Chapter 8

Borobudur's Pāla forebear? A field note from Kesariya, Bihar, India

SWATI CHEMBURKAR

The rise of the Pāla dynasty in the 8th century AD brought paradigm shifts in Buddhist text, ritual, and sacred architecture that sent cultural waves across the expanding maritime and land trade routes of Asia.[1] This paper focuses on how the architectural concepts travelled in the connected Buddhist world between the Ganges valley and Java. A movement of architectural ideas can be seen from studying the corpus of the temples in the Pāla (750–1214 AD) and Śailendra (775–1090 AD)[2] domains of India and Indonesia. This paper proposes that we see a paradigm shift in the design of a *stūpa* architecture at Kesariya (Bihar) that emphasizes the arrangement of deities in the circular maṇḍalic fashion with a certain numerological configuration of life-size Buddha figures placed in the external niches of the monument. This new architectural concept possibly played a key role in the development of a more elaborate structure of Borobudur in Java.

The architectural linkages emerge stronger with the central fivefold structure of the temples of the Pālas and Śailendras. In order to make the essential comparison, a quick method of drawing architectural plans is developed that is based on the basic measurements and not archaeological plans.[3]

Architectural development in *stūpa* structure

The main archaeological sites of the middle and lower Ganges plain were recorded in the 19th century by Alexander Cunningham, following the travel accounts of the Chinese scholar-pilgrims Faxian (c. 337–422) and Xuanzang (c. 602–64). Northeast India contained not only early Buddhist *stūpa*s and monastic complexes, but also a range of *stūpa* structures that advanced from the traditional hemispherical *stūpa* of Sanchi, through the cruciform, terraced *stūpa* structure of Nandangaṛh (Fig. 1) to the elaborate *stūpa-maṇḍala* of Kesariya. Most of the Pāla structures that may have served as a model for Central Javanese temples are in dilapidated state today, making it difficult to track the architectural borrowings.

But since 1998, the ASI excavations of some parts of Kesariya have uncovered striking design similarities with the massive Central Javanese *stūpa* of Borobudur, whose stepped pyramid structure and maṇḍalic arrangement of deities in circular

1. I owe a special word of thanks to Prof. Tadeusz Skorupski for introducing me to Buddhism and generously sharing his breadth of knowledge, and to Dr. Peter Sharrock for encouraging me to think beyond the boundaries of the established scholarship and reading and commenting on the manuscript. Many thanks to Prof. Max Deeg, for all his valuable comments on the paper and for generously helping out with the reading material, and to Dr. Andrea Acri for all his support, help and patience throughout the editing process. Dr. K.K. Muhammed's interest in my work, his insights and his significant contributions in excavating and restoring Kesariya *stūpa* are gratefully acknowledged. Thanks to Yves Guichand for providing me with the aerial images of Nandangaṛh, Kesariya, and to Deepak Anand, without whose help Bihar field work would have been difficult.

2. Pāla period dates after Huntington and Huntington 1990: 542, chart 1; Śailendra dates after Zakharov 2012: 1.

3. The drawings of Kesariya are from 2011 field trip measurements and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) reports. For temple buildings in Śailendra domain, the plans displayed at the Candi Sewu site museum have been used as a reference material but the details are mine. For Buddhist sites in present-day Bangladesh, I have mentioned the specific references for each drawing.

Fig. 1: Cruciform structure of the stupa of Nandangaṛh, Champāran, Bihar (Photo courtesy of Yves Guichand)

Fig. 2: Aerial view of Kesariya stupa, showing all the terraces (Photo courtesy of Yves Guichand)

Fig. 3: Model of Borobudur *stūpa* kept at the site museum, showing all the terraces (Photo: author)

form has hitherto been considered unique and without precedent (Figs. 2 and 3). Borobudur's pyramidal slopes and circular summit are covered with niches and small bell-shaped *stūpa*s hosting 504 life-size Buddha icons of the supreme pentad of Jina-Buddhas.

Kesariya also appears to be a monumental *maṇḍala* with life-size Buddhas facing the quarters of the universe. It is too early in the excavation cycle to identify the *maṇḍala*, but we already know that at least two of the Borobudur Buddhas, Amitābha and Akṣobhya, are present at Kesariya. From the

current evidence available it seems that Kesariya marked a major shift in the architectural development of the *stūpa* structure under the Pālas to a Buddha-bedecked, mountain-*maṇḍala* model. This breakthrough model for a ceremonial centre is what appears to have travelled, presumably with related texts and ritual practices, between the Pāla and Śailendra domains.

KESARIYA IN LEGEND

The dating of the Kesariya *stūpa* is in its infancy. The structure that is partly visible today, following only partial excavation, is the ultimate phase of a *stūpa* constructed on a natural hill that evolved through an unknown number of phases.

This may be the *stūpa* mentioned by Xuanzang, who traveled on the well-known route from Vaiśālī to Kuśinagara on the way to reside at Nālandā.[4]

Cunningham, the British archaeologist and army engineer considered the father of the ASI, wrote the first detailed description of Kesariya in 1861 and 1862. Following the leads of Xuanzang, he carried out some excavations of the adjacent mound known as Raniwās and found traces of an old Buddhist monastic establishment, with a temple enshrining a colossal Buddha image. However on his second visit, Cunningham said local people had pillaged the mound and the large cult image was lost. Cunningham suggests that Raniwās was the site of a large Buddhist monastery or *vihāra* linked to the *stūpa* of Kesariya.[5]

According to local legend, the big Raniwās ('Palace of the queen') mound is associated with *cakravartin* king Bena, who is said to have immolated himself there with his family because of the death of his wife Kamalāvatī. The *Padmapurāṇa* mentions King Bena as a Buddhist *cakravartin* who acquired superhuman powers, but due to some misconduct, his powers left him and his wife fell into a royal tank and drowned. The tank of the legend has been identified as the present-day Gangayā tank, about 1 kilometre south of the Kesariya. The despairing king, on the advice of the court priests, built the Kesariya *stūpa* and entered it with his family, never to be seen again.[6]

KESARIYA IN HISTORY

Xuanzang's 7th century account mentions a *stūpa* built in the area of Champāran, Bihar, where the Licchavis of Vaiśālī took leave of the Buddha, on his way to *parinirvāṇa*. Here the Buddha left his alms bowl as a memento for them. The record mentions the *stūpa*, possibly built in the location of Kesariya as a memory of the event (see Cunningham 1871: 66), as one of the principal Buddhist sanctuaries of the region and notes that Buddhists referred to it as a *cakravartin stūpa*—a monument that commemorates the *abhiṣeka* ceremony of a Buddhist king of kings.[7]

4. Xuanzang mentions a *cakravartin stūpa*, approximately 200 *li* to the northwest of Vaiśālī, which Cunningham (1871: 65) identifies with Kesariya. See Xuanzang's *The Great Tang dynasty record of the Western Regions,* translated in English by Li (1996: 214); cf. Watters 1905 II: 71–72 (English trans. of the French edition by Julien, 1858).

5. Colonel Mackenzie of the Madras Engineers was the first modern explorer to survey the mound of Kesariya in 1814, along with his associate Kashinath Babu. (Coincidentally, in the same year Borobudur was 'rediscovered' by Cornelius, an envoy of Sir Stamford Raffles). Mackenzie and Babu excavated the east side of the huge mound. Unfortunately, there are no first-hand records of their excavations. In 1835, Captain Brian Hodgson, assistant to the resident in a new office of British-ruled Nepal, published the survey efforts of Mackenzie along with his sketch of the ruins without any descriptive note. The sketch is published by *Bengal Asiatic Society's Journal* (1835, plate VII). Hodgson collected several Buddhist texts and had worked in this area during his ten-year tenure in Nepal. Finally, in 1861 and 1862, the first detailed description of the Kesariya *stūpa* was offered by General Alexander Cunningham. Cunningham never excavated the actual *stūpa* of Kesariya but only the surrounding area. During the excavations, Cunningham had found an old Buddhist establishment, with a temple enshrining a colossal Buddha image. The statue was removed in 1860 by the Bengali Babu of the Rāmgarh Indigo factory. Cunningham dates the *stūpa* to the 2nd to 7th century in his four reports made between 1862 and 1865 and published by ASI (Cunningham 1871: 65).

6. See Cunningham's four reports made between 1862 and 1865 and published by ASI (1871: 65–67); see also Muhammed 2002: 3.

7. Xuanzang describes: 'In the city there is a *stūpa* at the place where Buddha had told an assembly of various Bodhisattvas and men and heavenly beings about his past events of cultivating Bodhisattva deeds. He was once a universal monarch [*cakravartin*] named Mahādeva (known as Datian or great city in Chinese), in this city, possessing

The available archaeological evidence suggests there were various stages of construction, and the sheer size of the *stūpa* implies that it was funded by royal resources at each stage.[8] Its construction at the junction of four major roads and its striking revolutionary maṇḍalic design both tend to support such a *cakravartin* claim, as do the legendary *cakravartin* stories of King Bena.

HARṢA AND A LINK TO PĀLA

The Licchavi *stūpa* was possibly expanded by King Harṣa (c. 606–47), the first great post-Gupta king in the region.[9] Harṣa's empire was a loose federation of several kingdoms that at the peak of his power covered the present-day regions of Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Bihar, Bengal, and Odisha.[10] He was a lover of art and literature and was converted to Buddhism according to Xuanzang, who resided for eight years in his empire. Xuanzang records several monastic buildings patronized by Harṣa along with thousands of *stūpa*s, each over 100 feet high, gardens, water tanks, and numerous endowments to Nālandā.[11] Construction activity in northeastern India gained momentum first under Harṣa and then under later Guptas of Magadha.

