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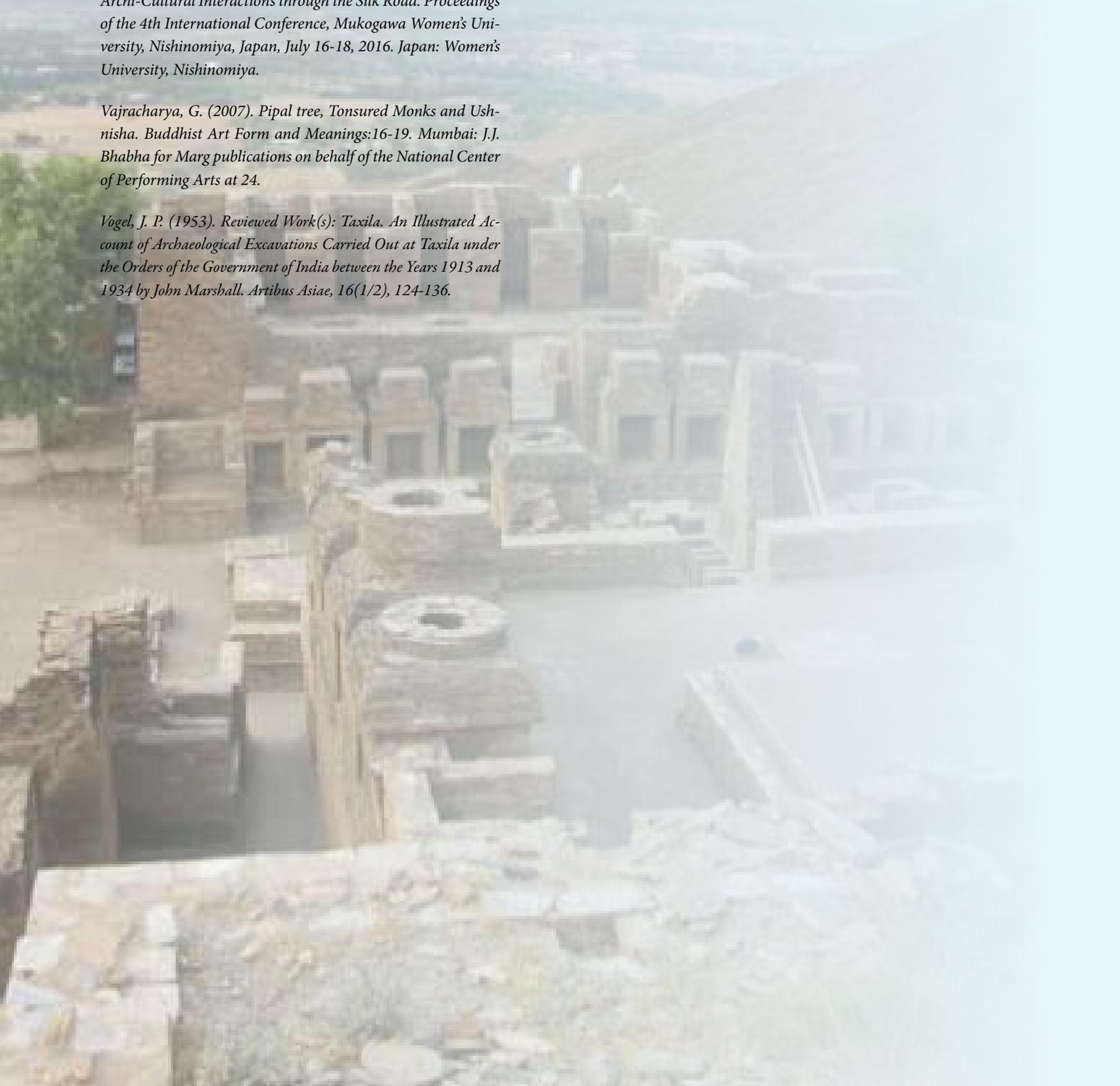
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Themes, images and symbols depicted on Turbans in Gandhara Art: An Appraisal

Samia Anwar

Abstract

Except for shaved-headed monks variety of characters in Gandhara art are seen wearing various headdresses like wreaths, turbans, fillets, diadems, crowns, caps, helmets, etc. Turbans secured a prime place in Gandhara art due to their antiquity, social, religious, and mystic status in ancient India and Gandhara. Along with protecting the head from the scorching heat of the Sun, it was an icon of social and religious superiority. As in Jataka stories Sakyamuni is mentioned as a princely figure with a turbaned head (Coomaraswamy 1928, pp. 829-30).

