BUDDHIST ART OF MATHURĀ
First published 1984
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Published by: Dr. Agam Prasad, M. A. Ph. D., Diploma in Museology
for AGAM KALA PRAKASHAN
34, Community Centre, Ashok Vihar, Phase-I,
Delhi-110052.
Phone : 711 33 95

Printed at : Print India, A-38/2, Mayapuri, Phase-I,
New Delhi-110064.
Plates Printed at : Raj Press
R-3 Inder Puri,
New Delhi
Dedicated

to

the sacred memory of

my grandmother Śrīdevī and mother Bhūdevi
OPINIONS

"I have to admit that from among all the theses which I received as external examiner from various universities in India during the past years, this is the best and the most outstanding in several ways.....The work contains a large amount of original and new research of great value for all scholars, interested in art history of India."

G.V. Mitterwallner
Professor of Indology
University of Munich, W.G.

"The author has come out with this magnum opus in the fulness of time with the maturity of his judgment to bear upon his interpretations....He has demonstrated his ability to handle complicated issues with grace and ease, his large background, and intimate knowledge of history, literature, numismatics, epigraphy, palaeography, iconography and art history with a rare sensibility to capture the slightest changes in art idioms like a barometer."

N.R. Banerjee
Former Director,
National Museum of India,
Visiting Professor Museology and
Archaeology, B.H.U., Varanasi

"The monograph brings out in relief the importance of Mathurā in history of Indian culture, art and religion. It is indeed an outstanding contribution to Indological studies and a sine qua non for all students of Mathurā art and Buddhist iconography."

B.N. Mukherjee
Carmichael Professor of
Ancient Indian History and
Culture,
University of Calcutta
FOREWORD

Mathurā has a very distinguished place in the history of the Indian subcontinent. In the centuries immediately before and after the beginning of the Christian Era, Mathurā, well connected with other parts of the subcontinent, became an emporium and the headquarters of a political or an administrative unit (under indigenous, foreign and again indigenous powers). There were naturally movements of people, ideas and trade between Mathurā and outside world (B.N. Mukherjee, Mathurā and Its Society—The Śaka-Pahlava Phase, Calcutta, 1981, pp. 1f and 97f). As a result it became by the time of the composition of the Lalitavistara (1st or 2nd century A.D.) a “large”, “populous”, “prosperous” and “beneficial” city. The Lalitavistara refers to the city of Mathurā, “which is prosperous, and large and beneficial, and (a place where) alms are easily obtainable and which is abounding in people” ((iyam Mathurā nagarī riddhā cha sphītā ca kṣhemā ca subhikṣācākīrṇa-bahujanānusyā ca) (P.L. Vaidya, Lalitavistara, p. xii, ch. 2, p. 15).

Life of a large number of people at Mathurā was probably highly religious. In fact, religion began to play an important role in the life of the inhabitants of Mathurā at an early stage of its history. Patronised by the prosperous section of the indigenous and non-indigenous population, including rich traders, religion got the necessary material support and grew receptive to outside ideas. Deeply rooted in Indian tradition, the city became at the same time an eastern outpost of several non-indigenous cultures (particularly in the age of the Śaka-Pahlavas and Kuśāpas). Mathurā was developed as a celebrated centre of religious and cultural activities and of art, the handmaid of religion.

The Mathurā school of sculptural art, which had its origin in the centuries immediately before the commencement of the Christian Era, was greatly stimulated in the Kuśāpa age, which was marked by a cultural acculturation and material prosperity (of at least a section of population). The art tradition, enriched with new ideas and stylistic traits evolved by numerous talented artists, reached its climax in the Gupta age, when Mathurā was still an important religious and cultural centre, (though perhaps no longer as important an emporium or a seat of administration as it had been in the Kuśāpa period.

Among the religions which stimulated art activities were Buddhism, Jainism, different Brāhamanical faiths and minor religious cults. The sculptors, engaged by the
Buddhist patrons, made significant contributions to the development of the Mathurā school and also to that of icono-plastic traits of the sculptures treating Buddhist themes. Their contributions constituted the Buddhist art of Mathurā, which was very much an integral part of the Mathurā art milieu and yet had a distinctive ethos.

This very important segment of Indian art has not yet been probably evaluated, though art of Mathurā as a whole has already attracted a large number of art historians. I am glad to note that a comprehensive study of the Buddhist art of Mathurā has now been made in the present volume by Dr. R.C. Sharma, who is now the Director of the State Museum (Lucknow) and a former-Director of the Mathurā Museum, has spent a great part of his professional career amidst Mathurā sculptures and is one of the most well equipped scholars to deal with the subject.

The monograph brings out in relief the importance of Mathurā in the history of Indian culture, art and religion. It is an outstanding contribution to Indological studies.

Dr. Sharma has made his study against proper geographical and historical (political as well as religious) background. He has taken into account all available archaeological materials, including the finds from the Govindnagar area of Mathurā. The inclusion of the Govindnagar finds has immensely enriched the author’s study.

With these materials at his disposal the author has first recounted the story of the origin and development of the Mathurā school of art and then has taken up the study of Buddhist art of Mathurā.

The study proper appears to consist of three parts. The first part (Chapter VIII) deals with the well-known problem of determining the date of the origin of the Buddha image. Dr. Sharma has marshalled numerous facts to advocate a pre-Kuṣāṇa (really pre-Kaniṣka I) origin of the Buddha image at Mathurā.


The relevant information is furnished by a Kharoṣṭhī (or Kharоṣṭhī) inscription written in North-Western Prakrit. (H.W. Bailey, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1980, pp. 1f). The inscription, which is engraved on a gold plate, is dated in the regnal year 14 of Senavarma (i.e. Senavarma), who was a king of Oḍi (now a part of northern Pakistan) and a contemporary and also perhaps a vassal of the Kuṣāṇa king Kujula Kadphises. Kujula, as it is well-known, ruled before Kaniṣka I.

The main purpose of our inscription is to perpetuate the deposition of Śarīr of the Bhagavat (i.e. Buddha) in the Eka-kuṭa (Eka-kūṭa) stūpa, which was done (or caused to be done) by king Senavarma. The Śarīra was or were caused to be made by a son of an Aṉākaya (Aanaṅkaios, i.e. “royal advisor”), (obviously under
the order of the king). According to a statement in our inscription, the šarīra “to be deposited was or were painted to life” (Ji‘ase likhiṭa ya šarīra pratīthavati‘a).

The expression “šarīra of Lord Śakamuni (or of Gotama)”, appearing in several Kharoṣṭhī (or Kharoṣṭhī) records, denotes the supposed body-relic (śarīram) or body-relics (śarīrāṇi) of Gautama Buddha, the Śākyya sage. The vases bearing inscriptions, referring to the deposition of such relics, have sometimes been found to contain pearls, beads and other items of stone, smaller caskets, coins etc. These objects cannot be expected to have been painted. But their main container might have been, if necessary, decorated with colour. So the šarīra, “painted to life”, as mentioned in the epigraph in question, refers to the body-relic or-relics and its or their painted container. If the šarīra or rather the container part of the šarīra was “painted to life”, the implication should be that the container was painted with one (or more than one) life-like (and not symbolic) representation of the Master (i.e. of the Master’s body or šarīra). The other supported body-relics, such as those mentioned above, could not conceivably have been “painted to life”. It appears that the receptacle containing the relics was deposited in the Eka-Kūṭa stūpa and the act was perpetuated by the record incised on the gold-plate in question.

This interpretation suggests that the practice of preparing life-like representations of the Buddha came into vogue by the time of the Kuśāna king Kujula, Kadphises, who was a contemporary of Senavarma (i.e. Senavarmā), the donor of the body-relics in question. If Kujula began to rule by about the last decade of the 1st century B.C. or a little later, (B.N. Mukherjee, An Agrippan Source—Study in Indo-Parthian History, Calcutta, 1970, p. 187), the practice of worshipping the image of the Buddha should have been known by that time. This may allude to the origin of the practice of preparing the image of the Buddha by c. 1st century B.C. (or early 1st century A.D.).

We may note here that our record refers to the worship of Maitreya, “who is with him Śaksmuṇi”. The cult of Maitreya (as a Bodhisattva and also as the future Buddha) was well-known in the Kuśāna empire. The “linkage of the images of Śākyamuni and Maitreya is a characteristic of Buddhist sculpture in the Kušanshahr, usually accomplished by placing smaller Maitreya figures in the pedestal of the status of the historical Buddha” (J.M. Rosenfield, The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans, Berkeley and Los Angels, 1967, p. 233; figs. 35, 98, etc.). In the light of this evidence the references to Maitreya as one “who is with Sakamuni” may be considered to allude to the knowledge of the appearance of iconic representation of Maitreya with that of the Buddha. In that case the author of the text of the record had been familiar with icons of the Master.

The epigraph in question seems to suggest a pre-Kaṇiṣṭha origin of the practice of preparing iconic representations of the Buddha. This evidence finds support from the discoveries of a number of sculptured panels, displaying inter alia the
figures of the Buddha, in a group of monuments at Butkara I (Pakistan), if D. Faccenna has rightly dated them, mainly on numismatic ground, to the period from the late 1st century B.C. to the early 1st century A.D. (D. Faccenna, “Excavations of the Italian Archaeological Mission (ISMEO) in Pakistan: Some Problems of Gandhāra Art and Architecture”, Central Asia in the Kushāna Period, Vol. I, Moscow, 1975, pp. 150 f). Certain stylistic traits of these figures of the Buddha are related, according to J.E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw, to those of the early representations of the Master at Mathurā known as the Kapardin type (on account of the Kapardin or bun of entwined hair on top of the head). J.E. Van Lohinzen-de Leeuw, “New Evidence with Regard to the Origin of the Buddha Image”, H. Härtal (editor), South Asian Archaeology, 1979, Berlin, 1981, pp. 377-400; Figs. 9-12, 14-17, 19 and 27). If these hypotheses about the dating and stylistic features of these icons are correct, images of the Buddha might have been known in the Mathurā area by the late 1st century B.C. or early 1st century A.D. This inference, however, does not deny the feasibility of the origin or at least of an independent origin of the Buddha image in Gandhāra, by about the same period.

The author is at his brilliant best in the second part (Chapter VIII) of his study dealing with the chronology of Buddhist icons at Mathurā. This section is a definite contribution to the study of Indian art.

The validity of this opinion is not questioned even if I donot agree with the theory that some of the inscribed icons bearing dates which are well below the figure of 100, referable to the Kaniṣṭha Era, should be stylistically dated to a period after the year 100 of that reckoning. In other words, the figure of 100 is to be considered as omitted in the dating portions of the image inscriptions. This theory, advocated by J.E. Van Lohuizen-de Leeuw and broadly supported by J.M. Rosenfield, J. Williams and R.C. Sharma himself, cannot explain the use of figures above 100 in the dating portions of the Kosam records referring to Vaiśravaṇa and Bhīmavarman (connected with the Maghas?) and in the Kailvan inscription of Ārya-Visākhamittra, who, as it is now proved, must have used the Kaniṣṭha Era. (For the arguments against this theory, see B.N. Mukherjee, “Problems of Dated Images of the Mathurā School of Sculpture of the Kushāna Period”, Central Asia in the Kushāna Period, Vol. II, Moscow, 1975, pp. 346-362). But for this minor criticism, I am full of praise for Sharma’s study which determines the stages of evolution of the Buddha image at Mathurā and their relations with the Gandhāra school of art.

The third part of Sharma’s study, which appears as a section of Chapter VIII, deals with iconic representations of different divinities of the Buddhist pantheon, of Mathurā. Here we have perhaps the best available treatment of the subject. I very much wish the author to study this theme in further details in near future.

In addition to the study proper, divided, (as noted above) into three parts, various interesting data have been furnished in the three sections (Background,
Material for Study of Mathurā Art and Buddhist Art) of the book. All of its chapters are rich in materials and they bear the stamp of original thinking. Photographs of a large number of sculptures, published in the book, should help the readers to follow intelligibly the arguments of the author.

In short, Sri R.C. Sharma has produced a volume, which is a *sine qua non* for all students of Mathurā art and Buddhist iconography. The *Buddhist Art of Mathurā* is indeed a landmark in the field of study of history of Indian fine arts.

Buddha Jayanti: May 2, 1983

Carmichael Professor of
Ancient Indian History & Culture,
University of Calcutta.

B. N. MUKHERJEE
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

On completion of the work I feel delighted in expressing my heartfelt gratitude to:
Dr. B.N. Mukherjee, Carmichael Professor, University of Calcutta, under whose able guidance and supervision this has reached the final stage. His initiation in the subject, valuable suggestions for improvement, a keen interest with personal touch and encouraging treatment cannot be suitably compensated through words. He has also been kind to write a brilliant foreword to the book.

Dr. Gritli V. Mitterwallner, Professor of Indology in the University of Munich, West Germany lent an incredible support in supplying numerous off-prints, books and a large number of slides and photographs for study and illustrations. Going through several chapters she offered many useful tips. It is not possible to repay her wonderful contribution.

Dr. N.R. Banerjee, Former Director, National Museum, New Delhi and now Visiting Professor of Archaeology and Museology, Bhārata Kalā Bhavan, Vārānasī has taken the pains in screening and polishing the press copy and also imparting Valuable suggestions for improvements. He has been my teacher in Field Archaeology and he has done this favour in this spirit. I am extremely obliged to him.

The writings of late Dr. J. Ph. Vogel, my esteemed teacher late Professor V.S. Agrawala, unpublished Lucknow Vogel records prepared by late R.D. Banerjee and the notable work the 'Scythian period' by Professor Van Lohuizen have provided the base material for elaborating my views and I feel deeply indebted to these pioneers.

I have been much benefitted through the discussions of the following scholars on one occasion or the other: Late Professor S.K. Saraswati, Late Prof. Nihar Rajan Ray, Late Padmabhūṣaṇa Sri C. Sivaramamurti, Late Dr. V.P. Dwivedi, Late Dr. B.N. Sharma, Prof. J.E. Van Lohuizen de-Leeuw (Holland), Prof. A.L. Basham, Dr. H. Härtel (Berlin), Prof. J.N. Rosenfield (U.S.A.), Dr. R.D. Gupta (London), Prof. D.C. Sircar (Calcutta), Prof. K.D. Vajpayi (Sagar), Dr. U.P. Shah (Baroda), Dr. Grace Morley and Dr. P. Banerjee (New Delhi), Dr. S.C. Kala (Allahabad), Dr. Prabhu Dayal Mital and Dr. P.L. Paliwal (Mathurā), Sri K.L. Gupta (Varindāban), Prof. B.N. Puri, Prof. B.N. Srivastava, Dr. K.K. Thaplyal and Sri. O.P. Agrawal (Lucknow).

I must also thank my colleagues and officers in the Department of Cultura Affairs U.P. for their support.
An unqualified cooperation was extended by my colleagues both in Mathurā and Lucknow museums and my successor in the Mathurā Museum, Dr. A.K. Srivastava deserves special mention. At Lucknow my two promising young associates Sri R.C. Tiwari, Assistant Director and Km. Sushma Srivastava, Librarian, checked up and put diacritical marks in the final script which was carefully typed by Sri K.D. Kapur. The Bibliography part is practically the creation of Km. Sushma. In my capacity as Director of Mathurā and Lucknow museums I had an easy access to the records and collection of the two great institutions with the help of my colleagues such as Sri G.S. Tiwari, Smt. Pushpa Thakurail, Sri S.K. Rastogi, Sri L.N. Varshney, Sri S.V. Bajpayi, Sri H.N. Raheja, Sri D.C. Karnatak and Sri Shatrughna Sharma. Sri I.P. Pandey helped me in different ways, particularly in marking the captions on the plates.

During the course of my research work I not only studied the Buddhist objects in Mathurā and Lucknow museums, but had also availed the opportunity to visit several other museums to see their collection and study in their libraries. Mention may be made of the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, Indian Museum, Calcutta, Ashutosh Museum, University of Calcutta, Patna Museum, Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi, Archaeological Museum, Sārnāth, Allahabad Museum and National Museum, New Delhi. I was further benefitted through consulting the library of the Asiatic Society, Calcutta, National Library, Calcutta, Calcutta University Library particularly the Departmental Library of Ancient Indian History and Culture and personal library of Prof. B.N. Mukherjee.

Prof. K.K. Gangoli, Dr. S.C. Ray, Director, Indian Museum, Calcutta, Dr. Som Nath Mukherjee, Dr. Banvir Chakravarti and Dr. Archana Roy rendered timely help during my study trips to Calcutta. My heartfelt thanks are due to them.

My sister Smt. Shakuntla Sharma, sister-in-law Smt. Chandra Jyotsna and her husband Sri Sudhir Batra Advocate, also helped me a lot.

My children Madhu and Piyush derived pleasure in sorting out the photographs and arranging the type script, notes and references at different stages of writing. My wife, Santosh deserves no thanks for the magnitude of her multiple cooperation and inspiration as the completion of this work is the fulfilment of her own long cherished ambition.

I must also express my gratitude to those institutions and individuals who have very kindly supplied the photographs either for the purpose of my study or for publication in this book.

My sincere thanks are due to Dr. Agam Prasad, Proprietor of Agam Kalā Prakashan, Delhi and his staff for bringing out this book as carefully as possible.

Like the Mathurā Buddha images I long for removal of the sufferings of all and for the attainment of Supreme Knowledge:

सब्बः दूःः लः प्रहृत्यायानुस्तर्यानावास्तृः

August 15, 1983

R.C. SHARMA
Director
State Museum, Lucknow
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI    : Ancient India, New Delhi
AIU   : The Age of Imperial Unity, Bombay, 1951.
ASR   : Archaeological Survey of India Reports, Calcutta & Delhi.
AV    : Atharva Veda.
BMA   : Bulletin of Museums & Archaeology in U.P.
BMC   : British Museum Catalogue.
CHI   : Cambridge History of India, Cambridge
CII   : Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum.
EI    : Epigraphia Indica, Calcutta.
GSI   : German Scholars of India, II, New Delhi, 1976.
HIIA  : Coomarswamy, A.K., History of Indian & Indonesian Art, 1927, London.
IA    : Indian Antiquary, 1927.
IMC   : Indian Museum Calcutta.
JAOS  : Journal of American Oriental Society
JASB  : Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.
JBBRAS: Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Bombay.
JESI  : Journal of the Epigraphical Society of India, Delhi.
JISOA : Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art
JNSI : Journal of the Numismatic Society of India, Bombay & Lucknow.
JRAS, NS : Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, New Series.
JUPHS : Journal of the United Provinces Historical Society, Lucknow.
MM : Mathurā Museum.
MMA : Sharma, R.C., Mathurā Museum and Art, 1976, Mathurā.
MS : Joshi, N.P., Mathurā Sculptures, 1966, Mathurā.
OZ : Ostasiatische Zeitschrift
PHAI : Roy Chaudhari, H.C., Political History of Ancient India, Calcutta, 1938.
RV : Rgveda.
SI : Sircar, D.C., Select Inscriptions, 1, Calcutta, 1942.
SML : State Museum, Lucknow.
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Background

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a) Geographical Importance of Mathurā
b) Work so far done including sources of information
c) Importance of the Subject

CHAPTER II : HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FROM THE EARLIEST TIME TO THE END OF THE GUPTA PERIOD

CHAPTER III : BUDDHISM IN MATHURĀ
SECTION I

Background

[Text continues]
INTRODUCTION

A. GEOGRAPHICAL IMPORTANCE OF MATHURĀ

Mathurā has enjoyed a unique place in the cultural history of India. Rightly assessed by Ptolemy as a city of gods, it has served as a perfect mould not only for casting the religious, spiritual and cultural figure of the country but artistically also it has shaped the figurines of deities of different sects. As art in ancient India was handmaid of religion, Mathurā also developed as a great centre of art activities. The statement is amply corroborated by thousands of art objects revealed from Mathurā and its neighbourhood since 1836 when Col. Stacy reported the first antiquarian discovery.

Topography of Mathurā

The city of Mathurā is situated on the right bank of the Yamunā at a distance of 58 km. to north-west of Āgrā and 145 km. to south-east of Delhi in Lat. 27° 31'N and long. 77° 41'E. But Mathurā also stands for the region known by various terms viz. Mathurā Manḍala, Śūrasena and Vraja. The land is now more popularly called as Vraja or Braja. For all practical purposes the present district of Mathurā is known by Braja Bhūmi although the religious, cultural and linguistic Vraja fairly exceeds the geographical boundaries of the District.

On the map the district of Mathurā can be located between Lt. 27° 14' and 27° 58' N and Long. 77° 17' and 78° 12' E, covering an area of about 3800 sq. kms and forming the part of the Yamunā basin. It is divided into two distinct units, i.e. the eastern part which is the Trans-Yamunā tract comprising Māt and Sādābād sub-divisions and the western part which is Cis-Yamunā tract comprising Mathurā and Chhātā sub-divisions. The important historical, archaeological or religious places in the Trans-Yamunā unit are Mahāban, Baldev, Gokul, Māt and Bajna.

5. Ibid., p. 4-5.
while the Cis-Yamunā unit consists of the following notable spots—Mathurā, Vrindāban, Govardhan, Kusumān or Kusum Sarasar, Rādhākund, Nandgaon, Barsānā, Sonkh, Chandrasingar, Aring, Parkham.

The District in north is bound by Gurgaon district of Haryāna in west by Bharatpur district of Rājasthān, in north-east by Alīgarh, in east by Etah and in south by Āgrā districts of Uttar Pradesh. Owing to some low hills in the western side, particularly the ridges of Govardhan and cliffs of Nandgaon and Barsānā (all detached portions of Arāvali chain), the landscape is somewhat undulating and higher than the south-eastern part. The highest point is 261 metres above sea level and with a sloping rate of .25 metres per kilometre its lowest point is 171.6 metres above sea level near Jalesar Road railway station in the eastern direction. The Yamunā is the only river in this region although the Pathwāha and the Jhirā or Karwan which are little known affluents play menace in the monsoon season.

The soil in the district is generally yellow which is not much fertile. There are certain patches of dumat in Māṭ, Sādābād and Chhātā sub-divisions. Clay is noticed in the low-lying areas. The Trans-Yamunā part is better for agriculture and pastoralism while the Cis-Yamunā part consists of some natural resources like stone and some inferior variety of iron. Discovery of copper implements by Cunningham at Chaubārā mounds in 1873 and a hoard of 16 copper celts from Sādābād hints to the possibility of existence of copper ore in Mathurā or adjoining area. The excavations have revealed some precious and semi-precious metallic and stone objects of gold, silver, bronze, crystal, jasper, agate, lapiz lazuli, carnelian, shell, glass etc. but these tiny items seem to have seen their way to the Mathurā region as casual trade goods and their local manufacturing cannot be substantiated at the present state of our knowledge.

As pointed out above there are detached and scanty hills in the western part of the District but surprisingly these have not yet fallen prey to the attacks of the stone cutters or miners. The main reason of the automatic protection of this ecology is the religious faith which interdicts the removal of even a small chunk from these sacred hills which are worshipped and circumambulated by thousands of pilgrims on various occasions.

**Geographical significance of Mathurā**

Beside its religious importance one of the main factors which led Mathurā to rise to the eminence of a metropolis of Northern India in ancient time was its ideal geographical situation. It is situated on the junction point of many important land routes. Several roads radiate from Mathurā which ultimately joined the two

7. Ibid., p. 6.
important highways of early India viz. Dakṣiṇāpatha (the Southern Highway) and Uttarāpatha (the Northern Highway).¹¹

The Dakṣiṇāpatha joined Mathurā to the commercially rich central India and particularly Mālwā and Deccan plateaus and continued up to the western sea coast. Near Vidiśā and Sānci this road joined the other prominent highway which ultimately led to different states of central, south-eastern and southern India. It was through these routes that Mathurā had linkage with several notable capital cities such as Ujjayinī, Aparānta, Māhiṃmatī, Pratiṣṭhāna etc.

The Uttarāpatha on the other hand was another significant route which connected Mathurā with the northern and north-western regions of India or the upper India. It ultimately linked the north-western regions with Bactria or Balkhika. The Uttarāpatha had several important branches and at least three roads proceeded from Mathurā to connect northern, north-western and western regions. One ran almost parallel to the Yamunā leading to Rohī (Rohataka), Udumbara (Pathānkot) and Śākala (Sialkot).¹² The Gilgit manuscripts inform that after completion of his education at Takṣaśīlā Jivaka Kumārabhṛtya reached Mathurā by the same route and from here he proceeded further to reach Rājgrīh via Vaiśāli.¹³

Thus Mathurā’s geographical position was unique as it was connected with all important towns of ancient India through main highways or subsidiary land routes which finally joined the main Dakṣiṇāpatha or Uttarāpatha.¹⁴ This early importance is amply preserved to-date. A glance at the city map will indicate that Mathurā has a network of roads in its periphery. One of them is the National Highway and several others are also of considerable significance. The railway route has also followed the early reputation of Mathurā being connected with all major cities of the country. This is probably the only spot on Indian Rail Map which is the junction point of four railways i.e., the Central Railway, the Western Railway, the Northern Railway and the North-Eastern Railway. The consideration behind laying the rail tracks and the road links has been the early traditions and the remarkable geographical situation which greatly contributed in developing this town as a metropolis of early India.

Beside the land route the city also flourished as an important centre of navigation activities. The Yamunā has been a major river and in ancient times its stream had adequate flow of water to allow even large boats required for maritime trade. Unfortunately the present site at river at Mathurā is miserable and gives a poor impression owing to the exploitation of water resources for different purposes and one has to depend on literary and other traditions to assess its significance as a water route. The existence of Saptasamudrīkūpa in the Mathurā Museum premises

¹¹. Several informations in the foregoing paras are based on an unpublished paper of Dr. S.G. Bajpai titled “Trade Routes, Commerce and Communications Patterns from the Post Mauryan Period to the Kuśāṇa Period” read in the International Seminar on Mathura held in New Delhi in January 1980.
¹³. Ibid., p. 142.
¹⁴. Ibid., p. 16.
corroborates the merchantine trade. As prescribed in the chapter of Śoḍaśamahādāna of Matsyapurāṇa excavation and gift of such wells was an act of great merit. The merchants before and after the sea voyage underwent certain rituals for their purification at these wells which existed in the towns which were the flourishing trade centres like Mathurā, Kaśi, Prayāga and Pātaliputra. Although none of these cities is situated on the sea shore yet these stand on the banks of the two important rivers viz. Gaṅgā or Yamunā which were quite suitable for navigation and the merchantine ships did pass through these points for loading or unloading the goods as the case may be. Names like Samudra and Sāgara were popular in Mathurā region and we have found a Gupta period stele carved with the figure of the first Tīrthaṅkara Rṣabhanātha dedicated by two Samudra and Sāgara. This suggests some sort of affinity of the citizens of Mathurā with sea or sea trade.

This ideal geographical situation and the network of roads and tracks transformed Mathurā into a meeting place of several cultural currents through traders, political aspirants, religious leaders and devotees. Merchants from different directions with the variety of merchandise halted here to sale their goods or exchange them with the articles of other merchant. Subsequently they either proceeded further to their destination or returned to their native places. Quite often the merchants undertook a long journey in cārvān equipped with all facilities and paraphernalia. They apprehended the attacks from road or riverside robbers and were consequently adequately armed to face such eventuality. Hence their movements sometimes appeared as military expeditions.

They generally preferred to halt at a place which had good market for their goods and were also renowned as religious and cultural centres. Mathurā was one of them and when the cārvāns of traders came to halt, the city was not only flooded with enormous varieties of items from distant quarters but was also transformed into a hub of religious and cultural activities. The same site is to be seen even today when there is a Yāṭrā in which thousands of pilgrims from different parts of the country assemble at Mathurā and go round the important holy spots in Vraja region. The Yāṭrā which continues for about forty days after the rainy season is virtually a moving town with all reasonable human comforts including music, dance, drama and religious discourses.

As the means of transport and communication were extremely slow in comparison with modern amenities, the caravans after a long journey made a fairly long stay at Mathurā not only to remove their fatigue but also to try their luck in the spiritually elevated environment of the city. We come across numerous epigraphs recording the erection of religious shrines, monasteries, tanks, gardens, assembly halls, gateways waterwells or waterhuts and other monuments built by traders and noblemen visiting Mathurā from time to time. This tradition of performing the

noble deeds was known as *Iṣṭāpūrta*\(^{17}\) and it continues till date in one way or the other.

It was a two way traffic. The merchants and noblemen spent handsome amount to impart better look to the city by erecting buildings and monuments of their choice and on the other hand Mathurā made all preparation to receive and utilise the generous grants offered by the guest traders and pilgrims. The learned preceptors, highly skilled masons, stone cutters, sculptors and other artisans were available in desired number to carry out the wishes and plans of the donors. As will be discussed later several names of sculptors have been traced in the early inscriptions from Mathurā.

The city also served as a transit trade centre extending all transport facilities for the movement of merchandise from one place to the other. The flourishing trade of Mathurā is testified by the *Āvasyakacūrī* which states that as an important business centre it was regularly trading with the southern Mathurā or Madurai.\(^{18}\) Similarly we are informed by the *Bṛhatkalpasūtrakhaṇḍa* that the main source of livelihood of the people of Mathurā was trade and commerce and not agriculture.\(^{19}\)

Thus the importance Mathurā as a Metropolis of Northern India was not only due to its rich religious or cultural background but the trade and economic factor was also responsible for this credit. The trade flourished during to its stratigic geographical situation and routes connecting it with almost all important towns in all directions. This fact is richly testified by literature and a number of inscriptions.\(^{20}\) It rose to further eminence in the first three centuries of the christian era when it became a stronghold of the Śaka and Kuśāṇa power. But soon after the disruption of the Kuśāṇa rule Mathurā not only lost its political status but due to repeated attacks it also disintegrated as a nerve of trade activities. Under these odd circumstances the city was left with no alternative but to shrink itself again to be a focal print of religion and spiritualism an honour which it has been commanding since time immemorial.

**B. WORK SO FAR DONE**

While no complete study of the Buddhist art of Mathurā has been undertaken so far, several eminent authorities have been contributing on the subject for more than a century. Stacy was the first fortunate person to pick up the antiquarian remains from Mathurā\(^ {21}\) but its identification has been debatable and we are not in a position to call it a Buddhist piece. Sir Alexander Cunningham paid several visits to

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Mathurā between the years 1853 and 82 and furnished a detailed account of his archaeological researches including the discovery of Buddhist finds in his Survey Reports. He tried to identify several spots and monuments, explored and excavated various sites acquiring a large number of Buddhist remains and architectural fragments. He also deciphered some inscriptions and published them in his reports. The following important conclusions are drawn from his repeated exploratory work:

1. The Buddhist establishment at Mathurā had started in the third century B.C.  
2. The Buddhism was on decline in the region from the 7th century A.D. and had completely disappeared by the time of Mahmūd Ghaznavi’s invasion in 1017 A.D. It was expelled by force.  
3. Upagupta’s monastery was situated near the present Collectorate or Jail mound.  

F.S. Growse Collector of Mathurā District was a sound scholar, an enthusiastic archaeologist and an able writer. Exploring various mounds he traced numerous antiquities including a number of Buddhist remains. He was also responsible for founding the Mathurā Museum in 1874 for preserving the antiquities from Mathurā and its neighbourhood. Besides his stray articles on the archaeological discoveries of Mathurā in different journals he made a wonderful contribution by writing the Mathurā Memoir which is a celebrated work on the history and culture of the region. He has given a complete chapter on the Buddhist city of Mathurā and its antiquities. It was for the first time that Mathurā’s association with Buddhism was well recognised and established on firm grounds. Growse has disagreed with Cunnigham on several identifications and interpretations of early settlements and sculptures.

As there was no local museum at the initial stage antiquities discovered at Mathurā were sent out for study, research and safe custody to different museums and Indian Museum, Calcutta got the lion share. John Anderson while writing the catalogue devoted a few pages for Mathurā finds which included some Buddhist exhibits also. Dowson studied a few Buddhist epigraphs recovered from Mathurā

Ibid., No. III, 1871-72, pp. 13-46.  
Ibid., No. XX, 1882-83, pp. 36-49.  
26. He was first appointed as Joint Magistrate in 1871 and the following year he became Collector on which he served for six years before his transfer to Bulandshahr in 1878.  
27. (i) “Supposed Greek Sculpture at Mathurā”, *JASB*, XLIV, 1875, p. 212.  
in the beginning of the archaeological explorations. G. Buhler concentrated on the Jaina inscriptions but their study is equally important to get familiar with the contemporary organisation of Church. J.F. Fleet incorporated a few Buddhist inscriptions of Gupta period from Mathurā in the third volume of the Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum 1888, No. 60, 69 and 70.

Pandit Bhagwān Lāl Indrājī had recovered the sandstone lion capital from Saptarṣī mound at Mathurā—now housed in the British Museum, London. Its Kharoṣṭhī epigraph, recordings the erection of Buddhist monastery namely Guha Vihāra etc., was read by him, and several other Indologists of whom Sten Konow and F.W. Thomas deserve special mention. V.A. Smith illustrated a few Buddhist Sculptures also in his monograph on the Jaina Stūpa and other antiquities of Mathurā. The life size torso of the Bodhisattva has been captioned as Vardhamāna in the plate. Similarly the Buddha head on plate C 1 figure 2 has not been described as the head of the Buddha. Later Smith discussed more Buddhist sculptures from Mathurā in his studies on art.

J.Ph. Vogel's memory will always be cherished for his meritorious services in spreading the fame of Mathurā School of Art and particularly highlighting some of the master specimens of Buddhist sculptures carved in the Mathurā style. His paper titled Mathurā School of Sculpture still serves as gateway for the study of Mathurā art. He examined the entire collection in the Mathurā Museum and brought out its first catalogue in 1910. The Buddhist antiquities have been discussed under classification, A from p. 47 to 65. He contributed several other papers on the Buddhist remains from Mathurā.

R.D. Banerji also deserves rich compliments for his hard work in preparing the manuscript of the catalogues of the Lucknow Museum which somehow or the other could not be published. But these typed registers including the one on the Buddhist Sculptures serve as valuable documents for the study of Mathurā art.

31. JRAS., N.S., V, 1871, pp. 182-93.
32. EI., I, 1892, p. 371.
33. EI., II, 1894, p. 195.
34. JRAS., 1894, p. 541.
36. EI., IX, 1907-08, pp. 135-47.
37. ASI, New Imp. Series XX, 1901, p. 63, pl. CV-CVII.
38. Ibid., p. 43, fig. LXXXVII. The description on p. 43 mentions that Fuhrer identified it as Vardhamāna and Mukherjee (probably R.K.) thought it to be a Brahmamical deity in the act of blessing.
   (ii) "Explorations at Mathurā", ASR, 1911-12, pp. 120-33.
   (iii) "La Sculpture de Mathurā", Art Asiatique, 1930.
   (vi) De Buddhistische Kunst van Voor-India, 1932.
including the Buddhist sculptures. Besides, he published some important papers on
the Buddhist finds from Mathurā.42

A. Foucher, a champion of Gândhāra School of art ignored the contribution of Mathurā School and just made passing references of some Buddhist finds from Mathurā while comparing them with their Gândhāra counterparts.43 He believed in the Hellenistic origin of the Buddha image and did not favour Mathurā.44 Daya Ram Sahni deciphered a few Buddhist inscriptions from Mathurā.45

H. Luders' contribution in the study of Mathurā inscriptions has been laudable. His decipherments and interpretations of the early epigraphs including the Buddhist documents have helped the researchers on art and culture of Mathurā to a great extent.46 His supplementary list was brought out by K.L. Janart.47 Following Vogel, Ram Prasad Chanda also wrote an essay on the Mathurā School of sculpture in which he commented on some Buddhist sculptures from Mathurā also.48

A.K. Coomaraswamy was another champion of Mathurā School of art and he not only appreciated the Mathurā style and its contribution but also credited this school for the origin of the Buddha image.49 This may, however, be pointed out that Victor Goloubew50 and Iwasaki Museum51 had already favoured Mathurā for the Gandhāra origin of the Buddha image was also refuted by E.B. Havell.52 He favoured the indigenous origin although Mathurā was not specifically mentioned in this regard probably due to the fact that not much material was available for study. Havell opposed the theory of Grunwedel who advocated in favour of Gandhāra.53 Ludwig Bachhofer illustrated several important Buddhist sculptures

42. (i) "The Scythian Period of Indian History," I A, XXXVII, 1908, pp. 25-75.
   (v) "Three Sculptures in the Lucknow Museum", ASR., 1909-10, pp. 146-49.
43. L' art Greco-Bouddhique du Gandhara. I, 1905, pp. 211, 217, 569 etc.
   (iii) "Mathurā Pedestal Inscription of the Kuśāna year 14", EI., XIX, 1927-28, pp. 96-97.
46. "A List of Brāhma Inscriptions from the earliest times to about 400 A.D. etc." published as Appendix to EI., X, 1912.
   (iii) "Buddha's Cūḍā, Hair, Uṣṇīṣa and Crown", JRAS., 1928, pp. 815-41.
   (iv) HIIA, pp. 56-63.
52. Indian Sculpture and Painting, 1908, p. 41.
53. Buddhist art in India, 1901, p. 68.
from Mathurā in his work. Similarly Stella Kramrisch also discussed some Buddhist finds from Mathurā in her writings.

V.S. Agrawala availed full advantage of his tenure as Curator of the Mathurā Museum and made a thorough study of the collection. To begin with he brought out a guide book of the Museum in which important Buddhist sculptures were also dealt with. Later as Curator of the Provincial Museum, Lucknow his first task was to reorganise the Archaeological Section and to prepare a guidebook in which he described some Buddha/Bodhisattva images acquired from Mathurā. His other notable contribution was to update Mathurā Museum Catalogue of Vogel. The revised catalogue was published in different issues of the Journal of the U.P. Historical Society between the years 1948-53 and the first of the series was on the Buddhist finds. He gave due recognition to the Mathurā School of art in his other writings also. He opined that Mathurā’s noblest contribution was the representation of the Buddha figure in human form. M.M. Nagar, successor of V.S. Agrawala at Mathurā wrote a guide book of the Museum in Hindi in which he explained the Buddhist sculptures also.

J.E. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw’s work is another commendable contribution in the stylistic study of Mathurā's sculptural art and particularly the development of Buddhist icons. She has advanced many a convincing arguments in the favour of the Mathurā origin of the Buddha image. On the basis of stylistic and epigraphic study Van Lohuizen has taken much pains in framing the chronology of the Buddhist and Jaina sculptures on quite convincing grounds. But in certain figures the stylistic frame work does not tally with the recorded date on the pedestal and in such cases she has suggested to add the figure of hundred in the given date. (D.C. Sircar incorporated a few Buddhist Mathurā epigraphs also in his book on inscriptions). He has discussed some other inscribed Buddhist sculptures in Epigraphica Indica etc.

Benjamin Rowland discussed some Buddhist sculptures from Mathurā in his work and observed that Mathurā should be given the credit for shaping the earliest

54. Indian Sculpture II, p. 79-90.
55. Indian Sculpture, 1933.
57. A Short Guide Book to the Archaeological Section of the Provincial Museum, Lucknow, 1940, pp. 15-16.
60. Ibid., p. 217.
62. The “Scythian” Period, 1949, Capters III and IV.
63. Ibid., pp. 150-71.
64. Ibid., pp. 171-219.
65. Ibid., pp. 236-37.
66. Select Inscriptions, 1954, No. 50, 54 and 56 A.
entirely Indian representation of the Buddha. He, however, has not dealt with the controversy of the origin of the Buddha image either at Mathurā or at Gāndhāra as he thinks it a futile chauvinistic exercise. K.D. Bajpai while serving as Curator in the Mathurā Museum wrote a general introductory book on Mathurā in Hindī in 1950 which was revised in 1955 and 1980 by different publishers. The art and iconography pages of this book describe a few Buddhist specimens also. N.P. Joshi Curator of the Mathurā Museum from 1963 to 67 brought out a monograph on Mathurā art in which he has illustrated the Buddhist sculptures also prominently. C. Sivaramamurti referred to a few important Buddha images in his introductory art book.

J.M. Rosenfield seems to have been confronted with the problem of dating the problematic sculptures and for that he forwarded a formula which is quite near the solution offered earlier by Van Lohuizen. He suggests that a second Kuśāṇa era started after the year 98 of Kaniṣka's reign. B.N. Mukherjee has, however, contradicted the views expressed by Van Lohuizen and Rosenfield of omission of 100 or the commencement of a second Kuśāṇa era after 98 years of Kaniṣka's reign. He suggests that the demand, economic condition and human factor should also be taken into account on assigning a date to the art piece. Stylistic consideration alone should not be the deciding factor for fixing the time limit. Van Lohuizen's theory has been opposed by Gai on the palaeographic grounds also.

Under the editorship of Mulk Rāj Ānand a special issue on Mathurā was brought out by the Mārg Publications. In this issue the origin of the Buddha image was discussed by Ānand himself and Y. Krishan. K.D. Bajpai contributed on the Kuśāṇa art of Mathurā including the Buddhist images. The Gupta art of Mathurā was highlighted by V.N. Srivastava illustrating some beautiful Buddha images. The last author has also contributed some papers on the inscriptions of Buddhist images from Mathurā in different journals, such as the pedestal of the year 93 and another pedestal of the Gupta Era 125Sravasti in collaboration with Shivadhara Miśra published an inventory of Mathurā sculptures from 1939

68. Mathurā, 1955, pp. 36, 39 and 52.
71. Indian sculpture, 1961, pp. 36, 39 and 52.
72. Dynastic Arts of the Kuśāṇas (henceforth DAK), 1967, pp. 270-73 and 295.
74. Ibid., 352.
76. Mārg, XV, March 1962, No. 2.
77. Ibid., pp. 8-16.
78. Ibid., pp. 28-48.
79. Ibid., pp. 49-58.
80. EI, XXXVII, pp. 151.
Introduction

(after V.S. Agrawala's catalogue) to 1973. Section of the invententory comprises the Buddhist images.\textsuperscript{81}

S.K. Saraswati's work is a valuable document for the proper appreciation of Mathurā art and the Buddhist art of Mathurā. He has beautifully highlighted the important characteristics of the Buddhist sculptures from Mathurā from the beginning to the Gupta period.\textsuperscript{82} P.D. Mittal's Hindī book furnishes a good record of important Buddhist finds from Mathurā.\textsuperscript{83} The Damsteegt's recent work of hybrid Sanskrit inscriptions is a welcome addition to the study of documented Buddhist images from Mathurā.\textsuperscript{84} The other notable contribution during the recent years on the study of Buddhist art has been made by D.L. Snellgrove.\textsuperscript{85} The Buddha images from Mathurā have been dealt with in chapters 2 and 3. Some good works on the Buddhist art incorporating the sculptures from Mathurā have been brought out in Jāpān. But as these are in the Japanese language their contents are not known to the majority of the scholars.\textsuperscript{86} J.C. Harle's new monograph mentions a few Buddha images of the Mathurā School of art.\textsuperscript{87} Actually no book on Indian art can afford to ignore the Mathurā art products and particularly the Buddhist sculptures which excell the figures of all other sects in beauty and grace.

The present author has also made his humble contribution in this field. In his comprehensive guide book of the Mathurā Museum\textsuperscript{88} the Buddhist sculptures housed in the Mathurā Museum have been discussed in detail.\textsuperscript{89} The problem of the origin of the Buddha image has also been thrashed out on the basis of some more convincing and positive arguments.\textsuperscript{90} Recent Buddhist discoveries from Govindnagar have been highlighted in the Lalit Kalā.\textsuperscript{91} B.N. Mukherjee has dwelt upon various aspects of Mathurā in his recent work focussing attention on the Śaka-Pahlava period.\textsuperscript{92} An International Seminar on the cultural history of ancient Mathurā was organised by the George Mason University, Virginia, U.S.A. through the American Institute of Indian Studies in New Delhi in January 1980. Ample light was thrown on the history and society of Mathurā up to the 3rd century A.D.

\textsuperscript{81} BMA, No. 11-12, June-December 1973, pp. 85-95.
\textsuperscript{82} A Survey of Indian Sculpture, Second Ed., 1975, pp. 64-68 and 133-34.
\textsuperscript{83} Braj Ki Kalān Kā Itihāsa, 1975, pp. 94-100, 1934-43.
\textsuperscript{84} Epigraphical Hybrid Sanskrit, 1978, pp. 159-72, 247.
\textsuperscript{85} The Image of the Buddha, 1978.
\textsuperscript{86} Mention may be made of the dignified and nicely reproduced volume captioned, The World of the Buddha by Hajime Nakamura, Yasuaki Nara and Ryojun Satoh with photographs by Isamu Maruyama.
\textsuperscript{89} Sharma, R.C., MMA, pp. 37-41 & 66-67.
\textsuperscript{91} Lalit Kalā, No. 19.
\textsuperscript{92} Mathurā and its Society—the Śaka Pahlava Phase, Calcutta, 1981.
C. IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT

The Background of Mathurā Art

Various factors have contributed to the eminence of Mathurā region. Eversince the religious preceptors have found it to be a suitable place to propagate their message. Not only the Brāhmaṇism or Hinduism embraced it since the dawn of Indian culture but Jainism and Buddhism also flourished here for several centuries. Many an important events in the sphere of religion, culture and art have taken place. It has given birth to the pantheon of all sects of early India. The contribution of Mathurā towards the development of Indian art and iconography has been of considerable significance with far reaching consequences. The transmutation from symbolic cult to the anthropomorphic form has been a landmark in the history of Indian art and culture and Mathurā has made the foremost contribution in this regard. S. K. Saraswati rightly observes, 'It is at Mathurā that this innate anthropomorphism and iconism asserted with vigour and found expression in images of the divinities of the principal religious systems.'

Significance

The style of art originated and developed at Mathurā not only dominated the northern part of the country but also influenced and inspired other subsequent schools of art. It is, therefore, quite appropriate that the art of Mathurā be studied more thoroughly from different angles. No study of Indian art or iconography is complete without taking into account the art products of Mathurā. The Mathurā School serves as the foundation of the great mansion of Indian art. Till the first quarter of the twentieth century Mathurā did not receive due recognition and was supposed to be the Indian version of late Hellenistic art conventions. But several European and Indian art historians and Indologists studied the subject with an unbiased view and gave due credit to the glorious artistic activities which were vibrated with indiginous thoughts, vision and sentiments. The rich and potential sites in Mathurā and its vicinity further strengthened this assessment through revealing thousands of terracotta, sculptural and architectural remains some of which displaying super artistic talent. But full justice has not been done with this cultural wealth and despite several commendable efforts Coomaraswamy's will has not yet been fulfilled and major part of the Mathurā art specimens escape the attention of the scholars. This drawback has hampered the process of proper appreciation of the magnanimity of this great style of sculptural art.

Non-sectarian Trends

In presenting this dissertation the present author has tried to draw the

94. ... 'Publications fully illustrating all that has been found in Mathurā are one of the first necessities.' History of Indian and Indonesian Art (henceforth HIA) 1965, p. 56, footnote No. 5.
attention of the scholars and researchers of Indian art to only one aspect of Mathurā school, i.e. the Buddhist art of Mathurā. Truely speaking the art of India should not be classified into sectarian divisions. There was no restriction or bar of religion among the artists and they were carving the sculptures and themes of all sects. The decorative motifs viz. full vase, lotus scroll, floral decoration, Svastika etc. are common to all sects. Similarly the stūpa architecture in Buddhism and Jainism is same. Dharmacakra, Triratna, Śrīvatsa etc. were adopted by both the religions. Even Āyāgapaṭas which are special feature of Jainism have been noticed associated with Buddhism as evidenced from a few specimens from Amaravati. Coomaraswamy's remark on Sāñchī is applicable on Mathurā also, 'The art of Sāñchī is not, as art, created or inspired by Buddhism, but is reaily Indian art adapted to edifying ends, and there with retaining its own intrinsic qualities'.

Van Lohuizen also thinks that the religions show a close relation so far as the expression of art is concerned. 'The reason is that early Indian art has never been sectarian . . . . and therefore it is impossible to talk of Jainistic or Buddhistic art in those very first schools of art'. Buhler's statement is more specific on this issue: 'the ancient art of Jainas did not differ materially from that of the Buddhists. Both the sects used the same ornaments, the same artistic motifs and the same sacred symbols, difference occurring chiefly in minor points only the cause of this agreement is in all probability, not that adherents of one sect imitated those of the other, but that both drew on the national art of India and employed the same artists.' Marshall expressed the same view while commenting on the sculptural art of Sāñchī. The description of monuments as found in the Jaina texts particularly the Rāyapaseniyam holds good for the Buddhist stūpas also.

Religious Fervour

Thus it is clear that the essential character of the early Indian art has been non sectarian but at the same time it was always wedded to the religion. Art has been the vehicle of our highest thoughts and vision which were inspired by religion. It was religion which opened the window of emotions and sentiments in the heart and mind of the artist who poured life in his creation through different expressions. The inter relationship of art and religion has been well explained by Agrawāla. While all religions spelt the same fundamental truth

95. Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw, J.E., The 'Scythian' Period (henceforth SP), 1949, p. 151.
96. HIIA., p. 36.
97. SP., p. 151-52.
100. 'Religion provided for soul. It opened the gates of human heart for a tide-like flow of human emotions. Religion also provided zest to life and gave to its most valuable motive-forces. Inspired by religion, art retained its purity. It was utilitarian from the worldly point of view, but was worshipped for its own sake, i.e. for the sake of a higher spiritual purpose. Its function was not to please the eye, but to satisfy the spirit. There was no compromise on this vital point.' V.S. Agrawala in the Studies in Indian Art, 1965, p. 7.
through different means of communications including art and architecture still some specific peculiarities made distinction between one religion and the other. The same was expressed through the media of art. Narration of myths, stories and life events of pontiffs certainly differentiated one religion from the other and this distinction is to be noticed in the iconographic details as well.

Thus a school of art while treating a particular religious theme might show traits mannerism conducive to the treatment of the subject. As archaeological finds show Buddhism was an important theme with the artists of Mathurā, many of them might not have been Buddhists themselves but their clientele included Buddhists in number. Their products betray features of Mathurā art and also some peculiar Buddhistic iconic traits and mannerism. These products can be aptly described as specimens of the Buddhist art of the Mathurā School. Our object is to study them in detail in the light of the latest archaeological discoveries. Such a discovery is of greater significance after the rich finds from Govindnagar.

The Plan of the work

The scheme of work has been divided into three main sections each consisting of three chapters. The first section deals with the introductory part incorporating geographical significance, importance of the subject and a quick survey of the work so far done by other scholars. The second chapter is devoted to the historical background from the earliest time to the end of the Gupta period.

The Second Section will be devoted to the Materials for the study of Mathurā Art and will be spread over in three chapters numbered in accordance with the general scheme. Thus the fourth chapter will present a survey of the archaeological campaigns in the Mathurā region. The next chapter will describe the recent discoveries from Govindnagar a new site of extra ordinary significance. The sixth chapter will deal with the origin and development of Mathurā School Art.

The third Section will have as its caption the Buddhist Art in three chapters of which the first will survey the emergence of the Buddha in the Mathurā art. The delicate issue of the origin of the Buddha image will naturally form a major part of the discussion. The eighth chapter of our work will explain the chronological sequence of the Buddhist icons carved at Mathurā. The last chapter will sum up our important conclusions and findings. The discussions will be corroborated with photographic illustrations.
HISTORY OF MATHRĀ
FROM EARLIEST TIME TO THE GUPTA PERIOD

The survey of historical background and important events is pre-requisite for the study of art of a region. Since our scope is confined to the origin and development of the Buddhist art of Mathurā it is proposed to deal with the history of Mathurā region from the earliest time to the Gupta period only. As will be discussed in this and the subsequent chapters both Buddhism and the Buddhist art face their extinction at Mathurā after the Gupta age.

The reconstruction of early history of Mathurā depends on three main sources viz. 1. Indigenous literary texts, 2. Foreign travellers' documents and 3. Archaeological sources.

Literary Sources

The literary traditions are of great significance to trace the history of pre-Mauryan epoch of Mathurā. The early texts do not mention the nomenclature as Mathurā, instead Braj and Śurasena Janapada are frequently met with. The Vedic Saṁhitās do not refer to any of these three terms and it is quite likely that this region was known to the Vedic sages. P.V. Kane observes, 'Till now it has been impossible to trace an express Vedic reference to Mathurā, the chief city of the country of Śurasena. But its existence from at least the 5th century B.C. appears to rest on firm grounds.' The word Vraja which really stands for pastoral land in the Ṛgveda has sometimes been misinterpreted as the region of Vraja. The later Vedic texts, however, hint at the existence of some places and persons who are associated with the land of Vraja. The genealogy of different dynasties or the traditions of teachers and their disciples as found in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, Vanīśa Brāhmaṇa, Chāndogya Upaniṣad and Vṛhadāranyaka Upaniṣad shed some light on the early conditions of this place.

The Epic literature and particularly the Mahābhārata is stocked with references to Mathurā and the Śūrasena region. The genealogy of solar and lunar dynasties describe several kings who held their sway over this land. This point will be subsequently discussed at the appropriate place. The glory of Mathurā owes to the traditions of the Mahābhārata.\(^5\) Panini was conversant with some names of the important heroes of the Bhārata was but we remain in dark with regard to the local conditions prevalent in the time i.e. c. 5th century B.C. The place has been described as a stronghold of Audhaka-ṛṣūṇi clans.\(^6\) The Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya refers to the Vṛṣūṇīs as a republican state and Kṛṣṇā has been called as Sangha Mukhyā of the combined guilds of Andhakas and Vṛṣūṇīs.\(^7\) The book describes the cotton cloth of Mathurā as of high quality.\(^8\) The early Yakṣa statues found in Mathurā region indicate that life-size, heroic size and even colossal images of folk deities were made here in the Mauryan-Śunga period and the manufactory was run by some master sculptors as Kunika, Gomitaka and Nāka. The colossal statue from Parkham in the Mathurā Museum No. C. 1 is an important illustration (fig. 1). Balarāma seems to have been other folk deity whose figures were made from the Śunga period as evidenced by the Lucknow Museum statue No. G. 215 from Junsūṭi, Mathurā (fig. 2).

Patañjali, the famous commentator on Aṣṭādhyāyī admires the general conditions of this place in his time i.e. 2nd century B.C. The people were happy and good looking and probably better off than the residents of Sankṣaya and Pātaliputra.\(^9\) Patañjali also furnishes an interesting information when commenting on Aṣṭādhyāyī V. 3.55. that there was some difference of price of cloth fabricated at Kāśi and that at Mathurā although the measurements were same, Kāśi produced a superior quality.\(^10\) In explaining another Sūtra Patañjali refers to Mathurā.\(^11\) Yet another important reference in the Mahābhāṣya is that of the dramatic representa-

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5. Aṣṭādhyāyī, IV. 1/14, IV 282 and VI. 2. 34.
6. Agrawala, V.S. India as known to Pāṇini, 1952, pp. 361-64.
8. Mathurāyataṃ kālakārā kālakāra bārd bārdak ca kārāpaṃ kṛṣṇā {
\textit{Arthaśāstra} II, Ch. 11, Sūtra 115.
9. Sākāśyacēṣṭha pātaliputratēṣṭha Mathurā prabhāṣyā nāti
\textit{Mahābhāṣya}, 5.3.57.
10. Īk samāne ṛṇyām kāsīyāṃ parānāṃ parānāṃ Mathurā prabhāṣyā
\textit{II}, p. 413.
11. N īk kāśyāṃ vṛttaṃ samāne ca Mathurāyām
(Kielhorn’s Edition pp. 18, 19, 244.)
tion of paintings and of stone depicting the killing of Kansa by Vásudeva. He also quotes a part of a verse about this scene. This is the earliest reference of Kṛṣṇalīlā (probably earlier tradition of Rāsa) which was painted and narrated before the public by Kathākāras, Sūtas etc. He further states that the people of Mathurā wandered in the Kuruland and vice versa. Mathurā or Śūrasena is referred to in the Manusmrīti where Manu addresses a king to place the Śūrasenas in the front line when arranging the army in the field. This points to the martial capabilities of the people of this place.

The Paurānic literature, however, excels all, describing the region of Mathurā, the heroes of the Bhārata war and their deeds. Almost all the important Purānas give graphic description of various events but those which repeatedly remember Mathurā are: Harivansha, Viṣṇu, Matsya, Padma, Bhāgavata, Varāha and Brahma Vaivarta. One gets a glimpse of cultural evolution of early India including of the Vraja region through the Purāṇas as all aspects of human advancements have been enumerated in detail. Not only the chronology and genealogy of kings and dynasties have been furnished but philosophy, religion, polity, society, art and crafts, war etc. have also been vividly discussed. The reader should, however, be careful in utilising the Paurānic material as source of history allowing a considerable margin for exaggeration and metaphors. The secular Sanskrit literature including epics, dramatlas, lyrics etc. may be found useful for the purpose but in most cases the narrations of the Great Epics and the Purāṇas are followed in same or different version.

Besides the Brāhmaṇic literature, the Buddhist and Jaina texts are also of vital importance for the reconstruction of the history of Mathurā which was an important centre of the activities of these sects in the pre-Muslim India. Some of the Buddhist works particularly Divyavādana and Lalitavistara refer to the visits of the Buddha to Mathurā. These further record the association of several eminent Buddhist monks with this place. Besides, the threads of cultural history of Mathurā are to be picked up from Ghaṭajātaka, Majhimanikaya Mahāvatthu, Petavatthu.

12. ये तावदेके शोभिका: शोभिका: नन्मते प्रत्येक कसं धातवन्ति प्रत्येक च वलि व शयनस्तीति।

13. प्रयोक्ता बद्धनि विषयः इति किमथम्।

14. बद्धु क्रुण चरा मधुर द्रियकुर्क चरा मधुरा

15. Manusmrīti, II.18-20 and VII.193.
Vimānavatthu, Aṭṭakathā etc. The association of Buddhism with Mathurā has, however, been discussed at length in the next chapter.

There is also an unbroken chain of Jaina literature which describes the socio-religious conditions of Mathurā. The Śilpa texts give beautiful description of the contemporary architectural and artistic wealth of the place. The Rāyapaseniya is a remarkable treatise to study the Jaina stūpa of Mathurā. Other Jaina works which furnish useful information are: Kalpasūtra, Samavayangasūtra, Uttarādhyāyana sūtra, Vṛhatakathākośa, Vāsudevahinī, Avaśyakacūrṇi, Ādipurāṇa, Jaina Harivaṇsapurāṇa, Vṛhatakpalabhaśya etc.

Documents of Foreign Travellers

The land of Mathurā has attracted the notice of foreigners also who came to India on pilgrimage or on trade or on diplomatic missions. The persual of their memoirs suggests that the travellers have been quite faithful in rendering their records. The first of them is Megasthanas from Greece towards the end of the 4th century B.C. when Candragupta Maurya was reigning in India. His experiences have been recorded by Arrian in his famous work ‘Indica’. Megasthanes mentions two great towns of Śūrasenas viz. Methora (Mathurā) and Clesibora (Keśavapura). Besides, he also speaks of the river which flowed in these towns. Another Greek writer Pliny describes the river Jomnes (Yamunā) and the two cities on its bank. The third Greek writer Ptolemy calls Modoura (Mathurā) as a city of gods.

The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien and Huientsang visited India in the 4th and 7th century A.D. respectively. From their statements we gather that Buddhism was flourishing at Mathurā and there were many Buddhist monasteries where thousands of monks resides. But some of the narrated by Huientsang need verification as sometimes he seems confused in giving the facts while describing the places.

Archaeological Sources

Archaeology is the most important source for reconstruction of history of the area concerned. It is of utmost significance for bridging up the gaps and for shedding light on the dark phases. Pre and protohistory are the outcome of archaeological researches. The same can be said about the ancient period of Mathurā which is a rich mine of archaeological finds and the glorious past of the region still remains buried beneath to a great extent. Sculptural epigraphic and

17. Mathurā has been visited by the saints and Ācāryas of different sects from all parts of the country. These scholars have left a rich legacy of literary works for propogating their doctrines. The tradition has continued to-date. We therefore find large number of manuscripts in Mathurā and its vicinity in Sanskrit, Hindi, Oria, Banglā, Marāṭhi, Gujrati, Persian, Urdu etc. The discourses collected in the form of Vārtā Sāhitya are of great value to study the post-mediaval society of Mathurā region. The important ones are Dōson Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā and Caurāśi Vaiṣṇavan ki Vārtā.
numismatic finds not only corroborate literary evidence but in several cases go a step forward and furnish new valuable material throwing ample light on the early days of Mathurā. Since the discovery of the first antiquity in 1836 the sites of Mathurā have been revealing enormous antiquarian wealth. There have been regular archaeological campaigns both by foreign and Indian Indologists. While the excavated material ranges from about the 10th century B.C. the prehistoric stone tools should belong to about 50,000 B.C. A hoard of the Copper Age implements was recovered from the Sādābād Sub-division of the District. The earliest pottery as collected from the lowest levels of the scientific excavations is known as Painted Grey Ware. Some scholars attempted to associate this ware with the Mahābhārata age.

The numismatic evidence is another vital archaeological source and coins found in Mathurā and its vicinity furnish several names of kings who are not known from any other source. In this context the coins of Mitras and Dattas are of great value. Epigraphy is yet another branch of archaeology as this provides the most authentic document for the study of the contemporary society. Luckily we have hundreds of inscriptions incised on stone or on the pedestals of the images unearthed at Mathurā. These deal with various aspects of social and religious life of the region. The names of the reigning kings and year of installation etc. furnished by many of them enhance significance of these lithic records. A perusal of Mathurā epigraphs is essential to trace the cultural and political developments of the Northern India in pre and post-christian centuries. The stone inscriptions also record the existence of more than two dozens of monasteries at Mathurā.

It is from these archaeological discoveries that we know of the highly developed artistic trends in Mathurā region. A reputed school of plastic art was in function and it dominated in the Northern India through its beautiful art products. It was from here that images of different deities were transported to distant places. We find several names of sculptors also on the pedestals of images. Innumerable stone sculptures and terracotta figurines unearthed from various sites of Mathurā and the adjoining region speak of an independent art style which originated a few centuries before Christ and reached the stage of zenith in the Gupta period.

19. Eminent Russian archaeologist and pre-historian Prof. Alexei P. Okladnikov, Director, Institute of History, Philology and Philosophy of Siberian Department who examined the implements in the Mathurā Museum on November 2, 1979, confirmed them as palaeoliths.
24. For further details of the archaeological discoveries please see Chapter IV of the present work.
SURVEY OF MAIN HISTORICAL EVENTS

Janapada Age

The political history of Mathurā can be traced back from about the 6th century B.C. when it was the capital of the Śūrasena country, one of the sixteen Janapadas in the Northern India. About a century later the Śūrasena territory seems to have formed a part of the Magadhan Empire which rose to great power under Nanda dynasty and Mahāpadma being the most famous ruler in the middle of the 4th century B.C. The subsequently the Nanda dynasty was uprooted by Candragupta Maurya and the Mathurā region was also reigned by the Mauryas. The references of the guilds of Vṛṣṇis and the Kukuras in the Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya suggests that even after being ousted, the Śūrasenas were exercising their influence in some form or the other and they worshipped Kṛṣṇa and Sankarṣana (Balarāma) who were the deities associated with cattle and Vraja.

Mauryan Period

The description as left by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Candragupta Maurya indicates that he had some personal knowledge about the place. He mentions the people as Sourasenoi their deity as Herakles (indentified as Kṛṣṇa), the river Iobares (probably Yamunā) and the two cities Methora (Mathurā) and Cleisobora the identification of which has been a problem. The place came into prominence in the reign of Aśoka whose religious preceptor Upagupta hailed from here.

Śunga Time

By the end of the 3rd century B.C. and beginning of the second century B.C. the Mauryan Empire was disintegrated and the power was seized by Puṣyamitra of Śunga dynasty. But he did not control over the vast Mauryan empire and some provincial governors or feudatories had also declared their independence availing advantage of debility of the successors of Aśoka. We are not sure regarding the position of Mathurā region but the scholars hold that it formed part of the Śunga kingdom. The society during this period was prosperous and people were happy. Mathurā was one of the important towns and several trade routes passed through here.

Greek Infiltration

The land was, however, invaded by the Greek chiefs who came from Bactria.

26. Ibid., p. 61.
28. Ibid., pp. 422, 353.
Demetrius was contemporary of Puṣyamitra and it was most probably this king who after conquering the Punjāb, attacked on Madhyamikā and Sāketa and passed through Mathurā. Another important Greek ruler was Menander who raided upto the Yamunā valley. An inscription recently noticed on a Śivalinga in Fatehpur District may lead us to conclude that Menander attacked the eastern districts of present Uttar Pradesh. But the contention of G.R. Sharma has been refuted by B.N. Mukherjee who does not read the word Minandara (Menander) and observes that the epigraph should refer to a Scytho-Parthian ruler. The numismatic evidence indirectly corroborates this presumption but this does not prove the Greek sovereignty on Mathurā. We have a list of more than thirty Indo Greek rulers who are known through their coins and who came to scene after Demetrius and Eucratides but it is a difficult task to correlate them with each other and to adjust in a framework of chronology in a short span of time. It is also not clear how many of them exercised their influence in the Mathurā region. This should, however, be made clear that the numismatic evidence is largely corroborated by the literary traditions which bespeak of the aggressive activities of the Yavana chiefs by way of plunder and massacre, although their rule or long stay has been disaffirmed.

Mitrās-Dattas

Right from the beginning of the Ist century B.C. we notice several princes trying to consolidate their hold at Mathurā. The coins of Gomitra, Sūryamitra and Viṣṇumitra suggest a Mitra dynasty while similar finds of Puruṣadatta, Uttamadatta, Bhavadatta, Kāmadatta, Rāmadatta, Śeṣadatta, etc. point out to the possibility of a Datta rule. We are not in a position to earmark a definite time span to every individual ruler but the chronology framed by the excavations at Sonkh in the Mathurā district (Fig. 3) proves that the Mitrās were followed by the

31. ततः साकेतमाध्यं पंचालं मण्डलस्तथा ।
वचनः दुष्टं विद्वृत्तात: प्रास्त्यनिति कुबुमध्यवम् ॥


35. The Puranas describe:
भविष्यं ह यवना धर्मं: कामतीश्वरः ।
वैव भूर्णंभीविद्वास्ते भविष्यनि नराविष्ण: ॥

The Gṛgī Śarīhītā narrates:
मवदेन्ते न स्वस्थस्त्वित्य यवना गुडा दुर्गङ्गः ।
तेवाम्विन्यो निकावा भविष्णे न समय: ॥

PHA, I, p. 386.
Dattas.\textsuperscript{36} An inscribed stone fragment and a brick from Ganesarā refer to some building activity by Kohada a Minister of Gomitra.\textsuperscript{37} The discovery of a hoard of about 700 coins of Brahmapitrā in 1954 hints that he was a ruler of considerable significance.\textsuperscript{38} Brahma is recorded in an early Brāhmī inscription found at Gayā.\textsuperscript{39} He was probably ruling at Mathurā when Demetrius attacked Pātaliputra. The bricks from village Morā\textsuperscript{40} in the Mathurā District refer to the erection of some shrine by queen Yasamati (Yaśomati), the daughter of king Brahmapitimitra (Brahaspitimitra). This suggests that the husband of Yasamata must have been Brahmapitrā ruling ever Mathurā. Out of the Datta kings who followed Mitra some used the title of Rajan in their coins.\textsuperscript{41}

It is open to dispute whether these Mitra and Datta rulers were scions of the main Śunga dynasty or independent rulers as suggested by the coins minted in their respective names. We have the evidence to prove that the Śungas were also disintegrating right from the middle of the second century B.C., particularly due to mounting pressure of Bactrian invaders.\textsuperscript{42} This gave way to family feuds and the provincial governors and the feudatories tried to enjoy independent status and Mathurā being far away from the capital (Pātaliputra) witnessed the short term rule of such less significant princes or kings. Still the contemporary account of the region is quite encouraging.\textsuperscript{43} While the Śungas were the followers of Brāhmanism, Buddhism and Jainism also gained their footing and their shrines and institutions were gradually coming up. The Mathurā school of sculpture which we shall discuss in detail separately had its beginning in this period. Terracotta art was more popular and the introduction of the technique of mould resulted in producing the beautiful and slim figures in abundance.

\textsuperscript{36} Hartel, Op. cit., fig. 10.
\textsuperscript{37} रान्नो गोमित्तस ब्राह्मचेतन कोह्देन कारितम्
\textsuperscript{a} जिबुप्तायेकर राजा भरायेबृहस्पतिश्चरः बि: तु
\textsuperscript{b} जिबुप्तायेकर राजा भरायेबृहस्पतिश्चरः तः
\textsuperscript{c} पुतायेकर राजान
\textsuperscript{d} भरायेबृहस्पतिश्चरः
\textsuperscript{e} य बृहस्पतिश्चरः
\textsuperscript{f} यशवंतायेकर भारितम्
\textsuperscript{42} ब्रह्मचेतन: साकेत: ब्रह्मचेतन: मध्यमिकम्।
Mahābhāṣya, 2.32.8
\textsuperscript{43} सांकायकेमिश्च पाटलिपुरकेमिश्च मानुरा ब्रह्मचेतन: इति
Mahābhāṣya, 5.3.57.
History of Mathurā

Scytho-Parthians

In about the middle of the first century B.C. the fame and prosperity of Mathurā attracted yet another stock of the foreign invaders and this time they were Scytho-Parthians. The chiefs are generally known by their titles Kṣatrapa or Sātropa. The earliest of them was Rājuvala or Rājula.44 who himself was Sātrap Azelises and Śoḍāśa who made a definite contribution in Mathurā’s history before and in the beginning of the Christian era. The Lion Capital discovered in 169 from Saptarṣi mound in the south eastern quarter of Mathurā city and now housed in the British Museum, London is a fine specimen of early pillar architecture. Made in typical red sandstone the capital is square block representing two lions standing back to back. The most important part is the epigraph in the Kharoṣṭhī characters recording the construction of a Buddhist monastery Guhā Vihārā (cave monastery) by Ayaśī Kamuia (Kambojijā), the chief queen of Mahākṣatrapa Rājavula.45 Almost a life size statue (fig. 4) made in schist stone and carved in the Gandhārā style, recovered from the same site, is believed to represent this royal lady.46

Rājavula was succeeded by his son Śoḍāśa who probably enjoyed the governorship (Kṣatrapa) of Mathurā in his father’s regime. This can be gathered from the Morā well inscription incised on a large stone slab which mentions Rājula as Mahākṣatrapa (overlord) and his son (name not given) as Svāmi (governor).47 The epigraph commemorates the installation of five statues of Vṛṣṇi heroes. Another epigraph on the doorjamb records the construction of a Bhāgavata shrine in the reign of Śoḍāśa.48 As the name of his father is missing in this case we may conclude that this charitable deed belongs to somewhat later period when Śoḍāśa was a full sovereign. Unfortunately the title of the king (Mahākṣṭrpa) is not clearly legible. Śoḍāśa also finds a place on a Jaina Ayāgapāṭṭa set up by Amohini (fig. 5) with the epithet of king as overlord, Mahākṣatrapa.49 The present author was fortunate enough to acquire an interesting and rare stone inscription50 from village Mirzāpur near Mathurā in 1979 (fig.6) It not only mentions Swāmī Mahākṣatrapa Śoḍāśa but also unfolds several interesting facts about the Kṣatrapa rulers and their relation with the local subject. Another epigraph bearing almost the similar draft was found from Jamālpur, Mathurā in the last century and was reported by

45. Konow, Sten, *CII*, Vol. II, Part I, 1929, pp. 48-49. The inscription has been given in the next chapter of the present work.
49. Lucknow Museum No. J. 1, V.A. Smith, *Jaina Stūpa* etc. 1900, p. 21.
50. Mathurā Museum No. 79.29.
H. Lüders but subsequently lost. The Indian Museum, Calcutta also houses a fragmentary slab from Mathurā.