Harṣa extended his kingdom in battle until his power stretched from Valābhī (Gujarat) to Magadha (Bihar, Odisha). With an empire consolidated at home he became the first Indian king to cement ties with the Tang court of China, notably through his personal friendship with the well-connected Xuanzang. Harṣa had ruled from Kanauj (Uttar Pradesh) for decades and then moved his capital to Magadha in AD 641.[12] He announced the event by sending a delegation to the Chinese emperor, who in response dispatched an embassy in AD 643 (Sen 2001: 8), presumably to attend his Buddhist *cakravartin* coronation.[13] Did Kesariya play a part in this ceremony?

Chinese sources mention another delegation to Harṣa's state in AD 648, which resulted in a battle between Wang Xuance, the lead envoy of the visiting Chinese delegation, and King Aluonashun (Aruṇāśa?), who had just usurped Harṣa.[14] The fact that Champāran (the region of Kesariya *stūpa*) was the scene of this major historic battle gives us some indication of its importance in Harṣa's vast empire.

---

the seven treasures and being competent to rule over the four continents of the world' (Li 1996: 214).

8. The structure clearly shows two phases of construction activity: Śuṅga/Kuṣāṇa and late Gupta period (late 7th, early 8th century), according to *Indian Archaeology: A Review 1998-99* (2004: 11). In a telephonic conversation on 16 January 2014, Muhammed stated that the slopes are strewn with late Gupta period bricks or maybe even bricks from a later date.

9. This is my hypothesis, based on the ASI findings of the post-Gupta period bricks at the site. The sheer scale of the monument would not have been possible without significant royal funding. Champāran was part of Harṣa's vast kingdom.

10. Devahuti 1970: 87, 111; Thapar 2002: 289; Scherrer-Schaub 2003: 226.

11. See Watters 1905 II: 164 and Li 1996 (Fascicle V: 144). Even though Xuanzang mentions Harṣa's building activity, the only architectural evidence from his reign may be sought at Nālandā. The archaeological remains of Nālandā date from the 5th century to the end of the 12th century AD, and during Harṣa's reign the monastery-cum-university was certainly at the height of its fame.

12. Based on her understanding of the Chinese sources, Devahuti mentions that Harṣa was the king of Kanauj for a long time, but by the time the Chinese mission arrived in 641 AD, he had already proclaimed the throne of Magadha: see Devahuti 1970: 84, 214, 217. Based on his readings of *Xin Tang shu* 221a (*New History of the Tang* [*Dynasty*]), Tansen Sen (2005: 19) concludes the same.

13. Based on Xuanzang's travel account, Elliot (1921: 100) paints a picture of this ceremony in which a golden image of the Buddha was borne on an elephant while Harṣa, dressed as Indra, held a parasol over it, and his ally, dressed as Brahmā, waved a fly whisk.

14. The name of Harṣa's usurper is known through the Chinese inscription of Bodhgaya and Chinese historiography as 'Aluonashun' (Lévi 1900: 297, Sen 2003: 22). Chinese sources describe Aluonashun as king of Nafuti or Tinafuti kingdom (see Devahuti 1970: 207–29). Modern scholars have deciphered the name of the kingdom as Tīrabhukti, a feudatory kingdom of Harṣa in northern Bihar (Waddell 1911: 37–65). Sen's reconstruction of Aluonashun as Aruṇāśa is tentative. Lokesh Chandra (1992a: 260–61) interprets Aluonashan as King Arjuṇa. The battle site of Chapoholo on the banks of Chientowei is identified by Lévi (1900: 297–401) as Champāran on the banks of river Gaṇḍakī . Supporting the identification of Lévi, Devahuti (1970: 228) adds that Tīrabhukti, Champāran, and Gaṇḍakī are all in the same region. Apparently Champāran, situated on the Gaṇḍakī, was a part of Tīrabhukti kingdom in the 7th century.

Archaeological research has not yet begun at many sites in the middle and lower Ganges, but the available evidence points to Harṣa as the most likely post-Licchavi and pre-Pāla builder at Kesariya. The ASI superintendent for the site, K.K. Muhammed, has found Gupta and late-Gupta period bricks from the 7th century on the slopes of the *stūpa*.[15]

According to Dilip Chakaravarti (2001: 203), the site remained active in later centuries:

> The recent excavations by the Archaeological Survey of India at this site have discovered a Pāla period stūpa dating from the eighth century. The excavations have revealed the terraces of the stūpa, with 'Prādakshīnā Path', which follows the pattern of those reported from Pahārpur in East Bengal and Nandangarh [in east Champāran]. The stūpa has been found with several [life-size] stucco figures of Lord Buddha in 'Bhumīsparśā posture in the cells provided all over the terraces.

Chakravarti (ibid.: 206) reports a later Pāla-period structure was added to the *stūpa* summit in the 8th century, but the exact nature of the construction is very difficult to determine. Champāran played a significant role during the subsequent Pāla period, given the constructions of the massive *stūpa* sites of Bisa Sāgar and Purnadih. Along with the Kesariya *stūpa*, these huge *stūpa* sites in Chamapāran await the excavations. A large Pāla-period black stone slab with a 10th- to 12th-century inscription in Siddhamāṭṛkā script was also found at Kesariya.[16] It is the same script that was introduced to Java by the builders of Borobudur, the Śailendra kings (Jordaan 2006: 6).

The Pālas inherited the territory that was previously united by Harṣa and by the Magadha Guptas (Asher 1980: 69; see Fig. 8). Their control of the Gangetic plain extended over the trade routes of the Bay of Bengal, giving the dynasty more international influence than any of its predecessors. Nālandā, the prime monastery-university, already had an Asia-wide network and was bolstered by Pāla patronage. But along with Nālandā, Pāla finance also brought the construction of the new Buddhist centres of Uddaṇḍapura (Odantapurī) and Vikramaśīla in South Bihar, of Somapura, Lālmai, and Maināmatī in modern-day Bangladesh, and other Buddhist sites in Odisha[17] providing a broad monastic base in northeastern India.

Pāla sway dominated after King Dharmapāla (c. 775–815) proclaimed his control over the Bay of Bengal trade.[18] He was an extraordinary king whose political and military ambition was matched by an unprecedented generosity towards Buddhist establishments that provided a platform for the sacred art and architecture. The dynasty's influence would soon be traceable across Asia in religious texts, bronze ritual icons, sacred architecture, and in the Esoteric Buddhist schools formed by Indian, Chinese, Korean, Japanese, and Javanese masters, who travelled both eastwards and westwards along the maritime and land routes to the Ganges valley monasteries.

From the basis of the above data, we can conclude that Kesariya hill first bore some kind of pre-Pāla structure and that the mound was active and under modification throughout the Pāla period. Pālas modified and enlarged many Buddhist sites, sometimes constructing on the older vestiges.[19] The other new Pāla Buddhist centres look to be parallel and major 8th- and 9th-century architectural enhancements of a maṇḍalic form that evolved from the older Nandangaṛh *stūpa* in Champāran

15. Based on the findings during the excavations and the size and the nature of the bricks, ASI has tentatively dated the structure to late Gupta period (*Indian Archaeology: A Review 1998–99*, ASI 2004: 11).

16. According to Patil (1963: 201), the stone slab that was found by J.B. Elliot in 1835 had a representation of a Viṣṇu image. The exact nature of the representation is not known but it could be one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu.

17. Donaldson (1995: 177) mentions the developments at Ratnagiri, Udayagiri, and Lalitagiri in Odisha, during the Pāla period.

18. The Khalimpur charters of Dharmapāla were issued from Paṭaliputra, 'where a variety of boats had formed a bridge on the Bhagirathi' (Kielhorn 1896–97: 249). A verse from the *Rāmacaritam*, an epic poem by Sandhyākaranandin about the Pāla emperor Rāmapāla, describes his seafaring abilities as well as Pāla renown abroad (see Shāstri and Basak 1969: 3).

19. Asher (1980: 92–93) has discussed the earlier Gupta-period fragments and their adaptation in several sculptures of Somapura Mahavihāra in Pahārpur, which is a Pāla monastery. He observes the strong Gupta character of some of the sculptures at Somapura.

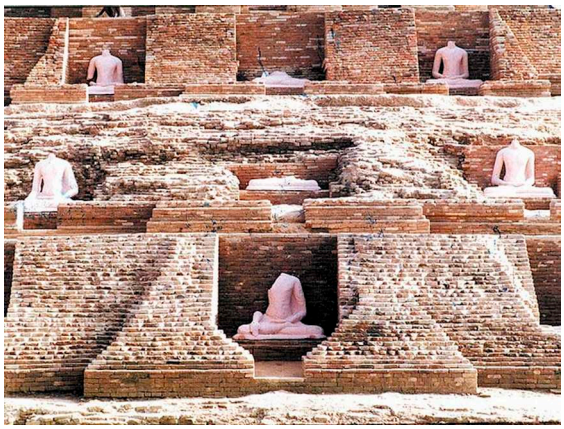


Fig. 4a: Kesariya east elevation showing brick niches housing Buddhas at all the levels (Photo: author)

Fig. 4b: Borobudur east elevation Buddhas (Photo: author)

Fig. 4c: Kesariya brick niche detail showing Buddha in *bhūmisparśa-mudrā* (Photo: author)

Fig. 4d: Borobudur stone niche detail showing Akṣhobhya in *bhūmisparśa-mudrā* (Photo: author)

and Kesariya *stūpa* type.[20] Apart from its religious function as a monument expressing the form of Mahāyāna or Esoteric Buddhism that flourished during the Pāla period, the temple became a statement of political power and a major ceremonial centre under the Pālas. These developments appear to be reflected in the art and architecture of Kesariya.

