

**ASHOKA**  
UNIVERSITY

# Kurukshetra: The Transformation of its Religious Landscape

---

**August 2023**

Aditi Mann

Ashoka University

# Kurukshetra: The Transformation of its Religious Landscape

**Aditi Mann**

August 2023

---

## ABSTRACT

Kurukshetra, known as the ‘land of great war of Mahābhārata’, is a popular pilgrimage centre for people in Northern India. This city holds significance among Hindus due to its association with the epic Mahābhārata and its protagonist Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, both literature and archaeological evidence suggest that this site held eminence among followers of Brāhmanic traditions much before the epic traditions termed it as a land of righteousness. This paper intends to examine the transformation of the religious landscape of Kurukshetra since ancient times on the basis of stone sculptures and other archaeological remains which have been recovered from there. Through such evidence, I will analyse the nature and spread of those religious cults which existed in the past before the Kṛṣṇa cult became popular. It will further examine the role of state and popular culture in defining and altering the sacred landscape.

## Introduction

On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2023, India celebrated its 74<sup>th</sup> Republic day in all its traditional grandeur. Besides the much awaited parade that takes place on ‘Kartavya path’ in the presence of national and international dignitaries, one of the most captivating moments is when tableau representing the culture and heritage of various states and departments float on the path. These tableaux are selected by the Ministry of Defence who set up the committee of ‘experts on arts’. On the basis of expert suggestions, it selects proposals. This year, the tableau representing the state of Haryana was selected in a similar way, with the theme being ‘International Gita Mahotsava’. The tableau showed Lord Kṛṣṇa in his cosmic form. One of the senior officials was quoted as saying

“Haryana’s tableau will give the message of Shrimad-Bhagavat Gita to the entire world this Republic Day. In this entirety the tableau shows Lord Krishna serving as the charioteer of Arjuna and giving him the knowledge of Gita. The first glimpse of the tableau radiates an appeal of spirituality, art and history.”<sup>1</sup>

The fact, that the entire tableau of state was dedicated to this deity reflects the extent of popularity of this beloved god, not only within this state but also in the entire Indian subcontinent. The district of Kurukshetra, or for that matter the entire state of Haryana, has completely subsumed itself in the spirit of Kṛṣṇa. The popularity of Kṛṣṇa is evident from the fact that as one arrives in Kurukshetra, on the top of the entrance gate, one is greeted by a massive portrayal of Kṛṣṇa giving a sermon to Arjuna on a chariot. Similarly, there is a Krishna museum here. Presumably, the setting up of a museum especially dedicated to the lord is an appropriate idea on the part of the government since the city is thronged by thousands of inquisitive visitors and pilgrims, for much of the year. The significance of the museum in discussion, can be ascertained by the presence of more than six hundred visitors every day.<sup>2</sup> Many visitors, as told, are foreign travellers who are dedicated devotees of the deity. They are often seen in the museum space singing songs, chanting mantras and even dancing around the exhibits displaying artefacts.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/chandigarh/haryana-republic-day-tableau-lord-krishna-8397966/>, accessed on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2023.

<sup>2</sup> When the author visited this museum recently, it was informed that two lakh people came here on the holy day of *Somvati Amaavasya*. Many people after taking the holy dip in *sarovar* came here as they visualize it as a memorial of Krishna.

<sup>3</sup> Most of the foreign travelers are members of ISCKON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), a Gaudiya Vaishanava Hindu religious organization founded in 1966 by A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in New York. It is largely based on beliefs of Bhagavad Gita, the holy text of Hindus.

This paper will examine a few questions that emerged during the fieldwork conducted in Kurukshetra district, particularly while covering Shri Krishna Museum. What role does popular culture and public memory play in creating 'religious heritage'? Does shifting of a religious icon to a museum changes its religious imagery for the audience? How can one view other less prominent religious cults and sects overshadowed by popular sects and their contribution in defining the sacred geography? How does state intervention 'create' or rather 'miscreate' the geographical and religious landscapes and simultaneously how it shapes the popular culture? These are selected questions which will be dealt with in the essay.

Situated in northern part of Indian subcontinent, the state of Haryana extends from latitude 29° 39' N to 30° 35' N and longitude 74° 27' E to 77° 36' E. It is among the thirty states of the country. As an independent state, it came into existence on 1st December, 1966, when it was carved out of the former state of East Punjab on a linguistic basis. Apparently, this is the reason why Haryana and Punjab share their capital city, Chandigarh. The area of research Kurukshetra district, is one of the twenty two districts of the state of Haryana.

### **Kurukshetra in Ancient Literature**

The earliest reference to the land and sanctity of Kurukshetra can to be found in *Atharvaveda*<sup>4</sup> and *Satapatha Brâhmana*<sup>5</sup> which goes back to a period long before the composition of the *Mahâbhârata*.<sup>6</sup> These references were further authenticated by Buddhist literature where Kurukshetra has been frequently alluded in *Jâtakas*, such as the *Mahâ suttasoma Jâtaka*<sup>7</sup> and also in *Digha Nikâya*.<sup>8</sup> The very first verse of *Bhâgavadgîtâ*, a philosophical text and segment

---

<sup>4</sup> Ralph T.H.Griffith, translated. *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, XX, Hymn 127, London, 1895-96. Atharvaveda, part of later Vedic literature is considered to have been composed between 1000 BCE to 600 BCE.

<sup>5</sup> Julius Eggling, translated *Satapatha Brahmana*, Part V, Kanda 14, Ist Adhyaya, Ist Brahmana, 14:1:1:1, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1882. Eggling opines that the final, written version of the text should be around 300 BCE, but also suggested that some elements could be far older of earlier antiquity.

<sup>6</sup> The composition of Mahabharata is generally places between 400 BCE-400 CE, however, Hildebeitel suggested the composition from mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE to the year Zero. A.Hildebeitel, 2001. *Rethinking the Mahabharata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. pp 18-20.

<sup>7</sup> H.T.Francis translated. *The Jataka Tales Vol V. (Maha suttasoma)* edited by E.B.Cowell (Cambridge University Press,1895 reprint Delhi, 1994). Shaw assigns the date from 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE to earliest part of Pali Jatakas to 3<sup>rd</sup> century CE to the later sections. See. Shaw, Sarah. *The Jatakas: Birth Stories of Bodhisattva* (Delhi: Penguin Publishers, 2006) 19.

