

The Bacchanalian Scenes and the Representation of Women in the Buddhist Sculptures of Gandhāra Art

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Abstract

The attraction between opposite genders in living beings including humans is natural and intuitive. The feelings of intimacy and passion for the opposite gender is an open secret, and its value and importance cannot be denied. Attraction among the opposite sex, or in other words, the feeling of love, is the culmination of all romantic poetry, folklore, and other literary works. For decades, it has also been a topic of debate and research for Psychologists and Sociologists. Looking at art history, the discovered sculptures showing human intimacy, are preserved in museum collections and academic publications. In this paper, few examples can be viewed in the form of Gandhāra art; in which bacchanalian scenes' carving are portrayed with numerous flairs, glances, and wine drinking to make them more amorous and signify discern of love in various ways. For this purpose, it is focused on the loving-couples and bacchanalian scenes as represented in Gandhāra sculptures in multiple practices and appearances. Furthermore, the key focus is to re-examine an essential depiction of women in the bacchanalian scenes in the context of Buddhist art of Gandhāra. To explore the above-mentioned scenes, in this research, descriptive and analytical method is used to extract the conclusion. It is found that, Women were imagined in all her grandeur as an appealing to lovers.

Keywords: Art, Bacchanalian, Buddhism, Female Domination, Gandhāra, Women Influence.

Introduction

The sculptures discussed in this article have another paradigm for interpretation as well. The representation of women in them gives various impressions and is interpreted in the context of different visible functions they perform. If the angle of observation to describe these sculptures is changed, then a fascinating aspect of women will be observed and verified. This is the power and influence domain or the domination of women in the roles they perform. The very exclusive and monopolized environment is the entertainment or leisure time activities, as it is visible that men have no option whatsoever except their reliance and dependence on women for their comfort and natural needs. The social image of the women for the objective may have been seen as unfavorable by the society, but the ultimate conclusion is the domination or control over the role. Since ancient times, women have been taken as the instrument of pleasure in male-centered societies. The element of nudity, even today, is the pleasure factor as society seems male-driven

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on the other side; women who are considered to be the weaker sex or passive gender are dominating based on their biological characteristics. So, they are naturally empowered to dictate the opposite gender and transform the iron into cotton. So, this argument can be verified and justified that the hidden empowerment of the female gender is a truth that can't be denied. Their gender is their fortune.

In this study, answers will be sought to the questions related to women and their depiction in the art of Gandhāra and culture, mainly focused on the bacchanalian scenes' carvings (stone carvings and other means), which in turn is the depiction of the society. The questions are:

1. What is the history of the Bacchanalian art in Gandhāra Civilization?
2. What were the social roles of women portrayed at different levels of society?
3. How were women being presented and treated for their gender (biological) traits?

The descriptions and details of the carvings are interpreted in this research paper according to their social status and roles.

Historical Background:

The history of erotic art goes back to the days when the human race came into existence, and it was portrayed in various forms such as text, pictures, paintings, and stone carvings. Provocative art has been recorded in the history of every civilization; the ancient specimen of erotic portrayal is paleolithic cave paintings and carvings. Before the human race realized they could depict and showcase their love for the opposite gender, the more familiar images were animal hunting scenes and the depiction of humans' private parts (Rawson, 1973: 11-12). However, the nude human figurines are also represented in Paleolithic artifacts and paintings. For instance, 12000 years old bare-breasted Venus' figurine⁶ has been unearthed at Creswell Crags in England (Pickrell 2004). The archaeologist Tim Taylor said that these Paleolithic nude female figures' purposes was primarily for pleasure or had a ceremonial function in the ritual deflowering of virgins (Rudgley, 2000: 195).

Prehistoric pornography consists of female images and bas-reliefs. The most "naked" female figurines had tiny waists and broad hips. This body type is considered beautiful and a sign of fertility and good health in females (Tripp et al., 2020: 536-537). The oldest lovemaking figurine has been discovered in Germany, and the archaeologists/historians believe, it is a 7200 years scene showing a male and female figure making love (Diver, 2005). Moreover, people in Mesopotamia and Syria showed interest in erotic art. Different lovemaking scenes made of clay and handmade figurines of naked women, cylinder seals, and terracotta or pierced metal plaques were shown. The Amarna period art (14th Century BCE) was rather graphic, showing sexual intimacy and sensual pleasure. It was depicted on temples, tombs, and houses; it displayed various sexual positions and familiarity between men and women.

Furthermore, some plaques depicted a woman leaning against a mud-brick tower, perhaps the town wall, where prostitutes usually lived and worked. Also, the tavern scenes run by alewives show one or more people drinking from vases and cups; these are houses of pleasure where men drink, listen to music, and have sexual activities with prostitutes. The walls of the top roof were decorated with clay plaques of naked women or other erotic scenes, and Ishtar, the goddess of love, was the patron of taverns (Nemet, 1998: 137). In Mesopotamia, votive plaques⁷ (from the early second millennium BC) and Middle Assyrian Age often depict lovemaking and drinking scenes. Many erotic images of male and female organs are found in the temple of Inanna at Assur (Black & Green, 1992: 150-152). In ancient Egypt, the depiction of lovemaking scenes on pottery

