

THE GHENT CENTRE FOR BUDDHIST STUDIES (GCBS) & GHENT CENTRE FOR SOUTH ASIAN STUDIES (GCSAS) PRESENTS:

A PUBLIC TALK BY PROF. JESSIE PONS & Co. OF DiGA, CERES, RUHR-UNIVERSITÄT BOCHUM

SUSTAINING DIGITAL HERITAGE BEYOND FUNDING: BUILDING ON THE DiGA PROJECT



Crossing the Swat river on the way to Chakdara, photo: (c) DiGA

From 2021 to 2024, the DiGA project ("Digitization of Gandharan Artefacts: A project for the preservation and study of the Buddhist art from Pakistan") documented a collection of approximately 1,500 Gandharan sculptures preserved at the Dir Museum in Chakdara, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province (KP), Pakistan. These sculptures originated from a dozen archaeological sites in the Shah-kot/Talash zone (around present-day Chakdara), excavated by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, KP, and the Department of Archaeology at Peshawar University in the 1960s and 1970s. As one of the few Gandharan sculptural corpora with established archaeological provenance, this collection provides a solid foundation for reassessing key questions in Gandhara studies, particularly regarding the history of Buddhism on the right bank of Swat River. The database of the collection is now available on the [heidICON](#) platform, ready to lend itself to exciting research avenues. With the project officially coming to an end, however, new questions emerge: how can such a project remain active and relevant beyond its institutional and financial framework? How can its data continue to be curated, enriched, and mobilized for research and public engagement once the funding period ends? This presentation will report some of the project's activities in the post-funding phase. It will share results from recent research based on the DiGA corpus, sketch the outline of a research program building on the project's legacy, and discuss ongoing initiatives with KPDOAM on community engagement. Ultimately, this talk invites reflection on the broader question of how digital heritage projects can evolve sustainably once their formal lifecycle has ended.

Thursday, Nov 20, 2025 @ 17.00
Location: Faculteitszaal, Blandijn
faculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte
Blandijnberg 2
9000 Gent



All are welcome. The Gandhāra Corpora Lecture Series is in-person and hybrid online. Please register for the series through this Google Form: <https://forms.gle/TwffQCPuVipUpMvk6> (or through the QR code above).



Buddhist site of Chatpat, Province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, (@KPDOAM/DiGA CERES)

Contact Prof. Dr. Charles DiSimone

charles.disimone@ugent.be

 Universiteit Gent

 @ugent

 Ghent University