<sup>8</sup> Maurice Walsh translated. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Chapter XV, Mahanidanasutta*, (Wisdom Publications), 1996. Devendra Handa opined that the place which the *Dîpavamsa* refers to as a city in the Kuru

of *Mahābhārata* consisting of sermon given by Kṛṣṇa to Arjuna, mentions Kurukshetra as Dharma-kshetra, land of righteousness.<sup>9</sup> It is believed that King Kuru ploughed this holy land and Viṣṇu granted him the boon that the land will named as Dharma-kshetra or Kuru-kshetra, land of Kurus. Similarly, Pehowa an ancient town near Kurukshetra is famous for Sarasvatī tīrath, a pilgrimage site, and it has also been mentioned in literature. It is a religious site located near river Sarasvatī which once flowed from here and people make offerings for the deceased.<sup>10</sup> This *tīrtha*, has also been mentioned in *Mahābhārata* in a discourse given by Bhīṣma to Pandavas.<sup>11</sup>

Archaeological findings of Painted Gray Ware phase, associated by historians with Later Vedic times have also been found in many places in Haryana but specifically around places like Kurukshetra, Amin, Raja-Karna-Ka-Tila, Pehowa, Panipat etc. This phase is generally dated from c 1000 BCE- 600 BCE.<sup>12</sup> The fame of Kurukshetra and the merit associated with this pilgrimage site had even reached beyond the Indian subcontinent in early centuries of first millennium as far as South-East Asia. In Laos, the Cham king Devanika in 456 CE, issued an inscription recording the consecration of the site near the imperial city of Shreshthapur and named it as ‘The New Kurukshetra’ which was to be constructed near a sacred peak known as Liṅga Parvat. The lines from *Kurukshetra Mahātmyā* have been inscribed on a stele of the king. This new Kurukshetra remained a spiritual centre for followers in Laos. Eventually, the influence of Hinduism began to wane and temple got converted into a temple of Theravada Buddhism.<sup>13</sup>

---

country, where the Buddha visited and received alms on the banks of the Anotatta lake was possibly Kurukshetra. Handa Devendra. *Sculptures of Haryana*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2006.

<sup>9</sup> A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, translated. *Bhagavadgita, - as it is*. Mumbai: Bhakti Vedanta Book Trust, 1986, second edition.

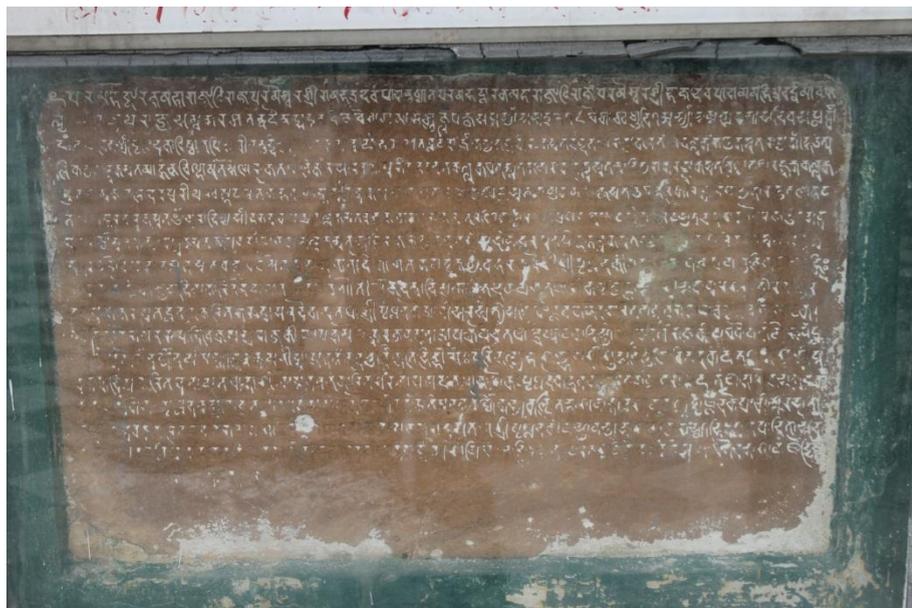
<sup>10</sup> Presently, there is famous Sarasvatī temple and next to it is an elaborate doorway which, as informed, was found from the mound nearby, besides twenty two stone images. This doorway which was also mentioned by Cunningham was later installed on the entrance of the door of this temple. Few years ago, after renovation of the temple, it was installed on a separate platform just outside the sanctum along with the foot impressions of the goddess called Sarasvatī pādūkā. There is a seated figure at the centre on the lintel of the doorway, probably of Sūrya-Nārāyaṇa as it depicts lower two hands of deity on his lap and the upper two holding a mace (?) and flower. However, these figures are worshipped as Gaṅgā, Yamunā and Sarasvatī as this place is believed to be the meeting spot of three holy rivers. The existence of this doorway further emphasises the existence of temple dedicated to Surya and Vishnu.

<sup>11</sup> K.M.Ganguly translated. *Mahabharata*, Vol III, Vanaparva, Tirthayatra Parva, section LXXXIII. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> *Ancient India* Vol X-XI (1995): 138-141.

<sup>13</sup> P.P.Mishra, *Cultural Contribution of India to South-East Asia: A case study of Laos*. Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 56 (1995).pp 870-876.

In 606 CE, Harshavardhan, the king of Thaneshwar (ancient name of Kurukshetra) belonging to the Pushyabhuti dynasty (who were sun-worshippers) ruled over this region. Huan Tsang, the famous Chinese traveller who visited during Harshavardhana's time described three Buddhist monasteries with more than 700 Hinayanists residing at Thaneshwar.<sup>14</sup> The remains of a Buddhist complex was revealed after excavation near Raja Harsh-ka-Tila, Thaneshwar were conducted. Similarly, the remains of one stupa, also mentioned by Huan Tsang exists near Kurukshetra University which till recently was lying in a neglected state.<sup>15</sup> By the eighth century CE, Haryana became the part of Gurjara-Pratihāra king Nāgabhatta's empire. Two inscriptions of this period have been found in Pehowa. The first one mentions the construction of three Viṣṇu temples and another one which is still installed in Garibnatha temple belonging to Raja Bhojadeva, 276 Harsha era (882 CE) recorded an agreement, where some horse dealers and the customers paid certain titles and taxes for the maintenance of these temples and sanctuaries. (Fig 1)



**Fig 1: Pehowa Inscription**

These inscriptions indicates that this region was included as part of Pratihāra king Bhoja's dominions.<sup>16</sup> Another inscription from the same place, recorded the construction of a Viṣṇu temple by some members of a Tomara family during the rule of king Mahendrapāla. During this period princes of this Tomara family served under the Pratihāras and initiated a line of powerful feudatories who became independent after the dismemberment of the Pratihāra

<sup>14</sup> Samuel Beal, translated. *SI-YU-KI Buddhist Records of the Western World*. Volume I, Book 4 (London: Trübner & Co. Ludgate Hill) 183.

<sup>15</sup> The PWD department has recently come up with the project to develop the mound and nearby area and a provision to install a statue of Buddha.

