SOME ASPECTS OF THE BUDDHIST MONUMENTS AT NAGARJUNAKONDA

By H. Sarkar

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1 INTRODUCTION

The large-scale excavations at Nagarjunakonda (fig. 1), carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India during the years 1954-60, have added considerably to the number of Buddhist establishments exposed there earlier by Longhurst and Ramachandran. 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), 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 śāntatā, etc., culminated in Mahāyānism, which, according to Dutt, had its seed in the doctrines of different sects of Andhra-deśa like the Lokottaravādīn, Apara-mahāvīna-seliya, Bahuśrutiya, etc.

1The excavations were done under Dr. R. Subrahmanya assisted by others including the present author.
4The Arabic numerals on pl. XLVIII represent the numbers given to respective sites in the excavations.
5Nalinaksha Dutt, Early Monastic Buddhism, II (Calcutta, 1945), p. 41.
It would appear from the history of structural activities, coupled with epigraphs, that different sects made this picturesque valley their happy abode. Inscriptions affirm the existence of at least four sects, viz. Mahāvihāra-vāsin, Mahāśāsaka, Bahaśrutiyā 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-Dharṇīgamī-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. Notwithstanding the ideological instability of the time and the import of ideas from outside,

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

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 pre-disposition 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 Virapurusadatta, who was the son and successor of Chāṃtāmula, 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 inscriptions1 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 Chāṃtāmula, the son of Virapurusadatta.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 Virapurusadatta. 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-kāmnma, mentioned in the inscriptions, may mean 'new construction', not 'reconstruction', Ep. Ind., XX, p. 30. The Chula-Dhammagiri inscription states: imani nava-kāmman tīhī navakat[ī]-mikehi kāritan. 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.

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

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

To face p. 68
Site 38, Mahāvihāra-vāsin monastery. See pp. 69 and 71

Site 38, inscribed Buddha-pāda. See p. 69
Site 5, Bahuśrutiya monastery. See pp. 69, 73 and 78

Site 5, Bahuśrutiya monastery, oblong shrine and circular chamber. See p. 69
Site 54, stūpa and monastery. See p. 71

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

To face pl. XL
Site 24, monastery with chaitya-griha in front. See p. 73

Site 26, double chaitya-griha enshrining stūpa. See p. 73
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-mahāvīna-seliyas of Nagarjunakonda became divided into two sub-sects.

The monastery situated on the Chula-Dhammagiri, Site 43 (pl. XLVIII), may be attributed to the Theravādin monks of Ceylon. Here, in the fourteenth regnal year of Virapurushadatta a female lay-worshipper from Govagāma, Bodhisīri by name, built a chaitya-griha with a stūpa—the first of its kind in the ancient city of Vijayapuri. 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-Dhammagiri-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-Dhammagiri-vihāra to the Mahāvihāra-vāsins; some other Ceylonese sect was possibly responsible for its construction.

The monastery of the Mahāśāsakas, Site 7-8 (pl. XLVIII), was built by the sister of Ehuvala Chāṁtamula and queen of Vanavāsi in the eleventh regnal year of Ehuvala. Vanavāsi was one of the main centres of the Mahāśāsaka sect,² which ideologically was nearer the Theravādins than the Mahāsānghikas. This monastery had two large stūpas but no chaitya-griha. It is, therefore, evident that this sect was averse to chaitya-grīhas, 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 Chāṁtamula 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 Mahāsānghikas and, as scholars believe, attempted a syncretism of Hinayāna and Mahāyāna thoughts. In this monastery there were two chaitya-grīhas, 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.

¹Ep. 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-mahāvīna-seliyas. Moreover, Site 38, where the foot-print slab was discovered, was more than a mile away from Site 1.

