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Costumes of Bodhisattva Depicted in Gandhara Art

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Abstract

The present paper treats different type of costumes provided to the images of princely figures, commonly known as Bodhisattvas in the Buddhist art of Gandharan art. The survey of Buddhist sculptures housed in different museums in Pakistan and abroad have brought to light many examples of costumes such as uttariya, paridhana, patika, trousers, girdles, cords, and ribbons etc worn by the Bodhisattvas. The current study is therefore focusing on the clothing material and tailoring techniques of dresses of ancient Gandhara.

Keywords: Castumes, Uttarīya and Paridhāna, Bodhisattva, Gandhara Art

Introduction

Bodhisattva or Buddha to be, is the term introduced in the Mahayana school of Buddhism for those who have not yet attained Buddhahood but must be capable of achieving the status of enlightenment (Craven 1976 90). Gupte (1972: 110), is of the view that Bodhisattva is the one who has attained the Bodh knowledge but refused to enter Nirvana, since he wishes to guide all humankind to the true path of Buddha. In addition to that, the Bodhisattva connote all the male

deities of the Buddhist pantheon (Bhattacharya 1958: 82). In the Buddhist art of Gandhara, almost all the Bodhisattvas are represented in the Buddhist art of Gandhara as princely figures embellished with crowns, jewelry and other costly costumes since they are involved in worldly affairs as a savior of the humanity against sufferings and ignorance (Gupta 2002: 48). Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, also went through the stage of Bodhisattva before enlightenment. Similarly, the other bodhisattvas who are on the way to achieve the supreme knowledge can be distinguished from each other due to the costume they wore, or the attributes held in hands as well as absence of a round shape circular glow. For instance, Vajrapani, the companion of Buddha always carries a Vajra or thunderbolt, Padmapani holds the rose lotus flower, Avalokitesvara secures the blue lotus and Maitreya, the future savior can be recognized by water flask held in the hand. Apart from the attributes, the symbolic representations, such as the dhyanī Buddha figure in the crown of Avalokitesvara and Manjusri can also distinguish them from each other (Coomaraswami 1927: 290).

As far as the costumes of Bodhisattvas in Gandhara art are concerned, they are bedecked with fine clothed robes made of either muslin, cotton or silk. With the addition of a variety of jewelry such as ear rings, beaded ribbons, necklaces, armlets and garlands etc. as the most common dress. Adorning their statues are the *uttariya*, *paridhana* and *patika*, therefore, focus is laid here on the making techniques of these garments in ancient Gandhara.

The Paridhāna, Uttarīya & Patika

Among the ancient Indian garments, *Paridhāna*, *Uttarīya* and *kayaband* were commonly used by both the genders alike, whereas the turban was reserved for men only (Rowell 2015: 47-48). One of the first depictions of *Uttarīya* is represented by the costume of *Didargang yakṣiṇī* in the form of *chunari* (see Biswas 2017: 01 & 02, Anjali 2017: 74, fig. 8.1). The material depicted for the *paridhāna* of the Bodhisattvas is mostly very fine muslin (cotton) and in some

