

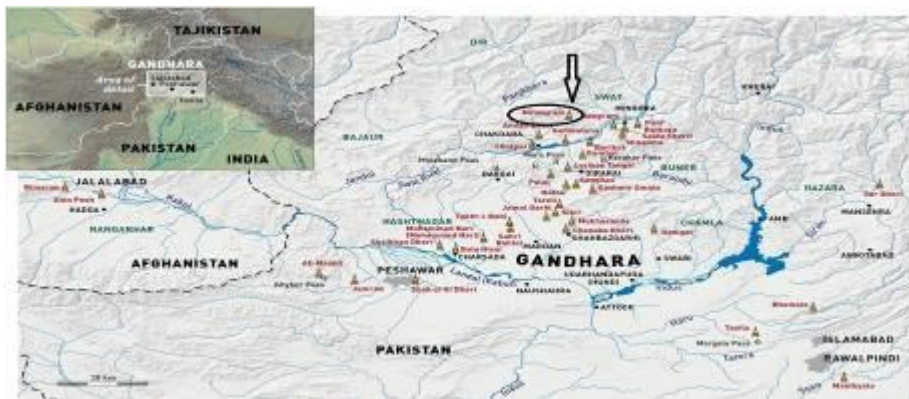
## Narrative Stone Reliefs from Nimogram Buddhist Complex Swat, Pakistan: Its History and Analysis

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The focus of this research paper is rare and important collection of artifacts excavated from the Buddhist site of Nimogram Swat Pakistan. The excavations conducted during 1967 and 1968 at site of Nimogram and the antiquities discovered were neither studied nor documented properly. A single preliminary report published by the Department of Archaeology & Museums Government of Pakistan in 1968 (Pakistan Archaeology; Vol. 5, 1968: 116), no extensive study of these artifacts has been conducted. The main object of this paper is to examine directly the narrative reliefs of Nimogram and to evaluate its religious, cultural, historical and iconographical importance so far ignored. This paper discusses and illustrates narrative stone reliefs, friezes and panels only. These selective stone art pieces reveals different subjects i.e., the Buddha's life events, miracles of Buddha and images of Buddha & Bodhisattva. The remaining artifacts of Nimogram are beyond the scope of the paper and have been catalogued and documented in a monograph that will be published shortly.

**Key words:** imogram, Gandhara, Udyana, Buddha, Bodhisttva, Maitreya, Vajrapani Siddharatha,



In Pakistan, there is a consensus among the scholars that Nimogram has never been reported by the pioneer explorers. I found solid proof that these pioneers did mention the site of Nimogram. In 1938 Evert Barger and Philip Wright, conducted the first ever scientific excavation in the Swat valley. Their report, published in 1941, cited the ruins of three stupas and their survey map provides the location of the site without giving a specific name (Barger and Wright 1941: 27-28). They mention;

“Three miles up the river from Gumbatuna on the same bank is the large village of Parrai. A mile north of the village, at the mouth of a ravine running up into the hills, are the ruins of a large monastery spread out along a series of terraces about 200 yards long. There are the usual courtyards, and the much decayed remains of three stupas, one of them partly surrounded by cells. Clearance round the base of this stupa produced a few pieces of sculpture, some of them in a soft green schist of very pleasing appearance. One of these—a fragment of stupa railing ornament—is illustrated in Plate V, 3 (No. 319). In the surface debris at the base of a second stupa were a few coins of Soter Megas.”

Another brief preliminary report on the Nimogram excavation Inayat-ur-Rahman (1968). He elaborates;

“It is to be noted that amongst the series of Buddhist monuments scattered all over the valley of Swat, a site of such importance as Nemogram had never been mentioned by the early historians, as Nemogram had never been mentioned by the early historians and archaeologists in their accounts of archaeological survey of this region”.

Later on Ahmad Nabi Khan, the then Director General of Archaeology and Museums Govt. of Pakistan in his book *'Gandhara the Enchanting Land of Buddhist Art and Culture in Pakistan'* (Khan 1994:76). He mentioned that;

“It is to be noted that amongst the series of Buddhist monuments scattered all over the valley of Swat, a site of such importance as Nimogram had never been mentioned by the early historians and archaeologists in their accounts of archaeological survey of this region”.

Recently the antiquities of Nimogram have been documented by Joan A. Raducha. She has established a website that discusses the artifacts <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/Arts.Nimogram>). She highlights;

“The site was excavated by staff of the Pakistan Department of Archaeology and Museums (DOAM) in 1967 and 1968 (Inayat-ur-Rehman. [1968]). The majority of objects found at the site are sculptures, stone and stucco that decorated the Buddhist monuments at the site. Minor finds from the site include materials used in construction, coins, and votive objects.”

