

**BRAJ: AN ART AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY
(BASED ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS IN THE
REGION OF MATHURA)**

VOLUME I

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT TOWARDS THE DEGREE OF
Ph.D. (HISTORY OF ART)**

GUIDE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled, **“Braj: An Art and Archaeological Study”** is an original research work done by myself under the supervision of Dr. Buddha Rashmi Mani and contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree in any university and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief no material previously published or written by any other person has been taken except when due reference has been made in the text of the thesis.

Date:

Place: Delhi

(Vinay Kumar Gupta)

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The first and the foremost indebtedness to any of my work, in case it is good, lies to the Almighty God, especially for conferring on me the greatest boon by giving me birth at Mathura, possibly the holiest and the most important ancient city, in the family of Varshneyas. My love for Mathura and my great nation along with its rich culture becomes the source of inspiration for my present work. It is because of my mother's hard work in life and her blessings that I always feel that whatever good work I do, its credit has to go to her first.

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Vinay Kumar Gupta

PREFACE

There is a very strong reason for selecting this particular topic of research. I always feel that the God has done me the greatest favour by giving me birth at Mathura in a Varshney family. Mathura is possibly the most important place on this earth not only for being the birth-place of Lord Krishna but also for being the cultural treasure house of the ancient past of India. Its pristine glory remains unparalleled. These factors and the inherent love for Indological studies in my heart somehow made me realize that the region of Braj is the best region for doing any kind of Indological research. As I had instincts for archeological field work even before entering the field of archaeology, I decided to make a thorough investigation in the archaeology of Mathura. The advice of Prof. D.K. Chakrabarti in July 2003 to do my Ph.D. on the archaeology of Mathura district and his continuous urge to take up this work also helped me in deciding to take up this topic as I have a lot of respect for him and his writings. Some scholars asked me to change the topic from a generalized one to a more specific one, as is the trend now-a-days. But I have stuck to my thinking that when there is a huge scope for a generalized work then it would be improper to do a specialized research unless the former is done. How far I am right in my approach, only the scholars would be able to decide after going through my work. Many scholars for long have thought that Mathura has been a much explored region and did not have a strong potential for new findings but this exploratory work of mine would help in further consolidating the position of Braj region as one of the most important regions in India for many reasons. I must admit that in the initial stages of my research I thought only to focus on the archaeological aspects and the work on art history was limited to providing a brief description of new art objects found. But during the period of my research, I developed a strong liking for the studies in art and iconography. Hence the resultant work would be equally important for the archaeological and the art studies; this is actually what the title of my Ph.D. thesis suggested.

The area selected for the present research work is about 11,500 square km considering Mathura city as the centre and a radius of about 60 km for this roughly circular area. This area covers the district of Mathura, major parts of districts of Bharatpur and Hathras and parts of districts of Aligarh, Agra and Palwal. The time span is not specific as such but the main emphasis has been on the ancient period (from the earliest times, generally P.G.W. to Kushan period) throughout the research. But for sculptural art and terracotta art studies cultural periods after Kushan (Gupta, post-Gupta and medieval) have also been included keeping in mind their importance. Although, I have tried to work on all important aspects and cult of various deities in the art of Mathura; an important aspect about the royal portraits in the Kushan art of Mathura has been left out because firstly I didn't find any royal portrait during my explorations and also because it has been dealt with enormous precision by J.M. Rosenfield and other great scholars. Some royal terracotta figurines have been discussed in the chapter on early terracottas. Numismatic and epigraphic survey is out of the purview of this research.

The first chapter of the thesis is of Introduction which deals with all the available references about Vraja (or Braj) and the city of Mathura and also about the meaning and the nomenclature of the word Vraja. The references from the Buddhist and Jaina literature have been excluded in this chapter as these have been discussed in detail in chapters based on Buddhism and Jainism in Mathura. An attempt has been made to fix the boundaries of the main Braj region as found in the late medieval *bhakti* literature and some *Purāṇas*. The chapter also talks about the geographical features of Braj including Vanas, Upavanas and water bodies like rivers, rivulets, canals and drains. An analysis of the previous work done has also been made, especially in terms of archaeological expeditions.

The second chapter gives a detailed account of all the sites explored, majority of these being reported for the first time in comparison to few previously known sites. The data is based on a village to village survey in the region and the surface findings. The location of the site, the chronology of the site as well as other relevant information like the nomenclature of a site and the mythological and local

associations of it have been specified. The non-use of G.P.S. during the explorations is regretted.

The third chapter is based on the analysis of all the archaeological data acquired in explorations. It tries to locate the strong and weak concentration pockets of ancient sites, the minimum area required for the presence of a single P.G.W. site and a Kushan site. It also discusses the changes that took place in between P.G.W. and Kushan periods; Kushan and early medieval periods in terms of the site density in a particular area. Another significant analysis is of various ancient routes which formed a very important part of the contact chain within the region and with other distant parts of sub-continent for trade and commerce as well as normal contacts. The number of sites in a particular stretch and the minimum distance required between two sites has also been calculated. This analysis helps in identifying some hitherto unknown routes and some ancient routes considered to be less significant which might have actually been quite important routes.

The fourth chapter is based on the studies of Buddhist tradition, literature and art in relation to Mathura region. All the references found in the ancient Buddhist literature have been quoted and analyzed in detail. Attempts have been made to identify many ancient sites which found mention in the Buddhist literature. The aspects related with the journey of the Buddha and the two Chinese travellers have also been discussed in detail. The Buddhist art with emphasis on the early phase of the Buddha imagery at Mathura have also been discussed in detail in this chapter.

The fifth chapter is related with Mathura's association with Jainism. The chapter discusses the literary references found in Jaina literature which are somehow related with Mathura and its nearby region. The data of Jaina text "*Vividhatīrthakalpa*" has been discussed in some detail. It also talks about the association of various Jina Tīrthankaras with mythology and history and also their particular association with Mathura region. After a brief description of Jaina art at Mathura, the chapter discusses all the new Jaina findings which came to light during my explorations in the region.

The sixth chapter is based on Mathura's association with ancient Śaiva cult. It discusses the origin of Śaivite iconography, the early and late phases of Linga worship, the Pañchamukha Lingas and various forms of Śiva found in the region of Mathura in ancient times. All the new findings with Śaiva inclination have been discussed at the appropriate place. The new finding of a Viśvarūpa Śiva image from village Hathiya has been discussed in detail.

The next chapter deals with the Vaiṣṇava cult at Mathura. It discusses the origin of Vaiṣṇava iconography, a survey of early Vaisnava images of north India and all the early inscriptional evidences related with Vaiṣṇavism / Bhāgavata cult. Various types of Vaiṣṇava images and the ten incarnation of Viṣṇu have been discussed in detail. A large number of new Vaiṣṇava images found during explorations have been described in detail which includes a number of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* scenes.

The eighth chapter is based on the Śākta cult at Mathura. It discusses the cult of female deities found at Mathura focussing on the new sculptural findings of various goddesses from the region. The most important of these deities are Durgā, Lakṣmī, *Mātṛkās* and Mahiṣāsura-mardīnī.

The ninth chapter is based on the Sun cult at Mathura. It discusses about the early literary references to the Sun God and the evolution of early Sūrya images. It talks about the important places of the Sun worship in Vraja region along with all the find-spots of solar imagery. A detailed analysis of Gokarneshwar colossus and the impact of its identification on Kushan *devakula* have also been done. Discussions have been made on the concept of considering the Sun God as the ancestral deity of the Kushans. A number of new sculptural findings of the Sun God from Mathura region have been discussed in detail.

The tenth chapter is based on the cult of other important Brāhmaṇical deities found in the region of Mathura. These deities include Gaṇeśa, Skanda-Kārttikeya, Yakṣas, Revanta and Hanumān. The origin of the images of these deities and their early imagery has been discussed in detail. A number of new findings of these deities

have also been discussed with detailed description of these images and their possible impact on the existing knowledge of these cults.

The eleventh chapter deals with the subject of early terracotta art of Mathura. The origin and evolution of terracotta art has been discussed in this chapter with major emphasis on the description of new terracotta findings from the region. The significance of these terracottas on the existing knowledge about the terracotta art has been mentioned with precision. The socio-religious significance of the terracotta art along with new important ethno-archaeological study has also been described.

The twelfth chapter is based on the late medieval terracotta art of Mathura. Initially, this period was not included for such a lengthy discussion but because of the importance of the new findings it was felt necessary to include it. As not much information is available about the late period terracottas (Islamic or late medieval period), the finding of large number of clay figures of this period is quite significant and would help scholars in the further studies of this aspect. All these new findings have been discussed in detail while elaborating the importance of their particular attributes.

The thirteenth chapter is based on a holistic study of the findings from the site of Mora. Mora is quite important because of the finding of the earliest and the only known inscription mentioning Pañchavṛṣṇi Vīras and it was felt necessary to discuss the site in detail. This chapter includes the aspects related with the nomenclature of the site, of the two archaeological sites and the new sculptural findings from the site.

The last and the fourteenth chapter draws brief conclusion of the overall work done in the thesis. Though, it is not possible to include all the important points of the thesis in the concluding remarks, attempts have been made to present some new points which might help in providing a better idea of the importance of the work done in short.

It would be important to point out in the beginning that diacritical marks have not been used for the place names which are still in use, but have been used for those places which are only found in ancient texts. For Kushans, Kanishka and Huvishka

words no diacritical marks have been used as is the norm now-a-days. Sanskrit words have more often than not been written in *Italics*. One transliteration sign of ‘m’ or ‘ॐ’ was missing in the list of my Sanskrit fonts, so it has not been used, that’s why a word like Kamsa has been written as such.

It is humbly expected that by the grace of the God, the hard work done in completing this thesis would be of some importance for the field of Indological studies and would be appreciated by the genuine scholars.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Vraja (Vrij, Braj or Brij) - nomenclature, origin and meaning-

Vraja is the ancient word which is now popularly known as Braj in popular tradition. All these words are generally used to denote a particular area, so any of these words can be used as per requirement of the speaker or the writer. Sanskrit scholars believe that Vraja word has been derived from Sanskrit *dhātu* Vraj which means “motion and movement”. ब्रजन्ति गावो यस्मिन्निति ब्रजः - the place where cows move or graze has also been called Vraja.¹ *Amarkośa* (3 – 3 – 30) has told three meanings of the word Vraja: *goṣṭha* (cow’s stable), *mārga* (pathway) and herd (गोष्ठध्वनिवहा ब्रजः). All these meanings also relate Vraja with cows. From this word Vraja, the Hindi word Braj has been derived.

In *Ṛgveda*, Vraja word has been used for *gauśālā* or for the areas where cows graze. In the same text prayers have been made for the growth of cattle wealth.

यं त्वां जनासो अभिसंचरन्ति गाव उष्णमिव ब्रजं यविष्ठ । (10-4-2)

गवामय ब्रजं वृद्धि कृणुध्व राधो अद्रिवः । (1-10-7).

Pandit (Prof.) Gopal Prasad Vyas, a famous Hindi poet and a *Brajvasi*, quotes a reference from *Ṛgveda* (which could not be confirmed) stating “the land of Vraja which is occupied by the cattle- wealth appears to be higher in stature than the heavens. The men of this land have *ojas* like the *devatās*”.²

अपावृत ब्रजिनी रुत्स्वर्गाद्विदुरो मानुषीदव आवः ।

In *Yajura-veda* (1-25), the grazing ground of the cows and *gauśālā* have been called Vraja and *Goṣṭha* respectively.³

व्रजं गच्छ गोष्ठान् ।

In *Śukla Yajur-veda*, reference is found of Vraja related with the grazing ground of cows having beautiful horns.

{याते धामान्युश्मसि गमध्वै, यत्र गावो भूरिशृङ्गा अयासः । (Adhyāya 6, mantra 3)}.

Sāmaveda mentions that Vraja is same as Goloka Dhāma.⁴

शूरौ नृषाता श्रवसश्च काम आ गोमति व्रजे भजां त्वं नः (Adhyāya 3, mantra 318).

I am of the opinion that the word Virāj mentioned in *Atharva-veda* might have some connection with the word Vraja. Vogel has mentioned while talking about Nāga Takṣaka “In one hymn (viii, 10) Takṣaka is mentioned by name. In this hymn the cosmic principle Virāj is successively associated with various classes of beings: gods, *asuras*, men, Manes (*pitara*s), tree- sprites (*vanaspati*), the seven seers, *Gandharvas* and *Apsarās*, *Yakṣas* and Snakes. In each case the two chief representatives of the group are mentioned as the calf (*vatsa*) and the milker of Virāj, which evidently is conceived as a cow.”⁵ The importance of Vraja region as one of the most important places on earth for its religious importance, for being the originator of various art and cultural traditions is well known. Even in philosophical and spiritual terms, arguably, the place is second to none on the earth. The conceptualization of the cosmic principle in the form of a cow also indicates towards the great association of the region with the cows. This link between Virāj (also defined as cosmic deity by Swami Dayananda) and Vraja is quite significant and can’t be ignored. In the *Skanda Purāṇa*, Mahārṣi Śāṇḍilya has called Vraja as the form of the omnipresent *brahma* while telling the meaning of the word Vraja as *vyāpti*.⁶

There is a complete *sūkta* in *Atharva-veda* related with *gauśālās*.⁷ In the *Harivamśa* and *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, Vraja word has been used for the interior parts of the region near Mathura, in a sense for the villages of cowmen.

तद ब्रजस्थानमधिकम् शु शुभे काननावृतम् । (*Harivamśa, Viṣṇu Parva, 9- 30*)

ब्रजे वसन् किमकरोन् मधुपर्याम् च केशवः ।। (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa, 10- 1- 10*)

The epic literature, especially the *Mahābhārata* is stocked with references to Mathura and the Śūrasena region. The genealogy of solar and lunar dynasties describes several kings who held their sway over this land. Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī* mentions a number of references related with Mathura (all indirectly), some of which have been further elaborated by Patañjali while elaborating the *sūtras*. It says that the glory of Mathura owes to the traditions of *Mahābhārata*.⁸ The place has been described as a stronghold of Andhaka-Vṛṣṇi clans.⁹ In Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*, a text composed during 2nd century B.C., Mathura is mentioned on at least eight occasions¹⁰ and at one place the text admires the general conditions of this place saying that the people were happy and good looking and probably better off than the residents of Sankāśya and Pātālīputra.

सांकश्यकेभ्यश्च पाटलीपुत्रकेभ्यश्च माथुरा अभिरूपतरा इति (*Mahābhāṣya, 5.3.57*)

Manusmṛiti (2-16) mentions Vraja region (Śūrasena) as part of Brahmarṣi country.

कुरुक्षेत्रं च मत्स्याश्च, पंचाल्यः शूरसेनकाः ।
एष ब्रह्मर्षि देशो वै, ब्रह्मावर्तदिन वरः ।।

Mathura is one of the most holy and important cities of ancient world. Some special references have been made about this city in the ancient Brāhmapical literature. For its special status, we may take a glance at some of the important references. *Garuḍa Purāṇa* mentions Mathura along with other six most holy cities of India.

अयोध्या मथुरा माया काशी कांची अवन्तिका ।
पुरी द्वारवती चैव सप्तैता मोक्षदायिकाः ।।

Uttarakāṇḍa of *Rāmāyaṇa* (Sarga 68- 70) deals with the incidents of Madhupurī, the fight of Śatrughna with Lavaṇāsura and the establishment of the capital city Madhurā. *Harivamśa Purāṇa* (54/ 56-62), which is one of the early *Purāṇas* provides some important information about Mathura. It also tells that this city was established in the forest area of Madhuvana by Śatrughna after killing the demon Lavaṇāsura here. It tells about the fortification wall, the moat, the crescent shape, gardens, high rise buildings, prosperity (in terms of crop production, availability of precious jewels) and the commerce of the city.

तस्मिन् मधुवनस्थाने मथुरा नाम सा पुरी ।
शत्रुघ्नेन पुरा सृष्टा हत्वा तं दानवं रणे ॥

सा पुरी परमोदारा साट्टप्राकारतोरणा ।
स्फीता राष्ट्रसमाकीर्णा समृद्धबलवाहना ॥

उद्यानवनसम्पन्ना सुसीमा सुप्रतिष्ठिता ।
प्रांशुप्राकारवसना परिखाकुलमेखला ॥

चयाट्टालककेयूरा प्रासादवरकुण्डला ।
सुसंवृतद्वारमुखी चत्वरोगदारहासिनी ॥

अरोगवीरपुरुषा हस्त्यश्वरथसंकुला ।
अर्धचन्द्रप्रतीकाशा यमुनातीरशोभिता ॥

पुण्यापणवती दुर्गा रत्नसंचयगर्विता ।
क्षेत्राणि सस्यवन्त्यस्याः काले देवश्च वर्षति ॥

नरनारीप्रमुदिता सा पुरी स्म प्रकाशते ।
निविष्टाविषयश्चैव शूरसेनस्ततोऽभवत् ॥

Padma Purāṇa (73/ 44, 45) mentions Mathura to be even holier than the holiest city, Kashi. It further adds that Mathura is the city of Lord Viṣṇu and is worshipped by many deities as a *sanātana purī* (583/ 12, 13, 14).

काश्यात्यो यद्यपि सन्ति पुर्यस्तासाम् हु मध्ये मथुरैव धन्या ।
 तां पुरी प्राप्य मथुरांमदीयां सुर दुर्लभाम् ॥
 तस्मात्त्रैलोक्यमध्ये तु पृथ्वी धन्येति विश्रुता ।
 यस्मान्माधुरकं नाम विष्णोरकांतवल्लभम् ॥
 स्वस्थानमधिकम् नाम ध्येयं माथुरमण्डलम् ।
 विष्णुचक्रपरित्राणाद्धाम वैष्णवमद्भुतं ॥
 अहो न जानन्ति नराः दुराशयाः,
 पुरीं मदीयाम् परमां सनातनीम् ।
 सुरेन्द्रनागेन्द्रमुनीन्द्रसंस्तुताम्,
 मनोरमां तां मथुरां सनातनीम् ॥

In *Varāha Purāṇa* (152- 8,9), Lord *Varāha* tells the Goddess Earth that no place on earth, space or nether world is so liked by him as is Mathura which is higher than the heaven in its reputation for being the birth place of Kṛṣṇa.

न विद्यते पाताले नान्तरिक्षे न मानुषे ।
 समत्वं मथुराया हि प्रियं मम वसुंधरे ॥
 अहो मधुपुरी धन्या स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ।
 सा रम्या सु सुशस्ता च जन्मभूमिस्तथा मम ॥

Area of Braj based on *Purāṇas* and traditions-

Among all the *Purāṇas* in which Braj has been mentioned, the reference in *Varāha Purāṇa* is the most significant. *Mathurāmaṇḍala* section of *Varāha Purāṇa* solely deals with Braj *maṇḍala*. A part of this text is famous as *Mathurā Mahātmya*. In *Varāha Purāṇa*, the extent of Mathura *maṇḍala* has been told as 20 *yojanas* and at many places it has been repeated while telling the importance of various places in this territory.

विंशतिर्योजनानान्तु माथुरं मम मण्डलम् ।
 यत्र तत्र नरः स्नातो मुच्यते सर्वकिल्बिषैः ॥ (158.1)

In *Vāyu Purāṇa*, the extent of Mathura *maṇḍala* has been told as 40 *yojanas*, but this reference has not attained wider popularity as the references of *Varāha*

Purāṇa have.¹¹ One *yojana* is roughly measures about 4 *krośa* or 7 miles (12 kms) and hence the traditional extent of Braj is considered to be 84 *krośas*. A popular *kimvadanti* in Braj says¹² –

इत वरहद उत सोनहद सूरसेन उत ग्राम ।
ब्रज चौरासी कोस में मथुरामंडल धाम ॥

Growse had talked about a similar tradition but it was possibly a corrupt form the above *kimvadanti*.¹³ This *dohā* had probably got drawn from *Gargasamhitā*, one of the important compositions exclusively related with Vraja and its episodes. In it Garga Ṛṣi talks about Vraja to Nandarāya in the following śloka-

प्रागुदीव्यां वर्हिषदो दक्षिणस्यां यदोपुरात् ।
पश्चिमायां शोणपुरान्माथुरमण्डलम विदुः ॥
विशंद्योजन विस्तीर्ण सार्द्धयद्योजने नवै ।
माथुरमण्डलम दिव्यं ब्रजमाहुर्मनीषिणः ॥

In these references Varhiṣad or Barhad in the north- east direction can be identified with Barhad near Bijaigarh in district Hathras. In the south of Braj is Yadupura or Śūrasena kā Grāma which has been identified with Bateshwar near Shikohabad along river Yamuna. In the west of Braj is Śoṇapur or Sonhad which can be identified either with Saundhand near Hodal or with Sohna near Gurgaon. Gargāchārya said that surrounded by these places, the region is called as Vraja by *manīṣis*. While in the local tradition, only three side extremes have been mentioned; in *Gargasamhitā*, attempt has been made to mention the four extremes by putting Varhiṣad in north-eastern direction. While in one of the editions of *Brajabhakti Vilāsa* of Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭ published by *Gauḍīya* scholar Baba Krishnadas, the northern limit of Braj has been mentioned as Sonagaon, the reference quoted by F.S. Growse¹⁴ mentions Bhuvana vana as the northern limit.

चतुर्शीति कोशाढ्यां चतुर्दिक्षु विराजिता ।
 मथुरा मण्डल त्कोशमेकविंशतिकं भजेत् ॥
 चतुर्दिक्षु प्रयाणेन पूर्वादिकमो गणत् ।
 पूर्व भागे स्थितं कोणं वनं हास्याभिधानकं ॥
 भागे च दक्षिणं कोणं शुभम् जन्हुवनं स्थितं ।
 भागे च पश्चिमे कोणे पर्वताख्यवनं स्थितं ॥
 भागेह्युत्तर कोणस्थं सूर्यपत्तनं संज्ञकं ।
 इत्येता ब्रज मर्यादा चतुष्कोणाभिधायिनी ॥

(Brajabhakti Vilāsa, Chapter six.)

It appears that the northern limit of Braj would have been Sonagaon and can be identified with Sohna near Gurgaon. Growse has identified Upahāravana with Sohna as well but for the northern limit he identified Bhuvanavana with Bhūṣaṇa vana near Shergarh which does not appear to be the case.¹⁵ Because of the contribution of *Gauḍīya* scholars, view of the greater Braj can be ascertained which has been called as “cultural Braj”.¹⁶ Rūpa Gosvāmī on the basis of his researches of various *Purāṇas* had derived at the conclusion that from Yāyāvara to Saukari Bateshwar, was the position of Braj. Yāyāvara has been identified with Jewar in Bulandshahr district. Based on the references provided by Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭ and the analysis of various scholars like Mittal, Bajpai, Growse and a local Braj saint Ramesh Baba, the following limits of the greater Braj region (a single religious cultural entity) can be drawn: in the north Sonapura (Sohna near Gurgaon / Saundhand near Hodal which would be in north-west direction actually) and Yāyāvara (Jewar along Yamuna in Bulandshahr district); in the east Varhiṣad (Barhad near Bijaigarh, Hathras, which would be in north- east actually) or Soron (near Ganga if it is the ancient Saurapura) and Hāsyavana (Hasayan in Hathras district or Hasangarh near Jalesar); in the south Janhuvana (Jajau near Dholpur) and Bateshwar near Shikohabad (in the south- east direction); in the west Apahārivana (Pahari village, near Govindgarh in Alwar district) and Pahari village (to the north- west of Kaman). Mathura city, whether part of ancient Vraja or not, has to be considered the central point of Braj.

A very beautiful description of Braj has been observed in *Viṣṇu Rahasya* which mentions “Mathurāpurī is the heart of Braj, Madhuvana is the nose, Tālavana

and Kumudavana are the two breasts, Vṛndāvana is the forehead, Bahulāvana and Mahāvana are the two arms, Kokilāvana and Bhāṇḍiravana are the feet, Khādiravana and Bhadravana are the shoulders of Braj. *Indriyas* are the *gau* (cows), *Jīva* is the *Gopa*. Gopāla is the supreme soul (*Paramātmā*). Desires of the *Jeev* are the *Gopikās*. That's why 'वृक्षे-वृक्षे वेणुधारी, पते-पते चतुर्भुजः'.”¹⁷

Another aspect of Braj can be taken as the area in which the language of Braj (*Brajbhāṣā*) is spoken. This region is quite larger than the area so far talked about. This area extends up to Gurgaon in north-west direction, Bulandshahr in north, parts of Moradabad, Bareilly and Badaun districts in north-east, parts of Mainpuri, Farukhabad districts in east, Bhind district in south-east, Datia in south, Dausa, Karauli in south-west and Alwar in west. Most of this vast area has been included by K.D. Bajpai and Prabhu Dayal Mittal in their analysis of *Brajbhāṣā* speaking region.¹⁸ The far off parts of this area are those in which *Brajbhāṣā* is spoken with slight regional variations. The area of *Brajbhāṣā* speaking Braj region is 38,000 square miles.¹⁹ In the north-eastern direction, this area which speaks *Brajbhāṣā* is quite far off and might have been so because of the presence of original Braj people like Varshneyas and Yadavas in this area in large numbers. Among this area the districts where pure *Brajbhāṣā* is spoken are: Mathura, Aligarh, Hathras, Palwal, Bharatpur, Karauli, Dholpur, Muraina, Agra, Firozabad and Etah.

Geographical features of Braj-

Mathura district is the centre of Braj and it lies between Lat. 27°14' and 27°58'N and Long. 77°17' and 78°12'E and covered an area of about 3625 square km. The area of the modern Mathura district is 3340 square km with a population of over 2 million people. An area of about 60 km radius around Mathura city considering it as the center has been taken for the present study (especially for archaeological explorations), although the area of greater Braj (cultural Braj) might extend far beyond this area. The whole district of Mathura is a part of Yamuna plains, so the land is more or less plain in appearance. The average height of Mathura district is about 600 feet from M.S.L. The area in the north is slightly higher than 600 feet while in the south and south-east is less than 600 feet. Hence the slope of the land is from

north to south and south-east direction. In between this area the river Yamuna flows from north to south.

From geo-morphological point of view, the region of Braj can be divided into three categories: 1. the plains; 2. the hilly area; 3. the *khadar* area. The plain area is much larger and is spread on both sides of river Yamuna in the east and in the west. During the ancient times there were many vanas (forests) and sacred groves in this area which are more or less non-existent now-a-days. The area to the east of Yamuna (the *trans*-Yamuna tract) is more fertile in comparison the *cis*-Yamuna tract as it comprises of *domat* soil (fertile clay). In the *cis*-Yamuna area, there are many fertile pockets like near Tarauli, Bathain-Jab, Mora-Sakna etc. Generally the soil of *cis*-Yamuna tract is sandy. Vegetation in the district is of a dry-deciduous type and the original scanty tree species include Faras, Pilu, Cheonkar, Reonj, Babul, Kharjal, Kadam, Karil, Hins and Bansi. Other trees and shrubs do not differ from those is genetic doab, through hilly outcrops at Barsana and elsewhere produce some Dhau, Kadam, Paserid & Pilukhan.²⁰

The hilly area is limited to the west and north-west of Braj. These low hills (height less than 100 feet) are the off shoots of Aravali and have more religious significance than anything else. This area would have definitely been used during the heavy floods in the area of Braj as these were quite safe from floods. The important hills in the region are: Govardhan, Barsana, Nandgaon, Kaman, Sikri and Charan Pahari. *Khadar* area is situated on both sides of river Yamuna in the form of thin strips and is made of the soil brought in by river floods. This area is quite up-low in appearance and is not always useful for agricultural purpose. Unlike the generally accepted trend of *khadar* land being fertile, people of Braj often talk of up-low sandy area near Yamuna which is not always fertile, as *khadar* land.

Location of Mathura district is the most important factor which makes it archaeologically and culturally so important. It is situated at the entry-pot of Ganga-Yamuna doab. The *trans*-Yamuna region is climatically a part of the Ganga-Yamuna doab, while the western part of Mathura district with Aravali offshoots is more associated with the geographical and climatic conditions of Rajasthan. Moving from North to South, it changes from the climatic condition of fertile Haryana land to a

mixed climatic situation. Because of its geographical location as a nodal point various ancient routes passed from here which have now taken the shape of highways, though some have lost their importance because of modernization. One route coming from Indraprastha and going to Malwa-Gujrat region passed from here, following almost the present day routes. One route went to Vidisha via Pawaya; one went to Kaushambi following the course of Yamuna in the east while one very important but less studied route went from here to west & north-west Rajasthan via Kaman, Alwar; other routes went towards Bareilly region crossing Yamuna and Ganga and met with the Maurayan royal highway in between. Thus Mathura district served as a meeting place for the desert with the doab, hills with plains, north with south and east with west. All these routes were so important that Mathura became an important centre for International trade, position of which, during the Islamic period was acquired by Agra and later on by Delhi, having almost the same geographical and nodal importance.

Rivers and streams in Braj-

Yamuna-

It is one of the most important and sacred rivers of India after Ganga. The important towns along Yamuna or near to it are: Jewar, Shergarh, Nohjhil, Manth, Vrindavan, Mathura, Gokul, Mahaban, Baldev, Runkata, Agra and Bateshwar. In the ancient times Yamuna might have been a navigable river and would have been used as a means of transportation for trade and normal contacts. It was only after the excavations of various canals from Yamuna and dams at higher reaches that it ceased to be such a potent river. This river would have played the most important role in the development of civilization in this region and possibly would not have served as a barrier for the movement of the people. The number of ancient sites on both the banks of the river is quite high.

Karban or Jhirna river-

It is more of a monsoonal river which dries down during the summer months but takes a huge shape during monsoons. It originates in the Khurja *tehsil* of Bulandshahr district and then flows in the *tehsils* of Khair, Iglas, Hathras and Sadabad of the old Aligarh district and Etmadpur *tehsil* of Agra. It meets Yamuna some distance past Agra city. The important ancient towns along this river are: Chandaus,

Khair, Mursan and Sadabad. The ancient towns are quite important and some of them might date back to Copper hoard-O.C.P. cultural period like the site of Sadabad.

Patwaha-

It is a small seasonal stream which originates in the district of Meerut and passes via Khair *tehsil* of Aligarh and Manth *tehsil* of Mathura before merging with Yamuna near Mirpur. An important ancient town situated along this stream is Bajna.

Sengar and Arind-

These are small tributaries of Yamuna which flow in the *tehsils* of Aligarh, Jalesar, Firozabad, Shikohabad before their merger with Yamuna. Important ancient towns along Sengar river are Harduaganj, Barhad, Band Abdullahpur, Jalesar and Shikohabad.

Gambhiri and its tributary Khari Nadi-

Gambhiri river flows in the southern part of Braj region in the Bharatpur district and Khairagarh *tehsil* of Agra. The important ancient site on the bank of this river is Khanua. Many other ancient sites are located along this river but exact details of their antiquity are not known. Khari Nadi flows mainly in the Kirawali *tehsil* of Agra and the important town on its bank is Akola, besides many important archaeological sites on its bank.

Agra canal, Govardhan drain and Manth branch of Ganga canal-

These are the canals which came into existence during recent past (possibly during colonial rule). These three important sources of irrigation in district of Mathura are possibly running on the natural alignment of some dried up streams or monsoonal streams. On the banks of Agra canal, the important sites are: Kosi, Sahar, Bharna Kalan, Aring, Sonsa and Kosikhurd. On the sides of Govardhan drain the important sites are: Kaman, Akata, Unchagaon, Barsana, Hathiya, Janu, Mundsaras, Gantholi, Paintha, Sonkh, Gunsara, Rarah, Santruk, Ol, Beri, Parkham and Pingri. The important sites near the Manth branch of Ganga canal are: Khera, Ahrola, Khayra, Karahari, Harnaul, Nasiti, Jabra, Arua, Barnauli Ki Dhari. It is quite possible that during ancient times this stream would have fallen into river Yamuna at Barnauli Ki Dhari. Govardhan drain was definitely an old channel with so many important sites.

Besides these channels, there are many other local drains and canal distributaries which have come up in past few centuries and even after independence. Many of these channels appear to be ancient water channels which would have definitely helped the ancient people especially during P.G.W. period in agricultural purpose as well as in other subsistence needs. From the distribution of ancient sites it appears that during the ancient times, people might have formed *bandhas* (blockades) at these drains or small rivulets during monsoons to collect and distribute rain water for agricultural fields and large ponds.

Important vanas of Braj-

Braj is the land of sacred groves and forests. Besides the important 36 vanas (12 major and other 24 upavanas) there were many other such vanas or small groves in this region. Many of the village names in Braj and the greater region derive their names from various sacred groves.

12 major vanas as mentioned in *Braja Vastu Varṇana*²¹-

1. Madhavana, 2. Talavana, 3. Kumudavana, 4. Bahulavana, 5. Kamavana, 6. Khadiravana, 7. Vrindavana, 8. Bhadravana, 9. Bhandiravana, 10. Belavana, 11. Lohavana, 12. Mahavana.

24 Upavanas of Braj as mentioned in *Braja Vastu Varṇana*²²-

1. Ariṣṭavana, 2. Satoha, 3. Govardhan, 4. Barsana, 5. Parmandra, 6. Nandgaon, 7. Sanket, 8. Mansarovar, 9. Sheshshayi, 10. Belvan, 11. Gokul, 12. Gopalpur, 13. Parsauli, 14. Anyor, 15. Adibadri, 16. Vilasgarh, 17. Pisayo, 18. Anjankhor, 19. Karhala, 20. Kokilavana, 21. Dadhivana (Dahgaon), 22. Rawal, 23. Bachchhavana, 24. Kauravavana.

History of archeological expeditions in Mathura-

Mathura came to prominence as an important place for art and archaeological studies after Col. Stacy found some antiquarian remains especially the *Silenus* sculpture from here in the year 1836.²³ After this Sir Alexander Cunningham paid several visits to Mathura between 1853 and 1882 of which several accounts are available in the *Archaeological Survey Reports (A.S.R.)* written by him and his associates. The A.S.R. nos. I (pp. 231-44), III (pp. 13-46), XVII (p. 111), XX (pp. 30-

54) deals specifically with the city of Mathura and its nearby area. During his first visit to Mathura (A.S.R., I, pp. 231-44) his main aim was to identify the spots at Mathura which matched with the description of Chinese traveller's (Hiuen-Tsang and Fa-hien's) accounts. He had explored the area around Katra and found some Buddhist art relics there and in the vicinity. Some of the important sculptures were: one mentioning the site of Yaśa Vihāra during the reign of Huvishka and a Māyādevī relief (possibly a *Śālabhañjikā*). He also identified various sites near river Yamuna as ancient mounds with probable Buddhist connection. Some of these mounds were: Naga, Dhruva, Narada, Saptarishi, Bali, Anand, Vinayak Tilas and Kans Qila. Between the year 1861 and 1882 many new sites came to light because of the work of F.S. Growse (then District Collector of Mathura). Most of these sites and the then newly found sculptures kept at the Mathura Museum were visited by Cunningham. Some of the conclusions drawn by them were²⁴: 1. The oldest city of the aboriginal king Madhu was at Madhupura, now Maholi. 2. The Aryan city, after the defeat of Madhu, was built on the site of the present Katra, with the Bhuteshwar temple as its centre. 3. The Jumna Fort was the last city. 4. The Buddhist establishment came into existence at Mathura during 3rd century B.C.²⁵ 5. The possible site of Upagupta monastery was either at Kankali (according to Growse) or Jail mound.²⁶ 6. The Buddhism was on decline in the region from 7th century A.D. and had completely disappeared by the time of Mahmud of Ghazni's invasion in 1017 A.D.²⁷ He described the latest discoveries made at Mathura, including the find of a statue of Herakles strangling the Nemaen lion, which according to him, was evidently copied from some Grecian model.²⁸ He described a number of inscriptions found from Kankali and Jail mounds as well as a number of coins of Punch-marked tradition, Indo-Scythians, Kushans, Guptas and later periods. Cunningham tried to identify the site of Katra Keshavdev as Cleisobora of Greek writers.²⁹ On this basis he identified present day Mathura city with Methora and postulated that river Yamuna or an important branch of river Yamuna flowed between Katra and Mathura. According to him this river stream would have been called as Iobres by Greek writers. He talked about the two large bacchanalian groups and various Jaina sculptures and Naigmeṣa figures found from Mathura.³⁰ He talked about the Buddhist and Jaina finds from the mounds of Manoharpura, Arjunpura, Jaisinghpura and other places.³¹ Cunningham went on to describe the much earlier antiquity of Keshavdev temple and the destruction of the temple by the bigoted Muslim ruler Aurangzeb.³² Cunningham

talked about his important discovery at Parkham of the earliest stone image of Yakṣa in northern India.³³ At village Mahwan near Mathura Oil Refinery, Cunningham found a broken lower part of a Buddhist relief which he related with some Buddhist legend of Buddha's descent from Tūṣita heaven being observed by a lady in the form of a *chakravartin*.³⁴ Cunningham talked about the famous Assi Khamba temple at Mahaban, the popular image of Lohasura at Lohban, the Buddhist convent at Pali-Khera, the inscription found by him at Mora mentioning Vṛṣṇivīras and the famous inscription from Anyor mentioning Uttarahāruṣa Vihāra.³⁵ Cunningham described the location and the Buddhist findings from the site of Kota situated on the Mathura-Delhi road.³⁶ Cunningham also described the finding of a possible Buddhist image from Chaumuha and Tumola villages lying on the road to Delhi.³⁷

During the same time in the year 1880, the then district collector of Mathura, Mr. Frederick Solomon Growse published his major work in the book entitled "*Mathura: A District Memoir*" which still remains a must read work for any Indological research in general and research on Braj region in particular. Growse presented a comprehensive data of the district of Mathura which was available till then. He found a number of ancient sites cleared especially Jail and Jamalpur mound and the nearby areas. He also did some important work of exploration at the sites of Katra, Kankali, Chaubara etc. His chapter on the "Etymology of Local Names" is an invaluable addition to the scholarly knowledge. He was the first person to establish the association of Buddhism with Mathura on a sound basis. Besides, he also established the first archaeological museum of country in the old museum building near Collectorate in the year 1874.

Other significant contribution to the archaeology of Mathura region came from A. Fuhrer in the years 1888-91 when he excavated the site of Kankali Tila (although a kind of destruction) which unearthed the earliest Jaina settlement in India at that site along with the finding of a large number of Jaina, Buddhist and Brāhmapical art and architectural pieces. Two very important sites were excavated in the beginning of 20th century by Pt. Radha Krishna namely Tokri Tila at Manth and Mora shrine. All these excavations were undertaken by Pandit in the years 1910-11 and 1911-12.³⁸ The most striking find of the site was its identification as a *devakula* with a number of royal portraits, broken sculptures and a number of important Kushan inscriptions. At the

site of Mora the first clearance work was undertaken by Vogel himself when he recovered a number of stone sculptures, one having a slightly readable inscription. After the excavations of Pandit at the site some important bricks with inscription of the period of Brahsvatimitra and possibly some broken stone sculptural pieces were found. At the site of Ganeshra, Pandit Radha Krishna recovered a number of Buddhist sculptures and brickbats, some of them having inscriptions. At the site of Jaisinghpura (possibly Kankor Tila), Pt. Radha Krishna obtained some Buddhist sculptures and some broken inscriptions. Some new sculptures and architectural remains were found by Pt. Radha Krishna at the site of Katra and most of these belonged to Buddhist faith.

Pandit Radha Krishna was one of the most important persons who worked very hard to increase the collections of Mathura Museum. His zealous approach to collect ancient sculptures and other artefacts for the collection of Mathura Museum remains unparalleled. Pandit Bhagwan Lal Indraji also contributed to the collection of Mathura art as he had recovered the lion capital from Saptarishi mound which is now housed at the British Museum, London.

Archaeological Survey of India Excavations at Katra Keshavdev³⁹ -

In 1953 M. Venkataramayya and Vallabh Saran of the A.S.I. conducted the first systematic excavation at the Katra site. This excavation was done in a very limited area. The site for the excavation was selected for its rich tradition in terms of literature, culture, inscriptions, coins, terracottas, sculptures and the surface find of P.G.W. sherds. The excavators were inclined to excavate the site also because of two rings of mud- ramparts one elliptically shaped and the other quadrangular suggesting citadel. The detailed report of this excavation would possibly never come out.

The excavators laid a small trench at a distance of about 500 feet to the north of the superimposed mosque of Idgah. The natural soil was touched at a depth of 42 feet and their last point was the portion of earth composed of hard clay and *kankar* bands. The most striking finding of the excavation was the presence of handmade potsherds besides the natural soil. No fragment of Painted Grey Ware was found from the layers although some pieces were collected as surface finds. It was possibly because of very limited area of the excavation. The six feet deposit above the natural soil revealed Plain Grey Ware and Black Slipped Ware pottery types along with

normal red ware pottery. This phase would have dated to pre-600 B.C. period. No N.B.P.W. sherds were found in this deposition. The other antiquities from this layer included terracotta discs, balls, beads, a boat- shaped bird and perforated pottery.

The next period was distinguished by the occurrence of N.B.P.W. and in the chronological sequence it can be divided into three periods. The earliest remains include bamboo and reed huts with slightly baked or unbaked bricks, bone styli or needles, carnelian amulets and beads. The terracotta objects included grey mother goddesses and animal figurines including a dog in red colour. The ring wells also came into existence at the site for the first time in this level. The second phase of finds was characterized by square copper coins, cylindrical terracotta beads, ear ornaments, etched carnelian beads, copper antimony rods, terracotta mother goddess figurines in grey colour with applique treated girdle, elephant figurines with lozenge shaped eyes and bodies decorated with punched, stamped or notched circlets, monkeys with three legs (mostly in red colour). No complete plan of a house had come to light but well laid out walls, drains and ring wells suggest a high degree of planning. This period can be assigned a date ranging between 6th century B.C. and 3rd century B.C.

The site was deserted for a very short period of few years after late 2nd century B.C. as the sealed ring wells indicated. The third period is typified by a large variety of beads of semi precious stones like agate, carnelian, lapis lazuli, jasper, amethyst as well as beads of shell, faience and copper coins, some of which belonged to Kushan period. Stone caskets and a turquoise blue glazed finial were also found in this period. The fourth period assignable from 100 A.D. to 300 A.D. is to be identified by the terracotta figurines of dwarfs prepared by using double mould technique. The fifth and the last period belonged to the Gupta period as evidenced by coins, terracotta, sealings, Naigameśa, elephant and horse riders.

Mathura excavations of 1973- 77⁴⁰.

Under the supervision of M.C. Joshi, A.S.I. conducted excavations in Mathura from 1973-74 to 1976-77 at nearly fourteen sites in different parts of the city. These excavations unfolded a cultural sequence divisible in following five periods⁴¹:

Period I: from circa 6th century B.C. to closing decades of 4th century B.C.

Period II: from closing decades of the 4th century B.C. to circa 2nd century B.C.

Period III: from circa 2nd century B.C. to about the end of 1st century B.C.

Period IV: from the beginning of the 1st century A.D. to about the 3rd century A.D.

Period V: from circa 4th century A.D. to the close of 6th century A.D.

Some later remains and antiquities were also found in a very limited area but the excavators could not find regular sequence of post- Gupta cultures.

Period I⁴²-

The excavated data suggested the beginning of the settlement at Mathura right on the natural soil in the form of a small habitation during Period IA around Ambarish Tila (MTR- 8), close to Yamuna, towards the northern end of present city; the community used the P.G.W. and associated pottery including B.S.W., though in little quantity. The early settlers of Mathura lived in small huts and in some cases built them on mud platforms. Evidence from the later levels of Period I (Period IB) indicated slight, although insignificant, growth of settlement. A notable feature of the sub period was the emergence of nearly 17 sherds of the N.B.P.W. along with P.G.W. with some new designs suggesting an overlap of the two classes of pottery.

During sub-period IB, the availability of antiquities like the terracotta discs decorated with painted parallel strokes or incision along the edges, gamesmen suggesting some kind of indoor game, terracotta *ghata*-shaped and semi-precious stone beads, and a pestle, antimony rods of copper, a few iron implements, bone arrowheads and a circular object (ear ornament) of a greenish glass were indicative of some general improvement in the living conditions of the community.

Period II⁴³-

It has been associated by Joshi with the process of urbanization as the mud fortification wall with a moat running by the side of it came into existence during this period. The most significant pottery of the period was plain Grey Ware and N.B.P.W. A number of terracotta mother goddess figurines and animal figurines were found in this period's deposit. Other antiquities of note other than semi- precious stone beads were: square punch marked copper coins, terracotta discs, beads, gamesmen, skin-

rubbers, bone- arrowheads, a legged quern carved with *triratna* motif, stone pestles and a variety of copper and iron objects especially arrowheads. The size of the settlement was as extensive as 3.9 square km during this period. Use of mud bricks was quite popular in this period while the burnt bricks were used for few selected structures.

Period III⁴⁴-

Joshi terms the Period III as the period of urban refinement. The archaeological material of this period shows certain signs of urban prosperity like the people used lime plaster for floors and tiles were used for roofing. This period witnessed the last phase of ring wells, N.B.P.W. and grey ware. Red ware was used as the main ceramic industry, some with stamp marks. Most of the items of household use continued with addition of some sculptures, inscriptions etc.

Period IV-

Joshi terms this period as the period of cosmopolitanism. This period saw the all round development in terms of material culture as is suggested by a number of Kushan coins, sculptures, inscriptions etc. Sprinkler as a new pottery type came into use.

Excavations at Sonkh-

German excavation team under the leadership of Dr. Herbert Hartel excavated the site of Sonkh about 24 km south-west of Mathura. It was one of better preserved mounds with fewer disturbances in district Mathura. The excavation work at the site started in the year 1966 and ended in the year 1973. The site provided a continuous sequence from P.G.W. period to late medieval (Jat) periods without any significant break. The report of Sonkh excavation is one of the best compiled excavation reports in India. The concise framework of various periods at Sonkh is as follows⁴⁵-

Period I-

It was observed in the levels 37- 40. The excavator termed it as P.G.W. and B.R.W. period. The main pottery type of the period was P.G.W. and to a lesser extent B.R.W. Other important pottery types were B.S.W., ordinary red and red slipped ware.

Vessels were partly decorated with incised, impressed or applied patterns. At the end of the period coarse grey ware was observed.

Period II-

It was observed in the levels 29- 36. The excavator divided it in sub periods of Pre and Early Maurya, Maurya and Śunga cultural phase. The exclusive pottery of the period was N.B.P.W. along with coarse grey ware, B.S.W. and ordinary red ware.

Period III-

This period belongs to Mitras and was observed in the levels 25- 28. The pottery included red ware continuing from the previous tradition. Some new shapes, esp. ovoid shaped storage jars with appliqué cordons and symbols (*svastika*, *nandyāvarta*) came into use. Some handles in shape of monkeys were also found. Ring wells and structures of baked brick came into existence.

Period IV-

This period belonging to Kṣatrapas and Rāmadatta was observed in the levels 23 and 24. The typical pottery of this period was red ware, characterized by definite differences in the shapes like globular water jar, small goblet, beaker. In the end of this period the fashion of stamping the vessels with symbols begin.

Period V-

This period belonged to Kushans and was observed in the levels 16- 22. The pottery include red ware with the characteristic Kushan stamping of storage vessels, jars etc. with symbolic, floral, and geometric ornaments. Moulded small bowl and spouted water jars were also observed in good number.

Period VI-

Levels 12- 15 of this period were ascribed to Gupta and Early medieval period. Red, mostly red slipped ware was the main pottery of the period which was delicately thrown and had smooth surface with distinct black horizontal stripes. Later on black painted swans and floral motifs were observed. Other important pottery types of this period included moulded bowls with relief ornaments, goblet with moulded bowl and stem, bottles with sprinkler necks and spouts.

Period VII-

The medieval period was observed in the levels 8- 11. In this period the quantity of pottery finds reduced considerably. Decoration was mainly of black painted stripes, swans and peacocks. Cone lid with knob replaces bell- shaped and

bowl lid. Besides appearance of thin grey ware with white slip, incised and painted variety was observed.

Period VIII-

This period found in levels 1- 7 belonged to Late Fortress levels of Mughals and Jats. The main pottery was black on red painted pottery. In levels 6, 7 and 8 moulded grey and red jars and bottles with relief decoration were found. Appearance of hookah was a new significant feature of this period.

Names of the already known sites- P.G.W. sites in district Mathura⁴⁶- Mathura, Gosna, Raya, Nohjhil, Chhata, Sankhi, Sakhitara, Sanket, Aring, Sonoth, Sonkh and Arbai. (Many of the sites have been mentioned in such a way that it is not possible to find the site based on the A.S.I., Agra Circle's data like the site of Arbay.)

Kushan sites in district Mathura⁴⁷- Mathura, Gosna, Raya, Nohjhil, Chhata, Sankhi, Sakhitara, Sanket, Aring, Sonoth, Sonkh, Arbai, Kota, Bajna, Ganeshra, Girdharpur, Mora, Itokri Tila (Mat) and Maholi.

Many sites which were known as being find-spots of sculptures (2nd century B.C.- medieval period)⁴⁸- Lohvan, Taiyyabpur, Nagla Kazi, Madaim, Aiyera Khera, Gokul, Mahavan, Jugsana, Baldev, Selkhera, Tasigu, Barauli, Gukhrauli, Mindhawali, Saraishal Bhar, Vrindavan, Chharera, Chhatikara, Deviatas, Bakalpur, Sehi, Chaumuha, Shergarh, Sakna, Bati, Satoha, Asgarpur, Pali Khera, Salempur, Tarsi, Dhangaon, Kosikhurd, Chharghaon, Baroda, Sanora, Parkham, Jhudawai, Bhadyghat, Usphar, Hakimpur, Jansuti, Khamini, Anyor, Ral, Maghera, Bhadar, Sahar, Barsana, Sanket, Nandgaon, Tumola, Kosikalan.

Majority of the sculptures found from the above mentioned sites are of Kushan period and the remaining of early medieval period (about 12). Only the sites of Parkham and Baroda provided the sculptures of about 2nd century B.C. Details of these can be seen the catalogues of Government Museum, Mathura written by Late V.S. Agrawala in the years 1948-51. Another important site Bharna Kalan of about 1st century B.C. came to notice for the finding of two important statuettes in the decade of 1990. There are many other sites like Rawal, Jaitpur etc. which should also be included in this list.

P.G.W. sites in Agra district⁴⁹- Akhbai, Inayatpur, Karahra, Khalua, Gaherakhurd, Gunj, Churyari, Jengara, Dauki, Dura, Poia, Etmadpur, Bakand Khera, Beman, Mahuar, Beman, Vidyapur, Sarwara Khera, Fatehpur Sikri.

All these sites might be considered to have continued during the Kushan period.

Rock-shelter sites in Agra district- Sikri, Churyali, Jajauli, Bandrauli, Jharauti, Madanpura and Rasulpur.

Ancient sites in Old Aligarh district⁵⁰- Aligarh, Andaus, Kalwa, Kazimpur, Komri, Koil, Koriyaganj, Kharkhonda, Khera, Gohen Khera, Tappal, Tarpahara, Tuskan, Bajhera, Bharatpur, Maho, Mahwa, Mandrak, Morthal, Lakhnu, Lal Qila, Vijaygarh, Shahegarh Khera, Sherpur, Saimarh, Sasni, Sankara and Hathras.

Of these Kazimpur, Kharkhoda and Lal Qila are O.C.P. culture sites while majority of other sites are P.G.W. period sites. Few belong to Kushan and onward period. All the P.G.W. period sites can be considered to have continued during the Kushan period.

Important contributors to the study of Mathura Art, History and Archaeology-

During the mid 19th century Mathura had emerged as an important centre for Indian art studies which later on became the most important centre for art studies in India. Apart from the contribution of various archaeologists and the Archaeological Survey Reports, the significant contributors to the study of Mathura art are a number of renowned scholars. Some of the most significant names for the study of all kinds of art forms related with Mathura are: Anand Coomarswamy, J. Ph. Vogel, Vasudeva Saran Agrawala, Krishna Datt Bajpai and Nilkanth Purushottam Joshi. For the study of Brāhmapical art the most important names are: R.G. Bhandarkar, Stella Kramrisch, T.A. Gopinath Rao, Jitendra Nath Banerjea, C. Sivaramamurti, J. Gonda, Dr. Ratna Chandra Agrawala, Doris Meth Srinivasan, Grittli von Mitterwallner, Kalpana Desai, P. Banerjee, Thomas S. Maxwell, Ramanath Misra, Zimmer, Joanna G. Williams, Gerd Kreisel, B.N. Sharma, V.C. Srivastava and Prithvi Kumar Agrawala. Among

these scholars the works of Joshi, Kreisel and Srinivasan are specifically related with Mathura and are a must to study thoroughly. For the important writings on Buddhist art, the significant names are: Johanna Engelberta van Lohuizen-de Leeuw (for Jaina art and pre- Kushan art also), Albert Grunwedel, A. Foucher, John Marshall, Yuvraj Krishnan, Susan Huntington and Ramesh Chandra Sharma. The important writings on the subject of Jaina art are of: Vincent Arthur Smith, Umakant Premanand Shah, Debala Mitra and Maruti Nandan Prasad Tiwari. Other very important writings on Mathura art especially pre- Kushan and Kushan art are of: John M. Rosenfield, Herbert Hartel, Shashi Asthana, Stanislaw Czuma and Sonya Rhie Quintanilla. Other art historians who included Mathura art in their writings are: J.C. Harle, Nihar Ranjan Ray, O.C. Gangoly, S.K. Saraswati, Benjamin Rowland, Charles Fabri, Pratapaditya Pal, P.K. Biswas and Bhogendra Jha, Frederick M. Asher, Ratan Parimoo and Pramod Chandra etc. On terracotta art the significant contributors are: Charu Chandra Dasgupta, Parmeshwari Lal Gupta, Satish Chandra Kala, Munish Chandra Joshi, M.K. Dhawlikar, Devangana Desai, Arundhati Banerjee and Amy Poster.

Besides these scholars, the writings of many great historians and archaeologists like K.P. Jayaswal, B.N. Mukherjee, B.N. Puri, B.D. Chattopadhyaya, Romila Thapar, R.S. Sharma, Shiva G. Bajpai, Motichandra, Padmanabh S. Jaini, B.R. Mani, Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti, R.C. Gaur, M.D.N. Sahi, Jim Shaffer, Herbert Hartel, F.S. Growse, Prabhu Dayal Mittal etc. are important to look at for the holistic study of Braj region. For the study of Mathura inscriptions the important writings are of: Heinrich Luders, D.C. Sircar, Rajbali Pandeya, Kalyani Das Bajpai etc.

¹ Prabhu Dayal Mittal, *Braj Ka Sanskrit Itihas* (Hindi), Mathura 1966, p. 1.

² Gopal Prasad Vyas (ed.), *Braj- Vibhav* (Hindi), Delhi 1987, p. 13.

³ Prabhu Dayal Mittal, op. cit., p. 1.

⁴ Vasudeva Krishna Chaturvedi, "Vedon mein Braj", *Braj- Vibhav* (Hindi), ed. Gopal Prasad Vyas, Delhi 1987, p. 57.

² J.Ph Vogel, *Indian Serpent Lore*, Varanasi, Delhi 1972, pp. 203-204.

- ⁶ *Vaiṣṇava Khaṇḍa, Bhāgavata Mahātmya* (1- 19, 20), cit. by Mittal 1966, p. 1.
- ⁷ *Atharva-veda* (2- 26- 1)
- ⁸ *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, IV, 1/14, IV 282 and VI. 2. 34, cit. by R.C. Sharma 1984, p. 18.
- ⁹ V.S. Agrawala, *India as known to Pāṇini*, Varanasi 1952, pp. 361-364.
- ¹⁰ *Vyākaraṇa- Mahābhāṣya*, ed. F. Keilhorn, Poona 1962, I.1.57, p. 144; I.2.1, p. 192; II.1.192; II.2.64, p. 244; II.4.7, p. 474; IV.1.14, p. 205; VII.1.1, p. 239; VII.2.62, p. 299.
- ¹¹ Prabhu Dayal Mittal, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- ¹³ F.S. Growse, *Mathura- A District Memoir*, Delhi 1883, p. 78.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ Prabhu Dayal Mittal, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- ¹⁷ Vasudeva Krishna Chaturvedi, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- ²⁰ E.B. Joshi, *U.P. District Gazetteers, Mathura*, Vol. 12, Lucknow 1968, p. 14.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 39.
- ²² *Ibid.*, p. 42.
- ²³ L.R. Stacy, "Note on the Discovery of a Relic of Grecian Sculpture in Upper India", *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta 1836, p. 567.
- ²⁴ Alexander Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, XX 1882-83, p. 31.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- ²⁶ Alexander Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, XVII 1881-82, p. 111.
- ²⁷ Alexander Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, I 1862-63, p. 237.
- ²⁸ Alexander Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, XVII 1881-82, p. 30.
- ²⁹ Alexander Cunningham, *A.S.R.*, XX 1882-83, p. 31.
- ³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 35.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.
- ³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 42-49.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 50-52.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 52-54.
- ³⁸ J.Ph. Vogel. "Explorations at Mathura", *A.S.I.A.R.*, Delhi 1911-12, pp. 120-133.
- ³⁹ *Indian Archaeology- A Review* 1954- 55, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁰ *Indian Archaeology- A Review*, 1973-74, pp. 31-32; 1974-75, pp. 48-50; 1975-76, pp. 53-55; 1976-77, pp. 54-56 and also see M.C. Joshi and A.K. Sinha, "Chronology of Mathura- An Assessment," *Puratattva*, No. 10 (1981), pp. 39-44.

⁴¹ M.C. Joshi, "Mathura as an Ancient Settlement," *Mathura- The Cultural Heritage*, ed. D.M. Srinivasan, N. Delhi 1989, p. 167.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

⁴⁵ Herbert Hartel, *Excavations at Sonkh*, Berlin 1993, p. 17.

⁴⁶ Records of A.S.I., Agra Circle and U.P. State Archaeology Deptt., Agra.

⁴⁷ Records of A.S.I., Agra Circle and U.P. State Archaeology Deptt., Agra..

⁴⁸ R.C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathura*, Delhi 1984, Map showing archaeological sites and find-places in Mathura district.

⁴⁹ Records of A.S.I., Agra Circle. and U.P. State Archaeology Deptt., Agra.

⁵⁰ Records of A.S.I., Agra Circle and U.P. State Archaeology Deptt., Agra.

Chapter 2

Explorations in the Region of Braj

This data is based on the thorough explorations done in the region of Braj. The quarter inch toposheets of various parts of this region were of immense help before going out for explorations in a particular area. The 1 inch toposheets were also very important for a proper analysis of the data collected on a day to day basis while going in a particular area. These explorations were done by going to all these sites by a motorcycle. When for reaching a site the need arose, bicycle was also used as well as at a number of sites it was done by moving on foot. The analysis of the chronology of a site was done by examining the pottery present at the site (some typical pottery types can be seen the Figs. 2.1 – 2.15). For the pre-Mauryan periods, the analysis of the pottery was the only tool to affix the chronology of the site. For the Mauryan and onward periods, the analysis was assisted by the finding of terracotta figurines and sculptures (generally fragments). The evidences of coins and epigraphs were not found during the explorations except for a few exceptions. All the sites of district Mathura have been described in detail. Some of the nearby sites of other districts like Hathras (old Aligarh district) and Bharatpur have also been described in detail and the name of the district have been mentioned in their description. As a general rule, the majority of the sites of the nearby districts of Hodal, Bharatpur, Aligarh, Agra and Hathras have been described in tables in the end. The order of the description of the site is based on a particular stretch like on the road to Sonkh, lying between two roads like between the road to Bharatpur and the road to Sonkh, along Yamuna etc. This order was felt more convenient while describing the sites. The sites in the tables have been described on the basis of their locations from a nearby city or town.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES IN MATHURA CITY-

The ancient sites of Mathura city are not situated in the form of a single mound but are actually scattered over a number of mounds. Near the river Yamuna, there is definitely the presence of a single large mound which extends from Kotwali up to Kans Qila with only lanes and bylanes in between. In totality the area of the ancient Mathura city can be estimated to be about 2500 x 1400 x 24 m. The list of the important mound which are slightly isolated from the central and the largest mound of the city are as follows-

Raja Bali Ka Tila-

This site is situated in close vicinity to river Yamuna and Saptarishi mound. The mound is about 12 m in height and is occupied by modern houses at its top. The antiquity of the mound goes back to P.G.W. period and continues up to modern times without any significant break. The mound has a huge ashy deposit which is traditionally considered to be the ash of *yajña* done by the Mahārāja Bali. Because this mound is related with the story of Vāmana incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu by the local people, it is called as Raja Bali Ka Tila, as Bali is the king who caused this incarnation. Bali is also a name of Balarāma, so it might have had some connection with his legend. From here starts the regular chain of habitation mounds dating back to at least P.G.W. period.

Saptarishi, Dhruv, Narad and Nag Tilas-

These mounds are situated along the river Yamuna. These mounds have either been cut off or houses have been constructed on top of them. Saptarishi Tila as an important Buddhist centre has been discussed in detail in the chapter on Buddhism in Mathura. Traditionally this site, now identifiable with the main cremation centre of the city, is related with the seven sages of Brāhmaṇical mythology. The other three mounds are related with Dhruv, the famous devotee of lord Viṣṇu, sage Nārada and the cosmic serpent Śeṣa. All three are somehow related with Lord Viṣṇu. These mounds form a kind of a chain along river Yamuna while moving towards Vishram Ghat. Nag Tila in front of Subhash Inter College is still a lofty mound disturbed by later activities. In all probability this mound of about 10 m height and slightly circular in shape hides some important

structure inside it. In my view it might be belonging to some Buddhist establishment as the nearby sites have provided some important Buddhist relics.

Kans Ka Qila-

This isolated high mound of about 16 m height is very disturbed and is full of bricks bats. I found two very fine quality B.S.W pottery pieces from the lower section of this mound. This mound at its top housed the famous observatory of Mahārāja Jai Singh, the famous ruler of Amber. Traditionally this place is considered to be the place where the fort of Kamsa was situated. Personally I believe that near this site, we may find the location of the royal establishments of Kushan rulers. From some sources I came to know that from this area, some large hoards of coins and antiquities have been found by various persons from time to time.

Ambarisha Tila-

This mound of about 12 m height was excavated by A.S.I. during 1974-78 under the leadership of late M.C. Joshi. A large part of it is occupied by the modern houses. This seems to have been situated on the periphery of the ancient Mathura during the late P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. periods. From this site a proper P.G.W horizon in period I A was found which has provided a tentative date of circa 6th century B.C. This mound is also related with the legendary king Ambarīṣa by the local people.

Katra mound-

Katra mound has been identified by many scholars as the earliest habitation area of Mathura, but I consider this mound as the first extension of the main city which was situated along the river Yamuna. This area was called so because of the presence of a fortified settlement at this site. This fortification has been discussed by Growse and more details of it were obtained after the A.S.I. excavations. This area which was situated on the other side of the main royal road coming from Rohitaka and Indraprastha became important with the growth in trade and the increase in population. The area of Keshavdev temple might have been the place of religious importance since the earliest habitation of the city. There are references of a Bhāgavata temple at the site (1st century B.C.

inscription of the time of Śodāsa). It was situated at such a location on the outskirts of the city which would have been an ideal location for a religious centre.

Here I would like to mention the archaeological findings from the Katra area. In the excavation of 1953-54, in a deposit of 42 feet, Ballabh Saran and Venkatrammaiya found sherds belonging to P.G.W., N.B.P.W and later periods. But the most significant finding was of a deposit containing hand- made pottery which lied below the P.G.W. period deposit. It is very interesting because after the O.C.P. period majority of pottery is always wheel made. This pottery culture requires further research.

Bhuteshwar-

From this area, situated between Balbhadra Kunda and the City Water Works, the earliest deposit which I found in my explorations, belongs to late P.G.W. and pre-Mauryan period (circa 5th century B.C.). There seems no significant gap between Katra and Bhuteshwar mounds, though, some scholars suppose the fortification wall running between these two mounds. The temple of Bhuteshwar seems to be of ancient origin as mentioned in *Purāṇas* and is one of the four cardinal Śiva shrines. It was destructed in 6th century A.D. by Hūṇas (Toramāṇa). In the nearby area of Katra and Bhuteshwar, mainly in Geeta Enclave, Bank colony etc., there were situated many monastic establishment during the Kushan and succeding periods, of which many sculptures are now housed in various museums of India and the remaining have been smuggled out.

Hathi Tila-

This mound which is situated in the rear side of K.R. Degree College and extending towards Manoharpura area belongs to Mauryan and later periods as the finding of Mauryan grey ware pottery indicates. Chances are that it might prove to be an earlier settlement after excavations. It is one of the mounds which are still unoccupied. This area lies within the ancient fortification (earlier than 200 B.C.) and is very close to it.

Chamunda Tila-

This mound seems to be a later extension of the city during Kushan and Gupta periods. It is called so because of the presence of famous Chamunda Mata temple at the site. This mound with a maximum height of about 6 m was earlier under Government

protection and is almost non-existent now, a clear evidence of corrupt Government functioning. This site has been mentioned in detail in the chapter on Buddhism in Mathura.

Kankali mound-

Kankali, excavated on a large scale, has provided archaeological evidences dating back to early 2nd century B.C. and continuing up to medieval period. The site is called so because of the presence of a Kankali Mata temple at the site. At the site a Kushan period tank was excavated. Besides this tank, another tank Balbhadra Kunda which is much larger and quite ancient lies at the back side of Kankali. The site has been discussed in detail in the chapter on Buddhism in Mathura.

Jamalpur and other nearby mounds-

Jamalpur or Jail mound, the site of ancient monasteries of Kushan and Gupta periods and the provider of the two extremely beautiful Gupta images is now completely levelled to ground and nothing can be found there at the site except for some degenerated potsherds and brick bats. It is situated near the ancient highway, that's why its location at about 3 km away from the main city is justified. Such types of monastic sites were more in number within a semi-circle towards south from the city of Mathura. These sites have been discussed in detail in the chapter on Buddhism in Mathura.

Sadar area along Yamuna up to D.M.'s bungalow-

A number of monastic and other religious establishments were situated along river Yamuna and the nearby area of Sadar. Many images of varying religious affiliations have been reported from this area. This area has gone through many changes because of Yamuna floods and human activities.

Gokarneshwar mound-

Gokarneshwar mound has been shown by M.C. Joshi as the northern most fortification part of ancient city. The height of the mound which is occupied by the deposit of Kushan period is not more than 3 metres. Though, Joshi has considered it as a part of fortification, it does not seem to be the case. This area of the mound (about 180 x

150 x 3 m in dimension) has provided sculptures belonging to all three ancient Indian faiths- Brāhmaṇa, Buddhist and Jaina. Besides, one image of the Sun God (Gokarneshwar colossus) and a royal statue were also found from this site. The site of Jaisinghpura might be considered to be the outer most area of Mathura during Mauryan period and the fortification wall would have run somewhere it.

Kankor Tila-

In the back side of Birla mandir in a village Bengali Basti is a well protected Kushan mound with some monastic or stūpa establishment; height of this mound is about 1.5 m with 4 or 5 small peaks, but not forming any regular pattern. The whole area of this site is about 200 x 160 m. The pottery at this a site is less in number and brick bats are also difficult to be found, all of these are much degenerated and deteriorated.

Mathura Junction Mound -

Near Mathura Jn. between it and Maholi road, there is a small protected mound of about 2 m height. It seems that it was cut by the people in the past. This is a similar to mounds which are of same shape, size and material as those near Bhuteshwar, Chamunda and Gokul etc. The deposit of this mound dates back of Kushan, Gupta and succeeding periods until late medieval times.

Mounds which were part of fortification-

Various mounds without habitation deposit are located in the city. Some of these can be identified starting from the northern side Jaisinghpura area, the mound attached with Chamunda Tila is a part of it. Then, near Saraswati Kund, just across the Masani Railway crossing, there is a large such mound. Thus the mound at Ramlila Ground and Jawahar Inter College are part of it, extension of which is visible near the Delhi- Mathura Railway track where it is attached with a habitation mound. Then such natural type elevation is present towards the backside of Water Works at Bhuteshwar, then how these crossed towards, Amarnath Vidya Ashram and K.R. Degree College, near Hathi Tila is not clear. Then such mounds are visible in front of K.R. Girls Inter college and near Mathura Museum extending towards Rangeshwar, Kans Ka Tila, one lofty mound near Ambakhar Nala across Krishnapuri and then possibly towards Church area and then

finally near Yamuna. At some spots these mounds containing natural soil as deposit might contain some archaeological remains of Kushan and later periods.

Archaeological sites situated across Yamuna-

Site of Hansganj and Isapur –

This village site famous for Durvasa temple is located just on the opposite bank of Yamuna, in front of Kans Ka Qila and Ambarisha Tila. Location of this site proves that the course of Yamuna has remained same during the last 2200 years at least. Yamuna has taken a turn at Mathura while Isapur is situated on the left side of this turn; Mathura is situated on the right side of this turn which is not so common. Hansganj has provided a large number of sculptures belonging from 1st century B.C., Kushan and later periods which are now housed at Mathura and other museums worldwide. There is a strong possibility of it being a much earlier settlement dating back as early as Mathura city itself. Because of the river floods, the thin early deposit might have got washed away. During my explorations, I found a deposit of about 3 m along Yamuna course and about 6 metres at some spots in the village.

This deposit is full of red ware and some ill fired brownish ware. Area of whole deposit is about 250 x 350 m, though there is a little separation now between the villages of Isapur and Hansganj but earlier prior to Muslim domination, it was possibly known as by some Hindu name only. The whole deposit is very much disturbed by the river and human activities. During earlier times, it might have served as a crossing point of river Yamuna to go towards Gosna. It is quite probable that Yamuna was not so frequently flooded in earlier times, otherwise how could this site have survived. There are some late medieval structures here, which should be protected and should also be developed from tourism point of view.

Taiyabpur-

This site lies ahead of Isapur in front of Lohvan after crossing railway track to Hathras. The area of the site, almost destroyed, was about 150 x 140 x 2 m. Major part of this site would have formed part of some Buddhist convent and the remaining would have

been habitation area. The site appears to be in use during the first four centuries after the Christian era.

Daharwa-

This site is situated on the road linking Taiyabpur with Panigaon. The ancient site which is occupied by the modern village is about 120 x 110 x 3 m in dimension and dates back to Kushan period.

Nagla Khera-

This site is situated very near to the road linking Vrindavan with Manth or Mat (new road). The site (*khera*) is situated outside the village and is being used for agricultural purpose. A part of it has been destroyed but still a handful of it exists. The area of the site is about 180 x 160 x 4 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods.

Saur-

This site is situated very near to Nagla Khera site near the up-low land of Yamuna. The area of the site is about 200 x 150 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a possibility of some early cultural horizon of P.G.W. period as well. Some broken Kushan sculptural finds were observed near the cart track going to Piprauth from Nagla Khera.

Barnauli ki Dhai-

Just after crossing the canal on Raya-Manth road, there is a huge mound on the left side of road about 300 m away from it. This one is an isolated mound and size of the mound is about 180 x 160 m and a height of about 12 m, though situated on elevated Yamuna sandy mound. The deposit of the mound mainly belongs to P.G.W., B.R.W., B.S.W. culture; some pre-Mauryan and Mauryan deposit were also observed at the site. After it the mound seems to have been abandoned, though not sure. So it seems as a pre-Christian era site with P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. periods only. B.R.W. of this site may provide some early dating. During my explorations, I felt some fortification like remains

there; if it is in fact fortification with mud and mud bricks, then it might be the first of its type in this region.

One very important point A.S.I. should take care of is that this site is coming under express-highway project linking Noida with Agra. So something must be done to save this mound.

Nagla Chamaran-

It lies outside the village of Nagla Chamaran in the *khadar* agricultural lands of the village. This site is actually an extension of Barnauli ki Dhai or we should say that there are about 4 sites situated on *khadar* mounds across Yamuna (opposite Vrindavan) which cover an area of about 500 x 400 m. The height of the deposit can not be determined in exact terms as all these deposits lie over natural sandy mounds. One important factor is their situation as it makes it clear that the *trans*-Yamuna region was as important as *cis*-Yamuna tract during P.G.W. period and there must have been a crossing point of Yamuna in this zone which proves the site of Vrindavan to be as early as these sites. These sites do not appear to be as such a regular habitation site as are other normal mounds in the area like Harnaul, Nasiti, Raya etc.

Bhimgaon-

This mound is situated under the habitation of modern Bhimgaon village at a distance of about 600 m away from Barnauli ki Dhai mound on the road to Manth from Raya. It seems probable that after the abandonment of the sites near Yamuna at and near Barnauli Ki Dhai, this site was occupied. Some crude B.R.W. sherds were found from here with red ware pottery. The deposit of this site belongs to early centuries of the Christian era and continued during the medieval and later times. The size of the site is about 240 x 200 m with a height of about 7 m.

Jasoli and Darbai-

This mound lies between the two adjacent villages of Jasoli and Darbai (Devnagar). The area of the site mostly occupied by the modern settlement is about 220 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period with a possibility of some earlier horizon.

Arua-

This site is situated just across the Manth branch of Ganga canal, opposite Darbai. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period with a strong possibility of the presence of an earlier horizon. Most of the site has been destroyed (which lied at the outskirts of the village) and the remaining lies underneath the modern village settlement.

Jabra-

This site is situated to the north of Arua village near to the canal. The area of the site is about 240 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back Kushan period with a strong possibility of the presence of an earlier horizon. The modern village has occupied the ancient site completely. Villagers told about the presence of some Buddhist shrine at the site as a Buddhist sculpture was stolen from the site some 20 years ago.

Jaiswan-

This site lies ahead of Jabra on the road linking Jabra with Gorai. The area of the site is about 250 x 210 x 9 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Nimgaon-

This site lies on the ancient route linking Gorai with Raya, about 4 km distant from Gorai. The present day village completely occupies the ancient site. The area of the site is about 260 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The famous Braj saint Nimbārkāchārya is believed to have some connection with this place.

Nasithi-

This ancient site occupied by the modern village is situated along the Ganga canal about 18 km distant from Raya. The area of the site is about 260 x 230 x 12 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Harnaul-

This site lies about 20 km distant from Raya along the canal, 2 km north of Nasithi. The area of the site is about 300 x 280 x 15 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The ancient name of the site might have been Huvīṣkṣpura or Haraṇapura. The local people call it as Hindol. The ancient site lies underneath the modern village settlement. At the outskirts of the village towards the canal, another smaller mound was observed which would have been a place of religious importance. Growse had suggested that the name of the village was derived from Har-Nawal, two brothers who were the landlord of the village but this view is untenable because I have seen some other important ancient sites by the name of Harnaul which do not derive their name from Har and Nawal.

Karahari-

This site lies 4 km east of Tentigaon near the canal. The area of the site is about 270 x 230 x 11 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods. The modern village completely occupies the ancient site.

Rajagarhi-

This site lies about 3 km north-west of Karahri. The mound was situated outside the village and was being destroyed by the villagers for possibly getting soil or something else. The area of the site is about 200 x 170 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kurwara-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Nasithi across the canal. The area of the site is about 200 x 210 x 8 m and is occupied by the modern village settlement. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a strong possibility of the presence of an earlier cultural horizon. Traditionally the site is considered to be the spot of Jahara vana. About three hundred metres outside the village towards the road to Nasithi, an ancient well with wedge shaped bricks was observed in the agricultural fields. The spot would have been of some religious importance possibly during the Kushan period but has been destroyed a lot by a local *bābā* for his small house. The rest of the site has been levelled by the villagers for agricultural purpose.

Iroli Junnardar-

This site is situated about 3 km north of Kurwara. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village settlement. The area of the site is about 200 x 170 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Hardpur-

This site is situated between Iroli and Karahari about 1 km south of the latter. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period. The ancient mound is occupied by the modern village settlement.

Kubra-

This site is situated in between Karahari and Gorai, about 3 km south-east of the former. The village comes under the old Aligarh district. The area of the site which is occupied by the modern village settlement is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Mound between Kubra and Jamon-

On the *kachcha* road linking Kubra with Jamon, a Kushan period site was observed outside Jamon. The size of the site was about 130 x 100 x 2 m. The site is in very disturbed condition. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Jamon Kalan-

This site is situated about 4 km north-west of Gorai. The area of the site is about 220 x 180 x 6 m. The village of Jamon Kalan is situated over the ancient site. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in old Aligarh district.

Sakrua-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Jamon near the Gorai-Gonda road. The size of the site is about 160 x 140 x 2 m. Post-Gupta findings were observed at the site

but there was possibility of it being a Kushan settlement, though, of very small scale. The site is occupied by the modern village. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Tond Nagla-

This site is situated about 4 km north of Gorai on the Gorai-Gonda road. The ancient site is currently occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 180 x 150 x 2 m. Kushan period bricks and pottery was observed near the road. The site definitely belongs to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Harji Ka Bans –

This site is situated about 300 m distant from Tond Nagla. A small mound of about 120 x 100 x 1 m dimensions was observed near the road outside the village. Most of the pottery from the site belonged to early medieval period but some potsherds belonged to the Kushan period. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Mahadaura-

This site is situated about 6 km north-west of Gorai. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village settlement. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Siktara-

This site is situated on the Gorai- Gonda road ahead of Harji ka Bans. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and its area is about 200 x 170 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period at least and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in the Aligarh district.

Gidaura-

This site is situated about 1 km east of Siktara. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 210 x 190 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Baksha-

This site is situated about 1 km south-east of Gidaura. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 210 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Khirsauli-

This site is situated about 500 m distant from Baksha. The area of the site is about 210 x 180 x 7 m. The site is situated atop the ancient site and dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Thatoi-

This site is situated about 1 km to the south-east of Khirsauli. The site is situated atop the ancient deposit with an area of about 200 x 170 x 9 m. The ancient mound starts to inhabit on an elevated surface. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Shahpur-

This site is situated about 1 km to the south-east of Thatoi. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 190 x 160 x 8 m. The site is situated on natural elevation and dates back to at least Kushan period as is usual with the sites having their name Shahpur. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Kaimawali-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Shahpur. The ancient mound is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 240 x 200 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods. This site lies in the Hathras district.

Matroi-

This site lies about 2 km to the south-east of Kaimawali. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 210 x 180 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in the Hathras district.

Bisahuli-

This site is situated along Karban River about 1.5 km to the south-west of Iglas. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village with an area of about 210 x 190 x 9. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with every possibility of the presence of earlier horizon in the form of Mauryan and P.G.W. culture. This site lies in the Hathras district.

Iglas-

This site is situated near Shivdan Singh Degree College. The area of the mound, now completely occupied is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to Post-Gupta and onward periods with some possibility of the presence of an earlier horizon as this site served as a junction of some important long distance routes. The site is situated on the bank of Karban river and lies in the Hathras district.

Hastpur-

This village is situated on the Mathura-Aligarh road, 9 km past Iglas. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern settlement and was partially free of habitation. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods. This site lies in the district of Hathras.---

Aiyera Khera-

It is situated about 4 km distant from Raya on the ancient route to Aligarh and Ahichchhatra from Mathura. Size of the mound is about 260 x 220 m with height of about 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period. Mauryan and later period potsherds were observed in the section of the mound. A Kushan period broken Yakṣa sculpture is still being worshipped at the site by the name of Khera bābā. The village is said to be earlier in habitation by kalārs who were chased out from here by the ancestors of the

present day population about 1000 years ago. A Kushan period Śivalinga and a medieval Sūrya image are still in worship at the outskirts of the village.

Kharba-

This site is situated about 2 km north-east of Raya. The ancient site is partially lies underneath the modern village and partially has been destroyed. The area of the site is about 100 x 100 x 2 m. The site dates back to post-Gupta period.

Dunaitiya-

This site is situated near the road joining Raya with Nimgaon, opposite Aiyyera-khera. The modern village is situated on the ancient deposit and some part of it is still visible at the outskirts of the village. The area of the site is about 190 x 170 x 4 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with possibility of some earlier archaeological deposit.

Nadaya-

This site is situated outside Dunaitiya about 500 m distant from the village. The site is the spot of some early medieval temple and some architectural fragments of that temple can be observed there. A modern temple has come up at the place. Walls of the old temple, even later than the first temple, built of *lakhori* bricks can be observed quite underneath the temple. The area of the site is about 50 x 40 x 2 m.

Bibawali-

This site is situated about 1 km south-west of Nimgaon near the Raya-Nimgaon road. The area of the site now occupied by the modern village is about 170 x 140 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Aira-

This site lies at the curve of the modern Aligarh road past the town of Raya. The area of the site is about 120 x 100 x 4 m. The site dates back to Post-Gupta period with a possibility of Kushan horizon in the lower layers. The ancient site lies underneath the modern village settlement.

Sathni-

This site lies about 12 km distant from Raya on the road to Aligarh. The ancient mound lies outside the village on the western side. The area of the site is about 130 x 100 x 4 m. The site dates back to post-Gupta period with a strong possibility for the presence of Kushan horizon. This site lies in the Hathras district.

Beswan-

This site of the ancient Viśvāmitrapurī lies 10 km south-west of Iglas near the road to Aligarh. The ancient site which is occupied by the modern town has an area of about 300 x 280 x 12 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until recent times. The site is also famous as Dharaṇīdhara Kṣetra. This site lies in Hathras district.

Qila Beswan-

This site is situated about 400 m west of Beswan. This mound was shaped in the form of a fortified area sometime during the medieval period. This site is about 330 x 280 x 12 m in area and dates back to P.G.W. period just like the main site of Beswan. This site lies in the Hathras district.

Tamotiya-

This site is situated about 4 km south-east of Gorai. The area of the site occupied by the modern village settlement is about 270 x 220 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods. This site lies in the Hathras district.

Gorai dhana-

It is one of the important sites in the area which serves as the junction of various ancient routes, especially the roads to Aligarh and Khair from Mathura. The area of the site is about 400 x 350 x 16 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onwards periods. The site is formed as three separate mounds, one of which is known as Khera of Shyamgarhi village while the nearby village of Dhana is a post-Gupta period site. This site lies in the Hathras district (old Aligarh district).

Itokari Tila, Manth (Mat)-

This world famous mound is situated about 500 m away from the Raya-Manth road on the right side and about 1 km before Manth. This small mound of about 110 x 100 m has provided a number of Kushan royal statues and was the site of Kushan *devakula*. It was excavated in 1918 by Pt. RadhaKṛṣṇa. The mound is roughly circular in shape and has a height of not more than 2.5 m. Moving from this site towards Manth, there are remains of an ancient *puṣkarīṇi* on the back side of Manth Thana. It is possibly a different pond from that excavated by Pt. RadhaKṛṣṇa. This pond is about 50 m square in shape. I would suggest that this pond should be excavated and preserved after the excavation. This would definitely provide some important evidences related with the Manth site as it seems to be associated with that site. The earlier excavated pond lies just in the vicinity of the Itokri Tila site.

Manth (Mat)-

The town of Manth is situated on the bank of river Yamuna. The mound of the site was disturbed when it was converted into a fortress during the late medieval period. The area of the site is about 250 x 240 x 8 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a strong possibility for the presence of earlier cultural horizons of P.G.W., N.B.P.W. and Śunga periods.

Chhanhri and Bhandir van-

Chhanhri village is situated near Yamuna on the Manth-Tentigaon route. This site is considered to be the place of origin by many north Indian Brāhmaṇs like Bhardwaj and Tiwaris. The site dates back to at least Kushan period as the findings from the village indicate. The size of this site is about 120 x 100 x 2 m. A little away from Chhanhri towards Yamuna, there lies an enclosed religious area, known as Bhandir van. A small mound of about 50 x 30 x 1.5 m dimension probably consists of the debris of a temple and related structures belonging to post-Gupta period (8th- 9th century A.D.). Some broken Hindu sculptures of the same period were observed there. There lies an ancient well near it. This well should be cleaned as there is a strong possibility of finding ancient images inside this well.

One very interesting point about Bhandira van is that Mahāvīra is said to have stayed at Bhāṇḍīra Udyāna when he had visited Mathura. This Bhandir van should be identified with Bhāṇḍīra Udyāna. Though archaeologically this site can not be proved to be in existence during circa 6th century B.C., there is the ancient site of Bhadra van near it which can be identified as the habitation deposit of the people living near Bhandir van.

Bijholi-

Along the river some 600 m away from Bhandira vana is the site of Bijholi, located near *khadar* land. The area of the site is about 150 x 130 m with a height of about 2-3 metre. The deposit mainly belongs to medieval period (early to late), but some early pottery of 2nd - 3rd century A.D. was also found from the deposit at the site. There is a possibility that it might have worked as a temporary extension for the site of Bhadravan during Kushan period.

Bhadravan-

This is located along Yamuna about 500 m north of Bijholi. This is a typical archaeological mound on which agricultural activity is being done. The size of the mound is about 240 x 210 m with a height of about 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W., N.B.P.W. onward periods. Presence of Kushan and Gupta bricks as well as ring-wells was observed at the mound. This mound must be taken under Government protection. It is one of the better mounds from excavation point of view.

Tentigaon-

This village site is located about 10 km distant from Manth. From here, the route bifurcates and one goes towards Nohjhil, Bajna and other towards Aligarh via Khair and both are ancient routes. Tentigaon is a mound of about 170 x 130 x 5 m dimensions, on which the present village is located. Kushan red ware pottery could be found from here. It is slightly away from the river Yamuna, where in the alignment of Tentigoan, another early site Eroli Gujar is situated, so the importance of Tentigaon seems to be more as a junction point for various ancient routes. On further investigations, this site might come out to be an earlier settlement.

Eroli Gujar-

It is a lofty mound along Yamuna of about 10 m height, on which modern village is situated. The area of the site is about 190 x 150 m. This site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to be in habitation in the successive phases of Mauryan, Śunga, Kushan, Gupta and medieval period. On the other side of river is the important site of Nandghat which is almost equidistant from Bhadravana, Eroli and Ohawa. In this sense this site would have served as a crossing point to go towards Nandghat in ancient times.

Auhawa-

This is a similar type of mound as Eroli Gujar. The modern village is located over it. It is also situated along Yamuna. This site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to be in habitation in the successive phases of Mauryan, Śunga, Kushan, Gupta and medieval period. The size of the mound is about 230 x 200 x 10 m.

Bidhauni-

This lofty mound, on which the modern village is situated, lies between Ohawa and Mirpur along Yamuna. I found some P.G.W. sherds from here. The height of mound is about 10 m with an area of about 240 x 200 m. It continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until the recent times.

Surir-

This site was an important town till 100 years back, larger than Nohjhil and Manth. The actual name of the town is said to be Sugriva ka Khera. The modern town has engulfed the portions of the mound. The size of the mound is about 340 x 280 m with a height of about 15 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods till the recent times.

Bhadanwara-

This village site occupying the ancient mound is situated 1 km to the east of Surir. The area of the site is about 240 x 220 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Lohai-

This village site is situated about 5 km to the east of Surir. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 250 x 230 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Badanpur-

This village site occupying the ancient mound is situated about 1 km north of Lohi. The area of the ancient site is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods.

Bhalai-

This village is situated about 8 km to the east of Surir and about 7 km north of Gorai. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 260 x 240 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Jarara-

This village is situated about 4 km to the north-east of Surir. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 220 x 9 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods till the recent times.

Bera-

This site is situated about 1 km to the north of Jarara village. The ancient site is lying underneath the modern village and has an area of about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Khaira-

This site is situated on the Tentigaon-Khair road about 7 km to the north-east of Surir. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods till the recent times.

Mirpur-

This village site is situated past Surir on Mathura-Nohjhil road. The mound is partly unoccupied on the left side of the road. The area of mound is about 230×210 m and with a height about 5 m. The earliest occupation at the site belongs to P.G.W. period as could be identified by pottery. The site continued to be in habitation during the succeeding periods.

Sikandarpur-

This village site occupying the ancient deposit is situated about 2.5 km distant from Mirpur. The area of the site is about $230 \times 210 \times 5$ m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Hasanpur-

This ancient site occupied by the modern village is situated about 5 km to the east of Mirpur. The area of the ancient site is about $250 \times 230 \times 11$ m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval period.

Ikhu-

This village is situated about 8 km to the north-east of Mirpur and is situated about 3 km east of Naoli. The ancient site which has been occupied by the modern settlement has an area of about $230 \times 210 \times 10$ m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods till the recent times.

Palkhera-

This village site is situated about 6 km to the east of Nohjhil town. The area of the ancient mound occupied by the modern village is about $250 \times 230 \times 10$ m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Barauth-

This village site is situated about 3 km to the east of Nohjhil town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods.

Bagharra-

The village of Bagharra is situated over the ancient mound. The area of the mound is about 240 x 200 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods until medieval times. In between Bagharra and Barauth, there lies another ancient mound called as Sher ka Khera. The size of the abandoned mound is about 240 x 220 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Nohjhil-

This is a huge lofty mound, first reported by Dr. R.C. Gaur. This mound covers an area of about 430 x 330 m, with maximum height about 23 m. This mound was disturbed probably for some fortification during late medieval period. P.G.W. and later period cultures have been identified at this mound. The area of this mound may be much larger. Some sherds with incised zig-zag pattern quite similar to O.C.P. tradition were also observed at the site. There is a lake situated by the side of the mound.

Parsauli-

This village is situated about 2 km south-east of Bajna town. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern settlement. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The ancient name of the site would have been Parāśarapurī.

Bajna-

This mound site is fully occupied by the modern town. The area of the mound is about 380 x 320 m; the height of mound is about 14 m. Bajna is generally a name of sites in the region of Braj where some Kushan period Buddhist monastery had been situated. This Bajna occupies a very important place as far as various ancient trade routes alignments are concerned. The ancient mound of the town can be located in the Uparkot

mohalla. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods and was an important town of ancient times which still has some importance as a town in the region.

Shall-

This site is situated about 4 km to the south-east of Bajna town. The area of the ancient mound occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. Local people believe that the name of the village has been derived from the King Śalya of *Mahābhārata* fame.

Naoli-

This village is situated about 7 km to the south-east of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern habitation is about 240 x 220 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Pachahra-

This site is situated about 7 km to the east of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the ancient village is about 260 x 240 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Edalgarhi-

This site is situated about 3 km to the north-east of Bajna town. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern settlement. The area of the ancient site is about 230 x 210 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods.

Kaulahar-

This site is situated about 5 km to the east of Bajna town on the road to Khair. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 230 x 210 x 7 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods.

Katailiya-

This site is situated about 2 km west of Bajna. The area of the site presently occupied by the modern settlement is about 230 x 220 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a possibility of the presence of P.G.W. and other cultural horizons in between.

Kulana-

This small village site occupying the ancient mound is situated about 2 km west of Bajna on the route to Musamna. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods.

Musamna-

This site is the next ancient site lying along river Yamuna past Nohjhil. The area of the site is about 250 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods. It would have been a crossing point of river Yamuna in the ancient time to go towards Majhoi and other *cis*- Yamuna sites.

Khera Pakhodana-

This site is situated near the Yamuna *khadar* area about 14 km west of Bajna town. The area of the site is about 240 x 200 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in district Aligarh near the boundary with Mathura district.

Untasani-

This site is situated further upstream from Pakhodana along river Yamuna. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 10 m and the site is occupied by the modern village. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during succeeding periods until medieval times. This site lies in the old Aligarh district.

Awakhera-

This site is situated about 4 km to the north-west of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Manigarhi-

This site is situated about 11 km to the north-west of Nohjhil near Yamuna *khadar* land. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 260 x 240 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Mangarhi-

This site is situated about 14 north-west of Nohjhil town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 250 x 230 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kaneka-

This site is situated about 5 km to the north of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods.

Sakatpur-

This site is situated about 6 km to the north of Bajna town. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 230 x 200 x 9 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Lohvan (Lohban)-

This site of Purāṇic association is situated at a distance of about 2.5 km from Mathura. Here during my explorations, I found a mound in the village of about 240 x 200 x 6 m dimensions. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until recent times. Modern village is situated on the ancient mound and around it. Near an ancient pond, I found a Kushan image, though broken with only lower part surviving and having polished surface (possibly because of oil). It is being worshipped as Lohasura, the Purāṇic demon who was killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa. At a village temple near it, I found a beautiful but broken Umā- Maheśvara mūrti of about 8th century

A.D. Some other unidentifiable sculptures were also lying there. Recently, one images of goddess Durgā has been found from the pond, which has a unique feature, as she is holding Śivalinga in one of her four hands. I could not see that images, so its period could not be ascertained. It came to my notice that the original image found from the pond was smuggled out the same day and another modern image was put there to befool the people of the area. From Lohvan the ancient route goes towards Sadabad, one route via Gokul, Mahavan, Baldev and the other route goes via Gosna, Kakretiya/ Raya, Khirari, Bandi, Baldev.

Gokul -

Gokul is situated about 8 km south of Lohvan. At Gokul, there are many elevations, mostly natural, but some of them might be as old a settlement as Vrindavan dating back to P.G.W. period. The site of a mound which I explored at Gokul is situated little outside the main town and is locally known as Pajaya. One mound here is intact while another small mound might have existed there as appears from the destructed sections. The whole area would range between 180 x 160 m. The maximum height of the intact mound is about 10 m. The archaeological deposit belongs to as early as Kushan and Gupta periods. Near this mound is a 17th – 18th century structure with a beautiful garden which should be protected and might be developed for tourism activities. Near the main mound on two sides there is a depression, which might be related with the site. At the back of this mound, there lies one quite beautiful pond, renovated in 19th century by some seth of Mumbai. It was quite interesting to note that the name of Bombay city was written as Mumbai in this 19th century inscription which is actually the recent name of the India's largest city.

Mound at the entrance of Mahavan-

As one enters the town, there is a mound on the left side of road which is rapidly being lost. This mound is about 7 m high. Red ware pottery was found from the mound. The size of the mound is about 120 x 80 m. In a nearby temple, some Kushan and medieval images were kept.

Mound at Sarai Ali Khan-

Mound at Sarai Ali khan is situated about 600 m away from the above mentioned mound which is situated along the Gokul-Mahavan road. Shape, size and nature of these mounds are same as that of Gokul.

The Protected Site at Mahavan-

This mound of Mahaban is a huge one with an area of apx. 800 x 700 m. The 17th century Assi Khamba Temple is a part of this mound. The average height of the mound is about 6 m. The pottery present at the site appears to be medieval red ware. In the early 11th century, there was the fort of king Kulachandra whom Mahumud of Ghazni had defeated in 1017 A.D. Though one or two Kushan images have been reported from Mahavan area, I could not find any Kushan remains at this huge mound because of overlying medieval deposit. This is one of the larger mounds in the region and might belong to pre- Kushan period, even as early as P.G.W. period.

Here, I want to mention one important point. Some scholars like M.C. Joshi and Shiva G. Bajpai have identified this Mahavan with Carisobora of Megasthenes. Until archaeologically it is proved that during pre-Mauryan times Mahavan was a large urban settlement, it needs not to be emphasised. I couldn't find any Mauryan or even Kushan remains at this site. So I do not support this identification. In Indica's reference Megasthenes has mentioned about two major cities in Sorasenoï, one Methora and the other Carisobora. Between these cities river Iobres (Yamuna) flowed. There is no mention of the distance. We don't know the Mauryan period names of the cities of Hathras and Aligarh which are nearly as large a site as Mathura itself. So, Megasthenes might have mentioned about any one of them and if the site was situated just across the river, then there is no option left other than Gosna.

Hathaura-

This site is situated about 1.5 km ahead of Baldev on the road linking Mathura with Baldev. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Baldev or Dauji-

This is an important ancient town. The sculpture which is worshipped as the chief deity has been identified by some scholars as an image of Kushan period. Balarāma was an important deity during Kushan period and Baldev (ancient name Reedo Grāma) is considered his birth place and his city. So it must have been an important city during Kushan reign. From here the route goes to many important sites like Sadabad, Jalesar and Kampila; Akos, Agra. It would have served as an important junction of various routes for the people travelling via the route along Yamuna.

Selkhera-

This site is situated about 11 km to the south-east of Baldev. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 210 x 200 x 8 m and the site dates back to P.G.W. and succeeding periods until medieval times.

Barauli-

This site is situated in between Selkhera and Akos. The site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times. Possibly an image of Kushan period was found from here, now housed at Mathura Museum.

Sent khera-

This site lies about 10 km distant from Baldev moving along Yamuna. The site is situated just touching the river Yamuna and is an isolated mound away from the nearby village Barha. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval period. At the site, a devī temple is situated and at the top of the mound, new encroachment in the form of a building for a local bābā can be observed. A Jaina sculptural panel and many other broken sculptural fragments were observed at the site lying in a heap. A lot of destruction has taken place at the site by the flooding of the river Yamuna.

Akos-

This site is situated along river Yamuna about 20 km south-east of Baldev. The site is situated on a very sharp curve of Yamuna. I must mention that Yamuna has taken so many turns in this area that one gets confused while moving to various sites. The site is very much destroyed by the floods and the fact that two broken terracottas of N.B.P.W. period and a P.G.W. sherd were observed at the site with no substantial deposit of these early periods visible, there is every possibility that the area of the actual site would have been much larger as an important town. The site is serving as a cross-over point for river Yamuna to go towards Agra at Runkata and Sikandara. The actual site is very small and contains not more than 10 houses atop it but still everybody at Baldev would indicate the road going towards it as the road to Akos. In the local newspapers, there is a separate page for the news of Akos which indicates towards the great importance which this place enjoyed in the past. It certainly means that in the past it would have been a very important settlement. The villagers told that the site was about 350 x 300 x 12 m in dimensions before the calamity of 1978 floods, the heaviest flood of the 20th century. Most of the villages in the nearby area including Nagla Akos at a distance of 3 km, have originated from this Akos. The kind of horse shoe lakes formed in the area needs further archaeological exploration as it can provide some still unknown information. I suggest this site to be similar to the site mentioned in *Anguttaranikāya* as Akkosa, possibly lying on the route to Mathura from Sravasti.

Gol-

This site is situated near the *khadar* land along river Yamuna and is about 3 km distant from the site of Akos with no access to the site. The site should lie in between the sites of Sent Khera and Akos along Yamuna. One can reach the site only after travelling for about 2 km on foot across the agricultural fields. The site is about 240 x 220 x 9 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The site is already destroyed a lot because of Yamuna floods and is free of modern structures except for some small shrines.

Midhawali-

This site is situated about 7 km east of Akos near river Yamuna. The site partially occupied by the modern village settlement and partially unoccupied, belongs to Kushan

onward periods with strong possibility for the presence of P.G.W. and later cultural horizon. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 7 m.

Gukhrauli-

This ancient village site is situated near river Yamuna near the border of old Mathura district with Agra. The area of the site is about 240 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to Kushan period with a strong possibility for the presence of an earlier cultural horizon in the form of P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. period. From this village site, a mother with child sculpture of Kushan period was found which is now housed at Mathura Museum.

Shahpur-Gosna-

This site situated on the ancient route to Sankisa via Hathras, is about 5 km distant from Mathura across Yamuna on the Raya Road. This is one of the best archaeological sites still unoccupied in the Mathura region and is in Government protection. Though, at the site, I came to know from a local man that 62 acres of the land was in Government protection but because of corruption in A.S.I., only 32 acres are now under Government protection. An outer brick boundary as well as wire fencing has been provided at the site recently.

During my explorations, I found it to be a very promising site for the archaeological studies in Mathura. The total area of site is well out of the boundary and goes much further crossing the road and the metre gauge railway track (from April 2009 changed to broad gauge) in the agricultural fields. Its area is approximately 450 x 400 m with maximum height 14-15 m. If the spread of pottery is taken into consideration, then the area of the site might exceed 800 m x 600 m. The earliest culture known from the site is P.G.W. of early tradition, associated with B.R.W and B.S.W. But its antiquity will go much further as some sherds of Black and Red Ware found from here belong to the first half of 2nd millennium B.C. Mat impression was found on one of such sherds, another was burnished like Neolithic Black and Red Ware. The pre-Mauryan and Mauryan cultures at the site were quite prosperous as is evident from the quantity and quality of grey colour terracotta mother goddess and animal figurines as well as of pottery.

This site was under habitation during Śūṅga, Kushan, Gupta and post-Gupta periods as is evidenced by various potsherds, terracottas and sculptural finds. Though, after post-Gupta period whether it was in regular habitation or not, is not yet clear but there are some evidences of the Mughal period habitation. Evidence of late medieval fortification is also present at the site. To me it appears as an important township during P.G.W. and Mauryan periods on the ancient route to Hathras and Sankisa. If Carisobora of Megasthenes was just across the river, then this site can be identified with Carisobora.

Another aspect about the name of the site is that it might have been derived from the word *godhāsanā* as it is used for Gaurī (*godhāsanā bhaved Gaurī*), and some temple at the site might have an image of *Godhāsanā* Gaurī and hence the name. It would have changed to Gosna with the passage of time while the site became abandoned for some time.

Malha-Kakretiya-

This site is located on a local link route between Gosna and Khirari, about 8 km from Mathura. From here, I found a Kushan site of about 180 x 160 m dimension with a maximum height of 1 m from the ground. Though the deposit is more than 2 m thick at present, villagers told me that the site was quite loftier earlier but was cut for agricultural purpose. When the mound was being levelled for agricultural purpose, one broken lower part of a Kushan Hārītī red sand stone image was found. Along with it one head of a deity (in all probability the Buddha) of Kushan period, made of red sand stone was also found, which was stolen by the smugglers. One image of a deity made of black sand stone was also found from here belonging to early medieval period. To me, this site appears to be a monastic establishment of Kushan period which was used for regular habitation in the succeeding periods.

Sihora-

This site is situated about 3 km distant from Gosna and about 2 km distant from Kakretiya mound. The area of the site which is presently occupied by the modern village is about 180 x 150 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Karab-

This site is situated about 2 km distant from Sihore on the road linking Raya with Baldev. The modern village is situated over the ancient site. The area of the ancient site is about 200 x 170 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. There is strong possibility of the presence of an earlier archaeological horizon at this site.

Raya-

Raya, now an important town of Mathura district is situated as the link between various routes. It is about 10 km distant from Mathura on Hathras road. The present town is situated on the top of the ancient mound. The area of the mound is about 380 x 340 m. with a maximum height of 12 m. The antiquity of this site goes back to at least P.G.W. period and continues during the succeeding periods until recent times. During 1950's some part of this mound was free from habitation but now it is fully occupied. This site said to be the treasure town of Nanda Rāya, might have derived its name from Rāyan (possibly used for Lord Kṛṣṇa) who is said to be the husband of Rādhā - the goddess of Braj. Besides it is the site of Kaimar vana, the spot of which can be located at a small mound at the periphery of the town while going towards Goga village. At this spot of Kaimar vana, *dassehra* ceremony is organised every year. The elders of the village told that the site was much larger earlier but was cut by the people of the town. The deposit of this small mound was found to be quite similar to the mounds of Vishwalakshmi nagar, Chamunda etc.

Bisawali-

This site is situated about 1 km to the right of Raya-Sonai road, past Raya. The ancient site which is now occupied by the modern village is about 150 x 130 x 4 m in dimensions. The site dates back to post-Gupta and medieval periods.

Sonai-

It is an important site on the ancient route from Mathura to Kampil and Sankisa. It lies almost equidistant from the famous sites of Mathura and Hathras. The size of the mound which is upto an extent occupied by the Muslim population is about 280 x 240 x 9

m. The antiquity of site goes back to at least P.G.W. period as some sherds of it were observed in the lowest visible section of the mound on the back side of the town which is occupied by low caste Hindus. A broken Mauryan mother goddess figurine of grey colour was observed in the deposit as well as the villagers told about the finding of some terracotta moulds from there belonging to either Śunga or Kushan period. It is from this side of the town that the ancient road towards the site of Gurera and further in the Baldev-Sadabad area goes.

Itauli-

This site is situated about 6 km distant from Raya. A very disturbed mound was observed at the village, some part of which is occupied by the village and the rest by agricultural fields. The size of the site is about 200 x 160 x 4 m. Gupta period onwards evidences were observed during the surface explorations. But Kushan deposit was certainly there at the site as a Nāga sculpture at a village shrine was observed by J. Ph. Vogel which he dated to Kushan period. Besides, a Gupta period terracotta head and an image of Jina Ādinātha of circa 9th century are the important finds from the site in the recent explorations. As far as the name of the village is concerned I think it might be a local corruption of the word Iṣṭapurī or Istoli. The finds from the site definitely belong to Brāhmanical and Jaina religion.

Mursainiya-

Between the sites of Khirari and Itauli this village site is situated. Although this site does not appear to be pre-11th century site, but still it seems important for its name as its name is derived from the ancient site of Mursan on the Mathura-Hathras road. The name of the village is said to be based on the *gotra* of Mursainiya brāhmaṇas and it indicates that the name of Mursan, Tuksan and Lutsan – all in district Hathras might be pre-Islamic (actually Scythian) in their origin.

Madaim-

This site is situated on the Raya-Sadabad road about 5 km distant from Raya. The ancient site which is occupied by the modern village is about 180 x 150 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Anaura-

This site lies in between Raya and Sadabad on the Raya-Sadabad road. Some part of the site lies outside the village. The area of the site is about 180 x 170 x 4 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval period.

Gurera-

This extensive mound lies on the route of the important archaeological sites of Sonkh khera and Pachawar from Sonai. This mound is an abandoned site. The size of the mound is about 280 x 250 x 10 m. It dates back to at least P.G.W. period and on excavations there is possibility of finding still earlier cultural remains. Overall view of the mound is very much like Shahpur-Gosna mound except for any later period fortification evidence as observed at Gosna. A nearby pond also seems to be belonging to the ancient habitation.

Sonkh khera-

It lies about 10 km distant from Raya in between the roads linking Raya with Baldev and Sadabad. This village site in recent times has been occupied by the villagers completely. The mound is almost of the same nature as is the famous Sonkh site which was excavated by Hartel. The dimensions of the site are 280 x 250 x 12 m apx. The antiquity of the site dates back to P.G.W. period at least and continues in the later periods as at other sites. There must have been in existence some glorious temples during the Kushan and Gupta period at the site as the scattered remains at local shrines indicate.

Talgarhi-

About 700 m distant from Sonkh this site is situated. Named thus because of a huge pond (*tāla*) near the village. No significant deposit was observed at the site but some post-Gupta sculptural pieces were observed at a shrine there. It might have been a temporary site for the agricultural purposes of the settlers of Sonkh khera village in the past as early as Kushan period.

Pachawar-

This site is also of the same nature as the site of Sonkh khera situated at a distance of about 3 km from the latter site. The present village completely occupies the ancient mound. The size of the mound is about 280 x 240 x 15 m. Mauryan mother goddess

terracotta figurines were observed kept at a religious shrine in the village. Besides, some chance finds of P.G.W. sherds also proves that the site dates back to at least 10th century B.C. Some Kushan stone objects of some strange nature were also observed at the site.

Daghaintha-

This site is situated about 4 km distant from Pachawar while moving towards Khandoli in district Agra. The area of the site is about 240 x 210 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during succeeding periods until medieval times. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village settlement.