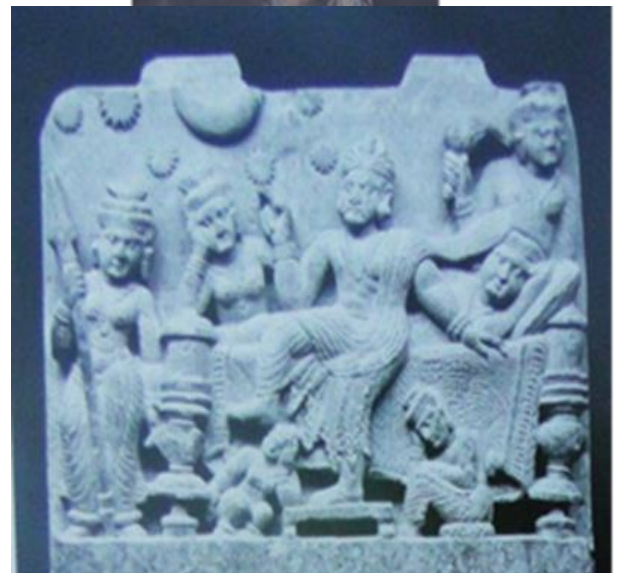


Figure 2

cases silk as the folds of the *paridhāna* shows. We know from history that rulers of the heyday of Gandhara art, i.e Kushans, brought stone workers and statue makers from the eastern Roman Empire (Byzantium) to decorate their palaces and stupas therefore, a lot of Greek influences are present in the depictions. Later the descendants and disciples of these stone workers amalgamated the Greco-Roman and local styles giving birth to true Gandharan style. The workers tended to exaggerate the folds and drapery of the cloth to some extent both for decorative purposes and also for religious reasons i.e giving perfection to the figures of the perfect beings (Buddha & Bodhisattva).



Figure 3

These types of clothes worn by Bodhisattva may or may not have colors on them. As for Bodhisattvas, the color of *paridhāna* is usually royal blue, purple, red, orange or green. Uncolored white muslin of the clearest and cleanest white hue and raw silk in its original color are also possible, as in those days wearing white cotton was common but evidences of dyed clothes for nobles and royal households is also present. As the Bodhisattva Siddhartha was a prince, it is most probable that he wore both dyed and undyed *paridhāna*. As shown in the figure, the residue colors from which we can easily deduce that the *uttarīya* is either red or orange while the *Paridhāna* is blue.

The *uttarīya* of Bodhisattva is usually of the same material as of the *paridhāna* i.e finest quality cotton / muslin or silk in both dyed and undyed forms. A third article of clothing which the Bodhisattva are shown wearing is the *Patika* (*qamar band* or belt). Its material is silk / cotton or in some cases even leather as seen on the depictions

Making of a *Paridhāna*

Paridhāna is a piece of cloth, two or three yards in length and with a breadth reaching from below the navel to the ankles in most cases. It is wrapped around the body like a sarong but in the case of

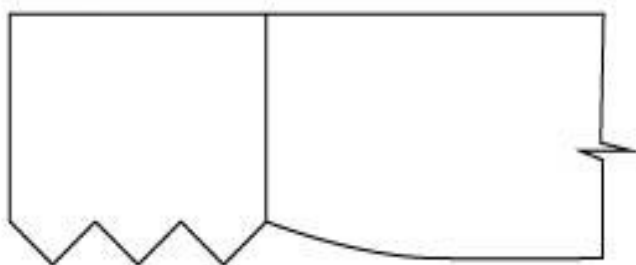


Diagram 2

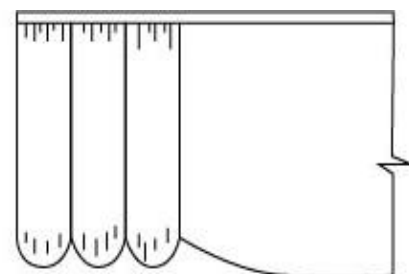


Diagram 2

Bodhisattva it has its own features and wrapping style. In the beginning, the *paridhāna* is tucked in four times into the waist in such a way that it forms three tongues or sections of pleats in the front part beginning from the left side of the waist to the middle of the body just below the navel (Diagram-1). After that, the *paridhāna* is wrapped straight. But in some cases, it is evident from the figure that three deep triangular cuts were made at the lower end of the *paridhāna* from the beginning to the end of the pleated part.

There is also a curious pattern in some depictions which shows that sometimes the pleated part is partially stitched. In this style, the folds of the *paridhāna* show that the vestment consists of three pieces sewn perpendicular to each other with triangular cuts at the bottom (frill edged in some case and unfrilled in other cases (Diagram 2). Pleated and hammed at the top so that movement and walking is not disturbed by the creases and form figures.

