

DRAFT MESSAGE



Odisha's heritage and legacy, especially of its art and culture that spans thousands of years, deserves our abiding interest, attention and support. The present imperative is to preserve and promote all that we have to the very best of our abilities.

I am happy to know that IPCA is contributing to this effort with interventions that help art and artists. Publications play a key role in documenting and highlighting art and its practice, and there remains much that needs to be brought into public domain.

It gives me pleasure to see that an important series of paintings by veteran artist Shyamsunder Pattanayak, showcasing the time of Emperor Kharavela and the Kalinga empire as depicted in the carvings of Udayagiri caves, is being published as an art book by IPCA. I commend the team for this effort and hope that this volume serves to bring to light one of our finest and most ancient works of art.

(NAVEEN PATNAIK)



PROLOGUE

Odisha has an unbelievable array of socio-cultural and art practices that have been a way of life for many centuries, and the lineage of such creative endeavour is still mirrored in present times. The heritage and legacy of art in our state spans millennia – from the Rock Paintings of Ushakothi and Sitabinjhi, to the Khandagiri-Udayagiri rock cut caves and the fort of Sisupalgarh, from the first Ashokan edict at Dhauligiri on the banks of river Daya, the Buddhist centres of Ratnagiri and Lalitgiri, to the Sun Temple at Konark aside the Bay of Bengal, to name but a few. These treasures highlight the art history and culture of the state. Odisha has a distinct and significant art history, particularly in sculpture, architecture, painting, murals, carvings, along with an equally wide spectrum of indigenous life and culture.

The context of this book belongs to the time of Emperor Mahameghavahana Aira Kharavela, ruler of Kalinga in 1st century BCE. The interest herein is the cause of art, and of artists. For the background of the narrative is the Udayagiri Hill in Bhubaneswar, and the art contained in its most important caves and cells: bas-reliefs, panels, inscriptions carved into stone,



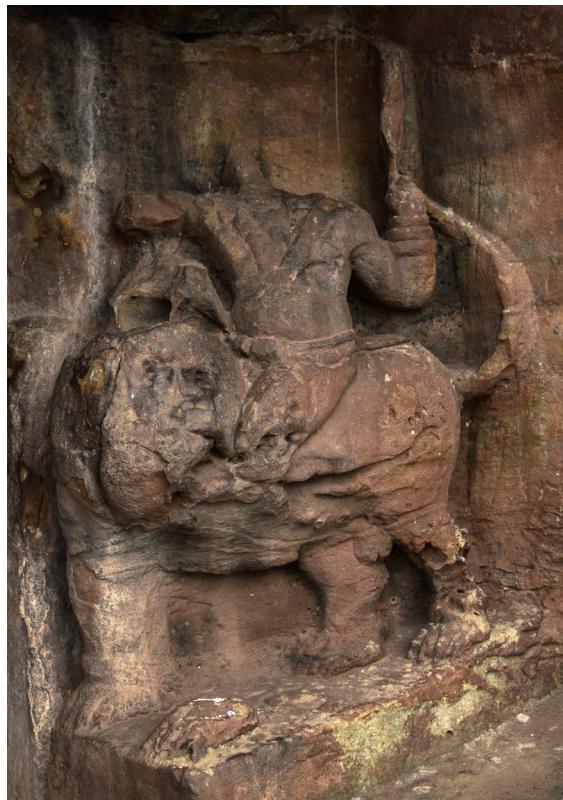
on walls of the caves, that are said to have been commissioned by Emperor Kharavela to depict his thirteen-year reign which was marked by many historical milestones. The veteran master artist, Shyamsunder Pattanayak, former curator of Odisha State Museum at Bhubaneswar, has significantly contributed to documenting the imagery of the carved panels in his own craft of painting. From the impressions on the stone surface of the caves, the artist has sketched out figures, taken photographs of the carvings, and has written the descriptions from the inscriptions. It is through Pattnaik's journey and his inspired creativity that we are able to see and grasp the substance of art from a time long lost to us, in vivid colours.

