mathura, is proven by finds of material exchange dating to the Kushan Period . Stool - querns and athletic weights from Mathura were imported into Gandhara . Decorated grinding stones or slab-querns from Andhra Pradesh also were imported into the Northwest . Probably the fine quality of the stone from these external regions prompted importation. Buddhism was brought into Gandhara from India during the time of the Mauryan Empire and although Buddhist art of Gandhara assimilated the visual vocabulary from Pre-Kushan and Kushan experiments made mainly further south, Gandhara often introduced its own idiosyncratic and original modes of expression. It is the same with Hindu icons from Gandhara . Although they are far less in number , they often show features untried further south. Possible reasons for iconographic and stylistic distinctiveness in Gandharan art may be that this was a multicultural region that had been

actively fostering its own indigenous crafts and artisans while it was actively absorbing outside influences.

A relief which encapsules Gandhara's readiness to both assimilate and innovate is a Buddhist relief depicting the form of the Bodhisattva, seated in the meditative pose, and emanating figures to either side. (Pl. 1 .) Several forms emanating from the Bodhisattava are Hindu deities. One may be the god Brahma or a Brahman; two specifically relate to Saivism, or the cult devoted to Siva. The middle form emanating from the left side of the Bodhisattva depicts Siva. The middle form issuing from the Bodhisattva's right side depicts Skanda/Karttikeya, who in time, is recognized as the son of Siva. Apparently, Saivism in Gandhara was not in conflict with Gandharan Buddhism.

It is easy to identify the emanating figure as Siva even though the god's head has broken off; the form exhibits three unmistakable Gandharan characteristics of Siva. He is ithyphallic and holds the trident and ascetic's water jug (*kamandalu*) in his right and left hands, respectively. Mathura also developed a preeminent school of art which is recognized as being contemporary with the Gandharan school - and in contact with it. The Mathura School of Art likewise fashioned images of Siva. Except for the trident which does not appear in Mathura icons of Siva, the other emblems seen on the Gandharan emanating figure, as well as the dress, are standard Mathura features associated with Siva. Gandhara's *saiva* devotees probably shared some beliefs with devotees in the Hindu heartland. Gandharan art contains examples (albeit only a few), of the three main religious typologies attesting to greatness of Siva. Religious notions inhering in these three typologies - the *linga* (that is, the phallic symbol), the *mukhalinga* (god's form proceeding from out of the *linga*) and god's fully revealed form - were probably developed in the heartland.

To the Pan-Indic devotee of Siva the fundamental nature and power of the Siva Reality is expressed by this threefold typology. The *Linga*, as also the ithyphallic god, express Siva's creative capacity. For the devotee, the Siva Reality is the sole creator of the phenomenal world and the plain *Linga* is the sign of this supernal, cosmic Power. The Siva Reality unfolds into the phenomenal world by stages. In the first stage Siva emerges from out of the *Linga* (the theological significance of the *Mukhalinga*), and in the fully emerged stage, he is represented in his anthropomorphic form. This form, called Mahesa or Mahesvara, is the one that god usually shows to his devotees. Two, possibly three, Gandharan Mahesa icons can be cited as examples; each is distinct from Gangetic portrayals of Mahesa.

The third century A.D. image from the collection of the Linden Museum, now broken

below the neck, is nonetheless an impressive Mahesa (Pl.2.) . Were it intact , it would have been the only known free-standing, four- headed *saiva* icon in Gandhara from this early period. The finely modeled central, frontal face displays a vertical third eye and the ascetic's locks . On that account, it could represent the face revealing the Yogi nature of Siva Mahesvara . Various aspects of Mahesa are represented by the extra heads so that the devotee may grasp the extraordinary powers of the Creator . In Gangetic sculptures, Mahesa usually has contrasting human side heads which symbolize the tranquil and terrifying aspects of the divinity. But whereas the side heads in the Linden Museum image are differentiated , they do not exhibit the features usually identifying Siva's terrific and tranquil aspects. The fourth head in back of the Linden Museum image may represent a semi-divine attendant or follower (*gana*) of Siva . This multi-headed sculpture is an important reminder that *saiva* religious symbolism attributes five heads to Siva ,but since the fifth head is transcendental , four heads are usually found on icons of the god conceived in the round , whereas three are usually represented on two-dimensional reliefs, coins and seals .

The Akhun Dheri plaque from the Peshawar Museum (Pl. 3) helps us to visualize what a free-standing sculpture , such as the Linden Museum fragment , may have looked like even though the plaque is made at least 100 years later . Siva Mahesa shows three heads and six arms. Standing in front of Nandi ,the bull ,Siva is ithyphallic as in the Peshawar relief emanation. The god's central face is imperturbable and framed by differentiated human side heads as in the Linden Museum fragment. His hair is piled up like that of an ascetic, or *yogi* and he wears a *dhoti* and shawl . This Mahesa exhibits several traits that remind of the earlier Siva figure emanating from the Bodhisattva . The Akhun Dheri figure is adorned with a beaded necklace and the sacred brahmanic thread. Some attributes held in his hands still remain : the staff, presumably of the trident, is seen on the right and the water pot (*kamandalu*) as well as the thunderbolt or *vajra* are on the left . Nandi, the theriomorphic form of the god stands behind him and lowers his head to the feet of his master . Although Nandi and Siva are already depicted on early Kushan coinage of Vima Khadphises , to date , no Kushan coinage prior to Vasudeva I (c. 191-227 A.D), is known that shows Nandi together with a multi-headed , multi-armed Siva . [*But a six- armed Siva as in the plaque , is not known on coins , so this must be considered a rare type of depiction. (omit)*]

