

# Excavations at **KANAGANAHALLI**

(Sannati, Dist. Gulbarga, Karnataka)



**K P Poonacha**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

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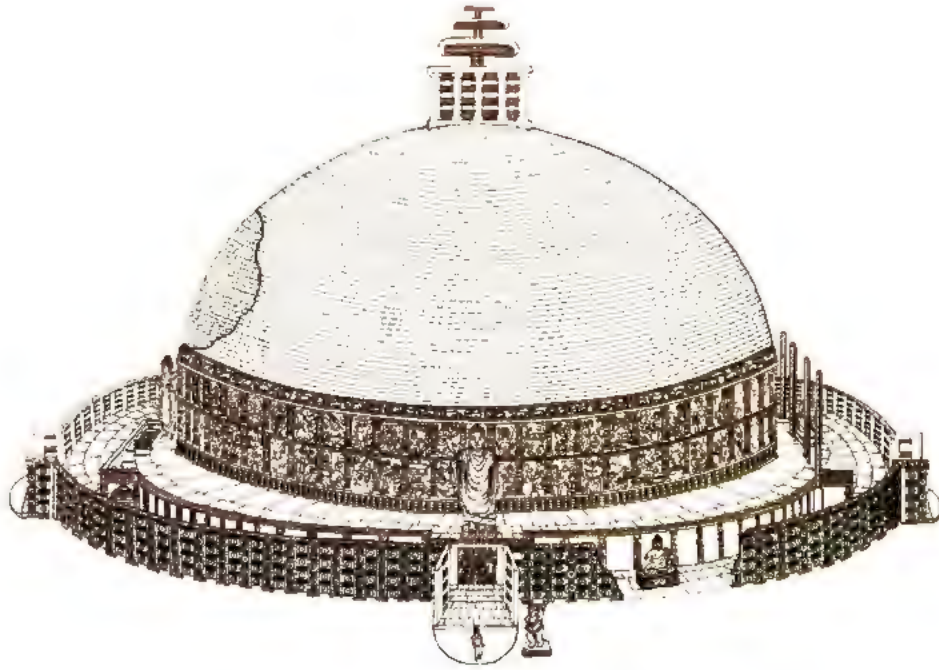


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(SANNATI)  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DIST. GULBARGA  
KARNATAKA**



प्रत्यक्षं वदत

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KANAGANAHALLI (SANNATI)  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DIST. GULBARGA  
KARNATAKA**



**K. P. POONACHA**



प्रत्नकीर्तिमपावृणु

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*Cover : Front : A View of the Excavated Mahā Stūpa, Kanaganahalli*

*Back : Image of Seated Buddha, Kanaganahalli*

*Frontispiece : Adhōlōka Mahāchaitya (Conjectural View)*

*Kanaganahalli, District Gulbarga*

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# FOREWORD

**K**arnataka rose to prominence during the 3rd century BC, evident from a series of minor rock-edicts of Aśōka, found scattered in Chitradurga, Koppal, Bellary and Raichur districts of Karnataka, significantly located in the areas rich with mineral resources. Occurrence of major rock-edicts nos. 12-14 and separate rock-edicts 1 and 2 of Mauryan emperor Aśōka reported recently from Sannati, Chitapur Taluk, Gulbarga District, Karnataka, further strengthened the opinion of various scholars that the northern Karnataka region played an important role in the formative stages of the early history of Karnataka and the spread of Buddhism.

Immediately after the Mauryas the Sātavāhanas, subjugating the Śuṅgas in the Vindhyan region in the 1st century BC, forayed into the Aśmaka region which included the Andhra and the lower Deccan including the northern part of Karnataka and in the process many Buddhist centres emerged. These new centres in fact were further extensions of the artistic traditions of Bhārhut and Sāñchi. Particular mention may be made of Pīthalkhōra, Karla, Bhāja, Bedsa, Nasik, Tēr, Bhokardan in the Deccan and Amarāvati, Kondāpur, Nāgarjunakoṇḍa and other such sites in the lower Krishna valley of Andhra Pradesh. Sannati, a prolific early historic centre which formed part of the Aśmaka region has emerged as the most important Buddhist site of the Sātavāhana period as evident from cultural vestiges found at Sannati and its surrounding areas.

Archaeological Survey of India, ever since its inception in 1861, has engaged itself in promoting archaeological research in different parts of the country which has resulted in numerous outstanding discoveries to its credit. To this list now we can proudly add the excavations of an ancient mound noticed at Kanaganahalli in the vicinity of Sannati, not far from the famous Chandralāmbā temple which brought to light what seems to be an unique ornate Buddhist Stūpa revealing copious information about various Sātavāhana rulers through dated inscriptions and numismatic evidence. No other Buddhist site, so far reported from Karnataka, has yielded such a wealth of fresh information about historical personalities particularly the Sātavāhana rulers. However, the most interesting discovery from this site appears to be the inscribed portraits of Mauryan emperor Aśōka and his family.

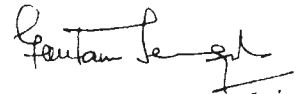


The trial excavations carried out at Ranamaṇḍala (habitation site) and ancient fortification, have given enough information to establish cultural chronology at Sannati and its suburban region. The initial work carried out by ASI at Sannati in collaboration with Society for South Asian Studies during 1994-95 has been further elaborated and interpreted in its proper perspective through the present work.

I am thankful to Dr. K.P. Poonacha, former Joint Director General, ASI, and his team for carrying out stupendous and strenuous archaeological research work at Kanaganahalli and Sannati and for producing this elaborate scholarly work and I have no doubt that this would be welcomed by the scholars in India and abroad. Further, I agree with the author, that such academic work usually takes longer time than anticipated particularly when we have enormous data which requires critical evaluation/assessment and meticulous examination and interpretation.

I thank Dr. P.K. Trivedi, Director, Publication Section and Shri G.S. Narasimhan, Superintending Archaeologist, Bangalore Circle for their efforts.

This excavation report published as a ASI Memoir (No. 106) aptly coincides with the 150th Anniversary celebrations of Archaeological Survey of India.



Gautam Sengupta  
Director General  
Archaeological Survey India

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological explorations in the Sannati region, were taken up by a technical team of the Bangalore Circle, Archaeological Survey of India, led by the author for two seasons between 1991-1993 as part of reconnaissance survey, in connection with the construction of a barrage across the river Bhima, by the State Government of Karnataka, in the Sannati region near Kanaganahalli. After completion of the survey, trial excavation was carried out on the southern slopes of the ancient mound, located on the left bank of the river Bhima at Kanaganahalli, which confirmed the archaeological importance of the mound. Later, a detailed proposal was submitted to the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, and after obtaining the approval large scale horizontal excavation was carried out for two field seasons between 1996-97 and 1997-1998 revealing remains of a large ornate stupa built of limestone and surrounded by as many as ten subsidiary structures built of stone and burnt brick. Subsequently during the field seasons of 2001-2002 and 2005-2006 further excavations were carried out to expose the monastic complex to the north of the stupa site and at Raṇamaṇḍala to ascertain the pattern of construction and the chronological sequence of the ancient fortification, enclosing the early historic period habitation mound at Sannati and to link it with the cultural sequence noticed earlier during the trial excavations at the habitation mound. The results obtained during the above mentioned research work involving explorations and excavations are detailed in the report.

It is pertinent to mention here that before taking up the excavation and finalizing the report it was felt essential to take critical note of the results of earlier works carried out by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Karnataka, excavations taken up under a joint collaborative project between the Archaeological Survey of India and the Society for South Asian Studies, explorations carried out by various scholars and to correlate the new results from the excavated site at Kanaganahalli site and the evidence obtained from the Raṇamaṇḍala with the fresh numismatic evidences particularly relating to Sātavāhana rulers reported from the adjacent Andhra region. Further, a vast collection of inscriptions found in the excavations had to be studied and interpreted in its totality keeping in view the large collection of inscriptions reported earlier in the Sannati region. All these studies obviously took considerable time than anticipated, resulting in delay in bringing out this report.

Further, it is needless to say that the conservation of the excavated remains of the Stūpa of this magnitude, requires immediate attention of the Archaeological Survey of India. As most of the excavated architectural members are exposed to the vagaries of nature, there is an urgent need to conserve and restore the exposed structure. The author feels that concerted effort is required by the authorities to put in place a time bound action plan to restore the structure to its ancient glory and for posterity.

The timely permissions accorded by senior officials in the office of the Director General, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi, and participation of a host of technical officials of the Survey in the field resulted in completing the task entrusted to me. It is my bounden duty to acknowledge the contribution of each of the official and thank them.

At the outset, I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to (Late) Shri Ajay Shankar and Shri Babu Rajeev, Former Directors General, A.S.I. for according necessary official permission to excavate the site during their tenure.

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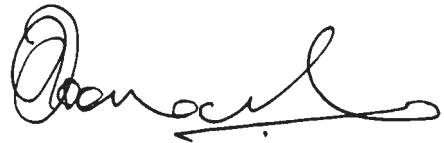
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**K.P. POONACHA**

BENGALURU  
03/12/2011

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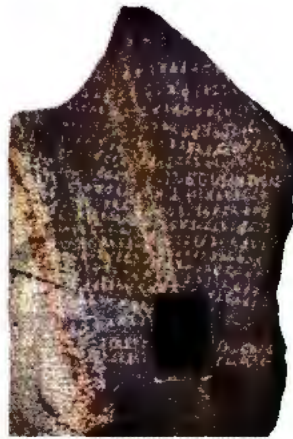


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# INTRODUCTION



## CHAPTER

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# I

### A. SANNATI - KANAGANAHALLI AND ITS ENVIRONS

**Location:** Sannati (Lat 16°49'40"N; Long. 76°54'30" E), also spelled *Sonthe* (topo sheet no. 56D/13), one of the ancient cultural centres in Karnataka, attracted the attention of scholars ever since its discovery in 1954. A systematic exploration carried out in the Bhima valley, including the part of greater Sannati, revealed the ancient mound under reference (Lat. 16°50'7" N; Long. 76°56'8" E), located 244 m from the left bank of the river Bhima, towards north, and 550 m south of Kanaganahalli village, in the Chitapur taluk of Gulbarga district of Karnataka State. It is at a distance of 3 km from the ancient site at Sannati and the famous Chandralāmbā temple is at a distance of 1.58 km from it towards south-west as a crow flies. It is located about 60 km due south of Gulbarga, the district headquarters. Nalwar, the nearest railway station on Bangalore-Pune line of South Central Railway is at a distance of 16 km from the site (Fig.1).

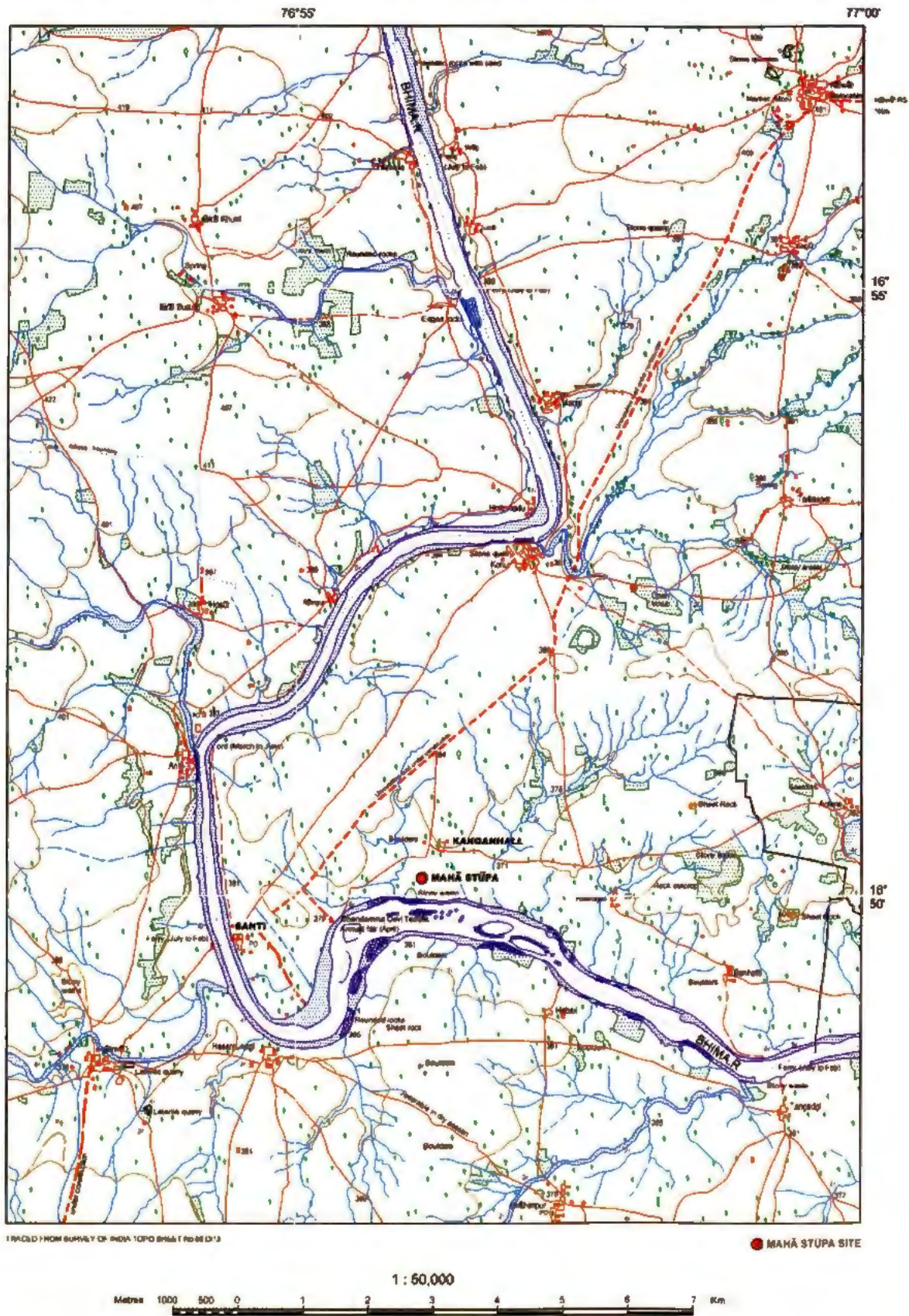
The river Bhima, a tributary of the river Krishna, originates in the Western

Ghats at Bhimashankara, district Pune in Maharashtra, and flows south-eastwards and runs along the boundary between Maharashtra and Karnataka for a distance of 83 km and enters Karnataka at village Sesgeri, district Belgaum. Flowing nearly to a distance of 298 km in Karnataka, at the village Sangam on the border of Raichur and Kurnool districts of Andhra Pradesh, it joins river Krishna. The river figures in the *Matsya*, *Brahma* and *Vāmana purānas* as also in the *Mahābhārata*. At the place where the river originates, one of the *Jyothirlingas*, highly venerated as Bhimashankara, is located and as such it is also venerated as a *mahānadi*. The river gets its name from a certain King Bhīmaka of *purānic* times<sup>1</sup>. At Sannati the river takes a northerly course (*uttaravāhini*) and as such gets sanctified. Sannati is popularly known for the temple dedicated to Goddess Chandalā (Chandralā) Paramēśwari or Chandralāmbā, a *śākta* deity (Pl.IA,B) supposedly representing the unified concept of Mahākālī, Mahālakshmi and Saraswati, the feminine counterparts of Śiva, Vishṇu and Brahmā, respectively (the *Traipurashas*). The temple in its

<sup>1</sup> The toponym "Sannati" has been spelled variously like Santi, Sonthe, Sanati in the successive editions of the toposheets of 1966, 1993 and 1999. Earlier scholars have used Sannati and Sannathi and other variant forms. However, keeping in line with the earlier publications of ASI the name here is referred to as "Sannati".



## LOCATION MAP OF STŪPA SITE KANAGANAHALLI (SANNATI)







Satellite imagery showing the location  
of Mahā Stūpa at Kanaganahalli

present form and style, with the plan and elevation of the sanctum resembling a *Śrīchakra*, is a late medieval edifice. However, the architectural and sculptural evidences like the typical dwarfish pillars with the shaft treated with dwarfs at *mālāsthāna*, topped by cushion capitals of the pillars in the vestibule; austere door jambs with the depictions of Ganēsha and Mahishamardini and the mutilated life size image of Kālikāmba amply indicate that the temple definitely dates back to the Chālukya-Rāshtrakūta times. Innumerable shrines of the early Rāshtrakūta period are noticed in the immediate environs of Sannati as at Sirwal and Kollur. Since then it has been a sacred place of pilgrimage.

**Geology, Geomorphology and Topography:** The river valley of Bhima is bestowed with a congenial geomorphology that could sustain human occupation right from prehistoric times. In the light of the above, the geomorphology of the region is briefly dealt here.

**i) Geology** -The district of Gulbarga has as many as four major geological formations viz.:

- (1) Pleistocene and Recent: consisting of soil and laterite, alluvium and recent conglomerates;
- (2) Tertiary: composed of Deccan traps and inter-trappeans and infra-trappeans;
- (3) *Purānas* (Precambrian): composed of Upper Bhima shales and sandstones, Middle Bhima limestones and Lower Bhima shales and sandstones; and

- (4) Archaen: comprising peninsular gneiss with associated younger granites and Dharwar schists.

The Bhima formations form one of the smallest Proterozoic basins in India. This area, also known as *purāna*-basins, is composed of nearly horizontally laid beds of sandstone, shale and limestone well exposed in the valley of the River Bhima. The formations are believed to be younger in the series with a close resemblance to the Kurnool group of the Cuddapah Super sub-group and the rectilinear E-W to NW-SE trending boundaries being faulted, the extension of it beneath the cover of Deccan Trap at North cannot be precisely told. However, nearly 5200 sq km has been found lying exposed.

It is interesting to note that the River Bhima has an independent sedimentational history compared to the rest of the Proterozoic basins. It has been found that these sediments occur in a linear stretch for nearly 160 km in a north-south direction and are bound by lat. 16° 20' and 17° 35' N and long. 76° 15' and 77° 40' E. Recent stratigraphical studies based on 150 m bore hole record that the entire sedimentation of the Bhima basin is a product of a single short-lived transgression event<sup>2</sup>. The lithology of the region is of:

- (1) Conglomerate of pebbles of white quartz, angular potash feldspar cemented by siliceous matrix from which level pre-historic middle-



palaeolithic tools fabricated on quartz and other siliceous materials have been found<sup>3</sup>. This overlies a bed of gritty sandstone in which ripple marks have been observed.

- (2) Sandstone - The sandstone formation in the basin is available in thin sections, which is coarse in grain and reflects graded bedding.
- (3) Silt stone - This is the transitional type of formation between sandstone and shale greenish to greenish-yellow in colour and is well bedded.
- (4) Shales - These are well-developed fissile and friable, compact and calcareous in nature, the thick deposits of which are noticed in Sirwal.
- (5) Limestone - This is the most dominant and important variety of rock formation in the area which is reported to have a thickness of nearly 100 m exhibiting the characters of fine grain waxy-lustre and has a nature of conchoidal fracture, and
- (6) Red shales - These are the uppermost formations usually affected by overlying trap formation.

It is also reported that the characteristic horizontal bedding in the Bhima basin is less disturbed in the region when compared to the neighbouring Kaladgi series. In the absence of any fossils, the Bhima group of sediments has been dated to 600 million years BP.

## Mineral Wealth

Evidence of ancient mines of gold and copper are reported from the nearby Shorapur Taluk as at Mangalur and Makangavi<sup>4</sup>. Quartz, agate, cherts of varied colour, crystals of tourmaline in pegmatite veins and gypsum are found in the district. Extensive deposits of limestone, which is being even now economically harnessed as building material, form the chief mineral wealth of the place.

## Seismic Centre

While no major earthquakes have been reported in the Bhima basin proper, off late Hasargundgi - a small hamlet located nearly 2 km south of Sannati on the right bank of the river Bhima - is identified as one of the active seismic centres of possible geological disturbances<sup>5</sup>.

## Geomorphology:

### River drainage systems

Sannati, located in a valley, forms part of the Deccan plateau elevated between the contour intervals of 380-400 m MSL. Here, the river Bhima meanders in great loops and takes a short straight north-south course providing a natural choice for habitation on the left bank as evidenced by rich archaeological findings in and around the place. During its sojourn, river Bhima receives several rain-fed seasonal and perennial rivulets like Sirwal halla, Biral halla, Kollur halla, Kagna, etc. resulting in vast stretches of exposed pebble beds.

### Soil, climate, flora and fauna:

**Soil:** The entire region is semi-arid with sparse vegetal coverage, mainly of dry deciduous type. The soil is either black soil known as regurs or more popularly the black cotton soil or red loam. The latter is found in the peninsular gneiss areas. Pebbles of chert, limestone, shale and granite embedded in the soil are a feature frequently met with in the area.

The black cotton soil of the region is devoid of rolled pebbles but is rich in nodules of *kankar* of different sizes probably formed through infiltration, leaching and precipitation of calcium carbonate. This deposit of black cotton soil is usually limited to less than a metre nearer to the river and in the river valleys it is very deep and extends up to 10 m. Since the formation of soil on either side of the river is palaeo-black soil in nature, a clearer demarcation or distinct strata in the soil profile is not possible. In wet conditions, this soil becomes soft and loamy and during dry spell, forms crackled cakes and turns into a fine powder. This soil is clayey and black in colour with individualistic chemical and physical properties. As such it is described as a separate soil group such as grumusol - dark clayey soils. Organic salts of iron, titanium, aluminium silicate, sodium etc. are noticed in its composition along with organic content. Due to restricted water content, it develops black colour in a neutral and alkaline environment.

Because of its property of retaining water, the agricultural operations are carried out even after the rains have ceased. The physical property of alternate shrinking and swelling causing sufficient air to traverse in its formation makes it a more desired soil formation for agricultural operations. The pH of the soil is distinctly alkaline and varies from 7.2 to 8.5. It is also rich in potassium and calcium, which are well suited for the growth of cotton. The formation of this black cotton soil of Krishna basin is dated to Eocene times. In this region, granitic gneiss is seen as outcrops.

**Climate:** The climate is characterised by dryness with a long severe summer; the annual average rainfall being about 700 mm. Southwest monsoon extends from July to September, September being the rainiest month, and brings sporadic rains. May is the hottest month with a mean daily maximum temperature of 46°C and the minimum being 14°C in December.

**Flora:** The area is intensely subjected to agricultural operation suitable to dry land farming sustained by rainwater. Some of the popular wood-yielding trees that are native to the place are Satin, Tirman (*Anogiessus latifolia*), Siris (*Albizzia lebbak*), Narlinga (*Albizzia amara*), Amaltas (*Cassia fistula*), Chanangi (*Lagerstroemia parviflora*), Gumpana (*Lennia grandis*), Andak (*Boswellia serrata*), Nallamaddi, Ermaddi (*Terminalia arjuna*), Ebony (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), Mohwa (*Bassia*

*latifolia*), Tada (*Grewia taliaefolia*), Bhilawa (*Semecarpus anacardium*), Halda (*Terminalia chebula*), Tari (*Terminalia belerica*), Sundara (*Acacia sundra*), Billphal (*Aegle marmelos*), Gumartek (*Gmelina arborea*), Sandal (*Santalum album*), Chironji (*Buchanania latifolia*) and Somi (*Soymida febrifuga*).

**Fauna:** Major carnivorous animals are absent in the place. However, a few panthers (*Felis pardus*) have been reported. Bears are found in the Chincholi forest area. Packs of hyena, wild dogs and wolves are reported attacking cattle and spotted deer. Of the deer, the spotted deer and sambar live in the semi-forest region of the place and black buck is restricted to open scrub jungles. The Indian fox, jackal, wild hog, porcupine, mongoose, langur, rabbit, monitor lizard etc. have also been sighted. Amongst birds, parrot, mynah, starling, swallow, dove, woodpecker, peacock, owl, eagle and humming bird are reported. Different varieties of snakes like krait, russel viper, pit viper, cobra and innumerable variety of insects, prominent amongst them being scorpion of both red and black varieties, are also sighted.

## B. PREVIOUS WORK

**(a) Exploration:** Though Sannati was known and identified as part of a flourishing Buddhist site right from 1954, when Kapatral Krishna Rao<sup>7</sup> discovered and brought to light the remains of Buddhist establishment, no serious exploration was

taken up in the region. Until then Sannati was known for its Sāktaic association and as a famous pilgrimage centre with a temple dedicated to goddess Chandralāmbā situated about 2 km east of Sannati village on the left bank of the river Bhima. Traditionally, the place has a legend that Rāma and Sīta of the epic *Rāmāyaṇa* were born as sage Nārāyaṇa and Chandravadanā. A certain king Sētūrāja, enamoured by the charm of Chandravadanā, attempted to molest her and subsequently perished in the river Bhima by her curse. Even now an estuary at Sannati on the banks of the said river is identified as *Sētūrājana Kaṭṭe*.

Subsequently, a survey of the area was undertaken by M. Seshadri<sup>8</sup> of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Karnataka, in association with S. Nagaraju<sup>9</sup>. They noticed more than 100 sculptures from the site, most of which are now in the State Government Museum in Gulbarga and a collection of surface finds from the habitation site are now in Mysore. Subsequently, P.B. Desai<sup>10</sup> of the Kannada Research Institute, University of Karnataka, Dharwad, also carried out explorations at Sannati in 1968 and considered the place to be “the biggest Buddhist centre in Karnataka”.

Further work carried out by M.S. Nagaraja Rao<sup>11</sup>, revealed remains of *stūpas* at various localities of Sannati. He published an article in association with K.V. Ramesh on a couple of inscriptions and sculptures noticed.

(b) **Excavations:** A. Sundara<sup>12</sup>, conducted trial excavations (1986-87) in the southwest corner of the ancient mound, presumably the citadel area, adjacent to the riverbed in the locality popularly known as *Raṇamaṇḍala* at Sannati village. The excavation revealed a rectangular brick structure with many small rooms constructed in typical size bricks (40x30x7cm and 39x20x6.5cm) and in association with early historic antiquities of the Sātavāhana times. In the year 1986-87 J.R. Howell<sup>13</sup> of Society for South Asian Studies conducted excavations at Anegutti, a *stūpa* mound in Sannati, in collaboration with the Archaeological Survey of India. The excavation in the *stūpa* mound rising to a height of 8.50 m with a maximum diameter of 70.00 m revealed that the *stūpa* had been constructed in layers of locally available shale alternating with black cotton soil deposits mixed with lime stone chips with peripheral veneering in bricks. At the core of the mound, at the apex, a deposit of pure shale was observed. The *stūpa* had peripheral brick structures in the northwest and in the south. The site has yielded typical early historic ceramics of black and red ware, black ware and red wares which were of coarse, slipped and polished variety along with polished red deluxe ware. Inscribed and uninscribed coins of lead, copper and potin of Siri Sātavāhana, Siri Sātakarṇi and Vasisthiputra Śiva Śiri Puḷumāvi are reported in addition to a solitary specimen of Punch marked coin. The site has also yielded many mutilated

memorial sculptures (*Chāyāpratimās*) both inscribed and uninscribed. Terracotta figurines, beads of different materials, bangles and other minor antiquities have also been reported.

The Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Karnataka, continued their probe<sup>14</sup> in the *Raṇamaṇḍala* locality at Sannati in the years 1993-95 in more or less the central part of the mound and laid bare structural activities typical to a habitation deposit and arrived at a chronology from c. 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to c. 3-4<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. The ceramics reported were Northern black polished ware, rouletted ware, red polished ware, inscribed pottery, moulded decorated pottery and other associated ware. Fragmentary russet coated painted ware was also reported. However, fragment of a miniature votive *stūpa* made on ivory, an exquisitely carved stone disc depicting three bare female figures alternating with animals such as horse, lion, elephant, stag, birds and floral designs akin to such discs reported from Vaishali, Sankisa and other sites, are noteworthy. Roman clay pendant depicting the bust of emperor Tiberius, coins issued by Sātavāhana rulers and varieties of beads made on semi precious stones and terracotta are other interesting finds.

## FURTHER EXPLORATIONS

The Government of Karnataka, in 1990-91 decided to build a barrage across



the river Bhima as envisaged in the Bhima Irrigation (Flow) Project at Sannati near Kanaganahalli. This single purpose dam, once constructed, was proposed to hold water up to 45 km along the upstream, subsequently resulting in a rise in the water level to about 381.3 m MSL spread over an area of 120 sq km threatening to submerge as many as 24 villages including Sannati in the backwaters (Fig.2).

As a preamble to the actual construction work, the irrigation authorities of the State government approached Archaeological Survey of India for the ecological clearance which necessitated an intensive exploration in the area to define the cultural potentiality of the threatened submersible area and to formulate the modalities pertaining to the salvaging and safeguarding of significant archaeological remains. As a sequel, a team of archaeologists of the Archaeological Survey of India, Bangalore Circle, under the direction of the author, the then Superintending Archaeologist, undertook extensive exploration and documentation of the listed villages (*see Appendix-I*).

The area subjected to investigation in the Bhima valley is defined by the geo-coordinates 16°45' N to 17°05' N and 76°50' E to 77° E. The above region falls under the revenue jurisdiction of Chitapur, Jewargi and Shahpur taluks of District Gulbarga, spread over an area of about 851 sq km.

The exploration was restricted to the actual submergence area upto 381.3 m

MSL and 2 km beyond it on either side of the river upto 400 m MSL with a view to exploring the banks of the rivulets and streams feeding the river Bhima.

## Details of Exploration<sup>15</sup>

The explorations carried out in the 24 villages, of which 13 were located on the right bank and 11 on the left bank, revealed cultural materials of Lower and Middle Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Early historic and Medieval periods.

The previous and the present field works have provided significant information pertaining to the general cultural ramifications in the area. However, for confirming the cultural sequence and also to understand the multifaceted features of the early historic urban centres of the region with special reference to Sannati, the following sites were taken up for probe.

**(1) Sannati:** Sannati, as exemplified already, is undoubtedly the largest Buddhist centre in Karnataka known so far. The mound rising to nearly 6 to 6.5 m in height is least disturbed but for the continuous agricultural operation. The surface indications in the form of brickbats, pottery, coins, terracotta figurines, etc. indicated that it is a promising site which can yield immense archaeological material for reconstructing the multifaceted early history of South India in general and of Karnataka in particular. In the light of the discovery of the Major and Separate Rock

**BHIMA VALLEY AROUND SANNATI  
VILLAGES EXPLORED IN THE SUBMERGENCE AREA  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA, KARNATAKA**

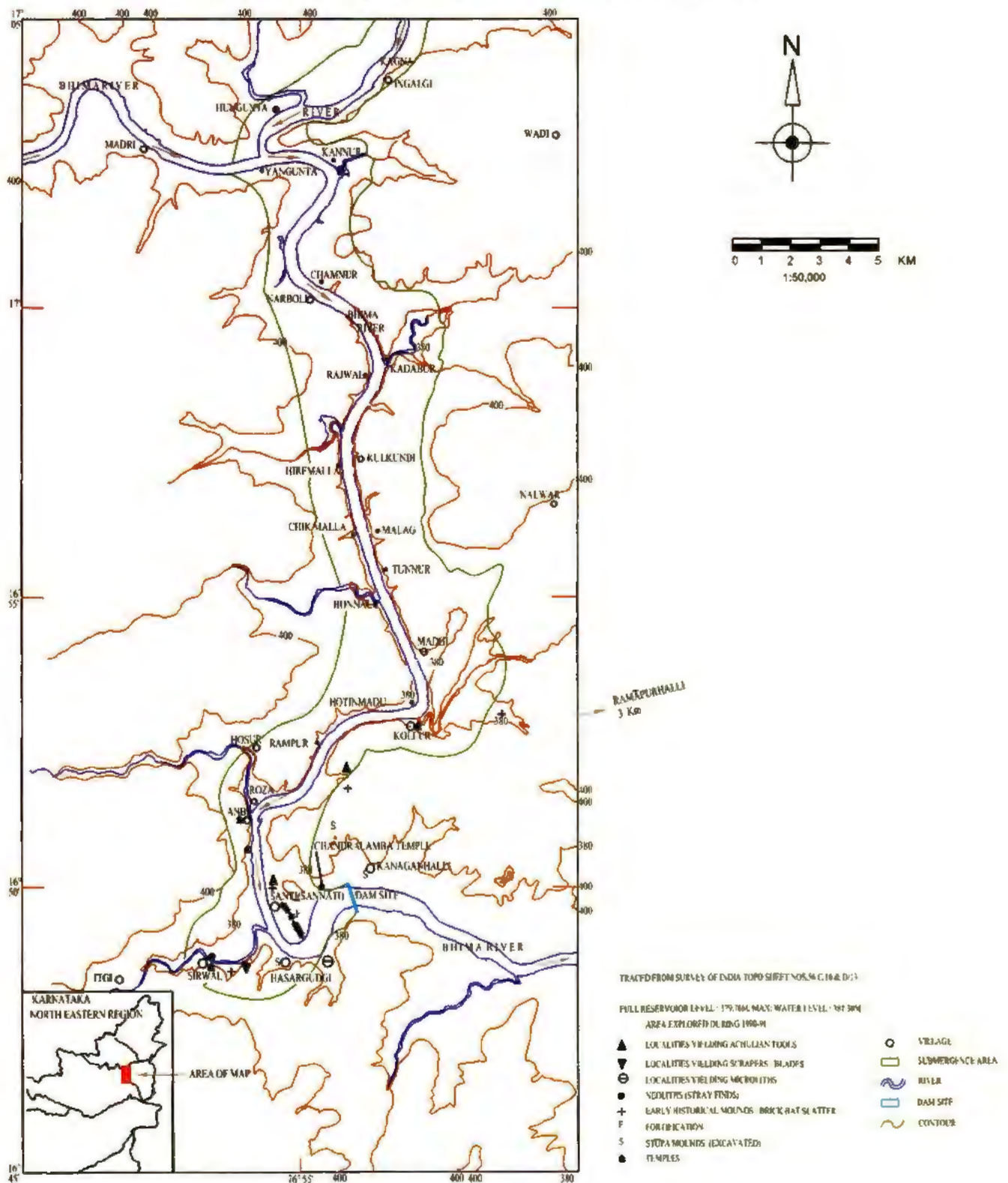


Fig.2

Edicts (Pl.I A) at the Chandralāmbā temple premises<sup>16</sup> located slightly away from the Sannati village and a granite stone having Mauryan polish noticed at *Raṇamaṇḍala*, the ancient fortified mound, a trial digging was proposed at the site, with the objective of understanding the cultural sequence of the site and the region, with special reference to the hitherto ambiguous Mauryan phase and to correlate the intensive structural activity at Sannati and its immediate neighbourhood in a befitting chronological framework.

**(2) Sirwal:** Two localities situated respectively on the right bank of Sirwal halla where it joins Bhima were probed.

The right bank section of the river cut by Sirwal halla at Sannati is composed of quaternary deposits of sterile limestone pebble bed 1.5 m thick at the bottom superimposed by a 3 m thick implementiferous gravel/silt deposit. The right bank is dotted with small gravel patches at many points. Some of these patches were found covered by 4 m thick soil deposit. Thus, the stratigraphy noticed in the cliff sections in the region could be built up as bed rock at the bottom (gneiss) overlain by pebble and gravel deposits varying in thickness, which in turn accommodates thick silt deposit (Fig.3).

From the adjacent fields near the above locality, scrapers and blades made of quartz, jasper, coarse carnelian and chert of Middle Palaeolithic affinity have been retrieved. Majority of these are

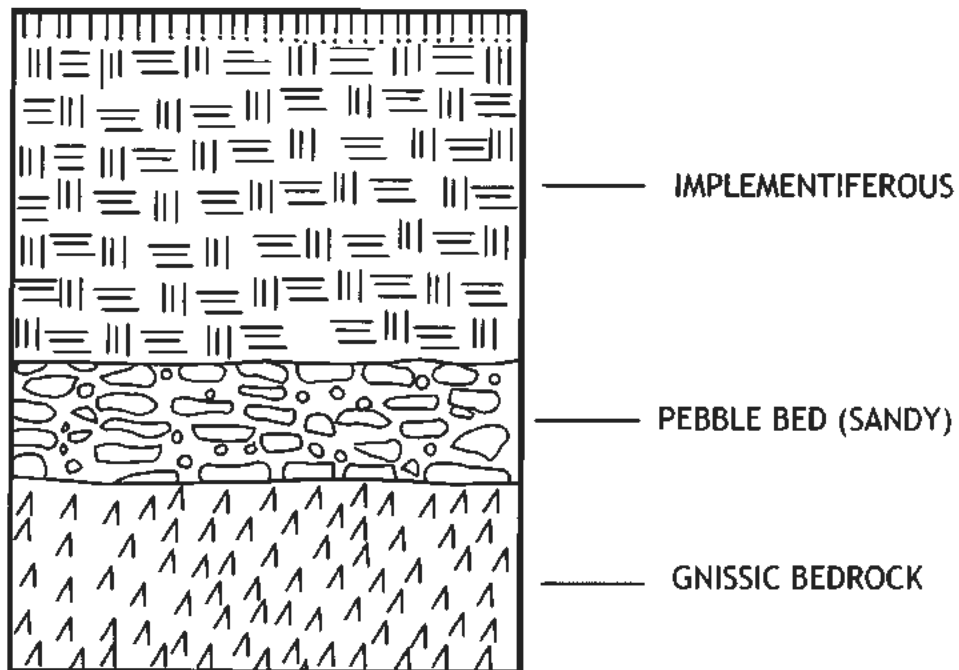
fashioned on thin flakes of small to large size. It is observed that smaller flakes are preferred for fashioning of blades. Some of the tool types like scrapers and blades tend to show their proximity to Upper Palaeolithic group. However typical Upper Palaeolithic tools are conspicuous by their absence. The apparent transition from Middle to Upper Palaeolithic phases cannot be ruled out. The site has also yielded Mesolithic implements made of quartz and jasper. The tool kit comprises parallel-sided blades and bladelets, side and end scrapers.

**(3) Hasargundgi** (Spelt as Hurasagundigi in topo sheet No. 56D/13/SE): The ancient site yielding pre-historic tools and a low mound with early historic assemblage, is situated on the right bank of the river Bhima almost opposite (2 km south of) Chandralāmbā temple at Sannati situated on the left bank. The site is located to the northwest of the present village and about 1 km away on the right bank of the Sirwal halla, a rivulet. The mound slopes towards northwest and west and is subjected to intense agricultural activity.

The mound rising gradually from the flat expanse to a height of about 2 m and measuring 50x50 m yielded Black and Red ware, Red ware and a few decorated friezes of railing besides a sculpture of Yaksha (Pl.IB) during the exploration. Rich scatters of brickbats as well as other architectural members such as uprights

## RIVER SECTION

### Sannati, Bhima River Section (Left Bank)



### Sirawal, Sirawal Halla, Section (Left Bank)

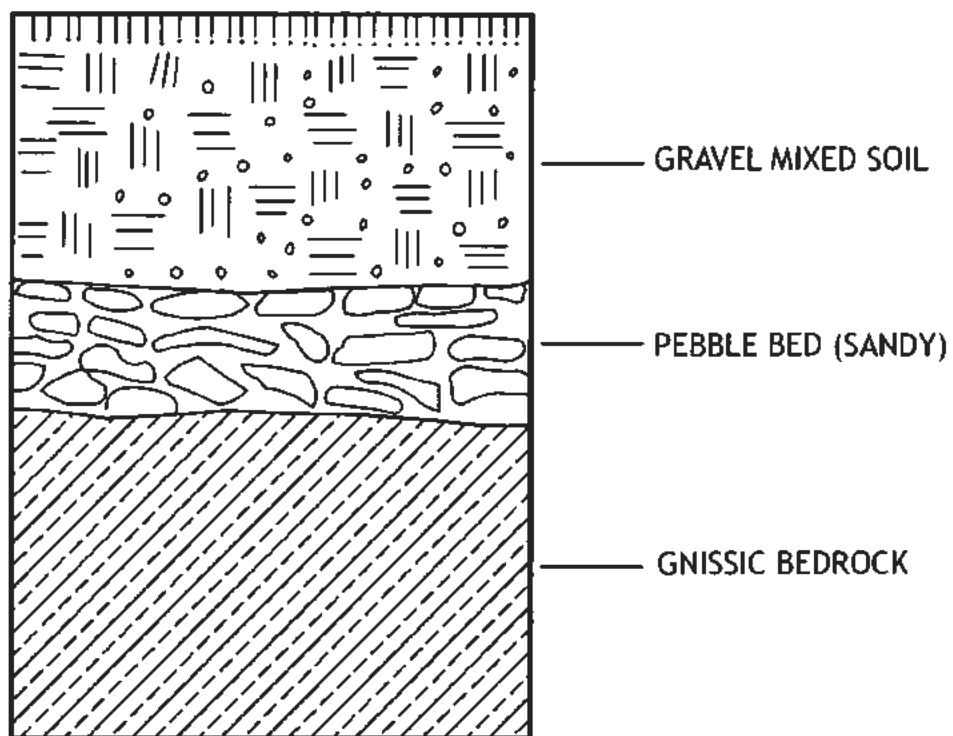


Fig.3



with mortices, fragments of octagonal shafts and pillar bases, all made of lime stone, dumped in a heap by agriculturists were explicit evidence of the existence of the remains of a brick built *stūpa* and railing at the site.

**(4) Kanaganahalli:** Here, two localities viz., (a) the area generally identified as the brick kiln; and (b) the mound having circular configuration, were identified as archaeologically, potential sites for further probe. However, considering the extant part of an disturbed edifice and sculptured panels reported as shifted from this site and preserved in the State Museum at Gulbarga, it was felt that the mound at Kanaganahalli accommodated, archaeological remains of paramount importance.

### Toponymy

From the point of view of better understanding of these sites and their nomenclature in proper perspective it is imperative to study the toponyms of the places in and around Sannati, which would also throw a welcome light on the antiquity of the place.

**Sannati:** The toponym “Sannati” is greatly analysed by the author<sup>17</sup> while examining the possible identification of the Yaksha image from Hasargundgi in the Sannati region wherein the site is identified as ancient town *Sāntimati*.

This unique sculpture of Yaksha provides some new information regarding

cult worship, as well as the iconography of Gajalakshmi, this being the earliest representation of such a type so far noticed in Karnataka. The most noteworthy feature of the image, however, is the *muktāhāra* worn around the neck. The *hāra* is a composite ornament comprising an inner unit of seven stranded pearl necklace with a roundish Gajalakshmi pendant and an outer unit of multi-stranded twisted rope design.

The Gajalakshmi relief is of utmost importance as it provides the basis to trace the iconographical development of this motif in the South Indian context in general and Karnataka in particular. In Vēdic literature particularly *Śrī Sūkta*, “she is depicted as seated on lotus, holds lotus in one hand and in the other *vilva* (Bilva) fruits. She rides a golden chariot being drawn by horses. She is not anointed by elephants but delighted by its roar”.

Although Buddhist and Brahmanical texts mention her forms elaborately, the relief under reference could be identified with the specific type mentioned in the *Saubhāgyalakshmi Upanishad*, that she “should be shown sitting on lotus, her eye should be like *padmapatra*. Holding lotus in her hand, garbed in white costume, she should be anointed by the two elephants”.

The depiction of Gajalakshmi on the locket of the *hāra* worn by the *Yaksha* and the association with Kubēra with *Śrī* or *Śrī* with Kubēra is quite popular in the early

Buddhist art at both Bhārut and Mathura. In one of the relief panels exhibited in the Mathura Museum, Kubēra is shown standing with Gajalakshmi and other Vaishṇava deities. Bhadrā, the consort of Kubēra, the God of wealth, is identified as Lakshmi. In this connection it is worthwhile to recall the names of tutelary *Yaksha* in the list of Sylvan Levi and Agarwal<sup>18</sup>. Interestingly, there is the name of a town *Śāntimati* and the tutelary *Yaksha* of that place is mentioned as *Vairōchana*. Surprisingly, both the town and the associated *Yaksha* have not been identified so far. Therefore, considering the fact of Kubēra's association with Gajalakshmi, it is possible to identify the *Yaksha* image with Gajalakshmi depiction from Hasargundgi as that of *Yaksha Vairōchana* and his town could be the present Santi (as per topo sheets) or Sannati, a corrupt colloquial form of the ancient *Śāntimati*.

However, it is well known to the students of Buddhist studies that *Vairōchana* is also one of the Pañcha Dhyāni Buddhas, the lord of east and "is an embodiment of ideal knowledge and is ranked first amongst the Dhyāni Buddhas"<sup>19</sup>. His association with the name of a tutelary *Yaksha* is rather peculiar and there appears to be some textual error in the list. It would have been more appropriate if *Vaishravaṇa* had been figured in the list who is also called Kubēra, the bestower of wealth and invariably associated with Lakshmi.

That *Śāntimati*, the place name of the abode of tutelary *Yaksha*, also indicates its close association with Buddhism since Lord Buddha himself is referred to as *Śāntātman*<sup>20</sup> "*the one possessing tranquility of soul*". Similarly, *Śāntimati* could also be construed as an epithet of Lord Buddha as "*the one possessing tranquility of mind*".

**Raṇamaṇḍala:** The oral tradition identifies the fortified mound as *Raṇamaṇḍala* literally denoting "battlefield". In this connection it may be surmised that the place may be the historic battlefield or site wherein the Mauryas subjugated the local Sātavāhanas in a battle and included this territory in the Mauryan conquered *vijita*<sup>21</sup>.

**Anegutti:** Anegutti is the second *stūpa* site located about 2 km northeast of Sannati village, close to the road to Nalwar. Literally, it denotes an elevated place or a mound resembling or as large as an elephant. Etymologically, the Pali/Prakrit term *gutti*, a derivative of *gupti* in Sanskrit means 'protection, defence, guard' etc. Thus, the term Anegutti may denote a mound or an elevated place protected by an elephant. During the Rāshṭrakūta times (8-9<sup>th</sup> centuries) this mound, with its height of nearly 9 m from the surrounding area might have served as a strategic watch point or a guards' platform befitting the present nomenclature. Similarly Benagutti, the mound or place protected

by Vināyaka, is also located towards the northern outskirts of the fortification from which a sculpture of Vināyaka of Rāshtrakuta period was retrieved.

**Kanaganahalli:** The place-name “Kanaganahalli”, literally meaning the ‘village of Kanaka’, appears to have direct association with Kanakamuni - one of the *Mānushi* Buddhas.

It is interesting to note that the Nigali Sagar<sup>22</sup> pillar inscription of Emperor Aśoka records that *Dēvanāmpiya Piyadasi* (Aśoka) enlarged the *stūpa* of the *Buddha Konākamāna* to twice its original size in his 14<sup>th</sup> regnal year. And when he revisited the site after his 20<sup>th</sup> year of coronation he erected an inscribed pillar specifically in honour of Konagamuni, the former Buddha. An inscription at Bhārhut<sup>23</sup> refers to him as *Bhagavatō Konigamēna* and there is also a depiction of him in the form of a totemic tree, personal-*Bōdhi* tree (*Udumbara* - *Ficus glomerata*) in sculptural art in the circular medallion of the ninth pillar (*tabha*) in the southeastern quadrant. It is to be noted that Major Rock Edicts of Aśoka (12 and 14) and Separate Rock Edicts<sup>24</sup> (1 and 2) have been found at Chandralāmbā temple at Sannati in the immediate neighbourhood of Kanaganahalli.

There are atleast two epigraphical references to Kanakamuni within the Sannati area. One of these found at Sannati, begins with an invocation to

Lord Kanakamuni as *Jayati Bhagavam Kanakasa* (Line 1: Pl-IIA). The other, found in the *stūpa* site itself, is engraved on a mutilated seated image of Lord Buddha (Pl.IIB) and reads-*Sidham bhagavā samasabudho Konāgamuni*. This form of Buddha is known as Konāgamāna and Konigamēna by the southern Buddhists and as Kanakamuni, and Konakamuni etc. by the northern ones.<sup>25</sup> In the light of the above, in the etymological context, the retention of letter *ga* in the toponym Kanaganahalli is noteworthy and the present nomenclature of the village therefore appears to be a derivative after Kanakamuni. It is pertinent to note here that the hamlet Kanaganahalli was the north-eastern suburb of greater Sannati, at the nucleus of which the Sātavāhanas had their fortified township, presently identified as *Raṇamaṇḍala*, the periphery of which was dotted with many *stūpas* and monasteries at north, northeast and east respectively at Anegutti, Benagutti, Kanaganahalli and Hasargundgi.

These factors necessitated a trial digging at the ancient site at Sannati (*Infra*. pp.17 ff.), across the fortification, and regular excavation at Kanaganahalli. The excavation here yielded valuable information pertaining to *stūpa* architecture in the north Karnataka region. The results of these probes are enumerated in the following pages.



## EXCAVATIONS

### (1) Excavation at Raṇamaṇḍala, Sannati

Spread over an area of roughly 80 hectares on the left bank of the river Bhima, Raṇamaṇḍala area of Sannati offers a unique chronological scale from pre-historic to early historic times. The mound is strewn with various cultural vestiges right from stone tools of pre-historic period to terracotta figurines, pottery, coins and brickbats of early historic period, indicating a highly potential site to affirm the multifaceted early history. The excavations carried out by the

Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, Mysore, in the southwest corner of the Raṇamaṇḍala<sup>26</sup> area, attest the intense structural activity of early historic period in this site.

With a view to arrive at a chronological scale for the entire mound, a trial trench (Pl.IIIA) of 25 sq m, was laid in the apex of the approximately 6.50 m (Fig.4) high mound, 7.00 m northeast of the site excavated by the State Department of Archaeology. The vertical probe here revealed a stratigraphy of 11 layers (Fig.5.) with the following chronological sequence, (for details see Appendix-II)

### SUMMARY OF THE STRATIGRAPHY AND PERIODISATION RAṆAMAṆḌALA (SANNATI)

Period	Strata	Ceramics and cultural assemblage
PERIOD-IV Sātavāhana	(2) to (4)	On an average, the cultural deposit in this strata measures 2.70 m in thickness.  Red ware, polished Red ware, Stamped pottery, Black slipped ware, Russet coated white painted ware, Rouletted ware, beads on TC, semi-precious stone, shell objects, polished pounders, mullers etc., Coins of copper, lead and potin have been retrieved dating to the rule of Sātakarṇi and Śrī Sātakarṇi.  Profuse brick structural activity.
PERIOD-III B Maurya- Sātavāhana.	(5)	On an average, the cultural deposit in this strata measures 65 cm in thickness.  Red ware, polished Red ware, Black slipped ware, beads on TC, semi-precious stone, shell objects, polished pounders, mullers, etc, and coin of Mahārathi Śrī Sātavāhana.  Structural activity begins.

PERIOD-IIIA Mauryan.	(6)	<p>On an average, the cultural deposit in this strata measures 85 cm in thickness.</p> <p>Red ware, Black polished ware, Black and Red ware, scrubbers, polished stone pestles, dumbell shaped pounders, stone block and other minor antiquities in the form of shell bangles, beads on TC and semi-precious stones, bone-arrow heads and coins.</p>
PERIOD-IIB	<p>7[B] Mauryan.</p> <p>7[A] Megalithic Black and Red ware</p>	<p>On an average, the cultural deposit in this strata measures 20 cm in thickness.</p> <p>Red ware, Black ware, less percentage of black and red ware.</p> <p>Red ware, slags, nails, fish-hook of iron.</p>
PERIOD-IIA Megalithic	(8)	<p>On an average, the cultural deposit in this strata measures 50 cm in thickness.</p> <p>Black and Red ware, stray iron implements.</p>
HIATUS	(9)	<p>On an average, the deposit in this strata measures 45 cm in thickness.</p> <p>No cultural assemblage.</p>
PERIOD-I Mesolithic	(10)	<p>On an average, the deposit in this strata measures 96 cm in thickness.</p> <p>Non-geometric microliths on inferior chalcedony, chert and quartz - lunates, bladelets, points, burin-cum-borer have been found.</p>
NATURAL SOIL	(11)	<p>On an average, the deposit in this strata measures 25 cm in thickness.</p> <p>Highly weathered granitic gruss.</p>

## (2) Excavation across fortification, Raṇamaṇḍala, Sannati

The massive fortification<sup>27</sup> wall running to over 2 km encloses an area of roughly 80 hectares in a semi-elliptical form at the southern part where the river takes a steep curve. The wall is about 12-13 m wide at the base and 4-4.5 m at the top and rises to an average height of 6.5 m on the outer side and 3-4 m on the inner side. The fortification has three wide and lofty entrances probably with bastions respectively leading to the Benagutti area in the north, the *stūpa* at Anegutti on the north-northeast and the Chandralamba temple and thence to the *stūpa* site at Kanaganahalli on the northeast - east.

The top of the fortification is much eroded and the regular courses and alignments of bricks are visible. Along the length of the wall, at regular intervals, there are segments where the wall is thicker. At these places right-angled inward and outward indents of the wall could be discerned. These could be the remains of square bastions or guard/watch towers.

Locally, the fortification is called *Sēturājana Kaṭṭe*, which has been interpreted variously by scholars. While K.V. Ramesh<sup>28</sup> explained it as a corrupt form of *Sātavāhana Kote* (fortress of Sātavāhanas) on par with Sātani Kota, I.K.Sarma<sup>29</sup> considers it to be named after the king Sētu (Sēturāja) who tried to

dishonour Chandralāmbā and died because of her curse.

To ascertain the main features of the fortification, particularly the construction method adopted and phases, if any, a trial trench measuring 10 x 5 m in the east-west axis was laid across the north-eastern arm of the fortification, nearer to the eastern gateway running in north-south orientation (Fig.6).

The work revealed in the first phase that the fortification wall was raised by using the earth excavated probably to provide a moat along the fortification on its outer periphery at east. The top of the fortification is much eroded and regular courses and alignment of bricks are visible. The section facing south and north of the trial pit measuring 2.3 m laid across the fortification revealed brownish loose soil at the base and black cotton soil mixed with limestone chips/*kankar* resting on it. The nature of layers, which dips from west to east, reflects that in this phase, the earthen wall of the fort was raised by cutting a moat along the outer periphery in the east and heaping the earth in the west as a method of construction.

In phase-II, the height of the fortification appears to have been further increased by using burnt bricks laid upon a 25 cm thick sole of black cotton soil mixed with limestone pebbles and gravel. The bricks measure 58-59 cm in length,



## CONTOUR MAP OF RAṆAMAṆḌALA SITE AT SANNATI TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA, KARNATAKA

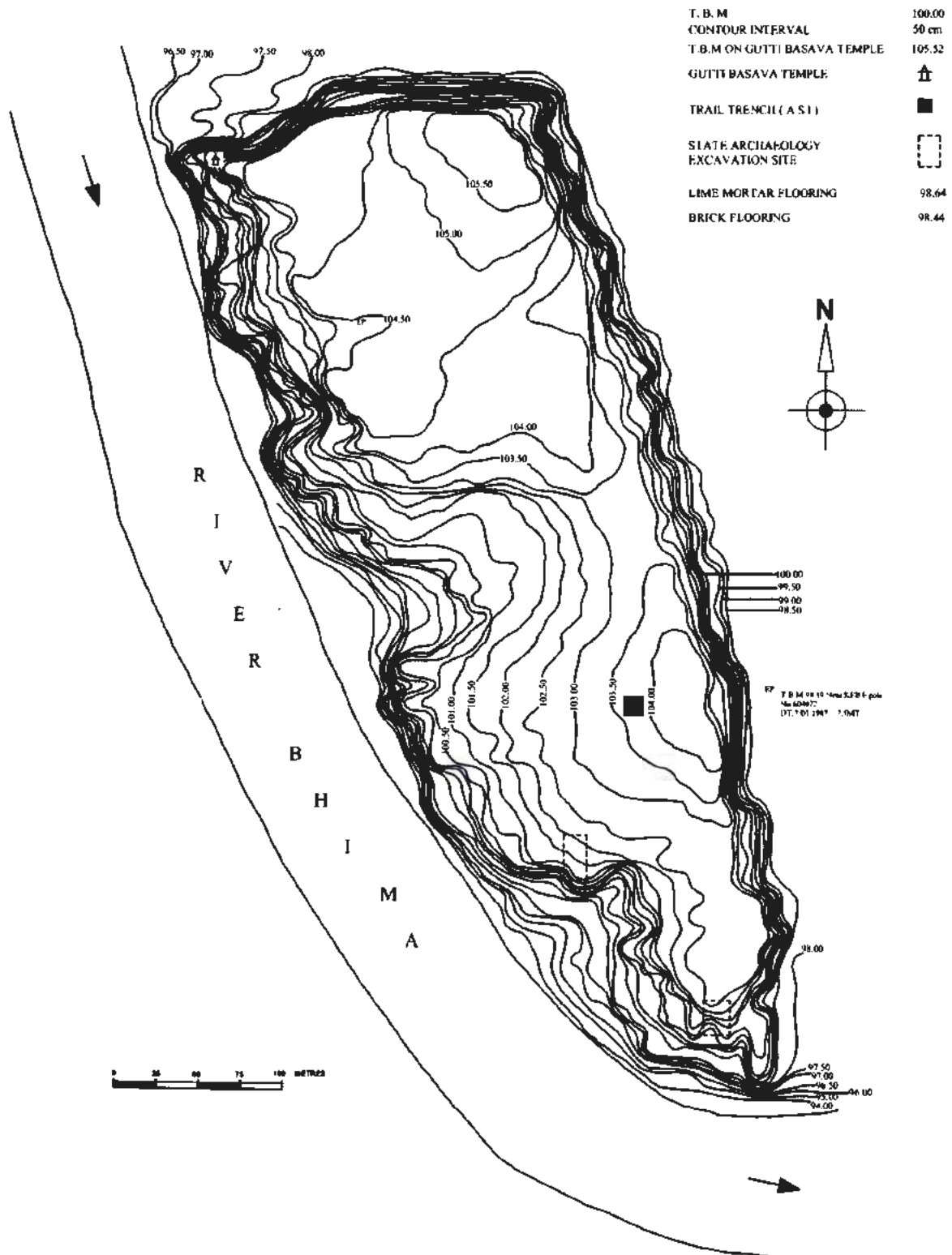


Fig.4

# EXCAVATION, SANNATI (RANAMANDALA)

STRATIGRAPHY-SECTION FACING SOUTH  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA, KARNATAKA  
(1994-95)

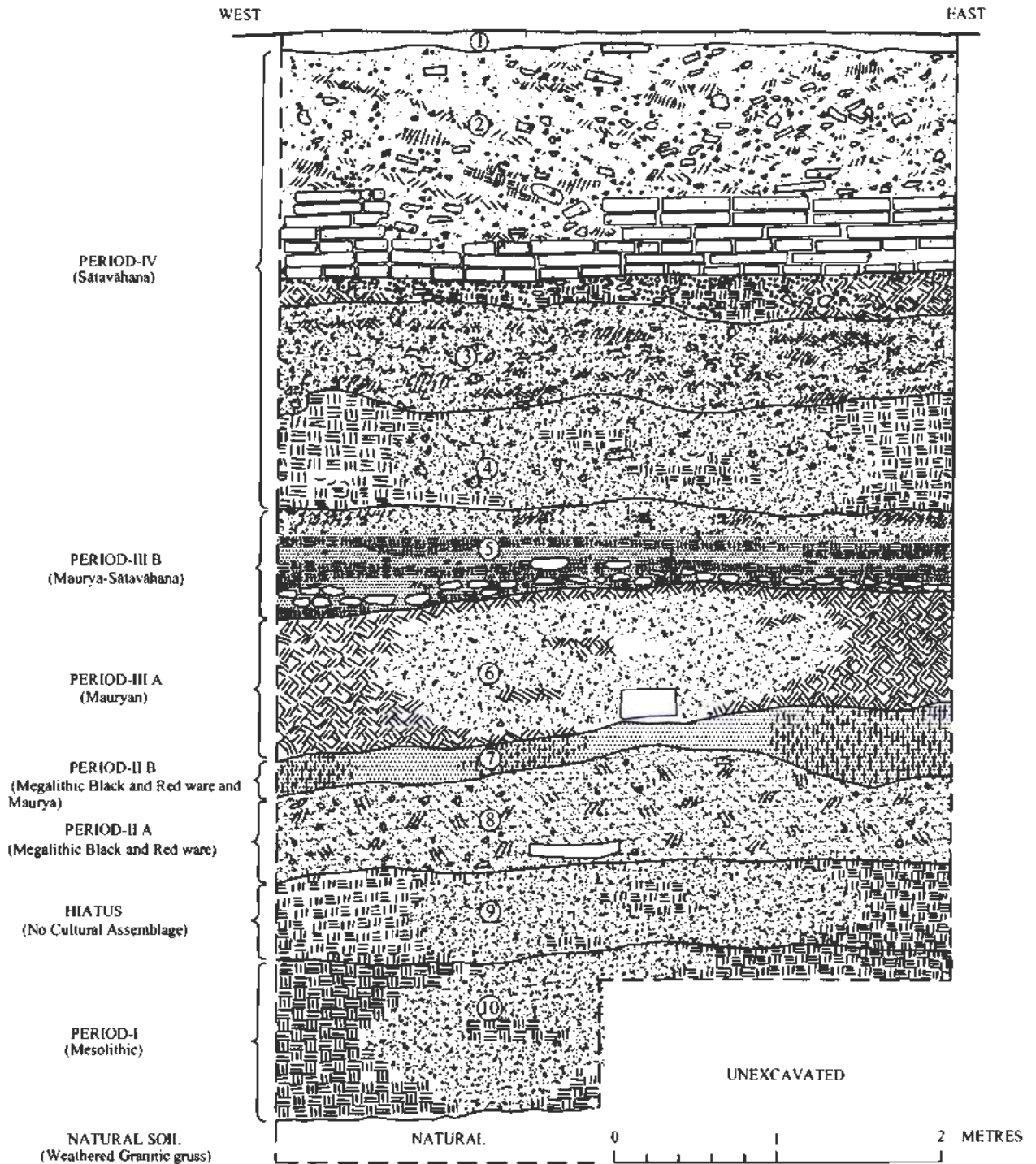


Fig.5

28-30 cm in breadth and 8-9 cm in thickness (roughly corresponding to 1:3:6 ratio). The larger bricks are laid in the typical header and stretcher fashion in the lower levels while the smaller ones are used in the upper part as also for core filling. Fine riverine clay is used as binding material. Sufficient care has been envisaged to leave offsets of about 30 cm width on both the sides. The extant wall is in 15 courses and measures 1.08 m in height. While the bottom eight courses are found intact, the remaining is disturbed (Fig. 7 and Pl. IIIB).

During the course of the excavation near the section facing west, head of terracotta human figurine is found. It has typical Sātavāhana features. The ceramics retrieved from the dump along the inner side of the brick wall on the western side comprised usual Red ware, solitary stamped sherd and Red polished ware of Sātavāhana period.

### **(3) Trial Excavations at Hasargundgi (Lat. 16°48'42"; Long 76°54'43")**

Hasargundgi is located 3.5 km east-southeast of Chandralāmbā Temple on the right bank of the river Bhima. A trial digging was taken up in the mound in the land of late Kaldar Sabanna yielding brickbats and decorated sculptures of *sūchi*, *stambha* and *Yaksha*<sup>30</sup>. The work yielded valuable information pertaining to the structural activity in the brick medium, supplementing the evidence at Sannati on the right bank.

### **Cutting**

The excavation in an area of 625 sqm encompassing the entire mound yielded the complete plan of a highly disturbed circular brick *stūpa* (Fig. 8 and Pl. IVA) with *āyaka* platforms. These were enclosed by a limestone railing with uprights and crossbars, of which a few damaged members were found scattered around the main brick structure at a safer distance.

The extant base portion of the *stūpa*, circular on plan, measuring 13.7 m in diameter, is built of burnt bricks measuring 7.5-8.5x2.7x5.1 cm in size. The uniformity of bricks and their mode of construction clearly indicate that it is a single phase construction. The foundation had been laid in naturally available rectangular limestone pebbles arranged on edge in the plan (Pl. IVB) over the black cotton soil and rammed to form a solid base upon which rises the brick courses arranged alternatively bound by fine lavigated clay in the core portion and the outer surface is pointed with lime mortar probably as a protective measure. The extant maximum height of the drum is 90 cm in 11 courses and the exterior surface was lime plastered. Much of the structure is destroyed due to intense agricultural activity, thus making it difficult to determine the other elevational details. The *stūpa* built in northeast-southwest orientation has rectangular *āyaka* platforms measuring



1x1.6x1 m abutting the drum at cardinal directions. Small limestone slabs found on the *āyaka* platforms (Pl.VA) were probably used as base-cushion to the pillars. That the *āyaka* pillars carried a coping member is evident from roughly rectangular lime stone members found near the western entrance.

A circumambulatory passage of 2.85 m width, with traces of lime plaster is found around the *stūpa*. That the brick and lime *stūpa* was enclosed by a limestone railing is evident from a number of architectural members such as uprights with mortices and cross bars lying at a convenient distance around the *stūpa*. Both uprights and cross bars are decorated exteriorly with pronounced lotus medallions, the maximum measuring 32.5 cm. in diameter. That the *stūpa* was not bereft of artistic expressions commonly noticed in similar edifices of the contemporary period is evident by a few decorated animal friezes, acting as *ushṇīṣha* over the railing. These rectangular panels having decorated border depict animals such as elephants, bull, boar, tiger and galloping antelope in their true nature.

Interestingly, for laying lime-plastered circumambulatory passage, red ware sherds have been used. Some of the red polished ware looks pale due to water logging. Though not a single inscription was found, a few coins of Puḷumavi are retrieved from the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* levels.

#### (4) Excavation at Kanaganahalli

##### Location

Kanaganahalli (Lat. 16°51'10" N; Long. 76°56'20" E) is a small hamlet located nearly 5 kms due east of Sannati village on the left bank of river Bhima and is about 16 km. west-southwest of Nalwar railway station, taluk Chitapur, Gulbarga district of Karnataka on Bangalore-Mumbai line (Fig.9).

At Kanaganahalli, a circular foundation of a *stūpa* with a small shrine of Durga under a neem tree was reported. The report also informs that the remains of a 16 pillared *maṇḍapa* and probably a *vihāra* complex forming part of the *stūpa*-complex existed in the area<sup>31</sup>.

However, the importance of the site manifested during the intensive exploration carried out by a team of archaeologists from the Archaeological Survey of India of Bangalore Circle in the year 1991.<sup>32</sup> The site, located 3.5 km. due east of the much famed Chandralāmbā temple of Sannati, yielded during the course of exploration architectural remains of what could be identified as a *stūpa*, sculptures and inscriptions of early historic period besides a temple of subsequent period (Pl.VB). In addition, ceramics of early historic period of different utilitarian purposes on ordinary dull red ware were collected. However, a huge crater lined with dressed limestone slabs laid in lime concrete forming part of a mound raising to a height of nearly 3 m.

**RAṆAMAṆḌALA, SANNATI**  
(FORT WALL)  
TRIAL TRENCH (2006)  
SECTION FACING EAST

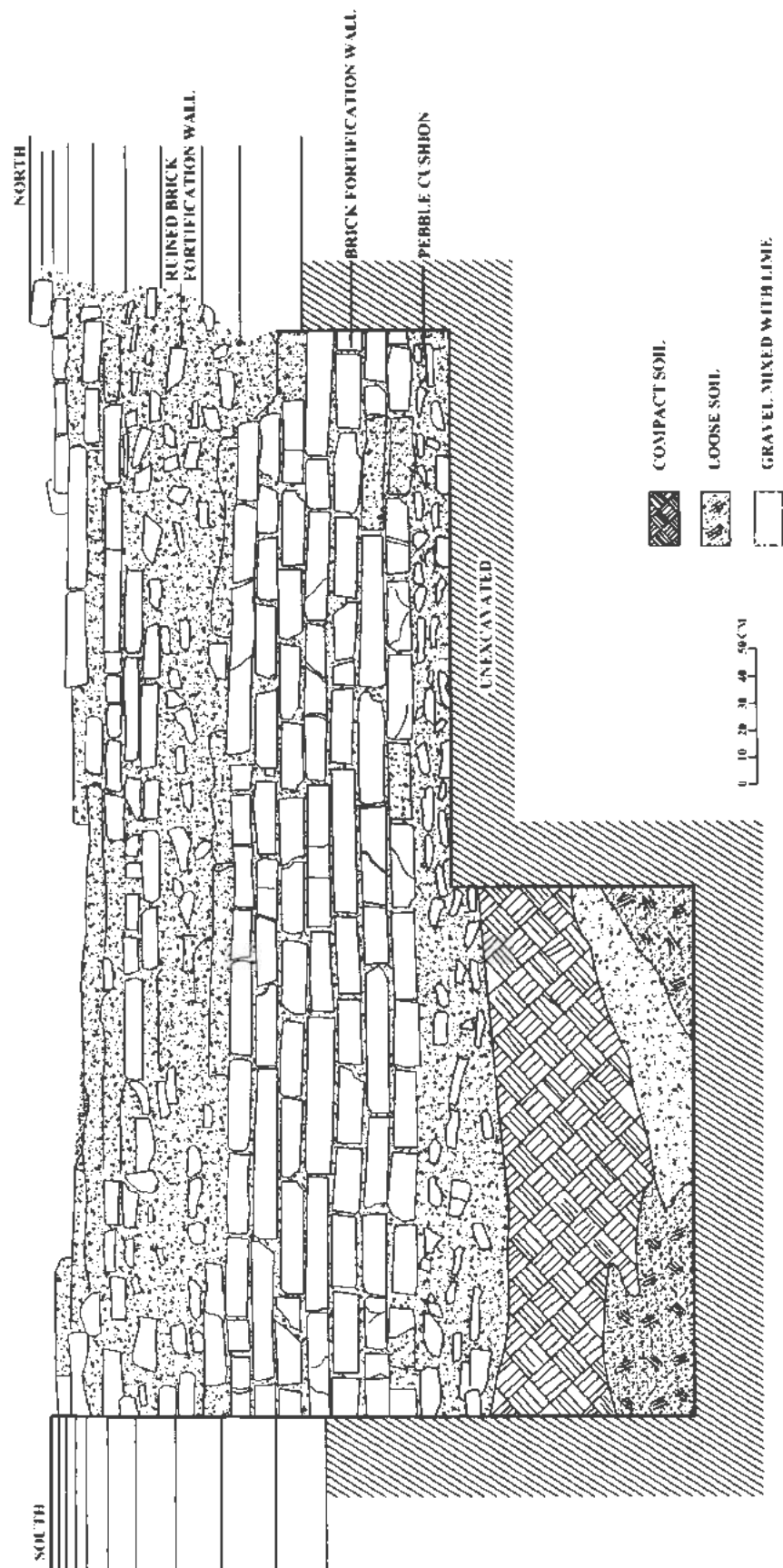
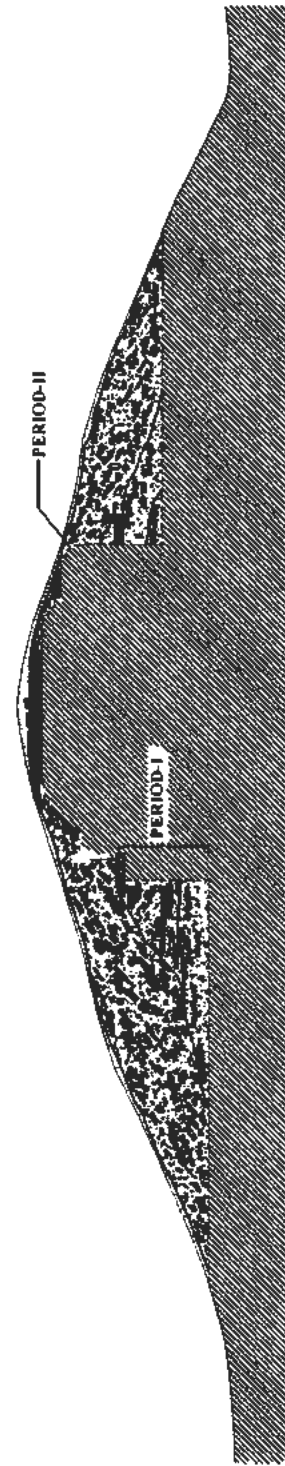
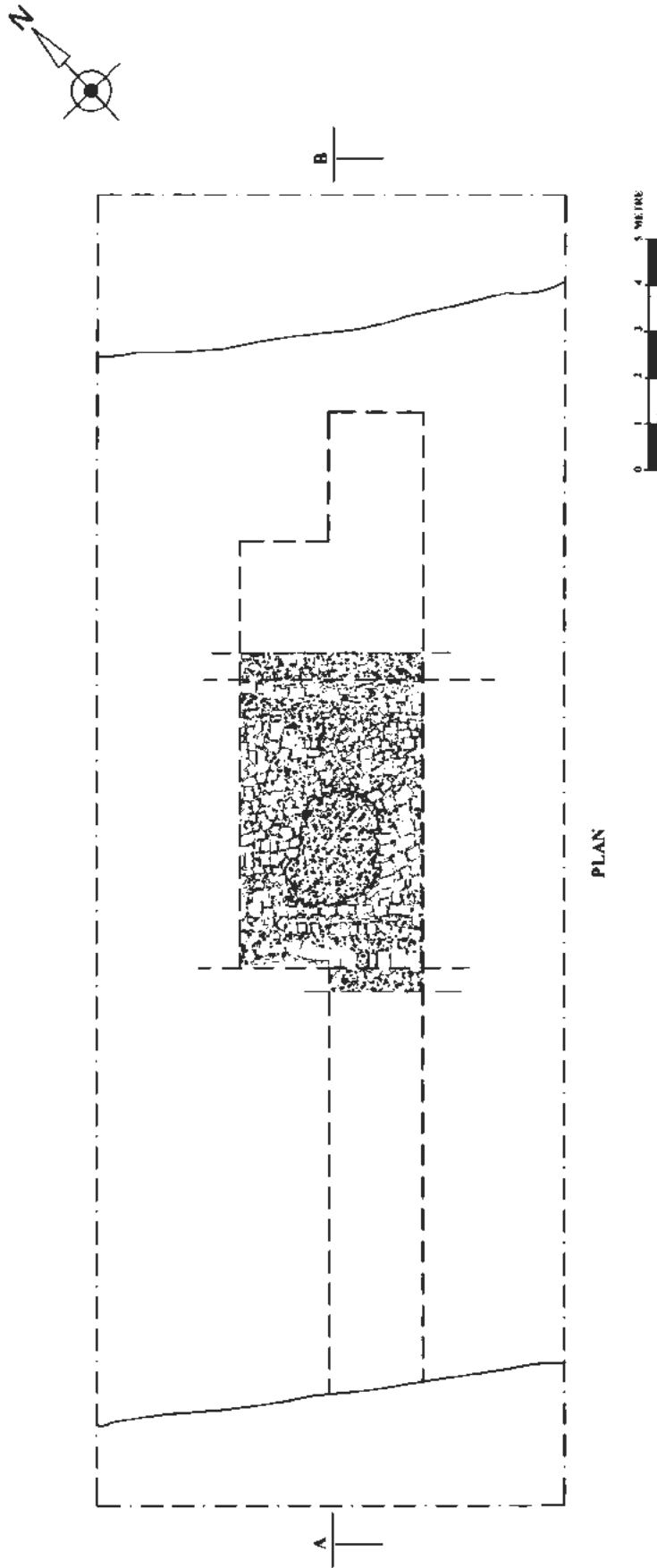


Fig.6

# **SANNATI, RANAMANDALA** FORT WALL ON PLAN



SECTIONAL ELEVATION AT A-B

**Fig.7**

from the surrounding cultivated land drew the attention of the team (Pl.VIA & B).

In the year 1994-95, to ascertain the potentiality of the mound and the nature of archeological remains Bangalore Circle undertook trial excavation, by laying a trench on the southern slopes of the mound.

The excavation laid bare plan of one-eighth (Pl.VIIA&B) of a large *stūpa* of *Hīnayāna* phase, built using

locally available limestone<sup>33</sup>. The structural remains exposed during the trial excavations included remains of *pradakṣiṇāpatha*, part of lower drum veneered with decorated limestone members depicting Dharma Chakra, Jētavana, Vajrāsana etc.

The results encouraged the team to take up a wholesome systematic, horizontal excavation of the mound spread in an area of approximately 3600 sq.m. in the succeeding years.



# CONTOUR MAP OF BRICK STŪPA SITE AT HASARGUNDGI TALUK SHAHAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA, KARNATAKA

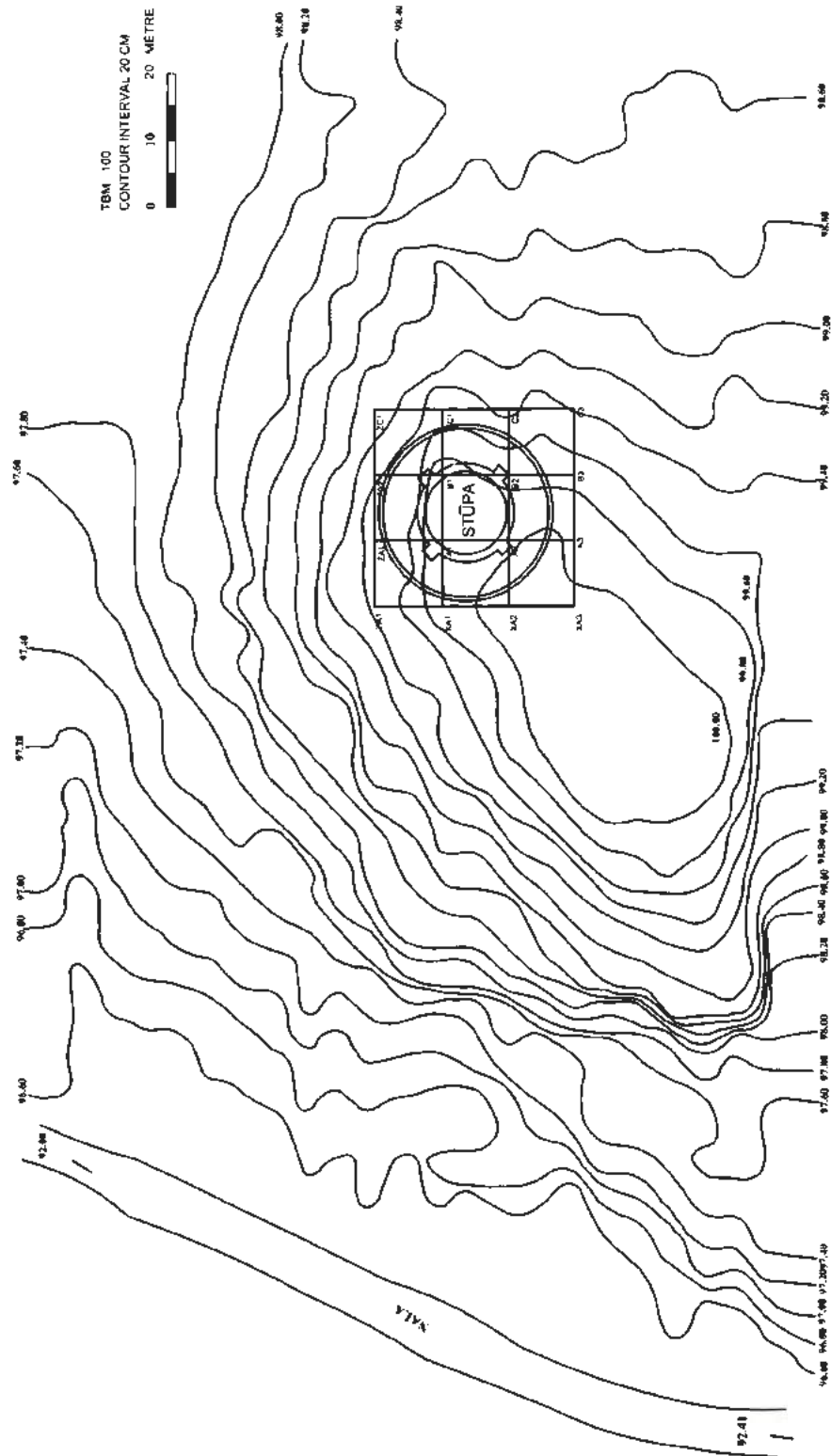
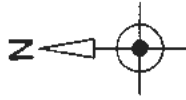


Fig. 8

# LOCATION OF MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGAHALLI, SANNATI, (LOWER KRISHNA VALLEY)

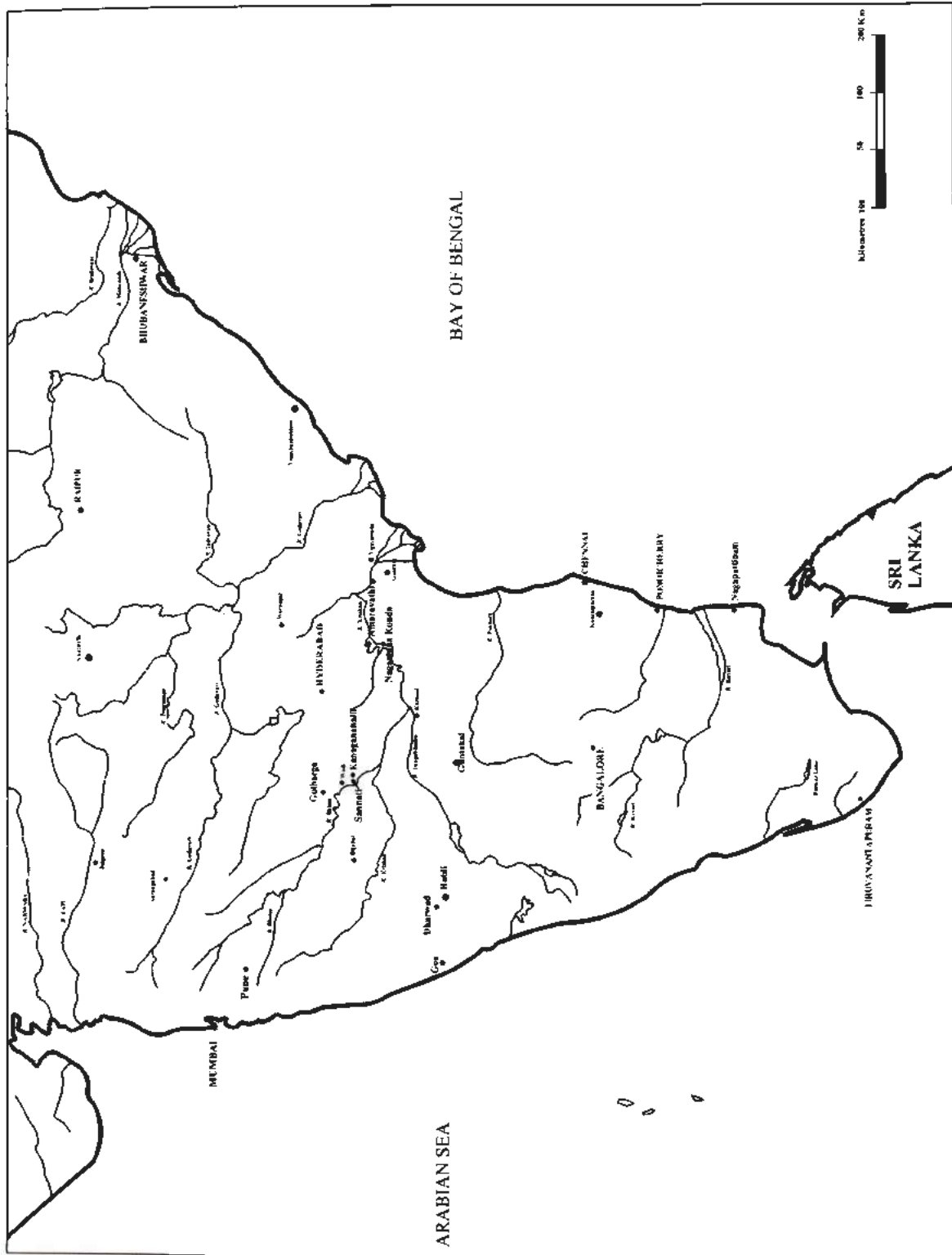


Fig.9

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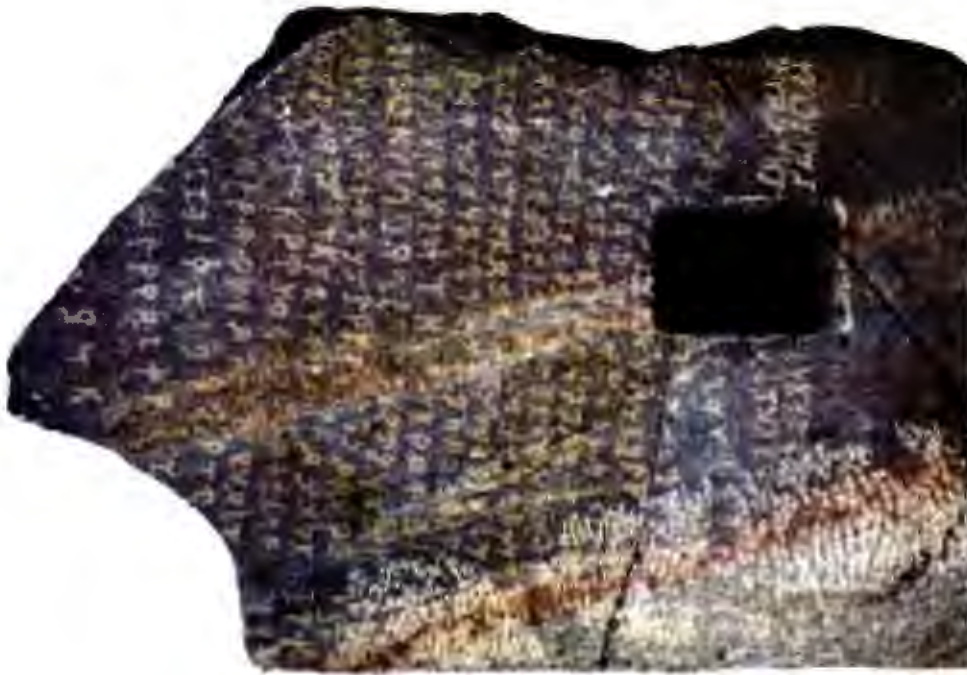


A. Chandralāmbā temple, Sannati - View from south-west



B. Sculpture of Kali, Chandralāmbā temple

PLATE I A



Face-b



Face-a

C. Asokan Rock Edict, Sannati





D. Damaged Sculpture of Yaksha, Brick Stūpa, Hasargundgi



PLATE II



A. Inscription, Siva Siri Pulumāvi, surface find, Northern gate way, Fort, Sannati



B. Inscription, Seated Buddha, Mahā Stūpa, Kanaganahalli

PLATE III



A. Section facing south, trial trench, Raṇamaṇḍala, Sannati



B. Fort wall, Raṇamaṇḍala, Sannati - View from south



PLATE IV



A. Brick *Stūpa*, Hasargundgi - general view



B. Brick *Stūpa*, Hasargundgi - close up view of limestone pitching at foundation level





A. Brick *Stūpa*, Hasargundgi - Close up view of *āyaka* platform



B. Durga temple, Kanaganahalli, view from east



PLATE VI



A. *Stūpa* mound, Kanaganahalli, General view



B. *Stūpa* mound, kanaganahalli, view from north-east

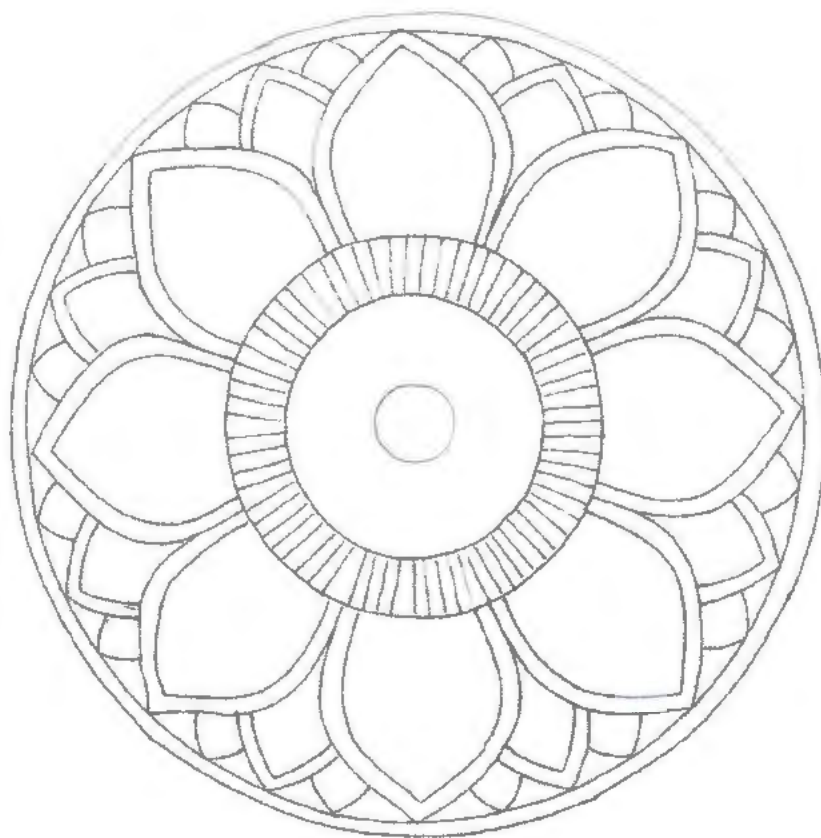


A. *Stūpa* mound, before excavation, Kanaganahalli, view from South



B. *Stūpa* mound, after trial excavations, Kanaganahalli





# EXCAVATIONS



## CHAPTER II

In continuation of the trial excavations on the southern side of the mound during the year 1994-95 (Ref: Chapter-I, pp.23) regular horizontal excavation was taken up in the *stūpa* mound with the objectives of (i) exposing the overall structural complex along with the accessory units in their extant plan and elevations, (ii) understanding the different structural phases in a chronological framework along with the construction methodology adopted, and (iii) to correlate the already known epigraphical, numismatic and cultural material from the explorations and excavations in the fortified township of *Raṇamaṇḍala* and other localities of greater Sannati.

### The Mound

The *stūpa* mound (Pl. VIIIA) lies 240 m to the north of the river Bhima amidst intensely cultivated agricultural fields on all the four sides. The mound, due to its insignificant height, practically gets hidden from the view when there is a pre-harvesting crop. The mound is spread between the contour levels of 97-100 m abruptly rising from the surrounding fields to a height of nearly 2.30 m in a circular

configuration (Fig.10). A small temple of Durga, of a later period is located 20m to the north-west of the mound.

Before taking up excavation, the surface indications revealed that as many as seven courses of a shell built of rectangular ashlar limestone slabs of irregular size set in thick lime mortar are seen exposed from the disturbed mound at north and northeast. This formed part of the dome of the *stūpa* (Pl.VIIIB). The same feature is noticed in plan in the diametrically opposite ends in the south and southwestern region roughly at a distance of 19 m. On the southern side, however, it has a thick lime plastering forming a curved profile like the intrados of a domed structure along the inner surface. The same at north shows well laid dressed rectangular slabs arranged in an arc of about 2 m length and a height of nearly 30 cm. With the removal of vegetation and systematic layout of the trenches, the circular configuration of the structure (Pl.IX), became more apparent and revealed a slope of about 0.40 m depth from periphery to centre.

The physiology of the mound revealed massive chunks of limestone chips





embedded in lime concrete, fragments of limestone blocks of varied size with an admixture of small to medium size rolled, weathered brickbats and occasional potsherds of dull red ware typical to the early historic period. Shapes of a few bowls of featureless rim were also found.

Nearly 30 m southwest, almost at the peripheral slope of the mound, stumps of several austere limestone pillar bases were found. Some of these pillars are still buried exposing only the upper parts and roughly appear to be in four lines of four pillars each, suggesting that they may represent the remains of a pillared *mandapa* or a promenade associated with the *stūpa*<sup>2</sup> (Pl.X A & B).

The Durga temple mentioned above situated below a neem tree, at the north-western corner of the mound, very simple in appearance, is built using the limestone architectural members probably collected from the nearby damaged *stūpa* complex. One of the inscribed memorial slab akin to the one found in the excavations at Anegutti and explorations at Anabi, Sannati and Sirwal is found reused for erecting the southern main wall of the temple<sup>1</sup>. An image of Mahishamardini which could be ascribed to the Rāshtrakūṭa-Kalyāna Chālukya period (10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> century AD) on stylistic grounds, is worshipped by the local community even today.

## Layout

The trench layout was carried out from the geometric centre of the mound. In all,

36 trenches of 10x10 m were laid in the grid pattern following the contour and circular configuration of the mound, so as to obtain the entire plan of the buried structures, to ascertain and record the exact location of the fallen members and for peripheral expansion as and when required. The work carried out in 16 trenches, covering a total area of 1,600 sqm to a maximum average depth of 2.5 m, laid bare the remains of a highly decorated and disturbed *stūpa* with rectangular platforms (*āyaka-vēdikās*) at cardinal directions enclosed by a sculptured railing composed of uprights (*tabhās*), crossbars (*sūchis*) and coping members (*ushṇishas*) having entrances in the cardinal directions with moon-stone (*chandraśīlā*) and an entrance sill as the major architectural composition (Pl.XIA&B). Subsequent excavation in the peripheral area of this structure also revealed as many as 10 associated brick-built structures of varying dimensions and plans meticulously aligned around the *stūpa*. (Fig.11)

## Stratigraphy

Topographically the site is on the flood plain of the river Bhima with the black cotton soil overlying weathered basaltic rock formation on the northern banks. As such the *stūpa* is also built upon a cleared and levelled ground of black cotton soil, which is excavated for laying the foundation courses of the structure (Fig.12). Topography of the formation of the mound reveals two distinct features, one away from the circular configuration

# MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI LAYOUT PLAN OF TRENCHES

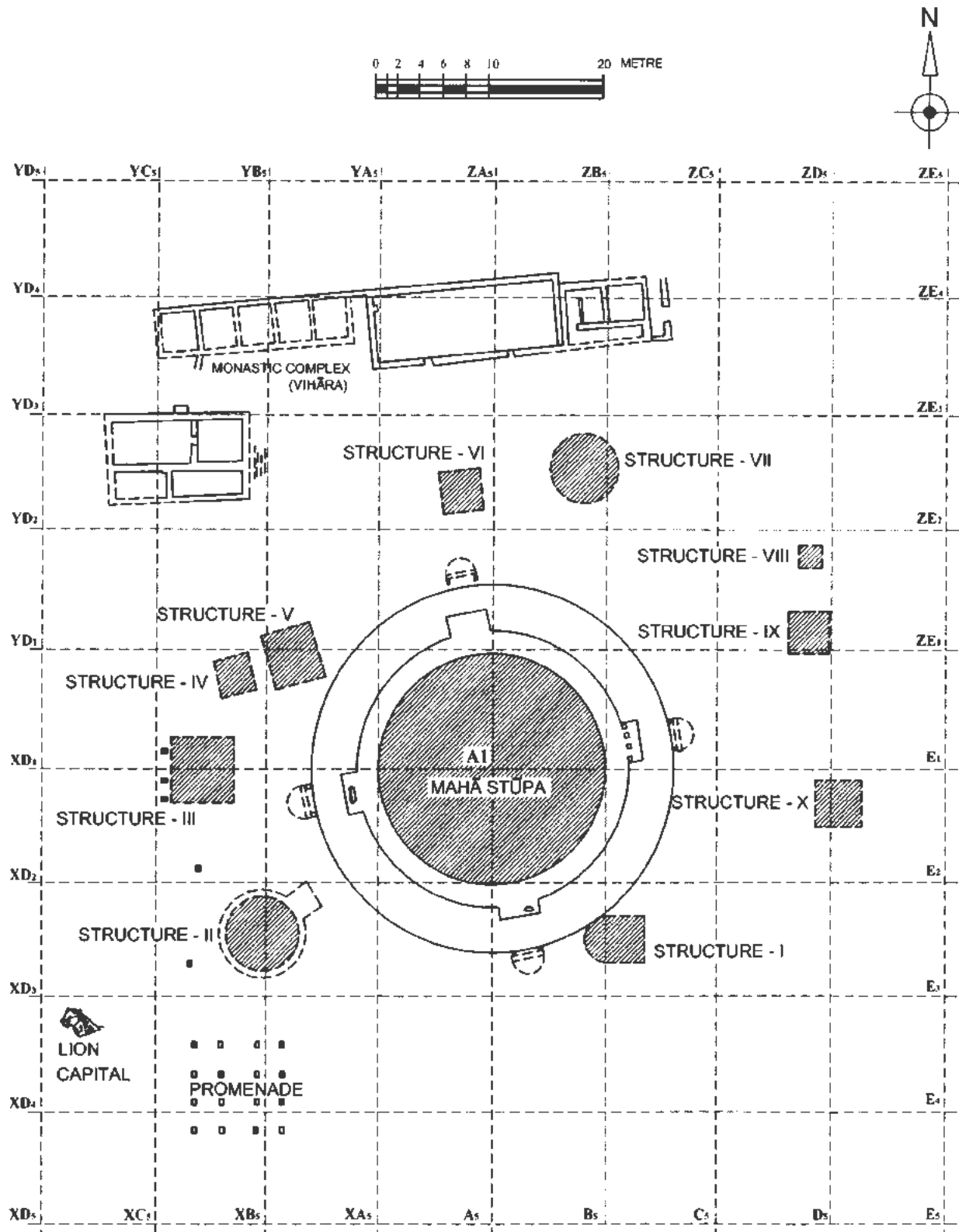


Fig.11

**MAHĀ STŪPA**  
KANAGANAHALLI EXCAVATIONS (1997-2000 & 2006)  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA,  
KARNATAKA

SECTION FACING WEST

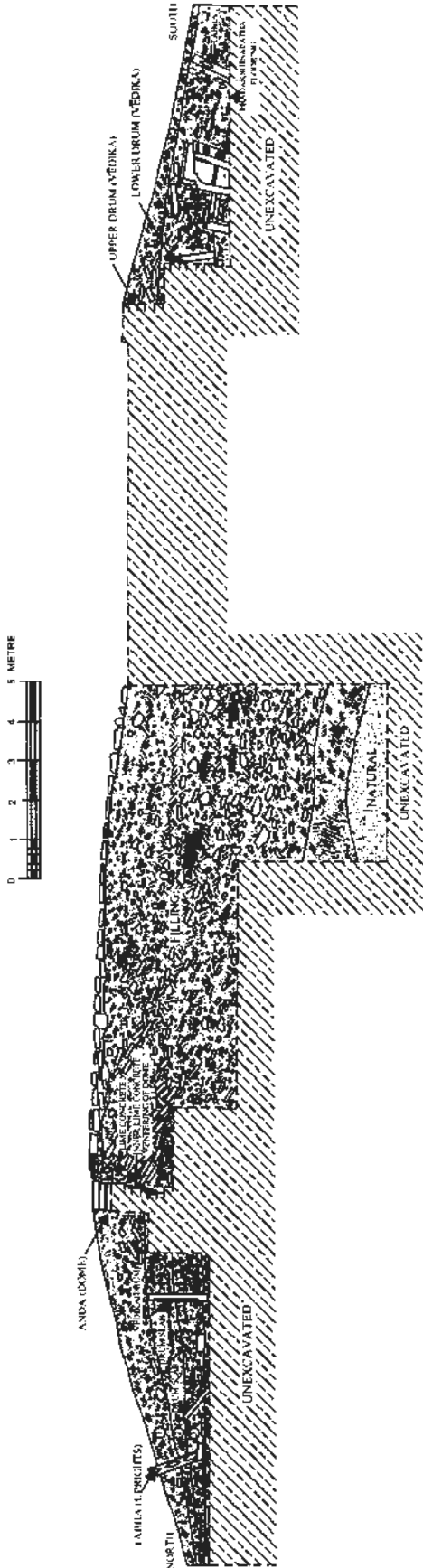


Fig.12



and the other within it. The first obviously is the gradual spread of the damaged architectural members embedded in the deposits diverging radially beyond the periphery and the second exhibiting the Stratigraphy of methodology adopted for core filling.

