

Early Historic Costumes of Bangladesh Depicted on the Stone Sculptures and Coins

ANANNA ZULFIQAR SHOWLY

Lecturer, Department of Archaeology, Jahangirnagar University, Savar, Dhaka,
Bangladesh. E-mail: ananna.showly@juniv.edu

Abstract: *The styles and designs of early historic costumes being interesting and important topics for studying the history of that time, got little attention to the scholars. This work is an attempt to give a clear picture of the early historic costumes of Bangladesh depicted on the stone sculptures and coins of Bengal as well as to get some hints of the dress and how people wore them. Through a vast literature review and careful study of the sculpture and coins, it was found that Dhuti and Sari were the most used costumes for male and female of Early Historic Bangladesh. Upper garments were not that much popular for both male and female and not much variation was found in lower garments. We can see some similarities between the dressing pattern of Bengal and some other regions of India. Besides the depiction of Royal figures on coins, foreign influence can be noticed easily.*

Keywords: *Costume, Sculpture, Early History, Iconography, Terracotta Plaques*

Received : 16 July 2023

Revised : 19 August 2023

Accepted : 29 August 2023

Published : 30 December 2023

TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Showly, A.Z. 2023. Early Historic Costumes of Bangladesh Depicted on the Stone Sculptures and Coins. *South Asian History, Culture and Archaeology*, 3: 2, pp. 179-196.

Introduction

Most of the people all over the world cover their bodies with an article of clothing, known as costume, dress, garment or attire. The reason of wearing costumes can vary. It is suggested by many scholars that, the initial motives were much more functional (Kemper, 1977) like protecting our bodies from extreme climatic conditions or dangers, but with the time, costumes became the symbolic representation of social and economic status, emblem of aesthetic sense, cultural and religious practices, festivals, one's perception towards the world, a phenomenon, technological advancement etc. In that sense, garments have a very important role in expressing ourselves. They may differ from culture to culture and change through the time. Some scholars argue that, in tropical areas like, valleys of the Euphrates, the Nile and the Indus, protection from cold weather could not be the dominant reason for wearing cloths rather some other motives for instance, modesty, and symbol of magical power played a crucial role in the

clothing history of these regions (Laver, 1960) Tracking back the first use of body covering is yet to be explored. As there are very little archaeological evidence for early uses of clothing, we need to rely on some other branches of scientific research for talking about early human clothing history. Some studies show that, origin of clothing can be dated back to roughly 42,000-72,000 years ago (Kittler, Kayser, Stoneking, 2003). Another analysis suggests that the use of clothing was likely to be originated with anatomically modern humans in Africa and reinforces a broad trend of modern human developments in Africa during the Middle to Late Pleistocene (Toups, et. all, 2011). Kemper referred the use of body paint as the first step in the development of clothing, which was entirely magical (Kemper, 1977).

There is no such authentic information on the history of costume patterns of the ancient people of Bangladesh. In Indian subcontinent, proof of cotton cultivation and remains of ancient clothing were discovered through excavation in Indus valley, dated as 2500 B.C. Discovery of archaeological textile is almost impossible for Bangladesh because of the climatic condition. Therefore, for interpreting the evolution of attires of this region we have to rely on some past literatures, paintings and iconographic evidence including sculptures, terracotta plaques, and figures on coins, very few toys and in the piece of cloths in the form of embroidery. Sculptures and coins mainly represent the religious and royal figures but in terracotta plaques, we find the presence of general people. Terracotta is curved and burnt mud bricks used as a durable medium of art for conveying artistic expressions in the early stages of almost all older civilizations (Husain, 1999). The Bengal people also used terracotta plaques for decorating and ornamenting their religious and other purposive architectures. Also, numerous toys, animal and human figures made with terracotta have been found from various archaeological sites of Bangladesh. This form of art throw tremendous light on past social, religious, political, economic (Husain, 1999) and contemporary life of Bengal (Haque, 2014).

In recent years, costumes got much attention by different scholars. Previously Nalini Kanta Bhattasali, A.K.M. Shamsul Alam, described the costumes of early historic people of Bengal while discussing the sculptural arts of Bangladesh. Niharranjan Ray also discussed the dressing patterns of Bengal people in his book "*Bangalir Itihas*." A notable work on Bengal people's costumes has been appeared in recent time named, "Terracottas of Bengal: An analytical study" by Zulekha Haque. In this book, she exemplified and described various aspects of life of Bengal people by analyzing the ornamentations of the terracotta of this region. In this book, she discussed the costumes of not only ancient Bengal but also medieval and late medieval Bengal. Some other scholars also attempted to do so but those were not that much significant. The present work discusses the costumes depicted on the early sculptures and coins of Bengal. Bengal encompasses a vast area including Bangladesh and the West Bengal of India. In this paper, the area refers to the present Bangladesh.

