CHAPTER 6
Art and Architecture

ART

Kushan empire, which emerged as a major civilizing force in the Orient during the first three centuries of Christian era, made remarkable contribution towards the development of art and architecture\(^1\). However, for proper understanding and appreciation of the Kushan art, it must be mentioned at the very outset that the Kushans were a nomadic race without having their own monumental tradition in art. When their power was consolidated in the former Bactrian realm and northern India they imbibed the artistic tradition and legacy of erstwhile dominant civilizations, namely, Greek, Chinese and Parthian.

The very geographical position of the Kushan empire, straddling the trade routes between Rome, Iran and China, made it in many ways the very centre of the world. Besides, Kushan empire was lying at the junction of many cultural spheres – the Indian sub-continent, Iran, Hellenized Orient, and the steppes of central Asia. Hence it is not surprising that its role in history was one of absorption and diffusion. And this function is eloquently illustrated in the art that flourished under the patronage of the rulers of this dynasty.

The quality and quantity of art activities were bound to vary from region to region in the vast Kushan empire, inhabited by artists and

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1 Roenfield, *Dynastic Art of the Kushans*, passim.
architects having varying experiences, skills and opportunities. However, as the subjects were all under one single central authority they were apparently in a position to move freely over a vast area in their intellectual and religious as well as commercial pursuits. As barriers to thought were lowered in this macrocosm of ancient period due to freedom of movement in a vast territory and consequent growth of commerce, even geographically and ethnically unrelated peoples found themselves in a position to influence one another. It is a fact that in isolation ideas deepen resulting in narrowness and in turn into stagnation. Whereas the movement of people results into interactions and exposure resulting into widening of ideas and in turn causes fermentation which, indeed is activation for classic creations in all arts. Significantly the vastness of the Kushan empire opened numerous interactive channels, facilitating movement of men as well as ideas, causing fermentation, the manifestation of which, indeed, was the remarkable development in art.

Rich traders and affluent class of the society were in a position not only to import foreign articles and objects of art, but also to employ artists from different parts of empire and outside to translate results of fusion of religious concepts into art, the hand maid of religion. That all this happened exactly is indicated not only by the syncretic icons of the age concerned betraying merger of thoughts, faiths and traits, but also by the interesting articles of beauty and worth of Indian, Chinese, Egyptian, Syrian, Greek and Roman influences that these art-pieces depict. Similarly objects de art of one region of the empire were exported to another, an interesting evidence in this regard is cited in Sutralamkara of Asvaghosa. It refers to a native of Pushkalavati, who traveled to a far off
site for the purpose of decorating a vihara.² It appears that the Kushan emperors knowingly or unknowingly created conditions which favored the growth of art activities. The creation of such traditions was among the greatest contributions of the Kushans to the development of Oriental culture.

The contribution that Kushans made to the development of art, earned for them a respectable place in the art history of ancient orient. Remarkable schools of art got affiliated with the Kushan civilization. On the one hand Bactria, Gandhara and Mathura schools emerged as national art schools and on the other many local schools grew progressive. Despite regional differences and variations, the fact remains that the areas where these schools flourished were politically united under a single state and this helped the pooling of ideas in various fields of artistic culture which finally led to the shared stock of themes, images and attitude that make it possible to view the art of the Kushans as a single entity. And at the same time, the fusion of varied ideas from different schools gave Kushan art a cosmopolitan character which was in harmony with the syncretic spirit of the Kushan civilization.

True, Kashmir’s art history commences from Neolithic period, stratified layers at Semthan associated with Indo-Greek period have also yielded terracotta figurines. However, the organized artistic activities in Kashmir cannot be dated prior to the Kushan period. As literary sources dealing with Kushan period in Kashmir are silent about the art that flourished in Kashmir during that period, the all important focus is therefore, on the archaeological findings depicting the art of the period.

It is because of obvious reasons that whatever artistic material has survived upto now pertains to sculptural arts. However, this art depicts many scenes which reflect that performing arts must have flourished during the period under review. The sculptural art of the period can broadly be classified into the three categories on the basis of material employed. These are:

1) Stone art
2) Wood art, and
3) Terracotta art

**STONE ART**

Till recently it was generally held that Kushan stone art did not exist in Kashmir. However, this assumption was challenged by the discovery of a stone sculpture, of Siva seated in ‘European pose’, from Ushkur Baramulla (Varhmulla) (pl. 3).- This is a magnificent sculpture art piece unique in itself because such a portrayal of Siva is not known from any other place till now. Though ‘European pose’ was not unknown in India, it was rarely used for ascetic seated pose, the commonly used pose being Padmasana. However, “in Gandhara sculpture the European pose became fairly common, but it was reserved (with variations) entirely for princes, Bodhisattvas, and for minor deities – never for the Buddha as a cult image until the third century and then only rarely.”3 Buddha was for the first time depicted in ‘European pose’ at Takh-i-Bahi in about third century A.D. and it is with this statue of Buddha that Kashmiri stone sculpture of Siva resembles most4. But for the three heads, this statue

4. Ibid.

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would have been taken to be of Buddha. Because the statue bears striking resemblance with the Buddha figures of Gandhara. The halo behind the head, characteristic feature of Gandhara Buddha is well illustrated here. The hair is also fashioned in Buddha's style. The dress worn by Siva in this statue is also the same which Buddha invariably wears in Gandhara statues. Further, Siva here is seated on the same lotus throne which is generally associated with Buddha.