⁶ *The Venus Figurine is an upper Paleolithic female Figurine carved in the round shape. Most of these Figurines were found in Europe but similar Figurines were also discovered in Siberia and across Eurasia (Fagan & Charlotte, 1996: 740–741).*

⁷ *An ex-voto is a votive offering to a saint or to a divinity. The term is usually restricted to Christian example. It is given in fulfillment of a vow or in gratitude or devotion (King & Hall, 2019).*

fragments and graffiti has also been found; women are depicted holding objects from traditional erotic iconography, associated with Hathor (the goddess of love) (Robins, 1993:189-90). Similarly, in the Roman period, we have rare glimpses of voyeuristic acts in scenes that reflect everyday Graeco-Roman life and culture's realities. An ancient silver scyphus, or drinking cup called Warren, with lovemaking scenes engraved on it, has been housed in British Museum. In Roman art, the attendants are present to serve during lovemaking,⁸ while the modern Western culture generally regards the act of lovemaking as highly private (Pollini, 2010: 291-92). Similarly, various sexually explicit sculptures and paintings are discovered from the ruined Roman buildings of Pompeii. However, an essential house in Pompeii, 'Casa del Centenario' or House of the Centenary,⁹ provides necessary information about lovemaking activities. Only elite class visits this residence, where they could relax and enjoy the amenities and comfort of domestic life (Pollini, 2010: 294).

The History of Indian Sensual Art

After prehistoric time, India's first civilization was the Indus Valley civilization (c. 2600-1900 BCE) The archaeologists discovered various kind of seals and terracotta female figurines; the nude mother goddess figurine was the most common. Their sensual organs, such as hips and breasts, were made well-proportioned to show their sex appeal (Marshall, 1931; Sharma & Gupta, 2016: 26-27). These miniature clay figurines are symbols of a woman's sexuality and ooze the power of fertility in a woman. The loving couples' representations were found in Buddhist monuments at Bhaja and Bedsa early in the first century B.C..E (Mitter, 2001: 79). Apart from love-making, the women were also observed in other entertaining roles such as dancing and drinking wine. The depiction of women as dancers starts from Mesolithic cave paintings; however, the most important and oldest sculpture excavated from Mohen-Jo-Daro, datable to c. 2500-1500 BCE, is known as 'Dancing Girl.' The 'Dancing Girl's sculpture is an exclusive example of dance and entertainment in primitive societies (Sharma & Gupta, 2001: 27; Varadpande, 2006: 67-8). Apart from stone carvings, women were also portrayed in paintings in various forms and practices; the primitive history of Indian images goes back to the mural of Ajanta (2nd BCE to 7th CE), which was an art shrine of Buddhist monks (Singh & Arbad, 2013: 135). These paintings' central focus was Buddhism, and these images are famous for their motifs and decorative designs that represent the 'Jataka'⁹ stories related to Gautama Buddha previous lives and his teachings which had been narrated by the historical Buddha, Siddhartha himself to his disciples, as he had the full memory of the past (Rahman et al., 2013: 86-87; Rahman & Khan, 2020: 66). The women's representation in the form of queen, dancers, mistress and other secondary characters in paintings is also a great accomplishment of Ajanta artists. Semi-naked and naked form of women in these paintings are renowned for their splendid gestures and grandeur. The half-nude and love-making figure of women and love-making couples portray love and respect for women and their importance in advancing the human race. These female figures are widely valued for their roles to appease men and must not be considered a mere sex symbol (Sharma & Gupta, 2016: 28-29; Mitter, 2001: 30). Vidya Dehejia, the great Indian art historian, links the scenes, depicting women, with acts other than sensual pleasures as she says; "The idea that such sensual images might generate irreverent thoughts did not seem to arise; rather the established associations appear to have been with accentuated growth, prosperity and auspiciousness.

⁸The ritual of attendants with loving couples is also found in Gandharan art.

⁹Jataka is a Pali term meaning birth story which relates an episode in the past life of the historic Buddha. Jataka stories have been mentioned in all canonical literature of Buddhism and are considered among the most prevalent stories, based on the accounts of the moral deeds and accomplishments of the historic Buddha in his previous lives as a Bodhisattva. Buddhist literature of the Theravada Canon mentioned more than five hundred Jataka stories, i.e. variously 550, 540 and 555 (Rahman & Khan, 2020: 66).

That is why the monasteries of Ajanta have images of attractive women in abundance and are considered appropriate decorations by monks (April 4th, 2014). According to Bach, apart from the Buddha's chief events of life and his previous births in the form of the jātaka stories, the Ajanta paintings also represent the lovers looking eagerly at each other. These paintings have a profound influence on Indian art and portray bacchanalian scenes in the art and images. This practice also developed into a common trait in the Indian arts (Bach, 1985: 22). This tradition was used to decorate the temple doorways from the Gupta period onward. Dancers are always depicted in different postures, moods, and positions in different art zones of India, such as Bhārhut, Sāñcī, and later in Gandhāra.

