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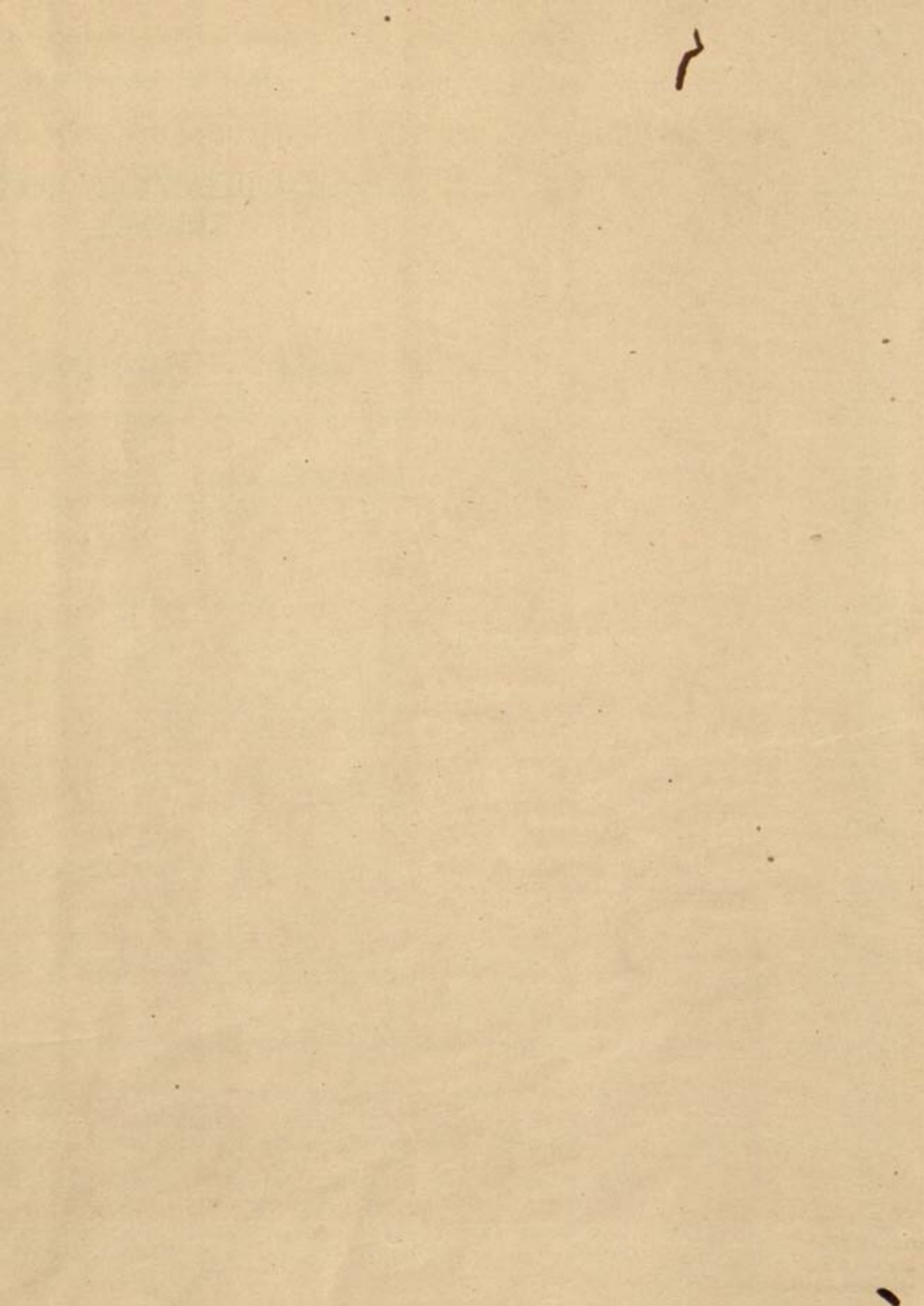
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# BHARHUT VEDIKĀ

By  
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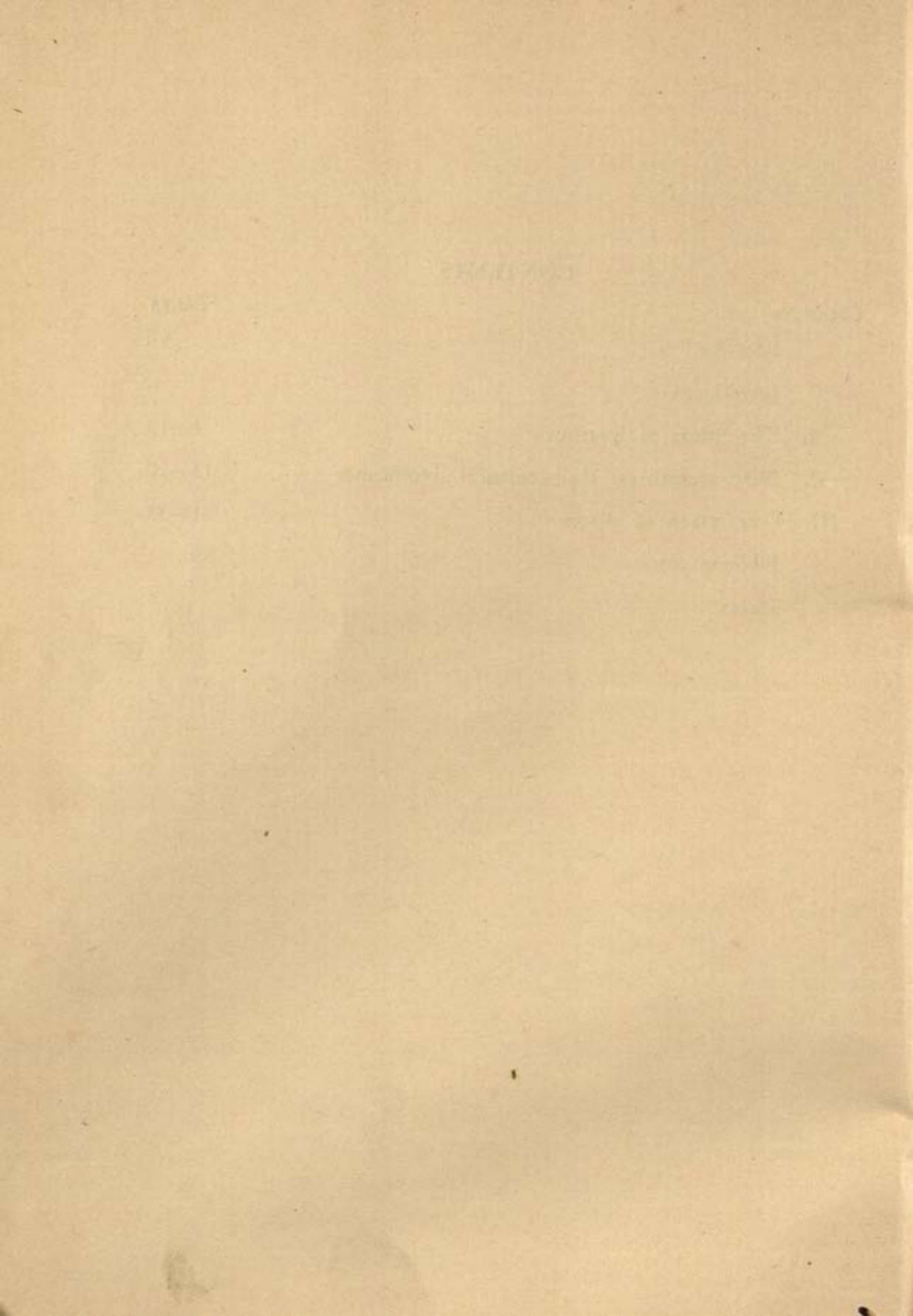
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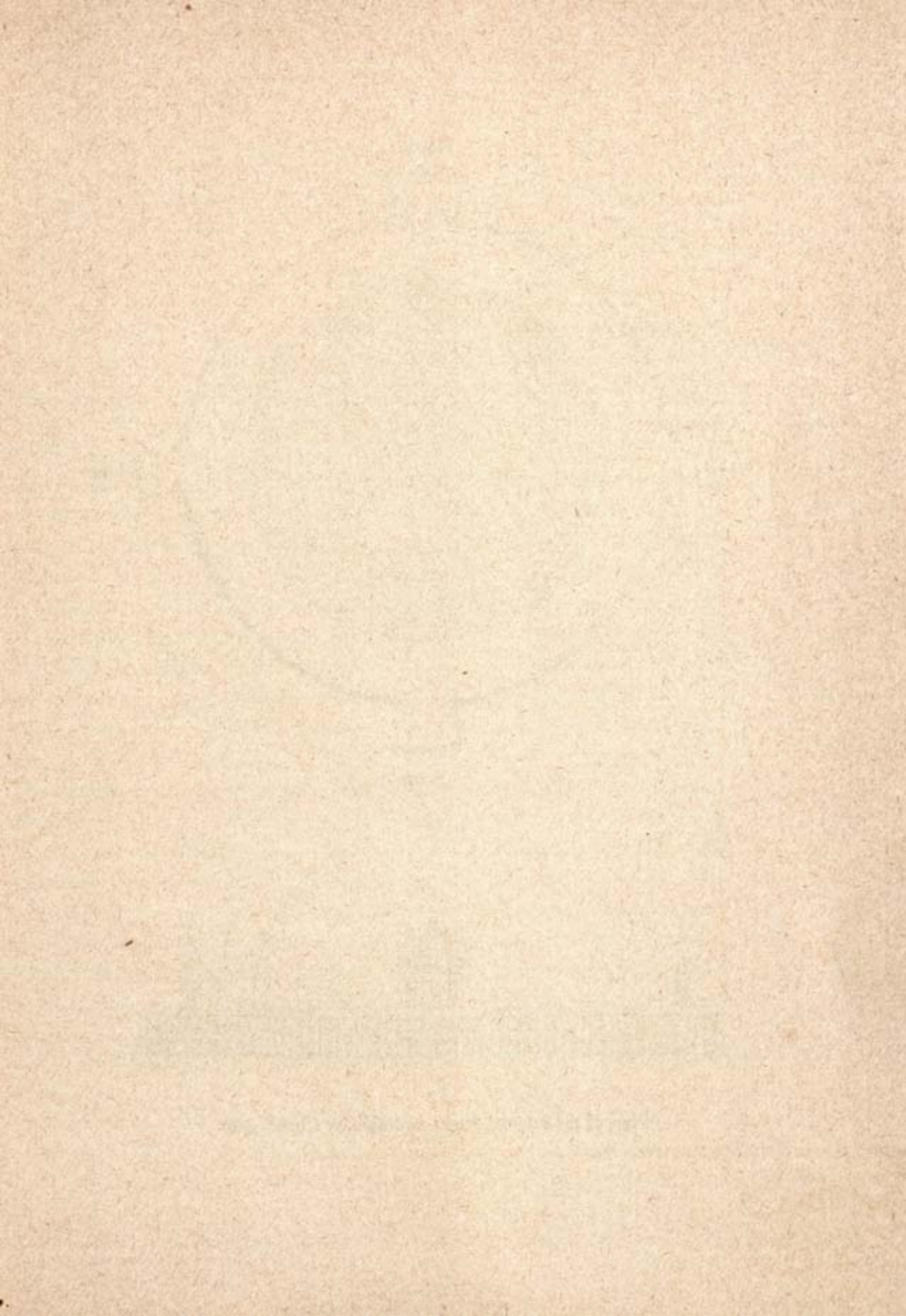
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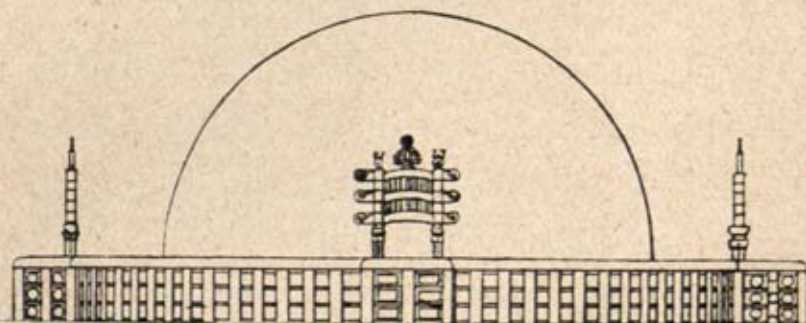
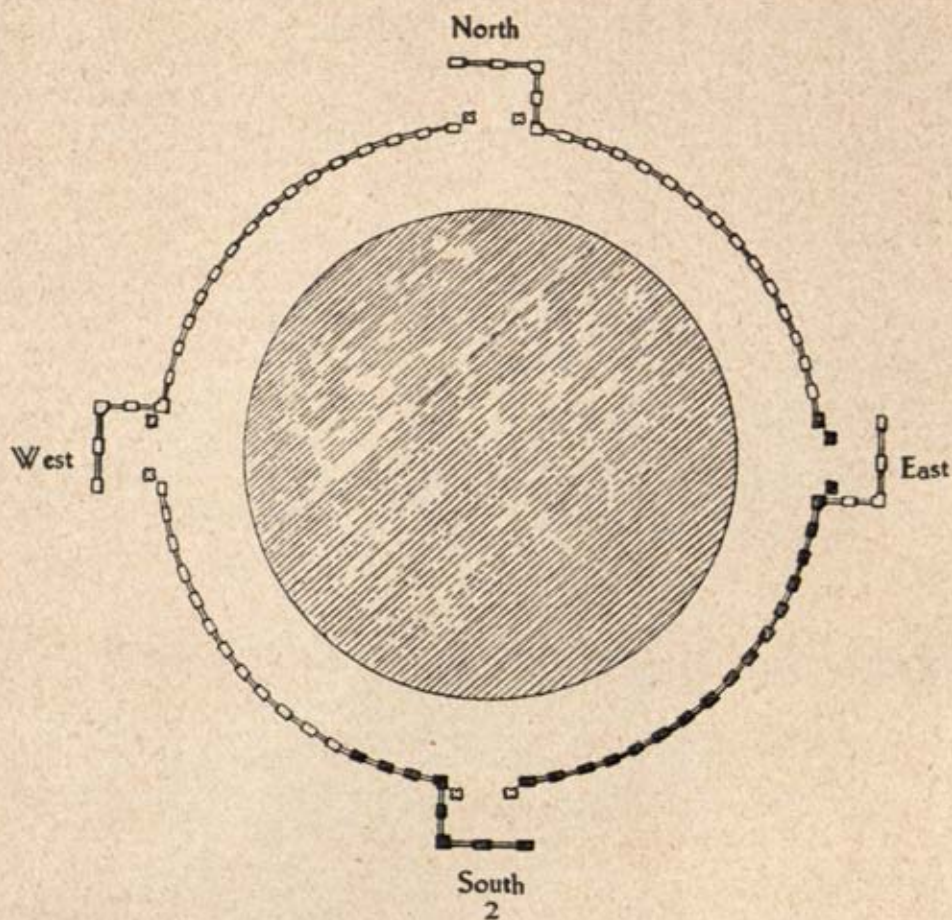
BHARHUT VEDIKĀ:

A CRITICAL STUDY OF BHARHUT SCULPTURES IN THE  
COLLECTION OF THE MUNICIPAL MUSEUM, ALLAHABAD









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Plan of the original Stupa as drawn by Cunningham

## FOREWORD

The Stūpas of Bharhut and Sāñchī serve as the two sparkling eyes of early Indian art through which we become acquainted with the rich world of ancient Indian life relating to the social, religious and artistic traditions of the people. As the two Epics, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata are to Indian literature, so are the Stūpas of Bharhut and Sāñchī veritable lithic documents of early Indian life. Our knowledge of ancient Indian gods and goddesses, religious cults, manners and customs, domestic and city architecture, fashions and fancies, is very much enhanced by these two immortal art monuments of central India.