Pattnaik has undertaken scholarly efforts to validate the history and interpretation of the epigraphical inscriptions found in Udayagiri caves, which informs us in this narrative today, about certain events during the benevolent rule of Emperor Kharavela. It is not possible for the scope of this publication to validate the information contained in the inscriptions and its many interpretations thereof. Hence, it draws on the essence of Mr. Pattnaik's research and references as recorded in his manuscript. His documentation on the subject is based on the many common as well as very different threads of interpretation by research scholars and historians, over the years. The artist, who is also the

rapporteur, has taken references from the works of many eminent historians, research scholars and archaeologists in the process of understanding and developing the context for his paintings of the carvings in the Udayagiri caves. Prominently mentioned are Satyanarayan Rajguru, Charles Louis Fabri, James Princep, H. Locke, Alexander Cunningham, Nabin Kumar Sahu, Kedarnath Mohapatra, K. C. Panigrahi, B. M. Barua and several others. This publication does not have the wherewithal to present or validate all the references made by Patnaik.

The subject matter here returns to the paintings of the carved panels in caves of Udayagiri hill, one of Odisha's greatest art treasures, paintings that Shyamsunder Pattanayak has so diligently created, inspired by the guidance of legendary leader Shri Biju Patnaik. Readers will experience amazing moments when they read through the artist's journey and take in his paintings of the Udayagiri carvings in subsequent pages.

At IPCA, we seek to shine the light back on our sculptural legacy and heritage, while also making the effort to bring our artists to the forefront. IPCA's interventions in the past five years reflect our values as well as our mission of bringing art and artists to interact and integrate with society. This publication is very special to us essentially because it records an incredible journey





and the creative contribution of a master artist while also telling the story of a piece of Odisha's art history, of an ancient time.

Readers and aesthetes can get the rich fragrance of an ancient time from this seminal work of Shyamsunder Pattanayak, making for renewed pride in our heritage and a legacy so precious. We are thankful to Mr. Patnaik for the use of his manuscript which is the foundation of this document.

We sincerely hope that this publication reaches as many people as possible, and that it captures the interest and imagination of all those who travel through its pages of paintings and the stories therein, of the Kalinga Empire under the great Kharavela.

On behalf of team IPCA, all artists and art lovers of the state, I would like to place on record my gratitude to Honourable Chief Minister, Shri Naveen Patnaik, for his keen interest in and consistent patronage of Odisha's art legacy. I am very thankful to him for his gracious message that initiates our art book.

July 2022

Paramita Panda
Founder Trustee, IPCA

In 1954, when I passed my matriculation examination, Late Shri Prahalad Patel, Art Teacher in Athagarh High School, encouraged me to study painting. Even though I was keen and interested, I could not go ahead because of the financial circumstances of my family. Also, there was no art institute in Odisha at the time, where one could pursue studies in painting. There were art colleges in other cities like Kolkata, Delhi, Mumbai from British times, and finances were essential to study art in any of those places. Late Shri Patel kept making efforts for my art education. A Government advertisement for art education was published in 'The Samaja' newspaper. He travelled to Cuttack to get me the application form and asked me to apply; and then told me to go to Radhanath Training School to take the practical examination on the specified date. He firmly believed that I would do well in the examination and would be selected for a scholarship. Since this scholarship was available from 1955, he kept on trying to find support for my art studies from different sources. At one point, he took me to Anand Bhavan, the residence of Odisha's renowned industrialist and political figure, Shri Bijayananda Patnaik, to seek his help and support for my art education.

