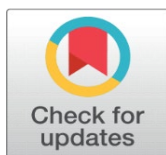


# REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN STONE SCULPTURAL ART AND ICONOGRAPHY OF ANCIENT KASHMIR

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout its history Kashmir has experienced an art life very much its own as well as accepting and absorbing influences and imported from neighbouring areas. The sculptural masterpieces that have survived in the valley have attracted the attention of art-historians and the scholars in the allied disciplines from time to time and have always been praised for their fine workmanship and iconographic features. Sculptors have not created the images only for the religious purpose but in the images are added subtle human moods and sentiments and have captured various states of emotions and feelings. Artists have captured the rhythm of life of all living beings in general and represented women in particular on the surfaces of the temples and in images. The aesthetic aspect of the sculptural motifs of the temple and images depends upon the religious canons of measurement in art. The carving approach of Kashmir's ancient and early medieval temples Goetz (1951) and Goetz (1969) includes a significant number of female images. Women from various cultures are portrayed in sculptures. Women can be seen here in a variety of subjects. The sculptures show representations of many feminine beauty ideals. This essay aims to shed light on the representation of women in Kashmir's early sculpting and iconographic traditions.

**Keywords:** Sculpture Art, Iconography, Representation, Feminism, Motifs

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since ancient times, the feminist movement has reawakened our critical interest in women's status and roles in society. Many of our perceptions of women come from the ancient Buddhist and Hindu traditions of Kashmir. Given the enormous changes in other aspects of society, the persistence of prejudices about women is all the more astounding. The art of the ancient Kashmir that has remained has an immediacy that transcends the confines of time and space, even though it is challenging to revive the emotional and intellectual atmosphere of the distant past. Kashmiri sculpture holds a unique role in both Indian and global art history. The

delicate warmth of traditional Kashmiri modelling can be seen in the sculptures of the old temples in Kashmir as well as in statues and idols. It undoubtedly has the ability to shed light on some of the roles played by women in ancient times as well as the widely held standards of beauty in the country of origin. From physical penance to divine joy, the Kashmiri sculptor strove to work out every feature of the woman's anatomy extremely carefully. Without a doubt, their sculptural representations are adorned with priceless jewellery and lovely clothing, emphasising their forms, and giving them a very attractive appearance. With their sculptured bodies, rounded hips, and clinging serpentine grace of limbs, the ancient Kashmiri ladies in iconography convey the impression of having a spiritual, divine beauty.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

The key objective of this research article is to explore the role, contribution, and position of women in the early history of Kashmir as depicted in ancient sculpture art and iconography. Besides, it will also examine mode of representing and representation of women in ancient sculpture art Kashmir.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

Appropriate historical method based on primary as well as secondary sources was adopted in the concerned paper. Some typical approaches used in the investigation are as under:

**Visual Analysis:** In visual analysis, the formal components of an artwork—such as its composition, colour, texture, line, and shape, etc., were carefully examined. The concentration was on comprehending how these components impact the artwork's overall perception and meaning.

**Identification and interpretation of symbols, themes, and iconography:** It was tried to comprehend the symbolic vocabulary employed by artists as well as the cultural, religious, or historical significance attached to particular symbols or motifs in the sculptures.

**Comparative Analysis:** The comparison and contrast of the works of art created by various artists, cultures, or time periods was done. It helped to learn about the development of artistic styles, iconographic traditions, or cultural influences by examining parallels and differences.

**Iconological analysis:** In this method the interpretation of works of art within a larger cultural, religious, or philosophical context was tried by referring to literary works, historical writings, or religious symbolism in an effort to decipher hidden meanings, allegories, or metaphors present in the artwork.

**Analysing the materials:** In this method the raw material of the artworks and technical and artistic analysis was done through analysing the sculptural material on which the art was executed.

