

Eastern Civilization 2018

Origin and Development
Of the Buddha Image

Gandhara

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Education and Learning

Gandhāra

- **Gandhāra** is the name of an ancient, extinct kingdom once located in north-western India in what is now Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan.
- Found mainly in the *Peshawar Valley*, the *Potohar plateau*, and on the *Kabul River*
- **The main cities were** Purushapura (modern **Peshawar**), and Takshashila (**Taxila**).



IRAN

TURKMENISTAN

UZBEKISTAN

KAZAKHSTAN

KYRGYZSTAN

TAJIKISTAN

CHINA

AFGHANISTAN

PAKISTAN

NEPAL

BHUTAN

BANGLADESH

INDIA

OMAN

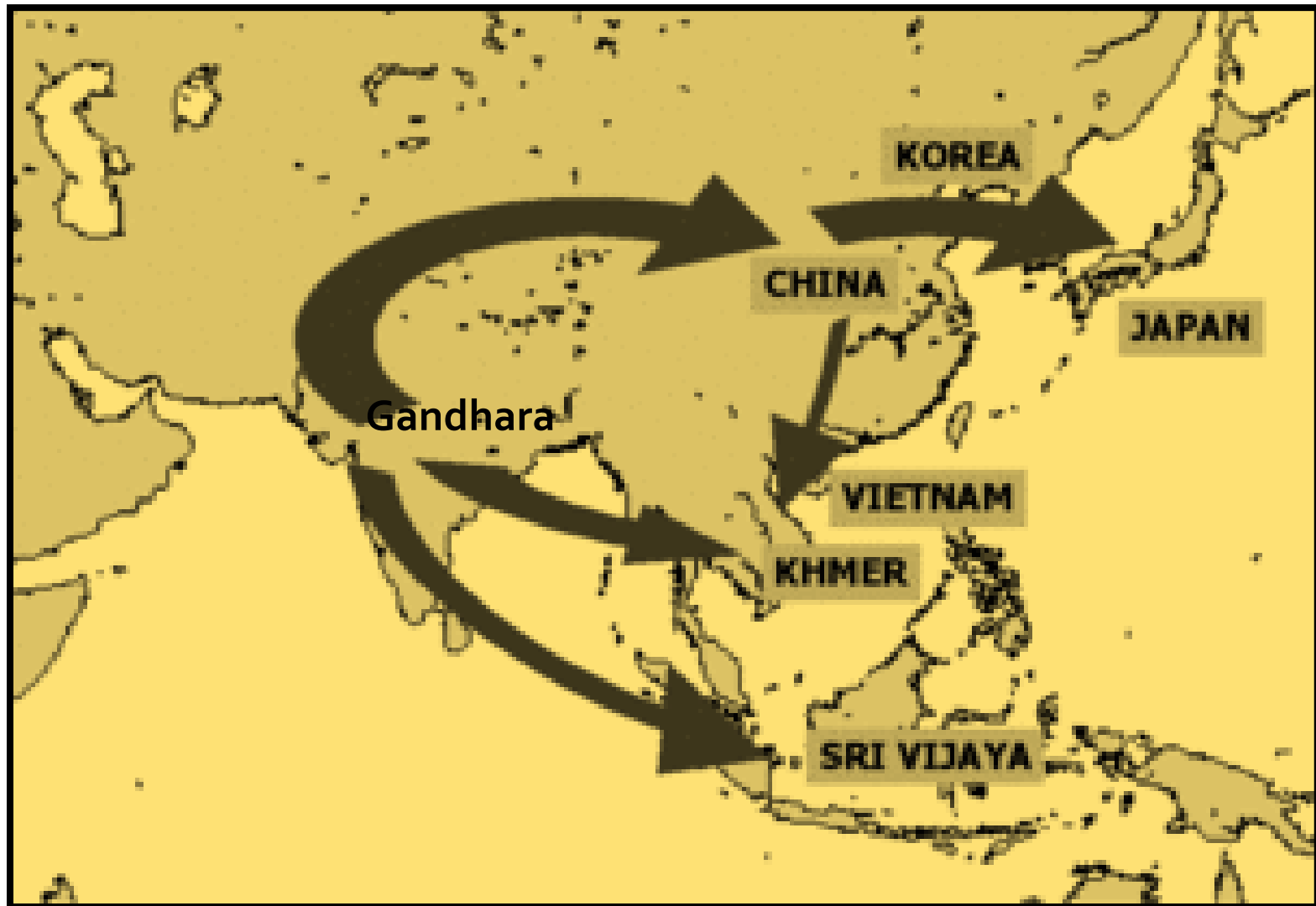
U.A.E.