These pleated parts are present on the both ends of the *paridhāna* and overlap each other making

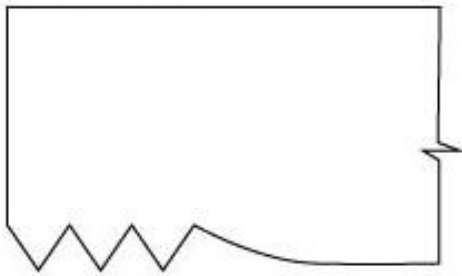


Diagram 4

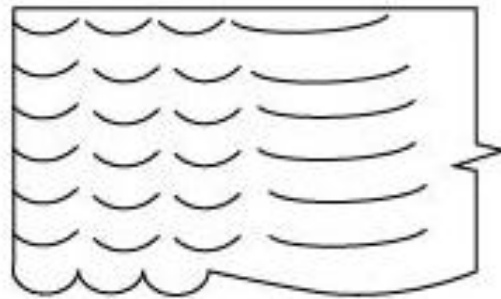


Diagram 4

gait easy and comfortable with least amount of binding of the legs during walking. In some cases, the cutting at the lower end looks more rounded but, in these cases, the upper part of the *paridhāna* looks more tucked in and rolled down (Diagram 3).

But in that case the tucked in part should bulge out which is absent here showing that these types of *paridhāna* consisted of a single length of cloth that were pleated at the top and stitched (Diagram 4).



Figure 5



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7

While in the case of (Figure no. 8 & 9), the *paridhāna* has triangular cuts at the bottom but is pleated, tucked in and rolled down at the waist as evident from the figure's waist. While in another figure from the Dir Museum, the *paridhāna* looks only partially tucked in under the navel and the cuts are evident at the bottom.

In the **figure. 13**, the pleating appears to be made by hand and tucked in while the cuts at the bottom are rounded (Diagram 3).

In **figure 14**, the bottom cuts are rounded while the evidence of hand pleating and tucking in at the top is lacking completely from which we can understand that in this case, the upper edge of the *Paridhāna* was stitched.

From all these examples, it is easy to say that at the times of making of the figures and panels of the Gandhara art, the *paridhāna* of Bodhisattva models was of a basic same type i.e plain cloth with cuts or cuts shown by tucking in. But from style to style, it was different in some aspects.

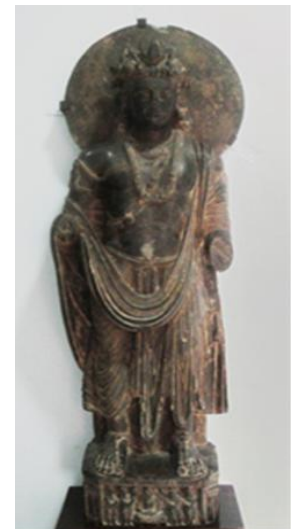


Figure 8

Case 1:

In this case (Diagram 5 & 6), a piece of cloth was cut length wise about the breadth of the *paridhāna* then it was cut triangularly three times at the beginning of the lower edge then pleated, stitched and hammed at the top. After that, the side-weft cloth was joined to the downward weft

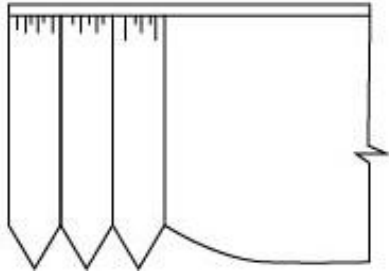


Diagram 6: Without Frill

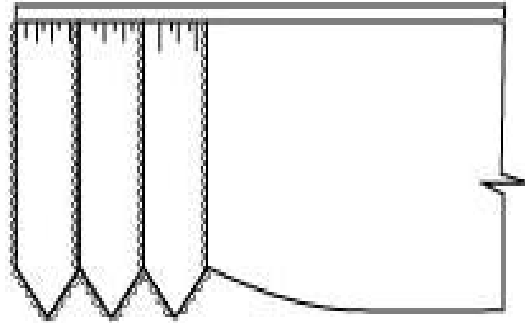


Diagram 6: With Frill

cloth. At the other end of the side-weft cloth, another piece stitched and pleated was also joined.

