

BUDDHIST TEMPLES IN KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

Architecture of Kashmir shows the traces of various religious influences. The Buddhist, Hindu and Islamic religious beliefs have left an indelible mark on the architecture of the state. In this paper the earliest structural monuments in Kashmir whose presences now only in books, which traced back to the 1st and 6th centuries, and its style, material, designs and methods of construction has been discussed in a considerable length.

INTRODUCTION

Prior to process of Islamization that began in the fourteenth century in Kashmir, both Hinduism and Buddhism had flourished there for almost two thousand years. Today, the remnants of a few Hindu temples survive and Buddhist monuments are so fragmentary that their original forms must be completely reconstructed from other evidence. Even during Kalhana's time in the twelfth century, Buddhist monuments were few compared to the Hindu temples that were still in worship.

The destruction of Buddhist establishments was begun by zealous Hindu kings, such as Harsha who destroyed many of the eighth-century Buddhist monuments of Parihasapura during civil strife in AD 1100, as well as by others who used cut stones, from Buddhist monuments to build Hindu temples, and was continued by iconoclastic Muslim rulers in the fourteenth century and thereafter. During the past seven centuries, when Buddhism disappeared altogether and Hinduism barely survived, nature's gradual erosion added to the neglected temples, causing further decay and leaving modern visitors with but a glimpse of Kashmir's former architectural grandeur.

The Stupa

The most familiar Buddhist monument is the stupa and even though no architectural example survives, its importance and distinctive form can be determined from literature and from artistic evidence. Kalhana's chronicle mentions the construction of several stupas at various locations in

the Valley by the third century BC by the Mauryan emperor Asoka. Later, Meghavahana son of Gopaditya ruling around the middle of the fourth century is cited by Kalhana as being responsible for the construction of at least one well-known stupa. It is of interest that Meghavahana is said to have come to Kashmir from either Tibet or Ladakh, and these areas were to carry on the traditional type of architecture developed in Kashmir. Unfortunately, nothing is known of the appearance of this or other early stupas. Meghavahana is credited with numerous other donation and he his queens are associated with several Buddhist monuments, especially Viharas. Kalhana also mentions Lalitaditya's Buddhist monuments, notably the vihara and stupa at Ushkur and the great stupa erected at Parihasapura by his minister Chankuna, all of which were, most probably seen by him. The stupas reputed to be from Asoka's time were no doubt reconstructed several times before Kalhana saw them, and retained little of their original design.

Other literary records include references by various Chinese visitors, who have left accounts from at least as early as the fifth century. Although it would appear that most of the Chinese pilgrims travelling to India by way of Central Asia visited Kashmir, only the records of a few given any details of the Buddhist establishments existing there. The report of the best known of the Chinese visitors, HEUN Tsiang, is the most detailed chronicle before Kalhana, though very little about stupas is included. He mentions four

stupas built by Ashoka, each containing “...a pint measure of relics of Tathagata.” The story of Heun Tsiang’s trip, as told by the Hwui Li, referring to these same stupas notes their “.....wonderful height and great magnificence.” The eighth-century visitor, Ou-K’ong, spent more time in Kashmir, but his chronicle contains fewer details about either the Buddhists or their monuments than does the record of his illustrious predecessor, though he does refer to large numbers of stupas and images in the valley. The Archaeological reports, published early in this century, are able only to offer diagrams of stupa foundations and photograph of ruins, due to some restoration carried out in the last seventy-five years, the few foundations that can be seen today are probably in better condition than they were at any time in the past one thousand years.

Curiously, one early Hindu text, dating probably from the sixth or seventh century at the latest, provides descriptive information about the Kashmir stupa. The text is the Vishnudharmottara-Purana, which was compiled in Kashmir or the north-west. In a section titled ‘aiduka’ is a detailed description of the stupa, closely matching that seen on the small plaques discovered at Harwan. The inclusion of a Buddhist monuments in a Hindu text and the use of the name ‘Aiduka’ insisted of stupa been explained at length. According to the Vishnudharmottara-Purana, the base of a stupa should consist of a triple platform, called bhadrapiṭha, with four stairways, one for each of the four directions. Above this base is the middle section, called dharuva, with four sides. Atop this section are to be thirteen tiers, called bhūmikas. The entire structure is crowned with an amalasaraka and it is decorated with a medallion. In the middle section should be four guardians (lokapals), each caring a staff or lance. They are armored and dressed in the northern mode. The text goes on to tie all these to Siva worship, but as has been shown, what is described is clearly the Buddhist stupa, and if one compares that description to the images of stupas founded at Harwan as well as to some of the extent bronze votive models, the parallels are remarkable.