Arabian Sea

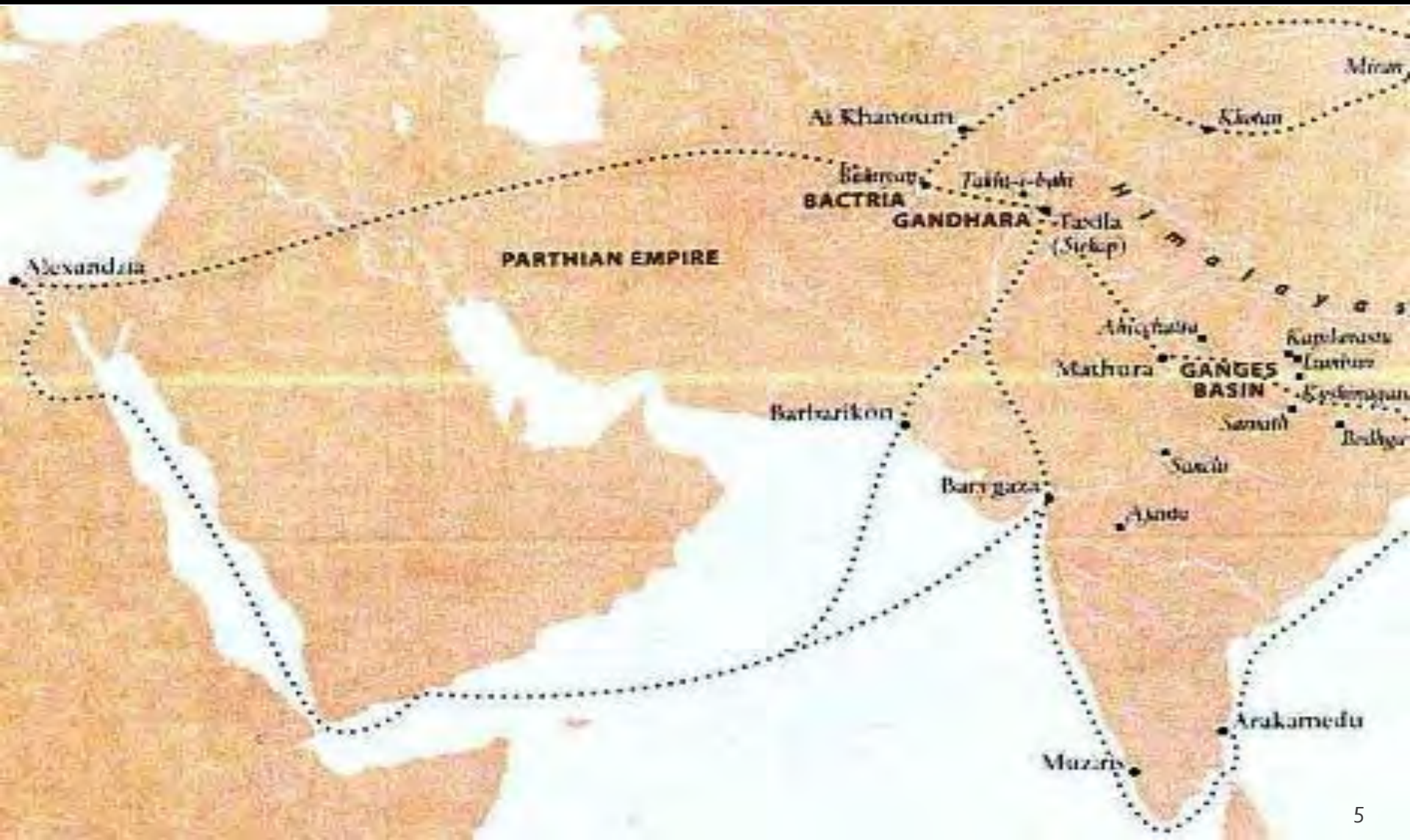
Bay of Bengal

300 km

Mahayana Buddhism spread to China, Tibet, Korea, Japan and Southeast Asia from *Gandhara*



Ancient Trade Routes





Taxila

Gandhara, and the ancient university of Taxila are not far from modern Islamabad

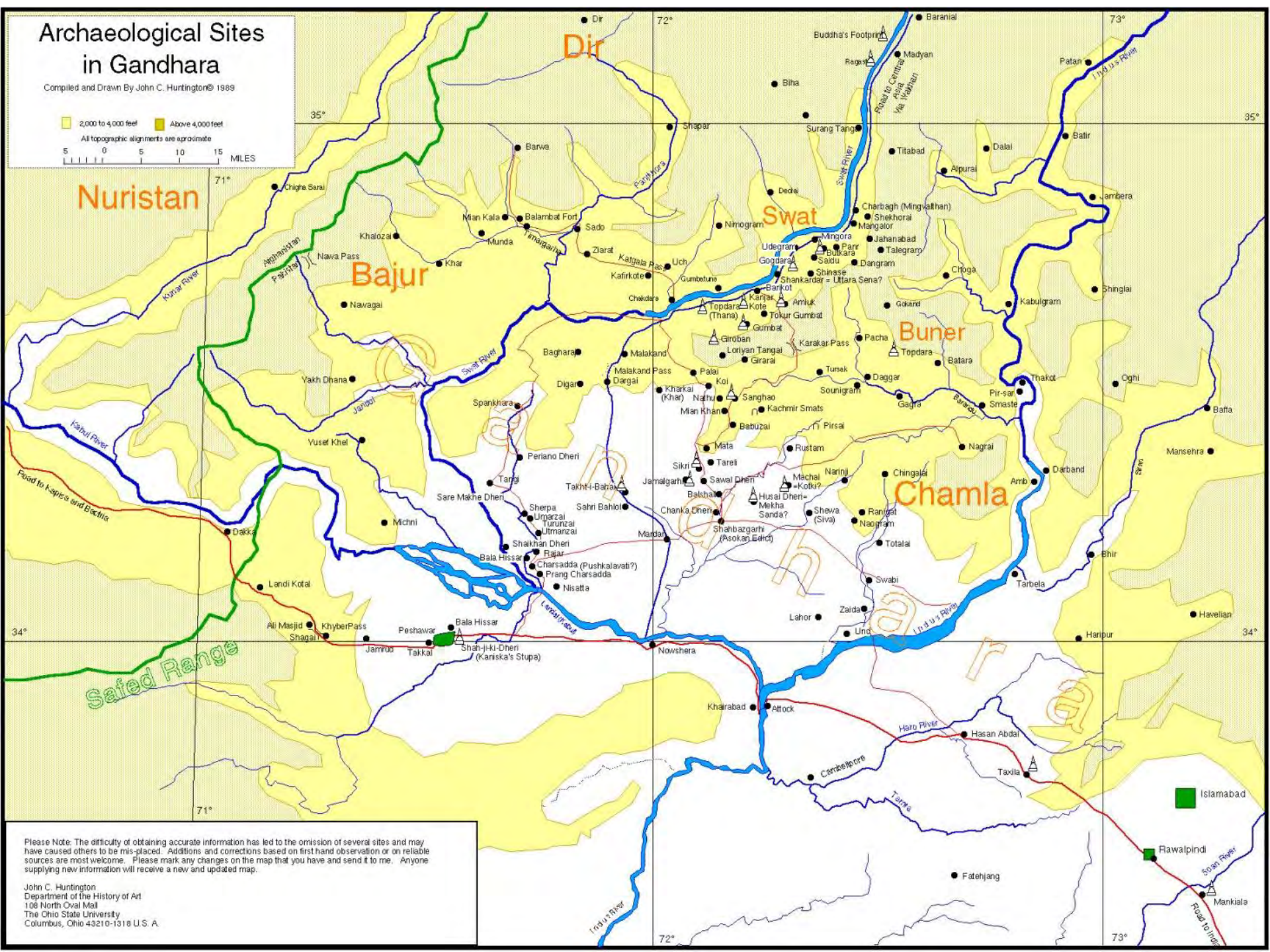
Islamabad is planned city and was designed by a Greek architect!