### **Deposits outside the circular configuration:**

At the surface, the excavation has revealed a weathered humus layer of nearly 7 to 10 cm thickness, composed of slightly brownish black soil loose in nature. Stone artefacts of Middle Palaeolithic, Mesolithic affinity of agate and chert are sporadically encountered, as it is a well-known fact that both the banks of the river Bhima in this region are dotted with many a Middle Palaeolithic and Mesolithic localities.<sup>3</sup>

Strata-1 is represented by loose ashy soil with occasional mixture of black-cotton soil patches, which slope towards the periphery from the centre of the main circular configuration in all directions. The maximum extant thickness is nearly 75 cm and the minimum of nearly 10 cm. The strata is composed of chunks of lime plaster, small limestone chips and mutilated large fragments of disturbed architectural members.

This stratum is disturbed at places by rat holes, crevices caused by tree roots, percolation of rainwater and also due to extensive agricultural operations. At a distance of nearly 3.25 m from the lower

drum, stumps of vertical posts (*tabhas*) of limestone are found *in situ* having lateral lenticular mortices to hold the cross-bars (*sūchis*) of lenticular section. These uprights are damaged and broken at varying heights and the *in situ* portions are found leaning outward prominently, due to sliding of the heavy architectural members of the dome (Pl.XIIA). Following the circular configuration of the mound, this layer also gently slopes radially towards the periphery, dipping almost at an angle of 25° to 30°. No antiquities were forthcoming from this stratum except for minute sherds of rolled and weathered redware.

Strata-2 is composed of light to deep brownish soil with an average thickness varying from 20 to 80 cm. It is the most significant stratum, essentially accommodating the collapsed architectural members or the construction material of the *stūpa*. The stratum is thicker from the railing to the upper drum and gradually slopes beyond the railing at a steep angle of 30° to 45°. The thickness of the stratum sometimes is governed by the verticality or the disturbed nature of the uprights. At places, some of the collapsed architectural members, clog in systematic alignment within the limits of railing. Wherever the upright is broken at the ground level due to the impact of collapse, the architectural members are found flung beyond 10 m across the uprights (Pl.XIIB). Thus, while part of this stratum rests on the circumambulatory

passage (*pradakṣhiṇāpatha*) (Pl.XIIIA) of the *stūpa*, the remaining rests on the black cotton soil forming part of the working level of the *stūpa* outside the railing. The section of this stratum reveals a set pattern of the accumulation of debris of collapsed architectural units including parts of dome, upper drum, cornice slab and the lower drum embedded in that order, and crammed into the circumambulatory passage (Pl.XIIIB) and some are flung beyond the railing. This stratum outside the railing gradually peter out into Stratum-3.

Stratum-3, measuring nearly 10 to 40 cm in thickness, is filled with the debris of lime mortar of riverine pebbles of quartzite of medium to large size, waste flakes of limestone liberally mixed with the other construction materials like weathered coarse river gravel within the limits of the railing and beyond it include, the waste flakes of limestone and smaller parts of collapsed structure made of highly fragmented brickbats, lime concrete and granular sandy soil somewhat loose in nature. The lower most levels of this stratum have yielded many a lead and potin coins of the Sātavāhana rulers coeval with the working level and the major structural activity of the *stūpa* (Period II, Phases II to V).

Strata-4 is represented by natural, compact, clayey black cotton soil. While afresh, the stratum can be easily scooped and when exposed to sun it becomes very

hard and tends to develop crackled surface. Excavation was continued below the lime stone paved circumambulatory passage to ascertain the earliest structural phases, if any, in the southeastern and northwestern parts of the *stūpa*.

## The Core

Excavation was also taken up inside the circular configuration bordered by lime stone structural activity. The interior, with a diameter of nearly 18.75 m, gently sloped into a depression towards the centre from the periphery. A tree grown at the geometric centre of the configuration had disturbed many features. An 'L' shaped trench with its arms extending from the centre to due north and due west was laid (Fig.13). These north-south and east-west running longitudinal trenches (XIVA) measure 10 m in length with a width of 2 m.

## North-South Trench

Surface indications had revealed at the northern periphery a wall built in dressed wedge-shaped limestone slabs with lime concrete still *in situ* (Pl.XIVB). The trench was excavated to a depth of 1.50 m. Its northern end revealed a nearly 1.0 m thick wall following part of an arc following the configuration with stones measuring nearly 1.07 m in length and 70 cm width with an average thickness of 10 cm. The thickness of the stones varies from 8 cm to 18 cm. From the surface nearly seven courses are

## PLAN OF MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI,

TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA, KARNATAKA

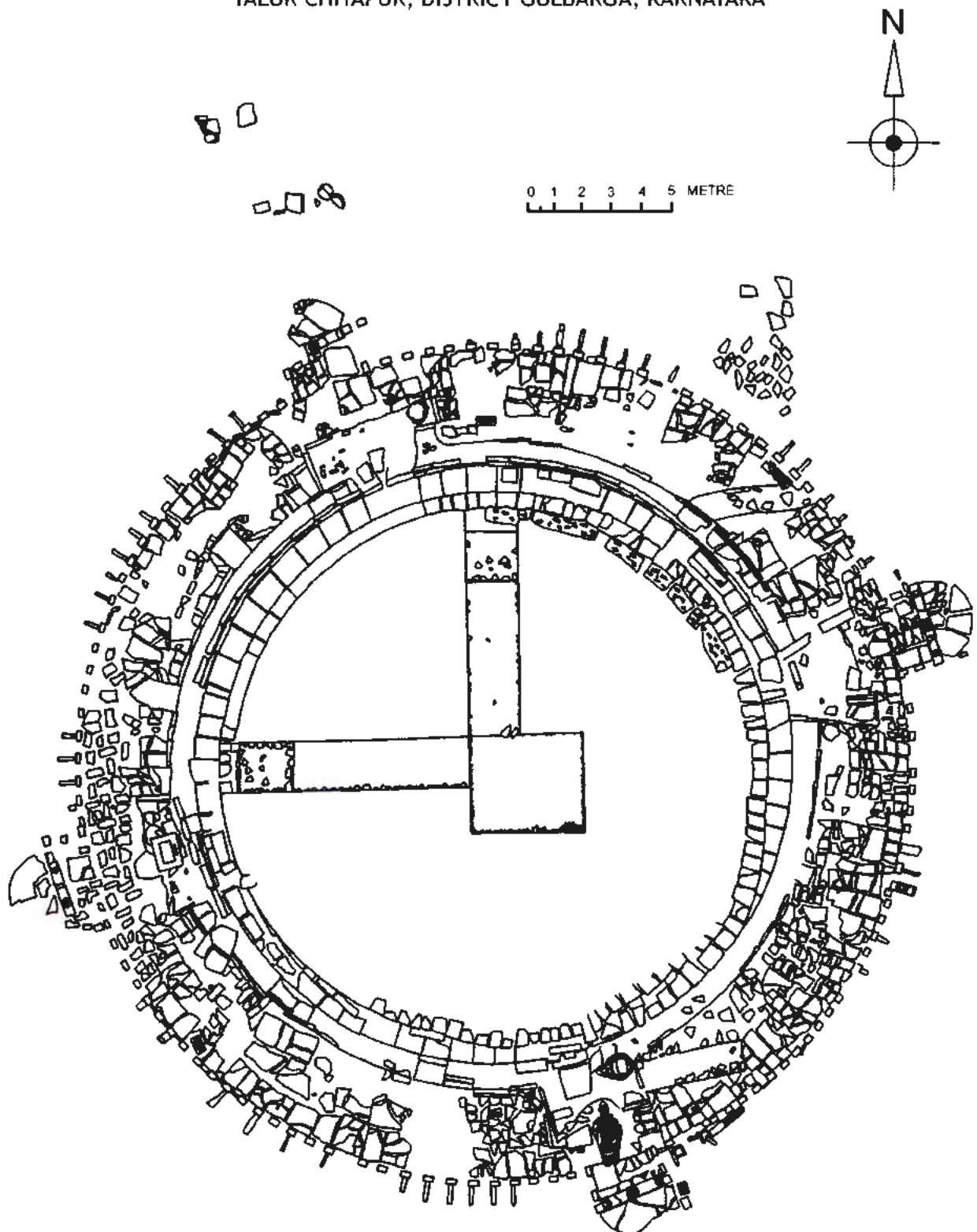


Fig. 13

found. This intrados of the *stūpa* was found provided with an offset of 15 cm width at a depth of 1.40 m over which the curvature of the upper drum of the *stūpa* appears to have been initiated.

Further, the excavation carried to a length of 1.90 m from the periphery towards the centre has revealed a ledge of nearly 2 m. This is laid with irregular limestone pieces measuring 15 to 40 cm in length with a thickness of nearly 11 cm. Set in mud mortar, this rises from a level of 1.1 m thick layer of sandy brownish soil mixed with limestone chips and riverine pebbles. Traces of lime have also been found. The layer composition changes towards the centre comprising of fairly large size riverine boulders mixed with limestone chips. Occasionally, boulders of pink granite and blackish basalt are also encountered with a characteristic feature of heaping of these boulders and pebbles from periphery to centre. Further, towards the centre, the same stratum turns into loose greyish brown soil with occasional limestone chips. The work has been stopped at a depth (of 1.50 m) in this trench.

### East-west trench

To study the occurrence of a similar stone structural activity with encasement on the western periphery abutting the inner edge of the drum, and also to understand the filling, excavations were carried out up to a maximum depth of 2.60 m. Similar offset that was noticed in north-south

trench was encountered here at a depth of 62 cm. This feature continues to a width of 1.96 m and to a height of 1.75 m with as many as 16 courses of an average thickness varying from 8-11 cm on the western side. The top few courses however were found disturbed. Below this feature alternate courses of rubble, limestone blocks and gritty black-cotton soil mixed with gruss are encountered up to a depth of 1.25 m. This was obviously provided as soling or foundation after cutting a deep foundation trench into the natural soil of weathered yellowish gritty gruss (Fig.14).

### Central core trench

The extension of the above north-south and west-east trenches towards the geometric centre of the structure reveals that the core filling pattern observed in the peripheral area in first two strata is also encountered, albeit with less percentage of boulders which is more ashy, loose, mixed with smaller riverine pebbles and stone chips. This overlies the earlier mentioned natural black-cotton soil preceded by weathered gruss in their natural undulated contour.

The results of the trial trench in the core region thus indicate that a low mound of alternate courses of rubble, limestone blocks and gritty black-cotton soil mixed with gruss has been raised over a foundation as described above after cutting a foundation trench. This low mound was further encircled and encased by a low



## MAHĀ STŪPA

KANAGANAHALLI EXCAVATIONS (1997-2000 & 2006)  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA,  
KARNATAKA

### SECTION FACING SOUTH

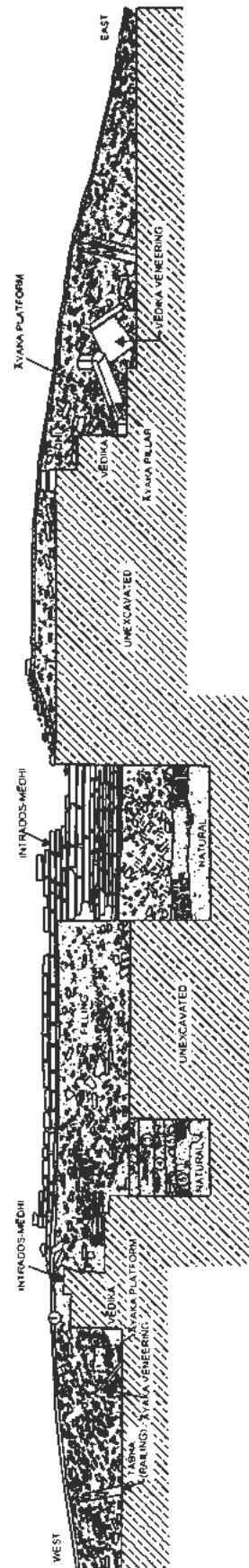


Fig. 14

wall of multiple coursed and undressed/ semi-dressed slabs of limestone that are locally available in abundance. This structure, the earliest phase of structural activity at the site, appeared like a low hemispherical mound not far removed from its preceding examples of Megalithic period spread across the lower Deccan.

## STRUCTURAL LAYOUT IN THE EXCAVATED TRENCHES

The excavation carried out in the trenches, each of 10 m square covering the entire mound and its periphery has laid bare a systematically and meticulously built *stūpa* complex (Fig.15). At the centre of the site is a much-disturbed structure of the *mahāchaitya* (*stūpa*), which is surrounded by 10 small and big brick and limestone veneered votive *stūpas*, square platforms for the worship of *Buddhapādas* and a large brick-built monastery, rectangular on plan, along the northern periphery of the complex.

The main *stūpa* is oriented at about 15° northwest from the true north-south axis. The extant damaged *stūpa* built in limestone (Pl.XV) standing to a height of nearly 3 m has in its composition, a completely disturbed dome, part of upper drum with its massive sculptured veneering supported by collars at base, an upper non-functional circumambulatory passage, a base (*vēdikā*), a 3.25 m wide circumambulatory passage - all enclosed by a 2.50 m tall railing pierced with entrances at north, south, east and west.

An entrance door sill and moonstone (*chandraśilā*) at the entrances complete the composition. Four disturbed *āyaka* platforms abutting the lower drum, at cardinal directions opposite to the entrances, a feature commonly seen in the *stūpa* architecture of the lower Krishna valley, have also been exposed. However the placing of colossal statues of standing Buddha on separate pedestals veneered with cornices along the periphery with sculptured friezes depicting the great events in the life of the Lord Buddha on the southern and western *āyaka* platforms is a unique feature of the site. A rare aspect and a deviation from the well-known contemporary Buddhist centres in lower Krishna valley is the positioning of as many as eight *Mānushi* Buddhas over the circumambulatory passage against unsculpted lower drum panels in the intra-cardinal directions of the *stūpa*. However, one of the seated Buddha sculpture was accommodated on the eastern *āyaka* platform in addition to the four *āyaka* pillars positioned on it (PLXVIB). It is interesting to note that due to the severity of collapse of the *stūpa*, the standing images of Buddha had fallen on the circumambulatory passage and fragmented into pieces. While the upper part of the sculpture of standing Buddha on the western *āyaka* was found lying face upwards (Pl.XVIA), the lower drum slab depicting sculpture of *Muchilindanāga* was found resting face downwards over it. The lower part of the body, broken at ankle, was found buried in front of the disturbed

## KEY PLAN

KANAGANAHALLI EXCAVATIONS (1997-2000 & 2006)  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA,  
KARNATAKA

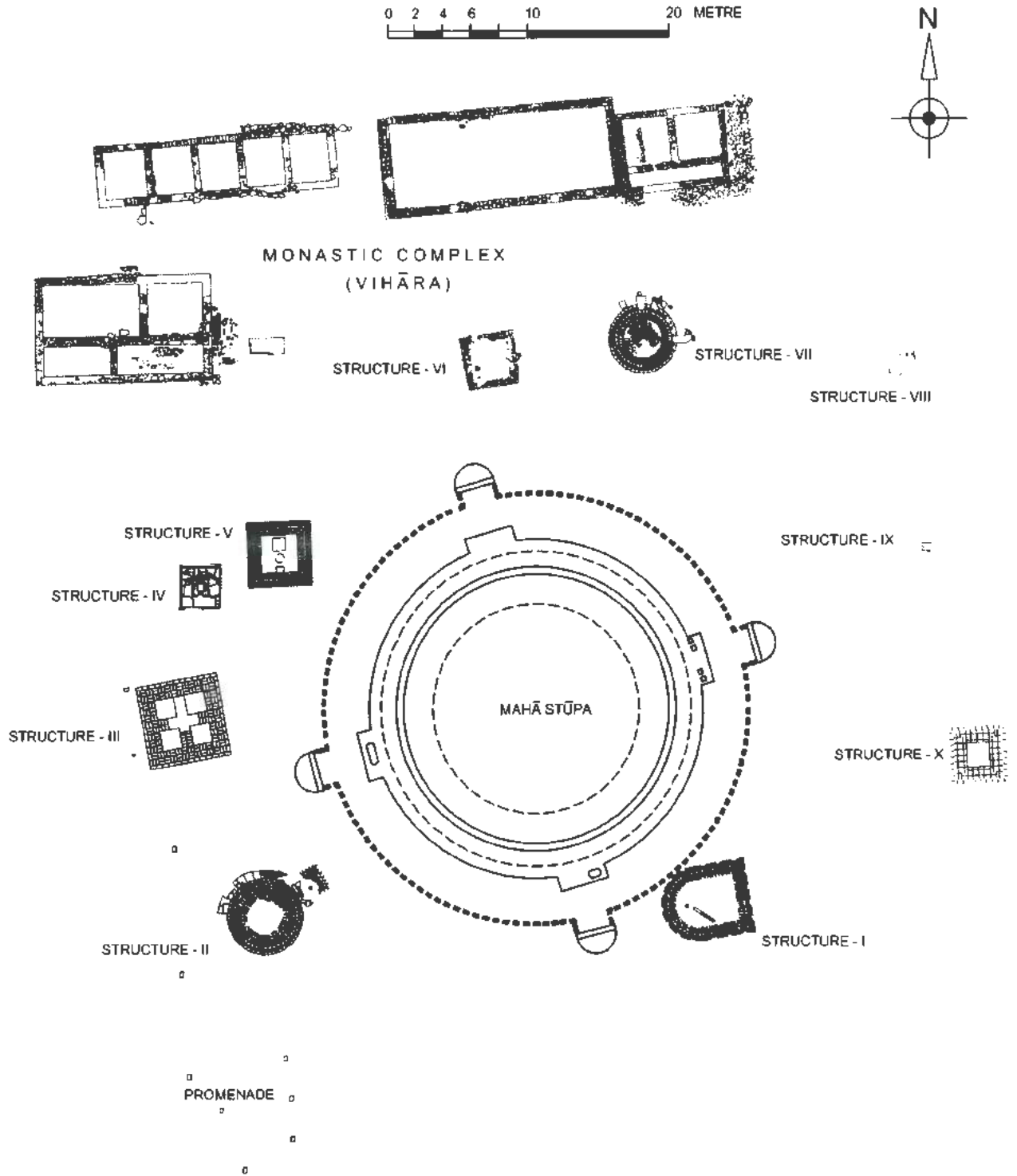


Fig.15

pedestal. Another important feature is the location of an image of *Yaksha* outside the railing, to the left of moonstone at north, south and west. The bowls of offering, cut in stone, probably placed over the head of these *Yaksha* images (*pushpavāhakās*) were also found nearby.

None of the uprights of the railing are extant in full and the remaining *in situ* portions show a predominant outward leaning due to the heavy thrust caused by the collapsed massive architectural members of the *harmikā*, umbrella (*chhatra*), veneering slabs of upper and lower drums. Some of the lower drum veneerings are *in situ* and are found interlocked with each other on their vertical plane. Falling into the ornate and plain category, these are held in position with the sculptured cornices, which have been found cut with a groove at the under surface to receive the top collar portion of a lower drum panel.

The structures in brick medium outside the railing and at the periphery of the mound are activities of a later period. They are greatly disturbed due to intense agricultural operations and presently are extant only up to a maximum height of 50-60 cm. On the southern side, about 4 m east of the southern *āyaka*, almost abutting the railing is an east facing apsidal brick structure (STR-I). Remains of a circular votive *stūpa* (STR-II) with a rectangular projection on the east were encountered in the west-southwest corner. Three more square structures (STR-III,

IV & V) were constructed towards the northwest of the *stūpa* aligned respectively from west to north. Similarly, there are four small and big brick built votive *stūpas* (STR-VI to IX) in the northeastern side of the *stūpa*. STR-X is again a modest square brick structure built slightly to the south of the east-west axis. The monastery, rectangular on plan, is built along the northern periphery of the complex with its longer axis oriented east-west.

The bricks used for construction of these edifices, immediately after exposure to the atmosphere, crackled up and further deterioration set in. Close to square brick structure STR-III, on the western side of the *stūpa*, is a massive rectangular stump of a pillar standing to a height of nearly 45 cm in trench-XC1 which in all probability accommodated a lion capital as evidenced by the finding of a mutilated couchant lion in the adjacent trench (Trench-XD3). Interestingly, the well-sculpted lion is in sandstone and has a polished lustrous finish recalling the lion capital of Mauryan times.

The other structure of importance is a pillared rectangular alignment found to the southwest of circular brick Structure-II in trenches-XC3, XC4 and XB4. The structure has only 6 pillar-stumps *in situ* in different verticality and is greatly disturbed. Traces of limestone paving between the pillars are seen. The structure appears to have been a promenade and probably accommodated more than 10 pillars.



## Nature of the debris

From the excavation, it is apparent that the architects of the *stūpa* and its associate structures have extensively used the locally available limestone and brick and have articulated these structures in lime mortar/lime concrete. As such, many chunks of lime mortar/concrete made on riverine pebbles and limestone chips are found in the debris. It is also observed that the *stūpa* and the structures surrounding it, might have got destroyed, due to various reasons such as political instability after the *Sātavāhana* rule in the region, gradual shift of religious convictions, lack of maintenance, natural calamities, growth of vegetation etc. and aggravated by subsequent agricultural activities. It appears that the disturbance caused to the *stūpa* was of a sudden nature and the entire railing all around leaned out heavily at an acute angle and the sculptured veneering of the lower and upper drums fell into the bay of the circumambulatory passage over which heaps of upper dome slabs collapsed. The chunks of lime concrete and lime plaster used for fastening these architectural members in position also choked the circumambulatory passage. The sculptured animal friezes of the collar placed over the upper drum panels had also collapsed into the circumambulatory passage. It is interesting to note that the *ushnīsha* or coping members of the railing, the crossbars and considerable amount of upper drum slabs, *harmikā* and umbrella, *āyaka* pillars (east), etc. were found outside the railing as part of the debris.

The concentration of binding material of lime mortar and lime concrete is reduced to a minimum in the trenches laid outside the railing. The collapse of the architectural members resulted in the disturbed narrow upper circumambulatory passage besides the outward leaning of the lower drum and *āyaka* veneering. However, the 3.0m tall upper drum veneering suffered great mutilations especially at south and south-east wherein the massive panels had broken into numerous fragments. Some of the mutilated upper drum sculptures were found *in situ*, albeit slightly dislodged from their position, perhaps due to the heavy collar introduced at its base. The un-sculpted portion of the upper drum slabs measuring about 35 cm in height were found buried towards the lower drum due to a thick layer of heavy mortar used for leaning them against the drum.

Despite the mutilations, a fair amount of lower drum panels stood against the 60 cm thick brick veneering built against the original dressed cut-stone masonry of limestone and provided with lime mortar plastering. During the course of excavation, the soil encountered was of loose ashy nature. It is composed of deteriorated lime mortar, concrete, sand and crushed bricks. Most of the architectural members had closely choked with each other making the excavation a difficult process. Removal of the architectural members within the railing revealed a well-laid circumambulatory passage, which had borne the brunt of the disintegration of the *stūpa*.

**EXCAVATIONS**

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2. James Howell, *Excavations at Sannathi, 1986-89*, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 28-29.
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(ii) *Indian Archaeology - 1990-91 - A Review*, p. 31.  
(iii) K.P. Poonacha, 'Fresh light on the Archaeological Vestiges and Sculptural Art at Sannati: Some Observations', L.K. Srinivasan *et. al.* (eds), *Sri Nagabhinandanam: M.S. Nagarajao Felicitation Volume*, Vol. I, New Delhi, 1998. pp. 279-294.  
(iv) Status Report On The Exploration Undertaken In The Submergence Area 1991-92- Bhima Irrigation (Flow) Project, Sannati, Taluk Chitapur, District Gulbarga, Karnataka, Archaeological Survey of India, Bangalore, 1992 (Unpublished); *Indian Archaeology - 1993-94 - A Review*.  
(v) *Indian Archaeology - 1991-92 - A Review*, p. 45.

PLATE VIII



A. *Mahā Stūpa*, mound, Kanaganahalli, general view



B. *Mahā Stūpa*, mound, Kanaganahalli, extant *mēdhi* close up





*Mahā Stūpa mound, Kanaganahalli, aerial view from south*



PLATE X



A. *Mahā Stūpa* mound, Kanaganahalli, pillared promenade



B. *Mahā Stūpa* mound, Kanaganahalli, pillared promenade (closer view)





A. General view of *Mahā Stūpa*, after excavation



B. General view of *Mahā Stūpa*, after excavation



PLATE XII



A. Collapsed dome slabs and leaning railing



B. Architectural members blocking the *Pradakshināpathi*



A, Section partly resting on the circumambulatory passage



B. Architectural members embedded in the section



PLATE XIV



A. L-shaped trench, central core



B. Extant inner face of *Mēdhi* at north

PLATE XV



General view of Mahā Stūpa



PLATE XVI



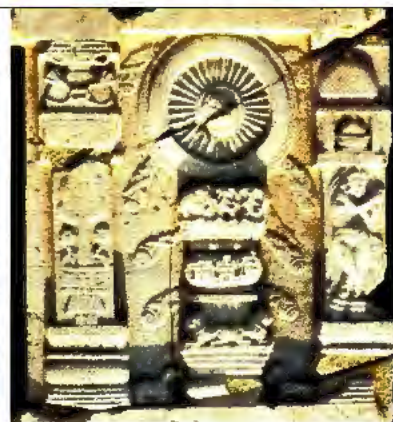
A. Mutilated Buddha image, western āyaka, Mahā Stūpa



B. Eastern āyaka along with damaged pillars, Mahā Stūpa



# DESCRIPTION OF EXCAVATED STRUCTURES



## CHAPTER III

### A. THE STŪPA

The extant *stūpa* measures roughly 26 m in diameter and 94.30 m at the railings, 74.35 m at the lower drum and nearly 68.14 m at the upper drum, in circumference respectively. Structurally, the existing remains of the *stūpa* at the top reveal, bottom portions of broken veneered slabs of the upper drum each held *in situ* by a semi circular collar resting upon a ledge of about 75 cm in width, provided at the top of the 1.20 m high lower drum and constitutes the upper circumambulatory passage. An *āyaka* platform measuring approximately 3.60 m in length and 1.25 m in width, abuts the lower drum. Around the lower drum a 3.75 m wide circumambulatory passage is provided. This passage is enclosed by a decorated railing of 1.95 m in height above the ground and the exterior face of each railing is composed of 4 lotus medallions and probably crowned by an *ushnīsha* evident from tenons on the top of railings. Each railing is held by 4 cross bars adorned with lotus medallions. In the cardinal directions, corresponding to each *āyaka*, the railing takes an outward right- angle position to a distance of nearly 3 m. In between the distal uprights

of the railing an entrance sill decorated with lotus medallions is provided which is preceded by a semicircular moonstone. The railing is slightly above the floor of the circumambulatory passage. Evidences of *Yaksha* sculptures bearing flower-bowls (*pushpavāhakā*) are encountered nearer to these entrances except the eastern entrance and thus completing the structural composition.

Mutilated sculptures of *Yakshas* have been found at north and south (Pl.XVIA-C). During the course of excavation, at the west, a stone pedestal which might have accommodated a stucco image of a *Yaksha* (Pl.XVIII A), evident from a heap of lime mortar strewn around the pedestal, was found facing southwards to the north of the moonstone. The figure might have been destroyed due to the collapse of the architectural members of the *stūpa*. Shallow stone-cut squarish and circular bowls for offering have also been found at the western and southern entrances, signifying their importance (Pl. XVIII B&C).

However, the placing of well-sculpted standing colossal Buddhas right over the southern and western *āyaka* platforms

(PL.XIX A&B), and seated Buddha figures placed over the eastern and northern *āyaka* platforms (Pl.XX A&B) evidenced here, adds to the architectural composition in elevation and appears unique to this *stūpa*. Interestingly, in front of the sculptures of Buddha on the *āyaka* platforms ornately sculpted *Buddhapādas* were also placed (Pl.XXI A). The *āyaka* platforms were veneered and the top edge encased with compact sculptured friezes narrating the events from the life of Buddha. Deviating from the usual practice of placing the *āyaka* pillars symbolising the events in the life of the Master as found in other Buddhist sites in the lower Krishna valley, here the *āyaka* pillars were inserted on the top at the sides of the eastern *āyaka*. Of them two pillars were placed flanking the rear of the *āyaka* platform, while the other two pillars appear to have flanked the seated Buddha sculpture on the platform, which probably represented the central *āyaka* pillar denoting the *sambōdhi* (enlightenment) aspect.

The excavations revealed the severe damage caused to decorated slabs particularly those which embellished the upper drum. Each upper drum slab measures 3.07-3.23 m in height, 1.07-1.13 m in width with a thickness of 15-17 cm. These upper drum slabs exhibit unique technique adopted by the builders of the *stūpa* to maintain the gentle

curvature on both the surfaces of each slab required while arranging them following the contour of the drum. Similarly the heavy wedge-shaped limestone veneering members of the dome, resting above the intervening decorated collar were mildly toothed or roughened exteriorly to facilitate lime plastering of the dome. At the time of collapse, these members of superstructure, appear to have caused great damage to the architectural members of other components of the *stūpa*, especially the railings, resulting in clogging of the entire circumambulatory passage sometimes almost vertically packed together (Pl.XXI B).

Mutilated members of as many as five large umbrella slabs, retrieved in the excavations, indicate that a single *chhatrayashti* crowned the apex of the dome of the *stūpa*, rather than the multiple honorific *chhatrāvali*, depicted on the drum slabs. Based upon the measurement of different architectural units, height and diameter of the extant remains of the *stūpa* it could be deduced that, it stood to a height of nearly 17 meter in its heyday.

## ĀYAKA PLATFORMS

The *āyaka* platforms appears to have been introduced by extending the brick veneering by a meter in the four cardinal directions as part of the second phase of constructional activity of the *stūpa*. This structural activity appears to be of the

Phase-II, Period-II of construction since already an inner drum built in dressed limestone slabs of lesser dimensions (Period-I) has been exposed during the course of excavation (Pl.XXII A). The limestone construction of the lower drum of the *stūpa* was enlarged further by encasing with brick veneering of 90 cm width which in turn was further veneered with 1.20 m high ornate and non-ornate limestone panels over which a sculptured cornice to hold the panels was hoisted which also incidentally formed part of the narrow upper circumambulatory passage.

Since these platforms face the entrances to the *stūpa* complex, it is but natural that the most significant events of the life of the Buddha are depicted in the sculptured cornices resting on the veneering of the *āyaka* platforms. The intention seems to introduce to the common folk, the exalted life of the Master through these narrative panels. Since these slabs were placed almost at the eye level of the visitor at the very entrance, sufficient care was taken to embellish them appropriately. The architects of the *stūpa* placed the objects of veneration of the Master over these platforms both in iconic and uniconic forms, which was inclusive of the narration of the great events. In Period-II during different phases of construction, in addition to the placing of the *Buddhapādas* over the pedestals on the platforms, ornate *Buddhapādas* were also placed behind the sculptures. On the eastern platform,

the four pillars symbolically representing the episodes from the Master's life i.e., *janana*, *mahāprasthāna*, *sambōdhi*, *prathamōpadeśa* and *mahāparinirvāṇa* (i.e., birth, renunciation, enlightenment, first sermon and the great departure) were installed over the platform. The fifth central pillar however, was represented by the statue itself.

### NORTHERN ĀYAKA PLATFORM

The extant northern *āyaka* platform in its disturbed state measures 3.45x1.60x1.46 m. The mutilation and collapse of the superstructure over the platform has dislodged the sculptured cornices, seated Buddha image and sculptured veneering slabs of the platform. The extant inner brick core has 12 courses (Pl.XXII B). The veneering panels at the north are found leaning outwards from their original vertical position and inclines between 60° to 70°. The decorated slab facing north, occupying the right side corner of the *āyaka*, depicting *Siri* (Śrī or yakshi), the guardian goddess of north and of wealth (Pl.XXIII A), broken into fragments, were found scattered over the circumambulatory passage. Similarly the veneering panel *in situ*, at the western corner, facing north, symbolically depicts the first sermon of the Lord to his disciples in the deer park at Sarnath (Pl.XXIII B). Buddha is symbolically depicted in the form of a throne (*simhāsana*) with footprints over the seat, a deer on each side of the throne



and a *dharmachakra* in the backdrop. The extant *āyaka* veneering at the eastern corner measures 1.46 x 1.08 m and is a plain slab with a pilaster culminating in two ornate addorsed lions with their faces turned inside over their shoulder. This panel has an upper register of 14 cm width and an unsculpted portion of 31 cm at the bottom. Similar to the eastern veneering slab, the western veneering slab is also plain. The pilasters of the above-referred plain slabs converge in the respective northeast and northwestern corner of the platform with the pilaster decoration of the sculptured panels. This gives an overall impression of pillared corner for the *āyaka* platform itself. Fragments of carved architectural members of veneering slabs and *Buddhapāda* were retrieved below the brick wall of the *āyaka* during the probe (Pl.XXIV A&B). One of the fragments of *Buddhapāda* (Fig.16) was found engraved with the name *Bōdhika* referring probably to the donor of the slab. During the course of excavation, it was found that the unsculpted portion of these slabs were buried with packing of limestone chips, brickbats and mutilated fragments of veneered slabs of the first phase directly placed over an earlier laid circumambulatory passage. From the level of lower border of the sculpted portion, the second circumambulatory passage is laid over a black cotton soil cushion mixed with waste lime chips and gritty soil mixed with sand.

### Probe for reliquary and construction pattern

As described above, the platform has been constructed out of well-burnt bricks of size (38x22x8 cm), which appears to have been dismantled in the second phase of construction and reused for veneering the extended and enlarged platform. From the surface of the existing platform at the depth of nearly a metre, limestone fragment, which has a length of 96 cm and 85 cm with a thickness of 11 cm was encountered laid over brickbat cushion (Fig.17 and Pl.XXIV B). Further below another sculpted panel measuring 76x8 cm was found. This indicates that in order to enhance the size of *vēdikā*, the earlier veneering and brick structure had been dismantled and the damaged veneering slabs were reused to act as a cushion for the construction during the second phase. At an overall depth of 1.47 m, a vertically buried peg stone has been provided to lean the panel of *Śri*. The mutilated fragments used were of *Buddhapāda* and plain architectural units with pilaster decorations.

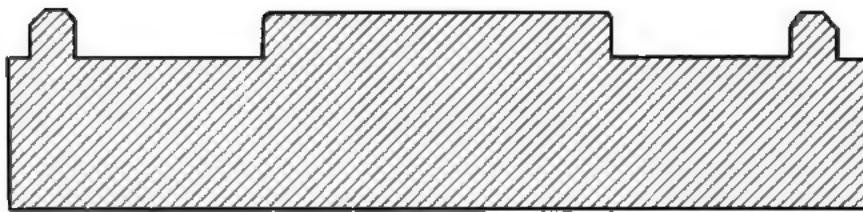
The excavation of the *āyaka* platform revealed the limestone lower drum offsets at a depth of 80 cm from the extant *āyaka* platform surface. The offset measures 6 cm and continues to a further depth of 30 cm. At the third course of this offset (from the top) a 60 cm wide and 10 cm thick high limestone slab is laid over which

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

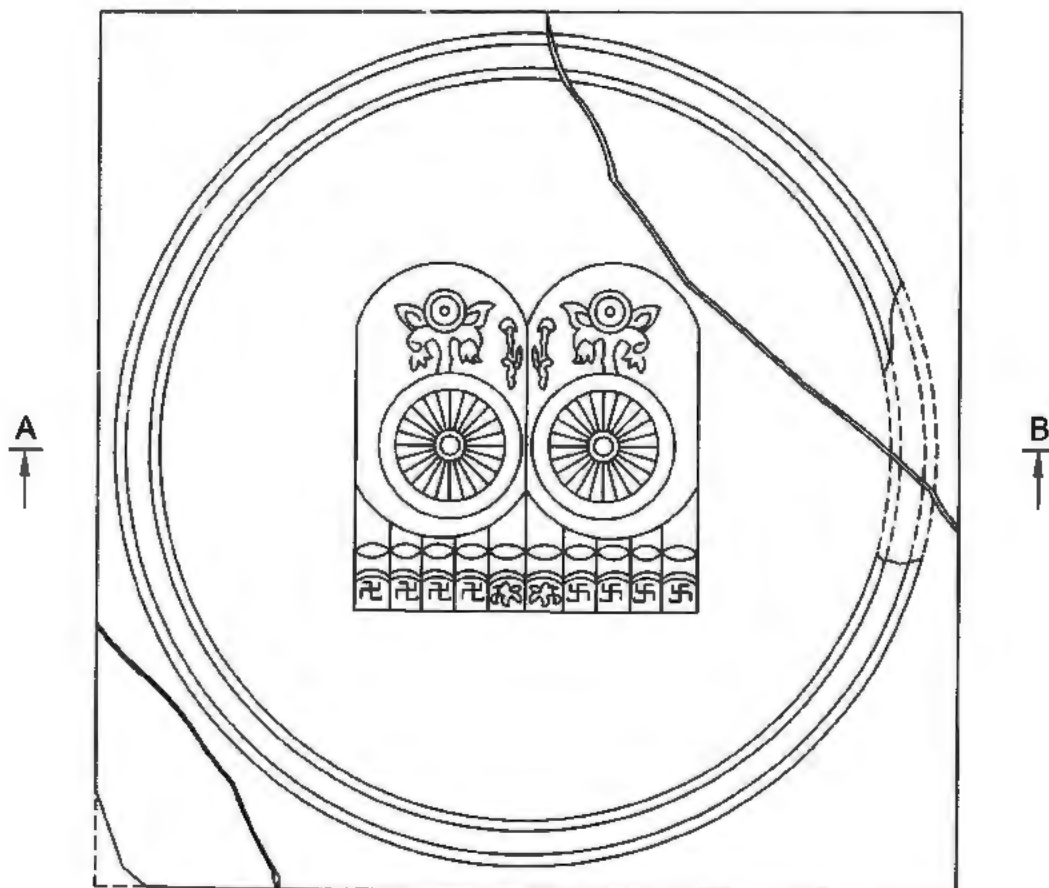
BUDDHAPĀDA

NORTHERN ĀYAKA

0 10 20 30 40 50 CM



SECTION - AB



PLAN

Fig.16

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

NORTHERN ĀYAKA PLATFORM

SECTION FACING EAST

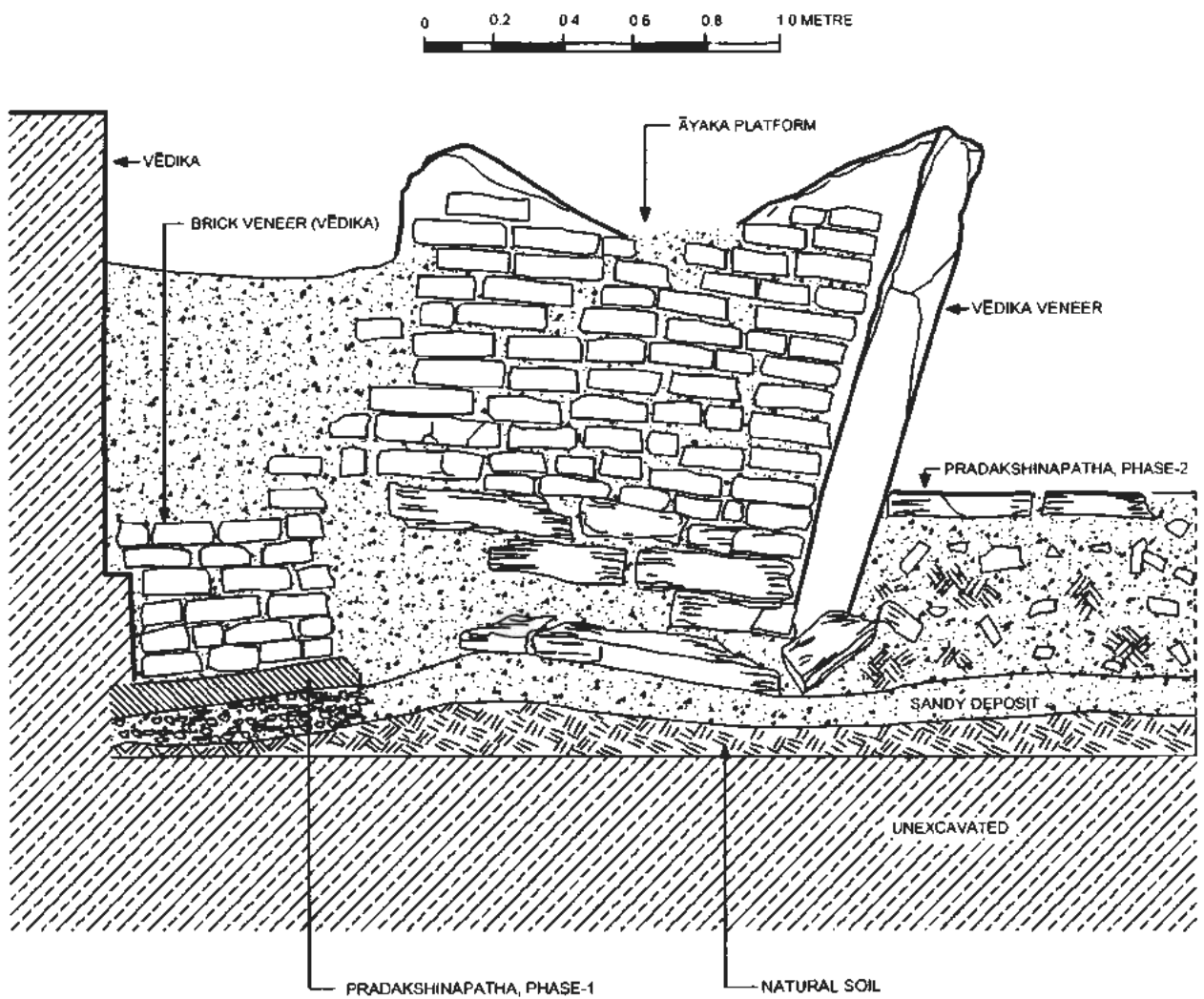


Fig.17



the enhanced 60 cm veneering of the lower drum of the second phase of construction is resting. The circumambulatory passage of the first phase in irregular limestone slabs is laid in alignment with the second offset over a cushion of thin layer of sand and limestone chips after levelling the uneven natural soil. No reliquaries were found at any of the levels including below the circumambulatory passage of the first phase.

### **Sculptured veneering of the northern āyaka**

The northern āyaka platform was veneered with as many as five sculptured panels as continuation of the lower drum. While the panels facing western and eastern sides were plain except for pilaster decoration along the borders, the north facing panels depict Śri, the Yakshi, and the relief of first sermon of the Master (*for details see Chapter-IV - Sculptural Art*).

### **Narrative friezes - Northern āyaka platform**

The āyaka platforms are decorated atop with a cornice of sculptural friezes narrating the life of the Master. The narration is sculpted on rectangular cuboidal blocks divided into horizontal registers each segregated by two types of pilasters viz., fluted or plain with abacus. (Pl. XXV A,B&C). The former is adorned with lotus medallions in the middle and the half lotus at the top and base. The latter has moulded

base and top abacus is crowned with addorsed lions. The upper border is either plain or inscribed and the lower border is treated with a row of crudely fashioned lion busts. The artist, depending upon the size of the stone, has carved 2-4 panels of the events of the life of the Buddha vividly capturing the finer aspects in all plasticity, which also reflect the socio-cultural life of the time. One of the inscription (Ins. no.A. 71) found on the cornice here refers it as 'sculptured panel' (*pratimā paṭa*). These were arranged facing outwards over the āyaka veneering enclosing the *Buddhapāda* slab. Three horizontal blocks were retrieved narrating a total of nine scenes sculpted on the front face. The scenes depicted are in the following order: (1) Dream of Māyadēvi, (2) interpretation of the dream at the royal court, (3) birth of Siddhārtha, (4) baby Siddhārtha being brought to Kapilavastu from Lumbinivāra, (5) baby being presented to Śākyavardhana the tree spirit, (6) the great departure, (7) carrying of the crest relic by the celestials, (8) enlightenment and 9) the preachings (*for details see Chapter IV - Sculptural Art*).

### **EASTERN ĀYAKA PLATFORM**

The eastern āyaka platform measures 3.60x1.25x1.20 m, and accommodated four massive octagonal square based āyaka pillars representing four of the five major events in the life of Buddha. This is the only platform having the evidence of āyaka pillars inserted into it. Excavations revealed that the dislodged sculptured upper drum slabs had collapsed right on

the *āyaka*, lower drum and even dislodged the Buddha sculpture from its position (Pl.XXVI A&B). Due to the impact of collapse, the *āyaka* pillars placed over the platform were found broken in to 3-4 pieces and flung towards the east (Pl.XXVI C). The impact of the disturbance extends up to the moonstone, which is also broken into many fragments. The collapse of the superstructure of the *stūpa* has disturbed all the veneering members of the eastern *āyaka* platform.

### Āyaka Pillars

These pillars of limestone having square cross-section (40x40 cm<sup>2</sup>) were positioned on the *āyaka* platform at an inter-space of about 40 cm well supported by bricks and boulders at the base almost abutting the stone ledge. Each of them was found in damaged condition in more than three fragments. On an average each pillar measures 4.50 m in height. The extant portion of the pillar at the north measures 2m in height and has a roughly hewn lower part of 1.08 m, which obviously was buried inside the platform. The exposed base of the pillar measured nearly 58 cm of square cross-section with its eastern face sculpted with a *stūpa* motif with multiple *chhatrāvali*. The upper octagonal portion is destroyed. However, the fragment of this damaged middle portion of the octagonal part bears a much-mutilated two-lined inscription:

(L-1) *Aya.....*

(L-2) *chatari deya dhama*. (Pious gift of an umbrella.....)

The second pillar retrieved in three parts measures 4.5 m in length. The lower, roughly hewn part, measures 38x36x112 cm. The finely dressed second part measures 35x35x63 cm. The eastern face of this pillar depicts a multi-branched *bōdhi* tree emerging from a double railing of considerable height. On either side of the railing, couchant deer facing the railing are carved. The octagonal part is seen jutting out from the top of the *Bōdhi-vṛiksha* upto a height of 2.75 m. The sides of the octagonal shaft on an average vary between 13.5 to 15 cm and the frontal face bears an eleven-lined Brāhmī inscription mentioning the donations made by a person from *Dhānyakaṭaka* (Amarāvati) for the installation of the *āyaka*- upright and umbrella. The depiction of the multi-branched *Bōdhi* tree may denote the third major event of Buddha's life i.e., enlightenment or *Sambōdhi* (Fig.18).

The third pillar retrieved in three parts has an undressed rectangular portion measuring 44x37x75 cm. The middle finely dressed portion measures 1m in length. The eastern face of this pillar depicts worship of *dharmachakra* by devotees on either side representing the first sermon. The extant octagonal shaft found in two fragments measures 2.65 m with each facet measuring 17 to 18 cm.

The fourth pillar was also found extant in three parts to a total height of 3.40 m. The lower part is fallen in east-west orientation and partly rests over the southern veneering slab. The finely dressed portion

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

EASTERN ĀYAKA

PILLAR

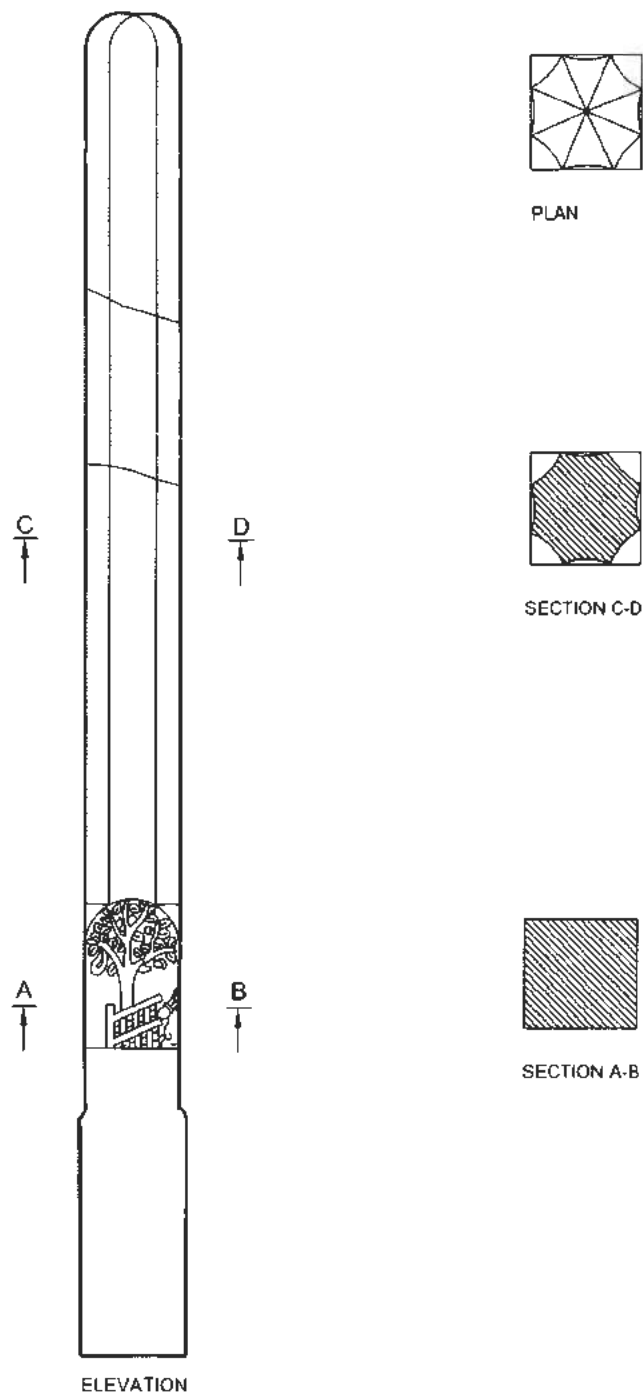
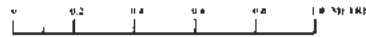


Fig.18



of lower part and its continuation in the second broken part contains a meticulously executed depiction of an ornate *stūpa* with a relief of relic casket on the drum portion. The representation of ornate *stūpa-chaitya* or relic shrine with reliquary probably symbolizes the *mahāparinirvāṇa* of the Master.

Thus the four pillars symbolically and pictorially represent four of the five major events in the life of the Master. One of the events - the *mahāprasthāna* is not represented here in the form of pillar. As already mentioned this is perhaps to accommodate the seated image of Buddha for representing one of the events like *dharmachakra pravartana* over the *āyaka* platform.

### **Sculptured veneering of the Eastern āyaka**

The brick core provided for enlarging the eastern *āyaka* was also veneered with limestone slabs, on the three sides and even additions were made subsequently, as evidenced by the inscribed panel of Mādhariputra Puḷumāvi, a ruler of the Sātavāhana dynasty. This *āyaka* platform has also exhibited similar features as described at northern *āyaka* in its composition and construction methodology. The *āyaka* is veneered with five limestone panels of which three were found *in situ* in various stages of mutilation. Of these, the north facing veneering depicts a *stūpa* with multiple umbrellas (*chhatrāvali*) and the south facing slab is plain with sides having

pilaster decoration. The central panel on the eastern face depicts *bhavachakra* (Pl.XXVII) and the one flanking it on the southern side exhibits *stūpa* worship, a contribution of the king mentioned above during phase V of period II. The veneering member to the north of the *bhavachakra* panel is greatly mutilated.

### **Probe for reliquary and construction pattern**

As in the case of northern *āyaka*, a probe was carried out in the eastern *āyaka* platform retaining the southeastern and southern veneering panels for tracing out the presence of any reliquaries. During the probe, it was found that the platform was constructed using reused bricks as well as fresh bricks. As at north, here too the third course of the offset of the limestone built drum had a dressed limestone slab of 60 cm width placed over a cushion of sand and the evidence of the first phase of circumambulatory passage laid by the side of it with irregular limestone slabs. This passage also had the same type of sandy cushion mixed with gritty blackish soil over the natural black-cotton soil.

### **Narrative friezes**

This *āyaka* also had been provided with sculptured cornices with narrative friezes (Pl.XXVIII A&B) placed at the periphery around the Buddha statue narrating the life story of the Master. These are very badly mutilated and extant in four cuboidal blocks of varied sizes. The seven scenes

depicted on these members have the following themes - viz., (a) Buddha in the harem at the time of departure, (b) return of Kanthaka and the grief-stricken parents of prince Siddhārtha, (c) *Chudāharaṇa* of the Lord; (d) Buddha's sermon to the Śākyas, (e) *Chudāharaṇa* (f) Jētavana episode (?) and (g) the *mahāparinirvāṇa*.

## SOUTHERN ĀYAKA PLATFORM

Of all the *āyaka* platforms of the *stūpa* the southern *āyaka* platform was the best composed. The platform having similar dimensions like eastern *āyaka*, accommodated a huge sculpture of standing Buddha (Pl.XXIX A) placed over an ornate pedestal wrought in the form of a fully blown lotus (Pl.XXIX B). Due to the destruction of the *stūpa*, the mutilated statue of Buddha was found buried amidst various other architectural debris with the head towards the *stūpa* and the feet towards the entrance, facing upwards just outside the *āyaka* platform (Pl.XXIX C). The pedestal, like the sculpture, had slid from its position and the sculptured cornice members were found scattered. Some of the limestone *āyaka* veneering slabs at east, west and at south were found *in situ* albeit their mutilations (Pl.XXX A). However one veneering member at west and two at south were found dislodged from their position. The central one especially was found lying face downwards over the Buddha sculpture. Some of the sculptured *mēdhi* veneering

slabs directly behind the *āyaka* platform were also found dislocated from their positions and lying face downwards upon the *āyaka* platform.

## Sculptured veneering of the southern āyaka

Similar to the veneerings at north and east, even the enlarged brick built platform of southern *āyaka* was also veneered with limestone slabs. Three ornate slabs embellished the southern face, and non ornate slabs, one each, at east and west sides respectively. The details of which are as follows:

1. The slab facing east is *in situ*, it is plain except for lotus medallion pilaster border along the right side. The top border along with abacus is mutilated.
2. The southern face of *āyaka* is veneered with decorated slabs. The one at the eastern corner, depicts pilasters on both sides with slightly damaged right pilaster, and the central one depicts a three-storied *vṛksha-chaitya* raised over six octagonal pillars with a railing (Pl.XXIX C).

Further, in the centre, between the pillars is the depiction of *Buddhapādas* placed over a pedestal. The superstructure of the *chaitya* rises in three tiers and the first two has the typical gable vaulted *chaitya* -arched windows alternating with wattle and daub wall. The third tier also has three such windows from the extreme

ones of which issue the branches of the *bōdhi-vṛiksha* in an artistic manner. The leaves are depicted naturally and in low relief. The central part of the stem of the tree rises above the structure and is shown to spread with three main branches each of which gets divided into three sub-branches in the form of stylised linear *triratna*. The plain top border is much damaged. The pilaster border along the left shows a lion capital with couchant deer denoting it to be as one caused at Saranath. The pilaster on the right side has a relief of Nagini at the centre of the shaft portion. Much of the face, hands, and part of the feet are damaged. She wears an ornate *makarakuṇḍala* and her long hair parted into three plaits, each well-decked in pearls, reaches up to the waist. She wears a two-stranded waistband of thick beads holding the lower garment at the waist. *Nāga*-anklets are worn at the legs. The *kankaṇas* are of five bands and cover right from knee to ankle.

3. This dislodged central panel is much damaged.

4. The slab at the western end also faces south and part of the lower portion was found *in situ*. The extant part depicts the base of an ornate *dharmachakra* flanked by a couchant deer resting its snout on the left side. The extant upper part is highly mutilated. Part of the shaft of the *dharmachakra* shows a decorated column with three mutilated human faces

projecting from the collar of the shaft. The central and left one are damaged and only the right corner is *in situ*. From the mutilated fragments retrieved it could be surmised that the main shaft and the capital as well as the *dharmachakra* with beaded festoons spread over on either side. The *dharmachakra* has 32 spokes with equal number of hubs, bordered by a plain broad rim the outer periphery of which has a series of out turned *triratnas*. The central hub of the wheel has a full-bloomed flower with a stigma at the centre. The pilaster along the left border of the panel is much mutilated. However, the extant lower part of the capital probably depicts *bodhi-vṛiksha* within railings and the upper part - a plain *stūpa* with multiple *chhatrāvali* raised over an ornate capital of octagonal shaft. The top border is also much mutilated and extant end portion has four letters *gahapati*.

5. It is a much-fragmented *in situ* panel on the western side depicting a plain *stūpa* with five-tier multiple umbrellas. The elevation of the *stūpa* has a lower drum rising in two tiers, a rather high vertical upper drum and a hemispherical dome. A two-barred railing marks the upper circumambulatory. On either side of the drum stately *Nāga* flywhisk (*chauri*) bearers are depicted. The face of the figure on the left as well as his lower body are highly mutilated. He holds his left hand akimbo, has raised the *chāmara* in his right hand, wears squarish *kuṇḍalas* and a thin *nishka*



type of *vaksha-hāra*. Inscription above the head of the *chauri* bearer reads - *Nāgarāya mahākalō* (Serpent King Mahākāla).

The flywhisk bearer on the right side is also similarly attired with a turban and a rectangular beaded ear ornament. His right hand holds the shaft of the *chāmara* near the chest and the whisk rests on the right shoulder. The left hand is folded and held near the abdomen. There is a fragmentary record engraved over the head reading .. *yakhō sadāgirō* (Yaksha Sadāgira). This veneering appears to have been added subsequently as evident from variation in style particularly in head gear, ornamentation and simple composition.

There is a fragmentary inscription in Brāhmī characters of 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD at the top border reading: *Kagisa sabhāriyasa saputakasa sa[d]u[h][.t[ū]ya cha kama* (Offering made by Kagi along with his wife, son and daughter (for the carving work).

### Probe for reliquary and construction pattern

Similar to that of the northern and eastern *āyaka* platforms, this platform was also enlarged subsequently. The trench laid inside the platform adjacent to the *in situ* Buddha pedestal revealed that a part of the earlier platform was dismantled and strengthened with the help of lime-stone slabs to hoist the sculpture of the standing Buddha on the decorated elliptical pedestal of massive proportion. The platform is built

of bricks set in mud mortar, and the lower drum offset has been conveniently used as part of its foundation to a width of nearly 60 cm. This platform is constructed over the circumambulatory passage of the first phase, laid with irregular limestone slab. The passage is laid over a sandy soil cushion mixed with waste flakes and chips, which in turn rests over the natural black cotton soil (Fig.19).

### Narrative friezes

In the third phase of its construction the *āyaka* platform at south, was further embellished on all the three sides, with cuboid cornice members each having three frames of narrative friezes, carved on the exterior face and resting on the top of the veneering members of the platform. (PL.XXX B&C). The friezes depict the following six major events from the life of Buddha - *Sanjanana* (birth), baby Siddhārtha being presented to Śakyavardhana, the tree spirit, *abhinigamana* or *mahāprasthāna*, enlightenment (*sambōdhi*), *dharmachakra pravartana*, distribution of the relics and its procession on elephants. These episodes are arranged from left to right.

### WESTERN ĀYAKA PLATFORM

During the excavation, western *āyaka* platform was exposed first, which incidentally enabled to conduct a study, to understand the articulation of the *stūpa* at various levels as also the nature of the destruction. The removal of humus

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

SOUTHERN ĀYAKA PLATFORM

SECTION FACING WEST

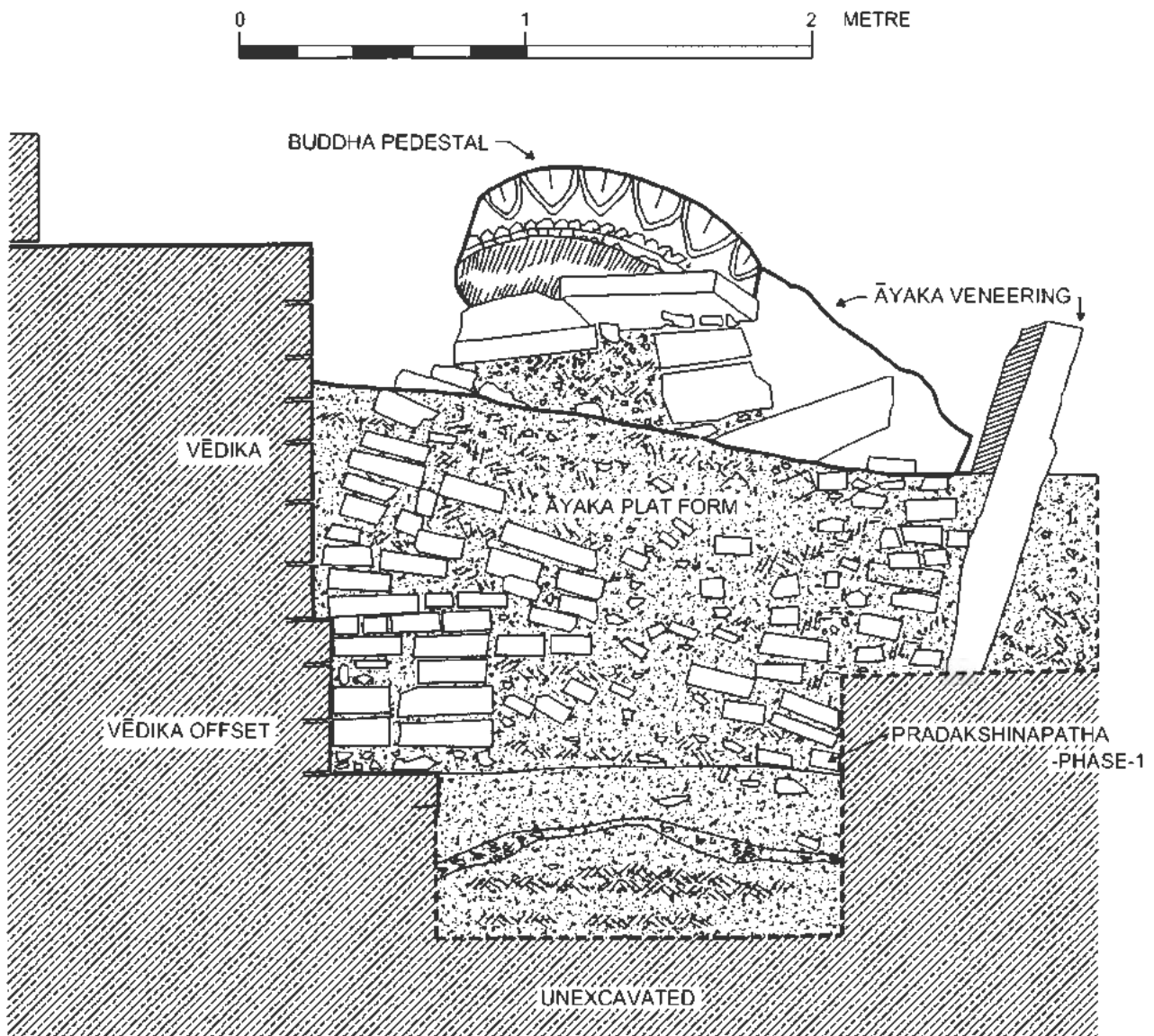


Fig.19

and excavation of first 30-60 cm revealed the collapsed upper drum and animal frieze (*paṭṭikā*) slabs. It also laid bare *in situ* pedestal of the Buddha statue, a mutilated *Buddhapāda*, broken feet of colossal Buddha statue and a damaged sculptured upper drum slab (Pl.XXXI A). The broken feet of Buddha had got buried upside down, after it was dislodged from the pedestal, obviously due to enormous force. The clearance near the feet laid bare the sculptured cornice bearing the narrative scenes from the life of the Master depicting the birth, Māra's defeat and the *dharmachakrapravartana* that was placed over the platform (Pl.XXXIB). The *Buddhapāda* slab also placed on the same platform had got dislodged from its position and broken into many fragments (Pl.XXXI C). Close to the sculptured cornice, further towards west, fragments of uprights, mutilated torso of Buddha statue and sculptured cornice, crossbars (*sūchis*) and fragmented doorsill were exposed at a depth of nearly 2.00 m (Pl.XXXIIA). After these mutilated fragments and other fallen debris were removed, the brick core, limestone veneering, and the upper part of the mutilated statue of Buddha could be retrieved. The *āyaka* platform on the western side, built of bricks set in mud mortar and veneered with sculptured limestone slabs, is similar in measurement to *āyaka* at southern side. At the centre of the *āyaka*, over the pedestal, supported by massive limestone slabs, stood a colossal

image of Buddha facing west (Pl.XXXII B), the broken right hand in the gesture of blessing (*abhayā*) and holding the *sanghāti* in the left hand placed near the chest. In the front, nearer to the feet, at west were placed the *Buddhapāda* and the sculptured narrative cornice bordering the top of the veneering members.

### **Sculptured veneering - Western *āyaka* platform**

The *āyaka* was veneered with five slabs, one each at south and north and three at west. They are:

1. The slab facing south, depicts an ornate *stūpa* with three hooded serpent under a parasol set within pilasters and four octagonal *āyaka* pillars above it.
2. Of the three ornate slabs veneering the western face of the *āyaka* platform, the extant upper part of the slab, at the southern side facing west, reveals pilaster along both sides and a well-decorated circular relic shrine rising in two tiers (Pl. XXXIIIA). The first tier has an entrance through which a pear shaped relic shrine with corrugated finial is seen. The *chaitya* dormer window has the gable end drawn into a *triratna* pinnacle. The domical second tier is topped by a finial. The body of the super structure derived in the form of *aṇḍa* is treated with floral garland designs arranged in a wavy pattern. Amongst the two pilasters flanking the *chaitya*, the right one depicts a low relief of Nāgiṇi at the shaft, in adoration facing right and a



flying *gandharva* at the abacus holding a plate of flowers in the left hand and in a posture as though of showering flowers on the *chaitya*. The left pilaster at the shaft, has a low relief of the *vṛiksha-chaitya* with *simhāsana* and a flying *gandharva* on the abacus, in a similar posture as at the right abacus. Incidentally, this pilaster forms the left border of the central panel of Muchilinda Nāga. The top border of the slab has an inscription: *paṭṭo āyako* (veneering slab of *āyaka* platform).

3. Central veneering slab of western *āyaka* depicts a coiled nine-hooded serpent king Muchilinda (Pl.XXXIIIB). This is the most ornate and imposing panel at Kanaganahalli *stūpa*, wherein the true serpentine nature of the venomous snake is captured in all plasticity and majesty coiled into five loops and spreading the jewel decked nine hoods in mesmerising grandeur. Though the panel has no border, the pilaster of the adjacent panels at south and north serve as borders for this as well. Interestingly, the right pilaster border of the panel at south has a sculpture of Nāgiṇi adoring with her upraised right hand and the one at north also has a Nāgiṇi in *añjali* which when flank the Muchilinda panel gives the impression of Nāgini's worshipping the serpent king.

4. The slab at the northwestern corner of the *āyaka*, facing west, albeit mutilation, is available in full and depicts an ornate *dharmachakra* over a decorated

pillar (Pl.XXXIIIC). While the pilaster to the left of it carries a Nāgiṇi in *añjali* at the shaft and the *stūpa-chaitya* at the abacus, the one at right has a *vṛiksha-chaitya* surmounted by an ornate *stūpa* at its capital and abacus, thus making it a panel with pilasters on both sides. The left pilaster of this panel forms the right pilaster of the central (Muchilinda Nāga) panel.

5. It is a plain *in situ* slab leaning towards north. Pilaster along left border shows addorsed, winged lion in the abacus and a plain top border.

### Probe for reliquary and construction pattern

Further excavations carried out in this platform revealed the same construction pattern encountered in the other platforms. The core was constructed of bricks and the top of the platform was paved with limestone slabs. The brick veneering of the *āyaka* was found to be set over the 60 cm wide flagstone provided abutting the third course of the lower drum offset. Interestingly, a 20-30 cm thick deposit of fine riverine sand was provided before constructing this *āyaka* platform. Here too, the remnants of early circumambulatory passage were encountered. The riverine sand deposits have yielded a few beads of semiprecious stone and a few rolled sherds of red ware (Fig.20).

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

WESTERN ĀYAKA PLATFORM

SECTION FACING SOUTH

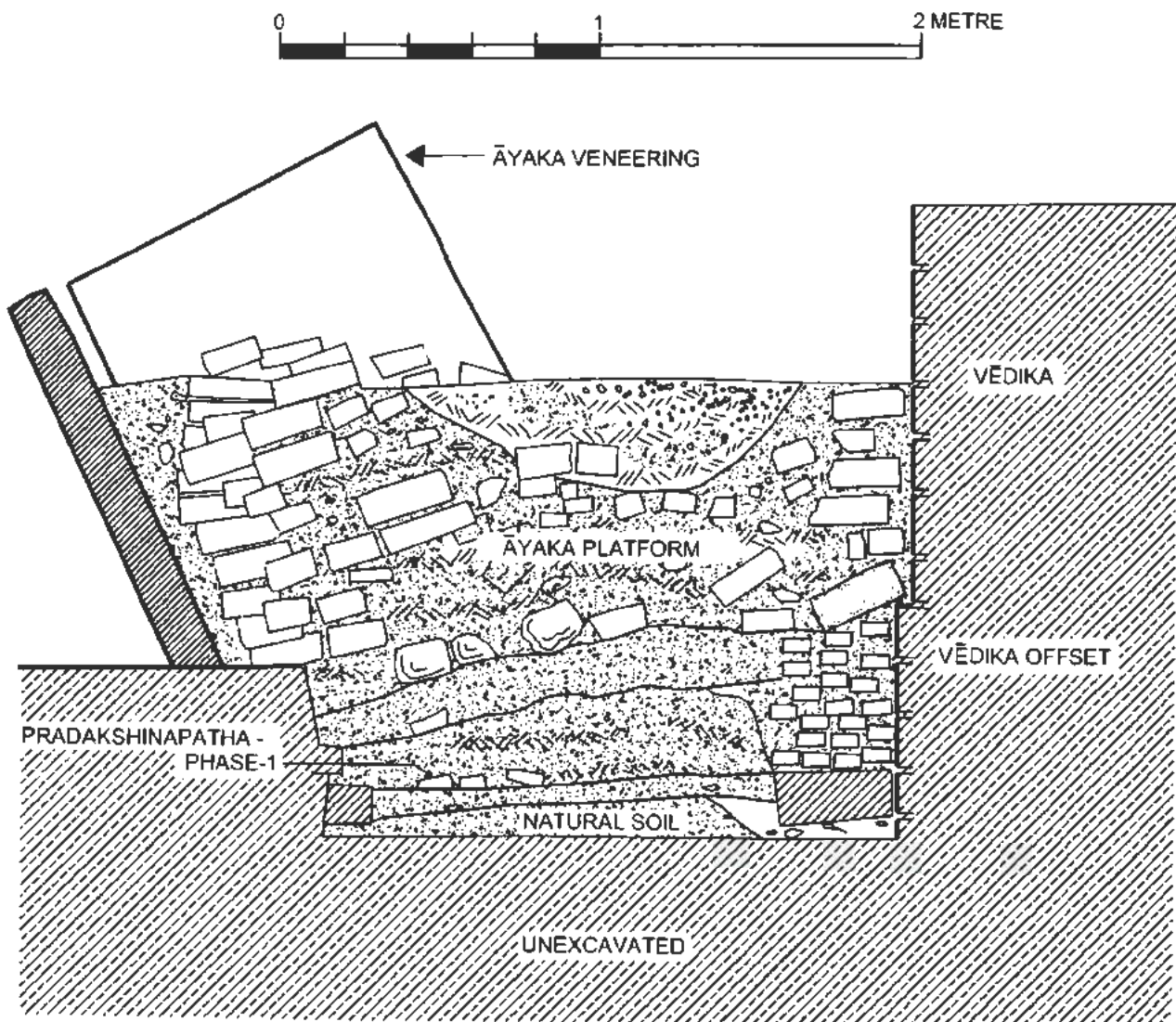


Fig. 20

## Narrative friezes -Western āyaka platform

The western *āyaka* is also decorated with cornices having carved narrative panels in three cuboid blocks of stone resting on the veneering members. While the first and second cornice contain three narratives each (Pl.XXXIV A), the third contains only the procession of elephants carrying the reliquary. The seven episodes narrated respectively are - (1) *Svapnadarśana* by Māyādēvī, (2) Asita interpreting the dream and forecasting, (3) The pregnant queen being admired by the royalty (Pl.XXXIV B), (4) Birth of Siddhārtha at Lumbinivana, (5) Māra's retreat or enlightenment, (6) Dharmachakra pravartana and (7) Distribution of the reliquary. Inbetween the sixth and seventh panel there must be atleast one more panel indicating the scene of *Mahāparinirvāṇa* which is conspicuous by its absence. (For details refer Chapter IV - Sculptural Art)

## LOWER DRUM (VĒDIKĀ)

The excavated *stūpa* was profusely decorated at the drum levels with sculptured slabs of limestone. The lower drum was also veneered with sculptured as well as plain slabs. Theme-wise, the sculpted slabs depict *chaitya* worship, *dharmachakra* adoration (Pl.XXXV A), panels of Muchilinda Nāga, *vṛksha-chaitya*, *Nāga-bandha-chaitya*, depictions of popular monasteries (Pl.XXXV B) of contemporary times, episodes like gift of

Jētavana by Anāthapiṇḍika (Pl.XXXV C) to Lord Buddha and *stūpas* with reliquaries.

The lower drum slabs treated (Fig.21) with sculptures measure 1.65 m in height, 1.22 m in width, 12 -15cm in thickness and have an upper border of 12.5 cm and a rough undressed portion of 35 cm at the bottom respectively. The sculptured portion measures 1.04 x 1.09 m. As in the upper drum slabs, in these too, the sculptor has provided an offset between the *pattikās* at front towards right measuring 35 cm and nearly 4 cm at left of the panel and induces a slight semi-circular curve in the left corner to interlock and articulate it with the immediate next panel. Non-ornate lower drum slabs were used as the backdrop, when the seated Buddha sculptures were introduced, at a later date, at the intra-cardinal directions of the *stūpa*.

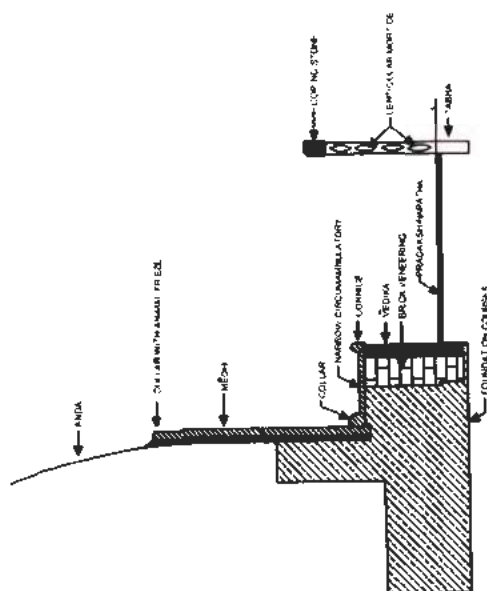
## Articulation of lower drum

From the excavation it has been found that the drum was constructed in a perfect circular configuration, over a foundation course of riverine pebbles resting over the natural black cotton soil, which ran into three courses and this was implicitly followed in the entire configuration of the *stūpa* (Fig.22 &46). An offset of 5 cm was provided for the foundation plinth and rest of the drum rose to a height of nearly 1.65 m before it offsets once again to a width of 75- 80 cm into the upper circumambulatory passage. At the



# MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI (1997-2000)

SECTION OF MAHĀ STŪPA



LOWER DRUM SLAB: TYPES AND ARTICULATION PATTERN

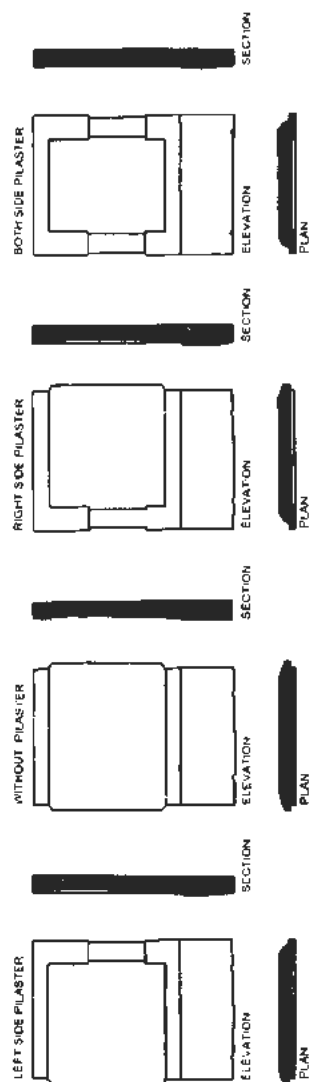


Fig.21

## KANAGANAHALLI EXCAVATIONS

1997-2000 & 2006

### PLAN OF MAHĀ STŪPA,

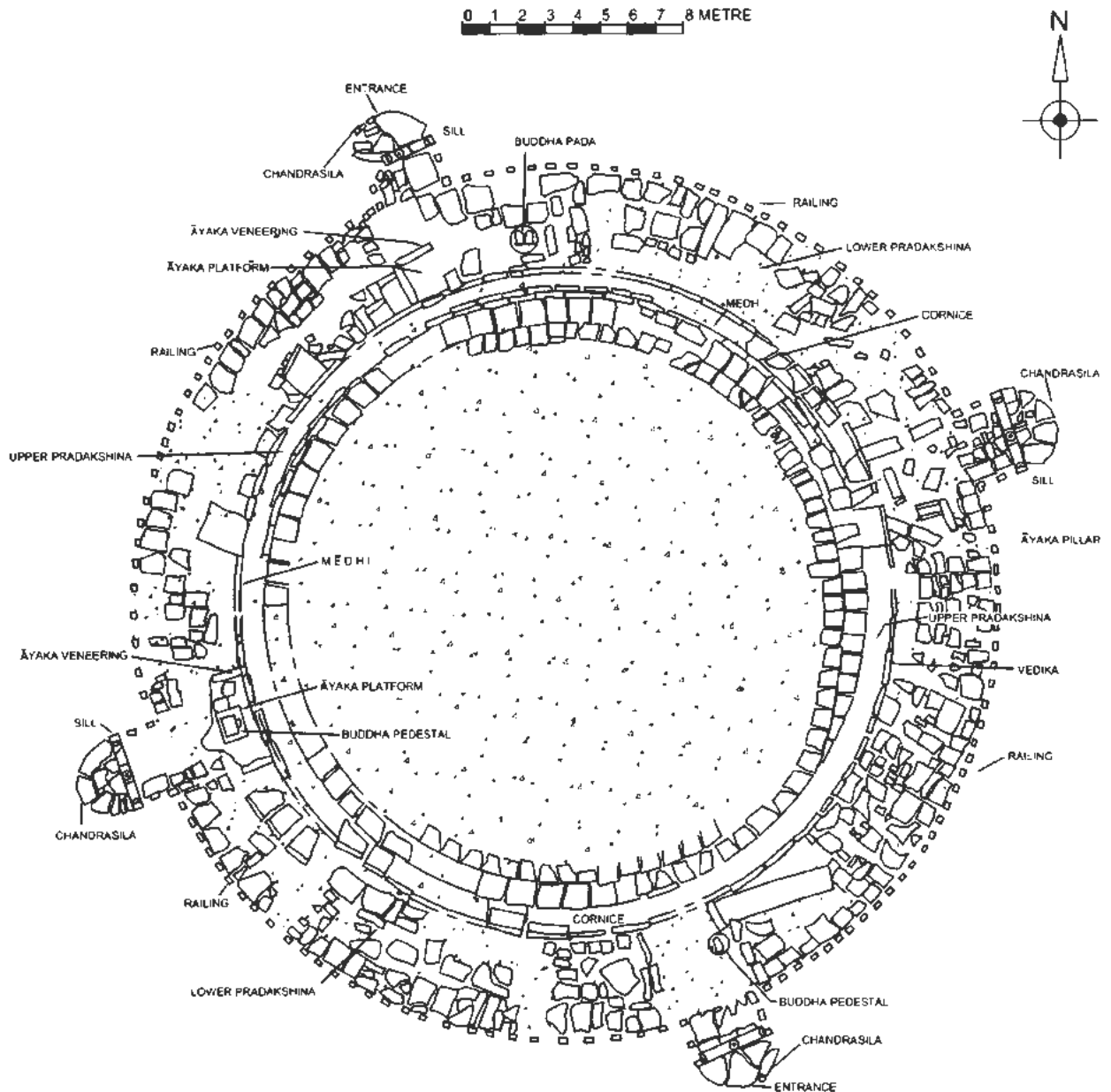
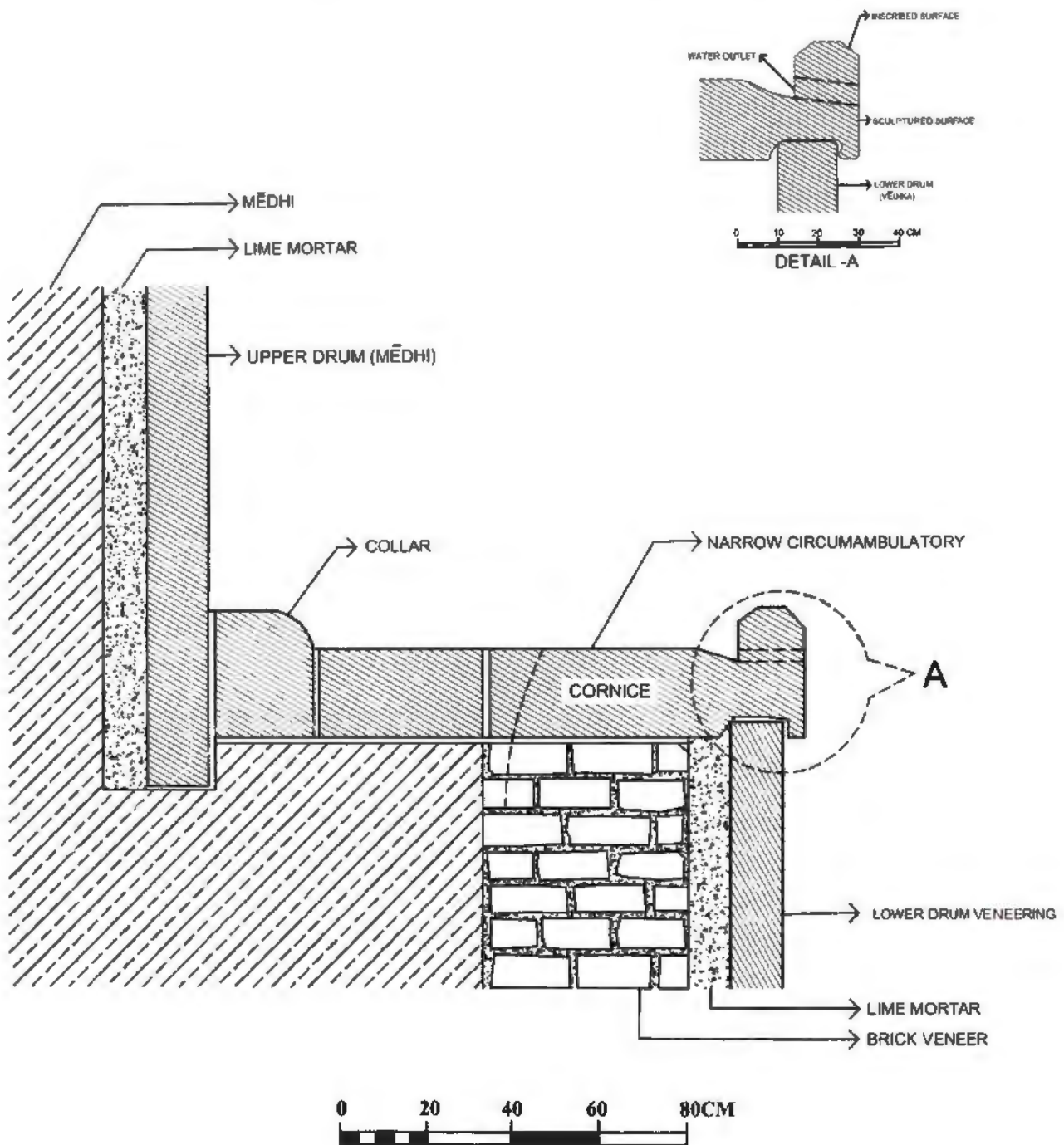


Fig.22

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI



SECTIONAL ELEVATION, PART OF STŪPA SHOWING  
LOCATION AND FUNCTION OF THE CORNICE

Fig.23



lowest level of the drum, a 60 cm wide flagstone or apron was provided marking the circumambulatory passage, over which a brick veneering set in mixed lime concrete, up to the entire height of the lower drum was constructed.

### Cornice and upper circumambulatory passage

The narrow passage or ledge intervening the lower and upper drum also served as cornices above the lower drum. Inscriptionally known as *puphagahaṇi* (*pushpagrāhṇikā* - flower receptacle) (Pl. XXXVI A B & C) these cornices are interesting architectural members which have functionally a dual purpose of (1) holding the top of the ornate/non-ornate *vēdikā* panels *in situ* and (2) to function as pseudo-upper circumambulatory passage. Each cornice member measures nearly 75 cm in length, 57.2 cm in width and has a total height of nearly 30 cm out of which a ridge of semi-hexagonal section measuring 5-6 cm in height is provided at the periphery. The peripheral chamfered facet of the ridge measuring 4cm in width contains donatory inscriptions. The top facet of the ridge measures 5 cm and the inner facet measures 4 cm. These cornice members underneath, at the periphery, have a curved groove of nearly 6-8 cm into which the top of the lower drum slabs fits (Fig.23). Correspondingly, the cornice ridge at the inner side also has a shallow squarish groove, which at places, is perforated outside, to drain off the

rainwater. The upper circumambulatory measures nearly 1.25 m in width.

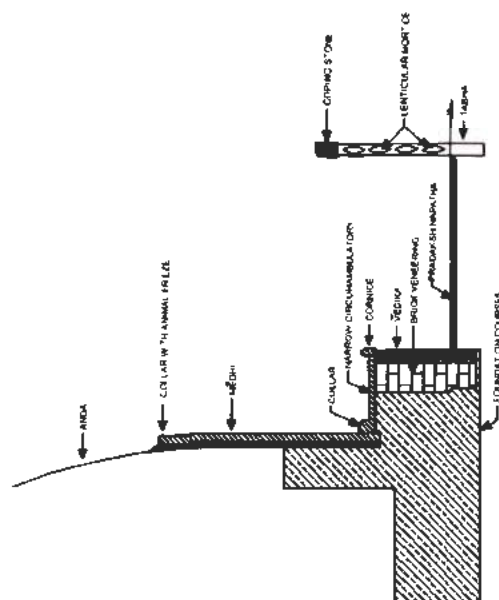
The exterior face of cornice members (*pushpagrāhis*) of 30 cm height is exquisitely ornamented with a frieze of railing pattern consisting of uprights and crossbars which are further intricately decorated with minutely sculpted animals, birds and floral motifs set in a border of beaded garland at the top and rows of lotus buds intervened with galloping animals like antelope, winged lion at the bottom, through out, all tuned to a notion of circumambulation to the Master or *Chaitya* in veneration. These cornices also served as flower receptacles for collecting the shower of flowers made by the devotees at the time of worship besides collecting and draining out the rainwater. Towards the inner side some of the cornice members have part of circular sockets cut into them in which the umbrella shafts or flag-posts (*chhatradaṇḍa*) of wood/stone were fixed at the time of celebrations or as a part of the construction and maintenance of the *chaitya*. The frontal ridge of the cornice usually has donatory inscriptions (Pl. XXXVIC).

### Upper drum (Mēdhī)

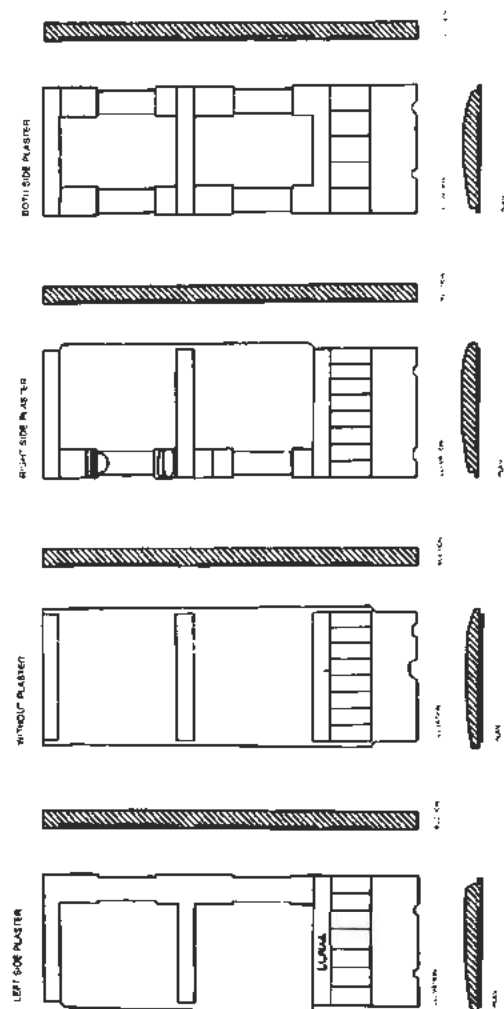
Each upper drum slab (Fig.24 and Pl. XXXVII A) measures 3.30m in height with a variable width of 1.15 to 1.30 m and an average thickness of 15 cm. The panel is divided into three registers separated by

MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI  
(1997-2000)

## SECTION OF MAHĀ STŪPA



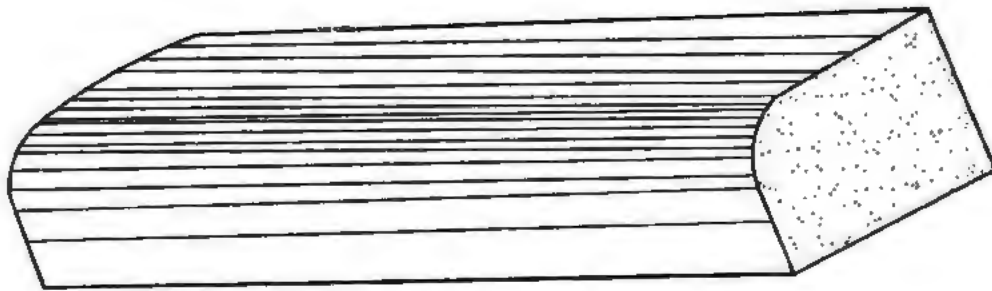
## UPPER DRUM SLAB: TYPES AND ARTICULATION PATTERN



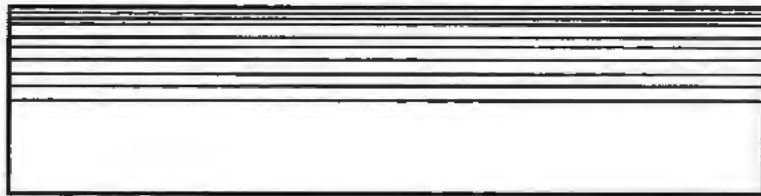
**Fig. 24**

MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI  
COLLAR

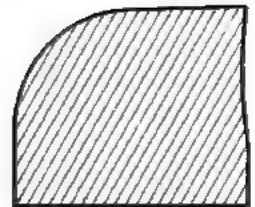
0 10 20 30 40 CM



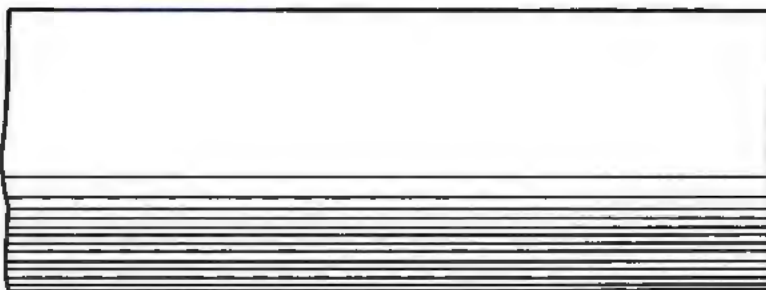
ISOMETRIC VIEW



ELEVATION



SECTION



PLAN

Fig.25



two horizontal borders (*paṭṭikā*) of 13 cm width. The first and second registers, from the top, each measuring 1.03 m in height with a border of 15 cm separating them, are sculpted in low relief to a depth of nearly 4 cm out of the total thickness of 15 cm of the entire slab. The median border is of a row of geese with lotus stalks held in their beaks (*hamsa-paṭṭikā*, Pl. XXXVII B). Depending upon the orientation and location of the panel to be articulated, a pilaster with addorsed animal motifs is sculptured either to the left or right side of the panel. There are two panels each having pilasters on both sides and without any pilasters.

The border of 13 cm between second and third register is used for inscribing, to label the subject, name of donee or theme depicted in the panel (Pl. XXXVII C). The lower most register measures 36.5 cm in height and depicts the three-barred railing (Pl. XXXVII D). The border of 13 cm above this register is used for inscribing, to label the subject, name of donee or theme depicted in the panel (Pl. XXXVII C). Below the railing panel, is a dressed unsculpted portion of nearly 26-30 cm, followed by an undressed portion of nearly 21 cm. This undressed portion is usually covered and held by a collar (Figs. 21, 23, 24 and 25). The bottom edge of the massive panel is provided with 2-3 semicircular notches for manoeuvring to the desired place and safe handling at the time of construction.

The pattern followed for narration on upper drum slabs is usually from the top of the panel to the bottom. Depending upon the subject, the composition of characters is seen. Undisputedly, It is the Buddha who gets the primary position in the narration of events of his life whereas the other characters are equally distributed on either side of the central character. Depending upon the importance of the scene and the characters required, the physiological features and rest of the composition is derived at. Even though, the anatomical features, contour, facial expressions and other details like hair-style, drapery etc., remain the same, the moderate plasticity of the limbs portray the subtleties of sentiments in a dignified manner.

The male characters that appear in the panel are heavily draped at the loins and are bare-bodied above the waist. However, the servants, like the bearers of flag, umbrella, water pots, monks and others, are shown well draped reflecting their social status. Sufficient variations are encountered in their turbans and ornaments like *kēyūra* (armlet), *vakshahāra* (necklace) and the *kankaṇas* (wristlets). The female figures are heavily jewelled befitting their taste and social status and they wear drapery around their loins with highly ornate *kaṭi-bandhas*.

Themes depicted in these panels resolve into three categories:- (i) episodes narrating the events of the life of the

Master, (ii) select Jātaka stories and, (iii) portrait sculptures of Sātavāhana and other kings. Since most of these *mēdhi* slabs were broken into several fragments, they were painstakingly put together in a conjectural sequential order of narration adopted during the time of construction. For this, a study was made of the extant *in situ* members and it appears that the narration sequence begins from the southeastern direction, wherein the eastern *āyaka*-platform and entrance might have been exclusively used by the *bhikkus* and *bhikhunis* of the monastery of Kanaganahalli. This would meaningfully converge to the circumambulation (*parikramā*) pattern. This is also coeval with the dawn and dusk, during which times with every movement of sun in the sky and due to the light and shade effect, the myriad of characters in the narrative panels may have been induced with life and expression.

Amongst the major and minor events from the life of the Master, the conception of Māyādēvī, deliverance of baby Siddhārtha, the great renunciation, the futile attempt of Māra (*Mārabhagō*), enlightenment symbolically shown in the form of worship of *simhāsana*, *bōdhi* tree in railing, *mahāparinirvāṇa*, carrying of reliquaries in procession, etc. are shown prominently. Jātakas vividly narrated in these panels include *Sutasōma*, *Vidurapaṇḍita*, *Śuka*, *Hamsa*, *Mahakapi*, *Vēssantara*, *Chhaddanta*, *Senakīya*, *Sajiniya* and others.

However, the sculptured panels of the *mēdhi* at Kanaganahalli *stūpa* surpass all other such depictions for they are the only extant specimens of a series of portrait sculptural renderings of Satavahana kings like Chhimuka, Sātakarṇi, Puḷumāvi, Mātalaka, Sundara Sātakarṇi, and significantly the Mauryan emperor Aśōka. Most of them are labelled. Some of the kings like Sōmarāta, Kāsirāja, Māndhātā, Mahāgōvinda, Udayana, Arindama etc. who were contemporaries of Buddha, or of traditional significance are also depicted.

### **Sculptured collar (animal friezes) between upper drum and dome**

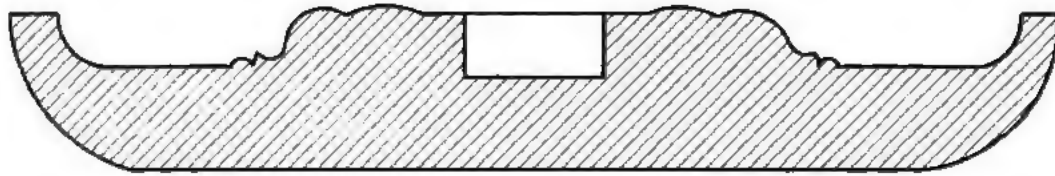
The upper drum is crowned by friezes of animals (Pl. XXXVIII A), which act as a collar before the hemispherical dome rises. Generally, these slabs measure 55-57x90-110x14-16 cm in their height, width and thickness respectively. The slab is sculpted with a slender concavity so as to serve as a locking device for the upper drum slab and also as a marker for the beginning of the visible curvilinear profile of the dome in elevation and to maintain symmetry with the curvature at the beginning of the upper drum itself.