Along with aesthetic aspirations introduction of themes and motifs complemented the spiritual meaning of turbans in Gandhara. These symbols were metaphors of gods, deities, and their attributes as a stupa portray Buddha. Various symbols (zoomorphic, avian, floral, numeral, and geometric) culled from everyday life, religion and myths were incorporated tastefully in turbans to instigate celestials to shower their blessing in form of material jackpots and spiritual accomplishments. The purpose of this paper is to shed light on the apotropaic and bulwark (warding off ailments and ghoulies, bring in prosperity) goal of connoting emblems, themes, and legends on utilitarian belongings: in this case turbans.

Introduction

Turban was a headdress of aristocrats and was worn on religious ceremonies like Vajapeya and Rajasuya in ancient India (Coomaraswamy 1928, pp. 818, 830). Investiture with the turban was indicative of successful completion of Vedic course by brahmin students (Yusuf Ali 1901, p.77). Similarly, in Buddhism, it was associated with the compilation of Jataka stories. A passage of Nidanakatha notices by Sivaramurti describes how Sakra tied the usnisa on the head of Prince Siddhartha. 'The large jewel is placed centrally and keeping in position the cloth is then wrapped around the head. There are many veshtanas or circuits of the cloth over the head, and the ray of jewel gives multiple appearances to the folds' (Fabregues 1991, p.288). Turbans portrayed in the Buddhist art of India are copied by Gandhara afterward, where they emerged as an amalgam of fabric, gems, and jewels (Tissot 1985).

Types of Turbans

In Gandhara, turbans are worn by all and sundry like bodhisattvas, kings, and commoners. But aristocrats and the religious class have worn ornamented turbans whereas laymen are seen in simple ones. Turbans were in vogue in Gandhara during the epoch of Buddhism in the region and remain in fashion until its disdain (Schmidt 1990).

Basic turbans

Earlier turbans are styled either by intersecting three self-restraining bands of cloth at the center front of a skull cap or positioned with a jewel in a bezel. We have an example from the simple style of turban from Butkara I, where two men under an arch are adorned with skull cap turban made up of self-restraining bands intersecting at center front with a coronet set up in folds there and bodhisattva standing under an arch from Ramora is bedecked with similar turban (Pl. 1, 2).

Ornate Turbans

In more ornamented types intersecting bands of cloth make panniers on either side of turban, embellished with jewels, gems, and beads. In some cases, crumpled and plain sashes of turban are tither inside knots and at times remaining fabric flaps on sides. Over time crests turned out to be more ornamented of turbans (Schmidt 2008, p.3). Modifications appeared in turbans as in first phase crest contains a faceted or a simple jewel, adjusted on plainly wrapped bands of textiles or lotuses, a stupa, in the second phase a bird clutches an abductee or abductees, in third stage crest shows lion heads spewing strings of pearls, next stage portrays seated Buddha (Schmidt 2008, P.44). The variant of jewels, precious stones, and mythical characters like putti, centaurs, and bifid tritons, kirtimukha, and winged dragon-like animals adorn the sides of the turban.

The ornaments on the Fan of Turban

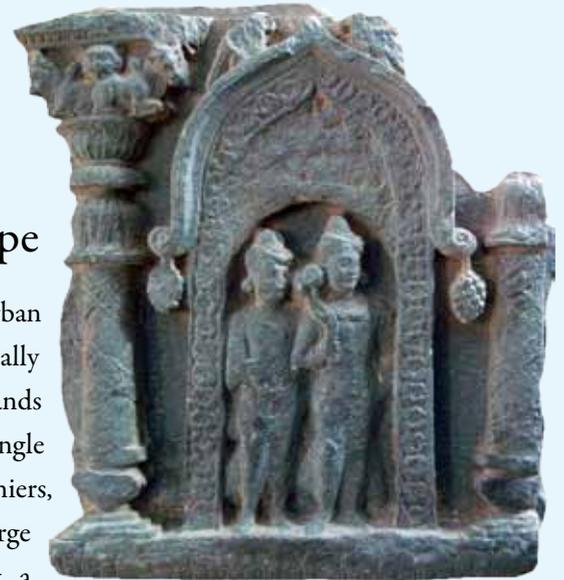
According to Schmidt an image on a turban was indicative of its nature and function, turbans with images and themes evoke celestial or were indicative

of an episode from jatakas (Schmidt 1990, p. 138). Here are motifs and themes portrayed on the cockade of a turban.