Archaeological Sites in Gandhara

Compiled and Drawn By John C. Huntington© 1989

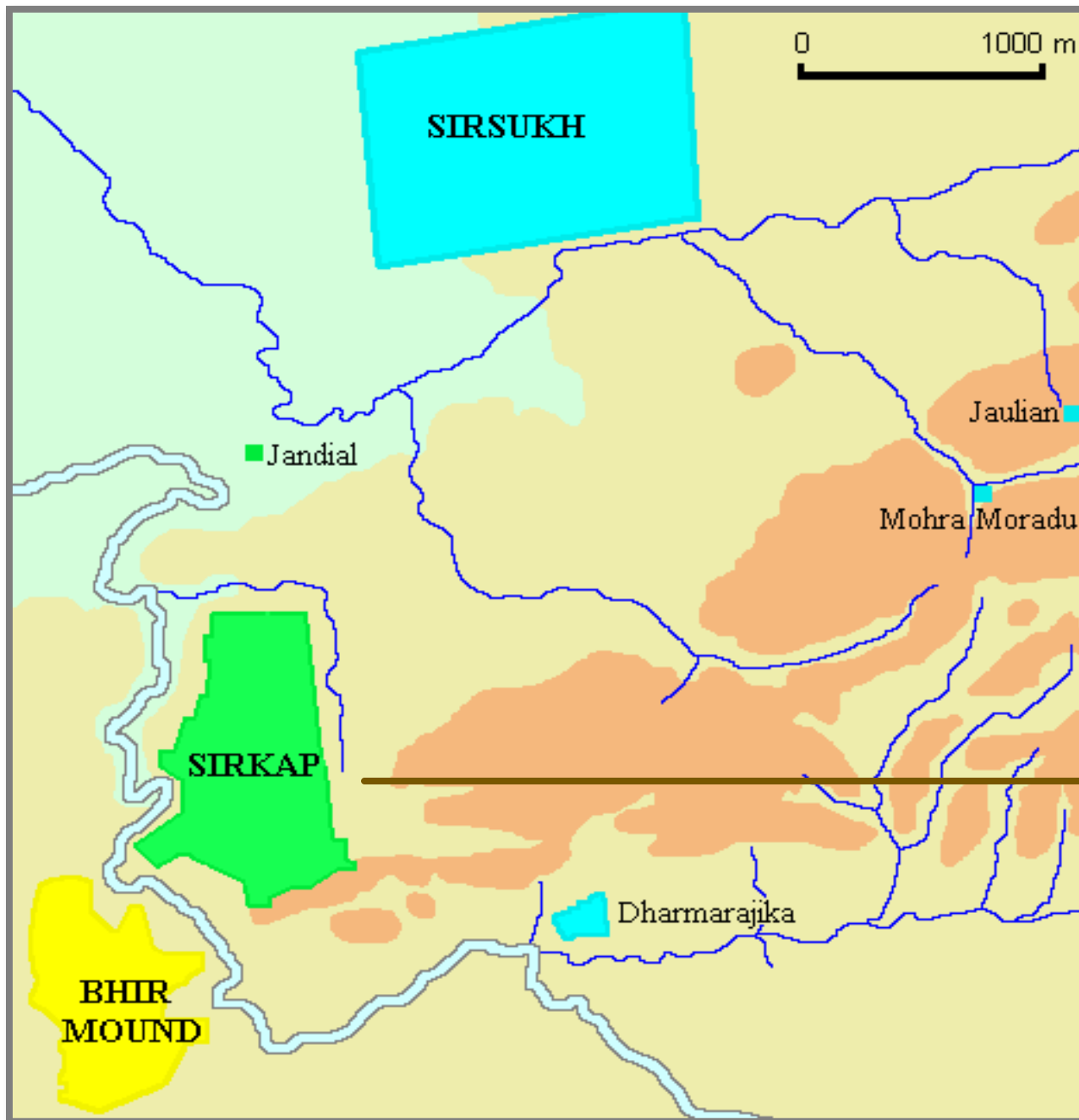
2,000 to 4,000 feet Above 4,000 feet
All topographic alignments are approximate

5 0 5 10 15 MILES



Please Note: The difficulty of obtaining accurate information has led to the omission of several sites and may have caused others to be mis-placed. Additions and corrections based on first hand observation or on reliable sources are most welcome. Please mark any changes on the map that you have and send it to me. Anyone supplying new information will receive a new and updated map.