Gotha-

This site is situated ahead of Daghaintha while moving towards Khandoli from Sonkh khera. The area of the site, presently occupied by the modern village is about 170 x 160 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Avairani-

This site lies between Pachawar and Baldev about 2 km before the latter site. The size of the site is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. Kushan onwards cultural evidences were observed at the site. Possibility of an earlier stratum at the site can not be declined as it is fully occupied by the modern settlement. The name of the village appears to be of ancient origin with minor change after the advent of Muslims at the site. The local people pronounce the name as Bainni.

Bandi-

This modern village located on the ancient mound is situated on Baldev-Raya road, about 8 km distant from Baldev. The area of the mound is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation in the succeeding periods up to recent times. The place is traditionally related with some *bandī* or *dhāya* of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Presently there is a temple of goddesses Anandi and Bandi which is quite popular in the region. The images of these deities date back to early medieval period.

Jagdishpur-

This site is situated about 2 km west of village Bandi. The area of the site occupied by a medieval *haveli* and the village is about 200 x 180 x 9 m. The site dates

back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Khirari-

This site is situated near Raya-Baldev road. A portion of the mound is free from habitation, while most of it is occupied by the modern village. The area of mound is about 240 x 220 m with a height of about 8-9 m. Mauryan grey ware as well as fine grey ware of P.G.W. tradition were found from the nearby fields. These finds date back the site to at least 7th century B.C. Many bricks of larger size, generally found in Mauryan period, were also observed at the village near a school.

Jugsana-

This site is situated near the road linking Raya with Sadabad. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and is about 240 x 220 x 10 m in area. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This is one of the important sites in the *trans*-Yamuna region.

Baltikri-

This site is situated between Jugsana and Sarkand Khera. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 210 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Unchagaon-

This site is also situated near the road linking Raya with Sadabad. The site was earlier as large as nearby site of Jugsana. Some part of the site was unoccupied outside the village but has been destroyed a lot by the powerful unruly villagers. The area of the site was about 250 x 220 x 9 m and the site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Sites situated to the right of Mathura- Aligarh road:

Mursan-

This site is situated on the Mathura-Hathras road. The ancient mound which was given the shape of a fortified area during late medieval period lies outside the small town.

The area of the site to the right of the road is about 270 x 240 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Jawar-

This site is situated 4 km north-east of Sonai. The area of the site is about 230 x 220 x 7 m. The site dates back to Mauryan and onward periods. The modern village settlement is situated over the ancient site. The route linking Mursan with Beswan and Sonai passes from this village.

Mankrol-

This site is situated ahead of Jawar on the route linking Mursan with Beswan. The area of the site is about 200 x 160 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods. The modern village is situated over the ancient deposits.

Kapurkhera-

This site is situated about 2 km north-east of Mankrol. The area of the mound presently occupied by the modern village is about 180 x 160 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Tochigarh-

This site is situated near Hathras-Iglas road past Tuksan about 8 km distant from Hathras. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 280 x 230 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Lalpur-

This site is situated along river Karban, just 1 km distant from Iglas to the right side of Mathura-Aligarh road. The area of the site presently occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 170 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period with the possibility of an earlier cultural horizon.

Sitapur-

This site is situated about 1 km distant from Iglas near the Iglas-Hathras road. The site is very much similar to the site of Lalpur in nature. The area of the village site is about 210 x 170 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period.

Kheriya Gurudev-

This site is situated near the road linking Iglas with Sasni about 5 km distant from Iglas. The area of the site presently occupied by the village is about 180 x 150 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods.

Kanka-

This village site occupying the ancient mound is situated near the road linking Iglas with Sasni, about 5 km distant from Iglas. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Gangagarhi-

This site is situated on the road linking Mursan with Iglas, about 6 km distant from Mursan. The mound is an isolated 1 km distant from the village Gangagarhi in front of Balipur. The area of the mound is about 180 x 150 x 3 m. The site belongs to Kushan and onward cultural periods.

Khera Baramai-

This ancient mound, presently occupied by the village Baramai is situated about 1 km to the left of Mathura-Hathras road about 6 km distant from Hathras. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Asroi-

This site is situated about 4 km to the left of Mathura-Hathras road and about 8 km distant from Hathras. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and is about 200 x 160 x 4 m in dimensions. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Explorations along river Yamuna and the sites situated between Mathura-Hodal road (N.H. 2) and Yamuna:

P.M.V. Polytechnic-

A Kushan period site was explored in the forest area in front of P.M.V. Polytechnic. The area of the mound is about 180 x 160 m and height is approximately 1-1.5 m. The mound is situated near the Yamuna *khadar* soil and is like many other such mounds along river Yamuna like the Gond-Atas, Jhandipur etc. The mound is quite disturbed because of frequent floods of the river. The site continued in habitation during Gupta and post-Gupta period as the stamped pottery pieces indicate. The deposit in my opinion is slightly different from regular deposits of other mounds in the region and might have belonged to some different kind of settlers.

Tehra-

This village site is located in between Mathura and Vrindavan on the left side of the road. During explorations I found at an almost completely destroyed mound, Kushan and later period's deposit. There was an ancient tank touching it. From this tank many sculptures have been found, but these seems to have been smuggled out. The size of the mound which is very much lost, because of human activities is about 100 x 120 m. One mould made red colour t.c. figurine with its head missing (of some goddess) was found from here. The height of the destroyed mound is about 1-1.5 m.

Vrindavan-

The most famous town of Mathura, Vrindavan is situated 8 km distant from Mathura along the river Yamuna. Generally, Vrindavan is considered as a medieval settlement but scholars forget the fact that old Vrindavan is situated on small mounds of 3-4 metre height and at some places up to 12 m height and it has been one of the most popular centres of pilgrimage for the last 800 years at least, so to find the ancient remains from here is very difficult as the whole old area is under occupation. Many Kushan sculptures have been reported from Vrindavan. Inscribed Kushan bricks as well as Gupta bricks have been found at the foundation of Madan Mohan temple. This mound of Madan

Mohan temple is known as Dwadash Aditya Tila. Near the Vrindavan railway station at Bhangipara a lofty mound of about 10 m height was observed by me, which has structural deposit of different periods, starting from Kushan period at least. The main area of ancient habitation should be about 500 x 450 x 8 m in dimensions. I am of the opinion that it might prove to be a settlement as early as P.G.W. period at least if some excavations are done at an appropriate spot. This assumption is based on the location of the site as well as archaeological findings from such type of sites in the region. This assumption is further supported by the presence of a number of archaeological mounds belonging to P.G.W. cultural phase on the opposite side of Vrindavan along Yamuna near Panigaon. Besides, Akrur Tila, Kankor Tila and Ahalyaganj mound lied in between Mathura and Vrindavan and have been discussed in detail in the chapter on Buddhism in Mathura.

Sunrakh-

This village site is located along Yamuna just 1 km away from Vrindavan. It is situated on a curve of Yamuna. The whole village is situated on lofty mounds, naturally made of Yamuna deposit as well as ancient habitation mounds. Size of the village is about 200 × 180 m with height of about 8 m. One Śaka Kushan period image holding a dagger and a sword and wearing indigenous style of drapery was found at a village shrine along with some other Kushan, Gupta and post-Gupta sculptural pieces. It is believed that at this village Saubhari Ṛṣi performed penances and hence the name Sunrakh.

Gond Atas-

On moving further from Sunrakh along Yamuna, at this site I explored archaeological deposit of Kushan and succeeding periods. The archaeological deposit is situated near *khadar* land just like Sunrakh village. The size of site is about 180 x 160 x 5 m. At some distance from the main site, on a natural sandy mound early medieval deposit with bricks and pottery of that period was also observed. It has to be kept in mind that this whole deposit is very disturbed and scattered as well. It is believed that Ṛṣi Aṣṭavakra performed his penances here, so the name Atas for the village.

Badi Atas-

This site is quite similar to the site of Gond Atas and the nature of its archaeological deposit is also similar to that site. But unlike Gond Atas site, its archaeological deposit is occupied by the modern village settlement and its size is slightly smaller in comparison to Gond Atas. At some distance from the site in a field as well as at the entrance of the village, medieval period deposit belonging to the followers of Islam was observed who would have occupied the site during the period of Islamic rule in India.

Chhoti Atas / Devi Atas-

This village seems to have been a religious site for the past 1500 years. There is a famous temple of a goddess, image of whom was found in the nearby ancient tank. The images lying there belong to post-Gupta period. But some late Gupta broken sculpture were also observed at the site during my early visits to the site but during my last visit I could not find these. The villagers told that these broken sculptures were thrown away in the temple pond. I doubt that these might have been smuggled out by the smugglers. The small mound near the pond is about 50 x 40 m in dimension with a maximum height of 1-1.5 m. Aurangzeb is said to have destroyed the ancient temple situated there. The main goddess image is an early image and is very revered by the people of nearby region. The regular habitation deposit would have lied near the temple, possibly in the village itself but it does not appear to be earlier than the Kushan period. This village is the place of the Braj goddess Ekānamśā- the sister of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma.

Ramtal-

This village is situated about 2 km distant from Chhatikara. In the village nothing significant was observed but surprisingly at the place Ramtal by which name the village is known, turned out to be a Kushan and Gupta period site while it was being dug out for getting soil. The pond lies about 700 m distant from the village. The actual name of the pond might have been Balarāma Tala which came to be known as Ramatala later on. This whole area is full of ancient spots earlier connected with Balarāma and the nearby village of Devi Atas is actually the place of his sister Ekānamśā.

Sakraya-

This village site is situated along river Yamuna near the *khadar* land. The present day village has occupied the ancient site in parts. The size of the mound is about 200 x 190 m with a height of about 5 m. The cultural sequence of the site seems to have started from about 2nd century B.C. as the finding of some Śunga period sherds indicate. It became quite important during the Kushan period and continued in habitation throughout the medieval period up to recent times. The name of the village should be a corrupt form of the word Shakambhari as the Shakambhari Devī near Sikar in Rajasthan is known as Sakhraya in local language. Mathura region certainly had some irrefusable link with the cult of Shakambhari Devī in the past, though it is not as popular now-a-days.

Parkham Gujar-

This ancient site is situated on the Chhatikara-Sehi route past Devi Atas. The modern village is situated over the ancient remains. The dimensions of the site are 250 x 220 x 6 m approximately. This site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. Two ancient *pokhars* are situated near the mound. One Śunga Yakṣī plaque and a red sand stone Yakṣa plaque of Kushan period were observed at a village shrine. Some other images were of Kushan and Gupta periods. This site is related with the legend of Lord Brahmā taking examination of child Kṛṣṇa for his divinity. Because of this *parīkṣam* (examination), this village is called as Parikham.

Pasauli-

This ancient site lies between Sehi and Tarauli, two important ancient sites in the region. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 6 m. This site dates back to at least Mauryan period as the pottery finds indicate. The site continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. As the ancient site is completely occupied by the modern village, there is still possibility of the presence of a P.G.W. period horizon at the site. This site is also related with mythology as it is also related with the legend of Nāga demon King Aghāsura like the nearby site of Tarauli. There lies an important ancient pond in the village.

Sehi Bihariji-

This site is located outside Sehi village at a distance of about 800 m toward Yamuna. This is a late medieval mound with red ware pottery scattered all over the surface. The site has also provided some Kushan period red ware sherds as well. I consider this site to be an extension of the main habitation mound of Sehi known as Garh mound. This place became more popular during the medieval period and a *baoli* of late medieval period was excavated there near this mound. This 17th century *baoli* still exists there and requires cleaning and conservation. Near this site, there lies the famous temple of Bihariji. The medieval idol of the temple was found near the site either from Brahmkund or from Yamuna shore. Actually, there were found three medieval images at that spot. One of them is now housed at the Bihariji temple at Chhata, second image is in private possession of a powerful Gosain at Sehi village and the third was being worshipped as the deity in this temple. From an elderly powerful person of the village I came to know that the original image of the temple was somehow destroyed by the priest and he replaced that with another image. In all probability I think that these three images found altogether should belong to some famous temple at Vrindavan, possibly Jugal Kishore or Madan mohanji which would have been thrown there after crossing Yamuna to protect them from Muslim attackers. An important Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu image of circa 6th century A.D. was found from this village which is now housed at Mathura Museum. I think that it would have also been found from this temple site. Brahmkund situated near the temple is very significant from religious point of view. It is said that this is the site of Purāṇic Vatsa van where Lord Brahmā had stolen the cattle of child Kṛṣṇa. Because of Kṛṣṇa's illusion Brahmā found these cattle at Brahmaloaka as well as near Lord Kṛṣṇa, so he exclaimed! Is it right (*sahī*) or that right (*sahī*), hence the name of the village Sehi. Whatever might be the truth, there is no denying that whenever I visit the place, I have some inexplicable sentiments, might be because of it being my ancestral village.

Sehi Garh-

This is a very good mound, 800 m away from the village towards Yamuna. The size of mound is about 280 x 260 m and height about 16 m. Just near it 100 m away another mound is situated, though this mound is not so old and is Kushan and later period's site with an area of about 150 x 120 m (stamped pottery and pottery with mica

content was also found there). The height of this mound lying on Yamuna sandy deposit is about 7 m and deposit's thickness is not more than 2 m. The main mound has provided P.G.W., N.B.P.W. and later period's evidences up to 17th century or even later. Some crude fortification activity took place at the site during medieval period. For all the sites within a distance of 5 km from here, this site of Sehi was the important settlement for supplying the materials of daily need and was a kind of a town settlement.

Earlier this site was not in habitation except for one small brick structure at the top of mound where one *bābā* used to live, but for the past few years, villagers have occupied a large part of the mound and have constructed a '*gaushala*' there. This mound must be protected and taken care of by the Government.

Indrauli-

This is an isolated mound situated on the route going towards Tarauli from Sehi. The exact location of the site is on the left of this road about 1 km distant from Sehi's tonga stand. The site is a similar type of mound as have been observed near Ranhera and Balhera near Parkham. The area of the site is about 180 x 150 x 2.5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and remained in habitation until Rājputa period. The site may date back to Śuṅga period as the finding of Śuṅga period bowl from there indicates. The site is presently being used by a Sehi's brāhmaṇa for agricultural use. That person told about the presence of a huge depression of a pond near the site. He was the person who informed me that his forefathers had told him the name of the site as Indrauli in the earlier days. F.S. Growse has only mentioned about Indrauli as a *khera* site and has missed the more important Garh site while talking about Sehi.

Mangrauli-

This site is situated about 1.5 km west of Sehi. There was not any significant archaeological deposit present at the site. But it was surprising to find Kushan sculptural fragments at the site. In fact it is comparatively a smaller site with an area of about 150 x 120 x 1.5 m. The archaeological deposit can be observed outside the village near the shrine of Pathwari mata. The site definitely belongs to Kushan period and would have continued in the succeeding periods until medieval period but the absence of thick

archaeological layers at the site poses some problems. The ancient name of the village should be Mangalapuri.

Ahuri-

This site is situated about 1 km distant from Mangrauli. The modern village is occupying the ancient deposit. The area of the site is about 180 x 150 x 4 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods. There is possibility of an earlier horizon of Śunga and Mauryan period at the site.

Mai-

This site appears to be a temporary Kushan and Gupta period settlement near the Yamuna *khadar* land. The pottery found from here belongs to early centuries of the Christian era which would have continued as a temporary settlement in the succeeding medieval period as well.

Basai bujurg-

Moving along Yamuna from Mai, one reaches at Basai. Basai is situated just near the *khadar* land. Normally the pottery scattered at the mounds was medieval, but some Kushan pottery types were also found there. This site seems to be a temporary kind of settlement site for people during the Kushan period, which was occupied on regular basis during 9th-10th century onwards. One Gupta period architectural fragment was observed at a village temple.

Bhogaon-

This site is situated about 3.5 km distant from Sehi village. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The size of the site is about 180 x 150 x 2 m. The site definitely dates back to Kushan period and seems to have continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Dalauta-

This site is situated about 3 km distant from Sehi. The area of the site is about 180 x 150 x 2.5 m. The site dates back to Kushan times and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Nagla Tunda/ Jaitpur-

This site is situated in the Yamuna *khadars* about 3 km distant from Sehi. During my explorations I could not find any important archaeological deposit from here. But Jaitpur has been mentioned as the find place of an important Kushan sculpture of a royal personage presently housed at Mathura Museum, so I would suggest that there might have been some archaeological deposit in the area from where that image was reported. The site would have been similar in nature to the sites of Mangrauli and Mai-Basai. Traditionally it is believed that after killing Vatsāsura demon, lord Kṛṣṇa had done the Jayaghoṣa here, that's why this site is named Jaitpur.

Another site named Jaitpur is situated near Bah in district Agra. The sculpture mentioned as found from Jaitpur might actually be a reference to this site.

Nand Ghat-

This archaeological site is situated along Yamuna which forms a slight curve here and lies between the villages of Bhogaon and Basai khurd. The area of the site is about 240 x 220 m with a height of about 4 m. A lot of P.G.W. pottery was found scattered all over the site. It seems to be an important P.G.W. period settlement. The deposit of the site continued only through Maurya, Kushan and Gupta periods, though, the thickness of the deposits of the Kushan and Gupta periods was no so high as compared to other sites. According to me, if further explorations are done at the site, it can provide some important evidences, even of earlier cultures. The mound has been cut a lot for agricultural purpose and is on the edge of extinction. This site would have served as a crossing-point for river Yamuna during the ancient period as three pre-Kushan settlements are equidistant from it across the river: Bhadravan, Eroli and Ohawa. Some important sculptures were found lying there at a shrine. One was a Yakṣa statue of Kushan period seated on a throne. The other statue appears to be of Kubera sitting with his consort and belongs to Kushan period. The third is a lower part of a medieval Śiva relief seated on lion along with his *parivāra*. Traditionally, this place is considered to be related with life events of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Near the site is the famous Chir Ghat of Purāṇic importance.

Gangrauli-

This village site is situated ahead of Basai Buzurg along Yamuna. The size of the mound is about 140 x 120 m with a height of 3 m approx. Some Gupta and post-Gupta broken stone sculptural pieces as well as pottery sherds were found at the site. This site is considered to have been founded by the famous Ṛṣi Garga, the Kulaguru of Vārṣṇeyas and the author of famous religious text *Śrīmadgargasamhitā*.

Lohlari-

This is an important religious place lying between Sehi and Dalauta. Sehi is a P.G.W onwards site and Dalota is a Kushan period site. The site of Lohlari is a small medieval site, very famous for local goddess shrine. This site might have been an ancient religious spot. Except for this shrine and its enclosure, the nearby ground is quite natural and plain.

Siharah-

On moving further from Gangrauli along Yamuna, this village is situated. Some broken late Gupta sculptural pieces were lying there at a temple, but no mound could be identified. There must have been some site of Gupta and post-Gupta periods at the place but now extinct because of river as well as because of human activities. Moving a little further along Yamuna, a medieval mound was found in which *lakhori* bricks had been used. Some ancient wells were also present at the site. The size of the mound was about 80 x 60 x 1.5 m. It appeared to be a sarai site of about 16th century, now in ruins.

Kajhroth-

This village site is situated along Yamuna, ahead of Siyarah. A little elevation was observed at this village, though not a large mound. Some Gupta and late Gupta broken pieces of stone images were found at a shrine. It must be an important Gupta period site. The actual site was probably situated towards Yamuna, some 700 m distant from this village where the chief village deity is housed. Anyhow, I could not visit that particular spot because of no approach to go there.

Vehta-

Outside the *khadars*, moving further from Kajroth, this village site is situated. Here a mound of about 100 x 90 m size and of about 2 m height was observed. The broken sculptural evidences suggest it to be a Gupta period site.

Gulalapur-

This site is situated past Vehta near the *khadars*. Here no exact mound could be located, but Gupta and post-Gupta sculptural remains were found. The land is disturbed because of Yamuna's action. This should be a Gupta period onwards site.

Vaidpur-

This site is also situated along Yamuna near *khadar* land. This village is definitely situated on elevated ground. Some good stone sculptures were stolen by smugglers from the village temple. So it can be concluded that at least one of the sites either Gulalpur or Vaidpur is an ancient site belonging to Gupta period. One important point is that these two villages are just 600 m apart from each other.

Ogaha-

This site is situated on the Kajhroth-Shergarh route along river Yamuna. Here, an archaeological mound of about 210 x 180 m size and about 5- 6 m height was observed. From the various broken sculptures present at the villages as well as on the basis of red ware pottery, this site definitely belongs to Kushan, Gupta and post-Gupta periods. A late Gupta period temple shrine would have existed at the site as the remains of broken door-jamb and other sculptural findings indicate.

Pirpur-

In between Ogaha and Shergarh, a medieval site Pirpur was also observed along Yamuna. This site is a medieval mound with deposit of those people who would have been followers of Islam. Broken Islamic structures like mosques and *barahdaris* were observed at the site.

Shergarh-

Shergarh is one of the important sites along river Yamuna as it appears to be the ancient crossing over point to go towards Nohjhil, Bajna and then ancient Unchānagar/

Varaṇa. A pontoon bridge was constructed there during the British rule. The town is situated on a broken *khadar* ground and its size is about 320 x 280 m and height varies from 8-12 metres. Evidences from Gupta period onwards were clear in the form of broken sculptures and pottery. Kushan period sculptural pieces were also observed at a shrine. The antiquity of this site goes back to P.G.W. period as the sherds found during a later exploration at the site indicate.

Paigaon-

This largest village of district Mathura is situated about 8 km to the east of Kosi-Shergarh road (roughly half way on the road). The village is situated on an extensive mound. The area of the ancient site is about 330 x 300 x 17 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The name of the village appears to be Pai with *grāma* or *gaon* as a suffix. An ancient site of similar name is situated in the Mewat district of Haryana which has been mentioned in the list of sites situated near Hodal.

Jatwari-

This site is situated about 2.5 km south-west of Shergarh near the road to Kosi. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and the ancient deposit has been occupied by the modern village.

Husaini-

This village site overlying the ancient deposit is situated about 3.5 km west of Shergarh. The area of the ancient site is about 240 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward cultural periods and continued to inhabit until late medieval times.

Bishambhara-

This site is situated about 6 km north-west of Shergarh. The site is a junction of various ancient routes. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 250 x 230 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods.

Rajagarhi-

This site is situated about 8 km north-west of Shergarh. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back Kushan period.

Ujhiani-

This site is situated near *khadars* about 3 km north-west of Shergarh along Yamuna. The area of the site almost disturbed by modern village and flood activities is about 240 x 220 x 8 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan times with possibility of earlier cultural horizon.

Garokhar-

This small mound of about 20 m radius is situated in the agricultural field in between the villages of Husaini and Ujhiani. The approach to the site was quite disturbing. The site appears to be a religious site with some arrangement for staying during the ancient times. The site has its own feeling, slightly different from all other sites. The sculptural findings at the site dates back to post-Gupta period but the site might be a bit early in date.

Barha-

This village is situated about 7.5 km north-west of Shergarh near Yamuna river. The sites observed there belong to two different types. One site is situated just near the approach road to the village from Ujhiani. This site is about 30 m in diameter and is hemispherical in nature. The nature of the site is quite similar to the sites of Gokul, Triveni and Bhuteshwar etc. and possibly appears to be somehow affiliated with Buddhism.

Another site is a habitation site situated in the agricultural field outside the village near to the road to Bishambhara. The area of this site is about 210 x 200 x 3 m. This site dates back to Kushan period and continued till medieval times. About 1 km to the east of this site near the river is a religious place known as Bhojan Thali. It is believed that at this place Lord Kṛṣṇa and his beloved Rādhā had taken meal in the past.

Shahjadpur-

This village is situated about 9 km north-west of Shergarh in the Yamuna *khadar* land. The ancient site is quite similar to Sunrakh site in nature. It has been occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 230 x 210 x 7 m. The site dates back at least Kushan and onward periods.

Majhoi-

This site is situated about 10 km north-west of Shergarh. The ancient site has been much destroyed by the river and is partially occupied by the modern settlement. The area of the site is about 240 x 220 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods. It is one of the rare sites like Mathura and Vrindavan which are situated just touching the right bank of river Yamuna. The site has a beautiful scenic view and should be promoted for religious tourism especially to the devotees who come to take a dip in Yamuna at either Mathura or Vrindavan. It is much better at this place to take a dip in the river and offer worship at an ancient (presently renovated) temple at the bank of the river.

Other sites situated in the vicinity of Chhata:

Ranhera-

This village site is situated over the ancient remains and is situated on the Shergarh-Chhata road. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to be in habitation in the succeeding phases up to recent days. Some Kushan and later period's broken sculptural pieces with carvings were seen at village temples. The size of the mound is about 280 x 250 m with a height of about 14 m. An ancient pond was also visible near the site.

One mound past Ranhera, Khursi -

One mound was explored on the left side of Chhata-Shergarh road, about 800 m distant from Ranhera towards Shergarh. The deposit of the mound belongs to early centuries of the Christian era. The size of the mound is about 180 x 160 m with a height of about 1.75 m. This mound should be taken under Government protection.

Mound outside Ranhera-

This mound lies about 1 km distant from Ranhera while moving towards Naugaon and Astoli. Ranhera's Chamar temple is situated at this site. This site actually is an extension of Ranhera town during Kushan period. Ranhera appears to be an extremely important town during the ancient times, that's why there are situated 3 Kushan extensions outside Ranhera including this site; earlier mentioned site on the road to Shergarh and the next site in this list is of Astoli. The present site under consideration was explored because during one of my repeated visits in the area, a boy who was the owner of the agricultural fields at this site took lift from me on my motorcycle. He told me about this site which lies on an almost abandoned route and about 200 m away from this route. The site turned out to be an important Kushan settlement as one Mahīsamardinī and a Yakṣa miniature sculpture were observed there in a heap of architectural and sculptural pieces. The size of this site is about 200 x 180 x 2- 2.5 m. Somehow, I feel that such type of mounds located outside important settlements might be the settlements of people belonging to some important tribe, possibly Yaudheyas as Mahīsamardinī was a popular deity among them.

Astoli-

On Shergarh-Akbarpur ancient route, this site is situated on the left side of the road. The mound is about 200 x 180 m in dimensions and only about 2-3 m in height. On the surface of the mound, Kushan stamped pottery was observed. So this mound belongs to Kushan and later period cultures. It is a similar site as the above mentioned site. A large part of this mound has been destroyed by the local people for agricultural purpose. This mound requires Government protection.

Agarhala-

This mound is situated on the link road between Tarauli-Shergarh and Dalota-Shergarh route about 6 km south of Shergarh. The modern village is situated on the mound. The size of the village is about 180 x 170 m with an approximate height of 5 m. Kushan evidence was found here in the form of some broken sculptural pieces and red ware pottery. This site might turn out to be an earlier settlement on further explorations.

Naugaon-

This mound is situated about 3 km further down from Astoli on Shergarh-Tarauli road. This mound on which present village is situated, is about 260 x 240 m in dimension and about 8 m in height. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation in the succeeding periods until recent times. This Naugaon site is quite similar to other sites by this name, like the one in Bharatpur district near Noh.

Ajnauthi-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Chhata. The area of the site is about 180 x 150 x 3 m. The site is occupied by the modern village. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Undi-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Ajnauthi. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 7 m. It is occupied by the modern village. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Gora-

This site is situated 1 km east of Undi. The area of the site is about 240 x 210 x 9 m. Major part of the ancient mound is still unoccupied and is in need of Government protection. The site's antiquity goes back to P.G.W. period and continued to be in habitation in the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Sainwa-

This site lies 2 km north-west of Naugaon, on the cart route to Ranhera. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Ladpur-

This site lies near the road linking Chhata with Shergarh. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation

during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The site is completely occupied by the modern village.

Baharawali-

This site is situated to the north-east of Chhata near the route linking Chhata to Shergarh. The area of the site which is completely occupied by the modern village is about 210 x 200 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Mauryan period, an earlier horizon of P.G.W. period is quite possible at the site. The site continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Tarauli-

This is one of the largest villages in Mathura district. A huge mound lies outside the village near an ancient pond of mythological association. An annual fair of Swami Bābā is organised here. The mound is about 300 x 280 x 12 m in dimensions. It is related with ancient snake cult and it is believed that the tail of the huge snake demon Aghāsura who was subdued by Lord Kṛṣṇa lies at this village while his mouth lies at the village Jaint. Somehow it indicates that it was the original place for which the legend of Nāga King Aghāsura later on got associated in mythology. Deposit of this mound dates back to P.G.W. period. Mauryan grey ware sherds were also observed at the site. This site forms an important part of the religious history of Braj. A proper documentation work is needed of the local traditions at the site, especially the Swami Bābā fair. This site is an important mound which must be taken under Government protection.

One mound outside Pelhora-

This site is situated about 1 km to the right side of Tarauli-Akbarpur road. The site is about 1.5 km south of Pelhora in the agricultural fields. A temple of a local deity is situated at the site. The site has dimensions of about 150 x 140 x 2 m. The site is unoccupied and dates back to at least Kushan period. It is a kind of extension site between two important sites of Tarauli and Pelhora.

Pelhora-

This mound, on which the present day village is situated, lies on the right side of Tarauli-Akbarpur road. The area of the mound is about 200 x 190 m with a height of about 10 m. This site dates back to P.G.W. period and had continued in the succeeding periods until the recent times. Kushan period sculptural pieces as well as a beautiful Gupta period Kubera sculpture were observed at a shrine in the village.

Barauli-

This site is situated between Tarauli and Senmari villages. The area of the site is about 150 x 120 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period at least and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval period. The modern village overlies the ancient deposit. A much mutilated Kushan period Nāga head was observed at a shrine at the outskirts of the village.

Sites near the N.H.-2 up to Kotvan border:

Birjapur-

This site is situated on N.H.-2, just touching the periphery of Mathura. From this site, one inscription of the reign of Śodāsa has been found mentioning the gift of a tank by Kauśikī Pākṣaka, wife of Ganjāvara (treasurer), related with the shrine of Lakṣmi, with some other associated deeds. Similar kind of inscription has also been reported from the Jail mound. R.C. Sharma had tried to prove the site of Birjapur as the main site for the erection of inscriptions, rather than Jail mound, on the basis of his observations. Though, he is correct in correlating the archaeological evidences from Birjapur with the inscription, it is not clear why did he think that similar kind of donation could not have been given at two different places, located about 3 km distance from each other? Near the Jail, I found some natural depressions, which may be because of some water tank. So, according to me, both the inscriptions were found from their original location. Birjapur evidence proves the existence of religious shrines away from main city. The tank for which the donation was made has been identified by me at the village and is situated on the periphery of the village, just touching the Mathura-Achhnera railway track. In fact,

this small site of about 80 x 60 m dimension along with an ancient pond lies on a very important ancient alignment. From Mathura to go towards Agra via Achhnera, the route passes via the Chandrapuri Railway Crossing site, Birjapur site, Aruki and so on. The metre gauge track is actually following an ancient path.

Narhauli-

This is situated on the Mathura-Bharatpur ancient route, about 400 m distant from N.H-2. Actually during ancient times the National Highway was passing through the main city and was not following this present route. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The antiquity of the site goes back to P.G.W. period and it continued in habitation in the succeeding phases- Maurya, Śunga, Kushan, Gupta periods up to recent times. Some important Kushan sculptures including a bacchanalian scene were found from this village. The major portion of the mound is occupied by the modern village and some part of it was cut because of the Delhi-Mumbai railway track's construction.

Azamabad-

This village is situated near the old route of N.H-2. Its importance during the medieval times is known because of the presence of a fortified sarai at the site. Actually this site is very close the important Kushan monastic site of Govindpur and appears to have been an important monastic settlement before it was occupied by Muslims during medieval period.

Kota-

This site is situated further away from Bajna on N.H. 2. The site dating back to Kushan period as a monastic settlement has been discussed in detail in the chapter on Buddhism in Mathura.

Allahpur-

Site of Allahpur is situated on the right side of N.H. 2, about 2 km ahead of Chhatikara. The isolated mound is about 160 x 140 m in size and 1.5 m in height. Because of agricultural activities, a lot of mound portion has got destroyed. The deposit of mound belongs to Kushan, Gupta and Post-Gupta periods. Some 200 m distant from

the mound is an ancient well, though seems to have been renovated in medieval period when this site was again occupied and at that time the name of the village would also have been changed by the followers of Islam.

Chhatikara-

This site lies as an important junction point for various important ancient routes. But it is shocking to find no ancient mound in its vicinity. It might have disappeared because of human activities, but it is for sure that this place served as an important spot for one or more Buddhist monasteries during the Kushan period. Traditionally, it is believed that Nanda bābā and his subordinate village folk while going towards Nandgaon after leaving Vrindavan had passed through this place and it is at this place that the *Ṣaṣṭhī* or *Chhathi* ceremony of the child Kṛṣṇa took place.

Jaint-

This site is situated on National Highway about 1.5 km distant from Chhatikara towards Delhi. The site is an important site and dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation in the succeeding periods of Maurya, Śuṅga, Kushan, Gupta and medieval periods up to modern times. The dimensions of the site are about 280 x 250 x 14 m. It is mythologically a significant place related with Nāga cult. It is believed that child Kṛṣṇa after killing the demon Aghāsura had made the *jayaghōṣa* here. Since he pronounced *Jayati Jayati*, this place started to be called as Jaint. Here, a pond is situated which is considered to be of religious importance. It is believed that the head of demon serpent king Aghāsura lies at this place.

Ajhai-

This site is situated after Jaint on N.H. 2. The modern village is located on the ancient mound. The size of the site is about 230 x 210 x 10 m. There is an ancient pond near the site. P.G.W. pot sherds along with later period pottery of Mauryan, Śuṅga, and Kushan periods were observed in the deposit at the site. Kushan, Gupta and medieval sculptural fragments were observed at village shrines. According to Braj folklore, after the pastime of the bewilderment of Brahmā the children of Braj came here and said “Today Śrī Kṛṣṇa has killed the Aghāsura!” (today = *āja hī*). Because they spoke like

this, this place is now known as Ajhai. This tradition almost confirms that Aghāsura was a demon living in this part of Braj i.e. in Chaumuhan block.

Chaumuha-

This site is situated past Ajhai on N.H. 2. This site is on the right side of the road while the 3 earlier sites Chhatikara, Ajhai and Jaint were on left side. The size of mound at Chaumuha presently occupied by the modern settlement is about 240 x 230 m with a maximum height of 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Akbarpur-

This village site is situated on the National Highway no. 2. The area of the mound is about 230 x 220 m with a height of about 8 m. The pre- Islamic name of the village is Sanpali khera. In the middle of the village is the ancient Banawari kunda. The site dates back to P.G.W. cultural period and continued in habitation till the recent times. Some Kushan period broken sculptural pieces were observed at the village. There is another mound outside the village just touching the N.H. 2 where a local village deity's temple is situated. This site covers an area of about 160 x 150 x 3 m in dimensions. This site dates back to at least Kushan period and there lies every possibility that this site as a religious place might date back to P.G.W. period as is the case with the main habitation village site.

In front of this village site, on the other side of N.H. 2, there is a mound with a deposit containing thick red ware and some structural remains. After reading Growse's views about the site of Akbarpur, I have drawn the conclusion that this mound is actually a sarai constructed during 16th century either by Shershāh Sūrī or Akbar. After the natural decay of this sarai it has taken the shape of this mound. It would turn out to be an interesting work if this debris in the form of a mound is cleared and studied from the point of view of formation of archaeological sites in the region.

Mound outside Konkera-

This site lies near the Mughal Kos Minar in front of Akbarpur village. On the other side it has been disturbed by the Mathura-Delhi Railway track, outside the village

Konkera. This site dates back to at least Kushan period and is about 140 x 120 x 2 m in size. In all probability it should be a religious site and possibly of Buddhist affiliation.

Sihana-

This site is situated on the opposite side of Akbarpur after crossing the railway track. The modern village is situated on the ancient mound and ancient ponds are situated near the site. The site is about 250 x 220 x 14 m in size. The antiquity of the site goes back to P.G.W. period. The site continued in habitation in the succeeding periods up to recent times. Some 17th century structure, possibly built by the Jats can be seen at the top of the village. According to Braj folklore, when Lord Kṛṣṇa had killed Aghāsura, the *Brajvasis* were satisfied and praised him by calling “*sihana*”, or clever. Interestingly, in the village there is a temple housing images of four of the Brahmā’s *mānas putras*: Sanaka, Sananda, Sanatana and Sanatakumara. One of the ponds of Purāṇic importance is called as Kṣīrasāgara, which might have been the reason of the present day name of the village.

Outside the village about 500 m away from the village towards Siwal, another mound (locally called as baraud) was observed which in all probability is a religious site and dates back to at least Kushan period on the basis of surface finds. There is also a possibility of it dating back to as early as P.G.W. period as was observed at the site of Kushyah (Kosi khurd), almost identical site in nature. The size of this roughly circular site is about 140 x 120 x 2.5 m.

Nari-

This site is situated near the N.H. 2, in front of Senmari. The site is presently occupied by the modern village settlements. The size of the site is almost same as that of Sihana i.e. about 250 x 220 x 10 m and same is the case with its cultural sequence dating back to at least P.G.W. period. Traditionally, this place is considered to have derived its name from word Kinnarī as once Lord Kṛṣṇa had taken the form of Śyāmā *sakhī* to pacify Rādhā’s anger and Rādhā thought Kṛṣṇa to be a Kinnarī. Hence the name Nari derived from Kinnarī.

Senmari-

This site is situated on the right side of N.H. 2, almost touching it. The present village is situated on the ancient site. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 10 m and it dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods. Traditionally, this site is considered to have derived its name from Yutheśwarī Śyāmalā, *sakhī* of Kṛṣṇa. This village is quite famous for the temple of Goddess Śyāmarī and during *Navaratri* it becomes a very hustling- bustling and popular destination.

Chhata-

This *tehsil* town of northern part of Mathura district is 32 km distant from Mathura on N.H. 2. The ancient site is densely occupied by the present day population. P.G.W has been reported from this site in I.A.R. (1951-52) report. The site continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times. The size of the large mound is about 440 x 380 m. with a height of about 14 m. This is the place of ancient Purāṇic Chhatra vana. Nearby Surya kunda is an important pond. The town is embellished with medieval structures built by Shershāh Sūrī and Akbar, known as Chhatries. These should be protected and developed for tourism promotion.

Kosi Kalan-

Kosi Kalan, a major town of Mathura, located 10 km distant from Chhata on N.H. 2 is situated on an elevated land. The mound is actually the place of ancient Kuśasthālī and is locally known as Chavar. This is situated in the heart of the old city and is famous for Jaina temples. The antiquity of this site goes back to P.G.W. period and it continued during the succeeding periods until recent times. The size of the site is about 350 x 290 x 15 m.

Kotvan-

Kotvana, situated at U.P. and Haryana border on N.H. 2 is a mound on which modern village is situated. Size of the mound is about 250 x 230 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times. It is one of the Purāṇic vanas.

Sites situated along Sonkh Road and in between Sonkh road and Bharatpur road-

Pali Khera-

The site is situated just on the fringe of modern Mathura City. This well known site is known for its Kushan sculptures, especially the Bacchanalian scene and various Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical images found from two of its wells. The area of the site in the past might have been about 180 x 170 m with a maximum height of 2-3 m but now the whole area has been turned into a huge depression instead of the ancient elevation. The site can be identified near a village temple where Growse had found the remains of pillars of a Kushan period Buddhist temple. It lies outside the village. The antiquity of the site goes back to late phase of P.G.W. period. The site became important during the Śaka-Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods. But the majority of the archaeological finds are related with Kushan and early Gupta periods only.

Salempur-

This is a famous Kushan site. From a well at Salempur village which is situated in between Pali Khera and Maholi villages, a number of important Kushan sculptures of Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical affiliation were found which are now housed at Mathura Museum. The site seems to a kind of monastic settlement outside the modern village. There is no mound as such as the Kushan period remains are lying underneath the surface. Nearby the famous well, as I suggest it to be so, an important pond of ancient period (at least as old as Kushan period) was observed. The Kushan period structural alignments were visible at the pond and near it up to a depth of about 3 m. Though, I am not sure whether these alignments were part of a Kushan pond or of some residential structure. The area of the site is about 180 x 170 m. Another ancient pond was observed at the other side of the village, in a sense inside the village. Traditionally this village is considered to be the spot of Ketakivana and the famous pond is known as Kanakasarovara.

Maholi-

This well-known site is situated about 4 km distant from Mathura near the village of Pali Khera and Salempur on the ancient route to Sonkh via Usphar. The group of mounds here occupied a large area, though now only some parts of these are visible in the village area. This village was identified by various scholars with ancient Madhuvana or Mathura but it appears that this was the place of Madhuvana only and the ancient Madhupurī was akin with the present day Mathura. At Maholi, a village settlement by the name of Madhupurī might have been there but it should not be considered identical with the great city of ancient Mathura mentioned in Purāṇic literature. There were observed a number of mounds at Maholi. One such mound is outside the village where an important village temple is situated. Inside the village, some of the modern houses are situated over ancient mounds. Some mounds are visible at the periphery of the village towards Madhuvana. The site dates back to P.G.W. period as the archaeological findings indicate. It continued during the succeeding periods and attained more importance during the Kushan period, as most of the mounds of the village belong to this period itself. Many of the mounds which were situated outside the village near the road to Mathura were destroyed by the so called saint Bābā Jai Gurudev. The area of the mounds in totality can not be determined now but for the main habitation site, it can be considered to be about 340 x 290 x 12 m.

One site just touching Sonkh Road between Mathura and Pali Khera-

A small site was observed by me on the left hand side of the Sonkh road, belonging to early centuries of Christian era. The size of the site is about 50 x 30 m with an elevation of about 1.5 m. The nature of the site, enclosed within a modern burnt brick boundary was very similar to various other Buddhist sites located on the outer periphery of Mathura.

Mukundpur-

This is an important site forming part of Braj circumambulatory. It lies about 1 km south-west of Salempur. The modern village is situated on a flat surface but at a local *pokhar* which seemed to be in the process of excavation under the Central Government's

N.R.E.G.S. programme, some structural alignments of Kushan and Gupta period were observed. Outside the village, moving towards Sonkh road via a shortcut route, an archaeological site (in ruins because of destruction) was observed. A number of P.G.W. period potsherds were scattered all over the surface. The size of this site appeared to be about 170 x 150 x 3 m. The natural soil layer in the deposit was visible at a cutting which was about 3 m deep from the topmost level of the site. At the site an ancient well was observed and I would suggest for its cleaning to find some ancient sculptures inside it.

Monastic settlement on Sonkh road-

A monastic settlement belonging to Kushan period was observed at a place about 100 away from Sonkh road near the villages of Salempur and Mukundpur. This site lies past the village of Pali Khera and came to my notice when some villagers told me that some brickbats were being found there. The land mafias of the area are excavating this place, ostensibly to get soil and sand and to occupy the land. The exposed walls are much below the ground level. At the top of the site, there can be no indication of it being an archaeological site. Only because of illegal diggings this place has come to notice. The scarcity of potsherds again indicates it to be a monastic settlement which would not have continued after Kushan period.

Bhojpur Nagla-

This site is situated on the right side of Sonkh Road, nearly opposite to Pali Khera. The antiquity of the site which I can say only based on the exploration in a limited area on the outer periphery of the village, goes back to about the early centuries of the Christian era. The area of the site is about 160 x 150 x 4 m.

Site situated at Brajwasi Poutry Farm-

One ancient site was explored by me in front of Pali Khera village amidst the fields near a poultry farm. The site seems to be some Buddhist monastic settlement of early centuries of Christian era. The burnt brick walls of the settlement were visible in the agricultural field cut off by the farmers. The size of the low lying site should be somewhere around 100 x 120 m. Some sculptures found from here were smuggled out by some people living in the area.

Naugaon-

This site is situated on the right side of the Mathura-Sonkh road. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding period until medieval times. Some Buddhist monastic settlement was situated at the outskirts of the village as has been identified by me. This is a smaller mound of about 80 x 70 x 1.5 m area.

Hakimpur-

This site is situated about 2 km distant from Naugaon on the route to Sonsa. No significant archaeological deposit was observed at the site. Besides, no sculptural remains could be found at the site because the villagers have thrown them away in the wells as they are the followers of Arya Samaj. Some Kushan period sculptural remains were reported from here in the past which are now housed at Mathura Museum. So, this was definitely a site of some significance during Kushan period, possibly some monastic establishment.

Sonsa-

This village site is situated equidistant from Sonkh and Govardhan road. The major part of the ancient mound is still unoccupied. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. A Mauryan terracotta mother goddess figurine was observed at the site. At the top of the mound there was a shrine dedicated to Jakhaiya *bābā*, again a proof of continuity of ancient tradition. This mound should be taken under Government protection.

Shahpur-

This site is situated about 800 m distant from Sonsa across the Agra canal. The area of the site is about 180 x 160 x 2-3 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and its name also has some association with the word Kushan Shah. Some Kushan period Buddhist sculptures from this site were sent to Mathura Museum during the past century. Both these sites: Sonsa and Shahpur would have formed a group of settlement during Kushan period.

Usfar-

This village site containing the ancient remains under the modern settlement is situated on the left side of Mathura-Sonkh Road. This is a high mound having dimensions of about. 250 x 220 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G. W. period and continued in habitation in the succeeding periods until the recent times without any significant break. The name of the village appears to be somehow related with some name of foreign origin.

Kudar/ Kumud vana-

This is an important spot on the Braj circumambulatory route. The site lies about 2 km south of Usfar and is known so because of a forest full of lotus flowers. During my visit, I didn't observe even a single lotus. The site with ancient deposit lies outside an ancient pond and is about 100 x 80 x 1 m in size. The site dates back to at least Kushan period as the pottery findings indicate.

Unchagaon-

This village site is also situated along Sonkh Road on the right side of the road. At this site (having dimensions of apx. 250 x 230 x 6 m) P.G.W., Mauryan, Śunga, Kushan and later period cultural deposits were observed. One sculpture of the Sun God of about 8th - 9th century A.D. was also noted at a temple shrine.

Lalpur-

This site lies on the route to Songaon from Unchagaon near the Mathura-Sonkh road. The area of the site is about 170 x 140 x 2.5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. It appears to be an extension of Songaon site during the Kushan and later periods. A headless Mahiṣāsurmardinī plaque was observed lying outside the village.

Songaon-

This village is situated equal distant from two ancient routes going to Mādhyamikā from Mathura, i.e. between Sonkh Road and Bharatpur Road. This is a very important site which provides evidences of fortification during the medieval period. The

size of the site is about 300 x 250 m with a height of about 17 m. The earliest cultural evidence which was observed in a cutting belongs to P.G.W. period and it continued in habitation during the succeeding periods. The whole site is occupied by the present village. One late Kushan Gaṇeśa image was observed at a shrine with some other early images. Name Songaon is very interesting as Songaon (near Gurgaon) is taken to be the northern most limit of Śūrasena region and has been identified with Sohna in district Gurgaon.

Pali Dungra-

This site is situated on the left side of Mathura-Sonkh road. The area of the site is about 180 x 150 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The name of the site is significant as there are at least four sites by the name of Pali in Mathura district and most of them date back to P.G.W. period except this site, which seems to be in habitation from Kushan period onwards.

Archaeological Sites to the west of Mathura City:

Ganeshra-

This site is situated about 2 km distant from the present route of NH- 2 to the south-west of the Mathura city. Here two mounds were earlier reported but now at present except a small elevated area, the mounds have disappeared. The size of mounds would have covered an area of about 220 x 200 x 5 m. One ancient pond was identified there, near which some broken ancient images were lying. Kushan horizon was definitely present at the site but some mutilated sculptures appeared to be pre-Kushan in nature. A number of inscriptions of late 1st century A.D. and later have been found from here. There is some possibility of its even earlier antiquity, but it could not be confirmed.

Satoha-

This ancient site, famous for Śāntanu Kuṇḍa by which it derives its name, is located just 2 km away from Mathura on Govardhan road. The ancient site is almost completely occupied by the present village. The size of the site is about 220 x 200 x 5 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until recent times. During Kushan period, it became more significant because of the presence of some Buddhist establishments. One mound in the centre of the pond is of Purāṇic importance, on which the famous temple of the village is situated. It actually appears to be a stūpa mound. Originally, the temple at the site would have been devoted to the Sun God as the tradition indicates.

Maghera-

This site is situated near the road linking Chhatikara with Govardhan. It lies about 2 km distant from Chhatikara and 3 km distant from Ral. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The site dates back to Śuṅga period at least as the pottery findings indicate. In the succeeding periods it continued in habitation until medieval period. The ancient site is now completely occupied by the modern village. After revisiting the site it was observed that the antiquity of the site goes back to P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. periods.

Ral-

This site is situated on the ancient route linking Vrindavan and Govardhan. It was a junction of various local routes. The size of the mound is about 370 x 320 m with a height of about 20 meters. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until the recent times. The ancient mound is completely occupied by the modern village settlement. There is a famous ancient pond known as Rabar Kund which might be the reason for the name of the village as Ral.

Bhadal-

This site lies about 2 km north-west of Ral village. It is almost as extensive a site as is Ral. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. A Kushan period Sūrya image and an Ekamukhī Śivaliṅga (about 6' in height) were the

important Brāhmanical findings from the site other than the Buddhist finds. This site has been mentioned in detail in the chapter on Buddhism.

Junhendi-

This site is situated 3 km distant from Ral on the road linking Chhatikara with Govardhan. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 5 m. The site dates back to Mauryan period at least as the findings of Grey ware of Mauryan period indicate. The site continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. The present day village settlement is overlying the ancient deposit. The antiquity of the site may date back to P.G.W. period as is the case with the other nearby sites.

Basonti-

This site lies about 1 km distant from Junhendi on the road linking Chhatikara with Govardhan. The area of the site is about 240 x 210 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The ancient mound is completely occupied by the modern village. The ancient name of the village is considered to be Vasati as Kṛṣṇa and his colleagues stayed here for sometime.

Kaunhai-

This site is situated about 3 km north of Basonti. The area of the site is about 220 x 180 x 9 m. A large part of the site has already been destroyed and the remaining is occupied by the modern village. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods. There was an important Viṣṇu temple at the site during the post-Gupta period. The lintel and the beautiful door-jambs could be found at the site inside a modern temple. It is believed that at this place Kṛṣṇa asked to the friends of Rādhā whether she had come or not (*kennai*), so the name Kaunai.

Pelkhu-

This site is situated about 3 km north-west of Kaunhi. The area of the site is about 230 x 190 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the

succeeding periods until medieval times. The ancient mound is completely occupied by the modern village.

Barot-

This site is situated about 4 km north of Ral. The ancient mound is completely occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Siwal-

This site is situated about 3 km west of Sihana village and 4 km west of Akbarpur crossing at the N.H. 2. The site appears to have derived its name from *Śivālaya*. The ancient mound is completely occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 250 x 200 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Radhakund-

This site is situated 4 km distant on the road linking Govardhan with Chhatikara. The village forms an important part of the circumambulation of Govardhan and is named so because of the ancient pond named Radha kunda which is of Purāṇic importance. The area of the site is about 380 x 340 x 20 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until modern times. This site is definitely one of the important ancient towns of the region.

Arhara-

Some distance away from Bajna is the village of Arhara. The ancient site is of the size of about 210 x 160 x 6 m. A very important finding from a shrine here were a female terracotta figurine of red colour belonging to late Mauryan period along with Kushan, Gupta and some medieval broken sculptural evidences. One beautiful Gupta period decorated ring stone was observed there. This site clearly indicates the fact that most of the sites are much earlier than Kushan period in nature but because of modern habitation over there and the disturbances; it is difficult to find the early antiquities.

Bati-

This ancient site is situated further away from Arhara towards Aring. The ancient site is occupied by some late medieval and modern structures. The size of the site is about 250 x 220 x 11 m. This site derives its name from mythological Bahulavana. The antiquity of this site goes back to at least P.G.W. period. The site continued to be in habitation during the Mauryan and later succeeding periods until recent times.

Fenchari-

This site is situated about 2 km from Bati towards Govardhan Road. The ancient site is now occupied by the modern village. The size of the mound is about 180 x 150 x 4 m. One ancient pond was observed near the site. The earliest occupation of the site belongs to Śunga period as evidenced by some broken sculptural finds. Later cultural periods deposit is also present at the site. This place is said to be the place of Pūtanā: the female demon killed by Kṛṣṇa.

Sakna-

This ancient site lies between Fenchari and Mora. This ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 170 x 150 m in dimension with a height of about 6 m. Kushan and later period's cultural deposit was present at the site as evidenced by some broken sculptural remains. One fine Śiva- Pārvatī sculpture is said to have been stolen from the site by the smugglers.

Mora-

This famous ancient site lies in between Fenchari and Khamini. The size of the ancient site is about 240 x 210 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until recent times. Another site which lies about 1 km distant from the village and is under Government protection, is the site of the famous Vṛṣṇi shrine of Śaka-Kushan period. The site for its importance has been discussed in a separate chapter.

Khamini-

This site is situated on the Govardhan road, in between Mathura and Aring. It is one of the junctions of ancient local village routes. The size of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The site at least dates back to Kushan period as the sculptural finds from the site indicate. There is a strong possibility of it being an earlier settlement dating back to P.G.W. period as are some other nearby sites.

Asgarpur-

This site is situated on the Govardhan Road, nearly opposite to Satoha. This ancient site is now completely occupied by the modern village and its size is about 170 x 150 x 4 m. The earliest known horizon from here is Kushan as is clear from broken sculptural pieces and pottery. The site seems to have continued in the early medieval period. In a way it might have been an extension of Satoha site during the Kushan period.

Mound situated on the Govardhan road opposite Asgarpur-

This site is situated some 250 m distant from the village Asgarpur on the right side of Mathura-Govardhan road. The area of the mound is about 100 x 70 x 1 m. From here I found Rangmahal type pottery (as suggested by Dr. A.K. Sharma and Dr. B.R. Mani), so it seems to be a site belonging to 2nd Century A.D. Besides, at the nearby site of Aring, Prof. D.K. Chakrabarti had found some Rangmahal type potsherds (personal communication). In fact, it appears to be a religious place outside the ancient sites of Satoha and Asgarpur and might be a Buddhist monastic establishment as these sites have provided a number of Buddhist sculptures.

Jansuti-

This ancient habitation site is situated ahead of Khamini in between Mathura-Sonkh road and Mathura-Govardhan road, about 4 km distant from Khamini. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 12 m. This site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods of N.B.P.W., Śunga, Kushan, Gupta and medieval. The site has provided the earliest known Balarāma image of circa 1st- 2nd century B.C.

Madhurikund-

This site lies about 800 m distant from Jansuti. No doubt that it is an ancient pond which might date back to Kushan period along with its high religious importance in Braj folklore. Some elevated area was observed in the centre of the village, but it could not be confirmed for chronological analysis. On the basis of my studies in the area, I am inclined to date this site back to at least Kushan period.

Jachonda-

This site is situated just along the ancient Mathura-Govardhana Road, about 2 km before Aring. The modern village is overlying the ancient deposit. The size of the mound is about 200 x 170 x 6 m. The earliest deposit of the site belongs to P.G.W. period and continued in the successive periods until recent times.

Jikhangaon-

This site is situated some 3 km distant from Jachonda. The area of the modern village overlying the ancient mound is about 260 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding period until recent times. The site derives its name from the word Yakṣa as it the village (*Grāma*) of Yakṣas.

Aring-

It is a well-known protected mound about 4 km before Govardhana on Mathura-Govardhana Road. The size of the mound is about 420 x 300 m with a maximum height of nearly 20 m. Presence of P.G.W. and onwards cultures up to modern times are very much clear at the site. This mound exists as a fortified 17th century structure. This is one of the most promising sites but is much disturbed. Some late Harappan- O.C.P. potsherds were identified at the site by an A.S.I. explorer years back.

Pali Brahman/ Palai-

This site lies about 2 km before Govardhan on the road linking Mathura with Govardhan. At one corner of the village, a much destroyed mound was observed. The size of the ancient site appears to be about 180 x 150 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. There

is a strong possibility of the presence of an earlier cultural horizon at the site dating back to P.G.W.- N.B.P.W. periods.

Jamunata-

This site is situated opposite of Pali on the Govardhan road. It is believed that when Kṛṣṇa lifted Govardhan, river Yamuna flowed from here, so the name Yamuna Mata/ Tāta or Jamunata. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to Mauryan period at least and continued in the succeeding periods. There is possibility of some earlier horizon at the site as the pottery found in the fields appears to quite earlier than 3rd century B.C. and is slightly different from the known pottery types but somehow no P.G.W. potsherd could be found. Similar chronology might be assigned to the site of Palai.

Govardhan-

This world famous religious Govardhan town is situated nearly 24 km distant from Mathura. At the foothills of Govardhana, many lower, middle and upper Paleolithic tools have been found. In the protohistoric context, the antiquity of the site goes at least up to P.G.W. period, evidences of which were found at a school mound outside Govardhan near the bus-stand. Size of this school mound is about 210 x 200 x 9 m.

Gantholi-

This site is situated on Govardhan-Deeg Road. The modern village is located over the ancient remains. The size of the site is about 300 x 260 x 18 m. Evidences from P.G.W. period onwards were quite clear there but some evidences indicate that it might belong to the O.C.P. period, being contemporary to Aring site. After the P.G.W. period, the site continued in habitation during the successive periods until recent times.

Anyor-

It is a very important site lying on the route of Govardhana *Parikramā* and has provided an inscriptional evidence of Kushan period's Uttarahāruṣa vihāra. Some habitation deposit of Kushan and even earlier periods appears to be lying underneath the modern village. The site of famous monastery appears to me lying outside the village

near an ancient pond and is called as Pajaya by the villagers. At the top of this much disturbed site pottery of early centuries of the Christian era and later periods were observed.

Sites situated on N.H. 2 between Mathura and Agra and in the Yamuna *khadars* in the same stretch:

Tantura-

This site is situated about 2 km distant from Narhauri P.S. along N.H. 2. The area of the site is about 120 x 100 x 2 m. The site is a kind of continuation of Mathura monastic sites of Kushan period which was used as a regular habitation settlement during the medieval period. The site of village Nawada, situated opposite to Tantura might be contemporary to the latter but only medieval deposit is visible there.

Aurangabad-

This site is situated on the medieval highway route which passed via Aurangabad while going from Mathura towards Agra and Gwalior region. This town has provided evidences of early medieval and post-Gupta period. It was later on occupied by Muslims and a mosque was constructed in stead of the main temple. Some parts of the town are at a little height, generally 1 m, except for mosque area where the height is about 4-5 meter. But that is a very small area. This town is situated about 1.5 away from Jail/ Jamalpur mound and this whole area was full of Kushan monastic activities. At Aurangabad because of town's growth, such site could not be identified.

Ronchi-

This site is situated near the highway, opposite Mathura Refinery Nagar near the *khadar* land of river Yamuna. The area of the site is about 150 x 120 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Koyla and Sarai-

These sites are situated just opposite to Gokul on the opposite bank of Yamuna. The site of Koyla basically appears to be a medieval site but there is possibility of it being an earlier settlement. The site is called so because of it being the site of ancient Kol vana. The nearby village of Sarai is basically a village of medieval period with monuments in dilapidated condition. The site might belong to a period as early as Kushan period as some of the pottery spread in the fields near Chamar shrine indicated. Kevala as a site has been mentioned near Manth as the find-spot of a Kushan image. There is no such village near Manth by this name, so this Kevala might be the same as Koyla. The Government must protect the medieval monuments of Sarai village and develop the site from the tourism point of view.

Karnawal-

This site is the mound at which the temple of Mahāprabhuji is situated. The temple is said to have been founded by Ballabhāchārya Mahāprabhuji. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. Some important Kushan period structure would have existed at the site as is indicated by structural remains. In the vicinity of the site, there is an ancient pond. The site would have served some important function during the ancient times.

Ladpur Khera-

This site is situated near the river Yamuna about 500 m outside the village of Ladpur. The area of the site is about 260 x 220 x 6 m. The site dates back to as early as Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods but majority of the deposit available at the site belongs to medieval period. Another mound of medieval nature was also observed outside the village on the opposite side of this mound mentioned above. This mound lies near the road linking Ladpur with Gaushala Basti near Karnawal. Unlike the main mound, it is not called as Khera.

Baburi Khera-

This site lies about 1.5 km distant from the village of Baburi. It can be reached as the spot of Chamar shrine of the village which is situated on this mound. But in fact, this

site is almost inaccessible. The area of the site is about 240 x 220 x 6 m and it dates back to Kushan period but like the Ladpur Khera, majority of the deposit belongs to medieval period.

Aganpura Khera-

This site is situated not very far from N.H. 2. But, there is no doubt that like the above mentioned sites, it was very difficult to reach at the site and one can reach there only by travelling on foot. The site can be located 1 km distant from Aganpura as there lies a temple of village goddess at the site, ancient sculpture from the site have been stolen like at the other sites in the region. The area of the site is about 250 x 210 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Jhandipur-

This site is situated further away in the Yamuna *khadars*. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 6-7 m. This area includes the area lying under the Jhandipur village as well as the main area outside village towards the river. This site outside village can be identified by the temple of the local goddess. The site dates back to P.G.W. period like the site of Nandghat near Shergarh in *tehsil* Chhata. Some Kushan period images were observed at that shrine. The site continued in habitation during the Gupta and medieval period.

Gadaya Khera-

This site is situated further away from Jhandipur in the Yamuna *khadars*. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period at least and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Shahpur-

This site is situated near Jhandipur near the river Yamuna. The area of the site is about 220 x 210 x 6 m. The modern village occupies the ancient mound. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Khairat-

This site is situated further away from Shahpur. The area of the site is about 220 x 210 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Baad-

This was an important site when Agra and Fatehpur Sikri had become the royal centres. This town also provided evidences of early medieval to modern times. The town is situated on an elevated natural surface, so to know the exact nature of archaeological deposit is very difficult. Kushan period bricks and some pot sherds were observed during the explorations. Since this mound is about 9 meters high situated underneath the modern village, there is possibility that it can be an earlier settlement dating back to P.G.W. period, as are the other sites nearby. Temple of Hita Harivamśa Gosāi is situated at the site near the ancient pond known as Kṛṣṇa kund.

Kurkanda-

This village site is situated about 700 m distant from N.H. 2 near the toll plaza. The ancient mound which is occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and there is strong possibility of the presence of earlier horizon at the site.

Mahuan/ Mahwan-

This site is situated about 18 km distant from Mathura on N.H. 2 near the toll plaza. The area of the mound which is occupied by the modern village is about 250 x 220 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Farah-

This town site is situated in between Mathura and Agra on the N.H. 2. The area of the site is about 250 x 210 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times. At some smaller mound near the habitation site, there would have been a Buddhist monastery.

Pingari-

This village site is situated to the back side of Hindustan Engineering College, near Mathura-Agra district boundary on N.H. 2. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 6 m and is occupied by the modern village. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. Some sculptural remains including one Ekamukha Śivalinga were observed at a shrine on the outskirts of the village.

Kitham-

This village lies near the district boundary of Mathura and Agra but comes under Agra district. The ancient mound lies underneath the modern village. The area of the site is about 280 x 260 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Pipraud-

This site lies about 4 km distant from N.H. 2 near Kitham. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6-7 m. The modern village is overlying the ancient site. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. There is possibility of even earlier horizon at the site.

Mai-

This village is situated on the road linking Achhnera with N.H. 2 near Kitham. I could not find any ancient deposit here but surprisingly a late Gupta period architectural frieze was lying at a place near the road. So, there is possibility of some ancient settlement in the area.

Arsena-

This site is situated just touching the N.H. 2 past Keetham. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Runkata-

This is the place where Lord Paraśurāma is believed to have taken birth as it is the site of the *āśrama* of Mahārṣi Jamdagni. The famous Braj poet Sūradāsa was born here. The mound lies outside the town and its major part is free of modern habitation. If not taken under protection, the site would be lost rapidly. The ancient site measures about 400 x 320 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times. There is possibility of an even earlier horizon at the site.

Sites situated on Bharatpur road and in the area lying between Bharatpur road and N.H. 2:

Tarsi-

It is also known as ancient Tālavana. The present village is situated over the ancient remains. The size of the site is about 220 x 200 x 7 m. The earliest deposit observed at the site belongs to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Aruki-

This site is situated near Mathura- Agra main Railway track. Modern day village is situated on the ancient ruins. The area of the site is about 200 x 190 x 6 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Dhangaon-

This site is situated opposite to the site of Tarsi, some 7 km distant from Mathura. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods. An important finding from the site was of a Kushan *Māṭrkā* panel, now housed at Mathura Museum. The site derives its name from famous demon Dhenakāśura, mentioned in various *Purāṇas* who was killed by Balarāma.

Murhesi-

This ancient site occupied by the modern village lies on the road to Bharatpur. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kosi Khurd-

This site is situated about 12 km south of Mathura on the ancient route to Bharatpur. Two sites were observed at the village. One is the huge mound of about 280 x 250 x 14 m size which was the regular habitation site. It is completely occupied by the modern village settlement. Near about 200 meter distant from it along an ancient pond and on the ancient route to an important Kushan site Umri, there lies another mound which was about 3-4 meters in height before it was destroyed some years ago. On closer examination I found that this was the religious place of the ancient inhabitants. A number of Kushan Brāhmanical sculptures were unearthed while digging this mound. A quite small Kushan architectural frieze possibly a lintel with a goddess in centre as the only carving is an important find. Besides, one of the broken sculptures seems to be of Balarāma. The pleasant surprise at the site was that I also observed P.G.W. sherds in the deposit of this site. It means that the site served as a religious spot for the ancient villagers since the P.G.W. period onwards till medieval period (i.e. ca. 10th century B.C. - A.D. 10th century). Another important thing was that the villagers call this spot as Kushyah which should be a corrupt form of ancient Kuśasthala and hence the modern village name Kosi.

Umri-

This site is situated about 2 km distant from Kosi Khurd on the right side of the road to Bharatpur. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation in the succeeding periods until medieval period. The ancient mound is occupied by the modern day village. Some Kushan Śivaliṅga finding was reported earlier from the site in the local newspapers. One Ekamukha Śivaliṅga was observed at a shrine inside the village. The nearby site of Rampur also appears to be an ancient settlement, possibly belonging to Kushan period onwards.

Pura-

This village site is situated about 700 m distant from Sonoth mound. This site seems to be an extension of the Sonoth site and dates back to Kushan period and onwards. The size of the site is about 180 x 150 x 6 m. There is a large pond near the site which appears to be like that lying between Sonkh Khera and Talgarhi in its nature.

Rasulpur-

This village site is situated at the border of Mathura district on the way to Bharatpur. The site was ignored a number of times by me because of its insignificant name but on closer examination it turned out to be an important site of about 180 x 170 x 10 m size. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. In ancient times the route which passes via Jajampatti towards Ol- Santruk would have passed from either this site or from Kosi and this site would have formed a junction of the two routes from Sonkh to Achhnera and from Mathura to Bharatpur.

Jhopra-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Rasulpur. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 150 x 140 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods with a possibility of the presence of an earlier horizon.

Sonoth-

This is a very important mound which is protected by the Government as well as is without modern habitation. This is situated on the left side of Mathura-Bharatpur road about 20 km distant from Mathura. The size of the site is about 270 x 250 m with a height of 10 m. There is evidence of disturbance at the site because of late medieval fortification activity. The earliest culture of the site dates back to P.G.W. period which continued in the successive periods without any gap. The site is getting destroyed by the agricultural activities, as the whole site is surrounded by fields on all sides and a lot of area is said to be cut for road construction. A.S.I. should take care of it.

Nagla Jhinga-

About some hundred metres distant from Sonoth is Nagla Jhinga and there is a temple, believed to have been constructed by Anangapāla Tomar, situated on a natural

mound. From here, Nagala Jhinga Yakṣī of 2nd - 3rd century B.C. was recovered. This is an ancient religious site outside the main habitation site of Sonoth.

Mal-

This site is situated between the important sites of Sonoth and Sersa. The size of the mound presently inhabited by modern settlement is about 170 x 150 x 10 m. The deposit dates back to at least Kushan period as some broken sculptural finds of a Nagī image and a Śivalinga indicate. The antiquity of the site may date back to as early as P.G.W. period.

Sersa-

This ancient site lies about 2 km distant from Mal going towards I.O.C.L. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. There was a shrine at the site for Jakhaiya bābā (Yakṣa) as well.

Bhurasyu-

This site is situated about 2 km north of Sersa. The area of the ancient deposit was about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site is occupied by the modern village and dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Bhainsa-

This site is situated very near to the Mathura Refinery. It is also a small station on the Mathura-Achhnera metre gauge track. The area of the ancient site, now completely occupied by the modern village is about 290 x 250 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. In the nearby fields near the railway track Kushan and Gupta period deposit was observed which should be an extension during these periods.

Chhargaon-

This site is situated to the south of Bhainsa near the Mathura Refinery. The area of the ancient site now completely occupied by the modern village is about 230 x 210 x 7

m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. From this site was found a famous Nāga/ Balarāma image of about 1st century A.D. Outside the village, there was a shrine of Jakhaiya bābā, a tradition in the region which is connected with ancient sites dating back to at least Mauryan period.

Pilwa Sadakpur-

This site is situated 1 km south of Sersa. The ancient site is completely occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 200 x 190 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a strong possibility of the presence of an earlier horizon like Mauryan and P.G.W.

Beri-

This site is situated near Parkham and in archaeological terms appears to be as important as the latter site. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 12 m. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. A smaller but lofty mound was observed at the outskirts of the village. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval period. This site lied on the ancient alignment linking Mathura with the sites in the Gwalior region like Pawaya etc.

Banmauli-

This site lies very close to Beri and is in all possibility an extension of the Beri site during Kushan period. The area of the site is about 150 x 120 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan and Gupta periods but majority of the deposit findings belong to early medieval period.

Sanora-

The ancient site now occupied by the modern village is situated in between Beri and Parkham. The area of the site is about 160 x 140 x 2 m. The deposit mainly belongs to Post Gupta and early medieval periods but some of the sherds belonged to earlier periods.

Bhahai-

This site is situated about 2 km distant from N.H. 2 near Barari. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The ancient site is completely occupied by the modern village. It is believed that in the past Braj *Chaurasi kos Parikramā* passed via this village. There is an ancient pond by the name of Bhṛigu Kund and villagers believe that because it was the place of Purāṇic Ṛṣi Bhṛigu, it is known as Bhahai.

Parkham-

Parkham is a well known site of Mathura District, known for its 2nd-3rd century B.C. Yakṣa sculpture. Parkham is an extensive settlement about 350 x 300 m with a height of about 12 meters. Along with one ancient tank, at a village shrine, some important broken sculptural finds were observed. One statue in red sandstone of Kushan period (about 2 feet in size) looked like some royal imagery. Another lion image and an image of Śuṅga period (as opined by Dr. D.K. Chakrabarti) were also observed there. One very beautiful Hanumān image of medieval times depicting the Ahirāvāṇa story was also observed at a shrine near the ancient pond. Besides this Hanumān image, another Hanumān image of the post-Gupta period from the same site is now housed at Mathura Museum. Some Kushan period and later Śivaliṅgas were also observed at a nearby temple. One very important aspect was that the site of these shrines was probably at the same spot which was in the ancient times and the Yakṣa statue was also recovered from the same area. The spot of the finding was situated near an ancient tank and that was a small mound of religious significance. As is the norm in the region that most of the important religious sites are situated near ancient ponds whether these are dedicated to Yakṣas, Nāgas or other deities. The local people associate the site with the legend of *Mahābhārata* in which Yakṣa asked questions to Yudhiṣṭhira and other Pāṇḍava princes. Here also, the people believe that *parīkṣam* word has given rise to the name Parkham. In the similar way, the people of Parkham Gujar associated the site with the word *parīkṣam* when Lord Brahmā tried to examine the powers of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The main habitation mound is lying underneath the modern village and at the top of it; I observed some structural remains of 2nd -3rd century A.D. In the village, at a temple I observed an

Ekamukhī Śivalinga of Kushan period about 6 feet in height. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Balhera-

Moving further from Parkham along the road to Ol, some 800 m distant in front of a temple, there lies a mound of about 180 x 150 m size and 2 m height. This is a similar kind of extension of an important ancient site like the three sites near Ranhera in Chhata *tehsil*, which came into existence during Kushan period. The site continued in habitation for a few more centuries. An interesting find of a Śunga bowl (personal communication with Prof. D.K. Chakrabarti) from the site is quite significant. It indicates that the extension which we are considering to have taken place during Kushan period actually may date back to Śunga period or even slightly earlier.

Ol-

This extensive site, presently occupied by a small town is situated just at U.P.-Rajasthan border and it might have served as an important junction for the routes coming from the side of eastern Bharatpur villages and the sites near Fatehpur Sikri. The size of the site is about 330 x 300 m with a height of about 18 m. The site belongs to at least P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval period.

Sarurpur-

This site lies about 2 km south-east of Ol. The ancient site lies underneath the modern village. The area of the site is about 150 x 120 x 4 m. The site dates back to early medieval period. Some earlier horizon might be present at the site.

Kirarai-

This site lies about 3 km south of Sarurpur. The site is an extensive mound, partly occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 15 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. There is possibility of the presence of O.C.P. at the site as this site lies not far away from the O.C.P. sites of Noh and Naugaon in Bharatpur districts. The P.G.W. was observed about 2 m above the ground surface, so it is quite possible.

Bhaderua-

This site is situated about 1 km south-west of Kirarai. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and its area is about 140 x 120 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period, possibly as an extension of Kirarai site and continued in the succeeding periods. Most of the surface findings were of early medieval nature.

Jhudawai-

This is one of the important sites at the boundary of Mathura district. This site lies about 4 km south-west of Parkham. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and its area is about 250 x 210 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Baroda-

This is the last important site of Mathura district on the route linking Mathura with Achhnera. The site is famous for the Yakṣa which is contemporary of famous Parkham Yakṣa and is about 13' in height. The shrine of Jakhaiya bābā lies at the entrance of the village, quite similar to Parkham but there was no ancient deposit visible at that place unlike Parkham. The village of Baroda itself lies on top of ancient deposits. The size of the site is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least 3rd century B.C. as the finding of the above mentioned image indicates. But at the site, no substantial ancient remains (earlier than Kushan period) were observed. The site continued to be in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval period. I strongly believe that on closer examination, this site might also date back to P.G.W. period as is the trend all over the area under consideration.

Sites lying in the vicinity of Sonkh:**Magorra-**

This site is situated along the route linking Ol with Sonkh. The modern village completely occupies the ancient deposit which dates back as early as P.G.W. period. The

area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 9 m. The site continued in habitation during the succeeding periods after the P.G.W. period until medieval times. The mound is more in the direction towards the linkage with the site of Umri and Kosi than towards Bharatpur side.

Phondar-

It is situated just along the road linking Ol with Sonkh. The ancient site has completely been occupied by the present village. The size of the site is about 210 x 200 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Loriya-Patti-

This site is situated further along the road linking Ol with Sonkh and it is almost similar to Phondar in nature. This mound lies outside the village but is rapidly being made a part of the modern village settlement. Some interesting Kushan architectural pieces in sandstone (about 2.5 m in height and 1 m in diameter) related with some structure inside a water body were observed at the top of the mound. The area of the site is about 200 x 170 x 9 m and it dates back to P.G.W. period. The site continued during the Mauryan, Śunga, Kushan, Gupta and medieval periods.

Sonkh-

This site came into prominence internationally when German Archaeological Mission excavated it under the leadership of Dr. Herbert Hartel from 1966 to 1974. It is the only site in the whole Braj region (particularly Mathura district) which has provided a complete archaeological sequence from the Painted Grey Ware period (circa 10th century A.D.) to 19th century A.D. The area of the site is about 290 x 260 x 15 m. A number of architectural alignments of various periods were exposed during the excavations. Only an apsidal shrine at the site has been left unfilled. A tin shade has been put over it to protect it. A four sided Nāga image is still at worship as Chamar mata near the mound, which is the spot for an ancient Nāga shrine and a tank.

Prior to the excavations one headless Buddha statue (M.M. No. 20.1602) mentioning a monastery by the name of Śaka or Svaka vihāra and a Bodhisattva head

(M.M. No. 18.1534) were reported from this site. In the excavations a number of sculptures including the *Śālabhanjikā* of incomparable beauty were found at the site. The site was a regular habitation site and worked as an important trading centre. According to local Braj folklore, it was at this place that Rādhā along with her friends had prepared some food stuff while on a picnic. Because he made a *chhaunk* at the site, it is now called as Sonkh.

Bachhagaon-

This site is situated about 2 km distant from Sonkh towards the side of important Rajasthan sites linking Sonkh with Nadbai via Kumher. The ancient name of the site is Vatsagrāma, possibly the original place of the demon called Vatsāsura who was killed by Kṛṣṇa at Vatsavana near Sehi village. The site presently occupied by the modern village is quite an extensive site, almost equal to Sonkh site in dimensions and is surrounded by at least five ponds of religious importance, definitely ancient in nature. The area of the site is about 290 x 260 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continues to be in habitation during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Borpa-

This site lies ahead of Sonsa on the route to Sonkh. It is roughly equidistant from the road to Govardhan and Sonkh from Mathura. The area of the site is about 180 x 140 x 3 m and is occupied by the modern village. The site dates back to Kushan period as the broken sculptural peices at a village shrine indicated. It might have continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods.

Cheeta Khera-

This site lies ahead of Borpa near Paintha. The site is still an isolated mound which is being cut rapidly and also being occupied by the villagers. The area of the mound is about 280 x 260 x 10 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. Some sculptures of Kushan and Gupta period belonging to Brāhmaṇical and probably Buddhist faith were observed at a shrine on the top of the mound. The ambience of the site is bit difficult. Government should take necessary steps to protect this site.

Paintha-

This is a very significant site lying between Sonkh and Govardhan. The area of the site is about 330 x 300 x 20 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. The modern village is occupying the ancient mound. This site also has some mythological association as it is believed that Kṛṣṇa had folded some tree here to show his heroics to his friends. That's why this village is called Paintha (*ainthā*). It is also believed that at the top of the mound, there was a tree (*ethā kadamb*) which is held responsible for this name of the site.

Garhi Bissa-

This site lies near the road linking Sonkh and Govardhan in front of Paintha. This site is an extension of Paintha site in all probability. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 10 m. The site dates to P.G.W. period as some sherds of this ware were found at the site. It might have started as a religious settlement outside Paintha but acquired more importance, even as a habitation site during Kushan and later periods. A part of the mound is occupied by the modern settlement and the rest is unoccupied.

Parsauli-

This site lies ahead of Paintha on the road linking Sonkh with Govardhan. This is the *karmabhūmi* of the famous 16th century saint Sūradāsa. According to Vallabhāchārya, this is the site of original Vṛndāvana. It is also the native village of famous Hindi poet Gopal Prasad Vyas. There was a mound on the outskirts of Parsauli which measured about 220 x 200 x 6 m. This site definitely belongs to Kushan and onwards periods. But its earlier antiquity could not be verified, though it is highly probable.

SITES IN THE NORTH-WESTERN PART OF MATURA:

Sites situated on and near Govardhan- Nandgaon road:

Sakhitara-

This village site is situated at the outskirts of Govardhan town on the road to Nandgaon. The site has been reported as a P.G.W. site in an I.A.R. report but I could not locate the P.G.W. site at the spot or in its vicinity. A mound which was observed at the site was about 180 x 170 x 5 m in dimensions and was quite similar to Bhuteshwar, Gokul, Triveni and other five- six mounds (*pajaya*) which according to me are quite similar in nature and might date back to Kushan period. The majority of the deposit of the site is definitely medieval in general and late medieval in particular. There might have been some other P.G.W. site which is non- existent now because of human activities.

Neemgaon-

This is the first village on the road to Nandgaon about 2 km north-west of Govardhan. The ancient mound is occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 300 x 280 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times. The site is called as such because of Nimbāditya ŚrīKṛṣṇa. Some people believe it to be related with famous saint Nimbārkāchārya. There is a strong probability of this site being identified with Nalerunimba mentioned in Buddhist literature.

Bhagosa-

This site is situated about 1 km north-west of Neemgaon. The site is only partially occupied by the modern village and a part of it is still unoccupied but rapidly in the process of extinction because of human activities. The area of the site is about 240 x 220 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Maraura-

This village is situated 1 km north-west of Bhagosa village. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods.

Sakarwa-

This site is situated 2 km to the west of Govardhan. The ancient mound is fully occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 230 x 210 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods.

Devsaras-

This site is situated about 5 km to the west of Govardhan town. The site is occupied by the modern village but still some part of it was left unoccupied which was recently cut when I visited the site. The village Dauseras has an area of about 270 x 220 x 14 m and dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Mundsaras-

This village is situated about 8 km to the west, slightly northwards of Govardhan on the ancient alignment linking it with Parmandra. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 220 x 200 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods until medieval times.

Mahrauli-

This ancient site Mihirpurī or Mahrauli is situated about 10 km north-west of Govardhan town. The modern village is situated overlying the ancient site. The area of the ancient site is about 260 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Janu-

This ancient village is situated just at the Mathura's border with Rajasthan. The huge mound has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 20 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Palson-

This site is situated about 7 km north-west of Govardhan town and is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 320 x 290 x 16 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The site might have derived its name from Paraśurāma as an ancient pond outside the village is

known as Parasuram Kund. The villagers attribute the name to the tradition of Kṛṣṇa saying to his mates- the *gopikas* that he will return on the day after tomorrow (*parson*).

Seeh-

This village overlying the ancient deposit is situated less than 1 km distant from Palson village on the opposite side of Govardhan- Barsana road. The size of the ancient site is about 260 x 230 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit thereafter. The villagers believe that at this place Kṛṣṇa had consoled the *gopikas* that he would return soon (*śīghra*), and hence the name Seeh derived from *śīghra* word.

Dahrauli-

This village is situated about 1 km distant from Seeh on the road to Nandgaon. The ancient site is occupied by the modern settlement. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to Kushan period at least with a strong possibility for the presence of an earlier horizon of P.G.W. culture.

Hathiya-

This site is situated about 4 km to the west of Seeh village. The ancient mound is completely occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 390 x 350 x 18 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods. The ancient name of the site might have been Hastapura. It would have been an important town settlement on the U.P. - Rajasthan border. It is said that at this place royal elephant Airāvata had come bringing water from heaven to shower upon Rādhā.

Kamai-

This village is situated about 4 km east of Barsana. The ancient village is completely occupied by the modern village. The area of the ancient mound is about 300 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods. It is believed to be the birth place of a very close friend of Rādhā named Viśākhā.

Mandoi-

This site is situated 1 km north of Kamai. The ancient mound is situated outside the village touching the road coming from Kamai. The site was completely unoccupied until a few years back but presently a large portion of the mound has been lost because of the construction of a cattle-pan and related human activities. The area of the site is about 200 x 190 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until early medieval times.

Karahla-

This village is situated just in front of Mandoi and is about 5 km east of Barsana. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 260 x 240 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period in chronological terms and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This village is considered as Karālā in local tradition and is considered to be the abode of Chadrāvalī, whose husband Govardhana was the son of Karālā. Chandrāvalī was the eldest niece of Rādhikā. Some important modern temple in a small forest area was observed outside Karahla village.

Pisawa-

This village is situated 2 km north of Karahla while moving towards Khayara. The ancient mound is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 250 x 210 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that at this place Lord Balarāma had quenched the thirst of Lord Kṛṣṇa and hence the name of village is Pisawa derived from *pyāsā*. I suggest the site to be a sacred grove of some trees which would have some similarity with the word Pisawa. There is another Pisawa in Aligarh district about 80 km distant from Mathura which is also an important archaeological mound and is comparatively larger than this Pisawa under discussion.

Barsana-

Barsana is quite a similar type of settlement as is Nandgaon. But from the point of view of importance on trade routes, it acquires lesser importance than Nandgaon. This is believed to be the town of Rādhā and her father Vṛṣabhānu. The ancient name of the

hillock is believed to be Vṛhatsānu or Brahmasānu. The hillock is believed to be related with Brahma. I suggest that the name Barsana might have got derived from some Varṣaṇa Vana at this place as it was quite a dense forest before 20th century. At the base of the hillock towards village Chiksauli I observed P.G.W. and Kushan potsherds, so this site of Barsana can be taken for granted as a town site dating back to at least as early as P.G.W. period. The area of town should be near about 380 x 350 m.

Sanket-

This site is situated in between Nandgaon and Barasana. Presently, the whole archaeological deposit is covered by the modern village. The size of the site is about 250 x 230 x 6 m. In I.A.R. 1952-53, P.G.W. find from the site has been reported. The site seems to have continued in the succeeding periods until recent times. The site has some mythological association as it is believed that at this place; Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa had met for the first time here, making suggestive gestures. Because of it the site is said to have been named as Sanket.

Nandgaon-

The site is believed to be the place where Nandarāya and his family had resided after leaving Gokul and Vrindavan. The site is situated on a lofty hillock of Aravali series. The present town is densely populated on the top, so it is not possible to locate the actual site but as it is surrounded on all the sides by the archaeological sites dating back to at least P.G.W. period and being situated about 1-2 km distant from Nandgaon. Another important factor is the location and the intersection of various routes, for which Nandgaon forms a major destination even before it got much recognition some 100 years back. The site was somehow related to Śiva as Nandikeśvara before it became as popular as a Vaiṣṇava place. I would definitely put the site as a very early settlement, even without proper archaeological findings at the spot itself, to at least P.G.W. period considering it as a town site even during that period. The area of the ancient site can be considered about 380 x 350 m.

Dabhala-

This site is situated about 2.5 km south-west of Barsana. The site is situated partially on flat surface and partly on hills. The area of the ancient site could not be examined properly but some Kushan potsherds were observed during the survey at the village. Besides the Ratan Kund in the village dates back to Kushan period at least as the bricks of that period indicate. It is believed that at this site Lord Kṛṣṇa's eyes had filled with tears when he saw the enchanting beauty of Rādhā (*Dabararo*), hence the changed name Dabhara. It is also the birth place of Tunḡavidyā *devī*.

At the back side of the village in the hills, there is an ancient mound locally known as Bajna Khera which dates back to Kushan period at least. The area of the site is about 200 x 220 x 5 m. The site might have some Buddhist association as some other sites with the name Bajna indicate.

Rankauli-

This site is situated about 5 km south-east of Barsana. The village is situated on some hilly surface which has some archaeological deposits in between. There lies a village known as Nagla just outside the village Rankauli which is actually situated over a proper archaeological deposit. The area of this site is about 220 x 200 x 3 m. Both the site dates back to Kushan period at least with a possibility of some earlier horizon at the site of village Rankauli.

Nahra (Burha) -

This site is situated about 8 km south-west of Barsana at the border with Rajasthan. The site is actually situated outside the village on the hills. Two small mounds were observed at the hills where a lot of illegal excavation activities were in progress. The area of both these mounds was about 230 x 200 x 2/3 m each. These sites date back to Kushan period at least.

Unchagaon-

This village is situated about 2 km north of Barsana. The ancient site is situated on hilly surface and partially on archaeological deposit. The area of the site is about 300 x 270 x 15 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding

periods until medieval times. It is the village of Rādhā's closest friend Lalitā and that's why it was earlier known as Lalitā Grāma.

Rithaura-

This village is situated about 2.5 km south-west of Nandgaon on the ancient route linking it with Kaman. The major part of the ancient site is still unoccupied and is surrounded by *karil* and *babool* trees. The area of the site is about 280 x 260 x 11 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is considered to be the place of Chandrāvali- a close friend of Rādhā.

Bharokhar-

This site is situated 3 km west of Nandgaon on the route to Mahrana. The ancient site is occupied by the modern settlement. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. onward periods until medieval times.

Mahrana-

This site is situated about 5 km west of Nandgaon. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 280 x 250 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Sancholi-

It is the village of popular local deity Sancholi mata. No significant archaeological deposit could be observed at the village except for an area of about 180 x 150 x 2 m which appears to date to Post-Gupta period. Possibility of Kushan horizon can not be ruled out as such.

Gindoh-

This village is situated about 2.5 km north of Nandgaon. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the ancient town is about 420 x 400 x 17 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods. To me it appears the site of ancient Gunda vana mentioned in

Buddhist literature. The villagers believe that at this place Kṛṣṇa plays with the ball and a pond here is called Gendokhar because of it.

Jab-

The ancient name of this village situated about 2 km north-east of Nandgaon on the route to Kosi is Yāvata. It is surrounded by a number of ancient ponds, about 15 in number. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village with an area of about 320 x 300 x 14 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods.

Dhamsingha-

This village is situated about 6 km north-east of Nandgaon. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village which has an area of about 300 x 290 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The actual name of the site might have been Dharma Simha, related with some Buddhist incident. The villagers believe it to be the birth place of some Dhaniṣṭhā *sakhī* and hence the name Dhansinga.

Jalalpur-

This village is situated about 5 km east of Nandgaon near the road to Chhata. The area of the ancient site presently occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 210 x 3 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods.

Anjnokh-

This site is situated on the road linking Chhata with Barsana. The size of the site is about 270 x 250 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation in the succeeding periods until medieval period. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern village settlement. It is believed that here Rādhā had applied *kājal* in her eyes, so named Ānjana- khor, which later on changed into Anjnokh.

Khayra-

It is situated on Barsana-Chhata road ahead of Anjnoth. It is the site of famous Khādira Vana and hence is named Khayra. The area of the site is about 300 x 280 x 12 m.

The site in chronological terms dates back to P.G.W. at least. The site continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval period. The site of Khādir vana is slightly away from the village and the ancient site has been completely occupied by the modern village.

Bhadawal-

This site is situated further away on Barsana-Chhata Road near Chhata. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during succeeding periods until recent times. The area of the site is about 280 x 270 x 10 m. Some archaeological deposit belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era was observed outside the village on the right side of Barsana-Chhata road in the fields. The height of the deposit here is about 3 m. The main habitation mound is completely occupied by the modern village. The village is believed to be the store house of Nandarājajī, hence the name of village derived from word *bhaṇḍāra*.

Khanpur-

This site is situated 1 km south of Bhadawal and is about 2.5 km distant from Chhata. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 230 x 220 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods. Local tradition believes that the name of the site has got derived as being the place where Kṛṣṇa and his mates had taken meal (*khānā*).

Gouhari-

This site is situated near the N.H. 2 about 3 km distant from Chhata. The area of the ancient site presently occupied by the village is about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods.

Sites on Chhata - Govardhan Road:

Site situated near Chhata Railway Station-

One archaeological site was explored on the left side of Chhata-Govardhana road about 1 km distant from Chhata railway station. A large number of red ware potsherds were present at the mound. The size of the mound is about 180 x 170 x 3 m. The site appears to be similar in nature to the sites surrounding Ranhera. This site, which might have served as an extension of the famous Chhata site, dates back to Śunga period. It appears to have gained significance during Kushan and succeeding periods until early medieval times. The site was an isolated mound near Ranbari site.

Ranbari-

This site is situated about 3 km distant from Chhata to the right of road to Govardhan. The ancient site is lying underneath the modern village. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. Here, Rādhā along with her friends is said to have played *holī* with Kṛṣṇa and his friends after coming from Arbai. Since it was the *holī* battle which took place here, the village is called Ranbari.

Arwai-

This site is situated to the right of Govardhan road about 5 km distant from Chhata. The area of the ancient site presently occupied by the modern village is about 260 x 240 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods. The old name of the village is believed to be Alābadi as Rādhā played *holī* with Kṛṣṇa here. A small mound outside the village towards the side of Sankhi might be of some religious significance. The pottery observed at the site dates back to Kushan and onward periods. Some sherds might be a bit earlier in date.

Umraya-

This site is situated about 1 km west of Arwai. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and has an area of about 280 x 230 x 12 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods. It is believed that at this place through the endeavours of Śrīdāmā, Kṛṣṇa and through the endeavours of her friends Rādhā were enthroned the king and queen of Chhatravana and Vṛndāvana respectively by Pūrṇamāsī *devī*.

Sankhi-

This site is situated about 7 km. away from Chhata on the road to Govardhan. The site is an extensive mound which is still unoccupied up to some extent. The area of the site is about 320 x 300 x 18 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and it continued in the succeeding periods until medieval times. This site is related with the episode of Kṛṣṇa killing Śankhachūṇa demon.

Rahera-

It is situated about 2 km west of Sankhi. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 270 x 250 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods.

Sahar-

This site was an important administrative place of Mathura district in pre-British times. The area of the site is about 400 x 350 x 17 m. The deposit analyzed here belonged to P.G.W. and later periods. One important Kushan sculpture was acquired from here now housed at Mathura Museum. Some medieval structure in very ruinous conditions was observed at the site which must be taken care of. Modern village overlies the ancient deposit. It is believed to be the abode of Upananda- the younger brother of Nandarāya.

Bharana Kalan-

This site is situated ahead of Sahar on the same road. The site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 300 x 280 x 12 m. From here Yakṣa sculptures of Agnipāṇi and Mudgarpāṇi belonging to 1st-2nd century B.C. were found which are now housed in Mathura Museum. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in the succeeding periods until modern times.

Dirawali-

This village is situated 1 km south-west of Bharna Kalan village. The ancient deposit of the site is occupied by the modern village and it has an area of about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods. It is believed that Nandarāya and his group had halted in the evening at this place when they were on their way to Nandgaon from Chhatikara. Hence the village is called as Derawali.

Bharna Khurd-

This village is situated 3 km south-east of Bharna Kalan. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village which call it as Chhota Banna. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. This place is associated with Sūrya Nārāyaṇa and in fact Sūrya is worshipped in the form of Kṛṣṇa at a famous temple here. It is said that Rādhā and her some family members offered worship to Sūrya at this place and Kṛṣṇa also worshipped the Sun god and facilitated his worship as a Brāhmaṇa. The religious pond of the village is still known as Surya Kund.

Pali-

This modern village overlying the ancient deposit is situated about 5 km distant from Govardhan on the Chhata-Govardhan road. The size of the site is about 220 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods.

Padal-

This village is situated 1 km ahead of Pali on the road to Govardhan. The ancient mound, the main habitation mound of the village has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 240 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. onward periods. The site is said to have taken from *pāṭala* as Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā picked roses (*pāṭala*) here. It should have derived its name from the Pādara vana as the tree of this species were found in abundance near it.

Another site of the same chronology is situated near the main road as one turns towards the village. The site is quite similar in nature to the site of Kushyah at Kosi Khurd. The area of this site is about 160 x 150 x 3 m.

Kunjera-

This village is situated 1 km east of Padal village. The ancient site which is occupied by the modern village has dimensions of about 240 x 210 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

This is believed to have derived its name from the legend of Kṛṣṇa when he was called as *kuñjara*- the king of the elephants by Rādhā at this place. Another tradition believes it to be named as Kunjera because of Kuñja vana. A shrine of Bhuniya bābā (terminology used for Yakṣas) was observed at the village.

Sites situated around Kosi Kalan:

Tumola-

This village is situated about 5 km south of Kosi near N.H. 2. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village and it has an area of about 250 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods until medieval times.

Surwari-

This village is situated on the Kosi- Nandgaon road about 4 km south of Kosi. The ancient site which now lies underneath the modern village has an area of about 200 x 210 x 8 m. The site belongs to P.G.W. and onward periods.

Bathain Kalan-

This site is situated about 4 km to the west of Kosi. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 250 x 240 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that the name of the site has been derived from *baiṭhaka* as being the place of sitting for the *gopīs*.

Batahin Khurd-

This village site occupied by the modern village is situated just in front of Bathain Kalan. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that the name of the site has been derived from *baiṭhaka* as being the place of sitting for the *gopīs*.

Khitawata-

This site is situated about 8 km south-west of Kosi. The area of the ancient site presently occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 220 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that at this place Kṛṣṇa was apprehensive of some fight among the *Gopīs*, that's why this village is known as Khitawata (derived from *khaṭapāta*).

Ruthari-

This site is situated about 10 km south-west of Kosi. The area of the ancient site presently occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 180 x 7 m. The site dates back to N.B.P.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. There is a strong possibility of the site dating back to P.G.W. period.

Puthari-

This site is situated about 500 m west of Ruthari. The area of the ancient site presently occupied by the modern village is about 220 x 200 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kadona-

This site is situated about 10 km to the west of Kosi. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that at this place Kṛṣṇa along with his friends had made cups of leaves and ate yoghurt in them.

Sirthala-

This site is situated about 1 km to the north-west of Kadona. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 230 x 210 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a strong possibility of an earlier horizon belonging to P.G.W. culture period.

Hulwana-

This site is situated about 8 km to the west of Kosi. The area of ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 250 x 230 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The old name of the site is Piparwara. According to villagers it was the place of amorous pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and the village was named Haroyalā.

Kamar-

This site is situated about 10 km west of Kosi. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the ancient mound is about 240 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Dahgaon-

It is situated about 6 km to the north-west of Kosi. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 260 x 240 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that at this place Kṛṣṇa had robbed the yoghurt from *gopikās* and ate it.

Dautana-

This site is situated just along the N.H. 2 in the midway between Chhata and Kosi. The ancient mound is situated outside the village near a mosque. The area of the much destroyed mound is about 180 x 160 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a strong possibility of an earlier horizon.

Chandauri-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Dautana. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to be in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Guheta Tinbisa-

This village is situated overlying the ancient mound about 4 km to the east of Kosi. The area of the ancient site is about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to at least

Kushan and onward periods. The site can be observed from the side of the road going towards Dalauta from this village.

Phalain-

This village is situated about 5 km to the east of Kosi. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 250 x 240 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa had played *holī* at this place. Since the colours were thrown at each other at this site, this place is known as Phalain. Some very important activities take place here during the *holī* festival.

Suphana-

This village site is situated about 3 km north-east of Kosi. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 230 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. It is believed that at this place *gopikās* had dreamt about Kṛṣṇa, that's why this site is called as Suphana derived from word *swapna*.

Barchhawali-

This site is situated about 5 km north-east of Kosi. The ancient site now occupied by the modern village has an area of about 230 x 210 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kharot-

This site is situated 4 km north of Kosi. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 280 x 240 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Bukhrari-

This site is situated about 8 km north-east of Kosi. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 220 x 9 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Barka-

This site is situated about 10 km north of Kosi. The area of the site occupied by the modern village is about 200 x 190 x 4 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a possibility for the presence of an earlier archaeological horizon.

Shaikhsai/ Sheshsayi-

This site is situated about 10 km north of Kosi. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 210 x 200 x 4 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a possibility of the presence of some earlier cultural horizon. It is believed that at this place in the nearby Kṣīrasāgara lake Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā had dwelled as Viṣṇu and Lakṣmi for sometime as part of their *līlā*.

Hathana-

This village is situated about 10 km north of Kosi. The area of the ancient mound occupied by the modern village is about 270 x 230 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Ainch-

This village is situated about 12 km east of Hodal and about 15 north of Kosi. The area of the ancient mound occupied by the modern village is about 280 x 250 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Ailwara-

This village site is situated about 800 m south of Ainch. The ancient site is lying underneath the modern village. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 9 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Site situated in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan near Kaman:

Kaman-

It is one of the major towns in the whole Braj region. The ancient name of this site is Kāmyaka vana and is related with Lord Śiva. The fort of Kaman is built over an extensive archaeological mound which continues even away from it. The area of this site is about 700 x 450 x 20 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period but I suggest it to be a much earlier habitation site. It lies on the route to Alwar and then sites of Jodhpura and Ganeshwar in Rajasthan from Gangetic valley sites. If some proper vertical excavation is done at the site, there is every possibility that it might provide some important links between the O.C.P. - Copper Hoard tradition and the later period cultures. The site is surrounded by various ancient ponds and is an integral part of Braj circuit.

Naugaon-

This site is situated about 14 km north of Kaman. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 260 x 240 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Naunera-

This site is situated about 15 km north-east of Kaman. The area of the ancient mound occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 230 x 9 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The presence of an earlier horizon is quite probable at this site.

Bamni-

This village site overlying the ancient mound is situated about 12 km north of Kaman. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to N.B.P.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Gaonri-

This village site overlying the ancient mound is situated about 13 km north of Kaman. The area of the site is about 250 x 230 x 12 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Kherli Gumani-

This village site overlying the ancient deposit is situated about 11 km north of Kaman. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Pathwari-

This site is situated about 11 km north of Kaman. The area of the ancient site is about 210 x 200 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Sahera-

This site is situated about 8 km north of Kaman. The area of the ancient site presently occupied by the modern settlement is about 240 x 220 x 9 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Unchera-

This site is situated about 7 km north of Kaman. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 220 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Ainchwara-

This site is situated about 6.5 km north of Kaman. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 220 x 210 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Satwas-

This site is situated about 5.5 km north of Kaman. The ancient mound is lying underneath the modern settlement. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 9 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Nandera-

It is situated 4 km north of Kaman. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 210 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Tarra-

This site is situated about 1.5 km north-east of Kaman. The area of the site is about 140 x 120 x 3 m. The site might date back to Kushan period but could not be confirmed. Post-Gupta deposit and sculptural remains were visible at the site.

Khera-

A small mound was observed in between the hills which lie between Akbarpur, Lebra and Kulwana villages. The size of the site is about 180 x 170 x 2 m. The site dates back to Kushan period. It was possibly not a regular habitation site.

Akbarpur-

In the hills outside the village Akbarpur two sites of small dimension were observed which dates back to at least Kushan period. The area of the deposit is about 200 x 180 x 3 m.

Lebra-

At the top of the hill at the village, an archaeological site was observed. The area of the site is about 200 x 190 x 3 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods. None of these sites has been completely occupied by the modern village but there remains every possibility of their extinction very soon because of mining activities in the area.

Dhilawati-

This site is situated midway between Kaman and Nandgaon about 6 km distant from Kaman. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern village settlement. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 7 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Akata-

This site is situated about 4 km eastward of Kaman. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the ancient site is about 280 x 240 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Sunhera-

This site is situated about 6 km to the east of Kaman on the hilly surface. The area of the ancient site is about 220 x 200 x 3 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with a strong possibility for the presence of P.G.W. at the site.

Bajhera-

It is situated about 3 km to the east of Kaman. The ancient mound is lying underneath the modern settlement with a little portion being used for agricultural purpose. The area of the site is about 240 x 220 x 11 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Nandola-

This site is situated about 500 m south of Bhajera and about 3 km east of Kaman. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern village which has an area of about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods.

Kanwara-

This site is situated about 2 km to the south-east of Kaman. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period with possibility of the presence of an earlier cultural deposit. At a village shrine some important Gupta period sculptures were observed.

Khera-

This site is situated on the route to Chhichhinwari from Kanwara. The distance of the site is about 1.4 km from Kaman town. The site is still unoccupied and being lost slowly. The area of the site is about 180 x 160 x 5 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and possibly continued during the succeeding periods until early medieval period.

One important feature of the site was that a lot of stone pieces were used in the P.G.W. period cultural level for constructing the houses. It indicates towards the adaptability of P.G.W. period people to the available material as stone is easily available near the site. Generally stone has not been used as a building material during the P.G.W. period.

Chhichhinwari-

This village is situated about 2.5 km south of Kaman. The ancient site lies at the corner of the village in the agricultural fields. Near the site, there is a temple of Chamar mata. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 7 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Sablana-

This site is situated about 4 km south of Kaman. The mound of the site is occupied by the small habitation of the Hindu population. The area of the site is about 210 x 200 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods. It would have served as a local crossing point for the Aravali ridge in the area during the Kushan and onward periods.

Khoh-

This site is situated on the Deeg- Pahari road about 10 km south-west of Kaman. The area of the ancient mound presently occupied by the modern village settlement is about 280 x 260 x 14 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods until late medieval times.

Gohana-

This site is situated near the Deeg- Pahari route about 10 south of Kaman. It is also the junction of various routes like Parmandra with Khoh and Tankoli with Badri. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern settlement but still some area of the mound is unoccupied. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 14 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Tankoli-

This site lies on the Deeg- Pahari road about 11 km distant from Deeg. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Parmandra-

This village is situated on the road linking Deeg with Kaman. The ancient mound has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 300 x 270 x 17 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Gurja Murar-

This site is situated about 5 km south of Kaman on the road to Deeg. The site lies outside the village while moving towards Mullaka. The site situated on the hills is about 200 x 180 x 2 m in size. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods. There is every possibility of the presence of much earlier hitherto unknown archaeological horizon in this area.

Ghata-

This site is situated in the hills outside the village about 6 km south of Kaman. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 2 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Another important site of about 8th-9th century A.D. was observed about 1 km north of Ghata village, near to the Deeg- Kaman road. The site can be reached by asking for the Chamar mata of old Ghata village and is about 400 m to the right of Deeg-Kaman road. A number of temple remains were observed lying there. This site should be taken under possession by the Government of Rajasthan and should be preserved and developed from the tourism point of view.

Suhera-

This site is situated about 7 km south of Kaman on the road to Deeg. The area of the mound occupied by the modern village is about 220 x 210 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods.

Dhamri-

This site is situated about 1 km to the east of Suhera in the hills outside the village. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 3 m. The dates back to post-Gupta period and continued during the succeeding periods.

Pasta-

This site is situated about 10 km to the south-east of Kaman near the border with Mathura district. The area of the site presently occupied by the modern village is about 240 x 210 x 7 m. The site dates back to Kushan period with a strong possibility for the presence of an earlier cultural horizon like the P.G.W. and N.B.P.W.

Iklehra-

This site is situated about 4 km to the north of Deeg town. The ancient site has been occupied by the present village settlement. It lies on the route linking Deeg with Chhata via Palson village in Mathura. The area of the site is about 230 x 210 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period with a strong possibility for the presence of an earlier cultural horizon like the P.G.W. and N.B.P.W.

Archaeological Sites lying near southern border of Mathura in Bharatpur District, Rajasthan:

Rarah-

This is one of the most extensive sites in the area. Although it comes under Bharatpur district, it is situated on its border with Mathura and is important in respect of Mathura's archaeology and trade links. It is about 22 km S-W of Mathura on the left side of Mathura-Jaipur route. Its area is about 350 x 280 x 15 m. Almost the whole site has

been occupied by the modern small town. From here P.G.W. and onwards cultural sequence was observed. This site seems to be as important a site as was the famous excavated site Rairh near Jaipur.

Takha-

This ancient village Takṣakapurī lies about 2 km distant from Rarah on the link road to Sonkh. The area of the site is about 250 x 230 x 10 m. The site which is presently underlies the modern village settlement; dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation in the succeeding periods until medieval period. The name Takha is quite important because I have observed a site near Baghpat in Meerut district by the name of Takholi (Takṣakapurī), which should relate to *Mahābhārata* legend of King Parīkṣita and Nāga King Takṣaka. Another such site by the name of Takha lies in Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh and has been mentioned by Cunningham. At this site also there is a temple of Takha with some other Brāhmaṇical divinity. All this indicates towards an ancient cult of King Takṣaka popular in north India. It also possibly indicates towards the transition of the cult from one region to another. Of these three, Takhauli lies near Hastinapur and might be an O.C.P. site. This site might be the earliest of these three sites in the present context of our knowledge.

Santruk-

This site lies very near to Ol. The area of the site is about 220 x 200 x 9 m. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times. Ol and Santruk are considered to be the place of origin of many Jat clans.

Dhaurmi-

This site is situated near to Rarah. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 180 x 160 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until medieval period. The site appears to be an extension of the important site of Rarah during Kushan and onward periods.

