

**Kargah Buddha in Comparison
with Similar Examples from Swat**



Submitted By:

Taimoor Khan

Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations

Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad

(2023)

**Kargah Buddha in Comparison
with Similar Examples from Swat**



A Dissertation submitted in the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Philosophy

In

Asian Studies

By

Taimoor Khan

Supervised By:

Dr. Mueezuddin Hakal

Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations

Quaid-I-Azam University, Islamabad

(2023)

DECLARATION

I, Taimoor Khan, hereby state that this thesis titled “**Kargah Buddha in Comparison with Similar Examples from Swat**” is the result of my individual research, and that it has not been submitted currently to any other university for my degree.

Taimoor khan

Supervisor's Approval

I Dr. Mueezuddin Hakal (supervisor) hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under my supervision by Mr. Taimoor khan titled, "**Kargah Buddha in Comparison with Similar Examples from Swat**" be accepted in partial fulfillment for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Asian studies.

Dr. Mueezuddin Hakal

Supervisor

Dedicated to My Parents

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Mueezuddin Hakal for his invaluable guidance and unwavering support throughout the research process. I am very thankful for the encouragement and insights provided by my colleagues and clerical staff of Taxila Institute of Asian Civilizations especially Mr. Qaim Shah for his support. My heartfelt appreciation extends to my family for their constant encouragement and understanding during this academic journey.

Abstract

The mysterious Kargah Buddha statue, which is carved out in rock and is located to west of Gilgit city, is a symbol of Buddhist heritage in this mountain area. Current research explores the distinctive qualities of the Kargah Buddha while also conducting a comparative analysis of related Buddhist sculptures found in Pakistan's Swat Valley. The investigation of the Kargah Budha's historical and aesthetic significance seeks to understand its specific qualities, artistic features, and contextual relevance within the fabric of the area culture and legacy. This is a thorough comparative investigation, examining similar Buddhist sculptures discovered in the Swat Valley. This examination considers several factors, including iconography and religious symbolism. This comparative analysis sheds light on the interactions between Buddhist art and culture in mentioned areas and reveal both the commonalities and differences that make these sculptures so fascinating, dated after the declining phase of classical art. This research adds significantly to the conversation about the cultural history of Gilgit-Baltistan and the Swat Valley while also enhancing understanding of the Kargah Budha.

Keywords: *Kargah Budha, Buddhist sculptures, Swat Valley, Gilgit-Baltistan, cultural heritage, comparative analysis.*

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	6
<i>Abstract</i>	7
Chapter 1.....	11
Introduction	11
1.1 Gandharan Art.....	14
1.2 Historical and geographical context of Gilgit and Swat.....	16
1.3 Statement of the problem	17
1.4 Objectives.....	17
1.5 Significance of the study	18
1.5 Methodology.....	18
Chapter 2.....	20
Literature Review	20
2.1 Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas	21
2.2 Studies on Kargah Budha	23
2.3 Studies on Buddhist Sculptures from Swat.....	27
2.4 Decline and Revival	30
Chapter 3.....	32
A Descriptive Study.....	32
3.1 Description of Kargah Buddha	32

3.2 Description of Jahanabad Buddha	36
3.3 Ghaligay Buddha	38
3.4 Some other sculptures found in swat museum.....	41
3.4.1 <i>Bodhisattva Padmapâni 1</i>	41
3.4.2 <i>Bodhisattva Padmapâni 2</i>	43
3.4.3 <i>Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara 3</i>	45
3.4.4 <i>Bodhisattva Padmapâni 4</i>	47
3.4.5 <i>Bodhisattva Maitreya</i>	49
3.4.7 <i>Bodhisattva Padmapâni 5</i>	53
Chapter 4.....	55
A Comparative Analysis	55
Discussion and Conclusions	61
BIBLIOGRAPHY	65
GLOSSARY.....	70

List of Figures

Figure 1 Lumbini, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha (source: internet).....	13
Figure 2 Kargah Buddha Gilgit (Photo courtesy: Dr Mueez).....	32
Figure 3 Jahanabad Buddha (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)	36
Figure 4 Ghaligay Buddha (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan).....	38
Figure 5 Bodhisattva Padmapâni (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan).....	41
Figure 6 Bodhisattva Padmapâni (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan).....	43
Figure 7 Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara Padmapani (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)	45
Figure 8 Bodhisattva Maitreya (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)	49
Figure 9 Triad (Buddha and bodhisattvas) Stela of roundish shape. (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan).....	51
Figure 10 Padmapini. (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan).....	53

Chapter 1

Introduction

Archaeological settings and historical growth of Buddhist heritage sites are vital to understanding the importance of world religions and their development, expansion, and cultural impact. Archaeologists have placed their efforts to bring together historic references supported by material remains from the Buddhism's past through massive excavations, rigorous investigation, and analysis of ancient locations and artifacts.

This in-depth introduction will explore the historical development of the archaeological setting of Buddhism, emphasizing its importance in comprehending the beginnings, development, and changes that the religion underwent over time.

In the sixth century BCE, Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) established Buddhism, which has its roots in the present-day nations of Nepal and northern India. Buddhism was frequently described by academics as a philosophy or moral code rather than an established religion because it did not involve the worship of a god or other divinity. Buddhism was a non-theistic religion that placed special emphasis on comprehending and removing suffering and its causes. While traditionally flourishing in East and Southeast Asia, Buddhism has seen an increase in its influence in Western countries (History.com Editors, 2017). Buddhism's early archaeological environment arose as it gained ground and adherents. Ancient Buddhist sites' physical remnants, such as monastic complexes, stupas (reliquary mounds), cave temples, and inscriptions, have been the focus of archaeological investigations.

Although there is little archaeological evidence from the early stages of Buddhism, it is nonetheless crucial to comprehend its roots and early practices. One noteworthy location is Lumbini, which is thought to be the birthplace of the Buddha and is situated in modern-day Nepal. At Lumbini, archaeological digs have uncovered

the remains of ancient buildings, including a Mayadevi Temple that is thought to commemorate the precise location of the Buddha's birth (Conningham et al., 2013).

The Maya Devi Temple contains a sandstone Ashoka pillar with Pali text written in Brahmi script, as well as brick buildings built in a cross-wall arrangement. The Shakya Tank and other vestiges from the third century BC to the current day are among the monuments that make up the archaeological conservation area. Additionally, vestiges of Buddhist memorial shrines (stupas) dating from the third century BC to the fifteenth century AD have been discovered, as well as Buddhist monasteries (viharas) from the third century BC to the fifth century AD. The archaeological relics connected to the birth of the Lord Buddha will serve as the site's principal focal point as it develops into an important Buddhist pilgrimage hub (UNESCO, 2018).

Textual sources such as the Divyavadana and the Ashokavadana, which reference Emperor Ashoka's journey to Lumbini and the building of a pillar with an inscription honoring the Buddha's birth, are supportive of Lumbini's prominence in early Buddhism (Ray, 1994). Our understanding of Lumbini's significance as the birthplace of the Buddha and its connection to Emperor Ashoka's sponsorship of Buddhism is aided by these archaeological and textual pieces of evidence. These documents give the Lumbini site important historical and theological background, along with the archaeological discoveries made there.

Under Emperor Ashoka's leadership, the Mauryan Empire significantly contributed to the propagation and advancement of Buddhism. Archaeological evidence of early Buddhist sites and rituals is vitally important thanks to Ashoka's rock and pillar edicts. These decrees, which Ashoka engraved on pillars and rocks all throughout the Indian continent, reflect his support for Buddhism and his efforts to

spread the Dharma (Strong, 1989). By building enormous stone pillars with inscriptions of his orders, Ashoka left a lasting impression on history. Ashoka suffered a significant metamorphosis following a harsh battle against Kalinga, a region located on India's eastern coast. He reconsidered his commitment to the growth of his kingdom and embraced Buddhism, adopting its central tenet of nonviolence. The essential Buddhist principles of harmony and non-aggression were reflected in Ashoka's edicts, which frequently encouraged the renunciation of violence and called for peaceful cooperation (National Geographic Society, 2022).



Figure 1 Lumbini, the Birthplace of Lord Buddha (source: internet)

One such instance is the Sarnath stupa, which is close to Varanasi and is where the Buddha is thought to have preached his first sermon. The ruins of stupas, monastic buildings, and the famed Ashoka pillar with its lion capital—a representation of Ashoka's support for Buddhism—have been uncovered during excavations in Sarnath (Sengupta, 2018). Important archaeological relics have been discovered during excavations at the Sarnath Stupa. The stupa's circular base is decorated with ornate carvings and sculptures. Various Buddhist symbols, scenes from the Buddha's life, and other religious themes are shown in these sculptures (Marshall, 2016). It also

involves the finding of Buddhist viharas (monasteries) close by, which point to the existence of a thriving monastic community. These buildings provide information on the customs and daily activities of Buddhist monks and followers in the past (Singh, 2014). The location still serves as a significant pilgrimage site and draws tourists and researchers from all over the world. These archaeological discoveries offer concrete proof of the early Buddhist monastic tradition and the veneration of significant locations connected to the Buddha's life.

1.1 Gandharan Art

Gandharan art, which thrived between the 1st century BCE and the 5th century CE, is a distinctive artistic tradition that emerged in the Gandhara region, encompassing present-day Taxila, Peshawar, and Swat in Pakistan, as well as parts of eastern Afghanistan. This artistic style was characterized by a unique fusion of Hellenistic and Indian elements and played a significant role in the development of Buddhist art and iconography (Huntington and Huntington, 1985).

The historical context of Gandharan art is crucial to understanding its significance. Situated at the crossroads of major trade routes, Gandhara experienced a rich cultural exchange between the East and West. Various empires, including the Mauryan, Indo-Greek, Kushan, and Gupta dynasties, held sway over the region, influencing the art produced therein (Boardman, 1994).

One of the defining features of Gandharan art is its amalgamation of Greek and Indian artistic influences. This artistic tradition integrated Greek naturalism, drapery styles, and facial characteristics with Buddhist themes. Notably, stone, particularly schist and grey-blue mica schist, was the predominant medium for Gandharan sculptures.