### **Dome (aṇḍa)**

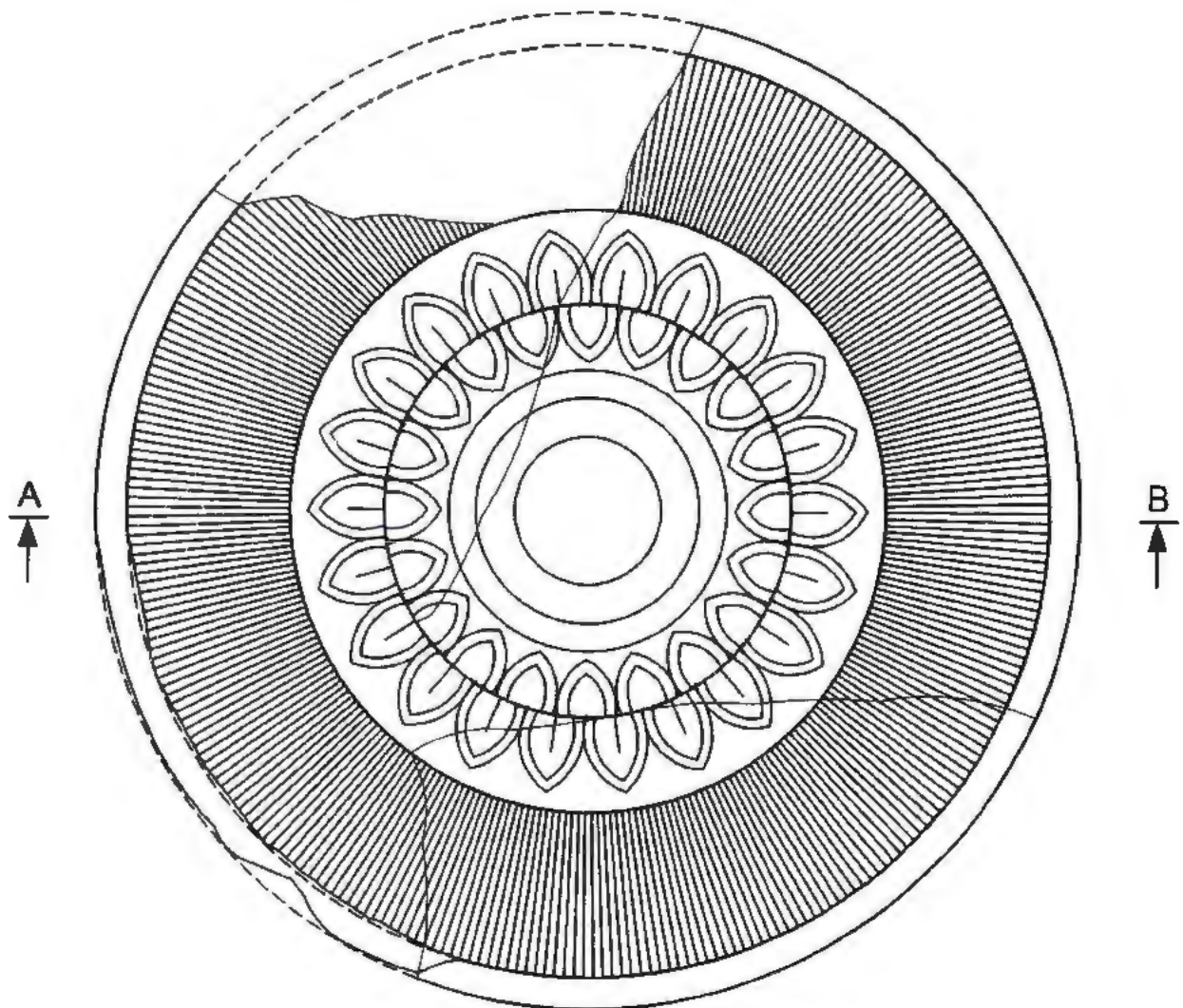
The dome of the *stūpa* is completely destroyed and as such the elevational features will have to be inferred by meticulously collating the available scattered material and circumstantial

**MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI**  
**CHHATRA**

0 10 20 30 40 50 CM



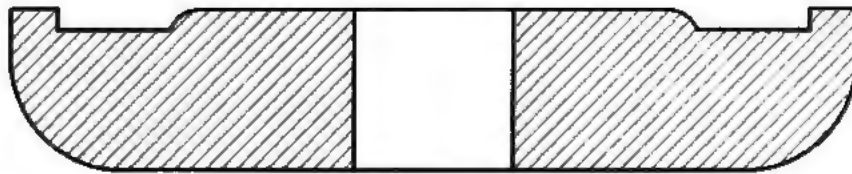
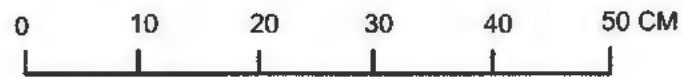
SECTION - AB



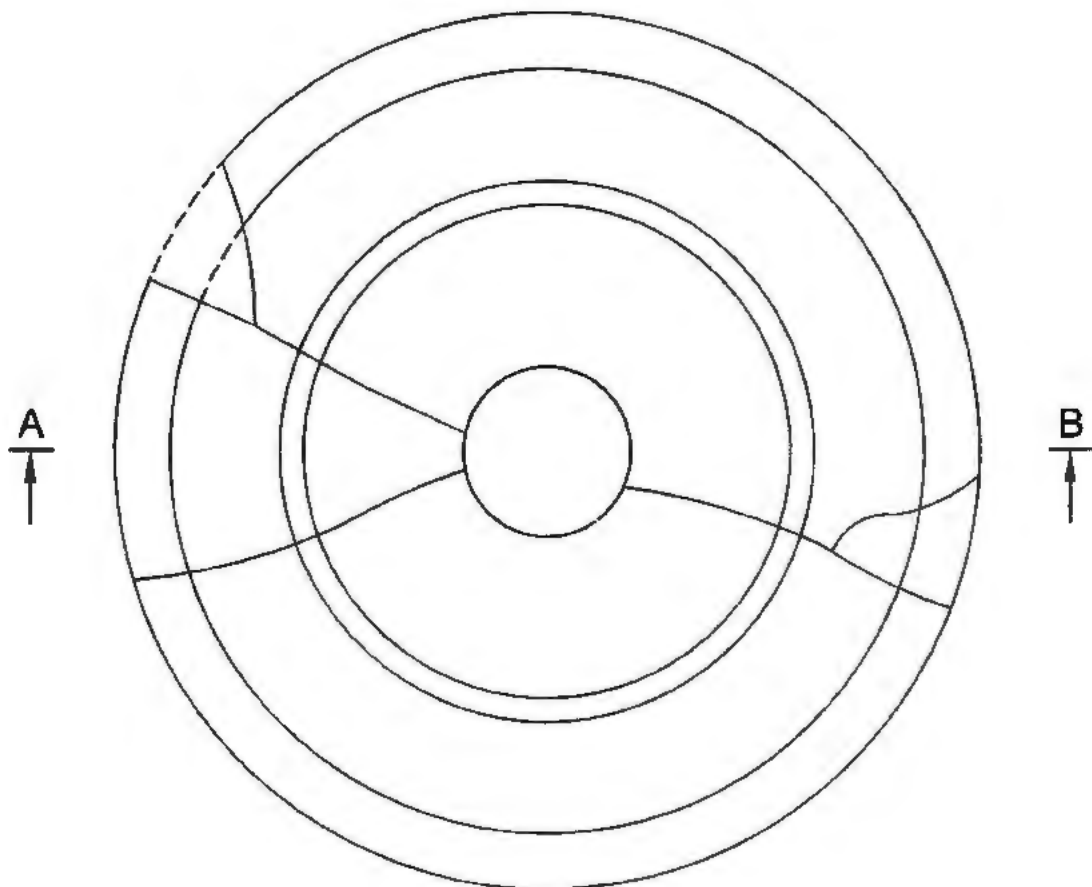
PLAN

Fig.26

**MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI**  
**CHHATRA**



**SECTION - AB**



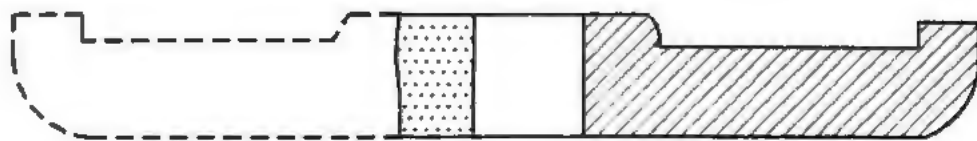
**PLAN**

**Fig.27**

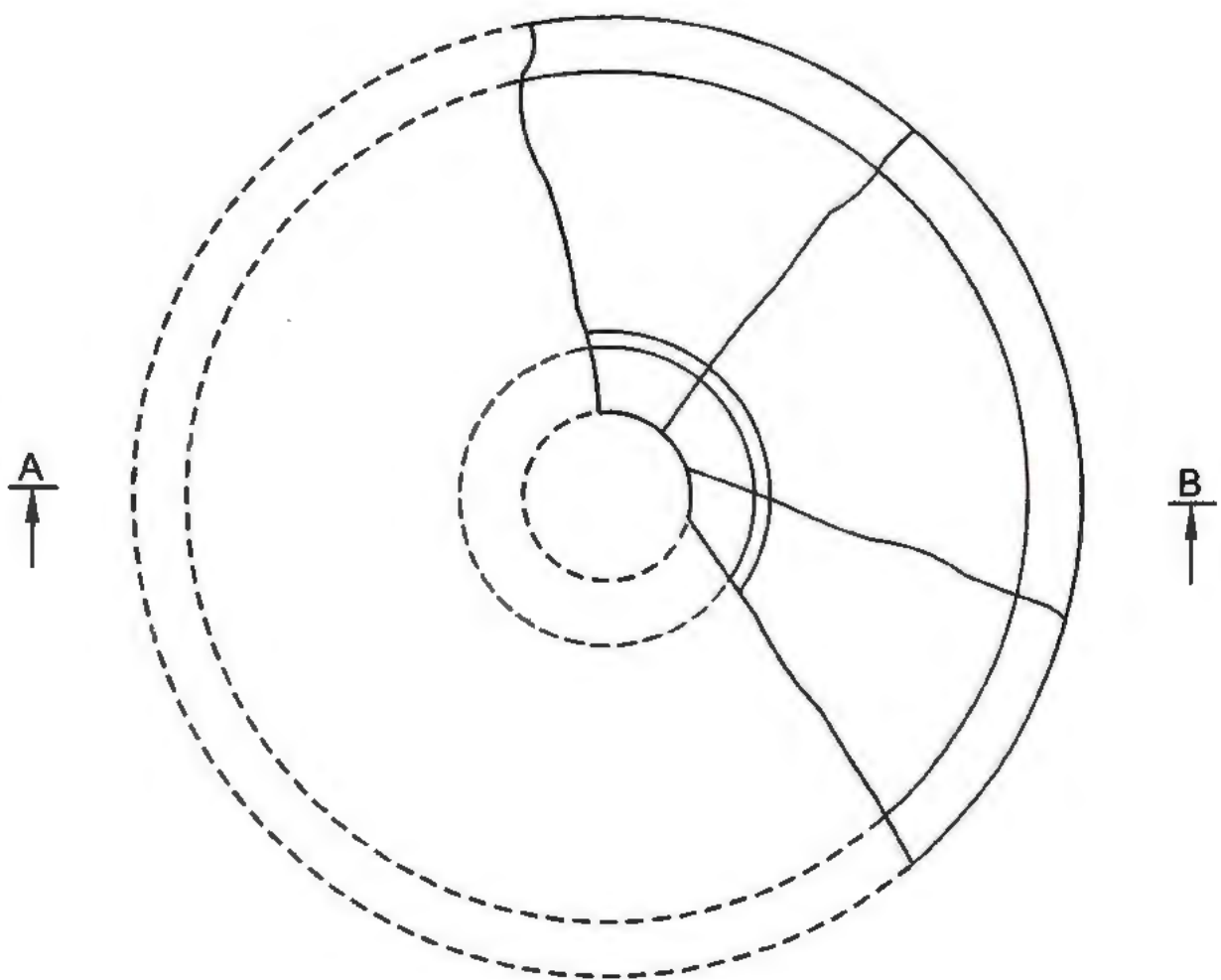


**MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI  
CHHATRA**

0 10 20 30 40 50 CM



**SECTION A-B**



**PLAN**

**Fig.28**

MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI  
CHHATRA

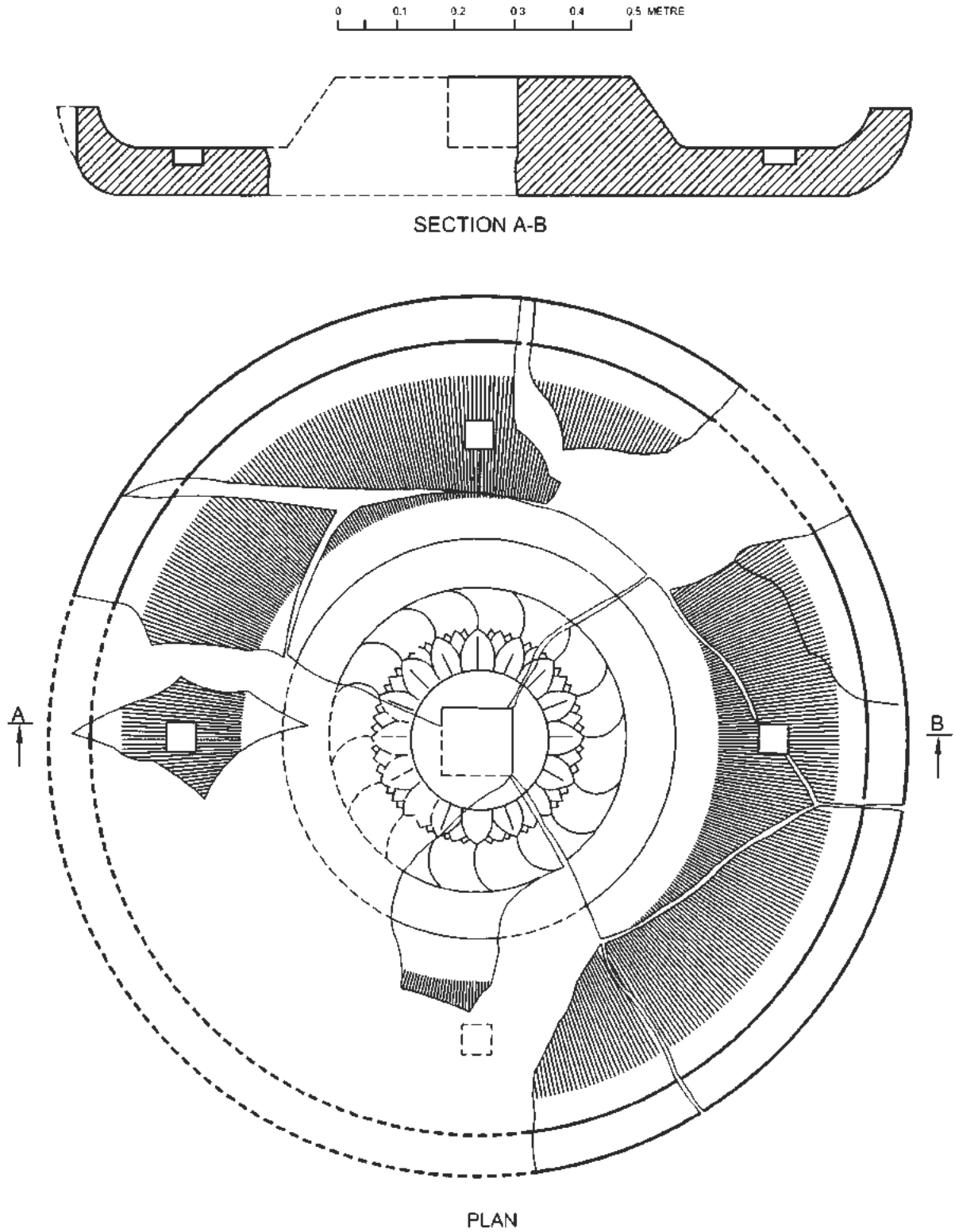


Fig. 29

evidences. The limestone slabs used in construction of the dome found in the trenches within and outside the limitation of the railing are remarkably chiselled with deliberate teething on both the top and bottom surfaces. The lateral edges are drawn into a wedge shape, where as the outer periphery is drawn into an arc to suit circular configuration of the construction. The dome slabs on an average, measure 56 cm in length, 35 cm in width and nearly 10 cm in thickness. Depending upon the requirement the measurements varied. The wedge side measured roughly 20-35 cm in width. The peripheral side was provided with a slight curvature and teethed for plastering the dome in lime mortar as some of them were found with lime mortar still sticking to them. Interestingly some of the dome slabs contain label inscription. Since many devotees, from laymen to monks and royalty, contributed for the construction of the *chaitya*, they were boldly inscribed.

### **Harmikā, chhatra and chhatradaṇḍa**

The *harmikā* is lost. However, the available architectural members retrieved during the excavations show that the *harmikā* had an austere railing pattern. The finding of mutilated massive circular fragments of the umbrellas (*chhatras*) (Fig.26-28) indicate that at the centre of the *harmikā*, the central shaft of the *chhatradaṇḍa* was buried and the three umbrellas (*chhatras*) were hoisted with the larger umbrellas

at the bottom and the smaller disc at the top. The under surface of the *chhatras* were carefully grooved or ribbed starting from the central coned hub towards the periphery which was raised into a ridge of nearly 4 cm (Pl.XXXVIII B). Some of the umbrella slabs were ribbed along the inner periphery of the central hole for providing grip. There are also squarish sockets nearer to the periphery (Fig.29 and Pl.XXXIXA), perhaps for suspending garlands and festoons. The cone at the under surface in some (Pl.XXXIX B), is treated with lotus petals opening outwards from centre to the periphery. The ones which are smaller in dimension do not carry any floral decorations-perhaps they are located further up at a distance from the view of the onlooker. These smaller and plain umbrellas probably formed part of the multiple *chhatrāvali*.

### **Pradakshināpatha (Circumambulatory Passage)**

After decorating the lower drum and *āyaka* platforms with ornate and non-ornate veneering slabs the pavement slabs of the circumambulatory passage have been laid (Fig.22). During the course of excavation, an earlier circumambulatory passage of irregular shaped thin limestone slabs was encountered at a depth of 40 cm laid parallel to the offset of the lower drum indicating the existence of an early phase of construction. This is further buttressed from the fact that almost all the uprights of the present railing rest over this earlier

circumambulatory passage and some of the uprights of the first phase of construction are reused to buttress the present railing as supports. (For details see Chapter IV).

The width of the circumambulatory passage measures 3.25 m around the *stūpa* and is constricted to 2.10 m at the *āyaka* platforms. Finely polished roughly rectangular limestone slabs of 6-8 cm thickness have been paved horizontally. The edges are cut at an angle so as to form almost thin joints with minimum gap (Pl. XL A). A uniform soling of lime mixed with small pebbles, limestone chips, etc. mixed with riverine sand and gruss is used before laying the pavement. Due to the collapse of the heavy architectural members of the drum and the superstructure above, the pavement of the circumambulatory passage is found much damaged. The damage and the scattered pattern of the slabs at places provide a clue to the enormous destruction that the structure suffered. Even in case of the circumambulatory passage, the southeastern side is much damaged when compared to other sides.

In front of the *āyaka* platforms, the circumambulatory passage is extended in the cardinal directions to a distance of 1.20 m, almost to the width of the *āyaka* platform and slabs of small size are laid. On an average the paved slabs measure 1.60 x 1.0 m, 1.50 x 1.16 m, 1.70 x 1.13 m, 1.17 x 0.92 m and 8-10 cm in thickness. It is interesting to note that these stones have been intentionally fashioned slightly in a

wedge shape to achieve the required plan of a circular nature between the drum and *āyaka* uprights. At places, for instance in the northeastern quarter near the northern *āyaka* slightly large size slabs are used projecting into the space between two successive uprights providing a rectangular slit for accommodating the uprights. The extant evidence indicates that three slabs of 1.0 m, 1.0 m and 1.20 m width have been positioned width wise in concentric circular fashion to achieve the desired plan. At places, however, slabs of rectangular and wedge shapes of required measurement are inserted radially as spacers.

Closer to the *āyaka* platform on either side, rectangular or circular holes are cut into the floor slabs for fixing wooden poles for garlanding and other decorative purposes on specific occasions. In the northwestern corner, on the east of the northern *āyaka*, portion of such a circular hole of about 8 cm diameter is extant. To the south of the eastern *āyaka* platform, at the southeastern corner, the hole measures 12-16 cm in diameter. To the west of southern *āyaka* it is a rectangular hole measuring 12 x 14 cm.

The circumambulatory passage is bordered by a sill opposite the *āyaka* platform in the respective cardinal directions which is preceded by a semicircular moonstone. This is very well preserved near the western entrance whereas the moonstones near the northern and southern entrances are broken in to many fragments. Due to



the impact of the collapse of lofty *āyaka* pillars, the moonstone on the eastern side is also severely damaged.

### Seated sculptures of Buddha in the circumambulatory passage

It is interesting to note that in the fifth phase of Period-II of construction and expansion, the architects at Kanaganahalli have introduced as many as ten seated images of Buddha in the *stūpa*. Of these, while eight were located on the floor of circumambulatory passage one each was placed right on the northern and eastern *āyaka* platforms. During the course of excavation, except for the sculpture of Buddha retrieved from the northwest, rest were displaced and greatly mutilated due to the impact of the collapse of massive architectural units of super structure (Pl.XLB). These sculptures were the exclusive contributions of sculptors and devotees hailing from *Vakāṭaka Vishaya* (Vidarbha region of the present Maharashtra) as evident from the inscriptions found on the pedestals (Pl.XLC). As per the inscriptions these represent the eight *Mānushi* Buddhas.

### Entrance sill (Fig.30)

The sill is fashioned out of a monolithic block of limestone measuring 2.80 m in length, 1.37 m in width and 23 cm in thickness. On the southern side the block is cut on either side to accommodate the uprights in a rectangular form (28 x 10 cm)

The top surface of the sill is decorated with a fully bloomed lotus medallion at the centre and half lotus medallions abutting a horizontal band decorated with alternate triangles having obliquely hatched designs. Presently extant in four fragments, it is finely polished on the top surface and roughly dressed on the other faces. The southern entrance being the main entrance from the riverside, the lotus medallion at the centre is much worn out probably due to the constant movement of the devotees.

The sill and the moonstone of the western entrance are comparatively well preserved (Pl.XLI A). The sill is fashioned out of a rectangular monolithic block of limestone measuring 2.80 m in length, 38 cm in width and 25 cm in height. The top corners of the block are fashioned in such a way that three squarish blocks are achieved one each respectively at the sides and one at the middle so as to form octagonal shafts in between. The central block has the depiction of a full-bloomed lotus medallion and the one at the sides have half lotus medallions. Like the sill of the southern entrance, the top surface and the lotus medallions of the western side also are much worn out. The extant portion is available in four fragments and is partly mended.

At the northern entrance, only two fragments of the sill bearing one full lotus medallion are noticed. Together they measure 1.80 m in length, 36 cm in width and 18 cm in thickness.

**MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI**  
**CHANDRASILA (MOONSTONE) WITH SILL**  
**(AT WESTERN ENTRANCE)**

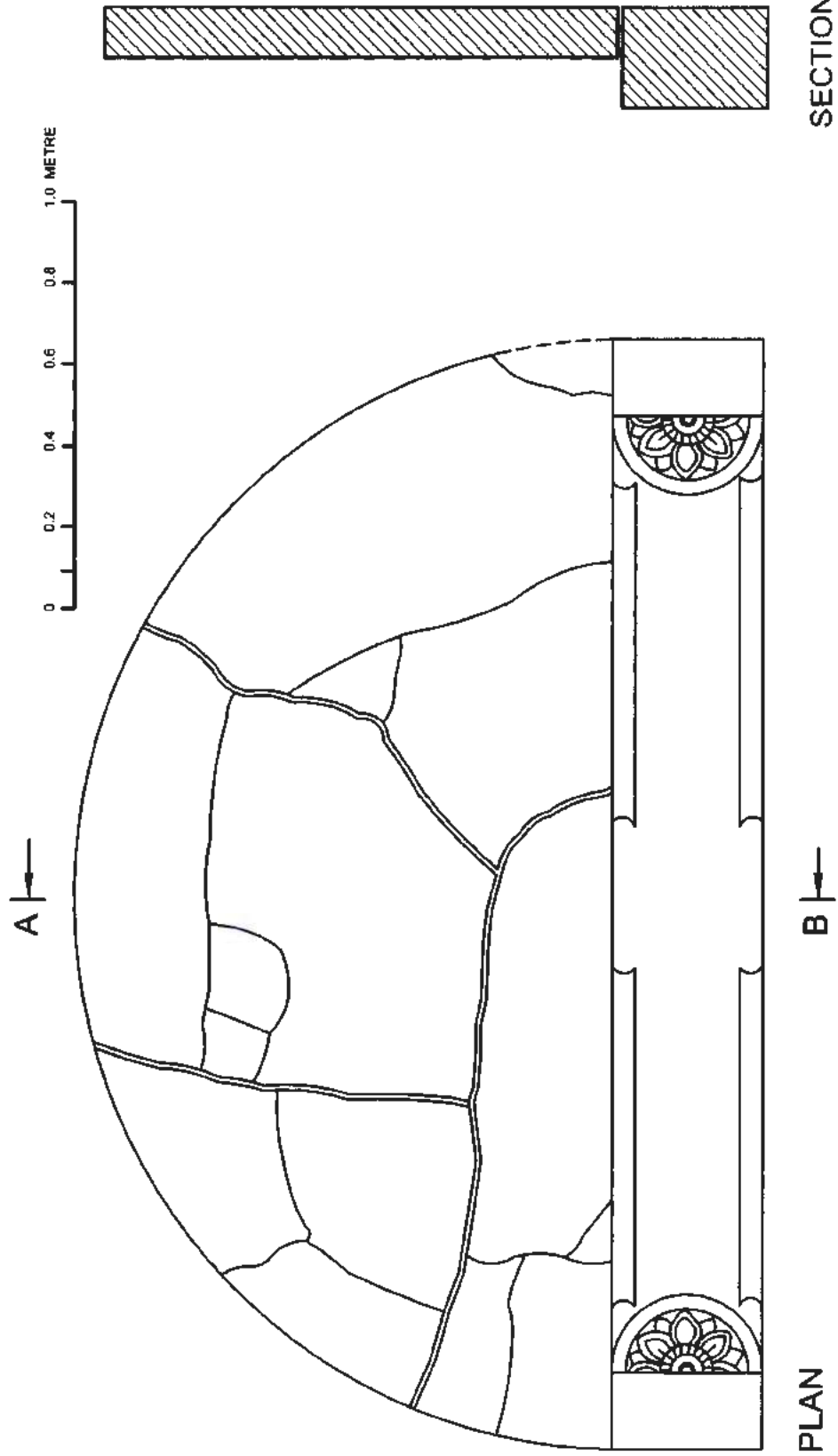


Fig. 30

On the eastern side also, the sill and the moonstone are much damaged. Only three fragments of the monolithic block of the sill are extant bearing only one of the half lotus medallions. The extant portion measures 1.20 m in length, 0.35 m in width and 0.21 m in thickness.

### **Chandraśilā (moonstone)(Fig.30)**

Beyond the sill, in the cardinal direction, a huge monolithic slab fashioned into a semicircular moonstone is positioned. This slab is highly polished on the top surface as well as at the peripheral border. As recorded at west, the moonstone measures 2.80 m in length, 1.65 m in diameter and has a thickness of nearly 18 cm. Along the straight edge of the moonstone, a rectangular groove is cut for placing the sill, an arrangement, which is not seen in other sills. Presently, the moonstone of the southern entrance is extant in four fragments (Pl.XLI B) and has a maximum length of 2.40 m with a maximum width of 1.25 m and has a uniform thickness of 11 cm. The moonstone was used as a resting place for pastime as evidenced by the engraving of rectangular (33 cm x 16 cm) chessboard design containing three rows of eight squares of roughly 4 x 4 cm, set in three columns, totally forming 24 squares. The moonstone at the north is extant in four fragments and measures 2.0 m in width and 1.35 m in length and 12 cm in thickness. The one at east is in five fragments and measures 2.10 m. in length, 1.80 m. in width and 12 cm. in thickness.

### **Yakshas at the entrances: Southern entrance**

On the eastern side of the southern entrance, there appears to have been accommodated a standing *yaksha* figure holding a separate rectangular stone cut trough or the receptacle for the offerings of the devotees. Only the feet of the *yaksha* figure along with part of the pedestal measuring 50 cm in length, 40 cm in width and about 30 cm in height have been found. The extant fragment reveals the feet of a lofty *Yaksha* figure and the lower ends of the *sanghāti* of the lower and upper garments respectively falling on either side. The fingers and nails of the feet are well delineated. The upper part of the sculpture is not available.

The stone receptacle found close by measuring 34 cm in length, 44 cm in width and 25 cm in height probably was placed over the head of the *Yaksha*. It is roughly finished on the exterior and on the back side a rectangular groove of 20 cm width and 2 cm depth has been cut all along the length, the purpose of which cannot be discerned. On the top surface, a rectangular depression (32 x 25 x 11 cm) is cut at the centre leaving a uniform border of 5 cm width all along the periphery. This depression is also roughly finished. This must have been to collect the offerings in the form of grains, flowers, coins, etc. made by the devotees as they enter the *stūpa* complex. Similar *Yaksha* sculptures

bearing the stone receptacles or offering bowls have been retrieved from the other important Buddhist sites as well.

Fragment of another *Yaksha* sculpture was also retrieved from the eastern side of southern entrance. The extant sculpture measures 62 cm in length, 22 cm in thickness and 25 cm in height. It shows part of the potbelly, upraised left ankle and right foot only. The garment worn by the *Yaksha* is very well delineated in horizontal strands with criss-cross designs, *yajñōpavīta* in the form of a thick chord is also shown. The left ankle is provided with a thick anklet in three strands having a series of tubular and spherical beads at the middle.

The potbelly is chamfered at a steep angle from the left towards the right indicating its mutilation due to the collapse of other heavy architectural members on it.

### Pillars of offerings

To the south of the standing *Yaksha* figure is the basal portion of a rectangular pillar, the upper portion of which is damaged or missing. The extant portion measures 0.34 m x 0.34 m and is extant to a height of 0.64 m slightly leaning towards north.

On the southern side of the entrance sill, in addition to the *Yaksha*, there is a cluster of three pillars of rectangular (21 x 18 cm) cross-section, two of them *in situ* and one fallen in north-south orientation. The

*in situ* ones measure 60 and 71 cm in height respectively. Over this a circular stone receptacle was placed.

This receptacle measures 50 cm in diameter and has a thickness of 17 cm. The circular depression of about 38 cm diameter and 12 cm depth has been cut at the centre of the block of stone providing a ledge of 6 cm all along the periphery. The depression has a diameter of 24 cm at the base. The external and internal surface of this receptacle is very crudely fashioned.

### Western entrance

To the north of the western entrance a rectangular platform raised over a soling of natural boulders, limestone chips and brickbats and limestone pieces of varying size was raised. It is veneered with rectangular slabs measuring 1.24 m in length, 20 cm in width and 20 cm in height. The front surfaces of these slabs are highly polished. This rectangular platform measures 1.20 m. north-south and is extant to a height of 54 cm. Over this platform a limestone pedestal measuring 1.10x53 x 36 cm (lxwxh) for an image appears to have been positioned. Except the front and top surfaces of the block, which are polished, the rest of the surfaces are left unfinished. On the front face a small offset of 8 cm. height is provided all along the length and there is a large chipped mark at the center. On the top surface an ovalish groove is cut having a maximum length of 60x33x10 cm



(lxwxd). The groove is cut at a distance of 11cm from the front outer edge and 26 cm along the right side and 9 cm from the rear edge and 23 cm from the left border. This must have accommodated the crudely fashioned sculpture of *Yakshi*, which is available in fragments. A considerable quantity of disintegrated lime plaster in the pedestal as well as the surrounding vicinity of the platform suggests that the crudely fashioned *Yakshi* sculpture must have been plastered to finish.

### Northern entrance

*Yaksha* on the northern side was found lying slightly away from the entrance and appears to have been mutilated and dislodged from its original position at the entrance facing west. The image has suffered severe damages because of plough marks. However, the grinning face, wide open eyes, heavy *sanghāti* tucked behind and a necklace are clearly discernible. In spite of mutilations, the extant torso and head of this *Yaksha* appear to closely resemble the much-famed *Pītalkhōra Yaksha*.

### Railing (Fig.31)

The *stūpa* at Kanaganahalli, was provided with a decorated railing 94 m in circumference. In its heyday, the railing pillars or uprights (*tabha*) stood to a height of 2.55 m including the undressed bottom, each pillar is connected with four

row of cross bars (*sūchi*) and a decorated coping (*ushnīsha*) 45 cm in height, resting on the pillars, along the outer periphery of the paved circumambulatory passage (Pl.XLII A). On an average, the upright measure 1.95 m in height above the circumambulatory passage level. The width varies from 36 to 40 cm and the thickness from 17 to 20 cm. The average distance between two uprights, edge to edge, also varies from 36 to 45 cm.

At the cardinal directions the corner uprights were provided with lenticular mortices on the two lateral sides (Fig.32). These 'L' shaped uprights are introduced towards the cardinal direction facing the *āyaka* platforms as well. In all there are 130 uprights (including the four L-shaped ones) classified sector wise as below:

Sector 1: Southwest	-	32
Sector 2: Northwest	-	31
Sector 3: Northeast	-	31
Sector 4: Southeast	-	36
TOTAL	-	130

This variation in numbers is probably due to the fact that the construction must have begun from the southern entrance towards the southwest in clockwise movement. A uniform pattern of 30 uprights in a sector with one extra in each cardinal direction appears to be the pattern intended originally. However, in the northern half in

MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

RAILING DETAILS

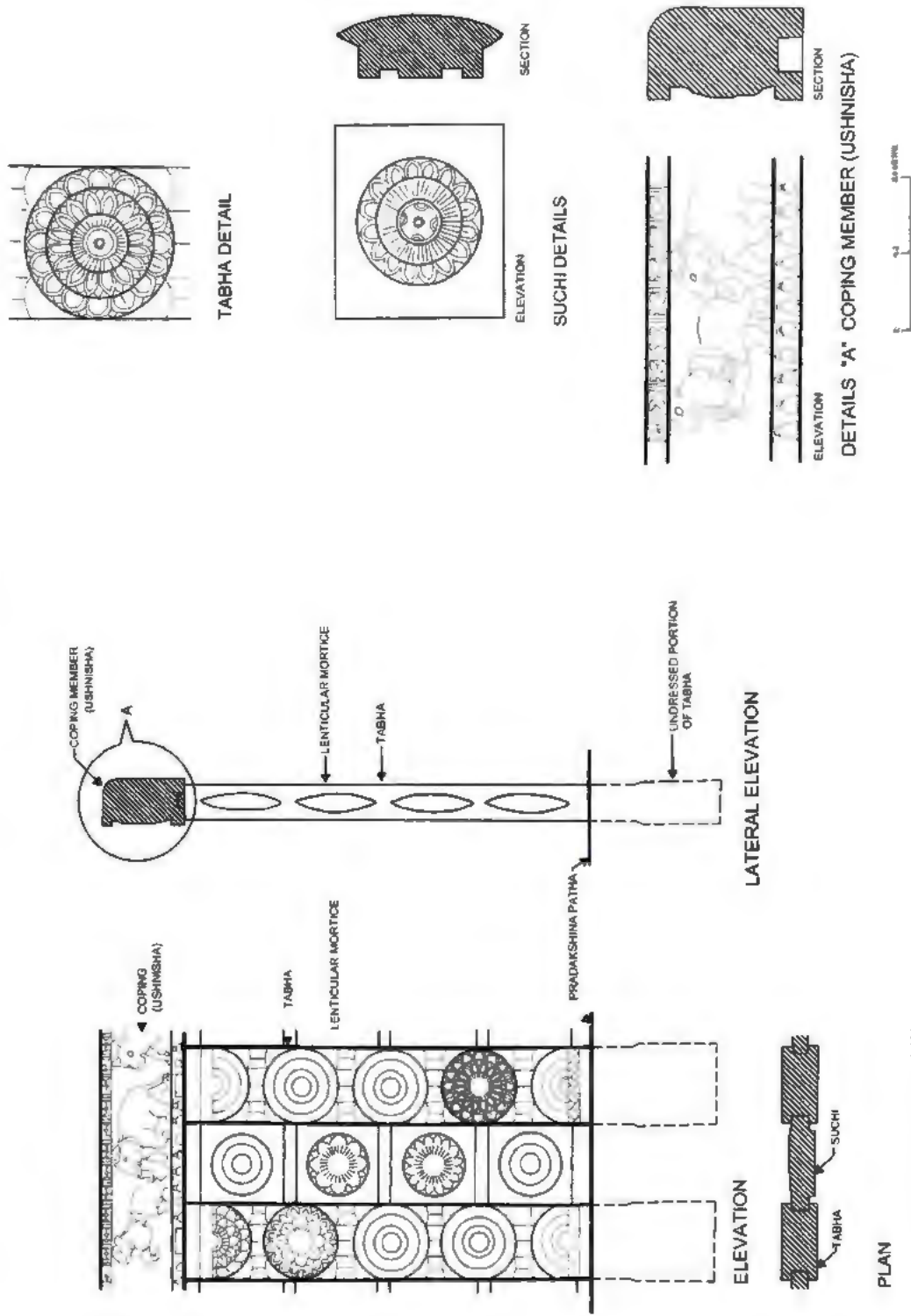


Fig. 31

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

### CORNER TABHA

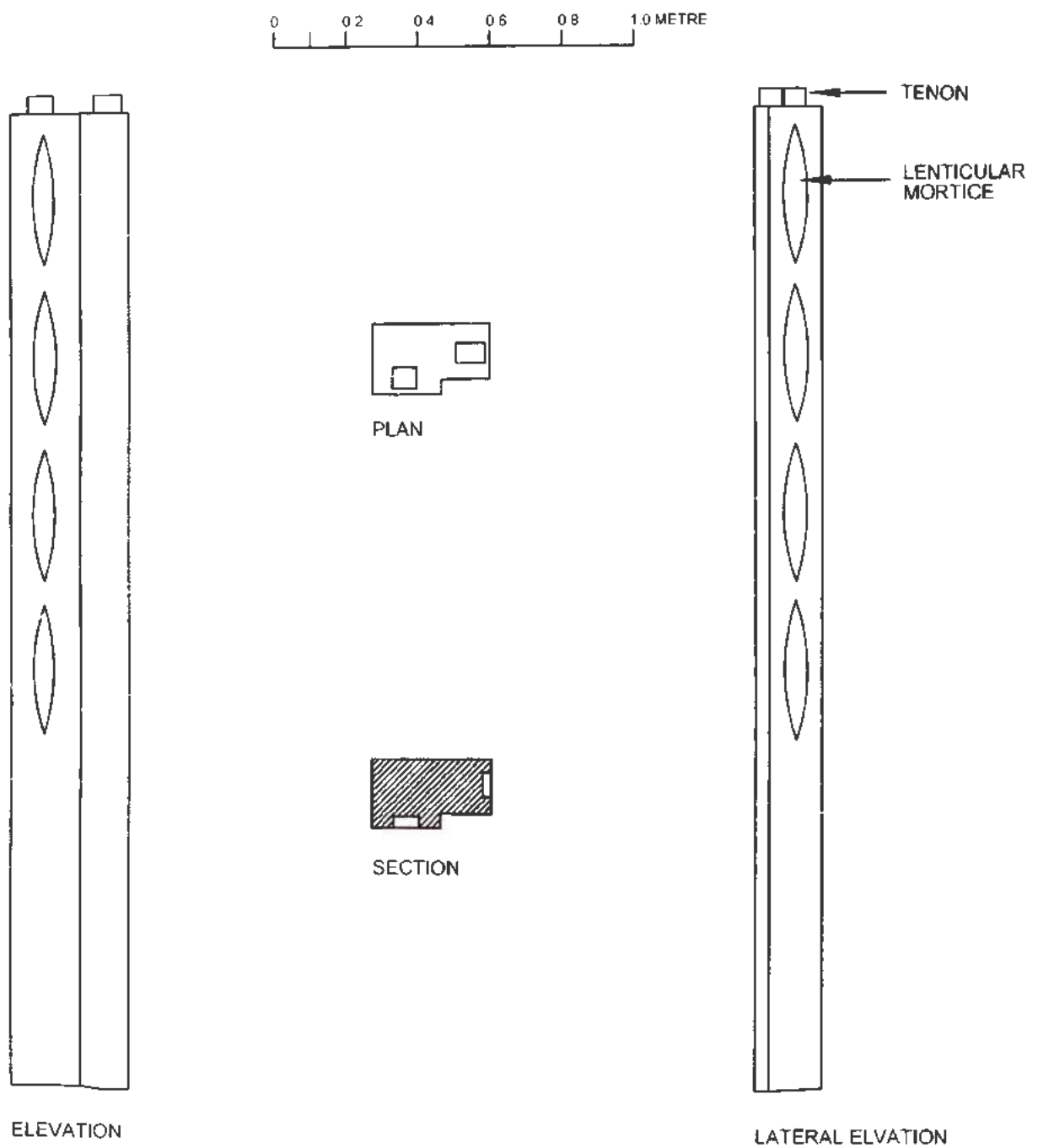


Fig.32

## DETAILS OF TABHA

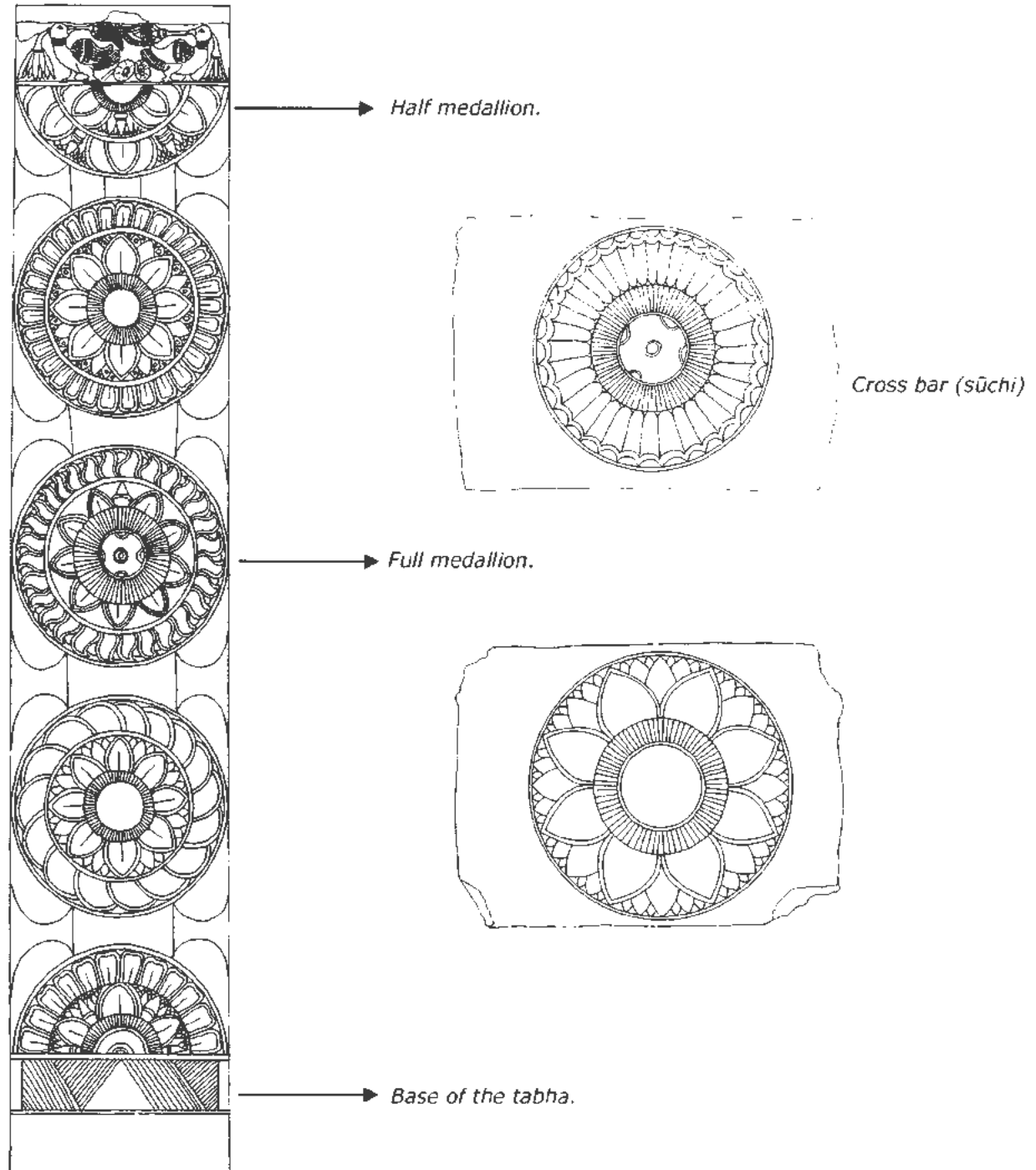


Fig.33



## CROSS BAR, GEOMETRIC DESIGNS

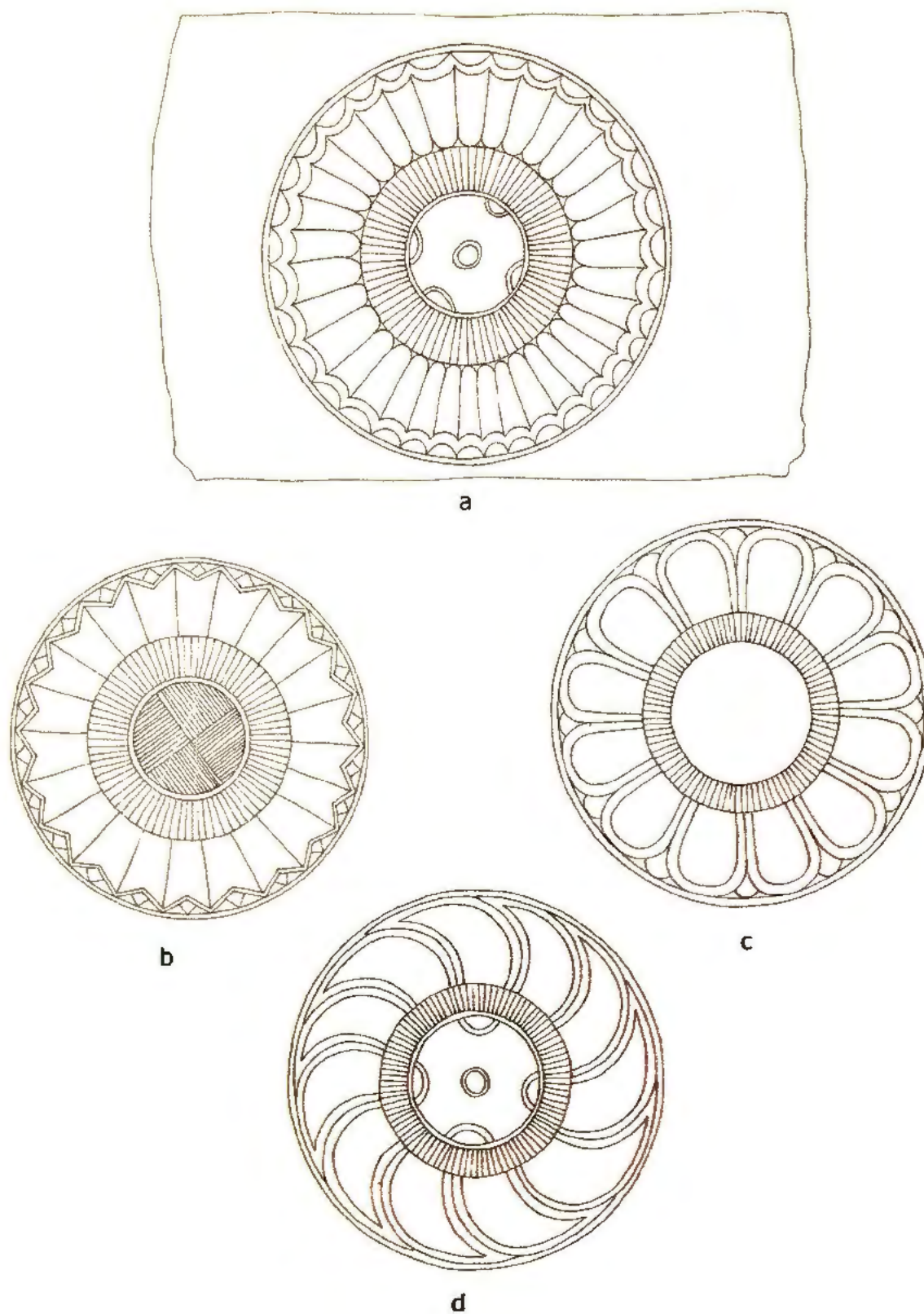


Fig.34

## CROSS BAR, NON-GEOMETRIC MOTIFS

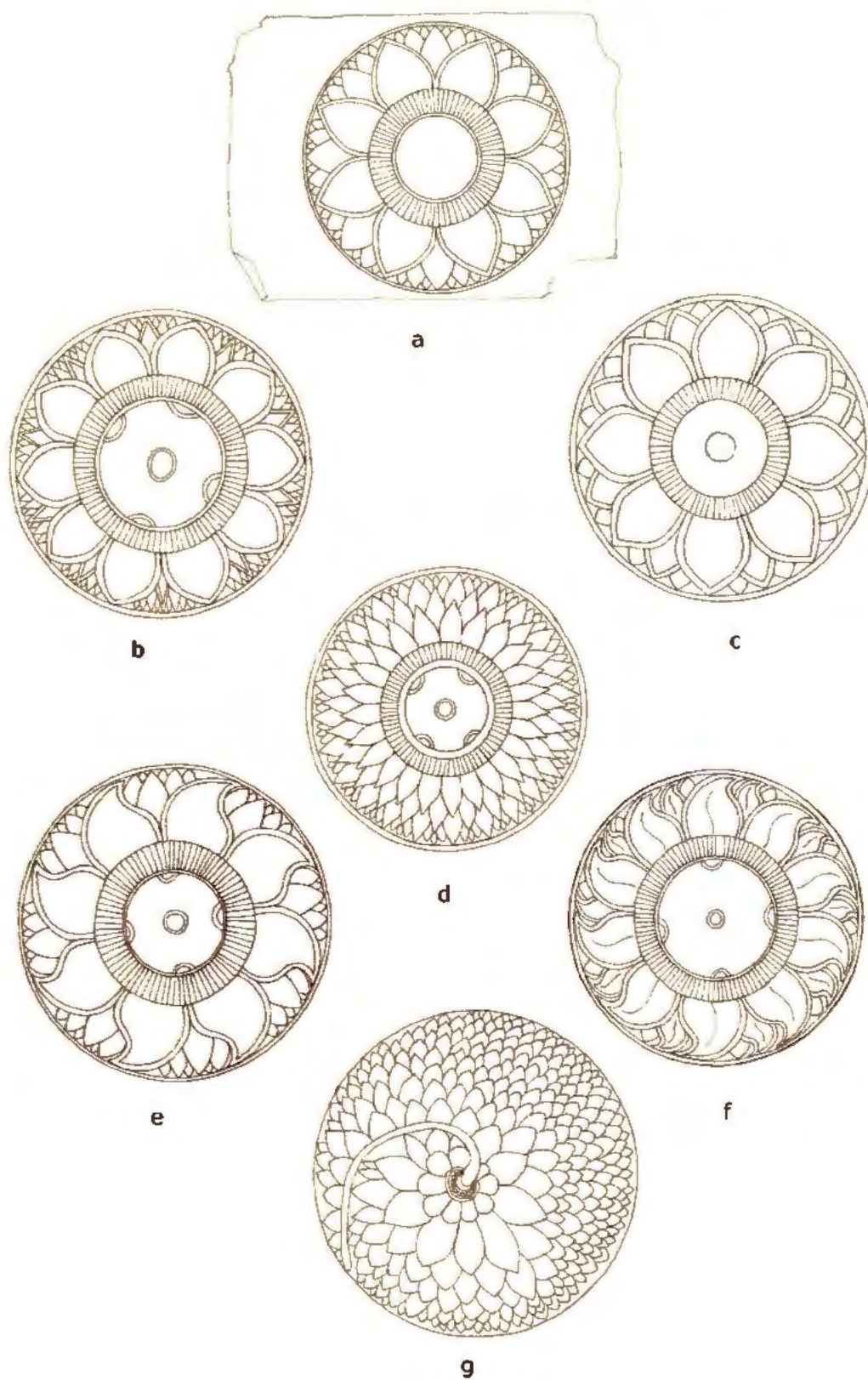


Fig.35

each of the sectors only 31 uprights are installed and in the last sector *i.e.*, on the southeast 36 uprights have been provided as the uprights become more slender and smaller in width. This difference might have occurred in the Phase IV of Period II when the railing was expanded and shifted radially outwards to the present form by incorporating the *āyaka* platforms.

The comparatively well preserved stretch of railing is located towards the south west corner (Pl.XLIIC). Each upright has three parts, the lowest uncarved portion obviously to be buried below the ground level with proper props (Pl.XLII B), plain dressed and uncarved portion just above the surface level. The exterior carved surface starts with a horizontal band of obliquely hatched triangular designs at the bottom above which an half lotus medallion is sculpted, followed by three full lotus medallions. The intervening space between lotus medallions is decorated with flutings. The triangle design band is repeated above half lotus medallion at the top. In most of the uprights the top border is decorated with birds standing back to back but beaks turned towards each other holding a variety of flowers in their beaks. The lotus medallions vividly capture the various aspects of the flowers in different stages of blooming and varieties both natural and geometrical (Figs.33 & 34 and Pl. XLII D). The same design is effectively utilised to carve out innumerable floral patterns starting from a simple eight to ten petalled flower to a thousand-petalled flower (Fig.35). The

top surface of the upright had a rectangular tenon or cylindrical projection to hold the *ushnīsha* member.

In the southeastern quarter, the uprights are 30 cm wide and the thickness varies from 15 to 18 cm, thereby accounting to increase in their number up to a maximum of 36. Similarly, the size of the crossbar also reduces considerably. One of the smallest crossbars in this quarter measures 30x33 cm (wxh) and the lotus medallion having 30 cm diameter is chamfered at sides to accommodate the mortice to adjust the space.

The corner uprights are fashioned out of thick rectangular slabs, the width of which varies from 37 to 40 cm, the thickness from 21 cm to 28 cm. Usually the shorter arm of the rectangle is provided with mortices along the peripheral line of the uprights and the longer arm also has mortices in the side facing the cardinal direction to accommodate crossbars with the extended side.

Each of the uprights has four axially set lenticular mortices at their lateral sides. On an average the length of the mortice measures 40 cm with a maximum central width of 9 cm and a depth of 3.5 cm. The interspace between two mortices varies from 5 to 6 cm.

### Crossbars (Sūchis)

The four row cross bars (*sūchi*) at kanaganahalli appears to be a early feature. Depending upon the space



between the mortices and the interspace between the two uprights, the size of the *sūchi* or crossbars varies. The crossbars are fashioned out of rectangular limestone slabs with elliptical cross-section so as to fit into the mortice. The central part has a circular projection to a maximum thickness of 15 cm and the side arms of a thickness of 3 cm fit into the mortices. The exterior surface of the circular projection is decorated with a variety of floral designs (Fig.33) as in the case of the uprights. The smallest of the crossbar measures 37 cm in length, 34 cm in width and has a maximum thickness of 15 cm at lotus medallion. One of the largest crossbars has a maximum length of 46 cm, a width of 38 cm and the diameter of the projecting lotus medallion being 33 cm. The lotus medallion over the central projection, on an average measures 30 cm in diameter. Usually, there will be three to five rows of petals arranged peripherally with increasing diameter and a central stud shown prominently. The stud is decorated with a series of concentric circles at the centre, semicircles at the diametrically opposite ends, obliquely hatched triangles, etc. The inner surface is left plain and used for engraving donatory label inscriptions. Similarly, the inner surface of the crossbars facing the *stūpa* is left plain. Though there are instances of using the plain surface over the crossbars for engraving donative inscriptions as found elsewhere, none of the crossbars in this *stūpa* bear any inscription.

The uprights at the end, laterally facing the cardinal directions have mortices on one side only and are not treated with lotus medallion as found in others. As many as 36 donatory inscriptions have been noticed on the inner face of these uprights, of which 14 have been found towards northwest. They range from a simple single line record of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD characters to a long three-lined inscription written lengthwise on the corner upright of western *āyaka* mentioning the donations made by a certain Sātvāhana Sramaṇa of Utarahakona (Ins.No.A.15) during the fifth regnal year of Vasisthiputra Siri Sātakarṇi. Interestingly, all the inscriptions are engraved neatly and deeply almost at the eye level along the inner face.

Thus, in a nutshell, the *Mahāchaitya* at Kanaganahalli represents the features of the *hinayāna* phase in its formative phase of Period I and up to phase four of Period II and suddenly transforms into a prolific *mahāyāna* site in the subsequent phase V. In its structural composition, it exhibited an austere plain dome topped by a fairly tall umbrella within a *harmikā* resting over a sculptured upper drum which in turn rested on a circular decorated lower drum intervened by a narrow upper circumambulatory passage. *Āyaka* platforms abutting the lower drum in the cardinal directions accommodated images of Buddha, *Buddhapādas* and *āyaka* pillars and a paved circumambulatory passage, enclosed by an ornate railing.



The *stūpa* definitely formed an imposing landmark on the banks of river Bhima far away from the township of Sannati, offering the requisite secluded atmosphere for meditation and religious study for the followers of different pantheons of the Buddhist faith.

## B. ACCESSORY STRUCTURES

During the course of excavation, as many as 10 brick and stone structures were brought to light surrounding the *Mahāchaitya* (Fig.15). Many of these structures belong to the third phase of Period-II of constructional activity at the *chaitya* as evidenced by construction of an apsidal *chaitya* at southeast almost overlapping the railing of the *Mahāchaitya* and a few square brick structures in the northwestern and northeastern corner. Mainly built of bricks, these structures, are located towards the periphery of the mound at a slightly higher level. They are greatly disturbed due to extensive agricultural operations and are extant only in 3-7 courses measuring 57-60 cm in height. Further, when exposed to the atmosphere due to ill-firing, these bricks have the tendency to break into small fragments.

During the heydays the *Mahā stūpa* attracted a large number of pilgrims, devotees and merchants who were passing by this important trade route connecting Sannati to Paithan (ancient *Pratishthānapura*), the celebrated capital

of the Sātavāhanas and other Buddhist sites in the adjacent regions. The epigraphical data from the site make references to such persons from other Buddhist sites such as, *Dhānyakaṭaka* (Amarāvati), *Kōtūra* (Kotur), *Kūpaṇa* (Koppal), *Isilā* (Brahmagiri), etc. The pilgrims who came thus have not only made grants for the maintenance and worship of the *stūpa*, to the monks and nuns of the monastery, but have also erected subsidiary brick structures around the *stūpa*, thus making the *Mahā stūpa* a flourishing religious complex during subsequent periods. These structures (STR-I to STR-X) exhibit different plans and probably served as monastery, votive *stūpas* and Buddha *chaityas*.

## MONASTIC COMPLEX (Fig.36)

The monastic complex is located towards the north of the *stūpa* in which two wings can be clearly identified. For the sake of description, these are classified into the northwestern wing and the northern wing.

### Northwestern Wing

Situated at a distance of about 20 m from the *Mahā stūpa*, the extant disturbed northwestern wing of the monastery, built of brick and lime, measures 10.90 m in length and 6.20 m in breadth with its longer axis in east-west orientation. On plan, the northwestern wing of the monastery is composed of a verandah, two cells and a large hall which probably opened in to five cells, built in almost

## MAHĀ STŪPA

KANAGANAHALLI EXCAVATIONS (1997-2000 & 2006)

TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA

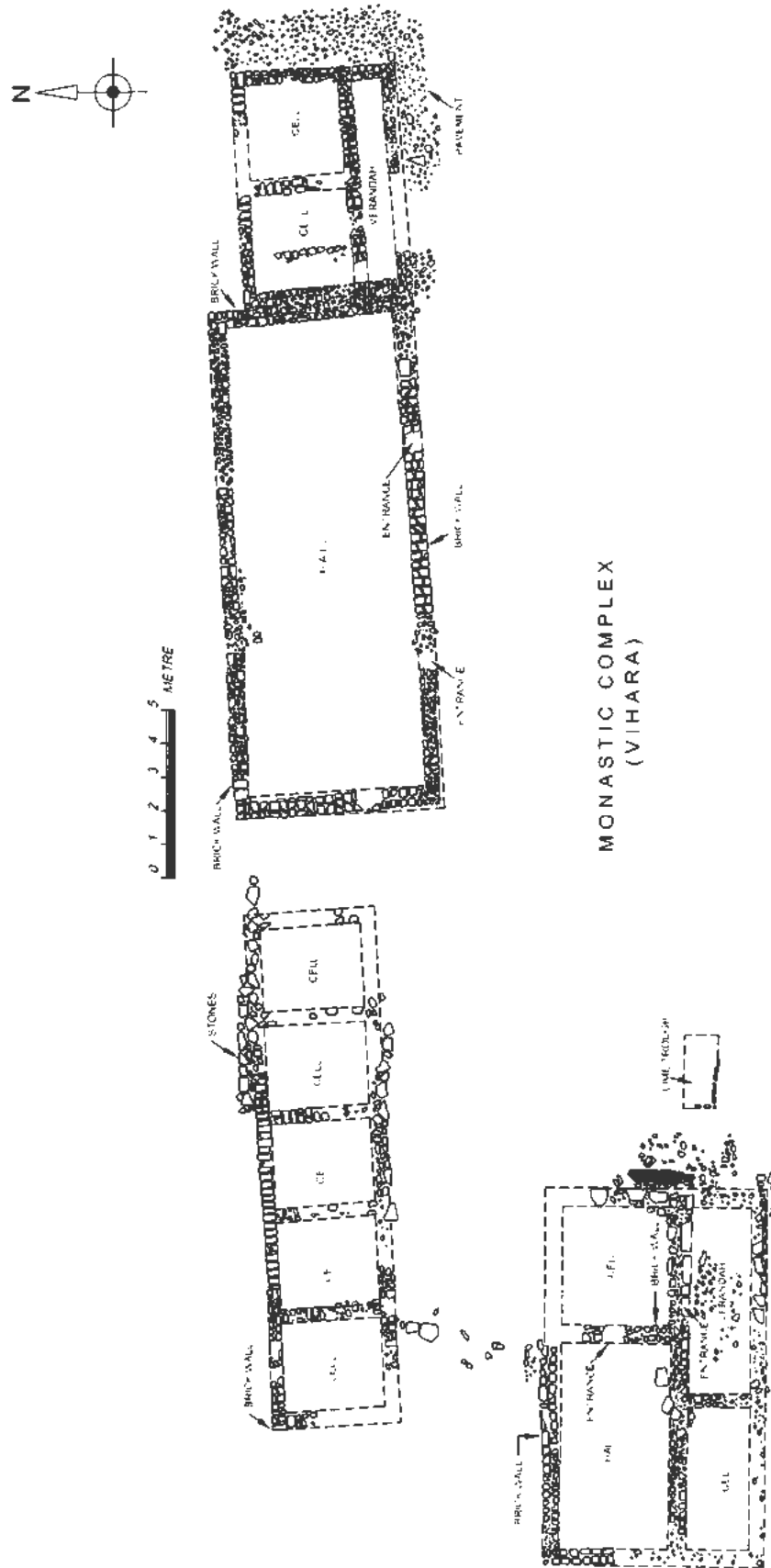


Fig. 36

north-east and south-west orientation. The entrance verandah measures 5.75 m in length and 1.75 m in width, with an entrance leading to the damaged square cell at north measuring 3.20x3.20 m. An entrance from this cell at west leads to a large hall measuring 6.50m in length, 3.50 m in width. The extant portions of the wall reveal two courses of baked brick varying in height between 8-20 cm and with a width of 46 cm set in 10 mm thick slurry. That the brick wall was provided with 15 mm thick lime plaster is evident from extant plastered surface noticed at places. The central hall opens in to five small disturbed cells located further north. Of these two extant cells measure 2.60x2.80 m and 2.45x2.85 m respectively. In the northwest cell close to the modern Durga shrine, wall is extant to a height of 70 cm (Pl.XLIII A), and the exposed foundation reveals potsherd mixed with slurry of black-cotton soil. The north-south running wall of the above has limestone chips piled along with the tiles indicating an attempt to strengthen it. In all probability, the so-called verandah at the front itself appears to be added later as indicated in the section wherein a deposit of nearly 20 cm clay succeeds the earlier floor of the verandah and another course of floor of 7 cm thick is laid using tiles and brickbats. Just outside these heaped tiles at east, is a passage extant upto 5 m, paved with brick and tiles of 1.85 m width, and running in north-south orientation, leading to the front of south of the verandah of the monastic complex.

## **Northern Wing**

Similarly, the northern wing of the monastic complex also had a large hall and two cells built side-by-side for the monks (Pl. XLIII B). These cells together measure 6m in length and 2.90 m in breadth respectively preceded by a common verandah measuring 6 m x 80 cm with an opening at the south. The bricks used measure 45x23x7 cm and are extant in one to three courses in elevation. Each wall of the cell measures 46 cm in width and the cell at the west has a screen wall measuring 2.35 m in length and 38 cm in width which forms a passage opening towards south through a 70 cm wide entrance. Each cell measures 2.85x2.90 m. The eastern cell also has a 70 cm wide entrance in its western wall. The rectangular hall to the west of these cells, in its present form, measures 14.20 X 5.20 m and probably used for congregation by the monks.

Interestingly, waste limestone chips and small slabs of limestone have also been used for construction. The floor of the rooms as well as the verandah have been laid in brickbats, sherds of pottery, tiles and well rammed lime surkhi.

The presence of circular post holes over the walls at regular intervals indicate that the construction was similar to the monastic complexes as delineated in the sculptural depictions at the site.

Traces of extant evidences indicate that both the interior and exterior were

## MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

### STRUCTURE-I

(APSIDAL CHAITYA)

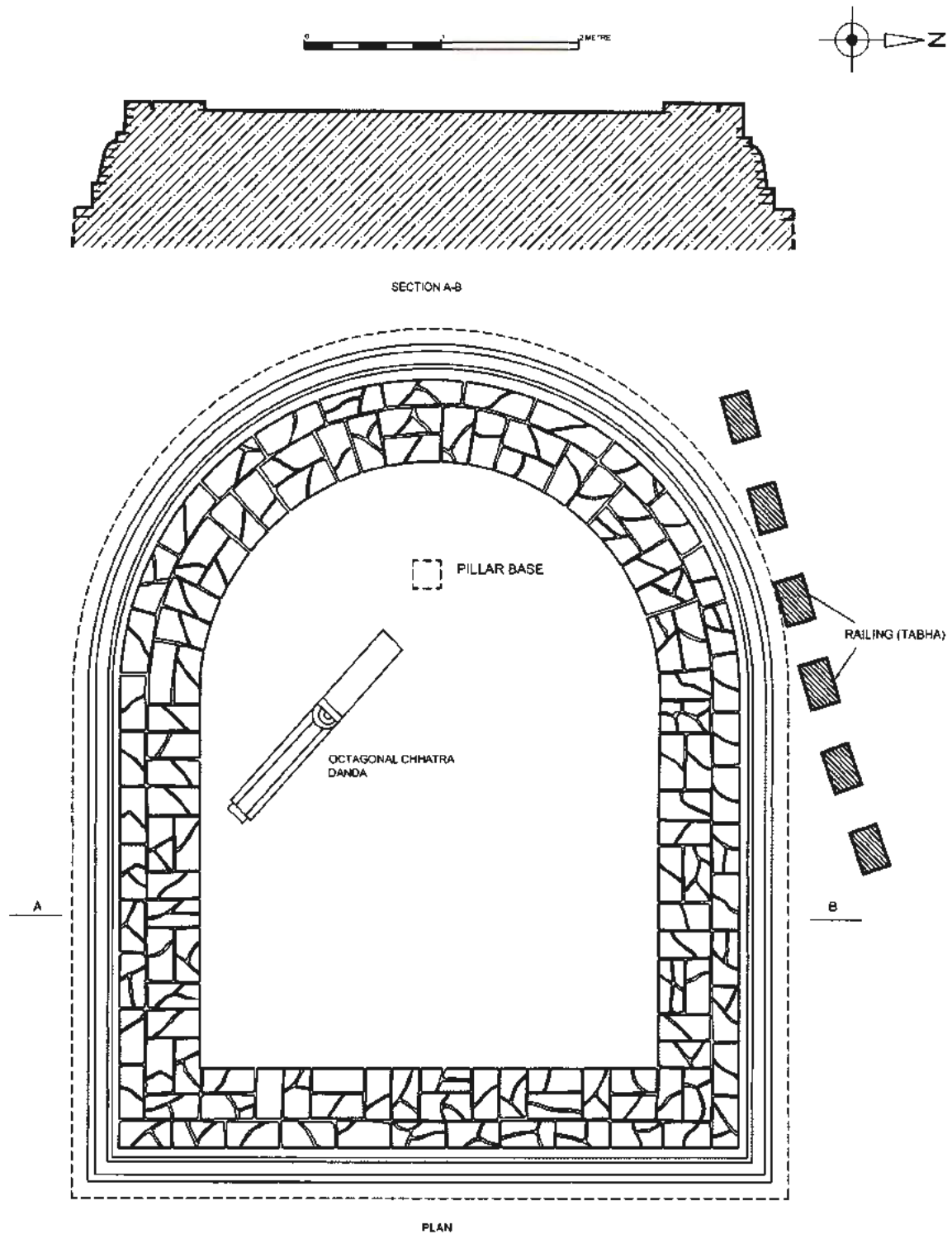


Fig.37



provided with fine lime plaster of 6-8 mm thickness (Pl.XLIII C). In all probability, the walls were built with wattle and daub with sufficiently heavy beams supporting the superstructure of Chaitya dormer windows and doors and the gable-vaulted roof and small windows were provided to allow sufficient light into the cells of the monks. Fairly large quantity of rectangular tiles of banana-leaf type with finger marks (ribbed) have been found used in the construction. At some places the same tiles have been used to lay the floor or to provide a screen wall. The bricks are arranged in alternate course of stretcher and header system in a very finely lavigated liquid like slurry for binding which measures not more than 4-5 mm in thickness. In the northwest wing of the monastery, and along its periphery, the floor was paved with limestone chips and brickbats to prevent slushing of the area during rain.

## PERIPHERAL STRUCTURES

### STR-I Apsidal structure (Pl. XLIV A)

This brick structure (Fig.37) is located to the south-southeast of the *Mahā stūpa* almost abutting the railings, at a distance of about 3 m from the southern entrance of the *stūpa*. The structure appears to have had on plan a rectangular entrance porch and an apsidal sanctum set in east-west orientation. It measures 6 m in length from the western apsidal end up to the entrance on the east and 5 m in width. The extant

brick wall set in lime mortar measures 60 cm in width. It is raised over a base of rectangular dressed slabs with the frontal visible side finely polished. The base slab measures 6.5 cm in height and at places the brick has been raised after providing a ledge of 1.3 m. The extant 13 courses high wall measures 85 cm in height. The core of the walls of the building has been veneered with moulded bricks of full size (40x30x7 cm and 39x20x6.5 cm). The main structure appears to have been built mainly of used bricks and half bricks as indicated by the eroded nature and lack of uniformity in size.

## Elevation

The interior is filled with brickbats mixed with lime and riverine sand over which originally dressed limestone slabs appear to have been paved. In the apse region a *chhatradaṇḍa* with an inscription on the octagonal shaft was noticed (XLIV B). The inscription reads:

Line 1: *Raño Gōtamiputasa Siri Yajña  
Sātakaṇisa Sava 10+1*

Line 2: *Hematāna pakhe1diva1bhikhusa  
Dhamādhikayasa Budhikayasa*

Line 3: *Chchata dēya dhama Saha  
mātāpitūhisaha chabhātubhaginīhi*

Line 4: *savalōkahitāya [II\*]*

This clearly indicates that this umbrella was a gift of a monk and religious head along with the parents, brothers and sisters on the first day of the first fortnight

# MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

## STRUCTURE-II

(CIRCULAR VOTIVE STŪPA)

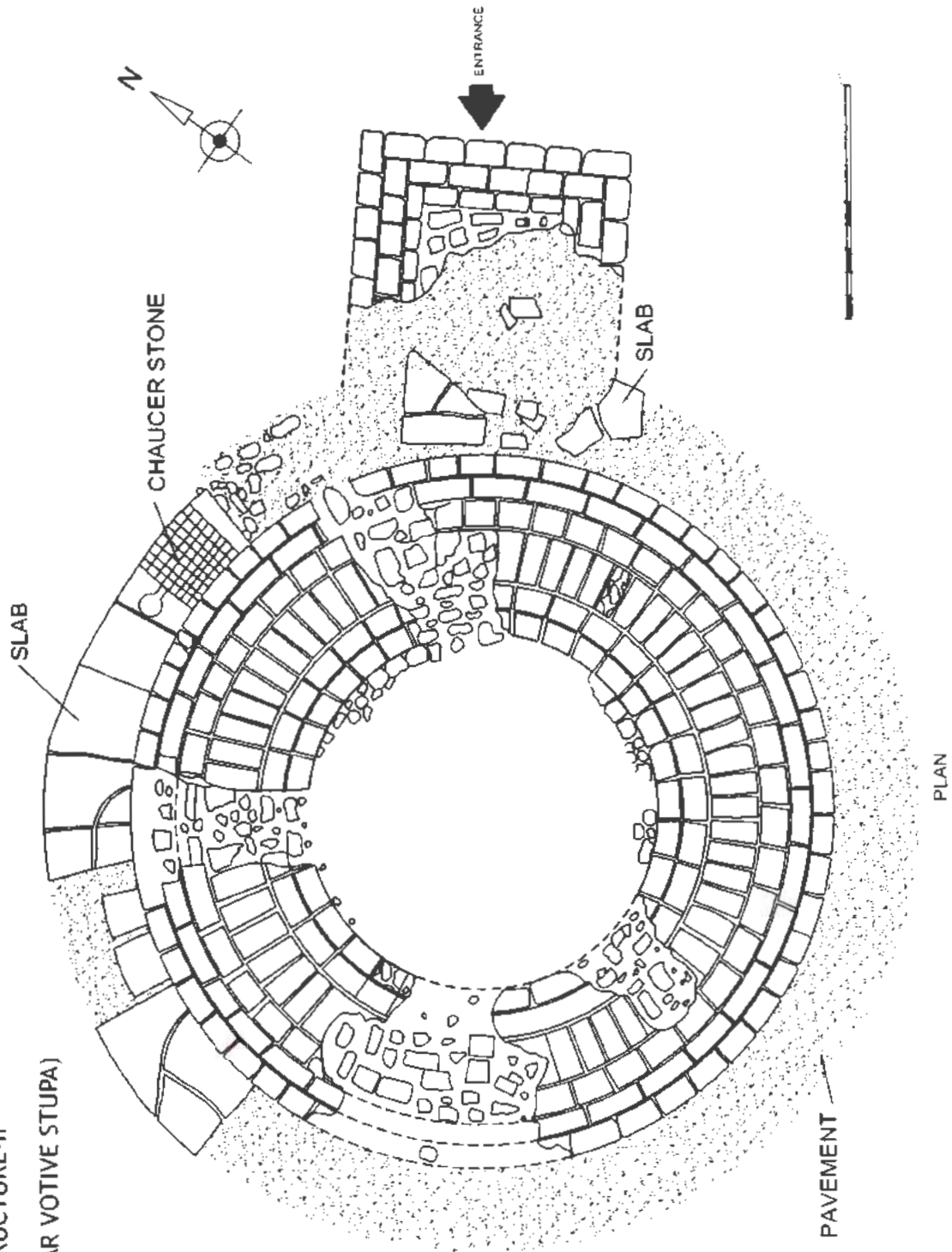


Fig. 38

of the summer during the 11<sup>th</sup> year of King Gotamiputra Siri Yajña Sātakarṇi. Obviously, this apsidal structure also gets a precise dating. A number of fragments of large tiles of typical banana leaf pattern with finger marks and holes for fastening were retrieved during the excavation indicating that the structure had a tiled gable vaulted roof supported by stone or wooden pillars.

The usage of used bricks of irregular size, non-provision of any solid foundation and constant agricultural activity has destroyed the structure to a considerable extent. The construction in close proximity to the *Mahā stūpa* almost abutting *tabha* points at it being one of the structures in the Period II Phase IV of construction.

### **STR-II - CIRCULAR VOTIVE STŪPA** (Fig.38, Pl. XLV A)

Located to the west-southwest of the *stūpa* and south of western entrance, this much destroyed structure was constructed over a foundation of clay slurry of black cotton soil mixed with riverine pebbles, broken bricks and medium size boulders. The structure is raised using full size bricks laid in header stretcher system in regular concentric circles wherein the arrangement of radial and peripheral bricks in alternate courses is also noticed. The binding material is well lavigated clay slurry to a thickness of 4-5 mm. This structure measures 6.12 in diameter. The structure is extant to a height of 24

cm and was provided with an apron serving as circumambulatory passage. It is of finely dressed limestone slabs of 14 cm thickness with a maximum width of 75cm, which is evident at the northwest of the *stūpa*. A small square entrance platform has been provided on the eastern side of the *stūpa* measuring 2.40 m in width and 2.18 m in length. The core is filled with sand mixed with brickbats and riverine pebbles.

### **STR-III – Square Shrine** (FIG.39, Pl. XLV B).

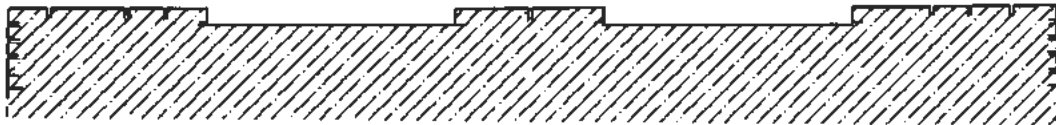
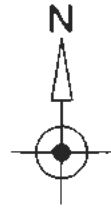
This square brick structure measuring 5.60 m<sup>2</sup> located to the west of *Mahāchaitya* and north of STR-II, is extant to a maximum height of 35 cm comprising five courses. The walls measuring 1.10 m in thickness are constructed of broken bricks as well as full size burnt bricks in header and stretcher system and veneered by another course of bricks kept width wise. The disturbed pattern indicates that the outward leaning of the peripheral veneering course was not bonded properly with the main wall, a feature noticed in STR-I (apsidal structure) also. It is observed that to the main wall another course of veneering was provided externally using moulded bricks to achieve the desired elevational pattern. The extant elevation however does not show any mouldings in the basement level. A 76 cm thick septal wall in the interior of the structure has been provided perhaps to divide the inner floor area into four quadrants and also to provide stability to

# MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

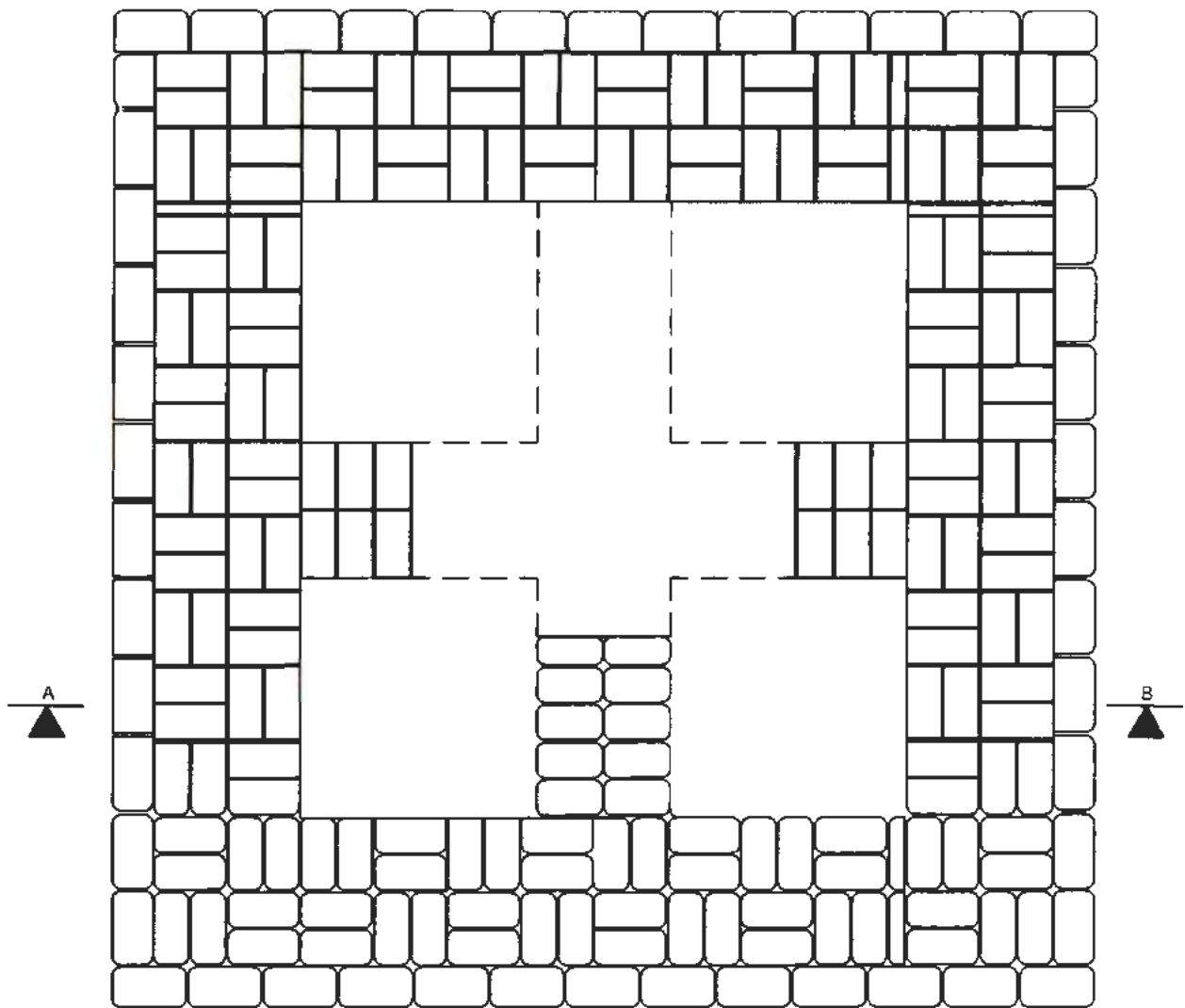
STRUCTURE-III

(SQUARE PLATFORM)

0 1 2 METRE



SECTION ON A-B



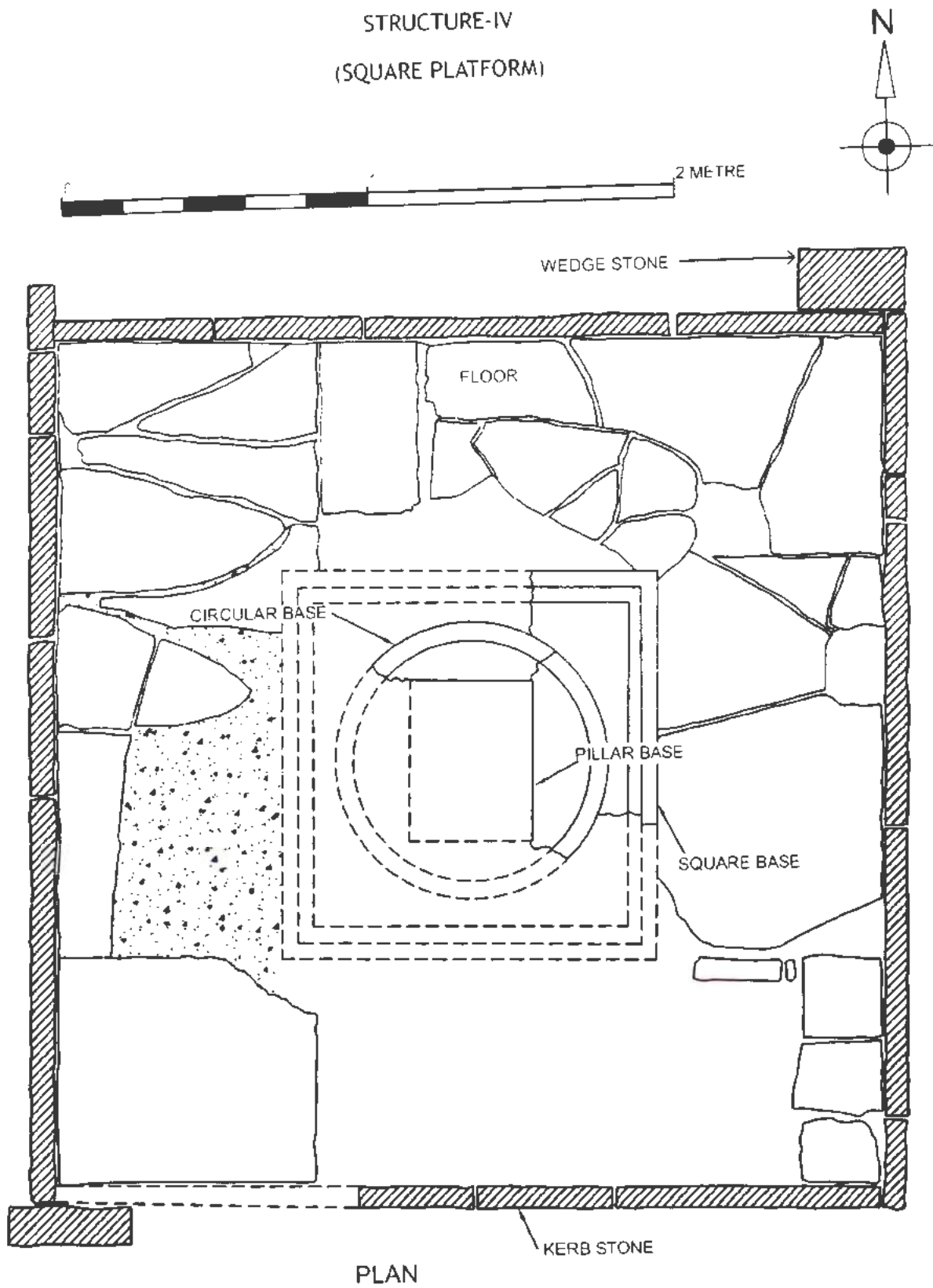
PLAN

Fig.39



## MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

### STRUCTURE-IV (SQUARE PLATFORM)



PLAN

Fig. 40

the structure. It appears to have served the purpose of a platform of low height probably for accommodating a moulded circular base of a *chhatra yasṭhi* and a votive *stūpa* in front of it. It appears to have had an entrance from south. The core is filled with riverine pebbles, medium size boulders and sandy clay and the top was paved with dressed limestone slabs as evident from the extant remains.

#### **STR-IV – Square Platform (Fig.40. Pl. XLV C)**

This squarish structure is located to the north of STR-III and northwest of the *stūpa*. Extant evidence and the remains of carved members indicate that it was constructed around a lofty pillar, probably bearing significant historical and cultural information. The pillar however is destroyed completely. Presently, this squarish structure measures 2.95m<sup>2</sup>, paved with finely dressed limestone slabs and bordered with roughly dressed rectangular slabs. The slab forming part of the southern border in the southwestern corner is slightly higher than the normal height of the border slab broken with a triangular top. It appears to have been part of a pillar of smaller width. At the diametrically opposite end roughly dressed base of a pillar of rectangular cross section is also fixed to the ground outside the border in the northeastern corner. At the centre of the platform fragments of exuberantly decorated pillar bases, capitals and decorated sockets are found

strewn which originally formed part of an elaborately decorated pillar of some great significance in the historical and religious context of the *Mahāchaitya* complex. The second east-facing slab from west appears to have been an upright with an octagonal shaft having lotus medallion decorations, which is reused as the bordering stone. This platform appears to be the construction of the last phase of structural activity in the place.

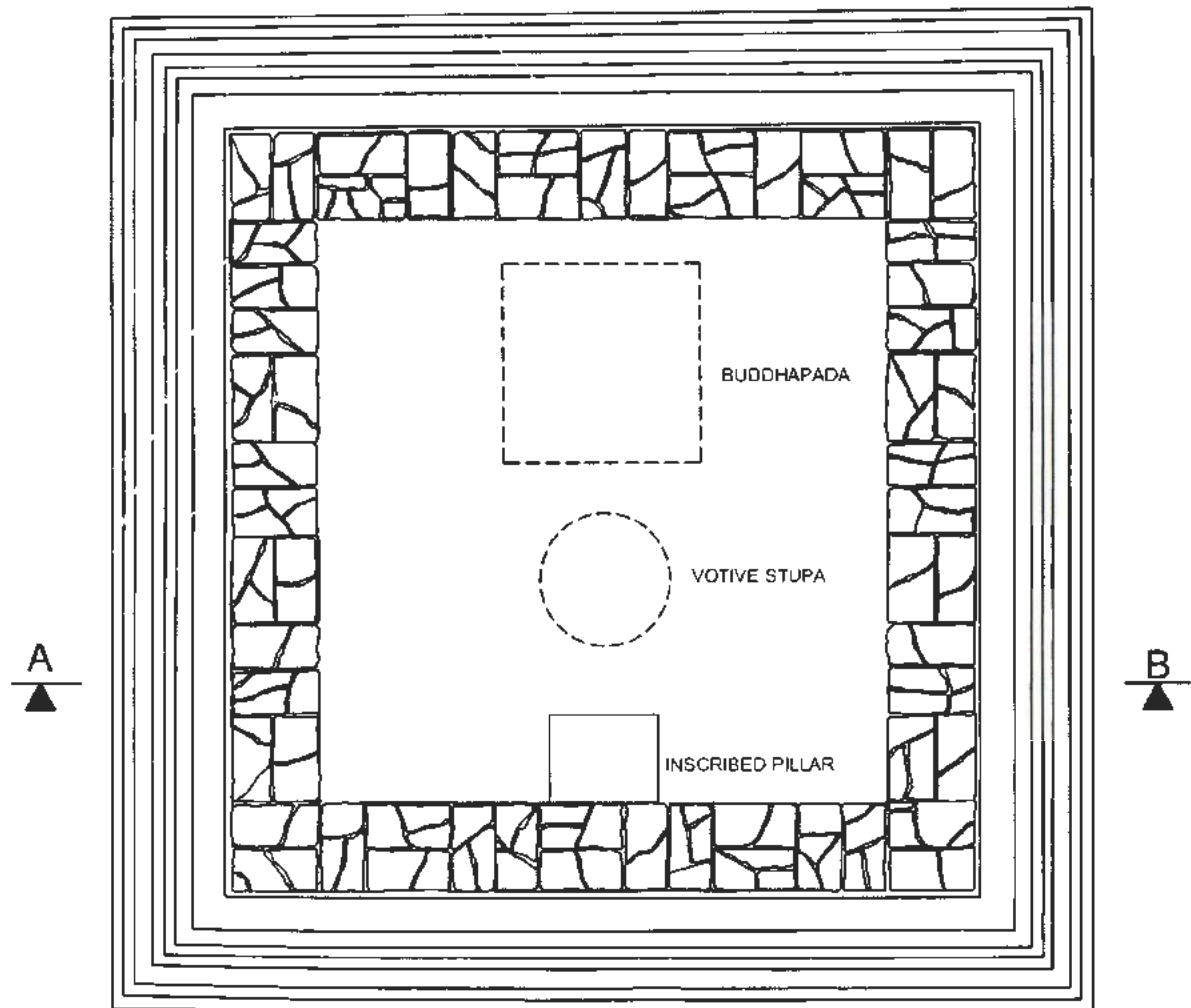
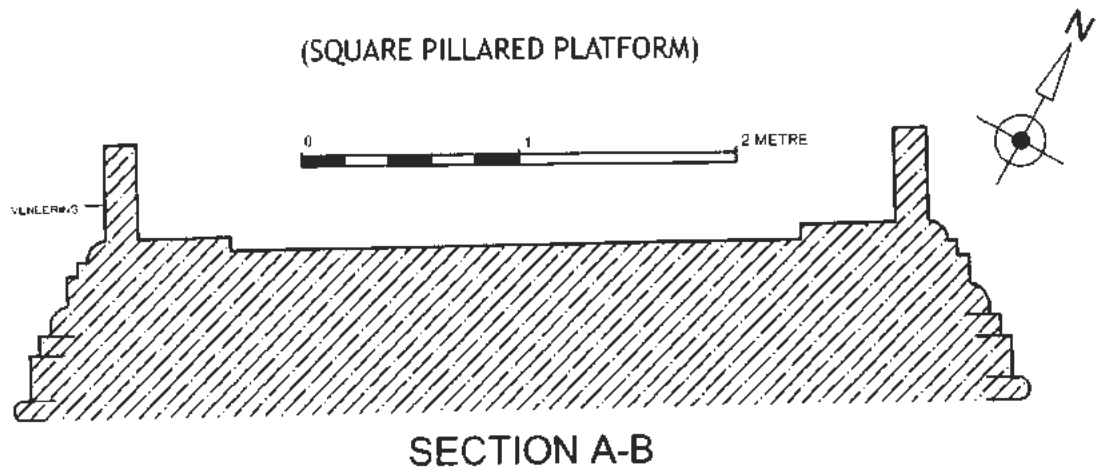
At the centre of the platform is the first moulding of a square base measuring roughly 1 m<sup>2</sup> and 14 cm height of a pedestal rising in three offsets respectively of about 5 cm height and 4.5 cm ledge in receding order. The top surface of this shows rough finishing at the centre and fine finishing at the periphery accommodating another circular disc like member of 35 cm height. The curved exterior surface of this member is decorated with floral design comprising lotus medallion interconnected by six wavy patterns.

At the centre of this member is a rectangular hole of 64 x 38 cm probably for accommodating the uncarved portion of the heavy pillar. Traces of fine lime mortar originally used for holding the pillar have been found. Above this, another thin circular disc of 10 cm thickness with the peripheral decoration of slanted lines appears to have been placed. Mutilated abacus with addorsed lions were also retrieved from the vicinity of this platform. Within the platform, a *Buddhapāda* and a stone

## MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

### STRUCTURE-V

(SQUARE PILLARED PLATFORM)



PLAN

Fig. 41

votive *stūpa* were accommodated, in the north-south axis. Yet another interesting aspect of this damaged structure is that in the vicinity of it a comparatively well-preserved head of a human figure with meticulous decoration was retrieved. This portrait head perhaps of a king, sculpted in round, presents a dignified look with broad open eyes, straight nose, thick and closed droopy lips, broad forehead, almost round fleshy smiling face with prominent cheeks, a thin head gear with wavy edge above the forehead, and curved strands of hair enclosing the long ears and beyond. The portrait head probably forming part of an abacus, undoubtedly bears close resemblance to the depiction of Yajña Srī Sātakarṇi on the silver portrait coins issued by him (Pl. XLV A). Conspicuously, the base, shaft and other parts of the pillars are missing.

### **STR-V - Square Pillared Platform (Fig.41, Pl. XLVI A)**

This platform located nearer to the east of STR-IV closer to the uprights in the northwestern sector of the *mahāchaitya* measures 4.50 m<sup>2</sup> and is extant to a total height of about 70 cm. It is constructed over a foundation prepared by ramming medium size riverine boulders, limestone pieces and pebbles in clay slurry. Moulded architectural members of five courses have been raised externally along the periphery. Following the inner contour of the moulded courses, full size bricks (35 x 19 x 6 cm), cut bricks and tile pieces have

been used to construct the core of the wall along the periphery. The total width of the brick and veneering core at the base measures 93 cm in width. The bricks have been arranged in header and stretcher system. The uncarved lower portion of a pillar is found fixed *in situ* in the interior, almost abutting the southern wall of the platform with proper soling of medium size boulders and stone chips in fine clay mortar. The remaining core is filled with brickbats, tile pieces, coarse-grained sand and clay. In front of the pillar, towards north, a votive *stūpa* with a diameter of 60 cm in limestone was kept over a pedestal of low height and further north, fragments of *Buddhapāda* were retrieved.

### **STR-VI – Square Shrine (Fig.42, Pl. XLVI B)**

It is a square (3.75x3.75m<sup>2</sup>) structure located north of the northern *āyaka* platform. Built in a slightly elevated area, it is extant upto a maximum of three courses, constructed over a soling of riverine pebbles of medium size and limestone chips well rammed with fine clay. It is built by using full size and half bricks, which have been reused as indicated by the weathered and rounded off corners of odd size. Header and stretcher system of laying bricks is followed here also (Pl. XLVI B).

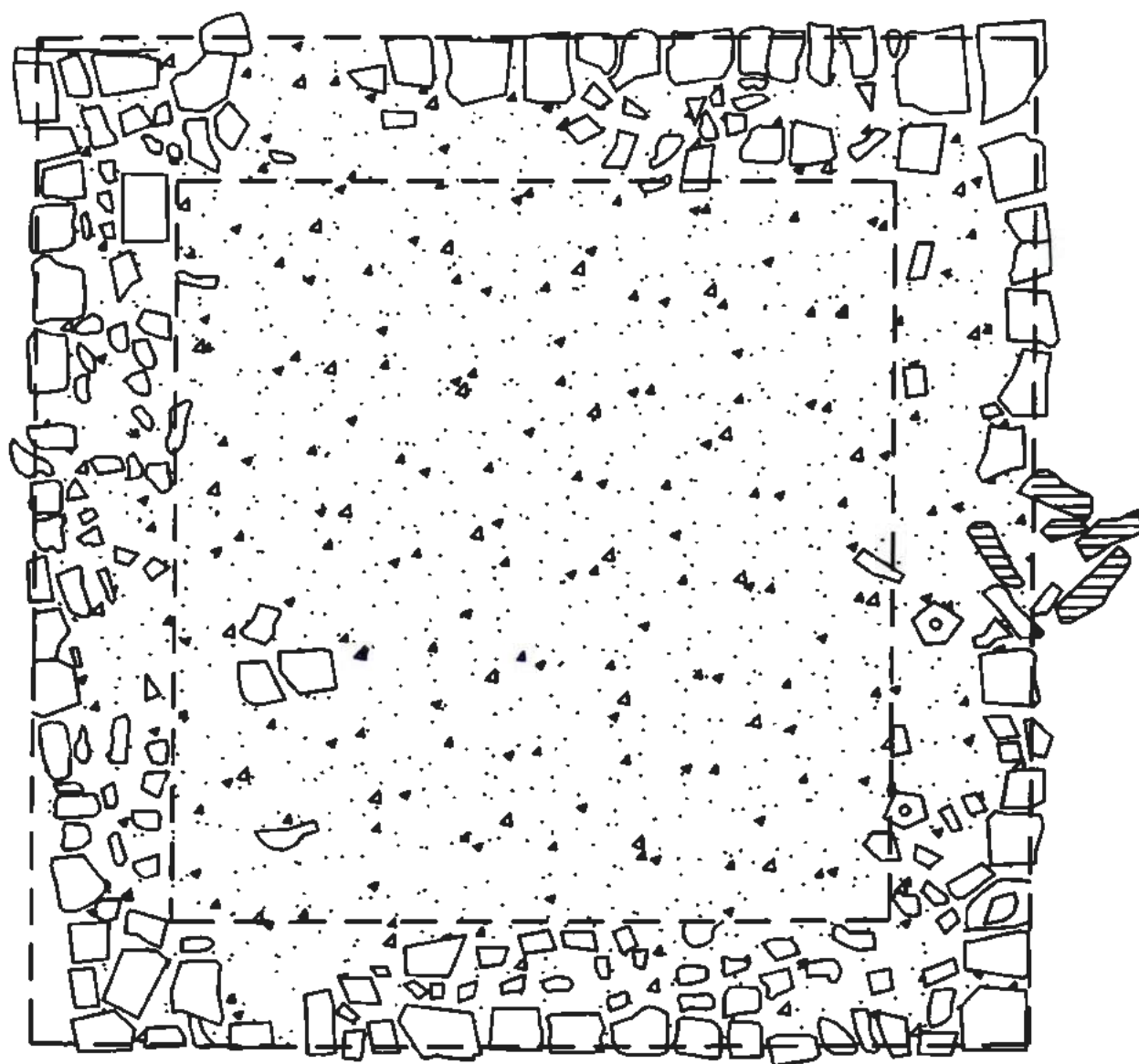
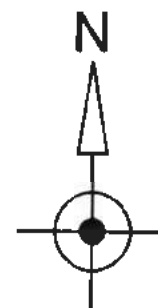
The extant peripheral wall is 50 cm in width and the core in between is filled with brickbats. The interior core is filled with brickbats mixed with lime, sand and



## MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

STRUCTURE-VI  
(SQUARE PLATFORM)

0 1 2 METRE



PLAN

Fig. 42

nodules of lime. It had a lime-plastered floor. Fragments of a monolithic dome (*gōla*) and an inscribed base having an *adhō-kumuda* motif and the vertical portion of the drum were retrieved from this structure. It must have served the purpose of a platform of low height for a votive *stūpa* of comparatively smaller size. The *adhō-kumuda* moulding of the base has a single line fragmentary inscription in thin linear characters of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD which reads: *Bahukana karana...*

The uncarved portion of a rectangular limestone pillar (55 x 22 m) extant to a maximum height of 26 cm is fixed at a distance of 2 m south of the platform along its central axis. A pillar base of another rectangular limestone, extant to a height of 70 cm is fixed at a distance of 1.5 m from the southwest corner of the platform in the same axis. It is leaning at an angle towards north. In addition, another uncarved portion of a small pillar of roughly rectangular cross-section with a circumference of 25 cm standing to a height of 25 cm is found fixed to the ground in the northeastern corner of the platform at a distance of 60 cm. Some stumps of damaged limestone members are also seen along the eastern arm of the platform. Interestingly, a brick of roughly rectangular (12 x 10 cm) arms and the remaining portion with a curved profile having a thickness of 5 cm is found positioned in the middle of the eastern wall in between the regular brick courses. It has a circular hole of 4

cm diameter. A similar arrangement is also seen in another brick of circular shape of 18 cm diameter. Such holes were probably caused in a circular fashion along the inner periphery of the wall of the votive *stūpa* to fix wooden sticks for providing shade using clothes (?) to the central object of worship on specific occasions. The structure is damaged due to agricultural activities.