Bharhut and Sāñchī virtually hold the key to the symbolical interpretation of Indian art. They moreover present a link between folk life and folk religion on the one hand and the higher way of the Buddha on the other. They present to our view the religious development of the Indian people in which vigorous folk traditions have their independent existence and are not mere handmaids of some superior religion. The monuments of Bharhut and Sāñchī symbolise that feeling and way of Indian life, which is nearest to the soil-robust, fresh, buoyant, simple and straightforward. It is an art that belongs to the countryside as well as to the cities without sophistication.

Sāñchī is 50 miles due north of Hoshangabad on the Narbadā on the route leading from Bharukachchha and Ujjayinī via Betwa to the north. It also picked up the route from the southern capital of Pratiṣṭhāna (modern Paṭhan) on the Godāvarī. Sāñchī with the cluster of other surrounding sites like Vidiśā (Bhilsa), Besnagar, was the nerve centre of eastern Malwa.



Bharhut in Baghelkhand also possesses a corresponding geographical importance. It is 200 miles north-east of Sāñchī and 100 miles in the same direction from Tripurī or Tewar on the Narbadā. It is the key-centre in the Sone Valley commanding the route leading from Māhishamatī on the Narbadā to Kauśāmbī on the Yamunā. Thus these two great stūpas seem to be part of a sub-continental architectural planning by the religious leaders of the Śuṅga period.

The remains of the Great Stūpa of Bharhut were first discovered by Cunningham in 1873 and fully exposed in 1874. The sculptures were bodily removed to Calcutta as a present to Government by the Rājā of Nāgod. Out of 80 pillars, Cunningham procured 49 and out of 40 pieces of coping stone, he found 16. It was left to the indefatigable Pt. Braj Mohan Vyas to recover the remaining relics of this Stūpa that had passed into private hands and were virtually lost to the World of archaeologists. With his characteristic zeal and tact he was able to retrieve for the Allahabad Museum 54 pieces of the Bharhut railing.

Shri Satish Chandra Kala, Curator of the Museum has presented his study of these new acquisitions in the pages of this Book aptly styled *Bharhut Vedikā*. His presentation of the material is clear, convincing and comparative, based on the first hand study of the originals with due regard to what has been written on this subject by earlier savants. The book distinctly advances our knowledge of the great stūpa of Bharhut. Its notable merit also consists in the profuse illustrations presenting in more than three dozen plates all that was of artistic or cultural value. Special attention may be invited to the acrobatic scene showing the formation of a human pyramid or Meru in four tiers, in which fourteen figures participate. The scene is a graphic representation of old Indian olympics, unique in the whole range of Indian art.

The Bharhut Stūpa has long been known for depicting scenes from the Jātakas and a new Jātaka labelled as Gaja sasa Jātaka has been



added to those already known. The sculptures also show many of the characteristic decorative motifs viz. lotus-creepers issuing at times from the mouth and at times from the navel of dwarfish yakshas, bell-borders (kīṅkiṇi-jāla), triratna, entwining garlands (dāma-yugala), lotus medallions (śatapatra-sahasr-patra-padma), Tree of life with repeated motif (Śrī Vṛiksha), battlement motif, lotus menders (padma-latā), wish-fulfilling creepers (kalpalatā) showing dresses and ornaments issuing from their stems and last but not the least female yakshī figures elaborately draped and ornamented with all their ravishing charms.

The Wish-fulfilling Tree which produced drinks, food, ornaments, robes, pretty maids and all good things was the *Kalpa-vṛiksha* which was the characteristic symbol of the Uttara-Kuru country, where Mithunas of eternal bloom and beauty lived in a state of ideal happiness. The sculptors at Bharhut were fond of illustrating these Elysean lands and so were the stone-carvers of Sāñchī on the Sāñchī Gateway. Indeed the Uttara-Kuru tradition was very strong and it is in fact in that context that the Epics and the Jātakas give a glowing description of the *Kalpa-vṛiksha*. The ideal Chakravartī sovereign Māndhātā was believed in folk-lore to have visited this land of Uttara-Kuru and so did Arjuna the great Pāṇḍava hero and the monkeys of King Sugrīva deputed in search of Sītā. For long long times the tradition survived uniting folk religious beliefs, literature and art in an integrated pattern.

An interpretation of all the art motifs both at Bharhut and Sāñchī would itself require a volume of epic dimensions. In this art we find something which is very near its perennial source being spurted out with inexhaustible variety and charm. The Yaksha motif and the louts motif, both are handled with mastery and sense of joy. Although repeated *ad infinitum*, there is hardly any real duplication. Like the ever-changing meters and rhythms of an epic bard singing in a hero-celebrating strain, the stone-carvers of Bharhut and Sāñchī give proof of an inexhaustible repertoire.



The *Rāyāpaseniya-sutta* speaks of the Lotus Railing (*Padmavara Veditā*) which surrounded the early Stūpas with all its richness of pillars, cross-bars, coping stones, pedestals, gateways, architraves, double animal (*baya-saṃghāḍa*, *gaja-saṃghāḍa*, etc.) capitals and symbols. In the Stūpas of Bharhut and Sāñchī we find a graphic illustration of these literary descriptions. These monumental Stūpas symbolised the soil sense and religious inspiration of a whole countryside (*subhiksha Janapada*) with its teeming population of youthful men and women whose hearts inspired with the thrill of a new religious experience responded to find expression through dance, drama, music and art. The stūpa was the nucleus of this life preserving forever a true record of the Indian janapadas, where the high art and the low, the rich and the poor, all men and women mingled with freedom in an eternal procession of joy and creative activity.

19. 3. 1951

VASUDEVA S. AGRAWALA, M.A., D.LITT.,  
*Superintendent,*  
*National Museum of India,*  
NEW DELHI

## INTRODUCTION

Two important treatises on the Stūpa of Bharhut, the one by Alexander Cunningham and the other by B. M. Barua are at present available to scholars. The former is the first comprehensive account of the monument reconstructed from the material then available, the latter an elaborate discussion as well as an interpretation of the subjects portrayed on the railing. The present essay evaluates some of the new finds and marks an advance in the study of the Bharhut railing.

On finishing this work in 1947, I made a request to Dr. Stella Kramrisch, Professor of Indian Art, Calcutta University to write a foreword to it. The learned savant agreeing congratulated me on the work and wanted to publish it under the auspices of the India Society of Oriental art. I agreed. In one of the letters addressed to me Dr. Kramrisch said "..... the problem of Bharhut art is indeed a basic one in the whole of Indian Sculpture. It is our duty and responsibility to present to the world the Bharhut sculptures entrusted to your care, with the same devotion and perfection of results as have gone to making and are shown in the sculptures themselves....." I have endeavoured to the best of my ability to realize the aim of this discerning art critic and if the work is found wanting in one respect or the other, the deficiency is to be ascribed to the inadequate resources at my disposal.

It is regretted that owing to insurmountable difficulties, the India Society of Oriental Art could not bring out the Book early. The manuscript remained with them for over two years and was returned to us only, on request, in September, 1950.



It is a pity that such an unusual delay should have occurred in placing this new Bharhut material before the scholars. Dr. Ananada Coomaraswamy (now dead) came to know of these finds as early as 1947, and had expressed a desire to include our pieces in his monograph on Bharhut. The late Dr. B. M. Barua learnt about them only in 1948 when the present manuscript reached his hands through Dr. Kramrisch. The early publication of new Bharhut material was, therefore, a desideratum for scholars.

I am deeply beholden to Dr. Kramrisch and the late Dr. Barua for kindly revising the manuscript and supplying many useful comments. I am also indebted to Sri Bishambhar Nath Pande, a scholar of repute, at present the Chairman of the Allahabad Municipal Board, for taking a keen interest in the publication of this monograph. But for his active interest it could not have been possible to bring it out as early as this.

I take the opportunity of expressing my sense of gratitude to Sri Sampurnanandji, Minister for Education, U.P., and his able Secretary Sri Anand Narain Sapru, I.C.S., for placing a generous grant at our disposal for publishing this book. I am also thankful to Dr. V. S. Agrawala, Superintendent, National Museum of India, New Delhi, for kindly writing a foreword to this monograph.

Scholars and Indologists all over the world will ever remain grateful to His Highness the Maharaja of Nagod and his competent Dewan, Sri Lal Bhagwendra Singh, for presenting the fifty-four pieces of Bharhut railing to the Allahabad Museum where they form the second largest collection of Bharhut sculptures in the World.

*Ram Navami, 1951.*

S. C. KALA.

1870





Part of the railing in *situ* at Bharhut (1873)

## CHAPTER I

### THE STŪPA OF BHARHUT

The remains of the Bharhut stūpa and its railing (*vedikā*) were discovered by Cunningham in 1873. The majority of the carved stone posts and beams had been by that time removed by the villagers in the neighbourhood, for ordinary construction work and only those sculptures that had remained buried could be collected besides a few stray pieces lying here and there. Cunningham, however, succeeded in excavating a whole quadrant of the buried railing (*vedikā*). His assistant Beglar continued the excavation work round the entire railing (*vedikā*) and recovered the famous Prasenjit pillar besides some more parts of the coping (*uṣṇīṣa*). By the end of 1874 the foundations of the entire railing (*vedikā*) had been exposed to view and a large number of architectural pieces discovered. The eastern gateway was removed to the Indian Museum, Calcutta in 1875. The stray pieces left at the site were later on transferred to Residency gardens at Satna (Madhya Pradesh); they were also transported to the Indian Museum in 1926.

Modern Bharhut lies six miles north-east of Unchera and nine miles south of Satna, a railway station on the main line of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, in Nāgod, in Madhya Pradesh. The history of the ancient city, the remains of which are found scattered within a radius of twelve miles is shrouded in mystery. Why such a magnificent stūpa was built at this particular spot remains unexplained. It is certainly not one of the eight stūpas where the corporeal relics of the Lord were originally enshrined. Nor there is a positive proof to show that Aśoka built a stūpa at the site to deposit the relics after the second distribution



supposed to be effected by him. The vanished city, originally stood at the end of the Mahiyar valley from where the highway connecting Bhilsā and Ujjain with Pāṭalīputra swerved towards the north for the halting station of Kauśāmbī. There are various inscriptions engraved on the railing (*vedikā*) adjuncts giving the titles of the various scenes depicted and the names of the donors who hailed from distant parts of the country such as Kauśāmbī (modern village of Kosam in district Allahabad), Vidiśā (Besnagar in Gwalior State), Pāṭalīputra (Patna in Behar), Karahakaṭa (modern Karhad in Satārā), Padolā (Pandaria in Bilāspur district of the Madhya Bhārat), Mathurā, Bhojkaṭa (situated in Behar) and Nāsika (Nāsika in Bombay). That the Bharhut stūpa was held in high veneration by the people all over India is evident from this list of place names.

Nothing definite is known about the date of the stūpa and the railing (*vedikā*) surrounding it. It is certain that the structure was not built all at one time. Additions were made from time to time according to the needs of the devotees and their resources. Cunningham held the view that the original brick stūpa was built during the time of Aśoka<sup>1</sup> but this claim has not been properly substantiated. The Prākṛita used in the inscriptions on the railing (*vedikā*) widely differs from the one used in the inscriptions of Aśoka.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Barua rightly points out that the Bharhut stūpa was constructed in three stages—the first one is covered by the pre-Śuṅga and the last two by the Śuṅga periods. It cannot, however, be claimed that it was built during the time of Aśoka. It may have been constructed during the reign of any of the Mauryan rulers. The railing (*vedikā*) appears to have been erected sometime about 125 B. C. and the gateways added later. The left pillar of the eastern gateway bears the following inscription:

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham—*The Stupa of Bharhut* (1879), p. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Majumdar—*A Guide to the Sculptures in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, Part II*, p. 14.