The small Gandharan three headed *saiva* relief , from the Museum fur Indische Kunst , portrays the side heads that are animal heads (Pl. 4) .The icon, dated to the reign of Huviska (c. mid to near end of 2nd century A.D.) , incorporates many characteristics of Mahesa : his third eye , the erect phallus, the ascetic's hair here styled into a conical shape, the brahmanic thread plus the water pot and trident . The god's central face sports a moustache while his lateral heads are probably a lion and an antelope, to-date a unique

Gandharan combination which may express the terrifying and tranquil aspects of Mahesa. But perhaps this portrayal, difficult to interpret, does not represent Mahesa. Another Gandharan *saiva* example, dated to c. the fourth century A.D. in the Italian Pontecorvo Collection also has side animal heads but these have the features of a boar and a bovine, possibly Siva's bull (Taddei, *SAA 1983*, Fig. 1). Again, the central head is human and has a moustache but a slanting third eye. Recent discovery of a hoard of more than 4,000 Kushan gold coins contains a commemorative coin type which opens a new chapter for understanding these multi-headed depictions. On the reverse of a coin probably attributable to the reign of the Kushan king Vima Khadphises, the god is shown with possibly an antelope head on the right side and possibly a human head on the other side. The god is not ithyphallic, though he holds the trident and an antelope skin. These examples, though they are few, convey the complexities and agglutinative process engaging Gandharan artists as they toiled for several centuries to introduce *saiva* images to a population which might have identified the Hindu god with one or more of their preexisting local gods.

Skanda/Karttikeya is well represented in Gandharan art because he melds smoothly and experientially into the world view of the ancient Northwest. He is seen as basically an aggressive divinity whose martial traits characterize both his imagery as well as the bellicose Northwestern culture which depicts him. Gandharan artists picture him as a warrior and dress him like a foreign, western soldier. That is how he is represented emanating from the seated Bodhisattva, noted above. (Pl. I). The haloed god wears a turban and a coat of mail over an undergarment. He holds a spear in his right hand and a cock in his left hand, poised at the waist.

Single images of this god can be found throughout Gandhara attesting to the broad appeal of his worship. More of his icons than any other Hindu god can be identified in the art of the Northwest. About a decade ago, 24 Skanda/Karttikaya images dated between the 1st through 7th century could be counted (Srinivasan, *SRAA*, 252). And more are continuing to come to light, including an important sculpture described below (Pl. 6). In these, he sometimes carries additional weapons such as the bow and arrows, and he may sometimes wear a helmet, plus leggings or sandals on his feet. Despite slight variations in weaponry, footgear, or headgear, it is easy to spot an early Gandharan image of Skanda/Karttikeya. No other deity has both a spear and a cock as emblems. Why would a warrior hold a cock? Cocks jump with agility when fighting and this habit is emblematic of the military prowess befitting a Warrior God. It is also a characteristic of the original nature of this god who may have initially been a folk deity. Later Gandharan images of Skanda/Karttikeya portray him less as a warrior and more as the youthful commander of the army of the gods.

This portrayal , under the influence of earlier Mathura depictions , does not occur in Gandhara until around 400 years after the Kushan images.

Noteworthy is that Gandharan representations of this god start from the Kushan Period and continue in the region. Post - Kushan icons of Skanda/Karttikeya , both as Warrior God and as Youthful Commander show iconographic features which reflect interactions between Gandhara and India . Artistic influences went in both directions. The sculpture of Skanda/Karttikeya , the Warrior , seated assertively on his *vahana*, the peacock (Pl.5) , clearly combines his Gandharan type of dress, headgear and weaponry with early Gupta developments . The god on the peacock whose feathers spread out behind him , reminds of the majestic version developed in the Gupta art (see Williams, *Gupta India* , #103). It is true that already in the late-to-post Kushan period , the peacock appears in Gandharan images of Skanda/Karttikeya . But the flourish of feathers around a god seated boldly on his *vahana* probably owes inspiration to the beautiful coinage of the Gupta king Kumara (415-454) , who favoured this god and minted an exquisite coin of Skanda on the peacock (see Stoler Miller , *Powers*, Fig. 10) .Thus, the Gandharan relief,perhaps of the early 5th century A.D., shows southerly influence while maintaining an indigenous emphasis on the might and prowess of the Warrior God.

