

A Study of Cultural Heritage in South Asia Archaeological Art in Historical Perspective.

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Abstract:

The advent of Buddhism in India is usually dated back to 6th century BCE. Siddhartha Gautama, a Sakya Prince left for quest of truth and reality of life. He was showered with the divine light of enlightenment, then, instead of keeping it to himself, Gautama preferred to enlighten others. The teachings preached and propounded by Gautama Buddha were warmly accepted by a large number of people and emerged as a new school of thought i.e. Buddhism which later turned into a major religion of the world and the Buddhist remains discovered through archaeological investigations help us to reconstruct our past. (Chakrabarti, 2006: 315) It is a well known fact that various the kings of different kingdoms like Magadha, Vaisali, the Sakayas, the Bullis, the Koliyas, the Mallas, the Moriyas and Kalinga (Ancient Odisha) sought for the relics of the Buddha after the *parinirvana*. (Kern, 1989: 46) The emperors, kings, traders and commoners extended patronage and built monuments, kept relics, offered gifts to pay ovation to the Master Teacher. This historical phenomenon is known from various forms of Buddhist monuments built across India. Odisha, a geographical orbit of South Eastern India, is fortunate to have received a good deal of Buddhist monuments and relics. This paper is intended to present an account of different forms of Buddhist monuments that have been discovered so far, such as Stupas, Chaityas, Monasteries under the possible patronage of Buddhism in this part of India from third century BCE to sixth-seventh century CE.

Introduction

From roughly first century BC, through to the second century AD, evidence strongly suggests that the religiosity of the Buddhists in early India substantially focused on the huge funerary mounds called *stupa* – enclosed with brick or stone – in most cases containing the relics of the Buddha. But with virtual disappearance of Buddhism from the Indian peninsula from around twelfth century AD onwards *stupas* as ritual monuments steadily went into oblivion. However, since the discovery and subsequent uncovering of the Buddhist *stupas* in colonial India – in the past almost two centuries – a great deal of scholarship has met the need to study this unique religious architecture, where varied forms of Buddhist ritual presentation took place. Since its inception, *stupa* studies have been interspersed with some monumental works from Cunningham¹ to Barua,² and more recently Snodgrass³ et al., have pushed the trajectory from descriptive, architectural, stylistic, art-historical, symbolism to newer and uncharted terrains. This has not merely deepened our understanding of such monuments but also equipped us better to understand early Buddhism – to which these monuments essentially belong – in its wider cultural and historical milieu. This volume brings together a motley collection of recent scholarship on *stupas* in early India – presents new paradigms, concepts and approaches to study this sacred monument and culls and combines data from archaeology, art history and epigraphy that hugely augments our understanding of these monuments in their broader architectural, archaeological, cultural and historical framework.

This volume with a compilation of essays that purportedly breaks new grounds in *stupa* studies makes the task of reviewing a hazard, as one occasionally runs the risk of over-emphasizing a certain piece of scholarship. It is difficult to achieve uniformity in such multiple-author work as compared to a monograph. Thematically divided into five sections, its 15 essays are neatly positioned in each of the sections.

The volume editors present an 'Introduction' that succinctly charts the course of the emergence, development, evolution, crystallization and recent divergences that have marked the study of the academic

discipline of ancient South Asia in general and of Buddhist Studies in particular, with the study of *stlpa* as a category of religious architecture inscribed within it. While the exercise is faultless in terms of charting the historiography, the approach, wherein the evolution of *stlpa* studies appears to be hemmed by the developments in the former fields, tends to marginalize the focus of this volume, effectively pushing the historiography of *stlpa* away from the centrality it deserved in such a work.

The two essays in the first section adopt the critical-historiographical approach for studying India's ancient past, which benefited both the study of early Buddhism and its archaeology. H.P. Ray's essay on the archaeological study of the *stlpas* explores the construction and negotiation of the Buddhist identity in the colonial period. She tries to argue that such a negotiation of Buddhist identities was as much achieved through the British discovery of Buddhism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as due to the uncovering and dexterous examination of the Buddhist *stlpas* by Alexander Cunningham – whose role and scholarship on Buddhist *stlpas* was singularly pioneering. However, in Ray's essay there is an axiomatic assumption that Buddhist identity either had dissipated or had lain dormant over the last several centuries of the pre-colonial period and that textual studies and archaeological uncovering of ritual buildings turned things around for the Buddhist community; secondly there is a tenuous linkage between Cunningham's archaeological explorations-excavations and a demonstratable consolidation of Buddhist identity in the colonial period. Identities are neither created nor reinforced/consolidated in vacuum

relative crisis and contingencies often force their negotiation. Ray fails to factor this while explaining the process of consolidation of Buddhist identity in colonial India.