Burawai-

This site is also situated near Rarah. The ancient site is occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 150 x 130 x 6 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until recent times. There was a shrine of some *bābā* (Yakṣa) at the outskirts of the village. This village would also have formed an important part of the subsidiary system of Rarah site.

Tamrauli-

This village is situated to the right of Mathura-Bharatpur road ahead of Rarah. Though, no significant deposit could be encountered at the site, it was surprising to know that while digging a bore well, the villagers found pieces of copper ore. The name of the site is definitely related with *tāmra dhātu* (Copper), so further scientific investigation at the site is required as it might be an ancient site for copper metallurgical work.

Ludhwara-

This site is situated to the right of Mathura-Bharatpur road before Tyonga. The area of the site is about 170 x 150 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Tyonga-

This site is situated just outside Bharatpur on the road to Mathura. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until recent times.

Jaghina-

This is known as the largest village of Rajasthan. The site is situated about 5 km north-east of Bharatpur. The ancient site lies underneath the modern village. The area of the site is about 340 x 310 x 14 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods. There is every possibility of even an O.C.P. horizon at this site as it is situated very close to Noh and has quite comparable dimensions.

Hathaini-

This site is situated about 3 km north-east of Jaghina. The ancient name of the site is Hastinapurī. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 7-8 m. The modern village occupies the ancient site and dates back to at least Mauryan period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. There is every possibility of its being a much earlier site, but it could not be confirmed. In the nearby pond at the outskirts of the village, work was in progress under N.R.E.G.S. programme and large size wedge shaped bricks were coming out from the pond in this process. This pond in all probability is pre- Kushan in nature.

Jatauli (Barbhan)-

This site is situated about 2 km north-east of Hathaini village. This is one of the places of origin of the Jats of the region. The area of the site, which is occupied by the modern village, is about 210 x 200 x 5 m. The site dates back to Kushan period and continued during the succeeding periods until recent times. The site might be of much earlier antiquity than Kushan period.

Peepla-

This site is situated about 2 km south-east of Jatauli. The area of the site is about 210 x 200 x 5 m. Kushan period onward cultural deposit and findings were visible at the site and it might be earlier than Kushan period. The modern village occupies the ancient site. In fact, there is every possibility of this site dating back to P.G.W. period as it forms a very important junction of various important ancient routes.

Luhara-

This site is situated about 3 km east of Jatauli. The area of the ancient village, presently occupied by the modern village, is about 180 x 170 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least post-Gupta period and continued during the succeeding periods. The site might have some earlier cultural deposit.

Gunsara-

This site lies on the road linking Bharatpur with Sonkh about 1.5 km distant from Sonkh. The area of this site is about 270 x 250 x 9 m. The site dates back to P.G.W.

period and continues in the succeeding periods until recent times. The ancient mound is completely occupied by the modern village.

Ajan-

This village lies on the Sonkh-Bharatpur road ahead of Gunsara. It is about 5 km distant from Takha and from Sonkh too the distance is roughly the same. The ancient site is completely occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 260 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued in habitation during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Mahgaon-

This site is situated on route to Bharatpur from Sonkh. The area of the site is about 250 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times. The ancient site is currently occupied by the modern village.

Sogar-

This site is situated on the Sonkh-Bharatpur road past Mahgaon. The area of the site is about 250 x 230 x 9 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. and onward periods.

Tihiya-

This site is situated on the Sonkh-Bharatpur road past Sogar and about 4 km north of Bharatpur. The area of the site is about 230 x 220 x 9 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until medieval times.

Archaeological sites situated near Bharatpur in Rajasthan:

Bharatpur-

The city of Bharatpur was as important a settlement as were the sites of other cities like Kumher, Dig, Kaman, Hathras etc. in Braj region. The city is situated on an elevated surface at many of the places. Because of the disturbances due to the

fortification activity of the Jat period, the actual site with P.G.W. pottery could only be observed at the site of fort where a canon has been kept. Overall it can be assessed that the scattered sites of Bharatpur would have had an area of about 700 x 650 x 20 m during the early days. The site continued to inhabit during the succeeding period until the recent times.

Barakhur-

This site is situated about 2 km east of Bharatpur. The ancient name of the site is Varāha Khura. Locals told of some Kadambakhandī at the site related with Kṛṣṇa *lilās*. No ancient evidence could be observed at the site except for post-Gupta scultural findings. The possibility of an early phase at the site can not be declined.

Naugaon-

This site is situated about 6 km to the north-east of Bharatpur. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 14 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times. Possibility of the presence of an earlier O.C.P. horizon at the site can not be ruled out.

Gaonri-

This site is situated about 6 km to the east of Bharatpur. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern village. The area of the site is about 250 x 220 x 12 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times. A famous dvimukha Śivalinga was reported from this site but now-a-days it is said to have been stolen out of the village.

Noh-

This well known excavated site is situated about 3 km east of Bharatpur near the road to Achhnera. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 15 m. The site is partially situated outside the village and is still unoccupied under Government protection. The site dates back to at least O.C.P., B.R.W. periods and continued to inhabit during the

succeeding periods until the medieval times. At a shrine at the other end of the village is housed the famous Noh Yakṣa sculpture.

Rundha Ikran-

This site is situated about 8 km to the east of Bharatpur near the Bharatpur-Agra railway track. The ancient site occupied by the modern village has an area of about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods.

Ikran-

This site is situated about 9 km to the east of Bharatpur along with Bharatpur-Achhnera railway track. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern village is about 250 x 230 x 10 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times.

Undra-

This site is situated about 11 km east of Bharatpur. The ancient site is partially unoccupied outside the village but is rapidly being lost. The area of the site is about 230 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times.

Khera Chiksana-

This site is situated near to the road to Achhnera about 13 km to the east of Bharatpur. The mound is still unoccupied outside the village but the villagers are destroying it at a very rapid pace. Two huge heaps of Kushan and Mauryan bricks were observed at the top of the mound indicating the destruction of the brick structures present at the site. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times.

Khemra Kalan-

This site is situated about 8 km to the south-east of Bharatpur on the ancient route to Fatehpur Sikri. The ancient site occupied by the modern settlement has an area of about 240 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times.

Birawai-

This site is situated about 2 km to the south-east of Khemra and about 10 km distant from Bharatpur. The area of the ancient site occupied by the modern settlement is about 220 x 200 x 8 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times. A famous early Yakṣa sculpture was reported from this site.

Bhanera-

This site is situated about 7 km south-east of Bharatpur near the N.H. 11. The area of the ancient site occupied with the modern settlement is about 220 x 200 x 6 m. The site dates back to Kushan period with a strong possibility of an earlier cultural horizon belonging to P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. periods.

Nagla Uncha-

This site is situated on the N.H. 11 about 9 km to the south-east of Bharatpur city. The area of the ancient site occupied with the village is about 200 x 180 x 4 m. The site dates back to Kushan and onward periods until medieval times.

Chichana-

This site is situated about 12 km to the south-east of Bharatpur near the N.H. 11. The village is quite famous in the region for a local deity. The modern village is situated on the elevated archaeological surface. The area of the site is about 200 x 180 x 5 m. The site dates back to at least Kushan and onward periods.

Aghapur-

This site is situated about 10 km to the south of Bharatpur, just touching the Ghana Keoladev Bird Sanctuary. The ancient site is lying underneath the modern village and is partially unoccupied. The area of the site is about 300 x 270 x 20 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times. There is possibility of the presence of O.C.P. level at the site.

Daulatgarh-

This site is situated about 22 km south of Bharatpur near the road to Rupbas and Dhaulpur. The area of the site occupied with the modern village is about 240 x 220 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times.

Khanua-

This site is situated about 28 km to the south of Bharatpur on the road to Rupbas and Dhaulpur. The ancient site has been occupied by the modern village settlement. The area of the site is about 280 x 250 x 10 m. The site dates back to P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times. This is the place near which the famous medieval battle between Bābar and Rāṇa Sāṅgā was fought.

Rupbas-

This town is situated about 34 km south of Bharatpur. The ancient town is situated on the bank of a huge depression in the form of a lake. The area of the site is about 400 x 360 x 18 m. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continued to inhabit during the succeeding periods until the medieval times. It has been one of the most important sources of red sandstone since the ancient times along with Tantpur and Fatehpur Sikri queries.

Archaeological Sites situated near Sasni, Hathras-

Sasni is a major town in the middle of the road joining two ancient cities Hathras with Aligarh. The site of Sasni is situated about 1 km distant from this road and presently lies on the road to Vijaygarh/ Bijaygarh, another important town site. The name of this site appears to be derived from “Sassanian” word which would be said as Sasani in local or Hindi dialect. The distribution of the sites in and around the area of Sasni and Vijaygarh has been mentioned with respect to their location from either Sasni or Vijaygarh, whichever is the nearer town. All these sites can be located in the toposheet no. 54 I/2.

Name of Site	Location of site from Sasni	Size	Chronology
Basgoi	8 km west on Iglas road.	210 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Mukandkhera (500 m south, open)	7 km west on Iglas road.	200 x 180 x 1 m.	N.B.P.W. onwards, might be P.G.W.
Garuwa	6 km south-west.	220 x 180 x 6 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Mohriya	7 km west.	200 x 180 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Jirauli	8 km north-west.	220 x 210 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Paril	9 km north-west.	240 x 220 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Larhota	6 km north-west.	210 x 200 x 5 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Lahaurra	2 km north-west	210 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Rudain	3 km north.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gadakhera	1 km north-west.	250 x 200 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sasni qila	1 km east.	400 x 380 x 17 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gohana	5 km north-east.	180 x 170 x 3 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera near Gohana	5 km north-east.	200 x 180 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Komri	9 km north-east	250 x 230 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bandhnu	6 km east.	210 x 200 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Tilauthi	3 km south-east.	210 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Lutsan	6 km south-east.	400 x 340 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Name of Site	Location from Bijaygarh	Size	Chronology
Bijaygarh fort (near	2 km north on	420 x 380 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Bijaygarh town)	Akrabad road.		
Thiramai	4 km east.	200 x 190 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Maloi	2.5 km south.	210 x 200 x 3 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gangraul	6 km south.	220 x 220 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Barhad	2 km south-west.	240 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Tikari &	7 km south-west.	250 x 220 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khera Tikari	7.5 km south-west.	280 x 250 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Dhatroi	8 km south-west.	180 x 170 x 3 m.	Kushan onwards.
Amokhri	9 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Chhaunk	7 km south.	210 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Salimpur	10 km south.	220 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Thulai	10 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 3 m.	Kushan onwards.

Sites situated in and around Hathras-

Hathras is one of the major cities of Braj region. Till about 50 years back, it was well known in the distant areas of India for the booming trade activities at its *mandi*. At Hathras two mounds could be located, one is the Qila mound, certainly belonging to a city centre of ancient India and another mound of significant dimensions as well is situated near the Agra road. The distribution of the sites in the area has been done based on their locations from the town of Hathras. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 2.

Name of the site	Location from Hathras	Size	Chronology

Hathras Qila	Hathras mela site.	450 x 420 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Hathras	300 m from Agra rd.	300 x 280 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Tuksan	6 km north-west.	270 x 250 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ahbaranpur	5 km north.	260 x 230 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ruheri	5 km north.	260 x 240 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khorna	6 km north-east.	200 x 190 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Daryapur	11 km north-east.	240 x 220 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Maindhu	7 km east.	270 x 230 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Maindhu II	Along main road.	150 x 140 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Rajpur	9 km east.	240 x 220 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Maktoi	Outside Rajpur.	150 x 130 x 1.5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Paharpur	11 km east.	250 x 230 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Jalalpur	9 km east.	240 x 230 x 8 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Chaturbhuj khera	12 km east.	260 x 250 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jaitpur	17 km north-east.	220 x 210 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Todh	19 km east.	230 x 220 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Punnair	17 km east.	230 x 220 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Heta Raghunathpur	18 km east.	250 x 230 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Rajnagar	19 km east.	200 x 180 x 2 m.	Gupta onwards.
Maho	18 km south-east.	380 x 320 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Manmaho	19 km south-east.	200 x 180 x 3 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gwarao Kalan	22 km south-east.	230 x 220 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.

Puwaina	18 km south-east.	220 x 210 x 7 m.	N.B.P.W. onwards.
Aihan	17 km south-east.	300 x 280 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pura Kalan	15 km south-east.	220 x 200 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Chursain	14 km south-east.	220 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Hasanpur Baru	15 km south.	230 x 210 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khera Parsauli	10 km south.	230 x 210 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Chandpa	8.5 km south.	230 x 210 x 8 m.	N.B.P.W. onwards.
Ladpur	8 km south-east.	240 x 220 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Lakhnu	9 km south-east.	240 x 220 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Parsara	7 km south-east.	240 x 220 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Rohai	6 km south.	240 x 220 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kota	5 km south-west.	280 x 250 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Siyamal Patani	10 km south-west.	280 x 270 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated near Sadabad-

Sadabad is an important town of the region. The ancient site of Sadabad is quite important for its location and might have been a town site during ancient times. It lies on the road linking Mathura with Jalesar and Agra with Hathras. Till 1995, it formed an integral part of district of Mathura. The sites in the area have been distributed based on their location from Sadabad. These sites can be located in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 3.

Name of the site	Location from Sadabad	Size	Chronology
Sadabad	Near Karwan nadi.	350 x 310x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Dhanauti	2 km north-west.	220 x 200 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bisana	4 km north.	220 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Badhar	2 km north.	200 x 180 x 4 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Arti	7 km north-east.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Kukargaon	8 km north-east.	240 x 220 x 6 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Rasgawan	9 km north-east.	220 x 200 x 6 m.	O.C.P. (?) onwards.
Chandwara	12 km north-east.	210 x 200 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Udhaina	14 km north-east.	230 x 210 x 8 m.	N.B.P.W. onwards.
Isonda	12 km north-east.	240 x 220 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Marhaka	5 km east.	220 x 180 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sahpau	8 km east.	300 x 290 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Chaubara Khera	10 km south-east.	300 x 290 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Guthara	10 km south-east.	250 x 230 x 8 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Jaintai	4 km south-east.	240 x 230 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jawahargarh	2 km south.	230 x 210 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Nagla Jhunna	2 km south.	180 x 150 x 5 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Bedal	5 km south.	220 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Kursanda	4 km south.	270 x 250 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gursoti	5 km south.	180 x 150 x 4 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Gigla	6 km south.	200 x 160 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Mansiya Khurd	3 km west.	190 x 170 x 3 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Pusaini	3 km south-west.	210 x 200 x 6 m.	Mauryan onwards.

Ghuncha	8 km south-west.	220 x 190 x 6 m.	Gupta onwards.
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Sites situated near Khandoli, Agra-

Khandoli, an ancient site is situated on the Sadabad- Agra road. The site has been selected to show the distribution of nearby sites just for convenience. These sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 3.

Name of the site	Location from Khandoli	Size	Chronology
Paintkhera	2 km west.	290 x 270 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khera	3 km south-west.	250 x 220 x 10 m.	Kushan onwards.
Semra	3 km north-east.	240 x 230 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bawani	5 km east.	210 x 200 x 6 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Baman	6 km north-east.	210 x 200 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Jarau	4 km north-east.	220 x 210 x 10 m.	Kushan onwards.

Sites situated near Barhan, Agra-

Barhan is an important ancient site and is a significant town of the area as well. The ancient remains of the site lies near the ruined fort of the town. The site lies on the road linking Etmadpur, Agra with Jalesar and Etah. The distribution of the nearby sites has been worked out keeping in mind the location of these sites from Barhan. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 3.

Name of the site	Location from Barhan	Size	Chronology
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Barhan	Fort	320 x 300 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Anwalkhera	4 km west.	350 x 320 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bandhnu	6 km north-west.	260 x 240 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khanda	5 km north-west.	220 x 230 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Tehu	6 km north-east.	230 x 210 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Aharan	4 km north-east.	260 x 240 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kurgawan	5 km east.	220 x 210 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Devkhera	7 km south-east.	260 x 240 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Panwari	8 km south-east.	260 x 240 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Chandkhera	4 km south.	200 x 180 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera Siktara	6 km south.	260 x 240 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mitawali	5 km south.	210 x 190 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sawain	9 km south.	250 x 220 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated near Jalesar-

Jalesar is a very important ancient site of the region and was earlier included in the district of Mathura during early British times. Possibly Jalesar is now a part of Hathras district and not of the district of Etah. It is situated on the road linking Agra with Etah. The distribution of the nearby sites has been worked out keeping in mind the location of respective sites from the city of Jalesar. Most of these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 7 and some of them in the toposheet nos. 54 I/ 3 and 54 I/ 6.

Name of the site	Location from Jalesar	Size	Chronology

Misauli	9 km north-west.	240 x 220 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Berni	9 km west.	260 x 240 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jamaun	6 km west.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Unchagaon	11 km south-west.	280 x 250 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khera Bichpuri	12 km south-west.	220 x 210 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Lauhcha	10 km west.	220 x 210 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Simrao	4 km north-west.	240 x 220 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gundao	3 km south-west.	240 x 210 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sakrauli	7 km south.	260 x 240 x 8 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Gothua	8 km south.	250 x 260 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Nabipur Khera	4 km east.	270 x 250 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jalesar	Fort and market.	500 x 450 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Chirgawan	4 km north.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Nibkhera	7 km south-east.	250 x 230 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jalukhera	7 km south-east.	260 x 240 x 12 m.	Kushan onwards.
Punhera	5 km east.	280 x 250 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pondri	7 km east.	300 x 270 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kuswa	7 km east.	290 x 270 x 12 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Awagarh	Fort	500 x 480 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated near Hasayan-

Hasayan is an important town of the area and some scholars of Braj region consider it to be eastern most limit of Braj region, possibly identifying it as Hasyavana. It lies on the road linking Bijaygarh with Jalesar. The nearby sites have been distributed in

the following study keeping in mind their respective locations from the town of Hasayan. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 6.

Name of the site	Location from Hasayan	Size	Chronology
Hasayan	Main town.	310 x 300 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jau Inayatpur	5 km north.	260 x 240 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bastoi	7 km north-east.	220 x 210 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Band Abdullahpur	4 km south-west.	320 x 300 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Itarni	2 km south.	220 x 200 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bakayan	3 km east.	240 x 220 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Andauli	2 km south-east.	250 x 230 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Garaula	3 km south.	220 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Mahewa	4 km south.	250 x 240 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kanau	6 km south-east.	280 x 250 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated to the south-west of Govardhan lying in Rajasthan-

Govardhan is a very important region of Braj area in many cultural and archaeological terms. The nearby sites have been distributed in the following study based on their respective location from the town of Govardhan and it is just for convenience than anything else. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 7.

Name of the site	Location from Govardhan	Dimensions	Chronology

Kaunthara	7 km south-west.	240 x 210 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sawain/ Samai	8 km south-west.	230 x 210 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera	9 km south-west.	210 x 190 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Umra	10 km south-west.	240 x 220 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Au	11 km south-west.	250 x 230 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Katahera	11 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 2 m.	Early medieval.
(Outside Katehra)	1 km away mata.	70 x 50 x 1 m.	Early medieval.
Barbari	11 km south-west.	180 x 170 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.

Sites situated near Dig in Rajasthan-

Dig is a very important town site of the region in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan lying on the road linking Mathura with Alwar. The nearby sites have been studied in respect of their location from Dig just for the convenience. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 7.

Name of the site	Location from Dig	Dimensions	Chronology
Dig	Fort and the town.	450 x 420 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bahej	4 km east.	320 x 280 x 21 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Panhuri	7 km west.	280 x 270 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kuchawati	4 km south.	260 x 250 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khori	6 km south-west.	230 x 210 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.
Girsa	7 km south-west.	240 x 230 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Januthar	11 km south-west.	300 x 280 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Songaon	6 km south.	300 x 290 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Syorawali	10 km south-west.	220 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gailhanawali	7 km south.	220 x 190 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Badangarh	8 km south.	240 x 220 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mandhera	8 km south.	280 x 260 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated in and around Kumher in district Bharatpur-

Kumher is a very important ancient site in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan lying on the road linking Bharatpur with Alwar. A number of ancient sites have been studied in the present study based on their respective location from the town of Kumher. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 7.

Name of the site	Location from Kumher	Dimensions	Chronology
Kumher	Fort and town.	450 x 420 x 18 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Saint	5 km north.	300 x 280 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sitara	6 km north.	290 x 260 x 18 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Tamrer	5 km north.	230 x 210 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Kasot	6 km north.	230 x 210 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Krenwa	8 km north.	300 x 280 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Koner	9 km north.	260 x 240 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Dirwari	8 km north.	210 x 180 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khaira	13 km north-east.	240 x 220 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Supawas	2 km north-west.	250 x 230 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Rithauti	2.5 km north-west.	220 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Dhansauti	3 km north-west.	250 x 230 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sinsini	6 km north-west.	380 x 320 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Therawar	7 km north-west.	350 x 300 x 18 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pichumar	4 km north-west.	300 x 260 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bartal	7 km north-west.	220 x 200 x 4 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Usrani	8 km north-west.	250 x 230 x 12 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sabora	10 km north-west.	280 x 260 x 16 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sikrori	2 km north-west.	210 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sikror	2.5 km north-west.	230 x 210 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Pidi	3 km west.	250 x 220 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Karoli	4 km west.	220 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Astawan	5 km west.	300 x 270 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mahrawar	7 km west.	280 x 250 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jaundhela	7 km west.	230 x 220 x 6 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Hingoli	8 km west.	220 x 200 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Birahru	10 km west.	240 x 220 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Mendhacholi	11 km west.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sirsai	1 km south-west.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Dhanwara	2 km south-west.	240 x 220 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Paua	5 km south.	280 x 260 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Puth	5 km south-west.	220 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.

Guhawali	6 km south-west.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gudawali	7 km south-west.	260 x 230 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bansrauli	8 km south-west.	240 x 230 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gangrauli	10 km south-west.	280 x 250 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pengora	1.5 km north-east.	350 x 330 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Talphara	8 km north-east.	240 x 220 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Abhora	6 km east.	260 x 240 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bailar Kalan	2.5 m south-east.	220 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bori	5 km south-east.	260 x 250 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Dehra	3 km south-east.	330 x 280 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Awar	5 km east.	360 x 310 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sunari	2 km east.	220 x 200 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.

Sites situated to the west, south-west and south of Bharatpur-

Bharatpur is a well known city of Rajasthan and is a very important town for the archaeology of ancient routes. The sites in the region have been studied based on their respective location from the town of Bharatpur. All these sites can be found in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 8 except for Halena which lies in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 4.

Name of the site	Location from Bharatpur	Dimensions	Chronology
Kasoda	6 km north-west.	300 x 230 x 13 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Baben	8 km north-west.	210 x 200 x 13 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ajau	14 km west.	240 x 220 x 6 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sini	15 km west.	240 x 220 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Helak	14 km west.	280 x 260 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Halena	32 km south-west.	400 x 350 x 16 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Paprera	20 km west.	240 x 230 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kawai	28 km west.	240 x 210 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gadauli	27 km west.	230 x 220 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Karai	24 km west.	230 x 210 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Paharsar	28 km west.	220 x 200 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sewar	6 km south-west.	400 x 360 x 17 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mahuah	11 km south-west.	260 x 230 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bachamadi	22 km south-west.	240 x 220 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards
Pingora	23 km south-west.	260 x 230 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Malah	2 km south.	220 x 180 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kuma	8 km south.	230 x 200 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Unchagaon	10 km south.	220 x 200 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Aikta	12 km south.	200 x 180 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ajan	16 km south.	230 x 210 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Uchchen	18 km south-west.	370 x 340 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pichuna	28 km south-west.	280 x 260 x 16 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated in and around Hodal in districts Palwal and Mewat of Haryana-

Hodal is an important ancient as well as modern town of the region and lies in district Palwal of Haryana. The nearby sites have been distributed for this study based on

their location from the town of Hodal lying in between Kosikalan and Palwal on N.H. 2.
All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. G43F5 or 54 E/ 5.

Name of the site	Location from Hodal	Dimensions	Chronology
Hodal	Near the old N.H. 2	400 x 350 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bhulwana	Hodal Rly Station.	220 x 180 x 7 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Karman	5 km south-east.	260 x 230 x 13 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Hamid Khera	1.5 km south.	210 x 200 x 8 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Garhi Patti	2 km south.	240 x 220 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kanchi Khera	3.5 km south-west.	240 x 220 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Nawalgarh	4.5 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bichhor	5 km south-west.	280 x 250 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Nai	7 km south-west.	280 x 250 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Hathangaon	10 km south-west.	230 x 220 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pai	13 km south-west.	300 x 270 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jurhara (Brajdwar)	15 km south-west.	350 x 320 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jharokari	7 km south-west.	230 x 210 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Maryaka	6 km west.	230 x 210 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Tirwara	9 km south-west.	230 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Imratpur Khera	9 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Nimka	5 km west.	250 x 230 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Indana	6 km west.	230 x 210 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.

Singar	10 km west.	330 x 300 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Punahana	14 km west.	340 x 310 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khaika	9 km west.	250 x 230 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Saundhad (Sonhad)	4 km north-west.	360 x 330 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Andhop	9 km west.	250 x 230 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ali Brahman	10 km west.	220 x 210 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Nangal Jat	8 km north-west.	250 x 230 x 10 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bahin	10 km north-west.	280 x 260 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Banchari	4 km north.	307 x 320 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Lohina	7 km north-west.	230 x 210 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Seoli	9 km north-west.	260 x 240 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Manpur	12 km north-west.	260 x 250 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.
Kaundal	17 km north-west.	260 x 240 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Hathin	20 km north-west.	480 x 450 x 18 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gudhrana	12 km north.	200 x 180 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera (Banchari)	3.5 km north.	240 x 220 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Marauli	8 km north.	260 x 240 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Siha	10 km north.	250 x 220 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Palri	9 km north.	200 x 180 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Tikri	11 km north-east.	240 x 220 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pingor	13 km north-east.	330 x 310 x 15 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Nakhraula	13 km north-east.	200 x 180 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.

Khanbi	8 km north-east.	270 x 250 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ghasaira	10 km north-east.	200 x 180 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gulawad	13 km north-east.	240 x 220 x 9 m.	Kushan onwards.
Atarchata	16 km north-east.	210 x 200 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jatauli	15 km north-east.	230 x 220 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Banswa	6 km east.	240 x 220 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gaurauta	4 km north-east.	220 x 210 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera Paingaltu	5.5 km north-east.	230 x 210 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bijolikhera	9 km north-east.	200 x 180 x 3 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera b/w Bhiruki and Bhandoli	9 km north-east.	220 x 210 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bhandoli	10 km north-east.	220 x 210 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ramgarh	10.5 km north-east.	230 x 210 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Darana	11 km north-east.	200 x 180 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Likhi	12 km north-east.	250 x 240 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sainoli (Hasanpur)	14 km north-east.	340 x 300 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated near Khair in Aligarh district-

Khair is a very important ancient cum modern town in district Aligarh of U.P. which lies on the road linking Jewar with Aligarh. The nearby sites have been distributed for this study based on their location from the town of Khair. These sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 13.

Name of the site	Location	from	Dimesnsions	Chronology
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	Khair		
Khair (more than two mounds)	Town and near river Karman.	460 x 420 x 15 m.	At least P.G.W. onwards.
Arni	7.5 km south.	220 x 200 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Palachand	6 km south.	200 x 160 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera near Edalpur.	6 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Shiwal Kalan	7 km west.	220 x 200 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Shiwal Khurd	6.5 km west.	220 x 200 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sajnan	4.5 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 5 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Kasison Khera	4 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 6 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khera	5.5 km north-west.	220 x 200 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Sopha	6 km north-west.	200 x 180 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gomat	3.5 km west.	250 x 230 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Arrana	3 km east.	220 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Lodha	8 km east.	200 x 160 x 4 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Akrawat	9 km east.	220 x 200 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sikharan	10 km east.	220 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bhanauli	7 km east.	220 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.
Kiratpur Nimana	7 km south-east.	220 x 200 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Sites situated near Gonda-

Gonda is a small town lying midway on the road joining Iglas with Khair. No archaeological deposit could be observed at this site but it has been selected for the ease of description of its nearby sites.

Name of the site	Location from Gonda	Dimensions	Chronology
Pachawari	4 km south-west.	220 x 200 x 10 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Kuagaon	10 km south-east.	150 x 120 x 2 m.	Medieval onwards.
Khera Gailow	8 km south-east.	200 x 180 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Hasangarh	4 km south.	200 x 190 x 7 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Deta	8 km south-west.	240 x 200 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Rajawal	6 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Bhandera	6 km south-west.	220 x 190 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera Nagla Madho	2 km south.	220 x 200 x 1 m.	Historical(?), totally ruined, not clear.
Mati	4 km north-east.	220 x 200 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pinjarinagari	6 km east.	220 x 200 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Baragaon	8 km east.	220 x 200 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gadakhera	6 km south-east.	220 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Jaintholi	8 km south-east.	220 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.

Sites situated near Aligarh-

Aligarh is a very important city of India whether during ancient times or in the present era. Some of the nearby sites have been studied in the present study keeping in view their respective locations from the city of Aligarh. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 16.

Name of the site	Location from	Dimensions	Chronology
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	Aligarh		
Aligarh (2 or more)	Jama masjid area.	1000 x 800 x 20 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Madarkhera	5 km south-west.	210 x 180 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mahua	10 km south-west.	230 x 210 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Kauakhera	15 km south-west.	200 x 180 x 8 m.	N.B.P.W. onwards.
Esi	6 km south.	240 x 210 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mandrak	7 km south.	280 x 260 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mahuwakhera	4 km east.	220 x 200 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Harduaganj	10 km north-east.	370 x 300 x 14 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Ikri	10 km east.	240 x 220 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bhawankhera	15 km east.	210 x 180 x 10 m.	Kushan onwards.
Konchhor	7 km south-east.	250 x 220 x 8 m.	Kushan onwards.
Adaun	9 km south-east.	250 x 210 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.

Sites situated near Achhnera in Agra District-

Achhnera is a very important town of the region and comes under district of Agra on the ancient road linking Bharatpur with Agra. The nearby sites have been mentioned according to their respective location from the town of Achhnera. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet nos. 54 E/ 16 and 54 E/ 12.

Name of the site	Location from Achhnera	Dimensions	Chronology
Achhnera	Main town.	4000 x 320 x 17 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Raibha	4 km east.	270 x 250 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.

Hansela	8 km north-west.	270 x 240 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bhandiri Khera	6 km north-west.	220 x 200 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Garhiman	7 km north-west.	200 x 180 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Sandhan	6 km north-west.	300 x 280 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khera Sandhan	6.5 km north-west.	380 x 360 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Kachaura	2 km north.	280 x 250 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Mangraul Jat	5 km west.	200 x 180 x 7 m.	At least Kushan.
Arua Khas	2.5 km north-west.	280 x 270 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Biyara	3 km south-west.	280 x 260 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Pura Mana	4 km south-east.	210 x 200 x 7 m.	Kushan onwards.

Sites situated near Fatehpur Sikri in district Agra-

Fatehpur Sikri is a world famous site lying on N. H. 11 linking Jaipur with Agra. It is a very important geographical unit for the study of distribution of ancient sites. All the nearby sites have been studied keeping in mind the location of these sites from Fatehpur Sikri town. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 12.

Name of the site	Location from Fatehpur Sikri	Dimensions	Chronology
Sikri Fatehpur	Main village.	Not known but a town site.	O.C.P. onwards.
Mahadau	6 km north.	260 x 240 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Churyari (Rock sh.)	2.5 km north.	260 x 240 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Chauma Shahpur	5 km north-east.	200 x 180 x 6 m.	At least Kushan.

Daulatabad	4 km north-east.	170 x 150 x 5 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Santha	6 km north-east.	260 x 220 x 11 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Rundh Santha	5.5 km north-east.	700 x 500 x 4/ 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Khera Kaunrai	3.5 km east.	210 x 200 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gur ki mandi	1 km east.	200 x 180 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Gur Mandi Crossing at Dura- Sikri Road	1 km south-east.	150 x 140 x 1.5 m.	At least Post-Gupta.
Nagla Lodh	3 km south-east.	220 x 200 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Jajau	4 km south-east.	210 x 200 x 6 m.	Kushan onwards.
Undera	4.5 km south-east.	260 x 240 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Dura	9 km south-east.	320 x 300 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Barnawai	8 km south-east.	210 x 200 x 8 m.	At least Kushan.
Rasulpur (Rock sh.)	3 km north-west.	Insignificant area.	O.C.P. onwards.
Patsal (Rock shelters)	3 km north-west.	230 x 210 x 3 m.	Pre historic and Kushan onwards.
Bandrauli (shelters)	4 km west.	Insignificant area.	Pre historic, P.G.W.
Sonothi	5 km west.	280 x 270 x 14 m.	O.C.P. onwards.
Madanpura	7 km west.	Rock shelters.	Pre historic onward.
Jajauli	8 km west.	Rock shelters.	Pre historic onward.
Samra	10 km west.	200 x 180 x 5 m.	Kushan onwards.
Ghorausli	12.5 km west.	230 x 200 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Daudpur	13 km west.	200 x 180 x 4m.	Kushan onwards.
Mandi Mirza Khan	4 km south-west.	Not known.	At least Kushan.

Dulhara	5 km south.	280 x 250 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Aulenda	8 km south-west.	260 x 250 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khera Jat	6 km south-west.	Not known.	Megalithic etc.
Dabar	7 km south-west.	Not known.	At least Kushan.
Sirauli	9 km south-west.	Not known.	At least Kushan.

Sites situated near Kirawali in District Agra-

Kirawali is a small town lying on N.H. 11 linking Agra with Jaipur. Its ancient origin requires another visit (in the Muriapura Thok) but in the present study the nearby sites have been studied based on their location from this town just for the convenience of the study. All these sites can be looked in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 16.

Name of the site	Location from Kiraoli	Dimensions	Chronology
Vidyapur	2 km south-west.	220 x 200 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bakendakhera	2 km south.	200 x 180 x 7 m.	Mauryan onwards.
Jengara	7 km south.	230 x 210 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Bewan	13 km south.	230 x 210 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Nahchani	5 km south-east.	210 x 200 x 7 m.	Post-Gupta onward.
Akhwai	9 km south-east.	210 x 200 x 8 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gahera Khurd	13 km south-east.	230 x 210 x 9 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Gahera Kalan	13.5 km south-east.	220 x 200 x 4 m.	Kushan onwards.
Karahra	7 km south-east.	280 x 270 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
Khalua	14 km south-east.	240 x 220 x 10 m.	P.G.W. onwards.

Mahuar	4 km east.	270 x 240 x 12 m.	P.G.W. onwards.
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TOTAL NO. OF SITES IN THE ABOVE TABLES (besides the sites in Mathura District) = 372.

No. of sites mentioned in detail lying in old Aligarh district = 25.

No. of sites mentioned in detail lying in Bharatpur district = 72.

Total number of archaeological sites in Braj region except modern Mathura district = 469

Chapter 3

Analysis of the Archaeological Data from the Braj Region

After a detailed description of all the archaeological sites in the previous chapter, it would be quite interesting to analyze that data. For the study of settlement pattern in the region during different time periods the data is going to shed some new light on the existing knowledge. Firstly we take the issue of the settlement pattern of the Mathura district, size of which has been quite reduced because of the merger of a part of *tehsil* Sadabad in recently created district of Hathras. Earlier the river Yamuna almost bisected the district of Mathura in terms of the total area and population but now-a-days, the area and population of western part of Mathura district is much higher than the eastern *trans*-Yamuna tract. We can presume that roughly, two-third of the total area of the district lies in the western *cis*-Yamuna tract. The earliest cultural horizon of this region starts during the proto-historic period, though, there are confirm evidences of the presence of palaeolithic men in the Govardhan hills. Potsherds belonging to O.C.P. cultural tradition have been observed at the sites of Aring and Gantholi in the *cis*-Yamuna tract and at Gosna and Nohjhil in *trans*-Yamuna tract.¹ The postsherds had incised zigzag designs on the surface (sometimes interior also). Some black and red ware sherds were also part of early cultural tradition, similar to sherds observed at the sites of Atranjikhara and Jakhera in Etah district. In the region of Mathura various varieties of Black and Red Ware can be observed of different fabrics at different sites. It is not only one variety of the thick Black and Red Ware of later tradition, which Dr. Joshi and his team found at the sites of Ambarish Tila etc. From the site of Chaubara Tila, a copper celt, possibly belonging to Copper hoard tradition was found by Cunningham (Ancient India No. 9, 1971: 37). In the year 1993, Mathura Museum purchased a lot of Copper hoard implements (Acc. Nos. 93.5, 93.6, 93.51, 93.65 etc.) from a person of Mahavan *tehsil* who found these implements while digging somewhere near Baldev.² When we consider the archaeology of old Mathura district (until 1995), there were certain

evidences of copper hoard findings from a site near Sadabad, possibly Rasgawan. In the records of Mathura Museum some Copper hoard objects (acc. Nos. 75.33, 75.34 etc.) are said to have been recovered from the digging of Rasganwan drain in Sadabad *tehsil* which came to Mathura Museum in the year 1975. I doubt the find of a Copper hoard implement from Chaubara mound from Mathura to be actually belonging to a site in Sadabad *tehsil* near the site Chaubara. It is clear from the above discussion that the area of Mathura was well in habitation by the people of Copper hoard cultural tradition. In this study, if we associate the finding of O.C.P. from Noh, a site very near to Mathura border with Bharatpur district, it becomes very clear that Mathura region was an important area for the development of O.C.P.-Copper hoard cultural tradition.

Except for the excavations at Sonkh and at some peripheral sites of Mathura city, no major proper excavation has taken place in the district. As far as the excavations at Sonkh are concerned these were definitely done meticulously by Herbert Hartel and his German team and according to them the earliest culture at the site started with P.G.W. using people. As their area of the excavation was quite limited (about 1/3rd of the total site and this total area was even less than half of the actual area of the ancient site), there are chances that the few spots where O.C.P. related potsherds might have been present, were not excavated. Otherwise, it has to be accepted that at the majority of archaeological sites the significant cultural sequence starts with P.G.W. period. Another important point about the excavations of Sonkh is the finding of P.G.W. cultural horizon in all the trenches in different parts of the mound where the lowest levels could be reached. It makes it clear that during P.G.W. period the settlement of Sonkh was quite extensive and on the basis of archaeological data and the present condition of the mound it can be considered to be about 300 x 250 m in area at least. It makes the case more powerful for supporting the area of P.G.W. using cultural tradition at most of the sites as equal to the archaeological mound present at the site.

Although, I firmly believe that the sites of Ambarish Tila, Hathi Tila and the part of Katra mound were the later extensions of P.G.W. using people, the dating proposed by Dr. Joshi and his team needs a re-analysis. The main disadvantage of Dr. Joshi's dating is that he was biased towards a particular theory as he wrote what he believed "the origin of NBPW is regarded by most of scholars to be somewhere in the

6th century B.C. in the mid-eastern India; its transportation to Mathura (from eastern India) might have taken considerable time in those days. Therefore we dated Period IB around 500 B.C.”³ It was the reason that he discarded a number of early dates. Some of these early dates were:

PRL-333 (Late Level of Period II, N.B.P.W.)- 610 + (-) 150 B.C., uncalibrated.

PRL-336 (Mid Level of Period II, N.B.P.W.)- 660 + (-) 100 B.C., uncalibrated.

Besides these dates, some other dates indicated that the average date of Period II at Mathura would have been about 650-700 B.C. after calibration. Keeping it in mind, it is obvious to consider a date of about 1000 B.C. for the early phase of P.G.W. but it has to be kept in mind that it is for the single site of Ambarish Tila, not the heartland of ancient Mathura city. Prof. B.B. Lal also tried to prove that the date of P.G.W. horizon at Mathura would date back to circa 9th – 10th century B.C.⁴ This exercise was presumably done for fitting Mathura in his theory of associating P.G.W. culture with *Mahābhārata* age.

In recent years, archaeology of north India has got enriched with the excavations of a few important sites and it indicates towards the fact that two cultural traditions of P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. might have co-existed in different parts and it's not always necessary to focus on a particular direction of cultural migration. The radiocarbon date of N.B.P.W. horizon of about 1000 B.C. from the site of Ayodhya⁵ indicates that P.G.W. cultural tradition might have been an earlier contemporary of N.B.P.W. at many sites in north India. Possibly the largest P.G.W. settlement of India- Mathura would provide at least the same cultural sequence as obtained at the sites of Noh, Atranjikhhera and Jakhera in the Greater Braj region, if excavated in the heart of the city.

Painted Grey Ware Culture sites in old Mathura district-

P.G.W. sites in *cis*-Yamuna tract = **138**.

P.G.W. sites in *trans*-Yamuna tract = **67**.

Total no. of P.G.W. sites in Mathura district = **205**.

Considering the total area of old district of Mathura to be 3625 square km and dividing it with the total number of P.G.W. sites, we roughly get the presence of a P.G.W. site in an area of about **17.7 square km**.

For the western sector, if we consider its area to be about 2200 square km, we come at the figure of about **16 square km** for the presence of a P.G.W. site.

For the eastern sector, if we consider its area to be about 1400 square km, we come at the figure of about **21 square km** for the presence of a P.G.W. site.

In the area west of Yamuna in the toposheet no. 54 E/ 9, the total no. of P.G.W. settlements in an area of about 540 square km is **37** including the largest site of Mathura city which also has some isolated mounds as well. Hence in this area if we derive the minimum area required for the presence of a single P.G.W. site, it comes out to be **14.5 square km**. This is the least area required for the presence of a P.G.W. settlement throughout the country as per the information available till now. Even in this area if we calculate the minimum area required per P.G.W. site in south, east and west sides of Chhata town, it would come out to be about **9 or 10 square kilometer** for the presence of a P.G.W. site. This area shows the highest distribution of ancient sites in the country and it continued in the similar manner during the succeeding periods of possibly Mauryan age, Śunga period and definitely during early centuries of the Christian era. The trend of occupation of the sites has been quite similar until the recent years. Only an increase of 10-20% can be observed in the number of modern day settlements in this area.

In the toposheet no. 54 E/ 7 in the region of Kumher and Deeg, the total no. of P.G.W. sites is about **40**.

In the area of roughly 700 square km total no. of P.G.W. sites = 40

So the area required for the presence of a single P.G.W. site = **17.5 sq. km**.

Total number of P.G.W. sites near Hathras and Sasni in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 2 ranges between **30-35** (35 or more Mauryan sites).

The minimum area required in this region for the presence of a single P.G.W. site =
 $700/30 = 23.3$ square km.

For a single Mauryan site this minimum area would come out to be lesser than 20 sq. km.

Mauryan archaeological sites in the old Mathura district-

It must be kept in mind that during the survey of Mathura district, more than 98% of ancient sites were found to be occupied by the modern villages. At all the sites which are lying in major parts as abandoned mounds like Gosna, Sonoth, Bhadravan, Bhagosa, Barnauli ki Dhari, Sankhi, Sehi Garh, Tarauli, Karnawal etc., all the early phases were identifiable in the form of P.G.W., N.B.P.W., B.S.W., B.R.W. and coarse grey ware. It is clear from such sites that there was certain degeneration in the fabric of grey ware from P.G.W. period to Mauryan period in which the place of deluxe pottery was taken by N.B.P.W. and the continuing tradition of B.S.W. up to some extent. At almost all the sites from where I have reported the finding of P.G.W., associated coarse grey ware was also found. Black and red ware pottery as well as Black Slipped Ware pottery are the pottery types which were found associated with both P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. cultural traditions. At most of the sites these pottery types were observed. But it is quite difficult to ascertain the period of such potsherds which were generally found without any particular shape except for the findings of N.B.P.W. pottery. I must accept that except for the above mentioned few mounds and few other sites; at a number of the sites N.B.P.W. potsherds were not observed. Even at these sites the quantity of these sherds was very less in comparison to other pottery types. I strongly feel that the typical pottery of Mauryan period in this region is the coarse grey ware along with B.S.W., B.R.W. and red ware. The grey ware which was observed from majority of P.G.W. sites was of both fabrics- finer and coarser. Finer sherds were definitely part of P.G.W. tradition but the coarse grey ware sherds may belong to any of the two periods. The pieces found at the sites occupied by the modern villages were too small to differentiate as to which cultural tradition these belonged to. But to me it did not appear at any of the sites that the site got abandoned after the P.G.W. period. The sites continued to inhabit during Mauryan, Śunga, Kushan and later periods without any major break. All the cultural periods were

present at most of these sites. I am not aware of any site which actually got discontinued after any of these early periods. There might have been some small intervals during various cultural periods but these were not long enough to deprive a site from the cultural deposit belonging to any of these major periods. It is highly probable that many of the sites which have been described as new Kushan settlements might have come into existence during the Mauryan or Śunga period, but in the present condition of knowledge this point can neither be proved nor discarded. We can safely assume that the total number of Mauryan sites would have exceeded the total number of P.G.W. sites and it would have been **in excess of 225**.

Kushan archaeological sites in the old Mathura district-

No. of Kushan sites in *cis*-Yamuna tract = **235**.

Hence if we derive the minimum area required for the presence of a Kushan site, it comes out to be,

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Total area of } cis\text{-Yamuna region} / \text{Total no. of Kushan sites} \\ &= 2200 / 235 = \mathbf{9.36 \text{ sq. km.}} \end{aligned}$$

Total no. of Kushan sites in *trans*-Yamuna region = **110**.

So, the minimum area required per site =

$$\begin{aligned} &\text{Total area of } trans\text{-Yamuna region} / \text{No. of Kushan sites in the } trans\text{-Yamuna region} \\ &= 1400 / 110 = \mathbf{12.7 \text{ square km.}} \end{aligned}$$

Total number of Kushan sites in Mathura district = **345**.

So the minimum area required per site in the district of Mathura

$$= 3625 / 345 = \mathbf{10.5 \text{ square km.}}$$

Total number of Kushan sites near Hathras and Sasni in the toposheet no. 54 I/ 2 = **60**.

The minimum area required in this region for the presence of a single Kushan site =

$$700 / 60 = \mathbf{11.66 \text{ square km.}}$$

From P.G.W. culture settlements to early historical settlements, a certain increase in the number of sites can be observed. The total number of P.G.W. sites

which is about 205 in Mathura district might be higher than this number with an approximate fluctuation of + 10%. In this way the total number of the sites might be more than 225. There is strong possibility of the presence of an earlier cultural horizon like P.G.W. at the sites of Sakna, Fenchri, Ganeshra, Maraura, Junhedi, Barauli etc., so this higher number is quite a possibility. If we take the number of total P.G.W. settlements about 225 in the Mathura district, then considering the total number of early historical settlements at around 345, we derive at the conclusion that there was an increase of about 50% from P.G.W. period to early historical period. For the number of Kushan archaeological sites, we can again assume an approximate fluctuation of + 10%. In this way the total number of Kushan sites might increase to about 380. So, we may safely derive at the conclusion that during the period between P.G.W. (circa 9th century B.C.) and early centuries of the Christian era, there was an increase of about **50-60%** in the number of archaeological sites. Many of the sites which have been dated to Kushan period might have actually come into existence during Mauryan or Śunga periods (4th - 2nd century B.C.). The grey ware which is generally associated with Mauryan period of the late N.B.P.W. phase had continued during the Śunga period up to some extent, so there are possibilities of many Kushan sites actually dating back to this period. Even during the Kushan period itself, we do not mean only Kushan period but the Śaka Kushan period which actually starts in 1st century B.C. and there are evidences that many of important Kushan sites (many even dating back to P.G.W. period) got their name from Indo-Greeks and Parthians. Examples of some of these sites are Mandrak near Aligarh, Maryak near Hodal, Helak and Halena near Bharatpur, Amokhri, Tikari, Mursan, Tuksan and Lutsan in Hathras district, etc. This number of early historical sites again gets around 50% additions in the form of new settlements during the early medieval period and medieval period (9th - 13th century A.D. and 17th century A.D.). Many of these sites might have come into existence during Gupta period and late Gupta period (4th - 7th century A.D.), but in the present state of our knowledge, we can not say much about it. Another important point about this late period is that even as the number of total sites increased to about 540, we can not say that their economic and social condition had improved. Many of the already existing sites might have been occupied for a brief period and might have had lesser population. This period is quite long for any specific data but there are some evidences indicating a wave of new arrivals of Thakurs and Jats during this

period especially from Rajasthan side about 10th century A.D. Except for the villages named as Naglas (with a very few exceptions) most of the village and town sites of Mathura district were occupied by the late medieval period (till about 16th -17th century) whether for longer periods or shorter ones. At more than 90% of modern villages in the region, I observed sculptures of medieval period but most of these sites have not been described by me either in the detailed description of the sites of Mathura district or the tables. It was not felt necessary to include all the sites because the focus of the research is more on the ancient period. This occupation of almost all the habitation settlements in Braj is further corroborated after looking at Growse's data as almost all the sites before 1880 had been in occupation for many generations. A large number of these sites had majority of the population following the Hindu religion and it was only during the 14th-15th century onwards when some of the villages became dominated by Muslim population. It was basically due to many locals converting to Islam like in many of the villages of Mevs. Very few villages came into existence as new sites with majority population being the followers of Islam in this period.

Analysis of various ancient routes-

In this section an analysis of various alignments of ancient period is being done which would have formed part of trade networks up to some extent even during that period. These analyses are based on the location of ancient sites and the shortest route possible based on their locations. It should be kept in mind that these are only tentative.

1. Mathura to Palwal-

It would have been one of the most important routes of ancient times and is now-a-days part of N.H. 2, going from Delhi to Kolkata. The stretch of the route between Mathura and Palwal was more important for the number of ancient sites than the remainder of route ahead, possibly after Ballabhgarh.

Sites lying on this stretch during P.G.W. period: Mathura - Jaint - Ajhai khurd - Chaumuha - Akbarpur (Sanpli Khera) - Senmari - Chhata - Dautana/ Tumola - Kosikalan - Kotvan - Hodal - Banchari - Bamni Khera - Palwal.

During the Kushan period some smaller settlements mostly religious in nature came into existence near this route. The new sites were-Sarai Azampur, Kota, Allahpur, Chhatikara.

Of these sites Mathura would always be a city site while Jaint, Chaumuha, Kotvan, Banchari were large village sites. Palwal would have been a city site and Chhata, Kosikalan, Hodal, Bamni Khera would have been small to large town sites. Considering the distance between Mathura and Hodal to be about 52 km. we get total of 11 P.G.W. sites in this stretch. We come at an average distance of about **4.7 km** between two sites. Interestingly the distance between Mathura and Jaint is much higher than this average length and is about 13 km. It is not possible to identify the exact reason for this anomaly as the distance between the ancient sites around Mathura city should have been much lesser. It is in complete disagreement with the view of the majority of scholars who consider that the nearby settlements of Mathura grew as such because of these being the feeder channels to the booming economy and cosmopolitan nature of Mathura city during ancient times, especially Kushan period. This data would not change much for the Kushan period as well because the new sites which came into existence in this stretch were not regular habitation sites. In my opinion these new sites would have been religious structural sites.

Route following Yamuna-

Besides this important route, another route went to Palwal region following the sites close to Yamuna. This route passed via Vrindavan, Parkham Gujar, Sehi, Nandghat, Shergarh, Majhoi to sites in the Hodal region. During Kushan period many other sites came into existence on this route like Jaisinghpura, Kankor Tila, Ahalyaganj, Akrur Tila between Mathura and Vrindavan, then Sunrakh, Gond and Badi Atas, Sakraya between Vrindavan and Sehi, then Mai, Basai, Jaitpur, Bhogaon, Ogaha between Sehi and Shergarh.

Of all these sites, the site of Sehi was a small town site while Vrindavan would have been an important town site (might have been a city site), Shergarh would also have been a town site.

2. Mathura to Agra-

This route more or less followed the river Yamuna and went via Karnawal, Jhandipur, Runakta, Agra. Another route which is almost same as the N.H. 2 went via Baad (possibly a P.G.W. site), Mahuan, Farah (possibly a P.G.W. settlement), Pingri, Kitham, Arsena, Runakta and Agra. Of these sites Kitham is a large village site, Runakta is a town site and Agra obviously a large city settlement.

During the Kushan period on both the routes many new sites came into existence like Sarai Azamabad, Aurangabad, Ronchi, Ladpur, Baburi Khera, Shahpur, Khairat along Yamuna in the *khadars*. On the N.H. 2, the important sites which came into existence are Baad, Aganpur Khera, Farah and Kurkanda.

The distance between Mathura and Agra is 54 km. and in this stretch the total number of P.G.W. sites range from 8-10. So the average distance between two sites comes out to be **6.75 – 5.5 km**. Even in this stretch the maximum distance between two sites is between Mathura and Baad or Mahuan and is about 11 km or 20 km respectively.

Alternate route from Mathura to Agra-

It appears that this route would have been much popular during the ancient times in spite of its being slightly more lengthy. This route would have passed from Mathura via Aruki, Bhainsa, Chhargaon, Bhahai, Mahwan and then would have followed N.H. Another option for the ancient travellers would have been via **Dhau Piyau (Chandrapuri) crossing - Aruki - Bhainsa - Chhargaon - Beri - Parkham - Pingri - Kitham - Arsena - Runakta - Agra**. Following this route the total number of P.G.W. sites on a stretch of about 66 km would have been 12 and so the average distance between two sites on the route would have been about **5.5 km**. This average distance between two sites is almost in line with the average distance between two sites on the Mathura-Palwal stretch. Among the sites on this stretch most of villages are large ancient villages and some of them might fall in the category of small towns like Parkham and Runakta.

3. Mathura to Bharatpur and Uchchen-

This route is going towards Bayana and Karauli via Bharatpur and Uchchen. The ancient route (P.G.W. period) from Mathura to Uchchen passed via **Dhau Piyau**

(Chandrapuri) crossing - Tarsi - Murhesi - Kosi Khurd - Sonoth - Rasulpur – Rarah - Jaghina - Bharatpur - Sesar - Uchchen.

Between Mathura and Bharatpur the distance is 36 km. So the average distance between two sites on this route comes out to be less than **4 km**. From Bharatpur the route to Bayana passes via Sesar, Uchchen etc. Of all these sites Kosi is a large village site while Rarah, Jaghina and Sesar are town sites of some importance. Bharatpur and Uchchen are city sites. Uchchen has been mentioned as a city site in some of the inscriptions from Kankali Tila belonging to Kushan period. During the Kushan period two other sites came into existence on this route- Narhauli and Tyonga. Both of these sites might be earlier in date but it could not be confirmed. So the average distance between two sites between Mathura and Bharatpur during Kushan period comes to be about **3.3 km**. This average distance is much lesser than the all important Mathura-Palwal route indicating the importance of Mathura-Bharatpur route during ancient times.

4. Mathura to Kumher and Nadbai-

The route to Nadbai and then towards Dausa and Jaipur region was very important route of the region. The sites which lie on this route are: **Pali Khera – Naugama – Jansuti – Sonsa – Sonkh**. Another alternate route to Sonkh was **Maholi – Mukundpur – Usphar – Unchagaon – Sonsa – Sonkh**. During Kushan period two new sites came into existence on this route – **Shahpur** between Unchagaon and Sonsa and **Borpa** between Sonsa and Sonkh. From Sonkh the ancient route to Kumher would have passed via **Bachhagaon – Talphara – Pengor – Kumher**.

For the distance of 24 between Mathura and Sonkh, we come at an average distance of about **3.5 – 4 km**. The distance between Mathura and Kumher is about 36 km and the average distance between two sites on this route comes to be about **3.5 km**. Up to Nadbai the distribution of the P.G.W. sites is in the same fashion. Some important facts about this area is that for a large area between Sonkh, Sonsa and Paintha, there is not a single P.G.W. site and only one Kushan site of Borpa (not very important). To the south, south-east and west of Sonkh the distribution of ancient sites is in the same fashion as is found in the rich site distribution areas of Braj. Why there

is such a dearth of ancient sites in this small area is not clear. This is possibly because of the unsuitability of the soil and the brackish nature of water in the area.

5. Mathura to Alwar and Sikar via Govardhan, Deeg and Nagar-

This route is very important one as far as the distribution of ancient sites is concerned. During P.G.W. period the route to Deeg from Mathura for which complete archaeological data is available passes via **Satoha – Khamni – Jachonda – Aring – Jamunata – Govardhan – Gantholi – Bahaj – Deeg**. So for a distance of about 35 km. there are 10 P.G.W. sites, so the average distance between two sites on this route comes out to be **3.5 km**. During the Kushan period some new sites came into existence but these were small settlements more of religious nature than regular habitation sites. These sites were Chaubara mounds, Girdharpur, Asgarpur (two sites) and Palai (most probably dating back to P.G.W. period). This development of new sites has not much to do with the settlement pattern based on trade route but just a normal extension because of increase in population and their activities. Among all these sites Aring and Deeg would have been important town settlements, Deeg might qualify to be a city settlement. Govardhan site as visible now is not a very large site but I consider that because of too much human activity, many evidences of a larger settlement have been lost by now. There is no denying that Govardhan enjoys a peculiar location on the alignment and distribution pattern of ancient sites and must have been a larger settlement, possibly qualifying for a town site.

From Deeg to Nagar the route passes via ancient sites of **Panhori – Rasiya – Siswar – Nagar**. The distance of Nagar from Mathura is about 60 km and from Nagar the distance of Alwar is about 45 km. The distribution of ancient sites on this route is not much different than in the area of Mathura district but it appears that the density of ancient sites in the area situated ahead of Nagar is lesser than Mathura and Deeg area. That might be because of the comparatively poorer soil quality and the paucity of water sources as the Aravali hills are more visible in this area. Nagar is certainly a city (*nagara*) site. Panhori can be included among small town sites. From Nagar the route goes to Alwar via Govindgarh, an important ancient site and from Alwar to Kotputli where it crosses the Delhi-Jaipur N.H. 8 and from Kotputli it reaches the sites in the area of Neem Ka Thana like Khetri, Ganeshwar, Jodhpura. The evidence of ancient route is found in the form of Shakambhari Devi near Udaipur Bhati which

is a popular deity (*kuladevī*) of many Mathura brāhmaṇas (Vashishtha) and some other castes. But surprisingly instead of following the ancient route, the pilgrims go via Jaipur making their journey too longer in distance terms. The route would have continued to be important till the medieval period. This route appears to be a major route for the migration of a large population during 8th–12th century A.D. from Rajasthan (Jodhpur, Bikaner, Sikar region to Braj). A number of Sūrya temples and Sūrya-*kuṇḍas* on this route are supportive of it. Another point which should be mentioned here is that that Shakambhari devi was known by elder people in Braj region as Shakhraya-Shyama. There is an ancient site between Vrindavan and Sehi called as Sakhraya which dates back to Kushan period with strong possibility for the presence of earlier cultural horizons and in all probability appears to have derived its name from this goddess of Jhunjhunu region. Besides, there is tradition among many important castes in Sehi region that derive their origin from Sikar, Jodhpur region of Rajasthan. I think this tradition is based on some ancient cultural interconnection between the regions of Rajasthan and Braj. It is slightly difficult to believe that all the people of Thakur clan came from Rajasthan during early medieval period to settle at Braj and there were no early settlers of this clan in Braj area.

6. Mathura to Fatehpur Sikri, Jagner and further south -

It is another very important route which would have become more prominent during and after Śūṅga and Kushan period as it was one of the major sources for the supply of the raw material of red sandstone for which Mathura school of art is so famous. From Fatehpur Sikri the route went southward to Jagner and Tantpur and Bari in the hilly tracts and the distribution of sites is lesser in that area.

There would have been different routes for reaching Sikri from Mathura. During P.G.W. period one would have been via **Tarsi – Murhesi – Kosi – Sonoth/ Mal – Santruk – Ol – Pipla – Ikran/ Hansela – Undra/ Chiksana) – Mahadau – Churyari – Sikri**. Among all these sites only Pipla is a site which I could not confirm as a P.G.W. settlement but on the basis of analysis of various ancient alignments it should have been a P.G.W. site. Following this route the distance of Sikri queries would have been around 46 km. On the basis of it the average distance between two sites would have been about **3.6 km**. Another stone query very near to Sikri is at

Santha and for that one would have followed the route **Chiksana – Daulatabad – Sikri/ Santha**. Anyhow Santha in spite of being a very important ancient quarry can't be compared with Sikri as Sikri would have been a much more important site, a town site, on the important alignment from Agra to Rupbas and Bayana. Of these sites, Ol might be put in the bracket of smaller town while Kosi, Dhangaon, Chiksana would have been larger village sites. During Kushan period a new site Pura came into existence on this route which is possibly an extension of Sonoth site.

There is another route which might have been used to reach Sikri. This route goes via **Aruki – Bhainsa – Chharghaon – Pilua Sadakpur – Beri – Jhurawai – Sandhan – Arua Khas – Biyara – Daulatabad – Sikri/ Santha**. Following this route the distance between Mathura and Sikri would be about 45 km and dividing it by 12 (total number of sites) we get an average distance of about **3.75 km** between two sites. Only a new Kushan site came into existence on this alignment and that is Banmauli which is an extension of Beri site. Besides, at Pilua Sadakpur P.G.W. horizon could not be confirmed though it is highly probable.

7. Mathura to Dholpur and Gwalior region via Achhnera-

One route to Gwalior region would have gone through the city of Agra but it appears that from Mathura or from northern India the route would have gone via Achhnera, Kagaraul to Dholpur region and from there to Mureina, Gwalior and then to central India especially Bharhut in Satna and Vidisha region via Eran. During the P.G.W. period, the Mathura-Achhnera route would have passed via sites of **Aruki – Bhainsa – Chharghaon – Sersa – Pilwa Sadakpur – Beri – Parkham – Baroda – Kachaura – Achhnera**. In a distance of about 35 km the total number of sites would have been 11 and hence we arrive at an average distance of about **3.1 km** between two sites. Of these Parkham and Achhnera would have been town sites while Bhainsa, Beri and Kachaura large village sites.

From Achhnera the route to Gwalior region would have gone via Puramana/ Muriapura – Nahchani – Akhwai – Gahera Khurd and then towards Saiyan-Dholpur region. Another route would have gone via Raibha – Mahuar – Khalua and then towards Saiyan region of Agra. As my explorations in this area were incomplete as well as were not as exhaustive as were in the area up to Achhnera, I am not going to interpret the data. Only one thing can be said with certainty about this region is that

this area was quite important for the journey from greater part of Alwar and Mathura region to Gwalior region and central India and the distribution of sites was in the same way as is throughout the Braj region but the minimum area required for the presence of a P.G.W. site would be slightly higher than the normal average in most parts of Mathura district.

8. Mathura to Firozpur Jhirka and Punahna via Kaman-

This important route from Mathura goes to Kaman and then from Kaman to Firozpur Jhirka and then towards Kotputli and the other route from Kaman goes to Nuh, Tijara, Rewari and then Rohtak via Punahna. The route from Mathura to Kaman dating back to P.G.W. period is as follows-

a) Mathura – Arahra – Bati – Ral – Bhadal – Pelkhu – Sahar – Kamai/ Mandoi & Karahla – Barsana – Unchagaon – Akata – Kaman.

From Pelkhu another route with slight variations would have passed via **b) Bharna Khurd – Bharna Kalan – Dahrauli/ Seeh & Palson – Hathiya – Dhabhala – Sunhera – Bhajera – Kanwara/ Kaman.** Among the latter route, identification of Dhabhal and Sunhera as P.G.W. site is a bit difficult as these are situated in hilly area.

Another route to Kaman from Mathura is via Govardhan and then via Barsana and Sanket. This route is more popular in the modern times. From Govardhan the P.G.W. period route passed via **c) Neemgaon – Palson -Seeh – Dahrauli – Barsana – Sanket – Rithaura – Dhilawati – Akata – Kaman.** Another popular route which is quite longer passes via **Govardhan – Deeg – Parmandra – Khera – Kaman.**

The average distance between two sites comes out to be less than **3.5 km** and the shortest distance between Mathura and Kaman to be about **40 km.**

On the a) route, the sites of Ral, Sahar, Barsana and Akata would have been town sites between the largest city of Mathura and a large city of Kaman. On the b) route the sites of Palson and Hathiya would have been town sites. Hathiya is definitely a lesser known but quite important town site. Most of other sites on these routes are medium to large villages.

From Kaman one route goes to Firozpur Jhirka, an important town site via Lohasar, Balkhera, Satwari and Pahari. Of these Pahari is an important town site on this route. Another route from Kaman goes to Rewari via Pai, Jurahra, Punahna, Nuh etc. and all these sites are large village and town sites.

Ancient alignments of Braj going to *trans*-Yamuna region-

9. Mathura to Kasganj, Soron and *trans*-Ganga region via Hathras-

It would have been a very significant ancient route linking Mathura and Rajasthan site with mid-Gangetic doab region. The ancient route passes via **Isapur – Lohvan – Gosna – Raya – Sonai – Mursan – Khera Baramai – Hathras – Hathras Qila**. The average distance between two sites on this route comes out to be slightly higher than **4 km** but in most part of *trans*-Yamuna region, the situation is same. The distance between Raya and Sonai (about 10 km) is much higher than the average distance between two sites. Among these sites Raya, Sonai would have been town sites, Gosna and Mursan large village sites. Gosna is an interesting case because of being abandoned during late medieval period and might be clubbed as a small town site if the total area of the site extending far beyond the railway tract is taken into account along with the archeological findings from the site. Hathras was one of the larger mounds of the whole Braj region and definitely a very important city settlement having a smaller settlement at another nearby mound. About the P.G.W. and Mauryan horizon at Isapur site, we are not sure but there is strong possibility of it.

From Hathras the ancient route might not have followed the present road to Sikandararao and Soron because on this stretch of about 35 km, I could locate only two P.G.W. sites. One of these two sites, Maidhu is also a part of another important ancient alignment while another site of Jau Inayatpur is about 9 km distant from Sikandararao. Some new Kushan sites came into existence on this route like Kanchana near Sonai and Thulai, Salimpur and Jaitpur between Maindhu and Sikandararao. During ancient times the route from Hathras to Sikandararao would have passed via Hathras – Merhu – Rajpur – Paharpur – Punnaur – Todh – Khitauli – Pichhaunti – Jau Inayatpur – Sikandararao.

There are two possible ancient routes to Kasganj and Soron. One would be: **Mathura – Hathras – Maindhu – Daryapur – Tikari – Gangraul – Khera Sultanpur and then after crossing G.T. road towards Kasganj and Soron. From Soron the ancient route goes to Ahichchhatra (Anwla) near Bareilly.**

The second altered route would have been via **Mathura – Mursan – Asroi/ Khera – Tuksan – Ahbaranpur – Ruheri – Lutsan – Daryapur – Tikari – Barhad – Bijaigarh and then to Kasganj, Soron and *trans*-Ganga sites.** A very important river from archaeological point of view, Kali Nadi is crossed near the important city site of Kasganj and Ganga at Soron.

From Sikandararao another important route goes towards Sahawar town via Bargawan, Naglakhera, Kapretha, Qazikhera, Akhtauli, SinSh and Atranjikhhera. **Atranjikhhera** is one of the largest abandoned mounds and was excavated by A.M.U. under the leadership of Prof. R.C. Gaur. It has provided evidences of O.C.P., B.R.W. phase, P.G.W. and onwards cultural sequence. The distance of this site from Mathura is about 105 km and it serves as an important crossing point at river Kali Nadi to go towards Sahawar town and Patiali/ Ganjdundwara. The actual importance of the site Atranjikhhera might be understood from its important location on the Mathura – Kampil and Mathura – Sankisa routes. Besides it also played an important role on the route linking Kasganj with Sakita and sites south of it. Another alternate route from Sikandararao to Atranjikhhera goes via Marahra, Jinhaira and Jarthai.

10. Mathura to Nidhauli Kalan and Etah via Hathras-

The important route to Etah from Mathura goes via Hathras. Up to Hathras the route is similar as discussed in the previous route. From Hathras the route would have gone via **Ladpur – Chaturbhuj Khera – Maho – Band Abdullahpur – Hasayan – Andauli – Kanau – Maqsdumpur (P.G.W.?) – Pilkhatra – Gadri/ Mitraul – Margayn – Nidhauli Kalan.** From Pilkhatra, Nidhauli Kalan can also be reached going via Khera Nuh but it would be slightly longer. From Nidhauli Kalan which is definitely an important town site, Etah can be reached via Dholeswar – Songra – Baragaon and Mukharna.

11. Mathura to Kampil, Sankisa and towards Sravasti via Jalesar-

Kampil near Kayamganj in district Farukhabad and Sankisa in the same district are two of the important ancient sites and during P.G.W. period, these must be considered important settlements at par with other large sites like Hathras, Aligarh etc. The major sites on this route are Mathura, Raya, Hathras/ Sadabad, Maho/ Sahpau, Jalesar, Awagarh and then the sites towards Ganga plain like Sankisa and Kampil. After crossing Ganga somewhere in that zone, the ancient route goes towards Sitapur district sites, Sravasti and then sites situated south of Sravasti. The site of Jalesar can be reached following three different routes.

One of the important routes would be from Mathura to Hathras and then Hathras – Parsara – Lakhnu – Aihan – Gwarau (Kushan site) – Simrao – Jalesar. Another alternate route would have been **Hathras – Ladpur – Jalalpur – Khera Chaturbhuj – Shahpur – Maho – Gwarau – Simrao – Jalesar**. The latter route would have gained popularity during Kushan period, though most of the sites date back to P.G.W. period. The average distance between two sites on the route to Jalesar from Mathura comes out to be about **4.5 km** or more.

The second important route would have gone via **Mathura – Lohvan – Sihora – Karab – Pachawar – Jugsana – Unchagaon – Sadabad – Sahpau – Isonda – Berni – Jamaun – Jalsear**.

The third route to Jalesar would have gone via **Mathura – Gokul – Mahavan – Baldev – Sadabad**. This route does not appear to be quite significant during the early times but after Kushan period it became the more popular route and still is. The number of ancient sites is much lesser on this route and at none of the sites Gokul, Raskhan Samadhi, Mahavan and Baldev I could find any pre-Kushan evidences. Another important route, most probably dating back to P.G.W. period passed along river Yamuna from Baldev to **Akos** and other important sites and continued further to Barhan, Devkhera, Narkhi, Fariha and then joined the *Uttarāpatha*.

The average distance between two nearby sites on either of these routes is more than **5 or 6 km**. This average distance is much higher than any of the less important route in *cis*-Yamuna tract. From Jalesar, the route passed via Punhera, Pondri, Gadsera to reach Awagarh. From Awagarh, the road to Kampil and Sankisa

had more than one option to reach. But for the long distance trade and travelling, the royal highways and other important routes would have been more popular during the ancient times.

12. Mathura to Aligarh-

A lot of change has taken place on the alignment of road to Aligarh from the ancient times to modern days. The ancient route to Aligarh, an extensive ancient city site, goes in this manner:

Mathura – Isapur – Lohvan – Gosna – Raya – Aiyera Khera – Nimgaon – Gorai -Kaimawali – Hastpur – Mahua – Aligarh.

The average distance between two sites is about **4.5 km**. Many new sites came into existence on this route during the Kushan period like Tamotiya, Harota, Bisahuli etc.

Another alternate route to Aligarh would have passed via **Mathura – Aiyera Khera – Beswan – Kanka – Sasni - Aligarh**. The present day route to Aligarh from Mathura is not an ancient one. The whole stretch between Raya and Hastpur is devoid of any ancient site except for twin sites of Beswan, which was definitely an ancient town but not part of Mathura–Aligarh alignment as such but of Khair-Sadabad and Mathura-Sasni and Ganga valley sites alignments. From Aligarh the ancient route went towards **Harduaganj, Atrauli, Morra, Karnawas (crossing point at Ganga), Bahjoi, Sambhal/ Chandausi, Moradabad and Himalayan region sites**. Another route went towards **Jawan** and further north.

13. Mathura to Nohjhil and Jewar-

This important route went towards north after crossing river Yamuna. The route would have been via **Mathura – Vrindavan – Chamar Nagla – Barnauli Ki Dhai – Manth – Bhadravan – Irauli – Samauli – Ohawa – Bhidauni – Surir – Mirpur – Bagharra (Sher Ka Khera) – Nohjhil – Bajna – Awakhera – Gairaula – Jattari – Khandeha – Tappal – Jewar**. From Jewar the route goes towards Dhankaur, Ghaziabad and Meerut region. From Mathura to Nohjhil and Bajna, the average distance between two sites comes out to be less than **3.5 km**. From Bhadravan to Nohjhil and Bajna, the distribution of ancient sites is much closer than the rest of the stretch. During Kushan period some new sites came into existence on

this alignment especially in the Nohjhil and northward region. From Mirpur to Bajna and northward sites an alternate route goes via Palkhera and Parsauli to Bajna. From Bajna the route goes towards Jattari, Pisawa and Khurja.

14. Mathura to Khair-

This is another important route and goes towards Chandaus, Khurja, Bulandshahr, Hapur and Garh Mukteshwar and then towards Saharanpur region. The Mathura to Khair route passes via **Mathura – Vrindavan – Nagla Chamar – Barnauli Ki Dhai – Arua – Jabra – Jaiswan – Nasiti – Harnaul – Karahari – Lohi – Khayara – Arni – Khair**. Another route from Mathura to Khair would have been via Arua – Nimgaon – Gorai – Deta – Rajawal – Arni – Khair. Another route can be traced as **Mathura – Vrindavan – Manth – Bhadravan – Eroli Gujar – Samauli – Ohawa – Bhidauni – Surir – Hasanpur – Jarara – Khayara – Arni – Khair**. On all the three routes the distribution of sites is quite close and the average distance between two sites on any of these routes ranges between **3–3.5 km**. Most of these sites date back to P.G.W. period except for a few where possibility of its presence is strong. During Kushan period many more sites came into existence (quite significant in number) indicating towards its importance as an important link route to reach various important regions. The distribution of ancient sites after the Mathura district is much lesser than inside Mathura district.

Other important link routes of the region-

1. Kaman to Khair-

This route passes via **Kaman – Akata – Rithaura – Sanket – Anjnokh – Khayara – Bhadawal – Chhata – Ladpur – Ranhera – Shergarh – Nohjhil – Parsauli – Shall – Pachahra – Khera Kasison – Khair**. The total distance between Kaman and Khair is about 58 km on this route and hence the distance between two nearby sites comes out to be **3.3 km**. Some new sites came into existence on this route during Kushan period like Khursi, Sajnan etc. From Nohjhil the more popular route to Khair seems to be via the important town site of Bajna which passed from Bajna to Khair via **Edalgarhi, Kaulahar, Shiwal Kalan, Shiwal Khurd and Gomat**.

2. Kumher to Khair-

This is the route coming from Vairāta region and going towards upper Ganga plains especially Bulandshahr and nearby regions. The route would have been as such: **Kumher – Pengor – Kasot – Krenwa – Konder – Dehiya – Govardhan – Radhakund – Kaunhi – Pelkhu – Siwal – Sihana – Akbarpur (Sanpli Khera) – Pelhora – Tarauli – Sainwa – Ranhera – Shergarh - Nohjhil – Parsauli – Shall – Pachahra – Khera Kasison – Khair**. Considering the distance between Kumher and Khair to be about 84 km, the average distance between two nearby sites on this route comes out to be about **3.5 km**.

3. Aligarh to Jalesar-

There are two possible routes to reach Jalesar from Aligarh. One goes via Aligarh – Bijaigarh – Hasayan – Jalesar. Many ancient sites lie on this route with these four sites being the major towns or cities. Another important route which might have been more popular goes via Sasni. This route definitely became more popular during and after Kushan period. From Aligarh the route goes via **Mandrak – Sasni – Lutsan – Daryapur – Punnaair – Heta Raghunathpur – Maho – Chirgawan – Jalesar**. The route from north-west region from the sites like Rohtak, Rewari would have reached the region of Jalesar via Palwal and then Jewar-Tappal after crossing Yamuna and then would have reached Jalesar and other sites in the region via Khair – Hasangrh – Khera Gailow – Gursena – Hastpur – Kanka – Sasni. Jalesar region from Khair region could also be reached via Hathras. The name of site Tuksan on the road linking Iglas with Hathras is quite interesting. The route from Aligarh to Jalesar is full of sites which are in all possibility related with people who entered India from north-western region. The examples of such sites are Mandrak, Sasni (most probably derived from word Sassanian), Lutsan etc. Many other sites in the nearby region but possibly part of some other routes also possibly derive their name from north-western region of India.

4. Etah to Rewari-

This route would have been an alternate route from the side of Kosam and Patna towards Rewari and then the sites of Hansi, Agroha, Sirsa up to Taxila region. From Etah one of the routes would have gone to either Hathras or Sasni. From Hathras the route would have gone via **Rohai – Tuksan – Kaimawali – Gorai – Khair – Gomat – Jattari – Tappal**. From Tappal after crossing Yamuna, the route

would have passed via **Kusnak, Palwal, Dhatir, Sohna towards Rewari**. From Sohna one important route goes towards Gurgaon, Bahadurgarh and Rohtak. One could also reach Palwal following the Grant Trunk Road up to Aligarh and then moving from **Aligarh via Lodha, Andla and Khair to Palwal and Rewari**. This link route would have been quite important joining the main *Uttarāpatha* route with the other areas of Mathura- Takṣaśilā trade route.

¹ This observation is based on my personal explorations as well as the observations of Prof. D. K. Chakrabarti and his team. Besides at the site of Aring,, one officer of A.S.I. Mr. L.M. Wahal (*I.A.R.* 1982-83 : 99) had reported finding of O.C.P. and late Harappan potsherds.

² Pesonal information received from Mr. Shatrughna Sharma, a senior employee of Mathura Museum.

³ M.C. Joshi and A.K. Sinha, "Chronology of Mathura-An Assessment," *Puratattva*, No. 10, 1978-79, p. 43.

⁴ "Mathura: A Re-assessment of the Chronology of the Crucial N.B.P.W. Horizons," *Man and Environment*, Vol. 9, 1985, pp. 109-112.

⁵ Personal communication with Dr. B.R. Mani, my Guide and the excavator of Ayodhya site.

Chapter 4

Buddhism and the Region of Mathura

Braj (Mathura) in Buddhist Literature-

The issues of Buddhism related with Mathura can be dealt with, keeping in mind two aspects, one is by considering all the references in Buddhist literature about Mathura and the other is by analyzing the details of places and find spots of various Buddhist sculptures and epigraphic evidences, in the area concerned. In the first case, when considering the literary references, these can be divided into four categories in the traditionally accepted chronological order as has been done by Padmanabh S. Jaini.¹

- A. *The Pali Tripitaka and the Aṭṭhakathās.*
- B. *The Sanskrit Avadāna Literature.*
- C. *The Vinaya texts of the Mūla- Sarvāstivādins.*
- D. *The Travel accounts of Chinese pilgrims Fa-hian and Hiuen-Tsang.*

An aspect about Pali texts is that these texts always refer to Mathura as Madhurā. Whether it is a variant spelling of Mathura or these texts have retained the original name, is not clear. Even in Brāhmanical texts, both the names appear, its earliest name is said to be Madhupurī or Madhurā. In Sinhalese texts Uttara Madhurā is used for it while Madhurā in these texts means the southern Madhurā (modern day Madurai in Tamilnadu).

*Majjhimanikāya*² (Mādhuriya Sutta 2.4.4) mentions that once upon a time Mahākātyāyana used to reside at Gundavana in Madhurā. At that time the king of Madhurā, Avantiputra went near him, riding a chariot. At the place where the

movement of the chariot was not possible, he moved on foot. There, the king discussed with Mahākātyāyana about the caste system. In the same text Kuru country has been mentioned on four occasions with the name of two towns- Kammāsadamma and Thulakotthita.³ All the references to Kuru country prove that The Buddha had travelled to the Kuru country via Śurasena region. *Majjhimanikāya* also mentions of a place named Ichchhanangala where four brāhmaṇas including a Jānu śroṇi brāhmaṇa had met the Buddha.⁴ This place was situated somewhere in Kośala country on some important trade route but the brāhmaṇa might have some relation with Mathura as will be shown later. The *Dīpavamśa* account that ‘in the past, Sādhina and twenty two of his descendents, the last of whom was Dhammagupta, ruled in Madhurā’⁵ is also of some significance. *Ghaṭa jātaka*,⁶ composed in Srilanka, mentions a much altered story of Kṛṣṇa legend, actually, for which Mathura is famous as such.

The sources enumerate Śurasena in the traditional list of sixteen *janapadas* and include Madhurā within that kingdom, but there is no specific mention of it as a capital city. The Mūla- Sarvāstivāda *Vinayavastu* places Mathura lying near Bhadrāśva and Oṭalā, all within territory of Śurasena kingdom. It designates the latter as the first kingdom (*ādi rājya*) and hence was known as *Mahāsamma*, ‘the Great Elected’.⁷ *Lalita Vistara*⁸ mentions Mathura city along with other great cities like Hastinapur. *Milinda Pañho* mentions Mathura along with Ujjaini, Sāketa, Magadha, Surattha, Kotumbara etc.⁹ In Beal’s translation of the Chinese version of *Abhinīṣkramaṇa Sutta*, Mathura has been styled as the capital of whole Jambudvīpa.¹⁰

The early Pali canonical texts are silent on the issue of the Buddha’s visit to Mathura region but one passage in *Anguttaranikāya* does say that he journeyed along the highway between Madhurā and Verañjā.¹¹ A certain tree, called Nalerunimba, figures several times in these *suttas* as a sacred spot on this highway.¹² Several brāhmaṇas from Mathura and Verañjā figure in the *suttas*. The *Anguttaranikāya*¹³ mentions one brāhmaṇa named Kandarāyaṇa of Mathura and also refers to one brāhmaṇa from Verañjā (probably identical with the person mentioned in *Vinayapīṭaka*). It makes clear reference to Madhurā and Gundavana for the stay of Mahākātyāyana.¹⁴ One reference in it of Kardama-daha along Varanā also seems to be related with Braj region.¹⁵

The *Vinayaṭṭaka* gives a full account of a famine in Verañjā during the the Buddha's visit to that place. The text says: 'At that time Verañjā was short of alms food, which was difficult of obtain; it was suffering from famine and people subsisted on blades of grass. Nor was it easy to keep oneself going by gleanings or by favour. At that time some horse dealers of *Uttarāpatha* arrived at the *varṣāwāsa* of Verañjā with 500 horses. In the horse - rings they prepared *pattha* - measures of steamed grain back to the park; they pounded them and ate them.'¹⁶ Apart from this description of Verañjā during the famine, the Pali *suttas* yield very little information about the conditions in and around Mathura. The Buddha seems to have viewed the city with distinct disfavour. In one *sutta* he says: 'Monks, there are five disadvantages in Madhurā. What five? The ground is uneven; there is much dust; there are fierce dogs; bestial yakkhas; and alms are got with difficulty.'¹⁷

Four *avadānas* of Mūla- Sarvāstivādin text *Divyāvadāna*, Nos. 26 – 29, deal with the events which allegedly took place during the lifetime of Aśoka and according to the 26th *avadāna*, the *Pāṃśupradānāvadāna*, which makes a specific reference to Mathura, these events occurred 100 years after the Buddha's death.¹⁸ This *avadāna* prefaces the story of the emperor's conversion to Buddhism with a narrative about his teacher, *sthavir* Upagupta. It tells that The Buddha, just before attaining his death, having subdued Upalālanāga and also having instructed the potterwomen named Chaṇḍālī and Gopālī, arrived in the city of Mathura. There he called his disciple, Ānanda, and pointed out to him the nearby blue hills of Urumuṇḍa. He then prophesied that two merchant brothers from Mathura, named Nāta and Bhaṭa, would establish a vihāra on that hill which would be known as Nātabhaṭa vihāra, a favourite haunt of meditation loving mendicants. There the elder Śānakavāsī (a hundred years after the *parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha) would ordain Upagupta.¹⁹ The *avadāna* then talks about Upagupta, a native of Mathura, born in a family of Gandhika whose father was known as Gupta. It tells the story of the famous courtesan of Mathura, Vāsavadattā and her liking for Upagupta, Upagupta's refusal for her desires, Vāsavadattā's wicked nature, her trial in court and punishment to her by cutting her ears and nose. At that time, Upagupta preaches her Buddhist *dharma* and then after her death, she being worshipped by the people of Mathura.²⁰ After this incidence, the fame of Upagupta reaches at Pāṭaliputra in the ears of the king Aśoka. The King

wishes to visit Upagupta at Mathura but the monk thinking of the great harassment which the people of Mathura would have suffered from such a royal visit, decides to go to Pāṭaliputra and preach the king there.²¹ Then, it further talks about the subduing of Māra by Upagupta and then Māra showing himself in the form of the Buddha, like a Nāṭa (a stage actor) on being asked by Upagupta to do so.²²

The story of Upagupta ends with one more interesting detail. We are told that on Urumuṇḍa hill there is a cave (18' long and 12' wide).²³ Upagupta is said to have instructed all those of his disciples who had attained arhatship to place a four inch stick in the cave. Consequently, in one day 10,000 sticks were placed in that cave. According to another tradition, Upagupta's body was cremated with these sticks.²⁴ This cave became a centre of pilgrimage as it was also visited by Chinese traveller Hiuen-Tsang.

The Mūla-Sarvāstivāda *Vinayavastu*²⁵ repeats the prophecy of the Buddha regarding the founding of Nāṭabhāṭa viḥāra and the advent of Upagupta in Mathura. About the previous life of Upagupta, the Buddha adds that Upagupta was once born as an ape and acted as a servitor of some *Pratyekabuddhas*. When the *Pratyekabuddhas* passed away from this world, the ape became very dejected until it met some ascetics who were practicing rigorous practices. It caused hindrances to the practices of the ascetics, made them take to the meditational methods followed by the *Pratyekabuddhas*, and ultimately helped them in acquiring the thirty-seven *bodhipakṣīya dharmas*. However, here *Vinayavastu* relates the visit of the Buddha in Mathura proper while journeying in the country of Śurasenas. The unwelcoming attitude shown by the brāhmaṇas there, the praise of the Buddha through 500 verses by a very learned brāhmaṇa Nīlabhūti, and the embarrassment felt by the goddess of Mathura, who had approached him in naked condition, are some of the important events there.²⁶ After the episode of the goddess of Mathura, the Buddha stepped away from the path, sat down in a quiet place and proclaimed to the assembly of monks the following five defects of Mathura: The ground is uneven, it is covered with brickbats and stones, it abounds in prickly shrubs, the people take solitary meals and there are too many women.²⁷ Then, the Buddha subdued the Gardhabha Yakṣa and his retinue of 500 minor Yakṣas outside the city. He also subdued at that time two other Yakṣas Śara and Vana and one Yakṣiṇi named Ālikavendā Maghā residing outside the city.

Finally, the Buddha by his magic powers entered the city and there he converted the Yakṣiṇi Timisikā (with a following of 500) in whose name 500 vihāras were built. The text concludes by saying that during his sojourn in Mathura, the Buddha subdued 2500 Yakṣas in and around the city and that the same number of vihāras was built by the devout laymen in the name of those Yakṣas.²⁸

The Verañjā of the Pali scriptures might not be identical with the Vairambhā of the *Vinayavastu*. We learn from the latter that the Buddha, having left Mathura came to Oṭalā and from there proceeded to Vairambhā. The king of Vairambhā was a brāhmaṇa named Agnidatta. He was not a follower of the Buddha but out of courtesy invited the Buddha to spend a period of three months in his city. He ordered the ministers to prepare a plenty of food but failed to mention that the food was for the benefit of the Buddha and his monks. Seeking to be the sole donor, he forbade others from offering alms to the *sangha* on the pain of death!²⁹ After that, as per some conspiracy, the Buddha and the monks were left to starve. The situation was saved by the arrival from *Uttarāpatha* of a caravan leader who camped in Vairambhā with five hundred horses and enough food to feed them. He, in spite of knowing the king's order and saying that he was out of purview of king's order, offered Ānanda to give the surplus from his horse food to the *sangha*. Thus, the Buddha and *sangha* were saved from this agony of starvation. After completion of three months, the Buddha and his *sangha* moved out of this place.

In the *Chivaravastu* section of *Vinaya*, famous physician Jīvaka is told to have come at Mathura, on his way from Takṣaśilā (the place of his education) to Rājgrha. There, he saved the life of an almost dead wrestler by doing surgery and applying medicines on his intestine and stomach.³⁰ At Mathura, he also cured the widow of a rich merchant of the city, who developed some vaginal infection, as her husband was residing in her *yoni* as a *kṛmi* after his death, because of excessive love of him for his wife. This story also speaks of the high moral order of the widow and above all the physician Jīvaka who calls the lady her sister after the treatment. He received 500 *kārṣapaṇas* for it and then he left the city for the banks of Yamuna.³¹

*Ghaṭa Jātaka*³² which is slightly related with the story of Kṛṣṇa mentions that in the ancient times a king named Makākamsa was ruling over Asitaṇjana Nagar which

lied in the Kamsabhoga state located on *Uttarāpatha*. Makākamsa had three children named Kamsa, Upakamsa and Devagabbhā. After the demise of Makākamsa, Kamsa sat on the throne. At that time, one king named Mahāsāgara was ruling over Uttara Madhurā whose younger son Upasāgara comes to the kingdom of *Uttarāpatha* ruled by Kamsa for shelter against his brother Sāgara, the king of Madhurā. Upasāgara married Kamsa's sister Devagabbhā and they lived together in the neighbouring village called Govaddhamāna. There Devagabbhā gave birth to one daughter named Anjana Devī who was killed by Kamsa and ten sons of whom Vāsudeva and Baladeva were the two eldest. They grew up concealed in the household of a servant woman Nandagopā and her husband Andhakavenhu. In the sequence of events Baladeva killed two of the wrestlers of Kamsa and then Vāsudeva killed Kamsa.

In *Buddha-Charita*, a mendicant named Sabhya has been mentioned who had gone to Deer Park to meet the Buddha. He was the son of Trikavyamgikā and brāhmaṇa Vidyākara who were the residents of Mathura.³³ Tibetan monk Tārānātha in his history of Indian Buddhism mentions that from Gandhāra, Upagupta went to Mathura situated on the north-western border of *Madhya-deśa*.³⁴ Tārānātha mentions Natabhaṇṭa vihāra as situated on Śira *parvata* in place of Urumuṇḍa hill.

Mathura in the accounts of the Chinese Pilgrims-

Mathura has been mentioned by a number of travellers right from the time of Chandragupta Maurya to the Mughal emperors, in their travel accounts. From the point of view of getting information regarding Buddhism the two travellers who are of interest are the two Chinese pilgrims: Fa-hian and Hiuen-Tsang. Fa-hian, who came in the beginning of the 5th century A.D., furnished a significant account in his travel memoirs. Starting with two-three friends from Tchang'an in the Central China and crossing Lung mountains, he covered most of the distance passing through the Gobi desert and other difficult routes,³⁵ and reached Mathura via Afganistan and Punjab. He captions the place as *Ma-teou-lo*.³⁶ From Mathura, he went to Samkāśya or Sankisa on the banks of Ganga in district Farukhabad after crossing the river Yamuna at Mathura.

Mentioning Mathura as the first kingdom in the region and situated on the bank of Po-na (Yamuna), he informs that everybody from the highest to the lowest rank had faith in Buddhism and this tradition continued right from the time of the Buddha. Elaborating the details of his stay, he states that there were Buddhist establishments on the both sides of the river and these were in possession of copper plate grants testifying the evidence of their historicity. The number of such establishments was twenty and the number of monks residing were about three thousand. However, the number of monks and priests (brāhmaṇical) is given as ten thousand. He noticed six types of stūpas erected in various monasteries by the monks of which, the most important and venerable was that of Śāriputra. The other stūpas were erected in the sacred memory of Ānanda, Mudgalaputra, Kātyāyana and Rāhula, the great teacher of *samādhi*. The site dedicated to Ānanda was more popular among women, probably for the fact that he persuaded the Buddha to permit the women folk in the *sangha*. The Samaneras generally worshipped Rāhula. The remaining three stūpas were to pay respect to the holy books- The Tripīṭakas, i.e. Abhidharma, Sūtra and Vinaya. Those, who had faith in Mahāyāna, worshipped Prajñā Pāramitā, Mañjuśrī and Avalokiteśvara.³⁷

About the general condition of the place, Fa-hian says that people were happy and cordial. The rulers and court-officials showed due regard to Buddhism and derived pleasure in serving the monks and feeding them. He also mentions that at the end of meal, a carpet was spread on the ground and people sat facing the president and did not occupy the couches in the presence of priests. This practice was also handed down from the time of the Buddha. The climate of the region was temperate without frost or snow. There were no official restrictions and only those who filled the king's land, paid tax on the profits earned. People, including foreigners, enjoyed freedom of movement. The criminal punishment was not severe and the culprit being fined according to the gravity of offence and even on the second attempt at rebellion, the punishment being the loss of right hand. The officials of administration were adequately paid and drew a fixed salary. The killing of a living person or animal was prohibited and wine was not drunk. Even onions or garlic were not consumed.³⁸ We, however, come across a reference about *chāṇḍālas*, who were treated as outcaste in the society and resided at a segregate place. They were supposed to produce a sound by a piece of wood to let the people know about their movement in the city or market.

There were no butcher's shops, as the hunting and trading of fish or flesh was not allowed. The *cowries* were used as medium of exchange at market place.³⁹

Fa-hian observes that the kings and noblemen started erecting vihāras along with gardens, houses etc. from the time of the Buddha and these were handed over to the priests. Even men and oxen were given for cultivation. The priests had chambers, beds, coverlets, food, drink and clothes; and when a monk or priest from outside arrived, he was received well and also looked after with grace.⁴⁰ Religious services were periodically observed and a large number of people assembled repeating the Law. From Mathura, Fa-hian reached Sankāśya or Sankisa in district Farukhabad where The Buddha descended after teaching the Law to his mother and gods in the Trayasatrimśa heaven.⁴¹

The other important Chinese pilgrim who came to India and has left a detailed account of his visit is Hiuen-Tsang.⁴² Hiuen-Tsang commenced his journey at the age of 26 and was in India between A.D. 629 and 645. After *Shito-ta-ulo* (Śatudru), he reached *Poli-ye-tolo* (Pāriyātra) and from there he reached at *Mot-ulo*, which in all probability stands for Mathura.⁴³ About Mathura, he writes: it is 5000 *li* in area and its capital is 20 *li* in its area. The soil is good and fertile and the crop production is also good. The people of this country are expert in growing *ānwalās* which are of two types. Good quality of cotton and yellow gold is also grown here. The climate is slightly warmer and the behaviour of its people is soft and respectable. People like to attain religious wisdom in a secretive manner and respect helping others and learning as well. There are about 20 monasteries and 2000 monks belonging to *Hīnayāna* and *Mahāyāna* tradition in equal proportion. Five temples are also there in which all types of sages pray and worship.

Hiuen-Tsang further adds: Three stūpas have been erected by king Aśoka. Remains of previous four Buddhas are also there. On the bodily remains of Tathāgata's disciples many stūpas have been erected like of Śrīputra, Mudgalaputra, Pūrṇamaitrayaṇiputra, Upāli, Ānanda, Rāhula, Mañjuśrī and other Bodhisattvas. Every year in the three religious months and every month on *ṣaṭa* festival, ascetics come at these stūpas and offer prayers and valuable offerings. These people offer their worship at different stūpas according to their religious following, like the followers of

Abhidharma to Śrīputra, those who meditate, to Mudgalaputra, those who practice Sūtras, to Pūrṇamaitrayaṇiputra, those who learn Vinaya, to Upāli, Bhikṣus to Ānanda. Mahāyānists offer worship to Bodhisattvas. The king of this country and his senior ministers also participate with pomp and show in religious activities at these places. To the east of the city at a distance of about 5 or 6 *li*, we reached a monastery on a hill. In the back of it, there are caves. We reached there at the Upagupta monastery through a valley. There is a stūpa in which the nails of the Supreme Being have been kept. To the north of this monastery there are a cave and a stone house measuring 20 feet by 30 feet. There are wooden sticks of 4 inch length inside this stone house. Upagupta used to put such a wooden stick inside the cave whenever he made a new disciple- either male or female. From here, 25 *li* in the south east direction there is a stūpa on the side of a dried up lake. When in ancient time, the Buddha was wandering there a monkey had offered him the honey. To the north of this lake in the forest, there are signs of four former Buddhas. Nearby, a number of stūpas of Śrīputra, Mudgalaputra etc. 1250 *mahātmā arhats* are there, where they practiced yoga, *samādhi* etc. Tathāgata has travelled a number of times in this region for the propagation of his religious doctrines. There are monuments erected in the memory of the Buddha at those places where he stayed. From here, after moving 500 *li* in north east direction Hieun Tsang reached ‘*Sat ani shifalo*’ country which is identified with Sthāneśvara (Thanesar) near Kurukshetra.

Critical Analysis of the data found in Buddhist literature-

Identification of various sites in the region-

It is almost certain that Lord Buddha had travelled to Mathura on more than one occasion. Mathura was one of the important cities, even before the time of Buddha as is clear from the archaeological deposit of P.G.W. and N.B.P.W.⁴⁴ cultures from the extensive mounds of Mathura and its adjoining regions. Whatever might be the case, I consider Mathura to be one of the largest city centres of the pre- Buddhist period which measured not less than 1800 m x 1400 m in dimension in the early N.B.P.W. period. These are not the dimensions of many scattered sites but of densely populated habitation areas. This importance of the city, is actually the reason for it (Śurasena) being called as *Ādirājya* and *Mahāsammata* in *Vinayavastu*. Although, it

was written at a later date, it talks about a great kingdom which was not an important Buddhist centre in the early days but has been mentioned as such just because of its ancient glory. Although, the Buddha had travelled to Braj region on at least two occasions, he did not find much of a support and following in this region, perhaps because of the already existing Brāhmaṇical religion. Many of the complex and subtle Buddhist doctrines were preached by the Buddha himself in the Kuru region, which is further away from the region of Śūrasena, because the people of that region were willing to accept the views and religious dogmas expressed by the Great Soul. Actually at Kammāsadamma, the Buddha delivered some profound discussions like the *Mahānidāna* and the *Mahāsatipatthana Suttantas* to the Kuru people (*Dīghanikāya*, Sutta nos. 15 and 22).⁴⁵ But, on all the occasions, when the Buddha went to Kuru region, he would have crossed the Śūrasena region either passing through Mathura proper or through Hathras and Aligarh districts.

The story mentioned in *Ghaṭa Jātaka* which was possibly written in Srilanka is very interesting. It indicates the popularity of the Kṛṣṇa story in far off places. Although, the story is much diverted from the actual story popular in India, it cites some important historical facts. The kingdom of Kamsabhoga is the only name in my knowledge which comes quite close to the site mentioned as Cleisobora in Śūrasena region by Megasthenes and later Greek historians.⁴⁶ The city mentioned as Asitanjāna Nagar appears to be identical with Verañjā. The names of various personalities and the names of ten sons of Devagabbhā who grew up at the house of a maid named Nandagopā also indicate some historicity in the Kṛṣṇa and the Vṛṣṇis legends.

The name of places in the region of Braj, which finds mention in the Buddhist literature are Gunda vana, Bhadrāśva, Oṭalā/ Otalā, Verañjā, Vairambhā, Akkosa, Kardama daha along Varāṇā, Nalerunimba, Kimila and Agga. Tārānātha mentions a Buddhist teacher Guṇaprabha of Mathura who resided at Agrapurī in Mathura.⁴⁷ Here one important thing which should be kept in mind is that this place Agrapurī is none other than the city of Agra which is about 56 km distant from Mathura but still has been mentioned at Mathura by Tārānātha. It indicates towards the nature of ancient writers mentioning far areas of Mathura region as being situated at Mathura with no clear mention of the distance or the nature of the site. It lends support to the argument

of identifying various sites which have been mentioned at Mathura with the distant places from this city. *Anguttarnikāya* mentions Mathura in its chapter *Akkosakavagga*, which is a chapter based on the incidents which occurred during the visit of the Buddha in this part of the country.⁴⁸ Here Akkosa can be identified as a place name. In the same chapter of this text, the Buddha had arrived at Kimila or Kimbila (Sanskrit). In between Akkosa and Mathura, the Buddha had arrived at a place named Aggi. All these places should also lie somewhere in or near the Braj region. Along with Buddha for his visits, the land of Braj is closely associated with Mahākātyāyana, Śānakavāsī and Upagupta. Because of this importance, both Fa-hian and Hiuen-Tsang had visited this region. Various attempts have been made to identify many of these places but none of them appears to be near the fact.

Otalā -

Let's first take up the case of Otala or Otalā which finds mention in *Vinayavastu* which says that Otalā and Bhadrāśva are the two centres in the Śurasena region between which Mathura is situated. It also adds that the Buddha after visiting Mathura had moved to Otalā and from there to Vairambhā. Otalā might be identified with the modern town of Hodal, situated on the National Highway No. 2, 54 km distant from Mathura in northern direction in the newly created district of Palwal in Haryana. The points in favour of this identification are: the local legend says that the original inhabitants of this place were known as Ota who were thrown away from here by the Jats, it is situated on the ancient highway linking Takṣaśilā with Mathura, the name Hodal does not make sense as such in any language except for it being a corrupt form of word Otala. Hodal is a sizeable mound of about 430 x 350 x 14 m dimension, on which the modern town inhabits. The site dates back to at least P.G.W. period and continues in the succeeding periods of N.B.P.W., Śuṅga, Kushan, Gupta, medieval periods up to modern times. A nearby mound known as Hamid Khera (about 2 km distant), similar in nature to the site of Hodal, is still largely free of human encroachments. A thorough analysis of the site may provide some very interesting information. Another nearby isolated mound (about 4 km distant from Hodal) is locally called as Kachi khera which might be the changed name for the famous woman disciple of the Buddha- Kachangalā. The story of Kachangalā, who in some of the previous lives of the Buddha had served as his mother, has been discussed in the

context of Otaḷā.⁴⁹ This site might have been situated at a distance from the main town. The nature of Kachi khera site is almost similar to that of the site of Hamid khera.

Bhadrāśva -

The other place Bhadrāśva might be identified with the place Bhadar or Bhadal, 20 kms to the north-west of Mathura. The similarity in names becomes clearer when we take into account the local Braj tradition related with the cult of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. According to it, the place is famous, because of Bhadrā Yutheśwarī, a close friend of Rādhā (beloved of Kṛṣṇa and his eternal power). Whether this tradition has merit or not, is not the issue. But, there is a strong similarity between the names of Bhadrāśva and Bhadrā Yutheśwarī and it is clear. Bhadrā is also the name of a Buddhist goddess who is worshipped along with Hārītī. Bhadar, situated quite near to the road linking Vrindavan and Govardhan, is a sizeable mound of 300 x 280 x 12 m dimension and dates back to at least P.G.W. period with the cultural deposit of successive periods: N.B.P.W., Śuṅga, Kushan, Gupta, Post- Gupta, Medieval periods up to modern times. The modern village occupies the whole of ancient mound, but at the top of mound, two certain Buddhist sculptures of Kushan period were observed by me. One was a Bodhisattva head and another one was a much broken Buddhist panel in which haloed head portion of the Supreme Being was identifiable. Besides, two very significant sculptures: a nāga sculpture (M.M. No. 211) and a Kubera and Hārītī panel (M.M. No. C 28) have been found from here. Both nāga and Kubera with Hārītī are closely related with Buddhism.

Another site by the name of Bhadas is situated on the Nuh- Alwar highway in the old Gurgaon district of Haryana from where two or more railing pillars of pre-Kushan date have been reported. This site also appears to be an important site and indicate towards the presence of more than one ancient site by the same name. Its significance in terms of Buddhist finds is yet to be determined.

Gundavana -

Now the place called Gundavana needs our attention. According to *Majjimanikāya*, here resided Mahākātyāyana where king Avantiputra of Mathura had gone to meet the monk. It makes clear that there was some relation between the royal

family of Ujjain and of Mathura. The place Gundavana also finds mention in *Anguttarnikāya*. Scholars have tried to locate this Gundavana inside the city of Mathura and have neglected the fact that archaeologically, the whole area within a radius of 70 km from Mathura is equally important. From Hieun Tsang's description of Upagupta's monastery, situated in a cave outside the city on Urumuṇḍa hill (blue in appearance), it is sure that he was not talking about the city of Mathura. Now, if we consider the identification of Gundavana, at a place about 40 km north-west of Mathura, not very far from the last remnants of Aravali hills in the Braj region, all the problems get solved. It is very clear in my research that most of the Braj region was special because of the presence of various groves, known as *vanas*. Many of these *vanas* are the names of ancient sites with the same name or a modified name e.g. Bhadravana, Lohavana, Tālavana (Tarsi), Madhuvana (Maholi), Bahulavana (Bati) etc. In the same way, Gindoh or Gundoh in district Mathura should be the site of ancient Gundavana. The nearby drain is also called as Ganda or Gunda *nala*, confirming to the ancient term Gunda. Gindoh is one of the larger sites of district Mathura. The site has dimensions of about 500 x 400 x 16 m. It is situated on the ancient route going from Otaḷā to possibly Verañjā, somewhere to the west of Govardhan and Barsana hills. The cultural sequence of the site is similar as that of Hodal and Bhadar, starting from P.G.W. period and continuing up to the modern times. If, Gindoh is accepted as the site of Gundavana, then it undoubtedly becomes one of the most important of Buddhist places in the whole of Braj region. *Divyāvadāna*'s and *Vinayavastu*'s reference to Buddha's visit in the city of Mathura on his way to Vairambhā, somehow appears to be a reference to this place of Gindoh. From Gindoh, the Nandgaon hills are situated at a distance of about 6 km in the south- east direction. So, the reference to the Urumuṇḍa hill where the Buddha had prophesized about Natabhāṭa vihāra and the future of Upagupta, who was destined to become a great Buddhist monk, appears to be a clear reference to the hills of Nandgaon. Whether there existed such a cave, or not, can't be confirmed now because of the changed status of the site as an important Kṛṣṇa pilgrimage centre and also because of unprecedented human activity in the region. The name Natabhāṭa vihāra based on the two merchant brothers also has some kind of similarity with Nandgrāma, as its chief Nandarāya is also said to be a Vaiśya in many Brāhmaṇical texts. A nearby site, about 5 km distant from Gindoh, which is equal in dimensions and has similar chronology, by the name of Dhamsingha, is in all

probability related with some Buddhist tradition. As the Pali impact is clear in the name Dhamsingha (Dham for *Dharma* and Singha for *Simha*).

Nalerunimba -

A certain tree, called Nalerunimba, figures several times in the Pali canonical texts, on the highway joining Mathura with Verañjā. It has not been identified so far. But it must be kept in mind that there are two extensive village sites, situated on ancient mounds, known by the name of Nimgaon or Nimbagrāma. One is in the east of Yamuna, about 20 km from Mathura, on the very important ancient route linking Mathura with the sites towards Aligarh city and even further from it. Another route from this Nimgaon passed towards Gorai, Khair, Varāṇa, Hastinapura etc. The second village by this name is situated 4 km north west of Govardhan. Traditionally, it is said to be called so, because of Nimbārkaḥārya, a famous medieval saint of Braj. The reference to Nalerunimba can be for both of these sites, but, the second site which is near to Govardhan seems to be more related with the path of Buddha's visit. The locations of Verañjā, Nimgaon, Nandgaon, Gindoh and Hodal are interdependent, as all these lie to the west of Yamuna in the Braj region.