Suganaṃ rāje raño Gāgīputasa Visadevasa  
P (0) teṇa Gotiputasa Āgarajasa puteṇa  
Vachhiputeṇa Dhanabhūtinā Kāritāṃ toraṇaṃ  
Silākammaṃto ca upamaṇa (no)

(In the dominion of the Śuṅgas, the gateway has been caused to be made together with the stone carving by Vātsīputra Dhanabhūti, son of Gaupīputra Āgaraju, (and) grandson of King Gargiputra Viśvadeva).

This inscription clearly states that the gateways were set up by King Dhanabhūti, son of Āgaraju and grandson of Viśvadeva, in the dominion of the Śuṅgas. Barua points out that king Dhanabhūti, was the ruler of the Mathurā region but he is not definite whether the Bharhut region also fell within the Śuṅga territory. Both Bühler and Cunningham suggested 150 B. C. as the probable date of the gateways. It is however difficult to say that the entire inner railing (*vedikā*) was constructed during a particular period. The inscriptions simply state that the gateways were erected by Dhanabhūti in the dominion of the Śuṅgas, but in what period of the 112 years rule of the Śuṅga suzerainty the construction took place still remains to be decided. On stylistic grounds Barua found three stages in the construction of the stūpa. In his opinion the eastern gateway was erected in the third phase which mainly covered the Śuṅga period.<sup>3</sup> The School of Bharhut sculpture according to Marshall was connected with the indigenous School of Mathurā and it came to an end when the Śakas conquered the city in the first century B. C.<sup>4</sup>

When Cunningham visited the site of the stūpa he saw a large flat topped mound with the ruins of a Buddhist monastery, three pillars (*stambhas*) of a railing (*vedikā*), three cross-bars (*sūchīs*), a big coping slab (*uṣṇīṣa*) besides a single pillar which once supported the *torāṇa*

<sup>3</sup> Barua—*Barhut*, Part I, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> Marshall and Foucher—*Monuments of Sanchi*, Vol. I, pp. 105-106.



arch of a gateway. Subsequent excavations and collections from the neighbouring villages revealed the entire plan of the stūpa, which, when intact, must have been half the size of the stūpa of Sāñchī. The original structure, made of plain bricks, stood on a base of solid stone blocks. Cunningham was informed by some people that a small relic casket found inside the stūpa was presented to the Rājā of Nāgod, but it was then untraceable. The base of the stūpa was sixty seven feet and eighteen and half inches in diameter. The only surviving portion from this stūpa was found on the south-east side. It measured ten feet in length and six feet in height. In this portion Cunningham noticed rows of recesses evidently meant for keeping lights. These recesses were nearly thirteen and a half inches broad at the top and reduced to four and a half inches at the bottom. The total number of these in the entire monument was about one hundred twenty and there must have been six hundred lights in each of the rows made at the lower portion of the stūpa. Over the hemispherical dome there was probably a pavilion (*harmikā*) enclosed by a small railing (*vedikā*), which also supported the shaft of an umbrella now lost. Adjoining the structure there was a terrace which formed the second circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇā*) path. It was reached by a stairway of seven steps. The main circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇā*) path between the stūpa and the railing (*vedikā*) on the ground had a terraced floor measuring ten feet and four inches in width.

The stūpa was encircled by an inner and outer railing (*vedikā*), consisting of upright pillars (*stambhas*), Cross-bars (*sūchīs*) and coping stones (*uṣṇīṣa*). The railing (*vedikā*) had four gates at the cardinal points thus dividing it into four quadrants. There were eighty pillars (*stambhas*) measuring seven feet one inch in height and having a one foot and ten and a half inches surface for the reliefs. Out of the eighty pillars (*stambhas*) Cunningham was able to procure only forty-nine. There were also three cross-bars (*sūchīs*) placed vertically and needled



to each side of the upright pillars (*stambhas*). The height of the railing (*vedikā*) was just about nine feet.

Cunningham found some detached pieces of an outer railing (*vedikā*) as well. It was much smaller in size than the inner one. He collected two small pillars (*stambhas*), four pieces of the curved stone plinth, on which the pillars (*stambhas*) were fixed and no less than ten examples of the coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*). When intact the inner railing (*vedikā*) must have contained two hundred-forty small pillars (*stambhas*) and seven hundred-fifty cross-bars (*sūchīs*). The railing (*vedikā*) was only three feet three inches high. Barring a few isolated figures of the yakṣas the outer railing (*vedikā*) was plain. Out of the four entrances only the eastern gateway has been restored. Each of the pillars (*stambhas*) of the gateway was composed of four octagonal shafts. Each was 9 feet 7½ inches high and 1 foot 4½ inches thick. At the top of each of them was placed a bell-shaped capital and a lotus ornament above which again there was a plain abacus surmounted on one side by two-winged lions and two bulls on the other, seated back to back. The ornamental arch consisted of two pillars (*stambhas*) and three elaborately carved beams, placed at regular distances one above the other. The space between these carved beams was filled by small pillars (*stambhas*) with bell capitals on which were seated animals back to back and pillars (*stambhas*), against which are carved figures of yakṣas. The projecting ends of these beams form a scroll having the curled tail of a crocodile carved on it; its gaping mouth faces the vertical extension of the gateway pillars.

The square blocks between the volute ends and the curved centre of the architraves bear the representations of a stūpa on one side and shrine on the other. The top block bears a *triratna*, which is faced by a horse carved in the round and placed on the projecting end of the stone. Between these there are again two stone blocks, the surface of which was filled, it appears by three Persepolitan pilasters above a rail-



ing (*vedikā*) and two lotus flowers placed in the intervening spaces. The curved centre of the lower beam bears on its face a procession of two lions carrying flowers from each of the sides towards a Bodhi tree kept in the centre. Similarly the beam in the middle depicts 'the fictitious representations of the Buddha's enlightenment by a procession of four elephants, two on each side, bringing flower offerings towards the Bodhi tree and the throne.' On the very top of the middle *torāṇa* was carved in the round a *dharmacakra* over an honeysuckle ornament.<sup>5</sup> The entire gateway structure when complete was 22 feet high. This description refers to the inner side of the existing gate, but, as Dr. Waddel remarked, this was not the main entrance to the stūpa.<sup>6</sup>

The recovered rail pillars (*stambhas*) numbering forty-nine are of the same pattern as are found at Sāñchī and Bodhgayā. The corner pillars at the entrances are 1 foot 10½ inches square. The edges of all the upper pillars (*stambhas*) are slightly bevelled on each of the sides and bear male and female figurines generally standing on lotus flowers with folded hands. Some of the female figurines hold the branches of the trees, flowers and bunches of fruits. In a few examples we see a goose on a flower top and plucking it with lowered beak. The pillars have on either face a circular medallion in the middle and half medallion at the top and the bottom. These are filled with lotus flowers or floral compositions, elephants, winged horses, bulls, monkeys, crocodiles and peacocks, besides a large number of Jātaka scenes.

The carvings on the corner pillars (*stambhas*) are differently arranged. The pillars (*stambhas*) of the inner corners generally bear life size figures of *yakṣas*, *yakṣīs*, *devatās* and *nāgarājas*. The two outer corner pillars (*stambhas*) have their faces divided into three compartments by horizontal bands of railings. Each of these is filled

<sup>5</sup> Cunningham—*The Stūpa of Bharhut*, (1879), Pl. VII.

<sup>6</sup> *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1914, p. 138.

with Buddhist Jātakas and scenes of the visits of Ajātaśatru, Prasenajit and Brahmadeva to the lord and also the four main episodes of the *Vessantara Jātaka*. The relic procession in the right terminus pillar of the south-east quadrant donated by Chāpa Devī, wife of Revatīmitra of Vidiśā is of unique interest.

The rail bars measure 1 foot 11 $\frac{3}{4}$  inches in length and 1 foot 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches in breadth with a thickness of about 6 inches. There were two hundred twenty-eight pillars (*stambhas*) of which Cunningham could collect only eighty at the site and from other places. These contain on their faces circular discs containing human busts, various types of lotus flowers, animals and Jātaka scenes. The discs either have a border of lotus leaves, rows of winged lions, elephants carrying lotus in their trunks or sequence of serpent heads etc. The human busts inside certain medallions are richly attired. One medallion holds the Goddess Śrī, another stūpa and the third the 'tree of life'.

On account of the intercolumniation of the pillars (*stambhas*) the rail bars (*sūcbīs*) at the gateways had to be cut longer. This increase in size necessitated a change in the pattern of the medallion as well. It had, therefore, to be carved in an oblong shape of 25 inches length.<sup>7</sup>

At the top of the pillars (*stambhas*) were placed huge blocks of stones which served as copings (*uṣṇīṣa*). Each of them measures 7 feet in length, 1 foot 10 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches in height and had a thickness of 1 foot 8 inches. The blocks were joined with each other, by means of tenons inserted into the corresponding mortices, and to the tops by a stout tenon. Out of a total number of forty coping stones (*uṣṇīṣa*) only sixteen could be recovered by Cunningham. The entire coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) which was minutely and boldly carved on both the sides was three hundred-thirty feet long. At the end of the coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) and facing the spec-

<sup>7</sup> Cunningham—*The Stūpa of Bharbut*, (1879), p. 127.



tator as he stood at the gateway, was the figure of a bushy-tailed lion, seated on his haunches. In all, the remains of three damaged lions came to light and of these only one has a head surviving. Next to the large figure of the lion on both the sides, the central band of the continuous relief panel has a kneeling elephant, from whose mouth issues forth a long undulating stem which proceeds making a number of panels right upto the quadrant corner. The panels of the inner side contain lions, elephants and other animals, flowers, ornaments, cloth, besides the representations of several Jātaka stories and isolated scenes like the sufferings in the hell. The same arrangement is repeated on the outer face but the panels here are filled with full blown lotus flowers, with blossoming and tendrils. The upper band of the coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) is filled by stepped merlons alternating with blue lotuses in vertical position. The bottom border consists of a series of bells hanging through meshes tied to a bamboo pole.

The artists of Bharhut devoted enough space and care to the representations of the Buddha's life as he led it in his various previous existences before being reborn as Gautama. The clue to most of these is furnished by the labels attached to them. Some of the scenes without labels have also been identified. Most of the scenes differ in their details from the descriptions in the Pālī Jātakas and it is presumed that the Bharhut sculptors were following a different version than the one which has come to us to day.<sup>8</sup> Of the important Jātakas depicted we may mention the *Bhisa*, *Mahādeva*, *Laṭukika*, *Sujāta*, *Maṇikaṇṭha*, *Mahājanaka*, *Vessantara*, *Mahākapi*, *Vidhuraṇḍita* and the *Chaddantaka*. The actual scenes relating to the life of the blessed one are few in number and no where is the actual figure of the Buddha represented. Where his presence was needed, the artist placed symbols like the Bodhi tree, foot prints, head-dress, a *chakra*, throne, *triratna* and a *stūpa*. The convention of the times was that Buddha being superhuman should not

<sup>8</sup> Majumdar—*A Guide to the Sculptures in the Indian Museum*, Part I, p. 29.



be represented by the likeness of human appearance and there was 'felt an awe in doing so'.<sup>9</sup> The Brahma-jāla-sutta says that the Buddha in his own life time had put an injunction prohibiting his portrayal in human form.<sup>10</sup>

The five past Buddhas are also referred to symbolically in five medallions, each of which shows an empty throne and the particular tree under which each of them attained enlightenment. The scenes relating to the visits of Ajātaśatru and Prasenajit to Buddha, Queen Māyā's dream, of Saṅkissā ladder and the purchase of the Jetavana garden all very clearly depicted.

The life-size figures carved on the corner and the middle pillars (*stambhas*) are *yakṣa*, *yakṣīs devatās*, *nāgas*, all generally standing 'in permanent mood of shy approval' with folded hands. Most of the figurines have their names engraved on the respective pillars (*stambhas*). The female figurines usually stand on vehicles like a horse faced crocodile, or on the heads of three lion-heads. A *yakṣī* stands on the palms of a dwarfish figure. The Goddess *Śrī* and *Gaṅgā* standing on her vehicle crocodile are also portrayed. Some female figurines such as *Chandrā* and *Chulakokā* are seen plucking the blossoms of a tree. The procession carved on a corner pillar (*stambha*) wherein a royal personage riding an elephant and holding a relic casket and an attendant sitting on horse back holding a *Garuḍadhvajā* is interesting. The warrior god (*Dikpāla Sūya*), the figures like the one playing on a seven-stringed harp, and the lady holding a bunch of lotus flowers have not yet been definitely identified. The warrior god referred to above wears shoes and carries a vine leaf with a bunch of flowers or fruits.

A large number of animals, real and fabulous are displayed in the carvings of Bharhut railing (*vedikā*), lions and the elephants, bulls, rams, monkeys, deer, dogs, otters, *garuḍas*, peacocks, quails and crows.

<sup>9</sup> Kramrisch—*Indian Sculpture*, p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Gangoly—*Origin of Buddha Image*, p. 44.



The artists show an intimate knowledge of the type and habits of the various jungle animals and Fergusson rightly remarks that "some animals such as elephants, deer and monkeys are better represented than any sculpture known in any part of the World."<sup>11</sup>

Vegetation in its different aspects has also been widely portrayed in Bharhut. Trees, creepers, flowers and buds all have been carved with much sensitive feeling. "The lotus scroll moves with homely assurance through its self-created jungle, which in its turn, and with all the exuberance of vegetation, of which jewellery and apparel are also part, obey a rhythm of slow but ceaseless measure."<sup>12</sup> The most favourite flower was, however, the lotus which the craftsman could draw to perfection in every form of leaf and bud and blossom.<sup>13</sup> The vine creeper also rambles along some borders. On the pillars (*stambhas*) are carved grapes, mangoes, jackfruits and bananas.

The railing (*vedikā*) reliefs also show a multitude of figures of men, women, members of royalty, ascetics, bankers and traders, all engaged in their particular callings. They are attired and bejewelled according to their stations in life. Music and dancing were their favourite recreations. Musical instruments like the harp, drums, shell and cymbals occur in several scenes and there is the dance performance of the nymphs in the Prasenajit pillar. The intermixing of high class people with those of inferior social scale is specifically marked in the panels.

