

BUDDHIST SCULPTURES OF MALAKAND COLLECTION: ITS HISTORY, ANALYSIS AND CLASSIFICATION

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ABSTRACT

This study is about the selected sculptures of the Malakand collection, which delineate salient and conspicuous features of the Gandhāra Art. This collection has historical importance and shows diversification of different postures and actions. These sculptures represent the traditions and practices of Buddhism in Gandhāra and they portray the standard of art, the soul and spirit of the followers and artists. Basis of classifying sculptures is established on the confined and distinctive analysis and material of stone used in making the sculptures. To establish the chronology and to specify the exact area of origin, the sculptures were extensively and exhaustively studied from the viewpoint of Zonal Workshops. While observing the quality and style of the art along with material used for making the sculptures it becomes clear that the artist paid attention to the socio-economic and religious conditions of the time in his mind. Methodology used for research of the present study is based on descriptive as well as analytical approach. The architectural elements like Persepolitan and Corinthian pillars are still present and observed in the villages of Malakand and different parts of Gandhāra region.

Keywords: Sculptures of Malakand, Gandhara Art, Buddhism, artists, stylistic analysis, socio-economic, religious condition, carving, architectural.

INTRODUCTION

Indian Sub-Continent has been the core of rich cultural heritage and the abode of civilization of the Indus valley. The researchers in archaeology, art, anthropology and history have brought out important information about developments that took place over the millennia. The world is now convinced that Indus valley has glorious past in the world of history. Many unexplored treasures were found during the course of excavation in 20th century.

“Gandhāra art” was one of the best treasures discovered by archaeologist. This art is famous for its unique anthropomorphic features consists of variety of objects of religious and cultural significance, carved out of materials like bronze, terracotta, stucco,

gold, silver and stone. The stone art seems to be the most attractive and durable of all. The stone is a material that is not easily perishable, so it remained unbeaten by the time and the enemy.

Geographically speaking ancient *Uḍḍiyāna* (Swat) has unique and an important place in the history of South and Central Asia. According Huan Tsang, a Chinese pilgrim says that “Swat or ancient *Uḍḍiyāna* is a lush green land with colorful flowers and snow covered mountains where grapes grow in abundance”. (B.Sardar 2005: 23).

Apart from the two schools that are Hinayāna and Mahayana a third school known as Vajaryana or Tantric Buddhism merged in valley of Swat during 7th and 8th centuries CE. It was Swat from where Buddhism travelled to China and Tibet.

The early archaeological activities are linked with A. Court’s information about the important sites in the Swat and Buner valleys (M.A. Court 1839: 306). At that time these areas were not easily reachable to foreigners, particularly Europeans. Court collected information about these territories and made a list of various sites “cupolas and ruined cities.” biased on the information of the local people. Later on, researchers proved that the information plays a vital role in their research. In 1924 Sir Aurel Stein conducted the first scientific survey of the Swat valley and reported a number of sites (Stein, A, 1944:56) following the footprints of the Chinese pilgrims who were able to find some Buddhist sites in the Swat valley. E. Barger and P. Wright also conducted the survey of the Swat valley in 1938. They found and excavated archaeological sites along the Swat River, particularly the site of Barikot (Barger.E & P.Wright, 1941:6).

The Italian Archaeological Mission also conducted extensive survey in the region. In 1955, Giuesppe Tucci carried out an Archaeological survey and chose some significant sites for his research. Archaeologists from Federal Department in collaboration with Peshawar University, have also carried out survey and excavations in Swat valley. The Italian Archaeological Mission further explored the region and a list of the archaeological sites was updated (G. Tucci, 1958: 238). On the basis of these surveys excavations were conducted in the region and as a result large number of antiquities were unearthed. Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan and Italian Archaeological Mission to Swat (IsMEO) excavated the Buddhist site of Butkara-I. Other excavated sites include, Udigram, Leobanr-I and III, Katelai, Barikot, Gogdara, Saidu Sharif, Balo-Kile-gumbat, Baligram, Kalako-Dheri, Ghundai, Panr, Ghalegai and Aligrama provided enough material of prime importance to study the style and material used in the manufacturing of the sculptures in the valley (Khan,M.A.2011: 39). In 1968, the process of excavation and exploration continued in the valley of Swat by the Archaeologists from Federal Department in collaboration with Peshawar University. During the process, a large number of new sites were discovered and investigated. At the same time, cultural materials from the earlier excavations on different sites had been re-examined and studied (Swati, M.F. 1997: viii).

