

**The list of five replicas and nine NM
masterpieces will be displayed alongside the IBC
exhibition**



Buddha in *bhumisparsha mudra* (earth-touching pose)

Ca. 11th century CE

Pala period, Nalanda, Bihar

Basalt

Ht:56, Wd:32.5, Dep:17.5 cm

Acc. No. 59.165/2

The moment of the Buddha's enlightenment is a crucial event, marked by Mara's attempts to tempt Gotama away from his goal. Despite an assault from Mara's army, Gotama's pursuit of eternal wisdom leads to his enlightenment. The stele depicts Buddha seated on a throne beneath a *bodhi* tree, making the *bhumisparsha mudra* and calling the earth goddess to witness his enlightenment. A halo around him is inscribed with the "Dependent Origination verse."

बुद्ध
पाँच, गुरुकुली, सुदी १०, पश्चिम बंगाल
उंचा ५६ सेमी, चौड़ा ३२.५ सेमी, गहरा १७.५ सेमी
प्रसंग, पश्चिम बंगाल ५९.१६५/२

Buddha
Pala, 11th cent. A.D., West Bengal



Buddha in *dharmachakrapravartana mudra* (turning the wheel pose)

11th -12th centuries CE

Pala period, Nalanda

Basalt

Ht:52, Wd:33, Dep:14.5 cm

Acc. No. 60.1513

The Buddha is shown making the *dharmachakrapravartana mudra*, symbolising the First Sermon at Deer Park, Sarnath, given to the first five monks. The halo around him features the *Pratityasamutpada-gatha* (Dependent Origination verse), while stupa motifs embody the concept of Emptiness (*Shunyata*).



Crowned Buddha Surrounded by Scenes from Gotama Buddha's life

Ca. 10th century CE

Pala Period, Vikramsila, Bihar

Limestone

Ht. Acc. No. 24. I

Permanent Loan from the Archaeological Survey of India (NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)

The eight great miracles (*ashtamahapratiharya*) from the Pala period feature a crowned Buddha in the thunderbolt posture (*vajraparyankasana*) on a double-lotus pedestal beneath the Bodhi Tree, performing the earth-touching gesture (*bhumisparsha mudra*), which symbolises his enlightenment. Depicted in royal attire, the Buddha represents a universal monarch (*chakravartin*). The narrative scenes include Gotama's birth at Lumbini, his descent from Tushita heaven at Sankissa, the First Sermon at Sarnath, and the Great Demise (Mahaparinirvana) at Kushinagar, along with the Miracle at Shravasti, the taming of Nalagiri at Rajgir, and the monkey offering a honey bowl at Vaishali.



Votive stupa showing life scenes of Gotama Buddha

Ca. 10th Century CE

Pala period, Nalanda, Bihar

Bronze, Width:30, Height:20 cm

Acc. No. 49.129

(NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)

This votive stupa features an intricate *chattravali* and dome, supported by an octagonal drum on a square pedestal. Its eight panels display foliate niches illustrating key scenes from the life of Sakyamuni Buddha, accompanied by celestial Buddhas at the corners. The square base has steps and seated Bodhisattvas with unique attributes. By this time, the connection between the historical and celestial Buddhas was well established. These small stupas housed the ashes of deceased monks, linking them to Buddha Shakyamuni and supporting their rebirth in a pure land.



Coping stone from the Bharhut Stupa showing Elephants carrying Relic Caskets of Lord Buddha

2nd century BCE

Sunga Period, Bharhut, Madhya Pradesh

H: 28.5 cm., L: 266 cm., D: 9 cm (Replica Size: H: 62.5, H: 28.5 cm)

Sandstone

Acc. No. 68.168

(Weight: 1 kg approx.)

The Buddhist site of Bharhut in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district is famous for its jataka tales and aniconic images of the Shakyamuni Buddha. A notable coping stone depicts a scene with elephants carrying caskets, approaching female dancers and musicians, symbolizing the transportation of Buddha's relics after his parinirvana. The Mahaparinirvana Sutta in the Digha Nikaya recounts the conflict among eight kingdoms over his remains, which were to be enshrined in stupas for worship. These kingdoms include the Lichchavis of Vaishali, the Shakyas of Kapilavastu, the Koliyas of Ramagrama, the Mallas of Pawa and Kushinagar, the Brahmanas of Vishnudwipa, the Buliyas of Allakappa, and Ajatshatru of Magadha.

NM Masterpieces

(Weight: 300 gms approx.)

**The Eight Great Events of Gotama Buddha's life
Life (*Ashtamahapratiharya*)**

Ca. 10th century CE

Pala period, Nalanda, Bihar

Stone, H: 14, W: 8.6, D: 4.5 cm

Acc. No.47.56

(NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)



The miniature stele, depicting the eight great miracles (*ashtamahapratiharya*) from the Pala period, features the Buddha in the thunderbolt posture (*vajraparyankasana*) on a double-lotus pedestal beneath the bodhi tree, performing the earth-touching gesture (*bhumisparsha mudra*). The pedestal depicts the three daughters of Mara attempting to dissuade him from enlightenment, while Bhudevi witnesses the momentous event. The scenes are arranged in a clockwise narrative order, including: Gotama's birth at Lumbini, his Descent from Tushita heaven at Sankissa, the First Sermon of the Buddha at Sarnath, and at the apex, the Great Demise (*Mahaparinirvana*) at Kushinagar. Additional scenes feature the Miracle at Shravasti, the Taming of Nalagiri at Rajgir, and the Gifting of the Honey Bowl by a Monkey at Vaishali.



