

Buddhist Art in Ancient Gandhara, An Appraisal of its Distinctive Features

Nighat Aslam¹ and Mustoor Fatima Bukhari²

Introduction

Geographically in ancient times the term Gandhara applied to the North West region of subcontinent, which is the main included the Peshawar valley and Mardan district and while talking about the Gandhara art ,its cultural boundaries extent to Swat, Dir district, Malakand and Bajaur agencies and Taxila parts of the Punjab. On the side of Afghanistan it went perhaps as far as Jalalabad (V.K.Sharma (2004; 45)1 Ancient mountainous region of Gandhara located in North West of Pakistan and below the meeting point of the Hindu Kush and Himalayan mountain ranges (Zwalf: 1996: 14) The Chinese pilgrims in their journey records as Kien-to-lo1, which was known with present valley of the Peshawar with hilly areas of swat and boner in the north and, the Indus River in the east. (Beal: 1969; 97-108) The political and cultural history of Gandhara frequently marks on numismatic evidence, art, architecture, and historical documents and inscriptions. The earliest reference of Gandhara mentioned in Rig-Veda (1.126.7) the oldest literature of South Asia composed in 1500-1000 BCE(Basham: 1954;38)as” Gandharidum” translated it “an awe of Gandharis” (Macdonell &Keith: 1958; 2191).Epigraphic evidence proves that Gandhara was a kingdom of king Darius from 528-519BCE. The Behistun inscription of Darius shows that Gandhara satrapy of the Achaemenians Empire and were named „Gadara ,until it was conquered by Alexander the great in 327 B.C. (Ishtiaq Khan 1998): 57.) Through his penetration, the Gandhara region came into contact with the Mediterranean. (Jansen: 2011). In the 3rd century BCE Maurya king Chandragupta (321-297 BCE), took over the charge of Gandhara. Chandragupta’s grandson Asoka Maurya (268–240 BCE), converted to Buddhism and became a pioneering supporter of Buddhism and during his reign, Buddhism spread throughout the Gandhara. (Sharma; 1989): 4-5) After the death of Asoka Maurya dynasty was deteriorated by Bactrian, who ruled for one hundred years (190-90 CE).He was pushed towards Gandhara by Scythians, a varied nomadic and war liked group of central Asian people. Later on, by the end of 1st century BCE, Parthians occupied the Scythian dynasty,(90 BCE to 64 CE) who established themselves in Taxila valley. They continued to support Greek artistic traditions and became the founder of ancient Greek art and during this period, Gandhara School of art has started. In the early first century CE, the Kushan, a branch of Yuchi tribe and nomadic people of Central Asia had taken control of Ancient Gandhara. Under him, Gandhara enjoyed its period of Great prosperity and Gandhara art reached its climax. Gandhara was further invaded by foreigners, such as Sassanians (241-358A.D), Kidar Kushanas(358-560 CE), white Huns (5th century CE) barbaric people from central Asia trampled Gandhara and carried firedand Hindu Shahis from (8th-11th century CE).(Nasim Khan; 1998): 165-166.) After some time Sultan Mahmud Ghazni defeated them in the famous battle of Hund in the beginning of the 11th century A.D and unfurled the banner of Islam. All these foreign invasions, Aryan

¹ Assistant professor in History, Government College for women Satellite town, Bahawalpur Pakistan.

² Professor, Government College for women Satellite town, Bahawalpur Pakistan.

to Hun contributed to producing several forms of art, among which Gandhara art, which flourished and faced unexpected changes for a long time (Khan, 1998: 53-57). The foreign invaders hailed from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds and in each case brought new ideas to enrich the local culture. The geographical and historical factors are certainly important for assessing the nature and features of this school. In addition, the art of Gandhara attests to an extensive knowledge of Western, that is Greek and Roman, mythology and visual culture. Parthian and then Sassanian invasions in the early decades of the 1st century and from the 3rd century, respectively, further contributed to the complex cultural environment, and are also credited with having had a considerable impact on the region's art (Nehru, 1989).