HISTORY OF THE COLLECTION

The Gandhāran Collection of Malakand probably came from the ‘Deane Collection’ already present in the Political House in December 1896 (Foucher 1901: 126) or from the Stewart collection. In any case, the Gandhāran Collection of Malakand was part of a larger collection inaugurated by Deane, the ethnographic part of which was deposited after 1906 in the Peshawar Museum. Additional material was sent to the Museum of Peshawar on different dates (perhaps prior to 1922, if this is what Waddell is referring to in 1922; again in 1924) and further material was acquired by the Stewart collection sent to Peshawar or was incorporated in Stewart’s (now fully private) collection. A large part of the original Malakand collection was sent to the Swat Museum in the 1980s. (Luca Maria.2014:196). The administration of the Malakand donated 134 pieces to the Archaeological Museum of Swat located in Saidu Sharif. These objects of the Malakand collection were labeled as MK (Behrendt, Kurt A,2003:282). As the collection under research was not found during the scientific excavations, so the material of the present collection was classified on the basis of subject matter and the style in perspective of those materials found in the scientific excavations of the Buddhist sites in the valley. We have made an attempt to establish the chronology alongwith analysis of the material using the same methodology and hypothesis.

The Buddhist sites at Butkara-I, Butkara-III and Shnaisha were systemically unearthed by local and foreign scholars. The material found as the result of these excavations established proper chronological order of Gandhara Art in the region i.e. 1st century BCE to 1st century CE. Sculptures found from Butkara-I were studied and compared with the sculptures from Buddhist sites of Buner and Taxila uncovered the fact that the art began in the Saka period (Marshall 1960: 17). Most of the sculptures found during in course of excavations are worked in stone, stucco and terra-cotta, metal and paintings.

Many Buddhist sites were discovered in the Swat valley in 1980 when the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar launched a project under the title of “Gandhāra Archaeological Project.” Moreover, Farooq Swati discovered 28 new Buddhist sites in 1995, during his short field survey along the right bank of the river Swat (Swati, M.F. 1997: viii)

The formation of civilization is not accomplished without evolution, in an evolutionary way; step by step formation and then development of civilization occur. Collective consciousness, values, culture and tradition when blend while continuously evolving with time give rise to a civilization hard to be neglected even thousands of summers would pass. An ever green by its art is the civilization of Gandhāra. Numerous Buddhist sculptures found during course of excavation from different sites of Swat valley now are on display in the Swat Museum Sadui Shrif give an overall picture of social, Cultural, and traditional values of Gandhāra civilization.

A comparative, thematic and stylistic study made the Malakand collection with other sculptures recovered during scientific excavation from the site of Butkara-I Udigram, Leobanr-I and III, Katelai, Barikot, Gogdara, Saidu Sharif, Balo-Kile-gumbat, Baligram, Kalako-Dheri, Ghundai, Panr, Ghalegai and Aligrama shows similarities and affinities in one way while dissimilarities and variation in the other resulting in blend. After critical analysis of Buddhist art of Gandhāra civilization and its developing stages and characteristics were recognized.

