

From Temple to Museum

Colonial Collections and Uma Mahesvara Icons in the Middle Ganga Valley

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2 Making of museums

A potsherd dug up and placed in a museum with a label identifying and dating it, becomes a specimen along with thousands of others, which establishes for the archaeologist a history.¹

The intellectual campaign initiated by the British government in India in the nineteenth century, found its logical fulfilment in the establishment of institutions and academic disciplines which systematised this knowledge pool and laid the foundations for the development of new disciplines such as, archaeology and art history. Museums in India emerged as one such type of institution.

As I discussed in the previous chapter, the surveys and explorations both individual and those sponsored by the Company led to the detailed identification and listing of religious sites of South Bihar. The sites also yielded a great mass of antiquities such as sculptures, architectural fragments and inscriptions. Archaeology as a discipline in India, which was still in its incipient stage, provided no answers or policy on what was to be done with these relics and artefacts. One route for these, and probably also the more favoured one was that they became a part of the private collections of the Company officials. It was an unwritten but well understood deal that the early archaeologists and explorers appropriated what they “discovered.” A large part of these were shipped to Britain as souvenirs of the Empire which had been established. During this long journey overseas, sculptures were often lost, at other instances sat in the packing boxes and crates in which they had been shipped or found a place in the British Museum.² A second option which subsequently developed was to keep the sculptures and relics within India to educate the native population about their history and religion through these visual tools. The museums which evolved became store houses but more importantly also served as archives of knowledge.

I return here to Bernard Cohn's instance of the potsherd and trace how religious sculptures get transformed into museum specimens. In the life history of sacred icons, the museum became the first step in its spatial relocation from the sacred to profane; in its temporal relocation as a motif from the past to the present and more so in a shift from being a cult object to an exhibition piece. In the case of colonial museums, the didactics of labelling, classifying and cataloguing objects had still not been codified and in this entire process the original identity, purpose and the ritual context of these sculptures was often lost.

In the present chapter I argue that museums and private collections in the early twentieth century emerged as cultural texts which present the point of intersection between the colonial past and the post-colonial present. The museum itself becomes a subject of study since it was subjected to the same historical influences as the historical narrative it was expected to present. The colonial museum was meant to be a channel to educate the Indian visitors about their ancient past; however, as we shall see, it became a showcase of Orientalism and imperialistic ambitions and played a central role in the "project of cultural 'improvement' of the colony."³

The first museum in India, the Indian Museum at Calcutta, was established in 1814 as an imperial archive to provide a visual documentation and dissemination of knowledge about India, its "ancient" culture, history and religion. The Indian Museum emerged essentially out of the collection of specimens at the Asiatic Society of Bengal; a result of centuries of survey, exploration and amateur collections by colonial officers and surveyors. The collection of the Asiatic Society had been haphazard and erratic, hence the main thrust behind the establishment of the Indian Museum was to scientifically classify and systematically present the available material so that it could be "mined for knowledge."⁴ Having been established as the central storehouse of antiquities and objects hoarded from sites across the Subcontinent, the Museum's vast collection later motivated the establishment of other regional and provincial museums in India. The Indian Museum was also prioritised as the most legitimate repository of the country's antiquities, delegitimising the claims of metropolitan museums in the West; if excavated structures could not be safely retained on-site, the argument was that the antiquities should at least remain within the territorial bounds of India.⁵ The Indian Museum and later the provincial museums hence formally became custodians for the care and conservation of ancient monuments and antiquities against vagaries of nature, human vandalism, theft and sale.

The main issue under discussion here is how the colonial museum interpreted and organised this collection of treasure troves and

curiosities into a systematic pool of information. There were different approaches through which meanings were framed around exhibits. The first and the most convenient was the use of religious denomination and relics of a particular religion were arranged around myths, personalities and the great moments of the mythological universe. The second visual strategy was that sculptures and artefacts were placed as illustrations to texts and the value of sculptures was measured by how true a representation of the text they were able to present. Religious texts and mythologies were thoroughly read and sculptures were placed as portrayal of the texts thus concretising a visual cannon. A third kind of display arrangement was around the great epochs of history and dynastic achievements where artefacts were grouped under broad chronological and dynastic labels. Royal patronage seemed to provide the only kind of explanation for the production of art with no lay participation. A cyclic progression to Indian art was presented with apogee points of great ages and dark ages and styles of execution and aesthetics became the only criteria of analysis.

Most importantly such an interpretation of art attached a primacy to sculptures as representative of each age and of Indian's art heritage. So much so that ancient sculptures came to dominate over medieval miniature paintings. "The field of early archaeology, however, remained dominated by an antiquarian attitude, which valued the most ancient over the medieval."⁶ The museum, thus intended to be a new centre of disciplinary knowledge, actually formalised the disciplines of archaeology and iconographic studies in India and fixed the narratives within which sacred icons came to be comprehended.

I endeavour here to trace the history of collecting, institutionalisation of museum practices and the consequent evolution of an art-historical scholarship for Bihar in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. I discuss how modes of display and cataloguing in colonial museums of Bihar defined a certain way in which sacred sculptures came to be perceived and the field of iconography developed. Religious sculpture became the yardstick to measure Bihar's artistic feat while the museum space came to exhibit a unidirectional, chronological, dynastic and geographical evolution of sculptural art prohibiting any interpretation which went beyond the scope of style and aesthetics.

I begin the chapter by examining the case studies of two private collections from South Bihar: The Bodh Gaya Mahant collection and the private museum of AM Broadley in Bihar Sharif. I have chosen to discuss these two collections in particular for the large number of religious icons and architectural fragments they contain; and more importantly, because the original provenance for a majority of these

relics is not known, it has significantly altered the way in which we now study some of these sites such as Nalanda and Bodh Gaya. I juxtapose these two collections in terms of their spatial location, the sacred versus the profane; how the display, meaning and interpretation of each of the objects in the collections were determined by their location, and the eventual fate of both these collections. While the images in the Mahant's collection are all enshrined irrespective of their religious affiliation; they remain securely locked away from public viewing. The Broadley Collection however continued to move around and the point of dissolution of this Collection in the early twentieth century is the starting point of the establishment of museums in Bihar. I will discuss the circumstances behind the foundation of two of the earliest museums in Bihar, the Patna Museum and the Nalanda Museum; the history of their acquisitions and how the display and nomenclatures of sacred sculptures within the museums determined studies of iconography. The chapter will conclude by examining the works of HD Sankalia and Stella Kramrisch in the early twentieth century and determine how their writings have shaped the discourse on sacred arts, especially that from Bihar.

Modes of collecting and preserving

The official discourse worked on consolidating, documenting and displaying a visual archive through museums; there were several private collections and hoards of images which changed the fate of some significant religious sites of Bihar. I would like to highlight the role of two such collections: the first is an assortment of sculptures and architectural fragments stored in the Bodh Gaya Mahant's compound and the second is a collection of sculptures which originally formed a part of Broadley's Museum in Bihar Sharif.

Both these collections include Buddhist and Hindu sculptures, sacred motifs and architectural fragments from various sites of South Bihar, with little indication of their original provenance or context. I will determine how these images through the course of their lives moved from sites to museums, from the realm of the sacred to the profane and how their current location and modes of display reflect the study of sculptures and sacred sites where they would have originally been located.

The Bodh Gaya Mahant's Compound is located on the left bank of the Phalgu River, a short walk from the Mahabodhi Temple.

Next to the Great Temple, which will be noticed further on, the largest building in the village is a monastery, or matha. It is situated

on the left bank of the Lilajan, in the midst of a garden extending over an area of about 20 acres, and surrounded by a high masonry wall. It is four storeyed in some parts, but three storeyed all round a small quadrangle. The ground floor round the quadrangle is faced by a one storeyed verandah built on sculptured monolithic pillars on three sides, and on wooden pillars on the fourth side. The roofs are low, and the windows very small and few in number; but the building is very substantial, and in excellent repair. To the north of this there are three two storeyed buildings of moderate size, and long ranges of out houses and stables in front on the east. On the South there is a commodious three storeyed building called Baradwari, with a terrace in front of it.⁷

The *matha* as it presently stands is a whitewashed structure and gives the appearance of a fort with its high walls and corner turrets. One can approach the Compound through an elaborate gateway with iron gates, on both sides of which early sculptures and inscriptions are seen embedded in the wall. The present structure closely corresponds with Buchanan's descriptions of the site.⁸

As recorded by GA Grierson, a magistrate of Gaya in the late nineteenth century, the first Shaiva Mahant, Ghamandi Giri belonging to the sect of Giris came to Bodh Gaya sometime in the sixteenth century.⁹ The site of the Mahabodhi Temple then was largely deserted and the shrine overrun by bushes and trees. The Giri *sanyasis* cleared the area and settled down; "The Buddhist temple at the time had no priest, nor any worshipper; and such an appropriation of it by a saintly hermit in a small village during the Muhamaddan rule was an act which none would question."¹⁰ Ghamandi Giri was succeeded by his *chela* Mahant Chaitanya Giri (1615–1642), under whom the Mahants received the right to collect revenues in the area. When the next Mahant, Mahadeva Giri, came into office, the present structure of the *matha* was built. Grierson dates the building of the monastery somewhere between 1642 and 1682. RL Mitra in his record of Bodh Gaya reaffirms a similar account of the *matha* and adds that in 1876 according to a 'Royal Firman from Shah Alum,' Mahant Mahadeva Giri received the right to collect revenue in the region and that the monastery was built at about that time. It appears that the Giris received land and the rights to rent from land, from a variety of sources.

What is of particular interest to the present discussion is the architectural organisation of the *matha*. The interiors of the *matha* are organised around a large courtyard at the centre of which is a pavilion made of white marble where the Mahant sits on a tiger skin and gives

audience to the visitors. The pillars of this pavilion are also embedded with sculptural fragments some of which are difficult to date. There is also an old well in the courtyard which has now been blocked because of lack of maintenance and repair.