Background of Gandhara art

Owing to its peculiar geographical location Gandhara had been playing an interesting role in the development of culture and civilization in South Asia. Gandhara was in closer contact with Afghanistan, China, and Central Asian and West on the one hand through the Silk Road and other was Subcontinent. Gandhara served as a station between the East and West which received and transmitted cultural, artistic, political, commercial and religious currents in both the directions. (Tissot: 1985) The rulers of the Kushan empire (c. 1st-3rd century), which enabled and obviously also supported the flourishing of Buddhism in Gandhara and a common culture from the 1st to the 5th century, is usually in its entirety associated with Buddhism. It is interesting that foreign cultures could not succeed in completely replacing the unique cultural pattern of Gandhara. Even Buddhism, when it reached Gandhara, took a new turn of its life and developed into a new form. This was known as the Mahayana (the Great Vehicle). Mahayana Buddhism gave birth to the most tangible form of the civilization of Gandhara and Gandhara art. The Kushan dynasty trend of artistic syncretism between eastern and western traditions caused Gandhara art to reach its zenith. The Kushan rulers generously invested a large portion of their riches to construct Buddhist monasteries. Thus, it was the Kushan who made possible the blossoming of Buddhist art. It was at this point that Gandhara became the melting point of several cultural currents and the result of which a mixed school of sculptural style emerged which is known as Gandhara Buddhist School of art. At the same time it maintained the distinct features which bespeak an independent language of artistic evolution (Nehru, 1989; 104) The Gandharis adopted several foreign influences in terms of art and architecture and introduced a new kind of art that was totally Buddhist in nature and Gandhara in expression. (Dar; 1980): 91-96)

Buddhist art of Gandhara

Art means the perfection of human skill study and creation of beautiful things like painting sculptures, architecture, writing coins, fine art and pottery and the term Gandhara art, applied to the Buddhist school of sculptural art and architecture that flourished in Gandhara and northwestern India from 1st century B.C.E to 5th century A.D (Luczanits, 2009, 16) but in some parts of Gandhara its lingered as late as 8th century A.D but the prime of Gandhara art covers the Kushan period (2nd to 3rd century CE) (Mughal ; 2007: 19-22) and reached at its peak during the 1st and 2nd century CE. (Sardar & Haq (1997): 23) Gandhara art is not a result of combination of different cultures but it is a geographical setting and trade contacts between the Kushan rulers and west which was enhanced for the development of a style that was different from the specific Indian style. However, the main theme area is Indian in nature; despite of all the foreign influences absorbed, artists produced nonetheless an art which remained Buddhist. In the earliest Buddhist art the Buddha was not sculpted in human form.

Rather, his presence was shown through symbolic representation and not physically. Initially various symbols were employed for Buddha as a lotus flower represents his birth, horse symbolizes the great departure, Bodhi tree indicates his enlightenment, (Sterlin, 1983):16.) Chakra represents the First Sermon delivered in the deer park at Sarnath, and a stupa represents his Mahaparinirvana. This early form of Buddhism flourished mainly in India, particularly under the Mauryans found Sanchi and Bhaurat stupa (Hungtington; 2006) 58-89) During the Kushan period the Buddha was defied in this region and the need of his worship was felt and artist started producing images of Buddha.