Verañjā -

Veranja or Verañjā is very well connected with the Buddha's first visit to the region and has been identified with different places by various scholars. Dr. Nalinaksha Dutta and Prof. K.D. Vajpayee, on the basis of the description of Verañjā in Mahāvagga of Pali *Vinaya Pīṭaka*, have concluded that Verañjā or Vairambhā was situated to the west of Mathura.⁵⁰ Motichandra thought it to be situated somewhere near Bari tehsil in district Agra, from where a route moved during the time of Al-biruni.⁵¹ Dr. Bharat Singh Upadhyaya considers it to be located somewhere near Sikandararao in district Hathras.⁵² Prabhu Dayal Mittal, a great savant of Braj culture, considered this identification right and opined Verañjā to be identical with either Barhad or Atranjikhara.⁵³ Both the sites are situated on the all important *Uttarāpatha* or near it, going from Takṣaśilā to Tāmralipti. E. Lamotte writes quoting Pliny that Verañjā lies on the highway between Takṣaśilā and Mathura.⁵⁴ He adds the route as follows: Verañjā- Mathura- Soreyya⁵⁵ - Samkāśya- Kanyakubja- Udumbara- Aggalapura- Sahajati- Prayag- Varanasi.⁵⁶ He again mentions Verañjā (Sanskrit Vairanti) on the grand route between Takṣaśilā and Mathura.⁵⁷ After the identification

of the above mentioned sites (Otalā, Gundavana etc.), there is no other option left than to consider Verañjā to the west or to the north-west of Mathura. From Otalā, moving via Gundavana, Urumuṇḍa hill, Nalerunimba, one could reach Verañjā. This alignment definitely provides an important place to the region near Govardhan on the ancient trade routes. Verañjā, in my opinion could have been situated anywhere to the south-west, west or north-west of Govardhan within a distance of 150 km. There is every possibility that in near future, this place will also be identified. It appears that Verañjā lied somewhere between Alwar town and Vairāta (situated near Delhi Jaipur highway) of Rajasthan. Although to me, Vairāta appears either to be the site or near to the site of ancient Verañjā (Sanskrit Vairanti), its situation between Takṣaśilā and Mathura can not be justified substantially. There is every possibility that Verañjā served as an important city from where many important routes got diverted like towards Bharukaccha in southward direction, Pakistani Sindh region (Roruka) in westward direction and Ganga- Yamuna doab in eastward direction. The route from Verañjā to Takṣaśilā would have passed via Alwar, Rewari, Rohtak, Hansi, Hissar, Agroha, Sirsa, Bhatinda, Ludhiana etc.

Vairambhā -

The story in *Vinayavastu* of a caravan of traders who had arrived at Vairambhā with 500 horses from *Uttarāpatha* (northern route), indicates that this place was situated on or near to *Uttarāpatha*. Lamotte⁵⁸ writes quoting Mūla-Sarvāstivādin *Vinaya* text (*Man. De Gilgit*, III, 1, p. 3- 68) that the Buddha moved via Ādirājya, Mathura, Otalā, Vairambhā, Ayodhyā, Kumāravardhana, Krauñcha, Aṅgadika, Maṇivati, Sālabalā, Salibalā, Suvarṇaprastha to Sāketa. If this order of direction is correct then, we have no other option than to consider Verañjā and Vairambhā as two different cities. According to Tibetan *Vinaya*, king Agnidatta ruled at Parāntaka and the Buddha had passed his place on his way to Pañchāla via Otalā.⁵⁹ There is some doubt in the mind of the writer of *Vinaya* because Parāntaka definitely stands for Aparānta i.e. Western country and as Mathura has been considered as the north-west frontier of Madhya desha, it is for sure that a site situated about 200 km west of Mathura would be called Aprāntaka country. But how can it be explained that a western country like Matsya lied in between Mathura and Pañchāla? Whatever may be the case; if Verañjā and Vairambhā were two different cities then the site of

Vairambhā (lying between Otaḷā and Ayodhya) should be located somewhere near Jalesar or Etah in district Etah.

Akkosa -

Akkosa is the name of a place mentioned in the *Anguttarnikāya* along with the incidents of Mathura which occurred during the visit of the Buddha here. Akkosa in Sanskrit would be read as Akrośa. In the *trans*-Yamuna region following the course of Yamuna via Gokul, Mahaban, and Baldev, one would reach at the ancient site named Akos. This much destroyed site of Akos would have been about 350 x 320 x 15 m in dimensions. It dates back to at least P.G.W. and N.B.P.W. period. The site continued to be in habitation from that time to the recent times without any major cultural break. This town would have been a major point on the road linking Mathura with Sankisa.

Kardama daha along Varāṇā -

In *Anguttaranikāya*, there is mention of this site of Kardama daha along with Varāṇā, where elder Mahākātyāyana was once residing. It appears that Mahākātyāyana was a native of Braj, his favourite places were Gundavana in Mathura and Kardama daha in Varāṇā. This site has been mentioned just after the episode at Gundavana in Mathura. Kardama (Hindi *Kadamba*) is one of the most important trees of the Braj region. A number of *Kadambakhaṇḍīs* (groves of *Kadamba* tree) are known from the *purāṇic* and the medieval Braj literature. So, this Kardama daha might have been some place in the country of Varāṇa (Bulandshahr), along some rivulet of the name of Varāṇā, by which this city and the region was known as Varāṇa. Dr. B.R. Mani has opined that the temple of Kardameshwar Mahadev at Varanasi might be the site of Kardama daha.⁶⁰ The present day temple of lord Śiva dates back to post-Gupta period. The possibility of Kardama daha being situated near Varanasi can not be declined but the identification with a place in district Bulandshahr seems more logical.

Kimila -

This site mentioned in *Anguttaranikāya* should lie somewhere between Akos and Ayodhya. The most probable position of it is that it may lie somewhere along river Ganga. Karnavas near Narora is situated on the bank of Ganga and has a traditional account of Buddha coming there and doing *tapas*. A spot there is still called as Buddhau because of that incident. Another possibility is that it may have lied

somewhere near Jalesar. I have tried to search any village by this name in a very long stretch but I have not got any success till yet.

Aggi -

The place by the name of Aggi mentioned in *Anguttaranikāya* as lying near Akos and Mathura can be identified with Agra city. There are some references which considered Agra to be situated inside Mathura (possibly kingdom). Aggi in all probability was the town of Agra which can be reached easily after crossing Yamuna at Akos. Even many scholars believe Agra to be the site of ancient Agravana. In Agra, at places near Agra Cant., two mounds were reported which provided P.G.W. potsherds. Besides I found the mound near Agra City Railway Station to be one of the ancient city centres in the region of Braj, nearly as large as Hathras and Aligarh.

Śaravana, Ālika, Gardhabha and Timsikā -

In Sanskrit *Vinaya* texts the Buddha is said to have defeated various Yakṣas near Mathura during his journey from Rohitaka to Mathura. Two Yakṣas by the name of Śara and Vana were defeated by him. Now it is interesting to note that the high mound of New Delhi where the President House is located was earlier a small village known as Saravan.⁶¹ This place seems to have been the ancestral place of people using Saravan or Salawan as their surname. The *Vinaya* reference to these two Yakṣas seems to be in relation to this ancient site. It indicates that during ancient times, even the area of Delhi was considered as a part of Mathura. Possibility of the identification of another place by the name of Yakṣiṇi Ālika has already been proposed by me with the site of Allika near Palwal. In my view the Gardabha Yakṣa might have some relationship with the incident of the killing of Dhenakāsura by Balarāma, in which the demon was actually a donkey. The site by the name of Timsikā has still not been identified by me but it might be the name of a site during ancient times.

Ariṭṭha/ Ariṭṭhapura, Sihapura and Jenta Thera⁶² –

In Buddhist literature town of Ariṭṭhapura has been mentioned on many occasions. This town has been identified with different places by various scholars. I have identified it with a town about 14 km west of Mathura which is named Arring.⁶³ The importance of the site of Arring can not be ignored as being situated on the very

important Mathura-Vairāta route, near Govardhan. So, there is a possibility that this might be the place mentioned in Buddhist literature as Ariṭṭhapura.

Sihapura mentioned as a rural site might be identical with the place named Sihana on the road linking Mathura and Otaḷā. Two Buddhist monasteries were located by me on the outskirts of this village, one at the entrance and one at the exit.

Jenta Thera which has been mentioned as a rural site might be identical with the village named Jaint on the road linking Mathura and Otaḷā, 5 km distant from Sihana. All these three sites Arring, Sihana and Jainat are mounds of some significance and dates back to P.G.W. period at the minimum. These identifications are not full proof and their names just might be a coincidence with other sites of these names somewhere else in India. But origin of names of various sites is also an area of further research.

On Buddha's visit to Mathura –

It is quite possible that the Buddha had visited Mathura on at least two occasions. Firstly, during his 12th *varsāwāsa* and then sometime before his *Mahaparinirvāṇa*. He had spent his 12th *varsāwāsa* at Vairambhā, where he had gone on the invitation of the king of that place, Agnidatta (according to *Vinaya Pīṭaka*). The Buddha had made his 1st *varsāwāsa* at Sarnath in the year 530, before *Vikrama Samvat*. Accordingly, he would have travelled to Verañjā via Mathura region in year 518, before *Vikrama Samvat*. It seems that in that visit the Buddha had not travelled to Mathura city, proper. He had probably travelled in months of summer as he mentions of the region with a great dislike as: the ground is uneven, there is much dust, there are fierce dogs, bestial *yakkhas* and alms are got with difficulty. None of these features is in reference to the city of Mathura in proper. For most part along the river Yamuna, from Delhi to Bateshwar, the ground is uneven, even at some other places in this region which are not along the river; this feature can be observed, like near Beswan in district Aligarh. The region which was full of dust is actually the feature of this whole Braj region, except for the period of heavy rains. Fierce dogs and bestial *yakkhas* can also be observed moving through this region, with no exception at any place. Now-a-days, the prevalence of Yakṣas can be understood by the finding of

Yakṣas images and *Jakhaiya* and *Bhuniya* shrines in this very vast area. The difficulty in getting alms, indicate to the unwelcoming attitude of the people of this region who, already had a religious order to follow as Bhāgavata cult and other Brāhmanical practices. The another reason might have been a heavy drought in the region, because of which people were unable to provide food for so many monks (more than 430 in number) who had come along with the Buddha. It is obvious that only a royal personage or a wealthy businessman could have made arrangement for such a large group for a long period of 3 or 4 months. There is no indication that the ruler of Mathura had converted to Buddhism during the lifetime of the Buddha. Neither there was a strong following of the Buddha, because he himself was the propagator of his religion and the people of Mathura would not have accepted it in such a short period. The main reason for it can only be the overall religious scenario of this region which was the centre of various indigenous religious cults since time immemorial. Until and unless, there are substantial proofs to discredit this nature of Mathura by any scientific means, the generally accepted view of the people ought to be considered right. That's why, without the help of a large number of existing or even new followers, the Buddha and his follower monks would have felt a lot of difficulties in getting alms.

Now, it becomes imperative that the Buddha had not entered the city of Mathura during his first visit; all the references in Buddhist literature about Mathura should be considered to the kingdom of Mathura or the Braj region, as it is known now. Even the fact that the name of the king of Mathura has not been mentioned in any of these texts and it is only little after the demise of the Buddha that the name of king Avantiputra finds mention in these texts, is corroborative of it. It also confirms the view that the Buddha had not visited the city of Mathura. Otherwise, the name of the king and his meeting with the Buddha would have found place in the Buddhist literature. Now, an obvious question arises, what would have been the route of the Buddha's journey. Most probably, the important destination from where he would have initiated his western journey seems to be Shravasti as Jetavana at Shravasti can be considered his most favourite place. Pali *Vinaya* also mentions that the Buddha after leaving Ekanala had reached Shravasti where he was invited by some brāhmaṇas of Verañjā.⁶⁴ Whatever might have been the starting point, it is for sure that he would have passed through Kannauj. From Kāṇyakubja, he could have followed two routes, one towards Sankisa, then via Awagarh, Jalesar, and Hathras to Mathura. He might

have travelled via Jalesar, Kimil, Sadabad, Akos, Mahaban to Mathura as, to me, Jalesar appears to be a very important centre after Mathura, as far as alignment of various ancient routes is concerned. Both these options are not very different as far as the Buddha's journey to Mathura is concerned because, if the Buddha had followed these routes, he would have reached Mathura proper. But, in his first visit, as has already been discussed he had missed the city of Mathura. In this case, the Buddha would have followed the second route from Kānyakubja via Bateshwar, Agra, Bharatpur to Verañjā, passing through district of Mathura somewhere near Achhnera, Parkham and Ol region. It would have been the shortest route from Kānyakubja to Verañjā (somewhere near Alwar-Jaipur highway). From Verañjā, the Buddha would have taken a different route to reach Otalā (Hodal). He would have travelled via Nadbai, Sinsini, Deeg (all in Bharatpur district), Govardhan, Nimgaon, Nandgaon, Gundavana (Gindoh), Kuśasthalī (Kosikalan) to Otalā. From Otalā, he most probably went to Kuru country (modern Meerut district and outside it). Here, the Buddha would have had two options again, one of crossing river Yamuna near Pālawāla (modern Palwal) to Varāṇa (modern Bulandshahr district) and from there to Kuru region and the other going via Palwal, Indraprastha (modern Delhi) to Kuru country, crossing Yamuna somewhere near Delhi. In the case of 1st visit of the Buddha, second option appears more probable. Hence, in my view the route of first visit of the Buddha to the Braj territory appears to be, from Kānyakubja via Bateshwar, Agra, Achhnera, Bharatpur, Sengar, Verañjā and from there via Nadbai, Sinsini, Dikpura (Deeg), Nimgaon, Barsana, Nandgaon, Gindoh, Kosikalan to Otalā (Hodal) and from there via Palwal, Delhi to Kuru country. In his first visit to Braj, the Buddha would have come in the month of *Jyestha*, 518 years before *Vikrama* era.⁶⁵

The second visit of the Buddha was made sometime before his *Mahāparinirvāṇa* and at that time Ānanda was with him. This time the Buddha would have come probably 490 years before *Vikrama* era.⁶⁶ About this visit, *Divyāvadāna* mentions of his prophecy about Upagupta and Natabhāṭa Vihāra at Urumuṇḍa hill. *Vinayavastu* says that during this visit the Buddha had defeated a large number of Yakṣas and Yakṣīs including the Goddess Yakṣī of Mathura, Gardhabha Yakṣa etc. One of the Yakṣī subjugated by the Buddha was named Ālikavendā Maghā residing outside the city of Mathura. Here one important coincidence which I would like to mention is that an important ancient town site near Palwal is named Allika. Is the

similarity between two names just a coincidence? Very important information which came to my notice is that there is a Buddha pedestal kept at Prince of Wales Museum which records of setting of Rosika vihāra at Alika⁶⁷ by a female worshipper Khuaisica. The find spot of this pedestal is not known. Dr. R.C. Sharma⁶⁸ has tried to identify Alika with Aring but this Alika should be identified with Allika and this vihāra confirms the presence of a Yakṣī by that name at that site. The pedestal was definitely found from a distant place and this should be Allika except for Alika being found within the periphery of Mathura city. Maghā or Magha also comes more than once in some epigraphs and might have some connection with the village Maghera situated near Bhadar site. From Maghera also, some Buddhist art evidences have been found. The visit of the Buddha in the Braj region is further supported by the finding of an ancient Buddha plaque depicting the story of the monkey offering honey to the Buddha.⁶⁹ This plaque is dated to about 100 A.D. and has been found in excavations at Vadnagar, Gujrat. The depiction of a story which had occurred during the visit of the Buddha in Mathura, at such a far off region like Gujrat during the early Kushan period clearly substantiates the fact that before the Kushan period this event was well established in the history.

During this visit, after subduing the Yakṣī of Mathura, the Buddha tells these five defects about it to his disciples: The ground is uneven, it is covered with stones and brickbats, it abounds in prickly shrubs, the people take solitary meals and there are too many women. The first defect is the same as was during his first visit but the second is significant because it talks of abundance of stones and brickbats which is symbolic of the urban characteristics present here. If he was talking of the vast Braj region then, abundance of stones does not pose a problem but if it is about the city of Mathura proper, then question arises, were the people of Mathura bringing the sandstone from distant areas just like the Śuṅga- Kushan period, as there is no stone available at Mathura and in its close vicinity. If this is a factual description, then, it has not been corroborated by any of the archaeological excavation at the city as the early N.B.P.W. period at Mathura is devoid of burnt bricks and stone structures. Personally, I believe in the correctness of this description and consider that it is a default of archaeology or to say of the excavators, that this fact has not been corroborated. The third defect of abundance of prickly shrubs (*babool, ber, tenti, karil*

etc.) can be easily felt by anyone who wanders in the interiors of Braj, whether in the city of Mathura or outside. The fourth defect of people taking only solitary meal indicates towards the high religious practices of Brāhmaṇism which the people of the region followed. This would have been the most important reason for the disliking of the region by the Buddha. We can not say much about the fifth and the last defect of the large number of women. Probably, women had a lot of stake in religious matters and they refused to accept the ideas propagated by the Buddha or it might be the obvious disliking of the master for the women as a hurdle in practising his faith. Traditionally, it is only lord Kṛṣṇa who had enjoyed this large number of womenfolk by doing so called *Rāsa-līlās* with them. Was this known to the Buddha at that time? Was it the reason for his disliking?

The repeat of Urumuṇḍa, the blue hill, indicates that the Buddha had even visited this place, which in my opinion is near Nandgaon. It is not clear whether the Buddha had revisited Mathura or it was written by someone else who had the first hand knowledge about Mathura. Whether during this visit, the Buddha had come to Mathura or not, it is for sure that he had travelled through the region of Braj for going to Kuru country. This time his route would have followed from Kannauj, via Kampilya, Sankisa, Atranjikhhera, Sikandararao (or through Jalesar, Hathras, Sasni), Aligarh, Khair, Dibai, Khurja, Bulandshahr, Hapur to Hastinapura or Kammāsdamma, Rohitaka etc. in the Kuru country. As *Vinayavastu* mentions that from Rohitaka the Buddha had travelled to Gandhāra region at night and had made a large number of people to convert to Buddhism with the help of Yakṣa Vajrapāṇi. The trip of the Buddha to Gandhāra seems to be a later interpolation but from Rohitaka the journey of the Buddha via Bhadrāśva, Urumuṇḍa hills, Mathura, Oṭalā to Vairambhā should be treated as a factual description. From Vairambhā the Buddha went to the south Pañchāla region.

Another important aspect of Buddhist texts which requires attention is the names of various brāhmaṇas by their *gotras*. Except of Kandarāyaṇa brāhmaṇa, other brāhmaṇas are not identified with the region of Mathura. But whether some of them belonged to Mathura, can not be declined without proper research. Three of the brāhmaṇa *gotras* which evokes possibility of some connection with Mathura are Jānu śroṇi brāhmaṇa, Kāṅki brāhmaṇa and Vatsa gotri brāhmaṇa. Jānu is a huge mound, on

which the modern village is situated at the Mathura-Bharatpur border in district Mathura. It is almost equidistant from three major early historical sites – Govardhan, Nandgaon-Barsana and Kaman, about 12 km distant from each. The Jānu śroṇi brāhmaṇa might have belonged to this site or the site was named after the arrival of such brāhmaṇas from the eastern part, after the popularity of Buddhism in this area. The first option seems more probable until and unless, some other ancient site by the name of Jānu is found in northern India. Kānki brāhmaṇa would have derived this name from a place named Kanka. On the road from Iglas to Sasni (both important and ancient sites), in the recently made district of Hathras, there is an ancient village by the name of Kanka, which dates back to pre- Buddhist times as the finding of P.G.W. pottery indicates. The site continued to be in habitation during the succeeding periods until modern times. Until and unless some other place by the name of Kanka comes to notice in any part of northern India, this site should be considered the place responsible for the origin of term Kānki brāhmaṇa. Even if any other site known as Kanka is found, it would require some fresh research to establish the relation between that Kanka and this Kanka. The third, Vatsa *gotri* brāhmaṇa does not have that exclusivity as the country of Kaushambi was well known as Vatsa. But there are two large ancient sites in district Mathura by the name of Vatsa *grāma* and Vatsa *vana*, dating back to 10th century B.C. at least and also related with the legends of Kṛṣṇa. Can any of these sites not be responsible for the term Vatsa *gotra*. Even if Kaushambi was the place responsible for the nomenclature of Vatsa *gotri* brāhmaṇa, the similarity in name of almost equally ancient sites (in chronological terms), needs to be looked at and needs some research on the issue of nomenclature of ancient places. It is for sure that four brāhmaṇas had met Lord Buddha at Ichchhanagla in Kośala region but as the site was an important trade centre, there is every possibility that people from distant places came there and after getting an opportunity met the Lord.

Analysis of the data provided by the Chinese pilgrims-

Fa-hian who had travelled India during the reign of Chandragupta Vikramāditya had actually visited the city of Mathura. He had come to Mathura from north. Although he had travelled in the region of Braj, his important and short stay was directly at Mathura. He would have definitely passed via Ōtala and would have stayed at more than one important site, but, he makes no mention of them. His

statement that there were 20 monasteries on both sides of Yamuna does not indicate that these monasteries were situated on the left and right banks of Yamuna but in the western and eastern sector of Braj, between which the river flows. Even this number of twenty for the monasteries is much lesser than the exact number, which would have exceeded the number fifty at that time. He would have definitely visited the monasteries near the village of Sihana, which I have explored during my investigations in the region, as this site is very near to the national highway. But he makes no mention of these sites. He gives no account of Gunda vana and the site of Upagupta monastery on the Urumuṇḍa hill, as probably, he would not have visited them. Fa-hian gives an account of various stūpas and other religious places in the city of Mathura. But these references do not indicate to a particular structure as such, rather he mentions them as being erected by the monks in various monasteries. Many of these stūpas should be the same, from where most of the sculptural finds belonging to Buddhist religion have come to light. All these were situated on the outskirts of the ancient Mathura or were outside the city. The great devastation of sites by British and the greedy local people have left very little evidence to corroborate the facts. The statement of Fa-hian that everybody from the highest to the lowest rank had faith in Buddha, does not mean that the majority of the population was Buddhist. But it only indicates towards the great respect which the people of Mathura showed to the Buddha irrespective of their personal religious leanings. No proofs are required to show that the religion of the majority of population was Brāhmaṇical through the centuries and after Gupta period, a large number of sculptural finds also substantiate it. From Mathura, Fa-hian had gone to Sankisa after crossing Yamuna. He might have followed the route from Mathura to Sankisa, passing via Gokula, Mahaban, Sadabad, Akos, Kimil, Jalesar, Awagarh, and Sakita etc.

It is quite possible that Hiuen-Tsang had not visited Mathura. Even if he had entered the Braj region, he only came up to Gindoh, Nandgaon area and from there he went to Sthāneśvara via Delhi. As his accounts are very much doubtful about the places he had visited, there is a need to first look at his itinerary in the region. From the Sirhind area on the bank of Sutlej, he had reached the country of *Poli-ye-tolo* (Pāriyātra) after moving about 300 km in the south-west direction. In my opinion this place should be situated somewhere on Alwar- Jaipur highway. It might be identical with Verañjā or might be near it. Because only from here one can reach Nandgaon,

Barsana after travelling about 180 km in the eastern direction, as described by Hiuen-Tsang. From here, he had gone to Thanesar near Kuruksetra, after moving about 200 km in the north-east direction. From Nandgaon, the actual direction of Thanesar is almost north and the distance is about 250 km, but as Hiuen-Tsang would have to move in the north- east direction from Nandgaon to reach the Mathura- Takṣaśilā ancient highway, he has mentioned the direction as north-east. This whole route which Hiuen-Tsang had followed does not appear to be different from that followed by the Buddha himself from Verañjā to Kuru country via Mathura. By considering this route, all the doubts about his visit to Mathura region diminish. The high moral and religious nature of people of *Mot-ulo*, the production of cotton and *ānwalā* and the most significant mention of Upagupta monastery on a hill leaves no doubts in identifying *Mot-ulo* with Mathura or Braj region. He does not mention river Yamuna for once during this whole journey from *Poli-ye-tolo* to Thanesar via Mathura. That means he had not crossed it during this journey. Even, he had not seen it during his journey, which means that he might have missed the area of Delhi near river Yamuna, and would have reached Thanesar bypassing most of the area of Indraprastha. His description of 20 monasteries and 2000 monks needs not to be taken seriously. He might have come to know about this number from some monks at a monastery at which he would have stayed during his journey. The important stūpa sites which he had mentioned might also be based on hearsay. But in any case the site where the monkey had offered Buddha the honey, should be searched somewhere near Gindoh and Nandgaon, if all these identifications of mine are near to truth. Some of the important stūpas which he had mentioned might also be lying there in the vicinity of these sites.

Newly explored sites in the Braj region-

Along with a number of already known sites, a number of new archaeological sites with a strong possibility of Buddhist association were discovered by me. All these sites are more or less similar in area, cultural deposit, and seem to have been abandoned after Gupta period. Although, here these sites have been called as monasteries, these do not adhere to the traditional meaning ascribed to a monastery. Most of these are settlements situated at the periphery of ancient towns where some

monks resided in a kind of isolation from the normal city and domestic life i.e. *sanghārāma*. A list of these sites is as follows-

1. Monastic settlement at the back side of Army Firing Range, Mathura- This is a site located at a distance of about 5 km south of Mathura city outside the Army Firing Range towards the side where new civilian houses have been recently constructed. The area of the site is about 70 x 60 m with a height of not more than 1 m. Kushan period brickbats and pottery were found scattered over the surface of this site. It seems to have been abandoned about 4th century A.D.

2. Monastic settlement in the Army Helipad Area at the backside of the Jawahar Bagh fence- This site is quite similar in nature to that of above mentioned site, area is also same. Kushan period brickbats and some pottery were observed at the site. Most of it has been destroyed by the army personnel by doing their drill exercises and the tasks allotted to them by their officers.

3. Monastic settlement at the site of Army Core Headquarter- This site was observed by me some 8 years back. At a lofty surface Indian Army has built some bunker type structure at that place. The deposit and the area of the site was about 50 x 50 m with a height of about 1.5 m. As the headquarter building exists at this place, now, I doubt that it might be non- existent.

4. Monastic settlement outside the Army Headquarter wall, near the old footpath joining Motikunj with the Police Line Colony (Defence Hall) - This is also a small site of about 50 x 40 m dimension with a height of about 4'. Kushan pottery especially an inkpot shaped lid and a number of brick bats were observed at the site. It was last seen some 6 years ago and its present status is not known to me as most of these areas have now been made restricted for civilians.

5. Monastic settlement at the backside of Police Line Residential Quarters- This site is situate between the Jawahar Bagh area and the Police Line Colony. A local drain passes near it and the District Magistrate office is not far from it. It is of the similar nature as that of the now remaining archaeological deposit at the back side of Mathura Jail, Government Nursery. This is in fact a continuation of monasteries

unearthed by British officers at Jamalpur, Jail and Court complex. Kushan period pottery and very few brick bats can be observed at the site which is almost in the same level as is the nearby ground.

6. Monastic settlement on the bank of Yamuna , opposite Gokul- While moving in the civil lines area , passing through Magistrate's residence, on the way to Gokul, on the right bank of Yamuna near a temple, this site is situated. The site is very small, about 30 x 40 m, just 2 or 3 feet above ground. Kushan potsherds and some brick bats were found scattered over its surface. Probably, during Kushan period, this was the place to cross Yamuna to go towards Gokul and Mahaban area.

7. Monastic settlement at Methodist Church, Sadar- Over the surface of the Yamuna khadar mounds, on which a church near Krishnapuri crossing is situated, are also remains of scattered Kushan pottery. The deposit is not thick and the size of the site is slightly larger than the above mentioned sites. It would have been an important monastic settlement during Kushan period and seems to have continued till late Gupta period but with decreasing importance. The site of the famous Sapatarishi Tila from where some very important Buddhist specimens like the Lion Capital Inscription of the period of Śakas, the sculpture of Kambojikā etc. were found is just 150 metre distant from here. But, so many changes have taken place in the area that any direct link between the two sites is not possible.

8. Monastic settlement at the site of Christian school, near Krishnapuri- This site is situated just in front of the Church site and is almost similar in nature. The pottery of Kushan and subsequent period continuing up to Post Gupta period can be observed in the back side of this convent school. The whole colony of Krishnapuri along with this site would have been one of the larger monastic settlements at the outskirts of the ancient city of Mathura. While the colony of Krishnapuri is completely occupied by modern settlements, at this site, there is still some possibility of archaeological investigations. Most of the area of this site also comes under the Army Cantonment.

9. Monastic settlement at Railway Colony, Mathura- This site is situated near the metre gauge railway crossing, 80 m from Bharatpur road inside railway colony, near a depression of some water body. Although the pottery found at the site left ochre

colour on rubbing, it is Kushan pottery. The size of the still existing site is about 40 x 30 m and a larger part of the site seems to have been cut by people much earlier than now. A complete Kushan brick of about 36 x 12 x 5 cm dimension was also observed at the site. The height of the site is about 1 metre from the ground.

10. Monastic settlement at Chandrapuri railway crossing- This site has now become almost non-existent. The exact location of the site is just on the left side of Bharatpur road, just below the road at the railway crossing. The potsherds can still be observed there, just like those belonging to other monastic establishments of Kushan and pre-Kushan period. There is a circular structure of two concentric rings which was later on used as a brick kiln. I doubt this structure to be some Buddhist establishment of some significance. While reading the *Catalogue of Mathura Museum*, I came to know about a site from where architectural pieces belonging to a Buddhist structure, possibly a stūpa, were found (L 21, L 22, L 23, L 24, L 25, M 7).⁷⁰ V.S. Agrawala has dated them to Śuṅga period on the basis of stylistic similarity with Bharhut specimens.⁷¹ It seems that some of these would have belonged to late 1st century B.C. The site would have been cleared of the already existing structures for the purpose of brick kiln, which would have made them dislocated. As the people of the area, more than 70 years back would not have had an idea about their antique value, they would not have been able to smuggle these out and thus these objects would have reached to the local museum. Still, some information can be collected after digging a trial trench at the double ringed circular structure as it is one of the earliest Buddhist establishments outside the city. An ancient well in the vicinity of the site which is now in very bad shape, (because of heavy water logging in the area) needs to be cleaned because it can provide some important evidences. Near this well, I found a number of pot sherds belonging to Kushan period. I was also able to find a Kushan period structural alignment here. A part of railway track about 500 m long has been provided a foundation with the soil of the ancient mounds. Grey ware of pre-Kushan period, Śuṅga pottery, stamped pottery and Kushan pottery can be observed in this deposit. I also found a Kushan copper coin in the vicinity of these sites. A later deposit which is somehow related with various Buddhist sites explored by me, although in an enigmatic condition, can also be observed near the *Saiyyad* and the opposite side of it crossing the railway track (metre gauge).

11. Monastic settlement at Vishwa Lakshmi Nagar, Triveni site, Mathura (Figs. 4.1-4.3) - This site is situated near the Govardhan crossing on the N.H.-2 at Mathura. The site is about 150 metre distant from Govardhan road, at the back side of Triveni Engineering Works. The most important aspect about this site under Army Cantonment area is that it is the only site from where I could find a miniature and much broken Kushan period Buddha image from the soil dug by the army personnel for the construction of some wall at the site. The nature of the site is almost similar to the other monastic sites being discussed here. Does the lofty mound just touching the monastic settlement hide a Kushan period stūpa inside it? It can only be confirmed by a small archaeological excavation at the site. Probably, somewhere near it was found an inscription carved on the lower half of a Buddha image (M.M. No. 78.34) reported by Dr. R.C. Sharma, which mentions of Kāyastha as a caste during Kushan period for the first time in epigraphic records.

12. Monastic settlement at Bajna flyover on N.H.-2- This site is situated on the ancient route linking the famous monasteries of Bajna with that of Govindpur and then to Mathura via Katra and Govindnagar monasteries. This site exists besides an industrial establishment and in all probability is a private property. The currently existing portion of the site measures about 40 x 30 m with an approximate height of 1.5 m. Clearance work should be undertaken at the site to expose the ancient structures and to increase our information regarding Buddhist establishments in the area.

13. Monastic settlement at Brajwasi Udyog, Mathura- This site is situated in front of Highway Plaza Mall situated on National Highway at Mathura. Most of the site has been destroyed by the industrial set up, but Kushan and even early pottery can be observed at this site. This area would have formed an important centre for Buddhist settlements. Some fine N.B.P.W. sherds were also observed near the site which indicates towards the possibility of it being occupied in the pre Mauryan period, but the deposit is not thick and seems to belong to a monastic settlement.

14. Monastic settlement along Sonkh road- A very small settlement of Kushan period of about 70 x 60 m dimension was observed at a place just touching the road to

Sonkh, in between Mandi Samiti and Pali Khera village. The height of the site is not more than 1.2 m.

15. Monastic settlement at Brajwasi Poultry Farm, Sonkh road (Fig. 4.4) - This site is situated about 100 m inside from the road to Sonkh, in front of Pali Khera village. The whole ancient settlement at the back of the Farm has been cut to form an agricultural field. Brick walls of about 30 m length are visible in the section. The bricks are much degenerated but still prove that these belong to Kushan period. The number of potsherds is very less as this was a structural site of some significance. The Farm is situated on the ground level but the walls are visible till the depth of 1.5 m from the normal level of the ground. During my first visit to the site, some villagers at Pali Khera village told me that a number of Buddhist sculptures of red sandstone were found at that site and were smuggled later on. There is no reason to disregard this suggestion after the inspection of the site. But nobody is going to provide further details about such activities.

16. Monastic settlement on Sonkh road (Fig. 4.5) - A monastic settlement belonging to Kushan period was observed at a place about 100 m away from Sonkh road near the villages of Salempur and Mukundpur. This site is ahead of village of Pali Khera and came to my notice when some villagers told me that some brickbats were being found there. The land mafias of the area are excavating this place, ostensibly to get mud and sand and to occupy the land. The exposed walls are much below the ground level. At the top of the site, there can be no indication of it being an archaeological site. Only because of illegal diggings this place has come to notice. The scarcity of potsherds again indicates it to be a monastic settlement which would not have continued after Kushan period.

17. Monastic settlement at Kakretiya- This site is situated about 12 km distant from Mathura in the *trans*-Yamuna region. It is situated on the bank of Manth branch of Ganga canal (which seems to be an old channel), 4 km inside from Mathura Hathras road. The site is in the fields of the village, on a cart route linking it with another ancient site Sihore. The area of the site is about 100 m x 120 m, which also appears to be a residential archaeological site. The site was important during Kushan period and possibility of its being pre- Kushan (about 100 B.C.) can not be declined. There

existed a Buddhist monastery at the place was clear from the find of a head of Buddha, which was stolen by the smugglers from a local village shrine. Another Hārītī image with only lower leg portion intact was also observed in the village which was transferred there from this site. Another important fact about the site is that it still maintains a corrupt form of its ancient name. The name Kakretiya is very special and in my opinion, in all probability it stands for Nāga Kārkotaka whose shrine along with the Buddhist monastery would have existed at the site like that of the shrine of Nāga Dadhikarṇa and Huviṣka vihāra at Jamalpur site in Mathura. The name Kārkotaka vihāra would have changed to Kakretiya in the succeeding periods and the site would have lost its ancient glory. Nāga Kārkotaka is one the most powerful serpent kings in Indian mythology and in Kashmir very popular from ancient times. Mathura was one of the most important centres of Nāga cult in the country, so such a shrine and monastery seems to be an obvious choice.

18. Monastic settlement at Taiyyabpur- It is the site of a large monastic establishment. The village is now-a-days called as Taiyyapur and is situated about 2 km distant after crossing the river Yamuna, from Mathura. Dr. Vogel had mentioned the finding of an Hārītī image (F. 30) from the village but had mentioned nothing about the site.⁷² Exploring the village it was observed that it was a significant Buddhist convent of Kushan period, having dimensions of about 120 x 100 m. Some habitation deposit was also observed in the vicinity of this site, but it did not appear to continue after 3rd century A.D. (apx.). At the site there are two Hindu shrines, both are in open and one of them is at a height of about 1.5 m while the other is on the ground level under a *peepal* tree. Both these shrines were part of the ancient settlement and had a number of Buddhist sculptures of buff coloured red sandstone which were stolen from there in due course of time. The site earlier had a height of about 2 m, which was cut and that's why a number of sculptures came to light and put at these shrines of local goddesses. This site is near to the famous site of Isapur- Hansganj.

19. Monastic settlement at Anyor- Anyor is a famous Buddhist site in the Govardhan hills where the first Buddhist image mentioning the deity as Buddha, (unlike Bodhisattva on the earlier sculptures) was found (M.M. No. A 2). One of the sculptures from the place is thought to be the earliest, showing the Gandhāran impact (M.M. No. A 65). No attempts were made to find the site mentioned as *Uttarahāruṣa*

vihāra in one of the inscriptions. I suppose to have found the site of the monastery outside the village near an ancient pond. Though, the village of Anyor itself is situated on some lofty surface having archaeological deposit, which belongs to 1st century of Christian era onwards, it might have earlier deposit like N.B.P.W. and P.G.W. But because of the completely covered surface by human activity, it is not possible to confirm. The site clearly indicates the presence of foreigners practicing Buddhism in far areas as far as Govardhan which is one of the most prominent Hindu pilgrimage places. The site which is locally called as *Pajaya* is about 120 x 80 m in dimensions and is covered with thorny trees like *babool* (acacia) etc. and is thus a bit protected. A large number of monkeys were observed at the site prohibiting anyone entering the site. This reminds me of the place in Mathura region mentioned in Buddhist literature, where a monkey had offered honey to *Tathāgata* Buddha.

20. Monastic settlement at Bhojpur Nagla- Bhojpur Nagla is a site situated on the west of Sonkh road about 5 km distant from Kankali mound, Mathura. The site is situated at the north- western part of the village. The site having dimensions 100 x 80 m with a height of about 3 m is a significant site. The site belongs to pre- Kushan (1st century B.C.), Kushan and Gupta periods. This site is not an isolated monastery but is part of a small settlement at the site itself and that opens the options of the area of the site to be extended, as some of its portion is occupied by the modern village.

21. Monastic settlement in front of Asgarpur village- This site is situated just along the Govardhan road just in front of Asgarpur village. The site is in urgent need of protection. The area of the site is about 110 x 80 x 1 m. The site has the deposit of Kushan period as pottery and some bricks indicate. The most important find from the site is the finding of Rangmahal type pottery, which makes it the only site in the region so far known for it. There is no certainty of it being a monastic establishment belonging to Buddhist tradition because all the sculptures which were found at the site have been stolen from the site. What people told at the site suggested it to be belonging to the Buddhist tradition.

22. Monastic settlement in front of Akbarpur village- This site is situated about 300 m away from Akbarpur village after crossing the National Highway No. 2. There is a Mughal *kosa minār* in the vicinity of this site and the Delhi Agra railway track is

touching it. The site is about 80 x 85 m in dimension with a height of about 1.5 m. A lot of Kushan period potsherds were observed at the site which seems to have continued till 7th century A.D. As this site is also very near to village Sihana, on the other side of which I found certain evidences of a Kushan monastic settlement, this site also appears similar in its nature.

23. Monastic settlement on the outskirts of village Sihana (Fig. 4.6) - This site is situated outside the village of Sihana, a significant 10th century B.C. onwards settlement, near to N.H. No. 2. This site is about 120 x 100 x 2 m in dimensions. A lot of Kushan period pottery was observed at the site. Pottery of slightly later date i.e. Gupta period continuing up to 7th century A.D. was also present at the site. It is not sure whether this site belonged to some other religion than Buddhist religion but finding of a beautiful Kushan period Buddha head (broken vertically from the top knot portion) confirms at least Buddhist status of the site. The fine craftsmanship in the red sandstone head indicates that the status of the site was quite high during those days. I would like to mention that this site is quite close to Tokri Tila site near Manth in appearance and dimensions. Even the name of the village Sihana (280 x 250 x 15 m apx. in dimensions) seems to be somehow inspired by Buddhism as *Simha* is the epithet used for the Buddha as *Śākyasimha*.

24. A site explored near Narahauli (Fig. 4.7) - This site has been explored by me just during the time of the preparation of the final manuscript of the thesis. This site is situated in between the village of Narhauri and ATV factory about 5 km distant from old Mathura city. The Delhi- Bombay railway track is almost touching the site. The site has the dimensions of about 80 x 60 m with no visible height. The site is covered with the chips and debitas of red sandstone. It makes it quite probable that the site was used as a factory site for making sculptures, most probably Buddhist in nature. Kushan bricks as well as some brick alignments of that period were also observed at the site. Kushan period potsherds but too fragmentary in nature, were also observed scattered at the site. If a small excavation at the site confirms these presumptions, then, it would be worthwhile to look at many other similar sites as I believe that such sites functioned not just as a small monastery but also as a residence for Kushan sculptors.

25. Gokul- This famous Hindu site along the river Yamuna is also an important Buddhist place. On the outskirts of Gokul near a medieval garden there exists a mound which is about 120 x 100 x 9 m in dimension. The site was explored by me in the year 2003 and no record could be obtained about its status as a protected site. In all probability it is a new discovery. To me the site seems to be containing a Buddhist stūpa and some monastic settlement. The site would have come into existence during Śaka- Kushan period and continued in later periods. Even British period deposit can be observed at the site. The nature of the deposits of these sites (identical with the site of Gokul) is being described in the following note-

A Note on the Nature of Sites which are Identical in Nature- We need to understand the nature and chronology of these archaeological mounds. The number of such sites providing some peculiar terracotta figurines and deposit is quite limited. The location of the sites is as follows-

1. Bhuteshwar mound.
2. Chamunda mound.
3. Vishwa Lakshmi Nagar- Triveni mound, Govardhan bye-pass.
4. Chandrapuri railway crossing, Bharatpur road.
5. Mathura Junction mound, near Maholi road.
6. Gokul mound.
7. Mahavana mound, Dauji road.
8. Sarai Ali Khan mound, near Mahavana.
9. A small mound outside Raya town.
10. Sakhitara outside Govardhan town.

Three of these sites, Bhuteshwar, Chamunda and the Mathura Junction mounds have provided Kushan period evidences in the form of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures, railing fragments and inscriptions. It is yet not clear how the cultural sequence of these sites developed after the Kushan period. During my investigations I found the possibility of pre-Mauryan and Mauryan horizons because of the finds of Black Slipped Ware and other related potteries, at the site of Bhuteshwar mound. At the Vishwa Lakshmi Nagar, Triveni mound site I could differentiate between Kushan horizon with red colour brickbats in compact yellow colour soil, very much like in other Kushan monastic sites of Buddhist nature, with the loose deposit above it. A

certain Kushan human terracotta figurine was also found from this horizon. Recently in a major discovery I have found a broken miniature Buddha image of Kushan period from the same site.

A little attention can also be paid towards the nature of the deposit of these mounds which are almost identical in nature. These mounds have a height of apx. 9 metres if the mound has not gone through much destruction. The deposit appears to be of over burnt red coloured bricks with ashy deposits in between. The whole deposit is very loose in nature. In the middle levels the presence of post-Gupta stamped pottery indicates towards the possibility of post- Gupta deposit. After the finding of some tile shaped brick and some structures at these sites the whole dating problem of these sites becomes very interesting. This phase is accompanied by a large number of terracotta figurines, often having over-burnt appearance with a peculiar deposit covering their exterior. Most of the pottery found from here is over-burnt with yellowish patches in between. Although no glazed ware specimen could be found in the deposit but celadon and porcelain of various types as well as glass bangle pieces are definitely present here. Most of these sites are somehow related with Buddhist religion and it seems quite probable that these were small stūpas of Kushan period which were later on acquired by medieval people for some important activities.

26. Raskhan Samadhi and Mahaban- The long stretch between Mathura and Baldev was occupied by various monasteries as the accounts of Fi- hian indicates. Starting from Isapur, Rawal, Brahmand Ghat up to Baldev, a number of important Buddhist sculptures have been found generally belonging to Śaka- Kushan period. There is an important mound between Gokul and Mahaban, famous for the Samadhi of Muslim Hindi Kṛṣṇa Bhakta poet Rasa Khan. It is under possession of U.P. State Department of Archaeology. This site is actually important not just for this Samadhi but also for the significant structural deposit of possibly some Buddhist establishment. The site appears to be rich in Kushan period deposit and continued in the succeeding phases. The site measures roughly 180 x 160 x 11 m in dimensions. The site outside Mahaban is also a new finding in terms of Buddhist importance.

Note-

Most of these sites, which have been discussed as Buddhist monastic sites should not be considered belonging to a single faith only as these were the sites belonging to such a new cult which was totally indigenous (Indian) in nature and was respected by majority of the population. As is the case in the present day society where *Mahāpuruṣa* like Sai Baba of Shirdi are respected and followed by most of the Indians whether or not following the dogmas and theories of Sai worship, in the same way the Buddha and his learned devoted disciples were a strong phenomenon in the religious history of India which got incorporated in the religious life of people without much confrontations. The majority of the Buddhists followers were the people of royal families and the aristocrats of the society who bravely accepted Buddhism as a complete religion and propagated it. As is the tradition in India people would have always respected Buddhism irrespective of their own personal beliefs. In all probability the religion of the majority of local people was Brāhmaṇaism. What was the actual nature of it before 2nd century B.C., requires a lot of researches. Most of the sites which now lie in the army cantonment area of Mathura would have belonged to a singular faith- Buddhism but those sites which are situated in the interior of Mathura region, near regular village or town settlements might have been multi religious in nature like that of Sihana, Akbarpur and many other sites which have not been mentioned above because they also have provided some Brāhmaṇical images along with Buddhists images or in the absence of them like Kosi Khurd, Bachchhavana Sehi, Shahpur Gosna etc.

Stūpa* sites in the region of Braj-

There are five such sites, which in my view are most likely to be the mounds erected as a stūpa. The names of these sites are: Ganesh Tila, Mahavidya Mandir, Akrura Tila Satoha and Gayatri Tila.

A. Ganesh Tila- Ganesh Tila is an isolated mound of Jaisinghpura on the outskirts of Mathura very near to the course of Yamuna. Presently, a Hindu temple exists at the top of the mound. The mound is about 20 metre in radius and about 8 m high. On the surface of mound regular archaeological deposit is absent. Only few potsherds of late periods are observable at the mound. Such isolated mounds are exceptional in the

whole Braj region. In all probability it was a stūpa which was not very far from the site of Gokarneshwar. A few Buddhist sculptures (headless Buddha statuette from Ganesh Tila well, M.M. No. 867 etc.) have also been reported from Jaisinghpura area.

B. Mahavidya Mandir (Fig. 4.8) - The site of Mahavidya Devi is quite similar to the site of Ganesh Tila. Roughly conical shaped mound has a radius of about 10 m and a height of about 9 m. Just at the base of this mound a beautiful pillar (M.M. No. N 9) carved with the figure of Māyādevī under Śāla tree and a square stone box with a seated Buddha on each of its four sides, were found.⁷³ Growse has suggested that the name of Mahavidya Devi is actually the changed form of Buddhist Mahāmāyā *devī*. It may be the case, but there is no certainty about it, as the popularity of mother goddess cult pre-dates as well as dominates any other cult during the ancient period. The mound does not have any regular archaeological deposit except for some scattered potsherds of Kushan and later periods. If the mound was the part of the fortification wall of the city, then the case would be different but it is an isolated mound with religious significance. In all probability it has to be a stūpa mound which can be confirmed by a trial trench at the site. Just at the base of this stūpa hill, there lies an ancient tank (50 x 50 x 12 m apx. dimensions) which was not identifiable during my earlier visits. But during my visit in the year 2008, I found the tank to be a well built structure dating back to Kushan period at least. In the lower portion of the tank Kushan bricks are easily identifiable. The tank was renovated from time to time as the use of bricks of Gupta, post- Gupta and medieval period indicate. Now, the tank has been completely renovated with the modern bricks and cement mortar by some local people.

C. Satoha (Fig. 4.9) - Satoha is an important ancient site having regular archaeological deposit from the P.G.W. period to contemporary period. But outside the village, there is a *Sūrya Kuṇḍa* and at its corner there is an isolated lofty mound. There is a famous Hindu temple at the top of this mound. The diameter of the mound is about 15 m and height about 14 m which is higher than the height of regular archaeological deposit at the village proper. Very few potsherds can be observed at the mound. This place is said to be related with the legend of *Mahābhārata* as it is said that it was the place where King Śāntanu had worshipped the Sun God to beget a son (Bhīṣma). Notwithstanding the Hindu legend, Satoha was a very famous Buddhist

site. Even, two broken Hārītī images were observed at a Hindu shrine by me. Some other Buddhist sculptures like a lower door jamb (M.M. No. P 14), were also found at this site, along with some Brāhmaṇical sculptures of slightly later date. Like the road to Sonkh, this road to Govardhan, on which this site is situated, was very important for Buddhist establishments. The sites of Triveni, Bakalpur, Girdharpur lie between Mathura and Satoha. These sites are very close to each other.

D. Aknur Tila- This site is situated in between Ganesh Tila and Vrindavan, very close to the course of Yamuna. This place is very well related with Bhāgavata cult. There is the temple of *Vṛṣṇi Vīras* and especially that of Akrūra, the ancestral deity of Varshney caste at the top of the mound. According to one view Akrūra is one of the famous *Pañchavṛṣṇi Vīras*. A beautiful standing female figure (M.M. No. F 6) was found near this site.⁷⁴ S.R.Quintanilla has dated it prior to Kushan period, during the reign of Sodāsa.⁷⁵ I am also supportive of this view of hers. The site is an isolated mound in the level ground formed of Yamuna soil. The pottery which can be observed on the surface of the mound is quite late in date and indicates its occupation by the people of later periods when this site was abandoned after Kushan period. There is no other site in its vicinity, so the monks would have resided there somewhere near the spot in a monastery. The area of site with a little scattered deposit (outside the lofty stūpa mound) is about 50 x 50 m.

E. Gayatri Tila- From this site, a number of Buddhist sculptural findings have been reported and are now a part of the collection of Mathura Museum. Near the Yamuna, some lofty mounds (two) were observed which were in most part devoid of any pottery deposit. One of the mounds is being used as a burial ground while the other is occupied with a local temple and a cattle- pan. In all probability, these might have formed part of some stūpa like structure in the past.

* I must mention that all these sites which have been suggested to be stūpa mounds does not necessarily need to be considered Buddhist in their origin. As it is well known that the concept of stūpa has been derived from Vedic *thūpa*, these sites might have been simple stūpa sites based on Vedic traditions. But, later on these might have developed some Buddhist affiliation. All the railing and other sculptural findings from these sites can not be exclusively termed as Buddhist in nature.

There are three mounds: one outside the village Barha near the banks of Yamuna in Chhata tehsil (about 50 km from Mathura) and two in district Hathras, which I suggest to be stūpa mounds. The Hathras sites are: one outside village Daryapur near the Hathras Junction section of Delhi Kolkata railway track and the other outside Meru on the side of Hathras Sikandararao route. Further investigations at these sites can prove the exact nature of them.

Important Buddhist sites in the Braj region-

Other than the above mentioned places which are the new archaeological sites found, there are a number of important Buddhist sites which were already known. With some new inputs the list of such sites is as follows-

1. Katra Keshavdev- It is one of the most important religious sites in the whole world. It is the place where the most popular of Brāhmaṇical gods, Lord Kṛṣṇa was born and whose birth-place has been given the shape of a huge temple several times till now. The first evidence of it dates back to 1st century B.C. as far as archaeological evidences are concerned. What is even more significant is the fact that this site was not only important for the followers of Brāhmaṇism but a number of Buddhists and Jaina antiquities have also been found at the site as well as in the vicinity of it. This site is the foremost example of fact that all the three sects of Indian origin actually respected each other and the topmost religious spot of the Hindus (traditionally much earlier than Buddhist establishment) was also considered very sacred by Buddhists and Jainas as well. All the evidences which are indicative of the fights between these sects are exceptional and much later in date. Many of these are the attempts of anti-nationalist forces who try to put these sects in three different isolated pots, antagonistic in approach and ideology to each other. To me, the area of Katra does not appear to be the earliest settlement site at Mathura. This area was more of religious importance than being a regular residential place, even though, the earliest date of the site should go much before the comparatively better known P.G.W. period that dates back to about 10th century B.C. As Ballabh Saran and Venkatramaiyaa (I.A.R. 1954- 55, pp. 15-16) of Archaeological Survey have talked of a pre- P.G.W. level that consisted of handmade pottery only. In my opinion this level should date

back to many centuries prior to the average date of P.G.W. culture. The area of the site is about 500 x 400 x 8- 10 m in dimensions.

In terms of Buddhist significance the site was first explored by Sir Alexander Cunningham during his first exploration in 1853 when he found some pillars of a Buddhist railing. Later he recovered a gateway from the same spot and a standing Buddha figure from a well (Lucknow Museum No. B.10), recording the name of the monastery as Yaśa vihāra.⁷⁶ He also found capitals of two round pillars which according to him should belong to some Buddhist monuments. A fragmentary inscription found here records the genealogy of Gupta dynasty from the founder to Samudragupta but the nature of the monument or the work is not traceable as the remaining part of the epigraph is gone. Cunningham further discovered a curved architrave of a Buddhist gateway depicting rich decoration of architectural complexities and a gate- way (M.M. No. M 1).

Another very beautiful discovery from this site is the famous Bodhisattva/ Buddha stele (M.M. No. A.1) which is one of the earliest and most remarkable specimens depicting the master in a sitting pose. The style of treatment of this image is in sharp contrast to images of Bodhisattvas in standing pose. While the standing Buddha images of this period are known for their monumentality and heaviness, this image is a master specimen of the Mathura art style which had already attained perfection during the time of Kanishka. This Katra Bodhisattva image records the name of the monastery as Śāka vihāra or Svaka vihāra.⁷⁷ As the donor Amohassī has installed this Bodhisattva statue in her own convent, the monastery is also termed as Amohassī vihāra.

A fragmentary Bodhisattva figure set up in the time of some Kṣatrapa probably in the 1st century B.C. was found in the vicinity of Katra site i.e. from the site of Galteshwar Mahadev temple (M.M. No. A 66). Other Buddhist figures now preserved in the Mathura Museum from Katra site include: Inscribed pedestal of Śākyamuni Buddha (No. 12.270), pedestal of the Buddha (14.416), Bust of the Buddha (14-15.437), Bodhisattva head with Garuda (15.510), Fragment showing *Vessantara Jātaka* (kt. 136), Pedestal with Bodhisattva (49.350), Slab with Buddha in Bhūmisparśa (47.3366), Fragment showing seated Buddha (57.4420), Torso of the

Buddha in *abhaya* (59. 4836), Bust of the Buddha (53.3654), Inscribed pedestal of the Buddha (56.3999), Head of the Buddha from Potarakund (56.4011), Head of the Buddha (54.3795), Head of Bodhisattva (56.3948), Torso of Bodhisattva (56.4000) etc.⁷⁸ Besides these, a number of architectural fragments belonging to Buddhist establishments were also found from the site which are now housed in Mathura Museum. These objects are: M.M. Nos. J. 40; 2567; 2568; 2601; I. 1; M. 1 and M. 5. This indicates that at the site of Katra, there were at least two Buddhist vihāras. Cunningham observes the potentiality of the spot in these words: “This site is the most promising one for discovery, and as the Masjid has long been disused, owing to many dangerous cracks in both roof and walls, I believe that there would not be any objection whatever to a complete exploration of the mound.”⁷⁹ This could, however, not been accomplished and A. Fuhrer also had to suspend his excavation work in 1896 as the walls of the stūpa were continuing towards Idgah.⁸⁰ There is still a lot of potential at this site for excavation but would never be made because of strong religious sentiments and because the whole area has been encroached by modern buildings of various nature.

2. Chaubara Mounds- These mounds would have formed one of the most important Buddhist establishments near the city of Mathura. The exact location of them is still not clear to me, though these mounds seem to be spread in a very vast area, from the Sonkh road near Mandi bye pass to the area of Brajwasi udyog, Girraj Maharaj college of Law, Vasant Vihara up to Shreejee Baba School. Nothing of that sort has been observed in this area in spite of repeated visits. These mounds seem to be the most destructed of mounds during and after the British rule. Recently, one senior employee at Mathura Museum informed me that these mounds were destructed by local mafias in connivance with some government officials during 1985. These were situated on the site of Brajwasi Royal Udyog and in its vicinity. It was actually a chain of more than a dozen mounds. Cunningham had found a copper celt in one of them.⁸¹ The bricks of early stūpas from these mounds were removed by the villagers of the neighbourhood, particularly that of Bakalpur and Girdharpur. When the road to Sonkh was laid in 1868, one of these mounds exposed a masonry cell which contained a small golden casket. The purpose of this reliquary was to preserve a tooth of some Great man but it was thrown away in ignorance by the labourers who kept the casket with much care for its metal value and later handed it over to the engineer for onward

transmission to the then District Collector F.S. Growse,⁸² but the whereabouts of this antiquity are not known. Cunningham from another Chaubara mound found a steatite casket in 1872 and it was made over to Indian Museum, Calcutta. Another important find which Cunningham has mentioned is a pillar capital adorned with four seated animals and it was recovered from Chaubara mound B. A colossal Buddha head bearing 'Egyptian features' was a remarkable discovery made by Growse from this site (M.M. No. A. 27). A pedestal of the Buddha image in early Brahmi characters records the year 33 in the reign of Mahārāja Devaputra Huvīśka.⁸³ Cross bars of Buddhist railings recovered from here represented different figures and motifs.

The other Buddhist findings from these sites in the Mathura Museum are: Cross legged Buddha in *abhaya mudrā* of Kushan period (No. A. 16), fragmentary right leg of a colossal Buddha image (No. A. 24), and a beautiful railpost representing on obverse probably R̥ṣyaśṛṅga in ecstasy with his two fingers on chin and reverse carved with the worship of *bodhi* tree and scene of birds fight etc. (No. J. 7)

The discovery of two relic caskets and a series of stūpa mounds indicate that it was a highly sacred place during Kushan period. The Chinese travellers have referred to the presence of a number of sacred stūpas containing the relics of the Buddha and his prominent disciples. I suggest that these mounds might have been the sites of those great stūpas and it is such a sad fact that no remains of them survive now at the site.

3. Jamalpur mounds- This site has been termed as Jail mound by Cunningham and as Jamalpur by Growse. This site was completely levelled in year 1860 for constructing the Collector's Court. Here, I would like to add that both the great scholars were right in their approach. Actually this is not a single site. The Collector's Court is itself a quite large enclosure and from there jail is situated about 300 m away. While exploring this whole area I realized that starting from Police Lines up to the limits of Jail, there are scattered archaeological evidences in terms of Kushan and Gupta pottery in this whole area. As most of this area is now occupied by modern buildings, such deposit was observed in the back side of Collector's Court near a drain, at the Government Nursery, at the back and rear walls of Mathura Jail. This is a vast area and if it is extended towards the Collector's house, then it becomes much larger. This area is almost equal in dimensions to the area between the sites of

Bhuteshwar and Chaurasi. As this whole area of Jamalpur (civil court) and Jail was levelled on a large scale, it has provided one of the best treasures of Buddhist sculptures so far recovered in India. The most remarkable image from the site is Mathura Museum No. A. 5, which is a masterpiece of Indian art and is the perfect example of the skill of an artisan who transformed the subtle details of one's spiritual feeling into existence by carving a stone. The delicacy of the treatment of the whole body of the master including the large decorated halo and above all the high spiritual order and the feeling of ultimate calmness which the master of the world expresses on the viewer can hardly be surpassed in any other Indian sculpture. The pedestal records the name of Yaśadinna who was supposed to be a donor monk but two other sculptures have come to light, one from Govindnagar, Mathura and the other from Kasia's *Mahāparinirvāṇa* panel, which bears the name of Yaśadinna as a sculptor. This makes the identification of Yaśadinna a bit complex but, to me, he appears to be the head (the master artisan Guru) of the most prominent school of Mathura art about 5th century A.D.

Growse writes that the mound appeared to be occupied by several different monasteries; three of which, according to General Cunningham bore the names of Sanghamittra- Sada vihāra, Huviṣka vihāra and Kundokhar. Some of the Buddhist sculptures found from Jamalpur and now housed in Mathura Museum are: A.49 a Buddha image of year 28; A.3 a Buddha image; A.14 image depicting the Buddha seated on lion throne; A.15 image depicting the Buddha in *abhaya*; A.19 image depicting the Buddha in meditation; A.33 a life size Buddha head; A.35 a life size Buddha head; A.44 a fragment of standing Buddha; A.46 Torso of Bodhisattva; A.6 Headless Buddha torso; A.7 Torso of Buddha in *abhaya*; A.8 Torso of the Buddha; A.10 Torso of the Buddha; A.11 Torso of the Buddha; A.11 Torso of the Buddha; A.12 lower part of a Buddha image; A.13 Torso of a Buddha image in *varada mudrā*; A.22 Broken left hand of a Buddha image; A.31 a Buddha head; A.36 a Buddha head; A.37 a Buddha head; A.48 a Buddha pedestal; A.51 Standing Buddha pedestal; J.15 Rail post showing a man under tree; J.41 Railpost with lady and *Ulūka Jātaka*; I.32 Fragmentary Rail post with male; I.33 Fragmentary Rail post with celestial beings; N.1 Drum of miniature stūpa; 64.12 Pedestal of a Buddha image. From this site, one of the most noticeable fragments was a stone hand, measuring a foot across palm,

which must have belonged to a statue not less than from 20 to 24 feet in height. All these images belong to either Kushan or Gupta period.

4. Bhuteshwar- Kankali area- This area has provided one of the largest collection of ancient sculptures from Mathura which in majority is Jaina but also prominently belong to Buddhist and Brāhmaṇical religions. This site further confirms the view of harmonious and cordial existence of all the major religions at the same site. It should be the similar case for the people of Mathura as described above after discussing the new monastic settlements (in *notes*). The site of Kankali housed possibly three Jaina stūpas and temples. The existence of Buddhist stūpa is indicated by the fact that a fight had occurred between the two communities for the ownership of the site. The Buddhist sculptures and railing fragments also attest to this fact. Besides, this site also housed a *mihiragrha* (temple of the Sun God). Other images of Brāhmaṇical Gods like Kārttikeya have also been found from here. The nearby site of Bhuteshwar and Balabhadra Kuṇḍa between them, have provided a number of Kushan and early Gupta sculptures, majority of which belongs to Buddhist religion and the remaining to Brāhmaṇical religion. The site of Kankali was extensively excavated by A. Fuhrer in the years 1888- 91. A small seated figure with six persons worshipping *chakra* and an inscription recording the name of the donor as '*Jīvikasya data Bhikkṣusya Vihāra sva*,'⁸⁴ was also found here. In the year 1975, officials of A.S.I. had excavated a fine brick tank at the site of Kankali, which has now-a-days turned into a dirty pond for draining all the drainage water of the area. The tank structure is not visible for the last ten years and would have suffered irreversible damage. What is the purpose of unnecessarily occupying a site when the authorities are too irresponsible to protect a monument of archaeological and cultural significance? Growse had identified this site with Upagupta monastery while Cunningham considered Katra to be the site of Upagupta monastery.⁸⁵ Vogel does not subscribe to the views of either of these scholars regarding the identification of some of the monasteries.⁸⁶ Dr. R.C. Sharma has tried to approve the view expressed by Growse.⁸⁷ I can not understand the basis on which such great scholars have forwarded their view. Why did they always consider Mathura to be the city proper and did not survey the interiors of Braj region for better identifications? All these are a kind of forced interpretations because of lack of exploratory data from the interiors of Braj region.

Whatever might be the case, it is for sure that at the site of Kankali there existed a full fledged Buddhist establishment including a monastery, a stūpa and a tank (should be for all the three religions). Similar was the case of Bhuteshwar site, a larger part of which is now non-existent because the site was levelled for laying the Delhi-Bombay track there and later on for the construction of Bhuteshwar Railway Station. Whatever was left had been destructed by the buildings of Shreejee Baba Ashram, houses of Jagannathpuri and more than these by the City Water Works. Unlike the site of Kankali which came into existence about 2nd century B.C., the site of Bhuteshwar was an earlier regular habitation site dating back to P.G.W. period in terms of chronology and traditionally to the period of the first settlement at Mathura. A number of railing posts and other Buddhist antiquities were recovered from the site, some of which are among the best art specimens of Kushan period. The important findings from the site of Bhuteshwar now housed in Mathura Museum are: No. 1250 carved with a standing a Bodhisattva figure with scalloped halo; Nos. 151; 152; 153; 154; J.4 (all railing pillars with females or with daily life scenes) and No. 1247, a cross bar. The important Buddhist discoveries from Kankali Tila now housed in Mathura Museum are: Bodhisattva Torso (No. 14-15.447), stele with beautiful standing Buddha (No. 15.578), slab representing anointment of the Buddha by two Nāgas on one side and by devotees on the other (No. H.2), Hārītī with a child (No. D.11) and tympanum showing stūpa worship (No. 47.3367) and Siddhārtha in meditation attended by two ladies (No. 46.3231).

5. Govindnagar mounds- The site of Govindnagar is in fact in continuation of the mounds of Katra, Mahavidya from eastern side, and site of Chaurasi from the northern side and is almost touching the site of Bhuteshwar- Water Works with an irregular pond in between. The Delhi-Bombay Railway track has played a huge role in separating the long series of these mounds. The whole colony of Jagannathpuri which lies between Bhuteshwar and Katra is equally rich in archaeological deposits but is fully occupied by modern houses. Pre-Mauryan, Mauryan and Śunga deposits underlie the Kushan and Gupta deposits at the site of Govindnagar. The site is actually very large and only a very small part (less than one sixth of the whole area) could be cleared by Dr. R.C. Sharma and that is the area which is still somehow under Government protection. How vast the network of smugglers and level of their activity

has been in the Mathura region, can be easily understood by observing this area. This area formed the largest series of Buddhist sites in the Braj region starting from around Katra and continuing up to Chaubara, Girdharpur sites with little space left between them. The grandeur of the site would have been unparalleled in the Indian context because it was so important, in spite of, not being a favourite place of the Buddha and also not being probably the prominent religion of local masses. When a small area at Govindnagar provided such a rich collection of antiquities what to say of this vast area! The smugglers of the area have worked better than the Intelligence Agencies of our country and have destroyed such a precious treasure of human civilization. An inscription from Govindnagar mentions the name of a monastery as Vīradatta vihāra (M.M. No. 76.34). Details of the important findings can be seen in the works of Dr. Sharma.⁸⁸

6. Chaurasi mounds – This site is situated somewhere near the Jambuswami Digambara Jaina Kṣetra and has provided both Jaina and Buddhist antiquities. From the survey in the area and the description of Cunningham⁸⁹ that the people reported to him that no stones were found in these mounds, it appears that these served as large earthen stūpas and only few monasteries were situated near them which were almost at the same height as the ground level. I can not deny the fact that the important site discovered by me near Triveni- Vishwa Lakshmi Nagar area might be the third mound which Cunningham had mentioned based on the information provided by local people. Cunningham had possibly not explored the site himself as he did not consider it worthy of exploration. This site is about 350 m distant from Chaurasi temple in slightly south- east direction while Cunningham mentions only a distance of 120 m for the third mound. It is also possible that this is a different site and the site, which Cunningham had mentioned as third of the Chaurasi mounds is non- existent now. Two of the mounds mentioned by Cunningham are: one on which the Jaina temple is situated and the second on which the large image of Mahāvīra has been placed. The temple mound is quite lofty and in all probability was a stūpa, but it is not clear whether it belonged to Buddhists or Jainas. The outer mound which almost touches the National Highway No. 2 also might be a stūpa mound. From Chaurasi and surrounding area large size fragments of Buddhist railings and door-jambes were acquired and deposited in the Mathura Museum in 1957 (57.4446- 48). Cross bar fragment of a stūpa (No. L 31) was also deposited in Mathura Museum from here.

7. Girdharpur mound- This site is situated on the left side of road to Govardhan. This important Buddhist site was excavated in the year 1913. At that time a number of Buddhist sculptures and railing stone were unearthed. A Nāgī pedestal (M.M. No. 17.1316) from the site mentions the name of the monastery as Prāvārika vihāra.⁹⁰ This was a very important Buddhist centre during 2nd and 3rd century A.D. and the site was spread in an area of about 150 x 100 m. Now the whole site, which was under so called Government protection, has been completely razed to ground and nothing of significance exists there. The whole colony named Shriji Dham has been constructed on the ancient site. It was only outside that encroached township that I could locate the potsherds belonging to Kushan period Buddhist site near the local temple of village Girdharpur. This temple of village *devī* is the only evidence which can be related with local population in the new township of urbane nature. The antiquities from this site now housed in Mathura Museum are: Bodhisattva image (No. 1310), Buddha head (No. 1335), Buddhist architectural fragments (Nos. 1307, 1329, 1330).

8. Chamunda mounds- These mounds are situated near the metre gauge track to Vrindavan, in the vicinity of Chamunda temple. It was not an outright Buddhist area. The site provides evidences of some regular habitation but only from the late Kushan period. Most of the area of these mounds has been encroached by modern settlements. This site was excavated by M.C. Joshi led team of A.S.I. in the year 1975, but its report is still unpublished and no other details are available except for two or three articles. This site was also under Government protection as per records of Archaeological Survey but how the whole site got razed down to ground or otherwise occupied illegally, only A.S.I. officials can tell about it. I observed the brick walls of about 3rd- 4th century A.D. Buddhist monastery in one of the larger plots being razed to ground, at the time of my exploratory visit to the site. Some Buddhist sculptures and railing posts have been reported from the site and many of them were brought to the Mathura Museum by F.S. Growse from the famous Hindu temple of *Mātā* Chamunda.⁹¹

9. Jaisinghpura mound- There is a lot of confusion about this site. In fact, the whole area between Gokarneshwar temple and Ganesh Tila seems to have provided Buddhist sculptures from time to time. The archaeological deposit belonging to early

centuries of Christian era can be observed at a number of spots in this area, especially in front of Methodist Hospital by the side of Vrindavan road. But this area is by and large a regular habitation area, so, where the Buddhist establishments were located, can not be found out. Dr. R.C. Sharma has shown this area as the site of Jaisinghpura mounds but actually the famous site of Jaisinghpura from where a number of Buddhist sculptures (MM. nos. J 9, J 10 and J 11) and inscriptions have been found is situate in the back side of Birla temple near the village Bangali Basti, just after crossing the Vrindavan Railway track. The name of the mound is Kankor Tila. This site is under possession of Archaeological Survey of India and is comparatively well maintained. The area of the site is about 180 x 140 m, with an approximate height of 2 m at some places. The site has been recently fenced with iron wires. The pottery found at this site belongs to Kushan, Gupta and post – Gupta periods but in all probability it was just a Buddhist settlement. A very conspicuous fact about this site is that there are five lofty areas at this site, four at four corners and one at the centre which rise to nearly 2- 2.5 m height while the left of the area is a depression. Whatever might be the exact nature of these lofty areas, it is doubtless that it forms a *Pañchāyatana* style of structure.

10. Ahalyaganj Mound- This was a mound of similar nature as was Jaisinghpura mound, but this site has been completely destructed and nothing significant of that now remains. This site was situated mid way between Mathura and Vrindavan at the Gas Godam curve. Only a few potsherds can be observed at the site, which can be now identified with the presence of Chamar *mātā* shrine at the destructed site.

11. Vrindavan- Vrindavan was an important town settlement even during the pre-Kushan period as the presence of various high mounds in the city indicates. But, pre Śaka Kushan period remains have not come to light till now because it has been densely populated on those mounds. It was definitely an important Buddhist place also, which is corroborated by the finding of some Buddhist sculptures from there belonging to Kushan period and now kept at Mathura Museum (a railing pillar M.M. No. 119, fragment showing worship of stūpa by Gandharvas M.M. No. 10.130, *Śālabhanjikā* images Nos. 40.2887, 40.2888, 10.119 and lower part of a Bodhisattva image M.M. No. 74.26). What was the exact find-spot of them is not clear. But I have

found a site very near to Vrindavan railway station towards the locality called Bhangipara, which is a structural mound of Kushan and succeeding periods. Though not confirmed, it might be a place of Buddhist establishment. Importance of Vrindavan as an important Buddhist settlement is also confirmed by the fact that most of the important sites near Mathura are situated on major trade routes like Bharatpur road, Sonkh road, Govardhan road, Chhata- Kaman road via Barsana etc. Vrindavan which has not provided so much of early archaeological evidences is reached from Mathura via sites of Gokarneshwar, Chamunda, Jaisinghpura locality and mound, Ahilyaganj mound and Akrur tila. All these are important Buddhist establishments. Besides these, two village sites have been explored by me between Jaisinghpura and Vrindavan. These two sites are: A mound in front of P.M.V. Polytechnic College (till now part of dense forest but recently a colony has been constructed near the site) and village Tehra. Both are Kushan period habitation sites which got abandoned after some centuries. Then from Vrindavan three important routes go to: Manth across Yamuna, Govardhan via Chhatikara, Maghera, Ral, Radhakund, Neemgaon and the third to Sehi via Sunrakh, Gond Atas, Sakraya and Parkham. Many of these sites had provided Buddhist sculptures but because of high level of smuggling activity, nothing substantial survives. Presence of a Śunga period Yakṣī and Kushan period Yakṣa at Parkham are only indicative of the presence of some important establishments at the site. At the site of Sehi Bihariji, I observed the presence of Kushan pottery on a disturbed mound where the deposit was not very deep. This site was situated at a fair distance from the regular habitation Garh mound. I suggest Sehi Bihariji site might have some Buddhist association.

12. Saptarishi or Saptarsi Tila- In the area which is very close to river Yamuna, a number of mounds existed. Some of the important ones are: Saptarishi Tila, Nag Tila, Dhruv Tila, Raja Bali Ka Tila. Of these the mound known as Saptarishi Tila, situated just at the site of City Crematorium is quite important for Buddhist findings. Here was found the famous lion capital inscription of Kṣatrapa Rājavula which is now housed in British Museum, London. The image of lady Kamuiā or Kāmbojikā (M.M. No. F 42) was also found here. Presence of Guhā vihāra, a stūpa, a *sanghārāma* and a *Sarvāstivādina parigraha* at the site, comes to knowledge from the inscription.⁹² A lion image was found at Dhruv Tila (M.M. No. 105). The area on the banks of

Yamuna was a favourite spot for Buddhist monasteries. The Buddhist finds which have come to light from near Jamuna Bagh mentions of Suvarṇakāra vihāra.⁹³ A Bodhisattva image (No. 1351) and a railing pillar (No. 438) from Jamuna Bagh have been kept at Mathura Museum. Near Mahadeva Ghat the remains of that site were observed by me, which is now-a-days a barren land. Kushan period pottery was lying scattered there. Yamuna river would have caused a lot of damage to the site.

13. Mathura Junction area- A number of Buddhist sculptures have been found from the area of Mathura Junction Loco Shed. A Buddha pedestal from this site (M.M. No. 10.121) mentions a '*chaitya kuṭiya svakaya*' at which the image was donated by Nāgapriya for Dharmaguptikas.⁹⁴ A railing fragment from this site has been kept at Mathura Museum (No. 115). The exact nature of this site cannot be determined as it is non-existent. But near the Army's 3RPD area wall near a *kachchi pagadandi* going towards Industrial Area, some potsherds of Kushan and later periods were observed as are usually found at Buddhist sites. It should be the site of the find-spot of some of the important images. Another important factor which needs to be considered is that this whole railway track from Bhuteshwar to Junction cabin is placed on a raised foundation which is the deposit from an archaeological site and it also consists of early pottery like P.G.W. From where did it actually come, is not clear. There is a possibility that this deposit would have been brought from a nearby site. A small mound known as Mathura Junction mound adjacent to the road linking Bus-stand with Industrial area is still under Government protection and has been fenced recently. This site is surrounded by modern houses from all sides. I did not find any Kushan evidence at the site. The nature of deposit of the site has been described in detail in the note on "The Sites which are Identical in Nature". I repeat it again and again that one such mound needs to be excavated to know the exact nature and chronology of such sites. It is for sure that some very important Buddhist antiquities were recovered by the British at this site, that's why this small site was selected for protection by them.

14. Isapur- Hansganj area- This area is situated across Yamuna opposite to Kans Qila at Mathura. The site is more famous as the site of Durvasa Muni Temple. A number of Kṣatrapa and Kushan sculptures and other antiquities have come to light from this area which belongs to all the important faiths of the time. This area was a

regular habitation site from Mauryan period onwards (at least) on the left bank of Yamuna and would have served as a crossing point of the river during ancient times. A number of Buddhist monastic establishments and other religious edifices would have existed there during early centuries of the Christian era. The important Buddhist findings from this site, now housed in Mathura Museum are: railing pillars Nos. 286, 804, 977, 1187, H 12 etc.

15. Ganeshra- This village is situated about 4 km distant from Mathura. A number of Buddhist sculptures were reported from the site in the past. The village was probably a habitation site, which had Buddhist viḥāras and stūpas at its outskirts. One of the inscriptions from the site mentions of a stūpa. The Government had taken in its possession two mounds in the village but I was not able to locate any of them after my repeated visits. The Buddhist sculptures from the site housed in Mathura Museum are: a Bodhisattva image (No. A 45), Railing pieces (Nos. F 10, F 48, F 59 and 464).

16. Maholi- This is the place of ancient Madhuvana and the name Maholi is derived from Madhupuri. This is a very important ancient site dating back to at least P.G.W. period. A number of important Kushan and Gupta sculptures have been found from this site. This site is actually a cluster of mounds. A large part of that is occupied by the present day village population. A number of ancient sites are scattered between Jai Gurudev temple and village Maholi, in an area of more than 2 km. All these sites at the back of the temple have been completely destroyed with all the sculptures being smuggled out. Outside the village of Maholi, there is an ancient mound of about 50 m diameter, on which a modern Hindu temple is situated. In fact it can be a Buddhist stūpa mound. It is situated near to a local Vaishnavite temple. Except for the central village, all the mounds which are situated on the periphery of Maholi like in the south near a Kuṇḍa are Buddhist sites. Many of these are possibly stūpa mounds as they are formed of natural soil with a few ancient potsherds. On the contrary, most of these sites have been transformed into important Hindu sites. There should be no doubt that Maholi was an important Hindu centre during Kushan period as various Śivaliṅgas and other Hindu sculptures have been reported from there. The important Buddhist findings from Maholi now housed in Mathura Museum are: Buddha image No. 1316 which mentions of Prāvārika viḥāra , seated Buddha figure No. 514, colossal

Bodhisattva No. 2798, a parasol No. 2799, inscription No. 2801 mentioning Khanda vihāra , railing pillars Nos. 517, 1501, 1508, fragment of door- jambs Nos. P 10 and P 11.

17. Salempur village- A good number of sculptures were found from Salempur well, just like the Pali Khera wells. The site of Salempur is situated in between Maholi and Pali Khera village. On closer examination of this village, I analyzed that this village was not a regular habitation site like the main village of Maholi. On the outskirts of Salempur village (towards the side of Maholi), there is an ancient pond and a Hindu temple. Outside the temple on the *kachcha* road I noticed structural remains of a Buddhist monastery of the Kushan period. The area of this site would be about 60 m x 80 m. The remains can be observed at the ground level or below it. The pond is definitely related with this site and in its chance diggings a number of Kushan brick alignments have been exposed. A stone stairs set of that period was also exposed. One of the wells at the eastern corner of this pond seems to be the famous Salempur well and it also dates back to Kushan period at the minimum. The Buddhist images from here now housed in Mathura Museum are: Bodhisattva Maitreya No. 746 and railing pillar No. 200.

18. Pali Khera- This is one of the famous sites of Mathura. The village is situated near the Sonkh road. The actual mound of the site was located outside the village and is one of the most disastrously dug out sites. The site can be identified near a 17th century village temple outside the road linking Pali Khera with the road to Sonkh. The monastic establishment was situated over the ancient mound of P.G.W. and Mauryan period as the pottery from the dug out fields at 2 m depth indicates. Four bell capitals of Buddhist pillars along with famous Bacchanalian image and some other Buddhist images were found at the site by Growse.⁹⁵ This whole area between Kankali, Chaubara, Maholi, Salempur, Pali Khera, Bhojpur Nagla and Naugaon was occupied by various monastic settlements but it was and is difficult to locate them because the level of Kushan period settlements has been same as the ground level. The important images from here now housed in Mathura Museum are: Broken Buddha and Bodhisattva images Nos. 664; 665; 667; 885; 907; 921; 992; 1211; 1217; 870; 877; 939; 1004 and fragment of railing pillars Nos. J 66; 663 and fragment carved with a sejant lion No. 718 , a pillar base No. P 12 and a lamp- stand No. P 13.

19. Mansa Tila – This mound is situated between Jai Gurudev Ashram and Pali Khera village. The site is an isolated mound of about 80 x 80 x 9 m dimensions. Potsherds belonging to Kushan and later period can be observed at the mound. A modern temple with the residence of a so called *sādhū* is located at the top of the mound. The mound is situated in the zone of important Buddhist sites. Besides the possibility of it itself being a stūpa mound, chances of monastic settlements at and near the mound are also there. Whether many objects found between the sites of Kankali, Maholi and Pali Khera villages are from this site or not, is not clear.

20. Nauganwa village- This village is situated to the right of the road to Sonkh. The village is situated over the remains of the ancient mound and is about 150 x 140 x 4 m in dimensions. It dates back to Mauryan period at the minimum and continues in the succeeding periods till medieval period. The actual site for Buddhist importance is situated outside the village near an ancient pond. The site is about 70 x 70 x 3 m in dimensions and dates back to Kushan period and continued in the successive periods. From here was found a seated Buddha pedestal (M.M. No. A 50), which mentions the presence of a Buddhist vihāra at the site. It should be the same site as explored by me. A Kubera image (M.M. No. C 7) was also found from this site.

21. Hakimpur- Hakimpur is a site situated between Nauganwa and Jansuti, about 8 km distant from Mathura. At the site I could not locate any ancient remains as this was just the place of a small Buddhist settlement and as the villagers have now turned to Arya Samaj sect, they have thrown away all the ancient sculptures lying there at village shrines. Railing cross-bar (M.M. No. L.30) was found from here.

22. Sonsa- Shahpur- Sonsa is a sizeable mound which is half occupied by the modern village. It lies between the road to Sonkh and Govardhan from Mathura about 12 km. from here. The site dates back to P.G.W. period at the minimum and continues in the succeeding periods till the medieval period. From here I found a Buddha head of Kushan period, indicating the presence of some Buddhist establishment at the site. Besides the name of the site Sonsa seems to be derived from some North-west region's word. The nearby site of Shahpur village, located on deposit mainly belonging to Kushan period is actually an important Buddhist establishment. Sonsa

village, an earlier settlement is the site of ancient village while Shahpur appears to be a monastic establishment outside the village. From Shahpur was found a railing pillar (M.M. No. 148). A Nāga image (M.M. No. 140) was also found from this site.

23. Govindpur – Sarai Azamabad- This site is situated just on the outskirts of Mathura, a little away from Mahavidya mound on the ancient road to Bajna. A vast area of these two localities was the spot of Buddhist establishments. A number of Buddhist sculptural finds were found from here. One head of the Buddha from this site (No. A. 70) is now housed in Mathura Museum. A senior employee at Mathura Museum, Mr. Moolchand told that he had observed a number of ancient images in the footsteps of an ancient pond there. Although this pond is now non-existent as such, after repeated visits to the site, I have no doubts about this claim. It was a very important Buddhist settlement, similar to Govindnagar site in nature.

24. Kota- This site was an important Buddhist settlement on the ancient highway linking Mathura with Gandhāra. Probably some clearance work was done at this site by the British. After the examination of the site, I can say that this was not a village establishment in the ancient times. Only monastic settlement was situated at the place and this was of about 100 x 70 x 1 m in dimension. The exact spot could be identified by me where some Kushan period bricks and pottery was observed. A coping stone fragment with ogee arches was also observed by me at the site. The sculptures from here now housed in Mathura Museum are: railing pillars Nos. J.56; J.57; J.58; J.59; J.60; J.61; J.62 and 116.

25. Kota Chharera- This site is situated just in front of Kota village on the ancient highway. The nature of this site was quite similar to Kota site but it was comparatively much smaller. No regular habitation deposit could be located at either of these sites. Only monastic settlements were situated here outside the metropolis of Mathura during Kushan period. The railing pillar found from here (No. 2574) is now housed at Mathura Museum.

26. Bajna- This site was also a monastic settlement of significance outside Mathura and here also no significant regular habitation deposit could be found. The site of monastic establishment was situated at the outskirts of the village and was excavated

in the first quarter of 20th century. Dimensions of this site are quite similar to the site of Kota. The sculptures found from here and now housed in Mathura Museum are as follows- Bodhisattva image Nos. 1366; fragment of Buddha pedestal No. 1405; torso of Buddha No. 1410; fragment of a Buddha image No. 1453; male head with Gandhāran features No. 1390; head of Buddha No. 1391 and fragments of railing pillars Nos. 1364; 1365; 1368; 1396; 1444; 1525 and 1448.

27. Gosna- This site is one of the most prominent mounds in the region of Braj which is still unoccupied and a part of which is under government protection. The nearby village of Gosna is situated on an archaeological deposit dating back to Kushan period and it was a definite extension of the site during Kushan period and is indicative of its increasing importance in that period. Besides it, the other nearby village of Shahpur might also be a spot of a Buddhist settlement as has been the case with most of Shahpur sites throughout Braj region. Focussing on the mound of Gosna Khera, it can be said with certainty that much more area comes under the purview of ancient mound but for some unknown reasons a large part of Mauryan and pre- Mauryan settlement has been left out of the fencing. The site was possibly a town site during Mauryan and pre- Mauryan periods. During the Śaka Kushan period the site was enriched with the establishment of some Buddhist establishment as it lies on one of the most prominent trade routes in the *trans*-Yamuna region. Still a part of the mound which is situated just in the rear of *devī* shrine looks like the spot of some peculiar association. Only excavations can prove it. The important findings from this site are: head of Buddha- M.M. No. 589; Maitreya statuette- M.M. No. 591 and fragment of a circular object probably a *dharmachakra*- M.M. No. 766. The first two belongs to Kushan period while the last one is of circa 1st century B.C.

28. Mahaban- Mahaban is an extensive mound of early medieval period. I could not find early pottery at this huge site but I consider it to be a P.G.W. period site based on my knowledge of the nature of the sites and various mounds in the region. Whether this extensive mound has provided Buddhist sculptures of Śaka- Kushan period or not, is not clear to me. But on the outskirts of Mahaban as one enters from the side of Gokul, there is a comparatively smaller mound just like the Gokul mound and to me it appears to be a site with some Buddhist connectivity. Similar is the case of the nearby

Sarai Ali Khan site. Important sculptures from the site of Mahaban now housed in Mathura Museum are: M.M. No. 36.2663 showing the worship of the Buddha's halo and M.M. No. 13.281 depicting important life events of the Buddha.

29. Sonkh- This is the famous site excavated by H. Hartel and his team of German scholars. Prior to his excavations one headless Buddha statue (M.M. No. 20.1602) mentioning a monastery by the name of Śaka or Svaka vihāra and a Bodhisattva head (M.M. No. 18.1534) were reported from this site. The site was a regular habitation site and worked as an important trading centre. The nature of the Buddhist settlement at this site could not be ascertained through excavations as Hartel and his team could not find a single object at this site belonging to Buddhist faith.

30. Yamuna bed and Rawal- A number of Buddhist and other sculptures have been found at various places on Yamuna river bed. Rawal is a village situated near Gokul and is traditionally considered as the birth place of the mother of Goddess of Braj – Rādhā. Here, near a Hindu temple situated outside the village, I found some potsherds of Kushan period lying on a plain surface. This site appears to be the spot of some Buddhist establishment. Two important Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions having Buddhist affiliation, M.M. No. 17.1210 and M.M. No. 17.1271 were found from this village of Rawal and in my opinion this site near the Hindu temple might be the find spot of these objects.

31. Narhauḷi village- This village is situated on the road to Bharatpur, just at the outskirts of Mathura city. Ancient deposit which might be quite earlier than Kushan period can be observed near the Western Railway track. Kushan period pottery is clearly identifiable at the site and it continued in the succeeding periods as well. From here some important Buddhist findings have been reported. The important findings from here at Mathura Museum are: railing pillar Nos. 1509 and 1595. Another significant finding from the site was the finding of a Bacchanalian sculpture like the famous Pali Khera and Maholi sculptures but exact location of it is not clear to me.

32. Barsana- Barsana, the place of Braj Goddess Rādhā was also an important Buddhist centre. The present day town is situated under the Aravali foothills and also on the hill surface. The lower part of Barsana village is actually situated on a thick

archaeological deposit, possibly dating back to the earliest times till now known in the region of Braj. During the Śaka Kushan period it was a flourishing centre of trade and few Buddhist settlements were located in the town. Railing pillar (M.M. No. 1273) and a fragmentary *torāṇa* architrave (M.M. No. 266) are some of the important Buddhist findings from this site.

33. Maghera- This village is situated about 12 km north of the city of Mathura. It lies in an important Buddhist zone near the ancient highway to Takṣaśilā. The village is situated over the deposit belonging to 2nd century B.C. onwards deposit. Possibility of an earlier archaeological deposit can not be declined. The important Buddhist findings from here now housed in the museum at Mathura are: coping stone of a railing Nos. 1539; 1542 and fragment of a coping stone carved with ogee arches No. 1541.

34. Chhatikara- This site lies as a junction of various important trade routes about 8 km north from Mathura on ancient highway. The site was not a habitation site at all but the possibility of some monastic establishment is clearly indicated by a railing fragment (M.M. No. 118) found from this place. It is quite obvious that this important junction served as a small halt in ancient times. Absence of archaeological deposit at the site is really quite interesting.

35. Ral and Bhadal- The site of Bhadar or Bhadal has been discussed earlier while identifying ancient site of Bhadrāśva. The site of Ral is also situated on an extensive mound slightly larger than Bhadar site and is about 2 km distant from it. To me, the name of the site Ral seems to have been derived from the word 'Rawal' or 'Rabar'. 'Rabar' is the name of the ancient pond situated in the village. This 'Rabar' word should have some connection with the people of North-west region as the site of Rawal on the banks of Yamuna has provided two Kharoṣṭhī inscriptions. The similar type of people can be associated with the site of Ral. The important findings from Ral in Mathura Museum are: fragment of a lintel decorated with row of five lion- heads, No. P 16, fragment of a door- jamb No. P. 17.

36. Kosi Khurd- The site of ancient place named Kuśasthalī is situated on the road to Bharatpur from Mathura about 14 km distant. Outside the village a religious spot known as Kusyah seems to the site from a where a Buddhist coping stone with ogee

arches and some important Buddhist scenes was found by the Great scholar V.S. Agrawala (M.M. No. 1280). This site dates back to P.G.W. period as a religious spot outside the Kosi village which is situated on an extensive mound. This is the site which has provided some early Kushan brāhmanical sculptures along with this Buddhist finding.

37. Sonoth- This important site is situated in front of Kosi Khurd about 2 km distant. Near this protected mound of Sonoth, from the temple at Nagla Jhinga the famous 3rd century B.C. sculpture of Yakṣī carved by a pupil of Kaṇika was found. From Sonoth village outside the limits of the protected mound a Buddhist railing pillar (M.M. No. 149) was found. This finding places the site of Sonoth dating back to P.G.W. period on the Buddhist map.

38. Farah- This site does not appear to be dating before Kushan period. The site lied on the way from Mathura to Agra on the ancient highway. From here a railing cross bar (M.M. No. 181) was found indicating the presence of some monastic settlement of the ancient trade route.

39. Manth- The site of Manth or Mat is world famous for the Kushan *devakula*. But this site of Tokri Tila is actually situated about 800 m outside the ancient habitation. From the site of ancient habitation a Buddhist railing pillar (M.M. No. 267) has been found which indicates the presence of some Buddhist establishment at the site. It was an important centre of Kushan administration, so this find also confirms the association of North- west region's population with Buddhism.

40. Kaman- This border town of Rajasthan was one of the most important centres of ancient trade and culture. From somewhere near the extensive site a Buddha pedestal containing an inscription mentioning a monastery by the name of Mihira vihāra was found.⁹⁶ This indicates that the ancient trade routes played a very important role in the spread of Buddhism. The site is situated to the west of Nandgaon-Barsana area, identified by me as the place of Urumuṇḍa hills.

41. Lakhnu- This ancient important site in district Hathras lies very near to the ancient trade route linking Hathras with Jalesar. Both are very important city sites of

ancient period. The actual habitation site is presently occupied by a small fortress and dates back to P.G.W. period and continues in the succeeding periods. The Buddhist establishments were situated outside this habitation site in the fields. On examination of the site it was observed that there were more than one Buddhist monasteries. All have been destroyed by the people of the area. A beautiful standing Bodhisattva image from here is now housed at Mathura Museum (No. A 63) and many other sculptures have been smuggled out to American museums.

42. Maho- It is a very extensive site in district Hathras lying on the ancient trade route linking Sasni (possibly derived from Indo Sassanians) and Jalesar. A number of Buddhist sculptures were found from here and most of them have been smuggled out to American museums.

43. Tumola- At this village, F.S. Growse had found a sculpture while digging the part of a canal. Cunningham, after observing the image had identified it to be a Buddhist image. So, this site lying on the ancient road linking Mathura with Hodal and Rohtak appears to have some links with Buddhism.

44. Mahuan/ Mahwan- This village lies on the ancient road linking Mathura with Agra about 18 km south of Mathura. A sculpture fragment from this site was identified as representing an event related with the Buddha by Cunningham.

Besides these sites there are many other sites in Braj region which would have provided Buddhist evidences. Example of such sites can be given as various spots in Mathura city itself like Gokarneshwar mound, Mainagarh mound, Shitala Ghati, Manoharpura Mohalla, Bairagpura Mohalla, Kans Qila, Gayatri Tila, Hathi Tila, Kans Khar, Deeg Gate, Bharatpur Gate etc. which have not been mentioned in detail in this chapter. In the Greater Braj region some important Buddhist sites are Palwal, Hathin, Ahirwar near Palwal, Mohmudpur in Mewat district and some other places in the old district of Gurgaon. Amin, Sugh and Thanesar in district Kurukshetra and Sanghol near Ludhiana are some of the famous places from where Buddhist sculptures of Mathura school have been found in good number.⁹⁷

BUDDHIST ART AT MATHURA-

The earliest literary references about the existence of the Buddha image-

The *Divyāvadāna* states that on the request of King Bimbisāra the Buddha agreed to allow his shadow to fall upon a cloth in order to facilitate the painting of his figure on it. He also desired to fill the outline with colour and write some religious sentences. Here we find a detailed description of preparation of a banner painting.⁹⁸ Another text, namely, *Korala Bimba Varṇava* records that a gilded sandalwood image of the Master was made with his permission. Probably placed in a monastery, it aimed at consoling those visitors who came from a far distance and felt disappointed when the Buddha happened to be out.⁹⁹

The Sri Lankan tradition, as recorded in *Mahāvamsā*, reveals that a golden statue of the Buddha in the attitude of Enlightenment was kept in the relic chamber of Ravanavati Dagoba of King Duthagamani in the middle of the second century B.C. Besides this image, which was painted in suitable colours and adorned with precious stones, a few statues of other deities were also kept in the relic chamber.¹⁰⁰

A Chinese record mentions that during the war with Hioun-nu, Hou Kiuping (123- 121 B.C.), the Chinese General first saw a golden statue of the Buddha, to which the King of Hieou-to (Kartchou?) paid obeisance, and which accurately correspond with the reports of Chang-Kian honouring the worship of Feou-to (Buddha) in Thian (India). This statue was taken and brought to the emperor in 121 B.C., and was the origin of the statues of the Buddha, that were afterwards in use.¹⁰¹

All the above references indicate that the image of the Buddha was first conceptualized in mediums other than stone. It is quite difficult to explain why we do not find the Buddha images prior to circa 50 A.D. in stone while the stone was used in abundance in Buddhist edifices. It seems that though the idea to represent the religious art in stone was taken from the North- west, it was not considered a right norm to represent the enlightened one in that medium. Except for minor deities like Yakṣas and Nāgas, there are only few sculptures of that period representing an

important deity. Exceptions are two Śivaliṅga images, one from Gudimallam and the other from Bhita, and a Bhāgavata image from Malhar, M.P. The idea of representing the minor worldly deities in the medium of stone was probably brought in India by the traders who first came to notice stone images in western world. That's why the earliest religious images in India in stone medium are of Yakṣas like Maṇibhadra, Kubera and other *laukika devatās* related with business activities. It would have been a quite slow process of accepting the images of deities in stone. Although, the stories of the life of the Buddha as well as his previous lives were represented in stone, the Master himself was never represented in anthropomorphic form prior to Kṣatrapa period until and unless the society had become ready to accept the Buddha in human form carved out in stone, possibly.

The earliest symbolic representations of the Buddha in the art of Mathura-

The earliest Buddhist symbolic representations in India art are found at Bharhut and Sanchi and it is observed in the Buddhist art of Mathura slightly later in spite of Mathura being almost as contemporary and important as the previous two centers. Before the emergence of the Buddha in human form in plastic art his presence was conveyed through one or more symbols. The use of these symbols continued in some of the reliefs along with the Buddha in human form. The main symbols which have found place in the art of Mathura or other Buddhist sites in India are:

1. Māyādevī in her dreams with an elephant, indicative of the birth of the Buddha.
2. Māyādevī under a Śāla tree, indicative of the birth of the Buddha.
3. Riderless horse (the great Renunciation episode).
4. Turban (the great Renunciation episode), (M.M. No. 56.4239, Fig. 4.10).
5. *Bodhi* tree, representative of the great Enlightenment (M.M. No. 10.130, 36.2663 and possibly M.M. No. 1516, Fig. 4.11)¹⁰²
6. *Bodhi* shrine (the Enlightenment), (M.M. No. M. 3, Fig. 4.12).
7. Deer Park (the first Sermon).
8. The wheel (*dharmachakrapravartana*), (M.M. No. M. 3 and 14-15.438, Fig. 4.13).
9. *Gandhakuṭī* (Buddha's dwelling hut), (M.M. No. 11.154 reverse)¹⁰³.

10. Stairs and steps (Descent from Tuṣita heaven), (M.M. Nos. 77.26 and 39.2868, Fig. 4.14).
11. Bowl (Buddha's begging bowl), (National Museum No. I. 1).
12. *Triratna* (motif indicative of three jewels: the Buddha, *dharma* and *sangha*), (I.M. Calcutta No. A. 25019).¹⁰⁴
13. Footprints (the feet of the Buddha).
14. Stūpa (the great demise), (M.M. Nos. 95.18 (Fig. 4.15), M. 3 and 10.130, Fig. 4.16).
15. Lion (Buddha's clan), (Lucknow Museum No. J. 268).¹⁰⁵
16. Various *Jātaka* stories like *Vessāntara*, *Sibi* etc.

A Buddhist tympanum from Mathura (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston No. 1926.241) dating back to about the Kṣatrapa period, depicts *chaitya vrkṣa*, Buddha's bowl kept at a throne, *chaitya* temple and *dharmachakra* as symbolic representations for the Buddha.¹⁰⁶

The earliest Buddhist images (considered to be pre- Kanishka)-

There are some images from Mathura which do not follow the features of Kushan Buddha images in totality. Scholars like Lohuizen de Leeuw and R.C. Sharma (generally following de Leeuw) have ascribed them to pre- Kanishka phase dating back to Śaka- Kṣatrapa period at Mathura.

1. A medallion on the rail post in Lucknow Museum (No. J. 295 or 339), represents a princely person riding on a horse. It might be related with the episode of Siddhārtha's *mahābhiniṣkramaṇa* as has been suggested by Dr. Sharma.¹⁰⁷ This must date to Śunga period based on the style of the representation of the subject and the double knotted turban. Another similar plaque (M.M. No. L. 2, Fig. 4.17) quite similar in style, represents a horse rider.

2. A headless princely statue in Lucknow Museum (No. B. 12b), first published by Smith as a Vardhamāna image,¹⁰⁸ has been identified as a Bodhisattva image by Dr. Sharma.¹⁰⁹ Though, the image must date to about pre- Christian era period as it is

based on Yakṣa iconographic features, in my opinion there is no certain evidence by which it can be adjudged a Bodhisattva image. At the most, it can be identified as a princely statue (possibly a deity) which might belong to any of the three religious affiliations present at the site of Kankali Tila.

3. There is a stele found from Kankali Tila (Lucknow Museum No. J. 531), carved with a scene of discourse between the Buddha and a king (in all probability king Śuddhodana). Smith has wrongly identified it as a scene depicting discourse between Vardhamāna and a king.¹¹⁰ De Leeuw has identified it as a sculpture depicting the episode of the Buddha coming to meet his father Śuddhodana.¹¹¹ The early features of the Buddha are: the corpulent body inspired by the Yakṣa prototypes; the bump of head or the bump caused by the coiled hair, is shown just above the forehead; the halo is free of scalloped border; over his left shoulder is a thin, closely folded shawl, thrown over the back and front and hanging down in a loop over his left wrist. The way in which the king is wearing a *dhotī* and the shawl is quite similar to the Buddha image but the king is shown wearing a large turban and some ear ornaments. Three figures to the back of the king are of his attendants. One of them is holding a parasol, one is in *anjali mudrā* and only head of the third figure is visible.

4. *Toraṇa* jamb (M.M. No. H. 12, Fig. 4.18) found from village Isapur depicts one of the earliest representations of the Buddha, quite similar to the style of representation of Jaina *āyāgapaṭṭas*. V.S. Agrawala writes about its importance, “firstly it makes us familiar with the earliest form of seat originally meant for the symbols but here supporting the Buddha himself, and secondly for the plastic form of the Buddha’s face which very much resembles the old *bhikṣu* faces. The graded pyramid placed inverted on a square *āsana*, represents the seat for the Buddha which once reminds of the *sapta-bhūmika āsana* of the *dhamma- chakra* (M.M. No. 438, Fig. 4.13)”.¹¹² This relief depicts the scene of the four *lokapālas* presenting *bhikṣā-pātra* to the Buddha, just after his Enlightenment. The peculiar pedestal is supported by a pair of addorsed lions. According to Agrawala, this relief should date back to the beginning of 1st century A.D. and this date was supported by de Leeuw.¹¹³

5. Fragment of a seated Bodhisattva image of which only the left leg, right foot and left hand together with the left leg of an attendant standing on his left side and carved in the round remain (M.M. No. A. 66, Fig. 4.19). This image was obtained by Pt. Radha Krishna from Galteshwar Mahadev temple situated near Katra mounds. The importance of this image lies in the inscription inscribed over its pedestal which mentions it to have been carved during the reign of a Kṣatrapa ruler (name of the ruler missing). V.S. Agrawala opined that the characters used in the inscription are of an early type similar to those used in the early Kṣatrapa period.¹¹⁴ He believed it to be the only image out of hundred of Buddhist images which referred to a Kṣatrapa.

6. *Toraṇa* architrave (M.M. No. M. 3, Fig. 4.20a- d) carved on both faces, depicts an early example of the Buddha image on one of its faces.¹¹⁵ On the obverse, the architrave depicts the worship of *chaitya vrkṣa* which has been enshrined inside a *chaityaśālā*. Six people who are in a process of worshipping the *chaitya vrkṣa* have been represented on either side of this shrine. On either side of this main theme, two persons are shown worshipping a stūpa and a *dharmachakra* kept on a base formed by four lions. The shape and the design of the three tiered ancient stūpa is really remarkable and quite amazing in a sense. On the reverse the scene of the worship of the Buddha in the Indraśālā cave has been carved, in the centre the Buddha has been shown inside the cave. To the left of the Buddha, Indra is shown in adoration pose and is followed by two other persons, possibly females and then their riding elephants which also number three. The first of the elephants might be Airāvata- the royal mount of Indra. To the right of the Buddha stands Pañchaśikha, the lord of *Gandharvas*, playing the harp. He is followed by six nymphs; some of them have their hands joined in adoration while the others carry a garland and a bunch of flowers as offerings. On either side of the architrave, a vase with foliages and a *mīna yugala* have been carved. At the corners on both sides, a fish tailed sea monster has been carved. It is to be noticed that in this architrave, the body of the Buddha has been depicted clumsy and his left hand has been shown resting in the middle of his left thigh while his right hand has been raised in *abhaya*. He is shown wearing the *ekāṇśika saṅghātī*. The treatment of the *uṣṇīṣa* of hair is quite different from the later images. The overall treatment of the body is archaic in comparison to the Kushan Buddha images like the Katra image (M.M. No. A. 1).

7. Part of a doorjamb with two full compartments and just a part of the third compartment (M.M. No. 76.121). In the uppermost compartment a Bodhisattva figure (possibly Siddhārtha) has been shown seated on a pedestal. The figure is shown with a halo having scalloped border. The treatment of the hair (probably *jaṭājūṭa* tied in a top knot) is quite peculiar and might be indicative of the concept of *uṣṇīṣa* or *kaparda* of later Buddha images which in my view don't show the Buddha with a bald head but rather a thin cloth is wrapped over his head, probably to depict him in a presentable manner. Similar type of idea about the hair-do of the Buddha can be obtained from the *torāṇa* jamb mentioned above (M.M. No. H. 12). Dr. Sharma had dated this doorjamb (No. 76.121) to the first half of 1st century A.D., but later on considered it to be as late as belonging to Huvishka's reign.¹¹⁶

8. Fragment of a railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 24, Fig. 4.21), on one side depicts the legs of a female with heavy anklets while the reverse consists of two panels. The upper panel contains an ornamental building with high roof, presumably a towered temple. The very interesting fact about this structure, besides the building, is the horse shoe shaped arched entrance as is observed in the early caves. In the lower panel, partly defaced, is seated under the *bodhi* tree a Buddha figure with right hand raised in profile, much above the shoulder level and his left hand has been kept at his left knee. The hair of the deity has been arranged in a top knot like an ascetic. The leaves of the *bodhi* tree are quite enlarged and the shape of the scalloped halo has become slightly triangular. V.S. Agrawala has compared this figure of the Buddha with the figures of the monks on the Śunga lintel (M.M. No. M. 1).¹¹⁷ In my opinion, this representation should be one of the earliest Buddha representations dating back to 1st half of 1st century A.D.

9. A *torāṇa* architrave, probably from Jamalpur site, earlier housed at Mathura Museum but now housed at National Museum (No. I. 1, Fig. 4.22 a) depicts on the obverse, the Buddha's turban in the upper arch shaped band, while the middle band depicts a seated Bodhisattva figure in *abhaya mudrā*. The figure in the third lunate arch (lowermost) is missing. The reverse side (Fig. 4.22 b) depicts in the centre of the upper arch, the Buddha's begging bowl. The middle arch in its centre depicts a seated Buddha image in the manner of the Kāśyapa Buddha. The remarkable point about this

seated Buddha is his head-dress which is very similar to ascetic's hair style as observed in some of the above mentioned images. The third lower arch in its centre depicts prince Siddhārtha seated in meditation. The architrave belongs to the series of early architraves which belong to the transitional phase from aniconic to iconic phase. This architrave should belong to the 1st half of 1st century A.D.

