

Representation of Headdresses of Male Imagery in Gandhara Art

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Abstract

This article discusses various hair coiffure and headdresses in vogue among male imagery in Gandhara art. The tradition of wearing long tresses irrespective of gender, social and religious status remains in vogue in Indian subcontinent as well as in Gandhara. In south Asia, detailed hairdo of terracotta figurines and combs discovered from Mohenjodaro proves inclination of people towards hair styling and ornamentation. In Rig Veda terms like opasa, kaparada, and stuka are used to describe various hair styles (Swami, 2000). These hairstyles were complemented with variety of ornaments like wreaths, fillets, diadems, crowns, turbans, caps and helmets. Repository of Gandhara art is replete with male and female sculptures adorned with choicest of hair dresses. However, in this paper, we will analyze practice of hairdo among males imagery in Gandhara.

Key words: Coiffures, Headdress, Jattamukuta, Usnisa, crowns, fillet, wreaths, turbans

Introduction

A headdress was considered as an additional upper garment (Sahay, 1975). However, it was also an indicator of social, religious, political status and equally served utilitarian purposes, as headdresses kept the hair strands in place and turbans were also used to protect heads from severity of weather. Headdresses like uṣṇīṣa and crowns are described in ancient Indian literature like *Atharvaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Ramayana* (Sahay, 1975) and Israeli religious texts states, “And on the turban, on its front, he set the golden plate, the holy crown, as the lord had

commanded Moses” (Leviticus, 8; 9) (Neva, 2012). Practice of wearing headdresses can be traced back to Indus valley, where male and female sculptures are wearing fan like crowns (Pl. 1), straight and carved fillets (Ahmad, 2014). Priest King (Karachi Museum) is wearing a fillet decorated with incense burner (Tiwari, 2002) (Pl. 2).

Male Coiffure: *Coiffure is a French word for hairdo and it requires time taking styling of hair. Reference of a barber for a king in Jatakas shows concern of male in preening hair (Sahay, 1975). Here we will briefly discuss hair styles of male depicted in Gandhara art.*

Coiffure of Brahma and ascetics: Most sacred and simple of headdresses among Gandharan sculptures are of disheveled long hair often coiled in top knots. Yearly unwashed and untidy long hair was a common custom among Indo- Aryans males and it was indicative of the custom that they endowed their gods with this attribute (Banerjee 2, 510-12). Coomaraswamy (1928) and Agarwala (1984) used *Vedic* terms *Kaparda* and *Opasa* for top knots and coiled hair .Imagery from Sanchi and Mathura is seen in this headdress (Vishnu, 1993), whereas this style is seen only on images of *Brahma*, *Buddha*, *Bodhisattva* and other ascetic figures. *Brahma* in *Kaparda* hair style have two manners, full hair in bun and other with remaining hair falling freely to shoulder level. In Gandhara, *jata* (matted locks) and *jatamukuta* were in vogue among ascetics, during the 2nd Century BC (Schmidt, 1990). Novices or young *Brahmins* are adorned with long free flowing hair, usually with a top knot (Schmidt, 1990).

Coiffure of Buddha: *Representation of this headdress among Buddhas is as follow:*

- Entire mass of curly hair is gathered in *uṣṇīṣa*, in center top of head (Pl. 3).

According to Schmidt, hair styles of *Buddha* followed four stages of development with low to high bun (Schmidt, 1990). High bulbous buns are secured with a fillet, during florescence period high buns transformed in to reduce form known as *uṣṇīṣa* (Schmidt, 1990). Low and high buns of

Buddha are complemented with wavy, ringlet and snail curled hair of *Buddha*. Brahma in entreatment scene shows developed style of *jatamukuta* tied in full and round top knot (Pl. 4).

