

ART AND ARCHITECTURE

The cultural history of Arakan is best reconstructed through the diversity of forms found in its sculpture and architecture. It will be shown that these reflect not only the art of the immediate region - Bengal and the Pyu centres - but also the art of South-east Asia in its widest sense. The whole gamut of northern and southern Indian influences, generally associated with the history of the better-documented schools of Indochina are equally apparent in Arakan. Although none of the Arakanese sites have been excavated, the assemblage of surface finds promises comparable rewards in the future.

The pre-Buddhist civilisation of Dhaññavatī was very probably based on the earlier Northern Indochinese/Yünnanese bronze-using culture commonly referred to as "Dongsonian", a tradition which persisted in the minor arts throughout our period. The first evidence of Buddhism, a century after the establishment of Dhaññavatī, is, surprisingly, that of a fully developed Mahāyānist cult, associated with kingship. Devacandra (fl.c 454-476) who, we assume, built the Mahāmuni temple, promised his people rebirth in the Western Paradise of Amitābha, protection by the Hindu-Buddhist guardians of the four quarters, and continued prosperity through the incorporation in his pantheon of a pre-Buddhist earth-goddess, now renamed Vasundharā. Devacandra's inspiration derived from the art and religion of the north-western fringes of the Gupta empire, soon to disappear in the wake of the Hun invasions.

The Mahāmuni sculptures formulate the Candara style which was to last until the end of the 6th century. The dominant material is the fine-grained warm red sandstone, possibly quarried in the

hills west of Mrohaung. The ground behind the figures remains plain, in contrast to the jungly compositions of Indian sculpture. In fact, the backslab often tends to dominate, rising well above the figures, a trend also noticed in the early Buddhist sculpture of Śrīkṣetra, and, according to Luce, the survival of an earlier megalithic cult where the stone itself was the object of worship. It is possible that the Mahāmuni in its original form was never completed: a *dvārapāla*, last to be erected, is still unfinished. No other sculptural remains are to be found at Dhañṇavati, but in a single example of relief sculpture from Kyauktaw, an exciting return to modelling from life and the use of a third dimension only equalled in the finest painting at Ajanta can be seen. The earliest remains at Veśālī and the surrounding area can be assigned to the early 6th century and remain close to the late Gupta style. Apart from Buddha images, there is evidence of an equally widespread Vaiṣṇavite cult, and from the superior quality of the images we can infer royal patronage, inspired by the imperial Gupta tradition. An image of Sūrya, iconographically derived from the late Gupta school of Bengal also belongs to this period.

After the middle of the 6th century, the Hindu art of Veśālī parallels, in many respects, the Cālukyan style which emerged at Badami after the disintegration of the Magadhan empire¹.

¹ Goetz suggested that the Cālukyas of Badami were northerners pushed southward by the Hephthalite invasions, noting that "they had been heirs to the best Gupta tradition, so much so that early Calukya art is practically best Gupta art." "The Crisis of the Migration Period and other Key Problems" in *Studies in the History, Religion and Art of Classical India* (Wiesbaden 1974) p.78

The majority of Buddhist remains from the period are much cruder in conception than the Hindu images, indicating a popular cult. There is no implicit evidence of the Mahāyāna, and in style, a continuing contact with Śrīkṣetra throughout the 6th and 7th centuries is evident. Gradually the naturalistic rounded modelling of the Gupta Buddha image becomes abstract and angular, and drapery is all but forgotten. Sculptures connected with the royal function, notably the *dhvaja-stambha* depicting Indra and an *abhiṣeka* plaque, illustrate the integration of ideals of Buddhist Cakravartin kingship at court.

The period of confusion following the fall of the Candra dynasty in c 600 A.D. did not encourage the erection of monuments and the manufacture of images. With the reestablishment of a stable dynasty in c 638 A.D., art forms became far more diversified. The red sandstone quarries were abandoned or exhausted, and grey sandstone, stucco and bronze become more prominent. After Harṣa-*vardhāna*, contact with northern India, in particular the Buddhist centres of Nālandā and Mainamatī, was reestablished, resulting in the adoption of Pāla forms of Mahāyānist art. The influence of Pallava sculpture at Mamallapuram is seen in Viṣṇu images by the end of the 7th century. A continuation of the Cālukyan contact is especially apparent in architecture, but by now Cālukyan art had itself absorbed the aesthetic of southern India, a process hastened by the occupation of Badami by the Pallava king Narasiṃhavarman I (fl. 630-668), and paralleled in Arakan. Again, the Buddhist sculpture of Śrīkṣetra made its impact at a popular level. Although northern Indian Tantrism had been accepted by the court by the first quarter of the 8th century, no remains have yet been discovered.

These multifarious influences do not seem to have been welded into a purely Arakanese art style. The very diversity of the remains suggests factionalism within the society. The lack of evidence is largely due to the severe depredations which followed the fall of the dynasty soon after 729 A.D. The art of southeast Bengal from this period, however, shows the influence of Veśālī and may reflect an attempted shift of the capital to the west.

Another half-century passed before a new dynasty was established at Veśālī in c 789 A.D. Almost constantly threatened by invaders, the sphere of influence is again reduced to northeast India, with the possible addition of Nepal and Tibet. Śrīvijaya, with which the art has certain affinities, no doubt succeeded in cutting the south India link. During this period, Hindu female deities were again adopted as local guardians. The goddess Gaṅgā ^{perhaps} was/raised from her status as a *dvāradevatā* and may have been associated with one of the more important local rivers. Her images, and a stylistically identical Viṣṇu image, stiff and overladen with decoration, show the influence of late 8th century Pāla Bengal. A short-lived settlement at Mrohaung produced the Wunti shrine, dedicated in c 976 A.D. to a Tantric form of Durgā, though to aid the king in defeating his enemies. Her images are highly stylized, in the manner of popular Himalayan art remote from its source of inspiration, with elongated erect figures and the distinguishing attributes emphasised. The same shrine contains an image of the Bodhisattva Vāṇiśvara, in a form derived from north India and Nepal, but similar to his representation at Thaton.

Buddhist art during this period underwent a revival. Possibly the earliest crowned Buddha image in Southeast Asia, a beautiful bronze *en ronde bosse*, shows Pāla influence, but the treatment of the body is softer and the facial features are peculiarly Arakanese.

"Eight Scene" votive tablets modelled on Pāla steles dating from the end of the period serve to show the last vestiges of western-inspired art before the expansion of Pagán under Aniruddha and Arakan's subsequent turning to the east for its Buddhist inspiration.

Catalogue Raisonné

The Catalogue attempts to examine all sites, sculptures and minor antiquities discovered to date, and includes any published information regarding them, local tradition, and a comparative stylistic analysis. The sculptures are arranged iconographically and chronologically.

The Mahāmuni Shrine (Plates XLII-LII)

The ceremonial centre.....projected images of cosmic order onto the plane of human experience, where they could provide a framework for social action.....Whenever, through the murk of textual corruption or the technologically and stylistically biased reports of archaeologists, we catch a glimpse of the process of urban genesis, it is the integrative function of the shrine or cult which attracts our attention.

writes Paul Wheatley², for whom the Mahāmuni shrine would ideally illustrate his theories of Asian urban origin.

The oldest and most revered Buddhist site in Arakan, the shrine has been the focus of the country's history since its inception³. Its magical image was sought as a prize by neighbouring kings, and it was the goal of pilgrims from all over the Buddhist world. Traditionally the shrine is said to have been built to house the image of the Buddha cast during his sojourn on the Selagiri hill. Hundreds of copies now sanctifying temples and pagodas in Arakan and beyond are reputed to be replicas of

² *The Pivot of the Four Quarters : A Preliminary Enquiry into the Origins and Character of the Ancient Chinese City* (Edinburgh 1971) pp. 477-8

³ See App. I - "The Mahāmuni Tradition".

this first great and only faithful copy of the Master.

The shrine encompasses a hillock at the northeast corner of the palace site. Nothing remains of the original structure apart from perhaps the massive walls of square-cut granular sandstone which form the first, second and third terraces, a large tank at the southeast corner of the first enclosure and a collection of stone sculptures. Even Forchhammer's description, written in 1881, differs radically from the state in which we find the shrine today⁴.

Architecture (Plates XLII-XLIII)

However, from aerial photographs it can be seen that the original plan closely resembles the present form. The shrine was contained within a rectangular wall, with openings at the four cardinal points, the most important being that at the east. The temple proper was square, set towards the west, and raised over two broad, almost square terraces.

No obvious Indian prototype for an image shrine over stepped terraces exists, although the development may be linked with that of the *stūpa*-shaped shrine discussed in detail below.

⁴ *Arakan*, pp.8-14 gives the dimensions of the terraces as I, 685 x 472'; II, 221 x 211'; III, 127 x 98'. Measurements taken in 1975 are I, 584 x 504'; II, 240 x 222'; III, 156 x 115'. These reflect the construction work undertaken some 60 years ago by the Arakanese banker U Rai Gyaw Thu (*ASB* 1922-23, pp.28-9). The site was visited again by the Archaeological Survey in 1958, when a number of new images were discovered among the debris on the terraces (*ASB* 1958-9, pp.24-5).

The most likely origin may be found in the pre-6th century phases of the main temple (site 3) at Nālandā⁷. Only two original architectural fragments, both carved from red sandstone were found in 1975. The first, a *caitya* arch on a lintel fragment, H.O.19m and 0.39m long, was uncovered during the clearing of the NE corner of the second terrace and is now lying at the SW corner. The little figure in the centre belongs to the late Gupta tradition. His wig-type hair, large *cakra* earrings, rounded face and downward-looking eyes and rather sensitive expression are all found among the *gaṇa* figures at Bhūmara⁸. The arch above him is flattened at the apex, and the shape is repeated in the recess beyond. The *caitya* motif is well-known in the art of Dvāravatī and Funan, but the Mahāmuni fragment may well be the earliest example in Southeast Asia. The second fragment is now in the Sima monastery at Kyauktaw, and was possibly part of a pillar; .185m in height, it is decorated on two sides with a . . . lotus medallion, beaded around the centre and with an acanthus pattern outside⁹.

Sculpture

Like the architectural fragments, all the Mahāmuni sculptures are made of fine-grained red sandstone. The one inscribed image, happily typical of the main group, is paleographically datable to the end of the 5th century. All the single figure images are approximately 1.2m high, and consist of a raised unornamented ledge of about 0.3m, on which the figure is seated, backed by a plain slab, usually rounded at the top. The size of each figure varies according to the iconographic group: the *lokapālas* average about 0.51m, and the Bodhisattvas

⁷ D.Mitra, *Buddhist Monuments* (Calcutta 1971) p.88

⁸ M.Benisti, *Rapports entre le premier Art Khmer et l'Art Indien* (Paris 1970) t.II, fig 249

⁹ cf J.C.Harle, *Gupta Sculpture* (Oxford 1974) figs 118,119,120 (Devnomori)

0.85m. The dyad and triad slabs, while stylistically similar to the main group, have a total height of 0.74m, while the figures average 0.4m. As all these images but one have their bases broken or partially buried it was not possible to investigate the size of the tenons underneath. The relative thickness of the slabs, $\approx$ 0.35m at the base, suggests that they were originally placed within niches which were presumably inserted at regular intervals around the outer walls of the terraces, each according to its relative function and importance. Most of the sculptures exhibit a number of peculiar characteristics which allow us to determine the group to which they belong and suggest the original position. The most notable of these features are the ornate headdresses, which will be discussed fully below. In the rounded faces, the smooth curves of the flesh, some elements of the costume, the naturalistic folds of the garments, and the serene balanced composition of the figures, we can trace a familiarity with the late Gupta style. However, the motivation of the Mahāmuni sculptor, who sought to integrate a new religious cult with equally new conceptions of kingship, was quite different from that of his Indian counterpart. The Buddha and Bodhisattva image-types were practically unknown in India and even China at this time. Emphasis on the importance of various Buddhist divinities was changing so rapidly that artists of the period were usually unable to keep pace with the story-tellers¹⁰. Thus the peculiarities of Mahāmuni sculpture were due not only to an adaptation of Indian forms in a new environment, but also to a highly individual interpretation of the *sūtras* devoted to meditation and perception of the deities. Each image was designed to be seen alone, but recognized to be part

¹⁰ A point aptly made by A.Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona 1959) p.232

of the whole complex. Hence the distinguishing characteristics, in particular the headdresses, are ornate and highly decorative, in contrast with the bodies, idealized into almost angular forms which are quietly resolved within a circular composition, emphasising the inspiration of the *sūtras*. Apart from the headdress, the costume of most of the images is almost identical. Each figure has large *cakra* earrings inserted in the lobe. All have upper arm bands, usually not embellished, with a single *fleuron* projection. The necklaces are rigid, wide and quite plain, and round the waist a *kaṭibandha* is always worn, tied at the front in various fashions. An *udarabandha* is sometimes discernable about the hips. Most of these ornaments are common to the earliest Bodhisattva images in India¹¹.

The present disposition of the sculptures differs from Forchhammer's description, and neither is any guide to their original placement. Some on view in 1885 are now lost, while others have been rediscovered since. The following is an analysis of all the available data:

Dvārapāla (Plate XLIV a)

Red sandstone, extant H. (of upper half, lower half now lost) c 1.25m, now painted and set in small shrine on third terrace, NE of central images, and worshipped as an 'ogre'. Not noticed by Forchhammer.

Arch Negs 2337 (1922-23); 8183 (1958-9)

This unfinished image was probably intended to stand in a niche at the eastern entrance to the shrine. Standing in an easy *tribhāṅga* attitude, the left arm is raised to the chest, and the right, falling by the side, holds a long sword. A *prabhāvali* behind the head is decorated with two rows of the coil motif typical of the Mahāmuni

¹¹ M-T. de Mallmann, *Introduction à l'étude d'Avalokiteśvara* (Paris 1967) pp.235-253

sculptures. The headdress is tall but unfinished, as is the necklace, also a row of coils. The lower garment appears to leave the legs naked in front, with a back flap falling naturally behind to above the ankles, held at the waist by a scarf hooked over the left hip, in the manner of the early Veśālī sculptures. The face, although unfinished, has ^a bulging eyes and ¹² broad mouth.

Nāgas (Plate XLVa)

(1) Forchhammer No.10 (II terrace, west side) "The naked figure of a female (sic); right arm broken off from elbow; the outspread hood of a cobra rises from the head; size of stone 3'10" x 1'10".

(pl. No.5, fig 2)

Now in a small shrine of the lower terrace, west of the northern gateway.

(2) Arch *Negs* 2340 (1922-23), 3159 (1958-59)

ASB 1923, pl.1, fig 2 and p.29, 2nd terrace, N of W steps. Now 2nd terrace, W of S steps.

Apart from the left arm, which in (2) remains intact, both sculptures are identical and may have belonged around the base of the second terrace. Their inferior status in relation to the other *devas* is usually stated in the plain reredos behind, reaching to forehead level, and rounded at the top, with extra rounded protrusions behind the

¹² cf J.Boisselier, *La Statuaire du Champa* (Paris 1963) pp.84-5 and fig.43; Nguyễn Phúc Long, "Les Nouvelles Recherches Archeologiques au Vietnam" (Complément au *Vietnam* de Louis Bezacier) *Arts Asiatiques* t.XXXI (1975) fig 297 "Figure représentant un Dvārapāla de la fausse-porte ouest du sanctuaire central du Hoà-lai", (Art de l'époque Tiênlê). The Mahāmuni door guardian may also be compared with the *dvārapāla* discovered recently within the citadel at Sriksetra (Aung Thaw *Historical Sites...*, pp.26-27; cf A.Soper, *Literary Evidence for Early Buddhist Art in China* (Ascona 1959), pp.240-1

shoulders. Iconographically, the figures are almost identical with those finishing the lintels at Prasat Payang described by Briggs as "Human *nāga* shapes, with hoods of five serpent heads. They have a coiffure with a storied chignon, large ear buttons, bracelets and the Brahmanic cord in serpent." ¹³

Our human *nāgas* have five-headed canopies, plain Brahmanic cords, plain necklaces, three-pointed crowns below the high and pointed chignons, and a stiff belt, tied at the front with the ends arranged in the form of a horseshoe. Each sits in *līlāsana* with his left leg folded under, right knee raised with the foot drawn back to the centre and pointing to the side. One arm rests on the raised knee, the other, held at waist level, holds an object now not recognizable. The posture appears to have been widely accepted for human *nāga* figures: we find it again in the later so-called Nāgārjuna image at Nālandā¹⁴.

Nagī

Forchhammer No.7, II terrace, south side. Represents a naked figure in the act of worshipping No.8; (a *lokapāla* !) The stone is broken and the figure is much damaged; over the head spreads the hood of a cobra.

Pl.No.IV, fig 4 (reprint, fig 2)

The same or a very similar image, very damaged, is now among a group of sculptures at the base of the ridge about 2km NNE of Mahāmuni.

The face, with its 9-hooded *nāga*-canopy, is shown frontally, while the torso bends to the left, the right arm by the side and the left, broken at the elbow, apparently raised. The legs,

¹³ L.P.Briggs, *op cit* p.75

¹⁴ S.L.Weiner, "From Gupta to Pāla Sculpture" AA Vol XXXV, p.178 and fig 35

depicted in profile, are in a kneeling position¹⁵.

Nidhi? (Plate XLIVb) *

Not mentioned by Forchhammer; now II terrace, E side, S of stairway.

Badly damaged above the legs and broken at shoulder height. Extant

H. 0.83m, figure 0.46m.

Arch Neg 8166 (1958-9)

From the remains of the figure it can be seen to be squatting, legs widespread, the right foot slightly in front. There is no trace of the right arm; the left appears to have been raised, possibly carrying an important attribute, as the figure is slightly off-centre to the left. Plain bands are worn around the ankles, and the girdle around the hips has traces of decoration. The stomach seems to have protruded more than usual. Behind the figure the backslab is raised slightly in an unornamented surround, similar to those of the *nāga* figures with whom, therefore, this may be considered. The attitude is reminiscent of the chubby squatting *padma* and *śaṅkha-nidhis*, personified attributes of *Kuvera-Vaiśravaṇa* found on either side of shrine and palace doorways in India and Ceylon¹⁶.

¹⁵ In view of Mahāyānist connotations of the Mahāmuni sculptures, we should recollect the story of the daughter of Sāgara, the Nāga king, who, excluded from Buddhahood by her sex, presented the lord with a priceless gem, achieved supreme enlightenment and manifested herself as a (male) Bodhisattva (*Saddharmapuṇḍarīka* XI 48-51). The attitude of our Nāgī suggests that she is presenting a valuable gift to a high personage.

¹⁶ S.Paravitana, "Śaṅkha and Padma " AA XVIII (1955) pp.121-7.

* Jan. 1977: This figure may preferably be described as a *Lokapāla*; perhaps the opposite number to the image at Pl. XLV(b)

Single figure images, main group. (Plates XLVII-XLIX)

Forchhammer, (*Arakan*, pp.12,13) noticed nine of these and classified them as females, no doubt influenced by their graceful proportions which approach the ideal of the Victorian corsetier.

No.5 (II terrace, east side) "Nude female figure with headdress, earrings, necklace, and rings around the upper arm; the arms are knocked off at the elbow; the stone is 3'8" high and 1'10" broad (His plate No.IV, fig 2)

No.6 (II terrace, southeast corner) "Nude female figure; right arm broken off, the left hand rests on the left knee; headdress and ornaments similar to No.4; the stone is broken in two; 3'10" high, 1'10" broad (see his plate No.IV, fig 3)

No.9 (II terrace, west side) "Represents the same figure as No.5; size of the stone also the same."

No.12 (II terrace,north side) A naked female figure, left arm broken off; size of stone 3'8" x 1'10" (see his plate No.V fig 3)

No.13 (I terrace, north side) "A female figure like No.12".

No.14 (I terrace, northeast corner) "A female figure like No.5".

No.18 (I terrace ,southwest corner) "A female figure like No.5".

No.19 (I terrace, northwest corner) "A female figure like No.12".

ASB 1922-3, p.29 and pl.1, fig 3; 1958-9, pp.24-5; *Arch Negs* 2338, 2339,2341 (1922-23), 8155,8156,8161,8166 (1958-9).

Eight of these remain, on the first terrace southwest corner, northwest corner on the northern side, west of the stairway and at the northeastern corner. Another was found among the group 2km away, and a headless , very weathered image near the tank may also belong in this series.

Although almost all distinguishing *mudrās* and attributes of these figures are now lost, enough remain to show that the sculptor was following an explicit iconographic text. All sit in a form of *ardhaparyāṅkāśana*, with the right knee raised, foot pointing forward and the left leg folded under, apart from one which has the left knee raised. Each apparently performed a different *mudrā* or held distinguishing attributes, none of which are entirely clear now, as in all cases but one, the upraised arms are broken from the elbow; where one arm rested on the knee, as was the case in four instances, it usually remains intact. The one fully intact image has the raised right hand passing through a round beaded object which may be a rosary; another appears to have held with both hands an object from which a string or rope dangles. These possibly are an *akṣamālā* and a *pāśa*, both Bodhisattva attributes¹⁷.

The group has no overt sexual characteristics and the broad-shouldered slim-waisted bodies reflect a combination of masculine and feminine ideals.

The usual ornaments are worn, including a *kaṭibandha* around the waist which, where visible, is tied at the centre with a single loop and the ends spread out, an *udarabandha* around the hips, engraved to produce the effect of embossed metal. Noticeable is the absence of the brahmanical cord (*yajñopavīta*), which was worn by the Nāga kings described above. As part of Avalokiteśvara's costume, it was likewise absent in Indian art until the late Gupta period¹⁸.

¹⁷ de Mallmann, *op cit* pp.266ff.

¹⁸ *ibid* p.244

The group is distinguished by wing-like round projections, decorated with rows of coils behind the shoulders. These *perhaps* illustrate the blazing glory which emanates from the body of a Bodhisattva, a Central Asian characteristic mentioned in the *Saddharmapundarika* ¹⁹, but fully developed in the *Amitāyur-Dhyāna-sūtra* ²⁰. The headdress is a five-pointed crown, surmounted by an *uṣṇīṣa* consisting of three coils tipped with a rounded projection sometimes decorated with geometric shapes and possibly with a distinguishing symbol in front. From the side of the crown and the *uṣṇīṣa* issue flower-like projections, and from these fly tripartite ribbon-like objects, curved at the ends. A similar headdress is described in another 5th century *sūtra*,

The *uṣṇīṣa* on the crown of his head holds *maṇi* jewels like the *śākrābhilagna* (worn by Indra). *All four sides of the uṣṇīṣa are luminiscent, emitting golden rays of light; between each pair of rays are four jewelled blossoms with all the colours of a hundred jewels; upon every blossom are phantom Buddhas and Bodhisattvas now showing and now hidden, in number beyond knowing.... etc etc*²¹.

The description is typical of the *kuan sūtras*, mixing precise detail with the fantastic in every sentence. Although in this instance the headgear belongs to the Bodhisattva Bhaiṣajyasamudgata, such iconographical details are fairly common in 5th century Mahāyānist literature. A similar text, now perhaps lost, would have been available to the Mahāmuni artist who has succeeded in an ingenious literal rendition in stone.

¹⁹ Kern trans. *SBE* Vol XXI, pp. 379-81; 397

²⁰ Takakusu trans. *SBE* Vol XLIX, pp. 176, 180, 182-3, 190, 196. Nanjio's catalogue of the Tripiṭaka, No. 198; trans. into Chinese in 424 A.D. by Kālayaśas, a Sramana from India.

²¹ *Nanjio* No. 305; *Kuan Yao Wang Yao Shang Erh P'u-sa ching*; *Daizoboyo* XX No. 1161, trans. in the Liu Sung by Kālayaśas; Soper, *op cit* p. 203-4, my italics.

Single figure with nimbus (Plate L)

Forchhammer noticed two of these images, comparing them to his No.4, the dyed slab, where the figures also have nimbi behind the heads, see his No.11 (II terrace, northwest corner) "A naked female figure like No.4." Only one was found in 1975, on the first terrace, north side, west of the northern stairway.

The figure is distinguished by an elliptical unornamented *prabhāvali*, decorated armbands, and even more slender, elongated proportions than the previous group. The distinctive headdress is also narrower and higher, but closely resembles those of the other "Bodhisattvas". Unfortunately, a thick coating of lime has obscured the finer details, but an extra coil on the *makuta* and a trefoil, pointed arrangement on the top can be discerned. The points of the crown appear to have been petal-shaped. The image probably represents a Bodhisattva held in higher esteem than the others. In the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra*, the two attendants of Amitāyus, Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta, are given similar attributes. Avalokiteśvara is described as being

eighty millions of *nayutas* of *yojanas*.... at the nape of his neck there is a round halo, the diameter of which is a hundred thousand *yojanas*. That halo contains five hundred magically created Buddhas, just like the Buddha Sākyamuni, each accompanied by five hundred Bodhisattvas and innumerable gods as his attendants. Within the *aureole of light that surrounds his body* are manifest the forms and the distinguishing attributes of all creatures in the five paths of existence. On his head is a celestial crown, fashioned with wondrous gems, within which is a magically created Buddha, twenty-five *yojanas* tall.

Mahāsthāmaprāpta differs iconographically in that

His celestial crown has five hundred jewelled lotuses. Each lotus has five hundred jewelled daises; in each dais are manifest, in all their length and breadth, the look of the Paradises of the various Buddhas of the ten quarters.

*The usñisa on the crown of his head is like a padma lotus blossom. On it there is a precious vase, filled with every sort of radiance to make manifest everywhere the Buddha's work.*²²

Despite the fantastic proportions common to *kuan sūtras*, the basic iconographical elements clearly correspond with those exhibited by our figure. The Bodhisattva's great height is emphasised by his slender figure and high headdress; he has a halo, *usñisa*, celestial crown and aureole of light emanating from his body. It is not clear whether there was a Buddha figure within the crown, but the jewelled lotuses and daises and *padma* crown of Māhasthāmaprāpta are certainly possible. At the top of the headdress, under the lime coating, a "vase filled with radiance" can perhaps be discerned.

The Lokapālas (Plates XLV a (?), b,c and XLVIa,b)

A Group of five images, stylistically divisible into three groups.

(1) 2 full-scale figures with low, rounded backslab. Probably identical to Forchhammer No.15 (I terrace, east side) "A female (sic) figure in the same attitude and headdress as No.1, but without the flag on the head; the left hand touches the upraised left knee and holds the spear."

Arch Neg 8157 (1958-59)

Now both on the I terrace, W side, S and N of the stairway, limed and painted. Total H. 1.0m, figure 0.865m and 0.88m (partly buried), and 0.825m respectively.

These sculptures represent the Bodhisattva images in *āsana*, ornaments, crown and *usñisa*. Each carries a sword in the left hand, and holds the right at waist level, palm facing outward. Their importance in relation to the preceding figures is emphasised by the coil-decorated aureoles emanating in a circular fashion from behind the face, and the elliptical *prabhāvali*, spread wing-like projections,

²² Takakusu trans. pp.181-185, my italics.

ornamented at the upper corners and angles with floral motifs from which pointed rays spring upwards and ribbons hang down. The similarity with the Bodhisattva head ornaments indicates that a closely related text was followed, without which it is difficult to explain the wing-like side projections. It should be noted, however, that a Bodhisattva crown showing a humanized *nāga* being carried aloft by a giant bird was known in the earliest Mahāyānist art²³. The coiled shape of the *makūṭa* combined with the side elements could be a survival of this tradition. The pair may be identified as *lokapālas* by their swords, appropriate attributes for protectors prescribed in the *Mahāvamsa* (XXXI, 79) and still carried by guardians of the Mandalay Palace in the 19th century²⁴. They must originally have belonged to a group of four, who by the 5th century had become not only protectors but part of Indra's law-enforcing apparatus²⁵.

Minor Lokapālas (Plate XLVIa,b)

Two small-scale figures with high backslab.

- (1) Forchhammer No.8 (II terrace, south side). "A male figure, flag on the head points east, otherwise similar to No.1; the portion

²³ A.Foucher, *L'Art Gréco-Bouddique du Gandhara* (Paris 1905) figs 320, 298, 415; pl.1A, head from Mathura of Gandharan type, showing only the monster bird, is illustrated by J.P.Vogel, *La Sculpture de Mathurâ* (Paris 1930) pl.XXXVIa. Soper, *op cit* pp.153ff connects the motif with the Zeus and Ganymede legend. In India, the conflict between Garuda and the Nāga can be seen to represent the opposing forces of the celestial and nether worlds.

²⁴ J.George Scott and J.P.Hardiman, *Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States* Vol 1, Pt.2, (Rangoon 1900) p.156

²⁵ see below, p. 208-10

of the stone not covered by the figure appears, to judge from the horizontal lines, to have contained an inscription, but no letters are now traceable. Size of stone, 3'10" high, 1'10" broad."

