Symbols of Wealth and Devotion: Indigenous Artistry along the Indus

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The spine of Pakistan is the Indus River. Splendid prehistoric and historic sites arose on either side of the Indus, its tributaries, and the waters rushing to meet the River. The Indus gives its name to the earliest prehistoric civilization on the subcontinent, namely the Indus Valley Civilization. Its mature phase dates to c. 2600 – 1900 BCE. About two thousand years later, Buddhist monasteries, towns and cities rose again in the valleys near rivers and streams connecting to the Indus. The Buddhist tradition belongs to the early historical cultural phase. Both the Indus and Buddhist traditions produced art, which stem from very different cultural and historical contexts. Indus art was probably produced in response to prehistoric socio-economic needs and conditions; Buddhist art was produced in response to religious requisites. These requisites originated outside of the land of the Indus by people in the Gangetic Valley. Yet, instances of continuity exist between prehistoric and historic art along the Indus.

Continuities can persist because they reflect common experiences in the geographical setting and common local expressions of wealth and value. Some of these commonalties are distinctive to all of South Asia; some pertain mainly to the land of the Indus. It may be well to first describe the land within its geographic setting. Next highlights of the Indus and Buddhist art are presented together with some of their connecting points. This will lead to the final discussion of continuities extending from Indus to Buddhist art.

Certain geographic features on either side of the Indus River would have been experienced by prehistoric and historic settlements. To the west lie the highlands and plateaus of Baluchistan, the hills and plains around Peshawar, and the mountains and alpine valleys of Swat in northern Pakistan. For example, the Indus city of Mohenjodaro is today on a plain three miles west of the Indus River in the province of Sindh, and the Buddhist monastic centre of Takht-i Bahi from the historic period is nestled on the spur of a hill in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan (Harle 1994: Fig 51). Perhaps this site was chosen for the monastery because of the sweeping view and proximity to urban life in the Peshawar Plains below.

East of the Indus, the land is more open and fertile. The Punjabi plains, though still punctuated by hills, are less rugged. The other great Indus city, Harappa, is situated on the River Ravi, a tributary to the east of the Indus. The location of the Indus Valley Civilization was not limited to the region on either side of the Indus. The Civilization extended far beyond the Indus, going north to Afghanistan, west to the border between Pakistan and Iran, and south along India's western coast to the Gulf of Cambay. An important Indus site on this seacoast of India is Lothal. During the historic period, a great stronghold of Buddhism arose at Taxila, to the east of the Indus River. From c. second century BCE - third century CE, Taxila was the most important city in the Punjab, and a great centre of art.

Practically the whole of Pakistan, even today, lies in the watershed of the River Indus and its many tributaries, and supports one of the greatest networks of irrigation canals in the world. Undoubtedly water and its fertilizing property had as great an import upon the well-being of the population in the past as it does in the present. Today, our eyes can still see the fertile abundance. It includes much wild and cultivated fauna; many different plants and flowers, the prominence of life-giving waters and fertile soil teeming with chthonic life. However, the thick mountainous forests in the north are now nearly gone. It is important to realize that this environmental setting inspired some of the art from the land of the Indus.

This environment fostered a pronounced emphasis on water in the prehistoric civilization. Houses in the lower town at Mohenjodaro feature an unexpected luxury in the ancient world - bathrooms (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 3.17). Bathrooms were an exceptional item in Greece, and not seen in Rome until c. second century BCE. The emphasis on cleanliness through proper circulation and drainage of water pervades all parts of that city. Mohenjodaro had an extensive central drainage system that ran tributary drains in the residential quarter to collective drains in the lower city (Kenoyer 1998: Figs. 3.16, 3.18). The citadel at Mohenjodaro also had drains, some turning corners to prevent friction or restrict the flow of sewage.

The citadel of Mohenjodaro boasted a Great Bath, which was watertight (Kenoyer 1998: Fig 3.22). The Bath measures 39 feet long, 23 feet wide, 8 feet deep. We know it is water-tight because the builders built a wall of precisely set bricks, with joints only millimetres wide, and sealed the wall with an inch thick layer of bitumen (natural tar). Most scholars agree that the Bath had a religious function associated with washing and purification for ritual purposes. The ritual function of a tank and its close proximity to a place of worship continues into the early historical period in the entire subcontinent.

For example, inscriptions from the Gangetic Valley dating to the first-third century CE, mention tanks near shrines to the Hindu god Shiva and to Yakshas and Nāgas; the Buddhist monastery complex at Takht-i Bahi features depressed thresholds leading to worship halls so that the monks can wade through water before approaching the sacred space. At Mohenjodaro other imposing structures besides the bath were situated high above the lower town; their elevation, size, and presumed function connects these structures with the power, prestige and wealth of the rulers of this city. No Indus objects help us to identify with certainty who were the rulers of Mohenjodaro or the Indus Civilization. A great drawback is that the script on the Indus seals is still undeciphered, so the voices from the past remain mute. However, some deductions can be made as to who had authority.

