SOME ASPECTS OF THE BUDDHIST MONUMENTS AT NAGARJUNAKONDA

By H. SARKAR

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

THE LARGE-SCALE EXCAVATIONS AT NAGARJUNAKONDA (FIG. 1), CARRIED OUT BY THE Archaeological Survey of India during the years 1954-60,[1] have added considerably to the number of Buddhist establishments exposed there earlier by Longhurst[2] and Ramachandran[3]. The total number of such establishments, all of the third-fourth centuries A.D., is now about over thirty (fig. 2), and they belong to different sects. In detail they vary from each other (pl. XLVIII[4]), but no attempt has so far been made to find out whether such variations are due to idiosyncrasy or chronology or are inherent in the ideology of the sect to which the establishment belonged.

Nagarjunakonda flourished at an epoch when the doctrines of different Buddhist sects were in the crucible—consequent on the impact of popular beliefs and practices on original teachings of Buddha. Despite the fact that the Buddhist edifices of Nagarjunakonda were constructed more than hundred years after the Fourth Buddhist Council, the majority of the sects had been following a faith not exactly similar to the Mahāyāna doctrine. Some of them were offshoots of the Mahāsāṅghikas, whose philosophical beliefs stood in contrast to Mahāyāna. The deification of Buddha started with the Mahāsāṅghikas and the allied schools; and this movement, reinforced by the conception of *śūnyatā*, etc., culminated in Mahāyānism, which, according to Dutt,[5] had its seed in the doctrines of different sects of Āndhra-deśa like the Lokottoravādin, Apara-mahāvina-seliya, Bahuśrutīya, etc.

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[1] The excavations were done under Dr. R. Subrahmanyam assisted by others including the present author.

[2] A. H. Longhurst, *The Buddhist Antiquities of Nagarjunakonda, Madras Presidency*, Mem. Arch. Surv. Ind., no. 54 (1938).

[3] T. N. Ramachandra, *Nagarjunakonda 1938*, Mem. Arch. Surv. Ind., no. 71 (1953).

[4] The Arabic numerals on pl. XLVIII represent the numbers given to respective sites in the excavations.

[5] Nalinaksha Dutt, *Early Monastic Buddhism*, II (Calcutta, 1945), p. 41.

It would appear from the history of structural activities, coupled with epigraphs,[1] that different sects made this picturesque valley their happy abode. Inscriptions affirm the existence of at least four sects, viz. Mahāvihāra-vāsin, Mahī-śāsaka, Bahuśrutīya and Apara-mahāvina-seliya; the last one, being the most dominant sect, has left behind it a number of records to vouch its superior status. There might have been other sects or groups of dissenters, but their names are not available. It is obvious from the inscription in the Chula-Dhammagiri-vihāra that monks and nuns from distant lands frequented the valley; it is but natural that they would bring in their trail new ideas, new constructional innovations, new approaches to the translation of ideas into architectural entities. Not-withstanding the ideological instability of the time and the import of ideas from outside,
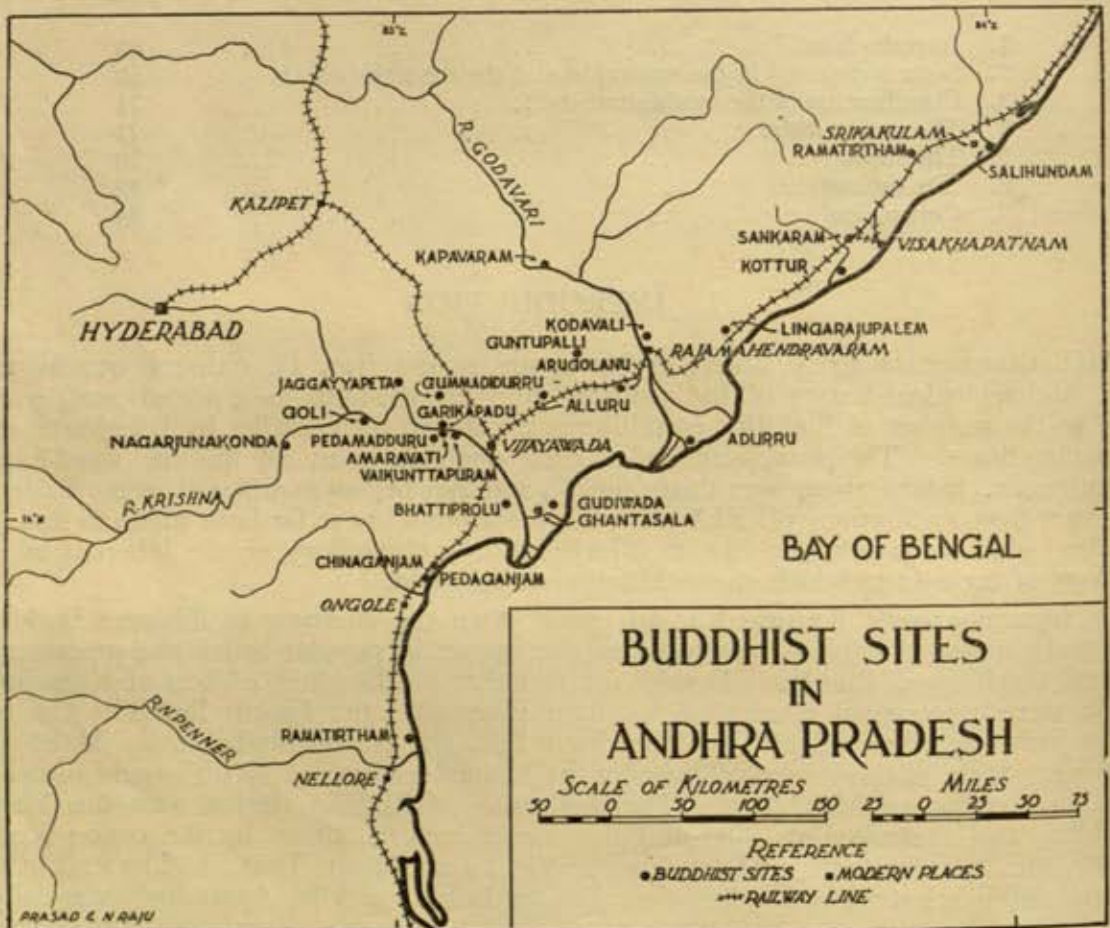

FIG. 1

the general outlook and the monastic set-up did not reflect any sign of radical or sudden change. The adjustment to the new condition might have been a gradual and often imperceptible process. It is worth noting that the general trend of Nagarjunakonda sculpture is to represent Buddha both symbolically as well as anthropomorphically. In

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[1] For Buddhist inscriptions of Nagarjunakonda, see J. Ph. Vogel in *Epigraphia Indica*, XX (1929-30), pp. 1-37, and XXI (1931-32), pp. 61-71; D. C. Sircar in *ibid.*, XXXIII (1959-61), pp. 247-50.

NAGARJUNAKONDA
SHOWING
BUDDHIST SITES

MANI G. SASTRY
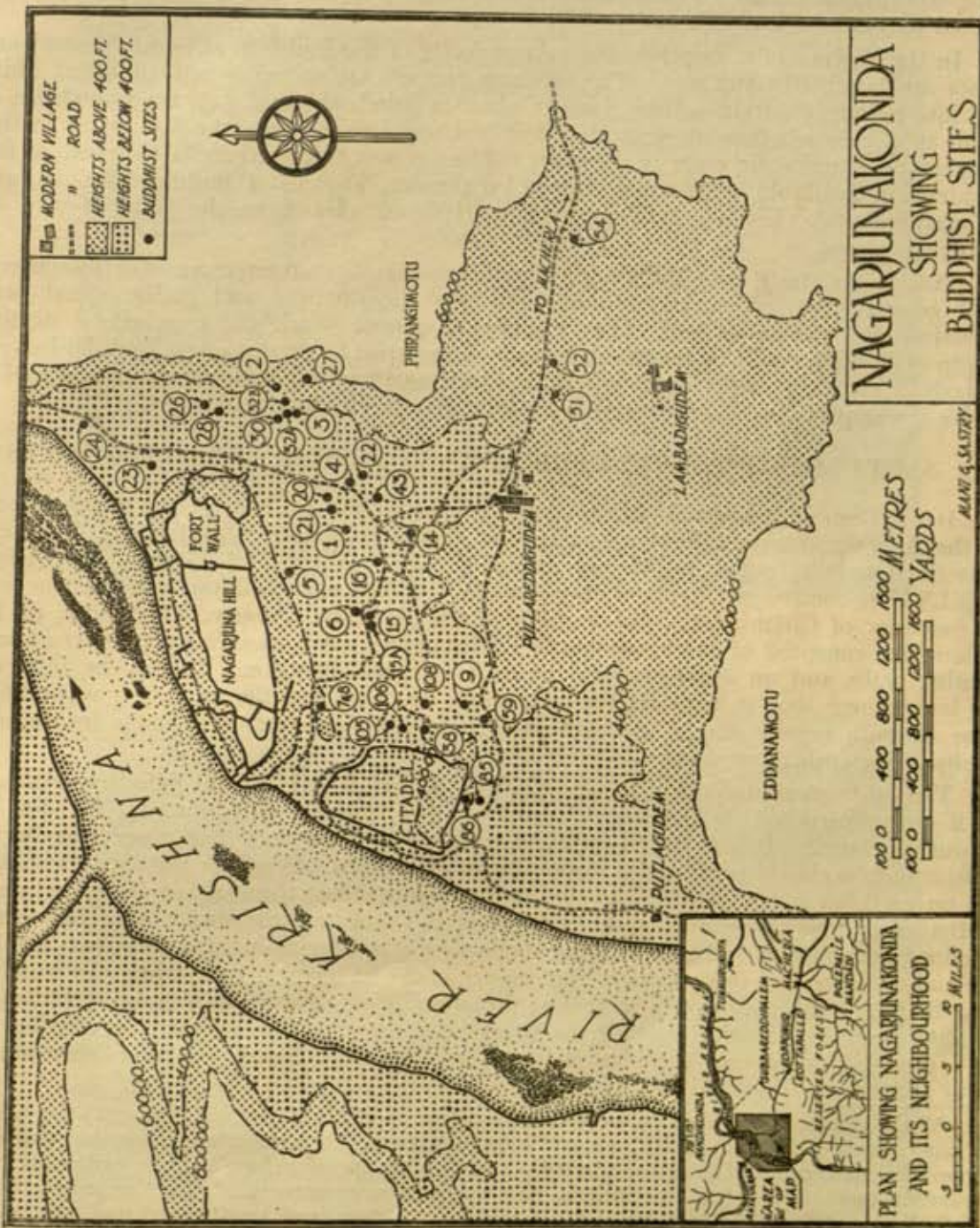
FIG. 2

PLAN SHOWING NAGARJUNAKONDA
AND ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD

some panels such forms occur side by side, which may be taken to be the characteristic of the transitional phase. There must have been also some sites where Buddha was depicted only symbolically (below p. 84).

In the absence of inscriptions the vast majority of the Buddhist structural complexes are not attributable to any sect. The amazing fact is that so many self-contained units came into existence within a short span of about a hundred years. At the same time, it is hard to decide whether ideological beliefs had any influence on the lay-out or in the arrangement of monastic units in all cases. The present study attempts to trace, as far as evidence is available, a doctrinal imprint on the development of Buddhist architecture of Nagarjunakonda, besides classifying monasteries and *stūpas* from the point of view of their development.