The image was not to be found in 1922, but was rediscovered in 1958 buried among the debris on the terrace. *ASB* 1958-9, p.24 and pls. 33 and 34; *Arch Negs* 8163-4, 1958-9.

Now placed in a small shrine at the SE corner of the second terrace, base partially buried, extant H. 1.18m, H. of figure 0.51m, H. of flag 0.11m. From the photograph taken after its discovery in 1958, it can be estimated that the roughly dressed socle was 0.30m, giving the stone a total height of 1.48m.

Behind the figure on the upper portion of the stone are twelve lines of an inscription, with only a few legible letters. This must have continued on the base to above the socle, but only portions of three lines remain, the rest having flaked away. Of these, only the lowest portion is clear, but contains the name of the figure, *Yakṣa-senāpati Panāda*, in northern Gupta script of the second half of the 5th century²⁶. Panāda was one of the 28 Yakṣa generals led by Kuvera or Vaiśravaṇa, the guardian of the north²⁷. He would therefore have originally been placed in a position subservient to Vaiśravaṇa, on one of the northern terraces. Iconographically he is essentially the same as the Lokapālas, with some important differences: his smaller size, absence of a crown below the *makuta* (in accordance with his semi-divine status), the flag above his head²⁸ and a simplified form of the

²⁶ See above p.118 ; I am extremely grateful to Sayagyi U San Tha Aung who organised our expedition to Mahāmuni primarily to obtain new copies of this important inscription, and provided me with no less than five rubbings to work from.

²⁷ As listed in the *Mahāsamaya* and *Atānāṭiya Suttas* of the *Dīgha Nikāya* (Nos.20,32) cf *OBEP* p.360 and n.14

²⁸ The *Win Hmu* guarding the Royal Palace at Mandalay had flags over their heads, their various colours reflecting the colour of the side of the Meru-palace they protected.

aureole-nimbus arrangement. He probably once held a sword in his raised left hand, his right arm, also raised, is broken at the elbow. A lotus motif is engraved at the rear of the backslab.

(2) Refs. Forchhammer No.1 (II platform, north side) "Stone slab 3'10" high, 1'10" broad; reliefs from 1" - 7" thick; the flag on the head points to the west; represents a male figure; it holds the royal spear in the right hand." Now on the first terrace, E side, N of the stairway. Extant H. 1.07m, H. of figure 0.52m, traces of a flag (?) above the head.

The figure is in most respects identical to that of Panāda, but somewhat better preserved. He holds a sword in his right hand, which rests on his raised knee; the other arm is broken, as usual at the elbow. In place of the necklace, two straps pass over his shoulders, twist over the chest and behind the arms, perhaps the baldric for a quiver carried on the back ²⁹. The girdle around his hips resembles a chain, joined at the centre front with a square buckle, beneath which he may have worn a short tunic.

Two other images mentioned by Forchhammer but now lost may have belonged to the group of Yakṣa generals:

No.2 (II terrace, NE corner) "Relief nearly effaced, the upper part of the head traceable; the small flag on the head points to the east; the headdress differs from that of No.1; size of stone the same as the preceding"; No.3 (II terrace, east side) "Only the headdress left of the stone with the head, which is the same as in No.1" Full size figure with flag.

Not mentioned by Forchhammer, but cf. his No.1 above. Now at the SW corner of the second terrace; Extant H. 1.04m. H. of figure, .79m, flag .14m; whitewashed and painted.

²⁹ cf Dikshit, *Paharpur* (MASI No.55) pl.XLVIII, b

The figure sits in a slightly different position than the others, his right knee raised and left leg folded, knee and toes touching the ground. In his right hand he holds a long spear, now broken at the top, while his left hand rests on the left thigh. He wears the usual ornaments, the armbands finishing in an upper point, and adds plain anklets and a short tunic. The headdress has no crown, an *uṣṇīṣa* consisting of four narrow coils topped with a bulbous bun and a flag; from either side protrude two spikes. The coil-decorated aureoles sprout from behind the shoulders like wings, and the figure is backed by a plain rounded reredos finishing at eye level and squared at the base.

Triad (Plate LIIa)

Not mentioned by Forchhammer. Arch Neg 2337 (1922-23).

Now on the first terrace, south side, west of the stairway, with the base buried. Extant H. 0.53m. Estimated height of the base above the socle (from Arch Neg) $\leq$ 0.35m, giving a total of $\leq$ 0.9m+. The damaged backslab was horizontal or slightly rounded on top.

The three figures are seated with the right legs slightly raised in front. The central member has his right arm raised in front of the body, the hand unfortunately broken, the left is resting on the shin, palm probably inwards. The side figures once held long stalk-like objects, wider at the top, in their raised inner hands; the outer hands, now lost, were also raised in front.

Stylistically the triad appears to be slightly later than the main group of images. The figures are only half the normal size, the front feet do not point forward and the *uṣṇīṣa* is not coiled but two-tiered. However, the use of red sandstone and ornaments identical to those of the larger figures ^{may} indicate that the sculpture

still belong to the Candra period. The side members, ornaments, nimbi and headdresses (apart from the *uṣṇīṣa*) are identical to the image tentatively identified as Mahāsthāmaprāpta, and despite the loss of their crowns and the distinguishing vase and Buddha figure within them, ^{may possibly} be identified as Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta. The fans or *cāmara* held in the inner hands emphasise their function as divine attendants on Amitābha. Such triads, inspired by the *Amitāyur-dhyāna-sūtra* were also produced in Chinese art at this period³⁰. Amitābha himself holds his hands in a similar pose to that found in late 5th century Chinese sculpture where the right hand is raised and the left held palm downwards³¹. Instead of a nimbus, three flames issue from either side of his head, following the *sūtra* (15,17) where he is described as "sending forth brilliant rays". Although the flame device was not used elsewhere, the six flames emitted from the shoulders remained part of the iconography of the Mahāmuni image until at least the 14th century³². A tradition preserved in the local chronicles recalls that after the installation of the Mahāmuni image by King Candra-sūriya, its six-fold aureole rays would fade away when heretics worshipped, but when the faithful approached, the rays would flash

³⁰ e.g. Soper *op cit* pp.130-1, describes inscribed triads of Amitābha with Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta dated between 550 - 581 under the Northern Ch'i.

³¹ Terukazu Ariyama and Saburo Matsubara *Arts of China - Buddhist Cave Temples : New Researches* (Tokyo 1972) pl.157, Amitaya Buddha, dated 483 A.D., under the Southern Ch'i, unearthed at Mou-hsien, Szechwan province.

³² cf below pp. 248-51 and pls.LIIb, LXIX .

forth like the flashes of forked lightning. The rays are also said to have flashed forth in the evening³³. That the tradition was still current in the 19th century is apparent from an inscription on a votive bell installed at Mahāmuni in 1818³⁴.

Dyāds (Plate LIa,b)

Only one of these was noticed by Forchhammer, "No.4 (II terrace, east side). The slab is much damaged; two small figures traceable in sitting posture; they represent Buddhas in their ordinary dress and attitude, and have been chiselled out of the original Nat figures by the emissaries of Anawratha."³⁵

The slab is now on the first terrace, E side, south of the stairway. Total H. 0.74m, H. of figures 0.42m. Another, in better condition, is on the second terrace, south side, near the southeast corner. The figure on the left appears to have had both arms raised; the one on the right had the left arm raised. The right remains intact, resting

³³ Forchhammer, *Arakan* p.5

³⁴ Capt.R.Wroughton "Account and drawing of two Burmese bells now placed in a Hindu temple in Upper India" *Journal of the Asiatic Society* (Dec 1837) p.1069, and note 6. The bell was plundered during the first Burmese War.

³⁵ *GPC* p.86, and a reference in the *Mahāmuni Thamaing* (Forchhammer p.6) where the King of Pagan, in the middle of the 10th century, is said to have sent two ministers to the Mahamuni pagoda with the instruction to "replace the stone figures of Nats by images of Buddha; but the King of Vesālī opposed this change and only two of the Nat figures were allowed to be chiselled into images of Buddha."

in front. The base is buried; Total H. above ground 0.52m,
H. of figures 0.45m.

Arch *Neg* 8165 (1958-9)

The dyad figures are in all respects identical to the side
figures on the triad, and ^{could perhaps} represent Avalokiteśvara and
Mahāsthāmaprāpta. Similar pairs of Bodhisattva images were also
known in China at the same period³⁶.

Function and significance

Through the "murk of textual corruption" apparent in
Arakanese traditional histories it is clear that from its est-
ablishment as a Buddhist centre the Mahāmuni shrine was intim-
ately connected with the function of Arakanese kingship. The
chronicles emphasise that its founder, King Mahācandrasūriya,
had all the qualities of a Cakravartin king³⁷. The foundation
is inferred to be coincidental with the adoption of Buddhism by
the king, his court and the people of Arakan. This may have been
the case, as there is no firm evidence of Buddhism earlier than
the Mahāmuni. The historicity of Mahācandrasūriya is doubtful,
but the name is auspicious in Arakanese tradition. The sculptural
remains point to the reign of Devacandra, who ascended the throne
in c 454 A.D. and ruled for 23 years. The Candra dynasty had been
in power for c 84 years, long enough to accumulate the wealth
and influence to build such a shrine.

After the conversion of the people by the Lord Buddha,
Mahācandrasūriya is said to have declared :

³⁶Soper, *op cit* p.126 (Northern Wei 516-535) pp.127-8 (Eastern
and Western Wei 534-557); pp.130-1 (Northern Ch'i and Northern
Chou, 580-581)

³⁷RYT Vol.1.1, pp.247ff

"O lord who is the crown, light and glory of the three kinds of beings, if you wander about from place to place in distant countries, we shall have no one to pay homage to. Therefore for my own good and that of others, I would pray you to leave us an image of you."

Thus the Mahāmuni shrine and its great image were seen to unite in worship the three kinds of beings: the celestial *devas*, men and creatures of the nether world. This is analogous with the traditional function of the *cakravartin* king, who in the course of the *abhiṣeka* ceremonies was imbued with the power to control the heavenly and subterranean forces in order to ensure the prosperity of his kingdom.

Its position, NE of the palace site, is paralleled in many other major shrines in urban Buddhist centres in Southeast Asia and Ceylon, and may be associated with the royal ancestors³⁸.

A continuation of a pre-Buddhist earth goddess cult is evidenced by the importance of the Vasundharā hole dug in the presence of the image in the traditions connected with the shrine. It is said that the hole could not be filled up with the holy water poured in it by its votaries³⁹. Continued prosperity in the kingdom was seen to be guaranteed when the king, during the *abhiṣeka* ceremony, placed 50 coins issued by his predecessor and 50 minted to commemorate the new reign in the Vasundharā hole⁴⁰.

³⁸ See above, p. 22 and fn. 49 ; P. Paris, "L'Importance Rituelle du Nord-Est...." *BEFEO*, XLI, pp. 313ff.
Dr. Daw Thin Kyi told me in 1975 that all the excavated Pyu cities have the main temple northeast of the palace.

The *Mahāvamsa* 29, 64-5; 31.86 includes the northeast among the five directions (east, west, south, north and northeast) and it was apparently considered to have special sanctity. cf also *Manu* 6.31, where *aparājita* *dis* is the direction of purification prior to union with Brahman. In Hindu cosmology the northeast is governed by Candra or Soma, which may also be significant considering the dynastic name of the Arakanese kings.

³⁹ Forchhammer, p.5

⁴⁰ See above, p.156 .

Further evidence of a continuation of a pre-Buddhist cult is seen in the Nāga and Nāgī sculptures which presumably were once placed either around the base of the Mahāmuni shrine, or, as in Ceylon, guarding the steps to the entrance to the shrine proper⁴¹. Their king, Virūpākṣa would have been the *lokapāla* presiding over the western quarter of the shrine and country. The male Nāga images were crowned, signifying their deification. As Soper has so succinctly explained:

The nāgas were imagined, long before the coming of Buddhism and long after its disappearance in India, as snake-like demi-gods, whose proper home was, like a snake's, the bowels of the earth or under the water. Associated with great deposits of hidden wealth, like the dragons of the Rhinegold; and with the power of water, shown either in the torrent or the storm. As in the case of other demi-god categories, their relationship with men was imagined as an equivocal one, now beneficent and now destructive; the maintenance of a proper balance between these two extremes was held to be one of the functions of the Buddha and the Church.

And, we might add, one of the functions of the king in an agrarian Buddhist society. In the more elaborate Mahāyāna *sūtras*, the deified Nāgas appear among the eight classes of beings who listened to Śākyamuni's preaching⁴².

According to the Mahāmuni tradition, the stone figures placed towards the cardinal points kept away persons who approached the image house with evil intention⁴³. Their power was so strong that, even in the 11th century, Aniruddha sought to have them recut into Buddha images. By the 5th century, the four *lokapālas* who guard the four quarters of the earth were also seen to protect the microcosm of the kingdom, as

⁴¹ cf S. Bandaranayake, *Sinhalese Monastic Architecture* (Leiden 1974) pp. 340ff.

⁴² The other seven categories being Devas, Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Asuras, Garuḍas, Kinnaras and Mahoragas.

⁴³ Forchhammer, p. 5

illustrated by the "Sūtras on National Safety". Recitation of the *Suvarṇabhāṣottamasūtra*⁴⁴ was recommended and was believed to bring immediate aid from the four Lokapālas, who arrive accompanied by countless hosts of demons and can thus protect a country against national perils such as famine, invasion, plague, revolutions etc. The Lokapālas also became part of a neatly worked-out law-enforcement apparatus, headed by Indra in his heaven. In the *Sūtra on the Four Celestial Monarchs*⁴⁵ the four are Indra's adjutants, dividing up the world between them and making inspection tours on Buddhist fast days to examine the conduct of all living creatures from the king to the humblest insect. Those reported to Indra and his gods as righteous reaped rewards such as the appointment of guardian spirits to watch over their welfare. As the function of the king on earth reflected those of Indra in heaven, his four chief ministers of state came to be seen as representatives of the Lokapālas⁴⁶. Following the *Mahāvamsa* description, the four Mahāmuni Lokapālas carry swords in their hands; the minor Lokapālas also fly flags over their heads, attributes still retained by the

⁴⁴ First translated into Chinese between 416 and 428 by Dharmakṣema, but followed by many others. The definitive translation was made by I T'ing in 703. English translation by R.E. Emmerick, *SBB* Vol XXVII, see Ch. VI - Chapter on the Four Great Kings; cf. A. Waley, *Catalogue of the Paintings Recovered from Tun Huang by Sir Aurel Stein* (London 1931) p. xi

⁴⁵ *Ssu t'ien wang ching* trans. into Chinese after 427 by the ex-pilgrims Chih-yen and Pao-yün; Nanjio No. 722, Daizokyo XV, No. 590; Soper *op cit* pp. 177 and 233-4.

⁴⁶ W. Geiger in *The Culture of Ceylon in Medieval Times* (Wiesbaden 1960) pp. 177-8 remarks that the scene of the gods rendering homage to the relics to be deposited in the great Thūpa in the *Mahāvamsa* 31.75 sq. was depicted after the model of a royal *abhiseka* festival. The same scene is depicted on the *devatā* plaques on the Ananda at Paḡān, where the sculptor follows the Mv. description with great precision, although Shorto in his "Devatā Plaques of the Ananda Basement" in *Essays Offered to G.H. Luce* II, p. 156 did not detect this and considered the plaques to be based on the *Midānakathā*. The iconography of the Ananda plaques, especially those depicting the Lokapālas is remarkably similar to that of the Mahāmuni sculptures.

Win-hmas who guarded the king in the Royal Palace at Mandalay⁴⁷.

The function of the higher Bodhisattvas, Mahāsthāmaprāpta and Avalokiteśvara, both in single images and in groups, is clearly stated in the early Amitābha literature. The oldest account is found in Lokarakṣa's 2nd century translation of a version of the *Larger Sukhāvati-vyūha*:

Among all the Bodhisattvas these two are the holiest. They are ever throned at the left and right sides of the Buddha of boundless purity.... discussing the affairs of the eight quarters, of the superior and nether worlds and of the past, present and future. When he wishes to send them as envoys to the countless Buddha-lands of the eight quarters,... the two Bodhisattvas fly thither.⁴⁸

Seen thus as ministerial envoys from the Western Paradise, conversant with the affairs of not only the eight quarters but also the heavens and the underworld, their connection with the king of Dharmāvati through their presence at Mahāmuni was particularly auspicious. By the 5th century, we see in the *Amitāyur-Dhyāna-sūtra* that the two had also become rescuers, accessible to the appeals of humanity, heading the divine host that swoops down in welcome to the deathbeds of the faithful. At Mahāmuni their presence therefore reminded the populace of the Paradise awaiting them should they, like the king, place their faith in Amitāyur-Amitābha.

The paucity of iconographic detail in the "Deva" group does not allow us to reconstruct their function conclusively. If the original number was ten, they may have been the Bodhisattvas connected with the Buddhas of the Ten Quarters of Space, the eight

⁴⁷ J. George Scott, *op cit* p.156

⁴⁸ Nanjio No.25, the *Fo Shua Wu-liang Ch'ing-ching P'ing-teng Chieh Ching* Daizokyo XII, No.361; Soper, *op cit* pp.141,150

cardinal points plus up and down, a concept which attained popularity during the 5th century⁴⁹. However, the ten *Devarājas* (Chinese *Shen-wang*), a class of demigods vowed to protect Buddhism and the Buddhists, is also a possibility. In the Kung-hsien caves (1st half of the 6th century) they are depicted sitting in postures identical to those of the Mahāmuni Bodhisattvas, but lack the ornate headdresses⁵⁰. On the other hand, the figures may represent the attendant Bodhisattvas at Amitābha's Sukhāvatī "infinite in number"⁵¹

The original position of the dyad and triad slabs, which appear to be later than the main group, is puzzling. Their smaller scale may indicate that they were placed in a small shrine on one of the terraces, or they may have been made after the identity of the central image had changed, perhaps to that of Maitreya, and were given an inferior status.

Why the central and uppermost image represented Amitābha raises a number of interesting questions. Amitābha was never accepted in Madhyadeśa, and in India his worship was confined to the northern fringes. His cult of a heaven of immeasurable light, accessible by faith alone, presided over by a group of three divinities, has far more in common with the Middle and Near East than with India, and was probably a product of Kuṣāṇa influence. Its wide acceptance in China and Japan (and, presumably, Arakan) was due to the belief that *nirvāṇa* could be attained merely through Amitābha's almighty blessing power, an "easy way" compared with the "difficult way" preached by

⁴⁹ Soper, *op cit* pp.199-200

⁵⁰ *ibid* p.277; Akiyama and Matsubara, *op cit* pl.125

⁵¹ *The Smaller Sukhāvatī-Vyūha*, 10; Takakusu, *op cit* p.98

the Āryas, which relied on one's own power⁵². The only other recorded Amitābha image from Southeast Asia is the brass statue sent, in the late 5th century, from Champa to the Liang court⁵³. For the previous two centuries, a sea route from the mouth of the Ganges to Funan had been known⁵⁴. It must have passed along the Arakan coast, and it is not surprising to find the same cult at two points on the way.

Although two centuries later the king was seen as a Bodhisattva, there is no evidence that in the late 5th century he was identified with Amitābha. The central position of the palace, as opposed to the shrine, suggests that secular considerations were dominant in the planning of Dhaññavati. However, from the close and cardinally-oriented juxtaposition of the shrine, it could be inferred that the king's rôle was seen as that of a "vice-regent" of the central deity. Thus, his initial motivation in the design of the shrine was to ensure peace and prosperity for his people. He was seen to achieve this by the placating of the local earth-goddess, conveniently absorbed into Buddhism as Vasundharā, and by the importance given to Kuvera/Vaiśravaṇa, lord of the dangerous northern direction and also the god of wealth through his installation as a Lokāpala, together with his generals.

In this context it is interesting to note that about the same time, Kassapa I of Ceylon had styled himself an embodiment of Kuvera in an effort to gain the support of the

⁵² cf M.W. de Visser, *Ancient Buddhism in Japan* (Leiden 1935) Vol.I, p.318

⁵³ In the bibliography *Ch'u san tsang chi chi* XIII (Daizokyo LV, p.92, b,c); Soper, *op cit* pp.53-4, 146

⁵⁴ Pelliot, "Le Fou-nan" *BEFEO* III (1904) p.276, n.2

populace⁵⁵. Both the Lokapālas and the Bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara and Mahāsthāmaprāpta were used as a divine law-enforcement agency, with the power to grant favours to those pursuing the guidelines laid down by the sacred and secular authorities. The ultimate reward, however, was rebirth in the blissful Western Paradise of Amitābha, where wealth and comfort were to be had and toil was unknown.

The continuity of the early Amitābha iconography is apparent in the first crowned Buddha image from Arakan, and the bronze images dating from the 12th - 15th centuries, copied from the Mahāmuni image as it appeared then⁵⁶. All retain the three flames on either shoulder. The earlier specimens of the later group faithfully follow Chinese and Tibetan Amitābha- Amitāyus images in both iconography and style. Whether these were worshipped as Amitābha is uncertain. Early texts refer to the Mahāmuni image as Maitreya⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ *Cūlavamsa* 39.6; Parānavitana "Sīgiri, the Abode of a God King" *J. of the Ceylon Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Centenary Vol. 1950, pp.129-162

⁵⁶ For the earliest of these see below, p.248-51 ;cf the bronze-gilt image found among the *trésor* of the shrine and taken to Amarapura in 1784: Max and Berta Ferrars *Burma* (2nd ed. 1901) p.206, fig 451; U Mya, "Our Museum" *JBRS* Vol.IV pl.1, figs a,b and pp.219-220; "Crowned Buddha Images in Burma" *ASE* 1958-9, pp. 28-37 and pl.65-66; Arch *Negs* 1296, 1297 (1913-14). The image closely resembles Amitābha sculptures from China and Tibet, e.g. A.Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism* (Paris 1928), pls. IIIa "Amitayus, clay, found in Honan, China"; XVd "Bronze, Tibetan"; XVIIIc,d "Bronze-gilt, Tibetan"; d with flame on shoulders.

⁵⁷ N.R.Ray *Sanskrit Buddhism in Burma* (Calcutta 1936) p.43, mentions two very early Burmese Chronicles, the *Maharaja Van Tawkrī* (Vol.1, p.209) and the *Pagan Raja Van Thit* (MS . No.918 of the Bernard Free Library, Rangoon) which state that it is an image of Maitreya. The development of the Maitreya idea was characteristic of the Theravāda Sarvāstivādin school, which is attested at Srikṣetra by the 7th century A.D.(Ray, pp.19ff). According to U Mya (*op cit*) Burmese tradition ascribes the introduction of the Mahāyānist doctrine to the saint Asanga, who it is said, proceeded to Tūṣita, and in the presence of Arimettaya received the Tantric doctrine and manuals in the 6th century. At Bōdhgava, Sākyamuni and Maitreya were symbolized in the same statue P.Mus, "Le Buddha Paré" *BEFEO* XXVIII (1928), pp.269-70.

It is possible that after the fall of the Candara dynasty and the subsequent neglect of the shrine, only vague memories of the Amitābha cult remained. The idea of Maitreya's Tuṣṭita heaven would have been more acceptable to a Theravādīn community and differed only slightly from Sukhāvatī in the minds of the populace.

Thingyain-taung

(Plate. LIII)

Ref ASE 1920-21, p.18

Thingyain-taung "Cemetery Hill", a large mound thickly covered with ruins and debris, SW of the Wethali palace site is thus called because human bones have been found there from time to time. The villagers have no recollection of the place being used as a burial site, and the supposition is that it may have been the resting place of the kings of Veśālī. As Duroiselle supposed, the tradition may be perfectly correct, as it was with regard to the vaults near the Payagyi at Śrīkṣetra which contained the remains of the Pyu kings.

About thirty metres to the south of the main building on the top of the hill, now completely in ruins, are the remains of a circular structure built of stone, 18.97m in circumference. Access to it is gained by a covered stairway at the eastern side, in 1920 still partially covered by a vaulted roof which has now completely fallen in. Brick vaulting was also used at Śrīkṣetra, notably at the Bèbè, and Lémeyethna, and East Zégu temples. Inside, an apsidal chamber, 3.3m wide and 4.5m deep was covered by a dome, the introdos about 12m from the base of the structure. The roof has fallen in, filling the base of the chamber; facing the entrance is a colossal Buddha image, head

and arms now broken, measuring 1.25m from the thigh to the shoulder (see below pp.245-6). Traces of curved mouldings are visible around the outer dome, repaired in places with brick at some relatively recent date. The average size of stone used was 0.42 x 0.26 x 0.13m. A carved stone fragment, constituting a right angle, the upper arm measuring 2.60m and the lower .30m, was found near the entrance to the stairway, and must have originally formed part of the balustrade. Similar rectilinear moulded balustrades are found on stairways in Ceylon architecture of c 5th - 7th centuries. The curved volute on the longer arm of the Thingyain-taung stone is similar in conception to the voluted wingstones which evolved in Ceylon during the period⁵⁸.

The *stūpa* -shaped image shrine did not gain wide acceptance in India. The circular structure around a Buddha image, with a covered entrance passage evolved at Nagarjunakonda from the circular ⁵⁹*gr̥ha-stūpa*.

Several small ruined structures, either cubic or cylindrical in plan, among the ruins of Sarnath and Bodhgaya may have been shrines of this sort. In cave XXVI at Ajanṭā, and in a corner *stūpa* belonging to the fifth phase of the great *stūpa* of Site III at Nālandā (late 6th-early 7th centuries), the *stūpa* itself has been hollowed out to form a cella⁶⁰. The only intact *stūpa*-shaped image shrines are found in the Thalawar district of Rajasthan, and again belong to the 6th and 7th centuries⁶¹.

⁵⁸ Senake Bandaranayake *Sinhalese Monastic Architecture* (Leiden 1974) pp.330ff.

⁵⁹ H.Sarkar *Studies in Early Buddhist Architecture of India* (Delhi 1966) p.29

⁶⁰ P.R.Meyer "Stūpas and Stūpa-shrines" *AA* XXIV (1961), p.27

⁶¹ D.Mitra *op cit* pp.135,137-40

Like the Arakan votive *stūpas*, these have a square platform with mouldings, and a moulded, high cylindrical *aṇḍa*. It is possible that excavation of the lower portion of the Thingyain-taung shrine may also reveal a square base.

This shrine type must have evolved in response to a development in the religion following the deification of the Buddha.

The type may have been alluded to in the *Suvarṇabhāṣasūtra*:

Whoever should desire to do inconceivable honour to all the Buddhas and to know the profound sphere of all the Buddhas, he should approach that place, monastery [,or ?] cell where this excellent Suvarṇabhāṣa is preached Then he must enter, by entry into the sphere of the Law, where there is this Stūpa, whose nature is the Law, profound, well-established. And in the midst of this Stūpa he will see the Buddha Śākyamuni expounding this Sūtra in a pleasant voice.⁶²

A funerary connotation of the Thingyain-taung shrine, if any, may be explained in terms of a posthumous association of the *dharma* of the Buddhist Cakravartin king, a Bodhisattva after his death, if not before, with the *dharma* of the Buddha Śākyamuni, in Mahāyānist mysticism, the supreme king. The concept may have evolved from an earlier megalithic ancestor cult. Similar shrines at Beikthano, square in plan but with entrance through a passageway, were associated with burial urns⁶³, and architectural counterparts of the Thingyain-taung shrine are found in the (often square) vaulted

⁶² R.E.Emmerick's trans. 14.1-2, 6-7. vv.3-5 appear to be an interpolation.

⁶³ Aung Thaw *Excavations at Beikthano* (Rangoon 1968), p.91 (KKG 14); p.98 (KKG 18) facing east with a stepped passageway, cf the south Indian megalithic grave sites, with covered entry and similar dispersal of urn burials described by R.E.M.Wheeler, *op cit.* Note too, the Buddha's permission in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (SEB Vol II, p.47) for the erection of *stūpas* over the remains of a Buddha, a Pratyeka Buddha, or a Cakravartin.

chapels of Śrīkṣetra,⁶⁴ the prototypes for the old Burmese *kū* "temple". Luce has noted that at Pagán *kū* were sometimes built near graves, by wives in memory of their husbands⁶⁵. In Arakan the Thingyain-taung type with a vaulted entry passage was still built under the Mrohaung dynasty⁶⁶. A number to the south of Kyauktaw may belong to the early period⁶⁷.

The main structure at the top of the hill is now completely ruined, but various carved fragments give some idea of the original form. Among these were probably the pillar and a pilaster now in Mrohaung museum (described below). A capital of a pilaster, carved on three adjoining faces with the half lotus motif also noticed at Mahāmuni, was found near the entrance to the *stūpa*-shaped shrine.