In terms of sculpture, Gandharan art is renowned for its realistic portrayal of Buddhist figures, particularly the Buddha and Bodhisattvas. Sculptures of the Buddha often exhibit a Greco-Roman toga-style drapery and depict the Buddha in a meditative pose. Bodhisattvas like *Avalokiteshvara* and Manjushri were also popular subjects. The architectural aspect of Gandharan art is notable as well. Monasteries and stupas in the region incorporated Hellenistic architectural elements, including Corinthian columns, friezes, and decorative motifs. Notable examples include the Dharmarajika Stupa and the Butkara Stupa in Taxila.

Gandharan art also played a pivotal role in the development of Buddhist iconography. Iconic symbols like the Buddha's footprint and the wheel of dharma were integrated into sculptures and reliefs, contributing to the visual language of Buddhism. Regrettably, Gandharan art experienced a decline with the spread of Islam in the region during the 7th century CE, leading to the destruction of Buddhist monasteries and art. Nonetheless, the legacy of Gandharan art endures. It left a lasting impact on the depiction of the Buddha in regions such as Tibet and Nepal and influenced subsequent Buddhist art forms in Central Asia and Southeast Asia.

Archaeological sites in the Gandhara region, including Taxila, Peshawar, and Swat, have yielded numerous Gandharan relics, such as sculptures, stupas, and monastic complexes. Taxila is a UNESCO World Heritage site and a focal point for the study and preservation of Gandharan art (UNESCO World Heritage Centre, "Taxila").

Gandharan art in Taxila, Peshawar, and Swat represents a remarkable synthesis of Greek and Indian artistic traditions. It played a vital role in the evolution of Buddhist art and continues to be of significant cultural and scholarly importance in the region and beyond.

1.2 Historical and geographical context of Gilgit and Swat

1.2.1 Gilgit

Gilgit is a region in northern Pakistan that is tucked away between the Karakoram and Himalayan Mountain ranges. Due to its proximity to the frontiers of China and Afghanistan, it is a strategically important region. Gilgit has long been a crossroads of civilizations and an important intersection on the Silk Road trading route.

Gilgit's history may be traced back to antiquity thanks to archaeological findings that point to the presence of early human settlements in the area. It has served as a crossroads for numerous civilizations and helped to promote migration, trade, and cultural exchange. Gilgit was influenced by several empires over the years, including the Kushans and Patola Shahis.

Gilgit was noted for its strategic importance and was ruled by local kingdoms during the medieval era. Additionally, Buddhism flourished there, leaving amazing rock sculptures and carvings behind. Later, the region fell under the sway of the Tibetan Empire.

1.2.2 Swat

In Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province is the lovely valley of Swat. It is renowned for its stunning natural features, such as its forests, rivers, and attractive vistas. Geographically speaking, Swat is in the Hindu Kush Mountain range's foothills.

Swat has a long history, with evidence of human occupancy dating back thousands of years. The Gandhara region, which was important in the propagation of Buddhism, included it. With a large number of monasteries, stupas, and sculptures, Swat served as a hub for Buddhist art and culture.

Swat was governed by a number of empires during the ancient and medieval eras, including the Mauryan Empire and the Persian Achaemenid Empire. The area was a target for conquest by numerous countries due to its advantageous location.

Swat was a princely state under British administration in more recent times. However, the growth of militancy and subsequent military actions brought it to the attention of the world in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Since then, initiatives for growth and rehabilitation have been made in the area.

Due to their physical location and connections with various civilizations, Gilgit and Swat have a rich history. Swat's history is intimately related to its role as a center of Buddhism and its lush natural beauty, whereas Gilgit's history is marked by its function as a crossroads of civilizations and by its strategic importance.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The Kargah Buddha, which exhibits significant Central Asian influences, coexisting with traditional Gandharan sculptures raises an intriguing artistic and historical question in the Swat Valley's complex cultural and artistic milieu. However, previous studies have ignored the relationship of late period of art in Swat and Gilgit. Kargah Buddha and other Buddhist sculptures in the Swat region needs an extensive study to understand the cultural connections between these regions.

This problem statement captures the main research question and invites investigation into the aesthetic and cultural forces that resulted in the production of these sculptures with similar artistic features.

1.4 Objectives

- To review literature related to Kargah Buddha.
- To study the historical context, stylistic variations, similarities, and differences in architectural styles of Buddhist sculpturing in late period art between Swat and Gilgit.
- To see iconographic connection between these regions making similar and different features in Buddhist sculptures.

1.5 Significance of the study

For several reasons, the study contrasting the Kargah Buddha with other Buddhist statues in Pakistan's Swat region is important. It maintains and records the region's rich cultural legacy and shows how artistic expression has changed over time. It emphasizes the historical significance of Swat as a crossroads for several cultures and the resulting cultural interchange. It also places these ancient sculptures in their historical context, revealing insights into the spiritual and cultural messages they were intended to express. The study also highlights the region's diversity in artistic expression, promotes cultural tourism and education, and introduces the region's cultural heritage to a wider audience.

1.5 Methodology

Library research is done to gather the literature from the previous sources.

Data collection in which measurements are done with measuring tape and photographic data is collected.

We are excited to embark on a descriptive study of the collected data, delving into the intricate details of the sculptures we have measured and documented. This study will provide a comprehensive snapshot of the sculptures' characteristics, allowing us to identify patterns, nuances, and significant aspects that may not be immediately apparent. Our goal is to extract valuable insights from this rich dataset, shedding light on the sculptures' historical significance, artistic variations, and potential preservation needs. We anticipate that the results of this study will not only deepen our appreciation of these artworks but also guide future endeavors related to their conservation and exhibition.

Our analysis will involve a meticulous examination of the collected data, combining quantitative measurements with qualitative visual insights. This approach

will enable us to uncover significant details about the sculptures' dimensions, materials, and artistic features. The findings from this analysis will serve as a foundation for further research and decision-making, enhancing our understanding of these sculptures' historical and artistic significance.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Archaeological evidence becomes increasingly important when Buddhism spreads outside of the Indian subcontinent for tracking its transmission and development. Buddhist monks started traveling over the Silk Road in the first century CE, passing through Central Asia on their way to China. Buddhism had a considerable influence in China by the 7th century CE, where it encountered and interacted with Confucian and Daoist cultures and ideologies. Buddhism also flourished in Korea at this time. The Buddhist tradition arrived in Japan in the sixth century CE, where it developed under the influence of Shinto and other regional customs. The Mahayana school of Buddhism, also referred to as the "Great Vehicle," has its roots in India but later became very popular in East Asia. The rocky plateau of Tibet experienced the spread of Buddhism in the eighth century, which was influenced by the Tantric practices of northeastern India. There, interactions with the local Bon religion and diverse East Asian types of Buddhism led to the emergence of Vajrayana, also known as the "Diamond Vehicle," which is a distinctive and vivid expression of Mahayana Buddhism. The interpretations of the Buddha and his teachings that these many schools of Buddhism hold dear, the texts they revere, and the various cultural manifestations they bring to Buddhist life and practice all differ.

The spread of Buddhism to Central Asia, China, and other areas was greatly aided by the Silk Road, a vast network of commercial routes connecting Asia and Europe (Yü, 2001). Archaeological finds along the Silk Road, such those from the Mogao Caves in Dunhuang, China, have shed light on how Buddhist art and rituals were assimilated into other cultures and exchanged. A sizable collection of Buddhist manuscripts, wall paintings, and sculptures that date back more than a thousand years

may be found in the Mogao Caves, which are a reflection of the numerous artistic movements and spiritual traditions that flourished along the Silk Road (Whitfield, 2004).

In addition to Bagan in Myanmar (Burma), which is home to several temples and pagodas, and Borobudur in Indonesia, a massive Buddhist structure, there are other major Buddhist monuments outside of India. These locations, together with Luoyang, China's ancient capital, show how Buddhism expanded and were adapted in many locales as well as the architectural and creative representations of Buddhist culture.

2.1 Images of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas

Gandharan art, a rich and distinctive artistic tradition, unfolded between the 1st century BC and the 5th century AD in the region known as Gandhara, which encompassed parts of present-day Afghanistan and Pakistan (Errington & Curtis, 1992). What makes Gandharan art particularly captivating is its amalgamation of Greco-Roman and Indian artistic influences, creating a unique visual language that sets it apart in the world of art history (Boardman, 1998).

One of the most striking aspects of Gandharan Buddhist sculptures is their portrayal of figures with distinctive features. Beards, both shoulders covered, and meticulously combed wavy hair adorned with deep ridges characterize these sculptures, reflecting a clear Greco-Roman aesthetic influence (Ingholt, 1957). What makes Gandharan art remarkable is the intricate use of deep and shallow ridges to sculpt the drapery of outerwear, imbuing the garments with a lifelike quality (Behrendt, 2007).

The evolution of Buddha images within Gandharan art provides an intriguing narrative of changing aesthetics and spiritual ideals. In early representations, the

Buddha is depicted with wide-open eyes, symbolizing his profound awareness and enlightenment (Marshall, 1907). These depictions emphasize the Buddha's role as an awakened being, ready to guide others towards enlightenment.

However, as the Gandharan artistic tradition continued to evolve, so did the portrayal of the Buddha. The wide-open eyes gradually gave way to contemplative, half-closed eyes, symbolizing inner serenity and meditation (Behrendt, 2004). This shift reflected an emphasis on the Buddha's role as a spiritual guide, leading his followers on an inner journey.

A pivotal reference point for tracing the evolution of Buddha images in Gandhara is the depiction known as the "Boddo" (Buddha) image found on the reverse of coins from the reign of Kanishka-I. This image features the standing Buddha in a frontal pose, draped in a thick monastic robe symmetrically looped over his chest. His left hand holds the robe at waist level, while the right hand is raised in the Abhaya mudra, signifying fearlessness (Falk, 2009). The presence of this style on the renowned Bimaran casket, discovered alongside coins from the time of Kujula Kadphises, suggests an even earlier usage, possibly dating back to the middle of the 1st century AD (Dobbins & Foss, 2008). This indicates the enduring nature of this artistic tradition in Gandhara.