## **4. GENESIS OF ART IN KASHMIR VALLEY**

The Kashmir Valley has a rich and diversified cultural legacy and art, that goes back to prehistoric times. For ages, Kashmir has been a hub of artistic expression and creativity, impacted by a fusion of local traditions and outside cultural influences. The Petroglyphs from Bomai, Sopore depicting humans and animals on a rock surface dated back to Palaeolithic period [Yatoo \(2005\)](#) and the prehistoric

ochre coloured hand Prints and hand Stencils on a rock surface are the earliest evidence of art in Kashmir valley [Shah \(2012\)](#), 329-336. The presence of 'Neolithic Hunting Scene' carved on the stone slab at Burzahom is another instance of prehistoric art in Kashmir valley [Pande \(1971\)](#), 134-138. The Buddhist era, which started in the third century BCE, had an early impact on Kashmiri art. The Greco-Buddhist style of the Gandhara school of art, which came to the area and permanently influenced Kashmiri art, is well recognised. Places like Harwan, Ambaran, and Ushkur still have Buddhist sculptures and monasteries with elaborate carvings. Kashmir developed into a significant hub of Hindu art and culture in the Middle Ages. The Martand Sun Temple and the Shankaracharya Temple both feature magnificent stone carvings, sculptures, and architectural magnificence among Kashmir's temples. The ruins of wall murals in old temples and palaces provide proof that the art of fresco painting also flourished throughout this time [Kak \(1933\)](#).

## 5. WOMEN AS REPRESENTED IN SCULPTURAL ART OF KASHMIR

The 7th Century CE text in Kashmir, *Nilmatpurana* mentions that on the moonlit night of *Kumauni-Mahotsava*, women sat next to the sacred fire with their husbands, kids, servants, and husband's friends, allowing them to take part in almost all religious ceremonies and festivals. She participates in the communal meal the following day as well as in both indoor and outdoor events, where she can be seen having a good time without inhibition. [Ghai \(1968\)](#), 90. The peasant's wife is thus absent from her home on the ceremonial day for preparing the fields and spreading the seed, which is marked by music, dancing, and feasting. The status of women at the time was high [Stein \(1900\)](#), 73. What is intriguing is the recognition of women as a ruler and significant agents in the realm's decision-making processes, and the role of women could also be seen in terms of social and cultural activities [Khawairakpam \(2015\)](#). However, the text does allot marginal space to women and suggests their peripheral existence.

The primeval nature of the female component in the antique Kashmir is established by the choice and diversity of female imageries thought to be connected with various activities and practices as early as the prehistoric Period (c. 5000 Years BP) at Burzahom [Pande \(1971\)](#) and Bomai [Yatoo \(2005\)](#). The earliest sculptural art in valley of Kashmir is found in terracotta in a trivial quantity that date from the end of 1st millennium BCE to the beginning of centuries CE, chiefly of Hellenistic impact [Siudmak \(2013\)](#) have been reported from Semthan [Gaur \(1987\)](#).

The two types of female figurines that have been identified so far, which are largely fragmented, are comparable in size and form [Siudmak \(2013\)](#), [Siudmak \(1994b\)](#) and [Pal \(2007\)](#). In front of the right leg is the bent left leg in the posture of the completely swathed type [Figure 1](#), which is slightly bent. The neck is extended, and the upper eyelids and bowed eyebrows, projecting slim nose and frowning lips, give the face a slightly constricted appearance. The illustration, which is severed at the ankles, has crosshatched hair and petite pendants with ridged ovoid shapes for the ears. The outfit is an elongated, huge, profoundly edged, and creased *chiton* that falls over the feet, is belted high on the waist, and has a subterranean step beneath the feet in the following example.