Shwè-daung-gyi (Plate LIV)

Shwè-daung-gyi - "the great Golden Hillock" lies NNE of the palace site, in the same relationship as the Mahāmuni is to Dhañṇavatī. The discovery of a *dhvaja-stambha* possibly connected with the king's rain-making function at the site may further indicate that the

⁶⁴ OBEF I p.243 and fn. 147

⁶⁵ *ibid*, p.249; I B, pl.I 96⁷ *saṅkhīvañ nhuik kī*, 598 s/1236 A.D.

⁶⁶ The most accessible being the large *stūpa*-shaped shrine on the first platform of the Shitthaung-para, near the present inscription shed, see Forchhammer, p.21 and pl.No.XI.

⁶⁷ *ibid*, p.114. Time did not permit an examination of this site in 1975.

shrine was associated with the rôle of the king⁶⁸. Now a large steep mound covered with earth and trees, it is scattered with brick and huge stone slabs, extremely damaged life-size images and remains of many small Buddha images. Towards the base is a hole, partially blocked with debris, through which a small man can climb. U San Tha Hla, the headman at Wethali, told me that inside are a number of enormous rooms, with bronze lamps and huge sculptures.

Shwè-daung-gyi over the centuries has attracted treasure hunters, who are reported to have been thwarted by the enormous stones and left poorer than when they arrived. Duroiselle's planned excavation in 1922⁶⁹ did not eventuate, but U San Shwe Bu is said to have begun excavation, with the aid of a wealthy Arakanese banker, before World War II. Nothing is known of the outcome of his efforts, however.

The hillock's reputation has been enhanced by a local legend, probably based on a substratum of truth. In the middle of the 10th century, after King Culataingcandra had disappeared (? in China) his queen, Candadevi married a Mru tribesman. The Pyu of Śrīkṣetra, incensed at the tribesman's audacity, attempted to attack Veśālī but were enticed away by his brother and massacred. The spot where the property, gold, jewels, etc of the Pyu king and his army was buried is still known as Shwè-daung⁷⁰.

⁶⁸ See below, pp.286ff and J.J.Meyer *Trilogie Altindischer Mächte u. Feste der Vegetation* (Zurich 1937) III, p.8; *Viṣṇudharmottara* II, 155.1 "In an eastern direction from the king's palace, in a pure place, on a spot towards the northeast, the king should erect the auspicious shrine for Indra (to erect the Indra-dhvaṇa)"

⁶⁹ *ASB* 1920-21, p.19

⁷⁰ *ibid* and *Dhammavatī Razawin* pp.94-99

U San Tha Hla has collected a number of interesting sculptures and architectural fragments from the site, most of which are in a shelter in his yard.

(1) *Simhamukha* with bulging eyes and two-layered curly mane. Grey sandstone, broken around the nose and mouth.

The lion-headed rearing *vyālas* guarding the entrances to Pallava *rathas* at Māmallapuram and Kañcipuram have identical faces⁷¹.

(2) Capital, grey sandstone.

Carved on three adjoining faces with a double lotus petal motif, a row of beads and addorsed lions at the corners, interposed with a variant of the double lotus motif. The addorsed animal motif was widely used on columns from the Gupta period⁷², but does not appear to have gained wide acceptance at Māmallapuram.

(3) Flying Gandharva, surrounded by a beaded motif, part of a square panel. The figure is more suggestive of late Gupta than Pallava sculpture, particularly in its wig-like hair.

(4) Fragment from upper part of façade, showing a portion of a reduction of the edifice. This trend is typical of the shrines at Budami, and was adopted by the Pallavas in the middle of the 7th century. The base of our fragment represents the southern barrel-vaulted roof, relieved in the centre with a *kūḍu* arch enclosing an open-lotus motif. Above this, three square projections suggesting pillars are surmounted by a beam, with another series of rectangular pillar diminutions on top.

(5) Another fragment with similar squared mouldings.

⁷¹ e.g. Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia* (New York, 1974) Vol.II, pl.267, Māmallapuram, Dharmaraja ratha, early 7th century; Pramod Candra (ed.) *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture* (New Delhi 1975) pl.117, Kanchipuram, Kailasanatha temple, early 8th century, a more developed type.

⁷² e.g. Zimmer, *ibid* pl.176, Ajanta, Cave XVII

Other sculptures discovered at Shwê-daung include a small standing female image (p. 294). The architectural fragments indicate a contact with early Cālukyan and Pallava styles from the middle of the 7th century. A possible later date for the *dhvaja-stambha* suggests that the shrine remained in use during the last phase of occupation of Veśālī, from the last quarter of the 8th century.

Letkhat-taung Plate LV)

A large mound at the east of Wethali village, now the site of a monastery popularly named after the huge stone slab in the shape of a *letkhat* ("weaver's shuttle"). A mid-6th century votive inscription (p. 91) may have been found in a 'cave' at the base of the mound. slabs, almost completely buried, are said to be the steps from which the ancient kings threw the powerful Areindama spear, and the sculptures scattered around are likewise said to represent ancient kings. These images, near life size, appear to have been *torana* figures at the entrance to a large shrine.

(1) ASB 1920-21, p. 18; Arch Neg (1958-9); extant H. 1.05m, B. .65m.

Headless male figure in semi-relief, arms broken below the shoulders, standing in *tribhanga* pose. A girdle is tied in a knot at the left hip, the folds falling gracefully to the knee and ankle respectively.

(2) ASB 1920- 21; Arch Neg 2690 (1925-26)

Another similar figure, the upper portion almost completely flaked away, standing in a slight *tribhanga* pose. He wears a high rounded headdress, ears reaching to the shoulders, a girdle around the hips looped to the left with folds hanging down; the left hand rests on the hip, while the right holds a long staff, tall as the figure and widening at the top. The attitude suggests that he was a *dvārapāla*, placed opposite no. 1.

(3) ASB 1920-21; Arch Neg 8147 (1958-9)

A similar slab, H. 1.85m, B. 0.85m, with a female figure in exaggerated *tribhaṅga* pose, H. 1.65m.

It is much damaged. The face is broken off, but there are traces of a high headdress and a plain nimbus behind. The right arm falls along the body, the hand being placed lightly on the leg just below the hip and seemingly holding a garment, the folds of which fall to the foot. A scarf around the hips tied at the front falls between the legs. The left hand is placed on the head of a much smaller figure, whose hands are in the attitude of adoration. It is facing the main figure, possibly with a halo surrounding the head and with the dress falling gracefully along its side and in front. The main figure may represent Gaṅgā or Yamunā, and could originally have been placed adjacent to a *dvārapāla* at the base of the *torāṇa* of the shrine.

(4) Arch Neg 8148 (1958-9)

Damaged lower portion of a figure seated crosslegged* on a plain pedestal, and wearing around the hips a belt decorated with geometric motifs. There is a long tenon below.

The body is treated naturalistically, the flesh firm and rounded, with a slight indication of the muscles.

Other sculptures found at Letkhat-taung are described on p. 239 & 242.

The broken stone plinth after which the mound is named has, at irregular intervals on its upper face, double-recessed square indentations, apparently to hold the tenons of a series of such carved slabs, suggesting that mortar was not used for stone construction at that time.

* A peculiar *āsana* which, Professor Boisselier tells me, is occasionally found in Thai sculpture of the 8th and 13th-14th centuries.

Sanghayama Hill

Sanghayama Hill, west of Wetheli village, is thus called after its reputation of being the site of the fourth Buddhist synod⁷³. One side of the hill has been cut into a series of wide terraces, and the top is paved with bricks under which (according to U Aung Tha Oo, who investigated) are large dressed stone blocks. Apart from the apparently Śaivite *dvārapāla* found at the site, (p.275), the only architectural fragment of note is the base of a square column closely resembling the two probably originating from Thingyain-taung (p.224-9). The pillar has an extant height of 0.42m, each face measuring 0.33m across. On each face, the base has an ornate floral motif, the central petals on each side in the form of stylized birds, a device often found in western Cālukyan sculpture. Over this, the first side has a male figure, left hand on hip, wearing a *dhōṭī* wound tightly above the knees; folds of a scarf tied around the hips fall naturally on either side; the second, a female figure, naked legs in profile, attended by a small dancing *gana* figure, right hand on hip and head facing the top of the thighs of the female; the third has another apparently female figure, wearing a garment incised with a ring pattern, falling at mid-calf level, and accompanied by a similar *gana* figure while the fourth shows a pair of naked legs in profile and

⁷³ U Aung Tha Oo, in a personal communication dated 28.3.74 says that Dharmaviṣaya convened a Buddhist assembly in 638 A.D., inviting 1000 monks from different parts of Arakan and 1000 monks from Ceylon. Cularevathara was elected president and the assembly devoted themselves to an examination of theological literature for three years. His knowledge of the Arakanese chronicles is, of course, greater than mine, but he does not give any reference for this, nor is the account given in the *RYT* or Nga-mi's chronicle. It is probable that the tradition of a 4th synod is associated in Arakanese Buddhist hagiography with the joint decision of the Pyu and Arakanese kings to begin a new era in 638 A.D.

and another *gana*. The pillars framing the figure differ from those on the other columns, having a square cross-section, a *kumbha* base on a lotus support and a band of decoration across the centre, consisting of a geometric motif within a beaded surround. Identical pillar bases are found on sculptured steles from Nagarjunakonda⁷⁴, where the attendant figures are conceived in the same manner as we find here, but lack the *gana* figures more typical of northern sculpture. The central band, however, is peculiar to early Cālukyan sculpture⁷⁵.

Wunticeti

Wunti hill, almost a kilometre north of Shwēdaungpara at Mrohaung, still covered with bricks, dressed stones and sculptures, was the site of a Hindu shrine traditionally built in 976 A.D. by King Pephyu, connected by marriage to the Singhacandra dynasty of Veśālī. The shrine was dedicated to the female Wunti Nat, who assisted the king in driving out the Shan who invaded the country from the northeast. The two major sculptures from Wunti, statues of Durgā with attendants in the medieval tradition of Bengal, can probably be indentified with the Wunti Nat and would have been installed at that time. (pp. 278-80). The remaining sculptures belong to the older style and were possibly brought from the Wethali area.(pp.262-4,293). The Wunti Nat rose to prominence again when she is said to have thwarted an invasion from Pegu aided by the Mughals⁷⁶. The shrine was then repaired, and typically, the

⁷⁴ O.C.Gangoly, *op cit* pls. XVIII,XXXIX,XL.

⁷⁵ A.Lippe, "Early Calukya Icons" AA Vol.XXXIV,4 (1972) figs 8,12

⁷⁶ San Shwe Bu "Wunti Nat" JBRS IX (1919) pt.1,pp.52-53; Phayre "On the History of Arakan" p.38; R.B.Smart,*Burma Gazeteer - Akyab District* Vol A (Rangoon 1917) p.63; Forchhammer, *ARakan*,pp.37-9 and pl.XXVI, No.47.

the inscription commemorating the restoration in 1521 was written on the reverse of an old plinth, itself originally used for a 6th century inscription (pp.114-17).

Engaged column, from Tezarama Monastery, Mrohaung; said to come from Wethali, possibly from Thingyaintaung. (Plates LVII-LVIII)
Mrohaung Museum, sandstone, H. 1.2m.

Ref. Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites*...., pp.122-3; Arch Negs 8123, 8124, 8125 (1958-9).

Sculpted on three sides and broken at the top, this column appears to have been engaged against a wall, at the entrance to a shrine. The base had addorsed, realistic elephant forequarters at the corners, of which traces remain; in the centre of each face is a *śiṃhamukha*, with bulging eyes, teeth horribly bared and a long curling mane. Very similar *façades* found at Oc-Éo and at Dvāravatī have been associated with the art of Amarāvati⁷⁷. Here, however, the mane is closer to the later southern school of the Pallavas⁷⁸. The column base thus incorporates the main elements of the shrine proper. Elephant caryatids, representing the *diggajas* which bear the weight of Mount Meru or Mount Kailasa, are found at the base of Pallava *rathas*⁷⁹. The *śiṃhamukhas* are diminutions of the Pallava *vyāla* caryatids, an integral element

⁷⁷ ADM t.1, pp.320-322 pl.LXXIIb (1944, Monument K) and P.Dupont in BEFEO XXXIX, 2 (1939) p.360 and pl.LXXI,B (Wat P'rá Pātôn)

⁷⁸ Notably the curled manes of the *vyāla* pilaster bases at Mamallapuram: see K.R.Srinivasan *Temples of the Later Pallavas* in P. Chandra (ed.) *Studies in Indian Temple Architecture* (New Delhi 1975) pls.110 (Bhima Ratha 630-668 A.D.) 111 (Ganeśa Ratha 672-700 A.D.); 112 (Dharmarāja Ratha 630-668 A.D.)

⁷⁹ C.Sivaramamurti, *Sanskrit Literature and Art - Mirrors of Indian Culture* (MASI 73) pp.6-8 and pl.III,9.

of the thrones of gods and kings⁸⁰. The combination of both these elements is constantly repeated in Pallava architecture⁸¹. Above the base, framed in an archway, stands Gaṅgā, on a small round lotus throne on the back of her *makara vāhana*, her right hip thrust outward in a slight *tribhāṅga* pose, right arm carrying a fly-whisk held over the shoulder, and left hanging by her side. She wears a necklace, upper and lower armbands, anklets and a belt hanging with jewels. A diaphanous skirt, flaring slightly above the ankles, shows the form of the legs clearly beneath in the manner of late 7th century Veśālī sculpture. Her headdress is conical, with a bulbous chignon at the left of the head. No precise parallel can be found in Indian art, where each river goddess is normally one of a group of about five *dhāra-devatās*. We are reminded of the only similar representation of a river goddess in Southeast Asia, Yamunā, also framed within an archway, on a pre-Angkorian pilaster of the mid-7th century, described, but unfortunately not illustrated* by Boisselier⁸². Yamunā here has been connected with the central Indian type found at Sirpur. Gaṅgā at Wethali, however, is iconographically closer to Western Cālukyan types, notably the Pāpanātha temple at Pattadakal (c 680 A.D.), where the goddess is similarly conceived, in the identical pose and wearing the same garments and headdress, with no umbrella nor accompanying *gaṇa*

⁸⁰ J. Auboyer, *Le Trône et son Symbolisme dans l'Inde Ancienne* (Paris 1949) pp. 125ff.

⁸¹ A. Rea, *Pallava Architecture*, ASI New Imperial Series Vol. XXXIV, pls. LIV, LV, LVII etc (Kailāsanātha Temple, Kanchipuram)

⁸² From Prasat A near Robang Romeas, north of Sambor Prei Kuk, "Nouvelles Données sur l'art Préangkorien : le Groupe voisin de Robang Romeas" in *R. C. Majumdar Felicitation Volume* (Calcutta 1970) pp. 152-163.

* publ. however in his *Le Cambodge* (Paris 1936) Pl. XLIX, 3

figure⁸³. The river goddesses of Indian doorways are never depicted as they are in Southeast Asia, alone with an architectural frame. The frame itself, as Boisselier suggested, is a reduction of the entrance of the temple. Again, the inspiration of Cālukyan art is apparent at Veśālī. The pilasters on either side follow the southern order which evolved under the later Pallavas⁸⁴ but was fully developed by the Western Cālukyas into the form we find at Veśālī⁸⁵. The *padma* capital is a mass of ornate floral shapes, which develop, on the inner sides, into *makara* heads swallowing either end of the curved lintel. Again, the type is directly linked with the Pāpanātha doorway. On the other two faces, identical half arches frame a male figure appearing to step from behind. The body is elongated and lithe, the slightly tilted face with a curious expression giving the impression that he is about to surprise the river goddess. The stance, inner leg straight and outer leg bent in front, the palms touching the wall at the back, is almost identical to that of a *dvārapāla* figure set between two pilasters

⁸³ A.Lippe, "Some Sculptural Motifs on Early Western Cālukyan Temples" AA XXIX (1967) fig. 9, hall entrance doorway. The figures here are quite different from those illustrated in O.Viennot, *Les Divinités Fluviales Gāṅgā et Yamunā* (Paris 1964) pl. 61a, "Pattadakal (Bijapur) temple Pāpanātha, porte extérieure, base droite," and seem to belong to a different school altogether.

⁸⁴ e.g. *mālsthāna* (belt of garland) with *padmabandha* (lotus bond) marking the top of the shaft, and over it the *śasana*, (dish moulding), *kumbha* (pot), *pāli* or *padma* (capital) and *phalaka* plank, with *vīraṇṭha* (necking) carrying the *pōtika* corbel described by K.R.Srinivasan, *op cit* p.205.

⁸⁵ A.Lippe, *loc cit*.

on the inner face of the *gopura* of the "Shore" temple at Māmalla-puram⁸⁶. The Veśālī *dvārapāla* also wears a high conical cap, possibly the "Scythian" type often adopted by temple guards in the south⁸⁷. He too has long earrings, a wide necklace and a sash tied about the hips, looped across in front with one end hanging down, a southern fashion adopted by the Cālukyas at Aihole in the late 7th century⁸⁸. Above the *dvāra-devatās* is a reduction of the main body of an edifice of the type to which the column possibly belonged. The general shape suggests the form of a South Indian *vimāna*. The lower portion appears to represent a *mandapa* running the length of the shrine in the form of a columned hall on a plain plinth, with a barrel-vaulted roof relieved at either end with *kūḍus*. The main body above is projected at the front, with a slab roof with upturned eaves on tall slender pillars, and with a great *kūḍu*-shaped false dormer, its upper edge decorated, half the height of the entire shrine. Behind this, the main body is recessed behind along the full length, with the same roof and pillars. An almost identical reduction above the lintel of the Pāpanātha doorways does not reflect the shape of the shrine proper but the slightly earlier Cālukyan forms of Mahakuta⁸⁹.

⁸⁶ J.C.Harle, *Temple Gateways in South India* (Oxford 1963) p.11 and pls. 3 & 4.

⁸⁷ O.C.Gangoly, *Āndhra Sculptures*, (Hyderabad 1973) pl.XI (Nagarjunakonda); K.N.Srinivasan, *op cit* pl.114, (Airāvateśvara temple at Kanchipuram 700-720 A.D.)

⁸⁸ *ibid* pl.XVII, cf A.Lippe "Early Cālukya Icons" AA Vol.XXXIV, 4 (1972) pp. 273ff and fig 25.

⁸⁹ G.Michell, *op cit*, Drawing 3 (Mahakuta Mahākuteśvara) and Drawing 4 (Mahakuta Mallikārjuna).

Above the "shrine" is an equally large panel depicting a lotus, with curled feather-like petals again in the Cālukyan style. The final panel, slightly recessed, has *vyāla* caryatids at the corners, flanking a small figure of Garuḍa apparently emerging from a sea of intricate foliage. A similar motif is found above the doorway at Pāpunātha, although the Veśālī rendition is much closer to the Amarāvati prototype.

It is clear that the shrine to which the column belonged was the result of Western Cālukyan influence in the late 7th or early 8th centuries, during the reign of Dharmacandra. The column no doubt formed part of the main doorway, while similar four-faced columns as described below supported the open *maṇḍapa* in front. The *dvāra-devatās* therefore need no longer be grouped together at the entrance, but were placed around the structural columns in an equally appropriate manner. The placement of the figures within a reduction of the doorway derived from early Pallava architecture, but was only fully realised in Southeast Asia. The column, as we have it, can be seen to illustrate in miniature the principal features of the temple proper: the elephant-*vyāla* base, the ornate main doorway, the pillared *maṇḍapa* in front and possibly a double-storied *garbhagrha*.

Broken column, 7' from Thingyain-taung.

Mrohaung Museum, sandstone, H. 4m.

Perhaps ASB 1920-21 "base of a column with beautiful mouldings, which measures 2 ft. 4 in. square and 1 ft. in thickness" found at Thingyain-taung. Arch Negs 2172, 2173 (1920-21).

The column was supported by means of a round tenon below, and was

⁹⁰ A.K.Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography* (1935 New Delhi rep. 1972) pl.1,1,2.

carved on all four sides, with well-preserved addorsed elephants at the corners and *śiṃṣumukha* heads between. Above the base on each side is a figure, broken at thigh level and framed between two pilasters. One side has, next to the elongated legs shown in profile, a vertical line of open lotus flowers alternating with buds arising from a *kumbha* in the manner of Nagarjunakonda relief sculpture⁹¹. The other sides are extremely damaged but appear to have been similarly decorated.

The stūpa (Plates LX-LXII)

The general form of the *stūpa* at Dhañṇavatī and Veśālī can be ascertained by an examination of the votive *stūpas* and relief depictions of *stūpas* found in the area. No similar groups of votive *stūpas* have been found at Pyu sites. Although these were apparently produced over three centuries, the shape scarcely varies. Particularly noticeable in its absence is the typical later

form with Buddha figures in niches on the four quarters of the *anda*⁹². The practice of donating votive *stūpas*, however, was initially encouraged among the Sarvāstivādin and Mahāsāṅghikan laity at Taxila and Nagarjunakonda who expected, in return, religious merits for themselves and relatives and friends, increase in the power and longevity of the ruling monarch, or even *nirvāṇa*-don⁹³.

⁹¹ O.C.Gangoly, *op cit* pls.XVIII, XXXIX, XL.

⁹² cf M.Bénisti, "Etude sur le stūpa dans l'Inde ancienne" *BEFEO* Vol.50 (1960-62) p.88

⁹³ H.Sarkar, *op cit* pp.57 and 83-4.

The earliest representation of a *stūpa* on a relief slab possibly found at Mahāmuni by Forchhammer is similar to the *Bodhgaya*

type, and, like the solid *stūpas* of Śrīkṣetra has buttress terraces at the base. The main group of votive *stūpas* have a square lower base, usually decorated with a lotus petal moulding and with a cylindrical relic chamber in the centre. This is surmounted by a square terraced middle base, and a cube-shaped upper base, sometimes inscribed with the *ye dharma* formula below the *aṇḍa*. The square base is associated with both the Mahāsāṅghikans and the Mūlasarvāstivādins⁹⁴. The *aṇḍa* is high and cylindrical, with one or two plain bands around the centre. The *harmika* is usually broken, but the *aṇḍa* on the Selagiri *stūpa* is surmounted by the "double thickness from which square teeth protrude in the four directions" of the Mahāsāṅghikan *stūpas*⁹⁵. On the other hand, the round *harmika* of the Tezarama *stūpa* recalls the Sarvāstivādin type described as "a circular terrace on which to place trees for the suspension of banners"⁹⁶. The *chattrikā* (umbrellas) are missing in every case; however, one of the Kyauktaw *stūpas* and the small *stūpa* in relief on the *aṇḍa* of the Mrohaung *stūpa* appear to have replaced this by a lotus bud finial or *uṣṇīṣa*. Other *stūpas* with no *chattrikā* but a similar bud finial are the miniature *stūpa* found in the relic chamber of the great *stūpa* at Nagarjuna-

⁹⁴ André Bareau, "La construction et la culte des Stūpa", *BEFEO* Vol. 50 (1960-62) p. 235, quoting the *Vinayapitāka* of Dharmagupta, Taishō Issaikyō 1425, p. 497c and 498a; 1459, p. 652c.

⁹⁵ *ibid* Taishō Issaikyō 1425, p. 497c and 498a.

⁹⁶ *ibid* Taishō Issaikyō 1435, p. 415c.

konda and on a *stūpa* in worship at a rail crossbar at Amarāvati⁹⁷. The finial may be the 'urn of jewels' of the Mūlasarvāstivādin *stūpa*⁹⁸. The presence of a sect or sects close to the Mahāsāṅghikans and probably the Mūlasarvāstivādins during the 6th and 7th centuries can therefore be inferred. Similar votive *stūpas* have been found at Nālandā and at Ratnagiri in Orissa, datable to the same period⁹⁹.

"Stone sculpture within the compound of the Secretariat, Rangoon" (Phayre Museum) (Plate LXa).

Arch Neg 851 (1909-10)

Said to come from Arakan. Present whereabouts unknown.

The photograph shows a plain ledge pedestal with arching reredos, and in relief a cylindrical *stūpa*, on a stepped square base, with deeply recessed *harmika*, heavily hanging garlands from the single *chattrā*, and flying *dhvajās*. The type is connected with the early high cylindrical *stūpas* of Amarāvati¹⁰⁰ and Ceylon¹⁰¹, but, like the solid *stūpas* of Śrīkṣetra, adds buttress terraces to the base.

Inscribed *stūpa* from the base of Selagiri. (Plate LXb,c)

Red sandstone, Total H (without missing *hti*) 1.14m.

Square lower base *in situ*, at the corner of a mound S. of Selagiri.

.67 x .61m, H. .28m, cylindrical relic chamber .12m diameter, .095m

deep. *Stūpa* proper, in two detachable parts, now at Shwè-daung

monastery, Kyauktaw. *hti* (*chattrā*) now lost. Extant H. .85m.

⁹⁷ K.R.Subramanian *Buddhist Remains in Āndhra* (Madras 1932), pl.B384; Barrett, *op cit* pl.XXXVII.

⁹⁸ Bareau, *op cit* p.236

⁹⁹ P.Myer, *op cit* p.7; *Indian Archaeology, a Review* 1957-8, pls.LIA and LIIA, 1960-61 pl.XXXVIII (Ratnagiri).

¹⁰⁰ cf D.Barrett, *Sculptures from Amaravati in the British Museum* (London 1954) pl.I; W.B.M.Fernando, "Evolution of the Chattravali in Ceylon" *AA* XXXVI, 1-2(1974), pp.75-80 and figs.2,4,5

¹⁰¹ *OBEP* I, pp.257-8

Paleographically datable to *around* the 6th century, the *stūpa* has attained elongated proportions with the addition of a wide lower base, with slightly recessed mouldings carved with a repeating lotus-petal pattern, a middle base, upper half stepped steeply inwards, and a top base, inscribed on one side, vertically almost square, widened above and below. The *aṇḍa* itself has three rounded steps below, and two superimposed plain bands around the centre, while the rounded *harmika* has a double band decorated with a row of square beads.

Two inscribed *stūpas* from Meewa village near Kyauktaw.

U Kyaw Zan Tha has sent me rubbings and drawings of two *stūpas* found in January 1976, both are paleographically datable *around* to the 6th century.

(a) H. c. 0.75m; broken at top of *aṇḍa*, lower and middle bases missing, otherwise identical to the Selagiri *stūpa*.

(b) H. c. 0.75m; lower base missing, otherwise identical to the Selagiri *stūpa* apart from the fact that the *aṇḍa* appears to have at its apex a rounded bud finial, with bands at the base and centre.

Inscribed votive *stūpa* from Tezarama monastery, Mrohaung (Plate LXIb) Mrohaung Museum; Arch Neg 130-4365 (1940-41); refs Johnston *op cit* pp.359, 362-3, 366; ASB pp.29,32 and App.H. p.XXIII, No.6; perhaps also 1926 p.26 and App.G, p.54, No.7; IB pl. CCCLVIc.

Like most of the objects in the Tezarama collection, this *stūpa* probably came from the Wethali area. The inscription, around the lower part of the *aṇḍa* is paleographically datable to *around*

the 6th century. The *stūpa* has a cube-shaped upper base, broken by four vertical bands, possibly representing buttress pillars, on each of the faces. The round *harmika* is narrow and

broken at the top.

Votive *stūpa* from base of Thingyain hill, Wethali.

Arch *Neg* 2171 (1920-21) Ref *ASB* 1921, p.19; present whereabouts unknown.

Paleographically assignable to *about* the 6th century.

this *stūpa* resembles the Kyauktaw examples. The round *harmika* is broken, and the middle and lower bases are missing. In 1975, I noticed a lower base, decorated in the same manner as the Sela-giri base, near the *stūpa*-shaped shrine at Thingyain-taung. Three similar bases have been collected and placed in the garden beyond Thanlawadi monastery at Wethali.

Votive *stūpa* from Mrohaung. (Plate LXIIa)

Arch *Negs* 2691, 2692 (1925-6) "A stone pillar to the NW of the Shitthaung temple". Present whereabouts unknown.

Broken at the top of the *aṇḍa* and with the lower base, if any, missing, this *stūpa* is identical to those found at the older sites but has on two sides, in the lower half of the *aṇḍa*, either a *stūpa* or a *torāṇa* in relief. There is no record of the reliefs on the remaining two sides. The *torāṇa* may represent in miniature the main gateway or entrance to the shrine, and was to become prominent in Pagan architecture¹⁰². The *stūpa* in relief, too, could signify the corner *stūpas* placed above the base, like those of the fourth and fifth phases of the great *stūpa* of Site III of Nālandā, and later found also at Pagan¹⁰³. The *stūpa* in relief appears to be a miniature of this type, with a square stepped base, no *chattra* and a bud finial. The *torāṇa* is a *caitya*-arch shape, with streamers (?) flying at the top, and has, surprisingly, a

¹⁰² *OBEP* I, pp.248-9

¹⁰³ *ibid* p.240

flower within. In the absence of any inscription, it is difficult to date this type.