### STR-VII – Circular Votive Stūpa (Fig.43, Pl. XLVI C)

This votive *stūpa* constructed to the north-northeast of the northern *āyaka* platform has a maximum external diameter of 7m with an entrance on the east. It is built of full and half size bricks arranged in concentric circles of double bricks in header and stretcher system. The outermost peripheral bricks however are seen arranged in continuous header fashion. Very fine clay has been used as binding material to achieve thin joint. The core has been filled with half bricks, brickbats and potsherds as also tile pieces and small chips of limestone. As in other structures in brick medium in the complex, a foundation of soling prepared of limestone chips, medium size riverine pebbles and boulders well rammed with clay and riverine sand is provided. Over the base of the structure from the third extant course, the drum having a diameter of 4.61 m rises. The drum also is extant upto two courses only. An interesting feature of the structure is, that the bricks

## MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

### STRUCTURE-VII

(CIRCULAR VOTIVE STUPA)

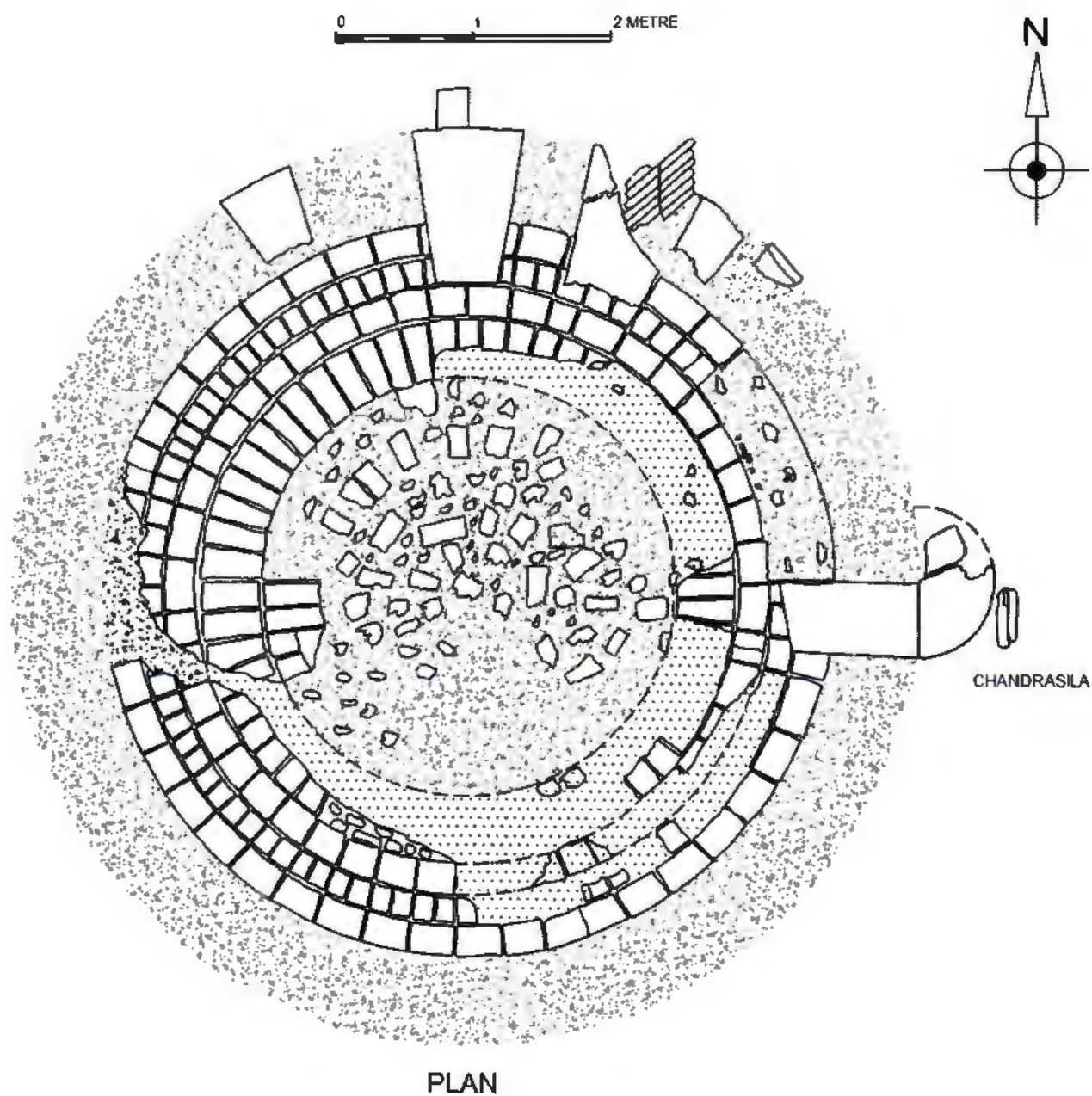


Fig. 43

have been fashioned in the wedge-shape with one of the sides wider than the other so as to achieve the desired circular plan. The bricks are of varying widths (19 to 24 cm) and have an average thickness of 7 cm. and a maximum length of 47 cm. The *stūpa* appears to have been provided with finely dressed and polished wedge-shaped slabs for the circumambulatory passage. These slabs measure 1.18 m in length with a thickness of 15 cm. The inner edge resting near the drum has a width of 28 cm and gradually increases to a maximum width of 90 cm in the periphery and the outer periphery has been rounded and provided with a curve to achieve the circular plan to the circumambulatory passage. At the east a moonstone (broken into several fragments) is provided marking it as the entrance. It measures 1.15 m in width and has a radius of 57 cm making it semi-circular. To the south of the moonstone the uncarved base of a rectangular pillar (50x20 cm) broken into several fragments is found *in situ* to a height of 15 cm. Similarly, to the north of the moonstone, basal portion of another rectangular pillar of 37 cmx15 cm is fixed standing to a height of 30 cm. These appear to have been the remnants of some additions to the structure in brick medium on the eastern side, the nature of which cannot be distinctly discerned due to maximum disturbance. The top surface of the structure is found extensively damaged due to intensive agricultural activity and disintegration of the bricks. Deep furrow marks are seen throughout the top surface at regular intervals.

### STR-VIII, IX AND X

These are three square platforms of varying dimensions aligned in north-south axis at a distance of about 20 m to the east and northeast of the *Mahāchaitya*.

**STR-VIII** is a much smaller square structure measuring 1.80 m<sup>2</sup> extant to a maximum height of 17 cm comprising three courses constructed of full and reused bricks in header and stretcher system. The bricks appear to have been reused and are of a comparatively smaller size (35 cm x 17 cm x 6 cm).

**STR-IX** (Fig.44) is 4 m south of STR-VIII and is 3.60 m<sup>2</sup>. It is extant to a height of 35 cm comprising five courses of bricks. It is constructed of bricks measuring 37x18x6 cm to 37x19x5 cm with both reused and full size bricks. A uniform ledge of 20 cm has been provided all around the lowest extant course. The bricks are laid in the typical header and stretcher fashion. Considerable amount of fragments of well burnt leaf shaped tiles, approximately measuring 15 cm in width and 25 cm in length are found scattered on the top surface of this structure indicating that the structure was having a tiled roof. Fragments of limestone were also found embedded in the core.

Two fragments of an ornate *Buddhapāda* slab were traced outside the brick structure at its northeastern corner. This *Buddhapāda* slab is carved out of a 58



## MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

STRUCTURE-IX  
(SQUARE PLATFORM)

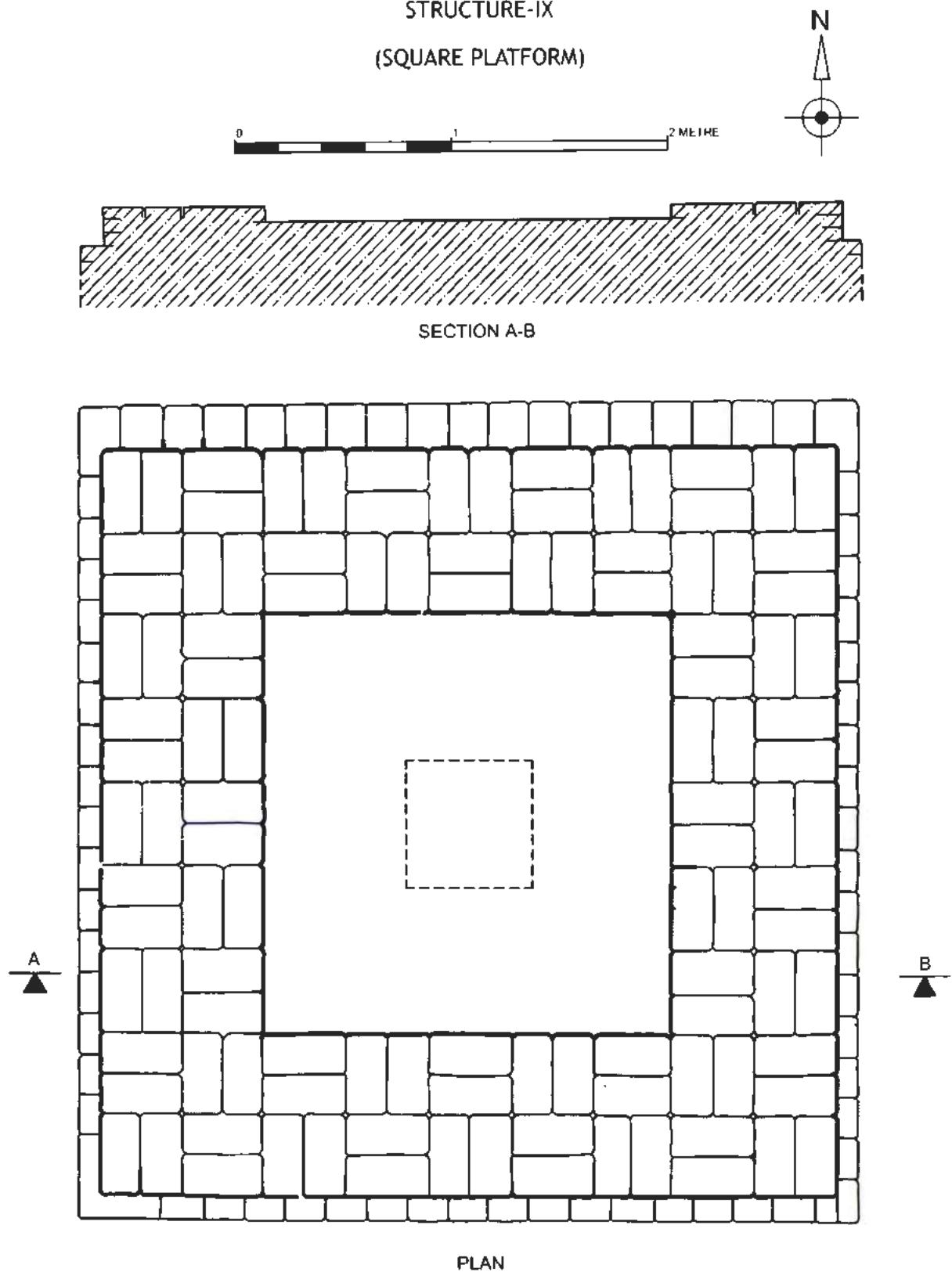
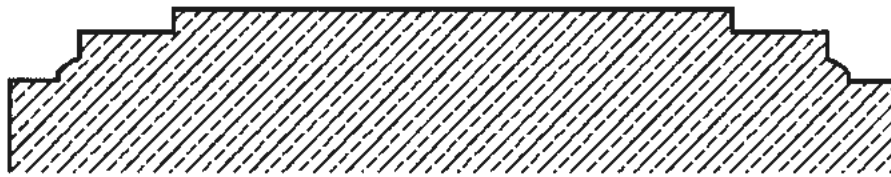
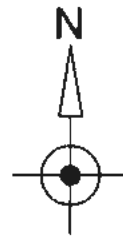


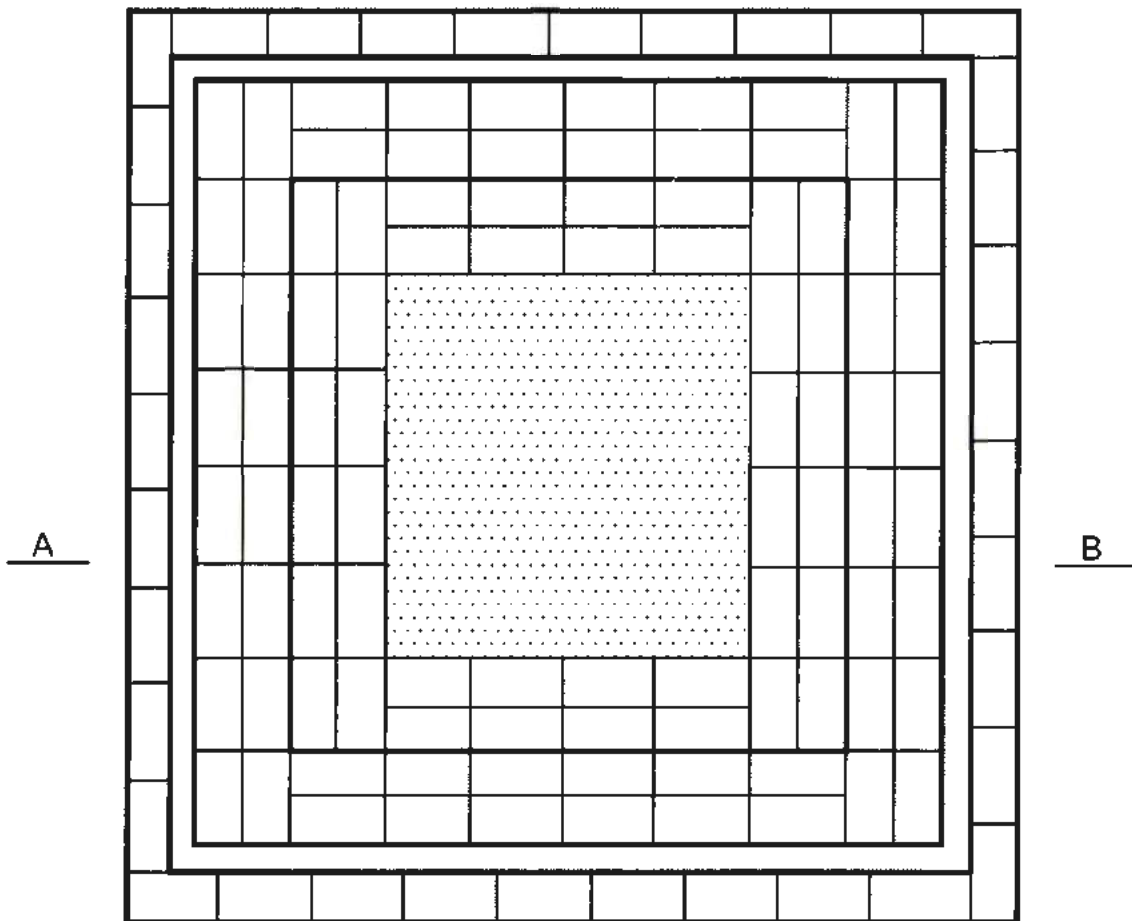
Fig. 44

# MAHĀ STŪPA KANAGANAHALLI

STRUCTURE-X  
(SQUARE PLATFORM)



SECTION A-B



PLAN

Fig. 45

sq cm limestone slab of 8 cm thickness. The impression of the feet rising to a height of 3 cm has the front impression of the foot intact and the heels are lost. A feet impression is carved in the form of a lotus encircled by a circular band of 4 cm width decorated with wavy designs the nodes of which are filled with half flower design. The outer rim of the circular band measures 50 cm in diameter. The feet impression has a width of 36 cm and is extant to a maximum length of 32 cm. The sides and corners of the square portion of the slab are embellished with lotus leaves and stalks. The feet impression have a prominent *dharmachakra* in the sole and *triratna* at the heels along with auspicious emblems like *ankuśa*, *triratna*, *śankha* in the toes and *triratna*, stylised *śrīvasta*, *svastika*, *vajra* and *pūrṇakalāśa* depictions at the phalanges of the toes.

**STR-X** (Fig.45) is located further south of STR-IX at a distance of 10 m. It measures 3.75 sqm. It is much disturbed and extant to a maximum height of 30 cm in five courses. It appears to have had an entrance from the west. The structure proper has a ledge of 20 cm all around and the extant evidence indicates that the exterior surface of the structure was plastered, the thickness of which varies from 6 to 8 mm. The structure is constructed of full and half bricks, which are very well burnt

and some are even over burnt leading to disintegration. They are laid in the typical header and stretcher order. Some of the *in situ* bricks measure 40x20x6 cm. The core is filled with waste brickbats and rammed with clay. It must have been a platform for positioning the *Buddhapāda*\*. Along the southeastern corner of the structure, basal portion of a rectangular pillar (30x20 cm) is extant to a height of 40 cm. Another stump of a pillar of rectangular shape (30x20 cm) extant to a height of 66 cm was fixed to the south of this structure.

From the above it is apparent that there are two periods of structural activity in which the second period is characterised by five phases (Fig.46).

## ANALYSIS OF MATERIAL USED FOR CONSTRUCTION OF MAHA STŪPA AT KANAGANAHALLI

With a view to obtain chemical constituents of the materials used viz., brick, limestone and lime mortar for the construction of the *maha stūpa* and to ascertain their physical parameters, samples were sent to Directorate of Science Branch, ASI, Dehra Dun.

A detailed report received from the Director, Science Branch, ASI, Dehra Dun is in *Appendix-III*.

\* Way back in 1980s Dr. Sundara reported a *Buddhapāda* retrieved from this part of the site. Presently, it is in the Karnataka State Archaeology Museum, Gulbarga.

## MAHĀ STŪPA

KANAGANAHALLI EXCAVATIONS (1997-2000 & 2006)  
TALUK CHITAPUR, DISTRICT GULBARGA,

### PHASES OF CONSTRUCTION

### SECTION FACING EAST

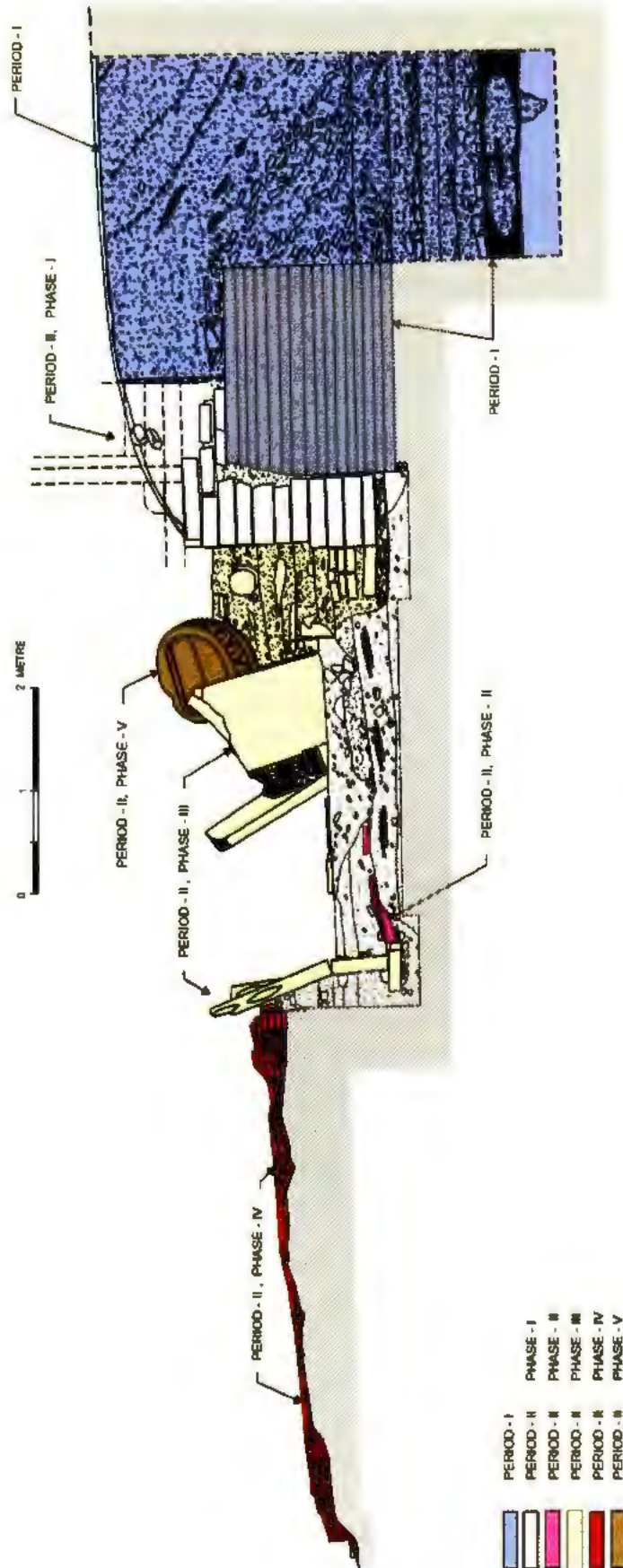


Fig. 46





A. Mutilated sculpture of  
Yaksha at north, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Yaksha at north, *Mahā Stūpa*  
( after mending)



C. Mutilated sculpture of Yaksha at south, *Mahā Stūpa*

PLATE XVIII



A. Pedestal of Yaksha image, west of *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Bowl of offerings, southern entrance, *Mahā Stūpa*



C. Bowl of offerings, western entrance, *Mahā Stūpa*





A. Standing Buddha, southern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Standing Buddha, western āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*

PLATE XX



A. Seated Buddha, northern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Seated Buddha, eastern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*





A. Buddhapāda, northern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Disturbed upper drum slabs, resting on *pradakshināpatha*, *Mahā Stūpa*



PLATE XXII



A. Inner veneering of the core, south-east of *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Northern *āyaka* platform, *Mahā Stūpa*





A. Sri Yakshi, northern *āyaka* platform, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. First sermon, northern *āyaka* platform, *Mahā Stūpa*

PLATE XXIV



A. Excavated northern *āyaka*, *Mahā Stūpa*, view from east



B. Excavated northern *āyaka*, *Mahā Stūpa*  
close up view from south





A. Cornice with sculptured frieze, northern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Cornice with sculptured frieze, northern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



C. Cornice with sculptured frieze, northern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*

PLATE XXVI



A. Collapsed eastern āyaka, Mahā Stūpa

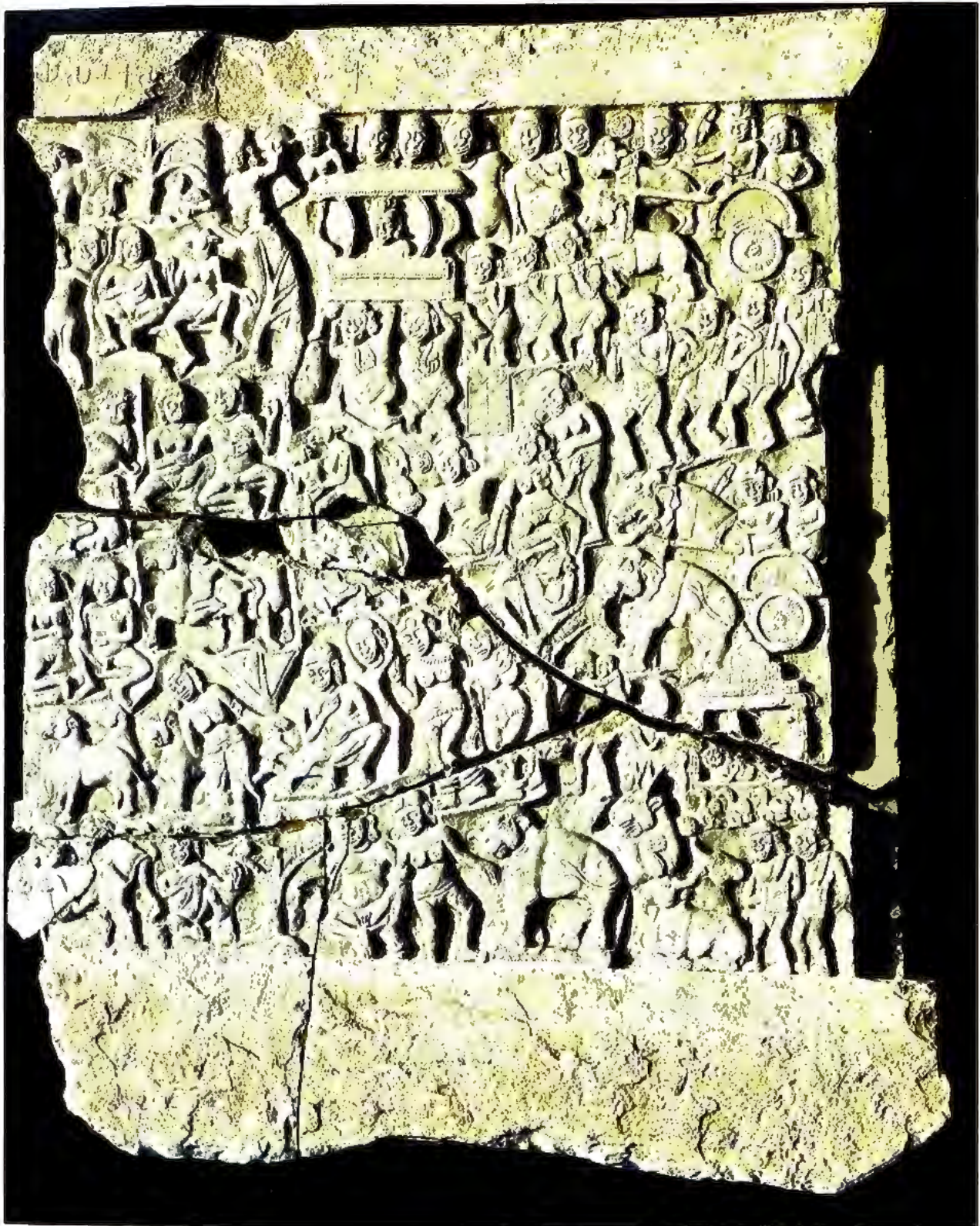


B. Damaged Buddha image, eastern āyaka, Mahā Stūpa



C. Dislodged and broken āyaka pillars, eastern āyaka, Mahā Stūpa





*Bhavachakra panel, eastern āyaka, Mahā Stūpa*



PLATE XXVIII



A. Cornice with sculptured frieze, eastern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Cornice with sculptured frieze, eastern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*





A. Standing Buddha image.  
southern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. pedestal of standing Buddha,  
southern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



C. Buddha image, southern āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*

PLATE XXX



A. Southern āyaka, Mahā Stūpa



B. Cornice with sculptured frieze, general view, southern āyaka, Mahā Stūpa



C. Cornice with sculptured frieze, lateral side





A. Buried feet of Buddha, western āyaka, Mahā Stūpa



B. Cornice with sculptured frieze, western āyaka, Mahā Stūpa



C. Buddhapada, western āyaka, Mahā Stūpa

PLATE XXXII



A. Cornice with sculptured frieze, western āyaka, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Mutilated standing Buddha,  
western āyaka



C Western āyaka, (close-up)





Veneering members, western āyaka  
 A. Ornate Stūpa (south-west); B. Muchilinda nāga, (central); C. Dharmachakra (north-west)

PLATE XXXIV

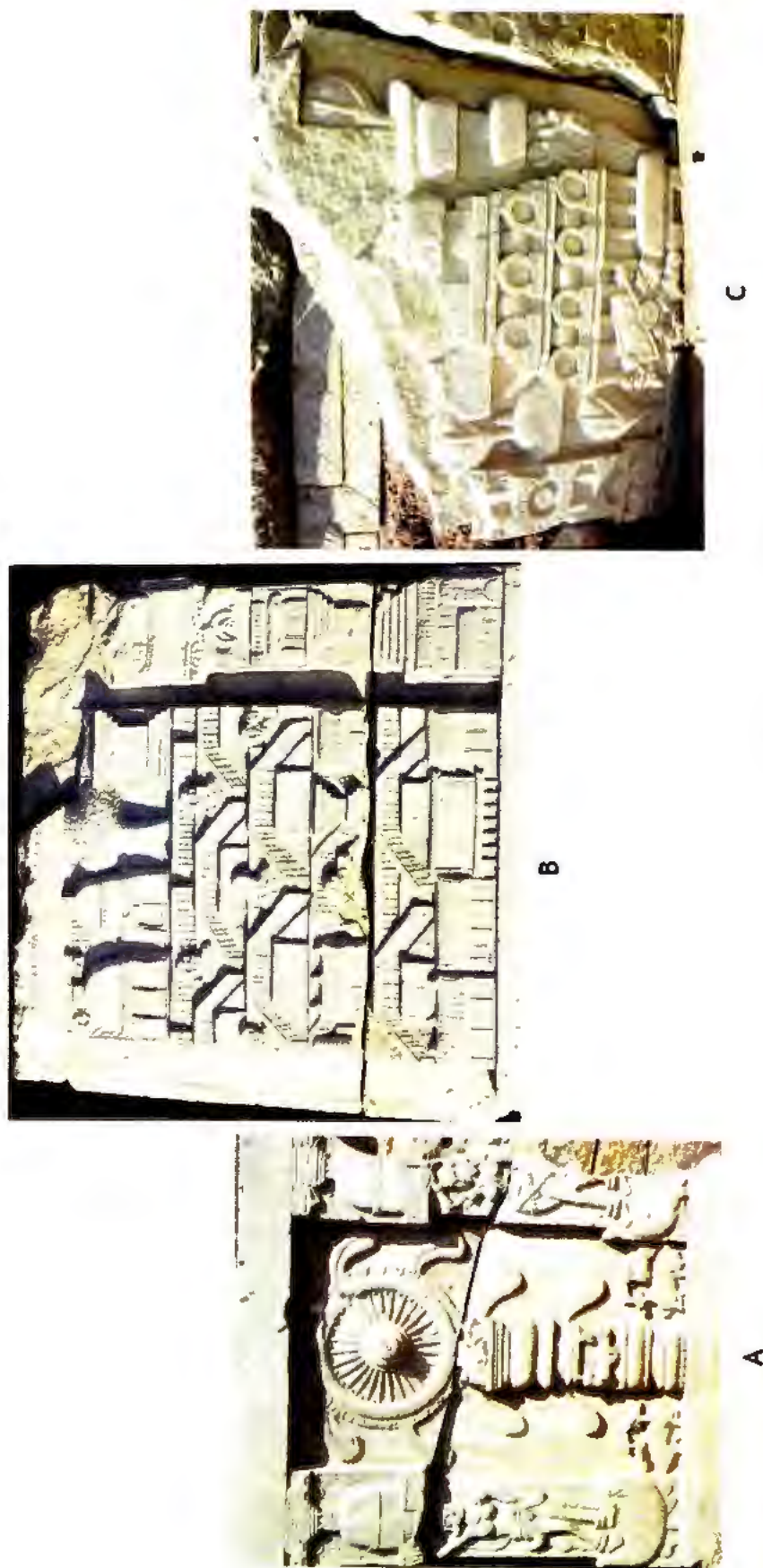


A. Cornice with sculptured frieze, western āyaka, Mahā Stūpa



B. Cornice with sculptured frieze, western āyaka, Mahā Stūpa





Decorated lower drum slabs, *Mahā stūpa*  
 A. Worship of Dharmachakra (south-west); B. Monastic Scene (south-west); C. Gift of Jētavana (north-east)

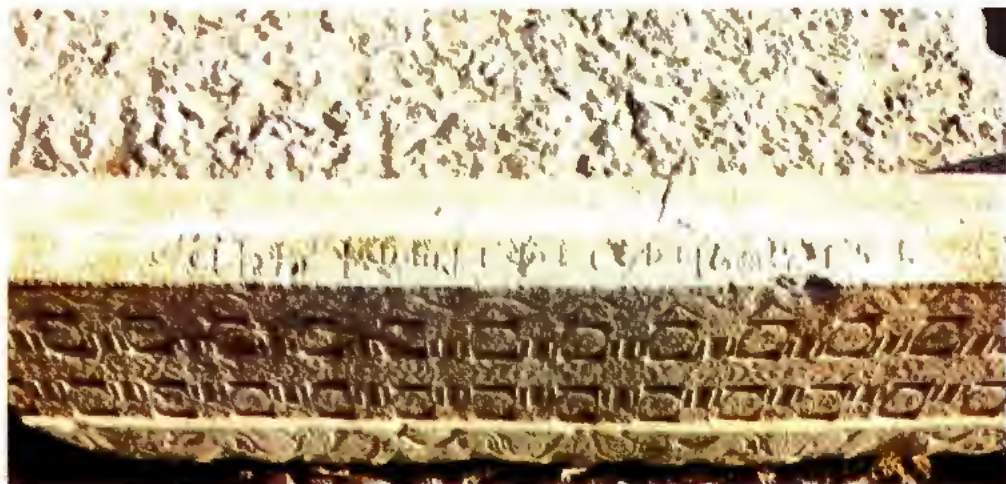
PLATE XXXVI



A. Close up of cornice (pushpagrāhiṇis), *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Close up of decorations on the cornice



C. Cornice with inscription ( close-up), *Mahā Stūpa*





A. Veneering member of upper drum



B. Hamsa paṭṭikā



C. Label inscription



D. Railing decoration

PLATE XXXVIII



A. Frieze of winged animals, on collar above upper drum



B. Chhatra disc, Mahā Stūpa





A. *Chhatra* with sockets, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. Decorated portion in *Chhatra*, *Maha Stūpa*



PLATE XL



A. Disturbed *pradakshiṇāpatha*



B. Seated Buddha mutilated due to fall of architectural unit, *Mahā Stūpa*



C. Mutilated seated Buddha along with pedestal, *Pradakshiṇāpatha*, *Mahā Stūpa*



A. *Chandraśilā* (moonstone) and sill, Western entrance, *Mahā Stūpa*



B. *Chandraśilā* (moonstone) and sill, southern entrance, *Mahā Stūpa*



PLATE XLII



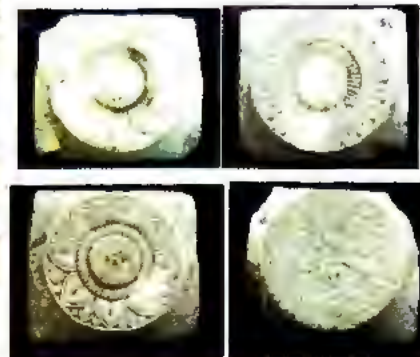
A. Disturbed railing  
(south-east)



B. Railing with props



C. Disturbed railing (south-west)



D. *Sūchis*, closeup





**A. Monastic complex, north-western wing**



**B. Monastic complex, northern wing**

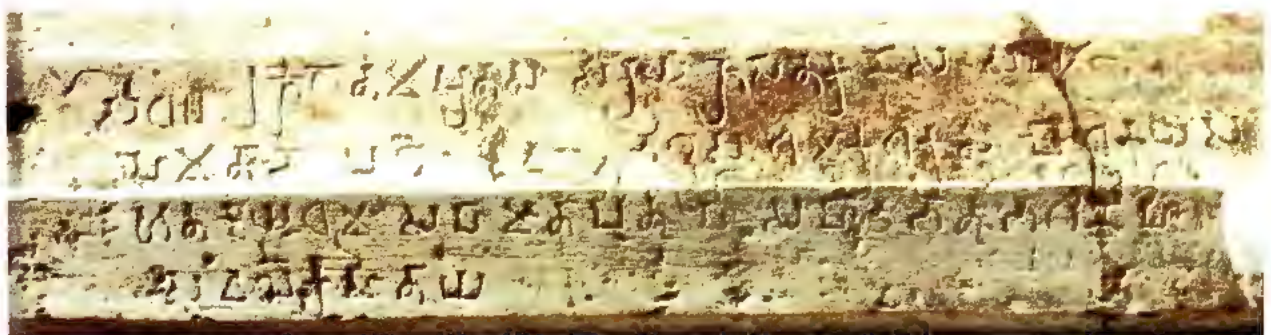


**C. Traces of lime plastering**

PLATE XLIV



A. STR-I, apsidal structure



B. Inscribed umbrella shaft





A. STR-II, circular votiva Stūpa



B. STR-III, square shrine



C. STR-IV, square platform



**PLATE XLV A**



D. Head of Yajña Sri Sātakarṇi (?)



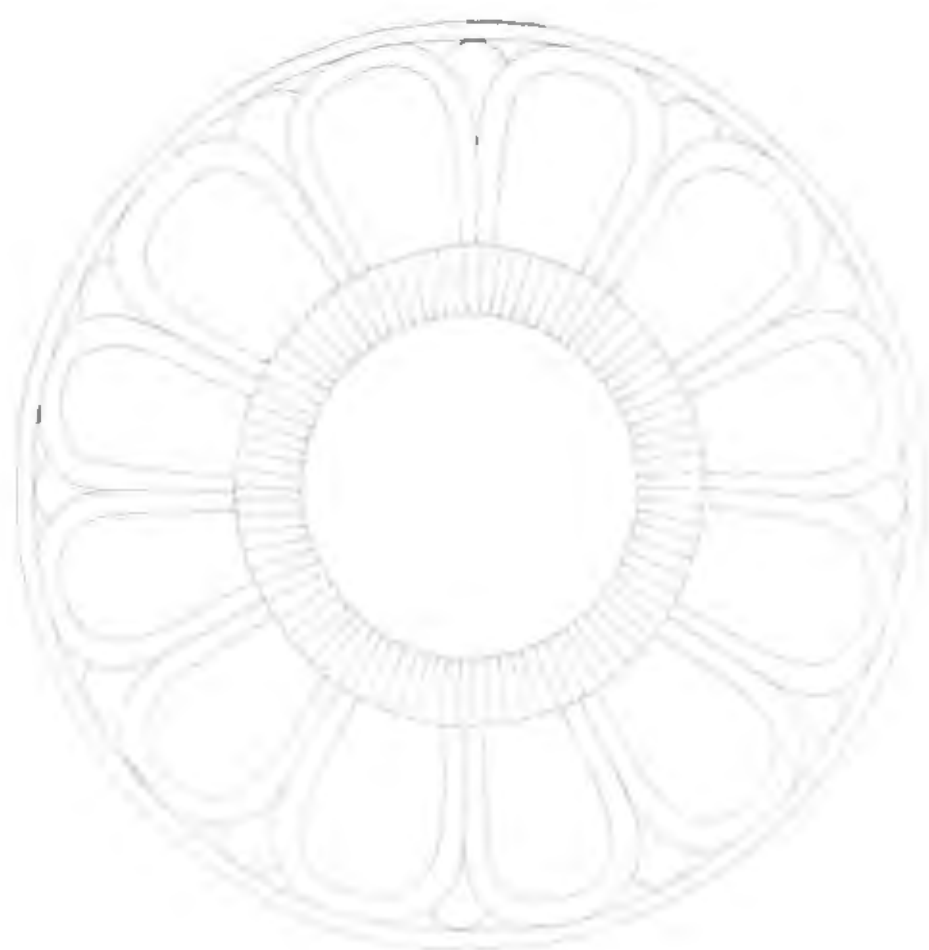
A. STR-V, pillared platform



B. STR-VI, square shrine



C. STR-VII, circular votiva *stūpa*





## SCULPTURAL ART



## CHAPTER IV

Sannati, identified as a prolific Buddhist site was dated to c. 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD on the basis of the earlier explored data. Dēbala Mitra<sup>1</sup>, however alluded it to be a flourishing Buddhist centre between 1<sup>st</sup> century BC to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD. It is pertinent to note here that the entire Deccan was reverberating with the new found gospels of the Master and the artisans were relentlessly scooping out a series of *stūpas*, *chaityas* and *vihāras* in his adoration as *varśavāsas* (dwellings of rainy season) in a more stable medium of expression in the form of rock cut caves not far from Sannati which also had formed an established trade route further downwards to *Isilā* (Brahmagiri) and thence to *Vaijayanti* (Banavasi), a Buddhist site (Pl. XLVII) at south and Dhānyakaṭaka (Amaravāti) in the east. The entire Deccan is dotted with such ventures as seen at Ajanta, Ellora, Pītalkhōra, Nāsik, Junnār, Koṇḍāne, Kārle, Bhāja, Sopāra, Kānhēri, Bedsa, Koṇḍivite and Manmad to name a few. So there is no surprise if some of the artistic traits and stylistic features percolated from the earliest ventures of the above centres of art like Pītalkhōra, Kārle, Bhāja and Bedsa, and

also from far off places like Bhārhut and Sānchi, which have metamorphosed into a unique feature of their own. It also had its share of influence from Dhānyakaṭaka (Amarāvati) as evidenced by the various gifts made by the people of that place.

From the excavations at Kanaganahalli, an unfathomable wealth of details pertaining to *stūpa* architecture have been laid bare. This *stūpa* is extensively embellished throughout its architectural composition, save the dome, and offers a wider perspective into the vividness of aesthetic composition, freshness in approach in a *hīnayāna* frame of Buddhism in the beginning and *mahāyāna* depictions of a slightly later period.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the *stūpa* has been provided with a decorated lower and upper drum with *āyaka* platforms in the cardinal directions at the lower drum, all enclosed by a sculptured railing. The railing is pierced by entrances in the four cardinal directions set with sculptures of Yaksha at north, south and west. The circumambulatory passage and *āyaka* platforms [at the east, south and west] were decorated with sculptures of *Mānushi* Buddhas and standing Buddha images.

Thematically, the *stūpa* embellishments fall into *hīnayāna* and *mahāyāna* phases wherein the *hīnayāna* phase is evident from the major sculptural narrations of the drum and the *mahāyāna* art is reflected as additions and alterations introduced in the form of sculptures of the Buddha.

There are two distinct periods of constructional activity viz., Period-I Mauryan and Period-II Sātavāhana. The Period-II Sātavāhana can be further classified into five phases.

The occurrence of the stele bearing the major and special rock edicts of Aśoka at Sannati and the sculptural renderings of the Mauryan Emperor, duly acknowledging his ardent efforts towards the cause of spread of Buddhism, by the Sātavāhanas, as depicted in the lower and upper drum slabs of the *stūpa*, assumes special significance in this context. Further, the explorations in the *Raṇamaṇḍala* at Sannati, by the Hyderabad Circle of the Survey<sup>2</sup> brought to light a granite stone bearing typical Mauryan polish and bricks measuring 54x27x9 and 47x24x08 cm at the site are some significant archaeological data for inferring a Mauryan phase here.

The excavations conducted in the ancient site (*Raṇamaṇḍala*) by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Mysore, in the years 1993-95 reported fragmentary ivory pieces of a *chhatra*, finial and a circular *vēdibandha* of a miniature

*stūpa* forming part of votive offerings and a few terracotta figurines. In addition, a few sherds of NBP and a circular medallion (disc stone) bearing the reliefs of standing mother goddesses flanked by palm trees and various animals, having Mauryan affinity, were reported<sup>3</sup>. The trial excavations by the Survey in 1994-95, though in a limited area, to study the stratigraphy of the site closeby in the same locality has brought to light a distinct layer of the Mauryan period characterised by polished stone mullers, pounders, stone block, beads on terracotta and semiprecious stones, arrow heads and points on ivory along with associated red and black slipped ware. Significantly, this period succeeds the megalithic period and precedes the affluent Sātavāhana period affirming the chronological horizon arrived at Adam<sup>4</sup> and other places. The trenches laid across the outer fortification wall at *Raṇamaṇḍala* has also revealed that in the first phase, the fort was constructed by cutting a moat and heaping the earth to the requisite height as a wall, an activity ascribable to the Mauryan period. Keeping the above data in view, the structural activities and the embellishment at the excavated *stūpa* can be dated to the following periods.

### Period-I: Maurya

In the light of the above findings, it would be in the fitness of things to ascribe earliest phase of the structural activity of the *stūpa* to the Mauryan period. It is worth

while to recapitulate here that the earliest phase of structural activity of the site is evidenced in the form of a simple earthen tumulus raised by piling up alternate layers of medium to small size boulders, pebbles and limestone blocks and black cotton soil around a pit of loose ashy soil indicative of some sort of sepulchral/funerary affinity, which was enclosed by limestone masonry wall set in mud mortar. This architectural composition was raised over a prepared ground of well-rammed black cotton soil mixed with naturally available limestone blocks and rubble of varying sizes. The basal diameter of the earthen mound was 16 m, which rose to a height of 7.5 m and probably surmounted by a simple umbrella set in a railing of perishable material as in case of the earliest structures of the kind. The wall surrounding the tumulus is extant upto a height of 1 m in seven courses with a uniform width of 1.96 m. This wall must also have served as a low drum or base for the object of worship besides holding the shape of the tumulus in position. This structural composition hardly displayed any improvement over its primitive prototype of the pre-Buddhist period.

This period of activity is buttressed by the finding of a mutilated polished sandstone sculpture of a lion capital (Pl. XLVIII C) at the *stūpa* site at west, which despite its mutilation reflects certain traits similar to the lion capital on the lines of the Bhārhut depiction<sup>5</sup> (Pl. XLVIII A). This lion positioned probably

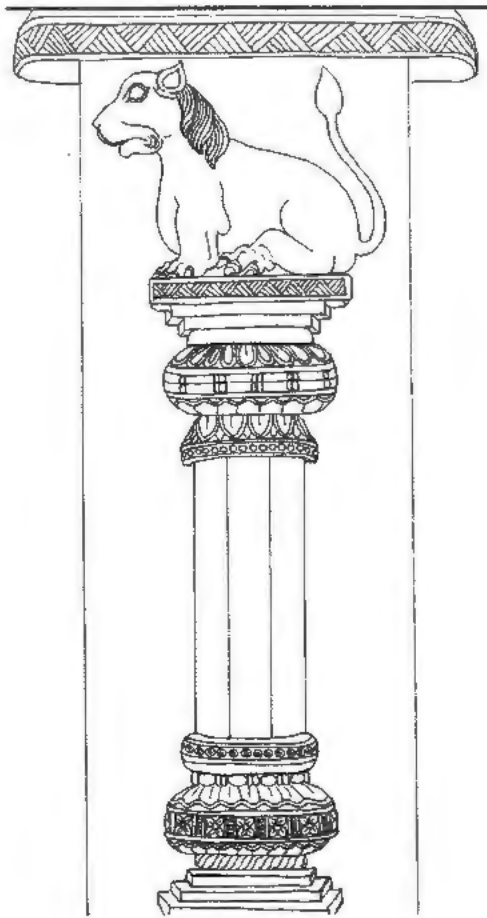
over a massive pillar and oriented towards the fortified habitation of Sannati, served as a beckoning landmark of this *stūpa* during its early days of construction and development. Sculpted in somewhat course-grained sandstone, a material alien to this region, this couchant lion is extant up to the shoulders with the head and body completely mutilated. It has as many as four rows of tufts in its mane. Each of the strands is twisted and sculpted like a lotus petal. While at Bhārhut the neck appears to be taller, at Kanaganahalli it is short and stout. However, the similarities cannot be ignored. The specimen at Sānchi of Śunga period reflects plasticity in the curvature of the shoulder and chest whereas the lions of Bhārhut and Kanaganahalli depict a median ridge of the mane running onto the shoulder and further back - a feature absent in the specimen at Sānchi<sup>6</sup> (Pl. XLVIII B) and Amarāvati. In addition to this, inspite of mutilation and wear and tear, the sculpture at Kanganahalli has evidence of a typical shine and lustre derived by polishing. This emphasises the presence of a lion capital towards the western entrance of the *stūpa* as is observed elsewhere.

The evidence of the pre-Sātavāhana levels at the *stūpa* gets supported by the occurrence of a solitary Northern Black Polished sherd and a silver Punch marked coin (Coin No.081) at the site. One of the lower drum veneerings of southern *āyaka* and an upper drum veneer (No.34), which

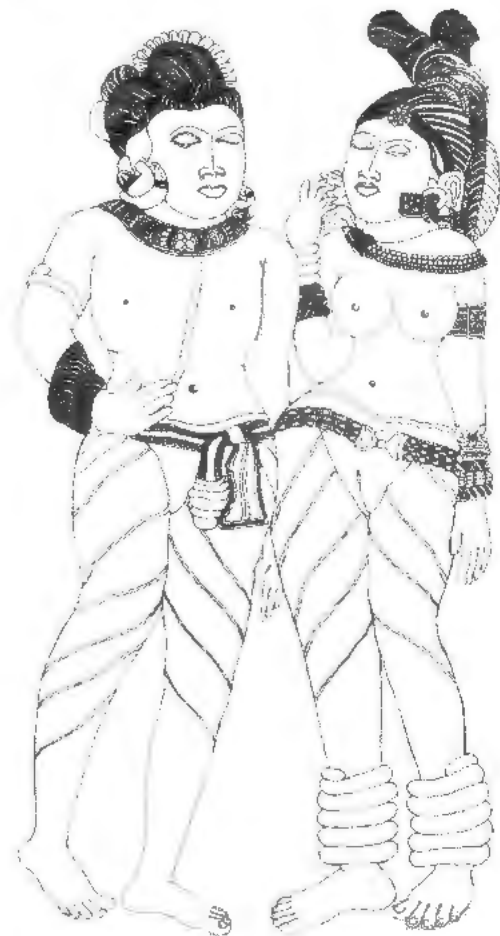


## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DEPICTIONS OF LION CAPITAL AND AŚŌKA



a. Lion capital, relief on a drum slab



b. Aśoka, the Mauryan king



c. Aśoka, the Mauryan king

Fig.47

encase the *stūpa* in period-II, depicts such a figure of lion capital (Fig.47-a). Further, in the light of the fact that many outcrops of granite boulders are still extant in the vicinity, it may not be an improper or far fetched presumption to associate the stele bearing the Aśōkan edicts inscribed on similar granite blocks, with this original *stūpa* complex of the Mauryan period.

It is interesting to note that the efforts of Aśōka towards the spread of Buddhism has been duly acknowledged in the sculptural renderings of him adoring the upper drum of the *stūpa* labelled as *Rāyā Aśōko* (Fig.47 b). Traditionally, it is believed that Aśōka was instrumental in opening as many as seven of the eight *stūpas* bearing the corporal relics of the Master and distributing it all over his domain and causing as many as 84000 *stūpas*<sup>7</sup>. His attempt to open the Rāmagrāma *stūpa* met with a stiff resistance from the Nāgas. Interestingly the Rāmagrāma *stūpa* is also depicted at this *chaitya* on two drum slabs and on the pilaster of an ornate lower drum slab (Pl.XLIX). One of the veneered sculptures of the lower drum also depicts a Nāga entwined *stūpa* being adored by a king who could be the Mauryan emperor (Fig.47-c) himself. In the light of the above findings, it would be in the fitness of things to ascribe the earliest structural activity of the *stūpa* to the Mauryan period.

## Period-II

### The Early Sātavāhana Phase

This period is marked by structural activity towards the expansion of the girth of the *stūpa* of Period-I. A brief account of the various phases of architectural additions and alterations as under, are necessary to know some of the major changes that have occurred in the sculptural art as well.

### Period-II: Phase I

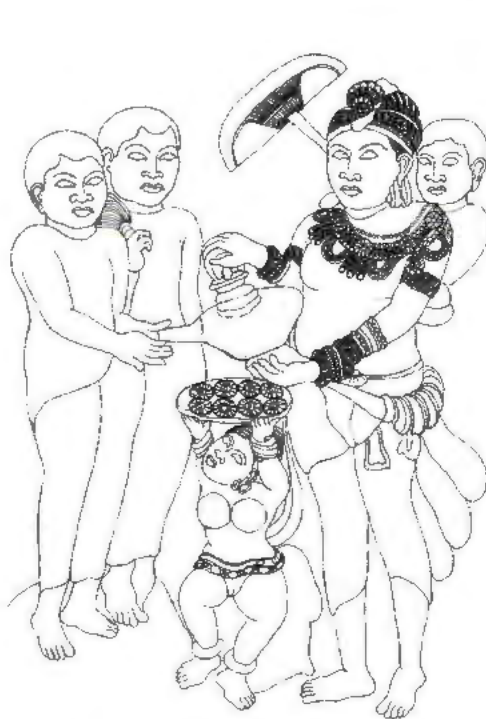
The core of Period-I was encased with uniformly dressed limestone blocks, with evidences of lime plaster, reflecting a gentle curvature at its lower drum. These were added following the contour of the tumulus. This lower drum was encased with interlocked sculptured slabs. The dome was also lifted up and the intervening space was embellished with tall and decorated upper drum slabs and its base rested in alignment with the lower drum and held by a heavy collar. The precise shape and height of the dome as also the nature of *hārmikā* and *chhatrāvali* that surmounted it, however have to be conjectured based on available evidences. From the epigraphs retrieved at the *stūpa*, this phase could be assigned to the 16<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Chhimukha Sātavāhana during which period these sculpted encasements were donated by a householder Tōkhisa (Ins no.A.101). Incidentally Chhimukha (Fig.48 a) is also depicted along with his friend Nāgarāya (*mēdhi*, slab-57b).

## MAHĀ STŪPA, KANAGANAHALLI

### DEPICTIONS OF ŚĀTAVĀHANA RULERS



a. Chhimukha Śātavāhana in royal court



b. King Śātakarni



c. King Puṣumāvi at Ujjain

Fig.48



The lower drum slabs were held in position by ornate sculptured cornices known as *pushpagrāhis* in the inscriptions. A narrow *pradakshiṇāpatha* and an austere railing with shallow lotus medallions at the *tabha* were provided. The subsequent additions and alterations to this railing have completely altered the specific features of this railing.

### Period-II: Phase II

In the second phase, the structural activity indicates further increase in girth of the lower drum by providing fairly large limestone blocks with roughly dressed exterior surface and introduction of some more drum slabs to fill in the additional space due to the increased girth. Simultaneously, the upper drum was also further embellished by introducing the slabs bearing portraits of kings Sātakarṇi (Fig.48 b), Mātalaka, Sundara Sātakarṇi and Vasisthiputra Puṣumāvi (Puṣumāvi II) (Fig.48 c). These introductions also inadvertently lead to certain anachronisms in the narration of the life of the Master and also in the articulation pattern. A collar of animal friezes was also provided to act as a counter weight functionally and to act as a *madhyabandha* (median band) decoration distinguishing the upper drum and the dome. The presence of simple *āyaka* platforms at the cardinal directions cannot be ruled out, since during the third phase, the presence of well developed *āyaka* platforms with increased size

have been noticed which overlay the fragments of earlier veneering stones and *Buddhapāda* at north, veneering slabs at west and south respectively.

### Period-II: Phase III

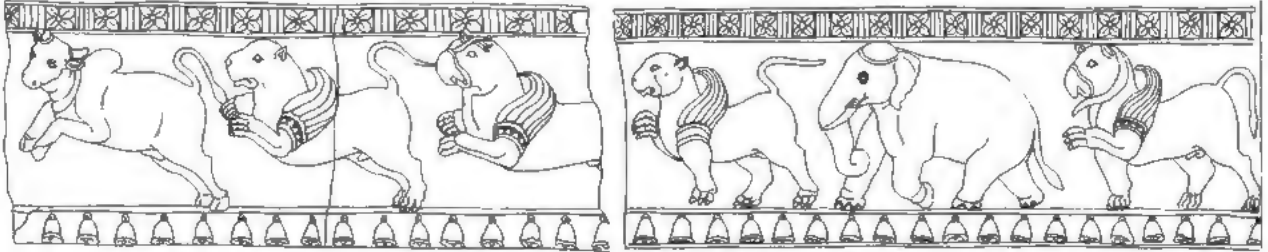
During this phase, the lower drum was further enhanced at cardinal directions by providing a thick brick core all around to accommodate and extend *āyaka* platforms and re-veneering of the lower drum by reusing and adding fresh sculpted slabs. This increased girth also led to the expansion of the *pradakshiṇāpatha* at a higher level and realigning the railing by providing fresh railings as evidenced by the usage of some of the fragmented uprights (*tabha*) of the earlier phase as props for the newly laid railing (Fig.49). The epigraphs found here also substantiate the above activity. At the same time, the eastern *āyaka* was provided with *āyaka* pillars. Further, circular *chaityas* at southwest and northwest and the monastic complex (*Bōdhikā vihāra*) at north were also constructed in brick. Enclosing the *Buddhapādas* placed over the *āyaka* platforms with cuboid cornices having narrative friezes and further expansion of the railing into its present form are other major additions.

### Period-II: Phase IV

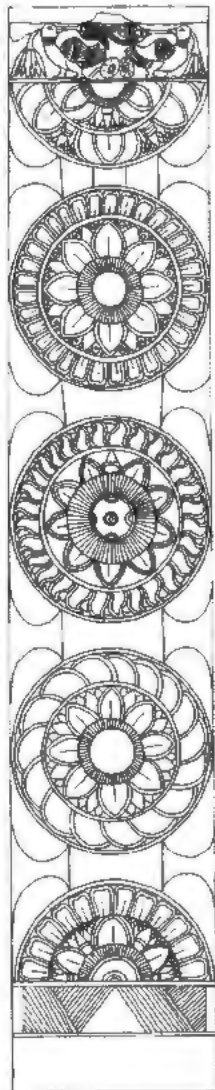
During this phase minor alterations were effected in the form of installation of umbrella stones and construction of apsidal *chaityagriha* at southeast, and a

## MAHĀ STŪPA

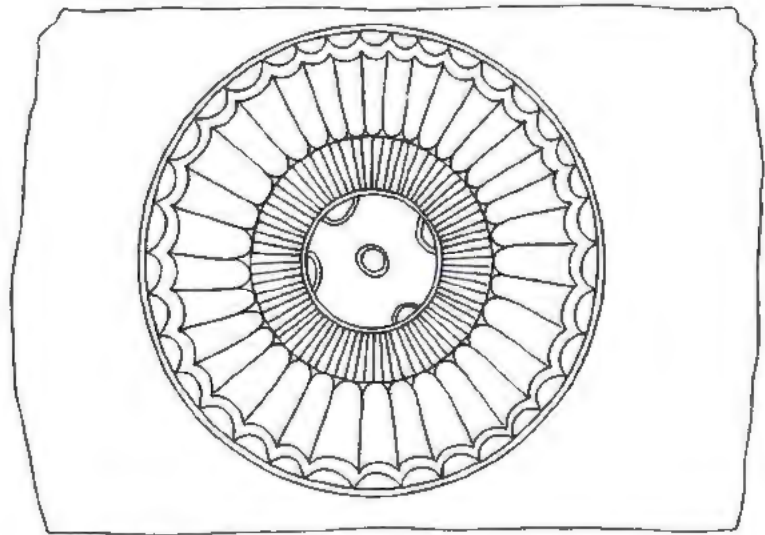
### DEPICTIONS OF MEMBERS OF THE RAILING



a. Coping of the railing



b. Vertical of railing



c. Cross bar

Fig.49

16-pillared promenade (?) in the southwest of the *stūpa*. In addition, during the period of Mādhariputra, the eastern *āyaka* with *āyaka* pillars was provided with new encasings at the lower drum.

### Period-II: Phase V

The *mahāyāna* phase of sculptural activity sets in this period, which is well-reflected in placing massive standing sculptures of Buddha over the *āyaka* platforms at south and west. Sculptures of *Mānushi* Buddhas were also placed, two each at sub-cardinal directions in the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* using the plain lower drum slabs as backdrop. One sculpture of Buddha was placed right over the eastern *āyaka* platform by modifying it with requisite changes. Of the four *āyaka* pillars, two were placed at the extreme northern and southern corners abutting the *āyaka* platform. The other two were placed behind the seated statue of Buddha. The development of various other structural components of the *stūpa* under different phases of construction under Period-II are dealt below.

### The Railing: Phase I&II

The railing in Period-II, Phase I was austere with slender *tabhas* with smaller lentils holding equally austere *sūchis*. The carving over the *tabhas* was in the form of three shallow lotus medallions arranged vertically. Due to reuse of the architectural members of this railing in Phase III of the same period, the details of differences in the *sūchis* are lost.

There appears to be no change in the pattern of railing of Phase I in the second phase and the present extant one is provided for the *stūpa* in Phase III.

### Phase III

In this phase, the railing composed of coping (*ushnīsha*), verticals (*tabha*) and crossbars (*sūchi*) was provided afresh with entrance gateways at cardinal directions. The verticals or uprights (*stambha* or pillar), popularly called as *tabhas* are known here as *pāyakas*, the horizontal crossbars as *sūchis* (Ins. Nos. A.4, B.151, B.155, A.10, B.156, B.158, B.159, A.15, A.16, and the coping as *ālambana* (Ins.No. B.169) in the inscriptions found at the place.

The uprights are sculptured on the external surface with two half-lotus medallions, one each at the top and bottom and three full lotus medallions in the middle (Fig.49 b). Internally they are austere except for occasional inscriptions. The corner uprights have a right-angled cross-section, the free lateral ends of which are provided with mortices for fixing the *sūchis*. The *sūchis* which are 50 cm long, 40 cm wide and 20 cm thick are treated with a circular medallion of nearly 30 cm diameter decorated with full-bloomed lotus (Fig.49 c). For varied expressions and to break the monotony of routine lotus medallions, the artist at Kanaganahalli has used both geometric and non-geometric variants which could be in the form of neatly sculpted 8 and



## MAHĀ STŪPA

### FLORAL DECORATIONS ON CROSS BAR OF RAILING

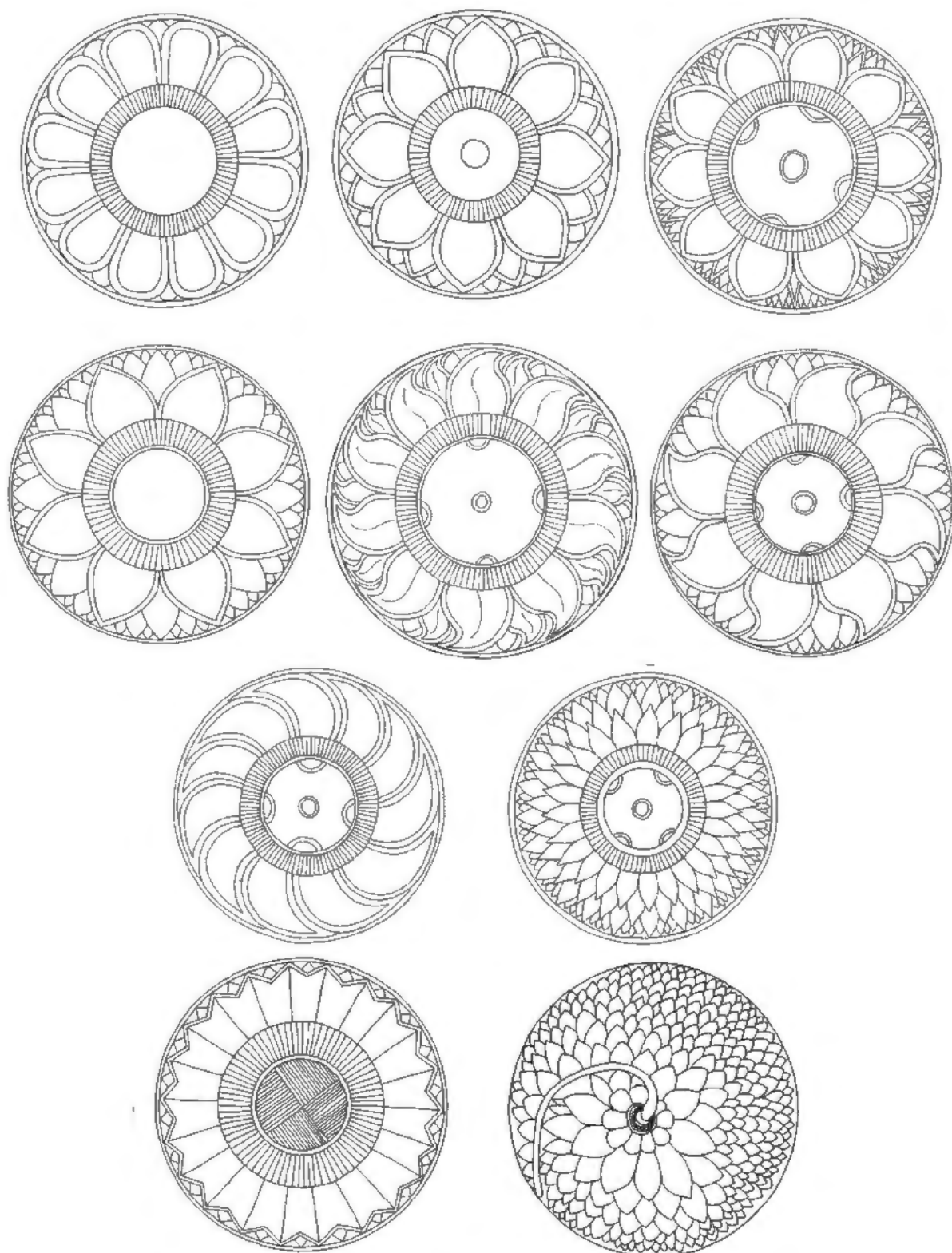


Fig.50

its multiples in as many as five whorles or simply a serrate-bordered multi-whorled, poly-petalled flower, eight petals of twisted variety and 10 to 12 petalled lotus flower with multiple whorles. One of the *sūchis* is also sculpted with a *sahasra dala padma* (thousand petalled lotus), which also occur at Bhārhut (Fig.50). It is quite a deviation from the early depictions as seen at Sānchi<sup>8</sup> wherein, in addition to the floral decorations, other subjects like winged lion, caparisoned horse, Gajalakshmi, *pūrṇakumbha*, Yaksha, Yakshi, centaur, ornate *triratna* and scores of other designs virtually crowd the medallions and shaft of the *tabha*.

At Bhārhut the *sūchis* carry the much famed busts, *jātakas*, depictions from the events of the life of Buddha and *Mānushi* Buddhas in the form of totemic trees. At Amarāvati, every inch of available space of the medallions of the *tabha* and *sūchi* are meticulously wrought with all the above in addition to the floral motifs. Even though the artist at Kanaganahalli had a vast canvas at his disposal for detailed enumeration of the thematic and symbolic representation, in the railing he has restrained himself to present the lotus as the primordial symbol of purity in all its vividity.

Interestingly, two *tabhas* have a *triratna* and birds (Fig.51 a) instead of the usual mat design at the top.

The outer face of the *ushnīsha* (coping members) depicts a string of animal

figures, both mythical and true animals - moving around the *chaitya* in frenzied motion (Fig.51 b-e). Most of the times they are shown galloping or as if chasing the animals in front. The mythical winged animals are mostly a lion to show superior mobility and strength (Fig.51 b, c). The other animals depicted here are bull (Fig.51 d), boar (Fig.51 e), elephant, horse and double humped camel. Sometimes the winged lion is also sculpted with the beak of birds especially of the parrot (Fig.51 c). The artist has excelled in carving the elephant in all its animated expressions. The friezes of animals have been provided with a border of floral motif at the top and a string of bells at the bottom.

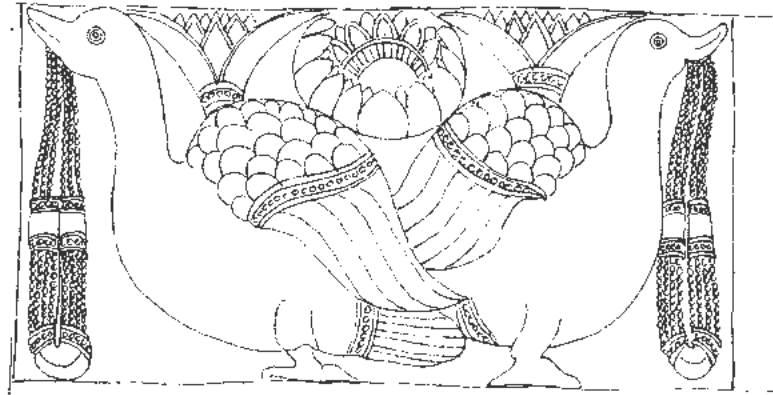
While the artist at Bhārhut has used, the *ushnīsha* as a canvas for depictions from the *jātaka* tales mixed suitably with the auspicious symbols in which he has used elephants, bull and winged lion as interceptors, the *ushnīsha* at Sānchi is bereft of such decorations.

### Lower drum ( *Vēdikā* ):

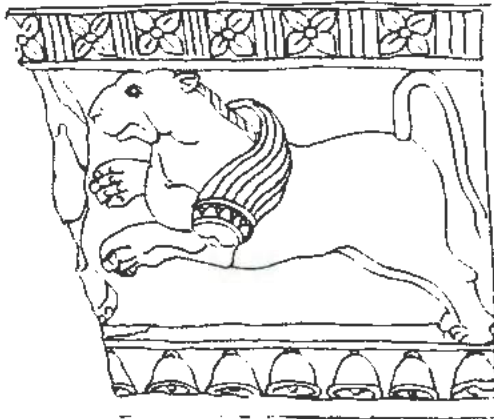
In all there are 76 slabs measuring 140-155 cm in height with the width varying from a minimum of 77-113 cm and a thickness of 15-17 cm. They are arranged as 14 panels to each quarter of the arc of the *stūpa* and five each for the *āyaka* projections in the cardinal directions. Broadly, they fall into two categories of ornate and non-ornate (Pl.XLIX A,B) variety and have a pilaster depiction either to the left, right or on

## MAHĀ STŪPA

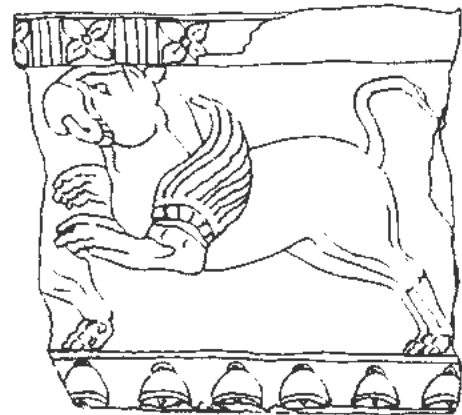
### DEPICTIONS OF BIRDS AND ANIMALS ON COPING OF RAILING



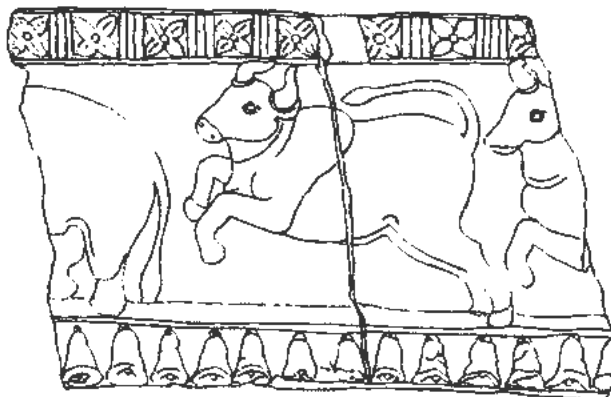
a



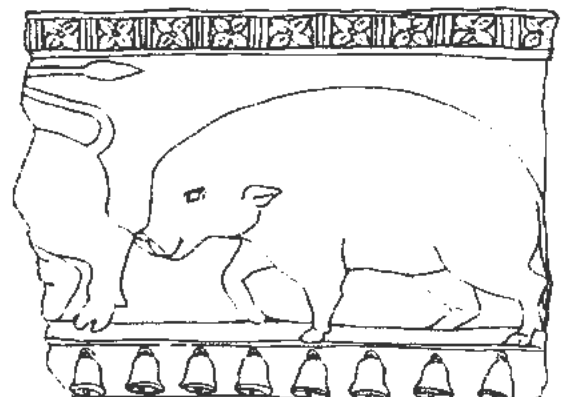
b



c



d



e

Fig. 51



both sides of the slabs. The central panel of each *āyaka* platform is devoid of any pilaster decorations, but is supplemented by those of the adjacent panels having double pilasters. The ornate *vēdikā* slabs reflect a systematic development of Kanaganahalli art with certain stylistic features of their own supported by the palaeography of the inscriptions noticed on them. Sometimes the themes and art forms of *stūpa* embellishment from Bhārhut, Sānchi, Pītalkhōra and the Deccan have also been introduced here with suitable modifications. We see a gradual metamorphosis from the cruder depictions, especially of human figures and other art motifs. This gradual change is because of the successive re-articulation that was being carried throughout in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> phases of Period - II which is equally applicable to the upper drum slabs as well. Interestingly, the artists of one phase have assiduously followed the previous stylistic traits in the treatment of the subject as also the embellishment patterns to arrive at a homogenous rendering in the entire *stūpa*. Without a careful observation, along with other evidences like inscriptions and the theme, distinguishing different phases is rather cumbersome.

### The Theme

The sculptural depictions of the *stūpa* reflect in its first four phases the themes of Buddha worship in the form of ornate, non-ornate *stūpa*, *jātaka* tales of the previous birth of the Lord and narratives from the

life of Buddha all in the *hīnayana* symbolic forms, interspersed with the portraits of kings like Aśoka, Udayana, Māndhātā, Sōmarāta, Mahāgōvinda, Chhimukha Sātavāhana, Sātakarṇi, Mātalaka, Sundara Sātakarṇi and Puḷumāvi, etc., are at the lower drum and at upper drum.

The articulation of the lower drum slabs and their workmanship (excluding those that were dismantled and reset or those that were replaced during renovations in the second phase) are exclusively of the first phase of the early Śātavāhana manifestations. Here the *hīnayāna* themes revolve around the worship of the Buddha in different forms of lion (Fig.52 a), *vajrāsana* with *pāda* (Fig.52 b and h), horse (Fig.52 c and d), *stūpa* (Fig.52 e), *dharmachakra* in railing (Fig.52 f), *vṛksha chaitya* (Fig.52 g), *buddhapāda* (Fig.52 h,i) and *triratna* (Fig.52 j).

The most striking feature and the subject of frequent occurrence is the depiction invariably of the worshippers in the form of Nāga and Nāgiṇis. In later phase of alterations to the *āyaka* platforms, especially in phase-III, the introduction of Muchilinda Nāga and Nāgarāya Mahākāla at the lower drum is seen. At the upper drum in addition to Muchilinda Nāga, Nāgarāya Bhaṭṭaraka is also seen. It is interesting to note that the most popular monastery of the times has inspired the artists and is depicted twice with minor variations.

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### SYMBOLIC DEPICTIONS OF BUDDHA

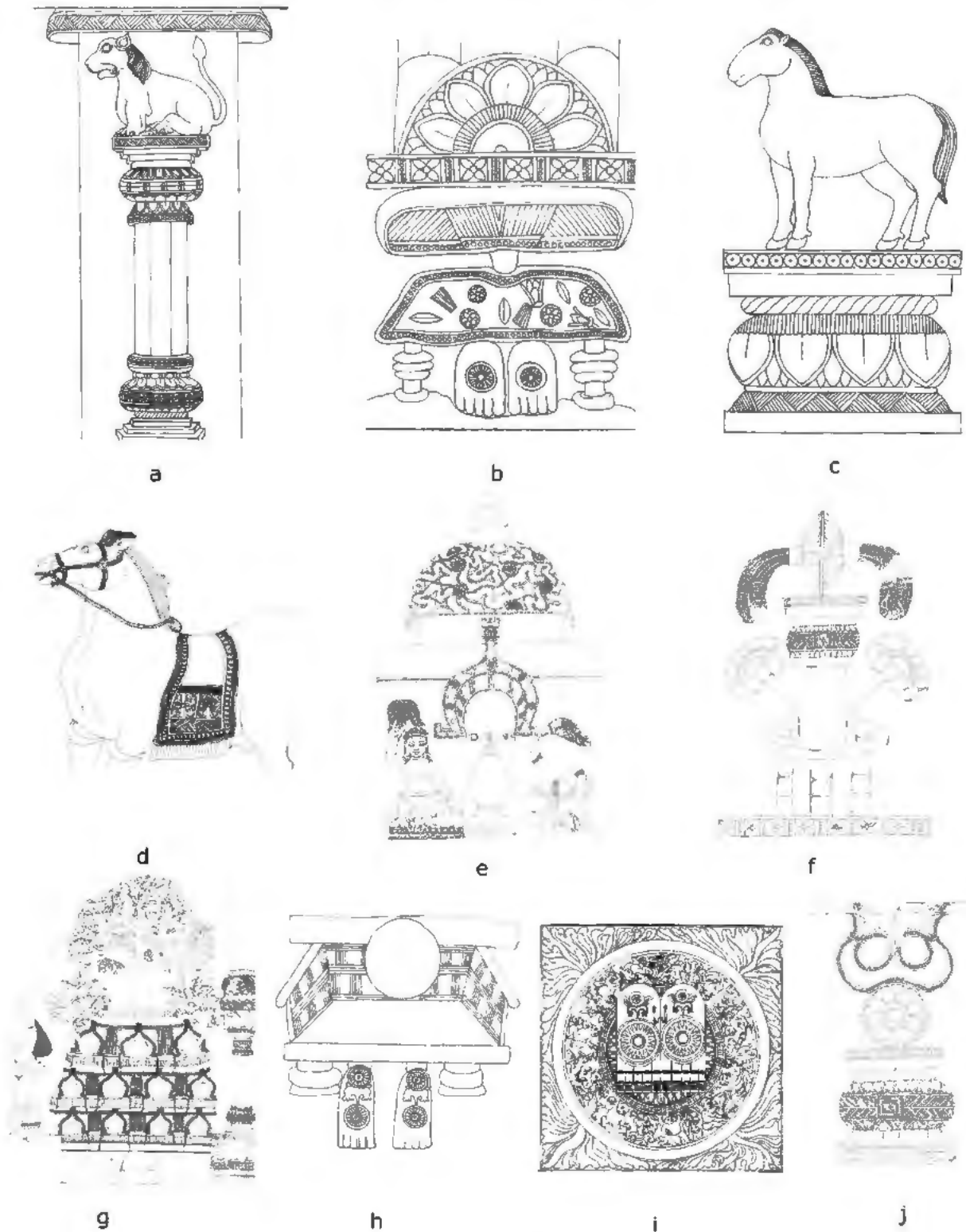
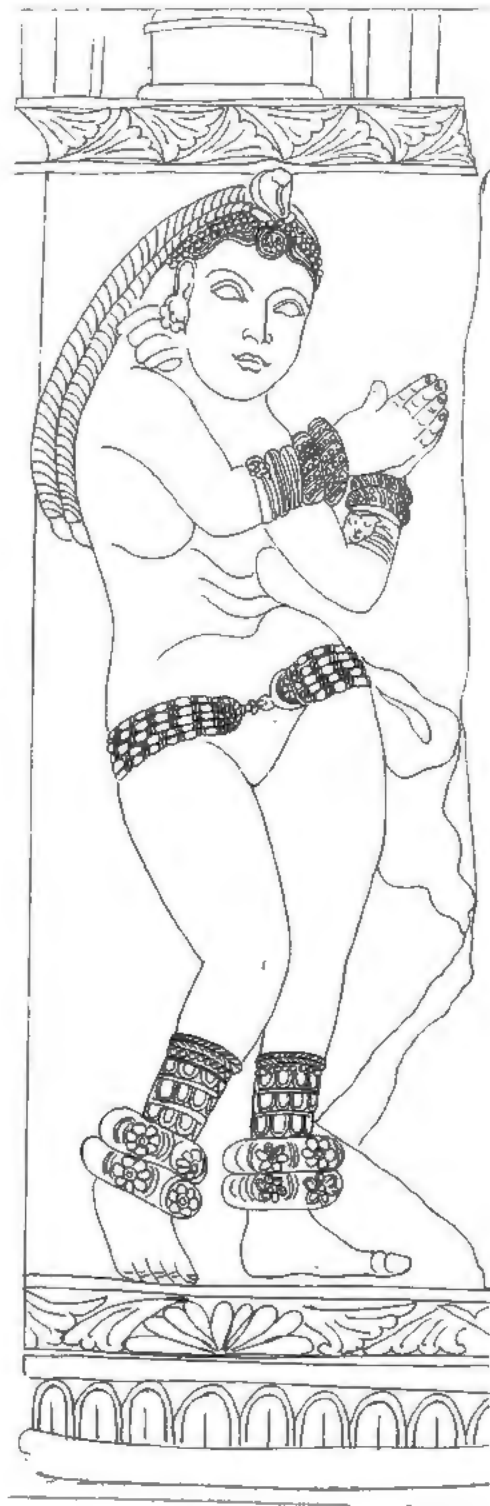


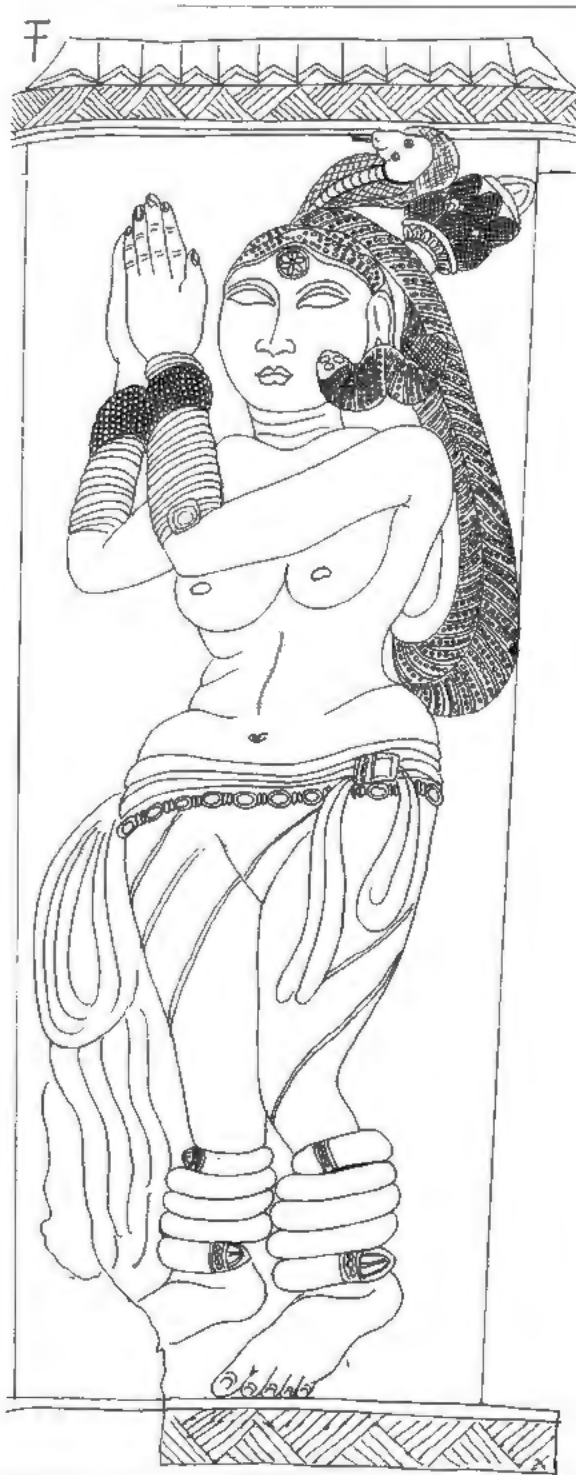
Fig.52

## MAHĀ STŪPA

LOWER DRUM SLAB, WORSHIPPING NĀGĪNIS ON PILASTER



a



b

Fig.53



## MAHĀ STŪPA



a. Lower drum slab-Nāga worshipping Rāmagrāma Stūpa



b



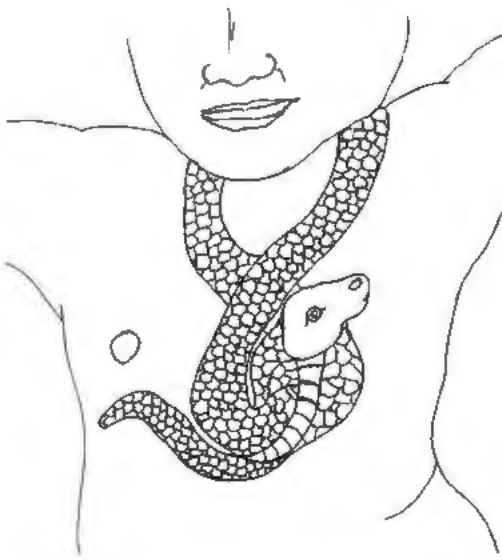
c

LOWER DRUM SLAB, WORSHIPPING NĀGĪNĪS

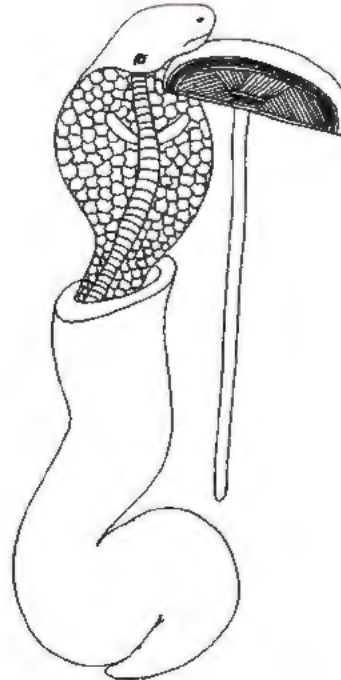
Fig.54

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DIPICTION OF NĀGAS AND NĀGĪNIS



a. Nāga as ornament



b. Nāga (Sēnaka Jātaka)



c. The Nāga family, Vidurapaṇḍita Jātaka

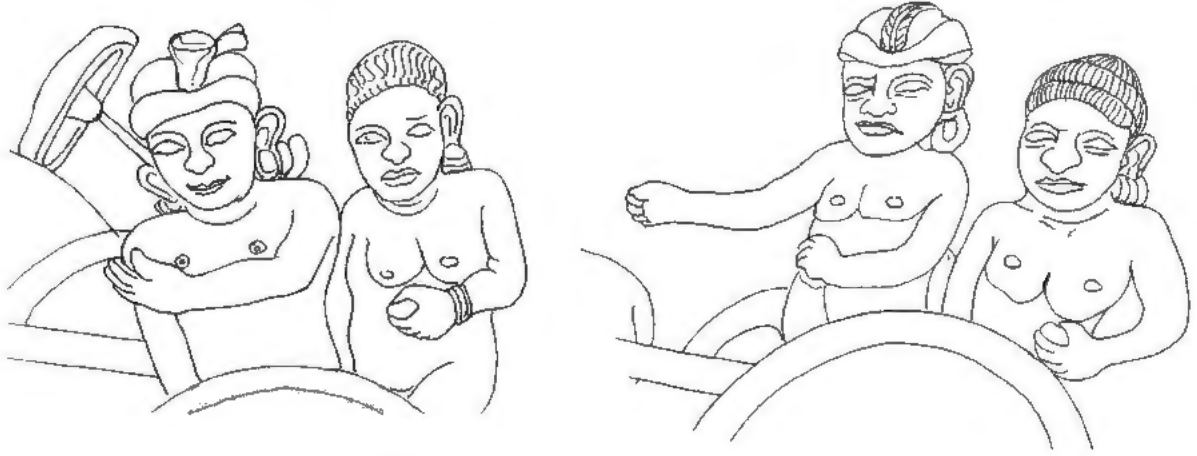


d. Nāga King Kālīka paying  
homage to Siddhārtha

Fig. 55

## MAHĀ STŪPA

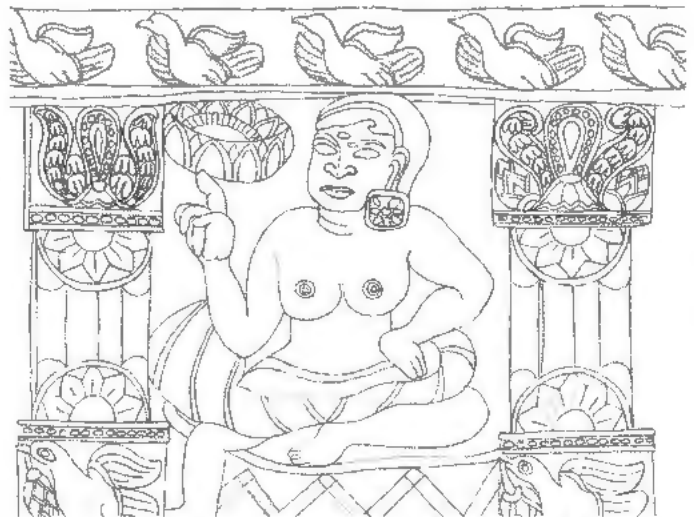
LOWER DRUM PANELS, RELIEFS OF PERIOD-II, PERIOD-I, BHAVACHAKRA



*a and b. Couples*



*c. Drummer*



*d. Yakshi*

**Fig.56**



## MAHĀ STŪPA

ORNAMENTATION DETAILS FOR MEN AND WOMEN PERIOD-II, PHASE-I



a. Devi Sāmivati, upper drum slab

b. King Aśoka, lower drum slab,  
worshipping at Rāmagrāma stūpa

Fig.57

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DESCRIPTION OF DRAPERY AND ORNAMENTS, (ROYAL OR NOBLE MEN)

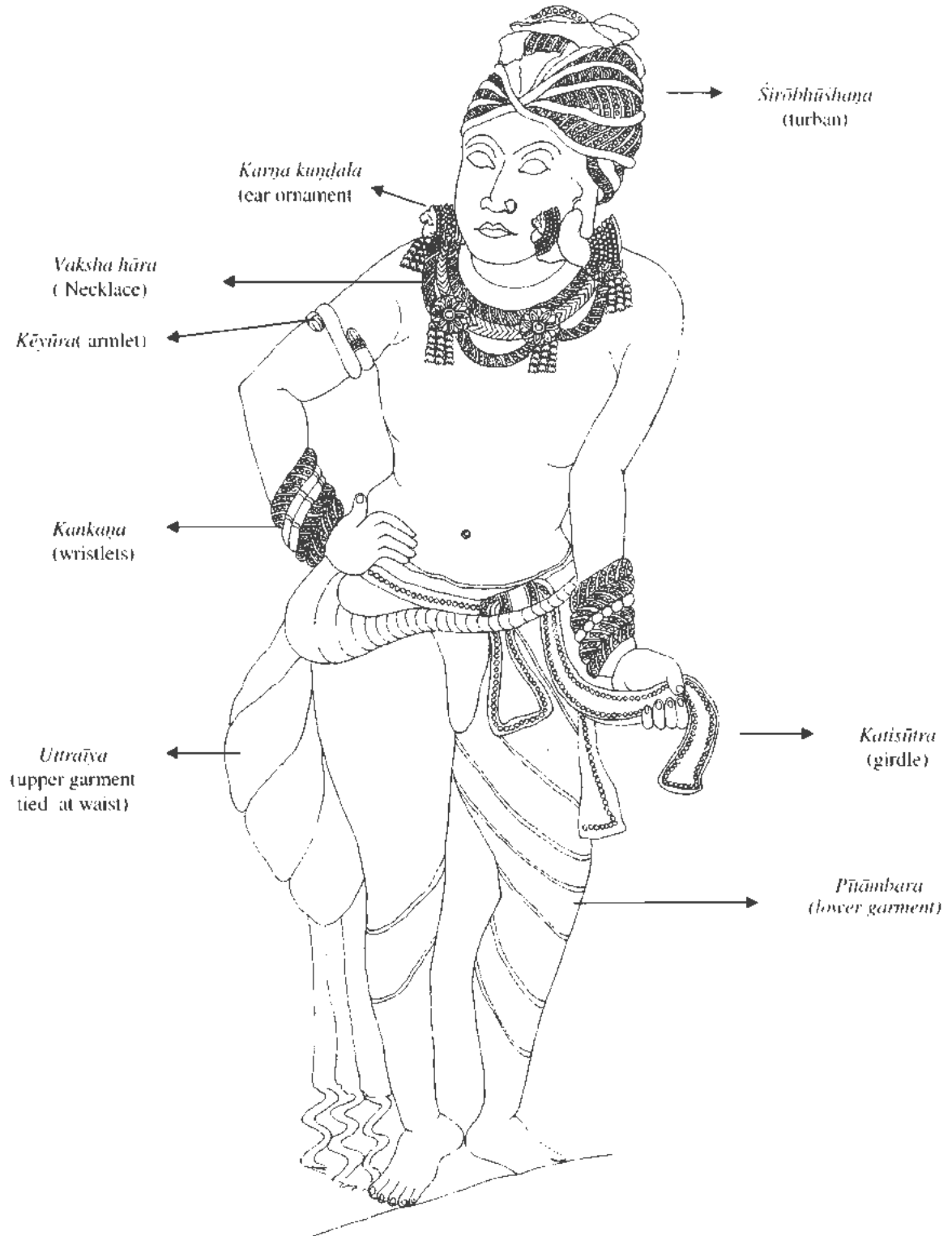


Fig.58A

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DESCRIPTION OF DRAPERY AND ORNAMENTS, (NOBLE WOMEN)

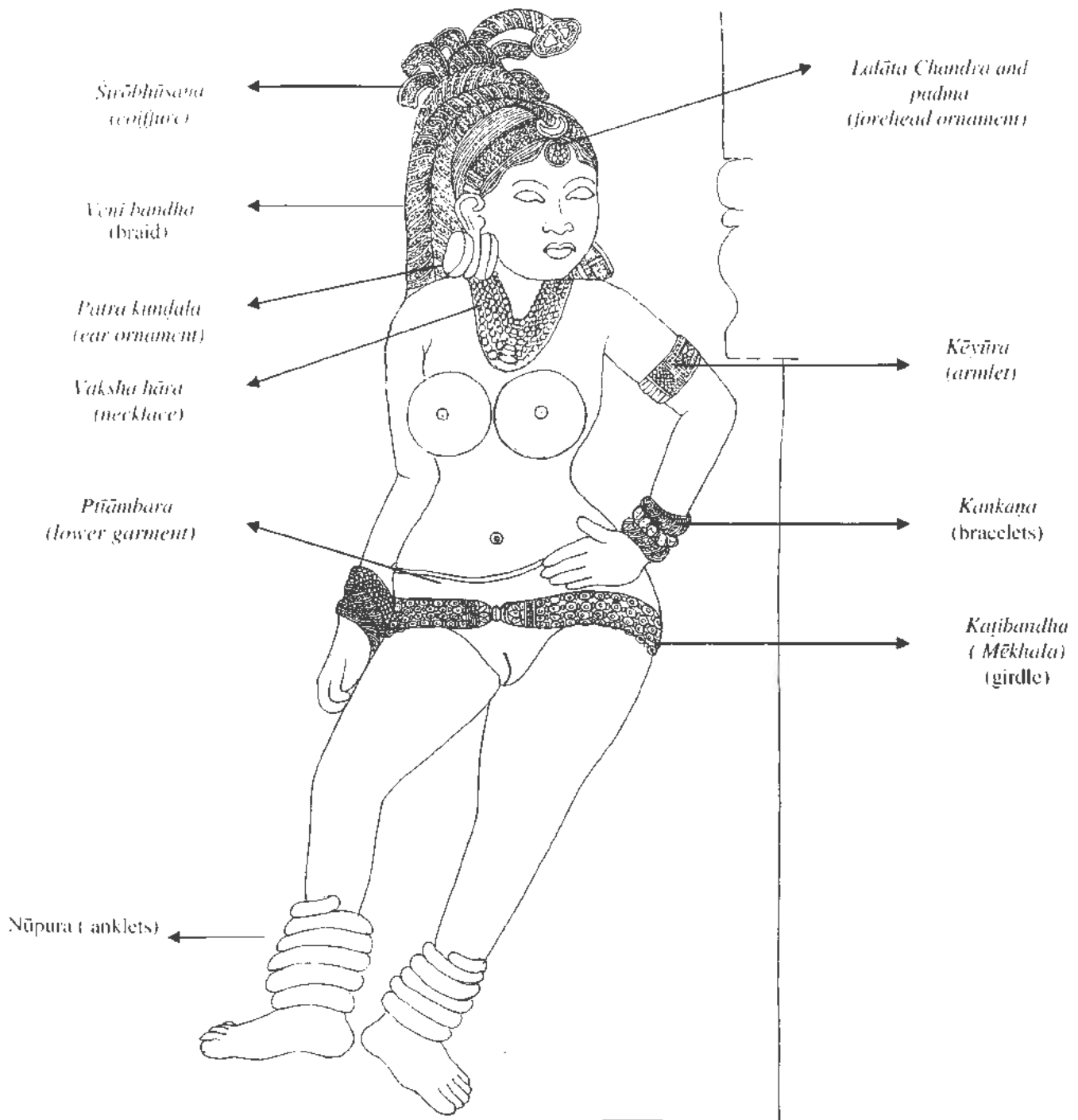


Fig. 58B



The lower drum sculptural depictions reflect figures of Nāga, Nāgiṇi in human form and devotees paying homage to the Lord in the form of *stūpa* (Pl.L), *dharmachakra* (Pl.LI) or *vṛiksha chaitya* (Pl.LIV A), in the main composition of the lower drum slabs or they are shown separately at the pilaster (Fig.53 a-b; 54 a-c and 55 a-d) (slab nos.5, 8, 22) in the Period-II Phase-I at the lower drum and appear as the characters of the *jātaka* tales and narrations of major events in the life of the Lord. However, one panel depicting the cycle of life (*bhavachakra*) is exclusively sculpted with socio-religious theme, with human and animal figures (Pl.LII).

In Phase-I irrespective of social or religious themes, the figures prominently exhibit triangular face with typical eyes, short forehead, aquiline nose with prominent flaring of the nostrils and somewhat pouted lips (Fig.56 a-d). This is probably because of the raw material on the one hand and the two dimensional low relief carving, spatial restriction to effect the carving within the stipulated frame and a new subject matter of narration opted for.

However, there is a marked improvement in Phase-I in the features as reflected in some lower drum panels no 8, 18 and 22, and upper drum depictions wherein the artists have tried

to introduce ovalish face with fleshy cheeks, obtuse chin with improvised expressive eyes and less flaring of the nose (Fig.57 a-b). Occasionally, both types of conical and oval faces are encountered in the same panel (no.8). The subtle difference noticed in the rendering may also indicate perception of individual sculptors employed for carving drum slabs.

The male figures are treated with elaborate hair-style, ear ornaments, *vakshahāra*, armlets, wristlets, *pītāmbara* arrested by heavy flowing *uttariya* (Fig.58 A). In addition to the above the women are treated with elaborate hairstyle, *ēkāvali*, bangles, coiled heavy anklets and the diaphanous *pītāmbara* is held in position with a *kaṭibandha* (Fig.58 B). It is interesting to note that irrespective of the phases all this ornamentation is depicted without much modification as evidenced by the turbaned head gear for the male figures and only a single type of spiralled anklet for the women. The heavy wristlets are accompanied by a series of bangles reaching upto the elbow of the lower arm. Some of the figures of the sculptural rendering of the enlarged *āyaka* platforms show three dimensional chubby features with a prominent smile and more lithesome limbs with due weightage given to the female anatomy as in Yakshi Śri, an addition of the third phase (Pl.LIII).

Theme wise, spread over the first three phases, these decorated lower drum slabs resolve into the following groups.