Case 2:

The bottom triangular cutting, pleating, stitching and hamming is present, but all this is made from the same piece of cloth. Same cloth for both pleated part and straight part (Diagram 7).

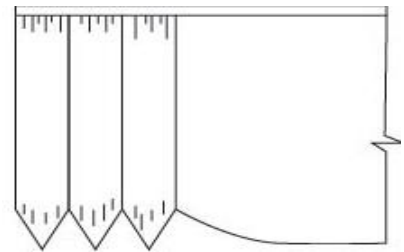


Diagram 7

Case 3:

Stitching and pleating evidence is present, but the lower cuts are more rounded or scalloped (Diagram 8).

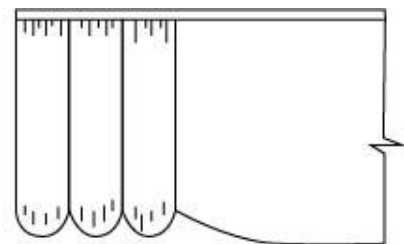


Diagram 8

Case 4:

Lower end is cut triangularly or in rounded shapes, but the pleating is made by hand and is tugged

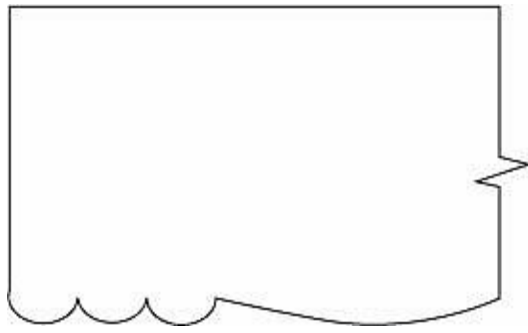


Diagram 10

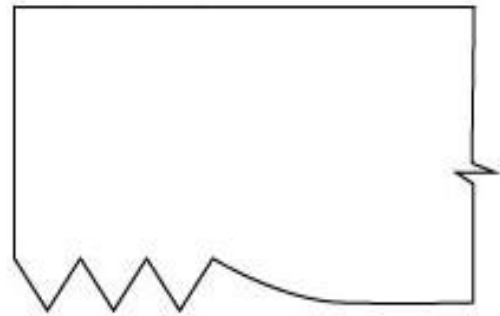


Diagram 10

in and rolled down for stability (Diagram 9 & 10).

Case 5:

No cuts are made, and the shape of the cuts is shown by larger tuck in at a distance from each other which considerably raised the cloth at the bottom in the linear drop line of the tuck. This shows the shape of the cuts or undulations of the cloth at the lower edge (Diagram 11).

Wrapping of Uttarīya

The *Uttarīya* of Bodhisattva is a single piece of soft cloth (muslin / silk) about six to eight feet long loosely wrapped in style around the shoulders and placed on the forearms to give a graceful look. The ends are usually shown loose but in few cases, the ends are shown tied up with a piece of string (Fig:15). In most cases, the *Uttarīya* is worn in such a way that one end is hanging from the inner side of the right forearm, passed over the forearm from behind the body to the left shoulder, passed over the shoulder and then the armpit. Then brought to the front from over the upper arm and passed under the portion passing in front of the shoulder and loosely draped in the front of the body hanging down below the knees. Finally the end is brought back to the left shoulder from behind, tucked in



Figure 9

with the end hanging down at the back.

In some cases, both ends are at the left shoulder and the *uttarīya* is wrapped in same manner without the end hanging down from the right forearm.