In primitive society, the discovery of dancing sculptures showed an utter urge to watch dances and activities of amusement, which made artists project women in such activities. Besides the unique sculpture of the Dancing Girl, the statues of the most noticeable dancers in solo and group are found in various ancient monuments like Rani-Gumpha cave on the Udaigiri hill near Bhuvaneshvar. The women opera bands performed all over the country in ancient India. The Ramāyāna calls them as Vadhu-nataka-Sangh, and the Arthaśāstra of Kautilya terms them street-preksha. Apart from art, the famous women dancers are stated by their names in Indian literature. Telapatta jātaka argues about Janapada Kalyani, a striking dancer with earnest standing among commonalities at that time. We also find the dancers' names on the Bhārhut pillar (Varadpande, 2006: 67-75). It provides evidence that depicting women dancers is not a new tradition in Gandhāra art. In Gandhāra art, this tradition is also portrayed in various forms and materials, but they are one of the finest specimens of loving couples' representation. There are many scenes of daylight activities of the Ravana harem where Prince Siddhartha is enjoying the music and dance of beautiful women. The most stimulating aspect of these reliefs is the amorous couples showing physical attractiveness and projecting ideal sexes (Rawson, 1973: 89). Moreover, the *Mithuna*¹⁰ couples were found in the stone art (1st- 2nd Century BCE) at Buddhist stupas like Sanchi and Bharhut or at Buddhist caves such as Kondane and Pitalkhora in Western Deccan (Varadpande, 2006: 108). The *Mithuna* sculptures were commonly depicted on the temple walls of Bhuvaneshwar, Konarak and Khajuraho during the 10th-13th century CE. According to this sculptural art, there was nothing improper in physical love and sex during ancient and medieval times in India. So, in the mentioned time, art represents all facts of daily life. They constantly depicted love scenes because it gives pleasure and enjoyment and perpetuates the family tree of the human race (Mehta, 1972: 11-2; Rawson, 1973).

Depiction of Loving-couples and Bacchanalian Images Depicted in Gandhāran Art:

Gandhara art is composed of a very important, visual language, which tells us about many different aspects of Buddhism in Gandhara Civilization (Rahman & Khan, 2020: 61). The representation of loving-couples/ bacchanalian images is also abundantly found in Gandhāra art. The depiction of these images in Gandhāra art represents an expression of 'natural society'. These sculptures show that women attended these gatherings and got amused by them, and men also appreciated women's company on such occasions. If men had not appreciated women's role, then it was almost impossible to become standard for these activities. The Sanskrit poet and scholar, Aśvaghoṣa (Ashvagoshā) talks about women's role in seducing and entertaining prince Siddhārtha in the palace, by using their erotic art skills, however, it is pertinent to mention that Siddhārtha did not engage in improper love¹¹ (Olivelle, 2009: 49). The depiction of the loving couples and bacchanalian images in the Gandhāra art also indicates human beings' universal and natural feeling. In these bacchanalian sculptures, the unique thing is that the background and the

¹⁰*Maithuna* or *Mithuna* is a Sanskrit term used in Tantra, most often translated as "sexual union" in a ritual context. They are also known as loving-couples (<https://www.eastern-spirituality.com>).

¹¹Based on Aśvaghoṣa description of "The Palace Life and Great Departure of Bodhisattva Siddhārtha" which has been depicted in Gandhāra art.

places are beautifully and elegantly decorated, because they wanted to make those events fantastic and dreamy. This practice is even still prevalent in the present-day South Asia, where on the occasion of a wedding, the bridegroom's car, house, and room are being decorated with flowers and lights to give it swanky and amorous touch. Gandhāra art characterizes the social and religious role of women in its sculptures and also depicts the secular role and seductive position of women in society. The Dionysus images are one of the examples of the profane condition of women in the Gandhāra society. Some examples of loving couples and bacchanalian images are given below. In the light of these sculptures, it will be examined that the loving couples of Gandhāra art are less romantic, and they portrayed women standing shyly along with their partners. These images show a variety of love-making and bacchanalian scenes, which attract the viewers' attention. These sculptures are unique due to the engraving of loving couples and bacchanalian scenes. Apart from these sculptures, the loving couples were also depicted on toilet trays in Gandhāra art to make them more beautiful and tempting for the buyers. These trays were being used in different rituals and occasions. Due to this reason, the decoration of these trays was an essential element.

In Gandhāra art, an attractive loving couple standing under the decorated arches has been depicted (Fig.1). The arches have folded layers of the wall decorated with small stones, but the walls' sides are adorned with bloomed lotus flowers. In the middle of the two arches, a big-sized bird is represented in a standing position and embraces both sides of the angles with its wings. The depiction of the bird in the art is associated with deities. The dove was a symbol of the “fertility goddess” in the mythology of Mesopotamia. This bird has resembled a parrot, and in the ancient Indian art playing with parrot was the favourite theme and is included in the sixty-four skills described in the *Kāmasūtra* (Chandrakala, 1980: 43). This sculpture's most exciting component is the dual depiction of the loving couple in two different positions. The couple is portrayed under both arches in two different love postures. They are enjoying the pleasure of love and are ignorant about worldly matters. On the right side of the sculpture, the couple stands in a side pose, but their facial expressions and figures are quite visible. The woman is hiding her lower part of the body with a thick wavy shawl while the upper part of the body is fully nude. Her hairstyle is quite different. The short hairs are visible on the forehead while she has a high knot at the back. This hairstyle is still in fashion in the Eastern as well as the Western world. A bearded man stands at the end of his companion. He wears a knee-length wavy Indian style dhoti and a girdle at the top of his dress. The upper part of his body is nude. He has long hair compared to the other male sculptures of Gandhāra, which is an unusual hairstyle. He has beard that presents the Indian tradition while his long hair is a western element in Gandhāra art.