The left arm and the lower portion of the body are both wrapped in a lengthy himation, with the edge being kept in place by the descending right hand. The decorated necklace and the many-sided piece of decorated lower outline, which bends down the inside of the chest, are prominent features. Even though the latter

is most likely another necklace, it may have been intended to be a component of the clothing or it may have been inspired by breast plate or an aegis, that is occasionally seen on sculptures of the Hellenistic style but was misrepresented or misinterpreted by the Indian artists.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 1** The Private Collection from Semthan, Terracotta Fragmented Hellenistic Female Sculpture (10.5cm), First Century CE

A rare instance of the semi-dressed style image is kept in a personal custody [Figure 2](#). It is similar to the fully draped kind in most ways, but the figure is nude from the shoulders to the tops of the legs, with the visible hip and right shoulder being particularly prominent. There is also no *chiton*. The features of the face are the similar, but the hair is curly and has a fillet, that has been parted along the brow. Similar to the *himation*, that falls down on the right thigh and the left leg is somewhat arched. A short-beaded necklet, a torque with two ribs made of beads, and crossbands, or *channavira*, are also present. The later item contains a medallion with a rosette design between the breasts that connects the four cords, with the lowest pair being longer.

**Figure 2**



**Figure 2** A Personal Acquisition from Semthan, Terracotta Semi-Draped Hellenistic Girl Figure (11.9 cm), 2nd Century CE.

Another strange hybrid female in clay depicts a tutelary [Figure 3](#). The body's contours are hidden by a unique ribbed fabric that is overlapped obliquely from the shoulders to under the knees on both flanks. Both ankles sport a set of four enormous anklets, while the wrists sport comparable triple bracelets. Both hands are dropped, with the right holding a pocketbook or a piece of clothing. The feet that are partially protruding have a little step. A necklace made of big beads and annular earring studs are worn, and the hair is pulled back into an outward-spreading bun above the skull. The facial features show some signs of ageing. The hefty ornamentation of jewellery, but not the clothing—a crossing dress is unheard of in ancient art of India that is inclined to the massive *yakshi* art pieces of that time, and the purse or carrier resembles to the trait carried by *yakṣī* like *Kubera*, albeit there are no other examples of this figure. However, beneath the thick clothing and stiff posture, the distinctive voluptuousness of the Indian *yakṣī* is entirely obscured.

**Figure 3**



**Figure 3** The Terracotta Female Tutelary Model (9.7 Cm), From Semthan, 1st Century BCE or 2nd Century CE (Personal Possession)

A *mithuna* [Figure 4](#) is a well-crafted piece that is closest to the Indian aesthetic, despite the fact that certain aspects are treated in a way that is similar to figurines in the Hellenistic style. The female among them adopts a posture resembling that of *yakṣī* in early Indian painting, standing with her crisscrossed ankles and her left foot elevated behind her right. The right hand is in the *abhayamudra*. position. The female attires a long sarong with many, small folds that end at her ankles, and another garment over it that ends just below the knees. A bejewelled torque, on the left arm the decorated bangles, and a number of trinkets in her neck are worn by the woman. A possible domed reliquary is supported by one of the neck-jewels, which hangs diagonally from it to her right hip. The thighs are covered in a double-stranded girdle that is gripped by the dropped left hands in the style of the *yakṣīs* as shown in the ceramic panels from the Sunga era at Candraketugarh, Mathura and Kauśambi [Mitra \(1977\)](#). She is looking at the man with her head cocked and her hair in a big bun. A long, pleated *paridhana* with zigzag folds around the edges is worn by the male and hangs amid the legs in a bunch of elongated, pointy ends. A thick belt with short ends that fall down the thighs and a knot in the centre secures it at

the waist. The head is protected by a turban that is firmly wrapped and has a little bun in the middle. Only a quick execution of the ear-pendants is done.

**Figure 4**



**Figure 4** Mithuna Made of Terracotta (10.5 Cm), from Semthan, 1st or 2nd Century CE

A locally fashioned sculpture is the animal capital of Persepolitan kind [Figure 5](#), evidently *mithuna*, found at Mamal, near Pahalgam. The head of female has a headscarf or cover over its middle-split hair. The figure's face is missing, but the left hand is mysteriously overextended to the opposite arm, with hand fingers till the rear bull's hump.