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Jaulian



Sirkap



Traditional Indian Iconography

- Indian art, particularly iconography, is well-known as idealistic, that is, not realistic
- The divine was transcendental – and was not defined in man's limited vision

Source: Nirmal C. Sinha

- At Gandhara, *Idealism* met with *Realism*!
- The Greeks made the Buddha image *Real* !

Dr. Steven

Pre-Buddhist Gandhara

- Most scholars believe that settlements of **Gandhara grave culture** (early Indo-Aryan) flourished in Gandhara from 1700 BC to 600 BC, when Mohenjo-daro and **Harappa** had already been abandoned.



Photo of Harappa
June 2001
Steven Martin

Mahayana: the *New School*

- Gandhara was the meeting point of Greek, Persian, and Indian culture and thought
- A new school of Buddhism emerged, known as *Mahayana* Buddhism
- Greeks invaded Gandhara but they never persecuted local religions, cultures and traditions, rather they dealt very gently and decently with them

Timeline

- **c. 3300-1600 BCE:** Harappa arises in the Indus Valley Civilization
- **c. 2000–1500 BCE:** Migrations of Indo-European Speakers into India
- **c. 1500–500 BCE:** Vedic Period (Bronze Age - Iron Age in north India)
- **c. 1500–1000 BCE:** Earliest hymns of Rig-Veda composed
- **c. 563–486 BCE:** Prince Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha)
- **c. 518 BCE:** Darius of Persia conquers Indus Valley
- **c. 326 BCE:** Alexander the Great invades Northern India
- **c. 324–185 BCE:** Mauryan Empire
- **c. 269–233 BCE:** Ashoka rules
- **c. 100 BCE:** Silk Road trade route established
- **c. 100–200 CE:** First Indian Buddhist missions to China
- **c. 100–300 CE:** Kushan Empire (from Gansu China)
- **c. 100–500 CE:** Gandharan art flourished in northwest India and Afghanistan
- **c. 100–500 CE:** Buddhism split into Mahayana and Hinayana sects
- **c. 400–411:** Chinese Buddhist monk Fa Hsien visits India
- **c. 600–700:** Islam introduced to India by Muslim traders

Taxila

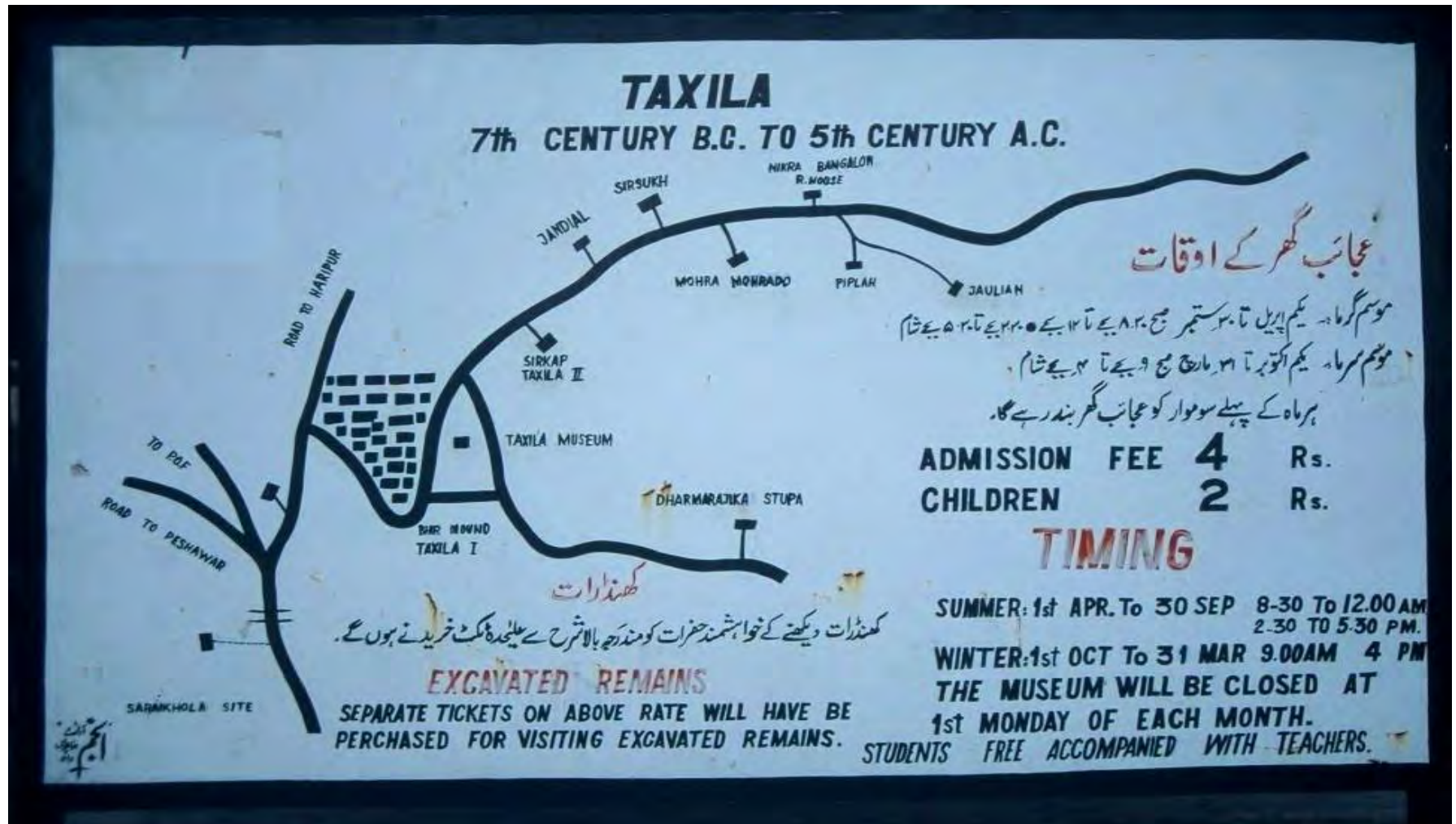


Photo: Steven Martin

Taxila

- The **Gandharan** city of **Taxila** was an important Hindu and Buddhist center of learning from the fifth century BCE. to the second century
- One of the greatest monastic-universities of the ancient world