Similarly, M. Ashraf Khan, while commenting on the history of archaeological research in Swat, highlighted Nimogram Buddhist complex in his book and give credit to Inayat-ur-Rehman as a principal discoverer of the site (Khan 1993: 5).

**Nimogram Buddhist Complex:** The Buddhist remains of Nimogram lies about 45 km west of Mingora, on the right bank of river Swat, in the tributary valley of Shamoza. The two seasons of excavations in 1967 and 1968, have brought to light three main Stupas in a row, with a courtyard of 56 votive Stupas and an adjoining monastery towards the west of the Stupa's courtyard. Besides so many monuments and finds recorded there the discovery of the three Stupas in one row is indeed significant because such a composition of Stupas has been discovered for the first time in the Buddhist sites so far excavated in the region. After Butkara-I, it is for the first time that such a huge collection of sculptures have been found from a single site, which makes Nimogram an important site all over the valley.

Among the discovered artifacts are images of Buddha, Bodhisattva, narrative reliefs, decorative and architectural elements, Buddha miracles, secular scenes, reliquaries, relic caskets and utilitarian objects. The muscular Atlas always support pillars and brackets, naked cupids carrying a wreath, the *gandharvi* with musical instruments, winged creatures in triangular brackets, tritons, Amorini and numerous other narrative scenes. Domestic scenes of marriages, love making, hunting, wrestling, archery, groups of ascetics, warriors, processions of men, kings riding on a chariots and general enjoyment. Large-scale artifacts in Nimogram complex represent narrative scenes and decorative friezes, images of Buddha as well as Hindu deities.

The Nimogram collection provides large-scale narrative reliefs, all of them could not be accommodated in this paper so only selected pieces are presented here.



**General View of Nimogram Buddhist Complex**

**Narrative Stone Reliefs:** Majority of the sculptures are fragmentary pieces of Buddha, Bodhisattvas, Amorini, wreath bearers, atlas figures, vine-scrolls, riding dragons or lions, musical performances, worshippers, the doorway motif of the *caitya* arches, frieze jambs and lintels. The bulk of the sculptures consist of architectural fragments and floral decorations and narrative panels and reliefs showing the various life happenings of the Buddha. The noteworthy aspect of the Nimogram collection is the scarcity of *Jataka* stories. The entire collection contains a single fragmentary frieze, which may be associated with *Dipankara Jataka*.

**Fig.1 Dipankara Jataka**



*Soapstone, from east of stupa 4, probably second century A. D., left and bottom of the frieze are broken & missing. See Hargreaves 1918: 4-6, Zwalf 1996: 126; Majumdar 1937: 29-34, Qazi et al. 2008: 31, fig 2.3,*

A detached and broken fragment of a frieze reveals a deeply carved female emerging from a doorframe dressed with *sari*. A water jug with its mouth facing outwards is tucked under her left arm. She is looking towards her right with her right broken hand is held up. She is wearing an elaborated head-dress and other ornaments such as necklace, bracelets and ear pendants. The hair arrangement in the shape of a spiral at the top of the head. The pose of the main figure holding a water pitcher with the balcony and above her head are two defaced female figures. Above the balcony is the torso of one female figure, also looking to her right as well as a broken figure.

**Fig.2 Bodhisattva Maitreya in Tushita Heaven**

*Soap stone, from level 2 of shrine 3, probably first half of third century A.D. Broken in eight pieces, only the left side is intact. See Ingholt 1957: 8; Hargreaves 1918: 6-7, pl. III; Joshi & Sharma 1969:52, fig. II.*

Fragment of a relief depicting Bodhisattva Maitreya in Tushita Heaven. Maitreya sits on a cloth covered seat of his lion throne with crossed legs. He is seated in the European position, feet resting on a broken footstool. His hair is tied up in the horizontal. He wears ornaments of ear, neck and arm. He is wearing moustaches, right hand in *abhaya* mudra while the left hand holds a water pot hanging in front of his knee. His robe covers his left shoulder leaving the right shoulder bare.

The most remarkable feature, however, is the lion throne (broken), which rests on two lions at the corners. It is similar to the lionthrones of rock carvings of Swat valley, where frontportions of the lions are depicted. The throne is covered by a kind of cloth with two large tassels at either end on the front, which is a living tradition in Swat valley. The remaining figures are depicted on a much smaller scale than the Bodhisattva. Two bejeweled women appear in a balcony while two richly adorned male figures, seated with legs in a similar pose to the Bodhisattva, devote their attention to him.