In the next essay, Jennifer Howes explores the treatment of the remains of a *stlpa* as legitimate source of study. Taking the second-century AD *stlpa* from Amaravati, she investigates the antiquarian exploration of this Buddhist site and the extrication and movement of Amaravati sculptures to beyond its confines and into external environment. She argues that the manner in which these sculptures were preserved, used by people and institutions – who subsequently owned them – came to have a heavy and unfortunate bearing on the manner in which they shaped our study and understanding of these monuments – an obvious fallout and not an entirely radical postulation.

The second section ('*Stlpa* and its Meaning') contextualizes the *stlpas* in a religious frame and opens with Michael Willis' paper on Buddha's relics that presents an overview of the diverse meaning and types of relics and the manner in which the Buddhists understood and associated with these. Those familiar with the recent fascinating scholarships of Strong,⁴ Trainor⁵ and Schopen⁶ on Buddhist relics would find Willis' essay plebeian and holding out nothing radically new. Many of the assumptions that Willis continues with – initial symbolic representation of the Buddha, figural/iconic representation following the aniconism, etc. – have been severely tested, criticized and found not well-founded.⁷ His understanding and inclusion of the 'Hymn of Dependent Origination' into the category of a valid *uddesika-dhatu* ('relics of indication') is both problematic and trifle far-fetched. In terms of freshness of ideas and insight Willis offers precious little.

In Chapter 4, Andy Rotman examines the strategy through which early Buddhist sacred geography was carved, invented and expanded. He ascribes the geographical spread of Buddhism largely to the proliferation of relic shrines and uses textual data to demonstrate what determined and defined a Buddhist site as sacred. But sadly, Rotman is short on innovative ideas with relation to the above process. However, towards the end of the essay he does hold out interesting insight into the manner in which Buddhist–Brahmanical antagonism and conflict spilled over to the contest of sacralizing a place abutting a Brahmanical neighbourhood and co-opting of the Brahmanical site. One wishes Rotman could have devoted much more space to it.

Moving away from import of relics and relic shrines, Robert Brown in the next chapter examines the nature and rationale of the non-religious motifs as found in the carved sculptures at relic sites. His spotlight is on the natural forms – relief carvings of plants and animals – that adorn the *stlpas* of Sanchi (Stlpa I) and Bharhut. He argues that natural patterns at these sites neither merely served decorative purpose nor are arbitrarily placed. Instead the presence of such structured and patterned representations had intent creation of a new kind of religious space which concurrently carved an ideal, secure and separate social space that showcased a microcosm of social ordering and working. Though abstracted and formalized, these representation of natural forms were deemed by the viewer pilgrims as imbued with a living quality. While the marshalling of sculptural representations of natural motifs and the juxtaposition of symbolism and realism is impressive, yet in the absence of the 'intention' – of the sculptors or of those who commissioned these; intention being lost or unavailable – behind the ordering of such 'utopian' social

spaces, Brown's analysis lacks solid backing of historical evidence.

The third section ('The *Stupa* in Context') brings together four essays that utilize an array of material – archaeological, epigraphic and art-sculptural – from *stupa* sites to shift focus from the religious contexts of *stupas* to wider social contexts. In the first essay, Kurt Behrendt examines the narrative sculptural reliefs – the Buddha's life-cycle scenes – from Gandhara. While piecing together the scattered (across museums of South Asia and Europe) sculptural narratives, he abandons the use of traditional textual sources to read and decode these truncated narratives. Instead he gives a shot at reconstructing the original sequence of narratives – that was most certainly viewed, decoded and absorbed by the viewer-pilgrims while circumambulating the *stupa* shrine – through examining similar narratives that were inscribed on single-stone slabs that were created for small *stupas*. Besides the novelty of the methodology, his research holds out promise of fresh insight into the study of Gandhara narrative tradition and styles.

