

Buddhist Gestures Demonstrating Gandhara Art

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Pakistan is God gifted land with cultural sites, monuments and rich historical features spared all-over the country. The two well-known acknowledged civilizations internationally are Gandhara and Indus Valley civilization. Both have their own importance but the Gandhara civilization is highly admired due to its religious impact on its art and architecture. The Bodhisattva images are compositional beauty and it is stylishness of sculptures Jewellery. It can be notice on the base reliefs of Buddhists figures in Gandhara. The reliefs are shown seated on a throne in the form of inverted lotus bloom. It is of interest to mention here that the production of sculptures was a popular art among the people of the Indo- Pakistan sub-continent going back to the remote antiquity. However, the art of sculpture came in full bloom with the advent of the Mahayana school in Gandhara (Marshall, 1960).

Keywords: Mudras, Buddha Preaching Styles, Pakistan the Land of Buddha, Gandhara Civilization.

Gandhara was mentioned for the first time in the Rig Veda, the earliest sacred book of the Aryans who entered the Valley of the River Indus at about 1500 B.C.; furthermore, in the Achaemenian inscriptions of the fifth and sixth century B.C. as an affluent Achaemenian satrapy, which in addition to paying rich tribute also supplied armed contingents to the Iranian armies. The Chinese pilgrim Kien To-Lo agreed placing capital of Indus which is towards west of Gandhara. The pilgrim mentioned that it is about three or four days distance from Indus. It is stated in old times which identify position of Peshawar. Also the Mughal emperor Akbar used the ancient name "Parashawar" (Cunningham, 1871).



Lahore Museum.

Kanishka is considered the second Asoka because of the royal patron-age he gave to the Buddhist religion .Under Kanishka and his successors. Gandhara enjoyed its period of greatest prosperity and it is

especially in this era that the majority of the sculptures made mostly of stone, depicting the figures of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas as well as the mythology connected with Buddhism, were produced (Rostovtzeff, 1998).

The important point need to be mention that Buddhist art Gandhara elegantly introduced Buddha in human form as it is pointed out in Mahayana School of Buddhist Art. The favorite subjects popularly depicted in an edifying manner, the scenes are mainly from the life of Buddha. It was in the light of the traditions, the legends and the rituals, that the art of sculpture-making gradually developed over the centuries. The sculptures that are discovered from various sites in the area have strong Greek Hellenistic influence in their treatment and workmanship. The importance of the area in the context of the Buddhist faith can be judged from marvelous sculptures, thousand in numbers and by the extensive historical remains which outnumber all the Buddhist vestiges in the whole of south Asia (Ingholt, 1957).

The Buddha as a cult image and on the relief's wears simple robes, according to the discipline books (VINAYA) of Buddhism, which are chiefly three.

Antarvasaka – this figure concealed quadrilateral piece of cloth made of different martial and it draped down under robe round the middle.

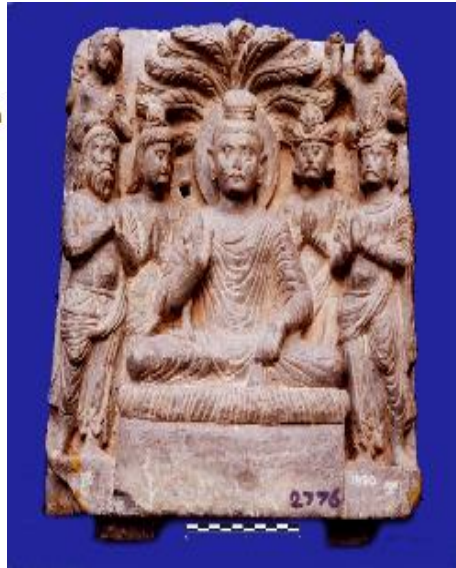
Uttarasanga – in this position the covers chest and comes under the left arm.

Sanghati – The third is an over robe and covers either the left shoulder alone or both the shoulder. The principal gestures (Mudra) performed by the hands as seen in Gandhara images of the Buddha are as follow.

Except in occasional action scenes, the Buddha at Gandhara are invariably displayed making the 4 important hand-gestures are called Mudras.