Jaulian

Photo: Steven Martin

Taxila University

- **Taxila University** may be the oldest in the world! It has been in existence even before the time of the Buddha – as early as the 7th century B.C.
- Philosophers gathered here to have their own schools of thought
- By the time of the Buddha it rose to be a strong educational centre, where instructions were given in military science, medicine, political science, philosophy, religion, language and literature, and grammar.
- According to early Christian legend, Taxila was visited by the Apostle St. Thomas during the Parthian period.

The Main Cities of Taxila

Taxila was rebuild several times in the same general area

- Birmound [7th century BC to 2nd Century BC] (600 – 190 B.C)
- Sirkap [2nd century BC to 2nd century AD] (190 B.C- 60 A.D)
- Sirsukh [2nd century AD to 5th century AD] (78 - 480 A.D)

Sirkap

Taken during my site visits in June 2001



EXCAVATED REMAINS SIRKAP

SECOND CITY OF TAXILA
CIR. 2nd Cent. B.C. - 2nd Cent. A.D.

THE SECOND CITY OF TAXILA DERIVES ITS NAME OF SIRKAP FROM THE LEGEND OF THE HERO RASALU AND THE SEVEN RAKSHASAS, WHO FED ON HUMAN FLESH. THE NAME OF ONE OF THE DEMONS WAS SIRKAP. THIS CITY WAS FOUNDED BY BACTRIAN GREEK KING DEMETRIUS IN 190 B.C.

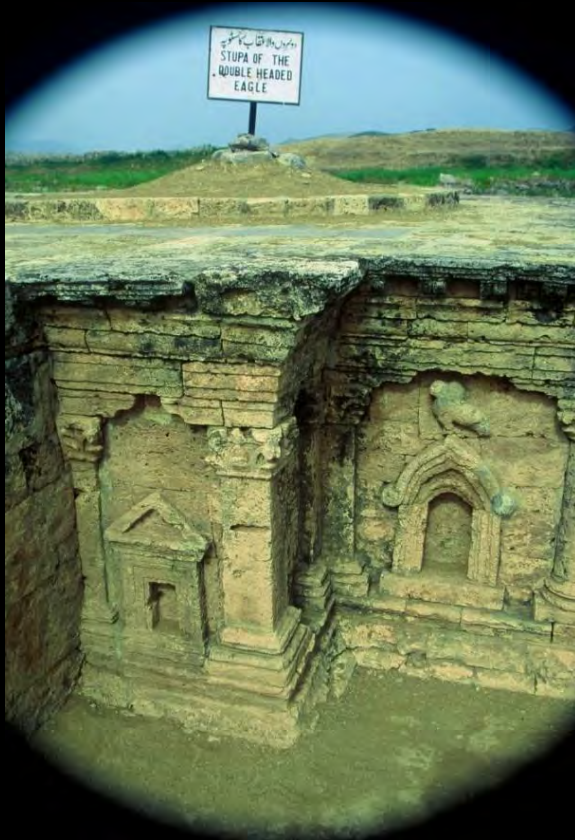
THE CITY REMAINS IN OCCUPATION FOR THREE CENTURIES UNDER THE SUCCESSIVE DOMINATION OF GREEK, SAKA, PARTHIAN AND KUSHANA RULERS TO THE TIME OF VIMA KADPHISES, WHEN THE CITY WAS SHIFTED TO NORTH EAST AT SIRSUKH IN 2nd CENTURY A.D. IN CONTRAST WITH THE IRREGULAR AND HAPHAZARD PLANNING OF FIRST CITY OF TAXILA (BHIR MOUND), THIS NEW CITY WAS LAID OUT ON THE SYMMETRICAL CHESSBOARD PATTERN CHARACTERISTIC OF HELLENISTIC OF THIS PERIOD.

STRATIGRAPHICAL SEQUENCE.

PERIOD - I	PRE - GREEK
PERIOD - II	BACTRIAN GREEK C 190 - B.C.
PERIOD - III	SAKAS & PARTHIANS 90 B.C. - 30 A.D.
PERIOD - IV	KUSHANAS C 60 - 80 A.D.

- I. EXCAVATED AREA MEASURES 2000 FEET NORTH SOUTH & 600 FEET EAST WEST.
- II. THE DEFENCE WALL SURROUNDED THE CITY INCLUDING EXCAVATED & UNEXCAVATED AREA MEASURES OVER 3 MILES.
- III. THE THICKNESS OF THE DEFENCE WALL VARIES FROM 15 TO 21 FEET & ITS HEIGHT VARIES FROM 20 TO 30 FEET.
- IV. THE FORTIFICATION OF THE CITY WAS BUILT IN THE FIRST CENTURY B.C.
- V. LAST OF THE BACTRIAN GREEK KING WAS OVERTHROWN BY THE SAKA CHIEF MAUES IN 190 B.C.
- VI. GONDOPHARES THE PARTHIAN KING CAPTURED TAXILA IN 19 A.D.
- VII. ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE VISITED THE COURT OF GONDOPHARES IN 40 A.D.
- VIII. VIMA KADPHISES THE KUSHAN KING CONQUERED GANDHARA REGION & WEST PUNJAB IN 60 A.D.
- IX. CITY OF TAXILA WAS TRANSFERRED FROM SIRKAP TO SIRSUKH IN SECOND CENTURY A.D.

