CHAPTER 5

Economy of Mathurā
Chapter V: Economy of Mathura

ECOMOMTY AT MATHURĀ

Analysis of Occupational Groups as Revealed by Inscriptions, Art and Literature (200 BC – AD 200)

Archaeological excavations combined with literary sources suggest an early growth of economy at regular pace at Mathurā. The economic importance of Mathurā was not derived from its agricultural hinterland or from its natural resources or from its pastoral part, but due to its increasing number of occupational groups and expanding commercial network. It may be mentioned on the basis of Buddhist literature\(^1\) that trade was perceived as less burdensome and more profitable than agriculture and therefore trade was supposed to be easier and more useful. The *Milindapañho* lists as many as seventy five occupations.\(^2\) There was population of professional groups in the society, the most frequent references being to commercial and artisanal groups. According to non-official lay professions followed by people of Mathurā, they can be divided into several categories:

I. Manufacturers

II. Traders and petty sellers

III. Entertainers

Mathurā as a city enjoyed special position in the post-Mauryan period due to its various artisanal activities. There is a long list of products which were manufactured at Mathurā.

**Pottery:** Pottery seems to have been a thriving craft at Mathurā since the beginning of its settlement in 6\(^{th}\) c. B.C. Painted Grey Ware ceramic industry in Mathurā is represented by bowls and dishes with paintings in Black and Red

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Ware and a few sherds of Black and Red ware of inferior quality.¹ Some of the Painted Grey Ware and Black and Red vessels seem to have been made of the potters wheel but others were made by moulding the base and building up the wall on a turntable.

The principal ceramic industry of the Mauryan period consisted of Northern Black Polished Ware, its associated pottery and plain Grey Ware.² The Śaka-Kuśāṇa period witnessed the last phase of Northern Black Polished Ware and Grey Ware and a prolific use of utilitarian Red Ware Ceramic industry.³ At post-Northern Black polished Ware phase, apart from various types of Red Ware found in excavations, i.e. jars, vessels, bowls, pitchers, large vessels, goblets, cups etc. are found represented in sculptures and have been noted by Vogel.⁴ A characteristic feature of a Mathurā pot is its thin walls particularly of sprinklers with bottlenecks. Their walls are thinner even than those of NBP and this thinness shows more skill and better technology.

The supply of terracotta in the early period in general was ensured through the potters (Kumbhakaras) well organised in guilds (śrenis), and their thriving business is suggested by references to their apprentice or hireling⁵ and by detailed description of their shops (apānas) with five rooms.⁶ The word Kumbhakara finds mention in the Āṅgavijjā.⁷ The prestigious position of potters can be inferred from a second century AD inscription of Nasik⁸ which records that money was deposited with the potter's guild. We have references

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³ Ibid, 1975-76, p. 54.
⁷ Anga, p. 160.
to potters woman Halahala, who at Srāvasti, had employed many other potters to work in her industrial unit.¹ The above mentioned texts and inscriptions do not have direct references to Mathurā pottery manufacturers but they do indicate the importance of pottery manufacturing industry and this may have played a vital role in the urban economy of Mathurā too. In Mauryan and post-Mauryan period i.e. Śaka-Kuśāṇa period, we have a variety of potteries indicating that potters’ profession was lucrative and it earned good money.

**Textile Manufacturing:**

Textile manufacturing was another important profession in early historical Mathurā. According to the *Milindapañño*, five processes of cotton manufacture were undertaken by Gautami, the aunt of Buddha². The *Arthaśāstra³* cited Mathurā (i.e. belonging to or produced in Mathurā) as the name of the seven best varieties of cotton garment and thereby indicated the existence of a prosperous textile industry in the area concerned. Arrian says that the cotton cloth worn by the Indians had a brighter white colour than any cotton found elsewhere.⁴

Patañjali mentions numerous types of garments used in Mathurā,⁵ and *pata* (woven cloth) called Mathurā.⁶ We have reference to Data, the wife of Kārpāsika (cotton dealer) Vridhumitaka, donating the image of Tirthaṅkara Rṣabha in the year 60 (138 AD), in the reign of *Mahārājādhirājā Devaputra Huviśka*.⁷ All these references indicate that Mathurā was an important centre of cloth manufacturing with a considerable population of weavers. We have

