



International Conference
on
**Angkor Wat: The Monument
and the Living Presence**

28th - 30th March, 2018



इन्दिरा गांधी राष्ट्रीय कला केंद्र
INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS

CONFERENCE REPORT

Day 1

Academic Session I

Chairperson: Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Kapur (IFS), Former Indian Ambassador to Cambodia

Topic: Blossoming Flower – Maidens and Fallen Heroes on the Battle Field: A Key to Understanding the So-called Apsara Figures at Angkor Wat

Speaker: Dr. Eric Bourdonneau, Lecturer, History and Archaeology of Ancient Cambodia, EFEO, Siam Reap

Presentation:

Historiography presents Apsaras as an emblem of Angkor Wat. Apsaras are semi-divine celestial entities in the abodes of Gods. They have been depicted as such on the temple walls at Angkor Wat. The speaker focused on the diversity of Apsara representations. According to him, the jewellery of Apsaras allows us to understand the trends in visualization of mythical figures in general. Many of the figures are found with a ring-shaped pendant. The speaker proposed that the pendant could have been a protective amulet. Even Krishna sculptures are found with such pendants. To further testify the recurrence of the pendant, the speaker showed a bas-relief panel depicting the meeting of Hanuman and Sita who is held captive by Ravana in Ashoka Vatika. Here Hanuman is seen offering a pendant instead of a ring to Sita, contrary to other records. The speaker suggested that characteristics of the Apsara figure need to be understood going beyond the prism of ornamentation. The speaker dwelt upon the concept of Apsara as hostess for the dead men at war, suggesting that conceptually the Apsara figure could perhaps be seen as a bridge between the celestial and the profane.

Discussion:

During the discussion, the speaker enlightened the audience on the hierarchical structure of Apsaras and the difference between Apsara and Yakshi. He also mentioned that since Cambodian iconography draws much inspiration from Indian iconographic traditions,

female figures are prevalent in the temple panels and bas-reliefs. Such figures also urge us to evaluate the position of women in the Cambodian society especially after a long history of cultural exchange between India and Cambodia.

Topic: Ideology, Legitimation and State: Some Reflections in the Temples of Angkor Wat

Speaker: Prof. Rajiva Kumar Sinha, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology, T.M. Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar

Presentation:

This paper focused on the formation of Angkor and the amalgamation of local and foreign elements behind state formation. He emphasized the struggle between Buddhism and Hinduism and the mutual exchanges between the two traditions. Angkor Wat holds equal respect for the Hindu and Buddhist ideologies of statehood. This is evident from the temple and other sacred sites. In this way, the setting up of Cambodia can be located within the tussle between the sacred and the profane domains which was historically reformulated in the 10th-11th century. Since the establishment of Cambodian empire by Jay Varman II in the 9th century, growth of tolerant religious worldview in Cambodia became the rule of the day. The king centralized many aspects of social reform into the religious sphere thereby securing his own political authority. The speaker stressed on a holistic survey of folk art and oral traditions of Cambodia, like Chando oral songs from Champa for a better understanding of Angkor Wat's socio-historical relevance.

Discussion:

The discussion highlighted the difficulties in capturing oral tradition in Cambodia due to several levels of social and demographic transformation, apart from linguistic issues.

Academic Session II

Chairperson: Dr. Philippe Delanghe, Chief of the Culture Unit, UNESCO, Cambodia Office

Topic: Angkor Wat: Passage from Vishnu to Buddha

Speaker: Dr. Ea Darith, Deputy Director, APSARA National Authority, Siam- Reap, Cambodia

Presentation:

The speaker commenced his presentation by mapping the country and sharing the geographical position of Angkor Wat in Cambodia. He then discussed the plan of the temple in brief. Further, the presentation introduced the inscriptions found in the relief of the temple which tells the story and the evolution of the temple. He discussed features of the various temples built by Suryavarman II who was also patron of the Angkor Wat temple complex. A series of photos were displayed to explain the surrounding and different images of the temple at various times of the day. The other issue that was touched upon was the symbolism of Angkor Wat. The moat represents the mythical ocean - *Samudra* and the galleries represent the mountain ranges that surround Mount Meru. Angkor Wat was dedicated to Lord Vishnu and we see icons of the different incarnations of Vishnu on the bas-relief of Angkor Wat. The key theme of the paper was transition of Vaishnavism to Buddhism in the late 13th Century. The main deity of Vishnu in the sanctum sanctorum was replaced by that of Buddha. Many other galleries also underwent similar changes. Several other symbols like the Stupa in Angkor Wat also indicate this transition.