1. Small Stupa, cone or gourd shape

The fabric of turban wrapped symmetrically or self-restraining bands of fabric forming single or double panniers, having small or large cockade supporting a

small stupa, cone or gourd shape ornament resting usually on a dais of various types. As in the case of royal donors from Butkara, I stupa like ornament is incised horizontally and vertically (Pl. 3, 4). Fabregues quotes Saunders that a stupa in a turban represents Buddha as a granter (Fabregues 1991, p.319). In the case of a princely figure, the jewel seems like protruding folds of fabric pulled out of a ring (Pl. 5) (Fig. 1). King Suddhodna is wearing a turban with a gourd-shaped jewel sitting on superimposed layers of fabric (Pl. 6). Male figure placed in Government



Pl. 1 Two males standing under an arch from Butkara I



Pl. 2 Bodhisattva standing under an arch from Ramora



Pl. 3 Donor from Butkara III



Pl. 5 Princely figure from Butkara III

Pl. 4 Donor from Butkara III

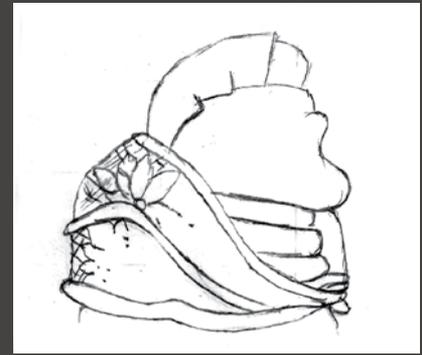


Fig. 1 Turban with protruding folds

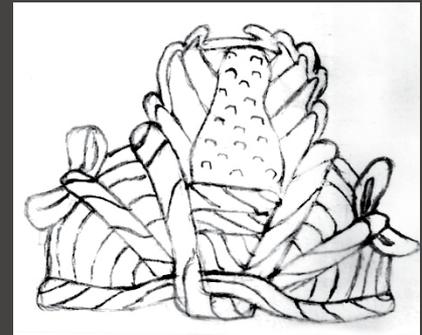


Fig. 2 Vase like jewel in turban

Museum of Mathura is adorned with a turban with setup-like ornaments (Huntington 2012).

According to Schmidt, a more vase-like object against the cockade shows a change in style and

increasing interest in emblematic values as can be seen in the case of a revered turban from Peshwar Museum (Pl. 7) (Fig. 2) (Schmidt 1990). Stupa in a headdress represents Buddha or any other sacred beings since once it was built to contain sacred relics



Pl. 6 Plaque from Peshawar Museum



Pl. 7 Worship of turban from Peshawar Museum

(Vidyavajra 2012). According to O. Bopearachchi, a tower-like stupa in a crown is one of the attributes of bodhisattva Maitreya (Bopearachchi, p. 238).

Lotus and Rosette

Turbans are also enhanced with profusing use of lotus roundels, rosette petal rings, flower terminals, or receptacles and were in vogue in Gandhara and related regions. According to Schmidt, these flower terminals represent flowers of heaven, the mandaravas that are mentioned in the Lotus Sutra (Schmidt 1990, pp.151, 169). Lotus was a symbol of the Sun associated with Lakshmi (the spouse of Visnu and a form of mother goddess identified with prosperity) in India (Neva 2012, p.32). In Buddhism Lotus is a sacred symbol of holy birth and integrity Rosettes can be originated in the Mediterranean world and are discovered in Mesopotamia and Ancient Greece. The earliest motifs are seen on a Phaistos disc dating from the 2nd millennium BC, recovered from the Phaistos archaeological site of Phaistos in the south of Crete (Benjamin Schwartz 1952, P. 105- 112). It seems this botanical motif traveled to Gandhara from the Western world. Lotus and rosettes are commonly worn by male and female images in Gandhara.

in case of turban worn by bodhisattva from Panr who is adorned with skull cap turban of plain intersecting sashes settled with a round gem in a bezel in a center front layer over by pedestal of fabric with diadem backed with a pleated cockade, in the center front of which has a blown half-lotus, five-petalled rosettes adorn sides and zones are styled with chevron shape gems (Pl. 9). Headdress with floral motif adorns headdress of Balarama from Mathura Museum (Ancient Sculptures from India, 1964, Pl.65). Based on the above-mentioned references, floral motifs in headdress show both ornamental development and spiritual sentient.