The present author while surveying these eight or nine epigraphs of the Kṣatrapa rulers tried to fix up a time table of the documents. The two epigraphs i.e. the Kharoṣṭhī inscription on the Lion Capital and the Moran Well inscription seem to be the earliest and belong to the reign of his father Rājula who has been addressed as Mahākṣatrapa while Śoḍāsa is mentioned only as Kṣatrapa. The Calcutta Museum inscription recording Śoḍāsa as Mahākṣatrapa but also mentioning Rājula whose position and context are obscure may be put up third in chronology. The fourth and fifth should be two inscriptions from Jamālpur and Mirzāpur referring to the erection of water tank etc. by Mūlavasu and his consort Kauśikī. Śoḍāsa now figures as the reigning king assuming the title of Svāmī Mahākṣatrapa. The Āryāvati or Amohinī tablet of Lucknow Museum belonging to year 72 of an unspecified era may be sixth. The fragmentary slab consisting of an incomplete inscription from Janmasthāna Mathurā. (Mathurā Museum No. 54, 3768) referring to the gift of a gateway by the wife of a Minister of Śoḍāsa should be placed at serial No. 7 as it belongs to the phase when Mūlavasu was promoted from Treasurership to the Ministership or his son had become Minister at the court of Śoḍāsa. The last in chronology fits the temple doorjamb probably from the same site and recording the dedication of the shrine to Vāsudeva by Vasu the son of Kauśikī-Pāksasā. The king remains the same i.e. Śoḍāsa but the boy Vasu is now grown up enough and he follows the footsteps of his parents Mūlavasu and Kauśikī and constructs a railing with a gateway. He enjoyed the same confidence of Śoḍāsa as was enjoyed by his father and was on some high rank. This conclusion is derived from the fact that the inscription records the wishes of the donor as the welfare of his master through his pious acts. The numismatic

51. List of the Brāhmi Inscriptions No. 82.
52. Ibid., No. 85c, IMC. No. N.S. 6482.
53. The paper was presented by the present author in the International Seminar on Mathurā held in New Delhi in January 1980.
54. The year 42 or generally accepted 72 as recorded in the Amohinī has been a point of dispute among the scholars who are not inclined to allow such a long time span for Śoḍāsa and presume that the date is given in some other era. But the perusal of all inscriptions of Śoḍāsa from Mathurā region warrants us to review this issue a fresh and to consider the possibility of an era founded either by Śoḍāsa or his father Rājula. The Amohinī tablet should be dated accordingly. If the figure is read as 42 it may be the regnal year of Śoḍāsa and if it is 72 then we may consider an era founded by his predecessor and father Rājula and continued by his son Śoḍāsa.
55. What time limit should be allowed to the reign of Śoḍāsa in the light of the circumstances mentioned in these epigraphs, is a matter of conjecture for archaeologists and historians. The present author feels that sufficient time has to be given to shape the events. Vasu who is introduced just as a son of Kauśikī Pāksakā later emerges as an official of some high rank. His father was the Treasurer (Gāmjāvara) of Śoḍāsa and it is quite possible that his promising son Vasu also impressed the king who appointed him on some high rank probably an Amāṭya (Minister). Vasu also prayed for the welfare of his master after erecting a railing and gateway of a shrine of Lord Vāsudeva most probably at the site of Kṣoṇajanmabhumi.
evidence suggests the existence of Śivaghoṣa and Śivadatta and then Hagāmaṣa and Hagāna as short term rulers in the Mathurā region.56

Kuṣāṇa Rule

The Śakas were followed by the Kuṣāṇas. The area was annexed to the Kuṣāṇa Empire probably during the reign of Vima Kadphises. The installation of his image (fig. 7) in a Devakula at Mathurā by his Bakanapati (temple keeper) proves that Vima Kadphises had established his rule in this region in about the middle of the 1st century A.D. He has been addressed as Mahārāja Rajatirāja Devaputra Shahi Vematakasama.57 The Brāhmī epigraph incised between his feet records the construction of a Devakula (temple or gallery), a garden (Ārama), tank (Puṣkariṇi), a well (Udapāna) etc. His coins frequently represent him as a Śaiva.

Vima was succeeded by Kanishka although we cannot say with certainty that the latter was the son of the former. Kanishka has been one of the greatest figures of the Indian history being a famous monarch and patron of art and literature. His court was adorned by the renowned philosopher Aśvaghosa and scholars like Pārśva, Vasumitra, Sangharakṣika and the physician and chemist Nāgārjuna. Both Mathurā and Gandhāra schools of art flourished during his age. Mathurā never enjoyed a greater significance in history of India than during the reign of this Emperor. He patronised Buddhism but other religions were also flourishing. He has been portrayed as a king of supernatural powers in the Buddhist texts. He was also probably responsible for founding the Śaka era commencing from his succession to the throne.58 But this issue has been one of the most controversial subjects among the historians and art critics. B.N. Puri while himself advocating in favour of 144 A.D. as the starting point of the reign of Kanishka has presented a good summary of views and theories profounded by different scholars on the issue.59

The headless statue of this king (fig. 8) recovered from Math60 represents him in the posture of a warrior wearing long tunic trousers (salvār) and heavy boots. He holds a sword with decorated scabbard in the left and a long club in his right hand. The firm grip of these weapons is suggestive of his might. His coins have been discovered in abundance and in Mathurā region these were in currency till the beginning of the twentieth century.61 Numerous epigraphs record his name and the Kuṣāṇa era. His time can rightly be called as the golden phase of the history of

61. Under the guidance of the present author the Mathurā Museum Modeller, Sri Shyam Sunder was able to prepare the head of Kanishka in 1980. It is based on the figure as noticed on the coins. This head is now displayed behind the headless statue of the Emperor.
Mathurā. He also is credited for convening a Buddhist Council in Kashmir under the chairmanship of Vasumitra and Áśvaghosa was its Vice President. This suggests his sway over Kashmir. B.N. Puri opines that after conquering ‘Kashmir Kaniṣṭha might have retired to his original kingdom at Khotan...’

How far the Kuśāṇa Empire as extended is a debatable issue but the numismatic and epigraphic discoveries indirectly suggest that the kingdom was large. B.N. Mukherjee observes: ‘The whole or a part of the territory of Kośala, and the regions of Kausāmbi and Vārānasi were in the empire of Kaniṣṭha I. But again we do not know whether these areas were ruled by the Kuśāṇas even after the end of his reign.’ Whether Mathurā was the eastern capital of his vast kingdom is not certain but it was one of the important metropolitan cities. The other metropolis was Kaniṣṭhapur (Peshawar) named after him. The capital of the Kuśāṇa Empire has been conjectured to be Balkh (ancient Bactria) or Khotan as pointed out above.

Kaniṣṭha ruled upto 101 A.D. The earliest inscription of the reign of his success or Vāsiṣṭha is of the year 20 i.e. 98 A.D. He ruled for a shorter period and his junior co-ruler and successor Huviṣka began his rule by the year 26. The common practice of the Kuśāṇa dynasty was that the junior ruler assisted the senior in managing the affairs of the empire. A recent epigraph on the pedestal of a missing Amitābha Buddha image recovered from the site of Govindnagar also records the year 26 and the reigning king was Huviṣka.

The Kharoṣṭhī inscription of the year 41 from Ārā, near the Indus river, has however, disturbed the Kuśāṇa chronology to a great extent. It mentions the king Kaniṣṭha as son of Vājheska or Vāsiṣṭha. Either we presume that Kaniṣṭha was the son of Vāsiṣṭha or we should have Kaniṣṭha II as son of Vāsiṣṭha. Rosenfield has forwarded several conjectures while discussing this problem: 1. That it belongs to Kaniṣṭha I, who had returned to India after campaigns in the Torim and resumed power having left Vāsiṣṭha and then Huviṣka to rule for eighteen years. 2. That both Kaniṣṭha and his father Vājeska were dead when the inscription was carved, Kaniṣṭha’s name being used to identify the era. 3. That Kaniṣṭha II was a minor when he succeeded his father Vāsiṣṭha, who died after a short reign. Huviṣka ruled as a regent, then Kaniṣṭha II succeeded to the throne, died or was killed and Huviṣka continued to reign. 4. That Kaniṣṭha II was a short lived usurper. 5. That there

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64. Ibid., p. 3.
67. Mathurā Museum No. 77. 30. Prof. B.N. Mukherjee is inclined to read the date as 26 although the present author while contributing his paper for Lalit Kalā, No. 19 read it as 28.
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were two Huviṣkas, grandfather and grandson, with Kanishka II intervening. 6. That there were two Huviṣkas, the first being Kanishka II’s uncle who usurped the throne. Kanishka II regained it but was succeeded by his cousin, Huviṣka II. 68

Van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw on the epigraphic and stylistic grounds thought that there were two Kuśāṇa centuries and 100 should be added in several epigraphs of Mathurā to frame a proper chronology. 69 In a paper contributed to the London conference on date of Kanishka she draws her conclusion after presenting a stylistic survey of the Buddha images of different schools as follows: ‘... it seems difficult to depend on a standing point of the Kanishka era which lies somewhere in the 2nd century A.D. or even later as the particular phase of the Mathurā Buddha which was copied in Andhradesa could not yet have existed in that case. Summing up, the sculptures discussed above would make us believe that we can only reconcile the art historical facts by accepting a starting date of the Kanishka era in the second half of the 1st century more precisely about the year A.D. 80’. 70 Theo Damsteegt refers to the most recent research of H. Plaeschke whose papers have not been published. Reviewing numismatic, palaeographic and stylistic grounds he fixes the date of the accession of Kanishka in about 200 A.D. He thinks that only Vāsiṣṭha has reigned in the second Kuśāṇa century. The chronology framed by him is as follows: Kanishka I 2-23, Huviṣka 28-60, Vasudeva I 64 or 67-98, Kanishka II 4-17 and Vāsiṣṭha 22-28 and Kanishka III of Arā inscription. 71 Damsteegt agreeing with Plaeschke’s views accepts 200 A.D. as the regnal year of Kanishka. 72 H. Hartel’s excavations have not contributed much in settling the chronic dispute of the Kuśāṇa chronology but the indirect evidence prove that Kanishka should not be placed in the third and or even in the second century A.D. 73 This indicated that the only alternative is to adjust him in the last quarter of the first century A.D.

Mention should also be made of a fragmentary inscription discovered by A. Führer from excavations of Katrā site in the year 1896. The epigraph is believed to have recorded the repair a stūpa by Vāsiṣṭha in the year 76. This Vāsiṣṭha cannot be the successor of Kanishka as the year is given as 76. But unfortunately the inscription was never published although it is mentioned in several books. 74 It is, however, not possible to follow Plaeschke and Damsteegt without going into the details of

74. (i) *ASR*, Circle North-Western Provinces and Oudh, for the year ending 30th June, 1906.
(ii) Vogel’s *CAMM*, 1910, p. 17.
the merits of their arguments and the sequence provided by the Sonkh Excavator H. Hartel seems to be more convincing.

B.N. Mukherjee accepts 78 A.D. as the starting point of an era by Kaniska on the basis of certain new data.\textsuperscript{78} He has used stratified data from Kausambi, numismatic source and Chinese and Tibetan texts to support the theory of A.D. 78. Some scholars believe in the division of the empire sometimes before its downfall. According to H. Lüders,\textsuperscript{76} the empire was divided between Huviska and Kaniska II after the reign of Vasiska. L. Bachhoffer\textsuperscript{77} held that "under" Kaniska III the empire had been divided. R. Gobl\textsuperscript{78} suggests a division of the empire between Kaniska (Kaniska II) (Sic) and Vasudeva II after the days of Vasudeva I. J.M. Rosenfield\textsuperscript{79} is of the opinion that Kusansahra was split into northern and southern parts after Vasudeva I. "Mukherjee does not agree with any of the above theories of division of Kusana Empire but admits that it" could have suffered territorial losses at different stages of its history.\textsuperscript{80}

Beside Vima and Kaniska, Huviska was a great ruler of the Kusana dynasty. Numerous pedestals of Jaina and Buddhist images refer to his reign. Whether Mathura attained the status of a capital\textsuperscript{81} during his reign is a conjectural issue but no doubt the city shot up to a great eminence. He encouraged all religious activities and we find Jaina, Buddhist and Brahmanical pantheons developing with much zeal and enthusiasm, besides, Nagas, Matrkas and other folk deities. Many of these sculptures record the name of the king and the year of installation. As suggested above Huviska in all probabilities ruled conjointly with Vasiska and his son Kaniska II.\textsuperscript{82}

Vasudeva ascended the throne after Huviska in 138 A.D. although his dated inscriptions begin from the year 67 corresponding to 145 A.D. as the last epigraph gives the year 98 i.e. 176 A.D.\textsuperscript{83} His coin-types depict him as a Siva and the name also suggest that the Kusanas were becoming Indianised. Brhmanism dominated although Jaina and Buddhist sculptures continued to be carved in abundance. After the death of Vasudeva we come across several names and it appears that Kaniska III and Vasudeva II also came to the scene but the Kusana power was on decline and the chiefs put forth their claim for sovereignty, consequently there were

\textsuperscript{75} Mukherjee, B.N., \textit{Op. cit.}, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{76} IA., 1913, XLII, p. 135.
\textsuperscript{77} JADS., 1936, LVII, p. 438.
\textsuperscript{78} Die Munzpruung der Kushan, Vou Vima Kadphisis bis Bahram, pp. 216 and 240.
\textsuperscript{79} Rosenfield, D.A.K., pp. 110-11.
\textsuperscript{80} The Disintegration of the Kusana Empire, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{81} Mathura, District Gazetteer, 1968, p. 37.
\textsuperscript{82} AIU., 1960, pp. 150-51.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 151.
revolts from different quarters. Mukherjee enumerates various reasons for the downfall of this great kingdom. 84

Disruption

The period of disruption 85 continued for more than hundred years and local or tribal rulers including some Nāgas ruled over Mathurā for some time. We find many statues of Nāgas and their study suggests that they were either deities or noblemen worshipping Nāga deities. Sonkh a place 21 k.m. to south west of Mathurā seems to have been a stronghold of Nāga dynasty which built a Nāga shrine in the late 1st century A.D. The members of the family wear a snake scalp over their heads (fig. 9) otherwise they are in perfect human form. 86 The Mathurā and the adjoining region has revealed the coins of the following Nāga rulers Bhīmanāga, Vibhunāga, Skandanāga, Prabhakarnāga, Vṛhaspatināga, Vyāghranāga, Vasunāga, Devanāga, Bhavanāga, Gaṇapatināga, Maheśvaranāga and Nāgasena. Some of them were ruling at Mathurā and others at Padmāvatī near Gwalior. 87 The Nāgas were devout Śaiva and they worshipped the snake deities. This may be pointed out here that the Mathurā Museum Coin Cabinet possesses about 35 copper coins of Nāga rulers. These are Prabhakarnāga, Vṛhaspatināga, Bhavanāga, Devanāga, Vibhunāga, Gaṇendranāga, Bhīmanāga, Skandanāga and Vasunāga. 88 As most of these coins have been supplied by the local dealers it may be presumed that these were recovered from the Mathurā region where the Nāga rulers must have reigned in the post Kuśāṇa period.

Gupta Age

In the Allahabad Pillar inscription Samudragupta has been described to have subdued some Nāga kings. It was probably Gaṇapatināga who ruled over Mathurā

84. His conclusions are: There was no dynamic king as Kaniṣka I and control over the far flung eastern provinces could not be effectively exercised by his successors. They probably voluntarily withdrew from some of the regions. Secondly the economic conditions became adverse after the decline of Kuśāṇo-Roman Commerce from the period of Vāsudeva I although he was able to manage the affairs and to control the empire at least from Central Asia to Mathurā. The other reason of the decline of the Kuśāṇa power was the rise of Sasanians and Vāsudeva II had to submit to Ardashir I between 230 and 242 A.D. Vāsudeva II then ruled probably as a vassal of Sasanians but the local and tribal chiefs also started declaring their independence and this is supported by a legend on vaudhyeya coins which refer to the victory of their republic. Thus there were various political and economic reasons leading to the fall of the Kuśāṇa dynasty which extinguished from the scene after the middle of the third century A.D. The Disintegration of the Kuśāṇa Empire. p. 84.

88. The information was supplied by my colleague, Dr. A.K. Srivastava, Director, Mathurā Museum in a letter dated November 1, 1981.
when Samudragupta accessioned this region into the Magadhan Empire in the middle of the 4th century A.D. The regime of Samudragupta's successor Rāmagupta was insignificant and this weak monarch was soon dethroned and slain by his brother Candragupta who assumed the title of Vikramāditya. So far we have obtained three inscriptions of his time. One recorded on an octagonal shaft found near the famous Rangeśwar temple, refers to the 61st year of the Gupta era, corresponding to 380 A.D. A big trident (Triśūla) and a corpulent figure of Śiva Lakuliśa form (holding a staff) is carved on one side. It records that some Uditācārya installed two Śivalingas Upamитеśvara and Kapileśvara in the 61st year of the Gupta era in the reign of the Bhāṭāraka Mahārāja Rājādhērāja, the illustrious Candragupta, the son of the Bhāṭāraka Māhārāja Rājādhērāja, the illustrious Samudragupta. The importance lies in the fact that it records only two Gupta kings. Secondly Śaivism is seen flourishing under the Bhāgavata cult. Thirdly the term Bhāgavata has been applied for Śaiva saints also. Fourthly it prescribes punishment for those who mutilate this object of worship. Thus as early as the fourth century A.D. necessity was felt of safeguarding the monuments from vandalism and for this reason the antiquity is of great significance.

The second inscription gives the genealogy of the Gupta dynasty from Ghaṭotkacagupta to Candragupta Vikramāditya omitting Rāmagupta or Kacagupta. As the epigraph is incomplete we are not informed about the purpose for which it was installed. But its provenance, Kaṭrā site—Birthplace of Kṛṣṇa—hints that it was probably engraved to commemorate the construction of some Brāhmanical temple on the spot. The third inscription is again very fragmentary and nothing significant is made out of it. It is interesting to note that the Jaina and Buddhist images carved in the Gupta period avoid the name of the reigning king although the same era is referred to. It is probably due to the fact that these religions did not receive any royal patronage under the Gupta rulers who called themselves as Paramabhaṅgavata.

Candragupta Vikramāditya was the most illustrious Gupta king and he ruled from 376 to 413 A.D. The Chinese traveller Fa-hien who visited Mathurā in 400 A.D. has left a good account of the place.

'The climate of this part of the country was temperate, without frost or snow, the people were prosperous and happy, there were no official restrictions, only those who titled the king’s land having to pay taxes on the profits made; people including

91. Agrawala's Catalogue No. 4, 1951, 141-43.
92. Mathurā Museum No. 3835.
93. This may be pointed out here that a few sculptures e.g. B. 10 of Lucknow Museum recording the year 230 or 280 should not be reckoned in the Gupta era. This will be taken up again while discussing the chronology of the Buddha images.
foreigners enjoyed freedom of movement; criminal punishment was not severe, the guilty being fined according to gravity of offence and even for a second attempt at rebellion the punishment being the loss of the right hand; king’s officers were well paid and drew fixed salaries; throughout the country no one killed any living thing, nor drank wine nor ate onions or garlic, the Cándālas (who were socially outcasts) were segregated and had to sound a piece of wood in order to warn people to their approach when they came to the city or a market and except for them no one went hunting or dealt in fish or flesh; people did not keep pigs or fowl and there were no dealings in cattle and no butchers’ shops or distilleries in the market places and that cowries were used as medium of exchange.\footnote{94}

Fa-hien mentions twenty Buddhist monasteries in which about three thousand monks resided. They remained busy in their religious practices and meditation and the incoming monks were received with due courtesies and adequate arrangements were made for their comfortable stay. The kings during their visit to the monasteries took off their crown as a mark of respect. They set on the ground and offered food to monks with their own hands. Several stūpas which were built in honour of chief disciples of the Buddha existed here.

Candragupta Vikramāditya was succeeded by Kumāragupta I who was known by his epithet as Mahendrāditya and ruled from 414 to 455 A.D. A Tīrthankara image was installed at Mathurā in 432 A.D. (Gupta era 113) by a Jaina lady Samādhyā at the instance of her teacher Dalitācarya.\footnote{95} This is the only inscribed and dated Jaina sculpture of Gupta period from Mathurā. The other inscription is recorded on the pedestal of a Buddhist image\footnote{96} dedicated by a lady Vihārasvāminī probably a nun incharge of the monastery. It is dated in the year 135 (454-55 A.D.) which is the last year of Kumāragupta’s reign. It was recovered from Jamālapur mound which was an important establishment of the Gupta period. A standing Buddha statue fig. 134, from the site of Kaṭrā, Mathurā and now housed in the Lucknow Museum\footnote{97} mentions the year of installation as 230 which has been reckoned in the Gupta era and assigned to 549 A.D. But the present author after a careful examination of the sculpture is inclined to revise its dating and to place it in the Kuśāṇo-Gupta age. The issue will be discussed in detail while framing the chronology of the Buddhist images. The most important discovery highlighting the artistic feat of the reign of Kumāragupta I is a recent Buddha image from Govinda-nagar Mathurā.\footnote{98} Its pedestal clearly states that it was installed in the year 115 (434 A.D.) and was carved by sculptor Dinna.

\footnote{96. Mathurā Museum No. A. 48, Agrawala’s Catalogue, 1948, pp. 90-91.}
\footnote{97. No. B. 10.}
\footnote{98. Mathurā Museum No. 76.25.}
The scholars generally believe that the great poet and dramatist Kālidāsa adorned the court of Candragupta Vikramāditya and Kumāragupta Mahendrāditya. His works particularly Raghuvansā, Kumārasambhava and Abhijñāna Śākuntalam impart the glimpses of a very prosperous society and higher values of life. On the basis of his description, contemporary epigraphs, Fāhien’s memoirs and abundance of gold coins of different varieties, we can easily conclude that the Gupta period was the golden age of Indian history. Kālidāsa has described Mathurā, Vrindaban, Goverdharā and Śūrasena territory with much admiration.99

After Kumāragupta his son Skandagupta ascended the throne. But before and after his accession he lost much of his time and energy in fighting against the powerful Hūnas who had invaded India. We have not come across any definite evidence or epigraph of Skandagupta in the Mathurā region which formed part of Antarvedi Viṣaya (the land between the two great rivers Gangā and Yamunā). It was probably governed by his governor Sarvanāga100 who must have belonged to the old Nāga family of Mathurā. The Hūna invasion shattered the Gupta rule and the successors of Skandagupta could not hold control over the large empire. After Buddhagupta no Gupta king of considerable significance appeared on the scene. The invaders advanced with great force and also reached Mathurā where they plundered and destroyed the magnificent monuments. The artistic workshops producing masterpieces of Indian art in Gupta period were completely devastated by these barbarians. The glory and gradeur of Mathurā disappeared and the beautiful city and its people were at the mercy of Toramāna and Mihirakula in the first quarter of the 6th century A.D.

99. सा शूरसेनाधिपति सुप्रसिद्धं लोकोत्तर गीत कतिपयः
ब्राह्मण शुद्धवृत्तं वंशं दीपं शुद्धात रक्षयं जगदे कुमारी।

यस्याःश्रवोदयतं बन्धुनानं प्राणालाम् द्वारिकं बिहारं काले
कालिन्दिक कन्या मथुरांगतापि गंगोभि संस्कृतं जलेष्यं भासि।

उपकूलं स कालिन्दिका: पुरीं योहिष्यं मूच्छ:।
निम्ममे निम्ममोपयों मथुरां मथुराकृति।।

राग्हु. 6.45

संभाषणयं भरतारमस्य युवानं मथुरं प्रावलोक्तं पुष्पं श्यले।
बुद्धाने जैन रथाधरने निविष्यतं सुदर्शं योवनती।।

राग्हु. 15.28

राग्हु. 6.5c

100. PHAI., p. 580.
The invasions and disintegration resulted in the extermination of prosperity and artistic activities from Mathurā. Under these adverse and critical conditions not only the Buddhist art was in a stage of extinction but the Buddhism itself started vanishing in the region. Maukharis of Kannauj ushered as independent ruling dynasty and Mathurā region also formed the part of their territory.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Tripathi, R.S., History of Kanauj, 1959, p. 55.
BUDDHISM IN MATHURĀ

Before commenting upon the Buddhist art of Mathurā it would be worthwhile to trace the association of Buddhism with Mathurā region. This depends on the following three factors:—


Literary Traditions

The earliest Buddhistic canons i.e. the Tripiṭakas furnish no account of Mathura’s association with Buddhism. Somewhat later texts, however, mention the

1. The Buddhist literature is available in Pāli, Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese and translations into the languages of the countries where the Buddhism spread. The earliest books known as Tripiṭakas are in Pāli. The Tripiṭakas or treasure boxes are three in number: 1. The Vinaya Piṭaka, Book of discipline, 2. The Sutta Piṭaka, the book of discourses and 3. The Abhidharma Piṭaka, the collection of books on philosophy based on psychological ethics. These three basic books have the following subdivisions:

i) Vinaya Piṭaka 5 books: सूत्ति विभंग, खुद्रक, परिवार, महावग, चुल्लवग। मुल्लविभंग

has two parts: महाविभंग तथा भिजुणिविभंग।

ii) Sutta Piṭaka has 5 books: दीघ विकायं, महिम विकायं, संयुक्त विकायं, ब्रह्मतर विकायं,

संयुक्त विकायं, ब्रह्मतर विकायं and खुद्रक विकायं, the last one खुद्रक विकायं has 15 subdivisions:

खुद्रक पाठ, धम्मपद, उदान, इतिविपत्त, मुत्त विशाल, विमान वस्त्र, पेस वस्त्र, चेर गाथा,

बेरी माथा, जातक, निर्देश, पतिसंभिदा, धर्मान, खुद्रकम and बरिया पिटका।

iii) Abhidharma Piṭaka has 7 books: चम्र संग्रह, विंग, धातुकथा, पुमल पन्नि, कथा वस्त्र,

यमक and पट्टहान।

The Pāli literature also includes non-canonical literature such as Milindapanha, The Nettipakurana, Buddhaddatta’s manuals on Vinaya and Abhidhamma, commentaries on the Tripiṭaka texts, Jātakas and Ceylonese chronicles like the Dipavāsa and Mahāvāsa.

The canonical literature of Buddhism in Sanskrit is incomplete. The Sarvāstivādins possessed some Āgamas which were equivalent to Abhidhamma’s seven books. A sizable portion of VinayaPiṭaka of Mulasarvāstivādins is preserved in the Gilgit manuscripts. The
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place as lucrative for Buddhism and later, it became a stronghold of the Sarvāstivādin sect. We are, no doubt, aware of the fact that there were people who opposed the teachings of the Buddha even during his life-time. Some of the inmates were also not happy with him. His cousin Devadatta conspired with Ajatasatru to fulfil his evil intentions against the Buddha. He also tried to divide the Sangha and demanded to impose greater restrictions on monks. Upananda, Canna, Mettiya—Bhumajaka etc. were longing for an early opportunity to be free from the bondage of the Vinaya rules. Some persons by nature derive pleasure in going against a set code of discipline and some oppose the laid down rules as they want to lead an easy and comfortable life free from restrictions and impositions. They hesitate in giving expression to their views in open but reveal themselves at proper time. Such was the case of Subhadra, the last disciple of the Buddha, who had a sign of great relief when the news of the Master’s demise was broken to him. He found himself free from ‘dos and donts’ of the discipline of Sangha.  

The great Vacuum created by the death of Buddha could not be filled by any of the followers and according to his wishes the Dharma and Vinaya were given the supreme regard. Out of innumerable followers and pupils the following thirteen were the chief disciples of the Buddha: Sāriputta, Mahāmoggalān, Mahākassapa, Mahākaccāna, Mahākoṭṭhila, Mahakapphina, Cunda, Aniruddha, Revata, Upāli, Ānanda, Rāhula and Mahāpajāpati Gotamī. Out of these Mahākaccāna and Revata were closely associated with Mathurā region. Although Mahākaccāna originally belonged to Ujjain but he later settled at Mathurā as a missionary. Revata entered the Sangha at Vaiśālī after his initiation by the Master but he belonged to Soron not far from Brāj region.

Lokottaravāḍins had another version of Vinaya known as Mahāvastu although it incorporates the subject matter of varied interest. The Lalitavistara is an incomplete biography of the Buddha in the mixed Sanskrit. This furnishes good account of the association of Mathurā with Buddhism in Mahāyāna tradition. Āvaghoṣa’s Buddhacaita and Saundarāṇanda and Āryasūra’s Jātakamālā are famous Sanskrit works in Buddhism. The Avadāna literature on the other hand narrates the stories with a view to explain the fruits of good and bad deeds.

Beside Lalitavistara, the other important Mahāyānist texts known as श्रेष्ठ सूत्र are प्रत्येकारसूत्र, सन्नवृत्त, तक्षालवृत्त, मुवास प्रमाण, गण्ड व्यूह, तथागत गुड़ युक्त, सत्सिनचरण तथा दशमूलसूर्यां।

The Tibetan literature consists of a large number of collection of translations of about five thousands of Indian Buddhist texts. Similarly there are Chinese translations of about two thousand books. An interesting point is that some of the original Indian works are lost and are available in their translation form in Tibetan and Sanskrit.

The above information is based mainly on chapter VII of “Buddhist Literature” by P.V. Bapat in 2500 years of Buddhism, 1956, pp. 139-42.

2. Banerjee, A.C., “Principal Schools and sects of Buddhism” chapter VI in 2500 years of Buddhism, 1956, p. 97.

After the demise of the Buddha, the above chief disciples tried their best in maintain peace and unity in the Sangha but within a century, there prevailed a confusion between the teachings of the Buddha and their interpretations in the scriptures. They opened the way for the multiplicity of differences and dissensions in the Sangha. The first Buddhist council was convened at Rājgrīha after three months of the passing away of the Buddha under the chairmanship of Mahākassapa. Attended by 500 monks it aimed to lay emphasis on the Dharma and Vinaya.

The purpose of the second council, convened at Vaiśālī, after a hundred years of the Buddha’s death, however, differed. By this time the dissensions were quite obvious and several monks had started realising the pang of over-strictness of the rules of the Vinaya. The Council which was attended by 700 monks—went on for about eight months under the chairmanship of Revata who belonged to Braj region. It witnessed a great dispute between those who wanted to introduce relaxation in the code of conduct and those who supported an orthodox and staunch action. As no agreement was reached, the revisionists convened another council at Kaūśāmbī in which about ten thousand monks participated. The Sangha was, consequently, divided into the two main branches. The western division advocating for adopting the original form of Vinaya was known as Sthaviravādā or Theravāda while the eastern division which was keen to introduce flexibility was called Mahāsāṅghika in view of the fact that the number of such followers was very large.

The orthodox Buddhist i.e. the Sthaviravādins were always critical of the reformers and addressed them as ‘Adharmavādins’ (whose conduct was against the Law) or ‘Pāpabhikshu’ (monks committing sins). On the other hand the Mahāsāṅghikas observed that the Sthaviravādins ignored the welfare of majority of people and their views were narrow and confined to a limited persons only. They were, therefore, nicknamed as Hīnayānists a small vessel or ship while the Mahāsāṅghikas were known as Mahāyānists having a large vessel and capable of delivering the goods to the larger number of people. The nomenclature of the two divisions was thus known as Hīnayāna conservatives and Mahāyāna (liberal).\(^4\)

But the schism did not stop here and the two fold division culminated into manifold divisions in the later centuries. Atleast following sects are known to us: Sthaviravādins or Theravādins, Mahāsāṅghikas, Sarvāstivādins, Vātsiputriyas, Dharmaguptikas, Kasyapiyas, Sautrāntikas or the Sankrāntivādins, Mahāsāṅghikas, Bauhūṣṭutiyas, Caityakas, Māhyamikas, and Yogācārī.\(^5\) The third council convened by Aśoka and presided over by Moggaliputta Tissa, who converted the Emperor into Buddhism, was not a meeting of the entire faith but represented a party meeting of Sthaviravādins only. On the other hand the fourth council convened by Kaniṣṭha was not attended by the Theravādins and the Ceylonese Chronicles do not mention it.\(^6\)

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5. Reference No. 2.
Some of the above sects of Buddhism flourished at Mathurā although Sīhāvīra-vādins or Theravādins gained more popularity in the beginning. According to the traditions of Anguttaranikāya7 the Buddhā visited Mathurā when he completed his twelfth rainy season (Vassāvāsa) at Veranā. The identification of this place is disputed.8 The Buddha was not satisfied with his visit as the Yakṣas were dominating here. Their leader was Gardabha and Tirmisikā a female Yakṣīṇī and they had created terror among the people. The Buddha, however, set them right or subdued them.9 When he entered the city to preach the Law he was prohibited by a naked woman who later slipped away and the Buddha went to the quarter of the city where the Yakṣas resided in a large number. We know that the predecessor of Mahāvīra, Pārśvanātha, the 23rd Jain, was a historical person belonging to the 8th century B.C. and some of his followers must have been at Mathurā which has ever been a great religious and spiritual seat. As the place was dominated by the Brāhmaṇas, they did not like the growing influence of the Buddha and persuaded their leader Nilabhūti to throw a challenge of learning (Śastrārtha) to the Buddha. But when Nilabhūti knew that the Buddha had humbled the notorious and mighty Yakṣas he was much influenced with the greatness of the Buddha and started arranging the convenience for him.

The Buddha was, however, not pleased with the people and the place and he observed the following five defects: The roads are undulating, the dust is too much, the dogs are wild, ignorant Yakṣas live here and the alms are collected with great difficulty.10 The Gilgit manuscripts narrate this story with some variation. Accordingly the five defects which he noticed were as follows. The people care too much for the high cast born against the low cast, there are lot of bushes and horns, the stones and pebbles are in plenty, women are in large number and most of the people take food late at night.11 The expression ‘Pracura mātrigrama’ can also be interpreted as villages where female deities or mother goddesses were very popular. This can be corroborated by the terracotta figures of mother goddesses found in

7. Anguttaranikāya 4.6.3, Pathamasamvasasuttam, 1960 pp. 60-61 एक समय में भगवान धन्तरा च मवरं धर्मरत वर्ज्ज वधानमय्यं चितमनो होति | सम्बूहा पि को गोपत्ति च गहु पतानियो च धर्मरत च मवरं धर्मरत वर्ज्ज वधान म्याणं पटिनम्य होति | पथ लो भगवान भगा औपकम्फः ध्रात्तरसिम्हपवधूिम्ने निसीदि ||......
10. पंचमें विषयार्थ यादीनत्ता मधुरायं। कतमे वंच २ विसमा, बहुरजा, घंड सुन्दा, बाल यक्षा, दुलम विंरा हमे को विकल्पे पंच यादीनत्ता मधुरायं। Anguttaranikāya, Akkosakavagga, Madhura sutta (5.22.10), 1960, pp. 494-95.
abundance from the early sites of Mathurā and range in period from c. 7th century B.C. to 1st century B.C.

The above references of Anguttaranikāya and Gilgit manuscripts hint that the first visit of the Buddha was not a success and he was not given a good reception. The people were not attracted towards the Sangha in a good number but his frequent visits to the Yakṣa colonies were able to humble this rather notorious class. They promised not to harass the citizens who on their part agreed to build places or dwellings for the Yakṣas.

The traditions of some other Buddhist texts such as Divyāvadāna and Lalitavistara etc. point out that the Buddha just before his death revisited Mathurā and this time he had a good impression of the place. His satisfaction is conveyed by the prophecy he made about the bright future of the city. This is recorded in the Sarvāstivādin Vinaya Piṭaka and Chinese translation of Asokāvadāna. Accordingly when he was wandering in the territory of Śūrasenas he revealed that it was the first state in which the king was selected by people (Mahāsammata). When he reached Mathurā his disciple Ānanda showed him a good forest of blue colour on Rurumunda or Urumunda mountain. But there exists no mountain of this name in Mathurā and its neighbourhood. The only hill or ridge is that of Govardhana about 21 kms. to west of Mathurā and some scholars are inclined to identify the Rurumunda or Urumunda as Govardhana. On the other hand the high mounds near the Gokarnesvara temple have also been explained as Rurumunda mountain. But these are habitational sites and can not be termed as mountain or even a cliff, hill or ridge.

The prophecy which the Buddha made is an interesting point. He foretold about Sānakavāsi and his disciple Upagupta, commencement of a monastery at Urumunda by two rich merchant brothers known as Naṭa and Bhaṭa after whom the spot was to be known as Naṭabhaṭa Vihāra. The role of Upagupta in propagation of Buddhism has been highly commendable as he became a very great monk.

But before Upagupta the credit of spreading the message of Buddhism goes to Mahākaccāna (Mahākattyāyana) who was one of the chief disciples of the Buddha. He was the head priest of Canḍa Pradyota who was a powerful king of Avanti and was a contemporary of the Buddha. The king reigning over Mathurā at that time has been mentioned as Avantiputra, daughter’s son of Canḍa Pradyota. Kātyāyana was sent to meet the Buddha and to invite him to visit Avanti. At that time the Buddha was at Vārānasī but there is a tradition that Kātyāyana saw the Buddha at Mathurā. It is more probable that the Buddha was staying at Veranjā in the

13. Ibid., pp. 197-98.
Śūrasena territory and when Canḍa Pradyota heard of it he sent Kātyāyana as his emissary. But before he reached Mathurā the Buddha had already left for Vārānasī where the meeting was held. Kātyāyana was greatly influenced by the teachings of the Buddha and entered the Sangha. After initiation from the Master the Buddha also admired the scholarship of Kātyāyana to the extent that when the latter requested former to visit Ujjain the Buddha replied that there was no need for him to undertake the journey as Kātyāyana himself was capable of propogating the Dharma. On his return to Ujjain Kātyāyana narrated the memoirs of his meeting with the Buddha with a great joy and esteem and the king and the people felt allured to follow the Buddhism. He established a centre of Buddhism and started giving the religious discourses. Later he visited Kośala and Magadha as a missionary but the main regions of his teachings were Avantī and Śūrasena.

There is a good deal of probability to assume that the Buddha did not come to Mathurā and the traditions mentioning his visit have to be studied cautiously. The following points deserve particular attention in this regard.

1. His visit has not found place in the original Pāli Tripitikology.
2. *Divyāvadāna* and *Lalitavistara* referring to his visit to Mathurā belong to the Kuśāna period.
3. Identification of ‘Veranjā’ or ‘Verambha’ from where the Buddha came to Mathurā is highly controversial.
4. There is no mountain in Mathurā but the Buddhist texts refer to a mountain or hill as ‘Rurumunda’ or ‘Urumunda’ Parvata.
5. In these texts neither Buddha nor Ananda has given any account of Yamunā which has been held in great esteem by the people of this region.
6. Regarding the opinion of Mathurā formed by the Buddha we have two versions and the five demerits pointed out by the Master referred to in the *Divyāvadāna* do not tally with the description found in the Gilgit Manuscripts. This hints that the defects were narrated in literature in accordance with popular beliefs, while the event never took place.
7. The version of Chinese Traveller Hiuen-tsang appears to be based on the tradition of the *Divyāvadāna* and he did not care to verify this myth as he was also a devout Buddhist.
8. Some of the descriptions of Mathurā region as given by the Chinese traveller are far from being accurate and sometimes one is inclined to think that he is describing some other place or depending either on traditions or on hearsay.

Once Kātyāyana came to Mathurā at the invitatation of king Avantipūra. He was given a warm welcome and the king himself came out of city to receive him.

He stayed in the Gundabana (?) and gave a wonderful discourse against caste system (Varṇadharma). This was the time when the Buddha had just passed away as the king was not yet aware of this fact and he heard it from Mahākātyāyana. Avanti-putra was initiated into Buddhism and he was followed by a large number of citizens of Mathurā.18

The Divyāvadāna19 furnished a detailed account of the prophecies made by the Buddha when he visited Mathurā before his demise. He foretold that after hundred years of my death there would be a perfume merchant (Gandhi) named Gupta. He would be blessed with an illustrious son, Upagupta who would fulfill my mission and propagate the Law. He would be Buddha without symptoms (Alakṣaniko Buddha). He would help thousands of people to get rid of miseries and sufferings. He would be initiated by Śaṇakavāsi who would establish a monastery at the Rurumunda hill....' 

There is some difference of opinion in deciding the teacher of Upagupta of Mathurā. Some traditions hold that the spiritual preceptor of Upagupta was Mādhyandina and not Śaṇakavāsi. Whether Mādhyandina and Majhantika appointed by Aśoka as a Buddhist, missionery were identical and whether Śaṇakavāsi and Sambhūta Śaṇakavāsi of the second Buddhist Council were same is also not clear Aśokāvadāna (Chinese tradition) informs that Mādhyandina and Śaṇakavāsi were two disciples of Ānanda who before his demise at Vaiśāli asked them to propagate the Dharma in Kāshmir and Mathurā. Mādhyandina is associated with Kāshmir tradition; hence the statement of Divyāvadāna seems to be justified in accepting Śaṇakavāsi to be the teacher of Upagupta. Śaṇakavāsi used to go for alms to the house of the perfume merchant, Gupta with one of pupils or attendants. Once he reached there alone and the merchant promised that if he was blessed with sons he would offer one of his sons to escort Śaṇakavāsi. But when the sons were born he did not keep his promise. It was only after the birth of the third son Upagupta that he decided to oblige the sage. Accordingly the boy became a Samanera at an early age and served Śaṇakavāsi with great devotion.20

After his initiation, Upagupta practised austerity and became well-versed in all scriptures. He always remained occupied with the preaching of the Law and like the Buddha he had also subdue Māra the cupid21 and through his help Upagupta


‘ताकर्षणतुर्य दिवसे भार: स्वयं महुराव्य चटाइयितुभारायुच्य सो युमोक्ष स्वप्निभंतरयु मधुमोक्ष स्वयं निर्तते, स्वप्निभं निर्तते स्वप्निभं निर्तते न दद्धस्ते स्वप्निभं पश्चात्... 

महुराव्य चटाइयितुभार विनिते निर्तते ।

तत्र: स्वप्निभं निर्तते च दनेकषु बाहुणायात सहस्त्रेण सनिधितं निन्तं इव निम्बं: सिद्धासम्बन्धं:।

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was able to visualise the physical presence of the Buddha. Māra paid rich tributes to Upagupta and pronounced his glory in the city. This bestowed a great fame on him and people thronged in a large number to listen to his religious and spiritual discourses. He lived in a cave near his monastery which was full of small bamboo spikes. Whenever he converted anyone (particularly the married couple) into Buddhism he used to throw a spike into the cave which gradually became full of such spikes and it was not possible to count them. On his death the great saint was cremated with these wooden pieces. His fame reached the Emperor Aśoka and he sent for him at Pātaliputra to seek his advice for spreading the message of the Buddha. It was Upagupta who decided about selection of spots where the holy stūpas consisting of the relics of the Buddha were to be built.

The episode of Vāsavadattā, a beautiful courtesan, of Mathurā is also associated with Upagupta. She fell in love with this great monk who declined the offer several times. But when the king of Mathurā was displeased with her and the lady was given corporal punishment and was thrown like a dead body outside the city, Upagupta appeared before her and granted solace and calm through his wonderful discourses. She at once recovered from the physical torture and realised the four great truths sufferings, cause of sufferings, sufferings can be removed and there is a way to end sufferings. After her initiation she entered the Sangha as a nun. She was later born in heaven and was worshipped in person (Śāśire pūjā kṛtā). Probably some stūpas were made on her bodily remains.

_Lalitavistara_ another early Buddhist text gives a good account of Mathurā which ranked among the best cities of India. Like other places it was also considered for the birth of the Buddha as the place was prosperous, looked beautiful and auspicious and good for alms. It was the capital of the king of Śūrasenas and Subhāhu who was a descent of Kansa. But it was rejected to be a fit place for the birth of the Buddha as the ruling monarch Subhāhu was a heretic. In Beal’s translation of the Chinese version of _Abhinīkṛmaṇa Sutta_, Mathurā has been styled as the capital of the whole Jambū-dvīpa.

Upagupta was succeeded by his disciple Dhītika who was the son of a wealthy Brāhmaṇa of Ujjain. He was a great scholar and had 500 Brāhmaṇa disciples with him. After the death of his father he renounced the world and came to Mathurā to meet Upagupta. He was much influenced with learned discourses of Upagupta and became his pupil and successor after initiation. Dhītika went upto Kāshmir

22. एषा ब्रजानि शरण विविधनव कमल विमल धर्म नेत्राम् ।
   तममर बुध जनमहिति जिजि विरागच संघं च ॥

23. Dr. P.L. Vaidya editing the texts of _Lalitavistara_ and _Divyavadāna_ has assigned them to early Kuśāna and late Kuśāna period respectively.

24. इष्य मथुराम नमग्री ऋषि च फलिष्य च शेषमा च सुभिस्का चाक्रीण ब्रजन मन्याच च ।...


25. Growse, F.S., _Mathurā Memoir_ 1883, Chapter V.
and Kabul to preach the message of the Buddha. Menander was the reigning king in that region and his faith in Buddhism is evidenced by the Pali text *Milindapanho* in which his conversation is recorded.\textsuperscript{26}

One may be inclined to suggest that the Buddhists invited Menander to attack and uproot the Śuṅga dynasty which followed the Brāhmaṇical faith and under whom the Vedic traditions were reviving. This is the reason that this Greek ruler is held in high esteem in Buddhism. Such invitations to foreigners are met with of course rarely. We are aware of the traditions that the Śāhīs were invited by Kālakācārya, great Jaina saint, to ruin the fate of Gardhabhilla, the ruler of Ujjain. Similarly Jaichandra supported Muhammad Ghori against Prithvirāj.

Beside these important figures responsible for establishing the association of Buddhism with Mathurā in the pre-Christian centuries, other persons who should be mentioned are Bhadrā Kapilānī who was the wife of Mahākaśyapa one of the main disciples of the Buddha. Mathurā was her native place.\textsuperscript{27} Mahādeva associated with the Second Buddhist Council was the son of a Brāhmaṇa of Mathurā. After his initiation into Dharma at Kukkuta-grama in Pāṭaliputra he was known as a man of great learning and wisdom and later headed the Buddhist Sangha which was also patronised by the king probably Dhana Nanda who met his doom. He introduced five new rulers for Arhatahood. The Tibetan and Chinese translations of Vasumitra reveal that the Second Council of Vaiśālī was called to discuss the five dogmas of Mahādeva.\textsuperscript{28}

**Accounts of Foreign Travellers**

Mathurā’s association with Buddhism is amply corroborated by the accounts of the foreign travellers. The Greek writers Magasthanes Pliny and Ptolomy who either visited or wrote about Śrārasena or Mathurā in their records are silent over this issue as by that time Buddhism was not popular although as discussed earlier efforts were being made to propagate it.

The Chinese traveller Fa-hien who visitid the place in the beginning of the 5th century A.D., furnished significant datas in the travel memoirs. The mission of his journey was to collect the original Buddhist texts and commentaries. Starting from Lanchow in central China he covered most of the distance on foot and passing through the Gobi desert and other difficult route reached Mathurā which he recorded as the first kingdom with the capital of the same name, situated on the Jamunā. According to him every body from highest to lowest rank had faith in Buddhism and it was so from the time of the Buddha. This appears to be an exaggerated statement as the time of his visit was the full fledged Gupta period when the court religion was Bhāgavatism. We have already discussed in the second chapter that


\textsuperscript{28} 2500 years of Buddhism 1956, pp. 98-99.
Mathurā region was a part of the Gupta Empire hence it is not desirable to believe that everybody was the follower of Buddhism. It appears that the Chinese pilgrim stayed in a large Buddhist monastery in which all the occupants were staunch Buddhists and they must have informed him that the sect was popular from the very beginning.

Fa-hien further informs that the religious establishments were in possession of copper plate grants testifying the evidence of their historicity. There were twenty monasteries on both sides of the river and 3000 monks resided in them. The number of the monks and priests is sometimes stated as ten thousand.²⁹ Besides, he saw six stūpas (relic towers) out of which the most important and venerable was of Sāriputra. The stūpas commemorate the sacred memory of Ānanda and Mudgalaputra the great teacher of Samādhi or meditation. The stūpa of Ānanda was more popular among women (probably due to the fact that he persuaded the Buddha to permit the women folk into the sangha). The remaining three stūpas were to pay respect to the holy books, the Tripiṭakas i.e. Abhidharma, Sūtra and Vinaya.³⁰

Fa-hien speaks of the happy and cordial conditions of the place. The rulers and the court officials showed much regard to Buddhism and they derived pleasure in serving the monks and feeding them. 'At the end of the meal they spread carpets on the ground, and sit down facing the president not venturing to sit on couches in the presence of priests', an arrangement handed down from the days of the Buddha.³¹ The general conditions and administration as described by the Chinese traveller have already been discussed in the previous chapter.

Hsüen-tsang (also pronounced as Yuanchwang) followed Fa-hien after about 200 years and spent about sixteen years in India. Like his predecessor he also collected a large number of Buddhist texts besides several other items of ritualistic interest and Buddhist figures. On his return to China he translated 75 texts into Chinese and went on writing for 19 years. Some of his translations are as valuable as the original sources as the original books are now not available. He has also handed over detailed account of his memoirs of wide travels in India. These supply valuable informations for the study of contemporary society but we should of course allow some margin for his religious zeal, prejudice and exaggeration.

He commenced his journey at the age of 26 and remained in India between 629 and 645 A.D. This tall and handsome pilgrim was a man of high determination and firm conviction. On his way once he was invited by Chu-wen-Tai the ruler of Turfan in Gobi. But the invitation was in a commanding tone and its purpose was to detain the traveller appointing him as the head priest of the court. The offer was refused but the king would not allow him to go and said 'I insist on keeping you in order to offer you my homage, and it would be easier to shift the mountain of Pāmir.

²⁹. Ibid., p. 259.
³⁰. Gronde, op. cit., p. 103.
³¹. 2500 years of Buddhism, op. cit.
than to shake my determination'. To this the bold reply of Hiuentsang was 'It is for the sublime Law that I have come and the king will only be able to keep my bones; he has no power over my spirit nor my will.' He refused food for three days and this fast had an occult effect on the king who had to yield to the wishes of the saint who of course agreed to stay for a month more to preach at the court.\(^{32}\)

He was given a touching send-off in Turfan and introductory letters to the kings where the pilgrim decided to go. He took a longer route than Fa-hien and touched Kārā Shāhī, Issyk Kul Bai, Tashkend, Samarkand, Balkh, Bamiyan, Kābul, Kapişā (Begrām), Nagarahāra (Jalalābād), Lampaka Khyber Pass, Gandhāra, Pesāhwar, Takshśilā and entered Kāshmir where he spent two years from 631 to 633 A.D. He then left for Śākala (Sialkot) and had a long stay at Chinabhūti on the left bank of the Beas. His last place or halt before reaching Mathurā was Jālandhara.\(^{33}\)

He has mentioned 18 sub sects of Buddhism which had two major divisions viz. Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. The later excelled the former in number.

He has described Mathurā to be 20 li or four miles in circumference. The city had 20 monasteries probably the same as described by his predecessor Fa-hien and about 1250 teachers of Law resided at a place. But by now the number of monks had come down from 3000 to 2000. This reflects that Buddhism had started losing popularity in this region probably due to the growing influence of Brāhmanism which was revived under the patronage of the Gupta emperors who were devout Bhāgavatas. He also records the existence of five temples dedicated to the Brāhmanical deities. Three stūpas built by Asoka were also seen by him besides several spots where the four former Buddhhas left their footprints. The stūpas built in the memory of the disciples of the Buddha were also held in a great reverence. These consist of the holy relics of Sāriputra, Mudgalāyana, Purvamitraśrāṇiputra, Upāli, Ānanda, Rāhula, Mahāsīrśi and other Bodhisattvas. Sāriputra was respected by the followers of Abhidharma and Mudgalāyana by those who practised Dhyāna or contemplation. The followers of Sūtras paid homage to Maitrāyaniputra and those who had faith in the three Piṭakas worshipped Upāli. The new entrants to the Sangha honoured Rāhula while the followers of Mahāyanism paid respect to all Bodhisattvas.\(^{34}\) The traveller reveals that five or six li i.e. about a mile and a quarter to east of the city was a monastery on the hill credited to have been built by Upagupta and it housed his nails and heard as relics (Mathurā Memoir by F.S. Grouse, part I, p. 62).

He states that grand functions and ceremonies were held on different occasions and festivals with much pomp and show and the sky was covered by the clouds of incense burning and constant showers of flowers. He narrates a story of a monkey

who had offered some honey to the Buddha. The monkey was asked by the master to mix the honey in water and to distribute to all monks. On this order he felt so excited that he forgot about his position and fell into a dry tank and drowned in it. His next birth was in human form. The traveller further records that the Buddha often visited this kingdom. The rulers and officials continued their respect towards the Buddhist monks and participated in the functions and festivals organised in the monasteries. Referring to the monastery of Upagupta he mentions that it is situated about five to six lis (about 2 kms.) to east of the town and surrounded by high caves. It housed a stūpa in which the nails of the Buddha were preserved. To the north of this was a stone mansion measuring 20'×30' and it consisted of innumerable bamboo spikes recording the number of married persons converted by Upagupta and attained the Arhatahood. But he did not care for other persons even if they were of the same high spiritual level.36

About the general conditions Hien-tsang gives an appreciable remark. People were happy and prosperous and the land was fertile and yellow in colour, mango yield was in abundance. The climate of the region has been recorded as hot while his predecessor mentioned it as moderate. It appears that the season of the visit of one Chinese traveller differed from the other. The citizens were of high intellect, honest and of good character. They believed in the merits of deeds (Karma-fala).

It is not safe to rely fully upon the statements of Hien-tsang as he appears to have mixed up the description of Mathurā with some other place. He has nowhere given the name of the town and has also omitted the Yamunā. The narration of monkey may be the creation of his own imagination or a legend prevalent here. It is also not possible to believe that the Buddha made frequent visits to Mathurā. The distances and measurements are also not furnished with accuracy. It is not unlikely that he by-passed Mathurā but recorded the description of the place on the basis of hearsay. Some of his impressions are quite close to those as recorded by Fa-hien and as such, these cannot be ignored. We can derive the conclusion that Buddhism was prevalent at Mathurā although its decline had begun. From here the Chinese traveller proceeded to Kānyakubja, the capital city of northern India in the time of Harṣavardhana of whom he speaks in high admiration, ‘His rule was just and humane and the king forgot to eat and drink in the accomplishment of good work.’36 He had developed great intimacy with the king and had attended large religious assemblies at Prayāga and Kanauj as a special guest or a V.I.P. in the modern sense. He visited several other places and returned to his native place Changen in China in 645 A.D.

The third Chinese traveller Itsing visited India towards the end of the 7th century A.D. But he took the sea route and his tour was confined to Bodhgaya and

36. 2500 years of Buddhism, op. cit., p. 269.
Nālandā where he spent ten years in learning theology of Buddhism and also in collecting the holy Buddhist texts like his two predecessors Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang. On his return to China in 695 A.D. he was also engaged in translation work and completed 56 translations out of 400 works which he took away from India. He, however, did not visit Mathurā.

Archaeological Finds:

The association of Mathurā with Buddhism is amply testified by the antiquarian wealth besides literary sources and accounts of the Chinese pilgrims. Although Buddhism is extinct from the region and there has been almost no activity during the last fifteen centuries but the rich cultural material revealed through explorations and excavations during the present and the last centuries proves that Mathurā was a stronghold of Buddhism. The visitor entering the galleries of the Mathurā Museum is astonished to see that the major part of the sculptures on display belongs to Buddhism.

Commenting on the disappearance of Buddhism from Mathurā, Gen. Cunningham remarks ‘The date of Mahmud’s invasion was A.D. 1017 or somewhat less than 400 years after the visit of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-Tsang, who in A.D. 634 found only five Brāhmanical temples at Mathurā. It is during these four centuries, therefore, that we must place, not only the decline and fall of Buddhism, but its total disappearance from this great city, in which it once possessed twenty large monasteries, besides many splendid monuments of its most famous teachers. Of the circumstances which attended the downfall of Buddhism we know almost nothing, but as in the present case we find the remains of a magnificent Brāhmanical temple occupying the very site of what once have been a large Buddhist establishment, we may infer with tolerable certainty that the votaries of the Śākya muni were expelled by force and that their buildings were overthrown to furnish materials for those of their Brāhmanical rivals, and now these in their turn have been thrown down by the Musalmāns.’

This remark of Cunningham does not appear to be sound in view of the fact that Mathurā had to face a great catastrophe when the Hūns invaded and destroyed the monuments in the post Gupta period.

Terminology for Describing Monuments:

A careful perusal of the early Buddhist establishments at Mathurā reveals some very interesting facts. So far we have been able to trace about three dozen names of such places under different terms viz. Vihāra, Stūpa Sanghārāma, Parigraha, Cetiya, Cetiya Kuti, Svāka vihāra and Upavana. While it is not possible to portray the exact picture of these establishments a comparative and consolidated study helps us in deriving certain conclusions.

37. ASR., 1862-63, p. 237.
Vihāra

This was the most popular place as the word frequently occurs in the epigraphs. The vihāra was a monastery where the monks and nuns lived and observed their religious practices. A place of worship as stūpa etc. must also have been an essential feature attached with the Vihāra.

A few pedestals of the Buddha-Bodhisattva images bear the word Svaka Vihāra which may be taken to be own or personal monastery. This shows that there were general monasteries which must have been of larger dimensions but at the same time those who could afford, also built their own monasteries and such a building was recorded as Svaka Vihāra.

In case of the Bodhisattva image from Katrā we read Śaka instead of Śvaka and it is sometimes explained as the monastery built by the Śakas i.e. Scythions.

Stūpa

It is a well known architectural term and it contained relics of some great teacher, monk or a great man.

Cetiya

This appears to be the corrupt form of caitya which had the same function as a stūpa. Actually a Cāitya signifies a place which was built on the bodily remains, ‘Cātīyam jāyate iti caityah’. Later the Cāityas were enlarged by a series of casings and the monument looked like a piled up oval shape structure known as Thūha or stūpa. The Cāitya may also be interpreted as an abode of supernatural power. The word Cāitya itself stands for spirit or superhuman force and this very well fitted in case of a place which was meant for offering worship.

We also come across the word as Cetiya kuti which should be explained as Caiya shrine. Cetiye katīya also seems to be same as Caiye kuti and like the usage of Svaka vihāra the term Svaka Cetiya kuti (own Caiya shrine) was also prevalent.

Parigraha

The inscriptions refer to Mahāsāṅghikānām parigraha means a place for household objects or storehouse. The existence of big store houses in the large monasteries was a necessary characteristic. Another explanation is that the monasteries were meant for the monks and nuns but the residential apartments for lay worshippers and visitors to the monasteries where families could stay, were probably known as Parigraha. We are aware that the word Parigraha also stands for family as used by Kālidāsa. In that case we may assume that some Buddhist establishments housed the visitors’ lounge known as Parigraha?

38. Abhijnāna Śakuntalam, III.18.
Sanghārāma

The word occurs in the Lion capital inscription installed in the time of Mahākṣatrapa Rājula. This also records a monastery—guha vihāra, stūpa and Parighraha. It appears that the Sanghārāma was a large complex housing a monastery, stūpa and visitors lounge.

Upavana

This means a garden or park and in the Buddhist terminology must have been a place for open air assembly with good surroundings. The Upavana was also used for growing flowers for offering and worship.

There are a few pedestals which refer to more than one term e.g. stone slab No. E.4 of the Lucknow Museum mentions a Vihāra and a park. As already explained, the Lion Capital records four such places, i.e. Sanghārāma, Stūpa, Vihāra and Parighraha. A few names were very popular and we have found them repeated on different remains. Word Pravara or Prāvārika is met with on a stone piece (Mathurā Museum No. Kt.132) from Kaṭrā mound. On the pedestal of a Nāgi image (Mathurā Museum No. 17.1316) from Girdharpur mound and also on the pedestal of a Buddha image (Mathurā Museum No. 18.1557) from Madhuban Maholf. Different findspots of these antiquities suggest that there were several branches of Pravari establishment. The exact meaning of the word is obscure but it appears to mean a mango monastery as we have Cutaka Vihāra where mango trees must have been in abundance. From the Kausāmbi excavations we are informed of a Pavarika Āmbavana besides the monasteries named Ghoṣitārāma and Kukkuṭarāma. Pravara also means a cloak or a monk’s garment. Either the garments for the Buddhist monks were available at this spot or the Vihāra was built by the cloak makers.

The names of some of these monasteries suggest their sectarian nature and we may pinpoint several sects of Buddhism flourishing at Mathurā, particularly in Kṣatrapa and Kuśāna period. Thus we have the places associated with Sarvāstivādins (Hīnānīśā), Mahāsāṅghikas (Mahāyānīśā), Dharmaguptikas (a branch of the followers of the old Sthāvatārāda doctrines) and Samītīyas a sub-sector of the Theravādin monks (also recorded on an Aśokan pillar at Sārnāth but in the Gupta characters).

The period of these establishments ranges from the 1st century B.C. to the 6th century A.D. as the earliest one is known from the inscriptions recorded on the Lion capital and the latest is referred to in an epigraph dated in the year 230 corresponding to 549 A.D. if reckoned in Gupta era and 308 A.D. if reckoned in

the Śaka era. The stone recovered by Fuhrer in 1896 at Kaṭrā records that a stūpa was repaired in the year 76=154 A.D. in the reign of Vāsudeva. It means that it was originally built in the earlier period.

The main problem facing us is to pinpoint the exact location of these monuments. The provenance of an antiquity referring to a monastery etc. should generally be accepted as the site of an establishment. But this principle will hold good if the source of their origin is the site of a ruined settlement. This should, if possible, be supported by some traces of building activity of the contemporary period. No doubt Mathurā and its surrounding region is full of such early sites and the possibility of several Buddhist monuments flourishing during the first six centuries can not be ruled out. We should, however, reserve our pronouncements if an object is unearthed accidentally from the spot which does not look like the site of some ancient ruins. In such cases we have to conceive the possibility of shifting the remains from one place to other and it would not be proper to locate a monument just on the basis of the find spot and the inscription it bears. The identification of some of the monuments is based on the Buddhist texts or the versions of the Chinese travellers, as their archaeological source is wanting.

Relevant informations can also be had from the inscribed stone sculptures or architectural fragments detailed in the following chart.

As these sculptures or architectural fragments have been found from irregular digging and scattered at different places it is not possible to pinpoint the location of these monasteries. It appears that these were destroyed during the invasion of Hūṇa and later mutilated, disfigured, disturbed, and buried by the Muslims. The discovery of the sculptures hints that the Buddhist shrines occupied a large area in old Mathurā city and its neighbourhood. Even the reputed Brāhmanical and Jaina sites have unearthed the Buddhist sculptures.

Kaṭrā

Sir Alexander Cunningham during his first exploration in 1853 found some pillars of a Buddhist railing at the site of Kaṭrā Keshavdev renowned as birthplace of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Later he recovered a gateway from the same spot and a standing Buddha figure from a well recording the name of the monastery as Yaśā Vihaṇa.41 He remarks I made the first discovery of Buddhist remains at the temple of Kesau Rāy in January 1853, when, after a long search, I found a broken pillar of a Buddhist railing sculptured with the figure of Maya Devi standing under the Śāla tree.42 Cunningham was mistaken when he identified the lady on railing as Māyā Devi. Since it was the first discovery he thought the representation conveyed some special event. Now we know that lady under tree was a common representation on the rail posts of Kuśāna period and it does not specifically represent Māyā Devi.

41. Sculpture No. B.10 of Lucknow Museum. It was gifted by a nun Jayabhaṣṭā in the year 280.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Recorded on</th>
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<th>Present Location</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>King or Year</th>
<th>Donor</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Srikunda Vihara</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Sanghamitra Sad Vihara</td>
<td>Pillar base</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>IMC</td>
<td>M.2j</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Monk Buddha-dasa</td>
<td><em>MI</em>, pp. 100-2, No. 65.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Amohassi Vihara</td>
<td>Bodhisatva pedestal</td>
<td>Katra mound</td>
<td>MM</td>
<td>A.l</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Amohassi</td>
<td><em>ASR</em>, 1909-10, p. 63, p. XXIII.</td>
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<td><em>Saka Vihāra</em> do do do do</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td><em>Yaśā Vihāra</em> Buddha pedestal</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>SML</td>
<td>B.10</td>
<td>Year 230 or 280 of Gupta era. Nun Jayabhaṭṭa</td>
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<td>Repair by Vāśiska in the reign of Vāśiska</td>
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<td>8a.</td>
<td><em>Stūpa</em> Stone slab</td>
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<td>do?</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>repaired by Vāśiska in the year 76 of the reign of Vāśiska</td>
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<td>MM</td>
<td>17.1316</td>
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<td>JUPHS, XIX, 1948, pp. 79-80. MI., p. 110 No. 74.</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td><strong>Jivikadatta Vihāra.</strong> Stone sculpture (frag. pedestal?)</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>Cetiya Kuti do</td>
<td>Kanskhār do</td>
<td>37.2740</td>
<td>Kaniṣka year 10</td>
<td>Monk Nāgadatta for Mahāsāṅghikas</td>
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<td>Kraustikīya Vihāra do</td>
<td>do do do</td>
<td>37.2740</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>do</td>
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<td>Cutaka Vihāra do Stone slab Mātāgali</td>
<td>do do</td>
<td>17.1350</td>
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<td>For Mahāsāṅghikas</td>
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<td>Āpānaka Vihāra or Alanka Vihāra</td>
<td>Bodhisattva pedestal Bharatpur gate</td>
<td>25-26 1612</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>do</td>
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<td>Guha Vihāra Lion capital Saptarṣi mound</td>
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<td>Rājula</td>
<td>Kamuia and Śodāsa for Sarvastivādins do</td>
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<td>Stūpa do</td>
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<td>Sanghārāma do</td>
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<td>do</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Viradatta Vihāra</td>
<td>do</td>
<td>Govindnagar near Kaṭrā</td>
<td>MM</td>
<td>76.25</td>
<td>Year 115 Gupta era</td>
<td>Monk Sarginavarman. MMA, p. 84. JUPHS, VIII (New series), pp. 1-3.</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Ladyaska Vihāra</td>
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Buddhist Art of Mathūra
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<td>Pūrṇa Mañjūraṇi Putra Stūpa</td>
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<td>V.S. Agrawala, Indian Art, pp. 219-20.</td>
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Buddhism in Mathurā

He also found two capitals of large round pillars which according to him should belong to some Buddhist monuments. A fragmentary inscription found here records the genealogy of Gupta dynasty from the founder to Samudragupta but the nature of the monument or work is not traceable as the remaining part of the epigraph is gone. Cunningham further discovered a curved architrave of a Buddhist gateway depicting rich decoration of architectural complexities and a gate-way (Mathurā Museum No. M.1) *Amohassī Vihāra* is also reported to be existing at this site. 43

Another very important discovery from the site of Kaṭrā is the famous Bodhisattva/Buddha MM No. A.1, figure 79 which is one of the most important and beautiful citations of early phase of Mathurā School of Art. It records the name of the monastery as *Saka Vihāra*. It means that there stood two monasteries on this site i.e. *Yaśā Vihāra* and *Saka Vihāra*. It is not unlikely keeping in view of the large dimensions of the area. *Saka Vihāra* has also been interpreted as *Śvaka Vihāra*. 44 Another *Śvaka Vihāra* occurs on the pedestal of a Bodhisattva image acquired from Sonkh long before Hartel’s excavations (Mathurā Museum No. 90.1602). It is dated in the 23rd regnal year of Kanishka. It is the last year of this king as in the 24th regnal year we have *Īsāpur Yūpa* pillar refering to Vāsiśka. We have already discussed the position of Vāsiśka in the Kuśāṇa dynasty in the light of the recent discoveries in the previous chapter. As the donor Amohassī has installed this Bodhisattva statue in her own convent, the monastery is also termed as *Amohassī Vihāra*.

A fragmentary Bodhisattva figure set up in the time of some Kṣatrapa probably in the first century B.C. was found in the vicinity of Kaṭrā site i.e. from the shrine of Galtesvara Mahādeva, (Mathurā Museum No. 66, fig. 78). Other Buddhist figures now preserved in the Mathurā Museum from Kaṭrā site include : Inscribed pedestal of Śākyamuni Buddha (No. 12.270), pedestal of the Buddha (14.416), Bust of Buddha (14-15.437), Bodhisattva head with Garuḍa (15.510), fragment showing *Viśvantara Jātaka* (kt.136), Pedestal with Bodhisattva (49.3501), Slab with Buddha in *Bhūmisparśa* (47.3366), fragment showing seated Buddha (57.4420), Torso of Buddha in *Abhaya* (59.4836), Bust of Buddha (53.3654), Inscribed pedestal of Buddha (56.3999), head of Buddha from Potrākūnda (56.4011), Head of Buddha (54.3795), Head of Bodhisattva (56.3948), Torso of Bodhisattva (56.4000), etc. These finds definitely prove that the site of Kaṭrā which is now famous as a Brāhmanical spot had been a great establishment of Buddhism. Cunningham observes the potentiality of the spot in these words : “The site is the most promising one for discovery, and as the Masjid has long been disused, owing to many dangerous cracks in both roof and walls, I believe that there would not be any objection whatever to a complete exploration of the mound.” 45 This could, however, not be

44. Agrawala, V.S., Mathurā Museum Catalogue 1948, p. 49.
45. ASR., 1862-63, p. 238.
accomplished and A. Führer also had to suspend his excavation work in 1896 as the walls of a Stūpa were continuing towards the Idgāh.\textsuperscript{46}

\textit{Kankālī}

Kankālī is another site which is known as Jainī Tīlā rightly because hundreds of Jaina sculptures were unearthed from here and the biggest campaign was undertaken by A. Führer between the years 1888-91 and the finds were shifted to the Lucknow Museum. As pointed out in the previous chapter there was a dispute whether the monuments belonged to Jainas or the Buddhists. This supports the theory that the site was in possession of the devotees of the Buddha also and consequently numerous Buddhist sculptures have been recovered here. As reported by Cunningham 'Harding, Magistrate of Mathurā dug a trench right across the Kankālī mound from north to south which yielded some mutilated Buddhist statues both life size and colossal.'\textsuperscript{47} Two colossal Buddha statues sent to Allahābād were later shifted to Lucknow Museum. A spandril of a doorway carved with column representing winged lions on capitals supporting elephant was an interesting find and the name of the donor was given as Mugaliputra. A quadruple image carved with headless Buddha figures seated back to back was in white stone. A small seated figure with six perons worshipping cakra and an inscription recording the name of the donor as ‘Jīvikaśyā datta Bhikṣusya Vihārasya’,\textsuperscript{48} was also found here.

