Sources for the Study of Ancient Indian Buddhism

The sources for the study of ancient Indian history may be broadly divided into two parts:
1. Indigenous Sources= Indian
2. Foreign Sources= non-Indian

Indigenous Sources may further be divided into two parts:
1. Literary Sources (also called Textual Sources)
2. Archaeological Sources (also called Non-Textual Sources)

Literary Sources

In the category of the Literary or Textual Sources falls the entire gamut of literature. This literature is broadly divided into three parts:
1. Religious Literature
2. Non-Religious or Secular Literature
3. Śaṅgam Literature

Blasphamy
Apostacy

Debate

Ātman, Brahman, Karman saṃskāra/saṃkhārapudgala/puggala
Numbers
plurality

Religious Literature

As there were three major religious traditions in ancient India, the religious literature is divided into three parts:
1. Brāhmaṇical-Hindu textsBrāhmaṇical-Hinduism
2. Buddhist texts
3. Jaina texts

Brāhmaṇical-Hindu Texts

1. The Vedas: Ṛg (c.1500 BCE, 1028 ślokas/hymns divided into ten maṇḍalas/chapters, Indra (Āryan Inda/Sakka=Tuṣita/Tāvatiṃsa Heaven), Agni), Sāma, Yajur, Atharva

Yajña (sacrifice) a god that links this world with the nether words

Marriage= Agni is a witness in Saptapadi7 volition

2. The Brāhmaṇas: commentaries on the Vedic hymns such as Aitareya, Taittrīya, Śatapatha, Kauseiṭaki.
3. The Āraṇyakas: works on philosophy and ethics such as Aitreya and Taittrīya.
4. The Upaniṣads: works on philosophy and ethics, such as Īś, Aitreya, Taittrīya, Kaṭha, Svetāśavtāra,and Chāndogayā.

Radhakrishnan   Six Upaniṣads

5. The Upavedas: treatises on sciences and art. Each Veda containd an Upaveda i.e. a subsidiary Veda. The Gandharvaveda, a subsidiary of the Sāma Veda, deals with the art of music (vocal and intrumental) and dancing. The Śilpaveda, the Upaveda of the Atharva Veda, deals with architecture.
6. The Sūtras: 1. Gṛha Sūtra (the rites and sacrifices to be performed at home) and 2. Dharma Sūtra (a manual on Dharma).
7. The Purāṇas: Viṣṇu, Vāyu, Brahma, Bhaviṣya, Vāmana, Skandha, Liṅga, Śiva, Bhāgavata, Garuḍa, Nārada, Kūrma, Brahmāṇḍa, Varāha, Padma, Matsya, Mārkaṇḍeya and Agni.
8. The Epics: The Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata.

Jainas= 3
Hindus= 300
Buddhists= 1 Dasaratha Jātaka Vārāṇasī
Before Gotra/gotta incest Yama and Yamī go=cow gotra=cowshed sevenniyoga

BUDDHIST LITERATURE
Buddhist literature, most of which was composed in Pāli language, may be divided into two categories: Canonical and post-Canonical.

Canonical Literature
The Canonical literature (Buddhavacana), which exists in the shape of *Tipiṭaka*(Sk= *Tripiṭaka*. Three Baskets/Collection)*,* consists of the following texts: Religious texts
Historical information can only be gleaned as indirect information
King Bimbisāra= Ajātasattu/Ajātaśatru Vajji Kingdom Minister Vassakāra

Three drives= hunger, thirst, sex
dhutaṅga= austere practices
vīriya=semen

Dāsa=slave

Rules= categorized
Most severe rules= Pārājikā (defeat) offences= expulsion from the Saṃgha= four= sex, theft, murder, claiming something which is not true (serious lies)= disrobed= intention

Bhikkhu/Bhikṣu Mahādeva

The Vinaya Piṭaka= Rules of Discipline
Saṃgha= Order of monks and nuns
Death of the Buddha= Mahāparinirvāṇa
Buddist texts of the Tipiṭaka are not unitary texts= They have literary strata belonging to different periods