'Shedding Skins' by Robert DeCaroli explores complex layers of meaning and imagery associated with *nagas*. Besides underlining the meaning and understanding of *nagas* as envisaged in traditional literature, DeCaroli sifts through the inscriptions and sculptural representations from Amaravati – also painstakingly compares them with those at Sanchi and Bharhut – to provide a measured reinterpretation of the category of *nagas*. Although there is incontrovertible evidence to concur with him that the *nagas* were integral to the socio-religious life of ancient India, his conclusion that their association with Buddhism, its institutions and rites provided legitimacy to the latter is on shaky ground. Buddhism as an established and popular religion had little call for gaining legitimacy through such association. On the contrary, Buddhism rather provided the *nagas* – through association with it – to transcend their social status and move up the ladder.

The two succeeding essays showcase the potential of landscape archaeology in the examination of Buddhist *stupas*. Julia Shaw and Jason Hawkes push the limits of such an approach in the context of the Buddhist sites of Sanchi and Bharhut, respectively. Shaw's core concern is the Sanchi archaeological landscape – ritual and social; monastic and *stupa* – and studying these by placing them against a wider archaeological context to refine our understanding of early Buddhism and its practitioners' motivations behind the ordering of ritual/religious and social spaces within the wider landscape engineering. Her bold suggestions and insights challenge some of the hitherto received and accepted wisdom concerning early Buddhism. Hawkes' focus is in on Bharhut's landscape archaeology, where he attempts to study these to identify the socio-political and economic dynamics of Bharhut region and employs the same approach to delineate shifts these spheres witnessed in subsequent periods.



Stupa at Lalitgiri

The main stupa at Lalitgiri is located on the highest point of the hillock Nandapahada, made of dressed stones having 6.14 meter in diameter at the base and built of random rubble masonry and then veneered with finely dressed khandolite stones following the curvature of the dome (*anda*) as well as drum portion (*medhi*). Two constructional stages have been identified here. At

a height above the pavement, the *stupa* has a ledge. From here the *anda* portion starts and the diameter of the dome (*anda*) decreases. The total available height of the stupa (drum and dome) is 4.05 meter above the surface.

The dome is also covered by rectangular slab with a square hole, possibly the base of the *harmika* which was used to support the canopy (*chhatra*). Fragment of a *harmika* was recovered during the excavation. The ledge is made more or less in the pattern of Dhamekh stupa of Saranath. The base of the stupa was also excavated, the remains of a well paved circular stone flooring i.e., *pradakshinapatha* running round the stupa being 3 meter in width. The edge of the flooring of the base is marked by course of a raised stone of 0.10 meter above the natural rock of the hill.

The monument stands on a hard rock-base and the core is filled with mud-mortar. The khondalite stone and iron clamps in some places were used. Fine dressed stone joints are made together to check the atmosphere erection. Numbers of railing pillars used for encircling of the stupa were found from the site. The style of these pillars seems very early and helps us to date the stupa, which are very much similar to that of the railing pillars found at Bodh-Gaya. This hemispherical stupa stands in between the stupas of Sanchi and Saranath and date back to 2nd - 1st century BCE¹⁹.

The most important discovery from this *stupa* is the relic caskets in the year 1985. Although, there are references found in Buddhist literature that several relics of Buddha like heir, tooth and bone were brought to Kalinga before and after Nirvana of the Buddha²⁰. From the core of the stupa's *anda* three caskets were unearthed from the north, east and south respectively. The caskets consisted of four containers one inside the other i.e.1. of khondalite stone resembling miniature stupas, 2. a steatite phial, 3. a silver casket, and 4. a golden casket. This golden casket preserved the sacred relic, Of the three sets of caskets (khondalite), only two of them contained all the three inner caskets. In one of the caskets the sacred relic (bone / *dhatu*) was found wrapped in a gold foil and the other casket contains only the relic (charred bone) which speaks about the importance attached to the person to whom the bone belonged. This type of arrangement is unique for Eastern India. In the past, relics of the Buddha have been reported from important Buddhist sites like Sarnath, Vaishali, Piprahwa, Kusinagar, Sravasti, Lauriya- Nandangarh and others but this type of arrangement was unknown in this part of the country for the first time. Normally, the relic caskets were either made of steatite, earthen ware, copper, soap stone or crystal containing the relic of the Buddha. The Relic Stupa at this place gives us the narration of Buddhism in 2nd century BCE and the flow continued up to 5th-6th century CE, when Mahayana Buddhism evolved at this place.