Around the courtyard, the main building is two storied and in some places three storied organised as a series of successive pillared verandah leading to individual rooms suggesting that the building might have been constructed in phases. Some of the stone pillars of the verandah are inscribed or sculpted and are obviously appropriated from elsewhere. RL Mitra in his account records “at least 33 pillars (from the Mahabodhi temple) attached to the residence of the Mahant.”¹¹

Within this courtyard, a part of the ground-floor verandah has been fenced off and a heavily secured gate leads into a long chamber. The door to the chamber is kept locked, and entry and photography is restricted. Inside the chamber is probably the largest collection of images and sculptural fragments that I have come across outside of a museum. This fascinating collection includes Buddhist and Hindu deities, the sculptures are whole or broken along with a large number



Figure 2.1 Uma Mahesvara icons from Bodh Gaya Mahant's *Matha*

Source: Courtesy of Vikas Vaibhav

of architectural fragments including lintels, inscriptions and sacred motifs. At the heart of the chamber is a shrine where an *akbanda jyoti* is maintained. The sculptures are all embedded in the walls while the fragments are scattered about. There has been no thought behind the organisation, display or categorisation of images based on their religious affiliation; Buddhist and Hindu icons are interspersed and no distinction is made between them. Daily worship and offerings are made in the Hindu ritual tradition to all images as evident from offerings of vermillion, flowers and incense. Uma Mahesvara images in various postures abound in this collection and most of these are located in the inner chamber or the sanctum with the *akbanda jyoti*.

The images are mostly in dark granite and a few in sandstone and some of these show evidence of gilding. Scholars contend that all of these images came from the Mahabodhi Temple itself, probably placed in the niches in the wall of the main temple, but to me they appear to have been collected from several shrines. The appropriation of sculptures and architectural fragments from the Mahabodhi Temple complex within the structure and shrine of the *matha* seemed to be a logical process when seen in contemporary light.¹² At a time when the Mahabodhi temple might have been largely abandoned and a Shaiva *matha* came to be established in the vicinity, it was only natural that the Shaivas appropriated and reused the earlier sacred space and sacred motifs. What is remarkable is that the Shaiva *sanyasis* did not attempt to wipe out the earlier religious denomination of the site but came to incorporate it within their rituals and modes of worship. Buddhist, Vaishnava and Shaiva deities continued to be deified on the same footing. It has been contended that the image which is now enshrined in the Mahabodhi temple was recovered from the Mahant's compound.¹³

At what point this appropriation began is difficult to trace and was probably an on-going process which took place over centuries. The collection of Bodh Gaya icons at the Mahant's house is only one instance of denuding the Mahabodhi Complex and its environs of its icons. The Mahants of Bodh Gaya unlike other Hindus are buried in cemeteries rather than cremated and close to the Mahant's living quarter is a cemetery complex for the monks. *Samadhis* of two early Mahants are also located in front of the Mahabodhi temple itself. The cemeteries are marked by several votive *stupas* used as *lingams* to indicate their religious affiliation to Shaivite monks. Votive *stupas* used as *lingams* are not unique to Bodh Gaya but can be seen across sites of South Bihar often enshrined in modern temples. This once again reflects upon the smooth transition in the identity of religious icons from Buddhist to

Hindu. “Even at a very concrete level, then, important symbols of the two faiths were interchanged with great facility: the genetic relations between the two traditions are here instantiated as iconic and material fact with no text-based exegetical mediation.”¹⁴

Owing to the sanctity of the site and the fact that sculptures and architectural fragments would have been littered at the site, these were very often used by the local people as construction material to build their houses, the fragments being used on door steps, lintels and pillars.¹⁵ The appropriation of relics and sculptures from Bodhi Gaya continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries once the site was “discovered” by British surveyors and archaeologists, an issue which I will discuss in a later chapter.

A second case which significantly altered the fate of several sites of South Bihar were the expeditions of another amateur archaeologist and explorer, AM Broadley, who surveyed and excavated various sites around Nalanda, Rajgir and Bihar Sharif, discussed in the last chapter.¹⁶ Like his contemporaries, Broadley concentrated on Buddhist remains in pursuit of the original religion and believed Buddhist art “to have formed a *tout ensemble* which Hindu art has never surpassed.”¹⁷ In the course of his survey and documentation he provides an idea of the geography of the region and lists in detail the Buddhist remains of the sites but merely skims over the relics of other religions.¹⁸ Broadley, as was fashionable during his time, followed the routes taken by Fa Xian and Xuan Zang and sieved a small area of the then Patna District, between the Ganga and the foot of the Rajgir Hills, extending about “thirty five miles north to south, and forty from east to west.”¹⁹ During the course of his amateur excavations he collected many sculptures and architectural fragments which he then carried off and established a museum at the Collector’s Bungalow at Bihar Sharif. Broadley being the District Magistrate had the economic means and a large labour force including prisoners at his disposal for the excavation of sites.²⁰ He dug shafts in *stupas* hoping to unearth relics, dismantled shrines and carried away any slabs, inscriptions, sculptures and doorways which interested him.²¹ He did not just pick up loose fragments or stray sculptures but actually broke down structures to add to his collection. The large, open air museum which he established was called the Bihar Museum. Though he gives no details of his excavations, there is a considerable tally of images listed at the end of his book. He catalogued some of the artefacts but for a large part of this collection of 686 artefacts the original provenance is unknown. “But amateur he remained, letting his desire for additions to the collections triumph more careful work.”²²

The Broadley collection continued to move around through history where the excavation and collection by Broadley himself was just the first step in their displacement. Frederick Asher has traced the several relocations which these images have undergone over time and how this has altered the history and identity of these images.²³ Asher moreover by tracing the style, chronology, material, etcetera, has identified the provenance of 46 of these sculptures now kept in the Indian Museum and in the Patna Museum, though the museums in question have taken no measures to rectify their labelling and proposed provenance.

In 1891 the Government of Bengal decided to transfer the contents of the Bihar Museum to the Indian Museum, Calcutta, where some of these sculptures were displayed while others stored in the Museum's reserve collection. PC Mukherji was appointed as a temporary archaeologist of the Indian Museum and was directed to "(i) remove the Broadley collection of ancient sculptures from Behar to Calcutta and to assist . . . in their arrangement in the Museum, and (ii) to make an investigation into the archaeological remains of Rajgir and Bargaon, removing that which ought to be kept in a place of safety and drawing that which could not be removed . . . 735 sculptures of which 686 formed the Broadly collection the remaining 49 having been collected by himself during his tour."²⁴

This relocation caused a second phase of displacement of these images; not only from one museum to another but also removing them from their original geographical provenance. During this transfer many images were damaged and broken, so much so that subsequently different fragments of the same sculpture landed up in separate museums.²⁵ The larger impact of this was that in the Indian Museum, on the display labels and even in the museum register, the provenance of these sculptures was listed as "Bihar" indicating the Museum and not the site thus losing the original provenance of the objects for ever.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Theodore Bloch assumed the post of First Assistant to the Superintendent of the Indian Museum but had little information regarding the 686 sculptures which had been brought from Bihar Sharif. Bloch wrote the Museum's new registers and in an attempt to bring some order to the chaos he noted that the sculptures were from Bihar, meaning Bihar Sharif. This misquotation caused further confusion about the provenance and identity of these sculptures.

A large part of the sculptures from the Broadley collection travelled further. Once the Patna Museum was founded a significant portion of this collection was sent there. These sculptures are still listed in the

Patna Museum catalogue as from the Broadley Collection and their provenance remains undefined or mentioned as 'Bihar.' The Indian Museum registers also show that some pieces were given to other fledging museums in India, while others were traded for works from outside eastern India. Items from the Bihar Museum are now found in museums across the world: at Varendra Research Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art and the Museum fur Indische Kunst, Berlin.



Figure 2.2 Uma Mahesvara from Broadley Collection; now at Patna Museum, accession no. 7881

Source: Courtesy of AIIS, Gurgaon

The nomenclature of images is often confusing also on account of Broadley's limited knowledge of the identity, provenance and faith of many sculptures. For instance, Vishnu and Surya have been often mentioned as Buddha and Tara as Mayadevi. This confusion was also because Broadley had set out on the agenda of identifying the Buddhist elements in the topography. Most sculptures of the Broadley collection can be dated between the ninth and the eleventh centuries; in a few sculptures earlier prevalent styles are evident. Clearly Broadley visited some fairly early sites which takes their history further back into antiquity.

It is important to determine the provenance of this group of sculptures which could throw significant light on the religious history of the region and the evolution of iconography. Although the word "Bihar" on the Indian Museum labels and registers refer to the place where the pieces were first collected, the sculptures clearly came from many different sites and some fairly early ones. Determining the precise provenance of these sculptures would also bring forward many sites with abundant sculptures in the Patna District and would shift the focus from a Buddhist centric history focusing on Nalanda, Rajgir and Bodh Gaya. Many such sites have not been sufficiently explored, and a large number of sculptures are still lying above ground, usually in worship in several villages. Asher further questions the fate of several sculptures of the Broadley collection which were transferred to the Indian Museum but apparently are no longer there. These sculptures clearly travelled further on with different identities, history and provenance.

My purpose behind comparing these two collections is many-fold. First is the thrust behind the making of the two collections. Both the cases show that their acquisition was not logical or sequential but rather haphazard. The relics in both cases have been accumulated from different sites with no record of their original history or context or purpose. Second, in both the cases the identities of sculptures as Buddhist and Brahmanical do not appear segregated. While Broadley clearly was looking for Buddhist remains he also gathered what he felt were good examples of artistic feat. Third, the space of display and modes of display of both are contrasting. Broadley as an archaeologist and collector consciously went about collecting the antiquities as relics of the past. The Mahant's collection on the contrary would have been more sporadic with a view to collect religious motifs, not initiated by a single individual but by the adherents of the faith. While neither of the collections showed taxonomy of display, Broadley presented his collection as in a museum and the Mahant's collection is displayed more

as in a shrine where the images are subject to daily offerings. The configuration of space defined by both the collections of sacred images is hence different, while the Mahant's collection makes the space sacred; Broadley's museum was a site of display.