The artistic qualities of this image indicate that it could not have been created overnight by an artist but needed generations of artistic efforts, experience and tradition behind it.

At this point it is important to mention that the statue discussed earlier is not the only piece of stone art in Kashmir. An inscription of Vima Kadphises has long been discovered at Khaltse (Pl. 2). This inscription has two fold significance for Kashmir history: First that it substantiates that Kashmir formed a part of the Kushan empire from the time of the early Kushan rulers, and second, that this is the earliest expression of the Kushan figural art in Kashmir. This is an oval shaped boulder and at its centre is a roughly executed male figure, wearing a long coat, trousers and riding boots. In left hand he holds a long sword, diagonally attached to the waist band, while the right hand is most probably placed on the scabbard of an unsheathed weapon. The face is in profile, and whether it is bearded or not is not clear. Although drawn in a somewhat crude manner, the figure displays a kind of dignified disposition in its majestic stance and conspicuously assertive attitude. A little to the right of the human figure and from its waist level downwards is a vertical row of what looks like four ibexes, etched summarily with
simple lines. It seems that the human figure has to confront the group of animals. Thus the figure seems to convey some meaningful interrelationship. The human figure as represented on this inscription bears striking resemblance with the effigy of Wima as represented on his copper coins found in Kashmir.

Another specimen of stone sculpture attributed to Kushan period is a bull capital found on the way from Pahalgam to Doen Pather. This sculpture is powerfully built with magnificent details. The human couple is between two bulls, in their typical Kushan head dress. In the words of Dr. Aijaz Banday “this bull capital is a tremendous representation of exclusive Kushan artists methodology he adopted in Gandhara. This Kushan sculpture further proves how alive Kashmir art was during that period and negates the notion held by some scholars that Kashmir remained in cultural backwater during the Kushan period”5

WOOD ART

Kashmir holds a distinguished position in the field of wood art today, and it seems that this art had a deep rooted tradition in Kashmir. It is fairly understandable that as fine quality wood had been readily available in abundance in Kashmir, the artists of this place may have used it for expression of their artistic ideas. Though no wood art piece of ancient period has survived upto now, because of impermanent nature of wood, the terracotta tiles belonging to Kushan period are a definite pointer towards the existence of wood work. These tiles depict various kinds of tripods over which lie purangathas (Pl.13 f.19). In all

5 Banday, A., op. cit. pp. 9-11
probability these tripods were actually made of wood. One can assume this on the basis of archaeological evidence. Nowhere from any Kushan site has been found a tripod of this type in any material i.e. copper or clay. The total absence of any such tripod indicates that the material used for its manufacture must have been some perishable material, and this could have been wood. Further more, the Kushan artists of Gandhara and Mathura portrayed beautiful railings on many reliefs in stone, such railings must have been in fashion in Kashmir too. That the railings depicted in stone reliefs were actually made of wood has long back been proven by E. B. Havell, Percy Brown and Sir John Marshall.6

**TERRACOTTA ART**

The terracotta art has been termed as a ‘Popularistic art’ because it has been the most popular medium of the artistic expression since the earliest times. The reasons for this are not difficult to seek. Firstly, terracotta is cheap and readily available, and secondly, it provides ample freedom of expression, in comparison to stone or stucco, to the artist. It may be because of these reasons that the most splendid art forms of Kushan period in Kashmir survive in clay and terracotta. In Kashmir clay and terracotta seem to have come in use around 2500 B.C. The archaeological findings from various pre-historic, proto-historic and early historic sites of Kashmir clearly show that the use of clay and terracotta continued from Neolithic times onwards in different parts of the valley in various forms to express artistic taste of the people in Kashmir:

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As this art has a continuous history in Kashmir right from Neolithic times to the medieval period, this art enables us to understand and appreciate various directional changes in the form and content of the artistic creation of the Kashmiri people since pre-historic times.

The earliest evidence of the terracotta art comes from Semthan and it is here that terracotta art underwent a gradual evolutionary process. In the Pre-Mauryan phase only terracotta beads were found, in the succeeding period i.e. the Mauryan period (500-200 B.C.) terracotta beads were found together with terracotta balls. Indeed the Saka-Parthian period showed further development of terracotta art, as terracotta discs, beads and balls were accompanied in the period by beautiful human heads with serene facial expressions. Thus it appears that at the time of occupation of Kashmir by Kushans, Kashmiri artists had got some degree of expertise in terracotta art activities. Though Kushan rulers themselves did not patronize any kind of art, Kushan state created such conditions that were favourable for the development of art. Equally important is the fact that localized schools of art got impetus for development and excellence during the Kushan period. This is illustrated by the fact that during the Kushan period we find Semthan showing remarkable progress in terracotta art. The art refined, the range of art pieces widened and it got diffused to many other places.

Terracotta art objects belonging to the Kushan period have been reported from almost a dozen of sites. These include Semthan, Kralchak, Chattragul, Gurwet, Hutmur, Doenpather, Takiyabal, Wanchdoor, Ushkur, Ahan, Kanispur, Harwan and Kutabal. Among the terracotta figural art pieces are included a wide range of terracotta tiles found from
all the above mentioned sites. The terracotta art pieces found from these places can be broadly placed in two categories:
1) Tiles and 2) clay art

Tile Art

Most of the Kushan sites in Kashmir have yielded terracotta tiles which were mainly used to decorate the pavements. The sites from where tiles have so far been retrieved include Harwan, Hutmur, Doenpather, Ushkur, Ahan Wanchdar, Takiabal, Hoinar, Semthan, Kralchak, Gurwet and Kanispor. A comparative study of these tiles enables us to reconstruct the history and evolution of this fascinating art of Kashmir.