The oldest remaining evidence of the complete Kashmiri stupa is founded upon the small, terracotta votive plaques discovered at Harwan. R.C. Kak published it 1933, and a drawing based upon them

appeared in a latter publication. According to Kak, there remains an inscription in Brahmi characters of about the fourth century, stamped in relief below the stupa, consisting of the usual honorific phrases parsing the faith. Another similar plaque in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum in Srinagar belongs with this group. Also in that museum is a slightly different version, of stone, consisting of a seated Buddha flanked by attenuated versions of the same stupa.

The stupa represented in these plaques consists of three recessed platform (medhi), with a distinct decorative moulding around each. A continuous flight stairs ascends through all three levels to the main platform. Due to the sculptures low relief, it is not possible to determine whether or not such stairways were found on the other three sides. The one existing stupa foundation, at Harwan, appears to have but one flight of stairs, while other monuments, at Ushkur and Parihasapura, discussed below, had four, as do various votive bronzes from Gandhara and Kashmir. At each corner of the platform, on some of the plaque, are two large, free-standing columns. These are no doubt a lingering tradition from Ashokan times, the well-known Ashokan columns found with Buddhist monuments throughout India. The size and prominence given the columns indicate their importance. To date, no evidence of Ashokan columns has been founded at any Kashmiri Buddhist site.

The hemispherical stupa proper (anda) is circled with several horizontal bands, with decorative elements visible between two of them. These are most likely niches with figures inside, as founded often in Gandharan monuments, fragments which were found about the area of the Harwan site. The upper third of the dome is left plain and the top supports a number of struts, which in turn are surmounted with a series of circular umbrellas (chhatravali) of diminishing size. These are separated from one another by more such struts and culminate in a point from which fly several streamers. The design of the struts and umbrellas indicates wooden construction, as does the extreme height, exactly half of the entire monument. The number of umbrellas to be either eleven or thirteen, both canonically correct.

Some of these votive stupas also differ from the Harwan plaques in the inclusion of figures. On one

there is a seated image, rendered in the Kashmiri style, on each of the four sides of the drum. Only three are visible in the photograph but the different hand gestures (mudras) suggest that each of the four represents a Buddha in the manner of the Mahayana concept of the transcendent Buddha, with a different form for each of the four directions. This mandala-like arrangement is found on another of the Gandharan votive stupas but the four Buddha's are shown with the same gesture of meditation. This arrangement, of the stupa with four identical seated images of the Buddha, can be found at least as far back as Kushan times and is even considered by some scholars to have originated in the north-west and Kashmir.¹ Furthermore; some of the Gandharan bronze stupas also include additional figures. In one example, especially close to the Harwan plaques in the details of the stupa itself, there are four figures standing atop the dome, between the struts that support the umbrellas. These figures, dressed in the costume of the north-west, are identical, each holding along lance. They may be identified as guardians, or lokapals, as mentioned in the description of aiduka in the Vishnudharmottara-Purana. According to that document, the lokapal as should carry a spear (sula), be dressed in armor and correspond to the four directions. The text points specifically to the northern dress of the, guardians, and the images shown on this stupa are clearly so arrayed. About the base of this stupa are several figures, in postures of devotion, no doubt meant to portray donors, and one standing figure with a club, or stick held at the shoulder. At his feet is a sheep or a goat. Such figures about the base of, bronze images are commonly found in Kashmiri works of the eighth-tenth century. In one such bronze, attributed to the eighth or ninth century, are found two stupas, complete with triple terrace, for stairways, four corner columns, a seated image and the thirteen umbrellas. Although the guardians are absent, the donors and devotional figures about the bases are shown in foreign dress. The few votive models shown here along with the literary record of the Vishnudharmottara make it possible to reconstruct the Kashmiri stupa, despite the paucity of architectural remains. The small number of Kashmiri

ruins agrees in all respect with the models and there is nothing to suggest that their missing upper portions did not look like these plaques and votive bronzes.

