

## **Dance Scenes in the Panels of Gandhara Art: An Insight to the Recreational Activities of Ancient Gandhara**

**Kiran Shahid Siddiqui**

### **Abstract**

*In India, dance is connected with religion and dancers were considered as the servants of gods who performed to please them. There are few Gandhara reliefs which depict dance scenes signifying the popularity of this recreational art in the region. The present paper aims to reveal the fact that dance had been an essential attribute of the lives of the people of Gandhara region by exploring and exemplifying the Gandharan panels depicting dance scenes. The paper also analyses the dance scenes in terms of dance technical terminology.*

**Keywords:** dance, music, Gandhara, Buddhism

### **1. Introduction**

“Art is the epitome of human life, the truest record of insight and feeling, and that the strongest military or economic society without art is poor in comparison with the most primitive tribe of savage painters, dancers, or idol carvers (Langer 1966: 5-12).” The present-day world asserts to be extremely civilised, but since a long time our current methods of warfare, human exploitation, misuse of precious resources will undoubtedly be regarded cruel. It is hard to furnish an accurate explanation of civilisation, to mark the exact phase at which human culture passes from barbarian to civilisation. In general, it may be said that every civilisation develops its own culture and every culture develops some kind of art. Art, as a general term establishes itself in numerous ways - architecture, literature, painting, sculpture, dance, theatre, music, drama, film and other forms.

The growth of civilisation also means the advancement of artistic sense. In the Indian sub-continent, the essential inter-relationship of the

arts, is one of the basic traditions of classical aesthetics. Dance is a unique form of expression that includes movement, emotion, and symbolism. When the representation of dance is explored and confirmed in art, it is comprehended that dance is unavoidably connected with historicity and civilisation. Therefore, the question of how dance is placed and looked today in the regions that are known as Gandhara is of great significance, Sadly, nowadays, in the label of religion, dance and music are being criticised and all that is associated to this part of civilisation is being disregarded as not attribute of our culture, religion and our heritage. Dance has been very much part of this culture and civilisation, and the decay of this art form means the death of humanity.

The present paper will explore how Buddhist civilization has contributed in human growth by way of its art, specifically the noticeable forms of dance and music that have been discovered in architectural and sculptural masterpieces of Gandhara art. It is apparent that melody and rhythm played a momentous role in Buddhist Sangha (community). Music and dance offerings were made to stupa and reliquaries, not by the monks themselves but, by the lay people (Bareau 1962: 246). The chant of mantras and engaging in music by Buddhist devotees till these days continues to be the norm (Bhattacharyya 1980: 55-61). Buddhism has borrowed much from Hinduism, such as its rituals, god and goddesses, nevertheless Buddha has definitely never depicted dancing like his Hindu counterparts Vishnu, Indra and Shiva. It seems strange that, in Gandhara panels, the worshippers are depicted dancing in attendance of Buddha. The scenes are mostly of celebratory nature and numerous panels depict festive dancing events. The paper also briefly explores various steps, mudras and movements that compose dance.

Dance scenes are portrayed in the rock arts since prehistoric times. earliest representation of dance in South Asia hails from the rock shelters of Bhimbetka dating back to Mesolithic period. (Fig. 1). Sculptural reference of dancing, in South Asia, dates back to Mohenjo-Daro's Dancing Girl predating any literary evidence. (Fig. 2). Another significant sculpture is that of the broken male torso, of grey lime stone, discovered from Harappa indicating the prevalence of dance in protohistoric times (Fig. 3). It is comparable to Greek skill by its remarkable anatomical exactness, standing on his right leg, with left leg raised up and the waist turned to the left and both arms dropped out in the same direction in the swing of dance (Chakravarti 1986: 143). The specimen is assumed as

suggestive of a Siva Nataraja (Srinivasan 1984: 77). Marshall (1996/1931: 45-46) states:

“It is the figure of a dancer standing on his right leg, with the body from the waist upwards bent well round to the left, both arms thrown out in the same direction, and the left leg raised high in front ... Although its contours are soft and effeminate, the figure is that of a male, and it seems likely that it was ithyphallic, since the membrum virile was made in a separate piece. I infer, too, from the abnormal thickness of the neck, that the dancer was three-headed or at any rate three-faced, and I conjecture that he may represent the youthful Siva Nataraja.”

There are numerous other figurines which show that dance as an art began with the growth of human society and civilization. Indra, referred in Rig-Veda as a dancer delivering a speech, under the influence of the intoxicating Soma juice, in conversation with his wife Indrani and his pet monkey Vrishakapi (Varadpande 1983: 32). In the Puranic literature, Indra, is represented as a deity compassionate of singing and dancing.