This paper starts with the simple hypothesis that the architecture of a monastery would generally be influenced or conditioned by the doctrine and philosophical predisposition of a particular sect. For example, a school which did not believe in the worship of Buddha could by no means have a *chaitya-griha* for enshrining a Buddha-image. Similarly, a monastery with a *chaitya-griha* to house an image of Buddha would speak of a definite worship of Buddha in the human form by its inhabitants.

2. SECTS MENTIONED IN EPIGRAPHS AND THEIR ESTABLISHMENTS

It has been stated above (p. 66) that the most dominant sect of Nagarjunakonda was the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas. At least two monasteries, Sites 1 and 9, can definitely be ascribed to this sect; the former included the earliest and largest *mahāchaitya* (pl. XLVIII), constructed in the sixth regnal year of Vīrapurushadatta, who was the son and successor of Chāmtamūla, the founder of the Ikshvāku dynasty. The *stūpa*, 91 ft. in diameter, consisted of three concentric circles connected with each other by cross and radiating walls and an *āyaka*-platform at each cardinal direction. It may be inferred from inscriptions[1] that at first only the *mahāchaitya* was built and the monastery was added in the fifteenth regnal year of the same king. In his eighteenth year came into being a *chaitya-griha* enshrining a *stūpa*.

The other monastery, Site 9 (pls. XXXVI A and XLVIII), was definitely renovated, if not constructed, in the eighth regnal year of Ehuvala Chāmtamūla, the son of Vīrapurushadatta.[2] It was a self-sufficient unit, with more than one phase, having a *mahāchaitya*, two *chaitya-grihas* and a three-winged monastery. A rubble *stūpa* with a *vihāra*, built on earthfast poles, belonged to the earliest phase. But the *chaitya-griha* to set up a Buddha-image and two votive *stūpas* in front of the other apsidal shrine were important accretions not encountered in the earlier monastery of the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas (Site 1). This may indicate that this sect started its career in the valley at a time when the worship of the Buddha-image was not in its tenets: the main object of worship was the *mahāchaitya*, the *stūpa* enshrined in the *chaitya-griha* being secondary. The original sect living in Site 1 thus did not accept the idea of image-worship till the end. On the other hand,

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[1] All the epigraphs inscribed on the *āyaka*-pillars bear an identical date, viz., the tenth day of the sixth rainy season of the sixth regnal year of Vīrapurushadatta. It is, therefore, likely that that day witnessed the consecration of this gigantic *stūpa*, which does not appear to have had any earlier nucleus. *Nava-kamma*, mentioned in the inscriptions, may mean ' new construction ', not ' reconstruction ', *Ep. Ind.*, XX, p. 30. The Chula-Dhammagiri inscription states: *imaṁ nava-kammaṁ tiṁhi navaka[ṁ]-mikehi kāritaṁ*. It is difficult to believe that a class of masons did only renovation. Cf. *Chullavagga*, VI, 5, 2 and 3, Sacred Books of the East, XX (1885), pp. 190-91.

[2] *Indian Archaeology 1957-58—A Review* (1958), pp. 8-9.

Site 9, stūpa with monastery in background. See pp. 68 and 78

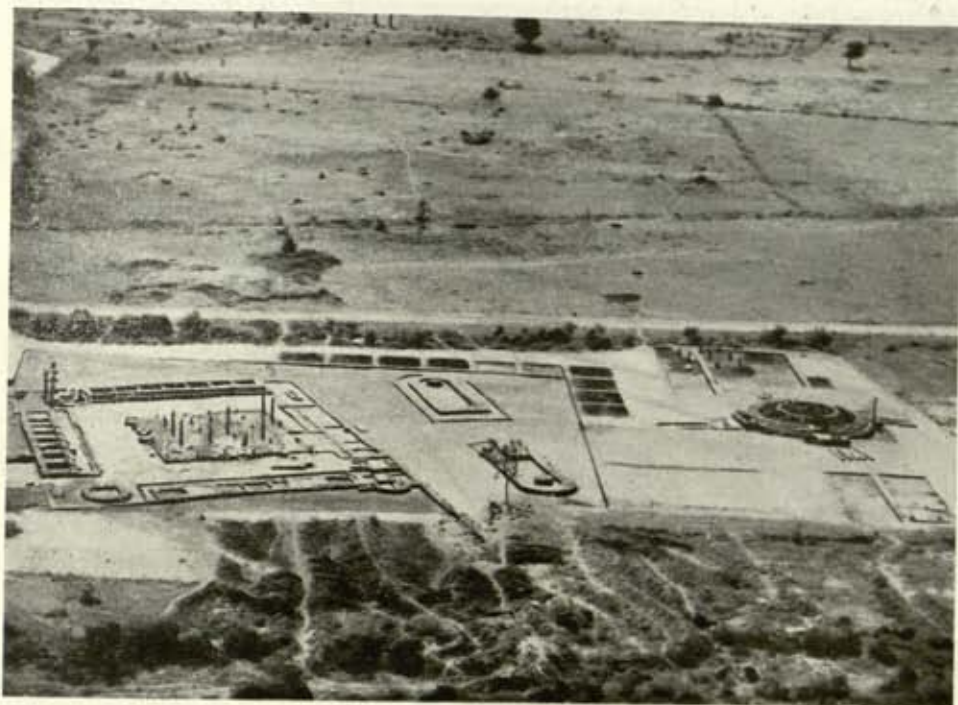*Site 14, stūpa with four-spoked base. See p. 71*

PLATE XXXVII

ANCIENT INDIA, NO. 16
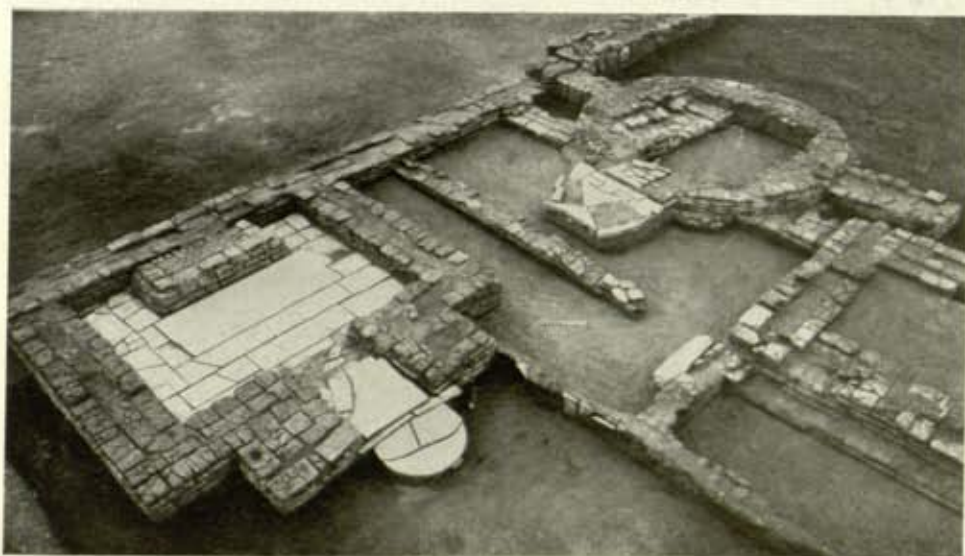

Site 38, Mahāvihāra-vāsin monastery.   See pp. 69 and 71

Site 38, inscribed Buddha-pāda.   See p. 69

Site 5, Bahuśrutīya monastery.　See pp. 69, 73 and 78

Site 5, Bahuśrutīya monastery, oblong shrine and circular chamber.　See p. 69

PLATE XXXIX   ANCIENT INDIA, NO. 16

Site 54, stūpa and monastery.   See p. 71

Site 27, stūpa with four-spoked base but without āyaka-platform.   See pp. 71 and 80

Site 24, monastery with chaitya-griha in front.   See p. 73

Site 26, double chaitya-griha enshrining stūpa.   See p. 73

PLATE XLI

ANCIENT INDIA, NO. 16

Site 85, monastery with oblong and apsidal Buddha-shrines.   See p. 73

Site 85, stūpa with eight-spoked base.   See p. 73

the Buddha-image did find place in the other monastery, Site 9. Thus, it may safely be concluded that the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas of Nagarjunakonda became divided into two sub-sects.

The monastery situated on the Chula-Dhaṁmagiri, Site 43 (pl. XLVIII), may be attributed to the Theravādin monks of Ceylon. Here, in the fourteenth regnal year of Vīrapurushadatta a female lay-worshipper from Govagāma, Bodhiśrī by name, built a *chaitya-griha* with a *stūpa*—the first of its kind in the ancient city of Vijayapurī. The main *stūpa* of the site, with a circular rim made of brick, had a solid rubble-core, without spokes or *āyaka*-platforms. This sect did not possibly yield to the idea of the worship of Buddha in the beginning; nor did they follow the tradition of the construction of *stūpas* with wheel-base and *āyaka*-platforms. But at a later stage even an oblong shrine with a pedestal, evidently for an image, was added inside the residential enclosure.

Another Ceylonese sect, the Mahāvihāra-vāsin, established a monastery, Site 38 (pls. XXXVII A and XLVIII), as is known from the undated inscription on a Buddha-pāda found here.[1] The construction of the main *stūpa* of this monastery was on the lines of those at Site 43: it was of brick but without any *āyaka*-platform and was further not wheel-shaped on plan. In a later phase the monastery was embellished with a *chaitya-griha*, but it is not certain whether this apsidal shrine was meant for an image of Buddha or for the worship of the Buddha-pāda (pl. XXXVII B), which was discovered at the site itself. A number of votive *stūpas* around the main *stūpa* came into existence in a still subsequent phase. Thus, the Mahāvihāra-vāsins launched upon their career like the orthodox Theravādins but gradually assimilated the idea of constructing votive *stūpas* and also possibly of Buddha-worship. This monastery therefore differs from the Chula-Dhaṁmagiri-vihāra in the existence of a votive *stūpa* and the absence of an apsidal structure enshrining a *stūpa*. These two sites were not identical in their general plan too: Site 38 had a *stūpa* as well as a *chaitya-griha*, situated within the residential enclosure. It is not easy to ascribe the Chula-Dhaṁmagiri-vihāra to the Mahāvihāra-vāsins; some other Ceylonese sect was possibly responsible for its construction.

The monastery of the Mahiśāsakas, Site 7-8 (pl. XLVIII), was built by the sister of Ehuvala Chāṁtamūla and queen of Vanavāsi in the eleventh regnal year of Ehuvala. Vanavāsi was one of the main centres of the Mahiśāsaka sect,[2] which ideologically was nearer the Theravādins than the Mahāsāṅghikas. This monastery had two large *stūpas* but no *chaitya-griha*. It is, therefore, evident that this sect was averse to *chaitya-grihas*, not to speak of image-worship. One of the *stūpas* at the site was wheel-shaped, and both had *āyaka*-platforms.