Votive *stūpas* from Launggret. (Plate LXIIb)

Four votive *stūpas* of stone have been gathered at the entrance to the Nangyāpara at Launggret. None are inscribed. Three resemble the usual Wethali type, while the other has a peculiar elongated *aṇḍa* suggesting that the *stūpa* was recut from a Śiva *linga*.

The base has square floral motifs on each side. As Launggret did not become capital of Arakan until 1237 A.D., these *stūpas* may be archaistic. *

Buddhist Images (Plates LXIII-LXXIV)

The earliest Buddha images represent the teacher seated, performing the orthodox *mudrās* - *bhūmiśparśa*, sometimes with the alms-bowl in the left hand, *dhyāna* or *dharmacakra*. Most are crude in conception, suggesting that they belonged to a popular cult, as distinct from a court tradition. This is further borne out by the large number of contemporary Buddhist votive *stūpas* and inscriptions. Stylistically they are very close to the art of Śrīkṣetra of the 6th and 7th centuries, and some may have even been imported from there. The initial impetus seems to have been the art of Nagarjunakonda, evidenced by the *vīrāsana*, where the right leg is placed over the left, a peculiarity typical of the schools of Southern India, Ceylon and the Central and Eastern Indo-Chinese Peninsula. But other "southern" features, particularly the draped robes held in the

* Professor Boisselier suggests that this tendency to elongate is a late development, a 10th century and later.

left hand, are absent. The Gupta school soon imposed its aesthetic, together with a rigorous attention to correct representation of text-book ideals.

Where no model existed, however, the Arakan sculptor, like his counterpart *further east*, gave new life to the forms. The relief depicting Śākyamuni preaching from Selagiri, which may be connected with the Dhaññavati court tradition, introduces figures conceived almost in the round, modelled from life, and the use of the third dimension only equalled in the finest painting at Ajantā.

A new and more diversified tradition of Buddhist image-making appeared after the middle of the 7th century. The Mahāyāna gained ground, strengthened by a firm link with Nālandā and monastic centres in Bengal, notably Mainamati. Dominant image types of Bihar and Bengal, modelled on the great standing image at Nālandā and the Bodhgaya *Māravijaya vajrāsana* Buddhas, were copied at Veśālī. The great Pāla steles illustrating the miracles of the Buddha's early life, centred around the enlightenment, were reproduced in miniature *andagu* plaques. Similar trends are noticed in Thatôn and Śrīkṣētran art until the 9th century. From the end of the 9th century this influence spread to Pagán, whose greatest sculpture was to evolve from the Pāla style.

As the Buddha came to be seen as Universal Sovereign, crowned Images appear in Arakan, also derived from the Pāla style. As elsewhere in Southeast Asia, notably Śrīvijaya and Central Java, Pāla types were initially used for local Bodhisattva images. Although we know that Tantric Buddhism was patronized by the court during the first half of the 8th century, no images of the period connected with this cult have yet been uncovered. Contact

with Bengal was spasmodic after this, but the influence of the Northern schools, including possibly that of Nepal, flourished again under the Singhacandra dynasty in the 10th and 11th centuries. The adoption of the Theravāda by the Burmans in the middle of the 11th century was soon reflected in Arakan, which from that time looked east rather than west for Buddhist inspiration.

Relief of Buddha Preaching the Law (Plate LXIIIa)

Mrohaung Museum, from the base of Selagiri, opposite Kyauktaw.

Sandstone, H. 0.6m, B. 0.4m, W. 0.14m; Arch Neg 2694(1925-6);

Ref ASB 1924 pl.V and pp.44-45.

This is the only surviving example of relief sculpture from the early period. The Buddha sits, hands in *dharmacakra-mudrā*, his right knee slightly raised¹⁰⁴, on an undecorated square throne. At his feet sits a man, richly ornamented, perhaps a king. It is tempting to identify the scene as the "conversion" of King Candrasūriya which traditionally took place after the Buddha arrived at Selagiri itself¹⁰⁵.

¹⁰⁴ We are reminded of the practice, unique to Arakan, of representing the seated Buddha with his right leg slightly raised. This is explained by a local legend embodied in the Mahāmuni tradition. As Gautama was about to leave Arakan, King Candrasūriya implored him to leave an image of himself. The image was made with the right leg raised, as it was when he was about to depart. *The āsana is unique in Buddhist Art.*

¹⁰⁵ The account of the Buddha's magical flight to Arakan and the consequent conversion of the king and country need not be seen as a reflection of the Ceylon tradition (*Mahāvamsa* L, 19-23), although this probably influenced the version we have now. The *Suvarṇabhāsottamasūtra*, ch.VI (which must have been the inspiration for much of the Mahāmuni iconography) instructs the king to erect within the palace a *seat of the Law*, on which a monk is to recite the *sūtra*, while he himself, unelated by his sovereignty, sits on a lower seat, in precisely the manner depicted in the Selagiri relief. Through the *dharma* preached by the monk, Śākyamuni is thought to have entered the palace, the region will be protected etc. Moreover, in ch.14 it is stated that when the preacher, having recited the *sūtra*, leaves the seat, various miracles take place upon(over)

It may however represent one of the better-known incidents in the life of the Buddha, such as the conversion of Nanda, a favourite theme of both Gandharan and early Āndhra art¹⁰⁶ and hence have been one of a series.

¹⁰⁵ (continued from previous page)

it: the form of the Buddha, or a Bodhisattva, or a mere glow of light, appears on the seat itself. As the seat is known as the seat of the law, the law is embodied in the preacher or the vision seen on the seat. Therefore in the relief, Sākyamuni is the embodiment of the law, and appropriately performs the *dharmacakramudrā*. If Candrasūriya (= Devacandra) had the *Suvarṇabhāsottama* in mind when building the Mahāmuni, he would have known of the recitation ceremony and have felt compelled to conduct one of his own. The tradition of the appearance of Sākyamuni at Selagiri could have originally have been seen to be one of the ensuing miracles. So, too, the "conversion of the country" in the Mahāmuni tradition can be seen in terms of the sūtra, for it is promised therein that those who listen "will become non-returners in supreme and perfect enlightenment". When Duroiselle discovered the relief, he noticed nearby "three ornately carved pedestals" which he thought to be image bases, although the top surfaces were smooth. None were to be found during our brief inspection of the site in 1975. However, his description suggests that they could have been *dharmāsana*, made expressly for the preaching of such sūtras. This may also be the explanation of the many "megalithic thrones" discovered at Srikṣetra, e.g. at Ledatpyin, Arch Negs 777 (1909-10) and at Hsin-ma-ko-wun-din mound, SSE of Bawbawgyi, ASB 1926, pl. III and pp. 21-23, ASI 1926, pl. LV (e) and p. 120; Arch Negs 2648-51 (1925-6); cf. the stone thrones now at Mrohaung, at Shwegyu-gyi-para, Arch Neg 8097 (1958-9). The use of stone for the seats suggests that their Buddhist functions, in Burma, were absorbed into an older megalithic tradition.

¹⁰⁶ See J.P. Vogel, "The Man in the Well and other Subjects Illustr'd at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa." *Revue des Arts Asiatiques* t. XI (Sept. 1937) pp. 115ff.

The relief is exceptionally high, the figures almost conceived in the round, and with an attention to detail indicating that living models and not textual illustrations, were used. The perspective follows the early Ajanta convention, as does the strangely abstract treatment of architectural or landscape forms behind the figures¹⁰⁷. The Buddha has an elliptical *prabhāvali*, the hair consists of rows of coils, slightly lowered over the forehead, and only a slight cranial protruberance is noticed. The facial features are not Indian; the nose is long and the lips full, and might broadly be described as Arakanese.

The *uttarāsāṅga* falls gracefully forward over the left shoulder, and an *antaravāsaka* is apparent from the waist, exposing the knee.¹⁰⁸

. The figure at the Buddha's feet is seated in a natural manner, legs loosely crossed with the knees raised, his left hand reaching to the right upper arm. His head is bent back slightly and his smile indicates that he is pleased with what he hears. His ornaments are those usually associated with royalty: jewelled necklace, upper armbands and belt. The lobes of the ears are distended to below the shoulders with heavy earrings¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁷ e.g. Ajanta cave 17, Buddha and Nanda from the antechamber; and the famous toilet scene in R.G.Gupte and B.D. Mahajan, *Ajanta and Ellora*, pls. A & I

¹⁰⁸ cf. Boisselier, *Kunst in Thailand* (Fribourg 1974) pl.42 and p.76.

¹⁰⁹ cf. the report on the Ngai-lao (near Yung-ch'ang, W. of the Mekong) in the *Hou Han shu* ch.116, f.5 recto, referring to the customs of the 1st century A.D. "Their chieftains, who call themselves kings, have earrings reaching down three inches below the shoulders. As for ordinary persons, (their ears) reach only to their shoulders." Luce noted that this trait was suggestive of influences from E.India, see his "The Tan (97-132 A.D.) and the Ngai-lao" *JBRs* XIV, ii, p.116 and fn.6.

and the hair curls from under the *maṭṭa* in the Gupta manner, but far more realistic. The *maṭṭa* itself comprises a lower diadem and three receding rounded tiers, decorated all over with a fine floral motif. Both the headdress and earrings are found in Pyu sculpture of the 6th-8th centuries¹¹⁰.

The relief is unique in Indian and Southeast Asian art. Such natural poses are almost unknown in Gupta sculpture, and were rarely achieved even at Amarāvati. There is no attempt to define muscles. The bodies present a continuous flowing surface, and the new problems of foreshortening from the outer knees to the thighs have been understood and masterfully dealt with. The illusion of space, achieved by the strange perspective indicated by the rhomboidal seat and the curiously modern architectural background was not attempted in contemporary or later sculpture elsewhere, although it was known, as we have noted, in Ajantā painting of the 5th-6th centuries.

Head of Buddha (Plate LXIIb)

Letkhat-taung Monastery, red sandstone, H.c. 0.30m.

Although badly weathered, this fragmentary head is close to the ideal Gupta type. The face is gently rounded, the hair a series of rows of snail-shaped curls only slightly dipping over the forehead. The lines around the neck are clearly delineated, and the ears modelled after those of the Mathurā Buddha images of the Gupta period.

¹¹⁰ The devotees stele from Halin, U Aung Thaw, *op cit* p.13

Seated Buddha in *dhyānamudrā*, from Thinkyit-taung (Plate LXVa)

Mrohaung Museum, red sandstone, H.O.36m.

Although the upper portion of the face and backslab of this image is broken, enough detail remains to show that its workmanship is far superior to those described above. Its provenance, the mound from which the 6th century copper-plate was retrieved, suggests that it may be associated with the religion of the queens of Arakan, who may have followed Buddhism while their husbands were Hindu. The figure sits, in the usual position, on a single lotus throne, with intricately engraved petals. The back of the throne ends at the corners in spouting *makara* heads, identical to Buddha thrones at Śrīkṣetra¹¹¹. Two small figures apparently carrying fly-whisks flank the throne, and probably represent Indra, to the right of the Buddha and Brahma (two or three heads are visible) to his left. This arrangement is also well-known at Śrīkṣetra¹¹². The rendition of the body is more reminiscent of Gupta models in the rounded face and broad shoulders, but the misunderstood foreshortening betrays the local sculptor. The fingers and toes all of equal length, suggest that he was faithfully following a text, which, unfortunately, I have not been able to locate¹¹³.

¹¹¹ e.g. the gilded relic casket from Khinba mound: Duroiselle *ASI* 1927 pp.175-6 and pls. XXXVII(d),XXXVIII(c). R.le May *Culture of Southeast Asia* fig 4; U Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites...*, p.29.

¹¹² e.g. the stone sculpture from East Zègu temple *ASI* 1910, pp.116-7 pl.XLVII (4); Arch *Neg* 619 (1908-9) U Aung Thaw *ibid*,p.29

¹¹³ Neither Burnouf's Lists of the 32 major and 80 minor marks (*Lotus* App.VIII pp.553ff) or Edgerton's *Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit Dictionary* gives this as one of the *Lakṣaṇas* of the *Mahāpurusa*, but fingers of equal length are common enough in later Buddhist sculpture.

Inscribed base of seated Buddha image (Plate LXIVa)

Mrohaung Museum, from Veśālī.

Red sandstone, H. 0.25m.

Broken above the legs, folded in *vīrāsana* with the right leg over the left, sole upwards, and the left foot concealed, the remains of the hands possibly in *dhyanamudrā*. The undecorated throne, relieved by horizontal mouldings is inscribed at the base, allowing us to date this and other images with the same features in the 6th century.

Fragmentary seated Buddha (Plate LXIVb)

Letkhat-taung monastery; red sandstone, extant H. 0.16m.

Although broken almost in half at the middle, it can be seen that the figure is seated, right leg over left, in *bhūmispārśa-mudrā*, the right hand almost touching the ground in front of the knee. A plain reredos, in the manner of the Mahāmuni deva figures, is indicated behind, and the seat is not decorated. Both the hands and feet are crudely conceived, with the fingers and toes merely divided by straight lines. Modelling of the flesh is not attempted. The type is familiar at Śrīkṣetra¹¹⁴.

Headless Buddha in *bhūmispārśa-mudrā* (Plate LXIVb)

Letkhat-taung monastery; red-grey sandstone, H.0.3m.

Again reminiscent of Śrīkṣetran sculpture, the figure is performing *bhūmispārśa-mudrā* and sitting in *virāsana* on an undecorated base sharply indented around the middle, foreshadowing the drum-shaped thrones of later Burmese art. The indented shape, was, in all probability, an adaptation of the throne used by the Pyu kings, (*baddha-piṭha*) known through its stylized depiction on the obverse of early Pyu coins. Almost no attempt has been made to define the hands and feet, and the flesh is treated in a hard, angular manner.

Buddha in *dharma-cakra-mudrā* (Plate LXVb)

Mrohaung Museum, from Letkhat-taung; red-grey sandstone. H.0.35m.

The upper part of the backslab and the face of this image are badly damaged. What remains is the usual form of popular Buddha image, seated on a plain straight slab, the hands crudely depicted, "turning the wheel of the law". There is no trace of a garment, but a round halo is apparent behind the head.

¹¹⁴ e.g. ASI 1934-5, pp. 45-6 and pl. XXI; Arch Neg 3766 of 1934-5.

Inscribed bronze Buddha image (Plate LXVIa)

Mrohaung Museum, "from Veśālī".; H.O.21m.

This crude and headless image, again conceived in the Śrīkṣetran manner, sits in *virāsana*, the knees exceedingly wide-stretched, the right hand in *bhūmisparśa* with the fingers of the same length, the left carrying an alms-bowl. The lines around the neck and the garment, two lines from the left shoulder across the chest, appear to have been incised after casting. The plain seat has an inscription, almost entirely illegible, the first two strokes apparently the sign for *siddham*, and *ye*, with a tripartite *ya* in the late 6th-early 7th century manner.

Three seated Buddhas (Plate LXVIc)

Mrohaung Museum "from an old *stūpa* E of the Veśālī palace site".

Steatite or whitish sandstone, H. 0.16m, 0.24m, 0.195m.

This strange group, all seated in *virāsana* and *bhūmisparśa-mudrā* on undecorated thrones, shows the complete stylization by elimination of detail foreshadowed by the previous images. The heads, all over large in proportion, are crowned by conical *uṣṇīṣas*; the ears are large, flat, and reach to the shoulders, and there is no attempt to denote the hair. The three lines around the neck are sharply delineated but the body is not covered by any garment. Fingers and toes are all of the same length, although the feet are scarcely modelled. The bodies are conceived in a minimum of flat, almost geometric planes, only softening where absolutely necessary. All have long straight noses, curved eyebrows and a slight smile; in the two smaller figures the eyes are slanting. Similar figures, with a lotus seat, are common at Pagan, those in the Pagan Museum having been dated to the late Pagan period, at about the 13th century. Unlike our examples, these have

a lotus throne. 115

Bronze Buddha image in *bhūmiśparśa-mudrā* (Plate LXVIIb)

Original provenance unrecorded, probably Veśālī; Mrohaung Museum

H. c 0.2m.

Only the second bronze image from the early period yet found, this so exactly resembles the large number from Śrīkṣetra¹¹⁶ that it may have been imported from there. The Buddha sits on a plain seat, in the usual *bhūmiśparśa-mudrā* position, the robe falling over his left shoulder. The face is broad, the features Pyu, the *uṣṇīṣa* a gentle protruberance, and the hair treated as a series of raised circles, the hairline falling slightly in the centre forehead.

Colossal Buddha Images

According to Seckel, the ancient notion of the all-embracing Buddha, or Cosmocrator, inspired the production of colossi in India, Ceylon, China, Burma and elsewhere¹¹⁷.

As far as can be seen, the two examples at Veśālī are conceived in the same monumental terms as the well-known Ceylon and Orissan colossi. The figures are carved from an enormous block of stone, planes broadly treated with little or no relief from details. The attitude is that of the victory over Māra, an example

115 I know of no published examples of this type.

116 e.g. the three bronze Buddhas from a mound on the N bank of Yindaikkwin, Neg 3051 (1928-9); *ASI* 1929, pl.LI (e,f) and p.105

117 *The Art of Buddhism*, (London 1964) p.142.

and inspiration to the devotee. In the absence of original heads it is difficult to date these sculptures. The use of *vīrāsana* however, may indicate some time between the 6th and 8th centuries.

Colossal Buddha at Thingyain-taung

ASB 1920-21, pp.18-19

This image was first discovered by San Shwe Bu and Duroiselle, within the *stūpa*-shaped shrine on Thingyain hill. They wrote:

Facing the corridor... is a large stone altar on which rests an enormous stone Buddha, seated, and which appears to be carved from only one block; the dome, in coming down, has smashed the feet and the arms, but the body is almost intact; the lower portion is covered with debris; what can be seen of the figure measures, from the thigh to just above the shoulders where the neck is broken, four feet, and three feet across the breast from shoulder to shoulder. Huge blocks from the altar have been torn away; and were it not that small blocks from the dome have more or less filled in the spaces thus formed, the statue would have fallen down itself.

The statue is in much the same state today, although treasure hunters have attempted to gouge away part of the stomach.

Nan-U Image, Veśālī.

ASB 1920-21, p.19; sandstone. (Plate LXIIa)

A colossal Buddha guards the main portal at the east of the palace at Wethali. It is not perfectly preserved, as Duroiselle supposed, the head and the hands having been repaired in the late Mrohaung style. As far as can be seen, the modelling of the body follows that of the smaller early Buddha images. The square altar, in part original, was made of bricks faced with dressed masonry, stepped in three diminishing courses at the base and with three expanding courses at the top. The statue is still in worship by the village people, who from time to time repair the shed erected over it. Its function was probably the same as that of the massive image opposite the gate of the Pyu capital, described in the *Man shu* (ch.X):

A great image seated in the open air, over a hundred feet high, and as white as snow..... If two persons go to law with each other, the king at once orders them to burn incense in front of the great image and ponder their faults: whereupon each of them withdraws. If a disaster should occur, or a pestilence, or war, or a disturbance, the king also burns incense facing the great image, repents of his transgressions, and takes the blame on himself.¹¹⁸

Bronze Buddha under the Bodhi Tree. (Plate LXVIIIa)

Mrohaung Museum, "from Wethali"; bronze, total H.O.265m.; H. of Buddha .145m; Arch Neg 13663 (1967-68).

Here the standing Buddha has a detachable *prabhāvali* of some interest. In the centre is a Bodhi tree surrounded by a beaded border from which stylized flames issue. The apex is surrounded by a flaming *cakra* on a pedestal, flanked by two birds at the base. Four rings attached behind the base indicate that the image was intended to be fixed to a wall. The figure itself is quite crude. The left arm is broken at the elbow, and the right hand is raised in *vitarkamudrā*. the folds of the inner and outer garments are scarcely indicated at the front, and behind, the robe falls towards the ankles. The *uṣṇīṣa* is a double protuberance, slightly conical at the top, a shape quite common in the later art of Śrīkṣetra ¹¹⁹. An almost identical Buddha figure was found during the Paharpur excavations. Dikshit noted at the time that Paharpur was not the centre of a bronze making industry, and both images were probably imported from the Mainamati region. Over 100 images

¹¹⁸ A similar passage is also found in the *New T'ang History*; see G.H.Luce, "The Ancient Pyu" *JBRS* XXVII, p.251

¹¹⁹ cf. Arch Neg 969 (1911-12) "Bronze seated Buddha with elaborate reredos recovered from the terrace of Bawbawgyi." *ASI* 1911-12, pp.142-5.

with similar distinctive treatment of the *prabhāvali* were discovered at the Salban Vihara excavations. Rashid has dated those with cruder treatment of the figures in the 8th century¹²⁰, and our image must have been imported at about the time of Ānandacandra. Another Mahāyānist image from Pegu, also in the Mainamatī style may have come there through Arakan¹²¹.

Standing Buddha (Plate LXVIIIa)

Mrohaung Museum

Fine whitish sandstone or shale; total H. 0.35m, H. of figure 0.26m.

This unusual figure stylistically belongs to a group including Gaṅgā and Viṣṇu (below pp. 272ff, 283f.) The Buddha stands rigidly erect, feet pointing forward, his left hand raised in *abhaya mudrā*, the right outstretched below in *vara mudrā*. The folds of the inner and outer garments are indicated only at the neck, around the wrists, the waist and above the ankles, where the garments can scarcely be distinguished from one another; the stiff, rather squat body appears beneath the robes in the *nu asexuē* manner. Behind is a plain oval halo, decorated with an attempt at ornate floral arabesques reminiscent of Sarnath. The style, however, is far removed from Sarnath, and must have reached Arakan via Nālandā. The facial features, half-closed elongated eyes, eyebrows meeting sharply at the middle, and the curved smile, are all close to the Nālandā style.

¹²⁰ *op cit* pp. 184ff.

¹²¹ Arch Neg 7668-9, 1957-8; "From the relic chamber of Shwemawdaw pagoda at Pegu, bronze figure of a two-armed Bodhisattva Lokanātha, seated in *lalitāsana* on a double lotus stalk against a flame-edged reredos. Total H. 7.25 in.+. Bottom of pedestal embossed with 6 lines of Nagari within a disc."

The skirt of the robe flares outward as it descends, merging into an arc formed by the bottom hemline, a tendency noted by Griswold in Nālandā sculptures of the 7th century, and in copies in contemporary Dvāravatī art¹²². Here, unlike the majority of these images, the left, (not the right) hand is in *abhaya mudrā* and the other hand does not hold the robe. The solid proportions and absence of any attempt at drapery suggests that our image was based on the stucco tradition at Nālandā during the late 7th and early 8th centuries¹²³.

Crowned bronze image from Wethali (Plates LXIX-LXX)

Mrohaung Museum, from a ruined *stupa* E of Thinkyitaw; H. 0.42m.

Bronze, *cire perdue*, gilded.

The crowned Buddha image represents, according to Krishan (East and West, v 21) "no particular school of Buddhism" but was "a natural product in the evolution of Buddhist art which employed every conceivable artifice to proclaim the Buddha's sovereignty."

They first appear in the

Pāla stele of Bihar and Bengal, in *bhūmi sparśa mudrā* and *vajrāsana*

¹²² "Imported Images and the Nature of Copying in the Art of Siam" *Essays Offered to G.H. Luce*.... Vol. II, p. 70. Griswold suggested that "all Nālandā images of this type are copies of one single statue that was a conspicuous object of worship at the renowned Indian seat of learning, perhaps the 80' tall copper figure of the Buddha standing upright which Hsüan-tsang saw in the six-storied pavilion there".

¹²³ cf Zimmer, *op cit* Vol II, pl. 377; Weiner, "From Gupta to Pala sculpture", *AA* XXV, p. 179. The same model served Burmese sculpture until today, the most notable series being the standing Buddha images in the niches of the Ananda temple at Pagán (c. 1105 A.D.) see, e.g., *OBEP*, pls. 290b, d, 295, 296a etc. The rigid stance of these images is first noticed at Veśālī, through which Pāla influence may have reached Pagán.

¹²⁴ cf P. Mus, "Le Buddha Paré: Son Origine Indienne: Śākyamuni dans le Māhāyānisme Moyen" *BEFEO* Vol. 28 (1928) pp. 153-272.

symbolising the enlightenment, and surrounded by scenes of the Buddha's earthly life. In these, as at Veśālī, the ornaments are limited to the crown, necklaces and earrings¹²⁵. This is one of the most impressive sculptures in the Veśālī collection, both technically and iconographically. Conceived in the round, the figure sits in *vajrāsana*, in the attitude of *Māravijaya*, on an undecorated throne sharply waisted around the centre. The *stūpa*-shaped smooth *uṣṇīṣa*, surmounted by a jewel in the shape of a lotus bud, is surrounded by a five-pointed crown with short ribbons rising behind. The fillet at the base is beaded, and the intact triangular projections are decorated with floral motifs. The earrings take the form of four-petalled flowers, and two necklaces are worn, one beaded, around the neck, the other over the chest, a wide band beaded on either side and hung with jewels. Identical crowns, necklaces and earrings are common among the illustrations in the Cambridge University MS of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* copied in 1015 A.D.¹²⁶. Each of the shoulders has three flames, seemingly emitting from the flesh.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ R.D.Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture* (Delhi 1933) p.86 and pls.XVIIIa,XXIIb,c.

¹²⁶ Foucher, *Étude sur l'Iconographie bouddhique de l'Inde* pt.1, Cat.1, pp. 89-206.

¹²⁷ Flames issuing from the shoulders of Buddha images indicate contact with the tradition of the Near and Middle East, and are found most frequently in Northwest Indian and Southern Chinese sculptures. cf. *ibid* Cat.1, No.31 and pt.III, 6, "Buddha image in China", illustrating, according to Foucher "Avalokiteśvara in the form of the Buddha" in *dhyānamudrā*, monk's robes, *ūrṇā* but no *uṣṇīṣa*, flames from the head, shoulders and elbows.

Unlike Pāla sculpture, the ornamentation, though impressive, does not overwhelm the figure.

The face is remarkable in that in photographs it appears to be too large for the body, but when viewed from below (the statue was obviously intended to be regarded in this way) this is not noticeable. In profile it can be seen that the model was not Indian, but a new racial type. A photograph taken of a woman living in Wethali in 1974 shows identical features: high forehead, long nose, hooded eyes, protruding lips and a prominent chin. However, most other people in the village did not have these characteristics (although long noses are more frequent among Arakanese than among Burmese) but I was not able to ascertain whether the woman came from one of the hill tribes, possibly the Sak. The finely-etched eyebrows, almost meeting at the centre, large downcast eyes and slight smile recall the sculpture of Nālandā, although the modelling of the body is much softer than is usual in Pāla art. Here, the hands and feet are so fluid as to appear boneless. Again, the Cambridge MS provides us with prototypes of the proportions, especially of the torso, with its broad chest and fine waist.

The image, obviously made in Arakan, provides evidence of a flourishing school of large-scale bronze-casting. The iconography was probably based on an illustrated manuscript similar to the Cambridge *Aṣṭasāhasrika Prajñapāramitā*. The treatment of the facial features (although not the features themselves), the ornaments and the proportions could all be easily copied from such a source, but the more life-like face and flesh and the strange rendition of the robes are local innovations, not dependent on any Indian prototype.

The rendition of the monk's robes, by comparison, is sketchy, having been merely incised in after casting. The *saṅghāṭī* is folded and laid over the left shoulder in the manner of many seated Buddha images of the Pāla period, but also found in the Dvāravatī art of the 8th-9th centuries¹²⁸. The *uttarāsaṅgha* is denoted by a single curve at the waist and double lines above the ankles. In the crevice below the point where the legs cross is an indistinct design, which could either represent a *vajra* or the folds of the garment. At the back of the image, although the necklaces are continued, there is no indication of garments at all. This suggests that this was one of the first crowned Buddhas *en ronde bosse*, assuming that the immediate prototypes were Pāla stone reliefs. Bronze, as Griswold has pointed out, invites *en ronde bosse*¹²⁹.

The "Eight Scene" Plaques (Plates LXXII-LXXIII)

Three plaques in Arakan representing the scenes of the great miracles are known to me. As Gordon Luce has so admirably analysed their form and function¹³⁰, they will be discussed only briefly here. The earliest examples in Burma are terracotta plaques from Śrīkṣetra, but those from Pagán and Arakan are made of *andagu*, translated by Luce as dolomite, but identified by

¹²⁸ cf. A.B.Griswold, "Imported Images and the Nature of Copying in the Art of Siam" in *Essays Offered to G.H.Luce...* Vol.II p.40, fn 8; J.Boisselier, *op cit* pls.48,49 and p.226.

