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**New Expansions of Buddhist Art in Gandhara:
The Conceptual Model for Pakistan's Cultural Heritage**

Ihsan Ali, Abid-ur-Rehman and Muhammad Ashfaq

Introduction

The cosmopolitan country, Pakistan hammed by unique cultures and civilizations, testified through numerous archaeological explorations and excavations, conducted by various national and international archaeologists in particular and art historians, philosophers, and geologists in general. The authors of this paper will discuss here the characteristics of Gandhara with the latest discoveries in Hazara region-its expansions towards the northeastern side of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with special emphasis on the Conceptual Model for Pakistan Cultural Heritage.

Gandhara, the cradle of Buddhist civilization, which gave birth to the famous Gandhara art (Sehrai, F: 1991), was first mentioned in Rig-Veda, a religious book of the Aryans (Ali, I: 2003; Young, R: 2009), dating back to the 2nd millennium B.C. The Rigveda has many things in common with the Zoroastrian religious book Avesta, better known as Zend Avesta. Atharva Veda relates Gandhara to Mujavants. Other significant references are found in the Apastamba, such as Angas, Magadhas, Sruta Sutras, Hiramyaikesi and Baudayana (Ali, I and Naeem,Q:2008). Greek historians like Herodotus, Hekataios, Ptolemy and Strabo mentioned Gandhara in various forms as Gandarioi, Gandarae and Gandaritis. The Buddhist text Anguttara Nikaya has made a mention of Gandhara as a prominent state (Swati, M.F: 2008). It remained one of the province of the Achaemenian Empire as per Darius' inscription of 6th century BC. Literary sources tell us that, the term Gandhara signifies "the land of fragrance" (Rhi, J: 2007). It is the combination of two Sanskrit words "Gand" indicating fragrance and "hara" defining land. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang, who visited Gandhara in 628 AD., wrote that the Kingdom of Gandhara shaped the

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tract of the country on the west bank of the River Indus and to the north of the River Kabul, including Peshawar Valley and the modern Swat, Buner and Bajaur (Shakur, M.A: 1946). According to Zwalf (1996), the British expert on Gandhara Art, the region of Gandhara was located below the meeting point of Hindukush and the Great Himalayas, while Dr. M. F. Swati (1997) maintains that except in the time of Mauryans and Kushans, the region was divided into a number of small kingdoms, such as Udhiyana (Swat), Gandhara (Peshawar Valley), Kapisa, Bactria and others.

Pushkalavati (Balahisar-Charsadda) was its first capital from 6th Century BC to 1st century AD (Wheeler, M: 1962; Jawad, A:1994; Ali,I: 2003; Cuningham, R and Ali, I: 2007), which was invaded in 327 BC by Alexander the Great (Ali, I:2003). This site was identified by Alexander Cunningham and excavated by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in 1958 and University of Peshawar in 1994-98, the ruins of Bala Hisar stands 29 km to the northeast of Peshawar at Charsadda. The site dates back to 11th century B.C and remained the first capital of Gandhara under the Achaemenids (6th century BC). Later, Gandhara was ruled by the Mauryans, Indo-Greeks, Scythians and Parthians (Ali, I: 2003). The Kushans established their capital at Purushapura or Peshawar in the 1st century AD and King Kanishka built a stupa and monastery at Shah-Jiki-Dheri, near Ganj Gate (Hazaar Khwani), Peshawar (Spooner, D.B: 1908-09; Foucher, A: 1915; Jaffar.S, M: 1945; Ali, I: 2003). A relic casket, discovered from this stupa, has Kharoshthi inscription, which speaks the name of the city as Kanishkapura, is now exhibited in the main hall of the Peshawar Museum (Jaffar, S.M: 1945; Shakur, M.A:1946). In the 7th century A.D, the Turk Shahi rulers of Kabul and Gandhara established the capital of Gandhara at Udabandapura, present Hund (Shakur, M.A: 1946; Rahman, A: 1979; Ali, I: 1999; Ali, I et al: 2005), it is proved from the evidences, discovered during Hund excavation, conducted by Prof. Dr. Ihsan Ali and Dr. Gul Rahim Khan (1996-97). The Hindushahis replaced them in 822 AD, which remained their capital till the invasions of Ghaznavids in 1002 AD (Rahman, A: 1979), thus ending their rule over Gandhara after about 1600 years (Law, B.C:1954).

