



Hellenistic and Indian Iconography in Gandharan Art; with Special Reference to the Relief of Buddha and *Vajrapani* at Jamal Garhi

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The Gandhara School of Art carries Hellenistic features that make it distinct from other schools of art developed in ancient India around the 1st century BCE to the 3rd century CE. Prevailing archaeological evidence from Gandhara unearthed Buddhist art. The Gandharan site of Jamal Garhi was initially excavated by the British archaeologist Alexander Cunningham. Cunningham argued that it is Devadatta who is depicted as the *Vajrapani* beside the Buddha in Gandharan art. Later, Oldenburg identified *Vajrapani* as a counterpart of the Greek deity Hercules. One of these reliefs illustrates *Vajrapani* as the protector of the Buddha. The significance of the selected relief is the illustration of *Vajrapani*, modeled after the Greek deity Hercules, who is a full-scale nude backward. None of the Gandharan art known hitherto has depicted *Vajrapani* in the nude with the standing Buddha. The relief will be analyzed focusing on its importance with the *Vajrapani*. The fusion of Hellenistic and Indian elements of it will be discussed. Examples from Greek art and sculptures will be examined to discuss how the Gandharan artist has amalgamated both Indian and Hellenistic elements in Gandharan art in the service of the Buddhist devotees in India. Furthermore, it is evident that the artist is probably a foreigner who works in the service of Buddhism. The Hellenistic features of the relief support the assumption that the artist should be Greek or was influenced by Greek culture. Furthermore, it is evident that the artist is not aware of the Buddhist manner of depicting the enlightened one.

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