EVOLUTIONARY STAGES OF ART IN SWAT VALLEY

Sculptures discovered from the Swat valley provide amusement to researcher, archaeologist as well as common man. On the basis of comparative, thematic and stylistic analysis, the development of art in the Swat valley can be studied under stages as;

STAGE-I

The first stage of development of ancient art in Swat where we have construction of monasteries for residential purposes and building of stūpa for Buddhist rituals today gives us a clue of their Art and its development in the valley of Swat.

STAGE-II AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

This stage of the Buddhist art of Swat valley belongs to early Kushan and the Scytho-Parthian period which appeared in CE 80 to 90 (Khan and others 2008, p.61). The artists became more expert to carve the sculptures, with their skill; they brought change in the sculptures by replacing frontality, stiffness, and drawing like attention into mobility (Fig.1) and flexibility (Fig.2). This stage is advanced one. The sculptures became more refined (Fig. 3). Drapery folds were parallel lines and free billowing (Figs.4). This indicates maturity of the Buddhist art of the valley.

STAGE-LLL AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

This stage of development includes Kusann-o- Sananian and Kidara period. Beautifully carved sculptures of this stage indicate that the artist of this period became more expert as compared to the previous stage. The reliefs became more realistic and the artists try to avoid overcrowding in the scene, emphasis on the individual detail of the figures.

DEVELOPMENT STAGES OF ART IN EACH SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP

Comparative study of the Buddhist art and archaeological excavations in the Swat valley highlights the remarkable features of the Buddhist art. The kingdoms of Bactria, Gandhāra, Kapisa, and *Uḍḍiyāna* were united together religiously, politically and socially. As far as *Uḍḍiyāna* is concerned, there are small zones of art in its territorial limits.

The present research study talks about only those sub-valleys where scientific excavations have been done. These mainly include Jambil, Ilam Khawar, Shamozaï and Dargai-Thana sub-valleys zonal workshops.

THE JAMBIL SUB-VALLEY DEVELOPMENT STAGE- I

Research on the sculptures of this stage showed that first artistic activities were started in this sub-valley. This is the early stage of the art of the Jambil sub-valley therefore the sculptures manufactured in this sub-valley are very crude and rough. The analysis of the sculptures showed that there was no proper proportion in the different body parts of the figures. For example in Fig.5, arm of the central figure is much longer than the other body parts whereas the figure on the left side has smaller legs as compared to his arms. Faces of the figures are fleshy and round (Fig.6). Females of this stage have wreath headdress whereas males have mustaches and beard (Fig.7). Stūpa pegs (Figs.8, 9) having princely figures were also found in the Jambil sub-valley. In Fig.8, head of a princely figure with elaborate turban, oval shaped flashy face with close lips short heavy dropping mustache is shown whereas Fig.9 depicts a stūpa peg decorated with acanthus leaves and a bust of a male figure. The figure has round fleshy face with open eyes. Same kind of stūpa pegs were also found from the sites, of Chat pat and Ranigat in Buner Sirkkap and Dhermarajika stūpa in Taxila valley and Gumbatuna in Dir (Khan and others. 2008:61).

THE JAMBIL SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-II:

During the 2nd stage of the Jumbil sub-valley, the figure of Buddha was showed frontally. The artists became expert enough that they can carve the image of the Buddha in seated position in *abhayamudrā*, (Fig.10), different episodes from the life of Buddha (from his birth to death) were carved. But the figures were still in crude form.

THE JAMBIL SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-III:

During this stage Indian influence became more dominant. Dresses of women mostly were Indian (shawl and dhoti) Fig.11. Figures became refined as compared to the previous stage; artists can carve different images of the Buddha. Different hand gestures of the Buddha like *dharmachakramudrā*, *abhayamudrā* and *dhyānamudrā* appeared in this stage. Decorated thorn with lotus flower of Buddha appeared during this phase of development (Fig.12).

THE SHAMOZAI SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-I:

At this stage, figures were found in crude and rough condition (Fig.13). This represents the commencement of the above cited zonal workshop. Static and stiffness carvings of the figures can clearly be seen (Fig.13).

