RATNAGIRI, LALITGIRI AND UDAYAGIRI:

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru

University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

the award of the degree of

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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2012

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled, **RATNAGIRI, LALITGIRI AND UDAYAGIRI : AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS** submitted by **Miss Meghali Roy** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** is her own work and has not been considered for the award of any other degree at this or any other university.

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiner(s) for evaluation.

Dr. Supriya Varma **Prof. Bhagwan Josh**

Supervisor **Chairperson**

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Abbreviations

EI	***Epigraphica Indica***
IAR	***Indian Archaeology a Review***
OHRJ	***Orissan Historical Research Journal***

Acknowledgements

I express my gratitude towards my supervisor Dr. Supriya Varma for her guidance in the completion of this study.

I would also like to thank the librarians of Centre of Advanced Studies, Delhi National Museum, American Institute of Indian Studies, Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts, Indian Council for Historical Research for their cooperation and help in collection of data for this research.

I also thank Mr. Vishnu Saxena, Mr. J.P.Das (renowned Oriya poet, artist and novelist), Mr. Gopinath Jena (Assistant Archaeologist and Curator of the Ratnagiri Museum) for enabling me to visit the sites for research purpose.

I am grateful to Mrs. Shaswati and Mr. Sinha and his family for hosting me as a guest in their home at the village of Kushupur (Orissa).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my parents Mr. A.K.Roy and Late Mrs. Krishnakali Roy, my sister Meghna and my grandmothers Ila Roy and Deeba Gupta for the love and encouragement that has enriched my life and inspired me to tread ahead. Lastly I would like to thank those who are equally important to me as my family. Aadil and Manasi, for their encouragement, support and believing in me. It would have been difficult to overcome the hurdles towards the successful completion of this thesis if both of them were not a part of my life. Neha, Shreyanjana, Prerna and Lamin for their useful suggestions, help in editing and ensuring when the going got tough to that I remember to smile. Shikha and Rajesh thank you for being there for me .

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Most academic encounters with Buddhism in India in the eighteenth and nineteenth century were marked by a combination of investigations of early Buddhist texts as well as forays into material remains. Much of this research focused on early Buddhist monasteries and pilgrimage sites across the subcontinent. Although interest in Indology had started much earlier when Sir William Jones founded the Asiatic Society at Calcutta in 1784, archaeological research began officially in India from 1861 with establishment of the Archaeological Survey of India. As the first Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India, Alexander Cunningham led expeditions that led to the discovery and excavation of sites like Sanchi and Bharhut. This led to the archaeological investigations of early Buddhism, and inspired his successor, James Burgess, to conduct preliminary digs at Mathura, that led to the recovery of a large number of sculptures. However, the era of systematic excavations commenced only with appointment of John Marshall in 1902 by Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India at that time (Trautman and Sinopoli 2002: 497-501).

Cunningham followed the itineraries of Faxian and Xuazang in order to visit and record several Buddhists sites in northern India (Hawkes and Shimada 2009: xviii); these testimonies also came in handy for Marshall who concentrated on early historical sites such as Taxila, Sravasti and Pataliputra. In some ways, it was the quest for the recovery of a stupa of the kushana that led to the spectacular and epoch-making discovery of the Indus Valley Civilization at Mohenjodaro. As the study of ancient Buddhism became a growing colonial concern, archaeology too evolved into a valid source for the study of Buddhist monuments. This, along with the strengthening of the textual studies on Buddhism, led to a greater historical understanding of Buddhist practices. Buddhist stupas became a means of providing corresponding chronological corroborators to these texts.

It can thus be said that by the twentieth century the studies on Buddhism had a come a long way from its antiquarian antecedents. But, while archaeology and archaeological material provided valuable insight on ancient history, it remained to a large extent a corroboratory tool to textual knowledge on Buddhism. The relationship between archaeology and history was, in many ways, an unequal one. The basic "facts" of history, the historical framework, and the "important" questions about the past were all established by historians from the written sources (Moreland 2001: 8). The role of archaeology in the reconstruction of the past was restricted to presentation – it provided the objects which illustrated the pages of history (Moreland 2001: 8). This subservient relation was articulated by historians and accepted by archaeologists. Rather than being an independent *observateur,* archaeology was used to support and amplify the literary sources. The psychology and meaning of art and architecture was also based on the understanding of the canonical text. As a result of this dominance of texts on archaeology and other disciplines, often the questions asked of the evidences in these disciplines remained the same (Hawkes and Shimada 2009 : xxvi). By the early twentieth century, the outlines of Buddhist history and doctrines had been sketched out and numerous Buddhist sites had been identified. Since the very beginning the western scholarship on Buddhism was divided into groups. As pointed out by Trautmann and Sinopoli (2002: 509-10) on one side the translation interpretation of ancient monastic texts became the purview of those pursuing the discipline of Buddhist studies. On the other were the archaeologists and epigraphers, who documented monasteries and religious monuments and recorded the numerous inscriptions placed on them by donors and pilgrims. Communication among these various specialists was minimal at best.

The last two decades have however witnessed a shift of sort from the early scholarship on Buddhism. These have been marked by an interdisciplinary approach to evidence, an awareness of textual bias (Schopen 1997: 1-55) and an in-depth investigation of visual representations in the wider architectural and sculptural context of the monuments. The Buddhist remains are now being investigated in the wider archaeological and geographical landscape. Patronage, ties to local communities and cults, administration of stupas are some of the new issues that have come to the fore with changes in methodology and the approach to both textual and archaeological endeavours of situating

Buddhism temporally and spatially in the fabric of ancient society, culture, polity and religion of the Indian subcontinent. There is a growing awareness regarding the futility of trying to use archaeology as a corroboratory tool to the words in the texts.

Recent work is marked also by an understanding of how deeply colonial perspectives of the history of 'natives' colour the present understanding of Buddhism. For instance the primary informants of 'Indian' culture for Europeans in the eighteenth century were Hindu Brahmanas, who led them to believe that any form of religious practice associated with the Buddha was a part of the Hindu religion. It was therefore quite difficult to distinguish the remains of ancient monuments as Buddhist (Hawkes and Shimada 2009: xiv-xv). Schopen (1997: 12-14) very aptly sums up this discussion by pointing out that the notions about what the Buddhist religion was and is are possible outgrowths of the polemical conception of where "true" religion lies in western intellectual tradition. This may have determined the history of the study of Indian Buddhism and, as a consequence, current notions of Indian Buddhism, thereby being a reflection more of our colonial, religious history and values than the history and values of Indian Buddhism itself. It is possible, finally, that the old and ongoing debate between archaeology and textual studies is not a debate about sources, so much as it may be a debate about where religion as an object of investigation is to be located (ibid:12-14).

1.1 Aim of the Study

Ratnagiri (Latitude 20°38´N, Longitude 86°20´E) is located in the Jajpur district of Orissa. It owes its name to a flat-topped hillock situated between the Brahmani and the Birupa rivers, on the eastern banks of a small stream, the Kelua. Extensive excavations conducted at Ratnagiri in four field seasons during 1958 to 1961 under the direction of Debala Mitra (1981), have brought to light the remains of a Buddhist establishment. As I have pointed out in the above discussion, the research on Buddhism has experienced a change of directions in the last two decades. It was with the intention of asking (and attempting to answer) new questions from the site of Ratnagiri that this study was undertaken.

The report and the survey of the literature and work done on Ratnagiri indicate a preoccupation with glorifying the site and the modern state of Orissa by a constant re-emphasis on its possible relationship with the genesis and growth of Tantric Buddhism. This will be discussed later in greater detail in this chapter. Architecture and sculptural depictions have been read into mostly in an attempt to corroborate textual claims about the site. The relationship between the sites Ratnagiri and the nearby sites of Udayagiri, Lalitgiri needs to be looked at (fig 1.1). Their location in the near vicinity of each other remains unexplained. What endeared the monks to settle in these places? Is it simply a question of royal patronage? The report published in 1981, 1983 in two volumes is an exhaustive one and describe structures and antiquities in detail.

However there is no attempt at interpreting the material beyond the descriptive art historical framework. Mitra states (1981:25) that the dating of the stupas on the basis of statigraphy was difficult due to lack of regular stratified deposit, uneven configuration of the hilltop. The date for the site Ratnagiri in most cases thus has been done on the basis of paleleographic evidence etc. There are chapters dedicated to sealings, slabs with text of the *Pratityasamutpada* sutras and surface sculptures. However a chapter on pottery is absent. Does this mean that the site did not yield pottery? The report sometimes does mention fragments of pottery. Pottery analysis can help in developing the chronology of this site which does not have other options. Food consumption, questions regarding rituals are some of the issues that can be addressed by an analysis of pottery. Another issue is case of deliberate changes in spatial organization. For instance, one of the monasteries, according to the excavator, underwent three phases of structural changes. In the second phase, the partially open porch in front of the sanctum was completely closed off. The original façade, aside from the door frame, was covered up and a new façade was erected in front of the shrine. Issues regarding conservation will be also studied in the light of how the site of Ratnagiri is presented to the visiting tourists as well the measures that yet to be investigated and can only be determined when both the original plan and the newer are taken for its upkeep. Thus the attempt of this study is to move beyond the research questions that have looked at only the religious or architectural aspects of the site Ratnagiri.

This introductory chapter will begin with a brief survey of the research done on early Orissa. This section will discuss the kind of issues questions that scholars have seemed fit to pursue in the case of Orissa. The next section will discuss some of the issue regarding the archaeology of Orissa, moving on then to a historiographical survey of Buddhism in Orissa. I would then like to discuss the recent archaeological and art historical perspectives on Buddhism. This chapter will end with a brief outline of this dissertation.

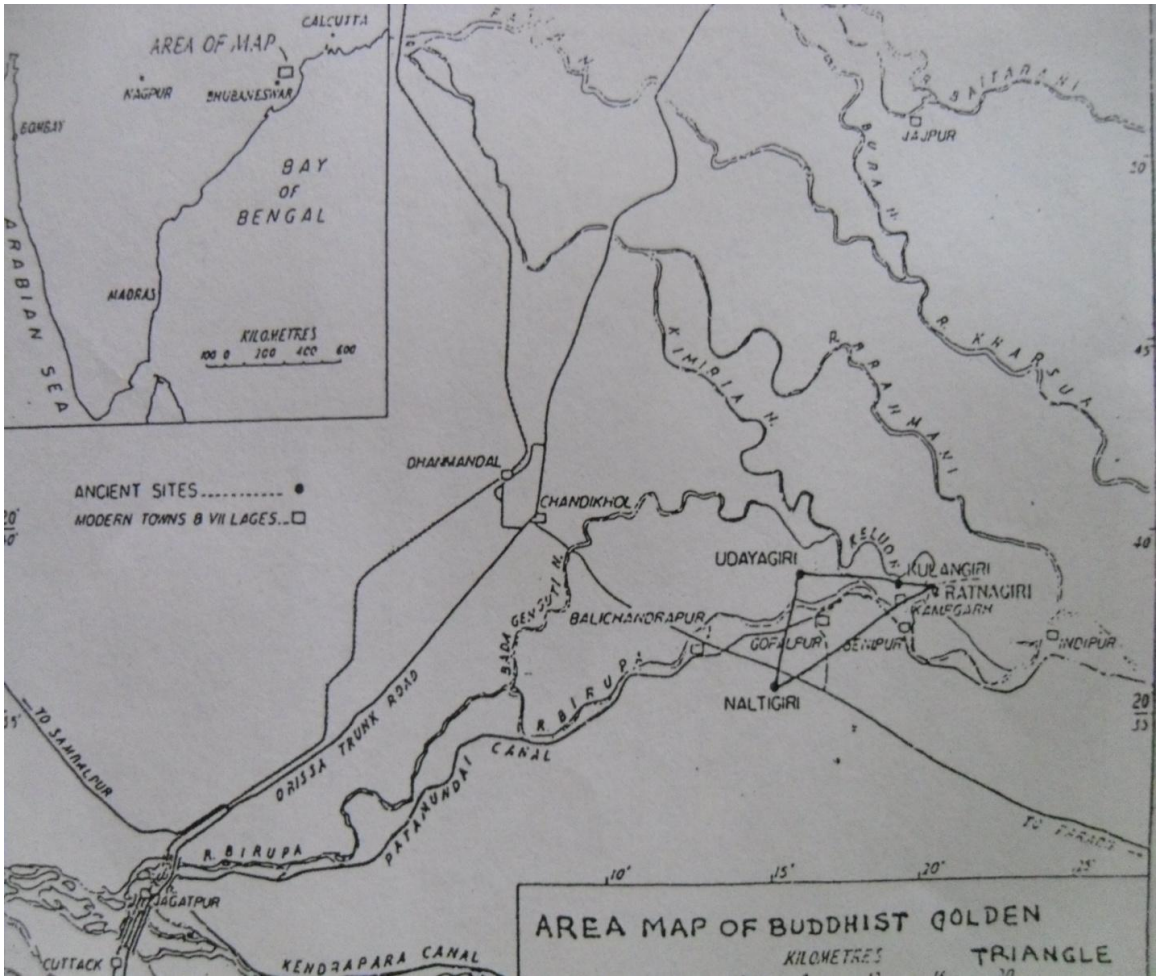

Figure 1.1 The area map of the sites Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri (Nalitigiri) and Udayagiri (Courtesy Ratnagiri Museum)

1.2 Historical Research on Early Orissa

Orissa in the ancient period was known as Utkal, Kalinga, Odra and Oidivisa. Though its boundary varied from time to time, Orissa has occupied an important position in the cultural history of India. This section will briefly introduce the different issues that have been picked up from time to time by scholars attempting to trace the history of Orissa. The foci of these scholarly works range from socio-political to religious questions, and the evidence and methodology used to reach answers too differs from one work to the next.

The urge and initiative to write the regional history particularly of Orissa began with British military commanders and civil servants who served as historians. By the middle of the nineteenth century, considerable progress had been made in the field of exploration and research pertaining to the early history of Orissa. Interestingly, the historiography of Orissa first began in the form of some stray articles in the journals of the *Asiatic Society of Bengal*. These journals did not, however, bring out any systematic history of Orissa (Gan 2004: 122). After the British occupation of Orissa, the first systematic attempt to write the history of Orissa was made by three famous orientalists viz Andrew Stirling, W. W. Hunter and John Beames. N.K. Sahu, (2005) in a reprint of the selected works of these three individuals, has pointed out that in spite of their limitations and prejudices, all of them have painted a faithful picture of the cultural and historical development of Orissa, based on the materials then available to them (ibid: xi). Their prejudice, however, can be seen clearly in some statements. For example, in the introduction of Hunter's book on the history of Orissa where he makes some broad generalizations: "The ethnical revolutions which brought in new ruling races, ceased in very ancient times; and during the last 1500 years, the rise and the fall of the Orissa dynasties have been connected not with tribal movements but with religious reformations. Each new line of kings represents a new era of worship and of spiritual belief. Its elevation to power takes place amid the birth throes of a fresh popular creed; its decay is contemporaneous with the decline of the national religion; and its fall is consummated amid the extinction of old rites and the coming in of new. I firmly believe that the key to understanding people is to emphasize on the religious side of the Orissan history. Throughout all northern India dynastic

revolutions and religious reformations have gone hand in hand" (ibid: 2). However, one must realize that these scholars could not have produced an authoritative history given the manifold disadvantages they faced. Archaeology, epigraphy, numismatics and the social sciences had yet to develop, and printed literature on Indology was rare.

During the post-Independence period, scholarship on various issues and aspects regarding the history of Orissa has slowly progressed. One of the earliest attempts at writing the history of Orissa was that of K. M. Panigrahi (1981). His work encompasses a huge time frame, starting with prehistoric period to the various dynasties that made their presence felt in Orissa such as the Bhaumakaras**.** Historians like N. K. Sahu (1964) emphasized on political, economic and cultural history. However, recent scholarship has moved away from the earlier focus on dynastic succession, and is trying to look at the history of Orissa in light of some new questions.

B. P. Sahu (2011) on the basis of archaeological, sculptural and epigraphic sources discusses the relationship between art, religion, state and society, especially between 100 BCE and 100 CE. The main concern of the study is to understand the types of patronage, their role in legitimization of royal power and the social groups involved. He examines the inscriptions on some of the caves of Udayagiri and Khandagiri as well as the Hatthigumpha inscription of Kharvela, and concurs that they provide valuable insight into the socio-political dimensions of art in Early Orissa. He points the fact that the "donors considered it necessary to record their gifts, so that they could read suggests that they were seeking advertisement and flowing from it recognition and status apart from religious merit" (ibid: 432). At the same time he points out that there is resounding vagueness surrounding ordinary people, while the available evidence is unequivocal on the larger issues of society. Scholars like Manorama Triparty (2011) believe that the major hurdle in the reconstruction of social history of Buddhism for instance is the paucity of written documents (ibid: 74). She counts the number of social groups regarding whom there is no information to be found in any of the sources, notably on the caste backgrounds of the Buddhist monks and nuns or on the role played by the peasantry in sustaining the great Buddhist centers of Orissa. Moreover, Triparty points out how women too are also thoroughly absent from all records of Orissa Buddhism. The artists

and artisans who created hundreds of great monuments and sculptures have also remained outside the extant records (ibid 75-77).

The issue of patronage of religious institutions and landgrants has been taken up comprehensively in the work of Upinder Singh (1994). On the basis of the inscriptions, she focuses on the twin issues of landgrants and the early medieval political and economic order. She believes that the empirical evidence regarding the details of royal grants is of direct relevance to the understanding of the nature of the political, economic and religious order in ancient and early medieval India. Her study presents the first detailed analysis of royal endowments to brahmanas and temples in Orissa during the period 300-1147 CE. The focus is on the relationship between kings, brahmanas and temples during this period, particularly the relationship between grants to brahmanas and temples and the formation and stabilization of kingdoms. The study is based on an analysis of 302 Sanskrit inscriptions of Orissa, ranging in time from the fourth to the middle of twelfth century CE.[1] The reason for choosing these inscriptions, she states, was the fact that from the fourth century onwards, a large number of inscriptions recording royal endowments became available, concluding with the period of Ganga king Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga (1078-1147 CE), which marks a distinct stage in the relationship between kingship and the sacred domain, with the construction of the Jagannāth temple. Since ancient and modern political boundaries do not necessarily coincide, the geographical perimeters of the study had to expand on occasion to include, apart from the thirteen districts comprising the modern state of Orissa, areas such as the Mednipur district of Bengal, the Raipur, Raigarh and Bilaspur districts of Madhya Pradesh, and the Srikakulam, Vishakhapatnam, and East Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh. A majority of the inscriptions are royal charters recording the grant of land by kings to brāhmaṇas or to temples. The medium differs: while some are on stone, the majority are copper plates, often when more than one inscription is strung on a ring, and stone slabs embedded on the temple wall (Singh 1994: 6). However, Singh also points out that despite the importance of these inscriptions in the reconstruction of political, social

[1] She points out that the language of the inscriptions that form the basis of this study is Sanskrit, the influence of local dialect is often discernible. A few of the inscriptions contain a mixture of Sanskrit with Telegu or with Oriya.

and religious history, there are certain problems that arise in the utilization of the epigraphic sources. Among these are the reading and editing of the text by scholars as well as that the inscriptions are often replete with Sanskrit influenced by local dialects, orthographical and grammatical mistakes. The language of the endowments is panygyrical and the terms set in it are often obscure, leading to the translations being only tentative. The dating is hindered by regnal years, the initial years of which are often controversial leading to paleographic dating being at the best an estimation of the approximate year (ibid:7-8).

Given the long chronological span of the study, Singh has divided the inscriptions into three rough chronological periods: Period I, from the fourth to the seventh centuries CE, Period II, from the seventh to the tenth centuries CE, and Period III, from the tenth to the mid-twelfth century CE.[2] She finds that the inscriptions of ancient and early medieval Orissa yield little evidence of royal patronage of Buddhist or Jaina religious establishments. She concludes that majority of the temple endowments were in the favour of Shaiva establishments. The land grants bestowed on Buddhist or Jaina establishments were often at the behest of a feudatory and therefore one must assume that these institutions flourished not through royal patronage but other intermedIARy classes like the ranakas (feudatories) of the kings (ibid: 295).

After the conquest of Orissa by British in 1903, (Basa and Mohanty 2001:19) Puri and its Jagannath Temple caught the eye of colonial scholars. Appropriated as 'Juggernaut', the deity was heralded as a Buddhist icon by Cunningham (1871), treated as a symbol of Oriya nationalism in the second half of the nineteenth century. The most comprehensive work on Jagannath was the outcome of Orissa research project. *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa* (1978) was influential in locating the cult of Jagannath in a wider context, leading to a clearer understanding of its essence. This interdisciplinary study provided insights into the hegemonic relationships between state and religion, the interconnectedness between what is considered tribal and what is considered brahmanical. *Jagannath Revisited: Studying Society, Religion and the State in Orissa* (2001) takes this discussion further. Kulke and Schnepel have identified three

[2]She assigns the first period as Ancient and the other two periods as early medieval.

major groups of scholarship engaged in research on the cult. These are: (i) The 'Oriya' School, (ii) an intermediate group, and (iii) a group of theory-oriented scholars. The Oriya School has, according to them, mainly sought to popularize Jagannath, the cult and research among the Oriya elites. The intermediate group too has its roots in the works of the pioneering generation of the Oriya School. However, they do not follow the "holistic" research agenda that conventional Jagannath publications take up, but tackle special issues in the context of Jagannath studies, without referring explicitly to contemporary discourses. The third group has taken the discussion on the cult and the history of Orissa beyond regional concerns. These include anthropological studies on Puri that examine the processes of cultural change and secularization of Puri and highlight the concept of 'Cultural Complex' (ibid: 5). Finally they point out to certain individuals who are looking at the temple, cult, Puri through the prism of contestation of power through various means. Thus, questions of the hegemonic dominance of outsiders and insiders are put to an end. This volume deals with a plethora of issues concerning the religion, culture and society of Orissa and provides a very detailed discussion on the various aspects of the Jagannath cult. Some of these issues are the interface between religion and the state, how the adivasis and the lower caste understand the cult of Jagannath, and the assimilation and modification of the cult in the peripheral areas.

1.3 Archaeological studies on Orissa

Several books on the archaeology of Orissa have been published during the last two decades. However a survey of most of them would make any reader aware that most are not purely based on archaeology rather most club issues of art, architecture, issues of conservation and many more such themes with it. Cases in point are the works of G.C.Chauley (2004), the edited volumes by S.K.Pradhan (1999). The following discussion is merely a short enumeration of some of the issues that have been raised by various scholars. The discussion on aim and methodologies with which a host of the excavations and surveys are undertaken will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Unpursued by scholars for several decades till 1927-28 when Ramprasad Chandra, Superintendent Archaeological Section, Indian Museum, Calcutta visited some of the sites of Orissa. *Exploration in Orissa* the memoir written by Ramprasad Chandra (1930) is as the author says a short account of the sites and their monumental remains to serve as

a background of the account of his acquisitions from Orissa in 1927-28. The main object of his visit was to collect some 'archetypal and attractive' sculptures that would grace the Museum. Consequently he did not pay much attention to the mounds and remains. His description of the images is also very scanty. Thus though he found a number of sculptures mostly on the hill – some around the temple Mahakali and others in a grove of trees he merely mentioned the images of Avalokitesvara, Tara, Heruka, Buddha and Bhairva. On the basis of an image of Buddha in the Bhumisparsa – Mudra, Chandra was the first one to dwell briefly on the artistic qualities and characteristic traits of the sculptures. He felt that the sculptors of Ratnagiri and Magadha were in touch with one another in the tenth and eleventh centuries (ibid: 12-14).

Since post Independence Orissa and its archaeological sites have found mention in a number of books and essays. One such work is that of R.P. Mohapatra (1986) who documented the sites and monuments of various districts of Orissa. Such basic documentation can be seen in more such works by authors such as Panigrahi (1961) etc. Gradually however more areas of research and enquiry have opened up in Orissa, thus the literature has also followed the pattern for example Mohanty and Triparti (1998: 70-98) have discussed the prehistoric and proto-historic sites of Orissa. P.K. Behera (2000: 1-34) has focused on the prehistoric rock art sites of the Deulga Hills in Orissa. *Archaeology of Orissa* edited by Basa and Mohanty (2001) covers the excavations that have taken place in Orissa. Divided into two volumes vast arrays of subjects and issues have been presented. While the first volume predominantly deals with the 'prehistoric' past of Orissa; the second is more focuses on excavations of sites like Lalitgiri and Golabai. The two volumes discuss various cultural phases as well as manage to give individual attention to certain archaeological sites. The focal point of all these essays is to provide some new insight into the questions of neolithic, maritime trade and patronage. For instance the chapter on the ceramics of Lalitgiri by J.K. Patnaik can be treated as one of the few studies that have come out in recent times that attempts at studying ceramics belonging to different periods which help in relative chronology of similar sites (ibid: xiii). The essay on '*Authority and Patronage in Early Orissa'* by B.P.Sahu too is one of the few works that talk about the role of patronage in shaping the course of political as well as religious institutions (ibid: 431-438).

Urbanism in ancient Orissa is also a rapidly expanding arena of scholarly research. The excavations of Sisupalgarh , Jaugada and sites in Tel valley like Asurgarh-Naha have brought to focus ancient urban sites in Orissa. Taking Tel valley as a case study Baba Misra (2011) points out how despite advances in research and methodology this area suffers from the absence of a large scale excavation. Therefore on the basis of trial trenches and intensive surface survey he tries to trace new sites and investigate the interaction of the settlement with its landscape and environment. The issue of ancient settlement patterns has been cogently discussed by G.N. Srivastava (2006). In a broad periodisation of settlement history of Bhuwaneswar he distinguishes between royal or political settlements and religious settlement. He points out to the non-permanency of royal settlements vis- a -vis the religious settlements. One of the examples that he cites is that of the period of turmoil when political disturbances and weakened economic atmosphere resulted in a Saivite tirtha for want of pilgrims and patronage. Due to this a large part of the population transmigrated to other places in hope of better life. The remaining population however maintained the sanctity of the place and in due course the place regained its prosperity (ibid: 268-269).

"As a corollary to the new advancements, made in other parts of the country and world, in methodology, theoretical interpretation and technical knowhow, the archaeological scenario in Orissa, except probably, art and architecture, iconography and numismatics, is not up to mark."