The sacred custom of worship through dance and music has pervaded Indian life presenting a picturesque perspective on their culture. Dance, in South Asia, is considered as part of theater, both derived from divine inspiration. These rules are narrated in the *Nāṭyāśāstra*, formalized in 2<sup>nd</sup> century CE (Ghosh 1951: LXXXI-LXXXIII), and attributed to a mythical character Bharata-Muni. It is believed that classical Indian theatre originated in the recitation of the epics, the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata*, on religious occasions. According to Indian tradition, it was Brahma who presented *Nāṭyāśāstra* to Bharata by creating the science of drama with Shiva as the Lord of the Himalayas. Siva, the cosmic-dancer, performed the first dance and is called as Nataraja or the Lord of Dancers and Actors. His consort, Parvati embellished Shiva's performances with strong and delicate modes of dancing. God Vishnu created dramatic styles. *Apsarās*, the celestial dancers, graced the drama to perform female characters.

According to the *Nāṭyāśāstra*, there are four forms of *abhinaya* (“expression”) in Indian dance and drama, classified as: *vāchika*—speech (through song), *āṅgika*—bodily movement, mainly through mudras,

*āhārya*— through costume and makeup, *sātvika*—mood and sentiment, mainly expressed through the face (Carroll and Carroll 2013: 24).

The *Nāṭyāśāstra* describe classifications of dance gestures, postures and steps such as: ten modes of standing, six modes of resting, five kinds of leaps, seven kinds of spins, thirty-two kinds of steps that include the ground movements and movements with one or both legs (Narayan 2007: 12). *Abhinayadarpaṇa*<sup>1</sup> of Nandikeshvara<sup>2</sup>, the first practical text exclusively dedicated to dance, extensively deals with the use of hand gestures for communication and expression. This text classifies twenty-eight single hand gestures, twenty-three combined hand gestures and thirteen ornate hand gestures for dance (Banerji 1942: p. 80).

Carvings on the Buddhist monuments like Bharhut, Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta indicate that music and dancing was part of stupa worship or Buddhist funeral rituals. Similarly, celebrations with dance and music at the event of consecration of a stupa is depicted on the western pillar of Northern gateway of Sanchi Stupa (Varadpande 1983: 107).

In *Nāṭyāśāstra*<sup>3</sup> dance is described as comprising of two features, *natya* (expression or dance used in drama) and *nṛtya* (pure dance). Its idea expresses those emotions (*bhava*) which effectively articulate devotion of one's god achieved through initiating a strong *rasa* or mood, a reaction, containing components of both the emotion and the aesthete. With some powers of expression at its disposal, it was appropriate that dance should form an integral part of religious worship.

## 2. Dance in Buddhist Text

Buddhist texts, *Mahāvastu*, *Lalitavistāra*, *Vinaya Piṭaka* and the *Dīvyāvadāna* frequently mention dance among the other performing and plastic arts. Dancing, music and drinking wine appears to be common in the early Buddhist centers and were tolerated in laity. However, these

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<sup>1</sup> Its date range from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.

<sup>2</sup> According to Lingapurana, Nandikeshwara was the chief attendant of Shiva and was immortalized by him. He was the son of a blind woman, Silada, who prayed to gods for a son and was blessed with one by Shiva (Banerji 1942: 42).

<sup>3</sup> *Nāṭyāśāstra* accounts how Sage Bharata, approached the gods to urge for the creation of dance and drama. Brahma handed him the skills and directed him to produce the dance and drama for the festival of the god Indra. Having ascertained the divine origins of the dance, the rest of the work is provided details of staging drama and dance techniques.

activities were prohibited for the monastic community by Buddha. According to the Mahīsāsaka<sup>4</sup> and to the Dharmaguptaka<sup>5</sup> schools, the monks did not perform music, singing or dancing themselves but they made them executed by the laity. In fact, in the texts of other schools, these particular offerings were never made by the monks and, in the few cases where the nature of their performers is specified, it is a matter of always lay people (Bureau 1962: 246).

Buddhist sacred literature frequently refers to the arts of music and dancing in a deferential manner considering it as sophisticated skill to be learnt and mastered. Nevertheless, these texts also emphasize the arts of dance and music as lure which should be resisted and overcome. Dancing peacocks and female dancers often occur in *Jātakas*. There are references of students in *Jātakas* who were sent to study in Banaras at king's expense: music and dancing was among the subjects taught (Fausboll 1880: p. 239).