¹²⁹ *ibid* p.59

¹³⁰ *OBEP* I, pp.148-153, II pp.58-67, III pls.69-74, 400-406

Lowry as steatite¹³¹ which occurs, according to Chhibber, mainly in the Arakan-Naga region and the Myitkyina district¹³². It is possible that these plaques were manufactured in Veśālī by the 9th-10th centuries, as they develop themes already apparent in earlier Pyu and Mon examples. The latest of the Arakan specimens compares with the best from Pagán, dating around the 11th and 12th centuries.

Broken plaque from Veśālī. (Plate LXXIa)

Private collection, Mrohaung

Steatite, Base 0.13m, H.0.20m

Broken along the left side, head of Buddha missing. Perhaps the earliest of the plaques, as the lotus throne rests on a simple architectural *triratha* projection in the manner of their Mon and early Burmese terracotta counterparts, although these normally have the central figure enthroned within the Bodhgaya temple, which here (and in all later examples) is replaced by the pipal tree. Behind the Buddha is an unornamented incised reredos, and the backslab is plain. The existing scenes can be identified as:

cetiya
PARINIRVĀṆA

standing Buddha	BUDDHA
NALAGIRI ELEPHANT	MĀRAVIJAYA

dharmacakramudrā
FIRST SERMON

pralambāsana
PARILEYYAKA

¹³¹ *Burmese Art* (London 1974) No.7

¹³² *Mineral Resources of Burma* (London 1934) p.245

Eight Scene Plaque (Plate LXXIb)

U Oo Tha Tun's collection

Steatite, Base .06m , H. .095m.

Slightly more evolved than the former, this plaque introduces the elephant/lion/*vyāla* motifs under the double lotus throne, a development also noticed in the early Pagán terracottas. Behind the Buddha Māravijaya can be seen a flaming halo and backrest of the throne. The arrangement is normal:

Stūpa

PARINIRVĀṆA

Pipal

NĀLĀGIRI

Standing Buddha,? elephant, BUDDHA
MARAVIJAYA

DESCENT FROM TAVATIMSA

Standing Buddha flanked by
indistinct figures

FIRST SERMON

seated, *dharmacakramudrā*

YAMAKAPĀTĪHĀRIYA

seated, *dharmacakramudrā*

PARILEYYAKA RETREAT

pralambanāsana, holding
bowl

NATIVITY

Babe, standing Māyā, Pajāpatī

The treatment is rather coarse and suggests mass manufacture.

Ten scenes and seven sites (Plate LXXII)

Private collection, Mrohaung, "from Wethali"

Steatite, Base 0.13m, H. 0.12m.

Broken at the top right and cracked at lower right.

This compares with the most complex and most beautiful of the later Pagán "*andagu*" plaques, and apart from all the earlier scenes in-

corporate a number of important new additions.

- (1) To the *cetiya-Parinirvāṇa*, a figure on either side waving palm fronds, and two pots holding flowers by the bed.
- (2) The assault of Māra; one of his beautiful daughters flies at the top left, while four soldiers of his army attack under the outer branches of the pipal tree.
- (3) A Bodhisattva on a lotus stands on either side of the central figure.
- (4) The seven weeks of the fast, according to the later Jātaka version, are depicted in a central column. Following Luce, we identify these
 - (a) In the upper tier, two standing Buddha figures, *mudrās* indistinct, refer to the second week, when he gazed NE at his seat under the Bodhi tree, and the third week, which he spent pacing up and down the Jewelled Walk N of the Bodhi tree.
 - (b) The middle tier at the left (right of the central figure) the first week, seated in meditation, and at the right, the fourth week, spent in the House of Gems, NW of the Bodhi tree, meditating on the *Abhidhamma*.
 - (c) In the lower tier, right of the central figure, a seated Buddha carries a bowl - either Sujata's offering, E of the Bodhi tree, on the eve of the enlightenment, or Tapussa and Bhallika's offering, S of the Bodhi tree, at the end of the seven weeks. On the other side, the Buddha seated under Mucalinda Nāga who protected the Buddha from rain SE of the Bodhi tree in the sixth week.

- (5) Below the outer column an extra figure is added at either side. On the left, the Fast, with two Devas distilling ambrosia near the ears; and on the right, the Buddha seated in *Dhyāna* under the hoods of the Mucalinda Nāga, a scene already shown on the middle tier, lower left (cf *OBEP* III, pl.401)
- (6) The double lotus throne rises on a stalk and is supported by two eager Nāga kings who also hold burgeoning lotus stems, a detail first found at Nālandā in images of the Miracles of Śrāvastī, but never on Indian eight-scene steles¹³³.
- (7) The upper part of the base of the throne has two kneeling figures, probably the *Aggaśavakas*, Sāriputta and Mogallāna, along with the usual elephant/lion/*vyāla* figures.
- (8) The lower base now includes seven auspicious signs, reminiscent of the royal *saptaratna*. The two at the left are indistinct, the third a prancing horse, followed by the *dharmacakra* flanked by deer, a walking elephant, a *śrīvatsa*, and a seated figure with one hand upraised, possibly representing a minister.

The four remaining outer scenes, clockwise from the top right, are the descent from Tavatimsa, the Yamakapāṭihāriya, Nativity and the Parileyyaka, the remaining two having been lost.

Jaṭā Lokanātha (Plate LXXXIIIa)

Bronze, H. .09m.

U Oo Tha Tun's collection, "from Wethali".

This small worn bronze is the only Avalokiteśvara image yet

¹³³ R.D.Banerji, *op cit* pl.XXIXb,c.

found in Arakan, although similar statues are known from Pagán¹³⁴. Seated on a double lotus throne in *lalitāsana*, he holds a lotus, now absent, in his left hand, and performs *varadamudrā* with the other. The jewellery, proportions of the body and general style are comparable with the crowned Buddha from Wethali, with which it must be contemporary. An interesting feature is the use of silver inlay for the vertical mark on the forehead, the sacred thread over the left shoulder, and a dot on the right hand. The tall conical *jaṭamakūṭa* headdress is also found in the Cambridge MS, No.35 of Foucher's *Catalogue "Rādhyārāma (sic me) Jāhtā (sic Jaṭa) Lokanāthaḥ"*.

The Bodhisattva Leaves the Palace (Plate LXXIIb)

Monastery Collection, Mrohaung

Bronze, H. 0.17m.

This very unusual example of Buddhist folk art depicts a man on a horse, each hoof of which is held by an elongated figure, while another, staff in hand, holds the tail. Obviously this illustrates the *mahābhiniṣkramaṇa* scene, the Great Departure from the palace. The figure on the horse is the future Buddha, attended by the groom Chandaka. The four figures holding the hooves are the devas who carried the horse through the sky lest there be any noise. The figures all slant backward, giving an impression of movement, and the whole rests on a rectangular base, now somewhat damaged.

In composition, a scene identical to this is found among the reliefs illustrating the life of Gautama in the Nanda temple at Pagán, following the *Nidāṅkathā*, the introductory chapter of the *Jātaka* commentary,

¹³⁴ OBEP Vol II, pp.2.6, Vol III, pl.446a,b.

*Avidūre Nidāna*¹³⁵. The simplicity of its conception and extreme stylization suggests a folk tradition of bronze manufacturing. The attendant figures are extremely elongated with no indication of flesh or garments. This elongation is accentuated by the conical headdresses worn by all the figures, similar to the peculiar conical *uṣṇīṣas* of some Buddha images found in monastery collections in Arakan, possibly dating from the Pagán period. This small bronze reflects the turn in Arakan to the Theravāda, as the country looked to the east, rather than the west, for its religious inspiration, after the 10th century. A very similar inscribed bronze image in the Dacca Museum, the 10th century Revanta from Vajrayogini depicting a conical crowned god on a horse surrounded by attendants, also on a rectangular base, suggests that the Arakan bronze was made in response to this Hindu cult, which, Luce has suggested, was introduced at Pagán through Kyanzittha's Pattikera queen¹³⁶.

Vāṣṭīśvara on Wuntiteung (Plate LXXIV)

Sandstone; H. c 1.2m.

Although extremely weathered, this image can be identified as Vāṣṭīśvara a form of the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī¹³⁷. The Bodhisattva sits in *ardhaparyāṅkāśana* on a plain throne supported by a couchant lion. No trace of garments remains, but the strange tripartite headdress is pointed at the top and sides. Both hands apparently rest on the knees with stylized lotus buds and *cāmaras* (?) rising behind on either

¹³⁵ Niche 42, w.wall, 2nd N of central doors. Duroiselle, *ASI* 1914 pl.XXXIV (33) and p.87; *ASB* 1914 pl.IV fig 2; arch *Negs* 395 (1905-6), 571 (1907-8); Luce *OBEP* II, p.131, III pl.2886 "Four devas bear the hooves to deaden the sound... Channa behind"

¹³⁶ *OBEP* I, pp.224-5

¹³⁷ *Sādhanaṃālā*, p.205n, in Bhattacharya, *The Indian Buddhist Iconography* (Calcutta 1968) pp.116-117, and fig.81 (Vāṣṭīśvara in the Indian Museum.)

side. An almost identical representation is found on one of the steles from Kalyānī Sīmā at Thatôn¹³⁸. The tutelary deity of the Nepalese Buddhists, Vāṣiṣvara was also worshipped in Bengal, and in Tibet as Mahārājalīla Mañjuśrī¹³⁹. The elongated proportions and flat unsophisticated treatment of the body point to a regional school influenced by late Pāla and Nepalese art of about the 10th century.

Cundā

In v.47 of the W face of the Shittāung inscription, describing the images which Ānandacandra caused to be erected, Johnston read *Cundāādīnāṃ* as *Cunda + ādīnāṃ* and tentatively proposed that this passage referred to the chief *śrāvakas*¹⁴⁰. However, Cunda never gained a position in the Buddhist hierarchy which would merit the worship of his image as the verse suggests. If we read *Cundā + ādīnāṃ*, the images referred to would portray the tantric goddess Cundā, well-known in India, and particularly in Southeast Bengal, from the 8th century. The earliest representation of this goddess is found among 8th century sculptures of cave no. 12 at Ellora¹⁴¹. Similar iconic

¹³⁸ Arch Neg 7771 (1957-8) "Tall pillar W of N entrance path, carved at the broken top with a Buddha touching earth; two Bodhisattvas in tiers below seated with the right hand on knee."

¹³⁹ Bhattacharya, *loc cit*; Gordon, *Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*, p.68; R.D.Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture* (Delhi 1933) pp.90-92.

¹⁴⁰ *op cit* p.371. "While Cunda is, significantly enough, omitted from the list in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, i, pp.23-26, he appears in Aśvaghoṣa's list in *Saundarananda*, XVI, 91. Of the schools which know three or four chief Sthaviras, only the Sarvāstivāda includes Cunda in this group, assigning him a place which justifies the expression of our text. It seems then that the Mahāyāna in Arakan was represented either by the Mahāyānist Sarvāstivādins or by a Mahāyānist school which ultimately derived from that sect..."

¹⁴¹ R.S.Gupte and B.D.Mahajan, *Ajanta, Ellora and Aurangabad Caves* (Bombay 1961) pp.175-6 and pl.LXVII, figure on right.

forms are depicted in the Cambridge MS No.4dd.1643 (*Lāṅtadeśe vṃkāraṇagare Cundā; Paṭṭikere Cundāvarabhavane Cundā*) and the Asiatic Society MS No.A15¹⁴². Other images have been found at Ratnagiri, Cuttack dist, Orissa¹⁴³ and at Chittagong¹⁴⁴. The goddess Cundā is the Tantric Buddhist counterpart of the Brahmanical goddess Cuṇḍī, with whom she shares a remarkably similar iconography¹⁴⁵. We have therefore our first indication of Tantric Buddhism in Arakan. Anandacandra's inclusion of "Cundā and others, according to power" along with the Buddha and Bodhisattvas is significant in that he was the first, and perhaps the last king of Arakan to recognize this form of the religion. The absence of Tantric images in the Arakan assemblage supports this view. However, Cundā is included among the female deities represented on steles from Harikela soon after the fall of Anandacandra's dynasty, described below.

Vasundharā

The pre-Buddhist earth-goddess was early incorporated into Buddhism as Vasundharā. No image of her was found at Mahāmuni, but she was said to be propitiated there by her devotees nevertheless. Duroiselle in 1920 discovered at Anbaung "the thoroughly Buddhist image of Vasundharā, or mother earth, wringing her hair brought in a tress in front of her breast; this is, so far as I can remember, the oldest figure of the gracious goddess as yet found in Burma; she is often

¹⁴² A.Foucher *op cit* App.1 No,58 and App,2, No.32.

¹⁴³ ASI *Negs* 61/293, 61/294, 61/311.

¹⁴⁴ P.Pal, "Two Syncretistic Icons" *J.N.Banerjea Volume* (Calcutta 1960) pp.326-335, pl.VII, fig 2

¹⁴⁵ D.Bhattacharya, "An Apītakucā Image from Kagajipura, Bangladesh" *AA* XXXVI, 1/2 (1974) p.94; K.P.K.Whittaker "A Buddhist Spell" *Asia Major* New series, Vol X, pf.1, pp.9-22. Jun-tei (Skt. Cuṇḍī /Cuṇḍī/Cuṇḍā) is believed by the Japanese to be the same as Durgā or Cuṇḍī of Indian mythology. See Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism*, p.93

seen carved in wood on the platform of pagodas, but she is standing. That of Veśālī is in a sitting position; the whole height of the stone is 10", the figure itself being 7 1/2" high; the breadth at the bottom is 3 1/2". The present whereabouts of the image is unknown, and no photograph appears to have been taken. The iconographic form is unknown in India, and derives from a Pali text well-known in Cambodia and Thailand, but rare in Burma, the *Paṭhamasambodhi*. Here it is said that after Siddhattha, under the Bo tree, called the earth to witness, it emerged from the ground in the form of a woman, who placed herself before the Bodhisatta as if to say "O, Great Man, I know thou hast fulfilled the necessary conditions for the attainment of supreme wisdom, my hair is soaked with the water poured upon the earth to ratify thy gifts, and now I will squeeze it out." The earth squeezed her hair and disappeared, but the water flowing from it like the waves of the Ganges could not be withstood by Māra's hosts, who fled and were scattered to the four points of the compass¹⁴⁶.

Vaiṣṇavite Images (Plates LXXIV-LXXX)

The number of images of Viṣṇu found in the Veśālī area so far is comparable to and perhaps exceeds those of the Buddha. This is surprising when it is remembered that the inscriptions contain no mention of Vaiṣṇavism. In fact, although Ānandacandra's *praśasti*

¹⁴⁶ G.Coedès *Mémoires concernant l'Asie orientale*, t.II pp.117-22, in ASB 1921-22, pp.14-17, cf. San Shwe Bu, "A votive tablet found at Akyab" *JBRs* VIII, pp.39-40

claims that the first Candara dynasty sprang from the lineage of Iśa, Śaivite remains are almost non-existent. However, local tradition in Burma retains memories of a Viṣṇu cult later overwhelmed by Buddhism. The earliest is in the name of Beikthano-myo "Viṣṇu city", the oldest urban site. In the 11th century, Buddhist Kyanzittha found it necessary to claim to have been, in a former existence, a hermit named Bisnu, sent by the Buddha to build Pyu Śrīkṣetra, together with Gavampati, Indra, Viśvakarman and the king of Nāgas¹⁴⁷. The same tradition is found in Mon origin legends, of both lower Burma and Siam, and probably derives ultimately from Sri Lanka¹⁴⁸. Viṣṇu images from Pyu and Mon sites mostly date from the 7th century¹⁴⁹, and appear to owe their inspiration to the early medieval art of Southeastern India rather than to the classical art of the Imperial Guptas. The most favoured aspect was the *śeṣaśāyī mūrti*, a form unknown in Arakan, but popular in pre-Angkorian and late Mon art, reflecting as it did Southeast Asian concepts of the universe. In Arakan, Viṣṇu images almost invariably represent Vāsudeva, the style and iconography initially closely following Gupta art of the late 5th and early 6th centuries.

¹⁴⁷ E.B.I. I, A31; III, A 28ff; IV, 17, 20; VIII, B, 22.

¹⁴⁸ *Mahāvamsa* VII, 5-6. In Sri Lanka Viṣṇu was to replace Brahma as the chief divine attendant on Buddha, and Viṣṇu shrines are found in many Buddhist temples. In the early Buddhist art of China, too, Viṣṇu is occasionally depicted as a door guardian. See Soper, *op cit*, pp.230-231, 237-8.

¹⁴⁹ N.R. Ray, *Brahmanical Gods in Burma* (Calcutta 1932) pp.15ff; G.H. Luce, *OBEP* I pp.216-8 and "The Advent of Buddhism to Burma" in L. Cousins *et al* (eds) *Buddhist Studies in Honour of I.B. Horner* (Dordrecht 1974) pp.128, 131 and n.28.

The worship of Vāsudeva, hero-deity of the Bhāgavata cult espoused by the Gupta emperors, gained ready acceptance by the Candras dynasty, anxious to emulate the glorious imperial tradition. As in India, the most frequent sculptural form was the four-armed *sthānakamūrti*, with the lower hands resting on the heads of the *āyudhapuruṣas*, "personified weapons", conforming with the *Viṣṇudharmottara* description.

In the 7th century, the influence of southern India becomes apparent in the style and iconography of Vāsudeva images. A new *mūrti*, with the god standing side by side with his consort Lakṣmī appears. This type is unknown in India but has been found at Śrīkṣetra, and illustrates the gradual decline of Indian influence and the formation of a national style. After the 7th century, no new *Viṣṇumūrtis*, or indeed notable images are found, unlike other areas in Southeast Asia, where the *śeṣaśāyī* and Harihara *mūrtis* became popular. The confused state of the country after the fall of the first Candras, and the Mahāyānist predilections of the succeeding dynasty no doubt prevented their acceptance. Only one image, of about the 8th century, remains, its style reflecting a new but degenerate phase of Northern Indian influence coeval with the end of the Andaja dynasty.

Standing Viṣṇu from Wuntitaung. (Plate LXXVa)

Mrohaung Museum, red sandstone; H. 0.51m. from base of socle.

cf. Arch Neg 4362 (1940-41), image at left.

The Wuntitaung site has given us a number of images from different periods, but this may well have been brought from the Veśālī area at any time after the 8th century. The figure is worn, headless, and the upper two arms have been broken at the elbows. A substantial tenon (below the socle) now broken but apparent in the Arch Neg indicates that it was once inserted in a niche or placed on a pedestal.

Viṣṇu stands erect in *śaṃpādaśthānaka*, his lower hands resting on the heads of two chubby *āyudhapuruṣas*. The figure on the left gazes at the god, his right arm passing over his body and holding a *cāmara* which appears behind him at the right of his face. Behind his head is a circular projection, obviously a weathered *cakra*, identifying him as Cakradeva. The figure at the right offers a cylindrical object, indented at the centre, representing the *gadā* of Gadādevī. The usual ornaments are worn: a broad necklace (*grāiveyika*) below which is a suggestion of the *śrīvatsa* on the chest (not apparent in the photograph), upper and lower arm bands, the thick *yajñopavīta* falling from the left shoulder round the right thigh. The *vanamālā* is absent, as is the case with other early Viṣṇu images in Southeast Asia. Two decorated bands pass around the lower torso, and a scarf drawn over the hips is draped again at mid-thigh level, knotted at each side with the loops and ends falling gracefully down. The body is well-proportioned and smoothly modelled; the decoration, though ornate, is tastefully restrained, and the drapery treated in a naturalistic manner. An attempt to relieve the static quality of the main figure is achieved with the *dvībhaṅga* position of the *āyudhapuruṣas* and the *contraposto* of their arms and attributes.

The immediate prototype of this image is found in 5th century Gupta sculpture at Mathurā¹⁵⁰, where the treatment of the *āyudhapuruṣas* and minor ornaments is identical, although the *yajñopavīta* is longer, reaching to the calves, and the fold of the *dhoti* is seen to pass between the legs and falls behind, exaggerating the crevice between the thighs to give an appearance of asexuality. Similar ornaments and garments are found in the 6th century art of the early Cālukyas at

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cf. e.g. Archaeological Museum, Mathura, No. 65-35, illustrated in *AARP* 4, p. 74, pl. 1

Badami¹⁵¹. This earliest Viṣṇu in Arakan can therefore be dated in the early 6th century, perhaps in the reign of Bhūticandra.

Fragment of a small Viṣṇu image from Veśālī. (Plate LXXVb)

Mrohaung Museum

Red sandstone, H. 0.145m.

This small fragment belongs stylistically with the previous image.

While now only the portion below the waist and above the knees, together with part of the lower left arm and the top of an *āyudhapuruṣa* head remains, the decoration and garments have not weathered, allowing fuller reconstruction of the image type. The waistband has at the centre an oval motif, decorated with incised scrolls, and a diamond shape is seen over the right hip. The general effect is of embossed metal. Around this, the *yajñopavīta* is entwined, crossing and hanging loosely over the right thigh. A scarf is stretched tightly across the hips, and again draped below, knotted at each side, the folds naturalistically depicted behind the legs. The *dhoti* is gathered tightly around each thigh and is indicated by two incised lines above the knees.

Head of Viṣṇu from Veśālī. (Plates LXXVI-LXXVII)

Exact provenance unrecorded; Mrohaung Museum

Red sandstone, H.O.286m.

This is perhaps the most beautiful example of early Veśālī sculpture, and alone would justify excavation of the city site. The top of the *makuta* is slightly damaged and the head broken at the base of the ears and the top of the neck. The stone has flaked around the face, but this does not obscure the calm, benign expression. The contours of

¹⁵¹ Especially Cave 1, cf Aschwin Lippe "Early Chalukya Icons", AA Vol XXXIV, 4, pp.273ff and fig.23.

the face are gently rounded in the best tradition of the Gupta sculpture. The facial features are treated in the manner of Mathurā art of the 5th century: thinly delineated arched eyebrows, almost meeting at the centre, eyes partly closed and fleshy lips turned in a slight smile, aptly illustrating Harle's definition of the Gupta style "a turning inward, an ability to communicate higher spiritual states"¹⁵². While the face compares with the well-known Viṣṇu from Mathurā¹⁵³, the *kirīṭamakūṭa*, by which we identify the god, is more restrained. Below it, the hair is indicated by stylized squares in front, gradually becoming rectangular towards the ears. Behind the ears are two rows of three ringlets, the texture of the hair indicated in fine gradations. The fillet at the base of the *makūṭa* is decorated with an alternating oval/square pattern within beaded borders, a common Gupta convention. This is surmounted by three *patra-paṭṭa* protruberances, triangular with the sides curved outward, one at each side reaching halfway up the *makūṭa*, and one in the centre front three-quarters. Within these is a decoration, now very worn, but consisting basically of a rectangle below and a circle with scrolls on each side above. The mid-point of the mitre is marked by a simple band of enclosed squares, after which the shape curves slightly inward, to be surmounted by a plain projection and another oval/square band, this time within a linear border. The apex, partially broken, is plain and was probably flat.

No precise parallel appears in Indian art. The curved outline is typical of southern India, and a more developed, highly decorated version can be seen at Bādāmi. The Viṣṇus of the Daśāvatāra temple at Deogarh have similar but straight-sided mitres¹⁵⁴.

¹⁵² *Gupta Sculpture* (Oxford 1974), p.8

¹⁵³ National Museum, New Delhi, SR 242; see Harle, pp.18,44 and pl.49

¹⁵⁴ Zimmer, *Art of Indian Asia* (New York 1964) Vol.II, pl.127

In pre-Khmer sculpture of the late 6th century, we find an almost exact counterpart, not in the *kirīṭamakūṭas* of Viṣṇu, which are usually straight-sided and undecorated, but in the crowns of Bodhisattvas¹⁵⁵. Here, the hair is treated in an identical manner, as was indeed the case with the Phnom Da style of the early 6th century. The fillet is decorated with the same square/oval pattern, and is surmounted by three *paṭṭṇapaṭṭa*, differently decorated but no doubt deriving from the same prototype, the royal diadem¹⁵⁶.

Standing eight-armed deity (Plate LXXVIIIc)

Arch Neg 4366 (1940-41) "Found lying at the foot of Mahadeva hill, SE of Mrohaung".

Size and material unrecorded, but appears to be sandstone.

The shape and size of this great slab indicates that it was originally structural. The figure, erect in *saṃapādashānaka* is headless, but traces of an oval halo remain. Eight arms are distinct, the middle two at the right being broken, as are most of the attributes. The four lower arms are separated at the shoulder, the next pair joined to the upper of these at the elbow, and the uppermost pair are placed behind, slightly above the elbow. The effect is easy and well-composed

¹⁵⁵ cf Dupont, *La Statuaire Préangkorienne* (Ascona 1955) pls.XIII. XVI and XXIIa.

¹⁵⁶ Remarkably similar forms of crowns, for both gods and kings, are described in the *Mānasāra* XLIX, 12-156

the attributes forming a visual circle, with the interest directed at the face at the top, showing that the sculptor was well-practiced at making multi-armed objects. The two upper arms hold rounded objects, pointed at the top, which could conceivably represent the conch and the lotus. Below, at the third right, is a long decorated *gadā*, and the third left holds a *dhanus*. Gopinatha-Rao identified a similar relief at Badami with the attributes disposed in the same order, as Vaikuntha¹⁵⁷.

The figure is broad-shouldered, and tapers gradually towards the feet. The smooth contours, graceful proportions and refined quality of the ornaments show the influence of Gupta art. A scarf, plastically conceived, is looped at the right and hangs softly above the ankle. There are traces of the usual decorated waistband, a low-slung *yajñopavīta* and perhaps a *vanamālā*. Similar treatment of the *prabhāvali* ornaments and garments is found in Sanci sculpture of the 5th-6th centuries¹⁵⁸.

Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī (Plate LXXIXb)

Mrohaung Museum, "from Veśālī".

Red sandstone, H. 0.06m.

A form of Viṣṇu image unknown in India and previously only found

¹⁵⁷ *Elements of Hindu Iconography* (NY 1968 reprint of Madras 1914 ed.) Vol I Pt. I, p.256 and pl.LXXV.

¹⁵⁸ cf Sheila F.Weiner, "From Gupta to Pāla Sculpture" AA Vol XXV, p. 172 and figs. 19-23; Harle, *op cit* pp. 42-43 and figs. 40,41.

at Śrīkṣetra¹⁵⁹, represents the god standing side by side with Lakṣmī. The equal stature given to Viṣṇu's consort possibly reflects the status of women in Tibeto-Burman society.

From Veśālī we have, in well-defined relief, the upper portion of a rounded slab with the head of Viṣṇu to the left, and that of Lakṣmī at his right. Between them is a weapon, similar to that carried by Lakṣmī at Śrīkṣetra. The god is identified by his comparatively short, straight-sided mitre, and his consort's hair is similarly arranged in a squarish chignon.

Standing images of Lakṣmī-Narāyaṇa in India are very few, and usually depict Lakṣmī with one of her arms around the god's neck, as described in the *Vīśvakarmāsāstra* quoted by Hemadri¹⁶⁰.

¹⁵⁹ The best known of these is the one found by General de Beylié in the garden of the Prome Deputy Commissioner; see Arch *Negs* 4504 (1940-41), 7524 (1957-8); L. de Beylié, *Prome et Samara* p.87 and pl.VII, fig.2; Ray, *Brahm. Gods...* pl.II,2 and pp. 24-27, 47, 74-5, 89; Luce, *OBEP*, Vol.I, p.216 and n.85; Aung Thaw, *Historical Sites...* p.28. For the remaining three: Arch *Neg* 3765 (1934-5) "fragment of a stone sculpture found at East Zegu temple"; the crowned figure on the right appears to be Lakṣmī. On her right was a figure of Viṣṇu, all that remains being the uplifted left arm holding a conch; Luce, *ibid*, n.86; Arch *Neg* 621 (1908-9); at Kyaukka Thein shed, a stone relief, much defaced, from Pogaungkan (W of Peikthano Mibaya Thingyaing) showing four-armed Viṣṇu standing with Lakṣmī by his side; Luce, *ibid* n.86; Arch *Neg* 784 (1909-10); a similar relief from Pokungôn, S of the Bawbawgyi, also at Kyaukka Thein, Luce, *ibid* n.86.

¹⁶⁰ Hemadri, *Caturvarga Cintāmaṇi* (Calcutta 1879), *Vratākhaṇḍa* pl.I. Representations of this image appear only after the 8th century, see Kalpani Desai, *Iconography of Viṣṇu* (New Delhi 1973) pp.31-32 and fig.26 (Amber Museum, 8th century) fig 27 (Allahabad Museum, 9th century).