Coiffure of Bodhisattva: Early representation of *Bodhisattva* during 1st Century BC was with an *uṣṇīṣa* and spirals of hair borders along face and fall freely on shoulders (Schmidt, 1990). Schmidt terms it 'formal ringlet style' inspired by Greek hair style of Apollo in the Zeus temple, only difference is absence of *uṣṇīṣa* in case of Apollo (Schmidt, 1990). *Bodhisattva* from Butkara-I is adorned with ringlet fashion and high double looped knot (Schmidt, 1990) (Pl. 5). In another hair style, locks are separated from the center and tight curls are fixed back on both sides of the head. This hair style is usually represented on *Maitreya*. *Bodhisattva Maitreya* from NMK is shown in this hair style (Pl. 6). Yet in another style wavy hair is combed back from forehead, this fashion is traced back to Greek style (Schmidt, 1990).

Hair style composed of two bow knot like loops or single loop on top of the head seems to have been adopted from Greek repertoire of deities as the former style is seen on Dionysus while the former with square knot belongs to Apollo (Schmidt, 1990). In *kapardin jatamukuta* long tresses have been wrapped in layers on top of head.

Coiffure of Kings, Gods and Masses: Many sculptures in Gandhara are seen in wig like coiffure. Surya from Taxila Museum is seen in this style (Pl. 7). Kings and merchants are seen in neatly combed straight long hair. According to J. M. Banerjea, Indo Aryan males of upper class, since Vedic times, wore long hairs (Schmidt, 1990). Along with long hair, short hair in various styles was in vogue among youngsters, soldiers, peasants, athletes and servants. Amorini on a panel from Butkara-III is wearing short hair (Pl. 8). Head of a foreigner from Lahore Museum displays short hair with tips turn inwards (Pl.9). A very interesting hair style in form of egg or *sikhanda* is

depicted on kids and adults in South Asia and Gandhara art (Murthy, 1977b). Working class as in case of a grass cutter is shown in unkempt hair.

Headdresses: Headdress, headgear are terms used for any element of clothing worn on one's head and have long been part of ancient cultures around the world (Jessica, 2014). Headdresses were worn for protection, religious purposes, modesty, distinction, sports, on festivals, ceremonies or for bedazzling others with style and fashion.

Male headdress

Wreaths: Wreath is a headdress made by intertwining leaves and flowers in circlet. This is Greek class of an ornament worn by both sexes in different designs as plain cable, crisscross, block, leaf and fabric types. Wreaths are worn mostly by females and few males showing Greek attributes. Wearing wreath as a mark of dignity, given as prize, in religious procession and offering in temples is a Greek tradition (Mireille M.Lee, 2015). Wreaths of leaves clearly show Greek origin as Crowns of natural leaves were given as prize in different form of athletic and music contests in Greece (Marshall, 1911). These wreaths were worn to evoke god to bestow mortals with renewal of vegetation and vital forces, joy, harmony and hope for life after death (Hermery, 2014). Gold wreaths in the form of ivy, laurel, olive and myrtle first appeared in Greece in the 5th-4th centuries BC. (Andrew Oliver, 1996). Foliage wreaths are also seen in hands of Bodhisattvas (Schmidt, 1990). An enchanting Greece gold wreath of leaves and olives, belonging to the 4th Century BC, is sitting in Dallas Museum of art (Lippitz, 1996). Most fascinating of all, is Indian class of wreath of fabric studded with alternating rows of oblong stones or gems. Nagarjunkonda sculptures (Fig. V, 1, Fig.V, 1-a) are wearing this type consisted of thin strip of cloth or metal, decorated with row of pearls, gems and beads names as *agrapatta* and *lalatapatta* (Murthi, 1977). In a panel depicting drinking scene a male is seen adorned with

a wreath (Zwalf, 1996) (Pl. 10). Males on a plaque are wearing wreaths of leaves (Kurita, 1990) (Pl. 11).

Turbans: Tradition of wearing turban is ancient in India, as from the *Vedic* times turban was worn by nobles on occasion of sacrifices as *Rajasuya* (Sahay, 1975) and *Vajapeya* (Coomaraswamy, 1927). Investiture with turban was also indicative of successful completion of *Vedic* studies by Brahmin students and transfer of religious leadership from deceased religious leader to his successor (Ali, 1901). Turban secured prime position in attainment of religious progress as is stated in *Amitāyār-dhyāna-sūtra* in these words “Who so ever will meditate on *Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara* should first meditate on the turban of his head, and then on his holy crown (Max, 1985). Prince *Siddhartha*, before leaving palace, is said to have his hair twisted with bands of cloth in top knot. Turbans were also used for utilitarian purpose of protecting head from severity of weather. Turbans represented in Buddhist art of India is later imitated by Gandhara, where it appears as a mixture of fabrics gems and stones (Tissot, 1985). According to Schmidt, turbans worn by Gandharan sculptures are found to be in stylistic and iconographic continuity, with various earlier artistic traditions of India (Schmidt, 1990).

