



South Asian Archaeology 2007

Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the
European Association of South Asian Archaeology
in Ravenna, Italy, July 2007

Volume II

Historic Periods

Edited by

Pierfrancesco Callieri

Luca Colliva



BAR International Series 2133
2010

Published by

Archaeopress
Publishers of British Archaeological Reports
Gordon House
276 Banbury Road
Oxford OX2 7ED
England
bar@archaeopress.com
www.archaeopress.com

BAR S2133

South Asian Archaeology 2007, Volume II: Historic Periods' Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the European Association of South Asian Archaeology in Ravenna, Italy, July 2007 Volume II:

© Archaeopress and the individual authors 2010

ISBN 978 1 4073 0674 2

Cover image: Sculpture from Butkara I (Swat, Pakistan), inv. no. B 6000 (Drawing F. Martore, courtesy ISIAO).

Printed in England by CMP (UK) Ltd

All BAR titles are available from:

Hadrian Books Ltd
122 Banbury Road
Oxford
OX2 7BP
England
bar@hadrianbooks.co.uk

The current BAR catalogue with details of all titles in print, prices and means of payment is available free from Hadrian Books or may be downloaded from www.archaeopress.com

THE PURCHASE OF JETAVANA IN AN AMARAVATI-RELIEF

Monika Zin

Recently, part of a relief was discovered in the depository of the Archaeological Site Museum in Amaravati. The object was uncovered during a photographic session for a research project; the project, financed by the German Research Society (DFG), aimed to produce a new publication about reliefs from the so called Amaravati School of Sculptures. Like all the reliefs stored in the museum depository in Amaravati Site, relief No. 405 (Fig. 1) was covered in a thick layer of dust. Dust aside, however, the depository is well-protected and dry, thanks to the diligence of the Curator, Mr D. Kanna Babu. In fact, the reliefs are in a much better condition than the pieces kept in the Government Museum in Chennai as the latter are exposed to the humid air of the coastal city.

Relief No. 405 (Fig. 1) which was previously – fully inadequately as no details are to be seen – published as a “Fragment of *chaita*-slab” from Gummadiurru (Rao 1984: Pl. 350), is a fragment from a pillar from the stūpa railing, it comprises a part of the left register, and a part of the middle register of the fluted area below a central roundel as well as a tiny fragment of the scene inside a medallion. Two registers on the fluted area belong together and form one scene; the scene is set in an open area among trees. All the depicted figures are male and simply dressed without turbans, except for one. One of the figures is holding a basket in the air, another is pouring the contents of a similar basket out onto the ground. Three other figures are kneeling on the ground: they are holding tiny objects in their fingers and putting them on the ground next to each other. The iconography seems clear: the relief depicts the purchase of Jetavana by the merchant Anāthapiṇḍada (Pali: Anāthapiṇḍika). A commonly known story relates how Anāthapiṇḍada purchased a park by covering the entire area of the park with coins. Later he donated the park, in which a monastery was built, to the Buddha. In our relief, the person who wears a turban is a clerk noting down the number of coins.

The story of Anāthapiṇḍada’s donation of Jetavana to the Buddha is included in the textual traditions of several schools; it exists in Pāli¹ and it is preserved in Sanskrit in the *vinaya* of the Mūlasarvāstivāda School (which is also preserved in Tibetan and Chinese),² Chinese translations of the story also survived in the *Mādhyamāgama*,³ in *vinayas* of the Dharmaguptaka, Mahīśāsaka, Sarvāstivāda

schools,⁴ and in two Buddha biographies.⁵

The story relates how Anāthapiṇḍada met the Buddha for the first time on a visit to the town of Rājagṛha where he invited the Buddha to Śrāvastī. The Buddha came to know that there was no monastery in Śrāvastī, and he described the sort of area which would make a suitable site to build one on. Anāthapiṇḍada realised that the only appropriate place was a park which belonged to prince Jeta. He asked the prince if he could buy it but Jeta, wanting to deter Anāthapiṇḍada named an exorbitant price: he stipulated that the entire area of the park be covered in coins laid side by side. Anāthapiṇḍada, not put off answered, ‘It’s a deal!’. Jeta, however then replied that he actually had no intention of selling the park. Anāthapiṇḍada took Jeta to court, and the judge ruled that as a price had been named and duly accepted, the transaction had been completed. All the *vinayas* narrate this episode of Anāthapiṇḍada and Jeta in court. Only sometimes the special condition of prince Jeta is added: he agrees to the sale providing that the monastery is called Jetārāma. In the *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya* the Four Kings of the Directions turn into the judges to help Anāthapiṇḍada purchase the park.