The second regnal year of Ehuvala Chāṁtamūla saw the construction of another monastery, Site 5 (pls. XXXVIII A and XLVIII) for the *āchāryas* of the Bahuśrutīya sect, which had branched off from the Mahāsāṅghikas and, as scholars believe, attempted a syncretism of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna thoughts. In this monastery there were two *chaitya-grihas*, both of them meant for enshrining *stūpas* but not Buddhas. At a slightly later date, at least one oblong shrine (pl. XXXVIII B) with a decorated pillar in front, simulating a *dhvaja-stambha*, came into existence within the residential part of the monastery. The pillar portrays the figure of a seated Buddha.
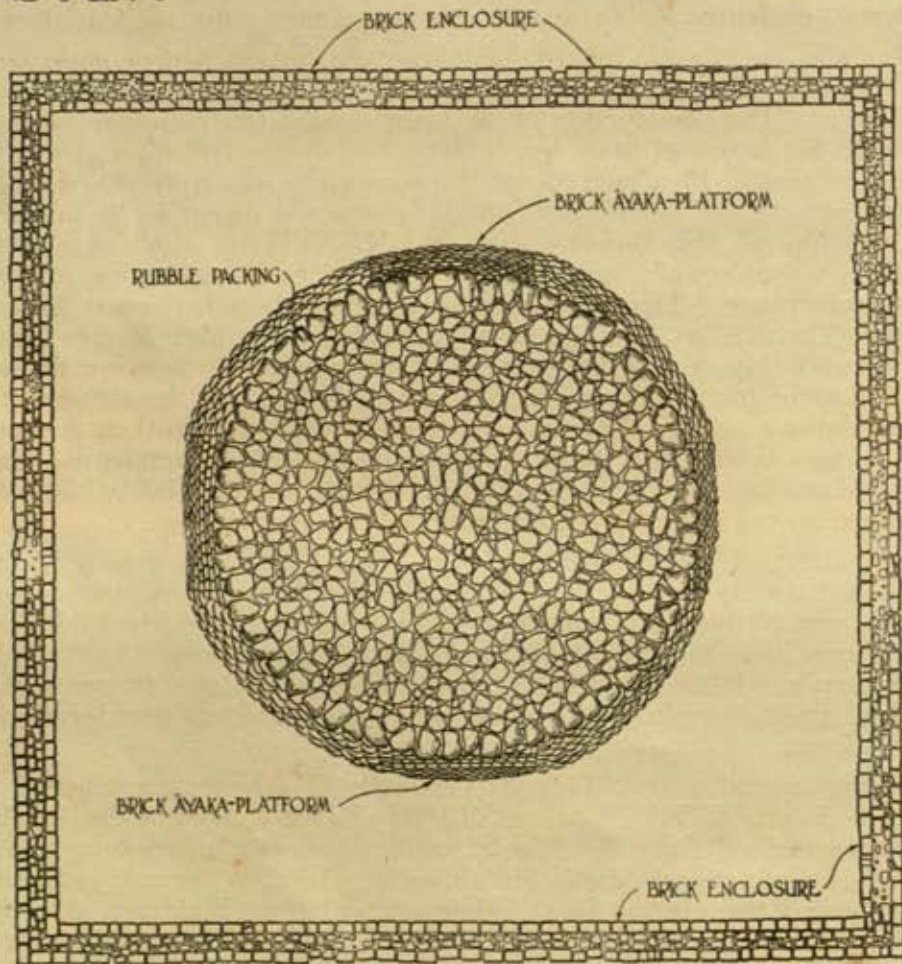
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[1] *Ep. Ind.*, XXXIII (1960), p. 249. The editors of the inscription are inclined to interpret the word *mahāvihāra-vāsin* as ' the residents of the *mahāvihāra* ' attached to the Great Stūpa (Site 1). But that *mahāvihāra* definitely belonged to the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas. Moreover, Site 38, where the foot-print slab was discovered, was more than a mile away from Site 1.

[2] Dutt, *op. cit.* p. 114.

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SITE 20

STŪPA

BRICK ENCLOSURE

BRICK AYAKA-PLATFORM

RUBBLE PACKING

BRICK AYAKA-PLATFORM

BRICK ENCLOSURE

SCALE OF FEET

METRES

MANI & B.RAO.

Fig. 3

It is apparent from the foregoing that the sects did not have identical types of establishments and that ideological differences manifested themselves in monastic architecture. It is definite that the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas did not originally own the idea of worship of Buddha-image. Even the *chaitya-griha* was adopted by them at a slightly later stage. But within a short period of two decades or so, one of their branches came to accept not only the *chaitya-griha* but also the idea of the worship of Buddha and the erection of votive *stūpas*. The Mahīsāsakas resisted these innovations down to their last days in the valley. The Bahuśrutīyas subscribed to the conception of *chaitya-griha* from the very beginning and raised two identical structures each enshrining a *stūpa*. The worship of the Buddha-image was not originally practised by them, but their subsequent history shows that they also fell in line with the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas.

All these three sects built *stūpas* with *āyaka*-platforms. But the Ceylonese sects did not adopt this constructional feature at all: their *stūpas* had solid bases and were without *āyakas*. The sect which had its monastery on the Chula-Dhammagiri also submitted to the popular demand of image-worship. The Mahāvihāra-vāsins too were swayed by this new current, but in the *stūpa*-construction both of them stuck to the older style. One point needs emphasis: many sects started their careers in the valley without the Buddha-image, but most of them succumbed to the idea after a period of resistance or hesitation. This change was effected within a maximum period of a century.

3. CLASSIFICATION OF THE ESTABLISHMENTS

Broadly speaking, the Buddhist establishments of Nagarjunakonda (fig. 2) may be divided into the five groups.

A. UNIT CONSISTING OF STŪPA AND MONASTERY.—The sites under this group, Sites 6, 7-8, 14, 15, 20, 21, 27, 30, 32 A, 32 B, 54 and 86 and the early phases of a few others (pl. XLVIII), may further be divided into two sub-groups of monasteries, viz. (i) those having a *stūpa* with *āyaka*-platforms and (ii) those having a *stūpa* without *āyaka*-platform. Sites 6, 7-8, 14[1] (pl. XXXVI B), 20 (fig. 3), 21, 30, 32A, 54 (pl. XXXIX A) and 86 were associated with *stūpas* having *āyaka*-platforms at the four cardinal directions. None of them, except Sites 7-8, 14 and 54, had a central hall or pillared *mandapa*. The second sub-group is represented by Sites 15, 27 (fig. 4; pl. XXXIX B) and 32 B. Similarly, the early phase of Site 1 would fall under sub-group (i) and those of Sites 38 (pl. XXXVII A) and 43 under sub-group (ii); in all of them the *chaitya-griha* was absent in the early phase.

The simple monastic unit at Nagarjunakonda therefore consisted only of a *stūpa* and a monastery, though there is hardly any reason to assume that such a unit would invariably suggest a chronological priority. It is fairly certain that sects responsible for these units did not uphold the worship of Buddha or the construction of a *chaitya-griha*, all importance being laid on the *stūpa* or *chaitya* itself. It is significant that at least two units of sub-group (ii), viz. Sites 38 and 43, belonged, according to inscriptions, to sects of Theravādin affiliation; hence it is not unlikely that the other three units of this sub-group, viz. Sites 15, 27 and 32 B, where there are no inscriptions, also belonged to such sects. The units of sub-group (i) obviously belonged to the other catholic sects not averse to innovations. The Mahīsāsakas, who were the authors of Site 7-8, did not yield to the idea of either image-worship or *chaitya-griha* and preferred two large *stūpas* instead.

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[1] This site had an earlier phase, represented by extant remains of another *stūpa* without any *āyaka*-platform.

NAGARJUNAKONDA 1954~60

SITE 27

STŪPA

RUBBLE PLATFORM

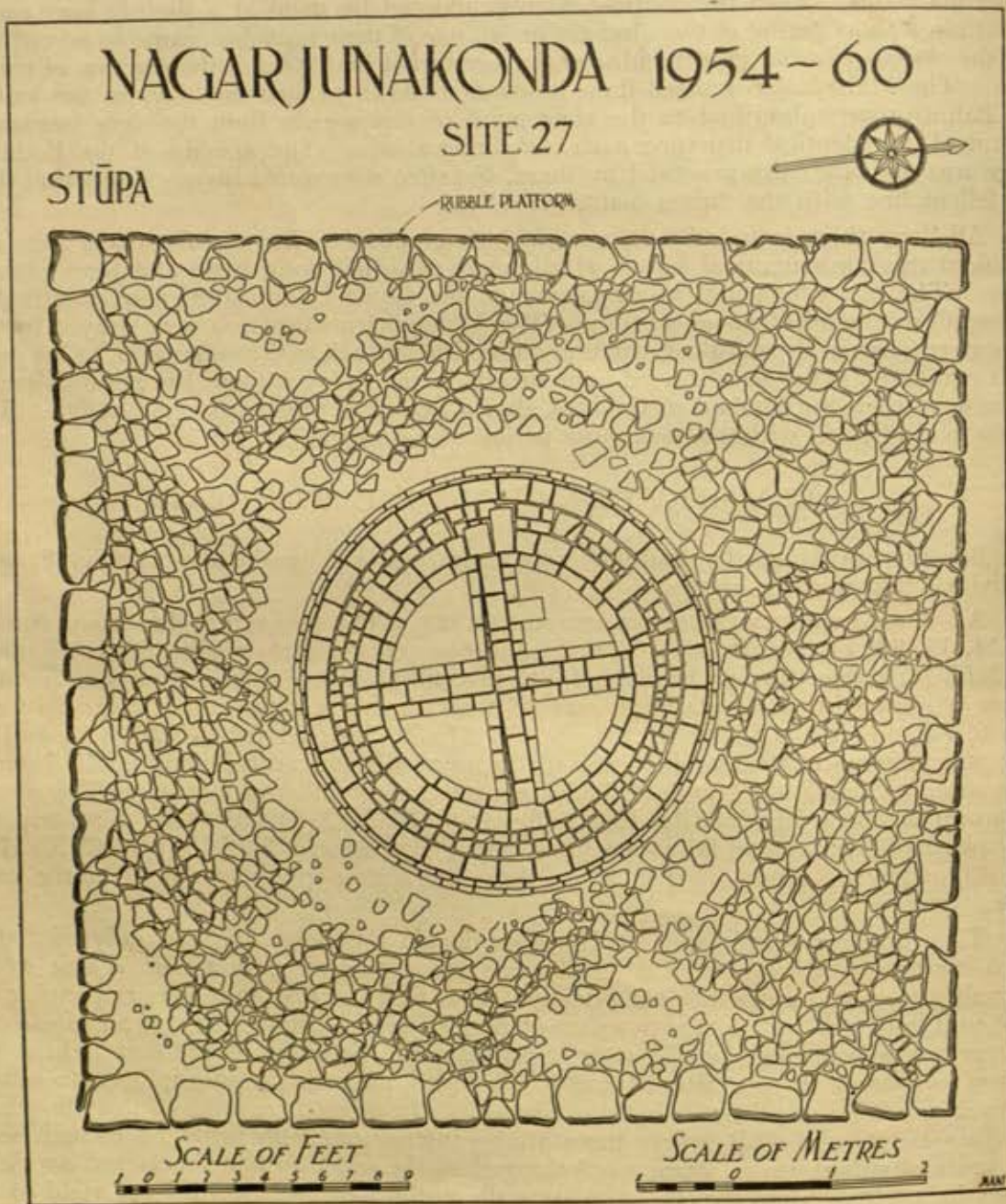SCALE OF FEET

SCALE OF METRES

FIG. 4

B. UNIT CONSISTING OF STŪPA, MONASTERY AND CHAITYA-GRIHA WITH STŪPA.—
This group is represented by only eight establishments (pl. XLVIII), viz. Sites 1
(later phase), 5 (pl. XXXVIII A), 23, 24 (pl. XL A), 26 (pl. XL B), 28, 43 (later
phase) and 108[1] (fig. 5). The *stūpas* inside the *chaitya-grihas*, as far as they could
be reconstructed, had generally a cylindrical drum surmounted by a low hemisphere—
a type reminiscent of the west-Indian caves. Sites 5 and 26 had each two *chaitya-grihas*,
the former belonged to the Bahuśrutīyas, and comparable with it in many respects was
Site 26. Besides the double *chaitya-grihas*, both the complexes had within the monastic
enclosure chambers externally circular and internally square. It is difficult to be
certain, in the absence of any inscription, as to whether Site 26 also belonged to the
Bahuśrutīyas. If this affiliation is correct, the presence of a double *chaitya-griha*, each
enclosing a *stūpa*, may be taken as the characteristic of this sect at a particular period of
its history.[2]