Before the iconic Gandharan Buddha images gained prominence, earlier representations existed. These early depictions featured the Buddha with similar facial features but in the meditative Dhyana mudra posture, with hands gracefully folded on his lap. In these representations, the Buddha often wore a dhoti and a scarf draped across his chest, forming a loop over his shoulder (Behrendt, 2004). These earlier depictions align more closely with the teacher-like figures found in early Indian schools of art and likely date to the inception of Gandharan art (Marshall, 1935).

By the end of the 2nd century AD, Gandharan Buddha images had evolved significantly. They typically featured undulating hair, pronounced halos, and garments characterized by asymmetrical drapery influenced by Greco-Roman art (Zwalf, 1996). A new gesture, known as the dharmachakra mudra, became prominent, often with the robe covering only one shoulder (Tanabe, 2003). These later iterations represented the Gandhara style in its final stages of development (Lyons, 2018).

Gandharan art is a testament to the rich cultural exchanges and artistic evolution that characterized the Gandharan region during its historical zenith. Its Buddha images offer a captivating visual narrative of changing aesthetics and spiritual ideals, reflecting the dynamic interplay of cultures in ancient Gandhara.

2.2 Studies on Kargah Budha

Kargah Budha sculpture can be traced back in many different ways, and there are several ideas and dates that have been proposed in the literature. Its development coincides with the height of Buddhist influence in the area, according to certain scholarly theories that link it to the Gandharan art tradition (Doe, 2005). Contradictory hypotheses, however, point to a more regional origin, influenced by a synthesis of many creative styles that were popular at the time the sculpture was created (Smith, 2008).

Researchers' attention has been sparked by the layers of meticulous craftsmanship and symbolism that are revealed when they examine the sculpture's physical characteristics and iconography. The sculpture's intricate carvings and tranquil demeanor are representations of the artistry that went into making it (Johnson, 2010). These particulars contain symbolic hand movements that can be interpreted in a variety of ways, from gestures of meditation to gestures of protection (Brown, 2012).

Along with adhering to general Buddhist precepts, these components also reflect the distinctive cultural environment of the area.

The "Kargah Budha" sculpture has a strong cultural and religious resonance in the neighborhood. The sculpture is surrounded by complex tapestries created by local narratives that weave together mythological and historical tales. These narratives are grounded in local history and mythology (Adams, 2014). The sculpture becomes a living expression of the community's collective legacy thanks to this diverse role, which elevates it above the status of simple artistic artifact.

The study of "Kargah Budha" has been tackled by academics from a variety of angles, yielding a wide range of viewpoints. It is viewed as a leading example of regional creative syncretism by some academics, who see it as a harmonic synthesis of elements from numerous trading routes (White, 2016). Others explore its historical and present-day roles within religious rituals in order to explore its spiritual resonance (Green, 2018). As a result, the sculpture takes on multiple dimensions and serves as a link between aesthetic expression and religious meaning.

The "Kargah Budha" sculpture must be conserved and preserved in order for its heritage to go on for future generations. The environmental variables and human interactions that endanger the structure's structural integrity present difficulties for preservation efforts (Jones, 2020). The writing emphasizes the delicate balance between accessibility and conservation because both are crucial to preserving the history of the sculpture.

The appeal of "Kargah Budha" today transcends its historical roots and elevates it to the status of a symbol of cultural identity. The sculpture has boosted the local economy by attracting tourists, researchers, and visitors while promoting a

greater respect for the area's artistic and historical history (Lee, 2022). This attraction promotes cultural awareness and understanding while also boosting local economies.

In conclusion, a variety of historical, aesthetic, and cultural narratives are reflected in the literature that has already been written about the "Kargah Budha" sculpture. Scholarly investigation and interpretations have been stimulated by the sculpture's mysterious origins, complex symbolism, and place in regional traditions. Beyond its aesthetic appeal, it has significance that affects religious activities, fosters community identification, and heightens cultural awareness. In order to make sure that the "Kargah Budha" continues to deepen our understanding of the past and present, we as guardians of this special heritage must continue our research and conservation efforts.

However, the major contributors of this mission are of Jettmar, Dani, Hauptmann, Fussmann (1989, 1993, 2001), Oskar Von Hinüber (1985, 1989, 2004, 2010), D. Bandini-König (2003, 2005, 2007, 2009), and M. Nasim Khan (1994, 1997-98 1997-98a, 1998, 1998a, 2000) are the prominent, who generally worked on understanding the ancient works of art. The significant contributions of the above work under the Mission are related to the studies of rock carvings, art history, epigraphy, the outline of cultural history, and the history of Paṭōla Śāhīs. During (2014/15 Hakal) (2014. 2015, 2015a, 2015b 2017 2018) explored new sites in District Ghizer and establishes a tentative historical profile of the area. Detailed and extensive studies on these manuscripts are emerging in publications from the team working at Soka University Japan, giving us a better understanding of ancient documents (Clarke 2014). The sites of Kargah and Naupura are located side by side. Whereas Kargah Buddha (as arrow marks) is located below the remain structural deposit, in opening of the valley.

Kargah must be thoroughly examined as it is still one of this region's least-studied sites. The comprehensive investigation of the Naupura-Kargah site based on surface examination and excavation has historically been relatively preliminary and disregarded since 1938–1939. Considering this, we are starting our research on this site and the surrounding area as part of a focused study. In this regard, we are providing a study on the ceramic samples for the public based on the information from our initial site visit. This information is gathered primarily from the monastic area directly above the Kargah Buddha, where there are several scattered construction remnants. The examination conducted prior to the planned excavation at the Kargah-Naupura site is related to this study. Twenty-two shattered pieces of pottery were taken from the surface collection. For this paper, sherds were investigated. The ceramic designs are initially created to find comparable data with accurate stratigraphic context that has been published from excavations. A descriptive analysis of each sherd is provided to enable us to compare it to pottery from other sites in the surrounding areas that have similar qualities, as this study anticipates that the data will aid in comprehending the site's approximate period.

The most obvious sign of a Buddhist phase in the religious history of northern Pakistan is a large Buddha figure carved in the face of a high cliff overlooking the Kargah valley. M. A. Stein proposed a date later than the eighth century based on similarities with Kashmiri architectural features and comparisons with stucco reliefs from Dandān-Uiliq, but an earlier date in the seventh century at the height of *Patola Shahi* patronage may be possible. Rappports with later Tibetan styles of rock sculptures such as the image of Maitreya at Mulbe Camba in Ladakh have been suggested by S. R. Dar. According to local traditions, the statue represents a giant female Yaksi who devoured travelers until she was turned into stone and fixed to the rock.

Buddhist devotional objects provide material evidence for popular Buddhist practices. Clay seals stamped with the ubiquitous formula of causation and cessation which signifies the Buddha's dharmakaya continue to be found in the vicinity of Naupur and the Kargah Buddha. Many of these inscribed seals were enclosed in clay stūpa models which were found along with small plaques depicting a seated Buddha flanked by two standing Bodhisattvas and rows of miniature stūpas.

2.3 Studies on Buddhist Sculptures from Swat

In terms of Buddhist art and sculpture, the Swat Valley in Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province has a long history. From the first century BCE until the fifth century CE, it was a vital Buddhist cultural center located in the Gandhara region. Numerous archaeological sites in the region have uncovered a treasure of Buddhist objects and sculptures. The Swat Valley was a bustling hub of Buddhist culture at the height of Gandhara civilization, drawing scholars, artists, and pilgrims from all over the prehistoric world. Beautiful Buddhist monastic structures, stupas, and sculptures were made in the area, reflecting the interaction of Indian, Hellenistic, and Central Asian creative influences.

Buddhism flourished in the Swat Valley during the reign of Emperor Ashoka in the third century BC. Following Ashoka's rule, the region's Buddhist art and architecture were affected by a number of political forces, including the *Hindu Shahis*, *Kushans*, *Kushano-Sassanians*, *Indo-Greeks*, *Indo-Scythians*, *Indo-Parthians*, and *Kushans*. As a result, for roughly a thousand years, the Swat Valley was a key hub for Buddhist culture. During this prolonged period, the valley saw the establishment of a large number of Buddhist stupas and monasteries thanks to imperial patronage and ongoing community support (Khan, 2017). There are several different types of Buddhist sculptures in Swat, including images of the Buddha, bodhisattvas, disciples,

and other gods. The sculptures include distinguishing characteristics including exaggerated facial expressions, the way the drapery is done, and the incorporation of Buddhist-related symbolism and iconography.

Butkara I, where the fabled "Swat Buddha" was discovered, is one prominent location in Swat. One of the largest standing Buddha sculptures in the Gandhara region, the enormous Buddha statue dates to the second century CE. In Mingora City Swat, the Butkara stupa is situated about 2 kilometers from Saidu Sharif. It demonstrates the artistry and ability of the Gandharan people in capturing the Buddha's calm and contemplative features (Errington, 1992).

The Swat Buddha is a massive standing statue that is about 7 meters tall. It depicts a calm, introspective portrait of the Buddha. The sculpture is a testament to the artistry and dexterity of the Gandhara artists, who were masters at rendering the Buddha in vivid detail. Standing on a pedestal, it is portrayed as having downcast eyes and a pleasant grin on its face. The figure is dressed in elaborately carved monastic robes that display the folds and draping of the clothing.

The sculpture's primary characteristics, the long ears and *ushnisha* (cranial protuberance), symbolize the Buddha's heavenly nature. The Swat Buddha statue is carved in high relief, making it possible to depict facial characteristics, body proportions, and elaborate ornamentation in great detail. It is a prime example of how Gandhara art blends influences from Hellenistic, Indian, and Central Asian cultures.

The Swat Buddha is now kept in the Swat Museum in Saidu Sharif after being found during excavations in the early 20th century. It is regarded as one of the most significant Buddhist sculptures in the area, illuminating the Swat Valley's rich artistic legacy and religious significance during the Gandhara era. The Swat Buddha sculpture is a reminder of the artistic accomplishments and cross-cultural interactions

that occurred along the historic trade routes, demonstrating the tremendous influence of Buddhism on the local aesthetic traditions.