The meaning of the word *koṭṭisanthareṇā* which is used in the *Cullavagga* in the inscription in Bharhut (*koṭṭisanthareṇā*: cf. Lüders 1963: 105) and in the later Pāli tradition⁶ and in is not clear but it must have been something like ‘the spreading out of millions’: it had always been used in this sense, since in visual representations of the story in Bharhut (Coomaraswamy 1956: pl. 26, fig. 67) and Bodhgaya (Coomaraswamy 1935: pl. 51, fig. 2), the purchase of Jetavana was depicted by the laying down of the coins to cover the park; the coins are square, as are the old *karṣapaṇas*.

The *Cullavagga* explicitly mentions that the coins were brought by oxen cart. In all ‘Northern’ versions, by contrast, the coins are packed onto elephants and horse-drawn carts. All the versions, apart from the *Mahīśāsakavinaya*, relate how the park was covered with coins. It seems unlikely, therefore, that this episode could have been represented in Gandhara without the characteristic elements of the laying down of the coins as Alfred Foucher (1905-51, vol 1, p. 473-75) claimed. There is no reason to identify the purchase of Jetavana in

¹ *Cullavagga* VI. 4. 4-10, ed.: *Vinaya* II: 158-9; for further references to Jetavana in Pāli literature cf. Malalasekera 1937-8, Vol. 1, pp. 963-67 and Law 1959.

² *Mūlasarvāstivādivinaya*, Sanskrit: ed. *Gilgit Mss*, Vol III. 3: 133-44; Tibetan: ed. Vol. 41: 314. 1,8; Chinese: *Ken pen chou yi ts’ie yeou pou p’i nai ye p’o seng che*, T 1450, chap. 8, ed. Vol. 24: 139c-142b.

³ *Mādhyamāgama*, *Tchong a han king*, T 26, chap. 6, ed. Vol. 1: 460c-461a).

⁴ *Vinaya* of the Dharmaguptakas (*Sseu fen liu*, T 1428, ed. Vol. 22: 939b); of the Mahīśāsakas (*Mi cha sō pou ho hi wou fen liu*, T 1421, chap. 25, ed. Vol. 22: 167 a-b); of the Sarvāstivādas (*Che song liu*, T 1435, chap. 34, ed. Vol. 23: 244a).

⁵ *Tchong hui mo ho ti king* = * *Mahāsammatarājasūtra?* T 191 (ed. Vol. 3, No. 191: 966c-967a) and *Tchong pen k’i king* (T 196, chap. 2, ed. Vol. 4: 156b).

⁶ *Nidanakatha*, ed.: 92; transl.: 125.

the relief that Foucher refers to. It may be that the episode simply disappeared from the depictions at some point when square coins were no longer in circulation. The coin-covered park is not found in the late adaptation of the story in *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*⁷ (11th century) nor in the objects of art based on it (Tucci 1949, vol. 2, p. 466; vol. 3, pl. 107).

The ‘spreading out of millions’ was depicted, however, in reliefs in southern India: one pillar in the Museum of Amaravati (No. 62)⁸ (Fig. 2), shows the workers putting down the coins. The inscriptions clearly indicate that the setting is Śrāvastī. In addition there are two unpublished reliefs from Kanganahalli, in which it seems as if this iconographic element not only ‘tells’ the story, but also serves as the means of setting the scene.

What may be concluded from the above analysis is that our relief, No. 405 in the Site Museum in Amaravati which can be dated back to the late 2nd century, is the latest of all the surviving examples.

