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Queen Maya & Yasodhara in Gandhara Buddhist Sculptures

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Abstract. The aim of the research was to study at the female representation in Buddhist Gandhara's sculptural history. It is a genuine revelation that the subject matter of Gandhara sculptures is the Buddhah life story, as depicted in the stone panels. We began to collect Queen Maya and Yashodhara images from Peshawar, Texila and Mardan Museum. As a result, the Gandharan perception of the female was complex: female images frequently signified prosperity, fertility, and nurture, but they also embodied seduction, disease, and death at other times. The Gandharan woman is dichotomous and replete with vigour, a synthesis of various religious, aesthetic, and political ideas. This research will contribute to the existing information about female portrayal in Buddhist and South Asian art forms, thereby advancing the work on women's roles and representation in the South Asian region.

Keyword's: Queen Maya, Yasodhara, Buddha, Gandhara Sculptures, woman

Introduction

Gandhara sculptures is almost exclusively religious art devoted to Buddhism (Miyaji, 1984: 220). The Buddhist stupas built in large numbers in the Peshawar basin, Swat and Taxila attest to the passionate Buddhist faith of the time. Gandhara played an important role in spreading to Afghanistan and beyond to Central Asia (Zwalf, 1996: 14).

The visual display of the Buddha's birth follows a very specific style that has been imitated indefinitely since its establishment around two thousand years ago. It refers to a set of highly specific elements that are always arranged within a specific composition. The model is characterized from the outset, leaving no space for basic variations and reflecting an underpinning clear and effective purpose though the fulfillment. Máyá, who is sitting under a tree, as well as the kid who emerges from her right side are obviously the major features. Other elements and characters can be scattered around this main scene, eventually referring to events during birth, but they will not attract our attention here. Let us simply remark that the characters and items adopted changed overtime and are linked to geographical borders. Within the geographical framework, the Northwest region appears to have played a significant role, as it was most likely there that the iconographic type of the birth was created at the dawn of our era; however, a proper chronological setting for the development of this image within this region (as well as for most images of the Buddha's life events) has yet to be established. At a future stage, representations of the birth can be found in the Andhra Valley. The birth is featured within a sequence of other scenes all carved on a single slab in Andhra Pradesh's reliefs, as seen below, but those from Gandhára are eventually carved on separate panels. It's important to note that Gandhara Art's content is generally focused on Buddha's 's life, as well as the connected tales, in which diverse figural depictions may be seen, producing artistic harmony in the overall figural composition. Several mythology characteristics in one of the other drawings issues closely associated to the theme of Gandhara Art were created during this

approach. In this light, it's also worth noting that the future Buddha Maithreya frequently appears with him. Maithreya's hairstyles and Kamandalu (water flask) separate him. Maithreya, like Buddha, is supposed to preach the law in the future. There are several Bodhisattva images that do not appear in the early Buddhist art school.

As previously indicated, the Buddha's life story, individual images, previous birth stories (jatakas), as well as depictions of the future Buddha were the main focus of Buddhahist art. The sculptures of the historic Buddha are most significant among them. His miracles, and all episodes from his birth to death, all of which were beautifully and liberally carved (Linrothe, 1993: 241-56). Local devoted artists, influenced by the Buddha's personality, used contacts, motifs, and technology from the Greeks, Romans, Persians, and Central Asians (Wheeler, 1962: 25-8). All of these Gandharan panels depict stories from the Buddha's life, The Jataka stories are famous in old Sanchi and Bharhut art, but the Mahayana text created during the period of Kanishka-I is the most influential in Gandharan art. in fact, the sculptors of Gandhara translated the Buddhist Mahayana religious text into details in stone, stucco, terracotta and bronze; making these images more romantic and providing a base that facilitated expansion of buddhism into the far East along the Great Silk Road through the travels of pilgrims and traders (Khan, 1998: 57).

The aim of this paper is to see how the prototype of the woman under the Buddha life has been retained for illustrating certain concepts pertaining to the representation of the Buddha's life. It is not mainly concerned with a study of the iconography of the bridal and marriage scene and its development, nor with an iconological approach allowing a better understanding of it. In this context, we will look at the woman's distinctive attitude and how it has been incorporated into the iconography of the source of wealth.

Queen Maya

Máyá is shown as a "woman under the tree" in pre- or an-iconic Indian art, particularly in the early ex amples from Kaushambi. The appearance of her picture in the birth scene represents the male monastery's assimilation of a power of creation that was originally possessed by female divine beings. This image of the fortunate fruitful female led to the practical removal of any other ornamental female figures on the walls of monasteries in Gandhára, whereas in India proper, fertility iconography in the Kuáa and Gupta periods maintained a key position in architectural adornment. 52 What was then seen in Gandhára was a major shift in fertility imagery, with the emergence of dionysiac scenarios in which male characters took precedence over their female companions.