Turbans of various styles are worn by males belong to different streams of life. Turbans were in use in Gandhara during the epoch of Buddhism and remain in vogue till its decline (Schmidt, 1990). Turbans worn by different characters in Gandhara can be classified in these types.

Basic Turbans: Of the simplest type we have an example from Butkara-I, where two men standing under an arch are wearing skull cap turban composed of self-restraining bands crisscross at centre front with a diadem erected in folds in centre front (Pl 12).

Skull cap turban of single pannier: Such turbans are composed of bands of fabric crisscrossed at center front on a cap forming single pannier incrustated with gems, in center front plain or faceted jewel rests on superimposed bands of fabric and further supported by cockade at back. Panniers are either plain or studded with gems and beads. This style of turban was in use during the earlier phase from the middle of the 1st century BCE up to 2nd century CE (Schmidt, 1990). Devotee holding lamp from Butkara-III is wearing this type of turban (Pl. 13).

Skull cap turban of double pannier: This type is made up of previous techniques only panniers are double in number and is seen worn by devotee who is wearing a turban with a diadem like a snakes' hood (Pl. 14).

Skull Cap turban with panniers worn sideways: In this type single or double panniers of the turban are worn sideways and zone area is decorated with medallions and gems in bezel and beads, we have example of this type worn by *Pañcika* from Mardan (Pl. 15) (Fig. 2).

Ornamentation on Fan of Turban: In Gandhara sculptures, turbans of kings and *Bodhisattvas* are ornamented with choicest of jewels and themes. These turbans have wide range with minor alterations. Fan of turbans worn by *Bodhisattvas* are ornamented with stupa, floral motif, bunch of strings of pearls, *kīrtimukha*, *Garuda* carrying a *nāga* or *nāgni*, *Buddha* seated in *dhyana mudra*, and *Sūrya* on chariot (Anwar, 2019).

Ornamentation on sides of Turban: Both sides of turbans worn by *bodhisattvas* are also ornamented with jewels, pearls, beads, mythical characters and themes like precious stones, winged dragon like animals, *kīrtimukha*, *Centaurs* and *bifide tritons* (Anwar, 2019).

Hair Web: Hair webs or hairnets were used to cover loose hair. This Greek ornament is consisted of two linked string of pearls, one secures the top knot and other adorns the area at front, both are linked with each other by strings of pearls held in different angles and are

ornamented with disc and gems fixed on meeting point of strings. Romans adorn their heads with hair webs. Hair webs are mostly worn by *Bodhisattvas* whose hair is arranged in top knot.

Top hair knot of a *Bodhisattva* from Swabi is tied with two strings having a round gem in bezel at centre front, underneath it issues two strings of pearls to form arches above forehead, string of pearls are linked with square stones (Pl. 16) (Fig. 3).

Males and females of *Śunga* period adorn their head dresses with one or two strings of pearls or head bands of ribbons studded with pearls and gold beads of different designs and jewels. Head bands consisting of one or two rows of pearls or beads with a pendant hanging from its center is also worn by women from ancient India (Visnu, 1993, Pl. XXV-B, LV-A, VI-3, 7, VII-2, 6).

Fillet: From earliest time in Greece bands made with thin sheet of gold were wore around head to stop hair fall on fore head and eyes. However, tradition of keeping hair in place with head bands goes back to the Indus valley, where head bands were made up of thin strip of gold pierced at ends, so that they can be tied together. In more ornate types, holes were bored on one edge at the distance of one inch apart, so that ornaments could be hung from them (Brijbhusan, 1981). On their coins, Seleucid kings are shown wearing fillets of flat (Rapson, 1922) and raised (Rapson, 1922) edges, encircling their heads and end in flaps at the back of their heads In Gandhara fillets are worn by both males and females. Priest King (Karachi Museum) is wearing a fillet decorated with incense burner (Tiwari, 2002). A male head from Peshawar Museum is wearing a fillet with a medallion (Pl. 17).

