GANDHĀRA AND THE EXPLORATION OF GANDHĀRA ART OF PAKISTAN *

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The Region of Gandhara

In the Rigvedic times people living in the Peshawar valley and the modern district of Rāwalpindi of Pakistan were called Gandhāras,¹ while in the third century BC, they are mentioned as the inhabitants of Gandhāra.² Gandhāra, thus, was a distinct geographical region.³ The Rigveda (verse 1.126.7) confines it to the Kābul valley down to the right bank (where river Kābul terminates into the Indus in the east) of the Indus,⁴ while THR Griffith on the basis of Atharvaveda (verse .22.14) places it in the north-west of the Brahmanical India.⁵ The Mahābhārata and Rāmāyana include Takṣaśilā, Modern Taxila, on the left bank of the Indus in Gandhāra.⁶ HH Wilson extends the boundary further east to the river Jehlum,⁷ and also, defines the Kian-tho-lo of A Remusat as Gandhāra.⁸

Gandhāra was one of the twenty-three administrative divisions of the Achaemenid Kings of ancient Persia and is recorded in the Behistun inscription of Darius the Great in about the sixth century BC.⁹ EJ Rapson considers its inhabitants as the "border peoples" but he also thinks that they were under the influence of the Aśokan empire.¹⁰ Aśokan Rock Edicts are found at Shahbāz-garhī in Gandhāra,¹¹ and in eastern Afghanistan which probably indicates the westernmost limit of Asoka's political control of Gandhāra.¹² The Budhhist text Aṅguttara Nikāya also mentions Gandhāra as one of the sixteen separate states or 'Mahājanapadas' at the dawn of early historic India.¹³

Whether it occupied parts of eastern Afghanistan at its western extent and those of Uddiyāna—the modern district of Swāt, Dīr, and Bājauar agency—in its north is disputed among scholars. Rapson concludes on the basis of Achaemenid inscription of Behistun that Gandhara Included the Kābul district in Afghanistan.¹⁴ NL Dey in his geographical dictionary of ancient India mentions that Gandhāra also covered the Yūsufzai or Hōti Mardān country.¹⁵ Alexander Cunningham suggested the geographical limits of Gandhāra "as Lamghân [sic] and Jalâlâbâd on the west, the hills of the Swât and Bunir on the North, the Indus on the east, and the hills of the Kâlâbâgh on the south".¹⁶ He excluded Taxila-Rāwalpindi region from Gandhāra. In early periods, however, Gandhāra occupied the territory east of the Indus with Takṣaśilā (modern Taxila) as its capital as it is strongly urged by R Bhandarkar.¹⁷ The Aīn-i-Akbarī locates Gandhāra between Kashmir and Atock. BC Law, therefore, has rightly pointed out that "the boundaries of the country varied at different periods of its history."

It was in this region that in the early nineteenth century AD the discovery of certain Buddhist sculptures, later on called Gandhāra art, aroused the curiosity of European scholars who, because of the broad similarity, extended the artistic distribution across the natural limits of Gandhāra.

The Distribution of Sites Yielding the So-Called Gandhāra Style Sculpture

Beyond the boundaries of historical Gandhāra, "other Gandhāran remains are found to the west in Afghanistan, which is artistically, a transitional zone. The style is represented, mainly in lime plaster, around Hadda in the narrowing Kābul Valley and again at Shotorak and Paitava below the Hindu Kush ..."¹⁹ Kunduz in the Oxus Valley in north Afghanistan has some lime stone sculptures of the Gandhāra type,²⁰ but such peripheral occurrences do not define the core area of distribution.

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In Pakistan the Buddhist sites are mainly scattered between the Swāt and Indus Kōhistāns in the north and Bannu area in the south, and between the Khyber in the west in the N.W.F.P and Manikyala in the east in the Punjab. In the extreme south and south east the influence zone extends to Sindh²¹ and Gujarāt (cf. Devnimori stūpa, and perhaps to the Bikaner area of Rājasthān, where in some large terracottas the influence of Gandhāran styles is evident.).²² These however, are outlying areas. Sites bearing the so called Gandhāra art lay between the Hindu Kush and Kābul Valley in Afghanistan and the Peshawar-Bannu²³ area, the Peshawar Valley and the Potwar Plateau in Pakistan (see Map)

The political destiny of the region was established from the period of its annexation by the Achaemenids, whose rule was extended to this area possibly under Cyrus (558-530 BC) onwards. They were followed by the Greek invasion, Mauryan dynasty, the Indo-Greeks, Scytho-Parthians, the Kuṣāṇas, the Hunas and the Hindu Śāhīs. In the Whole of this historical period Takṣaśilā (Taxila), Puṣkalāvatī (Chārsada), Puruṣapura (Peshawar) and Ohind (Hun) were important administrative or political centres of Gandhāra and were situated on the junctions of long distance trade routes (see Map).

Once the principal ancient sites—Shahbāz-garhī, Chārsadda, Peshawar and Hund,—of Gandhāra were identified they helped in the discovery of other important Buddhist sites and highlighted ancient link routs as well. All of them were situated on the left bank of River Kabul except Peshawar on the right.