However, the *Pārānanda Sūtra* gives a simple description:

"Lord Hari is to be meditated on as having the human body... He has four hands and is accompanied by Lakṣmī. In his right hands he holds the disc and the mace, and in his left ones the lotus and the conch. There should be his Garuḍa *vāhana* and the god should be adorned with various ornaments."¹⁶¹

It is possible that this text, which allows a certain freedom of interpretation, was used by the sculptors of Śrīkṣetra and Veśālī.

Their features, where discernible, are finely modelled, the flesh rounded in the manner of Veśālī sculpture of the second half of the 6th century. The fragment provides further evidence of the contact between Veśālī and Śrīkṣetra.

Massive Viṣṇu at Wethali village. (Plate LXXVIIIa)

Red sandstone; H. c. 2.00m.

This image was found buried in a garden near Letkhat-taung monastery¹⁶². The head is missing, the upper two arms are broken at the elbows, and treasure hunters have made a hole in the stomach and severely gauged the chest and the legs. Despite the condition it can be seen that the sculpture is as monumental in conception as the contemporary pre-Khmer Viṣṇu images.

The *āyudhapuruṣas* under each of the back hands stand in the erect frontal position of the main image, their hands, where visible, clasped in front. Both wear tall, almost conical headdresses, and garments (not visible in the photograph) identical to those of the god. The figure to the right of the god has a rayed *cakra* behind, identifying

¹⁶¹ *Parānanda Sūtra*, Gaekwad Oriental Series, LIV (Baroda 1931), *Sūtra* 19,37

¹⁶² Local tradition has it that when the stone is uncovered, calamity will befall the village. However, we were allowed to erect it with the help of our army escort, and once convinced that it was merely a "Hindu *nat*", the villagers eagerly assisted us, bringing water to wash the image and placing leaves on the top when the work was done.

Cakraḍeva. This reversed position of the personified weapons is also noted in early Cālukyan art¹⁶³.

The Vāsudeva figure bears traces of the ornaments and garments noticed on the earlier images, although here the back panel of the *dhoti* can be seen ending above the ankles. This panel and the scarf at the waist are treated in a rigid unrelieved manner. The same costume, treated in an identical manner, is found on the figures adorning the Dharmarāja *ratha* at Māmallapuram. The body is elongated yet taut, the surfaces smooth and hard, unlike the naturalistic modelling of the earlier images. The transition from the broad and powerful shoulders and chest to the narrow waist, and again to the broad hips and long strong legs is well-controlled. No attempt is made to define the toes. Again, a comparison can be made with the Dharmarāja *ratha* figures.

Gopinatha-Rao, quoting the *Vaikhānasāgama*, a 9th century text followed by the sculptors of Māmallapuram and other rock-cut shrines, informs us that "the Āyudha-puruṣas should each have only one face with a pair of eyes, that the head should be adorned with the *karandamakuta* and that each of them should have only two hands held over the chest in *añjali* pose... the weapon which each of them is intended to represent is shown over the crown worn on the head."¹⁶⁴ He offers no illustrations of this description, and I have not found any Indian example following the text as accurately as this Wethali sculpture. Gopinatha-Rao's dating of the *Vaikhānasāgama* is not important, as the *śilpasāstras* by their nature incorporated the earlier traditions of older texts.

¹⁶³ cf. J.N.Banerjee, *Religion in Art and Archaeology* (Lucknow 1968) p.26 and pl.III (Sthānaka Viṣṇu, Aihole)

¹⁶⁴ *Elements of Hindu Iconography* Vol.I pt.1, pp.78, 288-9. For an illustration of the *karandamakuta*, identical to that worn by the *āyudhapuruṣas* on this sculpture, see his pl.VIII.

An engraved design was found on the reverse of the stone, in the lower right hand section. It appears to represent a sprouting lotus rhizome, an eternal theme in Indian and Southeast Asian art, symbolizing the impregnation of water by the heat of the sun to produce life on earth¹⁶⁵. A passage from the *Viṣṇu-dharmottara* shows Viṣṇu as the embodiment of this eternal principle:

"...know that the conch in the hand of the god is the sky and the *cakra* to be the air and the *gāḍa* of that lord, the *heat and lotus* placed in the middle of the legs the water. These chief elements forsaken by Hari, O king, are soon split up, so Hari supports (them)."¹⁶⁶

The intention of the sculptor was obviously connected with this concept of Viṣṇu as preserver of the stability of the cosmic forces. The hidden position of the engraving suggests that it was connected with the installation ceremony.

The transition from Northern to Southern Indian inspiration already anticipated in the head of Viṣṇu in the Mrohaung Museum, is now complete. The evidence points directly to Māmallapuram, specifically to the Dharmarāja *ratha* sculptures, carved during the reign of Narasimhavarman I Mamalla (c.630-668 A.D.)¹⁶⁷.

¹⁶⁵ This theme is beloved of all followers of A.K.Coomaraswamy, the most comprehensive exposition being that of F.D.K.Bosch in his monograph on *The Golden Germ* (The Hague 1960).

¹⁶⁶ *Viṣṇudharmottara*, III, 58 Kramrisch's translation, p.111. According to th text, the earth goddess should be represented between the legs of the god, a detail often omitted even in Gupta sculpture.

¹⁶⁷ K.R.Srinivasan *op cit*, pp. 204-5, 218-9

or of Dharmavijaya (c. 656-692 A.D.). Pallava influence in the sculpture of the Malay peninsula and Thailand at this time is well-known. However, these images do not adhere to the Pallava formula with the same precision as the Arakan example, which was not subject to the stimulating influence of the east-west trade route to the same degree¹⁶⁸.

Small Viṣṇu image at Wethali. (Plate LXXIXc)

From Shwedaunggyi, now at the house of U San Tha Hla in Wethali village.

Red sandstone; H. 0.25m.

This weathered image, now headless and with the upper arms broken at the elbows, has a tenon beneath indicating that it was made to fit into a niche. The lower hands rest on two cylindrical shapes reaching to mid-thigh. From the photograph it appears that the object to the god's right was once a *cakra* mounted on a *stambha*, the smoother shape to the left was presumably the *gadā*. The treatment of the body and the garments is similar to that of the massive Viṣṇu and places the image in the first half of the 7th century.

Late image of Viṣṇu (Plate LXXIXa)

Mrohaung Museum, original provenance unknown.

Sandstone; figure and attributes now limed and painted; H. c. .40m.

This image is the best preserved of the series, only the upper arms having been broken at the elbows.

An elliptical undecorated *prabhāvali* is behind the head. The god's right hand rests on a *cakra* with a floral motif within, supported by a *stambha* with a square base and rounded capital, the left on a *gadā* with a lotus base, a body of diminishing coils and a ring at the top. The ornaments are far more elaborate than those of earlier

¹⁶⁸ cf S.J.O'Connor, *Hindu Gods of Peninsula Siam*, (Ascona 1972) Ch.IV *passim*

images. The *kirītamakuta* is the curved type, the three-pointed fillet decorated with a row of tear shapes and the body decorated with successive rows of simple motifs. The scarves formerly around the waist have been replaced by ornate bands; and the *yajñopavīta* falls from the left shoulder around the right knee. The *vanamālā* is looped twice, between the hips and from the upper right thigh around the left knee. The garment is rendered in an archaistic manner, with the back panel falling in three stiff tiers, although attempts have been made to denote drapery. Facial features are sharply defined, the arched eyebrows meeting in the middle, eyes slanting and half closed, the centre ridge of the nose ending in a point, and the thin lips curved in a smile. The graceful proportions of the earlier images have been forgotten. The head is 1/5th of the height, the arms reach below the knees, and the legs are short.

While the image is basically dependent on earlier forms, a new wave of Northern influence is apparent. The proportions, facial features and elliptical *prabhāvali* can be traced to the art of Nālandā during the late 7th and early 8th centuries. The hard surfaces and elaborate ornamentation are typical of early Pāla art at Bahāpur at the same period.

A number of fragmentary images found in the Mrohaung Museum found at Wethali probably also represent Visnu and will be included here.

(1) Red sandstone, 0.16m high, headless torso, originally four-armed but upper arms broken, as usual at the elbows; legs below the knees are missing. The body is well-proportioned, with flesh gently contoured. (1.4.88)

(2) Red sandstone head, 0.10m. high, broken at the right, but with remains of a mitre and an ornate earring in the form of a coil.

The mitre is similar in form to that of the large head from Veśālī, but there are traces of decoration all over. Again, the face is well-rounded. (pl. LXXXI).

(3) Inscribed base of an image, grey sandstone, 0.35m. long.

The socle is broken at the left and a tenon remains below, indicating that the image was to be placed in a niche. Two pairs of feet are all that remains of the image. In the original centre, the larger pair, pointing straight ahead, show that the central figure was standing erect in *śamapādasthānaka* on a crudely depicted lotus, signifying his divinity. To his right, a much smaller pair of feet in the same position, with traces behind the legs of the usual garment, rendered in the rigid fashion of later Veśālī sculpture. A similar figure was probably represented on the other side. The similarity with the massive Viṣṇu image at Wethali (pl. LXXVIIIa) and the script on the base (unfortunately undecipherable) places this sculpture at the end of the 7th or beginning of the 8th century (pl. XXXC).

Śaivite Images

Although the Candara kings were reputed to be descendents of Īśa, Śaivite remains are few. The possible Śaivite connotations of the coin motifs have been discussed in the previous chapter. No anthropomorphic representations of Śiva nor Śiva *liṅgas* have been found, but the shape of some of the votive *stūpas* suggests that they may be recut *liṅgas*. The possible existence of at least one early Śiva temple, however, is borne out by a high relief sculpture of Nandīśa, the companion of Śiva, often depicted at the entrance

to Śiva shrines in India. The cult of Durgā as Mahiṣamardini, adopted by the Guptas in the early 5th century had spread by the 7th century to Bangladesh, where we find the immediate prototype of her image at Veśālī. A memory of her benign aspect is retained in the name Umalakka, a village north of Mrohaung. Two relatively late images of Durgā from Wuntitaung testify to the introduction of a Śaktī cult, also from Bangladesh, by about the 9th century.

Dvārapāla Nandīśā on Sanghayama mount, Wethali (Plate LXXXIIa)

Sandstone; total H. 1.85m., H. of figure 1.56m, B. at base 0.62m.

The size and shape of this slab suggest that it was structural and from the nature of the image we may infer that it formed the base of a door jamb, part of the *torāṇa* of an important Śaivite shrine.

The figure, in high relief, stands erect, with a slight inclination of the hips to the left, and arms hanging by the sides. The left hand holds a rosary, the right a long staff, widening towards the top, now broken, but conceivably once crowned with a *triśula*. He may

therefore be identified as Nandīśā (var. Nandin, Nandikeśvāra)

mentioned in the *Agni Purāṇa* as one of Śiva's assistants in human form, a doorkeeper carrying an *akṣamāla* (Śiva's rosary) and a *triśula*¹⁶⁹.

According to the *Īśanaśivagurudevapaddhati*, Nandīśā accompanies Gaṅgā on the right side of the east door of the temple¹⁷⁰. Images of this kind first make their appearance in late Gupta art, and are, in India at least, confined to Śaivite temples. The Śaiva *dvarāpāla*

¹⁷⁰ *Īśanaśivagurudevapaddhati*, by Īśanaśivagurudevamiśra, ed. Ganapati Sashi. Trivandrum Sanskrit series, Vol II 3 & 4, (Trivandrum 1922-5) - Kriyāpāda, ch. 26, 27, trans S. Kramrisch, *JISOA* IX, 1942, p. 231.

¹⁶⁹ 50, 39, *sākṣamālī triśūlī ca nandīśo dvārapālakah* cf M. de Mallman *Les enseignements iconographiques de l'Agni Purāṇa*, Annales de Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'Études, t. 67 (Paris 1963) pp. 66-7.

comes to occupy the place of honour on the inside of the doorjamb, while the river goddesses, often on a smaller scale, are relegated to an inferior position on the outer side ¹⁷¹. We imagine this may have been the case at Wethali.

Following the Epic and Purāṇic traditions of Nandikeśvara, he is always depicted like Śiva, in *Candraśekharamūrti*¹⁷². Thus the image is crowned with a *jaṭāmakuṭa*, with a plain band over the forehead, following the natural shape of the head to the crown, from which protrudes a great *uṣṇīṣa* decorated with three rows of looped hair. This form is unknown in India, but has parallels in the pre-Angkorian style of Phnom Da, and is also noticed on some Bodhisattva figures from Mahāmuni¹⁷³. From either side of the head issue tresses in the form of flames¹⁷⁴. The left ear has a long earring, comprised of a small circular shape from which falls a leaf on a short stem, the *patra-kunḍala*. The other earring, inserted into the lobe, is large, circular, and has a stylized flower in the centre, obviously a *padmapatra-kunḍala*. Around his neck is a simple row of pearls,

¹⁷¹ A.Viennot, *Les Divinités Fluviales Gāṅgā et Yamunā aux portes des Sanctuaires de l'Inde* (Paris 1964) pp.61-2. The underlying philosophy of this placement has been discussed by H. von Stietencron, *Ganga u. Yamuna - Zur symbolischen Bedeutung der Flussgöttinnen an indischen Tempeln* (Wiesbaden 1972) pp.73ff.

¹⁷² Gopinatha-Rao, *op cit* II, 2 pp.455-459

¹⁷³ e.g. cf. Dupont, *op cit* pl.XIa "Tête du Hari-Hara" and the Mahāmuni Bodhisattva illus. at pl.XLVIIIa. Interestingly, the *uṣṇīṣa* has a crescent in front; cf, too the crouching Lokapāla figure.

¹⁷⁴ cf. Sivaramamurti, "Geographical and Chronological Factors in Indian Iconography" *Ancient India* No.6 (Jan 1950) p.53 & figs. 37, 38

muktāhāra. Nandīśa, in his role as *dvārapāla*, wears a version of the Scythian "northern dress": a short pleated tunic, tied at the waist with an *udarabandha*, and a long underskirt falling almost to the ankles. A scarf, passing loosely over the thighs, and tied, incongruously, below the right hip, the ends falling by the side, seems to be an afterthought, reminiscent of the Viṣṇu images and more conventionally dressed guardians. This type of costume is worn by guardian images from a very early period, and probably was copied from the dress of temple guards at the time¹⁷⁵.

The treatment of the figures follows the *typical Maṅgala* style: rounded face, broad-shouldered, tapering to a narrow waist and widening over the hips, with the drapery falling naturally over the body. Gupta influence is remembered but has become a formula, seen in the misunderstood *tribhanga* posture and the unrelieved curves of the flesh.

Fragmentary Mahiṣamardini from Anbaung village, near Wethali.

Size etc. unrecorded, present whereabouts unknown. (Plate LXXXIc)

Refs. ASB 1921, p.19; 1926, p.35; Ray, *Brahm.Gods in Burma*, pl.XVIII 23 and pp.62, 92.

Arch Neg 2174 (1920-21); 2695 (1925-6); Luce, *OBEP* I, p.213 and fn.65.

This fragment consists only of the lower half of a female figure, standing in *ālīdhāsana* with the right leg placed over a couchant animal, head to right, identified by Duroiselle as Mahiṣasura, the buffalo demon. A trident, probably held in the right hand, is planted in the back of the demon. The sculpture is broken at the sides, but the width of the base in proportion to the legs indicates that it

¹⁷⁵ V.Dehejia *Early Buddhist Rock Temples* (London 1972) pl.23, Guardians at Pitalkhora Vihāra IV (circa 50 B.C.)

was wide enough to accommodate a multiplicity of arms. The socle has an unusual lotus throne carved under the figure itself, leaving the sides plain. A tenon beneath this shows that the image was originally placed in a niche.

An almost identical fragment, slightly better preserved and with eight arms, was found at Rangamati on the old Bengal-Arakan road, and has been dated in the 7th century¹⁷⁶. Another inscribed image from West Bengal also belongs to the same period, but lacks the vitality of the other sculptures¹⁷⁷. This particular form of the Mahiṣamardinīmūrti is rarely found in South India, and the Veśālī sculpture illustrates the thrust of the cult eastwards in about the 7th century.

Small Mahiṣamardini from Wethali.

Grey sandstone; Mrohaung Museum, found during the wet season of 1974 "behind a hill in NE Wethali"; H.O.16m; Base 0.09m.

The entire front of this image has split off in one piece, leaving only the outline of the figure. However, it can be seen that it was beautifully carved, the eight-armed figure in the same position as the previous sculpture, the attributes neatly depicted within the rounded backslab.

Two Durgā images from Wuntitaung. (Plate LXXIb)

(a) Durgā, now at the Mrohaung Museum.

Forchhammer, *op cit* p.38; "A stone slab, 3'4" high and 2'8" broad, it exhibits two female and one male figure, the image of a bull, a horse and a winged, monkey-headed being..."

¹⁷⁶ Capt. Layard, "The Ancient City of Kansonapuri Now Called Rungamutty" *JASB* 1853; S.R.Das, "A Black Stone Image from Chirurti (Murshidabad, West Bengal)" *JASB* 4th series, Vol X 1 & 4 (1968) pp.70, 71 and pls. I, II.

¹⁷⁷ M.Rahman, "Three Mahiṣamardini Images from Bangladesh" *JAS Bangladesh* 1974, pp.154-55 and pl.1; N.B.Sanyal, *Ann. Report of the Varendra Research Society 1931-2* (Rajshahi 1933) p.12 and Plate.

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¹⁷⁷ M.Rahman, "Three Mahiṣamardinī Images from Bangladesh" *JAS Bangladesh* 1974, pp.154-55 and pl.1; N.B.Sanyal, *Ann. Report of the Varendra Research Society 1931-2* (Rajshahi 1933) p.12 and Plate.

ASB 1941, pl.1 and p.12; Arch Neg 4352 (1940-41)

Against the thick unornamented backslab, rounded at the top, the goddess stands rigidly erect, arms held stiffly by her sides, wearing only a plain neckband and a knee length lower garment. Below her feet is a running horse. To her left is a similarly attired lady, whose *vāhana* appears to be the multi-faced Kārttikeya riding on his peacock; at her right, resplendent on a drum-shaped throne which bulges around the middle, sits her consort Śiva, in *rāja-līlāsana* with a conical headdress, his only garment a flap between his legs, identified by the couchant bull under his throne. The goddess is similarly conceived to the image of Sarvvānī, inscribed by Queen Prabhāvatī, wife of Deva-khadga in the late 7th century, and found south of Comilla¹⁷⁸. Sarwānī also stands erect, but on a lion, in an identical costume, but with eight arms and flanked by two female attendants. Our image is a local interpretation of this form and was made after the reoccupation of Veśālī in the late 8th century, suggesting that the Śakti cult of early medieval Bengal made a brief impact on Arakan before the Buddhist revival of the 11th century. It does not conform to any known *dhyāna* but Bhattasali remarked that Durgā images of East Bengal followed "some particular Śilpaśāstra which we have not been able to recover."¹⁷⁹

(b) Durgā, *in situ* on Wuntitaung.

Forchhammer p.38 "... a stone slab 2'8" high and 2'2" broad; six figures are cut out in demi-relief: the central and highest is the image of a female deity standing upright on the back of a bull; she wears a simple dress around the loins; the hair is bound in a knot on top

¹⁷⁸ Bhattasali, *Iconography*... pp.203-4, and pl.LXX

¹⁷⁹ *ibid* p.199

of the head; the face is well-rounded, the nose prominent, the eyes straight, the cheekbones protruding; no other characteristics can be distinguished, the surface of the stone being much eroded by exposure. To the right is a male figure, only a foot high; the left leg is bent, the left hand rests on the knee, the outstretched arm bearing the weight of the body... he squats on the back of what appears to be a horse. To the left of the central figure is a female figure, somewhat smaller, but in all other features identical with its neighbour, beneath its feet is a winged creature in flying attitude, with a human body and a monkey's head; the hands are joined over the breast in the attitude of paying homage."

ASB 1940-41, pl.1 and p.12; *Arch Neg* 4352 (1940-41)

The bull which Forchhammer saw under the central figure appears to be a standing elephant; his horse under the Śiva figure is doubtful and has now broken beyond recognition. In other respects, the sculpture is almost identical to the former, but the garment worn by the female figure reaches to the ankles and the headdresses are higher. Both may have originally belonged to the Hindu temple on Wuntitaung, traditionally said to have been built by King Pephyu of the Simghacandra dynasty of Veśālī in 535 (976 A.D.) and dedicated to the worship of the female Wunti Nat who aided him in defeating the 'Shan' invasion¹⁸⁰. As all Hindu gods are known as Nats in Arakan, the two Durgā images probably represent the Wunti Nat herself.

Sūrya from Shin-ngê-det-taung (Plate LXXXIa)

Mrohaung Museum; red sandstone, recently painted in parts.

¹⁸⁰ *JBRS* IX, pt.1 pp.52-3; cf Phayre "On the History of Arakan", p.38

refs. Duroiselle, *ASB* 1923, pl.1 fig 1 and p.28; *Arch Negs* 2328 (1922-23) 9218130 (1958-9); Ray, *Brahm.Gods...* pl.XIX fig 24 and pp.69-71; Bhattasali *Iconography...*p.158; Tin Hla Thaw *Evolution of the Buddhist Image in Burma*, unpublished M.A. thesis, London University 1959; *OBEP* pp.208-9.

San Shwe Bu discovered this image on Shin-ngè-det-taung, about half a mile SE of the old city walls of Mrohaung, in about 1922. It is one of the best documented Brahmanical images found in Burma, having been discussed in detail by Duroiselle, Ray and Luce. The reverse face is almost covered with a long inscription, rendered almost illegible by knife-sharpening over the years¹⁸¹, but paleographically datable to the 6th century. It is not certain whether the inscription is contemporary with the image and I am inclined to think that it might be of a slightly later date.

On the obverse face, Sūrya is depicted riding in his chariot drawn by seven horses, with the horse in the centre placed within the single wheel. The figure of the chariot driver, Aruna, God of the Dawn, is barely perceptible in front. The principal figure is much defaced, but enough remains to show that the two hands, raised to the shoulders, each carried a lotus on a stalk. The god has a high headdress, surmounted by a small round object (is this a tiny *maṇḍala* ?) long earlobes, and earrings and a necklace. Over each shoulder are traces of a breastplate. Either side is flanked by what appears to be a small haloed figure, which, says Duroiselle, seems to be a female. The one on the right is carrying a bow, and that on the left, a staff or arrow. He suggests that the two small figures represent Ūṣā and Pratyūṣā. The legs of the main figure are hidden from the knees down in the chariot. Depiction of the legs of Sūrya below the knees is forbidden in the *Matsya-Purāṇa*, where it is stated that the legs of the god were so long that Viśvakarman could not see

¹⁸¹ See above, pp.75-6 and pl.XV

where they ended, and gave up making the first image at the knees¹⁸². The image itself conforms to the description in the same text, where it is directed that "the sun god should be placed on a car with one wheel and seven horses and he should have lotuses in his two hands. His lustre should be (purplish) like the inside of a lotus. The lotuses in his hands should rise over his shoulders. His body should be covered by armour or a breastplate, and he should be covered with two cloths. His feet should be invisible, being covered with effulgence. He should have two attendants, viz: Daṇḍa, and Piṅgala, with swords in their hands. The god Vidhātā (Disposer, i.e. the god Brahmā) should be placed on one side with a pen in his hands".¹⁸³

This form of Sūrya image, with the legs hidden in the car, was, it appears, common in Eastern India, and especially Bengal, during the late Gupta period. The popularity of the sun-god cult, and its patronage by kings at this time, is attested by inscriptions, notably the Mandasor stone inscription of the time of Adityasena¹⁸⁴. Two 6th century images almost identical to the Shin-ngê-det-taung Sūrya are known from Kāśīpur (24 Parganas.) and Deorā (Bogra District) in Bengal¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸² H.von Steiteneron *Indische Sonnenpriester : Sāmba u. die Śākadvīpīya Brāhmana*, (Wiesbaden 1966). The story is derived from the legend in the older *Sāmba Purāṇa* XV 18-21a, and *Bhaviṣya Mahāpurāṇa* I, 123, 55-58a. R.C.Hazra, *Studies in the Upapurāṇas* Vol I (Calcutta 1958) has placed the Matsya P. between the 3rd and the 5th centuries and later (p.15ff), while Srivastava, *Sun Worship in Ancient India* (Allahabad 1972) p.223, puts this passage between 500-600 A.D.

¹⁸³ cf Bhattasali *op cit* p.150; S.K.Saraswati, *op cit* p.26; *Matsya Purāṇa* 261. 1-8 'Vangavasi ed. p.902)

¹⁸⁴ Fleet, *CII*, vol.III, pp.79-83, 208-10.

¹⁸⁵ S.K.Saraswati *Early Sculpture of Bengal* (Calcutta 1937) ch.III *passim*, pl.II fig 8, Kāśīpur Sūrya now at the Asutosh Museum of Indian Art, Calcutta University, and fig 9, Deorā Sūrya, at Rajshahi Museum. cf. R.D.Banerjea *Development of Hindu Iconography* (New Delhi 1974) pp.435-6 and Srivastava, *op cit* pp. 303-4.

Gupta sculptures from this area are comparatively rare, and these two would indicate that the sun cult was then at least as important as Buddhism and Vaiṣṇavism. The Kāśīpur Sūrya had only three attendants, Aruṇa, and probably the arrow-shooting goddesses, while the Deorā Sūrya is surrounded by Daṇḍī, Pingala, Aruṇa, Uṣā and Pratyūṣā. However, the chariot in the Deorā image is represented in a manner identical to the Mrohaung example, with the central horse within the wheel, while the Kāśīpur image has the wheel to one side. Both Bengal images have no backslab, but a large aureole behind the head, reaching below the shoulders. The sun-god cult therefore must have reached Arakan from Bengal¹⁸⁶. The Sūrya image is stylistically comparable to the main Mahāmuni group. The figure fills only two-thirds of the height of the unornamented backslab, the elongated torso diminishes towards the small waist, and the flesh is firmly rounded. A date in the 6th century A.D. is therefore indicated.

Gaṅgā (Plate LXXXI**Tb,c**)

Although Gaṅgā was almost always considered as a *dvāra-devatā*, a separate cult emerged in Pāla Bengal¹⁸⁷. Two images from Arakan are said to represent the goddess, neither, however, completely conforming to the known *dhyanas*. U Oo Tha Tun, however, says that the goddess Gaṅgā is one of the Hindu Nats worshipped in Arakan, accompanied by two minor river divinities, Bhagiratī^(sic) Nat and Yamunā Nat. "

¹⁸⁶ K.D.Banerjea *ibid*, noted that the earliest Sūrya image in South India can be placed only in the 7th century.

¹⁸⁷ A.K.Maitra "The River Goddess Gaṅgā" *Rupam* Vol.6, 1921 pp.2-10

(1) Gaṅgā ? (Plate LXXXIIb)

Mrohaung Museum, "from Wethali".

sandstone (?) H.c.O.4m.

The goddess stands erect on a plain rounded pedestal with an illegible inscription on the front; she is four-armed, the upper pair broken at the elbow, the lower hands resting on the heads of two chubby figures reaching to her knees, similar to the *āyudhapuruṣas* of the early Vāsudeva images but without any distinguishing characteristics. She has her hair drawn back into a pointed chignon held by a wide decorated band, from which a long veil falls behind, long plain upper and lower bracelets and armlets, long earrings, a double-stranded necklace, an *udarabandha*, a wide belt decorated with a floral pattern, and a *yajñopavita* (sic) over her left shoulder. Her lower garments comprise a *longyi* wound twice around the body and folded in front, and a scarf draped in front and hanging from either side. The drapery, although stiff, is not stylized; the head, 1/5th the height of the body and the arched reredos with a foliate pattern behind all connect this image with the Buddha and Viṣṇu images in the Mrohaung Museum. (Plates LXVIIb and LXXIXa).

(2) Gaṅgā from Yakkha-taung (Plate LXXXIIc)

Stone, H. unrecorded.

ASB 1958-9; Arch Neg 8119 (1958-9)

An almost identical image, finely executed, but recently repaired; the two upper hands are raised in *abhaya mudrā* but may be newly added; the main figure stands on a double-lotus pedestal, from under which a stalk rises from either side to support smaller but similar pedestals for the smaller figures, each of which has a round nimbus behind, the inner arm raised and the inner leg slightly bent.

Dhvaja-stambhas (see also p. 316)

Two sculptures adopt an individual iconographic form derived from Gupta prototypes and connected with the Mon art of Dvāravatī, but unparalleled elsewhere. Conceived in the round, they were originally placed on a column, suggesting that they may have been the focus of a circumambulation ritual.

(1) Image from Mindra-byin (Plate LXXXIII)

Mrohaung Museum

Sandstone, extant H. 0.45m; broken below the waist of the central figure and badly damaged on the obverse.