Thus, the figure of this man is a combination of two unique traditions of East and West. He is embracing the woman from the back and touching her at the thighs. The woman also holds his hand with love as she is trying to stop her in shyness. The expression of wariness is visible on her face. This act also represents the social element of the Indian woman. As Gilmartin remarks, love shyness is a universal element of human nature and can be found among people of all ages and sexes. Still, the decisive part is found among women (Gilmartin, 2013: 05). Therefore, this sculpture is showing the exact picture of this statement.

In the next scene (Fig.1), the couple's position is changed that represents the next step of bacchanalian under the next arch. The same couple with the same garment stands in a different place of bacchanalian. The woman's shawl is missing now; she is depicted nude with her back pose while the man is portrayed in the same dress. He is embracing the woman in both arms. She is hugging her man and kissing on his cheeks with emotions and passion. She holds his face with hands that is a usual love posture. The man stands with bowing pose and enjoying the pleasure and affection of her woman. This image of a cuddling consort demonstrates the exact essence of the physical intimacy that starts from embracing the lover. This specific act of love making is also available in romantic poetic literature all over the world.

In another Gandhāra relief panel, a beautiful couple has been depicted (Fig. 2). The couple stands in a very relaxed and delighted mood, and the woman stands on the right side of the man. She wears a thin sleeveless ankle length Indian pattern *Paridhāna*. The left side of her body is covered while the right breast is nude. Her hair is explored on her forehead, but her head is covered with a lovely beaded *sirobhushānā*. She stands shyly by the side of her man with bent legs; the right foot is on the ground while she stands on her toe on the left side. She is looking down with coyness and warmth of love. The attitude of the woman is showing her deep inner impression of passion and enthusiasm for her partner. She is highly bedecked, and it is also demonstrated how she adorned herself for the pleasure of her mate. Her male counterpart stands on the left. He had kept his left arm at her shoulder with devotion and adoration. He is looking delightfully at his female partner while the woman is looking down bashfully. He holds a costly beaded and round-shaped necklace in his right hand. It might be possible that he is presenting it to the woman as a gift of love. It is widespread in Indian tradition that the male partner gives his woman valuable gifts before starting the formal and legal relationship. He has curly hair and wears an elegant headdress like *usnishā* at the top of the head. He stands in a different style resembled with Śālabhañjikā or Māyā's standing posture in the birth episode, and the left foot is clasped with the pillar. They have round faces and have identical features that show they belong to the same race. They seem to be Greek from their outlook and hairstyle, but they wear Indian dresses representing the local influence on Gandhāra art. Their physical features and their illustration with costly ornaments represent their sophisticated position in the Gandhāra society.

The woman in this sculpture wears a thin *paridhāna*, but the upper part of the body is nude. Mehta writes that in the olden days, it might be possible that women kept their upper part of the body unclothed in the house, excluding possibly before outsiders. The depiction of a woman's nude figure is not a new practice in Gandhāra art; the Indian artists commonly depict the woman complete and partial nude like the sculptures of ancient Roman and Greece. The nudity was common practice in the Indian arts of the medieval times and the earlier age of Bhārhut, Sāñcī and Māthura. It is not certain from these sculptures that nudity was common practice or not but Indian depicted the undressed female body to represent the vehicle of fertility, fecundity, and motherhood. Besides above-mentioned sculptures, the semi-divine *Yakshi* also represents the fertility aspect of a tree-goddess in the art of Gandhāra (Mehta, 1972: 30).

Apart from love making, wine drinking was also a common practice in Indian society, and a preferred subject of the artists. Women's participation in the wine-drinking parties in their lovers' company to boost the desire of lovemaking or as fun was a common practice in ancient India. Women relished the wine not only in the company of their lover. But they also enjoyed it in the company of their female friends inside and outside the houses and harems. Wine and women were also associated with richness and growth like wine was also used to make the trees blossom and irrigating in ancient India. It was common practice that young girls water the Aśoka tree with a mouthful of wine (Varadepande, 2006:55- 59). Later, this tradition was adopted by the Indian sculptors, and these wine-drinking scenes are also depicted in Gandhāra art, which represents their social rituals and preferences. Women have been depicted in these sculptures in different portrayals. They are drinking in the company of their beloved; at other sites, they are presenting the wine to the companions, and in some areas, they are swirling in ecstasy after drinking. In some sculptures, women are also dancing and playing music in wine parties. These activities portrayed different aspects and status of women in the same practice. It also makes clear the attitude and conduct of men in the described action. There are plenty of sculptures in almost all Indian art portraying the wine drinking scenes in which lovers are enjoying the pleasures of love while drinking wine in the company of their beloved.

Three figures of different gender and different age group; a man, a woman and a middle-aged man, has beautifully been exemplified (Fig. 3). A man with a muscular body is half lying on the mattress with his left arm's support while the right arm is in a raised position. A big wavy piece

of cloth is shown on the couch. It might be a mattress cover or his shawl that is thinning out on the cushion before sleep. He has a small beard and heavy moustaches representing the velour and impressiveness of his personality and the traditional local influence on Gandhāra art. He only wears undies like a dress that shows he is in the ambience of drinking before sleep. The second prominent figure of the sculpture is a sharp-featured woman with a full-body dress standing beside him, holding a big cup of wine in her right hand, and offering him to drink. It might be possible that she is a servant and offering a cup of wine to her master because her expressions are not fantasizing about the appearance of love or intimacy, which is commonly shown in the wine drinking scenes.