COMPARING KESARIYA AND BOROBUDUR

Based on the overall measurements and the architecture of the two *stūpa*s, Muhammed (2005) compares the structure of Kesariya to Borobudur. Long (2008: 187–91) also observes the similarities and differences between the two structures. The period between the Gupta and Pāla dynasties, when Kesariya was built, was a transitional period in art. The relative paucity of sculpture in stone and metal in the pre-Pāla period turned to prolific large-icon production in all media from the 8th to the 12th century. Some Nālandā sculptures from this period show Gupta traits (Asher 1980: 80, 93) and some art bears features identi-

20. The terraces projecting out in the cardinal directions, on all levels of Nandangaṛh *stūpa*, develop into brick chambers housing life-size Buddha images erected as at Kesariya, and later on form the four shrine halls at the cardinal directions found at Vikramaśīla and Somapura, with huge cult images, concluding the fold system in architecture. For the detailed account of Nandangaṛh *stūpa*, see van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (1956).

Fig. 5a: Kesariya plan showing the overall layout of the structure (Drawing: author)

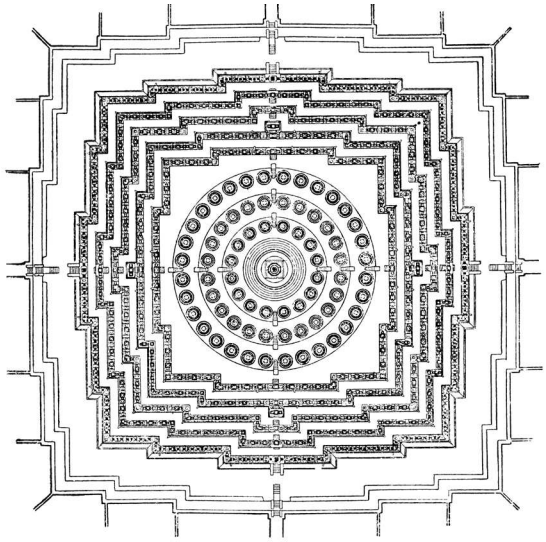


Fig. 5b: Borobudur plan (adapted from Mārg Vol. IX/4, 1956: 66; source image: Kern Institute collection, Leiden University Library, GD 14 1472)

fiable as Pāla.[21] Large niches on the outside walls of the temples were created during this threshold period to house life-size stucco sculptures. At the turn of the 8th century, Maniyār Maṭha in Rājgīr, *stūpa* III at Nālandā, and the Mahābodhi temple in Bodhgaya were adorned with such stucco figures.[22] Susan Huntington drew attention to this feature in her short survey of Pāla-period architecture.[23] The feature was further developed at the Pāla monasteries at Pahārpur (Somapura *vihāra*) and Antichak (Vikramaśīla *vihāra*), where huge Buddha statues were enshrined in the niches that were erected in the cardinal directions of the central terraced temple.[24] Sculpture thus became an integrated part of the monumental structure and was no longer just an adornment. The Pāla foundations of Lalitagiri, Ratnagiri, and Udayagiri in Odisha all made prominent use of massive sculpture. Earlier Buddha images were replaced by sculptures of Bodhisattvas, especially Mañjuśrī, and sculptural *maṇḍala*s (Donaldson 1995: 179–80).

The fivefold, terraced architecture of Kesariya with large external Buddhas in niches appears to be a somewhat radical enhancement of the feature that Huntington noticed as the new trait of the transitional period (Figs. 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d).

The concentric six terraces of the partly excavated *stūpa* at Kesariya are built on a natural hill in the same way as Borobudur. The lower four Kesariya terraces are more circular than those of Borobudur, but close examination reveals two square terraces on the top level, resembling the combination of

21. As Huntington (1984: 10, 20) notes, 'one might assume that "Pāla art" began with "Pāla dynasty", but since there are no remains which may be definitely assigned to the first Pāla emperor-Gopāla, this assumption thus remains unfounded'.

22. Bernet Kempers 1933: 10–11; Weiner 1962: 173; Asher 1980: 75.

23. See Huntington 1990: 90–91. Claudine Bautze-Picron (1993b: 283) supports this in her review: 'As the author emphasizes, a special feature of the architecture was then the niches on the outside walls of the temple. Those niches were occupied by sculptures as we know from temple 2 at Nālandā, still adorned with stone panels, or from the Maniyar Matha at Rajgir or the temple at Aphsad where stucco images used to adorn the niches'.

24. The structure is characterized by a cruciform plan raised on three receding terraces with a circumambulatory path. Four shrine halls of roughly the same size project in the cardinal directions on the second terrace that probably held the Buddha statues. Above the second terrace is the construction of the hollow but inaccessible central shaft that probably served as base to the superstructure of *stūpa* (Dikshit 1938: 14).

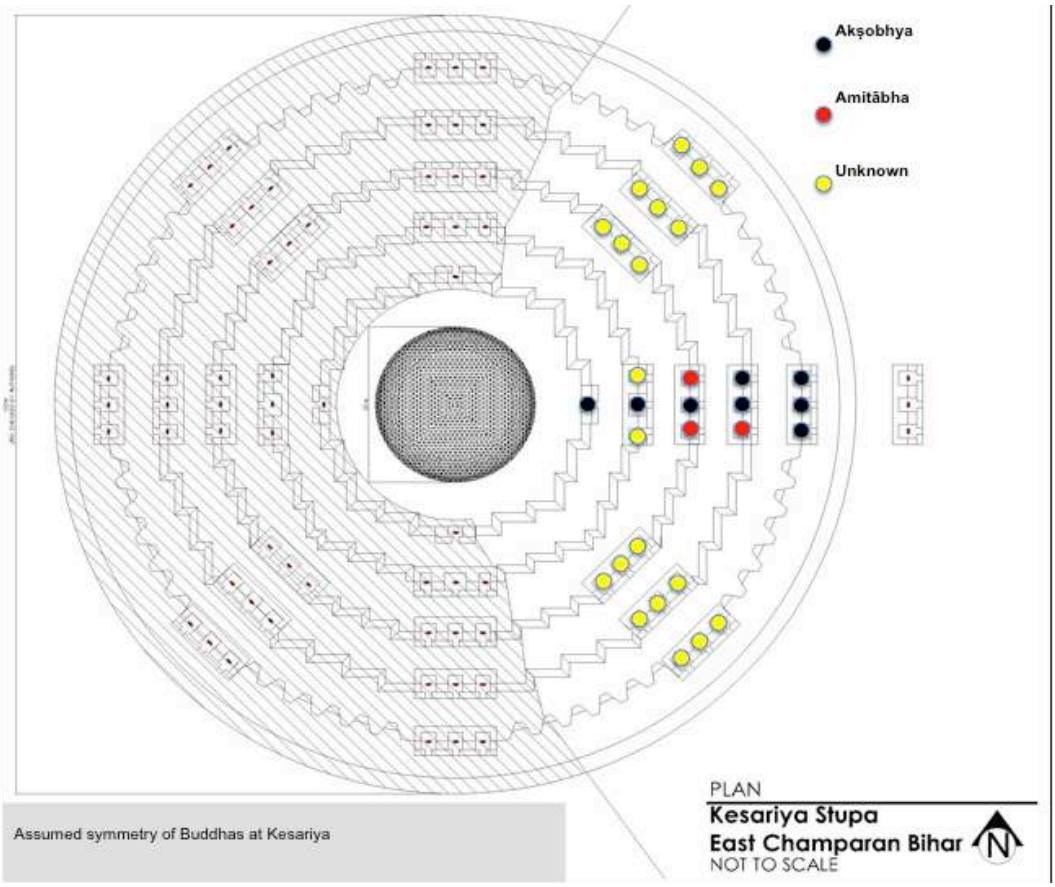


Fig. 6: Kesariya stupa: Probable arrangement of Buddhas in the exposed and restored brick chambers on all the terraces. Only the basic dimensions are given. (Drawing: author)

square and circular terraces found on Borobudur (Figs. 5a and 5b).

Like Borobudur, Kesariya's design combines three elements: a natural hill, a *stūpa*, and a *maṇḍala*. Both monuments present themselves to the viewer as horizontally flattened. Anyone standing at the base of either monument cannot see the topmost *stūpa*. Much like the *stūpa* of Borobudur, Kesariya has a certain numerological configuration of brick chambers on each terrace at regular intervals with a life-size Buddha statue positioned in them.[25] Atop the fifth terrace rises the *stūpa* to a height of 9.38 metres and 22 metres in diameter. The exposed terraced structure of the monument measures 123 metres in diameter and 37.5 metres in height (Muhammed 2005: 9). The length and height of Borobudur are almost the same as Kesariya.