(Mohanty and Triparti 2001: 91)

Characteristic of the archaeology of Orissa are gaping informational voids held together by notions of a linear development of artefacts within and between periods. Although surface explorations have been made in various regions of Orissa and some excavations have been conducted, the number of sites excavated is inadequate considering the archaeological potential of Orissa right from the lower Paleolithic onwards. The prehistoric for instance over a large part of the state is understood in terms of its related typology. The contextual information for the claimed chronological data is missing in most cases. A major limitation is that the excavations were mostly vertical and at best

throw light on the relative chronology with a diachronic perspective. In the absence of major horizontal excavation, we do not have a comprehensive account of the society in question at a synchronic level. Not much emphasize has yet been made in relation to interdisciplinary research for Orissan archaeology (Basa 2001: 43-44).

A departure from the earlier excavation methods and research questions is the example of Sisupalgarh. The early historic site of Sisupalgarh in Orissa has been under investigation by various scholars since 1948. The first excavation was undertaken by B.B. Lal in 1948. Similarly, a season of excavation undertaken by B.K. Thapar (Ota 2007: 68). Horizontal excavations were undertaken by Mohanty and Smith between the years 2005 and 2010. The Harris Matrix method was followed and a locus system was adopted (Mohanty and Smith 2006: 28). For the excavations, trenches were laid out as open area excavations without baulks, a strategy that enabled the exposure of different types of archaeological remains in their original configuration (Mohanty and Smith 2008: 12). Besides adopting a better excavation strategy that enabled a fuller understanding of the structures and related material assemblage, this is one of the few examples where ceramics has also been focused on.

1.4 Buddhism in Orissa: A Historiographical survey

Orissa witnessed the rise and fall of Buddhism just as its neighboring states, such as Bihar, Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, did. Buddhist remains in the state are extensive, with sites across the state having yielded sculptures and monuments. Noteworthy Buddhist sites in Orissa state include Jayarampur, Khadipara, Mahanpara, Solampur, Ayodhya. (Balasore district), Kiching, Ranibaudh and Udala in district Mayurbhanj, Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, Kulangiri, Kameswar, Vajragiri, Kharala, Chaudwar, Baneswarnasi and Kundeswar in district Cuttak, Bhuwaneswar, Kurume, Achutrappur, Aragarh hill top in district Puri, Talcher town in district Dhenkanal and Boudh town in district Phulbans. Stray images are found in large number from the district of Sambalpur. The Buddhist sites at Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri, which are the focus of my study, are situated within a radius of 20 km in the eastern Orissa.

A host of scholars have worked on Buddhism in Orissa. Their work has mainly focused on trying to determine the extent, origin and nature of Buddhism by analyzing the architectural remains and artefacts. An interesting interplay of archaeological, textual and visual history has been used.

N. K. Sahu (1958) has tried to identify Uddiyana, one of the greatest centers of Tantricism with Orissa, on the basis of few Tibetan texts. For this he has relied upon the traditions recorded by the Tibetan historian Taranath and subsequently reproduced in the Tibetan work *Pag Sam Jon Zang*. The scholar attempts to identify famous Tantric places like Sambhala and Lanka as modern Sambalpur and Sonepur[3] in western Orissa and holds the view that king Indrabhuti, who was ruling at Sambhala in Uddiyana, and his sister Laksmikara, who married the son of king Jalendra of Lankapuri, were famous luminaries of Tantric Buddhism. It is told that in the eight century CE, a Buddhist monk known as Acharya Pitopada of the Ratnagiri vihara, who happened to be the *guru* of King Indrabhuti, came to Sonepur and introduced 'Kalachakrayana' in the area. After the death of his *guru*, Indrabhuti introduced the so-called Vajrayana cult and popularized it in the area. Sahu informs us that in the period between 700 and 1100 CE, a number of Buddhist saints lived and worked for development of Buddhism in this area. He also believes that Indrabhuti was instrumental in organizing the Mahayana Buddhism into what is now known as Vajrayana, while his sister is b connected with initial development of Sahajayana Buddhism. An examination of the work undertaken in Orissa, particularly in terms of the sites excavated, indicates that the Tantric heritage of Orissa has been highlighted in most cases. Ratnagiri, if taken as a case study, proves this point.

Attempts to date the site of Ratnagiri have been marked by a paucity of conclusive archaeological data. As a result, scholars have attempted to date the structures on the basis of architectural elements. One such study is that of Robert L. Brown (1978), who tries to date the main monastery, designated as Monastery I. Due to the lack of concrete evidence that might conclusively date the monastery and the facades, Brown seeks his

[3] There is no unanimity amongst scholars regarding the identification of Uddiyana mentioned in the Buddhist tradition as one of the greatest pithas (centres) of Tantric Buddhism. For further discussion on the location of Uddiyana see (Dr.P.C. Bagchi 1939:38-39) He identifies uddiyana with swat valley. While Deo locates it in the Mahanadi valley(2004 ,87-93). His work contains the first yogic interpretation of the archaeological remains of the Manahanadi valley, which is the uddiyana pitha.

answers by a comparative study of the architectural features of the façades and those of Brahmanical temples of Bhuwaneshwar. Architectural motifs like the pūrna-ghata and the nāga figures are compared and contrasted in a bid to date the four facades. The entrance and the first shrine facades are discussed in the context of architectural similarities that can be discerned with the temples of Vaitāl and Śiśireśvara. A similar exercise is undertaken with regard to the second and third facades. The major architectural elements are compared with those of Mukteśvara temple (ibid: 5-28). The appearance of a *maithuna* figure on the second and third façades which is unusual for a Buddhist site is compared with three similar depictions found at one of the temples of Mysore, and in the temple of Lingaraja in Bhubaneswar and that of *Surya deul* at Konark. There is an attempt to correlate the chronology of the facades at Ratnagiri with the dates assigned to these depictions by scholar Devangana Desai (1975).

Thomas. E. Donaldson (2011) takes on the mammoth task of studying the various stages in the depiction of Buddhist deities in sculpture throughout Orissa. He begins with a cogently written historical background of how the Buddhism entered Orissa, assisted by the patronage it enjoyed under certain dynasties and kings, followed by deep discussions on the images of the Buddha, Tara and Manjusri. In his chapter on stylistic analysis, which is very thoroughly researched, he talks about the parallels between Buddhist traditions and the Brahmanical traditions as well as religious syncretism. He clearly divides the Ratnagiri sculptures into two periods; the 8-9th centuries CE, marked by a prevalence of Mahayana Buddhism, and the 10th-11th centuries CE, which he sees as the Vajrayana era (ibid: 58). Although Donaldson's work is an exercise in art appreciation, the historical process of amalgamation and the growth of new ideas as reflected in the sculptures are discussed in great detail. In case of Ratnagiri, the process of the slow transition from Mahayana to Vajrayana Buddhism is explained in terms of its interaction with the local belief system. Donaldson tries to trace the process of how local traditions entered the pale of Buddhism and resulted in the creation of a pantheon of deities similar to those worshipped under the Brahmanical umbrella.

Another thorough investigation of Buddhist visual history is Linrothe's (1999) study of "Krodha-Vighnantaka", or "wrathful destroyers of obstacles". Through an examination

and assessment of a huge corpus of depictions of wrathful deities, he presents the visual history of esoteric Buddhism. Examining these deities as ideological emblems, he discerns three chronological phases of subsidiary, complementary and central importance of wrathful deities in the images (ibid: 13). Abundantly illustrated, his work offers extensive textual discussions of individual art works as a means to understand the intricacies of esoteric Buddhist philosophy. The book has been divided into three sections corresponding to the above mentioned phases, the first of which deals with origin of the forms of the wrathful deities as well as the Mahayana-Esoteric Buddhism amalgamation.

Linrothe's discussion on Ratnagiri revolves around whether the site can be called a Tantric site or a Mahayana site. He engages with both textual as well as iconographic representations. Using the work of scholars like Hock and Debala Mitra (1981) he discusses the three phases of representation as well, starting with description of how deities like Vajrapani are depicted in Orissa and tracing the evolution of their iconography over time. The visual imagery along with textual and inscriptional evidence brings to light certain pertinent questions. Is the appearance of certain iconographic imagery enough to demarcate the site as Tantric?

Hock (1991) in an essay discusses the stupas at Ratnagiri; the images and texts. She considers the hundreds of monolithic stupas and dharanis found at the site as perfect evidence for the further understanding of *tantric* Buddhism of Ratngiri. She distinguishes two phases of *tantric* Buddhism to clarify the term. The first based on the caryā and kriyā tantras can be called Mantrayāna. The second, the Vajrayāna phase, uses yoga and anuttarayoga tantras. She believes that site of Ratnagiri was predominantly Matryāna given the number of stupas since this sect encouraged the maintenance and worship of stupas. Moreover she claims that the sculptural niches etched on the stupas may have served as meditational devices, akin to those encountered in *tantric* Buddhism(ibid: 323-325). On the basis of 16 images of the Buddha, she discerns that since these depictions are mentioned in tantra Kriya text, the site, though riddled with elements of Mahayana Buddhism, was largely Tantric in nature in the 5th-6th centuries CE. The argument is based on depictions of Manjusri and Avolokiteshvara, which are considered by Hock as purely Tantric in nature, since they find mention in Kriyatantra Manjusrimulakalpa.

However, Linrothe cites the Tibetan translation of a Mahayana sutra and posits that such depictions were not necessarily Tantric in nature. Furthermore, he points out that if only a fraction of the images of the Buddha display Tantric elements, then the site cannot be labeled as Tantric. Additionally, Hock puts too much emphasis on the appearance and content of Dharani inscriptions, often seen as carrying mystical messages. The assumption that the texts and the material evidence will reflect the mirror image of each other is often wrong and in this case difficult to prove. The practice of dedicating stupas flourished long before the tantric sect of Buddhism came into being and the sculptural niches in stupas deities reflect both Mahayana and Tantric affiliations.

Schopen (1997), like Linrothe, does not agree with the notion that these inscriptions are distinctively Tantric in origin. He points out that the content of these inscriptions address the Mahayana concerns of constructing Chaityas, earning merit, death and problems of life, similar to what early Mahayana canonical texts also discuss. This argument is enriched by the constant interplay between texts, images and inscriptions. As a result, it becomes clear that it is very difficult to argue for sharply defined stages in the growth of esoteric Buddhism. Rather the above arguments posit a good possibility of overlaps, which, in the case of Ratnagiri, has not really been stressed upon enough. The work on Ratnagiri, though extensive, is primarily concerned with the evolution and transition of visual imagery. They are repeatedly taken out of their context. For example, in the case of the depiction of Heruka on funerary stupas, there is no effort to explain why they are funerary. Why is the depiction so important in connection to other structures? Also, no attempt has been make to locate the deities according to the chronological phases used by Linrothe. Did those images that were a part of the first stage disappear or were the physical attributes changed?

A summary of the findings mentioned in the reports of Ratnagiri has been drawn up by Bandopadhyay (2004: 65) in his work, where he attempts to artistically appraise the sculptures from Ratnagiri. He begins by observing the lack of sculptures from the site that can be dated to the 6^{th}-7^{th} centuries CE. Sculptural art blossomed later at Ratnagiri and was marked by depictions that were more earth-bound and heavy. Sculptures belonging to the 9^{th} century CE are found in large numbers, which indicate according to

the author not only that the site became a flourishing Vajrayana site, but also that the facial features of the sculptures underwent a change, heralding the influence of the Eastern School. The figures become more earth-bound, sensuous, heavy and rounded. The 11th century, according to Bandopadhyay, is marred by heaviness in form and an overemphasis on details. "The artistic genius fails to produce sculptures of excellent quality," he reports.

On the other hand, Chauley's (2004) work deals with the religion, art, architecture, excavation and conservation of monuments of Orissa. It contains seven chapters that deal Buddhism, Jainism, Brahmanical Hinduism in Orissa and discusses the excavation of various sites in the light of this heritage. Stupas, temples and cave architecture are approached with questions regarding styles of representation and iconography. The expression of art through various mediums, including ivory work, paintings and wood carvings, is outlined. However, the chapter discussing Buddhism and sites like Ratnagiri mainly focuses on the discovery of stupas, chaityas and monasteries through excavations. The discussion is a repetition of the stray references from the texts and findings mentioned in the excavation report of these sites.

It is quite clear from the survey of above literature that the religious nature of a site overshadows the possibility of asking any other kind of question. The texts in many cases are still believed to be the repositories of the only knowledge that there can be.

1.5 Recent Archaeological and Art Historical Perspectives on Buddhism

Attempts at understanding Buddhism is defined by the evolution and development of various disciplines, which include archaeology, art history, history and religious studies. Beginning with purely antiquarian interests that triggered the pursuit of ruins by colonial officials and individuals in early nineteenth century, Buddhism gradually became the focal point of academic study. It was marked by a fixation on locating ancient sites mentioned in travel accounts of Buddhist pilgrims as well as in texts. Stupas, coins and inscriptions were studied vigorously to etch a clearer picture of the political history of the subcontinent as well as the patronage aspect of the Buddhist monuments and establishments. The archaeology of Buddhist monuments was also marked by an attempt

to identify iconographic representations on these monuments with narrative episodes from the text. In textual studies, the narrative sculptures of Buddhist stupas have continued to be cited as supporting evidence while attempting to temporally and spatially locate Buddhist narrative texts (Hawkes and Shimada 2009: xxii). However, there is growing realization that these frameworks fail to answer questions that require going beyond just corroboratory work. In the field of archaeology, research questions now focus on wider archaeological and geographical issues regarding these sites. Settlement patterns, inter-site relationships, attempts at trying to discover the processes of development of these sites and situating monuments like the stupa within them, are themes that are a quite distinct from the earlier preoccupation of ascribing religious affiliations to the sites. The studies discussed below are some of those that deal with new questions and methodologies. These have been included to emphasize the transition that the work on and regarding Buddhism has experienced in terms of both art history as well as archaeology, all of which is yet to be developed for the site of Ratnagiri.

Gregory Schopen (1997), attempted to affect a shift from the earlier focus on scholastic works by monastic elites. In order to provide recognition to the importance of the materiality of "popular" practice, Schopen begins by enumerating the general assertion advanced by a host of scholars including J. W. Jong, Longhurst and Rhys Davids, and proceeds to dismantle their claims on the basis of archaeological and epigraphic evidence. He argues that there is a propensity amongst most scholars to focus on explanations and interpretations which are based on texts written by the monastic elite. This results in the privileging of texts over the actuality of everyday practice (ibid: 1-3). He is also concerned that in the past too many scholars have assumed that the idealized monastic life described in the sacred texts was similar in nature to how Buddhists historically associated with their world and practiced their faith. This dichotomy is brought forth again and again through a host of examples. He (ibid: 5) cites, for example, Longhurst's discovery of a large number of lead coins and a lump of lead ore and earthen ware for the manufacturing of these coins in the cell of a monastery in Nagarjunakonda. According to Schopen, Longhurst simply assumed that the monks made coins. However, Schopen quite rightly points out that in this period the power to mint coins was primarily vested in the hands of the state or with guilds of traders. The evidence of such an activity

in a monastery therefore perhaps indicates an involvement in trading and commercial activity. This presents a different picture of the character of "historical Buddhist monasticism". He discusses how filial piety became an important part of Buddhist monasticism and that the monks had virtually no role to play in the ritual life of the laity. While the monks participated in the 'cult of the stupa', the laity were the exclusive or primary donors of images or monastic buildings.

Further, Schopen (ibid: 120-122) focuses on the interplay of textual and archaeological records to discuss mortuary patterns. Pertinent is the discussion on the nature and context of the Dharini inscribed "votive" stupas. He points out that the inscribed compositions are specific *dharanis* taken from a specific group of texts and that they are ad hoc in nature. The text clearly states their reason for being inscribed in the stupas. The content reflects a continual preoccupation with problems of death and rebirth. Moreover he cites the archaeological evidence provided by Mitra on Ratnagiri to stress the funerary association of the *dharanis* as mentioned in the text. He cites Mitra's evidence of bone deposits being found from stupas 3, 4, 23, 24, 25 and 115 to further focus on the archaeological context of these findings.

This discussion provides a more complicated picture behind the reasons and nature of the content of these *dharanis.* The scholars dealing with Buddhism tend to see the act of inscribing the stupas with *dharanis* and their content as Tantric. In the case of Ratnagiri, these types of stupas are often cited to stress upon the Tantric character of the site. Schopen's work thus moves beyond the attempts at seeing these types of stupas as some kind of an object endowed with magical powers. Rather, he tries to cogently combine both texts and archaeological records to arrive at an alternate hypothesis.

Discussing the generalisations which have been made about Buddhism and its archaeology, Connigham (1995, 2001: 63) points to the extreme focus on textual reading in the discourses on the Buddha and his followers, often to the detriment of archaeology. Owing to practices of early archaeology in Asia in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, he points out that "Buddhist research is dominated by textually-based scholars, or by historians of art or architecture, relegating archaeologists to a solitary role of

primary producer, not venturing further than the description of excavated remains" (Connigham 2001: 65). He ventures into a detailed discussion on the various aspects of the research done on Buddhism and lists a number of lacunae. He points out how there is no contemporary evidence of the individual known as the *Buddha*, and that even his image has no historical relevance as the first examples were produced centuries after his death (ibid: 87). Further, early Buddhists were not distinguishable from other local traditions; in this context, he cites the examples of Buddhist architecture and monuments like stupa which he argues has pre-Buddha antecedents. Therefore, the categories of what is Buddhist and what is the 'other' are, according to him, easy to determine perhaps in texts but not so archaeologically. Moreover the presupposition that donations were made by only Buddhist followers according to him distorts the picture of how Buddhism evolved and flourished over time. He (ibid: 88) further points out how a number of issues that have yet to be discussed, including the Buddhist diet, the role of women in Buddhism or even the archaeology of Buddhist artefacts .

Coningham (1995) has also described the early history of Buddhism in Sri Lanka by discussing two Pali chronicles, the *Dipavamsa* and the *Mahavamsa*. Both texts trace the introduction of Buddhism in Sri Lanka with Emperor Asoka sending his daughter and son to his ally Devanampiya Tissa. This narration, according to Coningham, gives the impression of Buddhism being immediately accepted as the state religion. The chronicles moreover portray the earliest kings of Anuradhapur as the sole patrons of early Buddhism. However, this evidence is not supported by the archaeological evidence, in this case the Buddhist dwelling caves amounting to over a thousand in number. The dedicatory inscriptions mention patrons bearing high royal titles, who are not included in the above mentioned chronicles. Coningham (ibid: 231) suggests that this silence can be read as an attempt by the monks to construct a canonical tradition that maintains the status quo of giving prime importance to only the successful kings of Anuradhapur. Thus, according to him, the mention of other patrons is omitted because when these chronicles were composed, in the 5th century CE, the Anuradhapura kingdom had successfully taken over the other kingdoms in Sri Lanka. Buddhism offered a harsh ascetic life and miraculous powers. More importantly, it provided a strong organization with links all over the subcontinent and an imperial linkage in the form of Asoka's children. This

enabled the establishment of a single royal succession in lieu of patronage to the sangha. This interdependency according to Coningham (ibid: 222) led to the "creation of a founding myth forever cementing the interest of the legitimate rulers with the survival and patronage of Buddhism."

Fogelin (2003) has assessed the architectural plans of thirteen stupa[4] complexes, which were examined to provide an understanding of the nature of ritual presentation in two forms of architecture: one focuses on the Buddhist laity and the other relates to the hegemony of monks (ibid:129). His study stresses the possibility that different groups of followers have different attitudes towards worship as well as how communities should be perpetuated. This would result in the manipulation of space and rituals, influenced by the underlying tensions between the laity's endeavors to perpetuate a direct form of worship of Buddha through the relics and the monks' need to assert their privileged rights of association with Buddha.

A detailed study undertaken by Fogelin (2006) is focused on the archaeological investigations of the Thotlakonda monastery, an early Buddhist monastery located on the eastern coast of India in Andhra Pradesh. The monastery's ruins were excavated between 1987 and 1991 by the Andhra Pradesh Department of Archaeology and Museum. Fogelin conducted an archaeological survey of the region around Thotlakonda over several months between November 2000 and March 2002. The initial chapters of his work summarize the early historic period in the Indian subcontinent and contemporary Buddhism, while simultaneously discussing the theoretical underpinnings and use of post-processual archaeological theory in the analysis of the result. Beginning with an introduction to the method employed in his archaeological survey, Fogelin goes on to document and discuss his survey of the monastery and the surrounding landscape. His findings include a stupa, considerable numbers of which are thought to be mortuary cairns, extensive ceramic scatters including sherds from large jars found in the refectory area and the lay settlement. The analysis of the architectural layout is undertaken to investigate the monastery's ritual function and to explore how the monks and laity

[4]The location of these stupas are Dharmarajika. (Taxila) , Bharut , Sanchi, Nasik, Ajanta, Kanheri, Sivaneri, Kondane, Karla, Bhaja and Bedsa (Fogelin 2003: 130).

interacted. Further, he attempts to analyze the mortuary and sacred landscape of the surroundings. The concluding chapter recommends that in order to understand the practice of religion in the past, an archaeological study has to be conducted to reveal the traces left by ritual, which points towards the problem of how archaeologists traditionally assumed that rituals were understood best in light of religious doctrines. How then do archaeologists explore the various dimensions of religion? Fogelin's work at Thotlakonda uncovers the tension between the desired isolation of the monastery and the shared commitment with the neighbor in the early historic period, with a special emphasis on the possibility of how the religious architectural design and the use of landscape helped to shape these relationships. On the basis of historical accounts, religious documents and inscriptions, as well as results of his systematic archaeological survey, Fogelin strives for a more complex understanding of the ritual and material workings of early Buddhism in this region and in the process shows how archaeology can contribute to our understanding of religious practice.

Shaw's (2007) work includes the results and conclusions drawn from a combination of multi stage archaeological survey, art and architectural history and debates generated within religious studies and ancient Indian history (ibid: 20). The survey was carried out with Sanchi at the center, and the sites of Satdhara, Morel Khurd, Andher and Sonari[5] as its peripheral boundaries to Sanchi. The work attempts at situating the Buddhist complex of Sanchi within a broader archaeological setting. The principal aim being is to situate the monuments at Sanchi within their wider cultural and archaeological landscape in order to examine the relationship between the spread of new religions, urbanization, state formation and agrarian change during the early centuries CE. Her research seeks to move beyond the tendency to focus on the iconographical study of important religious sites to their wider archaeological or cultural settings. The introduction points to the lacunae in Indian archaeology, that which has failed to recognize the recent theoretical shifts that attempts to see such sites in terms of topography, local settlement patterns. Shaw has further pointed out that how a lack of synchronization between archaeological research

[5] Documented for the first time in Alexander Cunningham's monograph "The Bhilsa Topes"

and textual analysis has resulted in a static model of understanding of Buddhist history (ibid: 18).

The research questions in themselves are an indication of the scholar's attempt to move beyond the stereotypical study of stupas, monasteries, sculpture and epigraphy. Shaw (ibid: 20) seeks to understand the processes of continuities, transitions and transformation of a "multilayered ritual landscape". Investigating the political, social and economic motivations behind such processes, she also traces how and when the monasteries permeated the social fabric of central India, which not only lead to a deeper social embeddedness, consciousness but also resulted in trade exchange network setups being established with the local population. One of the primary arguments of Shaw's work is that sites do not exist in isolation from each other, but they form integrated components of a series of archaeological complexes.

Buddhist Stupas in South Asia: recent archaeological, art-historical, and historical perspectives edited by Jason Hawkes and Akira Shimada traces the journey of Buddhist stupas from having been mere objects of interest for the adventurous surveyors and curious antiquarians to increasingly becoming the center piece of academic interest (Hawkes and Shimada 2009:xxii). This anthology of articles narrates the 'discovery' of stupas in colonial period by travelers, Indologists, Archaeologists and Ethnographers. Each work earns marks a departure from the existing academic approaches to stupas and Buddhism and explore new and formerly unconsidered questions of the past.

Ray (2009: 4) examines the discovery and early study of Buddhists stupas, focusing on the work of Alexander Cunningham. In the process she narrates the tale of the creation of modern Buddhist identity bolstered by the translation of ancient texts, setting forth the parameters for any future study on Buddha and Buddhists stupas. Howes (2009: 20-35) goes on to explore another vital aspect of the history of the study of stupas. She describes the fate of five sculptures at Amravati, through records, manuscripts, drawings and photographs gathered during the nineteenth century. Based on their use by different individuals and institutions, she manages to piece together the effect that colonial investigation had on Amravati that led to the dismantling of these sculptures, providing a

valuable insight into the factors that shaped and defined the ways in which stupas have been studied since the colonial period and compelling us to understand the methods and sources through which the extant material has reached our hands.

Willis (2009: 43) in the first chapter discusses the significance and relevance of Stupas. "When the relics are seen, the Buddha is seen". Before the practice of image making and worshipping became acceptable and widespread, the presence of Buddha was understood through the shrines i.e, particularly in terms of the stupa usually containing a relic. Willis shows how the gradual spread of Buddhism in time was accompanied by a movement of relics, resulting in the construction of stupas. Taking this discussion further, Rotman (2009: 51-62) examines texts, specifically the various versions of *Toyika,* to understand how these relic shrines were created and venerated in the early historic period. He has reconstructed the aspects that marked and defined a Buddhists site as sacred, pointing out that the sacredness of the relic lends to the place where it was enshrined with an equal measures of sacral importance. The significance of these sites was then marked by the fact that the laity could earn merit by visiting sites which were associated with these shrines. Suggesting further how this argument of sacral association was then furthered for places associated with past Buddhas, leading a wider geographical expansion of Buddhism.

Brown (ibid: 80) concentrated on the use of representations of natural forms on two of the earliest stupas: Stupa I at Sanchi and the Bharhut stupa. He has pointed out how the replication of naturalistic forms and their location on the stupas have a great imagery impact or effect on the person who sees it. He has argued that the representation of perfected patterns of plants creates a perfected space which can in turn be a place of idealized dharma. Thus, rather than being just a ritual or a religious entity the stupa could thus function within the society as a whole.

Behrendt (2009: 83-93) has examined the sculptural relief from Gandhara. Moving away from the conventional methods of trying to decode the depictions with the aid of texts; he tries to create a sequence of the depictions that the visitors would have 'read'. Even though the entire research is yet to come forth, it is a significant step towards providing

new insight into the development and the appearance of Buddha images as icons in the Gandhara region.