10. The Buddha image in Lahore Museum, Pakistan, found from somewhere in Gandhāra or nearby region is a certain product from Mathura as it is made of mottled red sandstone.¹¹⁸ The 120 cm high image represents a seated Mathura Buddha, belonging to the earliest phase of iconic phase of Buddhist iconography. The Buddha is seated probably in *dhyāna mudrā* and has a very corpulent body. The hair of the Buddha has been arranged in the style of Kāra Buddha but the top bump is quite small. The overall features of the image are quite peculiar and de Leeuw's views about the dating appear to be right. Because of this image and many other early Buddha images of Mathura, found in Gandhāra and nearby region, forced de Leeuw to rightly postulate the priority of Mathura school in carving the first image of the Buddha.¹¹⁹ After considering all those facts and the early images mentioned above, there can be no scope for considering the priority of Gandhāra school over Mathura. This issue should be put to rest now and other related researches should be done on these schools.

On the basis of above images, these general features can be drawn about the earliest Buddha images:

1. Almost all the images (except Lucknow Museum No. 531) are in seated position and have crude, rustic and archaic modelling.
2. The iconography of these figures is inspired from the iconography of Yakṣa images as well as the iconography of kings as observed in Bharhut reliefs. The view that the Mathura Buddha images have been derived from the iconography of the Yakṣas was for the first time propounded by Coomarswamy¹²⁰ and was later on supported by V.S. Agrawala.¹²¹ This impact is more visible on the standing Bodhisattva and the Buddha images while the seated images are more inspired by the king's as well as ascetic-mendicant's iconography as suggested by de Leeuw.¹²²

3. The breasts are shown prominent but are masculine in nature. The right hand generally appears in *abhaya mudrā* but the angle of the palm is quite different in many of the images.
4. The halo when present is generally plain but examples of halo with scalloped border also come to light.
5. The *uṣṇīṣa* is not always present and when present is slightly different from the later images as has been discussed earlier.
6. The left hand is not rested on the left knee holding some part of drapery as was the norm with the later images.
7. The lower ear is not as elongated as in the later images.
8. The dress which the Buddha is shown wearing is *ekāṅśika saṅghātī*, running over his left shoulder only but the transparent dress is not much visible in these images.
9. The seat is generally shown as a tier over tier representation like an altar, sometimes rested over lions.
10. It appears that these images did not follow a hard and fast rule of iconography and it was at the sculptor's discretion to incorporate certain features.

Buddha images during the early Kushan period (Kanishka- early Huvishka phase)-

Here we are talking about the period that starts after the ascension of Kanishka at the royal throne. Some of the images described above might have belonged to the early phase of Kushan period in the pre- Kanishka era but it is only after the ascension of Kanishka at the royal throne that we start getting dated images. That's the reason for considering the Kushan period in relation to Buddhist imagery, actually starting with Kanishka's accession in about 78 A.D. possibly. The images of this period show certain early characteristics and on that basis the period should include the reigns of Kanishka, Vāsishka and major part of the reign of Huvishka. There are two types of images found during Kushan period: one is standing Buddha/ Bodhisattva image and the other is a seated Buddha/ Bodhisattva image. Important seated Buddha images from Mathura art are: Katra Bodhisattva/ Buddha (M.M. No. A. 1, Fig. 4.23); Anyor Buddha (M.M. No. A. 2, Fig. 4.24); headless Buddha from Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.32); Kankali Tila relief depicting Siddhārtha in meditation (Lucknow Museum No. J 621); a headless image in Lucknow Museum (No. B. 1); a stele representing the

Buddha (Indian Museum Calcutta No. 25524); the lower part of the Buddha image (Lucknow Museum No. B. 18); the pedestal of a Buddha image (Lucknow Museum No. 66.48); lower part of a Buddha image found from Vrindavan (M.M. No. 74.20); fragment from a pedestal (M.M. No. 50.3533); lower part of a Bodhisattva image (M.M. No. 10.121); headless and armless Bodhisattva image from Sonkh (M.M. No. 20.1602); headless image of the Buddha from Triveni site (M.M. No. 78.34); headless Bodhisattva image (Indian Museum Calcutta No. A 25019); Buddha head (Lucknow Museum No. J. 226); upper part of a stele from Lakhnu in State Museum of Ethnology, Munich (MU 205); Buddha in Boston Museum (No. 25.437); Buddha in the Cleveland Museum of Art (No. 70.63); Buddha image in Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth of Kanishka year 4; Buddha *kapardin* in a private collection at Dusseldorf of year 31; Ahichchhatra Buddha (National Museum No. L55. 25).¹²³

Some notable features of the seated Buddha images are as follows:

1. The Buddha is shown seated in usual *padmāsana*. The majority of the sculptures are on stele in high relief like the Katra Bodhisattva/ Buddha but independent images in round were also made like the Anyor Buddha, the first image mentioning the deity as the Buddha.
2. Three lions are shown supporting the altar shaped throne of the Buddha. Two of them are at the corners in profile facing in outward directions while the central one is facing in face. In some sculptures, generally slightly later ones, the central lion is replaced by a *dharmachakra* and in between the corner lions and it, some devotees, probably the donors are represented.
3. The right hand is shown in *abhaya mudrā* and is slightly in profile (slant) probably derived from *chaurī* bearing Yakṣa iconography. In the early images it goes slightly above the shoulders. The space between the right hand and the back of the body towards the shoulder is filled with cushioned pattern.
4. The right palm and both the soles are marked with *mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇas* like *chakra*, *śrīvatsa*, *svastika* and *triratna* symbols.
5. The left hand is kept at the left knee either clenched fist or open. The clenched fist, symbolic of the great power, is related with the *chakravartin lakṣaṇas*.
6. The navel is cut deep while the breasts are shown prominent, though masculine in nature.

7. The halo is shown with scalloped border and in some of the later images an incised circle precedes the scalloped border like the Ahichchhatra Buddha.
8. The background of the stele is represented with the foliage of a tree, clearly identifiable with *aśvattha* tree, under which the Buddha had got the Enlightenment.
9. He wears an almost transparent lower garment (a *dhotī*), folds of which are visible in the middle of the leg between the knee and ankle.
10. He always wears *ekānśika saṅghātī* in the earlier images which always runs through his left shoulder leaving the right shoulder undraped. The thick pleats of the *saṅghātī* are always carved between the left shoulder and the knee which follow an order of arrangement. Thick pleats of the *saṅghātī* or the frill also fall between the legs and are shown running under his feet and follow a symmetric arrangement.
11. His lower ears are not elongated. A *ūrṇā* is generally shown between his eye brows which is also a *mahāpuruṣa lakṣaṇa*. The almond shaped eyes are wide open unlike the later half closed ones.
12. The head, though considered shaven by many scholars, actually appears to be tied with a cloth tightly, top hair being arranged as a snail shell (*kaparda*).
13. Two acolytes are generally shown standing on either side of the Buddha on lower pedestals than that of the Buddha and carry fly whisks. In the later sculptures, the attendant on the right side of the Buddha is represented in *udichya veśa* carrying a *vajra* while the attendant to the left of the Buddha is represented carrying a bunch of lotus buds. In the early examples, these might be Indra and Brahmā respectively or their prototypes. The later images like the Ahichchhatra Buddha possibly depict Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi and Padmapāṇi as attendants to the Buddha.
14. Two celestial beings carrying garlands in their hands are shown flying at the top of the stele.
15. In the overall treatment of the Buddha figure, a sense of stiffness and a physical realism can be observed. The first step towards the metaphysical transition in the early Kushan art is the effect of a serene smile on the lips of the Buddha.
16. The beautifully carved Katra Bodhisattva Buddha image clearly indicates the popularity of seated Buddha images prior to Kanishka era. Such perfection can only be achieved by a sculptor when such examples were available in front of his eyes. On the other hand the standing Bodhisattva images though more related with Yakṣa figures are rather crude and not so pleasing to the eyes.

The other variety of early Kushan Buddhist image is of standing Buddha and Bodhisattvas. The earliest dated Kushan sculpture is the standing bodhisattva image found from Kaushambi of the 2nd year of Kanishka which is a certain product of Mathura art (Allahabad Museum No. 69). The other early Bodhisattva image of Kanishka's third regnal year was found from Sarnath (Sarnath Museum No. B. 1, Fig. 4.25) and is an import to that place from Mathura. Along with this image a parasol which protected the image, was also found. It actually presents a rich variety of sacred motifs numbering twelve carved at its roof. These twelve motifs are: *triratna*; *matsyamithuna*; *śrīvatsa*; *maṅgalakalaśa*; another symbol like *śrīvatsa*; *sapākṣaśankha*; another honeysuckle; *svastika*; *phalapātra*; *mālāpātra* and honey suckle motif repeated thrice. Another band in this umbrella represents some winged animals (*ihāmṛga*) including lion, elephant, buffalo, goose, crocodile, leogryph, goat and camel etc.¹²⁴ A Buddha or Bodhisattva image on a railing pillar (M.M. No. J 18, Fig. 4.26) should be one of the earliest standing images of such type. The lappet of the drapery held in his left hand fall downwards up to his feet level and it can be observed in the above mentioned images while in the Maholi Bodhisattva image (slightly later in date, M.M. No. 39.2798, Fig. 4.27), probably it does not fall below the knees. The other early standing Buddha images are: almost life size Buddha image from Govindnagar (M.M. No. 71.105); a rail post from Jamalpur representing standing *kapardin* Buddha (Lucknow Museum No. B. 73); a rail post now housed in Musee Guimet, Paris carved with a standing Buddha figure; a small Bodhisattva figure in Mathura Museum (No. 14.485) and a Sarnath headless Bodhisattva imported from Braj region (Sarnath Museum No. B (a) 2).¹²⁵ There are some other headless Bodhisattva images probably datable to early phase, now housed at Mathura Museum (Nos. A. 41; 14-15.447; 10.93; A. 62; 80.1) and National Museum (Nos. 11; 60.1759; Maitreya images Nos. A 40 and 85.350).

Some important features of standing Buddha/ Bodhisattva images are as follows:

1. Majority of the images are free standing carved in round. Most of them are standing in *samapādashānaka* pose and are life size or larger than life size.
2. In between the two legs, generally a lion in frontal position or a bunch of flowers (or *chūḍāmah?*) has been depicted.

3. The body is shown stiff and erect.
4. The head is generally shown with a top knot in the shape of a snail shell, quite like the seated images.
5. The right hand is shown in *abhaya mudrā*, some part of the palm rises above the shoulder level. The hand is shown obliquely just like the seated images.
6. The left hand is kept at the waist with clenched fist.
7. The drapery is *ekāṅśika sanghātī* covering the left shoulder only. The *sanghātī* covers the left hand completely which is different from the seated images where it only covers the part up to left elbow.
8. The lower garment is a *dhotī* which is tied at the waist with the help of a band. The double knots of this waist band are shown to the right side of his waist, from which two fillets hang down on the right thigh. This lower garment covers the portion up to knees only.
9. The hem of the lower garment rests on his left arm.
10. The navel is marked deep and the breasts are shown prominent (masculine).
11. The halo, if intact, is shown rising from behind the body covering most of the part of the back. It is shown with a scalloped border.
12. The body of the Bodhisattva or the Buddha is slightly transparent in nature.
13. The body of Bodhisattva like Maitreya or probably in some cases Siddhārtha is shown wearing a number of ornaments like necklace, ear-rings etc. The pose is also sometimes different from the *samapādashānaka*.

The Second Kushan phase {post- Huvishka (from mid or late of Huvishka's reign)}-

This comparatively longer phase can be supposed to start from about the mid of the reign of Huvishka and might be considered to end by the end of Vāsudeva I reign, from about A.D. 120 to 176. The most signifying factor for defining this phase is the influence of Gandhāra art on the Mathura images. The characteristics of this group of Buddhas, indicating an influence from North-West India, are chiefly the following:¹²⁶ the garment, showing broad pleating, and the fact that the entire body is covered by this garment, so that both shoulders (and with the seated images also the feet) are hidden, and finally the attitude of the raised hand, which has gathered up part of the garment. Besides these features, other important features are: the folds of the

drapery are somehow shown in symmetric pattern; the right hand in *abhaya* does not rise above the shoulder in most of the images except two or three images, which might be considered as the earliest images with Gandhāran impact; the raised height of both the hands is almost in the same plane; the *abhaya* pose of the right hand becomes more frontal (*parivṛtta*) in contrast to the oblique position observed in the images of the early phase and the upper garment forms a semi circular or ‘V’ shaped pattern round the neck. De Leeuw has suggested that these folds of drapery are certainly due to the influence from Gandhāra, but the idea of covering both the shoulders might have originated in Mathura itself.¹²⁷

The earliest sculptures with Gandhāran impact are: a seated headless Buddha image (Sharma 1984, Fig. 105); Lucknow Museum No. B. 14; Mathura Museum No. A. 4 (Fig. 4.28) and the Buddha statuette in the Mathura Museum (No. 15.514) which is unique for its drapery.¹²⁸ In these sculptures the Gandhāran impact is limited to the *ubhayānśika sanghātī* and the lappet is gathered up at the left hand.¹²⁹ The Mathura artist followed the characteristics of his school as follows: the garment is not as thick as is observed in later images or in Gandhāra images; the breasts are shown prominent in spite of the drapery; the right hand in *abhaya mudrā* is not facing towards the onlooker, rather it is slightly oblique (*vyāvṛtta*), though, lesser than the early Kushan *kapardina* images; the right hand rises slightly above the shoulder; the head when intact, follows the features of the previous heads; two acolytes when intact and the pedestal with three lion figures, is in imitation of the previous images.

In the next phase of the increasing Gandhāran impact (the Anyor idiom), the Mathura Buddha figure shows following features:¹³⁰

- (i) The garment is coarse with thick pleats and imparts a rib effect.
- (ii) Despite thickness and heaviness of the folds the transparent effect is retained to some extent.
- (iii) A triangular shape is formed on both the shoulders by the wearing of the robe.
- (iv) Both hands are raised up in almost parallel position, the right hand being in the protection position while the left hand supports the drapery.
- (v) The right palm in *abhaya* becomes frontal (*parivṛtta*).
- (vi) The *kapardin* fashion of hair is replaced by the rows of notches fashion and semi circular scratches.

- (vii) The *dhyāna* posture appears for the first time.
- (viii) The lions on the pedestal are usually frontal or inward. These are now shown standing and indicate a departure from the hitherto seated depiction.
- (ix) The acolytes flanking the Buddha are generally absent.

The important sculptures of this group are: Buddha image of the year 51 (A.D. 129) from Anyor (M.M. No. A. 65); Buddha statuette in Boston Museum;¹³¹ a fragmentary image in Lucknow Museum of the 51st year of the reign of Huvishka (No. B. 3); the Buddha head within a niche in Mathura Museum (No. I. 20); the headless Buddha image in Indian Museum, Calcutta¹³²

In the next phase, the Gandhāra impact reached its culmination. The important sculptures of this group are: Mathura Museum Nos. 76.19 (Fig. 4.29); 76.17 (Fig. 4.30); 14.403 and Lucknow Museum Nos. B. 5; B. 208; B. 23; B. 182. The images of this stage are marked with following new additions¹³³ -

- (i) The drapery becomes thick and stiffer but the folds are broader.
- (ii) The rib effect is transformed into the shutter effect.
- (iii) Besides the *abhaya mudrā*, the other postures of the Buddha like *dhyāna*, *bhūmisparśa* and *dharmachakrapravartana* are also met with.
- (iv) The feet are only covered half unlike the previous phase images where the drapery covered the whole feet.
- (v) The hair now becomes curly with a topknot and sometimes it is wavy.
- (vi) The narrative reliefs related with the Buddha's life cycle become more popular.

During the late Kushan phase, possibly during the reign of Vāsudeva, the main distinguishing features are as follows¹³⁴ -

- (i) The shutter type stiff drapery is 'fan' shaped to the right side.
- (ii) The usual 'V' shape space below the neck is roundish.
- (iii) A cushion of *kuśa* grass is seen on the pedestal.

The important images of this phase are: Shitlaghati image (M.M. No. A. 21); Shravasti Buddha image in Lucknow Museum (No. 66.183) and a headless figure of the Buddha in *dharmachakrapravartana mudrā* (M.M. No. 61.5304). Besides these, the lower half of a Buddha image (M.M. No. 76.1, Fig. 4.31) of rare variety belonging to Vāsudeva's reign has been put in this phase by Sharma.¹³⁵

The next phase is marked by the decline of Gandhāran impact (possibly post-Vāsudeva) in which the indigenous traits of Mathura school again revive. In the later sculptures these indigenous traits definitely supersede the Gandhāran traits. The revival of the *kapardin* form of the Buddha with *uṣṇīṣa* and bare feet in *padmāsana* is an important landmark.¹³⁶ The thick drapery of earlier sculptures which was in imitation of Gandhāra images, give way to a light and less stiff drapery which suits the hot climate of Mathura region. According to Sharma, the important sculptures belonging to this phase are: headless image of the Buddha (M.M. No. 42.2919); a headless statuette from Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.33); an important standing image of the Buddha in the possession of A.S.I. (Sharma 1984, Fig. 122); the torso of a standing Buddha image (M.M. No. 76.21); the headless Buddha image (M.M. No. 76.18) and a figure of Bodhisattva in meditation (M.M. No. 46.3231).¹³⁷

Kushan- Gupta transition idiom-

This phase might be considered to date from the beginning of 3rd century and lasting until early Gupta period (1st quarter of 4th century). This phase is marked with increasing influence of the indigenous school. The important features of these images are:

1. The drapery gives the impression of lightness and transparency. The body behind the drapery appears to be in a semi naked state.
2. Majority of the images are in standing posture and a feeling of slight movement is imparted in the image by bending the right knee a bit.
3. The halo behind the head is quite large and is decorated in such a manner that the first circle around the head shows radiating rays; then in the second circle the rays are marked as spear heads; in the third circular band, some floral motif is carved which is unclear up to some extent; the fourth circle shows a divine garland decorated with lotus flowers at regular intervals; then after a beaded string the penultimate circle retains the earlier scalloped border.
4. The right hand is shown in *abhaya mudrā* in which the hand does not rise above the height of the arm pit, while the left hand holds the lappets of the drapery below the waist level.

5. The folds of the drapery are arranged in a symmetrical manner with a round thick fold running around the neck.
6. The practice of marking the chakra symbol over the palms is not totally discarded. Another early feature of depicting a bunch of lotus flowers is also observed in these sculptures.
7. The body gives the impression of short stature of the deity.
8. The outermost thick fold of drapery from the right arm to left palm is arranged in such a manner that it takes the shape of 'U' letter. The lappets in the left hand are shown running down with four semi circular zigzag folds.
9. The earlobes are elongated, *ūrṇā* symbol is generally absent, the eyes are shown with *nāsāgradṛṣṭi* representing a mood of contemplation and a feeling of serenity and calmness is observable in the overall treatment of the face.
10. The hair is arranged as circular notches with a top bump also marked with circular notches.
11. The cow web (*jālāṅgulīya*) pattern is retained in the depiction of the fingers.

Some important sculptures belonging to this phase are: ¹³⁸ a headless statue of the Buddha in Mathura Museum (No. 13.361); a headless seated image of Dīpāṅkara Buddha in Lucknow Museum (No. B. 22); a dated statuette of the Buddha in the Lucknow Museum (No. B 10); a statue from the site of Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.23); a seated Buddha image from Bodhgaya (Indian Museum Calcutta, Sharma 1984, Fig. 136); the colossal headless statue in Lucknow Museum (No. 0.71); a head of Buddha (Lucknow Museum No. B. 28); a Buddha figure in Allahabad Museum (No. 936).

The Gupta pinnacle-

This phase is the most remarkable and the best as far as the sculptural art quality in India is concerned. This phase in terms of Buddhist art can be considered to be ranging between the second half of 4th century and the first half of sixth century. In this period, the number of Buddha images is not as high as during the Kushan and late Kushan period, but whatever images now survive confirm the point that it was the period when Mathura art reached its zenith. Most of the characteristics of the last

mentioned phase continued during this phase but with more refinement. The additional features of Gupta period are:

1. The focus of the sculptor is now to impart a feeling of utmost serenity and calmness which the onlooker should feel while looking at the sculpture. The Buddha is made the perfect example of the most compassionate being and the enlightened one.
2. The length of the figure is increased and the body becomes supple and thinner.
3. A kind of youthfulness can be observed in the body.
4. A perfect balance of spirituality and physical charm is attained by the sculptor. The aureole becomes more decorated and enhances the divine glow on the face of the Buddha.
5. The eyes look like the *kamalanayana* (lotus bud shaped and half open) with *nāsāgradṛṣṭi* and a feeling of meditation.
6. The beautiful marking of lines on the neck makes it *kambugrīva* (conch like neck).¹³⁹

The important sculptures belonging to the Gupta period are:

1. The Jamalpur Buddha in standing pose (M.M. No. A 5, Fig. 4.32, height 7' 2.5'') which is arguably the best specimen of Mathura art and one of the best ever images produced in the realm of Indian art. It is the representative of all the features described above. The right hand which is broken was raised in the attitude of protection. V.S. Agrawala¹⁴⁰ has described the splendid aureole in these words "the halo originally possessed a coloured scheme which is only partly preserved. The central medallion of the halo in the form of a full blown sixteen petalled lotus had the smaller sepals coloured. The first band contains a garland held above and below by two addorsed alligator heads, a *makarīkā* ornament which was also coloured. The next band consisted of small rosettes painted in the centre. The third band was divided into six parts each separated by a lotus rosette and containing a conventionalized peacock or Garuḍa figure holding a grape vine in its beak. Only the crest feathers of Garuḍa and the vine creeper were painted. The last band was occupied by a garland interwoven with small rosettes which were painted. This was encircled by a beaded border and a segmented narrow fringe both of which do not show any traces of paint. Although the colour has now become faint it supplies evidence to show that the elaborate halo in the images of the Gupta period was beautified by being tastefully painted."

2. Another similar figure like No. A 5, probably from Jamalpur, under the custody of National Museum, is now housed at President House in N. Delhi (Sharma 1984, Fig. 141).
3. Another image of almost same quality exists in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.¹⁴¹
4. Govindnagar Buddha image (M.M. No. 76.25, Fig. 4.33).
5. Kasia *mahāparinirvāṇa* image, produced by Dinna of Mathura.¹⁴²
6. Torso of the Buddha from Jamalpur in National Museum (No. A.13).

The other important Gupta period Buddhist images are: Govindnagar Buddha image (M.M. No. 76.27); the Buddha torso from Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.28); the Buddha head from Govindnagar (M.M. No. 76.246); another torso of the Buddha from Govindnagar under the possession of the A.S.I. (Sharma 1984, Fig. 147); another Buddha torso (M.M. No. 76.30); a terracotta head of the Buddha (No. 76.240); a small Buddha torso (Lucknow Museum No. B. 6); a standing Buddha statue from Govindnagar housed in Metropolitan Museum, New York; the Buddha head from Chamunda Tila (M.M. No. 49.3510).¹⁴³

There are many other Gupta period Buddhist images from Mathura, now housed at the local museum.¹⁴⁴

***Jātakas* represented in the art of Mathura-**

A number of *Jātaka* stories have been represented in the art of Mathura. Many of these have been noticed as well as identified. There remain some other *Jātaka* stories which either have not been identified or not noticed. The list of some of *Jātaka* scenes which have already been noticed is as follows:

1. *Mahābodhi Jātaka* or the episode of Bāvāri represented on a railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 2).¹⁴⁵
2. *Viśvāntara Jātaka* represented on a railing pillar from Bhuteshwar (M.M. No. J. 4).¹⁴⁶
3. *R̥ṣyaśṛṅga* cycle of legends represented on a fragmentary railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 7),¹⁴⁷ also on a Govindnagar pillar (M.M. No. 76.40).
4. *Kachchhapa Jātaka* represented on a fragmentary railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 36).¹⁴⁸
5. *Ulūka Jātaka* represented on a fragmentary railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 41).¹⁴⁹

6. *Sumsumāra* and *Vānara Jātaka* represented on a fragmentary railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 42).¹⁵⁰
7. *Mahāsutasoma Jātaka* scene represented on the fragment of a railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 52).¹⁵¹
8. *Padakusalamāṇava Jātaka* represented on the fragment of a railing pilaster (M.M. No. 191).¹⁵²
9. *Vānarinda Jātaka* represented on the fragment of a railing pillar (M.M. No. 195).¹⁵³
10. *Dukhopādāna Jātaka* represented on a railing pillar (M.M. No. 15.586).¹⁵⁴
11. *Vyāghrī Jātaka* represented on the coping stone of a railing (M.M. No. 2280) and also on a railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 5).¹⁵⁵
12. *Romaka* and *Pāravāta Jātaka* represented on an architectural piece (M.M. No. I. 4).
13. *Dīpāṅkara Jātaka* represented on the architectural fragments (M.M. No. H 10 and Lucknow Museum No. B. 22).
14. An unidentified *Jātaka* scene represented on a railing pillar (M.M. No. J. 52).¹⁵⁶
14. An unidentified *Jātaka* scene represented on a railing pillar in Mathura Museum which was returned from Lucknow Museum.¹⁵⁷
15. *Sibi Jātaka* represented on a frieze in Indian Museum, Kolkata (No. M.15-c).¹⁵⁸
16. *Valāhassa Jātaka* in represented on an architectural frieze in Indian Museum, Kolkata (No. M.15-b).¹⁵⁹
17. *Mahilāmukha Jātaka* represented on a frieze in Indian Museum, Kolkata.¹⁶⁰

New Buddhist Sculptural Findings-

1. A head of the Buddha (Fig. 4.34) -

This head of the Buddha was found outside the village Sonsa in district Mathura. This head is comparable to the Katra Bodhisattva head. The hair is arranged in a top knot with snail shell coils of the covering cloth and is a typical example of *kapardin* type. The lower ear-lobes are not elongated as are observed in later examples. The style of cloth covering the hair at the forehead needs to be looked at. It is not as round as can be observed in other images. The linings of the eye sockets have been slightly stretched. On stylistic grounds, this image might be put somewhere in the last quarter of 1st century A.D.

2. A miniature broken Buddha image (Fig. 4.35)-

This image was found from the unearthed deposit of the site mentioned as Vishwa Lakshmi Nagar- Triveni site, Mathura. The Buddha sits in *padmāsana* with his left hand kept at his left knee with clenched fist. He is shown wearing *ekānśika sanghātī*, folds of which are visible between his left shoulder and elbow. The right hand which would have been in *abhaya mudrā* and the head are missing. This miniature image should belong to the last quarter of 1st century A.D. The importance of this image lies in fixing the nature of various such sites as have been considered to be Buddhist monastic sites by me.

3. A headless bust of the Buddha (Fig. 4.36)-

This headless bust of the Buddha was found at a shrine in village Maholi of district Mathura. The Buddha is shown in standing position and wears *ubhayānśika sanghātī*, the folds of the drapery are not thick as observed in Gandhāra images or Mathura images with deep Gandhāra impact. The folds of the drapery indicate a kind of regularity i.e. the folds run in the same fashion on either side (from the centre of the body). With his left hand, he holds the lappets of the drapery while the right hand is shown in *abhaya mudrā* with auspicious symbols like *chakra* and *triratna* marked at the palms and it is raised up to the shoulder height. The fingers are shown smaller in size and behind the hand a cushion shaped support provided to the hand is visible. The halo and the head of the image are missing. The image has been carved on a thin slab and on stylistic grounds is comparable to the standing Buddha image in Mathura Museum (M.M. No. A. 4). This image might be dated to the second quarter of 2nd century A.D.

4. A possible head of a Buddha image (Fig. 4.37)-

This head of a deity was found at a possible monastic site outside the village Sihana in district Mathura. The head has been cut vertically down from the topknot part. The head should belong to the last quarter of 1st century A.D. The head has all the features needs to be incorporated in a Buddha head except for the central ridge in between the hair. This ridge slightly makes the identification doubtful as I have not observed such a ridge in any of the Buddha images. But it might be a way of depicting the hair of the Buddha for the artist or this might have been the reason to abandon the

head unfinished. Some chiseling marks are still observable at the cheeks and the forehead suggesting that this head might have been left unfinished. If it is not a head of the Buddha, then, it must belong to some Buddhist deity like Hārītī.

5. Possibly a head of the Buddha (Fig. 4.38)-

This broken head was observed at a shrine in village Junhedi in district Mathura. The head is cut from the top in the same manner as the above mentioned head. The head would have been part of a life size image either seated or standing. The monk's head is quite clear in the image but whether it had a top knot or not, is not clear. There is a strong possibility that it would have been the part of a Buddha image.

6. A mutilated Buddha stele (Fig. 4.39)-

This much mutilated stele carved with a seated Buddha figure was observed at a shrine in Bhadar, district Mathura. The Buddha figure has a central top knot like a bump and is without any snail shell curls as observed in the above mentioned Buddha head from Sonsa. A large halo with scalloped border is visible in the figure. This stele should belong to the second half of the 1st century A.D.

7. Mutilated railing pillar (Fig. 4.40)-

This railing pillar covered with vermillion up to some extent was found at a shrine near Chamuda temple, Mathura. The pillar is quite similar to other railing pillars found from the sites of Kota, Bajna, Jamalpur etc. In the upper panel two human figures, possibly a male and a female are shown standing. In the lower panel, which is much broken, again there is a possibility of two human figures. Not much is identifiable in the railing but there is possibility that it might belong to 1st century A.D.

8. Relief with a *Jātaka* scene (?), (Fig. 4.41)-

This relief was observed at village Devsaras near Govardhan in district Mathura. In the fragmentary relief, in the centre a bird (possibly a parrot) has been depicted and to the right of the bird, a male with short and stout body has been depicted, his head is missing now. To the left in the relief, a person is shown holding some object with a long handle. If the bird can be recognized as an eagle, then, it might be a representation of the famous *Sibi Jātaka*.

9. Bodhisattva head from Bhadar (Fig. 4.42)-

This beautiful head with highly skilled treatment of the subtle facial and spiritual features was found at Bhadar village in district Mathura. The *mukūṭa* with a central rosette crest, which is typical of Kushan period head-dress, confirms its date to Kushan period. The deity is wearing round ear-rings with two circular rings. Although, the face is much mutilated, there is a certain feeling of some spiritual meaning attached with this head. It is not sure that it is a Bodhisattva head but there is a possibility of it. Some other Buddhist images have already been found from that village.

10. Bodhisattva head from Cheeta Khera (?), (Fig. 4.43)-

This head of some deity was found at village site Cheeta Khera. The head is quite similar to the above mentioned head and thus might belong to a similar deity, possibly a Bodhisattva. The central rosette crested Kushan *mukūṭa* can be observed in this head as well but this head is in match with the above mentioned head from Bhadar.

¹ Padmanabh S. Jaini, "Political and Cultural Data in References to Mathura in the Buddhist Literature," *Mathura: The Cultural Heritage*, ed. Doris M. Srinivasan, Delhi 1989, p. 214.

² *Majjhimanikāya*, transl. Rahul Sankrityāna, Bhartiya Bauddha Shiksha Parishad, Sravasti 1933, p. 343.

³ *Majjhimanikāya*, transl. Rahul Sankrityāna, pp. 37, 294, 332, 451.

⁴ *Majjhimanikāya*, transl. Rahul Sankrityāna, p. 412.

⁵ *Dīpavamśa*, III, ed. Oldenburg, Pali Text Society, London 1879, p. 21.

⁶ *Jātaka*, Vol. IV, Pali Text Society, London 1895- 1907, pp. 79 ff.

⁷ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, Vol. III, part 1, ed. N. Dutta and S. Sharma, Srinagar 1947, reprint 1984, p.3.

⁸ *Lalita- Vistara*, transl. by Meicho- Fukyu- Kai, Tokyo 1977, pp. 21-22.

⁹ *The Questions of King Milinda*, part II, ed. T.W. Rhys Davids, *The Sacred Books of East*, p. 211.

¹⁰ F.S. Growse, *Mathura- A District Memoir*, Delhi 1883, p. 105.

¹¹ *Anguttaranikāya*, II, ed. E.M. Hare, Pali Text Society, London 1885- 1900, p. 57.

¹² *Anguttaranikāya*, IV, P.T.S., p. 198.

¹³ *Anguttaranikāya*, I, P.T.S., p. 67.

¹⁴ *Anguttaranikāya*, I, transl. Anand Kaushalayana, Mahabodhi Sabha, Calcutta 1958, p. 69.

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- ¹⁵ *Anguttaranikāya*, I, transl. Anand Kaushalayana, p. 68.
- ¹⁶ I. B. Horner, *The Book of the Discipline*, I, London 1938, p. 11.
- ¹⁷ *Anguttaranikāya*, II, ed. Bhikṣu Jagdish Kashyap, Varanasi 1960, p. 494.
- ¹⁸ Padmanabh S. Jaini, *op. cit.*, p. 217.
- ¹⁹ *Divyāvadāna*, transl. P.L. Vaidya, Patna 1959, p. 217.
- ²⁰ *Divyāvadāna*, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
- ²¹ *Divyāvadāna*, *op. cit.*, p. 245.
- ²² *Divyāvadāna*, *op. cit.*, p. 226.
- ²³ *Divyāvadāna*, *op. cit.*, p. 228.
- ²⁴ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, part 1, Introduction, p. 7.
- ²⁵ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 3.
- ²⁶ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, Introduction, p. 7.
- ²⁷ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- ²⁸ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, p.17.
- ²⁹ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- ³⁰ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, Vol. III, part 2, p.35.
- ³¹ *Gilgit Manuscripts*, *op. cit.*, p. 36.
- ³² *Jātaka*, Vol. IV, Pali Text Society, London 1895- 1907, pp. 79 ff.
- ³³ *Buddha Charita*, Book XVII, 4, transl. E.B. Cowell, Oxford 1894, p. 191.
- ³⁴ Tārānātha, *History of Buddhism in India*, transl. Lama Chimpa and Alka Chattopadyaya, ed. D. B. Chattopadyaya, Shimla 1970, p. 34.
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- ³⁶ Samuel Beal, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- ³⁷ Samuel Beal, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-60.
- ³⁸ Even until now this practice of not eating onions and garlic was popular in the inhabitants of Mathura (especially Brāhmaṇas and Vaiśyas) as they consider it anti- religious.
- ³⁹ Samuel Beal, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
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- ⁴² Samuel Beal, *Chinese Accounts of India (New Edition)*, Calcutta 1958.
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- ⁴⁵ Dipak Kumar Barua, *An Analytical Study of Four Nikayas*, Calcutta 2003, p. 306.
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- ⁵² Prabhu Dayal Mittal, *op. cit.*, p. 63.
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- ⁵⁶ Etienne Lamotte, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
- ⁵⁷ Etienne Lamotte, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
- ⁵⁸ Etienne Lamotte, *op. cit.*, p. 363.
- ⁵⁹ Tārānātha, *op. cit.*, p. 85, footnote.
- ⁶⁰ Personal communication with Dr. B.R. Mani, Joint Director General, A.S.I. He is also a native of Varanasi.
- ⁶¹ This information was provided to me by Dr. B.R. Mani who is considered an authority on the archaeology of Delhi and the surrounding area.
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- ⁶³ Vinay Kumar Gupta, "Jaina Tradition and Mathura," *Sumati Jñāna*, ed. Hampa Nagrajaiah, Mujaffar Nagar 2007, p. 296.
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- ⁶⁶ Etienne Lamotte, *op. cit.*, p. 67.
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- ¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 203.
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Chapter 5

Mathura and Jainism

Mathura enjoyed the rare distinction of being a prominent place in the history of all three major sects of ancient India. In the Jaina literary texts, Mathura has got mentioned at many instances. One important fact in the history of Jaina literary texts is that, for the most part, the Jaina canon available to us today follows the texts of the Mathura council headed by Ārya Skandila in the fourth quarter of fourth century A.D.¹ Mathura was the seat of the last *arhat kevalin* Jambusvāmī. Among all Jaina texts "*Vividhatīrthakalpa*" composed during 1307- 40 A.D. by Jinaprabhasūri (a scholar during the reign of Muhammad-bin-Tughlaq) provides us a detailed account of Mathura in its chapter "*Mathurāpurī Kalpa*."² The important references, which can be derived from it, are: Mathura was sacred because of Seventh and Twenty-third Tīrthankaras- Supārśvanātha and Pārśvanātha respectively. There was a stūpa built by some divine interference, of Supārśvanātha at a place Bhūtaramaṇa Udyāna,³ the presiding deity of this place was *Naravāhanā* Kuberādevī.⁴ The iconographic features of Supārśva resembled with the Buddha and Śeṣaśāyī Viṣṇu as well as with Śiva up to some extent and that's why a conflict arose among various communities about the ownership of the stūpa which was finally decided in favour of Supārśvanātha. This stūpa was made of gold and studded with jewels, with images of *devas* surrounding it. Equipped with a *toraṇa* and a *dhvaja*, it was adorned with three *mekhalās* (railed-ways), each flanked by images and topped by a triple *chhatra*. The central image of the stūpa was that of Supārśvanātha. Twenty- third Tīrthankara Pārśvanātha had arrived at the place in his *kaivalya* stage and after that stūpa became a place of worship of Pārśvanātha too, in the form of a sculpture. Śrī Bappībhāṭṭi Sūri Mahārāja in 826 V.S. placed here an image of Mahāvīra for

worshipping.⁵ Mathura has been described as a place where the next Tīrthankara in line-Śrī Kṛṣṇa Vāsudeva would be born.

Besides, here were five *sthalas* - Arkasthala, Vīrasthala, Padmasthala, Kuśasthala, Mahāsthala and twelve *vanas* – Lohajanghavana,⁶ Madhuvana,⁷ Bilvavana,⁸ Tālavana,⁹ Kumudavana,¹⁰ Vṛndāvana, Bhāṇḍīravana,¹¹ Khādiravana,¹² Kāmikavana,¹³ Kolavana,¹⁴ Bahulavana,¹⁵ Mahāvana.¹⁶ Here were five *laukika tīrthas* – Viśrāntika, Asikunḍa, Vaikuṇṭha, Kālinjar and Chakratīrtha.¹⁷

The author also adds that the Śrāmaṇa Jinabhadraśani obtained the deteriorated manuscript of *Mahānīśithasūtra* and repaired the damaged folios, and that the God Śakra went to Bhūtagrha,¹⁸ near Mathura, for the elucidation of the *nigoda* by the Ārya Rakṣitasūri whose successors Vatsapuṣyamitra, Gṛtapuṣyamitra and Durbalikapuṣyamitra also visited Mathura.

The description of *Vividhatīrthakalpa* as well as the excavated material from Kankali Tila clearly proves the *Devanirmita Thūpe* to be identical with the one mentioned in Jaina literature on more than one occasion.¹⁹ This stūpa was first dedicated to Supārśvanātha and later on the due importance was provided to Pārśvanātha and Mahāvīra at the site. It also appears that there existed various *udyānas* in ancient times where a number of religious shrines were situated. This is corroborated by the nature of “Bhūtaramaṇa Udyāna” which can be identified with the present day Bhuteshwar-Kankali area of Mathura. Undoubtedly, there existed Jaina as well as Buddhist stūpas in the area as various archaeological findings like sculptures, railing-pillars etc. indicate. The Brāhmanical association is still reflected in the continuing tradition at Bhuteshwar Mahadev temple, one of the most revered Śiva temple at south-west corner of ancient Mathura.²⁰

Jaina mythology and it's association with history and Mathura-

What is most important in considering the historicity and imaginary nature of Tīrthankaras is the fact that prior to Pārśvanātha (circa 8th century B.C.) the proto-historic period is not well known to us. Although, there might be some historic facts in Jaina mythology prior to Pārśvanātha, it is difficult to prove. But there are certain evidences, which indicate towards the co-existence of some of the characters mentioned in Jaina and Brāhmaṇical texts. They might have drawn inspiration from a common source. The first Tīrthankara Ṛṣabhanātha's similarities with Śiva are well known. Vedic Vātarasana (nude) sage Ṛṣabha is sometimes identified with Ṛṣabha by some scholars. One very important mention of the characters of Ṛṣabha and Mahāpārśva is found in *Yuddhakāṇḍa* of *Rāmāyaṇa*,²¹ although, their Jaina association is not clear. But more important is the fact that 21st Tīrthankara Nimi onwards all the three Tīrthankaras have some mythological association with Brāhmaṇism and some simple references indicating their historical character.

Nimi as a Mahātmā Ikṣvākuvaṃsī ruler has been mentioned in *Uttarakāṇḍa* of Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa*.²² That is in essence related with the theme of Kṣatriyas trying to equilibrate the power of Brāhmaṇas (here sage Vaśiṣṭha). The character of Jina Tīrthankara revolutionising the practice of existing faith is slightly akin to it. Hence, *Rāmāyaṇa*'s Nimi might have some connection with Nimi of the Jainas.

Legend of Ariṣṭanemi and the identification of Ariṣṭapura-

The next Jina, Ariṣṭaneminātha is much more important in such mythological associations. In Jaina tradition, Nemi is termed as the cousin of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and these three are shown in sculptural representation from 1st century A.D. onwards. It means, by that time this association was very well popular in Jaina tradition. Ariṣṭanemi shares the same dynastic traits as Kṛṣṇa i.e. he was born to the parents; one of them belonging to Sūrya *vamśa* and the other to Chandra *vamśa*. In the life saga of Ariṣṭanemi, he is also said to have migrated from Saurapura to Gujrat, like the other members of Yādava clan. This often-made reference of such migration certainly indicates to some historical event resulting in such a migration much before the *Mahājanapada* period. The

birthplace of Ariṣṭanemi is said to be Soriya Nagar or Saurapura.²³ M.A. Dhaky has written that Nemi, supposed in Jaina tradition to have been born in Saurapura in Kuśāvarta adjacent to Śūrasena province where Mathura is located, naturally got associated with Dvārāvātī-Raivataka setting.²⁴ It is generally identified with Mathura but U.P. Shah has tried to prove that Saurapura was different from Mathura. I would like to put some new thoughts about the identification of Saurapura. In the local Braj tradition a small town Aring in between Mathura and Govardhan is, said to be the place of the great demon Ariṣṭāsura who was killed near Radhakund by child Kṛṣṇa. To me this Ariṣṭāsura seems to be a later deviation of Ariṣṭanemi who had deviated from the orthodox sect. The town of Aring has an extensive mound of about 460 x 350 x 16 m dimensions under government protection and from here in addition to well known P.G.W. sherds; some O.C.P. and late Harappan pottery findings have also been reported. So this takes back the antiquity of the site prior to 15th century B.C. A number of sculptural remains ranging between Kushan period and medieval times have been found from here and in addition to the Hindu pantheon, one or two Jaina sculptures (e.g. M.M. No. 1529) were also found from here which have now been kept at Mathura Museum. I am of the opinion that by the name of Saura *vamśa* or a great warrior in Yadu clan, the whole region around Mathura was known as Saurasena *Janapada* and Saurapura was the place where either he was born or from where he ruled for some time. After the popularity of Ariṣṭanemi or his legend later on, this Saurapura started to be known as Ariṣṭapura which changed into Anhilapura and now the present day form Aring. After the famous migration of Yadu clan from here, a new city in Gujarat also started to be called as Ariṣṭapura or Anhilwada, a local change of dialect at Gujarat. Besides a popular Jaina place Mangraul in Gujrat also indicates towards this migration, because in Braj region most of the places are known in this way like Maṅgalapur changing to Mangraul. A number of such names in Braj like Mangrauli, Tarauli, Ganthauli, Gangrauli, Kagaraul, Harnaui etc. are examples of this. Another possibility is that there were more than two cities by the name of Saurapura as the Jainas now consider Bateshwar to be the ancient Saurapura. Besides, Soron on the bank of river Ganga near Kasganj also seems to be the ancient Saurapura in all possibility. There are two or more than two ancient sites in Braj region by the name of

Parkham, Sonkh, Untasani, Unchagaon, Khayara etc. But it is for sure that Ariṣṭapura was the same as Aring and was possibly somehow related with Ariṣṭanemi.

Pānini in his *Aṣṭādhyāyī* has mentioned a city by the name of Ariṣṭapura.²⁵ Great scholar Vasudeva Saran Agrawala tried to identify it with a city by this name in the Buddhist literature, which lied in the Sibi *Janapada*.²⁶ I think that Ariṣṭapura might be identified with the one in Śūrasena *Janapada* as mentioned above; which played an important role in trade activities and was somehow associated with Indian mythology.

Relation of Pārśvanātha with Braj-

The twenty-third Tīrthankara Pārśvanātha is also associated with Mathura by the fact that his iconography matches a lot with Balarāma, an incarnation of Śeṣa, the legends and iconography of whom originated from Mathura. Besides Nāga cult was well associated with Mathura and Pārśvanātha is also associated with it in the form of Nāga Dharanendra. The stūpa at Kankali was earlier dedicated to Supārśvanātha and later on to Pārśvanātha as the Jaina literature suggests. Other references locate at Mathura a park by the name of Bhāṇḍīravadeṣia (Bhāṇḍīravatamsaka) visited by Pārśvanātha.²⁷ Here was the shrine of the Yakṣa Sudamśana, to which people made pilgrimage. This reference indicates towards two important points- one is the thriving cult of local deities and second is the location and the ancient route, which Pārśvanātha followed. This Yakṣa has been identified as Yakṣa Sudarśana. I would not hesitate reading it Sudamśana which mean well hooded one or a great serpent. Whatever might have been the perfect reading, there is no denying that at Mathura, especially in this area near Bhāṇḍīra Udyāna, there were ancient local cults of Yakṣa and Nāga in vogue, which later on played an important role in the formation and propagation of Indian religions. I have identified this Bhāṇḍīra vana or udyāna with the site of the same name, popular in Braj tradition. It is located about 25 km north of Mathura along river Yamuna, near Manth (Mat). This Bhandir vana with its village name Chhanhri is regarded as the place of their origin by a number of north Indian Brāhmaṇas (Bhardwaj, Tiwari etc.). This site lies on one of the ancient trade routes between Mathura and Sravasti (Sahet-Mahet). Before entering ancient Kol country

(Aligarh district) it passed through Mathura, Vrindavan (or via Isapur, Gosna, Raya), Barnauli ki Dhari, Manth, Bhandirvan, Bhadravan, Tentigaon, Ogaha, Surir, Mirpur, Naujheel etc., most of which are pre-Mauryan sites. The antiquity of Bhandirvan and Manth sites date back to Kushan times at least. The nearby Bhadravan site along Yamuna dates back to P.G.W. culture period (10th century B.C.). At Bhandirvan I observed few sculptural remains of a 9th – 10th century temple, which seems to be of Vaiṣṇava cult but their Jaina link (Śvetāmbara) can not be outrightly rejected. When considering about Bhāṇḍīra Udyāna, we should also keep in mind the fact that it served as a garden for rest and enjoyment on the ancient highway and the settlement near it should be at a distance of few hundred metres from it as in the case of Bhadravan and Manth sites.

The last twenty-fourth Tīrthankara Mahāvīra is also said to have arrived at Mathura during the reign of king Śrīdāmana.²⁸ He is also said to have been born at Mathura in his previous birth.

A Brief Description of the Jaina Art at Mathura-

Mathura was the most important Jaina centre in India during the period ranging from 2nd century B.C. to 3rd century A.D. Epigraphic evidences suggests that during this period, the following monuments existed at Mathura²⁹:

- i. Palace gateway by Uttaradāsika (Lucknow Museum No. J.536).
- ii. Gateway by Balahastinī (Lucknow Museum No. J.532).
- iii. Palace of Dāmaghoṣā (Lucknow Museum No. J.557a).
- iv. Sanctuary, hall, cistern and a Jaina temple built by the courtesan Vasu (M.M. No. Q.2).
- v. Shrines of the *arhats* (M.M. No. 17.1262).
- vi. Stūpa at Kankali Tila termed as *deva-nirmita* due to its hoary antiquity (Lucknow Museum No. J.20), which continued to exist at least up to sam. 1036 that is 979 A.D. (Lucknow Museum No. J.236).

Joshi has done a remarkable study of Jaina Icons from Mathura. In this process of his study, he has classified the art objects in the following categories³⁰:

- A. Stone symbols including 20 Āyāgapaṭṭas and 5 Śilāpaṭṭas.
- B. Figures of seated Tīrthankaras 93 in number (36 dated and inscribed, 38 undated and 19 uninscribed).
- C. Figures of standing Tīrthankaras 26 in number (8 dated, 9 undated and 9 uninscribed).
- D. Fourfold or *Sarvatobhadrikā* figures 28 in number.
- E. Male divinities 17 representations.
- F. Female divinities 8 representations.
- G. Depiction of events or stories of Jinas 3 in number.
- H. Detached heads of Tīrthankara figures 58 in number.

Like the Buddhist religious order, in Jainism too, worship of symbols was quite popular in the earliest phase of Jaina art carved in stone. In Jaina art, these symbols were generally not used to represent a Jaina Tīrthankara but were a part of ancient Indian tradition. Three important symbols which they worshipped (other than *maṅgalalakṣaṇas*) are: stūpa, chetiya stambha and Āyāgapaṭṭas. Among these, the Āyāgapaṭṭas seems to be more popular which contained a set of *maṅgala chinhas* (except two which represented stūpa). These *paṭṭas* are either square or slightly rectangular in shape. In some of these Āyāgapaṭṭas in later stages, in the centre a seated figure of a Jina was represented (e.g. National Museum No. J.249; Fig. 5.1). These Jinas are shown in *dhyāna mudrā*. In one example (Lucknow Museum No. J.253), the Jina is identifiable as Pārśvanātha because of seven hooded snake canopy. Āyāgapaṭṭas and Śilāpaṭṭas are carved on one side only, exceptions are found only in the case of reused stones (e.g. Lucknow Museum No. J.252 and M.M. No. Q.3). In the border frame of the slab there appear motifs like wine creepers (*drākṣālatā*), sacred symbols, winged animals (*ihāmrgas*) and dancing figures. The *maṅgala chinhas* found in the inner field of these Āyāgapaṭṭas are: *padma*, *dharmachakra*, *svastika*, *śrīvatsa*, *triratna*, *matsyayugala*, *vaijayanī*, *maṅgalakalaśa*, *bhadrāsana*, *ratnapātra*, *devagrha*, *nandipada*, *nandyāvarta* etc.

Tīrthankara Figures-

Pre-Kushan³¹ -

The earliest representation of a Tīrthankara seated in meditation is seen on a railing pillar (earlier a lintel of 2nd century B.C., Lucknow Museum No. J.354 together with J.609). Originally the lintel depicted the scene of *dīkṣākalyāṇaka* of Ṛṣabhanātha. One of the episodes depicted in it is the dance-scene of *Apsarā Nīlāñjanā*. In another frame, two Jinas in *dhyānamudrā* have been shown. The following features of these figures are noteworthy:

- i. Cross legging is very loose.
- ii. Jinas don't have *śrīvatsa* mark on their chest.
- iii. Head with plain skull devoid of any carving.
- iv. Each Jina has only one adorant carrying a flywhisk and standing almost on the same seat.
- v. The Jina sits on simple rectangular platform plain on all sides.
- vi. There is no nimbus.

In the next stage of the development, most of these features continue. These figures are observed carved on the Āyāgapaṭṭas belonging to the period of about 50 B.C. – 50 A.D. The seat is slightly changed in its look and generally decorated. *Śrīvatsa* mark is also observed in some of the images, though generally absent. The cross legging slightly tightens.

Kushan-

The Kushan Jaina figures of Mathura ranges between samvat 5 and 95 (83 – 173 A.D.). The Jinas adorned with *śrīvatsa* mark are either seated in *dhyāna mudrā* or standing in *kāyotsarga mudrā*. The seated image easily outnumber the standing images as 96 images are in seated posture while only 26 are in standing position.³² With these images out of 8 *Pratihāryas* only 6 *Pratihāryas* have been depicted. These are: *simhāsana*, *prabhāmaṇḍala*, *chaitya vrkṣa*, *chāmaradhara* attendant, flying *mālādhara*s and *chhatra*.³³ Among these only *simhāsana*, *prabhāmaṇḍala* and *chaitya vrkṣa* are regular. All the *aṣṭa- Pratihāryas* were depicted only after the end of Gupta period.³⁴

In the seated Jina images shown in *dhyāna mudrā*, *chāmaradhara* attendants have generally not been depicted by the side of the Jina. In some examples, the figures of the donors or Jaina preachers have been shown in stead of attendants bearing flywhisk. The hair of the Jinās have been arranged either in curls or tied towards back; in some images the Jinās are shown bald. In the middle of the throne of the Jinās, a *dharmachakra* is depicted (either on a high pedestal or a dwarf figure) surrounded on the both sides by the male and female monks either with folded hands or carrying a flower bunch, *śrāvaka-śrāvikās* and children. The feet, palms and the finger tips of the Jinās have been marked with the *maṅgala chinhas* like the *triratna*, *dharmachakra*, *svastika* and *śrīvatsa* etc. All the Jina figures are nude but in some images, the small monk figures, though nude, are shown carrying some kind of drapery. It is indicative of the presence of both the sects-Śvetāmbara and Digambara at Mathura during the 1st- 2nd century A.D.

Among these Jina sculptures only Rṣabhanātha and Pārśvanātha are identifiable on the basis of the falling hair locks on the shoulders and the seven hooded snake canopy over the head respectively. The majority of the Kushan Jina sculptures belong to these two. On the basis of the subsidiary figures of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, a number of Jina sculptures have been identified as Ariṣṭaneminātha. On the basis of inscriptions on the pedestals of some images, the names of these Jinās have been identified: Sambhavanātha (Lucknow Museum No. J.19), Munisuvratanātha (Lucknow Museum No. J.20), Ariṣṭaneminātha (Lucknow Museum No. J.8), Vardhamāna-Mahāvīra (Lucknow Museum No. J.2 and six others).³⁵ Hence in the art of Mathura, images of above mentioned six Jinās were carved with certainty while the images of many other Jinās are quite probable but for lack of *lakṣaṇas* and inscriptions.

Besides these a number of Kushan *Pratimāsarvatobhadra/ Chaumukhī* images (e.g. M.M. No. B.67, Fig. 5.2 a & b) have been found from Mathura showing four different Jinās facing the four different directions. Jaina Sarasvatī image of 132 A.D. from Kankali Tila (Lucknow Museum No. J.24) holding a book in her left hand and an *akṣamālā* in her right hand, is also a very significant find from Mathura. A number of

Naigameṣa/ Naigameśa and Naigameṣī images have also been found from Mathura which are related with Jainism. During the Gupta period, the earlier features of Jaina iconography continued only with the changes in the style of modeling the body and the features. The *Chaumukhī* images were not carved during the Gupta period and only a solitary example of Gupta period is known from Mathura (M.M. No. B.68). The cult of Naigameṣa and Naigameṣī also lost its popularity during the Gupta period.

New Jaina Findings from the Braj Region-

During my explorations in the whole region I found some new sites belonging to Jaina religion. One of these is already mentioned site of Aring from where one sculpture belongs to this faith (M.M. No. 1529).

Let us first have a look at the various places in and around Mathura where some kind of Jaina remains have been found earlier. The first and foremost is the famous Kankali Tila at the periphery of ancient Mathura. Hundreds of Jaina remains have been unearthed from there through various excavations. Other sites in Mathura city are Chaubia Para, Shitala Ghati, Gujar Ghati and some other unidentified areas in ancient Mathura city. Besides on the periphery of ancient city some sites like Chaurasi mound, Balbhardra Kund, Katra Keshavdev, Potra Kund, Saraswati Kund, Gokarneshwar temple, Peepalwala Kuan, Collectorate area and a place between Kankali and Chaubara mounds- all in and around Kankali Tila have provided one or more Jaina art and architectural remains. Some other places outside Mathura city but very close to it like Isapur along Yamuna, Pali- Khera, Salempur have also provided some Jaina evidences. In the district some other areas which have already provided some Jaina sculptural remains are Chaumuhan, Bandi-Anandi, Seeh village, Gosna, Bajna, Kosikalan, Aring. Besides in Agra district places like Rajkhera, Bateshwar, Tundla, Sakalpur, Kagaraul, Jagner, Agra, Fatehpur Sikri etc. are known for their Jaina findings. It must be kept in mind that except Mathura city and the sites very close to it like Salempur, Pali Khera, Isapur and also Chaumuha as an exceptional case (belonging to Kushan and Gupta periods) most of these findings belong to medieval period. As far as sites of Mathura city are concerned, all are

lofty archaeological mounds on which the present day population resides. The sites which are close to Kankali Tila are all famous for Kushan art and archaeological evidences but are almost non-existent now-a-days. Similar is the case with the sites of Isapur, Pali-Khera and Salempur all of which are now non-existent because of human activities. Chaumuhan and Bandi-Anandpur are two ancient mounds on which the respective villages are situated. One very important point about all these sites is that none of them is limited only to Jaina religion i.e. remains of Brāhmaṇical as well as Buddhist religion have also been found from these sites.

At Chaumuhan, a place about 18 km distant from Mathura on the National Highway No. 2 going towards Delhi was found a *chaumukhī*, after which the place was started to be called as Chaumuha. This was actually a Jaina image which was mistaken for a four headed Brahmā image. F.S. Growse has mentioned that it was in reality the circular pedestal of a Jaina statue or column, with a lion at each corner and a nude female figure at each of the four intervening spaces: the upper pattern being roughly carved with the Buddhist rail pattern.³⁶ During my exploration I found that the site of Chaumuhan is a fairly sized mound of early historic period over which the modern village is situated. The actual *chaumukhī* for which it was known as Chaumuhan, was stolen from the local Brahmā temple by the smugglers some 30 years back. However, I could find a very important clue of the ancient image in the form of a lion pedestal (Fig. 5.3) on which the main image would have been kept. On one side, two lions are shown sitting back to back. Over them two human riders, one male and one female are shown. The female rider is holding the reins of a lion while the male rider might be holding some very important religious object. On the other side the two lions are possibly winged without any rider. In the centre of the square *pīthikā* there is a hole to put the tenon of the main image, here in this case *Pratimāsarvatobhadra* possibly. These features are not clear in this Chaumuhan pedestal but have been noticed from a similar pedestal kept at National Museum, N. Delhi (N.M. No. 67.617, Fig. 5.4) which has been found from famous site of Khokarakot in Rohtak district of Haryana, possibly an import from Mathura. Here the most significant point is that the main *pītha* of the *Pratimāsarvatobhadra* has not been found associated with any such image of Kushan period, though a number of such pedestals

with addorsed lions have been found from the famous site of Kankali Tila. Besides, scholars have not been able to find any literary evidence of ancient period to relate with these Kushan images. The literary references of Jaina *chaumukhī* are found in the medieval period and that is related with the concept of *samavasaraṇa* where on all the four sides the same Jina is represented. Such images are found from medieval period onwards from various places. But the Kushan *Pratimāsarvatobhadra* images from Mathura are limited to this region only and are not found after 3rd century A.D. except for two early Gupta images, one from Mathura and the other from nearby Gwalior region. The very important point is that in none of these, the four Jinas represented are the same. Only three Jinas can be identified on such images and they are Pārśvanātha, Aṛiṣṭaneminātha and Ṛṣabhanātha. Others are not identifiable because of the lack of Jina *lakṣaṇas* in that period. Exact purpose of such representations is not clear. But one has to keep in mind that in Brāhmanical religion *Chaturmukha* liṅgas and Vaiṣṇava *Chaturvyūhas* were common in that period and also in Buddhist pantheon there are few such examples. The *Pratimāsarvatobhadra* presents four Jinas, facing outward on each side of the four sides of an upright as the expression of perfection achieved by these supra-normal beings. Nudity is symbolic of purity achieved by means of asceticism. The standing, totally static, posture of each Jina in the image also expresses the perfections of omniscient awareness. It cannot be considered a multifold Jina image as is manifested by various Brāhmanical deities as universal creative power. If this Jaina identification of the *pīthikā* comes to be true, then it will provide us with a new thinking regarding this. Besides the above mentioned evidences, a Jina head (M.M. No. 1531) of Kushan period from Chaumuhan is housed at the Mathura Museum.

A very important site has been found at Hathras. Hathras or Mahamayanagar is the district headquarters of the same name. One of the largest archaeological mounds of the region is situated in the heart of the city, known as Hathras Qila which is surrounded by an artificial moat. The site is under the protection of Archaeological Survey of India, but lacks proper upkeep. Here a number of remains of a huge Jaina temple are lying at two different Hindu shrines. One Tīrthankara image (Fig. 5.5) is being worshipped as a *mātā*. Exact identification of it is not possible because of excessive vermillion applied

over it, but it is definitely a Jaina image belonging to circa 10th century A.D. A lintel and some other part of door-jamb of the same temple are also lying at that temple. At a nearby temple of Hathrasi *mātā* on the other side of extensive mound, a number of architectural remains are lying in a heap. One of the life sized broken image seems to be that of Ambikā, Yakṣī of 22nd Tīrthankara Neminātha, who was of local Braj lineage and had often been represented in sculptural art in Kushan period. All these indicate towards the presence of a large Jaina temple at Hathras in circa 10th century A.D. Now-a-days very few people of Jaina community reside at Hathras, but at the nearby cities of Aligarh and Agra their number is still significant. There must have been a great number of Jaina followers in the whole of Braj region till the medieval period, although their population at various centres like Mathura, Hathras and Agra etc. continued to vary a lot.

Another important finding which I found at the site of Hathras is that of a broken head of a deity, possibly a Tīrthankara (Fig. 5.6) which would date back to circa 1st century B.C. If it is so, then it would be one of the early images of a Jina. The head has been identified as of a Jina because of the similarity in treatment of it with the known examples of Jinas from Mathura of about early 1st century A.D. Besides, the continuity of tradition of Jaina temple of medieval period at the site also supports such an assumption. This head seems to be a missing link between the iconography of early Jina images and the thriving Yakṣa cult of the area. The tradition of Jaina mode of worship at Hathras might turn out to be as old as that of Mathura *i.e.* comparable to the early phase of Kankali stūpa. It also provides a strong foundation for the existence of a great temple at the site during the early medieval period and also to the popularity of this religion in the nearby region of Hathras.

The site of Bhandiravan which has already been discussed again comes to notice here. Two sculptures lying there might belong to Jaina temple, if these are not Brāhmanical in the first case. Other new sites which have come to notice after the explorations because of the findings of broken Jaina sculptures are: Itauli village in district Mathura (Fig. 5.7), Jaghina village in district Bharatpur (Fig. 5.8), Jhandipur, Mathura (Fig. 5.9), Tikari village in Hathras (Fig. 5.10), Lakhnu village, Hathras (Fig.

5.11), Ladpur village, Hathras (Fig. 5.12), Gwarau Kalan village situated on Sasni-Jalesar road, Hathras (Fig. 5.13), Sandhan Khera, Agra (Fig. 5.14), Sent Khera in district Mathura (Fig. 5.15), Santha village, Agra (Fig. 5.16 a & b). All these images belong to medieval period and are a proof of the popularity of Jaina religion even in the interior parts of Braj region. Only one image from Itauli is identifiable as Ṛṣabhanātha on the basis of the falling hair locks on the shoulders, otherwise most of the other images are not identifiable because of their broken nature. The headless image from Jaghina is important for its inscription which mentions that the image was of Pārśvanātha and was established in year 1073 (This inscription was kindly deciphered by Dr. T.V. Ravishankar of A.S.I., for which all thanks are due to him).

After all this analysis, we can draw the conclusion that the whole Braj region served as a very significant centre in the history and development of Jaina religion and its tradition. All the three indigenous sects of India draw inspiration from a common source which indicates towards some historicity in their traditions. At least the last three Tīrthankaras have some strong base, possibly indicative of some kind of historicity in their characters. In this chapter a humble attempt has been made to identify some of the ancient places mentioned in Jaina literary texts with their modern counterparts along with a brief note on the Jaina sculptural art.

¹ *Kalpasūtra-vṛtti* (by Samayasundara), Bombay and Surat 1939, p. 107; *Nandisūtra-chūṛṇi*, Benaras 1966, p. 9; *Nandisūtra-vṛtti* (by Malaygiri), Bombay 1924, p. 51 as cit. by U.P. Shah, *Studies in Jaina Art*, Banaras 1955, pp.110-111.

² *Vividhatīrthakalpa*, transl. Agarchand Bhanwar Lal Nahta, Balotra, Rajasthan 1976, pp. 36-43. (Hindi)

³ It should be the modern day Bhuteshwar area of Mathura.

⁴ It refers to an earlier existing folk cult at the site in the form of Yakṣī Kuberādevī.

⁵ It indicates towards the increasing popularity of Mahāvīra during medieval times in this area.

⁶ It should be Lohvan across Yamuna.

⁷ It should be Maholi near Mathura.

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- ⁸ It should be Bihara vana near Tos.
- ⁹ It should be Tarsi on Bharatpur road.
- ¹⁰ It should be Kota on National Highway No. 2.
- ¹¹ It should be Bhandiravan (Chhanhri).
- ¹² It should be Khayara in Chhata Tehsil.
- ¹³ It should be Kaman (Bharatpur district).
- ¹⁴ It should be Koyala near Township.
- ¹⁵ It should be Bati village near Ral.
- ¹⁶ It should be Mahavan near Gokul.
- ¹⁷ All five are more or less known by similar names in Brāhmanical religious cult.
- ¹⁸ It may be a reference to the underground shrine at Bhuteshwar Mahadev temple.
- ¹⁹ ‘*Brhatakalpasūtrabhāṣya*’ also mentions it by this name as well as Haribhadrāsūri (ca. 7th century A.D.) that there were five stūpas at Mathura can be inferred from Digambara tradition of *Panchstūpānvaya* as cit. by U.P. Shah and Ernest Bender, “Mathura and Jainism,” *Mathura: The Cultural Heritage*, ed. D.M. Srinivasan, N. Delhi 1989, pp. 209-213.
- ²⁰ The other three Śiva temples were Rangeshwar, Gokarneshwar and Pipleshwar.
- ²¹ *Rāmāyaṇa* (Vālmīki), Vol. 2, Gorakhpur, p. 414.
- ²² *Rāmāyaṇa* (Vālmīki), Vol. 2, Gorakhpur, p. 735.
- ²³ *Āvaśyaka-chūrṇi*, Ratlam 1928-29, pp. 192-93; *Vasudevahiṇḍī*, Bhavnagar 1930-31, Vol. 1, pp. 10-11.
- ²⁴ M.A. Dhaki, “Urjayantagiri and Jina Ariṣṭanemi”, *J.I.S.O.A.*, N.S., Vol. XI, 1980, pp. 1-33.
- ²⁵ *Aṣṭādhyāyī* (Pāṇini), 6/2/100.
- ²⁶ V.S. Agrawala, *Pāṇini Kālina Bhāratavarṣa*, Varanasi 1955, p. 86.
- ²⁷ *Jñātādharma-kathā*, Bombay 1980, p. 156.
- ²⁸ *Vipākasūtra*, Bombay 1920, p. 26.
- ²⁹ N.P. Joshi, “Early Jaina Icons from Mathura,” *Mathura: The Cultural Heritage*, ed. D.M. Srinivasan, N. Delhi 1989, pp. 332-367.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Ibid.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ M.N.P. Tiwari, *Jaina Pratimavijñāna*, Varanasi 1981, pp. 48-49. (Hindi)
- ³⁴ U.P. Shah, “Beginnings of Jaina Iconography,” *Bulletin of Museums and Archaeology in U.P.*, No. 9, June 1972, p. 6.
- ³⁵ M.N.P. Tiwari, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
- ³⁶ F.S. Growse, *Mathura: A District Memoir*, Delhi 1883, p. 373.

Chapter 6

Śaiva cult at Mathura

Śiva is one of the two most prominent gods of Brāhmanism. “Śiva - a living God- transcends all categories. He is existence- with all its paradoxes. Beyond existence, he is the indefinable absolute.”¹ The literary references to God Rudra are found in Vedic literature including *Ṛgveda*. During the *Upaniṣadic* period, he became one of the most prominent deities and from epic period onwards Śiva is the supreme deity of Brāhmanism. In proto-historic art the Harappan seals depicting bull, the famous Pāśupata seal and the various Linga and Yoni symbols found from various sites might be indicative of their association with some incipient Śaiva cult. From Harappan times to early historical times, no substantial evidence has been found indicative of continuity of Śaiva cult but there are various literary evidences indicative of it which were dated in this period by many scholars. It is only during 2nd century B.C. when the confirm evidences of Śiva worship in the form of sculptural art are found. The earliest representations of Śiva in Indian art have been found from Bhita situated near Allahabad along river Yamuna and Gudimallam near Renigunta in Andhra Pradesh. Bhita Pañchamukha Linga² is made of buff coloured sandstone and is dated by inscription to second century B.C. The central shaft of it has been carved in the shape of the two armed Iśāna whose straight strands of hair fall on his shoulders. In the left hand, bent at elbow, he holds a water pot; the right hand was probably raised in *abhaya mudrā*. He is shown wearing a *yajñopavīta*. Under his arms the four different heads can be distinguished. Directly below the left arm is the Aghora mukha. Next to Aghora mukha moving counter clockwise, is the mukha representing Yogin aspect of Śiva. Next follows the Uṣnīṣin form and the fourth head adorned with earrings, necklace and fillet around the hair, is likely to portray the mild, feminine (*strī*) nature of Śiva. In the Gudimallam Śivalinga³, two armed Śiva, carved in high

relief before the Liṅga, stands astride upon the shoulders of a creature belonging to aquatic realm. The God with *jaṭābhāra* hair holds a small horned animal in the lowered right hand, a battle-axe and water pot in the left. His lowered *membrum virile* is seen through the drapery folds of his thin *dhotī*. Besides, on a unique Śunga terracotta of unknown provenance, C. Sivaramamūrti has observed Śiva, Lord of Music and Dance, depicted.⁴

Liṅga Worship:

The early phase (1st century B.C. - circa 80 A.D.)-

Besides these evidences and the Śaivite figures found on coins from 2nd-1st century B.C. onward, most of the early examples are found from Mathura and its nearby area. The earliest Śivaliṅga from Mathura is the colossal, free standing Liṅga from Kankali Tila (height above ground 38.2”) presently housed in Lucknow Museum with accession No. H.1.⁵ It is realistically conceived and composed of three parts; these are the dome, the shaft and the base set in the ground. This Liṅga dates back to circa 1st century B.C. or early 1st century A.D. It resembles another plain Liṅga on an altar (*vedī*), under a tree depicted on a Mathura relief from Bhuteshwar (M.M. No. 52.3625); the relief dates to same period. The dome part of both these Liṅgas is thicker than the shaft and is quite naturalistic as was the norm with pre-Kushan Liṅgas. Both these Liṅgas have a simple band encircling the dome. Joshi has opined that this ornamentation might be related with ‘*Padmamālākṛtoṣṇīṣa*’ mentioned in *Vāyu Purāṇa*.⁶ The Bhuteshwar Liṅga is quite an important example depicting the ancient form of Śiva worship where Śivaliṅga has been enshrined inside a square railing under an auspicious tree. Two winged Yakṣas or griffins are shown bringing garlands to worship the almighty. An Ekamukhaliṅga from Mathura now kept at Philadelphia Museum has been dated to circa 1st century B.C. by Srinivasan.⁷ According to her it shares a realism with the plain Liṅgas mentioned above. An incised rim circles the dome just above the central fold, and above this point the human head appears. According to her, the treatment of the ringlets of hair in which a snake slithers, and the wide open eyes, also indicate a 1st century B.C. date. Stella Kramrisch has dated this image to 1st century A.D.⁸ Except for the peculiar hair style; I am in consent with Srinivasan. During and after late 1st century A.D. more Śivaliṅgas came in existence. The earliest Ekamukhaliṅga (Bharatpur Museum, acc. No. 52) has been found from

Aghapur, 5 km south of Bharatpur in Braj region.⁹ The 5' high colossal realistic Liṅga, depicts Uṣnīṣin mukha on its shaft. An architectural fragment from Mathura (M.M. No. B 141) depicts an Ekamukhalinga with Yogin head. The Liṅga, installed upon a *vedī* platform under a tree, retains the realistic dome which is adorned with a patterned band. A free- standing colossus of Śiva *Ūrdhvaretas* was found at Rishikesh which is a certain product of Mathura school and possibly dates back to 1st century A.D.¹⁰ Srinivasan has ascribed a Śuṅga date to this sculpture.¹¹ From Musanagar in Kanpur district, a pillar of 1st century A.D. was observed by Joshi, on the top portion of which two Śiva reliefs have been represented.¹² In one of the reliefs two handed *Ūrdhvaretas* Śiva is shown standing with his right hand in *abhayamudrā* and the left hand kept at his waist holding a water pot. To his right, near his feet a lion has been shown while to his left near the feet a dwarf Gaṇa has been shown. The other relief is in *lalitāsana* with *Ūrdhvaretas*, having his right hand in *abhayamudrā* and the left hand at the waist holding a water pot. Beneath his seat a lion has been depicted. The most important aspect of this relief is the emergence of three figures behind the main Śiva figure. This relief appears to be the precursor of the Hathiya (to be described later in this chapter) and Parel Viśvarūpa images. The broken lower portion of an image (M.M. No. 214) from Tokri Tila, Manth (Mat) datable to early Kushan period has been identified as Śiva image by V.S. Agrawala.¹³ His identification gets further support from Musanagar reliefs which also show a lion associated with Śiva. A relief from near Dampier Park, Mathura (M.M. No. 2661, Fig. 6.1) shows a Śivaliṅga on a pedestal, being worshipped by two men holding garlands and wearing coats and trousers (dress of north-western region).¹⁴ A flying celestial in the left corner is shown throwing flowers on the deity. There is a beautiful border of vine creeper with a peacock perched on it on the proper left side. The relief is datable to 1st century A.D. and is a very important example of Śiva worship during ancient times. The top of the Liṅga is not as realistic as in the other examples found.

Two of the Liṅgas found by me during explorations can be actually put in this time bracket of 1st century B.C. to 1st century A.D. One of them (Fig. 6.2) is a plain Liṅga from Barbari village, district Bharatpur which is situated near Govardhan. It was in worship at a village shrine. The part of Liṅga which is now visible is about 3' in height and is quite realistic with a thicker dome portion than the shaft. There is

possibility of the presence of a mukha or some lotus type decoration below the domical portion, but it is not clear in the photograph. The second Līṅga (Fig. 6.3) found during explorations at a shrine in Bhadar village, is a unique Śivalīṅga of Ekamukha variety. It is about 5' in length. The Līṅga is divided in three portions; the square base, the cylindrical shaft and the domical top. These types of Līṅgas have been observed during 1st century B.C. but the most interesting and unique aspect of this image is that the mukha has been carved at the domical section. While in all other known examples of Ekamukha Śivalīṅga, the mukha has been carved below the domical section. The mukha of this image is quite worn out and not exactly identifiable. There is slight possibility of its being Raudra (Aghora) mukha. Another important aspect about its early date is the presence of ogee- shaped silhouette of the *frenulum praeputium* as was observed in the Aghapur image. This feature has been considered as one of the important features in the evolution of the Līṅga by Mitterwallner.¹⁵

Second phase (Kushan and Gupta periods)

During Kushan period, the number of Śaivite images grew significantly. The plain Līṅgas of this period are large and rather realistically conceived; they thus continue the precedent set in the preceding ages. An encircling wreath or a circle of flower petals is used to mark the division of the top portion and the cylindrical shaft. Sometimes the circular wreath is shown in the centre of the top domical portion like in the Maholi example (M.M. No. 15.652). Examples of some of the plain Līṅgas from Mathura are: M.M. Nos. 36.2661, 40.2885 and 52.3625. Jateshwar Śivalīṅga at Sahpau in Hathras district has an inscription that dates it to Kushan period. A very interesting Śivalīṅga (Fig. 6.4) is in worship at Chauma Shahpur village near Fatehpur Sikri in Agra district. The length of the Līṅga is about 5'. At the visible base of its shaft four different representations are visible, though small in dimension. The four figure carved in four different directions appear to be a female head (?), a pot- bellied Yakṣa or Gaṇa, couchant lion and a water jar. A similar kind of Śivalīṅga representation (Fig. 6.5) in a much broken state was observed at Cheeta Khera site in Mathura district. The newly explored Śivalīṅga from Daulatgarh (Fig. 6.6) in district Bharatpur also dates back to this period of circa late 1st century A.D. Fig. 6.7, 6.8, 6.9,

6.10 and 6.11 are also plain Liṅgas found from four different villages of Mathura and possibly dates from 1st – 3rd century A.D. period.

Mukhalingas see an unprecedented increase in their number and varieties during this period. All types of Mukhalingas are observed during this period except for a Trimukha Liṅga. Some variety is introduced in those Ekamukha Liṅgas that can be comfortably dated between the first and third centuries A.D. (Lucknow Museum No. H 2, National Museum No. 66.225, Russek Collection No. 246 IMG, M.M. Nos. 1615; 5382; 2206, Doris Wiener Gallery S 342, Norton Simon Collection F 72.16, 6 SA).¹⁶ Kreisel attributes several other Mathura Ekamukha Liṅgas to late Kushan period.¹⁷ Unlike the shape of plain Liṅgas of this period, Liṅgas of Ekamukha Liṅgas are not naturalistic (except National Museum No. 66.225). The mukha of majority of these Liṅgas is the ascetic form (Yogin or Tatpuruṣa aspect of Śiva). The head is identified by the presence of ascetic locks (*jatājūta*); the strands are raised in a topknot and some strands may fall behind the ears. A moustache and a third eye is generally observed on these sculptures. The common position of the third eye before the Gupta period is horizontal but some examples of vertical third eye are also known from late Kushan period. One Ekamukha Liṅga representing the terrific (Ghora) aspect of Śiva is also known (Lucknow Museum No. H 2). Almost all the Ekamukha Liṅgas up to late Kushan period have been found from Braj region except a few.

The recently explored Ekamukha Liṅgas found from various sites in Braj region can be dated to this period. The Pingri image (Fig. 6.12) of about 4' length was observed outside the village and was in worship. The mukha represented on it is of Yogin with *jatājūta* and wears a necklace (possibly *Rudrākṣa mālā*). A small Ekamukha Liṅga was found at a mound lying outside Ranhera in Chhata *tehsil* of Mathura district (Fig. 6.13). The mukha represented on it also appears to be of Yogin with *jatājūta* and wearing a necklace (*Rudrākṣa mālā*). It would have used for household worship at the site. The Śivaliṅga from Ladpur (Fig. 6.14) is a very fine specimen of late Kushan art and is about 10" in length. The representation of contemplative mood and the pleasing facial attributes are really remarkable. There is an inherent feeling of emancipation which the onlooker experiences while observing the almighty God. The head represented appears to be Yogin with a *jatājūta* and

wears a *Rudrākṣa mālā*. At the famous site of Parkham village in district Mathura, an Ekamukha Liṅga (Fig. 6.15) was observed. It is about 5' in length and is fully covered with vermillion. It appears to be belonging to Kushan period. The broken sculptural find (Fig. 6.16) from village Karahri in district Mathura is part of an Ekamukha Liṅga. The mukha of about 4" long image has been tied with Liṅga by the help of a rosette design as is found usually on Kushan head gears. The Ekamukha Śivaliṅga from Umri village (Fig. 6.17) is in worship under a tree. The Kushan period Liṅga of about 2' length is represented with Yogin face having moustache and *jatājūta* hair. The miniature Ekamukha Śivaliṅga from Ladpur in Hathras district (Fig. 6.18) also belongs to the typical Kushan tradition with a Yogin head with *jatājūta*. Another Kushan period Ekamukha Śivaliṅga was observed near Prayag Ghat along Yamuna in the city of Mathura where it was in worship. The Ekamukha Liṅga from Dirawali near Sahar in Mathura district (Fig. 6.19) is made of buff sandstone and is of about 3' length. This Liṅga is slightly different from the specimens mentioned above and might be later in date than 3rd century A.D. The mukha represented on it appears to be of Yogin. Another Ekamukha Śivaliṅga from Husaini village near Kosi in Mathura district (Fig. 6.20) is a typical example of Gupta period. Unlike the previous period the realism of Liṅga is wanting and the length of phallus part has also been shortened. The mukha represented, (possibly Yogin) starts just above the square base. The stone used is buff coloured sandstone and the features of the face are in conformity with the Gupta art tradition.

There is a solitary example of Kushan Dvimukha Liṅga found from Aring in Mathura (M.M. No. 14.462). The principal face represents the Yogin. The face on the reverse side has been identified as a Yakṣa or a Gaṇa.¹⁸ Joanna Williams has suggested that the reverse face could be of female while relating the Liṅga with Ardhanārīśvara concept.¹⁹

Pañchamukhalingas-

Development of the iconography of Pañchamukha Liṅgas (with four heads generally and the Liṅga's top part serving as fifth head) was possibly a new innovation of Mathura artist. Of the total number of six Pañchamukha (or some may call Chaturmukha Liṅgas), four are definitely products of Mathura region. One of

them is a unique example from Dampier Park, Mathura (M.M. No. 516, Fig. 6.21) which shows four Ekamukha Liṅgas joined together to form a Pañchamukha Liṅga, the fifth top face of which is missing. In other five Pañchamukha Liṅgas not much difference is observable. One of the earliest Pañchamukha Liṅga (except Bhita) is the one found from the vicinity of the Mahavidya Devi temple in Mathura (National Museum No. 65.172). The other four Pañchamukha Liṅgas are: Russek Collection No. 176 IMG from Mathura region; Allahabad Museum No. 636 from Kaushambi; Bharat Kala Bhawan No. 22755, possibly from Kaushambi and M.M. No. 72.23 from Mathura.²⁰ In all of these sculptures the south facing head can be identified as the terrific aspect of Śiva, Aghora. The east facing head is generally Yogin with moustache and *jatājūta*. Sometimes the east facing head represents the Uṣnīṣin aspect and in that case the west facing head is of Yogin. The north facing head is either Brahmachārin or Saumya. The west facing head is generally Uṣnīṣin except for the Russek Collection No. 176 IMG where it represents the Ardhanārīśvara aspect.²¹

The recently discovered Liṅga (Fig. 6.22) at a religious open shrine at village Mora is actually a Pañchamukha Śivaliṅga (the most majestic Liṅga image I have ever seen) datable to 2nd -3rd century A.D. and is comparable to other Kushan Pañchamukha Liṅgas in facial characteristics (see for example Fig. 6.21 for comparative analysis). The similarity of the main face of Śiva in this image and that on Ekamukha Liṅga in Russek Collection (No. 246 IMG, Kreisel 1981, Fig. 16) is striking. As the plain Liṅga is the unmanifested form of the Supreme creative power, the Mukhaliṅga form is the manifested form of the same divine creative power. The plain shaft (the *rudrabhāga* or *pujābhāga*), which is still about 5' deep in the earth,²² is the unmanifested form of the supreme cosmic creator who starts manifesting himself firstly as the topmost divine power of Iśāna, facing towards the east or heaven, not visible in this image. Then the four cardinal forms start manifesting. There is also a possibility of Iśāna not being represented and only the phallus top portion might have indicated the fifth face. The uniqueness of it lies in the representation of the four faces in four cardinal directions. In none of such images, so much emphasis on one aspect of Supreme Being is observed, as is the case with this Mukhaliṅga. The over-emphasis on the eastern face almost makes it disproportionate in its overall treatment. The eastern face is almost double of the other three cardinal faces. The eastern face of

it is shown with moustache and a third eye in horizontal position appears to be a possibility which helps in dating it to Kushan period. Its hair was arranged in braids probably tied as a top knot. Some peculiar marks on the left side of cheek can be observed which might be there to show the beard of the Yogin. The other faces are so deteriorated that it is not possible to exactly identify them. But as has been the norm in other Pañchamukha Liṅgas from Mathura region, these can be identified accordingly. The west facing head might be of Uṣnīṣin as it is found facing opposite to the Yogin head. The south facing head is definitely Aghora head as the terrible features of it indicate. The north facing head might be Saumya form of Śiva or Brahmchārin form of Śiva as is generally observed. The delicate attractive features of it also indicate towards its identification as a Saumya form of Śiva.

Two new Pañchamukha Śivaliṅgas were observed at Aira and Bachhagaon villages in Mathura. The Bachhagaon Liṅga (Fig. 6.23) is quite unique as on the shaft of the Liṅga four different faces of Śiva have been depicted but below it on the shaft eleven small faces of Śiva have been depicted, possibly indicating Ekādaśa Rudras. All the faces on it are having matted locks. The Aira Śivaliṅga (Fig. 6.24) also belongs to the same period as Bachhagaon Liṅga but it is quite simple having only four faces represented at its shaft. Both these images might be dated to post-Gupta or early medieval period.

Other possible Liṅga images-

There are two very unique images of Kushan period which I suggest to be Śivaliṅgas. One was observed at a shrine in Jikhangaon village, Mathura (Fig. 6.25) and the other was observed at a shrine in Siwal village in Mathura (Fig. 6.26). The Siwal image appears to be a part of a sculptural panel. During the post-Gupta period, the Śivaliṅga took the shape of a pillar (*stambha*) and the possible Liṅga from Bharnakhurd (Fig. 6.27) might be an example of it. A floral wreath encircles this Liṅga. Two other fragments of Śivaliṅga belonging to about 1st century A.D. were observed at a shrine in village Bati in Mathura district (Fig. 6.28). These two pieces appear to be the part of same Liṅga.

Śiva Figures (in association with Liṅgam) -

There are some other varieties of Śivalingas of Kushan period where the complete human form of Śiva is represented. Examples of this type are two Lingas published by Coomarswamy (Fig. 68 and Fig. 80 of his book).²³ The Lingam (Fig. 68 of Coomarswamy) depicts a four handed Śiva image in front. The lower right hand of the deity is in *abhayamudrā* while the lower left has been placed at waist. The deity raises his two extra hands above his head as he puts a wreath upon his locks. Coomarswamy has wrongly identified the Fig. 80 of his book as that of a bodhisattva as it is a Śaiva sculpture in front of the Linga.²⁴ The two handed deity in his left hand holds a *kamaṇḍalu* and his right hand has been raised in *abhayamudrā*. A Dvimukha Linga with two addorsed bodies was found from Gamri village, Bharatpur district. On one side Yakṣa figure has been identified while the figure on the reverse side is too mutilated to identify.²⁵ When I visited this village, people told me that this image does no longer exist there. There are some other Śaivite images (Maheśamūrtis) from Mathura which are either related with Linga or have some relation with the concept of Pañchamukha Linga iconography. In the figure of Russek Collection (No. 177)²⁶, the God stands in front of the Linga. His iconography is quite similar with other Śiva images of the period except for three ancillary heads oriented in the directions. The Mathura Museum image (No. E 12)²⁷ has one Śaivite figure standing in front wearing a *mukūṭa* typical of the Kushan period. The right forearm is lost but probably it was raised to the shoulder in *abhayamudrā*. The left arm possibly held a water pot at the waist. The lower portion is clad in a *dhotī*, a twice bound belt above it, and a scarf passing across the legs and falling on the left side. On the proper left side projects a head covered with matted locks. The figure on the back side is either of a Yakṣa or a Gana. Perhaps there was a fourth head which is now lost. It is possible that the shaft was either surmounted by a fifth head or the top part of Linga. There are two other Late Kushan Maheśamūrtis (like the famous Chaturvyūha image of Viṣṇu in Mathura Museum) in Mathura Museums with acc. Nos. 47.3259 and 14.382.²⁸ Kreisel has published another Maheśamūrti which is now housed at National Museum (N.M. No. 66.24) which is datable to Late Kushan period.²⁹ An exceptional Late Kushan period Linga with full figure of Ardhanārīśvara from Mathura is housed in Pritzker Collection, Chicago.³⁰

Śiva Figures and Śiva heads-

Besides these Līṅga images, a number of Śaivite images in human form have been found from Mathura region. The origin of iconography of many of these images took place at Mathura for the first time. Though, on the basis of coins and seals it appears that free images of Śiva would have been made in a good number but surprisingly such examples of Kushan and early Gupta period are few. Two early Śiva images, one from Rishikesh and the other M.M. No. 214 have already been mentioned. The Musanagar sculpture would also fall in this category and has been mentioned earlier. There is an image in Russek Collection (No. 209) which has been identified by Kreisel as Śiva dating back to Kṣatrapa period³¹, but it might actually date to late Kushan period. Mathura Museum Nos. 71.90, 3340, 67.411 are the other Śiva images in standing position datable to Kushan period. There are some other standing Śiva sculptures datable to Gupta period (e.g. M.M. Nos. 3764, 67.411, 71.23, Bharat Kala Bhawan No. 584 and Berlin Museum No. I 15).³² A Late Kushan Śiva sculpture (Bharat Kala Bhawan No. 22208) has been found in sitting posture. Most of these images show following features (where intact): *Ūrdhvaretas*, *kamaṇḍalu* in left hand, *Rudrākṣa mālā* in right hand with *abhayamudrā*, *yajñopavīta*, a beaded necklace, bull as vehicle, *jatājūta* and a third eye. One Gupta period terracotta panel (M.M. No. 1629) is identifiable as Śiva by his *trinetra*. A sculptural relief (M.M. No. 1570) is a beautiful example of Śiva imagery. A very good example of a late Kushan Śiva head (acc. No. L 668) has been housed at National Museum, N. Delhi. The sculpture is from Mathura and has its hair arranged in snail shell curls. This type of hair of Śiva has been called as *Kṛṣṇakunchitamūrdhaja* in the *Mahābhārata*.³³ The head is diademed like the Greek kings and the diadem might be identified with *lalāṭapaṭṭa* of *Śilparatna*.³⁴ On the left side of the head *ardhachandra* has been represented and it is the only example showing half moon in any north Indian Śaiva sculpture of that period. The third eye has been shown in vertical position. All these features along with the delicate features indicate the impact of north-western region's art on this piece. Other Śiva heads from Mathura are: M.M. No. 454, 2734, 2085 (all belong to late Kushan and early Gupta period). Kreisel has mentioned four other Śiva heads now housed in foreign museums and collections.³⁵ Kreisel has mentioned six other Śiva heads with Ugra aspect (Aghora mukha).³⁶ Some Rudramukhas are observed on the Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu images (M.M. 54.3827, Lucknow Museum No. J 683 C).³⁷ One *Ūrdhvaretas* Śiva image in terracotta of late Kushan period from Mathura has been

published by Czuma.³⁸ There is one form of Śiva for which the only head remains (Bharat Kala Bhawan No. 21490) and it is made up of Mathura red sandstone. This image has been identified as Virupākṣa with hair on his face and terrifying features.³⁹ Another head from Mathura (Lucknow Museum No. H 35) can also be identified as Virupākṣa, which has already been identified by Kreisel as Mahākāla.⁴⁰

Umā-Maheśvara or Umāsahita Mūrti-

Umā-Maheśvara sculptures were quite popular during Kushan and Gupta periods. In such type of sculptures (M.M. No. 11.2106, 34.2495) Śiva and Pārvatī are shown standing side by side and Śiva is shown *Ūrdhvaretas*.⁴¹ The bull Nandī is shown with a hump and stands behind. A fine example of Śiva-Pārvatī from Mathura has been published by Czuma which belongs to circa 3rd century A.D. and is a part of Russek Collection, Zurich (No. 545 IMKG).⁴² Another such image of Early Gupta period carved on both sides is now housed in Mathura Museum (No. 2084).⁴³ Other Umā-Maheśvara sculptures belonging to Kushan and Gupta period are: M.M. Nos. G 52, 67.191; Berlin Museum for Indian Art No. I 3210 and National Museum No. 72.72.⁴⁴ During the medieval period Umā-Maheśvara mūrti was one of the more popular themes and a number of such images have been found from Mathura. Many broken Umā-Maheśvara sculptures were observed during my explorations. These were found from Bachhagaon, Nandghat and Lohban in district Mathura, Kanwara, Jaghina, Akata in district Bharatpur, Sandhan and Patsal in district Agra. Umā-Maheśvara mūrti from Sandhan Khera (Fig. 6.29) seems to be belonging to Late Gupta period. A number of other temple remains of Gupta and late Gupta period were observed at that site. In this broken sculpture the four handed Śiva is shown sitting with Pārvatī in *Ālīṅgamudrā*. The left natural hand of Śiva who is sitting to the right of Pārvatī rests on the left shoulder of Pārvatī. Lord Śiva is shown wearing a *jatāmukuta*. Both the deities are shown wearing heavy *kuṇḍalas* in both the ears. In the sculptural relief from Lohban (Fig. 6.30) both the deities are shown sitting over Nandī in *Ālīṅgamudrā*. In fact Pārvatī is shown sitting in the lap of Śiva. The sculpture from Kanwar (Fig. 6.31) near Kaman is quite similar to Lohvan image and might be dated slightly earlier, about 8th century A.D. In it the small figure in the centre of the sculpture might be a Gaṇa but its position is quite interesting. Pārvatī is shown possibly holding a mirror in her left hand. An interesting episode is depicted in

this image as Lord Śiva is shown putting a small ring in the right hand finger of Pārvatī, the hand of Lord Śiva is shown underneath the hand of Umā. The image from Akata (Fig. 6.32) near Kaman represents Śiva and Pārvatī in standing pose side by side which is slightly different from the previous three sculptures. It was observed that in the iconography of Śiva- Pārvatī sculptures until Gupta period, the majority of such sculptures are in standing pose while majority of the medieval sculptures are in sitting pose. At the base their two sons- Skanda riding on a peacock (near Pārvatī) and Gaṇeśa (near Śiva or to the right of Skanda) are shown along with the face of Nandīn. Two attendants are shown standing on either side of Umā-Maheśvara panel.

Other important forms of Śiva-

Ardhanārīśvara-

It is one of the most important types of Śaivite images and is highly philosophical in its nature. Mathura region has provided a number of such images which are some of the earliest images of this type so far known. The earliest Ardhanārīśvara image so far known is housed in Mathura Museum (No. 2520). In this sculptural relief four deities Ardhanārīśvara, Viṣṇu, Gajalakṣmī and possibly Kārttikeya are shown standing in a row. Ardhanārīśvara is shown two handed without any holding any attribute. The right side is of a man and the left of a female. Both the genital organs- the Linga and Yoni are shown together. Other Ardhanārīśvara images from Braj region are: Mathura Museum Nos. 800, 874, 772, 362, Berlin Museum of Indian Art No. I 10051 and Victoria and Albert Museum No. I.M. 5-1931.⁴⁵

Rāvaṇānugrahamūrti -

There is a solitary example of this type in Mathura Museum (No. 2577) which dates back to Gupta period and is the earliest example of this type known in India. In this sculpture the proud Rāvaṇa is shown lifting the mount Kailāśa on which Śiva and Pārvatī are sitting. Pārvatī is shown terrified because of it but the Lord of Lords shows no anxiety and just presses the mountain with his toe to teach Rāvaṇa a lesson.

Harihara Pratimā-

The combined form of Śiva and Viṣṇu is known as Harihara Pratimā in which Viṣṇu is shown in the left side (*vāmāṅga*) of Lord Śiva like the female aspect is shown on Ardhanārīśvara images. No complete image of Harihara form has been found from Mathura region but there are four heads available which dates back to late Kushan and Gupta periods. It shows that iconography of this form was also developed at Mathura. The examples of Harihara images from Mathura are: Mathura Museum Nos. 1336, 1333, 2510 and Bharat Kala Bhawan No. 4849.

Lakulīśa-

At Kāyāvarohaṇa *tīrtha* (modern Karwan) in Kathiawad, a *Āchārya* named Lakulīśa had established Pāśupata sect before 1st century A.D.⁴⁶ During the course of time this sect became so popular that Lakulīśa became one of the representations of Śiva.⁴⁷ The most identifying feature of Lakulīśa image is its short stature and *tundila* body, Ūrdhvaliṅga and a stick held in one of the hands (*daṇḍa*). The representation of Lakulīśa on the famous Nand Śivaliṅga has to be accepted as the earliest representation of this God in art and it dates back to early Kushan period.⁴⁸ In this image Lakulīśa is shown seated wearing an *uṣnīṣa*.

The famous Gupta period pillar inscription from Chandul- Mandul Bagichi at Rangeswar temple in Mathura clearly establishes the popularity of this sect in the religious life of ancient Mathura. D.R. Bhandarkar editing the Mathura Śaiva inscription of the time of Chandragupta II, showed that a powerful branch of the Pāśupata Śaivas adhering to the tenets of teacher Lakulīśa was established at Mathura by one of his four disciples, Kuśika, in the beginning of 2nd century A.D.⁴⁹ The earliest inscription of the reign of Chandragupta II so far known records the installation of two Śivaliṅgas named Upamiteśvara and Kapileśvara, by one Ārya Uditāchārya who was tenth (in apostolic succession) from Bhagavat Kuśika and fourth from Bhagavat Parāśara, and who was a *praśiṣya* of Bhagavat Upamitra, and a *śiṣya* of Bhagavat Kapila, in the Gurvāyatana, to commemorate his two immediate predecessors, Kapila and Upamitra.⁵⁰ This pillar (M.M. No. 1931) shows the representation of god Lakulīśa holding a *daṇḍa* and his trident. There are two other representations of Lakulīśa from Mathura (M.M. No. 3211 and Lucknow Museum No.

J 550). In both these representations of Gupta period, Lakulīśa is shown seated in a teaching posture.

Other new findings-

Two human busts of Gupta (or late Gupta) period appear to be of Lord Śiva. The bust from Sonkh Khera in district Mathura (Fig. 6.33) which has been cemented in the wall of a village shrine seems to be of Śiva because of its head gear. This type of crown was not used for Viṣṇu images and the possibility of it being some other deity other than Śiva is very limited. The broken figure from Sandhan Khera in district Agra (Fig. 6.34) has a slightly short and *tunḍila* body. There are two possibilities of its identification either as a Yakṣa or Śiva. It appears that this image represented the Yakṣa aspect of Lord Śiva. It must be kept in mind that in the same heap of sculptures many other Śaivite images of Gupta period were observed.

The lower portions of two images (Fig. 6.35 and 6.36) belong to early medieval period and are from two Śaivite shrines at villages Akata in district Bharatpur and Bachhagaon in district Mathura. There would have been one or more Śiva temples at both the sites but were destroyed by the bigoted attackers. The sculpture from Akata (Fig. 6.35) has been cemented in a temple wall.⁵¹ The sculpture possibly belongs to Samhāramūrti of Śiva in which the left leg of Śiva is in raised position and has been kept upon the demon, possibly Andhakāśura. The sculpture from Bachhagaon (Fig. 6.36) is almost similar in iconographic features but its orientation is opposite to Akata image. In this sculpture the right leg of Śiva is raised over the demon. The story of Andhakāśuravadha is as follows⁵²- the demon Andhaka was having lustful desires towards the wife of Lord Śiva and hence a fight broke out between them. During the fight to counter the ever increasing number of the demons from his blood drops, Śiva created Chāmūṇḍā and *Sapta Matrākās* to drink the blood. Even then, Śiva was not able to win the battle and then he sought the help of Viṣṇu. On Viṣṇu's suggestion, Śiva won the battle and was just about to kill the demon that he begged for pardon and praised Śiva. Lord Śiva being the most benevolent of all, forgave the demon and made him the chief commander of his Gaṇas and named him Bhṛṅgīrṣi. In the visible portion of these sculptures, demon Andhakāśura is visible lying under the feet of the Lord and begging for pardon.

The two other broken sculptures from Bachhagaon and Lathakuri village in Mathura district (Fig. 6.37 and 6.38 respectively) belong to early medieval period and also appear to be Samhāramūrtis of Śiva. The sculpture from Bachhagaon (Fig. 6.37) can be identified as Andhakāsuravadhamūrti which was an important and popular Śaiva theme in northern India. In this sculpture to the right of Śiva, goddess Chāmūṇḍā has been represented as per the above mentioned story. For the sculpture from Lathakuri (Fig. 6.38) no definite identification seems possible at this stage.

Viśvarūpa Śiva from Hathiya (Fig. 6.39)-

It is one of the most striking new finds from the explorations in Braj region. It is only the second specimen of its kind, first being the much famous Parel Viśvarūpa image. Till now, Parel image was considered to be the only exceptional image of its kind, but this new finding would add some new dimension to the already existing knowledge. Hathiya is an ancient town (presently a village) situated about 3 km south of Barsana in district Mathura near the Rajasthan border. The image is in worship at the Chamar (*devī*) temple in the town and has been affixed with cement and mortar into the wall of the temple. Many other important sculptures were observed at that temple but most of them were in much broken condition because that town had to suffer a lot of devastation at the hands of bigoted Muslim attackers in the past. Perhaps this was the reason which forced the people of the town to place these sculptures (in spite of being mutilated) at a temple of *devī* and thus preventing them from being stolen as is the usual norm in this part of country.

This image is about 1.5 m in height (the visible portion) and when complete would have been much larger. The dimension of this image appear to be comparatively smaller than Parel image (about 3.5 m in height) and unfortunately this image is in very poor state because of its being in regular worship unlike the Parel image which was unearthed in 1931 in a sound condition.⁵³ Definitely the Hathiya image is not in its original condition but appears to be in continuous worshipping for a very long period. About the Parel image Maxwell has written “at about the time the Shamlaji (Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa from Gujrat) image was being formulated, or slightly later, a Śaiva iconographical development of equal originality though of less complexity was commenced some 550 kilometers to the south (at the suburb of Parel in

Bombay)⁵⁴. Now this view needs some rectification because the Hathiya image in spite of its being so mutilated appears to be earlier than Parel image and in this way should be the image following which Parel image was formulated. It's no surprise as Mathura is the actual originating place for the iconography of most of the Indian gods and goddesses. But this image highlights the point that even during late Gupta period (about 5th-6th century A.D.) Mathura was one of the most important art centers where new iconographic formulas were being invented, especially this image which is definitely one of the most complex images of India still needing a satisfactory explanation of its actual nature and meaning. The Hathiya image is too damaged for a good analysis but it appears that this image is slightly different from the image at Parel. The lower half of the image is possibly missing. What is visible in this image and comparing that with the Parel image, it becomes clear that three central emanations are visible which have been carved in a vertical axis like the Parel image but the style of their representation is different. While in the Parel image only the lowermost central figure has been shown in full length with the two central figures above it shown only above their waist, in the Hathiya image the lowermost central figure is too broken while the second central figure appears to be shown up to its ankles. While in the Parel image the two emanations on either side are shown coming out from the lowermost central figure and the second central figure, in the Hathiya image in the visible section of the image the four emanations (two on either side) appear to be coming out of the second central figure. Whether from the central lowermost figure in the Hathiya image any emanations were coming out or not, are not clear. But there is slight possibility that to the right of the lowermost central figure one figure is shown coming out which is different from the Parel image. While in the Parel image the central topmost figure has ten hands, in the Hathiya image there seems no such possibility. In the Hathiya image the position of side figures, their hair style and the position of their hands appear to be slight different from the Parel image. In Parel image all the figures hold a *kamaṇḍalu* in their left hand and the right hand is in *vitarka* or *vyākhyāna mudrā* with the position of hands being slight altered. The topmost central figure has ten hands with the usual attribute in the lower two hands as *kamaṇḍalu* and *vitarka mudrā*. In the Hathiya image these attributes are not identifiable. The treatment of head and their head dresses in Hathiya figure is slightly different from Parel image. There is a possibility that the central three figures in a vertical axis might be having three faces unlike the Parel image.

About the Parel image Kramrisch⁵⁵ has observed “The image from Parel is based on the meaning of the liṅgam, or Yakṣa and yoga power. It visualizes Śiva not with the cosmical suggestiveness of the Natarāja image. This shows Śiva in his everlasting activity beheld from without. The image from Parel shows Śiva realized from within his state of power”. Sivaramamūrti⁵⁶ has identified the Parel image as Śiva *saptasvaramaya*, Who is Composed of the Seven (Musical) Notes but this identification does not appear to be correct as none of these figures carry any musical instrument except for the figures at the lower half of the image. Besides, this image seems to convey some very complex exceptional cosmological doctrine of Śiva, rather than just denoting the *sapta svaras*. D.C. Bhattacharya bases his explanation of the formulation of this image upon *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa* 22, 23 and 33, and upon Banerjea’s formulation of Śuddha- Śaivism or Āgamanta- Śaivism.⁵⁷ Maxwell⁵⁸ has tried to modify the view of Bhattacharya and suggested quoting references from *Liṅga Purāṇa* and *Viṣṇudharmottara* which speak of separated manifestations of Śiva in four consecutive *kalpas*, followed by his universal form in a fifth *kalpa*. Maxwell identifies the topmost central image as the most important of all the figures and considers it the explicit iconographic form of Liṅga in the form of controller of time Kālarudra and then identifies the second central figure as one of his *kalpa* sons- Aghora, Tatpuruṣa, Vāmadeva or Sadyojāta. And below him the lowermost central figure with feet planted firmly on earth is identified as one of the sons of either of *kalpa* sons (e.g. Lakulīśa), a *mahāyuga*- incarnation, grandson of Kālarudra Viśvarūpa. Srinivasan does not agree with the identification of central topmost figure as Kālarudra but the Parel image has been identified as Maheśa Aṣṭamūrti by her in which she identifies seven manifested forms along with the eighth unmanifested nature form as the eightfold nature of Śiva Aṣṭamūrti.⁵⁹

For the exact identification of the Hathiya image more sophisticated studies are required but roughly it can be assumed to be quite similar to the Parel image and hence can be identified with the eightfold nature of Śiva as Śiva (Maheśa) Aṣṭamūrti, the concept of which was developed in the region of Braj and was quite popular during Kushan and Gupta periods.

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- ¹ Stella Kramrisch, *Manifestations of Śiva*, Philadelphia 1981, Introduction, p. xiv.
- ² D.M. Srinivasan, *Many Heads, Arms and Eyes*, Leiden 1997, p. 222.
- ³ Ibid., p. 223.
- ⁴ C. Sivaramamurti, *Natarāja in Art, Thought and Literature*, N. Delhi 1974, Fig. 4.
- ⁵ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
- ⁶ N.P. Joshi, *Prachina Bharatiya Murtivigyana (hindi)*, Patna 1977, p. 54 and *Vāyu Purāṇa* (2.24.155, p. 101).
- ⁷ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 222.
- ⁸ Stella Kramrisch, *op. cit.*, Philadelphia 1981, p. 2.
- ⁹ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 54.
- ¹⁰ Gerd Kriesel, *Ikongraphie Der Śiva- Bildwerke In Der Kunst Mathuras*, Berlin 1981, p. 286 and Fig. 58.
- ¹¹ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 223.
- ¹² N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 35.
- ¹³ V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of Brāhmaṇical Images in Mathura Art*, Lucknow 1951, p. 26.
- ¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 27-28.
- ¹⁵ G.V. Mitterwallner, "Evolution of the Liṅga," *Discourses on Śiva*, ed. Michael Meister, Bombay 1984, pp. 12-31. She has presented a remarkable survey of the evolution of the Liṅga concept through the ages.
- ¹⁶ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
- ¹⁷ Gerd Kriesel, *op. cit.*, Figs. 14, 18, 20, 21, 22, 24 – 46 and 109. Total number of Ekamukhalingas mentioned by him accounts for 32 specimens which range between Kṣatrapa to late Gupta period.
- ¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 209-210.
- ¹⁹ Joanna Williams, "An Ardhanārīśvara- Liṅga", *Kusumanjali*, ed. M.S. Nagaraja Rao, Delhi 1987, p. 301.
- ²⁰ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pp. 262- 63.
- ²¹ Gerd Kriesel, *op. cit.*, 204-205.
- ²² It was suggested by the villagers who would have excavated the spot of this image for the construction of a foundation.
- ²³ Anand Coomarswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, New York 1927, p. 67.
- ²⁴ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
- ²⁵ R.C. Agrawala, "Newly Discovered Śiva Liṅga from Gamari", *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, 59, Pts. 1-4, 1973, pp. 62-64.
- ²⁶ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 263 and Fig. 19.5.
- ²⁷ V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26 and D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, Pls. 19.6 and 19.7.
- ²⁸ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, Pls. 19.8- 19.10.