Geographical and Political Background

The term '*Bengal*' includes modern-day Bangladesh and the Indian states of West Bengal, Tripura, and Assam district, located in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent. In early historic period, different parts of Bengal were known by different names representing various kingdoms. During mid-14th century, the word 'Bangala' indicated the whole area. In British period, the Bengal included the areas 'from the Himalayans in the north to the Bay of Bengal in the south. Present Bangladesh is a small country situated at the north-eastern part of South Asia. It lays between 20° 34' and 26° 38' north latitudes and between 88° 01' and 92° 41' east longitudes. With some exception of a few hilly regions on the borders to the north, east and west, almost entire country is flat, low laying vast flood plain. It is very difficult to say with certainty when human settlement in Bengal started. There are also controversy over the origin of the people of Bangladesh. The reconstruction of the history of Bengal in the pre-

Muslim period is difficult due to paucity of sources. Medieval writer Ghulam Husain Salim mentioned in his 'Riyad al salatin' that, nearly seven thousand and five hundred years ago 'bang' or 'Vangas' tribe set up their residence in Bengal (Islam, 2007). In the 'Aitareya Brahmana', the people of East were termed as 'Dasyus', and we find a tribe named 'Pundras' (Alam, 1985). In fourth century, BC, Bengal came under the *Mauriyan* ruler (ca. 320-180 BC.). During the *Mauriyan* period, *Mahashthangarh* and *Wari-Bateshwar* became important centers for local and foreign trade. It has been proved that these two places were major urban and administrative centers of the *Mauriyan* Empire (Salles & Alam, 1998). The earlier settlement of *Mahashthangarh* dated back to fourth century BC (Salles & Alam, 1998). Based on the archaeological evidence recovered from this area Salles & Alam explained that it consists of the ruin of the ancient city, *Pundranagar*. Artifacts discovered from different layers shows that this city was being occupied from pre-*Mauriyan* period to early Islamic or early medieval period (Salles & Alam, 1998). After the decline of *Maurayas*, among the *Sunga*, *Kushana*, *Gupta* and *Pala* period, *Gupta* period is known as the Golden age of Indian history. Besides them various local dynasties like, *Gaura*, *Varman*, *Khadga*, *Chandra* and *Sena*, ruled different parts of Bengal.

Sculptures of Bengal

As a result of several explorations and excavations, many sculptures discovered from various historic sites of Bangladesh. Some of them are still insitu position; others were collected and housed at different museums for displaying and safeguarding. Though Bangladesh had no stone quarry, many stone sculptures were being found from this region. These are the symbol of high artistic quality and ancient sculptures aesthetic senses. In addition, the donor or financing authority was also very influential for the quality and quantity of the artistic works. Archaeologists unearthed some pre-*Mauriyan*, *Mauriyan* and post *Mauriyan* (*Kushana*, *Sunga*, *Gupta* etc.) sculptures and enormous number of terracotta plaques from various parts of Bangladesh. No stone sculpture of *Mauriyan* period have been found from Bangladesh yet, but various antiquities and terracottas of this period have been found from *Mahashthangarh* and *Wari-Bateshwar*. Several *Sunga* terracotta arts also found from various sites of Bengal. Scholars identified terracotta art as indigenous tradition of arts (Alam, 1985). Some *Kushana* Sculptures and coins were discovered from *Mahashthangarh*.

The earliest stone sculpture of Bengal was found from Silua at Noakahli district. It is fragmented and unfortunately, no information can be gathered from it. It was dated back to 2nd century A.D. Another fragmented 'Yakshi' discovered also represents the same date (Alam, 1985). Very few *Kushana* sculptures were discovered in Bangladesh. One of them is a red stone torso of a devine figure found from *Mahashthangarh* of Bogura district, which is now kept in the Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta. The sculpture of fourhanded Vishnu from Narahatta, Bogura has been dated back to 2nd century A.D. Four other stone sculptures of that same period were discovered from different places of North Bengal. The art creations of *Gupta* period are regarded as the finest expression of beauty (ref). The earliest sculpture of *Gupta* period found in Bangladesh is the famous image of Standing Buddha from the Bihrail in Rajshahi District., now being displayed at Rajshahi museum. Professor S.K. Saraswati assigned the sculpture to the early 5th century A.D (Weiner, 1962). Another significant Buddha image of this period is the standing Buddha image collected from Bhashu Bihar dated back to 6th century A.D. A *Suriya* image discovered from Deora in the Bogura District and a bronze image of Manjushri discovered from a mound named Balia Dhap of *Mahashthangarh* can be assigned to the same period, 6th century A.D (Saraswati, 1962). Another noteworthy specimen of *Gupta* art is an ornamented column made with sandstone found at *Mahashthangarh*. This column is ornamented with some figures, a four handed Goddess and a man and woman. After the end of *Gupta* period, many sculptures discovered form

various places of Bangladesh show the characteristics of Post-Gupta, Pre-Pala, Pala, Sena schools of art. Each school of art has its own features, and they vary in several aspects. These symbols of arts are intimately connected with Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. Along with the political stability, Terracotta arts as the indigenous form of art flourished in some settlements of Bengal.