Stupa at Langudi

The Langudi site presents a unique religious landscape having numbers of monumental remains. The main Stupa independently developed as a singular unit having a square base which dates back to the 2nd century BCE. The present base size of the stupa is 75 ft. north-south x 60 ft. east-west with a height of 9 ft. and the diameter is 60 ft. In the southern side steps are provided which leads to the elevated portion of the stupa. In the stupa architecture steps lead to the upper processional path in four directions are generally found. However, this stupa is an exception. The steps were originally flanked by eight railing pillars and *suchis* (cross bars) on each side as the post holes are clearly visible. The total stupa area might have encircled by railing pillars and *suchis* as observed with the discovery of 26 railing pillars. Fragmentary pieces of sandstone *chhatravallis* also noticed during the course of the excavation in the stupa area. These architectural pieces are culturally dated to the pre-Common Era. The remains of the pavement noticed in the upper portion of the staircase. The antiquities, its architecture and the absence of Buddhist sculptures indicate that the stupa belong to the Hinayana phase of Buddhism. The stupa has two

phases of which the earliest one is made of brick, and in later phase enlarged by adding laterite blocks.

Stupa at Aragarh

Aragarh, Buddhist site, a hillock in Puri district near Bhubaneswar of Odisha is located in one of the several isolated hillocks of varied height and dimensions. The core area with archaeological remains is identified on the hilltop spreading over an area of more than five acres. The site was taken for excavations during 2014-17. Here the Stupa remains are found with several terraces. A complete basement or platform is exposed with having stone encasing on either side which is the topmost surviving portion of the stupa with the drum base and the circumambulatory path is intact. Pieces of *anda* or drum, made of stone are traced. The circumambulatory path measures 1.78 m. in width and the circumference is 20.41

m. This is the first circumambulatory path.

Again, one more wide circular area with stone paving, the second circumambulatory path measuring 3.86 m. in width and having the diameter of 44.65 meters is found encircling the first one. In this area on the eastern side as well as western side two entrances to the stupa is marked with stone slabs having post holes. The width of the eastern side entrance on the top measures 3.2. m. This seems to be the main entrance to the stupa and joined further outward with the staircase on the eastern side. Here, between first and second enlarged *pradakshinapatha* there was a time gap in which it was enlarged.

These circumambulatory paths are located on a raised terrace. The two circumambulatory paths are laid successively which is the earliest period (2nd-1st century BCE/CE.). Some architectural pieces having geometric design and *triratna* symbol are also recovered from this level. Railing pillars numbering 191 and 300 *suchis* have been found both in situ and scattered around is no doubt a spectacular finding of the site. The first terrace measures 28 m. x 21 m. in which the circumambulatory path is marked. This terrace is exquisitely arranged with dressed stone slabs having railing pillars on the top. Some of the railing pillars are seen *in situ* on corners. It seems that this terrace (1.25 m. in height) was constructed, most possibly, on a raised morrum platform. The Stupa comprising of the above three parts was generally surrounded by a railing, this space was used by the devotees for performing *pradikshina*, a rite of worship. The *pradikshinapatha* (circumambulatory passage) of the Stupa was often paved with stone panels sometimes bear votive inscriptions. But here so far no inscriptions have noticed. In the *Mahavamsa* this railing is called *pada-vedika*: railing at the foot or ground railing around the stupa²³.

One more stone terrace was exposed in three sides i.e., west, east and south. The terrace is completely exposed and the available portion measures 50 m x 29 m. The staircase is completely exposed in this terrace on southern and eastern margins. Some railing pillars and *suchis* are found on the terrace perhaps meant for the enclosure. Besides, two more terraces are found measuring 29 m. on the eastern side only in between the first and second terraces.

From the available evidences of brick bats, morrum and some weathered potsherds, it is clear that the site was abandoned most probably in 4th-5th century CE for obvious reason and again reoccupied in 8th-9th century CE. It may be conceptualized that Odisha was one of the important land for *Mahasanghika* sect of Early Buddhism and the trend of stupa building earlier known from Lalitgiri and Dhauli is also attested too in this site. However, Dhauli (where the ancient stupa was no more in existence) and Aragarh belong to same culture complex²⁴. This type of platforms are observed in the early stupas of Sanchi, Satadhara and some other Stupas of Thatalkonda and Bhavikonda, more precisely akin to Stupa No. 2 and 3 of Satadhara²⁵.