Our fragment contains a small portion of the large central roundel. Inside the medallion it is possible to see trays laden with gifts and also the legs of kneeling women. It is not hard to imagine a scene of Buddha worship in the centre of the medallion. The medallion is bordered with a lotus-petal pattern and a narrow band of tiny lotus rosettes in flat relief. This series of little flowers is extremely rare as a decorative motif in Amaravati and it is this which allowed us ultimately to conclude what was in the medallion. The flower motif led to the discovery of the upper part of the same pillar which survives as relief No. 147 in the Government Museum in Chennai⁹ (Fig. 3). Not only does it feature the rare floral pattern on the edge of the medallion, but inside the medallion at its centre can be seen the Buddha’s throne, and this matches the fragment from the Museum in Amaravati exactly.

The scenes in medallions do not necessarily have to be from the same story as the scenes below or above; nevertheless in this case it seems that the medallion does continue the same story, showing its climax. The worship of the aniconically depicted Buddha is taking place next to monastery buildings, among trees in the park. Some figures are worshipping the Buddha with their hands put together in *añjali*, but one man is standing on the right-hand side, near the throne holding a round jug in his hands. He must be Anāthapiṇḍada, who – by pouring water out of the jug – is showing that he is donating Jetavana to the Buddha. Likewise, in the well known depiction of the story in the Bharhut relief (Coomaraswamy 1956: pl. 26, fig. 67), Anāthapiṇḍada, who stands next to the mango tree, shows that he is donating the park and the monastery to the Buddha by

means of pouring out water from a round jug.

Let us have a closer look at the scene above the medallion (Fig. 3). Sivaramamurti (1942: 191) interpreted the scene as Ajataśatru setting out to visit the Buddha in the mango grove. ‘In the central panel a king is seated on a couch, attended by his men with fan and chauri, conversing with the ministers, counsellors and friends.’ Sivaramamurti, however, was not aware of the context of Jetavana and explained the scene with reference only to the worship of the Buddha in the medallion. In the context of the scenes below it, the upper fluted area of the pillar would be explained better as a part of the Jetavana story – it may show negotiations between Anāthapiṇḍada and Jeta which play an important part in all text versions. On the right-hand side there is an elephant and a horse, these may perhaps just be waiting for Anāthapiṇḍada’s visit to the Buddha, but they may also be waiting to carry the load of coins, as described in all ‘Northern’ versions of the story. The ‘Northern’ sources specifically mention that the coins were packed onto elephants and onto horse drawn carts – in contrast to the oxen-carts in Pāli. As already noted (Zin 2004) in several other cases, the Amaravati reliefs frequently follow the ‘Northern’ Sanskrit tradition rather than the versions as they are known from Pāli sources.

On the ground, on the right-hand side of the relief, is a round vessel which might have been one of the containers holding coins. Unfortunately this part of the relief is seriously damaged and so we are denied final proof that the scene depicts the loading of the generous Anāthapiṇḍada’s coins onto pack animals.

Nevertheless, thanks to the DFG-Project, it has been possible to explain the context of the pillar: this is the purchase of Jetavana through ‘the spreading out of millions’ of coins and the donation of the park to the Buddha. Perhaps one day both parts of the pillar will be displayed together – and not only as a computer-generated image.

Acknowledgements

I wish to express my gratitude to Mr Chanwit Tudkeao, a graduate student of the University of Munich, for cooperation on this article and for providing me with the Chinese references mentioned in fn 2-5.

Bibliographic References

- Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā*, ed. Vaidya, P.L. (1959). Durbhanga.
- Cullavagga*, ed. Oldenberg, H. (1880) *The Vinaya Piṭakam: One of the Principal Buddhist Holy Scriptures in the Pali Language*, vol. 2, London; transl.: Rhys Davids, T.W./Oldenberg, H. (1882-

⁷ *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* XXI, ed.: 153-7.

⁸ Published before by Ghosh & Sarkar 1964-65, *ibid.* readings and explanations of the inscriptions.