*Mahāvastu* states that King Śuddhodana provided Prince Siddhartha with all the pleasures of royal court life to “keep him well entertained with dance and music and song, so he should not set his heart on leaving home (The Mahāvastu 1952: 139).” But the prince could not be attracted to such entertainments.

The *Milinda-pañha* provides information about “the tradition, secular law, arithmetic, music and military art”, except for dance, which is noticeably missing from this list (Vatsyayan 1977: 185). The classical tradition of dancing and music was maintained by the courtesans of the Buddhist folklores, Ambapāli and Sālavati. Both were “well-versed in dancing, singing and lute-playing much visited by desirous people (Davids and Oldenberg 1882: 171-2).” Lalita-Vistara mentions sixty-four *kalā* (arts) among the subjects which should be studied which include the arts of *nṛitya* (dancing) (Mitra 1882: 186).

The above-mentioned references from the sacred Buddhist texts indicate that dancing was widespread and eminent art of expression in the Buddhist society these sources leave no question about the prevalent acquaintance and performance of dance which is verified by the sculptural evidence from the Buddhist arts of Sanchi, Bharhut, and Amravati (Vatsyayan 1977: 185).

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<sup>4</sup>Mahīsāsaka is one of the early Buddhist schools.

<sup>5</sup>The Dharmaguptaka are one of the eighteen or twenty early Buddhist schools. They are said to have originated from, the Mahīsāsakas.

Dance scenes are not infrequent in Gandhara school. The poses and the attitudes executed in Gandhara may not be astonishing, but when analysed carefully it is certain that “the basics ‘*hasta*’ (hand gesture) and the feet positions of the classical dance are not unknown to them, and there is a discernible Indianness in the movement (Vatsyayan 1977: 302).”

### **3. Gandhara panels with dance depiction**

Numerous Gandhara narrative panels clearly reveal that dancing was an important part of Buddhist worship and devotion. Though dancers were an essential part of festive celebrations, both religious and secular occasions, depiction in Gandhara panels is not only connected with the events of joy but they are also shown enticing Siddhartha during his meditation. The birth of Siddhartha was celebrated by music, as was his wedding. Siddhartha’s father, Suddodhana, kept him in an environment surrounded by worldly pleasures to restrict him from his desire to renounce the world. Siddhartha married Yashodhara at the age of sixteen and his marriage was celebrated by drinking, dancing and singing. Mara sent his daughters to distract him with their beauty and amuse him through dancing when Siddhartha was about to attain enlightenment. Few sculptures also depict individuals in dancing poses. Few Gandhara panels with dance depictions, most of them ensemble dance and music, are chosen to carefully examine their context in which the activity is being performed.

#### *Siddhartha’s Palace Life*

Siddhartha lived within the palace with all the worldly pleasures which his father could provide for him to keep him away from the bitter truths of life. Lower most tier of a three-tiered panel from Peshawar Museum (Fig. 4) represents Bodhisattva in cross-legged ankle pose with both legs hanging off the couch and crossed at the ankle level. Two flanking male characters are depicted in similar posture with their hands in *añjalimudrā*<sup>6</sup>, a symbol of respect. One on his extreme right is standing in *añjalimudrā*. The middle tier of the panel contains a continuous band of pipal leaves. The upper tier depicts five dancers all in almost similar dance pose with their heads in *utkṣipta*<sup>7</sup> signifying reverence. The first dancer, from left, is

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<sup>6</sup> Both the palms in *patākā* are joined together to perform *añjalimudrā*.

<sup>7</sup> *Utkṣipta* head movement: turning the head aside and upwards.

facing her right, her right hand resting on her waist and left hanging loosely, in *ābhāṅga*<sup>8</sup> pose. The second dancer is facing her left in almost the same pose as the previous one with left hand on her waist. The third one is also in similar pose with her right hand in *patāka hasta*<sup>9</sup> extended above and away from her head. Left hand rests on her waist. The fifth dancer is holding a flower in her left hand and her right hand resting on waist is depicted in similar pose to the preceding ones. Facial expressions of first three dancers (from left) seems indistinct due to defacing of the panel. The other two can be noticed in an aggressive mood. Their eyes are in *ālokitā*<sup>10</sup> *dr̥ṣṭi*<sup>11</sup>.

A broken panel from National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi “dancer and musician in palace” (Fig. 5) depicts a male dancer, facing back, on the left, dancing with his head in *udvāhita*<sup>12</sup> right hand raised above his head probably in *uromaṇḍala*<sup>13</sup>. The feet position obliterated and cannot be ascertained.