Pāli Text Society, England
Vinaya Piṭaka= 5 vols

The Sutta Piṭaka (Discourses/sermons of the Buddha): It consists of the following divisions:
Evaṃ me suttaṃ= Thus have I heard
Every discourse (sutta/sūtra)
      1. *Aṅguttara Nikāya= 5 vols*
      2. *Dīgha Nikāya= 3 vols*
      3. *Majjhima Nikāya= 3 vols*
      4. *Saṃyutta Nikāya= 5 vols*
      5. *Khuddhaka Nikāya:* It consists of these texts:
            1. *Khuddhakapāṭha*
            2. *Dhammapada= 423 gāthās*
            3. *Jātaka= 547 stories= 6vols*
            4. *Sutta-Nipāta*
            5. *Petavatthu*
            6. *Vimānavatthu*
            7. *Theragāthā*
            8. *Therīgāthā*
            9. *Buddhavaṃsa*
            10.*Cariyapiṭaka*
            11. *Apadāna*
            12. *Niddesa* (*Mahāniddesa* and *Cullaniddesa*)
            13. *Udāna*

14. *Itivuttaka*
15. *Paṭisambhidāmagga.*

Igatpuri

The Abhidhamma Piṭaka

The *AbhidhammaPiṭaka* (literally "higher dhamma") is a collection of texts in which the fundamental doctrinal principles specified in the *Sutta Piṭaka* are systematically restructured and organized. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* consists of seven books: metaphysical/philosophical

1.*Dhammasaṅgani*
2. *Vibhaṅga*
3. *Kathāvatthu*
4. *Puggalapaññati*
5. *Dhātukathā*
6. *Yamaka*
7. *Paṭṭhāna.*

Post-CanonicalBuddhist Literature

1. *Milindapañha= Questions of King MenanderSāgala= SialkoṭNāgasena ātman= soul, anātaman*
2. *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*
3. Various *aṭṭhakathās. Commentaries on the texts of the Tipiṭaka*

THE JAINA LITERATURE

1. Twelve Aṅgas
2. Twelve Upāṅgas
3. Ten Paiṇṇas
4. Six Cheya Suttas

Ātman, Brahman, Karman

The Śaṅgam Literature

1. Śilappadikāram
2. Eṭṭuttogai

3. Pattuppāṭṭu
4. Maṇimékhalai= Buddhist themes
5. Puṟanānūṟu
6. Pattupāṭṭu
7. Padiṟṟuppattu

Purāṇa itihāsa
Secular Texts
1. Chronicles: *Rājataraṅgiṇī.*
2. Grammatical Works: Paṇinī's*Aṣṭādhyāyī*, Patañjali's*Mahābhāṣya.*
3. Biographies: *Harṣa-carita.*
4. Scientific Works: *Sūrya Sidhānta* and the *RomakSidhānta* of Ārya Bhaṭṭa. CharakSidhānta and SusrutaSidhānta.
5. Works on Politics: Kauṭilya's*Arthaśāstra.*
6. Plays: Kālidāsa's plays: *Mālavikāgnimitraṃ*, *Vikramorvasya* and *Śakuntalaṃ.*
7. Poems: *Meghadūta.*
8. Dictionaries, lexicons, and Manuals

Foreign Textual Sources

Western Sources
Alexander: 327-326 BCE: Caṇakya/Kauṭilya/Viṣṇugupta
Candragupta Maurya= Nandas at Pāṭaliputra c.313/321 BCE
305 BCE SeleucusNikatorBindusāraSandrakottos
Indo-Greeks= Yavana

Roma

London= LondraLontoo
Gaṇeśā
Legends

Indica of Megasthenese(Indica) and quotes from this text by Arrian, Strabo, Justin and others.

Arabian and Persian Sources

Chachnāmah Arabic=Persian
MdQāsim Al-Hajjāj 711 Chach Dāhir
Dhimmi Zhimmiahl-al-kitābJizia
569

KhamoshPani

Chinese
Faxian (Fa-hsien)=Foguoji, Xuanzang (Hsuan-tsang, Yuan Chwang)= Da Tang Xiyuji, and Ijing (Iching).