The mighty Warrior God swings into action in one truly remarkable Gandharan relief (Pl.6) . It shows Skanda/Karttikeya victorious over a demonic foe with an animal head . The foe lies vanquished beneath the striding conqueror. Haloed Skanda/Karttikeya displays his standard dress and weaponry . What is unique in this relief is the subject matter . Skanda/Karttikeya has just subdued the buffalo demon , the Asura Mahisa . The feat is well known in art and literature where it is ascribed to Durga, an aspect of the Great Goddess, Devi. Indeed the well known epithet of the Goddess , Mahisasuramardini , commemorates her killing the Asura Mahisa. Less well known is that this feat was first performed by the Warrior God . A passage in the Mahabharata attributes the slaying of Mahisa to Skanda/Karttikeya (see Srinivasan , *Many Heads* , pp. 302-3). The goddess's action, it seems, is a later interpolation in the Mahabharata. But until Christian Luczanits recently found this relief in the Peshawar Museum , no visual example illustrating Skanda's deed was known. It is significant that the depiction comes from Gandhara and not Mathura, which was, after all, the main seedbed for the development of Hindu iconography including that of the Warrior Goddess fighting the buffalo demon. Indeed, in Kushan images from Mathura , the death of the demon by the Goddess is rendered less as an actual slaying with weapons and more as a throttle , possibly a (ritual?) strangulation. Not until 5th century Gupta art is the Goddess's throttle dispensed with and she is shown slaying the demon with lethal weaponry while her foot pins him down. This Gandharan relief is therefore remarkable not only because, to-date, it is the first example of Skanda's victory

over Mahisa , but also because it fills the gap between Kushan and Gupta portrayals of Mahisasuramardini. Here is an instance where Gupta Hindu art adopted imagery developed in Gandharan art of the Northwest .

Oddly enough , there is no feminine Gandharan precedent for Mathura's Warrior Goddess who fights the buffalo. There are fierce female goddesses depicted in Gandharan Hindu art . A malevolent Mother Goddess - discussed above - is one such dangerous deity ; but she is unrelated to the myth and imagery of the Goddess killing the buffalo. The Gandharan Warrior God is Skanda/Karttikeya . The female counterpart to the Buffalo-Slayer is developed in the South.

What impels her development? A second century Mathura Hindu relief may give some insight (Pl.7) . A multi-armed goddess stands straight and proud upon her *vahana* , the lion , possibly emphasizing her warlike character . But no adversary is in view . The menacing weapons about her are actually later additions; originally she was two-armed , holding a spear or sceptre in her left hand while the right is poised in *abhaya mudra*. Adorned in a typically Indian manner, she wears a thin *dhoti* held by a girdle around her waist. A shawl drapes over her bare torso . The short dagger and the shield are reworkings. So is the carving on the left resulting in the clumsy-looking trident. In short, this image has been transformed. Possibly Mesopotamian-Bactrian Nana, the Goddess on the Lion, supplied the foundation upon which the iconography of Mathura's Warrior Goddess is based. She becomes a popular goddess in this town as indicated by the many small Kushan reliefs from Mathura of the multi-handed Warrior Goddess holding Mahisa in her deadly grip .

In sum, Gandharan art is a tapestry of choices made by artists from the land's rich multicultural heritage. Why certain combinations and certain Hindu deities were chosen can only sometimes be determined:

The region's warring ethos and exposure to the Graeco-Roman hero - cult could favour depiction of Skanda/Karttikeya as well as the legendary heroes (Viras) of Mathura. To date, the northern regions contain the first anthropomorphic forms of the Viras Vasudeva-Krsna and Samkarsana/Balarama . An invader's religious preference may also come into play. For example, Mathura's Warrior Goddess may be influenced, in part , by outside depictions of Nana, the most important deity in the pantheon worshiped by the Kushan king, Kanishka and prevalent on his coinage .

Depiction of the Hindu Sun God, Surya, may be an example of visual retention. Surya appears twice in Gandharan art riding a quadriga which may reflect the much earlier Graeco-Bactrian representation of a solar deity (see Rosenfield , *Dynastic Arts*, Pls. 88 and 89) . .

Siva's iconography is most complex since it brings together features from different

cultures . In connection with the images discussed above, the trident and thunderbolt stem from Classical art ; the lateral animal heads are problematic and remain undecipherable; his other attributes, including the convention of multiple bodily parts , arise from within Brahmanic/ early Hindu belief systems . However the full range and considerable variety of Siva's Gandharan iconography seen on coins , seals and sculpture is a topic that still awaits analysis . Northwestern inscriptions prove that the people were certainly familiar with his name ; it is inscribed on rocks and seals (Fussman, "Chilas", p. 12) . Possibly Siva's various depictions are therefore due to a desire to mesh Siva with the different local gods established in the vast Kushan Empire.

Hindu Goddess Sri, resting on a cornucopia, can be identified in one Gandharan sculptural fragment because her name is inscribed on the base(see Fussmann in *Annali*). Were it not, the female's identity could veer towards the Bactrian Goddess of Good Fortune and Abundance, Ardoxsho , whose attribute is the cornucopia. In ascribing the cornucopia to Sri, Goddess of Wellbeing and Prosperity , the Gandharan artist may have associated the emblem of one goddess of good fortune to another having a similar domain of power The fragment may well have been part of a larger Buddhist scene wherein Sri gave homage or was subordinate to some Buddhist deity - much like the Hindu deities in the small Buddhist relief mentioned at the outset (Pl. I) .

Brahmanic gods Brahma and Indra appear regularly in certain Buddhist narratives, as for example, the Birth of the Buddha. They occur in Gandharan sculptures not because they have a cult following in the North but rather to show that Brahmanic deities were present and rejoiced at momentous Buddhist events .