### *Siddhartha's Marriage with Yashodhara*

Prince Siddhartha was married to Yashodhara at the age of sixteen. In Gandhara art, panels associated with marriage ceremony are variously depicted including the introduction of bride, and walking of bride and bridegroom around the fire. Few panels, depicting post-marriage events show characters drinking, dancing and singing delightfully to celebrate the marriage occasion. A relief depicting “Life in Palace” in British Museum, London shows Siddhartha reclining on a couch with his wife. A female on their left is shown in dancing with her right leg raised. Her right hand is also raised above her head (Zwalf 1996: pl. 170).

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<sup>8</sup> *Ābhāṅga* is standing pose in which the plumb line or the center line from the crown of the head to a point midway between the heels passes slightly to the right of the navel. One hip is raised gracefully, the weight of the body is supported on one leg.

<sup>9</sup> In *patākāhasta*, performed by single hand (*asamyuktahasta*). all the fingers are kept close to each other with the thumb finger kept bent.

<sup>10</sup> *Ālokitā* (inspecting) is an eye gesture denoting keen glance (Banerji 1942: 102).

<sup>11</sup> In Indian dance, eye movements are equally important as the hand gestures.

<sup>12</sup> Head gesture in which it is turned upwards. “The *udvāhita* head is to be applied in pride, showing height, looking high up, self-esteem and the like (Banerji 1942: 95).

<sup>13</sup> One of the 108 *kāraṇas* or minor dance movements mentioned in the *Nāṭyaśāstra*. “A *kāraṇa* in dance is the co-ordination of the movements of the hands and feet (Banerji 1942: 88).”

The upper tier of the two-tiered relief in National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi depicts the palace life of Siddhartha with his wife Yashodhara entertained by the musicians and dancers (Fig. 6). Two dancers on the left side of couple are noticeable. One behind the seated musician is depicted with her head in *udvahita*<sup>14</sup> and hands in *karkaṭa hasta*<sup>15</sup>. The other dancer, on extreme left of the couple, is in *tribhanga*<sup>16</sup>, left foot in *kuñcita*<sup>17</sup> and her head in *parāvṛtta*<sup>18</sup>.

A relief showing “Yashodhara offering drink to Prince Siddhartha” in Islamabad Museum (Fig. 7) depict the couple seated on couch being entertained by female dancers and musicians. The dancer next to Yashodhara is in *svastika*<sup>19</sup> - *cārī*<sup>20</sup> with her head in *parāvṛtta* and neck in *ancita*<sup>21</sup>. Her right-hand rests on her head and left is stretched above and away from her head. The female sitting next to her is playing drum with her left hand and rise in dancing pose with her right hand in *patāka hasta*.

### *The Great Departure*

A relief displayed in Peshawar Museum depicting “the great departure (left) and Siddhartha in Meditation (right)” represents two female dancers along with three musicians (Fig. 8) in the right part of the panel. All five figures are richly bejeweled. The dancer on the right of Siddhartha is in *abhanga* pose with her neck in *ancita*. Facial features are not discernible. Her right arm stretched above her head. The *hasta* is indistinct due to defacing. Her left hand in *muṣṭi hasta*<sup>22</sup>, which denotes furious mood, is on her breast level. The right foot is in *ancita pada*<sup>23</sup>. Dancer on the left of Bodhisattva Siddhartha, too is in *abhanga* pose. Her head in *parāvṛtta*, her

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<sup>14</sup> Head gesture in which it is turned upwards. “The *udvāhita* head is to be applied in pride, showing height, looking high up, self-esteem and the like”.

<sup>15</sup> *Karkaṭa hasta* is a hand gesture of *saṃyuta-hasta* or combined hands in which the fingers of the hands are interlocked and stretched.

<sup>16</sup> A triple bend pose with one hip raised, the torso curved to the opposite side and the head tilted at an angle.

<sup>17</sup> Movement of the feet in which the heels are thrown up, toes all bent down.

<sup>18</sup> Head gesture in which the head is turned aside towards shoulder.

<sup>19</sup> The crossing of the limbs or the hands at the wrists (Devi 2002: 38).

<sup>20</sup> The movement with a single foot.

<sup>21</sup> When the neck is slightly bent to one side (Nandikesvara 1917: 20).

<sup>22</sup> When the four fingers are bent over the palm, and the thumb is set upon them.

<sup>23</sup> When the toe or toes are held up while the heels rest on the ground.



eyes in *avalokita dr̥ṣṭi*<sup>24</sup>. Her right hand in *muṣṭi hasta*. Left hand raised above head. Both the dancers present *prasārita*<sup>25</sup> torso.