Shahbāz-garhī or Pu-lo-sha of Hiuen Tsang

Alexander Cunningham first identified Pu-lo-sha²⁴ with Palo-dherai, about ten miles to the north of Shahbāz-gaṛhī village. Later he, on the basis of the accounts of the Chinese pilgrims,²⁵ modified his proposal and placed it at Shahbāz-garhī, where the famous Aśoka rock inscriptions are situated.²⁶ A Foucher endorses Cunningham's second proposal about the location of Po-lu-sha.²⁷

Shahbāz-gaṛhī is situated on the main ancient route which led to Puṣkalāvatī in the west and in the east to Ohind from where it continues in the same direction across the Indus to Takṣaśilā. This route branches off at Shahbāz-gaṛhī to the north and leads to Jamāl-gṛhī where it bifurcates. Both branches enter Uḍḍyāna at different points. The first proceeds in the north to Saṅgāo²⁸ village and onward through the Ta gē Pass into Bunēr (in ancient Uḍḍiyāna), while the second advances in the west to Sirī Bahlōl and Takht-i Bahai. At Takht-i Bbahai it turns to the north and leads onward through either the Shāh-kōt or Malakanḍ Pass into the Swat Valley.

The hillock which exhibits the Rock Edicts of Aśoka at Shahbāz-ga hī has the remains of a stūpa to its south and a huge monastic complex on its opposite cliff, facing northeast.²⁹ There are important sites,³⁰ commemorating various *jātakas*,³¹ in the vicinity of the town. It was an important crossing of international routes coming from India, Central Asia or China through Uddiyāna, and Peshawar through Charsadda. Therefore, the most suitable place for the edicts of Asoka to be engraved on rock was this.

Important site in and around Shahbāz-ga hī are Chānaka-dherai, Mēkha-sanda, Tharelē,³² Rānī-gat, Kashmir-tsmats, But-sērai, Palo-dhērai and Jamāl-garhī. All these sites were noted by Cunningham³³ and later on by Foucher.³⁴ Recently, in the Swabi District near Gango-dher village an important mound of Aziz-dhērai is excavated by the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, North-West Frontier Province, from 1993 to 1996 but its report is not yet published. It is a Buddhist site which beginning is assigned to the early Kuṣāṇa period by its first excavator Mr Farid Khan, then the Director.

Charsadda or Ancient Puşkalavati

In 1863-64, A Cunningham identified Chārsadda as ancient Puṣkalāvatī, the Peukelaotis of Arrian.³⁵ It is situated on the left bank of the Kābul River in the Peshawar Valley some twenty-nine kilometres to the northeast of Peshawar, on the right bank of the Kābul. It is situated on the ancient Gandhāra route from which braches off a road in the northeast to Uddiyāna. The same route continues in the southwest across the Kābul to Peshawar. There is another route which, most probably, might have been used by one contingent of Alexander's army lead by his Generals Hephaistian and Perdikeas to Charsadda. This route starts from Bājau and comes down through Ghalanai (in Mohmand Agency) via Shabqadar to Chārsadda in the southeast.

Foucher describes,³⁶ in detail, various sites in and around Chārsadda and agrees to the Cunningham's identification. However, he does not accept the locations suggested either by V de St Martin³⁷ or HBW Garrick³⁸ who placed the sites either too far upstream or too far downstream the Kābul.

The excavation of two important sites Bālā-Hīsār³⁹ and Shaikhan-dherai⁴⁰ established early history of Chārsadda. The former site revealed the history from the time of Greek invasion, while the latter was founded in the time of the Indo-Greeks and occupied down to the period of the Kuṣāṇas. However, they did not throw sufficient light on the origin of Gandhāra art.

Peshawar or Ancient Purusapura

"Po-lu-sha-pu-lo or Puruṣapura is Purushavar or Purshavar of Alberuni, the Pershavar or Peishavar of Abul Fazal and the Peshawar of the present day."⁴¹ HH Wilson was probably the first one who identified Peshawar with these ancient place names, in 1839.⁴²

Sung-Yun, who came to Peshawar in 520 AD, describes a great stupa of King Kia-ni-see-kia or Kaniśka which Foucher identified with Shāh-jī kī dhērī and which was excavated by DB Spooner in 1908-09.⁴³ A Bronze relic casket with an inscription, which is translated, "the slave Agisala, the overseer of works at Kanishka's vihara [sic] in the sangharama [sic] of Mahesana [sic]"⁴⁴, was recovered from the remains of the main stūpa. The human figures of the relic casket do not portray Greek influence in its physique, dress, movement or otherwise, although, as the inscription suggests, the work at the site was supervised by a Greek overseer.

Recently an important site of Gorkhatri was excavated by the 'National Heritage Foundation' (an NGO established by Professor FA Durrani) in 1992 and 1996. It revealed the occupation of the site from the Early Kuṣāṇas up to the British Period. Apart from other artefacts, a number of coins and inscriptions support this high cultural profile. The publication of a detailed report is still awaited.

Ohind or Ancient Uda-khanda

The U-to-kia-han-cha of Hiuen Tsang is called Uda-Khanda by M Julien⁴⁵ which St Martin identifies with Ohind or Hund of the present day. It is located on the right bank of the Indus about 15 miles upstream of Attock.