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- ²⁹ Gerd Kreisel, *op. cit.*, p. 279, Fig. 53.
- ³⁰ S. Czuma, *Kushan Sculptures- Images from Early India*, Cleveland 1985, pp. 134-135.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 285 and Fig. 57.
- ³² *Ibid.*, pp. 289-294, Figs. 62, 64, 65, 66 and 68.
- ³³ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 33.
- ³⁴ T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, Part 2, Delhi 1914, p. 156.
- ³⁵ Gerd Kreisel, *op. cit.*, pp. 298-301 and Figs. 75-78.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 301-305, Figs. 79-84.
- ³⁷ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
- ³⁸ S. Czuma, *op. cit.*, p. 126.
- ³⁹ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 267 and Pl. 19.15.
- ⁴⁰ Gerd Kreisel, *op. cit.*, pp. 305-306 and Fig. 85.
- ⁴¹ V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, pp. 27.
- ⁴² S. Czuma, *op. cit.*, p. 129.
- ⁴³ V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 30.
- ⁴⁴ Gerd Kreisel, *op. cit.*, pp. 307-315 and Figs. 87, 88, 92 and 93.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 319-323 and 332-333, Figs. 96-100 and 110.
- ⁴⁶ V.S. Agrawala, "The Religious Significance of the Gupta Terracottas from Rang Mahal," *Lalit Kala*, No. 8, 1960, p. 66.
- ⁴⁷ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 39.
- ⁴⁸ R.C. Agrawala, "Chaturmukha Shiva-Linga from Nand near Pushkar, Rajasthan," *Puratattva*, No. 2, Varanasi 1968-69, pp. 53-54.
- ⁴⁹ D.R. Bhandarkar, "Mathura Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II", *Epigraphia Indica* No. 21, 1931-32, pp. 1-9. His father R.G. Bhandarkar considered the date of Lakulīśa to be 2nd century B.C. (as cited by Banerjea 1968, pp. 50-51) and I think that he was right.
- ⁵⁰ J.N. Banerjea, *Religion in Art and Iconography (Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism)*, Lucknow 1968, p. 50.
- ⁵¹ Villagers told that most of the sculptures at that shrine were kept inside the village of Akata at a shrine but were later removed from there because of the atrocities by the Mevs (Hindus who have converted to Islam and are majority population in that village).
- ⁵² *Matsya Purāṇa*, chapter 179, *śloka*s 1- 40.
- ⁵³ T.S. Maxwell, *Viśvarūpa*, Delhi 1988, pp. 193-194.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 186.
- ⁵⁵ Stella Kramrisch, *Indian Sculpture*, London 1933, cit. by Maxwell 1988, p. 195.
- ⁵⁶ C. Śivaramamurti, *Indian Sculpture*, New Delhi 1961, p. 58.
- ⁵⁷ D.C. Bhattacharya, *Iconology of Composite Images*, New Delhi 1980, pp. 53- 55.
- ⁵⁸ T.S. Maxwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 200- 232.
- ⁵⁹ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

Chapter 7

Mathura and Early Vaiṣṇavism

Braj is the most sacred place on this earth for the followers of Vaiṣṇavism. The roots of Vaiṣṇavism lie in the Vedic literature where Lord Viṣṇu has been mentioned in a number of hymns. Vedic Viṣṇu became the most important God during the later Vedic period and the commingling of three different streams of Vedic Viṣṇu, Upaniṣadic Nārāyaṇa and the Pāñcharātra (Sātvata) sect during the epic and Purāṇic period gave rise to the broader cult of Vaiṣṇavism. Mathura is the birth place of Sātvata sect's main hero Lord Kṛṣṇa and the region of Braj is the place where he performed his *līlās*. References to it are found in a number of early *Purāṇas* including *Harivamśa* and also in *Mahābhārata*. The Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* mentions the killing of Kamsa by Kṛṣṇa and the narration and presentation of dramas, presumably in Mathura, on the life of Kṛṣṇa.¹ The ancient inscriptions, datable to pre-Christian era, mentioning the shrine of Vāsudeva (Bhāgavata cult) are as follows:

1. Ghosundi (Mādhyamikā, Rajasthan) Nārāyaṇa Vātikā Inscription.²
2. Heliodorus Garuḍa Pillar Inscription, Vidisha.³
3. Mora (Mathura) Inscription.⁴
4. Mathura Inscription of Vasu mentioning construction of Mahāsthāna.⁵
5. Vaishali sealing mentioning temple of Viṣṇupādasvāmī.⁶
6. Nanaghat Inscription of Queen Nāyanikā.⁷

Some important points which can be drawn from these above mentioned inscriptions are: the cult of Vāsudeva was very popular during 2nd- 1st century B.C. in a vast region of India, extending from Afghanistan in the north-west, Nasik in west, Vaishali in east and to Vidisha in south; Mathura inscription of Vasu mentions the spot of the shrine as *Mahāsthāna*, so the antiquity of this cult at Mathura should date

back to hoary past and the place can be considered to the centre from where this cult spread to other parts; the three aspects of Viṣṇu as mentioned above had already merged by the 1st century B.C. as the shrine of Samkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva has been mentioned as Nārāyaṇa Vātikā in the Ghosundi inscription.

Viṣṇu in Indian art-

The identification of various Viṣṇu images as the form of Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa was proposed by N.P. Joshi,⁸ so we should be clear about this fact that when we generally talk about a Viṣṇu image, it can be of Kṛṣṇa or vice- versa. The earliest example of a Vaiṣṇava theme, in my opinion, is found from a rock shelter at Tikla near Gwalior (Fig. 7.1). V.S. Wankankar, one of the most respected pre-historian archaeologists was quite right in the identification of this theme.⁹ This depiction is dated to about late 3rd century B.C. or early 2nd century B.C. on the basis of a small inscription written over it on the rock surface. The inscription reads “*dambukena kāritam odanakitā*” and on the basis of its palaeography can not date later than 200 B.C. It is quite clear that the artist who carved the painting on the rock surface was either named Dambuka or Dambuka was the person who got the figures painted at the rock surface by some artist, but what the third word means, is not clear. The painting depicts three humans; first male from left should be identified as a male who holds a *halāyudha* in his right hand. In his left hand he is shown holding some peculiar object, five circular discs fitted into a rod. He is definitely wearing some interesting headgear but not much can be said about it as well as his dress because these must have been inspired by the tribal rock art of the period. The second male who is shown in the centre and is slightly taller than the rest, should be identified as Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa. In his left hand, he holds some indistinct object while his right hand holds the same peculiar object which the first male holds in his left hand. The most important feature of this figure is the headgear which has been shown with a solar disc. Firstly, it confirms the divine nature of the figure and secondly, it represents the earliest known example of proto-halo concept in Indian art. This example should be considered as an answer to all those scholars who try to put the origin of halo in Indian art to have been derived from western school. A reference is *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, also indicates towards this concept of halo (*divi sūrya sahastrasya bhavedyugapadutthitā*).¹⁰ The third figure which is quite smaller in proportions than the rest of figures is of Ekānamśā. Her headgear is not so clear in the line drawing. She holds a *chakra* in her right hand but

the high flying object in her left hand is unclear. Dresses of all three figures are slight different and it appears that Ekānamśā has been shown wearing a skirt. It should also be kept in mind that Tikla rock shelter site is a part of Greater Braj region and lies on the route linking Mathura with Malhar and Vidisha.

The well known earliest representation of Vṛṣṇi deities is found on the copper coins of Indo-Greek ruler Agathocles, which have come to light in the excavations at Ai-Khanum in the Oxus valley.¹¹ On the obverse, or Greek side, occurs the figure of Samkarṣaṇa/ Balarāma, holding a club and a plough in right and left hands, respectively. On the reverse, or Brahmi side, appears two- armed Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa holding the wheel and conch (?).¹² The other early aniconic examples of Vṛṣṇi cult are found from Madhya Pradesh. Besides the famous Garuḍa pillar which mentioned the erection of Garuḍa capital (now missing) associated with Kṛṣṇa, two other capitals (*tāla* or palm leaf *dhvaja*) have been found associated with Balarāma; one from Besnagar itself and the other from Pawaya.¹³ The site of Pawaya is quite close to the site of Tikla rock shelter. The second Garuḍa pillar installed at Besnagar contains an inscription of the son of Gautamī and should date back to 1st century B.C.¹⁴ A Makaradhvaja of the same period was also found from Besnagar which should belong to the third *vyūha* Pradyumna.¹⁵ Another pillar from Pawaya which had an ass depicted at the top was identified by Banerjea to be related with the killing of Dhenakāsura by Balarāma and dates back to 1st century B.C.¹⁶ N.P. Joshi has rightly identified some palm capitals found from Mathura (Lucknow Museum Nos. J 584, J 268) as related with Vṛṣṇi (especially Samkarṣaṇa) cult which date back to 1st- 2nd century B.C.¹⁷ He has also associated the worship of a lion pillar on a corner upright (Lucknow Museum No. J 268) and the lion-plough capital from Mathura now housed in Victoria and Albert Museum, London to Samkarṣaṇa cult.¹⁸ The earliest known multiple armed sculptural representation of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa has been dated to 1st century B.C. and is from Malhar in Bilaspur district of M.P.¹⁹ This life size sculpture which was in worship at the village near a water body, exhibits Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa wearing a lower garment made of palm leaves. The image is four armed, holding a *chakra* and a heavy club (*gadā*) in the upper left and right hand respectively. A sword is shown hanging by the side of his waist. The two natural hands of the deity either hold a conch or are in *añjali mudrā*. The warrior-like pose of the figure denotes its close affinity with Vṛṣṇi Vīras.²⁰

At Mathura, the earliest evidence of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa in art except for the two inscriptions of Mora and Mathura (Vasu) dating back to late 1st century B.C. and the unidentified statues from Mora, is found from 1st-2nd century A.D. onwards. The total number of Kushan Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa images from Braj region is about 50 and might exceed it if searched further.²¹ Kṛṣṇa icons are generally found in two forms: two handed and four handed. Two handed icons might be there to represent the human form of him while the four handed icons are related with the divine incarnation of Viṣṇu in divine form. Some salient features of Viṣṇu/ Kṛṣṇa images from Mathura are as follows:

1. Most of these images are quite small in size (height ranging between 2.5”- 15”), possibly because these were part of household worship. The largest Viṣṇu image known till now is of *Chaturvyūha* Viṣṇu (M.M. No. 392-95) which would have been about 3’ high when complete.

2. Majority of these images are four handed. The usual four hands of the Lord have following attributes: *śankha* in natural left hand kept at waist, the natural right hand in *abhaya mudrā* kept at shoulder level, the upper left hand holds *chakra* and the upper right hand holds a mace or a club. In some of the sculptures, the left natural hand of Viṣṇu holds *amṛta ghaṭa* or conical nectar- flask. V.S. Agrawala had opined that this form of Viṣṇu having a water pot was inspired by the Maitreya Bodhisattva images holding a water pot in left hand.²² Agrawala might have proposed it due to lack of information regarding some of early Vaiṣṇava images at the time of his writings. In my opinion, Viṣṇu images possibly pre-dates Buddha images and need not to be inspired by Maitreya iconography. Viṣṇu was well known as a deity who held the *amṛta ghaṭa* for the *devatās* in his *mohinī* form.²³ This aspect of Viṣṇu emancipating his worshippers by providing nectar from his flask might have inspired the depiction of nectar-flask in some of his images. Even majority of Śiva sculptures are shown with a water pot held in quite the similar position as Viṣṇu. The Śiva sculptures (especially Gudimallam Liṅga and Musanagar relief) definitely pre-date Maitreya or Viṣṇu images and so should be considered the inspiration for the depiction of this feature, if it has to be. Even, in some of the early Yakṣa images a *kalaśa* or water pot

has been observed. One very significant point about early Viṣṇu images is the complete absence of *padma* or lotus in any of the deity's hands. This feature becomes popular in iconography only after late Gupta period.

3. Most of the early images share some common features like the *abhaya mudrā* of the right hand, *kativinyastha mudrā* of left hand, sometimes *ūrṇā* in between eyebrows and these features might have been inspired by the Yakṣa iconography.

4. *Śrīvatsa* symbol so well associated with Viṣṇu is not observed in any of the Kushan Viṣṇu image except for a Varāha image (M.M. No. 65.15). It might have been depicted in some other sculptures but is not visible now. Interestingly, it is an essential part of Jaina Tīrthankara images of that period.

5. During the Kushan period, the back sides of Vaiṣṇava images were not left untouched and in many of the images a tree laden with fruits and birds has been depicted. The hair arrangement and the arrangement of dress on the back side are also visible.

6. Extra hands of Viṣṇu images of Kushan period are shown coming out from lower elbow or waist portion and are shown rising above (*udbāhu*) while during the Gupta period the extra long hands come out from or near the shoulder and are shown towards down side (*pralambabāhu*).²⁴

Kushan Viṣṇu Images (Late 1st century- late 3rd century A.D.)-

***Chaturbhuja Viṣṇu images*²⁵-**

All such images are in standing pose and with four hands except one. Various types of these images as classified by N.P. Joshi are as follows:

1. Five of these images (M.M. Nos. 15.912; 15.948; 28.1729; 34.2520 and 42-43.3024) are shown with a water- pot or nectar- flask in the normal left hand kept near the waist. The mace has been hold from upside in the upper right hand in these sculptures. In the image (M.M. No. 15.933) of this type, mace has been hold with the top of it pointing downwards.

2. Viṣṇu holds mace which has been supported on the earth in his right hand while on the palm of the left hand he holds a *śankha*. Three sculptures of this type have been found, two of which are shown with *yajñopavīta* (M.M. Nos. 15.883; 34.2487 and 49.3502). There are five more Viṣṇu images datable to Kushan period, probably of this type from Mathura, housed at National Museum, N. Delhi.²⁶ These images are: National Museum Nos. 58.11/19; 66.76; 66.23; 58.11/20; 58.11/9. The image (No. 66.23) is complete and wears a *yajñopavīta*. Another such image of late Kushan period from Mathura is in a foreign collection and has been published by Czuma.²⁷
3. Like the type no. 1, in the right hand the Lord holds the mace from the top side and holds *śankha* in the left hand (M.M. Nos. 00.U 5; 15.1901; 15.1919 and Lucknow Museum No. J 610)
4. In these sculptures the typical Kushan *mukūṭa* with a central rosette is changed by long square or cylindrical *mukūṭa*. Some changes are also observed in the manner of holding *gadā* and *śankha* (M.M. No. 15.956).
5. This type is quite similar to type 4 but in these images *uttarīya* has not been used (M.M. Nos. 00.U 35; 100.U 77 and 15.1168).
6. In the images of this type, *ājānulambinī vanamālā* appears for the first time. In these images turban or *mukūṭa* have been used as per choice and *uttarīya* is also not necessary. In the manner of holding *śankha*, some changes are observed (M.M. Nos. 00.U 67, 29.2007, 54.3821).
- 7.-8. In this type some of the features of Gupta style start appearing. Mace is held as in the previous images (M.M. Nos. 20.002; 57.4426; 57.4267). In some images the halo also appears (M.M. No. 56.4225).
9. In this category, images from Bhita, Unchadhi and Jhusi have been included which are slightly different from the Mathura images.
10. In this category, a slightly later image from Pawaya has been included which is just like the Mathura images but for the depiction of *hasta-rekhās* on the palm.

According to Dr. Joshi, first three types belong to Kushan period while the remaining types are datable to late Kushan and Kushan-Gupta transitional phase. Other Viṣṇu images from Mathura datable to this period are M.M. Nos. 781; 40.3502; 50.3550; 29.2002 and 49.3502. Other images in various world museums are: Berlin four armed Vāsudeva, Sherman E. Lee four armed Vāsudeva and the Ashmolean Vāsudeva.²⁸

Dvibhuja Viṣṇu Images-

N.P. Joshi has identified five such images.²⁹ One of them is the image observed by A.C.L. Carlyle during his survey at Rupbas (Bharatpur district).³⁰ J.N. Banerjea had identified it as two- armed Viṣṇu having a *chakra* in one of his hands.³¹ Another two- armed miniature image is at Mathura Museum (Surplus No. 950). Other such sculpture from Braj region (slightly outside it) is at famous Nand column.³² One such image is a part of famous Kondamottu (Guntur district) relief along with other four Viṣṇi Vīras and Nṛsimha image.³³ Another representation of two armed Viṣṇu was found at Vidisha (now housed at Gwalior Museum) in which the deity is represented on both sides.³⁴ Though, the deity has been wrongly identified as Sūrya in place of Viṣṇu, it can't date earlier than 4th century A.D.

Seated figures of Viṣṇu-

A unique miniature carving (M.M. No. 56.4200) shows Viṣṇu borne upon Garuḍa. The relief is a seated version of the standing type described above; the natural left hand holds the *śankha*, the upper left hand holds *chakra* and the right hand holds a mace. The wings of Garuḍa are stretched out widely. All these features like the weapons and the association of Garuḍa might be indicative of the identity of the deity Viṣṇu as Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa.

In another seated figure (M.M. No. 39.2858), several departures from the standing type are notable. The four- armed God is seated in *lalitāsana* and extends his natural right hand in *varada mudrā*. The God is shown sitting on a seat decorated with lotus seat (*padmāsana*). This image might be dated to late Kushan period.

Eight armed Vaiṣṇava figures-

There are two such icons found from Mathura and housed at Mathura Museum.³⁵ A third image of this type from Mathura region is housed at Lucknow Museum (No. 47.247).³⁶ In one (M.M. No. 15.1010) the God wears the typical central crested turban. Only the upper right hands of it are now visible and objects held in three of them are: a rock; a sword and arrows. The fourth arm holds an unidentified weapon to the chest. The other eight- armed image (M.M. No. 50.3550) depicts the same objects held in the three raised right hands, though the order of these appears to be slightly different. The natural right hand holds a round object to the chest. On the

left, a conch is carried in the natural hand. The torso is well adorned with armlets, bracelets, *ekāvalī*, floral garland, a long *vanamālā* and *yajñopavīta*. Enough of the lower portion remains to indicate that the *dhotī* clad God stands in *vīrabhāva*, a heroic stance.³⁷

Chaturvyūha Viṣṇu-

It is one of the most important and interesting images of Kushan period's Brāhmaṇical art of Mathura (M.M. Nos. 392-95, Fig. 7.2). The sculpture was found as four broken pieces from Saptasamudrī *Kūpa* in the Museum compound. The total height of the remains is 43.2 cm. It was for the first time correctly identified by N.P. Joshi and was ably supported by the eminent art historian R.C. Agrawala.³⁸ The central figure is of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa who is possibly shown four handed. In his left natural hand, he holds a *śankha*, in his upper right hand he holds a mace but no part of this extra hand is visible in the present sculpture. The mace is shown as a palm tree trunk and lies just under the body of second emanation Samkarṣaṇa-Balarāma. The natural right hand of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa is shown in *abhaya mudrā* while the upper left hand is missing completely, which usually holds a *chakra* in Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa sculptures. This figure, broken off below the abdomen, wears a short garland of leaves and flowers, armlets and quadruple bracelets which are incised with a wine pattern, and a plain necklace. He wears a tall flat-topped crown of cylindrical shape decorated with a repeated rosette pattern. In his ears two pendant ear ornaments were worn but broken now. The eyes of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa are shown looking at the nose (*nāsāgradṛṣṭi*) indicative of its late Kushan date. The first emanation from the body (from the right shoulder) of Vāsudeva is of Samkarṣaṇa who is clearly identifiable with his serpent-hood and the left hand holding a wine goblet. The right hand of Samkarṣaṇa, which is now broken, would have been raised above the head in *abhaya mudrā* probably. The torque (*ekāvalī*) and the short garland of Samkarṣaṇa figure are quite similar to that of central figure of Kṛṣṇa. At the top of Kṛṣṇa, actually from his crown, in this present sculpture emerges another emanation which should be of Pradyumna. Actually, there is an attempt to create an illusion that this emanation is coming out from behind the Kṛṣṇa figure. Not much is clear about the features of this figure but for it being two handed. Another emanation would have been coming out from the left shoulder of Kṛṣṇa but is now completely lost. This figure in all probability would have represented the fourth Pāñcharātra vyūha- Aniruddha, the

grandson of Kṛṣṇa. A tree has been depicted at the back of this sculpture which is related with the concept of *vyūhavāda*. The main trunk of the tree has been shown on the back of Kṛṣṇa figure from which rises two side branches (on the back of Samkarṣaṇa and possibly on the back of broken Aniruddha figure) and a central branch (on the back of Pradyumna) towards the top. Slightly similar theology is observed on Pañcamukha Śiva Liṅgas.

The vyūhas are named after the elder brother, the son, and the grandson, respectively, of Kṛṣṇa, namely Samkarṣaṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha; and the pair of *guṇas* connected with these are respectively: *jñāna* and *bala*; *aiśvarya* and *vīrya*; *śakti* and *tejas*.³⁹ All six *guṇas*, before pairing, constitute in aggregate the body of the personal God Kṛṣṇa-Vāsudeva (*sadguṇya- vigrahaṁ devam: Ahirbudhnya- samhitā* 6.25).⁴⁰ These six *guṇas* are the *aprākṛta guṇas*, conceived as the ‘attributes’ of the Creator which appear at the first phase of movement in His potential state- in the ‘*śuddha- sṛṣṭi*’ before, or underlying, the manifestations of the *triguṇas*, whose evolution immediately anticipates the material creation.⁴¹ Vāsudeva is the male aspect of the creative principle quickened into his state of potentiality as the container of the *guṇas* prior to their projection as pairs in the vyūha stages. Before he is stirred to activity by the waking presence of the female principle (*śakti*), the source is sleeping potential only, known as Nārāyaṇa; his awoken, actively potential state is God Vāsudeva.⁴² Hence in the present chaturvyūha icon, the primeval power- God Nārāyaṇa is not represented and the four manifested emanations are the four Vṛṣṇi powers of which Kṛṣṇa is the foremost and most important emanation which is responsible for the three other emanations.

Vṛṣṇi triads-

It was another very important theme of the local Mathura tradition which later on became universal. In this kind of representation, three most important personalities of Vṛṣṇi clan: Samkarṣaṇa, Ekānamśā and Vāsudeva were represented standing side by side. This theme especially the Goddess Ekānamśā was identified by Joshi for the first time.⁴³ He has indicated towards the similarity of Ekānamśā with Subhadrā and Vindhyavāsini *devī* (the most popular goddess in eastern U.P.).⁴⁴ Srinivasan has talked of five Vṛṣṇi triads.⁴⁵ Four of these are from Mathura region (M.M. Nos.

67.529; U 45; 15.912 and a ring-stone relief from Pakistan). The fifth triad was actually found as three separate sculptures from Gaya, Bihar (Patna Museum Nos. 11300; 11269 and 11299). Another Vṛṣṇi triad which was found from Sanghel near Nuh in Haryana, a part of greater Braj region, (Kurukshetra Museum Acc. No. 1/395) has been published recently.⁴⁶ The already mentioned rock painting from Tikla should be considered the earliest representation of this type till now known in India.

Except for Gaya example the condition of these triads is not good. The genealogical hierarchy is followed in the representation of these triads as the eldest brother Samkarṣaṇa is shown the tallest and the first in the row. The central figure is that of Ekānamśā who was slightly elder than Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa. Her height is the least as was a norm for a female representation. To the right of Ekānamśā, Kṛṣṇa is represented. Generally the two male deities are shown with four hands having their usual attributes. Ekānamśā is always shown with two hands in these triads, one of her hand is placed near the waist holding a water pot while the right hand is generally shown in *abhaya mudrā*.

As subsidiary deities to Jina Neminātha-

There are total six such representations where Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma are shown standing as adorants or attendants to Jina Neminātha with whom they were associated by lineage.⁴⁷ One of such images (Lucknow Museum No. J. 47) represents both the deities Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma as four handed with usual Kushan attributes. It is one of the earlier images of such type and is datable to 1st century A.D. The other five representations are: Lucknow Museum Nos. J. 4; J. 60; J. 117 and M.M. Nos. B. 15 and 34.2488. Here, both the deities are shown in *namaskāra mudrā* and Balarāma figure is identifiable by his serpent hood.

Salient features of Gupta period Viṣṇu images-

Most of the features of Kushan Viṣṇu images continued during the Gupta period. Some of the features which were occasionally observed, became more regular. The halo became more popular and was sometimes decorated. The *udbāhu* feature of Kushan Viṣṇu images was replaced by *pralambabāhu*. Now, the main emphasis of the artist was to work on the frontal aspect of an image rather than on both sides as was the norm in Kushan images. The headgear of Viṣṇu continued to be either a turban or

a *mukṭa* but it was often decorated with a lion's face or crocodile's face from which pearl streams were shown to be coming out. The *vanamālā* of Viṣṇu became *ājānulambini* and it became an essential part of Vaiṣṇava iconography. The *katisūtra* of Kushan Viṣṇu images which was quite thick in appearance gave place to a thin *netrasūtra*. Many times the disc and mace of Viṣṇu were now represented by *chakrapuruṣa* and *gadādevī*.

Vaikuṇṭha Mūrti-

It was one of the more popular themes of Vaiṣṇava iconography during the Gupta period at Mathura. In such sculptures three faces were represented, the central one possibly denoting Viṣṇu and the two side ones- *Simha* and *Varāha*. The position of these mukhas on either side was not according to a single norm as in some sculptures *Simha mukha* was to the right and *Varāha mukha* to the left of central mukha (M.M. Nos. 34.2525; 34.2480; 54.3836) and in other sculptures it was the opposite (M.M. Nos. D 28; 15.771; 34.2419). Two *Vaikuṇṭha* images from Mathura (as *Vāsudeva- Para* aspect) have been mentioned by Srinivasan, one of which belongs to the late Kushan period (University Gallery, University of Florida No. S-82-I-UFG) and the other belongs to Gupta period (Brooklyn Museum No. 79.260.12).⁴⁸ Another such image of Gupta period has been published by Maxwell, now housed at Boston Museum of Fine Art.⁴⁹ One Gupta period *Vaikuṇṭha* image is housed in National Museum; N. Delhi (No. 67.161). These faces were possibly carved keeping in mind the *chaturvyūha* concept of *Pāñcharātrins*. The positions of these mukhas based on Purāṇic literature are as follows:⁵⁰

Frontal, or east direction- *Puruṣamukha* – *Vāsudeva*– Representative of *Bala*.

Right, or south direction- *Simhamukha*- *Samkarṣaṇa*- Representative of *Jñāna*.

Left, or north direction- *Varāhamukha*- *Pradyumna*- Representative of *Aiśvarya*.

Back, or west direction- *Kapila* or *Raudramukh*- *Aniruddha*- Representative of *Śakti*.

Maxwell, basing his explanations based on *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* differs from the above list.⁵¹ He identifies the northern face as *Varāha* or *Aniruddha* representing female power. The eastern face has been identified as *Saumya* or *Vāsudeva* representing the main power. The southern face has been identified with *Narasimha* or *Samkarṣaṇa* and is representative of knowledge. The western face has

been identified with Kapila or Pradyumna and the ferocious face has been considered as being the representative of sovereignty.

Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu-

Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu is the more evolved form of Vaikuṇṭha mūrti.⁵² Five Viśvarūpa mūrtis are known from north India. One is from Garhwa (Lucknow Museum No. B 223) which is actually a part of a sculptural panel; two are from Mathura housed in Mathura Museum (M.M. Nos. 42-43.2989; 54.3837) and two fragmentary pieces of aureole from Mathura housed in National Museum (Nos. 58.11/24; 66.78). *Viśvarūpa darśanayoga* has been mentioned in detail in the eleventh chapter of *Śrīmadbhagawadgītā*. It seems that the concept of Viśvarūpa Viṣṇu images would have been taken from there. One of the sculptures from Mathura (M.M. No. 2989, Fig. 7.3); the central face is of Vāsudeva or Viṣṇu who is shown wearing a *vanamālā* running down his shoulders. The face to the right of central face is of Narasimha while the face to the left is of Varāha. These two faces are shown coming out from behind the shoulders and an impression is given upon the viewer that the main body part of these figures is hiding behind the main body of Viṣṇu. The right side (towards Narasimha) is too much broken while in the left side of enlarged *prabhāmaṇḍala*, a number of deities are visible.

Important Vibhavas of Lord Viṣṇu-

Like the vyūha concept, vibhava concept was also a very important part of Vaiṣṇavism. There does not seem to be an agreement in the Purāṇic literature over of the issue of the number of Viṣṇu's incarnations and their names. During the medieval period, the often represented incarnations on *daśāvatāra* reliefs are: Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Nṛsimha, Vāmana, Paraśurāma, Daśarathī Rāma, Balarāma, Buddha and Kalki. Interestingly, the most important of the incarnations of Viṣṇu, Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa got started to be treated at par with Viṣṇu.

Matsya-

No such representation of this incarnation has been found till now dating back to Kushan and Gupta periods. Only during the post-Gupta and Early medieval periods, it was represented as the first of the incarnations in the *daśāvatāra* reliefs. I found a small sculpture piece from the important site of Cheeta Khera in Mathura district,

which I suggest to be the representation of a fish (Fig. 7.4). Two projections on either side of the main body (fangs of the fish) indicate the possibility of such identification. This piece, if it has been rightly identified by me, might be the earliest representation of Matsya *avatāra*. To me, the piece does not appear to be later than 3rd – 4th century.

Varāha-

There is only one extant image of Kushan period Varāha from India and that was found at Mathura (M.M. No. 65.15). It is a part of a broken sculptural panel. Varāha is identifiable by the heavy part of neck which is broken and the lady figure (goddess earth) which he is holding from his snouts (now broken). It is the only Vaiṣṇava image of Kushan period which depicts a *śrīvatsa* symbol at the Lord's chest. Two of the lower visible hands are put across his waist while with his possible two upper hands; he held Sūrya and Chandra whose figures are almost identical riding their respective chariots drawn by horses. Varāha is shown standing in *ālīdha* posture. A late Kushan Varāha image from Mathura is now housed at Los Angeles County Museum of Art (No. M.72.53.8).⁵³ During the Gupta period, Varāha worship became quite popular. The best example of Varāha in early Gupta art is the Udayagiri *Bhūmiuddhāra Pratimā*. Another such image was found at Eran, now housed at Gwalior Museum. Many of the Varāha images found from Mathura (like National Museum No. 66.21 etc.) belong to Gupta period. Depiction of Nṛvarāha was more popular than Yajñavarāha.

Nṛsimha-

No confirm evidence of Nṛsimha has come to light from Kushan period. There are possibilities of the presence of this concept on the Bhita Chaturvyūha image where on two sides a Varāha and a Simha have been shown, only in the case if these were not related with chaturvyūha concept. Besides, many findings of lion's head from Mathura region might have some link with Nṛsimha images. During Gupta period, a number of Nṛsimha images have been found but at Mathura independent representation of Nṛsimha was not a popular theme.

Vāmana-

A Lucknow Museum image (No. J 610) of Kushan period has convincingly been identified as Vāmana by Joshi.⁵⁴ During the Gupta period, the subject became popular.

Three images of Trivikrama are known from Braj region (M.M. Nos. I 19; 36. 2664 and a third image from Pawaya, now housed at Gwalior Museum). The God Trivikrama is shown lifting his left leg to at least waist height (up to shoulder height) to measure the three worlds as donated by King Bali to God Vāmana. Joshi has also identified a Hayagrīva image (horse faced incarnation of Viṣṇu) on the broken sculpture of Trivikrama at Mathura Museum (No. 36.2464).⁵⁵

Samkarṣaṇa/ Balarāma-

Samkarṣaṇa was one of the more popular deities of ancient India. He is one of the deities whose images are available as some of the earliest images of Brāhmaṇical art during 2nd – 1st century B.C. Four of the Samkarṣaṇa images are datable to Śuṅga period.⁵⁶ One of which has been found from Jansuti village, Mathura (Lucknow Museum No. G 215). The other image belonging to circa 2nd century B.C. has been found from Varanasi (Bharat Kala Bhawan No. 279). Two of these images have been found from Tumain near Gwalior.⁵⁷ All these images have snake canopies on their heads and wherever hands are preserved they carry plough and mace or pestle. There are 21 Samkarṣaṇa images known from Mathura region datable to Kushan period.⁵⁸ Most of these are now housed at Mathura and Lucknow Museums. Many of the types of Samkarṣaṇa images have been discussed earlier in this chapter. The typical Samkarṣaṇa images display following features-

1. Generally his images are shown with a snake canopy (seven hooded). Only a few sculptures are without serpent canopy.
2. He is generally shown with two natural hands. Only five-six examples of Kushan period are known where he is shown with four hands (three Viṣṇu triads, a Jina image and M.M. No. 17.1325 which seems to be an exceptional image). Though, during Gupta period he is generally shown with four hands.
3. Except for Viṣṇu triads and Jina images, Samkarṣaṇa is represented in a peculiar position. His left hand holds a wine goblet near his chest and the right hand is stretched over the head near the top of the snake canopy. His right palm is always shown open in such representations.
4. He generally wears a *mukuta* with three crests and an ear-ring in his left ear. A tight necklace or a string of single beads around the neck is observed in majority of sculptures.

5. A short *vanamālā* or *vaijayantīmālā* is observed in Kushan images of this deity. During the later periods, this *mālā* becomes longer up to the knees and takes the shape of a floral garland with jewels in between at regular intervals.

Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa-

As has been already mentioned that Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa's iconography had got merged with Viṣṇu's iconography possibly since the beginning of Brāhmanical sculptural art; in this section only episodes of the life of Kṛṣṇa would be included as found in sculptural art. There is a Kushan period sculptural relief (M.M. No. 1344, Fig. 7.5) which D.R. Sahni and V.S. Agrawala identified as Vasudeva carrying baby Kṛṣṇa across Yamuna to Gokul.⁵⁹ Though, I strongly believe that there should be representation of such episodes in the Kushan art of Mathura, I am not sure about the identification in the present case as the serpent figure who should be the King of *Pātāla* or water world is looking in the opposite direction to the figure that is being considered Vasudeva carrying the Lord. Because in such a case, the serpent king should be shown paying obeisance towards the figure as over his head was the the supreme deity in the form of a child. This lapse in proper representation might have been because of the inability of the artist. V.S. Agrawala thinks that the seven-hooded Nāga is advancing towards opposite bank.

There are two other Kushan representations on red sandstone weight- stones which have been identified as Kṛṣṇa fighting with Keśin *daitya*. One of these is in Mathura Museum (No. 58. 4476)⁶⁰ and the other one is in a private Pakistani collection.⁶¹

During the Gupta period, depiction of the life- stories of Kṛṣṇa became quite popular. Most of these examples have been found from the temple walls of Gupta period temples at places like Garhwa, Deogarh, Eran, Varanasi, Mandor, Bhitargaon etc. in north India. The terracotta reliefs of *Dāna-līlā* scene, Govardhana-*dhārī* Kṛṣṇa from Rangmahal are quite significant. From Mathura two sculptures of Govardhana-*dhārī* Kṛṣṇa (M.M. No. D 47, Fig. 7.6) and *Kāliya-mardan* (M.M. No. 44. 3374) date back to the late Gupta period.

New Vaiṣṇava findings from Braj region-

A Possible Vṛṣṇi Vīra (Fig. 7.7)-

This image was found at a shrine in Sunrakh village near Vrindavan. The headless bust of a standing male is quite damaged and seems to be belonging to Kushan period. The left hand of the deity was kept near his waist holding a sword. His right hand is completely missing but it might have been in *abhaya mudrā* as was the norm with Kushan images. Possibly a dagger was tied at his *katisūtra* which is distinctly visible in this image along with the thick folds of drapery tied at the waist. He is shown wearing a thick necklace like many other Vaiṣṇava images of Kushan period. Heavy armlets are visible in the remaining left hand of the deity. The *uttarīya* which the deity is shown wearing, appears to be of indigenous nature and is definitely different from the drapery worn by the Kushan royal images. As sword was a feature well associated with Vīra cult like that of Malhar image and the Kondamottu relief, there is a good possibility of this image representing a Vṛṣṇi Vīra. The total height of the image would have been almost equal to the height of the Mora torsos (possibly Vṛṣṇi Vīras).

Broken lower part of a Viṣṇu image (Fig. 7.8)-

This standing (in *samasthānaka mudrā*) sculptural piece was found at village Baraut in Chhata *tehsil* of district Mathura. This is a lower part of a Viṣṇu image which is identifiable by the thick *vanamālā* running down the knees and the mace held in the right hand of the deity. The mace has been kept upside down. The deity would have possibly had four hands. The sculpture would have been of about 6' height when complete. The image possibly belongs to late Kushan-early Gupta period as indicated by its static and crude modelling.

Viṣṇu Aṣṭabhuḥjī (Fig. 7.9)-

This broken and much mutilated bust of *Aṣṭabhuja* Viṣṇu was observed at a shrine in village Jaint of Mathura. The height of the broken figure is about 3' and when complete it would have measured about 6'. It is fourth such sculpture so far known in India datable to Kushan period. Only seven hands of the deity are visible. In one of his right hands (possibly second), he holds a sword and in the second left hand, he hold a *chakra*. In the hands, wristlets are visible and in one of the left hand he is wearing an armlet. His natural right hand is completely missing. The position of the

extra six hands is *udbāhu* rising from behind the hand in the space between the shoulder and the elbow. This was a typical way of representing Kushan multi armed Viṣṇu images. From the pose of natural left hand it appear that it would have been kept at the waist probably holding a conch as is observed in most of the Kushan period Viṣṇu images.

A Bust of Paraśurāma (Fig. 7.10)-

This image was found at a shrine in the village Radhakund near Govardhan. The image is quite unique in the sense that it represents a deity with *jaṭājṛta* head-dress holding a battle-axe (*paraśu*) with a small handle in his right hand. As it is well known fact that Paraśurāma's main weapon was *paraśu*, there is a possibility that this image might actually represent him. Śiva was another God who was represented with a battle axe in some of the early images but the shape of that is too different from that of image in discussion. The battle axe associated with Śiva is actually trident- battle axe. In some medieval Śiva sculptures from south India, similar *paraśu* as in the present image has been observed. No other characteristic which can confirm its identification as either of the two deities, is not observable in the image in discussion, e.g. third eye, trident etc. It is not clear in the broken image whether the deity was two or four handed. So, if it is actually the two handed image of Paraśurāma, then, it should be one of the earliest representations of him in Indian art datable to about the late Kushan period.

Samkarṣaṇa images (Figs. 7.11 a & b, 7.12 and 7.13)-

These two sculptural pieces (Figs. 7.11a & b), actually forming a single sculpture of Balarāma were found at a religious shrine of village Rajpur in district Hathras. This village happens to be my maternal village. This image is a typical image of Kushan period's Balarāma. He is shown holding a wine goblet in his left hand and his open right hand is raised above his head near the seven hooded canopy. He wears a typical necklace made of leaves and flowers just like the famous Chaturvyūha image discussed earlier. Folds of the body of Ananta *sarpa* are visible behind the deity's body. Not much can be made of other features like ear- ring and head- dress because the sculpture is quite mutilated. The total length of the figure is about 5'. Another such Balarāma image of Kushan times but much more mutilated and headless as well, was observed at a shrine of village Maghera in district Mathura (Fig. 7.12). A much

broken middle part of a Samkarṣaṇa image was observed at village Kosikhurd in district Mathura (Fig. 7.13). This image belongs to Kushan period and is identifiable as Samkarṣaṇa by the coils of serpent visible behind the figure.

Trivikrama images (Figs. 7.14 and 7.15)-

This image (Fig. 7.14) was observed at village Palai near Govardhan. The sculpture is made of spotted red sandstone and is more than 2' in height. The image is very mutilated and only this much detail survives as to identify it as a Trivikrama image. The identifying features are the long *vanamālā* which is running in the manner as should be in a Trivikrama image. His left foot is resting on the earth but the right leg is raised to the waist height to measure the three *lokas*. The right leg is totally missing but there are certain indications of this position of the leg. Though, too broken, the image is important as an early image representing this episode and might be dated to late Kushan or early Gupta period (ca. late 3rd - early 5th century A.D.).

Another Trivikrama image was observed at a shrine in Khera village (Fig. 7.15), situated near Govardhan. This image might be dated to early medieval period, about 8th – 9th century A.D.

Bust of a Viṣṇu image (Fig. 7.16)-

This headless bust of Lord Viṣṇu was found at a shrine in village Sandhan Khera in district Agra. Its hands are also broken. The image is identifiable by the *śrīvatsa* symbol visible at his chest. The deity is shown wearing a torque and a beautiful necklace. On stylistic grounds, the image is dateable to Gupta period.

Headless statue of Viṣṇu (Fig. 7.17)-

This almost life size statue was observed at a shrine in village Patsal in district Agra. Its head and both the arms are missing. The deity is shown standing in *samapāda sthānaka* pose. He is possibly shown without any upper garment and as his lower garment he is wearing a *dhotī*. A thick pleat of the *dhotī* is running vertically downwards in the space left between his legs and the *dhotī* has been tied at the waist as the two folds which are arranged like a *kati-sūtra*. The knot of the *dhotī* has been tied at the left side of his waist, two folds of which are running down on his left thigh. He is shown wearing a peculiar U- shaped torque, in which three strings are visible.

At the upper part of chest, this torque contains some golden object with beaded decoration in the horizontal part of it, decorating the upper portion of the deity's chest. The *vaijayantīmālā* which is running across is left shoulder is the identifying feature of this image as Lord Viṣṇu. The image might be dated to Gupta period on stylistic grounds.

Bust of Viṣṇu (Fig. 7.18)-

This small bust of Lord Viṣṇu was observed at a shrine in Chauma Shahpur village in district Agra. The God is wearing a peculiar *mukūṭa* which appears to be more like a *kirīṭa mukūṭa*. The crown is so mutilated that it is not possible to identify the presence of lion face carrying pearl festoons in it. Two sharp projections at the base of the crown on either side and the one at top are quite interesting. The deity is shown wearing a beaded torque and a roughly triangular beaded necklace. He is shown wearing heavy round *kuṇḍalas*. The eyes of the deity are half closed in *nāsāgradṛṣṭi*. The identifying feature of the image as Viṣṇu is the depiction of *śrīvatsa* symbol at the centre of the chest. This sculpture might be dated to Post-Gupta period about 7th century A.D.

Architectural frieze depicting Viṣṇu's *vibhavas* (Fig. 7.19)-

This architectural fragment which would definitely have been a part of temple structure was found at a shrine in village Bachhagaon in district Mathura. This fragment is quite interesting as such representations are not usually observed in such positions as are shown in it. Though much mutilated, the figures related with various incarnations of Lord Viṣṇu are identifiable. The lowermost from left side depicts the Vāmana incarnation in which possibly the King Bali is shown lying at the feet of Lord in adoration. Lord Vāmana is shown of short stature with a slightly staunch belly. The superhuman nature of the image is identifiable by the remains of broken halo behind the head and the remains of *vanamālā* below the knees. The deity is wearing two richly jewelled torque and possibly had his hair tied in a *jūḍā* at the back. The sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) is also visible at the chest of the deity. His left hand holds a *kamaṇḍalu* in a peculiar manner while the right hand is too mutilated to identify. The *chhatra* which the deity usually holds is probably missing in this representation.

The second lower figure also represents a vibhava and it is clear by the halo depicted behind the head of this figure. Two features are remarkable in this sculpture; one is that the deity has not been shown wearing a *vanamālā* and the second is the hair of the deity have not been arranged in *jaṭājūta* like a *yogin*. I am inclined to identify this figure as Lord Rāma who is holding a bow (*dhanuṣa*) in his right hand and probably held an arrow (*vāṇa*) in his mutilated left hand. The deity is wearing a beaded necklace round the neck. It appears that he is shown wearing a round turban over his hair-do. He wears a *dhotī* as his lower garment which has been tied at his waist by tightening the folds of the *dhotī* by folding again and again. The ripple effect which is observable in this sculpture is quite remarkable and has been observed in a number of Gupta and late Gupta sculptures from north and central India.

The third lower figure is without a halo but has to be identified as a vibhava because of the presence of *vanamālā* at the feet. The hair of the deity has been arranged in the shape of a three ringed *jūdā*, the size of the ring is a decreasing order. The deity is wearing a beaded jewelled torque round the neck. The *dhotī* has been tied round the waist in the same fashion as in the previous mentioned figure but at knees a thick band of *dhotī* folds is observable as is observed in many Vaiṣṇava images of Gupta period. The object which he held with both his hands is not clear in the sculpture. I suggest that this might be the representation of Samkarṣaṇa vibhava of Viṣṇu. If it is not Samkarṣaṇa, then the only option left (though very weak) is Paraśurāma.

The upper right figure is the representation of the Kūrma *avatāra* of *Bhagavān* Viṣṇu. During the episode of *Samudra- manthana*, Mandarachala was made the *mathānī*, *Nāgarāja* Vāsuki the rope and Lord Viṣṇu appeared as Kūrma incarnation to form the base for the *manthana*. In the figure under discussion, two figures are visible who are churning the sea; these should be identified as the representatives of *devatās* and *daityas*. The left side figure which has a similar hair arrangement as the lower third figure, might be identified as a *devatā* while the right side figure which is completely defaced might be a *rākṣasa*. At the base, below the churning pot, Kūrma (tortoise) incarnation of the almighty Lord is visible.

The upper left figure is the representation of the Nṛsimha incarnation of Lord Viṣṇu. The head of the deity is missing in this sculpture but he is easily identifiable. The deity is shown in *ālīdha* posture where his right foot has been shown kept on a wicker stool. He is wearing a thick torque and the *vanamālā* is visible at his left foot. Lord Nṛsimha has kept the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu on his thighs and is vigorously piercing the chest of the demon with the nails of his both hands. It is a very vivid depiction of the episode as the demon is shown holding some *āyudha* in his right hand which is falling to the right side, but it is of no use as the mighty God is so forcefully piercing his body.

I think that this architectural frieze, which also shows some vine- creeper decoration between the lower left and upper left figures, might be dated to Gupta period. In any case, it should not be later than late Gupta period (circa 625 A.D.). It might be one of the earliest representations of Lord Viṣṇu's Vibhavas in sculptural art so far known. Some of the vibhavas (like Varāha and Samkarṣaṇa) were already represented before or by the Gupta period but these were not shown in a panel as is the case in this frieze. Total five incarnations have been depicted on this frieze. It is quite probable that it formed a part of the entrance door- jamb of a Gupta period Viṣṇu temple. In that case, the other side's architectural frieze would have contained the figures of remaining five important vibhavas like Matsya, Varāha etc.

Kṛṣṇa-līlā scenes⁶²-

Sculpture relief possibly representing Kāliya-mardana episode (Fig. 7.20)-

This relief was observed at a shrine in village Maholi. The relief is interesting as it represents two human figures and a female figure. The male Nāga figure which occupies the maximum proportion in the relief is shown seven hooded while the female is represented with five sanke hoods. Earlier, observing the photograph of the relief, most of the scholars suggested it to be a Nāga-Nāgī panel which were quite popular during Kushan and early Gupta periods. But after visiting the site many times and cleaning the sculpture carefully, it was found that the Nāga-Nāgī figures in the relief were not intended to be the prominent deities. They are shown with folded hands (*añjali mudrā*) towards the side of third figure. Now this figure has to be the

most prominent figure in the relief and it is quite easy to identify him by looking at his features in detail. This third figure, though not as prominent in size, is shown with a *vanamālā* and is not in *añjali mudrā*. In his left hand, he is either holding a *śankha* or a *kamalanāla*. His right hand is missing. He is shown wearing a beaded necklace and heavy *kuṇḍalas* in his ears. Unlike the high stature of him in the relief, he is not crowned and only has his hair arranged in an upward manner tied as a top knot. Now it is a bit apparent that the prominent figure of the relief is a human deity and occupies the lesser proportion of the relief because the sculptor aimed to depict a life-episode of his in this relief. Because of its *vanamālā*, this deity must be a Vaisnavite deity and in human form, it can only be Lord Kṛṣṇa. I know of only three episodes of the life of Kṛṣṇa where a serpent figure can be represented. First can be the representation of his elder brother Samkarṣaṇa who is believed to be the incarnation of the cosmic serpent Śeṣa, the other two episodes are the killing of the serpent demon Aghāsura and *Kāliyamardana*. There is no possibility of the representation of the first theme as Balarāma is never shown with folded hands against Kṛṣṇa in any of the early reliefs. The possibility of the second theme also ends because in that episode, serpent King Aghāsura was killed at the hands of Kṛṣṇa. So, now the third possibility appears to be the episode represented in this relief. As Kṛṣṇa subdued the Nāga Kāliya, his wife or wives came out of the river Yamuna and prayed to the Lord to forgive the Nāga Kāliya and even Nāga Kāliya prayed to the God in his pitiable condition to forgive himself.⁶³ This relief depicts the next incident of this episode as the Nāga Kāliya and his chief queen are either shown praying to Kṛṣṇa or worshipping him. The whole background of the relief has been decorated with lotus flowers and lotus buds to provide the appearance of a water body, possibly Yamuna or a pond near it, in this case. The relief might be dated to circa 4th - 5th century A.D. as the sculpture is made of red sand stone with some features in continuance of Kushan artistic traditions while the position of the eyes and the delineation of the bodies indicate a strong Gupta art influence. All other reliefs representing the episode of *Kāliya-mardana* depict the subduing of the serpent, generally Kṛṣṇa thrashing his hoods by his legs or Kṛṣṇa dancing on the serpent hoods. This sculpture might be the earliest representation of this episode of *Kāliya-mardana* in the realm of Indian art. The sculptural reliefs at the cave nos. II and IV of Badami depict a number of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* episodes.⁶⁴ In the cave II relief, the serpent king is shown with folded hands against the attacking Kṛṣṇa while

in the cave IV relief, the depiction is more interesting for our sculpture in discussion as it depicts Kāliya with folded hands along with his two wives.⁶⁵

Govardhana-dhāraṇa image (Fig. 7.21a & b)-

This sculptural relief made of buff coloured sandstone was observed at a shrine in village Jikhangaon of district Mathura. It is one of the most interesting and the earliest depictions of this episode in the arena of Indian art. A terracotta panel from Rangmahal region and two sculptural reliefs (Bharat Kala Bhawan No. 147 and Mathura Museum No. D 47) datable to Gupta period are also known which depict this story in early art. An attempt has been made by the sculptor to present a vivid view of the Govardhana hill and the region of Vraja. As happened in some early Kṛṣṇa-līlā representations, in the relief under discussion, the maximum space has been provided to a cow whose calf is sucking the milk from her udders. This depiction is to present the panorama of Vraja where cows were found in abundance. Secondly, the depiction of the cow and her calf symbolizes the more important *bhakta-vatsala chhavi* of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The cow is not shown in a naturalistic manner but the calf has been shown with a hump. Lord Kṛṣṇa is shown lifting the mountain with his left palm while his right arm has been placed probably at his right thigh as to support the balancing act of lifting the mountain. Kṛṣṇa is shown wearing a *vanamālā*, a beautiful torque, *keyūras* and a very peculiar head-dress (*kākapakṣa*) characteristic of his youthful divine nature. Such type of hair-do is also observed in some other Gupta images. In his ears, he is probably wearing long floral *kuṇḍalas*. He is wearing a *dhotī* tied at the waist. The posture of Kṛṣṇa is shown in such a way that it appears that he held the mountain at his palm with so ease, without any trouble at all. Kṛṣṇa has been shown surrounded by a *gopikā* on either side. *Gopikās* are shown carrying a pot possibly filled with butter milk which they are supporting by their right hand while their left hand was possibly put at their waist. It is one of the earliest representations in Indian art depicting the closeness of Kṛṣṇa with *gopikās* which later on became the most important theme for *Rāsa-līlās*. The mountain is shown in such a manner that it really appears like a mountain but whether trees and some animals were shown there on the top surface of the mountain or not, is not clear because of the weathering of the stone. On the basis of iconographic features and stylistic ground, this sculpture might be dated to Gupta period about early fifth century A.D. This sculptural relief might be

considered as one of the inspirations for the later magnificent Govardhana-*dhāraṇa* reliefs from Mamallapuram.

Sculptural relief depicting Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* scenes (Fig. 7.22)-

This sculptural relief made of red sandstone was observed at village Chauma Shahpur in district Agra. The relief is slightly different from other such reliefs known till now. It appears that the depiction of the story starts from the left side where two males with heavy muscular built are shown with folded hands. In the neck of left figure a torque is visible, confirming their identity as of not being *mallas*. To their right is a female having *chaurī* in her left hand. Then the panel is followed by the representation of two persons sitting on a wicker stool. One of them is a male who is shown sitting to the right side of the lady, confirming the stature of the lady as *vāmāṅgī* (i.e. his wife). The lady is carrying a child in her lap and possibly breast feeding him (from her right breast). One very interesting feature in the iconography of the male is the depiction of *abhaya* in his right hand. He is also shown wearing a jewelled torque. It appears that this is an attempt to represent the scene of the birth of the almighty in the form of child Kṛṣṇa. Two persons sitting on the wicker stool might be identified with Vasudeva and Devakī. It is generally believed that they were in the Kamsa's prison and in very poor state at the time of birth but the artist has tried to provide them the higher stature which they deserved being the parents of the Supreme Power of the world. Two side figures with folded hands might be identified as *devatās* who came to offer their obeisance to the *Bhagavān*. One important reference can be drawn from *Harivamśa Purāṇa* which mentions that when Kamsa had gone to the house of Devakī to kill the newly born Ekānamśā (children had already been transferred), the women present in the house of Devakī started to cry.⁶⁶ This reference indicates that Vasudeva and Devakī were living in their as per their higher status but were in a kind of house arrest especially related with the issues of child birth. To the right of these figures, the most popular Kṛṣṇa theme of lifting the Govardhana hill has been depicted. The God is lifting the hill with his left hand (palm) and the right hand has been put on his right thigh as to balance the weight of the hill by distributing it on his thigh. To the right of Kṛṣṇa, under the hill, a cow has been represented whose calf is sucking the milk from her udders. Here again the meaning of the representation of the cow and her calf is to symbolize the *bhakta- vatsala* aspect of Kṛṣṇa besides

representing the locale of Vraja. There is a possibility of the depiction of another cow in the register above the lower cow. This sculptural relief might be dated to circa 6th century A.D. to early 7th century A.D.

Sculpture relief depicting Kṛṣṇa-līlā scenes (Figs. 7.23- 7.27)-

This quite an important relief (Fig. 7.23) was observed at a shrine in village Chursain in district Hathras. In the first scene (Fig. 7.24) from the right side of the panel, the birth scene of Lord Kṛṣṇa can be identified. The first figure sitting on a high stool, decorated with lotus flower design is a male figure and should be identified with Vṛṣṇi *vamśī* Vasudeva, father of Kṛṣṇa. He is wearing a beaded necklace and held some indistinct object in his right hand. Left hand of him has been shown kept at his left knee while his right hand kept at his waist as he is eagerly looking at the incident of Kṛṣṇa's birth. Another figure is shown sitting by the side of Vasudeva on a similar type of stool. This figure appears to be of a lady. The maximum space in the relief has been provided to a reclining lady lying on a cot with her just born child by the side of her and the lady is anxious to breast feed her child for the first time. This lady and the child can be easily identified with *mātā* Devakī and her son, the paramount force of the world- the Lord Kṛṣṇa. The pose of reclining Devakī is probably inspired from the contemporary iconography of *Śeṣashāyī* Viṣṇu images. Two female attendants are looking after the mother; one of them is possibly holding a *chaurī*. One very important feature in this scene is that the lady sitting on a high stool is holding a foot of Devakī in her lap and is probably in the process of applying some medicine on the sole of Devakī's feet. I am inclined to identify this lady figure either with a goddess or a learned nurse. The male seated figure can never be Kamsa in such scenes because he came to know about the birth of the child only after the children had been replaced between Devakī and Yaśodā.

The second scene (Fig. 7.25) depicts the episode of the transfer of child Kṛṣṇa in exchange with Nandagopa's daughter, the goddess Ekānamśā. The right side figure should be identified with Vasudeva holding Kṛṣṇa in his lap while the left side figure should be of Nandagopa who holds child Ekānamśā in his lap. *Harivamśa Purāṇa* does not mention the incident of Vasudeva crossing Yamuna. It only mentions that Vasudeva had taken the child Kṛṣṇa to the house of Nanda and Yaśodā situated

somewhere in the city. A good idea could have been got about the difference in the dressing of a royal personage like Vasudeva and the head of *Gopas* like Nanda, but unfortunately the relief is too mutilated to form an idea about it. In the same scene probably Yaśodā is shown looking at the exchange of the children from a pillar like structure which has actually been carved to convey upon the onlooker the change of place of the incidents from Mathura city to the Vraja. The sculptor has been quite successful in his endeavour because this change of frame can be realized even after so much damage to the relief. There is a feeling of amazing movement and vividness in the representation of this episode which is even more emphasized by the figure of Nanda entering the Vraja. The way in which the body of Nanda is shown coming out of the pillar demarcating the change of the frame might be unparallel in the Indian plastic art.

Then, the next famous episode is represented in which *mātu* Yaśodā is shown churning the butter milk. The child Kṛṣṇa is picking up the butter to put it into his small but the loveliest mouth. Nandagopa who is shown sitting on a high stool is shown looking at the child passionately. One thing which is quite remarkable in this frieze is that when the royal figures of Vasudeva and a lady sat on a stool have been shown, the stool is shown highly ornamented and the pose of the sitting of them is also like a aristocratic person but while representing the episodes of Vraja, the stool has been shown plain without any decoration and the pose of Nanda and Yaśodā is quite simplistic and natural. The head- dress of both of them is quite interesting though highly mutilated. Shape of the butter milk vase is quite similar to the vases found during excavations at archeological sites in the Gupta and late Gupta horizons. The *mathānī* has been tied with a rope which is shown as being pulled by Yaśodā to churn the milk. The sculptor has been successful in representing the intricate feeling of joy and *paramānanda* which the parents go through while their child starts toddling and doing little mischief. What to say of that everlasting and the most enjoyable pleasure which Nanda and Yaśodā witnessed because of being the parents of the almighty who was doing his *līlās* to provide his parents the feel of the *sukha* which only they and not any one else in the world deserved for being his most ardent worshippers.

The next scene (Fig. 7.26) is the killing of Pūtanā. The female demon Pūtanā came to the Yaśodā's house to breast feed child Kṛṣṇa on the order of Kamsa. She had poisonous nipples and put it into the mouth of child Kṛṣṇa with the bad intention of killing him. He being aware of all the intentions of worldly beings sucked her nipple with such a power that her *prāṇa* also came out through her nipple. According to *Harivamśa*, Pūtanā had come to Vraja in the form of a bird but she took the form of a lady to hide her true identity.⁶⁷ In the relief under discussion, neither Pūtanā nor Kṛṣṇa has been shown in a seated position. The scene represents the aftermath of Pūtanā putting her nipple in Kṛṣṇa's mouth; as a standing toddler Kṛṣṇa is pulling the right breast of Pūtanā with his right hand and from his teeth trying to press her nipple with immense power as his right leg is shown slightly lifted because of aggression. Pūtanā has been depicted in a very helpless situation as she is throwing her arms away in enormous pain. She is shown bent on her left knee which indicates her position of putting her breast in the mouth of Kṛṣṇa.

The next scene in the relief possibly depicts the killing of Pralambāsura at the hands of Samkarṣaṇa. *Harivamśa Purāṇa*⁶⁸ tells that while playing in *Bhāṇḍīra vana*, the *gopas* decided that the winner of the game would ride over the shoulders of the losing player. In this way Pralamba in the disguise of a *gopa* carried Samkarṣaṇa on his shoulders to the sky. Then after being reminded by Kṛṣṇa of his divine power, Samkarṣaṇa attacked the demon at his head with his fist (*muṣṭiprahāra*) and killed the demon. This scene in the relief depicts Samkarṣaṇa riding on the shoulders of Pralamba. Samkarṣaṇa can be identified by the remains of *vanamālā* still preserved at his feet and with the fist of the right hand as he just about to attack the demon with his fist. His left hand has been shown kept at his left thigh as to generate the power in the fist to attack the demon. The demon would have been shown with some demonic attributes on his face but not much can be seen now in the mutilated sculpture. By the pose of the demon, it is clear that he is shown flying in the sky as mentioned in *Harivamśa*. Depiction of a story related with Balarāma between the series of episodes related with Kṛṣṇa is really interesting and somehow tells that there was not much difference between them as divine figures.

The next scene (Fig. 7.27) to the left depicts the story of *Yamalāṛjuna bhaṅga*. One day Yaśodā tied child Kṛṣṇa with a *ūkhala* so that he could not do any mischief in her absence and went for her household work. Kṛṣṇa moved along with the *ūkhala* and passed between two *arjuna* trees. Between the trees the stick of the *ūkhala* got entangled and with the thrust of child Kṛṣṇa, both the trees fell down on the earth. This episode is only related with the falling of *arjuna* trees in the *Harivamśa* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇas* but in some later *Purāṇas* like *Bhāgavata*, the two trees have been considered as two Yakṣas who were freed from a curse by Kṛṣṇa.⁶⁹ In the present relief, this scene has been limited to the fall of the two *arjuna* trees only. Kṛṣṇa as a boy is uprooting the trees with his hands. Interestingly, the height of the trees has been shown lesser than Kṛṣṇa. The trees do not appear to be realistic in this depiction. In none of the Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* scenes so far known from India, *Yamalāṛjuna* scene has been depicted in this manner and in all of them two figures are shown coming out of the trees as per the reference of *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* whether at Paharpur, Bangladesh or Badami. This scene would be helpful in establishing an early date of about 6th - 7th century A.D. to this relief.

The last scene (Fig. 7.27) in this relief depicts the story of *Śakata- bhañjana*. As per the account of *Harivamśa* and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*⁷⁰, one day Yaśodā had gone for a bathe in river Yamuna. Meanwhile, child Kṛṣṇa felt the desire of *stanapāna* and in the frustration of not getting it, he kicked the *Śakata* under which he was lying. Because of his powerful kick, all the articles kept in the *Śakata* fell down and most of them got broken. In some later *Purāṇas* like *Bhāgavata*, this episode is related with the killing of a demon named Śakatasura. In the present relief, child Kṛṣṇa has been shown kicking the *Śakata* with his right leg because of which the articles like pots, vases etc. kept in it have been shown in a disturbed state. It again proves that the idea for the depiction of this relief was derived from an earlier *Purāṇa* like *Harivamśa* or *Viṣṇu*.

It is surely one of very interesting and important reliefs depicting the scenes of Kṛṣṇa-*līlā*. One thing which is observable in all the Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* reliefs is that the sequence of various episodes is not the same as mentioned in *Purāṇas*. But the sculptor has tried to depict the *saumya* incidents and *raudra* incidents in an undisturbed sequence. I am inclined to date this relief to about late 6th - 7th century

A.D. and in this way it would be the earliest such relief depicting a number of *līlās*. Although much deteriorated, it appears to be a complete relief. There would have been similar other reliefs at the site depicting the *līlā* scenes but are missing now. Ideally, this relief should be a part of a late Gupta or a slightly later temple.

Sculptures depicting Pūtanā-vadha and Govardhana-dhāraṇa (Fig. 7.28)-

These sculptures were observed in a heap of Vaiṣṇava sculptures which have been arranged in a cemented wall at a shrine in village Jawra, district Mathura. The sculpture to the extreme left at the top in the picture is a part of an architectural frieze which depicts the episode of Pūtanā-vadha. The depiction is very much similar to the above described Pūtanā-vadha relief. In the lower part of it, the episode depicted seems to be Keśin-vadha. This sculptural piece should date back to about 7th century A.D.

In the centre of this figure, a bust of a deity is observable which should be identified with Govardhana-dhāraṇa mudrā. The deity is shown wearing a *vanamālā* and has his right hand kept at his thigh. The left hand which is broken was lifted upward by which he held the hill of Govardhana. This sculpture might be dated to late Gupta period. Besides, in the same picture, two early medieval busts of four handed Viṣṇu are visible.

Bust of a Vaiṣṇava deity (Fig. 7.29)-

This small headless bust was observed at a shrine in village Ladpur of Hathras district. The deity is shown keeping his right hand at his thigh and the left hand probably held the mountain Govardhan. The *vanamālā* running across the knees confirms its Vaiṣṇava identity. There is also a possibility that this bust might belong to Balarāma who drinks wine from a wine goblet. But Balarāma is not usually represented with right hand kept at his thigh as is the case in this image. Besides, a *śrīvatsa* mark is visible at the chest of the deity, so, its identification as Govardhana-dhāraṇa seems to be right. The sculpture might be dated back to about 8th century A.D.

Two Daśavatāra panels (Figs. 7.30 and 7.31)-

During the explorations two *daśāvatāra* panels were observed at a shrine in village Kanwar, near Kaman. In the first panel (Fig. 7.30) only first five *avatāras* are visible, the remaining five would have been depicted on some other relief which is missing. A background of full blown lotus has been provided in the relief. The first vibhava is of Matsya who is depicted completely in fish form. A small figure is visible below Matsya depiction and it might be identified with Vaivasvata Manu who was saved as well as helped to save the living being by this incarnation of Viṣṇu during the time of *mahāpralaya*.⁷¹ The second incarnation in the relief is of Kūrma. Two human figures (possibly representative of *devatās* and *asuras*) are churning the ocean with the help of *mathānī* made of mandarachala *parvata* and rope made of *Nāgarāja* Vāsuki. Kūrma *Bhagavān* had appeared to form the base during the *Samudrā- manthana* process. The third vibhava is of Varāha *Bhagavān* who had appeared to rescue the earth goddess from the atrocities of demon Hiranyākṣa. Nṛvarāha (human shaped with a face of a boar) has been shown in *ālīdha* pose (representative of *vīrabhāva*) in which his left foot has been kept on some raised platform. His left hand has been kept at his thigh to balance the weight of Pṛthvī whom he is holding with his right hand and the snout. The next vibhava represented is of Nṛsimha who is also shown in *ālīdha* pose. His left foot has been shown kept at some evil spirit. He is shown killing Hiranyakaśipu by keeping him at his thighs as usual. Probably he is shown wearing a *vanamālā*. The fifth vibhava is of short and stout bodied Vāmana who is holding the *chhatra* in his left hand, as is usually shown with him.

In the second panel (Fig. 7.31) which contains ten incarnations, the first five have been depicted in the similar fashion as the above mentioned relief but the head dress of the face of Nṛsimha is quite interesting. It is also a possibility that he is shown having four hands, extra two hands are possibly rising from the top of the shoulders. The sixth vibhava is of Paraśurāma standing in *tribhaṅga* posture and is shown probably holding a *paraśu*. The seventh vibhava is of Śrīrāma standing in *tribhaṅga* pose. He is identifiable by his attributes like arrows which he is holding in his right hand and the bow which he is holding in his left hand. The eighth vibhava is of Samkarṣaṇa who is shown holding a very large plough rising above his head. The ninth vibhava shown in the relief is of Buddha who probably holds a *kamaṇḍalu* in his

left hand and his right hand is probably shown is *vitarka mudrā*. The standing pose of Buddha is also *tribhaṅga*. The last and tenth incarnation is of the future vibhava Kalki who is shown riding on a horse. Objects held in both of his hands are indistinct because of mutilation of the relief. His incarnation is said to happen in future at Sambhal near Chandausi which is also a part of greater Braj region. Both these reliefs might date to about 7th- 8th century. There is possibility that the first mentioned relief might date slightly early to about early 7th century. Finding of two *daśāvatāra* reliefs at the same spot might indicate the existence of a Vaiṣṇava *daśāvatāra* temple at the site during late Gupta onward period.

Sculpture possibly depicting Śrīrāma (Fig. 7.32) –

This stone sculpture was observed at a shrine in village Ajhai in district Mathura. The deity is shown holding a bow and an arrow in his hands in a position to shoot the arrow. Besides, the deity is wearing a crown and a *vanamālā*. On the basis of these attributes, the deity might be identified as Vaiṣṇava incarnation of Lord Rāma. The sculpture should date back to about 10th- 11th century A.D.

Sculpture possibly depicting a scene of *Rāmāyaṇa* (Fig. 7.33)-

This sculpture was observed at a religious place in village Rankoli near Barsana. In the sculpture some mythological episode has been depicted. Two young boys without any royal dressing are shown fighting with two horse riding royal persons. Both the boys and their opponents are shown facing in opposite directions. Besides, it can also be observed that the feet of the horses have been tied with a rope. Although the relief is too damaged, but still I believe represents the episode of Lava and Kuśa fighting with the brothers of Lord Rāma when these little kids had captured the horse of *Aśvamedha Yajña* and had subsequently defeated the army of Lord Rāma including his brothers in the jungle. The sculpture might be dated to about 9th century A.D.

Varāha images (Figs. 7.34- 7.39)-

There are about six images found during explorations which might be identified as Varāha images. The earliest of them was found from Bhadal village (Fig. 7.34). It is too broken to form an idea but from the longer right side projection it

appears that it might have been a Varāha image. If it is so, it should be one of the early representations of Varāha dating back to about late Kushan period. The deity would possibly have had only two normal hands. One sculptural piece was found from Vehta village along Yamuna (Fig. 7.35) which depicts a Nāga figure worshipping at the foot of a large figure which is completely missing. This representation can easily be identified as the *Pātāladeva* who is paying his obeisance to the Lord Varāha. This is slightly comparable to the famous Udayagiri Varāha relief. This sculptural piece clearly indicates of the presence of an equally large image in Mathura region as has been observed at many central Indian sites dating back to Gupta period. This piece might be belonging to late Gupta period. The broken image from Kaman (Fig. 7.36) depicts Varāha lifting Bhūdevī. Nṛvarāha is wearing a necklace and double stringed *vaijayantīmālā*. This sculpture might be dated to early medieval period about 9th century A.D. The Nṛvarha image from Mehrauli village near Govardhan (Fig. 7.37) and a small Nṛvarāha image from Jikhangaon (Fig. 7.38) might also be dated to about 9th century A.D. The Nṛvarāha image from Ol village (Fig. 7.39) is a part of an architectural fragment and might be dated to about 9th – 10th century A.D.

***Garuḍāsīna Viṣṇu* (Figs. 7.40 and 7.41)-**

One of such beautiful image was observed at village Kaunhi in district Mathura (Fig. 7.40) which is a part of a circa late 7th century temple lintel. Lord Viṣṇu is riding over the human shaped flying Garuḍa who holds probably a human shaped Nāga and Nāgī in his two hands. Lord Viṣṇu is shown seated over a decorated *kamalāsana*. Two of his hands have been placed in his lap possibly in *dhyāna mudrā*. In his extra left hand, he is shown holding a *śankha* while in the extra right hand, he probably holds a *chakra*. The deity is shown wearing a beautiful pearl necklace, armlets (*keyūras*) and a *vaijayantīmālā*. He is wearing a slightly cylindrical *mukūṭa* which is probably decorated with lion's face holding pearl necklace. Two flying *mālādharas* have been represented behind the *śankha* and *chakra* symbols. In spite of highly skilled representation the image lacks the suppleness and vividness of Gupta period sculptures.

Another Viṣṇu image riding on Garuḍa was found from Chauma Shahpur village in district Agra (Fig. 7.41). This image is a part of an architectural member

and possibly dates back to about 9th century A.D. In this sculpture too, Lord Viṣṇu is shown riding on a human shaped Garuḍa. The four handed Viṣṇu holds a disc and a mace in his extra left and right hands respectively. The objects held in his natural hands are very mutilated.

Other Viṣṇu images (Figs. 7.42- 7.62)-

Two heads of Viṣṇu images were observed at villages Arbai (Fig. 7.42) and Sonkh Khera (Fig. 7.43) in district Mathura. Both these heads are identifiable as Viṣṇu because of the presence of lion's face from which pearl festoons are shown hanging, on the crown. These might be dated to about early medieval period.

An upper part of a Viṣṇu image was observed at a shrine in village Hathiya in district Mathura (Fig. 7.44). Viṣṇu is wearing a two stringed *vaijayantīmālā*, a cylindrical crown decorated with lion's face carrying pearl festoons, a torque, heavy *karṇakunḍalas* and highly ornamental *keyūras*. Of his four hands, only extra left hand has remained intact in which he holds a chakra. His *prabhāmaṇḍala* has been shown decorated with a full blown lotus flower. On the either side of his halo, sitting Brahmā-Brahmāṇī and Śiva-Pārvaṭī have been shown. On the top of the sculpture a row of garland carrying *vidyādhara*s has been shown. This sculpture should date to Pratihāra period about 9th- 10th century A.D.

A four handed broken Viṣṇu image from Kaman (Fig. 7.45), identified with its *vaijayantīmālā*, might date back to about late Gupta period because of its peculiar hair style. Other Viṣṇu images found during explorations are of medieval period. These are: standing Viṣṇu plaque from Jikhangaon in which *Chakrapuruṣa* and *Gadādevī* have also been represented (Fig. 7.46); standing Viṣṇu sculptures from Kanwar (Fig. 7.47) and Karahla (Fig. 7.48); *Śeṣashāyī* Viṣṇu from Maghera (Fig. 7.49); broken part of a broken Viṣṇu image from Narhauḷi which might date to about 6th – 7th century (Fig. 7.50); Viṣṇu images from Paigaon village (Fig. 7.51); from Pisaya village (Fig. 7.52); from Rankoli village (Fig. 7.53); from Band Abdullapur village (Fig. 7.54); from Aring village (Fig. 7.55); from Fenchari village (Fig. 7.56) and from Chhichhinwari village (Fig. 7.57).

A bust of Viṣṇu was found from Seeh village in Mathura (Fig. 7.58) which is made of black coloured stone (possibly an import from deccan region). Its head and both the hands are missing. It is wearing a beautiful necklace, a *yajñopavīta* and a richly decorated lower garment; *śrīvatsa* mark at the chest is the identifying feature of this image as Viṣṇu. This sculpture should date about 9th – 10th century. A very good looking Viṣṇu head was found at Rajnagar in district Hathras (Fig. 7.59). The feel of contemplation on a slightly smiling face and the half closed eyes make it a remarkable head of its time. Lower lip has been slightly thickened but the ears are not as longer as was the norm during that period. Pearl festoons are shown coming out of *makaramukhas* on either side of *Kirīṭa mukūṭa*. The head might be dated back to about 7th – 8th century A.D., though I personally believe it might be earlier as a late Gupta specimen. The sculptural remain found from Cheeta Khera in district Mathura (Fig. 7.60) is actually a part of a Viṣṇu image in which the *chakrapuruṣa* is visible by the side of *chakra āyudha*. Above it the beautifully delineated hand of Lord Viṣṇu is visible. This sculptural piece might date back to Gupta period. A haloed bust of Viṣṇu was found from Sankhi Khera in district Mathura (Fig. 7.61). The deity is wearing a short cylindrical crown with a central rosette design. He is also wearing a necklace and *karṇakuṇḍalas*. *Vaijayanīmālā* is visible running across his shoulders. *Prabhāmaṇḍala* is decorated with scalloped border. The image might be dated to Gupta period on the basis of the shape and design of the crown and the halo. A late medieval Viṣṇu image of circa 12th century A.D. was observed at Nagla Khera village (Fig. 7.62). It has been carved on a small rectangular sandstone piece. Modelling of the image is very crude which follows some set pattern of this type of images. The four handed deity holds a disc in his upper left hand, a mace in one of left hand and a conch in the normal left hand. The posture of one of his right hands is not clear which would possibly have been shown with a no- fear posture and might have held a lotus stalk in it. *Vanamālā* is visible running down to his knees.

¹ R.G. Bhandarkar, "Allusions to Kṛṣṇa in Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*," *The Indian Antiquary*, Vol. III (1874), pp. 14-16.

² J.N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi 1956, p. 91.

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- ³ D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Calcutta 1946, pp. 90-91.
- ⁴ Heinrich Luders, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIV, pp. 194- 202.
- ⁵ Heinrich Luders, *Mathura Inscriptions*, ed. K.L. Janert, Gottingon 1961, p. 155.
- ⁶ J.N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi 1956, pp. 189-191.
- ⁷ D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Calcutta 1946, p. 186.
- ⁸ N.P. Joshi, *Prachin Bhartiya Murtivigyan*, Patna 1977, pp. 88-89.
- ⁹ V.S. Wankankar, *Painted Rock Shelters of India*, Bhopal 2005, pp. 145-146.
- ¹⁰ *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, XI. 12.
- ¹¹ A.K. Narain, "Two Hindu Divinities on the Coins of Agathocles from Ai-Khanum", *Journal of Numismatic Society of India*, XXXV, pp. 73-77.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid., p. 216.
- ¹⁴ J.N. Banerjea, *Religion in Art and Archaeology (Vaiṣṇavism and Śaivism)*, Lucknow 1968, pp. 10-11.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁷ N.P. Joshi, *Iconography of Balarāma*, Delhi 1979, pp. 23-24. The idea of this identification was first mooted by Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 11.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ D.C. Sircar, "Burhikhar Brahmi Inscription", *Proleg of the Indian History Congress*, 1953, pp. 39-41, cit. by Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 185.
- ²⁰ M.L. Nigam, "Identification of Vāsudeva/ Kṛṣṇa Images in Early Indian Art", *Kala*, Vol. VII, 2000-01, pp. 112.
- ²¹ For the details of these sculptures, see Joshi, *Prachin Bhartiya Murtivigyan*, Patna 1977, p. 74 and D.M. Srinivasan, *Many Heads, Arms and Eyes*, Leiden 1997, p. 247. A number of too much worn out, unidentifiable *Brāhmaṇical* images of Kushan period were observed during explorations and some of them would have definitely belonged to Viṣṇu.
- ²² V.S. Agrawala, *Catalogue of Brāhmaṇical Sculptures in Mathura Art*, Lucknow 1951, p. 4.
- ²³ *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 1.01.109.
- ²⁴ N.P. Joshi, *Prachin Bhartiya Murtivigyan*, Patna 1977, p. 76.
- ²⁵ Ibid., pp. 83-84.
- ²⁶ For details of these five sculptures see, Shashi Asthana, *Mathura Kala*, N. Delhi 1999, pp. 13-15.
- ²⁷ S. Czuma, *Kushan Sculpture: the Images from Early India*, Cleveland 1985, pp. 133-134.
- ²⁸ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 247, fn. 45.
- ²⁹ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
- ³⁰ Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey Report*, Vol. VI, p. 20.
- ³¹ J.N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi 1956, p. 401.

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- ³² R.C. Agrawala, “Chaturmukha Śiva-Liṅga from Nand near Pushkar, Rajasthan,” *Puratattva* No. 2, Varanasi 1968-69, pp. 53-54.
- ³³ M.L. Nigam, *op. cit.*, p. 114.
- ³⁴ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, line- drawings: 42 and 43. I was quite surprised to see this unique image at Gwalior Museum and thought it to be Viṣṇu image which was later on confirmed after reading Joshi’s comments about this sculpture.
- ³⁵ K.D. Bajpai, “Two Rare Images of Viṣṇu from Mathura”, *J.U.P.H.S.*, Vol. II, New Series (1954), pp. 17-19.
- ³⁶ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
- ³⁷ D.M. Srinivasan, “Vaiṣṇava Art and Iconography at Mathura”, *Mathura: The Cultural Heritage*, Delhi 1989, p. 387.
- ³⁸ N.P. Joshi, *Iconography of Balarāma*, Delhi 1979, pp. 26-27.
- ³⁹ F. Otto Schrader, *Introduction to the Pāñcharātra and the Ahirbudhnya Samhitā*, Adyar 1916, p. 35, cit. by T.S. Maxwell, *Viśvarūpa*, Delhi 1988, p. 30.
- ⁴⁰ T.S. Maxwell, *op. cit.*, p. 31.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Ibid. (citing S. Gupta 1971)
- ⁴³ N.P. Joshi, *Prachin Bhartiya Murtivigyan*, Patna 1977, pp. 122-126.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid.
- ⁴⁵ D.M. Srinivasan, “The Early Kṛṣṇa Icons: The Case at Mathura”, *Kaladarshan*, ed. Joanna G. Williams, Delhi 1981, pp. 129-132.
- ⁴⁶ Devendra Handa, *Sculptures from Haryana*, Delhi 2006, pp. 38-39 and Pl. 21.
- ⁴⁷ N.P. Joshi, “Early Jaina Icons from Mathura”, *Mathura- The Cultural Heritage*, ed. D.M. Srinivasan, New Delhi 1989, p. 351.
- ⁴⁸ D.M. Srinivasan, *Many Heads, Arms and Eyes*, Leiden 1997, Plate Nos. 18.16 and 18.17.
- ⁴⁹ T.S. Maxwell, *op. cit.*, Plate No. 42.
- ⁵⁰ N.P. Joshi, *Prachin Bhartiya Murtivigyan*, Patna 1977, p. 107.
- ⁵¹ T.S. Maxwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 126-127.
- ⁵² N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 108. Maxwell has shown it with meticulous working as is clear from his Plate No. 50.
- ⁵³ S. Czuma, *op. cit.*, pp. 132-133.
- ⁵⁴ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 87.
- ⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 105.
- ⁵⁶ N.P. Joshi, *Iconography of Balarāma*, Delhi 1979. See the list before the chapter 1.
- ⁵⁷ J.N. Banerjea, *Religion in Art and Archaeology*, Lucknow 1968, p. 14, has put one of these sculptures to 2nd - 3rd century A.D.
- ⁵⁸ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- ⁵⁹ V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

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- ⁶⁰ N.P. Joshi, *Mathura Sculptures*, Mathura 1966, p. 68 and Fig. 64.
- ⁶¹ J.E. van Lohuizen de Leeuw, "Gandhara and Mathura: Their Cultural Relationship," *Aspects of Indian Art*, Leiden 1972, p. 30 and Pl. XIa.
- ⁶² For a better understanding of the already known early Kṛṣṇa-līlā scenes in sculptural art, following articles and books are worth reading:
- Ratan Parimoo, "Kṛṣṇa-līlā in Sculptural Reliefs and Temples", *Studies in Indian Sculpture*, N. Delhi 2000, pp. 237-250.
- Kṛṣṇa Deva, "Are There Regional Variations in the Plastic Representations of Kṛṣṇa-līlā", *Vaiṣṇavism in Indian Art and Culture*, ed. Ratan Parimoo, N. Delhi 1987, pp. 395-400.
- Michael Meister, "Kṛṣṇa-līlā from Wadhwan and Osian", *J.I.S.O.A.*, N.S., Vol. 5, 1972-73, pp. 28-35.
- U.P. Shah, "Terracottas from Former Bikaner State", *Lalit Kala*, No. 8, 1960, pp. 55-62.
- V.S. Agrawala, "The Religious Significance of the Gupta Terracottas from Rang Mahal", *Lalit Kala*, No. 8, 1960, pp. 63-68.
- R.D. Trivedi, *Temples of Pratihara Period in Central India*, Delhi 1990, pp. 36-37.
- Benjamin Preciado-Solis, *The Kṛṣṇa Cycle in the Purāṇas*, Delhi 1984.
- ⁶³ *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, 5.7. 47-76.
- ⁶⁴ R.D. Banerji, "Basreliefs of Badami", *A.S.I. Memoir*, No. 25, Calcutta 1928, pp. 25-29, 52-55.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, Pls. XII.c.5 and XXV. c.1.
- ⁶⁶ *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, Viṣṇuparva, 4. 31.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 7. 22-28.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 14th chapter.
- ⁶⁹ *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, Viṣṇu Parva, 7th chapter and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Pañchama anśa, 6th chapter.
- ⁷⁰ *Harivamśa Purāṇa*, Viṣṇu Parva, 6th chapter and *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Pañchama anśa, 6th chapter.
- ⁷¹ For complete account of Matsya incarnation, we may refer to *Matsya Purāṇa*, chapter 1 and 2.

Chapter 8

Śākta Cult and Other Female Deities in the Art of Mathura

The Mother Goddess cult can be said to be the earliest and the most popular universal religious cult which existed in all the ancient civilizations of the world. There are various stanzas dedicated to various female deities as well as *Mātra-śakti* in Vedic literature. The *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* makes clear reference to the Goddess Durgā by calling her fiery in luster and radiant with ardency, who is the power belonging to the Supreme who manifests himself manifoldly, who is the power residing in actions and their fruits rendering them efficacious.¹ A number of hymns are devoted to Goddesses like Sarasvatī, Gāyatrī, Lakṣmī etc. in the ancient literature including the Vedic literature. In one of the most significant dedications to the Goddess, Ādi-Śankarāchārya in his *Saundarya Laharī*² narrates, “United with Śakti, Śiva is endowed with the power to create the universe. Otherwise, he is incapable even of movement. Therefore, who except those endowed with great merits acquired in the past can be fortunate enough to salute or praise Thee, Mother Divine, who art the adored of even Hari, Hara and Viriñchi?”

Throughout the ancient period which comprises various cultures and civilizations in India, the popularity of the Mother Goddess cult is observed and in most respects it surpasses the popularity of any other religious cult. Mathura region was one of the major centers of Mother Goddess cult during the early historical period as is proved by the presence of a large number of Mother Goddess terracotta figurines during pre-Mauryan, Mauryan and Śunga periods. Terracotta Mother Goddesses have been discussed in detail in the chapter based on early Mathura terracottas. During the Śaka- Kushan period, the cult of female deity got a major boost and the medium of the images was not limited to terracotta only. During this period, the Śākta cult might be considered to have incorporated various sub cults like that of Mother Goddess,

Mātrkāś, *Sapta Mātrkāś*, Lakṣmī, Hārītī, Vasudhārā, Sarasvatī, Durgā, Mahiṣāsuramardinī, Ekānamśā, Śaṣthī, Pārvatī, Nāginī, Yakṣī and various consorts of other Brāhmanical deities.

The most common representation of the female power in the art of Mathura is that of the Divine Mother (*Mātrkā*). Divine Mothers are found as independent deities as well as in groups, generally of seven (*Saptamātrkāś*). N.P. Joshi has done a remarkable research on the *Mātrkāś* and has grouped them in the following thirteen categories³:

- i. Seated *Mātrkā* with human face and with a cradled child.
- ii. *Mātrkāś* with faces of birds, animals or humans all seated in a line with cradled babies.
- iii. *Mātrkāś* seated with cradled babies as in Type i. above, but further associated with Yakṣa figures.
- iv. *Mātrkāś*, one or more, seated and carrying grown up infants.
- v. *Mātrkāś* with a lizard (*godhā*) in hand.
- vi. *Mātrkāś* sitting without children.
- vii. *Mātrkāś*, one or more, seated by the side of Kubera, the god of wealth.
- viii. *Mātrkāś*, one or more, in association with Skanda or Kārttikeya.
- ix. *Mātrkāś* without children standing in line.
- x. *Mātrkāś* with wings in association with Lakṣmī.
- xi. Female divinity, probably *Mātrkā*, standing alone.
- xii. Unidentified *Mātrkā*, perhaps of malicious nature, Śaṣthī or Jātahārīṇī.
- xiii. Śaṣthī, the chief *Mātrkā*, associated with children.

The important features of these images are:

- i. All the *Mātrkāś* put on *saḍis* or skirts and have hair-do and ornaments of Kushan style.
- ii. None of them is multi handed or multi headed except one.
- iii. The six headed Śaṣthī as a goddess forms a separate group.
- iv. None of them holds any weapons.
- v. The child is sometimes just a baby lying flat in a basket or a cradle, while in the other types it has been often substituted by a grown up infant in the *Mātrkā*'s lap.

vi. Some of the *Mātrkās* have a sort of canopy over their heads. This canopy, though not a specific mark of the *Mātrkās* alone, is undoubtedly a special Kushan feature not to be seen in the succeeding ages. Interestingly, some scholars have mistaken this canopy as a snake canopy.

vii. In a number of cases the figures are either in fragments or totally worn out; this makes it difficult to analyze the iconographic features as well as the number of the *Mātrkās*.

viii. There are a total number of one hundred four *Mātrkā* figures already known. All these images can be looked in the work of Dr. Joshi.

The most popular and the most powerful of the female deities is Durgā. From the Kushan and its onward periods, this deity has maintained her higher status among the Indian deities. The important images of Durgā from Mathura are: No. 214/ A, 592, 724, 879, 2028 and 1283; Berlin Museum No. MIK I 5894. The image from Itokri Tila, Manth (M.M. No. 214/ A) represents the lower half of a deity standing against a couchant lion. The identification of the deity as Durgā adds a new dimension to the religious nature of the Kushan *devakula* at Manth. The general features of a standing (*samapāda sthānaka*) Durgā image are: A lion (*vāhana* of the deity) is depicted near her feet; the natural right hand of the deity is held in *abhaya mudrā* while the left is shown in *kativinyastha mudrā*; in her extra two hands she holds a spear and a trident.

One of the popular goddesses of ancient India is Śrī Lakṣmī whose earliest representation in art has been found on a ring stone from Lauriya Nandangarh, datable to the Mauryan period. The site of Bharhut has also provided her image of circa 2nd century B.C. In the art of Mathura during the Kushan period, a number of images of this deity have been found. Her Kushan period images from Mathura region are: M.M. Nos. 728, 798, 871, 878, 897, 1008, 1014, 2306, 2660, F 26, 75.20, 14.410 and 61.5371; Lucknow Museum No. O 241 and Los Angeles Collection No. 11. The general features of Lakṣmī images are: the deity is either shown standing or seated with her right hand in *abhaya* and left akimbo holding a lotus parasol; a pair of elephants is shown emptying the water-jars held in their trunk; it's a depiction of *abhiseka* (consecration ceremony). In some of the sculptural reliefs, she is shown seated along side Kubera and also some other deities. Sometimes a child is also

shown in her lap, emphasizing her *mātrkā* aspect. Some of her Gupta period images are: M.M. No. D 9, D 10, D 17, 902, 985 and 2498.⁴

Another Goddess of prosperity, quite identical with Śrī Lakṣmī was also very popular at Mathura during the Kushan period. This Goddess has been identified as Vasudhārā and following are her images in the Mathura Museum: Nos. 127, 748, 604, 1411, 1583, 1695 and 2523.⁵ The iconography of this Goddess is quite similar to Śrī Lakṣmī and sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between the two. She is generally associated with the Buddhist order. The striking features of Vasudhārā images are the presence of two high jars on both sides of the deity and one or more pairs of fish (*mīna-mithuna*) in the image. The Goddess in standing attitude has her right hand in *abhaya mudrā* while her left hand generally holds a lotus parasol from which a pair of fish hangs.

New Sculptural Findings-

1. Headless female deity from village Beri (Fig. 8.1)-

This sculpture was observed to be in worship at an open air shrine in village Beri of district Mathura. The size of the image is more than life size. It shows a female seated on a throne in *pralamba pādāsana*, somehow reminding the Vima Kadphises image found from Manth *devakula*. The physique of the figure is such that it creates some doubts about the deity's identification as a female. Earlier, another possibility arose in my mind that a standing deity is shown in the lap of a seated male deity but on further examination, it was proved that the sculpture represents only a single deity and that's definitely a female. The head and the right hand of the figure are completely missing. The left hand of the deity has been placed near her waist and it appears that she held some object in it. By the position of the hand put near her breast, it is probable that she was suckling milk to a child held in her lap. A necklace is running between her round prominent breasts. She is wearing a *dhotī* as the lower garment but a peculiar piece of cloth is running over her shoulders and that piece appears like a garland on the arm but pleats of it are visible on both sides near the deity's waist. It counters the possibility of it being a garland and looks like a modern day *dupatta* (scarf) worn by ladies. Near her feet, three figures are visible. The figure to the right of her feet is shown seated on an animal possibly a bull or a goat. He holds some unidentifiable

object in his left hand. The figure to left of the deity's feet is quite identical to the former figure in appearance. The figure depicted in between the deity's feet is too broken to form an idea. This sculpture somehow reminds of the Śaiva sculptures in which near the feet of the deity three figures are shown seated; on the sides the two sons- seated Gaṇeśa and Kumāra riding on his mount peacock and in the centre, a Gaṇa. I am inclined to identify this *Māṭṛkā* sculpture as that of *mātā* Pārvatī, though a solid argument for this identification is still needed. The sculpture in all probability dates back to Kushan period.

2. Terracotta *Devī* plaque from Hathiya (Fig. 8.2)-

This small terracotta plaque was found from village Hathiya of Mathura. It possibly depicts a four armed deity of which only upper two hands are visible but in much defaced form. The deity is wearing an interesting head-gear and is also wearing heavy ear-rings and a triangular shaped beaded necklace. The *devī* might be identified as a form of goddess Durgā.

3. Bust of a female deity from Sankhi, Mathura (Fig. 8.3)-

This small bust of a female deity was found from village Sankhi of district Mathura. She is wearing the peculiar Kushan head-dress which appears like a snake canopy. Both her hands are missing in the image. She wears a triangular shaped necklace. A scarf like cloth is running over her shoulders as is observed in many Kushan sculptures. The deity has quite resemblance with the images of Ekānamśā and might be a representation of her.

4. Lower part of a Hārītī image from Kakretiya (Fig. 8.4)-

This lower part of a seated figure was found from village Kakretiya of district Mathura. The sculpture was actually found from the agricultural fields of Mr. Balbir and Harendra Singh. On exploration, this destroyed site appeared to be an important Buddhist establishment during the Kushan period. The lower half of the image shows a lady seated on haunches and two legs of a child held in her lap are visible in the fragmentary piece. It was late Dr. S.P. Gupta who for the first time identified this image as that of Hārītī when I showed a photograph of it to him. This sculpture belongs to Kushan period.

5. Lower half of a *Mātrkā* image from Sankhi, Mathura (Fig. 8.5)-

This fragment of a small sculpture was found from village Sankhi of district Mathura. This fragment shows the lower half of a seated female. The female is seated on a throne in *bhadrāsana*. Heavy round anklets are visible in her feet. Two children are visible in between her legs. It is quite probable that she also held a child in her lap. Generally such *Mātrkā* sculptures surrounded by children and seated on a throne are identified as Hārītī. This sculpture also dates back to Kushan period.

6. Fragmentary sculpture from village Paintha, Mathura (Fig. 8.6)-

This fragmentary sculpture was observed to be in worship at a shrine situated at the top of the mound of village Paintha in district Mathura. The red sandstone sculpture represents a female deity with a peculiar head-dress. The right hand of the deity appears to be in *abhaya mudrā*. Other details are not identifiable because of its bad condition. This image should date back to Kushan period.

7. Headless bust of deity from Asgarpur, Mathura (Fig. 8.7)-

This headless and quite defaced sculpture of a female deity was observed at a shrine in village Asgarpur of district Mathura. The deity is shown seated on her haunches in *bhadrāsana*. She is wearing *keyūras* and wristlets. The significant attribute of the deity is that she is holding an *akṣamālā* in her right hand unlike the usual *abhaya mudrā* of the female deity. Whether she held a child in his left hand or not, is not clear. *Akṣamālā* is generally related with Śrī Lakṣmī and *mātā* Sarasvatī but in slightly later sculptures. This sculpture might belong to late Kushan period.

8. Fragment of a Nāginī sculpture from Mal, Mathura (Fig. 8.8)-

This much mutilated sculpture of a female deity was observed to be in worship at village Mal in district Mathura. The snake hoods present over the head helps in identifying the deity as a Nāginī. The cult of Nāga and Nāginī was quite popular in the Mathura region during the Kushan period and the finding of this fragment also supports it.

9. Defaced bust of a female deity from Rarah, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.9)-

This miniature bust of a female deity was observed at a shrine in village Rarah of district Bharatpur. The deity wears a peculiar head-dress as was quite popular with

female deities during Kushan period. The right hand of the deity is in *abhaya mudrā* while in her left hand holds some indistinct object. There is a possibility that this image might be of Śrī Lakṣmī. It belongs to Kushan period.

10. Lower half of a female deity from Mahuan, Mathura (Fig. 8.10)-

This lower half of a female deity was observed to be in worship at village Mahuan of district Mathura. The deity is shown seated in *bhadrāsana* on a royal throne. Other details except the throne are missing in the sculpture. The sculpture might have been of a *Mātrkā* or any other deity. It might belong to Kushan period.

11. Broken bust of a *Mātrkā* from Manth (Fig. 8.11)-

This headless and armless bust of a female deity was observed at a shrine in village Manth of district Mathura. The female is identifiable as a *Mātrkā* because of the presence of a child, possibly playing with her breasts. It is difficult to assign it a particular period but it might possibly belong to late Kushan period.

12. *Mātrkā* sculpture from Sankhi, Mathura (Fig. 8.12)-

This miniature sculpture was found from village Sankhi of district Mathura. It depicts a lady seated on her haunches in *bhadrāsana* pose. She is holding a child to the left of her lap. This deity appears to be a *Mātrkā* belonging to late Kushan period.

13. *Devī* sculpture from Pelkhu, Mathura (Fig. 8.13)-

This sculpture was observed to be in worship at a shrine in village Pelkhu of district Mathura. It shows a deity in standing pose but her lower half is missing. The facial features of the deity reminds of the Katra Buddha image (M.M. No. A.1). She is wearing a peculiar head-dress with a central medallion. To the left of the deity possibly a child is held in the left hand supported on her shoulder. Other details are not recognizable because of the defaced nature of the image. The overall treatment of the figure reminds of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī sculpture but the possibility of the presence of a child in her lap indicates the deity to be identified as a *Mātrkā*. This sculpture should belong to early Kushan period.

14. Headless *Devī* from Patsal, Agra (Fig. 8.14)-

This headless defaced image of a female deity was observed to be in worship at a shrine in village Patsal of district Agra. The image depicts a deity seated on some unidentifiable animal. The deity is shown four handed; in one of her left hands she is holding some object (possibly a *naramuṇḍa*) while her natural left hand is busy in subduing the animal. Her extra right hand is holding some indistinct object while her natural right hand is attacking the animal with a trident. The lower part of the image is missing. The way she is subduing the animal, reminds of the Mahiṣamardinī images but there is no similarity in the treatment of this image and those of Mahiṣamardinī to identify it as the latter. The image should belong to some form of Goddess Durgā and might be datable to Gupta period.

15. *Māṭrkā* sculpture from Undi, Mathura (Fig. 8.15)-

This sculpture was observed to be in worship at village Undi of district Mathura. The deity has been shown seated, possibly in *padmāsana*. Her hair is arranged in a beautiful manner and her head is surrounded by a halo. She is wearing heavy ear-rings, torque and a pearl necklace. Her right hand has been kept at her right knee and in this hand she might have held an *aṣṣamālā*. Her left hand is involved in holding a child who is sitting on her left knee. This appears to be a beautiful specimen of a *Māṭrkā* sculptures belonging to Gupta period and is quite comparable with the *Māṭrkā* sculptures of Gupta period housed in Gwalior Museum.

16. *Devī* sculpture from Jaghina (Fig. 8.16)-

This sculpture was observed to be in worship at a shrine in village Jaghina of district Bharatpur. The deity is shown seated on her mount, much damaged but possibly a lion. The deity is seated in *lalitāsana*. She is having either six or eight hands. She is wearing an interesting head-dress as observed in few Gupta period sculptures. Attributes held in her hands are quite damaged, so it is not possible to identify these. The sculpture seems to be belonging to the Gupta period and might be representing a form of Goddess Durgā or a *Māṭrkā*.

17. Śrī Lakṣmī bust from Gosna, Mathura (Fig. 8.17)-

This bust of the Goddess was found from near the Gosna mound in district Mathura. She is having a very peculiar head-dress as can be observed in some late Gupta period sculptures from Deogarh, now kept in Jhansi Museum. She is wearing a thick round

necklace made of pearls. Both the arms of the deity are missing. The deity is pressing her left breast with her left palm. This feature of the image emphasizes the need to identify this lady figure as that of Śrī Lakṣmī who is often shown with this feature. This image should belong to late Gupta period.

18. Lower half portion of a female deity from Akata, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.18)-

This sculpture was observed at a religious place in village Akata of district Bharatpur. From the same spot, many other post-Gupta period sculptures were observed, all belonging to Śaiva cult. This sculpture shows a deity seated on her mount. The face of the animal is missing but it is possibly a lion. She is seated in *lalitāsana* and holds a child in her lap. Her waist and thighs are quite decorated with gold ornaments. From the Śaivite context of the sculptures, it is quite possible that this image is of *Skandamātā* who holds her son Skanda in her lap. This sculpture should belong to post-Gupta period about 7th – 8th century A.D.

19. Mātṛkā sculpture from Junhendi, Mathura (Fig. 8.19)-

This broken sculpture was observed to be in worship at village Junhendi of district Mathura. The deity seated in *lalitāsana* holds a child to the left of her lap. The richly ornamented deity is surrounded by a number of figures. This is a *Mātṛkā* sculpture belonging to medieval period.

20. Mātṛkā sculpture from Chhichhinwari, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.20)-

This mutilated sculpture was observed to be in worship at village Chhichhinwari of district Bharatpur. The deity seated in *lalitāsana* holds a child to the left of her lap. The sculpture should be identified as a *Mātṛkā* dating back to medieval period.

The Cult of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī in the Art of Mathura-

Mahiṣāsūramardīnī appears to be one of the most important and popular Goddesses in the region of Braj. In fact, she is Durgā in essence but her iconographic form killing the demon Mahiṣa becomes more popular and she also came to be known as Mahiṣāsūramardīnī. It's a very important fact that in every village of the greater Braj region, there are three shrines dedicated to the female deity and these are called as Chamar *mātā*, Pathwari *mātā* and Ser *mātā*. At most of these religious spots, the

images of Mahiṣamardinī were observed and even if the images of this deity were not available then a modern image of Durgā is put there for worshipping. It can be easily presumed that one of these three shrines would have certainly belonged to the Goddess Mahiṣamardinī during the ancient past. D.M. Srinivasan tends to believe in a north-western origin of the cult of Mahiṣamardinī and prefers to call it as the Warrior Goddess due to the lack of literary support for the name Mahiṣamardinī. Though, it is true that there are no images available of this Goddess prior to Śaka Kṣatrapa period and no references available prior to the *Virāṭa Parva* of the *Mahābhārata*, there are no solid grounds to put its origin as being inspired from Greco-Bactrian art. In fact, a number of images of the Warrior Goddess from Mathura region (e.g. Berlin Museum No. MIK I 5894; Srinivasan 1997: Pl. 20.1 and M.M. Nos. 592; 724 and 2028) depict her standing on her mount lion, holding a trident and spear in her left and right hand respectively. Another image from this region (M.M. No. 2317; Srinivasan 1997: Pl. 20.2) depicts the Goddess with similar pose and attributes except for the animal Mahiṣa. Srinivasan has put both types of the images in the category of the Warrior Goddess.⁶

So, here it is clear that the first image without the animal Mahiṣa is definitely a representation of the Goddess Durgā and the second image is just another form of the Goddess in the attitude of battling demon Mahiṣa. So, it is for sure that both are the variant forms of the greatest Indian Goddess- Durgā. References to Goddess Durgā are unquestionably found in the Vedic as well as Upaniṣadic literature. Hence, there can be no question of an outside origin of this most popular Indian Goddess as suggested by Srinivasan.

In sculptural art, Mahiṣāsūramardinī images are categorized based on the number of her hands: four, six, eight or more. Usually in the early representations, she has her upper two hands holding a wreath, possibly symbolizing her self- coronation after her victory over the demon. R.C. Agrawala considers the object to be an iguana (*godhā*) in stead of a wreath.⁷ Two of her hands hold a spear/ sword and a trident in her right and left hands respectively. Her natural hands are generally shown strangulating the animal demon Mahiṣa during the Kushan period. In the Gupta sculptures, some changes occur in her images and she no longer strangulates the animal with her hands. Now, she is shown trampling the animal under her feet and piercing the body of the animal with a trident held in her hand. During the later

periods, human shaped figure comes out of the decapitated neck of the animal and the deity pierces the figure with a trident. Majority of the images, especially the early Kushan images are quite small in dimension while during the later periods including the Gupta period, the size of the sculptures is generally normal. There are about 40 Kushan sculptures of this Goddess known from Mathura and its nearby region. The four armed sculptures of Mahiṣamardinī are:⁸ National Museum No. U 91; Mathura Museum Nos. 881, 2317, 65.1, plus one unnumbered image from Mathura Museum; Berlin Museum (from Sonkh) Nos. SOI 226, 137, 143, 214; Munich Museum Nos. 199, 200 and Indian Museum Calcutta No. A 1121/ 4266. The Nagar terracotta plaque⁹ and terracotta plaques from Ahichchhatra described by V.S. Agrawala,¹⁰ though, belonging to Gupta period might also be included in this category. The six armed images of Mahiṣamardinī are:¹¹ M.M. Nos. 2715, 993, 889, 875, 2037, 2784, 61.8, SOI 166; National Museum Nos. 66.77, U 51; Lucknow Museum No. G 332; Ashmolean Museum No. O.S. 37; Berlin Museum No. SOI 222 and the terracotta from Level 21 at Sonkh; Los Angeles County Museum No. M 84.153.1; Brooklyn Museum No. 83.172.1; one fragmentary image from Sanghel in district Gurgaon and an image in a private collection in Bombay. The other representations of the Goddess (eight armed) are: Berlin Museum No. I 5817 and an image in the possession of A.S.I., Agra Circle.¹²

An important aspect of the iconography of the deity is the position of the animal. Generally, the Goddess holds the head of the animal while strangulating him. Only two or three such images were known where the Goddess holds the animal from his legs and the tail. R.C. Agrawala considers it an exceptional depiction of the Mahiṣamardinī reliefs.¹³ From the explorations in the Braj region, many new Mahiṣamardinī reliefs have been found where this feature is observed. Now, it might not be considered an unusual feature. The sculptures of the Braj region should be considered as the precursor of such images from Mehsana in Gujrat, Abaneri and other places in Rajasthan as well as the sculpture from Khajuraho.

New findings of Mahiṣāsūramardinī in Braj region-

1. Image from a site near Ranhera, Mathura (Fig. 8.21)-

This small plaque depicting the deity was found from a mound outside village Ranhera in district Mathura. The deity is strangulating the animal shaped demon Mahiṣa with her usual hands while her upper two hands are in a posture of applying wreath over her head, symbolizing the victory of the great Goddess over the fearful demon or she might just be holding an iguana (*godhā*) as identified by R.C. Agrawala in some sculptures. The deity possibly had only six hands. The Goddess is wearing heavy *kuṇḍalas* as well as a round torque. The image belongs to the earliest type of Mahiṣamardinī images and might be dated to early Śaka- Kushan period. The absence of the human shaped head of the demon in such sculptures is an early feature. Whether a lion was depicted at the base or not, can't be determined as the lower portion of this plaque is missing.