Despite the juxtaposition in their display and collection, both Broadley's images and those at the Mahant's residence have changed the way in which the sites from which they would have been appropriated have been studied and added another layer of dust to their histories. The sites devoid of their motifs present only half the picture. The images in the two collections moreover suggest that they have been collected from various sites with little idea of their original geographical, chronological or architectural context. The images have developed a life independent of the structures on which they were originally mounted and have undergone significant spatial and temporal location. The aesthetics and styles of the icons also suggest that they belong to different chronological periods and also different sub-regions. One cannot but agree with Asher's observation that even within Bihar there would have been different schools of sculptures.²⁶

Museums in Bihar

To the organisation and development of museums as centre for research and education the Government attaches much importance . . . The Imperial and the majority of the provincial museums contains other sections besides the archaeological and are designed to be generally representative, in the former case of the Indian empire, in the latter of the province or presidency to which they belong. Others are devoted exclusively to antiquities and have been instituted on important sites for the purpose of safe guarding moveable antiquities and exhibiting them to the best advantage amid their natural surroundings.²⁷

The early decades of the twentieth century saw the establishment of two separate museums in Bihar; the Patna Museum was established in 1917 as the museum of the newly founded Province of Bihar and Orissa and in the same year a site museum came to be established at Nalanda to store the antiquities unearthed during excavations there. I examine the thrust behind the establishment of the two museums, their core collections, and strategies of acquisitions as also the focus on developing their collections. I further scrutinise the narratives of display and labelling which the museums developed and which reinforced the colonial modes of looking at sculptures as foremost indicators of artistic development, yet the images were displayed without any indication of their original context. Finally, I argue how the museums were

not only store houses of the antiquities but also had a larger political rhetoric behind their founding.

The Patna Museum

The establishment of the Patna Museum, on the one hand, should be studied in light of the formation of the new Province of Bihar and Orissa, with its capital at Patna, separate from Bengal in 1912 and the concerted drive on part of the ASI towards the establishment of local and provincial museums for the preservation of antiquities in their natural surroundings. Before the formation of the new Province, all the excavated remains from the sites of Bihar and Orissa were “exiled” to the Indian Museum, Calcutta.²⁸ In the Presidential address on the occasion of the inauguration of the new building of the Patna Museum, it was remarked with great relief that “much however remained safely concealed underground” and could still be excavated and displayed in the Patna Museum.²⁹

The political circumstances behind the establishment of the new Province and its partitioning from Bengal incited a great fervour to assert a provincial identity, to create a history for the region and to project its artistic and cultural heritage. There could have been no better way to do it than highlight the significance of Buddhism and that of Bihar as the original birth place of the Buddha. A second mode of publicity was based on the personalities of Asoka projected as the first ‘Monarch of India’ and the great ambassador of Buddhism and his grandfather Chandragupta Maurya, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty which formed the first ‘Indian Empire.’ The goal was to glorify and reconstruct the grandeur of their fabled capital Pataliputra recognised as modern day Patna.

It was against this “backdrop of provincial reconfigurations,” “politics of place-making” and “provincial self-fashioning”³⁰ in the early decades of the twentieth century Bihar that in the first meeting of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society held on the 20 January 1915, Dr Sachidanand Sinha moved a resolution that a provincial museum and library should be established in the state. The meeting held under the Presidentship of the then Lieutenant Governor Sir Charles S Bayley, appointed a committee to work out a scheme for the establishment of a provincial museum at Patna. It was in fact Charles Bayley who spear-headed the movement to carve out a distinct historical identity for the newly configured province of Bihar and Orissa and passionately led the Bihar and Orissa Research Society towards this. The Society set out with the task of collecting objects of archaeological interest,

ethnological data and specimens.³¹ The Museum was expected to work in tandem with the Society which would represent the “theoretical work of research and criticism on objects of historic or archaeological interest, the Museum seeks, gathers up whenever possible, and preserves the objects themselves. Functioning thus together, each institution is the definite compliment of the other.”³²

The Museum was meant to begin as an archaeological and ethnographical museum with the scope of later adding an economic section.³³ The collected antiquities were initially stored in the Commissioner’s Bungalow till they became too large to be kept there. In 1917, the collection was then shifted to a few rooms in the north wing of the Patna High Court building where in 1917, Sir Edward Gait the Lieutenant Governor of Bihar and Orissa formally established the Patna Museum with the distinguished ethnologist and anthropologist Rai Bahadur Sarat Chandra Roy as the first Curator. With the ever-increasing number of exhibits, the museum had to be expanded, as the Patna High Court Wing could not accommodate it, and more land was needed to construct a new Museum building.

In 1925, the land for the museum was allocated and a two-storeyed building designed by Rai Bahadur Bishnu Swarup was completed in 1928. The collection and offices of the Museum were shifted there. On 6 March 1929, the government formally handed over the building to the managing committee and on the following day, the then Governor of Bihar and Orissa, Sir Hugh Lansdowne Stephenson, inaugurated the Museum. In keeping with the rhetoric behind its establishment, out of the many proposals it was decided to have the building designed on a native style. The Patna Museum building as it now stands is one of the best specimens of Indo-Sarcenic style of architecture: *Chattri* over the centre, domes in the four corners and *jharoka* style windows.³⁴

The initial collection began with members of the Museum committee visiting other provincial museums in search of antiquities.³⁵ A Provincial Coin Cabinet was also initiated and the Government of India under the Treasure Trove Act agreed that the Patna Museum would “have precedence over all other institutions in respect of specimens from any part of Bihar and Orissa.”³⁶ The emphasis on the coin collection was to establish ancient trade relations and prove the vibrant economic networks that Bihar would have been engaged in even at the earliest times. CEAW Oldham a British civil servant posted in Bihar presented the Museum Coin Cabinet with 129 coins including five ancient silver punch-marked coins and one punch-marked coin found at Rajgir.³⁷ Other early specimens included two inscribed cannons, musical instruments and other articles of ethnographic interest along with samples of

minerals found in the region, for the geological section. The committee looked with great remorse that a great bulk of archaeological finds, some of the finest specimens of artistic heritage from Bihar and Orissa was in possession of the Indian Museum and from early on there were appeals to reclaim this lost treasure.³⁸

The beginnings of excavation of the site of Pataliputra in 1913, with funding received from Sir Ratan Tata and the excavation of Nalanda in 1915 funded by the Royal Asiatic Society (of Great Britain and Ireland), was particularly welcomed since it would add to the collection of antiquities from the region. Ratan Tata, however, had funded the excavations at Pataliputra with the sole motive to acquire archaeological objects for his personal collection. Throughout the period of excavation of Pataliputra, the ASI Reports portray this dilemma of the archaeologists to find antiquities for Ratan Tata's collection. Yet this would go against the spirit of the age of depositing archaeological finds in the local museums. Similar was the case at Nalanda where the excavations had been organised by the Director General of Archaeology. The theoretical implication was that the excavated antiquities would be deposited at the newly founded Site Museum there. At the same time the Patna Museum wanted to acquire some of the antiquities for its collection to bask in the fame of the 'Buddhist University.' The lack of display and storage space and the absence of a proper museum building were eventually used to plead that some share of the excavations be moved to the Patna Museum.

In 1915 the Museum acquired its most prized possession, the Didarganj Yakshi, a chance find which became not just the symbol of aesthetic proficiency of the region but subsequently also the ambassador of independent India's arts. In 1919, the Bodh Gaya Mahant presented a collection of antiquities to the Museum. In the same year, the Museum acquired antiquities from Belwa, in North Bihar presented by a local Raja, the Maharaja of Hathwa. The antiquities excavated by DB Spooner at Basarah, Vaishali in 1911–1912 were given to the Museum on approval by the Director of Archaeology in 1919. The Basarah antiquities dated to fifth century CE chronologically took back the history of the collection and were "displayed in a room kept apart for them."³⁹

In the following year, 1920, the Mauryan antiquities, excavated at Kumrahar in 1912–1913, were acquired by the Museum. Among the early collections of the Museum, the most important was the Persepolitan like capital, which was found at Bulandibagh by LA Waddel.⁴⁰ This initiated the long association of the Museum with the excavations of Pataliputra and forged a relationship of mutual dependence

where the Museum relied upon the site to add to its cherished 'Pat-aliputra Collection' and the archaeologist working on the site could use the Museum space to present their version of Mauryan history. In 1922–1923 the Museum itself undertook an excavation at Bulandibagh, which brought many interesting objects to the Museum. In 1926, chance finds in the Patna University campus during a spate of construction brought to light 201 antiquities which were presented to the Museum by VH Jackson.⁴¹ The same year a small excavation was undertaken by A Banerji Shastri at Buxar which unearthed a series of early terracotta and 15 more antiquities were acquired by the Museum.⁴²

During 1928–1929 the Museum purchased bronze images of the Buddha from Negapatnam in Tanjore. In 1929 a number of Buddhist sculptures from Udaygiri and Ratnagiri were brought to the Museum. The discovery of the Kurkihar hoard in 1930 was another high point when the Museum came to acquire 163 bronze images of Buddha, Boddhisatva and other Buddhist and Hindu gods and goddesses. These form the most important bronze collection of the early medieval period in the Museum. In 1932, 393 terracotta figurines from Mathura were purchased. The same year the Museum got quite a few objects from Ghorakatora, Rajgir, which was exposed in a small excavation by PC Chaudhari.