Visnu's Gandharan icons are rare in this early period. Two can be cited . One is a magnificent Visnu in his Boar incarnation , coming from Bannu , NWFP . It may date between the third - fourth century . The other is a rather famous glyptic in the British Museum (No. 1892.11-3.98) of four-armed Visnu being worshipped by a nobleman from Iranian Central Asia , dating between the 4th - 5th century A.D., that is after the Kushan Period. These Visnu images hint of a broader phenomenon, namely that Hindu deities continue to be fashioned and worshipped in the Northwest after the 3rd, even the 4th, century A.D. Some true masterpieces of Hindu divinities are made , as for example the brass Para Vasudeva - Narayana (Pl. 8) . These post-Kushan images attest to the continued creativity and vibrancy of workshops in the Northwest .

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Many Cultures , Many Gods

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Multiculturalism and Gandharan art are usually mentioned in the same breath . The diverse nature of Gandharan art needs to be placed into a context that describes the many cultures gathered together , like spokes around a hub. Sometimes, however , a picture can substitute for a thousand words , especially if - as in this context - the picture, or rather the image exemplifies Gandhara's multicultural layers in a single representation. Such an image is on an engraved gem from Kabul .A concise synopsis of the many cultures entering Gandhara can be efficiently introduced by describing this extraordinary gem found in the bazaar in 1973.

Here is a cultural palimpsest worthy of careful unravelling . So, let us we strip away the layers that account for the multicultural components in the goddess's imagery and discover the turbulent history of Greater Gandhara embedded within each layer . A story of influences will unfold that also helps to situate and understand many other objects .

The most ancient layer is the Greek one accounting for the recognizable aspects of Tyche (called Fortuna by the Romans) . We are reminded that Alexander the Great conquered not only the Achaemenian Empire in Persia (ancient Iran) , but also its possessions farther East in Bactria and Sogdiana (roughly corresponding to northern Afghanistan and modern Tadjikistan and Uzbekistan), above the Hindu Kush Mountains . Alexander marched into the land below the Hindu Kush as well . This land included the Achaemenian satrapy already then known as Gandhara plus regions that would become part of what we now call Greater Gandhara . After Alexander's death in 323 B.C., two historical developments occurred that leave their traces on our gem : Alexander's conquests south of the Hindu Kush, in what is now southern Afghanistan and Pakistan, could not be sustained . An aggressive Indian dynasty under Chandragupta Maurya (c. 311 - 287 B.C.) was emerging and filled the power vacuum. The Mauryas entered these parts , taking over the regions in c. 303 B.C. and ruling in Gandhara for more than a century. To this enlargement of their empire , we owe the introduction into the Northwest of Buddhism and aspects of Pan-Indic culture . Alexander's conquest below the Hindu Kush was thus short-lived ,but to the North, his succesors, the Seleucids, retained Bactria , Sogdiana and some western parts of the former Achaemenian Empire (Parthia and Aria, namely northwestern Afghanistan). Greek colonists therefore remained far longer north of the Hindu Kush Mountains where they retained Greek customs and culture .

By around 250 B.C. a break-away local Seleucid govenor established an independent

Graeco-Bactrian kingdom in which Greek art and architecture, religion, language, theater, philosophy and education flourished for more than another century. Then the kingdom toppled under the pummeling of nomadic invaders, the Scythians (referred to as Sakas in the subcontinent), and the Yuezhi. (The nomadic dress consisting of a tailored tunic, sometimes belted and embroidered, trousers, and boots is seen in Pl. 2. Saidu M. 070310-379-03 and Pl. 3 Peshaw. Mus. 070307-283-04). By c. 130 B.C., the Greeks had lost control of Bactria, and by 70 B.C., they abandoned the Kabul region to the Yuezhi, predecessors of the Kushans.

These events affected Gandharan art. Inferior coinage from the Bactrian region and eastern Afghanistan south of the Hindu Kush, dating between c. the end of the second century B.C. to the beginning of the first century B.C. tells us that when the Greeks abandoned the regions for Greater Gandhara they took with them their best engravers. Their excellent engraving tradition, as seen in the minting and jewelry workshops in Taxila (see seal and brooch in Plates 4 and 5, 0009640 and 0009641, respectively with the figures of Eros and Psyche) continued till c. 55 B.C. In addition, Greek craftsmanship was alive at the Gandharan urban center of Barikot in Swat. Archaeological levels of this ancient town date between second century B.C. through mid-first century A.D., and the levels indicate Graeco-Bactrian artistic penetration. During that extended time, Greek artisans and local artisans, some of whom were trained by the Greeks, transmitted Hellenic art and culture into Gandharan soil. To say it in another way, it is not at all strange to find a gem engraved in the Northwest - as the Kharosthi inscription shows - that depicts transformations of the Greek goddess Tyche seated above the Greek River God in a manner reminiscent of the Hellenistic model from Antioch. The events described thus far also provide a context for the Taxila incense burner with its handle in the shape of a winged lion recalling the popular Achaemenian griffin motif (Pl. 6; 20070919. 766).