Discussion: The discussion highlighted the political implications of the shift from Vaishnavism to Buddhism.

Topic: Sakshya-Drishya: The Evidences Visible at Angkor Wat and their Interpretation Approaches

Speaker: Ms. Vinita Srivastava, Joint Secretary, IGNCA

Presentation:

The paper dealt with what is evidential and what is tangible in the Angkor Wat temple complex. She began with a brief timeline and a background of Angkor Wat. She further explained Sakshya as a concept along with the examples which corroborated certain works in the archaeological as well as epigraphic records. While explaining the concept of Drishya, she took recourse to the visible heritage as seen at the temple complex. She shared her experiences of visiting Angkor Wat in Cambodia while signing the Memorandum of Understanding with APSARA National Authority. In conclusion, she spoke about documentation & research carried out by IGNCA on sites like the Tanjavur Brhadisvara

Temple as a model for work to be done at Angkor Wat. She held that the place undoubtedly had a glorious past but we must look forward to ushering in a bright future through the various research projects around Angkor Wat.

Discussion: The discussion revolved around the possibility of other temples in India influencing the temple architecture in Cambodia. The speaker suggested that these are at the stage of hypothesis and assumptions and only systematic proper fieldwork can answer such questions.

Day 2

Academic Session III

Chairperson: Prof. Sachchidanand Sahai, Scientific Advisor to the Government of Cambodia

Topic: Angkor as a Symbol of Khmer National Unity

Speaker: Dr. Philippe Delanghe, Chief of the Culture Unit, UNESCO, Cambodia Office

Presentation:

The presentation started with a brief historical overview of Cambodia from the 8th century AD, up until the country's independence, with a view to contextualize the topic of the paper. The speaker then presented a brief timeline in terms of the measures taken to conserve, preserve and restore the cultural heritage of Angkor Wat. The French expedition to study Angkor Wat, undertaken in 1863, culminated in the first exhibition in Paris in 1878 wherein artefacts and relics brought from Cambodia were also displayed. In 1954, a major UNESCO convention was held in which the cultural heritage of Cambodia was discussed in detail and specific suggestions were made for the conservation of Angkor Wat as well. However, from the 1970s up till the late 1980s, there were severe internal conflicts due to which not much work could be carried out. In fact, during this period, a lot of artworks and precious artefacts were taken away from Cambodia. In 1991, Angkor Wat was nominated by UNESCO on the World Heritage Site list. In an international conference held in 1993, 36

nations signed an agreement for the safeguarding and development of Angkor Wat and the International Coordinating Council (ICC) was born. Subsequently, in 1995, Apsara National Authority was founded in Cambodia. The speaker informed the gathering that, at present, there are ongoing projects by at least 18 countries from 4 continents at Angkor. In 2013, to mark the completion of twenty years of the ICC, an inter-governmental conference was held in Siam Reap where countries like Australia, Cambodia, New Zealand and Germany further focussed on sustainable development in Angkor Wat. The Angkor Charter was an important output of this inter-governmental conference, and it is in line with the Venice Charter of UNESCO. Among the tangible results of such important collaborative efforts, the tourists visiting Angkor Wat have increase dramatically from 3000 in 1993 to 6 million in the present day. The speaker concluded outlining certain issues which are being faced today, such as illegal construction around the protected heritage sites and protection of buffer zones.

Discussion:

While discussing the paper, Prof. Sachchidanand Sahai spoke about the collaboration that is required among Indian academia, international organizations and Cambodian authorities. He stressed on the fact that UNESCO should channelize some energy in conducting research in and around Cambodia.