It was during the Kushan rule that the Buddhist Art developed under the Mahayana Buddhism at Gandhara and spread towards China,

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Korea and Japan. The Chinese pilgrims of the 5th-7th century AD applauded about the great glory and existence of thousands of stupas and monasteries, upon their visit to Gandhara. Taxila, though not geographically included in Gandhara, was an extension of Gandhara art that had been a great teaching centre of Buddhism (Swati, M. F: 2008).

The need of New Museums in the region of ancient Gandhara

Three capitals were located within the boundary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Being very rich with archeological remains, these areas attracted many excavators from inside the country, Britain, Japan and Italy who collected hundreds of precious pieces of Gandhara Art, which needed to be preserved. For this purpose, before the partition of Indo-Pak subcontinent, Peshawar Museum was established within the Gandhara Region by the British Scholars, representing the largest collection of the Buddhist Art. Likewise, the Swat Museum, Dir Museum, Chakdara and Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayum (SSAQ) Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar, exhibits the remains of the region. Later on, thousands of new archaeological discoveries were made and hundreds of archaeological excavations were conducted by numerous departments in the KP region, resulting in more remnants of Gandhara Art but it was impossible to exhibit all those pieces in the Museums already in existence, because of the shortage of display capacity. Most of these unmatched excavated remains were amassed in reserved collection. With this practice, majority of the Buddhist valuable Art pieces lost its context and cultural value, that is why, in 2003 onwards, efforts were started by Prof. Dr. Ihsan Ali, former Director, Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of NWFP (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa) for the establishment of 5 new Museums in Gandhara region. After three years of the incessant indefatigable struggle of this department the dream of laying the foundation of new Museums in Gandhara was realized and founded the following Museums, namely; City Museum, Gor Khuttree, Peshawar, Pushkalawai Museum, Charssadda, Hund Museum, Swabi, Chitral Museum, Chitral, and Mardan Museum, Mardan for amusement and education of the inhabitants of respective districts. These nascent Museums are now representing both archaeological and ethnological

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profile of the respective regions and proved the best example, for easy access, to learn about heritage education under one roof. Furthermore, four galleries were added to the Peshawar Museum for display and reserve collection. Staff was appointed in the Lalasha Dur Museum, Chitral and Dir Museum, Chakdara was also renovated.

Expansion of the Buddhist Art in Gandhara Region

The Ain-i-Akbari (Alami, A.F:1556-1605 AD; Blochmann, H:1873), speak that the present Kashmir was also once part of Gandhara. Keeping in view this evidence in mind, the survey of Buddhist remains in the unexplored area, within the Hazara region, was started by the staff of Abbott Museum, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ihsan Ali, with the objectives to map and establish a cultural profile of Hazara Region. Although many archaeological sites were already discovered and excavated in district Haripur and Mansehra by the Department of Archaeology, University of Peshawar, Federal Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan and the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Government of NWFP (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). For the first time, attention was focused on District Abbottabad in particular and rest of the Districts of Hazara region in general. Over 8 months a continuous survey was carried out in District Abbottabad, resultantly a total of 304 archaeological sites were discovered, ranging from the 2nd-3rd Century AD to the 19th-20th Century AD. The report of this research activity was published in Pakistan Heritage Vol.1 of the Department of Archaeology, Hazara University, Mansehra (Ali, I et al: 2009). Over 130 new discoveries of Buddhist remains within the District of Abbottabad proved the expansion of Buddhist Art to the northeastern part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This evidence was further strengthened by the new discoveries of over 150 Buddhist sites in the districts of Haripur and Mansehra. The preliminary report of the archaeological explorations in District Haripur was published in Pakistan Heritage Vol.2 (Ali, I et al: 2011). The Archaeological excavations at Kandari Bedadi which is located near Shinkiyari at District Mansehra, carried out in 2007-08 by Mr. Safdar Khan and his team under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Ihsan Ali proved the existence of Indo-Greeks, Kushans and Hindushahi

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dynasties in this part of the region in the past. The antiquities recovered from the excavation was properly examined and displayed in the University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Hazara University. The establishment of two new Museums within the Gandhara region is another achievement of Dr. Ali i.e. Abbott Museum in Abbottabad and University Museum at Hazara University, Mansehra. These new museums are housing the archaeological and ethnological remains of Hazara, providing a base for the heritage studies in the region.