In the Gandhara art, introducing a new element by depicting Buddha anthropomorphically as a result of Mahayana thought. (Krishan; 1996: 13-14) Gandhara art is strongly connected with the origin of the Buddha image, and the outstanding developments of Buddhist iconography. (Miyaji: 1984: 220). The foremost contribution of Gandhara art is the depiction of Buddha in human form. The Buddha image first occurred in the bas-reliefs of the Buddha's life and making way for more prevalent singular, free standing images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, (Yamamoto; 1990), 36) Relief panels of Buddhist images, scenes in the life of the Buddha, stories of the Buddha's previous lives (jataka stories), and ornamental work. Episodes from his life, starting from his birth up to his death, are narrated in stone in such a sophisticated manner that the spectator gets sufficient knowledge about the master. The Mahayana tradition incorporated universal compassion, changing the Buddhist goal from attaining enlightenment to a more accessible objective of attaining a life of humanity as a Bodhisattva. (Zwalf: 1985), 13.) Bodhisattvas entered the pantheon as deities who postponed their own Buddha hood in order to aid all others. (Ibd 32) In Gandhara, the later influx of Bodhisattva devotional images and icon representation substantiate the greater receptiveness towards the Mahayana faith. Gandhara art simply expresses the socio-religious fervor of its people. An indigenous socio-economic stratum of cultivated taste the merchants, bankers, caravaners and minor officials and not the Kushan nobility may have provided the main impetus for its development. (Rosenfield, 1967, 73) The main principal theme of Gandhara art was to narrate the life story of the Buddha. Gandhara art is almost exclusively religious art and purpose was to communicate the Buddhism to its followers. Thus Gandhara art is, first and foremost, a Buddhist art and must be judged by its success in fulfilling its purpose as a sacred art, designed to illustrate the history and legends of the Buddhist faith and to glorify the memory of its founder. Almost ninety percent of the sculptures demonstrate the Buddha, the Buddhist pantheon and the Buddhist devotees. (Marshall; 1960:42) The remaining represents Brahmanical and alien subjects. The rectangular frieze with scenes from Buddha life in low or high relief were fixed against the bases of stupas and those secular subjects used as stair-risers and fixed with iron nails and hooks. Some of them contain more than two compartments which are separated from one another by a Corinthian or Persepolitan pilasters. They have upper and lower register also; we see square blocks or hermica of stone which are carved on four sides. They were placed on the top of the dome of stupa. The curved panels were fixed against the tiered drums of the stupa. (Spooner, 1908/09 :38–59)

Materials mostly employed by the sculptors consisted of kind of grey or blue slate stone called schist but stucco was also used for making statues and reliefs. (Marshall, 1960, pp. 109–12.) In the end of Gandhara art, stucco was more and more replaced by clay and terracotta. (Luczanits: 2009;318). The use of wood has also been attested at some places. Casting in bronze and copper was not as common in Gandhara as sculpting in stone, stucco and terracotta. A few bronze statues are known from Sahr-i Bahlol, Chinkolai (Swat) and other places. (Rowland, 1970, pp. 185–6) The Gandhara School of art enjoyed a long life and was in full florescence, most particularly in the Kushan

period. In the 1st-2nd centuries A.D., a large number of sculptures were produced. The artist of Gandhara adopted several foreign influences in terms of art and architecture and introduced a new kind of art that was totally Buddhist in nature and Gandhara in expression. (Dar; 1980: 91-96.) Religious Buddhist art of Gandhara recovered from stupas, monasteries can be subdivided structural remains. These are individual Buddha and Bodhisattva sculptures, the panels' relief and other architectural pieces with Buddha life story carved on them. (Agrawal 1964;30) The life story of the Buddha mainly based on the sacred literature composed by Buddhist scholars during the period of Kushan. The decline of the art started in the 5th century A.D. Some scholars are of the view that this glorious art ended due to devastation from the White Huns.

Distinctive features of Gandhara art

Gandhara art has many characteristics features and taken over many topics. The characteristics features of Gandhara art are the image of Buddha and Bodhisattva, relief panels, image of Hindu deities, western influence, jewelry and dresses of sculptures, are most important in the longer period of art development.

The presentation of Buddha image in Gandhara art

In Gandhara thousands of Buddha images were produced. In the Mahayana philosophy, the symbols of Buddha took new physical expression and received a transcendental and celestial character. The image of Buddha has been seen as being as being the physical representation of a historical character Sakyamuni who's reached supremely high spiritual level; his image could simply not portray a normal human being but had to reflect this concept. It is there that the need for material image of God. There is no doubt that the Buddha image was conceived within a cultural background. (Picron:2009;164) The problem concerning the origin of the Buddha image has not yet been convincingly resolved. Assuming western inspiration for the form and origin of the Buddha image, some scholars see it as adapted from the Greco Roman Apollo. (Grunwedel & Burgess; 1985: 159-169) Others have suggested late Roman Republican starting or the early imperial statue as the possible sources of inspiration. (Wheeler; 1949: 9-19) and It has also been argued that there was no need for a European stimulus and that Gandhara schools of Buddhist art could have evolved the image independently. (Coomarwamy(1926: 165-70.) Coins of Kanishka showing well developed Buddha image are also cited as postulating an earlier and established form. (Golubew (1923:438-54)