Side by side the Museum developed its substantial collection of epigraphs and estampages with the aim that the "public will have an opportunity of examining all the important epigraphs from the province in the Provincial Museum."⁴³ In 1919–1920 the Museum got plaster of Paris casts of the Bodh Gaya pillars stored in the Indian Museum. In addition, copies of inscriptions were made from the sites of Rajgir, Bargaon, Tetrawan, Bihar Sharif, Telhana, Jagdishpur, Deo Barunark, Gaya and Guneri.⁴⁴

Parallel to this, the Museum worked on developing its ethnological collection by accumulation of objects of daily use of people from Chota Nagpur, Bhils of Gujarat: samples of minerals from Bihar and Orissa; plaster cast of a meteorite which had fallen in the region but was stored in the Indian Museum; plaster casts of fruit and vegetables of Bihar; tree fossils; samples of craft tradition such as ivory, mirrors, textiles, etcetera. The Coin Cabinet made suitable progress with substantial additions each year through purchase, gifts and excavations. Overall the Museum had a steady growth with a well-represented collection by the time it shifted into its new building. The only weak point, described as the "Cinderella" of the museum was the "Arts Section, the reason being that the prices of art treasures have soared

so high in the period of our existence that it has been found impossible to compete with more affluent purchasers.”⁴⁵ The Bihar and Orissa Research Society moreover wanted to exercise extreme caution to take steps “to remove to the Museum some of the ancient carvings which lies scattered throughout the province, but this is a matter in which we must proceed warily, and only in accordance with advise of experts.”⁴⁶ Referring to the earlier generation of scholar-historians, particularly Broadley, they said “that great harm was done many years ago by an amateur enthusiast who made a large collection of these remains without keeping any record of the places from which they were taken.”⁴⁷

By the end of 1934, the Museum had collected 7,593 archaeological objects including stone sculptures, architectural pieces, metal images, terracotta, prehistoric objects, inscriptions, seals and sealings, potteries and numerous varieties of minor antiquities.⁴⁸ KP Jayaswal, the then President of the Managing Committee of the Museum, proposed to publish a Catalogue of the Antiquities of the Museum. In 1935, Stella Kramrisch was commissioned to undertake this work, and she submitted the catalogue of stone sculptures, metal images, terracotta and some minor antiquities in 1939. The catalogue prepared by Kramrisch was however later heavily edited and published by PL Gupta only in 1965.

Looking at the progress of the Museum, the emphasis on the collection and display of stone sculptures is obvious. In 1923, the Museum purchased a group of Hindu and Buddhist figures in red sandstone from Mathura. In the same year Buddhist sculptures were acquired on a permanent loan from the Peshawar Museum.⁴⁹ In the following year the Museum, on loan, acquired objects of daily use and Buddhist stucco from Taxila and purchased bronzes of Hindu deities from Nepal.⁵⁰ In 1925 the Madras Museum presented a host of Amravati sculptures to the Patna Museum.⁵¹ In 1928 there was a significant addition to the collection by purchase of a number of Buddhist sculptures from Mathura⁵² and Benaras⁵³ and subsequently also some Gandharan sculptures. In 1929, the Negapatnam bronzes were purchased.

The progress of the Patna Museum collection is an obvious example of the many tangents that religious sculptures travel losing their meanings and context. What is the need for Gandharan sculptures in the Patna Museum? What is the context of Tanjore bronzes in this Museum? The answers lie in the age old colonial practise of museums being illustrative of textual sources and sculptures being the yardstick for artistic feats of dynasties. Similar is the stance of presenting relics in clearly defined categories juxtaposed against each other: Gandhara versus Mathura; Buddhist against Brahmanical; stone vis-à-vis bronzes.

The narratives of display at the Patna Museum precisely engage in this colonial enterprise along with the need to highlight a Buddhist history through sculptural reliefs. In this process the Museum purchased samples of images of the Gandhara school, Mathura school and from Amravati. A variety of Buddhist figurines are available in stone, terracotta, stucco and bronzes from sites as varied as Taxila, Mathura, Basarah, Bodh Gaya and Amravati, and are used to create a Buddhist archaeology and represent events from the life of the historical Buddha. The aesthetic qualities of the images are emphasised in their labels and arrangements where the linear evolution of style as per chronology, dynasty and region has been underlined. The sublimity of indigenous styles vis-à-vis foreign influence was deduced in all the phases.⁵⁴ The Patna Museum Catalogue outlines, “The strength of the collection of stone sculptures in the Patna Museums lies in the insight it affords into the validity of traditional Indian form by works belonging to the ‘beginning’ and to the ‘end’ of the ‘historical’ phase of Indian art. In both these is the spontaneity of original work.”⁵⁵ At the same time, keeping in mind the construction of a provincial identity the survey of images was meant to outline a panorama of sculptural styles from Bihar with three distinct periods of artistic proclivity: the Mauryan, the Gupta and the Pala. The Museum Catalogue summarises: “The ‘Gupta phase’ can be studied in the Patna Museum from its inception in the school of Mathura to its fullest responsiveness to stages of spiritual realisation. The copious works of the school that flourished under Pala and Sena rule in Bihar and Bengal are shown in one of the earliest definitely dated works.”⁵⁶

Similar was the case with terracotta and bronzes. The narratives around geography, stylistic influence and purpose have been highlighted by the accumulation of sculptures from different sites of North India such as Mathura, Sravasti, Kausambi and Taxila apart from those from the sites of Bihar. The terracotta has been presented in comparison with stone sculptures to analyse “stylistic mutation,” “relative chronological connection,” “foreign influence,” and suggest parallels “from several sites of pre-historic date in and outside India.”⁵⁷

In the early years, the Bihar and Orissa Research Society in their attempt to establish an indigenous history strove to create a sequence from stone age to copper to bronze for Bihar. For the Ethnological section of the Museum, the Society had focussed on collecting stone, copper and bronze implements which abound in the South Bihar and Chota Nagpur region.⁵⁸ Lack of adequate evidence had, however, prevented the making of a complete sequence; “no bronze weapons or implements have yet been found there are not yet sufficient grounds to predicate the existence of a bronze age following the copper age.”⁵⁹

Another attempt to assert the provincial identity was the preparation of an Antiquarian Map of Bihar and Orissa in 1918 under the instructions of the Lieutenant Governor. The map depicted places with monuments and ruins in a variety of colours to distinguish the various classes of remains such as Pre-Historic, Buddhist, Hindu, Jain, etcetera. The map for each division was to be prepared and ruins later than 1700 were not included.⁶⁰

The establishment of the Patna Museum was almost hand in hand with the exploration and subsequently excavation of Mauryan sites at Kumrahar, Bulandibagh and several others all within the city limits of modern day Patna. The Museum display provided the visual testimony for all of the colonial theories. The Greek and Chinese textual sources which the British archaeologists heavily relied on were given a visual illustration, the grandeur of a vanished civilisation could be displayed within the Museum space, and foreign influence of Greeks, Romans and Achemenidians in Pataliputra could be highlighted and documented. The ancient glories of India, its pristine Buddhist universe and the corrupt practices of medieval Hinduism all came to be organised within this space. Archaeology and iconography as disciplines were shaped through museum practices to recover India's past. But in this process, archaeological finds, especially sculptures, became relics, devoid of meaning and context, engaged in a project of recovery of the ancient past.

The Bihar and Orissa Research Society hence summarised the aims of the Museum as: "*With our well-lit and restful galleries, the student and scholar should find ample material for instruction and further investigation. They will find arrayed before them a small but interesting panorama of exhibits ranging from the pre-historic fossil tree through the Pre-Dravidian and Pre-Aryan periods to the relics of the Vaishali Republic and on to the Mauryan Period when Hindustan was virtually ruled from Pataliputra, the site of modern Patna, by Chandragupta and the great Asoka 300 years before Christ. Thence they may proceed to the Sunga period, to the Kushana of the Christian Era and to the medieval period. If copper plates interest them, they will find such objects from 6th to 15th century AD. If it is coins they seek, they will find specimens from the 5th century BC to recent times.*"⁶¹

Nalanda Museum

The Nalanda Museum came to be established in 1917 essentially to house the antiquities excavated from Rajgir, Nalanda and other sites in the vicinity. The focus on preventing the removal of antiquities from

the proximity of the site was a priority behind the establishment of this Site Museum.⁶²

The antiquities excavated at Nalanda were first housed in a bungalow meant to serve as a rest house for the Archaeological Department. One of the rooms was fitted with wooden racks and show cases in which the antiquities were deposited.⁶³ In a letter to the Secretary Education Department, Government of Bihar and Orissa dated to 1921, Dr Hirananda Shastri requisitioned for improved facilities to this incipient Museum: "As the number of finds has considerably increased arrangement is being made to utilize another room likewise. The antiquities which are being exhibited or deposited to these rooms are not only valuable from an archaeological point of view but many of them possess considerable intrinsic value as well. At the same time most of them are easily portable. The bungalow lies out of the way at a distance from the adjoining villages and hamlets and its rooms are not at all strong. On this account it seems not only desirable but essential to make early arrangements for the protection of the bungalow or the antiquities it accommodates."

The Museum currently has more than 13,000 antiquities in its possession out of which only 350 are displayed in its four galleries. The antiquities can be dated between the fifth and the twelfth centuries and have been collected from the ruins of the Monastic Complex, from the neighbouring villages, from Rajgir and other sites in the vicinity. Other antiquities from the sites have been stored at the Patna Museum, the National Museum, New Delhi and the Indian Museum including parts of the Broadley collection, much of which came from Nalanda and its vicinity. Some bronzes from Nalanda were transferred to the Patna Museum in 1929 on a permanent loan while the Indian Museum houses antiquities which had been a part of the Broadley collection. The National Museum meanwhile acquired antiquities from Nalanda "after selected works, including several Nalanda bronzes, were sent to London for exhibition in 1947–48 honouring India's independence."⁶⁴ When they were returned to India, they came to form the core collection of the National Museum in New Delhi, established post-independence in 1949 as representative of India's art and heritage. The images have hence travelled as museum pieces serving as relics of the past and as objets d' art without any geographical or historical context.