Prof. Dr. Ihsan Ali, currently, the Vice Chancellor of Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan), has planned to further strengthen the understanding of Gandharan studies through the establishment of Gandhara Research Centre at Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan. This centre will be a base for the promotion of Cultural Heritage in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular and Pakistan in general. The Centre has envisaged as a future plan to collect data and information regarding Archaeology and Ethnology of the whole province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to publish Gazetteers, based on such surveys, explorations and excavations conducted scientifically. Besides this, a Museum will be established to preserve the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of the Province. The centre will also offer MPhil and PhD research facilities to all those interested in the protection, preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage of Pakistan. The Gandhara Research Centre will be under the umbrella of Pakhtunkhwa Study Centre, which was approved by the Academic Council on 5th May, 2011 and the syndicate of the University on 31st May, 2011. The concept of Pakhtunkhwa Study Centre is purely academic, offering the study of literature, poetry, art, culture, ethnology, and folklore. Moreover, under this centre, a literary and cultural cell has already been setup. There is a proposal of the Bacha Khan Chair, to be established not only at the Pakhtunkhwa Study Centre but also at one of the prestigious Universities of UK, for which negotiations are in progress.

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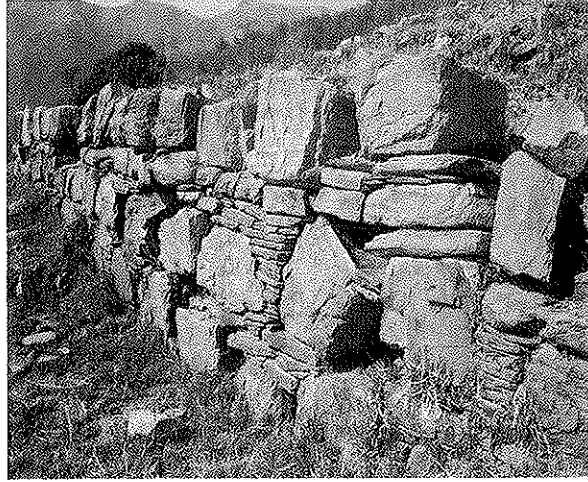
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Plates



Pl. 1. Bagh Dara-I, Havellian



Pl. 2. Bega Kot, Abbottabad

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Pl. 3. Chitti Dhakki, Haripur

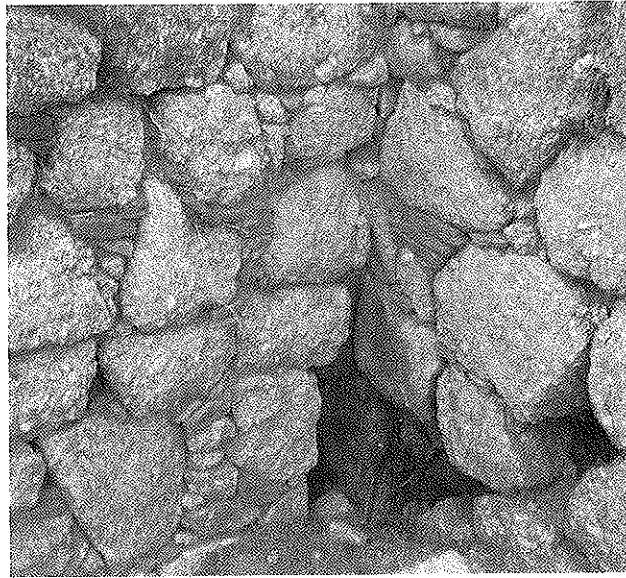


Pl. 4. Ghotam Dheri, Abbottabad

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Pl. 5. Kont Stupa, Havellian