Tibetan Sources
Tāranātha

Sri Lankan Sources
The *Dīpavaṃsa*and the*Mahāvaṃsa* with its supplement the *Cūḷavaṃsa.*
Aśoka's coronation (abhiṣeka) took place 218 years after the Mahāparinirvāṇa of the Buddha

NON-TEXTUAL OR NON-LITERARY SOURCES OR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

Archaeology is the most important new source of evidence for the study of ancient Indian history. It is the science of systematic study of antiquities and the construction of earlier history of nations and peoples from the remains of the buildings, burial places, implements, utensils, weapons, ornaments and the like, most of which lie buried in the ground, layer upon layer. These buried remains when unearthed, show the contours of the existence of man and in this way archaeology has "extended history's view backward in time a hundred fold." Extensive use of archaeological evidence by providing tangible and three-dimensional facts in the material remains, discovered through survey and excavation, has enriched ancient Indian history. Knowledge of the nature of the archaeological source and the techniques of handling it are essential for any understanding of the ideas of history in ancient India. The archaeological evidence may largely be divided into four broad categories:

1. Inscriptions
2. Numismatics
3. Architecture, sculpture, paintings etc and
4. Other archaeological antiquities, remains andsurface collections.

1. Inscriptions

Inscriptions though are generally included in the category of archaeological sources, but in reality form a link between the textual and archaeological sources. These inscriptions engraved on rocks, stones, rock-pillars, iron pillars, caves, slabs, bricks, sculptures, ivory plaques, conch & tortoise shells, terracotta seals and copper and bronze plates, have played a stellar role in the reconstruction of ancient Indian history. Inscriptions tend to be far more accurate as data on a particular period than the textual sources. They are perforce brief as inscribing is a difficult process. With few exceptions like the *praśasti*s (eulogies), they contain to the point and essential information. Further more, as they cannot be tempered with after they are engraved, passages cannot be added or changed as can be the case

with the textual material which was passes from generation to generation orally and more than one version of the same text in most cases is available which happened as a consequence of the editing, re-writing and/or interpolation processes. These inscriptions may be grouped into various categories including the sepulchral inscriptions, religious & mythological, commercial, regnal or state inscriptions, historical and religious inscriptions etc. From the epigraphical study of these inscriptions, the social, economic, political and cultural conditions of the people of a particular period may be obtained and their history reconstructed. From these inscriptions can be known the names and titles of the some of the kings who issued them, chronological history of some dynasties, achievements of kings, extent of kingdoms, identification of settlements, various aspects of the policies followed by the issuing kings and matters relating to script, calligraphy and historical geography etc. Aśoka, who is almost exclusively known through his inscriptions, was the first to issue a large number of them. They are mostly in Brāhmī script, but some were issued in Kharoṣṭhī, Greek and Aramaic. The important known edicts of Aśoka are the 14 rock edicts and 7 pillar edicts. It is on the basis of these and other minor edicts that we known of his dhamma policy, an idea about the extent of his kingdom, various titles used by him (e.g. *piyadassi, Devanampiya*), various officials of the state (e.g. *rājukas*), contemporary kings with whom he had contacts and many other miscellaneous facts regarding him. Other important inscriptions are the Allahabad Pillar Inscription (*Praśasti*) of Samudragupta composed by his court poet Hariseṇa, the Aihole inscription of Pulake in II and Gwalior Inscription of Bhoja. Hathigumpha is the most important cave inscription. The inscriptions may be divided into two categories: Official and private. The official inscriptions basically glorify the deeds and accomplishments of the kings who issued them. The private inscriptions, which are not very many in numbers, were issued by private individuals and are mostly in the form of religious donations. They are mainly engraved on buildings of religious nature and statues of deities.

We depend too a very large extent on the inscriptions "not only for the political history, but also for nearly all the chronological details that we require in connection with the linguistic, palaeographic, literary, religious, social and administrative

developments, and, in short, in connection with every development of research into the past of India." The chronology of kings and events has also been largely reconstructed from epigraphical evidence. The land grant inscriptions of the post-Gupta period because they are legal charters pertaining to the granting of land are providing very interesting evidence on this period, which evidence may probably change our entire understanding of this period.The inscriptions, however, do not suffice either to restore a reasonably comprehensive dynastic list or to define the regnal years and complete territorial holdings of those kings whose name survive.