Growse has suggested that the monastery of Upagupta mentioned by Huien-tsang was probably situated on the Kankālī mound. The Chinese traveller Huien-tsang described it lying east to the town and Kankālī is almost eastward of Kaṭrā which was the centre of ancient Buddhist city of Mathurā. The association of tank with monastery was an important factor as the monkey’s story does not find place without a tank. This was the weak point when Growse wrote his Memoir in the last quarter of the 19th century and he did not feel much confident while advancing his arguments for locating the Upagupta monastery.\textsuperscript{49} But just after a century the excavations conducted by M.C. Joshi of Archaeological Survey of India in 1975 a tank has been discovered at the site of Kankālī. This fine brick tank also revealed a stone slab giving the 5th year of Kaniśka’s reign. A plan of a circular building probably of a stūpa and the dwelling rooms for monks were also exposed.

These discoveries prove that there existed a full-fledged Buddhist establishment including a monastery, a stūpa and a tank which has been an important feature of a religious shrine in order to have a ceremonial bath to promote the feeling of

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{ASR.}, 1906, pp. 1-2.
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{ASR.}, III, 1871-72, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{48} \textit{MDM}, pp. 117-18.
\textsuperscript{49} \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 118-19.
purity and cleanliness. All these points support the theory of Growse to pinpoint the location of Upagupta’s monastery at the present site of Kankālī. Cunningham on the other hand identified the Upagupta monastery with Yaśā Vihāra on Kaṭrā mound. Growse contradicting his views remarks: ‘General Cunningham, in his Archaeological Report, has identified the Upagupta monastery with the Yaśā Vihāra inside the Kaṭrā; but in all probability he would not now adhere to this theory. At the time when he advanced it, he had never visited the Kankālī Tīlā and was also under the impression that the Fort had always been as it now is, the centre of city ……..’50 Vogel does not subscribe to the views of either of these scholars regarding the identification of some of the monasteries.51 But in view of the recent discoveries the controversy regarding the location of Upagupta’s monastery should be deemed as settled in favour of Kankālī.

Besides the above discoveries made by Cunningham and Growse a few more Buddhist objects have been acquired from the site of Kankālī and are now housed in the Mathurā Museum. These are: Bodhisattva Torso (No. 14-15.447), stele with beautiful standing Buddha (No. 15.578), slab representing annointment of the Buddha by two Nāgas on one side and devotees on the other (No. H.2) and Hārito with a child (No. D.11), tympanum showing stūpa worship (47.3367) and Siddhārtha in meditation attended by two ladies (46.3231).

A Yakṣa figure (46.3232) recovered from the Kankālī well mentions in the epigraph that it was set up in the mihiraggiha which has been explained as Mihira Vihāra by V.S. Agrawala52 and so the mound should be considered as a site of this monastery also. But the Mihiragriha should be interpreted as a shrine for the worship of sun. It is interesting to note that the famous Sūrya statue clad in the Northern style (Udicyaveśa, Mathurā Museum No. 12.269) and belonging to early Kuśāna period hails from this site. Hence on the basis of the epigraph under discussion and this Sūrya statue, the present author is tempted to conclude that Mihira gritha was a sun shrine in the Kuśāna period and not a Buddhist monastery. Mihira Vihāra as Buddhist monastery, of course, stood at Kāmān as mentioned in Lüders List (No. 12) which shall be discussed later.

This may be pointed out here that the vast mound of Kankālī has revealed several Brāhmanical sculptures besides a large number of Jaina and Buddhist remains. One wonders how was it possible that the three religions flourished simultaneously at one place, while we often learn about their mutual rivalry. Although no satisfactory explanation can be given to this rather strange phenomenon, the archaeological facts cannot be disowned. They suggest that there prevailed harmony between the followers of these religions and their relations were cordial despite their different ways of life. Much depended on the nature of the ruling

50. Ibid., p. 121.
51. ASR., 1906-07, p. 140.
52. Poddāra Abhinandana Grantha, p. 798.
kings who must be having a tolerant view and in order to maintain peace among their subjects they encouraged religious harmony and eclecticism.

Growse was once inclined to give another thought to the problem. In view of the fact that no foundation or ground plan of any establishment were noticed on the spot he doubted the existence of any temple on the site and according to him the sculptures were brought from different places and buried in a pit by the Muslims.\textsuperscript{53} While such type of occurances can not be denied in archaeology and this may be a conjecture. In case of the recent finds from the site of Govindnagar to be discussed in detail in the following chapter, it is not possible to subscribe to the views of Growse.

Excavations in the 19th century were not advanced and the excavators did not bother for vertical digging to find out the complete cultural sequence of the site from top to bottom. Moreover, they aimed at recovering the sculptures and neglected other important aspects. This should be mentioned here that Growse's observations are not wholly correct as the structural portions were also found.\textsuperscript{54} It appears that he did not have the sufficient data of excavation when he derived this conclusion. In the recent excavations, conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India a tank and walls of rooms have been traced. One can see the bricks of old stūpa after the rainy season towards the Kaccā road which is adjacent to the B.S.A. College. Growse was also not happy over his suspicion and it was with much reluctance that he advanced this hypothesis which he himself ultimately rejected, 'But upon the whole I conclude that the discovery of no foundations in situ is rather to be explained by the fact that the mound has long served as a quarry, and that bricks and small blocks of stone, being more useful for ordinary building purposes, would all be removed when cumbrous and at the same time broken statues might be left undisturbed.'\textsuperscript{55}

\textit{Chaubārā}

The chain of more than a dozen of Chaubārā mounds which existed about two kms. to the south west of Mathurā was also a site of some Buddhist monuments. Cunningham found a copper celt in one of them.\textsuperscript{56} The bricks of early stūpas from these mounds were removed by the villagers of the neighbourhood, particularly that of Bakirpur and Girdharpur. It appears to be the probable site where Hiuentsang indicated that 1250 eminent Buddhist scholars resided to preach the Law. When the road to Sonkh was laid in 1868, one of these mounds exposed a masonry cell which contained a small golden casket. The purpose of this reliquary was to preserve a tooth of some great man but it was thrown away in ignorance by the

\textsuperscript{53} \textit{MDM.}, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{54} \textit{ASR.}, 1906-07, p. 140.
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{MDM.}, p. 118.
\textsuperscript{56} \textit{ASR.}, III, p. 16
labourers who kept the casket with much care for its metal value and later handed it over to the engineer for onward transmission to the then District Collector, F.S. Growse but the whereabouts of this antiquity are not known. Cunningham from another Chaubārā mound found a steatite casket in 1872 and it was made over to Indian Museum, Calcutta. A colossal head of the Buddha bearing “Egyptian features” was a remarkable discovery made by Growse (Mathurā Museum No. A.27). A pedestal of the Buddhā image in early Brāhmī characters records the year 33 in the reina of Mahārāja Devaputra Huviṣka. Cross bars of Buddhist railings recovered from here represented different figure and motifs.

The other Buddhist finds which saw their way from Chaubārā to the Mathurā Museum are: crosslegged Buddha in abhaya posture of Kuṣāṇa period (No. A.16), fragmentary right leg of a colossal Buddha image (No. A.24) and a beautiful railpost representing on observe probably Ṛṣyaśringa in ecstasy with his two fingers on chin and reverse carved with the worship of the Bodhi tree and scene of birds fight etc. (No. J.7).

Thus the discovery of two relic caskets and several Buddhist sculptures proves that the chain of Chaubārā mounds was an important establishment of Buddhism.

Jamālpur

Another Buddhist site of great significance was the Jail (according to Cunningham) and Jamālpur (according to Growse) site which was levelled up in 1860 for constructing the Collector’s court. The objects found on the spot suggest that more than one stūpas and monasteries existed there in Kuṣāṇa and Gupta periods. The most important achievement was the discovery of more than life size image of the Buddha standing in abhaya posture wearing a transparent drapery and a beautifully carved nimbus. The face is expressive of perfect serenity and bliss. This is one of the master pieces of Indian art (Mathurā Museum No. A.5, fig. 139). Growse reports that the nose of this excellent piece was mutilated either by some bigoted iconoclastic person or by some child in mere spirit of mischief after its recovery. The pedestal records the name of Yaśadinna who was supposed to be a monk but the Kasiā image of the Buddha in demise and the recent excellent Buddha image from Govindnagar (Mathurā Museum No. 76.25, fig. 142) bear this name as sculptor. G.V. Mitterwallner thinks that these Buddhas were carved by different artists carrying the same name as these are quite different in art style from each other. The Govindnagar Buddha appears to be the earliest i.e. 434 A. D. followed by Sārnāth of the year 154 Gupta era and last the dying Buddha at Kasiā which should be assigned to first half of the 6th century A.D. on stylistic as well as palaeographic grounds.

59. Ibid., p. 115.
The pedestals of the Buddha images from Jamālpur or jail bear epigraphs on the basis of which the name of two monasteries have come to light. These are Huvīśka Vihāra, Kunḍokhara Vihāra and Sanghamitra Saḍa-Vihāra. Lüders opines that Saṭavihārisa should be read as Sadhryagvihārin meaning (travelling) companion. The first name follow the name of the reigning Kuṣāṇa king, Huvīśka. Cunningham recovered the bases of thirty pillars of this monastery. About fifteen names of donors who presented these columns have been found inscribed on them. The records suggest that seventy pillars were gifted to the monastery but it appears that forty pillars were removed from the site for local use. The second monastery needs some explanation owing to its strange nomenclature i.e. Kunḍokhara, Cunningham opines that the word is Kunḍa Suka Vihāra i.e. a monastery with a dry tank. It was the same dry tank which was referred to by Hieuntsang in which an over excited monkey was killed. Growse suggests that it is a compound word incorporating Kunḍa and Puśkara and both meaning a tank. It seems to be a farfetched interpretation although such words are in usage e.g. Śera Singh, Ādityabhānu, Šaśichandra etc.

The site of Jamālpur has revealed many important Buddhist figures beside the most famous one, discussed above (Mathurā Museum No. A.5 fig. 139). Those which are housed in the Mathurā Museum include: A.49 Buddha image of year 28, A.3 Buddha image, Kuṣāṇa, A.14 Buddha on lion throne, Kuṣāṇa, A.15 Buddha in Abhaya, Kuṣāṇa, A.19 Buddha in meditation, Kuṣāṇa, A.33 life size Buddha head, Kuṣāṇa, A.34 life size Buddha head, Kuṣāṇa, A.35 life size Buddha head, Kuṣāṇa, A.44 fragment standing Bodhisattva, Kuṣāṇa, A.46 Torso of Bodhisattva, Kuṣāṇa, A.6 Headless Buddha Torso Gupta, A.7 Torso of Buddha in abhaya, Gupta, A.8 Torso of Buddha, Gupta, A.10 Torso of Buddha, Gupta, A.11 Torso of Buddha, Gupta, A.12 lower part of Buddha, Gupta, A.13 Buddha Torso in Varada, Gupta, A.22 fragment left hand of Buddha, Gupta, A.31 Buddha head, Gupta, A.36 Buddha head, Gupta, A.37 Buddha head, Gupta, A.48 Buddha pedestal, Gupta era 135=454-5 A.D., A.51 pedestal of standing Buddha, Gupta, J.15 Railpost showing a man under tree, Kuṣāṇa, J.41 Railpost with lady and Ulūka Jātaka, I.32 Fragment Railpost with male, I.33 fragment with celestial, N.1 drum of miniature stūpa, Kuṣāṇa, 64.12 Pedestal of Buddha image dated Gupta era 125=554 A.D.

Some of these fragments are so large that they should form the parts of a Buddha figure measuring more than 7 metres. The number of railpost as gathered from the epigraph comes to 129 and the interesting point as that these bear some

60. Ibid., p. 107.
61. MI., p. 81, footnote 4.
62. ASR., I, p. 239.
63. ASR., II, p. 239.
64. MDM., p. 118-19.
figure most probably put by the sculptors as guide to the mason. The Mathurā Museum houses more than thirty Buddhist figures of ‘A’ series the provenances of which is recorded as Jamālpur with some doubt. An interesting exhibit is a square pillar carved with niches on four sides probably to receive the miniature Buddha figures. It served the purpose of a Sarvaśobhadra image (No. P.67). The charming dancing girls, now in the National Museum, New Delhi, probably adorned the gateway of the Huviśka monastery.

Chaurāsī

Beside these four large Buddhist establishments i.e. Kaṭrā, Kankāli, Chaubārā and Jamālpur there were other monasteries in Mathurā city and outside. We are informed by the epigraphs that the devotees used to oblige their religious preceptors in installing the Buddha images at their command. These included male as well as female devotees. A pedestal of the 33rd year of Huviśka (111 A.D.) reveals that the image of Bodhisattva was set up by two nuns at the instance of their teacher Bala. From Chaurāsī and surrounding area large size fragments of Buddhist railings and doorjambs were acquired and deposited in the Mathurā Museum in 1957 (57.4446-48). A headless Buddha image of early Kuśāna period recovered in 1978 near Chaurāsī mentions its dedications by some Kāyastha. This is probably the earliest reference to Kāyastha in an archaeological document (Mathurā Museum No. 78.34). We can safely presume the existence of some Buddhist stūpa on this site.

Pāllikherā and other Sites

A bowl on the head of a Yakṣa (Mathurā Museum No. 12.260) indicates that a monastery was built by goldsmiths Svaramakāra Vihāra in Sadar quarter of Mathurā city. Another stone bowl reads at Sanghīyānām Parigraha (Mathurā Museum No. 15.662) and it may suggest that a monastery of the Mahāsāṅghika order was existing at Pāllikherā the provenance of this bowl. It may be mentioned that the site of Pāllikherā has brought to light numerous sculptures belonging to different religions. Most of them were recovered from walls. The Buddhist objects acquired by Mathurā Museum include Buddha and Bodhisattva heads and fragmentary halo pieces and these date from Kuśāna to early medieval period. It is, therefore, quite possible that a Buddhist monastery as mentioned in the epigraph existed there.

The Mahāsāṅghikas had some other monasteries also. A fragment probably from a water channel bearing an epigraph in the 91st year of the Kuśāna era (169 A.D.) informs the erection of a monastery known as Cutaka Vihāra (Mango monastery) for the benefit of the Mahāsāṅghikas. It was found in the Mātāgalī in Mathurā city (Mathurā Museum No. 17.1350). Yet another establishment named

as Āpānaka Vihāra of the same sect is reported from an inscription incised on the pedestal of a Bodhisattva image (Mathurā Museum No. 25-26.1612) found at Bharatpur gate, Mathurā. From Kanskhar in Mathurā city pedestal of a Bodhisattva image was acquired (Mathurā Museum No. 37.2740). It bears three-line-Brāhma inscription which refers to the erection of Krauśṭikīya monastery for the teachers of Mahāsāṅghika monks. The image was set up in the 10th regnal year of Kaniṣka.

Maholī

Maholī near Pālikherā was also a centre of Buddhist activities. The inscribed pedestal of a headless seated Buddha image of the year 22 mentions Prāvārika Vihāra (Mathurā Museum No. 18.1557). As already mentioned the word has been interpreted as Pava meaning a cloak like drapery of monks. Pava also means a mango tree and the Prāvārika Vihāra under reference was another mango monastery.67 The one by name Cutaka has already been discussed. It seems that the word Prāvārika was very popular as it appears in different epigraphs. It is also possible that the chief monastery of this name was at Maholī and its branches were situated at different places. Thus there was one at Kaṭrā (Mathurā Museum No. KT.132) and curiously enough the fragments from a Nāgi image from Girdharapur mound also bear this name (Mathurā Museum No. 17.1316). This mound has revealed a fragmentary Bodhisattva head with halo and another Bodhisattva head (Mathurā Museum No. 17.1310 and 17.1355 respectively). But the reason for locating the headquarters of the Prāvārika Vihāra at Maholī is that this spot has revealed some interesting Buddhist sculptures. The elegantly standing colossal Bodhisattva (Mathurā Museum No. 2798, fig. 95) is a remarkable discovery. Near this image was also found an inscribed slab (38.2801) which refers to another monastery known as Khandā Vihāra which existed in the Kuśāṇa period as the slab is dated in year 92=170 A.D.

Saptarṣi

Another Buddhist establishment of considerable significance at Mathurā was situated at Saptarṣi mound which was a stronghold of the Sarvāstivādin sect. The Lion Capital, now in the British Museum, London, is inscribed in the Kharoshṭī characters and furnishes very useful information for the study of Buddhist church. The gist of the document is that the relics of the Buddha were deposited, a lion capital was erected and a monastery (Sāṅgharāma) was built for the welfare of the monks belonging to the Sarvāstivādin faith. The other important point is the gift of a monastery called Guhā Vihāra (Cave monastery) by Udaya a pupil of Buddhadeva to Buddhila of Nagaraka in the time of Kṣatrapa Śoḍaṣa the son of Mahākṣatrapa Rājula. The third revelation is the gift of some land to Acārya

Buddhila who had defeated the Mahāsāṃghikas in arguments. The charity was performed in the reign of Kṣatrapa Śoḍāsa. Salutation to Buddha, Dharma and Saṅgha and also to the Śakas of Śakastān. The person performing this charity was Kamuia, chief queen of Mahākṣatrapa Rājula, daughter of Kharoṣṭha and mother of Nada Diaka.68

The document indicates that the Śaka rulers had faith in the Sarvāstivādin cult and we know that their successors, Kuśānas patronised the Mahāsāṃghikas or Mahāyāna sect. Another point is that there was sometimes much rivalry between the two sects and one tried to defeat the other in canonical competitions and Buddhila must have been a well known figure for such discussions among the Sarvāstivādin scholars. This may be pointed out here that a life size female statue of schist stone made in Gandhāra style and discovered on the same spot (Mathurā Museum No. F.42) has often been interpreted as Kamuia or Kambojikā under whose patronage the charity under reference was accomplished.69 A beautiful railpost (Mathurā Museum No. 15.586) carved with different varieties of full blown lotus on both sides and the scene of the Jātaka of the Worst Evil comes from the same site. It should belong to the pre-Christian period.

Lüders in his list of Brāhmī Inscriptions refers to a large slab which mentions Kakāṭikā Vihāra but the provenance is uncertain.70 One pedestal of a Buddha image from Mathurā but now preserved in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay refers to a monastery known as Roṣika Vihāra.71

A stone slab incised with three lines in Kuśāna Brāhmī was acquired for the Museum in 1914 near Gaughāt well in the Mathurā city (Mathurā Museum No. 14.461). The contents of the inscription are important for more than one reasons. Firstly it mentions a monastery known as Siri Vihāra and secondly it refers to the Sammātiya teachers who were a sub-sect of the Theravādin monks. It is apparent that the record was meant for Bodhisattva image which has been referred to in the epigraph.72 Sometimes the inscription was incised on a separate stone and was not written on the image itself. The same was the case of the colossal Bodhisattva statue acquired from Maholi (Mathurā Museum No. 38.2798).

Gokarṇēśvara in the northern out-skirts of Mathurā is a potential site of Kuśāna period. The image in worship appears to be a Kuśāna king. It must have been the venue of the Buddhist activities in ancient time as several Buddhist sculptures.

71. JBBRAS., XX., p. 269.
have been acquired from this spot. Two small Buddha statues of Kuśāṇa period were made over to the Museum when their heads were broken off by some miscreants. These were worshipped as female deities under the name ‘Nāgarī’ and Sāgarī (Mathurā Museum 73.30 and 73.31). Other Buddhist figures from the site are 47.3290 Buddha head, 43.3097 Buddha torso, 43.3095 Shin of Buddha figure, 43.3089 Right hand of the Buddha, 47.3268 Halo of an image, 20.1605 a square pedestal representing life scenes of Buddha, all belonging to the Gupta period.

Trans Yamunā Sites

The Buddhist establishments were not confined to the Mathurā city only but some of them were situated in the interior also. As pointed out above, the Chinese traveller Hiuenstang has mentioned that the monasteries stood on both the banks of the Yamunā. This is corroborated by the antiquarian discoveries. Īśāpur situated on the left bank, opposite Viśrāmghāṭa has revealed some Buddhist sculptures. Mention may be made of H.12, fig. 72, showing Lokapālas offering alms to the Buddha. This is one of the earliest representations of the Buddha in human form.73 Mahābān was another point across the river where we can conjecture a Buddhist shrine. Exhibit No. 36.2663 is a fine piece showing the worship of Buddha’s halo. Another exhibit No. 13.281 represents Buddha’s life events particularly the birth and victory over Māra. Mahābān is an extensive site and many more pieces can be discovered if area excavation is conducted.

Vrindāban which is as famous as Mathurā among the devotees of Kuśāṇa also possessed some Buddhist establishments in the Kuśāṇa period. This is vouchsafed by several sculptures and architectural fragments which have come to light and are displayed in the Mathurā Museum. A fragment showing worship of Stūpa by two garland bearing Gandharvas (10.130) belongs to c. 1st century B.C. Two large size Śāla-bhānjikā figures—lady under the tree—of Kuśāṇa period must have been the part of some big railing of a Stūpa (40.2987-88). The sculpture No. 10.119 is another citation of the same posture but in smaller size. The present author had acquired a lower part of a Bodhisattva image (M.M. No. 74.26, fig. 88) with a three line Kuśāṇa Brāhmī epigraph mentioning the installation of this image by Senaka, the son of Siddhaka.

Existence of a Vihāra named Uttara Hāruṣa is proved by an inscription on one of the oldest Buddha images discovered by Gen. Cunningham at Ānyor near Govardhan. Another important Buddha figure from the same spot (Mathurā Museum No. A.65, fig. 109) is dated in the 51st year and is of great significance to trace the development of Gandhāra influence on Mathurā and to frame the chronology of the Buddhist images.74 It was under worship as goddess Durgā. A life-size head of the Buddha of Kuśāṇa period was another notable find from

74. The Scythian Period, 1949, Chapter III, figure 39.
Ānyor (A.32). A Buddha head of Kuśāṇa period (No. 42-43.3001) also came to the Museum from Ānyor in 1943.

Sonkh which has attained an important position on the archaeological map after the excavations conducted by H. Härtel from Berlin has provided two Buddhist antiquities before expedition. One is a headless Bodhisattva statue recording Śaka or Svaka Vihāra in the 23rd year of Kaniṣka (Mathurā Museum No. 20.1602) discussed above and the other figure is a head with crown which can be identified as Bodhisattva (No. 18.1534).

Lüders List of Brāhmī Inscription records a Budhist image inscription of the year 74=152 A.D. from Kāman. It refers to the gift of Śākyamuni Buddha image in a convent captioned as Mihira Vihāra by the monk Nandika for Sarvāstivādin Ācāryas. So Kāman was the site of Mihira Vihāra and as discussed above the conjecture to identify Mihiragriha as Mihira Vihāra at the site of Kankāḷi is not correct.75

There are many other spots which have yielded the Buddhist sculptures and mention may be made of Bājnā (near Mathurā city), Sarāi Āzampur, Barsānā, Rāwal, Ganeshrā, Girdharpur etc. Several pieces were recovered from the Yamunā bank.

Two interesting pieces were obtained from Rāwal on the left bank of the Yamunā. Of these one (17.1270) shows an elephant and a few letters in the Kharoṣṭhī script reading Sastakadhātu (Sasta-oksha-dhātu) meaning 'The collar bone relic of the Master'. The story as given in the Mahāvamsa narrates that Sumana, son of Aśoka's daughter, came to India from Ceylon to take some holy relics of the Buddha as desired by the king. On his return to Ceylon the relic was carried out in a procession on a state elephant. This is the only piece outside Ceylon representing this episode. The stone is not Mathurā red sand stone and seems to belong to some outside quarry. Moreover, the script used was also confined to the Gandhāra region. The probability is that the sculpture was brought from the Peshāwar side (ancient Kaniṣkapur).


As the whereabouts of this documents are not known it is worthwhile to reproduce its texts and translation as given by G. Bühler.

सिद्ध सो ३० गु १० । सर्व दश्म विश्रव्य नन्दिपार्व दानं भगवती
शाक्य मूरिना प्रितिम मिहिर विहरे प्र (वायवो) नां सम्ब्रह्मसिंह बादीनां मातिपुत्रां स
व्यास (त) जा च हित सुखार्थः ।

'Success', in the year 74, the first (month of) summer, the fifteenth day—at that moment, a statue of divine Sākyamuni (Śākyamuni, was set up as) the gift of the monk Nandika in the Mihiravihāra for the acceptance of the Sarvāstivādin teachers, for the welfare and happiness of (the donor's) parents and of all creatures.'

Another find from the same place is an inscription (17.1271) with a four-line-epigraph again in the Kharosthi script. It is a copy of an inscription found at a well from Shakradarra in the North western region (now in Pakistan). This forgery or attempt to imitate an original record is an interesting case. Probably it was some sort of a magic formula to get sweet water from the well. It must have proven effective in case of Shakradarra well. Anyway, the discovery of the piece from the left bank of the Yamunā strengthens the literary traditions and the accounts that the stūpas and monasteries stood on both sides of the river.

In the light of the above discussions we can conclude that Mathurā was an important Buddhist centre in pre and post Christian centuries and it flourished as such upto the 6th century A.D. There were different sub-sects of Buddhism and some of them had their independent monasteries and a few of these had different branches also.

Archaeological finds have shed valuable light to reconstruct the history of Buddhist church. It appears that in early days Sarvāstivādhins or Therāvādins or Hinayānis exercised greater influence and they were patronised by the Śaka rulers also. Subsequently the fortune smiled in favour of Mahāsāṅghikas or Mahāyānīs who were encouraged by the Kuśaṇa kings and Mathurā ushered into a metropolis of India and probably the most important Buddhist centre.

The sites of Mathurā have not been fully explored and excavated and many more Buddhist pieces have yet to see the light of the day. These might prove of great significance for a study of art and cultural history of India. During the recent years the site of Govindnagar in the western outskirts of Mathurā city has yielded hundreds of Buddhist remains some of which are of outstanding value. One pedestal of a Buddha image records a new monastery as 'Viradatta Vihāra'. The antiquities present a variety of subjects and range in date from 1st century B.C. to 6th century A.D. One can frame a complete chronology of the Buddhist art of Mathurā on the basis of these finds. The issue would be discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

Resume

Thus on the basis of literary traditions, accounts of foreign travellers and archaeological finds we can conclude that efforts were made to spread the message of the Buddha in Mathurā region during the life of the Master himself although not much success was achieved. Whether the Buddha visited the place or not is a debatable point and the present author is not convinced with the arguments forwarded in the favour of the visit. It was Mahākāśyapya who initiated to popularise

76. CII., II, pp. 49 and 161-62.

Another interesting point is that the find spot of these objects is wrongly mentioned in the Museum records as Barsānā the place of Rādhā's father while her mother was born at Rawal the provenance of these sculptures. It appears that Rādhā's association with both the place confused the person who wrote the find at a subsequent date.
Buddhism but the real credit should go to Upagupta who gained the favour of Emperor Aśoka and converted innumerable people into Buddhism. But Mathurā could not become the stronghold of Buddhism until the Kuśānas came to the scene. Kaniśka favoured Buddhism and also made Mathurā as an important seat of his Empire. He patronised arts and artisans and a large number of Buddhist monuments were built and hundreds of Buddhist images were installed in Mathurā and its vicinity.

The process continued in the reign of his successors and the archaeological finds prove that there existed about forty Buddhist establishments in Mathurā region during Kuśāna and Gupta period. The Chinese pilgrims who visited India between the fourth and seventh century A.D. also recognised Mathurā as a great centre of Buddhism, although during the late Gupta period it was losing the ground and Brāhmanism had started dominating again. The recent discoveries from Govindnagar at Mathurā support the view that Buddhism was quite popular here up to the Gupta period and the erection of Buddhist monuments and installation of the Buddhist images were considered to be very pious and sacred deeds.

The important sites in the Mathurā region have been spotted in two maps i.e. the map of the city and the map of the District.
SECTION II

Materials for the Study of Mathura Art

Chapter IV: History of Archaeological Campaigns

Chapter V: Recent Discoveries from Govindanagar

Chapter VI: Origin and Development of Mathurā School of Art
Section II

Materials for the Study of Malaria in

Chapter 1: History of Malaria Diagnosis

Chapter 2: Effective Methods for Controlling Malaria

Chapter 3: Control and Prevention of Malaria, Post-
HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL CAMPAIGNS

The glorious past of Mathurā is richly corroborated by the antiquarian remains unearthed from time to time in this region. Some of the spots have emerged as mines of art treasures and there are many which have not yet revealed their artistic grandeur. The archaeological potentiality of this area has been nicely put up by Coomaraswamy.1 The riches of Mathurā's past remained buried for several centuries and the only source to unfold this mystery was literature, the accounts of the foreign travellers or missioneries to Indian courts. The documents are, however, either too exaggerated or too meagre to paint a clear picture of the society of this region in different phases. Archaeology has helped us a lot in this direction and except for certain dark patches it has now become possible not only to verify the stock of events recorded in other sources but a comprehensive and almost an undisputed chronology atleast from the time of the Buddha and Mahāvīra i.e. from c. 5th century B.C. can also be framed. Since some of the aspects have already been enumerated in detail while discussing the allied problems in the Second Chapter it is proposed to draw an outline of the archaeological researches in the Mathurā region in brief.

Like many other great moments of archaeology, a chance discovery made by Stacy in 1836 put Mathurā on the archaeological map of the sub-continent. The finds consisted of the so called Silenus sculpture and a railing pillar with a lady mounting on a dwarf and holding a cage with a bird.2 This event attracted the attention of researchers in Indology and they started exploring the sites of Mathurā. The Department of Archaeology was not yet born and it was for the individual scholars to decide about the course of action in such cases.

The travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims lured Gen. A. Cunningham to make a first hand survey of the spot. As already discussed in Chapter three, Mathurā was a stronghold of Buddhism and the stūpa of Sāriputra was held in

1. HIIA., p. 56.
2. The finds were originally made over to the Asiatic Society and are now housed in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. JASB., Vol. V, 1836, p. 567 and III.
great reverence, the perfumes were offered and the lamps were kept burning the whole night. The grandeur and enthusiasm of the festivals and processions can be judged from the fact that ‘the showers of flowers darkened the sun and moon.’ The traditions of depositing the nail of the Buddha in a monastery built by Upagupta, the story of a monkey associated with Buddha at Mathurā etc. and several monasteries were to be verified by Cunningham. He focussed his attention on the site of Kaṭrā which revealed numerous Buddhist remains.

About the topography and archaeological significance of Mathurā Cunningham observes, ‘there are a great number of lofty earthen mounds around Mathurā which are covered with fragments of stone and brick. Nothing, however, is known about them although everyone of them has a separate name. The numerous fragments of stone which are found upon them show that they are not old brickkilns, as might have been supposed from their vicinity to the city. Apparently, they are natural mounds such as are found everywhere along with lower course of the Jumna, and which have usually been taken advantage of for the sites of forts or temples...’ He opines that most of the mounds bear Brahmanical names but the Ānanda Ṭīlā probably refers to the stūpa of Ānanda and the Vināyaka Ṭīlā reminds the stūpa of Upāli a teacher of Vinaya hence Vināyaka.

Cunningham’s archaeological explorations proved that the mosque at the site of Kaṭrā Kesāv Devan was built after the destruction of the temple of Kesāv Rāi in the reign of Aurangzeb. Some inscriptions recorded by the Hindū visitors to the temple bear the incomplete portions of the year in Vikram Samvat e.g. 1713 (1656 A.D.) and 1720 (1663 A.D.) which is five years later than the accession of Aurangzeb. Tavernier had seen the temple intact in 1659 A.D. This proves that the monument was standing in the beginning of the reign of Aurangzeb and that it was destroyed sometime during his reign. The temple fragments were then used in erecting the mosque. The Muslim architect cut the slabs according to his requirements and relaid them at the proper place.

Cunningham’s first sculptural discovery was a railing pillar found at Kaṭrā in January 1853 showing a lady under a tree. He also found some capitals and pillars in the surrounding area. A fragmentary inscription recording the genealogy of Gupta kings up to Samudragupta was an important discovery. The whereabouts of the pillar of capitals are, however, not known. In 1862 Cunningham resumed his exploration on the Kaṭrā mound and found several interesting objects including a door lintel carved on both sides representing the refectory of a monastery on obverse and an architectural complex on the reverse (Mathurā Museum No. M.1).

4. Ibid., p. 233.
5. Ibid., p. 234.
The most important discovery of this year was a beautiful standing image of the Buddha recording the year 230 (549-50 A.D.) installed by a nun Jayabhāttā in the monastery known Yaśā Vihāra. If the reading is accepted as 280 the sculpture then belongs to the later part of the 6th century A.D. But we shall see at the appropriate place, the year seems to be given in the Śaka era hence it should be dated in the year 230 plus 78 = 308 or 280 plus 78 = 350 A.D. The discovery of such an important image suggests that the site of Kaṭrā was under the control of the Buddhist church till the end of the 6th century A.D. and the Bhāgavata temple seen by Tavernier, Bernier and Manucci was put up subsequently. The image under discussion is presently housed in the Lucknow Museum (No. B.10, fig. 134).\(^9\)

When the mound of Jamālpur or Jail was levelled up for putting up the building of the present Collectorate in 1860, the site revealed numerous architectural fragments which are now seen in Mathurā, Lucknow and Calcutta museums. Growse records the number of pillar bases as thirty while Cunningham mentions only fifteen.\(^10\) From the epigraphs on the pedestals we are informed of the existence of a monastery known as Huvīśka Vihāra,\(^11\) and a shrine dedicated to Dadhikarna-nāga.\(^12\) A pedestal inscribed in the Gupta year 135 = 454-455 A.D. was also recovered from here. The most remarkable find from the site of Jamālpur is more than life size image of the Buddha an outstanding creation of the Mathurā art and the glory of Dinna. The sculpture now adorns the galleries of the Mathurā Museum (No. A.5, fig. 139).

In 1869 Bhagwān Lāl Indrājī found the famous Lion Capital from Saptarṣi mound. It is inscribed in the Kharoṣṭhī script and records the erection of a monastery Guhā Vihāra, a Sanghārāma, a stūpa etc. at the instance of Kamuiā the Chief queen of Mahākṣatrāpa Rājula and mother of Śoḍāṣa. The capital datable to the 1st century B.C. was deposited in the British Museum, London.

Cunningham's fourth archaeological campaign commenced in November 1971 and this time he selected Kankāli and Chaubārā mounds. At Kankāli he recovered some Jaina antiquities and from the neighbouring spot—Bhūteśwara he found a large railpost which shows a lady with umbrella and a medallion depicting a strange scene of an eyeward of an animal hospital.\(^13\) The letter incised over it has been read by Cunningham as the figure of hundred and according to him there must have been one hundred railposts of this size in some Buddhist establishment. Vogel, however, reads it as thirty.\(^14\) To the south of Bhūteśwara Growse spotted eleven crossbars

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of railings at Balabhadrakunda at Bhuteśwar some important and artistic railposts were recovered. The Mathurā Museum now displays two of such pillars; one (J.4) represents a lady after bath on obverse and the episode of Veśantara Jātaka on the reverse; the other one (J.5) displays a lady with a mirror on front and some Jātaka narration including Vyāghrī Jātaka on the back. The railing pillars in the Calcutta Museum show two beautiful damsels in a graceful and charming posture. The curves and contours, the voluptuous bosoms and exaggerated hips are indicative of their sensous delicate nature. Even the dwarf under their feet feels happy and enjoys the kicks of her delicate feet.

Exploring the series of about a dozen of mounds of Chaubārā in 1871 Cunningham found a golden casket for relics but the relic was lost. From the other mound a steatite vase for relics was picked up and this is now seen in the Calcutta Museum. The third mound revealed a Persepolitan pillar capital depicting four human faced animals with horns. This is to be seen in the Calcutta Museum (No. M.14). The fourth mound of Chaubārā chain consisted of fragments of huge images.15

After Cunningham the Chaubārā mounds were explored by Growse who found a large Buddha head in Kapardin style but betraying some Egyptian features (Mathurā Museum No. A.27). The pedestal of Buddha image of 33rd year of Huvishka was also recovered from here (Lucknow Museum No. B.2). Other finds included male and female figures, animals, decorated architectural fragments and a few grotesque figures. The notable archaeological and artistic discovery was that of a railpost depicting the young hermit Rṣyaśṛṇa in ecstasy and attitude of astonishment as seen through his fingers put on chin (Mathurā Museum No. J.7). Between Chaubārā and Kankālī mounds was unearthed the image of Pārśva or Supārśva with snake canopy over the head (Mathurā Museum No. B. 26). The Yakṣa with large round head and big tummy was found on the border of Mathurā—Maholl and Pālikherā (Mathurā Museum No. C.3). The second Bacchanalian group showing a pot bellied man enjoying drink on one side and his intoxicated helpless state on the other was acquired from Pālikherā (Mathurā Museum No. C.2). It is quite possible that both the sculptures belonged to one monument. Growse also found some pillar bases at Pālikherā and these were noticed after the interval of thirteen feet. Their position suggests the existence of some temple or a similar monument on the spot some inscriptions which were badly misused for a building or culvert were also recovered. Mention may be made of the epigraph recording year 50 in the reign of Huvishka (Mathurā Museum No. B.29 and P.22). Growse obtained a Nāga image from Kukargāon (Mathurā Museum No. C.15).

Frequent discovery of antiquarian remains from Mathurā region posed a problem of their safe custody and maintenance. None bothered to preserve them.

15. ASR., III, p. 18, pl. 3.
and their fate was at the mercy of the excavator or on an officer interested in them. This resulted in the loss of hundreds of good specimens of Mathurā art. When Mr. F.S. Growse took over as Collector of the District he gave a serious thought to check the outflow of antiquities. Being an archaeologist and a scholar himself he explored several sites and acquired numerous objects. He also felt the necessity of housing the available objects at one place and for this he found an unused guest house near the Collectorate building. A museum was started here in 1874. It was later shifted to the present building in 1930. The Museum, however, could not gain the favour of Cunningham and when he visited Mathurā in March 1882 he sent several sculptures to Calcutta from Mathurā. Of these, mention may be made of the sculpture wrongly identified as Herakles strangling the Nemaean lion. Similarly a pillar bearing the Mauryan Brāhmī script read by Cunningham as ‘Amogha rakhitāvē-dānām’ was acquired from Arjunpurā locality but it was sent out somewhere and the Museum was deprived of the earliest inscription from this region. A Jina image bearing year 62 and unearthed from Rāni ki mandi in Mathurā city was also presented by Cunningham to Calcutta Museum (M.12). The Mathurā Museum was, however, able to retain another Jina image of the year 57 from Sītlāghāṭī (B.15).

A vast archaeological campaign in the last century at Mathurā was undertaken by A. Führer at the site of Kankālī in the years 1888-91. This resulted in the discovery of hundreds of images and architectural fragments, mostly Jaina in character and ranging in age from about second century B.C. to the 12th century A.D. The antiquarian wealth proves the existence of at least two Jaina stūpas at Kankālī. Some of the inscribed pedestals are valuable documents to study the contemporary society and specially the organisation of the Jaina church at Mathurā. These antiquities were removed en bloc to Lucknow Museum as Dr. Führer was the Curator there and nobody was at Mathurā to look after the interest of the local Museum after Mr. Growse’s transfer from the District. But this excavation was far from being scientific and authentic records of digging were not prepared simultaneously. Subsequently Dr. V.A. Smith published a monograph of the excavated material. These antiquities from Kankālī have made Lucknow Museum another centre to study the Mathurā School of art. Beside Kankālī, many more objects excavated at Mathurā were made over to Lucknow Museum and Dr. Vogel has expressed much regret on this.

Führer resumed his work in 1896 and made Kaṭrā mound as the target of his expedition. His description of the site is of much significance to grasp the nature of

20. ASR., XX., Jain Stūpa etc., 1900.
21. CAMM., p. 17.
the spot. He writes, 'With the sanction of the Local Government, Rs. 380/- were spent partly on 'prospecting operations' in the large Kaṭrā mound, which is believed to conceal the ruins of Keśava Dev's ancient temple, destroyed by Aurangzeb in A.D. 1669, and partly on diggings in some unexplored portions of the Kankāli Ṭīlā, which mound in former years had furnished numerous Jaina sculptures and epigraphical documents.

The Kaṭrā is an oblong brick enclosure, built like a Sarāi, measuring 404 feet in length and 653 in breadth. In its centre is a raised terrace, 72 feet long and 86 feet broad, upon which stands Aurangzeb's Masjid, occupying its entire length, but only 60 feet of its breadth, about 5 feet lower is another terrace measuring 286 feet by 268, into the pavements of which are let some short votive inscriptions, dated Samvat 1713 and 1720, corresponding to A.D. 1656 and 1663. At the back of the Masjid, and running at right angles to it for a distance of about 163 feet, may be traced the plinth of some old brick sub structure, which according to the popular belief, marks the ground floor of the sanctum of the once famous and imposing temple of Keśava visited and described by the French travellers Tavernier (1650) and Bernier (1663). About 50 paces to the north west of this plinth I dug a trial trench, 80 feet long, 20 feet broad and 25 feet deep in the hope of exposing the foundations and some of the sculptures of this ancient Keśava temple. However, none of the hoped for Brāhmanical sculptures and inscriptions were discovered, but only fragments belonging to an ancient Buddhist stūpa. At depth of 20 feet I came across a portion of the circular procession—path leading round this stūpa. On the pavement, composed of large red sand stone slabs, a short dedicatory inscription was discovered, according to which this stūpa was repaired in samvat 76 by the Kuṣāṇa king Vāsiṣṭka unfortunately, I was unable to continue the work and lay bare the whole procession—path, as the walls of the brick sub-structure, adjoining the Masjid, are built right across the middle of this stūpa.\(^{22}\)

The last mentioned epigraph is of great significance as it records Vāsiṣṭka in the year 76. This means that this Vāsiṣṭka was different from the successor of Kaniṣṭha. But the inscription under reference was never reproduced and nothing is known about the real contents and palaeography of the document. Thus it took 44 years from Cunningham's first visit in 1853 to Führer's last expedition in 1896 to conclude the chain of archaeological campaign at Kaṭrā.

After a lull of about fourteen years Pt. Rādhā Krishna, Honorary Assistant Curator and later Honorary Curator of Mathurā Museum started the collection of antiquities for the Museum at mass scale in 1909. Meanwhile, Dr. J.Ph. Vogel rendered commendable service in bringing out the Catalogue of the Mathurā Museum in 1910. He not only classified and studied the objects but also managed

to bring back several important sculptures which were sent out of Mathurā by the excavators and were lying neglected at different places. Vogel’s efforts served a great cause to consolidate the position of Mathurā Museum and also to install the Mathurā School of art among some of the noble art conventions of the world.

Later in 1912 Rādhā Krishna excavated the Iṭokari mound at Māt and unearthed the important royal portraits of Wema Kadphises, Kaniska and Caśṭana. These statues speak of a unique contribution of Mathurā School of Art towards the development of sculptural art of India. For the study of political, social and economic conditions of the Kuśāṇa period society and also to have a grasp of Scythian traits percolated in Indian art, these images are of much interest. Their drapery, ornaments, traditions etc. were imitated for several centuries in India, at least up to the dawn of the Gupta empire as we notice the early Gupta kings on their coins, dressed in buttoned coat and trousers. This Central Asian impact is seen on some gods and goddesses also. The early sun images carved in Mathurā studio look like Kuśāṇa kings. The fashion being much prevalent in the northern part of the country owing to greater movements of Scythians and Kuśāṇas was known as Udīcyā Veṣa, i.e. Northern Fashion. The royal portraits of Māt are the best examples of this style. The statues also suggest the might and prowess of the ambitious Kuśāṇa rulers by way of their impressive delineation.

Rādhā Krishna also added about 600 sculptures through his vigorous campaigns of cleaning the wells in Mathurā town and the adjoining region. These finds added rich variety of deities which were carved in different periods and their study, to trace the origin and development of various pantheons at Mathurā is of utmost significance. While no thorough archaeological campaigns were undertaken, the sites like rich mines continued to reveal stray art treasures. Interesting finds include some terracotta panels of the Gupta period from the bed of the Yamunā. Their discovery hints to the possibility of the erection of a Śaiva or Vaiṣṇava temple by the Gupta rulers who were the staunch followers of Brahmānism and particularly the Bhāgavatism. The epigraphs recording the names of the Gupta kings have also been unearthed at Mathurā and the remarkable discovery being an octagonal pillar (Mathurā Museum No. 29.1931) with square base and top carved with a big trident Trīśūla—and a corpulent figure with a third eye on the forehead, holding a shaft in the right hand. The pillar points to the fact that Mathurā was a stronghold of the Lakulīśa cult of Śaivism. The inscription informs that Uditācārya set up two Śivalingas, Upamiteśvara and Kapileśvara in the 61st year of the Gupta era corresponding to 380 A.D. Another notable point about this object is that it was recovered from the site near the famous Śiva temple Raṅgēśvara.

23. DAK., Ch. VI.
24. The sun image in Mathurā Museum No. 12.269 is a typical specimen.
After the publication of the first catalogue of the Museum by Dr. J.Ph. Vogel in 1910 there was an immense growth of collection and Dr. V.S. Agrawala, an eminent Indologist who was fortunately associated with this Museum as Curator in thirties prepared catalogue in four parts, published in different issues of the Journal of the Uttar Pradesh Historical Society from 1948 to 1951. These were classified as:

3. Jaina Tīrthaṅkaras and other miscellaneous figures, J.U.P.H.S., 1950, and

The last volume incorporated railing pillars, coping stones, cross bars, Torana architraves and brackets, stūpas, lion figures, miscellaneous architectural pieces and inscriptions.

The scheme carried over Dr. Vogel’s descriptions and also introduced new objects acquired upto 1939, the last year of Dr. Agrawal’s tenure as Curator. These catalogues have been of great significance for scholars, working on Indian art, iconography and archaeology.

Katrā Excavation

In 1953 M. Venkat Ramayya and Vallabh Saran of the Archaeological Survey of India conducted the first systematic excavation at the Katrā site. But this small scale excavation was confined to the limited area. Besides, rich literary traditions, the frequent discovery of coins, terracottas, inscriptions and sculptures, the occupancy of the Northern Black Polished Ware and a few sherds of the Painted Grey Ware at the site tempted the excavators to know a complete cultural sequence. They were also attracted by two rings of mud-ramparts one elliptically shaped and the other quadrangular suggesting citadel. While the report of this excavation is not yet out, a brief note appeared in the Indian Archaeology 1954-55, A review pages 15-16.

They laid a small trench at a distance of about 500 feet to the north of the superimposed mosque or ʿIdgāh of Aurangzeb. The natural soil was touched at a depth of 42 feet and their last point was the portion of earth composed of hard clay and kankar bands. A few sherds of hand made pottery were noticed here. No fragment of Painted Grey Ware was found from the layers although some pieces were collected as surface finds. This was probably due to the fact that only a limited portion was selected for excavation. The six feet deposit above the natural soil revealed Plain Grey Ware and Polished Black Ware pottery, resembling the Hastināpur variety. The N.B.P. was conspicuous by its complete absence. The other antiquities included terracotta discs, balls, beads, a boat-shaped bird and perforated pottery. On the ground of a comparative study with the finds of other
sites the period of these early items from Kaṭrā site has been fixed as the 6th century B.C.

The next phase was distinguished by the occurrence of the Northern Black Polished Ware and in the chronological sequence it can be divided into three periods. The earliest remains include bamboo and reed huts with meagerly baked bricks, bone styli or needles, carnelian amulets and beads. The terracotta objects represented grey mother goddesses and animals including a dog in red colour. The ringwells were also given the same period. The next group of finds is characterised by square copper coins and cylindrical terracotta, beads, ear ornaments, etched carnelian beads, copper antimony rods, grey terracotta figurines of mother goddess with appliqued treated girdle and elephant figurines with lozenge shaped eyes and bodies decorated with punched, stamped or notched circlets and enormous tusks with gorgeous head-dresses and monkeys with three legs, possibly serving some religious purpose, were mostly in red but sometimes in grey colour. These figures are the products of onepiece mould. No complete plan of a house has come to light but well laid—out walls, drains and ring—wells suggest a high degree of planning. This phase has been assigned to the end of the second century B.C.

The site was deserted for some time and the ringwells were sealed. The third is typified by a large variety of bead of crystal, agate, carnelian, lapislazuli, jasper, shell, faience, bone dice, copper coins some belonging to the Kuśāṇa period, stone caskets and a turquoise blue glazed finial. Such finials have been unearthed from the excavations at Sonkh and have been assigned to the 1st century B.C. This will be discussed subsequently.

The fourth phase assignable from 100 A.D. to 350 A.D. is to be identified by the terracotta figurines of dwarfs produced through double mould process. The fifth and the last period belongs to the Gupta period as evidenced by coins, terracotta, sealings, Naigamesa, elephant and horse riders. It is rather unfortunate that the report of this small scale excavation of one of the most important sites of the Northern India has not yet been published. Such a publication would have been of considerable significance for dating the large number of antiquarian remains which are unearthed from Mathurā quite of and on.

Thirty eight sculptures saw their way to the Mathurā Museum in July 1954 when Sri K.D. Vajpeyi (later Professor) was the Curator. These were unearthed as a result of levelling and digging of the Kaṭrā site for renovating the birthplace of Lord Kṛṣṭa and were made over to the Museum by the Janmabhūmi Trust. Some other objects which were casually picked up by others from Kaṭrā site were also acquired. The finds include terracottas from Mauryan to Gupta periods, a few brick panels with creeper design and several Brāhmanical objects ranging from

28. Ibid.
Gupta to early Medieval age. The number of fragments of Viṣṇu figures is quite considerable and this suggests that a big Vaiṣṇava or Bhāgavata complex once stood on the site. Vajpeyi also conducted a small scale excavation at different sites and acquired some antiquities for the Museum. A casually found Buddha head (No. 49.3510) is one of the best citations of the classical art of the Gupta period. Its provenance is Cāmūndā site which has exposed several other valuable art pieces on different occasions.

**Sonkh Excavations**

A large archaeological expedition at Sonkh, about 22 km. to north west of Mathurā was undertaken by Dr. Herbert Här tel, Director of Indian Art Museum, Berlin and Professor in Free University. The work commenced in the year 1966, continued for eight years and was wound up in 1974. The excavators looked for an undisturbed site and they chose the lofty mound just at the northern outskirts of village Sonkh. It was known as the Garhi (fortress) of a Jāt chief Hajī Singh who was a contemporary of Sūraj Mal and Jawāhār Singh of Bharatpur in the 18th century. In the 19th century the site was very large measuring about two lac sq. mt. as mentioned by F.S. Growse but by the time the excavation was undertaken it was reduced to 75000 sq. mt. including the surrounding fields. The report of this excavations will be out in due course but the main features have been discussed by Prof. Här tel in his preliminary report and our information is based on it and also on the basis of our close association with the campaign for more than five years. As the Sonkh excavations were conducted on advanced scientific pattern and the method of documentation was also precise, their results will bear greater impact on framing the chronology and stylistic study of the remains, so far recovered from various sites of the region. It is therefore desirable to mention this campaign in somewhat detail.

Digging vertically from top to bottom, the excavators found 40 layers of the whole deposit (fig. 3). The sequence is as follows:

1-5 Jāt, 6-7 Islāmic, 8-11 late to early Medieval, 12-13 post Gupta, 14-15 Gupta, 16-22 Kuśāna, 23-26 pre Kuśāna to post Śuṅga, 27-28 late Śuṅga, 29-30 middle Śuṅga, 31-32 early Śuṅga, 33-34 Maurya, 35-36 pre and early Maurya, 37-40 Painted Grey and Black and Red Ware periods.

All these layers have revealed some material which is representative of a particular age. The Jāt period is typified by cannon balls of iron and stone.

29. The description of items from Kāṭrā site from Sl. No. 3795 to 3801, 3807 to 3861, 3880, 3884 and 3888 was published in the *Annual Report on the working of the Archaeological Museum, Mathurā for the year ending March 31, 1955*, pp. 5-10.
30. *MMA.*, p. 68, fig. 62.
suggesting a fierce battle and also the cause of the destruction of the fortress. The event was preceded by Mughal occupation as gathered by the presence of some coins of Shāhjahān, Akbar and Shershāh Sūrī besides very fine quality of thin glazed procelain and a few glass and shell objects.

In the lower levels we get the spouted jars with floral motifs and some thin small grey stone plaques carved with Brāhmanical deities particularly Sūrya and Viṣṇu. These can be dated in the late medieval period (c. 9th to 12th century A.D.). The mud fortress of Haṭi Singh had its foundation on some brick structure of late phase of medieval age (c. 15th century A.D.). The deeper layers reveal the objects of early medieval time (c. 7th-10th century), characterised here by the pottery marked with geese pattern and geometrical and floral motifs. The site appears to have been neglected during the Gupta era (c. 4th-6th century A.D.) as the contemporary remains are few and far between. A double rimmed Ḥāndī, an incense burner and a fragmentary terracotta brick plaque with crocodile and human foot (probably conveying the presence of Gaṅgā) are some notable specimens. A clay seal reading Sūryagupta or Āryagupta in the Gupta Brāhmi script, leaves a riddle for identification.

Continuing digging in the lower stratas the excavators reached the Kuśāna levels consisting of some brick pavements and structures. Horizontal expansion of the trenches to know the exact nature and behaviour of these structures, gradually exposed Kuśāna dwelling with several small rooms built of almost uniform large sized bricks measuring 36×24×6 cms. Besides, an apsidal shrine was the most significant discovery in this area. The position of its walls indicates that it was begun in the early Kuśāna era (late 1st century A.D.) and rebuilt in the third century A.D. A circumambulation path was also provided with it. It is a happy co-incidence that a stone stele bearing a figure of a seated Mātrkā (Mother Goddess) was also recovered from the shrine. The place being the earliest reminiscent of a Hindū temple is a remarkable achievement of the Sonkh excavations.

The date of these structures is based on some very positive evidence. A vase containing 120 copper coins from the reign of Vāsudeva I to Kaniṣka III is a notable discovery from these layers and we can safely assign a period of this Kuśāna settlement from late second century to early 3rd century A.D. This can be said with certainty that the residents of this ancient colony were the followers of Brāhmanism (Hinduism) as evident from several small statuettes of Viṣṇu, Skanda, Kubera, Mahiśāsuramardini, Durgā and Mother Goddesses. The cult of Skanda, Kārtikeya and Mātrkā seems to have been more popular. The pottery of this period includes spouted jar and other vessels with stamped decoration of floral and auspicious motifs like Nandyāvarta and Svastika.

Discovery of some bronze figures from the Kuśāna layers was of high magnitude. One is almost a square plaque depicting a divine couple, the male with bowl in his left hand and his lion or cat faced spouse holding a child to her left side. The right
arms of these figures are raised in the attitude of protection (Abhayamudrā). Other small plaque represents young Kārttikeya² with a long spear. A few years later was revealed a high cup with lid. We are informed by the literary traditions that when Mahmūd Ghaznavī invaded over Mathurā he took away several gold and silver statues with him. But an archaeological evidence to assert the prevalence of metallic icons in early period was hitherto wanting. This may also be pointed out that these are the earliest bronze figures of this region and are the oldest, Brāhmanical bronzes in India. Their discovery from the regular layers is an event of considerable significance.

An interesting find was a tympanum piece carved on both sides with the human faced Garuḍa quelling a three hooded cobra. A similar fragment acquired by the Mathurā Museum from the neighbouring hamlet Jogipurā, showed a human form of Garuḍa climbing a hillock. These architectural fragments encouraged the team to locate the site of the building which could be the possible source of such casual finds. Their attention was caught by a spot, lying at a distance of about 400 metres to the north of the main excavation site, from which the villagers frequently recovered the old bricks. A small shrine for a large Nāga deity of Kuśāṇa period locally known as Cāmardevī is also standing on the top. The guess proved to be correct and the exposure of this small mound resulted in great success.

It revealed an old apsidal shrine with distinct phases. The earlier one, on the firm basis of mud bricks of 42 and 48 cms. and roof tiles as found in the Sūryamitra level at the main site, has been dated in the first half of the first century B.C. while the second one standing above the same foundation and distinguished by the remains of fifteen round brick pillars was built in c. 100 A.D., i.e. the Kanishka era. The finds repeatedly display serpent figures or their anthropomorphic representations hence the shrine has been correctly identified as an abode of the Nāga deity and as such it is the earliest Nāga temple in India. The four sided Nāga figure in the modern shrine may be conjectured as the presiding deity of the old temple.

The small mound of Cāmardevī ushered as a rich mine of Mathurā School of Art revealing some of the wonderful creations of early plastic art of India. A lintel piece probably exhibiting the court of a Nāga King (fig. 9) represents him with a canopy of seven serpent hoods majestically sitting on a couch (throne) and fastening a long turban which is being presented to him by a group of four children forming the part of the delegation to his court. A lady with the equal number of snake hoods in the canopy over her head occupies a place to his right side with equal grace and elegance. She has stretched her right arm towards a young lady who, facing the delegation and putting on a single hooded snake scalp, holds a small necklace type beaded ornament. To the left side of the king are seen two female and three male attendants each marked with a snake hood on top. The first female
attendant holds a flywhisk and the other a royal umbrella with a long shaft. The three male figures wearing long bulging scarfs are seen with folded hands.

In view of the commanding position of the lady Dr. Härtel refuses her to accept as wife of the Nāga king and opines that the royal Nāga pair represents Nāgarāja Vāsuki and his sister Jaratkāru. The present author, however, thinks that the lintel depicts some important ceremony in the court of the Nāga king as is evident by the gifts brought by the guests, one of them holding a flask of water probably for anointment (Abhiseka or saṃkālpa), the depiction of flywhisk and a royal umbrella (chattrā). In this case the lady is none else than the queen (Rājamahisī). There are certain rituals or ceremonies when the wife is given a venerable position. Whatever may be the interpretation of the scene it is a superb specimen of Kuṣāṇa art of Mathurā.

The other sculpture of high degree of workmanship is a Śalabhanjikā figure i.e. a young lady standing on a prostrate dwarf and holding the branch of a tree with her right arm and the left hand held akimbo wearing different ornaments and diaphanous drapery, she presents a real beauty form through her charming physique and graceful posture. Her association with the Nāga family is ascertained by a serpent hood in her anklet. The figure served as a bracket to join the lintel with doorjamb (fig. 10).

Other remarkable pieces include a fragmentary coping showing a man bearing a Nāgahood and coming out of the wide open jaws of a fish-tailed crocodile. I am of the opinion that the sculpture symbolically represents some critical moments of the Nāga dynasty which it was able to overcome at last. Yet another beautifully chiselled fragment displays a fish-tailed elephant (Jalebha) holding two stalked lotus buds in his half upraised trunk. It is a happy and welcome gesture.

The excavators from the main site unearthed several interesting objects of Kuṣāṇa period viz. hollowed terracotta plaque with acrobatic scene, amorous couple, a round plaque representing a lion crushing the boars etc.

Going further deep they recovered some coins of Kṣatrapa and Mitra kings. At this juncture the excavation became more interesting from the point of view of fixing a chronology of various kings in the pre-Christian era. The finds indicate that the Kuṣāṇas were preceded by the Kṣatrapas and Dattas (Rāmadatta). Then we have names of Brahmamitra, Viṣṇumitra, Sūryamitra and Gomitra. These Mitra kings are placed between 120 B.C. and 20 B.C. Thus the Sonkh excavations shed valuable light on the possibility of a dynasty of Mitra rulers in this region. Beside coins we have some other interesting finds from the 2nd-1st Century B.C. layers and mention may be made of a terracotta model of a house with three rooms, different types of terracotta votive tanks, human figurines in grey colour, a seal reading Nandikarasa in Brāhmī letters and a silver punch marked coin.

The votive tanks are representatives of cult worship and must have served as moving or portable shrines. These terracotta vessels were filled with water. Clay
lamps were put at regular intervals on rim and the birds were pearched, water creatures like fish, frog or snake were shaped in relief on the surface. Sometimes a pillar with a lotus capital was projected in the centre. Another votive tank shows seven females (Mātrakās) sitting on the bottom and each carrying a bowl. H. Härtel thinks that the purpose must have been the worship of Saptamātrakā or Aṣṭamātrakā who received offering in the bowl on the lap. As the object comes from the last phase of 1st century B.C. layer the prevalence of Saptamātrakā worship should be admitted to be so early. It is therefore an interesting discovery.

The Mauryan layers are represented by a few shining black polished pottery pieces (N.B.P.). Fragmentary grey colour terracottas representing Mother Goddesses, have also been picked up. Similarly a miniature copper Trisūla is a rare find. The lower levels revealed Black and Red Ware beginning from about the 4th century B.C. and continuing with the Painted Grey Ware which is the earliest type of ceramic from Sonkh. This is a fine quality of grey pottery with black pigments and the earliest variety is datable to 8th-9th century B.C. Below is seen the natural soil which is devoid of any human remains.

About the dating of the earliest levels the following remark of the excavator is significant: 'The natural soil had been reached in Sonkh in four cutting lying far apart from each other. At all these spots the earliest levels of settlements were marked through more or less numerous fragments of Painted Grey and Black and Red Ware....Two charcoal samples found at different places in levels 39 or 38 yielded radio carbon dates of 620 and 575 B.C. As no charcoal was found in the deeper and higher Painted Grey Levels, i.e. in 40 and 37, we must consider these dates as indicating the middle of the period in question. Even at a generously hypothetical assumption of 200 years towards each side of the middle date, we do not come to any time older than 800 B.C. for the beginning of the Painted Grey settlement at the old Sonkh.'

While no positive evidence seems to be coming forth to set aside the chronic dispute of the Kuśāna chronology, the Sonkh excavation indirectly suggests the date of the accession of Kaniṣṭha as the end of the 1st Century A.D. Härtel remarks, 'Not-with-standing theory one may follow in dating Kaniṣṭha I, after Sonkh there is no justification of placing him in the second or even in the third century A.D.'

The antiquarian wealth unearthed from the excavations at Sonkh were deposited in the Mathurā Museum in 1974 and important objects are to be seen in the galleries. A few items were made over to the Excavation Party for permanent exhibition in the Indian Art Museum, Berlin.

33. Ibid., p. 78.
34. Ibid., p. 85.
Excavations by Archaeological Survey

Immediately on or just before the winding up of the Sonkh excavations the Archaeological Survey of India started the excavations on different sites in the Mathurā city. It was taken up by the Excavation Branch II of the A.S.I. under the supervision of M.C. Joshi. The sequence is as under:

Period I. From c. 6th century B.C. to the closing decades of the 4th century B.C. Main pottery is Painted Grey Ware but upper layers have overlapping with N.B.P.

Period II. From closing decades of the 4th century B.C. to c. 200 B.C. Main pottery is N.B.P. associated with Plain Grey Ware.

Period III. From c. 200 B.C. to about the end of the 1st century B.C. the last phase of N.B.P. with completely moulded terracotta plaques.

Period IV. From 1st century A.D. to 3rd century A.D. distinguished by sprinklers, stamped pots, incense burners, jars pots, handles etc.

Period V. C. 4th and 5th century A.D. Red Ware.

Further periods could not be ascertained due to much disturbed conditions of the sites but the traces of later deposits are met with. The excavations were conducted at Kankāli, Ambrīsha, Mahāvidyā, Hāthī Tilā, Cāmunḍā, etc. The main intention was to trace the development of the township of Mathurā. The report records, “The excavations have also thrown some light on the development of the township from a village of Period I in the northern part of the present town around Ambrish Tilā. A fortification of mud, now known as Dhūlkot, was raised around the township in Period II. In Period III the city wall lost its utility, but in Period IV, it was revived, enlarged and repaired. During the same period some sort of an inner mud enclosure or fortification of much smaller size was also built inside the walled town.”

We do not know whether it is safe to call Mathurā a village in Period I i.e. in the Pre-Mauryan period when it was the capital town of the Śūresena territory in the Janapada period (6th-5th century B.C.). It had earned a good reputation as a textile centre by the time of Arthaśāstra. Hence the conclusions drawn by excavators should not be taken as final and convincing.

The mystery of the so called terracotta ring wells appears to have found a solution after the excavation at Ambrish. In almost every trench were found more than one ringwells. If these served as water wells there was no need to have so many wells at one spot. The only purpose which seems to have been served by these ring wells was sanitation or a refuse pit or soak pit.

The site of Kankāli which revealed hundreds of Jaina sculptures during the last century was retrieved and luckily a fine water tank made of Kuśāṇa period bricks and reinforced by stone slabs at places was exposed. There is a slope or ramp on one side which was probably used by the cattle for drinking water. A stone slab recording year five of the reign of Kaniṣṭha was also found inside this tank. We are aware of the fact that there was a well established tradition of erecting tanks, wells, assembly halls and gardens. These deeds are recorded in various epigraphs engraved on stone slabs and pedestals of Buddhist, Jaina and royal statues.  

Among the objects excavated by the Archaeological Survey, the terracotta figurines are of greater interest, more so because these have been properly stratified and studied. No terracotta is reported from the lower levels of Period I but the upper layers have yielded hand made animal and bird figures. Period II i.e. the Mauryan period according to the excavators marks a stage of transition from ruralism to urbanism. The terracotta types are animals with decorative circlets and incised strokes. Deer, horse, dog, boat-shaped bird with flattish tail, elephant, and monkey figures are noteworthy. Mother goddesses and male figures appear in different types. Head is seen pressed by mould and the rest of the body is by hand. Period III i.e. the Sunga period terracottas included complete moulded plaques of male or females or representing both on one plaque in amorous pose—Dampati or Mithuna, toy cart etc.

Period IV i.e. Kuśāṇa period terracottas are characterised by moulded face and hand-made body, glazing and figures of Nāgas, Yakṣas, Vāmanakas (dwarfs), mother and child etc.

Period V i.e. Gupta period has not left much remains of terracottas probably due to the disturbance in the upper layers. But even a little quality speaks of the classical touch. The figures are now slim and more impressive, suggesting an over all serenity and grace as we notice in the stone sculptures of this age.

The cultural material revealed from these scientific excavations generally confirm the traditional dating based on the stylistic and comparative study. The Sonkh excavations have also led us almost to the same direction.

It is worthwhile to record the discovery of a hoard of sixteen Pre-historic copper implements from Sadābād Sub-Division of Mathurā District. It was received by the State Museum, Lucknow as Treasure Trove in 1970. The variety represents flat axes with slightly expanded edges and resemble with those found at Gungeriā. These are grouped in four categories on the basis of their measurements. One is $18 \times 10$ cms second is $20 \times 11$ cms, third is $19 \times 10$ cms and fourth measures above $21 \times$ above 11 cms. Hitherto only one copper implement was reported by

37. Statue of Wema Kadphisis Mathurā Museum No. 12.215, fig. 7 and New inscriptions from Mirjāpur No. 79.29, fig. 6.
38. For a detailed study see JISOA., op. cit.
Cunnigham from the Chaubārā mound in last century but it was unfortunately lost soon. Four of the newly acquired copper axes preserved in the Mathurā Museum also.40

One of the recent discoveries of great significance is the discovery of palaeolithic tools by the present author and R.B. Joshi of Poona in 1975. This indicates the presence of pre-historic man in this region earlier than 50000 B.C. Hence Mathurā now very well figures as an important centre for the interest of the pre-historians. The tools were found from the Govardhan ridge and now displayed in Museum gallery.41

A major salvage expedition of antiquarian remains was undertaken by the present author with the assistance of the Mathurā Museum staff in the year 1976-77 at the site of Govindnagar near the Bhūteshwar Railway in the western quarters of Mathurā city. But this interesting campaign will be discussed separately in the next chapter while highlighting the important art treasures revealed from the site.

In December 1979 the Sri Kṛṣṇa Janmabhumi Trust passed a resolution to transfer its antiquarian collection to the Mathurā Museum. This has further enriched its grand repository. The new acquisition includes some important sculptures from Kuṣāṇa to Mughal periods. An exquisitely carved doorjamb with a small figure of Gaṅgā on Makara is one of the finest sculptures of the Gupta period. Of the same age is the figure of Varāha and a screen with rosette decoration. The architectural fragments of the Mughal period remind of a temple which was put up by Vīra Singh Bundelā of Orchā in the reign of Jahāngīr. A beautiful red sandstone figure of seated Lakṣmī holding a stalked lotus in the left hand was stolen from the temple site probably in 1966 but was acquired by the Museum in 1980 through the good offices and Prof. H. Hārtel of Berlin (Mathurā Museum No. 80.2). An important discovery in the vicinity of the site of Govindnagar is an inscribed pedestal of the Buddha image (Mathurā Museum No. 82.240, fig. 169) recording the year 161 in the reign of Budhagupta (480 A.D.).42

This is the brief outline of the history of the archaeological campaigns in Mathurā region from 1836 to 1979. This land is a mine of art objects and every year it yields some art treasure hence the history of archaeological activities in Mathurā can never be called final and uptodate.

40. Sharma, *MMA.*, p. 21, Museum No. 75.33 and 75.34.  
41. Ibid., p. 20.  
RECENT DISCOVERIES FROM GOVINDNAGAR

Govindnagar Site and Finds

Now we may turn our attention to the biggest known deposit of Mathurā sculptures treating Buddhist themes found in the area around the site of Govindnagar. The site which yielded hundreds of Buddhist sculptures and some of them as marvellous products of Mathurā School of Art, is situated behind the Mathurā Water Works in the western outskirts of Mathurā city. It is in the vicinity of Bhūteśwar Railway Station, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Janmasthāna and the Jaina temple of Chaurāśi. It comprises a huge range of mounds separated in two main divisions by the Mathurā Delhi main Railway line. But the portion of land with which we are concerned is Sector D of the big housing colony known as Govindnagar Cooperative Housing Society which as reported to me by some persons, was named to cherish the memory of great Hindī writer, veteran freedom fighter and devotee of Kṛṣṇa, Seth Govind Das.

When the present writer took over as Curator of the Mathura Museum, the site looked very imposing, potential and intact. It was lying in an area, more than a kilometer in length and about three fourth of a kilometer in breadth. Repeated efforts were made to persuade the authorities of the Archaeological Survey of India to declare the entire land as protected area and to start excavations at the earliest. A number of officers visited the site from Delhi and Agra on different occasions but with no result. Meanwhile, a few colonisers started levelling some portions of the land under the name Rāmnagar, Gītā Enclave and Bank Colony. Mathurā is dent of idol lifters and they harvest on such casual and private diggings. Consequently I made more vigorous efforts by sending letters and wires to Delhi. The spot was visited again by officers and a blue print for protection and exploration was prepared but no progress was marked. Levelling continued and out of that devastation the Mathurā Museum could retain a few while a sizable number of antiquities was passed away to Delhi and sold at high price. Some of the images were broken into pieces in order to remove them conveniently.

Prof. Härtel was excavating at the isolated mound of Sonkh with his efficient team of workers. Seeing no response from the Archaeological Survey, I approached him to take up the vast site of Govindnagar for excavation before it was totally
ruined. Reluctantly he agreed to visit and both of us made a preliminary survey. It was just a coincidence that a pre-Kuşāṇa rusted copper coin was also found on the surface beside rich variety of pottery of pre- and post-Christian era. But somehow the idea did not appeal to him much mainly because he did not want to be disturbed by the frequent visits of the officers and others and it was but natural being so close to the city.