²Dutt, op. cit. p. 114.
NAGARJUNAKONDA 1954-60
SITE 20
STūPA

BRICK ENCLOSURE
BRICK AVAKA-PLATFORM
RUBBLE PACKING

SCALE OF 0 10 20 1 2 4 FEET 0 10 20 METRES

Fig. 3
THE BUDDHIST MONUMENTS AT NAGARJUNAKONDA

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-mahāvīna-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 Mahiśasakas resisted these innovations down to their last days in the valley. The Bahusrutiyas 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-mahāvīna-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' (pl. XXXVI B), 20 (fig. 3), 21, 30, 32 A, 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 Mahiśasakas, 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.

1 This site had an earlier phase, represented by extant remains of another stūpa without any āyaka-platform.
NAGAR JUNAKONDA 1954-60
SITE 27
STūPA

Scale of Feet
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Scale of Metres
0 1 2

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), 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 Bahuśrutiyas, 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 Bahuśrutiyas. 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 Chārītamūla and the last known Ikshvāku ruler; it was engraved on a pillar erected in front of the chaitya-griha in memory of his mother Vāṁmabhaṭa 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. XLIII 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 twenty-fourth year of Ehuvala Chārītamūla.\(^4\) The fact that these Buddha-shrines were constructed at a later date may indicate the mounting pressure 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 Bahuśrutiyas. So far as epigraphical evidence goes, the earliest monastery having a chaitya-griha with Buddha-image is dated in the eighth year of Ehuvala Chārītamūla 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-chaita 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.


\(^4\) Ibid. 1956-57 (1957), pp. 36-37.
NAGARJUNAKONDA 1954-60
MONASTERY
SITE 108

CELL
GOLD COIN

CHAITYA

VOTIVE STUPA

CELL

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 Chāintamula reached its zenith when the monastery of Site 85 was renovated. Two shrine-chambers, one apsidal and the other oblong, were constructed, both for instaling 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-griha 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-griha enshrining a stūpa, near which was brought to light the extent remains of a monastery, ruthlessly damaged by ploughing. There was no attached mandapa or central stūpa. Thus, these remains may reveal a line of evolution in a different direction. In Site 23 (above, p. 73) the chaitya-griha 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 mandapa in front of the chaitya-grihas. The present writer is inclined to regard these structures as bases of miniature stūpas. 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-grihas may also be observed in the Dhamarajikā complex at Taxila. Some of the stūpas in the Bagh caves in central India also have octagonal bases.

The earliest apsidal temple of Nagarjunakonda was built by Bodhiśrī in the fourteenth regnal year of Vīrāpurushadatta (above, p. 69). Bodhiśrī, it is learnt from an inscription, was also responsible for the construction of another chaitya-griha 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-griha 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 Ikṣvāku 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.

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 Eruvala Chântamâla’s rule, because Site 9 was renovated in his eighth regnal year. By his twenty-fourth 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 Mahâvihâra-vâsins 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 Bodhisãri, a lay-worshipper, was responsible for many a building, Kumâranandin, a śr̄ṣṭhīn, donated a sculptured frieze in the monastery of Site 106 and the renovation of the second Apara-mahâvîna-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-avahana) and (ii) nirvâna-sampati (nirvâna-dom) for himself or herself'. 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

¹Dutt, 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 constructive 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-deśa¹ 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.

¹The Chaityakas were so called on account of their devotion to the chaitya, Dutt, op. cit., p. 51.
²A 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
Site 3, monastery with stūpa in background. See p. 73

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

To face pl. XLIV
Site 16, stūpa with ten-spoked base. See p. 77

Site 30, stūpa with six-spoked base. See p. 80
Site 20, rubble stūpa with svastika-base. See p. 78

Site 59, stūpa with svastika-base. See p. 77
To face pl. XLV
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**

