

The Initiative in Global South Humanities Presents

One Mother, Many Mother Tongues: The Politics of Multiculturalism and Ancient Buddhist Art

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house dedicated to art and culture.

Nov
09 | 5
PM

Gilman Hall 130D
(English seminar room)

*Reception to follow in the Tudor
and Stuart room – Gilman Hall 388

Scan to register



The iconography of the statue of a Buddhist mother goddess called Hariti in the British Museum's collection forms the central subject of research in this paper. Made in the region of Peshawar in the second century, the sculpture quotes from the imagery of other ancient societies: Ptolemaic Egypt, Hellenistic, and Roman Lebanon and the Near East, Indian Hindu and Buddhist iconography and figures that seem to probably reflect a Zoroastrian origin.

In an age of diasporas, we often think about how a single image can be made to communicate to diverse people. The iconography of this sculpture similarly invites us to read into the social context of ancient Gandhara: Were there anxieties around multi-culturalism in ancient Gandhara?

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