

**VESĀLI: EVIDENCES OF EARLY HISTORICAL
CITY IN RAKHINE REGION**

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YE` MYAT LWIN

**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY
UNIVERSITY OF YANGON**

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ABSTRACT

Vesāli was on the valley between Kaladan and Lemro Rivers. It was the second capital of Rakhine and political power moved from Daññavatī in sixth century AD. Although it grew up under Indian Civilization, architecture, city-plan, sculpture and coinage show the indigenous aspect of Southeast Asia. This study attempted to approach not only the general view of urbanization and state formation but also material cultures from sculptural, architectural, numismatic and epigraphic remains of Vesāli and also attempted to progress the comparative study on Vesāli with the contemporary neighborings, especially Pyu cities.

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INTRODUCTION

The Vesali Old City is located in the northern region of Rakhine. This cultural area is one of the coastal cultures of Southeast Asian countries. The coastal culture means the relationship among the different countries relying on the sea route for mercantile. With the purposes of trade aids in ancient time, the cultural exchanges was indirectly correlated each other especially in the important places of coastal regions. So the coastal regions had so many diversifications of cultural materials and traditional practices. Among them, the cradle land is some parts of India such as Tamilnadu, Amaravati and Sri lanker.

The Srivijaya Land of Sumatra Island and central Java Island had got the Indian cultural influences together with Buddhist culture. In the same way, the Malay Peninsula involved the Indian cultural dissemination through the sea route to reach the Far East regions such as the coastal regions of Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam and Tonkin.

Likewise, the Vesali Old City is very near the coastal regions of western gateway of Mainland Southeast Asia. Vesali Old City has about 48 miles distance to sea mouth through the waterways. There are many remains of removable and unremovable archaeological materials in this area. The context of Vesali culture is mostly resembled to both of Pyu in hinterland of Myanmar and the ancient culture of the eastern Bangladesh. The material cultural remains, which related to the Vesali can be found obviously in and around the entire regions of Rakhine.

In this study, author attended to give the context of westernmost culture of Mainland Southeast Asia in comparison with some other context of neighbouring cultures such as Pyu and the architectural context of Eastern Bangladesh. In Chapter I, the fundamental of historical background concerning the Vesali Old City was described with the reference of former scholars and legendary. The study on background knowledge can provide for the better interpretation of confused about the trading and royal administration pattern. Moreover, these numismatic evidences can be traced to have some information about the religious concept and the chronology between kings and their descendent.

In Chapter III, the architectural and iconographic evidences are emphasizing on the descriptive method. It can tell that the ancient architectural context and technological aspects. But the architectural remains are very rare in Vesali Old City because it needs the systematic excavations a lot. For the iconographic remains, there are dramatically found in many ways and displayed in museums. The diversifications of iconographic remains are useful to identify the original sources of Vesali visual culture. Moreover, intangible cultural factors can be analyzed from the visual object with many contexts. Therefore the study will be taken in the aspect of descriptive method because of some controversies which both of the affinity to the southeast Bengal and western Inland of Pyu. The contribution of Vesali study can be traced to the ancient civilized area of Mainland Southeast Asia and as one of the coastal cultural regions.

CHAPTER I

COMPREHENSIVE HISTORY OF ANCIENT VESĀLI

Location and Geography

Ancient Vesāli is situated at E 98 08' 377" and N 20 46' 417" and it lies 100 ft above sea level in about 6 miles to the north west of Mrauk Oo. At present, tSsshe two villages, Pauk Taw Byin (Thalawati), Wethali¹ village are inside the walled city.² It has on its western flank Rann Chaung, the tributary of the Kaladan and on its eastern side the ridge between Kaladan (Koladyne) and Lemro valley.³ The south and south west outside of city wall have Buyutmanyoo and Pipinyin villages. (Map)

The outer city wall is stretched irregular oval, nearly in rectangle shape. The western part of city wall is rectangular with convex line and rounded corner. But in Eastern part, there is not found the north east corner wall and south east is irregular because of its hilly features.

The present village of Wethali in northeastern part of city obscures the palace site rectangular shape inside the city walled area. In eastern part of city, higher level, there are abundance natural range, hill, present living village and

¹ This village is located over the Palace site of Vesāli. The village name "Wethali" is modern local version or pronunciation of Pali version Vesāli (Vaisali in Sanskrit). The city name Vesāli came from Rakhine traditional chronicles and local saying mentioned that ancient city of Vesāli is there. In other word, ancient city Vesāli is located in modern village Wethali. In this work, I will use the word "**Wethali**" is for the name of village and stream for text and Map. And the word **Vesāli** is for ancient city, period and kingdom.

² Kyi Khin, ဝေသာလီမြို့ဟောင်း အမှတ်(၆)ကုန်း၊ အမှတ်(၇)ကုန်း၊ အမှတ်(၈)ကုန်းများ တူးဖော်သုတေသနပြုမှုအစီရင်ခံစာ (*Excavation report on VSL-6, VSL-7, VSL-8 of Vesāli*), report of the Ministry of culture, 2004, p-3 (Here after cite as Kyi Khin, **VSL-6-7-8**)

³ Thin kyi, "Arakanese Capitals: A Preliminary Survey of their Geographical sitting", *JBRs*, LIII, ii, Dec. 1970, p-7(Here after cited as Thin Kyi, "Arakanese capital")

ancient ruin mounds. Sub-tributaries of Rann Chaung are passing through the western part of Vesāli. In the upland area the villages are enriched by the silt brought down by the streams and rain waters from the hills, while the plain land is fertile and the abundant rainfall allows even high land and sandy ground to yield good harvest. The lands in the delta and on the banks of the principal rivers are suitable for rice cultivation. The foot of the hill is better adopted for gardening and grazing and different types of crops grow there. In hilly regions, shifting cultivation is carried on with the help of rain water and irrigation is practiced in a small way in the dry season in the plains.¹

Geologically the whole tract of Rakhine is divisible into three distinct belts: Cretaceous calls Ma I group; the Eocene of lower Tertiary known as Negrais rocks and the Triassic beds (i.e. axial group). Rakhine is substantially rich in mineral resources, although its patrol, coal and oil are of inferior quality.²

Celts of the Neolithic Age are sometime found in the beds of streams and on hill sides cleared for Taung-Ya³ cultivation. These Celts are in the form of adze axes chipped out of chart, basalt and horn stone rocks which do not occur in this region.⁴ There are no evidences for Paleolithic Age of Rakhine through the Neolithic tools, which have been found in the entire Rakhine regions.

¹ Abdul Mabud Khan, ***The Maghs [Rakhine]: a Buddhist Community in Bangladesh***, revised PhD thesis. Dhaka, The University Press Ltd ,1999,pp-4-5 (Here after cited as Khan, ***Maghs***)

² Ibid, p-4

³ It means Burnt-cultivation on hill side which known as Jumma culture in hill of Eastern Bengal.

⁴ W.B. Tydd, ***Burma Gazetteer: Sandoway district***, Vol-A , Rangoon(Yangon), Government Printing and stationery, 1962, pp-16-17

Archaeological Survey at Vesāli

Although Rakhine State is situated between India and Myanmar, both Indologists and Myanmar scholars are still less interested. Most of the early historical evidences are of incidental finds and surface monuments are very rare. Although traditional Rakhine chronicles are largely mythical, it can give some traces for early history. Folk tales and handed speech can also help to reveal the ancient culture.

At the beginning of British rule, a number of scholar- administrators began to study its antiquities¹ Sir Arthur Phayre, a British commissioner which ruled Rakhine was collected antiquities of Myanmar and he wrote about the coins of Myanmar,² which mentioned the earliest interpretation about Chandra coin. In 1885, Dr Emil Forchhammer, a Swiss Pāli Scholar, undertook a survey of the sites of the old cities and major monument.³ In 1920, Charles Duroiselle visited to Rakhine and he also mentioned about Candra coin of Vesāli in “Report of Archaeology Survey at India”.⁴

And some antiquities were frequently uncovered from Vesāli. Rakhine scholars, especially U San Shwe Bu were also studied on history and antiquities. He found a bronze bell which can be datable of 7th century AD in Vesāli with two

¹ Gutman, *Burma's lost kingdoms: splendour of Arakan*, Bangkok, orchid press, 2001, p-4 (Here after cited as Gutman, *lost Kingdom*)

² Nyunt Han, ဝေသာလီမြို့ဟောင်းလေ့လာချက် (*A study on Vesāli old city*), paper read at the seminars of cultural committee, Research Center for Archaeological Studies, Yangon, 1986, p-5 (Here after cited as Nyunt Han, *study on Vesāli*)

³ Gutman, *lost kingdoms*, p-4

⁴ Nyunt Han, ဝေသာလီမြို့ဟောင်းတူးဖော်လေ့လာမှု (၁၉၈၀ ခုနှစ်မှ ၁၉၈၄ ခုနှစ်ထိ) (*preliminary report on the excavation at Vesāli (1980-1984)*), interim departmental report, Department of Archaeology, National Museum and Library, Yangon, 1984, p-5 (Here after cited as Nyunt Han, *excavation at Vesāli*)

lines of Sanskrit.¹ In 1924-25, Anandacandra inscription, three faces with scripts of different period and have stated the list of Kings of Vesāli. This inscription was deciphered by Dr John Stan during 1935 to 1942.²

Other attractable findings from Vesāli are inscription of Buddhist causation verse (Yedharma stanza) and donation records, Buddhist and Hindu sculptures and Stupas. But none antiquities concerned with systematic archaeological excavation.

In 1976, Dr P. Gutman published a thesis about the coin, sculpture, inscription and architecture of Vesāli and Daññavati. Rakhine scholars also wrote many articles about ancient history by using evidences from all over the Rakhine regions.

The first systematical excavation was done in 1980. During the season from 1980 to 2005, it has been excavated in ten sites at Vesāli.³ In 1979, U Myint Aung, officer of Archaeology Department, explored to the Vesāli and he excavated in 1980.

Etymology

In A.D 863, FAN CH'O, a Chinese officer wrote the MAN-SHU (Southern Barbarian) which mentioned about the kingdom of NAN-CHAO (Yunnan) for the Emperor I TSUNG. In the tenth sector of this text, there were mentioned about the neighboring countries of NAN-CHAO. it described as the city of Pyu kingdom

¹ Nyunt Han, *study on Vesāli* , p-5

² *ibid*,p-5

³ OoThein Tun, *ဝေသာလီမြို့ဟောင်းလေ့လာချက်(A study on Vesali old city)*,paper for post graduate diploma, Field School Archaeology,Pyay,2007,p-12 (Here after cited as Oo Thein Tun, *A study on Vesāli*)

was far 75 day stage to south of YUNG- CH'ANG, city of MAN(barbarian) and **SHÊ-LI** city was far 20day stage to west of the city of Pyu. U Yi Sein referred as **SHÊ-LI** was the Vesāli of Rakhine. But FAN CH'O misunderstood the Vesāli of Rakhine with Vesāli of india and he thought that the Pyu city lie east India.¹

In the first century AD, the Alexandria geographer Ptolemy knew Rakhine as Argyre, the land of silver which was visited by merchants from southern India. Ptolemy cited three cities in Argyre: Sambra a city; Sada a city, mouth of river Sados; Berabbba a mart, the mouth of river Temalo, Temala a city, the cape beyond it.² P.Gutman identified as Barakoura situated on the mouth of the Naff River, Sambra is possible at the mouth of Mayu River and Sada may be modern Thandwe (Sandoway), which has reasonable port.³

M.Mitchiner identified as the city of Sambra lay south of Kanafuli River in precursor of Chittagong tract; the city of Sada was the Vesāli of Rakhine and named after the ruling dynasty Candra, Barabobba was in Thandwe-Pathein region, the city of Temalo from the mouth of River Temalo (Ayeyarwady) is close to Thanlyin (Syrian).⁴

G.H.Luce, quoting Ptolemy description on the location of ancient Rakhine, said;

¹ Yi Sein, “မန်ရှူကျမ်းလာ ပျူနိုင်ငံ (Pyu kingdom in the references of MAN-SHU)” *ဦးရည်စိန်၏ လက်ရွေးစင်စာတန်းများ (Selected papers of U Yi Sein)*, Dept of Historical Research, Ministry of Culture, Yangon, 2007, pp-1-4

² Mitchiner, *The Land of Water: Coinage and History of Bangladesh and Later Arakan, Circa 300 BC to The Present Day*, London, Hawkin Publication, 2000, p-34 (Here after cited as Mitchiner, *land of water*)

³ Gutman, *Ancient Arakan: with special reference to its cultural history between the 5th and 11th centuries*, PhD thesis, Australian University, Combera, 1979, pp-52-68 (Here after cited as Gutman , *Ancient Arakan*)

⁴ Mitchiner, *land of water*, p-34

“Descending the coast south-eastwards from the mouth of the Ganges, he named first the Airrhadoi (with the port of Barakoura) [this was presumably in the Chittagong region]; then the country of Argyre [“Silver Land” i.e. Arakan] with [the town of] Sambra, Sada, Berabonna and Temala [which Gereni believed was Cape Negrais]; then a cape; then the cannibal of Besynga [though to be in the region of the mouth of the Irrawaddy River] in the Sarabak Gulf [most likely the gulf of Martaban]”¹

Yi Jing (Itsing), Chinese Buddhist pilgrim of the seventh century knew area or cultural sphere of Rakhine and East Bengal as Ali-ki-lo or, Ali-kio or Harikela. The fragmentary praśasti on the northern face of Shitthaung pillar, written in mid 11th century, mention Arekadesa, the land of Areka, which was probably the name of Arakan at the time. In the inscription of Bagan and Innwa (Ava), from 12th to 15th century, the country is referred to as Rakhuin/Rakhine.²

The period, which centered politically and culturally to city of Vesāli is called Vesāli period. In other word, the word Vesāli is not only name of city or political and cultural centre but it is also for the period, flourished the city and cultural sphere. However, there is no epigraphic or numismatic evidence about the name of city. The name came from Rakhine chronicles and literatures.