The topmost, fifth terrace of the Kesariya structure, just below the *stūpa*, houses a single brick chamber facing each cardinal direction.[26] The chamber on the eastern side at this level contains an image of Akṣobhya in *bhūmisparśa-mudrā*. We await further excavation to discover which images faced the other cardinal directions. The fourth terrace has triple chambers facing the same directions. The lower three terraces in addition have triple brick chambers facing the subcardinal directions. All the chambers have a raised platform for a Buddha image. The entire monument, from the fifth terrace to the lowermost

25. The average chamber size at Kesariya is 2.20 x 1.80 metres with an approximate height of 2.25 metres. Each chamber has an opening 70 to 90 centimetres in width. There is a 25-centimetre high platform touching the wall to house a Buddha (*Indian Archaeology: A Review 1999–2000*, 2005: 11).

26. *Indian Archaeology: A Review 1999–2000* (2005: 17, 19).

terrace, would have housed (4 + 4 + 8 + 8 + 8 = 32) brick chambers and would have once contained (4×1 + 4×3 + 8×3 + 8×3 + 8×3 = 88) Buddha statues.[27] Figure 6 shows the Buddhas from the top level of the monument to the bottom level, based on the ASI report of 1999–2000. The drawing assumes symmetry in the unexcavated sections.

The two upper-level terraces are connected by an 80-centimetre wide staircase in the south-west corner that is concealed within the polygonal designs between the chambers.[28] Since the excavations are not yet complete, it is difficult to determine the number and exact nature of the staircase(s). The circumambulatory paths on all the terraces are today devoid of reliefs but there is ample space to have housed them. Whether there were any narratives in stucco, plaster, or paint is impossible to determine from the presently accumulated archaeological evidence. Borobudur is of course renowned for its kilometres of carved stone reliefs along the five terraces.

At present, there are three brick chambers on the eastern side, beyond the base of Kesariya's lowest terrace and rammed earth base. Due to the incomplete excavation, it is not yet possible to ascertain whether they were part of the *stūpa* structure, but their alignment and size strongly suggest they were. They seem to be later additions to the main structure and they may indicate that there was a further terrace below them, much like the hidden foot of Borobudur. This hypothesis can only be tested in further excavation (see Fig. 6).

The excavators have unearthed a number of beautifully carved bricks with geometrical patterns and Kīrttimukhas ('faces of glory'), tiles, vases, and many small red earthenware ritual pots with lids, spouts, and sprinkler heads that are presumed to have been used in consecrations. The scale of Kesariya implies that it was a mass ceremonial centre, but its relationship to the dynastic centre is so far unknown. Given the kind of ruins found around Kesariya, it appears to have been a part of a *vihāra* or temple monastery,[29] where daily rituals would have been performed by senior monks.

Borobudur is precisely aligned with the fire ritual temple called Candi Pawon and the regal Candi Mendut, clearly forming the ceremonial centre of the Śailendra kingdom.[30] No trace of a palace has yet been found, but it may have been beside Candi Pawon, as the king would sometimes partake in daily *homa* rituals. Archaeological finds made in a 5-kilometre radius of Borobudur indicate a monastic complex.[31]

KESARIYA AND THE PĀLA *VIHĀRA*S OF VIKRAMAŚĪLA AND SOMAPURA

Kesariya's innovation of a crowning *stūpa* and life-size Buddha images in external niches at cardinal points was further developed at the early Pāla monastery of Somapura at Pahārpur. Established by Dharmapāla (775–810),[32] the central temple of Somapura *vihāra* has a maṇḍalic plan.[33] An imposing brick structure 21 metres in height rises at the centre of the courtyard. It is raised on a cruciform plan in three receding terraces with circumambulatory paths housing narrative reliefs and accessed by a flight of stairs on the north side. Four shrine halls

27. The topmost level has a single chamber in all four cardinal directions, containing an image of Buddha in each chamber (4 × 1 = 4). The fourth-floor terrace has four chambers facing the four cardinal directions and each chamber has three compartments, thus containing (4 × 3 =) 12 images. The lower three terraces have eight chambers facing the cardinal and subcardinal directions. Each chamber has three compartments housing (8 × 3 =) 24 images. The total number of Buddha statues is therefore 88 (4 + 12 + 24 + 24 + 24).

28. See *Indian Archaeology: A review 2000–01* (2006: pl. 8).

29. See the four reports made by Cunningham in the period 1862–65 (1871: 67 and plate XXIII).

30. Van Erp (1917: 285–310) was the first person to recognize the significance of the alignment of the three structures. Krom (1927) believed that the three temples would have functioned as part of a single plan. It was Mus (1935: 418–20) who talked about the ritual dependency of the three structures that Moens (1951, English trans. Mark Long 2007: 7, 8, 67) supported. See Lokesh Chandra 1980a: 35–36 and Long 2008: 98–99.

31. Based on Boechari's excavation report (1982: 90–95), Miksic (1990: 34–35) argues about the monastic complex placed next to Borobudur.

32. According to Dikshit (1938: 19), who carried out the excavations at Pahārpur from 1926 to 1927 and 1933 to 1934.

33. Dikshit 1938: 19; Myer 1961: 3; Gail 1999: 131.

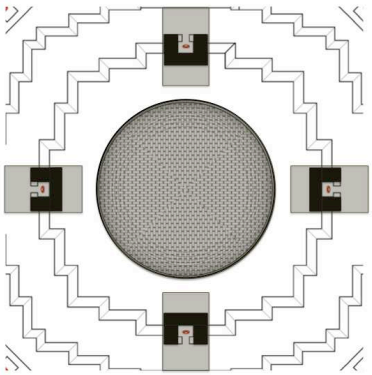


Fig. 7a: Kesariya stupa, Champāran. Central cruciform structure on the topmost level. (Drawing: author)

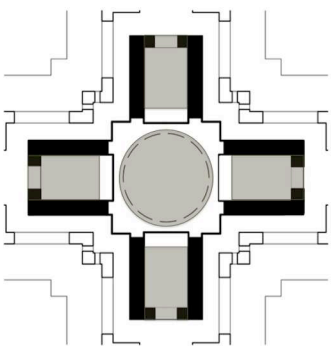


Fig. 7b: Somapura Mahāvihāra, Pahārpur. End of 8th century. (Adapted from K.N. Dikshit, report made in 1927–28 and published by ASI, 1938: pl. XLV)

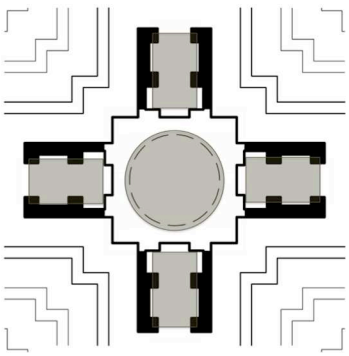


Fig. 7c: Vikramaśīla *vihāra*, Antichak. End of 8th century. (Adapted from B.K. Jamuar 1985: 87)

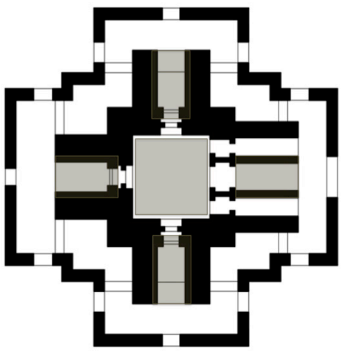


Fig. 7d: Rupban Mura vihāra, Maināmatī. End of 8th century. (Adapted from Imam Abu 2000: 66)

of roughly the same size project out in the cardinal directions on the second terrace, which presumably originally held Buddha statues. Above the second terrace is a hollow but inaccessible central shaft that probably served as the base for a crowning *stūpa* (Dikshit 1938: 14), as at Kesariya and Borobudur. One theory of Seema and M.M. Haque is that the central chamber and surrounding shrine halls would have once housed the supreme pentad of Jina-Buddhas, an expression of the Vajradhātu-maṇḍala.[34]

The contemporary monasteries of Vikramaśīla at Antichak (patronized by the Pālas) and others at Maināmatī (patronized by the Devas) have a central *stūpa* structure that is identical to Pahārpur.[35] These monuments share a cruciform plan and rise in stepped terraces. The niches facing the cardinal directions are empty today but presumably would have been occupied by huge Buddha statues,[36] much like at Kesariya and Somapura. Archaeological research has unearthed several monuments with similar plans (i.e. a fivefold central structure) in

34. Seema and M.M. Haque in a conference paper in 2004 thus speculated on the superstructure of the monument, which is today mostly abraded. Snodgrass (1992: 135) argues that *stūpa*s with five Jina-Buddhas are expressions of Vajradhātumaṇḍala.

35. For Antichak monasteries, see Asher 1980: 91; for Maināmatī monasteries, see Imam 2002: 614–16.

36. In a niche of the Antichak *stūpa*, the excavators found the crossed legs of a huge image made of clay. Plate IIIa (*Indian Archaeology: A Review 1961–62*) depicts the remains of an image from South chamber, while plate IXa (*Indian Archaeology: A Review 1962–63*) shows the remains of another image.

Bihar and Bengal[37] showing an identical arrangement of a sacred space that could have served parallel functions in Borobudur, Sewu, Lumbung, Bubrah, and Plaosan in the Śailendra domain[38] (see Figs. 7a–d).

From the above architectural plans of the central structure of these *vihāra* it is clear that the Buddhist monasteries began to resemble one another as never before. As pointed out by Joanna Williams (1982: 154–55, 174), the difference of layout between Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, Sañci, Taxila, and Ellora shows a wide variety of regional architectural forms, but the megastructures of Somapura, Maināmatī, Vikramaśīla and, I add, Kesariya, show a remark-able uniformity; in one sense, the development at Somapura appears to be an ancient Buddhist equivalent of 20th-century neoclassical office buildings—an early Indic model of university architecture (Davidson 2002: 107).