Whereas the Mauryas were probably the first to bring Brahmanic, Hindu and Pan-Indic folk beliefs into the Northwest, it is not until second half of 1st century B.C. that we can say with certainty that Gajalakshmi is known in the North. She and her lotus-borne, lustrating elephants on lotuses appear on the coins of the Indo-Scythian ruler Azilises (c. 40 -30 B.C.). Within the Pan-Indic context, Lakshmi's elephants are symbolic of waters, especially lustrating waters. Perhaps in the North, this motif continues to denote some sort of investiture, or validation, and could symbolize enthronement and authority on the gem.

The Indo-Scythians (or Sakas), penetrated into India from several directions, one of which took them through Gandhara and into Taxila and the Punjab. Pushed from behind by the Yuezhi, the Sakas, sometime during the second - first century B.C. migrated from Bactria, crossed the Hindu Kush in Afghanistan and settled in parts of Gandhara where

they displaced the Indo-Greeks . However between c. 90 - 55 B.C. the Indo-Greeks and Sakas were engaged in taking and retaking parts of the Punjab , including the city of Taxila and, in Gandhara, the city of Puskalavati . By the mid 1st century B.C. , a second wave of Sakas came from the south-east into Gandhara and “despoiled the remaining Greeks of their best workshops, which continued to turn out the same high quality of production for the new masters” (Callieri, 2006 , p. 12) . Skilled engravers now worked for the Sakas and kept alive not only stylistic techniques but also Classical iconography .

The Parthians had likewise been under the Greek Seleucids, and , after 64 B.C. were the neighbors, traders and rivals of Rome. In effect , Parthian contact with Gandhara , through trade and conquest , widened considerably Gandhara’s artistic horizon . The attributes of the goddess on our gem are associated with the Iranian Goddess Ardoxsho, and they identify her on Parthian coins. A small stone sculpture from Sirkap, Taxila (Pl.7 Karac. Mus. CL07 DSC 5776) depicting a draped, seated goddess wearing a *polos* and holding a cornucopia could reflect Parthian penetration , as does the elegant wine goblet from Taxila (Pl. 8 ;Taxila Mus. 070305-215- 05). The seated goddess from Sirkap , a Pre-Kushan stratum of Taxila , dates within the first half of the first century A.D , the time of Indo-Parthian penetration there.The Sirkap goddess reflects the Parthian hieratic style in the facial treatment ; the way her right hand is cradled in the heavy drapery fold is a Parthian adaptation from Roman sculpture .The convention continues and can be seen occasionally in Kushan Buddhist art , as demonstrated by the small Buddha from the Lahore Museum (Pl. 9; 070228-137-05) . The Sirkap female may represent Ardoxsho, or an amalgamation of Ardoxsho and Tyche / Fortuna , the prototypes for Ardoxsho. Aspects of the Mother Goddess, often called Hariti, could be folded into her persona as well .

These successive invasions into Gandhara expanded the repertoire of its art and infused it with enormous variety and vitality . The Classical tradition , introduced by the Indo-Greeks and sustained by both the Sakas and Parthians, influenced numerous Gandharan art forms:

In architecture, Pre-Kushan pseudo-Corinthian capitals with busts arising from acanthus leaves show an awareness of the Greek order (Pl. 10 ; SaiduM 070310-396-06) .

Sculptural forms such as the robust representation of an Atlantid borrow from Roman sculpture (e.g. Pl. 11; 20070915-6395) . The impressive female wearing a helmet and holding a spear may represent Athena or personified Roma (Pl. 12; Lahore Mus. 070227-131-02).

Themes from Classical mythology are evident on stone toilet trays which are often carved in a naturalistic , lively style . Such themes include Apollo by the side of Daphne at the moment of her metamorphosis (Pl. 13; Karac. Mus.CL07-DSC5708) ; Aphrodite chastizing Eros with her sandal , a purely classical motif given a few Indian touches , such as bangles for the Goddess and anklets for Eros (Pl. 14; Brit.Mus. 1973-6-18-1); Horsemen

executing a half-turn riding maneuver , a motif associated with the mounted Dioscuri on Indo-Greek and Saka coins (Pl. 15; Karach. Mus. CL07-DSC5718); the Classical figure of a triton shown with the oriental sea monster , the *makara* , plus eastern decorations such as lotus petals and a central rosette(Pl. 16; TaxilMu. 070304-180-04) ; a drinking scene composed of Greek and local elements (Pl. 17; Pesh.Mus 070307-319-03) .The drinking couple in the upper section is dressed in a Greek manner and encircled by a reconfigured laurel leaf garland; but the back of this toilet tray features a lotus flower.

Blending Eastern and Western decorations in a drinking scene is a useful reminder that viticulture and drinking wine were native to ,and practiced in, both cultures. The Taxila copper embossed vine leaf may well represent a decorative pattern observed from nature and not necessarily due to Roman influence . (Pl.18; Taxi. Mus. 070305-206-03). Perhaps the acquaintance with viticulture common to both these Eastern and Western lands allowed for the frequent incorporation of Bacchanalian scenes and Dionysian motifs into Gandharan Buddhist art . A spirited Bacchanalian scene on the base of a statue framed by lions' paws, shows maenads drinking while seated on the laps of silenai (Pl.19 LahorMus. 070228-143-05). In Gandhara , wine was stored precisely as shown in the relief of the corpulent drinker on the Chakdara Museum relief (.Pl.20; 070309-360 03) . It was placed in the cavity of an animal skin and poured from the neck. A similar wineskin held by a drinker is represented on a c. 2nd century silver dish , found in the Punjab and now in the British Museum (Acc. No. OA 1937.3-19.1) .