It appears that this art originated at Doen Pather from where have been retrieved tiles which don’t have well ligavated clay. The impressions of motifs on the tiles are also fade. One more indication of its earlier date is that the tiles from this site have been retrieved in association with a fine thin red-ware pot resembling Parthian pot (pl. 21, fig. 46). The next in row are the tiles found from Hoinar (pl.20, fig38,39). The motifs on the tiles here are clearer but the images still are not well defined. Then comes the tile site of Hutmur which shows a noteworthy development in the tile art. The site has yielded tile pavements at three places. The largest being the one with nine concrete circles of tiles like we have found at Kutabal (pl.19, fig.a). The tiles of the pavement here also are numbered in Kharoshti and are laid in a systematic plan. The centre of the pavement has a three dimensional kamalaghatta which is immediately surrounded by lotus petal motifed tiles in the first row. This part of the pavement is almost in the same fashion as lotus flowers are
carved on some of the railings from the Bharhut stupa or Sanghol railing. The second row of 12 tiles has a *Kalparaksa* (the wishful tree) emerging out of a *purnaghatta* (vase of plenty). Besides six of these tiles have alternatively swan and cock motif. The third row of 20 tiles have in upper tier a stag and lion motif facing each other in separate compartments. In the lower tier is geometrical line design. The fourth row, of lesser size of tiles, have four petaled floral design. This is followed by usual dimensional row of tiles with motifs as in third row. The interesting feature of the sixth row of tiles is that in three compartments of the tile are stamped three figures (pl.18, fig.35). Of these the one in the left is a human figure, standing, holding an unidentified object in one hand, while the other hand is almost rested on the hip. The central figure is of an unnatural creature with human head and animal body having a short tail and is almost in a dancing pose. The right side figure is of a monster having human with an animal head facing towards the dancing figure. In the rest of the circles of tiles the upper motifs are repeated. Some of these have geometrical design in the upper part while the lower fringe has lotus medallions with the central part plain.

The most remarkable tile site known in Kashmir is Harwan. It was the first site from where came the evidence of Kushan figural art in Kashmir. The site yielded beautiful terracotta tiles along with the fragments of clay sculpture. Though the site was visited by Hiranand Shastri in 1919, the first scientific excavations were taken up by R.C Kak in 1920-21. On the basis of Kharoshti numerals on these tiles and also on the basis of similarity between the sculptural art pieces of Harwan and
those of Jaulian, Kak dated these tiles to 3rd century A.D.\(^7\) However, as Harwan was the first site to yield such decorative tiles rich in pictorial art, it has attracted attention of many writers. While R.C. Kak placed it around 300 A.D. the later writers give a date ranging from 1st century B.C. to 8th century A.D. Thermoluminiscence dating also gives a date between 2nd century B.C. to 6th century A.D.\(^8\) While C.Fabri puts it to 8th century A.D.\(^9\) and P.G. Paul calls it art of the Hun’s and places it around 5th- 6th century A.D.\(^10\) J.L. Bhan attributes this art to the Parthian and places it around 1st century B.C.\(^11\) The first theory was put up by P.G. Paul who dates these tiles to 5th 6th century A.D. and attributes it to the Huns. P.G. Paul ontradicts R.C. Kak’s view that Kharoshti ceased to be used in North- West about 5th century A.D. and also that these tiles belong to a period when Kharoshti was on the peak of its popularity.\(^12\) Paul referring to the Marshall’s dating of Jaulian votive inscription around first half of the fifth century A.D. maintains that Kharoshti at that time could not have been an ordinary script, and also that its currency was rather confined to a limited number of people in a particular milieu, that is to say, in the Buddhistic monastic cloisters alone. Thus even if Jaulian votive inscription may suggest that Kharoshti continued to be used rarely even in fifth century A.D. it could hardly have been current with the ordinary labourers employed in the making of tiles. Thus these

\(^7\) Kak R.C., *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 110.
\(^12\) Paul, P., op.cit., pp. 39-44.
tiles must have been made in period earlier to 5th century A.D. The second point on which P.G. Paul contradicts R.C. Kak is that the tiles belong to a period when Kharoshti script was at the peak of its popularity. Refuting the view P.G. Paul points out that the Kharoshti numerals on the tiles show non-observance of the basic rule of Kharoshti against all conventions. He further explains, if a tile is to be numbered 15, conventionally the numerals should be placed as 1, 4, 10 i.e., in the decending order starting from the right hand side and not as 10,4,1 as has been done on the Harvan tiles. He further adds, the fundamental point however, is not the total, but the basic rule, which has been violated. Indeed violation of the basic rule indicates decline, but not when it has been committed by some ordinary labourer while marking the tiles, certainly it could have meant so if such an error would have been found in some literary work. And the fundamental point for the labourer who marked these numerals on the tile would, certainly have been the number and not the rule. The mere fact that the labourers were having some acquaintance with Kharoshti suggests that the script must have been at the peak of its popularity at that time. Thus it can be safely concluded that the tiles belong to period considerably earlier to 5th century A.D.