The Kashmiri stupa was a towering edifice, quite different from the stupa known in most other parts of India, due mainly to the emphasis upon the umbrellas and the multi-tiered base or platform. This meant a reduction in the size of the drum as it was dominated by the upper and lower portion. The Kashmiri stupa often featured the use of free-standing columns, at each corner of the top terrace, and these were topped by animals just as were the famous Ashoken columns. Some examples included images inside niches, usually four in number, sometimes with varied gestures.

Reliefs of stupas with these same features are also known from Gandhara and from at least one example from the Mathura region exists. The later (actually a Jain Stupa) follows a similar arrangement with free-standing pillars and a stairway upon a raised platform. The body of the stupa proper is closer to the type found at other sites in India, such as Sanchi. And the elaborate umbrellas, so popular in Gandhara and Kashmir, are reduced to only one, above the Harmika, with garlands flying to each side. This stupa can be dated to the first or second century AD, making it earlier than any known Gandharan or Kashmiri ruins. It is thus still difficult to determine whether the design of the Kashmir stupa originated in Kashmir, Gandhara or even Mathura. Certainly the evidences of the Kashmiri votive plaques, which are earlier than the Gandharan bronze examples, indicate a probable Kashmiri origin. In any event, this type of stupa with its distinctive stairways and crowning elements of a tower-like configuration of umbrellas enjoyed a long life in the north-western regions of the subcontinent and remained a model for stupas in Tibet and the pagoda style in Central and East Asia.

Ushkur and Parihasapura

Apart from Harwan, the only Buddhist remains of archaeological value in Kashmir are at Ushkur and Parihasapura. Both are associated with the eighth-century Karkota ruler Lalitaditya² and are located in the same general area of the Valley. At Parihasapura, only the ruined foundations of three structures are

left. Likewise at Ushkur all that is visible are foundations, we think if future excavation will be done, it will turn up a greater number of remains, as the immediate area is yet to be fully explored and the terrain suggests the presence of other constructions. Despite the ruinous condition of both sites, enough exists to add considerable information to the history of Kashmiri Buddhist architecture, including evidences of the creation of a new, composite structure where the traditionally separate buildings used for worship (chaityas-halls) and residences for monks (viharas) are joined into one.

According to Kalhana, Ushkur was founded during Kushan times by the Turushka king Huvishka, and named Hushkapura. Cunningham, identified this town as the modern day Ushkur,³ close by the larger Baramulla, and Stein, agreeing with Cunningham, listed the records of various travelers whose visits there proved the importance of the place as an early stop upon entering the Valley as well as a religious centre of some consequence. Huen Tsiang spent his first night in Kashmir there and later the eleventh-century visitors Alberuni, calling it Ushkara, noted its proximity to Baramulla. The Chinese Ou-K'ong reported a vihara there in AD 759-763, and Kalhana described a number of Hindu monuments erected in the immediate area, though little of their presence has yet been discovered. The only monument visible today, of which just portions of the foundations remain, appears to be a stupa of cruciform plan. However, Huen Tsiang mentions spending the night at a temple, after visiting the several monasteries at Ushkur, but says nothing about a stupa. Kalhana alludes to a great vihara built by Lalitaditya but does not give the name or exact location. This vihara, according to Stein, may well be the 'Moung-ti-wei-houo-lo' noted by Ou-K'ong who visited the site shortly after the eighth-century ruler of Lalitaditya.⁴ Kalhana also relates the story of Lalitaditya erecting a large stupa at Ushkur. There seems little doubt that Lalitaditya erected his stupa over the remains of an earlier monument and by adding what may have been monks' cells into the surrounding wall, he created a composite structure. The stupa was thus moved inside the vihara,

occupying the centre position and thereby creating a temple, of the sort later found in Kashmiri Hindu monuments, with the central shrine and courtyard surrounded by arcaded walls. Otherwise unknown among the few Buddhist remains.

The base of the Ushkur stupa/temple is cruciform in plan, with stairs on each of the four sides, each side being nearly thirty-three meters across. The stonework is now disappeared. Sections of the plinth, between the stairs, consist of angular projections in the manner of other Kashmiri stupas, such as at Parihasapura. The ruinous condition of the Ushkur remains prevents further comparison, such as of the presence of rows of cells that once may have been built into it.