**Figure 5**



**Figure 5** Bull Capital with Greenish-Grey Limestone (87 X 30 X 40 Cm), Mamal (Anantanag), 1st Century BCE- 1st Century CE.

[Figure 6](#) depicts a standing woman in the uncommon scene when Yaśodhara is being offered to Siddhartha by the king's chaplain. Her body is turned away from

him with her left leg opposite to the other. Her right arm is elevated over her head, while her left arm crosses her body diagonally. Two more standing females who are all wearing some variation of the sari, the most prevalent feminine clothing style in Gandhara art [Siudmak \(1994b\)](#), are used to frame the three prominent characters. The sari is enveloped round the torso and wrapped over the shoulders and the head.

**Figure 6**



**Figure 6** A Grey Chlorite Gothic Relief Panel in the Gandhara Style, Measuring 44 Cm By 37 Cm, Is Thought to Have Been Discovered in Tral, Pulwama.

Foucher observed a two-armed [Figure 7](#) at Papaharana Naga, 20 km from Bijbehara, close Brar in the Pahalgam's Lidder Valley. It stands with the left leg flexed sharply in a moderate contrapposto position. The top garment, known as the short chiton, has no sleeves, a looser fit across the body, and a little drop on the legs (Diserens: 1993). Instead, it has a little circular clasp that is fastened to the left shoulder, and slides down to reveal the chest. Profound, sloping wrinkles of the dress begin beneath the left breast and extend across the torso. The dress stretches down to the mid of the thighs where it is creased inward in extensive oblique folds, with the lower edges being defined in linen pleats. The belt that fastens the dress around the waist has its two short edges spread out sideways. Long bottom clothing that reaches the ankles adheres tenaciously to the external of the broad, wide limbs. It is extensively frilled amid the legs, merging with the the *himation* that hangs from the shoulder behind the bent left leg. The latter crosses back of the body to reach to the shoulder and from the left arm, after sweeping obliquely athwart at the thighs, where it is twisted, to land underneath the right leg. The hair is pulled back into a large topknot and secured with a small fillet and a diadem of petals fastened with short ribbons on either side. Below, one row of curls can be seen, and an elongated tress of hair that hangs from either lateral of the face ends under the chin. The wrists were previously adorned with a number of basic bangles and a multi-stranded beaded necklace. The higher portion of the ringlet has ear clips and the ear jewellery. Originally, the uplifted, fractured right hand was holding something upright, most likely a lotus [Siudmak \(2013\)](#).

**Figure 7**

**Figure 7** Fractured Grey Chlorite Towering Lakshmi—64 Cm High, From Bijbihara, First Part of the Fifth Century CE.

The standing image [Figure 8](#) is from Bijbihara, portraying the female deity Mahesvari. It appears earlier it had four arms, but the head is missing, and the right and left arms on either side are broken off at the shoulder. It has a big, swollen tummy, broad waist, and enormous, swollen legs. Although it is competent work, it lacks originality and naturalism, and its execution has a heavy, wooden feel. The chiton's folds are arranged in a formulaic pattern. The three-pronged trisula fragments that are still imbedded in the tucks of the robe that stretch outward on the ground to the right of the figure serve as proof that it is Mahesvari. The folds on the other side reveal the remnants of a second unidentified characteristic. The statuette may have fashioned as a portion of a loop of *māṭṛcakram*- the mother goddess, whom *Rajatarāṅgiṇī* mentions several times [Stein \(1900\)](#).