After establishing a date anterior to the 5th century A.D we will try to examine how tangible are the grounds for attributing the tiles to Parthian period i.e. to 1st century B.C. the main argument in this regard is presented by J.L.Bhan. He was the first to connect the tile art of Kashmir

13 Ibid
14 Kak, op. cit., pp. 109-11
15 Paul, p. op. cit., pp. 39-44.
16 Ibid.
with Parthians a non-Buddhist ethnic group of Central-Asia. He bases his argument mainly on four points. These can briefly be stated as (1) the motifs depicting hunting and ascetic does not allow these tiles to be associated with Buddhism. (2) Parthian influences are depicted on the tiles in the form of archer/hunter mounted on a horse back. (3) tile work or brick work had remained an exclusive art of Parthians in their domain. (4) The apsidal shrine at Harwan was built by these people as this type of architecture was in vogue long before it was incorporated in the Buddhist architecture.

While refuting the first point of argument it is to be borne in mind that Buddhist church was carried from simpler monastic form of Hinayana to a more naturalistic form of Mahayana. This new Buddhist church now allowed the anthropomorphic representation of Buddha. Buddha from a revered human being was transformed into 'ultimate god'. This mutation provided enough freedom to the Kushan artist to depict tales from the life of Buddha. He freely incorporated the ideas and themes originating from Rome, Persia and India into his art objects. The ideas came to be taken from the real life of Buddha and the Jataka tales. Asceticism has played an important part in Buddhism and in initial phases of his quest for enlightenment Buddha observed extreme asceticism, however, as Buddha afterwards renounced such extreme means to enlightenment as excessive, the example of such severe asceticism are rare. And it was only in some Gundharan art objects that this type of asceticism was represented. Outside this school such severe

17 Bhan, J.L., op. cit., p. 43-50.
18 Ibid.
scenes of asceticism were not seen. It is to be mentioned here that such scenes of asceticism were portrayed in Kashmir even during later period. An ivory panel from Kashmir representing fasting Buddha bears resemblance to the emaciated type of image found on Harwan tiles. Thus it is not surprising to find the seated image of Buddha on a lion throne of 130 A.D from the Katra-mond, Mathura, now in Mathura. Museum or the standing image of Buddha from Gandhara of mid 2nd century A.D., now in Lahore museum and that fasting Buddha of Gandhara of the 2nd century A.D. depicting Buddha in asceticism, are the scenes from his real life. In the same manner hunting was also banned in Buddhism but as early as Ashoka’s time they could not adhere strictly to it. In his Rock Edict I, Girnar, Ashoka himself says “Formerly numerous animals, were killed in the King’s kitchen. Now only two Peacocks and one deer are killed and this deer too not daily.”20 Deer has a revered position in Buddhism as this animal was associated with Buddha’s first sermon given in deer park at Sarnath, yet the animal was being killed in king’s kitchen. That despite emphasis on ahimsa, flesh eating had continued in India. In his latter Matriceta, the Buddhist theologian of Tibet, writes to Kanishka ‘to give up hunting of wild beasts and to live an exemplary Buddhist life. Thus, though Buddhism preached ahimsa, but in practice killing of animals continued.

It is also to be mentioned that Harwan tiles depict many emblems which are associated with Buddhism. On many Harwan tiles is depicted Dharmacakra, ‘wheel of law’ (pl.14, fig.20; pl.15, fig.24,25,26; pl.20, fig.38,39). Even tiles found at other sites in Kashmir also depict Buddhist

20 Sircar, D.C., Select Inscriptions I, p. 17.
emblems and also such scenes as were depicted at other Buddhist sites. These include lion attacking a man (pl.15, fig.24), cow suckling her young calf (pl.15, fig.23), elephants sporting in a lotus pond, cock fighting (pl.14, fig.19), the row of human couples in balcony (with slight variations) (pl.8, fig.7; pl.9, fig.9) and the procession of geese (pl.8, fig.7). The last two of the above mentioned themes were traditional themes and were extensively used in the early Buddhist art of India. The winged shell motif of Harwan (pl.9, fig. 9a) finds its replica at Mathura and Sarnath and both of these belong to the Kushan period. The motifs like rosettes, floral scrolls, lotus roundels, grape vine scrolls and purnagatha have widely been used at Buddhist structures. While studying art history it needs to be kept in the mind that many themes have been common to the civilizations in ancient times and have diffused from one place to another. As Kushan empire extended over a large territory and was inhabited by the people belonging to different culture groups the themes and ideas of one group were absorbed by other groups and eventually such themes diffused to other regions and peoples. There was immense interaction and the routes opened by missionaries, then traversed by the traders and commercial entrepreneurs were also used by artists and craftsmen to move from one place to another. It was a time when Huns were launching formidable offensive at different places, creating havoc in social and political setup and thus compelling people to migrate from one place to another. During their migratory process these artists and craftsmen did not migrate empty handed, wherever they went they took

21 Paul, P.G., op. cit., p.47.
22 Ibid.

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with themselves their art and crafts, themes and ideas, and techniques and methods.

As Kushan nobility was patron of arts and crafts, many migrant artists and craftsmen settled in Kushan empire which guaranteed peace and tranquility at that time, contributed their themes and ideas, methods and techniques to the arts that were flourishing in the vast Kushan empire. One more factor that was responsible for syncretic art tradition of the Kushans was that the culture these rulers propagated was syncretic in nature. They were influenced by their Indo-Greek, Indo-Scythian and Indo-Parthian predecessors. One example of the syncretic nature of the Kushan civilization is the Kushan coinage.