2. Numismatics= Coins

Numismatics has become an independent subject of study just as history is, and numismatists have contributed to history while historians have used numismatic evidence for historical writing. Among the non-textual sources, inscriptions and coins provide the most important materials for writing the history of ancient India. But between them there is a difference in nature. Inscriptions in fact are the earliest form of written history in prose and thus are capable of betraying the historical ideas of their authors, whereas a small coin has hardly any space for even two complete sentences scarcely enough in which to espy any lucid idea of history or much historical facts on the part of the issuing authority. Even if we uncover any thing like that it is disconnected and does not give much more than what is already known. The coins very rarely correct and/or supplement historical ideas and facts. They either authenticate or exemplify them. Thus, the biggest problem with numismatics is that they donor tender unequivocal evidence of historical thought. In regions and epochs where coins alone have played the major role in the reconstruction of history they have not succeeded in presenting more than a skeletal silhouette, to which even a few sentences in literary sources or inscriptions have proved adequate to bring flesh and blood.

Indian coinage may broadly be divided into two series: those issued by kings of foreign origin and those struck by kinds of indigenous origin.

The coins of Indo-Greeks, the Indo-Scythians, the Scytho-Parthians, the Yavanas, theŚaka-Pahlavas, the Śaka-Satraps and the

Ku|as carry the names of kings with full appellations as well as their personal epithets such as *Soter, Epithanes, Basileus, BasileusBasile n, Shao, Shaonano, Shaonano Shao, Dikaios*etc. Thus, the status of the king, even though it may have been paltry in some cases, could be easily known. In certain cases, even the status of the king's father was mentioned. But the Indian kings, especially those who ruled before the ChristianEra, when their issued inscribed coins for the first time, were not very particular even to mention the title of *rājā* on their coins. Some exceptions can only be found in the case of the coins of some of the Gupta kings, whose personal epithets (*virudha*) and titles such as *Vikrama, Parākrama, Mahendra, Rājā, Mahārājādhirāja, Rājādhirāja, Mahārājādhirājaparambhaṭṭāraka*occur. It is very curious to notice that even though a local Indian king would not balk from using grandiose and pompous titles in his inscriptions, a great emperor might disregard coins as a mode of exhibiting his ephemeral authority. On the other hand, the Gupta kings are meticulous to inscribe on their coins legends which express the well-known Indian idea that by the merit accumulated by sacrifice or good deeds the king may become equal to the gods or become an Indra and accomplish heaven.

Assuming that kings were aware of the fact that coin-legends could serve as indoctrination as well as for perpetuating their fame, it may be insinuated that whereas the kings of foreign origin laid emphasis on their material power and the outward show of regal pageantry and resplendence, the Indian kings, who also trumpeted their *conquest of the whole earth* in inscriptions, preferred on their coins to underscore their righteous deeds and their belief in the doctrine of *karma*. Thus, in the case of Indian kings, the *duty* aspect rather than the *power* aspect of the king was more emphasized. This may perhaps demonstrate why most kings did not care to issue coins with regal titles, or, in the post-Gupta period, often did not bother to strike their own coins at all if normal trade purposes were well served by older coins, no matter whether these coins were issued by the predecessor kings of their own dynasty or by foreign dynasties.

Though some coins do mention dates and era, no accepted notion of chronology is revealed in coins. Kaniṣka started a new system of time reckoning which was followed by his successors, which is mentioned in the inscriptions, but strangely no reference is

found to this in the coins. Śaka-Satraps of western India and later Guptas in their silver coins, used dates. Some kings like the Maukharis, Īśvaradatta, Pratāpaśīla and Śīlāditya, on the other hand, dated their coins in regnal years.

Another important characteristic of the ancient Indian coins is that the element of space predominated over the element of time. The coin-types are primarily local in character and at no time the same kind of coinage was current throughout any of the great empires. Different and distinct varieties were in circulation in different areas at the same time during the reign of the Guptas and the Śātavāhanas.

3. Architecture, Sculpture, and Paintings

Architectural remains are the most important archaeological source of information on ancient Indian history. Life of an ancient Indian in its vivid forms is discernable from the building remains and various sculptures and paintings of the period. The remains of various buildings including palaces, fortifications, drains, wells, temples, stūpas, caityas and monasteries are great sources of information on the material and individual skills of the people as well as their social and religious history. Most of the history of the Indus Civilisation is known to us from its architectural and sculptural remains. The architectural remains of the Indus Civilisation give evidence of an advanced sense of civic planning and organisation. Each of the urban settlements of this civilisation was divided into the citadel area, where the essential institutions of civic and religious life were located, and the residential area where the urban population resided. Sculptures reflect the religious, cultural and artistic attitudes of the people of the time to which they belong. For example, whole lot of *Jātaka* stories are sculptured at Bharhut and other places. The paintings at Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh and many other places depict the life of ancient India in its various aspects. At Ajanta, for example, are shown "princes in their palaces, ladies in their harems, coolies with their loads slung on their soldiers, beggars, peasants and ascetics, together with all the many beasts and birds and flowers of India, in fact the whole life of the times, perpetuated on the dim walls of the caves...."