According to Aurel Stein, this configuration, featuring the four stairs, high plinth and cells built into the enclosure, constitutes a distinct, regional type. It is seldom found on the Indian subcontinent, where the single stairway and circular-plinth types dominate. Some similarity can be found in the late eighth-century eastern India Buddhist vihara at Paharpur, which does use this type of platform, but this is not typical, and the Paharpur platform, with its small shrines attached, is different from any foundation in Kashmir. The geographically closest parallel (in addition to the Texola site of Bhamala) is founded in the Central Asian site of Khotan. The Rawakvihara, dated to the fourth or fifth century, exhibits the same structural features, and Stein's early explorations clearly showed cells built within the surrounding wall, just as Kak proposed for Ushkur. The dates of the Rawakvihara, Bhamala and Ushkur are all roughly the same. Along with other such monuments founded in Central Asia and Afghanistan, Ushkur (and the Harwan votive plaques) reflects a new direction in the development of Buddhist architecture in the north-west.

This development probably began in Gandhara and most likely coincided with the increased growth of the Mahayana schools. It consisted of the erection of a cruciform temple, or possibly a stupa, inside the vihara composed. This shrine was elevated, often upon a triple, recessed platform and utilized a stairway on each of four sides. It was never widely

adopted in Gandhara but became popular in what Sarkar calls the “Trans-Indus” region. That would include Kashmir along with Central Asia and Afghanistan. The type continued in Ladakh and Tibet long after Buddhism had disappeared from the other areas, and is remarkable close to monuments in South-east Asia.

If Ushkur belongs to this late development in the history of Buddhist architecture, and further excavation may hold the answer, then a date of the seventh-eighth century would seem appropriate. Excavation may also determine if this design was original with Lalitaditya’s building or already present with the foundations over which his monuments was erected, foundations that probably date from Kushan times.

The site of ancient *Paraspor (Parihasapura)* lies on the *Srinagar Baramulla* National Highway nearly 2.5 miles south-west from *Shadipur*. On leaving the road and passing by some corn fields and after ascending a gradual slope, reaches the plateau on which an ancient mounds rise. The site according to *Kalhana* was founded by king *Lalitaditya* (701 A.D.) for the erection of a new capital city. He also found the site of *Sunisshitapura, Darpitapura, Phalapura and Lalitapura*. According to H.H Wilson rightly states that, “there was no part of India, where he did not erect statues and Temples of the Gods”.

Kalhana gave a brief account of the five large buildings that *Lalitaditya* had erected here viz.

- 1) The temple of *Mukta Keshwa* with a golden image of Vishnu.
- 2) The temple of *Parihasa-Keshava* with a silver image of Vishnu.
- 3) The temple of *Mahavaraha* with its images of Vishnu clad in golden armour.
- 4) The temple of *Govardhanadhara* with a silver image.
- 5) The so-called *Rajavihara* with a large quadrangle.

Now the Plateau is studded with heaps of ruins of which a few have been excavated. Among these the most important are three Buddhist structures, a *stupa*, a monastery and a *chaitya*. Their common features are the enormous size of the blocks of limestone used in their construction, the smoothness of their dressing, and the fineness of their joints. The

immense pile at the north-eastern corner of the Plateau is the *stupa*. Its superstructure has entirely disappeared, leaving behind a huge mass of destroyed boulders which completely cover the top of the base.

The base is 128' 2" square in plain, with offsets and a flight of steps on each side. The side walls which pilasters in front had decorated with carved figures of seated and standing atlantes. Some of these are in position, while others, which were lying about loose, have been transported to the *Srinagar* Museum.

On the south of the *stupa* there is the *Rajavihara*, or royal monastery. A flight of steps in the east wall gives access to one of its cells which served as a verandah. The monastery is a quadrangle of twenty-six cells enclosing a square courtyard which was originally paved with stone flags, some of which are extant leads. In the middle of the west wall, there are three cells preceded by a vestibule. It is probable that these were the apartments occupied by the abbot of the monastery. Near a corner of it is a large stone trough, which may have served as a water reservoir for bathing purposes. In one cell of monastery there was found a small earthen jug which contained forty-four silver coins in excellent preservation. They belonged to the time of kings *Vinayaditya, Vighraha, and Durlabha*. They are now exhibited in the Numismatic Section of the *Srinagar* Museum.