The third charming figure is a middle-aged man having thick moustaches and wears a knee-length Greek-style dress. His one-shoulder is covered while the other shoulder is bare. He also wears long boots that are not common in Gandhāra art because mostly figures are portrayed as barefooted. In this sculpture, the long boots symbolize the Greek tradition. His hairstyle is also unusual among other figures. He keeps a big bag of wine on his shoulders and holds it with both hands. He also looks like a servant; the expression of exhaustion and tiredness is visible on his face. This sculpture represents that women were also used as wine servers in various assemblies of society. In some sculptures, she is depicted as a wife serving wine to her male partner to enhance the pleasure of love. Still, this sculpture shows that she is offering her services as a wine server in the royal assemblies or as an individual server to her master in obedience and respect.

Fig. 4 is divided into two parts with a giant pillar. The upper part of the post is decorated with various kinds of leaves. The thickness of the pillar shows the strong suit of the sculpture. On the right side of the pillar, a figure is depicted with a bowl in hands, which represents that water is falling from the pillar in the bowl. In the middle of the sculpture, a loving couple stands in a frontal position in a romantic mood. The woman is portrayed on the right side, and she wears a full sleeves knee length body fitted tunic and ankle-length tight trouser. She stands very gracefully and resting her left hand on her waist while the other hand is in a raised position that shows her pleasure and delight. She is offering some flowers or beads to her partner as a gift of love and affection. The intriguing object in this sculpture is a long wavy scarf or *uttarīya* hanging down on the couple's shoulders. They are sharing the same *uttarīya* that shows their love and nearness for each other. The male partner stands very near to her woman in a cross-legged style that shows his satisfaction and contentment. He is seeing dearly at his female partner and touching her breast with passion and fondness. This act of man indicates that Gandhāra art represents women as a source of intimacy and keenness for her male partner.

Conversely, the women were used as a tool to seduce a man and daze their understanding and intelligent acts. The couple is looking at each other with immense love and warmth of adoration. It is clear from their appearance that they belong to the royal or elite family. On the sculpture's left side, other sharp features male figure is depicted in a lovely dress. He holds his scarf in his left hand while he grasps the leaves of the Sāla tree with his right hand, but his character is not exactly in the sculpture. The couple is shown in physical love. The presence of the Sāla tree indicates the creation process. It also symbolizes the production and new life. Queen Māyā was also standing under the Sāla tree at the time of the Buddha's birth.

In Fig. 5, the pillar had occupied one-third of the available space. A royal couple stands in a frontal position on the right side of the sculpture. A man is depicted on the right side of the woman. A long scarf or the *uttarīya* is hanging down from his left shoulder. He holds a bowl of grapes in his left hand while the right hand is in an upward position with a flower. He is watching straight, which shows his compact boldness as a male member of society. The woman is portrayed beside him with the same posture. She also raises her right hand in an upward position and holds a beaded necklace in her hand. She stands with great splendour and grandeur that shows her status in society and her family significantly. The woman's equal status in the sculpture shows her position in the life and in the of heart of her partner. She is watching at the bowl of grapes in the

hand of her partner. A small, heightened figure of a woman is depicted on the left corner of the sculpture under the branches of the Sāla tree. She is offering a bowl of grapes to her master with respect and honour. Grapes symbolize the wine because most wine is extracted from the grapes. So, the sculpture depicted grapes instead of wine. The couple will eat grapes to enhance the pleasure of love. In this sculpture, the woman was not portrayed in the erotic scene; she is depicted in an equal position with her man with respect and honour. Wine drinking and grapes cultivation were common in Gandhāra Civilization. Alexander the Great Eastern campaigns and Dionysian tradition in the Gandhāra are associated with the agricultural richness of the area (Behrendt, 2007: 8).

Fig. 6 portrays the wine drinking scene with three women and a man. The right side of the sculpture is decorated with various motifs. On the same side, a woman is carved in front of the horse and holds his reign with her right hand while holding an empty cup of wine. A bald, bearded man with heavy moustaches is shown on the back of the horse. He is turning behind and drinking a cup of wine by the hand of a woman. They put their arms around each other's shoulders, which show their love and fondness. The man is nude while the woman wears a knee-length body fitted tunic, tight trouser, and a large *uttariya* is wrapped around her legs. She is looking at the face of the man with a feeling of tenderness. The woman on the left corner of the sculpture is depicted in a dancing posture. She is boogying in a traditional Indian style in cross legs stance. The right hand is resting on the waist while the left hand is portrayed over her head. The dancing figure of the female is adding beauty to the event. It shows that in Gandhāran society, people drink wine on particular occasions and arrange dancing women or courtesans on these events to enhance the moments' joy and pleasure. Mostly women used to perform such kind of service. They are shown as dancers, wine servers and wine sellers in Gandhāra art. These services signify women's inferior status in society, or women were treated as entertainment tools in the community in Gandhāra.