4. Archaeological Remains, Antiquities, and Surface Collections

As once Cunningham put it: "Archaeology is not limited to broken sculptures, old buildings and mounds of ruins, but includes everything that belonged to the world's history..." It is equally significant that an exact and detailed record be kept of all the observations made on the ground-surface. Potsherds found in the excavations as well as on the ground have been of immense help in determining the span of various cultures. Now the cultures related to the potteries like the *Painted Grey Ware, Northern Black Polished Ware* and *Black & Polished Ware* have been to a great extent classified and dated. Beads, objects and ornaments of various metals, glass objects etc help not only in determining the movements of materials and men from one place to another, but also in the location of trade routes and condition of the economy. The seals from the Indus Civilisation, numbering more than 2,000, appear to have been used either as some kinds of authority-letters or tokens by the merchants. They are small in size and are flat, square or rectangular in shape and have a pictorial motif, both human and animal, as well as an inscription. The inscriptions on the seals have not been deciphered satisfactorily as yet.

COMPARISON BETWEEN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND TEXTUAL SOURCES

For the periods, for which no textual evidence is available or it cannot be used i.e. pre-historic and proto-historic, archaeology is text-free. For the historic period, archaeological evidence is used both as *text-aided* as well as *text-free*. In the case of India, however, archaeology has still not developed as an independent subject. Most of the themes are dictated by textual evidence and archaeological evidence is often used to substantiate and elaborate upon themes derived through textual material. Thus, most of Indian archaeology is text-dependent archaeology. Techniques of archaeological excavation have now been greatly improved and the interpretation of archaeological data can provide substantial evidence for historical reconstruction. It is a great pity that historians of ancient India make so little use of archaeological data since the evidence which it provides is of major importance.

The results of most of the excavations till recently may be stated to have been the procurement of pieces of sculpture and the clearance and conservation of structural remains. The principle of

stratigraphy, which had already found successful use outside India, is seldom mentioned in India and its absence leads to really serious confusion.

The facts provided by the material remains discovered through excavation and surface survey not only corroborate literary evidence but also help in filling up the gaps left by the textual sources. Objects of everyday use, such as ceramics, beads, implements of various kinds, are found in abundance and some of them provide an excellent base for statistical analysis. For example, statistical study of the shape and texture of various wares provide evidence of the pattern of living, but the distribution of a particular type of ceramic culture in any kind of geographical region can give clues to trade and commercial distribution or migration of people. Similarly, coins can provide a good base for statistical analysis.

The beginnings of Indian history can now be traced back to remote antiquity not on the basis of the obvious myths of the textual material, but on the basis of the concrete evidence from archaeological material. The foundations of the Indian civilisation can now be more clearly defined and most of the credit for this goes to the archaeological sources.

However, it must be remembered that to bring the textual and archaeological sources together is not an easy task and often produces conflicts, strains and uneasy balances. The nature of the evidence controls the nature of the perception. A scholar, largely depending upon textual sources, would think of the Sākyans, Mallas and Magadhans as groups of people identifiable as more or less artificial organisations of people based on such ties as politics, proximity, geography, tradition and culture etc. On the other hand, an archaeological-minded scholar would be more interested in the material culture and for him buildings, fortifications, weapons, ornaments, implements, crafts, technological processes, pottery and the like are the main pillars of evidence. They mostly either look from a different angle or different aspects altogether. Archaeological material used in conjunction with the textual material can be misused and abused if employed only to illustrate what is known from the texts. Often square pegs are fitted into round holes resulting in *scissors and paste* history. In this kind of exercise, individual monuments and other features of settlements reflected in textual