This appearance of the new sacred architectural model raises many questions about what prompted the paradigm shift to a *stūpa-maṇḍala*, with a fivefold or ninefold maṇḍalic structure, and about how the Śailendras, the builders of contemporary Borobudur, inherited the model developed in Pāla Bihari-Bengali *stūpa*s.[39]

THE PARADIGM SHIFT IN DESIGN: THE *MAṆḌALA* MODEL AND THE *CAKRAVARTIN*

New forms normally arise in religious architecture when there are significant changes in belief and ritual. Although the specific *maṇḍala* of Kesariya cannot yet be determined, this is the monument that marks the shift to the new *stūpa-maṇḍala* architecture that was to spread in the Pāla period to Vikramaśīla, Somapura, Maināmatī, and Borobudur. These latter monuments follow the five-Buddha family scheme that forms the key pentad of Jinabuddhas in the seminal Yogatantra text *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* (Snellgrove 1987: 175, 189, 198); it is therefore possible that Kesariya will eventually be shown by archaeologists to embody the same *maṇḍala* in its final form.

In the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*, the fivefold Buddha-family scheme became dominant after Vairocana became a Buddha (Snellgrove 1987: 203). Vairocana then draws in a number of personages, beginning with Samantabhadra, who is crowned and consecrated with the name Vajrapāṇi. Later, the other thirty-six figures of the *maṇḍala* are consecrated with names conferred on them by Vairocana, before they are positioned in the *maṇḍala* (Snellgrove 1987: 8). These texts contain explicit references to human kingship. David Snellgrove (1959b: 206) establishes intimate connections between *maṇḍala*, kingship, *abhiṣeka* ritual, and Vairocana as the *cakravartin* Buddha in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

During the *abhiṣeka* a lustration vessel is placed at the centre. The properties of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the *maṇḍala* are understood to gather into the water of the lustration vessel. When anointed with this water, the monarch would acquire all the powers embodied in the central deity to become universal earthly ruler or *cakravartin*. He would then be able to exercise the powers of the central Buddha, whether mundane (e.g. producing rain) or supramundane (e.g. deepening one's store of wisdom and compassion), and be responsible for the spiritual as well as the temporal well-being of his geographical *maṇḍala* or the kingdom (Snellgrove 1959b: 208).

The Vajradhātumaṇḍala that was described in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* (Lokesh

37. Imam (2000: 133) mentions that further cruciform temples 'in the 7th–8th century time bracket' have been discovered in recent excavations at Savar near Dhaka. Maināmatī monasteries (Salbān *vihāra*, Bhojā *vihāra*, Aṇandā *vihāra*, Rupbān *vihāra*) in Comilla district in Bangladesh show an identical cruciform structure at the centre of the temple.

38. Rowland 1953; van Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1956; Bhattacharya 1978; Samuel 2002.

39. Hermann-Pfandt's study (2008) has observed the *maṇḍala* elements in Buddhist architecture in India, Tibet, and Indonesia, and compared the well-known architectural *maṇḍala*s of Uddaṇḍapura/Otantapurī, Candi Sewu, Borobudur, Mendut, Tholing, Tabo, and Gyantse. The first Tibetan monastery of Samye was built between 767 and 779 AD (Lo Bue 1990: 17). Since the architecture of Samye displays they typical fivefold maṇḍalic structure (Yang 1996: pl. 152; Wong 2014) and was modeled after Uddaṇḍapura as per the account given in *Pag-sam-jon-zang*, part II (see Das 1908: content XI), it is natural to assume that Uddaṇḍapura was constructed on a *maṇḍala* model. Hermann-Pfandt mentions the *Abhidharmakoṣa* (4th century AD) as the basis for the *maṇḍala*

Chandra 1980b: 319) found its way into the architecture as a concrete arrangement of deities, on a basic fivefold or ninefold model.[40] Akṣobhya and his attendants in the east, Ratnasambhava in the south, Amitābha in the west, and Amoghasiddhi in the north made up a maṇḍalic arrangement around Vairocana or Mahāvairocana. This pentad and the attendant deities demarcating respective Buddha fields and one thousand Buddhas of Bhadrakālpa found prominent places in architecture.[41]

Brajdulal Chattopadhyaya (1994) sees these textual developments of the *maṇḍala* with the strong centre and subsidiary sets in relation to the hierarchical structure of '*samānta* feudalism' of mediaeval India. The idea of a *maṇḍala* with the central figure representing a supreme deity and directional figures as subordinate deities reflects the idea of the supreme king at the centre, surrounded by lesser kings that are expected to exercise power as local landlords rather than independent rulers. The nature of the *maṇḍala* is therefore to map the social and political interests and designate levels of hierarchy. Ronald Davidson (2002: 121) argues that 'the central and defining metaphor for mature esoteric Buddhism is that of an individual assuming kingship and exercising dominion… through a combination of ritual and metaphysical means, thereby becoming a supreme overlord (Buddha) or universal ruler (*cakravartin*)'. These textual developments in Buddhism served the interests of imperial figures in organizing political and social landscapes with the assistance of their spiritual advisors. Architecture played a key role as ceremonial or ritual centre in these developments. The terraced architectural design of Kesariya and Borobudur, along with the arrangement of Buddha statues, clearly displays the hierarchical organization of the *maṇḍala* structure.

There are examples of an early *maṇḍala* model and its application in the geo-political and religious domain during the time of Kesariya's construction. Harṣa, in the tradition of the universal ruler, formally installed Bhāskaravarman on the throne of Kāmarūpa (modern-day Assam) as a symbol of his sovereignty over northeast India (Devahuti 1970: 45, 74, 75). The 6th-century Maitrika king Droṇasiṁha was anointed by a Gupta overlord, a fact that is proudly related in Valabhi grants in western India (Fleet 1888: 168). Maitrika queen Duddā was known for establishing a *maṇḍala* of monasteries in the 6th century, where the central monastery built by the queen became the nucleus that supported an extensive monastic group, known as the Duddā group of monasteries. This circle of monasteries was maintained and protected by the Maitrika kings, as overlords.[42] Valabhī was one of the distinguished Buddhist seats of higher learning in India along with Nālandā.[43] The *maṇḍala* concept evidently permeated the political organization of Śubhākaradeva I's (c. 780–800) kingdom of Odisha, when he created a group of feudatory states called *maṇḍala*s in a semicircular format, surrounding the central authority.[44] It seems that the application of the term *maṇḍala* to a political circle of vassals in the 6th and 7th century was already being reflected within the religious structures. In the subsequent centuries, it became well established in the politico-religious sphere of India as well as China (Da-

40. There are two extant Sanskrit manuscripts of *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* from Nepal. Guiseppe Tucci obtained a 19th-century manuscript of the Tantra, and in 1956 David Snellgrove and John Brough discovered an Indian palm-leaf manuscript that they identified as a 9th- or 10th-century work from Bihar, India. Snellgrove and Lokesh Chandra (1981) published a photographic reproduction of this manuscript; Do-Kyun Kwon (2002: 22, 28, 29) and Weinberger (2003: 47, 61, 62, 72, 73) have described the formation of Vajradhātumaṇḍala in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* in the light of its Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan commentaries.

41. For a detailed description of the *maṇḍala*s see Snodgrass (1988: 634); for their use in the architecture of Candi Sewu, Mendut, and Borobudur, see Lokesh Chandra 1980a: 8 and Bosch 1929: 111, mainly on Sewu.

42. See Guhasena's grant (*Indian Antiquary* VII: 67). The monasteries that formed part of the Duddā circle were under royal care and protection. For the details of the grants by Maitrika kings to these monasteries, see the table in Dutt 1962: 227.

43. 7th-century Chinese monk Yijing mentions Valabhī and Nālandā in the same breath during his time in India (Takakusu 1966: 177).

44. Donaldson (1995: 180) says that the central Odishan authority was situated along the coastal area, which created a group of feudatory states such as the Airāvata *maṇḍala*, Śvetaka *maṇḍala*, Kodalaka *maṇḍala*, Yamagarta *maṇḍala*, Khijjiṅga *maṇḍala*, and Banai *maṇḍala* to define the political boundaries.

vidson 2002: 126–40). How this *maṇḍala* model was used in the ritual is difficult to determine, as many of the teachings associated with the Vajradhātumaṇḍala were oral, secret, and esoteric in nature. The narrative of the king Indrabhūti receiving the hidden scriptures in the important commentary of *Prajñapāramitā Nayaśatapañcāśatikā* ('150-Line Perfection of Insight') provides insight into the preaching and practice of such esoteric scriptures. The narrative shows how the royal chief priest divided up the court of princes, princesses, and ministers and placed each member on a *maṇḍala* board. This is then revealed as the physical enactment of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala derived from the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* by the members of the court.[45]

Pāla Buddhism (8th–9th century) and the Connected Buddhist World

It seems that Empress Wu Zetian (r. 690–705) was interested in these new religious currents—especially the concepts regarding the *maṇḍala* and *cakravartin*—as she officially assumed the title of *cakravartin* after usurping the Tang throne (Forte (2006: 23–24). Her attempt to rule as an incarnation of Maitreya, born to rule the continent of Jambudvīpa, evidently fulfils the need to legitimize her usurpation and enhance her political status through Buddhist prophecies.[46] The worldly benefits of maṇḍalic rituals remained attractive throughout the reigns of Emperor Zhongzong and Ruizong in the early 8th century, who employed monk Fazang to perform esoteric rituals during the drought struck capital of Tang China.[47] Emperor Suzong (r. 756–62) consecrated himself as *cakravartin* while acknowledging the supernatural powers of Buddhism for his victory against the rebel forces.(Weinstein (1987: 58). Under the patronage of Emperor Daizong (r. 763-779), Amoghavajra managed to elevate the status of Mañjuśrī, the main deity of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*,[48] as the protector of the emperor and the nation.[49] Mañjuśrī became important in the Pāla,[50] Śailendra,[51] and Tang domains, possibly to serve the political needs of the kings. By the end of the 8th century, Mañjuśrī's cult, centred on the five-peaked mountain called Wutai Shan, was one of the most important cults in China, where aspirant to *cakravartin* status would seek the Bodhisattva's support (Miksic 2006: 186). Is the importance of Mañjuśrī in Pāla, Śailendra and Tang domains an indication of the well-established cultural and diplomatic ties between the three dynasties?