In Fig. 7, a woman is portrayed on the right side of the sculpture in the tribāṅgha stance. Her body's upper part is entirely nude, but she is adorned with elegant ornaments like long earrings, beaded necklace, bangles, and anklets. Hair is combed back on the forehead, and a loop-shaped knot is found at the top of the head. She holds a round-shaped mirror in her left hand while the left arm is kept on her partner's shoulder. On the other side of the sculpture, a man with a moustache is shown beside her. He holds a beaded garland in his right hand as a gift for his partner. He is watching with keenness at the wreath while the woman is watching into a mirror that represents her concern for her magnificence and outlook. A crown-like turban is enhancing the man's grace and charm, and they seem to be a royal couple from their appearance. We find the loving sculptures of almost every class of society. The artist has enlightened all the types of community in their special status and method. Their social position and quality in the community can be analyzed by giving a close site to the sculptures. These sculptures underline those bacchanalian and loving scenes were not prohibited in society because it is like humans, and human life is incomplete without this practice. Therefore, we find royal bacchanalian/loving sculptures and bacchanalian of familiar status people as the sacred sculptures of women worshippers are also seen. In the same way, sculptures of sensuality and intimacy are found.

Fig. 8 is divided into three compartments with different styles of rims and beautiful pillars. A couple is portrayed in each section. In the top area, an amorous couple is depicted. A woman stands in a frontal position. Her partner is shown behind her touching her body with his right hand while the woman is looking at him and holds his hand with love, which shows that she responds to his affection and love with a smiling face. The lower part of her body is carved with a wavy dress, while the upper part is nude. The man had long curly hair that reflects the foreign influence while the upper part of the body is naked. In the middle compartments, a wine-drinking couple is presented. A man is holding a cup of wine in his left hand, standing with his woman companion with his right knee bowing towards her. The woman is standing straight beside him, looking at the cup of wine. In the last compartment, a couple is standing in a frontal position. The

woman is holding a mirror while the man is holding a flower in his hand. They are wearing identical costumes; the upper parts of their bodies are covered while they are wearing a thigh-length dress to cover their legs. The dresses of all three couples are different from each other, and they are portraying various aspects of human life in Gandhāra.

Fig. 9 represents a different theme of the society in Gandhāra. The couple is depicted between two pillars, and the upper part is decorated with floral design. A round-faced woman is portrayed as a wine-seller, while the man is depicted as a purchaser. This sculpture indicates that women were related to the business of wine selling, which was not considered a bad thing in society. She holds a big pitcher in her left hand while they are talking about money or something else. The round-faced man stands beside her, purchasing wine from her female counterpart. He wears only a short Indian *paridhāna*, but they have an identical hairstyle. The classical style of the sculpture represents its Western origin, which reached Gandhāra through cultural and trade contact with the Western World and adopted by the local artisans of Gandhāra.

Fig. 10 comprises six images. All are busy entertaining themselves with different kinds of acts and performances. The sculpture can be divided into a group of three. The first group is occupying themselves by drinking wine while the other is amusing themselves with singing and dancing. All these objects of entertainment are reflecting the foreign influence. The wine was not prohibited in Indian society since prehistoric times, but these drinking parties' style and custom without gender discrimination is not an Indian tradition. On the sculpture's extreme right side, a nude male figure is depicted on the ground under a tree. He holds a bowl of wine in his right hand and looking immensely in his wine cup. A stunning woman is portrayed near her, and her posture is representing her bulging position. She is looking behind a man who is offering her a big bowl of wine with his right hand while he is carrying a wine trough on his left shoulder. The next man is also watching behind at them and observing their activity.

In contrast, he is associated with the next scene, three are engaged in music and dance activity. He is playing tambourine like a musical instrument. Next to him, a woman is dancing with a great tempo and passion between two musicians. A bearded man is holding two, three kinds of musical instruments in his hands in the extreme left, but he is playing a string with full passion and urges. He is unaware of his surroundings, which show his sincerity with his profession.

Fig. 11 represents the family drinking scene. This sculpture also comprises five figures. A young couple, an elderly couple and a small child is also depicted in the middle of the couples. In this sculpture, an elderly couple is carved on the right side of the panel. In this scene, the woman carries a big bowl of wine with a double handle in her right hand while a bearded man has placed his right hand on his head, which shows his gesture of kindness towards the child. The child is shown under the leaves of the tree. Her facial expressions show her inner bliss and delight. On the other side of the sculpture, a young couple is portrayed in an enjoyable mood. The young man is described as fully nude standing in frontal position. Marshall (1960: 39) is of the view that the style, design and execution are typically Hellenistic. Representation of such sculptures depict the tradition of drinking parties and arrangements without gender discrimination in society in Gandhāra. Women are abundantly shown/depicted in wine-drinking parties; even in the family drinking scene, the wine drinking was not prohibited in the community. Even the small child's presence is an indication of the transmission of the tradition to the next generations. Most of the sculptures portrayed the couples in the wine-drinking scene; either, they are depicted on the toilet trays or displayed in the sculptures. However, all the statues' theme and composition are the same and represent the real picture of the Gandhāran society.