The layer of the gem pertaining to the Mother Goddess probably arises from the Pan-Indic cultural context . Her signposts are the two children reaching for the hands of the goddess the way children in Gandharan art of the Kushan Period vie for the touch of the Buddhist Mother Goddess, often considered to be Hariti (Pl 21;Lahore Mus 070227-125-02 ; Pl. 22 Pesh. Univ. Mus .070309-335-03) . The children's gestures on the gem indicate this is a nurturing goddess , just as the Buddhist Hariti in the Gandharan sculptures (Plates 21 and 22) is a Goddess who nurtures children , having changed from being an ogress who eats them . But, there are other deities in Folk Cults , in Hinduism , and even in Buddhism who are Mother Goddesses . Popular cults devoted to such deities were to be found all over India. The *Mahabharata* , in the Book of Salya says as much, when it states that *Matrkas* , or Mothers, speak different languages.. Some of these Mothers are nurturing , but others, - as discussed below - can be quite the opposite . Therefore not every female depicted with children on a Kushan object needs to be thought of as a 'Hariti' .Indeed, at present , the earliest known and unequivocal Buddhist reference to the worship of representations of Hariti in the Northwest dates to the 7th century A.D . It still needs to be determined whether the deity surrounded by so many children in Gandharan art of the Kushan Period can actually be labeled ' Hariti ' . A few Northwestern seals dated to the Kushan Period show an infant stretching the hands towards a female personage,

considered as a fertility goddess (possibly Ardoxsho) but not necessarily as 'Hariti' . (see Callieri, 1997 ;Cat. Nos. U.7.20; U. 7.22 pages 196 - 197) . An image found in an early (or Pre-) Kushan stratum of the Buddhist Stupa at Butkara and dated to the first century A.D. is considered as 'Hariti' by the excavator (Pl.23 Saidu M. 070310-397- 08) . This is a gentle but childless female , possibly wearing a turreted crown , who holds flowers in one hand and makes a gesture signifying protection with the other hand. But the Butkara female lacks sufficient attributes associated with Hariti to securely identify her as this deity. Some examples - and complexities- associated with depictions of Hariti are described in the essay by Anna Maria Quagliotti , below. Although the connection between Gandharan images of Hariti and Gandharan images of Mothers Goddesses still needs to be worked out, it is becoming progressively clearer that both may have arisen from the same source, namely widespread folk beliefs. This could even make it possible that certain Mothers entered Hinduism and Buddhism from the same source as the populace devoted to folk beliefs converted into the higher religions. Consequently , it may be possible to find a Mother Goddess depicted in Gandharan art that exhibits Hindu iconography and another Mother Goddess conventionally thought of as the Buddhist Mother Goddess . Both, for the time being, could provisionally be called the Hindu and the Buddhist 'Hariti' (see below) .

The goddess on the Kabul gem , who folds into herself the myriad , complex, and varied symbols of many different cultures bespeaks of an exceptional artistic and cultural environment . Quite possibly, the historical impetus which could account for such a form to be created could only have resulted from the historical events set into motion by the Pre- and early Kushans. They brought together peoples from widely separated territories replete with different gods and unified these into one political entity within which safe travel and communication was usually possible .

The great Kushan king Kujula Khadphises laid the foundation for the far-flung Kushan Empire that Kaniska subsequently ruled . Already after Kujula had taken Bactria , he made forays south of the Hindu Kush . During the first part of the first century A.D. , he extended Kushan power into the Northwest, as is evidenced by 2500 of his coins found at Sirkap, Taxila . A Sirkap stucco head of a bearded Satyr has been recently dated to the time of Kujula Kahphises (Pl. 24 ; 20070919- 722 NEF) . Three generations after Kujula , the Kushan Empire extended from Bactria to Bengal and included the regions from modern Tadjikistan, Uzbekistan, to parts of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and northern India up to Bengal and the Narmada. During the height of its power, the Kushan Empire introduced a period of peace and it sustained the prosperity already existing under Sakas and Indo-Parthians. Kushans ensured that trade routes running through the Empire remained active and secure. A major entrepot , Begram in Greater Gandhara, played an important role already by the

1st century A.D. in the international trade going between Rome and China along Central Asia's Silk Route .Finds from this site testify to Begram's international trade connections : exquisitely carved Indian ivories, Chinese laquers, and articles from the West such as Roman plaster casts (Pl. 25 Guim. MA 194) ; a bronze bust of Athena(Pl. 26; Guim 99.149) ; a glass goblet painted with Classical mythological scenes (Pl. 27;Gui. 21228b) . Gandhara's centers were directly linked , by overland routes and mountain passes to Begram. Thus a series of sites from Peshawar to Taxila plus ancillary sites were connected along a major extension of the Northern Pathway or Uttarapatha , which continued into Gangetic India and traversed into Bengal . This chain of passageways linking the Empire may seem far-flung , but it was only one of several networks passing through the Northwest allowing art, ideas, commerce and people to move within the Empire. Along these routes came not only traders and foreigners travelling southward , but also Buddhists , as monks and merchants, plus Hindus travelling northward from India . Roads and trading stations were the backbone upholding interconnections within the Empire and facilitating Gandharan art to mirror multiculturalism .