**Figure 8**

**Figure 8** From Bijbihara, Grey Chlorite Fragmented Upright Mahesvari (68 Cm), 5th Century CE.

The vestment on the upper side of the Bijbihara goddess Maheshvari is knotted similarly to the Lakshmi and only just covers the lingering left arms' shoulders. It has



also slid down to reveal the right side of chest, but a corded end round the neckline, which is the hemline of a sheer undergarment, demonstrates how the sculptor reinterpreted the feature. Below the bust, bunches of ribbed twisted folds hang down. The tunic is tied around the wide waist, with the belt's two wobbly ends falling down the front. The edge is delineated in crisscross crinkles, with a linen crease at the upper of each bend. A sequence of twisted thread wrinkles in the mid and incurving upright tucks at the sides add variation to the surface of the apron as a result. With the exception of the incompletely covered feet, the lower garment has a shape resembling that of the Laksmi. The lower end of the vestment is delineated in linen crinkles. It has vertical parallel grooves in pairs carved into the back, which Lyons and Ingholt (1957), 37-38 classified as Gandhara characteristic. Minimal ornamentation is present. The outer upper left arm is adorned with a little rosette armband, and the badly abraded necklace includes an unidentified pendant. While a large swath of material crosses behind, the *himation* expands as it hangs down athwart the body of deity from below the right knee to the left shoulder, where it is twisted. Its inner front edge is bordered by a long-beaded chain with a clasp in the shape of a flower head and a three-bead separator at the right knee. According to Siudmak (2013), the sculpture was most likely created at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century.

The third shattered Figure 9 has four arms and is similarly believed to depict a mother deity. Its wooden modelling and frontal pose are similar to the Māheśvarī, despite the obvious new influences. In his chapter on Bijbihara, Kak (1923), 59 included it. The right and left arms are severed just above the elbow on either side, making it impossible to identify the deity. The forward-facing portion is clipped off from the thigh, and the legs are gone below the knee. The tunic's second half is strikingly similar to the Māheśvarī. It hangs at the right arm and is attached to left shoulder, revealing the torso. The previous sculpture's corded edging is replaced by a beaded and ribbed border on a diaphanous undergarment. Folds with loops descend from each breast. A comparable thin belt exists. The smock of the outfit has the identical configuration of perpendicular folds and looping creases. The *himation* is reduced to the size of an Indian *uttariya*, with coiled corners.

**Figure 9**



**Figure 9** Standing Mother Goddess with Four Arms Made of Grey Chlorite, 62 Cm High, Bijbihara, 3rd or Last Part of the 5th Century.

An extremely rustic-looking sculpture from Ushkur, Baramulla, dating to the sixth century [Figure 10](#), displays exquisite iconographical details. In this instance, Uma and a bull are there, and Mahesvara is standing adorsed [Kumar \(1975\)](#). The wounded head of Uma in the picture has annular ear ornaments and seems like it has been bandaged. When Bhan took the shot in 1989 [Bhan \(1987\)](#), [Bhan \(1989\)](#) and [Bhan \(2010\)](#), the forepart of the bull and the lower part of the accompanying Parvati were almost completely intact, but they gradually vanished owing to deterioration. It is possible to observe the mysterious female garment's form. The bottom side tulip flower-shaped costume is precipitously creased in thread crinkles spreading further down, to the linen creases, while the decollate upper clothing hangs to the border of the shoulders and wraps the arms.

**Figure 10**



**Figure 10** Upright Maheshvara and Uma in Greenish-Grey Stone, 50 Cm High, Ushkur, 6th Century CE.

At Sheri Baramulla, archaeologists discovered the headless miniature grey chlorite female deity [Figure 11](#), which most likely represents Laksmi. She is depicted in the smooth-edged and is installed in *pralambapadasan*, a stance common to Gupta art, with her legs spread apart and knobby knees. A cross-hatched pattern is used to embellish the cushion that is seen from behind. The same refined Hellenistic clothing from the earlier phase is still visible, including a himation, a lower clothing, and a brief chiton with a hook on the shoulder. However, the entire ensemble has a design of many stylized grooved creases, which is distinct from the earlier upright sculptures from the valley of Kashmir and the North-western side of India, which depicted the folds of their clothing in a more realistic manner. The left breast is keen and impressed in a sequence of circular rings that mimic drapes, while the right bosom is hidden by the beads encrusted in a line of the robe. There are the two lines of vaulted looping tucks below the breasts embellish the chest; the plan is replicated on the lower garment's legs. The tunic has vertical pleats below the belt, as does the bottom costume that hangs middle of the legs. Horizontal pleats indicate the concealed feet against the draperies. The right leg's lower portion is crossed by the wide, pleated himation, one end of which is covered behind the back in a sequence of folds. The necklace is double-beaded and has an oval pendant with a centre cylindrical bead. The right side of the figure is broken at the zoomorphic end and is clutched, that was once a transformed copiousness. On the either sides of the lying down lions there are remains of a female attendant. The piece of art has a low, coarsely sculpted base with a deep central groove that closely resembles later