Gathering courage, I looked through the iron grill of the gate and called the gardener. It was around eleven in the morning. Biju Babu was seated outside, below the balcony, waiting for someone. He heard our voices, the gardener's and mine, and asked, "who is there?". The gardener informed him, "Sir, a school boy is here." Biju Babu asked the gardener to let me in. Though I had gathered all my courage to walk up to him, the closer

I got to him, the harder my heart pumped, blood in my veins kept coursing faster. He was an immense personality. A legend. Biju Babu spoke to me in a serious, gravelly voice - asked my name, where I came from, what my family did - I answered as if I was driven by a machine. He asked me "why are you here, what do you want?". Though terrified, I expressed my wish to study art and the need for financial help. Still speaking in that serious manner, he said, "why don't you go to that Brahmin, what is he doing, sitting in Samaja office; he has the resources, he will help you." Then he turned, and walked up back on to the verandah. I also stepped away and started walking back. He turned around suddenly and saw me walking away, leaving. He called out to the gardener, "call the fellow, where is he going, what had he come for?" In a trice, the gardener reached me, saying, "he is calling you; how can you leave without telling him, go back and ask Sir's permission to leave." I turned back towards the house, even more afraid than before.

Head lowered, I came and stood in front of Biju Babu. He asked me, "what is in that bag?" "Some paintings and drawings, Sir, I replied; I brought them to show you, my work." He said, "why did you not show me, come on show them." Then he looked at my paintings, drawings, and was happy. After looking at my work he asked me, "have you been to Khandagiri, Udayagiri?" I said I'd not seen those places. He asked, "then what have you seen, how will you study art?" Alright, where do you want to study. I said, "Santiniketan". Happy with my answer, he said, "Nanda Babu (Nandalal Bose) teaches there, he knows me very well, give him my reference, tell him I have sent you. Do you

have money for admission?" I said, "yes." He said with emphasis, "I have helped many students get an education. They give me their word that they will work for Odisha, but once their studies are done, they go their own way. What do you plan to do once you complete your art studies?" I replied, "I will give my best to do what you wish me to." He then asked me if I had eaten, I said yes. "Do you need money", he asked again. I said no. And then in the end, he said, "go to Santiniketan, get admission, find out what monthly expenses you will need, and come back to me promptly with the details. I will arrange to get you that amount as a scholarship from OTM, for sure. I will definitely do it." I took leave, happy and assured.

Patel Sir was waiting for me outside Anand Bhavan. He seemed quite happy. He said, "you have done well in the examination and have been selected for the scholarship; the letter has been sent to your Athagarh residential address. Let's go back. After listening to all that had transpired at Anand Bhavan, he said, "you don't need that, you've won a Government scholarship. Now you should head straight to Santiniketan and secure admission in Kala Bhavana under Viswa Bharati University.

I got admitted to Kala Bhavana, where Nandalal Bose, Ramkinkar Baij, Radhacharan Bagchi, Sukhamoy Mitra, Biswarup Bose, Gouribhanja and others were professors.

After four years of study, I returned to Odisha, and successfully passed the examination and interview for a position in the State Museum, where I started a job in 1960-61.

In 1962, Biju Babu became Chief Minister of Odisha, and he created an independent department for the first time, named Department of Cultural Affairs, to promote and develop the heritage and culture of the state. The State Museum, State Archives, Archaeology Department, State Library, all State Akademis and Sports Institutions, new Music and Art Schools were brought under the purview of this Department. As a fresh new initiative, Biju Babu decided on an art exhibition to commemorate the occasion. Paintings of masters were collected and bought for the exhibition. The person in charge of this new Department of Cultural Affairs was the then Education and Home Secretary, Shri B. Venkatraman, IAS, an erudite and proactive officer.

He was well qualified and Biju Babu was fond of him. He took the lead in all kinds of cultural projects and programmes in the state. He had interest in and affection as well as regard for the Culture Department. Biju Babu had instructed that the art exhibition should be organized within four days. Shri Venkataraman, Secretary, had agreed to it. Therefore, that same day he visited the State Museum and consulted with Kedar Babu (Superintendent, Odisha State Museum). He learnt of my appointment as an artist in the museum, and since I was not present there, he drove to my residence to meet me.