### *Siddhartha admired by Naga Kalika*

Siddhartha was not charmed by the extravagant atmosphere provided to him by his father. He decided to abandon palace life and began to concentrate on the achievement of nirvana. He went through various austerities for the achievement of his goal after which he realized that no amount of austerities could lead him to reach his goal. Finally, after passing river Niranjana, on his way towards the sacred pipal tree, beneath which the enlightenment was to take place, he came across Naga Kalika, the serpent god. The Nagaraja praised Bodhisattva and foretold about his enlightenment.

An interesting panel “Naga Kalika with musicians and dancers”, in Musée Guimet, Paris (Fig. 9) depicts female dancers on either side of Naga Kalika. Both dancers elevate their hands over their heads in *uromaṇḍala* with their legs in *svastika* positions.

### *Attack of Mara*

After meeting Naga Kalika, Siddhartha went towards Gaya ultimately reaching at the sacred tree, began to meditate to seek nirvana. Mara, the evil spirit with his hosts tried to keep him from his goal by producing a thunderstorm, a flood, and an earthquake. He also tried to frighten Siddhartha by sending demons and furious animals. Mara sent his daughters, either nude or semi-nude, to amuse him and distract him.

A broken panel “Attack of Mara and his hosts” in Peshawar Museum (Fig. 10) depicts Mara and his team of demons and beasts. He with his bejeweled dejected daughters are depicted in the lowermost row. One on extreme left faces the missing bodhisattva in dancing pose. Her right foot is in *agratalasañcara*<sup>26</sup> and her right hand in *ardhacandrahasta*<sup>27</sup>. Her sister, next to her, is in *svastika cārī*. Her head is

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<sup>24</sup> Looking down towards the ground

<sup>25</sup> stretching of the sides in their respective directions.

<sup>26</sup> the heels thrown up, the big toe put forward and the other toes bent.

<sup>27</sup> When four fingers are held together, vertical to the palm, with the thumb held rigidly away from them. To give a clear effect of a half moon, this gesture should be held at an

in *parāvṛtta* and hands in *karkaṭahasta* resting on the shoulder of previous figure.

Another panel showing “Temptation of Mara and his daughters” in Peshawar Museum (Fig. 11) depicts Mara’s daughter, on extreme right of meditating bodhisattva in *abhanga* pose in *svastika cārī* and head in *utksipta*. Her right foot can be noticed in *kuñcita*.

### *Musicians and Dancers*

In a panel “Musicians and dancers” in Lahore Museum (Fig. 12) all characters are either *Nagas* or *Nagis* identified by the serpent headgear worn by some of them. The relief suggests the love *Nagas* had for dancing and music. The panel depicts the sacrificial scene in which the *Nagaraḥa* is standing on the extreme right in front of an incense altar with *Nagis* on his right. To their left, there is a group of two female dancers, in center, visible from the back, and six musicians, three on their either sides. Dancers performing on the music appear to be extremely energetic. Both the dancers are depicted in *kari hasta*<sup>28</sup>. Dancer on the left is depicted with her left leg lifted up behind in *vriśchika*<sup>29</sup> *kāraṇa*, right foot in *agratalasañcara* and her head in *parāvṛtta*. Dancer on the right is shown with her right foot in *agratalasañcara*. It leaves no doubt that music and dance had an essential role in the religious ceremony performed at the extreme right.

A stair-raiser relief in Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland (Fig. 13) depicts three male dancers flanked by two musicians wearing Parthian attire. The first dancer, from right to left, steps forward with his head in *parāvṛtta*, the left foot of the second dancer is in *agratalasañcara*. The third dancer stands with his knees bent and his torso bending forward. All three dancers are depicted with the fingers of hands interlocked. Lo Muzio (2019: 74) identifies this hand gesture as ‘Persian snap’<sup>30</sup>. It is interesting to note that the dancers wearing Persian attire, mostly

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angle and not flat (Banerji 1942: 132).

<sup>28</sup> *Karihasta* is performed when the left hand is held near the ear and the right hand is stretched out in the *Pataka* position and moves from side to side, this is the *Karihasta* hasta. The similar movement can be done vice versa i.e. with the right hand held near the ear (Banerji 1942: 135).

<sup>29</sup> *Vriśchika* (scorpion) resembling the tail of scorpion.

<sup>30</sup> With joined hands, with crossed fingers and wrists slightly bent downwards (Muizio 2019: 74).

discovered from Buner and Swat, are shown performing dance with the 'Persian Snap'. A broken panel from the Butkara I, Swat, now in Swat Museum, (Fig. 14) depicts a young dancer wearing tight-fitting tunic and trousers, and a 'Phrygian cap', performing the 'Persian snap' (Lo Muzio 2019: 77).