Academic Session IV

Chairperson: Prof. Rajiva Kumar Sinha, Professor, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archaeology, T.M. Bhagalpur University, Bhagalpur, Bihar

Topic: Roots of Angkor Wat

Speaker: Prof. R. Nagaswamy, Padma Bhushan Awardee, Eminent Archeologist, Chennai

Presentation:

He started his presentation by talking about Cambodian inscription and the earliest reference of Angkor Wat in Cambodia: '*Vishnupadam*.' It has a dual meaning: (i) abode of Vishnu and (ii) sacred feet of Vishnu. He mentioned that from known historic times, Cambodians were Hindus following Vedas and Puranas. In fact, Buddhism also travelled to Cambodia as part of Hinduism. In Cambodia, from earliest times till 1350, all kings were Hindus. He indicated similarities between Angkor Wat and temples in Southern India built

during the Pallava and Chola eras. He talked about Phnom, which means 'Parvatam' in Khmer language. All hills bore Sanskrit names and all rivers and Tirthas were also named in Sanskrit. Then he spoke of various kings and their posthumous titles. He then moved to talk about inscriptions referring to the installation of Lingas. In Cambodia, the Lingas include Shiva and Vishnu in one and sometimes even Buddha is indicated in the same Linga. The temples built for Hindu deities are basically erected to portray certain philosophy connected with the deity for whom it is built. He explained how the visual form must reflect the individuality of its character. He gave example of temple at Baset and how its *Adhithana* holds similarities with Gupta temple architecture. He gave example of Sambhor Prai Kuk brick temple and spoke of complexity of brick structure and the carvings. He mentioned about the similarities in technique of making the Sikhara. He also drew similarities between Kailasanatha Temple of Kanchipuram which was built around 8th century and the Cambodian temples built around the same time. He mentioned that Brhadisvara was also known as 'Dakshina Meru,' which means Southern Meru. He discussed the plan of Brhadisvara and Angkor Wat. He then talked about the sculptures in Angkor Wat which are carved in-situ. He drew the final similarity between the Sikhara of Angkor Wat and the Sikhara in the temple architecture of Khajuraho. Through various examples and similarities, he made the audience understand that the basic elements of Indian temple architecture can also be seen through the temples of Cambodia. In conclusion, he pointed out that unless we understand the philosophy and technique of any structure, we can never conserve it. We need to concentrate more on its scientific aspect rather than general description. He focused on the importance of traditional and fundamental study and how we need to go back to the inscriptions to understand the structures better.

Discussion:

The discussion revolved around the possible influence of Indian iconographic and architectural patterns on the sculptures and iconography at Angkor Wat. Prof. Nagaswamy held that it is difficult to ascertain the exact influences of Indian iconographic and architectural patterns on Angkor Wat. It is better to say that Angkor Wat and other temples in Cambodia actually present an amalgamation of local and Indian architectural and iconographic styles. The influences vary from temple to temple. Again, at times, one can see rather conceptual similarities between Indian and Cambodian temples than mere tangible similarities.

Topic: India's Restoration Efforts at Angkor Area from 1986 to 2005

Speaker: Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Kapur (IFS), Former Indian Ambassador to Cambodia

Presentation:

Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Kapur began his presentation by tracing his time back in 2001, when he was first appointed as the Ambassador of India in Cambodia. He recalled that no scholarly work had been carried out by India in Angkor since the 1970s. He tried to contact the scholars who had previously worked there, but there was little or no response. He found agencies from 38 countries that were working on Angkor Wat. However, India was not one of them. He mentioned that the last Indian Prime Minister's visit to Cambodia was in 1963. He talked about early texts referring to Cambodia as 'Kamboja-desha' while India was referred to as 'Desha'. He talked about India's role and influence in South-East Asia. He traced first excavations done by ASI in Cambodia from 1986 till 1993. He talked about the restoration work done by ASI in Cambodia during the civil war. In 1993, Cambodia asked UNESCO for international assistance for restoration efforts in Angkor Wat. He then discussed role of France in Cambodia. France has been a colonial power in Cambodia and retained control of the monuments post their colonial rule. He raised his concerns why India was not part of a committee of experts working on a Hindu Temple. He shared his experience working with ASI and how he helped outsource experts in the documentation and restorations of Angkor Wat in an attempt to provide contextualization to the work that could now be done by IGNCA in collaboration with APSARA National Authority, Cambodia.