Stupa of the Double-headed Eagle



Greek-style Buddhist stupa in Sirkap [new Taxila], Gandhara. The Double-headed Eagle icon was adopted from Sythian culture.

Arches are Greek, Hindu, & ...

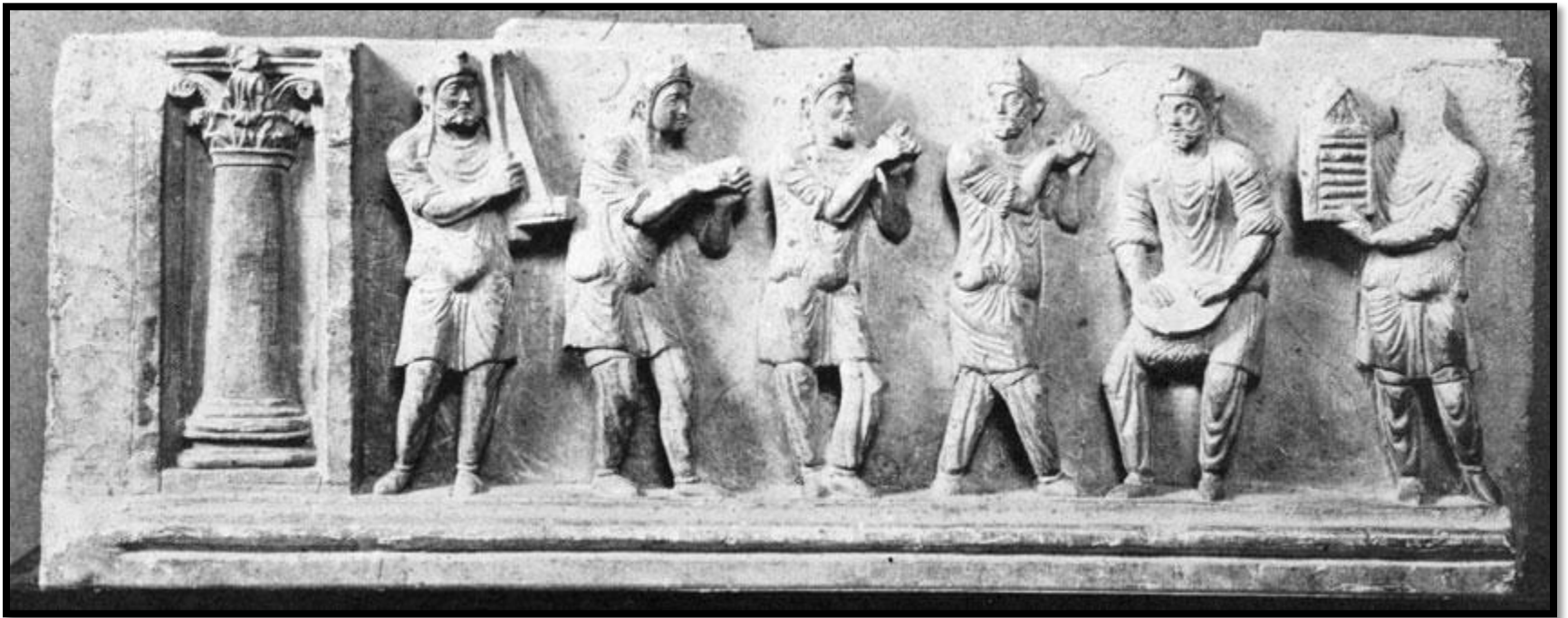
Columns are Corinthian

Photos by Steven Martin

Taxila

- Taxila was a place of teaching, similar to our idea of university, where students could study any subject, "religious or secular, from the Vedas to mathematics and medicine, even to astrology and archery".
- The prominence of Taxila as a seat of academic and practical teaching was a result of the city's geographical location and its reputation as an institute that promoted exchange and discussion of both western and eastern ideas.
- Taxila had Gandharan and Greek architectural styles.

Sythian Musicians at Taxila



The Transformation of Buddhism

India (South Asia) as a melting pot of ideas (300 BCE-300 CE)

Pastoral Kings (and Greek kings before) patronized local religions

The rise of Mahayana Buddhism

- Buddha as a deity
- Bodhisattvas
- Heavens or "Buddha lands"
- less emphasis on achieving nirvana
- more "heavenly" intervention



Devotees, Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Monks

Mahayana Buddhism in the Kushan World – A cosmopolitan religion

A strong visual culture emerges as rulers and monks expanded upon and evangelized the new faith

Gandharan Art represents the continued influence of Hellenism



Buddhist art flourishes at Gandhara under the Kushan rulers (1st-2nd Century A.D.)