Pl. 8 Princely figure from Butkara III



Pl. 9 Bodhisattva from Panr

The Turban of a princely figure from Butkara is ornamented with a rosette (Pl. 8) (Fig. 3). The addition of flower terminals led to the complex and fully ornamented detailings of turbans (Schmidt 1990, p. 169). As



Fig. 3 Floral ornamentation on a turban

An eagle abducting male and female

The motif of a large bird clutching a human figure in its claws sometimes adorns the headdress of the bodhisattva. Turban with this motif is worn by bodhisattva from Lahore Museum (Ingholt 1975, pl. 1-4) and bodhisattva from Shahbaz Garhi (Juhung Rhi 2009, Fig. 1) (Pl. 10) (Fig. 4). The human image is the anthropomorphic characterization of diety nagi or her spouse naga. Buddhist and Hindu religious and literary documents contain many references to hostility between nagas and garudas. This legend appears in the Gandharan repertoire frequently and bears mythological importance (Jhyung Rhi 2009, pp. 147-8). This motif is identified with the Greek myth of the kidnapping of a Ganymede by Zeus as a large eagle (Schmidt 2008 b: 5 and 6) and Indian legend of the mighty garuda abducting his foe the naga (Brian 2009, p.285-6).



Pl. 10 Bodhisattava from Shabbaz Garhi (Juhung 2009, Fig. 1)

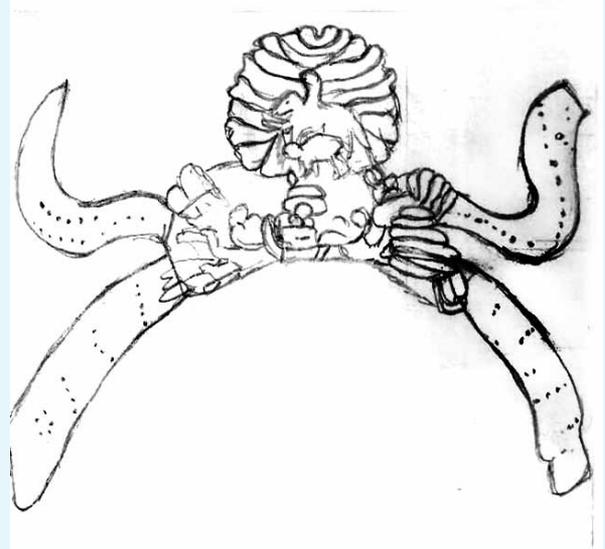


Fig. 4

There is a legend of Nagaraja mucalinda who protected Buddha from rain during seven days of meditation (J. Ph. Vogel, p.102). Naga and garuda are regarded as servants of Buddha in ancient literature (Schmidt 1990, p. 196). Guitty Azarpay emphasizes its significance by relating this motif to Sussondi jataka, where young garuda is considered as a former incarnation of Sakyamuni Buddha. But Alexander Sooper relates the motif with the classical theme of Zeus abducting Ganymede. Gerard Fussman argues that garuda- naga motif in Gandhara art is perhaps an iconographical sign for Avalokitesvara (Juhung Rhi 2009, pp. 148-150).

This ornament can be compared with a plate of gold in repousse, on the turban of an Afghan soldier (Discovery of Greek Ornament 1917, p. 283-286). An ear pendant belonging to the Hellenistic period and dated to 330-300 B.C. beautifully portrays this theme, in this case, Zeus as an eagle, holding a three-dimensional figure of Ganymede the prince of Trojan (McConnell Sophie, p.60-61). Garuda conquering the naga family is portrayed on a plaque from Gandhara dated to the 2nd -3rd century AD (Kurt 2007, Pl.38), on turbans of bodhisattvas (Kurita 1990) on a plaque from Victoria and Albert Museum (Kurita 1990, Pl. 510), on plaques from Swabi and

Sanghao (Kurita 1990, Pls. 513, 514) and Yusuf Zai (Zwalf 1996, Pl. 106), and carved on walls of Angkor wat (Brian 2009, pp. 258-6). Headdress with this theme is seen worn by bodhisattva from Mathura (Schmidt 1990, p. 185). Headdresses embellished with themes are legends are in vogue inis Greek, but this particular legend exists in Indian mythology.