Buddhism became a new bridge that fostered dialogue between the Chinese and Indian courts. Sen (2003: 16) believes that during the 8th century, an orchestrated use of Indic paraphernalia was employed to establish a Buddhist realm in China. The prominent Indian and Chinese Buddhist travellers in this period played a crucial role in transmitting the new religious thought through artefacts presented to the courts. They are recorded as carrying texts, icons, and drawings with them.[52] The delega-

45. Jñānamitra's commentary on *Prajñapārāmitā-nayaśatapañcāśatikā* is found in the imperial catalogue of the Denkar library of c. 810 AD (*Toh*. 2647, fols. 272b7-294a5; cf. Davidson 2002: 242–44).

46. The evidence for the presence and involvement of South Asian monks in Wu Zetian's political propaganda comes from a colophon found on the Dunhuang manuscript of the *Ratnameghasūtra*, translated by Forte (1976: 171–76, 253–70). The colophon records the names of the monks involved in the translation of the *Sūtra* under supervision of Huaiyi. Of the thirty people listed in the colophon, nine were monks from South Asia.

47. In the year 708, Fazang successfully performed a rain-praying ritual at Jianfusi, which was the monastery Zhongzong dedicated to the posthumous welfare of his father Gaozong. In year 711, Fazang performed an esoteric ritual at a temple on Mount Zhongnan and allegedly brought down some snow (see Chen 2005: 30–31).

48. The *Mañjuśrī-* (or *Mañjuśriya-*)*mūlakalpa* ('Primary Ritual Ordinance of Mañjuśrī') is believed to be one of the earliest texts of esoteric Buddhism (N. Dutt 1958: 487). Possibly composed during 7th to 8th century in India, it became an important text in the Buddhist world.

49. See the studies of Demiéville (1952), Lamotte (1960) and Birnbaum (1983: 30–38). Birnbaum's excellent monograph builds on the earlier work of Demiéville and Lamotte and draws attention to the centrality of Mañjuśrī during the late period of Amoghavajra's esoteric practice in China.

50. Jayaswal (1934) sees Chapter 53 as a Pāla period addition to the text. Snellgrove (1987: 314) sees Mañjuśrī's iconographic appearance in art only after the 6th century).

51. For its popularity in the Śailendra domains, see Miksic 2006.

52. Schafer (1963: 268) points out that 'a prime objective

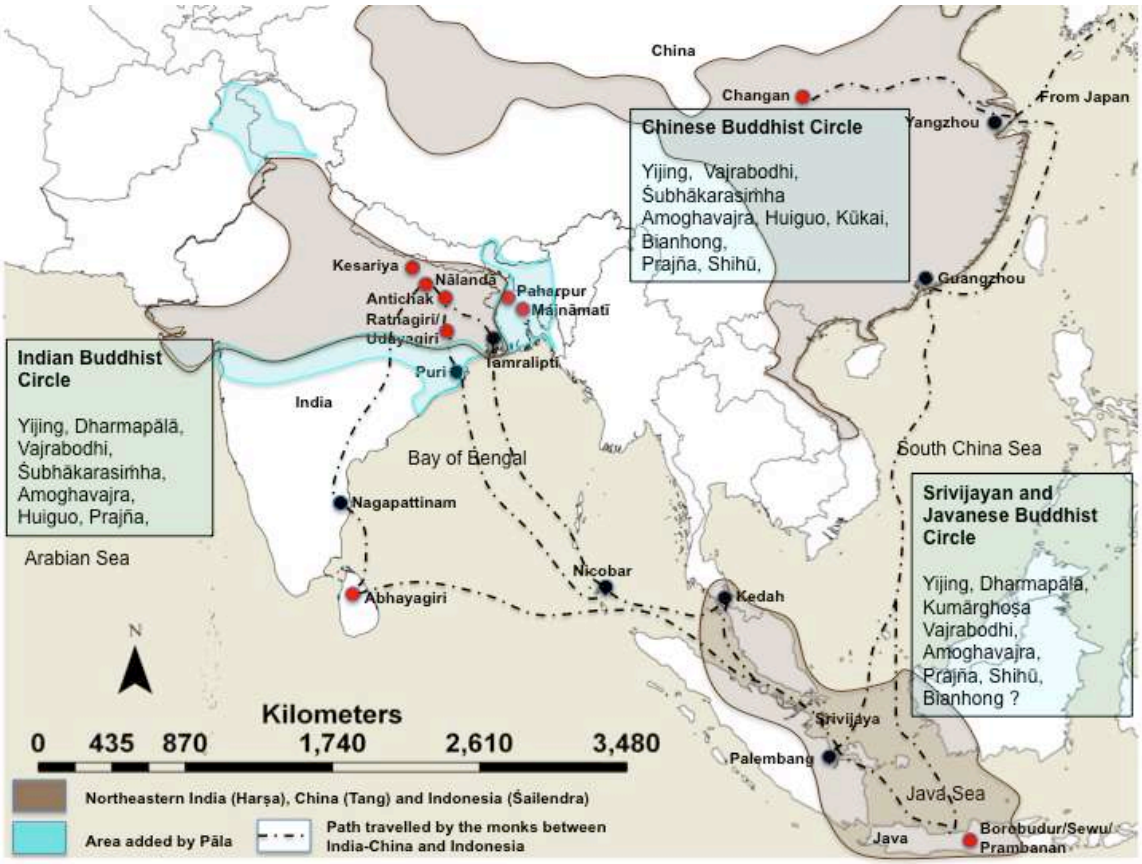


Fig. 8: The connected Buddhist world of India, China, and Indonesia during the 7th to 10th century. (Map: author)

tion that attended Harṣa's Buddhist ceremony in AD 643 visited Rājagṛha (Rājgīr) and the Mahābodhi complex in Bodhgaya, where the artist Song Fazhi made drawings of Buddhist architecture and artefacts to carry to the Tang court.[53] A model of the Nālandā monastery, an image of the Mahābodhi shrine, and other Buddhist illustrations were also taken to China at this time by the monk Huilun (Bagchi 1950: 196). The biography of Japanese monk Ennin notes that five esoteric images of the Buddha housed at the Jinge monastery on Mount Wutai were modelled after images from Nālandā and installed there by the Esoteric Buddhist patriarch Amoghavajra in the 8th century (*Ennin's Diary*, trans. by Reischauer 1955: 253). The same monastery also housed a rubbing of the Buddha's footprint, obtained by Wang Xuance from India (Reischauer 1955: 254–55). John Guy (1991: 362–64) has traced around twenty late Pāla-Sena period architectural models of the Mahābodhi temple that were dispersed from eastern India to Nepal, Tibet, Arakan, and Burma, indicating the continuity in Buddhist travels.

The well-developed Sino-Indian exchanges during the Tang period continued even when political upheavals, wars and economic changes took place across Asia during 9th and 10th centuries. Now the exchanges shifted across the maritime channels. Puri in Odisha had already established its position as the key port between India, the

of Chinese pilgrims in the holy lands of the Indies was the acquisition of holy statues, and images to edify the faithful at home and adorn the rich temples of T'ang'.

53. See Sen 2001: 9, quoting from the *Lidai minghua ji* ('Records of the Famous Painters of All the Dynasties') authored by Tang dynasty scholar-critic Zhang Yanyuan in AD 847: 'a painting of Maitreya drawn in India by Song Fazhi seems to have used as a blue print for a sculpture at the Jing'ai monastery in Luoyang'. For the exchange of architectural ideas, see Boerschmann 1931.

southern sea states, and China. Nākappaṭṭiṇam in South India also became a convenient transit port by the early 8th century. In AD 720, King Narasiṁhavarman Pallava II, also known as Rājasiṁha (691–729) of South India, sent an embassy to China requesting military help in order to mount an attack on the Arabs and the Tibetans.[54] He later honoured this support by erecting a Chinese-style Buddhist temple in Nākappaṭṭiṇam with the huge crowning *stūpa* (Sheshadri 2010: 114 fig. 7.4, 118, 128). The Chinese Buddhist imagery of the late Tang period also shows signs of increased interaction with northern and southern Indian art (Rhie 1988: 39–40). This two-way sea traffic of monks and pilgrims interacting with each other was part of a single symbolic language (Verwey 1962: 141; Iyer 1998: 9) in which the Śailendras played a part as cultural brokers (Jordaan 1999a: 228).