Each of the other sites in this group had only one apsidal temple. Site 24 revealed
an inscription of Rudrapurushadatta, the son of Ehuvala Chāṁtamūla and the last known
Ikshvāku ruler; it was engraved on a pillar erected in front of the *chaitya-griha* in memory
of his mother Vaṁmabhaṭa during his eleventh regnal year.[3] The apsidal shrine at Site 23
was raised within the *vihāra*-enclosure and had a rubble *stūpa* with *āyaka*-platforms. Here
the *chaitya-griha* was more conspicuous than the *stūpa* itself. On the basis of the style of
the *stūpa*-construction the site may be attributed to some Theravādin sect.

The other monasteries of this group are not much dissimilar to the Apara-mahāvina-
seliya units. A paved circular structure inside the monastery, the only one of its kind
in the valley, was discovered at Site 24. The presence of a *pūrṇa-kumbha* on either side
of the entrance to the structure may point to its use as a shrine, though no image was
found near by.

C. UNIT CONSISTING OF STŪPA, MONASTERY AND CHAITYA-GRIHA WITH BUDDHA-
IMAGE.—There are eight monasteries under this group, Sites, 2, 3, 4, 9, 38 (late phase),
85, 105 and 106 (pl. XLVIII). Of them Site 85 (pl. XLI) had a double shrine for the
image, whereas in other cases only one of the two *chaitya-grihas* enshrined the Buddha-
icon, the other one being meant for a *stūpa*. The *chaitya-grihas* of Sites 38, 105 and 106
were later accretions. Site 105 (pl. XLII A) had an oblong chamber with an image of
Buddha in the courtyard of the monastery proper. The apsidal structure of Site 106
was possibly added in the twentyfourth year of Ehuvala Chāṁtamūla.[4] The fact that
these Buddha-shrines were constructed at a later date may indicate the mounting pres-
sure of some popular opinion, to which the different sects had to give way. The available
data show that it was the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas who first yielded to this new ideology,
being possibly followed by the Mahāvihāra-vāsins or some other Theravādin sects and the
Bahuśrutīyas. So far as epigraphical evidence goes, the earliest monastery having a
chaitya-griha with Buddha-image is dated in the eighth year of Ehuvala Chāṁtamūla and
it was an Apara-mahāvina-seliya monastery (Site 9). Sites 2, 3 (pl. XLIII A), 4 (pl.
XLIII B) and 9 were compact and well-planned units—the *Buddha-chaitya* invariably facing

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[1] It is difficult to judge from the extant remains whether the *chaitya-griha* of Site 108 was meant
for a Buddha-image or a *stūpa*, but in the absence of any icon it has been included provisionally in this
group.

[2] Ramatirtham, in Visakhapatnam District, also has a double *chaitya-griha* each with a *stūpa*.
A third one, also with *stūpa*, is possibly a later addition. As the present condition of the site indicates,
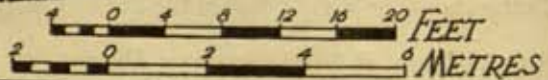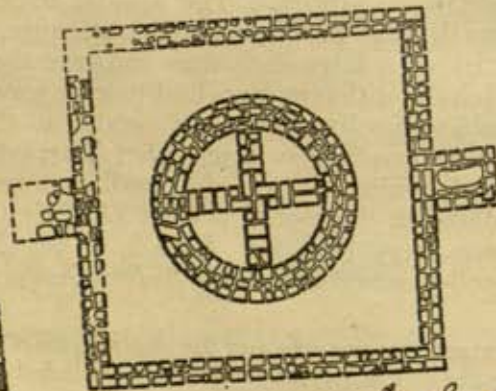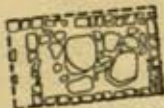the main *stūpa* is without any *āyaka*.

[3] *Indian Archaeology 1955-56—A Review* (1956), pp. 23-24.

[4] *Ibid. 1956-57* (1957), pp. 36-37.

NAGARJUNAKONDA 1954~60
MONASTERY SITE 108

CELL

GOLD COIN

CHAITYA

CELL
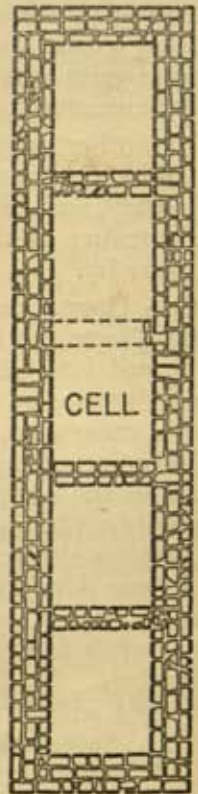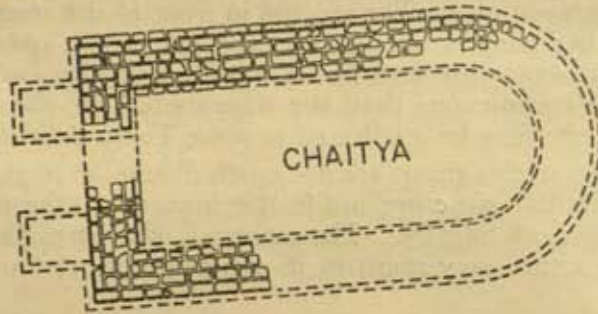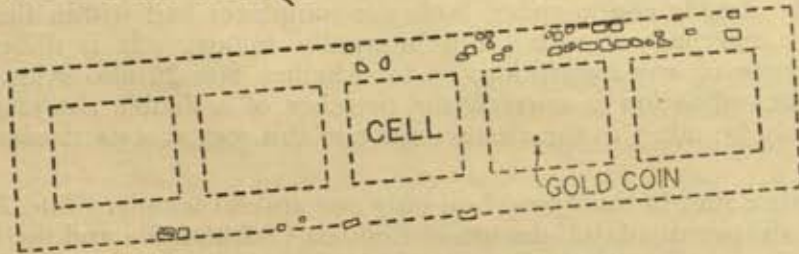
VOTIVE STŪPA

RAMANA & S H

FEET
METRES

FIG. 5

the *stūpa-chaitya*. They were store-houses of beautiful sculptures, executed in bold relief as well as in the round. The sect inhabiting these monasteries perhaps arrived at a reasonable synthesis that attracted the popular imagination and support. It succeeded in assimilating and harmonizing all the prevalent plastic and architectural innovations, thereby transforming the monasteries into galleries of art and architecture. Such establishments were invariably three-winged and had eight-spoked *stūpas*. Sculptures herefrom generally portray Buddha in human form, though aniconic representations are also not wanting.

The tide of image-worship that swayed the Nagarjunakonda valley during the reign of Ehuvala Chāṁtamūla reached its zenith when the monastery of Site 85 was renovated. Two shrine-chambers, one apsidal and the other oblong, were constructed, both for installing Buddha. The only other site that had a separate oblong Buddha-shrine was Site 105; that is distinct from the enshrinement of Buddha in an oblong cell attached to the monastery proper in Sites 5, 15, 32 A and 43. It is, therefore, evident that the Buddhists of Nagarjunakonda began without a *chaitya-gṛiha* and the image of Buddha, but eventually the popular urge for the Buddha-icon triumphed over the more orthodox schools of thought and established shrines of Buddha as an indispensable adjunct of a monastery.

D. UNIT CONSISTING OF MONASTERY AND CHAITYA-GRIHA.—There is only one structure under this group, viz. Site 51 (pls. XLII B and XLVIII), which had no *stūpa*. This may tend to show that unlike most establishments no importance was attached here to the adoration of the *stūpa*.

Site 51 revealed a well-preserved *chaitya-gṛiha* enshrining a *stūpa*, near which was brought to light the extant remains of a monastery, ruthlessly damaged by ploughing. There was no attached *maṇḍapa* or central *stūpa*. Thus, these remains may reveal a line of evolution in a different direction. In Site 23 (above, p. 73) the *chaitya-gṛiha* was given greater prominence than the *stūpa* itself.

The peculiar complex in Site 78 may be mentioned in this connexion. Here there were two apsidal structures placed side by side, with two monasteries to the left. A group of subsidiary structures in the shape of oblong, circular, square and octagonal bases existed around the pillared *maṇḍapa* in front of the *chaitya-gṛihas*. The present writer is inclined to regard these structures as bases of miniature *stūpas*.[1] One of them had clearly a circular outline on the square pedestal. It is significant to recall that the *stūpas* of north-west India were generally raised on a square platform. Octagonal bases for *stūpas* enshrined in the *chaitya-gṛiha* may also be observed in the Dharmarājikā complex at Taxila.[2] Some of the *stūpas* in the Bagh caves in central India also have octagonal bases.[3]

The earliest apsidal temple of Nagarjunakonda was built by Bodhiśrī in the fourteenth regnal year of Vīrapurushadatta (above, p. 69). Bodhiśrī, it is learnt from an inscription, was also responsible for the construction of another *chaitya-gṛiha* in the Kulahaka-vihāra, which must have been situated within this valley itself. It was possibly she who introduced at Nagarjunakonda the idea of *chaitya-gṛiha* as an adjunct to the Buddhist establishment. Karla, the stronghold of the Mahāsāṅghikas, and other west-Indian caves might have inspired certain architectural devices of Nagarjunakonda. The apsidal shrine became common both to the Brāhmaṇical and Buddhist architecture during Ikshvāku rule.

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[1] The absence of a large *stūpa* at the site has led some to believe that the complex was Brāhmaṇical in character, but it need not necessarily be so. The cave-temples of west India are examples where large *stūpas* are absent, the emphasis being on the apsidal shrine with small *stūpas*.

[2] John Marshall, *Taxila* (Cambridge, 1951), III, pl. 45.

[3] John Marshall and others, *The Bagh Caves in the Gwalior State* (London, 1927), pl. 1.