Luckily H.D. Sankalia the reputed archaeologist happened to visit the Museum and I escorted him in surveying the archaeological sites. He made an extensive Survey and was much pained to see the constant destruction of the promising mounds. Next day he seriously took up the matter with authorities in Delhi and advised them to start the work immediately at Mathurā. Thus M.C. Joshi camped here, but he had come with a different project under the instructions of B.K. Thapar. The mission was to study the development of the township of Mathurā in ancient period. I again requested the excavation party to take up the Govindnagar site first and to stop the levelling of the mounds but the team was there to fulfil their mission i.e. to know the behaviour of ramparts etc. More than two years passed and no site could be taken under protection.

Meanwhile, the Govindnagar Housing Society got its project of house building approved and the devastation picked up a terrific speed. Three hundred labourers were engaged for levelling the spot rapidly. The then Secretary of the Society Sri Chandra Bhanu Garg once brought a hoard of early rusted copper coins unearthed as the result of digging. A few days later some architectural fragments were recovered and later brought to the Museum. The local antique dealers and smugglers started visiting the site frequently and in order to counter their evil intentions, adequate precautions were taken against any untoward occurrence. One after the other the art treasures started peeping out of the earth. It became a fun fair for the surrounding localities. The levelling work of the Housing Society and search for antiquities by the Museum staff went on for more than a week in the last days of July 1976. A vigorous campaign of shifting, preliminary cleaning and washing of objects, their photography, recording and identification commenced simultaneously. The culmination reached when on August 3, 1976 the antiquities were formally taken over by H.E. Dr. M. Chenna Reddy, Governor of U.P. on behalf of the Mathurā Museum from the Govindnagar Housing Society.

It was a strange but happy co-incidence that a new Buddhist monastery recorded as Viradatta Vihāra in the inscription, came to light beside, hundreds of Buddhist antiquities in 1976, the 2600th birth anniversary of the Buddha. A part of Sector D of the site (Govindnagar) was declared protected by the State Government and the Archaeological Survey deputed Sri M.C. Joshi to excavate the remaining spot in 1977. The site was already much disturbed still at certain parts regular layers could be traced. The material including some Buddhist and Viṣṇu figures, terracottas etc. is under the custody of the Archaeological Survey. Proper report of the work is awaited. The site revealed one or two stray pieces after the excavations
including a Yakṣa carrying a bowl and a pedestal of Amitābha Buddha image in Huviška’s reign.

When and how the site of early Govindnagar i.e. the Viḍadatta Vihārā was ruined, remains a mystery. We are well aware of the intermittent attacks by outside invaders on Mathurā right from the post-Gupta period to the 17th century A.D. The neighbouring site of Kāṭrā, traditionally renowned as the birthplace of Lord Kṛṣṇa, was the main target of the Muslim invaders. The Viḍadatta monastery, having been so close to Kāṭrā, could also have been an easy prey of iconoclasts. But as there is significant evidence of activity on the site after the Gupta period it seems more reasonable to conclude that this magnificent Buddhist establishment was pulled down by the Hūṇa invaders in the beginning of the sixth century A.D. The sculptures, however, could have been further mutilated in the subsequent centuries. In the last century a part of the mound was destroyed for laying the track for Indian railways. Deposit of lime (surkhi) on the upper surface of some sculptures hints that these came in contact with some later building activity when the use of lime was a popular device for plastering and binding in the Muslim or post Muslim period. One or two Buddha images have their arms mutilated and the detached forearm is a later fabrication as its shape, size, quality and stone are quite distinct, and suggest that the images installed in the Kuṣāṇa or Gupta period were subsequently reused after necessary repair and restoration.

Finds from Govindnagar

The variety of material found at Govindnagar is so great that no study of any aspect of Mathurā art is possible without scrutinising them. Hence an attempt is made below to present a short survey of the material of Buddhist and also non-Buddhist Art of Mathurā. Actually the study of non-Buddhist objects is equally significant as these hail from the new Buddhist site and most of these formed the part of some stūpa or a monastery. Hence these finds are also Buddhist in the present context. Besides, decorative motifs were common to all sects.

Terracotta Objects

Among the objects recovered from the site, chronologically the earliest group is formed by some terracotta figures although their variety and quantity is not as rich as seen at other sites of Mathurā. However, paucity in this regard may be attributed more to the lack of intensive research for the materials in the mound concerned than to the real absence of the terracotta objects at the site.

Archaic Mother goddesses

The earliest female figurines in terracota from Mathura are known by different terms, viz. mother goddess, archaic female figure, tutelary deity and primitive
divinity. The site of Govindnagar has also revealed some specimens of this group. The distinctive features are as follows:  

Figures are modelled by hand and the mould has not been used, the face assumes the shape of bird or of an animal. The hair is indicated by a few vertical lines on the forehead, the eyes are incised and the nose is shaped by pinching. Ornaments and some limbs are appliqué, i.e. separately fixed, although in certain cases these have been carved out of the body material. The figure bears circular punched marks and but for the ornaments, the body is nude, yet the mount of Venus is rather obscure. The arms, if intact, are spread out horizontally, the hips are broad, and the waist is narrow. The girdle is either shown by a row of sunken circular punched marks or by a grooved line. The navel is seen like a small sharp pointed hole. The legs are separated from an arch. The body formation on the whole is crude and dis-proportionate.

These are the general characteristics; but a host of individual features distinguish one from the other figures, and these distinctions are based on the variety of their ornaments, hair arrangements, facial features and formation of bodily details. Sometimes the face is shaped like the beak of the eagle, while the other figures display an inconspicuous depression of a quadruple or a wide open cavity. The nose of some figures is modelled just in the continuation of the forehead, giving an appearance of a pig or a boar. It bears one of two holes for nostrils and in some cases the slit of the mouth covers the lower part of the nose. The eyes are lozenge shaped or semi-circular in slanting position. Some are devoid of the marks of pupils while others have very clear indication. In certain cases the eyes are seen out of symmetry. Many have prominent breasts but there are a few in which these are just indicated. Nipples are pointed or marked with pinholes or grooves. Neck, shoulders and some other parts are seen in punched circles. The ears wear single or double rings and in certain cases earlobe is stamped, with a rosette. The forehead is seen with a row of sunken circles, rosettes or suspended beads. A circular decoration mark (bindi) occurs at the centre of the forehead quite frequently.

The ornaments present a rich variety. Single or several rows of circles on the projecting bands, probably signifying the pearl strings, are invariably seen. These strings may either be worn independently or just as subsidiary to the main ornament. Torque round the neck with one or two bands is quite common. Sometimes it has a chain of circular beads, and in other figures heavy drum shaped beads are also noticed. The necklace decorated with criss-cross motif is worn across the shoulders and passes above or through the breast. Single or double strings of this wearing are seen hanging down between the bosoms. A big garland like ornament occasionally comes down from shoulders to the waist. The navel is indicated differently by an incised circular mark, a round cavity or a pinhole.

While the exact nature and purpose of these terracottas are difficult to determine, it would be far fetched to presume that the aesthetic urge of the people could be pacified by these clumsy figures. Nor does the hypothesis hold any ground that these are the products of children. The bird or animal-like face, elaborate ornaments and prominent breasts point to the fact that the modeller meant to represent the female aspect and most probably the fertility cult. This, as suggested by the excavators of several proto-historic sites in the Indus and Gandhāra regions, was a universal phenomenon, and India was not in isolation.  

K. N. Dixit observes, “The female energy or mother principle was one of the earliest forms of worship among several ancient races of the world.”  

Commenting on the terracotta figurines of the Gandhāra area Sir Aurel Stein observes that “If a conjecture may be hazarded it looks as if the little figurines so uniform in features and style might have been intended to represent some tutelary goddess.”  

Coomaraswamy holds the similar view in his well known paper on the Archaic India Terracottas.  

Agrawala, however, goes a step forward and has tried to correlate such female figures with Vedic and Paurānic deities such as Prithvi, Mahī Mātā, Aditi, Śīvalī etc.  

He identifies the eagle-faced figure as Suparṇa, or Vinatā, the mother of the great eagle Garuḍā. Some scholars are inclined to trace foreign element in them. Whatever might have been the exact purpose behind their representation, the terms given to them as ‘mother goddesses’, ‘vergin goddesses’, ‘love goddesses’, etc. seem justified as the figurines must have served some religious or ritual bearing.  

The fixing up of the period of these terracottas has been a disputed issue and the group has been conceived as ‘timeless’, ‘ageless’ ‘archaic’ or ‘primitive’ to convey their hoary antiquity. To bridge up the wide gulf between the protohistory and history, the art historians have been advancing numerous theories and the Mathurā archaic terracottas are being tipped to play a vital role to cover this span of over one thousand years, say between 1500 B.C and 400 B.C. This, however, remains a wishful thinking as none of these archaic figurines has been recovered from any of the pre-Mauryana layers detected in several excavations in the Mathurā region.  

Venkatramayya and Ballabh Saran of the Archaeological Survey of India who conducted the first systematic excavation at the site of Kaṭrā, did not report any such find in the pre-Mauryan level.  

As seen in the previous chapter we have not come across any archaic terracotta piece from Hārtel’s excavations conducted at Sonkh between the years 1966 and 74. The head of a Maṭrkā, which he assigns to

2. Ibid., p. 22.  
3. ASR., 1924-25, p. 72.  
4. ASR., Memoire, No. 37, p. 38.  
the Mauryan period, represents a developed stage and archaic in nature. Although M.C. Joshi and C. Margabandhu two excavators, have discussed the dating of archaic terracottas but not a single piece is reported from the pre-Mauryan excavations of different sites.

Thus the non-availability of the archaic terracotta figurines from the regular excavations has led to the divergent views. Agravala while writing the report on Ahicchatra terracottas referred to some archaic figurines discovered in the levels beginning from 300 B.C. to 200 B.C. He considered them to have been imported from Mathurā. Ahicchatra finds give a jolt to the theory of Coomaraswamy, later supported by Agravala. These do not, however, lead us to prove a later date for the archaic figures as the Mathurā terracottas cannot be dated on the basis of a few specimens found at Ahicchatra which was not the centre of production of such pieces. Both from Sonkh and Mathurā we have the developed human terracotta figurines from the Mauryan layers, from where the archaic types are significantly absent. Hence we can safely presume that the archaic figures are anterior in age, although it is not possible to fix any definite date for them.

The archaic terracotta figurines recovered from the site of Govindnagar represent mother goddesses with applique features at neck, girdle, big navel, prominent breasts, etc. These have either a bird face or an animal face. Grey colour with occasionally black slip is the essential characteristic. A torso (No. 76.233) and a bust with a beak face (No. 78.12) are good examples.

**Mauryan**

The archaic group is followed by a developed variety of terracottas datable to the Mauryan period, between 4th and 2nd century B.C. While many characteristics of the archaic nature (viz. applique treatment, grey colour and hand modelling) continue, some new traits are noteworthy. The face is in oval shape with large eyes, the number of ornaments has increased, hairdo is elaborate, showing several floral motifs and the breasts and hips are exaggerated. The face is sometimes pressed out of a prepared mould and the remaining body is hand modelled. Thus the use of moulds for the limited part of the body is a new technique. The female figures dominate although we have a few male and animal depictions also. Transformation of the face from bird or animal to human feature is an important landmark. The figures of this category, discovered from the site of Govindnagar include several interesting examples—No. 76.234 an armless female torso, No. 76.235 a female torso with prominent breasts, No. 78.13 bust of a mother goddess, No. 78.14 headless female bust, No. 78.26 female torso with applique treatment punch marks etc.

The site has also revealed a few animal figures some of which are rather uncommon: viz, No. 76.236 a mutilated figure of a stag with applique treatment and circular marks, the horn is extant on one side only and it had at least three offshoots, a double ear ring is seen in the right ear; No. 76.237 figure of a dog or ram with circular marks on the upper body, it bears the traces of black slip; No. 76.244 a mutilated elephant with applique treatment and traces of rider on back, legs and trunk, damaged.

Śunga

The clay art in the Śunga period took a new turn when the artisans switched over from hand modelling to complete moulds. The new technique was responsible for wide popularity of terracotta figures. The early monotonous tradition of shaping the mothergoddesses was replaced by a variety of subjects. Mathurā terracottas of this age portray a true picture of the contemporary society of this region. An impression is left that the life was gay and prosperous and the people had refined taste. We have a variety of figures including new deities such as Kāmadeva (god of love), Gajalakṣī (Goddess of wealth), Vasudhārā (Goddess of abundance), Śrīdevī (goddess of prosperity), Yakṣas (semi divine beings) etc. Besides, the male and female figures are shaped together, thus embarking upon a new theme of introducing the human secrecy to the world of aesthetics. This later multiplied into different poses and postures from amorous to erotics. The Mathurā terracotta artists of the Śunga period, however, restricted themselves to the amorous scenes and we rarely come across an erotic plaque. The terracottas of the Śunga age are known for a double knotted turban on the male head, a tastefully arranged hairdo with different braids, auspicious motifs and a large number of female ornaments.¹² We find both grey and red colour figurines.

The site of Govindnagar has revealed some interesting pieces which include human figures and toys. A vertical plaque (No. 76.238 measuring 12 cms. in ht.) depicts a lady wearing large circular earrings, necklace, girdle, bangle and lower garment shaping a flat band on front. Her turban type headgear is noteworthy. The hands suspend and rest against the waist. It is in dull red colour. Another objects is a grey male head (No. 76.243 measuring 4.5 cms. in height) wearing a bicorne turban and large earrings. There is a fragmentary red colour elephant (No. 78.25 measuring 11 cms. in length) with a floral motif in relief on trunk. We have also found a wicker seat (No. 78.15 measuring 7.5×7 cms.) of some figure (now lost) with vertical incised lines. This grey colour piece bears black slip.

A few post Śunga and pre-Kuśāna terracotta objects have also been picked up from the site. Mention may be made of a votive tank (No. 76.239 measuring 8 cms. in height and 23 cms. in diameter) shaped like a dish with lamps and birds

¹². Ibid., p. 148.
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perched on the rim, ladder, a raised lotus pillar (tenon), in centre and aquatic creatures as fish, tortoise and frog are seen on the surface (fig. 11). It is an interesting piece probably representing the mode of cult worship. Regarding its dating I am inclined to compare it with the votive tanks unearthed by Härtel at the pre-Kuṣāṇa layers, at Sonkh, dated to the 1st century B.C. 13

Kuṣāṇa

The terracotta art in the Kuṣāṇa period (between 1st and 3rd century A.D.) suffered in quantity as well as in quality. The probable reason for this setback appears to be the liking of the users and the artists for stone. It was the age of masons and not of potters who shaped the clay figurines. The use of moulds continued and sometimes we have a double mould separately for front and hind parts. The practice of hand modelling was revived, consequently some products look primitive in appearance. The body is rather rough and coarse with disproportionate limbs but the expression is quite suggestive and faithful. When two moulds are used the body is hollow. A few new divinities who appear in this age are Mahiṣāsuramardini, Kubera and Hārīti, Nāgas, Nāginīs etc. 14

The site of Govindnagar has not yielded much material in form of terracottas of Kuṣāṇa age. The items met with frequency are dabbers for shaping the pots. These are in different sizes, varying from 6 cms. (78.19) to 10 cms. (78.18) in height. Traces of husk mixed with clay are also visible in them. Other figures include a horse of the toy-cart with legs broken (78.32), jaw of a crocodile (78.31) etc. Red colour terracottas dominate in this age.

There are a few specimens which on the stylistic ground can be called Kuṣāṇo-Gupta i.e. belonging to the phase of transition between Kuṣāṇa and the Gupta period. These include a brick fragment with lotus decoration (78.33), brick showing battlement motif-Kapiśīrṣaka (78.22), etc.

Gupta

The terracotta art regained its significance in the Gupta period when the society of India witnessed a stage of resurgence in almost all spheres of life. The earlier conventions were either revived and revised or refined with greater zeal and enthusiasm. The highest aim before the artist was to combine spirituality with physical beauty. The figures were made more attractive, graceful and rhythmic. There is a greater movement and activity in the delineation of themes. Almost all characteristics of stone sculptures were given place in the terracotta art and we find the same charm and delicacy. The important features are oval head, slim body, less ornaments, expressive face suggesting peace and bliss. The ears are large, hair is curly and the eyes are shaped like half closed lotus buds. 15

13. GSI, pp. 88-9, fig. 29.
Here we can cite some examples of the Gupta period terracotta art among the Govindnagar finds. One is a small Buddha head (No. 76.240 fig. 149 measuring 9 cms. in height) with curly hair and a mutilated Usnīṣa. The earlobes are elongated and the left eye which is now extant shows a pupil. This dull red colour terracotta consists of some particles of mica. A fragmentary brick panel shows a band with three square rosettes (78.21). Similar is a band with flowers at intervals (76.412). There are other terracotta brick panels which illustrate square moulding (76.415), human figure in an arched window (76.411) and a monster with bulging eyes and wide nostrills (76.410 fig. 12). The number of terracottas including decorated brick fragments, recovered from the site of Govindnagar, is above forty. Their discovery suggests that the site was in occupation right from the pre-Mauryan period.

II. Architectural Fragments

The large number of architectural fragments unearthed at Govindnagar point to the fact that the site was an important establishment. The earliest dated sculpture found in this locality belongs to the twelfth regnal year of Kanishka (M.M. No. 76.36, fig. 13) corresponding to 90 A.D. and the latest dated find (M.M. No. 82.240) recording year 161 of Gupta era corresponding to 480 A.D. This will be discussed at the appropriate place. However, on the basis of stylistic study of some remains we can safely presume that the construction work at the site started at least a century earlier than the reign of Kanishka and continued up to the end of the Gupta period. What was the name of the monument at the time of its commencement is not known; but an inscription on the pedestal of a Buddha image of the Kusāṇa-Gupta age gives its name as Vīradatta Vihāra (M.M. No. 76.34, fig. 151). This epigraphic evidence dated in the year 121 will be taken up in detail subsequently.

As the site has been much spoiled by the unscientific and casual digs, no clear idea of the building activity is formed. Later the regular excavations of the Archaeological Survey of India found some traces of layers, floors, walls, hearth, pathway drain etc. Large number of early brick bats scattered at the site also supports the conjecture that the site was a big Buddhist complex. The true picture will emerge if the surrounding land is thoroughly explored and the remaining part of the mound is also exposed. But even the present evidence is sufficient to prove the existence of monasteries in pre-Kuśāṇa, Kuśāṇa and Gupta periods. The architectural remains recovered from the site include railing pillars, cross bars, copings, door-jambs, pillars, screens and miscellaneous pieces.

16. The report of the excavation conducted by Sri M.C. Joshi of A.S.I. is not yet out and the information is based on the basis of our visit and conversation with Sri Joshi.
Railing Pillars (Vedikā Stambhas)

A railpost known as stambha in Sanskrit and thaba in Prākṛt, is one of the four constituents of a railing (vedikā), viz., basement stone, upright pillar, crossbar and coping. The railing aimed at the protection of a monument. Each pillar had an unfinished base which remained under earth, the main shaft usually carved on one side with a male or female figure and on other are seen lotus medallians or compartments connected with some story. The railpost on the two adjacent sides has two or three vertical sockets to receive the crossbars which joined two railposts. The top bears a small tenon which was fitted into the socket of the coping stone lying horizontally on the top of two or more railposts.

The railing pillar which seems to be the earliest in date i.e. late 1st century B.C. or early 1st century A.D. is well preserved on one side but badly corroded on the other (MM. No. 76.40 measuring 139 cms. in height, fig. 14). The obverse displays four compartments conveying different scenes. The uppermost symbolically conveys the presence of the Buddha/Bodhisattva through a haloed royal turban (uṣṇīsa) of the Siddhārttha, respectively placed on a high pedestal and flanked by a flywhisk bearing attendant on either side. The pedestal has three projecting tiers or mouldings below and similar tiers above. It is in close resemblance with the altar like seat of the Tirthankara appearing on the Jaina Āyāgapattas which antedate the Kuśāna period. The thatched roof of hut, elevated tiered pedestal below the crown of the Bodhisattva, bulging drapery worn by the royal chief in the lowest compartment also confirm its early dating.17

The three compartments after the top one probably represent the episodes of the life of sage Ekaśṛṅga or Ṛṣyaśṛṅga: (a) romance between the sage Vidhāṇḍaka, the father of Ṛṣyaśṛṅga and deer, (b) birth of the child from the deer and the sage receiving the babe, (c) a scene of his marriage (?) with Śantā, the daughter of the king. The story appears in the Mahābhārata18 and the Buddhist texts also narrate it with some variation (e.g. the Alambusa Isisinga Jātaka wherein a doe on being conceived through an ascetic, gave birth to a male child). This is seen at Sānchī and Bharhut both with different names.19

The other side, which is badly damaged, shows in the top compartment an apsidal shrine with a big cāitya window on the main gate. The building being conspicuous by the absence of any human figure should be taken to be the

17. SP., p. 158.
19. The following note of Y. Krishan deserves mention: of the Jātakas depicted at Bharhut only the following can be traced in the Mahāvastu.

(i) Ayagrodha, called Mrṣa Jātaka at Bharhut.
(ii) Nalini Jātaka, called Isisingiya Jātaka at Bharhut.
(iii) The story of “The Arrow that shot far” in the Mahāvastu resembles the unnamed Jātaka at Bharhut, going by the name Asadisā Jātaka in Feet. See Mahāvastu translated by Jones, p. 78 H.

At Sānchī only two of the five Jātakas can be traced in the Mahāvastu viz. Alambusā (Ekaśṛṅga) Jātaka and Sāma Jātaka (Mārg, 1962, Mathurā Number).
Gandhakusā of the Buddha. Thus his presence has been conveyed by his chapel for meditation (Gandhakusā). The theme of the other three compartments is not clear due to mutilation.

The other railing pillar (M.M. No. 76.39 measuring 108 cms. in h.t., fig. 15) is carved with a lady seated on a cushioned wicker seat wearing large ear pendants, torque *stanaḥśāra* (necklace falling between the breasts), armlets, wristlets, girdle and anklets. Holding a mirror in the left hand she is probably pointing out at the nailmarks or teethmarks at her cheek. The Caitya window balcony on top shows a male bust probably recollecting his affair with the lady below. Reverse shows two full and one half lotus medallions and three vertical sockets for crossbars on two sides.

One railing pillar (M.M. No. 76.38 measuring 100 cms. in h.t., fig. 16) represents a nobleman standing under a balcony which shows figures of two potbellied Yakṣas carrying garlands inside two niches between the Indo-corinthian pilasters. The main figure on the railpost wears a crested crown, 'V' shaped necklace, large earrings and wristlets. In his upraised right hand he carries a garland which culminates into large knobbed flower. The left hand holds a flower baskets. The reverse has two full and one half lotus medallions.

There is yet another railpost (M.M. No. 76.37 measuring 63 cms. in h.t., fig. 17) showing a noblemen (feet missing) wearing a fluted crown, heavy round ear rings, 'V' shape necklace and wristlets. His mutilated right hand is raised up holding big garland and the left hand supporting the drapery rests on the thigh. The smiling expression on the face is remarkable. He stands under a balcony showing a Caitya window motif with a pillar like object in the centre. The reverse shows two full and one half lotus medallions.

Apart from these almost complete pieces several fragments of the railposts in different sizes have been unearthed. These are carved with variety of lotuses rosettes, lion head, ladies in different actions viz. standing under a tree and bending its branch, kicking the stem (*Aśoka dohad*, M.M. No. 76.134, fig. 18) etc. These pillars exhibit rich variety of male and female ornaments. A fragmentary pillar shows lower half of a lady wearing girdle, bangles, heavy anklets and scraf. Two rosettes are carved below (M.M. No. 76.124, fig. 19).

**Crossbars (Sūcis)**

Between two pillars were inserted two or three bars (sūcis) made in stone. These crossbars were fixed horizontally in the vertical sockets of the railposts. Lotus is the most popular motif carved on them. Sometimes both the sides are decorated with lotuses. The sculptor has, however, tried to make distinction from one flower to other by differently shaping the knob, number of petals or spokes. Most of these
belong to the early Kuśāna period. The crossbars which deserve attention are as follows:

76.43 Full blown lotus with a projecting large twisted rope shaped wreath encircling the central knob. Reverse also shows a full blown lotus with a large knob.

76.46 A sharply chiselled full blown lotus with a projecting knob and a spoked disc. The inside border of the petals bears pointed edges. Reverse also has a full blown lotus in relief and an inverted type of knob. The petals show a beaded line in centre.

76.48 The obverse shows full blown lotus with pointed petals and central knob (fig. 20 incised with a central circle and four semi circles on borders. There appears to & 21) be a monogram of Brāhmi ‘Ma’ or figure of 10. The reverse is carved with full blown lotus with round petals. The monogram on this side may stand for figure 5.

76.50 Wheel with clockwise spokes and central knob surrounded by a spoked disc. Lotus buds on four corners. Reverse bears a similar pattern.

76.57 Full blown lotus with a large knob carved with criss cross motif and a spoked disc. The petals are indicated with inturned tips looking like hoods of a cobra. There were four buds on four corners but now only three are extant (fig. 22).

76.58 Full blown lotus with large petals and knob incised with two circles and central point. It is encircled by a spoked disc. Four corners are decorated with buds. Reverse bears an unfinished lotus (fig. 23).

76.75 Full blown lotus with betel shaped petals and buds on four sides. The knob bears four incised round mark and a central groove. It is surrounded by a spoked wheel (fig. 24).

Reverse bears a full blown lotus with inverted petals looking like the serpent hoods. Lotus buds are seen on four sides. The central knob bears four incised mark and a sunken spoked wheel around (fig. 25).

76.76 About one third of the full blown lotus with betel shaped petals and the central disc representing the lotus petals in place of usual spoked wheel. The carving is in bold relief.

Reverse is carved with a small fragment of a full blown lotus consisting of betel shaped petals. Its size of $22 \times 18$ cms. suggests that it belonged to a bigger railing.

76.211 Central medallion indicating a spoked wheel surrounded by a band of lotus petals and outer circle carved with beautiful acanthus leaf (fig. 26).

Reverse shows dense petals in central disc, followed by a band of pointed petals and outer circle carved with beautiful scroll.

There are several cross bars from Govindnagar bearing some letters or a figure the exact purpose of which is not known. This may be interpreted either as mason's
mark showing his initials or monogram of the guild of the sculptors. It can also be taken to be a numerical mark which indicated the setting of the pieces. The mystery behind these marks is not fully unfolded but these are too prominent to be ignored. The crossbars bearing these marks are 76.48 (fig. 21), 76.51, 76.52, 76.53, 76.54, 70.55, 76.56, 76.57 (fig. 22), 76.60, 76.62, 76.71, 76.73 and 78.30. These monograms or figures have been noticed earlier also and the best citations are two railing pillars in Mathurā Museum.20 A few crossbars are made from vertical frieze with a tenon on either side. Depiction of vine creeper with a bunch of grapes supports this conjecture No. 76.61.

Copings (Uṣṇīṣa)

Two or more railposts were fastened on top by the help of large horizontal bars which are known as copings or Uṣṇīṣa in Sanskrit and Unhīṣa in Prākṛti. These bore sockets at intervals to receive the tenons of two or more railpost. The copings were rounded on top and represented various themes in medallions, or creeper and floral motifs on one or both sides. The number of coping is comparatively less probably due to the fact that these served as good lintels and were taken away from the site by the people and reused in their houses. The important copings are:

76.136 An ogee arch representing the crown (Uṣṇīṣa of Bodhisattva) respectfully placed and being worshipped by a devotee who is seen under another arch with his hand in adoration.

Reverse shows both the arches bearing corpulent devotees with the one sided headgear and ear rings carrying flower basket and wreath.

76.138 An ogee arch decorated with lotus petals portions of Dharmacakra are seen inside.

76.139 With one third of the ogee arch decorated with lotus reel and beaded border.

76.141 One complete arch with full blown lotus and about one fourth of the second arch the carving of which is not clear. The adjacent side is also carved with one arch bearing a tree which signified the Bodhi tree. This must be the first piece beginning from the gateway (Toraṇa) of the railing.

76.156 A mutilated fluted crown placed on the lion throne. It is a forceful and impressive depiction of the cult of Uṣṇīṣa.

Pillars (Stambha)

Pillars and beams are the supporting constituents of a monuments. Sometimes these are independently installed to commemorate an event or the glory of a king or a chief, a great man or a sage. Such pillars were known as Kīrtistambha (Mathurā

Museum No. Q.3) from Isāpur recording the performance of a Vedic sacrifice. The site of Govindnagar has revealed several pillars but unfortunately none is complete. These are of different shapes i.e. round, octagonal, square etc. Sometimes the base is square and the shaft is either octagonal or round. The important pillar fragments are:

76.36 It is square below and octagonal above with a vertical double scroll band on one side and lotus buds on four projecting corners. The most significant point is that the pillar bears an inscription recording the twelfth regnal year of Kaniška corresponding to 90 A.D. (fig. 13).

76.107 Fragment from a doorjamb carved with a headless devotee is a sunken niche carrying garland in his hands. He wears ear ring, torque, bracelets and dhoti. The niche is shaped between the two pillars. On our left adjacent side is carved a half lotus and lozange shaped vertical band.

76.110 Top of a pillar representing a half kneeling headless Yakṣa or a celestial with folded hands wearing ear ring, necklace and flat necklace. A pillar with this type of surmounting figure is rather peculiar and difficult to be explained. There appears to be a wing type object on the left shoulder and if we compare this figure with sculptures No. 76.83 to 86 we may interpret it as human form of Garuda and as such the shaft should represent a miniature or votary Garuḍa-dhvaja. We have the tradition of installation of Garuḍadhvaja in the earlier period also as testified by the Helliodoros pillar at Vidiṣā belonging to second century B.C. The piece from Govindnagar, however, is of Kuṣāṇa period.

76.123 Fragmentary semicircular pillar with groove and projecting band with lotus petal decoration. The sculptor might have intended to shape a Maṅgala Kalaśa. It can be assigned to 3rd or 4th century A.D.

76.144 Fragment from an octagonal pillar showing beautiful lotus decoration remains, Kuṣāṇa period?

76.145 Lower part of a pillar with square base and ghata motif above (Kuṣāṇa).

76.151 Fragment from a pillar with lotus decoration on three sides. It has square base, an octagonal upper point with plain caitya window carving (Kuṣāṇa period).

76.155 Pillar fragment with Makara motif, human head and two mutilated standing human figures on adjacent side (Kuṣāṇa).

76.158 Pillar fragment which was probably eight sided. One side is carved with two bold twisted floral ropes issuing out of a large flower (Kuṣāṇa period).

76.159 Fragment from a round pillar with beautiful Kirttimukha projecting with a beaded band above. The circular beads are intervened by a horizontal
bead. The stylistic lion heads are also intervened by a bold floral motif. An undulating pearled chain suspends below with strings at intervals. It is a fine example of pillar decoration of Gupta period.

76.168 Four miniature pillars or pegs of some seat carved with acanthus, floral, criss-cross and other motifs. The base and top are square and the central shaft octagonal. A tenon is seen on top to receive the socket of some upper structure or seat (Kuṣāṇa).

76.198 Lower part of a pillar with unfinished square base followed by a truncated shaft and a round moulding (Kuṣāṇa).

76.199 Lower part of a pillar with an octagonal projecting band with petals and upper broken part carved with large lotus petals. The artist probably intended to shape it as a vase (Kuṣāṇa).

76.216 Upper part of a pillar, tenon broken. The top shows the acanthus decoration on winged lions seated back to back. The reverse is damaged. The shaft is octagonal. Acanthus appears to be Tāladhvaja and its towering position hints to the religious significance of the theme (Kuṣāṇa).

76.381 Upper part of a small pillar with round and square mouldings. Traces of tenon above (Kuṣāṇa).

76.385 Part of a pillar with round moulding etc. (Kuṣāṇa).

76.387 Top of the pillar with disfigured winged lion seated back to back and lotus moulding below (Kuṣāṇa).

76.391 Square top of a small pillar with a tenon on top (Kuṣāṇa).

**Doorjambs**

The site has revealed some parts of doorjambs of the monastery. These are carved with different scenes both religious and decorative and other motifs. More significant ones can be described here:

76.41 (fig.28) It is a richly carved part of a doorjamb representing on front a grape creeper issued from the mouth of a half knelt dwarf below. This projecting band is followed by a wide sunken vertical panel carved with an attendant holding a long spear in Scythian attire in a niche. The compartment bears a fish tailed crocodile surrounded by a round beaded moulding while the upper compartment is carved with a devotee couple holding garland and a basket of flowers. The adjacent side bears three compartments representing devotees with garlands and flowers and the lower one shows an attendant with a Vajra type object in his upraised right hand. He wears a lion cloth. The sculptor seems to have committed an error in providing the shoes for the native attendant and displaying the Scythian doorkeeper with bare feet. A tenon projecting below was to be fixed in the socket of the doorsill. The sculpture is made in buff sand
stone but it appears that efforts were made to apply a coat of red paint over it (Kuṣṭaṇa period).

76.121 Part of a doorjamb with two full compartments and just a part of the third compartment. The uppermost compartment bears the figure of the Bodhisattva seated in Padmāsana on a pedestal which has a projecting edge. It is difficult to say whether the figure represents Maitreya or Siddhārtha but the absence of moustaches and youthful look favour the latter.21 The second compartment shows two flywhisk bearing acolytes with left arm resting on the waist. There is no object of worship. The remaining part of the third compartment shows just the haloed head of the Buddha of the Kapardin type (with protuberance above and Urṇā on forehead). Carving of attendant figures above the Buddha is inconsistent and the only explanation before us is to assume them as part of the top compartment. The sculptor probably faced difficulty in shaping the attendants due to the limited space and he shaped them independently below the Bodhisattva figure. It belongs to the early 1st century A.D. and the reason for placing it so early will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8 dealing with the chronology of the Buddha figures.

76.152 Badly damaged part of a doorjamb with a border carved with scroll and reel and bead bands and showing two compartments depicting the scenes of renunciation, Mahābhīṁśikraṇa, of Siddhārtha. The upper compartment bears only the legs of the Bodhisattva and his nimbus while the remaining part is missing. To his left is seen the half knelt figure of groom Chandaka who is seen in act of receiving the wearing of the prince Siddhārtha. On the other side his favourite horse Kanthaka licks the feet of the Bodhisattva in emotion and grief and wetting his feet with burning tears from the eyes. The first look on the horse gives the impression of a boar.22

The lower compartment depicts Gautama removing his fluted crown with his upraised hands while Indra wearing a high crown stands to his right. The hands and lower part of his (Indra’s body are fractured but whatever is extant is enough to indicate that he also stood in half kneeling post probably to receive Siddhārtha’s royal turban which was later installed in the Trayāstrimśa heaven as Cudāmahācetiya.23 To the left of Gautama stands a hunter clad in the Northern style (Udīcya Veṣa) holding bow and arrow. As the story goes the Bodhisattva exchanged clothes with him. It should be assigned to that phase of Kuṣṭaṇa period when the Gāndhāra influence had set in at Mathurā.

22. Ibid.
76.158 Fragment from a doorjamb carved with two twisted wreath issuing from a large flower (Kuṣāṇa).

76.160 Upper part of a doorjamb carved with a projecting a pilaster representing acanthus on half rosette lions seated back to back, a full vase-Maṅgala-kalāsa with some indistinct object. It is curious that the lions are supporting the acanthus which should have some mystic religious significance. The sunkan band shows beautiful grape creeper. A small tenon is seen above. It is a fine piece of sculpture and belongs to the Kuṣāṇa age.

76.348 Fragment from a doorjamb carved with a vertical hand of a vine creeper etc. (Kuṣāṇa).

76.358 Fragmentary doorjamb showing wreath and lotus motifs (Kuṣāṇa).

76.403 Fragmentary jamb with a kneeling devotees etc. (Kuṣāṇa).

76.404 Lower fragment from a jamb with right part of a male who sat on some couch (Kuṣāṇa).

The site has yielded numerous other architectural fragments such as friezes, bands, seven basement lintels etc. There are a few pieces which are carved with architectural motifs and designs. These provide a good scope to study the contemporary architecture. The architectural pieces which deserve our attention are as follows:

76.146 Fragment showing full railing on one side and it continues on the adjacent sides. There is an undercut groove below to receive the tenon (Kuṣāṇa).

76.147 Fragmentary frieze showing a vine creeper which issues from the mouth (fig.33) of the Yakṣa (Kuṣāṇa).

76.148 Fragment of a frieze with grape creeper (Kuṣāṇa).

76.150 Fragment from a frieze showing inter-woven scroll (Kuṣāṇa).

76.153 Portion of a lintel carved with a standing male figure in a sunken niche and holding a lance in his right hand. He wears a one sided head crest. It is followed by a devotee with his hands in adoration and facing to his left. The figure is carved between the two mutilated pilasters. The third compartment appears to be the main scene where the traces of the Buddha are visible. He was flanked by the flywhisk bearing attendants but now only the bust of one of them is extant. Existence of an attendant on the other side can also be made out. A socket is cut below to receive the tenon (Kuṣāṇa).

76.165 Fragment showing a railing and a projecting vertical arch which bears an oval shaped object probably the Gandhakuti, place for the dwelling of the Buddha. There are five tiers which shaped these mouldings as pedestals (Kuṣāṇa).
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76.200 Large vase shaped object with a hole in the centre. It is square below with a projecting figure of lion at each corner (Kuśāṇa).

The exact purpose of the piece is obscure but it may be a part of some lion throne serving as seat.

76.203 Fragment probably from a base of which only two adjacent sides are extant. The lower moulding displays acanthus and the upper one has twisted wreath. The socket marks suggest that the sculpture was a part of some complex (Kuśāṇa).

76.204 Fragment from a water channel with undercut deep groove (Kuśāṇa).

76.214 Fragment showing railing and Caitya window motif (Kuśāṇa).

76.346 Part of a doorjamb with scroll motif in bold relief (Gupta).

76.356 Fragment from a vertical frieze bearing undulating creeper (Kuśāṇa).

76.357 Fragmentary band with horizontal and vertical heavy lines and a human foot atop (Kuśāṇa).

76.359 Fragment carved with a pillar, inverted lotus and five separate bands of horizontal headed strings (Kuśāṇa).

76.360 Piece carved with scroll and traces of lion head (Kuśāṇa).

76.363 Slab showing more than half lotus and two horizontal grooves on the adjacent side (Kuśāṇa).

76.376 Fragment carved with two mutilated human busts inside broken arches (pre-Kuśāṇa).

76.378 Piece representing two rosettes and two pilasters (Kuśāṇa).

76.379 Fragment carved with a full vase on one and a creeper issuing from full vase on the adjacent side (Kuśāṇa).

76.380 Fragment carved with a rosette band and a pot bellied headless Yakṣa who carried a garland (Kuśāṇa).

77.25 Part from a band carved with vine creeper bearing bunch of grapes, (Kuśāṇa).

78.6 Fragment from a vertical band representing spreadout leaf decoration (Kuśāṇa).

78.11 Basement stone for installing the image. Its importance has been dealt with while discussing the technique. It is a unique find from Govindnagar.

78.3 Broken part of a screen with a frame of plain but inter-depandant mouldings. The screen is shaped on railing pattern and a central frieze is carved with one winged lion and traces of hind legs of another lion before him (Kuśāṇa).
Only a few instances have been cited to give an idea of the variety of architectural pattern and decorative motifs. Besides, several tiles have been found and the purpose must have been to use them for hardening and beautifying the floors. These are decorated with leaf pattern. The notable examples are 76.347, 76.355, 76.364 and 78.5.

_Lion Throne_

The Govindnagar finds include fragments of lion thrones. For the first time we get almost a complete idea of a _Simhāsana_ (76.167 fig, 35). The throne in question was found in twelve pieces. A to D are four side frames carved with lion heads, railing, arches with human head, rosette and battlements (Kapisīrṣaka) motif. Two tenons below are meant to be fixed in the sockets of the supporting screens.

E to H are four pegs or small pillars of the throne and each pillar has a projecting tenon which was fitted in the socket of the basement stones (I to L).

Some other fragments of the lion seat or lion throne have been recovered from the spot.

76.202 It illustrates projecting lion heads with rosette band above. A scroll is seen running on two sides. The seat bears the socket marks to receive other components of the throne. It is to be studied with pieces bearing No. 76.167, discussed above.

76.342. Piece probably from a lion throne representing one complete and one mutilated lion heads and the upper panel bearing human head in semicircular arch with pillars on which some object of worship was placed. A tenon is seen below.

76.344 Fragment from a lion throne showing front part of a seated winged lion with stylised manes. There is a vertical groove out on two sides.

76.388 Fragment probably from a lion throne with forepart of a lion which supported a pedestal or seat.

All these pieces belong to the Kuśāṇa period. This is for the first time that independent lion throne has been found. We have numerous sculptures from earlier excavations that exhibit the lion throne as part of the image. The lower part of the king (as Vema Kadphises) was shaped as seat with lions and the whole composition including the presiding statue is made in one block of stone. But the Govindnagar finds present a complex of lion seat in different parts.

_Cornerstones_

Several lion figures have been collected from the site. These are not simply the animal figures but had a functional use. Most of the lion figures are just the front part and the remaining portion is shaped like a vertical projecting tenon to be fixed in some wall. Their manufacturing and position hints that these served as
the corner stones and were fixed on the street where the two walls of a house joined. The house was strengthened against the vehicular menace. The half lion slabs also served as gateway pieces or bracket figures. The anatomy of the lions is quite bold and expressive of the vigour and strength of the beast and these are important as art pieces also. The notable specimens are 76.154, fig. 36, 76.205, fig. 37, 76.206, 76.207, 76.208, 76.209, 76.210, 76.343, 76.345, 76.390.

Thus the sculptural fragments from Govindnagar present a good glimpse of the architectural experiments being made at Mathurā during the Kuśāna period. Although the ground and elevation plans of early establishments are extremely rare owing to continuous devastation in different periods and disturbed layers, but hundreds of pieces viz. railposts, crossbars, copings, brackets, corner stones, doorjambs and a few illustrations in them speak of a rich Buddhist architectural complex of Mathurā in the early centuries of Christian era. Besides the urban settlements as gathered from various monuments we also have some idea of the Āśrama life in ancient India.24 The best specimen to serve this purpose is a railing No. 76.40, fig. 14 discussed above bearing four compartments on each side. The baby Ṛṣyaśṛṅga was born in a Āśrama and the compartments depicting this episode paint a lively life of a hermit. The hut with a straw and leaf roof, the fire altars with high conical flames etc. are the essential features of the hermitage. This is further corroborated by the long matted hair, large beard and the garment made of tree skin and leaves (Valkala). The reverse of this post illustrates a building with a voluted roof (Gajapṛśṭhākāra) and this may be identified as a chapel or the dwelling place of the Buddha, Gandhakuṭi.

Parasols (Chattrā)

It was customary to provide the image of a deity with an umbrella or parasol (Chattrā) in the Kuśāna period. In early phase of image worship the temples were not fully developed and the statues were installed on open platforms. In order to protect them from sun and rain it was felt necessary to provide an umbrella over the image at least in case of more important ones. While the parasol did not serve the purpose as the deity could not be protected from the angular sun and side showers the device undoubtedly added glory to image and conveyed a super human status of the deity. The provision of a parasol was considered as an important item particularly in case of a Buddhist and Jaina image as both the Śākyamuni Buddha and the Tīrthankara Mahāvīra belonged to the ruling Kuṣāṭriya race and the donor or the sculptor probably deemed it fit to put a royal insignia reminding their status of Cakaravartin. From the inscription of a Sārnāth Bodhisattva image we learn that the Mahākṣaṭrapa Kharapallana and the Kṣaṭrapa Vanasapara erected a colossal image of the Bodhisattva together with a Chattrā yaṣṭi in the third regnal year of Kaniṣka. The sculpture belongs to the Mathurā School. Besides

24. CMAS., pp. 35-36.
round umbrellas we come across some square parasols used for Gandhakūṭī and which, as observed by V.S. Agrawala, were constructed for the colossal free standing images of the Buddha by erecting three vertical plain slabs on the three sides and covering them with a flat slab which was on its inside with the same decorative patterns and symbols as were seen on the parasol or Chattra.25 A square umbrella reported by Agrawala and acquired by the present author for the Museum in 1976 (76.12) shows devices and grooves for erecting the upright slabs.26 Gandhakūṭī ushered into the full fledged temple with the addition of a porch and a Śikhara in the Gupta period.

About fifty pieces have been collected from the site of Govindnagar of which a few are complete and the remaining ones are the fragments of different parasols. These parasols range in size from 16.5 cms. i.e. miniature to the colossal size of 208 cms. Most of them bear eight undercut grooves and the present author is inclined to explain that these grooves received wooden nails for supporting the hanging garlands which must have been provided at least on special festivals. The large number of umbrellas further suggests that their provision was an invariable part of the installation of an image whether large or small. The practice was very common in the Kuśāna period but as we shall see it was subsequently discontinued. Those which deserve special attention are as follows:

72.5 It is more then half of a huge stone umbrella carved with decorative bands and auspicious symbols. The main circular frize consists of lotus, wheel, full vase, winged-pot oozing square coins, lotus, bowl, Svastika, winged conch omitting wealth (Śankhanidhi), lotus and lastly a halo with scalloped halo (Prabhā-manḍala).27 With a diameter of 208 cms. this is the largest specimen of parasols recovered from Govindnagar. The size of the antiquity suggests that the image installed under it must also have been of colossal size. This was the first sculpture which hailed from the site of Govindnagar. Unearthed in 1971 the object saw its way to the Museum in 1972 (Kuśāna).

75.32 This is one of the best specimens of the parasols. It is a complete wheel (fig.39) with a projecting central knob and the inturned rim bearing marks of grooves for decorative garlands. The knob and the field of the wheel display beautifully carved full blown lotus. But the most important part is a band showing eight auspicious motifs and each flanked by a full blown rosette on one side and a ten grooved simple design on the other. The auspicious motifs are Maṅgala kalaśa (full vase), Svastika (mystic cross), Triratna (three jewels), Śankha (conch), Puṣpadāmā (basket with

26. Ibid., p. 18, fig. 9 and MMA., p. 58, fig. 46.
27. Sharma, R.C., BMA., No. 8, December 1971, pp. 74-75.
rosary, *Palapātra* or *Ratnapātra* (basket with fruits or jewels), *Śrīvatsa* (central jewel) and *Nidhipātra* (a pot pouring the wealth in shape of square coins). The sculpture was acquired a year before the discovery of the large number of objects from the site of Govindnagar (Kuṣāṇa).

76.169 Plain umbrella, rim damaged, a large projecting central knob with a hole to receive the shaft. Due to removal of upper surface the low carving is now missing but it probably showed a full blown lotus in the field. It is a complete piece with 66 cms. diameter (Kuṣāṇa).

76.170 More than half part of a plain parasol with a large projecting perforated central knob for shaft (Kuṣāṇa).

76.171 About three fourth of an umbrella with a projecting central knob for shaft, rim damaged at parts (Kuṣāṇa).

76.172 Small umbrella carved with lotus motif and a projecting central knob with perforation for shaft. The rim bears eight grooves in which probably wooden nails were inserted for hanging the garlands (Kuṣāṇa).

76.174 Miniature umbrella with traces of lotus decoration and plain central halo. The eight grooves probably for fixing the garlands incised on the rim (Kuṣāṇa).

76.176 Miniature parasol with hole and eight grooves for garland. Measuring 16.5 cms. in diameter it is the smallest in size (Kuṣāṇa).

76.177 Fragment from a large umbrella which bore several auspicious motifs out of which only a pair of fish (*Matsyayugma*) is intact. The band of motifs was surrounded by the lotus decoration (Kuṣāṇa).

76.178 Fragment from a large umbrella showing lotus petals followed by a band of decorative motifs out of which only winged conch is extant. It was flanked by rosette on one side and lotus (now missing) on the other. The last band is fashioned as projecting twisted rope (Kuṣāṇa).

76.180 More than half of an umbrella with traces of projecting central knob and grooves undercut on rim. The deposit on surface points to its later use. This deposit has been detected on several finds and it appears to be the incrustation of lime in Mughal or post Mughal period (Kuṣāṇa).

76.191 Fragment from an umbrella with traces of lotus decoration and a groove on the rim also bears a few letters in the Kuṣāṇa Brāhmi script reading. . . . . . . *Vajaga (de) vasa*. Letter ‘de’ seems to be damaged due to the incision of the groove. This suggests that the groove was cut after the inscription and may be after the installation of the image and the parasol (Kuṣāṇa).

76.197 A complete umbrella with lotus and wreath motifs. The posthole in the
centre bore a coating of later deposit which was removed in chemical
treatment of the object in the Museum laboratory (Kuśāṇa).

76.352 Fragment probably from an umbrella representing a damaged Triratna,
plain flat band and traces of lotus decoration (Kuśāṇa).

76.361 Fragment probably from an umbrella with traces of several wreath and
floral band (Kuśāṇa).

78.8 Fragment from a parasol with lotus leaf and groove on rim which also
bears a few Brāhmī letters out of which ‘ni’ and, ‘sa’ can be read
(Kuśāṇa).

Halo (Prabhāmanḍala)

In order to distinguish a great man from the ordinary person a halo was
marked around the head. As it was deemed to be a symbol of divinity its
carving was confined only to the divine figures or the Cakrayavartins. It is interesting
to note that the early Brāhmaṇical deities viz. Yakṣas, Balarāma etc. are devoid of
halo but the Buddha and Jaina statues are marked with it from the very beginning.
The Govindnagar Buddha images show different stages of development from plain
field to pre and early Kuśāṇa period to the rich decorated bands in the Gupta
period. With the advent of shrines and temples the parasols outlived their utility
but their rich carving was transferred to the halo which also symbolised greatness
and divinity. Lotus decoration is an essential feature of development of halo.
Kālidāsa rightly terms it as Padmātapatra or Chāyāmanḍala
while comparing the halo of Raghu with a lotus parasol. He conceives that goddess Lakṣmī in her
invisible form held a lotus parasol on Raghu’s head and its shadow was transformed
into the lotus halo behind the head. This further supports the view that the halo
like parasol was also considered as royal emblem signifying greatness, glory,
prosperity and its development was in direct succession from parasol.

The word Parbhāmanḍala which is the most popular term for a halo also
conveys the same significance and it has continued at least from the Gupta age.
Kālidāsa gives a fine description of a full blown lotus halo and it portrays a
beautiful picture of the contemporary halos found at Mathurā and elsewhere. He
compares the beautiful figure of Pārvati with an elaborate halo with radiating rays
of light. The description very much tallies with the halo of some of the Mathurā

28. छाया मंडल लक्ष्येण तमहस्य किल स्वर्यम्।
पद्मा पद्मात पत्रेण मेजे सामर्थ्य दीर्घतम्॥

Raghuvanaṇa, IV. 5


30. तन्वा दूहिता सुतरां सावित्री स्तुर्वप्रभा मंडलया चकासे।
विद्वृर भूमिनन्देषचंस्वद्दुःध्वन्या रसुर्शलाक्षणेव॥

Kumārasambhava, 1.24

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Buddha images as A.5 fig. 139 in Mathurā Museum 76.25 fig. 142 from Govindnagar site now in the Museum and a Lucknow Museum Tirthankara image from Kankāll J.117.

From the site of Govindnagar about 25 fragments of halo have been picked up. These formed the parts of the Buddhist images installed in the monastery and stylistically can be dated from c. Ist century A.D. to the post Gupta period. While the plain halo with scalloped border are the earliest pieces datable to c. Ist century A.D. the halo marked by mermaid or flame on border should be assigned to a late period i.e. 6th century A.D. Thus the carving becomes more elaborate and intricate in the later period. The important pieces are described below:

76.192 (fig.43) Fragment from the halo of the deity carved with scalloped border, twisted wreath displaying at interval two small lotuses one of which looks like a fluted head crest and may be interpreted as Uṣṇīṣa of Siddhārtha—followed by a band with scalloped decoration round the beaded string and a full blown lotus. It can be assigned to late Kuśāṇa or early Gupta period.

76.193 (fig.44) Fragmentary halo with scalloped border, circular beaded string, again a scalloped band with spear head and lotus (Kuśāṇa—Gupta).

76.194 (fig.45) Piece from a halo representing scalloped border, string of circular beads, twisted wreath with rosettes and spear-heads (Kuśāṇa).

76.195 (fig.46) Fragment from a halo depicting scalloped border, string with circular beads and lotus (Kuśāṇa).

76.196 (fig.47) Halo fragment with scalloped border, wreath, scroll and spearheads. The workmanship is fine (Gupta).

76.223 (fig.48) Part from a halo carved with scalloped border, beaded string, twisted wreath, scroll and bands. The scroll seems to bear the headless winged mermaid which is an interesting feature and suggests a late date, (late Gupta).

76.224 (fig.49) Fragment from a halo showing just the headless figure of a winged mermaid whose body appears to be floating (late Gupta).

76.225 (fig.50) Fragment from a halo with wreath, scroll and some leafy object in projection which may be identified as hind part of a feathered mermaid or swan. The most striking feature of this piece is that the outer rim of halo is carved with flames which should be a late characteristic (late Gupta).

76.226 (fig.51) Piece from a halo showing hindpart of mermaid, scroll and wreath bands. Like previous one it also displays flames on the border (Late Gupta).

76.227 (fig.52) Fragment from a halo representing scalloped border, beaded string, twisted wreath and scroll decoration which subsequently assumed the shape of mermaid (Gupta).
76.228 Same features as described in 76.227 (Gupta).

76.229 Part from the halo carved with wreath rosette, large lotus petals and traces of spoked disc towards the centre (late Kuśāṇa).

76.230 Fragment from a halo carved with scalloped border beaded string, twisted wreath with flowers, scroll and spearheads (late Kuśāṇa).

76.231 Piece from a halo which had scalloped outer rim, beaded string, wreath with a plain flower and boldly carved spearheads (late Kuśāṇa).

76.338 Fragment from halo showing scalloped border, beaded string, rosette band, bead and reel and scroll with full lotus blown at interval. The number and variety of bands is remarkable but the piece is too small to appreciate it properly (Gupta).

Decorative Motifs

Decorative motifs occur as part of architecture or of an image and are rarely noticed carved independently. Their presence not only adds grandeur but sometimes a deep underlying thought is also conveyed by them. One cannot fully appreciate the spirit of Indian art unless the language of motifs and symbols is properly understood. As opined by the scholars, 'art in India is not a factual record of life in various forms, but from the outset it was intended to become a vehicle of the forms of thought, which enriched culture, religions, philosophy and literature. In India art has been employed to convey through its symbolical language—the ideas of the mind'.

Since all religious sects adopted symbolism to convey their message, we find variety of themes carved in Indian architecture. There are several motifs which frequently appear on religious and secular buildings and have continued to date. Sometimes one symbol is common to all religions although it conveys different meaning according to the concept of the creed and canons. Before the birth of the Buddha Māyādevī sees some auspicious dreams like a white elephant entering her womb. Similarly Triśalā or Devanandā also had the similar vision and the number of motifs increases. Sometimes it is eight (Aṣṭamaṅgalas) and sometimes the number is much more. The theme found popular depiction in paintings and sculptural art.

As symbolism preceded the image worship the earliest religious manifestation is to be conceived only by motifs. The Buddha was represented by Wheel, Tree, Stūpa, Chapel, Elephant, Lion etc. as for an orthodox Buddhist a prince walking in the streets of Kapilavastu was not of much significance but who mattered much was the Buddha who after attaining the highest goal i.e. the Enlightenment wandered for removing the miseries and sufferings of the people. The similar thought is

encircled around Mahāvīra, Rāma and Kṛṣṇa who were ready to give up all worldly pleasures for the welfare of others.

This may also be pointed out that motifs found their natural place in the realm of art. In early days man was in close affinity with nature. The flowers, trees, scroll, vegetation, animal and bird kingdom was very near and dear to him and he quite faithfully gave ample space for rendering different motifs. This is corroborated by the fact that in the Āyāgapatṭas only symbols are represented and if the figure of the Jina is introduced, it is also surrounded by large motifs (J.250 in Lucknow Museum). Mathurā followed earlier art traditions of Sāncī and Bharhut in laying emphasis on the depiction of symbols and the antiquarian remains revealed from the site of Govindnagar present a feast of such motifs. Those which gained more popularity are: full vase, creeper, lotus or lotus creeper, tree, svastika, wheel, caitya-window, Kirtimukha, garlands, rosettes, alms bowl, turban of Siddhārtha, halo, Yakṣas issuing creepers, Gaurī, fish, crocodile, twin fish, śrīvasta, conch, three jewel (triratna), railing with lotuses (Padmavara vedikā) and a host of mythical or composite beings. Most of these motifs have been pointed out while describing the architectural gleanings (fig. 38, 39, 40 and 41).

The purpose behind carving these motifs was to create an atmosphere of auspiciousness, prosperity and enjoyment. The full vase (pūrnakumbha) stood for the fullness of life. In Vedic literature the full vase like human body is representative of life and force and it consists of all pleasures of life. ‘Enjoyments, pleasures, delights, gladness, rapturous ecstasies, laughter, merriment, dance and play, have made body their home.’ Right from the period of Rgveda the placing of the full vase was considered as an important ritual of a ceremony. The full vase was used for home decoration as a symbol of prosperity. We have a good description of this use in the Atharvaveda where such dwellings are praised as reward of charity. The Buddhist texts mention a house decorated with full vase. This is supported by several Buddhist architectural pieces preserved in the Mathurā Museum. The beam of a gateway (M.3) shows beautiful illustrations of this motif (fig. 73-76). Among the Govindnagar finds the two parasols (M.M. No. 72.5, fig. 38 and 75.32, fig. 39) display different types of full vases.

33. भानुर्द भोज: प्रमुदोषीमोद मुदुष्च वे ।
हसो निर्णता नूतनि शरीरमुन्त्र च्रविण्यन् ॥

34. एतानि भद्र कलाः क्रियाम् ।

35. पूर्णनारी प्रभर क्रममेत दृष्टत्वारामवृत्तेन संभूताम् ।
इमान् पातृसमस्त समं इ. र्हीष्टपूर्तमिभि र्खास्येनाम् ।

AV., XI. 8. 24

R.V. X. 32.9

AV., III. 12.8.

O fair damsel, bring hither to us the Pūrnakumbha, filled with streams of clarified butter, blent with nectar. Bedew these drinkers with a draught of Amrta. May the reward of our pious works (Iṣṭāpūrta) guard this dwelling.

Studies in Indian Art, p. 46.

36. पूर्णवट पदमशिलित घर
Dhammapada Ajñakathā, 1, 147.
Other important motif is the tree which symbolises knowledge and existence. The Buddha attained his Bodhi under a tree at Gayā, hence the tree was later known as Bodhi Vṛksa. In Brāhmanical canons we have the concept of Kalpa vṛksa under which all wishes are ful-filled. The trees which are treated more auspicious in this regard are Pīpal, banyana (Vata); Pārijata and Aśoka. Kalpalatā, an undulating long scroll, also known as Padmalatā for its depiction of lotus buds and flowers conveys the same significance as the Kalpavṛksa. Lotus signifies light, life and evolution. The wheel on the other hand stands for time, movement, change of seasons and the solar energy. It is also shown as the Wheel of Law. The first sermon of the Buddha is indicated through a wheel placed on a pedestal or on a pillar. The Master is supposed to have turned the Wheel of Law (Dharmacakra pravartana) in the deer-park (Mrgadāva). Triratna (three jewels) is also a favourite symbol in Buddhism and Jainism (fig. 39). It is a combination of two buds, two fish shaped arms and a wheel on top. In the Buddhist traditions the triratna stands for Buddha, Dharma and Sangha while the Jainas take this motif to symbolise samyakdrṣti (right vision), samyakvāc (right speech) and samyakkñāna (right knowledge).

Svastika connotes the sense of auspiciousness and is the common motif among the three major sects of early India. It is a cross with ends turning clockwise or anticlockwise. Sometimes the ends are shown touching the next arm of the cross and the motif assumes the shape of a wheel. It is suggested that the clockwise turning (dakṣiṇavarta) of svastika signifies the solar energy and masculine power while the anticlockwise (vāmavarta) position symbolises the lunar or feminine force (fig.38). The bowl reminds the begging bowl of the Buddha and it is shown in a respectful position as one of the motifs in the parasol (M.M. No. 72.5, fig. 38). Sometimes it is carried on head of a yakṣa (M.M. No. 77.31, fig. 51). The Mathurā Museum houses some large stone bowls which were probably placed in the monasteries for collecting the alms for the monks and nuns.38 The śrīvatsa motif is represented in a dozen of varieties on the chest of Tirthankaras but it is also seen in the Buddhist Art (M.M. No. 75.32, fig. 39). A new inscription of the reign of Śoḍāsa bears a beautiful carving of this motif.39 The depiction of a fish-tailed female figure is repeated in several fragments of halo found at Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.224, fig. 48). Stylistically these are comparatively of late date but seem to carry over the early tradition of the winged maidens (dikkumārikās) noticed on some of the Jaina āyāgapattas recovered from Kankālī and other sites.40

The finds from Govindnagar frequently depict all such symbols in architectural fillings.

38. Mathurā Museum No. 10.97 and 15.662.  
40. Smith, V.A., Jain Stūpa etc. pl. IX.
Recent Discoveries from Govindnagar

Coins

The mound of Govindnagar has revealed an interesting hoard of 1543 coins (Mathurā Museum No. 76.245) which have been studied by A.K. Srivastava and the information is based on a paper presented by him in January 1980 in the International Seminar on the cultural History of Ancient Mathurā. As reported the break up of these coins is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coin Description</th>
<th>Quantity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kṣatrapa coin</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rājuvula ?</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rude copy of Huviśka</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vāsudeva</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late Kuśāṇa king at altar and Śiva with bull</td>
<td>738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King at altar and Ardokṣe</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo=Sassanian (or earlier variety)</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King at altar and seated figure (Hūṇa 7)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Double struck</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidar Shahi Kuśāṇa (?)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegible</td>
<td>366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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1543

The remarkable points which Srivastava notices in this hoard are:

1. The coins of Śiva and Nandī type do not bear any inscription below the arm.
2. On coins with Ardokṣo inscription is seen under arm.
3. For the first time coins of Śakas and Kṣatrapas together with different Kuśāṇa series are seen.
4. Kuśāṇo—Sassanian coins should be placed from about the middle of the 3rd century A.D. to the 5th-6th century A.D., or even later.
5. The Imperial Kuśāṇa coinage is missing.

Discovery of this coin hoard from Govindnagar is of considerable significance. As pointed out earlier the hoard was the messenger of the hidden antiquarian wealth in the site. This was the first event which led us to take due precautions for salvage of art treasures. But the real significance was, however, not known till Srivastava examined the coin hoard. As the site is greatly distributed and stratification has not helped us much we can now rely on the combined study of numismatics, epigraphy and artistic development for fixing the time span of the site. Stylistically the present author has been dating the sculptures from about 1st century B.C. to the 6th century A.D. This dating is fairly supported by two dated inscriptions, one in the 12th regnal year of Kaniska on a pillar (76.36 fig. 13) and other on the pedestal of the Buddha image (M.M. No. 76.34, fig. 151) recording
the name of the monastery as *Viradatta Vihāra* and the year of installation as 121 of the Gupta era? corresponding to 440 A.D.? A recently found Buddha image pedestal (M.M. No. 82.240, fig. 169) is dated in the year 161 = 480 A.D. So the epigraphic evidence is met with from the end of the 1st century A.D. to almost the end of the 5th century A.D.

Fortunately the discovery of the coin hoard is not against our dating. An analysis of the contemporary hoard suggests its burial sometimes in or shortly after the late Kusāna or post Kusāna phase, each of which is found covered by the broad brackets of dates as suggested by us. It can also be conjectured that the Buddhist establishment of Govindnagar was dismantled as a consequence of the attack by the Hūnas towards the end of the 6th century A.D. The numismatic evidence has thus proved of much importance for framing a general chronology of the sculptural finds.41

**OTHER ICONS**

The site of Govindnagar has yielded numerous sectarian and secular objects. The epigraphic and sculptural remains furnish ample evidence to prove that it was mainly a Buddhist establishment. While the Buddhist figures will be discussed in detail independently in the forthcoming chapter, we purpose to present a brief account of the associated icons including some female deities, yakṣas, garudas, and a few other male and female figures, such representations have been common to all pantheons in ancient India.

*Brāhmanical Objects*

A handless upraised arm with traces of beautiful garland of victory vajyayan-
tīmālā must be a fragment from the Viṣṇu image (M.M. No. 76.311). Another fragmentary Viṣṇu figure was unearthed by the Archaeological Survey and it is in

41. A.K. Srivastava has furnished information about other coin hoards from Mathurā. Accordingly four more hoards were found and sent to the State Museum, Lucknow. These are as under:

*Lot No. 1*—Consisting of two gold coins one belonging to Kadphises and other Chandragupta I Treasure Trove No. 17, 1900-1. Exact find spot not reported, only Mathurā district is mentioned.

*Lot No. 2*—Contains 2114 copper coins in the following sequence, Vema Kadphises 298, Kanishka 1426 and Huviṣka 451.

The importance lies in the fact that this hoard was recovered from the site of Bhūteśwar which is quite close to Govindnagar. While the Govindnagar hoard is conspicuous by absence of the Imperial issue the Bhūteśwar hoard is representative only of the royal varieties (Treasure Trove No. 3 of 1966-67, JNSl., XVIII., p. 232, BMA.; Vol. III).

*Lot No. 3*—Contains 1221 copper coins in this order: Vema Kadphises 254, Kanishta 927 and Huviṣka 49. Exact find spot not reported. (Treasure trove No. 6 of 1978-79.

*Lot No. 4*—Consisting of 593 copper coins but these donot form the part of the royal coinage as no name of a king is made out. Exact provenance not reported.

*Lot No. 5*—Including 1542 copper coins from Govindnagar discussed in the main body of the present work.
their custody. Both these pieces are in red sand stone and belong to the Gupta period. Besides, we have found one or two fragments of Viṣṇu figures of Medieval period and these are in buff stone. One is a pedestal representing his ankled feet on lotus cushion (76.219) and it may also be identified as the middle part of Viṣṇu image wearing necklace and the Yajñopavīta.

Yakṣas

76.106 Fragment from a doorjamb representing the torso of a divinity with his right hand raised up in Abhaya and the left hand holding a club or Vajra type object which rests against his shoulder. He wears ear rings, bracelets and loin. The sculpture seems to represent Vajrapāni or Mudgarapāni Yakṣa (Kuṣāṇa).

76.109 A male torso representing a Yakṣa who probably held a cup in the left hand against his chest. The right hand rests akimbo holding the hilt of the dagger which suspends from his belt. A plain necklace is worn round the neck. The sculpture is carved in round and the back shows projecting scarf with horizontal lines and the belt. The over all treatment including foldless drapery, selection of stone with less spots and finish suggests that it would be assigned to the Gupta period?

76.221 Headless and armless image of Kubera seated in Lalitāsana. The body is corpulent with pot belly and he wears a torque and scarf. There is a tenon below for installation (Kuṣāṇa).

76.310 Lower part of a pedestal with grotesque figure of kneeling Yakṣa (Kuṣāṇa).

77.31 This is one of the best figures of a Yakṣa. It represents only the bust carrying a broken bowl on his head which is round and devoid of neck. The ears are shaped as benowing basket Śūrpa. A round plain torque and wristlets are his wearings. The breast part is unusually prominent and the figure deceives for a female. The smile on the face is remarkable. The sculpture is carved in round and the long wavy curls on back are noteworthy. Stylistically the sculpture should be assigned to the early Kuṣāṇa period.

Female Deities

The terracotta female figures probably representing the cult of mother goddess have already been discussed in the beginning of this chapter and now we describe a few stone sculptures depicting female deities:

76.99 Stele showing a badly disfigured squatting Mātrkā with a child on her left lap. The right hand was raised in protection (Abhaya) pose. Heavy ear-rings suspend on the shoulders and a halo is seen behind the head (Kuṣāṇa).
76.118 Lower part of a female deity wearing girdle and heavy anklets and seated in *lalitāsana* or *parvkāsana* on a two cushioned couch. The period is doubtful, may be late Kuṣāṇa.

There are some fragmentary sculptures which are definitely parts of female figures but their divine characteristics are obscure. The important ones are cited below:

76.90 Fragmentary female face with circular mark on forehead, sharply chiselled eyes with eye brows drawn up. The hair is tied with a cloth depicting criss-cross design. It is tied to her left side in a large floral shaped knot.

76.97 Fragment probably from a screen representing back and profile of a lady with tastefully decorated hairdo terminating in a *Jūḍā* (tuft). She wears an armlet and the fillets of the front necklace suspend below. She carried probably a basket in the upraised left hand (Kuṣāṇa).

76.113 Small fragment showing lower part of a lady from navel to legs with girdle, scarf and *dhoti*. She stands in *tribhanga* pose with left hand resting on the left hip (Kuṣāṇa).

76.132 Lower part of a railpost representing human feet on some fish trailed animal. The position of feet suggests the *tribhanga* attitude probably of a *Yakṣī*.

76.215 Stele representing a female torso wearing a *stanaḥāra* (necklace falling between the breasts), bangles and *dhotī*. Hair suspends on her breast and she holds a big garland (Kuṣāṇa).

76.308 Fragment probably from the railpost showing the footless lower part of a lady (*śālabhanjikā* who stood crosslegged holding a scarf with his hand (Kuṣāṇa).

76.317 Fragment from a female figure showing only her breasts and traces of pearled necklace worn round the neck (Gupta).

76.318 Fragmentary female bust wearing heavy ear rings and torque (Kuṣāṇa).

78.9 Fragment from a female figure representing breast, bangled wrist and traces of double stringed beaded necklace (Kuṣāṇa).

**Garuḍas**

The discovery of about twenty figures of *garuḍa* (eagle deity) suggests its wide popularity and presents an interesting study. As already pointed out it symbolises knowledge, elevation, light and victory of good over evil. The formula is conveyed by the carving of a cobra in the beak or under the clutches of *garuḍa*. According

42. *Studies in Indian Art*, p. 142.
to the mythology he is a carrier of nectar hence associated with divinity. As a decorative motif it is to be seen on doorjamb and tympanums in the Kuśāṇa period. Sometimes we notice it adorning the crowns and armlets of the Bodhisattvas. The proper significance of and association of garudā in Buddhism is yet to be properly studied in detail but it has been mentioned as a vehicle of Amitābha Buddha. The deity is to be seen in bird form, hybrid form combining human and bird aspects and also in complete human form. There appears to be some gradual evolution from bird to human form and in the Gupta and post Gupta periods the deity assumes almost a full human form and serves as vehicle of Viṣṇu. The iconography of garudā seems to have developed in this age.

The sculptures recovered from Govindnagar presents a variety of garudā figures and it is only after a close and comparative study that one is able to make a clear distinction between a human and garudā representation. There are several human busts with hands clasped in adoration which on first appearance look like the figures of devotees but these really represent anthropomorphic form of garudā. The Govindnagar finds warrant us to re-examine such figures afresh and give them a proper label. This will help us in removing the confusion so far prevailing in Mathurā antiquities. It is also interesting to note that a good number of garudā figures served some functional purpose because a tenon on top or below the sculpture was meant to be fixed in the socket of some architectural component. The important garudā figures are mentioned as under:

76.79 The sculpture represents garudā with outstretched wings. The eyes are (fig. 57) open and wide spread and beak is pointed and large. There is a vertical tilaka like motif in relief on the forehead. The notched hair is arranged in two tiers. He wears ear rings (Kundālas) and holds a hooded cobra with his two bangled hands. The upper part of the serpent is seen in the clutches of his beak. A criss-cross design is shaped on the body and lower vertical portion is decorated with leaves etc. The uncarved tenon above the head hints its functional use. It is a composite form of bird and man (Kuśāṇa).