Crowns and Diadems: Diadems, crowns, coronet or tiaras are Greek type of ornaments and were a symbol of God or royalty and carried a social-ideological weight (Neva, 2008). Diadems are either placed directly on the head or fastened with a headdress. However, evidences show

that wearing crown was universal practice. History tells us of a ruler of Samarqand who wore a golden crown ornamented with seven precious stones (Neva, 2008). Even Terracotta female figurine of the Harappa are wearing *tiaras* and dangling ornaments (Mukhtar, 2014).

Diadems have long history in Central Asia, and worn to indicate social status of a wearer and are most significant piece of ornament for brides. This fact is indicated by wall paintings, reliefs and pottery and sculptures. Such as plate depicting geese from the Oxus treasure (2nd century CE) which could have been part of headdress, located in the British Museum in London (Neva, 2010). Ladies and gents of various classes and *Bodhisattvas* of Gandhara art are adorned with diadems of solid metallic rods ornamented with gems, flowers and medallions or tiaras compose of two to three strings of beads linked with stone *en cabochon* at intervals or by circular ornamented discs, These discs are either plain or ornamented with a creature vomiting string of pearls. Diadems are also made in shape of leaves, trefoils or rosettes.). Head of *maitreya* from Swat (Zwalf, 1996) is encircled with a tiara consisted of two strings of beads with a large faceted cylindrical clasp in centre front, seated *Maitreya* from Swat is wearing similar tiara (Zwalf, 1996). *Maitreya* from Takht-i-Bahi is wearing *tiara* composed of two strings of beads and medallions of beaded borders, at interval, in center of medallions drape strings of beads (Pl. 18).

Caps: Cap is usually made of soft material and is an alien element among headdresses in Gandhara and was worn by commoners like foreigner masses and soldiers. Caps were less popular than turbans and crowns, however plain and ornamented caps were found in variety as conical, domical and cylindrical (Vishnu, 1993).

Head of foreigner from LM is wearing a conical cap ornamented with square pattern along rim (Pl.19) (Lyson & Ingholt, 1957).

Helmet: Helmets were designed as defense against injuries on head and necks caused by weapons during war usually. The helmets were usually rigid and offer protection against blows. In Gandhara imagery helmets are often worn by *yavānis*. In ancient India helmets were used by soldiers during Vedic times. In *Rig-veda* *sipra* and *sirastrasa* are terms used for helmets (Singh, 1965). Coins of Indo Greek and Kushana kings show them in helmets (Pl. k). A panel showing ‘attack of Mara and his host’ from Peshawar museum, shows a male wearing conical type helmet (Pl.20)

Conclusion

The close study of male Gandharan sculptures shows diverse hair styles bearing indigenous and foreign impacts were in vogue in Gandhara. However, most common hair style was to comb long hair in top knot. Moreover styling hair in tight to loose curls, ringlets, waves and straight hair were equally in fashion among people belonging to different strata of religious, socio-economic and political levels. In Gandhara, Buddha and other characters are seen bareheaded but others are depicted with choicest of hair ornaments. Among them turbans were most distinctive iconographical items used to show dignitaries of Buddhist pantheon in Gandhara. Wreaths though present in variety are rarely seen on male sculptures, whereas crowns, fillets, diadems held prime place in headdresses and are worn by elites and masses with difference of cost of metals and gems used to adorn them.

