

Project Mausam Lecture on Thursday 31st July 2014

Conference Room I, India International Centre at 6.30pm

Stupa at Amaravati Great in coastal Andhra and the Indian Ocean World

by

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The Andhra region in southeast Deccan was one of the most important strongholds of Buddhism in early historic India. The region warmly supported Buddhist construction activity particularly between ca. 200 BCE and 300 CE as attested by more than one hundred remains of Buddhist establishments along the Godavari and Krishna river valleys. Particularly famous among such remains are the great stupa at Amaravati (ca. 200 BCE-250 CE and later) and the monastic complex at Nagarjunakonda (ca. 200-300 CE).

Around ca. 300 CE and after, although the vigorous Buddhist construction activity ceased in Andhra, the Andhran Buddhist material culture started spreading into the other Buddhist centres in India and Indian Ocean World, particularly South India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia, as attested by a considerable number of “Andhran-style” Buddhist sculptures discovered in these regions. Because the detailed date and original venue of the “Andhran-style” sculptures outside Andhra remains unsettled, however, there are different scholarly opinions about the “Andhran-style” and if these pieces were made under the direct influence from Andhra. This talk will explore major examples of “Andhran-style” Buddhist sculpture in the Indian Ocean World and will also examine the development of various scholarly interpretations on the sculpture and their problems.