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IMPACT OF GANDHARA SCULPTURES MOTIFS ON HARIPUR EMBROIDERY PATTERNS

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ABSTRACT

The ancient kingdom of Gandhara in the Swat and Kabul River valleys and the Pothohar Plateau, in modern-day northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan, lasted from the Vedic period (c. 1500-500 BC) to the 11th century AD. The Haripur district (of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan) is situated at the heart of the ancient Gandhara civilization. At the time of Alexander, the region including Taxila was known as "Eastern Gandhara. This region was and is considered as a hub for embroidery work from the dates almost unknown. Furthermore, regardless of which type of technique is used (i.e. hand embroidery or machine embroidery) as well as which type of stitch is used, the very basic common patterns of embroidery are found to be Lotus or wheel or Acanthus leaves in any form. These three motifs are inspired by the Gandhara art because all the Gandharan sculptures contains these motifs. This study only focuses on the "Lotus motif" of Haripur's local embroidery and its connection to Gandhara art.

INTRODUCTION

Gandhara was an ancient kingdom in the Swat and Kabul River valleys and the Pothohar Plateau, in modern-day northern Pakistan and eastern Afghanistan. The Kingdom of Gandhara lasted from the Vedic period (c. 1500-500 BC) to the 11th century AD. Haripur belongs to Hazara region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The Haripur district is situated at the heart of the ancient Gandhara civilization. At the time of Alexander, the region including Taxila was known as "Eastern Gandhara. And this is also considered as a hub for embroidery work. Embroidery is the tradition of Haripur which is done in

almost every corner. Today embroidery is a source of income and some people have taken it as their main profession. this study will discuss the influence of Gandhara art on the embroidery of Haripur.

Gandhara Art:

Gandhara art focuses the Buddhist iconography (Miyaji 2018) and considered as basically a religious art. Throughout the Gandhara region Buddhism is propagated through the stupas and monasteries containing thousand of sculptures and even paintings. Stupas are profusely ornamented, and every part of stupa shows the fine details of the different aspects of Buddha's life. These embellishments hence illustration of Buddha's life may be in the form of engraved images, Atlanta, garland bearers and other motifs. Earliest Buddha and Buddha's life was represented symbolically in humanly forms. At time various symbols were employed to present the different aspect of Buddha's life hence the introduction of Lotus flower, empty seat under a tree and a deer and a chakra etc showing his birth, enlightenment, and his preaching respectively. This is considered as Hinayanan iconography which strictly restricts the Buddhist religion from sculpting human images.

Different factors like invasions, immigration, diplomatic links and trade communication results in the regular incorporation of foreign elements into the buddhas art. Though the Gandhara art clearly manifests the Hellenistic influence, but the subject matter always remains local. That's why many Indian motifs are incorporated as such in this new framework of art. This region was when conquered by Mehmood Ghaznavi in 1021 AD, which laid a final brick into dooming Gandhara kingdom and hence name Gandhara disappeared.

But Gandhara art still exists or survive in Gandhara region from acanthus leaf to lotus flower designs being copied into stones, wood and now in embroidery. After Muslims invasion on the region which lasted many hundred years the Muslim populated regions like Kabul to now a days Pakistan, which also include Haripur, sculptures and figure art was abandoned on religious basis. But still some of the floral motifs of Gandhara art were taken and used as such like Lotus flower and acanthus leaves and to some extent wheel. As discussed earlier that the Haripur enjoyed an important geographical territory in Gandhara kingdom, so, it's the one of those important regions which got more influenced by Gandhara art. Even now a days one can witness it in different form from wood carving, to sculpted pillars and most importantly, in local embroidery patterns of the region. That's why, this specific study is aimed to discuss the Lotus flower motif used in the local embroidery of Haripur region and its connection to Gandhara art. [1]

LITERATURE REVIEW

Phulkari is common skill in almost all the districts of NWFP especially rural women of the province are very much familiar with it. Every area has its own name for said embroidery it is known as Swati stitch while some where it is called lakeeri. Hazara is famous for Phulkari embroidery since decades, women belong to any district of this region has familiarity with said kind of embroidery. Jasti stitch is mostly used on Khaddar and due to experts of producing handmade

khaddar in the old days, female of Haripur are more expert as far as Jasti stitch is concerned due to khaddar availability in the area. History shows that Females from Haripur were involved in Jasti embroidery since long and this skill traveled from generation to generation and now we can take Haripur as most expert district Jasti embroidery throughout the Hazara region. At present Jasti embroidery is common in females of every household in the District specifically in rural areas. It is situated in a productive and well-watered plain, with its enormous working buffalo and the unique sight of tropical orange. It is officially divided into two Tehsils (Haripur, and Ghazi) and these are further divided into 45 union councils having 307 big villages out of which 243 villages have share in producing jasti embroidery products [23].