The antiquities when housed in the rest house had no scheme of display due to constraints of space. The new Museum building, once it was built, was organised into four galleries. The thrust of the Museum is to highlight the Buddhist antecedents of Nalanda though it has a substantial portion of Hindu and Jain images in its collection. The

First Gallery houses Hindu, Buddhist and Jain sculptures; of the four show cases, three have Buddhist images and one dedicated to the Hindu deities. The Second Gallery displays miscellaneous objects unearthed during excavations in the Monastic Complex and includes seals and sealings, ornaments, terracotta, stucco figurines, tools and implements and other objects of every-day use. The Third Gallery displays Nalanda bronzes including sacred images. The Fourth Gallery contains inscriptions and sculptures belonging to the 'Pala Period' and concentrates on 'Buddhist' antiquities.⁶⁵

The Museum was meant to be a 'Site Museum' and is still an Archaeological Museum under the ASI. The current display, labelling and cataloguing of artefacts, still reflects colonial taxonomies. The labels provide basic information giving the name, approximate date, material and location of find. "Even today the Nalanda museum carries much of the original function – that is as a storehouse for the works excavated at the site. There is no sense of Nalanda as a living space in which sculptures performed a function."⁶⁶ Despite being a Site Museum the antiquities show no connection with the actual site in terms of architectural location giving details of the find spot. Neither does the signage in the Monastic Complex give examples of antiquities found there, and now present in the Museum. The ASI published a guide in 1933 to provide information to visitors on details of the site but once again failed to establish this crucial connection between the site and its artefacts in the Museum.

The original scope of the Museum, when established by the ASI, as it still is, can be gathered from A Ghosh's *A Guide to Nalanda*.⁶⁷ The focus of the Museum is on establishing the Buddhist identity of the site especially through the sacred images and motifs. The *Guide* makes a survey of the different categories of objects found from Nalanda including stone images, stone inscriptions, copper plates, brick inscriptions, sealings and plaques, coins, bricks and pottery yet the focus of the Museum is on the Buddhist images and a very small fraction of Hindu images have even been listed.⁶⁸ The images and other antiquities from Nalanda have been organised under dynastic labels with the 'Gupta Period' as the beginning and 'Pala Period' as a phase of last artistic interlude before the final collapse of the site due to Muslim invasions. The aspect of 'Tantric' religion and Nalanda being crucial in its development has been highlighted. Religion and art from Nalanda have been referred to as being the point of contact and export of artistic and religious influences to South East Asia and to Tibet. The colonial categorisation of the Buddhist and Brahmanical faith in conflict with each other are obvious by the use of sculptural example such as

the Trilokavijaya.⁶⁹ At the same time there is no attempt to provide any context for the large number of Hindu images found at the site.

From temple to shed

Through my discussion of early collections and museums of Bihar in the previous sections, I have endeavoured to highlight how archaeological practices which aimed at conservation and preservation of archaeological sites and relics, by the very nature of their practice, proved detrimental in the presentation of a complete picture of the site. Despite the emphasis on in site preservation of artefacts and overall maintenance of sites, sacred images, motifs and architectural fragments continued to be removed and relocated. The institution of the museum itself played havoc with the original context of images. By building up certain narratives of display, labelling and cataloguing religious images lost their sacred powers to become heritage objects ready to receive visitors in the sterile condition of the museums.

During this journey from sites to museums was also a stage of sculptures being heaped together in sculptural sheds very often mentioned in reports of the ASI, susceptible to theft, breakage and environmental degradation.

Spooner writes in the ASI Annual Report for the Eastern Circle 1912–1913, “My object of visiting this (Deo Barunark) place was to inspect the site of the proposed shed for containing sculptures. The shed since my visit has been constructed. . . . Quite a number of well sculpted idols are lying about, and a few stone mandapa columns, two of which are inscribed, are in front of one of the temples. Everything of value will now be placed in the shed and will be taken care of.” He further added that since the older shed was small, it did not provide enough space for the great quantities of sculptures from the site to be displayed and “hundreds of others are stacked in heaps in the shed.” More importantly “anyone can remove at pleasure,” in addition to the fact that the “present one is not ever burglar proof: anyone can easily climb in over the railings, which are set in the openings, and take whatever he likes.”

One of the most significant examples is the complete destruction of the series of stucco recovered from Maniyar Math in Rajgir, one of the earliest in South Bihar. The excavated reliefs were stored in an open air shed, exposed to harsh climatic condition resulting in the disappearance of significant archaeological evidence. The Annual Report of the ASI Bengal Circle of 1903 reports how Buddhist and Hindu images from Patharghata Hills had similarly been removed to Kahalgaon and

preserved at a large house of a European zamindar, one Mr Barnes.⁷⁰ There was also a small cannon with a short inscription in the collection. The Report of 1914–1915 added that the cannon was presented to the collection of the Bihar and Orissa Museum, what happened to the images is not known.⁷¹

Equally appalling was the situation at Bodh Gaya, despite considerable British interest at the site. The ASI Report states “Bodh Gaya is a place of surpassing interest to the student of Buddhism as well as of Indian archaeology. The monuments at this place range in date from the earliest times of which any remains are extant in the country; and although the most important of these have been described elaborately by many writers the locality always still awaits systematic exploration to yield its buried treasures. Reports of sculptures and antiquities from the locality being sold to pilgrims and visitors by various people are not infrequent. Steps have been taken in the past to prevent such traffic and an overseer with a staff of a few *chaukidars* is stationed there for the purpose. But it appears that more vigilance is needed on the part of these people to ensure complete safety to the monuments and antiquities in their charge.”⁷²

It was the British who, in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, defined how the value and the meanings of the objects produced or found in India were determined. They created a system of classification which determined what was valuable, that which would be preserved as monuments of the past, that which was collected and placed in museums, that which could be bought and sold, that which would be taken from India as mementoes and souvenirs.⁷³ The display and nomenclature used in museums were also reflected in the disciplines of archaeology, art history and iconography and established the scholarship around how religious sculptures were to be studied. “Each phase of the European effort to unlock the secret of the Indian past called for more and more collecting, more and more systems of classification, more and more building of repositories for the study of the past and the representation of the European history of India.”⁷⁴

I have emphasised how “colonialism, its ideologies and power relations”⁷⁵ came to influence the ways in which objects are understood, how when sacred icons became idols, “removed from their contexts, and subjected to appropriation and exhibition,”⁷⁶ their meanings underwent radical changes. “Wrested from popular devotion and disinvested of all sacred connotations” religious sculptures as static and isolated museum objects became a statement of art and of iconographic tradition.⁷⁷ Sacred and profane came to be looked upon by British archaeologists and historians as two diametrically opposite and

fixed categories with no interaction between the two. Once sculptures were recovered from archaeological sites and placed in museums, there was little thought given to the issues of purpose of sacred sculptures or patronage or devotion.

At this point I would also like to add a small note on various collections which have moved outside of India. Claudine Bautze-Picron has written extensively on one such collection at the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin.⁷⁸ The Museum has a substantial repository of sculptures, architectural fragments and glazed tiles from various sites from Bihar and Bengal that entered the collection between 1876 and 1879. By looking at the original catalogues of the Museum she has traced the various acquisitions and the agents behind these acquisitions. Amongst the many names, RL Mitra played a significant role in sending these objects from the original sites to the Museum in Berlin. Mitra travelled extensively in the region and amongst his many writings is a seminal monograph on Bodh Gaya. The collection includes sculptures from various sites: Bodh Gaya, Munger, Lakhi Serai, Gaya, and even some pieces from Broadley's Museum. There are at least two Uma Mahesvara images from Munger in this collection.⁷⁹ Claudine Bautze-Picron mentions names of several individuals who were private collectors, doctors or even travellers who visited the region in the late nineteenth century and either carried back specimens of sculptures or acted as brokers in the transfer of sculptures from temples to museums outside of the country. The collection at the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, is just one example of this process of relocation and de-contextualisation of relics and artefacts. There are several other Museums and private collections which acquired sculptures from the temple sites and what is significant here is that colonial officers, surveyors and archaeologists were not the only people acting as brokers in this process. Nor can we estimate the quantity of sacred icons of sacred icons which left the sites to have lost their geographical and ritual identity.

Preserving colonialism

By tracing the many trajectories sacred images travelled and the many identities they adorned I have outlined the role of museums, private collections and modes of exhibitions developed to promote the colonial project to present a "certain history" of their Indian Empire. The visual documentation of the religious history of India created through the interpretation of sites and objects during colonial times also have their reverberation in current studies and displays. I illustrate this process in the next section, in which I discuss the writings of archaeologist

HD Sankalia and art historian Stella Kramrisch to discuss how museum collections and sites from which they were recovered, have been projected in archaeological discourse, art historical writings and studies in iconography even in the twentieth century.

Hasmukh D Sankalia wrote his Masters' Thesis on the ancient Buddhist University of Nalanda which he submitted to the Bombay University in 1932. It was later published in 1934. Sankalia's methodology is primarily textual but the significance of his work lies in his ability to corroborate texts with architectural lay-out, ground plans and material evidence gathered from the site. His work not only popularised Nalanda in the early years of its formal excavation by the ASI but he also used iconography as a field of knowledge and as a source to understand the site.