Besides the above-mentioned panels, there are several individual Gandhara sculptures which depict *yakshas*, *śālabhāñjikās* and other females in dancing poses. One such female dancer in Swat Museum (Fig. 15), bejeweled and elaborately dressed, is depicted in *svastika cārī* in *abhanga*. Right hand rests on her waist and left hand in *patākahasta* held near the head. Salabhanjika from the upper monastery Nathu, now in the IMC, Calcutta, India is depicted similarly.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Dance is entwined with other arts in the service of religion to communicate with the divine, ranging from instinctive individual movement, to symbolic movements performed as ritual in religious ceremonies. A study of the reliefs of Gandhara art, though selective, has revealed the important part played by dance in the lives of the people in Gandhara. The sculptures of sumptuous dancers indicate that dance was important for Buddhism, a predominant religion of Gandhara, in the past.

It is interesting to note that after the attainment of nirvana (enlightenment), Buddha was hardly depicted, in the panels of Gandhara art, with the musicians and dancers. It was only before this milestone of his life story that he was frequently depicted amongst the entertainers. It is but noteworthy that we find several Gandhara reliefs other than the life story of Buddha that depict dancers.

An effort is made to identify the various dance poses in Gandhara reliefs which were prevalent in India since the ancient times. The study revealed that the depiction of dance is not infrequent in Gandhara art and the artist seems well aware of the dance poses. They may not be remarkable, as depicted in other South Asian arts, but from minimal details, it can be determined that the basic knowledge of *hastas* and feet positions of classical dance was not unknown to the Gandhara artist and the Indianness in the dance movements is noticeable. However, few from Swat and Buner, add a foreign touch to it. It is obvious from the study of

Gandhara panels that the natives of this region enjoyed their lives to the fullest and celebrated their special events with dance and music. Dancers were an important part of festival celebrations, which combined religious and secular functions. Hence it can be established that a kind of ceremonial classical dance was prevalent in Gandhara during the heydays of civilization which perished with the decline of civilization itself.

The study of Gandhara reliefs depicting dance enables to reconstruct the missing links in history; through these examples of dance, one can maintain the idea of the growth and development of dance when no written history of this exists. The mentioned examples provide the impression of totality of a tradition, which marks that all arts are interlinked and utilize the technique of one art in the other. It is the product of encounters between artistic streams of embodied imagination in a civilization, which has had the scale, the wealth, in its broadest sense, and the technologies over millennia, at times only to preserve, at others to glimmer with new achievements. The aesthetic experience and its continuity have been lost, yet all these forms are but a fragment of an integrated whole as they belong to a glorious and grand heritage, a past where dance was not just fragment but a significant part in the total conception of a beautiful civilizations that could accommodate diversity.

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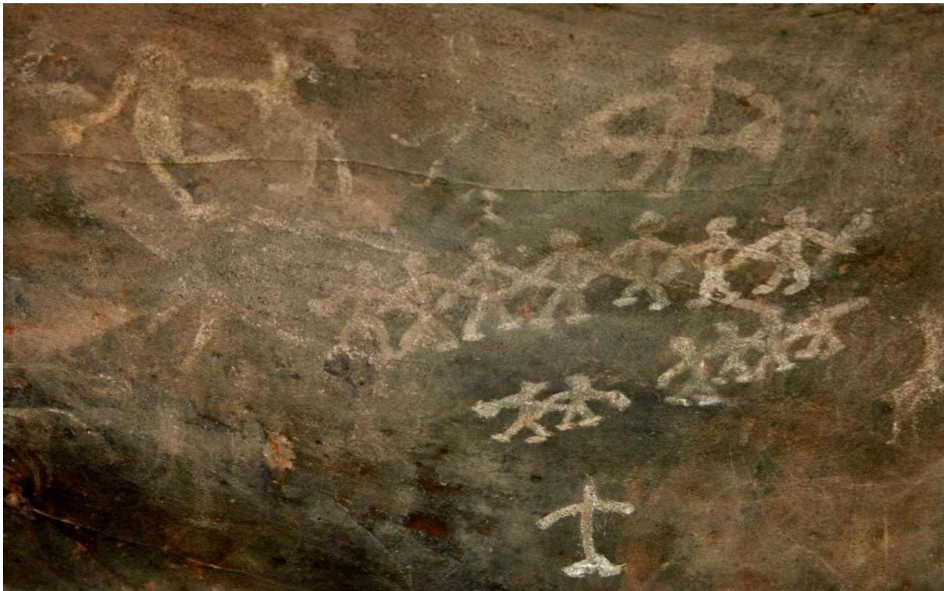


Fig. 1 - A group of dancers at Bhimbetka Rock Shelter, Madhya Pradesh (Photo taken by Worrel Kumar Bain, Faculty Member, Department of Anthropology, Gauhati University in 2014 during his MSc Dissertation fieldwork in Central Narmada Valley).