1. *Dharmachakra* depictions (Pl.LI A)
2. *Stūpa* and worship of relics (Pl.L A)
  - a) Simple plain *stūpa*
  - b) *Ashṭabhāga stūpa* of Rāmagrāma
  - c) *Stūpa* of relics (*Dhātu chaityas*)
  - d) Evolved type *stūpa* (of lower Krishna valley)
  - e) Crest relic worship (*Sudhamālaya*)
  - f) *Bōdhi* tree-*Vṛiksha Chaitya* or *Bōdhi maṇḍa* (Pl.LIV A)
  - g) Worship of *Vajrāsana* (Pl.LIV B)
3. Monastic complexes
  - a) Jētavana (Pl.LV A,B)
  - b) Monastery (Pl.LV C)
4. Nāgas (Pl.LV A,B, LVI A,B, LVII A,B and Fig, 60 a,c)
5. Yakshi-Śrī (Pl.LIII)
6. Wheel of life - *Bhavachakra* (Pl.LII)

Some of the *āyaka* alterations to the *stūpa* during expansion of the *āyaka* platforms (nos. 17, 36, 56 and 76) located towards north, south, east and west have been reintroduced by the end of the third phase of sculptural activity.

## Dharmachakra

*Dharmachakra* depictions in Buddhist art symbolise the setting of Wheel of Righteousness by the enlightened in the deer park of Saranath - a great event recorded and venerated as Buddha himself throughout the realm of Buddhist art. This has been the major theme opted by the artists at this *stūpa*. They have excelled

themselves in rendering the theme with great dexterity. This is reflected in the treatment of the shaft supporting the *chakra* and wheel (Pl.LI).

**Wheel:** Subtle changes in the treatment of the rim and number of spokes from 28-32 of the wheel are noticed. The rim is shown flaming and glowing with the *triratna* along the outer periphery. The hub of the wheel is treated either with head of a *nāga*, lion or as a plain floral motif. Some have tiny perforation in the centre of the hub perhaps to garland the panel during festivities. A bunch of twisted pearly festoons issuing forth from a human face or a *makara*, tied on either side of the rim complete the ornamentation.

**The shaft:** The shaft reflects a series of repeated compressed cushion capitals in turn treated with human heads (*dikpālas*, LDS no.18), couchant animals like lion (*Śākyasimha* - 8,18, 25, 43,75), elephant (*Gajātama* -18 and 43) and Bull (*Vṛishabha* - 8). The shaft is also festooned on either side as at wheels. It is flanked on either side at its base by couchant deers in different moods of intensity.

**Pilasters of the slab:** The central composition is flanked by a pilaster decked with Yakshi-chāmaradhāriṇīs on lotus pedestal and *nāga-nāgiṇi* as worshippers (Fig.53 and 54). Amongst all the panels of *Dharmachakra* depictions one panel is unique (Pl.LIV B) as it presents an event recorded as the visit of King Prasēnajit

of Kōsala country, contemporary of Śākyamuni, in absence of the Master at Śrāvastī and placing a wheel of law over the *Vajrāsana* 'as a type of advancement of Buddhist faith (Prasēnajit pillar, Pl.XIII, inner face, Bhārhut) by preaching and thus becomes an emblem of Buddha the teacher in the same way that the *Bōdhi maṇḍa* or the seat on which Śākyamuni sat for six years in meditation'. This panel as in the inscribed panel of Bhārhut<sup>9</sup>, depicts royal personalities, three on either side, flanking the *Dharmachakra* with the *Vajrāsana* with the foot imprints of Buddha placed in front.

## Stūpa

*Stūpa* and worship of relics is the most popular depiction of Buddhist art as enjoined by Buddha himself to his favourite disciple Ānanda, at the time of *mahāparinirvāṇa*. Later this developed into the *stūpa*-cult which made the worship of corporal relics enshrined in the *stūpas* mandatory and an essential feature of early Buddhism in the form of *śārīrika*, *pāribhōgika* and *auddēśika stūpas*. During the *hīnayāna* phase the *stūpas* remained as the sole objects of worship which incidentally is the outcome of Maurya Aśōka causing thousands of *dharmakāyas* (*stūpas*) of the Master. At Kanaganahalli *stūpa* too, the sculptured panels of different types of *stūpa* are depicted on the lower as well as on the upper drum (Fig.59). The type of *stūpa* represented include both ornate and

non-ornate type from the simpler variety with three-multiple *chhatrāvali* to an evolved variety, unique and popular to the lower Krishna valley. The former variety of *stūpa* has simple lower drum with a dome intervened by a row of railings at the middle. The dome is topped by a *harmikā* with multiple *chhatrāvali*. In another type the *stūpa* is devoid of any decorations at the drum but has well spaced pilasters with lotus medallions. The usual railing at the spring of the arch of the drum and multiple *chhatrāvali* atop, stylistically and palaeographically belongs to the Phase-I of construction.

In another instance of simpler variety, the drum has a three-tiered base, and slightly bulbous dome crowned by a *harmikā* and three tiered *chhatrāvali* issuing from the central shaft. On either side, in the same axis issues additional three-tier *chhatrāvali* on a curved shaft. The drum is decorated with cross-barred garland with a central medallion (Fig.59 g). This simpler composition also depicts devotees praying and two male flying figures showering flowers on the *stūpa*.

In the subsequent phases, the drum is shown, decorated with garlands, meticulously depicting even the hooks provided at the drum and multi-hooded snakes entwining the dome which is crowned by multiple *chhatrāvali*.

The profusely decorated Rāmagrāma *stūpa* depicted twice in separate slabs is



## MAHĀ STŪPA

LORD BUDDHA DEPICTED IN SYMBOLIC (STŪPA) AND HUMAN FORM



Fig.59

shown worshipped by a Nāga (Fig.59 f). It is quite interesting to observe that both the drum slabs also depict a king, probably Aśōka, shown adoring in the pilaster. The difference in sculpting the figures as enumerated is quite apparent. The attempt of king Aśōka, to open the *stūpa* at Rāmagrāma and the stiff resistance he faced by the Nāga tribe, the abandonment of his venture is narrated in *Aśōkāvadāna*. While this depiction occurs in a suggestive manner at Bhārhut, it is elaborate with variant forms at Sānchi.<sup>10</sup> The artist at Kanaganahalli has streamlined the subject into an explicit concept of Nāgas guarding and worshipping and the king Aśōka offering his veneration, all composed together. The depiction of Rāmagrāma *stūpa* occurs in a panel of fourth phase at Amarāvati.<sup>11</sup>

The southern slab of the western *āyaka* gives a clear hint to the possible elevation of this *chaitya* when it was complete akin to the typical Krishna valley specimens as noticed at Amarāvati. The relief of *stūpa* depicted on the drum slab is made up of a sculptured drum with a three-hooded Nāga Muchilinda, pilasters, and pillars hoisted in the cardinal directions on the *āyaka* platform. The bulbous dome shown resting on the drum is also adorned with sculptured panels of human figures. The lower part of the dome at drum level is decorated with a frieze of flying swans and a median band of *triratna*. The upper part of the bulbous drum is treated with elegant garland bearing swans in flight

surmounted ultimately by a *harmikā*. The *chhatra*, probably of triple umbrella type, is mutilated.

Another slab of the lower drum at the western *āyaka* of 2<sup>nd</sup> phase has a double pilaster with a pear shaped relic casket being adorned on either side by two female *chauri* bearers. This is more of a circular *chaityagriha* or a relic shrine variety with a central door with an arch over door. The extended spatulate ends in a *triratna* symbol. A circular vaulted roof ends in a finial and the hemispherical dome is treated with elaborate *padma* and geometrical design (Fig.59 d). The pilasters on either side at shaft has *bōdhi* tree set in railing with *Buddhapāda* and *vajrāsana* and a sculpture of Nāgiṇi in *anjali*.

Thus the *stūpa* depictions here speak of the *hīnayana* theological development symbolising *stūpa* with the *mahāparinirvāṇa* as the specific rendering at Rāmagrāma guarded by snakes symbolising the Master personified. Accordingly, the requisite morphological variations as explained above have also been found depicted. In the first three phases certain elements of similar renderings at the great *stūpa* of Sānchi<sup>12</sup> and Dhānyakaṭaka (Amarāvati)<sup>13</sup> are met with. It is also to be noted that many devotees from Dhānyakaṭaka (Amarāvati) have made donations here.

## Monastic depictions

There are three monastic depictions at the lower drum of which the gift of Jētavana

is repeated twice (Pl.LV A,B), reflecting the early phase of monastic architecture familiar to the artist of this place. The imitation of contemporary wooden architecture, its simplicity and inspiration derived from early representations as at Bhārhut is quite apparent. The depiction at Bhārhut is over a circular medallion whereas here it is taken on a large canvas and each structure being attributed to the persons who lived in it like the Master, Rāhula, Ānanda, Sāriputra, Gandhakuṭi and the area demarcated for women or nuns *utu pākhō* (=Ritupaksha) are quite interesting. The keepers of the Jetavana, Yaksha Priyakara and his mother, are also depicted in the composition. While, Anāthapiṇḍika, the donee of the mango grove gets a separate marked position of depiction as a nobleman in *anjali* in one, in the other panel he is shown at the pilaster standing upon a mythical *makara*. In the former only the *makara* is depicted.

Thematically, both the panels at the centre depict the careful unloading of cartload of gold in baskets and the unyoked oxen resting leisurely at front. Above are the pre-designated structures of the monastery amidst the thickly wooded grove. The structures depicted appear to be of wattle and daub and are circular, oblong to square in plan and elevation all set in an enclosure with an entrance provided with a vaulted gateway. The gable vault is sheathed with tiles and finished with finials. Interestingly, the excavated remains of

the monastery - *bōdhika vihāra* and other structures here have yielded tiles and finials. In the depiction the central large structure *gandhakuṭi* (the favourite abode of Buddha) is shown as multi-storeyed with *chaitya* arched windows and railed balconies. The other structures are of simpler thatched roof. Both the panels depict the promenade (*chakama*) of the Master. While in one veneering (of the eastern *āyaka*) a series of footprints in the top right corner represents it, the other found to the southwest of the *stūpa* in addition to showing the footprints in the left corner over a pedestal has a separate rectangular block inscribed as *chakamo*. From the depiction it is quite apparent that the artist of Kanaganahalli has closely followed the synaptic version of the scene depicted at Bhārhut<sup>14</sup> so much so that 'the ox carts laden with the gold square coins, the servants unloading them and the clerks spreading them carefully so as to cover the whole surface of the garden with them'. All the precious trees which had been respected and the cells transformed into the chapels with the divine presence of the Master and his disciples' have also been included in the composition at Kanaganahalli duly labelling the individual structures. It is quite in contrast to Sānchi<sup>15</sup> which is not so detailed. Both the depictions mentioned above follow each other closely in execution and are of the transitional period between Phases-I and II on stylistic and palaeographic evidences.



An interesting insight into a typical monastic complex can be seen (Pl.LV C) in the panel on the southern side, where the entire complex is fenced by an enclosure railing. This lower drum slab is of late phase-II of structural activity as evidenced by the donatory inscription recording the gift of a trader Aryamitra from Dhānyakaṭaka i.e Amarāvati. In the depiction, the complex has various square and rectangular residential structures all along the inner periphery with gable, tiled, and vaulted roofs. The structures with finials can be taken as places of worship - the hall of prayer (*gandhakuṭi*) in this instance. Nearby, the footprints of the master are found placed over a pedestal. The second, innermost enclosure has the sacred place of worship with *chaitya*, *dhātu chaitya*, *vṛksha chaitya* and a pedestal for *Buddhapāda*. The monastery is shown teeming with monks who are depicted either returning from the sacred centre or proceeding for worship. Shown upto the bust, they are delineated as markers of entrances and also used to indicate the various levels/divisions of complex structures.

The hierarchy of the monkhood attained by the individual monk is also shown by the shoulder girdles they wear. Even today, there are different coloured robes to identify the clerical hierarchy in Buddhism. Varieties of ear ornaments also reflect upon the choice of jewellery and lack of restrictions. However, perhaps they were restrained from wearing long locks of

hair as evidenced by close cropped hair shown in all the figures. At the pilaster also a short elongated version of the various structures of a monastery punctuated with entrances is shown.

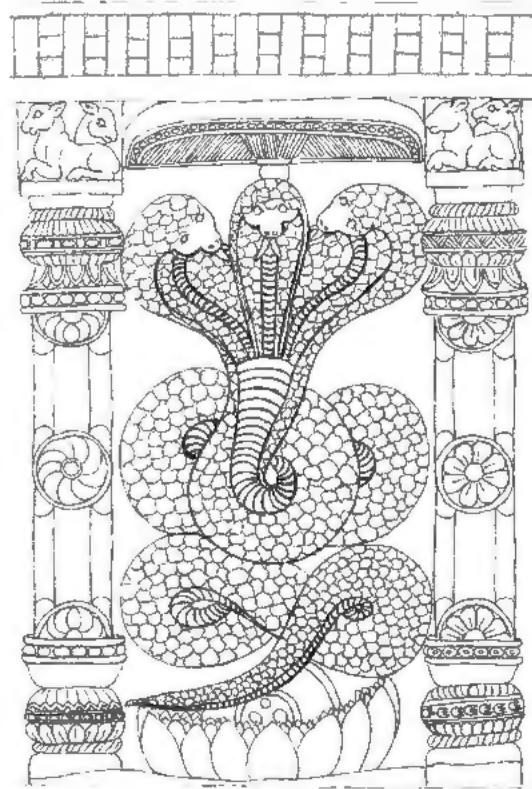
## Nāgas

Thenāgas (Fig.54a-c,55c-d) are the most frequently depicted sculptural renderings of Buddhist art reflecting the association of the same during the lifetime of the Master and the early rulers like emperor Aśoka and the Satavahanas themselves. It is a well-known fact from the scriptures that a serpent king Muchilinda, protected the Master during the torrential rain when he sat for enlightenment and paid homage to the Lord when he visited him in the sixth week after the enlightenment. During the lifetime, the Master had conquered the vicious serpent of the fire temple at Uruvēla - an act of subjugating the nāgas. The *jātaka* tales (Sēnaka) also refer to the nāga (Fig.55 b). Association of the Master with the nāgas in the *jātakas* is once again seen as the wise Vidurapaṇḍita elucidating *dharma* to the Nāga king, his queen Vimalā and daughter Irandati. These two episodes are depicted in the upper drum slab sculptures of the phase-III of sculptural activity.

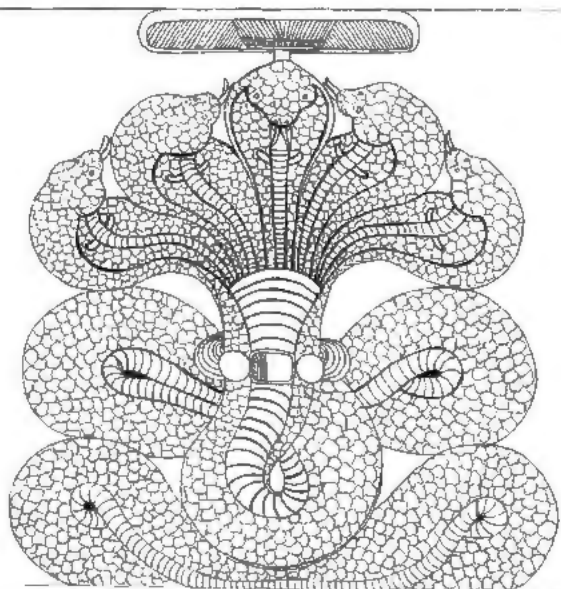
It is a known fact that the *Nāgas* were the guardian deities of the cardinal directions. Following the previous examples the artists have depicted the *nāgas* independently as *chāmaradhārīṇīs* and as

## MAHĀ STŪPA

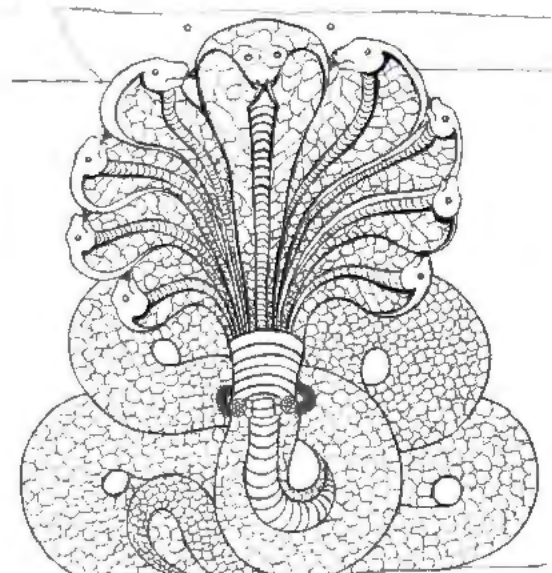
### DEPICTION OF MUCHILINDA NĀGA



*a. lower drum slab, three-hooded Muchilinda Nāga*



*b. Upper drum slab, five hooded Muchilinda Nāga*



*c. Lower drum slab, nine - hooded Muchilinda Nāga*

**Fig.60**

devotees offering prayers either at the *stūpa* or at the *dharmachakra* (Fig.53a-b). Both reptilian and human forms with snake hoods get depicted in the sculptures of the first three phases. While some of the depictions at the lower drum can be circumstantially identified as Muchilinda Nāga depending on the scene of depiction based on the number of hoods three, five and nine (Fig.60 a-c), those depicted at the upper drum in finest reptilian manner of five-hooded serpent are labelled as Nāgarāya Bhaṭṭāraka and Nāgarāya Muchilinda (Pl.LVII).

While the central veneer of western *āyaka* has an imposing nine-hooded reptile in all its grandeur, the veneer of the southern *āyaka* at the western end has a Nāga king Mahākala in human form. It is to be noted that these two depictions were added later during the expansion of the *āyaka* in phase-III as the fragments of earlier veneers were found buried under them. A five-hooded Nāga in reptile form under a parasol of the upper drum of the 3<sup>rd</sup> phase, reflects its status of a king even in the absence of any inscriptions, could be taken as Muchilinda Nāga. As elsewhere reflected, the Nāga king Kālīka offering his respects to the Lord is also very well depicted in human form along with his three queens in one of the upper drum panels of the same phase (no.10). In addition, the episode of Sujātā offering sweetened rice to the Master is also depicted. Such representations

of *nāgas* in human form in continuation of Bhārhut<sup>16</sup> and Sānchi<sup>17</sup> traditions however get elaborated in the Phase-III of Amarāvati depictions.<sup>18</sup>

### Yakshi-Siri

This slab veneering the northern *āyaka*, introduced during the enlargement and restructuring of the northern *āyaka* platform in phase-III, depicts Yakshi-Siri (Pl.LIII). The panel in the centre depicts a fairly large female figure standing under the parasol tied with festoons and garlands. She is shown standing in *samabhanga* with her left hand resting over her left hip. Her right hand is placed over a female attendant. The lady has a *kaṭibandha* strung with beads. The *pītāmbara* which she wears reaches beyond the ankle and a central fold is drawn across tightly and tucked into the *kaṭibandha* and *uttarīya* below the navel. She wears an anklet with stringed pearl drops along with two additional pairs of heavy anklets with *padma* and rope decoration. She is shown wearing a highly ornate upper garment reaching upto the waist and is treated with floral motifs (*padma*). She is depicted with prominent bosom - a sign of motherhood. In the open space at the abdomen above the navel is seen a *śrīvatsa* symbol. The upper garment appears to have been fastened in the centre of the chest before rising into a wide u-arc exposing her *vaksha* adorned with an *ekāvali* passing through up to the navel. The arms of the upper garment, treated with floral border, are



held by a *kēyūra*. *Vakshahāra* and *jhumari* type of massive ear ornaments deck her as other ornaments. A gentle smile adds to the grandeur of the face. The hair-dress is elaborately done by combing backwards and a series of plaits treated with pearls fall on either side.

The attendant to the right also with a gentle smile has *patrakuṇḍalas* and holds a square jewel box of the stately goddess in her upraised right hand and the left hand is in *kaṭyavalambita* posture. She is also moderately decked befitting the status of the attendant of the Goddess of wealth. The equally decked attendant to the left holds in her upraised hand, a mirror with her head slightly pushed backwards as if appreciating the charm of the goddess. The panel in its top register has three perforations placed at equidistance, which might have been used for decorating the panel on specific occasions of worship as seen in other panels also.

This stately figure could be identified as Siri, the Goddess of Wealth,<sup>19</sup> the consort of Kubēra - the *Yaksha* of northern direction. Her identification of the figure in the variant form of standing image as Siri is based on the *srīvatsa* mark at her abdomen, the rich ornamentation along with her maid carrying the jewel box.

The transformation of this divinity from simplest form of *Sirimā dēvatā* of Bhārhut to the goddess of wealth-

Gajalakshmi with elaborate canonical and iconographic features depicted in the pendant of the necklace of the *Yaksha* sculpture from Hasaragundgi, a suburb of Sannati<sup>20</sup> and through the developmental stages occurring at Sanchi is of much significance.

### **Yaksha Vairōchana at the northern entrance**

The sculpture of *Yaksha* placed at the northern entrance, albeit its mutilations, could be *Vairōchana*<sup>21</sup>, the tutelary *Yaksha* of the place *Sāntimati i.e.*, Sannati. This is also buttressed by the introduction of Siri - the goddess of wealth - in the northern *āyaka* of phase-III.

The extant torso and head of the *Yaksha*, also of the same phase, resembles the famous balustrade *Yaksha* of *Pitalkhōra*. The image is greatly damaged due to the plough marks during the agricultural operations in the area. However the grinning face, wide-open eyes, heavy *pītāmbara* tucked behind and a necklace are clearly discernible (Pl.LVIII A & B).

### **Bhavachakra**

This is the central panel on the eastern *āyaka* platform of the first phase and is inscribed as: *ya sa na ka sa . . . ko (yasanakasa [aya]ko)* denoting the *vyasanas (i.e., the greeds)* of life (Pl.LII). This panel vividly captures the various manifestations of the chain of life oscillating between

rebirth (*jāti*) and clinging to life (*upādāna*) from the 12 *nidānas*, which is the universal law of dependant origination or law of causes and causation (*dādaśāṅga pratitya samutpadah*)<sup>22</sup>.

In the panel, the sculptor has portrayed in small groups, figures involving men and women severely attached to life like ignorance (*avijjā*) - a primary cause of existence; *Sankhāra* (*karma* of the last life); *vināna* (sense of consciousness which regulates the *karma*), *nāmarūpa* (internal and physical body *i.e.*, the beginning of life); *śadāyatana* (the sense organs including the mind); *faṣsa* (the sensitivity of the six organs with the objects); *vedana* (the sensation of form - *rūpa*); *saddō* (sound), *gandha* (odour); *rasō* (taste); *phassō* (contact); *dhammō* (ideas). These are the objects of senses. In the light of the above, the depictions in the panel can be identified as that of Bhavachakra.

The panel, apart from the above Buddhist philosophy, also reflects on the social conditions of the contemporary period. It has broadly three groups of figures reflecting upon greed, lust and power of human mind which is symbolically suggested as fateful as the bite of a cobra which would ultimately result in the rebirth of life in various forms which is an endless agony.

### Pushpagrāhis

The lower drum slabs are decorated with pilasters in lines of *tabha* decoration,

sculptures of devotees of Nāga and Nāgini at the shaft. The base and abacus of these pilasters are treated with addorsed animals, mythical animals, *stūpa*, *vṛksha chaitya* and *pūrṇakumbha* motifs (Fig. 61a-e).

The artist at Kanaganahalli in phase I and II while articulating the lower drum veneerings, has utilised a sculptured cornice (Pl. LIX and Fig. 61 b) inscriptionally referred to as *pushpagahani*. He has used ingeniously, various decorative elements like *triratna*, *swastika*, *nandipāda*, *stūpa* models, *pūrṇa-kalaśas*, animated moving animals like beaked winged lion, buffalo, horse, deer, stag, elephant, bull, bird and human head all within a framework of garlands and railing designs. The usage of different types of floral designs at the *tabha* imitations is astonishing and reflects a freshness in the great skill of the artists in minute filigree work recalling the expertise of a jewel maker or an ivory carver. While he has used twisted floral, beaded heavy garland in the upper border, the space at the loops are treated with lotus flowers topped by a barrel shaped beaded decoration. The lower border is replete with animal motifs alternating with floral motifs especially inverted lotus blooms. The narrow top ridge of these *pushpagrāhis* bears inscriptions and also the frontal face of some bear square and circular perforations to drain off the water. Though the carvings of these are very shallow, the sheer orientation in circular configuration gives the requisite depth and each design

and decoration of the minutest execution stands out boldly. These get replaced by sculptured narrative cornices rendering the life of Buddha during the phase- III of expansion of the *stūpa* at *āyaka* platforms.

### Sculptures - Upper drum slabs

In the first and second phase of early sculptural activity of embellishing, the artists of the *stūpa* had an elaborate unhindered canvas for expressing their skill in carving with intense fervour. The themes opted by them include the previous birth (*Jātaka*) tales of the Lord, the major events of his life, themes associated with post *mahāparinirvāṇa* towards the spread of Buddhism, the people associated with such a righteous act and lastly the portraits of the Sātavāhana rulers (Pl.LX A,B and LXI A,B and C) who directly or indirectly participated in the cause of the *stūpa* in a total area of narration running into approximately 94.4 sqm. The scheme of composition in these upper drum slabs is already alluded to by the end of first phase of articulation of one of the lower drum slabs (Pl.LIV B) at north which is reused in the third phase during the rearticulation of the *stūpa* with addition and expansion of the northern *āyaka* in phase-III of constructional activities.

### Themes

The sculptural depictions of themes earlier referred are of Phase-I to III of Period-II and are uniform in the treatment

of drapery and ornamentation. However, there are subtle changes in the facial expression and technical execution, apparent under minute observation. Most of them belong to Phase-I and a few belong to Phase-II. The characteristic features in the upper drum slabs in the above groups reflect the contemporary architecture, social divisions, men and women with their coiffure, animals, etc., forming part and parcel of the same thematic narration. These depictions are the enlarged versions of the already known popular themes found in the railings and the gateways of Bhārhut and Sānchi in the north, from the paintings and sculptural art of early phase at Ajanta and Pīthalkhōra in the Deccan on the one hand as also the themes depicted in the art of the first and second phases of Amarāvati and other sites in lower Krishna valley at east on the other.

To continue the narration of an episode the artists have rendered two narratives in a single slab besides using more than one slab at times. The artist successfully brings out the essence of the episode delineated. Animals, nature, architecture and social events were intricately and judiciously interwoven with each other so as not to interfere with the main or chief rendering. The sculptor of Kanaganahalli has excelled in bringing out the religious intensity in a subtle manner nowhere reflected in the contemporaneous art of the Krishna valley. The renderings of the *Mahāchaitya* at Amarāvati in its drum panels is intensely



## MAHĀ STŪPA

### LOWER DRUM SLAB, DECORATIONS ON ABACUS AND BASE OF PILASTERS

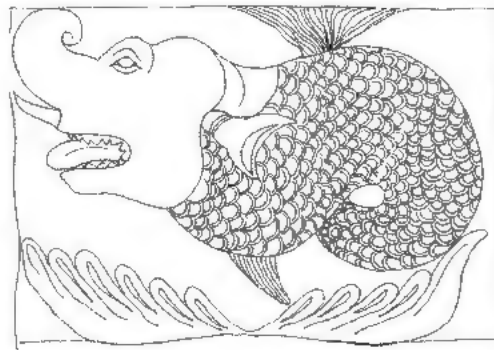


a

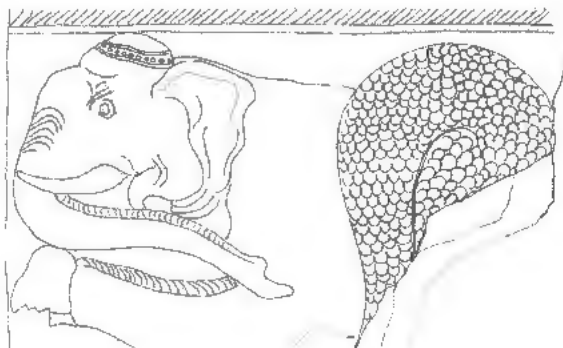


b

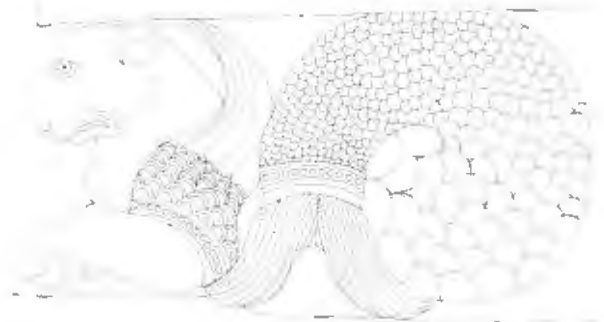
*Lower drum slab, decoration on abacus*



c



d



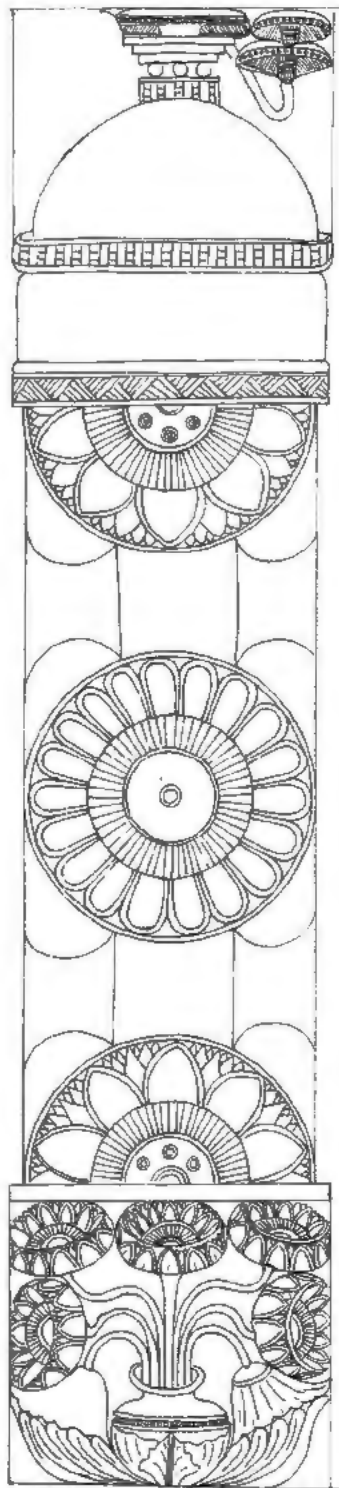
e

*Lower drum slab decoration on pilaster base*

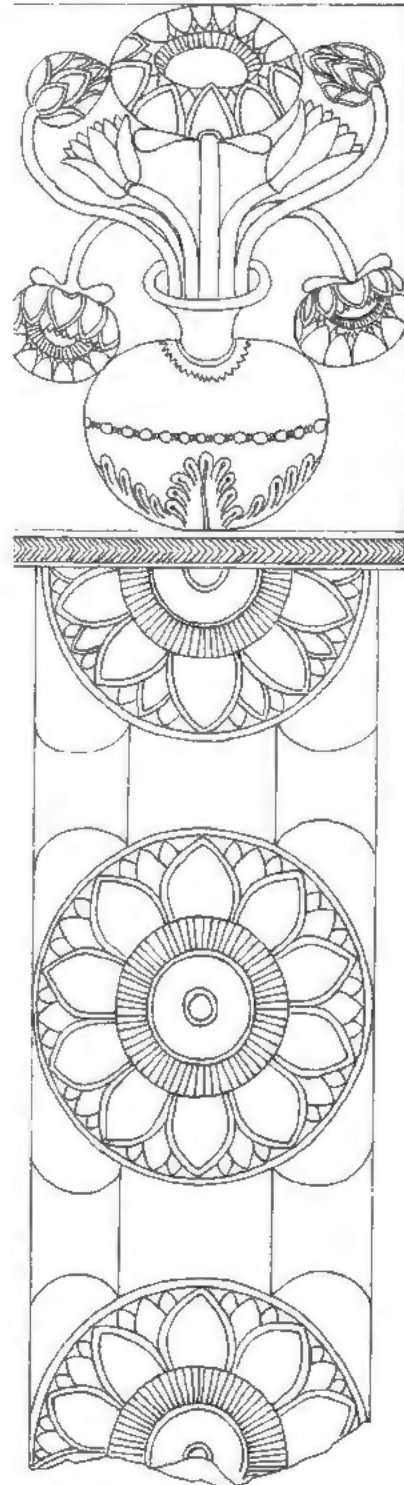
**Fig.61**

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### LOWER DRUM SLABS, PILASTER DETAILS



a

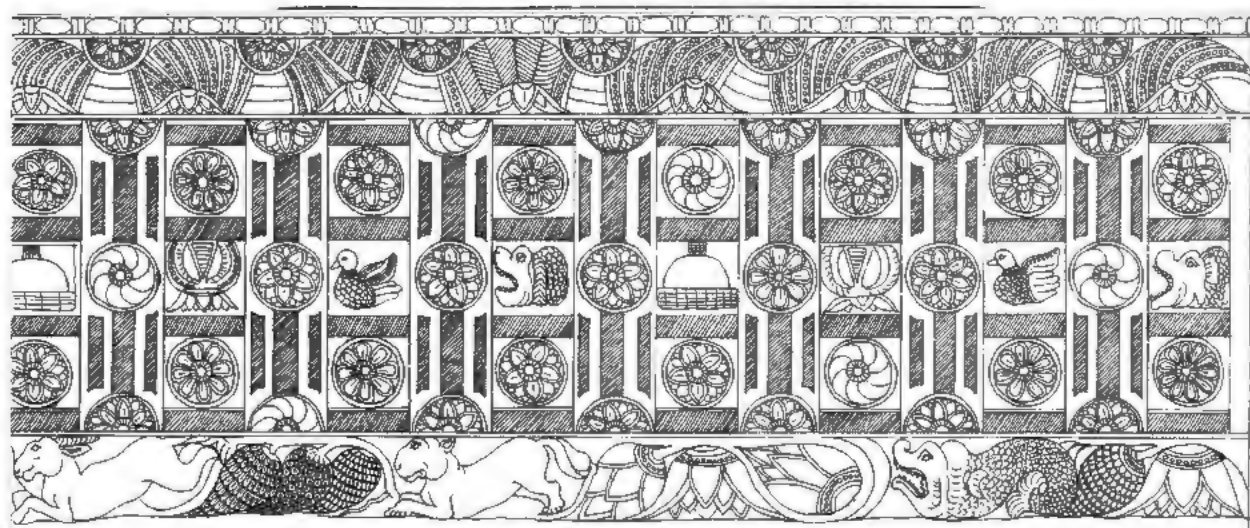


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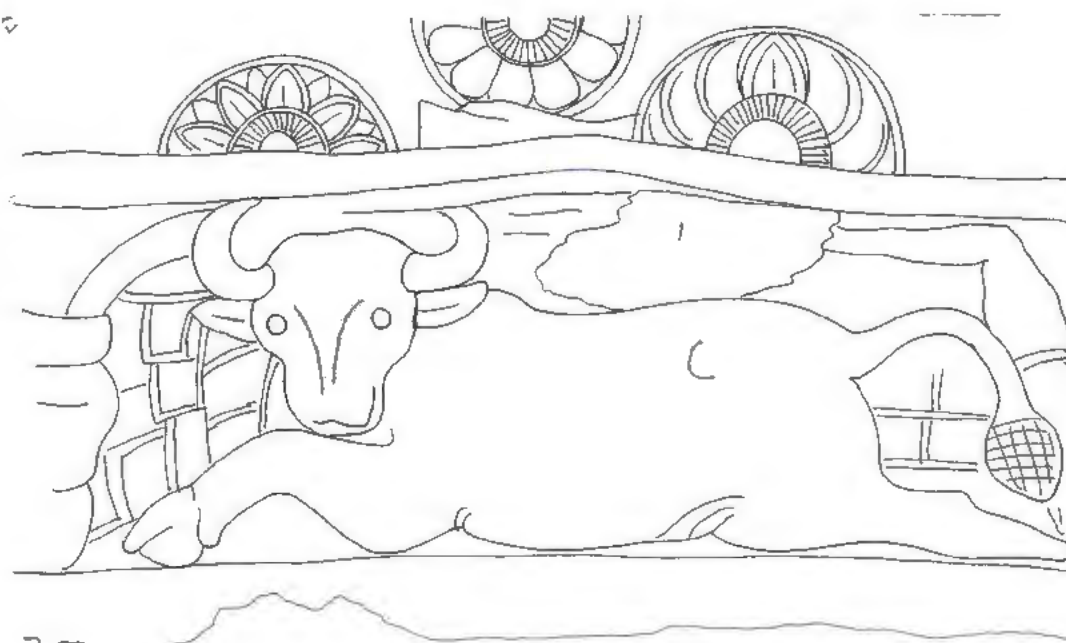
Fig.61A

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### CORNICE DETAILS (Pushpagrāhīnī)



a. Sculptured cornice.



b. Galloping bull, cornice

Fig.61B



religious wherein the life episodes of the Master and the *Jātaka* tales are (extant specimens) restricted to miniature friezes decorating the *stūpa* motifs of the drum. Much of the narratives were rendered in the circular medallions of the *tabhas*, *sūchis* and the *ushṇīṣha*. Some of these being chronologically earlier to Kanaganahalli specimens reveal the crowded composition. Every inch of available space is filled with a wealth of detail and thereby the impact of the art is reduced to an excessive miniature sculpturing and a keen observer can visualise and appreciate these finer aspects of plastic art.

The artist at Kanaganahalli was fully aware of the subject he had to deal with and he had two distinct regions in a particular space of sculpturing classified: (a) the chief character of the narration to be centrally positioned and (b) the rest of the characters arranged around the central character in the peripheral region and each of the ingeniously framed register with the border of *tabha* pilaster decoration at sides, a frieze of geese between two registers and only a plain border atop acting as a register of a median band clearly distinguishing the *mēdhi* with the *aṇḍa*. The artist had a fair knowledge of controlled chiselling on a rough and close grained material like limestone, a metamorphic rock condensed in horizontal layers. He has carefully sculpted to a depth of a maximum of 5 cm for the sculptured rendering whereas

the decorative sculpturing is slightly just above 1 to 2 cm. This type of sculpturing was done because of the material and the low relief nature appears absolutely flat in direct sunlight. However, the circular *Mahāchaitya* comes into life with the dawn as the first rays of sun start striking the *stūpa* carrying along with it in its momentum of journey and breathing life into each of the characters in a *parikramā* fashion beginning in the south east of the arc resulting in the enactment of the entire life of Buddha from his birth to enlightenment, his previous births, the various social events and the religious fervour all towards one cause of setting the wheel of righteousness in motion. The concept of the artist, using a humble chisel, to set in motion the static sculptures with life at the arrival of first rays of sun is a noteworthy achievement.

## Composition

The pattern of narration is usually from the top of the panel to the bottom. Depending upon the subject, the composition of characters is to be seen which may range from 2-8 figures accommodated around a central figure or the lead character. It is the Master who gets the primary position in the depictions of his life whereas the other characters are usually, equally distributed on either side of the central character. Depending upon the importance of the scene characters required and the physiological features of

rest of the compositions are derived. Even though, the anatomical features, facial expressions or contour and the other details like hair-style, drapery etc., remain the same, the moderate plasticity of the limbs portray the subtlety of sentiments in a dignified manner. However in the sculptural renderings two distinct types of features, especially in the treatment of the facial expressions and anatomical details, are encountered. This is because of the local artisans on one hand and the influence of artisans from the neighbouring lower Deccan and from Dhānyakaṭaka *i.e.* Amaravati on the other. The latter is buttressed by the donatory inscriptions of persons hailing from the place.

In spite of the sculptural depictions, the upper drum slabs reflect the first three phases in so far as the continuity of themes in composition of the characters and their general ornamentation, drapery, style of execution and articulation are concerned (Fig. 58 A - B, 59). The only difference is the treatment of facial features as noticed in Phase-III wherein some of the portrait sculptures of the kings are encountered. They also speak of the contemporary social divisions of different class and economic status from royalty to monk, from the venerated Master to the divine celestials, associated animals and contemporary architecture, all in the *hīnayana* theology.

As a preamble it is imperative to know the different types of characters

introduced in the narration in the light of the above before dwelling upon the narratives as they occur. The men and women depicted in Kanaganahalli sculptural art fall into the category of (1) celestials, (2) royal personalities, (3) noblemen and traders, (4) servants attending the royalty and noblemen, (5) monks and (6) common man.

## Celestials

The depiction of celestials is restricted to the four *dikpālakās*, Śakra (Indra), Nāgas, Garuḍa and *gandharvas* all in the acts of venerating the Master. The sculptures of celestials are shown with highly ornate turbans, varied ornaments and naked above waist. They are shown worshipping the Lord, either seated on either sides of the *vajrāsana* or descending from heaven to see the genesis of Siddhārtha, admiring the newly born child descending from heaven, showering flowers on the sacred crown, on the path of the sacred elephant during its descent into the dream of Mahāmāyā, carrying the crown of the Lord in the heavenly flight, adoring the Master in the form of sacred Bōdhi tree and *vajrāsana* and celebrating the demise of the Lord by beating the celestial drum (*dēvadundubhi*). Their different acts of momentum like flight towards heaven or descending from the heaven in an upside down fashion carrying large bowls of flowers - all indicate them to be celestials (Fig.62 a, b).

Occasionally, the ballooning of the *uttarīya* thrown across their shoulder and disturbed turban attributes them to be celestials moving in the air. While in flight, they are shown tucking their left or right leg upwards and almost straightening the other leg with their toes stretched downwards to reflect movement, descent or ascent. They are all treated with various ornaments like a headgear in the form of a turban, ear ornaments, necklaces and bracelets.

### Royal personalities

The royal personalities depicted with all the royal regalia are shown either standing or seated in the court or proceeding in a procession accompanied by their elaborate retinue. They are decked in artistically designed and decorated turbans with a varied central plumage. All of them are shown naked above the waist and wear *pītāmbara* held at waist by a *kaṭi sūtra* and a multiple folded *uttarīya* at the waist. King Sundara Sātakarṇi is shown with an elaborate hairstyle combed sideways to cover the upper part of the ear, which is an interesting feature for the royalty. Their nobility is highlighted by numerous ornaments like jewel-studded multi-stranded *vakshahāra* in varied designs of choicest pearls and beads. Sometimes, the *vakshahāra* is treated with gem-studded rectangular to square *phalakas*. Occasionally, they are shown with a closely placed *Kaṇṭhahāra* as well. The arms are

treated from the simple *sarpavalaya kēyura* to jewel studded elaborate *kēyura* as seen in the representation of the sculpture of Ajayata. Most of them are shown with heavy gem-studded bracelets and interestingly, among the royalty, except Ajayata and Rāya Aśōka others do not wear *yajñōpavīta*. A solitary figure of a Brahmin in the Sēnaka Jātaka is shown with *yajñōpavīta* and the learned minister of Māndhātā in Māndhātā Jātaka is shown with a thick fold of *uttarīya* thrown across the left shoulder.

### Noblemen

The noblemen (Fig. 63 a,b,d) are also attired in similar fashion as that of royalty and celestials. They are also shown with ornate turbans and flashy jewellery. Some of them like trader Mūrakasēthi and Kaśyapagōtra are shown enjoying the luxury of a palanquin. Some of the noblemen are shown riding tamed lion, elephant, horse and camel drawn chariots with their entourage of *chhatra* and *chāmara* bearers. Some of them are accompanied by a group of drummers as announcers and water carriers.

In the Jātaka tales they are shown as courtiers around the king Mahā gōvinda as attentive devotees listening to the discourse by ascetics, and as astonished devotees at the miracle of the Master, clan members of the Master receiving the share of relics, the devotees of the Master worshipping and as the courtiers of King



Śuddhōdana and as Māra admitting defeat. The sculptor has meticulously captured their anatomical details and various expressions of the sentiments befitting the respective occasions.

## Retinue

The royal men are accompanied by a number of persons as the retinue indicative of their social status. The retinue comprises of a *chhatra* bearer (Fig. 63 c) or a *chāmaradhāri* (Fig.63 d). Usually, women are shown as *chāmaradhāriṇīs* (Fig.64 a, b) for the royal personalities. However, in the rendering in the panel of Mahāprasthāna, Chūdāharaṇa, transportation of relics, Vēssantara jātaka, panel of Mahāgōvinda, Chūdāharaṇa and Kumara Arindama depict male *chauri* bearers. Female fan bearers are shown by the side of or in between the queen and the king. The royal personalities indulging in consuming intoxicants are graphically captured in the sculptured panel of king Mātalaka (Pl.LXI A) wherein both the king and queen along with their attendant *kubja* are in a highly inebriated state.

## Vehicles and mounts

Elephants, horses and camel appear to be the chief mode of transportation (Fig.65 a-h) for the kings, noblemen and elite traders. Elephant however appears to have been preferred as the first choice amongst them as well as of the artist which could easily fill in the spaces when

compared to the other animals in the depiction. Occasionally, lion and parrot-beaked lion are also depicted and as a mode of transport more as a matter of convention rather than as a real mode of transport in the strict sense. A few royal persons like king Sundara Sātakarṇi, prince Vēssantara and the clan of Buddha fighting for reliquaries and collecting the same are shown astride their mounts of elephants and horses. However some of them are also astride chariots drawn by four horses. It is interesting to note here that the trader from Chēdi-Mūrakasēthi's entourage has a camel drawn chariot.

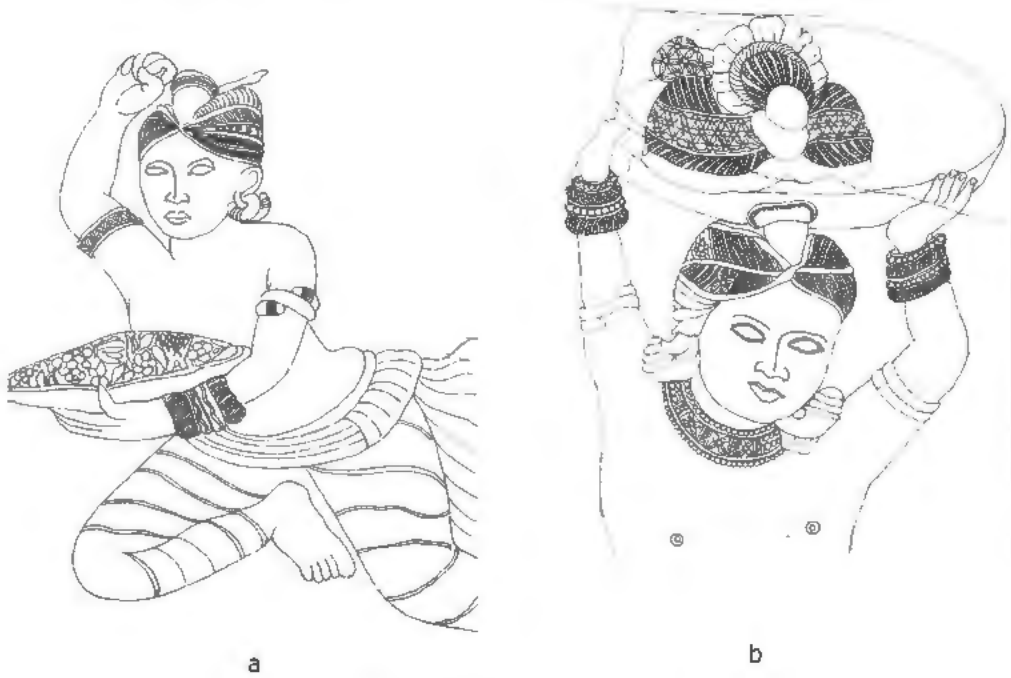
The preference of palanquin (Fig.65 g) as a means of transportation in the form of a pavilion of square and rectangular configuration with gable vaults and finials is seen in the episodes of transportation of Māyādevi to her native place, the long voyage of Mūrakasēthi along with his grandson and the travel of Kaśyapagōtra. The later two have water carriers, announcers and *chhatra*-bearers leading the entourage and the heavy palanquins are borne by sturdy runners. In one of the depictions one of the bearers has the support of a cloth to protect his shoulders from the friction of carrying the load.

## Common men and servants

Interestingly, while the royal persons and nobility are shown with a fine drapery at the waist, the common men and

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### UPPER DRUM SLAB, CELESTIALS AND ROYAL FIGURE



upper drum slab, celestials



c. Sēnaka (Bōdhisattva) Sēnaka Jātaka

Fig. 62. Mahā Stūpa - upper drum slab, celestials and royal figure

servants (Fig.66 a-d) are shown wearing the *dhōti* reaching upto the knees tightly held at the waist as in flag bearers and water carriers. Most of the noblemen are shown barefoot, bereft of anklets, save two sculptural renderings of a common man, Kings Mātalaka and Sundara Sātakarṇi are shown with simple and gem-studded anklets respectively in their right legs. The *pītāmbara* is worn with *kuchcha* shown prominently, sometimes, the 'V' of the thighs is conspicuous. Except for a common man whistling to celebrate the birth of the Master in one of the panels (Fig. 66,d) all the men including monks are shown with clean shaven faces.

The common men depicted chiefly belong to the following categories. They are shown as servants attending the royal personalities and noblemen, part of army in the entourage of the king and noblemen alike; joyous people indulging in celebration, caretakers of animals, characters of *Jātaka* tales and as door-keepers shown guarding the entrances with a *daṇḍa* or a club held in their hand. They are also shown dressed in a non-ornate turban, bereft of ear ornaments, wearing a pair of bracelets and a long full arm tunic reaching below the knee. In the panel of great departure the guard is shown fast asleep over his *daṇḍa* rested between his legs wearing non-ornate turban, *vriṭṭakuṇḍalas* and a *dhōti* held by an *uttariya* and naked above waist.

## Horse tenders

As horse tenders, they are shown associated with the royalty. Chenna (Fig.66 c) is shown in the great departure of the Master leading the jubilant horse Kanthaka moving away from the palace with pacifying gentle admonishes not to be noisy and returning with a remorse of leading back the tired animal and as a hapless personal attendant of the Master presenting the jewellery with all sorrow to the king and queen. He is robed in a knee reaching *dhōti*, a thick full-armed tunic tied at the waist and the head protected by a thick scarf.

In the panel of Sundara Sātakarṇi, the horse-tender is shown with the rope tied to the nose ring of the horse held in his right hand and briskly moving along the trotting horse. Here, he is shown naked above the waist, bareheaded and with pierced ears. He wears a knee reaching *dhōti* with a *kuchcha* in the centre rolled down at the waist. In the panel of Kaśirāya Bōdhisattva the tenders are attending two horses. While the first one is shown with a non-ornate turban and *patrakuṇḍalas*, the second one is shown with combed hair set with a flower.

The horse tenders of Puḷumāvi are similarly attired except for a change of ear ornament. Such type of horse-tender is seen in the panels of king Mātalaka and of king Sātakarṇi except Chenna, the personal valet of prince Siddhārtha, rest



of them are shown as servants of lower class attending to the animal. The *chhatra* bearers leading the troupe or procession are shown running ahead briskly holding a festooned umbrella of a bamboo shaft which also is shown swinging due to the movement of the individual. They are shown with a full-armed tunic falling short of the knee tied at the waist with a *kaṭi-vastra*. They are bereft of any ornaments and a headgear. However, they have well combed hair tied in a knot at the front and are shown with pierced ears but without ornaments. However, the *chhatra* bearer of prince Vēssantara in *Vēssantara Jātaka* is shown with a tunic similar to the one worn by Chenna covered by a scarf. In the depiction of *Sutasōma Jātaka* he is shown with a short tunic and in *Sajiniya Jataka* he is shown once again as Chenna running ahead of the horse drawn chariot.

### Mahouts

The elephants are the most preferred animals over horses and we find here that brisk moving pachyderms are controlled by the mahouts (Fig.65 e). In some, they are shown controlling the beast with a long goad (*ankusha*) attired similarly to that of a horse tender with close cropped hair and only *patrakuṇḍalas* as ear ornaments. They are also shown bare above the waist or wearing a tunic similar to that of horse tenders. Sometimes, depending upon the generosity of their master, they wear jewellery and also serve as *chāmaradhāris*

(Fig. 65 d,e) as in the case of depiction of *Vēssantara Jātaka* and also relegated to tertiary position on the animal at the time of battle and simply ride along with the masters. It is interesting to note that they have taken very good care of their animals by caparisoning them, befitting the large animal, with shoulder and abdominal girdles and also protect the thighs of the front rider by placing a thick drapery at the neck of the animal (Fig. 65 d).

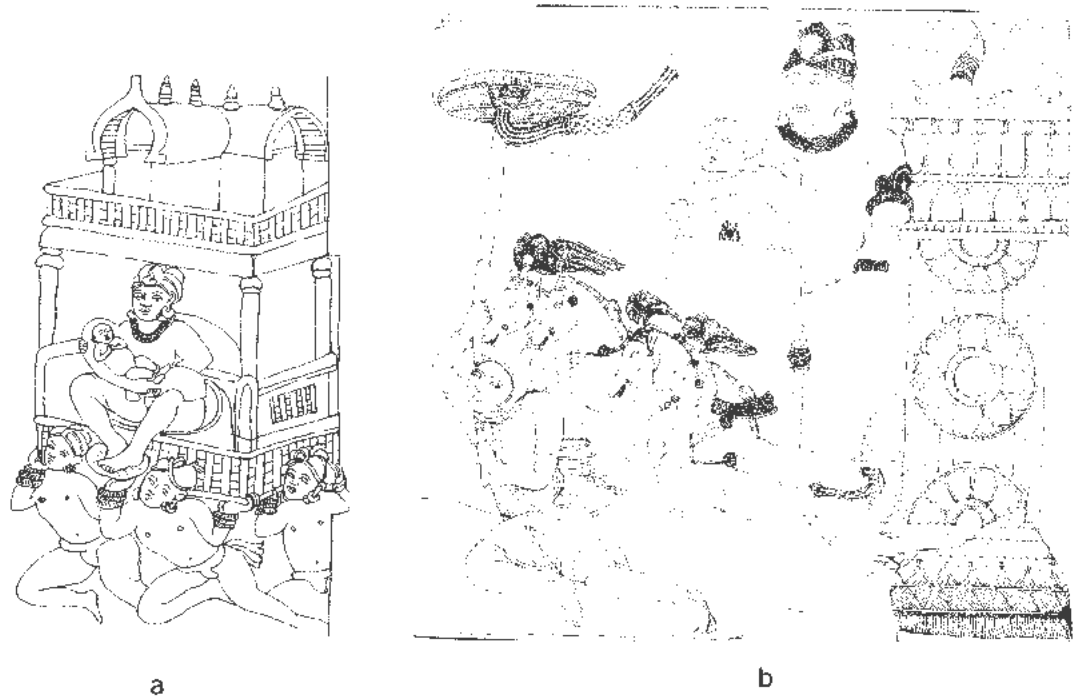
It is quite interesting to observe that in majority of the depictions, the noblemen themselves acted as mahouts (Fig. 65 e) during important events like battle and carrying reliquaries. Apart from these, as the owner of animal-Prince Vēssantara in the *Vēssantara Jātaka* and Sutasōma in *Sutasōma Jātaka*.

### Chhatra bearers and Chāmaradhāris

It is to be noted that all *chhatra* bearers (Fig.63 c) have short, close fitting drapery to facilitate brisk movement and a few of them cover their head with scarf to protect disheveling of hair from the wind during their run since they lead the entourage. Similar type of attire is seen on the attendants carrying water flask on their shoulders exclusively shown in the caravan of traders. Such apparels are seen on the announcers of the arrival of the noblemen as well. Their depiction as palanquin bearers of the rich trader Mūrakasēthi and Kaśyapagōtra is interesting since they

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### RETINUE BEARERS-UMBRELLA, FLYWHISK AND FLOWER



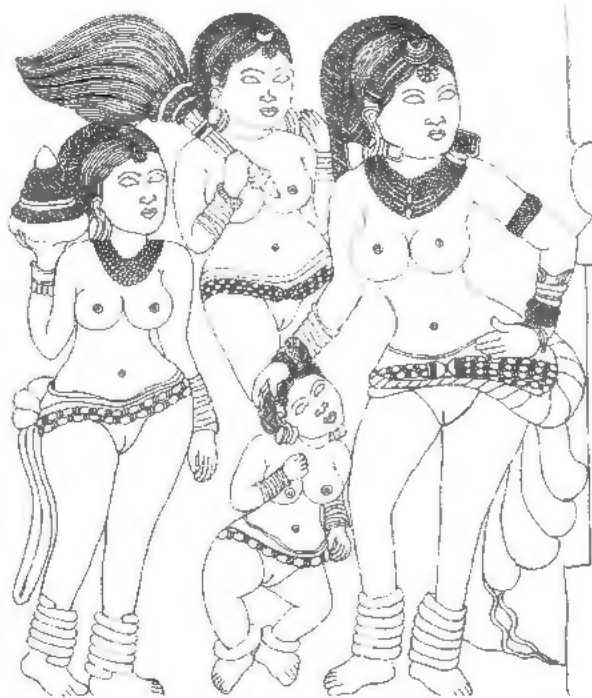
*Noblemen, upper drum slabs.*



**Fig.63**

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### RETINUE AND ATTENDANTS



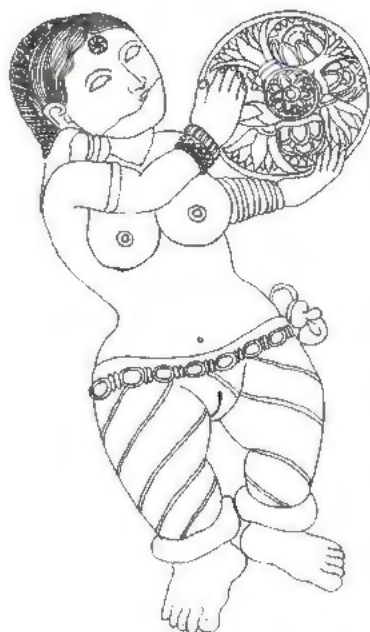
a



b



c



d



e

Fig.64



## MAHĀ STŪPA

### MODES OF TRANSPORTATION

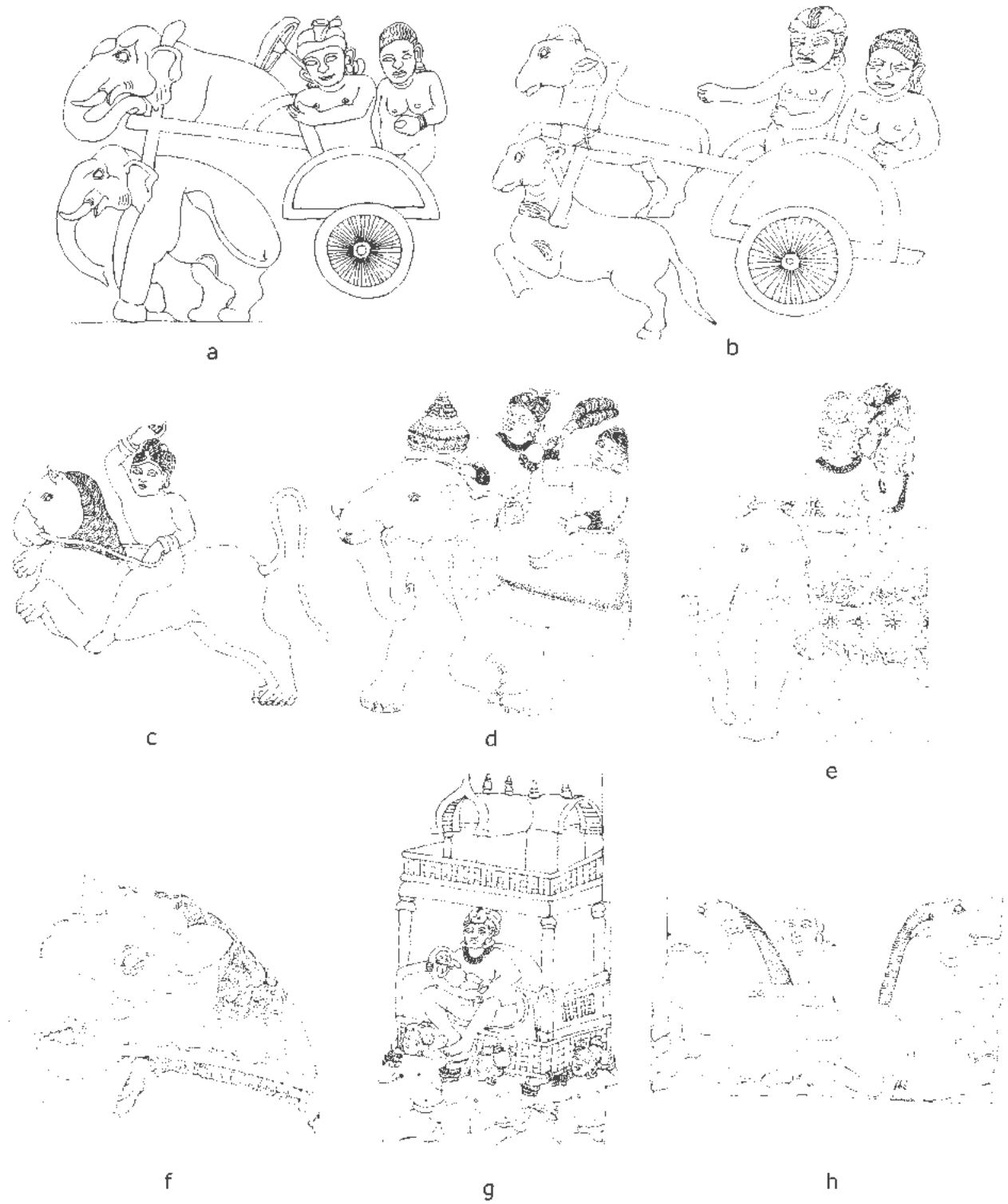


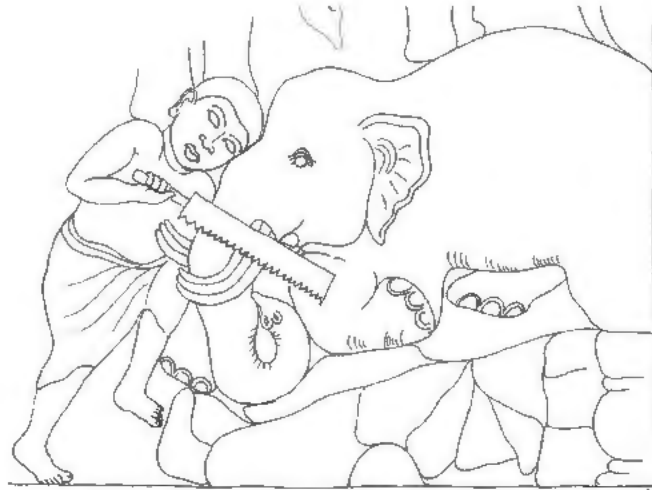
Fig.65

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### COMMON MEN AND SERVANTS



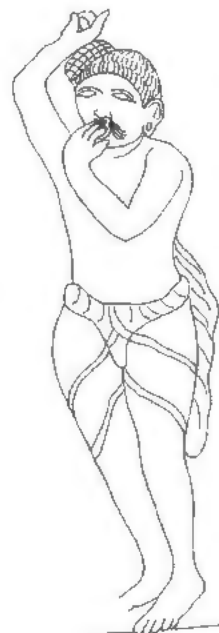
a. Fowler



b. Hunter



c. Horse tender



d. Reveller

Fig.66

also wear ornate turbans, ear ornaments and bracelets in tune with the noblemen. However, in both the depictions, they are shown without any *vakshahāra*. While in the register of trader *Mūrakasēthi* they have broken into a run, they are shown briskly paced in the register depicting *Kaśyapa*.

As *chāmaradhāris*, they are shown attending upon the king *Puḷumāvi*, Prince *Vēssantara* and as *dikpālās* worshipping the Master. However, in the panels depicting transportation of relics, the noblemen themselves act as the *chāmaradhāris*.

### Carriers of water and other materials

Interestingly, these are shown accompanying the trading community rather than the royal personalities. These are men (Pl.XCVIII) wearing a *dhōti* reaching only upto the knee with a full-armed sashed tunic holding a huge spouted water flask with a screw lid upon either of their shoulders and moving briskly supporting their consignment with their hands at the spout and body. They are shown with short combed hair tied in a central knot above the head and are bereft of any ornaments reflecting their social status. The pierced earlobes do not carry any ornament. A roll of cloth at the waist holds the short tunic, which could be *uttarīya*. This also reflects upon the assortment of supplies, essentially water or a liquid, being part of the entourage and an essential commodity

of the trading community. In one of the sculptural renderings, a person of the entourage of noblemen appears to carry upon his right shoulder a rolled up mattress as one of the accompaniments.

### Charioteers

Depicted usually along with the noblemen in the same basket of the chariot, the charioteer (Fig.63 b) is shown upto the bust level brazing himself against the gusty wind during the brisk momentum of the vehicle with a full armed tunic and a scarf covering his head. While in one he drives a camel driven chariot holding the long rein in left hand and a whip in the right hand commanding the two camels for brisk momentum, in another, he commands, the four caparisoned horses. Interestingly, in *Sajiniya Jataka*, he is shown with a whip in right hand and brazing himself against the basket of chariot without holding the reins in the left hand. He has a close fitting muffler added to the scarf covering the head, probably, to brace against the intensity of chilly weather during the sojourn.

### Ushers

Known as *ghōshakās* these men have been shown only once and are similarly attired as an umbrella bearer, water carrier, charioteer and other such similar classes of servants. Interestingly, they are shown carrying a small drum slung across their shoulders and with a short curved stick held in their right hand beating vigorously. In the composition, they are shown moving along



briskly to the right side of the retinue. It is also interesting to note that such *ghōshakās* did not form the retinue of the royalty since none of the royal depictions reflect the above announcers.

## Army

The *chaitya* being intensely religious, we find limited depictions of the army (Fig.67). To start with, they are shown in the form of the angry dwarf warriors of Māra attacking with hammer, goad, spears, etc. wherein the concentration of the artist is in sculpturing the sentiment of anger by showing clenched faces and wide-open eyes. Their attire is restricted to a loincloth at the waist but are otherwise bare bodied. In the limited depiction, they are reflected as short statured, pot-bellied dwarfs with a close crop of hair occasionally decked with flowers and sometimes with *patrakuṇḍalas*. Horse riders with a long spear were also part of the army. Archers (Fig. 67 a-c) formed the major group of soldiers in the thick of action as seen in fighting for the reliquaries astride elephants (Fig. 67 a), horses (Fig. 67 b) and foot soldiers (Fig. 67 c). The most striking feature in all such depictions is that they are shown holding the bow in their upraised right hand while drawing the string and arrow with the left. This is the ingenious way the sculptor has depicted the composition to avoid the left hand covering the face of the character and at the same time he has either taken the arrow parallel along the

extended right arm or simply falls short of the face. While, one of the archers astride the elephant is twanging his bow to announce his arrival at the battle, the animals on which they ride have sufficient quantity of quivers full of arrows slung across their body in stock and none of the archers are shown with a quiver slung at the shoulder.

Apart from the archers, the foot-soldiers (Fig. 67 d) carry rattan shields of circular, feathered ovate shapes with short scythes, broad-bladed sword, long handled spears, long handled double edged spears (Pl. CXI Sundara Sātakarṇi), short spear-like clubs, battle axe, axe and short thunderbolt (*vajra*). The last three are shown as the weapons held by dwarfs in the panel of Udayana who are similarly dressed. The archers and spear-bearers are shown with a turbaned headgear while the foot-soldiers bearing the sword and shield are bereft of any such headgear since they are the ones who are in the thick of the battle. They however, appear to have a thick reed-shield to protect themselves from the blows of the enemy. Apart from these (Fig. 67 a-i) and with an exception of Sundara Sātakarṇi, none of the royal personalities are shown carrying any weapon.

## Musicians and revellers

Bells and drums of assorted sizes and shapes were the most common musical instruments that are depicted wherein the

musicians (Fig.68 a-f) at the instrument are robed befitting the occasion. In the depiction of the panels celebrating transportation of the crest jewel of the Master, the celestials with the dress and drapery befitting them have a massive *dundhubi* slung across their shoulders. The gesture of both the figures playing at it unfortunately is mutilated. In the panel celebrating the birth of prince Siddhārtha, the common men of the society as revellers are playing upon *phalaka* and a small kettledrum as percussion instruments and bells. The din of these musical instruments is also accentuated by a reveller who whistles as an expression of joy and encouragement. The occasion is the street gymnastic show. This whistling is also noticed as an act of musical celebration at Bhārhut<sup>23</sup>. Their coiffure, attired in a short *dhōti*, naked above the waist, closely cropped hair with a central knot at the top and pierced non-ornate ears reflect upon the lowest rung of the society.

### Ascetics and monks

Apart from depicting the monks proceeding through different gates of the monastery at the lower drum, only once the depiction of monks preaching and receiving donations from king towards the cause of Buddhism is encountered. Sātavāhana king Sātakarṇi is gifting golden flowers to two Buddhist monks, bare feet with closely cropped hair. The robes cover the entire body upto the ankles. Their features of wide eyes, narrow forehead, not much of

an aquiline nose with prominent flaring of the nostrils, thick lips and heavy rounded shoulders point at their local origin.

In the depiction of the post dream event, the court astrologer Asita is shown attired in the robes of a courtier decorated with elaborate turban, heavy jewellery like *vakshahāra*, *kēyura*, wearing robes reaching upto the ankle. Asita is shown in conversation with Śuddhōdana outside the sacred or holy dwelling befitting the courtier of a king. In the *Vēssantara Jātaka*, Jūjuka, the crooked brahmin, is shown as a disformed potbellied figure, with haunched shoulders and crooked legs. He has close-cropped hair; a part of the same is drawn behind the head in the form of a knot as *śikhā*. The *yajñōpavīta* - a feature of a brahmin - is not discernible. In continuation of the same *Jātaka* two brahmins, of whom one is Jujuka, are seated in conversation with Sanjaya, king and father of Prince Vēssantara, as to how the children of the Prince-Jāli and Kanhajinā, were gifted away by the prince and collected gifts and ransom from the king. Here the brahmins are almost depicted like monks covering themselves in heavy drapery from shoulder to ankle, perhaps reflecting a chilly weather or as the robes of travellers. They are shown with close-cropped hair and roundish face with smiling countenance. While the elder one has pierced ear without ornaments, the younger one has unpierced lobes and is bereft of any ornaments. In the *Sēnaka*

*Jātaka*, a brahmin is shown astonished on hearing from the tree sprite about the threat to his life and his wife and reports the same to Sēnaka the Bōdhisattva. It is to be noted that he is shown wearing a *pītāmbara*, *ratna yajnōpavīta* and a traveller's baggage at the shoulder and interestingly a turban. This also reflects that the costumes and apparel of the character portrayed changed according to the requirement of narration rather than any uniform code of dress and drapery for the brahmins.

### Hunters and forest dwellers

Five *Jātakas*, *Hamsa*, *Śuka*, *Chhaddanta*, *Jāgarakhasa* and *Arindama* carry depictions of hunters. In the *Hamsa Jātaka*, the hunter (Fig.66 a,b) is depicted twice and has been shown wearing a *dhōti*, rolled and tucked at the waist and is naked above, gently yet firmly holding the bird in the outstretched hand. He has typical close-cropped hair, combed backwards and has set a lotus flower as an added hairdo depicting him as a forest dweller (*aṭavika*). His pierced ears are empty.

In *Śuka Jātaka*, the fowler is shown clutching the parrot closely to his chest and gesticulating the virtues of the bird to the Varanasi king and queen as well as the courtier seated closeby. He is also similarly attired like the hunter of *Hamsa Jātaka*. Only a non-ornate turban, a traveller's baggage slung across the shoulders speaks of his travelling from a far off place.

Except for the baggage no other attributes can identify him as a hunter.

In the *Chhaddanta Jātaka* he is similar to the one depicted in *Hamsa Jātaka* with a flower set in the hairdo and while presenting himself in front of the king, has his *uttarīya* tied firmly around the waist as a token of respect. In the next panel, the strain he is taking to saw the ivory or tusks of *Chhaddanta*, his efforts in carrying the load (Fig.66 b) and subsequent presentation of the same in the court with a touch of sadness are graphically captured. This could be very well understood by the expression of anxiety and sadness depicted in the other figures in their characterisation. In the tale of alert monkey (*Jāgarakha*), a forest dweller in front of his hermitage narrates the virtues of the *Mahākapi* to a group of seated noblemen. He is shown seated on a deer-skin wearing an *uttarīya* exposing his right shoulder. Being a recluse he is shown with close-cropped hair and non-ornamented ears. In the *Arindama Jātaka*, two hunters are shown shooting arrows at monkeys in the mango grove at the behest of the king. These are also similar to those depicted in *Hamsa Jātaka*.

### Male drapery and ornaments

The sculptural renderings, both at the lower and upper drums, have been decorated with a typical ornamentation and drapery following the same tradition of the earlier school of art as seen at



# MAHĀ STŪPA

## SOLDIERS AND WEAPONS



Fig.67

Bharhut, Sāñchi and Amarāvati. Basically, all the male figures are attired in a *dhōti* and a prominent *śirobhūṣaṇa* - turban, knotted in the centre with two equal divisions on either side of the turban sometimes with a prominent plumage (Fig.58A). They are also decorated with a prominent *makarakuṇḍala* occasionally replaced by a *patrakuṇḍala* or a *pushpakuṇḍala* depending upon the social status of the individual. Interesting to note is that almost all the characters at the lower drum, even including the Nāgas and the nobility offering obeisance at the different types of *stūpa*, are shown with the above drapery, headgear and ear ornaments. Monks, servants attending upon the nobility in the form of umbrella bearers, *chāmaradhāris*, etc. are shown with close-cropped hair without a headgear and also with pierced or non-pierced ear-lobes once again indicative of their social status and affordability. It is interesting to note that the monks of the monastic school depicted in the lower drum are shown with different types of ear ornaments suggesting the none-too-a-stringent code of dress in those times (Fig.69). While the *dhōti* and *uttarīya* at the waist is a common feature for the male figures, occasionally, they are shown with a full armed tunic reaching up to the thighs especially as seen in the depictions of the servants attending the nobility.

### Adhōvastra (pītāmbara)

As in practice right from ancient times and as gleaned from contemporary sculptural art, at Kanaganahalli too, the men were found befittingly attired depending upon their social status. Sometimes it is more of their affordability rather than any social status amongst the upper class since both men and women, from a king to a nobleman, a trader to a palanquin bearer, a queen to a *chāmaradhariṇi*, even *kubjā* or a dwarf had his or her choice of dress and ornaments. Most of the males, especially of the royal class and other nobility wore a loin garment known as *dhōti* or *pītāmbara* reaching beyond the knee and falling short of the ankle, which was worn in the *kuchcha* style. The servants and common men would either wear the dhoti with *kuchcha* up to the knee or sometimes even wear it shorter than the royalty and noblemen. (Fig. 66, 68). Sometimes the garment is shown worn in the form of a *dhōti* without a *kuchcha* and also as seen in the figures of ascetics and monks-a single garment covering the entire body (*ēka vastra*).

At Bhārhut<sup>24</sup>, in the figures of royalty and noblemen, the *kuchcha* of the *dhōti* is let loose at front between the legs in great folds, touching the ground, which is held at waist by a *kaṭivastra* with its central knot slightly above the pubis region.

At Sāñchi<sup>25</sup>, also as at Bhārhut, the men are shown wearing *dhōti* reaching up

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### MUSICIANS AND TYPES OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS



a



b



c



d



e



f

Fig.68

to the thighs only with the central *kuchcha* flowing down to the ground with the carefully arranged wavy folds. The *dhōti* is tied and held separately by a somewhat thick or heavy *kaṭisūtra*, the sash of which would be either lateral or at the centre, almost like that of Kanaganahalli. At Amarāvati too, there is the prominent *kuchcha* for the *dhōti* in the centre held by a *kaṭisūtra* and let loose between the legs. Whereas, the same is tucked closely in folds in front at the waist so as to prominently exhibit the lower abdomen at Kanaganahalli. This feature has made its beginning at Amarāvati.

### Kaṭisūtra

The *pītambara* is firmly held in position by tying a piece of lengthy tape-*kaṭibandha sūtra*, the sash of which is tied according to convenience, either lateral at the sides over the pelvic bone or at front in the region of pubis (Fig.58). This was a simple lengthy piece of cloth decorated with designs or studded with gems, which would reflect the affluence of the individual character wearing it. The *kaṭisūtra* at Bhārhut is just a girdle cloth tied over the *dhōti* with the central knot just on the pubis region as explained earlier.

### Ūrdhva vastra (Uttariya) (upper garment)

*Uttariya* adorned the waist of all men except for the monks, in the sculptural art (Fig.58A). It is shown as a fairly lengthy

*girdle* cloth, twisted and worn around the waist loosely or held at the waist in a thick folded knot, part of which would flow down at the sides of the thigh in great lengths all along. Most of the royalty and noblemen depicted as characters in the *Jātaka* tales display the robe. Sometimes the same is shown tightly robed around the waist while in the act of brisk movement or taken across shoulders-once again in the status of motion. In some they are worn around the neck for warmth as seen in the front flag - *chhatra* bearing runner in *Vēssantara Jātaka*, as extra support at the waist by the child bearing pole balancer and as a shoulder support by the palanquin bearer. It is to be noted that invariably they are worn around the waist at Kanaganahalli than being worn across the shoulder.

At Bhārhut<sup>26</sup>, the *uttariya* is shown worn across the shoulder and held by the hands as in case of Suchiloma *yaksha*<sup>27</sup> or let loose in carefully arranged folds with a V-formation at the chest as seen in the whistling figures worshipping the *Bōdhi* tree<sup>28</sup>. The *bhāravāhaka* renderings show the same as tied securely at the waist since they are the men in action and a flowing drapery would be more of a hurdle.

### Shirt or tunic

While the noble men and royalty at Kanaganahalli are shown bare above the waist except for the ornaments, the common men, especially servants, are shown wearing a full-sleeved tunic (Fig.66



c) tied at the waist by an *uttarīya* or *kaṭivastra*. This tunic reaches up to the thigh and fans out slightly with frills. It is observed that Chenna leading Kanthaka, *chhatra* bearer, archer, water carrier, and soldiers are shown wearing the tunic. It would be interesting to note that all the characters mentioned above are either briskly moving braving the sun and wind or are in the act of going out or have just returned from travel. In one of the lower drum panels, the abacus of the pilaster has two addorsed horse riders, who wear tunics similar to the present day *kurtā*. At Bhārhut<sup>29</sup>, a soldier is shown wearing a half sleeved tunic with sashes at the chest and abdomen. The stiffness indicates it to be made out of leather.

### Yajñōpavīta

The sacred thread is shown in the elite class of the society-the brahmins and the monarchs of the *Kshatriya* clan as per the *varṇāśrama dharma*. Among the monarchs Aśoka, Ajayata and the brahmin in *Sēnaka Jātaka* are shown wearing *yajñōpavīta* like a string across the left shoulder reaching up to the right waist.

### Śirōbhūṣaṇas

The *śirōbhūṣaṇas* (turban) depicted here are of specific type and only the most common variety. A careful observation does reveal minor changes. Usually it is a long cloth rolled in great coils covering the entire head, divided into two equal halves,

each held by beaded tapes or decorated with a string of pearls. Depending upon the affordability, they fashion a girdle across the lobes of the turban with a central circular or dumbbell shaped large cylindrical bead with a string of beads or of pearls, metal or semiprecious stone (Fig.70 a-k). The cloth used for the turban could be a simpler plain variety or a coloured designed variety depending upon affordability. Sometimes a plumage or a feather is tucked at the centre to give an additional loftiness to the headgear.

### Ear Ornaments

Men of nobility, royal persons and traders have ear ornaments of their choice. Some of the servant classes do not have their ears pierced (Fig. 71 a,b), whereas some have just simple piercing without ornaments. The following are the common types of ear ornaments seen (Fig.71).

1. **Pierced ear without ear ornament:** Usually found in the depictions of the servant class (Fig.71 c)
2. **Kanakatāla-patra type:** This is an ear ornament of rolled thin metal or gold foil, which is light yet large enough to extend the piercing of the lower ear lobe. One of the simplest yet developed version in metal of a *patrakunḍala* (*tālapatra*) (Fig.71 d, f)
3. **Pushpa-kunḍala:** Inserting fairly large natural flowers with a sturdy stalk to easily fasten them into the pierced ears. Usually lotus is preferred (Fig.47c).

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### MEN WITH DIFFERENT EAR ORNAMENTS AND HEAD GEARS

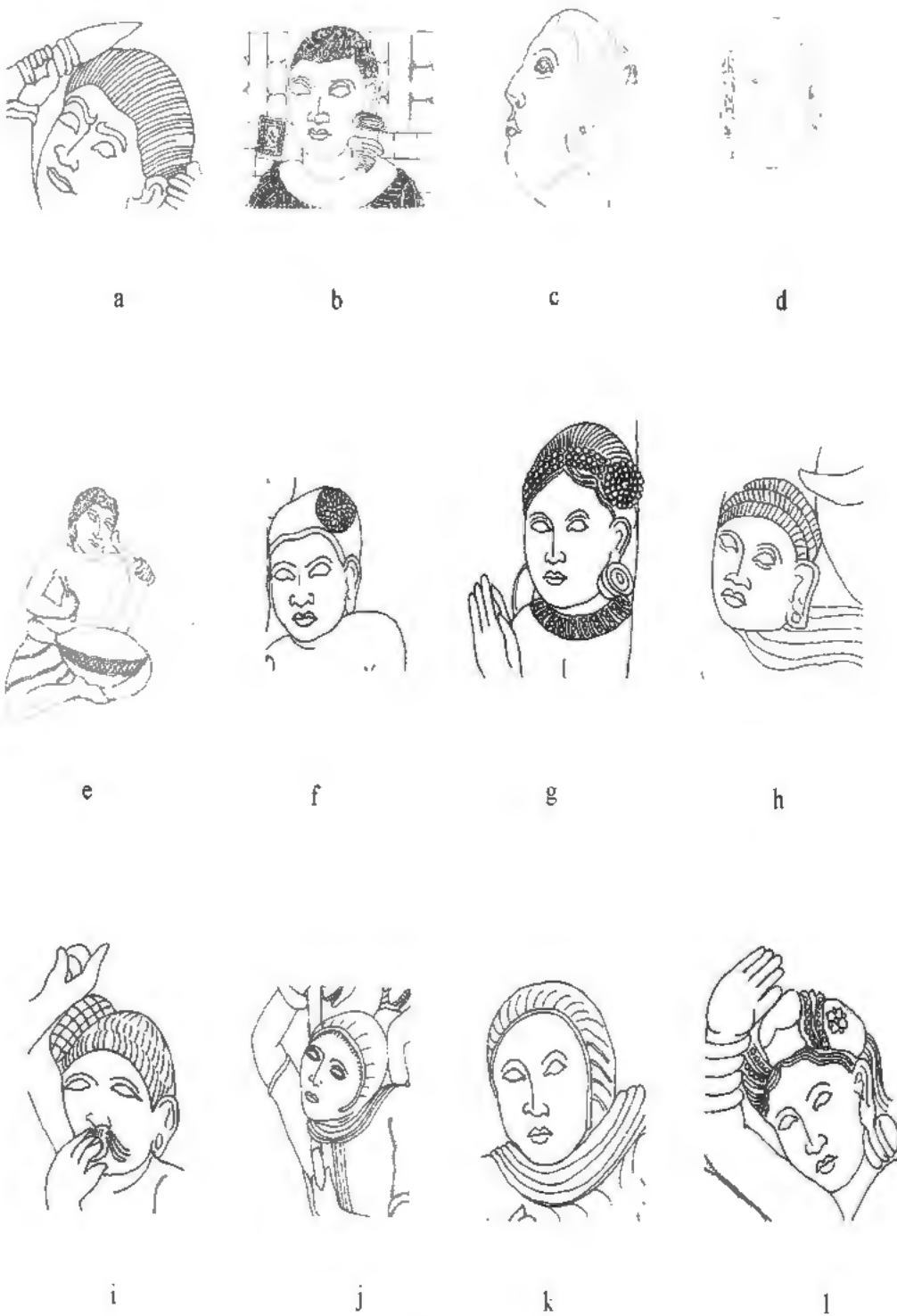


Fig.69

4. *Kanaka-pushpa* set in square. Usually shown as the ear ornament of the elite.
5. *Kanaka-kunḍala*-coil type, free ends culminate as a flower bud held by a band. It is fashioned as a metal tube, the ends of which are fashioned into gem studded floral buds (Fig.71 m,n).
6. *Kanaka-pushpa-valaya* type, sophisticated ornament of the elite, similar to the *kunḍala*-type. However it is fashioned out of thick twisted metal, intricately woven and ending in a lotus bud at broad side or at the ends (Fig.71 i).
7. *Kunḍala*-coil type, twisted on the apex of the end in a receding circle and ending in a bud (Fig.71 l).

## Vakshahāras

These occur in all variant types of the single, three to multi-stranded ornaments encircling the neck of both men and women. It also reflects the economic affluence of the individual and is seen used as a shoulder girdle of a specific rank achieved in monastic life. Sometimes it rests close to the base of the neck (as *Kaṇṭhahāra*) resting over the collar-bone and sometimes descends down to the bottom end of *vaksha* (*Vaksha* and *Stānahāra*). String of lotus petals, also some times reflected in metal, forms the simplest variety. Many types of *Vakshahāra* with variations in material, strands, size of the beads, types of tracers used are seen sculpted in the carvings for

both men and women. Different forms and shapes like faceted, truncated, cylindrical etc., are noteworthy. A general description of these is only possible as the material used in such beads like pearls, shell, ivory, precious stones and gold cannot be distinguished.

## Kaṇṭhahāra

The male and female figures sculptured on the drum slabs (lower & upper) and cornices resting over the *āyaka* platforms are decorated with numerous types of ornate *Kaṇṭhahāra* (necklace) as well as *Vakshahāra*. These are classified as per type, shape and described below;

### a. *Kaṇṭhahāra*:

- (1) String of lotus petals;
- (2) String of pearls with end fastener collar;
- (3) String of pearls and streaks of metal with a central truncated pendant;
- (4) String of pearls with end fastener collar.

### b. *Vakshahāra*:

1. **Cotton thread *phalaka hāra***: 2-3 strings of uniformly rolled perfumed cotton threads (Fig.72 c).
2. ***Ēkāvalī***: simple string of beads usually made of gold, precious material, T.C, shell, glass and pearls or others (Fig.72 d).
3. ***Ratnāvalī***: Multi-stringed pearl, beaded necklace occupying or resting over the valley of the chest. The strings on either side are strung together in a clasp probably of a metal or simply inter-twined into a rope and tied at

- the back. The necklace has flat ribbon type tracer bead in metal. (Fig.73 a).
4. **Phalaka hāra:** Five-stringed *ratnāvalī* with square metal ornate *phalakas* with floral design, at regular intervals (Fig.73 b,c,d).
  5. **Kaṇṭhī hāra:** Usually it is a gem studded golden necklace with meticulous filigree work of floral designs, broad in structure sitting pretty close to the neck (Fig.72 p,q).
  6. **Phalaka-Kaṇṭhī hāra:** It is a combination of fine string of pearls or beads and *Kaṇṭhī-hāra*. The circular large central *phalaka* either studded with gems or wrought with floral designs and mounted on to a string of twisted beads of semi precious stone or gold. Usually it is an ornament worn by male especially the king and noble men (Fig.72 r).
  7. **Kaṇṭhīhāra** with central faceted central tracer of metal (Fig.72 g).
  8. **Three-stringed ratnāvalī:** Simple three stringed *ratnāvalī* without any tracers or *phalakas*, which was fastened behind (Fig.72 e).
  9. **Multi-stranded ratnāvalī** with central truncated, faceted cylindrical large tracer (Fig.72 h).
  10. **Pushpa-Kanṭhi:** This could be of purely lotus petals stringed together or could be a *kaṇṭhi* made of precious metal strung at its wearing side with *ratnavali* with tracers (Fig.72 f).
  11. **Ratnāvalī Kaṇṭhi with Śirshaka:** Multi stranded *ratnāvalī* with a *śirshaka* used as *kaṇṭhi*. The central

pendant can be of precious metal with gem (Fig.72 m).

12. **Ratnāvalī with string holder:** *Ratnāvalī* with small cylindrical beads in five strings with a gem studded holder at the collar (Fig.73 j).
13. **Kaṇṭhi and ratnāvalī:** *Kaṇṭhi* and *ratnāvalī* with a *śirshaka*. Only depiction at the site (lower drum, northern *āyaka*. Yakshi Śiri).
14. **Ēkāvali-stānāhara:** This is made out either of selected beads, pearls or rope string of micro beads twisted into sturdy *ēkāvali* passing through the breasts (Fig.73 f).
15. **Ēkāvali-with a śirshaka:** A dwarfish palanquin bearer in the *Bhavachakra* panel is shown with a simple thread strung with a cylindrical, truncated faceted *tavit* type of bead.
16. **Nāga-hāra:** A dwarf palanquin bearer in the *Bhavachakra* panel shown wearing a small cobra as a *ratnāvalī* is noteworthy (Fig.72 b).

## Women

Various aspects of women from a noble lady to a maid (Fig.74), queen mother, queen, beloved, in the form of a charming princess to a *kubjā*, as a devotee, as a musician, as a submissive devout *nāgiṇī* and as a *Yakshi* of immense power have been captured in all vividity. Incidentally, they are also referred in the donatory inscriptions as a mother, beloved wife, sister, daughter, daughter-in-law, and devout disciples of the order; *mātā*, *ghariṇī*, *gahapatinī*, *bhāriya*, *putikā*, *bhaginī*, *snushā*,



*antēvāsika*, *bhikunī* and *upāsikā*. Some of the inscriptions, other than those found elsewhere in the same locality, refer to *rājāmātyī*, *amāchī* (wife of a minister) and *mahāsēnāpatinī*, etc. which also speak of the profession and social status of their husbands. Amitā Ray<sup>30</sup> has reflected upon the women of Sātavāhana times as an “explanation of the very free, uninhibited, sensuous and conscious and sophisticated role, the women play on the lively reliefs of Nagarjunakonda and other contemporary sites, may perhaps be sought, in a large measure, by this social milieu.” This is applicable in totality to the depictions at this place as well. However they are known for their larger dimensions and less crowding with a freedom of expression and an earthly plasticity unique to the place, placing them ahead by a century. Albeit the restrictions of a two-dimensional carving, the movement of limbs, intense eyes and anatomical details induced have effectively captured the various sentiments for the occasion in which they are depicted.

The women folk depicted by the artists of Sannati or Kanaganahalli are known for their triangular to ovalish faces with prominent expressive eyes, a short forehead and a small mouth, sometimes with a gentle smile and sometimes with a pout, sufficiently high neck, moderate rounded shoulders, full bosom befitting the anatomy and age. Emaciated abdomen, a high pelvis and supple slender limbs highlight their graciousness. In spite of the

diaphanous drapery, femininity is always shown prominently. The women are shown wearing a *pītāmbara*, the transparent extended portion thrown across the left shoulder as evidenced by the floral decorations of the *pītāmbara* or the bordered design of the drapery shown across the left chest of the figure depicted. The jewellery and ornamentation of moderate nature exalt the earthly feminine anatomy and grace of the figures, from servant to a queen. The sculptor of Kanaganahalli falters in sculpting the lower limbs of any given male or female figure. He appears to be very comfortable upto the heel in the anatomy of a figure sculpturing while he is at a loss in carving the soles and toes of the feet. It is only in the third phase of sculptural art of the upper drum, more maturity is seen in the depiction. In spite of the above negligible lacuna, the artist of Kanaganahalli equals himself in composition, achieving requisite plasticity while narrating the life story of the Master and his previous births and the major role the women played in the socio-religious and political life of contemporary times. This is also amply justified by a high percentage of donations made for the construction, embellishment and maintenance of the *stūpa*, either independently or along with their family members.

### Hairstyle of the Female

The elaborate hair dress of the women folk here is quite astonishing (Fig.75). The arrangement of the tresses range from

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### HEAD GEAR WORN BY ROYAL AND NOBLE MEN



Fig. 70

the simplest variety (Fig. 75 a-c) to the most complicated with string of pearls or beads tied at the forehead with a central *padma* suspended from a beaded chain (Fig. 75 e-i). The chain at the forehead, also known as *makarikā* appears to be the fashion of the day since even a maid sometimes is shown wearing it. Interesting to note is the trimming of a few tresses of the hair at the central partition on the forehead. Some of the prominent hairstyles observed are as follows.

1. Well-combed hair, the tresses set with string of pearls and beads, with three circlets of elevated rings in the centre with a central *chūḍāmaṇi*. A prominent ring folds in the back. The central plait at the front decked with *ardha-lalāṭa chandra* and *chūḍāmaṇi*. Highly elaborate hair dress here is seen in queen Mahāmāyā (Fig. 75 l).
2. Well-combed hair is decked with a gem-studded chain-*makarikā* from ear to the centre, a *chūḍāmaṇi* or a *śīraschandra* suspended in a chain at the front. An additional decking of the tresses into long twisted rope arranged slightly above the head ending in a prominent knot and culminating in flower offers an elevated hairdress as seen in Mahāmāyā (Fig. 76 d).
3. One of the rare hairstyles - a circular turban-like arrangement of the hair dress, treated with pearls, *makarikā*, *chūḍāmaṇi* and *śīraschandra* (Fig. 75 r).

## Ear Ornaments

The ear ornaments of the female are especially akin to those of the male with less changes and follow the same classification. Some special types worn by women are:

1. ***Kanaka-pushpa valaya kuṇḍala***: The frontal broad end is treated with floral design set in square and occasionally studded with gems. The rear screw part is drawn in the form of a designed funnel (Fig 75 q).
2. ***Kanakatālapatra* type**: This is an ear ornament of rolled thin metal or gold foil, which is light yet large enough to extend the piercing of the lower ear lobe. One of the simplest yet developed version in metal or a *patra kuṇḍala* (*tāla patra*)(Fig 75 d).
3. ***Kanaka pushpa*** set in square. Usually shown as the ear ornament of the elite (Fig 57 b).
4. ***Makarakuṇḍala***: Heavy coiled ear ornament of precious metal akin to *makara*. The free ends of the lobes of the ornament is blunted and constricted with bands studded with precious gems- as jewel of the elite or noble women. Sometimes, the women are also shown wearing it, reflecting their social status other than royalty.
5. ***Simha mukha swarna kuṇḍala***: This is akin to *makara kuṇḍala*. The front of the ornament usually is drawn into a tiny jumping lion with its fore-paw

## MAHĀ STŪPA

DIFFERENT TYPES OF EAR ORNAMENTS WORN BY BOTH MALE AND FEMALE

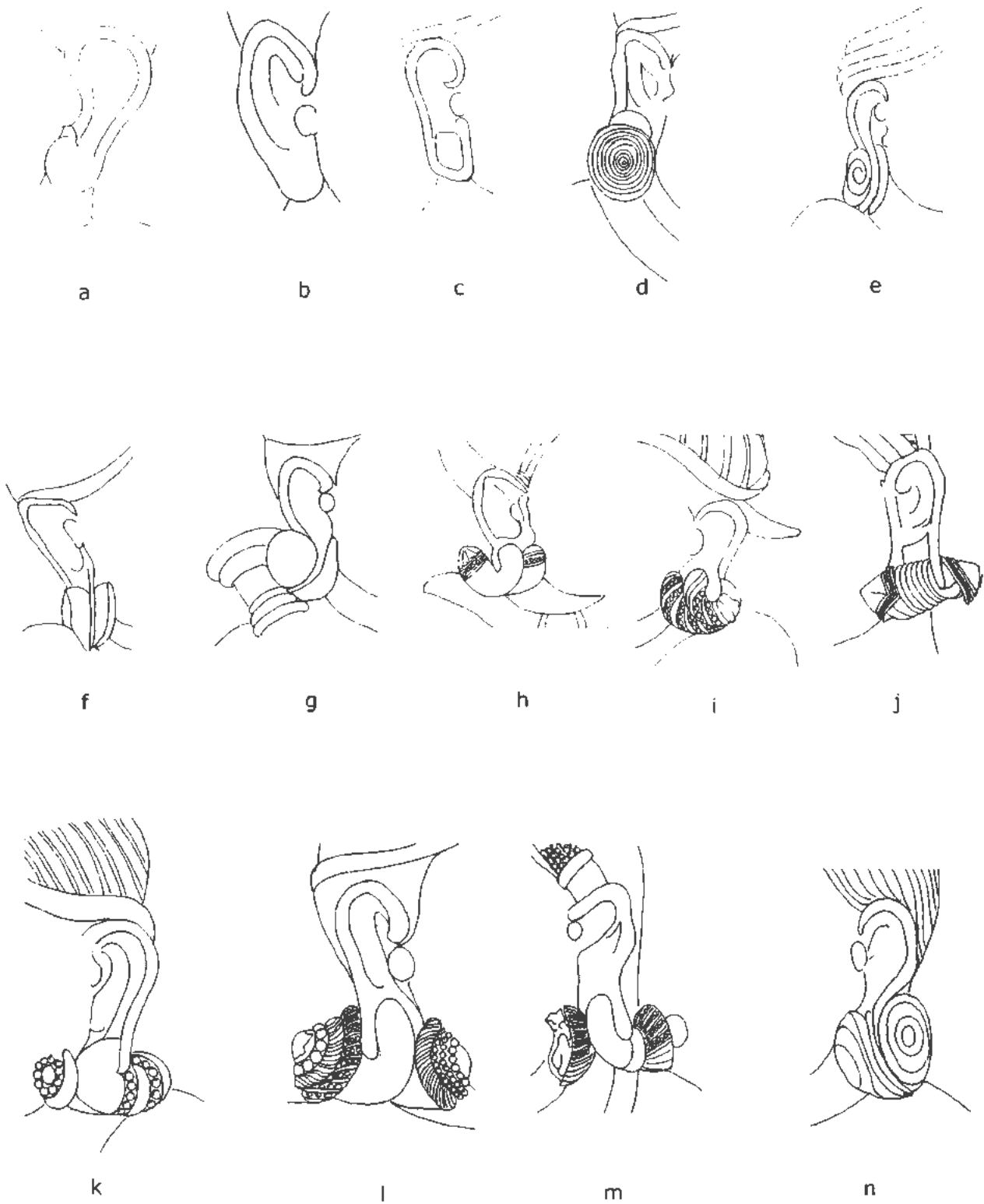


Fig.71



raised. The screw or the fastener of the ornament is drawn like cock feather arrangement with each leaf studded with precious gems. From the point of view of affordability it is the ornament of the elite.

6. **Vritta valaya** and Kanaka pushpa Kuṇḍala: This is a double ear ornament wherein gem studded or micro beaded twisted Valaya is worn in addition to gem studded Kanaka pushpa at the front( 75 i).

## Bracelets

The bracelets worn by both the male and female are also similar and the wearing of *sarpavalaya* and *maṇikhachita kēyūra* appears to be common for all except for the servant class, especially men. The *angadas* - bracelets sometimes are interspersed with bangles as well (Fig.76 e-j,l,n,o).

## Lalata Tilaka

Irrespective of their social status, depending upon the affordability, especially the women of the royalty, noblemen and even servant maids appear to have had a fascination towards wearing a decorated *padma-phalaka* or *lalāṭa tilaka*, earlier described as *chūḍāmaṇi*, at the forehead along with a beaded chain locking the frontal hairdo from the central parting to the ears, a practice even today, wherein women adorn themselves with such ornaments (Fig.76 a, b).

## Kaṭibandha

*Kaṭibandha* are of the following types (Fig.76 m-o and 77 a-n):

1. Double string beaded Kaṭibandha with central clasp. Double string beaded Kaṭibandha without central clasp.
2. Double-string beaded Kaṭibandha with central clasp with double phalakas.
3. Single-string beaded Kaṭibandha without central clasp.
4. Multi-string beaded Kaṭibandha with central clasp.

## Anklets

In addition to the bracelets and bangles for the upper limbs, the legs were decorated with springed anklets seen in the women of all social status. These were simple *valayas* worn at the ankle, either gem-studded or plain (Fig.77 o-t). Sometimes another ornament, *manjirā*, either of gem studded variety or plain type, was also worn.