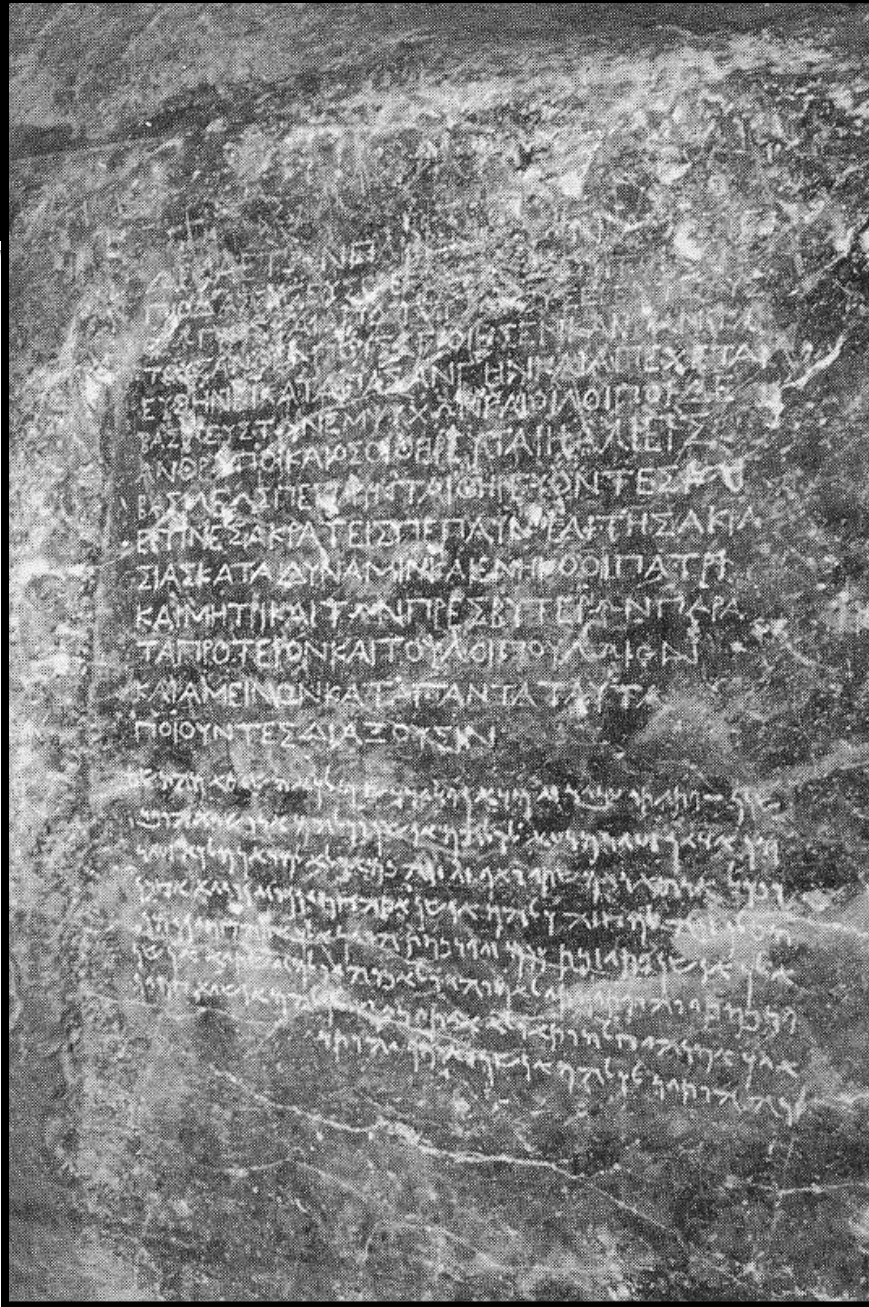
- Mauryans
- Indo-Greeks
- Scythians
- Parthians



Hellenistic culture in the Indian subcontinent: Greek clothes, amphoras, wine and music