In Fig. 12, two couples are portrayed on a lion footed plinth. Both women are illustrated in idiosyncratic stance and are exposed in the right contour. They wear upper garments just to cover their breasts because the cross bands of their attire are visible. They wear *paridhāna*, but their backs and bottoms are entirely exposed. On the right side of the sculpture, a woman is seated on her male partner's thigh and rests her right hand on his left shoulder, which shows their affection

and intimacy for each other. She is looking at the front while her companion is looking at her face with eagerness and keenness. The other couple is sitting on the left corner in front of each other. The woman is smiling in her beloved company and fans her partner with fondness and affection while her bearded partner is offering her a bowl of wine. The bowl of wine is depicted near her mouth, which shows her willingness. In this scene, both the male partners are sitting in an identical posture. Both of them are resting their left arms on their left leg and looking lovingly at their female partners.

In Fig. 13, the couple stands in an eye-catching and loving stance. Their physical gestures are representing their mood and feelings. The woman is shown with cross legs posture on the right side of the sculpture. She has placed her left arm on the side of the arch while the right hand is in a raised position. The movement of her hand and slightly turned neck shows her shyness with or from her companion. On the right side of the woman, her male partner is standing beside her. He holds a cup of wine in his right hand and offering his woman partner. She is depicted in a bashfulness posture while the male partner is looking at her with full passion and excitement¹².

In these sculptures, various forms of garments and ornaments were abundantly used. Apart from this episode, the different kinds of trendy clothes are used in almost all Indian art to enhance the feminine charm and charisma. In Gandhāra art, most of the female images portray the unusual feminine beauty, which is rarely seen in reality. The female figure not only describe the ideal form of body structures, but other ornamentations were also commonly used to praise their feminine impression. The female figures were vastly wreathed with all types of ornaments like girdles, anklets, necklaces, bangles, wrists, tikka, and various kinds of headdresses (Sultana, 2009: 58). In almost all the sculptures, women used multiple forms of dresses, but the most common dress of the Indian women is Sari. Many women wore a long shawl or scarf over both the shoulders. They also wear a beaded girdle around the hips and decorated claps in front to enhance the beauty of their dress. Their breasts are uncovered (whether this was the practice or only artistic convention is unclear) (Salmon, 1998: 40). All kinds of dresses and ornaments, representing the native costumes and class differences, can be observed in these sculptures.

Along with sculptures, the toilet trays with bacchanalian scenes are another significant symbolic artistic creation of Gandhāra region. These trays prove to be precious objects and made of various kinds of materials. They are made of soft stone such as steatite or serpentine or hard rock such as schist or made from gypsum. They are decorated with various motifs; forms and styles like geometric, floral and figurative themes are engraved within the globular space and generally bordered by the decorative edge. These trays are not associated with single culture but also show the beautiful combination of multiple traditions and values. These dishes portrayed the temporary phenomenon of Gandhāra art and are resulted from a diversity of samples, for instance, the globular shape with adorned motifs derived from Greek bronze mirrors and emblematic from Hellenistic Bactria. The Greco-Bactrian people came in Gandhāra with Demetrius-I by crossing Hindu-Kush through 185 BCE. They imported Hellenistic formal collection from Bactria to Gandhāra and then altered by native artists. Afterwards, new and unique objects were produced by the local people in the available hard and soft stone material. The style and design of their division also helped the researcher understand their origin. The circular division of toilet trays in compartments is shown in Hellenistic origin. These toilet trays represent an inquiring mixture of Greek and Iranian objects mutual on occasion with wandering basics from Indian iconography (Carter, 1968: 31).

Fig. 14 has an identical arrangement like the trays, as mentioned earlier. But the rims and two bars are decorated with beads. In the upper part, a beautiful couple is depicted in a standing position but facing one another. The woman is depicted in typical Indian style and keeping her

¹²Once Faxian was occasioned in a wine drinking party, arranged to celebrate the birth of a child in a village. Faxian refused to drink wine offered to him by the villagers. Faxian refusal shows either drinking wine was forbidden in Buddhism or it is forbidden for Bikshus only (Shoai, 2002).

left hand on her waist while on the other side, her companion holds a cup to the woman's mouth. One thing is identical in all the Gandhāran trays is that, they are divided into two or three sections. The lower units are decorated with different geometrical designs, but the human figures are shown in the upper part, and almost all models are portrayed in half-length. All the couples are enjoying the company of their companion. It shows that drinking was not forbidden in Gandhāra culture. Women also used to enjoy the company of their partners.

The illustration of a drinking couple carved on the comb in Fig. 15 is quite rare in the art of Gandhāra. The features of the figures are not noticeable, but the comb bristles are shown on the top of the scene. The comb is divided into five compartments, one central compartment and four small compartments are shown in each corner. The theme of the central couple is relatively straightforward and obvious. A drinking couple is shown in a romantic mood in the middle section of the comb. A man has been depicted in a half lying posture on a floor mattress with a pillow's support, and his female partner is sitting in his lap. They hold a cup of wine, and their posture shows they are drinking wine from one cup. This drinking scene shows that women used to enjoy the company of their husbands or drinking was an essential part of the romantic life in the Gandhāra culture.