NAGARJUNAKONDA 1954~60

STŪPA   SITE 22

RUBBLE FILLING

RUBBLE ENCLOSURE-WALL

RUBBLE WALL
PHASE I

PHASE II

SCALE OF FEET

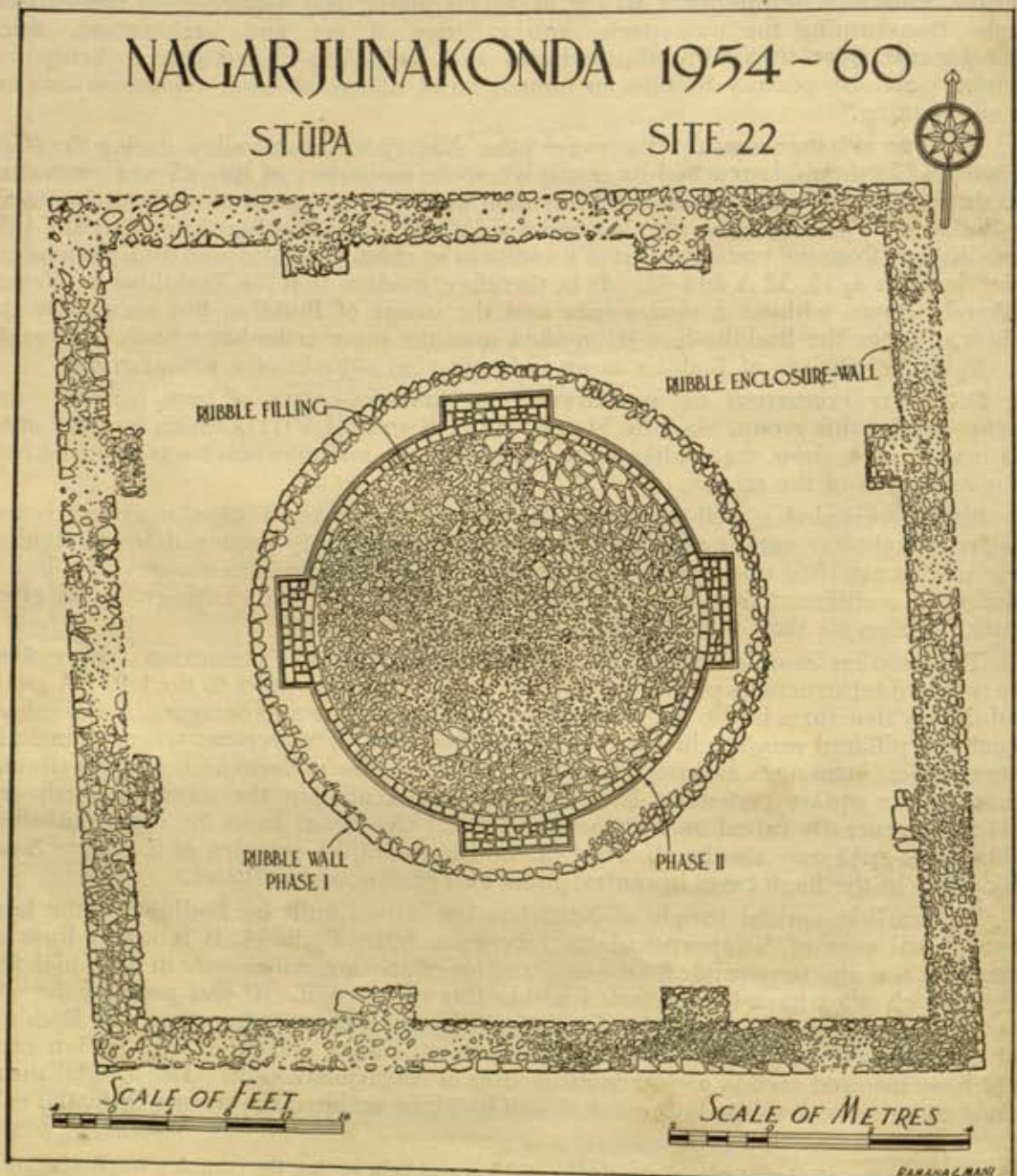SCALE OF METRES

RAMANA & MANI

FIG. 6

E. ISOLATED STŪPAS.—Five examples of *stūpas*, Sites 15 A, 16, 22, 52 and 59 (pl. XLVIII), possibly *uddeśika* in nature, unconnected with any monastery, etc., have come to light at Nagarjunakonda. All save Site 15 A had *āyaka*-platforms in four directions. Site 16 (pl. XLIV A) had the only specimen of a *stūpa* with a ten-spoked base. The *stūpa* of Site 52 was four-spoked on plan, but Site 59 (pl. XLV B) revealed a unique feature in the use of the *svastika* as an inset in the centre of the *stūpa*. Site 15 A had a circular rubble *stūpa* on a hillock without any *āyaka*. The *stūpa* of Site 22 (fig. 6) must have had more than one phase. In its earliest form it had a rim made of rubble, the interior being more or less hollow. In the next phase a brick-built rim with projections in four directions was constructed within the diameter of the circular rubble structure. The presence of *āyaka*-platforms in the second phase may help one in identifying it as a *stūpa*, but the core remained unpacked even in this period.

4. THE VOTIVE *STŪPAS*

The inclusion of votive *stūpas* in the monastic establishments of Nagarjunakonda may have some bearing on the changing outlook of the Buddhists residing in the valley. The earliest monasteries did not possess any such *stūpa*, but those of Sites 2, 6, 9, 15, 23, 38, 106, 108 and possibly 26 (pl. XLVIII) had them. Out of these eight sites, only two, Sites 9 and 106, yielded datable inscriptions. The *chaitya-griha* of Site 9 was flanked on each of the two sides by a miniature *stūpa*, which, however, did not show any *āyaka*-platform or wheel-shaped base. It may reasonably be surmised that the construction of minor *stūpas* was introduced in the early years of Ehuvala Chāṁtamūla's rule, because Site 9 was renovated in his eighth regnal year. By his twentyfourth year the practice of the construction of minor *stūpas* must have become established, since the monastery of Site 106 built in that year contained as many as eleven votive *stūpas*, four of them arranged at four corners of the main *stūpa*.

Site 6 yielded four votive *stūpas* of different sizes inside a separate oblong enclosure, one of them with a wheel-base. Site 23 too had four votive *stūpas* inside a similar enclosure. The Mahāvihāra-vāsins accepted this idea at a later date: two votive *stūpas* came into existence during the third structural phase of their monastery in Site 38.

All these votive *stūpas*, with rare exceptions, had a solid core and did not have any *āyaka*-platform, save the solitary example of Site 2.

The conception of the votive *stūpa* is intimately connected with the position of the laity in the Buddhist church. There is no doubt that in this period the commoners, including the merchants, promoted the construction of Buddhist buildings to a considerable extent: thus Bodhiśrī, a lay-worshipper, was responsible for many a building, Kumāra-nandin, a *śreshṭhin*, donated a sculptured frieze in the monastery of Site 106 and the renovation of the second Apara-mahāvina-seliya monastery at Site 9 was effected by gifts received largely from the merchant-community. The fruits expected out of such gifts were ' (i) religious merits, for himself, his relatives and friends resulting in their happiness in this world and the next (*ubhaya-loka-hita-sukh-āvahanāya*) and (ii) *nivāna-sampati* (*nirvāna*-dom) for himself or herself'.[1] This is in consonance with the doctrines of the Chaityaka sect, which possibly prescribed such gifts to popularize Buddhism amongst the laity. It is but natural that the common people would try to acquire religious merit by donating miniature *stūpas*. During the earlier phase donations were given in the monastery either for its construction or for extensions. But a period must have come when no

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[1] Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

additions to the existing establishments were feasible or needed, and it was during this period that the idea of donating miniature *stūpas* might have come to stay.

5. THE *STŪPAS*

The majority of the *stūpas* of Nagarjunakonda had wheel-shaped bases with *āyaka*-platforms at the four cardinal directions. These features are generally considered to be typical of the Andhra *stūpa*-architecture. But this is not wholly correct, because Nagarjunakonda disclosed *stūpas* without wheel-bases and *āyaka*-platforms as well, though *stūpas* with these features may be characteristic of a particular sect, perhaps the most dominant one. Practically all the *stūpas* of Salihundam, District Srikakulam, are without *āyakas*, which are absent at Ramatirtham also.

Most of the *stūpas* of Nagarjunakonda were built of brick, rubble accounting for only six. The *stūpa* of Site 43 had, however, a brick-built rim around an interior packed with rubble and earth. The rubble *stūpas* here were invariably without spokes, but the *stūpas* of Sites 20 (fig. 3), 23 and 28 had *āyaka*-platforms. A rubble *stūpa* with a wheel-base is noticed in the large *stūpa* at Kodavali, District East Godavari; it is built on a terraced platform with a solid hub and two concentric circles.

The introduction of a wheel-shaped plan for the larger *stūpas* was motivated mainly by considerations of structural stability and economy of material. A small *stūpa* of either brick or rubble does not require so much attention so far as stability and economy are concerned. There is also a possibility that this developed constructional feature might have drawn its inspiration from the *dharma-chakra* symbol. Hence, in wheel-shaped *stūpas* one may not only notice an improvement over an earlier building-tradition but also a successful attempt at transforming an idea, a symbol, into an architectural entity. It is difficult to assign the credit of this innovation to any particular sect. The fact that the Chaityakas formed a distinct school of their own in Andhra-deśa[1] may faintly suggest that they possibly specialized in this developed mode of *stūpa*-construction.

That ideology sometimes influenced the form of the *stūpa* is also evident from the *stūpas* with *svastika*-inset in the centre. Nagarjunakonda had three such examples, viz. the *stūpas* of Sites 20 (pl. XLV A), 59 and possibly 108 (fig. 5). These *svastikas*, being in the centre of the base, were obviously not visible from outside. Since such an arrangement cannot have any architectural significance, it may definitely be said that they were due to some ideological consideration. The only other *stūpa* outside Nagarjunakonda reported to have a *svastika* symbol was at Peddaganjam, District Guntur,[2] where largest *stūpa* had a number of bricks in the form of a *svastika*. That Buddha is also shown in the form of a *svastika* may easily be gathered from the sculptural representations of Amaravati and Nagarjunakonda (pl. XLVI). Thus considered, the wheel-shaped plan also might have been motivated by some ideological concept harmonized with architectural requirements. But it will also be apparent from the following discussions that the number of spokes in a *stūpa* was generally connected with its size.