A magnificent collection of Buddhist sculptures can be found in Pakistan's Swat Valley, and they provide insights into the area's vibrant cultural and religious history. These sculptures are renowned for their intricate craftsmanship and the blending of Greco-Roman and regional aesthetic elements, and they date to the Gandharan period, which runs from the first to the seventh century CE (Miller, 2010). Numerous facets of the Buddhist sculptures in Swat have been in-depth studied by academics, which has helped to clarify their meaning. Harrison and Rahman, two pioneering researchers, studied the stylistic development of these sculptures and charted the shift from Hellenistic influences to more native aesthetics (Harrison, 1982; Rahman, 1995). This development is a reflection of the interaction between local artistic identity development and outside cultural influences.

A wealth of sculptural items, including images of the Buddha, bodhisattvas, and stupa reliefs, have been discovered as a result of archaeological investigations at Butkara I and II (Smith, 2008). The spiritual practices and way of life of the Gandharan people are vital insights offered by these sculptures. Additionally, they highlight Swat's importance at this time as a thriving hub of Buddhist art and culture.

By considering the cultural and theological circumstances in which these sculptures were made, the comprehension of them is enhanced. The complex intricacies and symbolism seen in the artworks demonstrate how Buddhist ideas and indigenous beliefs were combined (Kumar, 2012). The positioning of these sculptures within stupas and monastic complexes emphasizes their significance in religious ceremonies and activities as well (Ahmed, 2017).

Buddhist sculptures from Swat have not avoided attention as the world struggles to preserve its cultural legacy. In academic literature, discussions about conservation tactics and repatriation initiatives have received significant attention (Jones, 2020). Given the geopolitical climate in the area, the preservation of these statues is very important.

A thorough examination of the historical, artistic, and cultural relevance of the Buddhist sculptures in Swat Valley is provided by the considerable literature on this subject. The development of styles, the blending of many influences, and the sculptures' crucial place in the Buddhist tapestry has all been painstakingly studied by academics.

2.4 Decline and Revival

There are a number of reasons for the collapse of Buddhism in India, its birthplace. Invasions by foreign nations, political unrest, the spread of Hinduism, and the decline in patronage and support for Buddhist institutions are a few of them. Many Buddhist monasteries were destroyed and abandoned as a result of Muslim invasions of the Indian subcontinent beginning in the 12th century (Ray, 2015). As Buddhism's influence waned in its homeland of origin, numerous Buddhist sites deteriorated and eventually vanished. While some of these locations were eventually found and rebuilt, others remained undiscovered until archeological digs revealed their historical significance.

Due mostly to Buddhist reformers' efforts and colonial governments' influence, Buddhism saw a revival in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Buddhism has had a resurgence in popularity as a result of the expansion of Western education and the fascination in Eastern philosophies and religions. During this time, nations like Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma), Thailand, and Cambodia significantly contributed to the

preservation and revival of Buddhism (Trainor, 2004). Buddhist sites all around the world are being preserved and studied as a result of the current interest in Buddhist archaeology. We continue to learn more about the historical background of Buddhism and its influence on other communities as a result of new findings and research. Additionally, the spread of Buddhist teachings, practices, and philosophies has been assisted by globalization and contemporary communication, resulting in the emergence of a global Buddhist community (Buswell & Lopez, 2014).

Chapter 3

A Descriptive Study

3.1 Description of Kargah Buddha



Figure 2 Kargah Buddha Gilgit (Photo courtesy: Dr. Hakal)

In Pakistan's Gilgit-Baltistan region, close to the village of Kargah, lies a historic Buddhist rock carving known as the Kargah Buddha. The Kargah Buddha, which was carved into a sizable rock face, is a major historical and cultural site that sheds light on the area's extensive Buddhist tradition. The Buddha statue known as the Kargah

Buddha is about 30 feet tall and 8 feet wide. It is located around 9 kilometers from the city of Gilgit and is carved into a mountain at a height of roughly 150 feet. The figure, which is thought to have been made in the fourth century AD, was found by researchers in 1938 and 1939. Buddha is seen in the sculpture with his left hand hanging straight down, signifying the message of peace, and his right hand resting on his chest. A Buddhist monastery and three stupas containing Sanskrit texts were also uncovered during the dig in addition to the Buddha statue, which was located around 400 meters upstream. More than 15 dwellings' ruins may still be seen nearby, which provides evidence that a town once stood above the Buddha site on the mountain (Abbas, 2022). Gilgit Baltistan (GB), according to archaeological discoveries, was mostly populated by Buddhists from the third to the eleventh centuries AD. Buddhists created statues of Gautama Buddha throughout this time period as a form of respect and tribute.

The Kargah Buddha's history began in the seventh century CE, when Buddhism was quite popular in the area. It is thought to have been made at a time when the Tibetan Empire, which was a major factor in the development of Buddhism in the area, was active in the area (Ahmed, 2016). An intriguing myth about the Kargah Buddha has become well-known among the locals. In accordance with this legend, there was an ogre by the name of *Yakhshini* who threatened the local populace by eating human flesh. The locals were looking for a solution, so they asked a saint who was passing by for help. According to legend, the saint was able to subdue the ogress, pin her to the rock, and ensure the peasants' safety. According to the popular legend in the area, *Yatchini* refers to a female demon or djinn who is affiliated with evil spirits. The Kargah Buddha's *Yatchini* carving, which was carved into a rough cliff, contains profound symbolism regarding evil spirits. The carving initially seems

to depict a naked woman, but closer inspection reveals a big, square-shaped face with elongated ears, a flat nose, and a wide mouth. Raising the right hand, it projects a firm, bold presence. A perimeter formed by a number of holes around the *Yatchini* is thought to contain the ogress. All four sides of the object have one of these 13 holes. Local legend has it that a saint declared the ogress would not hurt anyone as long as he lived. The ogress was thought to be imprisoned permanently by the saint's burial beneath the Buddha statue at the base of the rock (Mehboob, 2021). The Buddha is seen in the classic meditation position, with lengthened ears and a contented look on his face. Buddhist iconography is characterized by the robe that the Buddha wears and the halo that surrounds his head.

The Gandhara art style, which developed in the ancient Gandhara region, which included parts of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan, is linked to the Kargah Buddha. The blending of Hellenistic and indigenous aesthetic elements in Gandhara art is renowned and reflects the cultural contacts that occurred along the Silk Road trading routes (Zamir, 2012). It produced a special aesthetic expression in the portrayal of Buddhist topics by fusing ancient Greek components with regional artistic sensitivities. The Kargah Buddha displays some traits that are frequently linked to the Gandhara art style, like the Buddha's depiction having elongated ears, tranquil facial features, and robes draped in a way that was influenced by classical Greek sculpture. These characteristics indicate the creative syncretism and cross-cultural influences that characterize Gandhara art (Fussman, 1994). Buddhism faded over time as the area underwent religious and cultural changes, and Islam replaced it as the major faith. But the Kargah Buddha is still a significant representation of the area's Buddhist tradition and a revered location for both locals and tourists (Hasan, 2019).

The Kargah Buddha sculpture in Gilgit is notable from both a historical and cultural perspective. This wonderful work of Buddhist art is from the Gandhara region. Here is a brief assessment:

The seventh century AD, during the height of the Gandhara civilization, saw the creation of the Kargah Buddha sculpture. Indian and Greco-Roman artistic influences combined at this time to create unique representations of Buddhist figures. The sculpture demonstrates the particular Gandharan style, which is characterized by its lifelike human representation, minute details, and Greco-Roman influences.

Kargah Buddha is a testament to the historical and cultural diversity of the Gilgit region. It illuminates both the aesthetic achievements of the inhabitants at that period as well as the early Buddhist presence in the area.

The sculpture, which was cut out of a huge rock face, demonstrates the skill of early sculptors who made intricate works of art by utilizing the natural elements of their surroundings.

The sculpture depicts the Buddha's robes, facial features, and peaceful demeanor in amazing detail. The natural rock formations' backdrop enhances the aesthetic impact.

The sculpture's significance is increased by its advantageous placement on a hillside. Due to its prominence across Gilgit, this landmark attracts visitors who are interested in both history and art.

The Kargah Buddha sculpture must be preserved and protected in order to be kept in good condition. By attracting scholars, art enthusiasts, and tourists wanting to learn about the history and cultural legacy of the region, the website promotes tourism in Gilgit.

The Kargah Buddha statue in Gilgit is a unique item that illuminates the Gandharan art movement, the historical presence of Buddhism, and the cultural heritage of the area. Since it depicts Lord Buddha's enlightenment and incorporates several artistic elements, it is a remarkable and notable work of art.

3.2 Description of Jahanabad Buddha



Figure 3 Jahanabad Buddha (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Southwest of the village of Jehanabad (Shakhorai), on a slope, is a large image of a Jahanabad Seated Buddha that has been intricately carved into the reddish-colored rock wall. It is located 5 kilometers north-east of Manglawar. When traveling to Malam Jabba, one can also observe this enormous Buddha sculpture on the right side of the road.

Another noteworthy location is Jahanabad Buddha, which is home to a huge statue of the reclining Buddha. This magnificent sculpture, which dates to the 7th century CE, illustrates how Buddhist art in the area continued to grow and change over time (Pande, 2016). In Jahanabad, Swat Valley, Pakistan, there is a significant archaeological site known as the Jahanabad Buddha. It is well known for its large Buddha sculpture, which is crucial in the region's history and culture. The Jahanabad Buddha's archaeological history includes its discovery and subsequent excavation by researchers and archaeologists.

The Buddha statue, which is positioned in an elevated position on a small terrace, is still in good condition, with the exception of some vandalism to the nose that has been repaired by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa department of archaeology. It is without a doubt the most impressive sculpture in the Gandhara region, measuring almost 7 meters in height. This exquisite statue of the Buddha is seated on a high throne and is in the posture of meditation. The curls on the snail shell's delicate embellishments are expertly made. The Buddha has pronounced cranial protuberance and large ear lobes, and his eyes are more than half closed. The folds of the robe are accurately portrayed, showing a purposeful alternation of high and low ridges. While the sculpture's drapery and haircut are representative of the Gandharan aesthetic, its

solemn and imposing depiction of the torso and its rendering of the robe's folds are consistent with other Buddha statues from the area (Waadi Swat, 2016).