That such a high-ranking officer and influential person would arrive at my house thus, left me stunned, I could not believe it. He came straight into my house and asked me in fluent Odia, "are you Shyam Babu?" "Why are you on leave, what has happened?" On finding out that my first-born son had passed away only seven days ago, he expressed



grief, conveyed his sincere condolences, and sat down to console my wife. Thereafter, he told me why he had come to see me. I agreed immediately. Happily, he asked me to come to the State Museum, saying, "you come over, I have lined up everyone, they are all waiting there. He did not even give me time to change and I accompanied him, dressed as I was. And like he had said, following his instructions, everyone from the Superintendent to the gardener were assembled in the hall where the exhibition was to be held.

I assured the Secretary, "the painting gallery will be ready in three days, Sir. We will arrange the display of paintings and sculptures. Please come back to visit on the fourth day and see for yourself." He left. All of us went back to work on the task at hand and completed it as scheduled. As a result, his trust in me got firmer, and because of my work, he brought me a cash reward of Rs.1000/- allocated by the Finance Department.

The exhibition was inaugurated, Biju Babu came to the inaugural and Secretary Sir introduced me to him in the exhibition gallery. Biju Babu looked at me and said, "where have I seen you?" I told him that in 1955 I had visited him at his residence in Tulsipur, Cuttack. He recalled my visit and interaction with him, and said, "you never came back to me." "You studied in Santiniketan, passed your art course and are now employed in a proper place. Do you remember what I had said to you?" I said I remember, even though I couldn't immediately recall what he was referring to. He said, "you will show me your work, inform me what you do; there's a lot I will tell you." He went around the gallery, looked at the displays and left satisfied. I kept trying to remember what he had said that I

had forgotten – then it came to me suddenly. He had asked me if I had seen Khandagiri and Udayagiri. When I had responded that I had not seen those places, he had said that there are these caves carved onto the twin hills of Khandagiri and Udayagiri, in Bhubaneswar, Odisha's capital city. And that there was an ancient carved inscription in one of the caves of Udayagiri hill. He had almost reprimanded me, “you are an art student, you want to practice painting, yet you haven't seen these carvings? What kind of art practice will you work on, what art will you study?” Biju Babu had spoken to many students and youngsters about the carvings in Udayagiri caves but no one had heeded his words – that angered and saddened him. Before departing from the State Museum that day, Biju Babu said to me once again, “paint the carvings in the caves of Udayagiri and show them to me, don't forget.” That was his final instruction for me. It is this guidance that keeps me connected to and bonded with Biju Babu.

I visited Udayagiri and Khandagiri innumerable times. I studied the carved inscriptions and sculptures in Udayagiri carves bit by every bit, in detail. I made drawings and sketches of the inscriptions and carved bas-reliefs. I was closely associated with renowned scholar of Odisha's history, linguist and epigraphist Late Shri Satyanarayan Rajguru, who was like a master-mentor, in order to decipher and understand the 17-line inscription, incised in Brahmi script, in the Hatigumpha cave of Udayagiri hill. Once I understood what the inscription said, it felt like the inscription was directed at wise men and scholars, and the language in which it is incised was meant for the people of Kalinga. Therefore, it was important to seek the soul of the inscription and review it.

In 1964, Dr. Nabin Kumar Sahu, Professor of History (Utkal University) came to see Kedar Babu, with a photographic image of a carved panel in the Alakapuri cave of Udayagiri hill. I was also present there with Kedar Babu for some official work. It was a Saturday. Dr. Nabin Sahu's book in English, 'History of Orissa (Ancient Kalinga)' was to be published by Utkal University and he needed an artist to create the cover design of the book, with a painting replicating that image in Alakapuri cave. Kedar Babu said, "here is the person you were looking for." To me, he said, "please help Dr. Sahu." Dr. Sahu then came to my office, showed me the photograph and offering me Rs.500/- then and there, asked me to create the cover design for the book. As a government employee I could not accept money, so I refused. And I told Dr. Sahu that I wouldn't paint from the image, if he would take me to the location, I'd draw from the original carved panel on site, in the cave, and give it to him. Nabin Babu was very pleased.