Veneration of *Buddha-pada* (Buddha footprint)

Ca. 2nd century CE

Satvahana, Amravati, Andhra Pradesh

Stone, W: 43, H: 25 cm

(NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)

An intricate sculptural fragment from Amaravati depicts a striking pair of footprints above a beautifully crafted platform. Surrounding the footprints, a group of disciples expresses deep devotion as they worship the 'Buddha pada,' adorned with the chakra symbol. This act of veneration, representing the Tathagata's profound presence, has been a significant practice since the 2nd century BCE, highlighting the enduring spiritual connection between devotees and the Buddha.

(Weight: 300 gm approx.)



Head of Buddha

Ca. 5th century CE

Gupta Period, Akhnoor, Jammu

Terracotta, H: 17.2 cm

Acc. No. 51.208/1

(NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)

This terracotta head of a Buddha figure exemplifies Gupta art, characterised by its distinctive snail-shell curls and unique facial expression. The thin diadem represents the *sambhogakaya* concept of Buddha, conveying enlightenment through abstract features, especially in the contemplative eyes and convex planes of the cheeks and forehead. This figurine originates from Ambaran, located near the Chenab River in Akhnoor, a historic Buddhist centre during the Kushan and Gupta periods, renowned for its monastic complex, stupa, and terracotta artefacts.



Bust of Goddess Arya Tara

Ca. 9th century CE

Pala Period, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh

Stone, H:11 inches

Acc. No.47.29

(NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)

The Buddhist goddess Tara is revered as the 'Saviouress,' liberating her followers from the 'Eight Perils' and granting them strength for their journey toward enlightenment. This exquisite 10th-century CE sandstone sculpture from Sarnath depicts the Arya Tara form, where she holds a blue lotus (*utpala*), a symbol of Buddha Amoghasiddhi, accompanied by his protective presence in the halo and his right hand in the reassuring *abhaya mudra*. With her vibrant green complexion, Tara embodies the profound capacity to alleviate the suffering of all sentient beings, radiating hope and compassion in a challenging world.



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(Weight: 3 kg approx.)



Bodhisattva Maitreya in *abhaya mudra* (Gesture of Reassurance)

Ca. 2nd century CE

Kushan period, Ahichchhatra, Uttar Pradesh

H:76, L:26, B:14 cm

Sandstone

Acc. No. 59.530/1

(NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)

The standing Maitreya Buddha, in the Kushan-Mathura style, holds a water pot (*kamandalu*) in his left hand and makes the gesture of reassurance (*abhaya mudra*) with his right. He has snail shell curls, various ornaments, including- a sacred thread (*yajnopavita*), and wears a dhoti. His halo features a scalloped-edge motif. Maitreya resides in the Tushita realm, awaiting his future incarnation on Earth, symbolising hope and enlightenment.

(Weight: 2 kg approx.)



Head of Buddha

Ca. 5th century CE

Gupta period, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh

Sandstone

Ht:26.6, Wd:16.2, Dep:21 cm

Acc. No. 47.20

This exceptional piece, meticulously crafted from smooth, buff Chunar sandstone, embodies the spiritual and aesthetic pinnacle of Gupta art, which exerted a profound influence on Buddhist art across Asia. This exquisite Buddha head features delicate attributes, including an oval face, full lips, a defined nose, and half-closed eyes. Additionally, it showcases elongated earlobes and curls of hair styled in a spiral pattern, culminating in a *ushnisa* at the top. The half-closed eyes convey a profound sense of self-contemplation. Aesthetically, the sculpture seamlessly blends the concept of the highest vision (*drasti*) with perfect form (*rupa*), emotion (*bhava*), grace and charm (*lavanya*), and an ideal likeness (*sadrsya*). It encapsulates all the defining characteristics of the classical Indian art style that flourished during the Gupta period.



Buddha in *Mahaparinirvana* (The Great Demise)

Ca. 2nd century CE

Kushana period, Gandhara

Schist

Ht: 22, Wd: 29.7, Dep: 7 cm

Acc. No. 68.182

(NATIONAL MUSEUM COLLECTION)

Gandharan stupas featured scenes from the Buddha's life on their bases and drums, aligning with the *Mahaparinirvana Sutra*. They uniquely depicted the Buddha's final moments as he attained Mahaparinirvana at the age of seventy-nine, while travelling to Kushinagar. One stele shows him reclining between two *shala* trees, surrounded by grieving disciples—Ananda, Subhadra, and Mahakasyapa—while celestial beings look on. The scene is framed by Doric pillars with ornate capitals and rows of acanthus leaves, reflecting Greco-Roman artistic influence.



Replica of the Bust of Manjushri

Ca. 8th century CE

Pala period, Nalanda, Bihar

Basalt

Ht:116, Wd:38, Dep:17 cm

Acc. No. 59.528

Bodhisattva Manjushri embodies transcendent wisdom, radiating knowledge and enlightenment. In his right hand, he offers the boon-granting gesture (varada mudra), symbolizing generosity and spiritual gifts. His left hand holds a lotus flower (utpala), representing purity and the blossoming of wisdom amidst ignorance. These elements highlight Manjushri's role as a guide to deeper understanding and insight.



Bust of Buddha

Ca. 5th century CE

Gupta period, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh
Sandstone

From the second century BCE to the sixth century CE, Mathura, located in present-day Uttar Pradesh, India, emerged as a key centre for stone and terracotta sculpture. The Mathura Buddha sculptures, primarily carved from red sandstone during the Kushan and Gupta periods, exemplify artistic spirituality. These works translate textual concepts into divine representations of an enlightened being, marked by unique auspicious features (mahapurusha-lakshanas) that signify Buddhahood. Elements like the tuft of hair between the eyebrows and the ornate nimbus highlight the Buddha's supreme wisdom. The Mathura style is characterised by pronounced folds in monastic robes, influenced by Greco-Buddhist art.