It is now assumed that the Indus Civilization engaged in a flourishing overland mercantile trade between various Indus towns and a sea trade to the west reaching Oman and Mesopotamian cities (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 1.20). This assumption is based on the distribution of the Indus seals, which are understood to have primarily an economic function. So, wealthy traders may well have held positions of authority. However, the subject matter depicted on seals and on sculptural representations seems to reflect religious beliefs. These depictions, together with the noticeable lack of weaponry at Indus sites, suggest that authority and rulership may also have been invested in religious leaders.

If we want to visualize the mien of a religious leader of Mohenjodaro, we can gaze upon the bust of the so-called Priest-King (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 5.1). The statuette is of limestone and seven

inches high. The figure has his eyes half-closed; he has a strong nose, thick lips, and a beard. There is a fillet around his head, and a similar band circles his upper right arm. Later in a rare instance in Hindu art, the god Shiva wears a fillet (Figure 1). The sculpture of Shiva comes from the Gangetic Valley site of Mathura and dates c. third century CE. Moreover, seen in profile, the top of Shiva's head is flattened and slopes down towards the back, as does the head of the Priest-King from Mohenjodaro made over two millennia earlier. The so-called Priest-King wears a robe, which covers the left shoulder, leaving the right bare. The robe is covered with a trefoil design. This design reappears in much the same shape later on, again, on a Mathura relief, where it covers the surface of the throne of a powerful personage; the relief dates to c. second century CE (Figure 2). The so-called Priest-King is abstraction. The ears are almost abstract in shape; the hair of the beard is evenly incised to convey texture. Originally, the figure should have been sitting. He is usually considered to be a holy man because his portrayal evokes later symbols of spirituality and authority. His half-closed eyes appear to be focussing on the tip of the nose. We associate this, in later times, with a yoga exercise. However, the head of another so-called Priest-King has open eyes and a different type of physiognomy, although the abstract treatment of the ears, beard, and hair adorned with a fillet are quite similar (Figure 3).

Another statuette of a male may also be associated with religious practices. It is a red stone torso that comes from Harappa and measures 9.3 centimetres (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 7.8). The reason for its nudity remains a mystery. The figure, rendered so naturalistically, has a slight protruding stomach. There are sockets in the neck and shoulders for the attachment of the head and arms made of separate pieces. Nipples of the breasts were also made independently and affixed with cement. The body is conceived along ideational lines rather than as an actual physical type. The conception seems to emphasize an interior force within the body. That force is pushing against the outer surface of the skin, almost like air pushing out a balloon. The result is that the soft stomach gently swells. Technically, the swelling is achieved through the interlocking of smoothly modelled, convex planes. In later Hindu art we identify an inner force within the body. So here is another statuette that might have yogic implications – but we are not sure.

Consensus is growing, however, that a yogic posture seems to be represented on quite a number of Indus seals (Kenoyer 1998: Figs. 6.18-20, 6.24). The posture is that of a figure squatting with the legs bent at the knees. The feet touch heel to heel and the soles point downward. Most of the figures are male, but on some seals this figure can be described as female because of the pigtail hairdo. The arms of the seated figure are extended and reach up to the bent knees. It is usual for the arms to be loaded with bangles from wrist to armpit. These yogin-like figures often sit on an elevated dais, which is one way of indicating their special status. Another indication is by their headdress. The headdress of the figure on seal 420 from Mohenjodaro, marks him as fertility figure; it is composed of buffalo horns and an abstracted motif of plant branches (Kenoyer 1998: Figs. 6.18, 2.25-26; for full details on seals No. 235 and 222, mentioned below, see Srinivasan 1975-76; 1984). The figures on other seals from Mohenjodaro wear a similar, but more naturalistically conceived headdress made of curved, ribbed horns and branches sprouting leaves (e.g. seals no. 235 and 222). The figure on the terracotta tablet from Harappa (Harappa Lot 4651-01); Harappan Museum H95-2486) wears a headdress made of essentially the same elements; again we see horns flanking a central branch with three sprouting leaves (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 6.24 and Catalogue No. 27). It is interesting to observe that J. M. Kenoyer, the excavator of this tablet, considers this yogin-like figure to be witnessing the killing

of a water buffalo. It may be remembered that the yogin-like figure on seal 420 wears a headdress of buffalo horns and that a water buffalo is one of four wild animals that surrounds him. Possibly this personage in the yoga-like posture has some strong connection with the animal world.

Indeed, one important seal from Mohenjodaro shows the seated figure – this time without headdress – surrounded by kneeling worshippers (Figure 4). Behind each worshipper is a snake. Evidently, these worshippers are *nāga* or serpent devotees of the *'yogi'*. The similarity of this arrangement and later votive scenes in Gandhāra art showing *nāga* deities as they pay homage to the Buddha is quite startling (Figure 5). The parallel is so close that we can only assume that notions of the divine *Yogi* and the *Nāga* as lesser godling continued. The yogin-like being seems well known to the Indus tradition. The latest speculation concerning this figure is that he is a type of shaman, both a healer and a wonder-worker who entices wild animals and eliminates enemies. He is certainly not a proto-Shiva! The yogin model continued in Indian art, influencing the icons of the Buddha in the early historic period, as will be shown below. As for a fascination with snakes, this too can be documented by additional Indus Valley examples.