In Gandhara art, the head of Buddha has practically all the attributes with a high usnisa, . The arrangement of the hair in concentric curves which also cover the usnisa Arched hairdressing is also known from Gandhara schist sculptures (Ingholt; 1957:119, fig 246) as also parallel vertical curls descending from the usnisa to the forehead. The tuft show undulations starting backward s from the line of the scalp or left and right from a central line dividing his hairstyle into symmetrical parts . (Picron: 2009;183) Buddhist sacred literature mentioned four type postures of Buddha and sculptures of the Buddha are generally shown standing, sitting (asana), lying or walking. The sitting position with cross-legged and lift foot leg over the right thigh and the right foot leg over the thigh of the left, he always shown with "lotus position" (padmasana). The meditation pose (Fig.1) is very common for seated images of the Buddha, but, in some rare cases, he is also shown seated in a chair with pendent legs in the so-called European fashion (pralambapadasana). (Rosenfield; 1993: 187) The model of a standing Buddha (Fig.2) may have been copied from a Greek god Apollo. (Cunningham; 2002:29). The Buddha

stands to a height of 2.64m and is the tallest statue known from Gandhara. The great Buddha of 38 to 55 m carved out of rock at Bamian in Afghanistan is an exceptional expression of this tendency. Among the thirty chapels at Takht-i-Bahi in what was called the “court of colossi”, between the main stupa and the monastery, some, when first seen were still from 25 to 30 feet (8.375-10.05m) in height. The Peshawar Museum has recently acquired a stucco head 52 cm in height. (Juhyung;2007 :1-6) At the Dharmarajika at Taxila, now incomplete stucco image housed in a chapel of which the walls were evidently intended to support a considerable weight, would, from its proportions, had reached a height of 10.675m. (Marshall;1951 :268). A number of further walking scenes of Buddha depicted on the images in Gandhara art (Fig.3). The lying position is kept for only his Mahaprinirvana and his last departure or death scene.

The images of the Buddha show some special signs or symbols called lakshaGas (Grunwedel & Burgess; 1985:159-169). The signs for a transcendental being or a Universal Monarch as recorded in literary sources are 32 principal and 80 secondary. (Grunwedel & Burbess;1985 “159), BrahmanAsitanotes the thirtytwo signs of greatness marking of the prince Siddhartha body (Carter;1987:49) but all of these do not appear on the images of the Buddha. There is a halo around his head in the shape of a disc. Except in the smaller reliefs the Buddha is rarely without a halo which looks like a disc behind the head. (Picron: 2009,179) The term mudra (pose) is used to designate certain important gestures performed by the hands are of special significance. (Picron: 2008;181)

The most common are four mudras. First mudra called “Dharmacakrapravatanamudra” (turning the wheel of the law) a preaching gesture (Fig.4). In this gesture Buddha shows as a teacher and he slightly bend the right hand to himself in front of the chest, the thumb of the left hand, also slightly the closed, joined the index finger and look to enter into the lower part of the right hand. Picron: 2008;182) In Gandhara sculptures is perfectly illustrated by a well preserved relief from Sahri Bahlol, now in the Peshawar museum (no 1527) (Alfred Foucher, 1918,206) The Bhumisparshamudra meaning the (earth touching pose) was performed by the Bodhisattva before the Enlightenment, when he called upon the earth goddess by touching the earth with his right hand to bear witness in the context of Maras’ Attack on the lotus flower. Some of the seated position figures besides reassurance show the Dhyanamudra, (meditation pose), This pose show right hand lying above the left, palm upward, in the lap. Abhyamudra meaning “gesture of the without fear” In this pose Buddha lift up his right hand almost to the height of the shoulder in the standing position.