THE SHAMOZAI SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-II:

At this stage more episodes from the life of Buddha were practiced like marriage scene of Siddhārtha (Fig.14). Central Asian and Indian dresses were used (Figs. 13). Artists started carving the image of Buddha in standing position in *abhaya* pose (Fig.20).

THE SHAMOZAI SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-III:

At this stage, tremendous development was found. Figures were carved in three quarter view (Fig. 20) and Stiffness was replaced by mobility (Figs. 16). During this development phase of the art figures were carved having body tight drapery (Fig.17).

THE ILAM KHAWAR SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-I:

Figure of the Buddha was not refined even at this stage of development, there was no proper proportion in the body parts for example legs are longer in size as compared to the other parts of the body (Fig.18). Heavy drapery folds were observed (Fig.4). The majority of Buddha's images are in seated position and few in standing, throne without decoration was found. Halo is smaller whereas *uṣṇīṣa* is bigger and hair is tightened in three strips similar to a turban. Important mudrā that is *abhaya* and *dhyāna* were in practice at this stage, (Figs.10, 19). Figures of the Buddha having fleshy and round face with full opened eyes were introduced during this stage (Fig.20).

THE ILAM KHAWAR SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-II:

Artists of this stage concentrated on the life story of Buddha and carved different episodes from the life of Buddha in their sculptures, for example they carved first bath and horoscope of newly born baby (Siddhārtha), (Fig.(21) the Great Departure (Fig.22) event of archery (Fig.4). Worshippers particularly in *anjālimudrā* were shown (Fig.10). Artists carved the image of the Bodhisattva, (Fig.19). Figures of Ascetics were also practiced during this phase of development.

THE ILAM KHAWAR SUB-VALLEY ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-III:

During this period of development Stucco was used for making the sculptures. A figure of Buddha in stucco was found in *dhyānamudrā*, (Pl-25). Few episodes of the life of the Buddha were found, for example birth and horoscope of Siddhārtha and return of Queen Māyā, (Fig.26). Individual images of Buddha in different mudrā like *abhayamudrā*, *dhyānamudrā* were also practiced in this stage (Figs.10, 19). Indian and central Asian dresses were found. In the Malakand collection a figure of Vajrapāni was found in central Asian costume (Fig.27)

DARGAI-THANA SUB-VALLEYS ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-I

During this stage in Dargai-Thana sub-valleys poor quality of stone was used by the artists. Figures are crude, stiffness and static, there was no proportion in the different body parts (Fig.28).

DARGAI-THANA SUB-VALLEYS ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-II

During the second stage in the above valleys, beside the figures of Buddha, Bodhisattva is also depicted (Fig.29). Figures wearing Indian dresses were observed during this period of development (Fig.30). Figures of Buddha with half closed eyes round fleshy face both shoulders covered with upper garment and well proportioned limbs was carved (Dani.A.H and Khan Nazir Ahmed 1998:157) (Fig.31).

DARGAI-THANA SUB-VALLEYS ZONAL WORKSHOP DEVELOPMENT STAGE-III

During this stage of Dargai Thana sub valleys Zonal workshop, worshippers in *anjālimudrā* were carved in reliefs and panels (Fig.30). The static and stiffness carving of the figures were improved and depicted with more mobility in three quarter view (Fig.1). *Dhyānamudrā* became more popular and delicate (Fig.2). Now the sculptors became more experienced and stressed on the beauty of the sculptures. Typical Gandhāran and dense drapery folds were decreased (Fig.32). Deep and flimsy line and curve in the drapery were observed.

PROBABLE PROVENANCE OF THE MALAKAND COLLECTION

The chronological order of the Gandhāra art always remained a great problem for almost all the scholar and this became more complicated when the artifacts were collected as in the case of Malakand collection. On the basis of the thematic and characteristics features of development stages of art of the valley, out of 134 reliefs panels of the present collection, 36 are belonging to the first stage of the art, 41 pieces falling the second stage while 57 pieces are placed in the 3rd stage of the narrative depiction in the region.