A painted pottery sherd from Lothal, dating to the second millennium BCE, shows us how carefully prehistoric people observed snakes in nature. Two are painted slithering about an anthill. From the same site and time comes another painted pottery fragment on which two snakes approach a leafy tree (Rao 1973: Fig. 24.4).

The notion of the serpent devotee reappears in early Buddhist art from Swat. On a c. first century CE stone relief now located in the University Museum at Peshawar, a serpent projects from the centre of a lotus and raises both hands in worship, presumably to the Buddha (Figure 6). *Nāgas* are themselves godlings in Buddhist art and therefore auspicious Buddhist devotees. Two panels from Swat dating to the Kushan period, and now in the British Museum show their godling status. In one panel, a *Nāga* couple receive the offering of wine from female snakes or *Nāginis;* in the other, a *Nāga* king is serenaded by *Nāgini* musicians (Zwalf 1996). In the Kushan art of Mathura, two *Nāgas* arise from masonry wells to shower adoration upon the infant Buddha receiving his first bath (Vogel 1930: Pl. LII-b).

A survey of Indus art suggests that bangles were probably symbols of social status, worn even by the religious personages, especially the *'yogi'*. No other civilization favours this ornament as much as the Indus Civilization. Bangles were made different materials (clay, bronze, shell, gold), and probably indicated the relative affluence of the wearer. Perhaps the most unforgettable bangle-wearer is a Mohenjodaro bronze of a young female (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 7.42). She is a rare Indus example of a metal sculpture. Again, this is a small piece, only four inches in height and cast in the *cire perdue* method. She has disproportionately thin limbs. She stands nude, with her weight on the right leg and the right bent arm placed rather impudently on the right hip. The left arm is covered entirely with bangles; she holds a bowl in that hand. The figure looks quite different from the other Indus sculpture, be they naturalistic or abstract, which may be because she was found in one of the later strata at Mohenjodaro. The young girl, also adorned with a necklace, is sometimes labelled as a dancer, although there is no definite proof of this identification. Were her feet preserved she might have been wearing an anklet, as is shown in the drawing of a fragment of a foot from Mohenjodaro (Figure 7).

Actually whole ranges of jewellery - bangles, necklaces, and anklets - adorn females throughout the history of Indian art. A statue found at the Dharmarajika in Taxila and dating to circa early first century CE could be taken for a Greek figure were it not for a particular piece of jewellery (Figure 8). The Indo-Greeks had ruled in Taxila, so it is not totally surprising to find a figure wearing a long Greek chiton, which falls gracefully to the feet. But the left leg is bare, and betrays the Indian origin of the 15-inch schist female; her rather muscular leg is decorated with a heavy anklet.

Terracotta figurines give a good idea of the typical adornments that decked the Indus woman (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 6.16 and Catalogue No. 135). Her wide hips were emphasized by a decorated girdle; the ample breasts were offset by necklaces with pendants and chokers; earrings dangled on either side of her head, which often sported an elaborate headdress. Throughout the subcontinent, in the valleys of the Indus, and the Ganges River, these ornaments, emphasizing the female form, continued in the art.

This is the time to begin wondering if I am merely comparing similar forms and similar styles, or if I have any solid evidence on my side, which would allow for all the comparisons made so far in the name of cultural continuities. Current research is beginning to explain the historical and geo-physical phenomena upon which some continuities between Indus art and Buddhist art, or we may say, between prehistoric and historic art, may be postulated.

First, it is important to note that the Indus people did not vanish; they were not slaughtered by an incoming horde of Indo-Aryans. There is neither archaeological nor biological evidence for external invasions or mass migration of foreigners into the Indus Valley Civilization between the time we date the end of the mature phase, that is, c. 1900 BCE, and the rise of towns and cities, this time in the Gangetic Valley, around 600 BCE. We now know that the decline of the Indus Civilization is due to internal factors. Change in river patterns caused repeated flooding, shifting of some rivers, drying up of others, in addition to crop failures. Over time, the economic and political power base of the ruling class weakened. Trade networks, which helped maintain political control, became disrupted. As a result, political leaders and religious leaders would have lost authority, resulting in the break-up of the Indus cities and the gradual dislocation of the population.

Then began a phase during which smaller settlements were formed both as the vast civilization split and as people moved. New agricultural practices and new craft technologies can be noticed along the Indus and also in the Valley of the Ganges and Yamuna Rivers in India. This period of transition took a long time. We know that some urban centres in the late Harappan period did not come to a sudden stop; some continued till c. 1000-900 BCE in eastern Punjab (e.g., at Bahawalpur), and other late Harappan sites in the Punjab gradually merged with the mainstream Gangetic Valley cultural phase. For example, at Bhagawanpura, Dadheri, Nagar, and Katpalon, Painted Grey Ware was found with late Harappan material. It is this sort of evidence that encourages us to believe that in a number of regions no significant break occurred between the first or prehistoric and the second or historic urbanizations.