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¹ *Bhagavati Sutra*, V, 2369.
² *Milindapañño*, p. 240.
³ *Arthaśāstra*, II, II,115 ;Textile products of Mathurā are mentioned here along with those of Aparanta, Kalinga, Kāsi, Vanga, Vatsa & Mahīsa.
⁵ Ibid, V, 3, 55.
reference of women weavers in *Divyavadāna*, though it is not specific to Mathurā. An inscription of the year 20 of Kuśāṇa period from Kankali Tila at Mathurā mentions a *rayāgini* Vasu, the daughter-in-law of Jambhaka & the wife of Jayabhatta donating an image of Vasuya at the request of Graha...i., the female pupil of Balatrata, out of Kotiya *gaṇa*, Brahmadasi *kula* & Ucenagari *sākhā*. This suggests that the dyers could also earn so much to donate for the religious cause.

**Metal Craft:**

Mining and metallurgy thrived under the Kuśāṇas. This included the ordinary metals of regular use like Iron, copper, bronze, tin, lead and also precious metals like gold. Silver seems to have been a rare metal. Contemporary specimens of metal ware intended for everyday use and of ornaments have been recovered from various sites of Mathurā. Articles in gold, silver, iron implements, copper bronze articles, silver and copper coins have been found in excavations.

We have reference to house wife of Sovaṇikara (goldsmith), Dharmaka setting up of image of Bodhisattva in her own Chaityakuti for the acceptance of *Dharmaguptaka* teachers in the yr.17. Again we have reference to a daughter of Suvaṇнакarika Deva setting up an image of Vardhamana for adoration of the Arhat in the year 93. A Mathurā inscription refers to gift for worship of Suvaṇнакara *Vihaṇa* for the acceptance of *Mohapadaśaka* teachers by Ayala, son of Indrasama. In another inscription from Kankali Tila, Sovaṇika (goldsmith) Nandighosa, son of...Nandika is referred as setting up an

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1 *Divyavadāna*, p.56
2 H.Lüders, "List of Brahmi Inscriptions", no. 32
3 See the next section in this chapter.
5 *Epigraphia Indica*, II, no.22, p.205.
Āyāgapata.¹ We have one more inscription on a piece of red sandstone referring to gift of sovan (goldsmith) Uttara, the son of Gaupati.² In Mathurā goldsmiths functioned both as artisans and traders. The profession of Suvarṇakara might have been lucrative enough to make religious donations for the Buddhist or Jaina cause, and set up their own Vihāra.

Many types of jewellery are represented in sculptures. We notice earrings, bracelets, double bracelets, necklaces, breast jewels, bangles, anklets, tongue bangles, armlets, wristlets, crowns, armlets, strings, ear pendants, metallic chains.³ Gold leaf ornaments have been discovered from Sonkh.⁴ People of Mathurā must have been using gold jewellery. Inscriptions of Mathurā refer to workers and traders in iron. We have inscription of the yr.23 referring to dedication of Jaina image by Mitra, the first wife of Haggudeva, daughter-in-law of lohavaṇiya (trader in iron goods) Vadhara⁵. We have two more inscriptions referring to lohakākāraka, (workers in iron metal), one mentioning the dedication of image in yr. 52 by lohakākāraka Sura, the member of the gottika (committee), son of Sramanaka, at the request of vacaka Arya Deva⁶. The second inscription mentions the dedication of image of Saraswati in yr.54 by the lohakākāraka Gopa, the son of Simha, at the request of vacaka Arya Deva.⁷

Lances, swords, sheaths, shields, daggers⁸ are known from Mathurā sculptures of the period 2nd c. BC to AD 2nd century. These sculptures suggest that weapon making must have been thriving industry. Iron tools,⁹ iron spear