Abu Rihan Alberuni records it as Waihand or Oaihand in 1030 AD.⁴⁶ Mirza Moghal Beg Called it Ohind in 1790 AD.⁴⁷ It was capital of the Brahman Kings of Kābul⁴⁸ until the advent of Muslims in 1026 AD. It was a garrison town in the time of the Mughals. When Akbar the Great diverted the ancient rout, leading across the Indus, from Ohind to Attock, it lost its importance and was gradually deserted. At the time of Cunningham's visit, in 1863-64, half of the site was already destroyed by the river. Indo-Scythian coins were recovered from the site which suggest its antiquity. Its history may, probably, go beyond that.

The reports of the present excavations at Hund conducted separately by the Mardan Museum under the supervision of Mr Zainul Wahab and the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, under the supervision of Mr Ihasan Ali (Associate Professor) are not yet published. However, these excavations are inadequate for building up a historical profile of an important site like this and, also, to satisfy the scholarly approach of archaeologists.

Taxila or Ancient Taksasila

We include Taxila, on the left bank of the Indus and some 32 Kilometres to the northwest of Rāwalpindī, in the description of the principal sites of Gandhāra as mentioned above because of its historical proximity and cultural affinity with them. And it has remained in the past a political and administrative unit of Gandhāra as well. In 1863-64, A Cunningham identified it with ancient Takṣaśilā or Takkasilā⁴⁹ and J Marshall excavated it for about twenty years since 1913.⁵⁰ Three trade routes converged at this point: from Pā aliputra coming from eastern India; from the north from Central Asia passing through China and Tibet following the Karākoram highway; and the third from west passing through Assyria, Iran and Afghanistan.⁵¹

Around Taxila, the Late Stone Age Culture of Microliths of Khanpur Cave continued into the settled life of the Bronze Age (c 3000 BC) of Sarai Khola (Sarai Kālā), Hathiāl and other sites.⁵² The first civic life in Taxila is attested from Bhir Mound which dates back to the rule of the Achaemenids of Persia in the sixth century BC. Buddhism was introduced in the third century BC, most probably, by Emperor Aśoka as it is clear from the excavation of the Dhrmarājikā stūpa. The stūpa is founded on an ancient site which has yielded coins of the Greek origin.⁵³ Taxila continued to be an important learning as well as religious centre until the decline of Buddhism in the 8th century AD.

The Beginning of Archaeological Researches

M Elphinstone (1779-1859) while coming back from his diplomatic mission to Afghanistan in 1808 not only gives some information about the colossal statues of the Buddha at Bāmiyān in Afghanistan,⁵⁴ but also reports the monument at Manikyala in the Potwār Palateau.⁵⁵ Although William Erskine identified Manikyala as a Buddhist monument in 1821,⁵⁶ he did not know its date because knowledge about Buddhist monuments was not fully advanced at this early stage.⁵⁷

The second important turn of antiquarian researches in the north-western sub-continent may be assigned to the Sikh period.⁵⁸ Manikyala was excavated by General Ventura of Ranjit sing's army in 1830, and was followed, in the process of excavation, by General Court in the neighbourhood of Manikyala, and JM Honigberger and C Masson in Kābul and Jalālābād.⁵⁹ Ventura also initiated exploration in the modern Taxila area.⁶⁰ Masson was the first to draw attention towards the "Bactrian Pahlavi" (i.e. Kharo hi) legend on coins, on the basis of which J Prinsep developed this study further.⁶¹

The first piece in Gandhāra style to be seen by the Europeans was found by JG Gerard. It was a statue "of a seated Buddha with flaming shoulders"⁶² which he recovered near the modern village of Beni Hissar,⁶³ in the vicinity of Kābul, in 1833.

The annexation of Peshawar district by the Sikhs in 1834 provided General Court an opportunity for his archaeological and topographical researches in the districts of Peshawar and Yūsufzai.⁶⁴

In 1848 Cunningham, during his visits to the Yūsufzai district⁶⁵ observed the ancient fort of Rānīgaț, which he believed to be the Aornos of Alexander⁶⁶ and prepared a rough sketch of the fort of Rānī-gaț and also collected two Gandhāran statues from the site. However, MA Stein identifies Aornos in the region of Pīr-sar or Ūņa-sar at the valley of Kāna-Ghurband in Swāt.⁶⁷ Serious antiquarian activities commenced after the creation of the 'Guides', a special corps of Pathan soldiers, in 1847. Apart from military operations in the Yūsufzai districts and adjoining areas it also opened the way, from 1849 onward, for anthropological and archaeological researches. In 1852, W Lumsden, Deputy Commissioner of Peshawar, was ordered to arrange an escort for Mr James of the survey Department on his visit to the border of the Swāt Valley.⁶⁸ This event shows the beginning of pre-planned surveys in the region.⁶⁹

The documentation and description of antiquities and Buddhist sculpture, initiated by Cunningham,⁷⁰ revealed some special character of the sculptures which by the early 1870s led to the identification of Gandhāra art.