In the Gangetic-Yamuna Valley, processes were underway which would result in the second urbanization. Groups not previously dominant were amassing power in the Gangetic-Yamuna Valley. Quite possibly they were the wealthy owners of land and cattle extolled in the Vedic texts as

the generous patrons. Another dominant group could well have been the hereditary ritualists who envisioned the sacred Vedic hymns and who controlled religious life. Over time, the small villages in the Gangetic Plains grew in importance and became the nuclei, then the capitals of fortified city states (the *janapadas*). The process leading toward re-urbanization culminated with the establishment of the first empire, the Mauryan Empire, founded at the end of the fourth century BCE.

During this time, as new cities grew, as new social orders and alliances developed, and as new groups gained economic power in the Gangetic-Yamuna Valley, a man was born whose spiritual quest would prompt a new creed. His given name was Siddhārtha Gautama. A few historic facts are known about him. He was born into a petty kindgom in the foothills of the Himalayas, close to today's border between India and Nepal. His dates are in dispute, perhaps he was born in 563 or 440 BCE. While still young, the prince strove to understand the meaning of life. He did attain a realization, which he taught the length and breadth of the Gangetic-Yamuna Valley. At about 80 years, this charismatic teacher passed away. The truths that he realized soon caused a great following and he was declared a Buddha, that is, and Enlightened One. Years after his death, the tenets he promulgaed and those elaborated by his monks became the religion of Buddhism.

Buddhism arrived into the land of the Indus probably during the time of the Mauryan king Ashoka, in the third century BCE. Monks arrived spreading the creed. Monasteries and worship halls were built for them and their converts. These sacred spaces were carved with religius images. The imagery portrays the Buddha, as the Enlightened One and as the prince, or Bodhisattva, destined to achieve enlightenment. The wonderful story of his pursuit for knowledge, which resulted in his Buddhahood is told in Buddhist narrative art. Many essential Buddhist artistic conventions were crystallized in the Gangetic-Yamuna Valley and entered the land of the Indus, moving west, into the Punjab, the mountainous regions of Northern Pakistan and adjacent parts of Afghanistan. During this early period, the area from Taxila, through to the Peshawar Plains and the northern mountainous region of Swat – all part of modern day Pakistan – is usually referred to by its ancient name of Gandhāra. Early Buddhist art from this region is therefore referred to as Gandhāran art. The dating usually given to the mature phase of Gandhāran art is between the first to third centuries CE.

Gangetic art, especially as fashioned in Mathura, and Gandhāra art based the form of the Buddha and the Bodhisattva on specific models. The Buddha image was modelled upon the monk or the yogic ascetic (Harle 1994: Figs. 42-43, 56-57), and is devoid of all finery. He dons a simple robe. His hair is cut short and a chignon covers a cranial bump, symbolic of his supranormal knowledge. Actually, the body of the Buddha is a field of symbols reminding his worshippers that he is a superior Being. The Buddha's gaze is fixed; indeed his eyes may be half-closed. His hands may be webbed; they and his feet may be marked with the Buddhist wheel, symbolic of the doctrine. A protuberance is in the middle of his forehead, between his brows; this is a tuft of hair, again a sign of an enlightened Being. Other signs are that his feet completely touch the ground, leaving no space between foot and floor; his fingers and arms are excessively long. His brow is broad, as is his upper body. And there is no emphasis on his sexual parts. Of all his features, only the long ears betray his former princely life; the lobes are long, according to legend, because in the past they had been weighted down with heavy earrings.

The Buddha, prior to attaining enlightenment, was a being who had the potential to achieve the enlightened state. Such a being is called a Bodhisattva; a Bodhisattva may become a Buddha, or choose not to, because it means the extinction of his individuality after death and the inability to be reborn and give aid to humanity. The image of the Bodhisattva, in both Gangetic and Gandhāran art, is contrasted with that of the ascetic Buddha. The Bodhisattva is modelled upon the earthly prince, as indeed, a Bodhisattva remains 'a prince of the church' as it were (Harle 1994: Fig. 44). He may wear jewellery, a moustache (in Gandhāra), a regal turban, and sandals. He has long hair and heavy earrings. His garment is not the monk's robe but a dhoti, made of fine fabric and he wears a shawl around the shoulder.

Clearly, the artistic models for the Buddha and the Bodhisattva reflect two ideals, one from the temporal and one from the spiritual world. The ascetic, the yogi, the monk, inspire the Buddha model, and, royalty, especially the compassionate world ruler who protects his dominion, he is the Bodhisattva model.