Harwan tiles are remarkable because the motifs on these tiles are “suggestive of more than half a dozen alien civilizations of the ancient world, besides other which are indigenous and local. Such are the Bahrut railings, the Greek swan, the Sassanian foliated fret, the Indian elephant, the Assyrian lion, with figures of dancers, musicians, cavaliers and ascetic and racial types drawn from many sources as may be seen by their costumes and accessories”.23

At Harwan, the apsidal shrine (chaitya hall) is located at the upper terrace. With this apsidal shrine lies this fascinating and energetic tile pavement. This is the only site in Kashmir from where the remains of a chaitya have come to light. This chaitya hall stands in the centre of a courtyard facing to the north. It consists of a rectangular nave, porch in front and a circular apse behind. Both the apse and the nave are internally as well as externally lined in the diaper pebble style. A circumambulatory

passage (*pradakshina-path*) meets on either side of the nave to the porch in front. There is an outer *pradakshine-patha* which also joins the porch on either side. The architectural style of Harwan chaitya hall broadly conforms with other chaitya halls found in India and Gandhara. The plan of Harwan chaitya hall bears resemblance to chaitya halls of Sirkap, Ajanta, Karli, Bedsa and Bhaja etc. Usually a row of free standing columns separates the internal *pradakshina-patha* from the body of the hall, however, here at Harwan no such trace has been found. It seems just as in Jaindal temple in Sirkap these columns were probably replaced by a wall. It seems that arched timber roof existed in the Harwan chaitya hall, the basis for such an assumption is archaeological evidence found at Harwan, Hoinar and Hatmur. Both at Hoinar and Harwan when tile pavements were excavated these were found covered by a layer of charcoal. At Harwan too in a portion of 0.30m deep and 1.50m wide ditch was found half burnt mud plaster. Nothing can be said with certainty how the plaster was backed in situ to turn it into half baked terracotta. However, it can be assumed that a fire that might have brook in the arched roof and wooden structures of the chaitya hall could have supplied enough quantity of timber to bring the change in the mud-plaster. The fire might have brook out in the structure either on account of human vandalism or natural calamity caused during this period.

At Harwan besides tiles, were found a large number of broken figures, toes of terracotta figures, terracotta hair curls belonging to the images of Buddha (pl.23). Only a terracotta pendent from a necklace of colossal figure of Bodhisattvas published by Kak (pl.23, fig.53), this
The terracotta image collection of Harwan is regarded to be of the same period as that of Ushkur.

The Harwan stupa plaques (pl.7, fig.6) however, cannot be attached with these antiquities even if both were found from the same site. These tiles have inscription on the front side in Brahmi characters datable to 4th century A.D. However, Paul dates these plaques to a later date 6th century A.D. on account of the Paleographic study of the inscription he has found on the back side of these plaques. He finds resemblance of the alphabets of this inscription, particularly the alphabet ‘ya’ with those of Bodhgaya inscription of Muhnaman dated 588-89 A.D. This is very significant. As this implies that the Buddhists at Harwan remained active for quite a long time span, at least from 4th-7th century A.D.

Kutbal, the most recently discovered Kushan site is remarkable one. Chronologically the site can be placed along with Harwan. The site has revealed magnificent terracotta tiles. Like Hutmur and Harwan, it seems that the tiles at Kutbal also form part of some pavement (pl.16, fig.27). Again, like Hutmur and Harwan these tiles are laid in concentric circles. Seven rows of tiles are visible on one and eight on the other side of the central piece which appears like kamlagatha, from which it appears that lotus petals are emerging. This feature of tile alignment is similar with the tile pavements of Harwan and Hutmur. The second and third row of tiles repeats the motif of first row of tiles. The fourth row of tiles is very significant as it for the first time introduces the elephant motif (pl.16, fig.28). However, only three tiles of this row are placed in situ. A man appears sitting on the elephant back carrying flower in one hand and some other unidentifiable object in the other hand. The trunk of thee
elephant holds a flower, it is not clear whether the flower emerges from the trunk or is it simply held by it. The fifth row of tiles is in two tiers. In one tier is a horse in full gallop and then second tier appears a human figure carrying an arrow (neza) in one hand. At the lower end of the arrow appears a *dharmacakara* behind which is depicted a child sitting in praying posture. The sixth row again laid in circular manner carries tiles having two tiers. In upper tier there appears a deer in full gallop and half portion of a horse in full gallop. In lower tier there appear two anthropomorphic figures. Seventh row of tiles too is in double tier. The lower tier depicts a mount on a flying swain (pl.16, fig.30). The mount is carrying some unidentifiable object in his hand. In the lower tier of the tile appears a *purangatha* (pl.6, fig.31), from which emerges *kalpavraksa* and the upper tier carries an outline of fish design. The ninth row of tiles is in three tiers. The upper tile depicts a deer in full gallop, the middle a dancing girl bearing resemblance to Harwan dancing girl and the lower tier depicts a human figure carrying something in both hands. As at other Kushan tile sites of Kashmir the tiles at Kutbal are also numbered in Kharoshti.

One interesting feature that we come across at Hutmur, Harwan and Kutbal is the presence of small channel like drains alongside the tile pavements. This indicates that water was somehow associated with these pavements. It needs to be mentioned here that at Hutmur the row of tiles along the central round rubble wall has a raised moulding, semi-circular in plan, with water cascade design (pl.18, fig.37). In Buddhist mythology Stupa is regarded to be floating upon the cosmic ocean. The depiction of
water cascade design and the existence of water channels alongside tile pavements may thus be indicative of this mythology.