In Rakhine literature, it is mentioned as Vesāli other name of Vesāli is Kyok Lhe Kā: Mrui (the city of stone stair). Some Rakhine writers referred "**Ve**" as diverse "**Sāli**" as "plenty of Agricultural product", so **Vesāli** as "plenty of diverse

¹ N.F. Singer, *Vaishali and the Indianization of Arakan*, New Delhi, APH Publishing Corporation, 2008, p-3

² Gutman, *Ancient Arakan*, p-52

agricultural products”.¹ But it may be named after Indian city of Vaisali (Vesāli in Pāli), the present village of Basarh in Vaishali district, Bihar.

According to the Buddhist text, three wall were thrown up round the city at distance of a quarter of a yojana from each other, as the city was thus again and again made larger and still larger (*visalikata*), it come to be called Vesāli.² Vesāli of India derived its name from king Vishal of Mahabharata age. The city was also called Visala. Buddhaghosa 5th century Buddhist scholar mentioned it mean that extensive or *vishal*. The word Vesāli of Rakhine may be also derived from the Sanskrit word “*vishal*”. Vishal means great, grounder, magnificence, prominence, illustriousness and eminence. The meaning is also attributive to the property of being grand.³

Dating of Vesāli

Different Rakhine chronicles mention different date of foundation and decline of Vesāli. And also scholars made different suggestion based on distinct sources or evidences for the date of Vesāli. Dr E. H. Johnston assumed that Vesāli existed from 4th to 6th century AD based on Anandacandra inscription.⁴ U Nyunt Han mention that Vesāli period is to be 4th century AD to 9th century AD based on chronicles and Anandacandra inscription.⁵ His later opinion is mentioned in “Study on Vesāli Ancient City”, that Vesāli grew up between 5th

¹ RSPC, ရန်ပိုင်ပြည်နယ်ဖြစ်စဉ်သမိုင်း (*Rakhine State Gazetteers*), vol-V (historical section), Sittwe, RSPC compublished, 1984, p-42

² B.C. Law, *Ksatriya clan in Buddhist India*, Delhi, A.Sagar book house, 1993, p21

³ *Vishal* from www.wikipedia.com (5. 4.2011)

⁴ Than Tun, ခေတ်ဟောင်းမြန်မာရာဇဝင် (*History of Myanmar for ancient period*), Mahar Dagon Sarpay, 1969, pp-66-79 (Hereafter cited as ThanTun, *History of Myanmar*)

⁵ Nyunt Han, *excavation at Vesāli*, 1984, p-6

undecipherable name, which might be ruled at Daññavati, is mentioned. According to these inscriptions, this dynasty survived for 1060 years or 1016 years. The kings are:

1. Illegible condition
2. (Mahata?)
3. Purvartha
4. Satyayana
5. Bahisbali
6. Raghupati
7. Illegible condition
8. Candradaya
9. Annaveta
10. Illegible condition
11. Rimbhyappa
12. Kuverasmidevi
13. Omavirya
14. Jugna
15. Linki

In Anandacandra's Praśasti or royal inscription of AD 729, the founding of the city which may be Vesāli is mentioned as follow

:“Dvencandra namako dhimam, yo phut bhubrtampatin nrpaikottarasatam jitva
punyato bahu alina prakarakhatasamynktam nagara husanamikrtam Tena

nispadya nagaram svargga savndarya hasinam”¹

(Line- 19 and 20, Anandacandra inscription)

Pamela Gutman translated as follows:

“Dven Candra by name, who was a lord of kings”

“He (Dvencandra), strong of arm because righteous king, conquered 101

kings, built a city (which was) adorned by surrounding wall and a moat.

Having constructed, which laughed with heavenly beauty”²

After the Indo-mongoloid’s³ dynasty, the winner king Dvencandra of Iśa (Siva) lineage, erected the city together with city wall, and moat and founded the Chandra dynasty (lunar dynasty). (Anandacandra) Inscription mentioned that these were sixteen kings in this dynasty. Though and they ruled for 120 years, only the names of thirteen rulers is shown in inscription. It may be because another three kings was inconspicuous and only ruled for short live.

According to Anandacandra inscription⁴, thirteen king of this dynasty is as follows;

First Candra dynasty

1. Devacandra	55 years
2. Rajacandra	20 years
3. Kalacandra	9 years
4. Devacandra	22 years
5. Yajnacandra	7 years

¹ Aung, *Anandacandra*, pp-106-107

² Gutman, *Ancient Arakan*, 1979, p-68

³ S.K. Chatterji, *Kirata-Jani-Kṛti: The Indomongolide :Their Contribution to the History and Culture of India*, Calcutta(Kolkata), Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1951, pp-87-89

⁴ Aung, *Anandacandra*, 1975, pp-77-154

6. Candrabandhu	6 years
7. Bhumicandra	7 years
8. Bhuticandra	24 years
9. Niticandra	55 years
10. Viracandra	3 years
11. Priticandra	12 years
12. Prthivicandra	7 years
13. Dhriticandra	3 years

After the death of Dhriticandra, his successor Suriyacandra fled to Bengal and Mahavira of Purenपुर took power in Rakhine. Though there is no mention of the name of Suriyacandra in Anandacandra's inscription, a silver coin bearing his title has been found in Rakhine.¹

King of Purenपुर

While the Suriyacandra fled to Harikela, Mahavira became the king of Purenपुर and his successor ruled for 49 years in Rakhine. They are,

1. Mahavira	12
2. Vrayajap	12
3. Sevinren	12
4. Dharurasura	13

There is no still found coin and inscriptions of this dynasty. Mitchiner

¹ Vasant Chowdhury, "Harikela Coins_Some New Interpretations", *Indian Museum Bulletin*, Calcutta, Indian Museum Press, 1996, p-38 (Hereafter cited as Choudhury, "Harikela Coin ")

mentioned that Purenपुरa is Berabobba a mart (Thandwe-Pathain region) of Ptolemy descriptions.¹

Deva Family in Vesāli

According to Anandacandra inscription, after this dynasty, Vajrasakti (grandfather of Anandacandra) which belong to Deva lineage (Devanvayodbhava) was ruled the whole land, which may Vesāli, Harikela and Samatata Inscription mentioned that he was ruled the whole world or people (Pratipalya Jagatsarvam). But there have not been found of his coin. He was succeeded by Damavijaya, the king of Vesāli, Harikela and Samatata Dharmavijaya was extending his influence to Sylhet, India. His coins found at Sylhet from southern Tripura; Commila-Mainamati (Samatata) and Chittagaung tract (Harikela) of South east Bengal and both northern and southern Rakhine. These coin may be mint both Rakhine (Vesāli) and Chittagong tract (Harikela).²

He was succeeded by his son Narindravijaya and ruled for two years and nine months. After the reign of Narindravijaya, Dhammacandra, son of Vajrasakti was ruled. According to Anandacandra Praśasti, he belonged to the Isa lineage. He was ruled for sixteen years. After death of Dhamma candra, his Anandacandra became the king. He ordered to a Praśasti, which is called now Anandacandra inscription or western face of Shitthaung pillar inscription in ninth years of his reign.

¹ Mitchiner, *land of water*, p-34

² Mitchiner, *land of water*, pp-42-44

Vesāli kings had religious contact with Sri Lanka. Anandacandra sent the silk robe and an elephant for monks to land of Śilāmegha kings i.e. Sri Lanka. Many Buddhist monuments and icon were mostly advanced in the reign of Anandacandra.¹

Unfortunately, though the northern face of Shitthaung Pillar inscription may be a Praśasti of the Vesāli King in 11th century AD, it has been illegible. But some of the names from inscription could be deciphered by scholars. But, there deciphered titles of two kings with prefix Simgha and suffix Suracandra; Simgha Ganapati Suracandra and Simgha Vikrama Suracandra. Kyaw Min Htin assumed that they were successors of Suryacandra and they migrated from Harikela. Evidently, Vesāli was survived to 11th century. The fall of Vesāli at mid of 11th CE would be precipitated by the interruption of trading through the Bay of Bengal after Cola invasions and intrusion or incursion of population to Rakhine from east.

Context of Vesāli

The well known earliest historical period of Rakhine is Vesāli. It proceeded from Daññavati, a Protohistorical period and it was succeeded by Lemro valley cities. Vesāli is an area where influenced in paleography and art by East Bengal. Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Praśasti (Eulogy) and votive inscriptions appeared in Rakhine from 6th to 11th CE, their paleography indicating close link with east Bengal but also contact with Southeast Indian tradition centers. And also Vesāli shared with Śrīkṣetra a Viṣṇu cult and there are some similarities

¹ Aung, *Anandacandra*, p- 213

between its sculpture and architecture and that of Dvārāvātī and Pre-Angkorian art of Isanapur.¹

The relationship between Eastern India and Southeast Asia has been pointed out by F.J Richards thus:

“The eastern frontier is....difficult; true the Burmese and Shan have ravaged Assam and The Arakanese East Bengal; but flow of Indian influence is eastward, penetrating Indochina and isles as far as Borneo.”²

While the meeting point of Chinese and India culture are in Turkistan and North Annam³, those of Southeast Asia and India culture are in Assam, eastern Bengal and Arakan. Rakhine region played a pivotal role in exchange of cultures and religions between India and Southeast Asia. Rakhine connected by land and sea routes with East Bengal in west and with Myanmar proper in east, routes that served as ways of trades, cultures, religions. When its neighbors were weak, Rakhine was able to be expended its influence along the coast to the east, west, south.

The indigenous culture of Harikela and Samatata of southeast Bengal and Vesāli of Rakhine was absolutely similar in sculpture, epigraphy and coinage. The great cultures of north India such as Gupta, Pāla, Sena was influence over them. These indigenous cultures were existent under dynasties named Khadga, Rata, Deva, Akara and Candra. They minted coins described their title or name

¹ Gutman and Hudson, “ the archaeology of Burma(Myanmar) form the Neolithic to Pagan(Bagan)”, ***Southeast Asian from prehistory to history***, edt Ian Glover and Peter Bellwood, London, Routladge Curzon, 2004, pp-161-163

² Dani, ***Prehistory and Protohistory of Eastern India***, Calcutta (Kolkata), Firmak. L. Mkhopadhyay Press, 1960, p- 222

³ Ibid, p- 222

of kingdom. Candra dynasty ruled both of Rakhine and Southeast Bengal. They were powerful enough to militarily withstand the Pala Empire to the north-east. Evidence of Candras of Bengal is also able to help to reconstruct the culture and history of ancient Rakhine.