For some reason not yet sufficiently studied, a much more complete story of the life of the Buddha is found in Gandhāran art than in the art from the Gangetic Plains during the same period. Highlights of that story are found on several Gandhāran schist reliefs housed in the Freer-Seckler Galleries of Art. The Birth of the Buddha shows Queen Māyā in the centre of the relief (Figure 9). The Mother of the Buddha-to-be is in a grove. She has just left her husband's city, Kapilavastu, to return to the home of her parents and give birth there. En route, she stops, fatigued. Her sisters are by her side on the left. On her right are two godlings, Brahmā, an ascetic type of god, and Indra, associated with sovereignty and might. Queen Māyā holds onto a branch of the tree and emits the divine babe in a most unusual manner; she emits him from the right side of her hip. We know the babe is divine for his head is already framed by a halo.

The next scene is at Bodh Gaya in Bihar; it shows the Buddha-to-be surmounting his last obstacle before entering a long meditation (Figure 10). It will climax in his achieving an enlightened state of mind. He has taken his seat under the Bodhi tree; actually, it is a pipal leaf tree or Ficus religiosa, but it is called the Bodhi tree because the Buddha achieved enlightenment under it. The Buddha's last obstacle was to defeat Māra, a sort of Buddhist devil. Māra tried all means to break the meditative trance of the Buddha-to-be. Each ruse failed; finally he sent his motley army. The relief shows the army wearing the protective armour worn by foreigners. Already the soldiers are in various states of disarray for they are no match for Siddhārtha. He touches the earth with his right hand and calls the Earth Goddess to witness his accrued spiritual might which is superior to that of Māra's. The earth shakes underfoot, confirming Siddhārtha's superiority and scattering the foe. This relief displays the typical style of Gandhāran art. It is a fusion of external artistic influences mixing with a local, folk art tradition. The stone cutters probably drew upon the patterns and techniques of their local crafts. I believe they melded these to the traditions brought into the region by Indian craftspeople and foreign conquerors. That is how Indian, Greek, Roman, and Parthian influences (Srinivasan 1997), as well as nomadic influences from the Scythian tribes, can be detected in early Buddhist art of Gandhāra.

Upon attainment of Enlightenment, the Buddha is persuaded to teach the content of his realization. The next scene shows us the Buddha's First Sermon at Sarnath outside of Benaras (Figure 11). Buddhists refer to this moment and the teaching as the Turning of the Wheel of the Law - the Buddhist

Dharma. The Buddha is surrounded by his first disciples. The Sermon takes place in the Deer Park and that explains the crouching deer flanking the wheel seen on the Buddha's dais. The essence of Buddhism is contained in this sermon. He exhorts his disciples to follow the Middle Path and avoid both extremes in order to attain equanimity of mind, leading to enlightenment. The last scene depicts the Buddha's final moments (Figure 12). He is passing into *Nirvāna* and will not be born again. The doctrine will be taught anew when another Buddha is reborn on earth.

The specific locality of the reliefs from the Freer-Seckler cannot yet be determined. We still have not refined our critical tools sufficiently to be able to look at these loose reliefs and say where in the vast region of Gandhāra they may come from. However, thanks to systematic excavations of Buddhist sacred centres in Swat, we have a very good idea of the characteristics of Gandhāran art that comes from Swat. It is thus not difficult to determine that the Berlin Museum relief of the Enlightened Buddha comes from Swat and that it dates to c. first century CE, a very early stage in Gandhāran Buddhist art (Figure 13). It is with this relief that I would like to conclude by demonstrating, in some detail, the phenomenon of continuity in the indigenous artistry along the Indus. The Berlin schist relief shows the Buddha seated under the pipal tree. He is being implored by the two gods present at his birth to teach and share his wisdom. Brahmā and Indra, to the right and left respectively of the Buddha, entreat him to begin the Turning of the Wheel of the Law. Note that the Buddha assumes the yogic seated position already prefigured on the Indus seals. He wears the robe and shawl, leaving the right shoulder bare, just as the Mohenjodaro so-called Priest-King. The importance of the pipal tree under which the Buddha took his seat to mediate is also foreshadowed on the Indus seal showing two figures holding a pipal leaf stem, as if it were an emblem or totem (Figure 14). The pipal tree in the Berlin relief is conceived as 'a wish-fulfilling tree', appropriate for the entreaty taking place. The notion of a tree laden with so many precious things that it can fulfil all wishes is a motif shared by the whole subcontinent. The Berlin wish-fulfilling tree, fashioned by a local artisan in Swat to suit the scene of entreaty, is given a typical Swati additional embellishment. A necklace with a very distinctive shape hangs from the tree, right above the Buddha's head. Its half-moon form is precisely that of the neck ring still worn today by Swati women as a sign of marriage (Figure 15).

