

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA**

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3882
ANSWERED ON:04.09.2012
BUDDHIST RELICS
Satpathy Shri Tathagata

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has recently found Buddhist relics in Odisha;
- (b) if so, the details thereof;
- (c) the steps taken to preserve these relics;
- (d) whether the Union Government has received any request from the State Government of Odisha to hand over the relics to the State for their better protection and to attract Buddhist tourists from all over the world; and
- (e) If so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND MINISTER OF CULTURE (KUMARI SELJA)

(a) to (c) Yes, Sir. During the excavation by Archaeological Survey of India, Bhubaneswar Circle, three sets of relic casket containers made of Khondalite stone were recovered from the south, east and north directions of Mahastupa at Lalitgiri, District Cuttack, Odisha in the year 1985. Within this Khondalite stone, bigger encasing of casket, is found a steatite casket housing a silver casket and within the silver casket, a gold casket has been found. The other two relic caskets were also found with similar arrangement of which one contained pieces of charred bones. The container placed in the southern direction of the Stupa did not have relic caskets, it was found empty.

The relic caskets are in safe custody and well preserved in Bhubaneswar Circle.

(d) & (e) Yes Sir. A request from the State Government of Odisha was received. After due deliberation Archaeological Survey of India has decided to set up a site museum at Lalitgiri to house the sacred Buddhist Relics retrieved during the excavation at Lalitgiri.