Coins of Bengal

Many ancient coins have been discovered from all over Bangladesh. The earliest coin discovered here is of the Marican period from Mahasthan, in Bogura, Rajshahi, Mymensingh and Wari-bateshwar of Narsingdi district dated back to 4th to 3rd century BC. These are known as silver punch marked coins. Punch marked coins discovered from Bengal may be divided into two broad groups: (1) Coins having a group of five symbols on one side, the imperial series coins, (2) coins having less than a group of five symbols, either a group of three or four, local or regional coins. The symbols depicted on silver punch marked coins are, sun, six-armed symbols, hill, elephant, cow, fish in pond, boat, lobster, fish in hook or scorpion, cross leaf, snails (or flute of the snake charmer). After punch marked coins, Copper cast coins were used widely in the markets of Bengal during Maurya-Sunga periods but also were in use in the Gupta age. These coins bear only some symbols but do not have any legends inscribed on them. Besides, these bear no hint about the kings or dynasty.

A lot of Kushana gold coins and copper coins have been discovered from Bengal. In Bangladesh, Kushana coins are mainly found from Bogura and Cumilla regions. Among them five copper coins of Kujula Kadphises, the first Kushana king, are recorded from Bangladesh (Ahmed, 2012). In Kushana coins we find several royal portraits in various poses with different objects like, seated on a couch, seated cross-legged, seated at a jharokha (window); riding an elephant, driving in a biga; holding a scepter; standing sacrificing at an altar etc. as the motifs (Bulbul & Hasan, 2014). Using these motifs along with some more, continued until the end of this period. A good number of Gupta coins were discovered from Faridpur, Bogura, Jashore and Cumilla districts of Bangladesh. Bengal did not come under the Gupta rule till the time of Samudragupta, the second Gupta king. In Gupta coins some figures of God, Goddess and kings can be found. During the second half of the 7th or the first half of the 8th century AD, Noakhali, Comilla and the coastal areas of Chattogram, and a portion of Tripura formed the ancient kingdom of *Harikela*. Harikela coins have been found from a few places in Bangladesh and Tripura. 30-40 coins were found from Sylhet, 63 coins from Anada Vihara (Mainamati), 175 from the Shalban Vihara, and 28 coins have been recovered from the village Jobra, under Hathajari upazila of Chattogram districts. The symbols used in these coins are bull, sun, moon, a tripartite symbol (Trixula) with garlands hanging from it.

Costumes of Early Historic Period

The patterns of costumes are represented through sculptures, depiction of terracotta plaques, coins and in some toys. The objective of this work is to identify the costume styles of early historic people through the study of Early Historic stone sculptures and coins. These artworks vividly portray the fashion styles of that time, their costumes, and ornaments.

Lower Garments

Costume design of this period appears from the sculptural presentation reveal that loin cloth (*Kaupina*), short and narrow dhuti were commonly used by the early historic people. This is also supported by many travelers who traveled Bengal at that time and onward. Ibna Batuta visited Bengal in 1345 A.D., described

Bengali people with little cloths (Gibb & Beckingham,1994). The loincloth was also mentioned by Ralph Fitch who travelled in Bengal at Medieval period (Bhattashali, 1929).



Fig. 1: Four handed Visnu, Hankrail

The Hankrail image of four-handed Vishnu(Fig.1) from Rajshahi, a freestanding sculpture, has scanty jewelry on his body and his peculiar loin cloth clings to his legs as well as curls towards its lower edge while the folded end hangs between his legs. By examining the stone sculptures found from diverse archaeological sites of Bangladesh, the standard measurement of this dhuti appeared to be nearer 3 yds. × 24 inches for males(Bhattashali,1929) This short *dhutis* can be seen in almost all the figures of Gods. May be this costume was widely used throughout Bangladesh(Ahmed, 2007). At present dhuti is 5 yards long, almost half of this length is taken round the waist from right to left and fastened on to it like a belt. However, the other end of the portion is tucked up between the legs and fastened behind on the border. This portion is called *Kāchhā* (Bhattashali,1929 and Ray,1993). The other half of the cloth is folded into folds and suspended in front. This portion is called *Kochā*(Bhattashali,1929 and Ray,1993). May be in early historic phase, people wore *dhutis* in same pattern but in a short manner.