To attribute beneficent properties to trees and to worship them occurred throughout the subcontinent from prehistoric times onward. A terracotta tablet from Harappa shows a tree on a platform (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 6.3); this indicates that the tree was set off from the surrounding area and given a special, perhaps sacred, space. Formerly, the *Ficus religiosa* should have been more prevalent in the land of the Indus than it is today. A botanical description of the actual leaves helps in establishing its continuity in art. The leaf of the pipal tree is heart-shaped; its base is sometimes rounded and it terminates in a long, tapering point. This is the shape we will now trace. A favourite three-leaf arrangement is found painted on the third millennium jar from Nausharo in the Indus plain (Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 6.4) and on a pottery sherd dated c. 1700 BCE from the highlands in Swat (Figure 16). The trefoil arrangement continued to delight Gandhāran artisans as they carved the mid-section of a Buddhist narrative relief with the playful rendition; the relief is in the Peshawar Museum (Figure 17). In contemporary times, the motif persists on the embroidered sleeves of a Swati woman's dress (Figure 18). One last example illustrates the endurance of the pipal motif. In a square tablet from Harappa, having impressions on both sides, the reverse shows a figure under an arch formed by pipal leaves

(Kenoyer 1998: Fig. 6.5). About two thousand years later, a similar configuration can be found on a Buddhist relief in a private Japanese collection. The relief shows three figures standing beneath three arches. Strange but true, the last figure is framed by an inner arch composed of a series of pipal leaves (Figure 19).

The symbols we have traced are likely to have persisted because they are deeply rooted in the region's physical and spiritual fabric. They express nature's bounties plus the cultural values established in the Land of the Indus.

Acknowledgements

This paper had been written at the invitation of J. M. Kenoyer for presentation to the museum audience at the time his exhibition was at The Elvehjem Museum of Art at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

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Figure 1: Head of Shiva, Mathura region, ca third century CE. Sandstone. 12 inches high. National Museum, New Delhi, No. L-668. Photograph, courtesy of National Museum, New Delhi.

Figure 2: Seated Royal Male Figure. Beginning of second century CE. Sandstone. 55 centimetres. Linden Museum, Stuttgart No. SA356871. Photograph from Herbert Härtel and Wibke Lobo (1984), *Schätze Indischer Kunst, Staatlich Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Museum* für Indische Kunst Berlin: 48, plate 17.

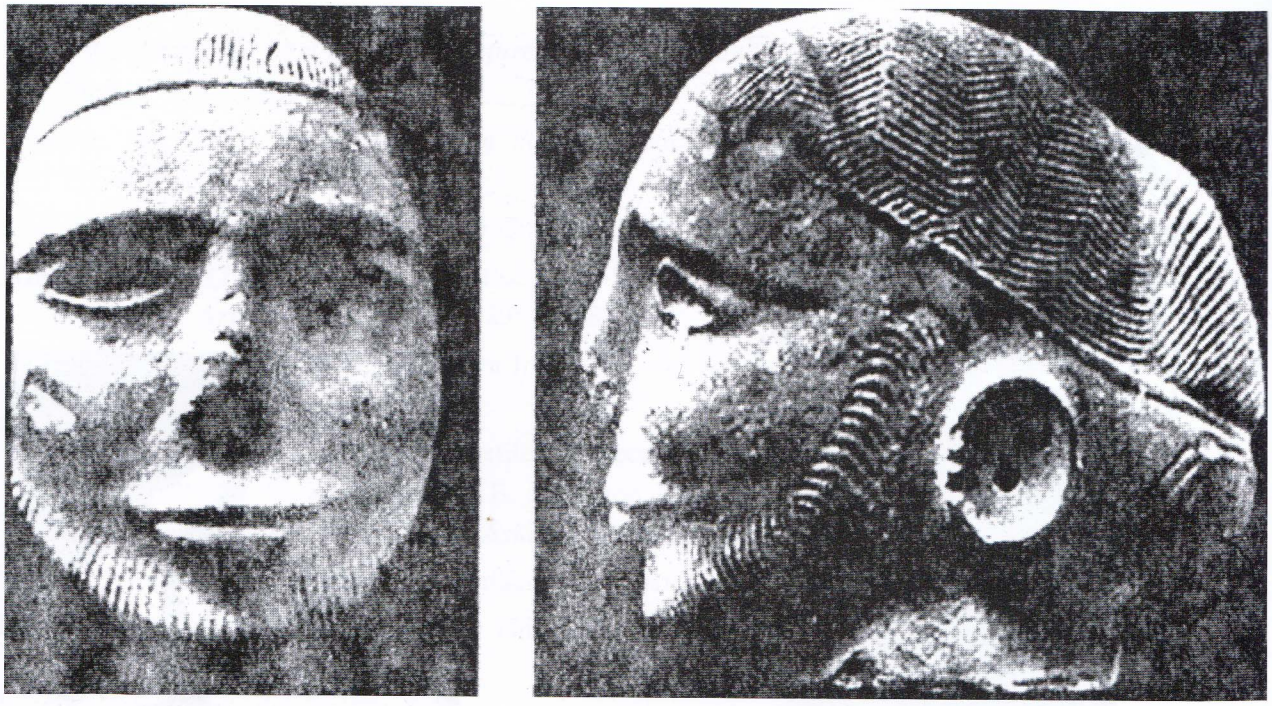

Figure 3: Possible Priest-King. Mohenjodaro. ca 2000 BCE. Limestone. National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi. Photograph from Sir Mortimer Wheeler (1966), *Civilizations of the Indus Valley and Beyond,* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company (reprint): 42, Figures 49-50.