images, particularly those found in the Northwest. Notwithstanding the drapery's dated appearance, the artwork dates to the sixth century CE [Siudmak \(2013\)](#).

**Figure 11**



**Figure 11** Lakmi Sitting in Broken Grey Chlorite, 10 Cm High, Sheri, Baramulla, Second Part of the 6th Century CE.

The Lakshmi from Sheri, Baramulla [Figure 12](#) is an extended version of the grey chlorite Lakshmi group [Figure 11](#), which depicts the lustrated god seated in *pralambapādāsana*. In terms of the modified Hellenistic clothing [Pal \(2003\)](#) and [Pal \(2007\)](#), it is comparable to the later, but the tucking is more real, and the upper costume is frilled unevenly, revealing the right side of chest without a pattern. The lower dress also bears this unusual treatment, especially above the hidden feet. The jewellery includes simple armbands, double bangles, earring studs, a necklace, and a pendant. Right hand raised, palm outward, gripping the petite lotus stalk between the index finger and the thumb. The animalistic end of a fully transfigured cornucopia, which dispenses diamonds, is held in the left. It consists of a long, folded-over stem that is growing leaves and holding a decorated vase. The appearance is broad in relation to the body and has a pointed chin. The hair is held in place by a gut with three crescents, the central one is spoiled, and is styled in twisting curls with elongated tresses enclosing the ears.

**Figure 12**



**Figure 12** From Baramula, Grey Chlorite Sitting Laksmi Group, 36 Cm High, Possession of the Late Simon Digby Early 7th Century CE.

In the Lumbini garden scene, the figurines of *Maya* are reinforced by *Prajapati* that was exhumed from Stupa with the numerous Brahmanical statues of mother goddesses at Pandrethan are very similar in terms of the feminine form. The womanly body more thoroughly look like the Indian type, with a high midriff, narrow hips, and huge, firm bosom, as can be seen. The busts of the two females and a small image of Indra, recognised by his flat third eye, are preserved on the Buddhist relief [Figure 13](#). A feminine chowrie carrier, most likely a tree nymph, is positioned among the Sal tree's branches above. A curtsy donor figure with a container of contributions is depicted on the correct left of the lower fragment, along with a little left foot on the side opposite. Maya and Prajapati's legs are both missing from this piece.

**Figure 13**



**Figure 13** Fragmented Grey Limestone Stupa, Pandrethan; Lumbini Garden Scene, Top Portion 35 42 Cm, SPSM No. 1854; Bottom Section 25 38 Cm, Second Quarter of the 7th Century CE.

[Figure 14](#) shows a dancing partial Mother Goddess sculpture with two arms, most likely *Kaumārī*. In a more twisted position than the Pandrethan females, the left leg of the image is lifted and equilibrums on the right leg with the hip push outward and the. Unfortunately, the breasts and face have been removed, along with the swollen stomach, which must be a sign of pregnancy. The decoration closely resembles the style of late sculptural art from the advanced stage of the determinative period, even if the posture shows an original post-Gupta expression. Originally, the uplifted right hand detained up a collection of elongated hair strands that were falling from overhead the right ear, two of them curled round the lower hand. A careful inspection of the sculptures reveals that there was another workshop operating at the same time as or perhaps earlier than the Pandrethan sculptures [Mitra \(1977\)](#), producing extremely intricate and high-quality work, showing yet additional facet of post-Gupta skill.

