

Concept Note

International Seminar on “Indo-Rakhine Concatenation over Dhamma”

Arakani.eRakhine played a pivotal role in the exchange of cultures and religions between India and Southeast Asia. Land and sea routes connected it with Bengal to the west and Myanmar proper to the east, routes that were travelled by peoples, religions and cultures. From the early centuries of the modern era.Rakhine was ruled by kings who adopted Indian titles and traditions to suit their own environment. Indian Brahmins conducted the royal ceremonial, Buddhist monks spread their teachings, traders came and went and artists and architects used Indian models for inspiration. In spite of its rich history Rakhine remained marginalized in Asian Studies. The sculptures of Buddhist images of early Rakhine belonged to the eastern Indian styles between the sixth and the tenth centuries CE and the palaeography of the inscribed images of the Buddhist pantheon shows commonality with scripts like *siddhamatrika*. Analogies may be drawn between the art historical material and that of contemporary phases of the kingdoms of southeast Bengal, particularly Mainamati, and with the discoveries from the Ratnagiri site in Odisha. Bronzes in the Mrohaung Museum, said to come from Vesalishow a close connection with the Pala School.

Buddhist traditions are the most important in the formation of Rakhine's culture. These traditions tell of the Buddha flying to the city of Dhanyawadi, accompanied by his disciples, and converting King Candrasuriya ("Sun-and-Moon"), after which he consented to have an image of himself made in commemoration of the event. This was the famous Mahamuni ("Great Sage")image, known throughout the Buddhist world and desired by kings who sought to conquer the country in order to carry away this powerful prize. The history of this image is entwined with that of Rakhine.The spread of Arakanese Buddhism in the form of the Mahamuni cult to Southeastern Bengal shows that Arakanese concepts of Buddhism spread into Southeastern Bengal.

The Shit-thaung pillar inscription of Anandracandra, who ruled Vesali in the 8th century, records a genealogy of some 22 kings ruling from the late 4th century, the earlier kings probably at Dhanyawadi. Anandacandra is described as a Buddhist who established monasteries, caused images to be made. The Shit-thaung inscription describes Anandacandra's most important activities as the building of Buddhist foundations and commissioning objects of worship and records his building many monasteries and providing them with slaves, fields and buffaloes. His religious donations also included gold and silver caityas containing relics of the Buddha, Bodhisattvas, the goddess Cunda and others, and Buddha images made of brass bell metal and copper, as well as ivory, wood, terracotta and stone.

While Rakhine has been predominantly Buddhist throughout its history its Buddhism received inspiration from many parts of the Buddhist world, and these different influences are reflected in its art. Through Buddhism it was in contact with countries as far south as Sri Lanka and as far north as Nepal and Tibet and even China apart from Southeastern Bengal and Nalanda. As because Buddhism remained strong throughout the history of Rakhine and its images were perceived to impart religious strength and power, they were not forgotten for centuries.

Keeping the other facts in consideration The Institute of Social and Cultural Studies(ISCS),India as an autonomous Think Tank has been addressing various historical perspectives, socio-cultural dimensions and contemporary happenings over a decade through in-depth research, national and International events along with documentations and monthly writings is keen to host a Day Long International conference on the proposed topic As the Institute affirms to the fact that the revelation and promulgation of the shared cultural alliance between the neighbouring's Indo-Rakhine can become a significant instrument to tackle insurgencies and initiate multilateral ties and sustainable partnerships among the nations in forthcoming years.