**Fig.3 Birth and Seven Steps of Siddhartha**

*Black schist, from south of Stupa 18, probably second century A.D. See Hargreaves 1930: 23; Dani 1968: 30, fig. 14; Ackermann 1975: 83, figs. XXII a. Luczanits 2008: cat.147, Ali et al. 2008: 52-56, fig 3.4, Khan 2015: panels. 6-11,*

Relief panel bordered on both sides by Corinthian pilasters, the panel contains two scenes, the birth of Siddhartha and the first seven steps that he takes. The sculpture shows Siddhartha mother Maya standing in the

centre of the composition, with her right hand raised and clutching a branch of the Sal tree, which represents the Lumbini garden. She is supported by her sister, Mahaprajapati, while attendants are clustered behind them. Meanwhile the divine child is shown issuing from the right side of the queen. Indra with a high headdress, receives the child in his outstretched arms, while Brahma, who is distinguished by his coiffure, looks on in adoration. In the foreground the child standing on the ground is in the act of taking the seven steps in the direction of each of the cardinal points.

**Fig.4 Birth and Seven Steps of Siddhartha**



*Black schist, from east of Stupa 17, probably second half of first century A. D. Preserved to some extent, only bottom border is chipped off. See Nehru 1989: figs. 109 & 110; Ackermann 1975: 60-1; Marshall 1960, fig. 99, Stoye 2008: fig 3, Luczanits 2008: cat. 119a 3, Ali et al. 2008: 52-56, fig 3.4, Khan 2015: panels. 6-11*

This narrative relief, bordered on both sides by Corinthian pilasters, reveals two scenes, the 'birth of Siddhartha' and the 'seven steps'. In the centre, Maya stands in a twisted, dance-like posture, with her right arm extending upwards to the 'Sal' tree branches above her. The Sal tree branches represent the Lumbini garden. Prince Siddhartha emerging from the right side of Maya, Indra standing with a towel in his hands, receives the child. Next to Maya stands her sister Mahaprajapati, who has arrived from the right in Maya's assistance. She backs viewers, placing her left hand on Maya's hip while the right hand hides behind her side. The two assistants are seen in an almost frontal view. One of the maidens next to Mahaprajapati holds a fan and the other a water vessel. The Indra, wearing a turban, bends over to receive the child as Brahma. His left leg is placed forward, almost reaching the standing Siddhartha. Behind Indra, Brahma approaches in *anjali* mudra. Both gods wear prominent nimbus around their heads. In the foreground the child standing on the ground is in the act of taking the seven steps in the direction of each of the cardinal points.

**Fig.5 Birth and Seven Steps of Siddhartha**



*Black schist, from south of Stupa 18, second century A.D. Roughly carved panel, sides mostly chipped off, bottom border broken. See Ackermann, 1975: 83-84, fig. XXII a. Khan 2015: panels. 6-11*

The fig. 5 panel reversals two narrations in the centre of the picture stands Maya under a projected Sal tree, slightly turned to her left, but looking forward, while the little prince Siddhartha emerges from her side. She has a soft face with full round features, button eyes and a short snub nose. She is wearing knee-length over tunic and foot-length *paridana*s protruding from underneath it, and a pair of anklets, while a shawl draped over her shoulders. This type of dress is frequently worn by women in the hilly regions of the Swat valley even today. She stands in a relaxed pose, while her left leg crosses over the right leg, her right arm reaches out to a branch of a Sal tree, and her left hand she holds Mahaprajapati's hip. Mahaprajapati is also wearing a knee-length over tunic and foot-length *paridhana* protruding underneath it, and a pair of anklets, as well as a shawl draped over her left shoulder. Behind her is a female servant wearing a similar dress, is standing attentively watching the miraculous event taking place. On the opposite side, Indra arrives in order to take the baby in his outstretched hands to wrap it in a shawl he is carrying. He wears a monastic robe and a unique cap and the usual ornaments, his face turned in full profile towards the little prince. In the foreground the child standing on the ground is in the act of taking the seven steps in the direction of each of the cardinal points.

**Fig.6 The First Meditation of Siddhartha**



*Greenish schist, from west of Stupa 7, first half of third century A.D. Broken at both left and right sides, lower part and bottom edge is missing. See Hargreaves 1930:26-7.*

The fig. 6 panel story is that one afternoon Siddhartha was taken to see the annual ploughing festival, where in the enclosed space half-stripped men and the pulling oxen were labouring tirelessly before the assembled crowd. As the sun increased in strength, sweat ran down both men and the oxen, and for a few moments they stopped from their labour. In the meantime various insects came out from the ground and flocks of birds descend in multitudes to devour the insects. Seeing the tired oxen, their necks bleeding from the yoke, the men toiling beneath the midday sun and the birds devouring the helpless insects, the heart of Siddhartha was filled with grief. Retiring from the enclosure he found a secluded place near a *jambu* tree. Dismissing his attendants he sat down beneath its shady branches and through the love and pity produced by his reflections was wrapped in a state of unconscious.

The panel is bordered at the top by a garland of overlapping lanceolate leaves. Siddhartha with a halo and in princely attire is seated on a raised decorated seat meditating with his groom Chandaka and caparisoned horse Kanthaka waiting nearby. On the left side of the panel is the subject of his meditation, the suffering caused to those engaged in agriculture, the farmer and his oxen, as well as the insects, etc., disturbed by the ploughing. Three figures in the background watch as the scene unfolds, one with his hand held in the 'blessing' pose.

**Fig.7 Great Departure of Siddhartha**

*Black schist, from west of stupa 21, third century A.D. Chipped off but the extant artistic details preserve. SeeIngholt 1957: 61, pl.47 & 48; Nehru 1989: pl. 112; Ackermann, 1975: 112-13, fig. XLII b; Hargreaves 1930: 27-28; Dani 1968: 30; Nagar 1981: 6. Luczanits 2008: cat.119b, Qazi & M. Ashfaq 2008: 95, fig 6.3, Khan 2015: panel. 21*

The fig. 7 is bordered by Indo-Corinthian pilasters on both the edges, pilasters' shafts with decorated flutes. The relief shows the Renunciation and Great Departure. Siddhartha has been portrayed almost in profile, seated on Kanthaka, well-caparisoned with a breast band and a yoke tail crest on the forehead. Siddhartha wears a turban with a large cockade threaded with pearls and dressed in princely attire, a rimmed halo behind his head. Siddhartha is leaving the city of Kapilavastu in search of a path that will free the world from misery.

A pair of semi-gods, shown walking in profile, holds the front hooves of Kanthaka to eliminate any sound that might awaken the guards. The fluttering edges of his shawl indicate that his horse is in motion. Behind Siddhartha is Vajrapani with the thunderbolt, who turns backwards towards the city gate behind which stands the city goddess, with turrets rising from her shoulder, regretting the loss of her most eminent inhabitant. One heavenly being hovers in front of the departing prince while a standing figure, sometimes identified as Mara, stands at the front, with a club in his lowered right hand.

This sculpture is similar to the one discovered at the site of LoriyanTangai, now in the National Museum Calcutta (Nehru 1989: pl. 112). A more or less similar panel is seen from the site of Butkara-I in the Swat valley (Nagar 1981:6).

**Fig.8 Great Departure of Siddhartha**

*Green schist, from courtyard, third century A.D. Right corner of bottom border is broken, cracks over it. SeeIngholt 1957: 61, pl.47 & 48; Nehru 1989: pl. 112; Ackermann 1975: 112-13, fig. XLII b; Hargreaves 1930: 27-28; Dani 1968: 30; Nagar 1981:6. Luczanits 2008: cat.119b, Qazi & M. Ashfaq 2008: 95, fig 6.3, Khan 2015: panel. 21,*

Fig. 8 shows the fragment of a frieze, bordered on the left by an Indo-Corinthian pilaster. The figures on the relief reveal the Renunciation and Great Departure. Siddhartha leaving the city of Kapilavastu on the way to renounce his princely life in search of a path that will free the world from misery. Siddhartha is shown with a moustache and dressed in princely attire. He wears a turban with a large cockade. The ornaments are the circular earrings with gems, a bracelet, and a necklace. His haloed head and round face is turned towards the viewers, with right hand raised and the palm is visible. Siddhartha seated on a tri-linear saddle, holds the reins of Kanthaka. A pair of angels raises the horse's hooves to avoid any sound that could awaken those who would stop the renunciation. Behind the prince is a half figure of Vajrapani holding a thunderbolt in one hand and a raised fly-whisk in the other. Mara stands in front of the departing Prince, to discourage him from leaving. A semi-god, walking in profile, holds the front hooves of Kanthaka to eliminate any sound that might awaken the guards. The head of other divine beings wearing disc-shaped headresses appear beneath the belly of Kanthaka.

**Fig.9 The Exchange of Clothes with the Hunter**



*Green schist, third century A. D. Broken, chipped, horizontally cracked, left edge and bottom of the relief is broken. See Majumdar 1937: 44; Ingholt 1957: 61, pl.46; Hargreaves 1918: 19-20; Joshi & Sharma 1969:19, fig.9a*

After travelling a certain distance from the capital, Siddhartha dismounts from his horse, conscious of his costly silk attire, which is unsuitable for an ascetic life. Siddhartha gives his princely garments to a hunter passing by receiving in exchange the simple one of the hunter. Fig. 9 fragment of a relief represents Siddhartha exchanging clothes with a hunter. The haloed Siddhartha has already removed his outer robe which he is offering to the hunter in front of him. Vajrapani stands behind him and a half figure hovers in the background, may be a god between the Bodhisattva and the hunter. Two other hunters fill out the remainder of the left-side of the panel, one carrying his prey on his shoulder.