With reference to its revival in rural areas of Hazara, in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. It is based on my three years of research work in Hazara in particular in village Noorpur of District Haripur. The art of silk embroidery on Phulkari chaddars and baghs (women's shawls) originated in Punjab in 15th Century, whereas in Hazara it can be traced further back to the time of Greek rule in the area. In olden days Phulkaris and baghs were part of the dowry given to a bride as a gift at the time of her wedding. An integral part of the Hazara culture, this custom slowly died down by 1950s owing to various factors, but regained popularity in the 1990s on a more commercial scale. A traditional Phulkari was prepared putting in a lot of hard work spanned over months and years by the elderly women of the household, to be given to the daughters of the family on their weddings. The period Phulkaris were made for personal adoration with pure silk floss whereas the contemporary Phulkaris made today for more commercial purposes have taken the shape of a commodity and are currently sold in both local and foreign markets. This new popularity is owing to their unfading lure, beauty, and artistry to attract local and foreign buyers. The newly emergent trend of commercialization of this period textile, embroidered with synthetic silk floss, entails more profit motive than its original purpose of body-adornment and keeping a rural tradition alive. Although, numerous products are produced with Phulkari embroidery in Hazara, for the purpose of this paper Phulkari only refers to women's chaddars or shawls prepared by using this embroidery.

The dying Buddha lie upon a patterned textile flung over his bedstead or couch. The heavy clothe features a combination of geometric and floral design arranged in vertical panels. The carving the of the individual textile patterns is sloppy. Barely recognizable in the outer vertical panel is along the leafy branch design akin to the one on the Sikri textiles. A much-confused rendering of a pattern based on basket weaving can be seen to the right of the center monk seated at the Buddha's bedside. The basket pattern consists of a series of striations going in one direction followed by a series going in the opposite direction etc.

Notwithstanding the facts that the concerned finds maybe generally defined as a scale armor in order to provide a clear description of each find, according to its shape, size and function; we have distinguished them as plates, proper scales and lamellae. Plates are generally short , flat and square or rectangular, sometime with a rounded bottom corner, scales are slightly concave, more elongated and rounded at the bottom (shield- shaped); both scales and plated are

provided with minuscule holes used to sew them into textile or a leather linen spot. A proper distinction between plates and scale is not always possible. Lamellae or fringes are long and narrow, ovoidal, rounded or pointed. Their overlapping was possible thanks to strings (possibly composed of skilled or leather) which passed through the small holes, which were then used to sew them onto a linen support[27].

The artisans of the cluster have also been given an international visit to Indian textile exhibition, where their products received good response and succeeded in selling their products. They also participated in Khyber women expo exhibition at Peshawar, international Phulkari Day and Jashnee-Bahar held at Lahore, Aurat Foundation at Islamabad, Home net Pakistan at Lahore and Lok Virsa Exhibition held at Lok Virsa Islamabad [28].

Today, machine embroidery has grown by leaps and bounds. Computers have added another twist into this sewing technique making the process easier for mass production of embroidered designs. Nowadays, machines are available in the market which can embroider designs for you. Specially designed machines can even read a computerized design and stitch it for you. Embroidery as an art form has enhanced our civilization, making it more aware of the beauty that can be created with a needle and a thread. Intricate designs and brilliantly colored patterns have infused a beauty of their own onto fabrics, adding to their value and worth.

The use of embroidery machines is to give us goods that are beautifully embroidered and that too very fast. It has the capacity to complete 1000 stitches per minute and it is computer based. By introducing such fast machines, the work of the workers has been reduced to a great extent. Embroidery work in earlier days usually was a very time-consuming work as it was totally done by hand. Nowadays with the advent of these machines goods with embroidery are much cheaper [29].