A hypothetical historical sequence constructed based on some scanty evidences by Vasant Chowdhury as follow:

“Suriya Chandra, after his brief rule in Arakan, around the middle of seventh century was defeated and or driven out, and went across the Naff River to Chittagong which was then called Harikela. It is not unfair to presume that the exiled ruler Surya Chandra was duly accompanied by his wise ministers and brave soldiers and also with personnel from the administration and treasury. He might have tried to get reinforcements there but the strong ruled of Vajrasakti prevented his returned to Arakan. And only after Surya Chandra's death his men might have settled down in Harikela territory.”¹

According to inscriptions of Candras, there were 7th king in their dynasty:

Name of Kings	Length of range	Date of accession (A.D)
(1) Purnacandra	?	?
(2) Suvarnacandra	?	?
(3) Trailokyacandra	20/29	.900
(4) Sricandra	55/46	920/925
(5) Kalyanacandra	25	975
(6) Ladahacandra	20	1000
(7) Govindacandra	30	1020

¹ Choudhury, “Harikela Coin, p-38

Thirteen copper plate grants of Candra have been recovered in Bangladesh; three from Charpatra Mura at Mainamati; other provenances include Dhaka and Sylhet.

According to copper plate inscription, the Candra family created a small kingdom in Rohitagiri (which may be Lalmai range, five mile west of Comilla). Puranacandra is first noted among Candra kings of Rohitagiri (Sanskrit: Red hill). His grandson Trailokyacandra established the Candra dynasty in the Harikela kingdom in eastern Bengal, centered at Devaparvata (near Mainamati, Comilla). In copper plate of Sricandra, Trailokyacandra carved out the expense of Gaudas (Pala).¹

Candra kingdom reached highest its power under Sricandra who was able to rule for at least 46 years. Candra copper plates mention that is command, Pala Empire and Kamboja of northern Bengal were fought. His empire encompassed the kingdom of Vanga and Samatata and he extended their rule to Sylhet. One of copper plate was found from Sylhet which recorded as śrihaṭṭa maṇḍala.² Sricandra moved the administrative centre of Candra kingdom to Vikrampur (near Munshiganj).

According to the copper plates, although Sricandra was a devout Buddhist and a patron of his faith, he was tolerant of other religious beliefs among his subjects, evidenced by his attempts to settle displaced Brahmins within his

¹ Benjamin J. Fleming, "New copperplate grant of Śrīcandra (no. 8) from Bangladesh", *Bulletin of SOAS*, 73, 2 (2010), University of Pennsylvania, School of Oriental and African Studies, 2010, 224–225 (www.sas.upenn.edu) (Hereafter cited as Fleming, "copperplate of Sricandra ")

² B.N. Mukherjee, "Original Territories of Harikela", *Journal of Dacca Museum*, vol-I, 1975, pp-115-119

empire in Sylhet.¹ It is comparable with description of Anandacandra inscription of Rakhine. Inscription mentions that, although Anandacandra was the devout Buddhist, he donated the land and slaves for Brahmin and established four Maṭha (monastery of Brahmin) and also renewed the old temples of gods (Deva Prasāda). Moreover, according to the two copper plates from Mainamati, Ladahacandra, the fourth Candra kings of Harikela kingdom, was a Buddhist and a renowned patron of Buddhism.²

The latest king of Candra dynasty, Govindacandra was probably ruled from A.D.1020 CE to 1049CE. During his early reign, Rajendra Cola I defeated to the kingdom. According to Tirumalai inscription of Rajendra Cola, he is identified as Govindacandra of Vangladesa. The noticeable one is that the title of Govindacandra is found at northern face of Shitthaung pillar inscription of 11th century. In early 1049CE, the Kalachury king, Karnadeva also launched an attack on Govindacandra (which may have been the downfall of the Candra dynasty of eastern Bengal. It may be that Candra dynasty was succeeded by Deva dynasty in Harikela kingdom.³

In coinage, the symbols and technique of minting of Candras of Harikela were similar completely with those of Rakhine. But, while Rakhine coins mention the title of issued kings, Harikela ones mention the name of Kingdom or capital (i.e. Harikela or Virak). Like the copper plate Praśasti of Candra of Harikela, it may also be inscribed in Rakhine. But only one praśasti copper plate had been

¹ Fleming, "copperplate of Sricandra "

² **Ruler of Candra dynasty** from www.wikipedia.com (15,4,2011)

³ **Chandra dynasty** from Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh www.Banglapedia.com/c_0124.htm

recovered and the name of kings from plate is illegible. This plate was found from brick mound of Vesāli before World War II and former finding was a number of copper plates, but only one plate could be preserved by Department of Archaeology.

CHAPTER II

EPIGRAPHIC AND NUMISMATIC EVIDENCES OF VESĀLI

The typology of coinage in Rakhine

There are two type of coinage in Rakhine based on their legends:

- (1) Symbolic coin and
- (2) Inscriptional coin.

The symbolic coins were concerned with ancient periods, i.e. Daññavaṭī and Vesāli. Inscriptional coins were belonged to three faces of Mrauk Oo Period. In this coins, there is no mentioned any symbol, but it inscribed the title of king in Bengali, Persian, and Rakhine. It may be for the purpose of paying grantee to coins and showing his authority.

A brief survey of symbolic coinage in Rakhine is best understood by treating it's under its various subdivisions: --

- (1) Form and fabric
- (2) Symbol
- (3) Coin legends,(their character)
- (4) Date
- (5) The title of king or kingdom etc.

Most abundance symbolic coins of Rakhine are belonged to the minting of Candra dynasty. It divided as Conch-Srivatsa/trident coins and Bull-trident coins by symbolism. The Conch-Srivatsa/trident coin may be concerned with earliest Candra kings; Dvencandra, Rajacandra, kālacandra and Devacandra. Bull-

temple/trisula coins of Devacandra were also found. Formerly known as the earliest inscribed coin are of Devacandra. But according to U Shwe Zan, the coin inscribed with the name of Rajacandra and Conch-Srivatsa/trident symbol have been found from the accidental finding of an association of Vesāli and Pyu coins in 1985, near Kharine village, Taunggut Township.¹

The list of coin of Vesāli and its context have been found from Rakhine are as follow:²

- (1) Non inscribed coin
- (2) Rajacandra
- (3) Devacandra
- (4) Yajñacandra
- (5) Candrabandhu
- (6) Niticandra
- (7) Viracandra
- (8) Priticandra
- (9) Prthvicandra
- (10) Suriyacandra
- (11) Dharmavijaya
- (12) Dharmacandra

¹ Shwe Zan, မြေကြီးကသက်သေတည်သရွေ့. ရခိုင်သမိုင်းအထောက်အထားများ(*The Provide Evidences from Ground*) ,Yangon, Shwe Min Thamee Sarpay, 2006, p-36

² (a) Aung Tun Tha, ရခိုင်ဒင်္ဂါးများသမိုင်း: (*History of Rakhine coins*),paper submitted for B.A degree in history, Yangon, Collage of Workers, p-8-11(Here after cited as Aung, *History of coin*)

(b) Than Tun, *Auspicious symbols and ancient coin of Myanmar*, Malaysia, AVAHOUSE SDN BHD, 2007 ,P-142-148 (Here after cited as Than Tun, *coin of Myanmar*)

(c) Mitchiner, *land of water*, p-34-37, p-44-46

(d) San Tha Aung, ရခိုင်ဒင်္ဂါးများ: (*Coinage of Rakhine*), Yangon, Daw Saw Saw Publication, 1979,pp-7-18, plates-1-17

- (13) Ānandacandra
- (14) Harikela
- (15) Lālītākara
- (16) Ramyākara or Dhammākara
- (17) Pradyumnakara
- (18) Annākara or Antākara
- (19) Dharmarajah
- (20) Śrī Simghagaṇḍacandra

Form and Fabric

All of Rakhine coins are rounded in shape. The symbolic coinage was found generally in four sizes: the full size coins have nearly 31mm in diameter and silver unit c. 7.6 gm in weight; second size have c. 3gm; the quarter size have nearly 19 mm and silver quarter unit (c. 1.9 gm)¹; and the smallest have (c. 0.96gm)². But most of coins have been reduced their weight and size because of damage.

Mitchiner have been quoted on denomination weighing of Candra coinage as:

“The Candras issued a substantial coinage of fairly uniform silver coins in the name of kings from Devacandra (c.433-55) to Dhriticanda (c.567-79). Throughout this period the silver unit was a denomination weighing 64 rattis (c. 7.6gm). Until the time of Niticandra (c. 499-544)the most popular denomination was a coin with fairly thick and compact fabric weighing 24

¹Mitchner, *land of water* ,pp-34-37

² Aung, *History of coin*,p-14

rattis(c. 2.85gm). Niticandra reformed the low denomination coinage and thenceforth the popular low denomination was a coin with broad and thin fabric weighing 16 rattis (c. 1.9 gm) the commonest issues are those of Niticandra and Priticandra: thus spanning the period c. AD 499 to 567.”¹

Through out the period of Candra Dynasty, silver purity of coinage was very close to 99%. The mean silver purity is above 98% (98.24%). Other chemical composition of this silver coins are gold, copper and also small amount of lead in some coin.² A specimen of gold coin of Priticandra also found from Vesāli.³ Dharmavijaya's pure silver coinage followed to Candra and fabric denomination may be full silver unit (64 rattis). A specimen from Rakhine is 30mm and 7.83gm.⁴ Dharmavijaya coinage followed by Harikela and Akāra coinages. Akāra coins are also full size (64 ratti) and nearly 30 mm. Harikela coin were varied from 7.6 gm to 1.9 gm. In early Harikela coinage, the mean silver purity is reduced to 96.92% and the mean gold content is 0.32%.⁵ In later, the mean silver purity is 93.79% and the mean gold content is 0.36%.⁶

Symbol and Coin legend

According to Pamela Gutman, the symbolic design of Candra Coin in observed is dynastic emblem and those of reverse are emblem of fertility and

¹ Mtchiner, *land of water*, ,p-34

² Ibid ,p-35

³ Than Tun, *coin of Myanmar* ,P-142

⁴ Mtchiner, *land of water*, ,p-44

⁵ Ibid,p-65

⁶ Ibid ,p-73

prosperity.¹ The first type which may be earlier and seen the more indigenous features of Southeast Asian coinage is the Conch-Srivatsa/trident type. The observe design of this type, within a circle surrounded by pallets, a conch with a tail is surrounded by a sequence of pallets. In inscribed coin, Nagari scripts are in each side of the tail below of conch. In reverse side, a trident which may be Srivatsa with two flora in centre; above, crescent moon in left and the disc of sun in right; below, a row of pallets; border, linear circle with sequences of pellets outside and inside. Central symbol is look like Srivatsa but close to trisula. Central spear is protruded to top and other two is curve to insides. The floral is fled to below from these two.

The influenced type of Candra coinage is Bull-trident type. In observe side, general design is humped bull seated with garland around neck; above, name of issued king; border, linear circle with row of pellets outside. Some coins do not mention the garland of bull. In reverse side, central symbol is trisula symbol with flora (axial pole *yupa* in temple: ornaments at sides²); above, crescent moon and the dick of sun; row of pallets; border, linear circle with row of pellets outside.

According to A.K. Coomaraswamy, in early coinages, the commonest symbols are the bull, *caitya-vṛṣa* (railed scared tree), mountain with one or several peaks (so called *caitya* of numismatic), river, solar symbols, *nandi-pada*

¹ Gutman, *lost kingdom*, ,p-46

² Mitchiner, *land of water*,p-35

(circle surmounted by stem less trident), *trisula* (trident part of last without circle), swastika, lotus, bow and arrow.¹

The symbols of Srivatsa, Sun, moon and row of pellets (which may be symbol of water or ocean) can be referred probably as ancient cosmological universal. Srivatsa may be mean holy place or heaven. And it is also relative with four or five elements (mahabhuta), i.e. earth, water, air, fire and space or ether.² Other probable concept is that these symbols are uncombined feature of nandi-pada from Sanchi stupa which is mean Triratana, Buddhist trinity, perhaps after pattern of the Hindu triad.³ Surrounded pellets (*Bindu*) may be for strength of coin. If it was a symbol, it may be concerned with the constellation or *Nakṣatras* which are called the Lunar Mansions.⁴

The most favorite symbols of Southeast India and Rakhine coinage, humped bull seated in one side and, circle, crescent, trident and row of pellets on other side, were found in Candra coins of Rakhine, Akāra and Giri Coins of Southern Bangladesh, Harikela (also read as Patikera or Yarikriya) Coin and bracteates of eastern Bangladesh, Viraka or Piraka coins of southern Tripura, Dharmavijaya coins of Rakhine and Bangladesh.

