



Gandharan Buddhist Reliquaries (Gandharan Studies)

David Jongeward, Elizabeth Errington, Richard Salomon, Stefan Baums

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Gandhara, the ancient name for the region around modern Peshawar in northern Pakistan, was of pivotal importance in the production of Buddhist texts and art in the first centuries CE. Since the mid-nineteenth century, excavations of Gandharan monastery sites have revolutionized the study of early Buddhism. Among the treasures unearthed are hundreds of reliquaries--containers housing relics of the Buddha.

This volume combines art history, Buddhist history, ancient Indian history, archaeology, epigraphy, linguistics, and numismatics to clarify the significance and function of these reliquaries. The story begins with the Buddha's last days, his death and funerary arrangements, and the distribution of the cremated remains, which initiated a relic cult. Chapters describe Gandharan reliquary types and subgroups, the archaeological and historical significance of collections, and the paleographic and linguistic interpretation of the inscriptions on the reliquaries.

The 400 reliquaries illustrated and surveyed are from museums and private collections in Pakistan, India, Japan, Europe, and North America. Stone is the primary material of construction, along with bronze, gold, and silver. Shapes range from spherical and cylindrical to miniature stupas, a configuration that provides valuable information about the history of this Buddhist monumental form.

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