A1121-Asia-Gandhara-Yakshi Praying-Sandstone-Kushan Period-4th Century CE

 

Figs. 1-3. Gandhara-Yakshi Praying-Sandstone-Kushan Period-4th Century CE

**Case no.: 3**

**Accession Number: A1121**

**Formal Label:** Gandhara-Yakshi Praying-Sandstone-Kushan Period-4th Century CE

**Display Description:**

The Kushan Period art of Gandhara in Peshawar Valley flourished by commemorating the Jatakas during the reign of king Kanishka the Great (128–151 AD/CE), when the cities of Taxila (Takṣaśilā) at Sirsukh and the capital at Peshawar were built. Kanishka as a patron of Buddhism helped diffuse the religion to Central Asia and the Far East across Bactria and Sogdiana (now Xinxiang Province), where his empire intersected with the Han Empire of China. This attracted Chinese pilgrims to worship at Buddhist monuments along the Silk Road. Mahayana Buddhism represented the Buddha in human form and many new sculptures of the Buddha were carved and new stupas and painted and sculptured caves were built while others were enlarged.

This particular sculpture is culturally important in that it shows a carved sandstone bas-relief fragment depicting a yakshi standing bare-chested in a loose skirt in a praying posture. This individual appears to have been a local woman from the Gandharan area as she has none of the Hellenistic traits that characterize other Gandharan statuary. She wears arm and wrist bangles, which was a local custom, has distended ears with ear plugs, and has a tiara with embedded ornaments. Perhaps, she was joining Alexander’s entourage and posed for this sculpture.

**LC Classification**: [NB992.2.K36](http://josiah.brown.edu/search~S7?/c2-SIZE+NB992.2.K36+B87+1978/cnb++992.2+k36+b87+1978/-3%2C-1%2C0%2CE/frameset&FF=cnb++992.2+k36+b87+1978&1%2C1%2C)

**Date or Time Horizon:** Kushan Period-4th Century

**Geographical Area:** Taxila, Gandhara (modern location: Rawalpindi District, Punjab, Pakistan)

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**Map, GPS coordinates:** [33°44′45″N 72°47′15″E](https://tools.wmflabs.org/geohack/geohack.php?pagename=Taxila&params=33_44_45_N_72_47_15_E_region:PK_type:landmark)



Fig. 2. Map of Gandhara and area from http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-ykxrKlxxjkg/U5rg7JPM\_RI/AAAAAAAAC9o/CvRbz8pUfbc/s1600/AlexanderConquestsInIndia.jpg

**Cultural Affiliation:** Gandhara

**Medium:** schist.

**Dimensions:** H 162.18 mm; 6.39 in.

**Weight: 411 gm; 14 3/8 oz.**

**Condition: original**

**Provenance:** unknown

**Discussion:**

Taxila (Greek for Takshashila,”Rock of Taksha”) in Indian and Greco-Roman accounts and by Chinese Buddhist pilgrims, Faxian and Xuanzang as the prosperous and well-governed capital of the kingdom of Gandhara and as a great center of learning. In 326 BCE, Ambhi (Omphis), the ruler of Taxila, surrendered the city to Alexander and placed his resources at Alexander’s disposal.

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