Buddha image is different as a monk dressed. The Buddha is wearing a very specific simple dress and the Buddhist Vinaya (discipline books) states three types of monastic robes called tricivara in Sanskrit. One of these is a lower undergarment round the middle called antaravasaka (waistcloth) in pali falls down to the ankles and is similar to the” lungi “It is an unsewn oblong piece of cloth made of a variety of materials. The second is an upper under robe over the left shoulder called (uttaranga) in Sanskrit covered upper part of the body. It’s a robe of monk hangs down the back, reaching a little above knees, draped gracefully from the both shoulders or only the left one and leaving the right arm open. The third is an over robe (saCghami) which is similarly draped around the body. It covers the back and the left shoulder (Grunwedel & Burbess; 1985 “159) but right shoulder leave free. Although a definite chronology of Buddha image is still missing.

Sculptures of Bodhisattva

A wonderful group of sculptures in Gandhara art is represented of the Bodhisattva figures. The creation of Bodhisattvas sculptures are a great contribution of Gandhara art and best example of full-length standing statue Bodhisattva sculptures, from Sahribahlol in the Khyber pakhtunkhwa Province, now in the Peshawar museum. Prince Siddhartha had to pass through this stage to become a Buddha. Gandhara iconography show some important Bodhisattva like Siddhartha, Maitreya (Future Buddha) Avalokiteshvara (also called Padmapani ("lotus in hand)) and Manjushri. (Lobo 1991) The Bodhisattvas of Maitreya (Fig.5) with a water bottle most important and well represent important in Gandhara art. They are being recognizable from their respective attributes and different positions of hands and fingers. Bodhisattva Maitreya usual attributes are the right hand in abhaya mudra and the left hand likely held the edge of his robe or some time the pendent water pot (Kamandalu) held by the neck in the left. (Behrendt; 2007:53) Avalokiteshvara has a seated Buddha image in the crest of his turban. Manjushri holds an oblong palm-leaf manuscript. Like the Buddha; the Bodhisattva usually shows a halo, an urna and the three principal gestures, namely the abhaya mudra and dharmachakra mudras. In common with the Bodhisattvas are always shown princely dress and ornaments. (Luczanits, 2009, 22) He wears two garments one of which called dhoti (in Sanskrit paridhana), is draped around the waist so that one of the shorter sides falls on the left in rounded or pointed ends. The other is an upper garment called uttariya and is worn in various ways. Bodhisattva has remarkable variety of head dresses called turbaned. Some of the Bodhisattvas are turbaned while others are bare-headed. The jewelry is a remarkable sign of Bodhisattva sculptures. (Luczanits: 2007) Bodhisattva has also Mustaches of Indian style.

Relief Panels

A considerable Gandhara sculptures consist of relief panels of various forms and sizes. It is generally assumed that the curved or flat rectangle panels stood in a horizontal arrangement on a stupa drum or base. It was noticed that flat panels could form a harmika and were also used on chapel walls. The jataka stories of the Buddha were very popular subject of Gandhara art. (Marshall, 1960, pp. 109–12). The narrative panels represent important events in the life of the prince Siddhartha and Buddha Shakyamuni like dream of queen Maya, (Lillie: 1974: 6) birth of Siddhartha, seven step of the child, The horoscope, the marriage of Siddhartha and Yasodhara, life in the palace, the first meditation of Siddhartha, the renunciation, the great departure, farewell to Chandaka and Kanthaka, first meeting with Brahman, fasting for salvation, the temptation and attack of Mara, the great enlightenment, the first sermon, the miracle of salvation, death of the Buddha, (Fig 6) cremation of the Buddha, distribution of the relics of the Buddha etc on schist stone. ((Sehrai: 1991: 15) Beside Buddha and Bodhisattva, there are other secular human figurine in various positions were very common on relief panels as male figures bears a wheel on head, female figure seated on full vase, figures on pillars and up right figures in niches, figures hovering in air carrying garlands, lady with parrot perched on shoulder, (Falser; 2015: 1-5) women and tree, women with harp, women with weapon, nude dwarfs carrying garland, foreigner wearing conical caps and cap like head gear, figure with more than one head attached to the same body, figure with legs ending in serpent like coiled, tails, drinking scene, caryatides, atlantes persepopolitan and corinthian, garland bearers, (Berkwitz; 2009: 167-168.) marine horse, tritons, marine deities, bearded atlantes, vine stem, fire alters, Garuda and the woman victim motifs. (Behrendt; 2007, 12-13) Like other art idioms, a variety of decorative motifs were introduced in the Gandhara School of art. At times, the decorations are meant for support or filling space of the plain. There are various decorative elements

are arranged in the composition in order to achieve perfect relationship between theme and ornamentation. The decorative elements are broadly classified in the following four groups, architectural, floral, Geometrical and symbolical.