2. Terracotta Mahiṣamardinī image from site situated near Ranhera (Fig. 8.22)-

This terracotta sculpture was found from the same site in *tehsil* Chhata as was the above mentioned image. This terracotta plaque is quite similar to the above mentioned sculptural plaque. The upper two hands of the deity are in the posture of applying wreaths over the head; the coronation after the victory over Mahiṣa. The animal shaped demon is being strangulated by the Warrior Goddess with her normal hands. In this plaque too, the Goddess seems to have had at least six hands. This plaque also belongs to Śaka- Kushan period.

3. Mahiṣamardinī from Rarah, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.23)-

This sculpture was observed in worship at a local Goddess's shrine in village Rarah of district Bharatpur. This image is slightly more damaged than the above mentioned images but survives enough to declare its identity as Mahiṣamardinī and is in almost similar fashion as the above mentioned two images. This image should also belong to early Kushan period.

4. Mahiṣamardinī plaque from Lalpur, Mathura (Fig. 8.24)-

This red sandstone plaque of Mahiṣamardinī was found from village Lalpur situated near the road to Sonkh in district Mathura. This sculpture is slightly advanced in representation of the theme than the above mentioned images. In this plaque, the Goddess is trampling the animal shaped demon with her feet. The human shaped head of the demon has been shown coming out of the body of the demon after being

trampled by the Goddess. This human shaped head of the demon Mahiṣa is being pierced by the Warrior Goddess either with a trident or a spear. The mount of the Goddess Durgā, the couchant lion has been shown near the feet of the deity in a seated position but is not participating in the battle. Only two hands of the deity are visible as the portion above neck is missing. The trampling of the demon by the Goddess with her feet and the piercing of the body of the demon (coming out of decapitated trunk) with a spear or *triśūla* is not met with in early sculptures. In my opinion, this should be one of the early images so far known depicting a human form coming out of the decapitated trunk of the animal. It also matches in representation the account given of the Goddess in the *Devī Mahātmya* of *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*. This plaque might be tentatively dated to Gupta period.

5. Mahiṣamardinī from Jasauli, Mathura (Fig. 8.25)-

This small sculptural plaque was observed at a shrine in village Jasauli of district Mathura. The quite defaced plaque depicts the four handed Warrior Goddess strangulating the neck of the demon Mahiṣa who is shown only in the animal form. Stylistically, this image should belong to Kushan period.

6. Fragment of Mahiṣamardinī image from Junhendi, Mathura (Fig. 8.26)-

This lower fragment of a Mahiṣamardinī image was observed at a shrine in village Junhendi of district Mathura. The fragmentary plaque depicts the left facing demon in animal form, being trampled under her feet and being pierced with a trident by the Warrior Goddess. In most of the images the demon Mahiṣa faces towards the right but in this image, he is shown facing towards the left. This sculpture might belong to late Kushan or early Gupta period.

7. Lower fragment of Mahiṣamardinī image from Radhakund, Mathura (Fig. 8.27)-

This lower fragment of a Mahiṣamardinī image was observed at a shrine in village Radhakund of district Mathura. The fragment shows the animal shaped demon being trampled under the feet of the *devī* and also being pierced with a trident by the Goddess. The head of the *devī*'s lion has been shown in a pose of attacking the demon from behind. This piece might date to late Kushan- early Gupta period.

8. Lower fragment of a Mahiṣamardinī image from Patsal, Agra (Fig. 8.28)-

This lower fragment of a Mahiṣamardinī image was observed at a shrine in village Patsal of district Agra. The animal shaped demon has been beautifully carved in the sculpture which looks like a *Mahiṣa* (buffalo). The lion of the Goddess is attacking the demon from behind. In the broken piece it is clear that the Goddess is trampling the demon under her feet and piercing the body of the demon with a trident. This fragment might be dated to Gupta period.

9. Mahiṣamardinī relief from Karahla, Mathura (Fig. 8.29)-

This sculptural plaque was observed at a shrine in village Karahla of district Mathura. This sculpture is quite peculiar as it depicts the Goddess in a frontal posture trampling the animal shaped demon under her feet and piercing its body with a trident. The lion of the Goddess is attacking the animal shaped demon from behind. This sculpture might belong to late Kushan or early Gupta period.

10. Lower fragment of Mahiṣamardinī from Patsal, Agra (Fig. 8.30)-

This lower fragment of Mahiṣamardinī was found at the same shrine as the above mentioned image from Patsal in district Agra. The portion above the Goddess's waist is missing. The animal shaped demon is facing to the left and is represented in a quite interesting manner. Her head is being trampled under the feet of the Goddess. The deity is also piercing the body of the demon with a trident. This sculpture should date to Gupta period.

11. Mahiṣamardinī sculpture from Dirawali, Mathura (Fig. 8.31)-

This sculpture was found at a shrine in village Dirawali of district Mathura. The sculpture depicts the animal demon Mahiṣa being trampled under the feet of the Goddess. With her left hand, *devī* is holding the demon from his back with its tail. The Goddess is attacking the body of the demon with a trident. The interesting feature of this image is that the demon is facing to the left and the lion of the Goddess is attacking him from the front. There is no human shaped figure coming out of the animal shaped demon. This sculpture might belong to Gupta period.

12. Mahiṣamardinī sculpture from Umraya, Mathura (Fig. 8.32)-

This sculpture was observed at a shrine in village Umraya of district Mathura. The deity is shown trampling the demon under her feet and is piercing the human shaped body of the demon coming out of decapitated trunk. The demon faces towards right side and his animal form is being attacked by the deity's lion from behind. A large lotus medallion has been carved behind the deity's head. Pairs of flying *vidyādhara*s have been depicted at the top corners of the slab. At the lower corners as well, two quite mutilated figures are visible. This sculpture might date to about 7th – 8th century A.D.

13. Mahiṣamardinī sculpture from Ghata, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.33)-

This sculpture was observed lying over the scattered remains of a medieval temple situated near the Deeg-Kaman road outside village Ghata in district Bharatpur. The sculpture shows probably eight handed deity (*asi* (sword), *dhāla* (shield), *triśūla* etc. visible in her hands) putting her right foot over the animal shaped body of the demon and attacking the demon's human shaped body with a trident. The human form of the demon is coming out of the decapitated trunk of the animal. The demon faces to the right and the lion of the deity is attacking the animal shaped demon from behind. A number of small figures like those of *vyālas*, females etc. are visible over the slab surrounding the deity as was the usual norm during medieval period (about 10th century A.D.) to which the sculpture should belong.

14. Mahiṣamardinī sculpture from Dhamri, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.34)-

This sculpture was observed in worship at an open shrine in village Dhamri of district Bharatpur. The sculpture depicts the eight armed deity trampling the animal Mahiṣa under her feet. Possibly two human shaped demons have come out from the body of the animal, one of them is held in the natural left hand of the Goddess. The animal Mahiṣa is facing to the right and is being attacked by the lion of the Goddess from behind. A beautiful lotus medallion decorates the sculpture behind the head of the deity which is unfortunately missing because of the destruction caused by the bigoted Muslim attackers. In the lower panel of the slab, various figures are shown playing on the musical instruments. The overall composition of the sculpture is quite complex and various deities along with *śārdulas* have been carved on the slab. Seated figure of Gaṇeśa is visible in the lower left part of the slab indicating the Śaiva connection of

the Goddess Mahiṣamardinī. This sculpture should be datable to 10th -11th century A.D.

15. Image from Kamai, Mathura (Fig. 8.35)-

This image is quite important from understanding the importance of the Goddess Mahiṣamardinī in the region of Braj. Some broken sculptural pieces would have been lying at an open shrine in the village Kamai near Barsana which were later on given the shape of a round pillar in which on one side, the artist gave them the shape of a Mahiṣāsūramardinī sculpture. Artist in spite of being unaware about the cult of Mahiṣamardinī would have given this shape because he would have observed such images at some other shrines in the nearby villages. Though, it appears that most of the part is of the original image and only some new additions have been made by the artist, the presence of Mahiṣamardinī sculpture in almost every village of the region raises some questions about the origin and the real significance of this cult.

Beside these sculptures, many other Mahiṣāsūramardinī sculptures were observed during the exploration, majority of them belonging to medieval period. Some of these sculptures with no significant change from the above mentioned images are: Lower portion of Mahiṣamardinī image from village Akata, near Kaman in district Bharatpur belonging to about 7th – 8th century (Fig. 8.36); image from Paigaon village in district Mathura (Fig. 8.37); image from Jawra village in district Mathura (Fig. 8.38); Lower half of Mahiṣamardinī image from village Lutsan in district Hathras (Fig. 8.39); Lower half of Mahiṣamardinī image from village Nandola in district Bharatpur (Fig. 8.40); Lower half of Mahiṣamardinī image from Pasta, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.41); Mahiṣamardinī image from Tyonga, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.42); Lower half of a Mahiṣamardinī image from Sonsa, Mathura (Fig. 8.43); image from Santha, Agra (Fig. 8.44); Lower half of a Mahiṣamardinī image from Badhiri, Bharatpur (Fig. 8.45); Lower half of a Mahiṣamardinī image from Kirarai, Mathura (Fig. 8.46); Broken Mahiṣamardinī image from Ral, Mathura (Fig. 8.47) and a small 12th century plaque depicting Mahiṣamardinī from village Nagla Khera, Mathura (Fig. 8.48).

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- ¹ *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, 2.2, transl. Swami Vimalanand, Ram Krishna Math, Madras 1957, p. 95.
- ² *Saundarya Laharī*, 1, transl. Swamy Tapasyananda, Ram Krishna Math, Madras 1987, p. 27.
- ³ N.P. Joshi, *Mothers (Mātrkāś) in Kushan Art*, Delhi 1986, p. 2.
- ⁴ V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of Brāhmaṇical Images in Mathura Art*, Lucknow 1951, p. 49.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.
- ⁶ D.M. Srinivasan, *Many Heads, Arms and Eyes*, Leiden 1997, pp. 282-304.
- ⁷ R.C. Agrawala, "The Goddess Mahiṣāsūramardīnī in Early Indian Art," *Artibus Asiae*, Vol. 21, 1958, pp. 123-130.
- ⁸ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 287, fn. 16.
- ⁹ R.C. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 127.
- ¹⁰ V.S. Agrawala, "Terracotta Figurines from Ahichchhatra," *Ancient India*, No. 4, 1947-48, pp. 133-134.
- ¹¹ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 288, fn. 22.
- ¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 289-290.
- ¹³ R.C. Agrawala, "Piercing the Belly of the Uprturned Back of Mahiṣa," *Expressions in Indian Art*, ed. B.R. Mani and Alok Tripathi, N. Delhi 2008, pp. 195-197.

Chapter 9

The Sun Cult at Mathura

When the Vedic seers thought of a divine power to protect them from all the darkness, to provide them the energy of life, they had the first and foremost saviour at their disposal in the form of Sūrya- the Sun God. He was the most important of all the natural powers that were directly visible to their eyes. The light rays of the Sun were one of the aspects of divine nature by which they could get the blessings of the Supreme Being and which helped in their perception of the later *brahma*, in the form of the self realization as the light rays of the Sun drives away the evil forces and the darkness of the night.

“Ten entire hymns of the *Ṛgveda*”, says Prof. Macdonell, may be said to be devoted to the celebration of Sūrya specifically.... Since his name designates the orb of the Sun as well, Sūrya is the most concrete of all the solar deities, his connexion with the luminary never being lost sight of.¹ Sūrya, or the Sun as the orb that is seen in the sky, was not only the Vedic deity, but he is also imagined as a God of light. He supports the world in the form of Viṣṇu,² and, as Prajāpati, he is the lord of all creatures, the supporter of the sky and the world, and is entreated to hasten his worshippers with the same eagerness as cattle to a village, as warriors to their horses, as a cow to give milk to her calf, and as husband to his wife.³ He is the Preserver and Soul of all things stationary as well as moving.⁴ The Vedas refer to him and his various aspects as Saviṭr, Pūṣan, Bhaga, Vivasvat, Mitra, Āryaman and Viṣṇu. All these deities seems to be the various states of the Sun throughout the day (or twelve months as some believe) with some exceptions. Epic and Puranic texts refer to them as Dhaṭṛ, Mitra, Āryaman, Rudra, Varuṇa, Sūrya, Bhaga, Vivasvān, Pūṣan, Savitā, Tvaṣṭā and Viṣṇu.⁵ These are the names of Dvādaśa Ādityas and Sūrya was important among these twelve. During the Upaniṣadic period Viṣṇu became the most important

deity in place of Sūrya but Sūrya still maintained his important status as a deity. It is clear from the *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*⁶ where Lord Kṛṣṇa identifies himself as Viṣṇu among the Ādityas but among *jyotis* he identifies himself as the Sun. (*Ādityānāṁ aham Viṣṇu jyotiṣānāṁ ravianśumān*).

While all other chief deities of Vedic period became unimportant and subsidiary to the main deities in the Upaniṣadic and later Vedic period, Sūrya continued to be important. It is clear from the references in *Chhāndogya Upaniṣad* where Satyayajña Pauliṣi meditates on the Sun as the *self*,⁷ and the same *Upaniṣad* bears evidence of the idea that “That golden person who is seen within the Sun – is the lord of all the worlds. In *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*⁸ also Sūrya has been described as unborn, being the Self of all. In the next stanza are the salutations to the Sun God as the son of the *Parabrahman*. In the epics there are a number of incidences where Sūrya has been invoked as a deity, like by Kuntī when she conceives Karna, when Kṛṣṇa announces a curse on his son Sāmba, a Vṛṣṇi hero. Besides, the ruling dynasty of Ikṣvāku in *Rāmāyaṇa* definitely draws its origin from Sūrya as Sūryavamśī Kṣatriyas. Kṛṣṇa is also of half solar descent from his father Vasudeva’s side.⁹

Vraja region, which is famous for its Bhāgavata and Śaiva inclinations, was very important for the Sun worship as well. The important city of the region, Saurapura is considered synonymous with Mathura by some scholars.¹⁰ According to me this Saurapura can be identified with Soron on the bank of river Ganga in district Etah. It seems probable considering the linguistics of Braj dialect (by delving in the etymology of local names). Besides a Sūrya-*kuṇḍa* is situated here which is considered of utmost importance for religious activities. This definitely indicates towards the importance of this city as a popular Sūrya-*kṣetra*. Whether this identification of Saurapura with Soron and another such identification of Ariṣṭapura with it are correct or not,¹¹ this area had certain instances of Sūrya worship. The site of Bateshwar near Shikohabad along Yamuna is also identified with Saurapura by the Jaina religious followers but there is no strong evidence to prove that the ruler Śura Singh who is credited to have founded the city was actually the ruler of Yadu lineage. There might have been more than one Saurapura in ancient times as the names of many other ancient sites in the region indicate. However, this site of Bateshwar also seems to be related with the Sun worship.

Although, most of the ancient ponds and water sources were used to offer *arghya* to Sūrya, there are some more important places linked with the Sun worship which still retain some name or reference of that ancient tradition when Sūrya was one of the important deities of Brāhmanism. Besides Soron, Karnavas along river Ganga near Narora is also an important Sūrya-*kṣetra* which is well related in popular tradition with Karṇa, the son of Sūrya. The Dwadash Aditya Tila in Vrindavana should be a very important centre of Sūrya worship as its name indicates. At this site the famous Madan Mohan temple is situated and the antiquity of the site dates back to at least Kushan period. Śāntanu-*kuṇḍa* at Satoha is also very important for Sūrya worship. Here king Śāntanu is said to have worshipped the Sun God to get his son Bhīṣma, one of the most famous characters of the *Mahābhārata*. A Gupta period inscription tells about the temple of Sūrya at Indor in Bulandshahar district.¹² Mahrauli (ancient Mihirapurī in my view) and the nearby Surajkunda also seem to have some strong solar connection. These sites definitely lie within the greater Vraja region in terms of cultural affinities. In *Varāha Purāṇa*, Sāmba is said to have worshipped Mitra, the Sun God at three important Sūrya temples- Udayāchala (on southern side of Yamuna), Kālapriya and Mulasthāna.¹³ Mulasthāna is well identified with Multan in Pakistan but Kālapriya possibly has not been identified properly. Rosenfield¹⁴ has talked about three major centers of the Sun worship, drawing references from the *Sāmba* and *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, as Mundīra, Kālapriya and Multan. He has identified Mundīra with Konark and Kālapriya with Mathura. About Konark, of being called as Mundīra we have no information but Mathura definitely was never known as Kālapriya, as per my knowledge till date. It seems that Kālapriya is the famous site of Kalpi in district Jalaun, famous for Parāśara-Vyāsa *tīrtha* and its Chandella remains. There is also a temple of Śiva by the name of Kālapriya Mahādeva. If there were more than one site by the name of Kālapriya, then it might be looked for in Braj region, but possibly outside the city of Mathura. In Mathura district proper, at the sites of Jasondi, Bachhagaon, Unchagaon, Chhata *kuṇḍas* by the name of Sūrya-*kuṇḍa* still exist. Near Govardhan and Gantholi, there is a famous Sūrya-*Kuṇḍa*. The Sūrya-*kuṇḍa* at Kaman is also of significance. At Barsana a *kuṇḍa* by the name of Bhanokhara (Bhānu-*puṣkara*) should also relate to the Sun worship. The Sūrya-*kuṇḍa* at Bharna Khurd village is a very important indicator of Sun worship in ancient Vraja. Here the temple of lord Kṛṣṇa by the name of Sūryanārāyaṇa, which

follows medieval *bhakti* tradition, definitely links its history with the Sun worship in this region. Many other ancient ponds in the region are also called as Sūrya- *kuṇḍa*. The Sūrya temple at Satwas near Kaman dates back to at least early medieval period and is a popular centre of Sūrya worship in Vraja.

The names of Mitra rulers of northern India, especially at Mathura like Sūryamitra and Bhānumitra also indicates towards the importance of the Sun cult at Mathura. From various places in Mathura like Saptasamudrī *Kūpa* (MM. Nos. D 46 and 515), Yamuna Ghat at Sadar Bazar (Nos. 1058, 1173, 1559, D. 15, 928, 1096, 1097, 1564 and D. 48), Kankali Tila (No. 269) etc., the Sun images have been found. From Pali- Khera (Nos. 886, 894, 888, 890, 895, 920, 928, 930, 936, 938, 1006, 1007 and 1013), Barsana (No. 1256), Sanora (ancient name Śanipura or Sahanpura, No. 123), Barai (No. 124), Gosna (No. 595 and a Piṅgala image No. 598), Baldev (No. 1363), Bajna (Nos. 1395, a Daṇḍa image No. 1397 and an image of Piṅgala (No. 1387), Dhangaon (No. D. 45), Baroli (No. 155), Jugasna (No. 542), Salempur (No. 750 from a well), Vrindavan (No. 1215) and Ainch (No. 1220), a number of important Sūrya images have been found. All these find- places along with Mat, Maholi, Seeh, Palai, Tarsi, Devsaras, Bhadal, Unchagaon, Maghera and Ayara Khera (all in Mathura district) and Sandhan Khera, Badhiri in Agra district would have served as important places for the Sun worship as would be described now onwards. Majority of these images especially from the sites of Pali-Khera, Salempur and Mathura city belong to Kushan period.¹⁵ Besides, there are five Kushan Surya images from Mathura (possibly Mathura region) now housed at National Museum, N. Delhi. These images are: Nos. 68.75; 58.11/8; 66.18; 58.11/23 and 72.130, of which the last image is a bit significant for the presence of wings at the back, shown at the top of the shoulders.¹⁶

The earliest evidence of the Sun in Indian art is found as a symbol on punch-marked coins. Parmeshwari Lal Gupta has identified the Sun symbol on the punch-marked coins of Magadhan series as part of the coins of the universal Magadhan series.¹⁷ These coins would also have formed a part of Śurasena region as it was a part of greater Magadhan empire. As far as the early iconography of the Sun images is concerned scholars differ in their views about its origin. Although the Sun images at Bodhgaya and Bhaja cave are considered to be the earliest Sun images of India

belonging to 2nd -1st century B.C.¹⁸, the chariot of the God with four horses is considered to be an adoption from Greek art tradition.¹⁹ Dr. Pandeya has been successful in proving the tradition of representing four horses in Sūrya images as Indian.²⁰ All these images are truly indigenous in nature based on ancient Vedic tradition with seemingly no foreign influence. Besides, one image of Sūrya in the Anantgumpha Jaina cave at Khandagiri in Orissa is also considered to be one of the early images of Sūrya.

In Bhaja relief (Fig. 9.1), Sūrya is shown driving a chariot drawn by four horses. The chariot is shown with one wheel only. There is no Aruṇa represented as a charioteer. The Sun God is accompanied by his wives Rājñī and Savarnā on the chariot. Besides there are two other persons shown as riding two horses and they appear to be female because of the ornaments in their hands which are generally worn by females only. In this case, they should be the two other wives of Sūrya, Chhāyā and Suvarchā. The chariot is shown running over a great demon that appears to be the demon of darkness, being run over by the Sun God. This description matches with the details given in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (śloka 10 and 11, 3rd part, Adh. 69; for ślokas see Pandeya 1989).²¹ Although, *Matsya Purāṇa* and *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* are not considered works pre-dating Gupta period, still, some of the references in them might have been earlier as the similarity in the description and Bhaja relief indicate. Besides, the Sun God is seen riding on a one-wheeled (*ekachakra*) chariot drawn by four horses on an 'upright' of the old stone railing (*prāchīnaśilāprākāra*) at Bodhgaya.²²

During the Kushan period it is again at Mathura where a new iconographic formula of Sūrya images is observed with some foreign influences. This influence is more Greek in nature than Iranian, in spite of the fact that Iranian Mithra has almost same characteristics as Vedic Mitra. J.N. Banerjea wrote "It has been assumed by some that the early north Indian Sūrya image had its prototype in the Iranian Mithra. But the ancient Iranians themselves did not represent the Sun God in human form in the earliest times, and like the ancient Indians used to represent him by means of such symbols as 'a solar disc', 'a wheel' etc."²³

In the Sun images of Mathura which are not earlier than Kushan period, God is not represented with his two wives- Uṣas and Pratyūṣas. He is generally shown seated on his haunches. His chariot is drawn by four or two horses and the charioteer Aruṇa is absent. He wears a round Persian cap and is shown with moustache. He is shown in *udichya veśa* wearing long boots and a coat and tunic as well as long ear rings in his ears (*kavacha* and *kuṇḍala* of the epics). He wears a club in his right hand and a dagger or a sword in his left hand. He wears a torque in his neck. This description holds true to the Sūrya image of Mathura Museum No. 269 (Fig. 9.2). In one of the images of 4th century A.D.(acc. No. 1256, Rosenfield 1967, Pl. 45) at Mathura Museum, Sūrya is shown standing with his two attendants Daṇḍa and Piṅgala holding a floral wreath in his hands. A nimbus is also shown round the head of the God. The image was found from Barsana in Mathura district and is made of soapstone. It is probably the earliest image from India, of about late 4th century A.D. showing Daṇḍa and Piṅgala with the Sun God.

The new finding of a headless Kushan image of Sūrya from Mat (Fig. 9.3), lying at a village shrine belongs to this kind of typical Mathura Sūrya image (like Fig. 9.2). The finding is significant from the point of view of its find spot, as the nature of Mat *devakula* is still not clear, especially the deity to whom it was dedicated. Mat *devakula* was not a habitation site; it was just a religious spot of the famous Belavana²⁴. The importance of the place should also be looked from the present day scenario. The main deity at the Belavana near Narora²⁵ at Ganga is a female deity and same is the case at this Belavana near Mat where the presiding deity is Goddess Laksmī (it might be the changed form of Kushan deity Nana or Ardokśo, the wife of Mithra-the Iranian Sun God). From the site of Tokri Tila a female deity (Mathura Museum acc. No. 214A, Rosenfield 1967, Fig. 9) in much broken condition was found. Of it only the lower portion was available, on the basis of which the nature of the deity as a female associated with her mount lion was identified. It might have been an important deity at the *devakula* but it seems that one of the more prominent deities of the shrine would have been the possible *Kuladevatā* (ancestral deity) of Kushans, Sūrya. The finding of a number of Kushan Sūrya images at Mat and the area in and around Mathura supports this fact. Another important basis of considering Sūrya as the ancestral deity of Kushans is the broken female head of a life size statue found

from Mathura area (Lucknow Museum No. 46.80; Rosenfield 1967: Fig. 18), on which a Sūrya image riding on a horse chariot has been depicted. This head would have definitely belonged to a royal lady who would have carried the royal emblem (generally related with ancestral deity) on her forehead.²⁶ Also, there remains some possibility that the name of place Mat or Manth has some relation with word Mithra or Mihira which can only be confirmed when some evidence in this regard is found from the place. A reference from the *Sāmba Purāṇa* (16.1-24) which states “Daṇḍanāyaka is engaged by Sūrya to rule over the world with his *daṇḍa*” and in this function, he is equated with Indra or with Skanda,²⁷ is of quite importance. As it is well known that from Mat site, an inscription was found mentioning an official by the title of Mahādaṇḍanāyaka,²⁸ this similarity can’t be overlooked. This reference of *Sāmba Purāṇa* makes it clear that the (probably Kushan) ruler was being equated with the Sun God and the official Mahādaṇḍanāyaka was authorized by the most powerful person on earth to administer an area (possibly in his absence). This reference also indicates the possibility of *devakula* being dedicated to the Sun God along with other deities.

Besides, the famous image at Gokarneshwar Mahadeva temple (Fig. 9.4 a & b) in Mathura appears to be of Sūrya, the only doubtful feature being the two lions carved at the base. The God who is sitting in *utkutikāsana* (sitting on haunches) is shown holding a dagger in his left hand. His right hand probably holds a wine cup or a lotus bud. A sword is shown tied at his waist. He is shown haloed, which indicates the divine nature of the image. He is wearing a necklace and a torque and in all probability is not shown bearded. What appears as a very large head-dress is, actually not the case. The neck and the mouth portion have been wrongly represented by the *Pujārīs* of the shrine. The two cuts just below the nose, probably marks the spot of the mouth of image. Hence the length of the conical cap is comparatively slightly lesser than what it appears now. The crown of the deity has been tied with the support of a thick fillet. The height of the figure is about 6 feet. M. Frenger has pointed out that, during the Kushan period, showing the two lions at the pedestal of Sūrya image was an important and popular practice.²⁹ Gail has also identified the image as of the Sun God on this basis.³⁰ Another Sūrya image at Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, recovered from Mathura also depicts two lions at the pedestal.³¹ Coomarswamy has identified the animal on the pedestal of the Sun image³² (M.M. No. 269) as lion.³³ The Sūrya

image of circa 6th century A.D. (M.M. No. 16.1215) clearly depicts two lions at its base in stead of horses. One very important fact about the Gokarneshwar image is the probable presence of wings at the back of the God which rises up to the head portion. Previous scholars have ignored these wings, while Rosenfield and Gail have considered them as the part of head dress. But these appear to be possibly wings when I examined the image again and again in different states of its appearance. The Sun God is the only prominent God who has been mentioned with wings in Indian scriptures. It leaves no doubt about the identification of the Gokarneshwar colossus as that of the Sun God.* Rasgawan image (Fig. 9.22) and the Nagla Khera image (Fig. 9.23) confirm this characteristic of Sūrya iconography of having wings which has been discussed at the end of this chapter. A Sūrya image at Mathura Museum (No. D. 46) of circa 4th century A.D. also clearly displays this attribute of Sūrya having wings.

Hence out of the two possible *devakula* sites in Mathura district, we are getting Sūrya, possibly as one of chief cult images at Gokarneshwar (though only in the case if it was the only important image at the site in contrast to the continuing tradition of Śiva worship) and for Mat also I suggest the Sun God to be a prominent deity if not the most prominent. Even if this image at Gokarneshwar is of a Kushan king in stead of Sūrya, it also indicates that Sūrya would possibly have been their *Kuladevatā*, who they tried to copy even in their portraits.³⁴ This point is further corroborated by the view of Soper who holds that the Kushan kings had a royal myth that was either an imitation of that of Mithra or was deliberately merged with it.³⁵ In the present state of our knowledge, we can not postulate which of the images- royal portraits or the Sun images were earlier in their execution. Even if royal portraits predate Surya images (though I can't believe so), it has to be pondered upon why so many Surya images (look alike the royal portraits) came into existence during Kushan period, if these did not have any major significance. Another important fact about the site of Mat *devakula* is that on certain occasions a special class of brāhmaṇas comes at this site to offer their worship and I suggest them to be Magi brāhmaṇas. They are actually all Tiwari brāhmaṇas who believe this place to be the place of their ancestral origin. If it is so, then this point of considering Sūrya also as one of the presiding deities of the *devakula* would become more substantial.

It must be mentioned here that it is not intended here to negate the importance of the finding of the lower portion of an image from Mat shrine (M.M. No. 214), which has been identified as Śiva by V.S. Agrawala.³⁶ This identification is in all possibility right and definitely indicates that Śiva was a prominent deity at this Kushan *devakula* site. The continuing tradition of Śiva worship at Gokarneshwar Mahadev temple at Mathura also indicates that there must have been an ancient tradition of Śiva worship at the place which has continued till now. But it does not harm the cause of considering Sūrya as one of the more prominent deities at *devakula* sites.

The Sun image from Bhadal (Fig. 9.5) is an image of about 4.5 inches in length and belongs to Kushan period. It further corroborates the importance of representing the Sun God with the lion throne. In this image the lion is shown at the back of the Sun God, who is sitting on his haunches as usual. In his left hand the deity is holding a dagger but in his right hand what he held is not clear because of the weathering of the stone.

At Goga village, about 800 meters distant from Raya, a very interesting sculpture (Fig. 9.6) was observed. At the village itself no other important archeological evidence was observed but it seems that this place would have been an extension of the famous town site of Raya during the Kushan period. The deity is wearing a head- dress as is found on many Kushan sculptures. In his left hand he possibly holds a wine cup and in his right hand he holds an object which appears to be a *khaḍga*. The object might also be a lotus bud but former identification seems more appropriate. He is wearing a torque round the neck and a kind of garland is also visible over his shoulders, just like the way found in some bhāgavata sculptures of Balarāma and Vāsudeva. Though the features of the deity are more akin to the Sun God, it's similarity with Balarāma can not be outrightly rejected.

The sculpture (Fig. 9.7) lying at Devsaras village near Govardhan in district Mathura also belongs to the Kushan period and is circa 12" in height. Its head is also missing, intentionally broken by Muslim attackers during the medieval period. He is shown seated on his haunches as usual. In his left hand, he is shown holding a big and thick dagger. In his right hand, he is probably holding a club kind of object.

At a mound outside village Badhiri in Agra district, small headless bust of a Sūrya image (Fig. 9.8) was observed, which is made of spotted red sandstone (height about 1'). In this image the Sun God would have been shown standing unlike his sitting pose during Kushan period. The deity is wearing a necklace with a central jewel as well as a torque round the neck. His dress has been shown like a warrior (*kavacha*). A full blown lotus at the navel, of which only half flower has been shown, is also a remarkable feature of this image. He is wearing a *dhotī* as his lower garment, tied at his waist by the help of two pleated *kati-sūtra*, a feature observed in the late Kushan images. The central fold of the *dhotī* are shown hanging in between the legs. Two strings possibly decorated with jewels are running vertically down on both the thighs, coming out of the knots of the *kati-sūtra*. A thick fold of some clothing (three stringed) is shown running above the knees, as is usually observed for *vanamālā* on the Kushan Viṣṇu images. On stylistic ground, this image might be dated to late Kushan or early Gupta period. It must be mentioned that this image shows some features like the necklace and torque in a crude manner.

The finding of an architectural frieze, possibly a lintel (Fig. 9.9) of a temple at a shrine at village Maholi (ancient Madhupurī, also known as Madhuvana) is very important. It is being considered a lintel because it can not be a part of stūpa architecture and for being some architectural part other than lintel its horizontal position with a central deity and such a naive carving, poses a number of questions. It seems to be one of the early architectural friezes of such type found till now in India. This frieze should date back to Kushan-Gupta transition phase or slightly later on the basis of its treatment. There have been found a number of evidences of the existence of temples from 2nd century B.C. onwards and even some archaeological remains have been discovered at Nagari in Rajasthan, at Sonkh in Mathura etc, but no such art piece has been found which has a deity carved in the centre of the frieze except for Buddhist examples. The architectural frieze (Fig. 9.9) indicates the nature of early lintels which is quite plain except for the three lenticular holes which seems to have been made to put some wooden blocks as part of temple architecture. The use of wooden models in the early architecture is well known and this frieze further supports this view. The total length of this frieze is around 32 inches, when complete it would have measured about 56 inches. On closer examination of the figure in the centre of the frieze (Fig.

9.10), the deity is identifiable as Sūrya as it follows the iconographic pattern of some of the Kushan Sūrya images. In the broken sculpture some characteristics can be identified with precision. He is shown sitting on his haunches and is wearing long boots. The other important feature is the tunic or the *udichya veśa* which he is wearing at his chest, like a *kavacha* (like in the Kushan image of Sūrya in Rosenfield 1967, Pl. 44). It is the most characteristic feature of the Sun images in India. Whether horses of his chariot were represented or not, is not clear because of the poor state of the sculpture. He is holding a garland in his two hands as is case in a Mathura Sūrya sculpture in standing pose, kept at Mathura Museum (acc. No. 1256). His hands are broken at palms, so it is not clear whether he was holding some object in it or not. Maholi is well known for its Buddhist finds like the famous bacchanalian scene in the National Museum, N. Delhi, a Bodhisattva image at Mathura Museum (acc. No. 39.2798), Buddha wearing a chequered robe at Mathura Museum (acc. No. 15.514), headless Buddha image at Mathura Museum (acc. No. 1557) and some Brāhmanical sculptures. A number of mounds there in and outside the village definitely had a number of stūpas and monastic settlements. But the existence of such an important Sun temple (possibly) at the site is quite interesting.

At Sandhan Khera village in district Agra (an extensive Kushan settlement), a number of broken but remarkable specimens of Gupta art were observed. Two broken pieces of circa 300 A.D. (Fig. 9.11 and Fig. 9.12) seems to of interest in this present study. The first piece (Fig. 9.11) is certainly the lower part of a Sun image in which two horses of the chariot of the Sun God are visible. The other piece (Fig. 9.12) is a separate image of a deity who is holding a long dagger in his left hand. Dagger is actually clinging to his waist band. In his right hand he might have held a club or a lotus bud. The crown of the Sun God is slightly cylindrical and is ties with a thick band. The standing posture of the God and its finding in the same heap of sculptures with relatively same chronology indicates it to be the upper half of the former (of Fig. 9.11).

At Ayara Khera, about 4 km distant from Raya, a Sun image (Fig. 9.13) of late Gupta period was observed at a religious shrine at the outskirts of the village. The image is more indigenous in nature than the above mentioned image from Mat (Fig. 9.3). The image is in much deteriorated condition so a proper description is not

possible. But it is an evolved example of the Sun image as the chariot with three horses (now only this much visible) is being drawn. This is a feature which is not observed in the early Kushan images from Mathura. This feature is followed in most of the later (post-Kushan) images. The broken sculptural piece from Seeh village near Barsana (Fig. 9.14), the broken sculpture from village Palai near Govardhan (Fig. 9.15) and the broken sculpture from a religious shrine in between the villages of Tarsi and Usphar (Fig. 9.16), all of them belongs to the stylistic tradition of the village from Ayara Khera and belongs to the period ranging from late 5th century to 8th century A.D.

The headless bust of Sūrya found at village Maghera in district Mathura (Fig. 9.17) belongs to possibly 9th- 10th century. The God is shown wearing a *kavacha* like a warrior, a number of necklaces, of which the lowermost is decorated with big jewels. At the centre of his chest, possibly a string is shown linking the two sides of his upper garment. There is some possibility that syamantaka *maṇi* of Sūrya might have been shown tied with this string in its centre. The Sun God is shown wearing a *dhotī* tied at his waist. It has been decorated with a number of vertically falling strings decorated with pearls and other jewels. An interesting feature of this sculpture is the thick fold of possibly a part of drapery (three stringed) is shown running across the thighs above the knees. Another such thick fold (four stringed or pleated) is shown below the knees, near which a broken figure (possibly female) is visible. Head, hands and the lower feet of the image are missing.

The Sūrya image from Unchagaon village in district Mathura, (Fig. 9.18) is actually a part of an architectural piece which might have been chief sculpture for worshipping when complete. The Sun God has been shown wearing long boots and a warrior's dress on his chest. In both of his hands, he holds *kamalanāla*. He is wearing a *kirīta mukūṭa*. A long *vanamalā* kind of thick fold is running down his knees. He is wearing a round necklace. To the right of the Sun God, one of his wives, possibly Sanjñā is shown while the other wife Chhāyā would have been shown on his left side but this part of the sculpture is missing. The relief has been decorated with *śārdula* and elephant designs. Sūrya is shown depicted between two pillars. On the basis of its iconographic and architectural features, this relief might be dated to about 9th- 10th century A.D.

During the post-Gupta and medieval periods, many of the Sun images are found as part of Navagrahas. These are generally a part of architectural design in the temples of that period. Example of such image is the Sūrya image from Bharna Khurd village (Fig. 9.19). Sūrya was also worshipped as an important deity as part of architectural panels and example of such image is the Sūrya image from Akbarpur (Fig. 9.20). Sūrya was also represented inside Bhadra motifs of medieval temples. Example of such an image is Sūrya at Chauma Shahpur village (Fig. 9.21). Another important aspect of Sun worship which came to notice is that in and around 10th century A.D., the Rājputa period of Indian history, the Sun God was one of the most prominent deities and even the winged character of him again came back into his iconography (Fig. 9.22 from Rasgawan and Fig. 9.23 from Sandhan Khera). Another such image was observed at Nagla Khera near Mat in district Mathura. The popularity of Sūrya images after the Gupta period appears to be more related with Indian concept of worship. There is every possibility that these Sun images do not only represent the Sun as God but these represent him as Sūrya Nārāyaṇa. As traits of Kṛṣṇa were merged with Viṣṇu in this period, same was the case with Sūrya who was merged with Vaiṣṇava concept of religious worship as Sūrya Nārāyaṇa. This merger is one of the most significant mergers in the history of Vaiṣṇavism. This practice of associating the Sun God with Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa and also considering Kṛṣṇa akin to Viṣṇu explains the reason of prominence of Viṣṇu and Sūrya images in the land of Kṛṣṇa, the Vraja.

Now, one very important factor must be kept in mind that prior to Kushan period (it would be better to call it Śaka-Kushan), from Mathura region no Sun image has been found. During early Kushan period the number of Sun images at Mathura might outnumber the number of images of most of the Brāhmaṇical Gods (possibly except Śivaliṅga)³⁷. Even during the Kushan period the maximum number of Sūrya images have been found from Pali-Khera village (at least twelve in number), which is situated on the outskirts of Mathura and is famous for its Buddhist and other remains. Such high number of the Sun images from a single site and that too from two of its wells (for the provenance, see catalogue of Brāhmaṇical Sculptures in Mathura Museum by V.S. Agrawala, Lucknow 1951, pp. 66- 74) indicate that most of these images were cult images and were thrown into the well for some specific purpose,

might be part of a religious ceremony. At Mathura also, five of the images have been found from ancient wells- one from a well at Kankali, two from Saptasamudrī *Kūpa* at the museum compound and two from Jaisinghpura well. Most of the early images are from those parts of Mathura district, from where evidences of the existence of people of northwestern region have been found. For this examples can be given of Pali Khera, Maholi, Kankali Tila, Girdharpur, Gosna, Mat, Yamuna river bed etc. Even though the images of Sūrya from Mathura area seem to be related with the people of northwestern region, these were not subsidiary in nature to some other divinity like Buddha. These were cult icons in most of cases except for the images which were part of some Buddhist architecture like the Kushan lintel kept in Lucknow Museum (No. B. 208).

I do not agree with M. Frenger (Frenger 2005) that the Sūrya images at Mathura were not cult icons during the Kushan period. Actually, this is not a new view and has already been propounded by some of the great scholars, like Vogel and Rosenfield to name a few.³⁸ What Vogel talked as a probability, has been accepted by later scholars as a fact. The small size of a sculpture can never accord a lower stature to it, like many Kṛṣṇa cult images or Śāligrāma Viṣṇu images for that matter, used to be the smallest in size until recent times. Indeed, almost all the Kushan images of Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu were small in size (not more than 1.5' except the famous Chaturvyuha image, M.M. No. 14.392- 395).³⁹ The same Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa is shown on the Jina Ariṣṭanemi images as a subsidiary deity but that does not mean that Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa was not one of the most important and superior deities of Kushan period. It only depends on the theme of a sculpture or a panel whether a deity would be represented in a human form, natural form or for that matter a divine form. A Yakṣa image (M.M. No. 46.3232) recovered from Kankali well mentions in the epigraph that it was set up in the *Mihirgiiha* and it should be identified as *Mihiragrha*, a temple of the Sun God.⁴⁰ It further corroborates the importance of the Sun God during Kushan period whose specific temples were in existence at such important sites like Kankali Tila. Some examples where Sūrya has been represented as a not so significant deity on sculptural panels, should not be taken as the reason for not considering Sūrya as a cult image. There are many instances where Sūrya performs the dual function of an important God as well as a natural power. So, such Sūrya representation (sometimes along with the moon) should be taken as representing the

natural powers only. Considering the dimensions of Gokarneshwar image (life size) and the late Kushan frieze described above, it is very clear that these were used for cult worship, specifically to the Sun God.

If one considers Frenger's argument that the images were of more royal character following the art tradition of Bharhut and Sanchi, than of God, then one has to keep it in mind that most of the Indian deities have royal characteristics assigned for them whether it is Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma, Bodhisattvas, Jinas and others. Solar descent is also called for the only purpose of showing the royal lineage as the divine one because most of the great personalities of ancient India are of some divine origination. There is no such proof to indicate that the indigenous people of Mathura (majority of them) participated in the public worship of Sun God in the form of these images during Kushan period. It is quite probable that this form of Sūrya worship was accepted by the local people only after the Magi Brāhmaṇas had mixed well with the Indian society and that's why there are certain evidences of Indianization of iconography of the Sun images after 3rd century A.D. Before this, which form of Sūrya worship the local people followed, is not clear but the Sūrya image of Kushan period was possibly a feature from North-western region of India which came with the people from that region. Those people would have considered to put the images in a well or such other water body as a religious ritual as most of the Sūrya images have been recovered from wells. Many large sculptural pieces of other deities have also been found from such wells but those would have been thrown to protect from the all devastating attackers. These Sūrya images were so small in dimension that these could have been protected easily without throwing those into wells. It is only a possibility which needs further support from literary and archaeological finds.

* I would like to talk about my feelings regarding the temple of Gokarneshwar Mahadev. Some months ago, when I was not sure about the identification of Gokarneshwar image, I was very anxious to know about it. I felt it so wrong a practice to keep a sculpture of archaeological and cultural significance at a temple with completely mistaken identity. I planned in many ways to make arrangement to clear its pedestal from the floor but was very disappointed after failing to do so. Now, when

I am confirm about my identification of it as an image of the Sun God, my anxiety has really come down. I have asome idea about this whole site (180 x 150 x 5 m, from the agricultural fields along Yamuna) which was a great centre of various religious cults including Buddhism, Brahmanism as well as Jainism. A similar site is situated on the opposite site of Saraswati drain and presently it is occupied by the Muslim burial ground near the Chameli Devi School. A little away from here starts the regular series of Mathura mounds with Ambarish Tila. The most interesting fact about Gokarneshwar site is that it was also a site related with Kushan royal family, as the find of Kushan images of royal order from here indicate.⁴¹ I am not sure whether this site can be termed as *devakula* now after the identification of the Gokarneshwar image as that of Sun God because on the basis of it and another royal image, Rosenfield and other scholars have considered it a *devakula* site. Whatever might be the scenario, the site was definitely an important Śaiva centre as the presence of ancient *lingas* inside the temple and the nearby temple of Nilkantheshwar Mahadev indicates. The worshipping of the Sun image as Gokarneshwar Mahadev also supports it because there must have been some tradition at the site which forced to identify this image as Śiva to the worshippers. It should be considered for sure that the Kushan *devakula* were selected at the sites of high religious significance. Besides Sūrya, Śiva along with a Goddess was the most important of all the deities at the *devakula*. Presence of various religious sects in the same area might indicate the support of different kings and members of royal family to different religions and different gods within the same religion. Considering the image of Gokarneshwar, I feel heartened by the fact the image still gets the devotional offerings of a large number of devotees. The only regret was about its mistaken identity but now even that has gone because a Great God like Sūrya is being worshipped as none other than Devādhideva Mahādeva, the Supreme God. The image which would have been made by one of the most talented artists with the utmost dedication and care and which would have been donated with the highest devotion by the greatest and the mightiest King of his time, is not lying as a waste relic of past in an ill-functioned Indian museum, but is being worshipped with the utmost devotion and care by the Hindu worshippers as the Supreme God. It is also very satisfying that the image is still in good state of preservation and has not been stolen by the smugglers to make one of the past relics symbolizing the highest pride of India, a decorative item of a foreign collection.

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- ¹ A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, Varanasi, reprint, 1968, p. 40.
- ² *Rgveda*, I.21, 154. transl. H.H. Wilson, London 1850.
- ³ *Rgveda*, IV.53,2; 54,4;X. 149,1,4. transl. H.H. Wilson, London 1850 and Durga Prasad Pandeya, *Sūrya- Iconographical Study of the Indian Sun God*, Delhi 1989, p. 3.
- ⁴ *Rgveda*, I.115, 1. transl. H.H. Wilson, London 1850.
- ⁵ Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi 1956, p. 428.
- ⁶ *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, X.21. Geeta Press, Gorakhpur.
- ⁷ *Chhāndogya Upaniṣada*, III, 1, 1. Geeta Press, Gorakhpur.
- ⁸ *Mahānārāyaṇa Upaniṣad*, Ram Krishna Math, Chennai 1968, p. 18. (Stanzas 3 and 4 of section One).
- ⁹ F.S. Growse, *Mathura: A District Memoir*, Delhi 1882, p. 53.
- ¹⁰ *Āvaśyaka- Chūrṇi*, Ratlam 1928-29, pp. 192-93; *Vasudevahiṇḍī*, Bhavanagar 1930-31, Vol. I, pp. 10-11, indicates that Mathura is different from Soriyanagara = Saurapura, as does the statement of vol. II, p. 356f. that Śoripura was founded by Śori (Śauri) of the Yadu-lineage. This negates B.C. Law's statement: "The Jains knew it as as Śauripura or Sūryapura". See his *Historical Geography of Ancient India*, Delhi 1954, pp. 106-10. The reference to Saurapura in the *Uttarādhyana-sūtra*, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 45, p. 112, may also refer to Śauripura and not to Mathura.
- ¹¹ Vinay Kumar Gupta, "Jaina Tradition and Mathura," *Sumati- Jñāna*, ed. Hampa Nagrajaih, Muzaffar Nagar 2007, pp.293-298.
- ¹² D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions*, Calcutta 1965, pp. 318-20.
- ¹³ *Varāha Purāṇa*, 175. 39.47-49, Kashiraj Trust, Varanasi 1972.
- ¹⁴ J.M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Art of Kushans*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, p. 195.
- ¹⁵ Kushan: acc. Nos. 886, 920, 922, 936, 938, 1006; Gupta: acc. Nos. 888, 895, 930, 1007; early medieval: acc. Nos. 890, 928, 1013. See Agrawala 1951: 67-68, 71.
- ¹⁶ Shashi Asthana, *Mathura Kala*, N. Delhi 1999, pp. 47-49.
- ¹⁷ Parmeshwari Lal Gupta, *Coins*, Delhi 1969, p. 18.
- ¹⁸ Durga Prasad Pandeya, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-72 and Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p- 432.
- ¹⁹ A. Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey Report*, Vol. III, Delhi 1871-72, p. 97.
- ²⁰ Durga Prasad Pandeya, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.
- ²¹ T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Part II, Delhi 1914, p. 88 mentions the same reference from *Matsya Purāṇa*, but it could not be verified in the same *Purāṇa*.
- ²² Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

²³ Jitendra Nath Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

²⁴ The whole area around Mathura has been divided in 24 sacred forests or gardens and this Belavana is one of them. The early reference to such forests is found in ancient Indian literature like Madhuvana in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and Bhāndira vana in a Jaina text (also see Vinay Kumar Gupta, *op. cit.*)

²⁵ This area lies on a very important ancient route going towards large sites in Ganga basin from Mathura and the areas south and south- west of Mathura.

²⁶ J.M. Rosenfield, *op. cit.*, p. 192. As Rosenfield had a notion of the Sun God being a subsidiary deity during Kushan period, he did not give much importance to this find and just mentions it an image of no major significance for the Sun cult.

²⁷ J.M. Rosenfield, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

²⁸ Heinrich Luders, *Mathura Inscriptions*, ed. K.L. Janert, Gottingen 1961, pp. 138-145.

²⁹ Marion Frenger, "Sun Images from Mathura – Cult Icons or Emblems," *South Asian Archaeology* 2003, eds. – Ute Franke Vogt and Hans Joachim Weissbar, Aachen 2005, pp. 443-449.

³⁰ A.J. Gail, "Early Sūrya and Gokarneshwar Colossus at Mathura," *South Asian Archaeology* 1993, Vol. I, ed. Asko Parpola and Petteri Koskikallio, Helsinki 1994, pp. 213-216.

³¹ Pratapaditya Pal, *The Ideal Image*, New York 1972, p. 59.

³² I would like to mention another important fact about this image. Earlier when Coomarswamy had photographed it, it had half broken halo which might have been wings actually but later on these got broken and even scholars as early as V.S. Agrawala were not able to observe this fault of museum mishandling of this much important image. I found this difference because I was in need of observing the image mentioned by Coomarswamy but without its accession number.

³³ Anand Coomarswamy, *The History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, London 1927, p. 68.

³⁴ J.M. Rosenfield, *op. cit.*, p. 190, rather surprisingly postulates that the iconography of the Sun God was derived from Kushan royal portraits and not vice- versa. There should be no problem in accepting that the dresses of a society can be included in the iconography of a deity but that is derived from the dressing of past as part of a continuing tradition. It can be observed from the dresses of various Kṛṣṇa images in Braj region derived from medieval dressing but to opine that the dressing of an important deity like Sun God to be derived from contemporary ruling class portraiture seems to be untenable. Only a lower person or deity in hierarchy would adopt the dressing of a superior person or deity and not vice-versa.

³⁵ Soper, *Artibus Asiae*, XII, 1949, p. 272.

³⁶ V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of Brāhmaṇical Images in Mathura Museum*, Lucknow 1951, p. 26.

³⁷ Vāsudeva- Kṛṣṇa images are also known in a large number from Mathura region but majority of them belong to late Kushan period. *Mātṛkās* may also outnumber other deities but these were the representation of various female deities, not a single deity.

³⁸ J. Ph. Vogel, *A.S.I.A.R.*, 1911-12, pp. 126- 127 and J.M. Rosenfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-195.

³⁹ V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-6. (see for the size of various images)

⁴⁰ R.C. Sharma, *Buddhist Art of Mathura*, Delhi 1984, p. 61.

⁴¹ J.M. Rosenfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-143.

Chapter 10

Other Important Brāhmanical Divinities in the Art of Mathura

I. LORD GAṆEŚA -

Gaṇeśa, Lord of the Gaṇas, is one of the most universally adored of all the Hindu gods, and his image is found in practically every part of India as well as in Sri Lanka, Java, Sumatra, Borneo, Central Asia, China, Japan and many other Asian nations. References to Gaṇeśa are not found in Vedic literature except for the *mantra* “*Gaṇānām tvā Gaṇapatim*” (*Rgveda*, 2.23.1) which too possibly does not relate with Gaṇeśa as such and has been used for Brahmaṇaspati, as confirmed by Sāyaṇa.¹ The *mantra* in *Vājasneyi Samhitā* “*Gaṇānām tvā Gaṇapatim havāmahe*” also does not relate with Gaṇeśa and has been used for the horse of Aśvamedha sacrifice.²

In a collection of Vedic *mantras* in the *Taittirīya- Āraṇyaka*,³ there is a mystic prayer addressed to a god, Danti, which might be the earliest reference to the God Gaṇeśa.⁴ Now-a-days, this *mantra* is often used as a prayer for Gaṇeśa. Clear mention of Gaṇeśa is found in the *Gaṇeśa-Gāyatrī* of *Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā*.⁵ *Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad* refers to Vakratuṇḍa, Danti etc.⁶ In the *Gaṇeśa Atharvaśirasa Upaniṣad*, he is referred to as Ekadanta, Vakratuṇḍa and Danti.⁷ The *Mānava Gr̥hya Sūtra* speaks of four types of Vināyakas (mildly malevolent form of Gaṇeśa).⁸ In the *Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra*, Gaṇeśa is referred to as Vighna, Vināyaka, Sthūla, Hastimukha, Vakratuṇḍa, Ekadanta and Lambodara.⁹ In the *Yājñavalkya Smṛti* (1.271), Vināyaka is appointed as the chief of Śiva’s Gaṇas.¹⁰ His job is to create difficulties in the performance of sacrifices. His mother is Ambikā-Pārvatī. He has to be placated to keep him out of mischief. In the epic and purāṇic literature, references to the god Gaṇapati become more frequent. It can be presumed that by the first three centuries of the Christian era, Lord Gaṇeśa had become quite a popular deity but the great status

which he enjoys now might have been given to him during Gupta and post-Gupta periods.

According to V.S. Agrawala,¹¹ Gaṇeśa is the *ākāśic* part of Śiva looked upon as the Lord of the Universe. His capacious belly is the symbol of expansive space, and the *modakas* are the innumerable universes floating in *ākāśa*. The snake *yajñopavīta* is the symbol of Infinity encircling the cosmos, corresponding to Ananta Śeṣa, who is the support of Viṣṇu.

According to A.K. Narain, the earliest occurrence of Gaṇeśa in Indian art is the depiction of the deity on a silver drachm of Hermaeus of about 50 B.C. now housed at British Museum,¹² but this identification is doubted by a number of scholars.¹³ From the excavations at Ter, a small kaoline image of Gaṇeśa of about 2nd century A.D. was found from the Sātavāhana level.¹⁴ A small Kushan terracotta plaque of Gaṇeśa has been found from Khairadih.¹⁵ In sculptural art, the earliest and the well accepted representation of this god is not found earlier than 3rd century A.D. A proto- type of Gaṇeśa, Gajānana Yakṣa was observed in a coping-stone of Amaravati stūpa by Anand Coomarswamy.¹⁶ A Mathura frieze of the Kushan period (M.M. No. 2325) shows a row of five elephant-headed Gaṇas very similar to the Amaravati relief depicting the same figure (about 2nd century A.D.).¹⁷ From a stūpa situated near Mihintale in Sri Lanka, a similar relief of about 2nd century A.D. was found.¹⁸ One of the well known early representations of Gaṇeśa is an image found from Fatehpur district of U.P. (Fig. 10.1.1) which probably came from the mound of Sankisa.¹⁹ The image is a definite product of Mathura school as it is made of spotted red sandstone and is not more than 20'' in height. The bare head of the standing Gaṇeśa has been marked with huge ears of abnormal size (elephant's ears). The trunk of the deity is turned in a sudden curve and then it comes vertically down to pick the *modaka* kept in a *modaka- pātra* held in his left hand. His right hand probably holds the tusk. His *linga* has been specifically represented in the image, possibly inspired from the cult of his father- *ūrdhvaretas* Śiva.

Other early images of Gaṇeśa are all from the region of Mathura. The two armed statuette of Gaṇeśa from the well Shah Kazi, Isapur (M.M. No. 792) depicts

him wearing a *sarpa yajñopavīta* and touching the sweet balls with his trunk turned to the left. This statuette in which the god is *surpakarṇa ekadanta* and is holding a fruit, perhaps pomegranate, in his right hand, belongs to the early Gupta period.²⁰ The Gaṇeśa statue found from Yamuna bed (M.M. No. 1064) and belonging to early Gupta period represents dancing Gaṇeśa, who is two armed, pot- bellied, *ekadanta* and with his trunk turned to left.²¹ Another Gaṇeśa statuette found from Salempur well (M.M. No. 758, Fig. 10.1.2) shows a two- armed nude corpulent Gaṇapati tasting the *modaka* from a bowl held in his left hand. The God is shown ithyphallic and wearing a *sarpa yajñopavīta*.²² There is also a terracotta image of Gaṇeśa (M.M. No. 71.6) housed in Mathura Museum belonging to Gupta period. There are about half a dozen more Gaṇeśa sculptures in the Mathura Museum, but they all belong to early medieval period.

During late Gupta period about 5th-6th century A.D., various important Gaṇeśa images came into existence at many of the important Gupta temple sites. A curious Gaṇeśa image from Bhumara, M.P. (Fig. 10.1.3) has been published by Getty.²³ In this image which is now possibly housed in Indian Museum, Calcutta, the god is shown seated on a high pedestal in the pose typical of Yakṣa images; the right leg turned at the knee lies on the horizontal plane while the left leg bent at the knee is slightly vertical in its position. Besides the normal features of Gaṇeśa iconography, the chain of round shaped bells which hangs across the breast is an unusual feature. There are bell ornaments on the *karaṇḍa mukūṭa*, *keyūras* and anklets. Another image from Bhumara (Fig. 10.1.4), probably is some U.S. collection, has also been published by Getty.²⁴ This sculpture might be the earliest of its type depicting Śakti of Gaṇeśa sitting in the left side of his lap. He is shown nude and wears few jewels. On his forehead is a simple jewelled band, while the *devī*, on the contrary, is crowned with an ornate head-dress. Gaṇeśa is shown four handed; the upper right hand holds an axe, the normal right a tusk, the upper left holds a sceptre and the normal left hand has been put around Śakti, pressing her left breast. I am inclined to put both these Bhumara images in around 600 A.D. Two Gupta period Gaṇeśa images from Afghanistan have been published by Dr. R.C. Agrawala; one of which was in worship at Pir Ratan Nath Dargah in Kabul and the other was in worship at Shorbazar in Kabul.²⁵ First image is two handed with usual attributes of early Gaṇeśa images while the second image has a definite impact of Viṣṇu images in its iconography having

four hands, two natural hands being placed at two *puruṣas* like the *āyudhapuruṣas*. Both the images are shown with *ūrdhvaretas*.

The other Gaṇeśa images of late Gupta period are: Udaigiri image,²⁶ Ahichchhatra images,²⁷ Bhitargaon image,²⁸ Deogarh image,²⁹ and Rajghat image. The important features of these images are:

1. The early images are without any crown but in some late Gupta images, some kind of head-dress comes into existence. In some images *karaṇḍa mukūṭa* is observed on the head. The head is always of an elephant with large ears.
2. In all the images, the trunk of the lord is turned towards the left side where he picks his favourite sweet balls kept in a *modaka-pātra* which is held in his left hand.
3. The early images are two handed but during late Gupta period, four handed images become popular.
4. These images are found in both the attitudes- seated as well as standing.
5. The position and attribute of the normal left hand is fixed in all these images. In his upper right hand, he generally holds a *paraśu* while in his other hands he generally holds a tusk and a fruit like pomegranate or reddish.
6. Most of the early images are shown with a *sarpa yajñopavīta*, which must be related with his strong association with Śaivite cult.
7. Another important feature related with Śaivite cult is the nudity of the images as well as the ithyphallic nature of many of them.

New sculptural findings of Lord Gaṇeśa-

1. Sculptural Panel from Kanwara (Fig. 10.1.5)-

This sculpture was found lying at a shrine in village Kanwara situated near Kaman in district Bharatpur of Rajasthan. The small sculptural plaque made of spotted red sandstone is quite defaced, especially at the top. The plaque represents two seated deities in high relief. The male figure, Gaṇeśa is seated to the right of the female deity. Gaṇeśa is seated in typical manner like the Kushan Yakṣas. He is possibly two handed; his left hand is in a pose of putting *modakas* in his trunk which is turned to the left while his right hand is too defaced to form an idea. The body of the deity is corpulent and stout. There is a possibility of the presence of the *sarpa yajñopavīta* over his belly part. He was possibly not shown nude as a part of the folds of *dhotī* is

visible between his legs. The head was probably devoid of any head-dress like *mukūṭa*, *uṣṇīṣa* etc. The female deity to his left is seated in *bhadrāsana* with her mount lion. The face of the lion is missing but the claws and the shape of the body confirms the identification of the animal. The female deity possibly held a child in her left hand and might have been feeding milk to the child. If it was not the child then it is quite difficult to identify the object held in her left hand which is positioned near the navel with open palms. The head and the right hand of the deity are missing. There is possibility of the presence of wings on the back of the female deity as visible towards left shoulder of the deity. If it is so, it should be only the second example of such a *mātrkā* image; the other being the *mātrkā* panel (M.M. No. 75.20) which shows the *mātrkā* seated in *bhadrāsana* holding a flask in her upraised hand and by her side appears Lakṣmī holding a lotus with a long stalk. On stylistic grounds, our sculpture in discussion should be datable to Kushan period (about late 2nd or early 3rd century A.D.). I don't think that the sculpture would have contained more than three figures in any case, so it can not be a part of a *saptamātrkā* panel. It is also to be kept in mind that Gaṇeśa is shown to the left of the *mātrkā* panels and is not found in such panels earlier than late Gupta period. The identification of the female deity poses a number of questions as two different aspects of female deity are attached with it; first the *mātrkā* and the other of the lion mount. I am inclined to consider it a prototype of the popular Lakṣmī-Gaṇeśa plaques if the lion can be considered to be related with Lakṣmī. In my opinion, it might be one of the earliest representations of Lord Gaṇeśa as a deity in Indian art.

2. Sculpture from village Son, Mathura (Fig. 10.1.6)-

This sculpture was observed at a shrine in village Son of district Mathura. Only upper half of the image survives which is made of red sandstone. The sculpture definitely depicts some early features like: there is no ornate head-dress over the elephant head of the deity; the trunk of the deity with a single tusk is turned towards his left side in a style observed only in early sculptures; there is only restrained ornamentation as only two round necklaces are visible around his neck. The size of the image is comparatively small (about 6''). This image might be dated to about 3rd- 4th century A.D.

3. Architectural frieze from Sandhan Khera (Fig. 10.1.7)-

This broken architectural frieze containing a figure of Gaṇeśa in the middle was found at a shrine of Sandhan Khera village in district Agra. The figure of Gaṇeśa is surrounded on both sides by winged celestial beings probably holding a *kamaṇḍalu* in their left hands. These winged figures wear round beaded necklace around the neck as well as a beaded *yajñopavīta*. The seated figure of Lord Gaṇeśa holds a *modaka-pātra* in his left hand and from this *pātra*, he is picking up the sweet balls with his single tusked trunk turned towards his left, as usual. His right hand is too broken to form an idea. He is wearing the beaded necklace round the neck and the beaded *yajñopavīta* in the similar way as the winged figures wear. The deity is wearing a peculiar cap over his head. This image of Gaṇeśa is not represented as a cult deity but as a part of architectural arrangement where he finds a place in between some other celestial beings which need to be identified. Floral decorations are visible at the top of the frieze. Stylistically, this image should date back to Gupta period about 4th- 5th century A.D.

4. Sculpture from Sandhan Khera (Fig. 10.1.8)-

This sculpture was observed at the same shrine as the above mentioned frieze. This sculpture would have formed part of a Gupta temple complex at the site of Sandhan Khera. The sculpture is quite defaced but still provides some details for its identification. The important aspect about this sculptural relief is that it comprises of two deities; the male deity is in seated position to the left of the standing female deity. The male deity has slightly stout and corpulent body. His *vāhana*, probably a rat is visible at the base of the panel behind the right leg of the deity. The possible trunk of the deity appears to be turned to his left side. The female deity possibly holds a pot of prosperity in her left hand. The image is too mutilated to form any idea about the number of hands of the deities and their attributes, though the number of hands in all probability would have been four. But if the male deity is Gaṇeśa and the standing female deity holds a pot of prosperity, then these figures might be identified as Lakṣmī and Gaṇeśa. It might be the earliest representation of its type in Indian art.

5. Broken bust of Gaṇeśa from Avairni (Fig. 10.1.9)-

This headless and armless bust was found at a shrine in village Avairni of district Mathura. The identification of the bust as that of Gaṇeśa is confirmed by the presence of a *sarpa yajñopavīta* over the chest. The figure is shown pot-bellied and is also

ithyphallic in nature. Fine *netra-sūtra* with beaded strings is visible at the waist of the deity. The deity is shown wearing a beautiful round necklace. Stylistically, this figure can well be compared with the ornamentation of the figures from Deogarh. So, this Gaṇeśa bust should belong to about late 5th- early 6th century A.D.

6. Gaṇeśa from Kanwar (Fig. 10.1.10)-

This figure of Lord Gaṇeśa was observed at a shrine in village Kanwar of district Bharatpur. This is the same site from various Gupta period sculptures along with the above mentioned sculptural panel (Fig. 10.1.5) have been reported by me for the first time. The hands and legs of this small sculpture are missing. There is a circular band round the forehead. Marks of double stringed necklace are visible over the neck. The trunk of the deity with a single tusk is turned towards the left side as is usually observed in early Gaṇeśa sculptures. This sculpture might date back to Gupta or late Gupta period (about 5th- 6th century A.D.).

7. Gaṇeśa from Gwarau (Fig. 10.1.11)-

This sculptural relief of Gaṇeśa was found at a shrine in village Gwarau of district Hathras. The deity is shown seated in a relaxed pose and having four hands. The trunk is turned towards his left and is picking sweet balls from the *modaka-pātra* held in his lower left hand. A beaded *yajñopavīta* is visible running over his chest, quite like the Sandhan Khera image (Fig. 10.1.7). The position and attributes of his two upper hands is not clear. This sculpture might be belonging to about 5th- 6th century A.D. or slightly earlier to early Gupta period.

8. Sculptural relief with Gaṇeśa from Chauma (Fig. 10.1.12)-

This sculptural relief, possibly part of a temple was observed at a shrine in village Chauma Shahpur of district Agra. The fragmentary relief depicts three figures (Gaṇas) who are busy in dancing and playing musical instruments. The instrument held in the hand of the central figure is a *dhholaka* (drum). It appears that the relief is a part of a larger theme of the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī. But it is interesting to note that their son is also shown dancing in such a theme. The two handed Gaṇeśa is holding a *modaka-pātra* in his left hand from which he is picking the sweet ball with his trunk. He is possibly also holding another object in his left hand. The head-dress of the deity

is plain except for a band on the forehead. This relief might date back to about 4th-5th century A.D.

9. Gaṇeśa from Sankhi (Fig. 10.1.13)-

This small but mutilated sculpture was found from village Sankhi of district Mathura. The deity is holding a *modaka-pātra* in his left hand from which he is picking a sweet ball with his trunk. The damaged right hand was probably held in *abhaya mudrā* with or without an *akṣamālā*. The head dress was probably an ordinary one. This image might date back to about 5th- 6th century A.D.

10. Lintel with Gaṇeśa from Paigaon (Fig. 10.1.14)-

This broken architectural frieze, most probably a lintel of a temple, was found at a shrine in village Paigaon of district Mathura. There are only three figures visible in this broken frieze. These figures are too defaced to form a correct idea but the figure to the extreme right appears to be of Lord Gaṇeśa. The body of the deity is quite corpulent, especially in comparison to the other seated figures (probably in *lalitāsana*). From the style of the frieze, it appears to belong to the early phase of temple architecture, of about late Gupta period.

11. Gaṇeśa from Akata (Fig. 10.1.15)-

This sculpture was observed at a shrine in village Akata situated near Kaman in district Bharatpur. The sculpture possibly depicts a dancing Gaṇeśa. A beaded string quite similar to the manner of the above image is visible running over the chest. Other features of the sculpture are too damaged to form an idea. The sculpture might be belonging to about 7th- 8th century A.D. as are some other Śaivite sculptures observed at the same shrine.

12. Gaṇeśa with his Śakti from Sablana (Fig. 10.1.16)-

This sculpture was found in worship (obviously as a female deity as is the norm throughout Braj region for ancient sculptures) in village Sablana situated near Kaman of district Bharatpur. Lord Gaṇeśa is quite corpulent in appearance and holds his Śakti in his left lap. He is wearing a peculiar crown. His *yajñopavīta* is also visible in the sculpture. Number of his hands is not clear in the broken sculpture but his lower left hand is definitely embracing Śakti as his hand is visible almost in an attitude of

pressing the left breast of Śakti. Śakti is wearing a very ornate head-dress along with a torque, necklace and *keyūras*. This image might be dated to medieval period, possibly around 7th- 8th century A.D.

13. Gaṇeśa sculpture (Fig. 10.1.17)-

This image was observed at a shrine in village Umro or some other village near it, lying between Govardhan and Kumher town in district Bharatpur. The deity is shown seated with ease. He is wearing a *yajñopavīta*, possibly of *sarpa*. He has a corpulent body with a pot-belly. He is wearing a heavy round necklace as well as *keyūras* and *nūpurās*. His *ekadanta* trunk is turned towards his left but he is not shown in a process of picking a *modaka* as there is no *modaka-pātra* visible in this sculpture. He has very large ears and wears a very peculiar head-dress. In his upper left hand, he is holding a *paraśu* while his three other hands are too broken to form an idea of their attributes. The sculpture might be dated to early medieval period about 9th- 10th century A.D.

14. Gaṇeśa from Bachhagaon (Fig. 10.1.18)-

This Gaṇeśa sculpture was found somewhere in village Bachhagaon of district Mathura. The deity is shown seated in an easy posture. Unlike all the above mentioned sculptures, the trunk of the deity in this sculpture is turned to his right side. It appears that during the later period, it was not a fixed norm to turn the trunk towards left as many late medieval Gaṇeśa sculptures like the one in worship at Gokarneshwar Mahadev temple show the trunk turned towards right side of the deity. The four handed deity in his upper right hand holds a *modaka* which he is putting into his curved trunk; his lower right hand holds an *aṅgamālā*; the upper left hand in all probability holds a *pāśa* while his lower left hand holds some fruit, probably a pomegranate. He is wearing a peculiar crown made of lotus petals, a feature observed in some early images of about 6th- 8th century A.D. In spite of the crown, this sculpture might date back to late medieval period, possibly around 12th- 14th century A.D. on the basis of its features and appearance.

15. Temple lintel with Gaṇeśa (Fig. 10.1.19)-

This temple lintel was found at a shrine outside village Ghata of district Bharatpur. The lintel depicts three deities, all standing, in the left, right corners and in the centre inside separate niches. *Navagrahas* (interestingly here 10 in number) have been

carved over the lintel. In the centre of the lintel (6 *grahas* to the left and 4 to the right), a dancing figure of Lord Gaṇeśa has been carved inside a niche. It possibly indicates that this lintel might be part of a temple chamber dedicated to Lord Gaṇeśa. Gaṇeśa has been shown in a pose of dancing and has two hands. In his left hand he holds a *modaka-pātra* as usual from which he is holding a sweet ball with his trunk; while in his right hand he is holding a *paraśu* (battle-axe). This lintel which is in a good state of preservation might date to circa 8th- 9th century A.D. Government of Rajasthan should take this lintel under their protection, not only this lintel but this whole small temple site.

II. SKANDA/ KĀRTTIKEYA-

Skanda is one of the very popular gods of ancient India. During Kushan period, he (as Viśākha, Skanda, Kumāra and Mahāsena etc.) was worshipped as an independent god but in later periods his worship got merged with the larger cult of Śaivism. Some scholars believe that the earliest reference to Skanda is found in *Ṛgveda* where Kumāra is closely associated with Agni as his son and the leader of divine army.³⁰ He was also considered as the god of rogues (*bhagvān devo dhūrtah*) in the “*Dhūrtakalpa*” *Pariśiṣṭa* of *Atharvaveda*.³¹ During the later Vedic period, Skanda name of this god became more popular. Much before the 2nd century B.C., by the time of *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, his image (not sculpture) as a commander-in-chief had become quite popular as *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* mentions “*Senānīnāmaham Skandah*.”³² This reference counters the view of some scholars who believe that the cult of this god owes a lot from north-west and west, i.e. outside ancient India. The *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* (2.5.8) contains early references to Skanda and his various names such as Ṣaṇmukha, Jayanta, Viśākha, Subrahmaṇya and Mahāsena.³³

The myth concerning the birth of Skanda is as follows: In the kingdom of the gods one demon named Tāraka grew into a powerful oppressor, and even Indra failed to subdue him. So, the gods contemplated the birth of a hero who would be able to destroy Tāraka and rescue them from his oppression. The gods visualized that only through the union of Maheśvara, the god of gods, and Satī, the birth of the desired hero was possible. Maheśvara and Satī finally got married after various hurdles. In the

course of time, during the moments of ecstasy there occurred the emission of the seminal fluid (*skanna*) of Maheśvara which fell on the earth. But, the fluid was unbearably strong for the Earth who threw it into the burning fire. Fire purified the fluid and threw it again into the Gaṅgā. Thus was ultimately born a powerful being. The new-born began to float in the water of the Gaṅgā, and was finally found out by the six Kṛttikās who fed him with their breast-milk. The wender-child, in order to suck the milk from the breasts of six foster mothers, issued forth sixth mouths. The child, however, grew into a great hero and defeated the oppressing Tāraka and rescued the gods. The child thus derived his name of Kārttikeya from his foster mothers, the Kṛttikās. Since he was borne out of the *Skanna* of Maheśvara-Śiva, he was known as Skanda. He derived his name of ‘Guha’ from Maheśvara. A great hero, he was rightly called Mahāsenā, and as the killer of Tāraka, Tārakāri.³⁴

Above account and various references in the ancient texts including the two epics clearly indicates towards some connection between Skanda-Kumāra and Agni, Gaṅgā, Śiva-Pārvatī, Kṛttikās. Vedic Rudra was also associated with the fire god, Agni. He was born out of some abnormal conditions. It also appears that various myths about him got merged during the Gupta period and later on his ancient but separate cult formed part of Śaiva cult.

Another very important reference about Skanda-Kārttikeya is found in *Matsya Purāṇa*³⁵ which mentions that in fury, Śiva’s semen was transferred into the mouth of Agni, Agni put it into a water body and there six Kṛttikās took it out and gave it to Pārvatī. Then Pārvatī gave birth to two children each having six faces, the first one was named Kumāra and the second child was named Skanda, Viśākha, Ṣaḍvaktra and Kārttikeya. Indra before the anointment of the boys merged them into one. This is a clear reference towards the merger of two different deities with almost similar characteristics into one deity. Another reference in *Matsya Purāṇa* confirms that *Agniputra* Kumara had younger brothers by the name of Śākha, Viśākha and Naigmeya.³⁶

Skanda in Indian art-

The earliest reference to the images of Śiva, Skanda and Viśākha, under Pāṇini V, 3, 99 is found in the Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya*.³⁷ From the *Mahābhārata* we learn that Viśākha arose from the right side of Skanda when the latter was struck by Indra's thunderbolt.³⁸ The distinct identities of Skanda and Viśākha are also proved by the two interesting coin types of Kushan king Huvishka showing (i) two male figures standing to front bearing the Greek legend *Skando Kumaro Bizago* and (ii) three figures standing side by side within a shrine with the legend *Skando Komaro Bizago Mahaseno*.³⁹ Skanda-Kārttikeya is also sometimes described as “goat-headed” (*chhagavaktra*) when he is called *Naigameya*.⁴⁰ This god also forms part of the pantheon of Jainas. Yaudheya coins bear such legends as “*Bhagavata svāmino Brahmaṇyadevasya Kumārasya*” and figures of six headed Skanda and Ṣaṣṭhī.⁴¹

In sculptural art the earliest representation of Skanda is found from the site of Kankali Tila in Mathura (M.M. No. 2949, Fig. 10.2.1). From the inscription of year 11 inscribed on this image, this image can certainly be identified as that of Kārttikeya. The 2/3rd life size image depicts the god standing in *samapāda sthānaka* pose with right hand at shoulder height in *abhaya mudrā* and the left hand holding a long spear. He is wearing a *dhotī* and a typical Kushan turban with central rosette. Youthfulness and the boy like treatment of the body are quite remarkable in the sculpture. Another important image of Skanda from Mathura is of bronze unearthed during the excavations at Sonkh (M.M. No. SOI 178, Fig. 10.2.2). The god in this representation holds the long spear in his right hand while his left hand most probably holds a cock kept at his waist height. He is wearing a typical Kushan head-dress and a *dhotī*. His body above waist is probably shown naked. In all the Skanda-Kārttikeya images from Mathura region, except this bronze image, the deity holds the long spear in his left hand. In majority of the Gandhāra sculptures of Skanda-Kārttikeya (more than 20 in number), the deity holds the spear in his right hand.⁴² So, this feature of Skanda image from Sonkh matches more with the Gandhāra images than those of Mathura region. In the coin of Huvishka with the legend “*Maaseno*” the deity holds the long spear in his right hand.⁴³ So, the deity on this bronze image might be identified as Mahāsena if it is the only or very significant difference between the iconography of the various forms of Skanda. Another bronze image (M.M. No. SOI 173) was found from the site of Sonkh which represents a standing male deity holding a small bowl in his left hand and a female deity standing to the left of this male deity. The female deity possibly

has a face of a lion and holds a child in her lap. Some scholars including N.P. Joshi consider the possibility of this male deity being Skanda.⁴⁴ Other Skanda images of Kushan period from Mathura are: M.M. Nos. 1022 and 1579.

The more popular representation of Skanda in the art of Mathura art is found on triads which represents goddess Śaṣṭhī surrounded by two male figures holding a long spear in their left hands. The goddess Śaṣṭhī in most of these images is shown in the centre with six heads and the right hand in *abhaya* pose and the left hand holding a water-pot; her height is much shorter than the two male figures. A fine example of such a triad is the relief housed in Mathura Museum (No. F 1, Fig. 10.2.3). There are some other Skanda images which form part of *mātrkā* panels with seven or a lesser number of mothers (M.M. Nos. F. 39; F. 38; 2491; 1179). The two male figures on either side of such panels with right hand in *abhaya mudrā* and in the left hand holding the long spear were earlier identified as *āyudha puruṣas* (as an earlier form of Vīrabhadra) by V.S. Agrawala⁴⁵ but Joshi might be right in identifying them as Skanda and Viśākha (or some other form of Kārttikeya).⁴⁶ In the art of Mathura during the Kushan period, there are some other representations of persons holding a spear in their left hand. Some are quite small in size and others might be part of an architectural member. Some of them might be just door-keepers but possibility of their identification as Skanda can't be outrightly rejected.

The salient features of Kushan Skanda images are:

1. Except for the Yaudheya coins, Skanda is always represented with one head and two hands. The left hand always holds a *śakti* or long spear, except for the above mentioned bronze image (Fig. 10.2.2) and the right hand is generally held in *abhaya* pose. Sometimes the top of the spear is decorated with floral garlands.
2. The standing god is generally shown in *samapāda sthānaka mudrā*. He has boyish charm and looks like the leader of an army. This attribute of him is highlighted in the images of Gandhāra region while in Mathura, in spite of him being a warrior, this aspect is not emphasized.
3. He is sometimes shown with a head-gear typical of Kushan period and sometimes he has his hair tied in a top knot. In some sculptures, two braids of his hair are shown falling on his shoulders.

4. He is generally shown wearing a *graiveyaka* of triangular shape and occasionally he wears a *yajñopavīta*.
5. He is shown wearing a *dhotī* tied at the waist with a sash running down on the left side.
6. In the art of Mathura, Skanda-Kārttikeya is not shown associated with a cock except for an image (M.M. No. 32.2332, early Gupta period). The Lala Bhagat pillar of Kanpur had a cock- capital which should be related with the cult of Skanda-Kārttikeya.

During the Gupta period, the importance of the cult of Skanda-Kārttikeya continued to be popular as is supported by a number of sculptural finds as well as literary references to the temples dedicated to this deity, found from various places in northern India. During the Gupta period, the overall appearance of the deity shifts towards a youthful juvenile *nāyaka* from that of a warrior god. He is more often shown associated with his mount peacock either riding on it or feeding the peacock. His hair is arranged as *śikhaṇḍin*. His *graiveyaka* now has a tiger nail (*vyāghra nakha*) tied in the centre of it. There is standing Kārttikeya image from Braj region, now housed at the local museum (M.M. No. 2019). Two terracotta images of Skanda are also housed in the Mathura Museum (M.M. Nos. 38.2794 and 32.2270). A Kārttikeya image (M.M. No.14.466, Fig. 10.2.4) is quite unique and shows the god riding on a peacock facing to the front. Skanda wears his hair in matted locks with a pair of loose locks falling on shoulders. He has elongated ears, wears an *ekāvali* necklace and armlets. He probably holds a *śakti* in his left hand and the right hand is damaged. Kārttikeya is being anointed (*abhiṣeka*) as the commander of the divine forces (*Deva-senā*) by four faced Brahmā on right, and Indra on left, both having matted locks and wearing girdles. They hold jars in hands pouring sacred water on the head of Skanda who became the *Senānī* of the gods to lead their armies in battle against the demon Tārakāśura. Behind Brahmā and Indra are two other smaller figures. The one to the right is headless, that on the left is probably goat-faced. The feathers of the peacock are spread in such a manner that these form a kind of halo around the deity. This episode of anointment is mentioned in detail in *Matsya Purāṇa* (159.6) and that description matches a lot with the treatment of this sculpture. V.S. Agrawala had identified the two deities pouring water over Skanda as Brahmā and Śiva and he

had also correlated this episode of *abhiṣeka* with the account given in *Kumārasambhava*.⁴⁷

One image of Kārttikeya has been found from village Mora, now kept in the godown of Mathura Museum (No. 99.24, Fig. 10.2.5 a & b). This image belongs to circa 4th century A.D. (Gupta period). The treatment of the body is typical Gupta i.e. slender body with very fine drapery. The Kārttikeya image is in standing pose with its head and arms missing. His mount, a peacock has been carved beautifully in lower part of the red sandstone sculpture. Kumāra is wearing a *dhotī* tied in a peculiar fashion at his waist with central knot and most of it hanging in folds and pleats on the left side of him below waist. On the upper limb, he is only partially draped, in such a way as a sacred thread is worn. The most striking characteristic of this sculpture is that it has been carved on both sides. It appears that the two of the images of the deity are indicative of their different identifications as Skanda and Kumāra. It is supportive of the fact that during Kushan period the same god was conceived as different gods by varying the attributes of him by different names- Viśākha, Skanda, Kumāra and Mahāsenā. In the present sculpture because of its broken nature, the difference between the two aspects of the deity can not be analysed but it surely represents two different aspects of the same god.

New sculptural findings:

1. Skanda from Noh (Fig. 10.2.6)-

This quite defaced red sandstone miniature sculpture was found from the famous site of Noh in district Bharatpur of Rajasthan. The god is shown standing and holds his *śakti* in his left hand. His right hand was probably held in *abhaya mudrā*. He wears the *dhotī* tied at his waist as observed usually. This image belongs to Kushan period.

2. Skanda from Jhandipur (Fig. 10.2.7)-

This miniature sculpture was observed at a shrine of local goddess in village Jhandipur of district Mathura. In his left hand the deity holds the long spear and his right hand is in *abhaya* with palm in profile. The hair is tied in a top knot. The sculpture might be belonging to late Kushan- early Gupta period.

3. Skanda from Sonkh-khera village (Fig. 10.2.8)-

This image was found at a local goddess shrine in village Sonkh Khera of district Mathura. The deity is shown seated and riding on his mount peacock; the peacock facing to front. The deity holds the spear in his left hand while the right hand is in *abhaya mudrā*. His hair is arranged in *śikhaṇḍin* and is shown wearing large round ear-rings and possibly a necklace with *vyāghranka*. This sculpture should belong to early Gupta period. Somehow this sculpture reminds of the most famous Kārttikeya image of India, housed at Bharat Kala Bhawan, Varanasi (Fig. 10.2.9) and indicates that such type of images from Mathura would have been the inspiration to the artists of Varanasi.

4. Fragmentary Śiva Parivāra image with Skanda (Fig. 10.2.10)-

This fragmentary piece of a Śaivite sculpture depicting Śiva along with his *parivāra* was observed at a shrine in village Kanwara of district Bharatpur. The young charming boy Kumāra is shown riding on his *vāhana* peacock. In such type of Umā-Maheśvara sculptures, Skanda is generally shown at this position near the feet of his parents and by the side of the bull Nandin. This sculpture might be datable to Gupta period as many other Gupta period sculptures were observed at the same site.

5. Terracotta plaque from Bhainsa representing Skanda (?), (Fig. 10.2.11)-

This terracotta plaque was found from village Bhainsa of district Mathura. It represents a deity seated in a relaxed pose. The deity is has youthful charm and has been treated like a young boy. He wears big round ear-rings. His left hand has been put at his chest while his right hand has been shown possibly picking something from the ground. No other identifying feature is visible in the plaque. After comparing the style of the deity with the terracotta images of Skanda housed in the Mathura Museum ((M.M. Nos. 38.2794 and 32.2270), it looks quite probable that the deity in question might be Skanda. This terracotta plaque should belong to Gupta period and is a very fine example of Gupta period terracotta art.

III. YAKṢA CULT AT MATHURA-

Yakṣa cult is one of the ancient most cults of early historic India and Mathura was a very important, possibly the most important centre of this cult. This cult was popular at the local village level and there is a possibility that Yakṣa had occupied the place of *Grāma-devatā* because in the region of Braj, I have observed in a number of villages the shrines of Jakhaiya baba (in the villages of Thakur dominance) and Bhuniya baba (in the villages of Jat dominance) which are the local names of Yakṣa as a deity. A number of significant works are already available on Yakṣas⁴⁸, so in this chapter we don't need to go in detail on Yakṣas. The main emphasis would be on describing the newly found Yakṣa images during the explorations.

It is during the Mauryan and Śuṅga period when various Yakṣa images in the medium of stone came into existence in the region of Mathura as well as in Pawaya, Patna, Besnagar and Kaushambi. All these places were major town and were related with traders and commercial activities. The important Yakṣa images of the earliest phase belonging to 3rd – 2nd century B.C. and found from the region of Braj are as follows:

1. Yakṣa from Parkham (M.M. No. C.1, Fig. 10.3.1).
2. Yakṣa from Baroda village (M.M. No. C.23, Fig. 10.3.2).
3. Yakṣa from Mathura (published by V.S. Agrawala).⁴⁹
4. Yakṣī from Nagla Jhinga (M.M. No. 72.1, Fig. 10.3.3 a & b).
5. Yakṣa from village Noh (in worship, Fig. 10.3.4).
6. Fragmentary Yakṣa from Noh (Bharatpur Museum No. 213.64).
7. Yakṣa from Virabai village, Bharatpur (Bharatpur Museum No. 301).
8. Standing headless Yakṣa from Mathura (M.M. No. 56.4338).
9. Yakṣa from Palwal (Lucknow Museum No. O.107).
10. Agnipāṇi Yakṣa from Bharna Kalan (M.M. No. 87.146).
11. Mudgarapāṇi Yakṣa from Bharna Kalan (M.M. No. 87.145).
12. Yakṣa bust from Bharatpur Gate, Mathura (M.M. No. E.9).
13. Inscribed Maṇibhadra Yakṣa from Pawaya (Gwalior Museum).

Some of the important features of the above mentioned images are:

1. These have been carved in round (*chaturmukhadarsana*) and are free standing but the main effect is frontal as to be viewed from the front mainly.
2. Most of these are of colossal size about 10' or more (even the smaller ones are larger than life size) and massively built with pronounce emphasis on muscular strength.
3. The cult is totally indigenous as the drapery of the deity consists of a turban on the head and upper scarf thrown on the shoulders and arms, or tied round the chest and a *dhoti* hanging below up to the ankles and fastened with a girdle.
4. The ornaments consist of heavy ear-rings, heavy torque and a flat triangular necklace and also armlets with feathered projections.
5. These were the cult images to be worshipped as an independent deity.
6. Though it is being said that these were more of local deities, the predominance of Maṇibhadra Yakṣa and strong possibility of other Yakṣa images being related with the Lord of Wealth, most of these have to be taken as the object of worship of the traders specifically.
7. In some of the images, the Yakṣa holds a money bag in his left hand while the right hand appears to be in *abhaya mudrā*.
8. In a few cases, there is possibility of the right hand holding a *chaurī*, in such cases the deity should be considered of secondary status in comparison to a prominent deity.
9. In some images, the image has a protuberant belly symbolizing the nature of the Yakṣa as provider of wealth and prosperity. It can also be related with fecundity as a protuberant belly is a symbol of pregnancy and fertility.
10. All these sculptures are in standing position but the *mudrā* is not *samapāda sthānaka* as the left leg of the Yakṣa is sometimes bent slightly at the knee.

The Parkham Yakṣa has an inscription on its pedestal which possibly refers it as Bhagavan Maṇibhadra and also of it being carved by a pupil Gomitaka of Kuṇika- the master sculptor.⁵⁰ The Yakṣī from Nagla Jhinga is referred to as a Yakṣī Lāyāvā and also being carved by a pupil of Kuṇika name Nāka.⁵¹ The inscription on the Yakṣa statuette from Pawaya mentions it as that of Maṇibhadra Yakṣa which was installed by the members of a *Goṣthī* at Pawaya.⁵² Besides these images, there are other Yakṣa and Yakṣī images known from the region of Mathura which were not cult images but were part of religious establishments e.g. carved on railing pillars etc. In between the late 2nd century B.C. and the Kushan period, some other Yakṣa images of

varying dimensions came into existence. The size of these images is generally not colossal.

During the Kushan period, there is observed a remarkable change in the iconography of the Yakṣas. The colossal sculptures now give place to medium to small size sculptures. Majority of the sculptures are in seated position. Now, generally the Yakṣa sculptures represent the chief of the Yakṣas (either Vaiśravaṇa or Kubera) who bestows money and prosperity on the worshipper. After the Gupta period, the independent cult of Yakṣas seems to have given way to the subsidiary cult of Yakṣas as secondary deities to the other prominent sects and their deities. The ancient cult of Yakṣas was able to survive even during this period as various shrines of Jakhaiya and Bhuniya baba in the Braj region indicate. But this continuity is more of a forgotten tradition than an independent cult popular in post-Gupta times. In some way during this period, the cult of *Mahāvīra* Hanuman is related with the cult of Yakṣas as the shrine of Bhuniya baba and Jakhaiya baba is generally found in association with Hanuman like I observed at the site of Parkham and Baroda and at many other places. The title *Mahāvīra* used for Hanuman is also an appellation used for Yakṣas as both these deities are extremely powerful in their physique. Besides, prior to late or post-Gupta period, independent sculptures of Hanuman are almost negligible while after this period he becomes very popular deity. In contrast to this the Yakṣa worship was very popular prior to late Gupta period while after this period, it is rarely observed as a cult deity.

New sculptural findings-

1. Lower half of an image from Lohvan (Fig. 10.3.5)-

This sculptural fragment consisting of the lower half of an image was observed at village Lohvan in district Mathura. This sculpture is being worshipped there as demon Lohāsura who is said to have been killed by Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this fragment, the left leg is slightly bent at the knee like the Parkham and other Yakṣas. He is clad in a *dhotī*. Other details of it are missing because of excessive use of oil over it. On comparative analysis, it appears to be the lower half of a Yakṣa image datable to circa 2nd century B.C.

2. Yakṣa plaque from Parkham, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.6)-

This small sculptural plaque was found from village Parkham Gujar of district Mathura. It is a different village from the well known Parkham (Beri) village but appears to be equally important. This plaque depicts the head of a person who is wearing a turban with a knot to the right. The eyes are large and have been incised. The carving in low relief as well as the overall treatment of this plaque indicates a Śuṅga period date for it. It might be representing either a Yakṣa or a Yakṣī.

3. Fragmentary relief from village Sonsa, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.7)-

This fragment consisting of an above neck portion of a deity was observed to be in worship at village Sonsa of district Mathura. This fragment is much defaced to form a proper idea but the heavy and round ear-rings, the carving in low relief and the shape of the face indicate towards a Śuṅga date. In the raised right hand of the deity an object is held which appears to be a snake. In the absence of other attributes, the image might not be identified as an important Brāhmanical deity but keeping in mind its early date might be put in the category of Yakṣas.

4. Headless Yakṣa image from Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras (Fig. 10.3.8)-

This headless image of a Yakṣa was observed at a shrine situated on the top of the mound of Chaturbhuj Khera in district Hathras. This sculpture is much defaced but is identifiable as a Yakṣa. The deity is shown seated in the usual squatting manner (in *bhadrāsana*) over an ‘altar’, as is observed in a number of Kushan Yakṣa sculptures. The ‘altar’ or base consists of two crossed bars indicating the frontage. Two small figures are also visible on both sides of the base. This sculpture might be dated to 2nd century A.D. or slightly later.

5. Yakṣa image from Parkham Gujar, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.9)-

This image was observed to be in worship at a shrine in village Parkham Gujar of district Mathura. The image represents a Yakṣa seated in a squatting pose over an ‘altar’ shaped base consisting of two crossed bars. The feet of the Yakṣa have not been shown as the artist intended to represent them behind the base. The Yakṣa is wearing round ear-rings and a beautiful double stringed pearl necklace. He is shown with a protuberant or pot belly. In his left hand he holds a long object which appears

to be a thick pleat of his drapery. Generally, a sack containing money or coins is shown held in his left hand. The right hand of the Yakṣa is possibly holding a goblet filled with wine. This sculpture should belong to early Kushan period.

6. Headless Yakṣa from Nandghat, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.10)-

This Yakṣa statue was observed at a shrine situated on the ancient mound of Nandghat along river Yamuna in district Mathura. The roughly 1 m high sculpture depicts a Yakṣa seated on a high throne in *lalitāsana*. He is of quite heavy physique with a protuberant or pot belly. Position of both his hands is unclear because of the damage to the sculpture. Two attendant females are visible on both sides of the deity. The sculpture was probably made of red sandstone but now appears to be of grey colour because of excessive deterioration by the atmosphere and by the worshippers. This sculpture might belong to late Kushan or early Gupta period. If on further examination, the stone turns out to be grey stone, then it would require a relook at this early dating.

7. Sculpture with two seated Yakṣas from Nandghat, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.11)-

This sculpture was found at a shrine situated on the ancient mound of Nandghat near Gangrauli in district Mathura. The spotted red sandstone sculpture depicts two Yakṣas seated side by side possibly on some wicker stools. The Yakṣa seated to right has a protuberant belly and appears to be more prominent of the two Yakṣas. Possibly, a sack is hanging down from the left hand of this Yakṣa, so he might be identified as Kubera. The Yakṣa seated to the left also appears to be a male Yakṣa. A thick scarf is running over the shoulders of the Yakṣas. Not many details are identifiable because of the defacing of the sculptural relief as well as because of the heavy incrustation on it. This sculpture definitely requires some cleaning for getting more information.

8. Yakṣa couple from Jaghina, Bharatpur (Fig. 10.3.12)-

This sculpture was observed to be in worship at a shrine in village Jaghina of district Bharatpur. It depicts two deities seated side by side in *lalitāsana* on separate wicker stools. The figure seated to the left possibly has his right hand in *abhaya mudrā* and his left hand has been placed near his knee. The other figure seated to the right (to the left of the male figure) has her right hand in *abhaya mudrā* while the left hand is holding a child seated on her left knee. This female deity definitely represents an

aspect of *Mātrkā*. These two figures might be identified as Kubera and Hariti. Some small figures are visible in the lower panel and these might be children associated with the couple or the worshippers.

The other fragmentary and defaced Yakṣa sculptures are:

9. Sculpture from Kirarai, Mathura belonging to Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.13).
10. Yakṣa from Asgarpur, Mathura belonging to Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.14).
11. Yakṣa from Aiyera Khera, Mathura which is being worshipped as Khera baba and possibly belongs to late Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.15).
12. Yakṣa from Jasauli, Mathura of Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.16).
13. Fragment of Yakṣa image, Ajnauthi of Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.17).
14. Headless Yakṣa from Ladpur, Hathras of Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.18).
15. Headless Yakṣa from Lakhnu, Hathras of Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.19).
16. Headless and handless bust of Yakṣa from Radhakund, Mathura belonging to Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.20).
17. Headless Yakṣa image from Gwarau, Hathras of early Gupta period (Fig. 10.3.21).
18. Headless Yakṣa image from Naugaon, Mathura of Kushan period (Fig. 10.3.22).

19. Yakṣa image from Shahjadpur, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.23)-

There are two sculptures in this Plate (Fig. 23) found from a religious site in village Shahjadpur of district Mathura. The sculpture to the left represents a Yakṣa holding a wine cup in his left hand while in the right hand, he holds a rosary. The sculpture to the right might be a Yakṣa or some other deity like the Sun.

20. Yakṣa image from Pelhora, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.24)-

This beautiful sculpture was observed at a religious shrine in village Pelhora of district Mathura. The Yakṣa seated on a lotus throne in *lalitāsana* holds a money sack in his left hand while his right hand is missing. His right hand might have been in *abhaya mudrā*. The hair style of the Yakṣa was quite popular during the Gupta period. To the right of the Yakṣa, a female is standing holding possibly a *chhatra*. She might be the wife of Yakṣa Kubera or just an attendant. The sculpture should belong to Gupta period.

21. Yakṣa sculpture from Radhakund, Mathura (Fig. 10.3.25)-

This sculpture was found at a religious shrine in village Radhakund of district Mathura. It is quite similar to the image from Pelhora. The Yakṣa Kubera has been shown seated on a wicker stool holding a money bag in his left hand while his right hand holds a fruit. He is wearing large ear-rings and a thick round torque. This image might be belonging to about 6th – 7th century A.D.

IV. THE CULT OF REVANTA IN BRAJ REGION-

Revanta is one of the popular minor deities of the medieval period. His images were not properly identified till the beginning of 20th century as most of the scholars considered these horse riding figures as Kalki, the future incarnation of lord Viṣṇu or with the *Mahābhiniṣkramaṇa* of Lord Buddha. Pandit B.B. Bidyabinod first identified them properly in the collection of Indian museum, Calcutta quoting a verse from *Bṛhatsamhitā* (ch. 58, v. 56).⁵³

A number of literary works provide useful information about the birth of Revanta, his iconography and also the wide popularity of his worship in India. But an important aspect is that *Harivamśa Purāṇa* (ch. 9) and *Narasimha Purāṇa* (ch. 18), which give detailed description of Sūrya's family and his children, do not refer to Revanta, which indicate towards the lesser importance of Revanta during early centuries of the Christian era.⁵⁴

In the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*⁵⁵ (III, 2, 2-7), Parāśara narrates to Maitreya the following story about the birth of Revanta. “Sanjñā, the daughter of Viśvakarmā, was the wife of the Sun God and gave birth to three of his children- Manu Vaivasvata, Yama and Yamunā (the river). Unable to endure the fervours of her lord, Sanjñā gave him Chhāyā as his handmaid and went of forest to do devout *tapas*. The Sun God, mistaking Chhāyā as his wife, begot three more children from Chhāyā - Śanaiśchara, Manu Savaṇṇī and river Tāpti. One day in some anguish Chhāyā denounced an imprecation upon Yama and hence revealed her identity as Chhāyā. After realising the truth, the Sun beheld Sanjñā by the eye of meditation engaged in *tapas* in the form of a mare in the Uttara Kurū region. The Sun himself took the form of a horse and

rejoined his wife and begot three other children- the two Aśvina Kumāras and Revanta, after that he brought her to his own dwelling.

In the *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*⁵⁶ (105. 6-12), Sūrya is said to have appointed Revanta to the lordship of Guhyakas and had told, “Thou shalt indeed be worthy of worship by the entire world, my child; and mortals who shall call thee to mind amid the terrors of forests and other lonely places, of great conflagrations, of enemies and robbers, shall be delivered out of great calamity. Comfort, intelligence, happiness, kingship, perfect health, fame, exalted position – these, when worshipped and well satisfied, thou shalt bestow on men.

In the *Skanda Purāṇa* (*Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa*, 164, 1-4)⁵⁷ Lord Śiva emphasizes the worship of Revanta and relates to Umā that after performing certain *pūjā* etc., one must have a *darśana* of the *Rājyabhata* Revanta seated on horse-back, as by doing so one will be free from all the evils and attain religious merit.

The *Kalikā Purāṇa* (85, 46-49)⁵⁸ tells that “kings should worship Revanta at the gates according to the principles of the Sun worship. His image should be placed on a white horse with his hair fastened by a cloth. The deity should be dressed in a coat of mail and should carry a sword in his right hand and a whip in the left.” The *Agni Purāṇa* calls him a horseman.⁵⁹

The earliest representation of Revanta in art is found in Gupta period, 5th -6th century A.D., in the form of images from Nagari (Chittor, Rajasthan), Newal (Unnao, U.P.), Jahangira hill (Bhagalpur, Bihar), Pachar (Gaya, Bihar) etc.⁶⁰ The important aspect about the find places of Revanta images is that these are generally found in northern India, in Gujrat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana and later on occasionally from Bengal, Orissa and Tamilnadu. The find- places are more or less related with trader’s activities, are those towns which acted as trade centres or were situated on various ancient trade routes.

After a detailed analysis of Revanta images in India, we can say that the region of Mathura and Bharatpur districts, from where a number of Revanta images have been reported, was an important centre of Revanta worship and the Sun cult. The

images of Revanta are represented in two styles, one in which only Revanta is shown riding a horse, holding the reins of horse in his left hand and a wine cup in the right hand; a sword or a dagger are shown tied at his waist. An attendant is shown holding a *chhatra* over his head and many other attendants accompany him in the hunting party. Here in this type of representation, which appears to be quite popular in northern India, Daṇḍa and Piṅgala, two main attendants of Sūrya are not shown accompanying Revanta riding on their respective horses.

The second type of images are those where these two attendants of Sūrya-Daṇḍa and Piṅgala are shown accompanying Revanta, one ahead of him and the other following him. This type of image appears to be the speciality of Mathura and Bharatpur region, from where no image of first type has come to light till now. Even when the images of second type are found outside this region, these are not far away from Mathura and are much later in date.

The three images being discussed here are the special products of Mathura and the nearby region. The first image has been found from a village named Harnaul (Fig. 10.4.1) of which actual name might be Haranpur or Huvishkpur, on the basis of studies of local Braj dialect. It is situated in the *trans*- Yamuna region of Mathura district near the famous site of Manth (Mat), near the ancient route going towards Ahichchhatra and other important places.

It is one of the early images of Revanta and probably the earliest of this type of imagery, belonging to late 6th century A.D. to early part of 7th century A.D. It is about 32 inches in height and is being worshipped as a female deity at a shrine near the huge mound, on which the village is situated. The sculpture is quite broken but some important information can be gathered from it. In the sculpture, the central deity is Revanta riding on a horse, holding reins of horse in the much broken left hand, while his right hand holds probably a wine cup. An attendant is holding *chhatra* over his head. Between the legs of the horses hounds are shown attacking the boars. One member Daṇḍa of the hunting party is completely missing while the figure of Piṅgala following Revanta is also much broken. The lack of sophistication of later Revanta

images while narrating the whole hunting party episode and the stylistic features helps to ascribe it to circa 600 A.D.

The second image (Fig. 10.4.2) found during explorations is lying at a shrine at the ancient mound of Aring (possibly ancient Ariṣṭapura). The ancient site of Aring is situated on the important trade route to Matsya and Mādhyamikā countries. The town seems to be the ancient Saurapura which was on all accounts an important centre of the Sun cult, and later came to be known as Ariṣṭapura. This image belongs to Pratihāra period, circa 10th century A.D. where the representation becomes quite sophisticated like the depiction of *navagrahas*, decorative background etc. The sculpture, which is about 30 inches in height, is complete except for the faces which have been defamed by iconoclasts. In the top panel *Navagrahas* and *Aṣṭadikpalas* have been depicted.

The central figure is of Revanta followed and preceded by Daṇḍa and Piṅgala. Lotus shaped parasols are shown hanging over all the three deities, held by Yakṣas and Yakṣis. Revanta is holding the reins of the horse in his right hand while in his left hand he is holding a wine flask in which a female attendant is shown pouring wine. Gandharvas, the garland- bearers are shown flying near the parasols. Between the legs of horses, hounds are shown attacking the boars.

The third Revanta image (Fig. 10.4.3) found during explorations is from Mandoi mound, which is situated in front of another site Karhala in the *tehsil* Chhata of Mathura district. The image is about 24 inches in height and is also being worshipped as some female deity as is the tradition in the whole Braj region. The sculpture belongs possibly to circa 9th century A.D. At the top panel *navagrahas* have been shown. The hunting party of the God is going in the left direction as is the case with the image from Harnaul. The other features include Daṇḍa following the deity and Piṅgala moving ahead of the deity. A person is shown holding a *chhatra* over the head of the deity. Daṇḍa and Piṅgala are shown without a *chhatra*. A *mālādhāri* is shown standing in front of Piṅgala. The depiction in the lower panel of a hound hunting the boar is possibly absent in this sculpture. It appears that a boar is shown under the feet of the horse of the main deity Revanta. Other details are not identifiable.

Two points are not clear at this stage- “why Revanta is shown holding a wine flask, while it is not mentioned in any ancient text” and “why hounds are always shown attacking the boars” because there are many more dangerous animals for a caravan or by that time had the boar become the only symbol of the evils?

Another important point that needs our attention is the fact that a number of horse rider types of terracottas have been reported from various north Indian medieval sites. Whether those were related to Revanta worship, is not clear yet. In the same way it came to my notice that in several parts of Bihar, a number of people of lower social class offer clay horse rider figurines to a deity named Śalheśa *devatā* under a tree. Whether this local legend is inspired by the legend of Revanta who was actually born in some very curious circumstances, also needs to be examined. Although Revanta cult was quite popular in Bihar as some of the early images found from this part of country indicate, whether in the later period the same major cult got transformed in a local tradition or not requires to be looked in.

Overall it can be said that Mathura and its adjoining part of Rajasthan formed an important centre of Revanta worship by its rulers and traders. Besides these three sculptures, four or five other Revanta images are already known from this region, all of them belonging to Pratihāra period. But the Harnaul image adds a new dimension to it because of its early date.