The earliest *stūpa* at Nagarjunakonda, Site 1, was, as already stated (above, p. 68), wheel-shaped on plan. There were eight examples of eight-spoked, six of four-spoked, two of six-spoked and one of ten-spoked *stūpas*. The first circle of the *stūpas* of Sites 5 (pl. XXXVIII A) and 9 (pl. XXXVI A) had eight spokes, but the number of cross-walls connecting this with the outer concentric circle was twelve and sixteen respectively. On

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[1] The Chaityakas were so called on account of their devotion to the *chaitya*, Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
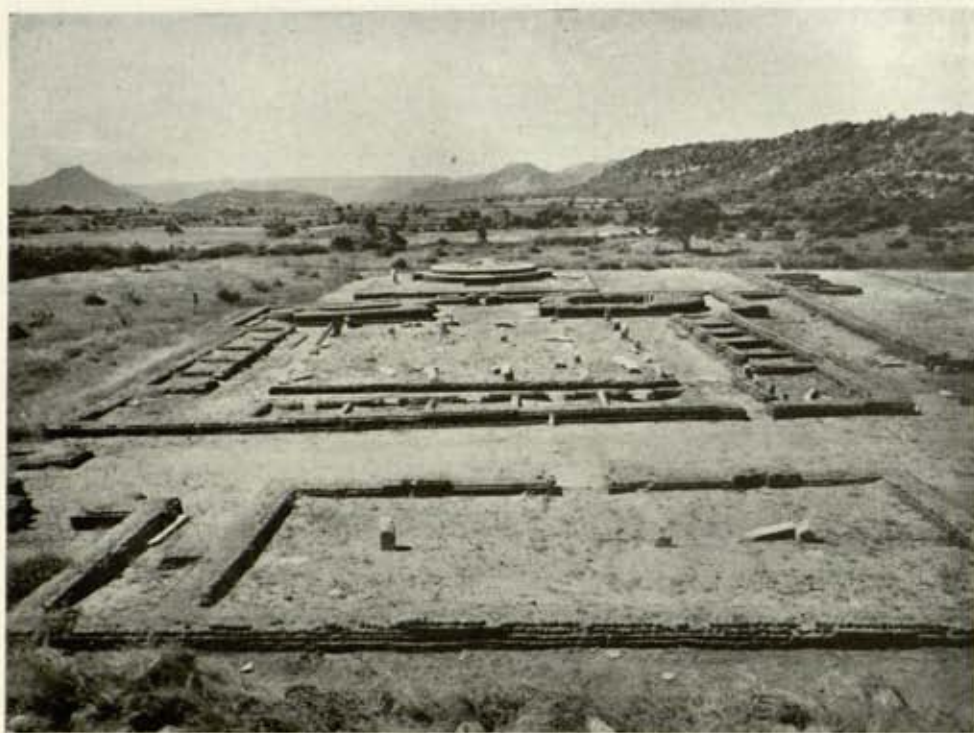[2] A Rea, *South Indian Buddhist Antiquities* (Madras, 1894), p. 3. See, however, below, p. 81, n. 2.

Site 105, square shrine with mutilated Buddha-image. See p. 73

Site 51, chaitya-griha. See p. 75

PLATE XLIII

ANCIENT INDIA, NO. 16

Site 3, monastery with stūpa in background.   See p. 73

Site 4, monastery with stūpa on platform in background.   See p. 73

Site 16, stūpa with ten-spoked base. See p. 77
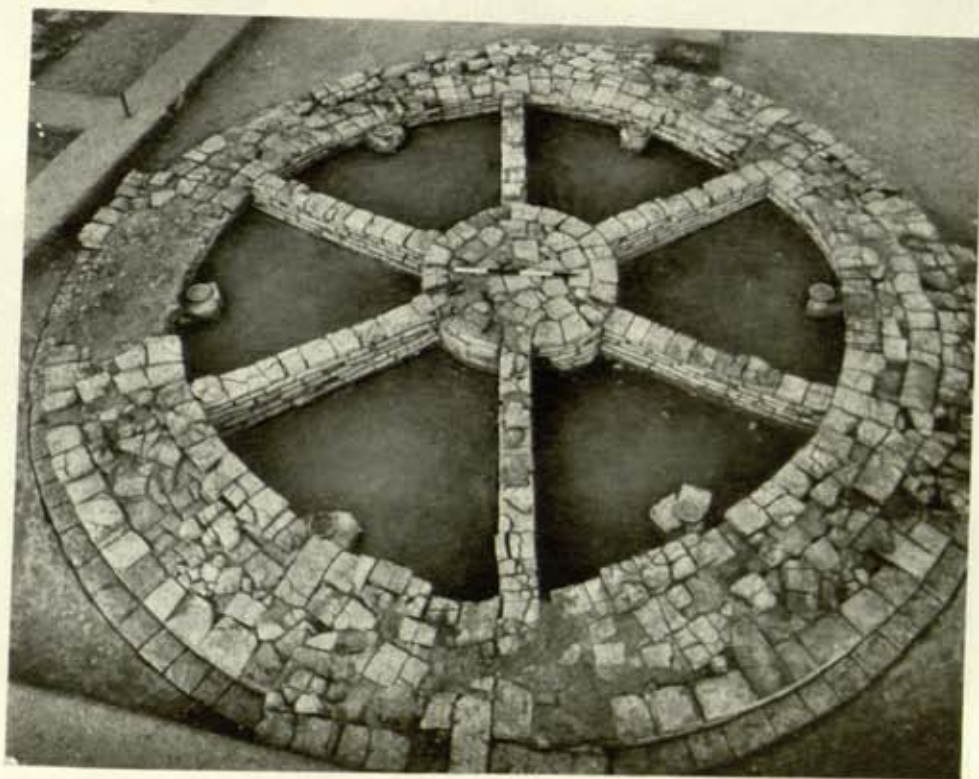
Site 30, stūpa with six-spoked base. See p. 80

PLATE XLV   ANCIENT INDIA, NO. 16

Site 20, rubble stūpa with svastika-base. See p. 78

Site 59, stūpa with svastika-base. See p. 77
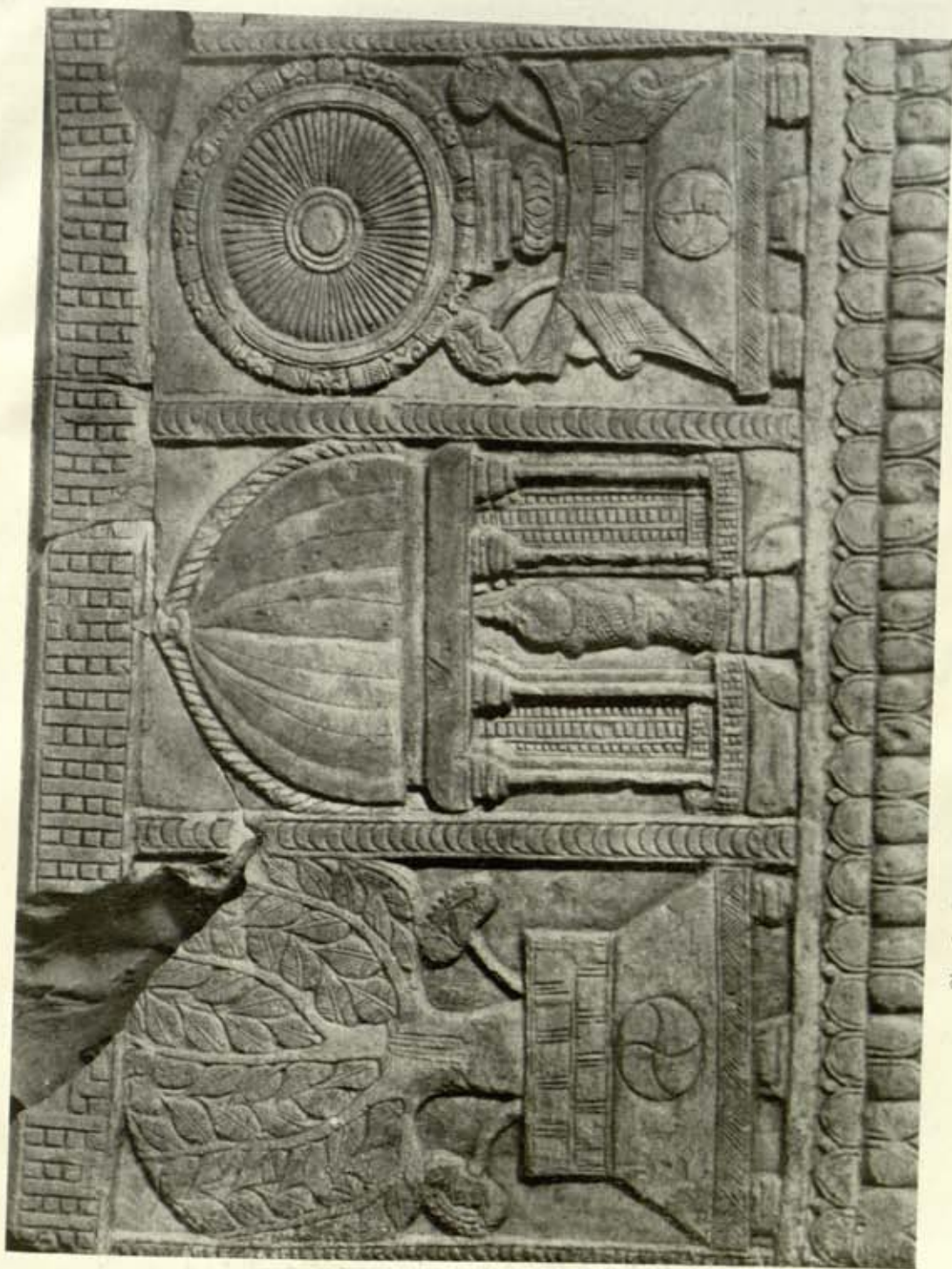
Site 1, drum-slab representing Buddha symbolically. See pp. 78 and 84

PLATE XLVII   ANCIENT INDIA, NO. 16

Site 6, drum-slab representing decorated stūpa. See pp. 81 and 84

the basis of diameter the *stūpas* may be divided into six groups, viz., (i) below 20 ft., (ii) between 20 and 30 ft., (iii) between 30 and 40 ft., (iv) between 40 and 50 ft., (v) between 50 and 60 ft. and (vi) 91 ft. The first group is represented by seven examples—Sites 15, 15 A, 27, 38, 59, 86 and 108,—of which two definitely belonged to the four-spoked variety; of the rest, one had *svastika*-inset and the other four were without spokes. The maximum concentration is in group (ii), represented by thirteen examples—Sites 4, 14, 22, 23, 26, 30, 32, 32 A, 32 B, 43, 52, 54 and 105. Only two *stūpas*—Sites 4 and 26—in this group had eight spokes; all the four four-spoked and two six-spoked ones, besides, five spokeless rubble *stūpas*, belong to this diameter-group. Eight *stūpas*—Sites 2, 3, 7, 8, 20, 24, 85 and 106, six of them being eight-spoked, may be included in group (iii). Only three *stūpas*—Sites 5, 9 and 16—fall in group (iv). There are two examples,—Sites 6 and 21—in group (v) and the last group is represented by a solitary *stūpa*—Site 1.

The position is summarized in the sub-joined table.

TABLE SHOWING THE RELATION OF DIAMETERS OF *STŪPAS* WITH THE NUMBER OF SPOKES

Number of spokes	Site	Range of diameter
Four	14	20 to 30 ft.
	27	,, ,,
	52	,, ,,
	54	,, ,,
	105	,, ,,
	108	,, ,,
Six	30	20 to 30 ft.
	32 A	,, ,,
Eight	4	20 to 30 ft.
	26	
	2	30 to 40 ft.
	3	,, ,,
	7	,, ,,
	24	,, ,,
	85	,, ,,
	106	,, ,,
	6	50 to 60 ft.
	21	,, ,,
Ten	16	40 to 50 ft.
Eight in the inner circle and twelve in the outer ..	5	40 to 50 ft.
Eight in the inner circle and sixteen in the outer ..	9	40 to 50 ft.
Eight in the innermost circle and sixteen each in the central and outermost ..	1	91 ft.