Making of Patka or Girdle

The *Patika* is a broad, flat cord or belt tied in a simple knot at the front below the navel over the *paridhāna* to keep it in place and impart stability to it. It is usually of a flat belt like shape of inter-woven cords or strings but sometimes looks rounded giving the shape of the present day *azarband* (girdle) and in very rare cases solid like leather. The lower end is almost always shown to be simple and lacking any adornments or flowery knots but, in some cases, there is a little tying up of the ends (Biswas 2017: fig. 07, Rowland 1967: Pl. 24).

Besides this, the Bodhisattva is sometimes shown wearing a royal turban (prince Siddhartha) and flat sandals in many cases along with the usual jewelry of the Bodhisattvas (Fig.no. 16)



Figure 10

In this panel of Buddha's life story (fig. no. 16), Prince Siddhartha is leaving the royal palace and his life as a prince in search of enlightenment. Here he is stepping down from the bed at night when everybody else is sleeping. As for his dress, he is wearing the princely turban, a necklace and bracelets in both wrists. He is also wearing ball shaped ear ornaments. The *uttarīya* is loosely draped across one shoulder and the other end is on his right thigh. The most interesting piece of clothing is the *paridhāna* on this figure. Not only the *paridhāna* pleated and stitched on the top, it is cut triangularly at the bottom edges. But it has frill piping sewn to the edge of each section of cutting both at the bottom and running up the whole breadth of the *paridhāna*, while the single fold at the waist shows that this is a pre-stitched *paridhāna* which is held in place either by clamps or possibly buttons or girdle. Both ends of the *paridhāna* are pleated and worn in such a way that the pleated sights overlap each other giving a very easy stride to the wearer.



Figure 12



Figure 11

In figure no. 17 and 18, a royal personality is throwing flowers at a festival or at some ceremony. He is wearing turban and bracelets together with *mukat* (necklace) and heavy earrings. Here the royal figure has one end of the *uttarīya* draped over his left shoulder brought to the front around the back and held by left hand. In the folds of the *uttarīya*, he has filled flowers while an attendant standing at the back is holding a basket in his right hand which is also filled with flowers. The *paridhāna* has deep triangular cuts at the lower end of the pleated part but no frill or piping is visible while at the waist the *paridhāna* looks very slightly rolled down showing that this *paridhāna* is also pre-stitched type but not a very elaborate one.

The Bodhisattva (figure 13) is wearing a *paridhāna* which has triangular cuts at the lower edge of the pleated part but at waist, the bulging fold at the belly shows that this *paridhāna* is not pre-stitched but hand pleats are tucked in and then rolled down type. The *Uttarīya* here starts from left shoulder brought to the front from over the right forearm in a loose drape then draped in front and covers left upper arm, here it is passed under the arm pit and then over the shoulder with the loose end hanging back to the knees.

Another Bodhisattva (Figure 14) is shown with the *Uttarīya* worn in



Figure 14

loose drape starting from left shoulder brought to the front in a depth, are draped over left upper arm passed loosely under the armpit and then thrown over the shoulder to the back. The *paridhāna* here has deep cuts at the bottom of the pleated part but these cuts are more rounded and oval rather than sharp triangular ones. Looking at the waist, we see that this *paridhāna* is also pre-stitched one, but frilled piping is absent. In his feet, the Bodhisattva is wearing flat sandals.

The Figure 14 is wearing simple sandals with one cross thong and one thong coming between the thumb and second toe and joining the other thong in the middle. The *paridhāna* is of calf length as usual with triangular cuts at the lower edge of the pleated part but the triangles are only slightly rounded at the tips. On the other hand, this *paridhāna* is tucked in and rolled down and not a pre-stitched one. The comparatively heavy draped here shows that this is silk or fine cotton rather than muslin. The *Uttarīya* is draped in typical style brought to the front from the left shoulder in a loose drape but in this case more spread then closely held, passing over the right forearm draped in the front. It again spreads over the left shoulder brought to the front under the armpit and finally thrown back and spread there.