Fig. 16 represents a different drinking scene in which three figures are shown: two females and a male. Four rectangles decorate the front of the couch with five indentations in each, and below the ledge on which the sofa is placed in a leaf-and-dart pattern (Ingholt & Lyons, 1957: 178). A small, heightened woman is seated on the stool on the right corner of the scene. She holds a wine cup in her left hand while the right hand is resting on the side of the couch, where a man is lying in a very relaxing mood and looking at the same woman that shows they are talking to each other. The other woman is portrayed in between his legs that show their love and closeness for each other. She holds a wreath/ garland in her left raised hand. It might be possible that she is offering the wreath to her companion to express her love because floral wreaths indicate love and commitment. The representation in the figure and the couch decoration shows that the drinking couple belongs to an elite class, and a short height woman is serving wine to the couple, which signifies that women were also appointed to serve wine in the royal chambers in the elite families. Marshall stated (1960: 18) that the scene is conversant with the way Greeks consumed alcohol. He is of the opinion that the figs. are attired in the Greek chiton and himation. These figures' exceptional characteristic is their wide-open staring eyes and the wig like treatment of their hair are dating from the late Saka- Parthian period.

Conclusion

It is evident that women were not only devoted to Buddhism but were also known to enjoy loving relationship with their male partners which shows the strong bond they had with their partner. The Indian sculptors adopted the bacchanalian motifs and represented it with a variety of styles and grace. Women were imagined in all her grandeur as an appealing lover. The various social life themes were carved by artists to enhance the beauty of these sculptures and toilet trays. The theme of these sculptures is to show various human activities; among these, melodies, loving couples is one of the notable subjects of the artists in Gandhāran art. It is determined that in bacchanalian scenes, women's role is not to seduce; instead, they are responding to the feelings of their partners and playing along to make them happy. It is a good indication that responding to their counterpart needs. Examination of the above-discussed specimen is not just about sex, it also shows the true feelings, love, passion, and respect towards one another and shows that amorous activities were viewed positive and healthy in a Buddhist society. These activities still exist globally to this day which is evidence of the continuity of a culture that started hundreds of years ago.

Figures

Figure 1 A loving couple, Schist, Dimensions: Ht. 32 cm, Wd.27 cm, Source/ Ref, Private collection Japan. With the courtesy of Osmund Boppearachchi. Professor University of California, Berkeley



Figure 2 A Loving couple, Schist, Dimensions: Ht. 21.9 cm, Wd. 37.4 cm, Source/ Ref, Private collection Japan. With the courtesy of Osmund Boppearachchi. Professor University of California, Berkeley



Figure 3 A man drinking a cup of wine from a hand of a woman, schist, Ht. 22 cm, Wd.26 cm, Source/ Ref. Private collection Japan. With the courtesy of Osmund Boppearachchi. Professor University of California, Berkeley



Figure 4 A Loving couple, Schist, Dimensions: Ht. 22 cm, Wd. 25.5 cm, Source/Ref, Private collection Japan. With the courtesy of Osmund Bopearachchi. Professor University of California, Berkeley



Figure 5 Standing couple with a short person giving a cup of wine, Provenance, unknown, Dimensions, Ht, 22 cm, Wd. 28 cm, Source/Ref: private collection Japan. With the courtesy of Osmund Bopearachchi. Professor University of California, Berkeley



Figure 6 Love drinking scene, Provenance, unknown, grey schist, Dimensions: Ht, 20 cm, Wd. 27 cm, Source/Ref: oriental Museum Tokyo, Kurita.I, *Gandhara Art II*. 2003. Fig.563. P.194



Figure 7 A Loving couple, Provenance, Butkara, Swat, Green schist, Dimensions, Source: I. Kurita, *Gandhara Art*, Vol. II. 2003. Fig. 569.P. 197.



Figure 8. A loving couple, Provenance, unknown, Schist, Dimensions: 42.7*15.8 cm, Source/Ref: Tanabe. Katsumi, *Gandharan Art from the Hirayama Collection*, 1984, Accession no. 103122. Fig.6. P. 70.



Figure 9 Wine Seller, Provenance, unknown, Schist, 23.0*42.5 cm. Source: *Gandharan Art from the Hirayama Collection*. 1984. Accession no 100122. P.66. Fig. 58.



Figure 10 Dionysiac scene, Provenance, unknown, Schist, Dimensions: 18.0*37.5, Accession no: 102129. Source: *Gandharan Art from the Hirayama Collection*. 1984. Fig.



55. P. 64.

Figure 11 Dionysos riding a lion, Provenance: unknown, Schist, Dimensions: 23.0*42.5 cm. Accession no: 100122. Source: *Gandharan Art from the Hirayama Collection*, 1984, P. 66. Fig.57.



Figure 12 A bacchanal scene of two couples busy in merry making over a bowl of wine, Provenance: unknown, Schist, Dimensions: Ht. 20 in. Wd. 9 in, Dt 3 in, Accession No G-167. Source: Displayed in the main hall of Lahore Museum.



Figure 13 Wine drinking couple, Dimensions. Ht.25 cm, Wd 25 cm, Source/ Ref: Calcutta Museum India.



Figure 14 Toilet tray with drinking scenes, Provenance: 3rd – 4th Century AD, Stone, dimensions: Ht. 14 cm. Wd. 14.3. Wt. 0.5 Kg, Accession No PM-03173, Source: Displayed in Western gallery of Peshawar Museum.



Figure 15 Comb drinking scene, Provenance: unknown, wood, 7.4*8.8 cm. Source: Gandharan Art from the Hirayama collection. 2003, Accession no 104657. P. 240. Fig.VI-69.



Figure 16 Drinking scene girl with garland, Provenance, Sirkap, Grey Schist, Dimensions: 5 5/16, No. 8494, Source: National Museum Karachi Pakistan.



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