<sup>16</sup> *Epigraphia Indica* Vol. I: 186.

empire. One of the ruler Anangapāla Tomara, founded the city of Delhi and made it the capital of Haryana.<sup>17</sup> Throughout the period of Pratihāra rule, there was a rise in temple construction activities evident from recurrent discoveries of sculptures and other architectural fragments from different parts of the state. The findings of several unfinished sculptures and architectural pieces from the site of Pehowa, Thaneshwar indicates that this must have been an art-manufacturing site.<sup>18</sup>

In early medieval times, sometime around 1000 CE when this area was under Tomara rulers, Mahmud Ghaznavi invaded Haryana and plundered the huge wealth of Thaneshwar and desecrated the temple of Cakrasvāmī (lord of the discus, Viṣṇu). This event has been narrated by two medieval historians, Abu Rayhan Al Beruni (973-1048 CE) and Muhammad Kasim Ferishta (1560-1720 CE).<sup>19</sup> Both record how the life size bronze statue of the deity which was believed to be ‘as old as war of Kauravas and Pandavas’ was eventually carried to the city of Ghazna to be ‘broken and trodden under foot’. Similarly, Abul Fazl, another prominent medieval period historian in his work ‘*Akbarnamah*’ called the Brahma- sarovar, sacred tank at Kurukshetra as a ‘miniature sea’ after witnessing the swarm of people taking bath on the day of solar eclipse.<sup>20</sup> This same day and view was also narrated by a foreign traveller Francois Bernier who visited the lake during the time of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan.<sup>21</sup> **(Fig 2)**

---

<sup>17</sup> Buddha Prakash, “Glimpses of Ancient Haryana,” in *Haryana- Studies in History and Politics*, ed. J.N. SinghYadav (Gurgaon: Viros Prakashan,1976), 13.

<sup>18</sup> An unfinished doorway of this period was found placed at the entrance of a newly constructed temple.

<sup>19</sup> E.C.Sachau- *Al Beruni's India*, Vol. II- 1964, p.147. John Briggs, Translation- *History of Mohammedan Power in India, till year A.D.1612*, Pg- 357.

<sup>20</sup> M.Beveridge translated, *Akbarnamah*, Vol II, (Asiatic Society, 1907), pg 422.

<sup>21</sup> V.A.Smith, *Travels of Francois Bernier*; (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1916) pg. 357.



**Fig 2: Brahma Sarovar where pilgrims take holy dip on auspicious days**

During colonial times, the sanctity attached to the site of Kurukshetra was re-affirmed by Sir Alexander Cunningham, the first Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India, while he was touring North India. He mentioned that

Thanesar or Sthāneshwara was derived either from Sthāna or the abode of Īśvara or Mahādeva, or from the junction of his names of Sthāna and Īśvara. The area immediately around Thanesar, was known by the name of Kurukshetra. Kuru was said to have become an ascetic on the bank of the great holy lake to the south of the town. This lake was called by various names as Brahma-Sār, Rāma-Sar, or Vayu-Sar and Pavana Sār. There were around 360 holy places connected with the Kauravas and Pandavas in the area.<sup>22</sup>

Another surveyor who carried Cunningham's work further was Chas.J.Rodgers.<sup>23</sup> He travelled extensively in then Punjab area and mentioned the popular religious centres. In his Rodgers mentioned his critical views on Kurukshetra war

It seems most unlikely thing in the world that two small parties living in Hastinapur and Indrapat, places near which there are splendid plains for fighting, should be by mutual consent, take up their positions on a plain overgrown by dense jungle, many miles from their homes. The events of the war are of fabulous nature and are incredible. The places now recognised as being those on which events took place were assigned from what was seen in a

---

<sup>22</sup> Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India Report*, Vol II, 212- 213.

<sup>23</sup> Chas. Rodgers, Report on the Punjab circle of the Archaeological Survey for 1888-89, 14.

dream some two or three hundred years back. None of the antiquities at present visible in the plain, or in towns near it, are more than a thousand years old. There are but two Sanskrit inscriptions known and they give next to no light. Hence, what is now known as Kurukshetra helps us but little in expounding the mythical poem which so many regard as trustworthy history.

Rodgers however, did highlight the multi-religious character of Kurukshetra. He mentioned the Sunetsar tank of Kurukshetra with trees and temples around it and the temples having stone images in them. He described an old image of Buddha, which he gave a specific description of, placed under a tree on the bank of Sunetsar and which was later shifted to Lahore museum.<sup>24</sup>

This literature that have been referred to, clearly indicates how the site of Thaneswar and the revered pond in Kurukshetra, have been popular pilgrim centres much before these sites were associated with Kṛṣṇa and the *Mahābhārata*. Taking a bath in the holy pond of Brahma sarovar on the day of solar eclipse has always been believed to be equivalent to the merit that one attains after conducting a thousand ashwamedha yagyas or sacrificial rituals. This also emphasises the prevalence of Surya worship in this region. It can be conveniently asserted on the basis of the recovery of several Surya images, Surya Narayana sculptures (composite deity, representing both Surya and Viṣṇu), images of Revanta (son of Surya) and navgraha panels<sup>25</sup> from this area that there was a strong existence of Sūrya cult before Viṣṇu took over. What is intriguing is the manner in which the landscape and the narratives started shifting from Surya and Viṣṇu towards the omniscient Kṛṣṇa. Taking Shri Krishna museum as the entry point, the following section of the article will examine the spread of popular culture and role of state in not only furthering these accounts but making it a grand spectacle for the visitors.

### **Shri Krishna Museum, Kurukshetra**

The theme of Shri Krishna museum popular known as *Shri Krishna Sangrahalaya* revolves around the personality of Kṛṣṇa and the themes based on his life along with episodes from the *Mahābhārata*. It is one of a rare kind in the country and has a range of objects pertaining to

---

<sup>24</sup> Rodgers mentioned that Sunetsar might be a contraction of Sūryanavat, the holy tank in which the horse head of Dadhyanch was found, a popular legend among locals. Besides it, the lower half of the Buddhist image was also described by Rodgers. He mentioned that it was an image of standing Buddha. On either side of the legs were three images. Below are two central Nāgas with intertwining tails. On either side of the legs are three other Nāgas with hands clasped in devotion. Rodgers, *Report*, 8- 9.

<sup>25</sup> The deities associated with celestial nine planets with Surya at the centre.