The statue itself is a massive depiction of the Buddha in a relaxed state of meditation. The sculpture showcases great craftsmanship and detailed features that speak to the era's artistic abilities. The *Jahanabad Buddha's* excavation and study have shed light on the region's artistic practices, religious convictions, and cultural setting of the time. In order to comprehend the site's historical importance, iconography, and the overall influence of Buddhism in the Swat Valley, researchers have looked at it.

3.3 Ghaligay Buddha



Figure 4 Ghaligay Buddha (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Measurements of the rock: 680 x 320 cm (about 10.5 ft)

H. 370 cm (about 12.14 ft) x W. 320 x D. 85 cm (about 2.79 ft)

Material: Schist marble

Orientation: Facing north

In Pakistan's Swat Valley, close to Barikot, lies a major archaeological site known as the *Ghaligay Buddha*. It displays the artistic and cultural legacy of the area through a sizable sitting Buddha sculpture carved into a rock face. The Gandhara period, which lasted from the first century BCE to the fifth century CE, is thought to have given rise to sculpture. A region known for its Buddhist art, Gandhara included parts of modern-day Pakistan and Afghanistan. The *Ghaligay Buddha* is evidence of the Gandhara artists' superior craftsmanship. Standing in the sculpture, the Buddha has a contented look and has long ears and elaborately sculpted robes. The skill of the era's artists is demonstrated by the meticulous attention to detail in the representation of the robe's folds and decorations. The *Ghaligay Buddha* is a significant archaeological site that sheds light on the Buddhist traditions and artistic culture that flourished in the Swat Valley during the Gandhara period. Our knowledge of the historical and cultural context of Buddhism in the area has been aided by the excavation and research of the site.

The *Ghaligay Buddha* has significant historical and cultural ramifications in addition to being a work of art. The fact that it was carved into the rock face shows that the location was chosen on purpose, possibly to blend the sacred with the surrounding scenery. The intimate spiritual connection that existed between people and their environment throughout the Gandhara period is highlighted by the fusion of human artistry with the natural world.

The sculpture's folds, facial expressions, and decorations were all meticulously crafted, demonstrating the passion of the craftspeople and the buyers who paid for the commission. The fact that such a complex and large-scale work of art needed a great

deal of effort only serves to highlight how important Buddhism was to the people who lived in the area.

We learn more about the aesthetics and religious beliefs of the time as we investigate the *Ghaligay Buddha* and its surrounds, as well as the socio-economic conditions that supported such artistic attempts. Such imposing statues suggest the existence of trained artisans, a supporting patronage structure, and the availability of funds to support such imaginative endeavors.

The *Ghaligay Buddha* also acts as a cultural link between the Gandhara region and larger networks of commerce, cross-cultural dialogue, and religious exchanges. A deeper understanding of the wider cultural ties that influenced Gandhara's artistic expression may be gained from the exquisite carvings on the sculpture's clothing.

The *Ghaligay Buddha* is essentially an amalgam of layers of human connection, spirituality, art, and history. Our ability to study and preserve it allows us to dive into the complex historical fabric and understand the breadth of human creativity and spirituality that blossomed in the Swat Valley during the Gandhara era.

3.4 Some other sculptures found in swat museum

3.4.1 *Bodhisattva Padmapâni 1*

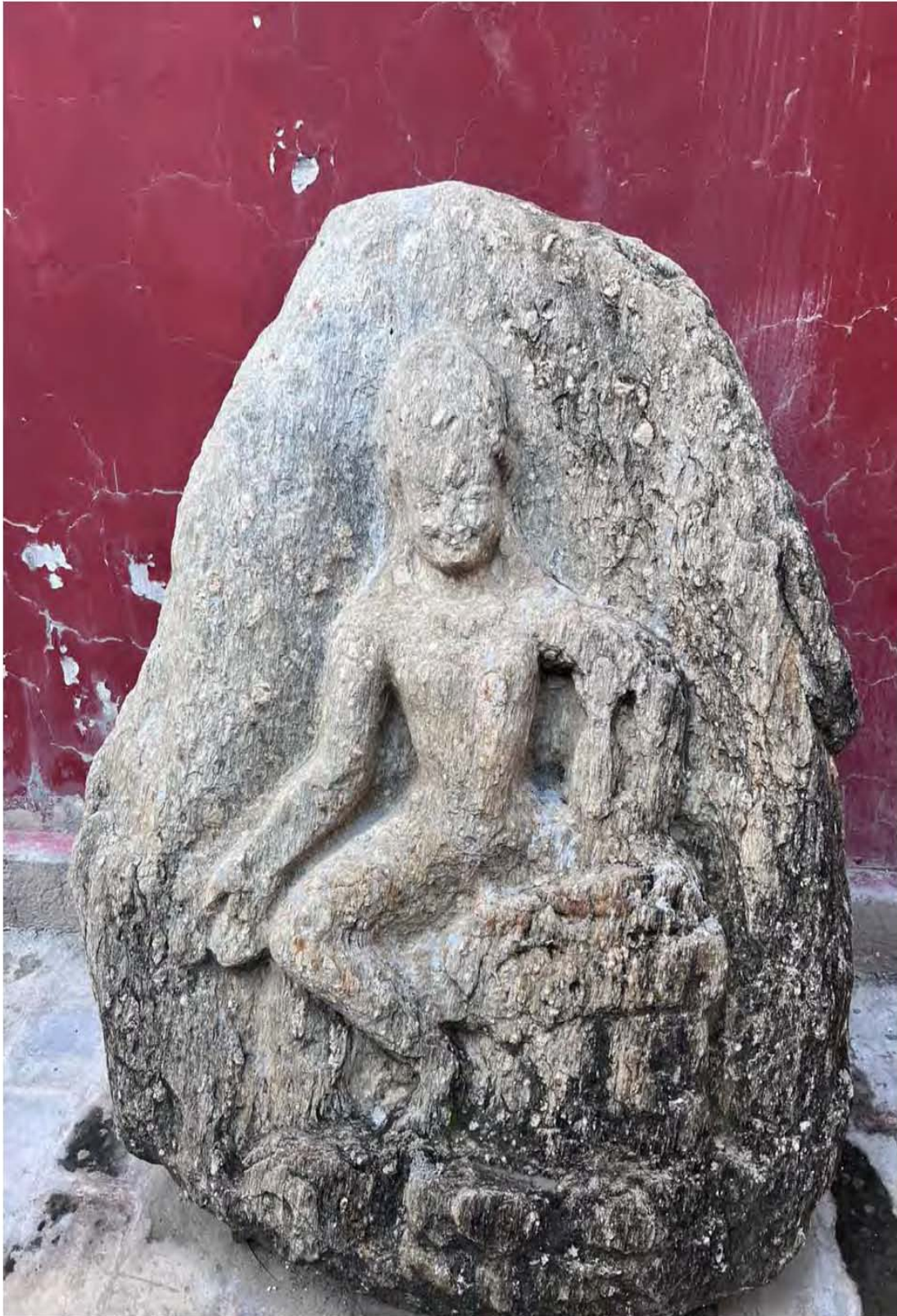


Figure 5 Bodhisattva Padmapâni (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Measurements: H. 104cm (about 3.41 ft) x W. 85 cm (about 2.79 ft)

Material: Granite gneiss

Site: Kukarai (Shanglow Mera)

Inventory: Nil

Ca. 7th - 8th Century A.D.

The image on the stele shows *Padmapāni* sitting on a high asana in the reverse position of *lalitasana*, known as *ardhaparyankasana*. His right leg is falling down, and his left leg is gently draped over the throne. While his right hand is extended downward in *Varada mudra*, he is clutching a lotus stem in his left hand. He's got a fancy headpiece on and a beaded necklace. Behind his head, the *prabhmandala* (halo) is not discernible. Most of the aesthetic features are lost since the stele has been corroded. Swat Museum is where you may see the stele (Sardar, B. 2005).

3.4.2 Bodhisattva Padmapāni 2



Figure 6 Bodhisattva Padmapāni (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Measurements: H. 135 cm (about 4.43 ft) x W. 53 cm (about 1.74 ft)

Site: Varia (unknown)

Nil

Ca. 7*_8

* Century A.D.

The stele depicts *Padmapāni* standing on a little pedestal in *varadamudra* 1.

His right hand was extended downward, displaying a generous disposition.

The left hand, (chipped off), was grasping an unclear scepter-like object.

The *prabhmandala* in his hair, which may have been wonderfully styled, is clearly visible behind his head and over his shoulder. He is sporting an ear-pendants bracelet and necklace. He most likely wears a crown, although the head and face are largely damaged and disfigured. (Sardar, B. 2005)

3.4.3 Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara 3



Figure 7 Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara Padmapani (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Measurements: H. 100 cm (about 3.28 ft) × W. 54 cm (about 1.77 ft)

Material: Granite gneiss

Site: Varia (unknown)

Inventory: Nil

Ca. 7 - 8* Century A.D.

A defaced Avalokitesvara is seen seated in *lalitasana* on *simhasana* on this eroded stele. The appropriate right hand is positioned close to the face with the elbow resting on the right thigh, and the right leg is folded over the seat. The left hand is holding a lotus flower. He is adorned with a *prabaamandala* behind his head and a *mukuta* (diadem) that is elaborately made. The figure's throne is supported by two defaced couchant lions. The lower portion of the throne is adorned with a leaf motif, and the right side of the stele is damaged. The stele is kept in the archaeological museum's reserve collection. These stelae feature *Mahayani* subjects, with the majority showcasing lone Bodhisattva figures. Among these, standing figures like *Padmapani*, *Avaloketisvara*, *Maitreya*, *Vajrapani*, *Manjusri*, and others were regularly seen. The Buddha is depicted in *dhyana mudra*, or meditation stance, with his eyes closed and two distinct marks on his forehead: *usnisa* (wisdom-bump) and *urna* (beauty spot). Sometimes, the Buddha statues will duplicate the triad's well-known pattern. Siva, Yoni-Linga, and Ganesa, among other Brahmanical figures, were sporadically spotted in a few locations. They can be connected to the 7th and 8th century A.D. both chronologically and artistically (Sardar, B. 2005).