Found at the village of Mindra-byin, between Mrohaung and Lemro, the sculpture is contained within an oval slab, broken below and carved on both sides. The obverse has a male figure standing in *tribhāṅga* pose; the right hand, raised to shoulder height carries a (slightly bent ?) oval object on a straight stalk, while the left curves downward to the thigh. There is evidence of a high headdress, and the usual royal ornaments and garments are worn: long earrings, necklace, upper and lower armbands and *udarabandha*, a girdle with traces of a knot in front, and a scarf tied round the hips and looped at the right in characteristic Gupta fashion. Gupta influence is also seen in the rows of tight ringlets behind the headdress, the prominent *trivali* marks around the neck, and in the soft modelling of the flesh. The figure is contained within a sixteen spoked oval (?) wheel with a plain rim encompassing the entire backslab. The reverse has the other side of the wheel; rendered in identical fashion, but in place of the figure the hub has an oval beaded border, from within which a lotus rhizome is seen to emerge, extruding to the top of the sculpture. The costume and quality of the carving may indicate a date in the 6th century.

(2) Image from Shwe-daung-gyi (Plate LXXXIV)

Sandstone, H.O.69m.

Now with U San Tha Hla at Wethali.

U San Tha Hla discovered this image at Shwe-daung-gyi in 1974

and had repaired and painted it before our visit in April 1975.

While most of the obverse is original, the upper part of the reverse has been carefully reconstructed and the figure itself has been crudely painted in black and yellow, partly obscuring some original detail. He stands in an awkward *tribhanga* pose, left hand on left hip, both feet pointing right; the right hand is raised to shoulder level, and carries a round object on a stalk, similar to that of the previous image. The body is short and chubby and the happy

expression now overpainted in the round face gives it a very

jolly impression. The hair is worn in the traditional Arakanese fashion, wound around the head in a series of diminishing coils;

this may be the result of restoration, but a similar style is

noticed in the Kyauktaw relief of Buddha preaching to a royal

personage. Great pains have been taken to render the naked torso,

the chest and stomach being carefully but crudely contoured. A

short skirt falls from the hips to the knee, gathered and tied in

front and draped to show the form of the legs beneath. The backslab

is again conceived as a wheel, with sixteen spokes contained

within a plain border. Behind, a repeated abstract design rises

from the base. The lower portion of the base itself is square in

cross-section, with a rounded moulding in front, and a row of

globules suggesting a stylized lotus throne behind. The transition

to the upper base is achieved by a series of square mouldings

which give rise to a platform, square in cross-section, with an

abstract leaf-like shape rising from each corner. Between these

emerges the high, cylindrical platform for the image in front, and the leaf design at the back. Too narrow to support the weight of the image proper, the shape of the base indicates that it was mounted on a pillar.

The posture of the figure, the wheel reredos and vegetation-ornamented reverse show a direct continuation of the iconography of the previous image. The treatment of the figure and the unusual base show that the sculptor had little or no contact with contemporary trends in Indian art, and the development of a purely local style is apparent. We may therefore place the image after the fall of Anandacandra^{perhaps} to around the end of the 8th century and the establishment of the last dynasty at Veśālī.

The stance of the figure atop the *stambhas* is that of a *cakravartin* raising his hand to the clouds from which wealth (often in the form of a shower of gold coins, but originally water to ensure plentiful crops) was thought to fall. He is depicted thus in early Āndhra relief sculptures¹⁸⁷ and later on Gupta *dhvaja-stambhas* of the 4th and 5th centuries¹⁸⁸, where addorsed figures with a surmounting *cakra* were placed on a square base upon a pillar.

¹⁸⁷ See A.K.Coomaraswamy, *Elements of Buddhist Iconography* (New Delhi reprint of 1935 ed.) pl.V, fig 19 (Jaggayyapeta, 2nd century B.C.; fig 20 (Amaravati, c. 200 A.D. and text opposite, and his "A Royal Gesture and Some Other Motifs" *Feestbundel K.Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* I, 1929.

¹⁸⁸ The identity of these figures is still a matter of conjecture. Considering the present evidence they must be closely connected with the concept of the *cakravartin*, cf. J.C.Harle, *Gupta Sculpture* (Oxford 1974) pp.38,40 and pls. 23 & 24; Stella Kramrisch *Indian Sculpture*, pl.45; P.K.Agrawala "A note on the so-called Sūrya statue from Pawaya" *Bull. of Ancient Indian History and Archaeology* No.11 (1968); Joanna Williams "The Sculpture of Mandasor" *Archives of Asian Art* XXVI (1972-3), p.52

The object held in the hand by both figures in the Arakan sculptures can be tentatively identified as Indra's *vajra*. An identical form is carried by Indra in Ajanta cave paintings¹⁸⁹. The figures, therefore, very probably represent Indra, with whom the king was closely identified as *cakravartin*.

The combination of the anthropomorphic symbol of the divine king with the burgeoning lotus, symbol of water, contained within the solar wheel of the *cakravartin*, and a square base mounted on a column, represents, like the so-called Aśokan pillars, the Indo-Aryan concept of the cyclic course of universal life, and ultimately derives from Vedic literature. After Indra had slain the demon Vṛtra, thus releasing the waters, he separated heaven and earth by erecting the great Stay, or pillar, creating space, and the sun arose for the first time, creating Time. Indra thus became the divine King, setting in motion the cosmic cycle which made order out of Chaos. Creation was thus seen as a daily occurrence, for, as the sun's path was prepared by the cosmic Stay, or pillar separating heaven and earth, it was exactly at midday that the sun united with the summit of the pillar. It was at this moment that the sun, through the pillar, interacted with the waters to produce life on earth. By the same logic, every earthly king ruled by divine right of Indra, who was the supreme source of Dharma, the eternal cosmic law¹⁹⁰.

189 R.S.Gupta and B.D.Mahajan, *Ajanta Ellora and Aurangabad Caves* (Bombay 1962) pl.H, Ajanta Cave No.17 "Indra flying down to earth to put Vishvantara to the test".

190 I am extremely grateful to John Irwin of the Victoria and Albert Museum for explaining this, his theory, to me and giving me access to his unpublished work on the subject. He, in turn, is dependent on the current work of Professor Kuiper on the Vedic conception of creation and cosmology, published in the *Indo-Iranian Journal*. Irwin's articles on the "Aśokan" Pillars are being published in the *Burlington Magazine* Vol CXV (Nov 1973) pp. 706-20, CXVI (Dec 1974) pp.712-27, Vol CXVII (Oct 1975) pp.631-40. Pt. IV is to appear late in 1976.

The creation cycle is central to the Rājasūya, the royal coronation ceremony¹⁹¹. To fulfil his duty and to ensure rain, fertility and abundance in his kingdom, it was incumbent on the ruler to ritually reenact Indra's archetypal act of slaying the demon and erecting the cosmic pillar.

The basic symbolism of the great Stay is encountered in many pillars, free-standing and in relief, throughout the history of Indian art. Irwin has shown how the "Aśokan" pillars, chosen by the emperor to propagate his own *dharma*, illustrate the function of the Cakravartin king. Hence, in the Sarnath pillar, the surmounting rayed *cakra* represents the sun alighting on the Stay, and the wheel of the Cakravartin king himself. The four lions, royal animals *par excellence*, are placed facing the four directions, the four cardinal points created when the great Stay separated heaven and earth. Similarly, the lotus capital recalls the waters with which the sun must react. The aspirations of the imperial Guptas led to the reuse of "Aśokan" pillars and the creation of a new but archaistic type¹⁹². The Eran Budhagupta pillar, for instance, retains the rayed *cakra* above and the lotus capital, but introduces a pair of addorsed anthropomorphic *cakravartin* figures below the wheel, the motif borrowed from Āndhra sculpture. Below the figures is a square platform, embossed at each corner with addorsed lions facing the four quarters. The pillar's inscription records that this is a *dhvaja-stambha* of the god Viṣṇu indicating the incorporation of ancient elements by the more recent cult. The addorsed figures, do not, however, necessarily represent Viṣṇu. The banner or flag for which the pillar

¹⁹¹ see J.J.Heesterman, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration* (The Hague 1957)

¹⁹² J.Williams, "A Recent Aśokan Capital and Gupta attitudes towards the past" *AA* XXXV, 3 (1973), pp.225ff.

was erected was Indra's banner, traditionally regarded as having been presented to the gods by Viṣṇu, the lord of Śrī, and believed to be "a source of vigour, which drives away all evil powers"¹⁹³. Its erection, in a royal ceremony, was thought to ensure that the population would be free from danger and have an abundance of food, when the rains fell at the proper time.

This then is the prototype for the *dhvaja-stambha* at Veśālī, with their *cakravartin* figures set within the wheel of the rayed sun. The square base of the Eran pillar is found again in the later *stambha* capital from Shwe-daung-gyi (the earlier base, unfortunately, is lost). The corners of this base are accentuated by a leaf motif, probably symbolizing fertility throughout the land ensured by the *cakravartin* king. But the original concept is more explicit than the Hindu Gupta *dhvaja-stambha*. At Veśālī, the *ur-king* stands

triumphantly in the middle of the composition wielding his *vajra* and calls on the clouds to bring forth rain; the sun at the zenith unites with water, symbolized by the lotus capital, to produce life, illustrated by the lotus rhizome or leaves emerging behind.

¹⁹³ Gonda, *Ancient Indian Kingship*...XII, pp.26-29

were part of a shrine complex. Aśokan ideals of Cakravartin kingship as preserved in the Buddhist literature written soon after his death, became the model for later Buddhist kingship in India, Ceylon and Southeast Asia¹⁹⁵. Thus the status of Indra as king of the gods and the macrocosmic counterpart of the earthly king was retained in Buddhist countries even though, in competition with Viṣṇu and Śiva his importance waned in India itself. In some rural communities in India, however, the Indradhvaja is still erected at the time of the monsoons to ensure fertility and water for the coming season¹⁹⁶. In the Buddhist countries of Southeast Asia, Indra, King of the gods, is thought to descend to earth once a year, and after proper ceremony cause the monsoon

¹⁹⁵ Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Background to the Burmese Revolution* (The Hague 1965) pp.33ff; J.Przyluski, *La légende de l'empereur Aśoka* (Paris 1923) pp.VII, 9, 59, 67, 110, 167.

¹⁹⁶ cf. J.J.Meyer, *Trilogie*, III *passim*

rains to fall at the appropriate time¹⁹⁷. The Burmese *Thingyan* festival was also the time of the washing of the king's head, which would appear to signify an annual repetition of the *abhiṣeka* ceremony of the royal consecration installing the king as Indra's representative on earth¹⁹⁸.

The *Suvarṇabhāṣottamasūtra*, a text which, we have seen, was followed by the ancient Arakanese kings in erecting royal shrines, states that the Turner of the Wheel of the Supreme Law (i.e. the Cakravartin) is entitled to raise the great banner of the Law, and causes the supreme great rain of the Law to fall¹⁹⁹. This then is the significance of the Arakan *dhvaja-stambha*, and will be discussed in the context of the Cakravartin *abhiṣeka* ritual below.

¹⁹⁷ Bernot, *Les paysans Arakanais...*, pp.183-7 gives a fairly complete bibliography on the subject. Dr. Loofs has drawn my attention to the relief depicting Indra and his rain falling over the heavens (= *hansa* frieze) and the earth to mark the end of the dry season on the *fronton* on the east facade of the north library at Banteay Srei, Angkor (976 A.D.). See G. de Coral-Remusat, *L'Art Khmer, Les Grandes Étapes de son Évolution* Etudes d'Art et d'ethnologie Asiatiques (Paris 1951) pl.XVII.

¹⁹⁸ cf. Shwe Yoe, *The Burman, His Life and Notions* (London 1910 ed.) pp.353, and U Thaung "Burmese Kingship in Theory and Practice during the Reign of Mindon" *JBRS* XLII (Dec 1959) p.172, where according to the *Myanma Min Okechokpon Sadan*, King Mindon was oiled daily rather than bathed, royal ablutions being reserved for occasions like the *Thingyan* festival. The king's hair was always dressed by the chief queen, and after her death the king combed his own hair. The custom of the royal ablution was also incorporated into Buddhist ritual. On the first day of the *Thingyan* festival the holy images and monasteries are ceremonially washed, while on the following days the elderly people observe the eight and ten precepts while the young throw water at each other. See San Shwe Bu's note on Collis' trans. of a 16th century Arakanese poem, *JBRS* XIII (1923) pp.221-3 and 224-31. For the practice at Mahāmuni, see Forchhammer, *Arakan* p.8

¹⁹⁹ VI, Emmerick's trans. p.36

Miscellaneous Images

Broken slab with female figure (? Gaṅga). Now on Nibusa-taung near Mrohaung, recently brought from Wethali. (Plate LXXXVa)

Red sandstone, H. 0.75m, Base 0.5m, Depth 0.25m.

Face broken, hands and *cāmara* repaired.

Apparently originally from the right-hand portion of a larger sculpture, the lady, standing in an exaggerated *tribhanga* pose, holds in her left hand a *cāmara* which passes behind the head while the right hand hangs down. She wears a high chignon, held with two bands, long earrings, upper arm bands and anklets; her skirt, once supported by an ornate belt, clings tightly to her legs and flares slightly above the ankles.

A round pilaster in the corner of her niche is identical to those found in Cave VI at Ajaṇṭā.²⁰⁰

Female figure from Wuntitaung (Plate LXXXVIa)

Sandstone, H.0.45m.

Mrohaung Museum.

Perhaps Forchhammer p. 38 "Appears to represent Buddha sitting cross-legged, right hand over left knee, left resting on lap."

ASB 1941, Pl.1 and p.12; Arch Neg 4352 (1940-41)

The upper layers of the stone have almost completely flaked away, leaving no fine details. The figure sits, right leg crossed over the left, left arm resting on the knee and right broken at the elbow, wearing a high, three-tiered *jāṭamākuta* and long earrings. Behind her head is a circular nimbus, backed by an aureole repeating its shape and continuing by the side of the body, in the manner of some of the Mahāmuni sculptures.

²⁰⁰ M.Benisti, *Rapports entre le premier art Khmer et l'art Indien* (Paris 1970) pls. 32, 39, 154 and 155

? Female figure (Plate LXXXVIb)

Red sandstone; H.O.57m.; in U San Tha Hla's shed, from Shwèdaung-gyi. Standing on a plain pedestal and with an unornamented backslab, the figure stands erect, feet pointing forward. The entire sculpture has been recently painted, and the portion between the neck and the feet entirely reconstructed in the form of an Arakanese lady in formal attire. The arrangement of her *jaṭamakuta*, however, is interesting in that it corresponds exactly with that of the pre-Khmer figure of Śiva from Nôj Īm²⁰¹, dated in the first half of the 7th century. At the base of the headdress is a three-pointed crown.

Male figure from Anbaung village (Plate LXXXVIc)

ASB 1920-21, p.19

Now at Mrohaung Museum

Duroiselle described the figure as "some high personage, for the elaborate *makuta* or crest is well-preserved; but the face is gone; the left ear is ornamented with a very large earring. The left arm is broken near the elbow; the dress falls in graceful folds along the left side. The right arm is pretty well preserved, but for the hand.... brought onto the thigh and, spreading out, is placed onto the private parts. This image does not seem to belong to the Hindu-Buddhist pantheon... it recalls the few erotic sculptures which were found at Mrohaung."

Now the image has been completely "restored" with a thick coat of plaster, only enough of the original shape remaining to allow us to identify it. Another sculpture in the same unusual position is an 8th century Buddhist *caturmmukha* from Bodh Gaya²⁰².

²⁰¹ A.D.M.II, pp.208-9 and Pl. LXXXVI.

²⁰² I.M. No.N.S.6; R.D.Banerji, *Eastern Indian School of Medieval Sculpture* (Delhi 1933) pl.LXXXVIIIId.

Miscellaneous Antiquities and Minor Arts

Abhiṣeka plaque and lustration vessel (Pl. Lxxxvii)

Mrohaung Museum, "from a ruined *stūpa* (?) at Wethali."

Steatite plaque, 0.17m x 0.17m x 0.12m in depth.

Round-based bronze vessel, three bands around neck, H.c. 0.17m, with detachable lid, H.c. 0.13m.

This square plaque has a round indentation, 0.055m. in diameter, in the centre, surrounded by two concentric bands enclosing 43 lotus petals. Another band encloses twelve auspicious symbols, namely a *śrīvatsa* diagram, a pair of fishes, a vase of abundance, an umbrella, an elephant goad, a bull, a *dhvaja-stambha*, a conch shell, a goose, a pair of fly whisks, a peacock and a deer. The corners are filled with lotus buds and leaves, the whole being surrounded by a beaded border. A bronze pot with a separate lid, whose rounded base fits precisely into the indentation, was found together with the plaque.

One is immediately reminded of the Dvāravatī plaques described by Boeles²⁰³, who suggested that the figures on the plaques represented the royal regalia, the plaques as a whole being a *maṇḍala* representing the king as the centre of the universe. He also implied that the motifs on the Dvāravatī medallions were connected with this symbolism. In Arakan, too, certain of the plaque symbols are to be found on the early coins, and also on coins from other parts of Burma and Thailand. Although the Arakan and Dvāravatī plaques have at least eleven common symbols, their composition is somewhat different. The Thai examples are both square and rectangular, attempting a symmetrical design on either side, whilst in the Veśālī plaque the design radiates from the lotus, a common feature

²⁰³ "The King of Śrī Dvāravātī and his regalia" *JSS* Vol 41, pt.1, pp. 99-110

in Indian art.

While van Lohuizen-de-Leeuw identified the Dvāravatī plaques as "toilet trays"²⁰⁴, I would suggest that their function was connected with court ritual, possibly with the *abhiṣeka* ceremony of the coronation itself. The indentations in the centre are too shallow to hold powder effectively, and the material used is usually too porous to hold oils²⁰⁵. However, they could well have supported round-based vessels of the type illustrated, and as such, have been used for ritual aspersion.

It will be shown that the symbolism and function of the plaques and bronze vessel are directly connected with the *cakravartin* concept and its dual orientation - mundane and supra-mundane²⁰⁶. The king, seen as a god on earth, was given divine attributes and functions through his *abhiṣeka* ceremonies and his regalia. After these ceremonies, the *cakravartin*, or "world ruler" was believed to be the centre not only of the kingdom, but also of the universe, his regalia reinforcing the function of protector of the people and guarantor of their prosperity, enabling him to harness the forces of nature for their benefit. From the evidence we have, we may regard the nature of the *abhiṣeka* ceremonies in ancient Arakan as lying

²⁰⁴ *ibid*, p.114

²⁰⁵ The Wethali plaque is made from a porous white sandstone, known in Burmese as *andagu*, usually translated as dolomite, but probably steatite; the Dvāravatī plaques are made from dark-green clayey sandstone and clay.

²⁰⁶ The nature and evolution of the *cakravartin* concept is well-known, see *inter alia*, J.Auboyer, *Le trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde ancienne* (Paris 1949); G.Coedès, *Le culte de royauté divinisé* (Serie Orientale Roma, V, 1952); J.Gonda, "Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View" *Numen* III & IV (1956-7); R.Heine-Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca 1956); P.Mus, *L'Inde vue de l'est; cultes indiens et indigenes au Champa* (Hanoi 1934) E.Sarkisyanz, *op cit*.

somewhere between the Brahmanic *abhiṣeka* of the *rājasūya* ritual, and the *pūrṇābhiṣeka* of Mahāyāna Buddhism. The earliest description of an Arakanese coronation ceremony, that of Datharāja (fl. ? 1153-1165 A.D.) shows that the injunctions of the *Śatapatha Brahmana* were only changed with regard to the divergencies of the Arakanese Buddhist society from the Hindu class system²⁰⁷. The traditional series of ritual aspersions continued to play an important part. The west face of the Shitthaung pillar inscription (v.47) recounts that at least by the late 7th century the king was considered to be a Bodhisattva. Paul Mus has admirably shown how Brahmanical ritual was absorbed into legends of the life of the Buddha as he came to be seen as a *cakravartin*²⁰⁸. Buddhist kingship in Southeast and East Asia, inheriting both the Brahmanical and Brahmanically derived traditions of royal aspersion, evolved its own ritual. While texts dealing with this ritual do not seem to have survived, later esoteric texts dealing with *cakravartin* and Bodhisattva consecration describe what can only be a direct development from this tradition²⁰⁹. Von Glasenapp's comparative study of ritual devotions established a considerable correspondence between the Indian *pūrṇābhiṣeka*, the Javanese consecration of a *cakravartin* and the *Hevajraśīta* of East Asia undergone by Khubilai Khagan²¹⁰. The common feature of these is a *maṇḍala* arrangement of symbols, either two or three dimensional, arranged around a product figure, i.e. a figure produced by the union of the properties of the symbols. The product figure is often a *kumbha*

²⁰⁷ cf. *Śat.Br* V.3-5,3 and San Shwe Bu "The Coronation of King Datharaja" *JBRSL* 3 (1923) pp.181-84. This episode is apparently recounted from a late chronicle, and the dates of Datharāja can only be regarded as approximate.

²⁰⁸ *BEFEO* Vol XXXIII (1933), pp.822ff.

²⁰⁹ cf P.H.Pott, *Yoga and Yantra* (The Hague 1966) pp.62ff.

²¹⁰ "Ein Initiations-Ritus in buddhistischen Java" *OLZ* 1936, pp.483-89, 1938 pp.201-4; *Buddhistische Mysterien; die geheimen Lehren u.Riten des Diamant-Fahrzeugs* (Stuttgart 1940)

filled with water then used for the *abhiṣeka*²¹¹.

The number of symbols is also significant in this context. In ancient India, the number twelve was considered to be a symbol of the reestablishment of the king's *dharma* and his capacity to bring rain to his land²¹².

By analogy we should regard the qualities symbolized by the twelve figures on the Veśālī plaque as being incorporated into the waters contained in the central *kumbha* during the consecration ceremony. When the king was anointed with these waters, we may assume that he was believed to have acquired the qualities inherent in the symbols to ensure his attainment of *dharma* necessary for the well-being of his country. The symbols then must be regarded in the context of the king as a Bodhisattva, a *cakravartin*, and mediator between heaven and earth. All belong to the repertoire of auspicious signs and objects associated with divinity, but their significance differs with the context. A digression on the individual significance of each is necessary to appreciate their function in the ancient Arakanese consecration.

Pūrṇa Kalaśa

The significance of the *pūrṇa-kalaśa* (*kumbha*, *ghaṭa*) in Southeast Asian art is quite familiar²¹³. To quote Coomaraswamy, "The vase of

²¹¹ Pott, *op cit* pp.63,65,69,73

²¹² J.W.Spellman, "The Symbolic Significance of the Number Twelve in Ancient India" *Journal of Asian Studies* Vol XXII (1962-3), pp.79-88

²¹³ see S.Al-George and A.Rosu "Pūrṇa Ghaṭa et le symbolisme du Vase dans l'Inde", *Arts Asiatiques* (1957) pp.243-254; J.J.Boeles, *op cit* pp.103-5; Coomaraswamy, *Yakṣas* (New Delhi 1971) pt.II, pp.61ff; K.Gairola, "Evolution du pūrṇa-ghaṭa (vase d'abondance) dans l'Inde et l'Inde exterieure" *Arts Asiatiques* I,3 (1954), pp.200-226.

plenty...is clearly a life symbol, and the formal offering of such a vase can only be the expression of the wish that the recipient, or in general those present, may enjoy health, wealth and long life. The representation in art implies that similarly a desired instigation by suggestion of all the vegetative energies involved in the current conceptions of well-being; as a symbol it clearly belongs to the order of ideas characteristic of the ancient life cults of fertility and fruitfulness."²¹⁴ Garlands spill from either side, and a rounded object rises from within, reflecting the idea that wish-granting trees (*kalpatarus*) grow out of the *kalaśa* placed on the *yantra* in the *cakravartin abhiṣeka* festival²¹⁵: the king, when anointed with the waters from the *kalaśa*, would have the power to grant the wishes of the people (for fertility, prosperity etc). The *kalaśa* on the plaque repeats the shape of the lustration vessel found together with it, round-based and with three bands²¹⁶ around the neck, which widens at the mouth.

Chattra

The umbrella as a symbol of royal power is well-known from early an-iconic Buddhist art onwards. On the plaque it has a thick handle tapering towards the lower end, and a small shade surmounted by a square knob, and is decorated with streamers flying from either side.

²¹⁴ Coomaraswamy, *op cit*, pp.62-63

²¹⁵ P.H.Pott, *Yoga and Yantra: their interrelation and their significance for Indian archaeology* (The Hague 1966) pp.63-4; for wishing trees associated with the Burmese Buddhist Cakkavatī ruler, see E.Sarkisyanz, *Buddhist Background to the Burmese Revolution* (The Hague 1965) pp.88-89.

²¹⁶ Serving the purpose of a magical fence, Coomaraswamy, *op cit*, p.62

Penzer regards the umbrella as symbolising the firmament, through its shape, and referred to Harṣa's policy of bringing all India under his umbrella²¹⁷. In Kalidāsa's time, the umbrella was seen as the symbol of the regalia *par excellence*. No other white umbrella should be raised on the earth conquered by a *cakravartin*²¹⁸; defeated kings were deprived of their umbrellas²¹⁹; it appeared as an auspicious mark on the feet of a *cakravartin*²²⁰. In Southeast Asia the umbrella was sometimes thought to be the seat of a protective genius who favoured the king with his advice and in critical moments intervened on behalf of the dynasty²²¹. In the royal regalia, it no doubt symbolized the royal dominion and the protective function of the king.

Aṅkuśa

The elephant goad restrains the animal synonymous with terrestrial kingship and power, the vehicle of Indra, associated with the coming of the rains. Here, it is decorated with streamers, like the *aṅkuśas* carried in royal processions depicted in the reliefs on Angkor and Borobudur. The *aṅkuśa* appears among the attributes of many later Hindu and Buddhist divinities, notably the *Aṅkuśa Tārā* from Central Java, one of the "commanding Tārās"²²². It is also one of the auspicious marks said to appear on the king's hand in the *Mahābhārata* (V.124.13). The Deccani ruler Viṣṇuvardhana III (fl.719-55 A.D.) was described by the title *Tribhuvāṇaṅkuśa* "elephant goad of the three worlds"²²³.

²¹⁷ *The Ocean of Story*, being C.H.Tawney's translation of Somaśeṇa's *Kathā Sarit Sāgara*, ed. by N.M.Penzer (Delhi 1968) Vol.II, pp.263-72

²¹⁸ *Raghuvamśa* IX. 15

²¹⁹ *ibid* IV. 85

²²⁰ *ibid* IV.88

²²¹ Heine-Geldern, *op cit* p.10

²²² F.D.K.Bosch, *Studies in Indonesian Art and Archaeology* (The Hague 1961) pl.IVd.

²²³ G.Yazdani, *The Early History of the Deccan* (Oxford 1960) p.474

The Bull

The humped bull, royal insignia of the Candara dynasty and depicted on the main series of coins, is represented on the plaque seated on a pedestal, indicating that he was worshipped in that position. That the symbol does not necessarily denote the Śaivite predilections of the dynasty has been discussed above. The importance of the bull in royal ritual has its origins in the Vedic *rājasūya* ceremonies, where the *dakṣiṇa* in the offering to Indra, king of the gods, was a bull²²⁴. The king was believed to symbolically absorb the *ratnas* (members of the royal household and bearers of the royal treasures, cf the *sapta-ratnas* of later Indian kingship) and their cosmo-mythological correspondents, the gods to whom the sacrifice is offered, thus becoming possessed of the vital force demanded by his function. The *Arthaśāstra* (I,19) recommended that the king was to circumambulate a cow, calf and bull daily²²⁵. Among the eighty minor marks (*anuvyañjana*) which distinguish the Buddha as a *cakravartin* we find *Vṛṣabhavikrāntagatiḥ* "he has the heroic bearing of a bull"²²⁶. In old Siam, the king annually circumambulated a sacred bull nine times, in a ceremony known as *Chavian Braḥ Go Kin*. We suggest that a similar ceremony, believed to enhance the *dharma* of the king, was performed in ancient Arakan²²⁷.

²²⁴ J.C.Heesterman, *op cit*, pp.49-53 and chart.