Stupa and Chaityagriha, Udayagiri

The earliest phase of Udayagiri site (Jajpur district) is marked from the excavated stupa at Udayagiri -2 with circumambulatory path having approach with *Chandrasila* and Kushana Brahmi inscriptions and shell script (*Samkhalipi*). The Kushana inscriptions read as *Kohakonasa ja* of 1st century CE and *Sankhalipi* of 5th century CE.²⁶ The base and part of the stupa is still visible just below the Apsidal Chaitya on the Northern side. This is the earliest phase of construction activity of the site in 1st century CE. The stupa, as it is ascertained from the available ruins, measures 3 meters in diameter and the circumambulatory path having a width of 1.22 meter. A massive stone platform along with flight of steps from the north with a *Chandrasila* at the entrance was traced. The impression of a circular stupa on plan in the centre of the platform attests the existence of a stupa. Its western arm has preserved some kerb stones curved on the top. There are ten donatory inscriptions in the shell character on the platform as well as threshold have been engraved in the later period towards 4th-5th century CE. It served as a nucleus for future activities within the enclosure²⁷. This stupa is one of the earliest Buddhist monuments of Odisha like those of Lalitgiri, Langudi and Aragarh. This shows that the Stupa was under active worship up to 5th-6th century CE with patronage of one sect of Buddhism. It may be mentioned that like other exclusive stupa sites of North and South India having the same tradition with early form of Theravada Buddhism. This is the result of expansion of Buddhism as it happened in other parts of India.

Apsidal Chaitya at Lalitgiri.

Of all the buildings of the Mauryan epoch that which is most distinctly Buddhist is the *Chaitya-Griha* or House of the *Chaitya*, which was the assembly hall or *chaptu* house of the order. The commonly - called caitya-hall known often as *Caitya-Ghara* (Sanskrit-*chaitya*) and Thupa-ghara and rarely as *thupa* (*grihastupa*) in inscriptions, was in reality a sanctuary. In Buddhist literature *caitya* came to be used as cult-object. In the *Mahaparinibban* sutta, the Buddha speaks of the efficiency of erecting *dhatu caityas* and himself visited *caityas* like Udama, Gotama, Sattambaka etc., revealing them thereby as pre-Buddha institution. Besides, the *Diga-Nikaya* shows that Lord Buddha lived in Ananda caitya at Bhojanagana²⁸.

The Apsidal Temple at Lalitgiri is located in a strategic position on which from all sides except east, there are monasteries and stupas. Perhaps, the Buddhists first constructed this temple and then gradually other monuments came into existence. As per the evidences available, there is a stupa, of which the base portion is traced on the middle of the shrine chamber. According to G.C. Chauley-the Excavator, this is the earliest monument in the site²⁹.

The *Chaitya Griha* or Apsidal Temple faces east and is built of fine bricks. The length of the temple is 32 metre and about 11.40 metre in width. Approximately about a 3.30 meters thick wall provides an inner space of

4.75 metre width. In this space, a circular stupa with an average diameter of 3.35 metre was constructed towards the western side. The base mouldings and stone paved apron, further extends the area around this Stupa. In the remaining interior floor area a compact ramming with lime kankars had been provided for easy throughfare of the devotee and for circumambulation (*pradakhina*). A traditional stone railing was provided around the Stupa as the evidence of three carved pillars with socket holes have been found lying near stupa. The purpose of putting the railing pillars was to keep the devotees at a certain distance from the Stupa.

The courtyard around the chaitya griha is found paved with stone slabs on the north, west, and southern sides. It is evident from the shape and size, the stone slabs were part of earlier structures

and here it was re-used in the pavement.

Evidences are also found that another brick stupa whose drum portion was encountered on the rammed lime floor inside the chaitya griha. All these constructions were imposed within the Apsidal chaitya griha. It signifies that there were several cultural phases and Stupa brought to be enshrined like that seen at Ajanta and Guntupalli.