Academic Session V

Chairperson: Prof. R. Nagaswamy

Topic: Moat of Angkor Wat in the Wider Context of Water as Symbol of Khmer and Indian Civilization

Speaker: Prof. Do Thu Ha, Dean, faculty of Oriental Studies, Vietnam National University, Hanoi

Presentation:

The speaker opened the discussion with India's cultural influences on Cambodia. She described water as a driving force of civilizations in general. She analyzed the symbol of water in Indian civilization and Hinduism. She mentioned a list of sacred rivers which signify physical and spiritual purity. Citing the example of Ganga, she underlined the sacred connections that Ganga shares with Vishnu and Shiva. Similarly, in Buddhism, water signifies symbolic and ritualistic pathways to spiritual enlightenment and also plays an important role in funeral rituals. She spoke about the rituals that Cambodian kings used to perform to pay tribute to water and mountains. The Khmer created a hydraulic society to control the reservoir of rain water for farming. They constructed dams, reservoirs and irrigation canals. Satellite mapping has discovered a system of old canals and waterways from the rice field. Water also played a vital role in amusement and festivals. She later discussed the symbolism of water as embodied by the moat of Angkor Wat. The moat represents the Hindu mythical ocean – *Samudra*. The central peak suggestively stands for Mount Meru within the ocean. Thus, the water symbol of Khmer and Indian civilization finds a graphic expression at Angkor Wat. She emphasised the fact that Angkor Wat replicates the larger universe and throughout the ages it stood parallel to the royal universe of the kings. She also spoke about the popular belief that the moat and other symbols at the Angkor Wat temple are living entities and they have divine or cosmic power.

Topic: Angkor Wat—A Glorious Temple Town of Cambodia

Speaker: Prof. Shiva Kant Dwivedi, Dean, Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture & Archeology, Jiwaji University, Gwalior

Presentation:

Prof. Dwivedi began his paper with an observation that Cambodian art is inspired by Indian artistic traditions. He traced the origin of the word Khmer from the Sanskrit word 'Kamboja Desa' which means land of Kambojas. He held that a person named Kambiya seems to have been the founder of the country. He might have sailed to this land from India as early as in 600 BC. Kamboja, he said, might have been a Mahajanapada. Further, he emphasized that proper human settlement in Cambodia started in about 500 BC with the arrival of a trader named Kamboja who came via sea route. He drew similarities between Indian and Khmer temples in terms of their characteristic features. He referred to the structure called Meru at Angkor Wat as a representation of the mythical Meru Mandara of Sanskrit texts.

Furthermore, he spoke about the stylistic features of Angkor Wat with a special mention to the *Panchang* and *Saptang* Shikahra. He highlighted the role of priests, Acharya and artists during the construction of the temple. While concluding he suggested that more research about Jaina influence on the iconographic features of the sculptures at Angkor Wat needs to be under taken.

Discussion:

During the discussion, the speaker clarified that the Brahmin priest community involved with Angkor Wat of the ancient times was not a homogenous community. There might have been some hierarchy among the priests. While responding to a question, he held that according to hearsay, a sage named Kambu Rishi was the main propagator of Hinduism in Cambodia. But it is an irony that there is hardly any substantial evidence about his historicity in the Indian Subcontinent.