This is a motif stitch. A wheel pattern is made using the blanket stitch. This, in spite of being called the buttonhole wheel commonly. Again, it is a result of using buttonhole and blanket stitches interchangeably. This pattern can serve as a very decorative piece of stitch in embroidery work [30].

There are other very famous embroidery work are popular in Pakistan. After reviewing the literature of those work has inspired this study and the idea of the study become clearer to focus the research on Haripur embroidery.

A brief review of most common and popular embroidery work prevailing in different parts of Pakistan is listed as follows. Mirror work, commonly known as the shisha stitch is the art of securing mirrors to the fabric by using some particular stitches like haring bone stitch, button hole stitch or blanket stitch. This mirror work is the specialty of Indian subcontinent. They are vastly used in different regional hand embroidery of Pakistan, with the combination of other stitches. These mirrors are used to decorate different things like clothing, wall hangings, shawls, bedding, cushion covers and table runners.

Ajrak is an object that is deeply linked to the Sindhi culture. In all the different provinces of Pakistan, touches to clothing allow one to distinguish on sight what province that person is from – Pathans wear a flat woolen hat called a “pukul,” while Balochis wear turbans. Sindhi men, on the other hand, wear a “Sindhi topi” which is a hand embroidered cap, usually in striking color combinations, with mirror work, and an ajrak over their shoulders.

Baluchistan is the province of Pakistan, and its people are Muslims; people speak baluchi and it is the part of Iranian language, in bolchi culture there are many different colors.

The Balochi and the Brahvi embroidery style are very famous because of its complex designs. The Bugti and the Marri people use cotton thread on cotton fabric and are very famous for their embroidery. Good stitches and the bold colors are the best features of the Baluchi embroidery and are very famous all over the world. There are more than 28 stitches use in the Baluchi embroidery and mirror work is the important part of the Baluchi embroidery. A triangular embroidered pouch on women’s shirt in the front side is the typical dress of the Baluchi, Makrani and Brahvi dresses. The difference in the embroidery on the Pushk is the differentiation symbol of the different tribe [31-33].

LITERATURE REVIEW

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DATA ANALYSIS

Embroidery is an expression of the creativity. Steel also acknowledges that the affluent land-owning families commonly purchase phulkaris from Hazara windows. Lockwood Kipling had described them in the 1880s as “making a little money by the needle”. The artisan is employed by export merchants to export these crafts outside the country.

The main embroideries of Haripur are Phulkari, Kavi, Chaar sooti, Taarkashi and shade work. Whatever the type of embroidery used the local designs contains basic motifs Lotus, Acanthus leaves and Chakra are used in one way or other. And these designs with variations of fabric types, threads, colors and techniques are used from ages and passed through generations to generations in this region. As, these designs with these basic motifs are highly appreciated not only in the home country throughout but also have the same fan and approval to the European and other part of the world. So, the local designers always use these motifs in different styles. As, discussed earlier that on religious basis the most commonly used motifs are floral and geometrical. Most commonly used floral motif is of Lotus, which has clear connection with the Gandhara art prevailed in this region for so long. That is why this study aims to discuss the Lotus motif and its connection to Gandhara art.

Lotus Flower in Gandhara Sculptures and Local Embroidery of Haripur:

Lotus is a very delicate flower of water origin. As it closes its flowers in the evening and does not open them up again until the first light of dawn, the lotus is an old symbol of light and the sun. For Hindus and Buddhists, the lotus is a symbol of purity. Although it grows in the mire it is rooted in neither mud nor water, so its beauty represents the triumph of purity. The lotus thrones of Hindu and Buddhist deities attest to this enduring theme; they are particularly associated with AMITABHA, the compassionate Buddha of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism. The lotus is also one of the Buddhist groups known as the ‘Eight Precious Things’. [6]

Padmasambhava, the founder of Vajrayana Buddhism, which is practiced in Tibet, was said to be lotus-born. The lotus is also an attribute of one of the Daoist Eight Immortals, He Xian-gu.[6]

Hundreds of sculptures have been found in excavations around the Gandhara region. But, here, few sculptures from Buddha art are selected just presenting the connection between Buddha art and Lotus motif.