documents are not only assumed to be identifiable or locatable among archaeological materials, their identification is assumed to be of primary importance. In fact, however, not many sites can be equated so easily. Moreover, the illusion that the textually known can be equated *en masse* with the archaeologically known has generated insurmountable problems. But for this the archaeologists themselves are largely to be blamed because they depend upon the methodology and paradigms spelled out by those who mostly depend upon the strength of the textual evidence. Archaeology still is not an independent subject in its own right and hence the problems. Whereas textual evidence is largely concerned with the life of the élite, archaeological evidence provides information not only on the life of the élite but also of the masses. Settlements when they are excavated reveal evidence of people at all levels of society. Textual evidence has been used more often than not so far mainly to obtain lists of kings and their activities. Archaeology, on the other hand, is not concerned with the lists of kings and the like. The fact that archaeology is concerned with the study of material remains and that it uses technological change as a basis for recognising cultural and other changes directs attention to these much neglected aspects of the ancient past such as social structure, technological change and the economy. Dynastic history is merely a part of the much larger fabric which goes into the making of history. We now have a fairly good knowledge of the various activities of the people of the Indus civilization that it is possible to reconstruct their daily activities, yet we do not know the name of a single of their rulers. Archaeology, in this way, demonstrates that the pursuit of compiling regnal tables may be interesting to a few but it is marginal to the essential study of the past.

A salient feature that comes to mind in the archaeology-aided history in the Indian context is the problem of chronology. Dates in ancient Indian history are mostly based on the textual evidence, just as various periods, reigns and ages are based on textual sources exclusively. Archaeology has up to now played a second fiddle to *textual history*. Normally it is left to the archaeologist to relate his data with the textual material and not *vice-versa*. An important example of this is the date of the Buddha. As now it is believed that the generally accepted date of the Buddha's death (c.483

BCE) is older by about 100 years than in reality, all that was archaeologically known from the sixth century BCEonwards, has been related to the age of the Buddha! In reality this material should have been shown as pre-Buddhist or not dated on the higher range.

Studying the two sources together serves one very important purpose. Textual sources cannot be called downright mythical or unhistorical, as some people still take them to be. Now some of the settlements mentioned in the textual sources have been identified beyond any doubt. The travel accounts of Faxian and Xuanzang, for example, were used by Alexander Cunningham in fixing and finding out dozens of ancient Indian settlements. The mention of certain fortification-walls, moats and the like in the textual sources and their corroboration in the archaeological sources proves that though there is a tendency in the textual sources to exaggerate and the archaeological data on the whole is quite limited, yet the two can offer sufficient material by way of corroboration. Their utility can also be immense when the two contradict each other. The bringing together of both archaeological and historical evidence can greatly amplify various deficiencies in the textual records, repair their omissions by *highlighting* and *correcting* those deficiencies and supply not only confirmation but precise meaning from material relics. But at the same time we must remember that "any picture of the past recaptured by our inadequate techniques from the fragmentary evidence available to us cannot be more than a rough approximation to the truth, a fleeting glimpse of conditions and developments to a great extent outside the range of discovery" (F.T. Wainwright).

The underlying assumption behind the joint use of textual and archaeological materials is to promote full co-ordination of the two from the initial stages of research. Dymond, a proponent of full coordination, for example, says that "we have a moral duty to find out as much of the truth as possible and should therefore be prepared to use whatever evidence survives. If it is of different kinds, then we must use it in all of its variety to co-ordinate it" (Dymond 1974: 99). Leon, on the other hand, promoted separation rather than coordination between the two, so that each could provide its own perspective and then be tested against the other. The fundamental difficulty in co-ordination arises from the fact that they are essentially different in