**Fig.10 Brahma and Indra Entreat the Buddha to Preach**



*Green schist, from courtyard, second century A.D., quite preserved panel. See Majumdar 1937: 48; Ingholt 1957: 68, pl.72-73; Joshi & Sharma 1969:21, fig.13, Luczanits 2008: cat.119c, Khan 2015: panels.30-41*



Fig. 10 depicts a panel in front of a bracket bordered at the bottom front by a plain fillet. Brahma and Indra are shown entreating the Buddha to preach. The haloed Buddha is seated on a low platform with incised lines indicating grass. His hands are held in the *dhyana* mudra. On his right is Brahma, haloed and shown as usual with the topknot of an ascetic. He holds a water vessel in his right hand and his left hand is raised towards the Buddha in a sign of appeal. On Buddha's other side is the turbaned figure of Indra, who bows his head with his hands raised in the *anjali* mudra. This composition is generally recognized as the moment when the deities ask the newly enlightened Buddha to preach for the betterment of all beings.

**Fig.11 Symbolic Representation of the First Sermon**



*Greenish schist, from west of Stupa 19, third century A.D. Bottom border is chipped off and broken. See Hargreaves 1930: 33-4; Ingholt 1957: fig.79; Ackermann 1975:85-6, pl. XXIVa; Nagar 1981:12; Joshi & Sharma 1969: Fig. 15, Khan 2015: panel.28,*

In the Hinayana school of art, where the figure of the Buddha is never depicted, the incident can only be represented symbolically, and the symbol chosen is naturally the wheel. Such symbolic representation also occurs in Gandhara but usually the Buddha is himself shown in the sculptures. The symbolism has not altogether disappeared, however, for in almost all cases the sacred wheel is shown, usually on the front of the 'Teacher's Seat' and sometimes in connection with the trident or *trisola* representing the three jewels of Buddhism, namely, the Buddha, the Doctrine and the Community of Monks.

Fig. 11 depicts a slab with four monks with hands held in the *anjali* mudra. The two at the front are shown kneeling down, while those behind are shown standing, all reveal shaven heads and button eyes. They flank an enthroned wheel that is surmounted by a *triratna* with two small four petal rosettes. Here instead of the Master, only the wheel is seen on the pedestal. It represents worship of enthroned objects, though this may also be taken as an iconic representation of the First Sermon.

**Fig.12 Turning the Wheel of the Law**



*Black schist, from north of Stupa 17, second century A.D. The panel is so much effaced that the details of the figures can hardly be seen. See Faccenna 1962: pl. 119; Nagar 1981: 10; Taddei 1969: fig. 9; Marshall 1960: pl.46, fig.70,*

In the deer Park at Sarnath in the vicinity of Varanasi, the Buddha, soon after his enlightenment at Bodhgaya, meets five *bhiksus*, who had previously refused him when he began to follow a new path of his own, different from theirs. As they listen respectfully, he tells them that he has attained supreme wisdom and that he is now ready to set the Wheel of Law in motion.

The fig. 12 defined by a haloed Buddha stands on the right, wearing a monastic robe covering both his shoulders. The folds of his robe reach down above his foot. A Vajrapani dressed in a Greek tunic stands behind him. Buddha reaches out his right hand literally turning a large wheel with a saw tooth pattern around the edge. The *dharmacakra* is shaped much like a halo and backs the torso of a crouching muscular Atlas on a high seat, who holds three wheels above him, one on the head, and one each on the right and left hands, the three wheels carved like rosettes, symbolizing the *triratna*, the Buddha, Dharma, and *Sangha*. The wheel with *triratna* usually is seen mounted on a pillar, but many times it is held on the head of a *yaksha* or Atlas. On the left, five monks with shaven heads and wearing monastic robes, who observe this event, are on the opposite side of the panel. Three are standing, among them one is holding a ceremonial water vessel for the welcoming ceremony, the other two are kneeling, but all are holding their hands in the *anjali* mudra.