In ancient Indian literatures, *Dhuti* is mentioned as *antaravāsaka* or *adhovastra* that is narrated as a cloth sheet, passed around the waist and fastened in front and made of cotton and wool (Ayyar,1987). Megasthenes described that Bengal people wore white cotton (McCrintle, 1877). Generally,*dhuti* does not contain any designs but in some images a rich ornamentation and elaborate girdle can be seen, which is holding the *dhuti* around the waist while its end hangs down.In most of the male figures, the end of the *dhuti* hangs in front. The lower garment of the fragmented sculpture of Silua is a *Dhuti*held by a girdle with a scarf passing over the wrist,ending in a beautiful knot just above the left thigh. Alam

suggested that the other end of the scarf encircles the right hand just below the elbow and hangs down as far as the right knee (Alam, 1985).

The sculpture of four handed Vishnu (Fig. 2) from Narahatta, Bogurahas been dated back to 2nd century A.D. This image is massive and muscular body with Trivali marks wearing a short *Dhutias* the lower garment. The dhuti reaches up to the knee, leaving rest of the legs bare. The lower garment depicted on the Hankrail image of fourhanded Vishnu from Rajshahi is also the same as thatof the four handed Vishnu mentioned earlier. But here his peculiar loin cloth clings to his legs as well as curls towards its lower edge while the folded end hangs between his legs.



Fig.2 : Four handed Visnu from Narahatta, Bogura

Unlike the Brahmanical images, Buddha is not representing the short costume common for the male images. In most of the Buddha images, his cloths can be seen descends to the ankles and the folds in front are represented spread in a wavy circle (Bhattashali, 1929). For females, *Sārī* was the common costume but wearing styles went through radical changes over time. In many sculptures, sari looks like a petticoat. There was much similarity between the draping style of the *Sārī* and the *dhuti*. It seems that *Sārī* was also shorter. At present *Sārī* is long, 5 yards long and goes around the waist like a petticoat, rest of the portion covers the upper part of the body and serves as a veil. But in sculptures, the style is totally different. They used the *Kāchhā* style where one portion of the sari is not covering the front like a flat piece rather its outer portion goes around the legs, left at a right angle to the leg and the inner corner is drawn up (Bhattashali, 1929 & Ray, 1993). In some sculptures, sari was worn a little bit of present-day style such as Marichi (Fig.3), Tara (Fig.4), the mother of the mother and child image (Fig.5), Sarasvati or the female figure of an amorous couple of Paharpur central temple (Fig.6). But identifying the style is very much difficult. The tucked-up cloths can be identified only by the line images or line designs. By careful observation, in those images' saris were worn like petticoat and lay like a flat flap on front. The lines on both the legs follow the contour of the leg and drawn inwards and upwards.



Fig. 3: Marichi



Fig. 4: Tara



Fig. 6: An Amorous Couple, Paharpur



Fig. 5: Mother and Child

Miah suggested that the Khadirbani Tara and her two attendances discovered from Jagaddal Bihara, wears breast cloth and lower garment with prominent fold (Miah, 2003) but after very careful observation, this author recommends this image of Buddhist deity is wearing a *sari* along with a waistband (Fig. 7).

For describing female attire, Patanjali referred *Sati* (*sari* of *chati*) many times (Bapat, 1998). A cloth like a *Sati* has also been called as *Sataka* which is translated as a skirt or a gown by M. Monier Williams, in his dictionary (Bapat, 1998). Patanjali also mentioned two separate garments for upper and lower parts of the body (Bapat, 1998). By examining some stone female images, it seems that the *dhuti* for the lower part and the *uttariya* or *paridhana* for the upper part was worn by the early historic female in the same manner as by the males.



Fig. 7: Khadirbani Tara

Upper Garment

Most of the body of stone images, both male and female, from its waist upwards is nearly bare. The upper garment worn by both male and female was a single, narrow piece of cloth or scarf that is known as *uttarīya* or *urṇā* (Bhattashali, 1929). In Vedic literature, *uttarīya* is also mentioned as *upavasana*, *paryanahana*, *adhivasa* and *paridhana*, which indicates various types of loose cloth thrown over the upper part of the body (Ayyar, 1987). In male images the *uttarīya* is worn diagonally and covering the left shoulder only (Fig.8 & Fig.9). In some images this scarf is also can be seen tied round the wrist, knotted to the right side as like the *Suriya* image discovered from Deora in the Bogura (Fig.10) district. It is wearing a flat top *Kirita-Mukuta* or crown on his head. His lower garment is like a short skirt and tied around the waist by a girdle clasped in front. He had a beaded necklace on his neck and a bracelet on each arm. He has two attendant divinities, *Dandi* and *Pingala*, wearing the same type of costume and ornaments.



Fig. 8: Lokanātha from Mahākālī



Fig. 9: Buddha from Ujāni



Fig. 10: Surya from Deora, Rajshahi Museum

The Manjushri (fig.11) discovered from a mound Balia Dhap of Mahasthangarh can be assigned to the same period, 6th century A.D. This figure wears a close-fitting dress and a dhuti as the lower garment. The *dhuti* is tied around the waist below the neval with a double-stringed girdle and gathered in front in a long plait hanging between two legs in drapes reaching his ankles. The left shoulder of this image is covered by an *uttariya* or scarf and the scarf pass diagonally across the front and below the right armpit. His right shoulder is bare.