The hair is tied on the top of the head in a rather loose top-knot and thrown over the shoulders. The usual jewelry along with the many charms hanging from a chain are present but the earrings are not so immense although they are large and flat but not the heavy balls or rings seen elsewhere.

This headless figure of Bodhisattva from Peshawar Museum (Figure 15) is wearing the usual tucked in *paridhāna* but the lower edge of the pleated part is cut in rather rounded scallops. Single piece *paridhāna* without the lower edge cutting is absent because in that case the folds of the cloth at the belly are more massive and the lower rounded portion is not so deep as in cut type *paridhāna*.

The Patika / girdle is also absent here. The *Uttarīya* or shawl of light cloth is worn in the usual way while the *paridhāna* looks like to be of muslin. The



Figure 15



Figure 16

ornamentation is usual and a *bazuband* (arm band) is also present. The slippers in his feet are knob thumb type with flat soles.

The turban and ornamentation on this Bodhisattva (Fig no. 22) are exotic even by the standard of the heavily adorned Bodhisattvas. Although the number and type of the jewelry is the same, but the make and thickness is different. The turban is very intricately made, and the heavy ear ornaments are cylindrical with lobes on them.

The *uttarīya* has one end draped over right forearm at the inside and the lower end of the *uttarīya* is tied up with a string. The *paridhāna* is a pre-stitched type as shown from the very thin folds of cloth at the waist. The lower edge of the pleated part is of deep roundish cuts. One curious thing is possible here that the edges of the cuts have strings sewn in the hamming to weigh down the folds and give more graceful and regular folds to the *paridhāna*. The sandals here are flat soled with one thong crossing the foot while the other one comes from between the thumb and the second toe and meets the other in the middle.

Here a Bodhisattva figure with one hand at the hip and the other raised in blessing (Fig. 23) is shown. The turban is beautifully adorned and the ear ornaments have beads suspended by double chains. We also have a cylindrical charm box hanging by the chain across the torso and heavy bangles in both the wrists. The *Uttarīya* is worn in typical style and over the right forearm and left shoulder.

The *paridhāna* here is of the type which consists of a single length of rectangular cloth with no pre-stitching and no cutting of scallops or triangular cuts at the bottom but the *paridhāna* is tucked in and hand pleated in such a way that shallow scallops are shown in the pleated detail. The *paridhāna* is tucked in at the waist and rolled down for extra stability.

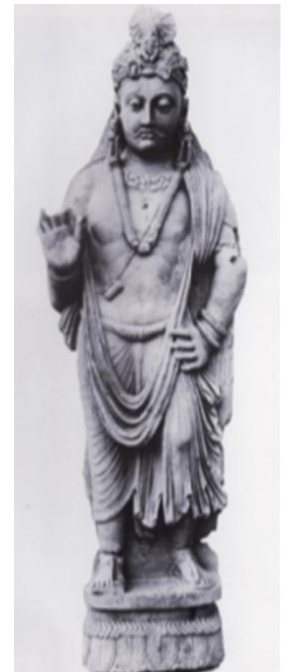


Figure 17

The cloth here looks like cotton or a bit heavy type of muslin instead of the traditional fine muslin associated with Bodhisattva. The *Patika* is absent here and the sandals are flat soled thongs one.



Figure 18A & B

This Bodhisattva (Figs. 24 A & B) is wearing his traditional *Uttarīya* in such a way, that one corner is thrown back from the left shoulder. From here the *Uttarīya* is draped in the front of the torso then over the right forearm. It is then spread and draped in at the back, coming to the left shoulder, where it is brought to the armpit then the ends are tied with a chord and left hanging outside from the left forearm.

The *paridhāna* here is wrapped and rolled down type with scallop cuts at the lower end of the front part. Also, the traditional necklaces, chain and the charm string are present with the armband or *bazoband* with a large medallion is also very prominent. The long hair are tied in a top knot with a beaded string and the rest is left spread on the shoulders.

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