The next building on the south side of *Rajavihar* (monastery) is the *chaitya* built by *Lalitaditya*. It stands on a double base of the usual type. A flight of steps on the east side leads to the entrance, which must originally have been covered by a large trefoil-arch. This building possesses some of the most massive blocks of stone that have ever been used in Kashmiri temples. The floor of the sanctum is a single block 14' by 12' 6" by 5' 2". It is probable that its ceiling was supported on four columns; the bases of each corner survive at the four corners. The roof, which was probably supported on the massive stone walls of the *pradakshina*, may have been of the pyramidal type.

As already mentioned that the famous historian and author of the great treatise '*Rajatarangini*' *Kalhana* gives his description of five edifices among them three was Buddhist and other two may have been exclusively appropriated by Hindus.

The upland officially known as *Karewas* of Diver and *Parihasapura* are situated at the same place which was also chosen by King *Lalituditya Muktapida* for the erection of new capital city. As the Diver erection has been also mentioned in *Kalhana's* account. According to *Sir Aurel Stein* (translator of *Rajatarangini*). "The vicissitudes, through which *Parihasapura* has passed after the reign of *Lalituditya*, explain sufficiently the conditions of utter decay exhibited by *Divar* Ruins. The royal residence, which *Lalituditya* had placed at *Parihasapura*, was removed from there already by his son *Vajraditya*. The great change, effected by *Awantivarman* in the course of the *Vitasta*, removed the junction of the river with the *sindhu* from *Parihasapura* to the present *Shadipura*, nearly three miles away. This must have seriously impaired the importance of *Parihasapura*. Scarcely a century and a half after *Lalituditya's* death, king *Shankaravarman* (883-901 A.D.) used materials from *Parihasapura* for the construction of his town and temple at *Pattan....*".⁵ He further mentioned that "under king *Harsha* the colossal Buddha image of *Parihasapura* is mentioned among the new sacred statues which escaped being seized and melted down by that king. The silver image of Vishnu *Parihasakeshava* was subsequently carried away and broken up by the king *Harsha*. The final destruction of the temple of *Parihasapura* is attributed to *Sikander But-shikh* (1394-1416 AD)".

One realizes the importance of this structure when it is compared with the *Ushkur*, *Baramulla* and *Rawak* monuments noted above. It belongs to that late Buddhist tradition where the *chaityas* joined with the *vihara*, and is the best example of that arrangement in Kashmir. A cruciform, terraced structure by monks' cells, was furthermore known in Hindu monuments, many of which remains in Kashmir itself. This structure is similar in concept to the temples/stupa at *Ushkur*. There, the object to be venerated, the stupa, is moved inside the residential compound, the *vihara*, creating a new focus for that older structure. At *Parihasapura* it appears that the *vihara* contains a shrine, the *chatiya*, in place of stupa, but the basic arrangement is the same. Both constructions

represent a later phases of Buddhist architecture, one seldom founded in the rest of India due mainly to the decline of Buddhism by the seventh-eighth century. In fact, the cruciform, terraced structure surrounded by monks' cells is found frequently in Kashmiri Hindu monuments. Nevertheless, it most likely was first developed among Buddhist monastic establishments, such as *Ushkur* and *Parihasapura*, and later adopted for Hindu shrines.

As already discussed, the historical evidences mention a large number of Buddhist relics to have existed in this land. A detailed description of some important Buddhist sites and monuments need to be given in the following pages.

Narendrabhavana:

Surendra, the son of *Khagendra* built a *vihara*, known as *Narendrabhavana* in the town of *Soraka*, in the *Darada* country.⁶ Both the town and the *vihara* have not been traced so far.

Saurasvihara:

Surendra also built a *vihara* called *Saurasa Vihara* at *Soura* on the shore of the *Anchar Lake* in Kashmir. This also remains unidentified.

Jaloravihara:

Janaka established the *vihara* of *Jalora*, which may be identified with *Zohlar* in *Zaingir*, *Sopore*, south of Kashmir.

Dharmaranyavihara:

Raja Ashoka built a *vihara* in the town of *Vitastatra*. It is believed that its structure was lofty and high. He also built stupas at *Suskalettra*. Both the towns have been identified as *Vethavutur* and *Hukalitar*, situated in *Verinag* and *Badgham*. Some ancient relics are found at *Verinag* spring. At *Kukalitar*, a few statues of Buddha were found.