Circle or double circle and crescent represent as the Sun and Moon. A row of pellets represent as water or ocean while the wavy lines or fishes or three

¹ Coomaraswamy, *The origin of Buddha image*, New Delhi, Mushiram Manoharlal publishers Pvt.Ltd, 2001,p-7 (Here after cited as Coomaraswamy ,*Buddha image*)

² De ,Gokuldas, *Significance and importance of jatakas*, Calcutta university press, Culcutta (Kolkata), 1951, pp-170-177

³ Ibid,pp-170-177

⁴ Bhattacharyya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Culcutta(Kolkata), K.L Mukhopadhyay, 1958,p-381(Hereafter cited as Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist iconography*)

dots¹ are use as the water symbol. The trident is look like trisula. Some assumed that the trident and bull is of trisula and *nandi* of Hindu god Siva.

According to Mitchiner, the design evolved through the course of Candra coinage from early cosmological temple design (srivatsa). The cosmological symbolism was retained but the general symbolism of the world temple became the specifically Buddhist symbolism of three jewels. The temple (srivatsa) design evolved into trisula design - the prongs of trisula representing the three jewels, sun and moon is of Heaven and row of pellets is of Primordial waters.²

The reason for using bull and trisula in Candra coinage, is might be concerned with their lineage. According to Anandacandra Inscription, Candra family belonged to Īśānvaya, lineage of Īśā or Īśāna³. The name of Īśāna is found as a deity of Mahāyāna Buddhism and Hinduism. Īśāna of Vajrayāna cult of Buddhist pantheon is the fifth of Dikpāla or Lords of Eight Quarters, the embodiments of the four principal direction and the four intermediated corners.

B. Bhattacharyya quoted and translated about the Īśāna from Niṣpannagavali:

“The fifth in the series of gods of direction is Īśāna the Lord of the Īśāna corner, and his form is described in the following word: _

¹ Than Tun, ***coin of Myanmar***, pp-78-84

² Mitchiner, ***land of water***, p-36

³ Formerly, scholars interpreted Īśānvaya as lineage of Īśā, and Īśā is referred as Siva. These two words, Īśā and Īśāna, are synonyms of Īśvara meaning “Lord” or “Supreme”. While the Īśā is the ruling goodness or an alternative word of goddess Kālī, the Īśāna is a form of Siva and Lord of North-East direction which hold trisula and ride bull in Hindu mythology. And also, this god is a deity of Mahayanist Pantheon. Thus, my recommended idea is that the name of lineage of Candra family was relative with the god Īśāna cult because it matches with symbolism of Candra.

Ref: www.wikipedia.com, (15,4,2011)

“In the Īśāna corner there is Īśāna riding on a bull. He is white in color and holds in his two hands the Trisūla (trident) and the Kapala (skull cup). On his matted hair appears the half moon, on his body a scared thread of serpent and”¹

The ornaments of this god are match with symbol of Candra coins. In other word, the symbol of bull and trisula, vehicle and weapon of the lineage god were stamped in Candra Coin.

In the Hindu Mythology, Īśāna is one of the eight guardian deities of universe. These deities held prominent position in Vedic Period long before Siva and Vishnu become supreme. Īśāna is the lord of the north-east region of the Universe. Here, the noticeable one is that Rakhine and Bengal lay at the North-east part of Indian sub-continent. And also, according to Hindu iconography and mythology, Īśāna is the same as Mahādeva or Siva; there should be crescent Moon on his head dress; he may be seated either on a *padmāsana* or better upon a white bull; his hand must carry a trisula and *kapāla*.²

For symbolic themes, the three prongs of trisula also represent the various triplicities in Shaivism (Shiva worship), including the three acts of Maheśamurti, the fully manifested Supreme Siva: creation (*śṛishti*), protection (*sthiti*), reabsorption or destruction (*laya*).³ The three also represent the three Shaktis

¹ Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist iconography*,

² Gopinatha, *Element of Hindu Iconography*, vol-II, part-II, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass Publishers Private Ltd,1997,pp-375-378 (Hereafter cited as Gopinatha, *Hindu iconography*)

³ Gopinatha, *Hindu iconography*,pp-368,379

(powers): will, action, and wisdom. The motif of trisula is referred as the Triratana, three gems or Buddhist trinity; Buddha, Dhamma and Saṃga.¹

The symbol of bull standing before a symbol on the earliest coins of the Arjunayanas and the Yaudheyas may very well represent the bull before yupa i.e. (sacrificial post). The bull was also a characteristic device of monetary issue of Ayodhya. This symbol is very common on Kausambi coins and also on a few specimens of Mathura. Bull and elephant together have conspicuous symbols on Indian coinage. In fact, these two animals dominated the ancient Indian art. There are a number of coins having Mahavṛsa, Vṛsadhvaja or Vṛsavahana (one whose mount in bull). In this connection it may be noted that the humped Indian bull on Greco- Indian coins issued from the mint of Puskalavati has been identified as the emblem of Siva.²

Animal motifs were used as the dynastic emblem or cognizance in dynasties of Deccan and south India like Candara of Rakhine. South Indian coins are generally identified on the basis of the dynastic emblem or cognizance. The motif of bull was given as the emblem of some of the principal dynasties of Deccan and South India: Rashtrakutas, Ganga and Pallava (South Deccan), while the emblem of Chalukya was Boar, those of Pandya (South and South-East Tamilnadu) was fish and that of Chola (Eastern Tamilnadu) was tiger. The fantasy and fascination of Indian mind for different varieties of animals make the

¹ *Trisula* from www.symbolicdictionary.com at 15th April 2011

² Jayanti Rath, "The Animal Motifs on Indian Coin(Ancient and Mediaeval Period)", *OHRJ*, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, unknown date, pp-57-58 (Hereafter cited as Jayanti, "Animal motif")

coins of India highly kaleidoscopic.¹

In Sanskrit, a bull is called "*vrisha*", which has a connotation - that of righteousness or Dharma. The cult of bull is of bull Nandi, Shiva's primary vehicle and is the principal *gana* (follower) of Shiva.² From Vesāli excavation, there were uncovered a stone sculpture of bull which may concerned with the cult of Nandi. The white color of the bull also symbolizes purity and justice.

Epigraphic Evidences of Vesāli

The inscriptions and coins are most important to reconstruct the ancient Rakhine history and culture because other ancient cultural remain had been collapsed. To study the epigraphy of Rakhine, there are some categories: material, size, script, era, style and matter, emblem or seal, etc. All of inscriptions which found in Rakhine were concerned with religious offerings. About fifty Sanskrit and Pāli inscription written in Gupta, Devanagari and Proto-Bengali Scripts between the period of fifth and tenth centuries CE were found in Rakhine. While the inscriptions of a Tibeto-Burman Language, so called Pyus were found in contemporary city Śrīkṣetra, there is no found in Rakhine during the first millennium AD were inscribed in vernacular or local languages. All were written in Classical languages of Sanskrit or Pāli.³

¹ Jayanti, "Animal motif", p-60

² **Nandi** from www.wikipedia.com at 25th April 2011

³ Kyaw Min Htin," Early Buddhism in Myanmar: *Ye Dhammā* inscriptions from Arakan(Rakhine)", **Early Interactions between South and Southeast Asia: Reflection of Cross Cultural Exchange**, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, p-381 (Hereafter cited as K M Htin, "Early Buddhism ")

The scripts using in first millennium AD of Rakhine had the characters like those of their eastern neighboring cities of Bangladesh, Tripura, west Bengal and Orissa. The early inscriptions of Vesāli during the fifth and sixth CE were characterized in eastern varieties of Northern Indian Gupta script which derived from North Indian varieties of Brahmi and Kushan (kuṣāṇa) Scripts. In the later-half of 7th century AD, this Northeastern Indian Script appeared a marked change leading up to the birth of Proto-Bengali Script.¹ From this onward, during the 7th - 11th centuries, this variety of script was developed as the proto-Bengali (also called Northern Nagari²).³ The eastern sub-division of Northeastern Indian Script developed separately and becomes the Bengali Script, of the 11th and 12th century.⁴ However, none of Bengali Epigraphs have been traced for the times before 15th century in Rakhine.⁵

Only two specimen of inscription in South Indian Scripts had found from

¹ R.D Banerji, ***The Origin of Bengali script***, Calcutta(Kolkata), Calcutta University Press, 1919, p-42 (Hereafter cited as Banerji, ***Origin of Bengali script***)

² The term “proto-Bengali” has been employed for a wide range of scripts, sometimes incorrectly, but it is most appropriate for those from the general time-frame of inscriptions of this period.

. Fleming, “copperplate of Śrīcandra”, p- 224–225

³ (a) S.N. Chakravarti, “Development of the Bengali Alphabet from the Fifth Century A.D. to the End of Muhammadan (Islamic) Rule”, ***Journal Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal***, vol-IV, 1938, pp-360-361

(b) Banerji, ***Origin of Bengali script***, p-42

⁴ Ibid, p-42

⁵ The Bengali language and script were used in the trilingual coinage of Mrauk Oo period of 15th-17th CE. The trilingual coins of Rakhine kings bear the three languages: Rakhine (Arakanese), Bengali and Persian. Evidently, Bengali poems also appeared under the Mrauk Oo rulers.

Rakhine; one¹ was found from Thandwe, Southern Rakhine and another was from Mrauk Oo. The language of Thandwe inscription might be Pyu and characters are similar with the 7th century Pyu Trisul scripts, derived from Kadamba Script belonging to Telugu- Kanati group of Southern Indian Scripts.² The next inscription was found from Wunditaung, near Mrauk Oo. It is written in Pāli and characters are remarkable similar to Pāli inscriptions of Śrīkṣetra and is also close with 6th century of Java, Funan, and Dvārāvati.³ These scripts derived from 5th or 7th centuries AD Kadamba script of Southeastern India.

Stone is common material for the inscriptions of Rakhine. The inscriptions of Vesāli period were written on stone miniature stupas⁴, stone pedestals or top of Images and stone slabs or pillars. The inscribed bronze bells and bronze images with inscribed pedestal of Vesāli period were also found in Rakhine. The inscription of *Yedharma* verse on brick or terracotta tablets was also recovered from Thandwe. It may be that many copper plate Eulogies were printed in

¹ This inscription is laying at the monastery mound of Tone-daw village, Bazunphay village tract, 30 miles south to Thandwe. The condition of inscription is still well now. But it is gradually lead to illegible because of the erosion of rain water. This inscription is might be concern with the ancient trading groups of Śrīkṣetra. I heard that there is a recently used raw pass way from this region to the east of Rakhine Yoma, using to carry the cattle for trading. However, there is also remarkable that Rakhine histories mentioned about the various attack to southern Rakhine by Pyu.

² (a) Gutman, ***Ancient Arakan***, p-114

(b) U Mya, မြန်မာအက္ခရာထုပ္ပတ္တိ (***Biography of Myanmar Script***), Yangon, Sar pay Beit Man, 1972, p-39, p-42-43

³ Gutman, ***Ancient Arakan***, p-114

⁴ Miniature stupas are also known as votive stupa. The stone miniature stupas of Rakhine are approximately four feet high. Unlike the terracotta votive tablets, stone ones of Rakhine are full reliefs. And also they are very outsized than Bronze ones. The similar type and size can be seen in the *Stūpa-Caityagriha* (Ceti- stupa complexes) of Udyagiri, Jaipur, and Orissa. In the Caityagriha, various sizes of stupas are complex. Though some are huge, miniature stupas which are close with those of Rakhine in size and appearance are abundantly. (Ref: photo catalogue of Orissa archaeological sites from Indira Gandhi National Centre) www.ignc.gov.in

Candra times, only one of copper plate had been recovered. None of inscribed date from epigraphs of Vesāli can be traced. Unfortunately, though the issuing date or time and place in the Praśastis of Candra kings, they had been illegible. To be datable the inscriptions of Vesāli are absolutely depended on the comparative study with Indian scripts.

The epigraphs of Vesāli Period can be grouped into four classes by their style and matter:

- (1) Buddhist text, especially Buddhist credo initializing with *Yedharma hetu*
- (2) Donatives
- (3) Mixed: *Yedharma* verse and Donatives
- (4) Eulogies or Praśasti¹

The Buddhist texts which found in Rakhine were mostly concerned with the thematic phrases of Buddhist causation. Uniquely the scripts used for these Buddhist texts are abundantly found as Sanskrit and Hybrid Sanskrit². The distinctive evidences of Buddhist text is the context of *Yedharma* verse. This verse is one of the most outstanding well known texts in Buddhist Literatures. In Myanmar this context can be found as the Pāli text in different from those of Rakhine. As for the later aspect of material culture concerning this context in Myanmar, most of the remains are votive tablets with Old Mon/Myanmar scripts and Nagari script. The older phase of *Yedharma* inscriptions were found abundantly in Rakhine and inscribed with Gupta or Eastern Nagari scripts. For the inland Myanmar, some specimen of the Sanskrit *Yedharma* verse with

¹ Inscription that eulogized or praised royalty

² It means that the compromise between Pāli and Sanskrit. Sometime it was almost Pāli.

