Chapter – III
α Critical Study of forms and Expression α
α (Dharmachakra Stupa) α

Sanghol from the earliest dwellers to Kusana (Kushana) period has a deposit of different constructional phases. The building methodology of the architectural remains is unchanged for this time period, as per their form and formation. The construction is concerned with both of sun dried and baked bricks. The use of bricks and wood for an architectural base was the prime material during the Mauryan period. The literary proof and excavations has supported its use in northern India. This place was designated to become a vehicle of the forms conveying philosophical thought, religion & culture. Antiquities that include bead, ivory objects, valuable stones, stone sculptures, terracotta figurines and coins were traced here. Discovery of these things falls in the IV period (C.200BC to 200A.D.) of Sanghol's scientific excavations that has been counted a long time span.

Monastery and Maha sputa architectural remains (Plate -1, 7, 8 & 9) of Sanghol are in order of Kushana time, related with excavation period IV. It's a time period of bringing out the communicative and informative function of Sanghol art that allowed the dwellers and travelers to exchange ideas.

Here art form graces the spiritual potential and the unity of mankind. Expression passed on through the architectural and sculptural forms, is easier to absorb, than information transmitted in words. It is a perfect qualitative and aesthetically rich world of expression than conceptual thought. The critical study of Sanghol forms and expressions is based on the artistic remains of the Stupa and its architectural vedika parts (Plate 7, 8).

Sanghol art has a mission that must be expressed through forms and their visual expression. Forms of Sanghol Mahastupa discharge the ideas assimilated with Vedic thoughts well analyzed and clothed in tactile and palpable imagery that is at the same time half exposed and half covered. The art and religion prospering on Sanghol soil have rendered motifs those work as a vehicle of spiritual ideas. Such formation and philosophy is the life breath of these sculptural forms. The supreme

3 Sharma, G.B., (1986), Coins, Seals and Sealings from Sanghol, Chandigarh, Department of Cultural affairs, Archaeology and Museum, Punjab., P.6 Pt vi.
expression and purpose of Sanghol forms was not only to please the eye but also to satisfy the spirit of the beholder. Therefore Sanghol art is basically related with the culture of beauty through the physical medium and expression.

The Mahastupa and sculptural discovery at Sanghol is primarily epoch making in the expression. It is for the first time, Kushana sculptural art in such a big number, relevant to Mathura Kushana idiom (1st cent – 2nd Cent, A.D) have been found (Plate-7).

There are two Buddhist Stupa, we have seen, one is near to Kushana habitational area and known as Dharmachakra Mahastupa (Plate-2, 3 & 4), designated as Stupa No.1 along with a Boddi tree enclosure. Monastery remains and Stupa No. II (Plate-4A) is near to Chandigarh – Ludhiana highway. Both Stupa are 600 meter away from each other.

Sanghol as a center of Buddhist thought and art falls on the way Uttarpatha, that is stretched 900 km from Mathura to Takshasila. It was one of the Buddhist center with Asokan Stupa recorded by Hiuen Tsiang in his travelogue Si-Yu-Ki as Satadru (She-to-t'u-lu). Once it was situated on the bank of river Sutlej that has presently shifted away about 10Km.

The Concept of Stupa as a form goes back to the third century B.C. by the time, when religion of Sakyamuni was going to spread. It was because of the religious sentiments of Emperor Asoka, the Stupa was adopted as commemoration of the Lord Buddha - the savior of the world i.e. Lokapala. It is important that Traders were one of the major supporters of the flourishing Buddhist order and monastic settlements, sharing the development of Sanghol as a center of Buddhist forms and artistic expressions.

Sanghol Mahastupa as a form was (Layout plan Drawing), built by Emperor Asoka, who erected 84000 Stupa in different parts of his entire

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9 Beal, Samuel., (n d), Si-Yu-Ki-Buddhist records of the Western world, Two vol. In one, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., Vol-I, (Book-IV of Hiuen Tsiang), P.178
empire out of the relics of seven original pagodas (Stupa) and represented Stupa into a worshipable shrine. The present Stupa, a symbol that stands for human salvation, confirms the early tradition of reliquary mound. Sanghol Stupa as a form of worship cult of Buddhist faith (Stupa Puja) was previously constructed as a manmade mountain to inculcate the idea of illumination among its worshippers. It reflects the wide spread belief that mountaintops are the abode of the Gods. According to Mahavastu (ii.390.14) it is fortunate to worship Stupa and take the path of chastity that leads to enlightenment. The present Stupa is fashioned on the place where the four past Buddhas sat & stroll. In that way Stupa stands for Buddha, which means the enlightened form. It is not the form of Sakyamuni (Rupa Kaya – The physical form), who is adored in the form of Stupa, but actually it is the idea of Buddha that is worshipped. Therefore Stupa is a representation of "Dharma Kaya" the form of the Buddhist principle belief itself. The symbol of tree is the form of enlightenment "Nirvana" and the image of a Stupa is to interpret Buddha's "Maha Parnirvana", as the supreme form of Buddhahood and represented as sign of Buddhist Iconography.