Kirtimukha or lion head

Lion as the king of all the beasts was the ancient emblem of power and protection. In early Buddhism, the lion was associated with Shakyamuni Buddha, who sits on Simhasana. The lion is also a vehicle of many Vajrayana deities (Beer 2003, p.63). This motif frequently appears on architecture in India as a long scroll issuing from a mouth of a kirtimukha adorns the side of the doorsteps of the Sambhulinga temple in Kundgol (Stella, p.84). The handle of gold vessels from Bactria Crete, Greece, Etruria, and Persia are provided with a lion head squeezing the rim of it in their mouth as if protecting the contents (Neva 2008, p. 24). (Fig. 5). The most enchanting lion image employed in the headdress is in form of Kirtimukha vomiting string of pearls, a garland of beads, beaded tassels which shows benefits derived from the voice of Buddha (Schmidt 2008, p.4).

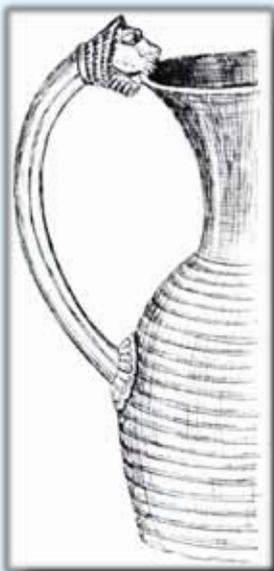


Fig. 5

The lion motif in headgear is representative of the lofty celestial and social status of the wearer. Four armed Harithi from Sahri Bahlol is wearing a headdress with a kirtimukha vomiting strand of pearls. This diadem is in the shape of three arcs the base of which has a chessboard design

string of cords of pearls hang from trefoil, kirtimukha in the center front of crown spew rope of pearls in the loop with a square shape gem in the center (Pl. 11). This motif is also identified on the turban worn by bodhisattva from Butkara I (Pl. 12) (Faccenna 1962, Vol. II, Pl. CCLXXXVI, no.3154). The bodhisattva wearing a turban with a motif allied to the full-fledge age of Gandhara art and exhibit its tie with jewelry with a lion motif (Schmidt 1990).

In the Gupta period, kirtimukha is seen on the turban of bodhisattva housed in Lucknow museum (Fabregues 1991 Footnote. 67, P.290, and Foucher 1905-1951, AGBG, II, fig. 45). Bodhisattva in dhyana mudra, from Loriyan Tangai, is wearing a turban of twisted self-restraining bands that seems emerging from lotus cup terminals. Against puffed pleated cockade is a kirtimukha spewing strings of pearls (Schmidt 1990, p. 176). (Fig. 6)



Pl 11. Four armed Harithi from Sabri Bahlol



Pl. 12 Bodhisattva from Butkara
(Faccenna 1962, Vol. II, Pl. CCLXXXVI, no.3154)

A Seated *Buddha*

The representation of an image in turban or headdress is because of Hellenistic impact, as it was the practice of early Greeks to portray their deities on headgears. Foucher believed that the anthropomorphic form of Buddha was based on Greek artistic models (Okar Research). Representation of seated Buddha in a turban was in vogue during fluorescence and was an icon of progress towards enlightenment (Schmidt 1990, p.137). Turban of a bodhisattva from PM is adorned with an image of Buddha seated in dhyana mudra (Pl. 13) and this motif appears on the crests of the turbans from the vicinity of Sahri Bahlol and Julian (Kurita 1962, Vol. II, P. 68, Pl. 173, 174). Head of the bodhisattva found from Sahri- Bahlol shows image three Buddha (Schmidt 2008, p.5, fig. 31a -31c). Avalokitesvara from the Salt range is wearing a turban with a crest adorned with an image of seated meditating Amitabha Buddha (Boparachchi, P. 246). A more elaborate example of this type of turban is worn by bodhisattva from Gandhara now kept in Filed museum Chicago. In this case crest of the turban shows meditating nimbate Buddha, whereas, pairs of mediating Buddhas symmetrically adorn sides of turbans. This motif may probably depict Panca Jina (Five victorious Buddhas)mandalas (Schmidt 1990, p.198). Images of Buddhas