¹ H.Lüders, List of Brahmi Inscriptions, no.95.
² H.Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, no.168, p.198.
³ V.S. Agrawala, Journal of UP Historical Society, XXII-XXIII.
⁵ H.Lüders, "List of Mathurā Inscriptions", no.29.
⁶ Ibid, no.53.
⁷ Ibid, no.54.
⁹ JAR, 1975-76, pp. 53-55.
heads\(^1\) found in excavations indicate that agricultural tools were also manufactured in industry. Not only iron tools or weapons were made but also copper tools were found in excavations, these include copper cells, harpoons,\(^2\) antimony of copper rods etc. Copper being a costly item may not have been used as an agricultural tool on a regular basis.\(^3\)

There is much in the *Arthaśāstra*\(^4\) on the technique of mining and metallurgy. The characteristics of ores and the method of smelting and purification of ores are discussed. The metals mentioned include gold, silver, copper, lead, tin, iron and *vaikṛntaka* (unidentified metal). The manufacturer of copper, lead, tin, bronze, brass, iron and other wares is discussed in detail, the qualities of varieties of gold and silver, the method of purifying them and the processes of their manufacture are specially noticed.\(^5\) In the description of cities, the literary works of the Kuśāṇa period invariably mention goldsmiths, silversmiths and workers in other metals as elements of population.\(^6\)

**Mathurā as a mint town:**

In an excavation carried out at Katra Kesavadeva, in the heart of the city of Mathurā, several terracotta coin moulds, meant to cast punch-marked coins were found.\(^7\)

Tree symbol is seen on the series of monarchical coins of Mathurā in later period. The same symbol appeared on early punch marked coins. This symbol

\(^{1}\) Ibid, 1976-77, pp. 54-55.


\(^{3}\) *IAR*, 1975-76, p. 55.

\(^{4}\) *Arthaśāstra*, II, 12.

\(^{5}\) Ibid, II, 13 & 14.

\(^{6}\) *Milindapañho*, p. 331, *Ramayana* II, 83, p. 2 f, refers to goldsmiths among the population of Ayodhya.

may be called ‘Mathurā symbol’ and this appears to signify Mathurā as a mint-town.

They are now deposited in the Mathurā Museum. Unfortunately, we have no records of excavation to know the stratum in which these moulds were found nor do we know the associated finds which could help us to determine the period. Nevertheless, on the evidence of similar moulds, found at other sites it may well be said that Mathurā moulds belong at least to the 1st - 2nd c. AD, if not to a later date. The information available on coins suggests that the period between 2nd c. BC to 2nd c. AD was an age of most plentiful coinage. Apart from the circulation of punch marked coins this is a period of inscribed coins. Patañjali’s reference to the currency of Karsāpana (coins) in Mathurā indicates of brisk trading activities in the city. Communication with the north west and west, through trade indicated by the discovery of Mitra coins of Mathurā during excavation at several places including Rairh (near Jaipur), Purana Qila and Rupar. The fact that coins of each of the rulers called Gomitra, Suryamitra, Brahmamitra and Vishnumitra are noted to have been recovered from Sonkh from the levels assigned to his period and not from any other level should suggest circulation of coins of each of these kings mainly during his reign. This would indicate regular minting of coins for its use as a medium of exchange by the people of Mathurā. The Mita and the Datta Kings were succeeded by the Śaka kings, bearing the titles kṣatrapas and mahākṣatrapas. It seems that the Kuśāṇas issued the largest number of coins. Mathurā museum contains copper coins of Soter Magus, Vima Kadphises, Huviṣka and Indo-

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1 Mathurā Museum, A/No. 1560.
3 Astadhyāyī, I, 1, 16.
4 See Local Rulers of Mathurā in chapter III.
5 Ibid.
6 J. Ph. Vogel, Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathurā, 205
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
Scythian or Kuṣāṇa type; a copper coin of late Indo-Sassanian type is also available. Copper coins were meant for the use of ordinary people, but for big transactions gold coins were issued by Kuṣāṇas on a large scale. Coins have been recovered from Sonkh. Kuṣāṇa had at some stage of their rule a mint at Mathurā is suggested by an important copper coin of a Kuṣāṇa king, inscribed with a Brahmi legend, found at Sonkh. But we have no means to establish the fact that the Kuṣāṇa gold coins were also minted at Mathurā.