Ahan is another tile site which has revealed Kushan tiles. The site is a small one but the motif on this tile is very significant. The tile depicts a human figure holding, a long spear in the left hand. He is wearing heavy soft riding boots and his feet are splayed outward. The figure wears a long top coat flaring to the knees and tight at the waist. The right hand of the figure rests on his hip. (pl. 12, fig.b) this motif is very significant as it bears striking resemblance to the 'effigy of king sacrificing on the altar' found on the obverse of the Kushan coins.

Wanchdoor is another site which has yielded terracotta tiles (pl.21, figs. 42,43,44,45). The site has yielded terracotta tiles which do not appear belonging to any circular pavement as the tiles are in perfect rectangular shape. These tiles do not bear highly artistic designs but just outline of human figures in profile. The outline of three human figures depicted on the tiles is in profile to left. One figure is depicted in the sitting posture and the two in standing portion (pl. 21, fig. 44, 45). The fourth tile from the same site depicts a Siva temple like structure holding an icon of Siva in his Bairava incarnation (pl.21, fig. 42).

**Kushan Clay Art**

Equally remarkable art of Kushan period is available in Kushan terracotta clay art. The finds from three sites, Harwan, Semthan and Ushkar are notable in this regard.
Harwan

The site besides yielding beautiful terracotta tiles, as mentioned earlier, has also yielded broken fragments of fingers, toes, terracotta hair curls and hair pins and a huge pendent. It seems that Harwan at least one witnessed some sought of vandalism that might have caused destruction to these objects it seems that these broken fragments might have belonged to images of which some might have been life size. The basis for this assumption is that a human size clay hand (pl. 23. fig. 53,54) has been found from Harwan. In the same manner a huge pendant (pl. 22. fig.47) has been retrieved, which might have belonged to the image of Bodhisattava. However, the most remarkable find from clay objects at Harwan are three terracotta plaques (pl.7, fig.6) showing miniature stupas. These stupas are reflective of the stupa architecture of the period.

Ushkar

As earlier mentioned Ushkar is the modern name of the town founded by Kushan King Huvishka. And that the town remained an important place of activity upto the Karkota period is borne out by the fact that Lalitaditya built here a shrine of Vishnu named Muktasvamin and a large vihara with a stupa. However, one interesting fact about Lalitaditya’s stupa is that it seems to have been built over an older structure of nearly the same type, stones of which were found still in situ when the silt over the base was removed. It was surmised that the lower structure might have belonged to the Kushan period. And the finds retrieved from the site later substantiated the assumption. The site

24 Rajatarangini, Book I, vs. 168.
25 Ibid., Book I, vs.
yielded eleven terracotta heads, besides a number of fragmentary limbs of images which in words of R.C.Kak “display the unmistakable influence of Gandhara school of the third and fourth century A.D.”\textsuperscript{26} The terracotta collection of Ushkur includes terracotta heads represented by Buddha, Badhisattva, male and female monks, lay devotees young and old some with serene and some with deranged looks. In view of R.C. Kak “these charming sculptures represent excellent example of modeling”\textsuperscript{27} and indeed are earliest examples of Kashmir sculptural art.

**Semthan**

Semthan has also yielded beautiful terracotta figurines belonging to the Kushan period. A remarkable terracotta figure is of a headless standing figure of a Bodhisattva, wearing a sleeved tunic reaching to the knees having intermittent delineated folds usually running parallel to one another (pl. 27 fig. 4). This bears striking resemblance to Gandharan Buddhist statues of early Christian centuries. The Semthan collection includes a damaged and broken terracotta head of a deity (pl.27, fig. 3), terracotta head of a soldier (pl.26, fig.7), a human terracotta figurine, terracotta fragment of a human face (pl. 26, fig.5), terracotta figurine of a lion (pl.27, fig.1), headless terracotta of a lady (pl.27, fig.2), a terracotta plaque depicting Buddha (pl.26, fig.1). It needs to be mentioned here that these sculptures are prepared out of a single mould.

**ARCHITECTURE**

The architecture of Kashmir under the Kushan was the product of the recognized religious and secular architecture obtaining especially in

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{26} Kak, op. cit., pp. 111
\textsuperscript{27} Ibid.

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Gandhara, local needs dictated by the climatic conditions and the availability of material. Although the written and archaeological sources point to a considerable building activity during the period, no edifice of the time has survived to us. And it is on the basis of a few shreds of material evidence and with the help of comparative history that a sketch of the architecture can be constructed till the spade brings out some more concrete and revealing evidence on the subject.

At Harwan four types of structures have come to light. They are: ordinary rubble stone style, diaper rubble style, pebble style and diaper pebble style. Ushkur, an another important Kushan site has revealed yet one more masonry style called, chip style.

**Rubble stone style:** At Harwan a number of walls were encountered (pl. 4a, fig. 2a.). They were ordinary rubble stone structures. According to R. C. Kak, who excavated the site during the 20’s of the twentieth century, “these structures were at first sight scarcely distinguishable from the mud and mud stone walls of peasants’ dwellings in Kashmir.”

**Diaper-rubble style:** A number of buildings at Harwan were constructed in this style. According to this style a number of large boulders were placed in one row with intervening spaces between each pair of them. These spaces were filled with smaller stones, so that the entire façade presented a diaper effect. (pl. 5, fig. 3). None of these stones was dressed. Among the buildings constructed in this style are, the triple base of a medium-sized stupa, and a set of rooms which might have served as chapels or for residential purposes.