Figure 1. Dream of Queen, Acc. No. 2722

This panel shows the dream of Queen Maya, sleeping on a couch in the place, while female attendants are observed the couch. All of these figure are depicted under round arches supported by indo- Corinthian. A female figure is lying on the ground resting on a pillow, while a female guard is shown standing and holding staff in her right hand with her left resting on her hip. The personal name of Buddha, the Enlightened' was Siddhartha. But he was better known by his *gotra* name Gauthama, Befor his birth, his mother, Mahamaya or Maya had a dream in which she dreamt a white elephant entering her body.

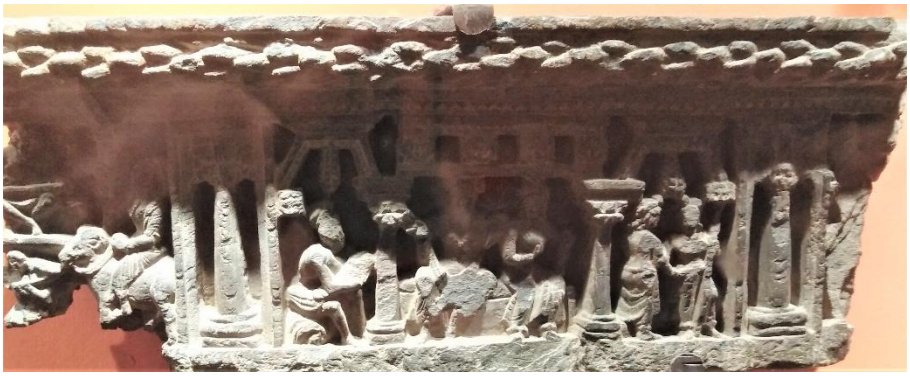

Figure 2. Horoscope of the Child, King and the Queen on a couch, with the astrologer making a horosecope of the child, Acc. No. 2737

This scenes are shown king Sududhana and his queen Maya seated side by side on a throne under a flat roof supported with brackets resting on two damaged Corinthian pilasters. Bejeweled queen Maya is wearing an elaborate headdress and holding in lout's flowe in her hand, while her right hand is placed on her chest. She is turned to her left, looking to her right at the astrologer Rishi Asita (Acc. No.: PM_02737).

Figure 3. Siddhartha Birth Seene, Queen Maya is Holding branch of tree, Acc. No. 2726

The birth of Siddhartha is depicted in this panel, which took place in the Lumbini garden. In the Centre of the scene, Queen Maya stands. Her lower half is covered, while her upper half

is exposed. Her right hand is raised and resting on Mays sister's right shoulder, while her left hand rests on a Sal tree limb.

Figure 4. Birth Scene of Siddhartha, Queen Maya holding of Sal tree, Acc. No. 2727

This is a long rectangular penal showing the birth of the infant baby Siddhartha. To the right of the panel a worshiper is depicted in *Namashkara Mudhra,* wearing a high turbaned headdress, cloth in local style. The figure of Queen Maya is the panel's most significant aspect. She is standing under the canopy of a jumbo tree, holding a branch. That represents the Lumbini garden. Her left hand is resting on Mahaprajaprati, her sister who is assisting her with the delivery. Drapery covers her left side of the body, but her chest and right hip remain exposed. She also sports a hat, earrings, anklets, and a long flexible necklace. Siddhartha, the infant, mysteriously emerges from his mother's right side (Acc. No: PM_02727, Source: Wali Swat 1935).

Figure 5. Batthing of the Child, Indra and Brahma, pouring water on the baby, Acc. No. PM. 2728

This panel represents the newly born kid Siddhartha's first bath, which is depicted under an umbrella. Two kneeling ladies hold the infant baby, while Indra and Brahma pour water from two globular jars held in their right hand over him. Indra, on the other hand, wields a thunderbolt. Both gods wear headdresses made of borate (Acc. No: PM_02728, Gudes Mess Mardan, 1942).

Yasodhara

At the age of sixteen Gautama won in marriage his beautiful cousin, Yasodhara (Thakur, 1996: 24). The first seen associated with this marriage shows the introduction of bride. The

marriage scene depicts the couple walking around the fire and then returning to the palace. After the marriage ceremony, figures in the panels are mostly shown in merry-making attitudes such as drinking, dancing and singing to celebrate the marriage event (Ward, 1988).