The artist of Bharhut occasionally took to depicting humorous scenes. Probably the ethics of the times, as Smith remarks. . . the rollicking humour and liberty of fancy, unchecked by rigid canons while alien to the transcendental philosophy and ideals of the Brahmins, are thoroughly in accordance with the spirit of Buddhism which, as a practical religion, makes human happiness its avowed object<sup>14</sup> . . . may

<sup>11</sup> Fergusson—*History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, Vol. I, p. 36.

<sup>12</sup> Kramrisch—*Indian Sculpture*, p. 27

<sup>13</sup> Marshall and Foucher—*The Monuments of Sāñchī*, Vol. I, p. 96.

<sup>14</sup> Smith—*History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, (1930), p. 31.



have contributed to this.

In one medallion four monkeys are employed in dragging along a captive elephant who is firmly secured by strong ropes so as to keep him under control. Another medallion shows the same group again but here the monkeys are seen sitting on the back of the elephant. In the third medallion a monkey is seen extracting the teeth of a stoutly built man by means of a forcep secured by a rope with the help of an elephant. The last scene shows a fight between men and the monkeys.<sup>15</sup>

In the Bharhut railing (*vedikā*) several animal figures and other motifs owe their origin to Western Asiatic influence. Fabulous animals like the winged-bulls, horses, lions and bulls having a human face and representations of honeysuckle and the bell shaped capitals, all indicate foreign contacts. Such motifs are also apparent in the antiquities found at Mohenjo Daro, Harappā and other ancient sites in India. India's contact with the Western World is of remote antiquity. Cultural intercourse during the course of centuries brought a number of alien elements in this country. They were fitfully utilized by Indian artists but they could not change the basic trends of Indian sculpture. There is a great force in the remark of Coomaraswamy that "India before the Mauryas was an integral part of an 'Ancient East' that extended from the Mediterranean to the Ganges valley"<sup>16</sup> and that both Asia and Europe derived its heritage from one common source.

The appeal of Bharhut art lies in its being vital and unsophisticated. Originating from the urgency of the humble village folk life, it presents a panoramic portrayal of the contemporary society. Against this crowded background, are displayed symbols and gods of Hindu pantheon. The gods such as *Sūrya*, *Lakṣmī*, *Indra* and *Agni* find a place along with the symbolic representations of the Buddha and other

<sup>15</sup> Cunningham—*The Stupa of Bharhut*, (1879), Pl. XXXIII.

<sup>16</sup> Coomaraswamy—*History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, pp. 13-14.



stones connected with his past life. The art is spontaneous and owes no subservience to any official school of art.

In the Bharhut railing (*vedikā*) we find the Indian sculptors attempt to replace wood by a more permanent material. He had the urge to give a more durable medium to the monument. Hence the technique has the characteristics of the transitional period.

Many features of primitive art are noticeable. The bodies of the various figurines are usually flattened and the legs drawn sideways. Elasticity of bodily limbs is wanting. The figurines are portrayed as silhouettes clearly detached from the background. There is overcrowding in certain scenes and a tendency to squeeze in as many figures as is possible within a small space. The figures generally remain static. Their actions and movements are not expressive. But certain figures carved on the balustrade of the eastern gateway are superior in execution. As there occur Kharosthī letters on them and as the facial expressions of the figurines bear alien features, Marshall thinks that some of the artists working at Bharhut hailed from North-West India.

The narration of stories in the railing (*vedikā*) is systematic. The figures lack the vigour and force of Aśokan court art. The forms are less supple and free than those depicted at Sāñchī, but they have their own naive and elemental freshness. On the contrary they attempt to picture the whole social nexus of the times and not only a part of the frame-work of society. Probably the art forms carry burden of Buddhism with its glorification of ethical morality and this—worldliness.

Nothing remains of the old Bharhut except scattered bricks and stones. Probably it remained the centre of a highly developed culture and men and women lived and died as they always do. Civilization developed and decayed. Mighty structures grew and fell and while mute stars and planets continued to witness birth and death, the spirit of art endured even though its manifestations could not escape the ravages of time and place.

## CHAPTER II

### NEW SCULPTURES: THEIR CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

Cunningham in his monumental work on the stūpa of Bharhut tried to reconstruct the whole of the railing (*vedikā*) and its various parts on the strength of the material at his disposal which was too inadequate to help in the drawing of a complete picture. In the course of his descriptions he frequently referred to the chance discovery in future of some of the missing pieces near the site of his excavations.<sup>1</sup> Cunningham's hope was not ill founded as six decades later Pt. Braj Mohan Vyas, the founder of the Allahabad Municipal Museum, succeeded in procuring as many as fifty-four pieces from Pataora and other villages situated near the modern village of Bharhut. In many cases the stones served as lintels while some were fixed in the plinths of the houses. Removal in such cases was not free from danger. This was specially the case with the pillar (*stambha*) showing an acrobatic scene (No. 1).<sup>\*</sup> This piece was fixed in the masonry of the plinth which supported a three storied old and heavy structure. The piece could be detached from the wall at a considerable risk and even then a part of it remained buried too deep below the wall to be extracted without bringing the whole structure down. Most of the newly discovered pieces had been utilized for building purposes and had suffered mutilation through chiselling and hewing necessary for their setting up in a building. They are either cut at the base or at the side. The pillars

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham—*The Stūpa of Bharhut*, (1879), pp. 11, 27.

<sup>\*</sup> Denotes the number of plate.



(*stambhas*) and coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stones in many cases are vertically cut into two separate pieces from the top. Pieces which are irregular in shape were broken during the course of hammering. Some parts of the railing (*vedikā*) reduced to rubble and probably, used in construction are lost for ever. None of the new pieces is intact. It is impossible at this stage to say whether some of these mutilated fragments are out of a single whole or are fragments of different single pieces damaged for one reason or the other. At any rate, it is not easy to restore them.

There are in all fifty-four pieces from the Bharhut railing (*vedikā*) in the Allahabad Municipal Museum. They include thirty-two pillars, (*stambhas*), one corner pillar (*stambha*) with a front and side face, three cross-bars (*sūchīs*), fourteen coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stones, one fragment of a capital, two other blocks and a stairway.

Cunningham pointed out that the total length of the coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stones was three-hundred and thirty feet. It had forty stone blocks, of which he could collect only sixteen. The newly discovered fourteen coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) fragments if placed vertically would measure twenty-eight feet two inches in length. Again the entire original railing (*vedikā*) contained two hundred and twenty-eight cross-bars (*sūchīs*). Three more cross-bars (*sūchīs*) have now been added to the list of Cunningham. One of these bears a human bust inside a medallion on each of its sides (Nos. 19 & 20). Cunningham traced forty-nine upright pillars (*stambhas*) out of a total number of eighty which originally adorned the railing (*vedikā*). The newly discovered lot contains fragments of thirty-two more pillars (*stambhas*). The upright pillar (*stambha*) (No. 2a & b) offers entirely new scheme of decoration. Nothing can be said definitely about their imposition in the railing (*vedikā*). It may be that they were kept at the corner ends or near the gateways. Pillars (*stambhas*) representing the *Muchalindanāga* (No. 26), acrobatic scene (No. 1), *Gaja Sasa Jātaka* (No. 7) and many



other decorative items on the various components are not noticeable in the previously discovered pieces of Bharhut. No other acrobatic scene is known in early Indian Sculpture and the representation of the *Gaja Sasa Jātaka* offers some interesting features.

Besides the *Muchalinda Jātaka* the representations of *nāgas* occur on two other coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stones (No. 21). Cunningham found *nāga* scenes only on five pieces but was convinced that there was one more *nāga* sculpture as he found a fragment of a bas relief belonging to the corner pillar with the title *Nāgarāja*.<sup>2</sup> The two *nāga* subjects found on the panels of the coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stones do not bear any engraved titles and it is difficult to identify them. Their sole importance for the present moment lies in the fact that they add two more *nāga* scenes to the list of Cunningham.

Amongst the new sculptures there is a mutilated stone block resembling a capital (No. 37a & b) and this is the solitary example of its kind from this monument. The carvings, though much damaged, can still be identified on both of its sides. The top portion of the stone is roughly chiselled and contains long leaves and foliage arranged horizontally. In the lower butted section, on one side is seen a man riding on a lion in a similar fashion as depicted on a Mathurā slab in the Indian Museum Calcutta.<sup>3</sup> On the other side there were two winged lions seated back to back. A much injured figure of a rider is seen above the back of the right hand side lion. This representation in some aspects recalls the front of the false capitals above the pillars of the Sāñchī gateways having riders on the back of the winged lions and bulls seated back to back.<sup>4</sup> As there is a horizontal cut on one side it may be presumed that this stone was fitted with some architectural slab. The floral decorations

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham—*The Stupa of Bharhut*, (1879), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Smith—*History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, (1930), p. 2, XIX E.

<sup>4</sup> Marshall and Foucher—*The Monuments of Sāñchī*, Vol. III, P. XCVII, XCVIII and CIII.



above the backs of the animals appear to be on the pattern of the honey-suckle noticeable on the capitals of the eastern gateway of the Bharhut railing (*vedikā*).<sup>5</sup>

The corner pillar (*stambha*) (No. 2, 3-6) depicting the four scenes of the *Vessantara Jātaka* is a very important piece. It has carving on the front and on one side. There is no trace of mortices in the pillar (*stambha*). It appears to be an incomplete piece.

In the Indian Museum Calcutta there is a sculpture (No. 11, I. C.) where a royal personage is pictured donating a royal elephant to an ascetic holding a staff in his left hand. Both Foucher and Chanda identified it as one of the episodes of *Vessantara Jātaka*. But doubt have been expressed about the correct identity of the scene. Dr. Barua says that the subject may have been taken from the *Kurudhamma Jātaka*.<sup>6</sup>

The new pillar (*stambha*) from Bharhut is therefore the first example of its kind which depicts the *Vessantara Jātaka*. The most significant point worth observation in it is the presence of certain Western Asiatic features on the back side of the Brahmins, specially in their heads. They are reminiscent of similar features of the Assyrian and Babylonian reliefs.

There is a half medallion containing the bust of female on a pillar (*stambha*) (No. 22). On both of her cheeks there are indicated tatoo marks. On the right cheek there is a moon symbol and above it a few leaves while on the left there appears to be a lotus flower. Cunningham also prepared a few drawings of the tatoo marks visible on the persons of the figurines carved on the rail pillars (*stambhas*).<sup>7</sup> But the moon symbol along with leaves, which appears on the cheek of the recently discovered figurine is a novel tatoo scheme not noticeable in the faces examined by Cunningham.

<sup>5</sup> Barua—*Barhut Book*, III. Pl. 13a.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> Cunningham—*The Stupa of Bharhut*, (1879), Pl. XI.

The sheltering of the footprints of Buddha by *nāga Muchalinda* on an upright pillar (*stambha*) (No. 26) is remarkable. The same subject appears at Sāñchī, Nāgarjunīkoṇḍa, Amarāvātī and in some later sculptures found at Sārṇāth and Bodhgayā. Buddhist literature records that after attaining enlightenment the blessed one rested for a week under the shade of a banyan tree and the period following it near the *Muchalinda* lake. Both these scenes have been combined at Bharhut, Sāñchī and Amarāvātī. At Sāñchī the dragon chief *Muchalinda* appears in human form with his queens.<sup>8</sup> At Amarāvātī he appears in half snake and half human form and adoring the Buddha in the symbolic form of foot prints.<sup>9</sup> The new pillar (*stambha*) represents the *nāga* in animal form under a banyan tree and without any attendants. The representation bears testimony to the development in the second century B. C. of a legendary life of the Buddha resembling in details similar stories described in *Jātaka Nidāna kathā*, the *Lalitā vistara* and other works.

The upper part of a pillar (*stambha*) showing a lotus plant with buds and flowers issuing from a vase (*puṣpa--kumbha*) (No. 13 is practically of the same pattern as illustrated by Cunningham.<sup>10</sup> But there are some departures in the new sculpture; above the semi-circular panel containing the vase we find a border of lotus buds and half-blown flowers. In the centre a pair of geese facing each other hold in their beaks a fruit and a half-blown flower respectively.

The fragmentary panel (No. 12) on a pillar (*stambha*) showing the *Sasa Jātaka* is the earliest representation of this Jātaka in the whole range of Indian art. The scene was pictured inside a circular panel. Another unique example in the new lot is the top portion of a pillar (*stambha*) (No. 28a & b). On one side of the stone there is a semi-circular panel containing a crocodile with the forequarters of a lion. The

<sup>8</sup> Marshall and Foucher—*The Monuments of Sāñchī*, Vol. II, Pl. XIX c.

<sup>9</sup> Shivaramamurti—*Amarāvātī Sculptures*, Pl. LVII, Fig. 1.

<sup>10</sup> Cunningham—*The Stupa of Bharhut*, (1879), Pl. XXXVI, Fig. 1.



portion of the panel depicting the lower extremities of the animal's body is unfortunately lost. The lion has a well arranged mane and a wide open mouth. This clearly indicates Graeco-Persian influence. The only other known representation of this animal occurs on the panel of a pillar (*stambha*) of the Sāñchī railing.<sup>11</sup>

There is one more interesting pillar (*stambha*) in the Allahabad Museum (No. 27). It has a half medallion at the top and a full in the middle. The latter contains the representation of *triratna* composed of jewellery and two crocodiles. Both the animals with their upraised tails touch each other's mouth from the opposite directions. They also rest on a *chakra* (ornament) placed on a long necklace. The *triratna* composed by these items has a blue lotus in the centre. Such a unique *triratna* is unknown to early Buddhist art. It reflects the creative originality of the Bharhut sculptor. Such motifs also lend support to the theory of Grünwedel that the reliefs of Bharhut railing (*vedikā*) were influenced in a large measure by the art of the contemporary jewellers.<sup>12</sup>

There is the repetition of certain scenes as well at Bharhut. The *Vessantara Jātaka* was already noticed by Cunningham. The eminent scholar could not find out the actual stone bearing in relief the *Haṃsa Jātaka* though he reproduced a line drawing of the same in his Book on the subject. The actual stone piece containing the *Jātaka* has now been traced out and is being illustrated here on plate No. 35. The *Vessantara Jātaka* depicted on the new pillars (*stambhas*) (No. 2) is also more elaborate than the one noticed by Cunningham.

