

Portable Art in Buddhist Period in Sindh and its Evaluation and Connection to Global Buddhist Community

Mastoor F. Bukhari

ABSTRACT

This paper aims at reporting a unique portable votive plaques and clay tablets discovered from different Buddhist period (Sites of Sindh, Pakistan.)

1. Kahu-Jo-Daro (Mirpurkhas)
2. Gul Mohammad Jamro (Ranipur)
3. Thul Mir Rukun (Daulatpur)
4. Khijrani (Umer Kot)
5. Koriani (Badin)
6. Siraj-ji-Takri (Khairpur)

These plaques made up of baked clay, in different sizes, and shapes like oval, square, small, large, thin, thick inscribed and carved. It can be classified in different groups; according to their sizes and shapes. According to their patterns, some are exhibiting Buddha's figure in different Asana, some with inscribed written Buddha's creed, some with stupa impressions and hundred stupas. The Buddha is in Bhumisparshamudra. The enlightened one must be understood as sitting inside the Mahabodhi temple at Bodhgaya, and the stupas surrounding him are meant to be inside the temple compound.

“The second type of plaque represents a series of bell-shaped stupas (understood as being grouped round the main stupa) and is inscribed at the bottom with the Buddhist creed.”

From Sindh, these plaques found and documented by Bhandarkar (1914-15) and Cousens (1929). Few tablets donated by Givannino Verardi (1975). The total No of 33 votive plaques display in Archaeology and Anthropology Museum, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, Sindh, Pakistan. Except a few, most of them are damaged and broken into small pieces.

The site Kahu-Jo-Daro, Mirpur Khas yielded hundreds of sun dried votive clay tablets almost identical with those discovered from Nalanda and Sarnath in Eastern India. These votive tablets were used by devotees who came on pilgrimage as offerings. These types of votive plaques/inscribed clay tablets have been discovered in different parts of Pakistan, Afghanistan and India.

Keywords: portable art, votive plaques, global Buddhist community

Archaeology & Anthropology Museum, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur.