

gave clear evidence of a number of small chambers clustered together.

Evidence collected in the first phase of excavation suggest that the northern sector has the establishment for teaching at the ground floor and probably the residential accommodations for the learners in the upper floors. As to the residential chambers of the Acharyas and the Bhikshyus in the southern sector, there is plenty of evidence. The second phase of excavation will no doubt bring to light a large number of such chambers throwing further light on the mode of living of the Bhikshyus as well as the architectural significance of the establishment.

KURUMA: Kuruma is a site of Buddhist archaeological discoveries. The mound of bricks which attracted the attention of the visitors was seen by the side of a tank called 'Dharma-Pokhari' at the one end of the village. Some years ago a large stone slab was lying on the bank of this tank. Once upon a time when the tank underwent a renovation the villagers displaced the slab, they found a beautiful image carved on it. The image was not then recognised as an image of Buddha. It was identified only in 1958 when Sri Bamdev Mohapatra, the then headmaster of Konark High School brought this incident to the notice of the state historians. Besides the image of Dhyani Buddha, two other images were found from the tank (Dharma-Pokhari) in the year 1960. The state archaeology department has undertaken the work of excavation at Kuruma for the last few years. Recent excavations have thrust this little village into the limelight with the discovery of antique of Buddha seated in Bhumisparsa Mudra along with the image

of Heruka. About 10 kms. from Kuruma a village named Chaurasi (literally meaning 84) is situated under the Nimapara police station in the district of Puri. The sacred Prachi river flows by its northern and southern sides. The village is full of antiquities. It is believed that in ancient times when Prachi was a navigable river there stood on its bank and at Chaurasi a big and prosperous town. Sailing vessels also could enter then in the river Kadua, a tributary of Prachi and there was a particular place where ships anchored. The ruins of this port still can be seen and the place is now called 'Boltadiha', or a place where boats took shelter in the village of Jagannathpara on the bank of river Kadua and the place of confluence where river Chandrabhaga meets river Kadua.

This place is 3 kms. from Kuruma in the north and half a km. from Otang which according to Pt. Krupasindhu Mishra was said to be an ancient Buddhist city - 'Odantapur'. Considering the reading of Chaurasi grant and other records available it may be said that a Buddha Vihara was built at Kuruma sometime in the 8th century before the construction of the Sun Temple. On every Akshaya Trutiya day, 3rd day of the bright fortnight of Baisakha (April-May) the villagers arrange for a gathering of 'Thakurs' (God) and enjoy the day -with great pomp. On Baisakha Purnima day people also take their plunge in the holy tank, 'Dharma-Pokhari' and hold meetings on the occasion of Buddha's birthday. Approachable by jeeps it lies at a distance of 8kms. from Konark.

Odisha is one of the 29 states of India, located in the eastern coast.

Source: **A Journey to Odisha** published by Orissa Tourism

Cultural Calendar - July 2016

1 & 2

Friday & Saturday
4.00pm - 7.30pm

**Cellular Awakening
Lecture cum workshop
Life Management through Mind Management**
by Anurag Chhabra, India
Venue: ICC auditorium

Hindustani Vocal Recital
by Prof. Ojesh Pratap Singh,
Phd. University of Delhi, India
Venue: ICC auditorium

8
Friday
6.00pm

15
Friday
6.00pm

Flute Recital
by Hemapala Perera
renowned flautist of Sri Lanka
Venue: ICC auditorium

Kathak Recital
by Sankaja Nimantha Pinidiya
Venue: ICC auditorium

22
Friday
6.00pm

29
Friday
3.00pm

Friday matinee – Dil Bole Hadippa
Director : Anurag Singh (duration : 3 hrs)
Synopsis: Veera who lives in a small village but dreams in 70 mm, who works in a local theatre group but dreams of playing cricket in the big league....
Venue: ICC auditorium



Indian Council for Cultural Relations
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Sanskarika

Newsletter of the Indian Cultural Centre, Colombo

July 2016



A view of Ajanta Ellora Caves, India
P.C.: Ashok Basu

Cultural Tapestry

Continues from May 2016 Issue

BUDDHIST SHRINES OF ODISHA

LALITGIRI: Lalitgiri, 90 kms. away from Bhubaneswar, is one of the earliest Buddhist complexes, dating back to the 1st century AD. The huge brick monastery, the remains of a Chaitya Hall, a number of votive stupas and a renovated stone stupa at the top of a rugged sandstone hillock dominate the greenery around. The sculpture shed nearby displays excavated images, throwing light on the various schools of Buddhist art. The discovery of golden caskets in 1985, containing sacred bone relics, probably of Tathagata, enhances the sacredness of the place.

UDAYAGIRI : Nearby Udayagiri is known for its bell-shaped Stupa signifying Vajrajana form of Buddhism. One of the largest Buddhist complexes in Odisha, Udayagiri is about 90 kms. away from Bhubaneswar. The ancient name of this complex was Madhavapura Mahavihara. Chronologically, this complex came into being after Ratnagiri and Lalitagiri, flourishing between 7th and 12th century AD. It is located in the basin of a U-shaped hill. The remnants suggest the presence of brick monasteries, a brick stupa, rock-cut sculptures and a stepped well with an inscription. The images of Dhyani Buddha, Bodhisattva, Avalokiteswara, Tara,

jambhala, Aparajita, Heruka and others, found during excavation, make Udayagiri a unique site of Buddhist heritage:

