

WHV – Interpretation of the terracotta plaques of Paharpur

Ruins of the Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur, Bangladesh

PROJECT DATES

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (1985)

01-10 October 2023

THE SITE - Evidence of the rise of Mahayana Buddhism in Bengal from the 7th century onwards, Somapura Mahavira, or the Great Monastery, was a renowned intellectual center until the 12th century. Its layout perfectly adapted to its religious function, this monastery city represents a unique artistic achievement. With its simple, harmonious lines and its profusion of carved decoration, it influenced Buddhist architecture as far away as Cambodia.

OBJECTIVES - Implemented for the second time, the project aims to interpret and document the terracotta plaques of the Vihara and strengthen collaboration between local and international partners to protect the authenticity of the site and at ensuring the establishment of community-led heritage management programs.

ACTIVITIES - The volunteers will conduct a literature review, and field research to document the terracotta plaques (lose 800 and more on the structure), practice interpretation, participate in a hands-on terracotta workshop with the local artisans and attend lectures on key heritage topics such as heritage interpretation, conservation skills development and community engagement. They will propose improvements to the terracotta plaques conservation through their learning from the workshop and work on a publication.

PARTNERS - Department of Archaeology Bangladesh, ICOMOS Bangladesh, UNESCO Dhaka, Faculty of the Fine Arts University of Dhaka, Jahangirnagar University, One Culture Foundation, Youth Planet, *Paharpur Adibashi* High School.

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