Hindu Gods and Goddess in Gandhara art

There are considerable remains of Brahmanical representations and exist many Hindu deities in the Gandhara art. The most well-known are those like Brahmna and Indra, the four maharajas , the twenty eight generals of the Yakshas or nature spirits, Hariti with her retinue,(Fg.7)one of the lokapalas, called VairavaGa or Kubera, has often been linked with Pancika the only Yaksha general identified on the sculptures, who received an independent cult.(Bailey 1980: 21-29)The most frequently occurring Yaksha, called VajrapaGi (“vajra in hand”), the Buddha’s protector, Skanda Nagas, Darudas, Yakshis, Kinnarasan in the Gandhara art, the mentions deities who were honored by the Buddhists. Skanda was most commonly represented in Gandhara art, wearing a tunic-like suit of amour, his bow strung across his chest, and holding a spear in his right hand. This time, though, the spear is used successfully against an enemy in combat.(Khan and Azeem, 1999).Another deity Mara occurs in narrative reliefs connected with Renunciation and with his Assault before the Enlightenment. Shiva was also worshipped in Gandhara, as he is seen not only on coins but also on panel reliefs and rock-carvings. On the coins again we find a moon and a sun deity. Some nice specimens have been found at Butkara 111. The serpent killing bird-deity or garua also finds place in a few reliefs.

Greek and Roman God and Goddess in Gandhara art

A considerable number is important from the Greek and Roman world like Athena (Minerva), Harpocrates, the Centaur, Silenas and satyr. Beside this, a city-goddess identified as Tyche (with turreted headdress), Athena, Dioscuri, Nana and possibly wind-god also occur on Gandhara reliefs. There are numerous examples of Atlas, Tritons, Hippocamp, Centaur, ichthyocentaur, marine bull and winged dragon. Of our particular interest are donors and worshippers who display a variety of costumes. Besides Apollo and Daphne, the toilet trays, of which a considerable number was found in Sirkap, represent a non-Buddhist element in Gandhara sculpture. The goddess with cornucopia is generally identified with Iranian Pharro and Ardoksha, goddess of wealth.(Rosenfield, 1993, 246-49)

The jewellery of Gandhara sculpture

The Gandhara jewelry displays a variety of styles and techniques. The Gandhara sculptures depict male and females, wearing ornaments on the large scale. The representation of jewelry on statues throws light on the Kushan fashion. Men wore jewelry as much as women, whereas before and after the Kushans, the wearing of personal ornaments was the privilege of ladies alone. (Wilson, 1941, p. 71) The richness of ornaments depended on the status of the person wearing them. Bodhisattvas, kings and queens, men and women of noble birth and even deities are always shown wearing heavy Commoners either wore samples of ornaments or none at all. The ornaments of head, forehead, ear, nose, arm, wrist, fingers thigh, hips and neck are found in large scale. The commonest types of Gandhara jewelry include earrings of leech and-pendant type necklaces, neck bands, bangles, bracelets and armlets, anklets, girdles, hairpins, amulets of great variety, etc. and are usually worn by Bodhisattvas. Jewelry. (Murthy;1977: 28-47) There is also a wide variety of fingerings with or without encrusted

gems and seal impressions. Decorative items, such as brooches, turban pins, and miniature gold figures of Cupid, Psyche, animals, birds, flowers and necklaces with fanciful designs are known from Taxila, but waist-cords, bejeweled breast-chains and footwear are known only from statues. Gandhara jewelry shows a fully developed stage of the crafts of granulation.