A trinity [Figure 15](#) has a distinctive form, with a Stupa filling the centre space. A standing representation of the Buddha dressing a symmetrically edged and closed-mode robe may be seen on the left. Given that the upright image on the right is plainly woman and has breasts, it must be a variation of *Tara* [Siudmak \(2013\)](#). It is dressed in two garlands, the longer of which reaches the ankles, a necklace, and ear decorations, a three-leaf crown, and it is holding a lotus stem in its left lowered hand. The saint and his attendants are crowned by an aureole with a blaze shape

plan. A genuflection contributor is located on the left side of the rectangular pedestal, which projects in front, parallel to the stupa's base.

**Figure 14**



**Figure 14** 41 Cm High, Fragmented Dancing Mother Goddess in Grey Chlorite, SPSM No. 5016, Mid-700 CE.

**Figure 15**



**Figure 15** Grey Chlorite Stupa, Personal Acquisition, London (17.3 Cm) Showing Buddha and Tara, 900 CE.

The statue of Durga *Mahiṣāsuraṃardini* with many hands [Figure 16](#) can be seen in the niche on the wall of the Surya temple at Nadihel [Sharma \(1993\)](#). Her right leg is depicted on the back of the buffalo and she is seated in *ālīḍhāsana*. It looks like she holds the tail of the buffalo in her lowest right hand and one of her left hand is holding the demon's hair, and her other hands are holding numerous weapons, including a mace, a lance, a bow and a sword, [Pal \(2009\)](#).

**Figure 16****Figure 16** Durga Mahiṣāsūramardīnī's Rock-Cut Relief, At Nadihel, C. 850 CE.

Durga is seated in a chariot with wagons at the margins in this unique sculpture [Figure 17](#), which has eighteen arms and is from the village of Tengpura [Siudmak \(2013\)](#) and [Siudmak \(1994b\)](#). The sculpture is around 90 cm high and has been carved from green chlorite. In keeping with the chariot of Surya, *Aruna* is replaced with a small charioteer. A genuflection contributor with ring circlet, a horn and is incongruously positioned behind the prostrate animal at the proper right. It has a lot of arms, yet it's a well-balanced construction. *Sumbha* and *Nisumbha*, the two demons whom she vanquished, are depicted with one of her left hands holding a stressed image round the neck and the other impaled on her trident lance. With one hand on her left thigh, she holds a bell, a bow, and a shield, a *kamandalu* and an *aksamala*, a trisula, a horn. Her right hands are clutching a spear and an arrow an upright sword, quiver, a club, a ring wreath, an axe, a vajra, and also a mace. A long lower garment, a chain girdle with a skirt of small bells, and a belt knotted around the thighs, coiled in front, and dropping below the legs adorn the goddess. A three-leaf lunar diadem with glowing foliage surrounding a beaded medallion on each leaf, beaded bracelets, and massive circumferential ear ornaments are among the jewels [Pal \(2009\)](#).

**Figure 17****Figure 17** The Durga Mahiṣāsūramardīnī Bas Mural is Greenish Chlorite and Is 68.6 Cm High.

The big relief is strongly patterned on a small relief sculpture of an eighteen-armed Durga [Figure 18 Nagar \(1988\)](#) on grey chlorite. The relief is with a railing backed by six short pillars depicting a charioteer holding the reins of the chariot. Durga is once more seen walking through *ālīḍhāsana*. Below a donor kneels to the left of two lions, a buffalo and a lion attacking the devil in humanistic form. Out of nine hands in the right side, three are shattered, and hold sword, a spear, a shiver of arrows, a club, and a part of *vajra*. The left hand is broken and is in *varadamudra*, while the rest of hands are grasping a demon with a small trident, a bow, a *mala*, few unidentified armours, and a *chakra* around the neck. It belongs to the early ninth century as suggested by the prominent use of flower composition in head ornamentation.