Carpenters:
The long settlement profile of Mathurā suggests the use of wood in house building and furniture making. The dry deciduous vegetation of this region produced Faras, Pilu, Cheonkar, Reonj, Babul, Kharjal Kadam, Karil, Hino and Bans. Some of them are similar to the trees of the Gangetic Doab. Varieties of wood must have been easily available to the people of Mathurā and carpentry must have been a lucrative profession. Pāṇini mentions two kinds of carpenters: the grāmatkṣa who worked on daily wages at the house of his employers in the village and the Kautakṣa who worked at his own residence. We have inscriptive evidence of the Kuṣāṇa period stating that in the year 8 of mahārājā rājātirājā Kaniska, Vadhaki (carpenter) Niya donated a tank and a garden for the holy Naga Bhumo for the welfare and happiness of all sentient beings. A Vadhaki making such a sustained donation indicates that in the Kuṣāṇa period in the city of Mathurā carpentry was a lucrative profession and was not localised.

Sculptors:

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1 Ibid
2 Ibid
4 See Chapter I
5 Pāṇini, Astadhyāyī, V, 4.95.
6 H.Lüders. Mathurā Inscriptions, no.102, pp.148-149.
The study of Mathurā sculptures as a whole confirms the fundamentally Indian character of this school which followed the traditions set by the sculptors of Bharhut and Sanchi. Though it received its inspirations from the North-west, its activity resulted in thoroughly Indianising the creations of Gandhara. Every image of Buddha or Bodhisattva which Mathurā has produced bears testimony to this process.\(^1\) Probably the sculptors of Mathurā sent images to the sacred sites of the Gangetic plains. Hundreds of Jaina images have been found in explorations and excavations. Representations of demi gods like Yaksas and Nāgas were also artists of the region. Altogether thousands of sculptures found in Mathurā, especially those in red sand stone indicate that the services of a highly professional group of sculptors were available in Mathurā. The gift of Buddhist, Jaina and Brahmanical images is indicative of the fact that it gave employment to a large number of masons and sculptors.

It seems that there must have been a group (something like a factory) where some people must have been engaged in stone-cutting, the others in giving shape to the sculptures. Most of the sculptures found are datable to the Śaka– Kuṣāṇa period. These sculptors were engaged not only in the making of images but also in constructional activities as is evident from the existence of stūpas, vihāras, temples, bas-reliefs, Āyāgapatās etc. It seems that these sculptors must have been paid handsomely. Probably these sculptors were rich enough to make donations of railing pillars and statues. We have names incised on the sculptured panel of Kusana period such as Jivanada on a railing pillar\(^2\), Rama on a railing pillar,\(^3\) Jotisa on railing pillars,\(^4\) Dasa on a railing pillar,\(^5\) Samghadeva on a railing pillar,\(^6\) Lavaṇa on a detached head of a statue,\(^1\) Mastana on a Jaina image (the head, the arms and the lower portion of the legs

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\(^4\) Ibid, no. 146, p. 184, no. 148, p. 185.
\(^5\) Ibid, no. 147, p. 185.
\(^6\) Ibid, no. 145, p. 184.
having disappeared,\(^2\) and Nayasa on a detached head.\(^3\) It also indicates that some degree of literacy prevailed among the sculptors who could incise their names on the railing pillars and statues.

The expression "Śrigatapara Buddhadasaviya" occurs at the base of a fragmentary image at Jamalpur (found in a well).\(^4\) The fragment consists of the lower portion of corpulent person seated in front, with another a corpulent male figure of smaller size squatting between its feet.

An inscription is found on a railing pillar obtained from in the Gopalpur area in Mathurā city. The pillar is carved on one face with a male figure standing in front under balcony. He holds a bunch of flowers in his right hand which is raised to the shoulder. The reverse is decorated with two complete and one and a half lotus-rosette.\(^5\) Above the later is an inscription: ‘Rama’.\(^6\) From the position of all these inscriptions it appears that they do not give the name of either the person represented on the obverse or the donor but the sculptors who did the carvings.