Northern Gupta characters of about 7th century had been found from Śrīkṣetra and also Pāli verse with Southern Indian characters can be seen at the Pāli texts of Gold plates from Maunggan mound, Śrīkṣetra.¹ The inscribed terracotta tablets were also used to mention the *Yedharma* verse in Sanskrit or sometime Hybrid Sanskrit or Pāli with character of mediaeval Nagari or sometime Proto-Bengali of 9th to 13th century.² According to languages and scripts, there is no doubt that inscribing the *Yedharma* verse of both Pyu and Rakhine was concerning with the devotion of Northern Indian tradition. This might be the early phase of Buddhist texts in Myanmar and the western part of Southeast Asia. This text can only be declared to remind the Buddhist teaching and Buddhist cultural achievement because of the usage “*Vocare*”, “*Vadatha*” in inscription which have *Yedharma* verse. “*Vocare*” means that the order for practicing the Buddha causation.³ “*Vadatha*” means that the order for reciting or reading the Buddha causation.⁴ This text of Sanskrit can be shown as follows:

“Ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetum tesām tathāgataḥ hyavadat tesām ca
yo nirodha evam vādī mahāśramanah”⁵

¹(a) Sein Maung Oo, “သရေခေတ္တရာမြို့ဟောင်း (Ancient city of Śrīkṣetra)”, *ရှေးဟောင်းမြို့နယ်မြို့တော်များ (Ancient cities of Myanmar)*, Yangon, Ministry of Information, 1993, p-128-135

(b) Sein Maung Oo, “သရေခေတ္တရာမြို့ဟောင်း (Ancient city of Śrīkṣetra)”, *တက္ကသိုလ်ပညာပဒေသာစာစောင် (University Journal)*, part-1, vol-iii, 1968, p-177-181

(c) Nihar-Ranjan Ray, *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma (Myanmar)*, Rangoon (Yangon), Buddha Sāsāna Council press, p-20, p-31-32

² Ibid-p-31-32

³ Ashin Kosalla, *ရခိုင်စာပေခရီး (Travel to Rakhine Literature)*, Yangon, Rakhine Thargyi Press, 1998, p-71

⁴ Ibid, p-89

⁵ (a) **Buddhist Causation** from <http://www.visiblemantra.org/index.html> (15th April 2011)

(b) D. C. Sircar, “No. 11_ Inscriptions of Chandras of Arakan (Rakhine)”, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXXII, Calcutta (Kolkata), Gov of India Press, 1962, p-108 (Hereafter cited as Sircar, *Inscriptions of Chandras*)

(c) K M Htin, *Early Buddhism*, p-382

It means that as follows:

“The Sentient Being (*par excellence*, i.e. the Buddha) spoke of the cause of the conditions arising from a cause. The Great Ascetic (i.e. the Buddha) also spoke about their destruction”¹

There are 22 *Yedharma* Verse Inscriptions of Rakhine during first millennium AD.²

The second group of Rakhine inscriptions is donatives. For instance, the Viracandra inscription shows his donation ceremony in details. This inscription can be studied about the donation ceremony of the ancient Rakhine kings. In this inscription, it was described as the donatives such as a hundred Buddha-stupas, the expenditure of his own money and the sovereignty through righteousness.³

Third group of Rakhine inscriptions mentions the mixed with *Yedharma* verse and donatives. Commonly the *Yedharma* verse was described on the upper lines and the donatives was on the lower line in inscribing. For instance, these inscriptions can be shown as Nga-Lun-Maw Inscription discovered in Taunggut, Candrasri Inscription discovered in Thandwe.⁴

The usage of Eulogies or Praśasti is the royal orders of ancient Rakhine kings described in only two stone inscriptions known as Anandacandra Inscription and copperplate of 6th century Candra king. In contrary, 13 Praśasti copperplates⁵ were also found in the Eastern Bangladesh while the only one copperplate can be seen in Rakhine.

¹ Sircar, *Inscriptions of Chandras*, p-109

² K M Htin, *Early Buddhism*, p-384, p-390

³ Sircar, *Inscriptions of Chandras*, p-109

⁴ K M Htin, *Early Buddhism*, p-384, p-386

⁵ Fleming, “copperplate of Śrīcandra”, p-224

CHAPTER III

ARCHITECTURAL REMAINS AND ICONOGRAPHIC EVIDENCES OF VESĀLI

The art and architectural works of ancient Rakhine can be traced on the literary evidences of stone inscriptions. In the line 20th and 21st of Anandacandra inscription¹, there were mentioned about Dvencandra having constructed a compact city (*nāgaram*) furnished with walls and moat, which laughed at the beauty of Paradise. The lines from 45th to 60th of this inscription show about the making religious monument and icons by king Anandacandra.

According to inscriptions, king Anandacandra built many monasteries (*vihāra*), and made *Caitya* containing the golden or silver icons (*prātimā*) and relics of Buddha (*Sugata*) and of Bodhisattva and of *Cundā*² and others. And there mentioned about the making up of the images of the lord of Sages (*Munīndrasya*, i.e. Buddha) which composed of brass (*rīṭī*), bell-metal (*kāṇisa*), and copper (*tāmra*) according to the measure of weight and number. The well decorated figurine (*sādu citritāḥ*) of Buddha composed of wood, plaster and stone; the innumerable terracotta figurine (*bimbāni*) of *Caitya*- structure; and the blessed relics many lotus-flower made of gold and silver and having pericarps of goodly gems. Interestingly, according to inscription, the construction of the monastery (*maṭha*) for Brahmin and also streets, various pleasancess, cause way

¹ E.H. Johnston, *Some inscription*, pp-367-382

² Cundā is affiliated to the Dyāni Buddha Vairocana, and spiritual daughter of Vairocana.

and passages and the digging wells and the restoration of god's temple(*Devaprāsāda*) and holy place(*tīthikā*) built by former kings were made up in the reign of Anandacandra.¹

Viracandra inscription described about the making up of hundred stupas (which may be votive stupas or structures enshrining relics of Buddha) by king Viracandra.² The standard of architecture and art in religious and secular buildings can be identified as the marvelous one with the references of stone inscriptions. Most of the material remains belonged to the stone inscriptions was disappeared but the small amount.

Architectural Remains Appeared from the Excavation

In Vesāli Old City, there can be proceeded the excavation projects in 10 times up to date. These excavated sites are as follows;

1. VSL 1_ brick structure in rectangular shape
2. VSL 2_ brick structure with enclosure
3. VSL 3_ colossal stone bull
4. VSL 4_ Eastern City Wall
5. VSL 5_ brick structure in rectangular shape
6. VSL 6_ Northern City Wall
7. VSL 7_ North Western Gateway
8. VSL 8_ Northern Gateway mingled with the brick structure

¹ Johston, ***Some Inscription***, pp-375-382

² Sircar, ***Inscription of Chandra***, p-109

9. VSL 9- brick structure, foundation, huge Buddha Image and pedestal of stone stele

10. VSL 10- Stupa built up of stone masonry and stone carvings.

Among the above-mentioned sites, it can be drawn out the architectural remains concerning the religious themes such as VSL 1, 2, 3, 5, and 9.

VSL 1

The geometric composition of architectural remains indicated the rectangular and square shapes. VSL 1 can be identified as the monastery building because of the multi-cell structures. This multi-cell structure contains 8 cells¹ and this might be a monastic building. The dimension of this monastic building is 64feet 6inches length and 48feetbreadth. At the base of this building, the stone block was found and it might be the pedestal to be placed the Buddha image. At the western wall of this building, waterspout was yielded in stone material and its size is rather large.

VSL 2

VSL 2 is also the rectangular shape structure in plinth. This is the largest structure among the excavated structures. It was measured the 85feet length and 60' breadth. The entrance was yielded at the North Eastern corner. This structure has brick enclosure with the entrance way at the North. Additionally, the brick stair case was also found attached with the entrance way. The central place of brick structure has a brick pedestal with three terraces and it might be the sacred

¹ Nyunt Han, *Study on Vesāli*

place to be enshrined the particular religious icon. Each side of the lower terraces has 14feet 6inches. At the top terraces, the stone slab sized 2' was found with the central hole in square has each side of 6inches.

VSL-3

No structure was found from this site. But, a damaged huge stone Image of Bull on a brick throne was recovered there.¹ This image may be concerned with Nandi, a cult of Shaivism and for setting at the centre of a Shrine. The position of bull is look similar with the Bull symbol of Candra coins.

Pamela Gutman commented on this image as:

“We have seen that the royal cult of Candras may have been Shavite as was the cast at Sambor or Prei Kuk in Cambodia, the pre- Angkorian city of Isanapura, where a building was designated as a stable for Nandi, the riding bull of Siva who inhabited the central shrine there.”²

VSL-5

The excavation recovered the rectangular shape brick structure orienting southeast to northwest. It has 74feet in length and 50 feet in breadth. The entrance of building was found in eastern side. There is a rectangular room inside the building and a long chamber is located in the western portion of structure. The walls were 3feet in thickness.

At the corners of structure, 13 stone pillars were erected in equal distance to each other. From the excavation here, there were uncovered the fragment of images, terracotta lump and potteries. According to the findings of the fragments

¹ Nyunt Han, *excavation at Vesāli*

² Gutman, *lost kingdom*,p-44

of statues inside and the existence of stone pillars, this building can be suggested as a *Simā* building or ordination hall.

VSL-9

A huge Buddha image measuring 4feet 8 inches high was found from the surface of site. The excavation uncovered a decorated stone throne and a rectangular brick structure with the east entrance. This building might be a Buddhist shrine for staying the Buddha images.

Architectural fabric of Citadel and Urban site

The geometric form of city wall is irregular shape but very near to the rectangular*. The northeastern corner of city wall cannot be found with alignment but ranges and reservoir. The city wall is orienting from the north-west to the southeast and the elevation can be observed that the slopping towards the west. As for the water supply, the western portion has many streams flowing around the western vicinity. And the large reservoirs located in the eastern portion under the foot of ranges. The distinctive features of hydraulic system show the important stream as the Vesāli stream, sub tributary of Rann Chaung. This stream is flowing through the city wall from the north western corner and inside the citadel place.

The citadel site of Vesāli is not located in the centre because the most eastern portion is the upland more than the rest. So the administration center might be situated on the highest place at the north eastern portion. From the

* The shape of Vesāli Old City is mostly resembled with Halin.

western wall of Vesāli, the distance has 8 miles by using of water routes to be reached Kaladan River. And then, 40 miles are needed to continue to reach the mouth of sea through along the Kaladan River. This water routes can mostly provide the trade and transportation of Vesāli Old City. The rice field lands of Vesāli Old City might be developed between the cause of Kaladan River and the eastern inland and city wall.

Recent situation indicated that the citadel place was covered by the settlements of Vesāli village. This is the mostly like the inner city¹ and this is enclosed by the wet moat. The perimeter of this site is 1464 meters and the area is 12.56 hectares.² Until up to date this citadel place has not yet by systematic excavating. To get the valuable information of the citadel place, Wethali village is the most important traceable settlements. In this area, many mounds are waited to be excavated for studying the contemporary of Vesāli Period. At the eastern part of Wethali village, the most interesting trace can be seen as the pagoda named Nan Oo Phaya meant that the crown of palace.

The area of Wethali village might probably be the cradle of urban system in Vesāli Old City. The remains of the brick structure show the thematic pattern that the large bricks were used for the lower base of the structure and the smaller bricks for the superstructure.³ The average dimension of brick size is such as the largest size is 15 inches length, 8 inches breadth and 3.5 inches high and the smallest is 10 feet x 7 feet x 2 feet.