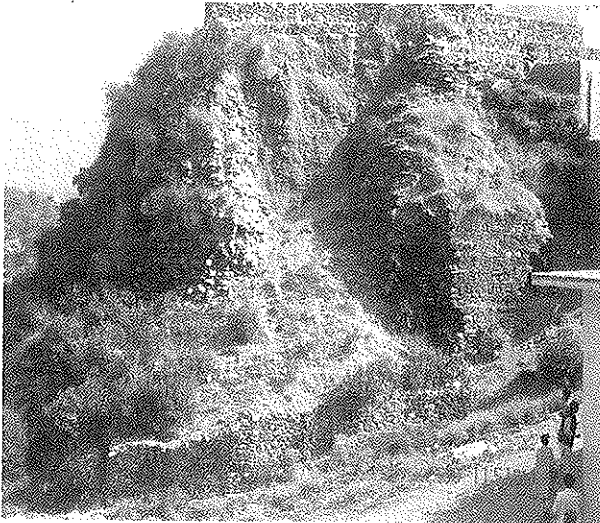


Pl. 6. Mari, Mor Baffa Kalan, Mansehra

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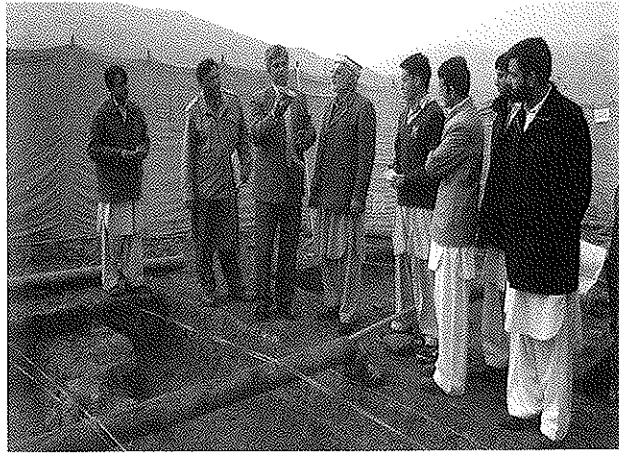


Pl. 7. Mubarkan, Abbottabad

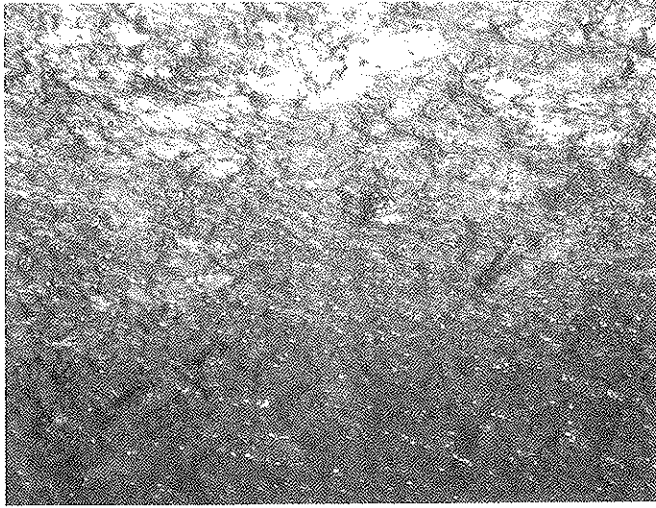


Pl. 8. Nowsehera Fort, Havellian

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Pl. 9. Excavation at Kandar Bedadi, Mansehra

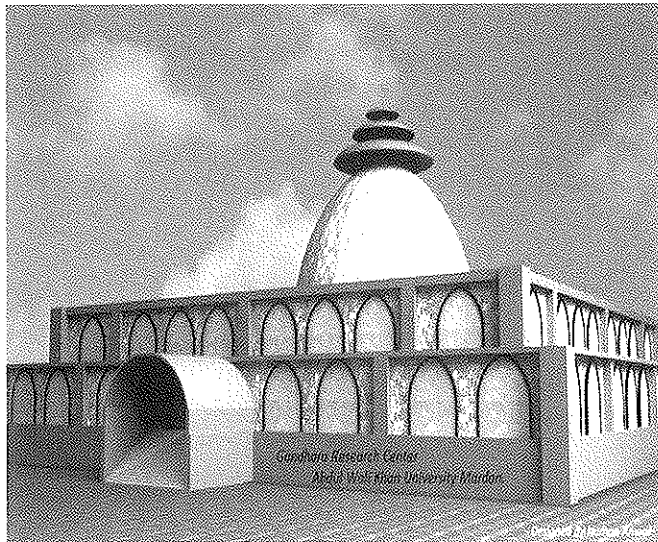


Pl. 10. Jaba Rock Painting, Mansehra

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Pl. 11. Chitral Museum, District Chitral



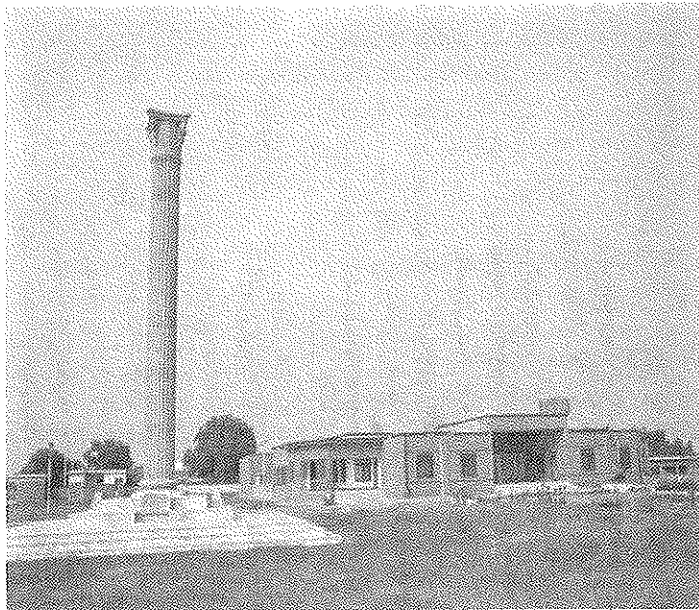
Pl. 12. Proposed Gandhara Research Centre

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Pl. 13. Gor Khuttree Museum, District Peshawar

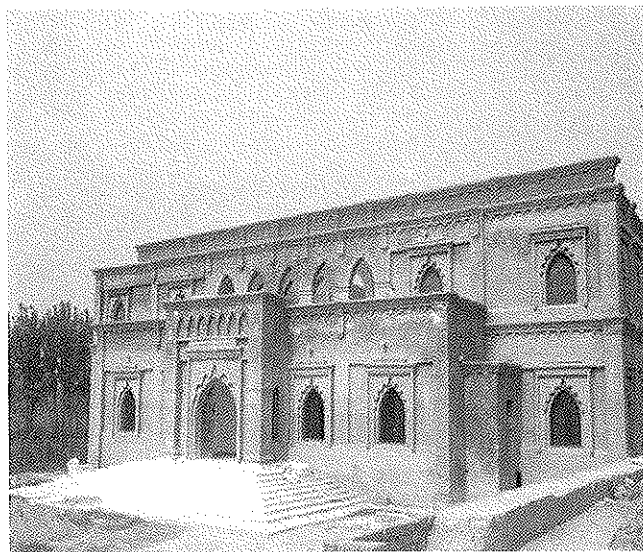


Pl. 14. Hund Museum, District Swabi

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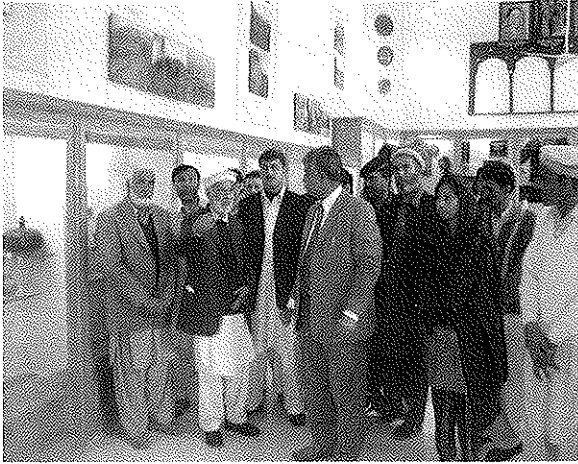


Pl. 15. Mardan Museum, District Mardan

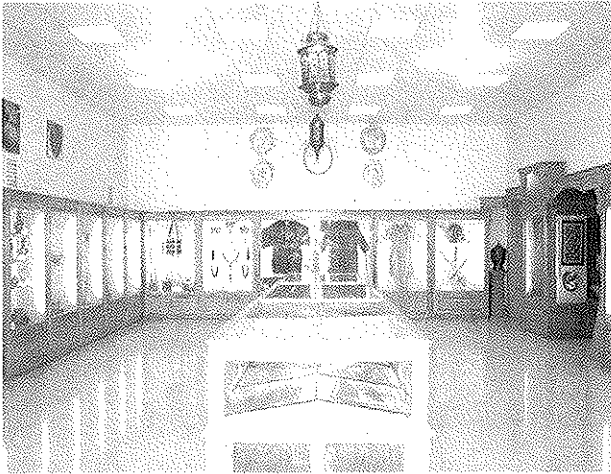


Pl. 16. Pushkalavati Museum, District Charsadda

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Pl. 17. Abbott Museum, District Abbottabad



Pl. 18. Hazara University Museum, District Mansehra