76.80 It is a bird form of the deity with a vertical incised tilaka mark on the forehead and pupils in the round eyes are seen bulging. The wings are half spread and the snake is absent. The projecting middle part shows criss-cross design. A plain vertical panel is seen below (Kuśāṇa).

76.81 It is also the bird representation of eagle deity. The eyes, beak and wings are conspicuous otherwise the figure is plain and devoid of any carving (Kuśāṇa).

43. The story is narrated in the Mahābhārata and several Purāṇas. Also see T.A. Gopināth Rao's Elements of Hindu Iconography, Vol. I, pt. 1, pp. 283-87.
44. Mathurā Museum No. 57.4446.
45. Mathurā Museum No. A. 45 and 44.3112.
46. Studies in Indian Art, p. 142.
47. Elements of Hindu Iconography, op. cit.
76.82 Head of garuda with prominent features. The notched type hairdo shows different tiers and the forehead bears a big vertical projecting tilaka mark. The pupils of eyes are bulging and the beack type nose with snake is sharp and pointed. The earlobes are damaged and cheeks show incised marks. The unfinished tenon type projection is seen on the head. It represents the composite features of human and bird shape and when complete it must have been in close affinity with figure No. 76.76 (Kuśāna).

76.83 The stele represents the human form of garuda. The wings of the earlier figures of garudas have now been transformed into proper arms. The hands are shown clasped in adoration and placed against the chest and their position reminds of the bulging middle portion of the body found in birds and composite forms of the deity. The head is completely human although the eyes are slightly bulging and the nose also has some affinity with the bird form as seen in M.M. No. 76.79. There is an effort of shaping a turban on the head which also bears a halo with incised border. The snake is absent and the portion below waist does not indicate any feature whether birds or human. The tenon on top indicates its functional utility. The figures is a good citation of the development of garuda from bird to human form. At the same time there is a deliberate effort to mark a plain halo with an incised line behind the halo in order to elevate the status of the figures from human to divine. Probably the wings on shoulders were transformed into halo (Kuśāna).

76.84 The figure has almost the same features as discussed in figure No. 76.83. The horizontal incised line below navel suggests an Indo-scythian lower garment? (Kuśāna).

76.85 Same as No. 76.83 and 84 except the tongue which is conspicuous in the wide open mouth (Kuśāna).

76.86 Fragment of the face of garuda with round and bulging eyes (Kuśāna).

76.92 Headless bust of a male with hands folded in adoration. Portion below waist is plain. It should be identified as human representation of garuda as No. 76.83 to 86 (Kuśāna).

76.93 Human form of garuda showing a male head with a fluted crown and ear rings in the right ear and a mark on the forehead. Traces of plain halo behind and the tenon on top to be fixed in some socket (Kuśāna).

76.95 Mutilated male bust with turban, ear rings torque and scarf. Traces of halo and tenon are also visible (Kuśāna).

76.96 Human form of garuda representing his bust with a crown and torque.
The eyes are bulgings and the hands are clasped in adoration against the chest. Plain halo behind the head and tenon on top are conspicuous (Kuṣāṇa).

76.105 Headless bust of garuḍa with hands clasped in adoration against the chest. He wears armlets, bracelets, torque and round ear rings. Traces, of halo are also visible.

The divine aspect of garuḍa is indicated by the nimbus but the folded hands suggest his position as devotee. He may, therefore, be called as divine attendant a concept which continued with him for ever. The folded hands appear to be reminiscents of his central body. This should be compared with No. 76.83, fig. 58.

76.213 This represents another aspect of male form of garuḍa in which he sits on lion’s head with hands touching the shoulder. The hair is combed back and he wears round ear rings, necklace and torque. The legs spread round the lion look like bird’s paws (Kuṣāṇa).

76.232 Head of garuḍa in bird form with a cuḍā on the forehead, the hair is combed back in thick line, round ear ring in right ear, open eyes and pointed beak. Tenon points to its functional use (Kuṣāṇa).

76.315 Male head of garuḍa with fluted crest and ear rings with traces of halo behind and broken tenon above (Kuṣāṇa).

76.316 Headless figure of garuḍa with folded hands, halo round the head and portion below waist is plain (Kuṣāṇa).

76.326 Same as object No. 76.316.

Other Objects

A large number of items falling in different groups and of varied interest have been recovered from the site. Those which deserve special attention for their artistic or stylistic significance are described in brief:

76.88 Stele representing a standing nobleman wearing a fluted crown, ear rings, torque, armlets, bracelets, scarf and dhotī. He carries a flower basket in left and a large garland in the upraised right hand. The plain halo round his head is an interesting feature and it elevated his status to a cakravartin (Kuṣāṇa).

76.89 The sculpture has close affinity with the previous one except the forehead bears a round circular mark and the torque is replaced by a ‘V’ shaped necklace and the carving is in bold relief (Kuṣāṇa).

76.91 Fragment from the doorjamb representing a headless human figure beating the drum with both hands on one side (Kuṣāṇa).
76.102 Torso of a male deity whose right hand is raised in Abhaya while the left one is held akimbo (Kuṣāṇa).

71.114 Right half of a male head with wavy moustache and wavy hair arranged in tiers. The pig tail (cōfi) is tied in the centre. It is a remarkable feature and appears probably for the first time in Mathurā Art. On the basis of this feature the person may be indentified as a priest of a temple. Śikhā and sūtra (yajnopavīṭa) were essential feature for a Brāhmaṇa. The neck is marked with three incised round lines and the finish is fine (Gupta).

76.115 Human head with locks of hair falling on both shoulders. There was a central tuft on top. The right ear wears a round ear ring (Kundāla) while the left ear denotes a suspended lobe. Unfortunately the face is chipped off otherwise it was a beautiful specimen of the classical art of the Gupta age.

76.313 Fragment showing an armless human bust wearing a headgear, round ear rings and single pearled necklace. It is noteworthy for the Gupta period ornaments. The bust is seen under some pedestal like objects and should be indentified as a devotee carved on the pedestal probably of a Buddha image (Gupta).

77.24 Fragment showing a headless flying celestial (Kuṣāṇa).

77.28 Headless bust of a warrior wearing cross belts and a central buckle representing probably a lion head. The piece is noteworthy as it helps to study on the dress of Scythian noblemen. The dress worn by the figure reminds us of the garments covering the royal portraits excavated at Māt (Kuṣāṇa).

A. Stray Architectural Fragments

78.3 Screen shaped like a railing with a central band representing a charging winged lion. It should belong to early Kuṣāṇa period.

76.204 Water channel with a deep groove (Kuṣāṇa).

76.163 Fragmentary round pillar with a projecting decorative band carved with Kīrtimukha, scroll and beaded strings suspending below. The top also bears a beaded string. The sculpture belongs to the Gupta period.
THE MATHURĀ SCHOOL OF ART

The Mathurā art products represent one of the most important art schools which influenced the other contemporary and later styles of art in the country. More than one features are to be enumerated which establish Mathurā as a distinct and a powerful school of Indian art.

Abundance of Sculptural Finds

The richness of Mathurā Art is suggested by the large number of sculptures unearthed in Mathurā and its neighbourhood during the last two centuries. The first important sculpture from Mathurā, the one representing the so-called ‘Bacchanalian scene and now housed in the India Museum, Calcutta,’ was reported in 1836. Since then a large number of sculptures has come to light. More are being found every other day. The number must have exceeded the figure of ten thousand by now. While Mathurā and Lucknow Museums are the chief repositories of this antiquarian wealth, the art products of Mathurā are seen adorning numerous other museums, art galleries and private collections both at home and abroad. Even after several archaeological expeditions, the region has not been completely explored and excavated, not to speak of being exhausted. Consequently much more cultural wealth is still awaiting the spade of the future archaeologists. The Mathurā Museum is of course the luckiest institution to be able to enrich its galleries speedily off and on, but other museums, in India and abroad, are also expanding their collections. This assessment is corroborated by a report of the Cleveland Museum of Art, U.S.A.²

1. The find was made over to the Asiatic Society but now housed in the Indian Museum, Calcutta. *JASB*, V., 1836, p. 567.

2. ‘In the United States before 1950 there were not more than ten Kuśāna sculptures of major significance, it would have been difficult at that time to write about the Mathurā holdings in American collection and virtually impossible to concentrate on the contents of a single collection. Today the Cleveland Museum collection alone is sufficiently large to provide a comprehensive overview of the diverse types of Mathurā sculpture and even an examination of the stylistic development of the school from the Śunga through the Gupta periods.’ Czyma, Stanisław, *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, March, 1977.
The statement, although unfortunate as we are losing our art treasures so rapidly, does prove the potentiality and antiquarian richness of the Mathurā region. As early as 1906-07, when only a small part of the art treasures of Mathurā had seen the light of the day, Vogel had realised the magnanimity of the Mathurā School of art. He observes, "the vast amount of the sculptural remains discovered at Mathurā would suffice to show the importance of this place in the history of Indian art. . . . the great flourishing period of the Mathurā school undoubtedly coincides with the reign of the great Kuṣāṇa rulers Kaniṣka, Huviṣka and Vāsudeva . . . . that the Mathurā School still existed in the Gupta period is attested by some inscribed Buddha images."3

The plentitude of the products of the Mathurā school, had impressed Gen. Cunningham also and at the end of the last century he remarked, 'Everywhere in the North-West, I found the old Buddhist statues are made of Śikri's sandstone from which it would appear that Mathurā must have been the great manufactory for the supply of Buddhist sculptures in Northern India."4

The places which have yielded the products of Mathurā include Taxila in Pakistan and Begram in Afghanistan in the west, Candraketu Garh (west Bengal) and Mahasthān (Bangla Desh) in the east,5 and Srāvasti and Kasiyā (both in Uttar Pradesh) in the south.6 Such a mass scale production of sculptures at Mathurā, must have been possible only when the art-traditions were well established here and Mathurā had earned high reputation as a great School of art. No place has yielded, such a large number of sculptures, architectural fragments or other detached pieces as Mathurā. This vast variety points to a glorious art-style flourishing here.

**The Stone**

The Mathurā art products are distinctive because of the use of a special variety of a stone, known as red sandstone with varying shades of colour. It often bears white, dull white, creamish or buff spots hence is generally called spotted or mottled red sandstone. This type was available in the neighbouring region, viz. Āgrā, Rūpbās, Śikarī, Karauli etc. The variety of stone, however, differs due to composition of layers as the sandstone is the sedimentary rock shaped by the waste material deposited due to the decay of earlier rocks. This material is composed of mud, clay, sand, silt and gravel transported from the nativity through water action and deposited in the form of layers, one over the other and transformed into the rock.7

3. ASR., 1906-07, p, 142-3.
4. ASR., XI, p. 75.
Thus the variety and quality of sandstone depends on the nature of its deposits and formation of layers, therefore, sometimes we notice big patches of buff colour and occasionally the whole statue is made in buff stone. The spot and line in different colours sometimes are so prominent that the aesthetic appeal and expression are seriously affected.  

The artist in certain cases seems to have been conscious of this drawback and he became selective in picking up the stone, but obviously under pressing demand he was left with no choice but to carve out the figure in the available material. During the Kuśāṇa period, when Mathurā was serving as a great studio of plastic art, the heavy requisition of its products in northern India engaged the artist day and night for shaping the figures of deities and carving the details in architectural components of the monuments, he could not afford to wait for the stone of his choice.

The study of sculpture from the different sites of Mathurā and also the recent discoveries from Govindnagar reveals that the stone mainly used by the sculptor is the spotted red sandstone but stone of other types are also met with. Sometimes the spots are very large and bold but in other cases they are small and minute. There are a few sculptures of which the front is red and the back is buff or vice-versa. In other cases, the statue or an architectural fragment made in buff stone, with red patches, are visible here and there.

The famous statue of king Kaniśka in the Mathurā Museum (No. 12.213; fig. 8) and the headless meditating Buddha image from Govindnagar (No. 76.19; fig. 112) are buff in front and spotted red at the back. The section of such statues shows a straight vertical line dividing the entire block of stone in two different colours pointing to a natural deposit of layers of different colours and texture shaping a large rock. The present author availed himself of the opportunity to survey a few quarries of stone in the adjoining region of Mathurā and Āgrā and also the composition of rocks in different layers of buff and red sandstone, and patches and spots of either variety were seen in abundance.

A careful examination of a few sculptures reveals that efforts were sometimes made to harmonise the colour of the statue through the application of a coat or number of coats of the matching colour. A standing headless Buddha in the Mathura Museum, from Govindagar (No. 76.187), is made in buff sandstone but the traces of red colour in the armpit indicate that the figure was painted red. Probably to impart uniformity of colour and resemblance with other images installed in the monastery. Another sculpture providing this testimony is a torso of the Buddha image acquired from Maināgarh (M.M. No. A.44). In this case the painting aimed at blending the old buff patches into red which is the real colour of the image. Rowland rightly observes, 'This is an exceedingly ugly stone frequently marred by veins of yellow and white so that streaks and spots of these lighter colour disfigure the surface. For this reason there can be little doubt that the

while carved surface was originally covered with a concealing layer of polychromy or gilt.\(^9\)

The Gupta period artist working at Māthurā seems to have been very careful in the selection of the quality of the stone. Most of the sculptures of the period are light pink or red in colour with very few or no spots. He never compromised with the patches or spots that tended to mar the beauty of his product. He has rarely carved in the buff variety, but in such exceptional cases too, he has avoided the spots. The reason behind this factor appears that the artist in this age aimed at quality and not at quantity.

In comparison to the Kuśāṇa period the Gupta sculptures are much smaller in number while the quality by and large is superb. It appears that during the age of strong Gupta rulers of Bhāgavata belief, the demand for the Buddhist and Jaina statues considerably fell and with the convention of the age the artist focussed his attention on producing the ideal from combining physical charm with an inner feeling of beatitude and serene expression. The choice of the stone did of course play a vital role in achieving this aim. It may, however, be pointed out that the typical stone used at Māthurā is spotted red sandstone and the Māthurā school of art is distinguished by this trait.

**Origin of the School**

When actually the Māthurā School of art began, cannot be stated with certainty. It was of course a flourishing and dominating style in the Kuśāṇa period but it did not commence with the advent of the Kuśāṇa rule. It is only for the sake of convenience that sometimes art historians prescribe the time limit of the Māthurā School from c. 1st century A.D. to the Gupta period. But the fact remains that the art traditions had already gained footing at Māthurā at least in the 3rd century B.C.\(^10\)

Before the development of the pantheons of the different sects it was only the images of Yakṣa who was under worship. The uniform pattern of the Yakṣa images found in the region suggests that the production of this variety of images was the national obsession of art, or if we make two divisions of Mauryan art, it can be said that the monolithic columns with shining polish and imposing capitals formed specimens of court art on the one hand while the Yakṣa statues constituted specimens of folk art on the other. The large size images falling in the second category, i.e., the images of folk style have been found at many different places of which the following may be mentioned.\(^11\)


3. An inscribed *Yakṣa* from Patnā also in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.
4. Inscribed *Yakṣa* from Pawāyā (Padmāvatī), now in the Gwalior Museum.
5. *Yakṣi* at Besnagar called Telin.
6. *Yakṣa* recovered from the river bed at Bhilsā.
7. Some *Yakṣa* statues revealed by excavation at Sisupalgarh, Orissa.
8. *Yakṣa* from Western India, now in the National Museum, New Delhi.
9. Trimukha *Yakṣa* from Pājīghāt now in the Bhārat Kalā Bhawan, Vārāṇasī.
10. Fourfold *Yakṣa* from Bhīṭā, now in the State Museum, Lucknow.

Mathurā was an important centre of *Yakṣa* worship in the pre-Christian epoch and consequently several *Yakṣa* statues of Maurya–Śūṅga period have been found in this region, the most notable among which are mentioned below.

1. Colossal statue from village Parkham now in the Mathurā Museum (No. C.3, fig. 1) recording the name of the sculptor as Gomitaka and his teacher Kuṇika.12

2. *Yakṣi* from Naglā Jhīṅā acquired for the Mathurā Museum by the present author (No. 72.5) with an inscription on the pedestal referring to the stone craftsman as Nāka whose teacher is again mentioned as Kuṇika. The wicker seat on which the headless deity is seated, is beautifully decorated.13

3. *Yakṣa* from village Baroda resembling the Parkham image and wearing heavy earrings in the cloven earlobes, a flat torque fastened by a band and a necklace with an interwoven knot ending in two lovely tassels.14

4. A colossal *Yakṣa* statue in village Noh in Bharatpur district. It is in close affinity with the Parkham image.

The discovery of these images proves that there were stone cutters, engravers and sculptors at Mathurā in the Maurya and Śūṅga periods although a polished monolithic column distinctly assignable to the reign of Aśoka is yet wanting from the rich sites of the region. It may, however, be pointed out that the traditions ascribe the construction of the Buddhist monastery to the famous preceptor Upagupta who exercised much influence on Emperor Aśoka. The Chinese pilgrim, Hiuen-Tsang also recorded such recollections in his travel memoirs.15

Sir John Marshall has rightly classified the pre-Kuṣāṇa products of Mathurā art in three groups, i.e. the earliest, assignable to the second century B.C., the second belonging to the first century B.C. and the third, reminiscent of the satrapal interregnum.16 Thus the art traditions were already deep-rooted at Mathurā.
in the pre-Kuṣāṇa period and the best examples of this period are the Yakṣa statues. Chanda describes them as 'the crudest of the early Indian school.' But to us it does not appear to be a correct assessment of these early images which appear intentionally to represent both volume and monumentality suggesting the might and power of these superhuman beings. Their delineation is simple but not without grace and at times the ornaments and wearings are indicative of royal splendour. No doubt the folk element dominates but this cannot be dismissed as crudity.

These Yakṣa statues are really the earliest specimens of the sculptural activities of Mathurā. The fact that the names of two sculptors are also recorded on two statues are particularly significant as the name of their common teacher is also mentioned. As already stated the image from Parkham mentions Gomitaka while the Yakṣi statue from Naglā Jhīṅgā refers to Nāka as the creator. In both these statues the name of their teacher is read as Kuṇika. This clearly suggests that at least three centuries before the Kuṣāṇa rule art was practised in the Mathurā region as a regular discipline and there were master craftsmen and their disciples (antevāsīs) as recorded on the pedestals of the two above cited Yakṣa statues. This indicates that Mathurā was already a centre of art even in the Mauryan-Śunga epoch, although we may not be inclined to term it as a School of art yet in the strict sense. But it had a fairly good background to emerge as an independent style of art. There can be no doubt that it gained momentum before long under the royal patronage of the Kuṣāṇa rulers and transformed itself into a highly potent and dominating school during the Kuṣāṇa period, but qualitatively it reached the pinnacle of glory in the Gupta period, when among others the gifted sculptor Dinna produced sculptors of superb quality.

**Development of the School through the Ages**

If one carefully studies the stylistic development through the centuries the following characteristics become apparent:

In the first phase the sculptures appear to be heavy and voluminous with the front treated better as indicated in the old Yakṣa statue. With the passage of time a tendency of reducing the mass is seen as indicated by the sculptures of the period between the 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D. The third phase is characterised by the products of Śaka-Kuṣāṇa age. These are mundane, sensuous, graceful and full of movement. A good deal of foreign traits are seen amalgamated with the indigenous trends. The fourth phase of development towards sublimation is indicated by the specimens of the Kuṣāṇa-Gupta period which show a tendency of growing repulsion for the foreign elements and a penchant for creating a subtle expression. The fifth phase represents the classical culmination of the Gupta period when sculptural art reached its zenith. The products are rather detached, supermundane, expressive of inner peace, calm, grace, and an indescribable harmony of physical charm and intellectual awakening. As observed by Saraswati, 'The lush sensuality of Mathurā

and the careless abandon of Amarāvatī undergo a distinct transformation in the hands of Gupta artists who seem to have been working for a higher ideal.

A new outlook appears to have emerged to inspire the artists to rise above this mundane world—the world of senses—and bring their productions within the confines of reason and intellect. The period of the Gupta ushers in a heightened intellectual consciousness which permeates all forms of activity.18 Having reached this culmination, the Mathurā School of Art starts descending in the end of the 6th century A.D. The Gupta empire disintegrated and Northern India fell a prey to devastation caused by the barbarous Hūṇas who made a fierce attack and struck a hard blow upon its monumental glory, and the long cherished art conventions suffered an unrepairable loss. Mathurā reeled under the impact and never recovered from the damage. Although some efforts were made to restore and revive the artistic tradition of old, Mathurā failed to recapture its glory and ceased to be a creative school of art from about the 7th century A.D.

Richness of Art Forms

A striking feature of the Mathurā School of art is the rich variety of art forms and traditions and there is an apparent reason for these phenomena. Mathurā has been a meeting place of several cultural currents right from about the 2nd century B.C. to the end of the 3rd century A.D. It is but natural that impact of foreigners and their traditions were absorbed by the art of Mathurā. After all art and literature are the mirrors of the contemporary society and Mathurā was no exception to this maxim. Moreover, when the foreigners occupied a dominating position in the society and the destiny of the country was in their hands, the artist had no choice but to give a befitting place to their likings and conventions. It is not always under a compulsion that the artist adopted a certain trend or was influenced by the ruling force, sometimes he himself derived pleasure in presenting new themes and motifs. Thus we do come across several foreign features in art of Mathurā but this depiction just speaks of the flexibility of the society which was reflected itself through art.

The presence of foreign themes and motifs in Mathurā Art has sometimes been misrepresented by some scholars who thought that there were several Greek artists actually working at Mathurā. This confusion was created by the early discovery of a sculptures of the so-called Silenus or the Bachhanalian scene now in the Calcutta Museum. It was labelled then as a Grecian sculpture carved by a foreigner. Prinsep thought that the sculpture was the outcome of Greek mythology. This encouraged Cunningham, Smith and Grünwedel to conclude that there was a group of Bactrian sculptors at Mathurā and that they were employed by the local followers of Buddhism who were prosperous enough to build monuments and instal images. Smith, however, thought that Mathurā represents a distinct school but it

was highly influenced by the Greek conventions hence he gave the nomenclature to the Mathurā School as Indo-Hellenic.¹⁹

The reasoning behind these arguments was not much convincing and main impediment was the paucity of materials then for a deeper probe. As the number of remains increased, Indologists started interpreting them in the light of Indian mythology and scriptures; consequently when Growse found a sculpture from Pālikherā in 1873-74 resembling the earlier piece discovered by Col. Stacy he challenged the theory of Cunningham and others of the presence of Bactrian sculptors at Mathurā. He did not agree with Stacy and Prinsep to identify the central figure as Silenus and advanced his views in favour of some Indian deity most probably Balarāma who is often shown as a drinker in art and literature. The first verse of Svapnavāsavadattam by Bhāsa introduces him as fond of wine. Rejecting Cunningham’s theory Growse concludes ‘Considering the local charac-
ter of all the other accessories I find it impossible to agree with Gen. Cunnin-
gham in ascribing the work to a foreign artist……..the thoroughly Indian character of the details seems to me as to Rajendra Lal Mitra, a decisive proof that the sculptor was a native of the country, nor do I think it very strange that he should represent one of the less important characters as clothed in a modified Greek costume, since it is an established historical fact that Mathurā was included in the Bactrian Empire, and the Greek style of the dress cannot have been altogether unfamiliar to him.”²⁰

With regard to the identification of the main figure in these so-called Bachha-
aelian Groups the present author does not find in agreement with Growse, who calls them Balarāma as the statue of this deity were already canonised and was represented through snake coils and hoods. The earliest one recovered from Junsuṭi near Mathurā and now in the State Museum Lucknow (No. G. 215; fig. 2) represents him in this fashion. Such cognizances are not to be seen in the Pālikherā and the earlier group of the sculptures. Vogel seems to be justified in identifying them as Kubera—the lord of wealth and the cup probably stood for the treasure vase of the deity.²¹ Supporting his views it may be added that the Yakṣas, who possessed great might and wealth, have been adopted as attendants to the pontiffs in Jainism and Buddhism. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the underlying idea of the sculptor was to depict the lower nature of the Yakṣas by exhibiting them drinking wine and falling senseless. Such representations were meant to amuse the general visitors to a Buddhist monastery as well as to warn them against the vices of wine.

Transformation of Symbols

The other important contribution which the Mathurā School has made is the inception of the new art forms and also continuing and improving upon the earlier trends experimented at Bharhut and Sānchī. In the pre-Christian period, the Mathurā artist depended more on symbols, tree and animal motifs and the message remained covered in such a mystic depiction. But the creative sculptor of Mathurā gave a new dimension to the whole concept and he transformed the symbols into direct representation. Thus he unfolded the mystery of nature and the object now conveyed a more clear meaning.

Emergence of New Deities

The Mathurā School is also known for the evolution of deities of different sects. Once the transformation of symbols into human form set in motion all important religions were encouraged to opt for it. Consequently there was a race for carving the deities in different forms and shapes. The Mathurā artist accomplished the great task of amalgamating the two different traditions which hitherto flourished independently.

There were on the one hand the cults of Yakṣas, tree deities and other folk divinities and on the other the newly developing pantheons of Buddhism, Jainism and Brāhmanism to inspire the artist. The masses, although keen to worship the Buddha, were equally keen to retain the earlier Yakṣa and folk traditions. There are several divinities who appear for the first time at Mathurā and no study of art and iconography can be complete without surveying their earlier representations at Mathurā. Some of these deities of course disappeared in the long span of time but many continue to the present day. Vasudhāra, Śrīdevi, Gajalakṣmi, Mātṛkā, Durgā (particularly Mahiṣamardinī), Kāmadeva, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Kārtikeya etc. have found their first form at the hands of Mathurā artists either in stone or in terracotta.

If the nude and controversial torso from Lohānīpur near Patnā is left aside, the Jaina Tīrthankaras were also shaped for the first time at Mathurā. While the cognizances for identification of different Jinas were fixed up in the post Gupta period, some of the distinguishing features of important ones were already settled several centuries earlier at Mathurā. Thus we have Ādinātha or Rṣabhanātha with hair falling on shoulders, Šuparsvanātha or Parśvanātha with a snake canopy over his head and Neminātha flanked by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma right from the 1st century A.D. The Āyāgapaṭhas assignable between the 1st century B.C. and 1st century A.D record a faithful delineation of transitional phase from symbols to anthropomorphic form. It is from these stone tablets of homage that a student of iconography concludes with a sense of firm conviction that Mathurā made a start of Jaina icons.

The same is the case of Buddhist pantheon and this issue has been discussed in a separate chapter but it may be briefly pointed out here that nowhere else do
we find an earlier representation of the Buddha in human form than in Mathurā. This is one of the noblest contributions which the Mathurā school has made towards the development of Indian Art. Not only the Buddha but several other Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with their variation emerged for the first time at Mathurā.

Eclecticism

Mathurā attracted all sects and religions and their followers built monuments and shrines of their choice. The eclectic atmosphere of Mathurā thus prepared a good background for the evolution of pantheon of various sects almost simultaneously. Besides of Brāhminical, Jaina and Buddhist nature other folk deities such as Nāgas, Nāgis, Kubera, Hārīti, Yākṣas and Yākṣis were also carved in abundance.

Royal Portraits

A novel experiment made in the Mathurā School was the introduction of royal portraits. Life or heroic size statues of Vima Kadphises (fig. 9), Kanishka (fig. 8), Cašṭana and some other unnamed princes were discovered at the mound of Čokri or Čokri near Māt in Mathurā District. This was a portrait gallery of Kušāṇa rulers and has been called as Devakula in the contemporary epigraphs. These kings used Devaputra as their epithet and must have thought of installing images at a particular place or their sons or successors might have done so as token of their regard for their fathers and the complex consisting of the statues of Devaputras was probably titled as the Devakula. The underlying idea seems to exhibit the might and prowess of the rulers. One can mark the fusion of Central Asian and North Indian artistic trends in these statues.22

It may be pointed out here that a section of scholars, particularly, S.K. Saraswati, opines that the Māt portraits are not the representative products of the Mathurā School of Art and the idea is possibly a loan from the west, from the Classical World in ultimate analysis.23 These are strikingly overwhelmed by the alien trends, and the possibility of the presence of some foreign sculptors in the Kuśāṇa period can well be conjectured. But the concept of a portrait gallery is not altogether an imported one. The third canto of Bhāśa’s Partimāṇātāka refers to a Devakula which housed beautiful stone sculptures of the deceased Ikṣvāku rulers.

Feminine Beauty

The Mathurā School is known for presenting the feminine form with great beauty, charm and attraction. In the earlier styles of Bharhut and Sanchī the

22. A comparative study of the Mathurā portraits with similar statues excavated at Surkh Kotal, Afghanistan has been made by C.M. Kieffer in the above quoted Mathurā Number of Marg, pp. 43-48. For further details see J.M. Rosenfield’s Dak, Ch. VI.
womanfolk seem to have played a simple and innocent role. They are there as a part of the society either to perform worship and rituals, to earn charity or are seen as superhuman beings as objects of worship in the form of Yakṣis and Devatās. But the artist of Mathurā served a different purpose through shaping their extra round breasts, heavy hips, graceful postures suggesting movements, attractive looks and inviting gestures. Numerous toilet scenes, more than thirty varieties of coiffure and about fifty kinds of ornaments speak of the gaiety and abandon of the beauties of the Kuṣāṇa period. Apparently the artist of Mathurā aims at revealing the secrets of female beauty through voluptuous forms. This was again a unique experiment which blended the fervour of sensuous emotion with a religious and spiritual flavour. The overtures were, however, much restricted in the Gupta regime.

**Female in Terracotta Sculpture**

It may be made clear that use of the female figure was not a monopoly of the Kuṣāṇa period or an innovation of the artist working under royal patronage in the Kuṣāṇa era. We have seen, the beginnings of this theme right in the Śunga period. A close study of the development of terracotta figures at Mathurā reveals several distinct stages of their evolution. The archaic mother goddesses are crudely modelled with applique ornaments and limbs, disproportionate flat body and a face giving the impression of an animal or a bird. It is not possible to call them as artistic pieces and they look like cult objects, aimed particularly, at promoting fertility. For this very reason these are known as mother goddesses and are assigned to the pre-Mauryan age. The second stage is marked in the Mauryan clay figurines which are provided with a naturalistic human face and the hairdo too is tastefully decorated. The other characteristics of the pre-Mauryan phase continue. Although, as a result there is much improvement in modelling, yet the figures are devoid of any expression, not to speak of being capable or rousing subtle emotions.

The story of the Śunga period terracottas is, however, different and here we notice the womenfolk willing to display their charm and delicacy as it were. Here the women are shown busy in various actions, viz. fastening a coiffure, applying cosmetics, looking into the mirror, playing with a bird or feeding it, holding a fan, removing a thorn etc. It appears that she has become conscious of her physical charm and is keen to exhibit it through her actions, gestures and rhythmic movements, certainly they donot serve a cult or ritualistic cause as may be conjectured in the case or Mauryan and pre-Mauryan mothergoddesses. But this is not enough; she goes a step forward and moves out with a male companion. It is not always necessary that such a companion is her husband only and scholars have tried to-

divide them in two groups—firstly, where the woman stands to the left of the man as is the usual attitude of husband and wife hence the couple is termed as Dampati plaque, and, secondly, the woman is sometimes seen on the right side of the man and such plaques have been called as Mithunas and may be taken to represent lovers. In any case the idea in either case is to depict them in an intimate and endearing attitude.

The love scenes as seen in the terracotta art are also noticed in contemporary architecture. A vertical architectural fragment, probably a doorjamb (Mathurā Museum No. I.11), belonging to about the 2nd century B.C. is of great significance. Here we find different compartments carved with male and female musicians, dancers and actors. In one compartment is depicted a copulating scene. It appears as though the whole theme represents the house of a courtesan—Gaṇikā Prakosṭha Vogel thinks that the relief represents the lower world—Kāmaloka with prominent sensuous elements.26 A railing pillar (Mathurā Museum No. J.2) is carved with a lady in a dancing pose. She wears a large hairdo, a variety of ornaments and her garment-sari-is so transparently thin as to completely expose the body. We are aware of the fact that Kāmadeva and Rati were worshipped in ancient India. The Mathurā Museum possesses a few terracottas and stone sculptures representing Kāmadeva in different forms and these belong to the 2nd century B.C. (No. 39.2894, 34.2552 and 18.1448).

In the light of these examples it can be stated that the depiction of the female body in a sensuous aspect already existed in the indigenous art tradition and the credit for the discovery or rediscovery and exploitation of this phenomenon should not be given altogether to the Kuśāṇas or other foreigners as held by some scholars.27 The Kuśāṇa people and the artists of this age of course gave due, perhaps greater, recognition to this striking theme and the spectators may also have found the Kuśāṇa period quite intoxicating, in consequence, if not distracting.

Decorative Motifs

The decorative motifs as depicted in the early architecture of Mathurā further suggest that the Mathurā School represented an integrated art style. These motifs are common in Brāhmanism, Jainism and Buddhism and are indicative of purity, prosperity and auspiciousness. The Svastika, Maṅgalakalasā, Phalapātra, Śrivatsa, Dharmacakra, Śankhañiahi, Paḍmanidhi, Garuḍa, Kalpalata, Kalpavrksa or Bodhi-vrksa, Triratna, elephant, lion, bull, deer, snake, goose, peacock, fabulous or composite figures and different types of lotuses are some of the motifs which are repeatedly seen in Mathurā art (fig. 38, 39, 40). Some of these convey a deep metaphysical meaning and cannot be dispensed with as just ornamental devices.

26. CAMM., p. 136 and pl. XX.
Artists of the Mathurā School

A very important factor which favoured Mathurā to be an important centre of art is the discovery of the names of several artists in the epigraphs of Mathurā. As stated above the names of three artists are well known from the pedestals of the Mauryan–Sunga Yakṣa images i.e. Kuṇika, Gomitaka and Nāka. Dinna is another popular name recorded in the images of the Gupta period Buddha images. The statue lying in the Mahāparinirvāṇa posture at Kasiā also points to the probability of its being carved by Dinna who belonged to Mathurā. The pedestal of the famous standing image of the Buddha (Mathurā Museum No. 45; fig. 139) also refers to him as Yaśadinnasya i.e. glory of Dinna. But it is not clear whether this name occurs in the capacity of a donor, monk or artist. A similar statue slightly smaller in dimensions excavated at the site of Govindnagar informs that the sculpture was made by Dinna (Mathurā Museum No. 76.25; fig. 142). Needless to say that these products of Dinna rank among the outstanding creations of Indian art.

The scholars once thought that Dinna is the only artist who has been recorded in the sculptures of Mathurā. Vogel remarked, ‘the famous Nirvāṇa, statue of Kasiā, which may be assigned to the 5th century appears to have been the work of Dinna of Mathurā, the only one of these numberless artists, whose name has, though, imperfectly been preserved.’ The Śrāvastī excavations, however, brought to light one pedestal of the Bodhisattva image which clearly records the name of the sculptor as Śailarūpakāra Śivamitra. The object is housed in the State Museum, Lucknow (fig. 87). It is one of the earliest Buddhist images and Daya Ram Sahni is inclined to date it in the pre-Kaniśka period.

H. Lüders is inclined to read the names of at least six more sculptors in the inscriptions discovered at Mathurā. These names are Rama, Dharma, Sanghadeva, Jośisa, Dāsa and Śivarakaśita. About the first name he writes, ‘From the position of the inscription it appears that it cannot possibly refer to the person represented on the obverse, and as the name, which undoubtedly in correct spelling would be Rāma is put down without the ending of the genitive. I feel sure that it is not the name of the donor, but of the sculptor who did the carving.’

The present author is in agreement with Lüders and has discovered that some other sculptures also bear the initials of the artists. Mention may be made of Singha (Mathurā Museum No. 56.4239), Nāyasa (16.1552), Deyahu (J.15), Viṣṇu. and Jayakula. The last name has been read on the pedestal of a small Buddha of the Kuṣāṇa period in a private collection registered in the office of the Registering Officer, Āgrā No. 1322 of Mathurā District. Thus we now have more than a dozen.

28. The last two letters of the epigraph are read as ‘Ghaṭitā Dinnena’ i.e. carved by Dinna.
29. ASR., 1906-07, p. 143.
30. ASR., 1908-09, p. 134.
31. MI., pp. 113 and 239.
of names of the sculptors of the Mathurā school from the Mauryan to the Gupta periods. Many more may be traced if the sculptures and the architectural fragments are carefully checked up. Some sculptures bear single letters which may be taken either as the initial or a monogram of the name of the sculptor. But this requires proper investigation before any firm conclusion is drawn.

Culmination

The Mathurā School reached its zenith in the Gupta period when the foreign trends imported by the Scythians and Kuşānas were either completely rejected or Indianised. The figure became slim and slender and the expression reflected bliss and serenity. The youthful body is now full of energy and mobility. There is an overall improvement in carving which reflect grace, charm and delicacy. The Gupta sculptures represent a unique combination of beauty and spirit. This was a noble experiment made by the school of Mathurā and was followed by other contemporaneous and subsequent art styles. The Mathurā School represents an integrated art dictum and the varieties of art forms of the Kuşāna period were fused into one main style. It may also be stated that even the Sārnāth school of sculpture was inspired by Mathurā School and it developed on the experiments made by the mastercraftsmen of Mathurā.

It may, however, be pointed out that the process of manufacture of Mathurā sculptures in the Gupta period slowed down considerably, probably due to the fact that royal patronage was not available now. During the Kuşāna hegemony Mathurā was the most important headquarter in the eastern expanse of the empire but the Gupta kings ruled this region directly from Pāţaliputra and Mathurā in consequence lost its political primacy or importance. But it continued to enjoy the favour of the religious teachers and their wealthy devout followers. Nevertheless it appears that after the fall of the Kuşānas many artisans had to leave the place to seek shelter elsewhere, though a few of them still stayed and continued to display the splendour of their chisel. The artists were no more in a hurry to meet any pressure of demand, which had shrunk, and they were able to concentrate upon the quality of the products. The Mathurā School took a distinct turn now. The intellectual and political resurgence which ousted the foreign authority of the Kuşānas and gave way to the rule of the Guptas, after an upheaval lasting a century, is amply reflected in the Gupta art of Mathurā.
SECTION III

Buddhist Art

CHAPTER VII: BUDDHA IN ART OF MATHURĀ
CHAPTER VIII: CHRONOLOGY OF BUDDHIST ICONS
CHAPTER IX: MATHURĀ AND OTHER SCHOOLS OF ART
BUDDHA IN THE ART OF MATHURĀ

The figure of the Buddha has fascinated throughout centuries artists and art critics, not only in India but all over the world. Therefore understandably the problem of fixing the the place and date of the origin of the practice of producing images of the Buddha has engaged the attention of many oriental and occidental scholars. They are divided into two camps: one propounding the occidental theory is led by Fouche, Smith, Grünwedel etc. and other advocating for the Indian origin include Iwasaki Masunvi, Goloubew, Coomaraswamy, Lohuizen, V.S. Agrawala and others.¹ When we study the Buddhist art at Mathurā it is not possible to ignore this controversy as the School of Mathurā has been a great manufactory of Buddhist figures from the very beginning. The problem can be scrutinised from three different angles, put in the form of questions below:

A. When did the Buddha image begin?
B. How did it begin?
C. Where did it begin?

A. When was the Buddha Image introduced?

So far we have not come across any contemporary image of the Buddha. But there are some later literary traditions which appear to indicate that the figure was already evolved in his time. The Divyāvadāna states that on the request of King Bimbisāra the Buddha agreed to allow his shadow to fall upon a cloth in order to facilitate the painting of his figure on it. He also desired to fill the outline with colour and write some religious sentences. Here we find a detailed description of

¹ Sharma, R.C., “Pre Kaniṣka Buddhist Iconography at Mathurā,” Archaeological Congress and Seminar Papers, Nagpur, 1972, p. 289.
preparation of a banner painting. Another text, namely, *Korala Bimba Varnava* records that a gilded sandalwood image of the Master was made with his permission. Probably placed in a monastery, it aimed at consoling those visitors who came from a far distance and felt disappointed when the Buddha happened to be out.

The Sri Lankan tradition, as recorded in the *Mahāvamsa*, reveals that a golden statue of the Buddha in the attitude of Enlightenment was kept in the relic chamber of Ravanavati Dagoba of King Duthagamani in the middle of the second century B.C. Besides this image, which was painted in suitable colours and adorned with precious stones, a few statues of other deities were also kept in the relic chamber.

Such later literary traditions about the making of the image of the Buddha during his own time are not corroborated by archaeology. Bharhut and Sānchi belonging to 2nd-1st century B.C. do not display a single Buddhist icon in human form. Instead, his presence has been indicated through various symbols sometimes with imagination or elaboration of well known events of his life, the conception was indicated by Māyādevi’s dream in which a white elephant is seen entering her womb. The nativity is marked by a lotus flower; a riderless horse stands to show the event of Great Departure (*Mahābhishnikramaṇa*), and the tree or footprints

2. The story is narrated in the 37th *Avadāna* i.e., *Rudrayonayavadānam* in the *Divyavadānam* edited by Dr. P.L. Vaidya, 1959, p. 466. As it is of great significance it would be worthwhile to quote the relevant passage.


under the tree recall the Enlightenment which he obtained while sitting under the Bodhi tree at Bodhgaya. Similarly the First Sermon at Sarnath (dharma-cakra-pravartana) is to be recognised by a wheel on the pillar, and, the last event, i.e. the Great Decease (mahāparinirvāṇa), is suggested by a stūpa.

The early Caitya halls executed in the pre-Christian centuries, i.e. Bhāja, Konḍāne, Pītalkhora, Ajantā cave (Nos. 9 and 10), Bedsā, Nāsik, Kārle etc. do not possess in relief the events of the life of the Buddha. The Bodhgaya railing, slightly later in date, i.e. 50 B.C., also has the aniconic representation of the Master. Early Amaravati architecture follows the same principle. Even in Śrī Lankā where we have the Mahāvamsa tradition of an early golden statue of the Buddha, not a single early figure is met with at any of the sites including the stūpas of Thūpārāma and Ruwanweli at Anurādhāpuram.

The early art of Mathurā has also been reluctant in exhibiting the Buddha in human form. He has been represented through various symbols, viz. Bodhi tree, cakra and stūpa. These are carved with much respect and reverence and their apparently superior position in relation to other objects in the panels of sculptures displaying them leaves no doubt that the presence of the Master has been conveyed through them.

The absence of the Buddha's representation in human form needs some explanation. It may be attributed either to the incapability of the sculptor or to some prohibition in this regard. About the first it may be pointed out that the human portraiture was not a problem for the Indian craftsmen. They were faithfully carving the Yakṣas, devotees, attendants, kings, celestials, and even some deities as Brahmā, Indra and others. The scenes from the jātaka tales were tastefully carved on stone and the Buddha was shown in human form also but only in his previous births. Thus the only explanation of the absence of the Buddha figure in these early art works appears to be canonical interdiction. Depiction of the Buddha as an ordinary man after his Enlightenment and salvation was perhaps considered to be contrary to the Buddhist canons.

Statements attributed to the Buddha in the early Theravādin literature seem to have disfavoured any attempt to make his image. He declared that the cause of the bondage of his body had extinguished and the people and gods could see it (the body) only till it existed. Afterwards nobody could see him in that form. The Buddhists, therefore, could have thought that an effort to represent him in human form would be a violation of the wishes of the Master. This inhibition haunted the orthodox Buddhists for several centuries after the death of the Buddha. They obviously believed that after the state of complete nirvāṇa, there was no question of reviving his body form.

6. Ibid., page 15.
8. Dīghanikāya, Brahmajālasutta 2.3.23.
In the light of the above survey we can conclude that the early art styles deliberately did not represent the Buddha. Mathurā too followed the Theravādins’ injunction against making an image of the Buddha and remained content with the aniconic representation of the Master.

B

How Did the Buddha Figure Evolve?

A large number of images of the Buddha dated or datable to the Kuśāna age proves that the Mathurā artists came out of the inhibition some-times in or before the Kuśāna period. But we have to determine the reason and date for the introduction of the image of the Buddha in Mathurā.

There were three main religious sects in the pre-Christian period, i.e. Brāhmaṇism, Jainism and Buddhism. The positive evidence of the prevalence of icons in the Vedic period is doubtful and generally the scholars do not favour any theory advocating the image worship in the Vedic age. When asked about the image making in the Vedic period, Max Müller replied, “The religion of the Vedas knows no idols. The worship of idols in India is a secondary formation.” Wilson held the same view when he observed that, “The worship of the Vedas is for the most part domestic worship, consisting of prayers and oblations offered in their own houses, not in temples. . . . . . In a word, the religion of the Vedas was not idolatory.” Macdonell remarked that no mention of either images or temples is found in the Rgveda. Bloomfield stated, “. . . . As a matter of fact there is no record of Vedic icons or Vedic temples. In all these senses there is no Vedic pantheon.”

Some scholars have, however, criticised these views. Bollenslen has tried to prove the existence of images from some hymns of the second Mandala of the Rgveda. He refers to a painted image of Rudra and of Varuna with a golden coat of mail, Venkatesvarā after a long controversy with Macdonell further supported his view. But these depositions have been criticised by J.N. Banerjea. He has noted that scholars like Bollenslen and Venkatesvarā mainly utilise the anthropomorphic descriptions of the Vedic divinities as contained in the hymns of the Rgveda in support of their theory. But what is the extent of this anthropomorphism Banerjea supports Keith who thinks, “that the Vedic pantheon has none of the clear cut figures of the Greek.” Opposing the view of Bollenslen about the existence of images in the Vedic period, Banerjea opine that there is not the least justification for assuming that these were based on actual concrete figures.

10. Wilson, H. H., Preface to Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Pt. II.
12. Religion of the Veda, p. 89.
16. DHI., p. 61.
The attention of scholars who do not see any references to icons in the Rgveda may be drawn to the verse which may be translated as follows:

'O Indra armed with strong stone we do not sell you even at a high price. Not even for a thousand or ten thousand or even for innumerable riches (cows).'

Another passage of the fourth maṇḍala may also be quoted to remove further doubts. Kaegi gives the following translation of the passage: 'who offers me ten cows for this Indra of mine. When he has overcome the enemy he will return him to me.' Explaining it Kaegi opines that, 'this is hardly conceivable without an image or symbols of the gods. I do not personally think that such type of sale, purchase, exchange or return is possible without having some object in hand.'

The Taittirīya Samhitā of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda refers to the 'temple of the gods.' The use of the word 'Devala' meaning one who earns by dealing with images, indicates that there was a proper installation of Vedic deities and a priest used to look after them and thus got his livelihood. The following reference of the Rgveda which states, 'Oh Maruts accept this your portion offered as temple' also deserves attention.

The Taittirīya Aranyaka mentions two sculptors namely Tvaṣṭā and Viśvakarmā and images of the sun. 'Let Viśvakarmā provide you with sun images. Let Tvaṣṭā provide you with images.' The third artist is Kaśyapa who is said to have represented seven suns in his art. The use of word 'Devamalimlac' (robber of the gods) in the Pañcavinīśa Brāhmaṇa clearly points to the fact that the people were concerned about the theft of images.

It appears from the above discussion that the use of icons was not altogether unknown in the Vedic period. The Sūtra and Smṛti literature occasionally refers to the image worship. The Epics also bear testimony to image making. The golden statuette of Sītā at the time of the coronation of Rāma, and the iron image of Bhīma which was placed before Dhrūvarāstra at the end of the Bhārata war are cases in point; the chapter on Town Planning in the Arthasastra of Kautilya prescribes that the abodes of some deities should be situated in the centre of a city. The word Prāśāda occurs for a shrine or temple and Patañjali's Mahābhāṣya which refers to one in which were the images of Dhanapati (Kubera), Rāma (Balarāma).

17. Rgveda IV. 24.10.
18. Ibid., Note 79a
19. Macdonall and Keith, Vedic Index.
22. Saḍḍhimaṇḍaḥ, V.10.34, p. 80.
23. Ibid., V.10.13.
27. Mahābhārata, Strīparva 12.17.
28. Arthasastra 2.4.
and Keśava.\textsuperscript{29} He further points to the exhibition of statues of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha while interpreting a Sūtra of Āśṭādhīyā.\textsuperscript{30}

Thus we have ample evidence to prove that image worship was known in India from a very early period and gradually it gained popularity. The extent of which it was common or popular is not known. The practice of purchasing images for worship could have been known in eastern India at the time of emergence to Buddhism and Jainism. Installation of images of living great men was well known in Jainism and some of the early Jaina works like the Āvaśyakacūrṇi, Niśithacūrṇi and the Vasudevahindī mention the tradition of the Jivantasvāmī at Vidiśā and Vitabhayapāṭṭana. It is said that a sandalwood image of Mahāvīra was got prepared\textsuperscript{31} one year before the renunciation of the world by him. He did not feel any attraction towards the worldly pleasures and derived satisfaction from meditating for hours together in the palace. His father realised that it was impossible to change the course of destiny, hence a wooden portrait of him was prepared before the prince had left for the woods to practise austerity. As the image represented a living person or saint, it was known as Jivantasvāmin. The sculpture remained for some time with Udyāna of Sindhu Sauvīra and was later taken away by king Prādyota of Ujjain, who got a similar wooden statue prepared for installation at Vitabhayapāṭṭana. It is believed to have been buried in a sandstorm causing great calamity to the town. Later Kumārapāla had it unearthed and brought it to Anahilavadapaṭṭana.\textsuperscript{32} That the Jainas began to make representations of Jina during or, at least not very long after, the period of Mahāvīra is suggested by the evidence of the Hāthigumpha inscription of Khāravela. While the epigraph is assigned to the 2nd century B.C. it records the incident of reinstalling a Jina image which had been taken away by the king of Magadha, a couple of centuries earlier.\textsuperscript{33}

Thus Brāhmanical cults could have been familiar with image worship before the birth of Buddhism and the Jainas could have accepted the practice by the 4th century B.C. The incidence of the cult of Bhakti perhaps gave rise to a demand for images of the deities and popularised them in early India. Service, devotion, loyalty and attachment to the deity were the characteristics of the Bhakti movement resulting in the making of images and building of temples for adorable great beings and deities. It was in this spirit that Heliodoros installed a Gauḍa capital as a token of his respect for Vasudeva at Vidiśā in early 2nd century B.C. He calls himself as Bhāgavata and addresses his deity as Bhagvān Vāsudeva. The ancient site of Mādhyamikā (modern Nāgarī near Chittor in Rājasthān) has revealed an inscription recording the existence of a Nārayaṇa Viṣṇu which should belong to the same period, although Coomaraswamy is inclined to date it in the third or even fourth

\textsuperscript{29} Mahābhāṣya II. 2.34.
\textsuperscript{30} V. 3.99
\textsuperscript{32} Shah, U.P., Studies in Jaina Art, p. 4.
\textsuperscript{33} AIU., 1951, p. 214.
century B.C. The inscription on a large stone slab acquired from the village Morā in Mathurā District (Mathurā Museum No. Q. 1) records that the images of five Vṛṣṇi heroes (probably Balarāma, Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna, Aniruddha and Śamba) were dedicated in the time of Soḍāśa, i.e. 1st century B.C. Mention has already been made of a Balarāma image of a still earlier date from the village Junsūti now in the Lucknow Museum (G. 215, fig. 2).

The idea of complete devotion to one’s adorable deity or Master which influenced the growth of the Bhakti movement and secatrian cults was not perhaps confined to the Brāhmanical cults only. No doubt the Gītā frequently mentions Bhakta and Bhakti and incorporates an independent chapter on this aspect. We should also remember that an old Buddhist text like the Majjhima Nikāya declares that the Master had said that “even those who have not yet entered the Path are sure of heaven if they have love and faith toward me.” Through his devotion and loyalty the devotee held the deity in high esteem and called him Bhagavān and those who worshipped Bhagavata or Bhagavān were known as Bhagavatas. So we have the usage of Śiva Bhāgavatas and Viṣṇu Bhāgavatas in the pre-Christian centuries. The same epithet was applied to the Buddha who has been called as Bhagavān in Bharhut epigraphs and also in the inscriptions on a base excavated at Piprāwā (where the relics of the Buddha were deposited in a stūpa). All these facts corroborate that the development of devotion only was responsible for image worship and this was the natural urge among the people. The idea of personal devotion to adorable beings became common to all religious beliefs and made image worship popular among the followers of all early Indian religions.

The Buddha image may thus be considered a result of the movements and strong urge among the lay worshippers who wanted to have a direct vision of their Master before them. Their demand for the representation of the Master in human form, which they could freely worship and adore, became too strong an urge for earlier inhibition against image worship to resist it any further.

C.

Where was the Buddha Image Evolved

On the question of exactly where, when and by whom the first image of the Buddha was produced, scholars are divided into two camps, one favouring the Gandhāra School and the other supporting the Mathurā school as responsible for introducing the icon of the Buddha in art.

34. The Composition of which is generally assigned to the 4th-5th century B.C.
35. Gītā. Chapter XIII.
37. Ibid.
The Theory of Gandhāra Origin:—The main arguments in favour of the Gandhāra origin of the Buddha image are as under:

(i) The Gandhāra style is known to have followed or imitated mainly the Hellenistic art which had a very long tradition of plastic art and its classical age was in the 5th-4th centuries B.C. It was, therefore, easier for the Gandhāra sculptor than the Mathurā artist to shape the figure of the Buddha.

(ii) India had developed her contacts with foreign countries several centuries before Christ and it was but natural that the region of Gandhāra which was a meeting ground of several alien cultural currents was much influenced by the Greek art which was much superior in quality to any other art styles of the times.

(iii) There is no positive evidence to prove the existence of the Buddha images in India before the inception of the Gandhāra School.

(iv) Foreign sculptors were accustomed to carving the Apollo figures and early Gandhāra Buddha sculptures are in close affinity with Greek Apollo.

(v) The evidence of coins goes in favour of the theory of the origin of the Buddha image in the Gandhāra region. The crosslegged seated figure on a class of coins of Maues (c. 100 B.C.) is considered as the earliest depiction of the Buddha. A series of coins of Kadāpha or Kadphises (before Kaniṣka) also display a seated figure, taken to be that of the Buddha. The coins of Kaniṣka show the Buddha standing on the reverse side with legend: ‘Boddo’. The reliquary discovered at Shahjil-ki-dheri of Kaniṣka’s time also bears a figure of the Buddha.

(vi) The reliquary of Bimarān represents the earliest representation of the Buddha and it belongs to the pre-Kaniṣka’s era.

Let us now examine these points one by one:

(i) No doubt the Gandhāra School has all the Hellenistic trends of delineating anatomical details in the icons of the Buddha but when this school emerged in the 1st century B.C.-A.D., the Hellenistic art had already exterminated and it had tended to become Greco-Roman in character. The Gandhāra School consequently indicates Greco-Roman as well as Parthian and Indian characteristics. The imitation of Hellenistic or Roman trends, however, does not necessarily support the view that the Buddha figure was carved for the first time in Gandhāra.

(ii) This has been discussed under (i) above. The contacts with the foreign countries in the pre-Christian era are well known but this is not a cogent argument for the emergence of the Buddha figures in the pre-Christian epoch in the Gandhāra region. We know of the visit of the Greek ambassador Megesthenes to the court of Chandragupta Maurya and of Greek Heliodorus to
the court of Kṣiputra Bhāgabhadra. Heliodoros was an inhabitant of Taxila, a part of the Gandhāra. But we do not have a single image of the Buddha either in the Gandhāra country or at Mathurā belonging to the Mauryan or the Śunga period.

(iii) There is absolutely no evidence to justify the existence of a Gandhāra Buddha image before its inception in a more indigenous school. The date of the introduction of the Buddha image in Mathurā in this context will be discussed later.

(iv) It is conceded that Gandhāra Buddha inherits the influence of Apollo. But this argument cannot prove that the first image of the Buddha was manufactured by the Gandhāra School.

(v) As regards the evidence of coins the identification of the cross-legged seated figure on the coins of Mauces as Buddha by Longworth Dames has been challenged by other scholars. Whitehead describes him as a king seated on a raised cushion and Smith mentions him as a deity or a king. Gardner thinks that it is the figure of a king who is seated on a cushion and hold a sword on his knees. Coomaraswamy also does not favour the identification of the figure as Buddha and explains that the two hands are folded in the lap, but there is a horizontal bar extended to the right which may be a sword or sceptre or possibly the back edge of a throne or seat. Bachhofer has also rejected the possibility of a Buddha figure on the coins of Mauces.

The coin of Kadphises has been cited with greater probability for the identification of the Buddha. Smith considered it as a remarkable discovery in numismatics as it proved the introduction of the Buddha image in the time of Kadphises, i.e. before Kaniśka. Whitehead has agreed with this identification while describing two such coins in his catalogue. Marshall has also accepted this figure as seated Buddha.

Coomaraswamy, however, contradicts this identification and comments, "In the case of Kañāpha (fig. 8), of which there are two closely related varieties, the

38. JRAS., 1914, p. 793.
42. Ibid., p. 16, fig. 6.
43. Bachhofer, L., "On Greek and Śakas in India", JAOS., Vol. 61, 1941.
44. "Numismatic Notes and Novelties", Part II, JASB., 1897.
45. PMC Cat., op. cit., pp. 181-82.
right hand is raised, holding some hammer-like object, perhaps a sceptre, the left hand rests on the thigh, and the elbow is extended, which the breadth of the shoulders and slenderness of the waist are conspicuous. It seems to me that these personages represent a king, and not a Buddha. The Kāḍapha type, however, apart from the object held in the hand, is exactly like that of the early Mathurā Buddhas (fig. 34-39) and of figures of kings or perhaps Bodhisattvas, and of Buddha at Amarāvati. ... 47

Coomaraswamy seems to be justified in casting doubt with regard to the identification of the Buddha figure on the coins of Kāḍapha. The object on his right shoulder looks like a hammer or a club and this does not have any association with the Buddha. The posture of sitting is unusually stiff and an over all appearance of the figure suggests that it should be a king. The cross-legged posture of sitting should not necessarily be explained in favour of the Buddha as we have the figure of the king sitting cross-legged on the coins of Azes. 48 In this case too we notice a raised cushion on which the king sits. We should, therefore, not place much reliance on the coins of Kāḍapha for the Buddha figure. Even if we accept it for a while, it does not become the earliest evidence of the Buddha image and as would be pointed out later, we have still earlier evidence for the beginning of the Buddha figure.

Coomaraswamy thinks that early Ujjain coins represent the seated figure of the Buddha on a lotus seat and the Bodhi tree is seen to his right. The date is not certain but such coins should belong to the 1st century A.D. 49 The coins of Kaniśka undoubtedly bear the Buddha figure and we find two varieties. One shows him seated cross-legged with both arms held akimbo. 50 In the other type he stands with the right hand raised in the preaching or protection pose and supports the hem of the drapery with his left hand. 51

Thus the survey of the numismatic evidence reveals that the coins of Mauës and Kadpha or Kadphises I donot represent the Buddha figure. The early Ujjain coins depict a seated Buddha type person. But there is no doubt about the coins of Kaniśka as not only we have the figure of the Buddha but the legend also records this fact. This may further be pointed out that the standing Buddha figure on the coins of Kaniśka betray a sufficiently developed stage.

(vi) The reliquary at Bimarān (Gandhāra region) is forwarded as a very strong argument in favour of the Gandhāra origin of the Buddha image. The decorated

47. *BMC. Cat., op. cit.*, p. 16.
49. *BMC., op. cit.*, p. 16 and Fig. 9.
50. *Ibid.,* fig. 10 aud *PMC., Cat. op. cit.*, p. 193, pl. XVIII, No. 113.
51. *Ibid.,* Fig. 11 and 12, *PMC. Cat. op. cit.*, pl. XX No. VII.
piece shows three ogee arches. In the central one is seen the standing figure of the Buddha with his right hand raised in the protection (abhaya) pose and touching the chest. The left arm supporting the drapery rests on the waist. He wears ubhayānsīka saṅghāṭī (upper garment covering both shoulders). The usnīṣa over the head is prominent and a pair of moustaches is also traceable. The head is of a bearded man with hands in adoration and he is to be identified as Brahmā. The arch on the other side is occupied by another male, Indra, with folded hands wearing a crown or a turban. The triangular space between the two arches above shows two eagles hovering in the air. The pillars of arches bear an oblong cut. A few coins of Azes II were found with the casket and scholars have dated it in the Parthian reign, i.e. in about 50 B.C. If so, this has to be considered as the earliest known representation of the Buddha.

The dating of the reliquary has been challenged on various grounds. Lohuizen-de-Lewuw\textsuperscript{52} thinks that the little oblong cut on the pilasters is a late motif and the oldest Gandhāran specimens do not display this shape. The design of row of ogees resembles the late architecture of about 3rd century A.D. as seen on the stūpa of Shevaki at Kābul. However, the shape of the pilasters also suggests a later date as in the earlier phase we have the round Corinthian pilasters. All these features do not support an early dating of the Bimarān reliquary. As known from the numismatic evidence the mound of Sirkap near Taxilā was in habitation before Kaniska only, for the coins upto the period of Wema Kaḍphises have been found from the site. Lohuizen rightly interrogates that if the Bimarān reliquary is to be dated from about 50 B.C. then why do we not get any Buddha figure till Kujula Kaḍphises i.e. till the middle of the 1st century A.D.?\textsuperscript{53} Why is the site of Sirkap silent over the issue?

The other arguments favouring the early dating of this reliquary are the discovery of four copper coins of Azes with it, fine workmanship and Kharoṣṭhī epigraph incised on the steatite vase which contained this casket. Regarding the first point it may be explained that the date of the casket may not necessarily be the same as that of the coins. The deposit of coins with the casket was considered to be an auspicious act and the possibility of the coins of Azes being current at the time of the deposit cannot be ruled out. Sometimes the old coins remain current for centuries, as at Mathurā itself the Kuśāna coins were in circulation till the beginning of the 20th century. We should, therefore, be cautious while dating an object on the basis of a coin deposit.

Regarding the second point of fine workmanship it may be added that the tendency of assigning an earlier date to the better looking piece does not hold good in all cases. It is a debatable point and several aspects are to be considered before:

\textsuperscript{52} SP., pp. 84-85.
\textsuperscript{53} Ibid., p. 87.
assigning a definite date to an object. Hence this argument should not be stressed when there is a dispute.\textsuperscript{54}

The third argument concerns the Kharoṣṭhī inscription on the steatite vase of the casket. But this also does not help us in dating it early. While Konow was inclined to put it, to the latter part of the 1st century B.C., Thomas favoured a date between 50 A.D. and 78 A.D. on palaeographic grounds. The difference of about a century indicates that this is not at all a forceful plea in favour of early date of the reliquary. Thus whatever has been discussed above leads us to the conclusion that the Bimarān casket must belong to the later half of the 1st century A.D.\textsuperscript{54a} A recently discovered Kharoṣṭhī inscription of the time of Kujula Kadphises refers to a painted figure of the Buddha in the Gandhāra region.\textsuperscript{55} This new evidence is a welcome addition but does not predate Gandhāra origin to Mathurā. It only suggests that the Buddha figures were shaped in the Gandhāra region even before Kaniṣṭha.

The theory of the Gandhāra origin of the Buddha image has been rejected by Coomaraswamy also.\textsuperscript{56}

\textit{Mathurā Origin of the Buddha Image}

Let us now evaluate the case of the origin of the Buddha image at Mathurā.

The necessity of carving a Buddha image, in view of the religious background in the pre-Christian era, goes in favour of Mathurā. The issue has been discussed in this chapter and this can conclusively be put up again that the Orthodox followers and teachers of Buddhism were not in favour of showing the Buddha in human form as he had already cut off the bondage of the cycle of birth and rebirth. But the issue was reviewed when other sects adopted the media of image worship for popularising their faith. This rivalry forced Buddhism also to follow the same line of action. The move was resisted by the followers of the old school but the urge among lay worshippers greatly favoured this new concept and the larger section of the Buddhist church had to adjust with it. Thus the emergence of the Buddha image was the result of a forceful \textit{Bhakti} movement, the chief centre of which was Mathurā. There was no such urge or urgency in the Gandhāra region.

The association of Buddhism with Mathurā has been discussed in detail in the third chapter and this also favours Mathurā as the actual venue for the commencement of the Buddha figure. Buddhism was introduced into the Gandhāra region at a much later date. The early art traditions also decide the case in favour

\textsuperscript{54}. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 93.
\textsuperscript{54a}. \textit{Ibid.}, p. 94.
\textsuperscript{55}. The information was furnished by Prof. B.N. Mukherjee with the reference of the Bulletin of the Asiatic Society, January 1981.
\textsuperscript{56}. \textit{BMC. Cat.}, p. 33.
of Mathurā. As testified by the Yakṣa statues we have clear evidence of manufacturing of images at Mathurā right from the Mauryan period. The colossal Yakṣa from Parkham and a Yakṣi from Naglā Jhīṅga\textsuperscript{57} reveal that there were teachers and their pupils who practised the art of carving in stone. The process grew in momentary in the 2nd-1st centuries B.C. as gathered by numerous architectural remains and images of Yakṣas, Nāgas, Balarāma etc.

But the beginning of art in Mathurā should not be traced to the Mauryan and Šunga periods. We have here pre-Mauryan and archaic terracotta figurines which suggest that the art activity was in a flourishing state in some form or the other several centuries before Christ and the artisans could shape any from whether indigenous or alien. We find several foreign faces in the terracottas found in the Mathurā region. All these belong to the Šunga period. So the artists were ready to produce the Buddha figure also but canonical interdiction always came in the way. Indian art which was generally a vehicle of religion and spiritualism could not ignore or hurt the religious sentiments.

One of the chief characteristics of the Mathurā School of art is that it took the initiative to transform symbols into human form. Here we notice an entire process of evolution, i.e., representation of symbols, and emergence of tiny human figures substituting the symbol which can be called a stage of transition, as aniconism to continue to dominate. The third stage of evolution is marked by the human figures dominating aniconic presentation, while the culmination is reached in the independent images where the symbols have little or no role to play. This point will be taken up again at the appropriate place. What we intend to stress is that the Mathurā School has shown different stages of the evolution of the Buddha figure and these stages speak of the gradual development and change in the mental outlook of the society and the chain of events which resulted in the outcome of the Buddha image. The Mathurā studio of art was highly sensitive to register all vibrations with which the contemporary religious environment of the pre-Christian and post, Christian centuries was charged.

As indicated above, archaeological discoveries do not suggest a definite date for a Buddha image produced in Gandhāra except a recently discovered Kharoṣṭhī epigraph of the time of Kujula as referred to above. The coins of Kaniṣṭha of course represent a real Buddha portrait along with a caption. The numismatic evidence is supported by the sculptural finds also as we have the dated Buddha/Bodhisattva images from the beginning of the reign of Kaniṣṭha. Although carved in the Mathurā style these were installed at distant places. One found at Kauśāmbī and now displayed in the Allahabad Museum (fig. 93) belongs to the 2nd regnal year of the Emperor, the other in the Sārnāth Museum is dated in the 3rd year (fig. 94). Assuming the generally accepted year of the accession of Kaniṣṭha as

\textsuperscript{57} Mathurā Museum No. C. 1 and 72.5.
\textsuperscript{58} Goswami, K.G., Kuśāṅ—Inscription of Kaniṣṭha : The year 2, \textit{El.}, XXIV., 1938, pp. 210-12.
A.D., these two sculptures were set up in A.D., 80 and 81 respectively. Another Buddha image (Bodhisattva as described in the inscription) supposed to belong to an early date is the famous seated image from Kaṭāra site (fig. 79). Lohuizen is inclined to give it an earlier date.\(^{59}\)

These three sculptures, particularly the last one, are finely executed and represent a fairly developed stage of Buddhist art and iconography when the artist already had some set formula before him. Even the coin of Kaniśka represents the Buddha in an elegant pose. Such beautiful depictions in coins and sculptures almost reaching perfection could not have evolved suddenly under the instructions of a patron or a king, but would presuppose a well entrenched tradition with an earlier inception. The sculptors who were responsible for these statues would be expected to possess a long experience of shaping the Buddha figure. They just could not produce them merely on the king’s command, without prior experience.

Now the problem before us is to find out those specimens which served as models or prototypes for meeting the demand of the Buddha images in the reign of Kaniśka. Luckily we have a few sculptures which should be placed in the pre-Kuśāna period and which must have served as models for the fine statues of Kaniśka’s time. It has already been discussed that the earliest sculptures dated in the beginning of his era, i.e., belonging to the reign of Kaniśka are seen both in the standing and seated postures and we have to trace the earlier specimens in both these attitudes.

**Yakṣa and Buddha**

It has now been established beyond doubt that there existed an early tradition (in the Maurya-Śunga age) of making Yakṣa statues throughout the country and the Mathurā region contributed significantly to it.\(^{59}\) A close examination of the Yakṣas and early Buddha—Bodhisattvas will reveal that there is a good deal of resemblance between the two. The following features deserve special mention:

(i) The sculptures, though corpulent, are conspicuous for their volume and heaviness.

(ii) These are carved in the round and the appearance is frontal.

(iii) The left hand resting on the waist holds the hem of the garment.

(iv) The right hand is folded and raised up in the gesture of imparting abhaya (attitude of protection) upto the shoulder. Although the hands of many Yakṣa statues are now broken but the scars clearly indicate that the right hand was in abhaya. This is corroborated by a small Yakṣa figure in the Mathurā Museum (18.1506).\(^{60}\) Sometimes the Yakṣas are shown

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\(^{59}\) SP., p. 150.

\(^{60}\) BMA., No. V-VI, June-December, 1970 plate facing page 18 lower fig.
holding a caurī in right hand, a characteristic to be discussed in detail later.

(v) Some space is left between the two legs and has been filled with the folds of drapery.

(vi) A decorated girdle or a plain waist band is seen round the waist.

(vii) Two fillets hang down from the knot of the girdle and fall on the right thigh.

(viii) The under-garment is fastened with the girdle and shows many pleats between the two legs.

(ix) The upper garment is worn diagonally across the chest and covers the left shoulder.

On these common grounds Coomaraswamy rightly reached the conclusion that the Buddha figure was evolved from the Yakṣa images. Sometimes the resemblance is so striking that it is not possible to distinguish it in the absence of an inscription or label. The confusion was prevalent even in early times. According to the Nidāna Kathā, Sujātā could not distinguish between the Bodhisattva and a jungle deity. This sometimes happens even today and a student of art easily gets confused between an early Bodhisattva and a Yakṣa. The reason for this close resemblance was that the Yakṣas were supposed to possess superhuman power and great men were sometimes addressed as Yakṣa. In the Majjhima Nikāya the Buddha himself has been called as Yakṣa.