¹ K M Htin, *landscape of capital* p-29

² Ibid, p-29

³ Ibid, p-30

For the gateways of Vesāli city wall, two gateways can be excavated as northern and northwestern gateway. Northern gateway is discovered in excavating VSL 8 in the middle of northern city wall. This gateway has 20 feet width at the widest place and gradually narrows to the inner portion. The structure of this gateway is obviously resembled to those of Pyu gateway with the curvilinear wall. The thickness of curvilinear wall is 10 feet width and so much damaged. The guard houses might be attached on each wall of gateway. In the place of guard house, two pieces of stone steles were excavated and its size is 6 inches. On these stone steles, the traces of relief sculpture were found and it might be the guard because of the appearance of anthropomorphic figures handed weapons.¹

The northwestern gateway has not protruding walls. At the entrance, the thickness of wall has 12' width. This gateway was excavated as the mound VSL 7. In VSL 7, the double city walls were evolved as the external and internal structure. The unique findings were yielded as the wooden poles which were fired. These wooden poles are situated in each side of internal wall. The dimension of these wooden poles is that 1 foot 1 inches diameter and 4 feet 6 inches high and 6 inches high.

The width of the entrance gateway is 26 feet. ²So the entrance gateways which were found at Vesāli Old City are wider than those of Pyu. According to the finding of wooden poles, the fire may destroy the city and the additional report shows the findings of ash layers in excavations.

¹ Kyi Khin, **VSL-6-7-8**, pp-6-9

² Ibid, pp-4-6

Iconographic Remains of Buddha and Bodhisattva

The iconographic remains are mostly found in Vesāli Old City and its vicinity. Most of them are made up of sand stone and bronze. The typology of these remains can be identified as the reliefs such as bas reliefs and some are high reliefs. In contrary, the rounded statues are also found rarely. The most distinctive type is stone reliefs carved on the rectangular stone stele. The attitudes of Buddha images are found in two types such as the gesture of hand, leg and pedestals. The gestures of hand or mudras are found as *Bhumisparsamudra*, *Dharmacakramudra*, *Dyānamudra* (meditation), *Abayamudra* (fearless), *Varadamudra* (giving) and *Vitarkamudra* (discourse). The gestures of leg or Asana are found as the *Dyānasana*, *Paryāṅkāsa*, *Pralambapādāsana*, *Padmasana*, *Virasana* and *Sukhasana*. The physiognomy of Buddha stone reliefs was resembled to those of Pyu images. The drapery of Buddha image is like wet robe and the edging can be seen at the neck and waist.

The standing Buddha and reclining Buddha are also found. Some of images were concerned with scenes of Buddhavamsa, the life of Buddha. The earliest images of Rakhine are concerned with the two city sites of 1st millennium AD; Daññavatī and Vesāli. The sculptural remains of these periods were abundantly found along sides of the river Kaladan. It is difficult to separate between iconography of Daññavatī and Vesāli. The iconographic remains of Vesāli period were abundantly found from the region of Vesāli old city and the region of Mahamuni shrine or Daññavatī old city.

The iconography of Vesāli can be traced some similarities of 5th to 11th centuries cities of Orissa (the western shore of Bay of Bengal), Bangladesh, Pyu cities and Dvārāvati and Pre-Angkorian Isanapura. The styles of earliest sculptures were derived of Gupta style and later were of Pāla School of art.

The scenes of Buddha from stone slabs

The most influence scene is the scene of attaining Enlightenment of Buddha. In this scene, Buddha seated in Padmasana with Bhumisparśamudra on undecorated block under the Bodh-tree. An oval-shaped aureole and a radiation form of body are served as the backdrop. The robe is depicted as a diaphanous garment molding contour and showing the folding part of left shoulder and upper hem of undergarment. The hair is usually showed as the rows of pellets or curls and almost indistinct uṣṇiṣa. The downcast eye and smiling lip are also characters and earlobes are touching with shoulders. The characteristics show the typical of late 5th century AD northeastern Indian sculpture of Sarnath School¹ with many indigenous features. It must, some traditional of Amaravati school of southeastern Indian were also influenced. The characters can be remarkable similarity with those of the early sculpture of Pyu of central Myanmar and peninsular Thailand.²

The scene of first sermon show Buddha is seated on square throne *Pralambapādāsana* and gesture is *Dhammacakramudra*. His two legs are rest on a

¹ Piriya krairiksh, *Art in Peninsular Thailand Prior to the Fourteenth Century A.D.*, Bangkok, The Fine Art Dept, 1980, p-20-21, 90

² Ibid, p-20-21

lotus stage. The two disciples are sitting on ground both his two sides and two deers symbolized to *Migadavana* (forest of deer) in front of them for the place of Buddha's first sermon. In two disciples, one has monk-form with robe and bald and the rest is ascetic (*Ṛṣī*) form. Both two is show the *Anjalimudrā*. Another slab mention the Buddha discussed the Dharma with a man who may be a royal person or kings. Buddha is posing the *Vitarkamudra* and *Sukhasana* (relax position) on a throne.

The rest scene is *Gilanasayana* of Buddha; he is reclining above the oblique throne. The figure of three trees is serving as backdrop and performing as a forest. At the below of throne, there can be seen three monks. Multi scene of Buddha life were carved on steatite, called as *Andagu*. It varied in number of scenes as seven scenes, eight scenes, nine scenes, ten scenes. The *Andagus* of Rakhine are closely resembled with those of Pyu and Bagan than the tablets of Pala from Bangladesh. The similarities between eight scenes *Andagu* of Rakhine and the nine scenes of Pyu can be seen as:

Nine scenes Pyu votive tablet¹

Parinibbana

**Victory of
Nālāgiri Elephant**

Descent from Tavatimsa

The Buddha

First sermon

Yamakapātihāriya(twin miracle)

Parileyyaka Monkey

Nativity

Sujata offering

¹ Paul Strachan, *Pagan: Art and Architecture of old Burma*, UK, KISCADALE Publication, 1966, p-27(Here after cited as Strachan, *Pagan*)

Eight scenes Rakhine votive tablet* ¹

Flying <i>vidyadhara</i>	stupa <i>Parinibbana</i>	Flying <i>vidyadhaya</i>
<i>Victory of Nālāgiri Elephant</i>	Bodh-tree	<i>Descent from Tavatimsa</i>
Buddha Maravijaya		
First sermon		Yamakaprātihāriya(twin miracle)
Parileyyaka Retreat	Lotus throne	Nativity
elephant	lion	vyāla

The sculptures which concerned with 1 millennium AD can be found the whole part of Rakhine and most have the position of *Bhumisparsamudra* and *Dharmacakramudra*

The interesting Buddha images are *Baisajyaguru* (lord of Medicine), the Fat Monk and Buddha with royal adorn. The *Baisajyaguru* is shown as one hand is earth touching position and the rest is handing a pot. It have the crossed-legged position (Padmasana), and can be seen the contour of monk-robe. The crowned Buddha images were confusable with the Bodhisattva images. In the crowned Buddha, The Buddha is crowned and wears the necklace but retained the Monk's robe of Buddha.² He is standing or seating in cross-lagged pose and have the *Dharmacakramudra* or *Bhumisparsamudra*.

* This table is modified after Gutman

¹ (a) Gutman, ***Ancient Arakan***, p-251-254, plate-LXXI

(b) San Tha Aung, ***Buddhist Art of Ancient Arakan***, Yangon, DawSawSaw Publishing, p-83-86

² Strachan, ***Pagan***, p-31

A number of Bodhisattva images can be found in the Nat-taung of Vesāli village. Unfortunately, all have been destroyed; only damaged icon and fragments can be seen. Bodhisattva can be seen in two postures; *samabanga* (standing firmly and squarely on both feet) and *tribanga* (show the ratio for three main parts of human body; head, torso and pelvic). The head dresses are Krita-mukuta (a conical cap surmounted by an ornamental top) and Jata-mukuta (a hair style adorned with decoration to look like a coronet). The *Mudra* are Kataka-hasta (to form ¹a ring to hold flower), *Viradamudra*, *Abhayamudra* and *Lolamudra* (an arm hanging down the side has the hand drooping softly in a semi-flexed position). The images can be identified as *Maitreya*, *Manjusri*, *Avalokitesvara* and etc.

Surya or Sun god

The sun god, *Surya* is also known as *Aditya*, head of list the Nine Planets in Buddhist pantheon. According to Nispannayogavali, *Aditya* rides on a chariot drawn by seven horse and both hand holds the discs of Sun on lotus.²

There two specimen from Vesāli can be identified as *Surya* images. Both are standing images and found in Nibuza pagoda and Shin Nge Tet pagoda. Nibuza specimen shows that the scenery of vehicle likes chariot with seven horses, and on it, *Aditya* was standing and holding the stem which might be with the lotus flower. This appearance of *Aditya* attitude is identified with the concepts of Buddhist pantheon.

² Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist iconography*, p-367

The other finding of *Surya* god relief is from the Nibuza pagoda and on the stone lintel fragments. This might be placed in the tympanum of pediments. The distinctive feature of this relief has symmetrical composition in the position of holding the lotus flower with three petals. This wears the headdress of Makuta ornaments and is proportionate. This figure is in half portray in the circular framing around the foliage design. The decorations supporting this *Surya* relief contain the *Gada* shaped also known as the Indian club and resembled to pumpkin shape with five lobes.

These iconographic remains directly related to the Buddhist pantheon which can be rarely found in Myanmar traditional practice. The concept of Buddhist pantheon shows about the spiritual gods and goddesses with their associated symbols. Furthermore, the vehicle objects called as Vahana are varied in this pantheon arrangement. For the delicate decorations, this might be mostly related to the decorative objects of the later Buddhist religious building such as the Shitthaung Temple of Mrauk Oo and Nat-Hlyaung-kyaung Vishnu Temple of Bagan. These instances shows that the early phases of Myanmar Buddhist cultural initiation might have been influenced by the neighboring culture of Mainamati hill in Eastern Bangladesh.

CONCLUSION

Indian influence reached to Southeast Asia passing this region by land because it lies on the frontier region between Southeast Asia and India. The earliest city of Rakhine flourished in the river valleys of northern part. Vesali lies on the valley between Kaladan and Lemro Rivers. It was the second capital of Rakhine and political power moved from Daññvatī in sixth century AD. Kings with Indian title, mainly Candara kings, ruled and also they influenced on the Commila-Mainamati area.

In other words, its geographical orbit was wide from Southeast Bengal to Southern Rakhine along the coastland. Though it grew up under Indian civilization, its architecture, city plan, sculpture and coinage showed the indigenous aspect of Southeast Asia. Its coinage was the symbolic coin of pure silver bearing seated bull, Trisula design and name of assuming king. The concept of symbols of Vesali coins are comparative with those of Oc-Eo, Pyu and Mon cities. Sanskrit and Sanskrit - Pali inscription were written in Gupta, Nagari and Proto-Bengali script. Irregular shaped or oval shaped city wall are encompassing the area of 2.7 square miles. This study approaches not only the general view of urbanization and state formation and also material cultures from sculptural, architectural, numismatic, epigraphic remains of Vesālī with a comparison with its contemporary neighbouring country, especially Pyu Cities.

The word “Vesali” used in Rakhine might be adaptable from the original name of Vaisali City located in Bihar of India. This word is descended from word

of Vishal means the great and attributed to properties of being ground. The controversy indicated the uncertainty of datable information about the founding and declining of Vesali City in Rakhine. But this might be with the contextual assumption of comparison with the Pyu and other Southeast Asian civilization such as S'riksetra and Dvaravati.

In contrary, the valuable information can be drawn out as the evolving the Candra Dynasty in the same period of Vesali City. But it might be controversial that the traceable evidences of epigraphic and iconographic remains proved the date of Vesali as not being before 6th century AD. In other way, Candra Dynasty might be powerful probably in 4th century AD according to the Anandacandra stone inscriptions. So it can be suggested that the founding of Vesali City was advanced after emerging the Candra Dynasty.

The material cultural remains in the context of Vesali can also be found in and around the Daññavatī Old City. So it might probably be the same age of artifactual information found in Daññavatī is mostly resembled to the Vesali in second half of the first millennium AD. In the same way, this contextual information of Vesali was found extensively all over the Rakhine. In the neighbouring culture of Bangladesh and India, the demarcation of period is based on the particular dynasty such as Gupta Period, Pala Period and Candra period. In contrary, Rakhine ancient cities were only demarcated relying on the regional names such as Vesali is based on the Vesali village and Daññavatī is based on the saying goes.

With the references of numismatic evidences, the Vesali coinage can be proved that the 5th century AD in parallel with those of Pyu coinage because the earliest coinage can be proved that of Devacandra King. The name of king was stamped on this coin. Rakhine coins of earliest phases have symbols of Srivatsa in observe and Sankha in reverse and mostly resembled to those of Pyu. The component of symbolic objects which stamped on the coin might be related to the Buddhist cosmology because of these symbols: Sun and Moon for the heaven; Srivatsa for the land of the splendour; Bindu for the water in different from the wave symbols of S'riksetra coin.