Of the many gods made by Gandharan artisans, none inspired a larger number than those stemming from the Buddhist faith .They would have been incorporated into Buddhist monastic establishments , composed of *stupas* and *viharas* , constructed all over the region. The faith fostered large and small cult images of the Buddha and didactic narratives of his life which were installed around a *stupa* ; that way when the devotee circumambulated the *stupa* , he would be instructed by this exemplary life . Gandharan monastic establishments were not alone in portraying these subjects ; Buddhist monasteries all over India did too .However , important features characterize Gandharan Buddhist art that distinguish it from early Buddhist art in India at localities such as Mathura, Andhra Pradesh and the Deccan. Those Gandharan Buddhist features , reflecting distinct cultural and possibly religious orientations , merit special consideration:

For example , two large Buddhas from the Peshawar Museum (Pl. 28 Pesh.M 070307-263-13 and Pl.29 PeshM. 070307-278-04) illustrate how much the Buddha's northern dress differs from his light ascetic attire in Mathura art (Pl.30 Mathura LindenM 187 36) . The treatment of the Buddha's heavy robe with its ample folds shows acquaintance with the imagery of the Roman toga ; depiction of this type of monk's covering must reflect the actual dress of Gandharan monks since the lighter wear was known in the North, as demonstrated by the recovery of a Mathura relief from Taxila (Pl. 31 Tax.Mus.070 304-197-02).

Gandharan art more than the other schools of art expanded upon the details in the Buddha's life . Scenes depicting the Measuring the Buddha; The White Dog that Barked; The Buddha's Battle with the Black Serpent in the Temple (Pl. 32 Lahore Mus. 070226-121-01) are hard to find elsewhere in contemporary Indian Buddhist art . Bodhisattvas are also more frequently represented in Gandharan art , and in greater variety than elsewhere .

Later Gandharan Buddhist art conceives of complex compositions , sometimes incorporating Bodhisattvas, which ought to reflect more developed religious and theological ideas and practices. Images of triads (the Buddha flanked by two Bodhisattvas , as in Pl.33 PeshM070307-332-02) and the Bodhisattva emanating other gods some of whom can be non-Buddhist godlings (Pl. 34 PeshM070307-322-03) are some of the distinctive Buddhist images .The tendency to incorporate sacred beings of other cults and belief systems is quite prominent in Gandharan Buddhist art as Anna Maria Quagliotti's essay makes evident.

Equally telling are some gods or features of gods that are missing in Gandharan art, although these are known in the rest of the subcontinent. There appear to be no icons of Jain Saviors or their narratives in Gandharan art. There also appears to be a discriminatory usage of the multiplicity convention in Gandharan art . Clearly Gandharan artisans know when and how to apply multiple eyes, heads or arms . As noted below in the essay on Hindu Gods in Gandharan Art , Siva, for example , is attributed the multiplicity convention - although sometimes in ways peculiar to Gandhara . To the contrary , no early Buddha or Bodhisattva image shows a multiplicity convention . For the figure of the Buddha, the lack of this convention makes sense . According to the early significance of the convention it ought not apply to the Buddha . Considering the way Siva and the Buddha, for example, were rendered, the Gandharan artisan may well have been aware that only Hindu icons in this early period may show the multiplicity convention. Perhaps that explains why the Buddhist Mother Goddess, the so-called 'Hariti' is without multiple arms , and what can only be "the Hindu version of the Mother Goddess " is shown with multiple arms.

' Hariti' (as also Skanda/Karttikeya) became very popular in representations of the Northwest . But it is obvious from the well-known Buddhist legend of her absorption into Buddhism that she enters the religion from another context . The legend , given below by Quagliotti , is a *prima facie* acknowledgement that her entry into Buddhism required a conversion. 'Hariti' - if indeed she can already be identified by that name in Gandharan art - may have originally been a folk deity believed to cause harm to children . She may have been worshiped , in antiquity, as a Mother Goddess , a name applied to godlings composed of both good and dangerous village deities . For example, the *Mahabharata* knows of a folk deity named Jara . She is a Raksasi who takes children left at the crossroads and feeds on their flesh and blood . (MhBh. II. 16. 35 -40). She has the power to take on any form (Mhbh. II. 17 .1) That may mean that she can take on a malevolent or benevolent form. Ancient Hinduism also incorporated Mother Goddesses , or Matrkas, into their pantheon ; these Matrkas can be both malevolent and auspicious . Again the *Mahabharata* has powerful descriptions of 'Mothers' who afflict offspring, both unborn and newborn . To this group belong the six wives of the seers who have become 'Mothers' to