**Figure 18**



**Figure 18** 14.3 Cm Tall, Grey Chlorite Tiny Bas Panel Showing Durga Mahiṣāsūramardīnī with 18 Arms, Personal Possession, 900 CE.

The Metropolitan Museum has a bigger green chlorite upright silent version of Durga with two servants [Figure 19 Siudmak \(2013\), Chandra \(1985\)](#). As she stands here, she is slightly backed on left foot. The inside of the left hand sustains the contrapposto, the weight of the severed buffalo head, in the exact same way as Vishnu holds a *shankha*. While the right is dropped and holding an upright sword, the outer left is dipped and retaining a bell with flexing strings of ribbons. She is wearing a complex ensemble with pointy trilobed ends and slit kameez dresses as well as jewels visible above the beaded girdle, with the front flap. It has a similar form to those already seen, covers the stomach and upper thighs, and has beading on the hem. The breasts are compressed by a short overgarment that is tied securely around the waist.

[Figure 20](#) is a beautiful example of Karkoa Brahmanical artwork, representing Kamadeva with eight hands in heavenly court, featuring musical band and dancers [Pritzker \(1989\)](#). In *Lalitasana*, the god is sitting on a throne, gazing at his proper left consort, whereas his two loved wives are on each side of him in *Rājalīlāsana*. She puts her left hand on his knee while making a gesture with her right hand towards

one of his two main arms, which is leaning on the latter's shoulder and holding a wine bowl.

**Figure 19**



**Figure 19** Durga Made of Green Chlorite, 26 Cm Tall, At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 800 CE.

**Figure 20**



**Figure 20** Kamadeva and Partners are Shown on a Grey Chlorite Plate that is 22.5 Cm High and Dates to the 3rd Part of the 9th Century.

## 6. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

In their art, Kashmiri artists represent various aspects of women. Women have been represented as goddesses in Kashmir Valley stone sculpture art, and were one of the artist's favourite topics. Women were worshipped in many forms in ancient Kashmir. She exemplifies dual existence, being worshipped both as an individual goddess and as an auxiliary to a primary male deity. Furthermore, the goddess depicted in Kashmiri stone art is worshipped in a variety of forms: *Ambika* as affectionate mother, and *Devi Tara* as a source of divine light. *Durga* as *Shakti* (power), whereas *Saraswati* as *Devi of Gyan* (Knowledge). *Kali* as greatest destroyer of sinners. Some depictions of the goddess see her as an anthropomorphic



manifestation of the natural world. In Kashmir's ancient stone sculpture, women are shown as symbols of socialisation, education, enjoyment, and the transmission of new notions, ethical ideals, and the light of knowledge. A woman is the package of relations and roles as mother, a wife, a daughter, sister, friend, and consistently plays crucial roles throughout her life. Her vibrant performance earns her the title "Devi." And this work demonstrates that women in general played a significant part in society and had a respected position.

In a creative sense Without a doubt, their sculptural depiction is decorated with excellent jewels and lovely clothes, making them appear incredibly attractive by emphasizing their shapes. The feminine ideal of Kashmiri women in oldest stone artwork with carved figure, rounded hips, and gripping serpentine elegance of limbs provides the sense of spiritual heavenly perfection. Sculptures art in Kashmir overall has a prominent role in global art history. The carved pieces of Kashmir's old temples exemplify the gentle warmth of traditional Indian sculpting. The sculptural approach of Kashmir's ancient and early mediaeval temples includes an abundance of female representations. Women from practically every country are carved in Kashmiri artwork. Women appear in a variety of subjects here. The temples portray notions of feminine beauty in shapes and characteristics. Kashmir's sculptor has worked meticulously on every area of the woman's body, from physical penance to divine delight. And Kashmiri stone art exhibits the impact of the time's prominent art schools, such as Gandhara, Mathura, Amravati, and local perceptions.

### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

None.

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None.

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