A relic box from the core of the Sanghol Stupa keeps an inscription (in Kharoshthi Language, Plate-5) of the 1st century B.C. to 1st Century A.D. that proved


its (Stupa) form as Saririka" (Body relics).24 The Kharoshthi letters read as "Upasakasa Ayabhadrasa" indicate that Stupa belonged to a lay disciple named Aryabhdra or Bhadra – The noble one.25 He might be a Buddhist teacher or future Buddha.

The super structures that were excavated at Sanghol either Mahastupa (Stupa No-I) or Stupa No-II are of brick built architecture with Dharmachakra (Rathachakra) plan (Plate-2, 4). The Dharmachakra plan indicates the different stages of time and space calculated by man for architectural aim in the vedic & post vedic era.26 Regarding Sanghol Mahastupa probability is that the Stupa attained its form during Mauryan era was made of mud that was enlarged and rebuilt during the Kushana period. Its Kushana exposition is concerned with the imagery of Stupa Vedika particularly Yakshi images. Its plan is surmounted over a plinth within a 17-meter square space.27 Stupa is divided into three concentric circles of brick with different number of intervening spaces in all respect.28 Its three divisions of space are named in the Rigveda as avama (minor) madhyama (midst) and parama (topmost).29 Above all its basic interpretation is related to Kalachakra. Although the altar of Stupa is a Buddhist derivation of the altar used for vedic rituals, it might had gone through numerous changes and convenient reforms before its Buddhist adoption.30 The formation of the altar (Chiti) work as the base, for development of a wheel (Dharmachakra) concept that is known as Ratha Chakrachiti. According to Fa-Hian the ground spot where lord attained nirvana resembled with the shape of a chariot wheel (Plate-3, 4 & 9) i.e. Dhama Chakra.31 It means Sanghol Stupa is here represented in the seed form as per Vedic records.32

The architectural plan is represented with three concentric circular spaces. All the three circles have 12, 24 and 32 spreading spokes (Plate-3 & Layout plan Drawing), with equal ratio of intervening spaces. The size of the Sanghol Stupa bricks is 33x22x5 cms and four entrances with staircases are connected to its square plinth. Its interspaces of spokes are pervaded with "Kankari" and pondu earth material.

Another concept of Dharmachakra Stupa plan is emblazonedly associated to universal concept, life concept and time concept. The Chakra concept and its spokes number may be 3, 5, 6, 8, 12 (Plate-2, 4) and so on, banking upon the time factor.\textsuperscript{33} Buddhist thoughts may follow the steps of Vedic geometrical concepts in this regard. Sanghol Stupa is an example of the concept of time and its division.

The twelve spokes wheel "rta" circulates around the heavens as discussed in Rgveda, which is the primary base of Sanghol Stupa (See layout plan). The Rathachakra form of Sanghol Stupa is an expression of time (Kala Chakra) that is converted into a year with three five or six seasonal period and twelve months.\textsuperscript{34}

The Sanghol Stupa No.II is of smaller size with six-spoked Dharmachakra form (SGL-5). Usually six-spoked wheel is primarily the emblem of the Chakravartin- Buddha the world ruler- who sets the Dharmachakra in motion.\textsuperscript{35} It is also the emblem (Form) of a year circle of six seasonal periods\textsuperscript{36} as well as that denotes a solar year.

In Upanishakdic Philosophy, Wheel (Chakra) is usually regarded as an emblem of cosmic order. It is regarded as the symbol of turning of the Dharmachakra parivartan i.e. "Wheel of Law".\textsuperscript{37} In this regard when the curtain of illusion of the form & matter is dispelled, one can perceive beyond it the par excellent world.

The Sanghol Mahastupa in its form had been quoted as 200 feet high monument alongwith ten Sangaramas (Monastic structures) during the visit period of Hiuen Tsiang.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{34} Joshi, Jagat Pati et al., (1997), Facets of Indian Civilization – Resent Perspectives (Essays in Honour of Prof. B.B. Lal), Vol-II, New Delhi, Aryan Book International., P.423.