Decaroli (2009: 94-113) examines the ideas surrounding the Nagas in literature and their mention in inscriptions and sculptures from the Amravati Stupa. He has suggested that the inclusion of Nagas in inscriptions and sculptures was a conscious decision on the part the Buddhist institutions to gain social approval. He convincingly manages to show how the symbolic meaning of the Nagas was a vital and dynamic component to religious and social life in early South Asia. He posits the idea that a similar dynamic may have also been true for other religious institutions and even the ruling dynasty itself.

On the basis of extensive field survey and an active reading of the site, Julia Shaw (2009: 114- 145) discusses the ritual and social landscape of Sanchi. On the basis of her observation of the different types of monastic residences, she not only challenges the notions of the process of the domestication of the sangha, but. But also focuses on the hilltop location of these monasteries to discuss on pertinent questions like such as the security concerns of monasteries and, the relationship between the Buddhist monastic community and pre-existent religious cults in the area. She furthermore discredits that the marginalization of the notion that the local cult of the Nagas suffered marginalization in the process of being assimilated. She argues that as protectors of subterranean and sub-aquatic treasure they were appropriated within the religion as they supported the agrarian production and water harvesting as instruments of lay patronage (ibid: 138-139). She rather stresses the positive aspect of this process that led to the elevation of the cult. Her research quite clearly strives to challenge a host of assumptions that the reading of texts have yielded.

Hawkes (2009: 148-174) has focused on the Buddhists stupa site of Bharhut. He looks at the landscape of Bharhut and points out the possibilities of identifying the broad social, political, and economic processes that were operating in the Bharhut area and how they changed over time through a consideration of archaeological sites, dated to the later centuries BCE, throughout the region. He further examines how the site of Bharhut was

related to these wider sacred and secular spheres, and reveals some of the ways in which the Buddhist community at Bharhut was related to those processes.

Liu (2009: xxxvii) has examined the parallel developments of Buddhist ideology, stupas or relic worship, and trading activities in Kushana India. In order to suggest some connections between theological developments, changes in Buddhist institutions, and the Buddhist sangha's relationship with its laity, Liu examines important Buddhist text, namely the *Milindapanha*, the *Buddhacharita*, Saundarananda, the *Mahavastu* and, the *Sukhavativya* (ibid: 177). In the process, Liu traces the transformation of Buddhists ideology from having originally addressed to renouncers to one that could encompass the laity as well. By examining these texts as well as archaeological evidence, Liu traces the growth of Indo-China trade between the Indian subcontinent and China, in the light of the growing trend of donating stupas or precious objects to gain merit. Liu argues that this link between Buddhist ritual practices and trade in luxury goods shaped the relationship between the Buddhist monasteries and laity. The resultant change in ideology brought out new facets in the relationships between the Buddhist monasteries, laity and the sovereigns (ibid: 189-191).

James Heitzman (2009: 192) has traced some of the salient socio-spatial features of second urbanization and the ways in which Buddhist monumental sites. In particular, he emphasizes on the features of Buddhist landscape on the basis of archaeological and textual evidence. Looking at the tripartite development of Buddhists sites, inter-city trade and emerging social classes, he ventures to identify the existence of settlement site ranking and site specific specializations that appear to have been closely related to Buddhist monastic institutions (ibid : xxxviii). Shimada (2009: 216) has focused on Amravati and Dhanyakata and the social relation between the Buddhist monastic institution and urban centres during the early historic period. Shimada concludes that Buddhism had the power to break the boundary of the brahmanical value- system and tradition because of both its 'outside' and institutional nature. This 'outside' nature thus helped not only in the religious pursuits but also allowed the formation of social linkages with urban components that the Brahmanical tradition was not able to or would not allow. Thus he challenges the traditional presupposition that the monastic space was a passive

area exclusively meant for religious pursuit. Shimada however through this work suggests that the monasteries around cities such as Amravati acted as spaces of accommodation for outcast social groups as well as provided crucial help for organizing activities like funerary and, commercial activities that were considered impure.

Walters (2009: 258) has discussed the biographical tradition in ancient Buddhism. He examines the three avadāna texts compiled during the post- Ashokan period and argued that they showed the soteriological path to attaining nirvāṇa. Since the stupas were the embodiment of the Buddha, their construction, embellishment and worship became a part of the Buddha's biography and therefore lead to the path of salvation. Walters has successfully traced the construction of stupas which involved donation and which became a joint endeavor involving a plethora of human agencies. He has pointed out that the festivals for constructing, improving and worshipping a stupa were historical situations in which texts, inscriptions and carving came together. The texts provided the ideological basis of such festivities that legitimized the participation by the donors and thereby furnishing directions and specifications that assure future bliss According to the model within which he argues all these aspects the most powerful element was the authorization of the said construction by the imperial kingship and in the process was able to explain why and how numerous stupas were constructed in the post- Ashokan period.

Becker (2009: 284) provides an eyewitness account of how the past is manipulated to create modern Buddhist identities. In January 2006, the site of Amaravati and the small town surrounding it hosted the Dalai Lama's thirteenth Kalachakra Initiation. The site, she recounts, became 'active' by being visually reanimated for the ritual. The remains of the stupa were reused, together with a host of new imagery, in order to create a new sense of sacredness at the site. She discusses the dilemmas of trying to promote tourism at the ancient Buddhist sites of Andhra Pradesh particularly by the Archaeological Survey India. The need to keep the ruined quality of the site and at the same time make the pile of dirt and bricks into something worth visiting has plagued the need to promote the site. A need to make sure visitors "enter an abundance of new imagery that quotes startlingly diverse array of visual imagery" (ibid: 284). This need to create new imagery perhaps stemmed from the fact that the older monuments often do not offer much to look at. Thus,

Becker traces the transformation of the site where the stupa and its decorations are in a perpetual flux changing according to the needs of tourism, devotees and patrons.

Discussing this phenomenon further, Kim (2009: 289-980) focuses on the manner in which the modern identity of Buddhism is established and legitimized. Kim talks about the new landmarks that are changing the landscape of many ancient Buddhist sites in India. The two ways in which this is being achieved is through construction of what Kim calls as 'collage' stupas, which are modern stupas built at ancient sites that are made from or contains ancient remains from the actual site, or and the construction of Peace Pagodas or 'Shanti Stupas' throughout India by the Japanese Nipponzan Myohoji religious group. Kim argues that these new breed of stupas and the phenomena around them reflect the aspiration for something more tangible and, less fossilized in time as is the case with archaeological sites and museums.

In an unpublished thesis by Dhammananda titled *"Nalanda: Changing patterns of a Buddhist monastic centre"* the nature of the Nalanda as a monastery cum ritual and learning centre is explored. It focuses on the economic base of the monasteries as well traces the transitions in the religious ideologies spanning over about eight hundred years. This research explores the multiple roles of Nalanda moving beyond its importance as merely a centre of education and learning. The multitude of roles played by monks, their interaction with the laity and gradual changes in the belief system incorporated in various structures are explored.

The studies on Buddhism began with a defensive division between the text and other sources on history, including archaeology, epigraphy and numismatics. The above mentioned scholarly works however indicate that this schism has ended. Texts and archaeology are no longer divided into two separate groups, unable to have a dialogue between them. The research questions have thrown up numerous possibilities of looking at some new aspects of Buddhism. For example, the need to carry out inter-site studies and to focus on everyday things likes food habits. At the same time, these studies make powerful remarks about how in the name of tourism the identities of the archaeological sites are reconstructed and calibrated.

1.6 Conclusion

"Indefinable as religion is, it not only does not function within a logical framework but is also constructed and concerned with essential concerns of human conditions."

(Insoll 2004: 8)

Traditionally most archaeological studies of historical periods in South Asia have heavily relied upon literary sources. For example, a great deal of archaeological research has attempted to identify cities or monuments mentioned in epics, the Pali canon or the chronicle of Faxian and Xuanzang. In the last two decades, the archaeology of religion has witnessed the development of two approaches. The first is an outgrowth of processual archaeology, taking seriously the idea that past religions could be investigated through the construction of interpretative methodologies for identification of the material remains of religious practice. The second focuses on more theoretical issues regarding religion, choosing to enlist assistance from other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology and history, for a better understanding of what can be constructed as religion and its archaeological implications (Fogelin 2006: 2).

Earlier, the study of Buddhism was based on texts, understood only through its scriptures. Implicit in such endeavors was the notion that real Buddhism is textual Buddhism, and that texts are the repository of the true religion. The works included on Buddhism in Orissa reflect a stagnancy and preoccupation with architecture and sculptures. In view of such a scenario, this study will attempt to follow the new path created by a host of scholars who have broken the barriers of preconceived notions regarding Buddhism based on texts. The objective here is to ask, as well as in some cases to attempt to answer several related to the sites of Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri.

Chapter Two will begin with an analysis of the excavation reports of the above mentioned sites. The focus here is to try and locate the prime motivators that led to the excavation and the relationship between the aims, objectives and methodology employed by the excavators and the generation of information from such endeavours. Moving on

from the critique of the reports, the study will further will attempt to view the sites in relationship to each in terms of the structures, architectural styles and so forth.

Chapter Three will begin with a discussion on how conservation of ancient monuments and artefacts has evolved globally. Issues regarding conservation techniques, measures required to encourage the process of conservations and so forth will presented. The situation of conservation in India is examined by taking up the example of Amravati and Sanchi to delve into the motivations and intentions behind colonial policies. Tracing this heritage further in the present day policies, issues which will be scrutinized are the rapid disappearance of sites due to ignorance of their importance etc. The example of Ratnagiri will be taken up to demonstrate the effects of the lack of proper conservation methods, local participation and protection.

Chapter Four, the concluding chapter will raise the themes and issues discussed in the previous chapters. Highlighting the major finds of the study as well as pointing out the areas where the possibility of further research can be seen.

Chapter Two

Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri

This chapter focuses on an in-depth discussion of the findings of the excavation reports of the three sites i.e. Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri. The discussion is on issues of the growth of the sites, interaction of structures with each other, access to a particular area, patronage and inter-site relationship. It is based on the information garnered from the reports as well as is based on the observations derived from onsite visits.

The presence of Buddhism in Orissa is attested by the numerous sites, antiquities, monuments inscriptions that have been discovered. The early years of Buddhism in Orissa are shrouded in mystery. Lord Buddha never visited Orissa. However the first disciples Tapassu and Bhallika who are said to be merchant brothers from Ukkala/Utkala, find mention in the second section of Vinaya [1] Pitaka .

Moreover text like *Buddhavamsa* and *Danthavamsa* speak of early existence of early Buddhism in Orissa. "They narrate the story of how the tooth relic of Lord Buddha was received by the king of Kalinga, who constructed a chaitya to house it in his capital Dantapura" (Misra 1999: 130). The *Kalingabodhi Jataka*[2] also speaks of the existence of early Buddhism in Orissa (Cowell 1901: 146-48). The most 'concrete' evidence that Buddhism was here to stay in Orissa can be the two rock edicts that attest to the 'change of heart' that king Asoka had after the bloody Kalinga war debacle. The extensive

[1] The *Vinaya Pitaka* is the first divison of the Tripitaka, and the textual framework upon which the monastic life is built. The *Vinaya* contains the code of rules by which monks and nuns are to conduct themselves individually, as well as the rules and procedures that support the harmonious functioning of the community as a whole.

[2] The *Jatakas* refer to the literature concerning the previous births of the Buddha. In Thervada Buddhism, the *Jatakas* are a textual division of the Pali canon, included in the *Khuddaka Nikaya* of the *Sutta Pitaka*.

missionary work done by king Asoka in the subcontinent gave impetus to the growth of the faith. Although literary evidence in reference to Asoka's missionary activities in Orissa are scanty there are some remnants of his monuments which bear ample witness to such activities, including his rock edicts at Dhauli and Jaguda, a pillar at Bhuwaneswar. During the Asokan period Hinayana form of Buddhism was popular. This is attested by the presence of stupas and chaityas in Dantapura, Tosali, and Hiruma. Dantapura lost its prominence when the tooth relic was transferred to Ceylon (Sahu 1958: 47). Pushpagiri instead now began commanding patronage. From an inscription of the Ikshavaku king Sri Virapurushadutta of 3rd Century C.E. found in Nagarjunakonda, we get reference to a mahavihara by the name of Pushpagiri. The name again gets mentioned in the iternary of the Chinese pilgrim Xuanzang who visited Odra in A.D 639, the *Pushpagiri* Mahavihara termed by him as peu-so-p-ki-li in the south east of the country. The people according to him were indefatigable student and many were Buddhist (Watters 1988: 193-194). However the exact location of this mahavihara is yet to be determined. The three sites Udayagiri, Lalitgiri and Ratnagiri have been investigated to throw some light on this question. One proposition that is currently being offered is that these three together formed the mahavhihara, rather than there being a single site. The conquest of Orissa by the Buddhist emperor Harsha in circa 643 C.E, gave impetus to the growth of Buddhism The Udayagiri and Lalitgiri hills in the Cuttack district became flourishing seats of the "great vehicle" in the 7th and 8th c C.E."The people of Udyana held Buddhism in esteem and were reverential believers in the Mahayana. Along the two sides of the Su-p'o-fa-su-tu river there had formerly been 1400 monasteries but many of these were now in ruins, and once there were 18000 brethrens but these had gradually decreased until only a few remained" (Watters 1988: 226). This statement even if an exaggeration in terms of numbers stated gives us a clue to the fortunes of Mahayana Buddhism in Orissa. Shailodbhav kings who ruled parts of Orissa in the sixth and seventh centuries C.E. were pro-brahmanic (Moharana 2001: 57) and Taranatha leaves the impression that in their time the Buddhist monks in Orissa declined in number. Mahayana enjoyed the zenith of its career in Orissa under the patronage of the Bhauma- Kara kings. The Bhauma- Kara dynasty's rule commenced in the 8th century and lasted for more than 200 years with royal patronage being heavy during the first hundred years i.e. during the reign of the

rulers i.e. Kṣmaṅkaradeva, Śivakaradeva and Śubhakara II. "The Bhauma kings bore titles of Paramopasaka, Paramatathagata and Paramasaugata signaling their Buddhist affiliations clearly" (Panigrahi 1981: 307). These rulers actively participated in the furtherance of the faith. They not only constructed monasteries and other Buddhist structures, but granted villages for the maintenance of the monks and repairs of buildings. Two charters of Shivakaradeva III of this dynasty, found at Talcher, record the grant of two villages to meet the requirements of the temple of Buddha in the Jayashrama-vihara (Misra 1934: 40-51). During this period there were great Buddhist scholars like Luipa and Kahnupa etc. However the fortunes of Mahayana did not last for long. It witnessed schism in the form of division into Mantrayana and Paramitayana Buddhism. Mantrayana later on went on to develop as Tantric or Vajrayana cult. Further more Orissa was in texts is credited with being the birth place of Kalachakra tantra. Gos lo-tsa-ba gZon –nu-dpal in his Deb –ther snon-po(Blue Annals 1476-78), "stated that Acharya Tsi-lu-pa(cheluka) had read it in the Vihara of Ratnagiri" (Roerich 1953: 755).

The Sōmavaṁsīs driven out of Dakshina Koshala by the Kalachuris settled in Bolangir district with their capital at Suvarnapur and established matrimonial relationship with the Bhaum-Karas and later on usurped the throne. The Soma dynasty figured on the political scene of Orissa for more than 200 years and did play an important role in unifying the several regions with distinct cultures and languages. Before the rule of the dynasty was thoroughly established in Orissa, the Sambalpur-Sonepur region was a different region called dakshina –kosala over which it originally ruled. The kingdom of the Bhauma-Karas comprising the present districts of Cuttack, Puri, Balasore, Keonjhar, Dhenkanal and Baud Phulbani was known as Tosali or Utkala and the southern part of the present Ganjam district was included in the kingdom of Kalinga. All these regions were brought together under one centre during the rule of the Sōmavaṁsī and since then the unified country was known as Orissa. It is they who merged the upper Mahanadi valley with the Utkala kingdom of the Bhauma-Karas and latter added to it the southern portion of the Kalinga country by conquest and thus contributed to the unification of Orissa.

The epigraphic records of that period refer to diverse creeds and points to a tolerant policy of the Sōmavaṁsīs kings. The kings were staunch supporters of Saivism, but they

held other faiths like Vaishnavism, Saktism, Buddhism and Jainism also in high regard. Among the Sōmavaṁsī king Balarjuna Mahasivagupta , the last great ruler of the early branch of this dynasty was a great patron of Buddhism though he was a Saivite by belief. The Sirpur stone inscription praises the lotus feet of the Sugata and records the construction of a monastery by a bhikshu Anada Prabha during his reign as well as the establishment of a **sattara** for monks residing in the monastery (Sarma 1983: 76). The faith slowly experienced decline with dynastic changes and the invasions took its toll on the patronage. However the culmination of different strands of Buddhism with Hinduism in some senses can be witnessed in the cult of Jaganath, under which Lord Buddha was accepted as the ninth incarnation of Visnu. Thus it becomes quite clear that the patronage received from the Bhauma-Karas and Sōmavaṁsī proved to be crucial for the effluence and growth of a number of Buddhist monastic complexes in Orissa. This whole account however lacked archaeological evidence.

Though the Buddhists sculptures were widely noticed, their contexts hardly received any attention, with the result that knowledge about the Buddhist edifices in Orissa was scanty till 1958. However subsequently with the excavation of the sites of Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitgiri, evidence for flourishing Buddhist centres in the region of Jajpur was attested to. This chapter begins with an analysis of the excavation reports of the three Buddhist sites in Orissa namely Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri II. The discussion would involve the excavations and the reports, the information generated from them and the conclusions that can be drawn from them. Some of the issues that will be highlighted are the need inter-site studies, patronage, location and visibility.

2.1 Ratnagiri

Ratnagiri, (latitude 20°38´ north, longitude 86°20´ east) (fig 2.1) owes its name to the name of a hillock situated between the Brahmani and the Birupa rivers where a small stream kelua, flows nearby. The hillock stands on the eastern bank of Kelua and has almost a flat top.

“In 1965, the year of Buddha Jayanti celebration, A. Gosh, the then Director General of Archaeology in India, decided that a few sites connected with Buddhism should be

excavated" (Mitra1981: 2). It was this statement that led Debala Mitra to excavate Ratnagiri She clearly states that the objective of undertaking the excavation was to find out "the nature of the remains contained within the mounds at Ratnagiri and also shed light on the unknown chapter of the architectural pursuits of Buddhism in Orissa" (Mitra 1981: 2). The yearly excavation spanned over four successive field –seasons .The summary of the results of the yearly excavations as well as the restoration work done on certain structures find mention in the Indian Archaeology – A Review (IAR 1957-58: 38-41, IAR 1958-59:33-36, IAR 1959-60: 38-39, IAR 1960-61:28-30, IAR 1961-62: 119, IAR 1962-63: 82, IAR 1963-64: 104). The report published in 1981 and 1983 in two volumes is an exhaustive one.

Figure 2.2 The site map of Ratnagiri (Courtesy Google Maps)

Figure 2.3 The site of Ratnagiri

Figure 2.3 The site of Ratnagiri

2.1. Topography and Orientation

The two rivers Brahmani and Birupa with their alluvial deposits, contributed greatly to the fertility of the land surrounding the hill but at the same time they are responsible for devastating flood. Consequently to counter this problem the major part of the habitation of the present village of Ratnagiri has come up on the southern and contiguous portions of the eastern and western slopes of the hill above the flood area (Mitra 1981:5). The mounds containing the ruins are all on the uneven top of the rugged hill. The southern half of the top of the Ratnagiri hill was, before excavation, covered with mounds, which with the exception of the one near the northernmost part of the hill was continuous. The circular mound situated near the south end of the site yielded the main stupa and one more mound was noticed to north of this area which was locally noticed as Rani – pukhuri. Owing to its situation on the highest part of the hill the stupa –mound looked higher than the Rani-pukhuri mound. From the stupa-mound the shapeless mound had a downward slope, first gentle and then sharp, till it reached the Ranipukhuri mound. On this mass, left mostly unexcavated and near its western end is located the ancient Mahakala temple made of stone; the enshrined two armed Buddhist image of Mahakala has been confounded with a Brahmanical deity and is under regular worship. To the north east of this temple is a grove of banyan trees and in this grove lay some images. The mound to the south of the stupa –mound was limited in extent and had a gentle downward slope towards the south. The mounds to the north of the Rani-pukhuri mound were insignificant and mostly reduced to about 90 cm. in height (ibid: 7-9).

2.1.2 Location and Visibility

Where a building is situated – at the top of a hill, against a hill, on level ground, by a river, lake– determines whether is the building is exposed, sheltered, dominating the landscape or restricted from vision. A building set at the top of a hill is in an exposed, prominent position and this confers on it a significance which its size may not necessarily command. This leads to the question of whether the building had been designed to take advantage of a particular view or turn back on some eyesore. The top of the hill which affords a panoramic view of the surroundings may have been chosen for the Buddhist

establishment on account of its isolated eminence, which could simultaneously attract the attention of the people from the countryside and ensure seclusion for the serene and calm atmosphere necessary for the monastic life, meditation and study.

"At the back of the selection of the site might have worked several factors like the proximity to the city of Jajpur which was the seat of power for a long period, surrounding navigable rivers, alluvial production all around and locations of other Buddhist establishments nearby. Added to these factors was the natural elevation of the site afforded protection against probable floods" (ibid: 5). The location of the site is in keeping with needs of the monks, being near a water body and suitably secluded. The construction of the stupa at the highest point of the hill is also in keeping with the practice of putting premium on the location of the 'sacred remains of Buddha' that was central to the praying place of the laity.

The fact that the monasteries though facing the stupa are on a lower dip of the hill can be seen to reflect a visible divide between the residential area of the monks which involves a more community-based meditation, with a shrine to be shared by all, as opposed to solitary prayer one on one with the remains of the lord enshrined in the stupa[3]. Alternatively, the location of all these structures might indicate the manner in which they were to be seen and accessed. The approach path first led to the main stupa and then towards the monasteries and temples. Inter-site visibility is also factor that needs to be considered. The hills of Laghundi and Udayagiri, two other Buddhist sites, can be seen from Ratnagiri. Question arises as to if and what kind of relationship/interaction did these sites have with each other. The fact these sites were located near the seat of power also leads to the question of patronage: Was the maintenance of the establishment entirely based on royal patronage or were there links with trade activities also?

2.1.4 Monastery I

The mound to the north of stupa 1 was locally known as Rani-pukhuri 'the tank of queen'. Before excavation it presented the appearance of a tank with a central depression enclosed by a quadrangular bank-like distinction. The basic plan of this monastery is the

[3] For further discussion see Fogelin (2003).

chatuhsala type, it consists of a spacious stone paved central courtyard around the four sides of which runs a verandah, which in turn, is surrounded by twenty four cells, by a shrine fronted by an antechamber and an entrance –complex. The last includes a front porch flanked by pylons and a rear porch which opens into the verandah. The monastery had an upper storey, admittance to which was gained by a grand stone staircase in the south western corner (Mitra 1981: 152).

Figure 2.4. The side view of Monastery

2.1.4.1 Structural Period

The monastery according to the excavator reveals two major well defined Period s of construction, apart from minor additions here and there. The structure of Period I is mainly of bricks; garnetiferous khondalite, however is used in the platform, facing the pylons, walls of the front porch, pillars, kerbs , flights of steps, pavement of the forecourt and courtyard, front wall of the shrine and door frames of the cells and chlorite in the

door frame communicating the front porch with the rear one. The cause of the ruins of the monastery of Period I seem to have been due to natural decay according to the excavator than intentional destruction or earthquake etc.

When the original cells fell in decay and the peripheral walls were stripped of brickwork completely at the back of the staircase and considerably throughout, massive restoration went underway. In this Period II the monastery became more impressive. The ruined peripheral walls of Period I were strengthened with cut-stone veneering; the cells of the lower storey with the exception of three were abandoned and filled in with earth and debris and their door openings bricked up; new cells were erected at a higher level over the tops of ruined walls .the width of the front wall of the shrine was enlarged by the inclusion of the entire space of the antechamber and a portion of the verandah; and the front porch now had a front carved wall. However the excavator opines that the above mentioned changes were not affected simultaneously as there are indications that the shrine was renovated before the bricking up of the door.

Period III the time of decay is represented by a few 'shabby' brick walls enclosing parts of the northern, western and eastern wings of the verandah to provide rooms (ibid: 153).

2.1.4.2 Chronology

According to the excavator in the light of no direct evidence on the chronology of the monastery, the dating of the Period I is based on a comparison of stylistic affinities between the sculptural and decorative art of the rear wall of the front porch and of the façade of the shrine and that of the early temples of Bhubaneswar dating to seventh - eighth centuries CE. Period II in the absence of any record having a direct bearing on the construction is dated on the basis of legend on several sealings that have been discovered. These roughly indicating that Period II was not certainly earlier than the eleventh century CE The third Period is ascribed to later than thirteenth century CE, contemporaneous perhaps ,the excavator opines with the last phase of Stupa 1, as the brickwork is similar in both the cases. The Period was represented by a few walls enclosing parts of the northern and western wings of the verandah to convert them into rooms. Other parts of the verandah were utilized as mortar pits by the construction of low partition –walls. Shells

heaped up in large quantities in one of these rooms and in the courtyard, seemed to indicate that the walls were intended to be plastered with shell lime. A heap of tiles was neatly stacked in the courtyard, evidently to use for roofing the rooms (ibid: 155).

This approach is marked often by absolute absence of understanding of the kind of activities that possibly could have taken place in times of stability and maintenance. Rather than developing only a chronological sequence of construction, occupation and abandonment; how a set of monuments came to mark the landscape needs to also be made a part of this pursuit (Barret 1999: 21). Dating based on comparison of artistic edifice is problematic as it is based on the assumption that certain motifs come into vogue at certain point of evolution of sculptural and decorative art in Orissa. The entrance and the first shrine facades are discussed in the light of architectural similarities that can be discerned with the temples of Vaitāl and Śiśireśvara. A similar exercise is undertaken with regard to the second and third facades. The major architectural elements are compared with those of Mukteśvara temple. Also a further research question can be regarding spatial change.

2.1.4.3 The facades of Monastery I

Monastery I has four carved stone facades according to Brown (1987), who has attempted to date these facades by analyzing the stylistic differences and commonalities of the carvings on the facades with those on other temples of Orissa, namely Lingraja temple, Srisresvara temple and so forth. The construction of facades can be described as following: one façade is on the wall behind the entrance porch, while the other three facades are connected with the shrine at the end of the monastery directly opposite to the entrance porch.