Identification of the Art and Changing Perspectives of Its Study

In 1836, James Prinsep declared the existence of a Hellenistic school of arts in India.⁷¹ Although Cunningham had discovered Jamāl-ga hī, west of the Indus, in 1848, and had also collected statues from there, he did not publish his report for a long time.⁷² Sir EC Bayley was the first to publish an account of the sculpture from Gandhāra in 1852.73 Prinsep's and Bayley's accounts of this newly recognised Indo-Greek sculpture gained little currency owing to crudity of the published illustrations.⁷⁴ In 1870 Dr GW Leitner removed to England statues from Gandhāra which he named Graeco-Buddhist. Scholars began to realise the existence of a distinct school, Indo-Hellenic, of architecture and sculpture in the northwest of the Indian subcontinent.⁷⁵ Gandhara, in VA Smith's opinion, "was the principal seat of Hellenic culture in India, and from one or other part of it nearly all the known examples of Indo-Hellenic art in its most characteristic forms have been obtained".⁷⁶ Furthermore, he traces the style of Gandhāra art and architecture in the European world, "Greek or Roman".⁷⁷ Other scholars had already started writing about the Buddhist art of Gandhāra as Indo-Greek.⁷⁸ This theory, however, was denied by W Vaux, FRS, while commenting on the finds of Dr Leitner.⁷⁹ The majority of the art historians who were interested in the art of this area did not agree with Vaux. For example, Professor Curtius Commenting on the discovery of Dr Leitner, Cunningham and others, said that this "opens a new page in the history of Greek art.⁸⁰

To support his theory of the western influence, Smith quotes example of a statue of Pallas Athene which was believed to have been recovered from the Punjāb⁸¹ (now in the Lahore Museum). This was thought to be purely Greek in style and cited as the earliest example of Indo-Hellenistic sculpture in the region.⁸² Smith suggested that no such art with real Gandhāran features was found in India proper.⁸³

The distinct style of art and architecture of ancient north-western India from those of the rest of the subcontinent was given various names, "Indo-Hellenic" or "Indo-Bactrian", etc. Eventually, "by the end of the nineteenth century scholars were using Gandhāra as a convenient term for what was being recognised as a remarkable, long-lived and influential tradition of Buddhist art and architecture."⁸⁴ The difficulty in identification of this art arose because Gandhāra had been a region of fluctuating geo-political condition as well as having a multi-ethnic social fabric that contributed to the evolution of a hybrid culture. The cultural difference from that of the interior Indian subcontinent was also observed in the ancient art of Gandhāra. This aroused the curiosity of the scholars to think about the origin of this art that led to the formation of various theories.

Theories about the Origin of Gandhāra Art

Once the distinct character of Gandhāra art was recognised, certain European scholars began to develop views about its origin. The first scientific discussion in this connection was offered in the 1870s by A Cunningham who assigned its origin to the Greeks during the time of Early Kusānas (c mid first to c mid third century AD). This issue has been a matter of grave discussion among workers in this field. All scholars unanimously agree, however, that the deification of the Buddha

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(later	on	called	Mahāyāna	Buddhism)85	is	the	true	inspiration	for	this	artistic	and	devotiona

flowering, apart from stylistic influences from the west. Two schools of thought—Greek and Roman—about the origin of Gandhāra art emerged by the last decade of the nineteenth century.

Greek Origin

The first view strongly supports the origin of Gandhāra art in the Greek colonies in Bactria founded there by the last quarter of the fourth century BC. The chief early proponents of this theory were A Foucher and Sir John Marshall.⁸⁶ Foucher in the beginning of the twentieth century declared that the presence of the western elements in Gandhāra art was the gift of the Hellenistic civilization established after the invasion of Alexander the Great in the nearby region of Bacteria.⁸⁷ He, is expecting to find a Greek city,⁸⁸ excavated Balkh in ancient Bactria in 1922, but was not successful, However, his hope was fulfilled after his death when D Schlumberger found an inscription in Greek characters at Surkh Kotal⁸⁹ in 1951, and discovered the Greek city of Ai-Khanum⁹⁰ in north eastern Afghanistan on the junction of the Rivers Kokcha and Oxus in 1964. Chronologically, Ai-Khanum covers the period from the advent of the Greeks till their displacement from Bactria by the Śakas in the last quarter of the second century BC.⁹¹ L Nehru concludes:

The discovery of Bactrian art is, above all, a vindication of Foucher's theory. The unrivalled hold of Hellenism in Bactria seems to have resulted from the absence of sophisticated artistic tradition in the region when the Greek arrived.⁹²

The next or Kusāna phase, dated between the first century BC and the first century AD, was discovered to the north of the Oxus in southern Uzbekistān. This is represented by the sites of Khalchayan, "dated between the first century BC and the first century AD⁹³ and Dalverzin, built in the first century AD, presenting the remains of palaces, both situated on Surkhan Darya.⁹⁴ The extension of Kusāna power in the southeast of Bactria into the Subcontinent introduced Bactrian culture into Gandhāra. The site of Dalverzin exhibits the third phase of Khalchayan and Bactrian sculptures and show the reverse influence, this time from Gandhāra to the northwest.⁹⁵

Marshall tried to confirm Foucher's view in his excavation of Sirkap, the second city of Taxila, dated to the first century BC. This city yielded interesting Śaka-Parthian sculptures that predate those of the Kusānas. The joint Śaka-Parthian period started from c 90 BC with the Śaka and lasted till 64 AD when the Parthians were ousted by the Kusānas. The latest levels belong to the early Kusāna rulers Kujula Kadphises and Vima Kadphises while the earliest level at Sirkap, which are claimed to be Hellenistic, were not fully excavated by Marshall. Information about the Greek period at Taxila is, therefore, inconsiderable. Marshall, on the basis of his excavations at Taxila, thought that Gandhāran art had its origin in the culture of the philhellenic Parthians with the support of foreign artisans from the Near East.⁹⁶ He further comments that Hellenistic culture, during the Śaka domination of Gandhāra, had become too feeble to create a new art form (i.e. of Gandhāra) had Parthian rule not rejuvenated it.⁹⁷