The scene relating to the transportation of relics was seen by Cunningham on a corner pillar (*stambha*) of the eastern gateway and also on a fragmentary coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stone. The same subject has been repeated in another slab acquired for the Allahabad Museum. In the

<sup>11</sup> Marshall and Foucher—*The Monuments of Sāñchī*, Vol. III, Pl. LXXIX-256, South face.

<sup>12</sup> Grünwedel—*Buddhist Art in India*, revised by Burgees, (1901), pp. 30-31.



corner pillar (*stambha*) of the eastern gateway one of the standard bearers is a female riding on a horse. The man sitting on the back of the elephant holds the relic casket. In the new coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) fragment (No. 17) a male attendant is seen driving the elephant while the relic casket is held up by another person sitting a little apart from the driver on the back of the same animal.

The Allahabad Museum possesses a pillar (*stambha*) containing the figure of an yakṣī (No. 15). The pillar is cut from both the sides. There is a branch of a śāla tree over her embroidered headcover and it may be presumed that she was holding the branch of a tree with one of her hands. Unquestionably this yakṣī belongs to the Sirimā *devatā* type. Dr. Barua anticipated four such divinities in the scheme of Bharhut outer railing (*vedikā*).<sup>13</sup> According to the *Lalitā vistara* Versions of the *Atanaliḡa Sutta* there are four divinities- Śrīmatī Lakṣmīmatī, Yaśprāpta and Yaśodharā, all of whom are relegated to the southern quarter. It is possible that images of all these four type of divinities were set up at the four quadrants. If the yakṣī on the Allahabad Museum pillar (*stambha*) is accepted as of the Sirimā *devatā* then one more type has been added to the list published by Barua.

There was one more pillar (*stambha*) containing a Yakṣī in the Allahabad Museum but it has been presented to the Bhārat Kalā Bhawan, Banāras. It has been restored now but the original piece is being illustrated here (No. 16). The face of the Yakṣī is chopped off and other parts of her body badly damaged. The anklets were made of the usual flexible spiral coils piled one upon the other but she also wore a *kikiṇī* of small suspended bells. An anklet of this type was also noticed by Cunningham.<sup>14</sup> While in movement the tinkling sound of these bells must have produced exquisite rhythmical notes. One special feature of this Yakṣī is the suppleness of her bodily limbs. It is slim and

<sup>13</sup> Barua—*Barhut*, III, p. 56.

<sup>14</sup> Cunningham—*The Stupa of Bharhut*, (1879), Pl. L, Fig. 4.



graceful and certainly one of the most subtle examples of Bharhut art.

One of the notable finds in the present lot is a solid stone slab containing four steps each measuring two feet ten inches in length and ten inches in width. It is however difficult to say at what place this stairway was originally set up.

In the foregoing account I have tried to assess the value of the Bharhut sculptures in the Allahabad Municipal Museum. These fifty four pieces have brought forward some very interesting features of the Bharhut railing (*vedikā*). New themes and decorative patterns have been brought to notice and evidence produced relating to some subjects believed to have been depicted on the railing (*vedikā*) but not available to the scholars working on the monument of Bharhut. Besides, many valuable links have been added to the rail-chain constructed by Cunningham on the strength of the material available to him during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

It is most unfortunate that ruthless vandalism should have caused such a stupendous damage to this beautiful symbol of a great faith which at the same time presented a virile and indigenous tradition of Indian plastic art.

### CHAPTER III

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE SCULPTURES

\*S/1 Fragment ( $8\frac{1}{2}$  inches  $\times$  6 inches), (No. 20°) of a lotus medallion showing the right side of a human bust. The left hand was turned towards the right and held some object.

S/2 Semi-circular fragment ( $6\frac{1}{2} \times 6$  inches) of a medallion (No. 30) showing in high relief the head of a horse.

S/3 Top portion (1 foot 10 inches  $\times$  1 foot  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches), (No. 14) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing the upper border containing a vine creeper. Below it is a semi-circular panel in which there is a lotus plant with buds and leaves and a half-blown flower rising in the middle. A goose from either side approaches this flower. Lower portion of the panel is injured.

S/4 Top portion (1 foot  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches  $\times$  1 foot  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches), (No. 13) of a pillar (*stambha*). In the upper border a pair of geese stands face to face. One of them holds the bud of a flower and the other a fruit. In the semi-circular panel below there is a lotus plant, the bulbous roots of which issue from an ornamented pot. With minor variations the same subject occurs on another medallion at Bharhut.<sup>1</sup>

S/5 Railing pillar (*vedikā stambha*), (4 feet 8 inches  $\times$  10 inches) bearing upper and middle panels on both the sides. The upper panel shows a half lotus encircled by a border of half rosettes alternated by blue lotuses. The middle medallion contained a full blown lotus inside

\* S/1-53 denote the catalogue numbers of the Allahabad Museum.

° These denote the number of plates.

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham—*The Stupa of Bharhut*, (1879), Pl. XXII 25/25.



the border of long curved leaves the top ends of which overlap one other. There is an inscription in the pillar (*stambha*) which reads as:—

*Girino Bhānukasa Bhātu* . . . . .

(Donation made by) the brother of *Bhānuka* of Giri.

At the top of the obverse there is a half lotus flower placed inside the border of vases issuing sideways from their mouth half-blown lotuses and buds. The pillar (*stambha*) is cut on both the sides.

S/6 Fragment (1 foot 9 inches×1 foot) of a capital, (No. 37a & b) having two slightly raised sections at the lower extremities on both the sides. On one face are seen two winged-lions seated back to back. The body of the man seated on the animal facing the right is damaged. On the other face there is seen the neck and face of a broad-eyed lion and a man riding on its back. The top part of the capital is roughly chiselled but there are traces of carved foliage resembling the honeysuckle on it. On the right side there is a horizontal cut evidently meant for inserting some architectural adjunct. At the base there is a mortice for fixing the tenon.

S/7 Lower portion (2 feet 9 inches×1 foot 10 inches), (No. 33) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing a half lotus. On each of its sides emerge the stalk with buds turned in different directions.

S/8 Fragment (2 feet 4 inches×2 feet), (No. 32) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing on both of its faces lotus creepers with stalks and shrubs kept inside a border made by palmettes emerging from small rosettes. Half portion much injured on one side.

S/9 Top (1 foot 7 inches×11½ inches), (No. 28a & b) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing on one side a half medallion containing a crocodile having the forepart of a lion. The animal has a wide open mouth and a well arranged mane. Above, there is a border of overlapping lotus rosettes flanked by two rows of leaves. On the reverse there is a lotus creeper above which runs a vine. The vine creeper is noticeable in one

more example at Bharhut.<sup>2</sup> On the top of the stone there is a depression.

S/10 Middle part (1 foot 10 inches×1 foot) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing damaged lotus flowers on each side.

S/11 Fragment (1 foot 10 inches×2 inches) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*). At its top there was the usual border of stepped merlons alternated with blue lotuses. Below are seen two damaged lotus creepers. The ornamentation on the other side is chopped off.

S/12 Fragment (1 foot 1 inch×1 foot 8½ inches) of a coping (*uṣṇīṣa*). At its top there was the usual border of stepped merlons alternating with blue lotuses. Below it there is one complete and two half lotus flowers. The bottom border consists of a row of bells hanging from meshes stuck to a bamboo pole. The back part of the stone is chopped off.

S/13 Fragment (1 foot 1 inch×1 foot 1 inch), (No. 25a & b) of the upper part of a pillar (*stambha*) with carvings on both the sides. On one side is carved a border composed of long petaled lotuses forming rectangles. Below it there is a half lotus. The leaves forming its outer border are turned in at the points. On the top of other face there is a border of palmettes having leaves spread sideways. Below it is carved a *śrīvatsa* (broken) and a half lotus issuing from it on the right side.

S/14 Fragment (1 foot 7 inches×1 foot 10 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing the top portion containing a half lotus. The flower has two rows of petals.

S/15 Fragment (1 foot 7 inches×1 foot inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) having on both of its sides lotus flowers. The pericap of the flower is unusually high.

S/16 Fragment (2 feet 11 inches×2 feet 3 inches) showing a half lotus flower at the bottom. The pillar (*stambha*) is cut off on each side. On the right bevelled edge is a part of lotus flower.

<sup>2</sup> Barua—*Barhut*, Part I, p. 63.



S/17 Cross-bar (*sūchī*) (2 feet 2 inches×1 foot 5 inches) showing lotus flowers on both the sides. The flower on the front face has two rows of petals, the outer one having pointed ones at the top.

S/18 Cross-bar (*sūchī*) (1 foot 11 inches×1 foot 11 inches) (No. 31) showing embossed lotus flowers treated differently on both the faces. On the front face the lotus has two rows of broad leaves with pointed tops. On the pericap a small flower is carved in low relief. The other side has a similar flower but instead of the central rays we find around the pericaps a series of superimposed buds running in a circle. Both the lotuses are greatly damaged.

S/19 Fragment (1 foot 4 inches×1 foot) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing part of a lotus. The petals of the flower alternate with blue lotuses and they are also encased in a border made by a series of overlapping leaves. On the right bevelled side there is carved a lotus on which are seen the legs of a figure.

S/20 Fragment (2 feet 3 inches×11 inches) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*) which has become difficult to identify because of its being weather-worn. Inside the panel made by an undulating creeper is an elaborate scene. On the left there is seen a railing fixed on some long posts. There are three figures standing behind one another in the centre. In front of this group there is a tree. An article is coiled round its trunk. It may be either a rope, a snake or an undulating creeper. On the right of the tree is seen the figure of a man in a helpless posture and holding a creeper or similar object in one of his hands.

S/21 Fragment (1 foot×11 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing a border of palmettes.

S/22 Fragment (1 foot×11 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing at the top a border of half lotus rosettes, with pointed, curved and round petals and a row of beads. Below it there is carved a half lotus having two rows of petals.

S/23 Fragment (9½ inches×1 foot 3 inches) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*) showing at the top a border of stepped merlons alternating with blue lotuses. In the middle panel made by an undulating creeper is first a hanging bunch of mango fruits. In the following panel there is a man riding on a horse and holding the reins in his hands. The lower border of hanging bells below is cut off, only the meshes being visible.

S/24 Fragment (8 feet 10 inches×1 foot), (No. 12) of a pillar (*stambha*) depicting inside a panel the story of the *Sasa Jātaka*. On the right side of the panel are two baskets filled with mango fruits and also a spouted jar (*kamaṇḍalu*). In the centre is a fire altar facing which is seen crouching an animal resembling a hare. Behind it is seated an otter, a lizard and one more animal, the head and back of which are cut off. In front of the headless animal is a *kamaṇḍalu*. Below the fire altar is a tank in which two fishes are seen floating. In the bevelled edges a lotus and a bud on a wavy stalk descend from the circular panel.

The scene depicted in the panel refers to *Sasa Jātaka*. The story goes that once when King Brahama Datta was reigning in Banāras the Bodhisattva as a young hare lived in a forest. The hare had three friends, a jackal, an otter and a monkey. The hare preached wise counsels to his friends by saying that alms should be given when demanded and the sacred law and the holidays should be strictly observed. With this message all the three friends set out for the wood where the otter collected fish, the monkey gathered mango fruits and the jackal took possession of a lizard and a pot of curd from the house of a watchman. The hare failed to collect any article. Sakka at this moment appeared on the scene and asked for food from the hare. The animal had nothing to offer and decided to burn his own body and offer the roasted flesh to Sakka. The hare promptly jumped into a burning fire but the



flame could not consume his body.<sup>3</sup> In the panel the hare is getting ready to jump into the fire altar. His three companions are also present with their respective collections. The Jātaka emphasizes the practice of *dānapārmīta*.<sup>4</sup>

This story is also depicted on one of the Stūpas of Nāgarjunikonda where the hare is actually seen jumping into the fire<sup>5</sup> and on a stone slab of Amarāvati now preserved in the British Museum.<sup>6</sup>

S/25 Pillar (*stambha*) (5 feet 6 inches  $\times$  8½ inches), (No. 15) showing a standing figure of a Yaksī. Face, head and breasts injured. She wears a long dhoti and a seven stringed girdle; a flat band is tied in a knot in front, its ends pendent. A sacred thread (*upavīta*) of rectangular units wrapped by thin sheets of gold or silver passes over the left shoulder, across the belly and then turns towards the right side of the waist. A round jackfruit shaped ornament hangs from the chain to the right of the naval. The figure wears a six stringed necklace, heavy earrings, coiled anklets, armlets and a flower shaped ornament on the forehead. A few ringlets of hair are visible on each side of her cheeks. Over the forehead there is a Śāla flowered fillet of muslin falling cross-wise and a bunch of leaves on the left side. These leaves might be of the branch which the woman was holding. A deep hole has been made over the head. The legs and hands of the figure and the left side of the pillar is cut off. At the top of the pillar is a half lotus.

S/26 Fragment (1 foot 9 inches  $\times$  11½ inches), (No. 18) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*). On one side runs the usual lotus creeper and on the other an undulating creeper. In the first panel on the front face of the coping is a bunch of jackfruits. Following it there is a tree under which two deers, one behind the other, are seen grazing. Above

<sup>3</sup> Francis and Thomas—*Jātaka Tales*, pp. 223-229.

<sup>4</sup> *Dictionary of Pali Proper names*, p. 1079.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 24, Pl. XVIII.