## Narratives depicted in the upper drum slabs

The *stūpa* has yielded a large number of upper drum relief slabs depicting the themes that are well known from many of the other Buddhist sites in India. The themes opted for narration 59 panels of two registers each, by the artists resolve into the following five groups:

1. The narrations of previous births of the Master (Jātaka tales) such as Vidura paṇḍita, Prince Vēssantara, Sutasōma,

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DIFFERENT TYPES OF NECK ORNAMENTS (KAṆṬHAHARA) WORN BY MEN

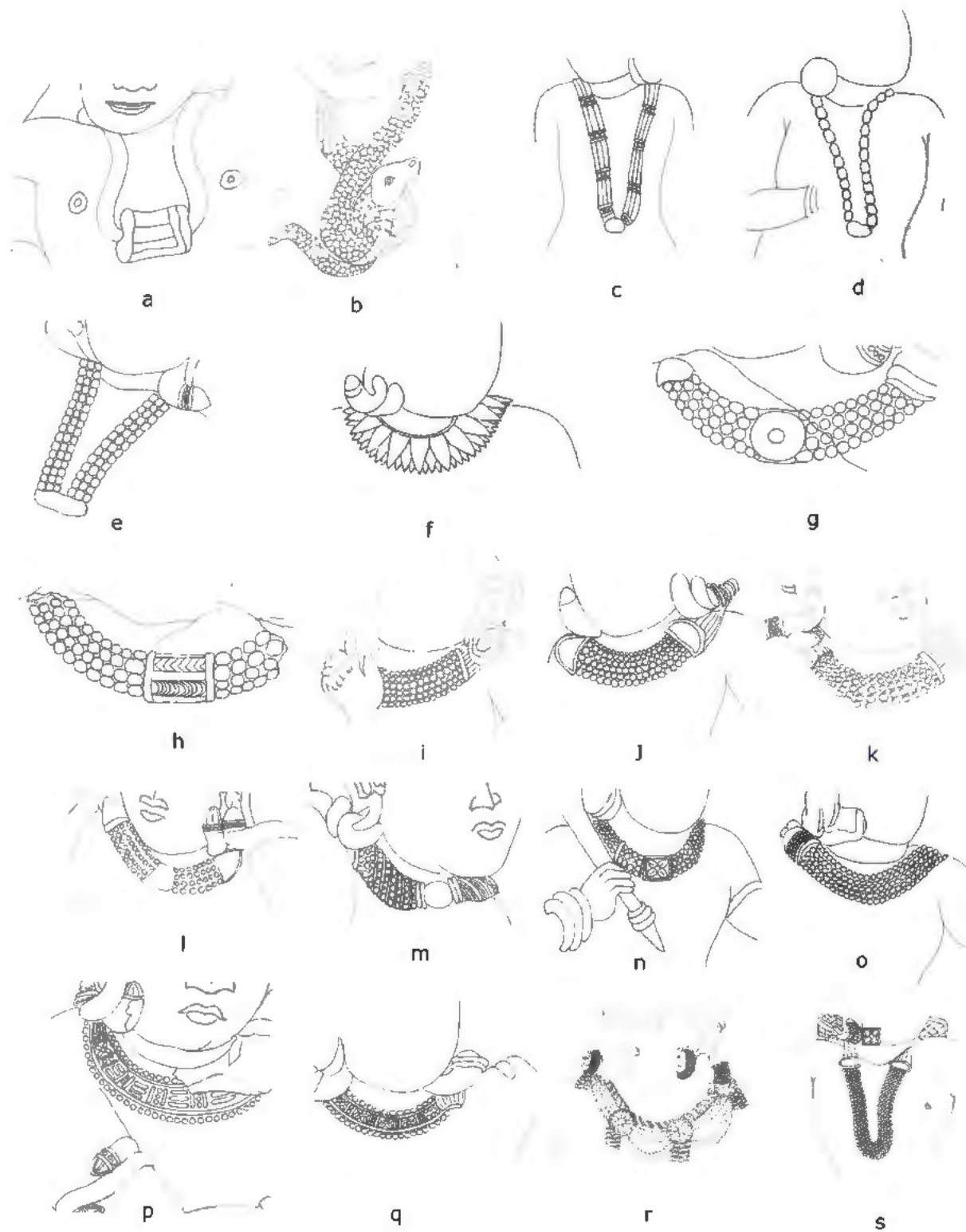


Fig.72

## MAHĀ STŪPA

DIFFERENT TYPES OF NECK ORNAMENTS (KAṆṬHAHARA) WORN BY MEN AND WOMEN



Fig.73

## MAHĀ STŪPA

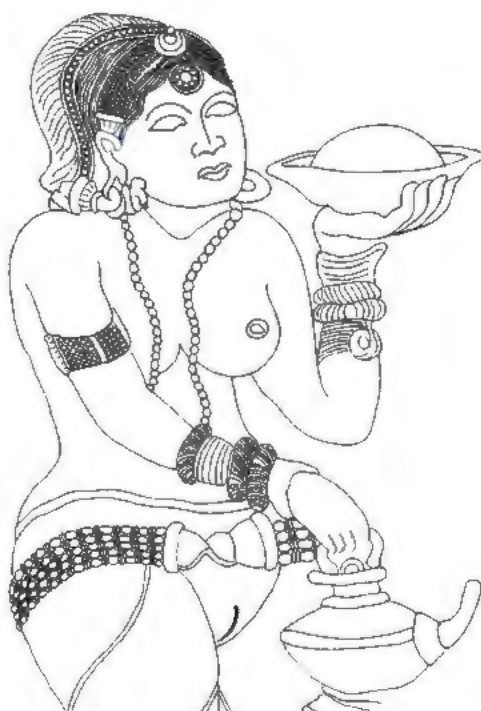
### COMMON WOMEN AND SERVANTS



*a. Water maid*



*b. Casket bearer*



*c. Sujātā*



*d. Inebriated Kubjā.*

**Fig. 74**



## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DIFFERENT HAIR STYLES AND OTHER ORNAMENTS

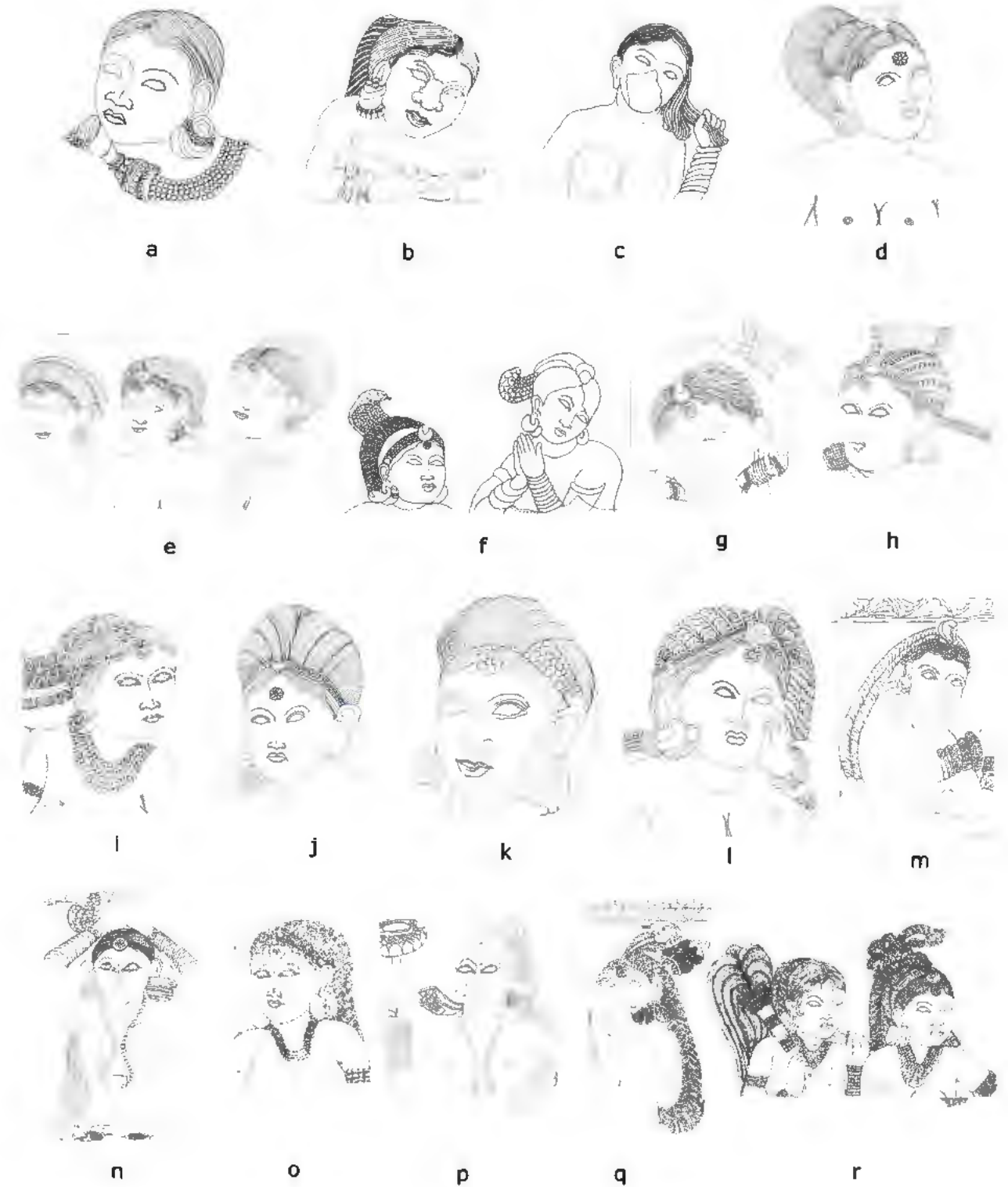


Fig.75

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DIFFERENT TYPES OF HAIRSTYLES AND OTHER ORNAMENTS

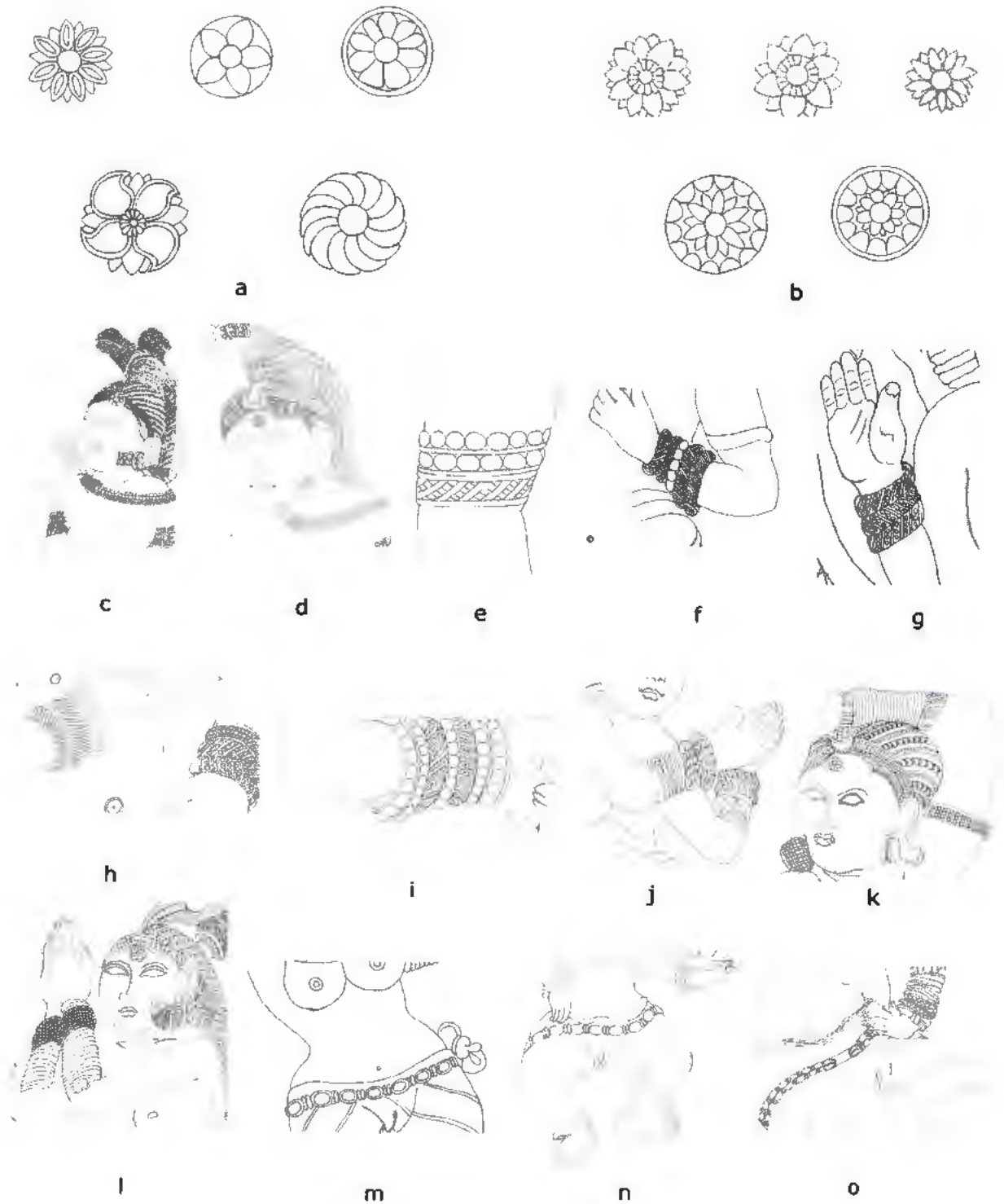


Fig.76

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### ORNAMENTATION AROUND WAIST AND LEGS

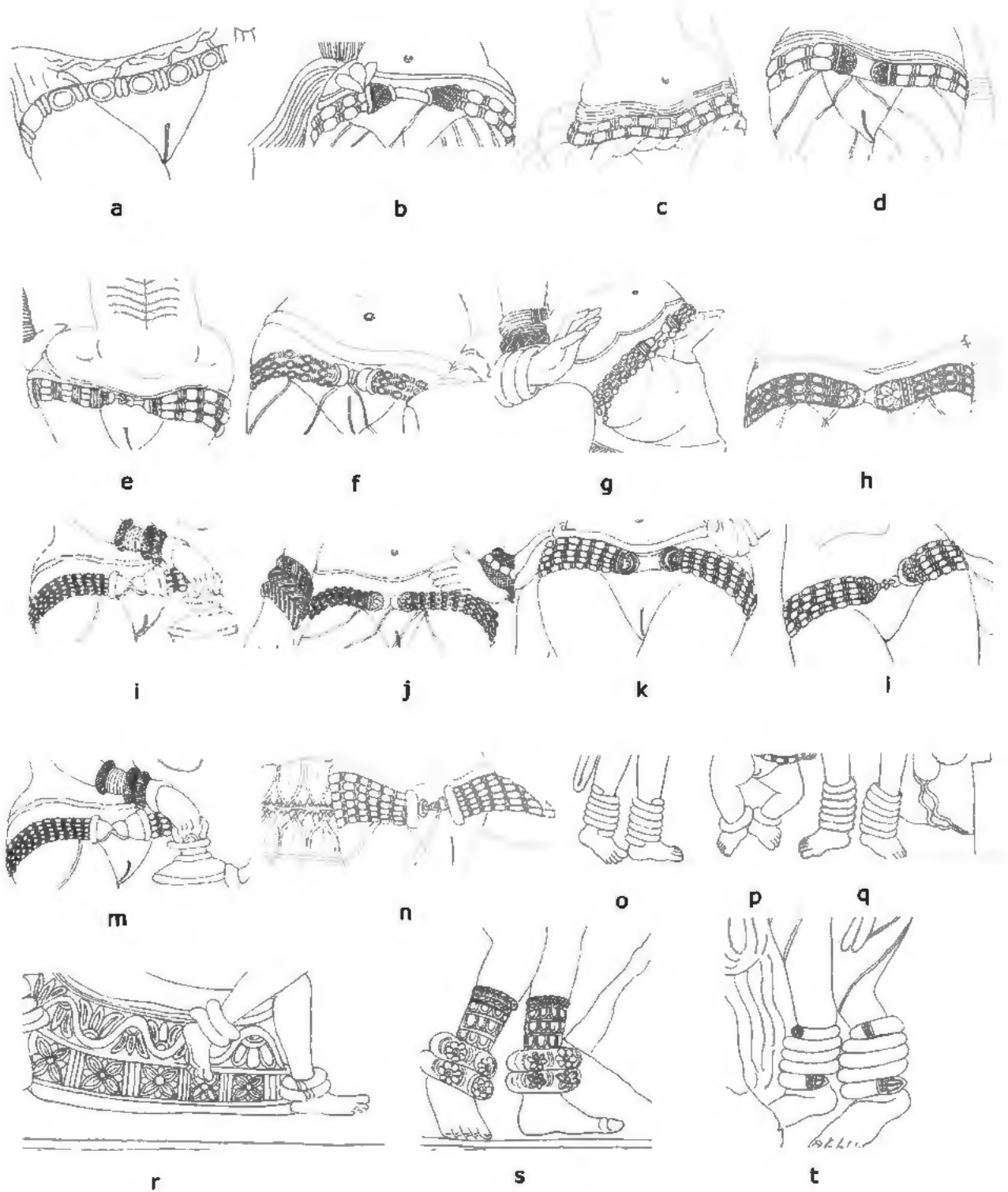


Fig.77

Sanjyaya, Arindama, Chhaddanta, the alert monkey (Jagharaka), Sēnaka, Kumara A(rindama) or Sonaka, and the birds like, Hamsa and Śuka.

2. The major events in the life of the Buddha, from the event of celestials seeking the birth to the distribution of relics after Mahāparinirvāṇa.
3. The worship of corporal relics of the Master guarded by the nāgas and visit of Aśōka, his association with Bōdhi Vṛiksha, commissioning Mahendra and Sanghamitrā-his son and daughter-as emissaries towards the spread of Buddhism. Historical royal personalities and kings like Arindama, Sōmarāta, Mahāgōvinda, Māndhātā and Udayana.
4. Portraits of Sātavāhana rulers like Chhimukha Śātavāhana along with his friend Nāga king, Sātakarṇi, Mātalaka, Sundara Sātakarṇi and Puḷumāvi (Pl LX & LXI).
5. Secular depictions.

### Jātaka tales

Highlighting the significance of the depiction of Jātakas and the themes on the life of the Buddha in the Buddhist edifices, Debala Mitra<sup>31</sup> opines, “The object of the narratives, particularly the Jātakas (tales of Buddha’s previous births) and the life-scenes of Buddha, was two fold: one was to beautify the cherished object of sanctity and the second to imprint permanently on the popular mind the sacred lores,

the visual representations of which are far more convincing than the text describing them. The appeal of these representations is direct and immediate and the effect indelible.”

The depictions of the *Jātaka* tales at Kanaganahalli range from monoscenic to polyscenic. The *Jātakas* of Hamsa, Śuka, Nalapāna (*Jātakam Jāgarakhasa*) and Sēnaka are monoscenic and are narrated in a single register capturing the climax of the scene following the idiom of Bhārhut. The polyscenic depictions range from 4-6 scenes in equal number of registers and depending upon the major events of the story are composed, giving importance to the continuity of narration following the Sānchi and Amarāvati idiom. It is also to be noted that such depictions reflected upon Buddhist religion, contemporary life, art-traditions, beliefs and practices.

With the comparatively large canvas at his disposal, the artist here has exercised a rigid control over the theme and has refrained from over crowding the panel. Spatial organisation and highlighting the chief character of the scene were of paramount importance to the sculptor. To assist the identification of the chief characters, some of the synoptic popular renderings appears to have been inscribed slightly at a later date, which also perhaps explains the changes in the palaeography of the label inscriptions. It is interesting to note that the artists here have selected the most popular tales of



Chhaddanta, Vēssantara and Vidura Paṇḍita, which have also been depicted elaborately at Sānchi and Amarāvati. However, the depiction of *Chhaddanta Jātaka* in all sentiments of jealousy, greed, pathos and ghastliness are vividly captured by the master artist who was at ease in portraying the pachyderm in all its anatomical details.

The *Jātakas* and other stories, rendered in 17 registers of 10 panels, are enumerated below:

1. *Velāmiya* (Pl.LXII)
2. *Vēssantara* (Pl.LXIII& LXIV)
3. *Hamsa & Śuka* (Pl.LXV)
4. *Chhaddanta* (Pl.LXVI-LXVIII)
5. *Jagarakha (Nalapāna Jataka)* (alert monkey) (Pl.LXIX)
6. *Aridamiya (Mahakapi Jataka)* (Pl.LXX)
7. *Māndhātā-(Rāya Chakavati Satrajano)* (Pl.LXXI)
8. *Story of King Udayana* (Pl.LXXII)
9. *Story of Devi Sānivati* (Pl.LXXIII)
10. *Sēnakiya & Kumara A (rindama) or Sonaka* (Pl.LXXIV)
11. *Sudasomiya (Sutasoma)* (Pl.LXXVII-LXXVIII)  
Sajiniya-preamble to Sutasōma(Pl.LXXV & LXXVI)
12. *Vidura Paṇḍita* (Pl.LXXIX &LXXX)

### 1. *Velāmiya Jātaka* (Pl.LXII)

In the introductory part of the *Khadirangāra*<sup>32</sup> *Jātaka*, while narrating a story related to Anāthapiṇḍika, a reference is made to a wealthy brahmin, by name

Velāma. It seems that this *Jātaka* appears only at Kanaganahalli and has not been reported from any other Buddhist sites located in the lower Krishna valley so far.

When the Master was dwelling in Jētavana Anāthapiṇḍika, a merchant, visits him and after greeting him politely, laments the loss of his wealth due to alms given to people by his family, forcing him to serve only broken rice grains and thin porridge to the Sangha and people. Hearing this the Master, mentions that the quality of food is not important but, the heart of the one who gives alms, either casually or with devotion should not expect any return or benefit and it is also important to know whether the receivers of alms are worthy. Then the Master preached *Velāmasutta* to encourage Anāthapiṇḍika, wherein he told the story of Velāma, a wealthy brahmin who gave costly gifts to people and could find no holy person as recipient.

The story narrated by the Master is of Bōdhisattva, born as son of a brahmin priest at the court of the king of Benaras, went with the crown prince to Takshaśilā, to pursue his studies and attained sufficient knowledge. In due course he became a teacher of repute. His pupil included eighty four thousand princes. Later he returned and became priest to the king of Varanasi. In order to pay their respect, the eighty four thousand princes use to visit Varanasi every year, causing considerable sufferings to people of Varanasi and the king having

come to know of this, asked Velāma to find a solution to the problem. The eighty four thousand princes obtained their benefits regularly from the eighty four thousand provinces earmarked by Velāma for them and the problem was solved.

Being a wealthy man Velāma wanted to give alms to people. To ascertain the gifts he was presenting to the people, would be free from blame and to ascertain if there are any men of virtues in the world, he held the water jar upside down and wished the water should flow downward, but water did not come out. Convinced that his gifts would be free from blame, he bestowed upon people, for seven years, precious gifts of value which included bowls of gold, silver, copper with jewels, costly silk clothes, wool, cotton, blankets, milk-giving cows, chariots, maidens adorned with jeweled earrings, food, etc. all of which resembled, as though merging of five great rivers in to one stream. The Master continuing further mentions that taking refuge in Buddha, good conduct, practising amity, and thinking of impermanence, each of these being greater than the other and even greater than giving alms, feeding a arahant/ Tathagata, building monasteries, etc. The Master after narrating the story identifies his birth as Velāma.

Here, the upper drum slab has two registers. The mutilated lower register depicts (Pl. LXII-B) an elephant rising its trunk and worshipping some objects kept

on a platform, perhaps denoting a set of gifts, given by the Bōdhisattva mentioned in the *Jātaka* under reference. Below are a mutilated horse symbolically representing chariots, a cow with its calf, both mentioned in the list of gifts all shown on the left flank of register. To the right, throughout right flank of the register are depicted two women, bejewelled, shown carrying pots on their head and in conversation with each other, probably, symbolically signifying the jewelled maidens included in the list of gifts given by Velāma or the water pots may even indicate pouring forth of alms by Velāma like flow of water.

The upper register (Pl. LXII-A) depicts Velāma (Bōdhisattva) with a spouted water vessel holding it in his right hand to ascertain that the gifts he was presenting to the people, would be free from blame and there are no men of virtues in the world. However the water jar is not shown upside down as mentioned in the story, therefore the scene depicted here could be construed as only symbolic. Four men seated over *vetrāsanas*, are shown holding circular bowls with gifts/ food received by them. This is looked upon by a bejewelled lady, probably given as a gift, shown standing behind Velāma with her right hand raised in *vismaya mudrā*. All the male figures are shown with typical turban headgear tied in different styles and all have similar stringed, beaded *vakshahāra*, wristlets, *pitāmbara* held by *uttariya*. None of them wear ear ornaments.

The pilaster to the left of both the panels are decorated with full lotus medallions flanked by half lotus motifs and the capitals are adorned with winged addorsed lions and a pillar within a railing topped by a capital carrying a *chakra*, respectively.

The plain border above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register bears an inscription that reads: *Jātakam Velāmiyam*.

## 2. *Vēssantara Jātaka*<sup>33</sup> Part (Pl.LXIII)

This being the most popular *Jātaka* of the times, occurs at almost all the important Buddhist sites from Bhārhut, Sānchi, Mathura in the north, to Amarāvati in the southeast including Gāndhāra school of art in the north-west. Graphic portrayal of the same in the paintings of Ajanta, in the Deccan and sculptured panels of Goli in Andhra Pradesh need a special mention.

The Master, while at Kapilavastu addressing the congregation narrated this story. Here, inscribed as *Jātakam Vēssantariyam*, the story is delineated in four registers of two panels.

It is the story of a generous prince Vēssantara known for gifting away his belongings to the needy so much so that even his personal elephant, horses, wife and children were gifted away in generosity. Ultimately, they were restored to him.

Since the rendering is in a *parikramā* to the *stūpa*, this *Jātaka* tale actually begins in the second register of the upper drum slab, depicting the prince Vēssantara before the banishment (Pl.LXIII-B). The relief shows prince Vēssantara holding a goad in both the hands, astride royal elephant Paccāya, which is bestowed with the supernatural power of causing rain, driving the well-caparisoned animal himself in a procession, along with a *chauri* (fly whisk) bearer seated behind. The elephant is lead by a *chhatra-dhāri* and two soldiers with spear placed upon their left shoulders. According to the narration in the *Jātaka*, the king of Kalinga sent eight brahmins to the kingdom of Jetuttara to fetch the sacred elephant Paccāya, from prince Vēssantara, to cause rains to ward off the great famine in his kingdom. Accordingly, these Brahmins approached the prince and using his generosity, obtained the gift of the elephant, a state property to a place called Kontimāra at the foot of Mt. Vanka, where river Aranjara flows, towards which the annoyed and frenzied citizens of Jatuttara, seek the banishing of prince Vēssantara as reflected in the first register.

The prince, bejewelled and robed befittingly is shown without *uttarīya* over the *pitāmbara*. The *chauri* bearer, behind the prince, is suitably dressed and bejewelled. The two soldiers leading in front wear a tunic of full arms and carry long spears. The *chhatra* bearer wears a cloak reaching up to the knees, has a

*kaṭivastra* and covers his head with a long muffler, the free end of which is fluttering. The wooden pole of the *chhatra* and the festoon tied to it is also shown swaying. The elephant has its ivory decorated has a girdle at the neck. Befitting the rider, an ornate heavy drape (*hatthatthara*) across the shoulder of the animal covering the entire body, save the legs, is also depicted. The border at the bottom has the label inscription: *Jātakam Vessantariyam*.

Prince Vēssantara was very popular for his deeds of charity. Fully Aware of this generosity, Jujuka of Kalinga, an avaricious Brahmin, greedy, old and helpless, had approached the prince in the hermitage, and pleaded with him to spare his little son and daughter, in order to procure slaves for his young wife Amittapana.

The scene in the first register (Pl.LXIII A) depicts prince Vēssantara, son of Phusati and Sanjaya-king of Sivi along with his wife, Mādri, and children (son Jali and daughter Kanhajinā) in exile at a hermitage built by Viśvakarma for the prince at the behest of Śakra, amidst a forest with deers. Close to the hermitage of wattle and daub stands the pensive prince, Vēssantara befittingly attired, seeing away his children Jāli and Kanhajinā. Queen Mādri, who is informed of this tragic event, subsequently by the prince, is shown in distress with *tarjanihasta* of her left hand, perhaps reaching to wipe her tears away at the separation of children. The scene depicts

the son and daughter of the prince moving away from the forest and hermitage (to be presumed as following Jūjuka) where the boy Jāli with his right hand clutching the *uttarīya* of his *dhōti* waves to his father with his left hand. The boy wears a small turban, circular ear ornaments and is surrounded by a pet deer to left and a rabbit to right trying to arrest the leaving young prince. He is followed reluctantly, by his sister Kanhajinā playing with her ear ornaments. She too is provided with a turban and wears a *pītāmbara* and *kaṭibandha*. She is decorated with *kēyūra* and bracelets.

## Part-II (Pl.LXIV)

The story continues on to the next panel in articulation and as usual the scene of narration begins at the lower register of the upper drum slab depicting the domestic life of the greedy Brahmin Jūjuka and the reunion of Jāli and Kanhajinā with their grand parents in the upper register.

In the lower register (Pl.LXIV B), greedy Jūjuka is shown with distorted limbs viz., round head, squat nose, round eyes, small mouth with thick lips, very short neck, thick small bulky arms and pot belly balancing on heavy thighs and short legs, swinging and gesticulating. A tufted hairdo completes the comic picture. Above are two women of the house of whom the one to the left is reluctantly swinging a fan held in her right hand to the young bride of Jūjuka standing to her



right in a forlorn mood. She stands with her legs crossed. While the women are decorated with the usual ornaments of head, *vakshahāra* and bracelets, Jūjuka and his son have heavy *kanthahāra* and wear a *dhōti*.

The upper register (Pl.LXIV A) is much mutilated and depicts the royal court of the king Sanjaya and queen Phusati, the parents of prince Vēssantara, receiving their grand children. The person leading the children, the king and the queen are obliterated except for the two children approaching their grand parents in veneration. It could be Jūjuka receiving gifts from the king. The king and queen are shown seated on separate *vetrāsanas*.

The bottom border of this register has a label inscription as: *Jātakam Vēssantarīyam*. Below this border, a relief of railing with a row of four uprights and three cross bars is depicted. Uprights are decorated with exquisite relief of two half lotus motif intervened by a full lotus medallion.

### 3. Hamsa<sup>34</sup> Jātaka and Śuka<sup>35</sup> Jātaka (Pl.LXV)

Interestingly, two *Jātaka* stories of Hamsa and Śuka are depicted, on one of the upper drum slabs in its two registers respectively.

*Hamsa Jātaka*: Also known as *Culla Hamsa Jātaka*, this story was narrated by the Lord at *Vēnuvana* (bamboo

grove) regarding the concern raised in the renunciation of life by the elderly Ānanda. The gist of the story is, Khēmā, queen of Samyama, king of Benaras had a dream of a golden geese preaching law and the king having come to know the queen's desire to listen to the discourse of law in the court by golden coloured geese dwelling on the mount Chitrakūṭa, obtains the views of various people. At the advise of his courtiers, the king ensnares them by creating an artificial lake with suitable environment near his city and appoints a fowler, by name Khēmaka to look after the pond and to catch the golden geese. Dhatarattha, the king of geese, having informed about the desire of his flock to go to the lake, and after taking the suggestions of his minister Sumukha, visits the lake along with his flock of birds. However, on the seventh day, king of birds is trapped by the fowler, and alarmed by his cry for help, his flock flew away except Sumukha who is determined to save his entrapped and wounded king. After hearing the virtues of Dhatarattha from Sumukha, the fowler released the golden geese and having come to know the reason for capturing the geese, Sumukha requests the fowler that they be taken to the court to be released by the king. Touched by the devotion of Sumukha, the king of Benaras asking for forgiveness for the trouble caused, releases both of them after the wise, eloquent, holy

Dhatarattha gives the much sought after discourse on law to the royal couple and flies away.

The Master identifies that the fowler Khēmaka was Chenna, queen Khēma was the nun Khēma, the king was Sāriputra, the king's retinue his followers, Sumukha was Ānanda and himself was the bird king Dhatarattha.

The upper register (Pl.LXV-A) of drum slab depicts the king Samyama and queen Khēma seated on decorated *vetrāsanas* (couches), attended by a female *chauri* bearer who appears to be spellbound by the beauty of swan held by the fowler, who is setting them free as well. The king wears elaborate turban and has his left hand at the waist and gesturing to Khēmaka, the fowler, to be gentle towards the bird he is holding in his right hand. The king wears heavy ear ornaments, *kankaṇas* and designed *uttarīya*. To the right of the king, on a low couch, is the queen seated in extended limb posture, resting both her legs on a foot cushion, admiring the beautiful bird. Her plaited hair decorated with beaded strings is shown behind the right shoulder. At the feet of the king is shown Sumukha, the wise bird, in conversation with the king and queen which is none, other than Ānanda seeking the release of the bird king, Dhatarattha held captive by the fowler Khēmaka. Further above, the liberated geese are shown flying away happily.

It is interesting to note that the sculptor uses the same fowler twice in the same attire of *dhōti* and hairstyle to use him for two actions that has to follow the narration. One for capturing the bird for presenting to the king and the other for its subsequent release.

The band dividing the two registers, is decorated with a row of geese holding lotus stalks in their beak, a common feature noticed in all upper drum slabs. Pilaster to the right of the panel is decorated with two semi circular lotus medallions. The central medallion is obliterated and the abacus at the top of pilaster depicts two lions seated back to back.

**Śuka Jataka:** There is more than one story associated with parrots in the *Jātaka* tales of which Rādhā, Śuka, Abbhantara and Mahāśuka are reflected. However, the rendering here closely follows the narration of *Abbhantara jātaka*, wherein the story is told by the Master while residing in the Jētavana, reflecting upon the mango juice given by the elder Sāriputra to Bimbādevi, the mother of Rāhula. The story is that Śakra had been scared at the glory of the virtues of Bōdhisattva, born as a wise brahmin of Kāsi, who was staying near the mango grove belonging to the king Brahmadatta. Śakra hatched a plot to drive away the wise brahmin. Appearing in the dream of queen Śakra, told her that if she eats a middle mango she will conceive a son who will become a universal monarch.

Next day she pretends ill and expresses her desire to the anxious king of Benaras, Brahmadatta, to eat a middle mango to get rid of her illness. He consoles her and his courtiers advice him to procure a middle mango from the mango grove belonging to the king. In the mean time, using his power Śakra makes the fruits in all the trees of royal garden vanish and the blame fell upon Bōdhisattva and his disciples whom the king drove away fulfilling the desire of Śakra. The courtiers of the worried king, mention about the mango grown in the golden cave of Himalaya and advice him to send a parrot, as no human being had an access to the territory. A young parrot in the kings family was identified to fetch the mango. The faithful parrot who at the behest of King of Benaras, Brahmadatta, flew to the forbidden kingdom of king Vēssavana (Vaishravana-Kubera) in the Himalayas and thence to the golden cave where the medicinal mango was available. The determined parrot manages to climb the heavily guarded tree and is caught by the goblins who, after listening to parrot's story of sacrifice, showing compassion, guide him to an ascetic, a favourite of king Vēssavana, by name Jotirasa, who receives four mangos from the king regularly. The parrot approached the ascetic Jōtirasa and narrates the purpose of its visit. For the efforts of the parrot, it was given the fruit on a string by Jōtirasa at the golden cave of Vēssavana, which was brought to the queen who eats it, but without any result, as told by Śakra in her dream.

The lower register (Pl.LXV-B) of the upper drum slab depicts the above story and since the chief character is the parrot it is labelled accordingly as *Śuka Jātaka*. The bird - parrot (Śuka) is perching over the branches of a tree depicted in the abacus of pilaster at right with a bunch of three fruits (mangoes) in its beak. While the king Brahmadatta sits in the royal court along with his queen at right. The bejewelled king wears an elaborate turban, and sits over a *vētrāsana*. At his right is the female *chauri* bearer. The parrot is shown in the hands of an attendant, which is being advised to fetch the mango fruit. A courtier is seated close to the left leg of the king. Face and lower limbs are obliterated. Towards right and slightly lower to the king is the queen, seated on a circular couch in a relaxed posture and is well decked. She has her feet placed over a soft foot cushion. While the right leg is kept wider, the left leg is drawn up to enable her to rest her left hand on her knee. She is watching and listening to the proceedings keenly.

The bottom border is inscribed with the label *Hamsa jātakam upari* at left corner and *Śuka jātakam* at right.

#### 4. **Chhaddanta<sup>36</sup> Jātaka** (Pl.LXVI to LXVIII)

The story is narrated by the Buddha during the sojourn towards Jētavana explaining the cause of weeping of a sister in the group who had recollected about



the sin she had committed against him in one of the previous births.

The story is of Buddha born as a six-tusked king elephant with many wives of which Mahāsubhaddhā and Chullasubhaddhā were the favourites. The herd of elephants frequented a huge lake in the Himalayas by name Chhaddanta, of the same name as that of the elephant king, grown thick with different lotuses that would cater to the herd. Once during the playful act, in the *sāl* grove, the six-tusker inadvertently had showered flowers and green leaves over the elder Mahāsubhaddhā and the younger received only dry twigs, leaves and red ants. Similarly, the elder was given choicest lotuses for eating. Hurt by this disparity, the younger one having dedicatedly served the Pacceka Buddhas won their boon of being born as the princess Subhaddha to the king and queen of Madda kingdom.

Accordingly her wish was fulfilled and she was married to the king of Kāsi. The vengeance and hatred she nurtured against Chhaddanta elephant continued and once pretending to be sick she convinced the king of Kāsi, to obtain the tusks of Chhaddanta. The king sent words and summoned all hunters in the kingdom and entrusted the task to the most crooked and expert hunter Sōnuttara. After painstaking search Sōnuttara succeeds in locating the dwelling place of Chhaddanta. Nearby, the hunter dug a pit and concealed it with leaves and twigs. Attired in saffron robe

he waits and when the elephant came near he shoots it with a poisoned arrow. Seeing the saffron robed monk, wounded Chhaddanta filled with compassion, asks the reason for hunting him and when Sōnuttara reveals the cause, he decides to shed his life. As the hunter could not reach the tusks of the collapsed elephant, he requests Chhaddanta to bend forward to enable him to climb and cut the tusks, which he succeeds with the assistance of the noble animal. After seven day's journey, Sōnuttara reaches Kāsi and enters the royal court with the six tusks of the elephant and announces the death of Chhaddanta. The queen perceiving the ghastly sight of the tusks of her beloved husband in previous birth and hearing of his death is filled with remorse and dies.

All the panels are inscribed as *jātakam chhadatiyam*. As else where said when the narration runs into more than two panels, the nearest register i.e. the second (lower) register is opted for beginning the narration and as such the narration here begins at Pl.LXVI-B and ends at Pl.LXVIII-A.

### Part-I (Pl.LXVI)

The sculptor has excelled in vividly capturing the boisterous herd of elephants stirring the entire pond in gay abandon. The scene in the lower register of the upper drum slab delineates (Pl.LXVI-B) the majestic Chhaddanta blissfully munching away the delicious lotus creeper



offered by his wives Mahāsubhaddhā and Chullasubhaddhā with a twinkle in their eyes vying and clamouring with each other for his love. The well-built Chhaddanta has almost entered into the centre of the pond and yet looms sufficiently large over his co-elephants and is shown offering a lotus bloom to his nearest pet wife Mahāsubhaddhā standing at the front. Close by, below the six tusker are two young elephants, while the one in the extreme left corner is busy gathering the favourite food, the other Chhullasubhaddhā is craving for the attention of the king elephant, pleading with its raised trunks reaching to caress the trunk of the king-elephant.

The upper register (Pl.LXVI-A) of the same panel depicts a pavilion in which king of Kāsi and queen Subhaddhā are in conversation with the hunter Sōnuttara. The king is seated on a squarish low couch leaning his left arm over the backrest and his right hand gesturing towards the hunter, the atmosphere is charged with seriousness. The king wears just a jewelled turban and *kankaṇas* and sits with his right leg folded on the couch and the left foot placed on the cushioned footrest. He has a heavy *uttarīya* and wears three *kankaṇas* on each hand. Similarly, the queen is seated on a cushioned couch turning slightly towards the king directing him, as it were, to issue necessary orders to kill Chhaddanta and fetch the tusks. She supports herself by

placing her left hand firmly on the couch, while the upraised right hand gestures towards the hunter. She wears elaborate hair dress, the frontal plait is held by a designed band with a *lalāṭa-chandra* and *padma* pendant, *kēyūra*, wristlets and heavy anklets. Slightly squeezed in the same pavilion is the hunter, standing to the right of the seated figure in *añjali* with his *uttarīya* tied in tight rolls over his abdomen. He wears a *dhōti* reaching up to the knees. The royal court has a three barred balustrade over eaves raised over simple square pillars carrying a heavy oblong hall above. The independent chambers with doors slightly ajar have projected *chaitya* - window-shaped sky light over the door frame and the entire scheme is topped by a gable roof without the usual finials at the apex.

## Part-II (Pl.LXVII)

The narration of the *Jātaka* continues in the lower register of the next upper drum slab (Pl.LXVII-B) capturing the poignant sacrifice of the great elephant. In spite of mutilation it stands as the foremost portrayal of plastic art wherein the great six tusked elephant - Chhaddanta kneels down bending his body to facilitate the hunter to reach and saw its tusks mournfully watched by his co-elephants breathing heavily and shifting their gait uneasily at the gruesome sight. The artist has shown the listless, laboriously breathing trunk of the grievously injured elephant

that is not completely dead, the grit and determination of the hunter Sōnuttara, a scene which cannot be easily forgotten.

The border has the inscription that reads: *Jātakam Chhadatīyam*.

The highly mutilated upper register (Pl.LXVII-A) probably presents the herd lead by Mahāsubaddhā mourning the death of Chhaddanta, their king. This rendering, if not mutilated, would definitely have exalted the virtues of the king elephant, the immense love and attachment its co-elephants had and the sentiment of *Vipralambha*.

### Part-III (Pl.LXVIII)

The lower register of upper drum slab (Pl.LXVIII-B) depicts the hapless hunter Sōnuttara arriving at the entrance of the king's palace from the forest carrying the six tusks across his shoulder. A couple, of which the male being aware of the magnanimity of the great animal, receives the hunter in *añjali*. He wears a typical turban, upper body is bare. He wears a simple *dhōti* having three foldings at the waist. The face of the female is obliterated and she is decorated with *kēyūra*, wristlets and heavy anklets. Aghast at the sight of the tusks appears to be dejected and moves away perhaps to communicate to the king and queen about the arrival of the hunter. She could be the same servant who is trying to revive the queen in the first register. Above is a relief depicting a gable roofed structure crowned with four finials, decorated pillars supporting

the roof, three barred balustrade at the base, and a large *chaitya* - window above the entrance.

The hunter is shown attired in *dhōti* with foldings up to ankle and his face is mutilated. Tusks are shown firmly tied with rope. His left hand rests on the trunk and the bent right knee, exhibits the weight he is burdened with.

The lower border as usual carries an inscription that reads: *jātakam Chhadatīyam*.

The upper register (Pl.LXVIII-A) carries once again a scene of the palace wherein the hunter Sōnuttara in remorse, showing the tusks to the queen and announcing the tragic death of Chhaddanta. Clutching the heavy tusks in his outstretched hands is trying to support the dead weight with his raised right leg. The king of Kāsi and queen Subhaddhā are shown seated under a pavilion with three-arched *chaitya* window roof supported by octagonal pillars. The king and queen, attired befitting their status, sit over a *paryankāsana* with their extended limbs resting over a floor-cushion. The king is trying to support and revive his fainted queen with both hands. The listless waist, closed eyes and leaning of her body against the king, expresses her collapse. To her left stands a servant-maid, holding a spouted water vessel for reviving the queen but to no avail. Her anxious face and raised toes to pour the water over the head of the queen speak of

the tragedy and the urgency of the event and is a mute witness to the unexpected happenings at the court and is bewildered. The artist's excellence in capturing the various sentiments of distress and agony are reflected in the posture of limbs, facial expressions and the body language - an admirable example of plastic art.

For pathos and sentiments, these panels depicting the story of Chhaddanta are second to none amongst the work of Kanaganahalli sculptors. The subject has so much captivated the artist that he narrates the story of Bōdhisattva born as six tusked elephant in all vividity, spread over in as many as three panels. Easily it is the best depiction of early Karnataka art full of vigour and plasticity.

## 5. Jāgarakha<sup>37</sup> (Nalapāna Jātaka) (Pl.LXIX)

This is the story of a resourceful monkey narrated by the Lord during an alms pilgrimage through Kōsala and dwelt at *Kētakavana* near a pool of Nalakapāna village of the same name. Buddha narrated the story to the query of his disciples as to why the bamboo reeds of the place are hollow. He narrated that once a water ogre resided in the lake who is none other than Devadatta in the previous birth. Buddha was a monkey king and his disciples a strong school of eighty thousand monkeys who were obedient to him and waited for his instructions implicitly for gathering fruits or drinking water from

an unknown source. Once the travel weary monkeys, struck with thirst and hunger, had arrived at this lake and waited for the arrival of the monkey king. Appreciating their intelligence, the monkey king went round the lake and noticed that the footprints of other animals led to the water but did not show up their return and thereby inferred that the lake is infested by a water ogre, which takes the shape of a monster and tried to pester the monkey king and its troop to get in to the lake. The king monkey plucked the bamboo reeds and effectively hollowed them out by his powers and made the herd quench their thirst without entering into the pool and thus deceived the water ogre.

The above *Jātaka* is narrated in two registers of upper drum slab from top to bottom. The upper register (Pl.LXIX-A) depicts a circular hut with domical roof in front of which a hermit is narrating perhaps the story to the four noblemen seated in front of him. The hut has a rectangular door opening. The hermit is fully robed, except at the right shoulder, sits on a deerskin in *padmāsana*. He has short crop over his head. In front of the hermit seated are two persons facing him and two more seated facing each other on an elevated and undulated ground along the bottom border. All the four persons are attired in robes and ornaments befitting their elite status. Since the narratives of various subjects on the upper drum slabs of the *stūpa* are of hīnāyana phase, symbolic



depiction of the Master as Dharmachakra with *triratna* set in a railing at the pilaster is noteworthy.

The lower register (Pl.LXIX-B) of the drum slab depicts the story in which Bōdhisattva was born as a monkey chief. The scene is of a circular pond in which a number of lotus flowers, leaves and buds are shown, at the centre is the water ogre shown emerging as a monster with features of bulged out eyes, squattish flaring nose and thick lips. The ogre, by raising one of its hands, is beckoning the monkeys to enter the pond to satiate their thirst. Around this pond, six monkeys are depicted in various stances of sitting or kneeling and sucking the water from the pond with the help of a straw made in reed. In spite of the eroded and mutilated state of the panel, the anatomical features and the facial expressions of the thirsty monkeys drinking water, exemplifies sculptors control over aesthetic rendering of this *Jātaka* within the available space.

The border at the bottom bears an inscription that reads: *jātakam jāgarakhasa* probably a scribal error for *jalarākhasa*.

## 6. Aridamiya<sup>38</sup> Jātaka (Pl.LXX)

Identified with the *Mahākapi Jātaka*, the story was narrated by the Master while dwelling in Jētavana to the Bhikkus.

The story is when Brahmadata was the king of Benaras, Bōdhisattva took birth as a monkey in the Himalayas and

growing strong became the leader of his retinue of eighty thousand monkeys. There was a large mango tree with branches near the river Ganga, which yielded large sweet fruits with exquisite fragrance and flavour. To save his retinue from being harmed by men, the monkey king directed the monkeys, not to leave a single fruit on a branch hanging over the river. However a ripe fruit, which had been hidden behind a ants nest, fell in to the river. Flowing down, it got stuck in the nets laid around the spot where the king of Benares was taking bath in the river. The fishermen while removing the nets, found the fruit and showed it to the king. Enchanted by its aroma and having learnt that it is a mango fruit, first he offered some pieces to members of his retinue and then he tasted it. Enamoured by the taste and fragrance of mango, the king after ascertaining the exact location of the mango tree, from his foresters, reached the spot with his retinue and set up a camp near the tree after eating enough mango fruits.

In the night monkey king and his retinue climbed the mango tree and ate all the mangoes. The king and his archers woke to the noise of monkeys and the king ordered the archers to shoot the monkeys. Fearing death, monkeys approached Bōdhisattva who, assuring their safety took a massive leap to the other bank to ascertain the distance. After calculating the distance, the monkey king



tied one end of a tall cane around its waist and bending the other end it again jumped across the river and finding short of covering the distance, it held on to the branches of mango tree to act as a bridge. It then commanded its retinue to walk over his back and the cane and the monkeys escaped to the other bank of the river. Devadatta who was the last one to cross, out of vengence, inflicted further injury, when he jumped high in the air and fell on the back of monkey king. The king of Benaras who watched all these acts of monkeys, was terribly moved by the sacrificial act of the great monkey king and his men lowered the wounded monkey from the tree. After covering the monkey with yellow robe and extending full honour, enquired about his well being and relationship with other monkeys. The monkey king preached the essence of sacrifice to save his group of monkeys, to the king of Benaras and died. After the cremation, the king caused a shrine at Benaras where the decorated skull was worshipped.

The story is narrated in two registers of the upper drum slab. The upper register depicts (Pl.LXX-A) along the plain top border, the monkey king stretching its body all along the width of the panel with its hand clutching branches of a mango tree, probably to allow other monkeys to walk over its back. The tree is depicted with a rich yield of mango fruits. On either side of

the panel along the border are two archers aiming to shoot the monkeys. Below is a relief of what looks like a wild animal with its face and limbs obliterated, probably shown as part of a forest scene, below the mango tree, which is missing. Further below, two seated male figures are in conversation and gesturing to the King Brahmadatta. The king seated in *vetrāsana*, appears to be personally supervising the hunt and issuing orders to the archers, to shoot arrows at the monkeys.

In the second register (Pl.LXX-B), king Brahmadatta is shown seated with his courtiers. The king is seated on a circular cushioned *vetrāsana* in *ardha-paryankāsana* with his left leg resting on a circular cushion. He is slightly leaning to his right majestically supporting on the right hand resting over the *vetrāsana*. He is befittingly adorned and dressed. To his left, in close proximity, is seen a monkey (face mutilated) in side profile, sitting with folded hands, probably preaching the king about the values of sacrifice and the good work done to benefit his fellow monkeys. Below the relief of king, two courtiers are shown seated on circular cushion, hands in different postures, probably, appreciating the sacrifice of the monkey king. The plain border below the panel bears an inscription that reads *Jātakam Aridamiyam*.

The story occurs in a circular medallion at Bharhut<sup>39</sup> (Pl.XXXIII, 4) in a variant synoptic form.

## 7. Māndhātā<sup>40</sup> jātaka (Pl.LXXI)

The story was narrated by the Master while he was at Jētavana during a discourse and reflected the greed and lust of Māndhātā Chakravarti which ultimately caused his downfall from heaven and he himself was Māndhātā.

Born to a king by name Upōsatha, Māndhātā was endowed with seven precious jewels and four supernatural powers, befitting the monarch of the universe. He ruled earth and heaven, where, Śakka offered him half of his seat. His greed for power was such, he even thought of killing Śakka, to rule the heaven alone. This evil desire made him lose all powers he enjoyed and old age caught on him rapidly, eventually to be sent back to earth where he died.

This popular *Jātaka* has been succinctly depicted on two registers of the upper drum slab by the sculptor. In the upper register (Pl.LXXI-A), of the panel, Rāya Chakravarti Māndhātā is shown standing with his queen in the centre, flanked at right by prince in a turban, in *añjali* and the *amātya* (minister) to the left of the royal couple. The king in *ālīḍha* posture, leaning to the right, has raised his right hand while the left hand is closed and shown striking the chest. When he does so, heavenly clouds, would cause a shower of wealth, one of the supernatural powers he possessed because of the status of Chakravarti or universal king. This is clearly portrayed by showing two layers of

clouds and small squares, depicting coins, near the raised right hand and behind the figures.

The king wears an elaborately decorated turban, heavy drapery, a broad *vakshahāra*, *kēyūra* and variously designed *kankaṇas*. The *pītāmbara* is held by an embroidered sash at the waist over which a knotted and twisted *uttarīya* is loosely tied. The queen, has her plaited hair held at the forehead by a beaded tiara with a central *padma-lalāṭa* pendant. She wears heavy coiled ear ornaments the free square ends of which are treated with geometrically set *padma* decoration. She wears a multi-stranded pearl necklace. Her *pītāmbara* reaching up to the ankles is held by heavy beaded stringed courses of *kaṭi-bandha* locked in the centre by a buckle. She also has *kēyūra* and *kankaṇas* and sufficiently large spring anklets. Interestingly she stands on a cushion. The virtuous minister stands to her left, and the prince to the right of the Chakravarti, are shown with the usual head gear and other ornaments.

The lower register (Pl.LXXI-B) depicts relief of the elephant, part of the sacred wheel, the horse and the sceptre with flames as the precious jewels, proud possessions of a Chakravarty. The fore limbs of a royal elephant majestically moving to its right in profile and a partly extant horse are well delineated. In between is a pillar with off set capital from the top of which issues forth flames.

It is too well known that down south, one of the favourite theme was, the downfall of Māndhātā Chakravartī due to greed, which gets elaborately depicted in many of the *stūpa* embellishments as noticed at Amarāvati, Jaggayyapeta, Phanigiri, Goli, Gummadidurru and Nāgarjunakoṇḍa. While in some of the depictions it is monoscenic, interestingly, at Nāgarjunakoṇḍa it is polyscenic.

The pilaster to the left of the slab is decorated with full and semicircular lotus medallions and the capitals are adorned with winged and plain addorsed lions respectively. The plain border above the relief of three barred railing bears an inscription that reads *Rāyā Chakavaṭi Satarajanō*.

## 8. King Udayana<sup>41</sup> (Pl.LXXII)

King Udayana of Kōśāmbi is an important ruler contemporary to Buddha who frequently gets depicted in Buddhist art. Here, the angry king is shown proceeding to punish queen Dēvi Sāmivatī, an ardent follower of the Master as instigated by one of his other queen Māgandīya out of jealousy. Ultimately he realises his mistake and seeks refuge at the feet of the Master as seen in the next panel.

This story is narrated in two registers of the upper drum slab. The upper register (Pl.LXXII-A) depicts an army of Udayana,

hastening with their weapons. On the right flank of the panel are depicted, three dwarfs wielding battle axe, axe and *vajra* respectively in upraised hands with a smile reflecting their enthusiasm. The dwarfs have a close cropped hairdress and wear closely tucked *dhōti* with prominent *kachcha*. Behind them, on the left flank, are two adult soldiers holding spear like weapons with short handle following the dwarfs closely. They are decorated with a turban, *vakshahāra*, heavy *karṇa kuṇḍalas*. They also wear closely tucked *dhōti* with *kachcha* in a refined way held by a *kaṭisutra* and one of them wears an *uttariya* in addition.

The register below (Pl.LXXII-B) is mutilated and has the king Uḍayana with a bow held in right hand and a sword in the upraised left hand proceeding briskly followed by three members of the retinue. He wears a turban and decorated with a *vakshahāra*, *kēyūra* and wristlets. Amongst the retinue, the one nearer to the king, shown wearing a simple *dhōti* having two foldings, is probably pleading in *añjali* not to punish queen Sāmivatī. One of them, a servant, in the extreme corner, is aghast at this anger of the king. A bejeweled courtier wearing a turban follows the troupe. The border between the two registers is decorated with a row of geese. The left margin of the drum slab is adorned with a relief of pilaster depicting lotus medallions and addorsed antelopes on one of the capitals.

The border above the three barred railing depicting semicircular and full lotus medallions has a label inscription reading: *Rāya [u] dayanō*.

## 9. Devī Sāmivatī, queen of King Udayana (Pl.LXXIII)

The upper register (Pl.LXXIII-A) depicts king Udayana, at the behest of queen Sāmivatī worshipping Buddha, symbolically represented by a Bōdhi-tree and *vajrāsana* with footprints at the front. The *vajrāsana*, provided with decorated side and backrest, has a circular cushion attached to it. King Udayana is squatting near *vajrāsana* at (right) with his right hand resting over the thigh and the left hand raised to the shoulder in all humility and veneration and as if in conversation with the Lord. He wears a moderately decorated crown with *vṛitta-kunḍalas*, a three-stringed *vakshahāra*, *kēyūra* and wristlets. His queen, the pious, Dēvi Sāmivatī, stands elegantly to the left of the *vajrāsana* with her right hand raised to her shoulder and left hand placed akimbo at waist. She is decked in elaborate hairstyle with *chūḍāmaṇi* topped by a *chandra* from which issues *makarikā* on either side of *sīmanta* (central parted hair). She wears *patra-vṛitta-kunḍalas*, assorted bracelets and *kaṭi-bandha* composed of a number of strands probably of gems. Behind Udayana, stands another queen, probably Māgandiya, who had dislike or envy of Sāmivatī. She is also moderately decorated with *chūḍāmaṇi*,

*mākarikā*, *vakshahāra* (*ratnāvali*), *vṛitta-kunḍalas*, *kēyūra*, only in left hand, *raśanā* (*kaṭi-bandha*) and spring type of anklets. The female figure slightly leaning to her left shown behind Sāmivatī and to the left of Bōdhi-tree could be Vasuladatta, beloved senior queen of Udayana, who is shown with typical hairdress, a beaded tiara and decorated with *karṇakunḍalas*, *ekāvalī*, *kēyūra*, wristlets and a multi stranded *kaṭi-bandha*.

The lower register (Pl.LXXIII-B) has Dēvi Sāmivatī in state with her servants. Sāmivatī stands tall and majestic looking to her left. This is a sequel to the previous panel wherein the angered king Udayana is proceeding with great speed to punish her. While her attendants look surprised, the *kubjā* appears to be frightened as reflected in their expressions and limb disposition. The bemused Sāmivatī appears to be waiting for the king. The hairdress and the various associated ornaments like *chūḍāmaṇi* and *makarikā* with a central *chandra* clasp are neatly executed which add to her posture of elegance. She wears a multi-stringed *vakshahāra* with choicest beads. She has gem-studded *kēyūra* with a string of bracelets on her *kaṭyāvalambita* left hand. Her right hand let loose is also decorated with bracelets and her *adhō-vastra* is held by *kaṭi-bandha* or *kānsya-bandhana*<sup>42</sup>. A *kubjā* at left is decorated with *chūḍāmaṇi*, *vṛitta-kunḍala* and heavy anklets, is shown resting her left hand on the chest. To the right of the queen stands



a *chāmara-dhāriṇi* clasping a *chāmara*. She too wears a *vakshahāra*, *kēyūra*, bracelets, a *kaṭi-bandha* arresting the *adhōvastra* at waist and heavy anklets. To her right another maid is equally decked without *chūḍāmaṇi* at the forehead and rests her right hand on the chest. The pilaster to the left of the slab is decorated with full and semicircular lotus medallions and the capitals are adorned with a relief of *stūpa* and seated addorsed antelopes at top and bottom respectively.

The plain border above the relief at the base, depicting three barred railing having verticals decorated with semi circular and full lotus medallions, has a label inscription reading *Dēvi Sāmivatī*.

## 10. Sēnakiya<sup>43</sup> Jātaka (Pl. LXXIV-A)

This *Jataka* was told by the Master, narrating the perfection of wisdom to the congregation, while dwelling in Jetavana.

When king Janaka was ruling Benaras, Bōdhisattva took birth in a brahmin family by name Sēnaka. After he grew up, he was sent to Takshasilā where he gained adequate knowledge in various arts. As he returned to Benaras, he met the king who made him a minister in his court, elevating his status. Being well versed in law, he preached the king, the benefits of alms-giving, fasting etc., which established the king in the path of virtue. On the occasion of fortnightly fast, held regularly, Sēnaka preached law, from a decorated room.

An old brahmin who lived in Benaras, earned his living by begging-alms. Once he gave all his earnings of one thousand pieces, to another brahmin family for safe custody and went to seek alms again. After some time he returned and asked the brahmin to return the money. But as the brahmin had spent the money, he offered his daughter to the old brahmin as his wife, instead. Being young, she befriended another brahmin and planned to send her husband away by asking him to provide her a maid for house work. The old brahmin decided to beg again, to earn money to buy a slave maid and his wife packed enough food in a skin bag, for his journey. After wandering for some time he collected seven hundred pieces through alms and decided to return to his village. On the way, he sat near a water body, had little food and went down to drink water leaving the bag open. In the mean time, a snake entered the bag. Unaware of this, the brahmin tied the bag mouth and hoisted it on his shoulder and walked away. At this juncture, on the way, a tree sprite emerging from the hollow trunk cautioned the brahmin saying, “Brahmin, if you stop on the way you will die, if you go home to-day your wife will die”, and vanished. Distressed and lamenting threat to his life, brahmin reached the gate of Benaras where groups of people carrying with them flowers etc., were seen going to the meeting hall to attend discourse of Sēnaka and they directed the brahmin to see him. The brahmin fearing death,

entered the hall and stood little away outside. Whereas the people applauded, Sēnaka noticed the brahmin in tears and ascertained the reasons for his sorrow. After hearing his plight, Bōdhisattva guessing the truth, asked brahmin to beat the sack with a stick and untie its mouth. As soon as he opened the bag, the snake stood there tall, spreading its hood. Immediately a snake charmer siezed it and left it in the forest. The brahmin expressing his happiness offered seven hundred pieces as a gift to Sēnaka, who declining, ordered to give another three hundred pieces to the brahmin. Sēnaka cautioned him about loosing the money if it is given to his wife and advised him to hide it, before returning to his house. Accordingly he buried the money under a tree, near his village and could not hide the secret from his wife. She informed her lover, who stole all the money. Finding his money stolen, old brahmin sought the advice of Sēnaka who told him a plan to catch his wife's lover and caught a young brahmin to whom Sēnaka revealed his identity and he confessed the guilt and returned one thousand pieces. There after old brahmin lived near by Sēnaka's abode.

In this story, Master was wise Sēnaka, old brahmin was Ananda and the tree sprite was Sariputta.

Interestingly, the upper drum slab depicts scenes from two *Jātakas*. Sēnakiya *Jātaka* is depicted on the upper register as a monoscenic rendering (PL.LXXIV-A).

At the left upper corner, a snake spreading its hood, is shown inside the bag and the parasol, may indicate the long journey under taken in the hot sun, by the old brahmin to obtain alms. The figure at the centre is the brahmin, listening to the voice of tree sprite, who is shown at the right corner of the panel, emerging from the hollow tree trunk, regarding the threat to him and his wife from the snake, which crept in to the bag shown protruding behind the left shoulder of brahmin who is keeping his right hand on his chest, probably expressing fear. Whereas tree sprite is decorated with ornaments such as *karṇakuṇḍalas*, *vakshahāra*, and *kankaṇa*, brahmin is devoid of any decoration except head gear which is similar to the one worn by the tree sprite.

It has in the foreground, Bōdhisattva born as Sēnaka shown seated on an ornate, low cushioned *vētrasāna* with elaborate backrest, preaching law, in the decorated room at Benaras. He wears a circular turban with a fan like crest at the centre. He is decorated with *karṇakuṇḍalas*, four stranded *vakshahāra*, *kēyūra* and *kankaṇa*. Whereas the folded right arm rests on the curved backrest, left hand is kept akimbo. Seated in *ardhaparyankāsana* posture, his hanging left leg rests on a decorated circular cushion. His lower garment is held by a thin *kaṭṭisūtra* having a buckle. The thick rolled *uttariya* across the trunk is noteworthy. Turning his head to left, he appears to be asking the brahmin

standing to his left reasons for his sorrow. The brahmin carrying the bag with snake on his shoulder, is shown narrating the reasons for his plight.

At the bottom, on the plain border, above the relief of three barred railing, two label inscriptions reading, *Jātakam Sēnakīyam upari* and *Kumāra A...* (*rindama?*) probably referring to the main character of Sonaka *Jataka*, are located on the right and left flank respectively. The term ‘*upari*’ used by the scribe to specifically distinguish the *Jataka* on the upper register from another *Jātaka* depicted on the lower register is noteworthy.

**10(a). KumaraA (rindama)  
(Sonaka)<sup>43a</sup> Jātaka  
(Pl.LXXIV-B)**

The story is narrated by the Master while dwelling in Jētavana about the virtues of perfect renunciation.

Bōdhisattva was born as the prince of Magadha and he was named Arindama. On the same day the royal chaplain or clergy was also blessed with a son and named him as Sonaka. The two handsome lads grew up together and to gain wordly knowledge they went to Takshasilā and obtained requisite training. To learn more and to experience practical uses of local observances they wandered and reached Benaras and decided to take rest in the royal park. Next day while going round the city, a group of men offering food

to Brahmins, invited both of them to the house. The seat occupied by prince Arindama was spread with a white cloth and before the seat of Sonaka a red rug was spread. This omen made Sonaka to understand that Prince Arindama would be made the king of Benaras and he would be offered the post of commander in chief. On the seventh day the king of Benaras died without a heir to the throne. The councillors started scouting for a man worthy to be king and the search began by taking the festal car through the streets of Benaras which stopped at the gate of royal park. On seeing the the festal car and hearing the music accompanying it, Sonaka again thought Prince Arindama will be made king and he would offer the commander's post. As Sonaka was not interested in such offer, he decided to become an ascetic and he preferred to hide behind a tree in the park.

On being requested by the royal chaplain (clergy), after ascertaining the reason Prince Arindama accepts the offer and the chaplain anointed him to become the king of Benaras. He was taken to the palace in the car and in the glory king Arindama forgot his friend Sonaka who after the departure of his friend, realises the impermanence of status he aspired for and attained to the state of *paccekabuddha*. As an ascetic he retires to the cave of Nandamula.

After forty years, one day sitting on the decorated throne, amidst his ministers and royal dancers in the royal court, king



Arindama remembers his childhood friend Sonaka. The king immediately composed and recited a two line song which conveyed offering of one hundred pieces of money to any person who has heard of dwelling place of Sonaka and one thousand piece of money to any person who has seen him and informs the king in person. Listening this, one of the court dancers repeats the song and it spreads across the kingdom. After fifty years Sonaka, the *paccekabuddha*, decides to preach the king the evils of desires and benefits of renunciation to encourage him to become an ascetic. Using his supernatural power he appears at the royal park at Benaras. While in the park he notices a poor young boy repeatedly singing the two line song and Sonaka enquires why he is repeating the same lines and whether he knows other songs. The boy replies, saying it is the favourite song of the king. Having heard this and with a view to confront the king through the boy he volunteers to teach him appropriate refrain in newly composed lines. After the young boy masters the new lines Sonaka directs him to sing it before the king saying he will be honoured with more wealth by the king. The boy informs this to his mother and attired in good dress reaches the palace and conveys through the guards his desire to sing before the king. The king obliges him and even accepts the demand of the boy, to assemble the people of the city to hear what he sings. He requests the king to recite first and when he completes his lines, the young boy

singing, replies him conveying, he has seen Sonaka at the park. The king rushes to the park, addressing Sonaka attired in the robes of an ascetic, mentions his status and enquires about hospitality received by him etc. The *paccekabuddha*, after rebuking the king with gentle words, highlights the essence of renunciation and vanishes in the air (obtaining *nirvāṇa*). The king Arindama realizing the same decides to give up his kingdom and to become religious. His councillors advise him to make his young son as the king of Kāśi. King Arindama (Bōdhisattva) attains supernatural power by doing meditation and reaches Brahmas world.

In this story Master was king Arindama and the son was young Rāhula.

The above *Jātaka* is depicted in the lower register of the upper drum slab, as a monoscenic narration of two main incidents from the Sonaka *Jātaka* (Pl.LXXIV-B). (a) The first scene is at the royal park, where prince Arindama dressed according to his status, is shown being recognised as the man worthy to be king of Benaras, evident from the presence of royal chaplain or clergy to the left of the prince, holding a fly whisker probably announcing the status of king and Sonaka is shown hiding behind (face obliterated), before Prince Arindama is led to the palace. (b) In the second scene the young boy sent by Sonaka in the royal court, probably is reciting the reply to the song composed by king Arindama.



In the panel Prince Arindama is shown standing in *tribhanga*, rests his bent right hand akimbo at waist where as he holds the frills of his waist band in the left hand. He wears an elaborately decorated turban and the lower garment with multiple folds at the back is held by a decorated waist band. The thick twisted *uttariya* is tied around the waist. He is decorated with *karṇakuṇḍalas*, three stranded *Kaṇṭhahāra* bound by four pendants, *kēyūra* and multiple wristlets in both hands. The royal clergy or the fly whisk bearer holds the whisker in the raised right hand where as left hand is placed akimbo at waist. He wears a plain circular head gear or cap decorated with a floral pendent at left top. He is shown wearing a simple *dhōti* held by a rolled waist band. He is decorated with *karṇakuṇḍalas* and three stranded *Kaṇṭhahāra*. Sonaka is shown hiding behind at the left top corner and his right hand with folded fist rests on the chest probably gesturing his expectations. He wears a turban with beaded design between folds. His face is obliterated. The boy standing to the left of the clergy is shown keeping his right hand akimbo at waist and the left hand hangs loose. He wears a simple head gear and the lower garment is held by a rolled waist band. He is also decorated with three stranded *Kaṇṭhahāra* and *karṇakuṇḍalas*.

All the three figures are having round face, static open eyes, straight nose, short lips and the proportionate arrangement of

figures in a receding order, within the frame of the register, exhibits adept handling of characters within the available space by the sculptor in this monoscenic narration.

The pilaster on the left of the slab is decorated with full and semicircular lotus medallions and the capital is adorned with the relief of a seated lion.

The plain border above the damaged three barred railing, bears two label inscriptions, that reads *Jātakam Sēnakīyam upari* on the left flank of the register and *Kumāra A. (rindama?)* on the right flank, obviously referring to the main character in the Sonaka *Jataka* narrated in the lower register of the panel.

### 11. Sutasōma Jātaka<sup>44</sup> (Sajiniya preamble) (Pl. LXXV to LXXVI)

This is the story of the previous birth of the Lord as told by him at Jētavana monastery in continuation of the discussion held by the brethren in the ‘Hall of Truth’ during the conversion of Aṅgulimāla.

This story is of Bōdhisattva, born to Koravya and his chief queen, who was ruling Indraprastha (*Indapattha*) in Kuru kingdom and named Sutasōma because of his fondness of Sōma juice. During his education at Takshaśilā he befriends a prince Brahmadatta. They return to their respective kingdoms. In the meanwhile, the king of Benaras inadvertently is converted into a cannibal by the cook whose deceit was revealed to the king

by Kalahatti, his commander. Kalahatti tries to bring the king to his senses by narrating the story of a brahmin noble who fell victim to drinking through the deceit of his friends and his subsequent banishment from his household. In spite of this, the king did not desist from his habit. The subjects and the family members had to banish the king who, along with his cook dwelt under a tree. The cook had to lose his life due to the cannibalism of the king. Once this cannibal-king had a great struggle between himself and a brahmin and got injured. The king took an oath with tree-spirit Āyush under which he resided that he would bathe the tree with the royal-blood of 101 lives, if his injuries were to be healed within seven days. Accordingly, Brahmadatta (friend of Bōdhisattva), the cannibal-king did not touch Sutasōma his friend when he had accidentally passed by the same tree. Aghast at the decision of the massive sacrifice the cannibal king intended to do, the tree spirit desires the four great kings (gods of four cardinal directions) to stop this killing and free the 101 kings imprisoned and hung to its branches. The *dikpālas* directed the tree spirit to approach Śakka (Indra) who in turn directed her to approach the king Sutasōma. A plan was hatched to instigate the man-eater to fetch Sutasōma as advised by the tree nymph and Sutasōma was held captive while he was bathing in the royal tank Mṛgacīra-park during the course of the sermon being given to him

by a brahmin Nanda coming from Taxila. Sutasōma conveyed to the man-eater king that he had kept a brahmin waiting to complete his teachings for the sin of which he is feeling sorrow and shedding tears rather than for the fear of death.

As agreed upon with the man-eater king, Sutasōma returned to his palace, attended to the discourse of the brahmin, munificently presented gifts to him and returned to the tree where the man-eater dwelled. During the course of conversation, he in turn discoursed the teachings to the man-eater king who as a promise to Sutasōma owed not to indulge in cannibalism any more and released all the captive kings and ultimately returned to his kingdom Benaras and ruled righteously thereafter.

Accordingly, the story is narrated in eight registers of four panels, wherein as a preamble to the narration of the main story begins with the rendering of a sub-story, delineating the effects of intoxicants as narrated by Kalahatti to the cannibal king leading up to the admonishing by the elders of the brahmin's household and his subsequent banishment. Interestingly, this part of the narration in two panels numbered respectively as 52 and 53 are inscribed as *Sajinīya Jātaka*. When the artists depict the main character Sutasōma in the subsequent panels numbered 54 and 55 they are inscribed as *Jātakam Sutasōmiyam*.

## Part-I (Pl.LXXV)

### A young Brahmin, who fell a victim to drinking

The upper register of this panel (Pl.LXXV-A) reveals Sutasōma standing and slightly leaning to left, in a horse drawn chariot with a parasol bearer running in front. He appears to be gesturing to the charioteer to hasten by raising his fore finger. He is robed befittingly with a turban, decorated with ear ornaments, a multi stringed pearl necklace, gem studded *kēyūra* and a heavy *kankaṇa* in his left hand. The charioteer is also shown standing inside the chariot and is well hidden by the arched high front board and covers his head with a scarf. The umbrella bearer in a brisk pace of running wears a folded sleeve shirt, a *kankaṇa* on the right hand and a thick scarf to protect his head. A heavy *uttarīya* and *dhōti* reaching up to the knees and at the waist completes his apparel. The brisk movement is captured in the decorated umbrella, its swinging festoon and the plumage on the crown of horses. The open chariot with spoked wheel is drawn by four well caparisoned neighing horses, with well trussed up mane.

The lower register (Pl.LXXV-B) of the panel reveals five noblemen, all in princely attire, in conversation and partaking an intoxicant being carried by one amongst them. The central figure refusing the offerings of a drink by his friends appears to be the brahmin boy

mentioned by Kalahatti in his narration. The figure to the left of brahmin boy, shown holding the end of his *uttarīya*, holds a spouted vessel (*kalaśa* type) with a handle at the top in his right hand (notice the strain of holding the heavy vessel), is being gestured by the brahmin boy to “stop” or refusing the offer of strong drink. The figure shown standing to his right is persuading him to accept it. He is also shown with moderately decorated flattish turban, coiled ear ornaments and four-stranded *vakshahāra*. His *dhōti* is held by a heavy *uttarīya*. Behind him at the top right looks another nobleman nonchalantly wearing a moderate turban and *patra-vṛitta kuṇḍalas*. He too wears four-stranded beaded necklace, *kēyūra* and bracelets. Above the central figure is the brahmin boy with upraised left hand bent behind the shoulder backwards almost touching the back of his head. He is shown with elaborate turban, coiled ear ornaments with *kēyūra* and bracelets. He has kept his right hand fore finger on the chin perhaps to indicate, silencing and hushing the trio below him not to reveal the content in the container. All the five figures are decorated with different kinds of gems, ornaments and appear to be of the same age group. The pilaster to the left of the drum slab, is decorated with full and semicircular lotus medallions and the capitals are adorned with seated winged addorsed lions respectively. The border between two registers, depicts a

row of geese holding lotus stalk in their beak.

The plain border above the relief of three barred railing bears a label inscription that reads: *Jātakam-sajiniya*

## Part-II (Pl.LXXVI)

The narration of this story continues in the next upper drum slab also. (PL.LXXVI-A). In the upper register, the brahmin boy is shown holding a spouted pot in his right hand which indicates his addiction to the strong intoxicating drink and his friends appear to be bemused evident from their gestures. The parasol above him, held by a female attendant, probably indicates that he belonged to a well to do brahmin family which maintained high status and moral standards. The female parasol bearer is bejewelled and the sring type anklet is shown prominently. The brahmin boy is befittingly dressed and wears a *vakshahāra*, gem-studded *kēyūra* and bracelets. Immediately to the front, is one of his friend resting his left hand akimbo and raising his right hand in a gesture probably warning the boy the evils intoxication. All male figures are shown with moderately decorated flattish turban, coiled ear ornaments. Two of them are decorated with four-stranded *vakshahāra*, *kēyūra* and bracelets and their *dhōti* is held by a heavy *uttarīya*.

In the lower register, (PL.LXXVI-B) the brahmin boy shown seated below on a low

platform, is being advised by the noble brahmin seated in *ardha-paryankāsana* posture over a low *vetrāsana* along with the other members of the household. The boy gets subsequently banished when he refuses to give up the bad habit. Behind the noble brahmin stand two courtiers.

The pilaster to the left of the slab is decorated with full and semicircular lotus medallions and the capitals are adorned with a relief of seated addorsed winged lions at top and bottom respectively.

The plain border above the relief at the base, depicting three barred railing having verticals decorated with semi circular and full lotus medallions, has a label inscription which reads *Jātakam-sajiniya*.

This is one of the story within Sutasōma *Jātaka*, narrated by Kalahatti, to the cannibal king as to how such a reveller brahmin boy, was banished due to the effects of intoxicants and flesh eating. Inspite of the wise advises of Kalahatti narrating the story of the brahmin boy, the king refused to give up the habit of human flesh eating and got subsequently banished.

Thus it appears the sculptors at kanaganahalli, while rendering this popular *Jātaka* tale, may have conceived the story narrated by kalahatti, inadvertently as a separate *Jātaka* by the scribe and thus inscribed as *Jātakam-sajiniya*.



## Sutasōma Jātaka (Pl.LXXVII-LXXVIII)

### Part-I (Pl.LXXVII)

It is actually from here the rendering of main story of Sutasōma begins. The upper register (Pl.LXXVII-A) of this drum slab depicts, the king Sutasōma astride a caprisoned elephant and his retinue is passing through the gateway of the city to go towards the Mṛigaśīra-park to have a head bath on the auspicious occasion of Phussa conjunction. The gateway is shown with *chaitya* arched balconied pavilion. The king himself drives the elephant and his right hand gestures towards a figure at the top right whereas he holds a goad in his left hand. He is moderately decorated with a turban, a heavy beaded multi-stranded *vaksha-hāra*, bracelets and a *kēyūra*. He wears a *dhōti* held by *uttarīya*. The elephant has its ivories decked. Immediately to the right of the elephant are shown three foot soldiers. Two soldiers bereft of head gear and the hair tied with a knot at the right side are carrying spear in the left and right hand respectively. The soldier in the middle probably holding a high rank, is shown wearing a turban and holds spear in his left hand and his right hand is gesturing towards a person at the top corner. They are moderately decorated. The elephant is led by a *chhatra* bearer who wears a full-armed cloak covering the upper part of the thighs only and the *dhōti*. A band holds the cloth at the waist. He is bareheaded, the hair combed backwards and ears are bereft of any ornaments. A huge garland tied at

the central hub of the *chhatra* swings away indicating the fast movement of the retinue.

At the extreme right top corner of the register to the right of the king and his retinue, is the brahmin Nanda from Takshaśilā, raising his right hand, cries at the king to stop to allow him to preach the morals and ethics learnt from Kassapa Buddha. He is shown with a non-ornate turban, bare ears, chest, hands and wears a *dhōti* held by *uttarīya*. Left hand is shown straight resting on left thigh. The king having heard the request of the brahmin, appears to be gesturing him by his right hand to wait till he returns, after taking bath in the royal tank.

The depiction in the lower register (Pl.LXXVII-B) of the upper drum slab is of paramount importance, wherein at the extreme bottom right corner of the panel, the cannibal king is shown hiding in the royal tank in Mṛigaśīra-park even before the arrival of king Sutasōma, to catch him. Only the head of man-eater king is shown who is standing between the huge lotus leaves covering his head. Depiction of lotus-blooms and ducks in the tank is noteworthy. The elephant and a soldier in the background indicate the well guarded surroundings of the park to enable king Sutasōma to take bath. The spear-bearing soldier wears a flattish turban and *ṛitta-kunḍalas*.

The mahout holding a lump of elephant feed in his right hand and the elephant is coiling the tusk with its trunk just before opening the mouth to receive its feed exhibits the sculptors ingenuity in narrating certain details. Just below the elephant, to the extreme left bottom corner of the panel, king Sutasōma is shown dressed after taking a leisurely bath in the tank. Standing sideways up to his waist the king has shifted his shoulder slightly to the left side and stands akimbo with his left hand placed over left hip and his upraised right hand touching the chin. He wears a turban, circular coiled ear ornaments, a *vakshahāra* and bracelets on each hand. He wears a *dhōti* held by *uttarāiya* tied at his waist.

Above the royal tank, on the right flank of the register, the cannibal king is shown carrying Sutasōma on his shoulders who wears an elaborate headgear, coiled ear ornaments, a pearl *vakshahāra*, a string of bracelets and is in a mood of contemplation as indicated by his right hand playing with the ear ornament. To indicate that he was snatched from the lake he carries a lotus bloom in his left hand. The cannibal king is shown bare bodied except a *dhōti*. His hair is combed upwards and the grim face probably exhibits that, he is thinking of the tough task ahead of him.

The plain border above the three barred railing bears an inscription that reads: *Jātakam Sudasōmiyam*.

## Part-II (Pl.LXXVIII)

The story is continued in the second panel, on the upper register (Pl.LXXVIII-A) wherein, Sutasōma appears to be repeating the four stanzas recited before him by brahmin Nanda who learnt it from Kassapa Buddha, before the cannibal king, and appears to be answering his questions. Some of the imprisoned princes also form part of the gathering.

In the circular composition of the register, Sutasōma is shown seated in the centre and is discoursing to the man-eater seated to his right. Both of them are squatting in *padmāsana*. Sutasōma, seated at the right top corner of the register, befittingly decorated, rests his left hand on the thigh with the thumb pointing inwards. His right forefinger touching the thumb appears to answer and clarify the doubts raised by the man-eater king seated opposite on a *vētrāsana* at the extreme left corner of the register and near the pilaster. In between above the man-eater king and Sutasōma sits one of the princes in royal robes with hands in *añjali-mudrā* listening with all intensity. Further below are three more princes squatting on the ground in *padmāsana*, in befitting royal robes, deeply engrossed in the discourse are shown raising their forefinger in *tarjani mudra*.

The lower register (Pl.LXXVIII-B) of the panel depicts a huge tree surrounded by six kings captured and subsequently released by the man-eating Brahmadatta.

They are bidding adieu to the tree-nymph who was their succour in summoning Sutasōma to get them released. All of them wear the typical headgear, drapery and ornamentation befitting their status with minor variations.

The pilaster to the left of both the panels are decorated with full lotus medallions flanked by semicircular ones and the capitals are adorned with winged and addorsed lions and in one instance with seated addorsed elephants respectively.

The plain border above the three barred railing bears an inscription that reads: *Jātakam Sudasōmiyam*.

It is to be noted that while concluding the story, the Master identifies the man-eating king to be Aṅgulimāla, Kālahatti, the commander who dissuaded the king to be Sāriputra, the Brahmin Nanda who discoursed to Sutasoma was Ananda, the tree spirit was Kāssapa. Sutasōma was himself and the other kings were the followers of Buddha.

Unlike Mathura and Kanheri<sup>45</sup> representations wherein the imprisoned or tied kings are shown, at Amarāvati<sup>46</sup> the hunting of men to satiate the cannibal, the sculptor of Kanaganahalli has been milder in his representation of the otherwise ghastly story. At Ajanta<sup>47</sup> the story depicted is in a totally different medium of expression i.e. painting. The artist has been highly dramatic and his love for detail has spread

over several scenes using his imagination and skill. At Aurangabad<sup>48</sup> the same story is executed more elaborately in stone.

## 12. Vidura Paṇḍita<sup>49</sup> Jātaka (PI.LXXIX-LXXX)

### Part-I (PI.LXXIX)

The *Vidura Paṇḍita Jātaka* is the most favoured *Jātaka* story from all schools of art of Buddhism because of its popularity far and wide. To sum up the story, the wise councillor Vidura for the king Dhananjaya - Korabba (Koravvya) of the Kuru Kingdom was known for his wisdom in discoursing the law. He being none other than Bōdhisattva, whose popularity had reached the Nāga world. Incidentally, the Koravvya King had defended Śakka, Varunanāga king and another king Sappanna who had been once borne in the household of four rich Brahmins, aspired to acquire a particular heavenly abode and accordingly they were born as described above. All the four friends recalled their previous births when they accidentally met in the same garden where king Dhananjaya and the other three recognised each other and extolled about their virtues.

Vidura Paṇḍita being nearby solved their doubt as to who was the most virtuous amongst them and they honoured him with gifts. All of them satisfied by the discourse of Vidura Paṇḍita and king Dhananjaya departed to their respective abodes and the Nāga-king on his return home was asked

by his wife about the jewel missing from his neck. The king mentioned that he gifted it to Vidura Paṇḍita and narrated about discourse to his queen Vimalā. The Nāga-queen desirous of hearing Vidura Paṇḍita fainted and said that she would die unless Vidura Paṇḍita's heart is brought to her.

To assist her father in saving her mother's life, the young Nāga-damsel Irandati proceeded to the Himalayas and with her song and dance enticed *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka, the nephew of Vessavaṇṇa passing by on his horse. Irandati presented *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka in the court of Nāga-king who agreed to marry his daughter to the *Yaksha* if he could successfully bring Vidura Paṇḍita's heart to him. *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka, thus challenged, by his magic spell wins the game of dice with Dhananjaya for a ruby and Vidura Paṇḍita in exchange. He wins Vidura Paṇḍita, who is subsequently taken to the abode of Nāga king wherein the desire of Nāga queen Vimalā of hearing his discourse (having the heart of Vidura Paṇḍita) is fulfilled and *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka is married to Irandati.

Each school of Buddhist art has rendered in their own inimitable way the story wherein the artist had a freedom for expression. While the story gets elaborately treated at Ajanta<sup>50</sup> and Amarāvati<sup>51</sup>, at Kanaganahalli, the master sculptor has utilised four registers of two panels to capture vividly the important scenes of the *Jātaka*.

These panels were donated by one village headman (*gahapati*), Tōta by name for the benefit of all. The inscription reads: *Jātakam Vidurapuṇakīya Tota Gahapatino deya-dhamma sava*. The word *loka-hitāya* is not inscribed due to oversight. In this panel two major events of the *Jātaka* are captured wherein the story begins in the first register of the panel of Nāga princess Irandati presenting *Yaksha* in the court of her parents, the Nāga king and Vimalā, the queen.

In the upper drum slab the upper register (Pl.LXXIX-A), Nāga-princess Irandati and *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka to the left of the panel are clearly discernible, standing before the Nāga king and queen seated on *paryanka* and *vētrāsana*, are mutilated above the waist. However, the snakehood of the Nāga king is intact. The king seated on *paryanka* is mutilated above waist. Part of the five snakehoods, mutilated left elbow, both the legs extended in *pralambapāda* are extant. The Nāga-queen as earlier mentioned sits in a circular *vētrāsana* with her right-leg extended over a foot cushion and the left leg folded back and placed at *vētrāsana*. The figure being mutilated, only a part of the right hand exuberantly decorated with gem-studded bracelets and bangles, a beaded *kaṭibandha* holding the pitambara and heavy anklets on the left foot and part of a mutilated snakehood are seen. *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka, the youth seeking Irandati, has presented himself in the court



of the Nāga king in his entire splendour with pleasing countenance wearing a coiled ear ornament. Befitting his *Yaksha* status he wears an elaborate turban, a coiled ear ornament, three-stranded heavy pearl necklace, austere *valayas* and bracelets treated with gems and beads. He wears a *pītāmbara* and his right hand is raised in a gesture of conversation with the Nāga. To his right, stands young Nāga princess Irandati. She being a Nāga-princess is shown with a snakehood and she decorates her hair as *lalāṭa-guccha* at front and a plait of combed hair is separated and drawn in front of ears and on to her shoulders. She wears *patra-vṛitta-kuṇḍalas* and has a *Kaṇṭhahāra* of multiple strings held by a central pendant. She perhaps has her upper body covered with a blouse held by a *kēyūra* and has a string of bangles covering her entire forearm from wrist to elbow. She wears a *pītāmbara* held by a lotus flowered *kaṭi-bandha*. Behind the king, is shown a standing figure of a fan (*chāmara*) bearer. She is moderately decorated and is depicted with a snake-hood. She holds in her right hand, an elaborate oval shaped fan probably made of rattan.

The lower register (Pl.LXIX-B) depicts the royal court of Dhananjaya who is engaged in the game of dice by *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka seated on the left flank of the panel. Above these are two courtiers deeply engrossed in the game. The sculptor has excelled himself in capturing

the intensity of the game between the confident *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka and a thoughtful dejected Dhananjaya and the anxious moments of the courtiers favouring the king's victory. Seated in front of the king, *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka confidently rests his left hand on his thigh and has picked up the dice for a throw in all concentration writ large on the face. He is decorated with the typical headgear, spring type of heavy ear ornaments, a *vaksha-hāra*, *kēyūra* and bracelets. He has his *pītāmbara* held by *uttarīya*.

Between him and the king Dhananjaya seated, across is the dice board of 64 squares. King Dhananjaya sits in *padmāsana* with right leg stretching slightly in front to ease the discomfiture and has just thrown his dice with the outstretched right hand. His left hand is playing with his ear ornament with deep contemplation lit large on the face. He is decorated with elaborate hair dress, heavy coiled ear ornaments, multi-beaded *vakshahāra* and bracelet. The courtier behind *Yaksha* Puṇṇaka is mutilated. The courtiers are provided with usual turban, beaded *vakshahāra*, *kēyūra* with *maṇi-padma*, bracelets. They too wear *pītāmbara* held by an embroidered ribbon at the waist. The plain border of the three barred bottom register has the inscription mentioned in the beginning, reading *Jātakam vidura puṇakīyam tōḍagahapatinō dēya dhāma sava*.

## Part-II (Pl.LXXX)

Inscribed as *Jātakam vidura puṇakīyam* this is the continuation of story wherein the depiction of the scenes after king Dhananjaya loosing Vidura Paṇḍita in the game of dice to *Yaksha Puṇṇaka* are sculptured.

The upper register (Pl.LXXIII-A) of the panel narrates the ushering of *Yaksha Puṇṇaka* and *Irādati* in human form to the court of wise *Vidura* who sits with his extended crossed (ankle) legs over a *vētrāsana*, in all grandeur attended by a *chāmara-dhārīṇī* as well as a fan bearer who appears to be a noble lady pleased to attend upon the wise *Vidura*. While *Irādati*, spellbound by the countenance of *Vidura*, stands in all humility in *añjali*, shown at the top left corner of the register. *Yaksha Puṇṇaka* with usual countenance of a majestic person is explaining *Vidura* to proceed to *Nāga* court since he has won him over the game of dice.

*Yaksha Puṇṇaka* is once again depicted with an elaborate headgear and the usual ornaments and stands with his left leg placed ahead of the right indicating his movement into the court. *Vidura Paṇḍita* with all the affluence of a minister is depicted with elaborate headgear, spiral ear ornaments, multi-stranded large gem studded *vakshahāra* and richly executed *kēyūra* and bracelets. His *pītāmbara* is held in position by a waistband with a sash to the right side along with the *uttariya*. He appears to have been shocked to have

lost in the game of dice, gesticulating by placing his right arm across the chest while his left hand is kept akimbo at the left hip. He sits over a circular bucket-shaped *vētrāsana*, which appears to have a semi circular backrest as well. The grimness of the situation is accentuated with the anguished fan-bearer who takes her left hand across her head reaching upto the right ear in dismay of king *Dhananjaya* loosing her master over a game of dice, the expression of which is further enhanced with her very wide open eyes. She is decorated with a *chuḍāmaṇi*, elaborate hair dress with *makarikā* reaching upto the ears and heavy spiral ear ornaments, *kēyūra*, bracelets and as usual the *pītāmbara* held by multi-beaded stringed *kaṭibandha*.

The lower register (Pl.LXXX-B) culminates in the joyous *Nāga*-king and *Nāga*-queen *Vimalā* having fulfilled their wish of listening to the discourse of the wise *Vidura Paṇḍita* and for the first time *Yaksha Puṇṇaka* is also shown paying his respectful homage to the elders who are at the court. *Irādati* looks towards *Yaksha* in admiration, who was successful in bringing *Vidura Paṇḍita* and sure of her marriage as vowed upon.

The *Nāga*-king and queen place themselves on circular *vētrāsanas* with foot cushion. While the king is in *ardha-padmasana*, the queen has folded her left leg on to the seat. The *Nāga*-king shown with multiple hoods and a highly ornate turban, has a heavy beaded

*vaksha-hāra*. The queen is also shown with a single Nāga-hood and equally decorated with *chūḍāmaṇi*, *makarikā* and gem studded *kēyūra* and bracelets. She sits with her left hand placed over the left knee and her heavy anklets at feet. Behind the king and queen is a *chāmara-dhārīṇi*. Slightly lower, at extreme left of the panel, Vidura Paṇḍita is shown seated in *ardha-padmāsana* over a *vētrāsana* giving the discourse by keeping count of the points he has been administering as the laws of *dharma* with all seriousness well expressed in the intensity shown on his face. Yaksha Puṇṇaka sits in *añjali* with an elaborate ornamentation in admiration of the Nāga-couple and as earlier mentioned Irandati has her sweet glances upon the Yaksha. Vidura Paṇḍita is also dressed for the occasion with an elaborate headgear and the usual ornaments of pearls and precious stones. The *paṭṭikā* above the three barred railing of the bottom register has the inscription: *Jātakam vidura puṇakiyam*.

As usual the pilaster to the left of both the panels are decorated with full lotus medallions in the middle, flanked by semicircular medallions and the capitals are adorned with winged and addorsed lions.

These *Jātaka* stories get interrupted by panels delineating historical happenings, events from the life of Buddha, portraits of royal personalities and other themes.

## Narratives of the life of the Master

The life story of the Master from the birth of the lord as Bōdhisattva down to the *mahāparinirvāṇa* are graphically captured in as many as 32 registers of 16 panels adorning the upper drum as detailed below.

1. *Adhyēshaṇa*: Gods beseeching Bōdhisattva Sumēdha to be born as Siddhārtha
2. Preparation of Māyādevi for the dream
3. Descent of Bōdhisattva as white elephant (*Śvētahasti*) and the dream
4. Narration of the dream by Māyādevi and the predictions by Asita
5. Māyādēvi proceeding to Devahrada and birth of the Master at Lumbiṇi
6. Celebration of the birth
7. Asita's visit to the sacred apartment in the palace and presentation of the child to Śākyavardhana-the tree spirit (Yaksha). The great departure
9. Transportation of the crest relic
10. Nāga king Kālīka paying homage to meditating Siddhārtha and Sujātā offering milk rice
11. Māra's attack
12. Śākyas paying homage to the enlightened at Kapilavastu
13. worship of the Vajrāsana and Khalatika Hills
14. Seige of Kuśīnagara for relics
15. Division of relics
16. Transportation of relics

Most of these upper drum panels are located towards the southeast, south and southwest of the *stūpa* approximately covering the southern half. The rendering of the events of the life of the Master follows the usual set pattern in a chronological sequence of events to some extent here, which is randomly depicted at Bhārhut, Sānchi, Amarāvati and other popular Buddhist centres. However, there are some anachronisms as noticed by the interpolation of the episode of Sujātā which should precede Māra's attack. However at the time of articulation it succeeds the event of Māra's attack. In addition, intriguing however, is the omission of the most popular episodes like the causes or four visions that lead to the renunciation, miracle of Śrāvastī, conversion of Nanda, Rāhula seeking inheritance and the subjugation of Nalagiri. The subject follows the typical *hīnayāna* symbolic depictions for the Buddha. It is to be noted that the narration of events prior to the birth is rendered in greater details at Bhārhut and Amarāvati to emphasise the divine status of the Lord in the places wherein the religion had its first inception.

From a closer scrutiny, it is found that the artists of Kanaganahalli, appear to have had a fair knowledge of the subject of execution as enunciated in the Buddhist treatises along with their variants such as *Nidāna kathā*, *Pachchuppanna-vatthu*, *Nikāyas*, *Mahāparinibbāna-sutta*, *Lalitavistara*, *Mahāvāstu*, *Abhinishkramaṇa-sutra*,

*Buddhacharita* of Aśvaghōsa, etc. This also reflects the sculptor being aware of such early depictions at Bhārhut, Sānchi and Amarāvati.

In spite of these, the artists do not appear to have strictly followed any single text for their delineation and appear to have effectively summarised the popular and presentable version in vogue.

In such renderings, emphasis was laid more on the visual representations of the sacred lore aesthetically leaving a permanent imprint on the minds of the onlookers and achieving the requisite spatial organisation of the canvas with less crowding.

The following is the detailed description of the sculptured panels related with the life of the Master.

### 1. **Adhyēshaṇa – The Gods beseeching Bōdhisattva to take birth as Siddhartha (Pl.LXXXI)**

This is the first panel in the series of life of the Master delineated in the *Mahāchaitya*. The four great guardian deities (*dikpālās*) entreating Bōdhisattva Sumedha, the future Buddha, to descend on earth as the child of king Śuddhodana and queen Māyā of Kapilavastu.

The upper register (Pl.LXXXI-A), depicts a centrally located empty *vajrāsana* with the sacred feet impressions shown below. Behind the throne is the



*dharmachakra* with a lion face to front at the hub indicating that the Master was to be born as *Purushasimha* or *Śākyasimha*. The *dharmachakra* has 36 spokes held by a rim treated with lotus creeper followed by another rim with *triratna*. The *simhāsana* is flanked by the four *dikpālas* (celestials) of which the ones seated to the left and right hold *chāmara*. Those standing behind and flanking the *dharmachakra* are in *añjali*. Three of them wear an elaborate, differently designed turban. The one standing to the right has a *Kaṇṭhahāra* and *tādapatra-kunḍalas* whereas the others have heavy *pushpavalaya-makara-kunḍalas*, *ratna khachita kēyūra* and wears *pītāmbara* and heavy *uttarīya*. The *āsana*, open to front, has side arms and a backrest, which is homogenous with semicircular perforations and hand grip. The backrest and the sideboards of the throne are treated with floral geometric designs and the border is treated with double line hexagon set with flowers. The squarish foot has off setted sole in three receding tiers. Infront of the throne a pair of footprints on a pedestal is shown and are decorated with *chakra* and *triratna* symbols.

The lower register (Pl.LXXXI-B) depicts the noble king Śuddhōdana and queen Mahāmāyā in the royal court with councillors. King Śuddhōdana shown seated on *vētrāsana* wears an elaborate head gear. He is decorated with *kēyūra*, wristlets and wears *pītāmbara* and heavy *uttarīya*. His face is obliterated. Just below the

relief of king Śuddhōdana, Māyā is shown seated on a *paryāṅka*. She is elaborately decked with *ardhachandra-padaka* with *chūḍāmaṇi* and *makarikā* at the forehead, the charm of which is enhanced by heavy *kanaka-valaya simha kunḍalas*. She wears an ornate gem-studded *kēyūra* and a series of bracelets mixed with bangles and a designed *pītāmbara* held in position by equally well decorated ribbon tied at the waist, the sash of which is shown in loops. Finely designed beaded *kaṭibandha* with a central clasp with screws and gems adorns the waist. The figures of courtiers and servants are mutilated, however, extant portions reveal that they were elaborately decorated.