Krtyasramvihara:

Jaloka has been mentioned to have built the *vihara* of *Krtyasrama*. This place has been identified with the village *Kitshom*, near *Baramulla*, south Kashmir. *Ou-Kong* mentions this *vihara* as *Ki-tche*.

Jaskapuravihara:

Juska is said to have built a *vihara* at *Juskapura*, a village to the north of *Srinagar*.⁷ *Huska* has been

mentioned to have built a vihara at Huskapura (modern Uskur), mentioned as Hu-se-kia-lo by Hiuen Tsiang. It is also believed that Lalitaditya (725-753 A.D.) also built some Stupas and viharas at Uskur.

Amritabhavana:

Queen Amritaprabha built a vihara, known as Amritabhavana for the use of foreign monks. Ou-Kong mentioned it as Ngo-mi-to-po-wan. Amritabhavana has been identified at Antbhavan, Vicharnag. Three miles to the north of Srinagar. Remains of vihara have been found at this place.

Lo-stonpavihara:

A Ladakhi guru is said to have built a stupa. Called Lo-stumpa, during the reign of Meghavahana. It has not been located.

Nadavana vihara:

Queen Yukadevi, is said to have built a vihara at Nadavana, which was wonderful and beautiful. Nadavana has been identified with Narvor in Srinagar. The vihara is non-existent at present.

Indradevibhavana:

Queen Indradevi is said to have built a vihara, called Indradevibha-vanavihara. This vihara is non-existent at present.

Khadavihara:

Queen Khadana is said to have built a vihara at Kadanyar near Baramulla. No traces have been found.

Jayendravihara:

Jayendra, the maternal uncle of Parvarsena II built the vihara known as Jayendravihara. A colossal statue of Buddha was installed in it. Hiuen Tsiang has mentioned it as Che-ye-in-to-lo and on his arrival to Kashmir in 631 A.D. he stayed in it. This vihara was burned by Ksemagupta and its statue was melted down by him to make a statue of Siva. Location of this vihara requires to be searched either at Chattabal, Srinagar or at Ushkur in Baramulla. Attached villages of the vihara, being given to the Khasa chief, indicate Ushkur as the correct alternative.

Skandavhavanavihara:

Skandavhavanavihara was built by Skandagupta, one of the ministers of Yudhisthira. Its location has been determined as somewhere in the modern mohalla of Khandabavan in Srinagar. Nothing remains of this vihara.

Kridaramavihara:

Lalitaditya (725-753) is credited to have constructed the Kridarama-vihara, position where of is unknown.

Rajavihara:

Rajavihara was built by Lalitaditya at Parihasapura. It housed a colossal statue of Buddha besides other relics of gold and silver. Parihasapura was the new capital built by the King near confluence of the river Jhelum and the river Sindh on a plateau between Panznor and Hartarath near Divar-Ekamanpura. The plateau is nearly 2 miles long and 1 mile wide. The site of the capital and vihara is in ruins. Its material was transported by Skankravarman (883-902 A.D.) for the construction of Siva temple in Pattan (his new capital). Harsha also removed the remaining statues from this site. Examination of the site reveals that the Rajavihara was a quadrangle of 26 cells around a square courtyard paved with stones. These cells were used by the monks. These are located, base of other viharas.

Jayapidavihara:

Jiyapia or Kiyadipa (754-758 A.D.) built a large vihara at Jayapura, in which he placed three statues of Buddha. Jayapura has been identified as Anderkot (Safapora) near Sumbal Sonavari.

Ratnadevivihara:

Queen Ratnadivi built a magnificent vihara at Ratinpur, now known as Ratinpora. Nothing remains of this vihara.

Ahan:

At, Ahan, near Sumbal, on the banks of a tiny lake, known as Ahansar were a Buddhist site was discovered by F.M. Hassnain in 1962. He unearthed a pavement decorated with the same kind of Harwan tiles, some pebble style walls and a dilapidated stupa. No further excavation has been done at the site.

Kuvanavihara:

It was specially constructed as a venue of the fourth Buddhist Council of Kashmir, held during the reign of Kanishka. It is also known as Kundalvanavihara.

Raithana and Rajagir:

The village of Raithan is at distance of 12 kilometers from Srinagar. It is situated in the vicinity of Yecchgam and Yecchkot, the original habitations of the Yakshas, the guardian tribes of the fourth Buddhist Council records. Many a Buddhist relics are found in the area, including the famous Budiha panel.

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