²²⁵ cf. *Yajñavalkya Smṛti* i, 326ff. According to the *Raghuvaṃśa* circumambulation of a cow and calf was believed to strengthen the invincibility of a king. The cow and calf motif is the symbol on the reverse of the Dvāravatī medallion illustrated but not identified by Boeles (*op cit*). The belief may also have its origin in the *rājasūya* ritual, where in the *maitrabārhaspatya* concerned with the safeguarding of the royal embryo in the womb, the *dakṣiṇa* is a white cow feeding a calf. (Heesterman, *op cit* pp.58-62)

²²⁶ Burnouf, *Le Lotus de Bonne Loi* (Paris 1925) Vol.II, App.VIII

²²⁷ H.Quaritch Wales, *Siamese State Ceremonies* (London 1931) p.295

Dhvaja-stambha

This symbol is depicted as a pole or pillar, on a round base, decorated around the circumference above the centre of the shaft, widening towards the square capital from which banners fall to either side. The shaft is crowned by a hollow, rounded construction. The pillar represents a *dhvaja-stambha* of the kind found at Mindrabayin and Wethali, erected by the *cakravartin* to ensure the coming of the monsoons and thereby guarantee the fertility and prosperity of the country. The *Mahāvamsa* (XI. 30-31) mentions a banner (*kumārikā*)²²⁸ among the list of auspicious objects sent by Aśoka to Devanaṃpiya Tissa on the occasion of his second *abhiṣeka*. The first in Ceylon in which the northern Indian form of a Buddhist *cakravartin* consecration was performed.²²⁹ The *Mahābhārata* (V. 124.13) and the *Raghuvamśa* (IV. 88) list banners among auspicious marks on a king's hands and feet.

²²⁸ E.H. Johnston, "Notes on some Pali words" *JRAS* 1931, pp. 589-90.

²²⁹ *Vamsatthappakāsenī*, commentary on the *Mahāvamsa*, P.T.S. ed. Vol. i, p. 306; S. Paranavitana "Two Royal Titles of the Early Sinhalese, and the Origin of Kingship in Ancient Ceylon" *JRAS* (1936) pp. 443-462.

Śaṅkha

The conch shell is prized for its shape, particularly when the central crevice is turned to the right; it was among the gifts sent by Aśoka to Devānampiyatissa on the occasion of his *punnābhiseka*²³⁰. In the *Viṣṇudharmottara* (III, 52) Varuṇa's conch is said to represent riches. The conch became associated with Kuvera, giver of riches and granter of wishes. In Southeast Asia, it was used in ritual as a trumpet, or as a vessel for lustral water. The winged conch of the Veśālī plaque is rare, but first appears at the Jaina *stūpa* at Mathurā, where it exudes coins or pearls, suggesting wealth from water. In Java, it becomes more intimately associated with the king. A winged *śaṅkha* standard carried in royal processions is depicted on the Borobudur reliefs, and the portrait statue of King Airlangga as Viṣṇu holds a winged conch. The conch exuding vegetation was depicted on the oldest coins of Arakan, dating around the middle of the 5th century, and on contemporary and later coins from the Mon and Pyu kingdoms. The *Suvarṇabhāṣasūtra* states that the *cakravartin* is entitled to blow the Supreme Conch of the Law, immediately before the passage concerning the raising of the banner of the Law, quoted above.

Haṁsa

The wild goose (*anser Indicus*), a water bird traditionally supposed to feed on lotuses, is associated with the monsoon rains, which its flight north to the Himalayas heralds, and is intimately

²³⁰ *Mahāvamsa* XI. 27-36. Apparently traditionally the first consecration of a Buddhist king in Ceylon according to the Northern Indian *cakravartin* ritual, as the list of gifts corresponds approximately with the articles required for the *rājasūya* according to the *Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*.

associated with Indra²³¹. In the later *Upaniṣads* and in Tibetan ritual, it is seen as *Jīvātman*, the soul or the spirit, typified by the pure white colour of the goose, and migratory like a goose²³². Rowland saw the *haṁsa* in the early moonstones of Ceylon as representing the 5th direction, the earth-heaven axis²³³. The *haṁsa* is usually represented carrying flowers or jewels in his beak, which may be connected with the idea that offerings to the king and deceased progenitors were eaten by birds and thus taken to heaven²³⁴. In the *Ja Haṁsa* state ritual of the Siamese kings, the *haṁsa* is seen as a vehicle between earth and Mt. Kailāśa, the abode of the gods²³⁵. In the context of the plaque, the *haṁsa* should therefore represent communication between earth and heaven, the main function of the king. Indeed in the *Raghuvamśa* (XVII, 78) the king himself is described as the 5th direction.

The Pair of Fly Whisks

The fly whisks carried by king's attendants were placed around *caityas* as early as the 5th century B.C.²³⁶. By the time of Kālidāśa, a pair of fly whisks (*cāmara*) was together with the umbrella, the most important part of the regalia,²³⁷ from which the king could not be separated. The *Mānasāra* (XLIII. 46-47) explicitly states that "all kings, beginning from the Cakravartin, without exception should especially possess the two chowries (*cāmara*) and the white umbrella".

²³¹ cf. J.Ph.Vogel "The Goose in Indian Art and Literature" *Indian Art and Letters* Vol.27 (1953) pp.17-27

²³² cf. P.Mus, "Barabadur" *BEFEO* XXXIV 1935, p.207

²³³ *The Art and Architecture of India* (Penguin 1967 ed.)p.220 and n.20

²³⁴ Gonda *op cit* p.47

²³⁵ H.G. Quaritch Wales, *op cit* p. 254

²³⁶ *Aupapātikasūtra*, sūtra 2, in U.P.Shah, "Beginnings of the Super-structure of Indian Temples" *Studies in Indian Architecture*, p.81

²³⁷ *Raghuvamśa* III. 16, XIV.11

The Peacock and the Deer

The juxtaposition of these two unusual symbols would indicate that they may be interpreted together. I would suggest that they represent sun and moon, and emphasise the cosmological implications of the king's *dharma*. Manu (VII, 4ff) states that the king was created from the essential particles of the eight great *devas* (who in later literature, become the guardians of the eight points of the universe), hence, he is the sun and the moon, fire and wind, Yama and Kuvera, Varuṇa and Indra²³⁸. Apart from the *svastika*, cosmological symbols do not appear early in art forms connected with the *cakravartin* concept, such as the Buddhapādas and Jain *āyāgapāṭas*, nor are they specifically obvious in the Dvāravatī plaque²³⁹. The earliest literary evidence may be in the Jain *Kalpasūtra* (II,4) where Queen Devānandā dreams of the sun, moon and other auspicious objects before giving birth to a *cakravartin* king²⁴⁰. In Buddhist literature, the sun and moon first appear as marks on the feet of Buddha as *cakravartin* in the *Mahāpādāna sūtra*²⁴¹. The *Suvarṇabhāṣottama sūtra* specifically states that with the establishment of a Buddhist *cakravartin* king

²³⁸ Gonda, *op cit* VI, 60-61 expands on this.

²³⁹ The peacock fans on the Dvāravatī plaque may have had some solar connotation, or the pair of royal *chattras* may, like the 19th century Burmese regalia, have also represented the sun and moon. cf. R.C.Temple, "Notes on a Collection of Regalia of the Kings of Burma" of the Alompra dynasty" *The Indian Antiquary* Vol.XXXI (Nov 1902) pp.442-444, where a pair of white umbrellas on the right and left of the throne were named after the sun and moon.

²⁴⁰ W.N.Brown, *Miniature Paintings of the Jaina Kalpasūtra* (Washington 1934)

²⁴¹ cf. U Mya's "Buddha's Footprints in Burma" *ASI* (1930-34), pp.320-331

"the seasons, months, half-months and years will all be associated with the proper time. Day and night, planets, asterisms, moon and sun, will all move properly. In due time, *showers of rain will fall on the earth.*"²⁴²

The Veśālī plaque is one of the earliest examples of the peacock as a sun symbol. In India, it has always been seen as a royal bird, and has been considered to be the emblem of the Maurya dynasty. Following the Ceylon Chronicles, the Burmese and Arakanese histories have given the Mauryas a solar origin, from which they trace their own royal lineage. The peacock became the emblem of the Burmese kings in the Konbaung dynasty.

Mrgāṅka, "deer-marked" is one of the names for the moon in Sanskrit literature. In East Bengal, the *biruda* of King Bhavadeva of 7th century Southeast Bengal was *Śrī Abhinavamrgāṅka* "new moon"²⁴³. Following Scythian and Gupta precedents, the Pyu and Arakanese kings included sun and moon symbols on their coins, associated with the *śrīvatsa* and water symbols in a manner suggesting the king's link with the water (and wealth) producing heavens.

Śrīvatsa

The development of the *śrīvatsa* motif and its significance on Southeast Asian coins has been described above. On the plaque, it is placed on a double lotus base, its outline reminiscent of the later Pyu coins, but with no enclosure in the square interior. A later development of this form is found on Buddhapādas at Pagán²⁴⁴. During the royal *abhiṣeka* the goddess Śrī was considered to enter the king

²⁴² Emmerick's trans. pp.28 and 59, etc. my italics

²⁴³ D.C.Sircar "Asiatic Soc Plate of Bhavadeva" *JASB*, Letters, Vol. XVII (1951) pp.83-95. *Bhaṅgala Mrgāṅkasya* "Moon of Bengal" is also inscribed on an imitation Gupta coin of the 7th-8th centuries found at Mainamatī (F.A.Khan, *Mainamati*, Karachi 1963)

²⁴⁴ cf pl. XXXV , figs. 31,32

to ensure the fertility and wealth of the country, hence he is *śrīmant*, "possessed of Śrī"²⁴⁵. The Dvāravatī plaque has, in place of the *śrīvatsa* diagram, the anthropomorphic equivalent Śrī Lakṣmī, being bathed with water by elephants²⁴⁶.

The pair of fishes

The pair of fishes, *mīna-yugala*, obviously connected with the fruitfulness of the waters, first appear on Buddhapādas and Jaina *āyāgapatas* among symbols associated with the Buddha and Mahāvīra as *cakravartin*²⁴⁷. Fish are among the auspicious objects carried by the *devatās* of the Ananda basement, in a procession modelled on the *abhiṣeka* ceremony²⁴⁸.

²⁴⁵ Gonda, *op cit*, pt.VIII, p.131; *Mahābhārata* 1. 171,19,21; *Raghu-vaṃśa* III, 36.

²⁴⁶ Although Śrī and Lakṣmī originally appear to have been independent goddesses, they were truly merged by the Gupta period. Scheftelowitz (ZDMG Vol.75, 1921) has traced this development through the *Śrīsūkta*, a *khilāṇi* to the Kashmir *Sākala* recension of the *R̥gveda*. In the earlier verses, Śrī, the expeller of misfortune (*a-lakṣmī*) is primarily associated with the sun; Lakṣmī, mentioned in verses of a later date, is similarly associated with water. The transition from symbol to icon in Southeast Asia is seen on pre-Angkorian lintels of the 8th century, illustrated by Boisselier "Les linteaux Khmers du VIII^e siècle: Nouvelles données sur le style de Kompong Prah" AA XXX, 2/3 (1968) pp.101-144. The central figure on the earlier types, described by Boisselier as a *padmamūla* is initially a *fleur-de-lis* with a *śrīvatsa* outline (his figs 1-5). The transition to a tripartite shape (a development analagous to the later Pyu and Arakanese coins) can be seen in figs. 11-14. The tripartite form, later identified as a *vajra*, is found in figs.17-19, contemporary with the inclusion of a figure of Lakṣmī within the *śrīvatsa* outline, figs. 15,16. The *makaras* on either side of the *śrīvatsa* seen at figs 19 and 21, reverted, at Dvāravatī, to the elephants of the *Śrī abhiṣeka*.

²⁴⁷ e.g. the *Buddhapādas* from Bodhgayā ASI I, pl.IV; the *āyāgapatas* at the Jain *stūpa* at Mathurā (circa 1st-3rd centuries A.D.) see V.A.Smith *The Jain Stūpa and other Antiquities at Mathura*, ASI New Imperial Series, Vol.XX, 1901.

²⁴⁸ Although Shorto, in his article "The Devatā Plaques of the Ananda Basement" (*Essays Offered to G.H.Luce*, Vol.II, pp.156ff) identified the scenes as the acclamation of the gods at the enlightenment of the Buddha according to the *Nidānakathā*, they correspond precisely with the *Mahāvamsa* (31.75 sq. and 30.74 sq.) description of the gods' homage to the relics to be placed in the Great Thūpa, which, as Geiger has rightly commented in his *Culture of Ceylon* (Wiesbaden 1960) p.177, was depicted after the model of a royal *abhiṣeka* festival. Thus, besides the fishes, the Ananda →

Thus it is clear that the twelve symbols arranged around the central *kumbha* are intimately associated with the establishment of the royal *dharma*, the king's given power to maintain the fertility and prosperity of his country. Although they are placed within a circle, the arrangement can be seen to be symmetrical, which may be significant, as the Dvāravatī plaques also attempted a symmetrical design. Thus the *haṁsa*, representing the fifth direction and the king's earth-heaven link, is placed diagonally opposite the *pūrṇa-kalāśa*, symbol of the products of that link. The pair of *cāmaras*, the king's immediate regalia, are opposite the white umbrella, the regalia item representing his entire domain. The *aṅkuśa* and the bull, denoting the power of the authority of the king to regulate the country, are in contraposition to the symbols of the sun and moon, the regulators of the heavens. The *śrīvatsa*, emblem of the goddess of the earth embodied in the king, is opposite the *dhvaja-stambha*, which denotes the king's relationship with Indra and the heavens, and the pair of fishes, the earthly water symbol, is opposite the winged conch, the water symbol of a triumphant *cakravartin*. It could therefore be inferred that the arrangement suggests the turning of the Wheel of the Law which regulates the forces of heaven and earth to ensure prosperity. The country, moreover, was seen as a microcosm of the universe whose maintenance was likewise ensured by the *dharma* of Indra. The centre of the plaque, the circular indentation on which the *kumbha* filled with lustral water was placed, can be seen to represent Mt. Meru, the axis of the world and the mythical abode of Indra, with whom the king was identified and whose functions he duplicated after the *abhiṣeka* ceremony. The 43 petals

²⁴⁸ (continued)

devatās also carry *śrīvatsas*, *aṅkuśas*, *cāmaras*, *vajras*, banners, *kalāśas* of various sorts, *śaṅkhas* etc. as illustrated on the Veśālī *abhiṣeka* plaque, symbols appropriate for offering either to a god or a god-king.

of the lotus flower around the circular indentation correspond to the 43 triangles around the circular *bindu* of the *Meru śrīcakras*, two-dimensionally constructed cosmic images still worshipped throughout India²⁴⁹. The outer circle enclosing the twelve symbols represents the circular universe which Indra maintained through his *dharma*, the *dharma* which was invested in the Arakanese *cakravartin* king through the power of the twelve symbols absorbed in the lustration waters.

In Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, the whole circular universe was thought to be surrounded by an enormous rock-wall²⁵⁰ represented on the plaque by the right-angled square beaded border, enclosing an ocean with four insular continents, each set in cardinal directions²⁵¹ here symbolized by the lotuses set in each of the four corners. The fifth direction, the earth-heaven axis, was of course, the king.

Returning to the *Dvāravatī* plaque, we find that the same symbolism, though depicted in a cruder fashion, is quite apparent. Boeles' supposition that the regalia symbols represented the *saptaratna* cannot be justified²⁵².

²⁴⁹ A full discussion of these is found in Gopinatha-Rao, *op cit* Vol.I, pt.2, pp.330ff and Pott, *op cit* pp.39ff.

²⁵⁰ Sayadaw Ma U *Parāmita Atakata* (Mandalay, n.d.) p.112, in Sarkisyanz, *op cit* p.82

²⁵¹ Ashin Zanakabhiwantha *Atama can: za Kou can Abhidhamma* (Amarapura 1320 1958) pp.317ff, in Sarkisyanz, *loc cit*.

²⁵² Such is the danger of using similar groups of symbols from different contexts. Boeles' double interpretation of the central lotus as a *cakra* "wheel" and as Mt.Meru may be correct; his identification of the remaining six *ratnas*, viz. Lakṣmī's elephants with *hasti* "elephant"; the yak-tail *cāmaraś* with a *śva* "horse", the *vajras* with *mani* "gem"; Lakṣmī with *śrī* "wife"; *grha* "household chief" with the conch and *pariṇāyaka* "general" with the *aṅkuśa* is tenuous and leaves him with five unexplained symbols.

Where the symbols differ they may still be explained in the context of the *cakravartin* king as upholder of *dharma*: the *vajras* on the Dvāravatī plaques thus represented the king's version of the *vajra* of Indra, the tortoises are water symbols, and the rosaries and peacock fans are regalia. The prominence given to the *kumbha* suggests that it was likewise placed in the central hollow, and the anthropomorphic version of the *abhiṣeka* of Śrī reinforces the idea that the plaques were used in the royal *abhiṣeka* rite. The fineness of detail on the Veśālī plaque and the stricter attention to Indian models, both cosmological and graphic, suggests that it was made for the *abhiṣeka* ritual of one of the Candra kings of Veśālī and could therefore be dated  *earlier than*

the Dvāravatī plaque,  seems stylistically akin to images of the late 7th and early 8th centuries²⁵³.

Architect's Plummet from Mahāmuni (Plate LXXXVIIIa)

now at the Sīma Monastery, Kyauktaw

H. 0.25m, Width 0.03m.

iron coated with bronze.

This object, found at the Mahāmuni temple, is in almost all respects identical to the Gupta architect's plummet now in the British Museum, found in the Surma river in East Bengal and dated in the 6th century, described by Rowlands as "having on the neck of the object... a plaque with a representation of a group of dancing figures reminiscent of the Bacchanalian reliefs of the Kushan period at Mathura. The weight is framed in prongs terminating in lotus buds which recall the pliant decorative plant forms of ornamental Gupta sculpture in stone." The Mahāmuni plummet is broken in parts below the prongs. The group of

²⁵³ cf. e.g. Boisselier, *op cit* pls. 56-58.

figures at the neck in the Bengal specimen is missing, although it may have been broken off, then repaired. The curved prongs are bipartite, the joint surmounted by a miniature *stūpa* or covered *kumbhas*. The prong finials, similar, but more complex in outline, end in the "sprouting lotus rhizome" motif. The craftsmanship of the Mahāmuni plummet is finer, with more attention paid to the minute naturalistic detail. The *stūpas* and absence of a "Bacchanalian relief" may indicate that it was used in Buddhist architecture. The two plummets are so similar that it is not inconceivable that they came from the same workshop²⁵⁴.

Bronze (?) seal (Plate LXXXVIIIb)

Mrohaung Museum, "found at Wethali".

Diameter c. 0.13m.

This is a flat round object, surrounded by eleven hollow triangular projections. The lowest projection is squared to indicate the position of the base when the seal is in use. Within appear to be the Pyu numerals for 504, in reverse;²⁵⁵ a ring is attached at the centre behind. Although locally regarded as the seal of the ancient Arakanese kings, its function is uncertain. It may have been a merchant's seal for branding bales of cotton etc., or even slaves.

Bronze bell (Plate LXXXVIIc)

Monastery collection, Akyab, possibly brought from the Mrohaung district.

H. 0.12m, width at base, 0.14m.

The bell consists of three planes; two rounded half-oval shapes with a flat strip between, the shape reminiscent of Dongson bells. On either side is a ring (for hanging round an animal's neck ?) such as

²⁵⁴ cf. A.K.Coomaraswamy, *Arts and Crafts of India and Ceylon* (Edinburgh 1913) fig 100; *History of Indian and Indonesian Art* (N.Y. reprint of 1927 ed.) pp.86 and 241, pl.XIV fig 169; B.Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India: Buddhist, Hindu, Jain* (Penguin 1967) p.152, pl203a.

²⁵⁵ cf U Mya's chart in ASB 1957-8.

are found on bells at Shih-chai-shan²⁵⁶. The lower portion is decorated on both sides with adjoining rectangles, within which are stalk like shapes, bifurcating at the centre into two inward curving whorls. This motif appears to be Dongsonian, but actually only occurs at Shih-chai-shan, most frequently on the foreheads of ceremonial oxen²⁵⁷. The herring-bone hatching in relief is however, the Dongsonian "cord pattern". This suggests the presence of an early metal-using culture connected with Yunnan and North Vietnam; the evidence at present is too scarce to allow further conjecture.

Bronze lamps with bird motif

Three hanging lamps said to have come from Wethali are distinguished by the use of a bird motif found not only on Indian temple lamps but also on examples from Vietnam²⁵⁸. The bird motif may have some connection with the *hansa* as messenger between heaven and earth, an appropriate symbol for a temple lamp.

Lamp with bird and perforated base (Plate XC1a)

Bronze, Mrohaung Museum

H.O.11m

A bird in flight, now headless, at the apex of this lamp was suspended by a hook over its back, and connected to the centre of the oil-bowl by a pole. There are nine of the usual wick projections

²⁵⁶ *Yün-nan Ch'in-ning Shih-chai-shan ku-mu-chlleh fa-chlleh pao-kao* (Peking 1959) Vol.II, pl. 93, fig.3.

²⁵⁷ *ibid*, cf pls.87 and 58-9; however a similar double-spiral motif appears on the bronze bell of Môt-sôn and on some ornamental plaques of the Dongson culture. See Bézacier *Le Viet-Nam*, pl76 and pl.VII, 2; also pp.135-6, 160

²⁵⁸ cf Coomaraswamy, *Arts and Crafts*...p. 141 and fig. 104; R.F.Bussabarger and B.D.Robins, *The Everyday Art of India* (NY 1963) p.82 Nguyễn Phúc Long, *op cit* figs 228-239 (bronze birds) and 248 (lamp with birds) "Art Hano-viétique, 1st- beginning 10th centuries" Identical birds are also found at each corner of the lid of the bronze casket or incense burner from the Borneo Sambas find, and surmounting a glazed terracotta incense burner from Bing-son, described by Tan Yeok Seong and H.G.Q.Wales, in the *Journal of the Malay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* Vol.XXII, pt.IV (1949) pp. 19-32 and pl.6.

and the base is perforated in a manner resembling eight-legged amoebas within squares. A similar casting technique is found in Tien bronzes, and also in the Sambas incense burner²⁵⁹.

Hanging lamp surrounded by birds in flight (Plate LXXXIX)

Bronze, U Oo Tha Tun's collection, found at Wethali.

This lamp can be seen to be a most successful blending of the early Vietnamese and Gupta styles. Under the hook is a cinquefoil handle, decorated at the upper and outer angles with arabesques reminiscent of those adorning the architect's plummet. Nine rounded triangular projections for wicks issue from the circular oil-bowl, each originally alternating with a bird in flight, with wings outstretched. The base has a wide decorated band perforated with circles. A much cruder lamp, similar in design and conception was found at Lạch trũ ð'ng²⁶⁰. The neck ornament recalls the early *śrīvatsa* design, although this may be purely coincidental.

Four-pointed hanging lamp with one bird (Plate XC)

Bronze, U Oo Tha Tun's collection, found at Veśālī

The cross-section of this lamp resembles a four-pointed star with a bird over one point, the back part of the comb in the form of a loop for suspension. The object is ingeniously weighted, the remaining points, each of which would have held a wick, balancing the bird. The bird itself is hollow, with perforations along the back suggesting wing feathers, stylized in a sophisticated manner. The lamp appears to have been cast using the *cire-perdue* method, possibly in two sections. The design, but not the execution, is comparable to the South Indian hanging lamp illustrated by Bussaberger and Robins.

²⁵⁹ Shih-chai-shan, Report II, pl. 42, fig. 2; Tan Yeck Seong, *loc cit*

²⁶⁰ Nguyễn Phúc Long *op cit* fig 248

Stone bowls and plates

A number of large bowls and plates of greenish-grey igneous (?) stone have been found at Wethali and are now in monastery collections at Akyab and Kyauktaw, notably in the Sīma monastery. The plates are flat, the rim slightly raised, with no decoration save for an incised line around the rim. The bowls are flat-based and the sides are slightly higher. The bowls measure between 0.20 and 0.285m in diameter, and the plates between 0.325 and 0.35m. All have been finely ground on the upper surface in the manner of "Persepolitan polish" still known in the Gupta period²⁶¹ or polished stone tools of the Neolithic.

Traditionally the plates are said to have belonged to the kings of Veśālī. The Sak (Thet) are recorded as having made similar bowls (see above p. 13). We may also compare the cruder "megalithic stone basins (almsbowls) found at Śrīkṣetra.²⁶²

Arakanese Influence in Southeast Bengal (Plates LXXXVb and XCII)

A few sculptures found in the Comilla district, now at the Mainamati Museum do not conform to the usual Pala-derived style of the region, but have some affinity with the Arakanese style of the late 7th and early 8th centuries²⁶³. A large decayed grey sandstone image of a standing female, recovered from a tank in Tarim village, Comilla district in 1957, has the elongated proportions, erect stance and lower

²⁶¹ J. Williams, *op cit* p.225

²⁶² Two basins on the SW side of Peikthano myo, S of the walls of Śrī Kṣetra, *ASI* 1911-2, pl.LXVIII, figs 7,8; *Arch Negs* 786-7 (1909-10) 7484-5 (1957-8); four basins at Peikthano Minbaya Thingyaing, L.de Beylié *L'Architecture Hindoue en Extrême-Orient*, p.243, *Prome et Samara*, p.87, *ASI* 1911-12 pp.147-8; *ASB* 1919-20, pp.13-14; *Arch Negs*. 7501-2 (1957-8); segment of a basin still *in situ* Lédatpyin pagoda (between Śrīkṣetra and modern Prome) *Arch Neg* 779 (1909-10).

²⁶³ The sculptures were first described by H.Rashid, *op cit* pp.191-4.

garments associated with the southern-influenced Arakan school. Two small flanking figures apparently hold the stems of lotuses which reach to the top of the slab; the ground is otherwise plain. Sandstone images are very rare in Southeast Bengal, but are the norm for large-scale images in Arakan.

A number of large soft grey shale steles found in a box chamber in the foundation of the middle *stūpa* at Kutila Mura, stratigraphically assignable to the first phase of that monument, represent a development in Mahāyānist art only hinted at in Arakan at the beginning of the 8th century. The first represents in high relief the Buddha in *vajrāsana*, *dharmacakramudrā*, seated on a lotus supported by a stalk rising from a *dharmacakra* on a square base, from which emerge *makaras* on either side, spouting stems of four lotus flowers on which female deities including Tārā and Cundā are seated. Nāga kings standing on each *makara* head appear to hold bifurcating stalks which support the lotus seats of the four male figures on the upperground. The second stele has a four-armed Bodhisattva seated on a similarly supported lotus, having a haloed dancing female instead of the *dharmacakra* and *nāga* kings. Three female deities (Tārās ?) on lotuses and a lay worshipper are depicted at the base of the slab, and the *aṣṭamahābodhisattvas* are placed around the main figure, seated on lotuses emerging from the main stem, next to which are a seated Cundā and a standing (?) Hayagriva, on similar seats. A number of fragments of similar steles were also found at Kotila Mura.

The stemmed lotus seat with supports for secondary figures is found in Arakan, notably in the Gaṅgā image from Yakkhataung. The elongated *nāga* figures have no parallels in Northern Indian schools but bear a strong resemblance to the Cālukyan-inspired *dvārapālas* of the Tezarama column. Although the composition of the steles has no Arakanese prototype, there is no precedent in Bengal either, suggesting

an indigenous development in response to the religious demands, modelled on scroll or wall paintings. A similar development is noticed in the Mahāyānist paintings of Śrīkṣetra²⁶⁴. The Comilla district sculptures must belong to the early phase of the Harikela school, which, like the coins minted in the area, owed its initial inspiration to Veśālī.

A Further Note on the *Dhvaja-stambhas*.

Since this chapter went to the typist, I received two books which further elucidate the origin and function of the Dhvaja-stambha. The first, J.P.Vogel's *La Sculpture de Mathurā* (Paris 1930) illustrates (pl.XXXIXa,b,) an "Image du dieu Indra avec des Nāgas " at Mathurā Museum. The image depicts Indra, broken at the waist, standing in the "cakravartin" attitude with the right arm raised to shoulder height and the left at the hip, holding an object now broken, but probably a *vajra* (cf. Vogel's plate XXXVIIIf). The god was apparently once surrounded by Nāgas, only one of which survives intact, appropriate underworld counterparts of the rain god. The reverse has a tree hanging with jewels, the Mathurān counterpart of the emerging lotus rhizome found in the Arakanese sculptures, the jewels depicting the wealth produced on earth when Indra causes the rain to fall. It was this type, rather than the Eran pillar, which was introduced to Arakan.

The second book, W.E.Begley's *Viṣṇu's Flaming Wheel: the Iconography of the Sudarśana-Cakra* (New York 1973), incorrectly identifies the Payawa and Eran *stambha-devatās* as Viṣṇu's *cakra-puruṣa* but illustrates (figs 1-8) a number of similar figures which could conceivably represent Indra. Note, too, that the 6th century copper-plate grant of Vijayasena, from Mallasārul, west of Burdwan in Bangladesh (*EI* XXIII pp.155-61) has on its seal a two-armed deity with a wheel back-ground.

²⁶⁴ Aung Thaw *Historical Sites...* pp.26-27