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The dome (Anda) part of Stupa not in existence now, was more cylindrical than hemispherical as recorded in the Vedika Stambha relief of Sanghol Stupa.39 (Plate-6) The Cylindrical Stupa form of Kushana era is familiar in its form with Syrian cylindrical tomb, where as early Stupa are usually hemispherical in form.40 It might have been altered during Kushana rule in Pañcanada. All the Vedika stambha (railing Pillars) imagery has designed and decorated the Sanghol Mahastupa in the time period of Kushana rule.

The Sanghol Mahastupa & architectural plans are well preserved due to burnt bricks that were the date back standard material of construction41 in the Pañcanada.

The form of Stupa traced at Sanghol had a monastic plan (Plate-9), which was designed according to an old custom of providing monasteries or Sangaramas to the Buddhist priests to stop and stay near the Stupa and to adore lord Buddha and the future Buddha.42

It is said that when Tatagatha = Buddha visited to north India (Āryāvarta), the country was honoured with "His" visit. It is recorded by the traveler Fa-Hian as per tradition says.43 When Fa-Hian visited to northern part of India the folk of this region generally worship Lord Buddha in Heenyan44 (Little vehicle) concept.

The Stupa is one of the prime emblems for adoration of Lord Buddha in its total magnitude, as Lord of the quarters.45 Secondly Fa-Hian recalls the story, when Lord Buddha addressed Ananda, regarding the form of Stupa that will be raised on a particular spot by a king, named Ki-Ni-Kia (Kanika = Kanishka).46 It is further justified that as soon as Kushana rule expanded upto Mathura, through Uttarapatha (Map-II), Kushana rulers erected Stupa and renovated Ashokan Stupa with their own concept of art, to validate the said prediction of Lord Buddha quoted to Ananda, about

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Kushana King.\textsuperscript{47} Fa-Hian also Visited to Mathura (Mo-Tu-Lo) that was one time capital of Kushana rulers in India and loudly talks about its Sangharamas and the prevailing law of Buddha.\textsuperscript{48} It is evident that Stupa at Sanghol is one of the adorable tower (Cylindrical Stupa, Plate-6) of the Buddhist sect erected for the follower (Upasaka) named Aryabhadra or Bhadra the noble one.\textsuperscript{49}

Once the Stupa had been well decorated with Vedika that comprises beautiful sculptures of Kushana era, which are well modeled with Mathura idiom. The form & concept of Stupa is enshrined with great faith in its expression and venerated at Sanghol.

The Sanghol Maha Stupa is simple in form and structure but richly graced with beautiful sculptures. It has been venerated as the emblem of Buddha's entry into Maha Parinirvana. Its (Stupa) plan is based on the act of preaching that is known as "Dharmachakra Parivatana" - turning of the wheel of law. It is the representative mark of wheel usually six spoked, which was originally the metaphor of "Tathagata". Buddha is known as "Chakravartim\textsuperscript{50}" because "He" himself sets the wheel of the law in motion and here we see this concept in the plan of Stupa form. The total plan of Stupa is analogous with the spiritual philosophy of lord Buddha and encircled with forms like Yaksha, Yakshinies, Worshippers, Bodhisattva and Monks.

Sanghol Stupa's true philosophy and expression is seen in the form of a Vedika pillar "Chakrastambha"(Plate-72, 73). During Kushana period, Stupa concept was represented with the holy path toward spirituality and its form is the expression of super human power i.e. Lord Buddha.

The impressive cylindrical and monumental form of Sanghol Stupa fascinated the traveler's like Huien Tsang even after the extinct of Kushana rule from Sanghol in the\textsuperscript{51} 7th Cent. A.D.

The concept of Stupa is non-personal expression, symbolic depiction of the lord Buddha in the form that permitted the folk to imagine the illuminated one, and as a valid symbol. Therefore Stupa is the composition of an imaginary body of the lord Buddha, designated over a wheel plan with the universal cosmological symbols.

\textsuperscript{47} According to Vinaya Pitaka, Lord Buddha addressed to Vajrapani about the construction of stupa by a king after His Parinirvana, not to Anada. In : Baldev Kumar., 1973, The Early Kusanas, New Delhi, sterling Publicshers (P) Ltd., (PP. 88 to 95). PP. 90:91.93.
\textsuperscript{51} Beal, Samuel., (n d)., Si-Yu-Ki-Buddhist records of the Western world, Two vol. In one, London, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., Vol-I, (Book-IV of Huien Tsang), P.178