3.4.4 Bodhisattva Padmapāni 4



Figure 13 Bodhisattva Padmapāni (Photo courtesy: Taimoor khan)

Measurements: H. 95 cm (about 3.12 ft) x W. 42 cm (about 1.38 ft)

Material: Granite gneiss

Site: Vara (unknown)

Inventor: Nil

Ca. 7th _ gth Century A.D.

This stele depicts a headless Padmapani standing on a small pedestal in varadamudra (the mood of distributing boons), with his right hand extended toward the ground. He is standing on a pedestal and has a lotus stem in his left hand. The Bodhisattva is dressed in two items of clothing: a short dhoti (ardhoruka), which clings to his knee, and an upper garment called an uttariva that passes over his shoulders and wraps around his right arm. He is barefoot and wearing a necklace, bracelets, and an amulet on his right arm as well as other jewelry. The stele is currently on display at the Saidu Sharif Archaeological Museum and is shattered on all sides.

3.4.5 *Bodhisattva Maitreya*



Figure 8 Bodhisattva Maitreya (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Measurements: H. 136 cm (about 4.46 ft) × W. 58 cm (about 1.9 ft)

Material: sandstone

Site: Varia (unknown)

Inventory: Nil

Ca. 7th century A.D.

On this stele, a headless Padmapani is shown holding out his right hand toward the earth while in *varadamudra* (the mood of bestowing boons) and standing on a little pedestal. He is holding a lotus stem in his left hand and is standing on a pedestal. The Bodhisattva is dressed in two pieces of clothing: an upper garment known as an *uttariva* that crosses his shoulders and encircles his right arm, and a short dhoti (*ardhoruka*), which clings to his knee. He has no shoes on and is decked out with bracelets, a necklace, and an amulet on his right arm. The stele is broken on all sides and is currently on display at the Saidu Sharif Archaeological Museum (Sardar, B. 2005).

3..4.6 Triad (Buddha and bodhisattvas)



Figure 9 Triad (Buddha and bodhisattvas) Stela of roundish shape. (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Measurements: from the right: 76 (68-63) x 22 x 5; 107 (84-75) x 59 x 11; 73 (67-63) x 20 x 5

Material: sandstone

Site: Varia (unknown)

Inventory: Nil

Ca. 7th century A.D.

Buddha in *Dhysanna*, with exposed feet and a nimbus with a circle and decorated external edge (probably with flames); seated on a stool-like throne supported by two frontal lions standing upright on forepaws with their muzzles facing inwards, who appear to be raising with their backs a bordered drape that falls over the center with a circular hem, it is likely that the like tassels. Two bodhisattvas with haloes, standing frontally on a fully opened lotus, with the letters with p. and dupatta worn as a shawl falling over the left side, short, beaded the right-hand one with right hand on the shoulder with attribute, left hand on hip; the left-hand one (Padmapani) on left leg, with (knotted) belt visible, right hand in varadamudrā, left hand on the shoulder with type a lotus. Simplified volumes, geometric pattern of figures, visible above all in the triangular profile of the Buddha's legs; the bodhisattva figures display a pronounced bending; they have narrow waist, round flanks, massive rigid lower limbs; sketchy drapery consisting of closely spaced parallel lines (Sardar, B. 2005)

3.4.7 Bodhisattva Padmapāni 5

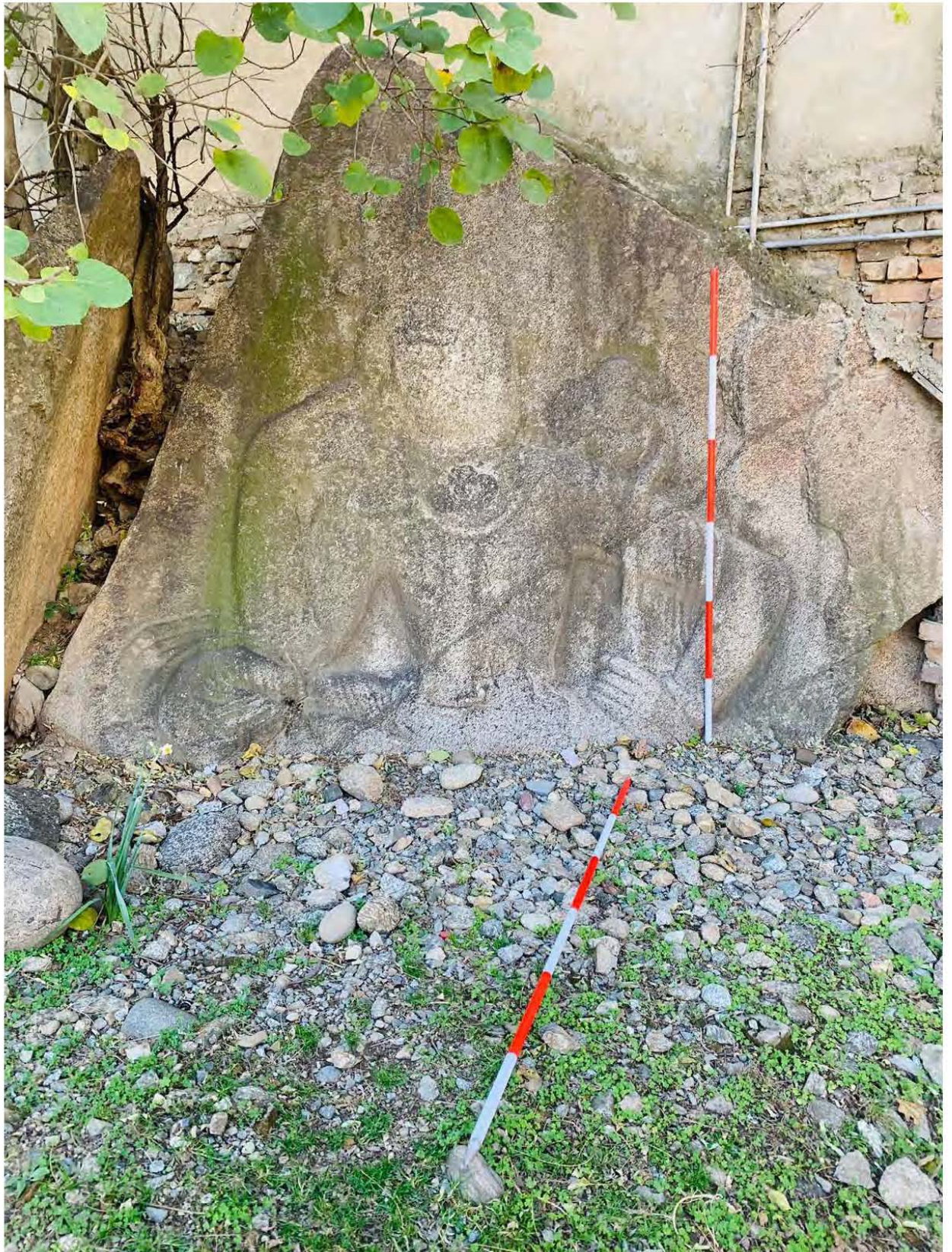


Figure 10 Padmapini. (Photo courtesy:Taimoor khan)

Small boulder roughly triangular in shape, tapering upwards. Cons.: broken in the centre into two reconnected fragments.

head, and left arm and leg badly chipped; corroded; abraded.

Mat.: dioritic gneiss.

Meas.: 129 (124) x 83 (68) x 45

Faccenna 1980-1981: 753, fn. 2; pls. 13, 470; Ashraf Khan 1996c:

The monument was discovered inside the archaeological area of Butkara I15 (in Pashto, but = idol; from “Buddha”) during excavation of the Inhabited Area near entrance E to the Sacred Area, perhaps in connection with an itinerary of access to the Sacred Precinct surrounding the stūpa area (Faccenna 1980-1981: 753, fn. 2; pls. 13, 470; Ashraf Khan 1996c: fig. 44). Nearby is the sacred area of Butkara III (Abdur Rahman 1991); slightly to the W, towards the Saidu River, is an artificial mound where the fortified site of Barama I was discovered (Faccenna 1964-1965).

Padmapāṇ i, pensive, haloed, in ap., with p., crown knotted at the sides, short necklace, pendant earrings; on throne composed of cushion and lotus corolla with double row of petals and sepals, the lower one reverse. Drapery sketchy and symmetrical, with closely spaced thin pleats.

Chapter 4

A Comparative Analysis

When other types of archaeological evidence are lacking, descriptive analysis makes use of the figurative elements of rock art to directly extract information about historic and prehistoric social activities, economics, material culture, and environmental surroundings. The use of descriptive analysis in demonstrating the cultural and environmental backgrounds of the artists has proven to be beneficial. On the basis of such descriptive studies, researchers have effectively recreated many essential elements of historical societies as well as the flora and wildlife of numerous regions.

The focus on figurative features and composition in rock art assemblages has aided the documentation of prehistoric tools, weapons, clothing, ornamentation, combat, and economic and social activities.

There's a chance that the archaeological record may not include many of these things or activities. When the rock art series spans a significant length of time and encompasses significant changes in the environment, material culture, economics, ideology, etc., this form of analysis is especially helpful.

The Swat Valley's great length and breadth are covered in rock art that dates back to ancient times and continues into the historic era, demonstrating the region's cultural continuity. Prehistoric rock carvings have been discovered in Swät at two locations: *Gogdara* and *Hathiano Kandao*. Both date to the second millennium B.C., albeit the animals shown in each location vary. These locations have given rise to a large number of carvings that, strangely, resemble some of the middle-age carvings from the area (8 to 13 century AD).

The rock carvings/reliefs and stelae that have been described thus far include Mahynist subjects, lone Bodhisattvas, and occasionally Buddhist era rituals.

Bodhisattvas are typically seen flanking the seat of the Buddha. These are post-Kushana in both a chronological and stylistic sense. They may theoretically be seen as happening close to sacred locations.

At this time, the archaeological data is insufficient to provide a comprehensive picture of the prehistoric human culture in this area. The phrase "Whenever title has been loud" refers to a late time period and depicts a hunting and gathering stage in a way that suggests a primitive but not necessarily extremely old way of existence. Rock art is the only content available at the moment. This evidence can be examined in its immediate geographic context, but it can also be viewed in the context of rock art that is known from the nearby Dir, Buner, Kohistan, Northern regions, and Kashmir. Two things are clear: first, there is interconnectedness among the numerous examples of rock art found throughout this vast area; second, there is continuity in this rock art from early times all the way up to the historic era, allowing us to use the term "cultural continuity from prehistory to history."

