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

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

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

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

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

References:
1 Vinaya of the Dhammaguptaka, Mahiśasaka, Sarvāstivāda
4 Madhyamagama, Tchong a han king, T 26, chap. 6, ed. Vol. 1: 460c-461a.

The Purchase of Jetavana in an Amaravati-Relief
Monika Zin

4 Vinaya of the Dhammaguptaka (Sieu fen lu, T 1428, ed. Vol. 22: 939b); of the Mahāśākas (Mi cha solitude yi hui wo fen lu, T 1421, chap. 25, ed. Vol. 22: 167 a-b); of the Sarvāstivādas (Che song lou, T 1435, chap. 34, ed. Vol. 23: 244a).
6 Nidanakatha, ed.: 92; transl.: 125.
the relief that Foucher refers to. It may be that the episode simply disappeared from the depictions at some point when square coins were no longer in circulation. The coin-covered park is not found in the late adaptation of the story in *Bodhisattvāvadānakalpalatā* (11th century) nor in the objects of art based on it (Tucci 1949, vol. 2, p. 466; vol. 3, pl. 107).

The ‘spreading out of millions’ was depicted, however, in reliefs in southern India: one pillar in the Museum of Amaravati (No. 62)⁷ (Fig. 2), shows the workers putting down the coins. The inscriptions clearly indicate that the setting is Śrāvastī. In addition there are two unpublished reliefs from Kanganahalli, in which it seems as if this iconographic element not only ‘tells’ the story, but also serves as the means of setting the scene.

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

Our fragment contains a small portion of the large central roundel. Inside the medallion it is possible to see trays laden with gifts and also the legs of kneeling women. It is not hard to imagine a scene of Buddha worship in the centre of the medallion. The medallion is bordered with a lotus-petal pattern and a narrow band of tiny lotus rosettes in flat relief. This series of little flowers is extremely rare as a decorative motif in Amaravati and it is this which allowed us ultimately to conclude what was destroyed. The flower motif led to the discovery of the upper part of the same pillar which survives as relief No. 147 in the Government Museum in Chennai⁹ (Fig. 3).

Not only does it feature the rare floral pattern on the edge of the medallion, but inside the medallion at its centre can be seen the Buddha’s throne, and this matches the fragment from the Museum in Amaravati exactly.

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

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

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

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

### Acknowledgements

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### Bibliographic References


THE PURCHASE OF JETAVANA IN AN AMARAVATI-RELIEF


Mūlasarvāstivādavinaya, Chinese: T = Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, ed. Takakusu, J. / Watanabe, K., Tokyo 1924-34.


TT = Taishō Shinshū Daizōkyō, ed. Takakusu, J./Watanabe, K./Ono, B. (1924ff) Tokyo


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

Fig. 2 - Archaeological Site Museum in Amaravati, No. 62 (Photo M. Zin, kind permission of the Archaeological Survey of India - F. No. 18-4/2006-Museum).
Fig. 3 - Computer-generated image combining photographs of relief No. 147 in the Chennai Government Museum and relief No. 405 in the Archaeological Site Museum in Amaravati, © Dominik Oczkowski (Photo M. Zin, kind permission of the Archaeological Survey of India - F. No. 18-4/2006-Museum).