**Fig.13 Offering of the Handful of Dust**



*Green schist, from courtyard, second century A.D. Defaced, right edge broken. See Ingholt 1957:80, pl. 110; Hargreaves 1930: 37-8; Zwalf 1996:196-7. Luczanits 2008: cat.169, Ali et al. 2008: 210-11, fig 10.12,*

The story of fig. 13 is that it was a daily custom of the Buddha, who instructed the same upon his monks, to wander around at a certain hour in quest of food. Once, as the Buddha was going along with his begging bowl, two boys of a family, called Jaya and Vijaya were playing in the dust and saw the Buddha on his begging round. Jaya give him a handful of dust, calling it a meal, while Vijaya expressed approval by joining his hand; on Jaya's pronouncing an aspiration to universal monarchy, the Buddha predicted his rebirth one day as emperor Ashoka.

The fig. 13 framed on the left by a Corinthian pilaster, the shaft of which is carved on the front and side with a haloed standing figure. The figure on the front of the pilaster holds a flower in his left hand. The haloed figure of the Buddha is at the centre, holding his right hand in *abhaya* mudra while holding a bowl in his left. A figure standing before him seems to be pouring an offering into his bowl. Two other youthful looking figures are behind, one standing and holding up an offering and the other seated on the ground with the fingers of one hand held up in the two fingered benediction pose. The torso of a haloed standing female is at the right side of the panel. Behind the Buddha is a bearded Vajrapani, his right arm held akimbo, with the *vajra* supported by the other. Four torsos two with clasped hands hover in the air above.

**Fig.14** Indra's Visit to the Indrasala Cave

Light grey stone, from west of stupa 19, second century A.D. Defaced and weathered, left side of bottom border is broken. See Majumdar 1937: 62-3; Dani 1968: 32, pl. XVII; Ingholt 1957: 87-9, pls.128-35; Buchthal 1945: 15-20, figs. 35-46; Marshall 1960: figs. 118,120; Ackermann 1975;81-2, fig. XXI a, Luczanits 2008: cat.175 & 176, Ali et al. 2008: 218-19, fig 10.15,

The relief fragment in fig. 14 once formed of a fairly long frieze, depicts the visit of Indra and the Panchasikha to the Buddha. The mountain in which the cave is situated in from the background in softly sweeping curves, few birds fly on the top of the rock cave. The haloed Buddha sits on a low platform inside a cave with his hands in *dhyanamudra*. Buddha is deeply sunk in meditation and his body looks turned towards the left, *sanghati* covers his hands, eyes are clearly visible and widely open, and the hair, held back in soft waves. He faces to his left where Indra stands, with head bowed and hands in *anjali mudra*. The delicate, soft features of the entire face are seen, above which rises the large head-dress wears a turban which is typical of Indra. He is wrapped in a long cloak-like garment covering the left shoulders and the left upper arm. His ornaments consist of a double bracelet, a necklace and ear pendants.

On the Buddha's right, Panchasikha, Indra's musician, whose duty is to announce his arrival to the Buddha by singing a hymn, approaches with his right hand raised as though to play the arched harp that he holds. His left foot is raised as though he is climbing up towards the cave in which the Buddha sits.

**Fig.15** Adoration of Buddha

Green schist, from west of stupa 19, third century A.D. Both right and left sides are broken

A flat relief with two panels of adoration remaining is depicted in fig. 15. Each panel depicts a seated and haloed Buddha on a low seat with his right hand in the *abhayamudra* and the left hand holding the edge of his garment. The *usnisa* is prominent and earlobes are elongated. On either side of the halo, stylized radiating branches are depicted. On either side of the Buddha, two monks stand facing the Buddha with hands in *anjali mudra*. The panels are divided by an empanelled Corinthian column. The top border is a horizontal moulding decoration of lanceolate leaves. The workmanship of the relief is unique in modeling, especially of radiating branches on both sides of the haloed Buddha head.

**Fig.16 Adoration of Buddha**

*Green schist, from west of Stupa 19, third century A.D. Left side is broken, bottom border chipped off.*

A flat relief with two panels and a fragment of a third remaining is depicted in fig. 16 each of the two panels on the right depicts a seated and haloed Buddha on a low seat with right hand in *abhayamudra* and the left hand holding the edge of his garment. The *usnisa* is prominent and earlobes are elongated. On either side of the halo, stylized radiating branches are depicted. On either side of the Buddha, two monks stand facing the Buddha with hands in *anjali mudra*. The panels are divided by Corinthian columns. Above, is a horizontal moulding decorated with lanceolate leaves. The workmanship of the relief in modeling and display is very similar to fig. 15, especially of radiating branches on both sides of haloed head of Buddha is exceptional and seems work of the same hands.