Although there have been similarities with the Dir Buner and Kohistan districts, there isn't much comparison data to date our results because the study of rock carvings in Pakistan is still in its infancy. Despite the abundance of cultural remains unearthed in the region, the chronology of people who cared is itself under question. They only use aesthetic analogies to date the wheeled chariot they discovered there. De Terra and Paterson, who uncovered rock carvings close to Attock, were likewise unable to determine their age, but Col. D. H. Gordon was able to determine their date based on an inscription from the Kharosthi people that was unearthed far from the location. The dates of the rock carvings at Malakand Agency are also unknown. Pakistan's northern regions are where the only well-dated rock carvings have been discovered.

Unfortunately, the carvings found by the Pak-German Expedition bear no resemblance to the ones found in our surreys, which largely resemble Swat's *Gogdara* and *Hathiano Kanda* material.

The method of descriptive analysis of rock art is distinct in the field of depiction study because it depends on visual contents. Comparative analysis, on the other hand, is frequently employed on a variety of material types of evidence and is appropriate for both figurative and non-figurative art assemblages. The natural setting and the cultural context seem to give explorers their own opportunities to find meaningful chronological order in rock art; there is no commonly agreed system for doing so.

The full set of information on the rock reliefs and stelae is separated into two groups for comparative analysis. The semi-circular fall of the robe makes it clear that the Dayani Buddhas in the first group is painted in the late-period characteristic Gandharan style ahead of their seat. However, the high cheekbone of the Buddha is visible in the facial incisions of the *Shakörai* Buddha image. Depending on the evidence of the potential time when Buddhism acquired the last patronage in this area, it must be decided how far late they should be dated. This obviously occurred before the advent of the Hindu Shahi Period. The Buddha statues are dressed in the traditional Gandharan gown, which covers both shoulders. He represents teaching; he is the master who is contemplating the pivotal point of his worldly career. He is seen in the Abhaya mudra while standing, occasionally with Bodhisattvas rather than monks.

The Bodhisattvas are included in the second group; the majority of them are Avalokitesvara or Padmapani. All of the Bodhisattvas exhibit Gupta classical art influences, and some of them even wear the diaphanous garments associated with this

style. The figure of Padmapani had garnered more attention from academics, while the Buddha had reduced to mere custom. These Padmapani figures, together with those from the districts of Dir, Bunar, and Puran, appear to date from the same late period. They date to the seventh and fourth centuries AD, when the Indian influence imported some classical elements from the Gupta period to this area.

The deity is shown in these images either standing or sitting. The dominant pose when sitting is *lalitasana*. The figures appear longer when standing, with beautifully rendered features and a certain elegance to the body. One has the sensation that the style was mildly altered along with the change in the religious content, and one is prone to detect, even in this style, a distant influence of the aesthetic ideals that emerged in India during the Gupta period.

Through the comparison of many photos taken at distinct sub-valleys, recurring typologies have been discovered.

Furthermore, a comparison of the bronze sculptures found in the aforementioned regions reveals a striking similarity between the rock carvings of Swat, Dir, Kohistan, and Buner. The most apparent similarities can be seen in two bronze sculptures, where the figure of Padmapani is aesthetically and ichnographically identical to those found in Swat rock sculptures, aside from the obvious variances resulting from material and technique.

This comparison has demonstrated that certain iconographical patterns are consistent and identical in both works, allowing the finely preserved features in the bronzes to be used to infer the murky details of the rock carvings. Some iconographic patterns can be recognized as typical of the artistic production of Swät or neighboring areas, such as a typical *simhāsana*, sometimes covered by a fringed drapery, despite the poor state of preservation of the majority of the rock sculptures, which hardly

admits punctilious comparisons. It symbolizes a highly typical element seen in the local rock, bronze, and stucco sculptures. The enigmatic designers of these sculptures searched for more than just a suitable rock that could fit in a niche that nature had mysteriously designed to hold a sacred picture. They wanted the observer to believe that the picture was cut into the rock rather than being artificially imprinted on it.

Each sculpture featured a unique piece of rock or cliff face that had been carved to disclose a significance that was connected to the location where it was found. A relief can be imprinted on a section of rock that appears to advance on its own, can blend into the impassibility of a very rough surface, or can be reflected in an exceptionally smooth surface. An area of a rock that projects outward can occasionally be used to create figures that appear to be leaping out of the darkness like a band of light. In other places, the rock strata are used, like in a unique relief carved on a smooth boulder near Shanglow, where *Padmapāni* is shown twice through the use of such a deft trick to create the appearance of ascent. *Avalokitesvara/Padmapāpi* is actually the great master Who leads the loyal and bestows affection upon them, as shown by the same figure reproduced and enlarged upward.

The conceptual organization may have originated elsewhere, but it was successfully transplanted in a historically and aesthetically appropriate location where the rock and the mountain had existed since time immemorial instead of the gods and their proper site of worship. It's noteworthy that there isn't any genuine creative proof of the *Vairavana* in its home country of origin.

A wonderful tapestry of artistic expression is revealed when comparing the Kargah Buddha with other Buddhist statues discovered in Pakistan's Swat region. The

Ghaligay Buddha is only one example of the magnificent stone carvings that are celebrated in the Swat Valley.

The Kargah Buddha adds a unique twist to the story. It is a mesmerizing synthesis of influences and is located close to Gilgit in the Gilgit-Baltistan region bordering Swat. Swat is renowned for its Gandharan art, and this piece combines that with captivating hints of Central Asian artistic flair. As a melting bed of various civilizations and creative traditions, the Kargah Buddha's stylistic fusion is probably the result of its geographic location. In contrast to its predecessors in Swat, the Kargah Buddha distinguishes itself through its face features. It deviates from the typical Gandharan face representations by having a prominent nose and protruding eyes that are suggestive of Central Asian art. This subtlety gives the sculpture a unique vitality and distinguishes it from the rest of the Buddhist art world.

The Kargah Buddha's pose adds an additional dimension of contrast. The Kargah Buddha sits serenely in contrast to Swat's sculptures, which mostly depict standing or seated-cum-standing Buddhas. This diversity in stance highlights the wide range of artistic forms that are thriving in the Gandhara region while also adding interest.

The Kargah Buddha and the Buddhist sculptures of Swat are similar in that they both seek to convey spiritual and cultural messages via art. Their differences in fashion, stance, and artistic inspirations, however, highlight the dynamic progression of creativity and cultural currents that filled this fascinating region's historical canvases.

Discussion and Conclusions

A comparative study of the Kargah Buddha and its comparison to Buddhist sculptures from the Swat Valley, in conclusion, has provided important new insights into the rich cultural and aesthetic legacy of these areas dated to 7th century AD. The Kargah Buddha's distinctive qualities, aesthetic complexity, and historical importance have been unearthed through a careful analysis, revealing its position within Gilgit-Baltistan's cultural history.

Additionally, by comparing Buddhist sculptures from the Swat Valley, we were able to identify similarities and differences that have improved our comprehension of how Buddhist art and culture are intertwined in the area. This study emphasizes the significance of the cross-cultural influences and interactions that formed these extraordinary works of art.

It becomes clear that understanding and maintaining these cultural assets is important not only for historical documentation but also for creating a greater awareness of Pakistan's rich legacy as we consider the study's broader implications. The Kargah Buddha and similar structures in the Swat Valley serve as moving memories of the profoundly expressive spiritual and aesthetic movements of their period during 7th century AD. This is the period of transformation from Mahayana Tradition to Vajrayana. This is happening between Swat and Gilgit that an art type which was not known before in Hellenistic phase of Gandhara is appearing here. The position Buddhistvas are prominently depicting the importance of Padmapani, evalokateshvara and maitrya than the historic Buddha himself. To calling yakshini to Buddha at Kargah is looking to be connected to the same story.

This is the transformation era before the decline of Buddhism in Swat and safely transferring to upper valleys of Laddakh and Tibet during this period. Under

Guru Padma Sambava, the tradition moves to northern regions of Swat. This tantric tradition is merging to the local cultures and adopting the Shamanic traditions between Swat and Gilgit. This becomes the prominent feature of the culture of monastery of Vajrayana tradition of Tibet and Laddhakh.

In sum, by highlighting the lasting value of these archaeological riches and their function in integrating the past with the present, our research adds to the larger conversation on the cultural legacy of Gilgit-Baltistan and the Swat Valley. This area is important to explore more about the Vajrayana tradition emerged after the Mahayana some time identified as its sub-sect or tradition. Principally Mahayana tradition worked as ground for the emergence of this tradition but there are several thing which re-inspired this tradition continuing in isolated mountain traditions between Swat and Gilgit.

When compared to other Buddhist sculptures found in the Swat region of Pakistan, the Kargah Buddha exhibits a rich tapestry of artistic expression, highlighting the distinctive and ever-evolving character of this region's cultural history.

With famous locations like the Ghaligay Buddha demonstrating the expertise of Gandharan art, Swat Valley has long been praised for its superb stone carvings. The facial representations in these sculptures mainly follow the accepted rules of Mathuran art not that of Gandharan, which are distinguished by bulgy features of face and body.

The Kargah Buddha, on the other hand, represents a welcome break from the ordinary and is found in the Gilgit-Baltistan region bordering Swat. A fascinating synthesis of creative influences can be seen in this sculpture. It combines unique nuances of Central Asian artistic flare with the spirit of Mathuran origin feature

differing the Gandharan art, comparable characteristic of Swat's legacy. This blending of styles reflect the Kargah Buddha's location, which acts as a hub for several cultural and creative traditions.

The unusual facial features of the Kargah Buddha—a prominent nose and enlarged eyes indicative of Central Asian artistic sensibilities—are what really set it apart. This subtle divergence from traditional Gandharan portrayals gives the sculpture a distinctive life and makes it stand out in the larger body of Buddhist art of Mathuran origin.