Pebble style: In this style walls had a core of rubble stones, but their facing consisted of closely packed small pebbles. The walls are built entirely in mud, but the pebbles are so carefully packed that after the lapse of nearly two thousand years the portion of the wall that remained standing presents a very neat appearance (pl. 4 a, fig 2b). The labour involved in collecting and fixing such small pebbles in an extensive building must have been, however, enormous.

Diaper-pebble style: An enclosure wall in a far better condition was found at Harwan alongside the other aforementioned structures. It is built in a peculiar style which is evidently a cross between the older pebble style and the later rubble style, and provides a strikingly effective façade (pl. 5, fig. 4). It consists of a series of large, smooth-faced irregularly shaped boulders placed at intervals of 6" to 18" apart, the inter spaces being filled with small round or oval pebbles of 1" to 2" in diameter.

Chip masonry: Chip stones were turned to excellent advantage by the Kushan builders at Ushkaur – the town founded by Huvishka.

While the ordinary rubble structures formed the oldest style, the chronology of the rest three styles, according to Kak is as follows. The pebble style of buildings was the earliest in date. It is followed by the diaper pebble style. This style was followed by the diaper rubble style.29

It should be remembered that coursed rubble masonry was the characteristic of Greek and Saka periods,30 and the heavy diaper masonry was the trait of the Parthian and Kushan periods.31 At Taxila heavy diaper

29 Ibid, p. 111
31 Ibid.
masonry had been introduced at Sirkap by the Parthians as in comparison to rough rubble masonry it was earthquick resistant.32 With the coming of Kushans, the diaper masonry was exquisitely augmented and widely introduced in other parts of the empire. Different stupas and monasteries at Taxila of this period were of the same characteristic.33

The Kushans were also known for introducing a semi-ashlar masonry in the hilly regions of their empire. About this style Marshall writes, “...the foundations of the walls are lime-stone rubble .... but above ground level the walls are faced with the strong semi-ashler masonry which first came into fashion in A.D second century and of which numberless examples can be seen among the Buddhist remains at Taxila dating from the second to the fifth century.”34 As compared with the old rubble and diaper works of the Parthians and early Kushans, the semi-ashler method was an improvement in many ways.

In Kashmir diaper pebble facing was sometimes covered with a revetment of beautiful and elaborately moulded bricks, some of which are still in situ on the enclosure wall at Harwan.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Kushans popularized diaper rubble and diaper pebble masonry, the climatic conditions of Kashmir favoured more the use of wood and brick and mud plaster. Even today in the areas lying near the jungles, houses are exclusively made of wood; and in the rest of the valley houses have been invariably constructed of wood and brick with mud plaster, rough stones being used mainly for foundations.

32 Ibid, p. 63.
33 Ibid, p. 218.
34 Ibid., p. 219.
Religious Establishments:

Archaeological and literary sources attest to the fact that many religious establishments pertaining to the Buddhist creed sprang up in Kashmir during the Kushan period. While Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini* specifically mentions construction of Buddhist structures at Huvishkapura (Ushkur), Jushkapura (Zakura) and Kanishkapura (Kanispur) archaeological excavations conducted during last two centuries have brought to light the Buddhist structures of Kushan period at some other place in Kashmir also. Harwan being remarkable among such archaeological discoveries. This is the only site in Kashmir which has yielded the evidence of Stupa, chaitya and vihara belonging to the Buddhist creed.

*Stupa*

Stupa – the circular sacred funeral mound commemorative of Buddha’s death was the earliest symbol representing the Buddhist creed. Although stupa was not invented by Buddhists and had Aryan origin, it was profusely made popular by Buddhists. The latest date attributed to the introduction of Buddhism in Kashmir is the reign of Ashoka, who is said to have constructed at least four stupas each containing “a pint measure of relic of Tathagatta” in Kashmir. Huien Tsiang attributes wonderful height and great magnificence to these

35 *Rajatarangini*, Book I, vs. 168.
37 *Rajatarangini*, Book I, vs. 105, 106.
However, no such stupa has been found in Kashmir till now. Kalhana in Rajatarangini credits Huvishka, Jushka (Vaishishika) and Kanishka with the construction of many viharas, which exist usually around stupas and chaityas but no stupa datable to the Kushan period has also been found in Kashmir till now. Neither have been any details regarding the architecture of stupas and viharas constructed by Asoka and Kushan rulers preserved in the sources which credit these rulers with the construction of these structures.

However, at famous Kushan site of Harwan, three votive terracotta plaques bearing stupas in relief were discovered (pl.7, fig.6). The stupa represented on these plaques consists of three recessed platforms (medhi), with a distinct decorative moulding around each. A continuous flight of stairs ascends through all three levels to the main platform. Due to the sculptures in low relief it is not possible to determine whether or not such stairways were found on the other three sides. At each corner of the platform on some of the plaques, are two large, free standing columns. The hemispherical stupa proper is circled with several horizontal bands, with decorative elements visible between two of them. These are most likely niches with figures inside as often found in Gandhara monuments. The upper third of the dome is left plain and the top supports a number of struts, which in turn are surmounted with a series of circular umbrellas (chatravali) of diminishing size. These are separated from one another by more such struts and culminate in a point from which fly several streamers.