Chakhil-i-Ghoundi stupa
Hadda, Gandhara, 1st century CE

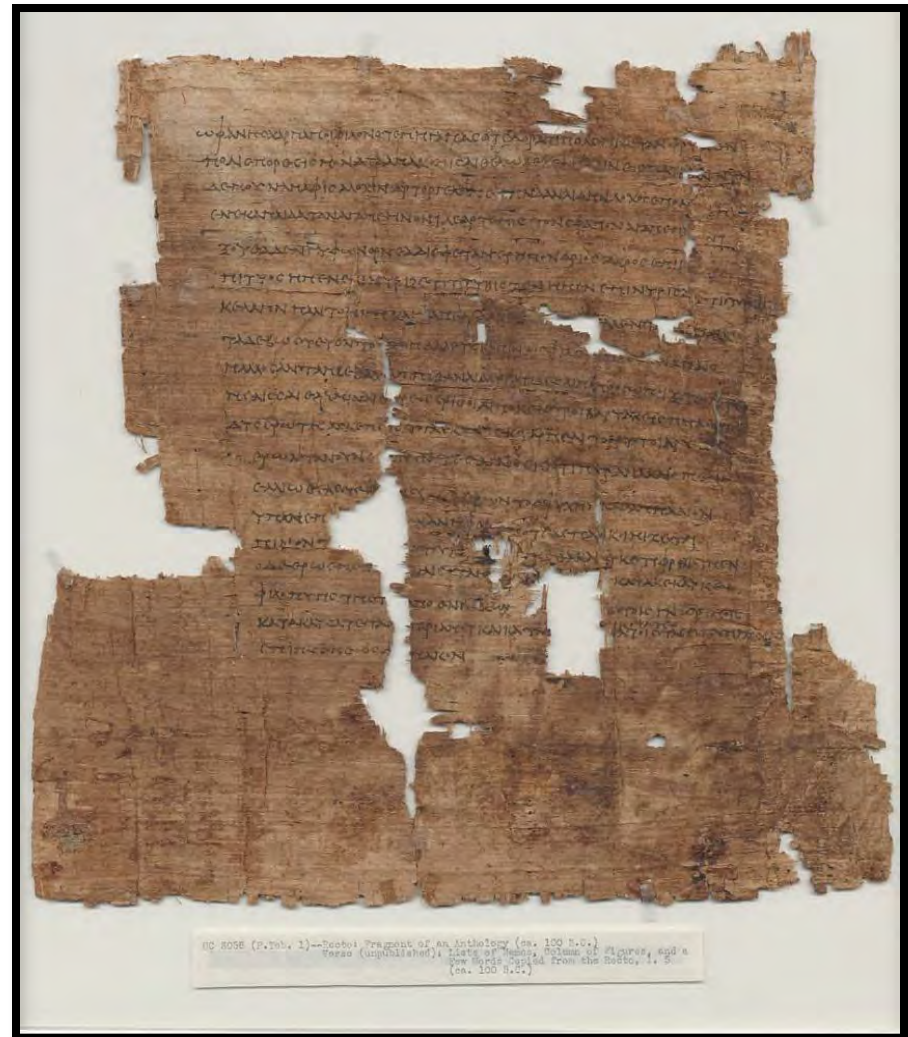


Inscription of Asoka from Kandahar (Afghanistan)

The great Mauryan king Asoka (c.268-232 BC), ruler of an empire covering much of the subcontinent of India, was converted to Buddhism about 257 BC and set up a number of inscriptions exhorting his subjects to lead lives of tolerance and self-sacrifice. Most were written in the native Prakrit, but some were in Aramaic and /or (as here) in Greek

Gandharan Scripture on Birch Bark

**Comparable in
Significance to
the Dead Sea
Scrolls!**



Maha Maya dreaming of the white elephant, 2nd Century AD



Gandharan representation of the Mahaparinirvana – Kushana period

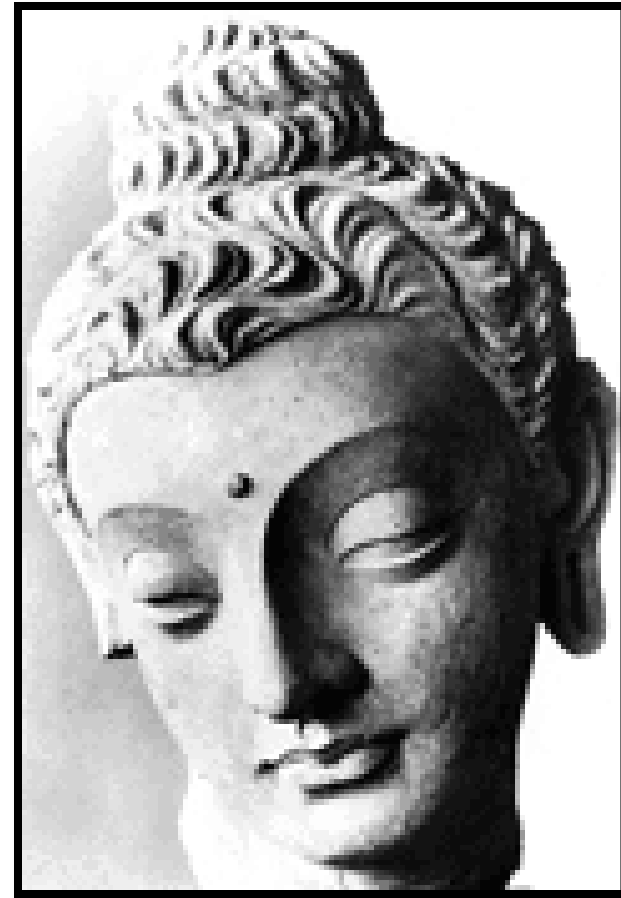
Whereas earlier art had focused on the purely spiritual and philosophic aspects of the message, attention in Gandhara was more on the life of the Buddha as a heroic individual. Gandharan representations are full of the drama of his life story, as in this depiction of the pathos of the moment of his passing away.



Fasting Buddha

Realism and
the Buddha
Image!





Greek-style Buddha Images

LEFT: Buddha in a Greek toga.

RIGHT: Greek-style hair.



**Bodhisattva
Depicted as
Hercules**



Images on Greek coins

Images of Greek deities and people making the *Vitarka Mudra* gesture from Buddhism indicating discussion or transmission

- Tyche, goddess of luck and fortune (top left)
- Zeus, king of the gods (top right)
- Nicias, an Athenian politician (bottom left)
- Menander II, an Indo-Greek king (bottom right)

Lokaksema

- The first Chinese translator of Gandharan text (167 -186 AD)
- Facilitator of Mahayana Buddhism



Concluding thoughts

- Buddhist art entered upon a new phase with the rise of Mahayana Buddhism during the 1st Century B.C. to 1st Century A.D.
- The period is noteworthy in that it gave for the first time the figure art or the anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha.
- Under the patronage of Kushana rulers (1st-2nd Century A.D.) a **new school** of art flourished in the Gandhara region

Concluding thoughts

- The Kingdom of Gandhara was located at the cross-roads of cultural exchange and thus became a laboratory for **religious syncretism** and cross-cultural fermentation.
- Following Alexander the Great's invasion of north-western India, Gandhara became renowned for its fusion of Greek and Buddhist culture, which was evident in its treasures of **Greco-Buddhist** art including the famous Bamyan Buddhas.
- The Kingdom represents one of the **highlights of cross-cultural syncretism between East and West.**

Concluding thoughts

- The Kingdom of Gandhara exemplifies one of many historical civilizations in which multi-religious influences have been pivotal in creating flourishing but reconciling cultures.
- Historical times of religious harmony provided their citizens and the world with a positive environment in which **art, literature, science and mutual understanding could blossom** and flourish.
- It is known from such historical examples that periods of religious harmony have always been times of great learning and progress.



**Thank you for
your mindful
attention!**

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