Fig. 11: Manjushri from Mahasthangarh

The upper garment of the Sun-God is quite different. In Elements of Hindu Iconography, Gopinath Rao explained a passage from *Matsya-Purāna* and told that, the Sun-God should be dressed as an inhabitant of the Northern countries. His body should be covered by a coat of mail (Rao,1985). *Upavita* or *yajñopavita* or sacred thread is another notable item of wearing that can be noticed on Hindu and Buddhist divine male, female characters. The Avalokitesvara from Namuja, Bogura (Fig.12), Subramanya and Devasena from Bihugram (Fig.13), Surya (Fig.14) image of Mahasthangarh museum, all these sculptures bear *khatvāṅga* which is placed like a sacred thread on their left shoulders. Another image of the headless male deity discovered from Jagaddal Vihara, bedecked with a short *dhuti* as the lower garment (Miah,2003) and an *upavita*. (Fig.15).



Fig. 12: Avalokitesvara



Fig. 13: Subrahmanya & Devasena



Fig. 14: Surya



Fig. 15: A headless image from Jagaddal Vihara

In females' sculptures, the *uttariya*, covers the left breast completely and the right breast partially. In some images the breasts are restricted by a knot (Fig.16) (Bhattashali, 1929). Sometime this knot appears along with the *Uttariya* (Fig.17). In very few female images, an *urṇā* can be seen to cover both the breasts in a manner which suggests that the *urṇā*, after covering both the breasts, is fastened in position by a knot in the back side.



Fig. 16: Mahisamardhini

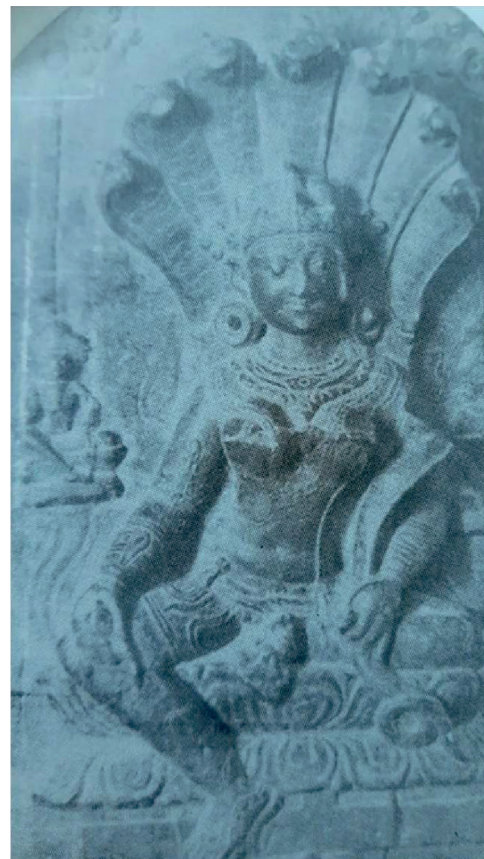


Fig.17: Manasha

The *uttarīya* is absent on the bust of the sandstone image of *Camardharini* (Fig.18) found from Ishwardi of Pabna district (Alam, 2008). The upper part of the body is completely bare, except a beaded necklace. She is wearing a small piece of cloth as the lower garment.



Fig. 18: Camardharini, Ishwardi, Pabna

Tunic can be identified as the upper garment of some sculptures. The Surya image from Kumarpur also shows that the drapery consists of a long tunic, and he wears a headdress. In the case of Sun God found from Niyamatpur, his long tunic is fastened at the wrist by a girdle and the headdress is a flat cap. In several images of Buddha, this great preacher can be seen with his 'wet' drapery covering both his shoulders and falls a little below the knees, reveals the shape of his body. A standing Buddha sculpture of 5th century A.D., the indenture around the waist suggests that he wears an *antarvashaka* (inner vest), along with the diaphanous *samagati* which covers both the shoulders and flares out near the legs and clings closely to the body from the shoulders to the knee. Another significant Buddha image of this period is the standing Buddha image (Fig.20) collected from Bhashu Bihar dated back to 6th century A.D. This sculpture and the Buddha from Bihrail (Fig.21), we find Buddha holding the folded ends of his diaphanous garment with his left hand. Besides, the *uttarāsanga* of Buddha found from Ujani, Faridpur, covers only the left shoulder is wavy lines, clinging like a wet garment (Fig. 9).