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Plates



Pl. 1 Baroque lady



Pl. 2 Priest King



Pl. 3 Head of Buddha



Pl. 4 Entreatment of Buddha

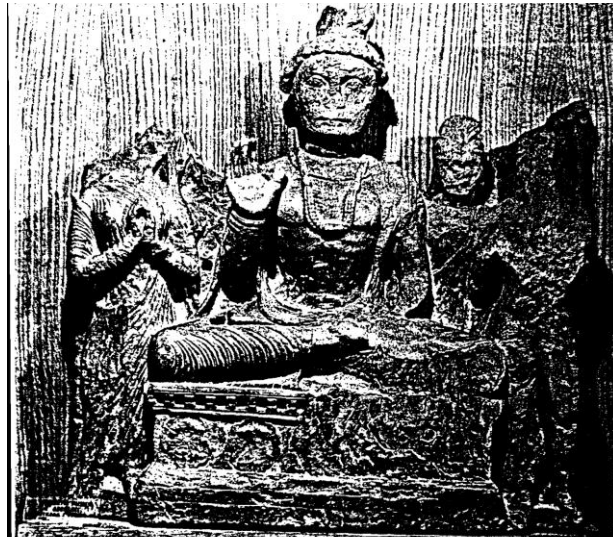


Fig. 1 Ringlet hair style (Schmidt 1990, Fig. 138) Pl. 5 Relief with image of Bodhisattva (Schmidt 1990, Pl. 464)



Pl. 6 Maitreya from NMK <http://huntington.wmc.ohio-state.edu/public/index.cfm?fuseaction=showThisDetail&ObjectID=11133&detail=large>
Pl. 7 Surya from Taxila Museum



Pl. 8 Amoris from Butkara III



Pl. 9 Head of a foreigner



Pl. 10 Panel showing drinking scene (Zwalf 1996, Pl.302)



Pl. 11 Panel showing drinking scene (Kurita 1990, Vol. II, Pl. 535)



Pl. 12 Males standing under an arch from Butkara I



Pl. 13 Devotee holding lamp from Butkara III



Pl. 14 Devotee from Butkara III



Pl. 15 Panchika and Harithi from Mardan



Pl. 16 Bodhisattva from Swabi



Fig. 2 Turban with panniers worn sideways



Fig. 3 Hairweb

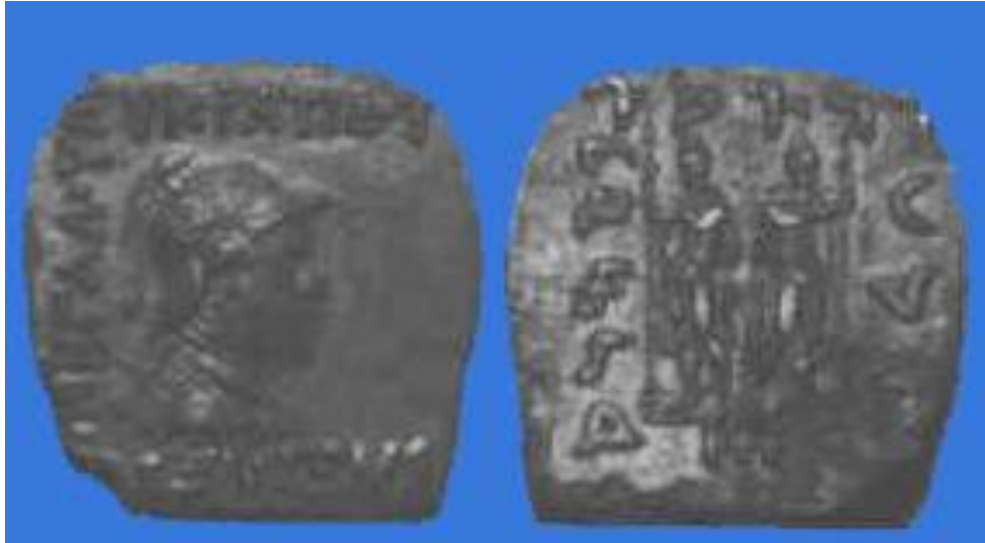


Pl. 17 Male head from Peshawar Museum
(Lyson & Ingholt (1957, Pl. 573



Pl. 18 Bodhisattva from Takht –i- Bahi

Pl. 19 Head of a foreigner from Lahore Museum (Lyson & Ingholt 1957, Pl. 574)



Pl. 20 Coin of Eucratides I (<http://coinindia.com/galleries/eucratides1.html>)