

**Spring 2016—Society for Asian Art—Arts of Asia Lecture Series**  
**Patronage in Asian Art**  
**Patronage of Pāla-Sena Art in Bihar, West Bengal, Bangladesh and Odisha, ca. 8th–12th**  
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**22 April 2016**

**Goal of Lecture**

To explore the pattern of donor inscriptions, donor portraits, and scenes of worship or consecration on (mainly) sculptures in eastern South Asia of the ca. 8th–12th c. Works of Brahmanical (i.e. “Hindu”), Buddhist and Jain themes will be considered, including representative sculptures in the Asian Art Museum’s collection. The data relating to patronage found on sculptures will be mined for information about the identities, intentions, and practices of the patrons, sculptors and intended viewers.

**Vocabulary and Terms**

Pāla dynasty: ruled much of Bengal and Bihar and at times parts of Odisha (Orissa) between the 8th and 11th centuries; many of the rulers were Buddhist, but Śaiva, Vaishnavite, Sakta and Jain religions and arts also flourished.

Sena dynasty: rivals and successors to the Pāla dynasty, mainly in Bengal during the 11th and 12th centuries; had connections to south India and especially promoted Brahmanical (Hindu) religion; many images of Viṣṇu were created during their rule.

Nālandā monastery: large Buddhist monastery in Bihar that was one of the centers of Buddhist art between the 9th and 11th centuries

Purohit: family priest in Brahmanical tradition; religious preceptor who conducts rituals

Ācārya: learned instructor; used here to refer to a Buddhist master who conducts initiations

Pratiṣṭhā: “establishing”; installing and consecrating a religious image

Mūrti: consecrated religious image

Tīrthāṅkara: “ford-maker”; a Jain founding Jina, or enlightened teacher, of whom there are 24

**Suggested Reading**

Bautze-Picron, Claudine. “Between Men and Gods: Small Motifs in the Buddhist Art of Eastern India, an Interpretation.” Pp.59–79 in *Function and Meaning in Buddhist Art: Proceedings of a Seminar Held at Leiden University 21–24 October 1991*, ed. K.R. van Kooij and H. van der Veere. Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 1995.

Huntington, Susan L., with contributions by John C. Huntington. *Art of Ancient India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain*. Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1985; reprint, New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2014. See Chapter 18: “Bihār and Bengal Under the Pāla and Sena Kings;” and Chapter 19: “Orissa and Related Regions.”

Huntington, Susan L. and John C. Huntington. *Leaves From the Bodhi Tree: The Art of Pala India and Its International Legacy*. Dayton and Seattle: Dayton Art Institute and the University of Washington press, 1990. See “Introduction to the Pāla Period,” pp. 75–121 and Catalog entries nos. 1, 8, 12, 16, 23, 30, 32, 36, 38, 39 comprising Asian Art Museum sculptures.

Kim, Jinah. “Unheard Voices: Women’s Roles in Medieval Buddhist Artistic Production and Religious Practices in South Asia.” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 80 no. 1 (2012): 200–232.