Academic Session VI

Chairperson: Prof. Dr. Chanthourn Thuy, Deputy Director, Institute of Culture and Fine Arts, Royal Academy of Cambodia, Phnom Penh

Topic: The Birth of the Buddha at Angkor Wat

Speaker: Dr. Nicolas Revire, Lecturer, Faculty of Liberal Arts, Thammasat University, Bangkok

Presentation:

This paper examined, in detail, a rare stone carved relief illustrating a momentous event in the life of the Buddha. This relief was found at Angkor Wat and dates back to the 13th–14th century. This relief was originally discovered in the late 19th century in the gallery of a “Thousand Buddhas” inside Angkor Wat and it is now located at the National Museum of Thailand, Bangkok. The relief depicts the miraculous birth of Śākyamuni Buddha, born as Siddhārtha Gautama, coming from the side of his mother, Queen Māyā who is standing in the Lumbini sacred grove. The paper discussed the provenance and journeys of this relief from Cambodia to Thailand. By comparing this relief with other artistic representations of the Birth of the Buddha and literary depiction of the event in various textual sources, the speaker hinted at the advent and uniqueness of Theravāda Buddhism at Angkor centering on the life of the Buddha.

Topic: Apsara Depiction in Indian Temples and Angkor Wat with Special Reference to Indian Classical Texts

Speaker: Dr. Sangh Mitra, Senior Fellow, Indian Council of Social Sciences Research

Presentation:

The paper dealt with the depiction of Apsaras in Indian textual tradition, Indian temples and Angkor Wat. The speaker explained the literal meaning of Apsara and their description in various ancient Indian texts. Apsaras are mentioned as daughters of God. In the Indian context, Apsaras are connected with water. Dr. Mitra spoke about Lord Indra's court that had many beautiful Apsaras. Urvashi is known to be the most beautiful of them. She said that there are various stories in which Apsaras were seen as a means of distraction. Referring to the Menaka-Vishwamitra tale, she said, in various texts Indra would be seen using the beautiful and sensual Apsaras of his court to distract various sages who tried to challenge his authority. She spoke about how Apsaras were often depicted as erotic and charming objects in Hindu mythological texts. She talked about Vedic texts that mention ritual dances by the Apsaras at various sacrificial rituals. Then she spoke about Gandharvas and Apsaras and their relationship. However, despite different kinds of narratives around them, Apsaras have been generously portrayed as semi-divine entities on temple walls in India. She then moved to the depiction of Apsaras in Angkor Wat. She mentioned that the Apsaras appear both as single entities and in groups of two to six and are depicted with very elaborate headgear.

Topic: Apsaras in Angkor Wat and Indian Art and literature

Speaker: Dr. Binay Kumar Mishra, Senior Lecturer, Department of A.I & A.S, Magadh University, Bodh Gaya

Presentation:

Dr. Mishra began his paper with a *śloka* from the Rg Veda in praise of the Apsaras. He spoke of various texts that mention Apsaras as celestial beings. He observed that Apsaras are rooted in myth and popular belief. He referred to Angkor Wat as a replica of the assembly of heaven. A large number of Apsaras have been exhibited on the walls of the Angkor Wat temple complex. The Apsara figures are carved out so beautifully that like the mythical

Apsaras these figures also enjoy a lot of attention. However, the outer wall is still undecorated. He described iconographical features of the Apsaras exhibited on the wall of the temple complex. Like the previous speaker, Dr. Mishra too mentioned about the headgear and ornaments of the Apsaras and the backdrop adorning them.

Day 3

Academic Session VII

Chairperson: Prof. (Dr.) Do Thu Ha, Head of Department of Indian Studies, Ho Chi Minh City University of Social Sciences and Humanities

Topic: A Survey of Mysterious Mahidharpura from the Sanskrit Inscriptions of King Jayavarman VII and the Archaeological Assumptions

Speaker: Prof. Sombat Mangmeesuksiri, Assistant Professor, Sanskrit Studies Centre, Silpakorn Univeristy, Thailand

Presentation:

The speaker began his paper with a survey of mysterious city of Mahidharpura. He talked about Angkor Wat temple complex and how it was built by King Suryavarman II. He then talked about the historical timeline of King Suryavarman II whose lineage derived from Mahidharapura. He also talked about King Jayavarman VII, who also hailed from the same dynasty. He explained the literal meaning of the word 'Mahidhara' as the name of a person and the city. He talked about his points of discussion for paper. The paper tried to locate the mysterious city of Mahidharpura with some inscriptions from Jayavarman VII. He concluded his paper by pointing out that the city has not been located yet, but offers an interesting field for research. He also added that it is believed by some scholars that the city of Mahidharpura would be somewhere in the North-East of the present day Thailand. However, some scholars believe it to be in Cambodia.