It will be seen from the Table that four-spoked *stūpas* conform to three different diameters, viz., 27 ft. (Site 14), 22 ft. (Sites 52, 54 and 105) and 15 ft. (Sites 27 and 108). Hence, it may safely be concluded that no four-spoked *stupa* had a diameter of more than 28 ft. The width of the *āyaka*-platform in these *stūpas* varied between 1 ft. 6 in. to 1 ft. 11 in. This narrow width could hardly provide space for *āyako*-pillars. One peculiar feature of the four-spoked *stūpas* is the general absence of the Buddha-shrine in the establishments containing them. Such a shrine no doubt occurred at Site 105 but it was definitely an afterthought. The *stūpas* of Sites 27 (pl. XXXIX B) and 108 (fig. 5) did not show any *āyaka*-platform; furthermore, no hub could be seen in the centre, whereas in all other cases it was either square or circular in form.

Two six-spoked *stūpas*, Sites 30 and 32 A, situated close to each other, had diameters of between 27 and 28 ft. The *āyakas* of Site 30 (pl. XLIV B) may be termed as incipient platforms. The other one, Site 32 A, had *āyaka*-platforms, measuring 6 ft. ×1 ft. 2 in. It is unlikely that any pillar could have been installed on a platform with such a narrow width. Site 30 was without any *mandapa* or *chaitya-griha*. On the other hand, Site 32 A revealed a Buddha-*chaitya* oblong in shape, probably a later addition. As the monastery of Site 30 had only three cells, a guess may be hazarded that it was the monastery of dissenters who separated themselves from the original monastery of Site 32 A. If that is correct, the six-spoked *stūpas* would stand as a symbol of common inheritance. At the same time, it is worth noting that none of the four- or six-spoked *stūpas* had a diameter of more than 28 ft.

Eight-spoked *stūpas* were ten in number, excluding Sites 5 and 9, both having double concentric circles. The *stūpa* of Site 5 had two concentric rings of eight and twelve spokes, respectively with diameters of 24 ft. and 49 ft., besides a hub, 4 ft. 4 in. square. The core of the *stūpa* was divided into twenty chambers, eight in the inner and twelve in the outer rings. The *stūpa* in Site 9 as well had two concentric circles with 24 ft. and 41 ft. 9 in. diameters and with eight and sixteen spokes respectively. But the builders of the *stūpas* of Sites 6 and 21, each with a diameter of more than 50 ft., did not feel the necessity of having more than one circle, which may imply that the outer rings of the *stūpas* of Sites 5 and 9 were afterthoughts.

It is apparent from the above that the number of spokes in a *stūpa* was largely subservient to its dimensions. *Stūpas* having more than 28 ft. diameter had invariably eight spokes. Conversely, those of less than 28 ft. in diameter generally had either four or six spokes. The numbers of spokes had thus a constructional utility. At the same time, as stated above (p. 78) the possibility of the numbers being symbolic representations of particular episodes of Buddha's life or of aspects of his teachings may not altogether be ruled out. This possibility is apparent in the ten-spoked *stūpa* of Site 16, measuring 47 ft. 3 in. in diameter, with a solid circular hub of as large as 12 ft. 6 in. diameter: a *stūpa* of such dimensions could easily have been constructed on eight spokes, such as the larger *stūpas* of Sites 6 and 21. Similarly, from the structural point of view, four spokes would have sufficed in those *stūpas* which have six.

A few miscellaneous facts about the *stūpas* may be noted here. There is not a single six-, eight- or ten-spoked *stūpa* without *āyaka*-platforms, though the platforms might not always have carried *āyaka*-pillars. Only those without spokes and a few four-spoked ones did not have any platforms. *Stūpas* carved on the drum-slabs often display railings around them. In all probability, the *Stūpa* of Site 1 had a circular railing. It is equally true that many *stūpas* were definitely without railings. Some *stūpas* were built on high square platforms; at least half-a-dozen stood on hillocks.[1] Needless to say, some *stūpas* were highly

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[1] It is curious, however, that no establishment of the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas was erected on a hill in spite of the name of the sect being associated with *śaila* ('hill').

decorated, the decoration extending over the full length of the hemisphere (pl. XLVII); the drum-portion was generally encased with sculptured slabs.

Both the *stūpas* of the Theravādin sects, Sites 38 and 43, were small in size. Possibly they did not put so much emphasis on the main *stūpa* as the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas, Bahuśrutīyas and Mahīsāsakas. Despite the fact that Sites 6, 20 and 21 were without any *maṇḍapa* and apsidal temple, the *stūpas* here were of large dimensions. This prominence given to the *stūpa* may be, as already hinted (above, p. 78), the characteristics of the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas or the Chaityakas.

Stūpas with wheel-shaped plans appear to belong to an evolved stage of *stūpa*-architecture. The *stūpa* of Amaravati had a solid core. The gigantic *stūpa* at Bhattiprolu, of the second century B.C., also approximates the solid variety, though its central portion is wheel-shaped. Here one sees the beginnings of this style in Āndhra-deśa. Let it be mentioned here that this type is not confined only to this region. A phase of the Dharmarājikā *stūpa* at Taxila was irregularly wheel-shaped on plan;[1] also wheel-shaped was the *stūpa* of Shāh-jī-kī-Dherī at Peshawar.[2] A *stūpa* at Barā-Pahārī near Patna had a similar 'wheel-like arrangement of the walls.'[3] Nor is this feature universal in Āndhra-deśa, for it is absent at such Buddhist sites as Salihundam, Ramatirtham and Sankaram, though it possibly exists at Kotturu and Kodavali, in Districts Vishakhapatnam and East Godavari respectively, the latter datable to the Sātavāhana period.

The constructional advantage of wheel-shaped *stūpas* has already been discussed by Rea, who observes: ' In small structures where sinking of the foundations, and consequent fracture of the masonry is not liable to occur, an earthen packing may be perfectly safe; but in large domes, any sinking of the wall may cause cracks which admit moisture, when the expansion and contraction of the material is certain to cause the destruction of the dome. In some cases, this has been obviated by brick, concrete, or stone floors stretching across the interior at intervals in the height. Examples occur at Jaggayyapēta, Garika-pāḍu and Peddagañjām. Others have cross-walls in the interior with a mud-packing. Examples are at Ghaṇṭaśālā and Peddagañjām. Solid domes are found at Guḍivāḍā and Bhaṭṭiprōḷu; and these are undoubtedly the earliest of these *stūpas*.' This experiment might have been irrespective of any doctrine, but difference of opinion was liable to creep in amongst different sects about its adoption: a few might have preferred the earlier mode of solid construction, while others did not hesitate to accept it. Thus, the Mahīsāsakas, Bahuśrutīyas and Apara-mahāvina-seliyas followed the new technique, which could be given a doctrinal colour by them. Some Theravādins like the Mahā-vihāra-vāsins refused to make any concession, though some groups within the Theravādins might have kept pace with the times by adopting this new architectural feature.

Even the *āyaka*-platforms are not peculiar to Āndhra-deśa. The recent excavation at Vaiśālī[4] has brought to light remains of a *stūpa* with such platforms. Though a projection, somewhat similar to the *āyaka*, is found on only one side of the *stūpa* hewn out of a rock at Sankaram,[5] it is not noticed at sites like Ramatirtham[6] and Salihundam. The

[1] Marshall, *op. cit.* (1951), p. 236 and pl. 45.
[2] *An. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind., 1908-09* (1912), p. 48. The Nirvāṇa *stūpa* of Kasia (Kuśīnagara) may have had a *svastika* in the core, though the available report may refer to a four-spoked wheel, *ibid., 1910-11* (1914), p. 64.
[3] *An. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind., Eastern Circle, for 1915-16* (Calcutta, 1916), p. 32. Information from Shri A. Ghosh.
[4] *Indian Archaeology 1957-58—A Review* (1958), p. 10 and pl. VIII B.
[5] *An. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind., 1908-09*, pls. LXII and LXIII.
[6] *Ibid., 1910-11*, pl. XL.

fact that *stūpas* with wheel-base and with *āyaka*-platforms are discovered at or near Vaiśālī may vaguely be ascribed to the spread of the Mahāsaṅghikas, who had their original stronghold at Vaiśālī and from whose doctrines the Śailas (including the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas) derived theirs.[1]

6. THE MONASTERIES

At the initial stages the residential part of an establishment at Nagarjunakonda formed an independent unit, though situated close to the corresponding place of worship. For example, at Site 1 the *mahāvihāra* was quite distinct from the *mahāchaitya* and the adjoining *chaitya-gṛiha*. Sites 6, 20, 21, 27, 28, 30, etc. (pl. XLVIII) had the main *stūpa* at some distance from the *vihāra*, the whole complex being surrounded by a compound-wall. Even at Sites 5, 7-8, 9, 15, 24, 26, 43, 54, 105 and 106 the residential portion was separated from the *stūpa* or *chaitya-gṛiha*. Such an arrangement may suggest the division of each establishment into two main components, viz., portions accessible and not accessible to the commoners. *Chaitya-gṛihas* were, at the beginning, situated in the area accessible to the public, but subsequently they became part and parcel of the residential area, the typical examples being Sites 2, 3, 4, 23, 85, and 105. Obviously, the worship of the *stūpa* or the image of Buddha inside *chaitya-gṛiha* was given more importance in the tenets of certain sects than the *stūpa* proper, which, with its gradually-diminishing size, possibly became only the object of veneration primarily of the lay-worshipper. When the Bahu-śrutīyas started worship of Buddha, the shrines were constructed within the residential part. Site 38, belonging to the Mahāvihāra-vāsins, was an exception in all respects, because whereas at other sites the *stūpa* stood in an area accessible to all, at this site even the *stūpa*, not to speak of *chaitya-gṛiha*, was surrounded by a four-winged *vihāra*. Such variations in the general lay-out are difficult to explain but would obviously reflect a particular type of attitude. It is well-known that the Theravādins at first were not in favour of giving the laity a prominent place in their scheme.

The Bahuśrutīya monastery, Site 5, was one of the largest at Nagarjunakonda, so far as the number of cells is concerned. It had at least twentyeight cells, besides an oblong Buddha-shrine and three special chambers, two of which were circular externally and square internally and the third oblong. These chambers might have been meant for the *āchārya*, *vinaya-dhara*, etc., who might have preferred to have separate cells of their own. But this was, again, a new development, since the *mahāvihāra* of Site 1 did not have any such chamber. Even the Mahīśāsaka and Mahāvihāra-vāsin monasteries, Sites 7-8 and 38, have more or less uniform cells. Site 26, almost identical on plan with the Bahuśrutīya, also possessed two such special chambers. The number of such rooms at Site 32 A was three and all of them had stone benches, thereby suggesting their use as residential cells. It is, therefore, fairly certain that leading monks of certain sects maintaind some aloofness from the rest.

The number of monastic cells varied from two to thirty or even more.[2] Site 86 had two cells and was the smallest unit. Sites 27 and 30 had each three cells and Site 108

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[1] Nalinaksha Dutt, *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hīnayāna* (London, 1930), pp. 21-22.

[2] According to the *Mahāvagga*, IX, 4, 1, Sacred Books of the East, XVII (1882), p. 268, there are five kinds of *saṅghas*, variously consisting of four, five, ten, twenty and more than twenty persons. According to the *Chullavagga*, VII, 5, 1-2, *ibid.*, XX (1885), pp. 265-67, nine dissenters are sufficient to create a schism (*saṅgha-bheda*) and thereafter they may perform their rituals independently; four dissenters can cause a dissension (*saṅgha-rāji*).