Standing Figures

Our aim in emphasising this similarity is to present the fact that for carving the standing Buddha-Bodhisattva images the sculptor had had an ideal model of Yakṣa before him and when the image worship was accepted by the church as a result of the tenacious perseverance of the Mahāyānist the artist readily offered the solution. Not only did the iconographic features bear similarity, but the aim of installation was also sometimes the same as both the Bodhisattva, and the Yakṣas served as guardian and protecting deities. In order to differentiate between the two (Yakṣas and Buddha) a label was inscribed and whenever it was not done, the confusion remained. The stock of evidence thus proves that it was neither necessary nor did the artist wait for any royal command to represent the Buddha in the anthropomorphistic from as he (the sculptor) had already started to fulfil the need of the time.

63. Ibid., p. 13.
64. Ibid., p. 18, Footnote No. 38.
Among the standing Buddha-Bodhisattva images which can be cited as Pre-Kaniśka, the following need mention.

(i) Bodhisattva in the Archaeological Section of the State Museum, Lucknow (B. 12B; fig. 69) is an important specimen. The treatment of drapery, the ornaments, the posture of hands, the girdle and modling of body point to the fact that the image is directly drawn from the early Yakṣa tradition. Another important feature which has rather escaped the notice of the scholars is the treatment of the pose of the right hand. No doubt it is raised up, imparting protection (abhaya) but the significance lies in the decoration behind. What does it indicate? Some hold that it is just the decorated filling between the hand and the shoulder and its purpose was to give strength to the upraised hand. But to us it appears to be the continuation of the caurī—bearing pose of the Yakṣas.

Whatever may be the interpretation, the Yakṣa statues are sometimes shown holding a flywhisk. This is evident from the Didārganij Yakṣi, now in the Patißa Museum. Agrawala thinks that the flywhisk was sometimes a distinguishing emblem of a Yakṣa image, the idea being that these figures were attendants of their king Mahārāja Vaiśravaṇa or Kubera and this was a mark of honour proclaiming their relationship with the god of wealth and immortality. Coomaraswamy also refers to Yaḵṣas holding caurī as the Yakṣa from Patnā, for instance. Even in the case of the Parkham Yakṣa, Cunningham thought that the image carried a caurī over the right shoulder, although Vogel does not agree with this conjecture. Actually the Yaḵṣas have been variously represented in Indian art. Sometimes they are supposed to possess superhuman power and sometimes they are shown as mere attendants. As referred to above, they have been described as attendants in the palace of Kubera and Brahmā in the Mahābhārata. This justifies their caurī bearing pose.

**Position of Yakṣa**

The term Yakṣa has been variously explained in Indian literature. It seems to have been derived from the root 'Yaj,' meaning worship. In the Vedic texts it generally means wonderful or terrible. Brahmān has so often been called a Yakṣa in the Vedic literature. 'By concentrated energy I became the primal Yakṣa.' The other gods also realised that Yakṣa is Brahmān. This supremacy, however, loses its force in later periods. Both benevolent and malevolent aspects have been associated with the Yakṣas who are believed to be possessed of magical or

65. Smith, V., Jain Stūpa etc., p. 43, pl. LXXXVII.
68. CAMM., p. 83.
69. Sabhāparva 10/18; 11/56.
supernatural powers. Their female counterparts, Yakṣinīs are more famous for witchcraft. In the Atharvaveda the subjects of Kubera, i.e. Yakṣa and Rākṣasas, are called as Pūnajānas but the disease Yakṣmā (a mysterious fever) also seems to be connected with the word Yakṣa. The Gītā points out that the people of the Rājasāka class worship the Yakṣas and Rākṣasas.  

It is also held that the Rākṣasas had two-fold divisions, the one as guardian of treasures was known as the Yakṣas; while the other class, which was notorious by nature and disturbed the sacrifices (Yajñas), was called the Rākṣasas. Generally the Yakṣas are supposed to be friendly with men, while the Rākṣasas are of evil nature. There are, however, many references of the wicked Yakṣas behaving like the Rākṣasas. There seems to be a gradual dethroning of the Yakṣas, as from the supremacy which they once enjoyed in the Vedic period they met the fate of semi-divine beings, guardian deities and reached the bottom when they started serving as mere attendants. The reason of their descent seems to be the emergence of Bhakti movement which required loyalty to a particular deity and Yakṣas were ignored. In Jainism we find a fully developed pantheon of Yakṣas and Yakṣinīs as attendants to the Tirthankaras. In Buddhism also these have a subordinate position as seen on the Stūpas of Sanchi and Bharhut. We have already referred to the tradition (Chapter III) which indicates that the notorious Yakṣas of Mathurā were humbled by the Buddha and the citizens felt much relieved afterwards. All these literary evidences suggest that the Yakṣas were gradually losing their position and in such case the holding of a caurī in their hand to suggest their position as attendants or subordinate to the main deities in other popular sects is quite appropriate.

The hands of many Yakṣas are missing but their position hints to the possibility that the right hand was raised up either to be in abhaya or to hold a caurī or some other object. One of the purposes of the caurī was to avoid trouble (physical inconveniences) and the same idea was conveyed by mystic representation of abhaya in a wider perspective. When the Yakṣa figure was replaced by the Bodhisattva, reminiscences of caurī continued even in the abhaya pose. The position of the wrist is bound to take a turn as it cannot be shown frontally while holding a caurī like object. The feature appears to have been copied in the early Buddhist Bodhisattva figures which show the palm at right angles to the body (in profile) and not in its frontal position. The obvious reason for such an execution was that the artist was trained in working on the Yakṣa images and consequently he faithfully copied all Yakṣa features while carving a Buddhist image. As the years rolled on, the Yakṣa convention was attenuated and the caurī decoration behind the upraised right hand was deleted. The position also became frontal. The same characteristic is to be met with in the seated Buddha figures as well.

72. Gītā, 17.4.
73. Sharma, R.C., MMA, 1976, p. 28.
74. Yakṣa from Palwal now in the State Museum, Lucknow holds some hilt like object in his upraised right hand.
On these grounds the Bodhisattva under reference should be assigned to the pre-Kaniṣṭha era. The ‘U’ shape necklace is also a fairly early feature. R.K. Mukerjee was correct in labelling this sculpture as the earliest image of standing Bodhisattva from Mathurā.\(^75\) Vogel thought that this statue served as a prototype for subsequent Bodhisattva figures produced in the Mathurā School.\(^76\) Strangely enough such an important image has escaped the attention of van Lohuizen who had made a detailed study of the subject and has been able to prove the priority of Mathurā to Gandharā for the beginning of the Buddha figure, quite convincingly.

2. The next sculpture, which is to be categorised as pre—Kaniṣṭha, is also housed in the Lucknow Museum.\(^77\) Führer, probably on the basis of its provenance (Kankaḷī mound), wrongly identified it as representing Mahāvira in conversation with a king.\(^78\) Smith disagreed with this interpretation but did not offer his own.\(^79\) But the Uṣṇīśa on the shaven head and the posture of abhaya clearly indicate that the figure represents the Buddha and not Mahāvira. There is no mark of Śrīvatsa which is a sure cognizance of Mathurā Jina’s, and, moreover, the figure wears garments while Mahāvira or Vardhamāna should be represented nude. Van Lohuizen has rightly interpreted it as meeting of the Buddha with Śuddhodana.\(^80\) She has strongly supported the Mathurā origin of the Buddha image in her work, “The Scythian Period”, and subsequent writings, particularly, the paper titled “Once more the Origin of the Buddha Image”, *South Asian Archaeology* 1979. Similar view were expressed by her in the International Seminar on Mathurā held in New Delhi in January 1980.

Here we are mainly concerned to know as to what extent this figure is associated with the early tradition. The standing pose is given a frontal view although the Buddha is engaged in conversation with the king standing in his front. The corpulence and heaviness of the Yakṣa body are continued. The drapery worn by the figures also suggests an early dating. Particularly the bulging shawl is to be compared with the shawl worn by the figures seen on some ayāgapaṭas, which, as we shall discuss later, are anterior in age. The style of the scarf is to be traced in the sculptures from Hekateion at Lagina, Caria, belonging to second century B.C.\(^81\) This points to the fact that the motifs travelled from one country to the other and this exchange is noticed even in the pre—Kuśāṇa period at Mathurā which was in contact with other advanced and civilised countries. But the practice of wearing a bulging shawl does continue in the Kuśāṇa period and should not be considered a

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75. “Notes on Early Indian Art” *JUPHS*, July 1939, Vol. XII, Part I, pp. 76-77, fig. 2.
76. *Ibid*.
78. *SP*, p. 160.
79. *Jain Stūpa etc.*, *op. cit.* No. 87.
sure means of dating the piece early. At the same time not all early figures are seen with this type of garment. For instance, many Yakṣas and central Indian figures are devoid of it. The shape of the column with a winged lion capital is an early characteristic. Another figure which may fall in the same category is seen in the Musée Guimet, Paris.  

In view of the above discussion and two illustrations we can safely conclude, on the lines of Coomaraswamy, that the standing Buddha images were in succession to the Yakṣa statues. Van Lohuizen, generally agreeing with Coomaraswamy, is more specific and suggests that the Buddha image was derived from the king type as there is a close similarity between the figure of the king and the Buddha in citation No. (ii). The folds and bulging form of the scarf, position of hands, modelling of the body etc. are almost the same. But it may be pointed out here that the representation of both of these figures reflects an unmistakable impact of the Yakṣa iconography, and, in advancing her argument of king type, Van Lohuizen does not challenge or affect Coomaraswamy’s theory that the Buddha figure was an outcome of the old Yakṣa tradition.

Seated Figures

The earliest seated images placed in the beginning of Kanishka’s reign are those which hail from Kāṭāra and Ānyor. As already explained, finely finished Kāṭāra image points to a gradual development of Buddhist iconography which culminated into such perfection. Unlike the standing images the seated figures should not be considered to have evolved from the Yakṣas, as the early seated Yakṣa figures have not been found. We have, therefore, to remain in search of some other model which might have served as the prototype for the seated posture of the Buddhist figures.

We do come across seated meditating figures in the earlier art of India, but these represent either devotees or donors. An architectural fragment from Bharhut shows two ogee arches on a coping stone occupied with seated male figures. Both of them wear turbans and ornaments and neither can be identified as ascetics. But they are seated in cross-legged posture and in perfect meditating pose with hands crossed below the chest. Although these are given a place of honour, we cannot take them as Bodhisattvas as in that case the juxta-position of in the same attitude would be difficult to justify. There is another frieze the central band of which depicts a seated ascetic in the attitude of discourse or Vyākhyāna. Before him sit his four (may be five as one figure appears to be paying respect in the prostrate

82. S.P., fig. 30.
83. Ibid., pp. 153 and 160.
84. Mathura Museum No. A.1 and A.2 respectively.
86. ENC., op. cit., fig. 25.
87. Ibid., fig. 27.
position) pupils in an attentive pose. There is a close resemblance in this scene with the event of the Dharmacakra pravartana by the Buddha to his first five disciples at Sarnath. One whose entire back view is visible may be in the meditating pose or listening to the discourse very attentively. So we notice a few devotees, ascetics, and pupils in seated and contemplating posture but so far no Yaksa statue in this position has been found in early Indian art. We cannot, therefore accept the seated Buddha figure as a successor of the Yaksa statues, although the essential elements of Yaksa iconography are present.

The other alternative before us is to examine the seated Jaina figures. The Ayagapataas excavated at Mathura reveal that the Jaina iconography had matured here, at least in the latter half of the 1st century B.C. The Amohin tablet set up during the reign of Mahakashatrapa Soasas is a dated specimen. This, however, does not depict any Jina and the identity of the central female figure commanding respect (Aryavati) is controversial. But the other Ayagapataas also excavated at Mathura and now shown in the galleries of Mathura, Lucknow and Delhi museums are contemporary of the Amohin tablet on stylistic and palaeographic grounds. Scholars have given them an early date. In fact, the Ayagapataas belong to the transitional phase when symbol and image worship flourished side by side. More correctly, the symbols were prevalent and the human form of the deity was being introduced. The earliest Tirthankara figure carved in the Ayagapataas was surrounded by numerous symbols.

It would be rewarding to compare these tiny Jina figures with the early Buddha-Bodhisattva images in order to examine whether the former had influenced the latter. The study of the Kastra Buddha (Mathura Museum No. A. 1; fig. 79) reveals that while the posture of sitting is the same, many features show an advanced stage from crudity and roughness to refinement and conventionalised treatment. So even if we presume that the seated Jina figures on the Ayagapataas (datable to the latter part of the 1st century B.C. as discussed above), served as a prototype for the Kastra and other early Buddhist icons, we have to look for a few earlier examples of Buddhist figures which were chiselled before the execution of the Kastra statue and which bear a direct impact of the Ayagapataas in several places.

88. Lucknow Museum No. J.1, Smith, Jaina Stupa etc., p. XIV.
89. U.P. Shah presumes that the lady in centre is the mother of Mahavira, Studies in Jaina Art, 1955, p. 79.
90. Van Lohuizen remarks, ‘these Ayagapataas date from the time when in Jainism people began to incline towards representing the Jina side by side with the symbols customary of old.....In the second half of the 1st century B.C. the Jina was therefore depicted side by side with the Symbols which formerly substituted him’. S.P., p. 155.
respects. Such sculptures as are being dealt with here are very close to the
āyāgapaṭa tradition and should be put approximately in the same period, i.e. the
pre-Kaṇiśka era.

The first among these is a fragmentary post in red sandstone.\textsuperscript{92} Wrongly
identified as a Jaina piece, it shows the Buddha as an ascetic flanked by
four lokapālas, who apparently hold almbowls in their hands. The Buddha sits on
a six-tiered high pedestal with his right hand in abhaya and the left hand placed on
the left thigh. The pedestal below shows two lions seated back to back. The
corpulent figure of the Buddha resembling the āyāgapaṭa Jina and the shape of the
altar-type tiered pedestal as seen on the Simhanādika tablet,\textsuperscript{93} are its early
characteristics. Another early feature is the position of the left hand which has
not yet reached the knee as seen later in the Kaṇṭha Buddha and other images. On
these grounds the sculpture may be easily dated to the end of the 1st century B.C.

The next early representation of the seated Buddha is seen on a toraṇa beam,\textsuperscript{94}
carved on both sides (M.M. No. M. 3; fig. 73-76). It belongs clearly to the period of
transition when symbols continued along with an anthropomorphic representa-
tion of the deity. On one side the Buddha sits in a cave attended by Pancaśikha
Gandharva and Indra to his right and left respectively. The other figures are
female devotees, elephants, full vase and fish-tailed mythical human being distributed
on both sides. The reverse of the beam shows the worship of a stūpa, a sanctuary
and the Wheel of Law. These three symbols are indicative of Bodhi (Enlightenment
at Bodhgayā), Dharmacakra pravartana (First sermon at Sārnāth) and Mahāparinir-
vāṇa (great demise at Kasi). The Bodhi tree is in the centre, the wheel on lions is
to our right and the stūpa is to the left. Devotees holding long-stalked garlands
are seen standing. The Buddha is seated in abhaya pose and the left hand is placed
on his thigh, an early feature as pointed out while discussing the previous figure. His
cross-legged position bears a great similarity to the seated Jinas on the āyāgapaṭas.
The elephant portraits on the lintel remind the early Bharhat style.\textsuperscript{95} The sculpture
should be placed in the end of the 1st century B.C. or the beginning of the 1st
century A.D.

The piece is significant for the study of early Indian architecture as well. While,
the Bodhi tree has been shown inside a building (Bodhīgharā or Bodhirukkhaṁpaśāda),
the branches of the sacred tree are seen issuing out from a decorated gateway and
the stem is noticed in the centre. The Bodhīgharā has been shaped as a fort or castle
with gateways and an upper railing sloping towards the lateral bastions. Similarly
the shape of the stūpa is also remarkable. The complex of a high tower made of
several super-imposed stories is a unique depiction of stūpa architecture. The two
ends on both sides of the beam show a fabulous creature combining the human bust
with the lower part of crocodile (ṭhāmrgha).

93. Smith, Jain Stūpa etc., pl. VII.
94. The Scythian Period, fig. 35.
95. Bachhofer, L., pls. 27, 29.
Prof. G.V. Mitterwallner has drawn our attention to a pre-Kaṇiśka Buddha figure, fig. 81, in the Museum fuer Volkerkunde, Muenich in West Germany. It represents the Master in the Kaṭrā style with shaven head, prominent top knot with snail shell, ārṇā between the eyebrow, small earlobes, right arm raised up in the protection pose and the left covered with lappets of the sanghāṭī. The left hand is broken hence its exact position is not known. The back slab behind the left arm is occupied by a standing male holding a flywhisk in the right hand. He wears a left-sided turban and heavy round earrings suggesting a fairly early date, i.e., before the 1st century A.D. The torso alone of the attendant, to the right of the Buddha, is discernible. But as will be discussed in the next chapter the Munich Buddha seems to belong to the Kaṇiśka phase on the stylistic grounds.

The fourth example, which has remained almost undiscovered by the champions of the Mathurā school, is a fragmentary sculpture discovered at Galteśwar near the Kaṭrā site in the Mathurā city and is now in the Mathurā Museum (No.A. 66; fig. 78). Only the left leg, right foot and left hand of the Bodhisattva along with the left foot of an attendant on our right are extant. The fragmentary evidence is ample enough to conclude that the sculpture was carved in the same style as the Bodhisattva from the Kaṭrā site. The pedestal was carved to present a projection at the centre with uniform recesses on either side at a depth of 8 cms. The central part bears a rampant winged lion and a female worshipper who was in all probability paying homage to the Dharmacakra. The most important part of the sculpture for our purpose is that it is incised with a four line haphazard inscription which informs that a female worshipper set up this Bodhisattva image and that it was dedicated to the Sarvāstivādin monks for their well being. Yet more significant is the reference to some Kṣatrapa and it is of vital importance to decide the age of this piece.66

Vogel incorporated this object in his Catalogue but did not make any comment on the word Kṣatrapa occurring on this Bodhisattva image.67 Agrawala took due notice of this fact in his edition of the Catalogue68 and put it in the 1st century B.C. He, however, missed this argument in his discussions on the origin of the Buddha image and opined that the earliest Buddha images were those that bear dates in the reign of Kaṇiśka.69 Such observations point to the strong bias in those days against the Indian origin of the Buddha image and to the fact that even savants were led away by the current prejudices. Anotber possible reason for this helpless-

66. The inscription reads as :

******* (उपासि)कर्मे नदाये केशव (स)

******** (बो) घे सत्य विस्तेरे तरे

सवस्तान नहि सु (वाच्य)

सवस्त सिद्धान परि वष्टु

H. Luders op. cit., p. 32

67. CAMM., pp. 66-7.
ness might have been that the Śaka and Kuśāṇa chronology was rather confused and a scientific sequence was not then available. It could not attract the attention of either Coomaraswamy or of Van Lohuizen, although they have both dealt with the subject in detail and have favoured Mathurā as the place of origin of the Buddha image.

This incidentally is the only Buddhist figure unearthed at Mathurā which records the word Kṣatrapa. Unfortunately the letters following this word are obliterated and we are not able to read the name of the Kṣatrapa here. As discussed in Chapter II, the Kharoṣṭhī inscription of the famous Lion capital recovered from the Saptarṣī site of Mathurā records that the followers of the Sarvāstivādin sect of Buddhism enjoyed royal favour in the pre-Kuśāṇa era and the two Kṣatrapa kings Rājula and Śoḍāśa patronised them most. The erection of Guhā Vihāra by queen Kambojikā, the wife of Rājula corroborates this statement. B.N. Mukherjee has drawn our attention to the Kṣatrapas, Vanaspara and Kharapallana, in the Kuśāṇa period as recorded on the Sārnāth Bodhisattva of the third regnal year of Kanishka and as such he disagrees with our observations. But it may be pointed here that the Mathurā Museum sculpture does not refer to any king and we cannot definitely assign it to the Kuśāṇa period. Moreover, the style of the figure and the calligraphy of the record point to an anterior date.

It is, therefore, quite probable that one of these Kṣatrapa rulers is referred to in the Bodhisattva image under discussion. They preceded the Kuśāṇa ruler and the sculpture should be fixed somewhere between the middle of the 1st century B.C. and the middle of the 1st century A.D. The use of spotless red sand stone of hard variety, the style and formation of letters of the epigraph support our line of thought.

Although no aid seems to come forth from Prof. Haertel's repository of Sonkh, owing to the absence of Buddhist figures from the site, he has indirectly helped us in pinpointing the fact that the Kuśāṇas were preceded by the Kṣatrapas. Out of the 40 layers of the cultural chronology of the site the deeper levels, i.e. No. 23 and 24, have been assigned to the Kṣatrapas, and the Kuśāṇa period, which includes the early kings viz. Wima Kaṭhpises and Kanishta, starts from layer No. 22. Commenting on this problem the excavator reports, 'Naturally, for the Kṣatrapa levels again no absolute date can be given. But there is no doubt that the reign of the Kṣatrapas follows the rule of the last Mitras. The sequences of levels require Ḥagamaṣa a date in the end of the 1st century B.C. Even without any attempt at dating Rājuvula and Śoḍāśa, it is evident that at Sonkh their reign reaches into the early decades of the Christian era.'

Whatever period we may assign to the Kṣatrapa kings it is now proved beyond doubt that they preceded the Kuśāṇas and as such the fragmentary inscribed Bodhisattva figure under discussion should also belong to the pre-

102. Ibid., p. 84.
Kaniška period and, therefore, there is no reason to believe that the anthropomorphic form of the Buddha was introduced (just) after king Kaniška came to power. The hypothesis of Foucher and his followers that the Gandhāra school was responsible for the innovation of the Buddha image, no longer stands.

Resume

A survey of the literary, numismatic and sculptural evidences reveals that the images were known and existed in the Mauryan period. There are also references to the making of the paintings and statues of Mahāvīra and Buddha during their lifetime, but no contemporary specimen is now available. Early Indian art is aniconic and the Buddha does not appear in anthropomorphic form till late 1st century B.C. or early 1st century A.D. The coins of Maues, Azes and Kaṭphises do not represent the figure of the Buddha. The early Ujjain coins which can be placed in the beginning of the 1st century A.D. seem to display the figure of the Buddha but this is not more than a conjecture. The coins of Kaniška, of course, depict the Buddha and the label Boddo leave no room for doubt. But this does not constitute the earliest representation of the Buddha. The reliquary of Bimarān is not so early as was presumed by some scholars and the presence of the coins of Azes with it also does not help us in attributing it to the 1st century B.C. It should actually be assigned to the second half of the 1st century A.D. and should be contemporary with or later than the reliquary of Kaniška found at Shāhjī ki Dherī as pointed out above. The new inscription of the time of Kujula Kaṭphises as stated above recording the painted image of the Buddha in the Gandhāra region, cannot be taken as tangible evidence of the priority or antiquity of the Buddha image in Gandhāra.

In the early art of Sānchi and Bharhut the presence of the Buddha is conveyed through symbols only and it is at Mathurā that we notice the confluence of symbols and human form. The arguments forwarded in favour of Gandhāra as the place of the origin of the Buddha image are at best very weak. On the contrary the religious and spiritual background and a long established art tradition support the case of Mathurā for the distinction. The presentation of the figure of the Buddha did not commence suddenly after the accession of Kaniška but was an outcome of the urge of the society and the concession which had to be allowed by the Buddhist church to meet the challenge of the growing popularity of other sects. The dated Buddha images in the beginning of the reign of Kaniška are not the earliest examples but these were also evolved from the already existing Buddh-

103. While I was reading a paper in a seminar in the National Museum, New Delhi on October 25, 1977, Dr B.N. Mukherjee and Dr K.K. Dasgupta of Calcutta University pointed out that Kṣatrapas are mentioned in the Sārnāth Bodhisattva of 3rd regnal year of Kaniška. No such evidence has come to light in the Mathurā region. Moreover, there are strong stylistic and palaeographic grounds to date this piece. At the same time the lion capital suggests that the early Kṣatrapas favoured Buddhism. We cannot, therefore, rule out the possibility of the carving of a Bodhisattva image during the Kṣatrapa reign which preceded the Kuṣāṇa rule.
Bodhisattva figures which served as prototypes for subsequent images. The standing Buddha figures are direct successors of the Yakṣa statues but the seated ones seem to have been influenced either by the Jaina Tirthankaras on the āyāgapātas or by a few sculptures installed during the Kṣatrapa rule. The earliest Buddha figures were carved at Mathurā between 50 B.C. and A.D. 50 and certainly before Kaniṣṭha. No Buddha sculpture of the Gandhāra school is known or can be shown as earlier than the pre-Kaniṣṭha Buddhist icons of Mathurā. The patronage given by Kaniṣṭha to Buddhism and the artisans accelerated the process of large scale manufacture of Buddhist images. Hence the credit for the origin of the Buddha image and its proliferation goes to Mathurā. The Gandhāra sculptors subsequently welcomed this revolution and it was the close contacts that were established between Mathurā and Peshawar under the mighty Emperor Kaniṣṭha which made the introduction of the fruits of the experiments of Mathurā in the Gandhāra region possible.

When the issue of the origin of the Buddha image was discussed in the beginning of this century the scholars did not have strong arguments in the support of either school and Coomaraswamy, summing up his discussion, observed, 'The balance of real evidence tends to show that the Buddha figure came into general use somewhat before the beginning of the reign of Kaniṣṭha, and not more than fifty years at most, if so much, before his accession. The evidence is not sufficiently precise to warrant us in forming a theory as to the priority of either school. We are inclined to presume on general grounds a priority for Mathurā; but that is not evidence.'

Gangoly depended more on the study of early Buddhist texts and reached the conclusion that the Buddha figure was evolved in the first century B.C. Van Lohuizen with her critical study of stylistic aspects of the early Buddha figures and survey of different archaeological sources pronounces a clear judgment 'when we survey these data in the light of the substance dealt with above, inevitable conclusion must be that we find the Buddha image atleast half a century, if not a whole century, earlier at Mathurā than in Gandhāra.'

Following the footprints of these eminent forerunners the present author has made an humble endeavour to bring out a few more facts and add a few more pre-Kaniṣṭha Buddhist sculptures for further cementing the theory of the Mathurā origin of the Buddha image.

105. Gangoli, O.C., "The antiquity of the Buddha Image"; The Cult of the Buddha, 0.Z., Neue Folge, Vol. XIV, 1938, p. 56. There he remarks, 'It is reasonable to conclude that the earliest of these texts sanctioning and recommending image worship had very probably been composed some time during the early part of the pre-Christian century (circa 150 B.C.). And there is nothing inherently improbable in the first image of the Buddha having been carved or painted some time before 50 B.C.
106. SP., p. 169.
CONTRIBUTION OF MATHURĀ TO THE EVOLUTION OF BUDDHA IMAGE

One of the greatest achievements of the Mathurā school was the introduction in art the representation of the Master in human form. Mathurā also established a set formulae for carving the Buddha figure. The essential elements of Buddhist iconography as conceived by the seers were given proper shape by the sculptors at Mathurā.

The Buddha was born as a son of a king and later, after renouncing the worldly pleasures, he started leading the life of a monk. So we have two aspects combined together, i.e., the ideal of a cakravartī and that of a yogī. Even after renunciation, the symbolic effect of this so far greatness continued. This has been conveyed through various symbols known as Mahāpurusā lakṣanās. The long arms hanging up to knee (ājānubāhu), the elongated earlobes (pralambakarṇapāśa), broad chest (viśālavakṣa), webbed fingers (jālāngulika), soles, palms, finger tips decorated with wheel etc. (cakrāṅkakahastapāda), knotted hair above the head (uṣnīṣa), spiral hair mark between the eyebrows (ūrṇā) are some of the signs seen on the Buddha images of Mathurā. 107

The Buddha has been shown in the form of a Yogi through his posture of sitting (padmāsana) in meditating pose (Dhyānamudrā) and the gaze of the eyes set on the tip of the nose (nāsāgradṛṣṭi). These basic requirements for representing a great ascetic like the Buddha were not known in the Gandhāra region which was dominated by the western conventions but Mathurā with a suitable spiritual and religious background was at home to depict such posture. 108

Not only the Buddha and Bodhisattva figure but the iconography of a few other deities of the Buddhist pantheon was either evolved or developed at Mathurā. We have the tradition of different Buddhas, Dhyānī Buddhas, Maitreya Buddha and Bodhisattvas right from the Kuṣāṇa period. The site of Govindnagar has recently revealed an inscribed pedestal of the Amitābha Buddha image (M.M. No. 77.30, fig. 154) which is dated in the year 26 (A.D. 104). This Buddha as we know is in the Dhyānī Buddha category. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

In showing the jātaka scenes the Mathurā art followed the earlier tradition of Sānci and Bharhut but while representing the life scenes of the Master new technique and style were introduced.

Besides the Buddha and Bodhisattva figures in different forms, the Mathurā school of art incorporated other divine and semi-divine figures also in the Buddhist

107. Aśvaghosha has mentioned the same features while describing the child Buddha:

चक्रवती पार्व ततो भौतिकात्यवन्द्या जूः, तिर पाणि वायुमाः।
सत्यं भौवं वारण वस्तिकं कोणं सविस्मयं राजसुतं ददायं।

Buddhacarita 1-60.

108. SP., p. 239.
pantheon. Mention may be made of Kubera, Hāritī, Brahmā, Indra, Pancaśikhā Gandharva, Nāga, Garuḍa, Vajrapāṇi etc.

Mathurā was the main manufactory of Buddhist figures in Northern India from the 1st century A.D. to about A.D. 500. These products were installed at distant places and consequently the artisans of those regions were largely inspired by such images. Several styles were also influenced by the Buddhist sculptures of Mathurā. Gandhāra art betrays the impact of this school and the Sārnāth school owes its origin mainly to the Buddhist images of Mathurā. These points will be taken up in detail when Mathurā’s art products will be compared with those of other schools.

We can thus infer that Mathurā has contributed a lot towards the evolution of Buddhist art and particularly towards the development of the Buddhist pantheon.

An Observation

During the course of our study of Buddhist Art of Mathurā we had the opportunity of examining the antiquarian remains or photographs of the sculptures of other art styles also. Our gaze fixed at a coping stone from Bharhut which illustrates the ascetic Dīrghatapasa preaching his disciples. (Cunningham, A. The Stūpa of Bharhut, 1962, Reprint, Pl. XLVIII, E/4, p. 130). One of the half medallions of a large undulating creeper shows an ascetic almost in Padmāsana (cross legged attitude). His left hand rests on the knee while the right one is raised up to chest in the attitude of preaching. There is a tree in the background and before him are seen four young persons in the attitude of listening and at the same time they are either reading a scripture or recording some thing as their hands are half raised. Three persons are seen in profile but we can have the back view of the fourth one who was facing the tree. His matted hair suspend up to waist and he sits in full padmāsana. The teacher sits on a raised pedestal and the pupils are on the ground.

The scholars have recorded it as ‘Dīrgha-tapas instructs his female disciples’ we don’t find ourselves in agreement with this identification. On what basis the disciples have been termed as female is not clear? There seems nothing to label them as such. They are of course young and handsome which is quite natural for a student. The hair style looking like a jūdā is actually the loosely tied up matted hair. The disciple sitting from back is undoubtedly a male as indicated by the fall of matted hair and the stiff posture of sitting. Thus to us these young students appear male and not female. The Brāhma label on the top reads as ‘Dīghatapa sise anusāsati’ which should be translated as ‘Dīrghatapas instructs the disciples’. There is no chance for insertion of word ‘female’ in it.

More significant point for us is that there are traces of the fifth disciple who is lying prostrate to pay homage to the sage. If it is so, can it be conjectured that an
indirect effort was made at Bharhut to represent the scene of the *Dharmacakraprap-vartana* after the Enlightened One gave his first discourse to the five disciples at Sārnāth. The word Dirghatapas does not appear to be the name but an epithet or adjective of the sage who has spent long time in austerity. This very well fits in case of the Buddha who had attained the Buddhahood after several years of penance and austerity. Religious interdiction did not permit to present the human form of the Buddha in this early period hence the event was reminded through a slight variation in the figure of teacher and the label above.

This is just a farfetched conjecture but we could not resist the temptation of pinpointing it. We have given a passing remark in the chapter but did not elaborate it deliberately in the apprehension of certain other complicated issues.
8

CHRONOLOGY OF THE BUDDHIST/icons OF
MATHURĀ SCHOOL

A researcher is confronted with several problems while endeavouring to frame the chronology of Buddhist sculptures of the Mathurā School of art. These issues are the date of Kaniṣka, eras used, contribution of Mathurā as a school of art, chronology of different events and the social and religious conditions prevailing at Mathurā in the early centuries of the Christian era. We have already shed ample light on most of these problems in the previous chapters, of course, avoiding a detailed discussion on the date of the accession of Kaniṣka and we follow the general consensus which is in favour of A.D. 78 as the starting point of the reign of this Kuśāṇa Emperor.

This has also been pointed out in the last chapter that the credit of evolving the Buddha figure should not be attributed to the reign of Kaniṣka or to the royal favour enjoyed either by the sculptors or the Buddhism itself. This great event took place much before the accession of Kaniṣka and the contemporary religious and spiritual environment and the competition between the religions to propagate their respective ideals and message were largely responsible for the introduction of the Buddha figure at Mathurā. The reign of Kaniṣka of course contributed much in the mass popularity of the Buddhist images and accelerated their production with a set and canonised formulae. The theory of the Gandhāra origin of the Buddha image also loses the ground in the light of the arguments detailed in the preceding chapter.

1. Symbolic-Representation

Before the emergence of the Buddha in human form in plastic art his presence was conveyed through one or more symbols which may at first glance appear to be mere decorative themes. But a deeper probe and the context of their representation would indicate that there is a message or story hidden under such decorations
The main symbols which have found place in the art of Mathurā or other Buddhist sites and monuments in early India are:

(i) Māyādevī in her dream with elephant etc. or elephant alone (the Birth).
(ii) Māyādevī under the Śāla tree (the Birth).
(iii) Riderless horse (the Renunciation).
(iv) Turban (the Renunciation), fig. 14 and 27 top compartment and others.²
(v) Bodhi tree (the Enlightenment), fig. 66, (M.M. No. 10.130).³
(vi) Bodhi shrine (The Enlightenment), fig. 73.⁴
(vii) Deer park (the First Sermon).
(viii) Wheel (the First Sermon), (M.M. No. 14-15.438).⁵
(ix) Gandhakuṭi (Buddha’s dwelling hut), (M.M. No. 11.154 Reverse).⁶
(x) Stairs and steps (Descent from Tusita heaven), fig. 67, M.M. No. 77.26 and 39.2868.⁷
(xi) Lion (Buddha’s clan, Lucknow Museum No. J. 268).⁸
(xii) Bull (Buddha as Muni Puṅgava or Śākya Puṅgava).⁹
(xiii) Bowl (Buddha’s begging bowl).
(xiv) Halo (Halo of the Buddha) (Mathurā Museum No. 36.2663).¹⁰
(xv) Triratna (Motif indicative of three jewels, i.e. the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, I.M.C. No. A. 25019),
(xvi) Footprints (the feet of the Buddha).
(xvii) Jātakas (the narration of the previous birth of the Buddha) fig. 14, lower three compartments (Mathurā Museum No. 76.40, fig. 14 and also 15.586).¹¹
(xviii) Stūpa (the great demise), fig. 68, (Mathurā Museum No. 10-130).¹²
(xix) Coffin box? (Mathurā Museum No. J.17) as pointed out by Dr. A.K. Srivastva.

2. Joshi, N.P., Mathurā Sculptures, 1956, p. 81, fig. 28.
3. Ibid., p. 80, fig. 8.
7. Joshi, N.P., op. cit., p. 81, fig. 28.
8. Agrawala, V.S., A Short Guide-Book to the Archaeological of the Provincial Museum, Lucknow, fig. 2a.
10. The following reference of Triratna is met with in the Lalitavistara an early Buddhist text:
एवं हि द्वादशाकार धर्मसिद्धि प्रवत्तिः
कौण्डिलकेन च धाराति निबुंति रत्नानि तयः
बुद्धो धर्मसिद्धि संपत्तिः इत्येकत्तनायायम् |       26.42.45
12. Ibid.
2. Pre-Kaṇiśka Transition

As already explained in the preceding chapter the symbols were transformed into the anthropomorphic representation before the accession of Kaṇiśka and preliminary and rudimentary icons had already evolved. As these are of much significance for framing the chronology of the Buddhist images of Mathurā it is necessary to give an account of their main characteristics. The time limit which may tentatively be fixed for such figures is of about a century between the later half of the 1st century B.C. to the end of the third quarter of the 1st century A.D. or to be more precise till the accession of Kaṇiśka i.e. A.D. 78. This was the phase when the symbols continue to dominate but at the same time the human figure of the Buddha was reluctantly or inconspicuously shown. The reluctance is gathered either through a tiny figure of the Buddha or through captioning the represented deity as Bodhisattva and not as the Buddha. The hesitation continues in the early Kuśāna period as well. The seated figures have a close resemblance with the Jina figures carved on the āyāgapaṭas while the standing figures bear the impact of the earlier Yakṣa statues.

Some of the notable features of the pre-Kaṇiśka Buddhist icons are noticed as under:

(i) The drapery is rather inconspicuous or marked with an incised line suspending from the left shoulder in the small figures. The bareness is also broken by a few lappets on the left shoulder but the chest does not indicate any pleats as the cloth is foldless transparent muslin. Sometimes the upper part of the body shows just a bulging scarf touching the left shoulder only.

(ii) While the small figures are devoid of the Uṣṇīṣa characteristic, the others are shown with a snail shell (Kaparda) tendency.

(iii) The earlobes are smaller than the upper part of the ear.

(iv) The eyes are protruding with a short line at the outer corner.

(v) The chest is well developed.

(vi) The navel is deep.

(vii) The girdle is generally absent.

(viii) The upraised right palm is in profile.

(ix) The portion behind the hand up to the breast is filled with the decorated cushion pattern which as discussed in the previous chapter appears to be an adoption of the flywhisk of the Yakṣa images.

(x) The thumb is pressed against the fingers.

(xi) The elbow is raised up and does not rest on the lap.

(xii) The left hand is not put on the left knee.

(xiii) The figure is rather corpulent which is an impact of the Yakṣa images.
(xiv) The field of the halo is plain and indicated by an incised circle. Even the scalloped edge is not noticed in the very early figures.

(xv) The seat shows a few tiers one over the other looking like an altar. Sometimes the lions are also seen supporting the seat and there is no space between the two animals.

(xvi) The overall impression of the figure is rather crude, primitive and archaic.

(xvii) No date or era is recorded.

Many of these features have been noticed by Van Lohuizen\(^{13}\) and some have been added by us.

The important specimens falling in this group may be cited as follow:

(i) Headless Bodhisattva in the State Museum, Lucknow (No. B. 12b, fig. 69) is one of the earliest images and shaped in the fashion of a \textit{Yakṣa}. Smith wrongly captions it as Vardhamāna.\(^{14}\) It is strange that Van Lohuizen has missed this important statue in her thesis.

(ii) The stele, carved with a scene of discourse between the Buddha and a king (probably Śuddhodana) in the Lucknow Museum (No. J.531, fig. 70), is also a very early representation of the Master whose body is almost bare except a scarf on the left shoulder. He is shown dwarfish like a \textit{Yakṣa} with a small \textit{Uṣṇīṣa} over the head. The big halo behind the head is devoid of any carving.\(^{15}\)

(iii) A medallion on the railpost in the Lucknow Museum (No. J.295, or 339 fig. 71), represents a rider on the horse back with a groom in front. To us it reminds the scene of \textit{Mahābhīnīśkrāmaṇa} of Siddhārtha. The anatomy of the human figures and double knotted turbans on their head are indicative of the Śunga period, trends. To our knowledge it has not been published so far.

(iv) The slab carved with the scene of the offering of alms by the four Lokapālas in the Mathurā Museum, No. H. 12, fig. 72, falls in the pre-Kaniška group. The multi-tiered altar shaped pedestal, corpulent body of the Buddha, the insignificant elevation on head, absence of halo, turbans of the attending \textit{Lokapālas}, position and posture of lions etc. are some of the notable features of the beginning of the Buddhist icons.\(^{16}\)

(v) The \textit{Torana} beam in the Mathurā Museum (No. M.3, fig. 73-76), is of great significance as it really represents a stage of transition between the symbols and the icons. \textit{Bodhīghṛha} and \textit{Dharmacakara} on the lions are on one side and on the other side is noticed a small anthropomorphic representation of the Buddha.

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14. Smith, V.A., \textit{The Jain Stūpa etc.}, 1901, pl. LXXVII.
15. Van Lohuizen, J.E., \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 159-60.
16. \textit{Ibid.}, pp. 157-58, fig. 27.
seated in padmāsana inside a cave. He is being worshipped by Indra and his retinue who hold their hands clasped in adoration. This episode terminates by the depiction of a full vase with lotus buds and mermaids at each end. Here the corpulent Buddha is seen in a very primitive form and the posture of sitting does not betray a sense of comfort. The right hand is raised in abhayā and although a cavity is cut round the head to separate the figures from mass of the cave there seems no effort in shaping it as halo. This should definitely be assigned to the pre-Kaniṣṭha era.17 The elephant figures remind us the Barhut rendering of the animal carving.18

(vi) The recent discoveries at the site of Govindagar have also brought to light a small fragmentary upper part of the Buddha (Mathurā Museum No. 76.104, fig. 77) in which his head with Uṣṇīṣa and right arm raised up in the protection are intact. It is a clumsy representation and no decoration is noticed on rim of the nimb. Although not much is left to discuss all features but the piece illustrates the archaic trends of the Kaniṣṭha stage.19

(vii) A fragmentary sculpture in the Mathura Museum (No. A. 66, fig. 78 also discusses on p. 164), has rather escaped the attention of the scholars (and even Van Lohuizen has not taken any note of it). The Bodhisattva is now extant by his left leg with left hand placed on it and right foot which was in the cross-legged position. One leg of the flanking attendant is also seen. The pedestal shows a winged lion and a female worshipper in the adoration pose. The sculpture represents a developed stage of treatment. The epigraph on the pedestal is of vital importance.20 As already explained it records the installation of a Bodhisattva image by a female devotee Nandā for the acceptance of Sarvāstivādin monks. The most important point is that some Kṣatrapa is mentioned in it. Although Mahākṣatrapa Kharapallana and Kṣatrapa Vanashpara are recorded in the Friar Bala Bodhisattva image of Sārnāth of the year three of Kaniṣṭha,21 the Mathurā Museum figure does not refer to the reigning king. It is, therefore, possible that it was carved during the Kṣatrapa period. V.S. Agrawala rightly putting it in the late 1st century B.C. observed, 'the reference to a Kṣatrapa and the Sarvāstivādin monks as well as the early form of writing together with the style of carving and spotless hard stone make it highly probable that the present Bodhisattva image goes back to the time of the earlier satraps who ruled at Mathurā in the late 1st century B.C.'22

17. Ibid., pp. 155-57, Sharma, R.C., op. cit., p. 33, fig. 23.
3. THE IDEAL FORM—The Kaniṣka Phase

The Buddha figure took a definite model shape during the reign of Kaniṣka. It is generally presumed that patronage to Buddhism given by the Emperor was responsible for the production of large number of Buddhist statues from the very beginning of the assumption of power by the great monarch. But this general belief although supported by the literary and sculptural evidence needs some verification. While the Chinese sources (particularly Huien-tsong) present Kaniṣka as a great patron of Buddhism and compare him with Aśoka, the Vigur (Turkish) texts denounce him as a sinner.23 There is also no direct evidence to project him as a convert to Buddhism. It is also sometimes argued that his inclination towards the faith was politically motivated.24 Even his association with the Buddhist Council of Kashmir is sometimes acknowledged as a ‘pious fabrications’.25

What is intended here is to explain that it is not proper to attribute the sole credit of evolution of the Buddha image to King Kaniṣka or his patronage to Buddhism, although his reign must have provided a congenially commensurate atmosphere for the production of better figures in larger quantity. As discussed in the preceding chapter the evolution was a natural process and it had a fairly early background of at least a century before the accession of Kaniṣka. The art and literature grow in proper direction and reach a classical stage when the administration of the country is under an efficient and powerful ruler. No doubt, Kaniṣka was a great king in this respect and before him the land was in a stage of disruption and we cannot except an effective art style at Mathurā under such circumstances. Kaniṣka not only had a firm control over his large empire but he tried to give new dimensions to different walks of life and this resulted in the development of a dynamic school of sculptural art at Mathurā which handled the Buddhist images more skilfully and delicately.

Seated Figures

A distinct formula seems to have been evolved for the seated figures and it became a popular convention in the northern part of the country up to the middle of the second century A.D. As will be seen later, a few changes were introduced in this form after Huviṣka came to power. Van Lohuizen terms it as ‘Canonised or Kapardin Buddha’ and notices several peculiarities26 to which we may also add a few.

(i) The sculptures are generally in high relief and not carved in round. This means that the back is devoid of any artistic treatment.

(ii) The features are clear and expressive.

(iii) The nimbus bears the scalloped border.
(iv) The back slab shows the foliage indicating the Bodhi tree in which the peepal leaves are quite conspicuous.
(v) The upper two corners are occupied by two celestials hovering in the sky with wreaths in their hands.
(vi) The deity is flanked by an acolyte on each side, generally carrying flywhisk.
(vii) The top hair on the head of the Buddha is shaped like a snail shell, Kaparda, hence the distinguishing feature of this variety is known as Kapardin.
(viii) The right arm is raised up in abhaya and the hand goes slightly above the shoulder in the protection pose.
(ix) Some space is left between the right elbow and knee.
(x) There is a cushion decoration between the back of the right hand and the shoulder.
(xi) The head is shaven or tied with cloth and no hair is visible except the top knot.
(xii) Between eye brows is seen the circular mark of Ēryā which is usually in relief or sometimes incised.
(xiii) The almond shaped eyes are wide open.
(xiv) The earlobes are small.
(xv) The expression of the face is slightly smiling.
(xvi) The left part of the body is covered by garment and the upper arm shows thick and heavy pleats.
(xvii) The left hand resting on the thigh or knee is sometimes clenched which is suggestive of commanding attitude of a prince or a king, a cakravartin style.
(xviii) The legs cross each other as desired in the Padmāsana pose.
(xix) The upturned soles of the feet are marked with auspicious motifs as wheel, Triratna etc.
(xx) The lower garment covers the half leg only.
(xi) The frill of the garment falls on the seat.
(xxi) The navel is deep.
(xxii) The chest part is prominent.
(xxiii) The posture suggests some stiffness.
(xxiv) The Yakṣa impact continues through corpulence.
(xxv) The seat is shaped as an altar with ridges.
(xxvi) It is supported by three lions of whom two on the corners are in profile while the central one is in face.
(xxviii) The central lion is sometimes replaced by a symbol or an object of worship with donors at sides.

(xxix) Sometimes neither the lions are carved nor any object of worship. The space is occupied by two devotees.

(xxx) The sculptures generally bear the epigraphs sometimes recording the date of installation and the name of the reigning king.

The important seated sculptures which should be included in this group are as under:

(i) Bodhisattva from Katrā (Mathurā Museum No. A.1, fig. 79), is probably the best specimen of this group. It represents almost all above characteristics of the ideal Buddha Bodhisattva images. Van Lohuizen is inclined to date it in the pre-Kaniśka period. On the ground of its well advanced workmanship we do not favour such an early date. The epigraph captions it as a Bodhisattva image.

(ii) The headless image of the Buddha from Ānyor near Govardhan, (M.M. No. A.2, fig. 80), differs with the Katrā in some respect. The central lion on the pedestal is missing and the left hand is clenched. There is no back slab and the flanking attendants are also absent. The image is independent and not projecting from the stele. Like Katrā Bodhisattva the epigraph neither mentions the reigning king nor any year. But unlike Katrā the Ānyor image inscription informs that it is a Buddha image. Vogel observes that, 'the image is the oldest Buddha figure designated as such in an inscription and must, therefore, be one of the first representations of Buddha found at Mathurā . . . .'

(iii) Bust of the Buddha in the State Museum of Ethnology Munich (fig. 81) is also an important citation. During the course of discussion at Lucknow

27. Vogel's Mathurā Museum Catalogue, pp. 47-48. Its inscription is read:

1. बुद्धरक्षितः मातरे भ्रमो हा प्राप्तिः बोधि सचो पतितापितो
2. साहा माता गितितिः सके विहारे
3. सव सत्वा निृतः सुखाये

'Budharakhita's mother Amah-asi has erected (this) Bodhisattva together with her parents in her own convent (or temple) for the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings'.


1. उपासकस्य सुधेऽवेन्य दान (१) हु (२) व प्र (३) त मा उत्तर राज्य ह (४) र व (५) बच (६)
2. विहारे वहां माता गितितेहि सवसंस्कर्त न (७) हिृत लुक्क (१ व घेन्द्र

'Gift of the lay member Suha of Haruṣa, a Buddha image at the convent of Uttara of Haruṣa together with his parents for the sake of the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings.'

Sharma, R.C., Mathurā Museum and Art, op. cit., p. 39.

G.V. Mitterwallner supported this dating i.e. placing it in the early phase of Kaśyapa. But she fixes the accession of Kaśyapa sometimes after A.D. 142.

(iv) Headless weather worn sculpture of the Buddha is a new addition from the site of Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.32, fig. 82). The corpulent treatment of body and bulging breasts are indicative of the continuation of Yakṣa and archaic traits.³¹

An image of the Buddha resembling the above cited sculptures now housed in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston and which has been explained as an early and canonised Buddha by Van Lohuizen,³² should not be considered in this group as it does bear some Gandhāra impact. This will be taken up at the appropriate place.

(v) Bodhisattva seated cross-legged in meditation wearing a crown and flanked by one attendant on either side is carved on a stele in the Lucknow Museum (No. J.621; fig. 83). Below are seen two devotees and three ascetics with their hands clasped in adoration. The three tiered pedestal devoid of any figure is an early feature. The sculpture has escaped the attention of several scholars dealing with the Buddhist figures from Mathurā probably because Smith had wrongly identified it as Vardhamāna in his monograph.³³

(vi) A headless image in the Lucknow Museum (No. B.1; fig. 84) is particularly noted for the absence of the lions on the seat the centre of which is carved with the Wheel of Law (Dharmakakra) mounted on a pillar which is being worshipped by eight devotees, each holding a garland. The restored reading of the two line inscription records the name of Kaśyapa.³⁴

(vii) A stele representing the complete figure of the Buddha,³⁵ almost in the Kaṭrā style, is a good specimen of this group, now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (No. 25524; fig. 85). The central lion is replaced by a Dharmacakra being worshipped by a couple. The upper rim of the seat is left blank and does not bear any inscription. The overall treatment is rather weak and the sculpture seems to be a product of some inferior artist.

³¹ Sharma, R.C., Lalit Kalā, No. 19, p. 21.
³² Van Lohuizen, op. cit., p. 172, fig. 32.
³³ Smith, V.A., The Jain Stūpa etc., 1901, pl. LXXXV.
³⁴ ¹।।য়ৃলিঙ্গ সমু তোপায় সহিত কাব্যকালক মাত্র:: আইত:: ?::যশ
 ²।।রাজরাজে ক ( নিকটস্থ সম্বস্তে ও )
(viii) The lower part of the Buddha image in the Lucknow Museum (No. B. 18; fig. 86) showing just his cross-legged position, frill of the drapery and the ridged pedestal occupied by two devotees who have been identified as Indra and Brahmā by Van Lohuizen. She observes that the palaeography, dwarfish acolytes, the style of bulging shawl worn by the left figure and the beautiful style of frill on the seat suggest a pre-Kaṇiṣṭhaka era although the figure of the year is now obliterated from the epigraph.

(ix) The State Museum, Lucknow houses an important pedestal of a Bodhisattva image, renumbered as 66.48, fig. 87, consisting of the cross-legged part of the body with beautiful frill on the seat. The inscription supplies very valuable information. The first three lines are incised in the early Brāhmi characters of the 1st century A.D. but the last line recording the Buddhist creed is a later addition of the 8th-9th century A.D. The real significance lies in the fact that although it was discovered at Śrāvastī but the epigraphy informs that the image was carved by Śīvamitra who belonged to Mathurā and who has been termed as Śailarūpakāra i.e.

37. The one line epigraph reads:

वर्षामासे 2 दिबासे 6 एते बोधिसत्तले प्रतिष्ठापिता माता पितृ हिरवे

On the sixth day of the second month of winter (the image of) Bodhisattva was dedicated for the welfare of parents, Ind. Ant. Vol. VI, p. 219, No. 9.

38. The original three line document is read and translated by Daya Ram Sahni as:

1. ‘रुपस्तुः सिवयवमयम् अतुरुप (‘) बलिष्ठान् धम्मान्त प्रकाशते जेत
बने बोहिसत्तले मबुरा (वा)……

2. ता सर्वः पुजयां माता प्रियी पुस्तकः सब सत्य हिरवं च द (ए)· ति सब विचक्षणा
मनवाका च भोगां

3. ‘अतीतम च सेरामिय कुङ्गला मयूर कुङ्गल प्रचीन मु (प्रा) चरुर्य शेत रूपकारेण (ो)
शब्द भिन्नितम बोहिसत्तले तत्त कुङ्गला

A Bodhisattva (has been set up) in the Jetavana of Śrāvastī (as a) gift of ...... and Śivadhara, कृत्रिया brothers from Viliṣṭa and sons of Dharmānanda (residents of) Mathurā. (Being) versed in the scriptures and (knowing) the unreality of pleasures and the unsuitability of life, (they i.e. the कृत्रिया brothers referred to) give (the Bodhisattva) in honour of all the Buddhas, for the welfare of all living beings with special regard to their parents, and accumulate merit for this world and merit for the next. (This) Bodhisattva was made by Śīvamitra a sculptor of Mathurā.

ASIR., 1908-9, p. 135.

39. Sahni quotes two important verses from Kathāsārītāgāra regarding the painting and sculpture carving

श्रवणशास्त्रीकृता श्रवण प्रकाशते सह ।
स स्तम्भं वीणाय सुकुमरं तत्र गौरीं समालिखत् ॥
रूपकारेन सर्वेणि बोहिसत्तलेकर्षणं ॥

‘In these verses the painter is called a citra-kṛta and the engraver or sculptor a rūpakāra. The citra-kṛta drew samālékha—the figure of Gauri on the column, while the rūpakāra did the engraving—ullīlekha—with his tool.’

Kathā Sarītāgāra, Taranga, 37, 8-9.

ASIR., 1908-9, p. 138, footnote 3.
the stone sculptor. This document also furnishes the evidence to locate Jetavana at Śrāvastī. Sahni opined that the character of the script was pre-Kaniṣṭha. The ridged pattern of the pedestal, the absence of lions, name of the king or year all suggest an early date.

(x) While at Mathura the present author had acquired the lower part of a Bodhisattva image seated in padmāsana (M.M. No. 74.20, fig. 88) with folds of drapery falling on the pedestal which is carved with three lions two in profile and the middle one enface. Soles of the feet of the deity are carved with Triratna and wheel marks and traces of auspicious motifs are seen on the toes also. Two third part of the legs is bare and it can be guessed that the left hand was resting on the left knee. Made in spotted red sandstone the sculpture on the stylistic and the palaeographic grounds should belong to the late 1st century A.D. The three line epigraph neither records the name of the reigning king nor any year. Its provenance Vrindāban had earlier yielded large size Śālabhaṇḍajkās (M.M. No. 40. 2887-88).

(xi) Fragment from a pedestal of a seated Buddha/Bodhisattva image in the Mathurā Museum (No. 50.3533, fig. 89) is important for its epigraph which records 5th regnal year of Kaniṣṭha. The pedestal shows the worship of Dharmacakra on a pillar by a devotee who is assisted by a dwarf carrying garland in a basket over his head. To the right of the devotee is seen the tail of a lion who supported the throne (Simhāsana).

(xii) Lower part of the seated Bodhisattva image (Mathurā Museum No. 10.121, fig. 90) with hand clenched on the left thigh and the upturned soles of feet are marked with auspicious motif. The frill of the lower garment is seen on the pedestal which shows a sejant lion on either side. The remaining field of the pedestal is occupied by six devotees comprising two male, two

40. Ibid., p. 134.
41. The inscription as deciphered by Dr. K.K. Thapilyal and me is as follows:
1. सिस्मक पुजय संहित्रि क्षिणि कुष वृज्ञ सेवक: बौध सत्तम (प्रति)श्वापय (ति)....सव वृज्ञऽ
2. सव सत्तम हिश्वास माता पित्राम पुजये धत्रा च बौधिसत्तम”
3. सेनकें: दम पुजय च

Senaka the son of Śreṣṭha Hasti who is the son of Sindhuka (?) installs (this image of) Bodhisattva ..... for the worship of all Buddhas and for the welfare of all beings in the honour of parents ....... by Senaka and son of Dama.

42. I read it as:
1. “. . . . (ति) वश स्य स वर्ष मास 2 दिन”
2. “....”ता पित्राम पुजार्य सव सत्तम बौध च

In the 5th year of Kaniṣṭha in the second month and on the day ....... for adoration of parents and for adoration of all beings.
female and two children. The elderly persons of the group carry garlands while the children hold their hands clasped in adoration. The upper rim is incised with two lines and the lower rim records only one line Brāhmī epigraph which is of much significance as it mentions among other things the teachers of the Dharmaguptika sect which was an offshoot of the old Sthaviravāda sect. Another important point is that there is neither a lion nor any symbol of worship in the centre of the pedestal. The figure is a rather crude specimen of early Mathurā art but on the basis of its style as composition it should not be taken to be a late piece.

Headless and armless image of Bodhisattva (Mathurā Museum No. 20.1602, fig. 91) seated cross-legged (padmāsana) with upturned feet. The frill of the garment is seen on the pedestal. The upper garment is notable for its transparent effect and only a few pleats are noticed on the left hand. The pedestal shows two sejant lions in the supporting position. The centre is carved to show a triratna, worshipped by two devotees, a male and a female holding garlands. The Brāhmī inscription undercut on two bands is important for the fact that this is the last dated sculpture of Kaniṣka’s reign installed in the year 23. The other significant point is that the sculpture was recovered from Sonkh which was later excavated by H. HärTEL but no Buddhist antiquity was found from the site.

Standing Statues

The standing Buddha/Bodhisattva images of this group (Kaniṣka period) are noted for the following general characteristics:

(i) The body is straight and stiff.

43. V.S. Agrawala in the Mathurā Museum Catalogue, JUPHS, 1948, p. 65, reads it as follows:

1. एतस्य दर्शनस्वरूप विनिभविये । ब्राह्मणस्वरूप कदाचिति ।
2. रुष्यिका नागरिका ब्राह्मणस्वरूप विनिभविता । स्वकृतः समाचरीत।
3. ये दर्शनस्वरूप विनिभविता । स्वामित्वम् सुमुख्य विनिभविता ।

‘On this date (specified as above) this Bodhisattva image was established by Puṣiṇa Nāgaparīḍā (? Nāgapriyā), wife of the trader Dharmakara in the (gandha) kuṭi of her own temple for the acceptance of the Dharmaguptika teachers.’

44. The inscription is read by Dayaram Sahni as:

1. महाराजे (ि) स्या काणि (स्वस्य) २० ३ वृत्त स्वज्ञ विहार स्वामित्वम् सुमुख्य विनिभविता ।
2. ब्राह्मणस्वरूप प्रविनिभविता (ि) समाचरीत।
3. स्वके ब्राह्मणेऽस्य (ि) स्वमुख्य विनिभविता ।

‘In the first month of the summer season of the year 23 in the reign of Mahārāja Kaniṣka, on this occasion as specified, Puṣyadātā, the daughter of Guna, the master of Vihāra (Vihārasvāmi), established this image of the Bodhisattva in her own convent (for the welfare) of all sentient being.

JRAS., July 1924 and Agrawala’s Catalogue, op. cit., p. 46.'
(ii) The head is shaven with a top knot in the style of snail shell (kaparda).

(iii) The right hand is obliquely held in the protection imparting pose (abhaya).

(iv) The left hand is held akimbo resting on the waist.

(v) The chest is prominent and the navel is deep.

(vi) The large halo, if intact, emerges from the shoulders and bears a scalloped border only while the remaining field is left blank.

(vii) Only the left arm and shoulder are covered with the folds of the drapery.

(viii) The lower garment reaches below the knee and its hem rests on the left hand.

(ix) A waist band fastening the lower garment terminates into a double knot to the right side and two fillets from the knot hang down on the thigh.

(x) The thinness and fine quality of cloth is marked through its transparent effect and consequently the body appears seminude.

(xi) A bunch of flowers surmounted on a knot of hair is usually seen between the two legs. Sometimes this object is replaced by a lion.

Thus the upper part of the body of the standing images resembles the seated figures and the lower half has its own peculiarities.

Eight important specimens of this group are dealt with as below:—

(i) Almost life-size standing Buddha image (MM. No. 71. 105, fig. 92) with snail shell knot on shaven head. The shape of the ūrṇa between the eyebrows deserves our attention as it represents the central point enriched by five lines in relief. The cakra on the palm of the right hand indicating his greatness is stylistically carved and surrounded by a beaded band. The finger tips of the raised right palm show svastika marks. Broken in two parts from the waist the sculpture acquired for the Mathura Museum from the Govindnagar mound in 1971 is stylistically very early specimen 45.

(ii) Headless images of the Buddha from Kaushambi, (Allahabad Museum No. 69, fig. 93), with left hand held akimbo and resting on waist and the right-arm completely missing. The ekānsikasanghāti and the lower garment is of same type as of the image described above. Between the legs is placed a large cluster of lotus buds and some object assuming the form of hair with top knot. A floral decoration is also noticed outside the left leg. The epigraph inscription on the pedestal informs that the image was dedicated

in the second regnal year of Kaniṣka\textsuperscript{46}.

(iii) The colossal statue in mottled red sandstone in the Sārnāth Museum (No. B. 1, fig. 94), dated in the 3rd regnal year of Kaniṣka, is another interesting example. The Bodhisattva stands erect with his right arm broken and missing but the left arm held akimbo on the waist. The anatomy and drapery are same as described above. The cluster of lotus buds is replaced by a figure of lion which according to Vogel was carved as a cognizance of Gautama Buddha\textsuperscript{47}. The statue was protected by a large stone parasol with the help of a shaft pierced in the hole of the umbrella. The parasol now broken but rejoined represents a rich variety of motives carved on its ceiling.

These twelve motifs each intervened by a grooved design are: triratna (three jewels); matisyamithuna (pair of fish), with a noose hanging between them, śrīvatsa flanked by a rosette on either side, managalakalaśa (full vase), honeysuckle, an obliterated symbol the traces of which indicate that it was another Śrīvatsa, sapakṣasankha (winged conch), another honeysuckle, svastika (mystic cross) in anticlock position and decorated with leaves, phalapātra (basket of fruits), mālāpātra (cup of leaves containing systematically arranged garlands and lastly the honeysuckle which finds repetition three times\textsuperscript{48}. The parasol has close resemblance with the umbrellas recently recovered from the site of Govinda,nagar (figs. 38 and 39). Another band of the Sārnāth umbrella represents some winged animals including lion, elephant, buffalo, goose, lion, crocodile, leogryph, goat, camel etc. Actually these are all mythical animals (ihāmṛgas) with their hind part differently shaped.

The inscriptions on the pedestal of the Bodhisattva is an important document\textsuperscript{49} for the study of contemporary political, social, religious and artistic trends.

\textsuperscript{46} Chandra, P., Stone Sculpture in the Allahabad Museum, American Institute of Indian Studies, Poona, 1970, pp. 61-62, fig. 85. The epigraph has been deciphered and translated as under:

1. (म) स (शा) राजस् कौ रि (शास्त्र संवेद) स (र) (१) २ नि ८ बोधिसत्त्वि: तः प्र: तिद : 

2. : शर: पर्यन्त भिक्षुणि बुद्धमित्र भेलि (ि) ट का भगवती बुद्धस च (\textcircled*{+}) कमे

In the year 2 of Mahārāja Kaniṣka, on the 8th day of the 2nd (month) of hemanta, (Buddhist) nun Buddhnamitra, who is well versed in the tripīṭaka, sets up (this image of) Bodhisattva at the promenade of the Lord Buddha (EI, XXIV, pp. 210-12).

A. Ghosh suggested that the year recorded is 22 and not 2. (IHS., X, 1934, p. 575).

\textsuperscript{47} Sahni, D.R., Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sārnāth, 1914, Calcutta, p. 34.

\textsuperscript{48} Ibid., pl. VIII.

\textsuperscript{49} A. The ten line inscription as deciphered and translated by Sahni in his above cited catalogue (p. 35) is as follows:

1. महाराजस्य काणिक्ष्टम से ३ हे ३ ति २२
2. एतवे पुरुषे भिक्षुरम् पुष्य बुद्धस्य स ध्यायिवि
3. हारिस्य भिक्षुरम् बलस्य भेलिपक्ष
4. बोधिसौभो छायापति च प्रतिपद्धितो
Chronology of Buddhist Icons of Mathurā School

The statue on the basis of stone and style must have been carved at Mathurā and was brought to Sarnāth for installation.

(iv) Another important statue, which in many respects is a close copy of the above, is the colossal statue of Bodhisattva from Maholi now in the Mathurā Museum (No. MM. 38, 2798, fig. 95). The main difference between the two is in respect of the object between the feet which in the case of the Maholi Bodhisattva looks like a high crown with hair tied in a knot, lotus buds and a rosette on the top.60

(v) The railpost from Jamālpur, Mathurā now in the State Museum, Lucknow (No. B. 73), represents the Kapardin style of standing Buddha in abhayamudrā. The halo is left blank except for the scalloped border. The reverse in the top panel shows a Buddha with shaven head seated on a seat supported by two lions.

(vi) A railpost, now in the Musée Guimet, Paris, is carved with the figure of the standing Buddha in the same style. It is a dwarfish figure with the heavy impact of a Yakṣa figure.61

5. बाराणसिये भगवतो चंकमे सहा मात (1)
6. पितिन्ह सहा उपज्ञाया चेरेन्ह सज्जै विमारि
7. हि ग्रंतिकारकेतिः च सहा बुद्धिन्त्र नेलिदिक
8. ये सहा छत्यें वनस्त्रें लहरला
9. नेन च सहा च च (2) हि परिसापेश सवस्तवन
10. तह सुवार्य

In the third year of Mahārāja Kaniska, the third (month) of winter, the 22nd day, on this date (specified as) above, was (this gift) of Friar Bala, a master of the tripiṭakas and follower of Friar Pusyabuddhi (namely, an image of) the Bodhisattva and an umbrella with a post, erected at Banaras, at the place where the Lord used to walk, together with (his) parents, with (his) masters and teachers, (his) followers and pupils and with (the nun) Buddhaṃitrā versed in the tripiṭaka, together with the satrap Vanaspara and Kharapallāna and together with the four classes (monks, nuns, laymen and laywomen) for the welfare and happiness of all creatures.'

The other short inscriptions engraved on the image are:

(B) 1. भिस्सुस्य बलस्य चेतिकस्य बोधि सचवो प्रतिकापिति : सहा
2. महालंकृते घर्पल्लाने सहाराच्छेन वनस्तपरेन
This (image of) the Bodhisattva, (a gift) of Friar Bala, master of the tripiṭaka; has been erected together with the great satrap Kharapallāna together with the satrap Vanaspara.

(C) 1. महाराजस्य कणि (कक्स्य) सं 3 हे 3 द्वि 2 (2)
2. एतं च बद्धस्य भिस्सुस्य बलस्य चेतिका (कक्स्य)
3. बोधिसत्त्वो छह्वाहित च (प्रतिकापिति)
In the third year of Mahārāja Kaniṣka, the third (month) of winter, the 22nd day, on this (date specified as) above has (this gift) of Friar Bala, a master of the tripiṭaka (namely, an image of) the Bodhisattva and an umbrella with a post (been erected).

51. Van Lohuizen, op. cit., fig. 30.
(vii) A small Bodhisattva figure in the Mathurā Museum (No. 14. 485, fig. 96), is also an interesting illustration of the theme. He stands majestically on a ridged platform wearing princely ornaments viz. a fluted crown, heavy round ear rings, a beaded torque, a flat necklace with a betel shaped central pendant, thick wristlets, and an ornamental waistband. A long scarf hangs down from his left shoulder to the right thigh and the clustered vertical pleats of the lower garment touch the surface of the pedestal. This feature will be discussed again. For the present it is suggested that the statuette represents Prince Siddhārtha, i.e. at a stage before the Renunciation. The scalloped nimbus emerges from the shoulders with an extra circular line. It graphically points to the ornaments in use among the noblemen of the Kuśāṇa period.

(viii) The Sārnāth Museum possesses an important headless Buddha image, (No. B(a) 2; fig. 97), with the left hand resting on the waist holding the scarf and the right hand broken, raised up in the abhaya posture. Between the legs is a kneeling figure of a lion, who, according to Bachhofer, is suggestive of the deity being the ‘lion of the Śākya race’. D.R. Sahni on the other hand thought that the defaced object is perhaps meant to represent a corpulent Yakṣa. But Bachhofer’s interpretation is nearer the truth as the figure looks like the usual central lion on the pedestal of the seated Buddha/Bodhisattva images. The treatment of drapery shows shallow and inconspicuous lines imparting a transparent effect which is a very early trend. Sahni guesses that some Banaras sculptor carved this statue in imitation of the Mathurā style. But there seems no ground for such a hypothesis and the image is clearly a direct product of Mathurā School, considering that the practice of importing sculptures from Mathurā was well known.

Some Observations on the Early Buddha Figures

Before closing the discussion on the standing Buddha/Bodhisattva images of this (Kanishka period) group a few points deserve our attention. The identification and meaning of the object between the feet is important in this context. The shape is not uniform in all the cases and it differs from image to image. Undoubtedly we come across two motifs, either a lion as in the case of the colossal Sārnāth Bodhisattva (fig. 94) or a cluster of flowers etc. as in case of Maholi Bodhisattva (fig. 95). The lion seems to suggest the supremacy of the Bodhisattva Gautama who was known as Śākya Simha i.e. the lion among the Śākyas. The

55. Ibid.
same message seems to have been conveyed in the early seated figures where the third lion is carved in the centre otherwise there was no justification for carving the additional figure. It would now appear that the Aśoka pillars surmounted by the lion carried the same meaning. The Buddha figure had not yet evolved and the presence of the Master was conveyed through some symbolic representation. The lions supporting the Dharmacakra on the Sārnāth capital probably signified the same superiority of the Master as the third lion figure on the seat or between the standing Buddha or Bodhisattva images.

The other motif, a more popular representation on the standing Buddha/Bodhisattva images, is the cluster of lotus buds or a full blown lotus assuming the shape of the royal turban. H. Härtel suggested that the motif should be identified as the turban of Siddhārtha which was thrown away by him along with his hair during the great event of the Renunciation. Later it was installed in the heaven by Indra and was worshipped as cūḍāmāha. The cluster of hair (Cūḍā) in several cases is very conspicuous as the lower component of this theme. Display of the royal turban between the feet may also indicate the supremacy of the Buddhahood over the kingship, the insignia of which (turban or crown) is placed at the feet of the Enlightened One. It may also be pointed out that in certain cases the depiction of hair is absent and only the flowers, sometimes placed in a basket, take the place. Such representations may be treated as the offerings to the deity by the devotees but this may also be interpreted as a modified version of the royal turban of Siddhārtha. Furthermore, the Bodhisattva figure No. 96 (M.M. No. 14.485; fig. 96) does not represent a ‘turban’ between the feet but it is just a part of the garment shown in a round shape and hanging below. Does this suggest that the turban was to be shown on the statues made to represent Gautama after his Renunciation? It does not seem to have had any purpose in the case of Prince Siddhārtha. But this conjecture needs further verification.