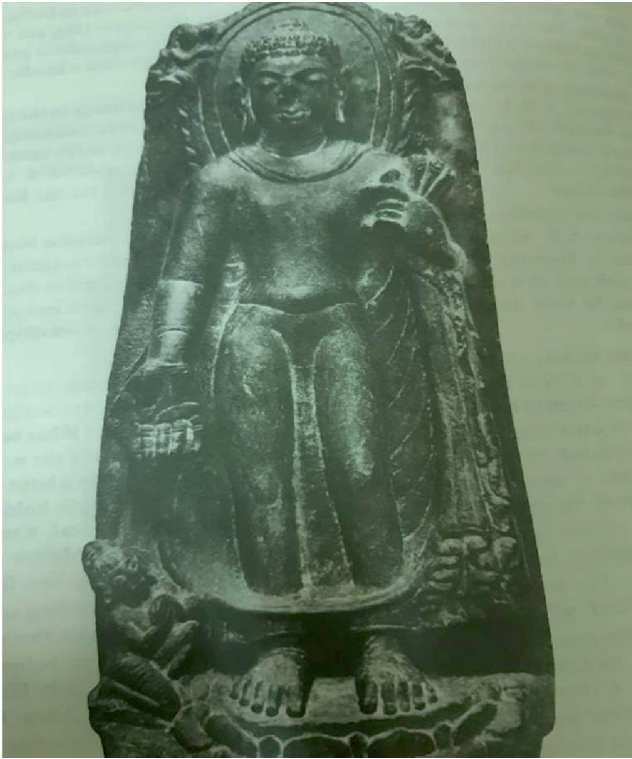


Fig. 20: Buddha, Bhasu Bihar



Fig. 21: Buddha, Bihrail

The apparel of the Buddhist monks is portrayed by the standing and seated image of Buddha. Bhikkhu clad himself after the master, Buddha. According to the Vinaya text, the attire of Buddhist monk consists of three pieces named, the antaravāsaka (lower garment), the uttarasaṅga (upper garment) and a saṅghāti (a cloak). These three pieces called *civara* or *tricivara* (Bhattacharyya, 1987).

Another very important item of Male and female's costumes is Katibandha or waistband which is a flat tape or belt. Though it is a separate piece, it is considered as an integral part of the lower garment, *dhuti*. It holds the *dhuti* from falling (Fig. 22). The Buddhist work, Cullavagga narrates several materials used for making waistband such as leather (*vilīva* or *carmapaṭṭa*), wool (*dussapaṭṭa*) and cotton (*colapaṭṭa*) (Ayyar, 1987). Waistband generally tied in the center, a little below the navel. The right knot became popular during the Gupta period (Alam, 1984). In the same period, may be waistband was considered as a fashionable item and the use of it was forbidden to the Buddhist monks. But according to Vinaya texts, Buddhist monks could use plain and knitted waistband to secure their lower garment (Ayyar, 1987).

In female images, we find a flat belt and an elaborate *mekhalā* for securing the lower garment whether it is short



Fig. 22: Balarama, Paharpur *Katibandha* or *Waistband*

or long. Sometime the waistband is richly embroidered and neatly pleated belts. Some put on this over their multi-stringed girdle zones. In some female figures, we can see only a beaded girdle holding their lower garments (Fig.23, 24, 25).



Fig. 23: Tara, Shukhabaspur



Fig. 24: Gaja-Lakshmi, Bogra



Fig. 25: Yamuna, Paharpur

Headdress

Crown, Turban or *Uṣṇīṣa*, was the common item for personal decoration of this period among both the male and female. In early literature like Atharva Veda, *Uṣṇīṣa* was described as white and bright. The Greek writers refer the crown as an essential part for male attire. In male and female images found from various sites of Bengal, the rich ornamentation is the most notable part of the costumes. The crown or *mukuta* or *kirita* is an important head ornament. It is nothing but a gorgeous turban sometime decorated with precious gems. Most of the crowns placed over the top knotted hair. The primary objective of using headdress was to cover their head but maybe it was also a symbol of social and religious status. Because of not finding any secular sculpture in Bangladesh, it is very difficult to say anything about general people's head gear of this region. The shapes of the crowns depicted in the early historic Bengal male sculptures are conical, three pointed and as well as uneven shaped. In some images, the central point of the three points is higher than the other two. The beaded band forming the base of the crown terminates above each ear in a flaring projection as part of the lower band of the crown. Sometime, the various motifs are added as ornamentation. The conical crowns are known *karanda mukuta*. In some crowns, the top can be seen decorated with a beautiful *amlaka-sila*.

The *Jatā-Mukuta* is the crown which is made by matted locks of hair being tied up in a bundle. In four-armed *Siva*, dated 11th century B.C., he is wearing a *Jatā-Mukuta* with a diadem and an *upavita* (Bhattacharya, 2000). Another type of crown, known as *kirita-mukuta* is also very common for both male and female figures. Other than the divine figures, some of the female figures are bare headed. In the Buddha images, we can see varieties of crowns or *Mukuta*. In several images, Buddha can be noticed with a series of knots arranging in pyramid shape representing the curls of his hair (Fig.9). Very few, may be just one or two, secular sculptures were found in Bangladesh which are insufficient to assume about the general people's costume. From these sculptures we can predict that attendants generally clothed themselves in the same manner as their masters. Attendants of *Surya* from Sukhabaspur (fig.31) and *Visnu oi Laksmanti* have the same type of costumes as their masters (Fig.32).