V. EARLY HANUMĀN IMAGES IN THE ART OF MATHURA-

Lord Hanumān is one of the most popular minor gods of modern India especially northern India. In a way the popularity of Hanumān as a deity in modern times takes the place of the ancient Yakṣa cult of which we get a number of evidences in the form of ancient sculptures and in ancient literature. In iconography, no confirm representation of Hanumān is available in Indian art prior to Gupta period. In some of the reliefs like the image at Bharat Kala Bhawan (No. 165); two sculptures in Allahabad and Patna museums, Hanumān is shown along side the monkey army.⁶¹ The earliest known sculpture of Hanumān as an independent deity has been found

from the site of Gupta temple at Deogarh.⁶² This image represents the scene of Hanumān bringing the *Saṅjīvanī Būṭī* as he lifts a mountain with both his hands above the head. He is wearing a necklace, a long floral garland, bangles and a crown over his head. Another early image is from Parkham village of Mathura (M.M. No. D 27, Fig. 10.5.1). In this statuette of colossal size, the god is standing with his left foot on a prostrate female figure, the head of which is lost and which from the emaciated breasts has been identified as Chāmuṇḍā by V.S. Agrawala.⁶³ I don't think that she can be goddess Chāmuṇḍā as Chāmuṇḍā is a very prominent goddess with a quite higher status among deities. At the most, this female figure might be identified as some *Pretanī* or *Bhutanī*. The left leg of the god and his right arm which is raised above the head in the attitude of lifting the mountain containing the *Saṅjīvanī Būṭī*, are broken away with the top of the slab. The left hand is kept at the breast and probably holds a flower of Pārijāta as Hanumān is popularly associated with the Pārijāta tree (*Pārijāta taru mūlavāsinam*). He is wearing round necklaces and a roughly triangular shaped *grāiveyaka*. His hair has been tied in a peculiar manner as three round rings have been formed to tie the hair. He is wearing a dhoti tied at his waist and also *keyūras* are visible on his forearms. His tail is shown coming from behind his right leg rising up to shoulder height. Coomarswamy had dated this sculpture to Gupta period,⁶⁴ but it might be actually dating to about 8th – 9th century. Early medieval date of 9th century A.D. has been suggested by Agrawala for this sculpture.⁶⁵ This image was possibly found from the same spot from where the famous Parkham Yakṣa image was found. The finding of an early Hanumān image from the spot of the shrine of local Jakhaiya baba at village Parkham also indicates towards the transformation of the cult of Yakṣa worship to the cult of worshipping of Hanumān. Besides, at the same spot a medieval Hanumān image was observed by me to be in worship inside a temple. Another similar image of Hanumān from Mathura is now housed in Indian Museum, Calcutta.⁶⁶

New findings of Hanumān images in Braj region-

1. Broken bust and the lower portion of a Hanumān image (Fig. 10.5.2 a & b)-

Two broken portions of possibly the same image were found in worship, though as a female deity, at a shrine in village Daulatgarh of district Bharatpur. The head and the right hand of the image (Fig. 10.5.2 a) are missing. The deity is wearing a torque

round the neck. He is also wearing a heavy three stringed pearl necklace. *Keyūras* are visible at the arms. His left hand has been kept near the chest and he possibly holds a fruit or flower of Pārijāta in it. In the lower portion (Fig. 10.5.2 b), the posture of the left leg of the deity suggests that it is slightly upraised and bent at knee and would have been kept over a female like the Mathura Museum Hanumān image. He is wearing a dhoti tied in a peculiar manner. His long tail is visible coming down by the side of his right leg and has a kind of knot at the lower end. The lower feet of the image as well as a part of the abdomen of the image are missing. The missing right hand would have been shown in the attitude of holding the mountain containing Sañjīvanī and three other medicines. In my view, this image might be dated to about 7th – 8th century A.D. It might be one of the earliest images of the Pavanputra Hanumān.

2. Broken bust of Hanumān image from Fatehpur Sikri (Fig. 10.5.3)-

This broken bust of Lord Hanumān was observed at the shrine of Ser Mata at the outskirts of Fatehpur Sikri on the road to Khanua. This bust is quite similar to the above mentioned bust. A torque and a three stringed necklace are visible over the chest of the deity. His broken left hand holds a similar type of object as held in the image from Daulatgarh. His long tail has been raised towards up side and from the position of its broken right hand it appears that it held a mountain containing the medicinal plants. This image might be dated to about 8th- 9th century A.D.

3. Broken bust of Hanumān image from Jaghina, Bharatpur (Fig. 10.5.4)-

This fragmentary image was observed outside village Jaghina in district Bharatpur. The spot where this image was lying appeared to be an ancient religious spot outside the village. Kushan pottery was scattered all over the surface of this spot which is isolated from the huge habitation mound of the village. This sculptural piece also belongs to the type of the above mentioned images and has a slightly corpulent body (Mahāvīra). This sculpture might belong to about 9th- 11th century A.D.

4. Hanumān image at village Chursain, Hathras (Fig. 10.5.5)-

This sculpture was in worship at a temple in village Chursain of district Hathras. Though the temple belongs to a female deity, this image might be in worship as Lord Hanumān. The upraised left leg of the deity has been kept over the body of a female,

possibly symbolizing the evil spirits. The left hand is kept near the waist and possibly holds a similar kind of object as is held in the above mentioned images. The right hand of the deity appears to be in a pose of lifting the mountain containing medicines which he had brought from Himalayas to cure his Lord Rāma, his brother Lakṣmaṇa and the *Vānara Senā*. This sculpture belongs to late medieval period of about 16th-17th century A.D. and clearly indicates the difference in the style of representing the God during post-Gupta/ Early medieval period and late medieval period.

¹ J.N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi 1956, p. 575.

² N.P. Joshi, *Prachin Bhartiya Murtivigyan*, Patna 1977, p. 167.

³ *Tatpuruṣāya vidmahe vakratuṇḍāya dhīmahi tan no dantih prachodayāt (Taittirīya- Āraṇyaka*, X. 1.5).

⁴ Alice Getty, *Gaṇeśa*, Oxford 1936, reprint, Delhi 1992, p. 1.

⁵ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

⁶ R.S. Gupte, *Iconography of the Hindus, Buddhists and Jains*, Bombay 1972, p. 47.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid., p. 48.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of the Brāhmaṇical Images in Mathura Art*, Lucknow 1951, p. 37.

¹² A.K. Narain, "On the Earliest Gaṇeśa," *Senart Paranavitana Commemoration Volume*, ed. Leelananda Prematilleke *et. al*, Leiden 1978, p. 142.

¹³ For these differing views please see, Nirmala Yadav, *Gaṇeśa in Indian Art and Literature*, Jaipur 1997, pp. 28-29.

¹⁴ Sadashiv Gorakshakar, "Ter, Kolhapur and the Yavanas," *Dawn of Civilization in Maharashtra*, Bombay 1975, p. 28 and Fig. 63, last row.

¹⁵ Vidula Jayaswal, *Kushan Clay Art of Ganga Plains: A Study of Human Forms from Khairadih*, Delhi 1991, p. 95, Pl. XXXII, 87.

¹⁶ Anand Coomarswamy, *Yakṣas*, Oxford 1928, reprint, Delhi 1971, pt. I, Pl. 23, fig. 1, p. 23.

¹⁷ V.S. Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art*, Varanasi 1965, p. 189.

¹⁸ Alice Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 26 and Pl. 2 a. Getty has wrongly mentioned the district name as Fatehgarh in stead of Fatehpur.

²⁰ V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of the Brāhmaṇical Images in Mathura Art*, Lucknow 1951, p. 37.

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- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Alice Getty, *op. cit.*, p. 26 and Pl. 3 b.
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 27 and Pl. 3 a.
- ²⁵ R.C. Agrawala, "Ūrdhvaretas Gaṇeśa from Afghanistan," *East and West*, Vol. 18, March- June 1968, pp. 166-168.
- ²⁶ J.N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, Pl. XV, 1.
- ²⁷ V.S. Agrawala, *Terracotta Figurines from Ahichchhatra*, Varanasi 1948, p. 28, Figs. 111 and 112.
- ²⁸ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, Fig. 111.
- ²⁹ M.S. Vats, "The Gupta Temple at Deogarh," *Memoirs of A.S.I.*, No. 70, 1951, Pl. X b.
- ³⁰ For the development of Skanda cult, please refer to P.K. Agrawala, *Skanda- Kārttikeya*, Varanasi 1967, Ch. 1-3, pp. 1-37.
- ³¹ P.K. Agrawala, *op.cit.*, pp. 104-107 (Appendix 2).
- ³² *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā*, X. 24, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.
- ³³ Upendra Thakur, *On Kārttikeya*, Varanasi 1981, p. 3.
- ³⁴ T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. I, Delhi 1914, p. 424 and J.N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi 1956, p. 361ff.
- ³⁵ *Matsya Purāṇa*, Chapters 158 and 159, Gita Press, Gorakhpur.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 5.26.
- ³⁷ R.G. Bhandarkar, *Vaiṣṇavism Śaivism and Minor Religious Systems*, Varanasi 1965 (first printed in 1913), pp. 150-151.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ P. Gardner, BMC, Pl. XXVII as cit. by Upendra Thakur, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
- ⁴⁰ J.N. Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 363.
- ⁴¹ K.K. Thaplayal and P. Srivastava, *Coins of Ancient India*, Lucknow 1998, p. 99-103.
- ⁴² For details of the Gandhāra Kārttikeya images, please see the paper of D.M. Srinivasan, "Skanda/ Kārttikeya in the Early Art of Northwest," *Silk Road Art and Archaeology*, Vol. 5, ed. Katsumi Tanabe, Kamakura, Japan 1998, pp. 233-268.
- ⁴³ For this type of coin, please see J.M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of the Kushans*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, p. 79 and Coin 95.
- ⁴⁴ N.P. Joshi, *Mothers (Mātrkāś) in Kushan Art*, Delhi 1986, p. 9 and Fig. 31.
- ⁴⁵ V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of Brahmāṇical Images in Mathura Art*, Lucknow 1951, pp. 59-61.
- ⁴⁶ N.P. Joshi, *op. cit.*, p. 8. For a detailed list and discussion of Skanda images associated with *Mātrkāś*, one may refer to this book.
- ⁴⁷ V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, pp. 39-40.
- ⁴⁸ The significant works on Yakṣas are: A.K. Coomarswamy, *Yakṣas*, Pt. I & II, Delhi 1971 (reprint); Moti Chandra, "Some Aspects of Yakṣa Cult in Ancient India," *Bulletin of the Prince of*

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- Wales Museum of Western India, No. 3, 1954; V.S. Agrawala, *Studies in Indian Art*, Varanasi 1965, pp. 114-122; R.N. Misra, *Yakṣa Cult and Iconography*, N. Delhi 1981; G.V. Mitterwallner, "Yakṣas of Ancient Mathura," *Mathura: The Cultural Heritage*, Delhi 1989, pp. 368-382.
- ⁴⁹ V.S. Agrawala, "Pre-Kushan Art of Mathura," *Studies in Indian Art*, Varanasi 1965, pp. 114-116, Figs. 61 and 63.
- ⁵⁰ H. Luders, *Mathura Inscriptions*, ed. K.L. Janert, Gottingen 1961, pp. 177-178.
- ⁵¹ R.C. Sharma, "New Rare Sculptures in Mathura Museum," *Bulletin of Museums and Archaeology in U.P.*, Vol. IX, 1971, p. 24.
- ⁵² V.S. Agrawala, "Mauryan Art," *Studies in Indian Art*, Varanasi 1965, p. 59.
- ⁵³ B.B. Bidyabinod, "An Illustrated Note on an Indian Deity called Revanta," *Journal and Proceedings of Asiatic Society of Bengal (N.S.)*, Calcutta, V, 10, pp. 391-392, cit. by B.N. Sharma, *Iconography of Revanta*, Delhi 1975, p. 25.
- ⁵⁴ B.N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- ⁵⁵ *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, Gita Press, p. 166.
- ⁵⁶ *Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa*, transl. F.E. Pargiter, Chapter CVIII, pp. 575-576.
- ⁵⁷ *Skanda Purāṇa*, Venkateshwar Press, Bombay 1909.
- ⁵⁸ *Kalikā Purāṇa*, Calcutta, 1336 B.S., cit. by B.N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- ⁵⁹ B.N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- ⁶⁰ B.N. Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 41.
- ⁶¹ Bhagwan Singh, *Gupta Kalin Hindu Dev Pratimayen*, (Hindi), Delhi 1982, p. 79.
- ⁶² M.S. Vats, *Memoirs of A.S.I.*, No. 70, 1952, Pl. 17 c.
- ⁶³ V.S. Agrawala, *A Catalogue of Brāhmaṇical Images in Mathura Art*, Lucknow 1951, p. 47.
- ⁶⁴ Anand Coomarswamy, *History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, New York 1927, p. 86.
- ⁶⁵ V.S. Agrawala, *op. cit.*, p. 47.
- ⁶⁶ A.S.R., 1926-27, p. 101, Pl. XXXV, Fig. (k).

Chapter 11

Early Terracotta Art of Mathura: An Overview

Terracottas form one of the most important aspects of the cultural heritage of past civilizations. In Indian subcontinent, except for a few doubtful occurrences, this tradition starts from early 7th millennium B.C. site of Mehrgarh in Baluchistan province of Pakistan.¹ In Harappan period we get a well developed terracotta art culture, which was comparable to any other civilization in its excellence. In the intermediary period between late Harappan and the early historic period, we find a sharp decrease in the number and the quality of terracotta art specimens.

A glance can be made through the references about the importance of terracotta art tradition in the ancient Indian literature.² In *Jātakas* eighteen crafts have been mentioned, among them one is of potters. In *Dīgha-Nikāya* twenty eight crafts have been mentioned and among them one is related with terracottas. This art is included among seventy-five occupations mentioned in *Milind Pañho*. In *Niśītha- Chūrṇi* a detailed description of *Kumbhakāras* shops (*āpaṇas*) with five rooms has been given. Jaina text *Uvāsagadasāo* (Chapter 7) speaks of one wealthy *Kumbhakāra* Saddālaputta who owned five hundred potter's workshops outside the town of *Polāsapura* in Kosala and had a large number of potters working under him. *Uvāsagadsāo* tells about potters who traded on highway. *Pāṇini* (IV.3.118, V.3.96) mentions of trade in *Kaulālaka* (porter) and *Pratikṛti* on *Uttarāpatha* route. Kautilya in *Arthaśātra* (V, 2,243; II, 22, 113) makes mention of taxes on potters and toll on trade of earthen pots. *Nāyādhammākahā* (17, p. 203) describes clay figurines (*potthakamma*) and dolls made of plaster (*lepakamma*) among items first carried in bullock carts and then shipped to a distant island.

With the onset of early historical period, especially 4th-5th century B.C. period, there appears to be a new beginning of terracotta art tradition. Mathura being one of the important city centres during that period enjoys an equally important place in terms of terracotta art activities. Although the basic treatment in forming female mother goddess figurines appears somewhat similar, changes occur in different periods as well as regional variations. In that way, early terracottas from Mathura also exhibit some distinct characteristics. The most significant characteristic feature of pre-Mauryan terracottas is the black or grey colour, with applied black slip over their surface. The black colour specimens clearly outnumber the grey ones. The slip over their surface is same as that found over the pottery of that period, especially the black slipped ware and occasionally the northern black polished ware. These are made up of well lavigated and well-fired clay in a very specific manner as the core of terracottas is generally found to be black. Red colour specimens of this period are very few in number. All these specimens are handmade. The more important specimens of this period can be considered as female terracotta figurines, also called mother goddesses related with maternity and fertility. The shape of the face is more like a bird or an animal than a human one. They generally have a beak shaped slit mouth. These have stumped and short hands as well as legs. Except for hair decoration, a necklace, a *mekhalā* and *kuṇḍalas* in the ears, there is not much ornamentation. These are often shown wearing a different kind of drapery which can be viewed at the back of them. On the surface of many of these terracottas some circular marks have been used either for decoration purpose or to denote the drapery. Most of the parts like breasts etc. have been added by appliqué technique. The large hips and breasts emphasize their importance as fertility goddesses. V.S.Agrawala has identified them as Aditi and Mahimātā and the heavy hips of them are termed as *Prthuśroṇi* in Sanskrit literature³. The size of these figurines is generally less than 8 inches.

During the Mauryan period, in the 3rd century B.C., slight changes occurred in the terracotta art. The most significant change was the use of single mould for preparing the head portion (only the portion above neck). The face became human with emphasis on facial characteristics. Another improvement was in the ornamentation, as the number of

head ornaments and the jewellery over the body increased significantly. In appearance Mauryan terracottas are more than remarkable and quite exciting.

In the succeeding period of 2nd century B.C. - late 1st century B.C., there occurred some revolutionary changes in the technology of terracotta art as well as in its subject matter. The colour of terracottas of this period is more or less red and these are made by using single mould for the whole body. These are made in low relief and the subjects vary in their range as never before. The generally found subjects are female divinity with a peculiar headgear, tied with different *āyudhas*; the *dampati* plaques and many scenes from daily social life. Unlike the Mauryan terracottas where we do not have many sculptural examples in stone to compare with, during Śunga period there is a striking similarity in the conceptualization of various subjects as well as their presentation in art. Participation of a large section of society in both these forms of art is very significant as there is not much difference in the standard of various art forms.

During Kushan period, the period in which Mathura is considered to have reached the pinnacle of its socio-political advancement and strategic significance, the terracotta art forms also show some signs of advancement. The figurines are generally robust in character and are made in round. The red colour terracotta figurines depict a variety of subjects, generally religious one. Figurines are made by using double mould, the technique that is considered to have entered India with the advent of Kushans and other foreign ethnic groups. The size of figurines is larger than those of the preceding periods. The figurines lack the ornamentation and the vibrant spirit of the previous figurines. These are aesthetically and spiritually less appealing than other ancient figurines. But in spite of all the limitations, Kushan figurines clearly mark a changing pattern, new in comparison to the more monotonic pattern of Śunga figurines and lay the foundation for the emergence of classical art tradition. The generally represented themes are mother goddesses, the Buddha and Bodhisattvas, Yakṣas, Śiva and various other Hindu deities, *Abhiṣeka* Lakṣmī etc.

During the classical times i.e. Gupta period, the terracotta art reached its zenith. The sublime impression with a spiritual delight and the delicacy in appearance are the features which help the onlooker in transcending from the macrocosmic realities to the subtle world of divinity and *Pāralaukika* truth. The robustness of earlier figurines gives way to slim, charming aesthetic persona of classic art. The classic combination of spirituality and aestheticism in art is wanting in all the other phases of Indian art except the Gupta period. Varieties of subjects have been depicted in these figurines. The maximum number of them belongs to various Hindu deities like Durgā, Mahiṣāsurmardinī, *Mātrkāś*, Śiva, Pārvaṭī, Viṣṇu etc. The other themes are moulded plaques of various types, Buddhist deities, male, female figurines and various animal figurines. The large specimens were more often handmade while major varieties of specimens were prepared by using double mould technique.

In the succeeding period, from post-Gupta to Rājputa, certain deterioration is observed in the number of figurines as well as in their treatment. It might be the result of the decline in the economy and the urban character of the society of that period. The normally found subjects are either religious or the representation of animals like bull, elephant, horse and camel. Most of the figurines are found at selected centres only and their presence throughout the empire as in the preceding period is not observed. After the arrival of Muslims, most of the sculptural art activity got abandoned as Muslim rulers patronized monumental art and architecture in place of an art form where humans were represented frequently. Terracottas of this period are either in the form of animals like horse, camel etc. or a stereotyped bearded male figurine. Some interesting finds of this period would be discussed in the next chapter.

Now it would be easy to study these terracottas by classifying them in various categories. The classification can be made on the basis of their chronology, only after that they can be further classified in other categories. At Mathura, the earliest terracotta finds belong to Painted Grey Ware period, examples of which are toy birds and other animal figurines. The real art activity at Mathura starts from pre-Mauryan Northern Black Polished Ware Culture period around circa 5th century B.C.

Late P.G.W. terracottas:

In late P.G.W. figurines, such type of figurines can be included as those belonging to the late phase of P.G.W. around 500 B.C.

1. Object- Hand modelled ritualistic t.c. figurine (Fig. 11.1).

Colour- Grey.

Dimensions- 6.3 x 4.3 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna mound, Mathura.

Description-

This is a very peculiar find with remains of black slip over its surface. This hand made object has three depressions made with finger tips in a decreasing order from bottom to top. Two of the upper folds have nail like oblique impressions. Both ends of it have been made smooth by rubbing it on some surface. It might be a part of some ritual. Its overall appearance indicates towards its use as a ritualistic object.

2. Object- Broken t.c. figurine, hand modelled (Fig. 11.2).

Colour- Dull brown.

Dimensions- 4.7 x 5.4 cm.

Find-spot- Sehi Garh mound, Mathura.

Description-

It is a crudely modelled and imperfectly baked figurine in much broken condition. By no means it appear to be a part of a pot, that's why it should be an archaic form of mother goddess which has a slight bump in the middle which might be indicative of either breast or folded hands. Its above neck portion is like a bird's beak. Lower part of it has been lost. It would have formed a part of a very early terracotta votive tank.

Mauryan terracottas (circa 300 B.C. - 180 B.C.):

3. Object- Bust of t.c. mother goddess, hand modelled (Fig. 11.3).

Colour- Greyish black.

Dimensions- 8 x 8 x 3.8 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna mound.

Description-

It is a beautiful headless bust of a Mauryan mother goddess. Mauryan black slip was applied over it as is evident from some traces of it. Neck, head and both the legs of it are missing. It has round breasts of which nipples have been marked by punched circlets. It is wearing a thick (3 or 4 threaded) torque around the front of neck which has an applied pellet in the centre with straight cuts. It is adorned with a beautiful necklace or a garland running in between the two breasts down up to the navel with a thick central pellet having horizontal lines. This garland has applied pellets as well as beaded decoration and is running up to both shoulder ends. It has a deep scooped out navel as well as is adorned by a thick waistband over the broad hips. All these features indicate towards its fertility, prosperity and motherhood aspect. The back of the figurine is decorated with appliqué design with punched circlets which should be a part of drapery. The pronounced *mulādhār* opening indicates towards its having short stumped legs. In spite of its broken nature, it is a well proportionately adorned figurine and is pleasing in nature.

4. Object- Bust of a t.c. mother goddess, hand modelled (Fig. 11.4).

Colour- Grey (with traces of black slip).

Dimension- 6.6 x 6.5 x 4.2 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna mound, Mathura.

Description-

It is the broken headless bust of t.c. mother goddess figurine whose hands are missing. Remnants of black slip over the surface can be observed but it was not as shiny as was N.B.P.W. surface usually. The female torso is having very prominent breasts as well as broad hips. The neck is adorned with a torque of two types of beads- barrel cylindrical and circular shaped, alternatively. A necklace is running between the two breasts up to the navel portion. At the lower end of it a *ghata* shaped bead has been placed. Tassels as applied designs are running on both the lower ends of the necklace.

The right part of the breast and the necklace is missing. The back of the figurine is decorated with usual appliqué design which appears to be a part of the drapery. At the waist it is adorned with a *Kati-bandha*.

5. Object- Bust of a t.c. mother goddess, hand modelled (Fig. 11.5).

Colour- Grey (with traces of black slip over the surface).

Dimension - 8.3 x 6.7 x 3 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna mound, Mathura.

Description-

It is almost similar to the above mentioned t.c. figurine but its portion above neck is missing, so there is no evidence of a torque. Besides, its back is adorned with applied design with punched circlets, almost up to the abdomen. The most conspicuous feature of this figurine is that it has been intentionally smoothened by rubbing it on the front at breasts and the lower portion (*ghata* shaped bead) as well as at the base. It might have been part of some ritualistic practice. Figurine might have not been having legs at all as the vaginal portion has been indicated by an undercut at the centre of the base.

6. Object- Bust of a t.c. mother goddess (Fig. 11.6).

Colour- Grey with traces of black slip.

Dimensions- 6.5 x 8.6 x 4 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna mound, Mathura.

Description-

In the newly explored material it is the only specimen of Mauryan t.c. mother goddess having its head intact. It is a very simple figurine with almost no added decoration. The mould made head has been luted together with the hand modelled breast portion. Moulded head has almond shaped eyes; nose and mouth have also been indicated. Ears are missing while the hair (much damaged) has been arranged towards the back in braided strips in appliqué form. She is shown with pronounced breasts. Its hands are much damaged.

7. Object- Broken middle part of t.c. mother goddess (Fig. 11.7).

Colour- Grey.

Dimensions- 11 x 11 x 4.5 cm.

Find spot- Mahavidya area, along Mathura-Delhi railway track, Mathura.

Description-

It is the broken portion of a t.c. mother goddess of a comparatively larger size. Almost similar but better preserved t.c. mother goddess has been exhibited in Mathura Museum. This figurine has a conspicuous *pūrṇaghāṭa* shaped bead hanging in the centre of the now lost garland between the two breasts. It has a deep navel and a thick girdle with horizontal pellets along with two rowed waist-band incised with punched circlet designs. The hanging *pūrṇaghāṭa* indicates towards the identity of the deity as deity of prosperity i.e. Śrī Lakṣmī.

8. Object- T.C. mother goddess bust (Fig. 11.8).

Colour- Red with applied red slip.

Dimensions- 9 x 5.7 cm.

Find spot- Arahra village, Mathura.

Description-

This figurine was found by some villager while digging in the village. It is the only mother goddess figurine found in the region during my explorations which is red in colour. This is a typical mother goddess figurine belonging to 3rd - 2nd century B.C. except for the colour which is generally black or grey. This figurine is wearing a torque around the neck, has prominent breasts and heavy hips with a broad girdle at waist level. It has a prominent navel while its head, legs and hands are broken.

9. Object- Broken middle parts of three t.c. figurines (Fig. 11.9).

Colour- Grey and black.

Find spot- Bhuteshwar, Gosna and Sonoth mound, Mathura.

Description-

These are broken middle parts of three terracotta figurines, possibly mother goddesses showing deep navel and a thick waist-band with small punched circlet designs.

10. Object- Broken bust of a male t.c. figurine (Fig. 11.10).

Colour- Grey with applied grey slip.

Dimensions- 4 x 6.2 x 3 cm.

Find spot- Govind Nagar colony, Mathura.

Description-

This t.c. figurine was found on surface during exploration in Govind Nagar area. This is a headless bust of a male figurine. Its both hands are slightly visible. Neck portion has an intentional grooving for fitting the head which is missing. Position of broken hands indicate that these would have been put somewhere in front of chest. Vertical lines at the waist (only in the back) indicate the position of either clothing or the waist-band.

11. Object- Elephant with rider (Fig. 11.11).

Colour- Black.

Dimensions- 12 x 8 x 6.5 cm.

Find spot- Mahavidya mound, near broad gauge line, Mathura.

Description-

This much broken figurine represents a male figure riding on an elephant. Elephant has lozenge shaped eyes with pupils marked by incision. Parts of animal's broad ears and tusk are visible. On its head it has round incision marks. Rider is sitting on the elephant in the manner typical of such elephant rider figurines. Its feet are bent at the knees. No footwear is visible in the feet of the rider. This figurine might be of Indra riding on his mount *Airāvata*. Some scholars have emphasised on the importance of elephant figurines as that of religious significance and their identification as Indra's mount.

12. Object- T.C. animal figurine, possibly a hippopotamus (Fig. 11.12).

Colour- Grey with applied black slip.

Dimensions- 7.3 x 11.8 x 4.8 cm.

Find spot- From section cutting of Govind Nagar mound.

Description-

This almost complete animal figurine was found from the lower section of a mound very near to Govind Nagar railway crossing. The whole deposit except at the top portion belonged to Mauryan or even earlier period. The deposit was very rich in grey ware dishes and other potteries. It is four legged which are slightly broken at their bases. The animal had a very short tail. It was having big snouts and big ears, although these are much damaged.

A black slip or a polish was applied over its surface. This figurine seems to be quite naturalistic. The animal can be identified as a hippopotamus and hence it indicates the involvement of an artist who came from far flung region to Mathura, supposedly from the deltaic region of Ganga and Brahmaputra in Bengal where hippopotamus are generally found in India. This figurine provides substance to the theory of Mathura being an important art school from Mauryan times onwards, where artists and students from different parts of ancient world participated.

13. Object- A peculiar head of an elephant figurine (Fig. 11.13).

Colour- Black.

Dimensions- 9 x 8.2 x 5 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna, Mathura.

Description-

This beautiful t.c. head portion was found during surface exploration at the lower part of the huge Gosna mound which must have been an important trading centre during Mauryan and later periods. This figurine has round socket at the back so that it could be attached with the main body of the elephant. Although it seems to be a stylized elephant head, there seems to be an attempt to provide it some human like features. This head has lozenge shaped eyes engraved on it. On both the top corners, it has *appliqué* bands intersected with *appliqué* lines. This may be for representing ears. Just touching

these appliqué bands it had two slight projections. Near the mouth it has a round opening probably for the elephant's trunk. On either side of this opening it has some missing portion which would have had the tusks of the elephant. The surface of the figurine has been decorated with punched circlets, a typical Mauryan feature.

14. Object- Broken t.c. horse figurine (Fig. 11.14).

Colour- Black.

Dimensions- 7 x 8.5 x 5.7 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna, Mathura.

Description-

This is a broken part (hind part) of a beautiful horse figurine, of which only one leg is intact now. It had a short tail touching its hind leg. Near the top of the back, a bump that too now broken) indicates a seat for the rider.

15. Object- Elephant figurine (Fig. 11.15).

Colour- Red

Dimensions- 11 x 9 x 5 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna, Mathura.

Description-

This elephant figurine has lozenge shaped eyes. Its lower trunk and teeth are broken.

Terracottas belonging to circa 2nd century B.C.:

16. Object- T.C. mother goddess (Fig. 11.16).

Colour- Buff red.

Dimensions- 6.8 x 4 cm.

Find spot- Shahpur Gosna, Mathura.

Description-

It is a broken t.c. plaque representing a deity and possibly made using a mould. The head and leg of it are missing. Female nature of it can be understood by its

prominent breasts and slender waist. In one of the hands she is wearing two bangles while the attributes of the other hand are not clear. The back of it has been made slightly roundish. She was probably shown in a standing pose. Such type of plaques were quite common during that period.

Terracotta belonging to early centuries of the Christian era (Kushan and Early Gupta periods):

17. Object- Headless male figurine (Fig. 11.17).

Colour- Red, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 7 x 5.5 x 3.6 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description -

It is a mould made t.c. figurine of possibly some drummer like a Gana. Such examples are already known from at least two sites in the doab- Sonkh and Ahichchhatra. The two hands of the male figure were put near his chest in which he might be holding some drum like object quite similar to the image from Ahichchhatra identified by V.S. Agrawala. The posture of its sitting is also peculiar, neither standing nor sitting properly i.e. it was just to sit (half sitting pose). In my own view it might be holding some other object linked with royalty as other terracottas found at this particular site are related with royalty.

One very important factor which must be kept in mind while discussing all these terracottas from this site is that the nearby site of it is called Shahpur and this name seems to have been derived from Kushan Shaho Nano Shaho and hence their place Shahpur. A number of Kushan figurines with royal features in them were found from this site of Chaturbhuj Khera, just adjacent to Shahpur.

18. Object- T.C. Royal head (Fig. 11.18).

Colour- Red, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 8 x 7.7 x 5.7 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

It is possibly a t.c. head of a royal person. The presence of a diadem in the centre of the forehead confirms its royal stature or the status as a ruler, which is a feature common in Indian art, courtesy Indo-Greek rulers. Lozenge shaped eyes have been engraved in the figurine and the nostrils have been indicated by two pin holes on the nose made by appliqué technique. Mouth has been scooped out between the thick lips. Its ears are almost broken but these were wearing heavy ear ornaments. On the top of the forehead, hair has been tied with a thick hair-band which seems to be a part of ruler's crowned head. On the back thick braids of hair have been tied with a long thick braid.

19. Object- T.C. head of crude variety, hand modelled (Fig. 11.19).

Colour- Red, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 6.9 x 5.5 x 5.2 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

This is a hand modelled male head of a crude variety. Many specimens of this type are found from Kushan horizons. Fish shaped eyes have been marked by incision with two pin holes representing the pupils. Ears have been indicated by two holes much below the eye level. Appliqué clay has been used to mark the nose in a crude manner. Mouth has been scooped out with a prominent chin.

20. Object- T.C. head of a royal person (Fig. 11.20).

Colour- Buff (dark), Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 6 x 2.5 x 3 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

It is a broken part of a royal male figure of which below chest part is broken. It seems to be a mould made figurine except for the very peculiar Scythian cap which has been luted over it. Its features are not much clear but it has lotus shaped eyes

with round pupils. It wore some royal kind of objects over the ears. Its both hands are missing from the shoulders. It is another royal figurine from the same mound.

21. Object- T.C. head with a Scythian cap (Fig. 11.21).

Colour- Buff, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 8.5 x 3.6 x 2.5 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

It is a male head wearing a conical Scythian cap. Face of the figurine was prepared by using a single mould and is long oval in appearance. Eyes are not perfectly marked but are shown as little round elevation over the remaining surface. Nose is marked; mouth is marked by two parallel cuts below nose. Ears are shown by putting small round pellets at its place. Terracotta has a clear foreign ethnic look and I would prefer it to qualify as a figurine with royal traits.

22. Object- T.C. mother goddess figurine (Fig. 11.22).

Colour- Buff red, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 5.7 x 4.6 x 1.6 cm.

Find spot- Mahavidya mound near railway track, Mathura.

Description-

It is a Kushan period mother goddess figurine and is slightly symbolic in representation. The face has bird like appearance with slit mouth; the eyes are scooped out in a triangular shape. At the top of the head three holes probably indicate some hair-band like ornamentation. Breasts have been symbolised by two pin holes. With an incised curve a necklace has been shown running round the breasts. Hands have been stumped in horizontal position just near the shoulders. By marking a pin hole navel has been indicated and at the waist height, a girdle has been indicated by the help of four incised dots. Portion below the abdomen is slightly broken. This figurine was found at the mound just adjacent to the ancient city fortification wall near the broad gauge railway track.

This figurine is more significant from the ethno-archaeological study point. Similar types of figurines in unbaked condition were observed at Shahpur Gosna mound which were made by local women on the festival of *Hariyālī Teej* and also on *Karwā Chautha*. Hence these figurines are more related with *Satītval Satīvratā* aspect than the proper motherhood aspect.

23. Object- T.C. human figurine (Fig. 11.23).

Colour- Red, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 5.8 x 5 x 2.3 cm.

Find spot- Triveni mound, near Govardhan bye-pass, Mathura.

Description-

It is a much broken red colour figurine which helps in dating this particular site to as early as Kushan period. Its gender can not be decided because of its broken nature. It is wearing a thick torque in the neck.

24. Object- T.C. human figurine (Fig. 11.24).

Colour- Brown, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 5 x 4.2 x 2.3 cm.

Find spot- Triveni mound, near Govardhan bye-pass, Mathura.

Description-

Although this type of figurines are included in the timeless variety, this figurine is quite early which may date back much early than Kushan period, but keeping in mind the nature and findings of the mound, it might be dated to Kushan period. It is an imperfectly baked figurine which seems to be of mother goddess. It is broken from the breast portion but even if it would have been complete, then too its breasts would not have been prominent as it appears to be more symbolic and eternal than the representation of the physical attributes. Its face appears like a bird's beak.

25. Object- T.C. inkpot (?), (Fig. 11.25).

Colour- Buff, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 7.5 x 6.5 cm.

Find spot- Sonoth Janubi, Mathura.

Description-

It is an interesting inkpot like object. It was either imperfectly made or was broken at various points. It has a 2.1 cm wide circular hole in its centre which might have been used for putting a miniature Śiva Linga. By closer examination it appears that it was pottery lid which probably was later on made a *yoni pītha*.

26. Object- T.C. human head, hand modelled (Fig. 11.26).

Colour- Red, Period- Early Gupta.

Dimensions- 10 x 7.2 x 5.6 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

It is a fine specimen of terracotta art. Its style of preparation is quite different from the above mentioned specimens. It has long almond shaped eyes marked by an elevated applied mass of clay. Round pupils have been marked by incision in between the half closed eye-lids. Eyebrows have also been marked by incised lines. A sharp nose (much broken) has been indicated in a very careful way, much smaller in size than the eyes and mouth. Mouth has been carved out in a very peculiar manner. The upper lip almost straight is not so prominently marked but the thick lower lip has been shown in an arched manner. Teeth have been marked by incised lines in between the lips, indicating that teeth have been intentionally shown.

It has a long chin but on the other hand a very low forehead. Hair has been arranged on either side of the central ridge starting just from the forehead portion marked by incised lines. Only one ear is now intact which is inverted L shaped and much smaller in dimension. But just below the ear up to the neck, additional clay mass indicate some divine or royal characteristic. Neck has been decorated with two incised lines. The figure certainly depicts a serene calm and far insight, typical characteristic of Early Gupta figurines. It is not possible to identify its gender but it has possibility of being a royal person by the style of head gear (on left side) it is having.

27. Object- T.C. head of a royal figure, mould made (Fig. 11.27).

Colour- Buff, Period- Gupta.

Dimensions- 5.5 x 3 x 3.7 cm.

Find spot- Hathras Qila mound, Hathras.

Description-

It is a mould made t.c. head of a royal personage, recovered from a disturbed section of the mound. It has features which are more akin to Scythians. The most striking feature of it is its head gear which is like a double horned crown, one of its projection is broken. The facial features of the figurine are very sharp like a long oval face, long sharp nose, long thin chin, broad oval shaped eyes, broad receding forehead. Ears have been marked above the eye-brow level, which is broken below its neck.

28. Object- Terracotta human head (Fig. 11.28).

Colour- Red, Period- Gupta.

Dimensions- 6.5 x 4.2 x 4 cm.

Find spot- Harnol village, Mathura.

Description-

This figurine was lying at a shrine in the village Harnol in *tehsil* Mat. It has a big scooped out mouth. It is wearing a beautiful neck collar like a golden chain. In its ears it is wearing beautiful round floral *karṇa kuṇḍalas*. This type of *karṇa kuṇḍalas* are found on various Gupta sculptures.

29. Object- T.C. human leg (Fig. 11.29).

Colour- Brownish red, Period- Kushan.

Length- 11 cm.

Find spot- Mora village mound, Mathura.

Description-

It is a broken leg of a human figurine of remarkable dimension. The human being, probably a deity was shown in sitting posture as often found in Kushan figurines. Four straight incised grooving marks the fingers almost up to the ankle joint.

30. Object- Broken foot of a human figurine (Fig. 11.30).

Colour- Brownish red, Period- Kushan.

Length- 6.3 cm.

Find spot- Mora village mound, Mathura.

Description-

It is a broken foot of a human figurine which is having a solid base. Either fingers or nails have been marked by four groovings at the front portion of it.

31. Object- Broken hand of a t.c. human figurine (Fig. 11.31)

Colour- Red, Period- Kushan.

Length- 8 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

It is a broken hand of a human figurine, probably a deity or a king. It is the left hand of a figurine in akimbo pose and the fingers have been marked at the tip of it. It is wearing an armlet and is hand made.

32. Object- Moulded decorative bricks (Fig. 11.32 a and 11.32 b).

Colour- Red, Period- Gupta.

Find spot- Naugaon, Mathura.

Description-

These two terracotta bricks seem to be part of a temple of Gupta period. Such terracotta bricks were often used during Gupta period on temple walls. Their finding from this village is indicative of its importance until Gupta period and the existence of brick temples there.

33. Object- Miniature animal figurine (Fig. 11.33).

Colour- Brown, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 4 x 4.8 x 2.5 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera , Hathras.

Description-

It is a very small t.c. animal figurine with four legs, much broken. It has a short tail, broad ears and a pointed mouth. Other details are missing. It might be a rabbit figurine.

34. Object- Head of a ram figurine (Fig. 11.34).

Colour- Red, Period - Kushan.

Dimensions- 4.6 cm in length.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera , Hathras.

Description-

Only head portion of this figurine is available to us. It was a well made figurine with a long projected mouth. Its two horns are now broken. It has two round projected eyes.

35. Object- Terracotta bull figurines (Fig. 11.35).

Colour- Red., Period- Kushan.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

These bull figurines are almost similar to each other. These are very mutilated with legs and tail completely missing, but are humped. All the minor details are missing.

36. Object- T.C. head of a horse (Fig. 11.36).

Colour- Brown, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 5 x 4.5 x 2.4 cm.

Find spot- Chaturbhuj Khera, Hathras.

Description-

It is a very beautiful head portion of a horse figurine. This horse has been crowned at its head. Its ears are just touching the crown and are made roughly oval by appliqué and scooping out method. It has slightly incised or marked elongated eyes. Its two nostrils have been indicated by two small holes just above the mouth. Its head has

been manned by a string. It definitely seems to be a special crowned horse, certainly belonging to an elite person or a person with royal lineage.

37. Object- T.C. elephant figurine (Fig. 11.37).

Colour- Red, Period- Kushan.

Dimensions- 8.4 x 12.5 x 6.4 cm.

Find spot- Sonoth Janubi mound, Mathura.

Description-

It is a much mutilated but roughly complete t.c. figurine. All the four legs are almost broken. Its trunk was adorned with a beautiful garland, a part of which is identifiable. His two eyes have been marked by incised holes. It was having large ears, now almost disappeared. This figurine depicts a kind of movement as the elephant appears to be in a joyous mood with uplifted posture.

Terracottas belonging to the post-Gupta period:

38. Object- T.C. domesticated ram figurine (Fig. 11.38).

Colour- Red.

Dimensions- 4.1 x 8.7 x 3.3 cm.

Find spot- Sonoth mound, Mathura.

Description-

It is a ram figurine with a long body, projected slit mouth, pinned nostrils, and applied goggled eyes and also having horns possibly. It is having a collar round its neck which indicates it to be a domesticated animal.

39. Object- T.C. female deity (Fig. 11.39).

Colour- Red with slightly ochre texture.

Dimensions- 7.6 x 6.7 x 5 cm.

Find spot- Tehra village, on road to Vrindavan, Mathura.

Description-

It is a mould made t.c. female deity figurine with a hollow oval shaped base. The deity is shown seated wearing a *sarī* and is sitting cross legged. It has four hands, two are rested over legs while the upper right is in *abhaya mudrā* and the other one is missing. It is adorned with bangles in hands. Its head portion is broken but some part of *karṇa-kunḍala* is visible. Slight projection of elongated ear is visible in the broken part of face and in that case the deity would be identified as *Vārāhi* etc. *Māṭrkās*, otherwise in normal circumstances it should be a *Lakṣmi* figurine. In its drapery, there is some influence of late Kushan style of clothing and because of this reason this figurine can date back a bit early but from the site, no Kushan evidence was found, that's why it has been dated in post-Gupta period on safer grounds. Secondly, such types of four handed deities with such an evolved form of representation are not often met with in Kushan period.

40. Miscellaneous objects:

- a. Broken bull figurines from Mathura city and Sonoth.
- b. T.C. ritualistic object or gamesman.
- c. T.C. skin rubbers.
- d. T.C. beads and spindle whorls.
- e. T.C. discs.
- f. Tortoise shaped pot, probably ritualistic in nature.

Conclusion:

With the analysis of the terracottas from Mathura and nearby region, one point which seems probable is that this region continued to manufacture terracottas unceasingly from the Painted Grey Ware Culture times to the late medieval times. Its importance as a great political and commercial centre fluctuated a lot in these times but the desire of its people to make and use terracottas never ceased as has been its pristine glory and fame in the minds of the Indians. A general pondering over these terracottas leads us to various important aspects about them. It is generally believed that clay figurines were associated

with the poor people and were used by those people who could not afford the luxury of costly stone sculptures. Here, after my study I have reached to the conclusion that in ancient times clay figurines were used by the people regardless of their social status. As most of the figurines are ritualistic in nature, the majority of them are definitely female (mother goddess) figurines; their use by all groups of society is very much the reality. Even till the present day, during every festival which is somehow related with mother goddess cult or Sati aspect of worship, every woman from all walks of life uses the same form of worship and rituals. In the ancient society, only the outsiders can be thought as the persons who did not use these clay figurines in the same manner of rituals as was used by indigenous masses. This trend of mother goddess worship continued from the pre-Mauryan period to late Kushan period at least, after which we generally encounter more specialized female deities than these simple mother goddess figurines. This does not mean that such simple figurines were discarded but the mode of their making seems to have changed like these were formed of unbaked clay to respect the ancient tradition on specific occasions. Another important point which came into my notice is about the various legs of female figurines found during the explorations. Here the important point is the shape of the legs which look like the elephant's trunk. From the *Rāmāyaṇa* I could collect a reference where Rāvaṇa calls Sītā, an ideal lady in Indian culture, as having thighs like an elephant's trunk. This might have worked as an ideal for the artists to make female legs.

Māma dṛstvā nāganāsorū guhamānā stanodaram.

Sundara Kāṇḍa 22.2

During the Śuṅga period, a number of terracottas of *Dampati* and *Mithuna* type were made but in my view these had more ritualistic significance than being only a decorative plaque hung on the walls. Various *mithuna* plaques might have been made with similar thinking as various such scenes are found on the walls of a number of medieval temples. Various scenes related with the activities of daily life and some *ālasya-kanyās* would have been related with the aspect of entertainment in those times.

During Kushan period a lot of terracottas have been put in the category of royal figurines which have foreign ethnic features along with various types of caps. I am quite amazed to discover a number of such figurines from a distant site in Hathras district identified as Chaturbhuj Khera which is the site of ancient Shahpur. The importance of this site in Kushan times can be imagined from the number of figurines having royal features as well as by the name Shahpur which is somehow related with Kushan Shah. The use of these figurines at such sites seems to be quite interesting. The common perception that these were made by the local folk as a subject of excitement after observing the foreigners, does not appear convincing. It does not seem proper to think that these were made for the purpose of entertainment by the society. If we observe the occurrence of such figurines, we would find that these were found from large to small sites, from distant to nearby sites. I am of the opinion that these figurines were made as a custom to honour the rulers. Either these were directly related with the worship of the rulers or were made to offer respect for the rulers who were considered *devaputra*. Occurrence of these figurines is more at such sites which were in greater contact with Kushan rulers as their administrative centres or trade centres. Another possibility is that these figurines were made for foreigners as part of their tradition of ancestor's worship.

During the Gupta period human figurines were much diversified in their subject matter but most of them were related with religious life. A perfect balance has been observed between the physical and the eternal attributes of the figurines belonging to this period. The figurines were either of deities like Viṣṇu, Mahisāsurmardīnī, Māṭrkā, Gaṇas, dwarfs, Yakṣas, Śiva, Parvatī, Gaṇeśa, Skanda, Sūrya, the Buddha etc. or were part of temple architecture where terracottas were used in abundance. The subjects got more specialised than any preceding period. A number of terracottas were secular in nature and these provide a lot of information regarding the way of dressing, hair style, fashion trends, the way of ornamentation and the types of jewellery.

Besides human figurines, a large number of animal figurines have also been found from Painted Grey Ware Culture period to post-Gupta period. The motive of making animal figurines appears to be more of children's appeasement and as decorative stuff in

houses than the ritualistic purpose. But a number of animal figurines like bull, elephant, horse etc. were sometimes related with the religious themes as almost every Hindu deity is related with one or the other animal in various ways. Elephant seems to be more popular theme during Mauryan times and the horse shows more popularity during Kushan times while the bull has been the most popular animal theme in Indian civilization.

The terracotta art activity seems to be related with the concept of urbanism as the number of terracottas is much higher during the times of prosperity among Indian masses and its decline in post-Gupta times when the urbanism was on a certain decline. It directly relates the happiness of masses with the rituals and the entertainment aspect of terracottas as well as the quality of the art. The maximum numbers of figurines have been encountered from those sites which were either administrative centres or the trade centres during their respective periods. As the finding of a large number of Mauryan terracottas from various sites of Mathura city and Shahpur-Gosna indicate their urban character during Mauryan period. In the same way the significant number of Kushan terracottas from Chaturbhuj Khera-Shahpur in Hathras district indicates towards its importance as a local administrative centre during Kushan period.

As far as the centres of making terracotta figurines are concerned, in the absence of findings of terracotta moulds, it is very difficult to say on a confirm basis. I am of the opinion that at every important site like Shahpur Gosna, Hathras, Shahpur (Chaturbhuj Khera), Sonoth etc. there would have been terracotta artisans who made a number of figurines. The specific features of the terracottas of this region indicate that these were formed by the artists, who had some common learning experience at a place where artisan gurus resided, probably Mathura. It is also corroborated by the finding of a hippopotamus figurine and a number of terracottas with foreign ethnic features at some distant sites. It indicates towards the fact that artisans from distant regions as far as Gandhāra and Bengal came to Mathura and shared their experience in art to their local disciples as well as learnt about this region's art from the gurus here. This might explain the reason of finding Mathura like features from the figurines of Ahichchhatra and other

various important sites. In it those types of terracottas should be included which were products of the local centre with some features of a distant school of art. Other types of terracottas were those terracottas which were a direct import because of trade activities. Many such references have been discussed at the beginning of the chapter. This is also corroborated by the finding of Patna and Buxar terracottas from Kosam, Bhita and Rajghat.

We often find terracottas of various times quite different from one another. Even difference in the figurines of the same period is also observed. It is quite possible that the difference in the figurines of various periods is due to the changing of technique and style from such a prominent school like Mathura. But the difference in the terracottas of the same period is quite interesting and it should be so because of difference in artists who were trained in this art through a proper channel and those who did not get any formal training regarding terracottas i.e. local artists. The remarkable examples must have been made through the moulds of master artists or must have been modelled by them. This point is also supported by Patañjali's *Mahābhāṣya* (II. 1.1; I, 364) where he clearly says that a carpenter engaged to work for the king did not entertain private works. Normal exchange of figurines through trade and person to person contacts is also a reason for these variations.

Although, large number of figurines were made for ritualistic purpose, among these some very fine examples would have been used in houses as decorative exhibit, once the ritual was over. Besides, a number of figurines would have been made for this purpose only, to put them as decorative exhibits.

¹ Catherine Jarrige, *et al. Mehrgarh: Field Reports 1974-1985, from Neolithic Times to the Indus Civilization*. Karachi 1995.

² Devangana Desai, "Terracotta and Urban Culture of Ancient India (600 B.C.- A.D. 600)," *National Museum Bulletin*, No. 4-6, 1983, pp. 59-65.

³ V.S. Agrawala, *Mathura Terracottas*, Varanasi 1936, pp. 16 and 23.

Chapter 12

NEW ASPECTS OF MEDIEVAL MATHURA TERRACOTTAS

In spite of the fact that a lot of work has been done on the sculptural art of Mathura, there lies a great scope for the work to be done on the terracotta art in general and late medieval period terracottas in particular. Even if we look at the number of significant archaeological sites throughout India belonging to medieval period and providing good examples of terracotta art, our information would not be so encouraging.

This whole chapter will try to throw some new light on the specimens of late period terracottas of Mathura region which came to my notice during my investigations. The north Indian archaeological sites of post-13th century era are generally not associated with terracotta figurines except for a few examples. Mathura region is specially famous for early historical terracottas and for a few examples of early medieval period. For the post-13th century era, finding of terracottas of various deities as well as human and animals is quite uncommon. The simple reason for it is that the ruling people who were Muslims believed that the representation of any human figurine is forbidden in Islam. That might be the reason that our knowledge of late medieval terracotta art is very limited.

Before discussing the terracottas, we should understand the nature and chronology of archaeological mounds where these specimens have been found. The number of these sites providing such figurines is quite limited. The location of the sites is as follows-

1. Bhuteshwar mound.
2. Chamunda mound.

3. Vishwa Lakshmi Nagar Triveni mound, Govardhan bye-pass.
4. Chandrapuri railway crossing, Bharatpur road.
5. Gopal Khera, Maholi road.
6. Gokul mound.
7. Mahaban mound, Dauji road.
8. Sarai Ali Khan mound, near Mahavana.

Three of these sites, Bhuteshwar, Chamunda and the Mathura junction mounds have provided Kushan period evidences in the form of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures, railing fragments and inscriptions. It is yet not clear how the cultural sequence of these sites developed after the Kushan period. During my investigations I found the possibility of pre-Mauryan and Mauryan horizons because of the finds of Black Slipped Ware and other related potteries, at the site of Bhuteshwar mound. At the Vishwa Lakshmi Nagar, Triveni mound site I could differentiate between Kushan horizons containing red colour brickbats in compact yellow colour soil, very much like in other Kushan monastic sites of Buddhist nature with the loose deposit above it. A certain Kushan human terracotta figurine was also found from this horizon. Recently in a major discovery I have found a broken miniature Buddha image of Kushan period from the same site.

A very interesting but very sad fact came to my notice after my investigations in the area that the famous excavated site of Girdharpur mounds, apx. 800 metres distant was completely destroyed by a group of powerful builders in connivance with the police and other authorities. Girdharpur mounds had provided a large number of Kushan period Buddhist sculptures in the excavations conducted in 1920s. At other sites, I could not find out any Kushan horizon, although there is a good possibility of it. As far as the latest horizon is concerned, it could be up to 19th century, at least at the Triveni mound where some inscribed pottery with English letters was found. Besides a new find of terracotta, in all probability imported from Europe with English letters at its base definitely proves the occupancy of the site by western people during the British rule. Recently a very important fact came to my notice that this site is still under Indian

Army's possession which confirms its use by British Army during the British colonial rule.

A little attention can also be paid towards the nature of the deposit of these mounds which are almost identical in nature. These mounds have an average height of about 8 m, if the mound has not gone through much destruction. The deposit appears to be of over burnt red coloured bricks with ashy deposits in between. The whole deposit is very loose in nature. In the middle levels the presence of post-Gupta stamped pottery indicates towards the possibility of post-Gupta deposit. After the finding of some tile shaped brick made square pillar like structures at these sites the whole dating problem of these sites becomes very interesting. This phase is accompanied by a large number of terracotta figurines, often having over burnt appearance with a peculiar deposit covering their exterior. Most of the pottery found from here is over burnt with yellowish patches in between. Although no glazed ware specimen could be found in the deposit but celadon and porcelain of various types as well as glass bangle pieces are definitely present here.

TERRACOTTAS-

After this brief information about the sites, attention can now be shifted towards the terracotta art here. Among all the specimens now being discussed, only two can be dated to Kushan period safely. One is a small red coloured broken headless t.c. bust of a human figurine which was found from Triveni mound. It is wearing a beautiful *kañthahāra* with pearl beads. The other one is a crudely made and imperfectly baked brown coloured terracotta mother goddess showing archaic features.

All the terracotta figurines which will be discussed now, are slightly difficult to be assigned a particular period. A very broad chronological span should be presumed for them. Although, Dr. D.K.Chakrabarti¹ assigned as tentative date the early centuries of Christian era to two of these sites, a broad time bracket ranging between the post-Gupta period to about 19th century would be more appropriate. Even in this broad time range,

¹ Personal communication with Prof. Dilip Kumar Chakrabarti of Cambridge University.

the most probable period seems to be 1300-1850 A.D., because of the nature of the associated pottery which had been discovered along with normal pottery, celadon and porcelain ware and even some imported European specimen.

A general assessment of the figurines for their common features and technology can be made now. The majority of terracottas are made of well lavigated clay and well fired, over burnt specimens are quite often met with. As far as their technology is concerned, almost all the specimens are mould made. A single mould was used to prepare an attractive front of the figurine. The back portion of almost all the figures was left untouched as they were probably made to be looked from the front side only. The usual colour of the terracottas is red but dirty white colour specimens also form a good proportion. Even some black coloured terracottas are also present. A whitewash like slip had been applied over the surface of most of them. Their size varied within 2cm to 7 cm.

The purpose of production of many terracottas seems mostly to be religious; some of the terracottas were made for the appeasement of children and some of can be termed secular. A number of classifications can be made for the study of these terracottas. The most suitable classifications are:

- A. Human figurines.
- B. Animal figurines.
- C. Miscellaneous figurines.

A. HUMAN FIGURINES—

Human figurines are male or female, divine, semi-divine and ordinary. The descriptions are as follows-

1. GAṆEŚA –

There are two slightly broken depictions of Lord Gaṇeśa (fig. 12.1). The deity is shown four handed wearing a long garland. His *karaṇḍa mukūṭa* is visible in one of the specimens. He is sitting in the *udar-bandh mudrā*, which is common for the *Gaṇas* as

well as for their head Gaṇeśa. He is wearing a *dhotī* as visible in the space between his two legs. The objects in his four hands are not clearly visible; his lower right hand was resting on his right leg and was probably holding a lotus bud and his lower left hand was in the process of putting some *laddu* like sweet in his long trunk which is running straight down. In his upper two hands he is possibly holding two of his *āyudhas*- *vajra* and *pāśa* (noose). In his left leg anklet is visible. The similarity of the two figurines indicates that these types of figurines were made in great numbers following a set pattern. They were definitely part of those people's religious life.

2. YAKṢAS-

Last two figurines (in Fig. 12.2) one in red colour and the other one in whitish colour are either of a guardian deity i.e. Yakṣas or a protecting ruler as the broad chest of them indicates. The red colour one is without any ornamentation while the whitish colour specimen is wearing a chest-band as well as a *kaṇṭhahāra*. Head and hands of both are missing. Another figurine (first from the left) is holding some money-bag like object, a typical Yakṣa feature.

There are five more figurines which can be put in the category of Yakṣas. One among them is a Kubera figurine (Fig. 12.3, first from right) is a sun baked brown colour specimen. The height of it is about 3.5 cm and the deity is sitting in *bhadrāsana*. He is shown sitting with his left leg knelt horizontally while his right leg is bent at his knees. His left hand is resting on his left knee, which probably held some object in it.

Another such type of figurine (Fig. 12.3, first from the left) is comparatively larger and better finished than the earlier figurines. The person is possibly sitting in *padmāsana* having his right hand resting on his right knee. Other features of it are missing except its well-built physique. The central broken figurine (Fig. 3, central one) without its head also appears to be similar to the figurines of this group.

Another figurine (Fig. 12.4, first from the left) can be added in this group, which is hollow and is bigger than all other figurines mentioned in this chapter. It is wearing a

long necklace with central pendant and its drapery is quite peculiar with four buttons on its chest. The right side figurine in Fig. 4 is too broken to identify but it also seems to be a Yakṣa figurine.

3 .CROWNED FIGURINES –

In this category of terracottas, such figurines have been included which appears either to be of some deity or of a royal personage. The crown over their heads or a very peculiar head dress over them is the proof of it. Seven specimens belong to this category. One such specimen (Fig. 12.5, first from the right) is an over burnt red colour figurine of a person with an attractive *mukūṭa* (probably *kirīṭa*) having his left hand in *kativinyastha mudrā*. Other details of it are beyond recognition in the now available figurine of about 6 cm height.

The second specimen (Fig. 12.5, first from the left) included in this category is quite interesting which has an oval face inside a halo like formation. Over this halo like formation a pitcher shaped finial is shown. The right hand of the figurine is shown supporting the pot on its head. The sex of this figurine is very difficult to be ascertained.

There are four head portions (Fig. 12.6), which are quite similar to each other and in this way indicate towards the popularity of this type of figurines during that period. Two of them are probably made from a similar mould. One of these two is in slightly better preserved and is one of the better specimens of its period's terracotta art. These are wearing a plain cap but it might be a *mukūṭa* as the other figurine (second from the left) of this group has on it. The proportions of face representation are the most remarkable. The eyes are almond shaped and the upper eyelid has been marked. Face is roundish with a slightly high forehead. The shape and size of nose, mouth and ears is in accordance with the shape and size of eyes. In their first appearance these remind of the Gupta sculptural art but after close examination the most important character of Gupta art – the serenity and the transcendental meaning is found missing. But, anyhow these figurines are able to impress upon the onlooker.

The third figurine from left is quite similar to the first two except for its head dress which is a leaf shaped *mukūṭa*, slightly larger than its actual face. In its centre the *mukūṭa* has a *peepal* leaf shaped incision which in its centre has a roundish point. Tentatively it appears like a fire representation, as on the peripheries of this *mukūṭa* flames have been shown, and hence it might be a representation of Agnideva. A very striking feature of this figurine is that a blue coloured slip was applied over it, remains of which are still visible. Another such head (fourth from left) is a crude copy of the first of the two heads in Fig. 12.6.

DISTINCT HUMAN FIGURINES-

The first figurine from left (Fig. 12.7) is very much like a north-western region's royal personage who has a long oval face with a very sharp chin. It is wearing a folded turban with two circular folds and a large fan shaped one at the back of it.

Third figurine from left in Fig. 12.7 is a small head portion having a round face. Headdress appears to be like that of an Arabian head-dress. The fourth figurine (Fig. 12.7, first from the right) in red colour has been found from the same site which is hollow in nature and might be a representation of a top British officer. Another figurine (second from the left) in this group is much damaged. Its features are also folkish. It has a long oval face with eyes marked as almond shaped sockets. It is wearing very peculiar and heavy *karṇa kuṇḍalas*.

Another terracotta head (Fig. 12.8, second from the left) is very much like that of a westerner. Its head-dress appears like a European warrior wearing a helmet. It is having a round face having mould made mouth, eyes etc. The other figurine (first from the left) is of a local folk who has its appearance like an indigenous person. The head dress in the form of a *pagaḍi* is the most striking which is quite similar to the headdress worn by the elites of 19th century. Its overall facial features are like that of a local person with slightly roundish face. Such figurines which have typical *pagaḍi* as their headdress should not always be termed as villagers, as this type of dress was considered a sign of a well cultured person till recent times.

Another specimen (third from the left) put in this category is a red colour head of a person with a projection below neck to put it with the remaining of its body. It probably was a woman as the *karṇa phūlas* in the two ears and the projection on the back of its head indicate. Its head except the face is covered with some scarf like material. It is definitely a mould made figurine with a sharp nose, oval eyes and a small mouth. It also appears to be having European influence.

Three more terracotta heads also need to be discussed here. These are without any crown. One red colour specimen (Fig. 12.9, first from the right) has a long face with sunken cheeks and eyes, very much like a *prêt*. Head appears to have been shown bald. The other terracotta head in black colour (second from the left) is a remarkable example of this period's terracotta art. It has an oval face with well marked features. Eyes are lenticular in shape with one of the eyes shown in a slightly slanting manner. The person is wearing a neck-collar with a central jewel. Another new find (first from the left) has a mask like nature in which only the frontal face was depicted by using a mould and the rest of the head, a solid one was wanting. It is in much broken condition but eyes, nose and mouth marked over it are visible.

TWO UNIDENTIFIED TERRACOTTAS-

There are two terracottas (Fig. 12.10) which are very difficult to be identified. First from the left is an ill fired brownish terracotta specimen with its head and portion below waist broken. The interesting aspect in it is that its hands are shown in such a manner as are shown in *dharmachakrapravartana mudrā*. The second figurine from left is also broken from top and bottom. It is made up of white kaoline clay, possibly. Its appearance is very much like a Hindu deity especially Kāmadeva and in some way it reminds of the winged Kāmadeva figurines of Śuṅga period from Kaushambi. It is wearing a *dhotī* tied at its waist. Folds of the *dhotī* have also been shown. It is wearing a necklace round its chest. Its right hand is holding some long object towards its shoulder.

TWO PECULIAR TERRACOTTAS-

One of these terracottas (Fig. 12.11, first from the right side) is a white kaoline specimen. The female is shown probably sitting on a very unique *murhā* (wicker stool) like object or it might be a stylized representation of the female in a standing pose where her lower garment has been tied at her waist with thick folds of her drapery. Her head and hands are missing. She has been adorned with a necklace running in between her breasts as well as a garland running over her breasts. It is a very charming example of female representation. It's importance either as a female of secular nature or as a female deity can not be denied.

The second figurine (Fig. 12.11, first from the left) is quite similar to the above mentioned figurine in its treatment. It is a red colour terracotta specimen with broken head and hands. The treatment of the *lahangā* like lower garment is similar to the above mentioned figurine, tied at waist and having vertical folds. Three of the long patties of the *lahangā* are running down near the feet. It is wearing a round breast-band over her breasts. Both of these figurines have a hollow circular base to be kept on some surface and their identification with gamesmen can not be out rightly rejected.

NORMAL HUMAN FIGURINES-

There are about eight specimens of human figurines, either male or female. This red coloured terracotta (Fig. 12.12, first from the left) can be identified as a female only on the basis of the *juḍā* or the hair knot tied at the back. It's both the hands have been shown kept on its waist near the navel. It was made only up to the knees and then the circular base which is slightly recognizable. Second figurine (second from the left) is of a male with head and lower portion below waist missing and the hands kept near its navel. One other such specimen is a very fragmentary portion of a male figurine which has not been shown in these photographs.

Another male figurine (Fig. 12.12, third from left) is of red colour and has either a buttoned or beaded upper garment in the middle as its peculiarity; otherwise it is too broken.. A recently found red colour headless figurine (Fig. 12.13, first from left) is also remarkable for its drapery which is very much like the dress worn by British soldiers.

Second figurine from left in Fig. 13 is remarkable for its lower garment which is like one worn by tribal people. Besides, there are two more figurines which have not been shown here.

EUROPEAN SPECIMENS-

One porcelain made figurine in white and green colour (Fig. 12.14, second from the left) is quite interesting. Only the portion below knee has survived of it, in which a European person wearing trouser is identifiable. It may be an example of imported European terracotta as one pottery piece found from the same site was also an imported specimen.

A newly found specimen from the Triveni site (Fig. 12.14, first from the left) is the proof of European presence at the site. This figurine is in ivory colour with yellow shades. Two persons are standing with their left and right hands on the shoulders of each other respectively. On their body they just have a small drapery to hide their below waist portion, only at thighs. On its base English letters SIAM ZWI MC are visible. It reminds us of Greco-Roman sculptural art.

The third figurine from left in Fig. 12.14 is probably made of kaoline or of some unique clay. Its sex can not be determined because of its broken nature. It also has a hollow circular base. It is wearing a long coat or skirt type lower garment whatever the case may be. Two anklets are adorning its feet. It would have been one of the most remarkable examples of this period's terracotta art if complete. In the light of new discoveries of European specimens, it might be belonging to the same variety.

PRIESTLY FIGURES-

A very interesting example of a priestly person in black colour stone is worth mentioning. It was found from Triveni mound. This 5 cm long specimen (Fig. 12.15, left one) has a very peculiar pose in which this free standing person has his right hand running along its vertical length like a Jina in *kāyotasarga mudrā*. The left hand has been placed at his chest. This hand might be or might not be holding some small object. It

is a fine example of minute work done on stone during that period. A white incrustation has deposited over its surface. Surprisingly another similar figurine but mould made of some unknown material (Fig. 12.15, right side), was found by me at the Chandrapuri Railway Crossing site where Railway staff had dug a part of it for changing the gauge. The size of this figurine is slightly larger but the pose is exactly same. This finding further confirms my identification of these sites having similar characteristics as well as the importance of making this type of figurine at these sites.

ANIMAL FIGURINES-

After the number of male human figurines, the next highest percentage is that of animal figurines at these sites. These are about fourteen in number (see Fig. 12.16 and Fig. 12.17).

RAM- This red colour ram figurine is very much like that of Rājputa period terracottas. This figurine was found from Bhuteshwar mound. It has two horns, one of which is broken. Its goggled eyes with pinhole are very typical of these period terracottas. It has a very short tail and its collared neck indicate towards its domesticated nature. One another head portion of a ram with goggled pin holed eyes and horns have also been found.

MONKEY- The small monkey figurine of red colour is very much like a child's figurine. It has a small circular base and has a dwarf like body appearance. So it might be a dwarf figurine rather than being a monkey figurine.

ELEPHANT- Two elephant trunks of good size and with slight better finished outlook indicate towards the popularity of elephant figurines during that period.

LION- It's a grey colour, much broken terracotta specimen of British period .

Figurines of four different birds-one sparrow, one duck, one string driven bird with holes and an eagle have also been found from these sites along with a bull or cow head, an owl, a rat head and a horse head with holes.

Presence of such number and types of animal and bird figurines indicate towards the popularity of such figurines among masses of that period residing at these sites.

BROKEN LEGS AND HANDS-

One base of a human figurine with its feet with two anklets, one broken leg, one very fine leg probably in a dancing pose, all in red colour and a white colour hand of unprecedented craftsmanship with a hole at the shoulder portion can be included in this category (Fig. 12.18). Another find of a black colour terracotta hand is quite remarkable for its workmanship. It holds a peculiar object in hand. It seems to be a part of a deity image.

MISCELLANEOUS FIGURINES-

FIVE SEALS-

Five seals (Fig. 12.19), most probably of religious importance are quite interesting as to my information such seals have not been reported till now from any part of world. All are round red colour seals with similar type of marks. Their sizes vary a bit. These have two *pāda-chinha* type of symbols over them. Over these symbols similar type of slip was applied and two black marks over all of them have been observed.

ONE BROKEN CHAKRA-

A broken chakra (Fig. 12.20) with spokes running from the centre of it is very significant indeed. As it is not a simple chakra, rather it formed part of some terracotta statue, either over the head of a *bhāravāhaka Yakṣas* or as a *āyudha* of lord Viṣṇu. It can be presumed because it is not round in shape; rather it has an oval shape with one of the sides running much longer and broken.

Besides these a *mukūṭa*, a terracotta leaf and many small rings are important objects to be discussed. In the recent exploration to the site, I found a slightly cylindrical object put inside a ring. It might have been used as an ear pendant. If it was not so, then

some ritualistic angle seems to be a possibility (for all these objects please refer to Fig. 12.19).

CONCLUSION-

The variety and the vivid nature of terracottas found from these sites in and around Mathura city indicate towards a great continuing tradition of terracotta art in the region with a very new and changed outlook. As not much information is available about such terracottas, it is just a humble beginning from my side. The dating as well as the character of these terracottas is very interesting as well as confusing. Assigning such a broad time span for them may not be correct but as the pottery and other aspects of site formation are considered, it may not appear to be so vague. Because of the lack of previous data about them, our thoughts about them should be considered as slightly tentative, which can only be confirmed by an excavation at any of these better preserved sites. Some of my conclusions are as follows-

- 1 .Although the sites belong to a much earlier period, the terracottas discussed above should date only between the 13th century and the 19th century.
2. These terracottas indicate a rare aspect of local Hindu terracotta art during the rule of Islamic rulers over north India.
3. Presence of porcelain and celadon at these sites and almost complete absence of glazed pottery is very significant to understand the basic nature of these sites.
4. Almost all the terracottas are single mould made, only from the front side and generally have a circular and slightly hollow base to put them on some kind of surface.
5. The majority of these terracottas appear to be of male figurine of various deities as well as princely people. After male terracottas, the largest percentage is that of animal figurines of various types.
6. Many of the figurines are quite unique in their features and in their treatment.
7. A proper excavation at one of these sites would probably solve most of the problems related with these terracottas.

8. Many of the terracottas have a certain European influence on them and the finding of an imported potsherd with inscribed bottom is very important for the proper study of these sites.
9. Finding of terracotta specimens up to the British period indicates towards the continuation of terracotta art tradition at Mathura even after the major decline in its importance as a political centre.
10. These terracottas undoubtedly show many foreign traits but in totality these indicate towards a process of assimilation of these exotic traits in the Indian character of art which has been a specific feature of Indian art through the ages.

Chapter 13

Mora Evidences- A Reappraisal

Mora is a village situated to the west of Mathura city at a distance of about 12 km. The villagers have no idea about the cause of its nomenclature as Mora but an important point came to light while going through the Archaeological Survey Reports of Eastern Rajputana by Cunningham.¹ There lies a site by the name of Mora near Dausa in Rajasthan, which is also a part of greater Vraja region. Cunningham has mentioned that the name was so because the famous ruler of Yadu dynasty- Moradhvaja, founded it. The same logic can also be applied to this village Mora, important for Vīras of Yadu clan. Another important place of worship for Varshneyas,² near river Ganga at Narora is also called Morra (should be Morapurā) and is a part of famous Belavana with its presiding goddess of high reverence. In Vraja, there is another Belavana near Mat along river Yamuna. So all these three Mora sites are related with local Vraja tradition of Vṛṣṇis and Yadus and indicate towards the migration of these people from one of these places to others. Mora village became one of the most famous of Mathura sites because of epigraphic and sculptural findings dating back to 1st century B.C. providing the earliest evidences of the worship of Pañchavṛṣṇi Vīras. Four sculptural finds (Mathura Museum Nos. E 20, E 21, E 22, E 23) and a door-jamb (Lucknow Museum No. J 526) have been reported from this site along with the famous Mora well inscription (Mathura Museum no. Q1, which was found by Sir Alexander Cunningham).³ Vogel has mentioned that the term Mora well inscription is a kind of misnomer as it was not made to record the construction of the well. This slab-containing inscription was being used as a part of the terrace of the well, possibly displaced from its original place. The inscription was not legible even to Vogel because of its deteriorated state. The inscription, which was read by H. Luders, is actually based on Cunningham's information. Presently on this

slab, which is now lying in open at Mathura Museum (acc. No. Q1), only six or seven words are legible with difficulty.

The inscription read by Luders⁴ is as follows-

1. *mahākṣatrapasa rājvulas putras svāmī-----*
2. *bhagavatām vṛṣṇinām pañchavirānām pratimāh śailadevagiri ----*
3. *yas Toṣāyāh śailam śrīmadgrham atulam udadhasamdhāra -----*
4. *archādesam śailam pañcha jwalat iva paramvapusā.*

Another inscription on the pedestal of a female statue (acc. No. E 23) from Mora is as follows-

1. *-----sya Kanishkasya-----ra-----,ma---*
2. *-----etasya purvaye māthurī kālhwāda o dakhī-----*
3. *-----ye Toṣāye patimā-----ta-----.*

One point which is clear from these inscriptions is that these belong to two different rulers- one probably to Śaka Kṣatrapa Śodāsa, son of Mahākṣatrapa Rājvula and the other to Kushan ruler Kanishka, both isolated by 75 years or more. The first inscription clearly mentions about the popularity of Bhāgavata cult of five vṛṣṇi heroes in this part of country and also the tradition of worshipping their images in a shrine. Toṣa word is quite important in both of them and should refer to same person or place whatever may be the case.

An important question is the identification of this word Toṣa or Toṣā. Luders⁵ writes “At first sight one would obviously understand ‘the house of Toṣā’ as a shrine dedicated to a goddess called Toṣā, but I am not aware that there ever existed a goddess of that name. Under these circumstances, Toṣā can only be taken as the name of lady who caused the shrine to be built.” He further adds “Toṣā does not sound like an Indian name. It is quite probable that Toṣā was of Iranian extraction.” Rosenfield⁶ writes about it- “Although it is difficult to reconcile a Toṣā of the time of Śodāsa with one of the time of Kanishka, the coincidence makes it most likely that the original Mora well inscription referred to the mound in question.”

Now there is a need to look at all this information in the present context. In the past, scholars had missed the very important fact that the nearby village of Mora (about 2 km distant as crow flies) is known as Tos. During explorations, it was found that the original inscription that was found at the outskirts of Mora by Cunningham came there from a site at a distance of about 1 km from Mora village. This so happened during 18th or early 19th century because of some government work. Later on, this area was taken under protection by the Archeological Survey of India. Not much information is available about this site except for the existence of some circular shrine considered ancient one by Pt. Radha Krishna.⁷ Now when we take a look at this site, we observe that this small site, about 80 x 60 m in dimension is situated equidistant from four very important Kushan sites, these are- Mora, Tos, Fenchari and Sakna. All these four sites are less than 2 km distant from this site. Local people told that till some 30 years back, people from as far villages as Ganeshra came to worship a deity at that site. Ganeshra about 5 km distant is itself a major Kushan site. One very important point which I, being of Varshney origin, always wanted to know became quite evident to me, that the deity to whom we Varshneyas offer worship by putting a cowdung made *kaṇḍā* on fire in the morning of *Holī* festival is none other than our great ancestors known as Pañchavṛṣṇi Vīras. We first used to offer them all the special food along with the usual worship. Because it was only on the day of the *Holī* festival that all these people from surrounding villages came to offer their worship at this site of Vṛṣṇi Vīras to a deity till about 30 years back, there is a strong possibility of this linking. Otherwise, why the people would come there, only on the occasion of *Holī* festival! I have also realized that throughout the Braj region, on the day of *Holī* festival, people of the area go to worship the great ancestors at ancient mounds or sites. Besides, there is a continuing tradition of great ancestor's worship at the site in the form of a shrine, which the villagers call by the name of a *bābā*. The important thing about this shrine is the shape of it, which is exceptional and probably made following the ancient tradition. I have observed many ancient religious sites at some distance from ancient habitation of villages, almost on a regular basis. But the important point about this site is that along with their exceptional finds of Vṛṣṇi Vīras, its location in the centre of some very important habitation mounds in an area which was called as *jheel* because of the huge depression. This is probably the largest area of depression in the whole *cis*-Yamuna section covering more than 16 villages and it is the reason for the high density of ancient sites in this area. During the monsoons the

whole area between Jikhangaon, Khamini to Satoha and Ganeshra took the shape of a lake which provided very fertile land for agricultural purpose. There was only a single natural drain in the area, which could not take out whole of monsoonal water. Only some years back the situation has changed after the construction of a huge drain-Govardhan drain in the area. The *trans*-Yamuna section along with many pockets in the western section was fertile enough for agricultural production. This makes clear that during the ancient times Mathura was a self-sufficient agricultural centre and needed not to depend on the trade for survival purpose at least. It is in contradiction to the view expressed by R.S. Sharma.⁸

In accepting Luders identification of Toṣā, there is a genuine problem that there is no deity known until now by the name of Toṣā neither in India nor in North-west of India. Secondly if it is taken to be a female by name of Toṣā who erected the shrine, then how will one explain the difference of about 75-100 years between the two inscriptions? The village of Tos is very well linked with the saga of the Vṛṣṇi Vīras. It is believed that it was the name of a *sakhā* or friend of lord Kṛṣṇa who had taught him the art of playing flute, in a sense his music guru. Besides here is said to have resided one of his favourite *Gopikā* Indīvarā who is one of the famous 108 *sakhīs* of lord Kṛṣṇa. I have not been able to find a purāṇic reference for it till now. But Growse has mentioned the mate of Kṛṣṇa by the name of Toṣa during the killing of demon Aghāsura by the lord.⁹ He has also mentioned that this village was named so because of this Toṣa.

I would like to suggest that Toṣa of the inscription is the same Toṣa mentioned in Vraja folklores. In that case *Toṣāyāh śailam śrīmadgrham* might mean that this great shrine of Bhāgavata heroes existed as the temple of Toṣa, which might be the name of the village Tos or a person who was considered the musical guru of Kṛṣṇa. There is certainly some doubt if it is actually *Toṣāyāh* as it might be *chaturthī* form of word *Toṣā* as a female, but neither this reading is full proof nor should *Toṣāyāh* be considered only as fourth case in feminine gender (*chaturthī strīlinga*). The name of village as Tos should be considered of utmost importance in considering the word *Toṣāyāh* and in that case it must be a in the masculine gender (*Pulling Vibhakti*). Another point which needs to be looked at is that if we consider the person mentioned

in the inscription as a female named Toṣā, then the village would be called as Toṣāgrāma and it would change to Toṣāgāma or Toṣām. But it has not been the case with the name of this village and it was only known as Tos with Grāma as a normal suffix. This is the reason that the name of the village has not changed as per the rules of local Braj dialect. Even if the name of the village is not considered to be related with the Kṛṣṇa legend, then also the name Toṣa can not be considered to be of foreign origin as it is a Sanskrit word which means satisfaction and is quite popular with prefix *sam* as *samtoṣa*.

On closer examination of the site, a broken sculpture was still found lying there, which is worshipped only on special occasions. This sculpture definitely belongs to the same group of sculpture, as was the broken lower half of a female figure of the time of Kanishka. It has been put inside a red stone slab which itself appears to me a slab, which might had contained some inscription. Whether the two other sculptures found from this site belonged to Śaka Kṣatrapa period or not, is yet not clear, especially after this find.

New Sculptural Finds from Mora –

A Unique Pañchamukhī Śiva Liṅga (Figs. 13.1 a – d):

Mathura is one of the early centers where Śaivite images were first produced. The first Śaiva sculpture is considered to be the Pañchamukha Śiva Liṅga from Bhita dated to 2nd-1st century B.C. on the basis of an inscription.¹⁰ The Gudimallam Śiva Liṅga is also dated to the same time bracket by some scholars.¹¹ Various Śaiva representations from Mathura date from 1st century B.C. onwards.¹² Before it, the images might have been there in the area, possibly in the form of plain Liṅga but the confirm evidence is still needed. During the Kushan period the number of Śaivite images at Mathura surpasses every other art centre in India.¹³

The Śaivite images can be viewed from the standpoint of three typologies- Liṅga, Mukhalinga and the full figure of Śiva. Liṅgas are the plain symbols of the universal cosmic generator without any of the manifestations and the most ideal form in the Śaivite iconography. Mukhalingas are generally Ekamukha or Pañchamukha. A

Dvimukha Liṅga has been found from Aring in Mathura (Mathura Museum No. 462), which displays Yogin and Ardhanārīśvara aspect of the Supreme Lord.¹⁴ From Gamari in Bharatpur district, another Dvimukha Liṅga has been reported, quite different from the Aring specimen as it represents a pot-bellied Yakṣa on the reverse.¹⁵ One Pañchamukha Liṅga (acc. No. 516) is in display at Mathura Museum which was found near the Museum compound. Its topmost face, the fifth face is completely missing while other faces have been carved on four separate Liṅgas joined with each other. Pañchamukha Liṅgas are generally found with four faces only, the fifth face missing or the plain shaft symbolizing the fifth head.

The recently discovered Liṅga at a religious open shrine at village Mora is actually a Pañchamukha Śiva Liṅga (the most majestic Liṅga image I have ever seen) datable to 2nd -3rd century A.D. and is comparable to other Kushan Pañchamukha Liṅgas in facial characteristics (see for example Fig. 13.2 for comparative analysis). As the plain Liṅga is the unmanifested form of the Supreme creative power, the Mukhalinga form is the manifested form of the same divine creative power. The plain shaft (the *rudrabhāga* or *pujābhāga*), which is about 5 feet deep in the earth¹⁶ is the unmanifested form of the supreme cosmic creator which starts manifesting himself firstly as the topmost divine power of Isāna, facing towards the east, not visible in this image. Then the four cardinal forms starts manifesting, the eastern head either representing Yogin or Uṣnīṣin form, the back side of it facing west representing either of the two. The northern face is manifested as the form of Brahmchārīn or Saumya form while the southern face generally represents the all destructive terrible form of the supreme divine being as Aghora. The same faces are also known by five other different names as five aspects of Śiva- Tatpuruṣa facing the east, Aghora facing the south, Sadyojāta facing the west, Vāmadeva facing the north and the central one Isāna facing the east.¹⁷

In this sculpture, the topmost face of Isāna is missing which faces either towards the heaven or the east. There is also a possibility of it not being represented and only the phallus top portion might have indicated the fifth face. The uniqueness of it lies in the representation of the four faces in four cardinal directions. In none of such images, so much emphasis on one aspect of Supreme Being is observed, as is the

case with this Mukhalinga. The over-emphasis on the eastern face almost makes it disproportionate in its overall treatment. The eastern face is almost double of the other three cardinal faces. The eastern face of it is shown with moustache and a third eye in horizontal position appears to be a possibility which helps in dating it to Kushan period. Its hair was arranged in braids probably tied as a top knot. Some peculiar marks on the left side of cheek can be observed which might be there to show the beard of the Yogin. The other faces are so deteriorated that it is not possible to exactly identify them. But as has been the norm in other Pañchamukha Lingas from Mathura region, these can be identified accordingly. The west facing head might be of Uṣṇīṣin as it is found facing opposite to the Yogin head. The south facing head is definitely Aghora head as the terrible features of it indicate. The north facing head might be Saumya form of Śiva or Brahmchārin form of Śiva as is generally observed. The delicate attractive features of it also indicate towards its identification as a Saumya form of Śiva.

A New Image at the Site of the Shrine of Vṛṣṇi Vīras-

Vṛṣṇi is the name of a clan which was a part of larger Yadu dynasty. It ruled over Mathura during the Mahābhārata period. Lord Kṛṣṇa has been called as Vārṣṇeya by Arjuna in *Śrīmadbhagavadgītā* (chapter III, 36). The members of this clan who now survive in Vraja and nearby region call themselves Varshney and consider Akrūra, the prime minister of Mathura rulers- Kamsa and Ugrasena as their great ancestor. Descendents of Varshney clan are now a days seemingly considered to be Vaiśyas in stead of their original Kṣatriya belonging. The Mora inscription makes mention of *Vṛṣṇinām Pañchavirānām* who are identified as the five Great Heroes of Vraja – Samkarṣaṇa (Balarāma), Kṛṣṇa (Vāsudeva), Pradyumna, Sāmba and Aniruddha.¹⁸ These names have been confirmed by the reference of *Vāyu Purāna* (97.1-2).¹⁹ *Śrīmadbhāgavata Purāna* (X.16/45) also mentions four Vṛṣṇi Heroes as Sātvat cult by the names of Samkarṣaṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. Besides this identification, Rosenfield had identified them as five ancient, legendary kings of Mathura.²⁰ Earlier, Luders had identified them as “five great heroes” mentioned in Jaina texts as Baladeva, Akrūra, Anādhṛsti, Sāraṇa and Vidūratha, among whom Akrūra was the commander.²¹ Quintanilla²² has tried to accept this identification as the right one. As far as the names of these heroes are concerned, these definitely

indicate towards the historicity of these characters, but considering them, to be of Jaina affiliation is untenable. Although, Kṛṣṇa and Baladeva finds some importance with Neminātha, there is no such indication that separate temples of minor local divinities were erected by Jainas before the Christian era. Besides, the place of these finds has not shown any Jaina association of any kind till now. The argument of Quintanilla of associating these sculptures with Jaina religion is untenable. The names of five Vṛṣṇi heroes as identified by Luders can't be outrightly rejected as they show some glimpse of history in them. But, to me, the identification of Agrawala and Banerjea seems to be more proper as the popularity of these characters as the family members of Kṛṣṇa, in Vraja region indicate.

The newly discovered sculpture (Fig. 13.3) brings to fore an inexplicable situation. If this is the site where Pt. Radha Krishna had done a clearance work to unearth a circular shrine of Kushan period, then, how this sculpture did not come to his notice! The smugglers of the region have not stolen it just because of the fact that it is not easily accessible and secondly, it does not look attractive to fetch them good value. There is no doubt that this sculpture also belongs to the same variety of sculptures that are now kept in Mathura Museum (Figs. 13.4, 13.5 and 13.6). The main problem is the exact identification of its gender. It has a comparatively slender waist in comparison to the two male sculptures and holds the sashes of the drapery in the same fashion as the lady of Kushan period (Fig. 13.5) holds. Its size is also more akin to the female sculpture than the two male ones. But the treatment of the drapery below its waist does not rule out the possibility of it being a male figure. Its treatment is more like that of a Kārttikeya image (Fig. 10.2.5 a & b), of circa 350 A.D., which was found while digging the foundation of a house in the village Mora and was brought to Mathura Museum some years ago. Obviously, the Skanda image would have followed the style of drapery and iconography of this image as Skanda image belongs to a later date. This similarity forces us not to rule out its gender as male. Whatever may be the case, it is almost clear that the new image in question belongs to circa 1st century A.D. and belongs to the same series of sculptures which are normally considered to be of Vṛṣṇi Vīras. More information about the sculpture can be gathered by the proper clearance of it on the initiative of government and the villagers. The proper excavation of the site is also required to clear many doubts about the history of Kṣatrapa and Kushan period.

Finding of this sculpture also makes it a bit difficult to agree with Doris M. Srinivasan who has tried to identify the female image (Fig. 13.5) as Ekānamśā.²³ Firstly, the female is not holding the usual pot held in the hand of Ekānamśā and secondly Ekānamśā does not need to be necessarily represented along with Pañchavṛṣṇi Vīras. She has generally been found represented on Vṛṣṇi triads only alongside Vāsudeva and Samkarṣaṇa. The biggest doubt lies in the overall dating of these four sculptures. If the historical time gap of about 80 years is true in between Śaka Kṣatrapa Śodāsa and Kushan king Kanishka then there is no such explanation by which these images can be considered of Vṛṣṇi Vīras ranging between 80 B.C. - 80 A.D. If according to Srinivasan the style of treatment of drapery on the images can be taken as a basis of identifying these sculptures, then, the identification and the chronology of these sculptures would start causing more problems. If it comes to the fore that the work of making these statues actually started in Kṣatrapa period and continued in Kushan period, then, it is bound to force amendments in the overall dating of various sculptures of different sects, generally ascribed to Kushan period.

A Beautiful Brahmā Image at Mora-

Mora, which has provided a number of images of early century of Christian era, becomes even more interesting when a complete image of Brahmā (Fig. 13.7), probably the chief deity of a temple was found lying there. The deity was being worshipped as some other deity than Brahmā and in contrast the earlier mentioned Śiva Liṅga was being worshipped as Brahmā. Images of Brahmā are very rare and as a chief deity which is a possibility in this case, even rarer. The earlier known Brahmā images from Mathura housed in the Mathura Museum are: Brahmā image from Saptasamudri well, no. 382, Fragment carved with two images including Brahmā, no. 2134 (both belonging to Kushan period) and Brahmā image no. 2481 (Gupta period) and Brahmā images Nos. D 20, D 22, 285 and No. 1098 (medieval period). Most of these images have been found from a water body like a well or river Yamuna and all the early images are quite small in size (less than 1 foot in height). The Mora image seems to be of Post- Gupta period (circa first half of 8th century A.D.) and is about 2.5 feet in height. The deity has been carved on a red sandstone slab in between beautifully carved pillars and an arch decorated with lotus design. The deity is shown

seated on *kamalāsana* with his legs put in a comfortable pose, slightly different than the usual *padmāsana*. He is shown four handed, upper right hand is either holding a lotus bud or some triangular object. His lower right hand is holding a writing brush, as he is considered to be the *bhāgyavidhātā*. His left hands are in much broken condition and probably held either a *kamaṇḍalu* or a manuscript. He generally holds a *kamaṇḍalu* in his lower left hand but in this case as he is holding a writing brush in his lower right hand, a manuscript to write on with this brush is more probable. His upper right hand might have held a rosary. The deity is tetra cephalic but only three frontal faces are visible. He is shown with matted hair locks on all three heads, similar hair dress has been observed on some early Pratihara period images. His eyes are shown half closed and the ears of the central head have been elongated. His central face probably had a sharp beard. He is wearing a typical *yajñopavita* (sacred thread). He is not wearing many ornaments but only beaded armlets, a beaded necklace of pearls only. Below his *kamalāsana* are shown two swans facing back to back. *Hamsa* (swan) is considered to be his mount. In this sculpture the swans are holding fishes in their beaks. In between the swans was shown a *ratna- pātra* possibly. The deity is shown in niche between two pillars. These pillars are square in shape and are decorated in the style of late Gupta period with lotus medallion, floral motifs etc. On the top of these pillars, two flying celestial damsels are shown holding a parasol like arch which is decorated as a lotus medallion, somehow reminding of the most exceptional *prabhāmaṇḍala* of the exquisite Buddha image (A.5) from Jamalpur, Mathura. By the side of the pillars *ihāmṛga* are shown with some other hybrid form above them. Now, it can be safely added that this image is one of the earliest Brahmā image from the region which would have been used as a deity in a temple. All the earlier images from the Braj region are those images which would have been used for private worshipping at home and were probably thrown in water bodies as part of some ritual (as their size is quite small and most of them have been found from ancient water bodies). .

One image of Kārttikeya from Mora-

One image of Kārttikeya also has been found from village Mora, now kept in the godown of Mathura Museum (No. 99.24, Fig. 10.2.5 a & b). This image belongs to circa 4th century A.D. (Gupta period). The treatment of the body is typical Gupta i.e. slender body with very fine drapery. The Kārttikeya image is in standing pose with its

head and arms missing. His mount, a peacock has been carved beautifully in lower part of the red sandstone sculpture. Kumāra is wearing a *dhotī* tied in a peculiar fashion at his waist with central knot and most of it hanging in folds and pleats on the left side of him below waist. On the upper limb, he is only partially draped, in such a way as a sacred thread is worn. The most striking characteristic of this sculpture is that it has been carved on both sides. It appears that the two of the images of the deity are indicative of their different identifications as Skanda and Kumāra. It is supportive of the fact that during Kushan period the same god was conceived as different gods by varying the attributes of him by different names- Viśākha, Skanda, Kumāra and Mahāsenā. In the present sculpture because of its broken nature, the difference between the two aspects of the deity can not be analysed but it surely represents two different aspects of the same god.

This image was brought to the same Museum some years back. It definitely indicate that this village was not important for Bhāgavatas only (whose shrine was about 1 km distant from the village), but there were definite shrines of other Hindu gods and goddesses like Śiva, Kārttikeya and even of Brahmā, a genuinely rare one. These features would also have continued at many other village sites but because of destruction of evidences by nature, humans especially smugglers, it is not so found. Besides a number of terracottas of Kushan and later period with some devotional merits were also in vogue at the site, as the exploration at the site indicated. The village name Mora which is related to the legendary king Moradvaja. Unearthing the image of Kumāra who is often related with his *vāhana* *Mayūra*, also confirms the ancient nature of village name- Mora or Mayūrapurā.

¹ Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey of India - Annual Report*, VI, Delhi 1881-82, p. 227.

² Varshney is a caste now considered Vaishya. Varshney owes their origin to Vṛṣṇi kula and are the progeny of famous Vṛṣṇi Vīra Akrūra. Besides they are one of the purest of Indian castes as far as the mixing of genetic traits is considered because they possibly have only one gotram and they only marry in this same gotram.

³ J. Ph. Vogel, *A.S.I.A.R*, Delhi 1911-12, pp. 127.

⁴ Heinrich Luders, *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXIV, Delhi, pp. 194- 202.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ J.M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Art of Kushans*, Berkeley and Los Angeles 1967, p. 151.

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- ⁷ J.Ph. Vogel, *A.S.I.A.R.*, Delhi 1911-12, p. 127.
- ⁸ R.S. Sharma, "Trends in the Economic History of Mathura," *Mathura – The Cultural Heritage*, ed. D.M. Srinivasan, Delhi 1989, p. 31.
- ⁹ F.S. Growse, *Mathura – A District Memoir*, Delhi 1883, p. 57.
- ¹⁰ T.A. Gopinath Rao, *Elements of Hindu Iconography*, Vol. II, part-I, Delhi 1914, p. 65. One may also refer to D.M. Srinivasan, *Many Heads, Arms and Eyes*, Brill 1997, p. 222.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 221.
- ¹³ D.M. Srinivasan, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
- ¹⁴ Joanna Williams, "An Ardhanārīśvara - Linga", *Kusumanjali*, ed. Nagaraja Rao, Delhi 1987, p. 301.
- ¹⁵ R.C. Agrawala, "Newly Discovered Śiva Linga from Gamari," *Journal of Bihar Research Society*, No. 59, 1973, pp. 62-64.
- ¹⁶ It was suggested by the villagers who would have excavated the spot of this image.
- ¹⁷ T.A. Gopinath Rao, *op. cit.*, pp. 97-98.
- ¹⁸ V.S. Agrawala, *Indian Art*, Varanasi 1965, p. 235.
- ¹⁹ J.N. Banerjea, *The Development of Hindu Iconography*, Delhi 1956, pp. 93-94.
- ²⁰ J.M. Rosenfield, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
- ²¹ Henrich. Luders, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-198.
- ²² S.R. Quintanilla, *History of Early Stone Sculpture at Mathura Circa 150 BCE- 100 CE*, Brill, Leiden, Boston 2007, pp. 212- 213.
- ²³ D.M. Srinivasan, *op cit.*, pp. 213-14.

Chapter 14

Conclusion

Mathura has for long been famous as one of the most important archaeological regions of our country, though in terms of archaeological studies, not much data has been available. The present study was basically aimed at presenting a complete picture of Mathura and the nearby region in terms of archaeological importance. The outcome has been rewarding as a total of 205 P.G.W. sites have come to light in Mathura district itself which has an area of about 3500 square km. Of these not more than a dozen sites were known to the scholarly world prior to this study. The total number of Kushan period sites has come out to be about 350 of which about 18 sites were already known while about two dozen sites were known as being the find-spots of some Kushan sculptures. Some sherds of early tradition, possibly belonging to O.C.P. cultural assemblage were observed at the sites of Gosna, Aring, Nohjhil and Gantholi but on a larger scale in explorations, majority of the sites begin with P.G.W. cultural tradition. This should partially be because of the unavailability of pre-P.G.W. (especially O.C.P. pottery) on the surface of a site. As even at the site of Noh in district Bharatpur which is an essential part of Braj region, no O.C.P. sherds are observed during the explorations. But if we are getting about 205 or more than that P.G.W. sites in the district of Mathura, it would not be right to consider the beginning of all these sites with P.G.W. period only. Many large sites would have previous antecedents as well and need to be further explored, possibly by means of excavations and trial trenches at some important sites. Even during the P.G.W. period which covers a long span of about 800 years, there must have been various phases as early, middle and late. By considering Noh in district Bharatpur in the south (O.C.P. sherds were observed by me at the ruined site of Patsal in Agra district as well), Lal Qila in Aligarh district in the east, Delhi in the north and the sites of Ganeshwar, Jodhpura near Neem Ka Thana in the west (though, these Jhunjhunu sites are quite distant but

sites situated in between have not yet been explored), it has to be accepted that Mathura region is an essential part of O.C.P. cultural tradition, otherwise how can this region remain isolated when there are important O.C.P. sites surrounding it from all sides. Besides, the chance finding of Copper hoards from a village field near Mahavan and from Rasgawan drain near Sadabad requires a proper explanation.

The concentration of ancient sites varies only slightly throughout the region except for the fact that the concentration of ancient sites in the Sadabad *tehsil* (or the modern Mahavan *tehsil*) situated in the *trans*-Yamuna region of old Mathura district is much lesser than the other parts of Mathura district. The concentration of ancient sites is at its peak in the Chhata *tehsil* of district Mathura and it might be the highest in the country as well. Even in the explored parts of the districts of Bharatpur, Palwal and Hathras, no major difference was observed in the settlement pattern of the sites. Though, it appears that in these districts there are certain pockets which have quite variations in the concentration of ancient sites; e.g. when one comes from Aligarh to Jalesar via Mandrak, Sasni, Lutsan, Hathras, Rajpur, Maho, Shahpur, Lakhnu etc., there is certain element of the presence of some Śaka-Kushan traits at these sites, in their names and their characteristics. It is still unclear why there is a paucity of ancient sites in the *trans*-Yamuna region, especially near the towns of Gokul, Mahavan and Baldev while this area consists of one of the most fertile lands in the region. The presence of dense forests and the absence of technological advancement in the ancient times can not be accepted as a proper argument for it as the situation remains the same until the early medieval period. Now-a-days, this area has a high density of human population as there are a number of newer and smaller settlements at short distances in this area. It is really surprising to note that in the *cis*-Yamuna tract, majority of the sites are situated over ancient archaeological mounds and this trend can be observed from Ballabhgarh in district Faridabad to Uchchen in district Bharatpur. In no other part of our country, so many ancient mounds are found occupied by the modern villages and towns. In the area of Sonapat situated along Yamuna (like Mathura) where thorough archaeological investigations have been done by many scholars, the data supports this view as more than 80-90% sites have been reported as isolated sites (Thakran 2000). The total number of archaeological sites found during explorations in the Braj region (excluding modern Mathura district) stands at 470 sites of which more

than 270 are P.G.W. period sites and about 400 Kushan period sites. More than 400 sites out of these 470 sites are possibly being reported for the first time.

Another very significant observation has been that near the important sites of Mathura and Sonkh, the nearby ancient sites are situated at quite a fair distance in some directions like from Mathura the next major habitation site along Yamuna in north direction is Vrindavan (8 km distant), in the north-west along the ancient highway is Jaint (13 km distant), in the south Karnawal (10 km distant) while from Sonkh there is no major ancient site to the east and north-east up to Sonsa (7 km distant) situated on the route to Mathura. Many scholars believe that Mathura was not a self-sufficient economy and was dependent on external trade but if that was the case, then we should find the maximum concentration of ancient sites around these city or town centres but that's not the case. There are many pockets with high concentration of ancient sites in the hinterlands of Mathura region irrespective of their position from Mathura or any other major centre. The soil quality and the irrigation facilities would not have been much different throughout the region except from the sites situated near river Ganga. Such a high concentration of ancient sites in the region, most probably the highest in the sub-continent could not have been without a self-sufficient economy, though the long distance internal and external trade would obviously have had an impact on the location, size and importance of many of the sites. Most of the sites which are somehow related with the life saga and the events of Kṛṣṇa's life have been found dating back to as early as P.G.W. period but this should be so because of the limitations of explorations as well as because of it being a general trend in the region. This data should in no case be considered to be supportive of B.B. Lal's theory of linking P.G.W. with *Mahābhārata* period as I consider his theory to be full of misleading interpretations.

A number of ancient routes have been observed in this region but surprisingly the maximum concentration of the sites is observed on the routes to Kaman, Bharapur and Kumher. The ancient sites on the N.H. 2 towards Delhi are distributed homogenously except for the first site after Mathura which is Jaint at a distance of about 13 km. The route to Agra does not appear to be the same as the N.H. 2 but possibly it went via Beri and Parkham. The road to Aligarh from Mathura is a newly laid one and the ancient route went via Gorai. The route which went via Hodal to

Rohtak missing Delhi was possibly as important as the N.H. 2 going via Delhi. River Yamuna would have been a major channel of contact and trade and it did not serve as a barrier in the movement of people. In the sites situated at fair distances from Mathura in the districts of Agra, Aligarh and Hathras, the concentration of ancient sites appears to be somehow related with ancient trade route alignments.

Some very information has been gathered about the Buddhism in the region of Braj as about 40 new possible monastic and stūpa sites have been discovered by me during the course of this research. Many of the sites indicate the possibility of being factory sites for carving sculptures and this supports my view that the sculptures were carved throughout the Mathura region and this activity was not limited to a centre at Mathura city only. This view about carving centres should also hold true to the sculpture of the other sects as well. Another important contribution has been the identification of various sites as mentioned in ancient Buddhist literature. The name of places in the region of Braj which find mention in the Buddhist literature are Gunda vana, Bhadrāśva, Otaḷā, Verañjā, Vairambhā, Akkosa, Kardama daha along Varāṇā, Nalerunimba, Kimila and Agga. A sincere attempt has been made to identify these sites on the basis of exploratory data. An important analysis has also been made of the possible routes of journey taken by the Buddha and the two Chinese pilgrims Fa-hian and Hiuen-Tsang in and around the region of Mathura. A detailed survey of the early Buddhist art especially the early phase of the beginning of the Buddha image has been made which has some new additions in it besides following the dependable work of Lohuizen de Leeuw and R.C. Sharma. About ten new sculptural findings belonging to Buddhist religion have been described in detail which are a new addition to the existing knowledge.

In the field of Jainology the important contribution has been of preparing a detailed list of Jaina literary references related with Mathura and the identification of some of these sites based on the exploratory data. The identification of Uchchen town in Bharatpur district of Rajasthan with the Uchchena nagar mentioned in a number of Kushan epigraphs from Kankali mound is quite significant. The identification of Bhāṇḍīra Udyāna with the Bhandirvan situated along Yamuna near Manth and of Ariṣṭapura with modern day town of Aring situated on the Mathura-Govardhan road are also important findings. The finding of an important Jaina temple at Hathras and a

possible early Tīrthankara head from there are very significant. About twenty new sculptural findings belonging to Jaina faith have been described in detail in the present study which help in our understanding of the popularity of the Jaina faith in Braj region, especially during the early medieval period.

In terms of the Brāhmanical sculptural findings, this research has been quite rewarding as about 38 new Śaivite images, about 60 new Vaiṣṇava images including some rare Kṛṣṇa-*līlā* scenes, about 48 new images of female deities, about 21 new Sūrya images, about 16 new Gaṇeśa images, 5 new Skanda images, about 20 new Yakṣa images, 3 new Revanta images and about 5 new Hanumān images have come to light. Some of the Śivaliṅgas belong to the earliest phase of about 1st century B.C. The Mora Pañchamukha Śivaliṅga is a rare specimen of its type and its finding is a welcome addition to the existing knowledge on Śaivite iconography. The finding of a Śivaliṅga from the village Bachhagon of Mathura is very important as it displays the Ekādaśa Rudras on its shaft along with the four prominent faces at the top of the shaft. It might be the only specimen of this type so far known. The finding of a Viśvarūpa Śiva image of Gupta period from village Hathiya might be one of the most significant findings of this research and it seems to be the precursor of the famous image from Parel in Mumbai. In the Vaiṣṇava imagery, the finding of *Daśāvatāra* panels, Govardhana-*dhārāṇa*, Kāliya-*mardana* and sculpture reliefs depicting the child Kṛṣṇa's *līlā* scenes are quite significant findings. The finding of a number of *Mātrkā* and other female deity images would help in further study of female deities. The finding of a number of Mahiṣāsūramardīnī images would help in determining the various aspects of the iconography of the goddess like how she holds the demon (from the hind part or from the mouth), whether the demon has been shown in human or animal form, how she pierces the body of the animal etc. Some of the sculptures which are much broken would be of use in such type of studies where the quantity of the images adds in substantiating a particular theory.

The identification of the Gokarneshwar colossus as the Sun God on firm basis and the finding of some other Sun images with the lion throne as an attribute is not only important for the iconological studies of the Sun God but it has an impact on the nature of Kushan *devakula* sites. There are some strong reasons to consider Sūrya as

the ancestral deity of the Kushans and these have been discussed in detail in the chapter on the Sun Cult. The finding of an architectural frieze, possibly a lintel from the site of Maholi is quite significant as it represents a Sūrya image in its centre and substantiates the fact that there were temples in ancient Mathura specifically dedicated to the Sun God. A number of early Gaṇeśa images have been found during the explorations which supports the early antiquity of the Gaṇeśa cult. The sculptural reliefs from Kanwara (of late Kushan period) and from Sandhan Khera (of Gupta period) show the lord Gaṇeśa seated along with a female deity which is quite an interesting feature and adds new dimensions to the cult of Gaṇeśa. Attempts have been made to differentiate between the Skanda and Viśākha images based on the position of the spear held in the hand of the deity. The study of Yakṣa images would help in any further study based on Yakṣa cult as these images show the deity sitting and standing in various poses with varying attributes. The Revanta image from Harnaul village is quite early (of about late 6th century or early 7th century A.D.) and adds some new information regarding the cult of this deity in the region of Mathura. Not many early sculptures of Hanumān are known from India but the finding of some Hanumān images of early medieval period would help in understanding the nature of early Hanumān images.

The finding of about 100 new terracotta figurines from the region of Braj adds some new information related with terracotta art. The finding of a hippopotamus figurine of Mauryan period from Mathura is quite important as it proves that by that time Mathura had already become a major centre of art where artisans came from distant parts like Bengal to learn the terracotta art. Because only a person well versed with the look of hippopotamus found in Sundarvan Delta would have been able to make a figurine of the animal. The finding of a number of Kushan royal terracotta heads from the Chaturbhuj Khera site situated near village Shahpur indicates towards some kind of Kushan connection of the site. The terracottas belonging to late medieval period add a completely new dimension to the existing knowledge of terracotta art as such terracottas have not been found earlier. Even if these would have been found, then these were not correctly identified by the scholars.

Finally it can be said that no place on this earth would be able to compete with Mathura in the fields of art and culture. The highest concentration of ancient sites in

the region in terms of archaeology and the continuing tradition of sculptural and terracotta art until medieval period provides a unique place to this region on the world map. First images of many of the deities whether Brāhmanical, Buddhist or Jaina have originated and got developed on this soil. Besides, the continuing tradition of Kṛṣṇa cult in this region further enhances the importance of this region to unprecedented heights. Yes, definitely it is the city of the Gods and the place for which the Lord Varāha believes-

न विद्यते पाताले नान्तरिक्षे न मानुषे ।
समत्वं मथुराया हि प्रियं मम वसुंधरे ॥
अहो मधुपुरी धन्या स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ।
सा रम्या सु सुशस्ता च जन्मभूमिस्तथा मम ॥

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