**Fig.17 Two Miracles of Buddha in front of Kashyapa**

*Green schist, from west of shrine 2, second century A.D. Broken and chipped off. See Ingholt 1957:72-3, pl.85-9; Chandra 1974: 14, pl. 33, Luczanits 2008: cat.172*

Part of a frieze defined above and below with fillets. The Buddha presents the serpent to Kashyapa. In this small section of the original panel, the Buddha sits holding the bowl from which the black serpent can be seen rising. In front of him, half sitting and half kneeling is Kashyapa, holding a water pot. Another miracle of Buddha is the fire which first could not be lit, then could not be put out. The fire flames from ground in between Buddha and Kashyapa can be seen. Both Buddha and Kashyapa represent weak anatomical details. Buddha emaciated body after practicing austerities for seven years has been well portrayed by the sculptor.

**Fig.18 Conversion of Kashyapa**

*Green schist, from courtyard, second century A.D. Right side of the relief is broken. See Majumdar 1937: 49; Marshall 1960: 55-6, figs 73 & 74; Hargreaves 1930:34-5; Ingholt 1957:72-3, pl.85-89, Luczanits 2008: cat.46, Khan 2015: panels.64 & 65,*

This relief story depicted in fig. 18 is that Kashyapa of Uruvilva who was the eldest of three brothers, who lived with a vast multitude of disciples on the bank of a river near the place where the Buddha had himself practiced austerities. One day Buddha himself went to Kashyapa's shelter, intending to convert him and all his followers. But this proved no easy task, and the Buddha was bound to perform some five hundred miracles there. One of these was the victory over the serpent. Buddha is shown holding an alms bowl in front of Kashyapa, in which the snake lies coiled.

Fig. 18 depicts the Buddha presenting the serpent to Kashyapa. The Buddha approaches from the right with the bowl containing the coiled snake in front of him. Vajrapani stands behind the Buddha. They approach a group of three young standing ascetics and the elderly Kashyapa, seated in front of his grass hut. One of the young ascetics and Kashyapa each hold a small water pot.

**Fig.19 Subjugation of Nalagiri Elephant**

*Black schist, from west of shrine 2, second century A.D., broken, eroded and defaced. See Majumdar 1937: 54; Ackermann 1975:93, fig. XXIX a; Hargreaves 1918: 32-3; Chandra 1974: 14, pl. 34, Luczanits 2008: cat.169, Ali et al. 2008: 232-33, fig 11.5,*

Only left half of the panel shown in fig. 19 is preserved. In the centre stands the Buddha turned to the right in near profile, and slightly bent forward in order to touch the forehead of the enraged elephant with his right hand, to tame the elephant Nalagiri which has been sent to crush him. The elephant has rushed in from the right, but has already peacefully lowered his trunk. Vajrapani, half the size of the Buddha, holds the *vajra* in his left hand while waving a fly whisk above his head in the other. Behind him is the torso of a haloed figure that holds his right hand in the two fingered gesture of blessing. The heads of two female figures are above the door

frame as though from a balcony witnessing the event. The workmanship of the panel looks coarse and rough and is very similar to that of the other reliefs from Gandhara and Udyana.

**Fig. 20 Taming of the White Dog**



Green schist, courtyard, second century A.D. Broken in the middle, chipped off and defaced. See Hargreaves 1930: 38; Zwalf 1996:202-3, *Ali et al. 2008: 214-15, fig 10.13,*

The relief shown in fig. 20 represents a story of the white dog that barked at the Buddha when he went to visit a certain man named Suka, who was not at home when Buddha arrived. Suka had a white dog, which at the moment of his entrance, was eating out of a dish on the top of a table. The sight of the Buddha enraged the dog extremely, and he barked in furiously. The dog had hidden a vast treasure and through the intervention of the Buddha, now reveals it as hidden beneath the platform on which the dog sits. The Buddha argued, and told him that he had fallen into this state because he had been so rich. Thereupon the dog deeply ashamed crept away to a far corner.

The pilaster dividing the two scenes is decorated with a figure with folded hands. The narrative panel shows the Buddha holding his right hand in the *abhaya mudra* gesture, calming a dog, on a high seat in front of him. Bodhisattva Maitreya stands behind the dog holding a water pot in his left. Behind the Buddha is a bearded figure of Vajrapani, looking downwards, with the *vajra* in his left hand. The scene on the left contains two standing figures facing to their right, heads bent and hands held in *anjali mudra*, both wear turbans and heavy earrings as well as robes.

**Fig. 21 Offering of Bowls**



Green schist, from courtyard, second A.D. Left & bottom edge broken, figures defaced & head less. See Hargreaves 1918: 27-8, pl. XXI; Chandra 1974: 12, pl. 29; Majumdar 1937: 47; Joshi & Sharma 1969:21, fig. 12

After enlightenment, for seven weeks the Buddha had not touched any food. Now it so happened that two merchants, named Trapusha and Bhallika, who were passing by offered him in all humility some eatables to break his fast. The Buddha accepted the offering, but thought that it would be appropriate to have it in a vessel. The guardians of four quarters immediately appeared there with golden bowls in their hands. On account of their unsuitability for an ascetic the offer was not accepted. Ultimately they brought stone bowls. This time the Buddha accepted the offering but thought that it would be appropriate to have it in a vessel. Lest any of them

should feel offended, he accepted all the four bowls and through his miraculous powers, he pressed them into one.