The first of these latter three façades is in front of the shrine, facing the statue of the Buddha. The second façade was added later and little remains of it. It was moved away from the first façade, out of the shrine and into the verandah. The area between this façade and the pillars, which supported the roof of the original porch, in front of the first facade, was filled with stone, thus forming a solid wall and turning the originally open porch into antechamber.

The third façade consists of a central doorway flanked on each side by three small shrines. This structure has been reconstructed by the excavators in the courtyard of the monastery. The pieces from which it was reconstructed was "found at different heights amidst the debris in front of the shrine of Monastery I." It was most probably originally set up in the courtyard, directly in front of the second façade connected to the shrine. At some point, a brick shrine was built, connecting the second and third facades on the proper right. The walls of the shrine had niches in which stone Buddha image was placed (Brown 1987:5).

A look at the entire plan of the shrine complex indicates that, whereas the area of the shrine was increased, the doorway became smaller. Thus, clearly, visitors had to pass through more than one doorway in Period II (c. 11th century C.E) than in Period I (c. 7th to 8 Century CE) to reach the sanctum sanctorum: is this an indication that the ideas related to access were changing?

It also seems that in Period I, the partly opened porch was converted into a completely closed one. The pillars and pilasters were done away with, or, they disappeared behind a stone wall built in front of it. The rear porch opens onto a spacious verandah, which is separated from the courtyard by a raised stone curb that runs in front of the cells, the antechamber of the shrine and the staircase, leading to the upper storey. The front wall of the shrine was widened. The entire chamber and a portion of the verandah were blocked in this Period by khondalite masonry, leaving only a central stone-paved, narrow passage, 1.51m wide, so that the new façade of the shrine projected 3.416 m towards the south. The frame of the door was left open. The residents of the monastery in this Period had to pass through two doorways to reach the sanctum sanctorum. In the third Period of construction (c. 13th century CE), the shrine was further barricaded. Another façade that covered the original and the second façades, as explained above, was constructed (Mitra 1981: 179-180).

This gradual disappearance of the shrine behind facades is perhaps not only an indication of the changing ideas regarding the use of space, but also ideas about how the shrine was to be accessed. If we imagine the three facades standing in front of each other then it is quite difficult to see anything from the entrance façade. The access of light of light is so

frugal that the shrine would have the appearance of 'Hindu' temple where the sanctum sanctorum usually is very dark and the deity can be see clearly only when one steps inside.

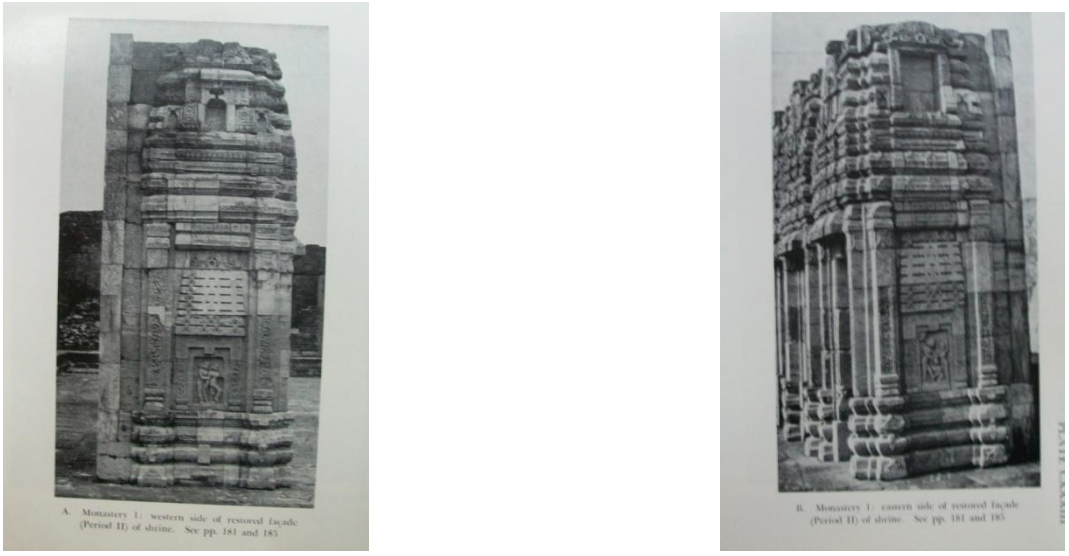

Figure 2.5 The Eastern and the western façade (Period II) Monastery I (Mitra 1981: Plate CXXXIII)

The eastern façade of the shrine in Period II houses an interesting addition. It depicts a bejeweled man, with long hair tied behind his head and with a sheath of a dagger attached to his waist, in the act of cutting the hair of a kneeling woman who is trying to dissuade him by holding the right wrist of the latter. Behind her is an old lady with disheveled hair and emaciated body with both arms raised. On the corresponding western façade is a maithuna figure. Similar depictions are seen on the third façade as well, a rarity in the case of Buddhist architectural depiction (ibid: 185).

Devangana Desai (1975) has worked on three similar depictions, one found in the one of the temples of Mysore and the other two at the temples of Lingaaraja in Bhubaneswar and Surya deul at Konark. Why are they placed there? In the cases cited by Desai the position of the three depictions are in such areas where the general public would not be able to access it. Here the depictions are on the façade. There is a notable absence of depictions regarding the life of Buddha or related events.

The visual narrative may be defined as a story which is represented in a series of fixed images. Whereas the images endure through time and space, their context as well as the images themselves are redefined each time they are viewed. Therefore, visual narratives depend on a viewer for the completion of the narrative, to read the visual clues presented by the artist. In order to communicate the story to the audience the artist uses various compositional devices. Such devices structure the sequence and make it comprehensive to the viewer. Monoscenic narratives contain fragments that have been excerpted from a narrative that function as signal references to viewers and rely on them having prior knowledge of the tales both to complete the narrative and to remind themselves of their moral significance.

A work of art may be viewed from two angles, artistic and aesthetic. The artistic aspect refers to the product of the artist, while the aesthetic aspect refers to the effect it produces upon the viewer. It is of interest to discuss the reception of religious visual narratives and the viewer's response to the manner in which tales are presented (Dehejia 1997:3-35). The situation is somewhat complicated by our uncertainty regarding the audience for whom the narratives were intended. Visual narratives can serve as a powerful proselytizing tool. Thus, the location of these images within the monastery, where the laity might not have unhindered access, raises questions about why they were placed there. Are the depictions merely the work of the craftsmen who might have been mixing local customs in to the carvings or was it intentionally commissioned to be carved? The disappearing accesses of light into the shrine as well as the appearances of these depictions are an interesting 'coincidences' that need to be further studied and problematised.

2.1.4.4. Cells

There are twenty four cells in the ground floor sides , the eastern and western side each have seven cells and the northern and southern sides have six and four cells respectively. The size of the cells (3.86m long and 3.66m wide) is an indication that the living quarters could house more than one person. The excavator points to the lack of any niche for keeping things , platform for bed and a shelf , nor pegs or holes indicating the possible insertion of rods and concurs that monks presumably used portable beds etc. This lack of

consciously trying to mark a living space with certain individual markings is an indication of perhaps of not only following the tenets of the belief that advocates frugal life but also perhaps of the impermanence of residing time Period as well. The presence of staircases coupled with the thickness of the wall is an indication says the excavator that there was at least one more storey over the lower. However in the absence of full existing walls it's hard to concur whether the thicknesses of walls of the upper storey were in line with the lower one, whether the exterior face of both was in one alignment (Mitra 1981: 205). Restorations during the second Period interestingly involved filling up all the cells except cells 11, 4 which continued to be occupied (Mitra1981: 208). The new masonry went deep into the foundation to the original depth. The stonework was bonded with older brick core of varying of varying extant width. The excavator points out that to distinguish the two is quite impossible except in places where the brickwork of Period I present a decayed appearance in comparison to the new bricks.

2.1.4.5. Secret Cells

There are two secret cells in Monastery I, situated in the east and west of the shrine. The floor is paved with a single course of bricks, laid over the bedrock. According to the excavator, the depressions in the bedrock were filled with stone chips and earth. The reason for their existence has so far been not explored. As the debris from the collapse of the ceiling blocked the passage to these cells, I was not able to access them.

Figure 2.6: The entrances to the secret cell of Monastery I (Mitra, 1981: Plate XXXI)

The ceilings of these chambers are 0.66 m wide and 3.05 m long, and spanned by corbels. The opening, 0.55 m high and 0.36 m wide, is a tiny area that would hardly admit even a very thin person (Mitra 1981: 179). Since access seems to be limited, in terms of both how many people could fit in the tiny space as well as how many could physically enter it, the existence of such a space is interesting. Moreover the location of these cells within the shrine is interesting, flanking the entrance on both sides. They do not immediately attract attention. The manner in which light enters the shrine casts these spaces in the wall in darkness effectively masking their entrance. The secret cells in Monastery I are located in the shrine. This combined with the fact that the growing number of facades that restrict access to the shrine as well as the stone wall around the monastery seems to indicate that the cells were used by very few individuals and their existence might not have been that widely known. Perhaps these cells were used for meditation purposes. Or, alternatively, these could have been used as a hideout for people. Their location indicates that the contents of this room could potentially have been very well protected.

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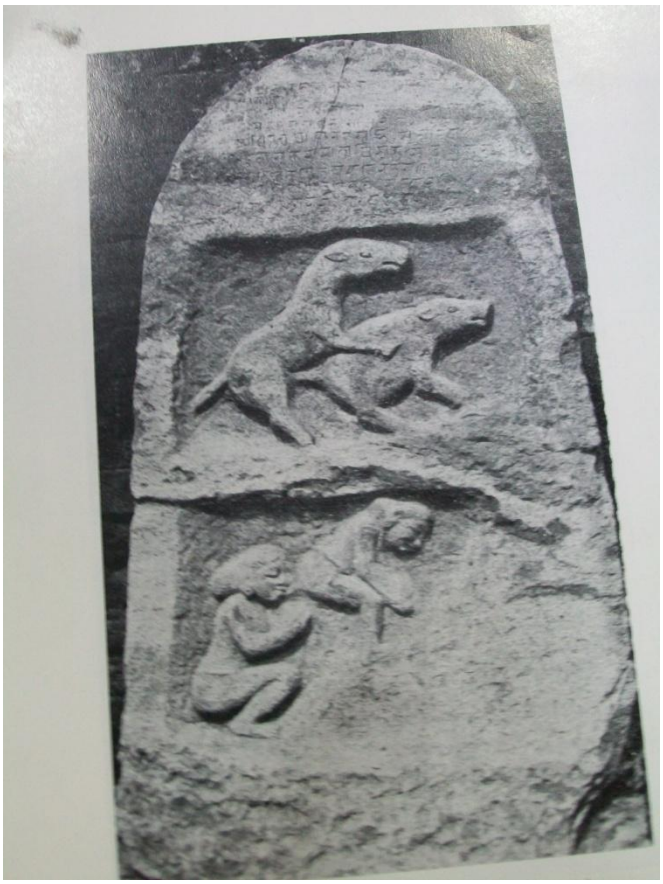

Figure 2.7: Inscribed Stelae (Mitra 1981: Plate CLXII A)

2.1.4.6 Inscribed Stelae

Found in-situ the two inscribed stelae were found in the southeastern corner of Monastery 1. Made of khondalite the front side of the upper portion is divided into three registers. In the bottom panel there are two human figures, one behind the other. The one behind is seated in a somewhat squatting posture. In the oblong panel are two animals in erotic posture an ass over a sow.

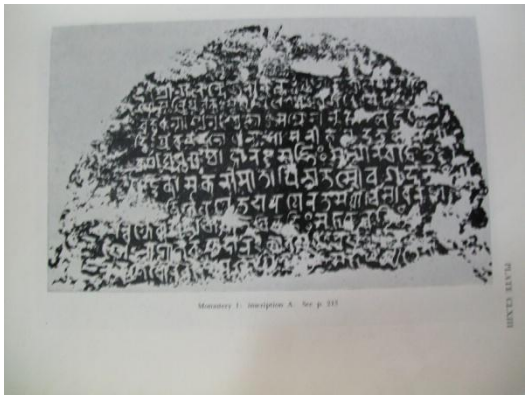

Figure 2.8: Inscription (Mitra 1981: Plate CLXIII)

In the top is a ten lined inscription records a gift in the favour of the sangha by Jananda of the kayastha kula belonging to Nalanda along with verses containing the gardabha sukari abuse (Mitra 1981: 213). The translation of the inscription indicates that anyone who prevents the fulfillment of the grant will turn into a sow or a donkey and whoever helps in its fulfillment will go to heaven. In the light of this

statement the visual representation are interesting. One wonders if the curse and the blessings correspond in the visual representation.

2.1.5 Monastery II

Monastery II was designed on a smaller scale as compared to Monastery I. The monastery is south oriented with an analogous plan, though has no upper storey. The excavator points to a similar use of arches, design of door frames and *khura* shaped mouldings at the base of the walls flanking the door frames in Period III of Monastery II with that of Monastery I of Period II (Mitra 1983: 265).

2.1.5.1 Structural Periods

The monastery according to the excavator has three discernible structural periods. She points out that unlike Monastery I, little has survived to constitute the superstructure of Period III above the plinth. The monastery of Period III, quadrangular on plan, comprises a flight of steps, a front platform, an outer porch, a central paved courtyard and a running four flanked verandah which gives access to an inner or rear porch, eighteen cells and a shrine. Construction material essentially consisted use of bricks, khondalite being used for the door frames, windows, kerb of the verandah, pillars, pilasters, pavement of the courtyard and the flooring of the shrine (ibid: 265-266).

2.1.5.2 Chronology

Period III of monastery II cannot be dated precisely due to an absence of direct epigraphical evidence according to the excavator. On the basis of architectural features such as arches, she opines that it can be dated to later than the Period I of Monastery I. The foundation trench for the stone facing of the western peripheral wall of Monastery I of Period II was found cut into the earlier floor and the overlaying accumulation which had practically covered the decorated base of the peripheral wall of Monastery II of Period III (Mitra 1983: 266).

2.1.5.3 The Structure

The monastery consists of a central square courtyard, bordered on all sides by a pillared verandah around which are arrayed an inner porch, eighteen cells and a shrine chamber and an outer porch built at the centre of a low platform approached by a flight of steps. While its front side is *pancha ratha* on plan, other exterior sides are *tri ratha* on plan. The brickwork of the monastery is in clay mortar. Almost all the bricks are fragmentary, the facing ones are larger and smoothly chiseled, while the core is made of courses of small brickbats (Mitra 1983: 267).

2.1.5.4 Shrine

Square in shape, the door frame has however disappeared. The shrine houses a khondalite image of Buddha and images of Avalokitesvara and Shadakshari Lokeshwara. The image

Figure 2.9: The statue of Buddha found during the excavation (Mitra 1983: Plate CCXI)

was carved out of an existing lintel of khondalite; this is evident from a long chase on its back which had accommodated an iron beam but also from two sockets which used to receive the top ends of the posts of the wooden door (Mitra 1983: 272).

The standing statue of Buddha, as can be seen, has been made from an earlier doorjamb. The chronologies of both the monasteries indicate that Monastery II was built perhaps with the growing number of monks or students that were flowing into the place. However the reuse of the doorjamb perhaps indicates that Ratnagiri as yet had yet to enjoy the kind of patronage that later resulted in the use of finer building material and ornate carving of stupas etc. Some questions however remain unanswered. Before the doorjamb was carved into the statue, where was it placed? Why was the doorjamb reused? Is it a case of mere reuse of a valuable stone piece or because the doorjamb belonged to the monastery it had become a sacred piece of stone which was seen fit to be molded into the image of the Lord?

2.1.5.5 Cells

The verandah gives access to eighteen cells, five each on the east and west sides and four on the remaining sides. Average dimension of cells are 2.48 m and the width varying from 2.41 m to 2.84 m.

2.1.5.6 Period III

Monastery II of Period III was raised immediately over the ruined walls and foundation brickwork of the monastery of Period II. The remains from this period are scanty. The sizes of the cells roughly conform to those of the cells of Period II.

2.1.5.7 Secret cell

The location of a secret cell is very interesting. The chamber is 2.69 m long, 1.35 m wide and 1.42 m high, and is located under the stone paved floor of Cell 2. The passage between Cells 2 and 3 is 0.60 m wide and 0.94 m high. This indicates that the access is not only difficult but also limited in terms of numbers. Its location also raises questions about to its purpose (Mitra 1983: 281).

The location of the single secret cell in Monastery II indicates that the knowledge of its existence would have been equally restricted. The resident of Cell 2 could possibly perhaps have known its location, which could mean that the person was of enough importance to be entrusted with such knowledge. Moreover the narrow passage indicates that only one person could access it at a time. Access would have been quite troublesome and uncomfortable given its size. Since the passage links Cell 2 to Cell 3, this may have been perhaps an escape route.

Figure 2.10 Secret cell Monastery II. Mitra 1983, plate CCXXVIII 1.

2.1.6 Stupa Area

The first season's excavation concentrated on the highest part of the hill. Numerous stupas of varying sizes, apart from the main stupa were discovered. The excavator points out that the dating of the stupas on the basis of stratigraphy is hampered by the lack of regular stratified deposit, uneven configuration of the hill top. Mitra (ibid: 25) further states that dating on the basis of deposition of earth and debris of a site like Ratnagiri is difficult because building activities continued for a long time. Since the stupa and monasteries were in use for a prolonged period it prevented the accumulation of cultural deposit in an unhindered manner. Moreover the construction of minor stupas around the main stupa which involved digging for foundation as well as leveling the ground around the structures disturbed the earlier floor levels considerably. The foundation of some of the stupas in the area went back at least to the Gupta period, as is evident from the discovery of several stone slabs inscribed with the text of the *Pratityasamutpada-sutra* in the characters of the 5^{th}-6^{th} century CE. Among the stupas unearthed two are noticeably significantly due to their dimensions.

The minor stupas can be categorized as (i) structural stupas, built either of stone (khondolite) or of bricks (ii) portable monolithic stupas. The first category is concentrated on the ground immediately surrounding Stupa1.Though the monolithic stupas were found in abundance amidst the structural stupas as well, their maximum concentration, often in a disorderly was on the south-western side beyond the compound-wall of Stupa1 of Period ii. While no mortar was used for stupas of stone masonry, clay was used for brick ones. The slabs of some of the stone stupas were joined by iron dowels and cramps (ibid: 27).

These minor stupas stood at different levels either due to the uneven configuration of the rocky ground or owing to the accumulation of debris. Sometimes stupas were found built over earlier ruined stupas of masonry and even over the intact monolithic stupas. Evidently fresh stupas were installed over older ones allowing them to be covered up, a clear indication of space issues. The plans of the bases or of the platforms of the minor structural stupas were variously circular, square, square with *ratha* projections and octagonal .Some of the stone stupas had various decorations in relief, a prominent motif being a row of thunderbolts, indicative of the Vajrayana cult (ibid: 28). The sacred deposits within the structural stupas have yielded corporeal relics in the form of partially charred bones in a few, presumably of monks and dignitaries of the sangha. The intact bone relics were found at the centre of the base (or platform) near its top or middle but very rarely within the drum. The reliquaries were made of plain earthen vases or stone blocks with sockets. In some cases bones were however deposited within a socket made in the platform or drum of the stupas. Sometimes they were accompanied by gold beads (stupa24), a gold Ganga fanam (stupa 25), and a gold coin (stupa 23).

Figure 2.11 Votive Stupa

The second type of deposits consists of inscribed stone slabs and terracotta plaques and tablets. Monolithic stupas often used to enshrine the relics of the departed were also votive and sometimes inscribed with the Buddhist creed (Mitra 1981: 29-32).

The area around the stupa originally, at the time of the excavation, housed more than a hundred votive stupas, most of which now have been removed to be placed strategically in and around the site. The excavator opines that stratigraphic analysis has indicated that the pressure on the land was extensive here, as votive stupas were deposited here regularly. Mitra however does not cite any reason for the latter. That motive behind donating votive stupas often with funerary deposits was to earn merit is a well-known fact. The deposition of votive stupas near the stupa to be near the Buddha does not necessarily dictate that it must be done in the vicinity of the main stupa to the extent that older votive stupas were covered to make space for new votive stupas. This could be the result of a shortage space due to the existing structures around the stupa, which necessitated such an intense concentration of votive stupas. At the same time, the construction of votive stupas in the same area could have, over a period of time, have led to an association of the land around the Main Stupa as sacred for both the laity and the monks.

2.1.6.1 Stupa I

Stupa 1 is located on the highest part of the hill. Due to its location and size it commands quite a view from a long distance. The description of the stupa has been divided into two periods. The greatest extant height of its facing is 2.74 m, while its core rises to a further height of 1.50 m more, at which level it gives place to twelve spokes of the drum. These spokes of solid brick work, radiate from a central circular hub, also of solid brickwork, 3.29 m in diameter. Rising above a *tri-ratha* ledge like *upana,* the platform is also *tri-ratha* on plan. Each *ratha* has two divisions so that there are six vertical projections on each of the four sides.

There is no uniformity in the size of the bricks, the largest size being 45.7 cm x 25.4 cm x 6.3 cm. The debris of this stupa included many wedge shaped bricks also. A small quantity of paddy husks was found mixed with the clay of the bricks. The face of the

stupa was covered with plaster of shell lime, patches of which were found on the wall surfaces here and there. There were at least two coatings of plaster, if not more. The plaster varies from 0.32 to 1.27 cm in thickness.

A shaft about 2 m square, sunk at the centre of the stupa, revealed that its solid core consisted of regularly laid brick courses numbering sixty five from the bottom to the extant top and attaining a height of 5.05 m. It was also noticed that between the bed rock and the bottom brick course was rammed packing of stone chips and earth varying in thickness from 15 cm to 46 cm, it is not unlikely that the relic, if any was deposited at a level higher than the present top or else lies at a spot other than the centre. There is no evidence about the definite date of the construction of the stupa. However, out of the *dharanis* texts and the Buddhist creed found inscribed on some of the stone stupas of the eastern group situated on the debris above the initial level of the main stupa there is one which is paleographically comparable with the records of the ninth century CE. The construction of Stupa 1 must therefore have taken place, prior to that period.

During Period II the upper part of the stupa and top edges of the platform had collapsed, resulting in an extensive restoration which entirely changed its plan. The polygon base was transformed into a circular plan. This was achieved by the construction of two circular walls at two different levels. The walls of Period II were poorly constructed of mostly large brickbats with the outer faces somewhat finished. The inner faces were left rough and uneven. The joints are wide and the mortar is coarse grained earth. No care was taken to achieve proper bonding. The bricks were re-used, presumably taken from the fallen material of the decayed stupa. This restoration seems to have taken place after the thirteenth century according to the excavator because Stupa 24 which yielded a Ganga *fanam* was covered by a thick accumulation of debris when the reconstruction took place (ibid: 40-41).

The unfinished stupas are an indication according to Mitra that these were fashioned locally. Though the workshop was not found, she opines that it was no doubt located somewhere on the hill and that this may indicate the maintenance of permanent atelier and sculptors (ibid: 32). In the light of this evidence one is also forced to ask where did the patronage to maintain the artisans come from? The presence of metal sculptures

though few in numbers also beg the question of whether there was an artisanal group manufacturing these? What other artisanal groups did exist to cater to the specific needs of the laity?

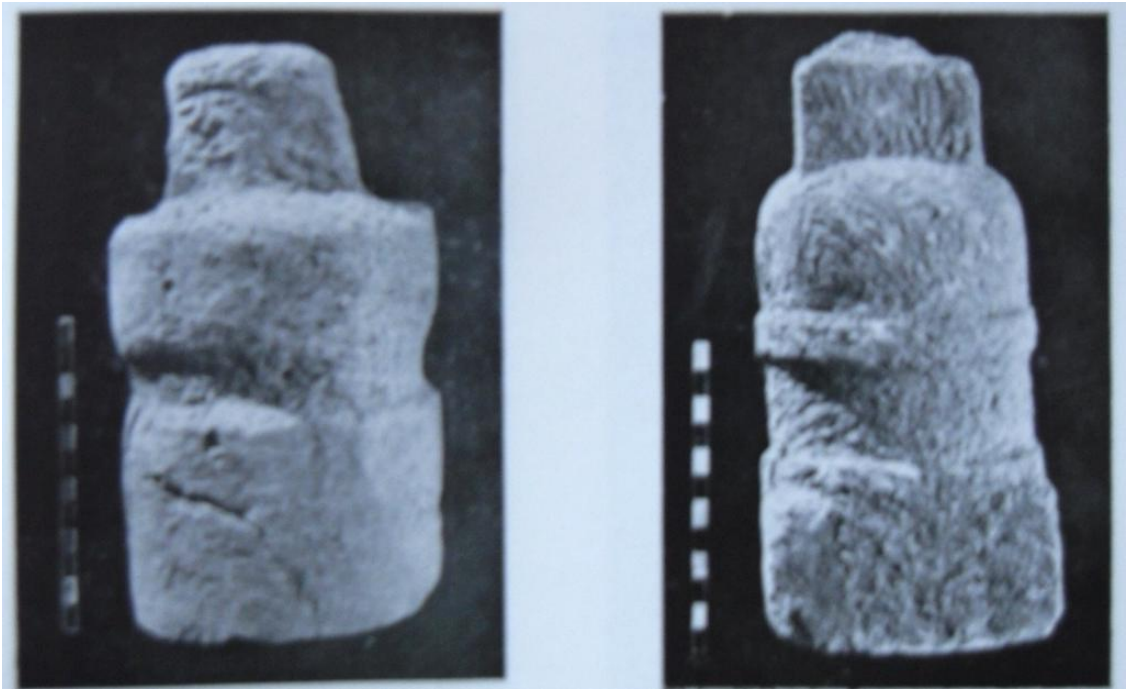

Figure 2.12: Unfinished monolithic stupa (Mitra 1981: Plate LXI)

The Buddhist adopted the practice of raising stupas, following a custom already in vogue. The Buddhists in India introduced several architectural forms, of which the stupa, representing a structural dome, attained maximum importance in ancient times. Around the stupas was a circular wall made of panels of brickwork alternating with octagonal columns of woods. No Buddhist sangha could have survived without a large number of followers and lay worshippers as they were the patrons whose gifts varied from the donation of a stupa, a gift a small stupa, or even a sculpture of Buddha. Broadly speaking, these gifts to the Buddhist sangha may be divided into two categories, (i) gifts for the construction of the main edifices like stupa, *arama* or *sangharama* and (ii) establishments of relics or *dhatu* and offerings in the shape of constructing miniature stupas, image-chapels or donation of Buddha figures. The custom of raising miniature stupas appears to be an older tradition than the offering of images or constructing image-chapels, because the ring of miniature stupas around the dharmarajika came into existence during the first

century CE. This characteristic feature of encircling the principal stupa by subsidIARy monuments was modeled possibly to substitute the railing so conspicuous in the early stupas at Bharhut, Sanch, Bodhi Gaya and Amravati. It appears, therefore, that the Buddhist sanghas might have given the lead in the introduction of miniature stupas, which subsequently became an important item of gift by the lay worshippers (Sarkar 1966: 56-57). Images of Buddha were first modelled at Mathura and in Gandhara and according to Sarkar since both were the strong holds of Sarvastivadinds. As a collorary can it not be assumed that it was the Saravastivadins who first took to image worship? In the light of this discussion the location of structural stupas around the Stupa 1 is intriguing. Was it, as Sarkar discusses, a substitute for the railing or was it to give a perambular appearance to a polygonal structure.