Interestingly both panels are bereft of decorated pilasters, usually seen in other upper drum slabs.

## 2. Preparation of Mayādevi for the dream (Pl.LXXXII)

This is the highly mutilated panel of which only part of the lower register is extant. Except for the guard with a staff in his hand standing in *vismaya mudrā*, one of the servants seated and decking the right leg of Māyā bedecked with a coiled anklet, rest of the panel is mutilated. Māyā seated on a couch (*vētrāsana*) to left and admiring her charm with a mirror held in left hand, albeit mutilations, are discernible. The face of Maya, her lower limb from waist to ankle, a female figure to her front and the face of a female figure

carrying a small pear-shaped container with a lid in her right hand at the extreme left are obliterated.

The border has a fragmentary inscription reading: ...*yanō Māyā cha*, perhaps referring to the preparation of Mahāmāyā to the sacred dwelling in the Himalayas for the dream and Māyā admiring herself.

A pilastered fragment on the right margin of the slab, depicts portion of lotus medallions.

### 3. Worship of descending Bōdhisattva as white elephant and the dream (Pl.LXXXIII)

This panel, extant upto the upper register and a few fragments of the lower register, reflects the descent of Bōdhisattva in the dream of Mahāmāyā from the heavenly abode.

The upper register (Pl.LXXIII-A) shows the four *Lokapālās* (celestials) in flight of which, the first three leading carry the flowers on platters in their left hand and are spreading handful of the same through the path of the descent in their upraised right hand. They are led by Śakra (Indra), depicted at the bottom left of the panel holding the *uttarīya* across his shoulders. At the top, a celestial has his ballooned *uttarīya* following his flight folding both his legs backwards. He is decorated with an elaborate turban, *kanaka-pushpa-valaya-*

*kuṇḍalas*, gem-studded and mat designed *kēyūra* and heavy bracelets. He bears a bowl of flowers in his hand. Interestingly, the same gesture is to be seen in the other two celestials. The celestial leading in front of him has the same type of ornaments. However a tubular, beaded, gem-studded *vakshahāra* adds to the jewellery worn by him. His *uttarīya*, tied in a looped knot at the waist flows down all along his stretched left leg and the right leg is kept folded. Below him is another celestial similar in flight. Śakra in the lower right corner of the panel is also in flight gripping his ballooning *uttarīya* in both his hands. The turban appears to have been slightly dislodged in flight. The figures look elegant with broad face, staring eyes and exhibit the sculptors approach to show free movement, equal distribution of figures within the available space. However, he has overshot the sculpturing by carving the extended left leg of the figure onto the frieze of ducks, unable to restrain himself within the stipulated measurement.

The lower register (Pl.LXXIII-B) is of the dream. *Mahāmāyā* is shown reclining on a couch extending her feet. Above her head, in the left corner is a miniature elephant moving to right as if about to circumambulate the future divine mother. The feet of Māyā are placed over a designed *vastra* held by the attendants. They are decorated with different hairstyles and ear ornaments of *tālapatra* type. A female attendant is shown squatting

near the knee. Māyā is decked in *kanaka-valaya-kunḍalas*, *chūḍāmaṇi*, *ardhachandra-phalaka* from which issues *makarikā* upto the ear arresting the frontal plait of her elaborately combed hair. Unfortunately, part of the body of reclining Māyā and other details of the panel are lost. However a lamp of oil burning to indicate the time is discernible. The details are similar to that of Bhārhuṭ<sup>52</sup> except for shifting of the location of the lamp. Interesting to note here is the diagonal composition of the scene in this panel instead of the usual horizontal or vertical one.

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the upper register, is decorated with a full blown lotus medallion, flanked by semicircular medallions on either end. Above the capital, depiction of seated addorsed deer is noteworthy.

#### 4. Narration and interpretation of the dream (Pl.LXXXIV)

This mutilated panel (retrieved in as many as 20-22 fragments), delineates the narration of dream by Māyā to her husband Śuddhōdana in the royal court in two registers.

In the upper register (Pl.LXXXIV-A), the royal couple, Śuddhōdana and Māyādēvī are seated facing each other in a pavilion of the royal court over their respective *vetrāsanas* attended by female attendants. The first tier of the palace is shown all along the top border in the

form of a large hall with three entrances crowned by high arched windows and probably seven finials symmetrically positioned on either side of the central arch. The king sits over a high cushioned *vetrāsana* in *ardhaparyanka* posture and is listening keenly to the narration of the queen. He is well attired in royal costume. Queen Māyādēvī sits to the left of the king over a cushioned *vetrāsana* of comparatively lesser height. She is attired in typical royal costume and ornaments like *kanaka*, *patra* and *valaya kunḍalas*, *chūḍāmaṇi*, *ardhachandra-phalaka* from which issues *makarikā* upto the ear arresting the frontal plait of her elaborately combed hair. She is explaining in detail about the dream in a dramatic manner by the gesture of the right hand folding three fingers inwards. Between the king and the queen is a female *chāmaradhāriṇī*, with a fan of typical bamboo reeds. Behind the queen is another *chāmaradhāriṇī* holding the flywhisk in her upraised right hand. It is interesting to note that the artist has graphically captured the disturbed *vaksha-hāra*, which has swung on to her shoulders due to the swinging motion of her upraised right hand. Unfortunately, the bust of the queen and the female attendant behind her are partly damaged.

The lower register (Pl.LXXXIV-B) has the episode of narrating the details of the dream to the royal astrologer, Asita. Asita squats leisurely on the ground before

the king and queen to the extreme left corner, probably on a deer or tiger skin. He rests his right hand on the floor at ease and the left hand holding rosary is kept on his thigh. His closed eyes and melancholic face reflects his mind's vision of the birth of a male child to the royal couple. In front of him and to the right are shown the royal couple in which the queen is mutilated. The king, adorned befitting his status, is in *añjali* and requesting Asita to interpret the dream. Only the coiffure of queen Māyādevī sitting to the left of her husband is extant. Behind the royal couple and slightly above, another person is shown seated in *padmāsana*. Much of the figure is damaged. Along the left top border is a small structure of vaulted roof topped by three pinnacles and a door on the right side. This probably represents the *puṇyaguhā* or the sacred inner apartment of the palace or the dwelling in the Himalayas to which queen Māyādevī was taken by the celestials and the divine elephant entered her womb in the dream. In front of the dwelling is the typical throne with decorated back and side rests bearing the impressions of the feet indicating the Master.

The inscription on the plain border above the three barred railing of the bottom register reads: ... *sati puṇyaguhā*, 'sacred cave or dwelling' associating the location of the event narrated in the panel.

Pilasters decorated with reliefs of half and full lotus medallions form the right

margin of the drum slab. Capitals above pilasters are shown with seated addorsed winged lions.

## 5. Māyādevī proceeding to Dēvahrada and birth of the Master at Lumbini (Pl. LXXXV)

Inscribed as *Bhak(g)avatō je (na) na*, this much mutilated panel depicts, the birth of the Master.

The extant portion in the upper register (Pl. LXXXV-A) of the panel depicts the proceeding of Māyā to right from Kapilavastu towards Dēvahrada being carried in a palanquin by the briskly moving bearers. They are attired in the usual robes befitting their status. Their movement is well captured by the folded limbs and ballooning of the drapery that is worn. The figure of Māyā, perhaps is seated slightly in a reclining posture. So also are the other figures, probably the celestials.

The lower register (Pl. LXXXV-B) depicts Mahāmāyā decked suitably and standing under the *Sāla* tree, playing with her right ear ornament and the upraised left hand holding the bough of the tree. Standing elegantly she has raised her left foot and folded backward resting against the stem of the tree and the right foot is kept straight. The depiction of her joyous smile of contentment of having attained motherhood has no comparison. She has an elaborate hairstyle befitting a queen and is adorned with *lalāṭa tilaka*, *chūḍāmaṇi*,



heavy *makara kuṇḍalas*, gem-studded *valayas*, bracelets, and equally heavy spiral anklets. Her *pītāmbara* tied at the hip with centrally sashed *kaṭisūtra* and multistringed beaded *kaṭibandha* completes her ornaments and drapery. Interestingly, she does not wear a *vaksha-hāra*.

The newly born baby is held in silken cloth by four *Lokapālās* shown standing in a row with a gentle smile on their lips, heralding the arrival of the Master. A *kubjakannikā* is shown saluting the newly born in *añjali*. The bottom border of this panel interestingly depicts the Bōdhisapling in a pot probably foretelling his becoming an ascetic and *chhatra-chāmara* as royal insignia. Between them is the first miracle in the life of Master, of the newly born taking seven strides depicted in the form of miniature footprints with prominent lotus motif.

This being the key scene of depiction in Buddhist art in accordance with the standard norm of presenting Māyā in an elegant posture under the *Sāla* tree had become the favoured subject in all schools. However, the ornamentation, entourage, depiction of the location of *Lokapālās* either to her right or left are purely the artist's choice, imagination and understanding of the subject based on the textual citations.

The left margin of the lower register accommodates, a pilaster with reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of deer shown seated back to back looking at

each other, on the capital above pilaster is noteworthy.

## 6. Celebration of the birth (Pl.LXXXVI)

The sculptor has exclusively used this entire panel for depicting the joyous people of Kapilavastu celebrating the birth of the Lord.

The upper register (Pl.LXXXVI-A), reveals revellers indulging in acrobatics in the streets. A central standing figure leading the troupe of acrobats looking upwards is directing the young artists climbing the pole balanced on the shoulder of a gymnast. He carries a small whip-like guider in his upraised right hand to intensify the occasion with ear-splitting sound induced by it. He wears a *dhōti* held by an *uttarīya* and an anklet at the right foot, the only ornament on his person, and has his hair tied in a knot above. His left hand in akimbo rests on the hip. To his left a slightly hefty gymnast standing with spread legs and resting both his hands at the waist has a roll of cloth tied at his abdomen in which is inserted a curved pole with a lateral hook at the top. He also assures a firm grip to the pole by supporting it with his chin and is very watchful at the child indulging in acrobatics swinging from the cross stick. Another child is also shown climbing the same pole using the head of the gymnast. Both the children have the same hair dress. While the first child swings downwards from the cross stick hooked

to his waist girdle so as to facilitate him freeing the hands and swing away from the pole, the other is clambering up the pole with ease. To the right of the central figure is a disc drummer beating a brisk fervent note suiting the event and creating a crescendo of suspense. He is also looking upwards and is aided similarly by another drummer above. He is shown seated on the ground holding the kettledrum kept on his thighs with two short curved sticks. Both the drummers wear *dhōti* and are naked above waist and have their hair tied in a knot above. They do not wear any ornaments. However the most interesting figure is another man of the troupe moustached and standing to the extreme right whistling<sup>53</sup> by inserting the fingers of his left hand into the mouth and enthusing the children by raising and waving his right hand and also perhaps keeping a count of the time they should swing. The hairstyle of the gymnast and the whistler is also similar to those earlier described and they wear a *dhōti* reaching upto the knees. Interestingly, none of them wear any ear ornaments, which also indicates their social status.

The lower register (Pl.LXXVI-B) has a group of musicians holding the typical three pronged bells, side drum, a disc-drum and dancing in a circle celebrating the occasion. They are five in number and two stand separately at left swinging the three-pronged bell. Except one who wears *patra-kunḍalas*, to the extreme

left, others are without ear ornaments. Similarly, only two have *kaṇṭha hāra* strung with lotus petals and all have their hair tied in a central knot above the head. The plain band above the three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription - *lagukōmēya kathālikā* and *Isaradāhikō Ghumaṭa putō* probably meaning that the story of *lagukomēya* and the artist of this balancing pole scene is *Īśwaradāhika*, son of *Ghumata* respectively.

This is the most interesting narration albeit slight deviation from the serious subject, reflecting upon the contemporary social events of celebration. It also assumes greater significance as one of the earliest narration of folk dance and music prevalent in this part of the country as a popular means of expressing a happy occasion and subsequent celebrations.

The pilaster to the left of both the registers are decorated with full lotus medallions flanked by semicircular ones and the capitals are adorned with seated, addorsed winged lions.

## 7. Asita's visit to the palace and presenting the child to Śākyavardhana-the tree spirit. (Pl.LXXXVII)

The artist generally uses the lower register that is nearer to the onlooker to begin the narration. Here too the depiction of the event after the celebration of the

birth of the Master begins in the lower register of Asita's visit to the sacred apartment in the palace and presentation of the child to Śākyavardhana-the tree spirit in the upper register.

The panel, in its upper register (Pl.LXXXVII-A) has the pilaster design along the left border. The abacus of the pilaster shows *dharmachakra* on a pillar in profile set in a railing. Fully bloomed lotus flowers also emerge from the railing on either side of the *dharmachakra*. This can be taken as the initiation of the setting of the wheel of righteousness in motion from the beginning of the birth of the Siddhārtha (an anachronism). It may also be taken as the depiction of the first meditation of the newly born as depicted at Bōdhgaya and later in Gāndhāra art.<sup>54</sup>

The new-born Siddhārtha is being presented to Śākyavardhana, the tree spirit (Yaksha) of Kapilavastu, in the upper register (Pl.LXXXVII-A). Māyādevī standing over a cushion, bedecked in all the usual royal ornaments has her hair done almost like a crown. *Chūdāmaṇi* fashioned like a flower, *nāga-kuṇḍalas*, four stranded necklace of pearls with a tubular pendant, a bracelet with five bands of pearls, spiral type of bangles, an ornate *mēkhalā* at the waist and spiral anklets adorn her. Standing over a cushion, Māyā holds the white silken cloth smoothly held in both her hands and the Master is represented by a pair of feet. She has a

slight respectful venerative stoop towards the tree spirit.

To the left extreme of the sculptured register is a multi-branched tree. From the lower part of the trunk of the tree, the tree spirit Śākyavardhana, is shown emerging. He, attired in royal costumes, is wearing the usual turban, coiled *nāga kuṇḍalas*, three stranded necklace, multiple bracelets and an armlet. He is in *añjali* and bends in an expression of total submission and veneration towards the child being presented to him by the royal mother. This depiction of visit to the tree spirit-a tutelary deity of the Śākya clan-at the behest of Asita, the court astrologer, is as per the custom.

She is accompanied by her retinue comprising *chāmaradhāriṇi*, holding the flywhisk in her raised right hand. Another lady holding an unidentifiable object (probably a fruit?) in her twisted right hand; another attendant-a *kubjā* holds a water pot with a conical top in her upraised hand and stands to the left of Māyādevī. A fourth female attendant, also a *kubjā*, to the extreme left nearer to the tree is shown holding a flower bowl. The ornamentation pattern of the female retinue presents a harmonious contrast and variety depending on their hierarchical status.

The extant portion of the lower register (Pl.LXXXVII-B) has at the extreme left top border a structure with an entrance and the feet impression of the Master over a

*vajrāsana* provided with backrest and armrests. This is the visualisation of the Master by Asita as none other than Bōdhisattva born to the royal couple as *Chakrāṅka pādam...rājasutam dadarśa*<sup>55</sup> [(He) saw the king's son bearing the auspicious sign of a wheel in his foot]. To the left of this structure is Asita pleasantly looking at the *vajrāsana* i.e. the baby and admiring.

Outside this apartment in the foreground Asita is in *padmāsana* in the gesture of blessing. Behind him stands Nārada, a nephew of Asita and disciple also in the gesture of blessing. Seated to the front of Asita, in conversation and in *padmāsana* at the lower left corner is probably the mutilated figure of Śuddhōdana.

The extant pilaster on the left margin of the lower register is decorated with reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of antelopes shown seated back to back. There are two label inscriptions engraved on the plain border over the three barred railing of the damaged bottom register. The one engraved along the right border reads *Idasāla guhā* representing the sacred mountain cave near Lumbiṇi or the royal chapel of the palace. The inscription along the left border reads *Sākiyavadhanam cheratiyam* for the depictions in the first register indicating the presentation of infant Siddhārtha in front of Śākyavardhana and he is in turn venerating the future Master.

This narration appears unique to south India alone wherein there is an age old tradition of presenting the infants at the door step of the tutelary deity of the clan or village. This does not find depicted in the available renderings of Bhārhut and Sānchi. However this event gets slightly expanded at Amarāvati and Nāgarjunakoṇḍa<sup>56</sup>

## 8. The great departure (*abhinigamana*) (Pl.LXXXVIII)

For sheer composition and expression this panel stands out as one of the foremost sculptural renderings of the Kanaganhalli artists. Every character is meticulously planned and spaciouly arranged. The artist has given importance to express the sentiments of each character involved in this most revered episode in the life of the Lord.

It is also interesting to note that the artists here, have overlooked narrating the four great drives of life which lead to the renunciation of the world once again, a clue to him following that tradition of Bhārhut which also does not portray these events. However, they are depicted at Sānchi<sup>57</sup> and in Ajanta frescoes (cave 1). While it is not encountered at Amarāvati, Nāgarjunakoṇḍa<sup>58</sup> has all the four events depicted on a drum slab.

The upper register (Pl.LXXXVIII-A) depicts the departure of prince Siddhārtha, expressed in the form of a well-caparisoned horse Kaṇthaka being



led outside by Chhandaka, the personal assistant of the prince. The celestials hold a festooned parasol over the horse representing the prince and a *dikpāla* as *chāmaradhāri* also accompanies. To muffle any noise that may be produced during the great departure by the hoofs of the horse awakening the palace, four well-decked celestials hold the feet of the horse. Behind this elegant procession, the high raised walls of the palace with balconied pavilions are sculpted with an attendant or guard of the palace who has fallen asleep on the *daṇḍa* he carries. He saddles himself on the *daṇḍa* in his sleep and holds on to it—an expression of subtle humour. The composition of narration is of a well-balanced nature wherein the various sentiments - especially of joy are captured. To start with, the majestic joyous trotting of Kanthaka in almost dance like gait, its head held high and gently neighing at the prospect of taking its master for a ride, which is being silenced by Chhandaka, the servant, who drapes himself in a thick long coat reaching upto the knees with a heavy headgear reaching even the neck region in the form of a muffler. The snorting snout, slightly open mouth of the horse, muscular shoulder and swing of the tail are very well shown. The celestials holding the festooned parasol and flywhisk are heavily draped in *pītāmbara*. They are highly jewelled in the typical fashion. The celestials supporting the feet of the horse are sculpted as if looking upwards with a gentle smile on their lips and are shown as

if springing out of the netherworld below. The expression is that their redeemer has set into the task of enlightening them. The sculptor has interestingly sculpted the palace with its pavilion and *chaitya* gabled roof in tune with the contemporary wooden architecture.

The scene of extreme joy in the lower register is in contrast to the one of sorrow and stupification when the listless Kanthaka returns back hesitantly to the palace led by Chhandaka in the second register (Pl.LXXXVIII-B). So fine is the depiction that the knots introduced in the leg of the horse speak of the long journey it had and the disturbed *vastra* on its shoulder highlighting its swollen facial expressions with wide mouth, snorting nostrils, sad looking eyes so much so that even the tail which otherwise was joyously swinging at the prospect of carrying the Master is limpingly let down at the hips. A worried Chhandaka hesitantly is at the entrance of the palace with the entire smile on his face lost.

The scene further above depicts the inner apartment wherein king Śuddhodana and Mahāprajāpati are seated on low coach with dutiful Chhandaka presenting before the royal couple, the jewellery of the prince. While the queen appears to be shell-shocked by seeing the jewellery of the prince and hearing the news clutches at the seat in which she sits with her right hand while the left hand is placed at the chin in the gesture of astonishment

followed by grief. The king deeply grieved at the news is consoling the queen as well as Chhandaka with both hands and appears to be calling for the details of the event that happened. One cannot but marvel at the sentiment of joy and pathos well expressed in these panels, which surpass even the best of the Ajanta paintings. The inscription on the border below reads *abhinigamana*-the great departure.

The event being of utmost importance in Buddhist religion and art gets delineated in varying details. It is rendered at Sānchi<sup>59</sup> in a synoptic way while it is captured in all vividness at Nāgarjunakoṇḍa,<sup>60</sup> wherein even the princess Yaśōdhara, wife of Gautama, is shown wailing and swooning.

The pilaster to the left of both the registers are decorated with full lotus medallions in the middle, flanked by semicircular medallions and the capitals are adorned with addorsed lions and griffins respectively.

## 9. Transportation and adoration of the crest relic (*Chūdāharaṇa*) (Pl.LXXXIX)

The panel depicts transportation of the crown jewel of prince Siddhārtha to Sudhamālaya-*dēva sabhā* also known as Vaijayanta palace by the celestials and its worship.

The upper register (Pl.LXXXIX-A), even though mutilated, depicts four flying *gandharvas* with bowl of flowers hovering

above the crest jewel and are showering flower upon the jewelled crown of the prince shown in the lower register below. The first two *gandharvas* atop are shown descending downwards in a topsy-turvy fashion indicating their flight. The extant figures are shown wearing typical head gears and decorated with *kēyūra*, wrislets and *pītāmbara*, heavy *uttarīya* completes the drapery.

The lower register (Pl.LXXXIX-B) depicts three celestials in a circular configuration, flying with a large platter, carrying crown of the Lord. The ballooned drapery of the celestials and their stretched and folded lower limbs speak of their flight.

Interestingly, all the celestials wear a typical hair dress characteristic of the period and heavy bracelets and *kēyūra* (armlets). Each one has an ear ornament of his choice. The lower three celestials are heavily bejewelled and their *pītāmbara* is held by a slender *uttarīya*. The two fly whisk bearers (*chāmaradhāris*) atop have moderate ear ornaments and typical headgears.

The plain band above the three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription identifying the depiction of the panel as *Chūdāharaṇa* (carrying or procession of the tuft / crown relic).

It is interesting to note that the event captured in this panel of *Sudhamālaya* already occurs in one of the *vēdikā* panels in this place.

The left margin of both the registers has a pilaster decorated with ornate reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of deer and lions shown seated back to back on the capital.

### 10. Nāga king Kālīka paying homage to meditating Siddhārtha and Sujātā offering milk-rice (Pl.XC)

This is also a popular depiction in Buddhist art, occurring in varying degrees of expression, right from Gandhāra down to Amarāvati. The canvas available here being large veneering slabs of *Vēdikā* and *mēdhi*, more maneuverability in the depiction of a scene of Nāgas in detail is to be seen.

This panel has in its upper register (Pl.XC-A) the Nāga king Kālīka with his three queens worshipping the meditating prince in the form of *Buddhapādas* and the pious Sujātā's offerings before he sits for enlightenment.

The upper register has in the extreme right corner, a pair of footprints of the Lord on *Vajrāsana* with the sacred marks of *triratna* at the heel and *chakra* at the sole of the feet. Seated very close to the footprint is a well-sculpted human form of Nāga Kālīka in *añjali*, paying homage to the Lord. He is shown with five hoods each with flickering tongue. Heavy coiled ear ornament, gem studded bracelets, long massive *vakshāhāra* with tubular beads and gem-studded tracers form the jewellery

and he wears a *pītāmbara*. Close to him below on either side are seated three Nāgiṇis in human form and their hands folded in *añjali*, of which two are shown upto their chest and one is shown upto her loins.

All the Nāgiṇis are shown with a single snakehood over their ornate hair dress braided with pearls and beads, *chūḍāmaṇi* and *makarikā*. Heavy bracelets alternating with bangles and the *kaṭibandha* held by central sash over *pītāmbara* form other ornaments and drapery. The *kaṭibandha* of one of the Nāgiṇis has cylindrical beads held with tracers. All of them wear *patra vritta-kunḍalas* and different ropy, multi-stranded, pearl and beaded *vakshāhāras*.

The lower register (Pl.XC-B) too has a similar composition. The only difference is that Sujātā and her friends replace the Nāga and Nāgiṇis. Once again a pair of *Buddhapādas* over *vajrāsana* is shown at the extreme right corner with the backrest as well.

Very close to the *vajrāsana* at left stands one of the friends of Sujātā in *añjali*. Close to the right corner of the *vajrāsana* Sujātā stands in elegance with a look of concern towards the emancipated Lord with her left hand carrying a bowl of sweetened rice and the extended right hand carrying a spouted vessel by the handle. Her modesty and humbleness is envisaged in her ornaments as reflected in a *chūḍāmaṇi*, *makarikā*, coiled heavy ear

ornaments, *ēkāvali* of beads, *kēyūra* at right hand, simple bracelets and bangle, multi stranded beaded *kaṭibandha* held by a central sash over the *pītāmbara* and heavy anklets. Close to Sujātā, almost reaching upto her thighs, is a *kubja Kannikā* with a bowl of fruits. She too is ornamented with a bracelet, single anklets and a beaded *kaṭibandha* over *pītāmbara*. To the front and right of Sujātā stands another friend of her with an innocent face playing with her ear ornament in her upraised right hand and holding a lotus flower across her left shoulder. She wears *chūḍamaṇi*, *patra-vṛitta-kunḍalas*, a beaded lotus bloomed pendant mixed *kaṭibandha* over the *pītāmbara*. She wears a *kēyūra* on her left hand and a double bracelet at the wrist and the right arm is decorated with bangles. A spiral heavy anklet completes her ornamentation. The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a mutilated label inscription referring to the two depictions which read: *Sujā .... vikaduhu* (lower register) .... *ro cha Nāgarāyā*. (upper register) (Sujātā daughter of ... and the Nāga king).

Here it is to be noted that a chronological anachronism has occurred in delineating the succession of events wherein Sujātā's offering should be succeeded by the attack of Māra and his enchanting daughters trying to woo the Lord. However, the scene of Nāga king interferes here because the artist has

opted to depict the attack of Mara and his daughters enticing Siddhārtha on to the next independent panel. This intension of the artist is also reflected in the label inscription, wherein the name of Sujātā appears first followed by that of Nāgarāya.

The extant pilaster on both the margins of the panel is decorated with reliefs of full and seme-circular lotus medallions and a pair of winged lions shown seated back to back on the capital.

## 11. Māra's Attack (Pl.XCI)

The panel in its two registers records the futile attempt of Māra to disturb the meditation and his subsequent defeat and subjugation by the enlightened Lord who is symbolically represented in the form of *simhāsana* and *pāda* impression under the tree.

As usual, the narration begins in the upper register and concludes in the lower. The upper register (Pl.XCI-A) in its central composition has a *Bōdhi* tree with its branches and leaves arranged in a semi-circle. Below the tree is the depiction of *simhāsana* with low-fluted legs. In front of the *simhāsana* on a trapezoid-shaped pedestal are the foot impressions of the Lord with *chakra* and *triratna* symbols. In front, the seat has horizontally arranged lotus flowers as a border. The backrest and side verticals of the throne are treated with geometrical, floral designs and the symbols of infinity, each separated by



a series of rafters. Seated Māra and his elegant daughters who are trying to entice the Lord towards the worldly pleasures, flank the throne on either side. Seated to the left extreme, near the throne, Māra with defeat writ large on his face gesticulates holding the heel of his right leg with his left hand keeping the thumb at the heel and the rest of the fingers all along the sole and pointing the right *tarjani* towards the earth. Māra has heavy bracelets (*kankaṇa*) and two different types of *valayas* decorating his upper arm. His well-groomed hair is tucked beneath the typical turban. He wears a coiled ear ornament in the right lobe. Behind Māra one of his daughters stands cross-legged elegantly with her right hand kept akimbo on waist and the left hand in *lōlahasta* or dropping gesture. The high pelvis, shrunken abdomen with beaded girdled waist and elaborate hairdo with *lalāṭa-padma*, reflect it as one of the well-sculptured figures. The sculptor has taken care to draw the median abdominal lines and faint lines of the drapery she wears. Close to the left corner of the throne, another elegant daughter of Māra in similar fashion of sculpturing plays with her right ear ornament and her left hand freely dropping downwards nearer her thigh. She is also treated with a beaded girdle holding the *pītāmbara* and like her counterpart at right has the entire forearm treated with bracelets. Close to her left shoulder, there is another daughter with

an elegant hairstyle treated with pearl strands and a jewelled ear ornament large for the face. She holds a *padma* in her right hand and also wears a *vakshahāra*. The former two female figures do not wear any jewellery across the chest. The first female figure described has *vṛitta-kunḍalas*. Apart from these, one of the daughters nearer to the throne is trying to seduce the Lord with her expressive *lāsyā* in vain. She, in the act of dance, has almost stood on her right toes with heel raised and the left foot placed across on toes. The gesture of limbs speaks of her whirling mode of dance. She too has elaborate ornaments.

The lower register has Māra approaching the Lord for an attack. In the scene he is shown on an elephant along with his retinue comprising a spear bearing horse rider and noise-creating group of dwarfs with their *krōdha* (anger) expressed in their chubby faces which is achieved by wide open eyes and gesticulations of their hands. In the confusion caused, the briskly paced elephant clutches one of the dwarfs in his trunk by his left leg who is screaming for protection. One of the dwarfs in the extreme corner raises the hammer and another dwarf has already lost his balance in the entourage and has fallen on the ground and the two dwarfs in the extreme left side of the panel are charging towards the elephant with bare hands and with a stick respectively. In the entourage is an unbridled horse at the

top probably reflecting symbolically the uncontrolled mind.

The plain band above the three barred railing of the bottom register has a four-lettered Brāhmī label inscription reading: *Mārabhagō*.

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the upper register, is decorated with a full blown lotus medallion, flanked by semicircular medallions on either end. Above the capital, seated addorsed winged lions and antelopes are depicted.

## 12. Śākya paying homage to the Enlightened at Kapilavastu (Pl.XCII)

After seven years of his great departure and after enlightenment, the perfectly accomplished Buddha proceeds to Kapilavastu to enjoin the newfound doctrine to his clan as sought by Śuddhōdana. The Lord is received in all pomp and grandeur and accommodated at *Nyagrōdhārāma* (Banyan park) as he was a mendicant. The panel in its two registers depicts the grand reception offered to the Master by the Śākya clan headed by Śuddhōdana with *pūrṇa-kalaśa*.

This panel, at its upper register (Pl.XCII-A) depicts probably king Śuddhōdana and his noblemen and women worshipping the enlightened Buddha during his visit to Kapilavastu. Two noblemen are seen approaching the enlightened

in the form of Bōdhi tree set in a railing with sacred *pūrṇakalaśa*. Three women also holding the sacred *pūrṇakalaśa* in their upraised hands accompany them. The depiction shows two well-robed male figures standing close to the *Nyagrōdha* tree set in railing of six *tabhas* and four *sūchis* of austere design implanted with two umbrellas on either side of the stem of the tree which is obviously the *Nyagrōdhārāma* specifically decorated with festoons to receive the august guest which also incidentally serves as the depiction of the Master. In their outstretched hands are the pots (*kalaśa*). The male figure to the left is bedecked with elaborate turban, *makara-valaya-kunḍalas*, multi-stranded (six) beaded *ratna kaṇṭhikā*, a simpler *valaya* and three sets of *kankaṇa* set with gems and the *pītāmbara* held by a twisted heavy *uttarīya*. The hands bear a short-necked globular pot with the shoulder designed with incise marks and a *triratna* design with as many as four lotus blooms in its mouth. This noble person, is probably Nanda, the cousin of Siddhārtha. To his right is a woman of noble lineage also carrying a *kalaśa* or *pūrṇakumbha* with minor changes in the design of the pot. She is decked with *chūḍāmaṇi*, *makarikā* heavy *makara-valaya-kunḍalas*, gem studded *kēyūra* and multiple rows of bangles. She too wears a *pītāmbara* held at the waist by four stranded, beaded *kaṭibanda* held with a central buckle, and heavy anklets. Right leg from thigh onwards is

obliterated. Immediately above this noble couple is another female figure holding the sacred *pūrṇaghaṭa* in both her hands and decked in the usual ornaments.

The noble to the right is similar in posture and expression. He wears an elaborate headgear, *patra-vritta-kunḍalas* tubular faceted *phalaka-hāra* and a fairly large *kēyūra*, which is faceted and gem bordered. Save the design on the *pūrṇaghaṭa*, the flowers are similar to the earlier described. He could be the King Śuddhōdana. Behind him stand two noble women of whom the one nearer the tree depicted, is partially hidden by the tree. She is shown with an elaborate hairstyle decked with *makarikā*, *chūdāmaṇi* and wears *vrittakunḍalas*. She carries the *pūrṇaghaṭa* with lotus flowers. The lady standing behind the noble man is partially seen and she too holds a *pūrṇa-kalaśa* at front and is decorated with usual ornaments and the *pītāmbara* is held by a beaded *kaṭibandha* with a central clasp. These could be Mahāprajāpati and Yaśōdharā, the adopted mother of Siddhārtha and his wife respectively.

The lower register has the depiction of the women of the harem probably led by the two noble women Mahāprajāpati and Yaśōdharā carrying the sacred *pūrṇa-kalaśas*, which is perhaps a continuation of the worship as shown in the first register. Amongst the ladies, the one to the left holds aloft the *pūrṇa-kalaśa* in her upraised hands in a gesture of offering. She is moderately ornamented and

dressed. The lady to her front, at left, is shown with a more elaborate hairstyle with a ropy *ratnāvalī*, heavy *valaya-simha-kunḍalas*, gem studded *kēyūra*, bracelets and bangles with a beaded *kaṭibandha* and heavy anklets. She stands elegantly crossing her legs - left foot to front and the left hand placed at her hips. The upraised right hand holds *kalaśa*. Servant maids flank the women with their upraised hands carrying the *pūrṇa-kalaśa* and they are also decorated with the usual ornaments and drapery. The sculpture of dwarf (*kubjā*) female at the extreme left corner is mutilated. Another *kubjā* below to right, wears a terracotta disc ear ornament. The *kubjā* too carries a *pūrṇa-kalaśa* in her upraised right hand and almost stands on her toes to reach the noble lady above.

These depictions have great resemblance to those at Sānchi<sup>61</sup>

### 13. Worship of the Vajrāsana and depiction of Khalatika Hills (Pl.XCIII)

The panel depicts Lord Buddha symbolically in the form of Vajrāsana, being worshipped by a group of noblemen, in its two registers. In the background of Vajrāsana, the topography of the rocky terrain is also graphically captured by the artist by showing lofty hills in both the registers. Interestingly, a seven-lettered label inscription provided on the plain border below the lower register reads, *galatikō pavatō*<sup>62</sup> i.e., “Khalatika

*parvata*” identified with the famous “Barabar hills,”<sup>62a</sup> located about 24km from Gaya in Jahanabad district in the state of Bihar. Forming part of a cluster of hillocks, the granitic cliff at Barabar, measuring approximately 200 m in length, accommodates four rock-cut caves, now known as Karan Chaupar, Lomas Rishi, Sudama and Visvajhopri, are excavated during the time of Mauryan ruler Aśōka, evident from three brahmi inscriptions found in these caves. Of these, two inscriptions located in Sudama and Karan Chaupar caves, referring to the grants made to the ascetics of Ajīvika sect by king Aśōka, mention the name of Khalatika mountain, and reads as; (a) “By king Priyadarśin, (when he had been) anointed twelve years, this cave in the Khalatika mountain was given to Ajīvikas” (b) : “When king Priyadarśin had been anointed nineteen years, this cave in the very pleasant Kha.. (latika mountain) was given by me for (shelter during) the rainy season”.

It is too well known that, Aśōka, after adopting Buddhism as his creed, undertook pilgrimage to important places associated with the Master and gave donations or took measures to preserve Buddhist sites, as mentioned in Divyavadana and evident from couple of minor rock-edicts of his period viz., Rummindei and Nigalisagar. In this context it is interesting to note that the Master after his enlightenment travelled from Uruvēla (Bōdhgaya) to Sarnath and

at a later time from Rajagriha to Patna (Pataliputra). Incidentally the Khalatika hill range is located amidst this route. The Master visiting Khalatika hill, on both the above occasions or during his sojourn in the region, for spreading his teachings, cannot be ruled out. This may have been one of the reasons prompting king Aśōka, to get the rock-cut caves excavated and occurrence of specific name of Khalatika hill in his inscriptions may further attest the importance attached to the place. It is interesting to note that except the Aśōkan inscriptions none of the other known Buddhist literary works make any reference to the Khalatika hills.

After Aśōka, the earliest reference to the hill is available in the *Mahābhāṣya* of Patāñjali,<sup>63</sup> who explaining the word “*Khalatika disu vachanam*” used in “*Katyayanas Vaṭṭikas*” mentions as “*Khalatikasya parvatasya adurabhavam vanāni Khalitakam vanāni.*” From this, it is clear that Khalatika was identified with the name of a famous hill, in the second century B.C.E. In the inscriptions of later period, the hill was called Gorathagiri or Goradhagiri and still later as Pravaragiri.

Centrally positioned in the panel in the upper register (Pl.XCIII-A) is a well-sculptured low throne with sufficiently high backrest and arm rests at the sides. The throne is provided with a short foot with octagonal shaft and a base. The front border of the throne is treated with floral



decoration of fully bloomed lotus, whereas the backrest is treated with vertical lines in two tiers denoting the bands in imitation of wooden architecture. Behind the throne are bejewelled chāmara-dhāris on either side with a relief of hillock carved in between. Seated on either side of the couch in padmāsana with hands in añjali are two noblemen befittingly robed and jewelled. Below the throne are the footprints of the Lord Buddha, on the pedestal as an assertion of physical presence. The footprints have, in low relief, triratnas near the toes and a dharma-chakra motif at the sole of the feet.

The lower register (Pl.XCIII-B) has four noblemen in añjali who are worshipping the centrally positioned Vajrāsana as seen in the first register. The only difference being the missing of the Buddhapāda, probably symbolically signifying that even after the demise of Buddha congregations continued to be held in the site under reference. The Vajrāsana is surrounded by a row of hills at the top and bottom. While one pair of devotees is shown on either side of the throne at the far end in añjali, the others, are shown seated in añjali-mudrā. All are shown with elaborately decorated turban. They are decorated with coiled ear ornaments, four-stranded vakshahāra, kēyūra and bracelets. Two figures shown in the foreground are wearing pītāmbara held by a heavy uttarīya. The one on the right side is in padmāsana whereas the other to the left is shown seated cross legged almost resembling yogāsana.

The pilaster to the left of both the registers are decorated with full lotus medallions flanked by semicircular medallions and the capitals are adorned with seated, addorsed winged lions. The middle border deviding the registers, is decorated with a row of airborne geese holding lotus stalk in their beaks. Below the lower register relief of three barred railing is depicted. The four uprights are decorated with full and half lotus medallions in relief, intervened by offsets.

Above the upper register on the plain border a nine letter label inscription reads; *kachuka<sup>64</sup> dēya dhama dana*, (Meritorious gift of encasement slab). However unlike the other inscriptions at the site, name of the donor appears to have been missed by the scribe. Interestingly this is one of the panel where label inscription occurs both at the top and bottom border, similar to the Aśoka panel.

#### 14. Seige of Kuśinagara for relics (Pl.XCIV)

It is well known that the Master attained Mahāparinirvāṇa in the suburbs of Kuśinagara. The Mallas cremated his body befitting a universal monarch. The news of the demise led to the arrival of seven claimants namely, Ajātaśatru of Magadha, the Lichchavis of Vaiśālī, the Śākyas of Kapilavastu, the Bulis of Allakappa, the Kōliyas of Rāmagrāma, a Brahmin of Vēthādīpa and the Mallas of Pāva.

In this panel are the depictions of two scenes of warriors charging for a battle. Even though the individual characters cannot be easily identified as there are no clues in the earlier depictions, there are clear cut epigraphical references. Based on the label inscription *upayāna* denoting the 'siege' it could be surmised that the Śākya of Kapilavastu and Koliyas of Dēvahrada, the clan to which Siddhārtha belonged, and the clan of his mother Māyā might have rightfully charged the Mallas at their refusal. Under such circumstances it could be the depictions of Śākya and Kōliyas proceeding to lay a siege for the relics. And it is known that Drōṇa, the learned Brahmin, equally divided the mortal remains of the Lord and pacified them.

The upper register (PL.XCIV-A) depicts an archer leading another archer astride an elephant. The archer on the elephant holds the bow in his right hand and is twanging his bowstring with the left. The first archer has set an arrow in the bow held in right hand and has drawn the arrow almost to his ears in his left. A royal person appears to be driving the elephant into a brisk pace by piercing the pointed end of goad he is holding firmly in his left hand and on the lateral sides of the elephant are slung quivers and spare bows. The brisk movement of the elephant has slightly imbalanced the attendant at the back who grips the edge of the sheet spread on the back of the elephant. Immediately above the archer, riding on the elephant who is in the act of drawing the arrow, shown lifting his left

hand nearer to the ear, is a soldier with a shield in his left hand and a broad bladed sword in the right. All the characters are moderately bejewelled while the archer astride the elephant does not have ear ornaments. Save the elephant rider and a sword bearing soldier the two archers and the attendant riding the elephant wear full-sleeved shirts. The brisk moving elephant is led by a foot soldier with a sword and wing type of shield.

The lower register (PL.XCIV-B) shows two warrior astride an elephant and horse, respectively, in the act of fighting. Above the elephant is a soldier with a sword in the upraised right hand and holds a shield in the left close to his chest. His right hand drawn to strike the enemy is obliterated. The warrior on elephant has coaxed the elephant into a brisk movement with the help of a fairy large *aṅkuśa*. By the side of the elephant an archer astride a horse is all set to release an arrow. Slung on either side of the horse are quivers full of arrows. The saddled horse is galloping and neighing and is decorated with a *padma* decoration behind its ears. The horse is led in front by a briskly moving foot soldier with the winged type of shield in left hand and a long sword in the upraised right hand.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription that reads: *upayāna* denoting the 'siege'.

The right margin of both the registers depict decorated pilasters with ornate

reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of lions shown seated back to back above the capital.

It is significant to note that the articulation of the upper drum, the rendering of the stories of the Buddha in the form of life events, his miracles after the enlightenment, *Jātakas* and the rulers directly or indirectly causing the spread of Buddhism was of paramount importance rather than maintaining a chronology of events. Frequent anachronism in articulation is seen when there is a break after the worship of Vajrāsana and Khalatika hills, the fight for relics and distribution of relics are shown and the demise, carrying of the crown to the final destination and the erection of a *stūpa* get depicted towards the north west of the *stūpa*. In between, the panels of depiction of King Aśoka, the miracle at Śrāvastī, *Vēssantara*, *Hamsa* and *Śuka Jātakas*, and a Śātavāhana ruler Sundara Śātakarṇi interfere. The first few scenes of the early life, which seem to be in a sequence, need not be taken for granted for the chronological sequence of events depicted in the entire *stūpa*.

### 15. Division of relics (Pl.XCV)

This panel records the division of the relics of the Lord. The upper register (Pl.XCV-A) depicts six royal personalities (two each at the top, at the sides and at the bottom) around a small rectangular *pīṭha*, which has eight ovalish portions of the mortal relics of the Lord in between

and are paying their obeisance with great veneration.

In the upper part of the depiction the first figure wears a *vaksha-hāra* of pearl and the second figure has an *uttarīya* thrown across his neck behind the shoulder. The right one has his turban with a large barrel shaped bead issuing two strings on each side to hold the shape of the turban, the left one also has two threads crossing each other in his turban. They wear *vṛitta kuṇḍalas* and heavy *kaṇkaṇas* as ornaments. The lateral two devotees are kneeling on their toes and are in *añjali*. In the panel the noblemen leaning on one knee at the relic stool to left and to right in the panel also have an elaborate turban. The one to left wears heavy *makara-kuṇḍalas*, thick beaded *vakshahāra* and three sets of *kaṇkaṇas*. The other two kneeling on one leg in *añjali* and bejewelled, also have elaborate turbans similar to those described earlier with slight variation. Interestingly, all these male devotees are sculpted with a slight paunch, prominent pelvis, heavy *pītāmbara* draped almost upto the ankle and heavily twisted *uttarīya* at the waist perhaps to show their affluent social status. The preceding panel has the depiction of the siege for relics. The Mallas, at first were unwilling to share the relics, who were brought to reason by Drōṇa who made eight equal shares to distribute to them, which is depicted over the pedestal. The sculptor has depicted only the noble persons of the royal lineage

and has not depicted Drōṇa, the brahmin from Vēthādīpa. However, a separate sculptured panel depicting a decorated *stūpa* and the *śārīrika stūpa* could be presumed as the *stūpa* erected by Drōṇa<sup>65</sup> over the urn in which the remains had been collected.

The lower register (Pl.XCV-B) depicts a troupe of dancers and musicians celebrating the occasion of having received the venerated relics of the Lord on a festive note. The composition at the top has two female dancers elaborately decked, vigorously dancing to the accompaniment of the musicians. Two female figures to the left perhaps are playing musical instruments or witnessing a performance. The musicians group is accompanied by three artists playing on a heavy drum (extreme right nearer to the pilaster), a percussion player (*dhōl?*) gripping the instrument in his left hand and a centrally seated female figure carrying curved sticks in her hands perhaps to keep the note of rhythm or playing the metal disc. Close to her left is a male playing on a vertically placed percussion instrument in the lap. This register, apart from the intended scene in narration, throws a welcome light on dance forms and musical instruments of the contemporary times.

The inscription on the plain border above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register records the event of distribution of relics as *Sarīramibhago* (division of relics).

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the registers are decorated with a full blown lotus medallion, flanked by semicircular medallions on either end. Above the capital, relief of seated addorsed lions and deer are depicted.

## 16. Distribution of relics (Pl.XCVI)

In continuation of the one described above, the upper register of the panel depicts two elephants carrying the relics of the Master. The first elephant depicted in the background has one rider attired in royal costumes and has a decorated turban and *kuṇḍalas* besides a close neck *kaṇṭha-hāra*. He also wears bracelets with criss-cross designs and holds the relic casket in veneration placed over the head of the elephant. The second (front) elephant shown in full view has two riders, both attired in royal costumes. The person at the front is bedecked with an ornate turban, *kaṇṭha-hāra*, bracelets and armlets of beaded designs and a *pītāmbara*. The *uttarīya* is worn around the waist with a knot to the left. The nobleman behind him holds a *chāmara* in his upraised right hand and has all the features similar to the person sitting in the front. At the top left of the panel a gable roof structure with an arched entrance is seen reflecting a ceremonial entry into his palace.

The lower register (Pl.XCVI-B), akin to the first, also shows two elephants, the first one in the background carrying one rider holding the sacred relic casket in



reverence, placed over the head of the elephant. The second (front) elephant shown in full profile carries two persons both attired in the usual royal robes. The one sitting in front holds a comparatively smaller relic casket placed over the head of the elephant and the second person sitting behind him holds a *chāmara* in his upraised right hand. The elephants are decorated in similar fashion wherein sufficient care is taken to depict even the nails. Similar to upper register, relief of a gable roofed structure is depicted at the top right corner indicating entry into palace or main entrance.

The panel represents the event of transportation of the corporeal relics of the Master by the respective kings in all reverence to their respective regions for construction of *Śārīrika stūpas* over them. However, in other sculptural depictions elsewhere in the Krishna valley as also in the carved cornice slabs over the *āyaka*-platforms at Kanaganahalli itself eight kings are shown separately astride eight different elephants in procession. It is pertinent to note here that symbolic procession is indicated rather than the numerical count of reliquaries, such a depiction also occurs at Sānchi.<sup>66</sup>

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a six lettered label inscription reading: *Sariravibhago* indicating the narration is the distribution of relics.

The damaged pilasters on the right margin of both the registers are decorated with ornate reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of seated deers and winged lions above the capital.

## Propagation of Buddhism

The role of Aśoka towards the cause and propagation of the *Dharma* is too well known to be elaborated here. However, since he appears as one of the major depictions here certain events that were part of his endeavours like commissioning the emissaries far and wide is also projected here. As per the Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvamsa*, the third Buddhist Council (*Mahā-sanghīti*) was held in c.250 BC, at Pātaliputra under his patronage, under the chairmanship of Moggaliputta Tissa (Upagupta in the northern texts). After the council, several missionaries headed by teachers of repute were dispatched to propagate *Dharma* to different regions. Amongst them five missionaries Mūlakadēva, Sahadēva, Kassapagōtta and Majjhima (*Madhyma*) were dispatched to the Himalayan (Himavat) region under the leadership of Dundubhissara (Dundubhīsvara). All these teachers are depicted in as many as six registers of three panels respectively followed by the panel of Mauryan king Aśoka. Incidentally, all these panels were the gifts of a *gahapati* Tondaka during the 16<sup>th</sup> regnal year of Chhimukha Sātavāhana.

## Transportation of relics (Pl.XCVII)

The traditional account of Aśoka opening up the earlier seven out of the eight *Sāririka stūpas* bearing the corporeal relics of the Master and their distribution and the stiff resistance offered by the Nāgas in opening of the eighth *stūpa* at Rāmagrāma, incidentally being a stronger one, gets depicted here.

The artist here uses panels recording in great detail pomp and procession, the transportation of relics by the missionaries like *ārya* Mahima (Majjhima), *ārya* Satyanāma (Sachanāma) in the upper register and *ārya* Dudubhissara (Dundhubhīsvara), sent to Himalayan region by Aśoka, in the lower register.

The upper register (Pl.XCVII-A) depicts two brisk paced elephants with five riders, three on one (front) and two on the other. The elephant rider at the rear, highly jewelled, holds the casket of relics in both hands in front resting it on the head of the elephant. Behind him, partially seen, is a *chāmara-dhāri* swinging the *chāmara* in his upraised right hand. Both the riders are noblemen as reflected by their elaborate hairdress, thick string of pearls, heavy bracelets and artistic ear ornaments. Only the head of the tusker elephant is sculpted with its ivory decorated by jewelled bands. The second elephant in the front carries three riders, of which the last one appears to be a servant or

mahout. He has his hairdo tied in a knot and wears a knee-reaching *dhōti*, a tunic and *uttariya* at neck. The two riders at the front are similar to each other in their dress and ornaments and in the designs of their *vakshahāra* and turban. The rider at front holds the casket of relics in his outstretched hand in front. The ivories of the elephant are treated with jewelled bands. The sculptor has taken care to depict the shoulder drape and nails on the foot of the elephant. A robe across the first rider's thigh to protect it from the swinging ears of the elephant is quite interesting.

The lower register (Pl.XCVII-B) also depicts three riders on elephant. A drummer announcing and leading the elephants is an added element in this panel. The drummer has slung the drum across the shoulder and is in the act of beating probably with a small stick held in his upraised right hand. The bejewelled first rider rests the casket of relics on the head of the elephant, which tucks its trunk into the mouth reflecting its long journey and thirsty nature. A *chāmara-dhāri* seated behind is shown swinging a *chāmara* in his upraised right hand. The second elephant has Dudubhisara, the noble teacher, a *chāmara-dhāri* and a mahout. The mahout sitting in a crouching posture over the animal wears a full-sleeved shirt, tightly held by a *kaṭivastra* and a *dhōti*. The former two wear *pītāmbara* and *uttariya* with knot to the left.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has an inscription reading: *Āyō Mahimō Sachanāmo ayōcha Dudubhīsarō* - referring to the revered ārya Mahima and Sachanāma (Sahadeva) and revered Dundubhīsvara, three of the five missionaries who were sent to Himalayan territory for the propagation of *dhamma* as per *Dīpavamśa*. These preceptors are also referred to in their relic casket inscriptions of Sanchi, Sonari and Andher<sup>67</sup> who are immortalised with identification in sculptured form here.

The right margin of both the registers depict decorated pilasters with ornate reliefs of semicircular and full lotus medallions and a pair of lions shown seated back to back above the capital.

### **Entourage of Mūlakasēthi** (third panel of Chhimukha's inscription) (Pl.XCVIII)

The sculptured upper register of the panel reveals a nobleman carrying a child in a palanquin borne by three palanquin bearers. The pavilion, in three-dimensional depiction, is open to front, with the out-curved sideboards treated with lattice decoration. The super structure of the palanquin is supported with circular pillars with *kumbha* capital. A four-side (only two are shown) gable-vault roof with *chaitya* dormer window and finials within a low three barred railing, completes the

palanquin. A nobleman sits over a heavily cushioned couch in the palanquin in extended limb posture and cradles a baby with the help of a thick drapery held in his arms. He has an elaborately designed turban, treated with ropy pearls. A heavy pearl *vakshahāra*, the baby draped from the bottom of armpit to the thigh has kept its hands across the chest. Interestingly, the hairstyles of the palanquin bearers are almost similar to that of the royal figure seated in the palanquin. Leading the procession are servants with *chhatra* bearer and a water carrier who carries spouted *kalāśa* over his left shoulder, the fluttering tapes of the umbrella speak of its blowing against the wind in momentum. While the palanquin bearer and the royal figure in the palanquin are naked above waist, the servants carrying the umbrella and the spouted vessel wear a *dhōti* and a short, skirted shirt, held by a heavily twisted waist band. Both these do not bear any head gear but have left their lengthy hair firmly combed back.

The lower register (Pl.XCVIII-B) has an interesting retinue depicting a very well sculpted camel drawn chariot. Two servants dressed similarly as in the first panel, carry an umbrella and a spouted water pot. The third is a drummer as an announcer. The accompanying retinue of umbrella bearer, vessel carrier and an attendant are sculptured in receding heights in the panel so as to convey the movement, distance and the order of

the individuals leading the procession. The double humped camels found in Kashmir region of Himalaya are depicted almost true to their nature, the plasticity of their limbs very well captured. The camels are caparisoned at mouth and neck and the charioteer holds the reins in his left hand and a whip in the right hand. The yoke of the chariot is curved and the nook is held in position by a circular knob. The chariot has large rimmed, spoked wheels and a heavy geometrically treated bucket-body. The nobleman leans against the front board of the body and keeps his left hand akimbo on the waist. His right hand gestures for a speedy drive. Except the charioteer, who covers his head with a cloth, the rest of the retinue has ornately arranged hair-do without any headgear.

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the registers are decorated with a full blown lotus medallion, flanked by semicircular medallions on either end. Above the capital, relief of seated addorsed lions are depicted.

The inscription on the plain border above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register reads: *āyo Chēdīyavaṇīyō Mūrakaseṭhi kumārō cha*. This helps us to identify the depiction in the first register as the Chēdi trader Mūlaka with his grandson in the lap in the first register and his son on camel driven chariot in the second. This could probably be the Mūlakadēva, one of the four preachers who had accompanied Dudhubisara to the Himalayan region.

*Kassapagotto cha yo thero Majjhimo Dumdubhissarō* [l]

*Sahadēvō Mūlakadēvō Himavantē yakkhaganam pasādayum*<sup>68</sup> [ll\*]

(*Dīpavamśa*, II.10, p.54)

This is the panel in continuation of the donations made by the rich trader Gahapati Tokhi along with his entire family recording the inscription of Chhimukha Sātavāhana spread over four panels at the top border.

Kāsapagota and Majhima referred in the Sānchi casket inscriptions are contemporaries of Aśōka. But palaeographically these inscriptions are decidedly of later period. This has been explained by assuming that the corporeal relics must have been collected subsequently for enshrinements from places where they were originally preserved.

Further, based on palaeographical grounds and other circumstantial evidences, it has been concluded that the Buddhist saints of the Sānchi, Sonāri and Andher caskets represent at least three generations of teachers. Kāsapagota, Dudubhisara and Majhima who formed the first group of teachers were followed by Gotiputa and by his disciples, Moggaliputa and Vachiputa and Vāchiya Suvijayata. Regarding others, nothing could be said conclusively.



The upper register (Pl.XCIX) of the next panel depicts a nobleman, astride a chariot drawn by four horses along with his retinue comprising five persons. The nobleman stands in the chariot; slightly leaning backwards due to the momentum of the chariot with his left hand in akimbo and the upraised right is instructing the charioteer to hasten. The charioteer completely covers his head and neck with a scarf and wears a long full-sleeved tunic. He holds the reins in his left hand firmly to keep the galloping horses under check and whip in his right hand. The horses are decorated with hackle (plumage fixed over their heads), reins, bridles and neck girdle. The yoke of the chariot is of a curved type and the nook is held in position by an ornate circular knob and wedge tied to the yoke. The chariot has large-rimmed spoked wheels and a geometrically treated heavy bucket body with a prominent top rim probably of bamboo or cane. In the background of the chariot are shown two drummers beating the drum to announce the arrival of the nobleman. In front of the chariot is an umbrella bearer holding the long shaft of the umbrella, reflecting the importance of the person in the chariot. The flowing ends of the tape and the swing of the umbrella indicate the speed of the movement of the group. Behind the umbrella bearer is a servant holding a spouted water-vessel over his right shoulder by his right hand. His swinging left hand reflects the momentum. All the four servants have similar costumes with

sleeved long coats, having a skirt-like lower border and are bereft of any ornaments. They do not wear any headgear but have combed their hair with a front knot.

The depiction in the lower register (Pl.XCIX-B) appears to be the continuation of the procession of a nobleman on an elephant. The nobleman holds a long goad (*aṅkuśa*) in his left hand and his right hand is held upwards as if gesturing the retinue to keep a faster pace. A *chauri* bearer is holding the flywhisk in his raised right hand and keeping the left hand in akimbo. Both are decorated with ornate turbans, ear ornaments, a thick *kaṇṭha-hāra* with beaded designs, and set of *kaṇkaṇas* (bracelets). The nobleman wears an *adhō-vastra* (*dhōti*) tied to his waist and is naked above waist. Behind the elephant are two drummers holding the curved sticks in their upraised right hands. One of them is holding a cylindrical drum. At the front there are three servants leading the retinue. They are holding respectively an umbrella, water pot and probably a trumpet. All of them wear long full-sleeved tunics.

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the registers are decorated with an ornate lotus medallion, flanked by semicircular medallions on either end. Above the capital, relief of seated antelopes are depicted.

Since the panel is mutilated, the characters in the registers cannot be identified. However, this may be taken

as the troupe of noblemen accompanying *ārya* Kāssapa depicted in the succeeding panel.

### The journey of Kaśyapa gōtra in a palanquin (Pl.C)

This is the first panel of the donations made by the *gahapati* Tōkhi from Matisēka (Mahisaka) along with his wives, sons, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, kinsmen and daughter. The top border records the beginning part of the lengthy inscription referring to Chhimuka Śātavāhana and also identifies the person travelling in the panel as *ārya* Kaśyapa.

The upper register (Pl.C-A) has scenes depicting a nobleman astride an ovalish palanquin carried by four men across their shoulders. The shallow trough of the palanquin is supported by two crossbars shouldered by the bearers. The palanquin is open to front in which *ārya* Kaśyapa sits cross-legged. The sides of the palanquin are open to ventilate the interior. A sunshade is fixed to the palanquin at the roof with the help of sidewardly projected shaft from the edge of the sideboard. The entourage is led by a *chhatra* and a water-carrier who are in their typical tunic and a knotted hairdo. The saint has the typical turban headgear, usual heavy ornaments, *vaksha-hāra* and wristlets. Even the palanquin bearers are decorated with the same attire as that of the saint. However, they do not wear any *vaksha-hāra*. This Kaśapagota is credited

with the establishment of the *Haimavata* branch of the *thēravāda* school. The Dipavamśa plainly indicates that Kaśapagota as the leader of the mission to the Himalayas. Dundubhissara, Mūlakadēva, Sahadēva, Kaśapagōta and Majjhima are also referred in Buddhagosha's *Samanta Pāsādika*. One of the seals unearthed from Sankīsa bears an early Kushāna Brāhmī legend: *Ayana Himavatāna*, i.e., of the venerable Haimavatas.<sup>69</sup>

The lower register (Pl.C-B) depicts three riders upon three different animals. The first two riders at the top are astride caparisoned lions and the one below is upon a mythical parrot beaked griffin. Mountains are shown below indicating they have crossed great terrains and long distances. They all have their right hands raised atop their head and wear similar ornaments and turbans with slight variations. Since they are depicted riding on the mythical animals (Fig. 65, c and f)), they can probably be the *yakkha-gaṇa* accompanying the *āchāryas*.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription reading: *Ayasa kasapagōtasa Sivikāpayānam* (Travel of revered Kaśyapagotra in a palanquin).

The damaged pilasters on the right margin of both the registers are decorated with ornate reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of seated addorsed antelopes and griffins above the capital.

## Yaksha's and Nāgas of Himalayan region (Pl.CI)

Inscribed as *Hēmavatā yakhō nāgāhi*, this panel in its two registers delineates the Nāgas and Yaksha's headed by Garuḍā of Himalayan region proceeding in great veneration towards receiving the revered teacher, Kassapagōta and perhaps the relics of the Master sent by Aśōka.

The upper register (Pl.CI A) has a group of five devotees proceeding to receive the revered teacher Kassapagōta across mountains. The four devotees are bare above waist and are decorated with *yaksha-hāra*, coiled ear ornaments, wristlets and the usual turban headgear and are in *añjali mudrā*. While the first raises both his hands above the head in obeisance, the others hold it in front of their face and chest. One of them wears a *vṛitta kuṇḍala*. The last in the group is Nāga identified by the three snake hoods over the head and is in *añjali mudrā* held in front of the chest. All are wearing *pītāmbara* held by a heavy *uttarīya*

The second register (Pl.CI,B) depicts the above group having arrived at the Himalayas and amongst them the central figure is that of Garuḍa (shown with wings). Interestingly, the mountain and its cave are shown above. One of the devotees with *vṛitta-kuṇḍalas* is kneeling on his right foot in great veneration. Except for the two hoods, the face of Nāga, right shoulder of Garuḍa and the face of the first

devotee are obliterated. All of them wear *pītāmbara* and heavily draped *uttarīya* around the waist. The entire group of devotees, both in the first and second register, are shown moving to their left. This panel is the sequel to the preceding panel of Kassapagōta's visit to Himalayan territory.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a nine lettered label inscription reading: *Hēmavatā yakhō nāgāhi*.

The left margin of both the registers has a pilaster decorated with ornate reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of lions and winged lions shown seated back to back above the capital.

## The preaching by Dudubhisara (Pl.CII)

This is the gift of Tōdaka and is a sequel to the above, depicting perhaps Dundhubīsvara preaching to kinnaras, garuḍas, nāgas, demons and their clan<sup>70</sup>.

This is a double pilastered locking panel in two registers depicting noblemen and women offering their obeisance to monks.

The upper register (Pl.CII-A) has in its depiction two completely robed monks preaching and blessing the august gathering of noblemen in *añjali* with probably their children, a boy and a girl. The monks are heavily draped from ankle to the neck and

have shortened hairstyle, while, the ears of the first monk who looks young are not pierced, ears of the elderly monk seated below are pierced. Seated closeby are two children of whom the girl, to the extreme right, is in *añjali hasta*. She wears a loin cloth held by rolled up *uttarīya* at the waist and has a typical tufted hair style which is rolled up on to the back of the head and tied. *Patra-vṛtta-kunḍalas* and a pair of bracelets are her ornaments. The other child, a male is seated slightly behind her to the left. The right hand is in *tarjani hasta* with similar hairstyle and ornaments. The noblemen are austere in their attire with a turban and a *pītāmbara* held by an *uttarīya*. They do not wear any ornaments.

The lower register (Pl.CII-B) depicts a noble lady surrounded by her friends and two female children paying obeisances to the monks above. She is shown standing in the centre with her upraised hands in *añjali*. The slightly upturned face with the eyes lifted above, reflects the intense devotion. She is decorated befittingly with all the usual ornaments. Her *pītāmbara* is held by a beaded *kaṭi-bandha* with central latch or hook. The beads are strung alternatively with tracers as well. The other women, except the extreme one to the right, carry in their upraised left hand a bunch of lotus blooms.

The inscription on the plain border above the relief of three barred railing

of the bottom register reads: *Tōdakasa kachukāniyō tāna* reflecting the gift of veneering slabs by a certain Tōdaka.

The damaged pilasters on both sides of the margins of the panel are decorated with ornate reliefs of medallions of different types and pairs of seated addorsed winged lions above the capital.

### The miracles of the Master

While delineating the miracles of the Master, the artist has selected the most popular rendering, the miracle he performed at Sankiśa to confound the six heretical teachers in the presence of king Prasenajit. He went to *Trayastrimśa* heaven to ordain Dhamma to his mother and alighted at Sankisa, using the staircase provided by Śakra.

### Descent of Buddha (Pl.CIII)

This is a unique panel, in which the frieze of swan dividing the two registers is absent. The subject chosen for depiction is the descent of the lord from *Trayastrimśa* heaven. To show the continuity in narration the median register is omitted. The panel depicts at the centre a ladder with as many as 19 steps with a pair of footprints over the *vajrāsana* with *bōdhi*-tree, as if emerging from it. The branches of the *bōdhi*-tree are spherically arranged. On either side of the *simhāsana* and the *bōdhi*-tree are two female *chāmara-dhārīṇis*. The flywhisks they carry, overshoot the upper border.



They have elaborate hairdress, armlets, *vakshahāra* and *kaṭibandha*. Immediately below the *simhāsana* on either side of the steps are four devotees. While at left, the first one close to the steps, holds his hands in *añjali mudrā*, the one behind him is in a *tarjanihasta*. The two devotees seated opposite to them are shown in *añjali*, bedecked with ornaments and wear typical head gear. At the right, after the tenth step is a flying celestial - Śakra - holding an umbrella, indicating the descent of the lord. The depiction to the left is mutilated and yet the figure is probably that of Brahma taking right side position to the Lord. Further between 11-16<sup>th</sup> steps on either side are flying celestials and at the bottom are male devotees wearing a *vakshahāra*. These two are seated over a cushion. At the last step, nearer to the border, is a pair of footprints (*pāda*). The top four seated figures and the last two seated figures perhaps are the six heretical teachers.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a five lettered label inscription reading: *Dēvōharana* (the descent of the Lord). This scene is depicted almost in a similar manner at Bhārhut.<sup>71</sup>

The extant damaged pilasters on the right margin of the registers are decorated with ornate reliefs of lotus medallions and a seated winged lion above the capital.

## Kings and other historical personages

This *stūpa* site has brought to light duly labelled portrait relief sculptures of royal personalities. Amongst them the rulers of the *Mahājanapadas* like Mahāgōvinda, the king of Magadha is depicted. Even Udayana, king of Magadha and grandson of Ajātaśatru, is depicted here with labelled inscription. Aśōka being quite well known is depicted at two places in the upper drum along with label inscription besides getting depicted in association with the worship of Rāmagrāma *stūpa* at the lower drum without any inscription to affirm this.

Amongst the Sātavāhana rulers, right from the founder of the dynasty Chhimukha Sātavāhana, down to Puḷumāvi under whose period this veneering of the great *chaitya* appears to have been completed, are found depicted including Sātakarṇi, Mātālaka and Sundara Sātakarṇi. Apart from the above kings, sculpted head of Yajña Sātakarṇi found near one of the accessory structures adds to the gallery of the Sātavāhana rulers depicted here.

Thus, apart from the depiction of the Aśōka, for the first time reliefs of more rulers of the Sātavāhana dynasty occur here after the famous statue gallery at Naneghat<sup>72</sup>.

Apart from the above, the legendary king of Varanasi elevated to the status of a Bōdhisattva frequently appearing as the ruler of the place in the *Jātaka* tales also gets depicted here as *Bōdhisatō Kasirāya*.

Interestingly reliefs of some of the main characters of the *Jātaka* tales are depicted prominently such as Prince Arindama (PL.CVII) etc.

## The Maurya and other Magadha rulers

### 1. King Asōka and Sōmarāta (Pl.CIV)

Asōka's endeavours in the spread of Buddhism need no introduction. The occurrence of his edicts, the Mauryan presence at Sannati have also been established and inferred in the preceding pages. Suffice to say that his popularity has been duly acknowledged by the Sātavāhanas by incorporating him as one of the chief propagators of Buddhism also alluding to the historical events like his futile attempt to retrieve relics from the *stūpa* at Rāmagrāma zealously guarded by the nāgas, his visit and revival of Sambhōdi, his despatch of missions to Himalayan territories and Mahendra and Sanghamitrā to Ceylon have been vividly captured. Some of these are further authenticated by label inscriptions. It is pertinent to mention here that the edicts of Dēvānāmpriya bearing the emperor's name as Asōka also occur

together as seen at Maski and Udegolam. Even though his figures have been inferred to on the circumstantial evidences at Sānchi<sup>73</sup>, he has been clearly identified here as *Raya Asoko* for the first time.

This interesting panel depicts the sculptural representation of King Asōka appropriately located succeeding the panel of the procession of *ārya Kassapagōta* and his entourage to emphasise that he was instrumental in augmenting the third Buddhist Council at Pātalīputra under Tissa and after the Council the earlier referred teachers proceeded towards the spread of Dharma.

The upper register (Pl.CIV-A) of the panel in its top border is inscribed *Rāya Asoko*. The panel has a royal figure - Asōka along with his queen flanked by two female *chauri* bearers and a female *chhatra* or umbrella bearer. The composition of the panel is very elegant and the king stands majestically in *dvibhanga* with his face turned slightly towards left as if in conversation with the queen. To introduce seriousness of majesty to the countenance of the king, the lips of the king are made to pout in the cherubic face. His right hand with heavy bracelets of pearls is kept akimbo and a *kēyūra* adorns the upper arm. He wears an elaborately decked turban held by fan shaped frontal knot. He wears, heavy ear ornaments and a *vaksha-hāra*. While most of the royal figures or other portraits of noblemen

and celestials in other panels do not wear *yajñōpavīta*, Aśōka is shown with *yajñōpavīta*. He wears a *pītāmbara* held by a laced *uttarīya* tied in a knot to the left at his waist and an extra large part of the *pītāmbara* shown in the form of slender lines reaching upto the ankle of his and his queen jointly flow down all along the left leg. The *chhatradhārīṇi* surprisingly has an elaborate hair dress, a *chuḍāmaṇi*, heavy anklet and short but heavy *chāmara*.

At the left top corner, a *chauri*-bearer with an elaborate fan like hairdress and decorated with *karṇa kuṇḍala* is shown holding the short handle of the *chauri*.

The queen, to his left, looks at him adoringly with pride. She stands in *tribhanga* and is playing with her ear ornament in her right hand. A string of pearls as *vakshahāra*, an ornate *kēyūra* in left hand and different wristlets for both the hands are the other ornaments. She has a *kaṭi-bandha* with a fastening hook at the waist over the *pītāmbara* and has unusually heavy multi-coiled anklet. The queen is attended upon by a *chauri*-bearer with moderate hairstyle, *kēyūra*, wristlets, ear ornaments and heavy anklets. Even the drapery lines and a girdle at the waist are well sculpted. She holds a short handled heavy *chāmara*.

The lower register (Pl.CIV-B) is labelled in the fragmentary record as *dhisati Sōmarāto*. The panel at right

depicts a noble person closely embracing a lady and is in the act of removing his necklace with his right hand with a touch of arrogance or mockery in his face. Slightly away, to the left is a pair of women, the one nearer to the nobleman appears to be reciprocating the king in arrogance reflected by her posture and expressions in the face and also her displeasure at the brazen display of love of Sōmarāta for another woman. An attendant is counselling this lady with her right hand raised almost to her chin in whispering conference. A female dwarf in between Sōmarāta and this lady is also trying to hear the counsel in spite of her short stature by placing her right hand to the ear. They are all robed and decorated befitting their status of nobility and servitude. The rendering of the sentiments in all clarity of expressions cannot be ignored.

The king Sōmarāta could be one of the characters in the *Jātaka* tales.

The damaged pilasters on the right margins of the panel are decorated with ornate reliefs of full and half lotus medallions of different types intervened by flutings and a seated lion above the capital of the upper pilaster.

The inscription on the plain border above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register reads: *dhisati Sōmarāto*.

## 2. Revival of Bōdhi tree and propogation of Dhamma (Pl.CV)

In the upper register (Pl.CV-A) of the panel, four noblemen are shown seated in front and around a *vajrāsana* with the footprints of the Master contextually. The figure at the top right corner sitting in *padmāsana* with *añjali mudrā* near the *vajrāsana* attired befittingly, could be the representation of king Aśōka. He wears an elaborate turban, heavy double *vakshāhāra* of which the first one is studded with gems and the second is of lotus petals. He wears *kēyūra* and heavy bracelets. He has heavy *uttariya* holding the *sanghāti*. The nobleman sitting opposite to him is looking towards the throne with an admiration expressed with the right hand held in *tarjanī-mudrā*. The noble man sitting in the foreground to the left is shown placing his left hand upon the thigh and the right hand with palm upwards symbolising the gesture of an order. His legs cross each other in front while sitting and his *sanghāti* is held by an *uttariya*. He is decorated with an ornate hair dress with circular fan shaped headgear, coiled ear ornaments and *kēyūra*. Interestingly, he is bare-chested. In front of him, to the left of the *simhāsana* below sits another noble person wearing a pinnacled turban, heavy coiled ear ornaments, a large multifaceted, truncated beaded *vaksha-hāra*, *kēyūra* and bracelets. He squats on the floor with his right leg folded below the extended left leg. He also raises his right hand in *tarjanī* which is unusually long.

The *simhāsana* is open to front with a backrest provided with a cushion and the side arms extended on either side. The *āsana* is borne by two short circular pillars with *kumbha*-base. Between the feet of the *āsana* are the footprints of the Master with the *ashtā-mangalas* of which the *triratna* at heel and *chakra* at the sole are prominent. The digital lines of the toes are also carefully drawn and of the other signs *swastika* on toes of both the feet are interesting. The *chakra* symbol at four corners in both the feet have *swastika*.

The lower register (Pl.CV-B) depicts two noblemen, Aśōka and probably his son Mahēndra, worshipping the Bōdhi-tree with Buddha symbolically shown as the *simhāsana* with footprints in front, while the mutilated sculpture of prince Mahēndra is shown offering lotus flowers at the stem of Bōdhi tree, and his out-stretched right hand holds the bunch of lotus blooms, left hand is held in *akimbo* at the waist. A maid, standing behind him carries a bowl full of flowers in readiness. At right *i.e.*, to the left of Bōdhi tree stands king Aśōka in *añjali* followed by probably Sanghamitrā. Aśōka has ornaments befitting a king, stands elegantly with his left leg slightly raised and wears an elaborate turban, heavy coiled ear ornaments, poly-stranded, beaded (pendant) *vakshā-hara*, *kēyūra* and heavy bracelets. He is shown with heavy *sanghāti* held by *uttariya*. It is well known that Aśōka sent his son, Mahēndra and daughter Sanghamitrā to



Sri Lanka as his emissary with a branch of Bōdhi tree to propagate Buddhism. Hence at the scene the noble lady holding the bunch of lotus blooms behind Aśōka could be Sanghamitrā. She stands very gracefully behind her father looking slightly to left and her upraised left hand holds a bunch of lotus blooms. She wears a *chūḍāmaṇi*, *vṛitta-kunḍalas* and bracelets. She wears a *sanghāti* and anklets. At the centre of the register is the multi-branched Bōdhi tree sculpted in a round fashion with a straight stem. To the front of the tree is *simhāsana* or *vajrāsana* without cushion. Rest of the details are similar to the ones found in the first register. The footprints in front also are similar to the earlier described ones with five *swastika* signs instead of the four around the *chakra* sign.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a five lettered label inscription reading: *Rāyā Asoko*.

The pilasters on the right margins of the panel are decorated with ornate reliefs of full and half lotus medallions intervened by flutings and above the capital are shown reliefs of seated addorsed winged lions and griffins.

### 3. King Mahāgovinda (Pl.CVI)

This panel depicts a five-hooded snake with a jewelled collar in the upper register and a royal figure Mahāgovinda, with a stern facial expression seated on a low cushioned *vetrāsana* in the lower register.

In the upper register (Pl.CVI-A) the giant serpent Muchilinda has been artistically shown with elegant coils and five hoods vertically held straight flickering their bi-forked tongue. The workmanship of the head portion of the reptile pertaining to eye, treatment of the scales of stretched hexagons, the vertical vertebrae, prominent V-mark are almost nearer to a live specimen, reflecting the closer observation of a massive hooded snake by the artist. The coils are equally distributed on either sides of the vertically held body in all elasticity. Being depicted as the King of serpents a *chhatra* is sculpted above the hood of the snake and a close-fitting girdle of beads encircles the neck.

The lower register (Pl.CVI-B) of the panel depicts a court scene of the king Mahāgovinda, seated on a decorated *vetrāsana*, surrounded by a *chāmara-dhāri* and courtiers. Of these, two are squatting in *ardha-padmāsana*, and extended limb posture on either side of the king and a courtier standing to the left of the king in *añjali* held in front. The king sits in *ardha-padmāsana* on a soft cushioned circular *vetrāsana* with the support of a foot cushion. He is resting his right hand on the couch and his left kept akimbo. He wears a floral-designed turban with feathers and a large central jewel held by a tape, heavy coiled ear ornaments with free ends decorated with lotus flowers and equally heavy *vakshahāra*.

He is adorned with heavy gem studded wristlets and the *pītāmbara*, held by a tape with a sash and heavy twisted *uttarīya*. The noblemen seated are also similarly attired. The nobleman seated to the left with his out stretched right palm is conversing with the king. His left hand is stretched straight downward and kept over the floor by the side. The flywhisk bearer, standing behind the king at right has his left hand raised and touching the shoulder and the right hand bears a flywhisk with an elegant shaft decorated with mouldings. The person standing to the left of the king in *añjali* is similarly dressed but the *vakshahāra* is absent.

The two label inscriptions on the plain border above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register reads: *Rayā Mahāgovindo* and *Nāgarāya Mujulido* respectively.

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the registers are decorated with a full blown lotus medallion, flanked by semicircular medallions on either end. Above the capital of upper register a *pūrṇaghaṭa* with lotus blooms emanating from it is depicted. Relief of seated addorsed lions adorn another capital.

The king Mahāgovinda delineated in the lower register could be identified as Mahāgōvinda<sup>74</sup>, also known as Jyotipāla, the learned minister of King Viśāmpati Reṇu, deciding to renounce the world

as directed by Brahma Sanakkumara and being dissuaded by his courtiers not to do so. Another Mahāgōvinda is also referred to who was one of the chiefs of the ruler of Magadha<sup>75</sup> along with Māndhātā, ruling at Rājagṛīha at the time of Buddha, who was also instrumental in *Mahāgovinda Suttānta* well known in Buddhist literature.

## SĀTAVĀHANA RULERS

### 1. Chhimuka Sātavāhana (Pl. CVIII)

He is the founder ruler of the dynasty as attested by the *Purāṇas*.<sup>77</sup> Coins issued by him have been found at Kotilingala and Sangareddy in the Karimnagar district of Andhra Pradesh and Paunar in the Wardha district of Maharashtra with the legend *Rājño Chchimukha Sātavāhana*.<sup>78</sup> However, his name appears in a short label inscription at Naneghat in the Sātavāhana gallery as *Rāya Sīmukha Sātavāhanō sirimatō*.<sup>79</sup> Here too, he is denoted in the label inscription as *Rājā Siri Chhimukha Sātavāhanō* (Ins.No.A.101) and as *Rājño Chhimuka Sātavāhana*, in the lengthy donatory inscription (Ins.No.A.108). It is quite possible that both these forms stand for Śrīmukha (one who has a beautiful face). His early dominion appears to be the Telangana in Andhra Pradesh adjoining Sannati region. A number of coins found from the area attest to this fact. From here he appears to have expanded his

kingdom upto Vidisa of Vidarbha, where he vanquished his erstwhile overlord Kanva Susarman<sup>80</sup> and slew him. In the light of the above inscriptions found here, he ruled atleast for 16 years.

At this place, the artist has captured an important historical event, wherein, during the expansion of their empire in the Aśmaka region, the Sātavāhanas developed friendship with the local Nāgas an event worthy of recording and justifiably gets sculptured as Chhimukha with his new found friend Nāgarāya.

Inscribed as *Rājā Siri Chhimukha Sādavāhanō Nāgarāya sakhāvapi* this panel in the upper register (Pl.CVIII-A) has the king Chhimukha and his queen seated on an ornate couch with backrest. The king elegantly poises himself in *ardha-padmāsana* placing his right hand on the armrest of the couch and supports his extended left leg on a squarish footstool. He is decked in an elaborate turban, *makarakuṇḍalas*, a multi-stranded beaded *kaṇṭhahāra* with triple wristlets, adorned in *pītāmbara* held by a loosely arranged *uttariya* at the waist, the king faces his queen at right. The queen is modestly decorated with usual *śirōbhūṣaṇas* consisting of a *chūḍāmaṇi* with *makarikā*, *makara kuṇḍalas*, *kēyūra*, heavy anklets and triple stringed *kaṭibandha*. She elegantly sits with her left leg folded and placed on the couch and the right leg stretched far downwards and resting on

a soft circular foot cushion. The queen gently shifts backwards and turns to her right to converse with the king towards the posture of which she uses her right hand as a support. The royal couple sits under an ornate pavilion in the palace being attended by a group of three women of the harem with *chāmara*.

The greatly mutilated lower register of the panel appears to be a centrally seated Nāgarāja attended by a lady bearing flowers in a bowl.

The pilasters on the right margins of the panel are decorated with ornate reliefs of full and half lotus medallions intervened by flutings and above one of the capital is shown reliefs of seated antelope.

## 2. Sātakarṇi (Pl.CIX)

This panel depicts another important Sātavāhana ruler, king Sātakarṇi (Sātakarṇi-I), successor of Chhimukha shown here gifting golden flowers (*swarṇa-kamalas*) to a pair of Buddhist monks and is also inscribed as *Rājā Sātkamṇī.. yasara himayāni payumāni dēnō yēti* (Ins.No.A 102). He is the most illustrious ruler of the dynasty credited with the performance of many a religious sacrifice like *Angāraka*, *Gavāmayana*, *Rājasūya* and atleast two *Aśvamēdhas*. His inscriptions at Naneghat<sup>81</sup> meticulously mention costly fees (*dakṣiṇās*) and precious presents to the deserved people. In the *purāṇic* genealogy, he is known as

Siri Sātakarṇi and incidentally a number of lead and potin coins of the ruler have been found with the same legend. He had a long reign of nearly 56 years, sufficient enough to accommodate the achievements he has proclaimed in the inscriptions.

The highly mutilated upper register (Pl.CIX-A) at left has king Sātakarṇi highly bejewelled and attended by a royal umbrella-bearer and a dwarf *kañchuki* carrying a bowl of golden flowers. The king is pouring the sacred water at the time of offering the gift to two Buddhist monks in front of him. The king is highly ornamented befitting the royal figure with an elaborate jewelled turban with receding tiers of fan shaped plumage in front, heavy *patra-vṛitta-kuṇḍalas* multi-stranded *vaksha-hāra* held by a gem-studded lotus flower decorated circular pendants from which issue bunches of tiny pearls and a string of looped pearls joining wherever the tracer pendants are tied. While he has a plain *kēyūra* and two decorated bracelets in the right hand his left hand has a gem-studded *kēyūra*, and assorted bracelets in the left hand. He wears a *pītāmbara* falling short at ankle held by a jewelled tape and a heavy *uttarīya*. He holds the spouted *kalaśa* in his right hand by the handle supported at the base by left hand and has gently tilted the pot into the over stretched palms of the first Buddhist monk standing at the extreme right in the panel. He is accompanied by another monk with his raised right hand with the

*tarjani* slightly bent held at the chest. The face of one of the monks is mutilated below the eye. The umbrella (*chhatra*) bearer is partially visible behind the king who holds the *chhatra* slightly raised and tilted between the king and the monks. A *kubjā* carries over her head a oval shaped bowl of golden flowers, has bracelets, a heavy beaded *kaṭi-bandha* held by a *pavitra*-knot over the *sanghāti* and anklets.

The lower register (Pl.CIX-B) has two royal elephants moving to right and a horse between the elephants held by a horse tender. The first elephant leading is sculpted with its trunk raised and the mahout with typical central knotted headgear set with lotus flower and *vṛitta-kuṇḍalas* persuading its movement by using *aṅkuśa* held in left hand. The elephant is fairly young with its ivories just shown growing. The other elephant is massive with sufficiently large ivories jewelled at its tips with the mahout holding the goad in his right hand. He too has his hair combed back with circular *patra-vṛitta kuṇḍalas*. Both the mahouts wear only *dhoti* held by a *kaṭi-vastra* and are naked above waist. Only the neck, front, forelegs and head of the horse are sculpted, held by the attender with the help of a nose ring and rope. Being the royal horse it has mane at the neck trimmed, and the frontal hair is trimmed ornately. The horse tender has his hairs trimmed and wears *dhōti* held by a cloth band.



The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription which reads: *Rāyā Sātakamṇi... yasara hi [ra] mayāni payūmani deno yeti*, referring to King Sātakarṇi approaching to offer golden lotuses.

The left margin of both the registers has a pilaster decorated with ornate reliefs of lotus medallions and a seated lion with horns(?) above the capital.

### 3. Mātalaka (Pl.CX)

The next king in order of chronology, who appears to have ruled for only five years according to the *Purāṇas*, is depicted here labelled as *Rāya Mātalako*. He can be identified as king Māṇḍalaka or Māntalaka, the 18<sup>th</sup> ruler as per the *puranic* texts of the Sātavāhana kings<sup>82</sup>.

The upper register (Pl.CX-A) depicts an inebriated royal couple seated on a *paryanka* wherein the intoxicated queen has embraced the king with her right hand and her left hand is placed over the left thigh and she wears a loosened (disturbed) *pītāmbara* and the *kaṭi-bandha* which slips on to her hips. She has almost slumped on the *paryanka* with her extended feet pressing hard against the foot cushion. The expression of intoxication is captured in her almost half closed eyes and pouted lips. She wears *vṛitta-kunḍalas*, multi-stranded *vaksha-hāra* with choicest pearl strings, jewelled *kēyūra* and bracelets. A spring-coiled anklet adorns her ankle.

It is interesting to note that even her *vakshahāra* is disturbed wherein the holder of the pearls has almost swung towards the central part of her chest.

The king braces himself against the queen in his *ardha-padmāsana* with his left hand drawing the queen towards him for an additional draught of wine from the stemmed glass he carries in his right hand and his left knee supporting the hip of the queen from behind. The king is wearing a gem studded circular ear ornament in his right lobe and an equally attractive heavy gem-studded spring type of ear ornament in the other. He wears ropy pearl garland type of *vaksha-hāra*, gem studded *kēyūra*, heavy bracelets and even a thick loose anklet (the only other sculptural rendering other than King Sundara Sātakarṇi, where in the male also wears an anklet). His *sanghāti* is disturbed, and is held loosely by a decorated embroidered type of *vastra* sashed at right and heavy *uttarīya*. The queen is attended at left by a chamberlain, wearing *vṛitta-kunḍalas*, *kēyūra*, bracelets and bangles on her arms. She carries a flywhisk in her upraised right hand and the left hand is let loose.

Adding to this amorous situation of the intoxicated couple, even the *Kubjā* decorated with ear ornament and bracelets appears enjoying a bowl of the intoxicant. The maid chamberlain wears a *pītāmbara* tied by a *kaṭi-bandha* of beads. The humour is envisaged in her drooped

face, half closed eyes and the comical look that the sculptor has tried to provide. The multifaceted *paryanka* has an offsetted foot.

At the top portion of the register, a gable roofed structure decorated with two finials on the roof and three *chaitya* arched entrances all within a balustrated enclosure is depicted reflecting the palace surroundings.

The character of this register could be identified as king *Mātalaka* based on the inscription in the lower register

In the lower register the horses and elephants are shown. In the retinue, a noble astride the horse with a typical crop of hair combed on either side covering the ears and decorated with a central forehead jewel. The horse rider is led by a servant who holds its reins in his left hand.

Below the horse an elephant in relief is depicted and the elephant head is mutilated. The mahout is bereft of head gear and his face is damaged. Interestingly another attendant seated on the back of the elephant, is shown holding the thick rope tied around the elephant and looking to his left. His head is mutilated.

The damaged pilasters on the left margin of the lower register of the panel is decorated with *Bōdhi* tree within a

railing and a seated lion on the capital. The pilaster of upper register depicts ornate lotus medallions and seated addorsed lions over the capital.

The plain band above the relief of three barred damaged railing of the bottom register has a six lettered label inscription reading: *Rāya Mātalako*, who could be identified with the person astride the horse.

#### 4. **Sundara Sātakarṇi (Pl.CXI)**

King Sundara Sātakarṇi, who ruled for a very short period of two eventful years according to *Purāṇas* gets depicted for the first time with label inscription at this place. However, the author of *Periplus of the Erythraen Sea* avers that ‘after Sandanes (Sundara) became its (of Kalyāna) Master, its trade was put under severest restrictions; for if Greek vessels even by accident entered its ports a guard is put on board and they are taken to Barygaza (Bhṛigukachcha)’. This indicates that these ports which had become lawful and lucrative marts under the elder Saraganus (Sātakarṇi-I) had become quite insecure due primarily to the growing ascendancy of the Kshaharata power under the powerful Nahapaṇa.<sup>83</sup>

The upper register is mutilated to a great extent, whereas the frieze of swan and part of the lower register containing Sundara Sātakarṇi as a horse rider are mutilated.

The upper register (Pl.CXI-A) depicts a royal couple-seated in court. Part of the Bōdhi tree, of the *vṛiksha-chaitya* branches of the pilaster decoration is visible. In the panel, the left portion of the king is mutilated which might have had his downwardly stretched left leg. The left hand is mutilated. The king has his young queen seated on his right lap of the thigh (only one such representation at the *chaitya*) who sits in an extended limb posture placing her foot on the soft foot cushion below. The king has a unique cap like hair dress laced with golden brocaded border placed over a hair dress similar to the hair dress of king Mātalaka, well combed on either side covering the ears, cheek and almost running down to the nape of the neck (*kapōla-kēśin*). He wears *patra-valaya-kunḍalas* and an elaborately girdled *phalaka-hāra* treated with circular *padma-phalakas* as the tracers of three-stringed courses of beads. He wears a *pītāmbara* held by an *uttarīya* with a frontal knot. The cherubic face in smiles has a long aquiline nose with wide almond shaped eyes. He has his right hand thrown over the shoulders of his queen, which passes in front of her *vaksha* and rests above the bosom. The queen looks tender, young and very well dressed with elaborate head gear treated with *chūḍāmaṇi*, *ardha-chandra* with *makarikā*, *patra-vṛitta-kunḍalas* arrested by a chain of five strings originating at the *karṇa-maṇi*. She wears a *pītāmbara* held by a beaded *kaṭi-bandha*. Part of her

bosom, waist and hands are mutilated. While she has her right hand (mutilated) resting over the couch by her side, her left hand holds the king at the shoulders. The right hand at the upper forearm is decorated with a jewelled or beaded *kēyūra*.

The lower register (Pl.CXI-B) has the horse riding Sundara Sātakaṇi led by a foot soldier leading the horse and a partially depicted elephant rider. In the panel that is greatly mutilated, the central figure is the king himself with typical headgear as explained in the upper register. The turban is damaged. The king is naked above the waist and wears *vṛitta-kunḍalas* and is astride the horse holding its reins in the left hand and the right hand carrying double edged, *sabre* with a slasher (mutilated) at the top, and at the base. The king is shown with an anklet. He wears a *pītāmbara* reaching upto the ankles and held by a short *uttarīya*. The horse on a trot is moving from left to right and is led by an easy paced servant without ear ornaments and a *dhōti* at waist and folded around like a band. The elephant behind, is shown turning its trunk to the right and the mahout riding it with his hair combed backwards, is holding a goad in his right hand.

The inscription on the plain border above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register reads as: *Rāya Sundara Sātakaṇi*.

## 5. Puḷumāvi (Pl.CXII)

As per the longer chronology of the Sātavāhana lineage enumerated in the *Purāṇas*, as many as four kings by the name Puḷumāvi occur. They are respectively Puḷumāvi I, the 14<sup>th</sup> king (who ruled for 24 years *Vāyu Purāṇa*, 36 years *Matsya Purāṇa*), Puḷumāvi II, the 23<sup>rd</sup> king also known as Vāsisthiputra Puḷumāvi, Puḷumāvi III i.e, Vāsisthiputra Siva Sri Puḷumāvi - 25<sup>th</sup> ruler (7 years *Matsya*, 4 years *Vāyu Purāṇa*) and Puḷumāvi IV, the 30<sup>th</sup> ruler (7 years).

Amongst these kings it is only Vāsisthiputra Puḷumāvi i.e. Puḷumāvi-II, son and successor of the illustrious Gautamiputra Sātakarṇi, who appears to have had close contacts with Ujjain as he had probably accompanied his father during the expansion of the kingdom in their conflicts with Nahapaṇa and Chasṭana, who was ruling Ujjain at the time.

King Puḷumāvi depicted in the panel (Pl.CXII.A) here could be Puḷumāvi II, who appears to have arrived at Ujjain and bequeathing the territory of Ujjain to Ajayata - indefeatable. It is rather difficult to identify Ajayata with any known ruler contemporary to Puḷumāvi II. The depiction here, reflects Ajayata, assertively receiving the gift of Ujjain from king Puḷumāvi.

The upper register vividly captures highly decked Ajayata with retinue being received by Puḷumāvi along with his

retinue. Ajayata is attended by a *chāmara-dhāri*, an umbrella-bearer and, perhaps the priest or the minister. He receives the holy water poured into his outstretched right palm, by holding his *yajñōpavīta* in the left hand. The noble guest wears an elaborate jewelled turban with central circular plumage (knot) in three receding whorls. The heavy hooked ear-ornament at distal ends culminates in yet to bloom lotus petal. He wears four-stringed necklace of quality beads with square tracers treated with floral decoration studded with gems. The upper arms are decorated with highly ornate *kēyūra* befitting the royal personality, which are fashioned with creeper and *nāga* hood formation studded with precious stones. Both the hands have set of wristlets treated with beads and gems. He wears *pītāmbara* tied at waist by fine threaded sash at the loin, which are held by a metal clasp at the waist. A fairly large heavy *uttarīya* is tied around the waist of which the loops are drawn to the right and the free end is shown flowing along with the left leg. Immediately behind the king at right is a short cropped person, perhaps the priest or the minister who is greeting the king of Ujjain with folded hands decorated with wristlets. Behind the king is a partially hidden, short cropped royal umbrella bearer and a *chāmara*-bearer who does not wear any ear ornaments. A coiled bunch of *uttarīya* is shown between the king and the *chhatra*-bearer.



In comparison to Ajayata, Puḷumāvi is moderately ornamented with the usual typical turban, *patra-vṛitta kuṇḍalas*, *ēkāvalī* of beads, spring *kēyūras* ending with floral decoration, a set of seven beaded, plain, designed wristlets, a *pītāmbara* reaching upto anklets tied at right by a designed tape and a twisted heavy *uttarīya* at waist. In all humility and expression of submission, the king is pouring the holy water through a *kalaśa* type of spouted vessel into the outstretched right hand of Ajayata while the left hand grips the body of *kalaśa* near the spout, the right hand grips the handle of the vessel. Behind the king at right is a *chhatra-dhāri* followed by a *chāmara-dhāri*. Very close to the king at left is his commander or minister with his top-knotted-hairdo held by a beaded band. He wears a garland of flowers and *vṛitta-patra-kuṇḍalas* and a heavy *uttarīya* and *pītāmbara* at the loins. His upraised left hand clutches the garland at neck and is treated with beaded necklace.

The lower register has the mounts of the visiting king Puḷumāvi and his retinue held by respective servants. The royal elephant is partially shown moving to left, is goaded by a *māhout* who wears a typical turban and to the left of the elephant are two reined horses held by their nose-rings. The servant of the first horse has a short turban and a cylindrical, truncated ear ornament and the servant of the other horse is without ear ornaments and wears a *dhōti* folded up at the waist.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription reading: *Rāya Pudumāvi Ajayatasa Ujēni dēti* (Ins.No.A.99).

The damaged pilasters on the right margin of both the registers are decorated with ornate reliefs of lotus medallions and a pair of seated addorsed lions above the capital of pilaster of upper register.

Puḷumāvi, the ruler depicted here is in a way reflects the possible completion of the third phase of the main *stūpa* in its simpler form of a decorated lower drum surmounted by equally well decorated upper drum and a plain dome culminated by a *harmikā* and *Chhatrāvali*. At cardinal directions, the lower drum was provided with *āyaka* platforms with *Buddhapāda* placed at north, east and west.

Apart from the above, the artist at Kanaganahalli has also incorporated many panels like the *mahāparinirvāṇa*, *dharmachakra*, *chaityagṛiha*, worship of *bōdhi* tree, lion capital, Nāgarāya Bhaṭṭāraka (Muchilinda), Rāmagrāma *stūpa*, Bōdhisatva Kāsirāya and Suvīrā, a princess, all of which occur as anachronisms perhaps at the time of articulation. They are as follows:

### 1. Mahāparinirvāṇa (Pl.CXIII)

It is an interesting sculptured panel, depicting the Master in the state of *mahā-parinirvāṇa* shown in the upper register. In the lower register, the soul symbolised as

horse departing through a gateway through a *toraṇa*-arch is narrated.

The upper register (Pl.CXIII-A) depicts residence with a wagon vaulted roof topped by three *chaitya* dormer windows at the first tier of the roof. The gable vault succeeding has a set of five finials and a horseshoe shaped arched window, all set in a balustrade. The entire workmanship reflects a structure built out of wattle and daub with profuse use of wood for the architecture. Inside the structure laid in between the fluted pilaster is a large *paryāṇka*, diagonally placed in the rectangular frame with two cylindrical puffed cushions (*bhisi*) having decorated border on either side with their ends tucked into a central knot. Borders of *paryāṇka* is ornately designed with small panels decorated with strings of bead. The *paryāṇka* is shown with two legs with two-tiered foot on the head side. Nearby, placed over a fluted circular pedestal, is a water flask with a glass covering the mouth and a burning lamp.

It is known that the Master attained *Mahāparinirvāṇa* in the suburbs of Kuśinagara, the capital of the Mallas, at the age of 80.

The lower register reflects a *chaitya-griha* with arched-windows over the door of a gable-vaulted structure set in a balustrade. The structure is provided with a *tōraṇa* through the gateway of which the soul of the Master exits as a divine horse

led by a servant (mutilated above head) followed by the royal umbrella and the *chāmara*. The *tōraṇa*, recalling the Sanchi gateways, has three verticals extending beyond the crossbars with obtuse ends. Flanking, on either side of the central *tabha* are two more verticals and the wavy crossbars extend beyond the *tabhas* in three registers. The *tabhas* at the extreme are treated with *triratna*-symbol and the inner *tabhas* are treated with four petal flowers. The *taraṅga* of the *sūchis* are treated with *makaras* facing the *tabhas*. The upturned free ends of the *sūchikās* have the tail of the *makara*. The top *sūchikā* is treated with lotus creeper whereas the central one has stylised *triratna* with half lotus medallions. The lowermost *sūchikā* has lotus creeper decoration. The horse led by the servant is well caparisoned with muzzle guard with the snout reined in. The horse in a gentle trot has a dressed drapery (*asatthara*) at the shoulder. Further, this composition may also be interpreted as reminiscent of the great departure depicted symbolically. However, its position in the representation of events strongly points to anachronism.

The right margin of both the registers depict full and half lotuses intervened by flutings. Above the lotus medallions of pilaster of the lower register a pillar within a railing carries a festooned *dharmachakra*.

Above the capital of upper pilaster, relief of a seated winged lion is shown.

## 2. Chūdāharaṇa (Transportation of relics and celebration) (Pl.CXIV)

Greatly mutilated, this panel depicts the transportation of the crown of the Master by the celestials in great pomp and show to the accompanying *dēva-duṇḍubhi* (large drum) respectively in the upper and lower registers. This is as a sequel to the *Mahā-prasthāna* panel. The anachronism in the narration of the event after the *Mahā-nirvāṇa* however cannot be easily apprehended.

In the upper register (Pl.CXIV-A) the central figure, Śakra holds aloft above his head and carries a turban like crown placed over a large golden plate in great veneration. Flanking on either side are a *chāmara-dhāri* and a celestial, waving *uttarīya*, obviously the *Lōkapālas*. They are soaring high, with slightly bent lower limbs as if in upward movement. The lower limbs of Śakra and *chāmara-dhāri* are mutilated.