Fig. 31: Surya from Sukhabasapur



Fig. 32: Visnu oi Laksmanti

It-sing mentioned that, man in India had only one piece of linen. Yuan-Chwang testifies the use of bark and leaf garments by a few non-Buddhists. He also wrote that; females of Bengal wore a long robe which covered both their shoulders and hang down. At the time of hunting, the hunters wore short *dhuti* as we can see in a hunting scene of Revanta.

Costumes Depicted on Coins

We only find some figures in Kushana and Gupta coins. The Kushanas introduced gold coins in the sub-continent for the first time. The introducing of inscription as well as 'royal tamghas' or monograms of the kings on coins were the most significant and innovative ideas in Kushana numismatics (Bulbul & Hasan, 2014). Depicting of God and Goddess of Babylonian, Iranian, Indian and Graeco-Egyptian origin on the coins became a popular fashion in this period (Bulbul and Hasan, 2014).

The copper coin of Soter Megas (Vima Kadphises) dated *ca.* 1st century AD. (Fig.33) discovered from Mahasthan, shows the King riding on horse holding whip in his right hand. He is wearing a short frock styled coat, which seem to fit the upper part of the body and then flair out in gathering or pleats from the waist. The coat also contains long tapering sleeves. He wore a trouser as the lower garment and armor like helmet.

In the obverse side of the gold coin of Kanishka I, the king standing to left wearing conical shaped helmet and diadem, clad in coat and trousers (Fig.34). A goddess is depicted on the reverse side of the

coin, but her costume cannot be recognized, some beaded ornament can be seen on her two legs. In another silver coin, same costumes can be seen but here the helmet seems to be round.



Fig. 33: The copper coin of Vima Kadphises



Fig. 34 & Fig. 35: Gold coins of Kanishka I

Vasudeva I can be seen with a short frock coat with trousers in his gold coin of ca. 141/42 or 144/45-175/76 AD (fig.36).



Fig. 36: Coin of Vasudeva I

Of the seven types of gold coins issued by Samudragupta three viz. Standard, Archer and Ashvamedha are known to be from Bengal (Mukherji, 1992). Samudragupta is represented wearing

short *dhuties* as we see on the sculptures of early historic Bengal (Fig.37). The Ashvamedha type Gupta coin, discovered in the Cumilla district, shows a female (probably the chief queen) on the reverse side with a *Stanapatta* or *Urna* and her lower garment is not clear but seems that it is as same as the costumes depicted on Sculptures of Goddess *Laksmi* (Fig.37). Chandra Gupta II, in his “Archer” coins, is dressed more in the style of Samudra Gupta and, except the close-fitting cap.



Fig. 37: 1-2. Samudragupta’s Archer type coin; 3. 1st Kumaragupta’s lion-slayer and 4. 2nd Chandragupta’s archer type coin

Some scholars mentioned that a gold coin discovered from Rupban Mura, Cumilla, is of Balabhata’s, a king of the Khadga Dynsty (7th century). This coin is an imitation of Gupta Archer type coin. The king wears a Scythian conical cap with Gupta costume (Alam, Dewan, Qadir, Miah, 2000).



Fig. 38 & Fig. 39: Sketches of Early historic male costumes



Fig. 40 & 41: Sketches of Early historic female costume & Crowns

Conclusion

The common attire of Early historic Bengal male and female throughout the centuries had been a sheet of cloth and the mood of wearing it was to wrap it around the waist with the help of waistband most of the time. *Dhuti* is a common costume used by both male and females. Beside dhuri the main attire for female is *Sari*. Sometimes one end of the cloth was drawn between the legs and tucked up the backs. A smaller piece of cloth was used for covering the upper portion of the body which are known as *Uttariya and Urna*. However, we find a lot of both male and female figures bare in upper part of the body. Long and short tunic or coats also can be seen on some images. Most of the early historic stone sculptures found from Bangladesh is almost same. Variations, ornamentation, adjustments in tucking, folding, disposing of the end part of the cloth in some cases depended upon the social or religious status. The different types of dresses depicted in stone sculptures and Early Historic coins portraying the cultural traditions of the time they lived. This can be an interesting subject to study the then society.

Acknowledgment

Author is thankful to the Faculty of Arts and Humanistic, Jahangirnagar University for facilitating and funding this research project.