Figure 2.13: Earth reliquary and partly burnt bricks and pieces of bones. (Mitra 1981: Plate XVI)

" A relic is first and foremost the bodily remains of a holy person – the whole of these or any part of them, even the most minute……." (MacCulloch 1971: 654-655). The examples of reliquaries that have been included were found within the structural stupas. Some of these stupas are *sharirika*. The reliquaries were generally either plain earthen vases or plain stone blocks with sockets. These reliquaries do not confirm to any said pattern as some are made of stone and some are interred in earthen vessels, also the contents vary. As has been pointed earlier in this chapter the structural stupas were primarily located near Stupa I surrounding it in a somewhat circular manner. Being near the Stupa I reflects the belief perhaps that by association of location the departed will become one with the Buddha.

One look at the contents also indicate that the besides the bones, the material placed within the reliquaries did not follow any set pattern.

The excavation yielded a number of *dharanis*, mostly on stone slabs and some on terracotta plaques. Inserted in the stupas the idea was to gain merit of erecting one lakh Tathagata-chaityas (Mitra 1981: 31). The text indicate the Vajrayāna affiliation of the Buddhist establishment from the ninth century CE onwards, according to Mitra.

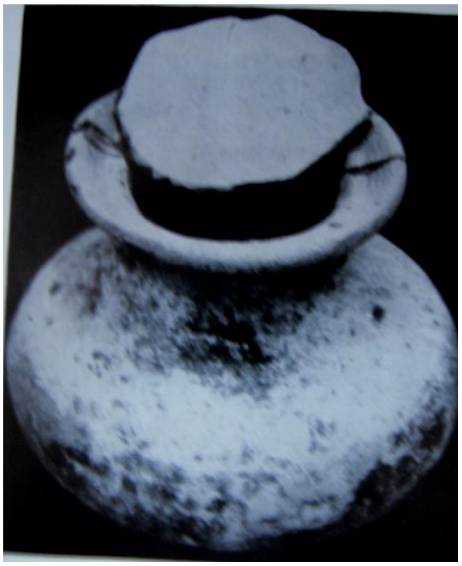

Figure 2.14: Earthen reliquary found within Stupa 24 (Mitra 1981: Plate XXVII A)

Schopen (1997) has focuses on the interplay of text and archaeological records to discuss mortuary patterns. Pertinent is the discussion on the nature and context of the *dharini* inscribed "votive" stupas. Schopen points out that he inscribed compositions are specific *dharanis* taken from a specific group of texts and that they are ad hoc in nature .The text clearly state their reason for being inscribed in the stupas. The content reflects a continual preoccupation with problems of death, rebirth and so forth. Moreover he cites the archaeological evidence from Ratnagiri to stress on the funerary association of the *dharanis* as mentioned in the text. He quotes Mitra's evidence of bone deposits being found from stupa 3, 4, 23, 24, 25 and 115 to further focus on the archaeological context of these findings.

This discussion provides a more complicated picture behind the reasons and nature of the content of these *dharanis*. The scholars dealing with esoteric Buddhism tend to see the act of inscribing the stupas with *dharanis* and their content as tantric. In the case of Ratnagiri these types of stupas are often cited to stress upon the tantric character of the site. Schopen's work thus moves beyond the attempts at seeing these types of stupas as some kind of an object endowed with magical powers. Rather he tries to cogently combine both texts and archaeological records to arrive at an alternate interpretation.

2.1.6.2 Single Winged Monastery

Located to the north east of Monastery I, the structure is north east facing, consisting of three cells fronted by a common verandah. The brickwork is in clay mortar, the joints of the facing brickwork being fine. The bricks used are fragmentary. Chiseling was restored to the facing bricks. Husks were mixed with the earth for making the bricks. The monastery has yielded a set of three inscribed copper plates strung together with a ring. The inscription records the grant of a village called Kona by the Sōmavaṁsī king Karna to Rani Karpūraśri who hailed from the Salonapura- Mahavihara. Mitra (ibid: 350-52) opines that since it was found on the secluded mound away from the main establishment, perhaps Karpūraśri passed her retired life here.

2.1.6.3 Conclusion

The excavator discusses the three major structures, Monastery I, Monastery II and Stupa I, in terms of the construction that was undertaken regarding their upkeep. The broad sweeping time periods are discussed in terms of how construction took place, for example, filling of cells, bricks being rebounded with the older ones The monasteries can be seen through the dual vision of being learning centers as well the living quarters of the monks and students. How does then the amalgamation of local practices of worship and architectural style and so forth contribute to the growth of the site? Can reactions to it be determined by examining the archaeological record?

How we perceive buildings depends on their size and space around them. Scale and site are closely interrelated, for our perceptions about the size of the buildings are related not only to our own size but also the building's position and the relative sizes of the neighboring buildings and spaces. The feeling of space and light around buildings depend on the relationship between their height, the size of the open space and how the shadows fall. The monasteries are located in such a manner that the stupa on the top of the hill is somewhat not accessible visually in the present day context. Monasteries I and II situated side by side however exhibit how size and shape have ultimately led to the former not only dominating in terms of size and space but also access to light. The movement of sun gives a preferential prominence to Monastery I due to its location,

whereas Monastery II is sheltered in the shadow of Monastery I. Secret cells it seems is a requirement that both the monasteries felt. However the variance in location may indicate that they served different purposes.

2.2 Lalitgiri

Lalitgiri (latitude 20˚35'N and longitude 86˚15'E) (see Figure 2.15) lies in the Birupa Chitropala valley in Jajpur district. The village is crouched between the hills of Parbadi and Landa which are the scattered hills of the Assia range. The excavation was taken up at this site in 1985 and continued till 1989 (*IAR 1985-86*: 62-63, *IAR 1986-87*: 64-67, *IAR 1987-88*: 88-90, *IAR 1988-89*: 65-66) and was geared towards finding answers for the following questions; firstly to identify whether the site was the same Puspagiri as mentioned by Xuanzang, secondly to ascertain the potentiality of the accumulation of deposit on the slope of the Nandapahara and thirdly, to correlate the dates of the site with the those of Ratnagiri and push the date of the site prior to the Gupta or Kushana period (Patnaik n.d.: 19-20)[4]. Archaeological excavations at Lalitgiri revealed a continuous occupation of the site by the Buddhists from almost second century BCE to the thirteen century CE. The site not only yielded the relic caskets possibly of the great master from the stupa but also laid bare the remains of an apsidal chaitya griha built on the ruins of an earlier brick structure. Apart from these, the discovery of Kushana – Brahmi donative inscriptions datable to first-second century CE, Gupta gold coin, shell script inscriptions of post Gupta period, remnant of a bas relief of the first century CE are quite significant to provide adequate proof that the Buddhist settlement at Lalitgiri remained a great centre of learning (ibid: 7).

2.2.1 Brief History

The small scale excavation conducted by Utkal University in 1977 on the southern slope of the Landa Hill at Lalitgiri exposed the remains of the base of a large number of stupas,

[4] The excavation report of the site has so far not been published. The details that have been included in this section are from the unpublished volume that was given as a gift to the Assistant Archaeologist who is the curator of the Ratnagiri museum. He was kind enough to let me go through the unpublished excavation report.

which were later conserved and preserved by Archaeological Survey of India. But no chronology of the site was known except surface findings of Kushana copper coins and Gupta gold coins.

In December 1985, the solitary prominent, mound existing on the hill top behind the sculpture shed was selected for excavation. The vegetation was cleared, divided in to quadrants for excavation. In course of the excavation, it was observed that the mound had the remains of a stupa constructed by random rubbles and mud mortar and finally veneered with stone astylar masonry. The excavated remains can be broadly categorized as: a) the stupa containing the relic, b) the apsidal temple and the area around it and c) the monasteries. Besides, a hoard of artefacts in various mediums have been unearthed and include stone sculptures, terracotta seals and sealings, figurines, inscribed brick, brick image, slate plaques and inscribed potsherds (*IAR 1985-86*: 62-63, *IAR 1986-87*: 64-67, *IAR 1987-88*: 88-90, *IAR 1988-89*: 65-66).

2.2.2 The Stupa

On the northern side of the hill top at the back of the sculpture shed a mound was visible. This area was taken up for excavation during the first season, in 1985-86. The remains were somewhat hemispherical in appearance suggestive of a stupa constructed without strong foundation, its diameter being 15 m at the base. It was made of random rubble masonry veneered with finely dressed sand stone on the curvature of the dome as well as the drum portion (*IAR 1985-86*: 62).

The dome was covered by a rectangular slab with a square hole, possibly the base of the *harmika* the probable use of which was to support the *chhatravali*. Fragments of a *harmika* were also found from the area. It appears that the veneering was done with finely dressed sand stone without any arrangement for interlocking. At a height of 1.30 m from floor level the Stupa has a ledge of 1.20 m from which the hemispherical drum rises. At the base of the Stupa the remains of a 3 m wide circular stone flooring possibly serving the purpose of a circumambulatory passage was found (Chauley 2001: 445; Patnaik n.d. : 35).

2.2.2.1 Relic Caskets

The most significant result of the excavations of mahastupa at the hilltop was the discovery of the relic caskets between December 1985 and January 1986. Such types of relic caskets have not been earlier reported from any other sites of Orissa. As many as three sets of relic casket containers made of khondalite located on the south, east and north directions were found namely Gold, Silver, Steatite and Khondalite like a Chinese puzzle box were found from the stupa at Lalitgiri (Patnaik n.d.: 47). This discovery has led to the conjecture that these are the remains of lord Buddha and his two disciples. This assumption is based on the fact that similar remains were found in Sanchi, which were said to have belonged to the above mentioned individuals.

2.2.2.2 Chaitya-griha

The elliptical mound located to the northeast of the sculpture shed on the hill top was excavated. The area for the convenience of the excavation was earmarked as Lalitgiri-2. The excavations carried out here during 1986-87 and 1987-88 have revealed a huge *chaitya-griha*. The *chaitya –griha* is apsidal in its layout (Patnaik n.p. :100). The apsidal *chaitya griha* at Lalitgiri bears close resemblance to the Andhra Pradesh counterpart, therefore suggesting an early date according to the excavator. The associated structures of stupas both structural and votive and epigraphic and style of the sculptures suggest the apsidal structure was in use right from the early common era till circa eight-ninth c CE. The statigraphy of the site was disturbed due to hetrogenous deposits but excavations underneath the structure and the area under question points to prolonged Period of occupation (Patnaik n.p. : 103). Three main floor levels have been distinguished that correspond from the beginning to the end of activities at the site. A number of enlargements/alterations were noticed within the apsidal *chaitya-griha* during post Gupta Period.

The repeated repair work witnessed by this area as well as the profusion of votive stupas around the chaityagriha suggests that this was place which received attention and importance from both the monks and laity. Repeated behavior of dedicating votive stupas

to this area indicates that over time this part of the landscape of the site of Lalitgiri had become sacred through shared memory.

2.2.3 Monasteries

Monastery -1

The size of the monastery is 36 m×36 m. The verandah is 2.70m. wide, kerb on which pillar bases are existing around courtyard is 1.10m, with courtyard forming 12.90×12.90m. The size of the sanctum is 4m×2.35m. The thickness of the outer walls is 3.30m and inner walls 1.20m roughly. The main entrance is 4m×3.35m. A covered drain is also traced existing on the north-western corner of the monastery for draining out water of the open courtyard.

Monastery -2

It is situated on the extreme northern side on the hill top. The northern wing and garbha griha or sanctum survived partly. The southern wing is completely robbed. It is comparatively smaller in size. The measurement of courtyard recorded 5.20×5.10 m. The width of the verandah is 2.50 m. **Monastery-3**

This monastery lies very close to the existing math. It is facing south-east direction. The main entrance is 4.45 m× 4.30 m. This monastery sustained merciless brick robbing and became highly dilapidated and survived up to 1 to 2 m.

Monastery-4

Excavations revealed that this monastery faces to the west. The outer measurement recorded in 30 m×30 m. In the sanctum a colossal Buddha image was discovered in situ which is made of several pieces and the head is missing. This monastery has revealed two distinct phases. The earlier monastery wall is traced at a depth of 2.60 m, over which the second phase is reconstructed with 6 layers of stone foundation overlapped over the remains of the early monastery. A terracotta seal was also discovered from material assemblage of this monastery which is inscribed with a wheel flanked by two seated deer

on either side and in the central part the name of the monastery which read as *"Sri Chandratiya Vihar Samagara Arya Vikshu Sangha"*.

The above mentioned details clearly indicate that the size of these monasteries is not consistent. Therefore one can safely claim that perhaps there was a hierarchy within the structures and perhaps used by different sections of monks according to seniority or perhaps the smaller ones were used by the students. Moreover there location which is located a few kms away from the stupa area indicates that there might have been a demarcation of ritual spaces.

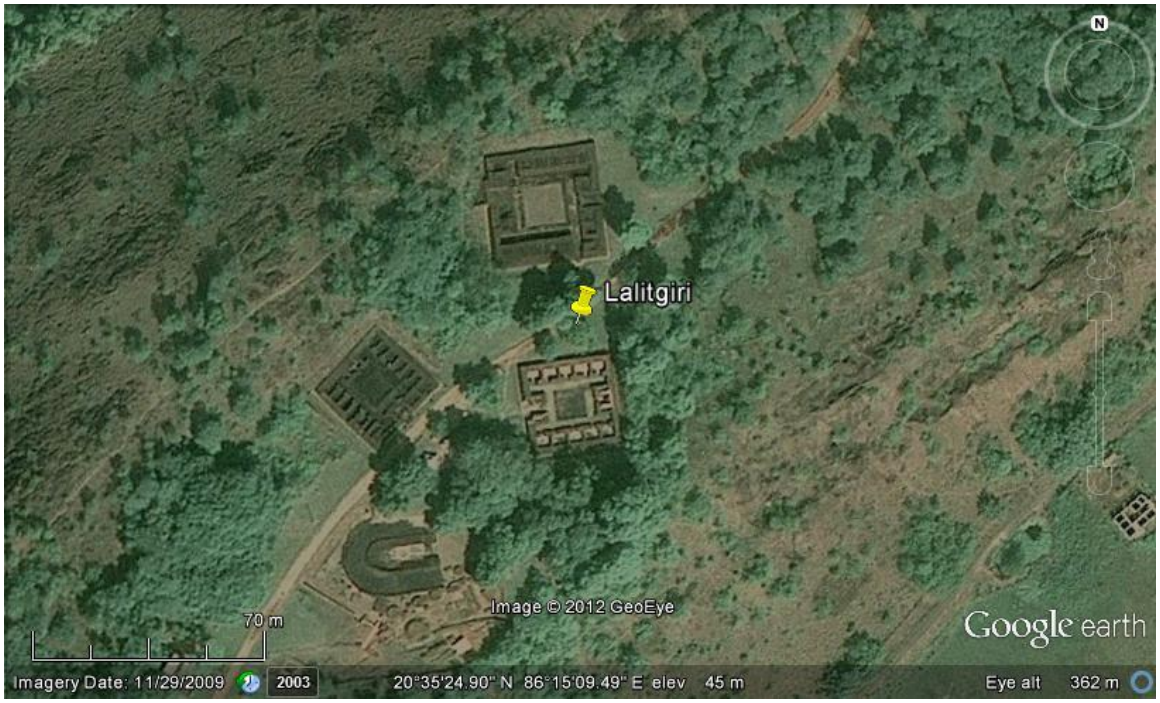

Figure 2.16. The site map of Lalitgiri (Courtesy Google Maps)

2.2.4 Ceramics and Chronology

This excavation report is the only one amongst the three site reports that are being discussed which talks about the ceramic assemblage of the site. Patnaik (2001) elsewhere in an article on the ceramics of Lalitgiri has pointed that a good number of excavations have taken place in Orissa and the material culture has been analyzed primarily on the basis of structural remains, sculptural wealth and epigraphic or numismatic data. The study of pottery has been quite often ignored (ibid: 456). Since this chapter does not entail a detailed analysis of ceramics, only a general description of the findings will be mentioned here. The ceramic assemblage has been divided into four major groups' viz., Red ware, Red Slipped ware, Grey ware and other decorated ware besides a few sherds of Stone ware. The excavation report mentions that the ceramic assemblage from the site right from the earliest layer to the surface level of the site has helped in establishing a chronological and cultural sequence without break from the post Maurya period to medieval period (Patnaik n.p.: 235). The discussion on ceramics is descriptive, discusses that styles, techniques, fabric of pottery that the site has yielded and has been divided in according on the basis of cultural deposit into four broad Period s namely: Period I (post Maurya to post Kushan Period) (2^{nd} c BCE to 3^{rd} c CE), Period II (4^{th} to 6^{th} c CE), Period III (7^{th} -9^{th} c CE) and Period IV (10^{th} c to 13^{th} CE). These Periods correspond with the chronology of the site which has also been divided into four phases.

2.2.5 Conclusion

This excavation report gives meticulous details of the structures and artefacts that the site has yielded. However there is no attempt to connect the information of the different structures together. The catalogue of artefacts at the end needs to be contextualized in terms of where within, outside or nearby the structures was found. The analysis on ceramics is a welcome effort in the face of the fact that the other two sites have not retained or analyzed the potsherds discovered during the excavations.

The repeated expansion, reconstruction and repair of the chaityagriha area indicates that it was one of the important areas of worship and witnessed the regular veneration of the laity and monks alike in the form of the votive stupas. However this is the only example

of a site with a chaityagriha, though it was maintained for a long time the practice of venerating in and around a chaityagriha ended with this Buddhist complex. It seems it was not in vogue in that area or elsewhere.

2.3 Udayagiri

Udayagiri (lat 20˚39′ N, long 86˚16′E) (fig 2.17) is surrounded by Assia hill in south, south-east and north and open land in the east reaching the bank of the river Bada Geguti (Birupa). Chronologically it is the youngest among the three Buddhist centres. The horse shoe valley is vertically divided into two halves by a spur. Archaeological excavation, under the auspices of Archaeological Survey of India were conducted in two phases during 1985to 1989 in the northern half and 1997 to 2000 in the southern half has unearthed the remains of a magnificent Buddhist establishment. For convenience of work the sites have been named Udayagiri -1 (*IAR* 1985-86: 63-65, *IAR* 1986-87: 67-69, *IAR* 1987-88: 90-95, *IAR* 1988-89: 66-69) and II (*IAR* 1997-98: 136-144, *IAR* 1998-99: 120-130, *IAR* 1999-2000: 117-24, *IAR* 2000-01: 109, Bandhyopadhyay 2007).

2.3.1Udayagiri I

The part of the site at the north-west direction of the protected area was taken up for excavation in 1985. During the four seasons of excavation the remains of a Buddhist centre consisting of a huge monastic complex protected by a large enclosure wall, a seven metre high stupa having images of four *dhyani* Buddhas[5] in the niches on all four cardinal directions were discovered. Besides the Buddha images sculptures of Tara, Avolokitesvara, Maitreya, Aparajita, Vasundhra, Jmabala and Hariti were also recovered. Among other antiquities, a good number of seals and sealing were found which read Shri Madhavapura Mahavihara Arya Bhikshu Sangharya identifying the site as "Madhavapura Mahavihara". The Buddhist establishment has been dated to between eight-ninth century and twelfth and thirteenth century C.E (IAR 1997-98:136-37). Unfortunately the details

[5] In vajrayana Buddhism The five dhyani Buddhas are also called the five tathagathas and are the representation of the five qualities of the Buddha. Vajrayana formulated the theory of families of the five Dhyāni Buddhas from which deities emerged from time to time (see Moharana 2001).

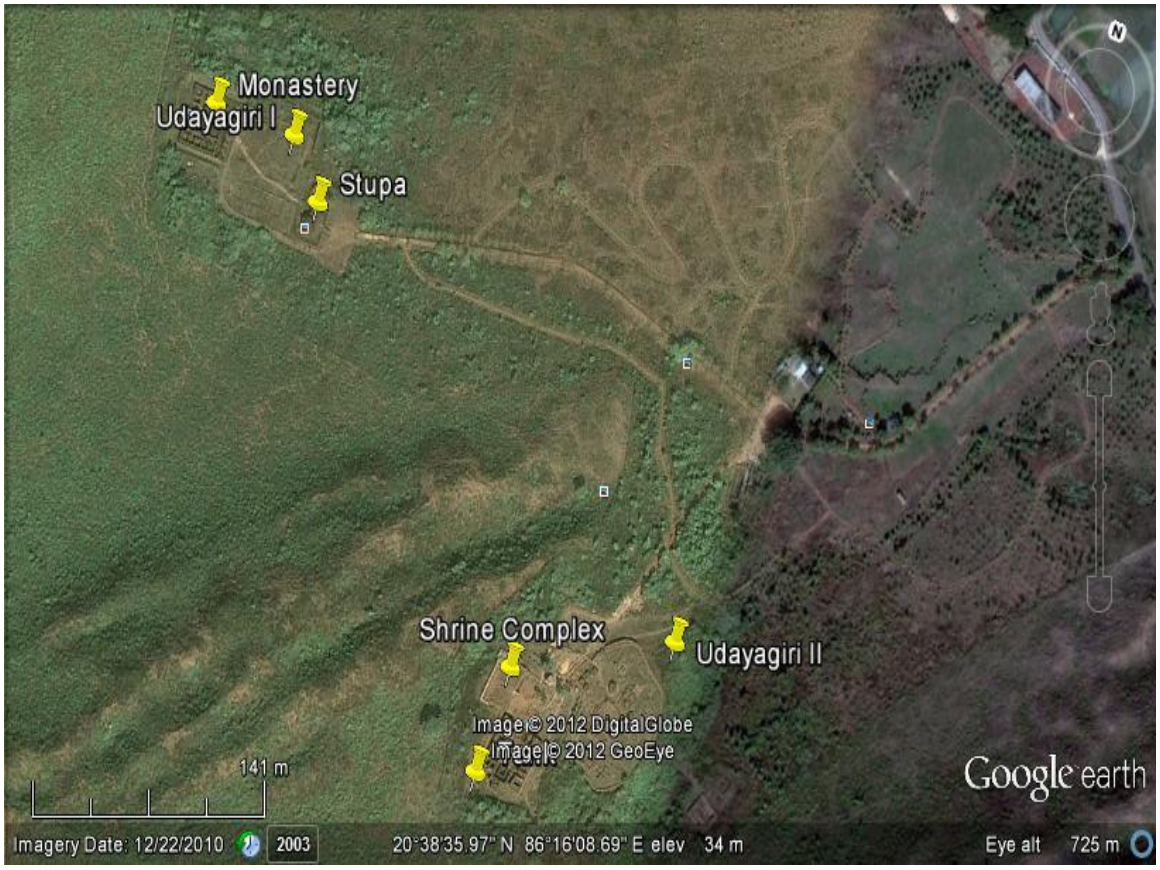

Figure 2.17. The Monastic Complex of Udayagiri I and I (Courtesy Google Map)

of Udayagiri I can only be found in the IAR as so far, no excavation report has been published.

2.3.2 Udayagiri II (fig. 2.18)

The area on a natural terrace gradually sloping towards the well which was considered extremely rich in antiquarian wealth remained in obscurity under thick jungle cover till 1997. In the winter of 1997 excavation branch of Archaeological Survey of India from the Bhubaneswar took up excavation there under the direction of B. Bandyopadhyay. "The site is located at a distance of about 400 m in south east direction of the earlier excavated monastery. The archaeological remains are spread in an area of about 400×300 m on the hill slope with a total deposit of 5 m" (IAR 1997-98:137). The objective behind

this work was to unravel the antiquarian remains hidden under thick jungle growth at the natural slope about 100 m away from the ancient well through an area excavated and to co-relate the findings with the previously excavated materials found from Udayagiri I.

2.3.2.1 Brief History

Excavation during the three consecutive field seasons from 1997-1998 to 1999-200 has unearthed a magnificent monastery with a central shrine containing a massive seated Buddha, a shrine complex towards north –west of the monastery and a sprawling reservoir. That the site Udayagiri II contained some Buddhist temples has been evidenced by the finds of a large number of sculptured and ornamental architectural members. The remains are datable to eight-twelfth century CE

Figure 2.18. The site map of Udayagiri II. Courtesy Google Map.

2.3.2.2. Topography and Orientation

The stray hill ranges emerging almost from Jajpur have three wings falling in this part known as Alti or Nalti , Assia and Mahavinayaka. Udayagiri is located at the eastern most part of the Assia hills and it has a horse –shoe formation (Bandyopadhyay 2007:1) . The name has been derived from the tradition that the first sunrise in Orissa is seen from

here. The area is covered on three sides by spurs of the hills with opening on the east, where the vast stretch of land merges with horizon. The river Bada Genguti flows nearby merging with Birupa. The land beyond Udayagiri is significantly dry, arid, sandy plain where growth of vegetation in earlier times was very limited. The hills however have thick vegetation, full of bushes and shrubs. The Buddhist settlers decided on such a location for establishing their sangharamas in order to promote spiritual studies in isolation away from the din and bustle of the city. Communication with the rest of the world was possible through the rivers flowing nearby. The contemporary seat of power was at Jaipur which was within a range of approximately 21 km. Besides, such an elevated area was considered suitable for habitation in the midst of a flood prone region (ibid: 4-5).