Kṛṣṇa, *Mahābhārata* and Kurukshetra. The idea of establishing a museum based on the multifaceted personality of Kṛṣṇa was first conceived in 1987 by the Kurukshetra Development Board as a part of expanding the cultural activities. The chairman of the board at that time was Bharata Ratna Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda who gave a small hall for its initial setting. In 1991, it was shifted to its present building; and later, a new block was added to it in 1995. Presently, the museum consists of nine galleries in which nearly a thousand objects are on display which have been collected from different parts of the country as gifts, donations, purchase, explorations and during excavations. The museum narrates the life of Kṛṣṇa through the masterpieces in the collections. These depict his multiple roles as a beloved god, an avatāra of Viṣṇu, an able administrator, and a supreme lover. (Fig 3)



**Fig 3: Shri Krishna Museum, Kurukshetra**

As one proceeds towards the entrance, the sense one gets is the similar to what we feel while entering a temple to seek *darsan* of the lord.<sup>26</sup> Rather than showcasing history, which is what museums are commonly known to deliver, it reaffirms the faith of the devotee through artefacts. The exhibits of the museum displayed in the galleries are the exquisite wooden panels and carvings, ivory works, bronze artefacts, stone sculptures and palm-leaf manuscripts all connected to the theme of Kṛṣṇa. Besides these artefacts, the museum also

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion on concept of *darshan* see, Diana L.Eck, *Darśan, Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Publications, 1981).

boasts of a large collection of regional paintings. This place also showcases significant episodes of the *Mahābhārata* and *Bhāgvata Purāṇa* in the form of murals and tableaux of clay and papier-mâché. There are some replicas of popular pieces in stone as well as also replica of silver coins of Agathocles, an Indo-Greek king who ruled in parts of northern India in around c 190-180 BCE and issued coins depicting Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma-Saṅkarāna.

The museum has made a noteworthy effort in showcasing the archaeological history of Kurukshetra by exhibiting the ceramics in a chronological order. The archaeological remains consist of pottery and terracottas belonging to different periods excavated by the Archaeological Survey of India, State Archaeology Department, and Kurukshetra University along with a map of Haryana showing the archaeological sites. Besides all these, the institution has also brought out a number of publications for the visitors.<sup>27</sup> There are some rare findings, the museum claims, displayed there of the sunken city of 'Dwarka'. Photographs of ancient Dwarka, pottery, conches, bangles and a steatite seal are displayed in the archaeological gallery. This specific exhibit nurtures the popular legend that Dwarka is the kingdom of Lord Kṛṣṇa which was destroyed due to the curse of the mother of Kaurvas, Gāndhārī, and the whole city sunk in the sea. According to the authorities, initially the collection did not include stone or metal sculptures. The entire focus initially was on the 3-D tableaux and paintings on the themes of Kṛṣṇa and the *Mahābhārata*. However, it was later suggested by many scholars and tourists that museum should also have some stone sculptures to add to its esteem.

This persuaded the curator<sup>28</sup> and his colleagues to explore and collect some stone images from the Kurukshetra region. The fact that stone sculptures would not only add grandeur but also historicity to this place must have prompted the curator to work in this direction. During the intensive exploration of the pilgrimage sites of the Kurukshetra region, as stated by the museum authorities, thirty stone sculptures were collected. These images, broken and intact, were acquired by various methods. Either they were donated, found, excavated, or gifted. It was intriguing that individuals and communities gave away their 'masterpieces' and made a clear distinction between an image being gifted, or donated. This distinction has been

---

<sup>27</sup> 'Masterpieces from the Sri Krishna Museum Collection' catalogued by Rajesh Purohit, 'Stone Sculptures of the Kurukshetra Region' catalogued by Rajesh Purohit, *Krishna- The Enlightened One*, etc. to name a few. It also includes a major documentary on the religious heritage of Kurukshetra titled as '48 Kos Kurukshetra Bhumi ki Parikrama'.

<sup>28</sup> Rajesh Purohit, 'Stone Sculptures of Kurukshetra Region' (Kurukshetra: Kurukshetra Development Board, 2004) 2.

emphasised on basis of intentions, that for some people it was a charity to the newly established museum but for followers it was an offering to a scared shrine. Most of the sculptures which are exhibited were collected from Haryana only, primarily from Kurukshetra, Pehowa and Thaneshwar in Haryana.

The images showcase the growth and development of religious art in Kurukshetra over a period of time. The curator mentioned that

“deeply influenced by the Bhakti movement in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C., Kurukshetra like any other religious centre witnessed various architectural and sculptural activities manifested in image worship. Temples were constructed, sculptures on various cults got sculpted and religious tanks were excavated at various *tīrthas* of Kurukshetra. Most of those have been lost with the passage of time and a few have survived which are found today in the vicinity of Kurukshetra. Thirty sculptures have been collected from these sacred sites of Kurukshetra region. The whole range of exquisite stone sculptures includes various images of all the five cults viz. Gaṇapatya, Śakti, Śaiva, Saura and Vaiṣṇava. This vindicates that all the four cults of Brahmanic religion were in vogue in the ‘48 *kos* Kurukshetra region’. However, most of these sculptures are found in their mutilated condition. The region was predominantly a religious centre and a revered pilgrimage hence the sculptures recovered from the region mostly pertains to cults of Brahmanical religion.”<sup>29</sup>

Despite the curator’s emphasis on other cults which were predominant in Kurukshetra, there is a conscious attempt to display the stone sculptures in a fabricated religious environment that only revolves around Kṛṣṇa. The majority of stone images are of Viṣṇu as the Brahmanic traditions claims Kṛṣṇa to be the eighth avatāra of Viṣṇu and this connection needs to be justified and depicted here.

Without a sense of incongruity, the first image that is displayed on the ground floor as one enters, is of Jain *tīrthaṅkara* Ādinātha/Rṣabhānātha. When asked, the authorities mentioned that according to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Rṣabhānātha is an avatara of Viṣṇu, a great sage known for his learning and austerities. It was also suggested that India is named Bhāratavarṣa or Bhārata after the son of Rṣabhānāthā.<sup>30</sup> Since, both Ādinātha and Kṛṣṇa are believed to be avatāra of Viṣṇu, this Jaina sculpture was assigned an apt place in this sacred space.<sup>31</sup> Next to it, is placed an image of Gāndhāra Buddha giving a sermon surrounded by his disciples found from Jhajjar, Haryana. This image is also kept here due to this common belief which asserts that Buddha was the ninth avatāra of Viṣṇu. Both sculptures of Ādinātha and Gāndhāra

---

<sup>29</sup> Rajesh Purohit, *Stone Sculptures of Kurukshetra Region* (Haryana: Srikrishna Museum, Kurukshetra Development Board, 2004) 2-3.

<sup>30</sup> Umakant Shah, *Jaina Rupa Mandana: Jaina Iconography* (Abhinav Publications, 1987) 72.

<sup>31</sup> Another Jaina piece which is put on display in another showcase is a lower half of *tīrthaṅkar* Mallinātha brought from Mathura. It shows crossed leg deity with his emblem jar on the pedestal. No one knows the relevance of placing it here. My sense is that without giving much thought some of the original pieces and replicas were brought here from Mathura city which has close connections with Kṛṣṇa,

Buddha have completely shed their original form and now play a secondary role in the midst of the objects associated with Kṛṣṇa.(Fig 4 and 5).