Among the whole collection of 36 pieces discussed in the initial group, 8 fall in the Jambil sub-valley, 19 are probably belonging to the Ilam Khawar sub-valley, 7 pieces are placed in the Adinzai and Shamozaï sub-valleys zonal workshops and 2 probably from Dargai-Thana sub-valleys zonal workshops. At second stage of the art among 41 objects, 6 fall in Jambil Sub-Valley 25 pieces are belonging to Ilam Khawar Sub-valley whereas 7 pieces fall in the Adinzai and Shamozaï Sub-valleys, while 3 reliefs came from the Dargai Thana sub-valleys zonal workshop. Out of 57 relief panels of the third stage 30 objects probably came from the Jambil Sub-valley, 12 objects belong to the Ilam Khawar Sub-Valley whereas 9 pieces fall in the Adinzai and Shamozaï sub-valleys and 6 pieces came from Dargai Thana sub-valleys zonal workshop.

CONCLUSION

The collection under the present study is lying in the archaeological museum Saidu Sharif. After the thorough study of Malakand collection it is expected that the valley of Swat remained the homeland of multinational and tribal units. These nations and tribes brought their own culture and traditions in the area which later on absorbed in Buddhism. The influence of this culture can be seen in the Sculptures of Swat and Gandhāra. Architectural elements such as Persepolitan and Corinthian pilasters, lotus flowers and terracotta toys can still be seen in the villages of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and tribal areas. The fortified cities and houses with boundary walls and the gateways show security measures taken for the safety of the citizens.

The analysis of the sculptures selected for the present study reveals that there existed different cultures and civilizations in the sub-valleys of Swat which are referred to as zonal workshops. The objectives set for the present study were to trace the origin, structure and material of Malakand collection. The study aimed at identifying the place from which these sculptures were probably acquired / transported. It was also analyzed how stone of different material and color was used in carving these sculptures. The study finds out that the sculptures were made of the stones of different colors and kinds as they were locally available and came from different Zonal Workshops such as Jambil, Dargai-Thana, Ilam Khawar, Adinzai and Shamozaï Zonal Workshops. The study remained successful in meeting all goals set for it. It is expected that this study would also help the researchers who intend to conduct their research in the neighboring areas. It will further open up new horizons in the research about the nearby areas which are still unidentified.

FIGURES



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 10



Figure 11

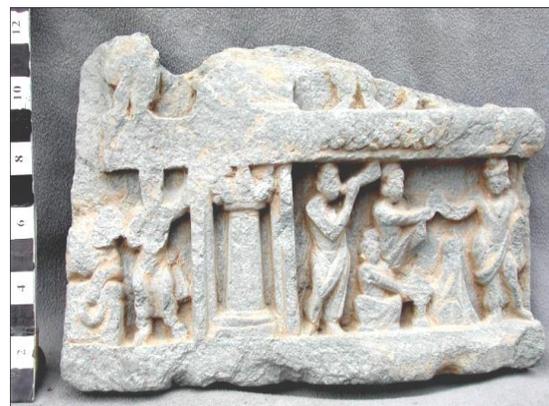


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20

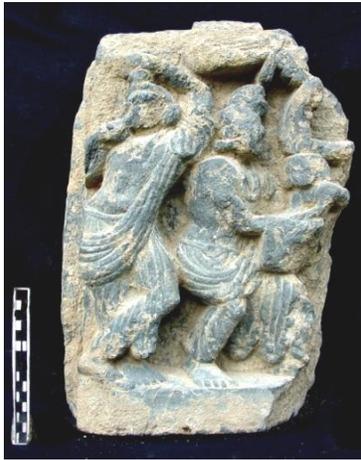


Figure 31



Figure 3



Figure 23



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30



Figure 31



Figure 32

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