2.3.2.3 Structural Remains

2.3.2.3.1 Monastery

The monastery along with the central shrine covers an area of 30 square km. Construction is mainly in brick in the layout and entire brick masonry works, although stone is used in the frontage, gateway, pavement of courtyard and door part of cells, staircase, top of room walls etc. The entrance is from the north where an elaborate gateway evidently existed. The side walls of the porch are relieved with a beautifully carved niche to enshrine the guardian deity (Bandyopadhyay 2007: 23). The main side walls of the porch are badly damaged. On both sides, two walls are encountered, which appear to be a later restoration. On the approach to the monastery no traces of stairs is available, the floor of the passage after the entrance is rammed with brick jelly. The gateway complex consisting of heavy stone blocks laid over the brick built surface is placed over a wall of eight courses of brick, foundation of which shows stone chips and boulders (ibid: 29).

2.3.2.3.2 The Central Shrine

The central shrine is a brick chamber located in the centre of the southern side facing north, rectangular in shape measuring 3.75 m×2.75 m while the side walls have thickness of 1.5m. It has been found in an extremely bad state of preservation with no traces of roof. The 2.60m high image of Buddha with pedestal seated in *bhūsparśa- mudrā* (earth

touching attitude) is made of stone blocks, some detached from the actual location. An ambulatory (*pradakshiṇa*) 1.4 m wide around the shrine chamber is a novel and unique feature of this monastery as no other monastery in this region contain such an ambulatory. Another interesting discovery in this part is the upper shrine chamber on the first floor just at the back of the central shrine atop the southern wall. This chamber, 2×2 m in dimension was found in a badly dilapidated condition, its superstructure and walls totally crumbled down (ibid: 23-33).

2.3.2.3.3 Shrine Area

After the completion of excavation of the monastery area in order to trace a link between the monastery and the area on the north western was taken up for excavation. The excavation of the site towards the north-east outer area of the monastery revealed a shrine complex within an enclosure. A large number of votive stupas deeply embedded on earth were also noticed. The shrine entrance is from the east and the area inside consists of passage verandah on three sides. At the centre of the courtyard a massive image of Avalokitesvara with an inscription of twenty five lines on its back was found standing obliquely, supported by loose stones from the back; its placement probably dates to a later Period says the excavator. Flagstones and votive stupas were noticed in the north-west corner of the courtyard. The verandah slightly raised from the courtyard was veneered with bricks and the wall behind it had niches for holding images. Besides the shrine of the presiding deity, there were chambers on the northern and southern side of the main shrine for other deities (IAR 1999-2000: 119; Bandyopadhyay 2007: 51-57).

2.3.2.3.4 Cells

Residential cells are arranged on all sides, on two wings of the central shrine. The cells have a narrow low height door made of stone blocks. The cells altogether thirteen in number thus have their orientation in the following manner, four in the south, three each in the east and west and three on the north. In most of the rooms, there is a small niche for keeping lamp and a bigger niche –use of which appears to have been for keeping an image for personal worship. Bandyopadhyay bases this hypothesis on the discovery of stone images of the same size from a passage that would fit in these niches. Excavations

revealed that the two storeyed monastery underwent stages of repairs and renovations, though no major traces as such can be detected.

2.3.2.3.5 Chronology

The entire monastery area during excavations revealed a mass of debri of fallen building structures and antiquity and therefore the excavator concedes that it was difficult to distinguish and maintain strategraphic sequence in layers. The site according to the excavator, represents a single period with culture ranging between c eight and twelfth centuries CE. The monastery in particular broadly exhibits only two phases of occupation (ibid: 41).

The first phase of the monastery was constructed between c. eight-ninth and tenth century CE and continued to be occupied while during the tenth century gradually veered towards decline. In the tenth century the ground floor was no longer used. The second phase saw the closing up of the windows, some cells by masonry walls. The floor of the upper shrine was re-laid with thick coat of brick jelly etc. High quality bricks with mud mortar were used to build the monastery. The brick sizes are 36×24×8cm, 34×24×7, 36×26×7 cm (ibid: 41-46).

2.3.2.3.6 Structures in the peripheral Area of Monastery

In order to clear the outer area of the monastery for complete exposure and to trace the foundation of the walls, the peripheral area was dug. In the process remnant of disintegrated walls, stupa as well as dump area that possibly earlier perhaps housed some Buddhists temples were uncovered (ibid: 46). In the south-west corner as further clearing up of the area was taken up a spacious water reservoir was discovered. Situated almost on the adjoining hill it has the capacity to contain rain water for use in dry seasons opines the excavator.

2.3.3 Conclusion

The excavation report leaves much to be desired, especially in terms of a discussion on the ceramics from the site. Only nine sherds have been retained with their point provenance because they were inscribed. Again this site indicates that stupa is not the

only object of veneration. The circumbulatory path around the shrine and the provision for individual worship in the cells indicate that notions of the manner in which worship was done had evolved in to another stage.

2.4 Analysis

2.4.1 Excavation reports

Writing excavation reports should encompass a process of reconnection that involves the creation of interpretative networks. This process of reconnection should be twofold. First it is essential that we recreate the connections which defined the relationships between site and artifacts. By doing this we will go some way towards providing a clearer picture of the site that was excavated. Rather than presenting a picture of the site with its compartmentalized artifacts and scientific analyses, we need to create an image of the site with its components in context, either in the order and sequence that makes sense within the overall interpretative connections by bringing together the varying analyses undertaken at both the excavation and post excavation level in an inclusive form of interpretation.

This maxim of what an excavation report should contain does not hold for the excavation reports of Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri. I began reading these reports keeping all these requirements in my mind and believed that very excavation report should tackle a site in such a manner. But an examination of the excavation reports of Ratnagiri, Udayagiri II and Lalitgiri reflect in some senses how difficult it is to evaluate them in the light of the above said statement. The objective of the excavation, the excavation method, what artifacts are retained what are discarded, what or which structures are reconstructed shapes the questions and answers in an excavation report. The absence of any discussion for instance in the excavation reports of the sites Ratnagiri and Udayagiri II on ceramics indicates that they are not a question of priority when the chronology of the site is discussed. In the case of Ratnagiri as well as Udayagiri only those ceramics were retained which are either associated with funerary remains or inscribed or unbroken pots. The reader is left with an impression except the above mentioned pieces of pottery nothing

else was found. However in the case of Ratnagiri[6] I can claim with surety now that the pottery from the site was discarded and can be seen in small dumps around the site. A systematic survey for the collection of this ceramics is however is not possible. Since the dumps consist of very tiny sherds and also there is no scatter of pottery. The small dumps make appearance only in a small part of the site as a result of runoff effect especially after monsoons.

2.4.2 Puspagiri

The fabled monastery of Pushpagiri mentioned by Xuanzang (Watters 1988:193-194) in his travelogue has become the cross bearer of text aided archaeology in Orissa in some senses. Repeatedly even if not mentioned in the excavation reports explicitly the search for this monastery still continues on. The discovery of seals bearing names of different monasteries being *Ratnagiri Mahavihara, Madhava Mahavihara* (Udayagiri I) and *Simhaprastha Vihara* (Udayagiri II) one of the monasteries Lalitgiri possibly as *Sri Chandraditya Vihara* rather rule out the existence of Pushpagiri in this area (Patnaik n.p. : 11). Instead now excavator of the Lagundi hill near Salepur village in Jajpur district claim to have found two inscriptions dated to first century BCE. The first one reads as *Sri Pushpasabharagiraya* and the other as *Puspagiri Kananahaladharakasa praracha Valasa* (ibid: 11) . These seals might confirm that laghundi hills might have had a monastery with the name *Pushpagiri* but it does not however so confirm that this was the same one mentioned by the Chinese traveler. Further a preoccupation with finding places, monasteries in texts ends up neglecting several important issues that could have been explored.

[6] Enquiries about the ceramics collection of this site were made at the Ratnagiri site museum, Bhuwaneswar National museum, Cuttack archaeological circle. The ceramics could not be located. The register for the catalogue of the numbered items at the Ratnagiri museum was also examined but there is no mention of ceramics of any kind other than the ones found in funerary context or those which were unbroken mainly miniature vessels which were retained.

2.4.3 Location and visibility

The location of all the three sites is keeping in mind the need for seclusion that the Buddhist monasteries required. The locations from the point of view of protection are also taken care of. While Ratnagiri is situated on a hill top which would command excellent vantage point to keep an eye on any person approaching the site, the valley protecting the site of Udayagiri from North, South and west also meant that the monks would be able to monitor the movement of any strangers. Moreover the sites are also located near the seat of power which no doubt facilitated the setting up of these monastic complexes. Apparently the locations thus provided them the twin benefit of living on the outskirts of city settlements and at the same time enjoy the benefits of royal patronage. The existence of two monastic complexes with two different names i.e. *Madhava Mahavihara* (Udayagiri I) and *Simhaprastha Vihara* (Udayagiri II) is also very curious. One claims to be a mahavihara the other one is just a vihara. The close proximity of the two complexes as well as their similar chronologies indicates that they came up at the same. Why? What was the nature of their interaction? These are some of the issues that are yet to be answered.

2.4.3.1 Levels of Access

A clear visible division of areas that have various levels of access varies from site to site. In the case of Ratnagiri for instance since the ancient path of access to the site has not been found the hypothesis of access is based on visibility of structures. The structures lie in the sight line of each other. Even though the Main stupa is on the top of the hill and the monasteries are at the dip of that hill there are no visual barriers. Except in the case of Monastery II, where the entrance of the shrine faces a temple. The presence of structural stupas on the eastern side of Monastery II though its extent is not known also gives an impression of seclusion. However the three facades of Monastery I discussed earlier in this chapter does indicate that the notions regarding that particular building were perhaps changing. The construction is such that by the time the second and third façade were constructed the narrow tunnel like view of the main shrine resembled that of what one sees in temples i.e. resembling the entrance to the sanctum sanctorum. In the case of Lalitgiri the monasteries cluster together in an area few kms away from the Stupa/ chaitya

griha area. Their entrances do not face the stupa and one can say that the stupa is visually not placed at a commanding location. This distance is perhaps an indication that there might be a demarcation of ritual spaces. Further the structures at the site of Udayagiri also are not built at such points that they command maximum visibility. Udayagiri I and II which have been identified with two separate names on the basis of seals are not visible from each other's location. Moreover the structures have been constructed very close to each other. For instance the stupa and the monastery of Udayagiri I, are located right in front of each other. The access in this case would have been quite different from the kind witnessed at Ratnagiri for example. While in Ratnagiri these is a discernible measure of distance between the monasteries and the main stupas such is not the case in Udayagiri I.

2.4.3.2 Transitions in Ritual Spaces

The sites are located in the close vicinity of each other and chronologically Lalitgiri (second century BCE to the thirteen century CE) is the oldest, Ratnagiri emerges in the middle (fifth century CE to sixteenth century CE) and Udayagiri (eight-twelfth century CE) is the youngest of the sites. Architecturally in the context of ritual spaces transitions can be discerned. The cluster of votive as well as structural stupas have been noticed around the chaityagriha area in Lalitgiri, in the case of Ratnagiri near the main stupa and around the shrine of Avalokitesvara indicates that the object of veneration was varied and continued unchanged for long period of time. The repeated dedication of votive stupas specifically near these places indicates a continual shared memory which in long term turns the area around that structure equally sacred and venerable.

Further when the worship practices of laity in Buddhism are discussed one of the primary practices that are often focused on is the practice of taking a walk around the Stupa. The stupa interned with a relic of lord Buddha serves as the ultimate affirmed presence of him, hence the walk to be in close contact with the lord. In such a scenario the the presence of ambulatory path around the central shrine in the monastery of Udayagiri II is novel. Perhaps an indication that the individuals who had access to the shrine too undertook a similar manner of worship as one engages in with in the case of a stupa. It needs to be pointed that Udayagiri II has not yielded a Stupa while the site of Udayagiri I has yielded a stupa. Thus one hypothesis of such an absence is perhaps that one needs to

see the site as centre of learning and education rather than residence of monks merely. Further the excavator of Udayagiri II states that small niches meant to keep small idols have been found in the cells of the monastery. Corresponding small idols which fit the size of these niches have also been found. Thus while in the case of Ratnagiri large size niches with images of various bodhisattvas have been found on the side entrance walls of the facades of the shrine, the individualistic nature of the niches in the monastery of Udayagiri II again indicates that there was no one systemized pattern of worship even for the monks/students.

The stupa often treated as the central focus of monastic sites also exhibits the touches of transition. While the stupa at Lalitgiri has yielded relic While the stupa at Lalitgiri has yielded relic with caskets that rival the ones found at Sanchi and have given rise to the speculation that they are too the remains of Lord Buddha and his two disciples. At the site of Udayagiri I, a seven metre high stupa having images of four *dhyani* Buddhas in the niches on all four cardinal directions were discovered. Thus besides indicating the importance of these sites, it also gives rise to question that why these images are present on the stupa. While at Lalitgiri there are a number of votive stupas they are not carved, in Ratnagiri on the other hand the votive stupas are regularly carved with various bodhisattva images, again in Udayagiri the votive stupas are carved with very few bodhisattvas. The different types and styles of stupas not only indicate the transitions in Buddhism but also indicate what is accepted or discarded over a period of time. The example of *dhyani* Buddhas for example is bold statement of tantric Buddhism, clearly indicating that the sect had gained followers and was thriving. As well as indicating the changes in the belief system from the veneration of Lord Buddha to a manifestation of his qualities embodied in these *dhyani* Buddhas. Curious however is the fact that there are five *dhyani* Buddhas from which deities emerge. However in the case of Udayagiri only four appear on the stupa in cardinal directions. Since the excavation report is as of now unpublished it is not clear which of the *dhyani* Buddhas has been left out; a significant omission that needs to be investigated further. Vajrayāna included within its purview all varieties of tenets, notions, dogmas, theories and rites to bolster the number of followers. The local cults were often assimilated to make the transition easy as can be seen from the presence of rare maithuna cravings on the facades of monastery I in Ratnagiri. Thus one

can perhaps speculate that the presence of the *dhyani* Buddhas on the stupa is not only a visual claim of the religion but perhaps also a tool of proselytizing for the masses.

2.4.4 Chronology

In the case of Ratnagiri and Udayagiri II the chronology of the site is entirely dependent on statigraphy, dating through sculptural depictions, epigraphic details. In the process for example in the case of Monastery I (Ratnagiri) the discussion veers towards the origin, pinnacle and decline of the structure. Other questions regarding activities with the intermittent times, its relation to other structures on the site, the ramifications of the structure marking the landscape of Ratnagiri are not asked. The construction patterns of the monasteries of these sites provide an idea of the number of occupants. Also this study indicates that the repeated construction patterns of the monasteries of these sites also provide an idea of the number of occupants. The numbers see an increase roughly around eighth century CE in all the sites when expansion of the structures as well the number of the monasteries goes up which corresponds with the increase in patronage enjoyed by Buddhism in Orissa. For example Monastery II was constructed during this period and the second story of Monastery I was constructed in the site of Ratnagiri. During this period all the cells in Monastery I on the ground floor were filled except three. Again during the period of changing political fortunes at the end of thirteenth century CE these sites again see a decrease in numbers of resident in the face of dwindling patronage. The ground floor of the monasteries are abandoned and filled; only the top floors are occupied. Thus it can be safely said that a part of the monk and student population leaves these sites or the cells are filled beyond their capacity. This practice of filling the ground floor is perhaps a measure to strengthen the base of the cells constructed over them.

John C. Barrett points to loopholes in the archaeological investigations of a given landscape. Pointing to the priority that absolute dates are given in the process of establishing linear chronologies. Artifacts, monuments or buildings often become the primary evidence of this type of pursuit. Why were they made in a certain manner and for what purpose are the two primary questions that are dealt with. In this process the artifacts for example are given a single "date of origination" (1999:21) i.e. when they were produced. A reflection of the 'traditions' and technology later they constitute the

part of residual. What is not enough stressed however that associative ideas and believes are not stagnant, neither so can be there a single associative idea with artifacts. Strategraphic dating and functional ascription privileges the Period and purposes of construction points out Barret. This approach is marked often by an absolute absence of understanding of the kind of activities that possibly could have taken place in times of stability and maintenance. Rather than developing only a chronological sequence of construction, occupation and abandonment; how a set of monuments came to mark the landscape needs to also be made a part of this pursuit (ibid: 25). I agree with the author; when he urges for a dual understanding that attempts at straddling both the 'original' intentions of the builders and the subsequent process of disassociation, discontinuity and perhaps rediscovery as well. The sites thus need to be subjected to questions which are not related to searches for absolute dates.

2.4.5 Inscriptions and the question of patronage

Discussions on political history of Orissa for the Period between fourth to twelfth centuries center on the growth of regional kingdoms. The rise of these kingdoms was accompanied by the growing phenomena of land grants to religious institutions. With the growth in the number of monasteries, Buddhism was institutionalised and land grants by royal families were made not only for personal piety but also to gain political legitimacy as non-sectarian monarchs. The mahaviharas of Ratnagiri no doubt acted as a catalyst for the growth of economic and religious centers (see Jha 2003). The following discussion will focus on inscriptional evidence from the sites of Ratnagiri, Udayagiri II and Lalitgiri to examine the relationship of the monasteries with royal patronage, and attempt to address the following questions: What was the nature of this patronage? Is there a connection between political legitimacy through the land grants and religious establishments, as the conventional theories state?

The political history of ancient and early medieval Orissa is fairly complex, as the area has witnessed the rise and fall of many dynasties. One of the problems of reconstructing a continuous narrative of the political history of this region is the uncertainty that surrounds the initial dates mentioned in royal inscriptions related to the rule of dynasties like the Bhauma-Karas and the Ganga dynasty. Royal inscriptions are an articulation of political

authority, and provide important information about the antecedents of various lineages, the political geography of kingdoms and political centers (Singh 2006: 190-194). It is certainly true that the *praśastis* of the royal grants contains poetic embellishment, conventional rhetoric and downright flattery. But if examined carefully, the *praśastis*, the seals and the invocations of the grants allow us to reconstruct elements that pertain to both the ideal and the practice of kingship. These inscriptions also reflect how kings of Orissa established; proclaimed and maintained their connections with religious domain. The sectarian epithets often used by the kings reflect their personal religious leanings. The earliest assumptions of specific Vaisnava or Śaiva epithets by the kings of Orissa dates to about the fifth century, and became quite common thereafter. The *parama-māheśvara* is one such epithet belonging to the Śaiva sect. In Orissa and adjoining areas, the majority of royal grants through the early medieval Period were made in favour of brāhmanas, though some were made to other religious establishments as well (ibid: 193-196).

The primary source employed in the reconstruction of the history of the Bhauma-Kara dynasty are their epigraphic records. The twenty four epigraphic records of Bhauma-Karas discovered often bear the motifs of the couchant bull, the crescent moon and sun, the conch, the elephant goad and floral designs. The name of the donor king or queen in the genitive or the normative case appears often on the seals (Singh 1994: 98). The early Bhauma-Karas were Buddhists; this is attested to by one of the earliest inscriptions, the Neulpur plate of Śubhākaradeva: "Lines 1-3 record that there was an illustrious king in the family of Bhauma named Kṣmaṅkaradeva who was a *Paramopāsaka*, 'a follower of the Buddhist faith'. He had an illustrious son named Śivakaradeva, endowed with the religious title of *Paramatathāgata,* 'a devout worshipper of the Buddha'. Lines 3-5 record that from Śivakaradeva was born the illustrious king Śubhakara, the reigning king who issued the charter. He has been endowed with the title of Paramasugata, 'the devout worshipper of the sugata'." (Tripaty 2000: 114). These Buddhist epithets frequently are mentioned in inscriptions issued right until the conclusion of the reign of the monarch Śubhakara.

Among the few royal grants to Buddhist establishments given under the rule Bhauma-Karas are the two Talcher plates issued by Śivakaradeva, which record the grant of kallāṇigrāma and Surabhipura village to Buddhist establishments in Pūrvarāṣṭra viṣya and Koraṭṭi-Khaṇḍa (both located in north Tosali) respectively, at the behest of the Rāṇaka Vinītatuṅga (Triparty 2000: 140-153; Singh 1994: 253-54). These are the only two inscriptions that mention the donation of land to Buddhist establishments. How, then, do we understand the rise and growth of the above mentioned sites? The chronological phases of growth and decline of these sites is often discussed in terms of the patronage received under the rule of Bhauma-Karas. However, no direct evidence of such can be found from the epigraphic evidence.

Only a single inscription which records a land grant has been discovered from the site of Ratnagiri. These were three plates originally strung together in a ring. The plates were discovered in the possession of different individuals by Debala Mitra, the excavator, and were found to be inscribed in Sanskrit. These entail a charter issued by Paramamāhēśvara Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja Paramēśvara Sōṁakulatilaka Trikaliṅgādhipati Karṇadēva**,** known as Mahāśivagupta, from Yayātinagara. Its object was to record the grant of the village of Kōṇā, which was within the Brahmō-Aṭṭhāvīsa khaṇḍa (sub-division) of Uttar-Tōsalī to Rāṇi Karpūraśrī who was the granddaughter of Udayamatī (on the paternal side) and the daughter of Mahārīmā- Huṇadevī, and belonged to the Kāśyapa gōtra, having three pravaras. According to Mitra, the fact that the inscription states that the donee came from the salonapura monastery suggests that she was a Buddhist, although, if so, the proclamation of her gotra with three pravaras seems incongruous. Mitra also states that her title 'Rani' is enigmatic and it is not clear whether she was the wife of a ranaka or one of Karna's secondary queens (E.I. XXXIII 1959-60: 263). D. C. Sirkar, however, points out that the word *Pautrī* needs to be seen not only in the context of Karpūraśrī being described as a Rāṇī but also in the context of her being described as the daughter of a woman and the granddaughter of another woman, and thus as 'the daughter's daughter'. According to him, the absence of any information on the patrilineal side of her ancestry as well as the special mention of matrilineal relations suggests that she was the daughter of a prostitute. He cites examples found in the donative inscriptions from the Period of the Chālukya king Vijayāditya, which describe,

in one instance, a donation made by a "harlot", who is also described as the daughter's daughter. Further, he explains that if Karpūraśri was the secondary queen or concubine of the Sōmavaṁśī king Karṇa, the suffix devi would have been placed after her name to indicate this status. The fact that the names of her mother and her grandmother are given in the inscription as also that her mother's name is affixed with the title a Maharima (or the mother of a Mahari), she appears to have been daughter of a "prostitute" or a devadasi. He continues that a devadasi could not possibly have been the associated with a Buddhist monastery, that she could not have been a resident of the Solanapur monastery, and that the reference in the inscription should probably be interpreted as indicating that Karpūraśri lived in the vicinity of the salonapura monastery (E.I. XXXIII 1959-60: 272). This inscription thus provides the social background of the done, but the inscription belongs to a later Period , and therefore does not provide us with any clues as to how the monastery complex came up at the site or how it sustained itself.

Excavations at both Udayagiri 1 and 2 as well as at Lalitgiri have yielded a number of inscriptions of various kinds, including stone sculptures, stone slabs and votive stupas. They are all religious in nature and no land grants or references to any king or political events mentioned in them. Though all the three centers are close to Jajpur, the seat of power for both Bhauma-Karas and Sōmavaṁśī, the question of royal patronages still remains unanswered.

Thus, we are left with the question of how these monasteries sustained themselves/ Where did the grants come from? Instead of looking for direct royal patronage, as Singh has suggested in her study of inscriptions of Orissa, perhaps it is time to look for other possibilities of sources of patronage. The Talcher plates clearly indicate that the grants were made at the behest of a feudatory. Therefore, the possibility of similar patronage needs to be explored for these sites. While one must acknowledge, thus, that these monastic complexes are of such importance that they could quite possibly have been patronized by the contemporary kings, it is clear that the questions regarding how they came up and survived for such large tracts of time, particularly Ratnagiri, which has been dated from 5^{th} to the 16^{th} century CE, require more concrete evidence and perhaps also new research in and around the sites.

2.5Conclusion

It has been well documented that landscapes are not static; rather they are in a continuous state of development, replacement and termination (Riley and Harvey 2005). These processes change the way people see, use and understand their surroundings. To understand landscapes of the past is to do so in relation to the beliefs and perceptions of those who occupied the region. The sites of Udayagiri, Lalitgiri and Ratnagiri thus need to be seen in relation to each other. Individual isolatory research of these sites has prevented the understanding as to why and how the the Assia hill was chosen for these monastic settlements. This region clearly was viewed favorably by both monks and kings alike for setting up of monastic complexes. But further intensive survey around the vicinity of these three sites need to be done. What other kind of settlements existed in this area? Were there smaller monasteries also co existing with these bigger monasteries? These sites need to be understood in their regional context and viewed in a larger physical and cultural context. That is the significance of the place is understood in the way it contributes to the whole. As such it is argued that a place can never be fully understood unless its place in the physical and cultural landscape is understood. Why were these hills favorable for such settlements? Was it because these were rich fertile tracts of land? On the basis of analysis of style of architecture and sculptures scholars have all along agreed that these three sites witnessed similar development in techniques and styles. Its time however to try and connect the sites in other new ways to each other and other known sites whether it's a question of inter-site interaction or the questions regarding how and why did these sites come up in this region need to be asked.

Thus it is quite clear that there are a lot of blanks in the information that we have on the sites of Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitgiri. There is a need to move beyond cataloguing artifacts and providing absolute dates that would help in pushing the antiquity of the sites. Questions on patronage generally assume in the case of these three sites that with the political fortunes of the region they would receive patronage or the patronage would be withdrawn. The study on the single inscription on Ratnagiri points to the fact that alternate sources of patronage need to be thought about.

Chapter Three

Conservation of Site: Issues and Problems

Archaeological conservation is concerned with sites, structures and associated artefacts that are the focus of archaeological study. The philosophy typical of archaeological conservation has a scientific focus reflecting the way in which this branch of conservation developed in the late nineteenth and twentieth century (Pyre 2009: 129). However the issue of conservation and restoration suffers from certain dilemmas usually discussed in terms of great work of art that have been allowed to decay, prompting accusations of criminal neglect, or else laboriously restored, occasioning charges of criminal damages (see Reé 2009). The genesis of this discussion can be traced to sculptor Antonio Canovas's refusal in 1816 to restore the fragmentary sculptures brought from Greece to England by Lord Elgin on the grounds that no one, not even he, could improve on the style of the original artist, and that their fragmentary state should thus remain unaltered. His stand defied the contemporaneous convention of fully restoring fragmentary antique sculptures; indeed in that same year, Danish sculptor and collector Bertel Thorvaldsen completely restored the sculptures of the pediment of the temple of Aphaia at Aegina, including the addition of modern replacement heads, limbs, drapery and armour. Canovas's refusal to intervene kindled two of conservation's fundamental principles; the desire to preserve the authentic work of art unsullied by restoration and the acceptance of damage incurred since its conception (Richmond and Bracker 2009: xvi). Thus the central question that arises is how should conservation be undertaken and in what manner?