It may be postulated that the Mathurā artist has invariably shown the Buddha in abhayamudrā in the early phase and the other postures were introduced as a result of the Gandhāra influence. It was not because the Mathurā artist was incapable of showing other poses but it seems that there was a deeper meaning and ideological justification for this. The Mathurā artist conceived of the Buddha as a superhuman being or a deity, a stage which he attained after the Enlightenment. So the only befitting posture for such an elevated soul was the abhaya. The Gandhāra artist on the other hand had a realistic approach owing to Greek and Roman influences and he visualised the Buddha as a great man. Consequently he derived pleasure in displaying the events of his life and different stages of penance and austerity. The

57. G.V. Mitterwallner in the course of discussion with the author at Mathurā did not favour the identification of the object as the uṇśa of Siddhārtha as she thought that the hair or cūḍā could not be cut in the existing shape without causing injury to the head. She opined that the object should better be explained as flower basket placed by the devotees.
postures other than abhaya i.e., vyākhyāna, dharmacakravartana, bhūmispāraśa, dhyāna etc. indicate some human effort and endurance while the Buddha, according to the Indian concept, had crossed these stages when he attained the Buddhahood and wandered on the earth to remove the sufferings of the people and to assure them for the perfect protection through Dharma and Saṅgha. This message of the abhaya pose appealed to the Indian society and the artist displayed it as a mark of divine protection and assurance.

The survey of the standing Buddha images reveals that in most of the cases the right hand in the protection pose is missing while the left arm with the hand is intact. The reason is that the left arm found the support of the waist but the right arm was devoid of any such support remained vulnerable and often got broken.

Most of the statues are captioned as Bodhisattva in the accompanying inscriptions even though there is no iconographic distinction between the Buddha and Bodhisattva.

4. Emergence of Gandhāra Traits—The Huviśka phase

The seated Buddha image in the National Museum, New Delhi, (No. L. 55.75; fig. 98) dated in the year 32 is marked for the introduction of some new features which are not seen in the sculptures discussed above. There are some other specimens which follow the same trends and a critical examination of such figures suggests that the Buddha icons in the Huviśka’s reign were undergoing a modification. The characteristics noticed in this group of sculptures are as follows:

(i) The nimbus bears a beaded line in addition to the scalloped border or a full blown lotus decorates the plain field.

(ii) The top knot of hair on the head is more conspicuously tall and has more than one twist. Alternatively it shows matted hair which is usually combed back or shows small curls.

(iii) The figure is elongated although the semblance of the Yakṣa figure continues.

(iv) Additional thick pleats are seen over the inner folds.

(v) The central lion on the pedestal disappears.

(vi) The eyes are sharpened at the ends.

(vii) A line on the neck is generally noticed.

(viii) The inscription on the pedestal of the seated figures seems to be an important aspect.

(ix) The iconographic distinction between the Buddha and Bodhisattva emerges now.

(x) The traces of the Gandhāra impact can be felt for the first time in the Buddhist sculptures of Mathurā.
(xi) Vajrapāṇi, clad in the Udīcyavesa, is a new introduction.

(xii) Sometimes the frill below the Buddha is decorated with a round band.

The important sculptures which may be considered in this group are:

(i) Buddha (National Museum, New Delhi No. L. 55.75, fig. 98) seated in usual protection pose and left hand clenched on the knee. He is flanked by Vajrapāṇi on the right and by Padmapāṇi on the left. The earlier Caurī-bearers have been replaced by these new attendants. The rest of the characteristics are the same as discussed above. The pedestal shows the worship of the Bodhi tree. The three lined inscription does not record the name of the reigning king.58 This specimen of Mathurā style was unearthed at Ahicchattra.

The sculpture is of great significance from the fact that it is probably the earliest dated Buddhist image which reflects Gandhāra impact. This is just the beginning of the confluence of the two art schools of ancient India viz. Mathurā and Gandhāra. This impact is to be noticed in the figure of Vajrapāṇi who is clad in a Scythian or Northern dress (udīcyavesa), wearing a flat turban with cris-cross motif. The buckled scarf round the neck and the stitched short lower garment or short pants are also alien in form. The style of draping round the neck has a close affinity with the motif seen on the statue of so-called Hercules with the Nemean lion from Mathurā and now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.59 Besides the thunderbolt (vajra) in the right hand, the physiognomy is apparently non-Indian. The ladies worshipping the Bodhi tree on the pedestal wear their sārīs in the Scythian fashion.

Now carefully looking at the presiding deity in the light of this discussion we are apt to draw the conclusion that the additional thick pleats on the left shoulder should also be considered as a Gandhāra trait. The deity does not sit in a calm and composed way as seen in the case of the Kaṭrā or other Buddha-Bodhisattva figures of the earlier phase. The legs of the Ahicchatra image under discussion suggest a somewhat upward trend indicating a feeling of discomfort.


The inscription is read as:

1. स ('') व 30 2 हेम 4 पित्र 8 एतसू पुलक्ष्य (') भस्म विरलम्य
2. न ('') (') सु (ल) वं संह सम (व) जंही सह अवशानिधि हि
3. दानं संह म (व) ता वितिधि ध्रतज (हि) च वर्षकित्रियं तवा

There is error in the sequence of the inscription. The third line should be the second and the second line ought to have been incised last.

59. Vogel, J. Ph., La Scultura de Mathurā, pl. XLVII b.
Thus Van Lohuizen’s views that the Buddha images do not bear any Gandhāra impact before the year 50 and the first sculpture registering this influence is the small figure from Anyor (M.M. No. A. 65; fig. 109), dated in the year 51, would perhaps need revision. The National Museum sculpture of the year 32 had not come to the light when she wrote her thesis. The Gandhāra influence at Mathurā should now be traced back to an earlier date probably in the beginning of Huviśka’s reign as the sculpture under discussion is to be dated in A.D. 110 (32+78).

The assessment of Van Lohuizen regarding the products of Mathurā of the Huviśka period is, otherwise, quite justified. She observes, ‘During the reign of Huviśka, however, is a great revolution in the style of Mathurā. This change is caused by a strong influx from Gandhāra probably due to the fact that the art of this country had by this time risen to such a height that its products passed the borders and drew the attention of sculptors from other parts of India. The result of this can clearly be seen for instance in the Buddha images at Mathurā.’

(ii) The seated Buddha in the Boston Museum61 has to be considered on the same grounds. The pleats of the drapery on the left shoulder and arm are heavy and thick although the additional upper folds are not seen. Whatever remains of the attendant to the right of the deity is sufficient enough to suggest that he is Vajrapāni with a thunderbolt in the right hand, buckled scarf round the neck and the short pants. The views of Van Lohuizen, who has assigned a very early date to the Boston Buddha,62 would now need reconsideration and modification.

(iii) Another important instance of this group of sculptures is a new acquisition of Mathurā Museum (No. 78.34; fig. 99), representing a headless seated image of the Śākyamuni Buddha, accidentally unearthed in the course of the foundation for a wall in the Trivenī Engineering Works near the Govardhan by-pass in the vicinity of Delhi-Agra Highway. The upturned soles of the cross-legged deity are carved with auspicious motifs of double circle, spoked wheel and triratna. The toes of the left foot are rubbed off but the right foot toes show some marks like full vase, Śrīvatsa and svastika. The right hand raised in abhaya hears a sharply chiselled spoked wheel with a beaded rim inside a circle. The finger tips show a bowl or basket with flowers, triratna, full vase and śrīvatsa symbols. The background of the hand is carved with criss-cross design suggesting a webbed hand. There is a decorative line round the neck. The left arm is broken and the hand is clenched on the left knee. The ekāṃsikasanghātī covering the left shoulder only shows schematic loose folds. A decorated girdle is.

60. SP., op. cit., pp. 180-81.
61. Ibid., p. 172, fig. 32.
62. Ibid.
fastened around the waist and it *suspends* on the pedestal. The frill of the lower garment is further decorated with a round band. The fragmentary halo rises above the waist and is marked by a lotus in centre surrounded successively by the traces of a band of shooting arrows, a scroll and a scalloped border, respectively.

The two lined inscription on the plain band of the pedestal is important due to the fact that it is probably the earliest archaeological document to record Kāyastha. The word ‘Bhaṭṭi’ occurs three times and the members of the family were fond of the use of this epithet or nomenclature which probably conveyed the significance and popularity of the profession of goldsmith as ‘Bhaṭṭi’ means a furnace, an inevitable base of the business.

The statue is notable for the following new stylistic features which make it quite distinct from the earlier group of the Kaniṣka period:

(a) There are additional thick pleats over the *sanghaṅga* on the left shoulder.

(b) The inscribed pedestal is devoid of any figurative exposition and even the lions are missing. It seems that the statue was placed on the separately provided lion throne.

(c) The frill of the lower garment is richly treated.

(d) The field of the large halo is carved with full blown lotus. The unusual size of the nimbus hints that the entire scheme of the parasol was transformed into the halo. Thus with the help of the present sculpture it can be suggested that the elaborate halo was a modification of the earlier practice of placing a large decorated *chattrā* (umbrella) over the Buddha/Bodhisattva statues. As already stated the colossal image of Bodhisattva from Mathurā installed at Sārnāth in the third year of Kaniṣka records that an umbrella with a post was also erected over the image. Thus the development of the halo can be traced from the parasols in the first quarter of the second century A.D. i.e., in the reign of Huviśka.

The statue under discussion is of extraordinary significance from different aspects and it deserves proper attention of art historians and epigraphists.

63. The inscription is read and translated by the present author as follows:

1. "भृगुसेन पुत्रस्य भविष्य भविष्य प्रियस्य डारस्यकार कायस्यक्यं कुटुंबिनिमये प्रह्योक्तस्य पितु यशाये"
2. "हरितज्ज्ञ दल्सय च माते भवेतो बुद्धस्य शाक्त्य नृतिस्य प्रतिमा प्रतिक्षापिता सर्वस्तवां ऍहिस्तुङ्कायै"

This image of Śākyamuni Buddha was set up for the welfare of all beings by Yaśā, daughter (?), of Grahadīna, mother of Hasti and Datta and housewife of goldsmith (?)*KĀYASTHA* Bhaṭṭipriya who is the son of Bhaṭṭisena and grandson of Bhaṭṭihasti.

64. Our reference No. 49, D.R. Sahni’s *Sārnāth Museum Catalogue*, p. 35, pl. VIII.
(iv) The site of Govindnagar has yielded a new specimen, (Mathurā Museum No. 76.121; fig. 29) (also discussed in Chapter 5 dealing with the Govindnagar finds) which on stylistic grounds should be included in the early phase of Huviśka. It is a part of doorjamb which was refused in the subsequent period for a different purpose. The top compartment shows a Bodhisattva seated cross-legged on a pedestal with a projecting edge. His right hand is raised in abhaya and the left one holds a water vessel. He wears a torque, ear rings and bangles and the matted hair is tied in a cylindrical knot at the top. The ūrṇā (circular mark) is seen on the forehead and a thick scarf is worn on the left shoulder. Two lines are marked from the left shoulder and their space becomes wider on the right side of the waist. It appears that the sculptor intended to convert these lines into amulets.

The second compartment displays two attendants only with their left arms resting on their waists. Their ornaments comprise fluted headdress, earrings, torques and bangles. The depiction of mere acolytes independently in a niche is rather unusual and needs some explanation as there is neither a figural representation nor any symbol of the Master. We think that the sculptor could not carve the figures of the flanking attendants in the upper compartment owing to paucity of space, so he displayed them with flywhisks in the lower niche. The extant part in the third compartment depicts only the head of the Buddha figure.

The sculpture under discussion is of greater significance not only for assigning a proper period but also for the development of the Buddhist pantheon. The present author had once attributed this piece to the early first century A.D. but the critical analysis of stylistic traits warrants us to post date it by about a century. The hair style, the additional scarf like pleats on the left shoulder and the ornaments etc. are indicative of Gandhāra impact which enters Mathurā in the beginning of Huviśka’s reign.

Another striking point which deserves our attention is that from now on the sculptor of Mathurā begins to make a distinction between the Buddha and the Bodhisattva figures. We have seen that in the preceding era, i.e., during the reign of Kaniska there is no iconographic distinction between the two and the only source of their proper identity is the inscription recorded on the pedestal. Thus the sculpture from Kaṭrā (Mathurā Museum No. A. 1; fig. 79) is recorded as Bodhisattva while the statue of the same characteristics from Ānyor (Mathurā Museum No. A.2, fig. 80) is captioned as Bodhisattva. But from the time of Huviśka the pantheon develops and the confusion between the Buddha and Bodhisattva disappears. More contacts with Gandhāra resulted in assimilation of several western traits in the art of Mathurā.

The Gandhāra artist visualised the Master as a great pontiff and rendering of the mundane aspect of the Buddha’s life was his favourite subject. This encouraged a diversity of theme and pantheon in the Mathurā school as well. The concept of pantheon developed through the narration of the events of the Buddha’s life. The episode of the renunciation of Siddhārtha has already been illustrated while describing the architectural fragment (MM. No. 76.152; fig. 30). This theme is depicted on a small piece (MM. No. 76.87; fig. 100) which shows the lower part of Siddhārtha on horseback. The neck of the animal is missing and the hoofs have been supported by the four lokapālas in order to avoid noise. Though a popular subject in the Gandhāra art it was rare at Mathurā.

(v) The Indian Museum, Calcutta houses a stela representing a headless image (No. A. 25019; fig. 101) of Bodhisattva seated cross-legged on the lion throne. His right arm is raised up in the protection pose and the left one rests on the lap. The drapery covering the left side is transparent. He is flanked by attendants whose heads are now missing. The pedestal shows the worship of the triranta by two male and two female devotees. The much worn out inscription on the rim records that the Bodhisattva image was set up by a nun named Pusahathini, together with a nun Buddhadeva and her parents on the 5th day of the third month of the winter in the year 39 during the reign of Huviśka. The sculpture under discussion is important for the fact that though carved in the reign of Huviśka it retains all the essential characteristics of earlier group. The form of the body, the indigenous fashion of clothes worn by attendants, transparent drapery with narrow folds, prominent chest and absence of extraneous influence suggest that art is not a watertight compartment and the established conventions do not disappear suddenly. Various factors are responsible for retaining the old consideration for assessing the chronology of any sculpture.

(vi) The Buddha head in the State Museum, Lucknow (No. J. 226; fig. 102) with prominent Ūrṇā, multi-tiered top knot of hair on head, eyes sharpened at the extreme end and a line round the neck should stylistically belong to the Huviśka’s phase.

The standing images of this group (Vāsiśka/Huviśka’s early phase) are not marked with many new peculiarities and there is always a possibility of a stylistic overlap between the third (Kaniśka’s phase) and the fourth group (Vāsiśka/Huviśka’s early phase). Nevertheless, a few characteristics may now be considered.

68. Smith, V.A., *The Jain Stūpa etc.,* 1901, p. C 1, fig. 2.
1. The sculptures are comparatively less voluminous, with a tendency of reducing the mass.

2. As a result the corpulent aspect of the Yakṣa impact is now diluted.

3. The pleats of the upper garment covering the left arm and shoulder are less refined and broader.

There are only a few instances to illustrate the point.

(i) A headless standing Buddha image acquired by the present author from Dhauli parade near the Mathurā Junction Railway Station (Mathurā Museum No. 80.1; fig. 103) is a good specimen. The bunch of lotus buds over the detached hair knot (a motif already discussed above) is placed between the feet. The lotus decoration is also seen behind the legs. The right arm is missing; the left arm with thick pleats rests on the waist and supports the hem of the scarf. The tapering solid block of the pedestal bears an inscription which is unfortunately rubbed off and only a few stray letters can be made out. The lotus carring behind the left leg is accidental or indicative of the development of pantheon is a debatable point.

(ii) The standing figure of Bodhisattva Maitreya holding a flask in the suspended left hand is a beautiful sculpture in the collection of the National Museum, New Delhi, (fig. 104): The rare feature of the statuette is that the inscription on the pedestal labels the deity as Maitreya.⁶⁹ The right arm is raised up in the usual protection imparting pose. A big cakra is noticed on the palm. Heavy ear rings, a flat torque, a necklace, three bracelets and armlet are his ornaments. The waist band is also carved with floral motifs and the neck shows two incised grooves. The Brāhmanic aspect is reflected by the pitcher and the sacred thread (yajñopavīta) with a drum-shaped bead as a substitute for the knot. The nimbus has a scalloped border and the remaining field is just left blank. The small curls of hair seem to have appeared in the art of Mathurā for the first time in this phase, but gained popularity with the passage and became a prominent feature in later periods. This, however, did not find favour in the Gandhāra region.⁷⁰ Despite the lower garment the bareness of the body is conspicuous. Only the last line of the inscription is now intact.⁷¹ The appearance of semi curls in hair alone is a late feature, but the other characteristics point to an early phase.

5. Furtherence of Gandhāra Impact (Huviska’s second phase)

The Buddhist icons at Mathurā witness another stage of development in the

⁶⁹. Agrawala, V.S., Indian Art, op. cit., p. 244, text, fig. 149 and Saraswati, S.K., Survey of Indian Sculpture, fig. 33. The inscription is read as ‘Maitreya pratimā pratiṣṭhāpitā’ i.e. the statue of Maitreya was installed.


⁷¹. This can be read as

मातृत्व पुजी मात्
reign of Huviṣka and this is evidenced by a small figure from Ānyor (Mathurā No. A.65; fig. 109) dated in the year 51 corresponding to A.D. 129. The author is in agreement with Van Lohuizen who had opined that the sculpture should be reckoned in the Kanishka era on the basis of the paleographic and stylistic development. But her theory that it suggests the beginning of the Gandharā impact cannot be upheld in the light of the discussion of the preceding group. No doubt the Ānyor figure represents a distinct group and betrays considerable Gandhāra impact but a close scrutiny of the Buddhist figures of Mathurā hints that this impact had set in at the very beginning of Vāsiṣṭha or Huviṣka's reign and it is seen developing in different stages of which we have already discussed the first. The second stage of Gandhāra impact is marked by the following new characteristics.

(i) The drapery covers both the shoulders.
(ii) The feet of the deity are also covered with the garment.
(iii) The broad pleats covering the feet fall in a semicircular fashion.
(iv) The left hand is also raised up holding the hem of the drapery and it is almost parallel to the right hand in abhaya.
(v) The left elbow does not rest on the knee.
(vi) The upper garment forms a semicircular or 'V' shaped pattern round the neck.

The other features viz., the flanking attendants, scalloped border, chest made visible through cloth and right hand in abhaya retaining the profile position. The notable examples of this group are as under:

(i) A headless seated Buddha image (fig. 105) which was taken over by the present author for the Museum (but not acquired so far) may be the earliest statuette of this category. The pedestal with ridged bands and three lions is in close resemblance with that of Kaṭrā image. The left hand holding the hem of the drapery is partly lifted. The navel is deep and prominent. The halo does not bear any carving probably it had a scalloped border. The body conspicuously bears the corpulent aspect of the Yaksha. The traces of attending figures indicate the archaic. Although the date is rubbed off from the inscription it is apparently of the early Kuṣāṇa period.

(ii) The State Museum, Lucknow possesses a sculpture in low relief, (No. B. 14; fig. 106) representing a headless figure of the Buddha with the right hand raised up in the protection pose and left hand also lifted up to the

73. Ibid., p. 183.
74. Van Lohuizen thinks that the idea of covering both the shoulders might have originated in Mathurā, *Sp.*, p. 183.
75. This can be read as
1. महाराजस्थ रा : जातिराजस्थ
armpit supporting the hem of the garment, marking a progressive step in comparison to the earlier figure. The treatment of the drapery is same as described above. The pedestal shows two lions occupying the two corners and a disfigured lion in the centre.\textsuperscript{76} This has been identified in the Museum records as a stūpa. The acolyte to the right of the deity may be recognised as Indra or Śakra from the vajra type implement held by him while the object with the other attendant is not clear. Van Lohuizen once opined that this should be one of the earliest images bearing the Gandhāra influence,\textsuperscript{77} but this view is not tenable in the light of the arguments detailed above.

(iii) Another specimen with much stylistic affinity with the above is a small standing statue of the Buddha in the Mathurā Museum (No. A. 4; fig. 107). The deity with early features showing a shaven head, āṭau, between the eyebrows, scalloped carving on the edge of the nimbus, right hand in abhayā held in profile is noteworthy for some of the important new features of the group such as broad pleats in the drapery covering both the shoulders. ‘V’ shape formation of the sanghāṭi below the neck, which has two distinct incised lines. The scholars like Grünwedel and Vogel\textsuperscript{78} also thought that the sculpture bears Gandhāra impact.

(iv) The Buddha statuette in the Mathurā Museum (No. 15.514; fig. 108) although unique for its drapery must belong to this group on other stylistic grounds. Its early characteristics are: (a) posture of sitting, (b) flanking acolyte to his right, (c) plain halo with the traces of a scallop mark between the head of the attendant and the right hand of the Buddha, and (d) the lion throne. At the same time the sanghāṭi covering both the shoulders is a new formula as it represents the chequered drapery pāṇsukūla cīvara with pālibandha and maryādābandha\textsuperscript{79} looking like the small squares in the fields, a befitting garment for a monk. The idea was to encourage simplicity and austerity and a monk’s robe could be prepared by stitching the stray pieces of cloths. The sculpture is carved in the round and the back slab carries the Bodhi tree and wreaths. The other specimens of this type of monk’s dress in the Mathurā Museum are No. H. 9 and No. 2362.\textsuperscript{80} One such representation is on the tympanum in the Boston Museum.\textsuperscript{81}

\textsuperscript{76} SP., op. cit., p. 184.
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{78} Buddhist Art, fig. 117.
\textsuperscript{79} Mathurā Museum Catalogue, op. cit., p. 49.
\textsuperscript{79} Joshi, N.P., op. cit., p. 83, fig. 50.
\textsuperscript{80} Agrawala’s Catalogue, op. cit., p. 68.
\textsuperscript{81} Vogel, J. Ph., La Sculpture de Mathurā, pl. LV, fig. 2.
6. The Ānyor Idiom

A distinct group of the Buddha icons may be captioned as representing the Ānyor idiom after the Buddha figure from Ānyor (fig. 109), a leading specimen which is dated in the year 51=A.D. 129. The remarkable features as noticed by Van Lohuizen\(^{82}\) and a few by us are:

(i) The garment is coarse with thick pleats and impart a rib effect.
(ii) Despite thickness and heaviness of the folds the transparent effect is retained to some extent.
(iii) A triangular shape is formed on both the shoulders by the wearing of the robe.
(iv) Both the hands are raised up in almost parallel position, the right hand being in the protection pose while the left hand supports the drapery.
(v) The right palm in abhaya becomes frontal.
(vi) The kapardin fashion of hair is now replaced by the rows of notches or semi-circular scratches.
(vii) The meditating (dhyāna) posture appears for the first time.
(viii) The lions on the pedestal are usually frontal or inward. These are now shown standing and indicate a departure from the hitherto seated depiction. The rendering of the animals is rather crude.
(ix) The acolytes flanking the presiding deity are generally missing.

The important sculptures of this group are as under:

(i) As already pointed out, the statuette from Ānyor (Mathurā Museum No. A. 65; fig. 109) is of considerable significance for fixing the chronology of Buddhist images of the Mathurā school. It represents the Buddha seated in padmāsana with his right hand raised up to the shoulder. The position of the palm is now frontal instead of being in profile. This is a new development in shaping the Buddhist figures at Mathurā. The left hand is also raised up holding the hem of the sanghāṭī which now shows somewhat thick and coarse pleats. This is another feature which developed in the second phase of Huviṣka’s reign. The hair is arranged in the schematic notched fashion with row of crescents or semi-circular scratches placed one over the other. This is another departure from the kapardin or canonised form which remained prevalent at Mathurā before and in the early period of Huviṣka’s reign. But this style of hairdo should not necessarily be attributed to the Gandhāra school and may be a natural development of Mathurā style\(^{83}\). The remaining part of the nimbus does not show any decoration.

82. *SP.*, op. cit., pp. 188-89.
83. Joshi and Sharma, op. cit., p. 28. It has been observed that the notched hair fashion is a Mathurā feature which was imitated at Gandhāra. Van Lohuizen, however, thinks that the semi-circular scratches should be taken to be an effort to imitate the curly hair of the Buddha from Gandhāra. (*SP.*, op. cit., 195).
The pedestal indicates the change in the posture of the lions which are now carved *en face* on the two sides. Previously these two animals were always made in profile. This is of course a new feature but the earlier tradition of carving the lions also continues. The most important addition on the pedestal of this sculpture is the depiction of a meditating Buddha as an object of worship between the two devotees. This Buddha also wears the same type of drapery as is worn by the presiding Buddha. The meditating posture (*dhyānamudrā*) is an innovation at Mathurā where the only way of depicting the Master was in *abhaya* pose which conveyed his divine status. This has already been explained in detail in connection with some observations on the early Buddha figures of the third group i.e., the Kaniska phase. The devotee to the left of the meditating Buddha seems to wear a headgear or turban while the person in attendance on the other side is bareheaded. It is presumed that the figures represent Śakra (Indra) and Brahmat, respectively. If so, their status has been downgraded from being at a level and by the side of the Buddha to a lower level, on the pedestal.

The importance of this statuette is further enhanced by the incision of a Brahmī inscription on the upper and the lower rims of the pedestal. It records the year 51 which on counting in the Kuśāna era corresponds to A.D. 129. This fixes a time limit for the influx of several Gandhāra features as well as the emergence of a few indigenous traits in the Buddhist icons produced at Mathurā during the reign of Huviśka.

(ii) The statuette in the Boston Museum (*SP.*, fig. 40) has a close resemblance with the Ānyor Buddha and must have been carved contemporaneously.

(iii) Curiously enough the Lucknow Museum also possesses a fragmentary sculpture (No. B. 3; fig. 110) dated in the 51st year of reign of Huviśka. Fortunately the year and the name of the reigning king are clearly legible. It shows the legs of the deity and traces of the legs of another devotee to the left of the main image. To the right side of the Master is seen the kneeling figure of a headless male with some offerings in his hands. This devotee is clad in the Northern style, namely, the tunic, loin cloth and the buskined sandals. An important point which claims attention is that both the seated and standing images of the Buddha, of the year 51, are marked

84. *SP.*, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
86. Lüders deciphered the inscription as
1. सं 50। (१) अ 3 दि (४) प्रलय पुवया...म् (…) हरतः (प्रति)
2. (स्य) बो (‘‘) (तृ)‘‘ज’‘य म‘‘ (‘‘) विक (प्र) (१) (र)‘‘ ( )

‘In the year 51, in the 3rd (month) of summer, on the 4th (?) day, on this date,...the Bodhisattva (?), the (gift) of..., for the acceptance of the teachers (?), the Mahāsāṅghikas.’

87. *SP.*, *op. cit.*, p. 197.
by the extraneous characteristics. As the presence of the presiding deity is indicated by the extant remains of the feet only the intended drapery cannot be described. But the kneeling devotee furnishes good evidence to support the present stand. The inscription informs about the existence of a monastery of Devaputra i.e., Huviṣka where the image under reference was installed.88

(iv) The Buddha head within a niche (Mathura Museum No. I.20, fig. 111) seems to be yet another specimen of this group. Here the notched hair is arranged in several tiers and terminates into the high top with three circles. Vogel describes this arrangement as 'concentric rows of schematic waves surmounted by a high usṇīṣa of peculiar shape.89

(v) The headless Buddha in the Indian Museum, Calcutta90 is another prominent product of the Ānyor idiom. Actually it represents a further developed stage of Gandhāra influence. The drapery dominates the entire composition with rib and wooden effect. The figure seems to have been formed in a triangular shape. The pedestal is devoid of any lion figure and it appears that a separate pedestal was prepared to place the statue. The epigraph is much damaged and nothing can conclusively be said about the dating. Chanda read the year 30 and thought that the sculpture is a clumsy imitation of the Gandhāra style at Mathurā.91 Van Lohuizen, however, does not uphold his reading and opines that the piece must be contemporary of the Ānyor Buddha and the year may be read as 50 (A.D. 128) and not 30.92

7. Culmination of The Gandhāra Impact

The Gandhāra influence at Mathurā penetrated still deeper and reached the point of culmination during the last years of Huviṣka’s reign with the following new additions93:

(i) The drapery becomes thick and more stiff but the folds are broader.

88. The inscription is read as : H. Lüders, Ibid., p. 64-65.

1. महाराजस्य देव पुजतः हुविष्कार (स) वस्त्राः 50 1 ह (‘) महत्तमास्य । द (‘) व ** (ग्रेत) (व) (पूजतः) मिश्रयुष्म बुझ वम्भम्भ‘‘

2. प्रतिष्ठा प्रतिशिष्ठण्या सर्वे बुझ . पुजारा अनन्त देव धर्म परिस्थापने उपपथयुष्म च (‘) ध दासस्य जानावाणे व्यः व्यः व सत्व विनीत ******

3. बुझ वम्भम्भ सर्वे दुधानाशाम्य सर्वे दत्त हित सुपुर्वः महाराज देव पुजत विहारे

‘In the year 51 of the Mahārāja the Devakutra Huviṣka on the... day of the first month of winter on that (date specified as) above the... image... of Bhiksu Buddhavarman was dedicated in honour of all the Buddhas. By the donation of this sacrifice and pious gift let it be for the acquisition of knowledge of teacher Sanghadāsa... mother and father...... for the lessening of all griefs of Buddhavarman (and) for the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings. In the Vihāra of the Mahārāja Devaputra (i.e. Huviṣka).’

90. SP., fig. 37.
92. SP., op. cit., pp. 201-2.
93. Ibid.
(ii) The rib effect is transformed into the shutter effect.

(iii) There is a control pleat at the elbow from which the lower pleat is covered by the upper one and above this master (box or control) pleat the upper pleat is covered by the lower one.

(iv) A ‘V’ shaped additional scarf seems to go round the neck.

(v) The folds suspend from the left shoulder and are gathered upto the right side.

(vi) Beside the abhaya pose the other postures of the Buddha like dhyāna, bhūmisparsa and dharmacakrapravartana also emerge.

(vii) The feet upto half legs in the seated figures are covered more.

(viii) The hair now becomes curly with a topknot and sometimes it is wavy.

(ix) The nimbus is more elaborate showing a scalloped border and shooting arrows.

(x) The Bodhisattvas are also frequently shown.

(xi) The flanking acolytes disappear.

(xii) The frill of the garment on the pedestal assumes the shape of a cushion.

(xiii) Buddha’s life cycle becomes more popular.

It appears that the heavy inflow of Gandhāra traits at Mathurā resulted in a sort of stylistic crisis and despite several new alien features a few archaic and indigenous conventions were also revived and the most important among such indigenous features is the fashion of showing the uncovered feet which was current during the Kaniṣka phase.

A few important examples of this group are described:

(i) A recently discovered headless image of the Buddha from the site of Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.19; fig. 112). The meditating Buddha is seen carved in high relief against a stele of which the back is red and front is buff in texture. The feet and hands are in crossed pose as desired in the dhyāna attitude. The pedestal is plain and devoid of any animal figure or inscription. The sculpture seems to be an unfinished specimen as seen from the carving of just the scalloped line of halo and the remaining field left blank. The scarf thrown round the neck assumes a ‘V’ shaped blank space. The frill of the lower garment appears to be a separate cushion, which was a common features of the Buddhist figures in the Gandhāra region.  

(ii) Another new discovery from Govindnagar is an almost complete seated image of the Buddha (MM. No. 76. 17; fig. 113), with the left hand supporting the hem of the garment while the right hand raised in the protection pose. The palm is decorated with a double rimmed wheel and

94. Sharma, R.C., Lalit Kalâ No. 19, p. 23.
95. Ingholt. H., Gandhāra Art in Pakistan, figs. 45, 47, 48, 49, 51.
the filling between the fingers gives the effect of the webbed hand, jālāṅgulikara, a cognizance of a great soul. 96 The hair on the head has schematic curls with a protuberance above. The eyebrows are marked with projecting semicircular lines and a circular mark in the relief is conspicuously shown on the forehead. The almond shaped eyes have been stretched towards the temples by a small but sharp horizontal stroke. The earlobes are small and the nose is straight and pointed although the tip is rubbed off. The expression on the face is sober. The halo, as indicated by some traces, was carved with a full blown lotus, shooting arrows and a scalloped edge. The drapery has the same features as explained in case of the image described earlier.

(iii) There are several images of this variety in Mathurā and the Lucknow museums. Mention may be made of a headless statue in the Lucknow Museum (No. B.5, fig. 114). The following remark of the late R.D. Banerji in the old unpublished Lucknow Museum records is noteworthy: "...... had not the material been different the sculpture might have passed for a specimen of Gandhāra." This observation approximates to correct assessment of the element of Gandhāra influence in the art of Mathurā in the later half of the second century A.D.

(iv) The State Museum, Lucknow, houses a fine architectural fragment (No. B. 208; fig. 115) which on stylistic grounds should be included in the same group. The whole composition is divided into six horizontal bands. The uppermost panel represents the worship of the Royal Turban (uṣṇīṣa of Siddhārtha) by the busts of eleven male and female devotees each with a garland shown separately in niches. This is followed by a row of ornamental creepers. The third band is carved with a figure of meditating Buddha inside a cave at the extreme left. That if has been visited by Indra is suggested by the depiction of his mount Airāvata standing in front of the cave. Behind the elephant is seen the bodhi tree. The episode of the first sermon at Sārnāth has been shown next by the scene of the turning of the Wheel of Law (dharmačakra pravartana) by the Buddha himself. His first five disciples are seen between the bodhi tree and the Wheel on pillar in two rows. The victory over Māra has been represented next by the carving of the cupid and his retinue in action while the picture of Buddha's firm and unshakable determination has been shown by his posture of touching the earth (bhūmisparśamudrā) as witness to his victory over Māra. This is a new pose introduced in the art of Mathurā as a result of the Gandhāra influence. The last figure of the panel shows Sūrya with a lotus in the right hand and a dagger in the left. His bust is shown behind two horses running in the opposite directions. The idea

96. Abhijñāna Śākuntalam, VII. 16.
is to suggest the chariot of the deity which is seen drawn by two horses only in the early Kuşâna period.

The fourth band is carved with a railing with four major components i.e., the basement stone (ālambanapindikā), upright pillars (thabha), two cross bars (sticīs) and the coping stone (uṣṇiṣa), which also serves as the pedestal for the upper frieze.

The fifth band is carved with stray scenes beginning with the broken fragment of the left thigh of the Buddha with traces of a hand on it. Buddha is next shown twice seated in abhayamudrā flanked by devotees. This scene is followed in succession by Bodhisattva in meditation wearing usual ornaments and turban, Bodhisattva Maitreya with a water bottle, a half kneeling royal devotee and lastly a standing attendant clad in the Northern style (udācayaveśa) with a long spear. The last panel is a mixture of several decorative motifs including a wavy creeper with leaves and flowers, caitya-window and railing, a full blown lotus, alternating with a rosette twice.

The real significance lies in the fact that this sculpture represents a confluence of several old and new stylistic traits. The garment invariably wraps both the shoulders and the feet of the Buddha are covered in two figures of the third band while the fifth band shows his bare feet. There are thus four distinct postures of the Master comprising dhyāna, dharma-ekarpravartana, bhūmisparśa and abhaya respectively. The fragment of the first figure in the fifth compartment reminds us of the depiction of the Buddha in the canonical fashion when he placed his left hand on the lap and the right hand remained in the protection pose. This representation was quite popular in the Buddhist icons of Kaniṣṭha’s period and continued in the early phase of Huviṣka. A point to note is the depiction of two Bodhisattvas beside the Buddha. The one in meditation with royal attire may be identified as Siddhārtha while the other with a flask is Maitreya. The depiction of Sūrya with the Buddha arouses further interest. Most of the attending figures are in the indigenous fashion but the one with long spear is a Scythian. The sculpture really serves as a mirror to reflect the contemporary society of Mathurā. It faithfully renders the churning and melting stage of religious and social movements which were drawn upon by the master sculptors through themes and motifs.

(v) The stylistic development is further attested by a fragment of a bas relief (Lucknow Museum No. B.23) representing the visit of Indra to Buddha who is seen in meditation on a rocky cave.

(vi) Another important sculpture of the same group is No. B.182 of the Lucknow Museum, showing a row of acanthus leaves and an undulating creeper. Two Buddhas sit in different attitudes. The first one is in abhaya pose wearing ekān̄sikasanghāṭī with bare feet. The second Buddha is seen in meditation wearing ubhayān̄sikasanghāṭī and also covering the feet.
The third is a Bodhisattva Maitreya as recognised by his ornaments and a water pot in the left hand.

(vii) The fragmentary lintel in the Mathurā Museum (No. 14, 403; fig. 116) shows from our left the Buddha seated in abhaya wearing ekānsikasanghāṭī in the Kaṭāra Bodhisattva fashion. The second Buddha is also in abhaya but he wears the ubhayānsikasanghāṭi holding the hem of the drapery in the lifted left hand while his feet are covered. The second scene displays the Bodhisattva in meditation, wearing a crown and usual ornaments. To his right is seen a devotee clad in the Northern style (udīcyevēśa) holding a garland. The lady in the alien attire also holding a wreath may be his spouse. The third niche represents the Buddha in abhaya with the garment covering both the shoulders and also his feet.

The fusion of several traits of Gandhāra and Mathurā styles in this sculpture is specially noteworthy. Another important feature is the shape of the halo which shows the scallop motif between two lines and this appears to be a common characteristic of this group. But we do come across several varieties as in the present piece also the nimbus of one Buddha contains several incised lines of decoration.

8. Late Kuṣāṇa Treatment

It appears that the Buddhist sculptures experience stylistic changes after about each quarter of the century and during the reign of Vāsudeva also this process continues. Van Lohuizen is justified in analysing the two Buddha figures, namely, one from Śrāvasti and the other from Śrīlāghāṭi under a separate category. The main distinguishing features of which are as follows:

1. The shutter type stiff drapery is ‘fan’ shaped to the right side.
2. The usual ‘V’ shape space below the neck is roundish.
3. A cushion of kuśa grass is seen on the pedestal.

A few noteworthy specimens of this group are described below:

(i) A statuette in dull yellowish stone in the State Museum, Lucknow, (Renumbered as 66.183; fig. 117), was discovered by Sir John Marshall in the course of the excavations at Śrāvasti. The hand shows the webbed (jālāṅgulikara) style as explained above and a beautiful cakra on the palm of right hand held in abhaya. The traces of halo suggest that it was decorated with a full blown lotus. The eyebrows are drawn up as if to provide a cupshaped cavity for the eyes. There is a thick kuṣa-grass cushion on the pedestal. Below in the centre is seen a Bodhisattva seated

97.  *SP., op. cit.*, p. 196 and text fig. 40.
in meditation and flanked by four garland bearing worshippers. The inscription on the lower rim of the pedestal is interesting. It reads:

'Shadevasya Pr (a) var (i) kasya Sāketasya deya dha (r) mo' i.e. 'the pious gift of Shaddeva, a Pravārika of Sāketa (Ayodhyā)'\textsuperscript{100}

Van Lohuizen opines that stylistically it should belong to the later phase of Vāsudeva's reign who was in power during the years 62-98, corresponding to A.D. 150-176.\textsuperscript{101} But her palaeographic argument may not stand a scrutiny and this point has been dealt with separately. The installation of a Buddha figure of the Mathurā school by a devotee from Sāketa at Śrāvasti is of extraordinary interest to us. Firstly it pronounces the fame, richness and popularity, of the art works of Mathurā. Secondly, it also indicates that the only style of art that flourished in the Northern India during the Kusāṇa period was that represented by the Mathurā school and the people of Sāketa also depended on Mathurā for procuring their good sculptures. Thirdly, it also indirectly hints that Buddhism was making a footing even in the strongholds of Brāhmanism and a resident of Sāketa (Ayodhyā a renowned seat of the Vaishnava sect) preferred to install a Buddha statuette at Śrāvasti. Mathurā, the other stronghold of Vaishnavism-Bhāgvatism, was already under strong Buddhist influence.

(ii) Another good specimen of this group is in the Mathurā Museum (No. A.21). It is from Sitalāghāṭī Mathurā city.\textsuperscript{102} The detached head has been rejoined with the body and it shows the traces of curls. The hands are broken and the pedestal, although damaged, has received almost the same treatment as discussed in the case of the Śrāvasti Buddha. The only difference is constituted by the elaborate halo on the pedestal of the Bodhisattva figure from Sitalāghāṭi. The obliterated letters on the pedestal are read as "Nam hita sukhārtha".\textsuperscript{103}

(iii) A comparatively new acquisition in the Mathurā Museum (No. 61.5304; fig. 118) may form part of the same group. It represents a headless figure of the Buddha turning the Wheel of Law with his right hand. The drapery is similar to that of the earlier figure and a thin cushion on the pedestal has also been indicated. This is of course a crude representation but the style resembles the idiom of the previous two Buddhas. In the present case the dharmacakrapravartana action is noteworthy.

(iv) An important statue of the Buddha (Mathurā Museum No. 76.1; fig. 119), was acquired for the Museum by the present author. It represents the

\textsuperscript{100} ASR., 1910-11, p. 12.
\textsuperscript{101} SP., op. cit., p. 203, fig. 43.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid., fig. 44.
\textsuperscript{103} Agrawala's Catalogue, op. cit., p. 54.
lower half of the standing deity flanked by four garland bearing devotees on the right, and the same number of female worshippers on the left. Between the legs is placed the typical object consisting of hair, a cluster of lotus buds and a full blown lotus on top. The identification of this motif has already been discussed above. The drapery is rather peculiar as it is devoid of folds forming a large vertical triangle in front and another small triangle above. The three lined sharply incised inscription records the date of installation as 93 (A.D. 171) in the reign of Maharāja Devaputra Vāsudeva. V.N. Srivastava reads the word Kayastha in the end.104 The inscription records the installation of this image along with an umbrella which is now lost. Although this dated piece does not help us much in framing the chronology of the Buddhist images, nevertheless, it is a rare specimen of the Mathurā School of Art.

9. Decline of Gandhāra Impact

It has already been pointed out that with the overwhelming Gandhāra influence in the last years of Huviṣka and early days of Vāsudeva a stylistic crisis developed at Mathurā. Consequently both indigenous and Gandhāra traits started dominating the sculptures. The revival of the kapardin form of Buddha with usṇīṣa and bare feet in padmāsana is an important landmark. Ultimately the indigenous trends emerge victorious and the flood of Gandhāra trends starts receding. This gradual retreat is to be traced from the last days of Vāsudeva i.e. the beginning of the last quarter of the second century A.D. The alteration of the drapery is the most conspicuous aspect of this change. It appears that after the Kaniṣka phase the Mathurā school, owing to the closer contacts with its counterpart in Gandhāra region developed a taste to dress up in the foreign garb and this preference remained a dominant feature for about three quarters of the second century A.D. Then a feeling of disgust is seen with the rejection of alien traits and it is first reflected in the Buddha’s garment which is now less stiff, relaxed and light. Actually the thick woolly robe suited the requirement of the cold

104. V.N. Srivastava reads it as follows :

1. (सिद्धम्) महाराजस्य देवपुत्रस्य वासुदेवस्य स 90 (+) 3 हे 4 द 20 (+) 5 बस्य (व) पूर्वांश भग (व) तो वि
2. तम्रहस्य स्वमतस्य प्रवशस्य प्रतिमा छात्र च प्रतिस्थापित्व प्रथ्य धम्मवर्ग ग्राघ मार्ग
3. शरीर धन्त पितर च सर्वसंहित मातर च जिज्ञ (शि) रि पुरस्कृत यम् भवेतान् कायस्तेन

In the 93rd year of Maharaj Devaputra Vasudeva, in the 4th month of Hemanta as on the 25th day, an image of Lord Buddha, (Pitamah) who has full grasp of knowledge and whose faith cannot be shaken, was set up along with a parasol by a Buddhist monk who was Kayastha (?) after paying due respect to his father Sarvanand, mother Jiva and Arya Dharmesvara, Arya Maha and Arya Dhana. (R.C. Sharma, Mathura Museum and Art, p. 67 and BMA No. 4, p. 22).
climate of the Gandhāra region but it did not suit Mathurā which is quite hot. The outlandish cloth was adopted just for a change and as the wave against the foreign elements prevailed it made its frontal attack on the drapery and it was the beginning of the process of Indianisation. With the decline of the Kuşāṇa rule (under the circumstances explained in chapter two) the process gained a further momentum and the art products of Mathurā experienced it at every stage.

The most important instances of this development are:

(i) Headless image of the Buddha in the Mathurā Museum (No. 42. 2919; fig. 120) wearing ubhayāṇšikasanghāsti and seated in meditating pose. There is a thick Kuśa-grass cushion on the throne supported by large lions and the worship of the Bodhisattva by the Śaka noblemen and women. Thus the pedestal bears many Gandhāra traits. But the garment of the deity shows relaxing trends. The folds present a tendency to become independent reviving the earlier rib convention under a refined treatment. The statue may suggest the beginning of the process of Indianisation but still retaining a heavy Gandhāra influence on the pedestal.

(ii) A headless statuette from the site of Govindnagar now in the Mathurā Museum (No. 76.33; fig. 121), wears the robe with loose and independent folds. Stylistically it seems to be the work of a less skilled sculptor.

(iii) The site of Govindnagar revealed an important standing image of the Buddha, (fig. 122), now in the possession of the Archaeological Survey of India. This beautiful piece of art presents the deity with a long robe covering both the shoulders and reaching below the knees revealing the second under garment below. The right hand is raised up in the abhaya pose with webbed (jālalakṣaṇa) features. Although the control pleat is seen at the elbow yet the stiffness has given way to lightness. The curls in the hair present a more sophisticated treatment with three rows of full circles. The cupshaped eyes show an inclination for elongation and there is a indication of an inward vision. These features mark a definite stage towards refinement if compared with the statuette from Śrāvastī (fig. 117).

105. We have already explained this feature while discussing the figure No. 113 (MM No.76.17) but for detailed discussion the following references may be seen:

(a) SP., op. cit., pp. 213-15.
(b) Foucher, A., Art Greco Buddhist, 1952, p. 558.
(iv) The torso of the standing Buddha image (MM No. 76.21; fig. 123) is another new addition from the site of Govindnagar. The treatment of the cloth though prominent yet suggests a light effect through schematic carving of independent folds. The right hand in the protection pose is a subsequent addition as the stone used for carving it does not match the stone used for the image. The use of an iron nail to join the hand to the arm points to the truth. The addition of this hand suggests that the image was reused after mutilation. The new hand is rather heavy and crude and might have been fixed to the image in the post-Gupta period.

(v) The Mathurā Museum possesses yet another interesting headless Buddha image (No. 76.18; fig. 124) with the right hand raised up in the frontal position, imparting abhaya. The webbed (jālalakṣaṇa) feature is conspicuous between the fingers. The palm is decorated with a disc and there are some ornamental lines on the wrist. The left hand supporting the cloth shows half a cakra. The garment suggests a subtle treatment with independent folds. The gathering of the lappets below the neck has become round in place of the usual shape. The pedestal is carved with the dental moulding intervened by blank space. Between the feet is placed the favourite 'turban' motif. The deity was provided with a halo as suggested by a small projection above the left arm. The sculpture is made in the buff sand stone.

(vi) The figure of Bodhisattva in meditation (Mathurā Museum No. 46.3231; fig. 125), may also be included in this or earlier group. Flanked by worshippers, Prince Gautama, wearing a crown and ornaments, is seen practising austerity and penance. It reminds one of the pronouncements of the great poet Aśvaghoṣa that the attainment of nirvāṇa (salvation), the highest goal was not the monopoly of the ascetics and it could be achieved even by the pious house-holders.106

10. Controversy about Style and Date

Before taking up the next group of the Buddhist icons in the process of framing the chronology we should introduce the problem of a prevalent confrontation between the style on the one hand and the date recorded on the specimens on the other. The sculptures so far illustrated to distinguish the stylistic development of the groups dealt with above are noncontroversial, as the features generally tally with the specified date. We have seen that the dated sculptures of Mathurā do record an established era which, as discussed in the second chapter, most probably commenced with the accession of Kaniṣka to power in A.D. 78. This era was used in the Kuṣāṇa art products of Mathurā upto the year 98 i.e. A.D. 176

106. प्राप्त गृहसौरिपि मोक्ष मार्यः: Buddhacarita, IX. 10.
and seems to have been discontinued subsequently probably after the death of Vāsudeva, the last important monarch of the Kuśāna dynasty. But suddenly we find stylistically developed Buddhist or Jaina figures from Mathurā inscribed to record lower digits of the years from 5 to 57, but not mentioning the name of the ruler. In order to avoid a lengthy discussion we would prefer to confine ourselves to the Buddhist figures only.

To make our point more explicit we would introduce a Buddhist image of year 22 (Mathurā Museum No. 1557; fig 126). This represents a headless deity seated in padmāsana holding the hem of the drapery with the left hand. The right hand, which was raised in abhaya, is broken. The drapery covers both shoulders and the pedestal shows the worship of Bodhisattva Maitreya as indicated by holding a waterflask in his left hand and ornaments on the body. The treatment of the garment, a thick cushion of kuśa grass, decoration of the pedestal, and the heavy and bulging figures of the lions all speak of a very late stage of development with several Gandhāra traits and the statue has many similarities with figure No. 120 discussed in the last group belonging to the late second century A.D. This certainly suggests a much more advanced stage if compared with the statuette from Śrāvastī (fig. 117) which has been stylistically assigned to the last days of Vāsudeva. But the year 22 inscribed on the statue under reference creates confusion.¹⁰⁶a

On the other hand the statue of Bodhisattva recording the year 23 and the name of the ruling king Kaniṣṭha, (Mathurā Museum No. 20. 1602, fig. 91) represents him in the old Kaṭrā or canonised fashion. He wears an ekānsikasanghāṭī covering left shoulder only with a few folds above while the remaining part of the robe is transparent. The statue does not suggest the slightest infiltration of the Gandhāra influence. Thus there is no similarity between this image and the statue recording the year 22 giving no name of the ruling king. Stylistically these two are quite poles apart. Under these circumstances we are compelled to draw the conclusion that the year referred to in these two statues has to be reckoned in two different systems of counting. There are several other examples but we have cited just one to introduce this controversy.

A solution of this riddle would now be the obvious desideratum. In this task we are helped mainly by the views of three scholars in the field i.e., J.E. Van Lohuizen de Leeuw,¹⁰⁷ J.M. Rosenfield¹⁰⁸ and B.N. Mukherjee.¹⁰⁹ In recent years G.S. Gai has also joined the fray on the palaeographical grounds.¹¹⁰ B.N. Mukherjee has

¹⁰⁷. SP., pp. 232-32.
presented a condign summary in his introductory paras to a recent publication on the subject. The suggestions offered by these authorities are mentioned below.\(^{111}\)

(A) Van Lohuizen opts to omit the figure of 100 from the date. Elaborating her viewpoint she remarks (with which we agree) that the omission of the digit of hundred has been a common practice and is followed to date\(^{112}\) as by writing 83 we really mean 1983 for the sake of convenience of current and popular counting. She further suggests that after reaching the figure of 100 in the era founded by Kaniṣṭha the digit of hundred became redundant and with the beginning of the new century altogether a fresh counting, commenced. It was after the death of Vāsudeva whose reign has been recorded upto year 98 of Kaniṣṭha era that the digit of hundred was omitted. Thus she prefers to date the above Buddha statue of the year 22 to 122 corresponding to A.D. 200 which befits the stylistic sequence also.\(^{113}\) As such the presumption of Daya Ram Sahni for assigning the statue in the reign of Kaniṣṭha is not justified.\(^{114}\)

(B) J.M. Rosenfield holds almost a similar view with a slight variation that he sees the possibility of the commencement of a second Kuśāṇa era\(^{115}\) just after the death of Vāsudeva in year 98 and the controversial icons giving small digits should be reckoned in the second Kuśāṇa era. Thus although the theory differs, the net result is almost the same. Van Lohuizen omits 100 and Rosenfield omits 98 a minor difference of two years only and this slight variation for us is negligible in framing the stylistic chronology.

(C) B.N. Mukherjee commenting on the above two theories opines, 'The above arguments apparently look impressive. However, these perhaps do not stand a close scrutiny.'\(^{116}\) He argues for considering different factors for dating the art objects and only the style should not be held to be the conclusive proof. Social, religious and economic conditions, skill and performance of the craftsman, urgency of work etc. should be taken into account in case of any discrepancy.\(^{117}\) Mukherjee has given his own observations on the stylistic

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development of the early art of Mathurā. The details furnished under the major nine heads are of considerable significance for the researchers of early Indian art but we do not find ourselves in complete agreement with his assessment.\(^\text{118}\)

It is also not possible to ignore the gradual line of development of art and rely on the date of any unspecified era as discussed in case of the present statue of the year 22 (fig. 126). We are aware of the fact that different eras have been used simultaneously at all times according to the conventions and convenience of the people. In the modern times also, we have several current eras in India while the Christian era is predominant, the Śaka and Vikrama Samvats are preferred in the Hindu rituals. Similarly the Hizri San is prevalent among the Muslims.

(D) G.S. Gai reopening the discussion on the fragmentary Buddhist image from Mathurā of the year 14 of Mahārāja Devaputra Kaniṣka criticises the views of Van Lohuizen who on the paleographic grounds opines that this piece should belong to the year 114. Some other statues under the theory of omission of 100 have also been discussed.\(^\text{119}\)

_The Kauśāmbī Riddle_

After introducing the controversy of the dated sculptures in brief we now scrutinise a few important Buddhist icons which, although dated and controversial, fit quite well in our chronology. In this connection we should first take up the three statues discovered at Kauśāmbī recording the year 83 but not mentioning any Kuśāṇa king.

(i) A fragmentary statuette in the Allahabad Museum (No. 89; fig. 127) representing the right thigh of the Buddha covered with the broad pleates of a heavy woollen garment. The lower expanse of the folds cover the feet also. Mirashi explores several eras to date this piece.\(^\text{120}\) But our stylistic study fairly coincides with the period assigned by Promod Chandra and accordingly the date should be reckoned in the Kaniṣka era and the given date should correspond to year A.D. 161 (83+78), the reign of Vāsudeva\(^\text{121}\) although the epigraph refers to Bhadramāgha.


\(^{119}\) Gai, G.S., op. cit., p. 213.


\(^{121}\) Chandra, Promod, Stone Sculpture in the Allahabad Museum, op. cit., pp. 63-64, pl. XLI.

The inscription is read as: _Sri Bhadramaghasya va 83 ‘The gift of Sri Bhadramagha, the year 83’._
Chronology of Buddhist Icons of Mathurā School

(ii) The defaced sculptures in the possession of the University Museum, Allahabad (fig. 128) represents the Buddha seated on a lion throne with the two animals rendered in profile, facing opposite directions. The sanghāṭī covers both the shoulders and feet of the deity. The neck is marked with incised decorative lines. Van Lohuizen thinks that the hair was arranged in semicircular lines in different rows. The folds of the garment falling from the left hand bear the honeysuckle motif of decoration.

(iii) The headless statue of the Buddha in the Allahabad University Museum (fig. 129) bears the same characteristics as observed in the preceding figure. But in the present case the right arm is missing and the pedestal does not show any lion figure. Like the two earlier images this one is also dated in the year 83 of King Bhadramagha.

Our observations

The three Buddha sculptures detailed above are of considerable importance for more than one reason. All of them were found at the same site and all bear the year 83. These are all carved in the Kuśāṇa fashion of the Mathurā school. The statues follow the style of carving which was prevalent in the early years of Huviṣka’s reign approximately towards the end of the first quarter of the second century A.D. But the Kauśāṁbi sculptures record the year 83 which corresponds to A.D. 161. By this time the Buddha figures unearthed at or in the vicinity of Mathurā had undergone a vital change as explained in group No. 7 and 8. The problem now is to bridge up the gap between the styles of Huviṣka and Vāsudeva for assigning periods to the stray Mathurā products found at Kauśāṁbi.

We are aware of the fact that there was no independent manufactory of stone sculptures at Kauśāṁbi in the Kuśāṇa period and the images chiselled in the Mathurā atelier were transported and installed in distant places. This is corroborated by the Buddha image of the Allahabad Museum which was installed at Kauśāṁbi in the second regnal year of Kaniska. This statue follows the contemporary idiom practised at Mathurā but the three later statues under reference stand for the continuance of an earlier tradition in a subsequent period. The reason of this gap in our opinion seems to be that the statues were carved earlier but remained unused or unsold for a long period as with the introduction of new trends the old fashioned statues probably outlived their market value. Later, on some urgent demand, these were pressed into service again and supplied and the inscription was then undercut recording the actual year of installation.

Alternatively, the family of some sculptors working at Mathurā during the reign of Huviśka may have migrated to Kauśāmbī and settled there for good. Owing to slow means of communication or for other reasons the family could not remain in touch with the new experiments taking place in the homeland metropolis of Mathurā. When the occasion demanded the old fashioned statues were chiselled in A.D. 161. Harle suggests the possibility of an offshoot of the Mathurā School at Sārnāth and Kauśāmbī.\(^{124}\)

These are some of the conjectures which may help in bridging up the gap of about quarter of a century which can otherwise be ignored. But this line of thinking may pave the way for considering other stray statues recording a late date but bearing an anachronistically archaic look. The famous Mānkunwar Buddha in the Lucknow Museum (No. 0.70; fig. 168), installed in the reign of Kumāragupta retains the Kuśāṇa idiom of Mathurā to a great extent. The same can be said about the new Jaina sculptures discovered at Vidiśa and dated in the reign of Rāmagupta (A.D. 376-380)\(^{128}\) but looking like the late Kuśāṇa period products of Mathurā. Thus the name of the reigning king or even the date may not prove to be of absolute help in attributing a period to stray and doubtful specimen. We must be prepared to explore several possibilities and should not jump to a conclusion abruptly.

**Srāvastī Bodhisattva**

The colossal statue of a Bodhisattva in the Indian Museum, Calcutta hailing from Srāvastī (No. A.2502; fig. 130) also deserves our attention. This is fashioned in the style of the early Buddha/Bodhisattva statues of Kaniṣka’s reign and can well be compared with the standing images of our group No. 3. The drapery covers only left shoulder and a transparent effect is seen on the left arm and soft folds are seen on the left shoulder. The lower garment is fastened with a waist-band of which broad fillets suspend to his right side. The major part of the halo is broken and the remaining portion does not show any details. But the sculpture is carved in the round and the scalloped edge can be noticed at the back side. Between the feet is placed the ‘lotus turban’ object which is now corroded. The four line inscription on the pedestal is rubbed off and only a few letters can be made out.

Cunningham while describing this statue commented, ‘It opens with the figure 10 and some unit of the Gupta numerals...’\(^{126}\) This means that he was inclined to date it in the early Gupta period. This does not tally with the fabrication of the image, particularly the stiff posture, deep navel and drapery, which constitute

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early features. But there are a few points which might justify a date in the post-Kuṣāṇa phase. The carving of several lines (trivalaya) round the neck and the elongation of the ear-lobes till they touch the shoulders and the slimness of the body are late characteristics. Thus this Bodhisattva image combines both early and late features and cannot be dated so easily. Anderson was not in favour of dating it later than the first century A.D.\textsuperscript{127}

**Buddha of Year 36 (?)**

Another very interesting dated sculpture falling in our controversial group is an intact and beautiful statue in the National Museum, New Delhi, fig. 131. It is reported to have been found between Agra and Mathurā.\textsuperscript{128} It represents the Buddha seated in meditation wearing an ubhayāṇsikasanghāṭī (garment covering both shoulders) imparting a rib or shutter effect with schematic folds which suspend from the left side but are drawn up to the right side. The feet in padmāsana are exposed and the hands are placed crossing each other. The eyebrows are drawn up and a circular mark (ūrṇā) is seen between them. The hair is arranged in spiral curls with a protuberance on the crown. The nimbus is tastefully decorated with a full blown lotus in the centre successively encircled by a floral wreath interspersed with rosettes, a beaded line and a scalloped edge. The pedestal supported on two sturdy lions looking frontally with protruding tongues bears a kuśa-grass cushion. In the interspace between the lions, below the throne, is a dharmacakra mounted on a pillar at the centre, flanked on either side by worshipping devotees, both men and women. The lower rim of the pedestal bears a one line inscription which records the year 36 without mentioning the name of the reigning king.\textsuperscript{129}

Now this inscription poses a problem as the year 36 reckoned in the Kuṣāṇa era corresponds to A.D. 114 which falls in the early phase of Huviśka and as such must tally with our group No. 4, but it does not. This has no similarity with the other Buddha image of the National Museum, New Delhi (No. L.55.75, fig. 98), which records the year 32 and bears all characteristics of the style of early Huviśka period. Actually the statutte of the year 36 represents a more developed style than the Buddha figures of our Group 8 of Vāsudeva period. Clearly the inscription given on the pedestal is misleading and we should not reckon it in the Śaka era of A.D. 78.

In such cases we are left with no alternative but to accept the theory either of Van Lohuizen of the omission of 100 or to follow Rosenfield, suggesting the commencement of a second Kuṣāṇa era after the death of Vāsudeva. This gives us a good margin of a century and the sculpture may be placed in (100+36+78)

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid., p. 195.
\textsuperscript{128} Van Lohuizen de Leeuw, J.E., *op. cit.*, (our reference No. 122) p. 130.
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., p. 131.
A.D. 214 according to Lohuizen and in \((98 + 36 + 78)\) A.D. 212 following the suggestion of Rosenfield. In the light of this discussion the assignment of this Buddha statue by A.K. Narain to the reign of Huviṣka stands revision.\(^\text{130}\)

There are several other dated Buddhist sculptures of Kuśāṇa and late Kuśāṇa period which are dated but the fixation of their age needs a fresh scrutiny in the light of the above discussion. Mention may be made of the pedestal of the Buddha statue seated in padmāsana representing the Wheel of Law on a corpulent Yakṣa dated in the year 8, Mathurā Museum No. 2347.

Sometimes the problem of chronology is further complicated by the over-enthusiastic or ill-conceived views of art collectors and museum personnel. For example, in the State Museum, Lucknow, some Kuśāṇa period fragments were joined with the Gupta and Medieval period images. These have been separated now. Even the art historians have cited such wrongly joined figures in their researches to support their arguments. Van Lohuizen has published one such image in her thesis and discussed it in detail.\(^\text{131}\) The same has been illustrated and discussed by B.N. Mukerjee.\(^\text{132}\) But if it is made clear that the Gupta period Buddha head was wrongly transplanted by someone on the Kuśāṇa period Jina body, the mystery is solved and there would be no room for laboured and undue interpretations.

Religious rivalry, overzealousness or ignorance have also been responsible for creating stylistic confusion. The Mathurā Museum houses a few Bodhisattva images and śāla-bhaṇḍajikās of the Kuśāṇa period (MM No. 40.2887-88) which are marked with a tilaka in bold relief on the forehead. This was probably done during the 16th century when the Mathurā region was under the influence of the Vallabha or puṣṭi sect of Vaiṣṇavism.

In the late Medieval period the old canons of iconography were either forgotten or ignored and the Buddhist statues were worshipped as Brāhmaṇical deities. The present author acquired two Buddha statuettes from the Gokarneshwar shrine (MM. No. 73.30; 73.31) under worship as female deities namely Nāgarī and Sāgarī, respectively. The statuette from Ānyor (MM No. A. 65; fig. 109) of the year 51 was known as Durgā and the famous Kaṭra Bodhisattva (MM No. A. 1; fig. 79) was interpreted as Viśvāmitra with Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. A miniature votive stūpa is currently accepting the offerings as Śivalīṅga near the Bengalighat on the bank of the Yamunā at Mathurā: The image of Śrīnathji at Nāthdwārā is suspected to be a Buddha statue of the Kuśāṇa period from Mathurā.

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131. Sp., *op. cit.*, pp. 249-51, fig. 60.
132. Mukherjee, B.N., *op. cit.*, p. 349, pl. V.
11. Post-Kuśāṇa Pre-Gupta Phase

As explained in chapter two, with the setting in a decline of the Kuśāṇa power was on and especially after the death of Vāsudeva in about A.D. 176 a period of disruption and disintegration emerged and it continued for more than a century. The dust of political instability in northern India settled only when the Guptas came to power in A.D. 319-20. What terminology should be given to the artistic creation of this long time span in the absence of a real controlling authority, is a problem before us. This gap may be explained by different nomenclatures viz., (a) transitional phase, (b) post-Kuśāṇa period, (c) pre-Gupta epoch, (d) age of disruption etc. But from the point of view of the study of art we prefer to caption it as ‘Kuśāṇo-Gupta phase’ when the Kuśāṇa trends were passing away and the Gupta features were coming in.

Really speaking it is only for the sake of convenience that the dynastic names are given to the art of a particular period. The names of the king or of ruling dynasty become common and it is easy to associate the art of the age with them without going into details of the actual contribution made by the ruling king in the furtherance of art. Art did not extinguish with the end of the Kuśāṇas at Mathurā, neither did it suddenly reappear with the emergence of the Gupta rule. It was, in fact, a continuous process which had its roots in the masses, wealthy merchants and noblemen who encouraged the art and the artisans for the fulfilment of their religious, spiritual, social and aesthetic predilections and aspirations. No doubt, royal patronage resulted in the refinement and acceleration of artistic creations.

As the royal patronage in real sense was denied to the sculptors of Mathurā during the period of disruption, art lived on its own and the artist followed the tune of the people in his products. We have already pointed out that the feeling of disgust and repulsion against the foreign influence had begun in the late years of Vāsudeva’s reign and the choice was for reviving the old indigenous trends.

The Kuśāṇo-Gupta phase is, therefore, marked for the following characteristics:

(i) Rejection of alien i.e. Gandhāra influence,
(ii) Revival of earlier conventions,
(iii) Thick and heavy folds giving way to light treatment of the drapery,
(iv) Resurgence of transparent effects,
(v) Commencement of the diminution of rib or shutter effects,
(vi) Improved facial expression conveying a feeling of serenity,
(vii) Horizontality of the eyes,
(viii) Tendency of the earlobes for elongation,
(ix) Fully curled hair style,
(x) Thinning down of the massive body,
(xi) Clearer carving of the nimbus, and
(xii) Inclination towards all round refinement and improvement of the figure.

There are several Buddhist sculptures which fall in the Kuṣāṇa-Gupta group and we cite below a few instances:

(i) A headless statue of the Buddha in the Mathurā Museum (No. 13.361; fig. 132) is an important illustration of this phase. The deity sits in padmāsana in meditation on a lion throne. The ubhayānsika drapery shows the Kuṣāṇa pattern but it is considerably relaxed. The independent folds make it light and transparent. The remaining part of the neck bears trivalaya carving. V.S. Agrawal dated this piece in the Kuṣāṇa period\textsuperscript{133} but it has more Gupta features than Kuṣāṇa.

(ii) A headless seated image of the Dipankara Buddha in the State Museum, Lucknow (No. B.22; fig. 133), should not be placed in the Gupta period, 5th century A.D., as has been done so far.\textsuperscript{134} A fresh scrutiny of the art, palaeography of the inscription on the pedestal of and iconography leads us to put it in the late 3rd or early 4th century A.D. The treatment of drapery is similar to that of the previous statue with relaxed rib effect. The identification of the posture (mudrā) is also subject to revision. To us the deity appears to be in abhaya pose and not in upadeśa (preaching) pose as described earlier.\textsuperscript{135} The left hand was raised up to support the hem of the drapery in the parallel position to the right hand in the protection pose. This was the common practice of shaping the Buddha statues in the late Kuṣāṇa period.

(iii) Among the Buddhist images of Kuṣāṇo-Gupta phase we would particularly like to include a dated Buddha statue of the Lucknow Museum (No. B.10; fig. 134). This almost intact and complete figure in buff sand stone representing the deity standing in the attitude of abhaya was found in the course of an excavation, the site of Kaṭṛā in Mathurā during the last century. Wearing an ubhayānsikasanghāṭi the Buddha holds the hem of the drapery with his left hand. The halo behind the head is richly decorated with various bands including the prominent radiating arrows or spearheads at the centre. The two-line boldly undercut Brāhma inscription is read as on further pages.\textsuperscript{136}

\textsuperscript{133} Agrawala's *Mathurā Museum Catalogue*, op. cit., p. 66.
\textsuperscript{134} *IA.*, VI., p. 219 and XXXIII, p. 155.
\textsuperscript{135} Lucknow Museum's unpublished records prepared by R. D. Banerjee.
1. Devadarmoyam Yaśāvihāre Śākyabhikṣunyā Jayabhatṭāyā yadatra puṇyaṁ tadhavatu sarvasa

2. tvānāmanuttara jñānāvāptaye samvatsaraḥ 230 (280)

The sculpture has been attributed to the Gupta period adding 319 to the year 230, corresponding to A.D. 549. If the reading is accepted 280 it would be placed towards the close of the 5th century i.e., A.D. 599-600. The date was checked up again by Prof. G.R. Mitterballur and it was found that the year given is 230 and not 280. A careful study of the stylistic features, however, prompts us to review the date so far accepted by the scholars. In no case can the sculpture be cited as a specimen of the full-fledged Gupta period art. The following points deserve due consideration:

(i) The body is rather short statured and not slim as is generally seen in the 5th or 6th century Buddhist images from Mathurā.

(ii) The halo bears a radiating band of arrows, an earlier trait than the sophisticated lotus decoration which became an essential feature in the Gupta age.

(iii) The right hand raised up in abhaya is carved with a wheel which is a common trait in the Kuśāṇa period but almost absent in the Gupta age.

(iv) The broad zigzag fold of drapery falling from the left hand is again a motif of the late Kuśāṇa period while in the Gupta age two parallel lines of rippling pleats hang down from the waist to the feet.

(v) Another striking feature is a small lotus or turban shaped pattern placed between the two feet. This is quite conspicuous in the Buddhist images of the Kuśāṇa period hailing from Mathurā. It becomes small and insignificant in the later phase but is extremely rare or absent in the Gupta period. The interpretation of this phenomenon has already been offered above while submitting some observations at the end of discussion of group 3 but the point desired to be stressed here is that it is a distinct feature of the Kuśāṇa period standing Buddha-Bodhisattva icons.

(vi) The webbed hand with criss-cross net between the fingers is also an early tradition.

(vii) The face does not bear the typical serenity of the Gupta age. The overall expression is less suggestive than the faces of the Gupta period.

(viii) The circular mark on forehead is a pre-Gupta feature and seldom seen in the Gupta age.

(ix) The two little devotees as seen near the feet of the Gupta period Buddhas have not yet emerged.

(x) The formation of Brāhmī letters of the inscription is rather archaic compared to the beautiful script of the Guptas.