Commenting on the consequences of Hellenism established in Central Asia and north-western India, M Hallade says that the invasion of Alexander the Great inspired the evolution of a hybrid culture with influences from the east and west.⁹⁸

Roman Origin

The second theory associates the beginning of Gandhāra art with the expansion of Roman culture into India in about second century AD.⁹⁹ This theory was promoted by Smith and later supported by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, Hugo Buchthal, Benjamin Rowland, Alexander Soper and Herald Ingholt. They do not find the development of Gandhāra art in the land of its birth but relate its mature form, under the Kusānas, to the influence of the Romans.

Gandhāran sculpture was given the name 'Graeco-Buddhist' by Leitner, as mentioned above, and Smith specified it as the 'Gandhāra or Peshawar School of sculptures'.¹⁰⁰ Because of its resemblance with the Roman sculpture he preferred to call Gandhāran sculpture Romano-Buddhist rather than Graeco-Buddhist and says that:

The name Graeco-Buddhist proposed by Dr. Leitner cannot be asserted to be incorrect, all Roman being only a modification of Greek art, but the term Romano-Buddhist would be much more appropriate.¹⁰¹

According to the supporters of this theory, the commercial and political power¹⁰² of Roman Empire was impressed upon the life and culture of the Indian people, especially, of those regions which were more directly in contact with, i.e., of the north-west through land route from Bactria and interior India through ports of the western coast.¹⁰³ These ties with the Romans grew stronger with the passage of time, according to the holders of this theory, and reached its full bloom in the time of Kanişka, the Kuşāṇa ruler.¹⁰⁴ Wheeler, in this connection, writes that:

It is essentially a cultural by-product of the Kushana commerce which brought into and through the kingdom objects of art and craftsmanship of the Roman Empire.¹⁰⁵

This theory is endorsed by Buchthal. On the basis of analogies of various elements such as decorative features, poses, dress, genre scenes, mythological and ordinary life scenes (seen through the Gandhāran sculpture) he tried to prove that Roman culture was the derivative source for Gandhāra art.¹⁰⁶ Another strong support of this theory, Benjamin Rowland, negates any Greek influence on Gandhāra art and defends its close relation to the Roman art.¹⁰⁷ On the basis of certain characteristic features of some figures, he established the affinity of Gandhāra art with that of the Roman. He justifies his claim by comparing the face, pose, and dress of the Buddha figure which was recovered from Ha a in Afghanistan to the relief figure of the Christ carved on marble sarcophagus found at Psamatia near Constantinople, both dated to the fourth century AD.¹⁰⁸ Their faces, he says, are derived from a common prototype, an earlier Apollo.¹⁰⁹

Alternative Views

Besides the above two approaches about the beginning of the Gandhāra style there is a further view. This approach seeks, through historical as well as archaeological contexts and the geographical setting of the region, to define its origins. The archaeo-environment of Gandhāra suggests that it developed a hybrid (Western and Asian) cultural assemblage.¹¹⁰ Craftsmen from this complex context were responsible for creating this unique art dedicated to Buddhism.¹¹¹ The detailed subjects of the art of the Buddhist religion, such as symbolic representations of basic concepts, the adoration of the stūpa, depiction of the Buddha or Bodhisattva figure, etc., remained characteristically local.¹¹²

On the basis of archaeological researches carried out so far in Gandhāra and the surrounding regions, it becomes clear that the mature phase of Gandhāra develops only during the Kusāna occupation of the region. This view has been elaborated by Marshall at Taxila, AH Dani in Chakdara and Chārsadda (ancient Puskalāvatī), the work of the Italian Mission is Swāt, and the French in Afghanistan and Bactria.¹¹³

Haralad Ingholt, in his *Gandhāran Art in Pakistan*, suggested a chronology based on four groups.¹¹⁴ Group I (AD 144-240) includes those sculptures which have Philhellenic Parthian influence, received through the Kuṣāṇas' link with Mesopotamia; Group II (AD 240-300) gives evidence of Sassanian influence from the period when the Kusānas were ousted by the Sassanians from Gandhāra in AD 241; Group III (AD 300-400) shows Indian influence from Mathurā in the period of the Kidara Kusānas who were looking more towards the east, and in the last, or Group IV (AD 400-

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460) Sassanian influences are revived with their re-establishment in Gandhāra¹¹⁵ until the coming of the Hūnas.

