

WHV – Community engagement in heritage conservation

Ruins of the Buddhist Vihara at Paharpur, Bangladesh

PROJECT DATES

Cultural property inscribed on the World Heritage List (1985)

01-31 October 2024

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 third 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 participate in hands-on terracotta workshops with the local artisans, document the terracotta plaques through drawings and photographs, and reproduce small scale replica of the terracotta to be utilised as souvenirs for the visitors in order to spread the understanding of the challenges and techniques required for the preservation of the site.

PARTNERS - Department of Archaeology; Bangladesh National Museum; Institute of Fine Art-Dhaka; UNESCO Dhaka; ICOMOS Bangladesh; Paharpur Adivasi School; Paharpur Terracotta Artisan community; Azimur Rokia Rahman Trust; New Age; Manabjamin.

Nagar Upakhyan - Perceive

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