⁹ Published before: Burgess 1887: pl. 12.3; Bachhofer 1929: pl. 121.4; Stern & Bénisti 1961: pl. 36a.

- 5) *Vinaya Texts* = Sacred Books of the East Series, 17, 20. Oxford.
- Malalasekera, G.P. (1937-38) *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, 1-2, London.
- Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, Chinese: *T = Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, ed. Takakusu, J. / Watanabe, K., Tokyo 1924-34.
- Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, Sanskrit: ed. (extr): Dutt, N. (1947-50) *Gilgit Manuscripts*, 3. 1-4. Srinagar.
- Mūlasarvāstivādinaya*, Tibetan: *Tibetan Tripitaka, Peking Edition*, ed. Suzuki, Daisetz T., Kyoto 1955-1961.
- Nidānakathā*, in: *Jātaka*, ed. Fausbøll, V. (1877), vol. 1, London: 1-94; transl: Jayawickrama, N.A. (1990) *The Story of Gotama Buddha, The N^o of the Jātakaṭṭhakathā*. Oxford.
- T T = Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō*, ed. Takakusu, J./Watanabe, K./Ono, B. (1924ff) Tokyo .
- Stern, P. & Bénisti, M. (1961) *Évolution du style indien d'Amarāvati* (Publications du Musée Guimet, Recherches et documents d'art et d'archéologie 7). Paris.
- Tucci, G. (1949) *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, 1-3. Rome.
- Zin, M. (2004) 'The Mūkapaṅgu Story in the Madras Government Museum: The Problem of the Textual Affiliations of the Narrative Reliefs in Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda', *Annali dell'Istituto Universitario Orientale* 64: 157-80.
- Bachhofer, L. (1929) *Early Indian Sculpture*. München-New York (repr. 1972).
- Burgess, J. (1887) *The Buddhist Stupas of Amaravati and Jaggayyapeta in the Krishna District, Madras Presidency, Surveyed in 1882* (Archaeological Survey of Southern India 1). London (repr. Varanasi, 1970).
- Coomaraswamy, A.K. (1935) *La Sculpture de Bodhgayā* (Ars Asiatica 18). Paris.
- Coomaraswamy, A.K. (1956) *La sculpture de Bharhut* (Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'Art, N. S. 6). Paris.
- Foucher, A. (1905-51) *L'art gréco-bouddhique du Gandhāra, Étude sur les origines de l'influence classique dans l'art bouddhique de l'Inde et de l'Extrême-Orient*, 1-2. Paris.
- Ghosh, A. & Sarkar, H. (1964-5) 'Beginnings of Sculptural Art in South-East India; A Stele from Amaravati', *Ancient India* 20-21: 168-77.
- Law, B.C. (1959) 'Prince Jeta's Grove in Ancient India', *Journal of Indian History*, 37: 341-65.
- Lüders, H. (1963) *Bharhut Inscriptions* (Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum 2.2). Ootacamund.
- Rao, R.P.R. (1984) *Andhra Sculpture*, Hyderabad.
- Schlingloff, D. (1987) *Studies in the Ajanta Paintings, Identifications and Interpretations*. New Delhi (repr. New Delhi, 1988).
- Sivaramamurti, C. (1942) *Amaravati Sculptures in the Madras Government Museum* (Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum, N. S. 4). Madras (repr. 1956, 1977, 2000).



Fig. 1 - Archaeological Site Museum in Amaravati, depository No. 405 (Photo M. Zin, kind permission of the Archaeological Survey of India - F. No. 18-4/2006-Museum).



Fig. 2 - Archaeological Site Museum in Amaravati, No. 62 (Photo M. Zin, kind permission of the Archaeological Survey of India - F. No. 18-4/2006-Museum).



Fig. 3 - Computer-generated image combining photographs of relief No. 147 in the Chennai Government Museum and relief No. 405 in the Archaeological Site Museum in Amaravati, © Dominik Oczkowski (Photo M. Zin, kind permission of the Archaeological Survey of India - F. No. 18-4/2006-Museum).