Sankalia identifies the archaeological site of Nalanda as that of a Buddhist University and elaborates upon "the meaning of the word *university* to its Latin original, which roughly meant a community of teachers and scholars."⁸⁰ He thus compares this European connotation of a University with traditional modes of learning in India and derives "Nalanda University" as a "Buddhist University" that thrived under royal patronage. Sticking to this dynastic appellation he traces the evolution of the University complex under each dynasty and ruler and then supports this theory with epigraphic evidence. "From the account of Hieun Tsang it appears that there were at least six colleges at Nalanda. For each king, beginning from Kumaragupta I down to Harsa, built a vihara or sangrahama at Nalanda. And if we include a vihara built by Balaputradeva, King of Suvarnadvipa, there would be seven."⁸¹

There are two sets of writings that Sankalia uses for his study of Nalanda, the first being the records of the two Chinese pilgrims Fa Xian and I Tsing and second being the accounts of Taranath, a Tibetan monk who visited Nalanda around the thirteenth century. Based on the memoirs of the Chinese travellers, Sankalia explores the physical lay-out of the "University complex," as the "greatest centre of Buddhist learning," dotted with monasteries, temples, kitchen, dining halls and so on. He also emphasises upon the sacredness of the site itself; "Nalanda before it became an educational institution was imbued with the holy memories of the Buddha. Even before the Buddha, it was the place where Mahavira had met Gosala. Among the many places that the Buddha carried his Holy propaganda, Nalanda remained a unique place. Buddha had visited the place with his favourite disciple Ananda."⁸² On a critical note, Sankalia, however, concedes that like most other sites in India the antiquity, glamour and sacredness of

Nalanda is often reasserted by the popular belief that the “University” was founded by Asoka.⁸³

For information on Nalanda in the medieval period, Sankalia refers to the accounts of Taranath on the basis of which he concludes its pre-eminence as a Tantric centre, “From references in Tibetan sources to Nalanda as a great centre of Tantric learning, or to a person as a professor of Tantra at Nalanda, and also from a number of books, evidently Tantric, ascribed to the Pandits of Nalanda in Chinese, it would appear that Tantra was, perhaps a very popular subject with students and professors at Nalanda.”⁸⁴ He argues that the form of Tantricism which he associates with “Sakti worship” which was prevalent at Nalanda had its origins amongst the various religions and even philosophical practices that were followed by the Hindus as well as Buddhists. One can thus imagine a religious milieu with considerable fluidity between Buddhism and Hinduism. He describes the Tantricism practiced at Nalanda as a form of Buddhism distinct from “primitive Buddhism” but based on the “recital of mantras and dharanis, practise of yoga, and Samadhi and lastly, worship of not only Buddha in different mudras but even worship of gods and goddess.”⁸⁵ He believes that this change in doctrine came with social compulsions where the laity could follow the faith yet was allowed liberty of action which was forbidden in the original Buddhist doctrine.

It is here that Sankalia uses religious icons found from Nalanda to reinforce his theories on the antiquity and pre-eminence of the site as that of a Buddhist University and its eventual transformation into a Tantric centre. He pre-supposes that the very large number of images in bronze and stone, in a variety of forms and cultic traditions found from Nalanda, suggest that the images in some way might have been integrated into the “University curriculum.” Theology being one of the subjects taught at Nalanda, in keeping with the prevalent Mahayana traditions, the focus might not just have been philosophy but also on image worship.

Sankalia sees images as part of a ritual circuit of shrines, defined by strict adherence to scriptural traditions popular within the “University” complex. He discusses that a number of “public rites” were performed by the resident members and priest which revolved around very large images such as those found at Nalanda. He elaborates upon the rites around daily worship of images in shrines which also would have involved the chanting of *strotas* and *mantras*.⁸⁶ In addition, the monks and students also performed “personal worship” in the individual apartments of the monastery every day, which accounts for the large numbers of bronze icons found from the various monasteries. He

categorises the icons based on their religious affiliation into three categories: as Early Mahayana, Tantric Mahayana and Hindu pantheon⁸⁷ in contrast to the earlier classification given by AK Coomaraswamy as Early Mahayana, *Tantrayana* images and finally the Kalachakra images.⁸⁸ In this aspect, Sankalia's study significantly differs from Coomaraswamy's: he does not just focus on the aesthetics but also highlights the placement and purpose of religious images.⁸⁹ He studies the images in a chronological order, though he remarks that the style of execution of the images has no bearing on its date or textual reference. In this process, he tries to correspond the physical attributes, *mudras*, garments of the images with textual traditions.

Taking note of some very unusual images unique to both Buddhist and Hindu pantheon which have been found from Nalanda, Sankalia attributes these to the strong Tantrayana philosophy popular there. On the basis of the large number of Tara images found at the site, he concludes that "it is quite certain that Tara was also worshipped at Nalanda," in her various forms as Prajnaparamita, Maha Sri Tara, Shyama Tara, Bhrukuti Tara or Gauri.⁹⁰ He lists the other figures of the Tantrayana pantheon found at Nalanda, such as Vasundhara, Trilokavijaya, Heruka, Marici, Jambhala and Aparajita and one "most unique" Kalachakrayana image of Yamantaka.⁹¹ On the lack of reference to the practise of Tantrayana in the Chinese sources Sankalia concluded that Tantrayana was probably introduced in Buddhism at a much later date, only around the fifth century and in its explicit forms as Vajrayana and Kalachakrayana appeared only in the tenth century when a host of gods and goddesses made their appearance. He also deduced that the Chinese travellers may have chosen to record only the earlier, purer forms of Buddhism.

Explaining the variety of Hindu images found at Nalanda such as Vishnu, Surya, Saraswati and Ganga, Balarama, Ananta Vasudeva, Shiva, Parvati and Ganesha, he suggests that on the one hand Buddhism probably underwent some kind of transformation to suit the popular appeal and at the same time was gradually replaced by Hinduism. "The ritualism of Nalanda Buddhism varies from time to time, as modifications took place in the faith itself" when *chaityavandana*, abulation of the holy image, chanting of *gathas*, etcetera, were replaced by the individual worship of these Tantric images. Consequently, there was an attempt made to display the superiority of the Buddhist theistic faith over others, as is evident from the figures of Heruka, Trilokavijaya and Aparajita.⁹²

Through his influential work Sankalia recognises the multiplicity of faiths and practices at Nalanda though he emphasises a linear

transition of religion from Buddhist to Tantric to Hindu where there was a take-over of sacred space. He also records some popular ritual practices, some of which continued into contemporary times such as the mention of a “particular stupa which contains the Buddha’s hair and nails and people afflicted with children’s complaints coming here and turning around religiously are mostly healed.”⁹³ A second significant issue which Sankalia suggests even in this early study is that the Nalanda of medieval times would have extended far beyond the limits of the present excavated boundaries, an issue which I will come back to in a later chapter. On the basis of iconography and sculptures scattered about on mounds and “in fields, under trees and on roadsides of the village,” he concludes that the site would have extended over villages such as those of Bargaon and Jagdishpur.⁹⁴ Suggestions such as these made almost eight decades ago have, however, gone unnoticed and Nalanda and other sites in this sub-region continue to be viewed and popularised as Buddhist.

A second set of writings on Indian art which are extremely relevant in the context of the early decades of the twentieth century are the works of Stella Kramrisch. Kramrisch was able to elaborate upon the deeper meanings of Indian art, emphasising upon the regional and sociological context without applying the western concepts of aestheticism. She wrote at a time when the museum movement was gaining momentum in India, and her writings are a cross-over between art history and iconographic studies. “She devoted her energy and scholarly skills to building Indian art history as an intellectual discipline in which formal history, archaeology, iconography and religion had their roles to play.”⁹⁵ While she compared the visual symbols of sacred art with textual prescriptions, she was also able to elaborate upon the spiritual experiences behind the religious arts. She spoke of a symbolism in art and how it becomes a visual expression of the imagination of the patrons and craftsmen and a physical manifestation of centuries old techniques.

The nature of her methodological approach and the vast scope of her writings can be understood in light of what Ratan Parimoo describes as the “cultural psychological method.” Having been trained under the Vienna school of art historians, Kramrisch’s approach to art has been inter-disciplinary and concerned with the origin, purpose and agency behind the making of art. At the same time, she attempted to view religious arts as more than just an archaeological object and as providing a more holistic view of the past. Her methodological approach emphasises upon comprehending the nature of art which entailed a critical discussion of chronology, region and physical appearance which she

felt formed the preface to her study. This has been described by the use of the German word *Kunde*, meaning “information.”⁹⁶ The second part of her study is called *Wesen* – explained as nature or the character, substance or essence of an art object, referring to and describing material, composition, shape and content. Kapila Vatsyayana summarises the vast scope of Kramrisch’s writing under five broad themes: the patron and practise (craftsmen); unknown India comprising of tribal and folk art; the subtle body; the (sacred) image and temple architecture; and lastly the theory and practise of art.⁹⁷

Kramrisch, in keeping with the nationalist spirit prevalent at the time, talked about the Indianness of art; yet unlike other contemporary nationalist scholars she emphasised on the centrality of history to the study of stylistic changes. Kramrisch accepted ‘naturalism’ as an intrinsic quality of Indian culture, and this she felt reflected on the modelling of human figures, use of certain decorative motifs, costumes, jewellery, animal symbols, etcetera. She detached Hindu art from its Christian counterparts and introduced the spiritual aspects behind sacred arts, something which none of her other contemporaries were able to do. This comes as evident in her pre-occupation with the *Puranas*, narration of myths and episodes, and the idea of manifest and unmanifest forms of the divinity. She was able to compare the theories of transubstantiation with the Indian idea of *pancha koshas* from the Upanishads, and the importance of rituals such as breathing life into images. Through the use of such philosophical notion, Kramrisch with her unique approach was able to link Indian art, its origins and evolution with the soils of the Subcontinent with the “post- Gupta period” as the starting point.

Kramrisch perceived Indian art as being linear hence attached importance to chronology and periodisation. She divided art into ancient, medieval and modern and into timeless art and time bound. According to her, there were several high peaks in the development of Indian sculpture such as Mathura, *yakshis*, Shiva Mahadeva, Ellora, Brahmanical rock-cut sculpture, etcetera. Ratan Parimoo writes that Kramrisch saw a “continuous transformation in art where individual works or groups of work are part of this transformation.”⁹⁸ This approach, however, had a deep drawback where the different periods were broken down and there was no merger of traditions or evolution of styles.