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

¹It is curious, however, that no establishment of the Apara-mahāvīna-seliyas was erected on a hill in spite of the name of the sect being associated with sālī (‘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-mahāvīna-seliyas, Bauhsrutiyas and Mahiśāsakas. Despite the fact that Sites 6, 20 and 21 were without any mandapa 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-mahāvīna-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 Andhra-deśa. Let it be mentioned here that this type is not confined only to this region. A phase of the Dharmarājika stūpa at Taxila was irregularly wheel-shaped on plan; also wheel-shaped was the stūpa of Shāh-ji-ki-Dheri at Peshawar. A stūpa at Barā-Pahāri near Patna had a similar 'wheel-like arrangement of the walls.' Nor is this feature universal in Andhra-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 Satavahan 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-pādu and Peddagaṉjam. Others have cross-walls in the interior with a mud-packing. Examples are at Ghaṇṭaśālā and Peddagaṉjam. Solid domes are found at Guḍāvāda and Bhaṭṭipröl; 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 Mahiśāsakas, Bauhsrutiyas and Apara-mahāvīna-seliyas followed the new technique, which could be given a doctrinal colour by them. Some Theravādins like the Mahāvihāra-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 Andhra-deśa. The recent excavation at Vaiśāli 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, it is not noticed at sites like Ramatirtham and Salihundam. The

2 An. Rep. Arch. Surv. Ind., 1908-09 (1912), p. 48. The Nirvāṇa stūpa of Kasia (Kuśinagara) 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.
6 Ibid., 1910-11, pl. XL.
fact that stūpas with wheel-base and with āyaka-platforms are discovered at or near Vaiśāli may vaguely be ascribed to the spread of the Mahāsaṅghikas, who had their original stronghold at Vaiśāli and from whose doctrines the Sāilas (including the Aparamahāvīna-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-grīha. 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-grīha. Such an arrangement may suggest the division of each establishment into two main components, viz., portions accessible and not accessible to the commoners. Chaitya-grīhas 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-grīha 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 Bahusūrutiya started worship of Buddha, the shrines were constructed within the residential part. Site 38, belonging to the Mahāvihāra-vāsinīs, 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-grīha, 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 Bahusūrutiya monastery, Site 5, was one of the largest at Nagarjunakonda, so far as the number of cells is concerned. It had at least twenty-eight 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-dhāra, 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 Mahāśāsaka and Mahāvihāra-vāsinī monasteries, Sites 7-8 and 38, have more or less uniform cells. Site 26, almost identical on plan with the Bahusūrutiya, 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 maintained 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

²According 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-rājī).
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 I had twentyfive cells and, as stated above (p. 82), the Bahušrutīya 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 mandapa 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 Hinayāna Buddhism, to use Dutt’s terminology. 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 Mahīsāsaka Theravādins, who were the only sect which preferred the double stūpa to the chaityagriha, gave more importance to the stūpa than even the Apara-mahāvina-seliyas and the Bahušrutīyas. 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. 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.

\* Dutt, op. cit. (1930), p. 4.
\* 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-mahāvīna-seliyas acceded to the idea of image-worship during the eighth regnal year of Ehuvala Chāntamūla is evident from a mutilated Buddha-image from a chaitya-griha of Site 9, belonging to that year. The Mahāvihāra-vāsins, and the Bahūsrutiyaśas 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-griha meant for the icon. The Mahāśāsakas, like the original Apara-mahāvīna-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-grihas (Site 38) 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 Virapurushadatta both the Theravādins as well as the Apara-mahāvīna-seliyas allowed chaitya-grihas to come up. It was possibly Bodhiśri, the lay-worshipper from Gova-grāma, who introduced the chaitya-griha 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-griha and the main stūpa might have arisen. Subsequently, chaitya-grihas 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 Mahāśāsakas and the original Apara-mahāvīna-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.

[Received on the 15th May 1960.—Ed.]

Postscript: The author desires me to record here the recent (1962) discovery at Nagarjunakonda of an inscription of Vijaya Satakarnī, a late Sātavāhana ruler. It runs to four lines and reads as follows: nama bhagavato aga-pogalisa raño Gotami-putasas siri-Vijaya-Satakanṣa sava 8 gipa 4 diva Vesākha-pujina. 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.