Abhayamudra

In this scene the only gesture made by standing Buddha image and seems to have a wide range of meaning. The Word Abhaya means “with-out fear”. This gesture or pose is generally interpreted as “re-assurance” but it may also stand for assent and also instruction. In this pose the right hand is raised to the level of chest, with the palm facing outwards and the forearm more or less vertical from the elbow.



Both figures demonstrating Abhayamudra – standing and seated.

Dhayana

Dhayana, signifying meditation, literally means meditation. This gesture is not seen on standing images. In this Mudra the right hand lies above the left in the lap, the fingers of the right open curling slightly over palm of the left.



Seated Dhayana

Dharma Chakra

Dharma chakra, the preaching associated with Buddha's first sermon in the deer park at Serienat with the first miracle at Sarvasti, This may be loosely translated as "putting in motion the wheel of the law". This pose is also confined to seated figures. In this pose the hands are brought together before the chest, the right with palm in wards and fingers curled is held above the left, which also keeps the palm hidden while its fingers touch the bottom of the upper land.



Dharma Posture of Buddha.

Bhumisparsa

Bhumisparsa, earth-touching, recalling the Buddha's calling the earth to witness just before the enlightenment at Bodhagaya. This is seen only in reliefs in the context of Maras attack when the Bodhisattva called upon the image touches the seat. Theoretically the Buddha had 32 principal signs or body-marks (Laksanas) of which only very few appear on sculptures. The most striking is this "Ushnisha" that appears in various sizes and shapes. It is represented as the bun-chignon of a head. Another body-sign is called Urna. It is a tuft or whorl of hair between the eyebrows at the root of the nose and is shown by a raised circle or by a depression to contain a semi-precious stone.



The Buddha position in Bhumisparsa.

Bodhisattvas

The concept of Bodhisattva is the creation of the Mahayana school of Buddhism; it means "the one who is on the way to enlightenment or the Buddha to enlighten". A Bodhisattva before becoming Buddha must practice the six virtues: Compassion, Morality, Patience, Energy, Meditation and Knowledge (Marshall, 1960). Apart from Siddhartha Bodhisattva who became the historical Buddha and mastery Bodhisattva who is presently in Tushita Heaven waiting to become Buddha, there are also other Bodhisattvas.

Theoretically the Bodhisattvas are numerous but they can only partly be identified with the extant examples. The most recurrent forms, which occur in Gandhara, are the following:



Peshawar

Lahore

Maitreya

The Maitreya is commonly features of are the right-hand in Abhaya and the sagging water pot held by the neck in the other. Maitreya may also be in Dhyana (meditation) with the suspended pot held by the neck. In this case the Bodhisattva is always seated. He also appears in preaching pose. As this gesture require both of his hands, he cannot hold the water pot which very often appears on the seat. The distinctive hair style consisting of two small locks looped right and left and separated across the middle by a fillet may also help in identifying this Bodhisattva. Maitreya is evidently always without turban.

**Maitreya****1. Avalokitesvara:**

This Bodhisattva shows the figure of Buddha Amitabha seated in the crest of the turban. In the turbaned seated figures, his right hand points towards his inclined head indicating which may express pensive gesture.

2. Marjusin

The Bodhisattva holds an oblong palm-leaf manuscript and in later images a sword.



Padmapani (Lotus in Hand)

This epithet describes a form Avalokitesvara who is called Padmapani in later iconography. Early examples of figures holding lotus stalk, seated or standing, are often taken to be for representing Padmapani. In some cases the figures hold lotus stalks in both the hands.

**Siddhartha**

This Bodhisattva is still defining precise identification except in instances such as the: Ploughing Festival: where he can clearly be defined. Some of the standing figures showing youthful countenance and a wealth of curly tresses flowing down over shoulders are sometimes also identified with Bodhisattva Siddhartha. Besides Bodhisattvas; several other figures also appear in Gandhara Art. These include Buddha's protector and acolyte is called Vajrapani. In narrative reliefs this Yaksa appears in a variable iconography and always in association with his master. His distinctive feature is the club like Wajra, which he holds in one of his hands. He was never elevated to the position of an independent cult image.