Apart from the philosophical and spiritual concepts behind art, Kramrisch was able to emphasise upon the Indianness of art in two ways: first through the agency of the artist and second by integrating sculptures with temple architecture. For Kramrisch, the artist is an important component of art since he is able to assert his individual

style and combine textual prescription with local traditions to provide a unique flavour to each piece of art. "Some of the ideas in her book *Indian Sculpture: How Indian artists see nature and life, human and animal forms and how in turn do these relate to vegetative forms; how Indian sculptors compose and integrate man, animal and nature and how these within themselves establish the space in which their very forms exist; and how is enfolded the narration of the episodes in the Buddhist reliefs, how there is accentless composition and modelling and how the human body is transubstantiated.*"⁹⁹ The artists and craftsmen with their understanding of texts, individual techniques, choice of stone and other materials gave a visual shape to the religious ideas of the people.

Kramrisch's second approach to emphasise upon the Indianness was to study art by comparing it to textual prescriptions such as the *Vastu Shastras* and by understanding sculptures as part of temple architecture. She wrote that temples were built as per prescriptions and that "The verbal image is the precursor of the architectural symbol."¹⁰⁰ Kramrisch refused to study art within the confines of the museum or illustrations as she believed that when placed in a museum, sculptures are devoid of their original context.¹⁰¹ She tried to understand the meaning behind the Hindu temples; the sacred site, geography, rituals, pilgrimage networks, mythology and so on and then perceived and understood the sacred images as part of this larger complex. She believed in the *vastu purusa mandala* and the sacred square as the foundation of a temple complex which differentiated the sacred from the profane.

Kramrisch made a significant departure from earlier studies where she stressed upon the architectural and ritual context to sacred sculptures and the metaphysical experience behind them. She was able to ignite a new line of thought on Hindu temple architecture which was followed by others in the 1960s. In this sense my methodology and approach to understand sacred iconography is very close to Kramrisch where I evoke the architectural placement and ritual context of icons as well as understand the stylistic evolution of the Uma Mahesvara icon. A second reason Kramrisch's approach and understanding of sacred sculptures are important is because she was the first to prepare a catalogue of sculptures of the Patna Museum soon after it was established in the 1930s.¹⁰² This catalogue for the Patna Museum was later published with minor modifications by PL Gupta the then curator of the Museum.¹⁰³ Even the present published catalogue of the Museum has emerged out of Kramrisch's seminal work.¹⁰⁴

Kramrisch's comprehensive study of the Pala and Sena Sculptures also makes her writings relevant to the geographical context of the

present study. For Kramrisch “art is situated in political developments,”¹⁰⁵ and she classifies Pala and Sena art as the Eastern School hence codifying a specific style, a dynastic tag and a fixed chronology. A similar taxonomy of classification is very much visible in the narratives of the museums which crystallised during the period. Though Kramrisch conceded that no direct patronage to art came from the rulers themselves who were more interested in the act of donation which was why sacred arts was popular during the period. By doing so she introduced the second aspect of viewing art with a clear separation between the sacred and the profane space, where the divine and the deity live in separate zones with no point of merger and is another tendency seen in museum displays from the contemporary period. Kramrisch also made distinct division between Buddhist, Hindu and Tantric art. She spoke of Eastern India as the starting ground for Tantricism as a consequence of the decline of Buddhism and the advent of Islam. This entailed the predominance of an overarching female principle and the evolution of composite icons such as the Uma Mahesvara.

Kramrisch developed a vocabulary for art criticism where the surface beauty was “connected with the depth,”¹⁰⁶ where as in a museum each piece of art can be looked at individually yet is the part of a sequence belonging to a particular period, region and dynastic style. Her emphasis on aesthetic qualities analysed the position of limbs, facial expression, drapery and jewellery, and the hidden meanings behind each decoration such as the lotus, the *kinmaras* and the seat. The museums from the period, the Patna Museum being an ideal example, were able to adopt Kramrisch’s style of classification but failed to understand her holistic approach. As a result, the importance of sculptures is still gauged by their association with the Mauryas, the Guptas, the Palas or the Senas and where deities still stand in museums as fossilised pieces classified as Hindu or Buddhist.

Notes

- 1 Bernard S Cohn, ‘The Transformation of Objects into Artifacts, Antiquities and Art in Nineteenth Century India,’ in Barbara Stoller Miller (ed.), *Powers of Art: Patronage in Indian Culture*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1992.
- 2 Colin Mackenzie ‘saved’ as much of the sculptures at Amaravati as he could and since there was no museum in India in which they could be deposited, he shipped the first batch to London in 1821, hoping that they would be accepted for the ‘Oriental Repository’ but the offer was coldly received. At that time there was little interest in paintings and sculptures to justify the large amount of space they would have needed to be on

- permanent display. They were therefore relegated to the stables of East India House where they remained forgotten for the next half a century; HP Ray, *Colonial Archaeology in South Asia: The Legacy of Sir Mortimer Wheeler*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, India, 2008.
- 3 Saloni Mathur, *India by Design: Colonial History and Cultural Display*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2007, p. 16.
 - 4 Tapati Guha Thakurta, 'The Museumised Relic: Archaeology and the First Museum of Colonial India,' *IESHR*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 1997, Sage Publications, New Delhi, pp. 21–51.
 - 5 Tapati Guha Thakurta, *Monuments, Objects, Histories*, p. 58.
 - 6 Kavita Singh, 'The Museum Is National,' *India International Centre Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3/4, Winter 2002–Spring 2003, pp. 176–196.
 - 7 RL Mitra, *Buddha Gaya: The Hermitage of Sakya Muni*, Printed at the Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1878, p. 3.
 - 8 "The convent is surrounded by a high brick wall containing a very considerable space on the banks of the west branch of the Fulgo, between it and the great temple of Buddh Gaya. The wall has turrets at the corners and some at the sides and has two great gates the handsomest part of the building." *Ibid.*
 - 9 GA Grierson and Rai Ram Anugrah Narayan-Singh Bahadur, *Bodh Gaya Math: District Gaya*, Printed at the Bengal Secretariat Press, Calcutta, 1893.
 - 10 RL Mitra, *Buddha Gaya*, p. 4.
 - 11 *Ibid.*, p. 70.
 - 12 Alan Trevithick draws out from Mackenzie's Report, "At least one of the Buddha figures from the shrine had been 'carried away by the Bairagis [Saivites] of this place, who keep it in their convent.' The Pandit was told that, in the upper stories of the temple there had been perhaps 'a lakh of small, elegant images and vases,' but that they had either been 'destroyed by time', or 'removed by the Bairagis, and some carried off by English gentlemen.' Bits and pieces of the temple had been carried off, no doubt, by a variety of persons for a very long time, but it was not until 1847 that 'English gentlemen' began to consider organizing the removal of antiquities in the manner we think of as early archaeology." Alan Trevithick, 'British Archaeologists, Hindu Abbots, Burmese Buddhists: The Mahabodhi Temple at Bodh Gaya, 1811–1877,' *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 3, July 1999, pp. 635–666.
 - 13 "In the 18th or 19th century the last image (of Buddha) was evidently lost, and in its place was set up a black stone image, which I believe was removed by one of the Mahants of the math when he again consecrated a lingam in the middle of the sanctuary. The image was not destroyed but removed to a small temple within the enclosure of the math where it still exists. There is an inscription on its base which records the name of the person who dedicated it. The lingam established in the centre of the square area in front of the throne is not an ordinary figure of the kind, but a big votive stupa, which has been made to do duty for it. It is still worshipped by the Mahant of the math," RL Mitra, *Buddha Gaya*, p. 84.
 - 14 Alan Trevithick, 'British Archaeologists, Hindu Abbots, Burmese Buddhists.'
 - 15 "Fragments of mouldings, friezes, architraves and other architectural stones, are to be met with in almost every part, stuck in the mud walls of

- huts over an area of five miles to the sacred spot; and these incontestably prove the former existence of a considerable number of stone temples in the neighbourhood of the great one. Bodh Gaya's magnificent sculptures were used by local people as doorsteps or grindstones or were carried off by visitors, and this was stopped only when George Grierson made complaints about it to the Mahant," RL Mitra, *Buddha Gaya*, p. 139.
- 16 "On the 15th March, 1871, I took charge of the Sub-Division of Bihar, and ever since that time, have devoted such of my leisure as I could spare from my official duties, to the examination of the antiquities of the country, be they Muhammadan, Hindu or Buddhistic; but in the following pages I speak only of the last; the others will, I trust, one day form the subject of separate papers." AM Broadley, 'The Buddhistic Remains of Bihar,' first published in 1872, this edition, Sundeep Prakashan, Varanasi, 1979, p. 3.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 18 He divides the relics of Buddhism found in Bihar into five groups: (1) ruins of temples, (2) those of monasteries or Viharas, (3) votive stupas, (4) figurines and sculptures, (5) Inscriptions. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 2.
- 20 In the context of his excavations at Bargaon, Nalanda, he mentions, "Subsequent to the excavations of October 1872, I employed with permission, for some three or four weeks, the labour of about twenty prisoners, and succeeded in making a deep cutting on the north face of mound VII." *Ibid.*, p. 97.
- 21 Speaking of the votive stupas Broadley writes, "The Chaityas vary in height from four inches to two feet. I have about 25 five distinct varieties in my collection. Buddhism has now-a-days disappeared even in tradition from the minds and recollection of the people of Bihar, and the dedicatory chaityas of the pious followers of Tathagata are commonly supposed to be nothing else than a different form of the sacred linga of the Hindus." *Ibid.*, p. 20.
- 22 Frederick M Asher, *Nalanda: Situating the Great Monastery*, Marg Publications, Mumbai, 2015, p. 40.
- 23 Frederick M Asher, 'The Former Broadley Collection, Bihar Sharif,' *Artibus Asiae*, Volume 32, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, 1970, pp. 105–124.
- 24 *Ibid.*
- 25 Asher has discussed the curious case of a colossal Vishnu image which Broadley had found at Dapthu. The right hand and Gadadevi of Vishnu has broken away from the main image, and this fragment is now stored in the Patna Museum while the rest of the Vishnu image is still with the Indian Museum. The two parts of the same image now have different accession numbers and lie in two different museums detached from the shrine where it was originally meant to be. Sometime during the transfer of the Broadley collection from Bihar Sharif to Calcutta and finally to Patna the Vishnu image would have been damaged since it survives whole in photographs of the Bihar Museum. *Ibid.*
- 26 *Ibid.*
- 27 John Marshall, *Indian Archaeological Policy 1915*, Superintendent Government Printing India, Calcutta, 1916, Directive no. 22, p. 21.