On the basis of excavation at Shaikhān- herai (Chārsadda), supported by straitigraphic and numismatic evidence, AH Dani suggests that "we have now to start afresh our approach to the study of the Gandhāra sculptures."¹¹⁶ He explains that the presence or absence of any foreign models is not a proof of the origin of a particular art but it depends on the nature of relationship either through trade or otherwise of one region with another at any period.¹¹⁷ He disagrees with the idea that Gandhāra art originated exclusively due to the influence from the Greeks or Romans.¹¹⁸

The term Gandhāra art is applied specifically to the sculpture art of what has been defined here ancient Gandhāra, as well as the nearby regions of Swāt and Taxila in Pakistan, and Bactria and Begrām (Kapiśa) in Afghanistan. Discussing the nomenclature of Gandhāra art, SL Huntington confines it to the geographical boundaries of Gandhāra but as far its artistic relationships is concerned she generalises and says that:

In narrow sense then, the term "Gandhāra" should be used only to describe the art of that specific region, while the more broadly based styles of western Asia might be called Bactro-Gandhāran.¹¹⁹

It is notable that religious and iconographical notions such as the physical description of the Buddha the associated auspicious signs and prescribed poses all grew out of the Indian tradition.¹²⁰ The Kusāna art of Gandhāra is representative, therefore, of the hybrid culture of Gandhāra. The nearby region—Bactria, Kapiśa, Uddiyāna and Taxila—were geo-politically distinct units and their art at some stages was more or less influenced by that of Gandhāra. They represent, however, different schools [styles] that are to be named after their respective regions.¹²¹

Gandhāra was situated on the crossroad of east and west. The cosmopolitan nature of the region gave, therefore, a special and characteristic impact to its culture. This is why Hellenistic, Roman, Western Asiatic, Central Asian and Indian forms and concepts are observed in its art and architecture.¹²² A Good example of such infusions and diffusions, i.e., blending of western and eastern concepts, in a distinct way is Kapiśa or ancient Begrām to the west of Gandhāra.¹²³ The eclectic nature of Gandhāra art reflects that "a religious and aesthetic element drawn from widely different cultures are brought together", however, "the iconography is purely Indian".¹²⁴

Marshall¹²⁵ and Dani¹²⁶ observe no Buddhist sculpture in the Hellenistic cultural levels in Gandhāra. Bactrian Greeks cannot, therefore, in this case, be credited for being the originators of this art style. One explanation for the absence of such material may be that the ruling class was not yet converted to Buddhism. For more solid proofs we should then refer to settlement sites of the common people rather than royal cities or palaces. The high frequency of Buddhist remains and literary sources suggest that the bulk of the population of Gandhāra seems to have been Buddhist, at least, from the Aśokan period onward to the advent of Hindu Śāhīs. To give an analogy from later Indian history it does not necessarily follow from the existence of the Mughal cities or their palaces in India that the general public invariably observed the Muslim culture. Neither it will be correct to infer from the British period churches that during their rule the whole population of India was Christians. It is essential to base our assumptions on solid proofs, and before reaching the cross-roads we should know very well the place where our way begins.

Remarks

It is suggested that the Buddha figure from Swāt¹²⁷ and representation on the Bīmārān reliquary from Afghanistan can be dated before the Kusāna period, a view which is supported by architectural analogies and stylistic comparisons with Indian art on the one hand and numismatic evidence on the

other.¹²⁸ This demonstrates the presence of the Buddha's figure in sculpture before the declaration of Mahāyāna Buddhism as state religion in the Kaniśka's period. There is thus no need to associate the ultimate origin of the Buddha's image with any specific western influence, however, it might have warded off the hesitation of the followers to cast his figure openly. Furthermore, Gandhāra culturally was closer to India than the west, a notion which is confirmed broadly by the narratives of the Chinese pilgrims and successive historians. It is, therefore, necessary to search for appropriate archaeological data to support the argument in favour of this or any other related theory rather than following any rigid or a priori line of speculation.

JE van Lohuizen-de Leeuw and L Nehru respectively pointed out separately close resemblance of the early Gandhāran sculptures from Taxila and Ai-Khanum to those from Swāt and not vice versa. Firstly, because Swāt, situated between Bactria and Taxila, was an international passage and its geographical environment was attractive for the Buddhists and suitable for their religious activities right from the very beginning. Its closeness to Bactria and Central Asia gives much weight to the origin of so called Gandhāra art in Swāt, which might have received from the colonial Greeks the idea of making the statues of heroes or supernatural beings, where the presence of the Buddha was transformed from symbolic to the human form before it was done anywhere else. Secondly, the pre-Kusāna levels at Shaikhān- herai in Chārsadda and pre-Śakan cultural-levels at Sirkap in Taxila failed to demonstrate any Gandhāra sculpture. But, this is not the case in the Swāt Valley where we do have an early local style that gradually developed into the so called Gandhāra art. We, therefore, have to discard any theory of total foreign origin and trace the ultimate roots of Gandhāra art in Uddiyāna, especially in the Swāt Valley.

It is high time that some organisations within the country or abroad come forward and contribute generously their suggestions and material help to facilitate the last few steps of the long march of the so called Gandhāra art towards the destination of its origin.

Notes:

¹¹ Another Rock edict is found in Mansehra, on the left bank of the Indus.

¹ B.C. Law, *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, Paris, 1954, p. 76.

² Rock Edict-V of Aśoka; Law, 1954, p. 76.

³ B.C. Law, Tribes in Ancient India, Poona, 1943; N.L. Dey, The Geographical dictionary of Ancient and Mediaeval India, Calcutta, 1899; N.N. Bhattacharyya, the Geographical Dictionary---ancient and Early Medieval India, New Delhi, 1991; H.H. Wilson," Account of the Foe Kue Ki or Travels of Fa-Hian ...", Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (Hereafter JRAS), Vol. V, 1839, pp. 117-140;S. Beal, (trans.) Si-yuki or Buddhist Records of the Western World, Vol. I, London, 1906, pp. 97-118.

