



Ganesha

Date

11th century

Medium

Sandstone

Description

People visiting a Hindu temple first encounter a sculpture of Ganesha. At the start of a new endeavor, they leave offerings for the elephant-headed god and ask him to remove any obstacles. In this sculpture Ganesha's flattened belly and darkened trunk resulted from centuries of worshippers rubbing his belly and touching his trunk to receive his blessings. The son of the Hindu gods Parvati and Shiva, Ganesha dances to the rhythm of drums played by two small figures on his right. He wears a crown and carries a cobra as a trophy in his upper pair of arms, while another snake adorns his chest. With one of his left hands he holds a bowl filled with laddoo sweets,

and he picks one with his trunk, eating as he dances. His other hands carry a battle-axe and hooked goad, known as an ankusa, used by elephant drivers. Ganesha uses these implements in his role as a remover of obstacles. One of Ganesha's tusks is usually missing, and he sometimes holds it or a tusk-like radish. In this sculpture one of the now-lost right hands may have once carried it.

Dimensions

49 × 27 1/2 × 10 in.