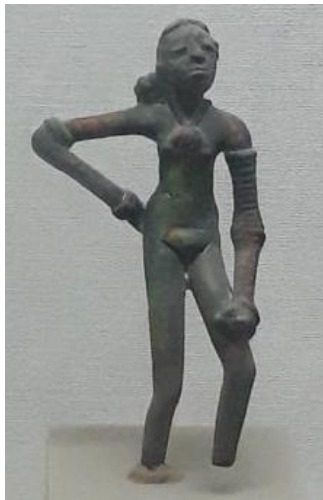


Fig. 2 – Th “Dancing Girl” from Mohenjo-daro, National Museum, New Delhi (Photo by the author).

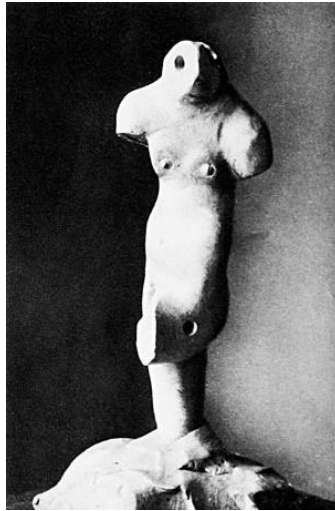


Fig. 3 - Photographs of Male Dancing Figure from Harappa. Retrieved from <http://shorturl.at/cgxL9>



Fig. 4 - Panel showing “Bodhisattva Siddhartha in Palace”, Peshawar Museum. (Photo by the author).





Fig. 5 - Panel showing “Dancer and Musician”, National Museum of Pakistan, Karachi.  
Retrieved from <http://shorturl.at/aixI0> (permission taken to republish).

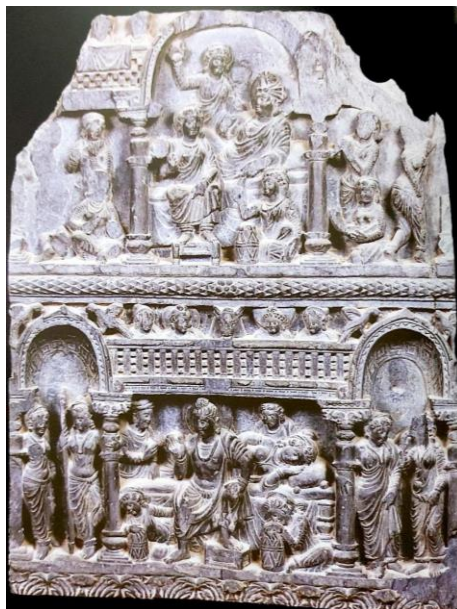


Fig. 6 - Panel showing “Life in the Palace”, National Museum Karachi (After Ingholt 39 A-B).



Fig. 7 - Panel showing “Yashodhara offering drink to Prince Siddhartha”, Islamabad Museum (Photo by the author).



Fig. 8 - Panel showing “The Great Departure and Siddhartha in Meditation”, Peshawar Museum (Photo by the author).

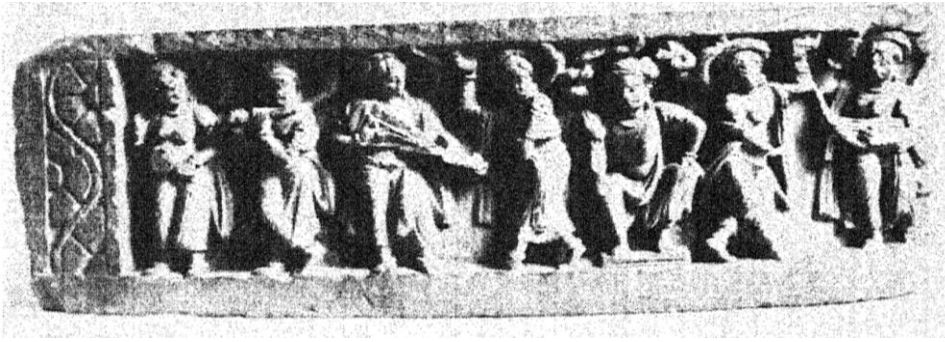


Fig. 9 - Panel showing “Naga Kalika with Musicians and dancers”, Musée Guimet (After Hackin, 1923, pl. III a).