The fig. 21 of Nimogram collection reveals the same event. It is bordered on one side by a Corinthian pilaster, the front of which is decorated by a haloed male figure standing cross-legged on a lotus. The side of the pilaster is decorated with a lotus bud on a stem. The narrative relief reveals a large standing image of the Buddha and 14 others. The Buddha looks to his right, approaches with a bowl held out as an offering. A doorframe behind this figure is filled with two figures, one sitting on the ground while another stands behind him. Above them are two figures facing each other, on either side of the Buddha are two half figures. Behind the Buddha, Vajrapani stands, his right hand raised and his left holding the *vajra*, behind him are two monks and a child. The upper left contains three half figures, hands rose in adoration.

**Fig.22 Narrative Relief**



Soapstone, from east of Stupa 5, second century A.D. Left side is broken but extant artistic details are clear. See Majumdar 1937:106

Fig.22 depicts two panels divided by a Corinthian pilaster with a shaft decorated with a large lotus blossom on a stalk. The panel on the right shows a figure approaching the ascetic Kashyapa seated on a bedroll inside a straw hut. The Vajrapani figure behind him allows us to identify the approaching figure as that of the Buddha. Another now headless figure stands at the edge of the panel while a figure depicted with the upper torso only hovers in the background between the ascetic and the Buddha.

The panel on the right reveals a young seemingly naked boy standing under a tree with hands to the stem of a tree, while a spear-holding guard is watching from behind. The guard is tall man with a tough body and is holding the long spear in his right hand is approaching the boy who seems to have been condemned to death. The haloed Buddha with his hand raised in *abhayamudra* is approaching followed by Vajrapani. This scene has not yet been identified. This is a unique scene not noticed elsewhere in Gandhara. The artistic details of this frieze are remarkable for its delicate and refined workmanship.

### Conclusion

Among the art pieces, foreign motifs like the vine, acanthus, cupids, garlands, hippocampus, triton, marine divinities, Dionysus, some of the local motifs like atlantes, griffons and the flora and fauna of the area are clearly visible over the panels and friezes. Arches, decorative friezes, rolling garlands, inhabited compartments, miscellaneous motifs, model stupas, brackets, panels, framing elements, parts of capitals, parts of arches, *harmika* boxes, *chattra* parts, fragments and stone caskets also included in the Nimogram artifacts.

Buddha and Bodhisattva images, deities, bracket figures, framing figures and monsters and narrative scenes, musicians and miscellaneous figures are prominent among the broken panels.

In light of the above descriptions it is clear that stress is laid on the life events of Buddha. It is noteworthy that the *Jatakas* depiction is less in number as compared to other themes. Symbolic representation of the Buddha is an uncommon, except the scene of symbolic representation of the first sermon (fig. 12). The Bodhisattva images and very often figures of Brahma and Indra have been modeled after the general features of

kings and royal personalities. Beautiful hair, garments with heavy and deep folds, profuse ornaments, handsome appearance, well-built physique, jewelled headgear and halo behind the head are some of the salient features of the Nimogram artifacts.

The Nimogram art developed in Buddhist monasteries, is essentially religious in character devoted to the service of Buddhism. Numerous Indian motifs like the atlantes, griffons and the flora and fauna are depicted.

The art pieces of this paper tell us, that the interest of the Udyana artists, however, is by no means limited to their religious and aesthetic aspects.

- Foreign influence is the vine scrolls, the acanthus leaves, cupids and garlands and marine divinities. Bead and reel and saw-tooth mouldings, horse-shoe arches, trapezoidal door-ways, merlons and Indo-Persepolitan pilasters, Indo-Corinthian columns, modillion cornices and foliated mouldings are prominent.
- The costumes of all classes from the princes to the poor, the furnishing of houses, the sport, armour, ornaments, saddles, carts and carriages, horses and yoke, tools, agricultural implements, cult objects and musical instruments are all skillfully depicted. Their existence can be seen even today in the Swat valley.
- The people at work, play and worship, engaged in acts of devotion, marriages, cremations, donations, sports, and ceremonies, the appearance of musicians, ascetics and wrestlers all have a close similarity with folklores of the Swat valley.
- The imagination depicted in the panels (battlemented, guarded city walls and gateways) are still survive in the tribal area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.

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