Dresses and hairstyle of sculpture

Dress of every class has been represented by the Gandhara artist like king, couple god, semi gods, celestials, prince, queens, male guards, female guards, musicians, royal chaplain, soldiers and common people. (Ingholt; 1957:340) Gandhara art showed remarkable variety and fashion as regards their headdress. Headdress is a quite interesting feature of personal dress in Gandhara sculptures, kings readymade head dress, Gods either readymade or obtained by winding round the head a rolled scarf. Prince wear a head dress having an egg shaped ornament tied in the centre caps and helmets are also noticed, head dress of women are decorated by ornamental devices like discs, flowers, leaves, string of beads gems or pearls. (Marshal; 1960) Remarkable taste and fashion have been represented in the sculptures of Gandhara art. As the majority of the figures in this art appear with covered heads. However the artisans have made efforts to great extent to have a fair idea of their hair styles. Kings wore aslant, gods with curly hair a wig type or combed back from forehead princes; hair style as egg shaped ball, commoners wig like coiffures, Ascetics with their matted locks, monks with clean shave heads. Buddha his hair represented in two ways either with Woy lines and protuberance (usnisa), the women portrayed in the Gandhara sculptures betray variety of coiffure. (Murthy; 1977: 49-63)

Western influence on Gandhara art

The Buddhist art of Gandhara give the impression certainly familiar, its illustration, language and the representation of Western pattern making it appear deeply rooted in the sculpture of the classical world. (Grunwedel; 1985: 75) The composite character of a number of Gandhara scenes of the Buddha's life like Buddha's birth scene, the figure of the god Indra approaching the Buddha's mother Queen Maya with a cloth covering his lower arms is traced, a series of miraculous birth representations, the posture of the queen grasping the branch of a tree, in contrast, derives from a common Indian depiction of yakshi goddesses of fertility are associated with Western artistic tradition. (Stoye, 2008) So the many aspects like art of sculpturing, technique of stone carving, physical features of the Buddha, certain specific statues of western origins as well as decorative and architectural motives all reflect their western connotation but however the spirit of Gandhara art remained local and Buddhist. (Gombrich; 1984): 105) Due to its philhellenic background Gandhara art considers as Indo- Greeks, Indo- Hellenistic and Indo-Bactrian (Grunwedel; 1985: 75) Graeco-Buddhist, Romano-Buddhist (Dani,, 2008, 120-121) art etc. The French scholars Alfred Foucher called it 'greco -boudhique' art (Foucher, 1905-51) We can say however that the Buddhist art of Gandhara developed out of the amalgamation of Greek, Roman, Persian and Indian artistic influences (Tanveer & Amanulla; 2004: 29).

Conclusion

The Buddhist art of Gandhara flourished in the region of Gandhara in ancient times represent the life story of the Buddha and of his early existence (jatakas) mainly in stone. Throughout its history,

it was ruled by foreign invaders. The foreign rulers brought with them their cultural traits, religion, philosophy of life, traditions, language and style of constructions. The foreigner and are surviving regional culture intermingle with each other and receptive to new ideas and trends. However, Gandhara art seems the only surviving source to tell us the real story of cultural interaction and process of assimilation into Gandhara life. Above all, in spite of absorbing foreign cultural traits the people of Gandhara seem never compromised their own traditions as Gandhara art depicts the whole story. It has its own individuality, reflecting its socio-religious aspirations of its people. Although Gandhara art have various unique features but its chronology still remains an unresolved problem and complicated issue. It obviously Gandhara art had the origin of the pre- Kushan era but as a well-established and became dominating school under the patronage of Kushan king Kanishka. Scholars have tried to establish the chronology of Gandhara art, but this is still open to debate, even still the origin of the first image of the Buddha is disputing issue among the scholars. The problem becomes more critical we are confronted with the paucity of inscribed material. Even in case of date, the era for reckoning is not certain. So far only dated sculptures of Gandhara School have been recovered but the date given does not lead to a definite conclusion for the fact that these represent different eras because the classification of the humorous work into acceptable relative chronological order has so far defied all attempts because most of the material has come from unscientific diggings in the past. There are inferring only few dated works. Some of the inscriptions of these works have been to natively interpret and there is no real certainty about the era to which a date refers to. Furthermore the major part of the material has come from casual finds unscientific excavations. The mystery of the beginning of Gandhara art however have been addressed in the scholarly discussions but, instead of reaching to any solution the problem seems more infuriated and confused. Now in the existence of determine marsh of intelligent guesses, supposition and assumption the main issues relating to Gandhara art need to be addressed in the light of concrete evidences regarding its beginning and chronology.