⁴ Bhattacharyya, 1991, pp. 130-31.

⁵ The Hymns of the Arharva-veda, Vol. 1, p. 225, n. 14, London, 1895, T.H.R. Griffith, (trans.).

⁶ Bhattacharyya, 1991, pp. 130-31.

⁷ H. Wilson, 1839, p. 117.

⁸ H. Wilson, 1839, p. 117; T.W.R. Davids in his Buddhist India, London, 1903, p. 28, connected modern city of kandahār in Afghanistan with ancient Gandhāra but other scholars like J.W. McCrindls in his Ancient India as described by Ptolemy, edited by S.M. Sastri, Calcutta, 1927, p. 116, do not support it; Law, 1943, p. 7, n. 3, writes, "There is no proved etymological connection between the name Kandahar and Gandhara.".

⁹ The Sculptures and Inscriptions of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistun in Persia, London, British museum Publication, 1907, pp. 3-4.

¹⁰ E.J. Rapson, The Cambridge History of India, Vol. I, Cambridge, 1922, p. 514.

¹² Z.H. Dani, A Short History of Pakistan, Book one ---Pre Muslim Period, (I.H. Qureshi, Gen. Ed.), Karachi, 1987 (rpt.), p. 111, (First Published, 1984).

- ¹³ The Anguttara Nikaya, III. Ixx. 17, E.R.J. Gooneratne (ed.), Ceylon, 1913, p. 233; R. Davids "Some notes on the political division of India when Buddhism arose", Journal of the Pali Text Society, 1896-1901, p. 70.
- ¹⁴ E.J. Rapson, Ancient India from the Earliest times to the First Century A.D., Cambridge, 1914, p.81.

- ¹⁶ S.M. Sastri, Cunninghamis Ancient Geography of India, Calcutta, 1924, p. 56.
- ¹⁷ D.R. Bhandarkar, Lectures on the Ancient History of India on the period from 650 to 325 B.C., University of Calcutta, 1919, p. 54.
- ¹⁸ Law, 1943, p. 10.
- ¹⁹ W. Zwalf, Shrines of Gandhara, London, 1979, p. 2.
- ²⁰ Zwalf, 1979, p. 3.
- ²¹ A.H. Dani, "Duddhists in Sindae As given in the Chachnamah", JCA, Vol. II, Number I, July 1979, pp. 25-37.
- ²² Archaeological Survey of India annual report, 1917-18, Calcutta, 1920, pp. 22-23; R.N. Mehta and S.N. Chowdhary, Excavation at Devnimori (A Report of the Excavation conducted from 1960-63), Department of Archae4ology and Ancient History, university of Baroda, 1966, p. 123.
- ²³ M.A. Stein, "An Archaeological Tour Along The Waziristan Border", Geographical Journal, 1928, Vol. LXX No, April, pp. 378, 380.
- ²⁴ E. Errington has proposed a new identification of the site with Sahri Bahlol, near Takhti-bahai. See her article, "in search of P-iu-sha, a City of the Central Gandhāra Plain", Bulletin of the Asian Institute & Iranian Studies in Honor of A.D.H. Bivar, vol. 7, 1993, pp. 55-66, esp. P. 59.
- ²⁵ A. Cunningham, Archaeological Survey of India Reports, Vol. V, 1875, pp. 15-16
- ²⁶ A. Cunningham, Archaeological Survey of India Reports, Vol. II, 1871, pp. 90-92.
- ²⁷ A. Foucher, Notes on the Ancient Geography of Gandhara, Calcutta, 1915, p. 22.
- ²⁸ Near the Sangāo village at the foot of the mountains, A.h. Dani discovered a cave with middle and Late Stone Ages cultural deposit. See his "Sangao Cave excavation, the First Season 1963", Ancient Pakistan, Vol. 1, 1964, pp. 1-50; and Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Pakistan, UVESCO, Paris, 1988, pp. 8-10.
- ²⁹ The foundation of the Stūpa, on which stands the modern building of a school, in the east and remains of the monastic establishment of a huge dimension with beautiful diaper masonry on the northern cliff of the spur were noticed by the present author during his visit of the site in 1991 in the company of Professor (Dr.) Abdur Rahman.
- ³⁰ Foucher, 1915, pp. 21-23.
- ³¹ Foucher, 1915, pp. 25.
- ³² S. Mizuno (ed.), Teraliæ Buddhist Site in Pakistan Surveyed in 1963-67, Kyoto, 1978.
- ³³ Cunningham, 1875, pp. 8-23.
- ³⁴ Foucher, 1915, pp. 21-32.
- ³⁵ Cunningham, 1871, pp. 89-90.
- ³⁶ Foucher, 1915, pp. 10-16.
- ³⁷ Foucher, 1915, p. 11, n.1.
- ³⁸ Foucher, 1915, p. 11, n. 1.
- ³⁹ M. Wheeler, Charsada, A Metropolis of the North- West Frontier, Oxford, 1962.
- ⁴⁰ A.H. Dani, "Shaikhan Dheri Excavationæin search of a second City of Pushkalavati". Ancient Pakistan, Vol. II, Peshawar University, 1965-66; also see "Early Historic Period Discoveries in the Peshawar Valley", Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Pakistan, Unesco, Paris, 1980, p. 77 by the same Author.
- ⁴¹ Foucher, 1915, p. 4.
- ⁴² Foucher, 1915, p. 11, n.1; JRAS, 1839, p. 118.
- ⁴³ D.B. Spooner, "Excavation at Shāh-jī-kī-Dhērī', Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1908-9, Calcutta, pp. 38-59; Foucher, 1915, p. 10, n. 1.
- ⁴⁴ Foucher, 1915, p. 10, n. 1.
- ⁴⁵ Cunningham, 1871, pp. 92 sqq.
- ⁴⁶ Cunningham, 1871, p. 92; Sastri, 1924, p.65.
- ⁴⁷ Sastri, 1924, p. 65.
- ⁴⁸ Sastri (ed.), 1924, p. 94.