**Fig:4 Buddha Giving Sermon**



**Fig 5: Tīrthaṅkara Ādinātha/Rṣabhnaṭha**

Among the prominent gods and goddesses of Hinduism, figures which are displayed are of Viṣṇu and his multiple avatāras followed by Umā-Maheśvara, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, to name a few. One of the image of Viṣṇu which was acquired from Gurgaon, Haryana shows two shells put on the eyes of deity. Possibly, this image was still under worship when collected by the museum authorities.<sup>32</sup> All the images of Kṛṣṇa- whether stone, wood or metal- were brought from the other states. Many originals and replicas were brought here from Mathura, so as to provide the equal sanctity to this place which the legendary city is already known for. **(Fig 6)**

---

<sup>32</sup> In a discussion with the staff, I was informed that while acquiring the sculptures from villages, the authorities prefer not to collect images which are installed in temples and are under worship. Usually, these sculptures are revered as local deities and taking these away would hurt the sentiments of villagers.



**Fig 6: Some of the artefacts and replicas from Mathura**

Mathura, is another city in northern India which is famous for its association with Kṛṣṇa. The popular legends claim it to be the birthplace of the deity. Since, early centuries of first millennium CE, the epigraphic records and textual sources indicate the significance of this deity in Mathura. There are also records of patronage to the temples of this god, called Mahâsthâna as early as first century BCE/CE.<sup>33</sup> Sometime around first century CE, this renowned historic city developed an art tradition famously called Mathura school of art. This school produced red sandstone images of major religious traditions of early India, namely Buddhist, Jaina and Hindu as also Nâga and Yakṣa traditions. From 4<sup>th</sup> century CE sculptures of Kṛṣṇa-Îla (stories of Kṛṣṇa ) were known in Mathura and the production continued till 11<sup>th</sup> century CE. However, even though textual sources acclaim this site as the birth place of Vâsudeva- Kṛṣṇa, there are lack of sculptures of the deity in comparison to Buddhist and Jaina images. Even the epigraphs recording donations in favour of the deity are meagre in number in comparison to other religious traditions. The spread of the cult of Kṛṣṇa and legends associated with it became widespread after the arrival of Gauda Brâhmins who migrated to Mathura from Bengal sometime around 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was largely due to the

<sup>33</sup> The Vâsudeva door-jamb inscription from Mora, dateable to first century BCE/first century CE records the gift of a gateway and a railing in the sanctuary of bhagvân, (god) Vâsudeva. It has been pointed out that this is the only inscription from Mathura which makes reference to Kṛṣṇa under the name bhagvân, Vâsudeva. Kanika Kishore Saxena, *Before Krishna*, (Delhi: Oxford University Publications, 2020) 171. For more details on religious landscape of Mathura from 3<sup>rd</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> century BCE, read Saxena, *Before Krishna*, 2020).

influence of Bhâgvata cult tradition that hymns and devotional songs dedicated to Kṛṣṇa by this class of Brahmins altered the religious landscape of Mathura in favour of the deity.<sup>34</sup> Similarly, from Kurukshetra, or rather from the entire state, there are very few independent stone images of Kṛṣṇa which have been reported so far.<sup>35</sup> Only two images of him were found during the fieldwork and both showed Kṛṣṇa along with Balarâma and Ekânaṃśa/Subhadrâ.<sup>36</sup> As mentioned before, most of the stone image which have been yielded from this district primarily are of Sûrya, Sûrya-Nârâyana or deities associated with cult of Sûrya such as Revânata. The excavations that took place near the Harsh-Ka-Tila revealed a large sized broken image of Sûrya which must be a part of a larger architectural piece.<sup>37</sup> (Fig 7)



**Fig 7: Surya image**

Besides this, images of Viṣṇu (mainly in his Varaha or boar form), Umā-Maheśvar, Gaṇeśa, Durgā, and Sivalingas have also been reported. It may be a probability that over a period of time, with the popularity of the *Mahābhārata*, the decisive character played by Kṛṣṇa in it

<sup>34</sup> I express my gratitude to Kanika Kishore Saxena for personal interaction and providing information on the changing landscape of Mathura.

<sup>35</sup> Handa has reported one image of Ekânaṃśa from Sanghel, Gurgaon, a fragmentary brick panel depicting demon Keśī attacking Kṛṣṇa and another panel showing a wrestling scene between Bhīma and Jarāsandha being watched by Kṛṣṇa from Agroha, an image of Veṅṇu Gopāla and a doubtful figure in a panel from Gujjar Kheri, Sonipat and a sandstone relief of Kṛṣṇa uplifting mount Govardhana from Fatehabad, now in Victoria and Albert Museum, London. See Handa, *The Sculptures from Haryana*, 114-117.

<sup>36</sup> One of the images is displayed in Kurukshetra museum and other one is in Gurukul museum, Jhajjar. There are also few small stone images of Murlī-dhar Kṛṣṇa (flute-player) are in State Museum, Chandigarh.

<sup>37</sup> It is now displayed in at site-museum at Sheikh Chilli complex, Kurukshetra.

and Kurukshetra already being a pilgrimage centre resulted in assimilation of all these factors in changing its religious cosmos Kurukshetra. There is no concrete historic evidence which may point out the extent of the spread of Kṛṣṇa cult in Kurukshetra. Eventually, the historicity and significance of the other cults started diminishing and was gradually overshadowed when Kṛṣṇa became popular with time.<sup>38</sup>

In order to under the nature of collection, I have discussed the details of stone images which are part of the collection of this museum, including their original location, time period and iconographical details in **table 1**. Even though the collection displays many stone sculptures acquired from various parts of the state, I will only mention the ones which have been collected from Kurukshetra district. Besides these, the image of Ādinātha and Gāndhāra Buddha have also been described in the table.

### **Glorified past in modern Re-presentations**

What kind of narrative, art and architecture dominates the region largely depends on the kind of audience that the particular place receive. The entire district of Kurukshetra presently speaks volumes about how ‘heritage’ is fabricated due to constant intervention from the state in order to promote religious tourism. Setting up Shri Krishna Museum is not the only example which furthers the narrative of Kṛṣṇa and his significant role in *Mahābhārata*. Most of the structures which existed since earlier periods or are being constructed in present times are also modified in a manner that repeats the same tale of Kṛṣṇa and his association with this holy place. In 2008, a humongous sized bronze chariot being pulled by four horses depicting Kṛṣṇa counselling a hesitant Arjuna was set up in Purushottam Bagh, next to Brahma sarovar. It was inaugurated by Smt. Sonia Gandhi.(**Fig 8**)

---

<sup>38</sup> Salila Kulshrestha also studied the images of Uma Mahesvara from South Bihar and highlighted the architectural context and ritual use of the images to create a historical narrative of some of the sites of Bihar. She pointed out how despite the presence of diverse faiths on a site evident from the discovery of religious icons, these sites assumed a monotheistic identity largely due to colonial intervention. Salila Kulshrestha, *From Temples to Museums*, (Delhi: Routledge Publications, 2018),.