The following discussion will focus on the conservation practices worldwide. It will try and delve into several issues and ask various questions that might be relevant to any scholar or researcher tackling with conservation practices. What are the accepted modes of conservation or restoration? Who is responsible for conservation? Is the primary aim of an archaeologist merely to ensure the safe arrival of the objects from the field? Should

the responsibility of conservation and restoration be only shouldered by museums only? This discussion then will veer towards the colonial legacy of conservation policies in India. Also if in Post Independence era these policies have been changed or altered, what are the new concerns that now surround the question of conservation? This separation of pre and post independence eras to discuss issues of conservation is necessary to the show how far the policies that dictate the fate of sites , monuments and artefacts have changed. The site of Ratnagiri has been taken up as a case study to show what policies are being followed for the conservation, restoration and the upkeep of the site.

"Introductory archaeology texts devote very little discussion to the problems of preservation and conservation beyond a brief statement above the responsibility to conserve. Those texts that elaborate further usually suggests that real conservation goes on "at the museum" and that the primary aim of the archaeologist should be to insure the safe arrival there of objects from the field" (Bourque *et al* 1980: 794-95). This statement sums up the issues that plague how and what type of conservation practices and policies are followed around the world. Some of the issues that will be taken up for discussion in the following sections are the various measures that can and are taken to conserve sites, the importance of educating the public about Heritage and so forth.

3.1 Conservation

Archaeological sites are widely recognized as being limited in number and their nature render them vulnerable to destruction from both natural elements and humans. Cultural material that make up the archaeological context range from being highly perishable, capable of being preserved only under certain conditions, to nearly indestructible items such as stone and ceramic artefacts. Methodically destroyed at an alarming rate sites are often the primary concern of conservators. But what about the material things produced by past human activities such as artefacts, structures and monuments, are not paid much attention. Conservation concerns of today are rapidly undergoing changes and it is now being realized that sites and the material assemblage from them both require equal attention of the conservators since once the site is destroyed then it is irreversible. Following are some of the salient points of the conservation policies and measures that are now being used worldwide to conserve sites.

3.1.1 Excavation as a measure of conservation

Salvage archaeology in the United States developed initially as a response to the growing recognition by the archaeological profession and by some members of government and business that the supply[1] of archaeological sites was not infinite and that important sites, once lost, could never be duplicated among the supply of sites remaining, let alone be replaced. The response was to excavate sites threatened with immediate destruction - to salvage as much information as possible with the time, money, and methods available (Lipe 1974: 214). It has however been realized over the past decade that salvage archaeology should be carried out only as a last resort, and should combine a strong problem orientation with additional work designed to preserve a representative sample of the data to be lost when the site or sites are destroyed. Sites not immediately threatened with destruction should be dug only when the data needs of a problem cannot be met from the available sites being already excavated. Such problem-oriented research should be conducted so as to leave as much of the archaeological resource as possible for future workers (ibid: 213-245). There is a general assumption that archaeological remains are best safe guarded in situ and it is often argued that excavation should take place only when a site is threatened, although research interests may justify excavation of unthreatened areas. However it is increasingly difficult to conserve sites in this way as they are threatened by changing land use. Increased mobility of tourism damages sites through over visiting. Climate changes damages buried sites through rise and fall in the water table or through erosion caused by storms and flood (Pyre 2009: 130).

Also over the past three decades it is being increasingly pointed out that conservation input for an archaeological excavation should begin long before work in the field (Borque *et al* 1980: 795). The preservation of the site and its artefacts are thus entirely dependent on the methods applied to excavate them, the reason for the excavation and the conservation of the site (whether *in situ* or by removing parts of it) and artefacts depend on a closer collaboration between archaeologists and conservators.

[1] I have used 'supply' an economic term to demarcate the growing trend within which archaeological sites are increasingly becoming important economic sources primarily through tourism.

3.1.2 Excavation and conservation techniques

Archaeological sites which have been excavated are usually backfilled for preservation. Structural components which are difficult to conserve in their original, unearthed state when using the backfilling method, such as pillar bases and platform exteriors made of tuff, are subjected to preservation treatment after removal from the site. However, the ideal situation would be to preserve the excavation site as is, with the entire site exposed, without backfilling or removing site components. When an excavation is carried out with a view to preserve and organizes the site post-excavation, conservation techniques becomes involved in a variety of forms. Investigating the material and structure of unearthed artefacts and remains yields important information in determining the archaeological nature of the site. An environmental investigation is also needed to find out the geographical conditions of the site as well as the state of preservation of the remains. Ultimately, it becomes necessary to formulate a conservation plan which takes all of this information into account in a comprehensive manner.

3.1.3 Interpretation through restoration

Restoration should not alter materials, or conceal the effects of use, discard and burial. As far as possible, fills or reconstructed features are designed to be readily removable and are toned to be the general colour of the fabric rather than matched precisely the principle being that viewers should be able to distinguish original from restoration. Furthermore the reconstruction and reshaping of objects should not be undertaken if the damage relates to their original use or to their deposition or reflects significant events relating to their discovery. In any case reshaping can be controversial because of the risk of losing technical evidence (Pyre 2009:134).

3.1.4 Heritage and Public Education

“Heritage use retrospective memories of the past to convey a fabricated sense of the future” (Harvey 2008: 22). Heritage is often intertwined with identity and territory, where individuals and communities are often in competition or outright conflict (Silverman and Ruggles 2007: 3). The values perceived in the archaeological heritage by various

segments of the society depend on the different qualities and meanings attached to these sites. These interest groups do not cherish the same things and their perceptions of what is important about a site are very often in conflict. Thus it is important that the conservation and up keep of a site need to be in tandem with the interests of these groups. Tourism is a primary factor of conflict between groups. It has become a primary source of income, but also led to land tussle with locals. The locals access the archaeological sites for purposes of worship as often the ancient structures like temples and mosques continue to be used in the present day. Any restriction on access to these places leads a conflict of interest.

Public education and its objective, public support, is the key to the whole undertaking. Individual acts of vandalism are one of the principal threats to the resource and cannot be stopped without a large-scale change in public opinion about archaeology. If more of the public understood and respected archaeological values, greater self-restraint would be exercised, land-holding agencies would find it easier to justify the expenditures for archaeological patrols, and law-enforcement and judicial agencies would be more eager to utilize existing antiquities laws (Lipe 1974: 216).

In order to educate the public about archaeology and heritage which will result in better conservation of sites, it is important to know how people prefer to learn about it. Understanding the public's preferred method for learning is just as important as understanding how they currently learn about it. The students should learn about archaeology and archaeologists work as part of their school curriculum (Ramos and Duganne 2000: 18).

I sum up with some of the basic principles that conservation manuals discuss. For instance *Conervation Manual For Northern Archaeologists* (Scott 2007) states certain prior requisites before excavations.

Prior to Fieldwork

a) Retain the services of a qualified conservator who will assume responsibility for the conservation of archaeological objects.

b) Demonstrate that adequate funds have been allocated for artefact conservation.

c) Submit the conservator's current resume and a letter confirming their participation in the project.

During Excavation

a) The field project should include conservation packing materials and supplies.

b) All personnel should be briefed on appropriate techniques for handling, packing and storage of artefacts while in the field.

c) Artefacts must be packed to prevent drying or breakage during the post-excavation period

and shipping.

d) Wet or damp artefacts must be kept wet or damp prior to conservation.

e) All artefact packages must be labeled with a Borden catalogue number.

f) A packing list of the artefacts with their catalogue number, name of object and material should be sent with the artefacts.

After Excavation

a) Any interim research facility for the artefacts must provide an adequate environment and

safekeeping for artefacts under analysis.

b) Artefacts should be sent to the conservator immediately or as soon as possible after the completion of the field excavation (ibid:3).

Keeping these requirements in mind, further it needs to be pointed that there are certain standards and ethics that need to be followed while finally conserving a structure or an artefact. Even though every historical structure, site and artefact has very individualistic needs, certain standards should be maintained while under taking conservation. Following are some them:

A) The condition of the objection at the beginning and at various stages of treatment, all methods and material used during conservation should be recorded.

B) Historical evidence should be fully recorded without falsification, destruction or removed without necessary reason for such intervention.

C) Any intervention should be necessary and must maintain the original architectural, historical and physical integrity of the cultural property.

D) The conservation undertaken, methods followed should be published so that it benefits other future similar projects.

E) The conservation methods applied should be reversible.

D) The conservation undertaken should retain maximum amount of existing material, should be harmonious in colour, texture, tone, form and scale if additions are necessary ; but should be noticeable than the original material (Feilden 1993: 8-9).

Colin Pearson (1987) states in the Preface of Butterworth's, *Conservation of Marine Archaeological Objects* that, "excavation without conservation is vandalism". Indeed the act of excavation is destructive and requires to be tempered by a comprehensive policy of conservation. The following section takes up the issue of conservation in India under British rule. The focus is on finding the roots of conservation policy in India and also to understand the politics of how and when the sites that are famous now as a beacon of Indian cultural heritage were discovered and documented.

3.2 The colonial politics of archaeology and conservation in British India[2]

The second half of the nineteenth century was an age of archaeological discovery and documentation in India, the colonial government sponsored a great part of it. A separate department was created during this period to impart a greater degree of co-ordination and coherence to archaeological research in India. This was the Archaeological Survey of India, which was established in 1861 with Alexander Cunningham as its first Director-General (Singh 2004: 34). But it was also a time of the destruction of many ancient sites and structures. The official correspondence of the colonial state constantly blamed the indifference and vandalism of 'ignorant' natives but there were occasional murmurs of awareness of the other agents of destruction. One of these was the colonial archaeologist whose enthusiasm for discovery was not sufficiently tempered or curbed by a concern for preservation. Swiftly expanding network of road and railway lines converted numerous ancient structures into rubble under the direction of road builders and railway contractors (Singh 2004: 184).

[2] (Rai 2004: 184)

The archaeological undertaking of the government of India was tempered by several factors. It was driven by the passion felt by individuals like Curzon for preservation of historic monuments, who deplored the inertia and disinterest of their colonial predecessors. The latter believed that the conservation of India's historical monuments was 'one of the primary obligations' of the government. The archaeological project in India was shaped by the evolution of 'scientific history' in Europe which inspired men such as William Jones, James Prinsep, James Fergusson, Alexander Cunningham to reconstruct the ancient history of India (Rai 2004: 184-185). This archaeological endeavor also served as a mechanism of establishing the legitimacy of colonial government in India. Unlike in Europe and elsewhere, where private wealth often funded the archaeological research and conservation of ancient monuments; in India however it began as a government responsibility and has remained so.

In the halcyon days of the company rule in India, officials transferred unrestricted the historical and cultural wealth of India abroad as trophies of conquest. This practice however was halted if not completely stopped specially after 1857 when the civilizing mission of the crown necessitated the construction of legitimacy in the full view of the beneficiary Indians. Through the task of archaeological conservation they claimed the right to rule as successors to previous rulers with view of sharing and safekeeping the historical legacy of India with Indians.

3.2.1 *In situ* versus the Removal of Antiquities to Museums[3]

The continuing discovery of ancient sites and artefacts gave rise to concerns about their custody, removal and display. To give light to some pertinent issues that rose due to the growth of imperial, provincial and local museums the views of Cunningham and Cole have been taken up to demarcate the issues that surrounded the question of conservation.

Cunningham's views on these issues were fairly clear, he was not a particularly keen supporter of the *in situ* principle. As far as the most suitable place for the deposit of antiquities was concerned, he thought the most important ones should be housed in the Indian museums in Calcutta, where they were both safe and accessible (Singh 2004: 213).

[3] (Singh 2004:212)

Cunningham when consulted on the issue of the repairs of old structures often gave suggestions which were highly destructive. For instance, in 1872, he suggested that the roof and ceiling of the Diwani-i-Khas in the Agra Fort which were suffering damage due to damp, be replaced by a corrugated tin roof. This suggestion was not accepted. In 1874, the government of India was seriously considering to peel the Ajanta frescoes off the cave walls by a special peeling off method. The idea was to remove them and relocate the frescoes to some other place in Hyderabad, Bombay, or London where they would presumably be safer and could be viewed by a larger audience. Cunningham's opinion was sought, and he recommended that although there was an element of risk involved, it was a good idea to go in for the peeling operation. Luckily, his advice was not accepted (Singh 2009: 67).

Even more serious is the charge that he was personally responsible for destroying a number of historical monuments. In 1851, he and Maisey spent months opening various stupas at Sanchi, Sonari, Satdhara, Andher and Bhojpur. He describes in Bhilsa topes, the procedure he adopted to swiftly dig a vertical and horizontal shaft into the core of the stupas to see if they contain any relics (Singh 2009: 68).

According to Cole conservation involved taking custody, preservation, restoration and illustration. The first two criterions could be left to the local authorities. The third and the forth i.e. preservation and illustration required special staff with special qualifications and skills. Cole was not an advocate of rampant restoration rather encouraged that the focus should be on maintenance. He suggested that historical buildings under the occupation of British military establishment be freed from such control. He emphasized the importance of photographic documentation as well as the preparation of drawings of the plans and elevations of important monuments. According to him the replicas of ancient remains a made and housed in museums rather than uprooting the artefacts from the sites (Singh 2004: 205-6).

Thus in the light of the above discussion it becomes imperative to understand how sites like Amravati and Sanchi were discovered, excavated and restored. Amravati one of the major Buddhist sites first caught the attention of Colin Mackenzie on a tour of duty in the district in 1797. It seems two years prior to Mackenzie's visit the Rajah of Chintapilly

attracted by the sanctity of a siva temple under the name of Amareśvara, determined to erect a city on the spot and on looking for building materials for his new capital, opened this and several neighbouring mounds and also utilized the walls of the old city of Dharaṇikotta which was located 1.20 km from the site of the new city. Many of the antiquities perished in the process, and large quantities of the stones were used by the raja in building the temple and palaces. But several sculptured slabs still remained *in situ*. Being now Surveyor General of Madras, Mackenzie employed all the means at his disposal during the two following years to the elucidation of the principal temple, which he now styles Dīpaldinna (Fergusson 1868: 150). In 1816 under his instructions careful plans, maps and 80 drawings of sculptures were made by his assistants (Clements and Markham 1871: 185).

Sir Walter Elliot, the commissioner of Guntoor in 1840, excavated a portion of the monument, and sent 160 fragments of sculpture to Madras which were forwarded to the India house in 1856. Some of these sculptures were exhibited in the museum at Fyfe House, and the others, on account of want of space, were placed in store, where they remained until they were brought to the notice of Fergusson who had them photographed (ibid : 186). Fergusson published his *Tree and Serpent Worship* in 1868 which described the remains of Amravati and Sanchi. This was the first detailed textual and photographic account of Amravati[4].

In 1880 Amravati was hastily again excavated by J. Horsfall, collector of the Kistna district. Horsfall had no qualifications[5] for the job and the result was hasty, sloppy and scarcely supervised excavation of the site. Horsfall's hasty work attracted a lot of

[4] Fergusson never visited the site; hence his interpretation of the site was entirely based on the reading of Mackenzie's (1807) description of the site. For instance going by the frequent depictions of the trees and serpents, he concluded that although there were many Buddhists scenes, the dominating feature was their representation of the worship of trees and serpents. (see, Singh 2004)

[5] Robert Sewell, the Acting Head Assistant Collector of the Kistna District had in 1977-78 conducted a small excavation on the southern part of the mound and exposed a number of sculptures. He was one of the first individuals who realized the potential of the site as well as the danger of destruction that it faced. His repeated request that a larger fund needed to be allocated for further investigation as well as a full time on site archaeologist was required were not attended to (Singh 2004:41).

criticism from several quarters and also further led to a tussle between the head of Archaeological Survey of Southern India James Burgess and the curator of Ancient Monuments Captain H.H.Cole regarding the fate of the site. While Burgess thought it was a good idea to transport the best of the sculpted stones to Madras; Cole was in strong favour of *in situ* preservation (Singh 2004: 43-45). He suggested that sections standing in their original position should be secured using concrete, cement and iron bars. He further recommended that the fragmentary sculptures be collected and housed in a permanent shed on the site, construction of a wall around the stupa and a chowkidar placed to restrict access and thereby protect the site. However Burgess saw no point in following this course of action. Since there was no monument to be protected, only scattered parts remained which could not be put together; hence it was better to remove the remaining intact stones to Madras museum (ibid: 45). In this situation of impasse the matter was referred to Cunningham who was in agreement with Burgess and the Madras government tired of the whole affair simply send the stones packed by Burgess to the Madras museum (ibid: 46). Thus the tale of Amravati is merely not just about the repeated excavations and removal of its material. It also reveals the complex relationship between discovery, documentation and destruction of archaeology in colonial state of India. Systematic archaeological research as well as in situ preservation were yet to develop and in the face of often indifferent bureaucracy failed to hear the sound advice of individuals like Swell and Cole.

The story of the exploration, exploitation and restoration of the monuments at Sanchi is a long one, covering a century from 1819 to 1919. There are four major groups of Buddhist monuments located in the vicinity of the town of Bhilsa. Located on the top of a low sandstone hill, the monuments of Sanchi included the Great Stupa as well as several other stupas, pillars and temples (Paddayya 2009: 23). The stupas were discovered and first described by Captain Fell. Prompted by the eleven page hand written report of Fell and the three drawings Maddock, political agent at Bhopal and Captain Johnson, his assistant excavated the first and second stupa in 1822, when the whole solid brickwork was found without any appearance of recess (Cumming 2005: 314). Lieutenant F.C. Maisey who had been employed by the government of India to carry on special archaeological work in the upper Betwa districts of Central India, prepared in 1849 an illustrated report on the

stupas at Sanchi, their sculptures and inscriptions. Alexander Cunningham joined Captain Maisey at Sanchi in 1851. They sank perpendicular shafts down the middle, not only of one of the three big stupas at Sanchi, but also of fifty other stupas at Sonari, Satdhara, Pipaliya and Andher for recovering relics enshrined therein (Cunningham 1852: 109). The excavations were undertaken rapidly is evident from the fact the relics from the stupas were discovered in a matter of hours. As in the previous case, neither Cunningham nor Maisey thought it necessary to repair the structural breaches they had created (Lahiri 2004: 55).

Before 1851, the western gateway had also fallen. Cunningham suggested that the two fallen gateways of the Sanchi Tope should be removed to British Museum which would ensure their preservation. Evidently encouraged by this recommendation Napoleon III requested the Begum of Bhopal to present one of the gateways to be erected in Paris in 1868. The government of India however did not approve of any removal of any portion of the Sanchi remains (Cumming 2005: 314). Concurring on this matter the discussion on the fate of gateways from Sanchi it was further agreed upon that all archaeologists must concur heartily in the policy of retaining ancient Indian monuments in situ, and that the government should also keep the chief ones in repair (Journal of the Society of Arts 1869: 869).

Under the aegis of Captain H.H. Cole in the course of two years from 1880 clearance was made and the railing and gateways were repaired. In 1912 Sir John Marshall started work and devoted seven seasons to excavation and conservation of the monuments of Sanchi. The operations carried on by him may be summarized under the following heads: (i) Clearance of the whole enclave. (ii) excavation of the areas to the south and east of the Great Stupa. (iii) Complete repair of all the monuments. (iv) rebuilding of the strong retaining wall between the central and the eastern terraces. (v) arrangement for the effective drainage of the surrounding area. (vi) the improvement of the site by leveling, turfing and tree planting. (viii) Building of a small museum on the site for the exhibiting of loose sculptures, inscriptions and architectural fragments (Cumming 2005: 315).

The founding principles of conservation that are at present followed by the Archaeological Survey of India and Public Works Department were laid by John

Marshall. The main principles underlying conservation were clearly set forth in a departmental manual, entitled *Conservation Manual* (1923), which covers the entire field and anticipates most of the difficulties met by conservators. Since the next section of this chapter discusses the current policies of Archaeological Survey of India, it is quite significant to discuss and understand the salient points of this manual. Marshall is quite clear that that the archaeological, Public works or other officers charged with the execution of conservation work should seek to preserve the ancient buildings and not renew them in any way. The repairs should the use of the original parts as they lend authenticity and are of more value than any new work. Thus he states that the historical value of the monuments is gone when their authenticity is destroyed (ibid: 10-11). Further while specifying the details of the repair he is quite vocal about what and in which manner replacements or reproductions should be achieved. For instance in his discussion on the restoration of carvings and images he states that one should be cautious against indiscriminate re-erection of images in the wrong places. Carved stones, bricks and tiles should be restored only if the original former place is determined with certainty. Additionally he instructs that the repair of divine or human figures should not be attempted; broken images should not be repaired with new limbs or other new parts. Also empty niches should remain empty, spaces occupied by images in friezes and string courses should in repaired portions be left blank (ibid: 26). When the conservation of cave temples, monasteries was to be undertaken Marshall clearly states that all such reconstructions in terms of new stone work for instance should match in texture, colour with the original structural details (ibid: 27). It is quite interesting to find that in order to achieve this uniformity for instance in the colour of stone work Marshall advocates artificial staining of new so that it resembles the dark tint of the older pieces (ibid: 58-59).

This manual not only instructs on how to restore, but also the methods through which it can be achieved. Thus there are details of how to make staining agents, glue cement and lime mortar. Marshall also arms the conservators with a full knowledge of the legalities of how the conservation should be undertaken, what are the points of agreement that need to be remembered while negotiating with the private owners of religious monuments for instance, creating estimates of the cost of conservation and upkeep. A commendable job

is achieved through this manual but it is apparent given the current accepted methods of conservation that when additions of any kind and nature are made now to a monument it is imperative that it should show. While Marshall is careful to point out that new additions to broken images should not be made, but he also wants the conservators to restore stone works in such a manner that the restored new pieces resemble with the older ones. The public that would view such restoration work would not be able to tell the difference. Modern day conventions on conservation state that reconstruction of any kind should be apparent to naked eye, that the individual who views it should be able to tell what was restored and what is original.

Thus the above brief discussion on the legacy and the beginnings of archaeological conservation in India indicates that discoveries, documentation and restoration of ancient monuments were challenged by the bureaucracy, untrained officials acting as archaeologist. The methods of how and what to conserve were in their nascent form. However it would be wrong to assume that individuals like Marshall were not conscious of the need to preserve and protect the monuments. Further the several acts passed by the government of colonial India also indicate the recognition of the need to stop carting off material found during surveys and excavations to the museums of Britain for instance. These acts were then modified post independence to include a larger of monuments that were declared as protected sites.[6]

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[6] The Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878 (Act No. VI of 1878) was promulgated to protect and preserve treasure found accidentally but had the archaeological and historical value. This Act was enacted to protect and preserve such treasures and their lawful disposal. In a landmark development in 1886, James Burgess, the then Director General succeeded in prevailing upon the Government for issuing directions: forbidding any person or agency to undertake excavation without prior consent of the Archaeological Survey and debarring officers from disposing of antiquities found or acquired without the permission of the Government.

The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904 (Act No. VII of 1904) provided effective preservation and authority over the monument particularly those, which were under the custody of individual or private ownership. The Antiquities Export Control Act, 1947 (Act No. XXXI of 1947) and Rules thereto which provided a regulation over the export of antiquities under a license issued by the Director General and

3.3 Conservation in Post Independence India

The Archaeological survey of India is responsible for the maintenance of ancient monuments and archaeological sites and remains. The science branch of the Archaeological Survey of India is responsible for mainly for the chemical conservation

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empowering him to decide whether any article, object or thing is or is not an antiquity for the purpose of the act and his decision was final.

In 1951, The Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951 (No LXXI of 1951) was enacted. Consequently, all the ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains protected earlier under 'The Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904' (Act No. VII of 1904) were re-declared as monuments and archaeological sites of national importance under this Act. In order to bring the Act on par with constitutional provisions and providing better and effective preservation to the archaeological wealth of the country, The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act 1958 (No 24 of 1958) was enacted on 28th August 1958. This Act provides for the preservation of ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains of national importance, for the regulation of archaeological excavations and for the protection of sculptures, carvings and other like objects. Subsequently, The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules 1959 were framed. The Act along with Rules came into force with effect from 15 October 1959. This Act repealed The Ancient and Historical Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Declaration of National Importance) Act, 1951.

The Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972 (No. 52 of 1972) is the latest Act enacted on 9th September 1972 for effective control over the moveable cultural property consisting of antiquities and art treasures. The Act is to regulate the export trade in antiquities and art treasures, to provide for the prevention of smuggling of, and fraudulent dealings in, antiquities, to provide for the compulsory acquisition of antiquities and art treasures for preservation in public places and to provide for certain other matters connected therewith or incidental or ancillary thereto. This Act was also supplemented with The Antiquities and Art Treasure Rules 1973. The Act and Rules have been in force with effect from 5th April 1976. This legislation repealed The Antiquities Export Control Act, 1947 (Act No. XXXI of 1947). (see, http://asi.nic.in/asi_legislations.asp)

The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2010, No new construction is allowed within 100 metres of centrally protected monuments and is limited within 200 metres of the regulated area.

treatment and preservation of protected monuments. The official website of Archaeological Survey of India states the following:

The treatment strategies for cultural heritage are conceived according to the following principles:

- They must assure reversibility, i.e. if technically possible, use materials whose effect can be reversed.
- Not prejudice a future intervention whenever one may become necessary.
- Not hinder the possibility of later access to all evidence incorporated in the object.
- They must maintain authenticity, i.e. allow the maximum amount of existing historical material to be retained ensure harmony with original design and workmanship (in colour, tone, texture, form and scale).
- Do not allow new additions to dominate over the original fabric, but respect its archaeological potential, and meet the test of authenticity in design, material, workmanship or setting and in the case of cultural landscape their distinctive character and components.

The main activities of the science branch that fall under head Chemical Preservation:

- Chemical treatment and preservation of about 3650 centrally protected monuments including 19 centrally protected world heritage monuments.
- Chemical treatment and preservation of museum exhibits and excavated objects. Scientific and technical studies as well as research on material heritage of different building material to study the causes of deterioration with a view to evolve appropriate conservation measures in order to improve the state of preservation of our built cultural heritage and physical heritage as well.
- Chemical conservation of monuments and heritage sites abroad.
- Technical assistance to state protected monuments as well as built cultural heritage under the control of trusts in the form of deposit works.

- To impart training on chemical conservation to the students of Post Graduated Diploma in Archaeology, from Institute of Archaeology, Red Fort, Delhi.