¹⁵ Dey, 1899, p. 23.

- ⁴⁹ Sastri, 1924, p. 111 sqq.
- ⁵⁰ J. Marshall, Archaeological discoveries at Taxila, Lecture before the Punjab Historical Society, September 4th, 1913.
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- ⁵² A.H. Dani, 1988, p. 10; W. Zwalf, A Catalogue of the Gandhāra Sculpture in the British Museum Vol. I, The Trustees of the British Museum, 1996, p. 15.
- ⁵³ Marshall, 1913, p. 3.
- ⁵⁴ M. Elphisnstone, An Account of the Kingdom of Caubul, Vol. II, reprinted Karachi, 1972, (first published London, 1815), pp. 213-14; Errington, 1987, p. 30.
- ⁵⁵ Elphinstone, 1972, Vol. I, pp. 106-8, Pl. Frontispiece.
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- ⁶⁵ Cunningham, 1848, pp. 102-5.
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- ⁶⁷ Stein, 1929, pp. 143 ff.; Stein, 1930, pp. 66 ff. Some scholars like P.H.L. Eggermint does not agree to this identification. See his "Ptolmy, the Geographer, and the peole of Dards: Alexander in Buner, the Aornos Problem and the Drads of Dyarta", Journal of Central Asia, Vol. VII, No. 1, July 1984, pp. 73-123.
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- ⁷⁴ They were exhibited in Crystal palace in England where they were destroyed by fire. JASB, Vol. LVIII, p. 120.
- ⁷⁵ Cunningham, 1875, p. V; Smith, 1889, p. 120.
- ⁷⁶ Smith, 1889, p. 112.
- ⁷⁷ Smith, 1889, pp. 113, 119
- ⁷⁸ Smith, 1889, n. Pp. 113-14 (Smith has quoted about ten references in this connection).
- ⁷⁹ Numismatic Chronicle; Vol. XV, N.S., p. 12, note (Cited by smith, 1889, p. 120)
- ⁸⁰ Smith, 1889, p. 113-14.
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Museum", Lahore Museum Bulletin, of S.R. Dar (ed.), Vol. III No. 1, January-June 1990. Pp. 19-28, esp. 26. Pls. I. II

- ⁸² Smith, 1889, p. 121.
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- ⁸⁴ Zwalf, 1979, p. 1.
- ⁸⁵ Although the term 'Mahāyāna' seems to have been coined much later in the time of the Kuṣāṇa dynasty, it was prevailing in concept as well as practice almost right from the origin of the Buddhist society. Therefore some scholars with the support of literary sources suggest the presence of the Buddha image or, at least, it legalisation right from the very beginning. See M.C. Joshi, "Aspects of the Iconic Representation of the Buddha", Ancient Ceylon, Journal of the Archaeological Survey Department of Sri lanka, No. 12, Vol. 6, Department of Archaeology, Sri lanka, 19910, pp. 1-8; Jul Hyung Rhi, "From Bodhisattva to Buddha: The Beginning of Iconic representation in Buddhist Art", Atribus Asiae, Vol. LIV, ³/₄, 1994, pp. 207-25, especially 219 ff; S. Huntington, 1985, pp. 122-24; J.C. Huntington, "The origin of the Buddha Image: Early Image Traditions and the Concept of the Buddhadar-Sanapunaā". In A.K. Narain's (ed.), studies in Buddhist Art of South Asia, New Delhi, 1985
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- ⁹¹ There is difference of Opinion among the scholars whether Ai-Khanum city was really founded by Alexander himself a suggested by P.Bernard, Ai Khanum on the Oxus: a Hellenistic city in central Asia", Proceeding of the British Academy, vol. LIII, 1967-a, p. 92; Bernard, "Deuxieme Campagne de Douilles d'Ai Khanoum en Bactriane", Comptes rendus des Seances de l'Academie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres 1967-b, p. 322f.; or others would suggest later date of second century B.C. such as M. Wheeler, Flames over Persepolis, London, 1968, pp. 84, 86; About the end of the city there is general consensus of c. 130 B.C. Its end is associated with the invasion of either Śakas or yueh-chi (Bernard 1967-a, p. 93); F. Tissot, "Art in Afghanistan---Pre-Islamic", JCA, Vol. VI, Number 2, December 1983, p. 6.
- ⁹² Nehru, pp. 37.
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- ⁹⁴ Nehru, p. 29.
- ⁹⁵ Nehru, p. 29.
- ⁹⁶ J. Marshall, *Taxila*, Cambridge, 1951, pp. 65f., 198, 208, 494, 513, 691-94: Marshall, 1960-a, pp.xv, 5f., 26, 28.
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