Bharhut

Yaksha from Bharhut stupa © John Huntington

The stupa at Bharhut may have been constructed by Ashoka in the 3rd century BC, but many of the decorative features (particularly the carved friezes) were added during the Sunga Dynasty in the 2nd century BC.

The stupa, which has been dismantled and installed in the Indian Museum in Calcutta, is highly important for its series of early Indian sculptural reliefs (many in medallion form) depicting stories of the Buddha's previous lives (Jataka tales) together with images of nature spirits (yakshas) and aniconic Buddhist symbols such as the wheel, bodhi tree, footprints and empty throne.

Unusually, some of the panels include text identifying the individuals represented.
Yaksha reliefs, Bharhut Archaeological Survey of India, 1875, Photograph by Alexander Cunningham
Relief carved panel, Bharhut
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