Vyavahāri:

Eight vyavahāris (merchant) are mentioned in a Mathurā inscriptions. They are Sihavarajata, Buddharakoka, Jivasiri (Jivasri), Buddhadasa, Samgharabsita (Sangharaksita), Dharmanarma (Dharmaarna), Bhuddadiva and Sukhila, as commissioners of the community. They are mentioned in the contexts of putting up a cooking stone of the Kakatikas (Kakatika seems to be the name of a local Buddhist school) which is permanently fixed in their Vihāra in the park at Srikunda, which was not to be transferred to another dwelling place.\(^7\)

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\(^1\) Ibid, no. 127, pp. 166-67.
\(^2\) Ibid, no. 100, p. 145.
\(^3\) Ibid, no. 101, p.145
\(^4\) Ibid, no. 66, p.102.
\(^7\) Ibid, no. 65, pp. 101-102.
Seṭṭis or Śresthi:

The influential class among the trading communities was the Seṭṭis. Jātaka literature states that the Seṭṭis were engaged in trade and together with Sārthavāhas traveled to far off lands to sell their wares. J.C. Jain holds that a Seṭṭi was the leader of eighteen craftsman according to Jaina literature. Inscriptional evidence does not indicate that Seṭṭi was the leader of merchants or the head of an industrial corporation. They or their spouses were rich enough to make donations for religious purposes as have been mentioned in the inscriptions. In the reign of Kaniska, the Seṭṭis were profitably engaged in trade and their wives made religious donations at three instances. One Kumaramittra, the first wife of the Śresthin Veni, dedicated a Sarvabhadrika (four-fold) image of Bhagavata in the year 5 (i.e. 83 AD). At another instance, in Kusaṇa period, Khuda (Ksudra), the consort of Seṭṭi Sena dedicated the image of Vardhamana. Mathurā Jaina capital inscription of the time of mahārājā devaputra Huviṣka dated in the yr.38 records setting up of the statue of Nandivisala by the Śresthin (banker) arya Rudrasa, the son of the Śresthin (banker) Sivadasa for the worship of the Arhat. All these inscriptions are found at Kankali Tila.

Seṭṭis were also known to transact the business of usury and act as bankers. The Khadiravigara Jātaka refers to Seṭṭi Anathapindika who used to finance the merchants of their bonds. The same source refers to Seṭṭi as money lenders lending money to people engaged in trade (Vanīja). Though these references are not directly related to Mathurā, they do indicate the nature of work with which Seṭṭis were associated.

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1 Jātaka, 1.12 (145), 1.8 (366), 9.93 (338).
2 J.C. Jain, Life in Ancient India as Depicted by the Jaina Canons, p. 110.
5 H.Lüders, “List of the Brahmi Inscriptions”, no.41.
6 Jātaka, 1.40.
7 Ibid, IV, 439, 482.
Sārthavāha:

Sārthavāha seems to have been a section of trading community who moved from one place to another selling and purchasing merchandise. They generally moved in groups and their leaders were known as Sārthavāhas. It may be pointed out that gahapatis, vaṇiks, and brahmanas, ksatriyas and sudras who were engaged in trade and commerce were also taking part along with setṭis, gahapatis, vaṇiks and vaisyas as Sārthavāhas and they moved under a leader called Jetthaka. In Sanskrit, Sārthavāha means a leader of the caravan.

In the context of Mathurā, we have reference of the Sārthavāhinī donating money for the adoration of Arhat at the request of the Vacaka Ārya Matridina (Ārya Matridatta) in the year 22 (i.e. 100 AD) in the Kusāṇa period.

The word Sārthavāhinī has been used in the above inscriptions. She may just have been the wife of a Sārthavāha. It may not be improbable to think that there would have been women caravan leader, as we have reference to potters women Hala in Śrāvāsi as employer of many potters in her industrial unit. Since women in Mathurā had been generously donating for religious purposes, it seemed that they might have practiced independent vocations and Sārthavāhinī must have been one of the prominent woman professional in Kusāṇa times.