Pl. 12 Bodhisattva from Peshawar museum

Of a somewhat later date than the first example is an image from Swāt. Among those in the research body, this image is perhaps the earliest identifiable image of Avalokiteśvara (Padmapāṇi) (Figs. 59, 362). In this example, Avalokiteśvara is shown seated and displaying *abhaya mudrā* with his right hand while holding in his left hand the stem of a partially opened lotus. His turban appears to be of a lozenge weave with a crest emblem sculpted in the form of a tapered, fluted jewel. He wears the conventionalized set of chest necklaces. His earrings are of the large hoop type ornamented with cut jewels. Along with the lion and garland earring, this type of jeweled hoop was very much in fashion for Bodhisattva images during the mature period.



Fig. 59.



Fig. 60.

The third example, an image from Loriyan Tangai, is quite similar to and perhaps from the same atelier as the previous figure (Figs. 60, 363). This sculpture is of a seated Bodhisattva with his hands positioned *dhyāna mudrā*. His headdress, similar to that worn by the image of Avalokiteśvara from Swāt, is of what appears to be a lozenge weave secured by three twisted restraining bands which originate from small lotus-cup terminals. Apparently attached to the middle band at the sides are open-faced flower roundels. Above a wrapped base, a large, round cockade of pleated fabric is ornamented with a lotus roundel and *śimha-mukha* emblem from the mouth of which fall multiple strands of beads. Consistent with developments of the mature phase of the Buddhist tradition in the northwest, the Bodhisattva's earrings are of the lion type that suspends jewel garlands between their paws.⁴⁵

Fig.6 (Schmidt 1990, fig.60)



Pl. 13 Turban showing kirtimukha

and bodhisattvas are also seen on pectorals as is in the case of a pectoral found from the Salt Range (Bopearachchi, Fig. 1)

The symbol of Buddha in the headdress is identified with Avalokitesvara in the Buddhist art of India. According to Yuvraj Krishan “The effigy of Buddha in the mukuta of the statues represent the prized diety of the donor gets support from many so-called Bodhisattva sculptures from Mathura (Krishna 1996, Pl.27b) containing the effigy of Buddha in their crown” (Krishna 1996, p.59). Fabregues quotes M. T.de Mallmann that images of Dhyani Buddha in turbans of bodhisattvas identify them to be Avalokitesvara (Fabregues 1991, p.295) (Bopearachchi, P. 239). Moreover, ancient literature Amitayur- Buddhanusmrti - sutra, Lokesvara- calaka, Karandavyuha sutra says Avalokitesvara carries on his head omniscient being (Fabregues 1991, p 295). In Tibet, Nepal, and China this motif is noticed on headdresses known as Vajrasattva headdresses (Huntington 2003, p.224, Cat. 60,61,62).

Surya driving a biga

Headdress with Surya driving chariot is worn by Bodhisattva Suryaprabha (Huntington) (Fig. 7). The sun god symbolizes Greek Helios, Iranian Mithra, and Indian Surya. This divinity is represented in Gandhara art too often, clad in Scythian attire and driving his quadriga (Lohuizen-de Leeuw, p.42). The cult of Sun worship was Indian as well as nomadic tradition. Mural paintings in the caves of Bamiyan and Kakrak show Sun God standing on a chariot pulled by white horses (Bopearachchi, P.246)



Fig. 7 Turban showing Surya driving biga

The ornaments on the sides of Turban

Both sides of the turban are symmetrically ornamented with gems, floral motifs, discs, the string of pearls, and themes in Gandhara.

Kirtimukha

Lion protome symmetrically adorns sides of turbans in Gandhara. Kirtimukha vomiting string of beads is noticed on the turban of a bodhisattva from Mardan (Pl. 13) and Panchika at Jamalgarhi (Zwalf 1996, Vol. II, p.58, Pl.90). Based on open mouth and profile view Schmidts compares kirtimukha with mythological makras issuing strings of pearls on Bharhut stupa, as a show of riches (Schmidt 1990, p.194).