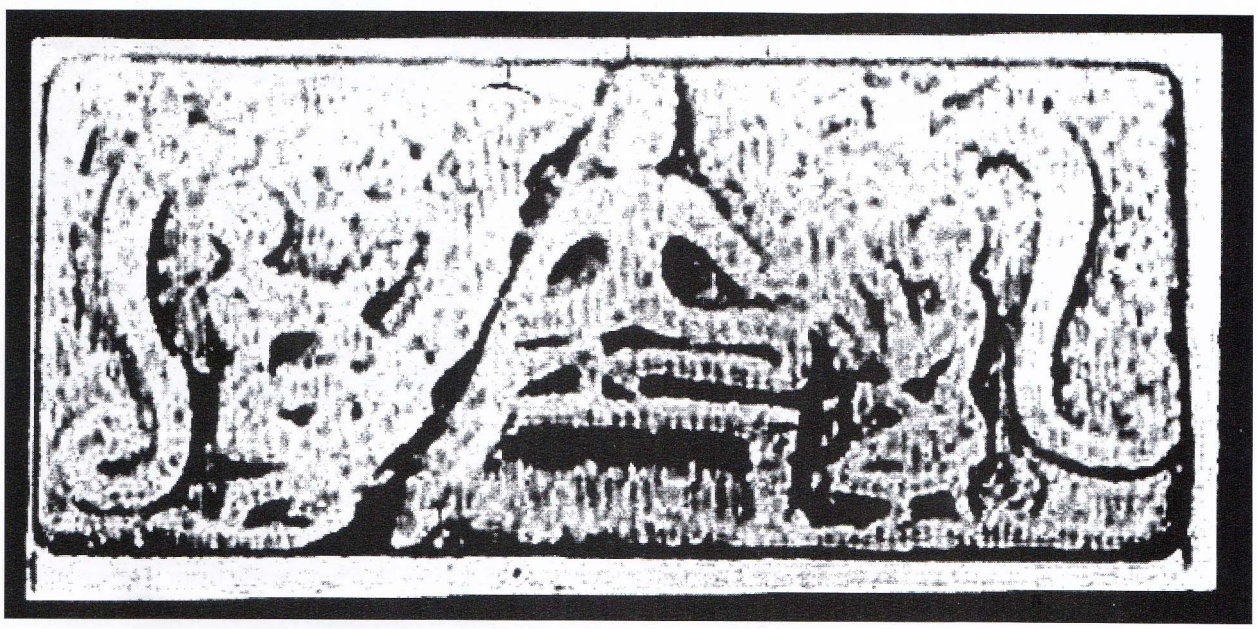

Figure 4: Kneeling *Naga* worshippers flanking a 'yogin-type' seated figure, Drawing of Mohenjodaro seal. From Sir John Marshall (1973), *Mohenjodaro and the Indus Civilization,* Delhi: Indological Book House (reprint), vol. 3, Plate CXVIII, figure 11.

Figure 5: Seated Buddha flanked by worshipping *nagas*. Stupa drum panel, Kafir-kot. 14.2 centimetres high; 5.3 centimetres deep, Schist. The British Museum No. OA 1899.6.9.13. Photograph, courtesy of The British Museum.

Figure 6: *Nagaraja* emerging from a lotus flower, Butkara III, Swat. Sir Sahibzada Abdul Qayyum Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, University of Peshawar. Photograph, courtesy of the SSAQ Museum, University of Peshawar.

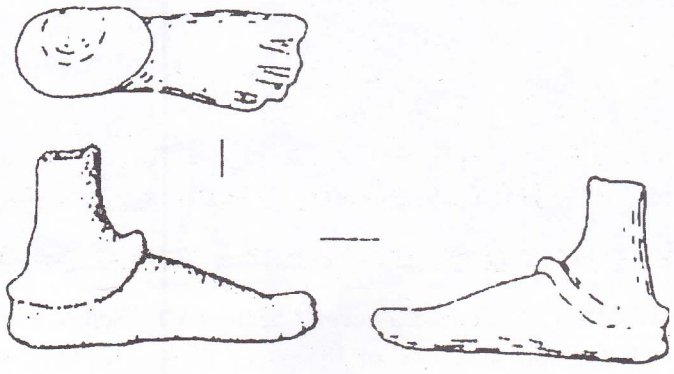

Figure 7: Fragment of a foot. Mohenjodaro. Drawing from MORE.

Figure 8: Female in Greek dress, Dharmarajika stupa complex, Taxila. ca early first century CE. Schist, 15 inches high. Archaeological Museum, Taxila. Author's photograph.