- 28 “So, the people of this region, had hardly any opportunity to know their ancestral heritage. Therefore, a great necessity of a Museum of their own was being badly felt by them since long; but it could not materialize till Bihar and Orissa were separated from Bengal.” PL Gupta, Foreword to *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*, 1965, reprinted in Naseem Akhtar (ed.), *Patna Museum Catalogue: Stone Sculptures and Other Antiquities*, Patna Museum, Patna, 2001.
- 29 Presidential Address on the inauguration of the Patna Museum in *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society (JBOR)*, Volume 15, 1929.
- 30 Sraman Mukherjee, ‘New Province, Old Capital: Making Patna Pataliputra,’ *IESHR*, Vol. 46, No. 2, 2009, Sage Publication, New Delhi, pp. 241–279.
- 31 “Even if most of us cannot take up the spade and seek to unearth the valuable remains of the past, we may each of us in our own way help forward the aims of the Society by giving information and other assistance to actual workers. All that we have to do is walk with our eyes and ears open.” *JBOR* 1918, p. 13.
- 32 Presidential Address on the inauguration of the Patna Museum in *JBOR*, Volume 15, 1929.
- 33 *JBOR*, Volume 1, 1915, p. 292.
- 34 Vivek Kumar Singh and Sudhir Kumar Jha (ed.), *Patna a Monumental History*, Vitasta Publishing, Patna, 2010.
- 35 *JBOR*, Volume 2, 1916.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 “Many of our most interesting remains have already left the province. Enquiries will be made to ascertain whether it will not be possible at a reasonable cost to obtain for our Museum plaster casts of some of these, such as have already been made for other Museums.” Ibid.
- 39 *Annual Report of the Eastern Circle of the ASI, 1918–19*.
- 40 PL Gupta, *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*, p. xiii.
- 41 *Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the Patna Museum, 1927*.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 *Annual Report of the Eastern Circle of the ASI, 1918–19*.
- 44 *Annual Report of the Eastern Circle of the ASI, 1919–20*.
- 45 *JBOR*, Volume 15, 1929.
- 46 *JBOR*, Volume 2, 1916.
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 PL Gupta, *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*, p. xiii.
- 49 *Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the Patna Museum, 1923*.
- 50 *Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the Patna Museum, 1924*.
- 51 *Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the Patna Museum, 1925*.
- 52 Birth of Buddha figure from Mathura, *Annual Report of the Managing Committee of the Patna Museum, 1928*.
- 53 Hariti figure and a Mahayana figure of a female trampling upon Ganesha. Ibid.
- 54 “Mathura sculpture was valued because it was seen as the purely local precursor to the art of the Gupta period, the period that nationalist historians had identified as India’s Golden Age.” Kavita Singh, *The Museum Is National*.

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- 55 Naseem Akhtar (ed.), *Patna Museum Catalogue: Stone Sculptures and Other Antiquities*, p. 7.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 Naseem Akhtar (ed.), *Patna Museum Catalogue: Terracotta and Metal Images*, Patna Museum, Patna, 2001, p. 3.
- 58 The Museum obtained Bronze celts from Museums at Cambridge in 1920, *JBOR*, Volume 5, 1919, *JBOR*, Volume 6, 1920.
- 59 *JBOR*, Volume 4, 1918, p. 11.
- 60 *Annual Report of the Eastern Circle of the ASI, 1919–20*.
- 61 *JBOR*, Volume 15, 1929.
- 62 Education Department File number XI E-47 of 1922, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- 63 Archaeological Survey of Central India File number XIE 25/21, Bihar State Archives, Patna.
- 64 Frederick M Asher, *Nalanda*, p. 96.
- 65 As noted in the display labels at the Museum.
- 66 Frederick M Asher, *Nalanda*, p. 96.
- 67 A Ghosh, *A Guide to Nalanda*, 3rd Edition, first published in 1939, this edition, Manager of Publication, New Delhi, 1950.
- 68 “By far the richest collection is that of stone and bronze images of gods and goddesses of the Buddhist, and, in a few cases, of the Brahmanical pantheon. The images are found in an abundance in the monasteries where they were worshipped and in all probabilities manufactured,” *Ibid.*, p. 21.
- 69 “The presence of not a negligible number of Brahmanical images in the centre of Buddhist theology and ritual is intriguing. Probably their introduction and existence were tolerated, but it must be remembered that this was the age when the Buddhist were conceiving and erecting such deities a Trilokyavijaya trampling on Shiva and Parvati. It is no doubt that there were mutual exchange and borrowing of deities, but it is not possible to think that a Brahmanical deity whose image we find at Nalanda was ever absorbed in the Buddhist pantheon.” *Ibid.*
- 70 *Annual Report of the Eastern Circle of the ASI, 1903–04*.
- 71 *Annual Report of the Eastern Circle of the ASI, 1914–15*.
- 72 *Annual Report of the Eastern Circle of the ASI, 1917–18*.
- 73 Bernard S Cohn, ‘The Transformation of Objects into Artifacts, Antiquities and Art in Nineteenth Century India.’
- 74 *Ibid.*
- 75 Tim Barringer and Tom Flynn (ed.), Introduction to *Colonialism and the Object: Empire, Material Culture and the Museum*, Routledge, London, 1998.
- 76 *Ibid.*
- 77 Tapati Guha Thakurta, “‘Our Gods, Their Museums:’ The Contrary Careers of India’s Art Objects,” *Art History*, Vol. 30, No. 4, September 2007, pp. 628–657.
- 78 Claudine Bautze-Picron, *The Art of Eastern India in the Collection of Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag, Berlin, 1998.
- 79 The two images have been published by Thomas E Donaldson in his exhaustive volumes on Shiva and Parvati icons. Thomas E Donaldson, *Śiva, Pārvātī and the Allied Images*, in *Perspectives in Art and Archaeology*, Volume 8, DK Printworld, New Delhi, 2007, p. 409, figure 383 and p. 405.

- 80 HP Ray, *The Return of the Buddha: Ancient Symbols for a New Nation*, Routledge, New Delhi, 2014, p. 252.
- 81 HD Sankalia, *The University of Nalanda*, BG Paul and Co., Madras, 1934, p. 62.
- 82 Ibid., p. 36.
- 83 Yet Sankalia asserts that a lot of what the Chinese writers recorded was based on their “love for legends” and “from heresy,” Ibid., p. 37.
- 84 Ibid., p. 86.
- 85 Ibid., p. 87.
- 86 Ibid., p. 128.
- 87 Ibid., p. 133.
- 88 Coomaraswamy’s classification of images from Nalanda were as follows: The Early Mahayana images included those of Buddha, Bodhisatva and votive stupas; the development of Tantrayana marked the appearance of Shaiva images; and finally the Kalachakra tradition which included Vaishnava images. Ibid.
- 89 According to I Tsing’s records, images of Haritis depicted with babies and children were often placed in the dining halls and daily offerings were made to her to ensure abundance and benevolence.
- 90 HD Sankalia, *The University of Nalanda*, p. 135.
- 91 Ibid., p. 136.
- 92 Ibid., p. 139.
- 93 Ibid., p. 221.
- 94 Ibid., p. 225.
- 95 These themes are also the five sections of Barbara Stoller Miller’s edited volume, a compilation of selected writings of Stella Kramrisch with a Preface by Kapila Vatsyayana, Barbara Stoller Miller (ed.), *Exploring India’s Sacred Arts: Selected Writings of Stella Kramrisch*, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts Series, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, New Delhi, p. 12.
- 96 Verena Widorn, ‘Is There a Vienna School of Asian Art: Early Considerations on Indian and Oriental Art by Viennese Scholars at the Beginning of the 20th century,’ Unpublished paper, presented at XXIV ESCAS, Warsaw.
- 97 Preface by Kapila Vatsyayana in Barbara Stoller Miller (ed.), *Exploring India’s Sacred Arts*, p. 12.
- 98 Ratan Parimoo, ‘Stella Kramrisch’s Approach to Indian Art,’ in Parul Pandya Dhar (ed.), *Indian Art History: Changing Perspectives*, DK Printworld and National Museum Institute, New Delhi, 2011, pp. 69–88.
- 99 Ratan Parimoo, ‘Stella Kramrisch’s Approach to Indian Art’
- 100 Barbara Stoller Miller (ed.), *Exploring India’s Sacred Arts*, p. 249.
- 101 “She explicitly refused to use the illustrations published by Fergusson or other ASI publication like the one from Burgess since she noticed that drawings, sketches and woodcuts do not support any relevant art historical conclusions. She believed in actually seeing the object at its original location and hence made it a point to visit many archaeological sites,” Verena Widorn, ‘Is There a Vienna School of Asian Art.’
- 102 “Stella had been engaged to do the catalogue, but when she presented her work, Prof. Banerji Shastri, who was excavating Buxar in the 1930s demanded that Stella date and name certain objects to support his theory

that the site was as old as Mohenjodaro. She refused and the catalogue was later published without her name.” Barbara Støller Miller (ed.), *Exploring India’s Sacred Arts*, p. 17.

103 PL Gupta, *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*, 1965.

104 Naseem Akhtar (ed.), *Patna Museum Catalogue: Stone Sculptures and Other Antiquities*.

105 Barbara Støller Miller (ed.), *Exploring India’s Sacred Arts*, p. 205.

106 Ibid.