



## **"East meets West: Buddhists and Greeks in the North-west of the Indian subcontinent."**

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Buddhist communities in the North-west of the Indian sub-continent lived under Greek rule for at least 150 years. Our understanding of the history and character of Buddhism in this region and assessments of Greek influence on it have until recently been based primarily on evidence provided by art objects, coins, inscriptions, and archaeological excavations. What has been virtually absent from this field are examples of the Buddhist literature of this region, which, given the long and prosperous history of Buddhism in the North-west, must have been vast. In the past decade several major collections of Buddhist manuscripts from Afghanistan have appeared in the West. Dating from approximately the 1st to the 8th centuries A.D., these manuscripts span a significant proportion of the history of Buddhism in the North-West. The earliest of these post-date the last of the Indo-Greek kingdoms by several decades, but were certainly copied from manuscripts that were in circulation during the Indo-Greek period. In this paper Greek influence on Buddhism in the North-west will be discussed in the light of the new manuscript finds.