THE BUDDHIST MONUMENTS AT NAGARJUNAKONDA

five. As already stated (above, p. 80), Sites 27 and 108 each had four-spoked *stūpas* without *āyaka*-platforms and Site 30 a six-spoked one. These small units may be the monasteries of the schismatics. Site 108 would exhibit certain features very similar to Site 38, whereas Sites 27 and 30 might have belonged to the dissident groups of Sites 32 B and 32 A respectively, though this is only a conjecture. There were monasteries with arrangement for the accommodation variously of nine, ten, twelve, thirteen, fifteen, sixteen, nineteen, twenty, twentyone and twentytwo persons. The *mahāvihāra* of Site 1 had twentyfive cells and, as stated above (p. 82), the Bahuśrutīya monastery, Site 5, had twentyeight normal cells. The largest unit was Site 32 A, to provide room for 30 persons. Approximately, the size of the monastic population of Nagarjunakonda, which naturally might have included temporary inhabitants, was about four hundred and fifty. The size of the individual cells varied from 7 to 9 ft. The developed units, e.g. Sites 3 and 4, had refectories, store-rooms, etc., attached to the monasteries.

A *maṇḍapa* or the congregational hall was absent at Sites 2, 20, 21, 27, 30, 38 and 105; what this absence actually means is not easy to surmise. Though the western half of Site 32 A is generally said to have been a nunnery, the evidence is not definite; in fact, it is not possible to identify any nunnery, even though the testimony of inscriptions may suggest the presence of nuns at Nagarjunakonda.

7. CONCLUSION

The history of the monastic development at Nagarjunakonda thus discloses a complicated picture. The first wave of Buddhism that reached the valley was, broadly speaking, a mixed Hīnayāna Buddhism, to use Dutt's terminology.[1] The earliest *mahāchaitya* was that of the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas, built in the sixth regnal year of Vīrapurushadatta. There are evidences to prove that the worship of the Buddha-image was not originally in their tenets; nor did they favour the construction of the apsidal temple. Possibly they did not even approve the idea of representing Buddha in human form. Like the Chaityakas or Lokottara-vādins they gave special prominence to the worship of the *chaitya* (*stūpa*): one could acquire merit by the erection, decoration and circumambulation of the *chaitya* and by offerings of flowers, garlands, etc., to it. The path for acquiring piety was not complicated, and one may detect in such doctrines the urge of the sects to bring into their folds as many adherents as possible. These Lokottaravādin trends, in some form or the other, were pursued by the majority of the sects of Nagarjunakonda. Some of the Theravādin sects were, however, an exception, as their *stūpas* did not attain any great distinction; nor did they construct *stūpas* with *āyaka*-platforms. There is a possibility that a few of these sects were even against the idea of the wheel-shaped *stūpa*. But the Mahīśāsaka Theravādins, who were the only sect which preferred the double *stūpa* to the *chaitya-gṛiha*, gave more importance to the *stūpa* than even the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas and the Bahuśrutīyas By far the largest number of Buddhists adhered to the original Apara-mahāvina-seliya type of establishments similar to Site 1 (early phase), comprising the *stūpa* proper and residential cells. The *Mahāvastu*, the *vinaya* of the Lokottaravādins, portrays somewhat a similar picture of an age when the Lokottara conception of Buddha had not yet taken hold on the people's mind: Buddha had already been deified but was not represented in anthropomorphic form.[2] In all likelihood, the Lokottaravādins, at least in the beginning of their career, had a predisposition for symbolic representation of Buddha. The Apara-mahāvina-seliyas introduced almost an identical tradition at Nagarjunakonda.

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[1] Dutt, *op. cit.* (1930), p. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 25, and (1945), pp. 293-98.

A study of sculptures from the different sites should normally throw light on this aspect of development, but the chronological sequence of the earlier collection in the local Museum has not been studied. It appears to the present writer that some sites, such as Sites 1 and 6, had practically no piece where Buddha was shown in human form. There is only one drum-slab with Buddha-figure in the Museum which is recorded to have been picked up from Site 6, but the style of its execution is different from that of other examples from the same site. In this slab the Bodhi-tree is depicted behind the scene of Buddha's First Sermon in the Deer Park, but this motif appears to be the characteristic of the sculptures from the *stūpas* of Sites 2 and 3. Sculptures from Site 1 (pl. XLVI) exhibit only symbolic representations of Buddha. Thus, the authors of Sites 1 and 6 (pl. XLVII) did not possibly favour the carving of Buddha in anthropomorphic form. Let it be emphasized here that the symbolic representation does not necessarily imply a high antiquity, for it might have been inherent in the faith of a particular sect.

That some section of the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas acceded to the idea of image-worship during the eighth regnal year of Ehuvala Chāmtamūla is evident from a mutilated Buddha-image from a *chaitya-gṛiha* of Site 9, belonging to that year. The Mahāvihāra-vāsins, and the Bahuśrutīyas also followed suit (above, p. 69). Sects inhabiting Sites 2, 3, 4 and 106, which yielded the best specimens of sculptures, were also believers in image-worship. They often represent Buddha in human form, and each site had a *chaitya-gṛiha* meant for the icon. The Mahīśāsakas, like the original Apara-mahāvina-seliyas, did not yield to the popular demand of image-worship. A stage, however, came in the development of Buddhist establishments at Nagarjunakonda when both the *chaitya-gṛihas* (Site 85) were adorned with images, neither of them being reserved for a *stūpa*.

During this period of idolization, *stūpas* were possibly relegated to the background and at some sites the apsidal shrine became the most imposing edifice. In other words, the temple-concept gained greater currency. During the latter part of the rule of Vīrapurushadatta both the Theravādins as well as the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas allowed *chaitya-gṛihas* to come up. It was possibly Bodhiśrī, the lay-worshipper from Gova-grāma, who introduced the *chaitya-gṛiha* at Nagarjunakonda (above, p. 69). At that time this conception might not have had any far-reaching effect on the prevailing doctrines of the different sects. At the next stage, controversy as to the relative importance of the *chaitya-gṛiha* and the main *stūpa* might have arisen. Subsequently, *chaitya-gṛihas* were raised within the precincts of the residential enclosure. Thus, the emphasis was transferred from the *stūpa* to the shrine.

The image-worship and the concomitant apsidal and, later on, square or oblong shrines were steps towards further popularization of Buddhism. The creed and ideology of different sects except the Mahīśāsakas and the original Apara-mahāvina-seliyas, who stood firm against the tide, had to undergo metamorphosis in order to make room for these changes, which were the general trend of the time. Such changes reflected themselves in the monastic set-up and plastic art as well.
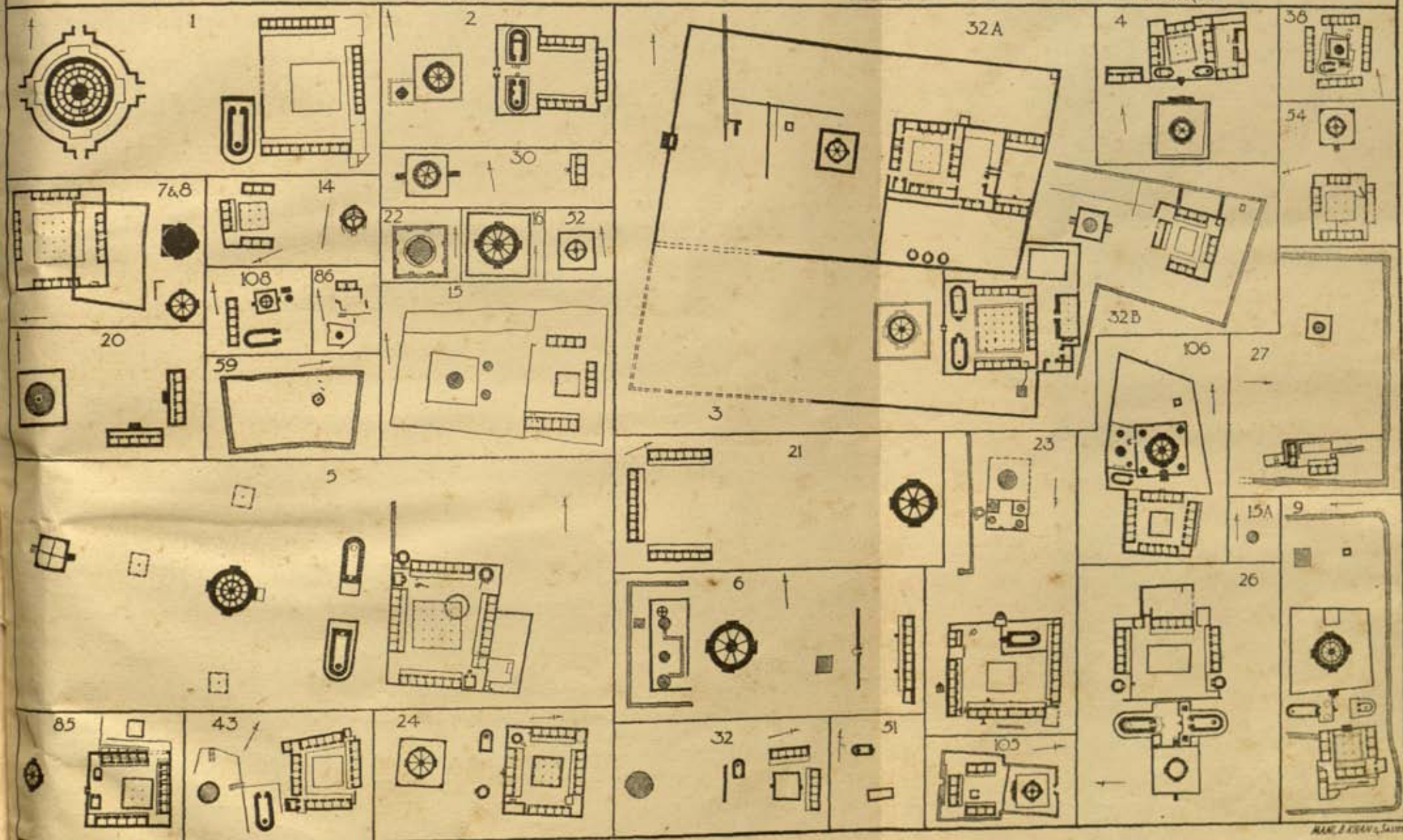
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Postscript: The author desires me to record here the recent (1962) discovery at Nagarjunakonda of an inscription of Vijaya Śātakarṇī, a late Sātavāhana ruler. It runs to four lines and reads as follows: *namo bhagavato aga-pogalisa raño Gotami-putasa siri-Vijaya-Satakaṇnisa sava 8 gi pa 4 diva Vesākha-puṇima.* The inscription seems to be incomplete but is certainly Buddhist in affiliation, as it begins with salutation to *aga-pogali*, an epithet of Buddha (cf. *Ep. Ind.*, XX, p. 26); the date, the full-moon of Vaiśākha, is also significant. There is therefore no doubt that Buddhism had penetrated into the Nagarjunakonda valley even in pre-Ikshvāku days.—Ed.

STŪPAS & MONASTERIES AT NAGARJUNAKONDA