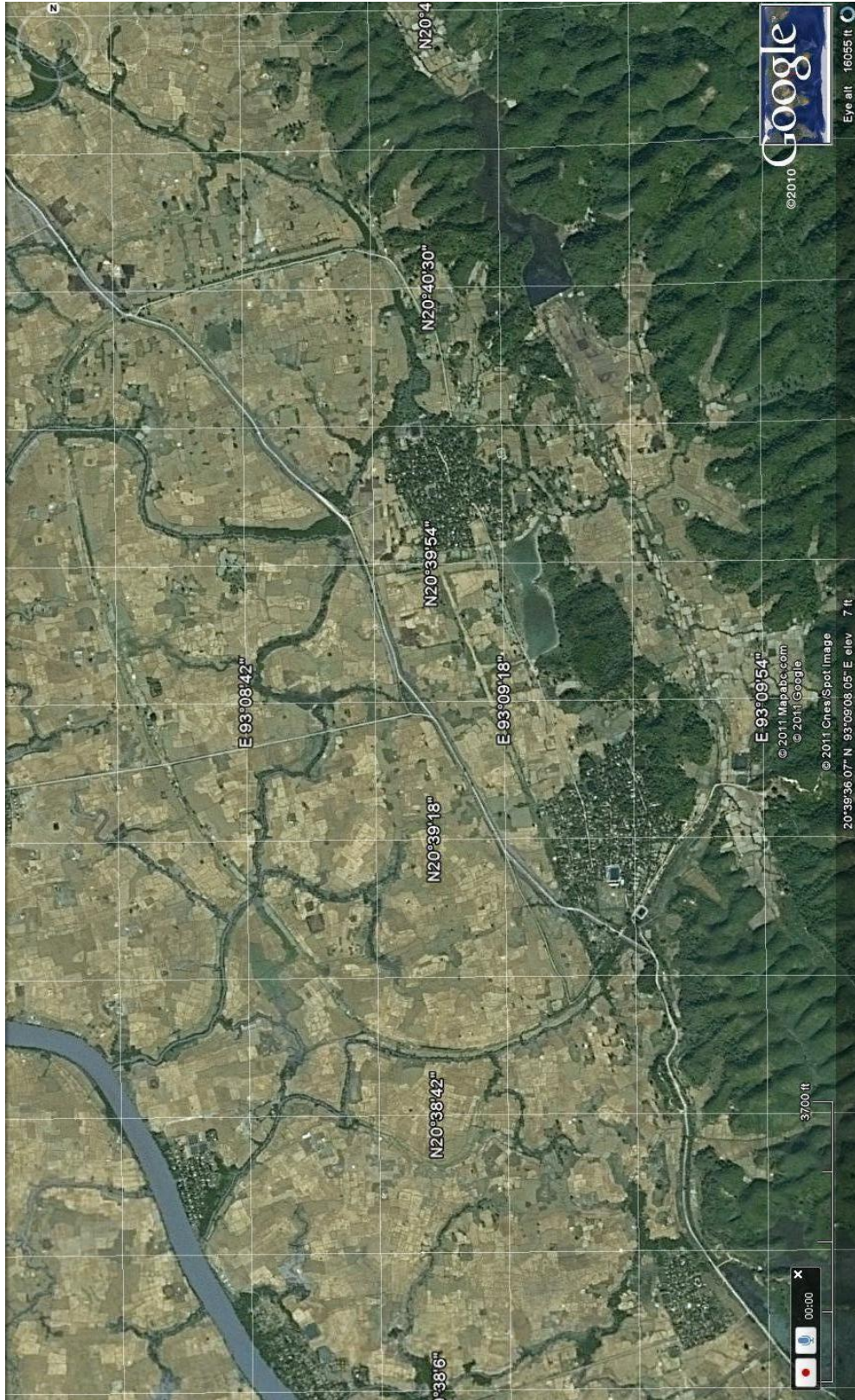
The symbolic coins which abundantly found in Rakhine contain the Bull-Trident symbols. Bull can be meant that the lineage of Candra family according to the epigraphic evidences. Trident symbolized the Buddhist Trinity and indicated that the concept of religious themes can be progressed with Buddhist culture in parallel with the traditional practice of Siva.

To summing up, it can be assumed that the Buddhist theme was mingled with the Hindu practice in ancient Vesali. In addition, some other evidences of epigraphy and iconography highlighted the Candra Dynasty overwhelming the artifactual remains in Rakhine. Then, the cultural remains of Rakhine can be definitely proved that the most important culture through the ancient civilization of the western coastal regions of Mainland Southeast Asia.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Fig (17) Stone tablets bearing with the scenes of Buddha : (a) the attaining Enlightenment of Buddha (b) the first sermon of Buddha (c) Buddha preaching to the royalty (d) the reclining Buddha in Gilanasayana



Map (3) Satellite image of Vesāli



Fig (18) Some Styles of Buddha in Rakhine :

- (a) Buddhist Sermon (b) Dharmacakramudra Buddha (c) Bhumisparśamudra Buddha (d) Pyu style Buddha image (e) Baisajyaguru Buddha (f) Bhumisparśamudra wearing royal ornament (g) Pala royal adomed Buddha in Dharmacakramudra (h) terracotta votive tablet bearing Bhumisparśamudra Buddha in Temple

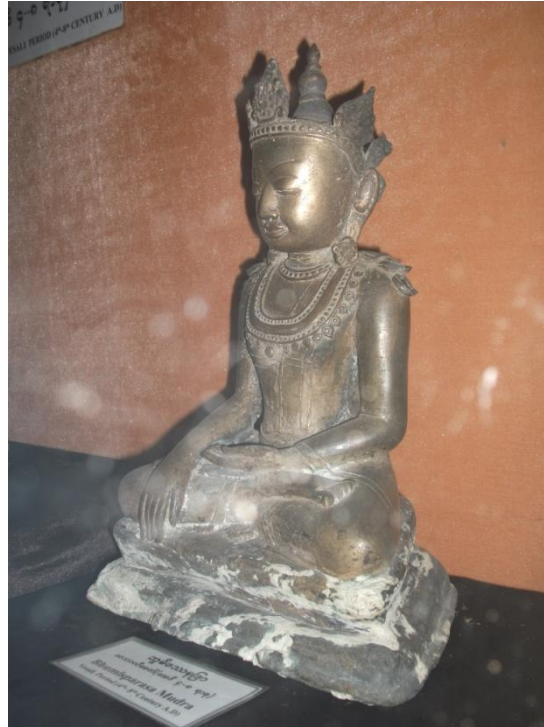


Fig (22) Crowned Buddha Image wearing monk's robe and royal ornaments



Fig (23) Stone votive tablet bearing Eight Scenes of the life of Buddha



Fig (24) Aditya image from Shin-Nge-Tet Pagoda



Fig (25) Surya image from Nibuza Pagoda



(a) Image of the Maitreya



(b) Image of Bodhisattva (? Avalokitesvara)



(c) Image of the Fat Monk



(d) Image of Bodhisattva (? Manjūśrī)

Fig (19) Some Bodhisattva images of Ancient Rakhine



Fig (28) Northwestern Gate of Vesāli



Fig (29) Northern Gate of Vesāli

(Photo from Thein Tun Aung, Dept of Archaeology, Mrauk Oo)



Fig (21) Some Bodhisattva and Buddhist god from Nat-Taung, Vesāli village



Fig (8) Some bull /trident coins of Rakhine



Fig (9) Some specimen of Symbolic coins of Ancient Rakhine : (a) *uninscribed Coch/ srivatsa* (b) *Devacandra Conch/ Srivatsa* (c) *Rajacandra Conch/Srivatsa* (d) *Dharmacandra Bull/Trident, Harkela coin*, (e) *Harkela Bull bracteates* (Than Tun Dedaye, **Coins in Myanmar**; U Shwe Zan, **Provided Evidences**, Than Tun, **Ancient Myanmar History**)



Fig (26) Northern part of city wall



Fig (27) Exposed structure at VSL-5



Fig (6) Some noticeable coins

(Than Tun Dedaye, **Coins in Myanmar**)



Fig (7) Symbolic Decorations on the Stone Stele found in Vesāli



Fig (15) A Chattaravali from Mrauk Oo Concerning Vesāli Period



Fig (16) Engraved Stone Pillar from Mrauk Oo

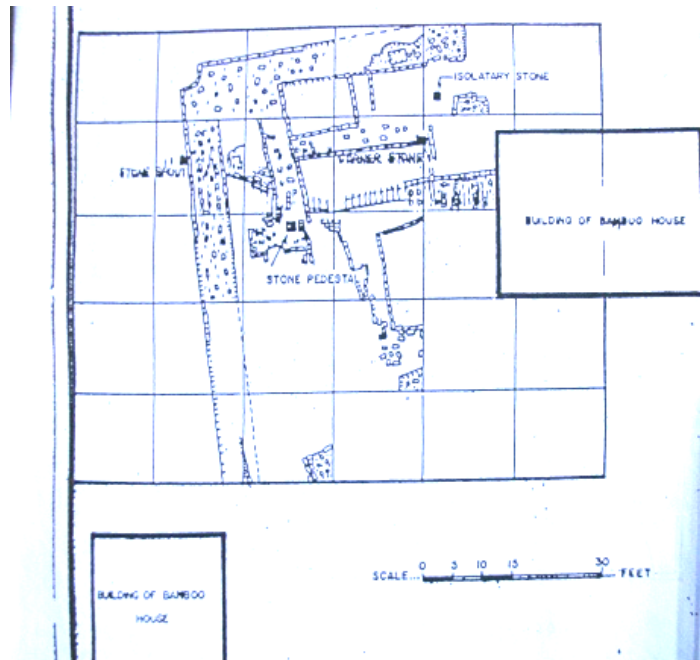


Fig (30) Plan of Exposed Structure of VSL-1
(Nyunt Han, **Excavation at Vesāli**)

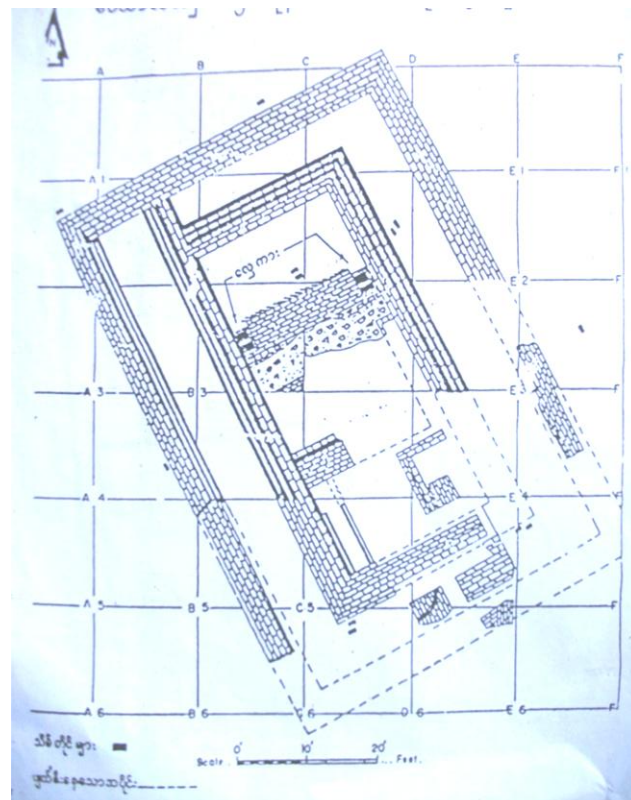


Fig (31) Plan of Exposed Structure of VSL-2
(Nyunt Han, **Excavation at Vesāli**)