KHICHING: The wealth and antiquities unearthed here clearly indicate that it was the place where people professing Buddhism, Jainism and Brahmanism were living side by side and were maintaining institutions of their respective religion. The largest number of ruined temples and sculptural remains found at Khiching, exist now within the perimeter of nakuram's compound. The image of Buddha in Bhumisparsha Mudra represents post-Gupta style. The figure sits on the lotus throne in a posture of Yogi, touching the earth, with the fingers of his right hand, making the earth witness to his great vow, placing the left hand palm upward on his lap. The face looks graceful with dangling ear-ring and branches of the Aswatha tree are shooting up from the Usnisa, suggesting the Bodhi tree of the Uruvela forest where the Blessed One attained Enlightenment. The figures of two lions have been engraved underneath the lotus throne and one of them appears to be roaring with vigour. The image, however, seems engrossed in deep meditation and reveals soft modelling and pulsation of life within. A few figures of Vajrasana Buddha are found in this site and they differ both in style and execution. They sit on the lotus not on cross-legged posture but



nearly placing the right leg upon the left one and they display in right hand not the Bhumisparsha but Varada pose, although the left hand is lying with palm upwards, on the Utsanga. In each of these images, Aswatha branches are seen shooting up from the Usnisa and heavenly beings paying obeisance from the sky above, while below the lotus throne a devotee is found worshipping with several upacharas. All these Buddha figures are however, much inferior in artistic merit to the colossal image of Bhumisparsha Buddha and although they display great vigour, they lack in soft modelling and appeared conventional and crude.

The lower half of a colossal image of Lokeshwar (Boddhisattva Avlokiteswara) which was recovered from a mound in 1974 has been preserved in Khiching Museum. An inscription incised on the base of the image states that the image of the Lord Lokesh has been made by Sri Dhanani Varaha, assisted by Kirti for Raja Sri Rayabhanja, was found at Bamanghati (presently Rairangapur) in 1870.

ARAGARH : Located at a distance of about 20 kms. from Bhubaneswar, on the northern bank of the river Daya, Aragarh was a prominent centre of Buddhism. The Buddhist nucleus is traced from the time of Ashoka. It was the abode of famous Buddhist dialectician Diganaga (4th century A.D.), who established a monastery and a colossal stupa here.

LANGUDI : Close to the diamond triangle of Ratnagiri-Lalitgiri-Udayagiri, Langudi is another important Buddhist heritage site. The remains unearthed here include clusters of rock-cut votive stupas, two unique images of Buddha with female followers and ruins of a brick monastery. The most remarkable and prize discovery at this place are the two inscribed images of Emperor Ashoka-one along with his two queens. The excavation going on in these hills provides the visitors with a unique opportunity to be a part of the unfolding history and heritage.

While Buddhist circuit of Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri, Udayagiri and Langudi hill deserves special mention in the annals of Buddhism in Odisha, there are other Buddhist sites which lay scattered all over the state. There is not a single district in the state, where a Buddhist image or remains of Buddhism have not been found. Of all the places, Kuruma and Chaurasi in Prachi valley of Puri district, Banpur in Khorda district, Biswanath hills in Puri district, Moraguda in Nuapada district, Choudwar in Cuttack (Kataka) district, Jaipur in Jaipur district, Ayodhya and Balasore in Balasore district, Jaugada and Buddhakhhol in Ganjam district, Khiching and Baripada in Mayurbhanj district, Ganiapalli and Melchamunda in Bargarh district, Boudh in Boudh district, etc. have remained great centres of Buddhism.

JAUGADA : Jaugada is situated near

Purusottampur of Ganjam district. It is named so because the walls of an ancient fort which once existed here, were made of Jau or lacquer. The fort was destroyed by the King of Malatigarh belonging to the Keshari dynasty. The caves of the hills here bear the inscriptions of Emperor Ashoka. About 2 kilometres from Jaugada lies Buddhakhhol, with reminiscence of Buddhist sculpture.

BOUDH : Buddhism was prevalent in Boudh in between the 9th and 12th centuries. So it bears the name.

PARIMALAGIRI : In ancient times the foot area of Gandhamardan mountain, where Nrusinghanath temple is situated was called Parimalagiri. According to Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller, this place was a centre of Buddhist scriptural learning.

MUCHALINDA : The Muchalinda Vihara, located near the confluence of the Ang or Ong and Nagar rivers at Ganiapalli in Bargarh district was not only the earliest of its kind in Odisha, but even in India. A structural monastery of this magnitude was rare during the fourth-fifth century A.D. according to the report on the archaeological excavation of the ruins at Ganiapalli, submitted by the late eminent historian Dr. N. K. Sahu. The Vihara at Ganiapalli was most likely built after the

designs of the Parimalagiri Monastery (200 A.D.) which had five storeys and lofty towers . with four big halls with the life-size images of Buddha (made of solid gold), according to Hiuen Tsang's account.

The Muchalinda monastery, which covers an area of 1.5 acres, was a multi-storeyed structure of well-burnt bricks. The extensive floors paved with bricks suggest that there were big halls or dormitories in north, while the site south of the Chaitya Hall appeared to have been the residential establishment. The foundation wall was quite massive, about 0.9 metres in width, containing 12 large layers of bricks placed on strong earth mixed with small stone chips and sandy clay. Small brick walls having foundation on stone boulders run on from the main wall. These were apparently meant for dwelling of bhikshyus (holy beggars).

The ground floor seems to have contained a large number of such small cells, which are 1.8 metres by 2.4 metres. Traces of only four such cells have been found so far. The excavations reveal that the monastery had structural buildings on the northern and southern sides of the main Chaitya Hall. The northern area showed evidence of some dormitories like building and the southern sector