**Fig 8: Bronze chariot showing Krishna giving sermon to Arjuna**

Similarly, In the beginning of the year 2018, the Kurukshetra Development Board proposed to set up murals around the Brahma Sarovar, recounting the episodes from *Mahābhārata*. Artists from Bengal who were proficient in this craft were especially recruited for this work. Needless to say, only those events were installed in the form of illustrations which had some affinity with Kurukshetra. More than one hundred forty murals depicting the selective noteworthy events of *Mahābhārata* along with the description engraved on marble slab have been put up on top of the boundary wall surrounding the northern side of the pond. Stories ranging from birth of *Prachi tirtha*, legend of king Kuru, composition of *Mahābhārata* by sage Ved Vyasa, to enthralling incidents during the great war, these murals certainly captivate the attention of pilgrims. This project which ended sometime in the month of March, 2019 was a part of the grand Gita Mahotsava which celebrated Kṛṣṇa and his teachings. (Fig 9 and 10).



**Fig 9 and 10: Murals set up around the northern side of Brahma Sarovar**

Following this, as a part of the same project, another life size image of Kṛṣṇa in cosmic form was installed in Jyoti Sâr. In November 2022, the festival was inaugurated by none another than the president of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu. Currently, a massive structure is under construction which will have eighteen storeys signifying, the eighteen days great war, eighteen chapters of *Mahābhārata* and eighteen puranas of Indian literature.

This form of heritage creation is not only confined to new structures but also to some earlier ones. For instance, a small dilapidated brick structure, exists near the pond and is famously refer to as Baba Khatu Shyam temple. Khatu Shyam, or Barbareek of *Mahābhārata*, is a deity who is revered as form of Krishna evident from the name Shyâm, which is another name of Kṛṣṇa. However, one can still notice the use of lakhauri bricks in this structure which

indicates its existence since medieval times. It was pointed out, that this was an Islamic structure, which probably was constructed near the pilgrimage site to collect taxes from Hindus who visited this sacred site on specific days.<sup>39</sup> This form of transformation and ‘fabrication’ of heritage (a phrase coined by David Lowenthal), incidentally is quite common in many other contexts. As stated by David Lowenthal

Celebrating some bits and forgetting others, heritage reshapes a past made easy to embrace. And just as heritage practitioners take pride in creating artifice, the public enjoys consuming it.<sup>40</sup>

It has been repeatedly asserted by the authorities that the entire city depicts the history, spirituality, art and heritage of our country and continuous construction of super-structures are constant reminders of the same. However, despite the presence of several faiths in the same vicinity, the history has been altered to pave way for a specific form heritage creation. Not only in the country, but in many places across globe, Kurukshetra has become synonym of Kṛṣṇa. It was rightly said ‘Heritage diverges from history not in being biased but in its view of bias. Historians aim to reduce bias; heritage sanctions and strengthens it.’<sup>41</sup> Even though, the evidence proves the historicity and influence of other cults and deities in not only India but in far flung areas as well, it is the spiritual presence of Kṛṣṇa which made him immensely popular and dominant over a period of time. Unlike other deities, Kṛṣṇa, has human traits which binds him with every individual who seek him as mentor and philosopher and these attributes made him singularly popular across the world.<sup>42</sup>

The attempts made by the state in promoting religious tourism is definitely worthy of approbation. For every tourist and devotee, witnessing these several colossal structures give them an opportunity to visualise the many distinctive attributes of Kṛṣṇa. But the larger question is whether this magnitude of promotion by the state is really required to draw devotees? The site of Kurukshetra has since time immemorial not only survived but thrived owing to the immense faith that devotees had. Whether it is ritual bathing on designated days in honour of solar deity, or visit to Sarasvatî tīrath for performance of rites for departed souls

---

<sup>39</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Rana, former-director, Shri Krishna Museum to give me valuable insights on not only the museum but religious landscape of Kurukshetra as well during our conversation.

<sup>40</sup> Lowenthal, David. *Fabricating Heritage*, History and Memory, Vol. 10, No.1 (Spring 1998), pp.5-24.

<sup>41</sup> Lowenthal, *Fabricating Heritage*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> ISCKON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), a Gaudiya Vaishanava Hindu religious organization founded in 1966 by A.C.Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in New York. It is largely based on Krishna worship and beliefs of Bhagavad Gita, the holy text of Hindus.

or various other sacred spots each recounting a spellbinding story leaving an impression which lasts for lifetime. Kurukshetra and Kṛṣṇa both have faced the vicissitudes of time and his worship prospered owing to people's faith. At the same time, however, it would be more authentic to also provide space and create a narrative around all those faiths which pre-existed or existed simultaneously here. After all, Kurukshetra is a multi-religious site, as its history and archaeology reveal.

### **Conclusion**

Many elements such as remembrance of a particular character or episode, value addition through recurrent conveyance of specific themes and furtherance of myths or legends through exaggeration tend to complicate our perception and reconstruction of the past. The site of Kurukshetra has been popular as the "land of Mahābhārata" or "land of origin of Bhagvadgītā", and its identity has been permanently fixed by constructing the Shri Kṛṣṇa museum and other structures based on various episodes of the epic which further reinforce this legend. Contradictory to the popular opinion, there are few stone images of Kṛṣṇa which have been reported so far from this district belonging to earlier times. The majority of sculptures which are displayed in the Sri Kṛṣṇa state museum are of Viṣṇu. The archaeological evidence has also suggested that this region was influenced by the five cults of the Brahmanical faith i.e. Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, Śakta, Gaṇapatya and Saura. Besides this, there are some Buddhist and Jaina stone images, and old archaeological sites that have been reported. This indicates the co-existence of different religious faiths. The popular narrative has invisibilized this fact. Instead, different religious elements have been incorporated to create and nurture one popular memory of a region by making the Kurukshetra as synonym of one supreme deity.