<sup>6</sup> Fergusson—*Tree and Serpant Worship*, Pl. LXXXII, Fig. 2.

the animals is a banyan like tree. In its foliage stands a man wearing a dhoti. Below there is the row of hanging bells. The incomplete scene cannot be correctly identified. It may be the representation of either the *Kaṇḍina* or *Kuruṅga Jātaka*.

S/27 Pillar (*stambha*) (3 feet 10 inches  $\times$  11½ inches), (No. 27) showing a half medallion at the top and the base. The top border consists of usual stepped merlons alternating with blue lotuses. Below it there is a half lotus the leaves of which are half open. A border containing a flat chain or coiled band encircles the lotus. The bottom panel shows an interesting decorative pattern. At the base there is a girdle of several strings composed of beads of different shapes. Above it, in the centre is a round ornament inside which there is a lotus flower. This round ornament supports two crocodiles facing each other and having raised tails. With their open mouths they appear to be holding a common object kept in the middle. The ornaments and the crocodiles form a *triratna*. On the bevelled sides stood female figures holding either a branch of a tree or a bunch of fruits but only partial traces of these remain now.

S/28 Coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*) (5 feet 4 inches  $\times$  1 foot 3 inches) (No. 34) bearing on its face a creeper of lotus flowers with scrolls. The upper border is completely cut away. In the lower border is the usual row of hanging bells. There are in all seven complete lotus flowers. Nothing remains on the reverse side.

S/29 Fragment (2 feet 10 inches  $\times$  1 foot), (No. 21) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*). The top portion is greatly damaged. In the middle are panels made by an undulating creeper. In the first panel beginning from the left are three lotus leaves. Then follows another having a beaded necklace, hanging from above. A stalk bearing a forehead ornament, an earring and a coiled anklet are stuck to it. In the last panel, which is damaged, is seen a *nāga* with a hood containing four heads. Before the *nāga* are visible the feet of a man walking towards



the right. There are also traces of the feet of another man walking towards the left. Below, there is the usual border of hanging bells.

S/30 Fragment (1 foot  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches  $\times$  1 foot  $3\frac{1}{2}$  inches), of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*). In the half cut portion on the left is a piece of cloth hanging from the top. In the panel following it, is a *nāga* only one hood of which now remains. Above his head is a tree. Below is the usual border of hanging bells. The piece is cut slantingly.

S/31 Fragment (2 feet 1 inch  $\times$  11 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing on the right bevelled side a half-blown lotus, below which is carved in high relief the head of a ram. The portion below the neck of the animal is broken off.

S/32 Fragment (1 foot  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches  $\times$  1 foot  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches) of a pillar (*stambha*). At the top was a border of stepped merlons. Below is a half lotus. On the other side a half lotus is placed between the borders of small rosettes alternating by sinuous *padma* creepers. There is a tenon at the top.

S/33 Fragment (1 foot  $10\frac{1}{2}$  inches  $\times$  1 foot 2 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*). At the top run four stalks of a blue lotus. Below it is a half lotus. Much damaged on all the sides.

S/34 Fragment (1 foot  $9\frac{1}{2}$  inches  $\times$  1 foot 6 inches) of the inner side of a coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stone, showing a partly cut lotus flower with scroll. Below is a chain of hanging bells.

S/35 Fragment (2 feet 3 inches  $\times$  1 foot  $31\frac{1}{2}$  inches), (No. 35) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*). On one side, at the top is a border of stepped merlons alternating with blue lotuses. Below it is a damaged peacock with outspread plumes. His face and legs are cut away. From the left side a gander's head is seen touching the plumes of the bird. An inscription occurs above the panel which reads as:

*Haṃsa jātaka.*

This Jātaka has been represented on one more stone at Bharhut.

The story goes that once the Bodhisattva was born as a golden Mallard. He invited the birds from all the Himalayan countries and asked his daughter to choose a husband from them. Her choice fell on a peacock who on hearing this began to dance in joy. Seeing that the peacock had lost all sense of decorum King Mallard rejected the choice of his daughter. The gander personifies the Bodhisattva in King Mallard.<sup>7</sup>

S/36 Top part (1 foot 5 inches×1 foot 8 inches) (No. 23a & b) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing on one side a half lotus flower inside a half medallion. Above it are pairs of geese facing each other and picking up something with their lowered beaks. On the other face of the stone is again a half lotus above which is a border of conventional honeysuckle.

S/37 Fragment (1 foot 2 inches×1 foot 7 inches) (No. 36) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*). The upper border is broken. Below, there are a few panels made by an undulating creeper. On the left of the first panel are front parts of a galloping horse. The head of the rider is cut off. In the following panel a scarf and a necklace made of barrel shaped beads hang from the lotus creepers. On the other face there was the usual lotus creeper.

S/38 Fragment (2 feet×1 foot 5½ inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing in the middle a lotus flower. A border of palmettes emerging from lotus flowers is found on each of the bevelled sides.

S/39 Pillar (*stambha*) (4 feet 4 inches×1 foot 2 inches) containing at the top a half-blown lotus flower being flanked on both the sides by blue lotuses issuing from the pericaps of the flower. Below is seen a half lotus. The bevelled sides are cut off.

S/40 Top (2 feet 3 inches×1 foot 11 inches) (No. 22) of a pillar (*stambha*). The top part is badly damaged. In the semi-circular panel made by a curtain is the bust of a female figure wearing heavy earrings and a pearl necklace. She holds down the curtain with

<sup>7</sup> Cowell and Rouse—*Jātakas*, Vol. IV, pp. 264-67.



one of her hands while in the left one she held the branch of a śāla tree, the leaves, of which only are now visible. A semi-circular mark is dotted on both of her cheeks. On the left cheek there is also a flower and on the right a moon and the leaves. On the left bevelled edge a woman is shown standing and holding the branch of a jack tree, evidently to pluck one of the fruits. The same type of figure was carved on the right bevelled side but it is now in a damaged condition.

S/41 Pillar (*stambha*) (3 feet 4 inches×1 foot 9½ inches), (No. 1) showing in low relief an acrobatic scene. In the lowermost circular panel stand eight persons firmly holding each leg of the four persons above, who again support two in the same manner. These two persons hold each of the legs of the persons at the top firmly with both their hands. The man at the top has both his hands raised above his head. All the figures wear the same dress, a dhoti tied by a belt, pleated turbans, flat torques and long necklaces. A longish scarf is thrown round the shoulders of each and its ends fall on either side or in front. The face of the figure in the second row from the top is bent towards the left. On each of the bevelled sides, on half-blown lotus flowers stands a figure, one male the other a female. The figure on the left has folded hands while the right one holds some object in one of her lowered hands. The relief is damaged in certain places. On the pillar there is a damaged inscription which reads:

*Pusadātaye nagarikasa Bhikuniye* . . . . .

(Gift) of nun *Puṣyadattā* of *Nagarika* (?)

A similar inscription occurs in another pillar (*stambha*) at Bharhut.<sup>8</sup>

The acrobatic scene depicted in the above pillar (*stambha*) is highly interesting. Scenes relating to acrobats and physical feats are extremely rare in the Buddhist monuments of India though there occur frequent

<sup>8</sup> Barua and Sinha—*Barhut Inscriptions*, Insc. 43.

references to these in the Jātakas.<sup>9</sup> A story even goes to say that once the Bodhisattva had taken birth in the family of acrobats.<sup>10</sup> The word 'samāja' may also refer to some type of acrobatic exhibitions.<sup>11</sup> Some of the Jain texts give long lists of sports and games. The word 'laṅkhaga' referred in the *Ardhamāgadhbī* Jain works was used for a particular type of *naṭs*. The participating members in this scene certainly belonged to some class of *naṭs*. This subject falls in line with the scenes of wrestling and dancing depicted at Bharhut and fits very well in the artistic scheme of its railing. Dr. Barua says that this scene may refer to a *melā*, held in connection with the celebration of the stūpa festival (*thūpa maha*).

S/42 Pillar (*stambha*) (5 feet 4 inches×1 foot), (No. 26). At the top there is a border of stepped merlons surrounded on the tops by arches made by a garland. Below this border is a half lotus encircled by the representation of a semi-circular field resembling a pond and having a number of compartments which are filled with tortoises and flowers.

In the middle round panel is a banyan tree below which is a five-hooded *nāga* sheltering an altar and the footprints of the Buddha. On each of the bevelled sides stood figures on flowers. Both sides of the pillar (*stambha*) are cut off. The pillar (*stambha*) has the following inscription engraved on it:

*Muchalinda Nāgarāja.*

*Tiṣiya Beṇākāṭi kāya dāna.*

*Muchalinda Nāgarāja*—the gift of *Tiṣiya* of *Beṇākāṭakā*.

The story says that after attaining enlightenment the Buddha stayed for some time in the neighbourhood of the *Muchalinda* lake which was then guarded by a serpent king named *Muchalinda*. When a huge storm was brewing the Buddha felt that he had nothing to protect his body

<sup>9</sup> Fausboll—*Jātakas*, II, 253, Vol. 81-82.

<sup>10</sup> Francis and Thomas—*Jātaka Tales*, p. 176.

<sup>11</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, Aug. 1918, p. 221.



from the rain and storm. Thereupon the *Muchalinda nāga* spread his hooded canopy over him. In the pillar (*stambha*) the *nāga* is shown sheltering the seat and the footprints of the Buddha. The episode has been pictured at Sāñchī,<sup>12</sup> Amarāvati<sup>13</sup> and Nāgarjunikoṇḍa.<sup>14</sup> Two later images of the *Muchalinda nāga* have also been found at Bodhgayā.<sup>15</sup>

The exact location of *Beṇākataka*, the place of the donor is not known. The word *Veṇākataka* occurs in the Nāsik inscription of Gautamīputra Sri Śātkaṛṇī where he is called the 'lord of *Veṇākataka* in Govardhana.'<sup>16</sup> But Bakhle emphatically contradicts the connection between *Veṇākataka* and *Govardhana*. He locates the place outside Nāsik and identifies it with the track round modern Kolhāpur.<sup>17</sup>

S/43 Fragment (3 feet×1 foot 8 inches), (No. 7) of a coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stone. At the top is the usual border of stepped merlons alternating with blue lotuses. The lower one has a row of hanging bells. In the centre are three panels made by an undulating creeper. On the left, is pictured a piece of cloth hanging in folds. In the following panel there are three cottages, one placed in front and two side ways. In the space between these cottages are two richly attired persons engaged in conversation. The figure on the left side holds an animal (hare) in his right hand while the left one is raised above the breast. The right side figure hears the discourse of the other with rapt attention. One more animal is noticeable in the scene. In the last panel there is a *paṇakuṭī*, a domed hut and behind it are visible tops of two trees.

The cottages in this panel bring to light some novel features of ancient architecture. The front cottage is thatched with grass and

<sup>12</sup> Marshall and Foucher—*The Monuments of Sāñchī*, Vol. I, p. 208.

<sup>13</sup> Shivaramamurti—*Amarāvati Sculptures*, p. 265.

<sup>14</sup> *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 54, Pl. XXXI, Fig c.

<sup>15</sup> Banerji—*Eastern School of Medieval Sculpture*, p. 63.

<sup>16</sup> Rapson—*Catalogue of Indian Coins, Andhrās and Kbastrapās*, p. XXIX.

<sup>17</sup> *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. III, N. S. P. 87 f.

reeds and has a gabled roof. The walls of the house appear to have been made of wood. There is a sliding door and a star shaped window on each of its sides. The two side cottages have vaulted roofs supported by wooden beams. The cottage in the right has three finials. A disc ornament is also carved near these. It has perhaps no connection with them. The third panel contains a necklace, two round earrings, and anklet all hanging from a stalk. There is an inscription engraved on it which reads:

*Gaja jātakasasa jātaka.*

Dr. Barua suggests that the label inscribed above the coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) panel on the left is completed on the right and that the inscription should be read as *Gaja Jātaka Sasa Jātaka* like another Bharhut label reading *Viḍala Jātaka Kukuṇṭa Jātaka*. If this interpretation is accepted then the scene may relate to one of the different versions of the *Gaja Kumbha Jātaka* (No. 345).

S/44 Cross-bar (*sūchī*) (1 foot 8 inches×2 feet 6 inches, (No. 19) having on each of its faces a lotus medallion containing the bust of a male. The figure wears the usual turban with a big knot over which also passes a band of embroidered cloth, heavy earrings (*vajra kuṇḍalas*), a crescent shaped flat torque and a chain of four strings. This type of torque according to Cunningham was composed of a series of overlapping lotus rosettes. On the right bottom corner of the front face an inscription reads:

*Nāgarakṣitasa cha mātucha Kamchukiye dānam.*

Gift of *Nāgarakṣitā* and his mother *Kāmuchuka* (or *Kaichuka*).

The name of the donor *Nāgarakṣitā* is found on another rail pillar (*vedikā stambha*) but the name of his mother is not given there.

On the obverse is the same type of bust (No. 20) inside a medallion. There are slight variations in costume and jewellery. The crescent shaped torque worn by the figure does not have overlapping rosettes



but has lotus petals with rounded tops. The end of the turban goes sideways on the right and not downwards as in the turban worn by the bust in the front face.