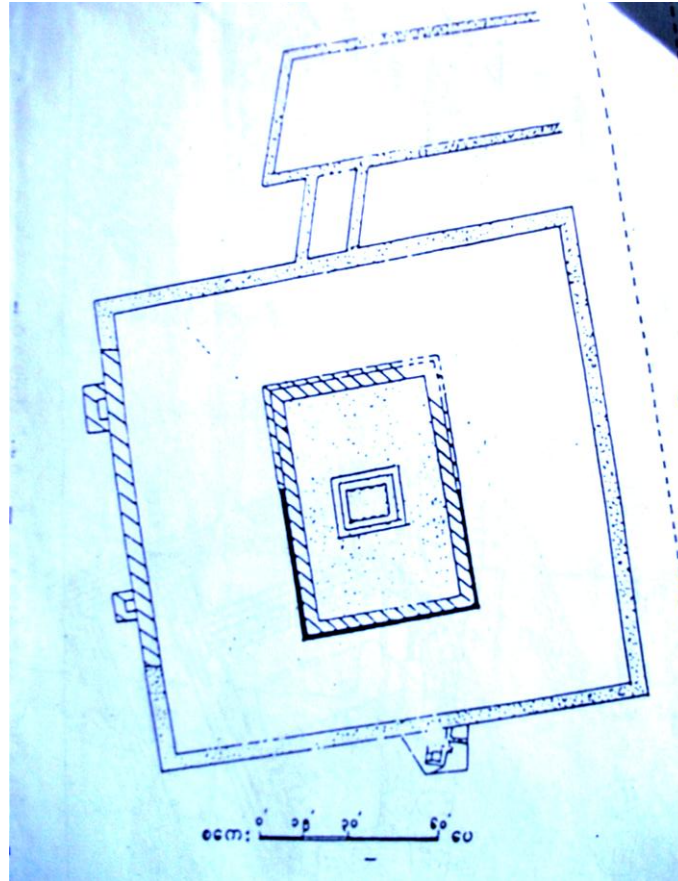


Fig (32) Plan of Exposed Structure of VSL-5

(Nyunt Han, **Excavation at Vesāli**)



Fig (33) Plan of Exposed Structure of City Gates in VSL-7 and VSL-8

(Nyunt Han, **Excavation at Vesāli**)



Fig (13) Land Grant Copperplate Praśasti Inscription from Vesāli (obverse face)

(ASB, 1963-64)



Fig (14) Land Grant Copperplate Praśasti Inscription from Vesāli (reverse face)

(ASB, 1963-64)

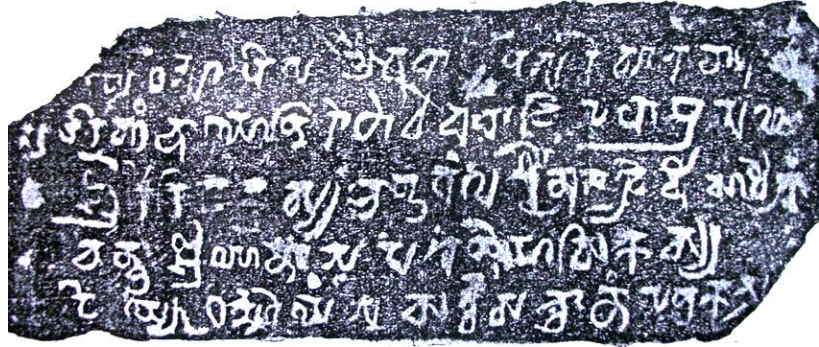


Fig (10) Rubbing Copy of Inscription of The Queen of Niticandra

(Sirca, *Epigraphia Indica*)

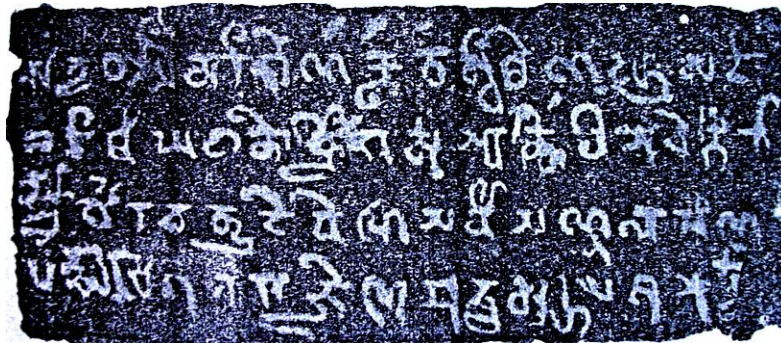


Fig (11) Rubbing Copy of Inscription of Viracandra

(Sirca, *Epigraphia Indica*)



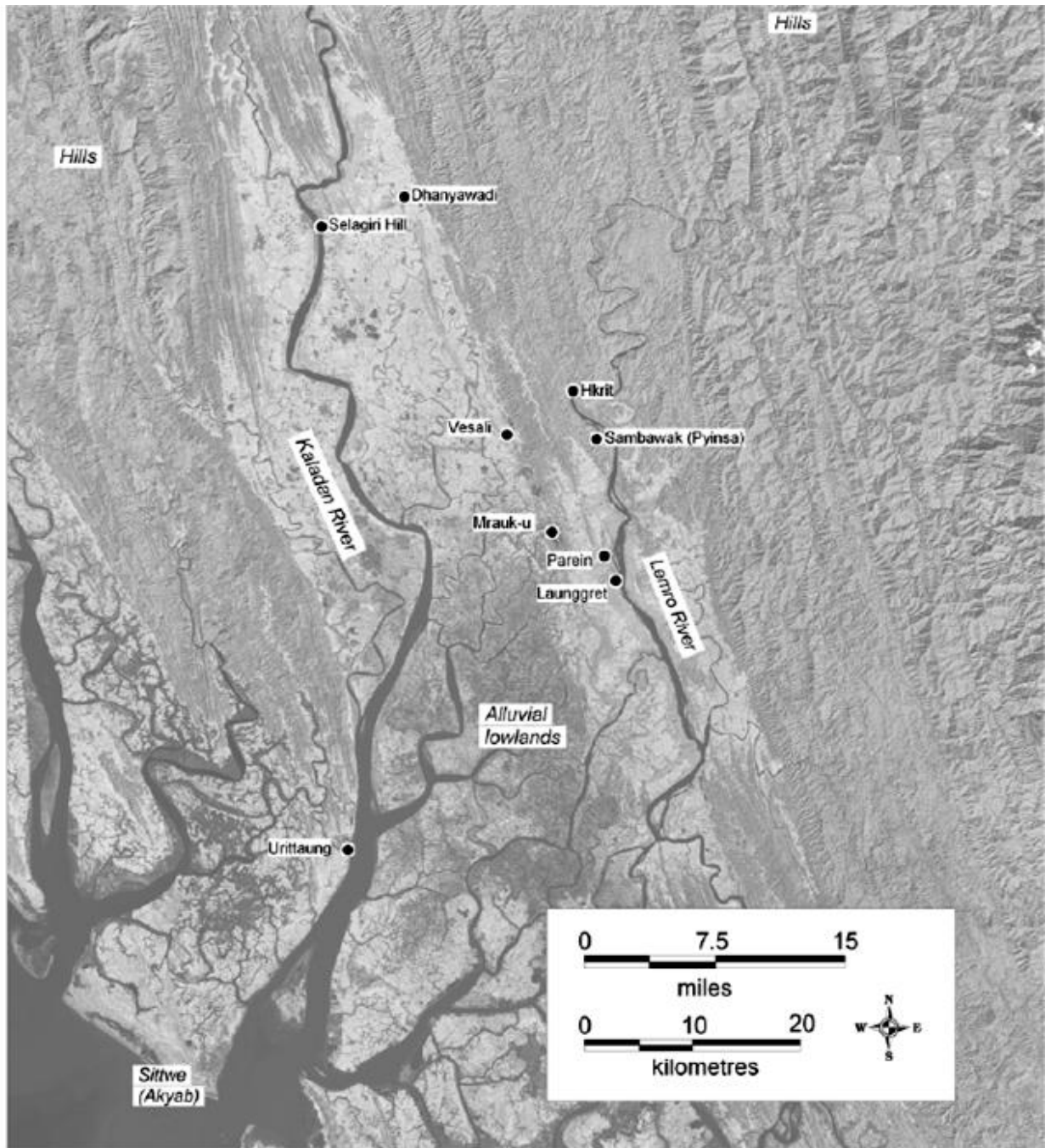
Fig (12) The Inscription of Candraśriyā, The Queen of Niticandra



Fig (4) Copperplate Praśasti Inscription of Sricandra from Northern Bangladesh
(Fleming, **Bulletin of SOAS**)



Fig (5) The Votive Stone Stupa Bearing The Yedharma Verse



Map (2) Location of the Old Settlements and Major Landmarks of Rakhine
(Bob Hudson, **Ancient Arakan Cities**)



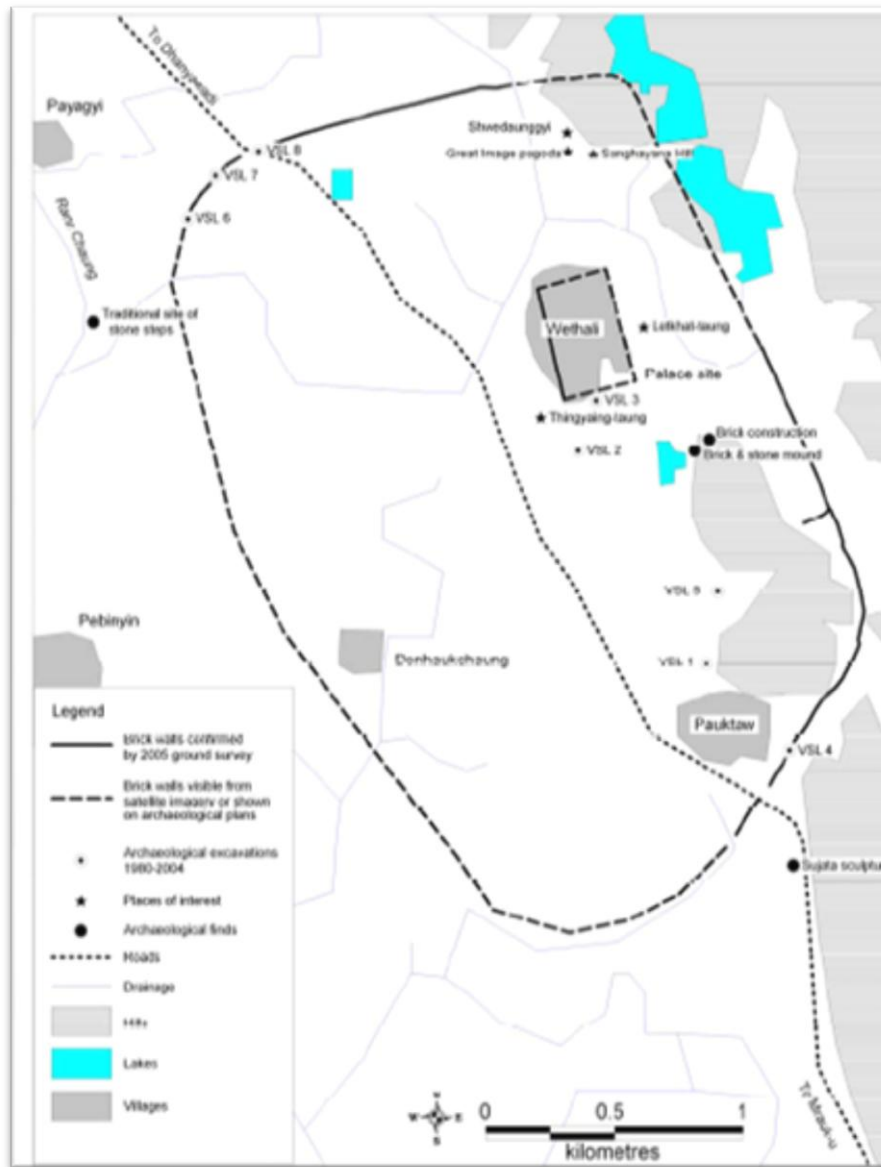
(a)



(b)



(c)



Map (1) Map of Vesāli in Comparison with other Ancient Cities

(a) Daññavatī (b) Halin (c) Śrīkṣetra

(Bob Hudson, **Ancient Arakan Cities**)



(a) Brick structure from Northern gate



(b) 15×8×3 ft size brick from Let-Khat- Taung



(c) Very huge stone slab bearing symbol from Let-khat-Taung



(d) Very huge stone slab called locally as Let-Khat-Kyauk

Fig (34) Brick and Stone Masonry Works found in Vesāli



Map (4) Satellite view of citadel site of Vesāli



Fig (2) Iconographic Remain in Nat-Taung, Vesāli



Fig (3) Brick Mound in Palace Site, Wethali village



(a) Pan-Shar- Mraung, Reservoir From Northern Corner of City



(b) Eastern Region of City

Fig (1) Landscape of Vesāli



(a) Colossal Stone Sculpture of Bull Cult



(b) Head of Siva



(c) Fragment of Linga Relief



(d) ? Mahishasuramardini, Goddess Durga
Slaying Buffalo Demon (Asurā)



(e) Massive Stone Yoni Figure

Fig (20) Some Icons of Shivaism

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