By the 9th century, the shoreline of the Bay of Bengal, nourished by its river networks, had acquired a vibrant new commercial identity (Ray 2006: 78). Strong links, mostly Buddhist, provided connections with eastern India, Java, and Sumatra. Indonesia's Śrīvijayan port at Palembang, Sumatra, became a centre of Sanskrit language study for monks travelling to the sacred sites and institutions of India. Palembang lay halfway between India and the Chinese capital Chang'an (Xi'an today), and international scholars congregated there and consolidated the growing Buddhist network (see Fig. 8).

There are several indicators of the growing importance of Sumatra and Java. Guṇavarman, one of the earliest known travelling Indian scholars, stayed in Java in the 5th century before being invited to China by the emperor (Miksic 1991: 20). Dharmapāla, the chief abbot of Nālandā in the late Gupta period, departed for Sumatra after his retirement in the early 7th century, and stayed there till his death (Schoterman, this volume, p. 125). Yijing arrived in Nālandā in c. 673 after spending considerable time in Śrivijaya.[55] The earliest written sources in Sumatra, from the late 7th century, are Buddhist and are connected with the foundation of the Śrīvijayan polity. By the 7th century Buddhism appears to be well established in Sumatra, and probably maintained Guṇavarman's foothold in Java (Miksic 2006: 187). The monk Śubhākarasiṁha from Odisha (637–735) arrived in Chang'an in c. 716, bringing paintings of the *maṇḍala*s of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha* to China.[56] Vajrabuddhi (671–741) from Kāñcī in southern India studied at Nālandā, visited the Kāñcī-supported dynasty in Sri Lanka, and then sailed to the Malay Peninsula on his way to Sumatra and Java. It was King Narasiṁhavarman Pallava II who sent his emissaries along with Vajrabuddhi.[57] He eventually reached China after an eventful journey on a Persian ship in AD 719. Amoghavajra (705–74), who also became a patriarch of Chinese Buddhism, met Vajrabuddhi in Java and accompanied him to Chang'an.[58] The success of their magical powers in Chinese military operations is celebrated. They became the most influential monks of Chinese Esoteric Buddhism and made the major contribution of weaving Esoteric Buddhist concepts through the increasingly connected international Buddhist world.

JAVA DURING THE PĀLA PERIOD

According to Dumarçay (1986b: 22),

> By the 8th century AD, Javanese Buddhism was at its peak and consequently Javanese Buddhist

54. See Sen 2001: 27 and Sheshadri 2010: 110–11.

55. Yijing was interested in the new religious developments and was aware of the esoteric currents at Nālandā: see Chou 1945: 245, 314 (quoting Chavannes 1894: 104–5). On his way to Nālandā, Yijing had spent six months in Śrībhoga (Śrīvijaya) studying Sanskrit grammar. He spent 10 years in Nālandā, and then again remained in Śrīvijaya for a few years on his way back to China (see Takakusu 1966: xxv–xxxvii).

56. Lokesh Chandra (1980: 13) argues that the monk knew six *maṇḍala*s of the text; cf. Iyanaga 1985: 724–25..

57. See Sundberg and Giebel 2011: 143–49. As Sheshadri (2010: 118) reports, Ācārya Vajrabuddhi had helped Narasiṁhavarman Pallava II when his country was caught in famine. When he expressed his urge to meditate on Mañjuśrī in China, the king decided to send his emissaries along with the scripture *Mahāprajñāpāramitā*.

58. The generally accepted view takes Yuanzhao's biography as the most reliable source. Sundberg and Giebel (2011: 148) are in agreement with Chou (1945: 321) over Java being the meeting place of Vajrabuddhi and Amoghavajra. However, Woodward (2004: 339), following biographies of Amoghavajra by Zhao Qian (*T* 2056) and Feixi (*T* 2120), maintains that Amoghavajra never went to Java (on this trip) and never met Vajrabuddhi there.

> rites had been modified [to suit the need of the new dynasty?]…. Buddhist temple architecture developed elaborate plan to embody maṇḍala systems…. Javanese Buddhist temples assumed the cruciform plan. The plan provided separate rooms for 5 images with the central cella opened to all sides.

The Javanese monk Bianhong, who was ultimately headed for India, arrived in Chang'an in AD 780, to undergo the Garbhadhātumaṇḍala consecration.[59] His arrival in China coincides with the Śailendra period and the early construction phase of Borobudur. He joined the enormously influential Chinese Buddhist circle of Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabuddhi, Amoghavajra and Huiguo that was very well aware of the Indian Buddhist developments.[60]

These masters were all experts in state protection sutras and *maṇḍala* consecration rituals. Whether Bianhong returned to Java and played any role at the Śailendra court, or in the construction of Borobudur, is not known, but it seems likely.[61] An inscription found less than a hundred metres from Borobudur shows that Buddhists following the Mantrayāna were active in the vicinity of the monument.[62] It seems highly improbable that the Śailendra Buddhist dynasty in Java was unaware of the ambient international propagation of text, philosophy, art, architecture, and ritual technology by these powerfully connected Buddhist leaders, who were apparently pursuing an Asia-wide strategy.

The Buddhist centre in Java enjoyed international esteem since the time of Guṇavarman in the 5th century and beyond the end of the 10th century when Shihu (*Dānapāla), one of the Indian translators, arrived in China with a good knowledge of the languages of Khotan, Sanfoqui (Śrīvijaya), and Shepo (Java).[63] The fact that Shihu was well versed in those two Southeast Asian languages indicates that either he must have spent a good amount of time in Śrīvijaya/Java or the Chinese Buddhist circle included a few Indonesian monks.

All drew on the common platform of Indian Esoteric Buddhism. The Buddhas of Borobudur, for example, resemble in some ways the stone Buddhas of the Pāla Buddhist monastery of Ratnagiri in Odisha (Huntington 1985: figs. 19 and 44). Śubhākarasiṁha was the prince of a ruling central Indian family of Odisha. He is recorded in the Chinese annals as achieving the Saddharmapuṇḍarīka-samādhi at Ratnagiri *vihāra*, before travelling to China (Chou 1945: 251–55; Donaldson 1995: 176). This *samādhi* involves reciting the whole Lotus Sūtra in an endeavour to see the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra. The sutra opens with the introduction of Mañjuśrī and then Samantabhadra. Hudaya Kandahjaya's (2009: 10) study of the Kayumvuṅan inscription (AD 824) demonstrates the presence of the Lotus sutra in Java at the time of Borobudur's construction. Both Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī play decisive roles in the reliefs of the topmost terrace of Borobudur, where the pilgrim Sudhana is guided to Buddhahood.

The king of Uḍra (present-day Odisha) had sent the *Gaṇḍavyūha-bhadracarī* text to the Chinese emperor around AD 795, which was immediately translated by Prajña (Donaldson 1995: 177), an Indian monk who flourished in China from c. 785 to 810 AD. The text is an important source for Mañjuśrī's role as one of Sudhana's guiding *kalyāṇamitra* ('good friends'). He is the first of the fifty-two spiritual friends that Sudhana visits on the terraces of Borobudur. The text also mentions Maitreya, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśrī as *cakravartin*s in earlier lives along with Vairocana. The *Gaṇḍa vyūha-bhadracarī* illustrations at Borobudur conform to the text translated by Prajña.[64] Before

59. Iwamoto 1981: 85; Kandahjaya (2004: 65, 94–96, 108, 165) examines four independent references to the Javanese monk Bianhong. See also Sinclair, this volume.

60. Based on the inscription on a Pāla period Buddha statue, Deeg (2010: 196–211) has convincingly argued about Huiguo's journey to Nālandā between 751 and 790.

61. The hypothesis that Bianhong did return to Java and was involved in the design of Borobudur was proposed by Kandahjaya (2004: 165, 251) and supported by Woodward (2009: 24).

62. See Kandahjaya 2009 and this volume; Griffiths 2014b.

63. Between 977 and 1032 AD, four Indian monks reached China and were extensively engaged in Song translation projects. Shihu was the most productive one, as a record of 111 Song translations is attributed to him (see Sen 2003: 122–23; Orzech 2011a: 449–50).

64. See Kandahjaya 2004: 197, 218, 250, 260. The first portion of the *Gaṇḍavyūha-bhadracarī* is depicted in the reliefs of the second and third galleries, the second portion

arriving in China, Prajña had travelled extensively in the southern seas and probably spent a few years in Java and Sumatra (Pachow 1958: 19; van Gulik 1980: 22). The script that was employed by Śailendra kings is close to the one implemented by Prajña.[65] It is possible that the Javanese gained knowledge of the text from the Chinese esoteric circle, but the ties between Java and Odisha are also well attested by art-historical evidence, and recent excavations at Udayagiri near Ratnagiri *vihāra* are expected to strengthen the evidence for these ties.[66]

During the reign of Devapāla (AD 850), Bālaputradeva, the scion of the Śailendra dynasty, established a monastery at Nālandā (Sastri 1942: 95, 1923–24: 310–27). A verse inscribed on a small *stūpa* at this monastery is taken from the *Bhadracarī* text. The same text is depicted in the uppermost series of reliefs on Borobudur, which were probably carved in the early 9th century. Based on the invocation of the *Bhadracarī-praṇidhāna* on the Nālandā *stūpa*, Hiram Woodward suggests that either the concepts embodied in the great *stūpa* in Central Java were well known in Nālandā , or Bālaputra's monastery brought to Nālandā new emphasis from abroad.[67] The Śailendras were focused on Esoteric Buddhism. Bianhong, for example, first headed towards South Asia but then heard that the esoteric knowledge was available in China, so changed course to Chang'an. To promote esoteric teachings the Śailendra king Cūḍāmaṇivarman founded the Buddhist Śailendra Cūḍāmaṇi-*vihāra* in Nākappaṭṭiṇam, which was in turn supported by Cōḷa grants.[68] Nākappaṭṭiṇam in South India was the port that Vajrabuddhi left from on his voyage to Sri Lanka, Sumatra/Java, and China, with a copy of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*. The Nākappaṭṭiṇam monastery was to remain the last major Buddhist bastion in India after the destruction of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla between 1197 and 1207 AD.

