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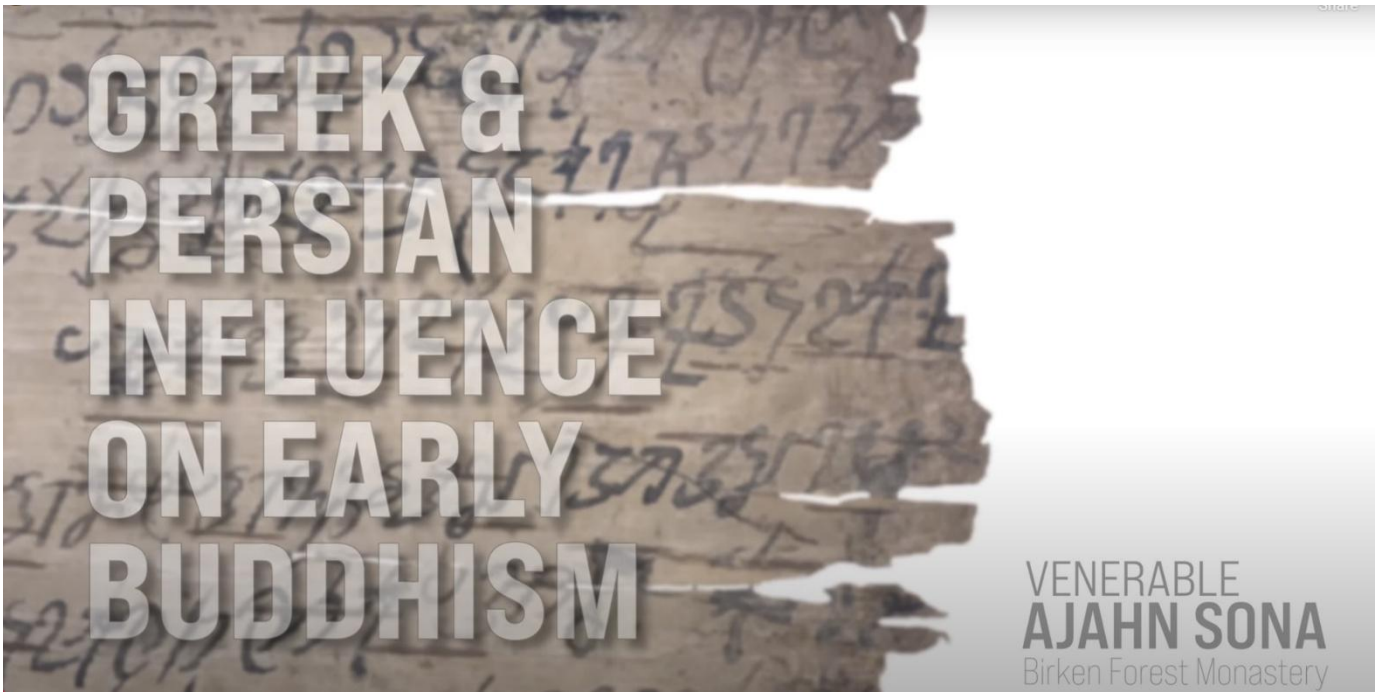
會協禪一第國美

Film Series

Green & Persian Influence on Early Buddhism

December 7, 2025
10:00 AM at 113 East 30th Street



Greek & Persian Influence on Early Buddhism is a documentary discussing the influence of Gandharan monks of Greek/Persian extraction on early Buddhism. The "Shakyas" derive their name from the same etymological root as the "Shah" of Iran, and "Shah" means warrior. The family of Shakyamuni Buddha was not originally part of the Hindu caste system, but a warrior clan originating somewhere in Persia. It looks as if Buddhist scriptures were first put into writing by Buddhist monks of Greek extraction. We are all familiar with the Greek influence on Gandharan art – and thereby on Buddhist art throughout Asia. However, based on archeological discoveries in Pakistan in the 1990s it looks as if the very earliest Buddhist writing also had its origins in Gandhara. Research done by Richard Salomon on some ancient birchbark scrolls found in a ceramic jar on the Pakistan antiques market reveals that the ancient writings were executed in the now-extinct Gandhari language.

Ajahn Sona of the Birken Forest Monastery in Canada is a Theravadin Buddhist monk in the line of Ajahn Chah. This expertly crafted documentary is his creation.

Admission is free.