S/45 Fragment (1 foot 5 inches×1 foot 4 inches), (No. 17) of a coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stone. At the top is the usual border of stepped merlons alternating with blue lotuses and at the bottom a row of hanging bells. In the central panel made by the undulating creeper is an elephant walking towards the left. On the back of the elephant is a thickly padded and ornamented cloth with bells hanging at the two corners near the front legs. A man holding a casket is seen riding on its back. At the tail end an attendant is seated holding a flag bearing cross designs. The scene depicted in the panel refers to the transportation of the coporeal relics of Lord Buddha. When the blessed one left his mortal coil at Kuśinagara his body was wrapped up in five hundred pieces of cloth and cremated in accordance with the ceremonies befitting a universal monarch.<sup>18</sup> The Mallas then collected the ashes in a urn and preserved them in their council hall for seven days. The news of the death of the blessed one soon spread over all the parts of the country and many kings and clans came forward to have a share of the relics. The Mallas refused to distribute on the plea that since the Buddha died within their territories, they were the rightful claimants of his entire relics. The matter was hotly debated and a dreadful war was apprehended. The infuriated groups soon came to a compromise on the intervention of a Brahmin named Droṇa. He chided the various clans by saying that it was not proper to quarrel over the relics of a person who all through his life preached the gospel of love and peace. Ultimately a compromise was arrived at by which the relics were to be distributed to the various rival claimants. Except the Mallas, who were on the spot, all others had to transport them to their respective

<sup>18</sup> *Dīgha Nikāya*, II, p. 182, XVI, 6, 17.



capitals and this was done with great enthusiasm. The scene in the panel shows one of the claimants carrying share to his destination.

S/46 Fragment (3 feet 5 inches×1 foot 11 inches) (No. 8 & 10) of a pillar (*stambha*). In the semi-circular panel above the roughly chiselled portion serving as the base a short legged yakṣa is seen with his knees bent and seated in the midst of the lotus flower buds, scrolls and leaves. He has a big face, leaf shaped ears and a prominent belly. On his head is a turban, the ends of which are coiled in a knot. From his open mouth issues forth a lotus stalk rambling upwards. On the bevelled sides of the pillar there is a border containing superimposed conventional palmettes.

The same arrangement with minor variations is found on the obverse. The yakṣa here appears to be of an advanced age. He wears a single stringed bracelet placed in between two bangles.

S/47 Part (4 feet×1 foot 10 inches) (No. 11) of a pillar (*stambha*) (No. 11). On each of the sides is carved a border of one string chain of beads. In the central sunken panel a seated yakṣa having short legs, hands and a large face and belly issues forth from his mouth a lotus creeper with full and half blown lotus flowers and buds. His head is covered with a leafy cap. He also wears a dhoti tied by a rope at the waist and earrings of circular shape. The figure holds a stalk with one of his hands and takes his support on the ground by resting on the other hand.

The scene on the obverse is very much damaged (No. 9). It had the same bead and chain border on each side of the central sunken panel. A yakṣa wearing a dhoti and a flat torque is found sitting at the bottom of the panel. He holds a cup like object in one of his hands while the other, which is injured was raised. From his naval issues forth a lotus creeper. Only a half-blown lotus flower is seen on the right corner of the panel. In Indian mythology the naval has been considered as a



source of the vegetative energy.<sup>19</sup>

S/48 Lower portion (2 feet 10 inches×1 foot 10 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing a much injured half lotus on both the sides.

S/49 Lower portion (8 feet×1 foot 9½ inches) of a pillar (*stambha*) showing on the obverse a lotus flower. The second row of the flowers is composed of over-lapping circular leaves and separated in the middle by a vertically placed petal. On each of the bevelled edges there rise stalks with half blown lotus flowers. On the reverse is again a half lotus bud with a different arrangement of petals. The inner row of the flowers has its petals turned towards the pericaps. On the right side is a lotus with a bud.

S/50 Lower portion (4 feet×1 foot 10 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*). On the obverse is a half lotus. On each of its sides rise half lotuses on which are found seated a gander with lowered beak. On the reverse there is again a half lotus flanked on each side by stalks and flowers.

S/51 Middle portion (1½ feet 8 inches) of a pillar (*stambha*). In the centre is a full blown lotus with long pointed petals. On each of the bevelled edges a female figure is seen standing on lotuses. The pillar is damaged at places.

S/52 Corner pillar (*stambha*) (5 feet×8½ inches), (2a & b) and (3-6) cut into two parts. Each part of the pillar (*stambha*) is divided into three panels by the horizontal bands of a railing. The scene on the upper panel of the one part shows a royal personage riding on a richly caprisoned elephant. Near his head is visible a part of some tree. Two children stand below on the ground. In the middle panel are portrayed four horses with well arranged manes, evidently belonging to a chariot on which is seated a royal figure. In the bottom two stumpy

<sup>19</sup> Art Bulletin, Vol. XI, No. 2, p. 2.

yakṣas are supporting the structure above with their upraised hands.

The other part has also similar arrangement of the scenes. In the upper panel is a royal personage pouring water into the hands of a Brahmin. Behind him there are some members of the king's retinue. In the scene are shown furthermore three Brahmins wearing beards and skin or bark clothes and holding long staffs in their hands. The two figures on the right have upraised hands and stand in an attitude of begging. In the second panel are four horses having beautiful manes; they are yoked to a chariot. Three Brahmins stand near the feet of the horse with folded hands. At the bottom are two stumpy yakṣas supporting the heavy structure above with their upraised hands.

The four scenes described above depict episodes of the *Vessantara Jātaka*.<sup>20</sup> The story says that when a terrible famine broke out in Kalinga the people rushed to the king for seeking succour in their distress. Owing to the failure of the regular rains there was a widespread drought. The king told his people that he would invite the rains by performing *austerities*. Immediately after the departure of his subjects the King started the performance of *austerities* and continued them for about a week but not a single patch of a cloud appeared in sight. As a last resort he invited Prince Vessantara of Jetuttara to visit his dominions along with his favourite white elephant who possessed necessary qualities for inviting rains. The king decided to send eight Brahmins to Jetuttara. After supplying them with the necessary provisions for the journey the Brahmins were asked to proceed. When they reached their destination, they found the Prince moving about and offering gifts to the people. The Brahmin finding the right opportunity begged for the gift of the animal. Vessantara at once acceded to their request and offered the elephant to them. In the first scene on the front face the royal figure riding on an elephant is Prince Vessantara moving in the

<sup>20</sup> Cowell and Rouse—*Jātakas*, Vol. VI, pp. 246-305.



park. In the second scene he is in the actual act of offering the animal to the Brahmins with due rites.

When the Prince returned to the palace he discovered that his gift offer had annoyed his subjects. They insisted on the banishment of the Prince for this hasty action. The Prince without offering any apology or argument decided to retire to the forest. On a fixed day he proceeded on a gorgeous chariot drawn by four Sindhi horses to bid farewell to his parents. This episode is pictured on the second panel of the left part. After meeting his people the Prince left for the forest on a chariot along with his wife and children. On the way he came across four Brahmins who asked for the gift of the four horses employed in the chariot. As a last act of charity the Prince presented these as well. This last phase of the story is depicted on the central panel of the side face.

S/53 Fragment (1 foot 10 inches×1 foot 7 inches) (No. 24) of a coping stone (*uṣṇīṣa*) showing the border of stepped merlons at the top and a row of hanging bells at the bottom. In the centre of the left panel made by an undulating creeper there is a lion jumping towards the right. In the following panel a cloth and a necklace is hanging from the undulating stalk. A similar type of lion representation is found in another coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) fragment of the Bharhut railing.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Barua—*Barhut*, Part I, Pl. XLI (38).

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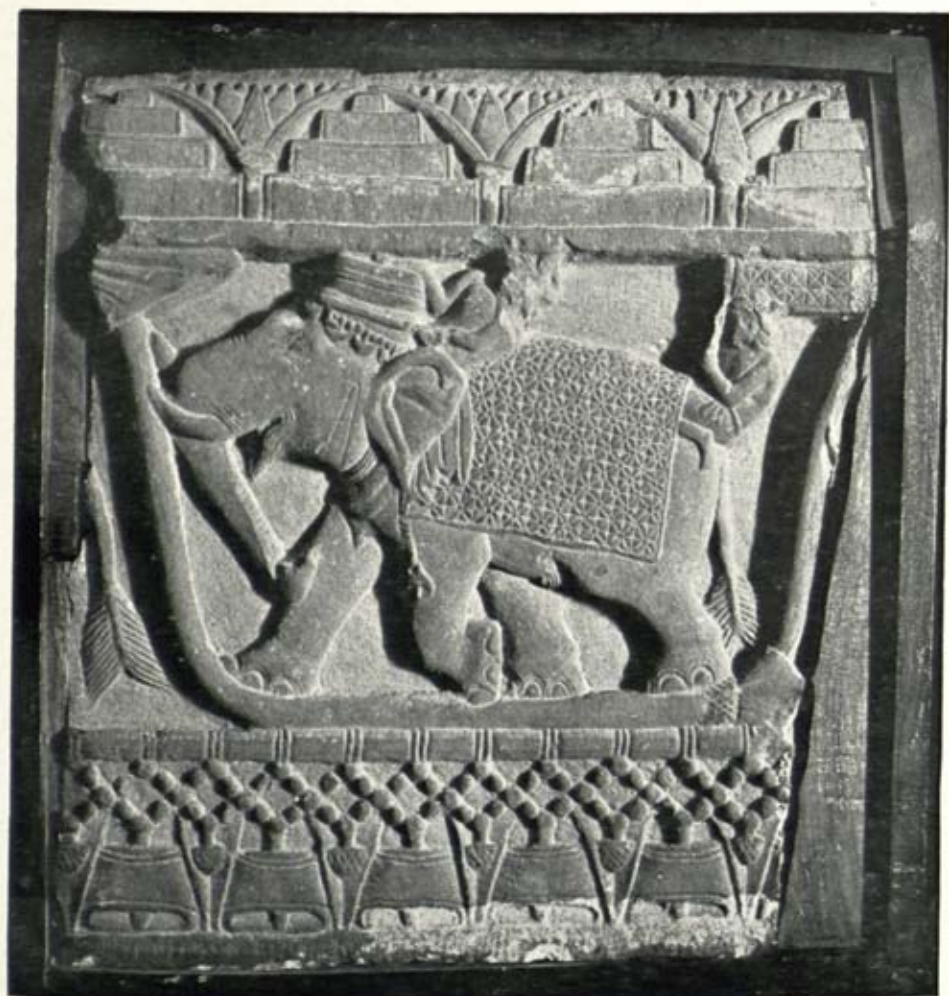
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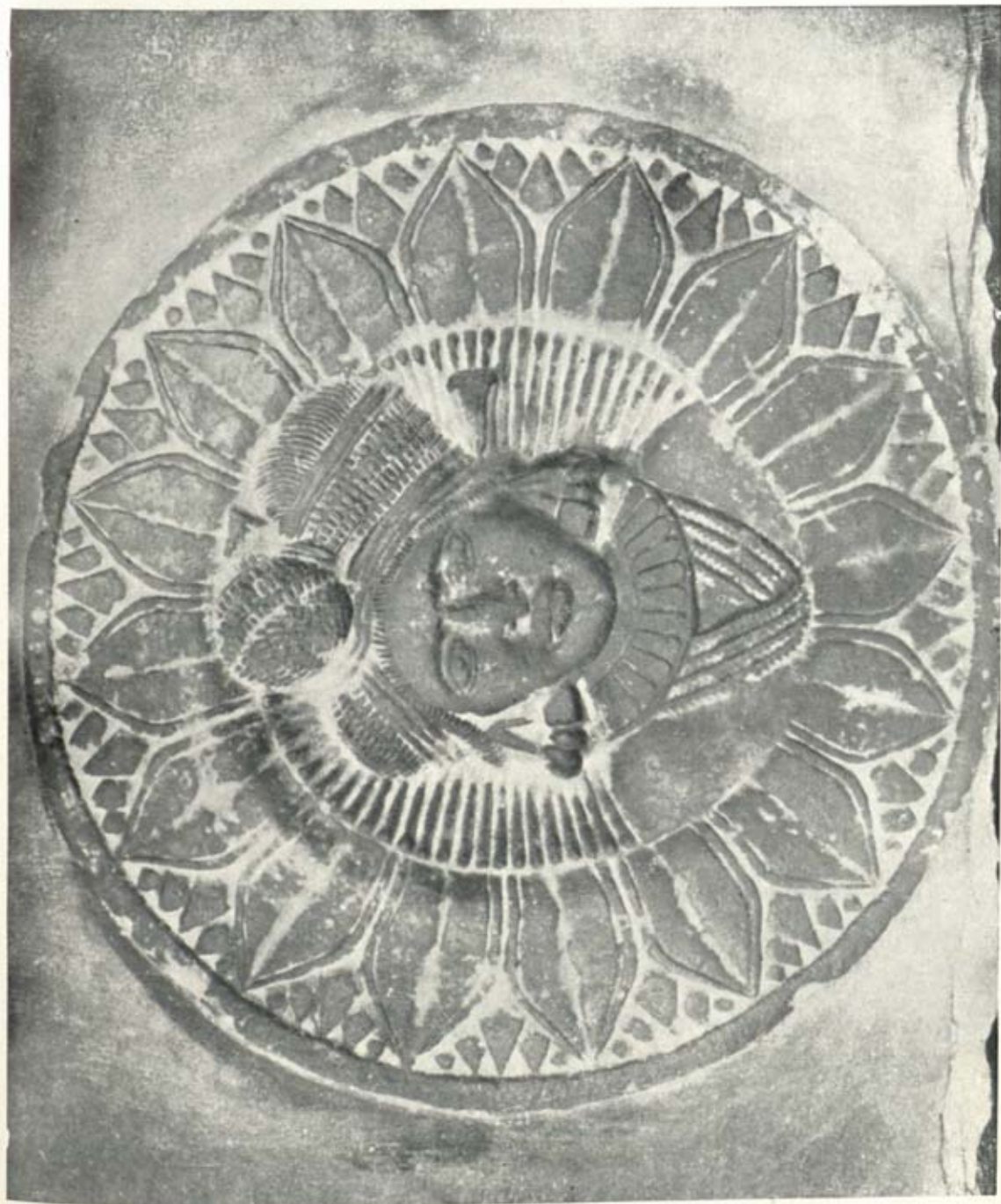


