A stone paved path-way approximately 10 meters in length and 3.50 metre wide was delimited with the porched brick stupa due to semicircular end, constructed at least in three phases, contains the name of the donors in shell script or Sankhalipi dated to the Gupta period of 5th - 6th Century CE. On the southern side of the pathway an almost square pedestal (1.42 x 1.42 meter) containing an inscription in Brahmi script of 2nd - 3rd century A.D. has been found. This pedestal is raised with two layer of brick courses and the top one stone course. The super structure above it, is now missing. The inscription according to K.V. Ramesh of Epigraphy Branch of ASI (Mysore), seems to record *the completion (Samaavta) of the seat (AASSAANA) of Adatmana, probably, jointly by Vinaya, a resident of Vadhamana, a certain Vinayadhara and his disciple Buddhini a resident of Aggotisila.* the inscriptions shows the patronage of the of the Buddhism and building of this monument and donations comes from different regions³⁰. The inscription throws light on the popularity of this Chaitya Temple. It perhaps attracts Buddhists from far and wide. Number of miniature and votive stupas found laying near the Apsidal *Chaityagriha*. Some miniature stupas contain inscriptions of 7th - 8th century CE. The Apsidal Temple thus gives a running chronology from 1st-2nd century CE. to 8th-9th century CE. This Apsidal is unique in different ways and more akin to Andhra counterparts as seen Salihundam, Sankaram, Ramatirtham. But I think the wave of Buddhism must have rolled from this area to further south at the beginning.

Monasteries

Several monasteries datable to 4th-5th centuries to 10th 11th centuries were unearthed at Lalitgiri, Langudi, Udayagiri, and many other places in Odishan region and their continuation is seen in a number of sites of adjoining Andhrapradesh. Almost all the monasteries are identical with cells, courtyard, shrine chamber on the middle. As has been mentioned in Pali text, *Chullavaga*, the entire monastic complex consisted of *viharas* (dwelling rooms) *parivenas* (cells of private chambers), *Kottnakas* (gate chambers or porches) *upatthanasalas* (service halls), *eggi-salas* (halls with fire places), *kappiyakutis* (store house outside the vihara), *Vachchakutis* (privies), *charikarmas* (promenade) *herikasalas* (rooms with promenades) *udapanas* (wells), *udapana salas* (shade attached to wells) *janatagharas* (bath rooms) *pokkharani* (tanks) and *mandapas* (halls)³¹. The site of the monastery would be neither too far from a village or town nor too near, suitable for coming and going, accessible to people whenever they want, not crowded by day, having little noise at night, little sound, without folks breath, secluded from people, fitting for meditation.

The Buddhist remains of almost all the important establishments were found slightly away from towns. It is thus, that outside the populous city of Vidisa (modern Besanagara adjoin Vidisa) there sprung up the magnificent establishment of Sanchi, besides a host of

lesser ones at Sonari, Satdhara and Bhojpur. Similarly the *Dharmachakra-vihara* of Saranatha was established six kilometres north of Varanasi. The other viharas being Ghositarama and Kukutarma at Kausambhi, the Kalkarama donated by the branch Kalaka at Saketa and the Viharas attached to Venuvana, Jinakamravana and Maddaku-Chehi-Migadaya in the suburbs of Rajgriha³².

There are altogether four monasteries unearthed at Lalitgiri, Two in Udayagiri, one at Langudi, three at Ratnagiri. These sites are located in the hill slopes and the landscape matches as referred in

the Buddhist scriptures. The interesting fact is that all these monasteries are constructed centuries after the monuments be it stupa or chaitya and have different nomenclature such as *Sri Chandraditya Mahavihara Arya Bikshu Samgha* (Lalitgiri), *Sri Madhavpur Mahavihara Arya Bikshu Samgha* (Udayagiri-1), *Simhaprastha Mahavihara* (Udayagiri-2) and *Ratnagiri Mahavihara* (Ratnagiri)³³.

Almost all these monasteries followed as usual a *chauthasala* type in quadrangle in plan 36 x 36 meter and some in 29 x 29 meter consisting of a series of cells all around with four running pillared *verandahs* and a central courtyard. It has a porched entrance on its eastern side and an exit on the southern side near to the western end. The sanctum chamber is on the west. Some of the monasteries are double storied. However, the monastery 2 at Udayagiri has some unique features like *pradakshina* around the shrine chamber, which has not been encountered in the other monasteries see Figure 3.