Skanda . They approach Skanda with a wish. These Mothers wish to devour children. Skanda permits them, in their various forms , to destroy young children up to the age of sixteen, and a long passage describes the many gruesome ways in which these 'Mothers' obtain their food (Mhbh. III. 219 1 ff; see especially, 24 - 40) . 'Hariti' , the converted , benevolent Buddhist Mother Goddess may well have formerly been linked to similar folk beliefs . An iconic result could be the 'Hariti' images of the Goddess surrounded with children as mentioned above and in Quagliotti's essay . But Gandharan art concretizes another type of icon portraying the dark and ambivalent side of 'Mothers' . The art portrays a Mother Goddess who is cruel to children. She has tusks , holds weapons and sometimes is shown pulling infants off the ground by their hair (Pl. 35 from Kurita , 1990, 490). This cruel Mother can have multiple arms. The Goddess from the Peshawar Museum shows the parents beseeching the fanged ogress who has captured their young one in her lower right hand (Pl 36 PeshM 070307-265-05) . Her upper right hand holds a bowl, the lower left holds a water pot and the upper left the trident. This type of depiction cannot be the Buddhist 'Hariti'. Since the multiplicity convention does not appear in Buddhist art of the Northwest until quite a bit later and there are no Jain icons during this period, this must be a Hindu 'Hariti', the mirror image of the Buddhist 'Hariti'.

Who made this complex wealth of art - ferocious Hindu deities ? Hindu warriors ? saviors and sublime Powers ? Buddhist divinities? legendary Classical figures ,Iranian protectors ? And more. Some of the art would have been made by foreigners. But for the most part these representations should have been made by local artisans , some of whom would have been trained by foreign or Hellenized artisans . The point is that Gandhara had craftsmen capable of absorbing the region's various and bounteous artistic traditions . Foremost are those who had their own traditions as practitioners of specialized crafts. The intaglio, described at the outset, reminds that woodcarving was a craft practiced successfully in Gandhara. Sculptural details of furniture , architecture, utensils probably render in stone examples that should have originated in wood . In addition to the indigenous form carved on the gem's chair , the Taxila chair supporting a divinity and child (Pl. 37 Tax. M. 070305-233-01) shows off the woodcarver's decorative skill on the back rest. The gateway or *torana* seen in several reliefs (Pl 38 .Lahore Mus.Reser. 070301-163-01) was undoubtedly a splendid wooden architectural structure carved and raised by master carvers (Pl.39 Saidu M 070310-371-03) . The other important local craft practiced in the Northwest was textile weaving. Examples of floor coverings enter into Gandhara's sculptural art in precisely the way local custom valued carpets , namely as prestigious possessions which offset a worthy person or item , creating thereby a special space around the eminent object (see e.g. Pl 40 Pesh. M . 070307-326-06; Pl.41 Pesh. Mus 070307-331-02 ; Pl. 42 Said.M. 070310-372-03). Other schools of art contemporary with the Gandharan school did not introduce a carpet or covering into similar Buddhist

themes , reinforcing thereby the special value and prolonged tradition of this craft in the Northwest . The native carving tradition is also signaled by the carved bone handle from Taxila (Pl.43 Tax.M. 070305-219- 02) .

Whereas it is usual to define Gandhara as a melting pot of many different cultures , it needs to be stressed that Gandhara's own culture, specifically its craft traditions, should be added into the multicultural mix. Gandharan art depends upon its native craftsmen , their world , their skills in addition to the impressive artistic traditions of other cultures . These craftsmen could introduce Pan-Indic symbols valued throughout the continent; they could apply iconographic features with discernment ; they could remain sufficiently open minded and creative to absorb and develop further the stone sculptor's craft in order to fashion the many different gods requested by patrons of so many different cultures and religious persuasions. Most important, they could infuse some South Asian art forms with distinct originality and make Gandharan art exciting to behold.

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C. Few early Siva Lingas : Butkara ,PL.CDXCIIIa - possibly earlier plain Linga ; No. 240 Gandharan (?) 3rd century Ekamukhalinga. ; plus Nancy Weiner; Lahore conf. Notes check ; remember Sophytos/ maybe more details as to place of objects etc.

It is also a characteristic of the original nature of this god who may have initially been a folk deity , a Graha or child-threatening deity, as discussed in a recent paper (see Mann , Skanda's Cult). ¹

¹ In trying to make this Skanda's dominant aspect in Mathura, Mann incurs distortions . The author bases the popularity of Skanda's Graha nature on his awareness of "at least four ...panels " with this possible aspect as compared to "only two or three Kusana-era Mathura images which depict Skanda standing alone " as a martial figure (Mann p. 117). However , nine major martial images from around Mathura are listed in Srinivasan , SRAA ,p. 256, fn.19 . Mann also misunderstands when he states that I consider the earliest depiction of Skanda with a cock comes from Mathura (p.126) . The SRAA analysis gives precedence to the cock in Gandhara in pages 236,239, 242,248 plus fn. 20, and speaks of the cock's rarity in Mathura icons of Skanda , the Commander . Additionally, the cock is introduced into the Northwest several centuries before Mann's postulate of influence from Philhellenic Parthians (p. 119) . Fourth century B.C. coinage of Sophytos, a Mauryan satrape in Bactria , features the fighting cock known throughout the Greek , Persian and Mauryan worlds .(See Bernard , Inscriptions grecques , 311-317) . In short, aside from a textual discussion of the Graha cult , Mann's analyses need to be taken with caution .

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