Topic: Bas-Relief Wall Art in Angkor Wat

Speaker: Prof. D. P. Tewari, Professor, Department of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology, University of Lucknow, Lucknow

Presentation:

Prof. Tewari started the presentation with an explanation of the map of the Khmer empire. Angkor, which is located in north-western part of Cambodia is a religious complex comprising of about 100 temples. The temples were primarily dedicated to Indian Gods depicting Ramayana, Mahabharata and Puranic themes. The lecture was further enhanced by the discussion of the plan and construction of the temple. The main theme of the paper was bas-reliefs and iconography in them. At Angkor Wat, the outer verandas are marvellously decorated with bas-relief motifs covering about 800 meters. The panels are carved from left to right in a sequence starting from the South East corner. The main themes explained by him were: battle of Lanka; Ram with Hanuman; Ravana with twenty arms leading his army, seated on a chariot; monkeys with stones and branches of trees participating in war; battle scene of Mahabharat; Arjuna standing on his chariot driven by Krishna; Krishna teaching Gita to Arjuna; incarnations of Vishnu; depiction of king Suryavarman II; Samudra Manthan; Apsaras-celestial dancers; Gods and Goddesses; well dressed and ornamented human figures, etc.

Discussion:

In response to queries, Dr. Tewari explained the timeline of the introduction of Hinduism in Cambodia. He observed that at a later stage Buddha's head was replaced by that of Hindu deities. Also, during the years of conflict in Cambodia, art objects suffered a lot of vandalism resulting in the distortion of Buddha's sculptures. While responding to another question, Dr. Tewari observed that it was perhaps the Jain merchants who brought Jainism to Cambodia. However, no substantial or concrete evidences can be corroborated to testify the arrival of this religion at Cambodia.

Topic: King Jayavarman VII: An Embodiment of Political and Cultural Bond between Cambodia and Sri Lanka From 1181 To 1220 CE.

Speaker: Dr. Siyaram Mishra Haldhar, Department of Buddhist Studies, University of Delhi

Presentation:

The presenter attempted to analyze the pioneering role of King Jayavarman VII in carving a niche for Theravada Buddhism in Cambodia and developing a strong political and cultural bond with Sri Lanka. His paper offered a possible context to Buddhist cultural ties between South Asia and South East Asia. King Jayavarman VII was presented as a devout Buddhist ruler who posthumously received the title of *Mahaparamsaugat*. The record of his royal donation contained in the Ta Prohm inscription reveals the magnitude of the resources of the kingdom and depth of the king's religious sentiment. The inscription refers to the Rajvihar i.e. the temple of Ta Prohm and its adjacent areas where he had set up an image of his mother *Prajnaparamita*. Another inscription in Sanskrit was discussed in which the tale of Jayavarman's wife Jayarajadevi's induction to the Buddhist order has been depicted. He noted that by the end of the reign of Jayavarman VII, Theravada Buddhism became one of the prime religions of Cambodia and it further travelled to Thailand. However, the journey of the religion was not smooth as opposing forces were always at play.

Academic Session VIII

Topic: Angkor and Champa: Political and Cultural Relations

Speaker: Dr. Bachchan Kumar, South East Asian Studies, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts New Delhi

Presentation:

The speaker began with a view that the present geographical division of Cambodia, Champa and Thailand is a modern day concept and in ancient times there were no such marked divisions. He then focused on political and cultural relationship between Angkor and Champa. His paper was divided into three segments. The first segment of the paper talked about changing political relation between Champa and Angkor, where he stressed on the struggle between smaller kingdoms for the control of power. He explained the shifting residence of Jayavarman II the founder king of Angkor to strengthen and safeguard his kingdom against the Cham invasions. The second segment of his presentation discussed the prospective plans for collaboration between India and Cambodia initiated by IGNCA, to promote relations with the institutions. He spoke about the first visit of IGNCA delegation

in Angkor in 2008, a four day visit following meetings with Apsara National Authority, the Ecole Francaise de Extreme Orient (EFEO). In the third segment, the material remains from Angkor Wat were discussed and the bas-relief found a special mention in his presentation.