### **Stone Sculptures in possession of Shri Krishna Museum collected from Kurukshetra District**

**Table**

<b>Serial No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Original location</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Time period</b>	<b>Iconographical details</b>
1	Rṣabhanāth	Given by state archaeology, original	Sandstone	8-10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It is seated image of Ādināth or

		location unknown			Riṣabhanāth. The tīrthan̄kar is seated in meditative pose with both broken hands placed in his lap. There is a lotus halo behind his head. On the pedestal is the symbol of the Tīrthan̄kar, a seated bull. <sup>43</sup>
2	Gāndhāra Buddha	Jhajjar, Haryana	Chlorite Schist stone	1 <sup>st</sup> -2 <sup>nd</sup> century CE	The sculpture shows Buddha seated on a padmāsana giving sermon at the centre along with two bodhisattvas..
3	Ekanamśa <sup>44</sup>	Sanghel, Faridabad, Haryana	White-Spotted red Sandstone	1 <sup>st</sup> Century CE	It depicts the goddess along with Balrāma and Kṛṣṇa. All the three deities are standing in equipoise. The goddess right hand is in abhaya mudra. There is a canopy placed over her head. To her right is four handed Balarāma with mace and hala in hand. Kṛṣṇa is standing to the left in similar

<sup>43</sup> There is a five-line inscription in Sanskrit language and Nagari script which is carved on the right side of pedestal. It refers that this image of Rṣabhdeva was installed in the smavat 918, in the month of Phālguna, by the traders Jiula, Bansulā, Vatsarāja, Vādhulāha, Samudra, Umata, Rshidhara, Bhaskara, who were chiefs of the governing association. The sculpture was carved by Rajabhima. See, Agrawal, Jagannath. *Inscriptions of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kashmir and adjoining Hilly Tracts* (New Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2001).

<sup>44</sup> Ekanamśa is believed to be the daughter of Yaśoda and adopted sister of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa. She is known as Ekanamśa because she was born of one part (Eka-amśa) of Viṣṇu. In some parts of India she is associated with Subhadrā, the sister of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. Her earliest images were carved during the Kuśāṇa period and it is worth noting that only few sculptures of this period have so far been found from the Indian subcontinent.

					pose. left hand holds a nectar pot.
4	Vaiṣṇavī	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra, Haryana <sup>45</sup>	Sandstone		She seems to be one of the Mātrikās. The goddess is feeding a child lying next to her. Her right leg is in the hands of her attendant. In the background are visible seven other female figures. Below the bed on which she is laying down are four objects, one of which seems to be a conch.
5	Umā Maheśvar	Gumthala Gadu, Pehowa, Kurukshetra, Haryana	Sandstone	9-10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It shows four handed Śiva with Pārvatī in his lap, both seated on Nandī. Śiva is wearing Jaṭāmukuta, holding his trident in upper right hands and lower right hand is in varādamudrā. With his lower left hand he is holding the goddess. Pārvatī right hand is resting on Śiva's shoulder and is looking at the deity. In right hand she is holding an object.

<sup>45</sup> Donated by Sh. Ashish Sabharwal, Kurukshetra.

6	Śiva	Thaneshwar	Sandstone	9-10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	The image of Śiva is shown seated in lalitāsana and is holding trisūla with his two lower arms whereas his upper right and left hands hold some unidentified objects. Face is mutilated, Nandī is shown near his feet
8	Śiva on an image of Viṣṇu	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra, Haryana	Sandstone	10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It is a top left part of a larger architectural piece and shows four-handed Śiva holding trident and pot seated on Viṣṇu's cakra.
9	Pillar	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra, Haryana	Sandstone	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It is the left section of a pillar which shows elephant, vyāla and peacock from bottom to top. There are two figures, one kneeling and other standing on the other side of pillar
10	Umā-Maheśvar	Pehowa, Kurukshetra, Haryana	Sandstone	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	This large piece depicts the deities seated on Nandiā. Śiva is holding betel nuts to Pārvatī which he is holding in lower left hand. With his upper left hand he is touching Pārvatī's breast.

					His left leg is resting on a lotus and left leg is folded on which Pārvaṭī is sitting. An attendant is offering a bowl of sweet balls to Nandī, the bull. On the pedestal itself are Gaṇeśa on right side and Kārtikeya on a peacock on left side.
11	Durgā slaying demon	unknown	Sandstone	10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> century CE	The image shows the eight-armed goddess in her ferocious form killing Mahiṣāsura, the buffalo demon. She is holding her attributes, sword, Noose, discus, trident, conch, lotus, shield and bow. Her lion is depicted biting the demon. She is wearing an ornate crown, has calm expressions. She is three eyed, the third one carved vertically on her forehead.
12	Sūrya	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra	Reddish Sandstone	9 <sup>th</sup> -10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It is standing human figure with both hands and feet broken. He is shown wearing an elaborate jewelled crown and a necklace. He has arched

					eyebrows, almond shaped eyes and subtle smile.
13	Gaṇeśa	Pehowa, Kurukshetra, Haryana	Sandstone	9-10 <sup>th</sup> century CE	Gaṇeśa seated in Lalitāsana pose. It is a four handed image, but two of its hands broken. His upper right hand holds a lotus and lower left hand is holding a bowl of sweet balls. The trunk is moulded abnormally towards left. He wears a mukūṭa , a crown, and yajñopavīta, sacred thread worn on upper part of the body.
14	Gaṇeśa	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra	Sandstone	9 <sup>th</sup> century CE	The lower body of the deity is broken. He is shown wearing a crown and sacred thread around his body. His eyes are closed and the trunk unusually twisted to right instead of left.
15	Umā Maheśvar	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra, Haryana	Sandstone	10-11 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It is a seated image of Pārvatī and Śiva. The deity is holding trident in upper right hand and betel leaf in lower right hand offering it to the goddess. His right foot is placed on a lotus

					pedestal. Only the breasts of the goddess are visible, rest of the sculpture is broken.
16	Elephant with two attendants on either side	Not labelled	Sandstone		It shows an elephant standing in the middle with two attendants on either side. The elephant is wearing a crown, thus is quite possibly a royal elephant. <sup>46</sup>
17	Mother-Goddess/ Ambikā	Kurukshetra, Haryana	Reddish Sandstone	10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It shows a goddess with a child sitting on her lap on left side. Her arm is around the child and child's arm is around her neck. Heads of both mother and child are broken. There is a necklace visible around her neck. Both of them are seated on a lion. <sup>47</sup>
18	Umā Maheśvar	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra	Sandstone	10-11 <sup>th</sup> century CE	It is a badly mutilated seated image of Pārvatī and Śiva. On the either sides of the main image are two vyālas, a composite animal. The lower part of the sculpture shows Gaṇeśa and a

<sup>46</sup> It might be Airāvāt, vehicle of Indra being worshipped as it symbolizes Gaṇeśa himself.

<sup>47</sup> This is probably an image of Ambikā, a goddess commonly shown with children and is attendant deity of 22<sup>nd</sup> Tīrthaṅkar, Nemināth.

					lady holding a bowl.
19	Kubera	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra, Haryana	Sandstone	8 <sup>th</sup> -9 <sup>th</sup> century CE	The deity is seated in Lalitāsana , a sitting posture, and is holding money-bag in left hand and another object in right hand. He has a protruding belly which is partly covered with layers of cloth. On top right is a vidyādhara, attendants with garlands in hands.
23	Varāha	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra	Sandstone	8-9 <sup>th</sup> century	Carved in a niche, it shows Varāha, boar faced deity rescuing Bhūdevī, the earth goddess. His left leg is placed on a pedestal and the goddess is standing on it.
24	Gaṅga with Khatvang puruṣa	Thaneshwar, Kurukshetra	Sandstone	10 <sup>th</sup> -11 <sup>th</sup> century CE	An architectural piece showing Khaṅvang puruṣa and Gangā in tribhanga pose. Khaṅvang -puruṣa is bearing a stick with skull on its top. A crocodile is carved on the base of the sculpture which is commonly associated with Gangā as her vehicle.