This monastery consists of monk cells arranged in the usual pattern like other monasteries i.e. monk cells, shrine chamber, courtyard, drain and pylon etc. Here, the shrine chamber found on the middle end with circumambulatory path (*pradakshina patha*) around. The back or the southern wall of the shrine chamber is divided by projections like *pancharatha* pattern of Odishan temples. An upper shrine chamber is provided just on the back wall. The arrangement of the cells are made with two each on both wings of the central shrine, three each in the east and the west while three in the south. The unique feature of the cells of this monastery is that secret chambers are provided inside the cells perhaps meant for esoteric practices or keeping of valuables. Again, on the recess of the cells mostly a recess for keeping lamp and a niche the use of which perhaps meant for practicing meditation. A significant architectural style introduced is the use of long arches in the shape of vaulted passage particularly noticed in formation of 2m high 1.44 m long and 1.70 m wide arches on the window part. One must appreciate the excellence in mastery over architecture achieved by monk architects of this monastery. Two cells in the north-western side represent somewhat different formation having combined unit. Access is made for a room from the door of the other room is inside facing east. These cells are also provided with secret chamber 83.5 x 75 x 98.5 cm probably served for the purpose treasury. It is observed that this cell perhaps meant for the chief monk or the elderly one. The excavators has given a precise date that during 8th-12th century CE, the monastery was in use.

The monastery is double storied for which steps were provided on the north-eastern corner. A water reservoir or a tank has been exposed on the south-western side of the monastery comparatively bigger in size than one found in monastery-1 of Lalitgiri. Its inner dimension is around 6.70 x 6.20 m while the depth is slightly more than 2 m. This system of water reservoir is called "*podhi*" in Buddhist literature often associated with Buddhist sites.

In the adjoining areas, in front of this monastery on its north-western side assemblage of votive stupas and a massive Avalokitesvara image still found *in-situ* stands over a ground primarily consisting of shrine zone. Little in a distance just on southern hill slope a kitchen complex is also discovered³⁴.

Buddhist Art

Indian art is an expression of Indian life and thought attuned to its vast natural background and its socio- religious traditions. It is not exclusive or sectarian in the narrow sense of the term. Its style, technique or general tenor has nothing to do with any particular religious outlook. It is fed and fostered upon a vast store-house of Indian traditions, symbols and designs. Buddhist art is meant popularly for those monuments and paintings which have for the main purpose the edification

or popularization of Buddhism. The earliest stone monuments in India, as discussed, dated to the Mauryan period (320-180 BCE). Emperor Asoka was converted to the Buddhist belief and was an immensely powerful patron. Early Indian Art is anionic and the Buddha does not appear in anthropomorphic form till late first century BCE³⁵. This early phase of Indian Buddhist Art that manifests itself in the Buddhist reliefs of Bharhut, Sanchi, Amaravati etc. (from 2nd century BCE. to 1st century CE.), would reproduce all these eight in periodical convention of the symbolic or Buddhist sculptures are the Persian pillar with bell shaped capital which was adopted directly, can be seen in the east Gateway at Sanchi. The bell capital frequently serves as a basis for one or more lions or elephants or for a religious symbol (wheel) when the pillar is considered as standing alone. If the pillar is used as a support in a building, the bell capital serves as base for an abacus on which turned towards the sides, winged figures of animals such as horses, gazelles, goats, lions or sitting elephants are placed. This can remarkably be seen in the pillars of Sanchi, Ajanta, Bagh, Pitalkhora and Nasik etc.

The region of Kalinga (Ancient Odisha) being one of the cradle land of Buddhism also developed its own style of art starting from stone pillars, Yaksha and Yakshi images from Bhubaneswar, Rock-cut Elephants at Dhuli and Kayama, railings, *suchis*, terracotta figurines, and images recently discovered from Langudi, Radhanagar, Lalitgiri and Aragarh all are dated from 3rd century BCE to 5th century CE in its first phase³⁶. The discovered monumental remains, images, terracotta figurines, ornaments and sculptures are for the first time present a chronology of early Buddhist art at par with the Mathura, Gandhara and Saranath School of Art.