References

- Beal, Samuel (1969), "Buddhist Record of Western World", translated from the Chinese of Hiuen Tsiang (now Xuan Zang), repr, 1st printed 1884, (Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal 97-108.
- Coomaraswamy, A.K. & Nivedita, (1967) "Myth of the Hindus and Buddhists" New York.
- Errington, (1987). "The Western Discovery of the Art of Gandhara and the Finds of Jamalgarhi" Unpublished Theses, University of London.
- Dar Saif-ur-Rahman, (1980) "A Fresh Study of Four Unique Temples at Takshasila (Taxila)", Journal of Central Asia, 3/1
- Foucher, Alfred (1905-51), "L' Art Greco-Bouddhique du Gandhara", Paris
- Hargreaves, H. (1930) "Handbook to the Sculpture in the Peshawar Museum". Calcutta.
- Ingholt, Harald, (1957) "Gandhara Art in Pakistan". New York
- Khan Muhammad Nasim, (1998): "Epigraphy in Pakistan", The Glory that was Pakistan, 50 Years of Archaeological Research in Pakistan" Published by Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar and National Heritage of Pakistan
- Khan Muhammad Ishtiaq (1998) "Buddhism in Gandhara: Some Thoughts", Journal of Asian Civilization, 21/257.
- Majumdar, N.G., (1937). "A Guide to the Sculpture in India Museum" Delhi.
- Marshall, J.H. (1951) "Taxila: an Illustrated Account of Archaeological Excavation" 3 Vols. Cambridge.
- Marshall, J.H. (1960) "The Buddhist Art of Gandhara" Cambridge.
- Mughal A.M., (2007): "Gandhara Art the Pride of Pakistan" Journal of Asian Civilization, 30/2
- Murthy, Krishna, (1977) "The Gandhara Sculptures: A Cultural Survey" Delhi.
- Rahman, A., (1993) "Recent Developments in Buddhist Archaeology in Pakistan" South Asian Studies .
- Rowland, Benjamin, 1960. Gandhara Sculpture from Pakistan Museum. New York.
- Sardar, Badshah & Saleem-Ul-Haq (1997) "Gandhara: A Buddhist School of Art", Journal of Central Asia, 20/1
- Sehrai, Fidaullah, (1986) "A Guide to Takht-I-Bahi" Peshawar.
- Sehrai, Fidaullah, (1991). "The Buddha Story in Peshawar Museum" Peshawar.
- Shakur, M.A., (1954) "A Guide to Peshawar Museum" Peshawar.
- Sharma R.C (1989) "Buddhism and Gandhara Art" (New Delhi: Oxford University Press

Spooner, D.B. (1906-07) "Excavation at Sahri Bahlol", Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report" (1990), Delhi.

Spooner, D.B.(1910). "Handbook to the Sculptures in the Peshawar Museum" Bombay

Tanveer Tahira & Amanullah,(2004) "Historical Development of the Buddhist Art of Gandhara: A Stylistic Analysis" Journal of Central Asia, 27/1

Ward, C.H.S.,(1988) "Early Buddhism: Doctrine and Discipline" Delhi.

Wheeler, R.E.M.(1962) "Charsadda: a Metropolis of the North-West Frontier". London.

Y. Krishan,(1996)"The Buddha Image, Its Origin and Development" New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd

Yamamoto Chikyo,(1990) "Introduction to Buddhist Art", New Delhi

Zwalf, W. (1985)."Buddhism Art and Faith" London.

Zwalf, W.(1996). "A Catalogue of the Sculpture in the British Museum". London



Fig.1 Meditating Buddha Butkara (Swat)



Fig.2 Standing Buddha Lahore museum



Fig.3 Walking Buddha from Sahri Bahlol



Fig.4 Teaching Buddha from Sahri Bahlol



Fig.5 Bodhisattva Miteriya



Fig.6 Death Scene of Buddha



Fig.7 Hindu Goddess Hariti
with her husband