THE ŚAILENDRAS AND INDIAN BUDDHISM

There are unresolved debates about the origin of the Śailendra dynasty[69] and their sudden rise to power in Central Java in c. 750–1090 that coincided with a massive surge in temple construction that included Borobudur (c. 760–830) and Candi Kalasan. The AD 778 inscription says the latter temple, dedicated to Tārā, was erected by the will of the preceptor of the Śailendra family. This corresponded with the rise of the Pāla dynasty in eastern India (c. 750–1214) and the construction of the large monasteries of Somapura, Paharpur (c. 775–810) in present-day Bangladesh and Vikramaśīla, Antichak (c. 770–810) in Bihar. The construction of the Tārā temple at Somapura would have been contemporary with Kalasan.[70]

The AD 782 Buddhist inscription of Kelurak in Central Java mentions Bengali guru Kumāraghoṣa from Gauḍīdvīpa (Bengal), who consecrated an image of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī at the requestof the Javanese king (Bosch 1928: 18–19, 21, 29–30; Sarkar 1971 I: 44, 46). Bengal was already part of the Pāla empire by then. The inscription envisions the new image of Mañjuśrī bringing prosperity and

on the fourth gallery. These two scriptures had existed independently until brought together in the 8th century, perhaps not until the creation of the text sent by the ruler of Uḍra to the Chinese emperor. This text was translated by Prajña in 796–98 (see Gimello 1997: 144).

65. Van Gulik (1980: 22) sees the similarities between some Siddhamātṛkā glyphs used by Prajña and the one employed by the Śailendras in AD 778 and AD 792 inscriptions.

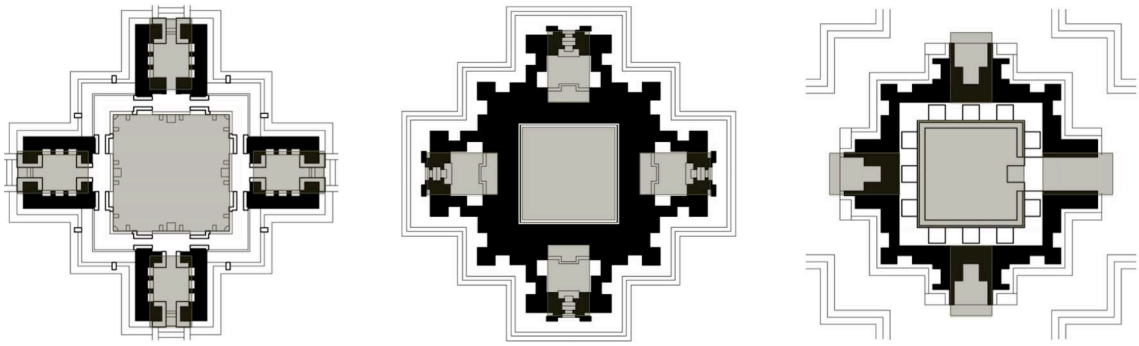
66. Woodward (2009: 27) sees a strong connection based on the ASI, 'Excavations 2000-2005-Orissa': http://asi.nic.in/asi_exca_2005_orissa.asp (last accessed 16-2-2016). See also Reichle's contribution in this volume.

67. Sastri (1942) provided the text of an inscription on the small *stūpa* at Nālandā site 12. Schopen (1989: 149–57) translated the text. Based on the presence of Jinas and the invocation of *Bhadracarī-praṇidhāna* on this memorial *stūpa*, Woodward (1990: 16–17) sees a strong connection between Nālandā and Java.

68. The Leiden Copperplate inscription of the Cola ruler Rājarāja I dated to AD 1006 refers to this construction (*Epigraphia Indica* XXII: no. 34). For the detailed discussion of all the references of the inscription see Karashima and Subbarayalu 2010: 272–73.

69. The paper of Jordaan (2006) and the monograph by Jordaan and Colless (2009) sum up all the earlier views on the origins of the Śailendra dynasty and conclude that the dynasty was a non-Javanese one. For the counterargument and discussion on 'Śailendra as Javanese dynasty', see Zakharov 2012.

70. A 12th-century Nālandā inscription mentions the construction of a Tārā temple at Somapura for the eradication of dangers (*Epigraphia Indica*, 1923–24 XXI: 97–101).



Candi Sewu central shrine | Candi Kalasan central shrine | Candi Lumbung central shrine

Fig. 9: The fivefold structure of the central shrines of Javanese monuments. (Drawings by Swati Chemburkar; not to scale)

welfare to the kingdom. As this inscription was found between Sewu and Lumbung, John Miksic (2006: 189) believes that Lumbung was probably a Mañjuśrī temple. Another inscription found in the ruins of Candi Sewu, dated AD 792, mentions a Mañjuśrīgṛha, or Mañjuśrī sanctuary. Mañjuśrī evidently played the same significant role in Śailendra Buddhism as he played under the Pāla and the Tang.

Yet another inscription dated to the middle of the 9th century at Candi Plaosan says this Central Javanese temple was visited by people who were continuously arriving from Gurjaradeśa, which refers either to Gujarat in western India, the Valabhī domain of the Maitrika kings, or to the kingdom of the Gurjara Pratihāras in central north India (de Casparis 1956: 188–89, 202).

The construction dates of Buddhist monuments of the Śailendras and the Pālas are close and they have many design features in common. In AD 792, Candi Sewu underwent an enlargement in a cruciform structure,[71] probably to represent the Vajrādhātumaṇḍala.[72] Two important architectural changes that occurred in Central Java during the construction of Sewu are the transformation from a square to a cruciform plan and the inclusion of four entrances instead of one (Dumarçay 1986b: 22), presumably to follow the fivefold structure of Pāla monuments.

The entire Central Javanese complex of Prambanan is thought to reflect the ruling dynasty's feudal political structure, where the ruler of the centralized state controlled the autonomous regions with its subordinate rulers. According to Chinese sources, Holing, identifiable with a kingdom in Central or East Java, enjoyed suzerainty over twenty-eight self-governing territories in the manner of the geopolitical *maṇḍala*s of northeast India.[73] The designs of Somapura, Vikramaśīla, Maināmatī and Kalasan, Sewu, Lumbung, Bubrah, and Plaosan have striking similarities (see Figs. 7a–d and 9). Roy Jordaan (1999a: 225) takes this as support for his view of the Śailendras as newly arrived outsiders from northeast India:

> Even though we cannot exclude the possibility of the designs for the Śailendra monuments being the brainchild of a single pilgrim-architect genius [i.e. Bianhong], it would seem much more likely that they originated from one of the prominent Indian centres of art and scholarship such as Nālandā in Northeastern India.

From an architectural point of view, a monument like Borobudur can only have been the

71. See Dumarçay 1989: 25 and Chihara 1996: 99.

72. Bosch (1929: 111) had identified Sewu as a Vajradhātumaṇḍala drawn from the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṅgraha*. Lokesh Chandra (1980a: 8) has demonstrated in detail how a Śailendra ruler, as an aspirant to the status of *cakravartin*, dedicated the temple to Vairocana.

73. Chihara (1996: 100) mentions that this was possibly a Śailendra domain enjoying suzerainty over twenty-eight self-governing territories, which would suggest that it had seven dependencies in each of the four quarters. For a discussion of the identification of the toponym Holing (or Heling), see Damais 1964.

culmination of a long period of artistic gestation. Wolff Schoemaker (1924: 22) suggests three to four centuries of an autochthonous gestation period and argues about the lack of an autonomous development of sculpture in Java. Given the Śailendra-Pāla contacts and the construction of the earlier Śaiva temples on the Dieng plateau, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility in this connected Buddhist world that a breakthrough development in the Pāla domain, which transformed a *stūpa* into a *maṇḍala* of life-size Buddhas, was enhanced with narrative reliefs at Somapura and Vikramaśīla and reached its ultimate form of expression on Javanese soil. Jordaan has argued that the Śailendras built their monuments in direct cooperation with Indian architects and craftsmen. This seems possible at the high conceptual level of architectural design, but at the level of relief carving and highly innovative *stūpikā* designs, there is no trace of non-Javanese influence.

We have already seen how the design ideas for Buddhist art and architecture were circulating from the 5th century. It was the network of monks, artists, and craftsmen that made possible the construction of the huge monuments and ritual centres.

The first record of the association of the Śailendras and Pāla India is dated to the Kelurak inscription of c. 778 and the last inscription found in India referring to Śailendras is the smaller Leiden copperplate inscription of c. 1090.[74] By then, the ties between the two states had been sustained for more than three centuries.

74. The inscription of Kulottuṅga Cōḷa refers to the grant of villages to the Buddhist temple constructed by the Śrīvijayan king (*Epigraphia Indica*, 1923–24 XXII no. 35). For the Sanskrit inscription and English translation, see Karashima and Subbarayalu 2010: 280–82.