References

- A Preliminary Study, *Journal of Bengal Art*, **19**, 113-122.
- Ahmed, Bulbul, Hasan Mohammad Abu Al, (2014), *Kushana Coins from Bangladesh*:
- Alam, A.K.M. Shamsul, (1985), *Sculptural art of Bangladesh*, Dhaka, Department of Archaeology and Museum.
- Alam, Md. Badrul, (2008), *Samprati songrihito Dhatob o Pathorer prottnobostu, Prottnachorcha*, **2**, Dhaka, Department of Archaeology, Bangladesh.
- Alam, Md. Shafiqul, Dewan Md. Tofael Ahmed, Qadir Muhammad Abdul, Miah Md. Abul Hashem, (2000), *Excavation at Rubban Mura, Mainamati, Comilla*, Dhaka, Department of Archaeology
- Asher, Frederick M., (1980), *The art of Eastern India, 300-800*, Delhi, India, Oxford University press.
- Ayyar, Sulochana, (1987), *Costumes and ornaments as depicted in the early sculptures of Gwalior Museum*, Delhi, India, Mittal Publications.

- Bapat, S. (1998). CULTURAL REFERENCES IN THE “MAHABHASYA”. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, 59, 169-175. Retrieved August 27, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44146988>
- Bhattacharya, Gouriswar, (2000), Representation of Nandin in Medieval stone Sculptures from Bengal, In: Haque, Enamul, ed. *Essays on Buddhist Hindu Jain iconography*, Dhaka, The international center for study of Bengal art. Pp.173-180.
- Bhattacharyya, Benoytosh,(1958), *The Indian Buddhist iconography*, 2nd ed., Calcutta, Firma KLM Private Limited.
- Bhattachasali, Nalini Kanta, (1929), *Iconography of Buddhist and Brahmanical sculptures in the Dacca Museum*, Dhaka, Bangladesh National Museum.
- BN Mukherji, (1992), *Coins and Currency System in Gupta Bengal*, New Delhi.
- Gibb, H.A.R., Beckingham, C.F., (1994), *The travels of Ibn Battuta AD 1325-1354, Vol IV*, England, Ashgate Publishing Limited
- Haque, Zulekha, (2014), *Terracottas of Bengal: An analytical study*, Dhaka, The international center for study of Bengal art.
- Husain, Shahanara (1999), Paharpur Terracotta plaques: A source of the social history of Ancient Bengal, *Journal of Bengal Art*, 4, 147-152
- Islam, Md. Sirajul, (2007), Introduction, In: Cultural Survey of Bangladesh Series, Volume 4: Cultural History, Dhaka. Bangladesh Asiatic Society.
- Islam, Sirajul (Ed.), (2012) *Banglapedia, National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, 2nd ed., Dhaka
- Kemper Rachel II (1977), *A History of COSTUME*, Newsweek Books, New York.
- Laver James, *The Concise History of Costume and Fashion*, HARRY N. ABRAMS, INC. New York.
- McCrinkle, J.W., (1877), *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, London, Trübner & Co.
- Miah, Md. Abul Hashem, (2003), Archaeological excavations at Jagaddal Vihara: A preliminary report, *Journal of Bengal Art*, 8, 147-166
- Mohsin, K.M., Ahmed, Sharif Uddin (Ed.), *Sanskritic Itihas* In. *Bangladesh Sangshkritic Samikhhkhamala-4*, Dhaka, Bangladesh Asiatic Society.
- Ralf Kittler, Manfred Kayser & Mark Stoneking (2003), Molecular evolution of *Pediculus humanus* and the origin of clothing, *Current Biology*, 13 (16): 1414–1417, Retrieved on 20/04/2020, doi:10.1016/S0960-9822(03)00507-4, PMID 12932325, archived from the original (PDF) on 2008-09-10
- Rao, T.A. Gopinatha, (1985), *Elements of Hindu Iconography (Vol. I & II)*, Second ed., Delhi, India, Motilal Banarsidass.
- Ray, Niharranjan (1993), *Bangalir Itihas Adi parbo*, Kolkata, Dej Publishing.
- Salles, Jean-François & Alam, Md. Shafiqul, (2001), The archaeology of Mahastan historical and environmental perspectives, In: Salles, Jean-François & Alam, Md. Shafiqul, *France-Bangladesh joint venture excavations at Mahasthangarh First interim report 1993-1999*, Dhaka, Department of Archaeology. Pp:1-18
- Saraswati Sarasi Kumar, *Early Sculpture of Bengal*, 1962, Sambodhi Publications, India
- Toups, Melissa A.; et al. (2011). Origin of Clothing Lice Indicates Early Clothing Use by Anatomically Modern Humans in Africa, *Molecular Biology and Evolution*. 28 (1): 29–32. Retrieved on 20/04/2020, doi:10.1093/molbev/msq234. PMC 3002236. PMID 20823373,
- Weiner Sheila L., From Gupta to Pāla Sculpture, *Artibus Asiae*, 1962, Vol. 25, No. 2/3 (1962), pp. 167-192, URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3249253>
- Wendy Doniger (1999). Merriam-Webster’s Encyclopedia of World Religions. Merriam-Webster. p. 1134. ISBN 978-0-87779-044-0.