Centaur's bifide tritons and celestial beings

An unusual motif is seen on the sides of the turban of a bodhisattva from LM (Schmidt 2008, Fig. 26 a, b). Sides of turbans are adorned with fragmented pairs of tritons and centaurs, whereas the crest is

ornamented with an eagle abducting loving couple. There is no reference in ancient literature which could interpret this iconography, whereas there are numerous references to nagas and garudas (Schmidt 1990, p.196). Other interesting celestial figures appear on the turban of a bodhisattva from the Peshawar museum. In this case, both sides of turbans are adorned with heavenly figures carrying garland, and figures in Anjali mudra are seated on a lotus throne (Schmidt 1990, p.196, figs. 90, 91). These figures could be compared with attendants on relief from Peshawar and Lahore museum (Schmidt 1990, p. 196).

Winged dragon like animals

Dragons and gryphon are the most popular of all mythical beasts used in jewelry that ensure security from evil powers and infliction of magic. Dragon is vahana of Vairocana (the white Buddha) in Buddhism (Robert 1996, p.72). Winged dragon-like animals are seen on profusely ornamented turbans. Bodhisattva from Mardan is adorned with skull cap turban having distinct Usnisa, the turban is prepared by crisscrossing three twisted bands tie-up inside knot making double ornamented panniers positioned with a knot shape ornament in center front. Tiny cords of beads dangle from both sides. Sashes of remaining fabric are fixed with ornamental terminals in the shape of lions having high curvy back and wings in the shape of acanthus. The residual place is ornamented with round stones in bezel and cords of beads (Pl. 13). Outside of Gandhara standing horned lions are seen on the turban of a bodhisattva from Mathura (Mallmann 1948, pp.224, 308 Pl. II a).

These animals have a comparison with the symbol of the gryphon and other beasts as heraldic lions, and birds with spread wings. As per Schmidt “The arching of the spine and flowing lines of torso and hips of the winged lion forms on the turban plaque exhibits features reminiscent of the feline forms seen

on several Scythian manufactures.” (Schmidt 1990, p. 191). The motif of Chinese dragon first surfaced in Neolithic carving dated to the 5th millennium BC and are conceived as a one of earliest representational symbol of mankind (Robert 1996, p.69). Roundel in the shape of a winged lion dated to 6th-5th Century BC is the representation of Achaemenid Persian animal style (Pl. 14). Similar animals are seen in Scythian art and V.A. Ilyinskaya thinks that these motifs were included in the zoomorphic style of Scythians by the impact of ancient Eastern art (Neva 2008, p. 21). In folk fables of Japan, dragons possess auspicious rank contrary to West where they are considered obnoxious (Clayton 2018, p.3).



Pl. 14 Winged lion roundel (CAIS Images of Ancient Iran Available at: <http://www.caissoas.com>

[com/CAIS/virtual_museum/achaemenid/Artefacts/metalwork.htm](http://www.caissoas.com/CAIS/virtual_museum/achaemenid/Artefacts/metalwork.htm), Accessed 28 March, 2019.

Conclusion

In Gandhara turban, itself was a symbol of higher rank, glory, hegemony, and sovereignty. It was a part and parcel of royal couture and kings wore profusely decorated turbans while positioned on thorns and participating in religious ceremonies. Turbans secured immense religious value as usnia which means

ahead like turbans are one among many attributes that alienate a Mahapurusha from a commoner (Krishna 1996). The repository of Gandhara art is replete with majestic images of bodhisattvas wearing turbans ornamented with pearls, gems, jewels, and a variety of motifs. So turbans along with fulfilling the utilitarian purpose of protecting the head from the blazing heat of the sun also determined an individual's caste, religion, social status, and sect.

In Gandhara, artists invested spiritual and religious ideas of showing reverence to a specific deity and exalt spiritual and secular ideas of pursuing them to shower bounties and protection to mortals in jewelry and headdresses. As a devotee wearing a turban with the image of the deity was a reflection of his devotion, faith, and love to it. Flowers adorning headdresses in Gandhara were associated with flowers from heaven. Turbans offer space to portray mythical legends and jataka stories. Mythical creatures like kiritimukha, winged dragons, tritons, etc are benevolent beings offering protection to wearers.

The human instinct of seeking protection from the wrath of demons in form of the disease, flood, and other calamities can be well-read in ornaments they wore. Ancient people wore amulets and to animate that piece of jewelry with spirit and magical power they would imply it with an image. The same is the case of implied themes and motifs in turbans. Jewelers and artists invested the motifs, myths, epos, and themes, in objects of adornment, which they witnessed popular among the people of society they belong to. That why, center front, as well as sides of turbans in Gandhara, are adorned with the choicest of jewels, roundels, flower receptacles, and themes.

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