Topic: Iron and Stone Industry of the Great Angkor Civilization (Mekong Iron National Park)

Speaker: Prof. Dr. Chanthourn Thuy, Deputy Director, Institute of Culture and Fine Arts, Royal Academy of Cambodia, Phnom Penh

Presentation:

Dr. Chanthourn Thuy began his paper by tracing a timeline and mapping the extent of the Angkorian Empire. This was followed by the role of ancient Iron industrial sites in South-East Asia. The metal was crucial in the expansion of the kingdoms which spread across much of South-East Asia from the 7th century onwards. Discovery of iron tools and weapons helped with the emergence of various civilizations. He talked about the importance of iron revolution and how had it not been for it, there would be no temples and none of the civilizations in this region. This theory was further supported by his example of the Angkor civilization. He showed photographs and videos of the restoration work in the Angkor region from 1980. This was followed by the speaker talking about various constructions carried out in the Angkor civilization in the 10th century. It included bridges, roads and water canal systems. He then talked about the iron industry and various iron production centres in Cambodia. He showed videos of excavation of the iron production areas and photographs of iron ores from the excavation site. He continued to talk about dating process and the results of dating the iron ores to further support his theory. As part of his paper, he showed videos of methods used to cut laterite and sandstone blocks with the help of iron bars. He concluded his paper by sharing his experience of setting up the Mekong Iron National Park. He said that there can be no Angkor without iron. He supported this theory by pointing out that Cambodia is a major source for iron in South-East Asia.

Discussion: As part of the discussion, the audience and the speaker discussed the dates of iron revolution in Cambodia and India in a comparative mode. They spoke about various tribes in Jharkhand that are engaged in iron smelting to this day. The discussion was

concluded as it was pointed out that in India, iron smelting dates back to the Harappan civilization.

Topic: Angkor Songkran: The Splendour of Cambodia

Speaker: Dr. Manisha Pandey Tiwari, UGC-Post Doctoral Fellow, New Delhi

Presentation:

Dr. Manisha Pandey Tiwari began her presentation by explaining the title of her paper. She explained that 'Angkor Songkran' is also known as 'Chaul Chnam Thmei'. It is the name of the Khmer New Year Festival. It literally means 'entering the new year' in Khmer language. She illustrated that the festival is celebrated every year from April 13 to 15. It is considered to be the grandest and the most important celebration in Cambodia. She went on to explain that the festival and the ceremonies and rituals that go with it. She pointed out similarities between this festival and various other Indian festivals. She explained that the festival is a three day festival. The first day is known as 'Moha Songkran'. On this day, a new God or angel is appointed to protect the world for the year ahead. She drew similarities of this day with the Indian festival of Baisakhi. The second day of the festival is known as 'Virak Wanabat.' It is the day of giving where the locals make donations and charities and make offerings to their ancestors to please them. Here, the speaker drew similarities with the Indian Shraadh tradition. This is followed by the third day, which marks the water festivals. Water is considered very pure and auspicious in Cambodia and it is believed that it washes away all evil. So, the locals throw water at each other on this day. The speaker drew similarities with the Indian festival of Holi. She further illustrated by saying that the festival showcases spectacular Cambodian culture; coincides with the end of the harvesting season and the beginning of the monsoon. The Cambodian people unite with their families and friends on this three day festival and everyone comes out of their respective homes to wish each other success, peace and happiness. She further continued by adding examples of foreigners visiting the country, who join the locals and witness the joyous occasion. She concluded by pointing out to the audience that this time of the year is the best time to visit and witness the grandeur of Angkorian temples as they are beautifully lit up for some of the very significant ceremonies that take place here.

Discussion: At the end of the paper, the audience discussed further similarities between Indian festivals and the Angkor Songkran festival of Cambodia.