The next day he came in his car and drove me to Udayagiri, where I drew the image in the Alakapuri cave. On our way to Udayagiri, I asked him about the historical importance of the inscriptions and carved panels seen in the Udayagiri caves. He gave me a comprehensive commentary on all of the Udayagiri carvings. He also spoke about the carving of Emperor Kharavela's second marriage in the inner wall of Rani Gumpha (Queen's cave). When I countered him, he gave me two examples - first, the use of the word "Agramahishi" (meaning senior queen) inscribed in Brahmi alphabet in the Manchapuri cave, and the second, a carving showing Emperor Kharavela sitting between his two queens watching

a dance and music performance in the lower level of Rani Gumpha (Queen's cave), from which he deduced that Emperor Kharavela married twice.

He said to me, "Shyam Babu, your eyes are that of a young man, and that too a budding artist's, the divine has bequeathed you with an invisible force. You will be able to derive many more facts and information from these carved panels on the cave walls." I asked him about the Alakapuri carving. He said, "it may be a memento related to religion, or Emperor Kharavela and his two queens or female slaves; therefore, the association of two women with the Lord of Kalinga, Aira Shri Kharavela, cannot be overlooked and might well be a depiction of feminine power."

Professor Sahu said, "researchers and historians are constantly seeking the truth. I have written and published my considered opinion and have also tried to provide the proof. In future, researchers and historians may be able to gather more facts and proof from the inscriptions. You are an artist, Shyam Babu, you must also try, using your artist's perspective, and I believe that it will be you who will bring new facts and the truth to light."

Late Biju Babu's interest, encouragement, conviction and expectation from me, along with the blessings and enthusiasm of Professor Nabin Kumar Sahu were the strength and support with which I worked, from 1964 until retirement; I drew, sketched and painted all the carvings in Udayagiri caves, then I photographed the inner and outer facades of the

caves. Putting them all together, I created panels of drawings based on the original line drawings and carvings. Then, I painted each panel in the ancient grafitti mode, using colours made from different stones and soils, like I was taught by my teachers - Nandalal Bose, Parimal Da and Professor Sukhamoy Mitra, creating several layers on canvases. Starting in 1992, I had thought I will be able to complete the entire Udayagiri narrative by the year 2000. Sadly, that was not to be. I could not fulfil Biju Babu's wish. This regret will remain with me till my dying day. However, my burden was lightened a little, when Late Biju

Babu's illustrious son Shri Naveen Patnaik honoured me by inaugurating an exhibition of all my Kharavela related paintings at Jayadev Bhavan in the capital city in 2003.

I have painted the life of Mahameghavahana Aira Kharavela, recreating the imagery from the carvings and bas-reliefs in the caves of Udayagiri hill. I have documented the entire description along with photographs, contributing my best effort to conserving their style and form through my paintings. My sole wish in undertaking this work was to fulfil Biju Babu's wish; to bring to life the stories of Emperor Kharavela in my paintings on the subject, reaching out to the interested and discerning readers and art lovers.

This endeavour is not my effort alone. It has been made possible because of the efforts and support of the then Principal Secretary of Culture, Shri R. Balakrishnan, a culture enthusiast and art aficionado himself. I convey my deep gratitude to him.



I convey my heartfelt thanks to my brothers - Shri Raicharan Das and Dr. Pramod Kishore Das for their unstinting assistance and advice. I will always be grateful to Dr. Jiban Patnaik, former Director, Archaeological Survey of India who was responsible for the conservation of Udaygiri carvings and inscriptions, as well as Shri Rajkishore Mishra, former Secretary of Odisha Sahitya Akademi. I am grateful to S. N. Girish, IAS, and Dr. B. Venkatraman, IAS, retired Chief Secretary, for their support and encouragement throughout my working life. My sincere thanks are also due to Manmath Kumar Satpathy and Dipak Kumar Sahu.

It was my life's commitment to recreate ancient Kalinga's art and culture highlighted in the images, inscriptions and carvings of Udayagiri. I have also attempted to document and recreate the cave paintings of Sitabnjhi in Keonjhar, as well as the sculptures of the Chausathi Yogini complex at Hirapur – being able to accomplish these aspirations, I would like to believe that I have contributed to our great legacy, that I have given back something to the state of Odisha. The carved panels of Udayagiri have diminished in 2000 years. The cave paintings of Sitabnjhi are wearing away and will probably disappear soon. As an artist, my endeavour has been to document these treasures as best as I could, through my paintings, drawings and research, so that we retain some records of our ancient heritage and legacy.

Shyamsunder Pattanayak

SHYAMSUNDER PATTANAYAK



Receiving award from Hon'ble Governor of Orissa Sj. Y. N. Sukthankar, at All Orissa Art Exhibition organised by Orissa Lalit Kala Akademi, 1962

Shyamsunder Pattanayak, acclaimed master painter, was born in 1935 at Radhanathpur Sasan in Athagarh, Odisha, where he completed his high school education, following which a state government scholarship enabled his art studies at Kala Bhavana, Visva-Bharati University, Santiniketan in 1954. He spent four years honing his skills under the tutelage of legendary greats like Nandalal Bose and Ramkinkar Baij, Radhacharan Bagchi and Sukumoy Mitra amongst others. He thereafter got a Masters in History, trained in Musicology at National Museum, New Delhi, museum modeling and display at the Prince of Wales Museum in Mumbai. He joined the Odisha State Museum in Bhubaneswar as Curator of Art, Craft and Display in 1960. The artist went on to serve in this position until he retired in 1993.

His art practice spans six decades during which his works have been exhibited at prestigious art events in the country and abroad. He is well-known for his works based on the Chousathi Yogini temple complex, at Hirapur, the Udayagiri cave carvings in Bhubaneswar, and the Sitabijhi rock paintings in Keonjhar, Odisha.

The artist is the recipient of many significant honours and awards including the Ila Panda Chitrakala Samman, the Outstanding Contribution in the field of Art and Sculpture honour from the Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi, Felicitations from the Academy of Fine Arts,



Mother, Charcoal on paper, 1959



Child's Desire. Wood sculpture, 1965



Photo: Ashis Dhir

Kolkata, Infosys Foundation, Bipra Charan Mohanty Foundation, Guru Debaprasad Das Samman, Award from Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, and Toshali Samman to name a few.

This IPCA art volume highlights Shyamsunder Pattanayak's painting series on Emperor Kharavela and the cave carvings found in Udayagiri hill, Bhubaneswar, Odisha.



Ila Panda Centre for Arts (IPCA) is a non-profit platform with the mission of showcasing, promoting and conserving the visual arts of Odisha. IPCA has been constantly persevering towards creation of a perceptible art consciousness, alongside the promotion of and support for artists from Odisha, through various collaborative initiatives.

IPCA's interventions in the past seven years of its existence reflect its core vision and mission of bringing art and artists to the forefront in Odisha. This has been made possible through regular art exhibitions, workshops, seminars, art residency modules and art publications. Substantial scholarships and grants are provided to deserving young artists to pursue higher education in renowned art universities in the country, in order to upgrade their knowledge and skills. Established artists have been provided support to participate and display their works in international art forums. "Bridging Centuries" is a continuation of IPCA's constant efforts in documentation of our art heritage.

IPCA seeks to widen the scope of art patronage, facilitate partnerships with key stakeholders and engage the community at large, drawing people into the influence of the arts domain, thus bringing art into everyday lives.

IPCA's vision is to be a catalyst and innovative facilitator, and a key contributor in the promotion and conservation of the visual arts of Odisha.