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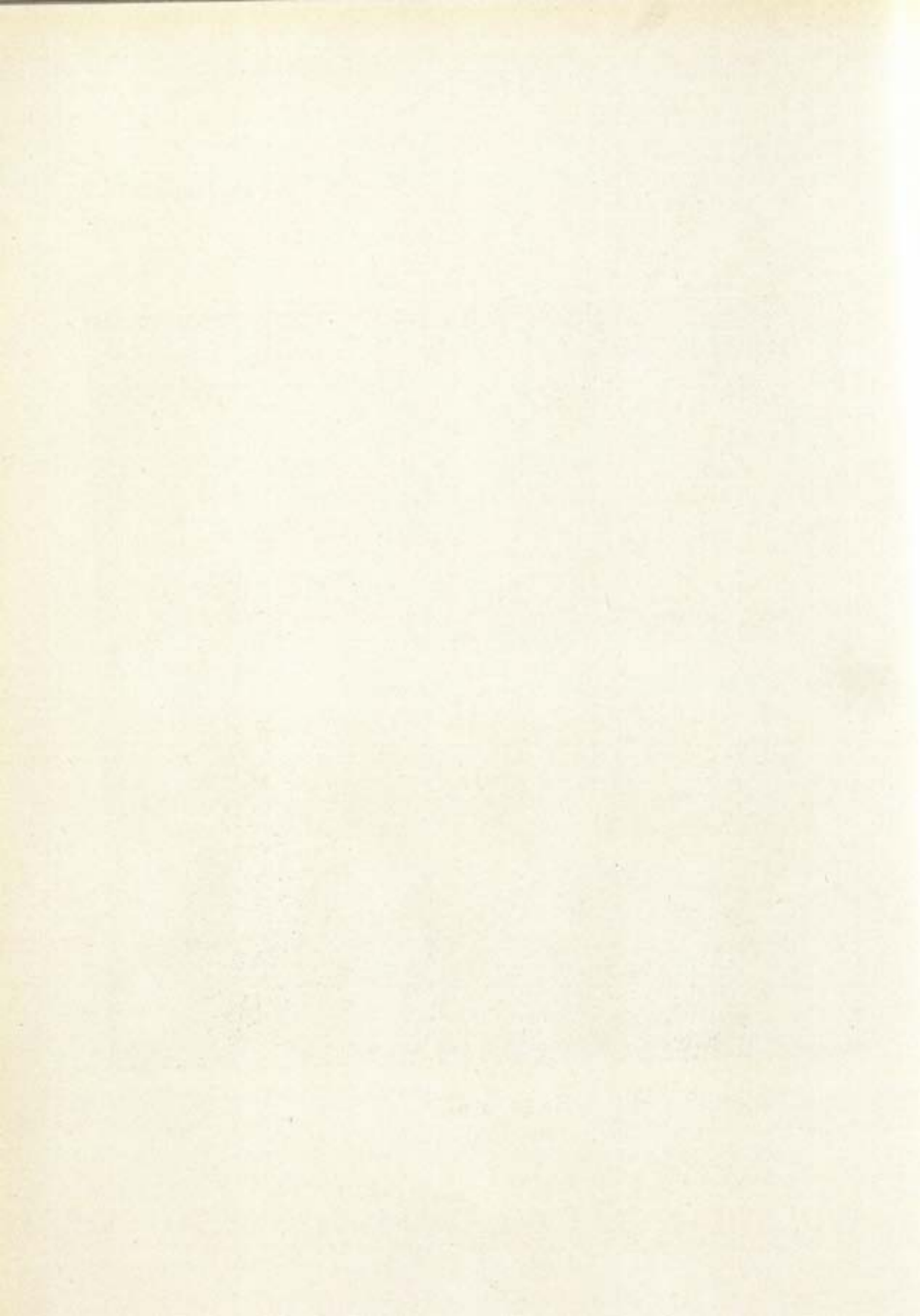






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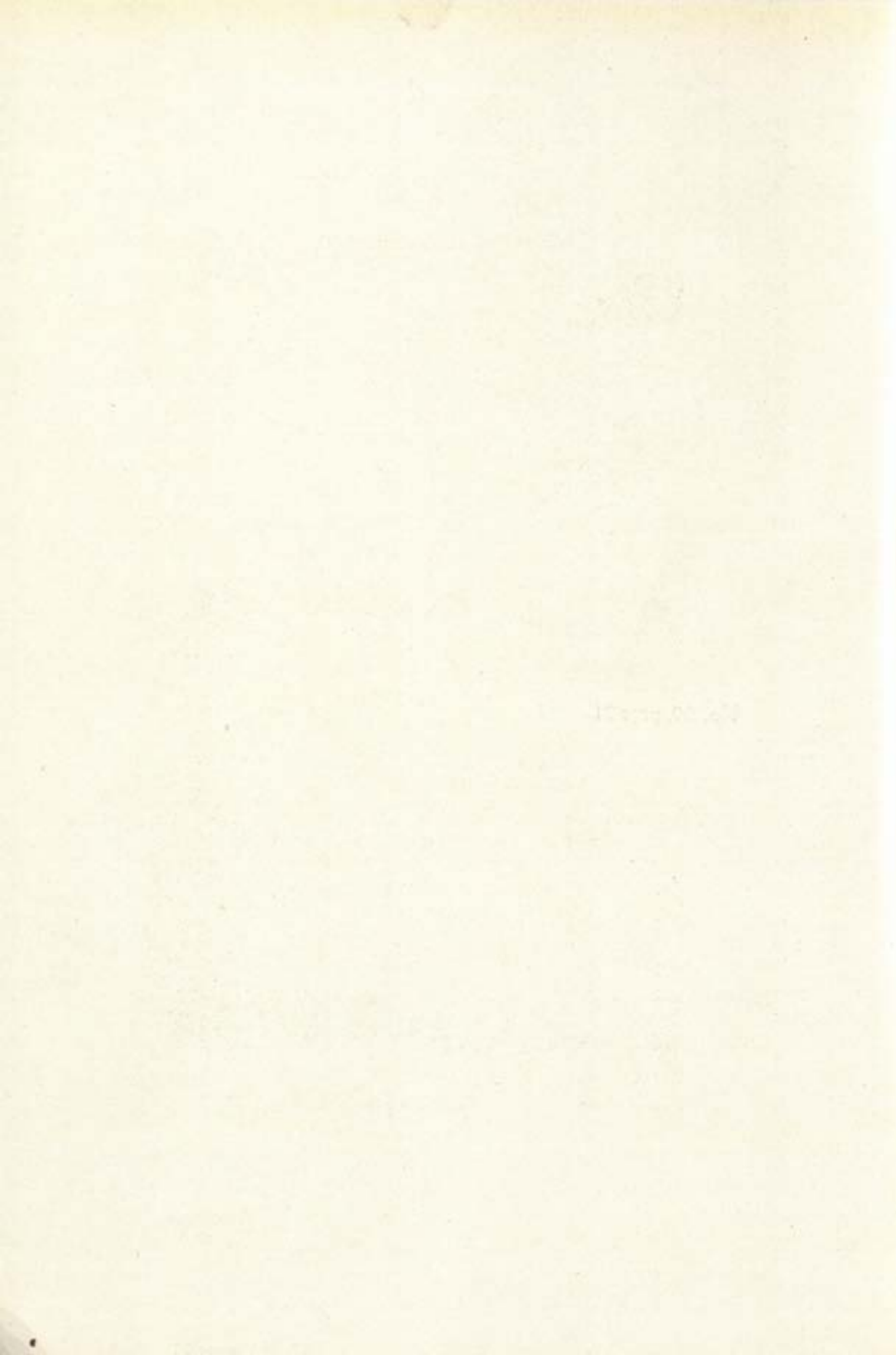


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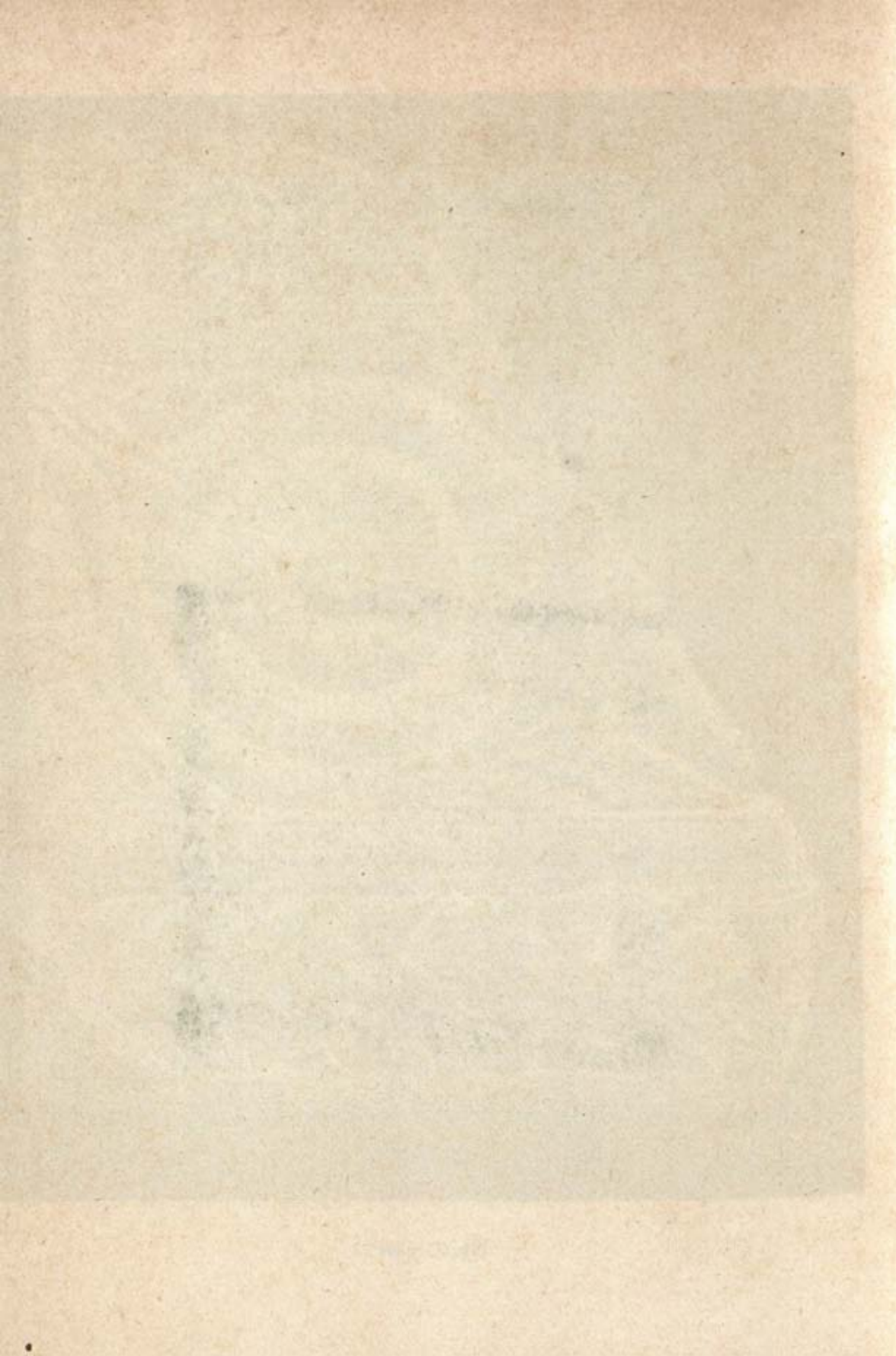
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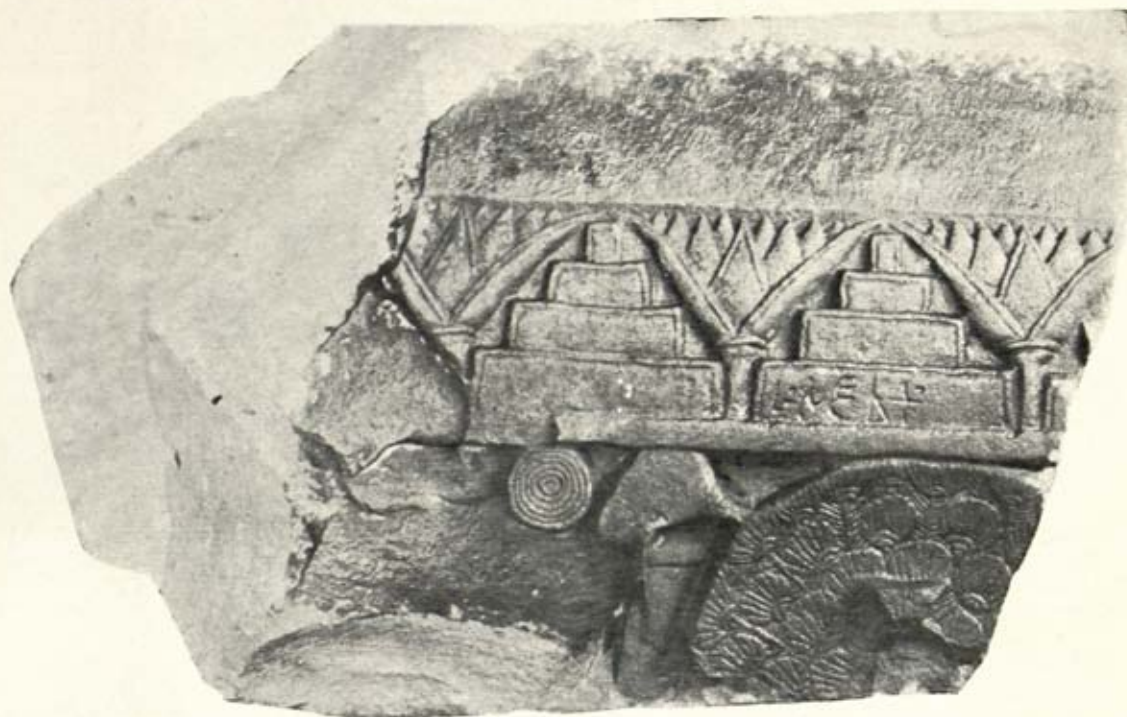




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Sculpture X Buddhist

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