Fig. 10 - Panel showing “Attack of Mara and his Host”, Peshawar Museum (Photo by the author).





Fig. 11 - Panel showing “Temptation of Mara and his daughters”, Peshawar Museum  
(Photo by the author).



Fig. 12 - Stair-riser (?) showing “Musicians and Dancers”, Lahore Museum. Retrieved from <http://shorturl.at/apDKR> (permission taken to republish).



Fig. 13 – Stair-raiser relief showing “Parthian dancers and musicians”, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland. (after Lo Muzio 2019: fig. 4.1).

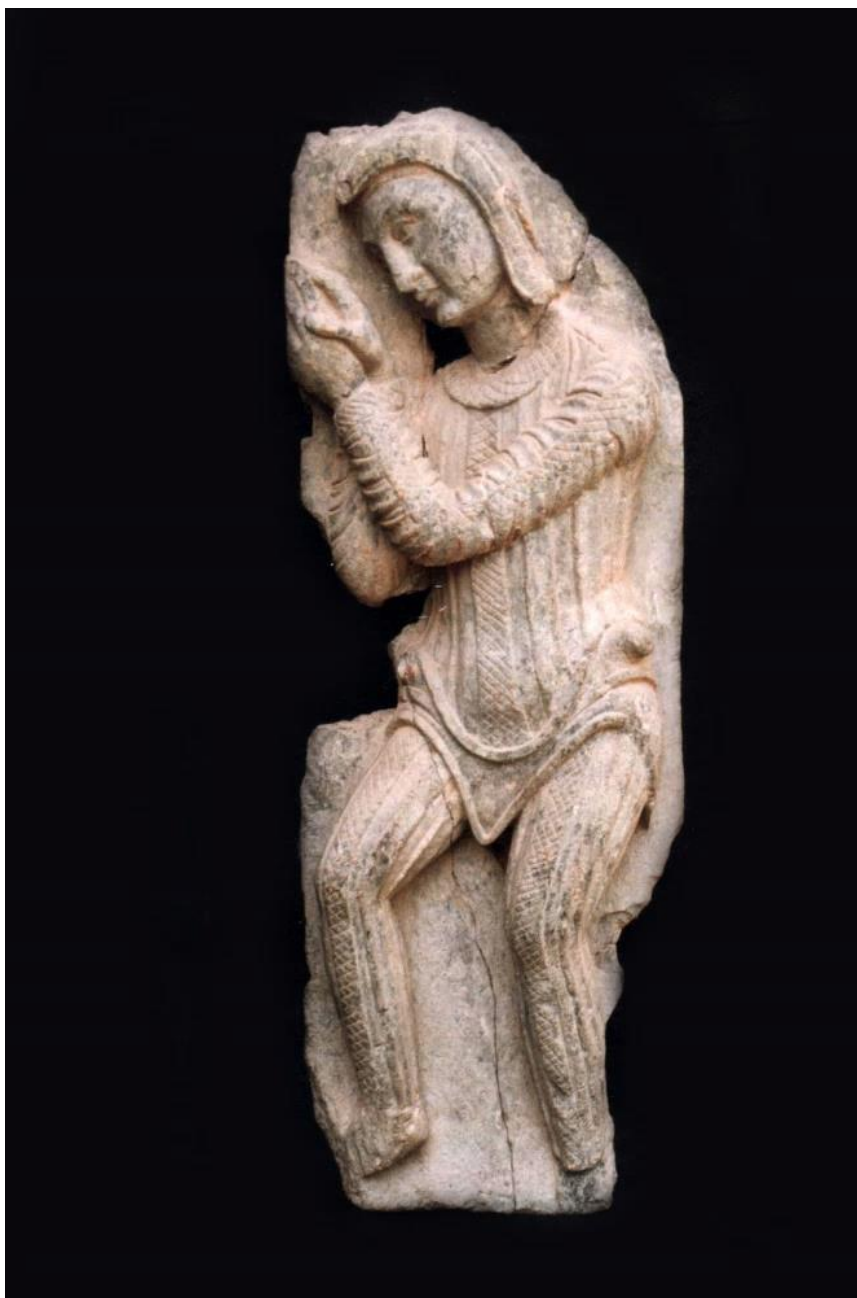


Fig. 14 - 'Persian dancer', Butkara I, Swat Museum (Photo by the author).



Fig. 15 - Female dancer, Butkara I, Swat Museum (Photo by the author).