To organize public awareness programme and workshops/seminars with regard to scientific conservation works.

It is quite apparent that the recommendations of John Marshall are still being followed. The drive for restoring with keeping authenticity is intact. The theory, method and practice of conservation, restoration have not yet fully developed. Further Indian administrative framework at the centre is composed of various ministries. Heritage conservation is dealt with by the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, which is further divided into the Department of Culture and the Department of Tourism. The former is responsible for the Archaeological Survey of India and the National Culture Fund. Further, there are other central ministries that are relevant to heritage conservation. For instance, the Geological Survey of India falls under the purview of the Department of Mines, part of the Ministry of Coal and Mines. The Ministry of Environment and Forests is responsible for the Botanical Survey of India (Government of India 2002, Government of India website). Thus too many departments and not much coordination between them also create a hurdle in taking quick decisions regarding conservation.
Most discussions on archaeological conservation revolve around preservation, restoration of excavated sites, material culture yielded by the sites as a result of surveys and excavations. What about the sites which have not been excavated or which are not that noticeable due to absence of temples or stupas?

The destruction of sites makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible to ascertain the actual archaeological potential of a habitation let alone classify it as an archaeological site or settlement. Vijnesh Mohan (1996) cites the example of site destruction through his field experiences in Haryana to illustrate the long lasting effects of rapid development of agriculture and the growth of industrial activities. Substantial disturbance to archaeological sites is also caused by the extraction of nitrates and salt petre. He points out two sites in the Bangar zone like Ramgarh Pandwan and the Balu (29°40′15′′N 76°23′16′′E) where destruction has been caused due to extensive nitrate collection. It has

been noticed that due to changes in agricultural patterns and extensive panning for collection of nitrate precipitates the density counts of superficial scatters of potsherds are considerably disturbed. Sites like Urlana Khurd (29°11′N 76°04′E) in the Nahari zone of Haryana is an example of extreme and moderate damage caused by intensification of agriculture encouraged by the investor-friendly mechanization of the farming sector. The site of Tigrana (29°53′15′′N 76°08′12′′E), locally known as Tigri, comprises an extensive oval shaped mound exhibiting evidence of the three occupational phases of Harappan civilization (ibid: 71-72).

Given the above details, it is quite comprehensible that sites are rapidly facing extinction due to population pressure on land, mechanization of agricultural techniques. In this dismal scenario however Mohan has also found instances of sites being protected. He cites the example of small site called Sisai (29°11′47′′N 76°03′20′′E) which was found to be largely undisturbed due to the villagers' dread of demonic visitations on the mound. The construction of modern-day temples has also been found to be a deterrent to destruction and degradation of archaeological mounds, a practice quite prevalent in both Punjab and Haryana where archaeological mounds are consciously preserved as the abodes of *sants* and *sadhus*. Moreover, it has been noticed that voluntary protection of multicultural sites like Augund solely happened due to village participation (ibid: 73).

Using the Shorapur Doab of north Karnataka as an example, Paddayya(1996) points out that till recent times traditional methods of land use did not cause drastic changes in the archaeological record. However, the opening of major irrigation project on the river Krishna and the resultant developmental activities of various natures have started a noticeable pattern of radical alteration or destruction of sites (ibid: 75). Through a cogent discussion on traditional tillage and other land use activities, introduction of irrigation, he has pointed out that a number of sites have been destroyed in the process. For example, at Hunsgi, the Neolithic debris was flattened by the tractor blade and spread over the field covering more than a hectare. As a result, artefacts like pottery, animal bones have been reduced to tiny fragments. Further, describing scavenging and treasure hunting (ibid: 84) as one of the sources of interference with the archaeological sites of the area, he points out how, on several occasions, he has noticed stone axes, hammer stones with smooth

surfaces, from Neolithic deposits being collected and worshipped as deities by placing them near a Banni or a Bevina tree. In the light of this discussion it becomes apparent that it is not only temples, stupas and other imposing monuments that are facing the problems of destruction due to the effects of modern developmental activities but also sites and features like ashmounds, megalithic structures, Neolithic deposits are been seriously threatened and, in some cases, even completely destroyed. Citing the example of Nagarjunaconda, a Buddhist site which was removed from the floor of a hill-girt valley on the right bank of river Krishna and transferred to the top of a hill in the centre of the valley as part of an irrigational project that planned to turn the area into a vast reservoir of water, he concludes that it is not feasible to stop such developmental schemes. Rather, it would be better to device steps to tackle the negative effects of this phenomenon (ibid: 78-83). Padddayya opines that one of the major solutions to this problem is creating public awareness *i.e.* to educate the public about the archaeological record of the country and also seek their participation in protecting the archaeological sites and monuments (ibid: 85).

It is fitting here to discuss further the problems that are faced by the ancient monuments because there is a lack of co-ordination, departmental exchange that can prevent problems like unauthorized construction, encroachment or ill-conceived development projects that stumble upon on archaeological remains. For instance recently Delhi Metro Railway Corporation [7]stumbled upon a 17th century mosque, in the walled city area. This area which was earmarked for the Jama Masjid station had obviously not been investigated for archaeological remains or undergone heritage impact assessment. Further again such negligence is seen regarding the various monuments in the Nizammuddin Basti[8] where a number of illegal constructions have taken place in the prohibited area of protected monuments. For example in Chausa Kambha one of the protected monuments a five storey building has come up right on the boundary wall of the monument and another construction is happening next to it. Atgah Khan's tomb is another such encroached monument in which a family has been living in the crypt of the tomb over which

[7] Hindustan Times , New Delhi, July 06, 2012, p 02

[8] The Times of India, New Delhi, July 09, 2012, p 08

Archaeological Survey of India is yet to take action. In the past six months a number of complaints have been filled but no action has been taken.

3.4.1 Ratnagiri

One clear conclusion that could be drawn from the excavation report and related secondary literature on Ratnagiri was that there was a clear need to see the site in person. The visit helped me understand not only some of the questions that I had about the structures but also provided me with the visual evidence of the state of conservation that the site was in. The site was visited twice in the months of December 2010 and June 2011. The first visit was a preliminary examination of the site to understand its layout and to identify areas that could be investigated further. It became obvious that, inspite of the excavation report being exhaustively detailed, some aspects of the site were not clear unless seen in person. The second visit involved a more thorough survey of the site, the documentation of those features that were missing in the report, photographically as well as though interviews of the local people, who live in the village of Ratnagiri at the edge of the archaeological site.

Figure 3.1 The votive Stupas

To reach the monastery complex one has to first climb the gentle slope leading to the entry point. The first thing that catches the eye of any visitor is the votive stupas that have been barricaded and cemented to the place.

It is possible that this would lead to the impression that this was their primary location, leading any visitor to assume that they were found in this space in precisely the manner in which they have been preserved. Moreover, as none of the stupas are protected from the rain or the sunlight, most of them have turned white. This raises various and immediate doubts about the conservation of this site.

Potsherds could be noticed strewn carelessly along the path leading to the monastery complex. This is most likely the result of the drainage of rain water in this area. It bears mention here that the excavation report makes no mention of ceramics at all, except in case of small whole pots in the funerary context. The remaining ceramics were most likely left exposed after the excavation, and parts of these appear occasionally on the site in such a manner.

Figure3.2.Potsherds lying on the ground.

Figure 3.3. The Main Stupa

3.4.1.1 The stupa

The first thing that one is confronted with is the wear and tear of the Main Stupa, with bricks visibly missing from the structure. Around it are other stupas of various shapes and sizes. It bears mention, as is evident in this photograph, that the

site constantly faces vandalism and destruction by casual visitors. In picture, one can observe the visitors, mainly young adults who showed no respect for the monument, climbing the stupa, which in any case looks quite dilapidated. Furthermore, due the tussle between the government and the locals regarding the land of the site, the locals openly flout ASI's rules of access. Not only do they use the site for grazing their animals, it is also evident that the locals relieve themselves in the vicinity of the monuments. The site is, in effect, an open latrine as well as, seemingly, grounds for drug peddling. While the ASI is trying to construct a boundary wall around the site in a bid to control illegal trespassing, it seems this measure is too little too late.

Figure 3.4. The new location of the Mahakala Temple.

Figure 3.5. Sections of the trenches showing the brick structures buried beneath the mound.

3.4.1.2 The Mahakala Temple

In 2000, the Mahakala Temple was removed brick by brick in a bid to keep it from falling apart, due to a tree growing through it at its previous location. The temple was supposed to be shifted just a few meters from its original place, but the trenches that were dug up for this purpose yielded evidence of the presence of more structures. As a result the temple now has been removed to the furthest location on the western side of the site. The removal of the temple has yielded a host of broken structure pieces as well as statues. It is quite apparent that more structures are buried under the ground, the nature of which can

only be speculated on for the moment.

This is one of the photographs of the trenches that were dug to shift the Mahakala temple. The trenches yielded brick structures; their whole nature is yet to be determined. However, the sections of the trenches indicate the presence of a huge brick structures, quite possibly one more stupa.

This conjecture is based on the fact that the brick structure jutting out of the sections seems curvilinear. Further excavations will certainly bring to light more structures. It is evident that this area needs to be protected; as the trenches have not been covered, they are now being used as a place to dump garbage. A glance at the picture makes it clear that the brick structure is covered with grass and algae. This is destroying the structure as it is vulnerable to the torrential rains as well as intense sunlight that this area is famous for.

Figure 3.6. The slope towards the stupa

The slope towards the stupa area further provides evidence that more structures and artefacts are buried here. This photograph displays one of the many buried structures and/or artefact that are readily noticeable while walking around the area. The slope has many such more examples of unexcavated artefacts and structures. The slope is also littered with loose pieces of artefacts that were perhaps unearthed during the excavation undertaken by Debala Mitra. Unfortunately most of them are in very bad condition. Marks of vandalism are apparent on them, scratched with names and dates.

Figure 3.7. Broken parts of stupas , frieze stored under a tree.

This photograph is yet another example of how the site is littered with broken parts of stupas, frieze, etc. There is no way of telling where they have come from and their context is entirely lost. The site is suffering from serious neglect and needs immediate and effective conservation strategies. There is only one guard for the site. No one is willing to work on the site due to fear of local people and thugs. As mentioned before, the site has also become a hub for drug peddling. Given the fact that there is almost no security on the site, pieces of stupas make way to the houses of the residents of the Ratnagiri village. For example while walking around the village; it was observed that a host of houses had these little shrine-like constructions, which housed these engraved votive stupas, which have been white washed. When I asked the locals about their purpose, I was told that these are worshipped to drive evil spirits away from their homes.

3.4.1.3 Conservation

While walking around the site it was noticed that the site was used not only by the locals to graze their animals but also as a latrine. Most of the residents replied, in this context, that since they had no sanitary facilities they were helpless. One of the interviewees also raised the pertinent question of local participation in the upkeep of the site. He pointed out that ten years ago, when the site had a local person as the guard, it was kept clean. Animals were not allowed to graze here and the general upkeep of the monuments was good. The present situation of the site is due to the fact that the guard is a non-local person who has no personal standing with the people of Ratnagiri. Most of the people who were interviewed agreed with the government proposal that no constructions should take place within 200 meters in the immediate vicinity of the site. They said that they would gladly shift elsewhere if they were provided with proper housing and other facilities. Though it cannot be assumed that there is a general consensus on this issue, it does seem as though there is a general awareness that the site is being destroyed because of the current practices. Most actually agree that the site has potential for further excavations.

Figure 3.8.One of the walls of the shrine of Monastery I that exhibit the effects of chemical wash.

The conservation attempts are meager at the best and are often damaging. This photograph for example is the result of chemical wash, the treatment given to the interior walls of the shrine of Monastery I. Since Ratnagiri falls in the heavy precipitation zone, the humidity levels are incredibly high almost throughout the year, except from around December to first week of March. The high humidity and the torrential rains in the monsoons encourage a lot of algae activity in the structures at the site. The chemical wash used to remedy this, however, leaches in to the old bricks leading to discoloration.

Figure 3.9. One of the walls of the cells in Monastery I

This photograph shows one of the cells of Monastery I, again one can see that the walls are under attack from algae activity. The site requires an infrastructural overhauling, with regard to the management of monument The site faces some very tough conditions that are not conducive for its long term survival as well as for attracting visitors.

Earlier in this chapter, I have discussed the accepted norms of restoration elsewhere. In the case of Ratnagiri one finds a sharp difference in what one can see of the site in excavation photographs and the present day status of the site.


***(Left)Figure* 3.10. The area of Monastery I during excavation, (Mitra 1981: Plate cxxvi); (*Right)* Figure 3.11. Monastery I**

Photographs sometimes say it more loudly than words. These two photographs (Figures 3.10, 3.11) one on the left taken during the excavation and the other taken recently in 2010 during a visit to the site show the remarkable transformation of the Monastery I.

It is pertinent here to mention the methods that were employed by the conservation team of Bhuwaneswar to conserve and preserve these structures as discussed by Chauley (2004).During excavation itself large and small size bricks were sorted and subsequently reused in conservation works. To get quality mortar, surkhi was made from the available brickbats by crushing them. This was done because it was economical and salt free thus gave good hue or colour to match the brick bonding of fine hair joints as per original. Dressing of bricks was undertaken to achieve the required shapes and sizes of bricks which were then used for conservation of vertical wall surface by neat bonding of veneering members to facilitate water tightening of monastic complexes (ibid: 136). Thus as it can be seen that the accepted methods of conservation were not followed at the time of excavation.

Figure 3.12 The reconstructed third façade of monastery I

This is the photograph of one of the facades of Monastery I that was reconstructed by the excavator Debala Mitra. Reconstructed from the material found in the debris in the courtyard of Monastery I it is hard for anyone to make out which are the original pieces and if during restoration new pieces were introduced. Thus it is quite apparent that much of what we see on the site of Ratnagiri has been reconstructed b based on the vision of the excavator. One of the residents of village of Ratnagiri told us a lot of the structures were reconstructed with the help of masons and artisans who were specially drafted to sculpt missing pieces of the structures. They imitated the ancient designs on similar stone surfaces which were then placed to complete the structure that we see today. Indeed, the lay visitor will not realize that a lot of the standing structures have been reconstructed, and indeed, imagined into existence. A reconstructed building if based primarily on excavated evidence must be considered a new building. Reconstruction is a creative act (Price 2009: 41). How many of the visitors to this site would realize that a lot of what they see is reconstructed?

Ratnagiri is not the only site that has undergone reconstruction as a means of restoration. The following photograph shows the ongoing conservation and beautification of the site Lalitgiri.

Figure 3.13. The Chaityagriha area undergoing restoration work, Lalitgiri.

This is a photograph of one of the Stupas which was opened up during excavations in a bid to search for relics. Now the stupa is being rebuilt in such a fashion that it looks brand new. Moreover we approached some of the masons on the site and noticed that new stones are being shaped in such a manner that they look like the original bricks.

Thus the issue of conservation in India has yet to undergo a host of theoretical and practical changes. It is imperative that there is better communication between agencies that are engaged in the enterprise of conservation i.e. namely Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) and other non-profitable organizations. Public awareness and participation is the paramount need of the hour.

3.5 Conclusion

> ***"Ancient building is evidence of the way our ancestors lived…an example of a class of beautiful things…and emblem of an attachment to values more pleasant of joyful than money….it is the gentler side of us bodied in old stone or brick. We smile at each other when we see it, thinking how much nicer it is than what would have replaced it and how much nicer we are than the people who wanted to knock it down"***
>
> *Wayward Young*
>
> (Cited in Kuppuram 1995: 497)

One might not agree fully with this statement as to being the reason why we want conserve our past but one gets the point none the less. Preservation is a conscious act, it is necessary that the need for it may be created amongst the general public. Conservation of monuments, sites cannot be pursued in a vacuum. Conservation is currently re-evaluating itself in relation to society and acknowledging both its role in assigning and perpetuating cultural value, and its need for greater dialogue outside of the profession (Richmond and Backer 2009: xv).One cannot stress hard enough on the fact that sites are in danger of disappearing, and that excavating them is sometimes the only way that they can be preserved. In such a situation it becomes imperative that the archaeologist works in close proximity with a conservator or conservators according to the need of the site. Public awareness and participation in conservation forms a necessary part of this drive, otherwise conservation can never be successful. It is quite apparent that conservation techniques and policies are undergoing changes in methods of preservation and restoration. However conservation in India is yet to come in to the full view of the concerned authorities and the public. In a bid to promote tourism, conservation is used as means to make sites and monuments attractive to visit. Sensitising the general public about their heritage can be achieved for example by involving local people and recruiting them as fieldworkers during excavations or conservation work. The example of Ratnagiri shows that it is of uttermost importance that the local people are also involved in the measures for conserving the site. Once they too have a stake in preserving the site, the possibilities of the survival of the monuments and the site also will increase. Thus it can

be said that conservation is a complex and continual process that involves determining what heritage is , how it is cared for , how it is used , by whom and for whom (Richmond and Bracker 2009:xiv) .

Chapter Four

Conclusion

The scholarship on the issues of Buddhism has undergone a sea of change in the twenty first century. However which is the ultimate repository of knowledge regarding Buddhism i.e. Texts or Archaeology is an ongoing one. The introductory chapter has attempted to discuss this dilemma in the face of the emergence of Archaeology with an identity of its own, moving away from being merely a corroboratory tool to the texts in the earlier scholarship on Buddhism. The Historical and Archaeological research on Buddhism in Orissa indicates that a preoccupation with finding places in texts, art historical research of monasteries for example still lingers on. In the light of this discussion this study focuses on the three sites of Ratnagiri, Lalitgiri and Udayagiri. Issues of location, visibility, patronage and inter-site relationship have also been discussed.

Major Findings

The discussion in chapter two began with an in depth discussion of the findings of the excavation reports of the three sites i.e. Ratnagiri, Udayagiri and Lalitgiri. Through this discussion issues of the growth of the sites, interaction of structures with each other, access to a particular area, patronage, and inter-site relationship have been focused on.

The findings indicate that in all the three sites a clear visible division of areas that have various levels of access varies from site to site. In the case of Ratnagiri for example the ancient route of access has still not been discerned and the present route that people use is a newly created one. Moreover the visibilities of the structures from each other's vantage point indicate that they were clearly in the sight line of each other. The absence of structures constructed in such manner which bars access also indicates that there were perhaps no demarcations as to who could access what structure. In the case of Lalitgiri unlike Ratnagiri where the monastery entrances face the slope on which the Main stupa is

located; the monasteries cluster together in an area few kms away from the Stupa/ Chaityagriha area. This distance is perhaps an indication that there might be a demarcation of ritual spaces.

All the structures in these three sites have been built on a comparatively large scale. The structures have also undergone repeated structural repairs and changes. This indicates that the growth and the sustenance of these sites would have largely depended on the patronage of the major political players in that region; namely the dynastic rulers of the region the Bhāuma- Kara and the Somavamsīs. However the single land grant inscription from the site of Ratnagiri makes it difficult to understand how the sites grew in size and underwent changes. In the light of this fact it becomes imperative perhaps to understand that the initial endeavours may have enjoyed the royal patronage but the sustenance of these sites may have also been the result of patronage gained from the feudatories; who often were the motivators of such land-grants to religious establishments.

The sites are located in the close vicinity of each other and chronologically Lalitgiri (second century BCE to the thirteen century CE) is the oldest, Ratnagiri emerges in the middle (fifth century CE to sixteenth century CE) and Udayagiri (eight-twelfth century CE) is the youngest of the sites. Architecturally in the context of ritual spaces transitions can be discerned. For instance the presence of chaityagriha at Lalitgiri and the cluster of structural and votive stupas around it, where as in the case of Ratnagiri a similar cluster of structural and votive stupas is noticed, near the main stupas. Again in the case of Udayagiri they are noticed around the shrine of Avalokitesvara. Thus it seems that the object of veneration encompasses a host of different forms of structure. Further stupas are often seen as the space where veneration by a laity is based on undertaking a walk around the structure. The presence of ambulatory path around the central shrine in the monastery of Udayagiri II is novel. Perhaps an indication that the individuals who had access to the shrine too undertook a similar manner of worship as one engages in with in the case of a stupa. Further the excavator of Udayagiri II states that small niches meant to keep small idols have been found in the cells of the monastery. Corresponding small idols which fit the size of these niches have also been found. Thus while in the case of Ratnagiri large size niches with images of various bodhisattvas have been found on the side entrance

walls of the facades of the shrine, the individualistic nature of the niches in the monastery of Udayagiri II again indicates that there was no one systemized pattern of worship even for the monks.

The stupa, often the central focus of the monastic sites also indicates the changing Buddhist values of the time. While the stupa at Lalitgiri has yielded relic with caskets that rival the ones found at Sanchi and have given rise to the speculation that they are too the remains of Lord Buddha and his two disciples. At the site of Udayagiri I, a seven metre high stupa having images of four *dhyani* Buddhas in the niches on all four cardinal directions were discovered. Thus besides indicating the importance of these sites, it also gives rise to question that why these images are present on the stupa. While at Lalitgiri there are a number of votive stupas they are not carved, in Ratnagiri on the other hand the votive stupas are regularly carved with various bodhisattva images, again in Udayagiri the votive stupas are carved with very few bodhisattvas. The different types and styles of stupas not only indicate the transitions in Buddhism but also indicate what is accepted or discarded over a period of time. The example of *dhyani* Buddhas for example is bold statement of tantric Buddhism, clearly indicating that the sect had gained followers and was thriving. As well as indicating the changes in the belief system from the veneration of Lord Buddha to a manifestation of his qualities embodied in these *dhyani* Buddhas. Curious however is the fact that there are five *dhyani* buddhas from which deities emerge. However in the case of Udayagiri only four appear on the stupa in cardinal directions. Since the excavation report is as of now unpublished it is not clear which of the *dhyani* Buddhas has been left out; a significant omission that needs to be investigated further.

Also this study indicates that the repeated construction patterns of the monasteries of these sites also provide an idea of the number of occupants. The numbers see an increase roughly around eighth century CE in all the sites when expansion of the structures as well the number of the monasteries goes up which corresponds with the increase in patronage enjoyed by Buddhism in Orissa. For example Monastery II was constructed during this period and the second story of Monastery I was constructed in the site of Ratnagiri. Again during the period of changing political fortunes at the end of thirteenth century CE these

sites again see a decrease in numbers of resident in the face of dwindling patronage. The ground floor of the monasteries are abandoned and filled; only the top floors are occupied. Thus it can be safely said that a part of the monk and student population leaves these sites or the cells are filled beyond their capacity.

Interesting is also the presence of the secret cells in the case of Ratnagiri and Udayagiri II. Variously located, in the shrine of Monastery I of Ratnagiri, under a cell near the shrine of Monastery II of Ratnagiri, the central shrine of the monastery of Udayagiri II; what purpose do they serve is a mystery. I contend that the purpose is not uniform, for example in the case of Monastery I of Ratnagiri the two secret cells are located on the either side of the shrine. The location is not only very unnoticeable but also the small size of access makes it quite apparent that not all could access it. Thus it can be safely said that this might have been area of storage since the size of 66cm width ×3.050 cm length with an entrance which measures 54.6cm high and 36.2cm could have scarcely allowed more than a person to enter and that too a very thin individual. Similarly the secret cell in monastery two is situated under cell in such a manner that it gives access to another cell. The location as well as size indicates that the existence of such a cell would not have been a common knowledge. In this case the character of the secret cell forces one to speculate that perhaps it was an escape route.

The third chapter deals with the issue of conservation and heritage. The discussion primarily focuses on how and what issues are currently being re-evaluated in the world of conservation when it comes to archaeological sites and the associated material assemblage. The conclusions reached were that while the issues on and of archaeological conservation, the methods of conserving a site, a monument and artefacts have experienced a vast change over the decade. It is pertinent to note that conservation no longer means adding anything new to the original structure except in extreme need. Moreover it is expected that when such changes are made, they should be visible to the naked eye quite distinct from the original work. The need for conservation plan prior to excavations that care of during and after excavation needs of structures and artefacts is now cogently followed with a closer cooperation with conservators experienced in various fields. India has unfortunately failed to keep pace with the rest of the world. The

issues arising out of this lack of keeping pace have lead to massive destruction and disappearances of sites, faulty methods employed to conserve structure and artefacts. It is alarming to realize that the manual for conservation written by John Marshall in 1923 is still followed word by word. Some of the issues arising out of this discussion have been taken up in the case study on Ratnagiri. The site faces a threat from vandals, drug peddlers, visitors who have been known to scratch their names on the various structures of the site. The conservation of the site indicates that the structures are in much need of regular upkeep. The issue of how a site as representative of heritage is marketed through the help of archaeology is also discussed. The site Ratnagiri when excavated looks light years different from the present day reality of its structures and surrounding areas. The shrines of both monasteries and the monasteries itself to a large extent have been reconstructed. The end result is 'spectacular' and convinces the public that the ancient picture of the site resembles the one that the excavator has managed to recreate. The reconstruction may be admissible for the purpose of providing the excavator a picture perhaps of how the landscape with these structures being a part of it looked like. But the reconstruction does not necessarily reflect how the structures looked like in the ancient time. The desire is not to present archaeology to the public but rather to play to the popular concerns of presenting the cultural past in such a manner that reinforces the pride of associating oneself with the 'greatness' of previous generations. Notions of heritage have become highly volatile charged with political identities. In such a scenario, the case of Ratnagiri is apt to demonstrate how the site is introduced to a visitor and what message the reconstructed structures convey in the visitors mind about the past of the site and Orissa in larger terms.

Areas for further study

The three sites individually and in relationship to each other need to be focused on more. It is apparent especially in the case of Udayagiri and Ratnagiri that further potential excavations will yield more information on how the actual parameter of the sites with its various structures. Also the relationship between the three sites would perhaps become clearer if the area around them is surveyed. There is a possibility that more sites perhaps smaller in site may be discovered. It will further our understanding of the interactions that

these sites had with each other. It is imperative that further research on the ceramics of these sites is undertaken.

The three sites are located within 20 kms of each other and given the chronology also enjoyed the height of patronage around the same time period, i.e. the eighth century CE. Therefore a study on the past routes from one site to the other can provide an insight in human movement. There is a good possibility that such a study may also yield evidence of other smaller settlements. Further the location of all the three sites in relation to Jajpur which was the seat of the power needs to be investigated more. This will further throw some light on the nature of these monastic complexes which are discussed only as centres of learning, meditation and renunciation. The multitude of roles that they may have played, their interaction with the local community, artisanal groups that catered to the needs of the laity and also monasteries still remain to be investigated.

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