Topic: Influences of Jainism in the Architecture of Angkor Wat

Speaker: Prof. B. Jain

Presentation:

The speaker began his paper by pointing out that the spread of Jainism in Cambodia predates the arrival of Buddhism. He then talked about the salient features of Jain art and architecture. He quoted several Kamboja legends and drew their similarities with Indian legends. The major concern of the paper was to understand the influence of Jain art and architecture in the temple complex or Angkor Wat. He drew similarities between the Toranas and human figurines found in the niches and the ones found in India during the Kushana and Gupta period. He discussed the sea route between India and Cambodia and that it was in use as early as in the 2nd century A.D. He also mentioned that the suffix 'Varman' to the Kings' name was very common in the Pallava period. He then went on to discuss Khmer architecture in detail. He began this part by talking about the architectural styles and themes of the Pre-Khmer period, which was followed by the architectural developments in the Khmer classical period. In conclusion, he spoke about Mount Meru, and how it is associated with Jain Tirthankaras.

Academic Session IX

Chairperson: Prof. I.K. Chaudhary, Dean, Faculty of Social Science, Ranchi University, Jharkhand

Topic: Angkor Wat Unfolds Humanity to Divinity of Royalty

Speaker: Prof. Shashibala, Professor, International Academy of Indian Culture, New Delhi

Presentation:

Prof. Shashibala began her paper explaining the word 'Devaraja' and presented a hypothesis about how this term might have been associated to Jayavarman VII. She traced the origin of 'Devaraja' to Manusmriti. Manu likened every king to various aspects of Dharma. Thus,

according to the texts, a king is a representation of divinity. In Cambodia, kings were attributed with divine qualities. More often than not, sacred festivals were organized to celebrate the might of kings like Jayavarman VII. In Angkor Wat, there are many deities like Kubera and Indra or in other words, deities of the Brahmanical Hinduism. Another distinct feature which can be seen in the panels is that the Sun god and Brahma holding bow and arrow look alike. She concluded her presentation with a hypothesis that the Angkor Wat temple might have been built for coronation purpose. History reveals that temples in Cambodia were built either to mark a royal coronation or to commemorate a deceased royal entity.

Topic: Mapping Angkor Wat Using Tools of Cultural Informatics

Speaker: Shri Pratapanand Jha, Director, Cultural Informatics Laboratory, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi

Presentation:

The speaker introduced Cultural Informatics as an emerging field of study. While venerating the unique Khmer architecture at Angkor Wat, he pointed to the improbability of covering Angkor Wat in its entirety given its vastness. He held that a selective approach in the beginning would perhaps be a better way of commencing documentation. He discussed about the various tools developed for cultural informatics. He underlined the need to understand that there is ample room for interaction between aspects of culture and digital technology. The speaker highlighted the history and role of IGNCA's Cultural Informatics Laboratory and Multimedia Centre (better known as CIL Unit), set up in 1994, in bridging gaps between aspects of traditional culture through Information Technology and Multimedia. He mentioned about the various projects undertaken by this Unit and its achievements, the most recent one being the receipt of ISO 16363:2012 Certification by National Cultural Audiovisual Archives (NCAA), thus becoming the world's first Trustworthy Digital Repository. He dwelt upon various aspects of Angkor Wat in the light of the enormous multimedia documentation of the Thanjavur Brhadisvara temple by IGNCA in the recent past. In this context, he also presented previews of multimedia documentations of 'Devanarayana' and 'Mesmerizing Gommateshvara at Shravana Belagola'. While concluding his presentation, Shri Pratapanand Jha pointed out the potential of the tools of multimedia in integrating various aspects of Angkor Wat, including its art & architecture.

Discussion:In response to the proposed project of documenting Angkor Wat, some scholars suggested that drawing a concrete plan and training new scholars of South-East Asia would be of benefit in this project. Dr. Philippe Delanghe pointed out that many teams are already present on the premises. So collaboration between the already working teams and the emerging research teams would perhaps be more effective. Prof. Sachindanad Sahai pointed out that developing a mechanism to fund the students for the concerned projects must be accorded utmost importance.