Figure 9: Birth of the Buddha, Gandhara. ca second century CE. Schist 67 centimetres. Freer Gallery of Art. Photograph, courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Figure 10: Mara's Assault on the Buddha-to-be. Gandhara. ca second century CE. Schist. 67 centimetres. Freer Gallery of Art. Photograph, courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Figure 11: Buddha's First Sermon at Sarnath, Gandhara. ca second century CE. Schist 67 centimetres. Freer Gallery of Art. Photograph, courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Figure 12: The Parinirvana, Gandhara. ca second century CE. Schist, 67 centimetre. Freer Gallery of Art, Photograph, courtesy of the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

Figure 13: Meditative Buddha flanked by Brahma and Indra, Swat. ca first century CE. Schist. 42 by 40 centimetres. Museum für Indische Kunst Berlin. Photograph, courtesy of Museum für Indis-che Kunst Berlin.

Figure 14: Indus Seal, MORE.

Figure 15: Gujar woman wearing a twisted silver neck ring. Photograph from Johannes Kalter (1991), *The Arts and Crafts of the Swat Valley,* New York and London: Thames and Hudson: 96, figure 124.

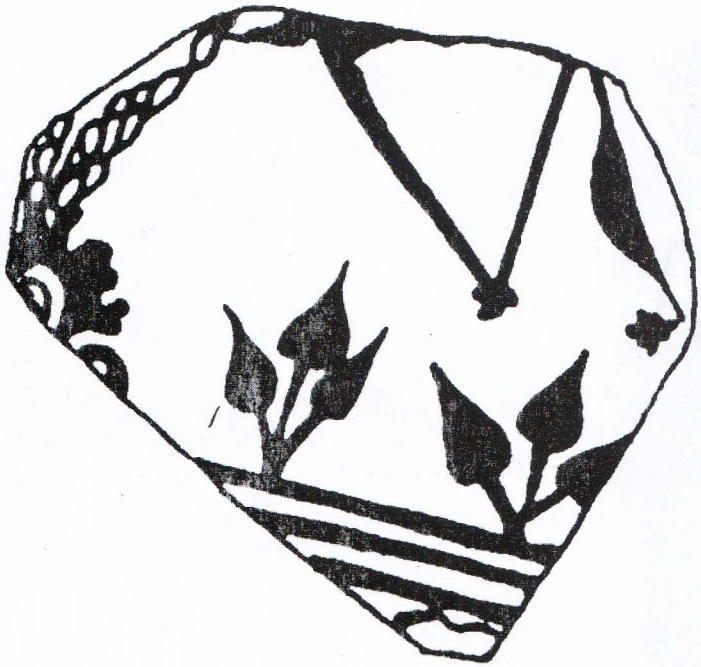

Figure 16: Pottery sherd showing triple pipal leaf, Bir Kot Ghwandai, Swat. ca 1700 BCE. Photograph, courtesy of Professor G. Stacul.

Figure 17: Triple pipal leaf as decoration in Gandharan relief. Peshawar Museum No. 1906. Author's photograph.

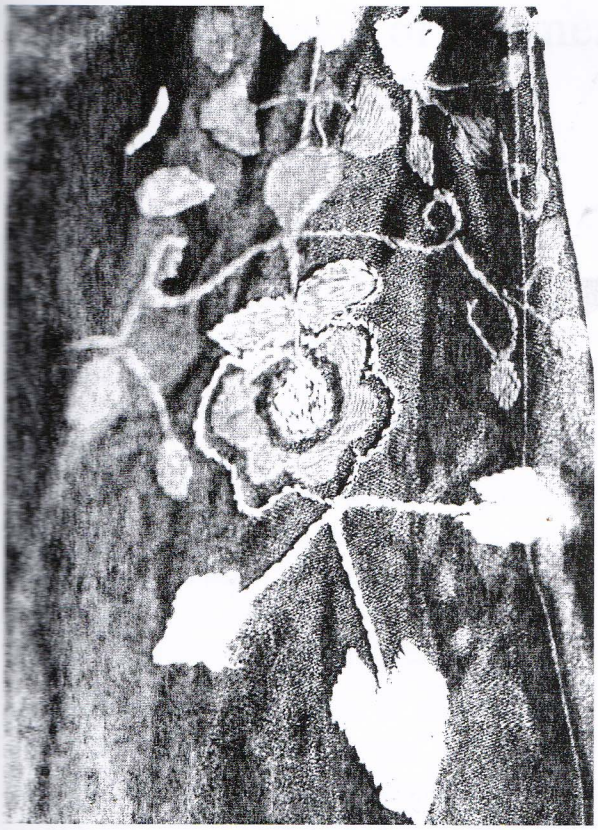

Figure 18: Contemporary dress of a Swati female. Detail of sleeve with pipal leaves. Dir Museum, Chakdara, NWFP, Pakistan. Author's photograph.

Figure 19: Relief segment showing figure in an arch decorated with pipal leaves. ca second-third century CE. Schist. Private Collection, Japan. Author's photograph.