26	Pillar	Without label	White spotted red sandstone		It shows a male standing figure. Over his head is a medallion which shows Buddhist scene depicting 'Māyā's Dream'. It shows a female lying on bed and an elephant coming towards her. <sup>48</sup>
27	Śankhapuruṣa and Gadādevī on a door jamb	Without label	Sandstone		It shows the human form of Gadādevī (female holding mace) and Śankhapuruṣa (male holding conch) at the bottom of jamb

#### Sculptures in Vault

1	Nemīnāth	Given by State Archaeological Department, Haryana
2	Hari-Pitāmah	Given by State Archaeological department, Haryana
3	Uma-Maheśvar	
4	Freize of the temple	Hat
5	Śeṣāyī Viṣṇu	
6	Gaṇeśa	
7	Miniature temple	
8	Makar-Mukha	

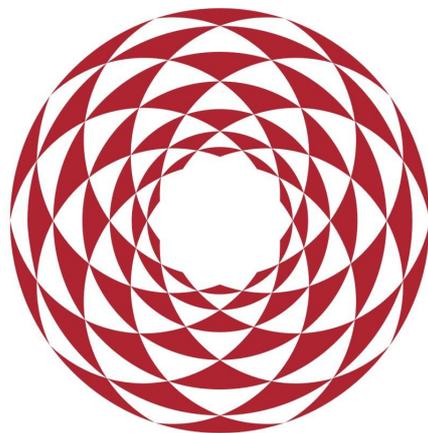
#### References

- *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I.
- *Ancient India*, Vol X-XI (1995).

<sup>48</sup> According to Buddhist legend, Mahā Māyā was the mother of Gautam Buddha and wife of Rājā Śuddhodana. Māyā dreamed that a white elephant with six tusks entered her right side, which was interpreted to mean that she had conceived a child who would become either a world ruler or a Buddha.

- Agrawal, Jagannath. *Inscriptions of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Kashmir and Adjoining Hilly Tracts*. Delhi: Indian Council of Historical Research, 2001.
- Banerjea, J.N. *The Development of Hindu Iconography*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1956, reprint 1985.
- Beal, Sameul. translated. *SI-YU-KI Buddhist Records of the Western World*. Volume I, Book 4 (London: Trübner & Co. Ludgate Hill) 183.
- Beveridge, M. translated, *Akbarnamah*, Vol II, (Asiatic Society, 1907).
- Bhattacharya, D.C. *Medieval Indian Sculpture*. In the government Museum and Art Gallery, Chandigarh: Chandigarh, 1981.
- Briggs, John. Translation- *History of Mohammeden Power in India, till year A.D.1612*, Pg-357.
- Buhler, G. "The Pehewa Inscription from the temple of Garibnath." *Epigraphic Indica* 1,(1907): 184-90.
- Buddha Prakash, "Glimpses of Ancient Haryana," in *Haryana- Studies in History and Politics*, ed. J.N. SinghYadav (Gurgaon: Viros Prakashan,1976), 13.
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K and sister Nivedita. *Myths of the Hindus and Buddhists*. Kessinger publishing, 2003. pp 324-30.
- Cunningham, Alexander. *Four Reports Made During the years 1862-63-64-65*. Archaeological Survey Report I. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, 1871.
- Diana L.Eck, *Darśan, Seeing the Divine Image in India* (Chambersburg, PA: Anima Publications, 1981).
- Eggling Julius, translated *Satapatha Brahmana*, Part V, Kanda 14, Ist Adhyaya, Ist Brahmana, 14:1:1:1, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1882.
- H.T.Francis translated. *The Jataka Tales Vol V. (Maha suttasoma)* edited by E.B.Cowell (Cambridge university Press,1895 reprint Delhi, 1994).
- Ganguly, K.M. translated. *Mahabharata*, Vol III, Vanaparva, Tīrthayatra Parva, section LXXXIII. (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 2012).
- Griffith T.H.Ralph, translated. *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, XX, Hymn 127, London, 1895-96.
- Handa, D. *Sculptures of Haryana*. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 2006.
- Hildebeitel,A. 2001. *Rethinking the Mahabharata: A Reader's Guide to the Education of the Dharma King*. Chicago: Chicago University Press. pp 18-20.

- Krishna, Brijesh. *The Art under Gurjara- Pratiharas*. New Delhi: Harman Publishing House, 1989.
- Kulshrestha, Salila. *From Temples to Museums: The Many Lives of Uma- Mahesvara Sculptures*. Delhi: Routledge Publications, 2018.
- Lahiri, N. "Archaeological Landscapes and Textual Images: A Study of Sacred Geography of Late Medieval Ballabgarh." *World Archaeology* 28, no.2 (1996): 244-264.
- Lowenthal, David. *Fabricating Heritage, History and Memory*, Vol. 10, No.1 (Spring 1998), pp.5-24.
- Mishra P.P, Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, Vol. 56 (1995).pp 870-876.
- Prabhupada, Bhaktivedanta. translated. *Bhagvadgita,- as it is*. Mumbai: Bhakti Vedanta Book Trust, 1986, second edition.
- Purohit Rajesh, *Stone Sculptures of Kurukshetra Region*. Haryana: Srikrishna Museum.
- Rao, Gopinatha T.N. *Elements of Hindu Iconography*. Madras: Law Printing House, 1914.
- Rodgers, Chas. Report on the Punjab circle of the Archaeological Survey for 1888-89, 14.
- Saxena, Kanika. *Before Krishna*. Delhi: Oxford University Publications, 2020.
- Shaw, Sarah. *The Jatakas: Birth Stories of Boddhisattva* (UK, Penguin Publishers).
- Shukla, S.P. "Relics of Ancient Art from Pehowa." *Punjab University Research. Bulletin (Arts), Chandigarh* XI, no. 1-2 (April-October 1980): 72-73.
- Singh, C.P. *Early Medieval Art of Haryana*. Delhi: Kaushal Book Depot, 2003.
- Singh, Kavita. "The Museum is National." *India International Centre Quarterly* 29. No.3/4 (2002-2003).
- Smith, V.A. *Travels of Francois Bernier*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1916).
- Walsh, Maurice translated. *The Long Discourses of the Buddha, Chapter XV, Mahanidanasutta*, (Wisdom Publications), 1996.
- Yadav, K.C. ed. *Haryana (Studies in History and Culture) Kurukshetra*, 1968.



**ASHOKA**  
UNIVERSITY