So far, human representations in early Buddhist art are represented with delicate and supple joined limbs, miserable calves and feeble muscles, light built slippery, eel-like, as that of today with an agreeable child like naturalism. The other kind of representation is a long head with full round face, large eyes and thick lips which can be seen in the Buddhist panels. The terracotta figurines found from Radhanagar presents a benchmark in the study of Buddhist Art. The Buddha head, Lion figure and other terracotta figurines of 1st-2nd century CE provides certain clue to study the early art tradition of Odisha³⁷. An important form is the lotus-flower (*padma*) which is employed decoratively and with great taste in the arrangement. The broad disc of the blown flower is employed in all positions as a decoration. A medallion of such type was found from the Apsidal Temple site at Lalitgiri which is datable to Sunga-Kushana period. Also, such medallions are still found in the Stupa rock cut panel of Langudi. There are several railings with Lion copings and beautiful ornamented lady figurines of stone with typical head gear (knot) is also reported from Langudi belonging to 1st century BCE /CE. The art of ancient Odisha of this period thus well represented like that of Sanchi or Bharhut and its continuation is also seen in the later monuments. Towards 2nd -3rd century CE, the terracotta objects recovered from Radhanagar Excavation (2010-13) represent the continuity of Buddhist art which include Buddha head, Lion motif, *trirtna* symbols, Bodhi tree, terracotta serpents, elephants, Sri image, and other decorative ornaments which all displayed in the recently organized Tarapur site museum. This shows the continuity of Buddhist Art in this region although as discussed earlier, there were constant interaction with Buddhist sites of other parts of India.

Afterwards, the monolithic Buddha images at Langudi 2nd-3rd century CE appeared followed by Buddha and Bodhisattva images from 4th-5th century CE at Lalitgiri. This tradition can very well be understood from Udayagiri and Ratnagiri sites towards 7th -8th century onwards. This phenomenon was for the first time discussed here after close examination of the Buddhist images of India known so far.

The art works like representations of perforated panels, alternating with *ghatas*, dancing figures,

bharavahakas, dotted arches and the decorative details like rosettes, lotus petals, *puṇaḥatas*, scrolls, dots, gourd bands, and undulating figuration of half lotus - are all found in the Buddhist monuments of Langudi, Lalitgiri, Ratnagiri and Udayagiri. These were little later (around 7th century) developed profusely and more attractive details depicted on the temple walls. Thus, the formative phase of art traditions of early Odisha is reflected in the Buddhist Art as that of India.

Summary

This paper has presented an alternative paradigm and a structured framework for interpreting the cultural heritage of South and Southeast Asia for the purposes of developing conservation approaches. Based on established synergies between systems theory and Buddhism specifically (Chao and Midgley 2007a, 2007b, Midgley and Chao 2007, Khisty 2006a, 2006b, Macy 1991a, 1991b, 1976, Ellis and Ludwig 1962) and Asian cultures more broadly (du Plessis 2005, 2001, 2000, 1999, Churchman 1968), the framework has been constructed that takes into account, for example, the intangible values, sense of place, cultural traditions and philosophies that are elements of the specific cultural heritage of the region under study.

The philosophy of Buddhism is founded on three principles; interconnectedness, mutual conditioning and radical interdependence (Khisty 2006b, Macy 1991a, Kalupahana 1976). The notion that everything is related or connected to everything else, that an action cannot occur without a previous action is the key to these three principles. For these reasons Buddhism is seen as a holistic approach to the questions of life and matter. Providing the basis of a Buddhist hermeneutic and is seen to explain most of what occurs in Buddhism. As discussed in this paper, Buddhist ideologies and principles have been adopted as the key relational qualities of the framework that has been developed to provide an alternative approach to conserving cultural built heritage in South and Southeast Asia. Traditionally, problem solving in the scientific context has been reductionist in nature, breaking down the larger problem into smaller components. Conversely, systems theory focuses on looking at the problem and its context in terms of systems and looking at relationships between these systems. The other aspect of systems theory deals with the communication between systems and the feedback loops that exist that make the process cyclical and informative. The synergies that have been identified between Buddhism and systems theory are based on the nature of holism and the cyclical nature of communication and feedback loops. The cyclical qualities of the communication channels between systems allows for reiterative evaluation of the relationships while assessing the basis for protecting the cultural heritage.

Finally, from this discussion a conceptual framework was formulated that incorporated the philosophy of systems theory and principles of Buddhism. The framework has the key relational qualities, interconnectedness, interdependence and mutual conditioning that form the basis of the relationship between the heritage and the people who consume it. The interpretation of these key relational qualities is done with clarifying questions, which provide the opportunity to describe the key relationships that give the heritage its values and meanings, significant qualities in the context of how people view the heritage.

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