The lower register (Pl.CXIV-B) has the depiction of two drummers carrying a heavy *duṇḍubhi* slung across the shoulders, also in flight as indicated by their posture and swaying drapery. Above them is another smaller figure of a celestial, hovering. All the figures are heavily draped with *pītāmbara* and *uttarīya*. In the right portion of the register, the leading drummer, parts of the second drum bearer and the one with flower bowl are mutilated. Above the

capital of missing pilaster seated addorsed winged lions are shown. At the bottom, the plain border has a fragmentary label inscription reading: *chūdāha(raṇa)*.

## 3. Chaityagṛiha (jeṭṭhāgharō) (Pl.CXV)

The upper register depicts the highly ornametal *stūpa* with multiple *chhatras* and the second register depicts the sacred house of the relics of the Master in a circular hut like structure in which the sacred relics are placed inside a *stūpa* receptacle. This panel is inscribed as *Jeṭṭhāgharō* denoting *chaityagṛiha*.

The upper register (Pl.CXV-A) has an ornate *stūpa* with the *mēdhi* enclosed with the typical *tabha* pilasters treated with lotus medallions at the shaft, lotus petals at the base and addorsed deer at the extreme pilasters and at the central pilaster is an addorsed lion (mutilated). At the top the *mēdhi* has a balcony with railings and a hemispherical dome decorated with huge garland of flowers and beads in a snake coil pattern - intertwined over the *aṇḍa*, a square *harmikā* with as many as seven rows of plain *sūchi* and four plain *tabhas* are shown. From the *harmikā* issues five rows of *chhatrāvalis* the top one being the largest and the second having two umbrellas, the third row three umbrellas, the fourth row four umbrellas and the fifth row five umbrellas. Ultimately, this group of umbrellas is shown protecting the entire *aṇḍa* and the drum. Each row of the

umbrella can be taken as symbolising the five great events of the Master's life.

The lower register (Pl.CXV-B) has a *chaitya-griha* of wooden architecture built out of wattle and daub with a door provided with horseshoe shaped, double arched *chaitya* windows. The open door reveals a *stūpa*-type of reliquary, pear-shaped and the finial acting as a lid. The finial of the *chaitya* dormer-window overshoots the heavy eave depicted. The superstructure is in imitation of an *aṇḍa* of a *stūpa* with gable-vaulted *chaitya* windows along with *jālandhras*. The architecture is completed with a finial with ringed base.

The damaged pilaster on the left margin of the registers are decorated with full and half lotus medallions. Seated addorsed lions and horses adorn the capitals of pilasters respectively.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription reading: *jetthāgharō*.

#### 4. Sambōdhi (Sacred bōdhi tree) (Pl.CXVI)

The upper register (Pl.CXVI-A) of this uninscribed panel depicts a multi storied (two) *chaitya-griha* enclosing the sacred tree of enlightenment of the Master at Bōdh Gaya. The magnificent tree is shown growing beyond gable-vaulted *chaitya-griha* and two of the huge branches are shown issuing forth from the horseshoe-shaped *chaitya*-windows.

The *chaitya-griha* is raised on massive pillars and the first storey has as many as three *chaitya* windows with an entrance and the sidewall of the *vēdikā* are of wattle and daub with a gable-vault because of the arched configuration of the doors and windows. There is an austere *tabha* and *sūchi* balustrade encircling the above. In the second storey two *chaitya* windows and a door with a lattice-diamond decoration and a plain wall offers the elevation and through the lateral *chaitya* windows issues the branches of the holy tree. A dome with railing design, surmounting the gable-vault, culminated in a finial completes the architecture.

The lower register (Pl.CXVI-B) has a hexagonal shaft bearing an ornate *kumbha* capital with an abacus bearing a majestic partially extant couchant-seated lion. The base of the *kumbha* capital is treated with lotus petal decoration bordered by a *paṭṭikā* of four petalled flower intercepted by vertical bands. The base of *kumbha* (cushion-type) is also treated with upward lotus petal and the *madhya-bandha* of the *kumbha* treated with rosette of five lotus-flowers and the shoulder treated with downward lotus petals. The neck of the *kumbha* is treated with rope design. The abacus, to start with, has a plain register and the second register is treated with mat-decoration and accommodates on haunches a lion with its tail tucked below the abdomen between the legs.



The forelegs are placed firmly straight and the lion is facing right. Unfortunately, part of the upper lip and nose are obliterated. The short ears are attentively held back and the mane over the nape of the neck reaches up to the shoulders. Just below the ear is a circlet of hairs or whiskers of the animal. This register immortalises the event of installing a lion capital by Mauryan emperor Aśoka in front of the *vṛksha chaitya* at Bōdh Gayā.

In the above context, the occurrence of a mutilated lion capital in the excavations at the site is noteworthy and the depiction of the lion capital on the drum slab under reference is interesting.

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the registers are decorated with a full and half lotus medallions. Above the capital, relief of seated addorsed lions are depicted.

The bottom register is composed of relief of railing having four uprights decorated with full and half lotus medallions intervened by flutings. Three plain cross bars connect the uprights.

## 5. Dharmachakra (Pl.CXVII)

The uninscribed sculptured panel reveals a *dharmachakra* in a railing in the first register and a *vihāra* in its second register.

The upper register (Pl.CXVII-A) reveals in the centre a *dharmachakra* set in a

simple three barred circular railing flanked on either side by a couchant deer denoting the first sermon of the Lord in the deer park at Sarnath. The *dharmachakra* is raised on an octagonal shaft with a thick cushion capital treated with drooping lotus petals. The cushion capital is also provided with a base, treated with drooping lotus petals with a border of lozenge decoration. Above the cushion capital is a ropy constriction with an abacus treated with couchant lion with upraised tail. While the lion to right is half couchant, the one to left is fully couchant. Above these lions is a 32 spoke *dharmachakra* with its flattish periphery treated with geometrically arranged lozenge type of elongated petal flower. On either side of the *dharmachakra* are twisted pearl festoons, three each. The central hub of the *chakra* is in three tiers with the third one sculpted with fully blown lotus flower. Between the spokes are 32 knobs in the frame.

The lower register (Pl.CXVII-B) has a *vihāra* structure, raised on pillars. The first floor has a balcony with railing decorations and two *chaitya* window doors. The second tier has also a low barricaded railing projected into a central balcony with a large *chaitya*-window sculpted with a plain arch symbolically denoting it as a *vihāra*. The heavy roof of the second storey has four finials at the top.

The damaged pilaster on the left margin of the registers are decorated with full

and half lotus medallions. Seated addorsed lions adorn the capitals of pilasters.

The bottom register is composed of relief of railing having five uprights decorated with full and half lotus medallions exhibiting different types and intervened by flutings. Three plain cross bars connect the uprights.

## 6. Nāgarāya Bhaṭṭāraka (Pl.CXVIII)

This panel inscribed as *Nāgarāya Bhaṭṭāraka* depicts in its upper register (Pl.CXVIII-A) a highly ornate *stūpa* with *āyaka* platforms surmounted with pillars within a railing. The *stūpa* is enclosed by a series of pillars treated with addorsed couchant lions, deer at the abacus over lotus medallion treated in the pilaster.

The lower register (Pl.CXVIII-B) has a well sculpted five-hooded serpent king *Nāgarāya Bhaṭṭāraka* under a *chhatra*. The heavy central coil is flanked on either side with equally distributed two spring coils and an ornament girdles the vertical neck region. In spite of mutilation the flickering tongue, the 'v' mark and the ventral and dorsal scales are admirably well depicted.

The bottom register is composed of relief of railing having four uprights decorated with full and half lotus medallions intervened by flutings. Three plain cross bars connect the uprights and the inscription on the plain border above the railing reads: *Nāgarāya Paṭāraka*.

## 7. Bōdhisattva Kāśirāya (Pl.CXIX)

The panel is inscribed in the *paṭṭikā* below the lower register as *bōdhisatto kasarāyā*. It is to be noted that in many of the *Jātaka* tales Lord Buddha was born as the king of Kāśi or Varanasi. Here in the panel, we find King Kāśirāya seated in his palace, along with his queen with a retinue of attendants in the upper register and his mounts with servants tending to them in the lower register.

The mutilated upper register (Pl. CXIX-A) depicts Bōdhisattva Kāśirāya as the king along with his queen seated in conversation on a low couch with independent cushioned foot rests in a pillared pavilion denoting the palace. The pavilion has octagonal pillars more or less supporting a rectangular superstructure with gable-roof ceiling with centrally placed *chaitya* window. The roof of the pavilion is treated with ornate finials. Kāśirāya sits in *ardha-padmāsana* over the couch turning his face towards the queen. His right hand is resting on the frame of the couch and the left hand is placed on the waist. He has an elaborate turban, heavy ear ornaments with floral design. He wears an elaborate *vaksha-hāra*, *kēyūra*, five sets of heavy wristlets and elegant *pītāmbara* reaching upto the ankle. Towards his right is a moderately jewelled *chāmardhārīṇī* holding in her upraised right hand a *chāmara*. The queen seated

to the left of the king sits in extended limb posture. She leans on her right hand and her open expressive eyes speak of the intensity with which she is listening to the king. Her left hand is loosely placed on the thigh reaching upto the knees. She has a simple hairstyle with double circle of twisted pearls set in the hairdo treated with a central *lalāṭa-padma*, suspended from the string of pearls elaborate heavy ear ornament of a *padma* type, a *kaṇṭha hāra*, wristlets of varied design and heavy anklets. A beaded buckled girdle at the waist holds the *pītāmbara*. The attendant standing behind the couch holds a circular rattan fan supported by a frame.

The lower register (Pl.CXIX-B) reveals a māhout leading an elephant and two attendants leading two horses, perhaps from the stables, in the service of the king. These animals are partially sculpted. The elephant is decorated with a rope behind its shoulders. Both the horses are well groomed and the servants are moderately dressed and ornamented.

The damaged pilaster on the right margin of the registers are decorated with full and half lotus medallions. Above the capital, relief of seated addorsed deer are depicted.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription reading: *Bōdhisato Kasarāya*.

## 8. Rāmagrāma stūpa (Pl.CXX)

The upper register of the panel depicts a highly ornate *stūpa* with multiple *chhatrāvali* entwined by *nāgas*, whereas the lower register has in elevation a building, perhaps the *vihāra*, associated with the above *stūpa*.

The upper register (Pl.CXX-A) has a highly ornate *stūpa* wherein above a small base or *upapīṭha* the cylindrical *mēdhi* rises and is richly sculpted with highly stylised four petalled flowers each touching the tips with the neighbouring flower and in between the space are tiny circular rosette flowers of different varieties. The *mēdhi* culminates in a railing over which a hemispherical *aṇḍa* rises. The *aṇḍa* is totally entwined by four three-hooded serpents with well-sculptured, partially and fully opened hoods. The ventral and dorsal scales are very well sculpted. Above this *aṇḍa* rises *harmikā* in two receding tiers with railing pattern. From the *harmikā* issues multiple umbrellas covering the entire width of the *stūpa*.

The lower register (Pl.CXX-B) depicts a three-tiered gable vaulted structure in imitation of wooden architecture raised on four plain octagonal pillars. Each tier is marked by a door of *chaitya* window and a low balcony of railing pattern. While the first tier has two large rooms, the middle has three smaller rooms with projected balconies and the third tier

has a large central arched door. All the tiers have gable-vaulted heavy eaved roof, reminiscent of the contemporary wooden architecture.

The damaged pilasters on the right margin are decorated with full and half lotus medallions intervened by flutings. Seated lions adorn the capital of both the pilasters.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription reading: *Rāmagāmilō aṭṭhabhāgathūbhō upari* [I\*](Depiction) above is the Asṭabhāga-stūpa (stūpa built over 1/8th portion of relics) at Rāmagāma.

## 9. Suvīra with his retinue (Pl.CXXI)

This panel in its upper register (Pl.CXXI-A) depicts Suvīra, summoned by Sakka (Indra) to fight against Asuras proceeding with his army. He is shown as the elephant-rider with the usual turban, circular ear ornament, a *vaksha-hāra*, *kankaṇas* and *kēyūra*. While the right hand is in the gesture of stopping, the left hand drawn close to the body is trying to control the movement of the elephant using the goad. In front of the elephant is a horse rider who has jumped over the dwarf who appears to have fallen asleep and is an obstacle hopelessly caught at the feet of the horse. The horse rider while pulling back the reigns of the horse looks behind towards the elephant rider who is

gesturing to stop him. To the right of the horse rider at the upper right corner of the register two foot soldiers are depicted with limited attire and holding spears in their left hand.

The lower register (Pl.CXXI-B) depicts an elegantly dressed noble woman with her right hand supported by a dwarf and her left hand placed at the waist, forming part of the entourage of Suvīra depicted in the first register. She has a highly decked hairdo with a beaded *lalāṭa-paṭṭikā*. The plaited hair has a string of pearls held by tracer beads in the centre. She also wears closely fitted composite bracelets, heavy wristlets in both the hands and a pearly *kēyūra* in the left hand. Over the *pītāmbara* she has a buckled *kaṭi-bandha* or girdle made up of cylindrical ends constructed of beads. The *kaṭi-bandha* also holds the heavily twisted *pītāmbara* folds let loose all along the left leg. She wears an elegantly designed transparent *pītāmbara*, up to the ankles decorated with heavy anklets. She rests her right hand on a dwarf woman who is also moderately jewelled with a *lalāṭa paṭṭikā*, ear ornaments, bracelets, anklets and a beaded girdle at the waist. Behind her is a *chāmara-dhāriṇī* (the face is mutilated at chin) also decorated with *lalāṭa-paṭṭikā* with a *chandra* at the centre, *lalāṭa-padma*, *vṛitta-kunḍlas*, *kēyūra*, *kankaṇas* and *kaṭi-bandha*. Slightly to her lower right and that of the *chāmara-dhāriṇī* is a servant maid carrying a bowl with strings of flowers or pearl garlands.



The extant pilasters on both the margins of the panel is decorated with reliefs of full and half lotus medallions and a pair of winged lions are shown seated back to back on the capital of lower pilaster. On the upper pilaster is depicted a festooned *dharmachakra* on a pillar within a railing. Two lotus blooms in the railing further add to the decoration.

The plain band above the relief of three barred railing of the bottom register has a label inscription reading: *Suvira Sākiyāni*.

The king depicted in the panel is Suvīra as he was ordained by Indra to proceed in a battle of Dēvas against the Asuras, wherein the king failed to do so three times. The story was narrated by the Master to show the followers the value of exertion<sup>84</sup>.

### **Narrative sculptures in the cornice (Period II, Phase-IV)**

As part of architectural embellishment, during the end of the third phase and in the beginning of the fourth phase Period-II, the *āyaka vēdikās* at the *stūpa* were enlarged and decorated with the sculptural friezes (cornice) narrating the life of the Master in great detail. This activity is also buttressed by the palaeographical data found at the site reflecting that these activities were carried out during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> years of the reign of Vāsisthiputra Siri Sātakarṇi.

The most important aspect is the rendering of life of Buddha from genesis to *mahāparinirvāṇa* in Hīnayāna theology wherein the various sentiments are graphically captured by the artist with excellent taste of composition. In each block as many as three consecutive episodes are captured with less crowding giving importance to sculpturing each character and none appears to be an alien intrusion reflecting his control over the subject of delineation. The three-dimensional characters, unlike the renderings of the upper drum are full of vigour and do not create monotony. Each character of the narration is shown with a gentle smile and revolves around the intense subject of sheer devotion to the Master and readily in attendance of the happenings of divine scenes with the happiness of having the fortune of being part of the life events of the Master. However without overdoing the theme, the sculptor has captured, the various sentiments like the great awe at the sight of pregnant Māyā, the contentment of motherhood, anxiety towards the birth of the Master, the happiness at the sight of the new born child, the curiosity at the future predictions of the child, unfathomable sorrow at the great departure, the failed attempts of seducing Siddhārtha from meditation, the resultant defeat and disgust of Māra and his retinue, the veneration at the enlightened, the satiation of divine enlightened discourse on Dhamma and the great remorse at the death of the Master are arresting.

The renderings of these sculptured narrations are detailed below.

## Cornice of the Northern Āyaka (Pl.CXXII)

These narratives are sculpted on cuboidal blocks each divided into successive horizontal registers interspersedly fluted *tabhas* with decorated medallions acting as vertical borders separating each scene from the other. The upper narrow register is used for inscribing and the lower border is treated with dumb-bell shaped notches. The artist, depending upon the size of the stone, has sculpted 2-3 sometimes even four scenes depicting the events of the life of the Master, capturing in all plasticity, which incidentally also reflect the socio-cultural aspects of the time. Referred to as *pratimā paṭa* (Ins.No.A.7) these are arranged facing outwards i.e. north, over the *āyaka vēdikā* bordering the *Buddha-pāda* slab. From the excavation at the northern *āyaka*, three horizontal sculptured panels were retrieved, narrating three scenes in each slab sculpted on the front face. In spite of their disturbed locations, the theme of narration could easily be visualised as to the nature of its articulation over the *vēdikā* in the following order: (a) dream of Māyādevī, (b) prediction of the dream at the royal court, (c) birth of Buddha, (d) baby Siddhārtha being brought to Kapilavastu from Lumbinivana, (e) baby being presented in front of the tree spirit, (f) *abhinigamana* or *Mahābhinishkramaṇa*

- the great departure, (g) *chūḍāharaṇa* - carrying of the crest jewel by the celestials, (h) Māra's attack - *Sambōdhi* (enlightenment) and (i) enlightenment and first sermon. The details are as follows:

### First narrative slab

There are three scenes engraved on the face and one on each side of the cuboidal block. At the sides (Pl.CXXII-A to C) the slab has a plain non-ornate *stūpa* at the centre flanked on either side by a seated and standing pair of devotees in *añjali*.

The first scene (Pl.CXXII-A) from left to right depicts Māyādēvi resting on a long rectangular couch of low height. She is resting at ease to left placing her left arm as a cushion to her head. The right hand rests along the right thigh. The elephant of her dream is sculpted in a pavilion above her right shoulder standing to front. Face of the queen is damaged. Two of the exhausted attendants, squat and kneel near by and against the cushioned footstool placed near the couch after seeing to the comforts of the queen. Another attendant sits near the feet of the queen and holds the cot also eventually falls asleep. Shown flanking the elephant are the *dikpālakās* who have descended down to witness the great event of the dream and are rejoicing at the occasion. One of them near the feet of the cot is shown blessing the queen. One of the attendant's guard is at the entrance.

In the second scene (Pl.CXXII-B) king Śuddhōdana and Māyādēvi are seated on two different seats. While the king sits on a wooden couch in extended limb posture, the queen sits saddled on an ornate circular cushioned couch. The queen rests her right hand on the couch and has raised her left hand to shoulder. The king, slightly leaning back towards the queen, is conversing with her, gesticulating with his raised right hand. He is resting his left hand over the backrest of his seat. In front of the royal couple, seated are three important courtiers on independent cushioned seats. Asita, the royal astrologer is shown seated facing the king, far across in the hall. In the background a fan bearer and a flywhisk bearer are shown attending to the queen, king and the other courtiers. The three-seated nobles are shown with their raised right hands in unison in appreciation of the dream and auspicious prediction by Asita.

The third scene (Pl.CXXII-C) of the same fragment shows queen Māyādēvi having delivered the child stands elegantly in *tribhanga* under a tree with contentment writ large on her face at having attained motherhood. She holds the bough of the *sāla* tree, depicted in the background, with her upraised left hand and is playing with the pearls of her ear ornament in her upraised right hand. While her right leg is placed straight, the left slightly bent at the knee is placed across the former. To the left of Māyādēvi stands a female attendant

with an interesting hair dress. Near the right shoulder of the queen are shown the royal insignia *chhatra* and *chāmara*. The four *dikpālas* (*mahābrāhmaṇas*) standing to the right of queen Māyādēvi hold the silken cloth bearing the baby shown in the form of tiny footprints. Three more divinities are to be seen behind the *mahābrāhmaṇas*.

## Second narrative slab

The first scene (Pl.CXXII-D) in the slab depicts the return of queen mother and the infant Siddhārtha to Kapilavastu in an ovalish palanquin with a sunshade at the top being carried on the shoulders by six briskly moving joyous servants. Inside the palanquin, the queen is shown seated cradling the new born. In front of the palanquin are seen the people of Kapilavastu giving a tumultuous welcome, celebrating the occasion by playing musical instruments, leading the troupe with an exuberant majesty. Behind the palanquin rest of the royal retinue is following on elephants.

The second scene (Pl.CXXII-E) depicts presentation of the baby Siddhārtha in front of Śākyavardhana - the tree spirit (*Yaksha*). Queen Māyādēvi is presenting the baby, wrapped in a silken cloth, before the tree spirit of Kapilavastu. In front of Māyādēvi the tree is provided with square plinth with offsets and the *vṛksha dēvatā* himself is issuing forth from the stem of the tree in great reverence to the



Master. Behind the queen, the musicians accompanying the queen holding musical instruments like flute, trumpets, etc. and a basket of offerings carried by a *kubjā* are depicted. The faces of all the figures except the *kubjā* are damaged.

The third scene (Pl.CXXII-F) in the sequence shows the *mahābhinishkramaṇa*, indicated by the well-caparisoned horse Kanthaka lead by Channa. The *dikpālas* witnessing the event and rejoicing are depicted behind the horse in the background. The hoofs of the caparisoned horse in movement are held by dwarfs to muffle the noise of the footsteps. In front of the horse are shown three persons, two of them holding the royal parasol and the *chhatra* and the other is *Chenna*. The pattern of scheming slightly varies in this block. Instead of the usual *tabha* pilaster for bifurcating and punctuating the narration, the artist here has used a different type of pilaster design. As for example, the first two scenes are bordered by octagonal or hexagonal pillars topped by seated lions as the capital while the fifth and sixth are separated by pilasters of square cross-section topped by a storied *vihāra*. The top border of the panel bears a much mutilated and damaged inscription (Ins.No.B231) in deeply engraved cursive characters.

### Third narrative slab

The highly damaged first scene (Pl.CXXII-G) in this slab depicts the

transportation of the crown by Śakra to heaven. Śakra, the central figure, is carrying the crown in a platter underneath. At the centre of the panel is a rectangular *pīṭha* indicating the presence of the Master. On either side of the central figure i.e. Śakra, are two divinities depicted in flying posture, one below the other.

The second scene (Pl.CXXII-H) in the sequence depicts Māra's futile attempt to detract Siddhārtha performing penance and his humiliating retreat. Empty *simhāsana* with the cushion and the Bōdhi tree in the background represents the presence of the Master. To the left the four daughters of Māra who have failed to detract the attention of Siddhārtha are standing in great dismay and bewilderment. To the right a group of dwarfs who have also failed in their mischievous attempts to detract Gautama are standing dejected in a row. In between the dwarfs and the *simhāsana* is a damaged figure probably Māra himself who might be being told about the enlightenment of the Master, perhaps by a tree spirit standing closeby. Right at the corners of the backrest of the *vajrāsana* are the heads of two dwarfs.

The third scene is the first sermon or *dharmachakra pravartana* by the Master at Sarnath. The empty throne is shown with a *dharmachakra* on a pedestal in the background at the centre. To the right and left are group of seated people representing the citizens of Sarnath and



the first five disciples. Along the top borders are two flying *gandharvas* in the posture of adoration.

### Cornice of the Eastern Āyaka (Pl.CXXIII)

The eastern *āyaka vēdikā* had also been provided with sculptured cornices placed at the periphery around the Buddha statue narrating the life story of the Lord as detailed below. The cornices of the eastern platform are badly mutilated and are extant in three cuboidal blocks of varied sizes in which the second one is broken into two. The events narrated in this cornice are slightly different from others. The following seven scenes are depicted viz., (a) Buddha in the harem at the time of departure; (b) return of Kanthaka and the grief-stricken parents of prince Siddhārtha, (c) *Chūḍāharaṇa*, (d) Buddha's sermon to the Śākyas, (e) *Chūḍāharaṇa*, (f) Jētavana episode (?) and (g) the *mahāparinirvāṇa*.

#### First narrative slab

Unusually the narration starts from *mahābhinishkramaṇa* and the first scene (Pl.CXXIII-A) has two events depicted in two panels associated with the departure of the Master. The extreme right panel depicts an empty *simhāsana* with a cushion and a *bōdhi* tree in the background being worshipped by royal devotees with their hands in *añjali*. This represents Siddhārtha in the harem preparing for setting forth.

To the immediate right of the *simhāsana* is a much mutilated seated figure, probably Chenna reporting that the horse Kanthaka is ready. Behind the seated figure is the caparisoned horse. The face of the horse is touching the ground as if in utmost grief understanding the graveness of the task for which he has been summoned.

As part of the second theme the eight *dikpālakas* arriving to witness the event of the great departure are standing in the background with their hands held in *añjali*. On the left of the panel the charioteer, Chenna, is shown leading the prince and the horse. Chenna wears a typical headdress and the tunic like long overcoat of a *Yavana* warrior.

The second scene (Pl.CXXIII-B) in the sequence, separated from the first by a three-barred pilaster, depicts the return of Kanthaka and Chenna and narrating the event of the departure to the royal couple. The king and queen are seen seated on cushioned seats separately one in front of the other. The king is sitting on a rectangular couch with a footrest for the left leg whereas the queen sits on a much-decorated circular cushioned seat. The king to front has his right hand placed on the right thigh and the left placed over the backrest of the *simhāsana*. The grief-struck queen rests her right hand over the cushion for support and has raised her left hand in dismay. To her immediate left at her feet, sits Chenna holding up a platter

with ornaments like wristlets and armlets indicating that they were handed over to Chenna by prince Siddhārtha at the time of his resolution on the banks of river Anōma. A noble lady stands close by keeping her hands across her waist who could be princess Yaśōdhara. To the extreme left of the panel, the reluctant arrival of the horse without the Master is sculpted to add to the pathos. In the backdrop are the rest of the members of the palace. Similarly, behind the king and to his extreme right are some more male and females of the apartment.

### Second narrative slab

Two scenes are carved on the comparatively smaller block broken into two. The first scene (Pl.CXXIII-C) depicts the carrying of the crown of prince Siddhārtha by the celestials to heaven. The bejewelled crown placed on a circular plate is shown being carried to heaven by Śakra, the god of *dikpālakas*, at the centre in a flying posture. Symmetrically, on either side, are positioned two *dikpālakas* each in flying posture and in *añjali*. At the ground below, the Master is depicted in the form of a rectangular seat with a circular cushion (*vajrāsana*).

The second much mutilated scene shows (Pl.CXXIII-D) a *simhāsana* with a crudely carved *agniskandha* (pillar of fire) against the backrest denoting Buddha, with a circular *pādapīṭha* in the left side behind which a number of female

worshippers stand in *añjali*. To the right of the *simhāsana* an elderly lady is standing holding a circular object in her hands. This may depict the conversion of Gautami and other noble women of Kapilavastu into the nunnery. The lateral narrow side of this block has a seated lion worshipped by devotees indicating it to be the Master depicted as *Śākyasimha*.

### Third narrative slab

This slab depicts three scenes of *chūḍaharana*, gift of Jētavana, and *Mahāparinirvāṇa*.

The first scene (Pl.CXXIII-E) is the repetition of *chūḍaharana* depicting the celestials in flight carrying the sacred bejewelled crown of the Lord by the *Aṣṭadikpālas* commanded by Śakra clutching his ballooning *uttarīya* across the shoulders during heavenly flight.

The second scene (Pl.CXXIII-F) is of gift of Jētavana monastery to Buddha and his followers by Anāthapiṇḍika. At the centre, the scene reveals a rectangular high *simhāsana* with circular cushion, with the impression of the feet of the Master. To the right of the *simhāsana* are seen three seated persons. While the first person, with a basket full of gold coins, is the rich merchant of Śrāvastī (Anāthapindika) prepared to purchase the mango grove, the other two are shown in *añjali*. At the top, to the right in the corner, is the unyoked bullock cart, with the two bulls

resting, which had brought the gold coins required for the acquisition of the mango grove. Behind the *simhāsana* are shown a number of devotees and monks adoring the Lord. Interestingly, the scene has men with different hairstyles and beards with different facial features indicating they are from different parts of the contemporary world.

The third scene (Pl.CXXIII-G) depicts the great demise (*mahāparinirvāṇa*) of the Master and sorrowful mourning disciples in *añjali* aligned around the couch. The couch, interestingly, has a rectangular frame mounted on seated lions.

Pilasters punctuate the narration. A variety of floral designs are used in decorating the circular medallions. Some of them are plain and some highly ornate. The top border continuing throughout the length of the beam is broken at places, the top edge of the border is chamfered at an angle. The bottom border however shows a series of crudely fashioned seated lions almost looking like dumb-bells.

### Cornice of the Southern Āyaka (Pl.CXXIV)

The two cuboidal cornice blocks of the southern *āyaka* platform have the following six major events from the life of Buddha at their frontal face. *Sanjanana* (birth), baby Siddhārtha being presented to Śākyavardhana - the tree spirit, *abhinigamana* or *mahāprasthāna*,

enlightenment (*sambōdhi*), sharing of relics and transportation of relics.

### First narrative slab

1. This cornice slab at its east face, has a circular *Chaitya* shrine, the entrance of which is flanked by two pilaster decorations. A conical single pinnacled roof pierced by a *chaitya* window in the front crowns the shrine. Inside the *chaitya-gṛiha* is a miniature relic casket fashioned like a *kalaśa* kept over a low lotus pedestal. Flanked on either side of the *chaitya-gṛiha* are female devotees with hands in *añjali*, all framed by pilasters.

Similarly, at westend face, the cornice slab has a non-ornate variety of *stūpa* crowned by a *harmikā* and three umbrellas being worshipped by a noble couple. This also is set within a pair of plain pilasters.

The first scene (Pl.CXXIV-A) presents the birth of the Master. Queen Māyādēvi stands to the left of the panel in an elegant *tribhanga* pose, and the upraised right hand holds the branch of *śāla* tree in the *Lumbinivana* under which she stands. To her left is a female attendant admiring the motherly charm of the queen. The *śāla* tree, in the background with circular configuration of its branches, provides the requisite shade to the noble lady. The face and the chest of Māyādēvi are mutilated. In the background, above and near the right shoulder of the queen, are shown the

royal insignia, the umbrella and flywhisk signifying the new born *chakravartin*. To the right of the panel are shown the seven celestial guardians of the directions (*dikpālas-mahābrāhmaṇas*) holding baby Siddhārtha in a transparent drapery. The faces of the four celestials and the female attendant to the queen are mutilated. The heads of three celestials depicted in the back row are shown with a typical headgear.

The second scene (Pl.CXXIV-B) depicts the presentation of infant Siddhārtha in front of *Śākyavardhana* - the tree spirit. Queen Māyādēvi is presenting the baby, draped in a cloth, to the deity. The infant is symbolically depicted as a pair of footprints (*chakrāṅka-pāda*) on the cloth. The tree has a square basement at the trunk and the *Yaksha* issuing forth from it is shown in *añjali* in all reverence to the child. The retinue of queen Māyādēvi also expresses their reverence in *añjali*. Except the female attendants on the extreme left, the faces of the rest of the figures are mutilated.

The third scene (Pl.CXXIV-C) narrated is the event of *mahāprasthāna*. Chandaka is leading the horse Kanthaka symbolising the Master. The gait of the movement of the horse is very well depicted. Even the gods who were waiting for this auspicious moment are extending their whole-hearted assistance in the *abhinigamana* of Siddhārtha. While the *dikpālas* are shown welcoming the occasion in veneration

above, the *dēvagaṇas* depicted below in the form of tiny dwarfs are supporting the hooves of the horse to muffle the noise to prevent the awakening of the female of the harem from their deep slumber. In the front, Chenna, the obedient servant of the prince, leads the fully caparisoned and saddled horse, which is excited at the prospect of a long journey with its Master, very well expressed in the majestic trot with all intensity and anticipation. The costume and hair dress of Chenna is indicative of the intended long journey in the chill of the night, wherein he is heavily robed with a long thick tunic and perhaps has a muffler thrown over the head for protection.

## Second narrative slab

The middle part of the cornice is broken and much of the sculptured surface is damaged obliterating important details.

The first scene (Pl.CXXIV-D) of this block shows the enlightenment and the *dharmachakra-pravartana*. The Master is preaching the first five deciples in the *Mṛigadāva* of Rishipattāṇa at Sārnath along with the local citizens. The central piece of the composition shows *simhāsana* with the cushion with *dharmachakra* prominently shown at the top and footprints of the lord underneath the *simhāsana*. The pilaster and the persons assembled on the left of the throne are completely mutilated and the faces of the devotees seated on the right are also damaged. The second and



third scenes are merged due to the pilaster dividing the scene which is mutilated and depicts the division of the mortal remains of the Master after the *parinirvāṇa*.

The second scene (Pl.CXXIV-E) depicts a rectangular pedestal held by the four lions seated back to back as in the Aśōkan capital. There are eight circular hatched marks on the table indicating the division of the remains into eight parts, which are being venerated by the eight claimants. These royal personalities in *añjali* are symmetrically positioned on either side of the central line, two persons are standing behind the pedestal, one each seated in *vajrāsana* on either side of the pedestal and two more in the foreground at the extreme corners. The faces of all the persons except three to the left of the pedestal are much damaged.

In the third scene (Pl.CXXIV-F) the number of elephants on which the royalties are taking the reliquary in the procession cannot be discerned due to mutilated condition. Only one elephant making brisk movement towards right is clearly seen with a rider holding the precious reliquary. The other elephants and the riders are not clearly seen.

### Cornice of the Western Āyaka (Pl.CXXV)

The western *āyaka* cornice is also decorated with carved narrative panels in three rectangular blocks of stone.

While the first and second contain three narratives each, the third contains only the procession of elephants carrying the reliquary. The seven themes narrated respectively are - (1) the dream of Māyādēvi, (2) interpretation of the dream by Asita, (3) the queen being admired in the harem, (4) birth of Siddhārtha, (5) defeat of Māra, (6) the first sermon and (7) distribution of the reliquary.

The first scene (Pl.CXXV-A) in this cornice is queen Māyādēvi's dream. The queen is shown sleeping in her apartment on her left side in an easy posture on a large couch resting with her head on the folded left hand over the pillow and the right hand rests all along her waist. Befitting the queen, she wears elaborate ornaments. Near the headrest stands an attendant in *añjali*. Further above this is the mutilated figure of the royal insignia umbrella and flywhisk. Below the couch, two exhausted female attendants of the queen are asleep reclining and resting their tired limbs over the *pādapīṭha* as supports. Nearer to the feet of the couch three of the *dikpālās* are shown. One of them is in the gesture of blessing. The fourth *dikpālā* is shown standing at the foot of the couch in *añjali*. At the centre of the panel near the top border is a rectangular pavilion carrying the Master in the form of white elephant.

The second scene (Pl.CXXV-B) presents the interpretation of the dream and forecasting by Asita in the royal court.

The king and queen are seated on separate low cushioned *pīṭhas* on the right side. The king is shown seated in front with an exclamatory gesture with his upraised right hand and the queen is depicted as seated sideways facing the court of *Mahābrāhmaṇas* and Asita sitting in front of her on separate cushioned seats. Each of the three *Mahābrāhmaṇas* and Asita has hold their right hand uplifted in *vismaya-mudrā* explaining the meaning of the dream to the royal couple. Behind them and the royal couple are *chāmara*-bearing attendants. Interestingly, the forearm of the left hand of the king has a small circular hole indicting that the hand was broken at the time of fabricating and subsequently mended at the time of installation by appliqué method probably by introducing a metallic pin. This provides a clue to the mode of mending of mutilated sculptures in ancient times.

The third scene (PL.CXXV-C) is an unusually different scene, as it is not depicted in the general sequence of the cornices. This panel shows the courtiers and the *Mahābrāhmaṇas* greeting the queen for her conception and receiving rewards from her. The queen is shown seated in *pralambapāda* on a large rectangular cushioned throne with a backrest. Fully decked, the queen, seated sideways in an angular pose is facing the astrologer, Asita, on her right. The other *Mahābrāhmaṇas* are shown standing around the queen. The queen is holding an

ornament or an object of significance in her right hand in the act of gifting it to Asita. To the immediate right of the queen behind the throne stands the *chauri*- bearer. The upper plain border of the panel contains inscription (Ins. No.A70), which records it to be the pious gift by Nāṇikā, sister of Pravrajaka Kanhasiri.

## Second narrative slab

The first scene (PL.CXXV-D) depicts the birth of Siddhārtha at Lumbinivana. Queen Māyādēvi standing in an elegant *tribhanga* posture holds the branch of Śāla tree in her upraised left hand and is playing with her ear ornaments in the upraised right hand. The foliated śāla tree is shown in the background as an umbrella. She wears *vṛitta makara-kunḍalas* and except the lower garment held by an ornate girdle and *kaṭibandha*, no other precise garment is seen. An *uttarīya* is loosely tied at the waist, the free end of which flows on either side. She wears thick spring like anklets. To her left, stands a female attendant. In front of the queen, and to her right are standing the *Mahābrāhmaṇas* or *dīkpālās* in two rows in great veneration, carrying the newborn in the silken cloth held in their hands. They are also decorated with turbans, ear ornaments and beaded *hāras*. Those in the second row are in *añjali*. All of them have a pleasing smiling countenance. The royal parasol and the flywhisk, the symbols of sovereignty, are

depicted to the right of the queen at her shoulder level. The characters in the scene and the inscription in the border above are damaged and lost.

The second scene (Pl.CXXV-E) in the sequence shows Māra's futile attempt to distract the meditation of Gautama and his defeat and subsequent retreat. In the centre of the panel, Buddha is shown symbolically as *vajrāsana* under the sacred *Bōdhi* tree. The throne cushion bears *Buddhapāda* impressions. To the right of the throne, Māra, astride an elephant, is shown encouraging his dwarfs to attack the Master to disturb his meditation, who in turn, with all seriousness, are at their job. The artist has been successful in portraying different sentiments in their facial expressions with a touch of mischievousness and playful attitude. The face of one of them close to the throne is mutilated. Similarly, to the left of the throne are shown the bewitching four daughters of Māra in various moods of *śṛṅgāra* enticing Gautama unsuccessfully to give up penance. Two are mutilated.

The third scene (Pl.CXXV-F) has *dharmachakra pravartana* at Sārnāth. At the centre *vajrāsana*-throne with cushion bearing *Buddhapāda* and the prominent *dharmachakra* on the pillar is depicted. Flanking the throne, seated in *padmāsana* on either side are *chāmara* bearing royal persons. There are five persons each on either side behind them who could

be the first five disciples and citizens of Sarnath who attended the first sermon. Along the top borders shown are two flying *gandharvas* showering flowers and bearing lotus bloom.

### Third narrative slab

This is a separate cornice slab (Pl. CXXV-G) depicting the bodily relics being distributed amongst his kinsmen and carried in a procession on elephants. Only the first elephant from the left is shown in full profile and of the remaining six elephants only the forelimbs are shown. On each of the elephants is a rider carefully holding the casket containing the mortal remains of the Master. The caskets are fashioned like miniature *stūpas*. The slab bears inscription (Ins.No.A.69) on the top frontal border recording it to be the gift of Kanhasiri, disciple of *Hā-gaṇa*, the revered elderly monk of *Bōtikā* (*Bōdhikā*) *vihāra*.

These were the marvellous sculptural embellishments during the time of Vasishṭiputra Siri Sātakaṇi in lines of Sānchi, Amarāvati and other sites of Krishna valley and reflect the culmination of the artistic expression, which beomes more rigid in the fifth phase where the introduction of a series of standing and seated Buddha images reflects that the hitherto *hīnayāna* theology shifted or changed over to the *mahāyāna* phase at the site.

## BUDDHAPĀDA

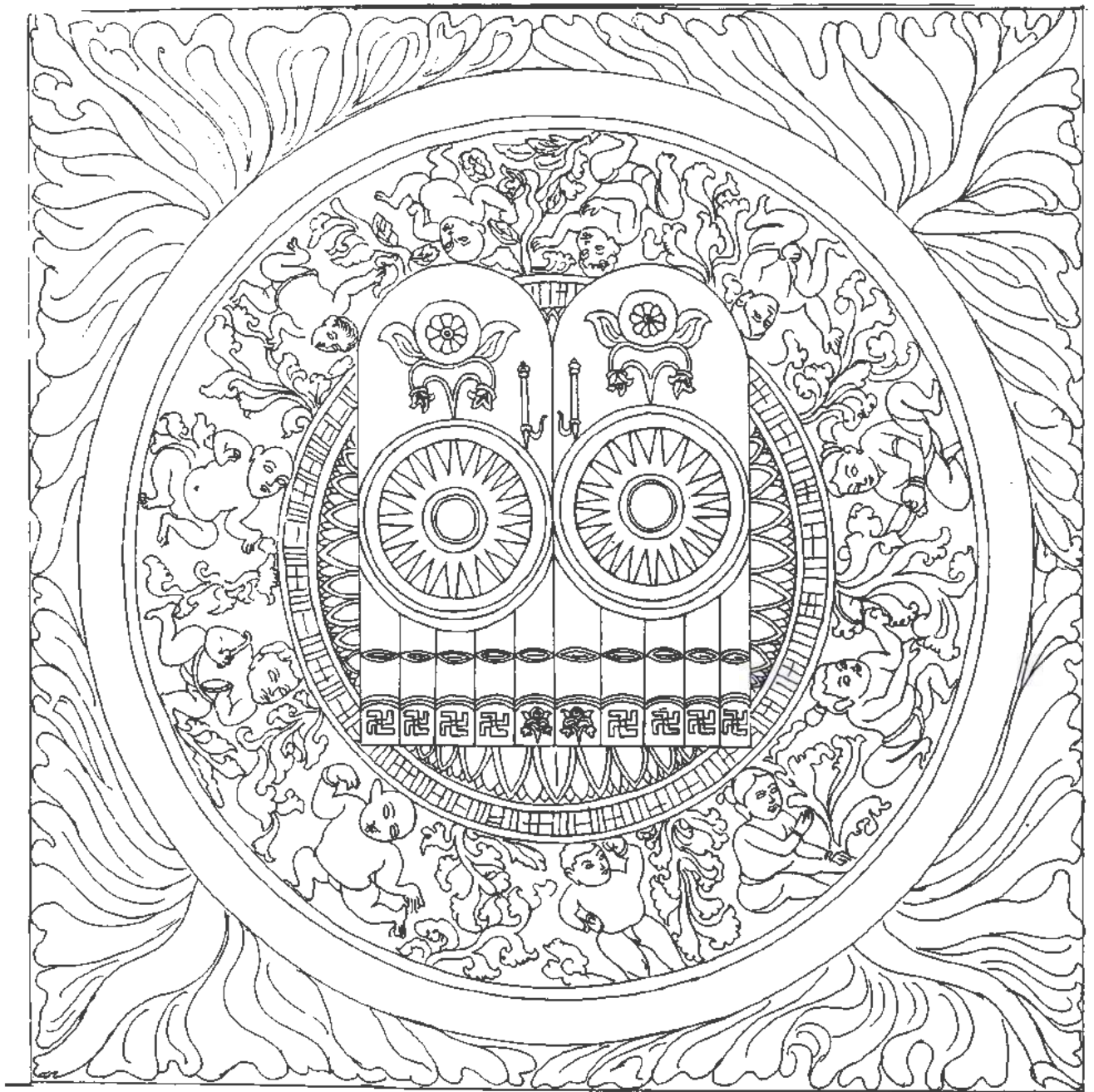


Fig. 78



### Sculptural Art (Phase -III & IV) Buddhapāda (Fig.78)

As part of expansion of the *stūpa*, it is already envisaged that the *āyaka* platforms of the second phase were enlarged and adorned with the *Buddhapādas*. This was in accordance with the sectarian principles of *hīnayānānism* as Buddha is not depicted in human form at this site also. Whenever his representation is required in the portrayal of the scenes depicting his life, his presence is indicated by a symbol. Amongst such symbols the *Buddhapāda* is the most favoured. In addition to the depiction of the foot imprints in the upper drum slabs, *Buddhapādas* are also worshipped independently, being positioned over the *āyaka* platforms and temples and pavilions built separately in the *stūpa* complex. Independent shrines built to house and worship *Buddhapādas* as suggested in the panel at Jaggayapēta and the evidence from Bāvikoṇḍa<sup>85</sup> are replete in the Krishna valley. Highly ornate platform was also specially erected for the worship of *Buddhapāda* at Totlakoṇḍa.<sup>86</sup>

Excavations at Kanaganahalli have yielded as many as 12 complete *Buddhapāda* slabs amongst which nine are inscribed. The more ornate and inscribed ones were positioned over the *āyaka* platforms or on the flower receptacles (*pushpagrāhiṇis*) opposite to the entrances prior to the installation of the images of Buddha. During the excavation in the proximity

of the *āyaka* platforms of north, east and west, fragments of such ornate footprint slabs were found. A fragment of the non-ornate but inscribed *Buddhapādas* was also found buried under the brick veneering of the northern *āyaka* platform indicating that even before the *āyaka* platforms were added to the *stūpa* such slabs were positioned over the flower receptacles. A notable feature in one of the *Buddhapādas* is that part of a rectangular socket was provided at the rear end probably to accommodate an umbrella with a shaft that was provided to the *Buddhapāda*. At least four of these ornate *Buddhapādas* were donated by the disciples of Buddhatrāta, an elderly reverend associated with the monastery *Bōdhika vihāra* at the site (Ins. Nos.A.88, 89, 91, and B.238). One of the revered disciples, Sīhaka (Simhaka), has gifted three of these *Buddhapādas* (Ins.Nos.A.88, 91, & B.238) and another disciple, Bhavajīvaka, has gifted one (Ins.No.A.89).

Based on the auspicious symbols depicted that are seen on the *Buddhapādas* in various Buddhist sites, they have been grouped into four phases of development<sup>87</sup>. The earliest among them datable to 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC have only *triratna*, *śrīvatsa*, *chakra* and *svastika*. Another interesting feature of *Buddhapādas* of this phase is that the footprints are carved separately with some intermittent space. The *Buddhapādas* of the last phase have as many as 12 auspicious symbols viz., *triratna*,

*śrīvatsa*, *chakra*, *svastika*, *simhāsana*, *pūrṇaḥaṭa*, *matsyadvaya*, *stambha*, *kamala*, *ankuśa*, *śankha* and *stūpa*. This phase is represented by the well-known footprint slab of Nāgarjunakoṇḍa belonging to 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD<sup>88</sup>.

In a majority of the available specimens available at Kanaganahalli, fully blossomed lotus flower with an ornamental band of eight segments of leaf motifs are carved in the corners. On the lotus is embossed a pair of feet in a conventional bold relief. At the centre sole of the feet, a large *dharmachakra* representing the *mahāpuruṣa-lakṣaṇa* is depicted. The number of spokes in the *dharmachakra* varies between 16 and 32. On the heel is depicted a stylised *triratna* flanked by *ankuśas*. At the toes, *triratna*, *śrīvatsa*, *svastika*, *bhadrāsana* and another indistinct symbol are depicted. The *bhadrāsana* very much resembles the inverted triangle-headed standard commonly occurring in the Sātavāhana coinage. In some specimens, the large toes bear the symbol of *bhadrāsana* and the remaining toes have *svastikas* depicted in anticlockwise fashion. Stylistically, the *Buddhapādas* at the site could be grouped into two categories. The first ornate and inscribed ones which are positioned over the *āyaka* platforms could be ascribed between 1<sup>st</sup> century AD and 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, while the non-ornate ones could be ascribed to mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century AD.

## Sculptural art (Phase-V)

It is during this phase of sculptural embellishment, the *stūpa* enters the *Mahāyāna* phase of Buddhism indicated by seated and standing Buddha sculptures in *Dharmachakra pravartana mudrā* encountered over the eastern, southern and western *āyaka* platforms and at the eight intra cardinal directions inside the *pradakṣiṇāpatha*. The most pronounced is the depiction of two massive 2.40 m tall standing Buddha images over the southern and western *āyaka* platforms which incidentally served as the main entrances from the river side and Sannati proper to the *chaitya*.

It is a well-known fact that the advent of *mahāyāna* Buddhism and its canonical victory over *hīnayāna* paved way for the sculptural depictions of the Master as a meditative ascetic either in standing or seated posture with a benign smile in Buddhist art. Images of Śākyamuni<sup>89</sup> came to be introduced around 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD when the Mathura and Gāndhāra schools of art took lead in the sculpturing such Buddha images.

However, a special feature to be noted in these sculptures is that the prominent *ūrṇa* (the circular projection on the forehead right above the nose bridge, symbolising supreme spiritual wisdom) is absent in all of them.

## Standing Buddha images

The earliest standing image of Buddha occurs in one of the Chaityas at Kanheri<sup>90</sup>, among the western Indian cave architecture of the period of Gautamiputra Yajña Śrī Sātakarṇi.<sup>91</sup> The sculpture of Kanheri in bas relief over the base of a fluted pillar, depicts a moderately robust standing image, the feet slightly placed apart and is provided with a halo around the head with well developed facial features. The right hand is held in *abhaya-mudra* and the left holds the ends of drapery. The same feature in a large scale is encountered here too.

### 1. Southern āyaka image (Pl. CXXVI-A)

It is one of the finest sculptures of standing Buddha erected over a separate lotus pedestal, unique to this place. Easily, it is the best specimen from Karnataka, for its composition, plasticity, expression and execution. Be it the *dakṣiṇāvarta* curl gently rising to form the low *uṣṇīṣa* at top or the elongated well delineated ear lobes reflecting a *mahāpuruṣa*, or the gentle folds of the long heavy drapery covering the Lord, the benign smile, with wide open eyes as if beckoning the devotees with an assurance of benevolence - this is an unsurpassed creation of Vākāṭaka-*vishaya* sculptors. At present, the image is mutilated into more than five fragments and measures 2.40 m in height with a shoulder width of 76 cm. The drapery covers

the ankles and covers both the shoulders. The right hand mutilated is in *abhaya-mudrā*. The left palm holding the loose ends of the *Saṅghāti* is also mutilated. The sculpture is mutilated above the foot along with part of the ovalish pedestal of 10 cm height and 35 cm thickness. Part of the pedestal is mutilated along with the right foot as well. The extant pedestal has the mutilated left foot with well delineated toes. The pressure of the body weight is reflected in the bulge of the toes. A closer observation reveals that for such a huge sculpture, the pedestal is a bit short and inadequate to carry the heavy load of the body. It is no surprise that the image has succumbed due to this lacuna even though a massive lotus designed additional pedestal was provided of sufficient bulkiness which also could not hold and balance the statue in its position when the *stūpa* got destroyed.

The lotus pedestal, which accommodated the above standing Buddha image, is circular in shape. It measures 32 cm in height. The lower part of about 8 cm is undressed obviously to be buried inside the ground. The upper part measuring 24 cm in height has deeply engraved lotus petals in two whorls. On the top surface of the pedestal there is an ovalish depression measuring 79 cm in length, 39 cm in width and 9 cm in depth, obviously to accommodate the standing Buddha image. There are two inscriptions of two lines each carved on the lotus pedestal, which read:

L-1 *Dāraghāṭikēhi Bhagavatō,*

L-2 *Budhasa patimā kāritō* ll (Ins.No.A87)

The image (of Lord Buddha) is got carved by the people from the Dāraghāṭika (Naneghat?).

The second inscription engraved on the left side of the pedestal reads:

L-1 ..(A)sabhūtinō upajjhāyēna natukēna  
Venōna upajhāēna

L-2 *putēna Najikēna katō* [l] (Ins.No A87)

A certain, Najika, son of Venu *upādhyāya* and maternal grandson of Aśvabhūti *upādhyāya* carved the image.

## 2. Western āyaka image (Pl. CXXVI-B)

This is the second monolithic sculpture of Buddha placed over the western *āyaka* platform. During excavation its foot was found *in situ* on the rectangular pedestal. The image measures 2.34 m in height with a shoulder width of 1.00 m. It is similar to the southern image in its features and is provided with a halo around the head, upper part of the right palm held in *abhaya* posture and left arm holding the loose ends of the *sanghāti*. The robe covers the ankles in the form of a thick translucent cloth. On the left side it forms a thick angular folding, the lower ends of which are held in the left hand and the other end rests on the pedestal near the left leg. The folds of the upper garment begin from near the neck forming a circular arch at the neck and are delineated in the form of thick waves of parallel lines turning and bending following the contour of the body.

Anatomically the figure shows ovalish, well modelled face; broad and rounded shoulders, well-fashioned chest reflecting good physiology and health. The *ushnīsha* is fashioned with *dakṣiṇāvarta* ringlets and slightly protrudes. The curls of the ringlets are shown right upto the neck on the backside. The long ears reflect the *mahāpurusha lakṣaṇa*. The large eyes are wide open. The nose, though damaged, has a thick and elevated bridge. The lips, cheek and double chin are in high relief.

The pedestal of the image is carved of a massive rectangular block measuring 1.17 m in length, 85cm in width and 30 cm in height. It is quiet plain and devoid of any decoration on the front and sides. It has a roughly rectangular (75 x 38 cm) depression at the top centre having a depth of 8 cm. At the centre of the back of this rectangular depression there is another slit cut to 32 cm length, 12 cm width and 10 cm deep. It has been provided with a roughly rectangular ledge-shaped tenon measuring 30.5 cm in length and 15.5 cm in width and 10 cm. thick. This arrangement appears to be for positioning the image tightly on the pedestal and locking it to avoid any slight movements and balancing in view of the massiveness of the sculpture.

## 3. Torso

The torso of another standing Buddha (54 x 48 cm) image found at the site could have been placed in one of the shrines built



around the *chaitya*. The highly mutilated sculpture has clear *sanghāti* in great folds.

### Seated Buddha images

In all, ten seated sculptures of Buddha have been retrieved from the excavations in the *mahā stūpa* complex. All are carved in round and some retain the cortex of the original stone formations on their back side. These seated images of the Buddha kept over the *āyaka* platform at north and east and in the intracardinal directions in the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* stylistically belong to the same period and workmanship of the sculptors of Vākāṭaka vishaya as reflected in the inscriptions. While most of the images are mutilated above shoulder and sometimes at waist, only one image is completely extant and in a fair state of preservation.

The seated sculptures of Buddha in the *pradakṣiṇāpatha* have been placed by using the non-ornate *vēdikā* slabs as the backdrop. It is to be noted from their respective pedestal inscriptions that they form part of the *Mānushī Buddha* representations such as Vipasyin, Śikhi, Viśvabhū, Krakuchchaṇḍa, Kāśyapa, Śākyamuni-Siddhārtha, Kanakamuni and Maitreya (Anāgata). The sculpture of Śākyamuni is repeated. It is interesting to note in this connection that the *Manushi* Buddhas appear for the first time in sculptural art in the *Hīnayāna* context at Bhārhut.<sup>92</sup> The names of only six of

the eight Buddhas are engraved along with their corresponding Bōdhi trees or the totemic trees (Pl. XXIX to XXXI) (*Bhagavatō Vipassinō Bōdhi* etc). The next representation of the eight *Mānushī* Buddhas in their fully developed *Mahāyāna* theological concept appears only at the *Mahā Stūpa* at Kanaganahalli. The iconic figures of these Buddhas, duly identified with label inscriptions appear to have been positioned as per standard canonical injunctions. The epigraphs on the pedestals also indicate that all these images were contributions of persons hailing from Vākāṭaka Vishaya and were executed by a group of sculptors who belonged to the same family and the same school of art accounting for the striking similarities. The *Mānushī* Buddhas also appear in the Mathura school of art during the times of Huvishka - a contemporary king of Yajña Śrī Sātakarṇi. At Sanchi, in the niches of the cardinal directions of *Stūpa-I*, four of the *Dhyāni* Buddhas are introduced during the Gupta period.<sup>93</sup> Subsequently, however, these are depicted in a matured phase at Ellora as seen in the Teental Cave (12) of the time of the Western Chalukyas of 6<sup>th</sup> century AD. At Nala Sōpara (ancient Surpanaka),<sup>94</sup> a copper casket contained the bronze images dated to about 8<sup>th</sup> century AD of the *Mānushī* Buddhas. However, the earliest occurrence of all the eight *Mānushi* Buddhas in a standardised form is a unique feature of Kanaganahalli *Mahā Stūpa*.

## 1. Kaśyapa (Pl.CXXVII-A)

Found *in situ* to the south of eastern āyaka, this image is inscribed as *Bahgavaṃ Samasa Budhō Kasapo*. The image along with the pedestal measures 88 cm in height, 74 cm in width and 32 cm in thickness and is mutilated at right hand, part of both the knees, head and the left shoulder. The intact left palm with fingers folded inside holds the loose ends of the *sanghāti*. The folds of the upper garment covering part of the left foot expose only the thumb and the index fingers. The parallel lines of the garment are not shown deeply and boldly engraved on the sides. The ends of the garment majestically flow and rest on the pedestal. Like many of the other images the garment is continued on to the backside partly and the original cortex of the stone is partially retained.

The roughly rectangular pedestal of the image has at its sides fully bloomed four-petalled flowers whereas the frontal portion shows prominent *patralatā* design in wavy fashion. It could be a very ornate stylised variety of depicting the *triratna* also. The frontal edges are chamfered at an angle and depict full circular lotus medallion at the centre with semi circular lotus medallion at the top and bottom. The pedestal alone measures 27 cm in height. An inscription at the pedestal (Ins.No.A.83), records the image to be that of Kāśyapa, carved by Viśākha from Vākāṭaka Vishaya along with his son.

## 2. Śākyapati Siddhārta (Pl. CXXVII-B)

It is the largest amongst the seated Buddha images measuring 72 cm in height and 84 cm in width located in the *pradakṣiṇā* at southeast. It is well modelled with broad shoulders and the upper garment covers both the shoulders fully including the hands. The wavy type of parallel lines of the cloth covers part of the left foot. The lower garment however exposes only the slightly damaged right foot. The foldings of the garments are carried on to the backside but majority of the cortex of the original stone surface is retained on both image and pedestal. Both the hands and head are mutilated. There is a big chipped off mark on the left side of the pedestal. While the other images are in direct contact with the pedestal, here a 3-4 cm ledge is provided over which the image proper is shown seated.

The pedestal has a band of austere, circular floral motif. The front face of the pedestal has an inscription (Ins.No.A.84) recording this as the image of Śākyapati Siddhārtha got carved by Viśākha from Vākāṭaka Vishaya along with his son. Kanhila carved the image and the pedestal.

## 3. Sikhin (Pl.CXXVII-C)

This well modelled, comparatively better-preserved Buddha sculpture with

the pedestal also carved of the same block was found slightly to the north of western *āyaka vedikā*. It measures 1.10 m in height 77 cm in width and 33 cm in thickness. Carved out of a roughly ovalish block of stone the image retains the original cortex on the back side. Buddha sits in *padmāsana* with hand in *abhaya mudrā*, which is mutilated. The left hand in the lap is kept folded. The upper garment delineated in thick wavy parallel lines covers only the left shoulder. It forms a loop over the left shoulder and flows down below the left arm, covers the left forearm, suspends down and rests on the pedestal. The lower garment similarly leaves both the ankles open and in comparison to the upper garment it is rather thick and not deeply carved. This is the only sculpture in which the head is intact. The *dakṣiṇāvarta* ringlets of the hair shown only upto the neck on the backside, the wide open eyes, long ear without any ornament, small smiling lips and comparatively narrow neck characterise the sculpture. The *uśhṇīsha* projection over the head, halo and right hand beyond the upper forearm are broken. There are chipped off marks on the nose, lower lip, right knee, ankle and left arm and the garment on the left corner.

The slightly mutilated pedestal on the frontal face has three compartments divided by the usual *tabha* pilaster motif. Compartments on the extremities depict stylised *nandipādas* fashioned like *triratnas* resting over *dharmachakra*. The central, comparatively larger, compartment shows

*triratnas* fashioned out of two *makaras* with face or nose touching each other at the centre. The sides of the pedestal show heavy designs. Above this decoration on the frontal face the 7 cm high strip bears a two-line inscription (Ins.No.A.81) and identifies the image as Śikhin, carved by Visāgha along with his son. The inscription also gives the lineage of the sculptor Nāgabudhi as the son of Mādha, grandson of Sāmināga and great grand son of Āsadēva.

#### 4. ANAGATA (Maitreya) (Pl.CXXVII-D)

This sculpture, located to the south west of the *stūpa* in the *pradakṣiṇā*, is identified as Bōdhisattva Anāgata i.e., Maitreya. It measures 84 cm in height, 80 cm in width and 33 cm in thickness including the pedestal. Buddha sits in *padmāsana* over an ovalish *kurmāsana* provided with *vyāghrājina* (tiger skin) as indicated by *vyāghra pādas* fashioned like *triratna* or reversed *nandipāda* near the left leg of the image. In comparison to the other Buddha sculptures, which are comparatively robust in anatomy with a heavy muscle delineation, this sculpture has slender anatomical features. The *uttarīya* covers only the left shoulder and leaves the right shoulder and much of the right chest is exposed. The fairly thin single fold of the upper garment is sculpted as wavy lines and as a narrow strip across the left chest and carried behind



the shoulder. Unlike the other sculptures, the lower garment is shown as a thin and tightly worn *dhōti* without any foldings but held by an ornate waistband, the knots of which are seen on the left side. Thus a diaphanous treatment appears to have been given to the garments to highlight the anatomical features and the perfect body contour. The head is missing and the right hand broken at the shoulder level probably was held in *abhaya* or *pravachana mudrā*. The left hand is also broken from the shoulder upto the palm, which rests on the left thigh.

Below, the *kūrmāsana* pedestal extends to a height of nearly 12 cm bearing two-lined inscription. The image and the pedestal are further provided with a rectangular additional pedestal of 21 cm height and 96 cm length and 35 cm thickness. The frontal face of this pedestal is divided into four compartments treated with three-barred pilaster design and a four petalled lotus flower. The top surface has a 3 cm deep ovalish depression to accommodate the image. This additional rectangular pedestal, probably provided to increase the over all height of the image, is fashioned out of a corner *tabha* pillar as indicated by the elliptical mortices at the lateral sides.

The inscription (Ins.No.A.85) at the pedestal, records that the image was got carved by Viśākha, from Vākāṭaka Vishaya along with his son.

## 5. Vipāśyin (Pl.CXXVIII-A)

This sculpture of Buddha located to south-west in the *pradakṣiṇā* is seated over an ornate pedestal and is one of the most robust figures. It measures 1.03 m in height, 63 cm in width and 35 cm in thickness. The image is mutilated above the shoulders, at both the wrists and left knee which otherwise would have depicted a serene robust figure of the Master. He sits in *padmāsana*, the right hand probably held in *dharmachakra-pravartana mudrā* and the left held the loose ends of the *sanghāthi*. The extant sculpture depicts rounded draped shoulders, broad chest, flattened stomach and heavy thighs and feet. The image is heavily draped and the folded lines of the drapery are shown in the form of thick lines. The upper garment covering both the shoulders extends upto the forearm and the loose ends rest on the left thigh. Similarly fashioned lower garment covers upto the ankles.

The ornate pedestal has three decorative compartments formed by fluted pilasters at front with *bhāravāhaka gaṇas* at the sides and a five-hooded Muchilinda nāga at the center. The coils are folded in the form of a *padmāsana* and the hands are kept on the thighs. He is also depicted as if sharing the load of the sculpture. The smiling facial expressions of the *gaṇas* reflect the ease with which they are carrying the load. The pedestal on its narrow sides has simple multi-whorled floral pattern



within a frame of plain rectangular pilaster. Above this panel is a two-lined inscription (Ins.No.A.80) recording that this image of Vipasyin was got carved by Viśākha of Vākāṭaka Vishaya along with his son. The inscription also records the lineage of the sculptor Nāgabudhi as the son of Mādha, grandson of Sāmināga and great grandson of Āsadeva.

## 6. Viśvabhū (Pl.CXXVIII-B)

This sculpture is on the south-eastern side in the *pradakṣiṇā*. It represents Buddha seated in *padmāsana* over a pedestal with the mutilated right hand probably showing *abhaya* and the left holding the loose ends of the *sanghāthi*. The sculpture is mutilated above neck and hands, the left side and the back side has prominent erosion marks due to the defective raw material of the iron ore faults on the frontal body portion. The feet placed in *padmāsana* are fully covered by the extra length of the upper garment at the front. The sculpture shows well-built physique.

The ornate pedestal on the sides have stylised *triratna* within plain pilasters. They are either crudely fashioned or much eroded. The frontal face is divided into three squarish compartments out of plain pilasters at regular intervals. Fully bloomed lotus flowers with three whorls of petals are at sides and the central panel is decorated with a geometrical design of intertwining *triratnas*.

The two lined inscription (Ins.No.A.82), records that the image of Viśvabhū was got carved by Viśākha of Vākāṭaka Vishaya along with his son. Bōdhigupta, the sculptor and royal minister, son of Mādha, grandson of Sāmināga and great grandson of Āsadeva executed it.

## 7. Krakuchchaṇḍa (Pl.CXXVIII-C)

This Buddha sculpture was found *in situ* towards north east of the *stūpa* over *pradakṣiṇā* and measures 79 cm in height, 67 cm width and 34 cm thickness. This sculpture is much mutilated and is in two parts. The upper torso is separated from the lower part with the pedestal. The sculpture is mutilated above shoulder and at hands. The left palm holds *sanghāthi* near the left thigh. The image is seated in *dharmachakra pravartana mudrā* in *padmāsana*. The upper garment covers part of the right foot. The rectangular pedestal on its frontal face depicts addorsed lions, shown with a common face at the corners.

The inscription (Ins.No.A.78) records it as the contribution of Viśākha from Vākāṭaka Vishaya along with his son.

## 8. Kanakamuni (Pl.CXXVIII-D)

This sculpture is retrieved at the north of eastern *āyaka vēdikā*. It measures 61 cm in height and 83 cm in width. Kanakamuni is seated in *padmāsana* over a *simhāsana*. The extant portion reveals the feet of the Lord partly hidden under the upper

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DIPICTION OF ARCHITECTURE

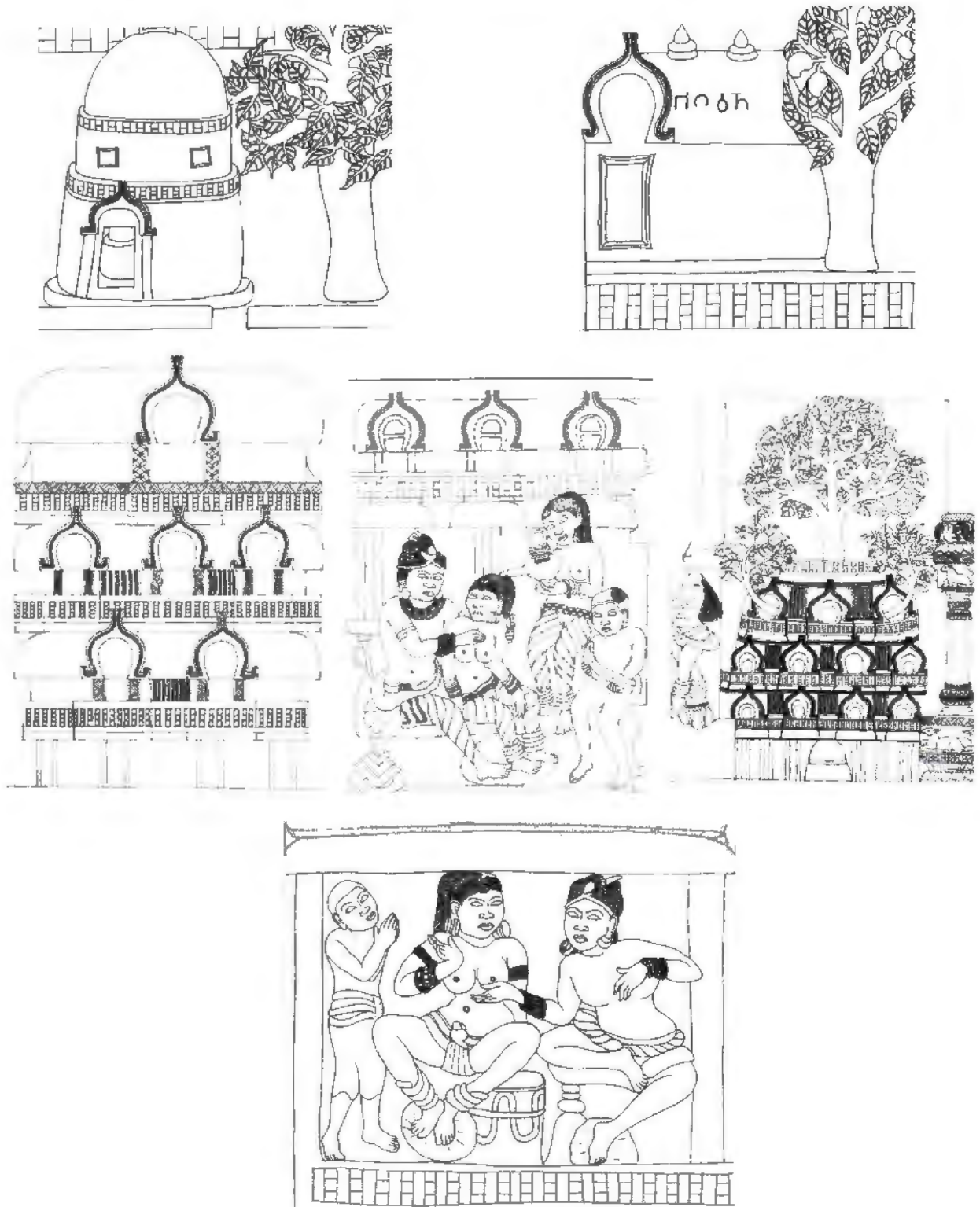


Fig.79

garment. The lines of drapery in wavy pattern have been sculpted so as to reveal a well modelled abdomen of an ascetic. Sufficient care has been taken to introduce plasticity in the exposed sole of the feet and toes.

The rectangular pedestal set with a lotus creeper border has two addorsed lions, with face to front. A single line inscription (Ins.No.A.79) at the pedestal records it to be the gift of Viśākha, hailing from Vākāṭaka Vishaya along with his son.

From the above it is apparent that all these images of Buddha, both in standing and seated postures, were the contribution of a group of sculptors hailing from Vākāṭaka Vishaya i.e, upper Deccan, where the development of Buddhist art and architecture was at its peak and as such there was a great movement of the guild of artisans in the area. It is also pertinent to note that the artisans of Vākāṭaka Vishaya do not refer to any king of importance in their domain probably indicating that the Sātavāhanas still held sway over the region.

### Late phase

With the major embellishment of the *chaitya* having been carried out in the preceding periods, at the *Mahāchaitya*, which was already embellished to saturation point, the activity shifted to the peripheral structures in the form of erecting pillars, shrines or *chaitya grīhas*, *pādukā* platforms, etc. in the fag end of the fifth phase. The seeds of decadence

had already set in as seen in one of the narrative friezes. The depiction is seen in one of the veneerings of the pillar erected in STR-IV. This is the only representation of such narrative frieze, which depicts the Master in sculptural and symbolic form. The first scene in the panel shows Buddha in human form subjugating Nalagiri elephant in the street of Rājagṛīha (Pl.CXXIX-A). The second (Pl.CXXIX-B) depicts the worship of the Master in the symbolic form of Bōdhimaṇḍa. The third frieze again presents Buddha in human form in which Rāhula is asking for patrimony (Pl.CXXIX-C).

Apart from this some of the architectural members like the fluted shafts of a pillar with *bhāravāhaka gaṇas*, different types of capita! once forming the part of pillars or *chhatraṇḍas* erected in the periphery are the only representatives of the last phase of sculptural activity.

### Architecture in the sculptural art (Fig.79) at the *stūpa*

The *stūpa* at Kanaganahalli has brought to light unique visual data for a variety of forms of early architecture. All the three major types viz., defence, secular and religious architecture have been depicted in all grandeur. The scale, range and complexity and details of architecture represented are amazing. Though these depictions are in general comparable with the Bhārhut, Sānchi, early paintings of Ajanta and Amarāvati traditions, the range

# MAHĀ STŪPA

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF FURNITURE

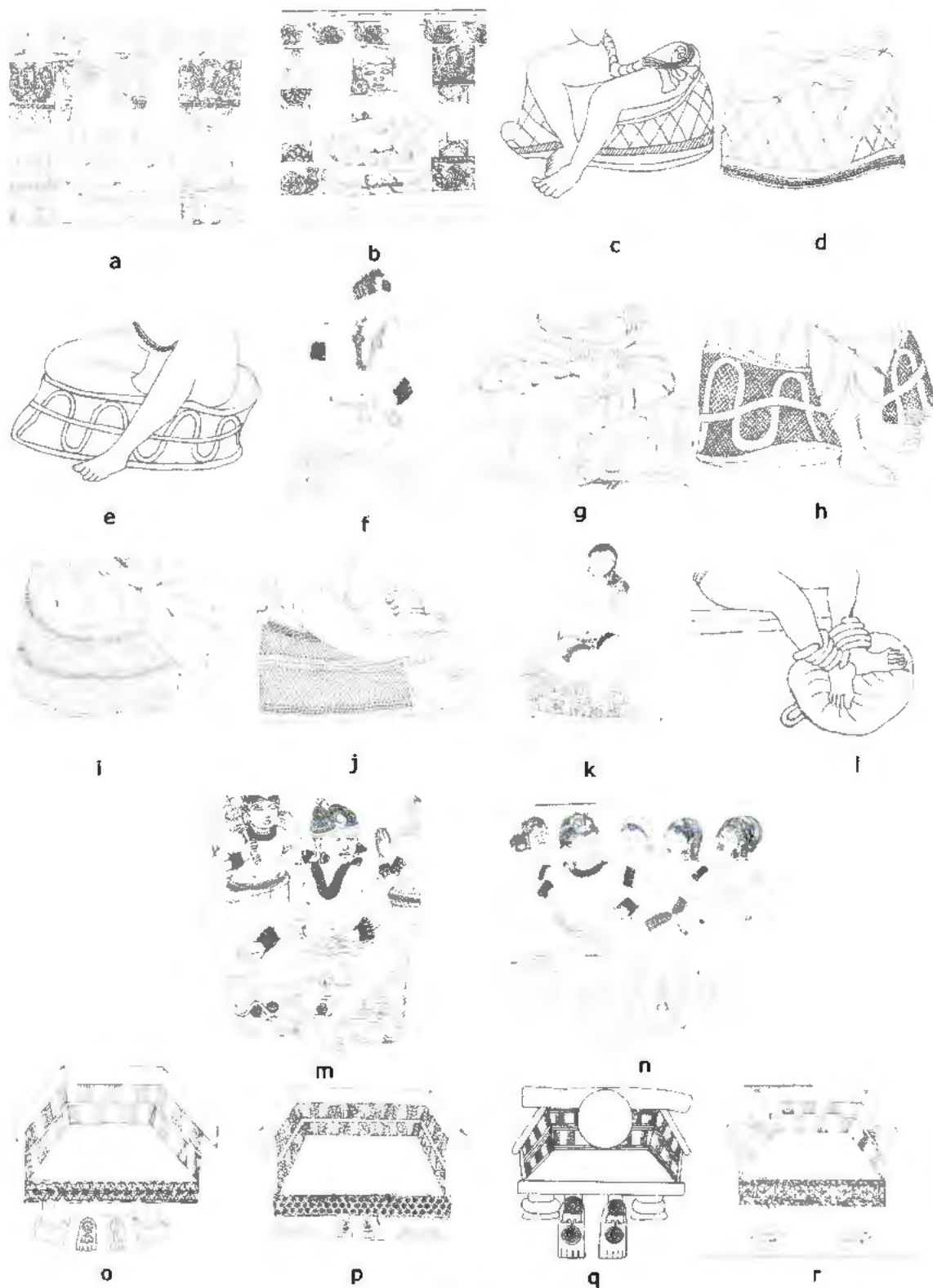


Fig.80



and details are unprecedented, especially in the realm of religious architecture. Representations of a wide variety of *stūpas* ranging from a simple hemispherical dome set on a plain drum to ones set on multiple terraces with enclosed *prākāras*, multiple pillars, *chhatrāvalis*, etc. indicates not only the vivid ramifications and development of its plan and elevations but also the rich ornamental vocabulary developed from time to time.

The *stūpa* offers an insight into the contemporary wooden architecture extensively from a simple hermitage to elaborate pavilions for the royal personalities and the noblemen, which are sufficiently described while delineating the panels from Phase-I to Phase-V. The secular architecture represented reflects two social groups - the rich and the poor. The rich could afford large pavilions well furnished with gable vaults; *chaitya* arches over the door, tiled roof and finials depending upon the simplicity or grandeur of the structures. Occasionally, the gateways and fort walls are also depicted as in the rendering of the great departure of the Lord, transportation of relics and the banishment of the cannibal king in *Sutasōma Jātaka*. In these depictions the enclosure or fort of the palace had vaulted gateway large enough to allow the brisk moving elephants, also provided with a projected balcony treated with low balustrades. The nature of fort wall of brick/stone masonry is discernible only

in the scene of great departure. In the renderings of *Jētavana* and the monastic scene of the lower drum, the various huts constructed for the monks in different sizes and shapes and the hut dwellings in *Vēssantara*, *Jāgarakhasa Jātakas* in the upper drum slab renderings reflect them to be constructions of wattle and daub and usually circular in configuration. *Utupakha* depiction in *Jētavana* monastery panel (south, lower drum) and *Puṇaguḥā* in the palace of *Śuddhōdana* (southeast, upper drum) are some interesting labelled structures for specific purposes, the former being a female apartment for nuns and the latter the inner room of the harem in the palace for pregnant women for delivery.

In addition to the above, the religious architecture like *Sudhammālaya*, various types of *chaityas* and *stūpas* of the contemporary times also get depicted. However, the artist has prominently depicted *Jētthāghara (Chaitya)* and *vṛiksha Chaitya* and the associated architectural features like lion capital, *dharmachakra* etc. which have already been dealt with in detail.

## Furniture

This formed part of the *āsanas* of the royalty and noblemen exclusively. They are chiefly of four types viz., 1. *Vētrāsanas* - cushioned circular seats with different size, shape and design; 2. *Paryankas* - low stools large enough to accommodate both the

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### ANIMALS DEPICTED IN THE NARRATIVE PANELS

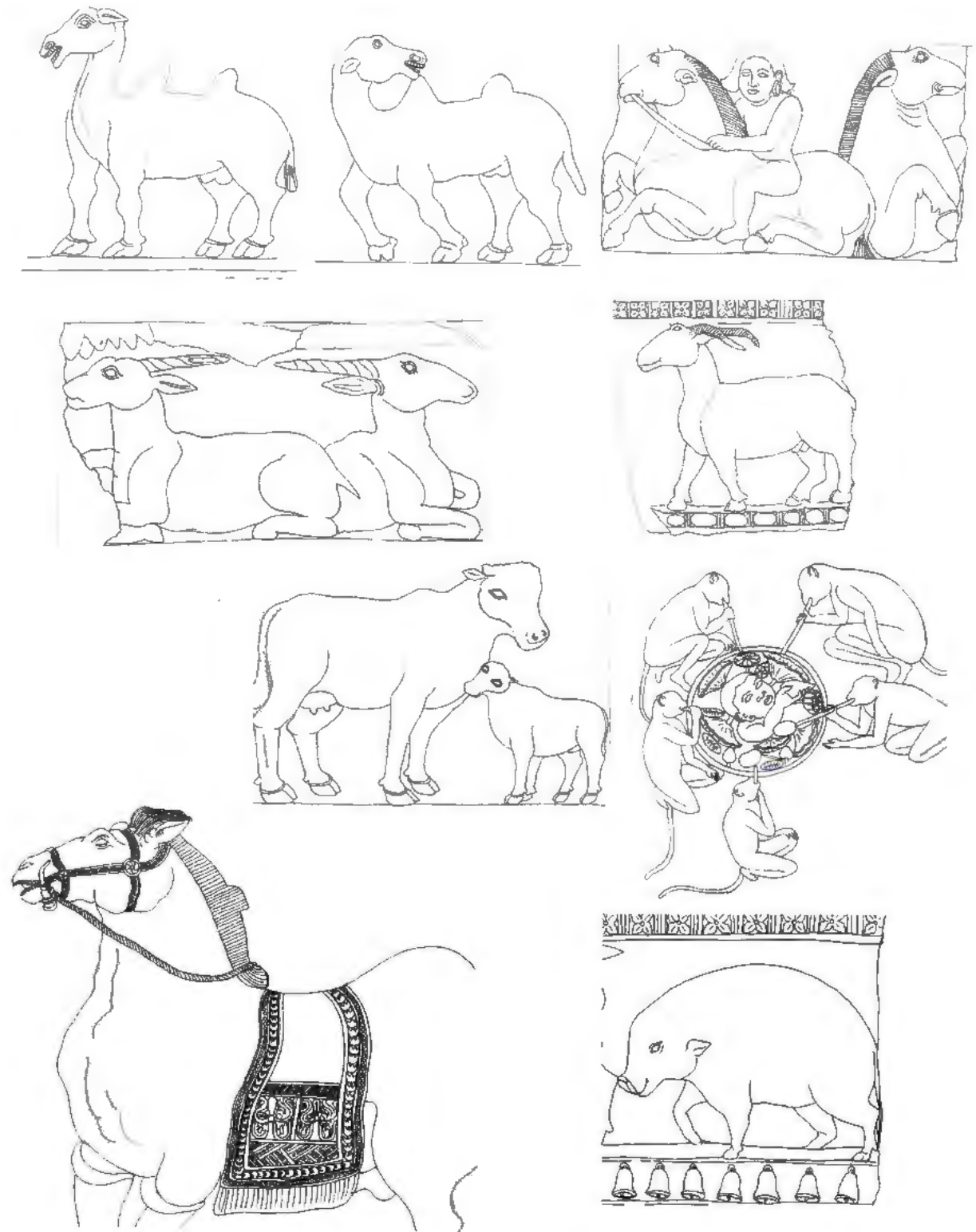


Fig. 81

## MAHĀ STŪPA

### BIRDS DEPICTED ON UPPER DRUM SLABS



Fig. 81A

king and queen in the court either together or individually; 3. *Simhāsana* or simply a bucket type of cushioned chair of both single and double variety with or without back and armrests. The term *simhāsana* can be applied to this seat when a royal person is seated, otherwise it does not exhibit any features like lion balustrade at the throne. Only a solitary representation is the throne of Chhimukha Sātavāhana; 4. *Vajrāsana* - is the frequently represented throne symbolising the presence of Buddha and has been dealt with in greater detail at appropriate panels (Fig.80).

### Animal kingdom

Two categories of animals are depicted on the architectural members and sculptures of the *Mahā Stūpa* - mythical and true (Fig.81,81A).

### Mythical

The animals of this category are called *īhāmṛigas* i.e, animals of fancy. They are a combination of beasts, birds and reptiles. They can be further sub-divided into aerial, terrestrial and aquatic types depending upon the presence of certain body parts or limbs, which distinguish the animals of each region.

### Aerial

The addition of beaks and wings to the animals make them aerial. This category of animals are normally depicted at a sufficiently elevated position like the coping members; the abacus of the capital

of pillars and pilasters and the series of animal friezes positioned over the dome slabs suggestive of their movement in aerial regions.

### Aquatic

Aquatic animals are characterised by the hindquarters fashioned like the body of fish. There are elephants and lions in this category, which, “suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange”. These types of animals are shown at the base of the pillars and at the lower levels of the narration of the episodes and below figures of semi-divine beings like *Yakshas* and *Yakshis*, to suggest their region of movement.

Such representations are used in all early structures as common sculptural and decorative motifs. Several identical examples could be drawn from the sculptural delineations at Bhārhut, Jaggayepēta, Amarāvati, Sānchi and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa. Early Sanskrit literature like the *Rāmāyaṇa* and *Mahābhārata* have replete references to such animals as forming decorative repertoire of palaces and other structures. The *Jātaka* stories also mention a number of sea monsters like crocodiles and tortoises. Some of these depictions in sculptural media share common features with similar representations in the architectural and sculptural ramifications of far off countries with which India in general and Sātāvahana Empire in particular had trade and cultural contacts. Thus the winged lion of Persia,



## MAHĀ STŪPA

### DEPICTION OF WINGED LIONS

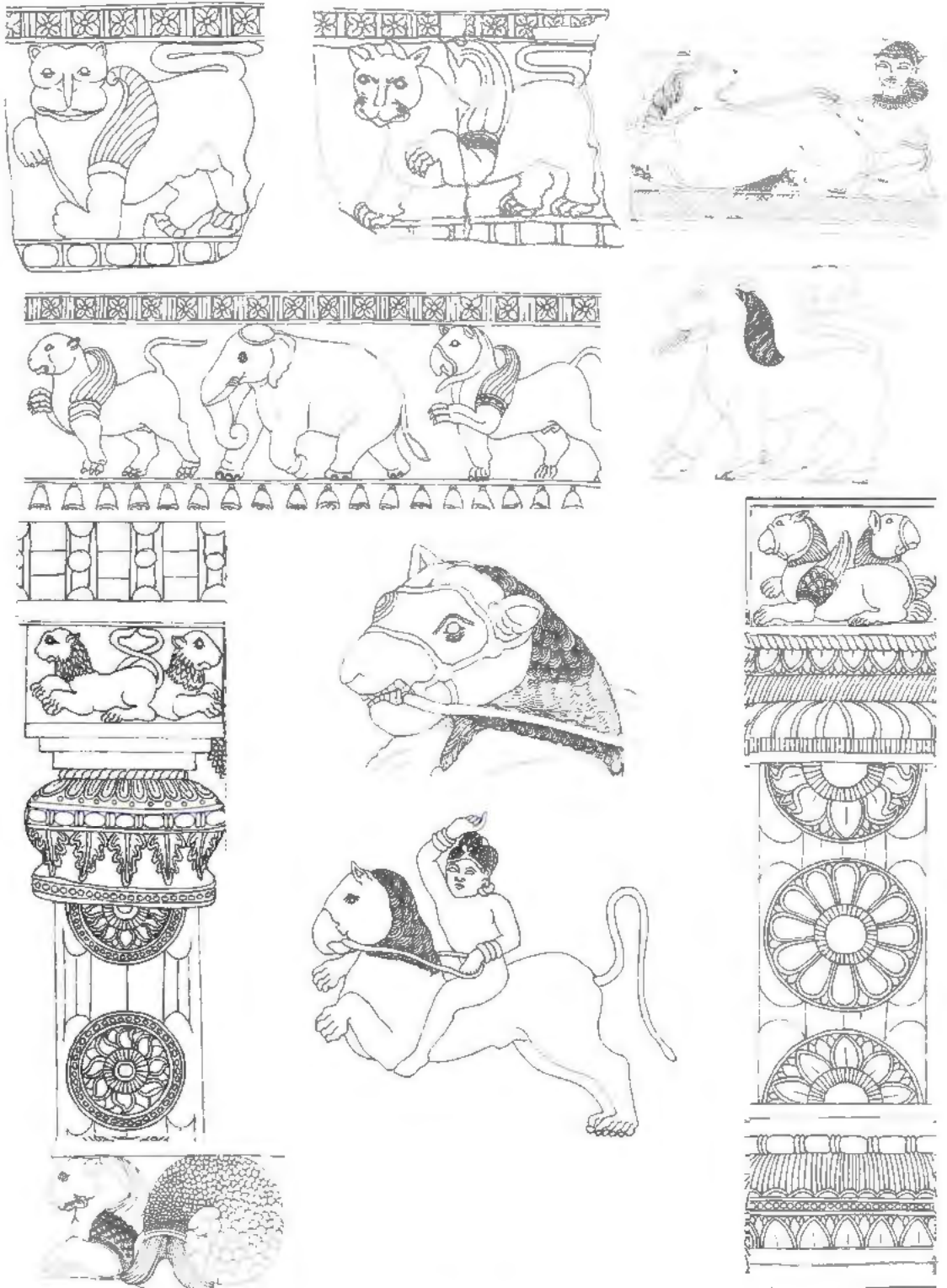


Fig. 82

centaur of Greece, human faced lion of sphinx, lions and chariots closer to the Assyrian models, etc. point towards such similarities in spite of differences in minute ornamental details for obvious reasons. This also establishes the mutual influences among regions and people having sustained commercial and politico-cultural relations with one another.

### Lion (Fig.82)

Five types of mythical lions could be identified in the sculptural depictions at the *mahāchaitya*. They are with:

1. only wings
2. beak and wings
3. only beak
4. horns and
5. human face.

The winged lion is the most often represented variety sharing several features with the Persian counterparts. It is mostly depicted on sculptured coping, abacus of the pilasters of drum and dome slabs and the panels of animal friezes. Occasionally, they are also represented on the capitals of the shaft of the *dharmachakra* panel and the capitals of the freestanding monolithic pillars.

The lion with beak and wings are also represented in similar places except on the shaft of the *dharmachakra* panels, whereas, the animals with beak only find representation exclusively in the coping members and animal friezes.

The lions with horns and with human face form part of the decoration repertoire of the animal frieze only. The mane in such depictions is composed of curls and is clearly that of a conventional lion like those at Amarāvati and elsewhere. There are only two or three depictions of horned lion and it is interesting to note that a similar depiction at Amarāvati is a meek animal that imbibes the gentle spirit of the antelope and deer with its horns. One of these is even shown eating grass from the hands of a dwarf. The horned lions at Sanchi<sup>95</sup> on the other hand are ferocious, though bridled, and provided with wings and riders.<sup>96</sup> One of the unique representations of the site includes a ferocious horned lion being bridled and held by a man depicted on the abacus of a drum slab. The ferocious lion is snarling over its shoulders towards the person who is controlling it. A crudely fashioned human-faced lion is seen in the *bhavachakra* panel of the eastern *āyaka* in the extreme right of the lowest row of depictions.

Figures of animals having a beak like that of griffin are classified as terrestrial monsters when they lack wings.

### Elephant types (Fig.83)

There are two main kinds of elephantine representations in sculptural art. One is an ordinary type with wings and the other elephant with the hindquarter fashioned like a fish. In Buddhist and Brahmanical literature, Airāvata, the elephant that

# MAHĀ STŪPA

## DEPICTION OF ELEPHANTS

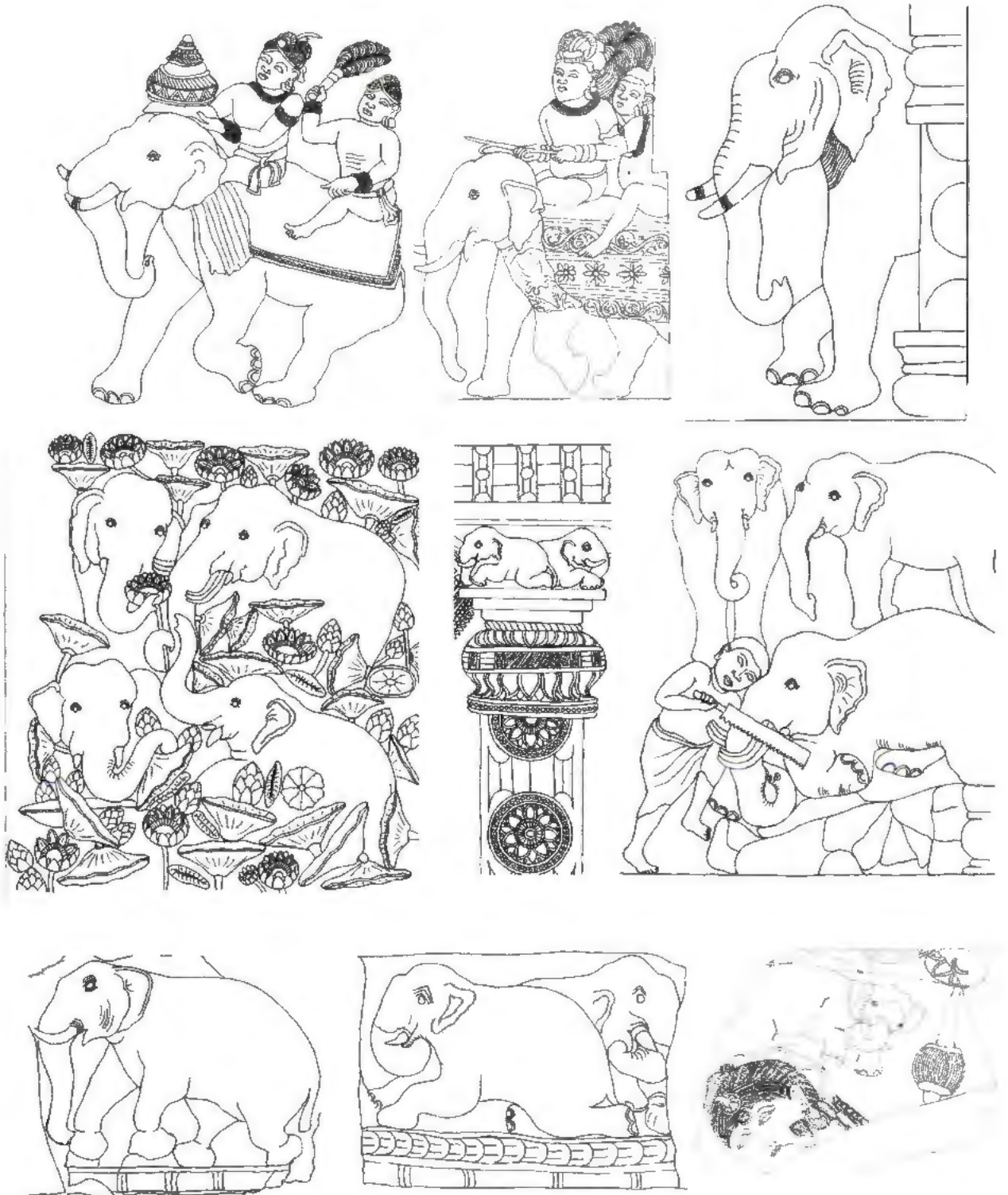


Fig. 83

moves on high roads of heaven, probably provided the idea of flying elephant with wings. The gem amongst the elephants, according to Buddhist texts, is the *upasatha* and mahārājas own and astride such an animal. In the *Kalingabodhi Jātaka* the prince rides such an elephant and travels in the sky. In the story of *Vēssantara* the precious rain yielding elephant is the offspring of a magnificent elephant that was accustomed to move in the sky. Though such winged elephants are reported from Amarāvati,<sup>97</sup> no such animals have been found depicted at Kanaganahalli. Elephant with its hind part fashioned like a fish has been depicted in the sculptures. There are several textual descriptions for the existence of such animals. A large river or ocean is described as full of fish and crocodiles and horses. The elephant with tail of a fish is normally termed as a *jalebha* or *mātanganakra*. Ananda Coomaraswamy refers to *Jalebhas*<sup>98</sup> calling them sea elephants and describing them as “a creature formed of the fore parts of an elephant with a body and tail of a fish.” Such elephant depictions are seen seated at the base of the pilaster containing a Nāgakkannikā in a drum slab having a sculpture of five hooded serpent king and another pilaster of the adjacent slab (to the north of Western *āyaka*).

A third category of elephant presented in *bhavachakra* panel peculiarly shows the animal with full body of elephant, face of a lion and with a single horn.

## Equine type

Like the mythical elephant, horses are also of two types-those with wings and those with fish tails. Winged horses are commonly seen in the Indian art of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC onwards. However, their depictions become lesser and lesser at Amarāvati and Jaggayyapeta. The winged horse probably derived from the Hindu concept of celestial horses, *Ucchaiśravas*, the divine horse of king of the Gods (Indra). But according to Buddhist concept the *Chakravarti Mahārājas* like Māndhātā are supposed to own a splendid winged horse as one of the jewels (*saptaratnas*) that confer the emperorhood on them. The *Valahassa Jātaka* and *Vidurapaṇḍita Jātaka* make a mention of winged horses soaring in the sky prompting the sculptors to depict them in sculptural art. Water horses *i.e.*, horses with fish tails, also appear to have merged along with the sea elephant and depicted in the same manner.

## Aquatic animals

Varieties of fish and crocodile are the parents of Indian *makara* type of animals. The earliest such aquatic animals could be seen at Bhārhut, Amarāvati etc. wherein these have the heads of crocodile, the body being that of the fish with elaborate scales, tails and fins. Occasionally, a part of legs is added and horns are introduced on the forehead above the eyes. At a later stage the *makara*



develops a snout somewhat like the curled trunk of an elephant and the lower lip reduces to insignificance.

During the first phase of Amarāvati, the *makara* is represented with the body partly composed of crocodile and partly composed of fish. The ear is finely shaped like fin with frilled edge. The scales and fills on the dorsal and frontal body are finely depicted. The later Amarāvati sculptures however, sometimes have horns like those of rams and stag, loosely drooping from the head and the ears are absent. The tips of the horns are fashioned like the fish tail. Occasionally, short legs resembling those of crocodiles also appear. The jaws of the crocodiles diminish in length, especially the lower jaw. The teeth are shown prominently in all the above styles.

At Kanaganahalli *stūpa* site, the depiction of the aquatic animals follows the same pattern and execution. In the early Amaravati school, the representation is restricted to the pilaster motif of the drum slabs and the *pushpagrāhiṇis*, full body of the crocodile with a small lower jaw, lengthy snout like upper jaw, at times fashioned like the trunk of the elephant with curls and short horns of a unicorn and body decorated with elaborately worked scales. It is depicted once at the base of the capital while at another it is depicted on the abacus.

In the *pushpagrāhiṇis* they are depicted in the lowest border below the railing

pattern in the narrow space. Though full body is depicted in a small scale with all other details of the anatomical features of the animal, the scales have not been depicted vividly probably due to lack of space. A minutely presented version of the animal could be seen in the crossbars of the railing pattern in the same *pushpagrāhiṇis*. At places, full body is shown with additional details. It is interesting to note that the *makaras* are also depicted artistically on the pedestals of seated Buddha images. Here two *makaras* are entwined at the face to form the central prong of the *triratna*, the curled and upraised tails of the two *makaras* on either side acting as the side prongs of *triratna* pattern. Such depictions are seen in the seated Buddha (PL CXXVII).

## Merman

Merman are a combination of half fish and half man which are a common decorative motif known the world over. In the Indian Buddhist context the earliest sculptural representations of merman belong to Sunga period from Bōdh Gayā.<sup>99</sup> Though generally it is half man-half fish variety, some at Bōdh Gayā have four legs of horses shown beneath their stomachs. The concept behind this composite creature appears to be the same as that of water-elephant, water-horse, etc. The lonely specimen from the site agrees with the general pattern of half fish and half men as found at Amarāvati.<sup>100</sup>

The specimen from Kanaganahalli *stūpa* depicts the upper half of the body of a man with wide open eyes and tightly combed hair with what looks like a simmers cap held by a buckle and ornate *kuṇḍalas* with hands held near the chest. He is looking back over the shoulders. Below the waist the body is fish-like with an artistic bend, the tail rests on the floor. The fins are also shown like wings and the scales are artistically delineated. There is a band of beaded decoration at the tail. It probably forms part of decoration on the abacus of a drum slab.

### True animals

In addition to a number of mythical animals a large number of true animals of both domesticated and wild variety have been represented in various contexts in the sculptural art of Kanaganahalli.

Lions and lionesses, elephants, camel, wild bear, bison, humped bull, animals of the deer family like stag, antelope, spotted deer and horses are some of the often represented animal varieties. These animal depictions could be seen in the coping members, pilasters of the drum slabs and dome slabs, railing pattern and the lower border of the *pushpagrāhiṇis* besides the animal friezes used as decorative elements. At these places the animals being the subject of carving maximum attention is given to capture the characteristic anatomical features, attractive stances appropriate to the sentiment being narrated and the majesty of the individual animal. In the drum and dome slabs these animals are invariably depicted in the abacus as addorsed animals. In the *pushpagrāhiṇis*, a variety of animals of small size are depicted in brisk movements.