Sculpture 1: Life story of Buddha [1]

Sculpture 1: Acc. No: PM_00007

Source: Excavation, A.D.F.C 1907-08

Provenance: Takht-I Bahi

Period: 2nd-3rd Century A.D.

Height: 58.46 cm

Width: 39.40 cm

Weight: 36.50 kg [1]

This broken and slightly defaced figure of bejeweled headless Bodhisattva was probably detached from a panel illustrating the miracle of Sravasti. This figure is seated on a full bloomed lotus throne in dharmachkramudhra. [1]



Sculpture 2: Life story of Buddha[1]

Sculpture 2:

Acc. No: PM_03133

Period: 2nd-3rd Century A.D.

Height: 61.00 cm

Width: 53.37 cm

Weight: 33.00 kg [1]

A lotus flower scroll design is present on the inner border of the panel. The outer border is decorated with an acanthus leaf design. A lotus flower design is present on the lower inner side of the arch panel, just above the Buddha's head [3][5][7]

Haripur's local embroidery samples:

The lotus flower in local language is called panch pati pool (five petals flower) and aath pati pool (eight petals flower). Buddha of the Pure Land sect of Buddhism. The lotus is also one of the Buddhist groups known as the 'Eight Precious Things'. The lotus is also an attribute of one of the Daoist Eight Immortals, He Xian-gu. [6]

Thousand of embroidered articles including cushions, bed sheets, clothing and decorative items and many more are produced on daily basis. Here we selected only very few samples just to show the use of Lotus motif in local embroidery designs.

Sample 1:

The sample is cushion used for beds and sofa. It is a medium sized cushion.

Color Combination:

The base color is light pink, and the embroidery is with the dark colors. The



Sample 1: Lotus motif in Haripur local embroidery

Material:

The material used in this sample is silk cloth. As the quality of shade work is that it can be done in all type of stuff.

Threads:

Thread used in this sample is silk thread of different colors.

embroidery is of yellow, yellowish orange, orange and purple applied on the flower. The stem and the other flowers and design are of brown, blue, light blue, and Sea green.

Motif:

The main motif used is of Lotus flower. Three main flowers in yellow, purple and orange are lotus flower transition. The position of lotus flower is half wide open.

Technique:

The technique used in this embroidery is the satin stitch which is also called filling stitch. The type of satin stitch used in the embroidery is long and short satin stitch.

Sample 2 & Sample 3:

The following two samples i.e., sample 2 & sample 3 are the examples of Machine Embroidery. Both contains lotus motif as main motif. Theses samples

also shows the different forms Lotus flower i.e., at the dawn and at full blossom time. These will be discussed together.

Material:

The material used in both samples is cotton.



Sample 2: Lotus at the time of Blossom time.



Sample 3: Lotus at full Dawn.

Technique:

The samples are manually operated through machine and the embroider must adjust the cloth as per the pattern followed. First the pattern is drawn with tracing paper (butter paper) by piercing the tiny holes. The holes are the marks of the exact design the embroider wants to make on the cloth. This butter paper is then placed on the cloth. To mark the design on the cloth, first a cotton piece is soaked in the ink and then rub that soaked cloth on the butter paper which leaves mark of ink on the cloth drained through the holes pierced.

CONCLUSION

The focus of the study was to show the impact of Gandhara art on the local embroidery patterns of Haripur, Hazara division of KPK province of Pakistan. Because Muslim art forbid the human representation in sculptures. While flowers, sun or moon or leaves patterns are acceptable in Muslim art as well. Moreover, Haripur region being the one of the central parts of Gandhara kingdom, got heavily influenced by the Gandhara art. Over the long periods of times Gandhara art declined but few elements still exist. With modifications to and mixing to Muslim art Gandhara art is still present in this region in the form of embroidered motifs, sculpted pillars and wood and stone carving etc. Out of some important motifs, Lotus motif is selected. Lotus has the very special place in Gandhara art as it is the symbol of birth of new life, enlightenment and harmony of piece of body and soul. Lotus motif is even accepted by Muslims in Gandhara region. So, here with very few samples of Buddha's sculptures and local embroidery patterns of Haripur's region a correlation is established between the Lotus used in Gandhara art and that of the embroidery motif.

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