Lahore Museum

Hariti

A mother goddess accompanied by children is identified as Hariti. According to a Buddhist legend she was once a malevolent Yaksi converted by the Buddha.



PancikaHariti and Pancika

Certain texts connect Hariti with the Yaksa general Pancika who holds a long spear. There are many images of a couple or standing figures, with a spears or purse held by the god. Pots or bags of money at their feet and children around one or both have been identified with Panchika and Hariti.



Iconography of Ardoksho is based upon that of the Greek god Demeter. Hence the name Demeter-Ardoksho or Demeter-Haritein Hindu iconography, she takes the form of Sri Lakshmi, a goddess of fertility and good fortune. But Lakshmi is associated with elephants and lotus. Here the cornucopia connects the goddess with the Iranian Ardoksho who also appears in a variant of the tutelary couple of similar function, replacing or combining with Harite (Foucher, 1951).

The latter is also shown with a cornucopia an attribute of the Iranian Pharro, god of royal power, and Ardoksho goddess of wealth.



The Yaksha may also be seen in the Amorino of the garland bearer relief's, the cailya arches, the uprights and elsewhere as an atlas. The Yaksi may be recognized in the female standing against framing pilasters as figure under recalling the Salabhanjika.

Serpent deities representing the waters and the underworld and related concepts of fertility and wealth are usually shown anthropomorphically.



GanguDherSwabi

A figure corresponding to the wind-god of coins occurs.

An array of local and foreign deities occurs on the coinage of Gandhara. Some of these are found in sculptures as well. The influence of the iconography of Heracles figure on Vajrapani cannot be denied, besides his own representations.



Drinking and merry-making scenes are usually seen in the stair-riser reliefs. They were inspired by Hellenistic models, which existed in the area where Buddhism spread later on. These themes were readily adopted by artists for the decoration of Buddhist monuments. Incongruous with the sacred character of Buddhist Stupas as they may seem, they nevertheless appear to be very popular. At the outset such themes were incorporated just as they were, without any modification, among the Stupa reliefs. But it was not too long before doubts began to surface as to the propriety of these scenes on the walls of sacred structures. It was probably this reason that the Buddhist artists started introducing such elements as flowers with a view to create a sober effect



The relic in the Buddhism has very significant role, it relates to Soka who opened pioneer Stupa and distributed relic to more than 84 thousand newly built Stupas. The Menander inscription of Bajur in Shinkot the relic of Buddha called endowed with fire and the cult is not alike, variation is usually known Buddhist sects. Their understandings are somehow not matching. For example Dher Meguptas, Saarvastivadins and Mulisarvastivadins overdue that Stupa cult was lucrative. It is because that Buddha had mentioned that there was no difference between relics and him-self (Buddha). At his death it was accepted as gift made to a Stupa in advance. The Caetikas and Mahesaskas however held that the only value of such a cult lay in the state of mind of the contributor.

The value accumulated by Bodhistva is measured convenient to other for emerging of the faith in them in order to become the true factions and ultimately accomplish Nirvana. It has to be understood that exposition of the fundamental philosophy of Mahayanist was the original work of the celebrated Sanskrit researcher and poetry writer Asyegosha. It is also notice that the original text of Sanskrit is not available.

It is believed that the exposition of the fundamental philosophy of Mahayanist was the original work of the celebrated Sanskrit scholar and poet Asyagosha. However, no copies of this original Sanskrit text are available.

Conclusion

Buddha did not encourage making of his images and the worship postures. But Buddha made perfection in his prayer and reached to stage of Gautma – the enlightened.

The important historical remains, most particularly the Buddhism propagation and Gandharian trade is performed due to geographical position of Pakistan.

The historical significance of region can be judged through the Buddhist remains and rock inscriptions and technique was first introduced by Achaemined.

Asoka embraced Buddhism after the war of Klinga and disseminated different groups for religion propagation.

In Gandhara art or Buddha styles are good and artistic example of the meeting of Eastern and Western influence.

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