nature. They require different methods of approach and are subject to different sets of limitations. They also produce conclusions which are fundamentally different in nature. The archaeological material as well as the historical material at its best represents only a part of the whole. To bring them together, i.e., produce a historical synthesis is not an easy task at all and often produces conflicts, strains, and uneasy balances. The nature of the evidence controls the nature of the perception. The historian, for example, thinks of Sākyans, Mallas, Magadhans, and Pāñcālas as groups of people identifiable as more or less artificial organisations of people based on such ties as politics, proximity, geography, tradition, and culture etc. The archaeologist, on the other hand, would be more interested in the material culture and for him buildings, fortification, implements, crafts, technological processes, pottery, weapons, ornaments, and the like are the main pillars of evidence. Both these sources may belong to the same chronological bracket, but one sees hardly any point of contact between them. They either look from a different angle or different aspects altogether. What we call *historical synthesis* may not necessarily mean that historical evidence has embraced ideas from outside its own sphere. More often than not, the so-called similarity is more in appearance than reality because it is produced by assumptions combined with the evidence to produce conclusions, not by the evidence itself. Although we can scarcely expect the practitioners of traditionally defined disciplines to embrace each other warmly on all occasions, or even to be concerned with the same range of substantive historical questions, the common processes underlying the formation of our evidence would seem to suggest a need for developing a sustained and fruitful dialogue amongst them. It is precisely in the field of historical archaeology that we might expect to see the initial stirring of a unified science; for, understandably the historical-archaeologist-possesses a particular sensitivity to the complexity of both kinds of evidence, and has important contributions to make toward illuminating the laws of cultural-formation processes. Whatever we consider ourselves to be historians, archaeologists, or historical-archaeologists, our substantive research is likely to involve consideration of both historical and archaeological evidence. Archaeological materials used in conjunction with the historical can be misused and abused if employed only to illustrate what is known

from the texts. Often square pegs are fitted into round holes resulting in *scissors and paste* history. In this exercise individual monuments and other features of settlements reflected in textual documents are not only assumed to be identifiable or locatable among archaeological materials, their identification is assumed to be of primary importance. In fact, however, not many sites can be equated so easily. Moreover, the illusion that the historically known can be equated *en masse* with the archaeologically known has generated insurmountable problems. Archaeologists largely depend upon the methodology and paradigms spelled out by historians on the strength of textual evidence.

A salient issue that comes to mind in archaeology-aided history in the Indian context, is the problem of chronology. Mostly dates in ancient Indian history are based on textual evidence; just as various periods, reigns and ages are based on textual dates almost exclusively. Archaeology has up to now played a secondary role. Normally it is left to the archaeologist to relate his data with the textual material and not *vice-versa*. An important matter in this case is the date of the Buddha. As, according to our study, this date was thought to have been nearly a century older than we have argued it to have been, archaeologists have tried to collate their material findings of the sixth century BCE with the age of the Buddha. Many younger dates were stretched to fit into that age. Dates of various wares, especially the NBPW, appear to lack any absolute precision. Dating itself in archaeology is not without hazards. C-14 dates even after calibration still must be expressed in very broad terms, especially when one deals with the still unexplained distortions that occur in the first millennium BCE. Such problems have often led archaeologists to leave the textual evidence alone. It appears to an extent quite justified. As can be seen from chapters on textual and archaeological perspectives, these two forms of evidence even when belonging to the same time brackets, have very little to offer to each other. Of the more than four thousand references that can be found in our textual material, most are of a kind for which there is no way to relate to archaeological material. Despite the fact that nearly half of the settlements mentioned are reasonably identifiable, only about a dozen or so fortifications, monasteries, and other monuments can be identified in the archaeological remains. If archaeological material abounds in pottery types, coins, building materials, and metals, the textual material mainly consists of names of kings, queens, monks, traders, settlement types, commercial information, and social classes. Only a few *cetiyas,* moats, fortification-walls, halls etc. may be collated and rest is very tentative and generalised. But such an exercise does solve one problem. Textual sources cannot be called downright mythical or unhistorical, as some people still take them to be. Now nearly all agree that the Buddha was not a mythical character and that at least half of the settlements if not more that he is supposed to have visited, in fact did adorn the plains of India. The mention of certain fortification-walls

and moats in the literature and their corroboration in the excavations proves that though there is a tendency in the literature towards exaggeration and the archaeological data is on the whole very limited, yet the two can offer something by way of corroboration.

The bringing together of both archaeological and historical evidence can greatly amplify various deficiencies in the historical record and repair its omissions by *highlighting* and *correcting* the written record. The coordination of reliable conclusions from each allows a synthesis fuller and more revealing than that could be reached by a single approach. But at the same time, one must not forget that "All human activity in its several dimensions is inextricably complicated, and each of our conceptions offers at best only a faint reflection of one aspect of it... any picture of the past recaptured by our inadequate techniques from the fragmentary evidence available to us cannot be more than a rough approximation to the truth, a fleeting glimpse of conditions and developments to a great extent outside the range of discovery" (Wainwright 1962: 123).

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