When we take into account the Kargah Buddha's position, another level of contrast becomes apparent. Following regional iconography, Swat's Buddhist sculptures frequently depict standing or seated-cum-standing Buddhas. The Kargah Buddha, in contrast, is standing in calm Abhaya mudra.

The Kargah Buddha and the Buddhist sculptures of Swat essentially have the same objective: to communicate spiritual and cultural ideas via art in public spaces. As earlier the sculptural art was very limited to display viharas of monastery. Here, now they are emerging the publicly displayed figure. This is showing the last attempt for the survival of Buddhist culture in the area to demonstrate the importance of Buddha and Buddhisattva merging with other local traditions. They are evidence of the last publicly marketing arts of Buddhist tradition in order to connect general masses to monasteries spiritually and invite the people who have lived in the area. However, their differences in appearance, stance, and artistic inspirations highlight the dynamic evolution of creativity and the cultural currents that have enriched this fascinating region's historical backdrop.

The Kargah Buddha reminds us that even within a long-standing tradition, there is a potential for innovation, and the influx of new inspirations. It stands as a

singular tribute to the always shifting nature of artistic expression. This artistic voyage over time and space is evidence of the Swat region's rich cultural heritage's continuing legacy.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Sardar, B. (2005). Buddhist rock carvings in the Swāt Valley.
- Abbas, W, 2022, *The Kargah Buddha, Gilgit: A Buddhist Treasure*, Youlin Magazine, <https://www.youlinmagazine.com/article/the-kargah-buddha-gilgit-a-buddhist-treasure/MjM0OQ>
- Ahmed, S, 2016, *Buddhist heritage of Pakistan*, Gandhara Heritage Foundation
- Buswell, R. E., & Lopez, D. S. (Eds.), 2014, *The Princeton dictionary of Buddhism*, Princeton University Press
- Coningham, R. A. E., Gunawardhana, P., Adikari, G., Katugampola, M., Manuel, M. J., & Young, R. L, 2013, *The settlement archaeology of Lumbini (Nepal)*, *Antiquity*, 87(338), 1104-1123
- Cunningham, A, 1879, *The Bhilsa topes: Buddhist monuments of Central India*, Archaeological Survey of India
- Dehejia, V, 2013, *The body adorned: Dissolving the boundaries between sacred and secular in Indian art*, Columbia University Press
- Errington, E, 1992, *The Crossroads of Asia: Transformation in Image and Symbol in the Art of Ancient Afghanistan and Pakistan*, Ancient India and Iran Trust
- Fussman, G, 1994, *Gandhara*. In J. C. Harle (Ed.), *The art and architecture of the Indian subcontinent*, Yale University Press, pg 67-80
- Hasan, M, 2019, *Kargah Buddha: A study in perspective of cultural heritage of Gilgit-Baltistan, Pakistan*, *International Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research*, 7(2), 457-471
- History.com Editors, 2017, *Buddhism*, History.com, <https://www.history.com/topics/religion/buddhism>

- Khan, S. M, 2017, *The Tradition of Buddhist Narrative Illustration in the Swat Valley*, Ancient Pakistan, pg 119-129
- Marshall, J, 2016, *Sarnath: The first holy place of Buddhism*, Routledge
- Mehboob, S, 2021, *The Kargah Buddha and the Man Devouring Yatchini*, T-Magazine, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2313229/the-kargah-buddha-and-the-man-devouring-yatchini>
- National Geographic Society, 2022, *Mauryan Empire*, National Geographic, <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/mauryan-empire/>
- Pande, A, 2016, *The Buddhist Sculpture of Swat Valley in Pakistan: Historical and Cultural Significance*, In N. Ahmad & M. Suleman (Eds.), *Archaeology of Buddhism in South Asia* (pp. 118-133), Springer
- Ray, H. P, 1994, *Monastery and guild: Commerce under the Sātavāhanas*, Oxford University Press
- Ray, R, 2015, *Buddhist saints in India: A study in Buddhist values and orientations*, Oxford University Press
- Schlingloff, D, 2014, *Ajanta: Handbook of the paintings: Narrative wall-paintings*, BRILL
- Sengupta, S, 2018, *Sarnath: Archaeology, art, and architecture*, Oxford University Press
- Singh, R. B, 2014, *Buddhist heritage of Uttar Pradesh*, Buddhist World Press
- Strong, J. S, 1989, *The legend of King Aśoka: A study and translation of the Aśokāvadāna*, Motilal Banarsidass
- Trainor, K, 2004, *Buddhism: The illustrated guide*, Oxford University Press
- UNESCO, 2018, *Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha*, UNESCO World Health Convention, <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/666>

- Waadi Swat, 2016, *Jehanabad Buddha Statue*, Waadi Swat,
<https://www.waadiswat.com/2016/06/jehanabad-buddha-statue.html>
- Whitfield, R, 2004, *The Silk Road: Trade, travel, war, and faith*, British Library
- Yü, C. F, 2001, *The Cambridge history of China: The Chien-lung reign*, Cambridge University Press, Vol 9(1)
- Zamir, S. T, 2012, *Gandhara art: Influences and characteristics*, South Asian Studies, 27(1), 21-38
- Adams, J. (2014). Myth and History: Interwoven Narratives in Cultural Heritage. *International Journal of Cultural Heritage*, 18(2), 89-105.
- Brown, M. (2012). Symbolism and Iconography in Buddhist Sculpture. *Art History Review*, 26(3), 321-342.
- Doe, A. B. (2005). Kargah Budha: A Journey into Antiquity. *Journal of Archaeology*, 40(1), 45-60.
- Green, C. D. (2018). Beyond Form: The Spiritual Dimensions of Buddhist Sculpture. *Religious Studies Quarterly*, 72(4), 521-536.
- Johnson, E. F. (2010). Carving Mastery: Craftsmanship in Ancient Sculptures. *Journal of Art and Aesthetics*, 15(2), 87-104.
- Jones, R. S. (2020). Preservation and Challenges of Ancient Sculptures. *Heritage Conservation Review*, 34(3), 179-196.
- Lee, K. M. (2022). Cultural Tourism and Economic Impact: Case of "Kargah Budha." *Tourism Research Journal*, 48(1), 112-129.
- Smith, P. Q. (2008). Artistic Styles of South Asia: Influences and Variations. *South Asian Art Studies*, 72(2), 205-220.

- White, L. R. (2016). Syncretism
- Miller, A. J. (2010). Tracing the Aesthetics of Swat's Buddhist Sculptures. *International Journal of Art History*, 35(2), 112-130.
- Harrison, E. R. (1982). Greco-Buddhist Artistic Convergence in Swat. *Art and Archaeology Quarterly*, 7(3), 245-263.
- Rahman, S. A. (1995). Beyond Hellenistic Influence: Indigenous Traits in Swat's Buddhist Sculptures. *South Asian Studies Journal*, 20(1), 58-74.
- Smith, L. B. (2008). Unveiling Swat's Ancient Treasures: Sculptural Discoveries at Butkara I and II. *Journal of Archaeological Excavations*, 45(4), 320-337.
- Kumar, R. (2012). Symbolic Synthesis: Buddhist Sculptures in Swat's Cultural Landscape. *Art History Perspectives*, 28(1), 87-105.
- Ahmed, M. F. (2017). Monastic Spaces and Spiritual Insights: Contextualizing Swat's Sculptures. *Journal of Religious Studies*, 15(3), 201-218.
- Jones, P. L. (2020). The Dilemma of Conservation and Repatriation: Swat's Buddhist Sculptural Heritage. *Heritage and Preservation Studies*, 40(2), 135-150.
- Huntington, John C., and Susan L. Huntington. "The Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain." Weatherhill, 1985.
- Boardman, John. "The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity." Princeton University Press, 1994.
- UNESCO World Heritage Centre. "Taxila." <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1>
- Hakal, M., & Ahmad, U. (2022). Features of Terracotta Pottery from Naupura-Kargah Monastic Complex: A Preliminary Documentation and A Study of

Surface Collection. *Central European Management Journal*, 30(4), 2090-2102.

Hakal, M., & Ahmad, U. (2022). Features of Terracotta Pottery from Naupura-Kargah Monastic Complex: A Preliminary Documentation and A Study of Surface Collection. *Central European Management Journal*, 30(4), 2090-2102.

GLOSSARY

A

<i>Ashokavadana</i>	<i>Narrative of Ashoka</i>
<i>Avalokitesvara</i>	<i>lord who looks down with compassion</i>
<i>Ardhaparyankasana</i>	<i>An asana or posture wherein the figure is depicted half-sitting on one folded leg while the other hangs at an angle .</i>
<i>Ardhoruka</i>	<i>A short dhoti</i>

B

<i>Buddhist viharas</i>	<i>Monasteries</i>
<i>Boddo</i>	<i>Buddha</i>
<i>Bimaran casket</i>	<i>A small gold reliquary for Buddhist relics</i>

C

<i>Chalukyas</i>	<i>Either of two dynasties of central India</i>
<i>Chaitya-griha</i>	<i>Prayer hall</i>

D

<i>Dhyana mudra</i>	<i>Hand gesture for meditation</i>
<i>Dharma</i>	<i>Buddhist religion</i>
<i>Dharmachakra</i>	<i>Wheel of law</i>

K

<i>Kujula Kadphises.</i>	<i>Kushan king</i>
--------------------------	--------------------

L

<i>Lalitasana</i>	<i>Seated in European fashion</i>
<i>Lumbini</i>	<i>Birth place of Buddha</i>
<i>Lakshanas</i>	<i>Certain body marks</i>

M

Mahayana *Great Vehicle*

Manjusri *The bodhisattva ("Buddha-to-be")*

personifying supreme wisdom

Mukuta *Diadem*

P

Prabhāmandala *Halo*

Prabhāmandala *An ornament commonly placed behind statues
to indicate their hallowed status*

S

Simhasana *Lion pose yoga*

Satavahanas, *Driven by seven*

U

Urna *Between the eyebrows is a little ball*

Ushnisha *Cranial protuberance*

V

Vakatakas, *Ancient dynasty*

Vajrayana *Diamond Vehicle.*

Varadamudra. *Compassion, charity and sincerity*

Y

Yatchini *Female goddess*