

**Buddhism
Slide #1**

The Offering of the Four Bowls to the Buddha
Indian, Gandhara Region, 2nd c.
schist, 16 3/4 x 18 3/8 in.

In this image four princely guardians of the heavenly quarters offer the Buddha bowls of food. In the story, the Buddha refuses to accept the bowls because they were made of gold and were too fine. The four guardians changed the bowls into stone, a material associated with monastic life, and the Buddha accepted them. Before he began to eat, the Buddha transformed the four bowls into one, in order that no one offering might be seen as favored over the others.



The Buddha is seated underneath a tree. Flowers decorate the ground beneath him.

The Buddha has his hand raised in this frieze. This **mudra** represents the Buddha's offering of assurance: Fear Not.

The Three Wheels beneath the Buddha symbolize the three jewels of Buddhism: the Buddha himself, his teachings, and the community. In other similar objects, the three wheels have been consolidated into one, with deer on either side. This represents the Buddha's first teaching in the Deer Park.

This piece would likely have been one of several originally placed side by side, depicting the stories of the Buddha's life. His birth, his awakening, his teaching and his death are common themes.

The Gandhara region of India is east and north of the Indus River. Because of the trade routes that connected Europe and the East, this region was an affluent and influential religious area in the early part of the Common Era. Not only did inhabitants travel to far away places, but people came to the Gandhara from Europe and the East, seeing it as one of the religious centers of Buddhism, five hundred years after the Buddha's death.

A frieze is a relief sculpture which forms a decorative horizontal band in architecture. This frieze comes from a part of India called the Gandhara region. It is north and east of the Indus River. In the early part of the Common Era, this region was a part of the trade routes that led from Europe to Asia. Rulers of this area profited from these trade routes, and artisans learned new techniques and styles. The works from this part of the world during this time hold examples of Roman influence. One example of this is the flowing garments on the figures within the work. This style of representation is not found in earlier Indian images. Due to its age, and perhaps exposure to the weather, this sculpture is worn, and some of the figures are difficult to see, but originally, as was common for this type of piece, the sculpture may have been coated with stucco and painted, creating a much more vivid image than is visible today. What elements and attributes of the Buddha does this piece share with the other images of Buddhist art? How does the artist establish the Buddha as the central figure?