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39 Ibid.
Interestingly, the type of stupa found on the Harwan plaques is repeated in the ruined foundation at Harwan, Ushkur and Parihaspura. And also the same descriptive information about the Kashmir stupa has been provided by sixth- seventh century Hindu text – Vishnudharmottara purana a purana which was compiled either in Kashmir or in North-west. However despite the paucity of architectural remains we can reconstruct the Kashmir stupa with the help of the literary record of the Vishnudharmottrapurana and the details from the votive plaques of Harwan. The small number of Kashmiri ruins agree in all aspects with the models and there is nothing to suggest that their missing upper portions did not look like those on the plaques.

The Kashmiri stupa was quite different from the stupa’s known in most of other parts of India. The Kashmiri stupa looked like a towering edifice due to the emphasis on the umbrellas and the multi-tiered base. It may be mentioned here that similar votive Buddhist stupa plaques in bronze have also been found in Gandhara. But as the Kashmiri votive plaques are earlier in date then the bronze plaques of Gandhara, it appears that the design of Kashmiri Buddhist stupa originated in Kashmir itself and was carried to other parts from Kashmir.

It also needs to be mentioned here that the decorated tile paved circumambulatory passage (praslaksinapatha) was a distinctive feature of the Kashmiri Buddhist stupas of the Kushan period. This feature is not found at other Buddhist structures elsewhere in the Kushan empire,

41 Ibid
except at Bhamla (Taxila), where we find a pradiksinapatha decorated with baked tiles resembling the tiles we have found at Kanishkapura.

**Chaitya**

The Buddhist temple or chaitya hall arose out of the particular demands of the Buddhist religion. Earliest the religious rites of the Buddhists had been conducted in the open air, but as the time passed and lavish patronage extended by the rulers increased, worshippers became desirous of ease and comfort and thus a structural house of prayer housing the funeral mound of Buddha came into existence. In Kashmir the earliest remains of chaitya stupa have been excavated at Harwan and this chaitya stupa belongs to the Kushan period. The structural remains of this chaitya are ruins of walls constructed in diaper pebble masonry. At Harwan we have ruins of a chaitya Hall constructed in diaper pebble masonry. The chaitya is a large apsidal structure. On plan it consisted of a spacious rectangular antechamber with a circular sanctum behind (pl. 5, fig. 4). The general shape of the stupa and the ritual of circumambulation naturally suggested a building a portion of which should be circular in plan with a domical roof. The ruins of Harwan very well conform to this plan. The chaitya of Harwan stands in the centre of a courtyard facing north. It consists of a rectangular nave, porch in front and a circular apse behind. Both the apse and nave are internally as well as externally lined in the diaper pebble style. Pradakshina patha runs on either side of the nave to the porch in front. There is another pradakshina-patha which joins porch and the nave internally.

Although, we have not found any monumental or material remains of any stupa or chaitya at Hutmur, Kutbal or Hoinar, the circular
alignment of tiles, forming disc shape, suggest that these too would have been tile paved circumambulatory passages pradaksinapathas. The style of Harwan chitya, generally conforms to other chaitya hall found in Indian sub-continent. However, it seems that Harwan stupa shared many features with the Sirkap chaitya hall, because, like Sirkap the row of free standing columns separating internal pradakshina patha from the main hall is absent in Harwan chaitya hall also. The pillars being replaced in both the cases by walls. It cannot be said with certainty if or not the arched timber roof existed in the Harwan shrine; however Dr. Aijaz Ahmad Banday holds that “one can assume it more so on the basis of archaeological evidence found at Harwan... At Harwan the chaitya hall is surrounded by the tile pavement. This in turn is enclosed by a diaper pebble. Just near the south-east corner, on the eastern wall, facing to the west a small recess in the form of a nitche, about 0.30m, deep and 1.50m wide was present in 1983. Part of it still exists. On closer examination then we found that this nitche is having mud plaster, of which a small portion existed. Just in line with the apsidal end of the temple was noticed another patch of mud plaster on the enclosure wall. This plaster was half burnt. In the absence of some more concrete evidence it is difficult to ascertain how the plaster was baked in situ to turn it into half baked terracotta. It can perhaps be safely assumed that a fire would have broken out in the arched roof and wooden structures of the chaitya hall that could have supplied enough quantity of timber to bring the change in the mud-plaster. The Hoinar and Hutmur charcoal layers add weight to this assumption.”

42 Bandey, Aijaz, op. cit., pp. 7-8.
Vihara

It seems that the origin of vihara may have been earlier than that of the Buddhist stupa or chaitya. For during Buddha’s life time stupa and chaitya were not known but the organization of sangha was started by him during his own life time. Not surprisingly, therefore, we find literary reference to the construction of vihara by king Surendara, who was predecessor of Asoka in Kashmir.43

However, none of these early Buddhist structural monasteries exist now, because these were generally built of wood and thatch, which are impermanent in nature. By the time the Kushans appeared on the political and cultural scene of Kashmir, stupas and chaityas had become an integral part of the viharas. Kalhana credits Hushka, Jushka (Vaishashika) and Kanishka with the construction of viharas in Kashmir. It seems that at Harwan and Ushkur viharas came into being during the Kushan period for these sites have yielded many artifacts of Kushan affiliation. The conventional arrangement of vihara consisted of a series of cells enclosing three sides of a square courtyard, the remaining side being left open for the entrance. However, gradually at some places cells were placed with the chaitya hall. It seems that at Harwan and Ushkur it was the latter type of Vihara that had been constructed there.

43 Rajatarangini. Vol. I, pp. 91, 94.