(xi) The language of the inscription is hybrid form of Sanskrit as against the chaste Sanskrit used in the 5th-6th century inscriptions in Northern India, particularly, at Mathurā.
Taking all these points into consideration one is apt to suggest that the image under reference should not be reckoned in the Gupta era as the stylistic features betray a fairly early date. It appears that the Kuśāna era of 78 was not altogether forgotten in the period of disruption and the figure of 230 in the present image probably infers the same. The date then comes to A.D. 308 (78+230=308) which quite convincingly fits the stylistic development. The sculpture should, therefore, be cited as a good specimen of the transitional or the Kuśāṇa-Gupta idiom prevalent in the early 4th century A.D.

It is interesting to note that Joanna Williams has also thought on the same lines and has felt the necessity of changing the date. But she accepts the reading of H. Lüders favouring the year 280 instead of 230. Secondly she prefers the commencement of the Kaniṣṭha era from c. 120 and the date thus assigned by her to this image comes to c. A.D. 400 (280+120=400). In that case the figure becomes a full-fledged Gupta piece with which we do not find ourselves in agreement on the stylistic grounds detailed above. The possibility of the prevalence of the Śaka era at Mathurā till as late as A.D. 400 is very remote when the inscription of Chandra Gupta II suggest the rule of Gupta dynasty in the very region. The study warns us to be cautious in dating a piece even though the year is recorded. One has to make sure of the era first before fixing or suggesting any period or a date. The best course under the circumstances is to take refuge to stylistic study. Thus the epigraphic and stylistic approaches are complementary to each other for assigning the period and framing the chronology.

(iv) A newly found statue from the site of Govindnagar (Mathurā Museum No. 76.23; fig. 135) is a remarkable specimen of this group. The Buddha standing in abhaya pose with curly hair elongated earlobes, traces of ornamental halo with spearheads, a twisted wreath, beaded bands and scalloped border is significant for more than one reason. The drapery is foldless in contrast to the other Buddha figures of this period from Mathurā. This type of robe has been a typical characteristic of the contemporary school of art which flourished at Sārnāth. The stone is also not the red sand variety generally used in the Mathurā studio.

The fixing of the date or period of this figure poses a problem. Despite the possession of several Gupta characteristics the image reflects some earlier trends and we may pinpoint a few of them:

(i) The figure is dwarfish and straight as against the slim body rendered in the Gupta images.

138. Ibid., p. 32.
(ii) The palms of the hands show a *cakra* mark, a typical Kuśāṇa feature.

(iii) The forehead bears a projecting *ūrṇā* which becomes rare in the Gupta period.

(iv) The object between the feet (already discussed in detail) is still retained although made insignificant. This was very bold and conspicuous in the Kuśāṇa period right from the time of Kanishka but it is absent in the Gupta period.

(v) The small acolytes or devotees as noticed near the feet of the deity have not yet made their appearance.

(vi) The expression of the face is not yet serene and contemplating, as the eyes are slightly bulging.

In the light of these early characteristics we are inclined to place it in the post-Kuśāṇa or early Gupta era and to be more precise in the Kuśāṇa-Gupta phase. It has many similarities with the statue No. B. 10 of the Lucknow Museum (fig. 134) discussed above. Another statue with foldless garment (fig. 147) unearthed from the site of Govindnagar is in the possession of the Archaeological Survey of India but this belongs to the classical Gupta period and will be discussed in group 12. The discovery of these two rare sculptures may indicate that the Sārnāth idiom of foldless drapery has its root in the Mathurā school in the 4th century A.D. The fashion, however, did not become popular, at Mathurā as the people of the region had become accustomed to seeing the deity wearing the *sanghāṭi* with refined folds. Some scholars have observed that the Sārnāth style was inspired from Mathurā which had a fairly early tradition of sculptural art.

(vii) The seated Buddha image from Bodhgaya now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, (fig. 136) is another important representative of this group. Curiously enough it retains *ekānsikasanghāṭi* with transparent effect which became rare from the mid-Huvishka period. The other archaic characteristic is the position of the left fist (now broken) placed on the left knee, the right (arm now missing) must have been in *abhaya* pose in this context. Despite these very typical Kuśāṇa features the three lines round the neck (*trivalaya*), elongation of earlobes, curly hair, enlarged eyes, serene expression and overall improvement in formation of body are clearly Gupta characteristics. Thus the image represents a rare confluence of Kuśāṇa and Gupta art styles when the old and new formulae were successfully blended by the sculptor.

The following observation of S.K. Saraswati is a good assessment of this important sculpture, ' . . . . The Bodhgaya image... represents a happy

and successful combination of the stolid dignity of the Kuśāṇa idiom with the restrained grace and inner spiritualism of the Gupta.\textsuperscript{140}

The inscription on the image informs that it was consecrated in the year 64 of some Mahārāja Trikamala whose identity is obscure and it is difficult to associate this with the known eras. J.C. Harle suggests the possibility of the use of the Gupta era and dates it accordingly to A.D. 384 (320+64).\textsuperscript{141} But while Saraswati accepts it as an undoubted product of the Mathurā atelier, Harle assigns it to some eastern Madhyadeśa style.\textsuperscript{142} We are not in agreement with Harle on this point as there is no much background of the existence of an Eastern Madhyadeśa School of art. Besides, the inscriptions on some Buddha images found at Śrāvastī and Kuśānagar clearly mention that these were manufactured by the Mathurā sculptors. Of course, we can think of some manufactory at Sārnāth in the Mauryan period under the patronage of Aśoka but it seems to have completely disappeared, possibly with the death of the Emperor and the Sārnāth School of sculpture revived under the expansive inspiration of Mathurā. Under these circumstances the Bodhgaya image under reference should be accepted as an import from Mathurā as correctly observed by Saraswati.

(viii) The colossal headless statue in the Lucknow Museum (No. 0.71; fig. 137) is another specimen of the Kuśāṇo-Gupta phase. The schematic and refined treatment of the ubhayānsikasanghāti, traces of an elaborate halo, and the kneeling devotees on the pedestal are the Gupta features. But the folds running one over the other indicating the possibility of a box pleat at the left elbow (now broken), the figure of Bodhisattva Maitreya standing between the feet with a flask and wearing a fluted crown, the style of his scarf and the bunch of lotus decoration behind—all speak of Kuśāṇa characteristics.

(ix) A head of the Buddha in buff sand stone (Lucknow Museum No.B.28, fig. 138) retains the Gandhāra feature of wavy hair-combed back. The broken halo, elongated ears and facial expression suggest the Gupta idiom.

(x) A new Buddha figure belonging to this group is now in the Allahabad Museum (No. 936, discussed by R.R. Tripathi in B.M.A. No.8, pp.75-76). Hailing from the locality Bihar, in Kunḍā Tahsil of Pratapgarh District, U.P. the bust of the Buddha combines both Kuśāṇa and the Gupta characteristics.

140. Ibid.
141. Harle, J.C., Gupta Sculpture, op. cit., p. 16.
142. Saraswati, S.K., op. cit., p. 133.
12. Gupta Acme

The art produced by the dedicated efforts of the Mathurā artist in shaping the Buddha figures during the preceding five centuries reached their zenith in the Gupta period, 4th-6th century A.D. The firm grip over administration and dynamism of the Gupta rulers introduced prolonged peace, prosperity and stability in the country and also provided a commensurate atmosphere for the growth of artistic activities. The high moral principles and ideals as conceived and established by the Gupta rulers made a deep and noble impact on society and the artists and artisans also endeavoured to translate them into their creations.\(^{143}\) Thus in the words of Saraswati 'The Gupta period witnessed a heightening of the aesthetic consciousness leading to the fulfilment and culmination of the earlier trends and tendencies. The classical concept in Indian sculpture reached its supreme expression in what is described as the golden age of the Gupta.'\(^{144}\)

The classical Gupta art of Mathurā is known for the following characteristics in the Buddhist context:

(i) Emphasis on expression,
(ii) Figures made slim and elegant,
(iii) Handsome and youthful body,
(iv) A constant effort to achieve a harmonious combination of the physical form and the spirit through bringing out the inner feelings on the face is evident. This was the highest goal of art which was successfully achieved by the artist. Consequently a divine glow is seen on the Buddha head which has found its further diffusion in carving out the halo.
(v) An elaborate aureole round the head suggesting the radiation of knowledge.
(vi) The burden of the heavy drapery is substituted by lightness and rippling folds producing a graceful appearance. The diaphanous treatment is further suggestive of ease and comfort against the thick garment of the Kuśāṇa period.
(vii) The animal and vegetal world finds no importance and even the human beings have a minor role in the composition.
(viii) It is the figure of the Buddha which surpassingly dominates all others.

\(^{143}\) J.C. Harle remarks, 'The famous seated Buddha from Bodhgaya......has been widely assumed to be an import from Mathurā. A Gupta era datum, i.e. 320 + 64 = A.D. 384, is plausible enough. It seems unlikely, however, that it is from Mathura. The curious juxtaposition of the body which is both iconographically and stylistically closely related to the finest Mathurā Buddhas of the Kuśāṇa period with a head having the brooding contemplative face which was only achieved in the Gupta period points to an origin in the eastern Madhyadesa, where the influence of the Kuśāṇa style remained strong until the fifth century, as seen in the Mānkuwar Buddha...'

\(^{144}\) Saraswati, S.K., op. cit., p. 16.
(ix) Almost all alien trends were either discarded or retained in a subtle and transformed fashion (as folds of the garment) to enhance the grace of the dominant figure.

(x) The eyes are now shaped horizontally and made large, lotus budshaped, half open, infusing inward vision and meditation.

(xi) The beautiful marking of lines on the neck makes it kambugrīva (conch like neck).

(xii) The aim of the installation is often recorded as anuttarajñānāvāpti (attainment of Supreme Knowledge) in the inscriptions as against the ‘sarvasttvānāmhitasukhārtham’ mentioned in the Kuśāṇa inscriptions. This suggests a march from mortality to divinity.

(xiii) The figure is more straight and static but relaxed. Even in the case of the standing figures of the Buddha the position of one leg gives a feeling of movement which is suggestive of Gupta period society aspiring for higher aims through constant efforts and noble deeds, the slightly bent knee is indicative of motion.

Some important examples of the Gupta idiom are illustrated below:

(i) The standing Buddha image of the Mathurā Museum (No. A. 5; fig.139) is one of the most remarkable products of Mathurā art. It reflects all noble characteristics of the blooming phase of Mathurā style. The diaphanous drapery looks like a thin muslin and produces a murmuring effect. The hair is arranged in fine curls, ears are large and elongated and the eyes are shaped like half open lotus buds. The socel is richly decorated with several ornamental bands beginning with the full blown lotus at the centre, successively encircled by a wreath issuing from crocodile heads, row of rosettes, an extremely beautiful band showing stylised geese or peacocks intervened by full blown lotuses, a twisted wreath with a beaded line and lastly the scalloped edge. Above all, the expression suggests a combination of serenity and divine bliss, a stage after the extinction of all worldly wishes in the fire of penance and knowledge. The two line inscription on the pedestal records that the purpose of the installation of this image was the attainment of Supreme Knowledge.145 The occurrence of the word yasadinna is an important factor and it seems to refer the name of the sculptor as we shall discuss at the appropriate place.

(ii) A similar image is in the custody of the National Museum, New Delhi (exhibited in the Raṭtrapati Bhavan (fig.141). The nose of this figure is

145. The inscription is read as:

1. दय चर्मो व शाक्य निल्यो ( f ) वश दिनस्य • यदन पुष्य तद् भवतुभा
2. ता पिथयो...प्राचायोपावध्या (भय)वान्य च सवं सवं (सव) नृत्तर ज्ञानावापुत्रेये

This is the pious gift of the Buddhist monk Yāsadinna. whatsoever merit (there is) in this (gift), let it be for the attainment of the supreme knowledge of (his) parents, teachers and preceptors and all sentient beings. (Vogel’s: Mathurā Museum Catalogue, 1910, p. 50).
intact and there is some variation in carving the halo which begins from the knob of a full blown lotus, floral bands, undulating rich scroll, twisted wreath, beaded line and lastly the scalloped border. The main difference between the two classic sculptures is in replacement of the stylised geese motif of the Buddha by the scroll.\textsuperscript{146} There is also no inscription on the pedestal.

(iii) Another image of almost the same quality exists in the Indian Museum, Calcutta (fig.141). The halo is missing in this case.\textsuperscript{147}

(iv) The fourth sculpture in this category, of superb workmanship, is a recent addition from Govindnagar which enriches the Mathurā Museum (No. 76.25; fig. 142). It has the same grace and elegance as seen in the preceding images. The right hand which was found separately and joined with the image adds further attraction. The three line inscription on the pedestal (fig. 143) is of considerable significance.\textsuperscript{148} It records the year 115 which reckoned in the Gupta era, corresponds to A.D. 434-35 falling in the reign of Kumāragupta Mahendrāditya when the art was at its pinnacle and the sculpture is a true representative of this glorious age. Another point is that last two letters read as: \textit{Ghaṭitā Dinnena}, undoubtedly mention the name of the sculptor as Dinna. On the basis of this new find we can safely suggest that the mention of \textit{yašadinna} on the earlier described Mathurā Museum Buddha image pedestal (A.5; fig. 139) spreads the glory of the sculptor.

(v) The same name figures in two inscriptions of the Buddha images installed at Kasiā.\textsuperscript{149} It may be pointed out here that the gigantic Buddha image of the Buddha in the \textit{mahāparinirvāṇa} is also a magnificent example of the Gupta art of Mathurā. Its expression is very suggestive and leaves a deep and chastening impact on the onlooker. The head is very large and one has to look from different angles to appreciate the rhythmic effect of calm and solace as reflected by the face. The inscription (now covered) on the pedestal records ‘\textit{Pratimā ceyam}

\textsuperscript{146} Harle, J.C., \textit{op. cit.}, fig. 48.
\textsuperscript{147} Snellgrove, D.L., \textit{The Image of the Buddha}, 1978, fig. 57.
\textsuperscript{148} The inscription as read by us is as follows:

1. \textit{... cavyā (ि) सं 100(+)10(+-)5 शवशव या वि 10(+)2 प्रश्नम् ... दिवस पुष्करिणां भगवतः दश बल विलिन शायम् मुनेन:}
2. \textit{प्रतिमा प्रतिहारिता भविष्या सच्चार्यं मदद्र पुष्यं तथ्माता पिशविंधुबंधवमहत्वं सत्रं सत्तान}
3. \textit{सबं दु:ध प्रहरमायनं शान्ति वर्षम् चट्टिता दिनेन}

Success. In the year 115, in the month of \textit{Śrāvana} on the twelfth day, on the day (specified) above, an image of Lord Daśabala-balina Śākyamuni was installed by Friar Sanghavaran after paying due respect to parents. Whatever merit (there is) here (i.e. in this act), let it be for the removal of the sufferings of and for the attainment of Supreme Knowledge by all sentient beings. \textit{(MMA., op. cit., p. 84)}.

\textsuperscript{149} \textit{ASR.}, 1906-7, pp. 49-50.
ghaṭitā Dinnena Māthureṇa’ i.e. this image was carved by Dinna who belonged to Mathurā. This is a very important document to assess the greatness of the art of Mathurā and the master craftsman Dinna. The other fragmentary piece just records ‘Kṛtiruddasaya’ i.e. made by Dinna.\(^{150}\)

(vi) The new site of Govindnagar has revealed yet another Buddha image the detached head of which has been fixed on the body, (Mathurā Museum No. 76.27; fig. 144). But this does not seem to have been handled by Dinna as the quality is not that superior. The intact right hand is seen in the protection pose and the male and female devotees are seen below. The hair is curly as usual and the traces behind the head indicate that the nimbus was decorated with multiple bands. This may be a specimen of early Gupta age.

(vii) We have a torso of the Buddha image from the site of Govindnagar (Mathurā Museum No. 76.28; fig. 145) which is important for the excellent treatment of drapery with rippling folds.

(viii) From the same site comes a Buddha head (Mathurā Museum No. 76.246; fig. 146) imbibing all basic qualities of the Gupta age viz., curly hair, lotus bud-shaped half closed eyes with drooping eyelids and a serene expression. A circular beauty point between the nose and the upper lip is conspicuous here. Much of this beautiful head is unfortunately damaged.

(ix) A very important torso (fig. 147) recovered from Govindnagar is now with the Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi. The remarkable point is the fabrication of foldless and transparent drapery. We have already discussed, while describing the earlier Buddha image from the same site (Mathurā Museum No. 76.26; fig. 135) under the Kuśāṇa-Gupta phase, that the discovery of these statues establish a relation between the well established Mathurā School and the budding Sārnāth School in the early Gupta period. Harle is justified in his observation that ‘... The Buddhas of Mathurā take precedence, in point of time over the Sārnāth Buddha.’\(^{151}\) His remark was in a different context and written when these two new Buddhas had not seen the light of the day.

(x) The Buddha torso from Govindnagar (Mathurā Museum No. 76.30; fig. 148) betrays inferior workmanship of the Gupta idiom indicating that sculptors of inferior skill were also engaged apparently when the work was brisk and the good hands were preoccupied.

(x) The terracotta head of the Buddha from Govindnagar, (Mathura Museum No. 76.240; fig. 149) is a rare specimen. It suggests the installation of

150. ASR., 1906-7, p. 49.
the Buddha figures in clay either by the practice of those of modest means or in an urgency of performing the ritual when stone statues were not readily available. It is also likely that the young sculptors first practised in clay and when their hands were set on this malleable medium, they switched over or were promoted to stone. We have already explained that there was a well established tradition of terracotta art at Mathurā and it preceded stone carving by several centuries. It suffered a reverse during the Kuśāṇa period as a sequel to the growing popularity of stone but was revived in the Gupta age. The depiction of a Buddhist theme in the revived terracotta art was, however, very rare and considered from this aspect the small head under review is of much significance.

(xii) The small Buddha torso in the Lucknow Museum (No. B. 6; fig. 150) deserves special mention here. Firstly, it has an oval shape prabhā or halo carved with a running leaf pattern around the entire body. Secondly, the position of the suspended right arm below the waist suggests that it was in varadamudrā (boon bestowing pose), which marked a new feature in Mathurā art. We have already discussed and stated that the other postures viz., abhaya, bhūmisparśa and dhyāna, vyākhyaṇa or upadeśa (preaching) pose was conceived in the Dipankara image (fig. 133) but to us it appears to be abhaya posture. It is not possible to suggest anything conclusively as only traces of two upraised hands are visible now. This mudrā has, however, been shown by the turning of the Wheel of Law as already discussed in regard to fig. 118. Thus the varadamudrā in the present torso is remarkable and rare.

(xiii) An interesting inscribed pedestal was unearthed at the site of Govindnagar, consisting of the feet of the deity and a kneeling worshipper to his left (Mathurā Museum No. 76.34; fig. 151). The four line inscription is of very great significance as it records the name of the monastery as Viradatta Vihara,152 which once stood at the present site of Govindnagar. Secondly, it refers to two years 121 and 15. Previously we read only 121 and, on the basis of the Gupta characteristics, it was held as assignable to A.D. 440. But subsequently K.K. Thaplyal of the Lucknow University opined that it should be reckoned in the Śaka era and the date of the sculpture be fixed as A.D. 199. To us it appears to be an early Gupta piece as we had conjectured from the tiny figure of a kneeling devotee, though not much is left to assess its artistic qualities. The other interesting point is that this doubly dated record most probably refers to an established era i.e., the Gupta or some other and also the regnal year 15, but the name

152. Sharma, R.C., MMA., op. cit., p. 84.
of the king is not mentioned and we have to explore different possibilities in this regard.\(^{153}\)

(xiv) There is yet another inscribed pedestal of the Buddha image acquired by the present author from the site of Govindnagar (Mathurā Museum No. 76.35; fig. 152) representing the feet of the deity and the complete figures of the kneeling devotees who can easily be recognised as the good representatives of the art of the affluent Gupta period. They seem to be well off, in good shape, gifted with fine features and graceful looks. Their hair is tastefully arranged in locks and the lady to the left of the deity wears heavy ear-rings, armlets and wristlets. Both of them are in the prayer offering and meditating pose. The pedestal bears a sharply chiselled four line inscription in chaste Sanskrit rendered in a mixture of prose and poetry. No name of a king or date is mentioned.\(^{154}\) Interestingly enough, the Buddha has been mentioned here as Jīna.

(xv) One statue of standing Buddha after being removed from the site of Govindnagar was smuggled out of the country and it is now housed in the

153. The inscription is read as:

1. संबत्सर शते एक विषोतर रते 100 (+) 20 (+) 1 कालानुवर्तमान संवत्सरे प (’)
2. चाचिरि मांडाशीये माता (”) दिवसे प्रथम (१) द्रष्या (१) दक्षाय नारायण (हीरदत्त)
3. बिहारे भवति: शाक्यमुने स (म्य) सामुदीय प्रतिमा प्रतिष्ठापित जीविया
4. बुद्धिश्चु बुधिवर यदव पुष्यां तद्भवतु माता पिशो (सर्व) सत्वानां च

In the year one hundred and twenty one—121 of current era in the fifteenth (regnal) year (of ruling king) in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, on the first day. On this day specified above, an image of Sākyamuni, the Fully Enlightened One, was installed in the Vāradatta, monastery, by Jīva, daughter of Rudrasimha. Whatever merit be here (i.e. in this pious act) may that be for the parents and for all sentient beings.” The identification of Jīvā and her father Rudrasinīha poses a problem. (BMA, No. 29-30, 1982).

154. The inscription read jointly by K.K. Thaplyal and the author is as:

1. (नमः) नवायं महते (ब) ब जनवधाप कुपिन्दलय शत (सम) प्रथावताय कृम (०) तोनमका (म)
2. अप्रतिमस्य प्रतिमा प्रतिम शत भाविते जिनस्येद्यु स्तुतंगणे भंगवतं निवेशित (मि) हिरणयेन
3. तद्विषेदाय तत्वाय यतु वहे पुष्याः इति निविर्यलेन मनसा माता पितरे समुद्र्यिस्य
4. श्रवणा पुष्यां तल्दाय श्रवणेष्य सव सल्वेष्य; मध्यवर्त्य सदाहिष्ठता प्रभावित करा ज (न) साधु

'Salutations to the three Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) praised by the great and learned men, bestowers of the fruits of merit which bring deliverance equal to hundred (?), tranquil and worthy of obeisance. Thus resolved in mind that (only) that should be given which is noble (and only) that should be done which promoted the adoration of the preceptor, Mihirānāga for the sake of his parents, installed this image, which is equal of hundred (images in merit), of the lord Jīna (i.e. Buddha) who is incomparable, in the courtyard of the stūpa. May its fruit of merit, whatever there be, in entirety be for all the sentient beings, be they indifferent, or always hostile or dear and doers of good.'

It was G.V. Mitterwallner who suggested the reading of Mihirānāga.
Metropolitan Museum, New York. We have no other source of information but a news item, which states that the image is one of the outstanding examples of Mathurā art in the Gupt period. Several other antiquities must have met with the same fate and the Mathurā Museum remained deprived of possessing them. Except the feet and the right arm the Buddha under reference is in good shape. The socle is also partly extant over the right shoulder.

(xvi) A fragmentary pedestal acquired in 1964 for the Mathurā Museum (No. 64. 12), is an important exhibit for several reasons. Firstly, it hails from the Jail (Jamālpur) or Collectorate mound which was an important Buddhist settlement in the Kuśāṇa and Gupt periods. Secondly, it is the only dated inscription of Kumāragupta’s reign (125 + 319 = A.D. 444) from Mathurā. Moreover, the name of the city is also mentioned in the document. The kneeling devotees appear on this pedestal also hence the appearance of such figures may be considered as an accepted norm of the full-fledged art convention of the Gupt period in Mathurā.

(xvii) The recently acquired pedestal of a Buddha image (Mathurā Museum No. 82. 240; fig. 169) is of greater significance for the fact that this is the only epigraphic record mentioning the name of Budhagupta and dated in the year 161 corresponding to A.D. 480. It is a good evidence to study the development of Brāhmī script on the basis of a dated object otherwise nothing remains in it to attract the attention of a student of art and iconography.

(xviii) The Buddha head from Chamudā mound (Mathurā Museum No. 49.3510; fig. 153) is one of the rarest specimens to represent the blooming phase of Indian art flourishing in the Gupt period at Mathurā. Aesthetically it is a superb piece with fine curly hair, elongated earlobes, lotus-shaped half open eyes under heavy eyelids imparting a feeling of serenity and contemplation.

155. "Deccan Herald", March 29, 1980, the paper clipping of which was sent to me by Dr. S.P. Tewari, Dy. Superintending Epigraphist, A.S.I., Mysore.

156. V.N. Srivastava read and translated it as follows:

1. …..Śri Kumāra Gṛṣṭṭāra (I) bījā (I) 20 25 (a) 100 20 5 (a) svāma 9 bījā (I) 20 25 (a) svāma 9 bījā (I)
2. …..śrīrāma dāsa bījāyamānaśt (I) yadā paś奇 tadbīkṛt maṭa piṭṛo saṃvāna dānātāra
3. ……..

1. In the victorious year 125 of (the reign of) Sṛī Kumāragupta, in the month of Aśvayuṣa (September-October) on the 9th day, on that date specified as above (resident) of Mathurā.
2. ….. who is known as ….. Maṭrī Das Daṇḍā. Whatever religious merit there is (in the gift) let it be for the welfare of mother, father and all sentient beings. (BMA. No. 1, March 1968, Harle J.C., op. cit., p. 18.


158. MMA. op. cit., p. 81.
Many more Gupta period Buddha figures from Mathurā can be cited but we have concentrated only on the very important icons or fresh discoveries.

It has already been explained at the end of the second chapter that towards the close of the Gupta period Mathurā became the target of repeated attacks of the barbarious Hūnas and the devastation caused by them resulted in the callous extinction of the splendid school of art which flourished at Mathurā during the last five centuries. Buddhism also disappeared from the scene. When after a couple of centuries the city regained consciousness, old conventions were altogether forgotten and the Buddha lost his early majestic position. He was accommodated in the Brāhmaṇical pantheon and was occasionally shown as one of the incarnations of Viṣṇu in a few sculptural depictions housed in the Mathurā Museum such as No. 68.3.159

**The Buddhist Pantheon**

It will be well within the scope of our work if a quick survey is made of the position of the Buddhist pantheon before closing this chapter. As explained at the end of the preceding chapter, the Mathurā School of art is responsible not only for

159. The five line inscription is read and translated by K.K. Thaplyal and A.K. Srivastava as follows:

1. ( f ) तद (स) यो (?) व (स्र?)...(व) स्थन निर्मज (?)
   (ज) स्म अय मतं चके दथ बल बलिने नमस्तः

2. कार्यक्षर यः (प्रतिमाः लोः) क नायस्य जगति बुद्धस्य
   स भवति सुरें भारस्य लोके नवनामिरामशः

3. कृतसन्ता प्रवाससंतति मही बुद्ध गुप्त राजसि प्रविठ वषे
   वर्षसत एक प्रदः भारवदे गोवे दिवसे

4. प्रतिमा चतुर्द्यामिदं धमांश्च शार्किकेन राज्यम्
   भव्येन जिनस्य कारितमहुः गुर्जः दुर्योण

5. अत्रक्षते यत्तुष्ण मन्थेरस्मक्षवं व हि तत्सवेः
   माताप्रिोशास्थरि सब्वपाश्र (ि) वनि सत्वानां (नाम)
the origin and development of the Buddha image but it had also evolved the Buddhist pantheon and prepared a good background for its further growth. When Vogel published the Catalogue of the Mathurā Museum in 1910 only on the basis of the scantly material that then available for scrutiny he expressed his opinion as follows: The Mathurā sculptures, however, point to the fact that during the Kuśāṇa period this Bodhisattva cult was not yet developed.\(^{160}\)

### Background

Subsequently V.S. Agrawala studied this issue afresh and on the basis of new material he was able to trace a good background of the Buddhist pantheon.\(^{161}\) Since then the Mathurā Museum has been enriched by some new important finds\(^{162}\) which confirm the representation of the Buddhist pantheon at Mathurā to a considerable extent, though the complex forms as revealed by the Sādhanaṃaḷā and other later Buddhist texts arose out of a Medieval concept. The vyūha tradition as explained by Agrawala in a chart,\(^ {163}\) had developed in the Kuśāṇa and Gupta periods. The Brāhmaṇical pantheon made the beginning of the cosmic representation of the deity on the traditions of the Pancarātra Āgamas. This is supported by the installation of the statues of the five Vṛṣṇi heroes in the pre-Kuśāṇa period and the vyūha images of Vāsudeva (MM No. 14, 393-95) and Śaṭṭhī (MM No. 43, 3099). This tradition must have inspired the Buddhism also to portray the Buddha into multi-forms.

163. The chart as furnished by V.S Agrawala is a useful document for the study of the Buddhist pantheon hence it is being reproduced here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Dhyāṇi Buddha</th>
<th>Bodhisattva</th>
<th>Mānasi Buddha</th>
<th>Mudrā</th>
<th>Vāhanas</th>
<th>Skandha</th>
<th>Position in the Stūpa</th>
<th>Varga (Group)</th>
<th>Sign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vairocana</td>
<td>Samntabhadra</td>
<td>Kruccha</td>
<td>Dharma</td>
<td>Dragons</td>
<td>Rūpa</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>Kavarga</td>
<td>Discus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Aksobhyya</td>
<td>Vajrapāṇi</td>
<td>Kanakamuni</td>
<td>Bhūmi-</td>
<td>Elephants</td>
<td>Vaijñāna</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>Cavarga</td>
<td>Vajra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ratnasambhava</td>
<td>Ratnapāṇi</td>
<td>Kaśyapa</td>
<td>Sparsa</td>
<td>Varada</td>
<td>Veneda</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>Tavarga</td>
<td>Jewel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Amitabha</td>
<td>Padmapāṇi</td>
<td>Gautama</td>
<td>Samādhi</td>
<td>Peacocks</td>
<td>Sanjāā</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>Tavarga</td>
<td>Lotus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Amoghasiddhi</td>
<td>Vīṣvapāṇi</td>
<td>Maitreya</td>
<td>Abhaya</td>
<td>Garudas</td>
<td>Sanskāra</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>Pavarga</td>
<td>Viṣva-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>pāṇi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>vajra</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Studies in Indian Art, 1965, p. 139)

B. In the Bharhut inscription we are informed about the seven Buddhas with different trees for their representation i.e.

1. क्षिष्ण (पाटलिपि), 2. निन्द्र (आद्र), 3. वैसमू (शाल), 4. कुकुस (शिवरीप), 5. कोमागमन (उदुम्बर), 6. कस्प (श्योष), 7. साक्षम (प्रश्वलय)
Among the Dhyāni Buddhas we have Amitābha, Ratnasambhava and Amoghasindhi represented in Mathurā art. Similarly among the Bodhisattvas we have Vajrapāni, Padmapāni and Siddhārtha. The concept of Mānasī Buddhas has been conveyed by the presence of Kāśyapa, Gautama and Maitreya. As already stated, all the five mudrās, viz. dharmacakra-pavartana, bhūmi-sparsa, varaḍa, saṃādhi (dhyāna) and abhaya make their appearance in Mathurā. The position of vāhanas (mounts) is obscure, although we notice garuḍa as the vehicle of a Bodhisattva and lions supporting the seat of almost all seated Buddhas/Bodhisattvas. The other cognizances did not come into portrayal.

Origin

When actually this concept originated at Mathurā is difficult to explain. But to us its inception is seen at the initial stage of the origin of the Buddha image in the pre-Christian centuries. The canonical victory of Mahāyāna over Hinayāna paved the way not only for the emergence of the Buddha in art but also his attendants or companions. Thus we have a remote concept of the Buddhist pantheon which has not found place in the above mentioned chart. Even in the time of aniconic worship the manifestation of the Buddha in his previous births as conceived in the pre-Christian centuries and revealed through jātaka narrations and their exhibition in the early sculptural art of Bharhut, Sānchī and Mathurā prepared a background for the evolution the Buddhist pantheon before the representation of the Master in the anthropomorphiform form in art. Consequently in some of the early representations we notice the Buddha as well his companions in the form of attendants, guards, devotees, visitors or admirers. We know that the Buddha belonged to the ruling race and the depiction of his retinue was a natural phenomenon which emerged with the Buddha figure and later developed into complex forms.

Our statement is further corroborated by the travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims, Fahien and Hiuen-tsang. The former saw six stūpas commemorating the sacred memory of Sāriputra, Mūdagalaputra, and Ānanda. The other saw three stūpas aimed at paying respect to the three important holy books i.e., Abhidharma, Sūtra and Vinaya pīṭakas.164 This concept further developed and by the time of Hiuen-tsang we are informed of the stūpas cherishing the memory of Sāriputra, Mūdagalaputra, Pūrva maitrāyanīputra, Upāli, Ānanda, Rāhula, Manjuśrī and other Bodhisattvas. At this stage the stūpas seem to fulfill different aims as for examples the followers of Abhidharma visited the Sāriputra stūpa, believers in dhyāna went to the Māudgalāyana stūpa etc.165 Thus the Buddhist pantheon was at the developing stage at Mathurā.

An early Buddhist text Sukhāvatī vyūha or Amitāyus sūtra which was translated into Chinese in the later half of the second century A.D. refers to the tradition of Amitābha one of the Dhyāni Buddhas.166 This indirectly suggests that the original

165. Details may be seen in Chapter 3.
166. Agrawala, V.S., op. cit., p. 140.
Sukhāvati text was written at an early date. This textual reference has fortunately been corroborated by a new epigraphic evidence of the early Kuṣāṇa period which we shall shortly discuss in the following pages. The issue was analysed in detail by J.C. Huntington in his paper presented in an International Seminar on Mathurā held in New Delhi in January 1980. He rightly opines that the stone sculpture should not be considered to prove the beginning of the representation of art as this media of expression was preceded by wood carving which was much easier to handle. But the point at issue is that to date we have not come across any evidence earlier than that of Mathurā to prove the existence of the Buddhist pantheon in any media of art. This point will be taken up subsequently but our intention at the moment is to stress that the Buddhist pantheon at Mathurā had evolved with the Buddha image and it gradually developed further with the passage of time. When Mathurā ceased to be the centre of artistic activities in the post-Gupta period under the adverse circumstances, as explained above, the process discontinued and Buddhism and the Buddhist pantheon migrated from Mathurā to elsewhere.

With this brief account of background of the Buddhist pantheon we now discuss a few sculptural evidences revealed from the Mathurā region.

Dhyānī Buddha

(i) Amitābha: It has already been pointed out that with the accession of Huviṣka the Buddhist art of Mathurā took a distinct turn in the beginning of the second century A.D. and the most important contribution of his period is the portrayal of the personality of the Master in different forms. The earliest representation of Amitābha Buddha was thrown up by the recent diggings at the site of Govindnagar, (Mathurā Museum No. 77.30; fig. 154). It represents the pedestal of the image with only the feet extant. To the right of the intended figure is seen the lower part of an attendant and a lotus to the left. Between the feet is seen the lower part of the ‘turban motif’ indicating the hair. There is an installation tenon below the image and it suggests that the statue was inserted into the cavity of the basement stone.

The real significance of the piece lies in its four line inscription which informs that the image of Amitābha Buddha was set up in year 26, i.e. A.D. 104 in the reign of Huviṣka. B.N. Mukherjee read the figure as 26 while our reading was 28. Thus it becomes the earliest known inscription of Huviṣka from Mathurā recording the first year of his reign. The creed of Anuttaraajñānāvāpti which became very popular in the Gupta period finds its appearance in A.D. 140. The most important point is that it establishes the prevalence of the Dhyānī Buddha tradition just in the beginning of the second century A.D. This is the earliest and positive dated archaeological evidence in this regard.

Huntington’s remark on this point needs mention here. He writes, ‘The findspot at Govindnagar and the date of the first year of Huviṣka provide an important new perspective on the cult of Amitābha which by this very epigraph is attested to in India. Those who wish to see the cult as a non-Indian development or a movement that never was very popular in India are going to have to face up to the implications of this image.’

The above observation proves that this inscribed pedestal of Amitābha Buddha is one of the most significant discoveries bearing a lasting impact on the reconstruction of the history of Kuśāna period, history of Buddhist religion, development of its pantheon and the noble contribution of Mathurā in this regard.

Another point to which we would like to draw attention is the depiction of a lotus in the background of the left foot of the deity. As will be revealed from the chart (our reference No. 162) that the lotus is the cognizance of Amitābha. We do not know whether the carving of lotus is accidental or deliberate and purposeful. If it conveys some meaning the significance of this antiquity is further enhanced.

Huntington also refers to the new interpretation of the Mohammad Nari Gandhāra sculpture of the Lahore Museum as Amitāyus Sukhāvatī and observes that India was the base of the Sukhāvatī tradition.

(ii) Amitābha/Padmapañi: The Bodhisattva in the Mathurā Museum (No. 2336; fig. 155) wears an elaborate crown showing the seated meditating Buddha with the large background of a lotus halo. The pedestal is a big lotus seat hence the Buddha should be identified as Amitābha and the head should belong to Padmapañi Avalokiteśvara. The head is decorated with a row of garudās and a prominent ūrṇā mark. According to the pantheon chart the garudā is the mount of Maitreya and in that case the dhyānī figure should be that of Amoghasiddhi whose pose is abhaya which is not the case here. It appears that the Bodhisattva crest with garudā has only a decorative purpose. Stylistically, it should belong to late second century A.D.

(iii) There is an interesting crown type fragment in the Lucknow Museum (No. B. 23; fig. 156) representing the meditating Buddha on a high lotus


169. The inscription as read by us is as follows:

1. मद्यराजस्य हुविष्कर्ष एस 20 (6) व वि 20=6
2. एतस्मूर्भ्य सर्वकल्याण सार्वबाहुल्य पौर्णेन वल क (ि) तत्स्य ब्रह्म नातिनिषिद्ध
3. बुध बलन पुर्णेन नरगतिते भवतो बुद्धस्य अभिमानस्य गृहिष्ठाभ्याः प्रतिमा प्रतिष्ठायि (ता)
4. (सव) बुध प्रजायि इमेन कुशलमूलन सत्त्व (सत्त्व) अनुतर बुध ार (आविष्ट)

‘On the 26th day of the second month of rainy season in the year 20 (6) (i.e. A.D. 104) on this occasion the image of Amitābha Buddha was installed by Nāgarakṣita son of Buddhabala grandson of the merchant Satvaka and grandson (daughter’s son) of the trader Balakirti (?) for the worship of all Buddhas. Whosoever merit is in this charity let it be for listening to the Supreme Knowledge of the Buddha.’


seat. That he is shown inside a cave with Indra on elephant Airāvata to his right and his companion Pancaśikha to his left is significant. The Dhyāni Buddha here should be Amitābha on a lotus seat and the crown should be of Padmapāni Avalokiteśvara.

(iv) Ratnasambhava/Ratnapāṇi : V.S. Agrawala refers\(^{171}\) to a Bodhisattva head with a Dhyāni Buddha on the crown, the whereabouts of which are not known. He could examine only the photograph of the sculpture which showed a divine Buddha seated in a crown in the padmāsana on a lotus seat. Wearing elegant garment covering both shoulders, the Buddha holding the hem of the garment in the left hand and the right hand in varada is noteworthy as it appears only in the Gupta age. We have already discussed this feature while describing another Gupta period Buddha torso (B. 6 of the Lucknow Museum; fig. 150). Agrawala opines that from the position of the right hand and the rampant lion the Dhyāni Buddha may be identified as Ratnasambhava as the lion serves as the vehicle of this Buddha. In this case the head must belong to Bodhisattva Ratnapāṇi whose Dhyāni Budhha is Ratnasambhava and the mortal Buddha is Kāśyapa. The period assigned to this piece is Gupta.

(v) The Mathurā Museum houses a Gupta period head of Bodhisattva No. 1944 with a seated Buddha in the crown with two lions. The features are almost the same as in regard to the preceding piece but the right arm is broken and the attitude of varada is not clear. This should also be identified as the head of Ratnapāṇi with Ratnasambhava as the Dhyāni Buddha.\(^{172}\)

(vi) Amoghasiddhi/Viṣvapāṇi: There is a fragmentary head of Bodhisattva in the Mathurā Museum No. 2367 which depicts the figure of the Dhyāni Buddha seated in padmāsana in abhaya pose. One acolyte is seen on either side and Agrawala was inclined to identify them as Indra and Brahmā. The lotus seat is missing. On the ground of the abhaya pose the Dhyāni Buddha has been identified as Amoghasiddhi and in such a case the head should belong to Viṣvapāṇi according to the chart. This piece resembles the relic casket of Kaniska from Peshawar.\(^{173}\)

2. Mānuṣi Buddha

The Mānuṣi or Mortal Buddhas have been represented by Kāśyapa and Maitreya.

Kāśyapa

The Mathurā Museum possesses the lower half of the standing Buddha statue (No. 37.2739; fig. 157) supporting the scarf with his left hand and an elegantly

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fastened waistband suspends between the legs. The figure is broken at the feet but joined up. The two line Kuśāṇa Brāhmi epigraph is of vital importance as it is only through this record that the deity is recognised. It is read by V.S. Agrawala as:

1. (Ru) vakasa dānam Devaputro Magho Budhasa Kasapasa,
2. Padra . . . . mahasthakena.

‘Gift of an image of the Buddha Kasyapa by Ruvaka, chief of the village, of Devaputra Magho.’

The epigraph raises several knotty problems of identification of the persons referred to in it but there is no controversy about the fact that the image represents Kasyapa Buddha and at this stage we are mainly concerned with it.

3. Bodhisattvas

Some of the Bodhisattvas have already figured in the inscription of the Dhyāṇi Buddhas. The main difference between the Buddha and Bodhisattva is that the former has attained the Enlightenment and the latter is in the process of attainment. In the early phase there was no iconographic distinction between the two and it is only through the epigraph that we can differentiate the two representations. However, from the period of Huviṣka the pantheon grew and necessity was felt to mark some distinction. Consequently the Buddha was shown as an ascetic while a Bodhisattva was represented in the princely form. Even in the royal form we come across two varieties, i.e., Maitreya and Siddhārtha.

**Maitreya**

In the Buddhist texts he has been held as the future Buddha. His main representative features are the flask in the left hand, generally the abhaya pose but, sometimes the meditating pose as well, hair falling on shoulders, occasionally wearing moustaches, a large crown generally decorated with the figure of garuḍa, sacred thread (yajñopavītṛ) etc. The important representations of Maitreya in the Lucknow Museum are B.7, fig. 158, B. 208 fourth figure in fifth band fig. 115, B. 208, B. 82 etc.

The head of the Bodhisattva with a haloed garuḍa in the crown (Lucknow Museum No.B.25; fig. 159), should also be identified with Maitreya. Several garudas are seen on side and front below the main dominating figure who carries a wreath type object which may also be interpreted as a serpent. In all, the number of small figures is twelve below the central one. As the garuḍa has been associated with light and sun, a question can be raised as to whether this aspect symbolises

176. Studies in Indian Art, p. 142.
the concept of twelve suns (dvādasādityas)? From the site of Govindnagar we have recovered several Garuda figures and their presence in the Buddhist establishment seems justified. Similarly the depiction of the sun in a Buddhist architectural piece (Lucknow Museum No. B. 208, fig. 115), should also be considered on the same line.

The Mathurā Museum too houses some Maitreya figures e.g., A. 45 and A. 46 etc. The stele unearthed from the site of Govindnagar is a new addition, (MM No. 76. 24, fig. 150).

Siddhārtha

When the pantheon evolved, the stage of the Buddha before the Buddhahood was conveyed through the depiction of prince Siddhārtha generally in the dhyāna pose, youngish with tender look, wearing a fluted headgear etc. But sometimes Siddhārtha and Maitreya are shown identically and the crown with garuḍa motif was common. The main illustrations of Siddhārtha in the Lucknow Museum are B.208 third niche in the fifth band, (fig. 115), an excellent head with delicate features and elaborate crown No.B.26, (fig. 161) and a standing statue No.B.15, (fig.162) which belongs to the Gupta period. The Mathurā Museum also has similar representations as already illustrated in fig. 125.

Subordinate Figures

Apart from the main members of the Buddhist pantheon mentioned above, subordinate figures belonging to divine, semi-divine and mortal categories, respectively are also represented in the Buddhist art of Mathurā. Mention may be made of Indra or Śakra Vajrapāṇi, Brahmā, Kubera, Hārīti, Pancaśīkha and Lokapālas. Disciples, royal visitors and attendants also form part of the growing pantheon as all of them in one way or another contribute to magnify the glory of the presiding deity and play a vital role in the composition of the theme.

Indra/Vajrapāṇi

Indra or Śakra finds the earliest depiction in the Buddhist pantheon. The lintel or toraṇa crossbar in the Mathurā Museum (No.M.3, figs. 73-76) which is one of the earliest illustrations of the Buddha is carved with Indra and his divine companion Pancāśikha Gandharva. Similarly on another early piece (Lucknow Museum No.B.18; fig. 86), he is shown seated on the pedestal of the Buddha along with Brahmā.

Indra is also known for his epithet Vajrapāṇi i.e. holding a thunderbolt in his hand. This depiction which was common in the Gandhāra region found place in Mathurā art as well. In such cases the deity is called as Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi who serves as a guard to the Buddha. The National Museum, New Delhi, has a fine

sculpture, (fig. 98), in which he stands to the right of the Buddha and on the opposite side is another attendant holding the lotus buds hence called Bodhisattva Padmapani who became a favourite subject of depiction in art in the later period. Sometimes, these attending deities were carved independently also. The Lucknow Museum has one torso in which the weapon is conspicuously shown, (B.19; fig. 163), as a twig with many branches.

As already explained the main disciples too form part of the pantheon and we have a few depictions at Mathurā. Among them Subhadra the last disciple, is easily recognised by his tridanda or a flywhisk and water jar hanging from a stand. The slab in the Mathurā Museum (No.H.1) and a new addition from Govindnagar. MM No.76.101; fig. 164) are good examples. Subhadra generally appears in the scene of mahāparinirvāna and he was the last disciple, initiated just before the death of the Buddha.

In the light of the above discussion it should be accepted beyond doubt that the Buddhist pantheon had its origin along with the Buddha figure at Mathurā and it developed considerably during the Kuśāṇa period. We have just introduced this important aspect of Buddhist art and iconography of the Mathurā School of sculpture, but actually it is itself an important subject which opens new horizons for the future researchers. For realising the full implications of these developments one should make a detailed survey and scrutiny of the old and new material not only in Mathurā and its vicinity but also in other regions which had the impact on Mathurā or which were inspired by the glorious art traditions of Mathurā.
9  
MATHURĀ AND OTHER SCHOOLS OF ART

It has been explained in Chapters VI and VII that contribution of Mathurā towards the development of Indian art has been of great magnitude and it is more apparent in case of Buddhist art. The Buddha images carved at Mathurā were installed at different places in the Northern India. The ateliers of Mathurā were not manufacturing the Buddhist figures in isolation but had also developed contacts with other contemporary art styles or workshops. This resulted in the exchange of large number of art motifs between one school and another and here we intend to present a brief survey of this artistic interaction to assess the importance of the art of Mathurā.

Mathurā and Gandhāra

It is a well established fact that Mathurā had close political and cultural links with the region of Gandhāra and these were at the peak during the Kuśāṇa period. Both the places had their respective art conventions and were at the pinnacle of their fame during the Kuśāṇa regime. The Mathurā School of art has been discussed in detail in a separate chapter and we now put up the ancient characteristics of the Gandhāra School.

The nomenclature derives from the geographical situation as the region of Gandhāra art included the north-western territory of present day Pakistan and a part of Afghanistan. This land was a gateway to the Indian sub-continent in the ancient period and served as a meeting place of different warrior races and cultural currents viz., the Greeks, the Scythians, the Parthians and the Kuśāṇas who were all fired with an ambition to exercise sway over India. They settled for a brief

span and left their impress. Soon they either advanced deeply into the Indian zone or made a retreat. As a sequel to these political and cultural upheavals there emerged a mixed school of plastic art, known variously as the Gandhāra School of Art, Greco-Buddhist School, Greco-Romano Buddhist School and Indo-Hellenistic School. This School is known for its use of schist stone or stucco, dominating Greek features in anatomy and expression, thick and heavy folds of drapery, covering both shoulders, wavy hair etc. In actuality the Buddhist figures which were handled by the foreign artists (fig. 165), were shown in a foreign garb.

We have discussed in the preceding chapter that the Buddhist art of Mathurā experienced the first Gandhāra influence in the beginning of the reign of Huviṣka. It grew thereafter with faster speed and by the time of Vāsudeva Mathurā appears to be another offshoot of the Gandhāra studio. The flood of the alien trends, however, did not last long and towards the close of the reign of Vāsudeva himself it started receding and after a century or so the Gandhāra traits were seen with rarity.

This may also be made clear that it was not only Gandhāra which left its impact on Mathurā but the latter also influenced the former. The important Gandhāra features noticed in Mathurā art are: (a) drapery covering both shoulders, (b) events of the life of the Buddha, (c) wavy hair, (d) variety of postures, (e) Vajrapāṇi, (f) Pañcika and Hārīti, (g) Scythian dress, (h) Sūrya clad in Northern style, (i) moustaches, (j) kusāegrass cushion on a lion throne, (k) conical cap, (l) garland bearing erotes, (m) Atlantes shaped as Yakṣas, (n) sandaled feet of Bodhisattva, (o) round pillars with Corinthian capital etc. Most of these features have been dealt with while describing different groups of Buddhist figures in the preceding chapter.

On the other hand several Mathurā motifs have been incorporated in the art of Gandhāra viz., (a) Jāraka narration, (b) curly hair, (c) lotus seat, (d) drapery covering one shoulder only, (e) symbolic representation, (f) the abhaya pose, (g) monks wearing dhottī and shawl looking like the Brāhmaṇa ascetics, (h) Bodhisattvas clad in the same fashion, particularly Maitreya (fig. 166), shaped as a Brāhmaṇa ascetic wearing a sacred thread also, (i) the lion throne, (j) railing pattern, and (k) śālabhaṅjikā etc.

Thus the relations of Gandhāra and Mathurā developed on the mutual exchange of art motifs. The affinity between the two art styles in certain cases is so

4. Ibid.
7. Ibid., fig. 229.
8. Ibid., figures 144 and 146.
10. Ibid., figures 359-62.
much that it becomes difficult to discern whether the object belongs to Mathurā or to Gandhāra. The reliquary found at Peshawar closely resembles the Bodhisattva crown which displays a dhyānī Buddha flanked by two acolytes who can be identified as Brahmā and Indra (Mathurā Museum No. 34.2367). The two different kinds of stone used in the two areas are the only distinguishing factors between the two schools.

The Gandhāra school did not leave a permanent impact and its contribution toward the development of Indian art is rather negligible. Marshall thought that, ‘Hellenistic art never took a real and lasting hold upon India’. Saraswati rightly observed that ‘In the fabric of Indian art as a whole the Gandhāra school occupies nothing more than that of a mere passing phase and has only a very slight contribution, except in a certain manner and a few motifs which, again, were quickly Indianised’. Comparing the quality of the two schools, Agrawala opined, ‘It should, however, be admitted that the Buddha figure (in Gandhāra) is stiff, insipid and lacking vital inspiration in comparison to the great Mathurā figures. We do not find in Gandhāra anything of the vigour and introvert expression of the Buddha and Bodhisattva figures of the Mathurā school.’

Mathurā and Amarāvatī

The early Āndhra-Sātavāhana art is predominantly Buddhist and the most famous work of the school is the stūpa of Amarāvatī. The artistic activities at the place began as early as 1st century B.C. and continued for several centuries, but the best sculptures are to be dated in the second half of the second century when the region was enjoying the prosperity of the golden age ushered by the glorious Sātavāhana rulers. Unfortunately nothing is left on the site and the artistic jewels of the monuments are now adorning the galleries of British Museum, London; Government Museum, Madras and the Indian Museum, Calcutta. A few stray pieces are seen in different art galleries and private collections.

The early phase of artistic activities ows its inspiration to Bharhut and Sānchi laying emphasis on the aniconic representation of the Master. But the second phase, when the Buddha assumes the anthropomorphic from and the pantheon grows, seems to have been inspired by Mathurā. It has already been pointed out at the appropriate place that the Mathurā school made the beginning in transforming the symbols into the human form and this device was followed at other places. We have also discussed in the 1st chapter that Mathurā had road links to all important

towns of the country. It is, therefore, quite understandable that the experiments made at the great metropolis of Mathurā were followed by other centres of art.

Coomaraswamy traced Gandhāra influence at Amarāvatī through Mathurā, although in the round statues he sees more affinity with the Anurādhāpurām (Sri Lanka) images. The delicate treatment of the female figures with charming curves and contours, full busts, heavy hips and a slender waist and in words of Saraswati the 'serpentine suppleness' seems to have been influenced from Mathurā. According to Coomarswamy the Amarāvatī art presents 'the most voluptuous and the most delicate flower of Indian sculpture'. But wherefrom does this alluring female beauty in art originate? It has been suggested in Chapter VI that the Mathurā sculptor saw the feminine charm from a different angle and exposed it to be appreciated by the onlookers. This became a favourite subject in the contemporary and later art productions. But as observed by Saraswati the overtures and sensuousness of Mathurā were arrested, restrained and refined in Amarāvatī.

Van Lohuizen is more specific on the issue when she writes, '...... in fact it is most likely that Mathurā was the source from which Amarāvatī borrowed its presentation of the Master.' According to her the snail-shell curls and uncovered feet, two peculiarities of Mathurā, were imitated in the sculptural art of Āndhradeśa.

Similarly Agrawala opined that the Mathurā Buddha/Bodhisattva served as proto-type for the Amarāvatī Buddhist icons and the same holds good for women wearing diaphanous drapery and a few other motifs.

Mathurā and Sārnāth

Sārnāth entered the field early enough but stormed it as an important centre of the classical art of the Gupta age. The Gupta style of Sārnāth is known for light and transparent foldless drapery in its outer form while the inward discipline is reflected by a serene expression suggesting a stage of perfect peace and repose (fig. 167). But if we pose the question of the origin of these noble features, the answer that comes forth is, Sārnāth derived its idiom from Mathurā only. As discussed in chapters VI and VIII there was no school of art and Sārnāth in the post-Maurya and pre-Gupta epoch and the Mathurā ateliers supplied Buddha and Bodhisattva images for installation in Sārnāth, and elsewhere in North India, right from the beginning of the reign of Kaniṣka as vouchsafed by the famous colossal statue of Bodhisattva dedicated by monk Bala in the third regnal year of Kaniṣka (fig. 94).

22. Van Lohuizen de Leeuw, J.E., "The Date of Kaniṣka and some Recently Published Images", *Papers on the Date of Kaniṣka*, 1968, p. 133.
The Gupta period, however, introduces Sārnāth as a blooming school of plastic art producing some of the most magnificent and graceful Buddhist images. But this was not a sudden outbreak of artistic activities as the castle of this style stood on the deep foundations of the well established art traditions of Mathurā. The serenity and divine expression on face is a special characteristic of Mathurā art which was already reflected in the post-Kuśāṇa era but became an ambitions aim of the Gupta period sculptor to master. The Sārnāth style follows the graceful technique and may be considered as a further improvement of the Mathurā trait.

The most remarkable and distinguishing feature of the Sārnāth style is the foldless wet drapery. But the two Buddha statues recently discovered from the site of Govindnagar (figs. 135 and 147) discussed in the preceding chapter prove beyond doubt that this idiom was also invented by the Mathurā school. It has already been established by us that the former image, bearing some Kuśāṇa traits must be at least a century older than the most beautiful comparable specimens of Sārnāth.

Saraswati thought that the Bodhgayā Bodhisattva of Mathurā school (fig. 136) must have served as a model for the early Sārnāth Buddhas.²⁴ Kramrisch, however, observes that "the Sārnāth version of the Mathurā prototype is subtler than the original."²⁵ Analysing the merits of the two schools of art Saraswati remarked, "In spite of such plastic refinement and an idea of spiritual absorption, the image at Mathurā remains statuesque in its own dignity, while that at Sārnāth with its slender and more sensitive treatment of the body and the face, carried almost to a point of exaggeration, seems to soar above in the supreme enjoyment of its own blissful experience. Contrastingly, the Mathurā Buddha with its solid massiveness still conveys more the feeling of 'awesome dignity and power.'²⁶

Thus the contribution of Mathurā towards the development of Indian art and, particularly, in the domain of the Buddhist art is of far-reaching consequences and and it gave birth or inspired several other schools of art as well. Besides the above mentioned schools of art, the stray finds also bear an unmistakable Mathurā impact. We have elaborated the point while discussing the three Buddha figures from Kuśāṃbi (figs. 127, 128 and 129). The same can be said about the Lucknow Museum statue (No. 0.70; fig. 168) from Mānkuwar, Allahabad. Although consecrated in the year 129 (Gupta era = A.D. 448-49) the image is a unique combination of the Kuśāṇa features of Mathurā and the Sārnāth characteristic of foldless drapery.²⁷ Nihar Ranjan Ray thought in the same terms when he wrote, 'The influence and tradition of Mathurā are also found in distant localities, e.g. the seated Buddha image dated A.D. 448-49 from Mānkuwar, Allahabad.

²⁴ Saraswati, S.K., op. cit., p. 135.
²⁵ Kramrisch, Stella, Indian Sculpture, p. 63.
²⁷ Ibid., p. 140.
District. This proves that the Buddha figure carved at Mathurā during the Kuśāna and the Gupta periods was treated as the ideal form and it served as prototype at different places for several centuries.

Ray's assessment, 'The Mathurā laboratory used to export its products to Śrāvastī, Prayāg, Sārnāth and presumably to other places as well. The practice, continued in the fourth century as well and we find Mathurā artists and Mathurā inspiration working at Kasiā, Bodhgayā and also at Sārnāth', is prophetically correct.

B

Findings

The notable findings of this book are summarised as follows:

1. This exposes numerous Buddhist sculptures for the first time.
2. The work is based on the archaeological discoveries and antiquarian wealth acquired by the present author for the Mathurā Museum.
3. It incorporates several new interpretations of old architectural terms.
4. It furnishes a comprehensive study of Mathurā's cultural and historical background.
5. Association of Buddhism with Mathurā has been dealt with in the light of several original, archaeological and secondary sources.
6. Detailed information regarding the Buddhist establishments at Mathurā has been furnished in a specially prepared chart which will serve as a very useful document for the future researchers.
7. Efforts have been made to identify a few old Buddhist settlements at Mathurā.
8. An up-to-date and detailed account of the archaeological campaigns in the Mathurā region has been given for the first time.
9. The site of Govindnagar is introduced as the new Buddhist establishment which existed on the spot under the name of VĪRADATTA VIHĀRA in the Kuśāna and Gupta periods.
10. Mathurā School of art has been discussed with new facts corroborated with fresh material.
11. Several new names of sculptors working in the Mathurā ateliers from the Mauryan to the Gupta periods have been added.
12. Origin of the Buddha image has been discussed afresh in the light of new evidences and more convincing facts in favour of Mathurā.
13. Efforts have been made to frame a chronology of the Buddhist images of Mathurā, beginning from late 1st century B.C. to the end of the 6th century A.D. on the basis of new epigraphic and stylistic evidences.

29. Ibid., p. 523.
14. The confrontation of date and style has been dealt with from a new angle.
15. Our findings and observations should help in assigning proper period to the Buddhist icons of Mathurā art.
16. Many important dated sculptures have got to be reconsidered in the light of our discussion.
17. The Buddhist pantheon had considerably developed at Mathurā in the Kuśāna period.
18. It has been convincingly established that the iconographic distinction between the Buddha and Bodhisattva began from the time of Huviśka.
19. It has also been shown that the Gandhāra trends find their first appearance in the Buddhist art at Mathurā in the beginning of the reign of Huviśka.
20. It has also been maintained that Mathurā art has left its bearing on several contemporary and subsequent art styles and the Sārnāth School of sculptures not only drew inspiration from Mathurā but its novelty of foldless drapery is also an invention of the Mathurā studio.
21. The new epigraphs incorporated in the present work throw useful light on the contemporary socio-religious conditions of Mathurā. Discoveries made upto 1983 have been taken into consideration.

A large number of photographs, a detailed list of illustrations and a useful bibliography on the subject have further enhanced the significance of the work. The two maps locate the important archaeological sites in the city and District of Mathurā.
POST SCRIPT

During the course of publication of the present book, the author was engaged in setting up the new galleries of the archaeological collection in the new wing of the State Museum, Lucknow. He came across some interesting Buddhist sculptures which somehow or other could not be discussed in the work, but as these are of considerable importance it is felt necessary to record them as post-script.

Corner Pillar (S.M.L. No. J. 268)

This square red sand stone corner pillar depicts four compartments on two adjacent sides and the remaining two sides bear the two vertical sockets on each side to receive the crossbars of the railing. One side of the pillar in the upper compartment shows the worship of the pillar surmounted by a lion. The pillar bears the traces of railing decoration below and lotus abacus above. It is being circumambulated by a male and female worshipper. The lion top may be interpreted as symbolic worship of Śākyasīṃha Gautama. Below this compartment is a broad band representing the railing motif.

The lower compartment on this side depicts a music and dance scene on a stage. The lady is dancing to right with graceful curvature of the body and rhythmic movements of feet and hands and her four accompanists (two men and two women) are playing on the percussion instruments. The dance and music scenes are separated with the help of a pole. The stage is made on a high platform which is approached by three steps to left. The composition indicates that the spectators could view only dancing figure and not the accompanists who probably performed from the back drop. The slanting roof of the stage shows square tile covering.

The adjacent side of the pillar also illustrates two different scenes. The upper compartment bears a male figure resting his hands on the shoulders of two ladies who are seen flanking the man. Does it suggest the Hallīsaka posture of dance, in which a man dances with two women? is open to guess. The lower compartment shows an amorous royal couple. The man is kissing the woman who has out-stretched her arms in opposite direction with a suggesting and inviting gesture of her body.

The treatment of the body of figures, double knotted turban and the round pilasters on both sides of the compartments suggest an early dating i.e., 2nd-1st century B.C. The exact findspot of the antiquity is not known.
Post Script

Rail Post with Life Scenes (S.M.L. No. B. 80)

On the obverse of this red sand stone railing pillar is seen a lady plucking the flowers of the Aśoka/Campā tree with her upraised right hand and putting them into a petal shaped basket which rests on her left hand. She stands in quarter profile with her back on view. Beside a thick bangle she wears a large number of thin bangles between her hand and the elbow. The long suspending ear-rings (jhumkās) and a crescent shaped girdle are her other ornaments. The hair arrangement is tasteful and attractive. It is combed back and terminates into a flat knotted loop. At the same time two strings of locks hang down on two sides.

The reverse of the rail post although much worn out is of greater interest. The top compartment shows the traces of the worship of the stūpa by two devotees. The middle compartment represents the traces of a man on horseback and a few human figures. The identification of this scene can be conjectured on the basis of the lower compartment which is much clear and intact. Here we see a prince on the horse back coming out of an arched gate. He is preceded by man wearing a long tunic and carrying a bundle of sticks. To his left is seen a weak old man going with the help of the stick.

The Museum records identify it of renunciation (mahābhīnīśkramana) of Siddhārtha. But it must be interpreted as the promenade of the prince when he witnessed four realities of life. The present episode must stand for his realising the miseries of the old age as indicated by the emaciated old man walking with stick. The central figure of course represents the royal groom Chandaka.

In the light of this identification, the middle compartment can also be explained. The figure to left is the prince Siddhārtha on the horseback and the big mutilated figure was that of Chandaka and the traces of the seated or reclining figure to right should be a physically disabled man suffering from leprosy etc.

The antiquity hails from Jamālpur mound, Mathurā where a large Buddhist establishment once stood.

Rail Post with Lamp Bearer etc. (S.M.L. No. B.84)

The front side of this red sand stone is carved with a lady carrying burning lamp. The long skirt or maxi in the modern terminology is decorated with horizontal bands showing a variety of floral motifs. Her long ear rings with beaded decoration and turban type headgear with hair falling on back and front are remarkable. The balcony projecting through the support of girders above represents a Buddhist shrine or Gandhakuti.

The reverse in the top compartment shows the turban of the Bodhisattva on a couch of which two legs are seen on sides. The middle compartment illustrates a lion on the pedestal and a lady carrying some pot on her left hand. Its identification is a problem and its association with some Jātaka cannot be ruled out. But it may
also be interpreted as the worship of the lion (Śākyasirīha). The position of the lion and his pedestal, shown to have been made of bricks, indicates that the image of the lion was installed for the purpose of worship.

The lower compartment also poses a problem of identification. Here we notice an ascetic wearing a tree skin lower garment (valkala) and the matted hair with large top knot. Infront of him are two conical objects, which may be identified as the fire altars. R.D. Banerjee in the Museum records explained them as temples and if his conjecture is correct the evolution of temple and particularly of the Śikhara has to be traced back from a hoary past. Such conical objects are to be seen in a railpost from Govindnagar, M.M. No. 76.40 fig. 14.

_Lady with a Pitcher (S.M.L. No. 86)_

The red sand stone railing pillar on the obverse displays a lady carrying a big pot over her head. She wears a torque, round ear rings, bangles and armlets. The double skirt worn from the waist is divided into two tiers, the smaller garment projects over the bigger garment. The balcony above shows a female bust on a railing and inside the arched window.

The other side of the pillar in the top compartment shows the Buddha in _padmāsana_ in _abhaya_ pose. The other two compartments are carved with amorous couples. It also comes from Jamālpur mound, Mathurā.

_Buddha's Life Scenes (S.M.L. No. 46.13)_

A red sand stone horizontal frieze hailing from Rannagar, Bareilly but belonging to post Kuśāna phase of the Mathurā art illustrates four main events of the life of the Buddha. In the first scene Māyādevī, the mother of Siddhārtha stands under the Śāla tree at Lumbini and she is assisted by her sister Mahāprajāpati. To the right of Māyādevī, Indra receives the newly born baby. The second event narrates the incident of his firm determination to achieve the Enlightenment at Bodhgayā. Seated in _padmāsana_ the would be Buddha rests his right hand on his right knee with the firm impression of his thumb and downward action of fingers indicating his vow not to move before attaining the Buddhahood. At the same time the evil forces of Māra (cupid) intensify their actions to disturb the austerity. While Māra stands with a bow and arrow to our right, his female counterpart Rati is seen on the other side with a flag of crocodile. Other ladies are in act of dancing and amorous expositions. The third scene represents the first sermon of the Buddha at Sārnāth to his first five disciples. The Buddha sitting on a lion throne bearing the figures of two deer (suggesting the place of the first sermon Mrgadāva and probably a dharmacakra in the centre. With preaching (upadeśa) attitude, the Buddha is flanked by three disciples to his right and two to his left. The fourth scene explains the demise of the Master (mahāparinirvāna) as he lies in the eternal peace in profile on a big couch. The remorseful atmosphere is marked by the actions of three devotees above. Shocked to learn the departure of the Buddha Vajrapāni
has thrown away his vajra and the last disciple Subhadra is seen in meditation with his tridanda resting in the centre.

*Rail Post with Coffin Box (M.M. No. J. 17)*

This is a fragmentory red sand stone rail post with a lady standing under a tree on obverse and the reverse containing three compartments of which the uppermost displays the relic casket placed on a throne. Smt. Rani Srivastava a research scholar is inclined to identify it as coffin box which should be a rare feature in Mathurā art. The middle compartment bears a nobleman who is assisted by a dwarf carrying a garland for worship. The lower compartment shows a royal person with a cluster of flowers in his right hand. The sculpture must belong to early Kuśāṇa period. Exact findspot is not recorded but the object is from Mathurā.
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10. Toraṇa Śālabhanjikā (Bracket figure), c. A.D.100, spotted red sand stone, from Sonkh, Mathurā, M.M.No.SOIV-27.
11. Terracotta Votive tank, c. Ist century B.C., red clay, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.239.
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13. Fragmentary pillar recording 12 or 13 year of Kaniška, A.D. 90-91, red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.36.

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15. Railpost representing a lady on wicker seat, Kuṣāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.39.

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17. Railpost representing a nobleman with garland standing under an arched building, Kuṣāṇa period, red sand stone with buff patches, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.37.

18. Fragmentary railpost showing lower half of a lady (Aśoka dohada?), Kuṣāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.134.

19. Fragmentary railpost representing lower part of a lady holding scarf, Kuṣāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.124.

20. Cross bar showing full blown lotus with pointed petals and a figure mark.

21. Reverse also shows a figure mark, Kuṣāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.48.

22. Cross bar with full blown lotus and some figure mark, Kuṣāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.57.

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118. Headless Buddha figure turning the Dharmacakra, late KuśaṆa period, spotted red sand stone, from Mathurā, M.M. No. 61.5304.

119. Lower half of the standing Buddha image installed in the year 93 (A.D. 171) in the reign of Vāsudeva by a Kayastha monk, wearing peculiar garment, red sand stone with buff patches, from Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.1.

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136. Seated Buddha of year 64, Kuṣāṇa solidity and features blended with Gupta period grace and serenity, A.D. 383-84, red sand stone, from Bodhgaya in the National Museum, New Delhi.

137. Headless colossal image of Buddha with figure of Maitreya between the feet, c. 4th century A.D., red sand stone, from Mathurā city, S.M.L. No. 0.71.


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148. Torso of Buddha statuette, rather inferior workmanship, Gupta period, red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.30.

149. Buddha head in terracotta, Gupta period, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.240.

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153. An excellent Buddha head of the Gupta period, from Chamunḍā mound, Mathurā, M.M. No. 49.3510.
PANTHEON


155. Bodhisattva (Padmapāṇi) head with Dhyāni Buddha Amitābha in the crown, Kuśāṇa period, red sand stone, M.M. No. 2336.

156. Fragment showing Dhyāni Buddha flanked by Indra and Pancaśikha, Kuśāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Chaubārā mound, Mathurā, S.M.L. No. B. 23.

157. Lower half of the Buddha image recording the figure as that of Kuśyapa Buddha, Kuśāṇa period, red sand stone, near Kansa-khāra, Mathurā, M.M. No. 37.2739.


159. Head of Maitreya with garudas in crown, Kuśāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Kankālī mound, Mathurā, S.M.L. No. B. 25.

160. Stele carved with seated figure of Maitreya, Kuśāṇa period, spotted red sand stone, from Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 76.24.


162. Bodhisattva (Siddhārtha), Gupta period, red sand stone, S.M.L. No. B. 15.


164. Lower band of the Mahāparinirvāṇa scene, showing Subhadra in meditation, Kuśāṇa period, buff sand stone, M.M. No. 76.101, from Govindnagar, Mathurā.
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165. Buddha with big hollow on forehead probably for a jewel, wavy hair combed back with a top knot, faint traces of moustaches plain halo, thick drapery covering both shoulders, c. 2nd century A.D., schist stone, S.M.L. No. 0.280.

166. Maitreya wearing a diadem and jewellery locks of hair falling on shoulder. The moustaches and anatomy represent him as a grown up man, c. 3rd century A.D., schist stone, S.M.L. No. 0.284.

167. Buddha seated in preaching pose, large halo carved with beautiful scroll, foldless diaphanous drapery, suppleness of body and expression on face remarkable, c. 6th century A.D., buff stone, from Sārnāth, Sārnāth Museum No. B. (b) 181.


169. Inscribed pedestal of some Buddha image installed in the year 161 (A.D. 480) in the reign of Buddhagupta. Recovered from Bank Colony, near Govindnagar, Mathurā, M.M. No. 82.240.
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