Figure 6. Marriage Ceremony, Siddhartha and Yashodhra circling around the marriage fir, Acc. No. 2748

The couple is shown in the place in this relief fragment. Siddhartha and his wife Yasudhara are holding hands to complete the traditional rounds of the holy fire. Siddhartha is wearing an ornamented headdress, a necklace, upper and lower garments, with his right shoulder uncovered. Yasudhara father, in the background behind the couple. A figure holding her garment stands beside the pilaster to the right of the couple and behind Yasudharta.

Figure 7 , Palace and street Scene. Siddhartha and his wife Yashodhara in the palace, Acc. No. 2751

This panel consists of two pieces that depict three scence separated by two square- shaped Crponthian pilaster with moulded bases. From right to left, Siddhartha is shown on horseback having a richly embellished headress and armaments. The head of the horse is missing. The second depicts four figure . at the right of the scean near the Corinthian pilaster, a figure wearing long draped robes, probably female,behind the riding Siddhartha , on the left side of the scene, a femal figure holds a shield in her left hand. She has long hair and wears a long draped dress tied at the waist with a belt.Siddhartha wears an elaborate headdress, pandants, neckleces, and bracelate.and he facing his wife Yasudhara. She is depicted frontly and sitting next to him. With draped garments covering her full budy. She and Siddhartha holds a branch of lotuses in the hand.

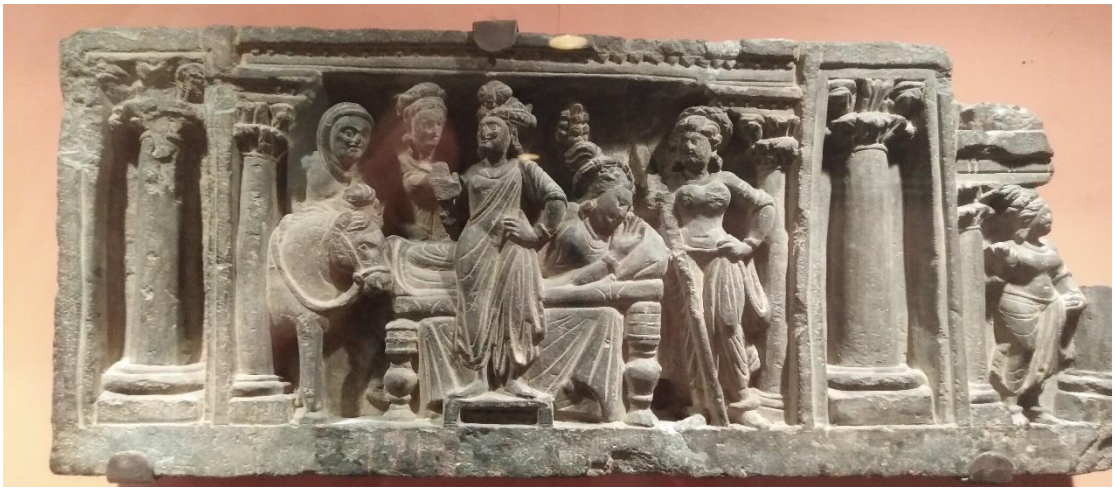

Figure 8. The great Renunciation, Acc. No. PM-02753

This elegantly panel represents an important event.On the left side of the panel the secne is conframed by Indo- Corinthian pilasters, while another scene to the right of the relief is broken. This scene show Yasudhara on a bed guarded by a Yavani, Bodhisattva Siddhatha has stepped down on the stool, behaind him, his wife. Her right hand rest beneath her face on the pillow.

Conclusion

With the introduction of dionysiac themes in the imagery of fecundity, the representations of the Maya and Yashodhara have been an auspicious image of creativity, abundance, and a favourable vision of the female channelling chthonic abilities since their initial portrayal. The image of a birth that is viewed has more information than just being a sign of birth. This figure was intended to be placed at a point of passage in the architectural decoration, both practically and conceptually. The birth scene is in the bottom half of the image, thus at the threshold between the material and spiritual levels, and this value is kept up to the later time with the position of the birth scene in the lower part of the image, thus at the threshold between the sacred and profane spaces. The scenario was included by Buddhist community artists as the image of the birth before being utilised to illustrate the moment when the Buddha began his last existence. And also Gandhara art is strongly connected with the origin of the Buddha image, and the remarkable development of Buddhist iconography. In Gandharah sculpture made a substantial contribution to later Buddist art. In the art of Gandhara, Queen Maya and Yasudhara are treated with great reverence, consistency, and care. The study's premise, however, would be incomplete without mentioning the earthy and affluent Gandharan women who funded these exquisite statues, which have been preserved and provide as concrete evidence of Buddhist art's spread in the first few centuries of the Common Era.

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