



THE NATIONAL TRUST – SRI LANKA
THURSDAY 26TH AUGUST 2021

THE ART OF GANDHARA - BUDDHIST HERITAGE OF PAKISTAN

By Prof. Nimal de Silva

The 137TH Session of the Monthly Lecture Series of the National Trust will be delivered online on Thursday 26th August 2021 at 6.30 pm. by Prof. Nimal de Silva.

Link to lecture: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85107918275>

In the past, Buddhism was the main driving force in the development of Art and Architecture in all Asian Countries. As given in Mahavamsa, after the third Buddhist Council held in 3rd Century BC., with the patronage of Emperor Asoka Buddhist Missionaries were sent to seven countries carrying the noble message of the Buddha. In that occasion, Mahathera Mahinda with six others came to Sri Lanka and Mahathera Majjanthika went to Gandhara and Kashmir. This was the beginning of developing a new dynamic religion – cultural civilization in Gandhara resulting the great art of Gandhara, the Buddhist Heritage of Pakistan.

Pakistan has inherited four civilizations; Mehrgarh is a Neolithic period 7000 BC – 2000 BC, located to the West of River Indus near the Bolan Pass. It was succeeded by Indus Valley civilization which comprises two ancient civilizations of Harappa and Mohenjo Daro, which existed during the period of 2500-1500 BC. The fourth is Gandhara civilization that existed in what is now northern Pakistan and Afghanistan from about 500 BC to 900 AD. It was ruled by many dynasties but nearly all were linked by their adoption of Buddhism as a religion. The Buddhism and the Indo-Greek artistic tradition became its cultural identity, the Gandhara Art.

It was during Kushan Emperor Kanishka's time in 2nd Century that Buddhism saw its second revival after Asoka, the life story of Buddha became the staple subject matter for all aspects of Gandhara Art. During Kanishka's period for the first time introduced the Buddha image in human form which went to proliferate so much that it defines the entire Gandhara Art and culture.



Vidyajothi Prof. Nimal de Silva, an Architect, Archaeologist, Art Historian, and Conservation Specialist, Emeritus Professor of Architecture - University of Moratuwa, Former Dean Architecture and Head of the Department of Architecture, Director of the Postgraduate Institute of Archaeology - University of Kelaniya, Doctoral Programme Supervisor - University of Colombo, Consultant Professor School of Architecture - SLIT, Hon. President of National Trust - Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Museum Society, ICOMOS Sri Lanka, and Sri Lanka Scout Association, Former Chairman - National Design Centre, Urban Development Authority, Director Conservation - UNESCO – Sri Lanka Cultural Tri-angle Project, Director General - Central Cultural Fund, and Former Scout Chief Commissioner.

The National Trust – Sri Lanka conducts monthly lectures on the last Thursday of each month. The lectures are open to the members and the public. The HNB Sustainability Foundation is the principal sponsor of the events of the National Trust – Sri Lanka.

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