In another inscriptions a woman relation Dhanyabhava of the Sārthavāha Bhavasiri in the reign of mahārājā devaputra. Kaniska is mentioned as making religious donations in the year 4 i.e. 82 A.D. In Kusāṇa period trading
activities were thriving and Sārthavāhas and Sārthavāhinis must have played prominent role in the development processes through their economic activities. But whether the profession of Sārthavāha was hereditary or not, it cannot be ascertained.¹

Kālavāla (Wine distiller, or liquor seller):

The Jātakas refer to traders in spirit (Varuni) who used to prepare fiery spirits (tikhina-varuni).² Kautilya also refers to the process of manufacture of liquors by the traders of liquors.³ Patañjali mentions the producer and seller of wine.⁴ Milindapañño refers to Sisakara who used to produce and sell these commodities.⁵ At least twice in the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period Kālavāla or Kālavāiyas are mentioned in Mathurā inscriptions⁶ as donors for religious purposes indicating this as a profitable industry. In both the inscriptions husbands and wives are mentioned together donating an Ayagapaṭa indicating the involvement of women in the economic activities in the Śaka-Kuṣāṇa period.

Prāvārika (Tailor):

At least five times in the Kuṣāṇa period and once in the Gupta period Prāvāri or Prāvārika (tailor) is mentioned. It seems tailoring was a thriving occupation in the Kuṣāṇa period and continued till c.400 AD. We have instances of tailors making donations in this period. A Prāvārika donated pedestal of a slab showing Nāgi and a female figure with a spear in his left hand and the right hand raised in abhayamudra in the early Kuṣāṇa period.⁷ Sanghila, the wife of a Prāvārika is referred to have set up an image for the

² Jātaka. 1.251.
³ Arthasaṅdra, 2.25.16, 2.25.13.
⁴ Mahābhāṣya, 5.2.112; Manu, 3.158; 9.3.180.
⁶ Epigraphia Indica, II. No. 8, p. 200. H. Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, No. 19, p. 49.
⁷ H. Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, No. 124, originally found at Girdharpur mound.
veneration of holy god in the year 14 of KaŅišKa.\textsuperscript{1} Another female is referred to have donated the image of Buddha in the \textit{Prāvārika vihāra} in the Kuśāna year 22.\textsuperscript{2} In the Kuśāna period tailoring was so thriving that the \textit{Prāvārikas} could establish their own vihāras. Another inscription at Katra in the reign of \textit{mahārājā} Vāsudeva in the year 98 (i.e. 176 AD) refers to a female donor as the daughter of a \textit{Prāvārika}.\textsuperscript{3} We have fragmentary inscription from Katra mound on a piece of stone where ‘\textit{syā Prāvāri...}’ has been inscribed.\textsuperscript{4} The inscription is incomplete. In the Gupta period we have reference to Aśvadeva, son of the \textit{Prāvārika} Bhavanandin in 400 AD (from Maholi-Usapur Road, 3 and 6 milers respectively from the South west of the city).\textsuperscript{5}

\textbf{Gandhikas}

Perfume was an important item for trade. At least 5 times \textit{gandhikas} are mentioned in the Mathurā inscriptions of Kuśāna times. At one instances the mother of a \textit{gandhika} who is also wife of \textit{Prāvārika} Buddhī dedicated the \textit{sarvato bhadrika} (fourfold) image of Arhat Vardhamana at the request of ganin Ārya Nandika out of varana gaņa, the …\textit{kula} in the year 32.\textsuperscript{6} In the year 35 another Jaina inscription from Kankali Tila records dedication of an image of Vardhamana by the \textit{gandhika} Kumarabhatti, son of Kumaramitra, the sisini of Ārya Baladatta.\textsuperscript{7} At another instance Jinadasi, daughter of Sena, daughter-in-law of Datta, the wife of a \textit{gandhika} donated a Jaina image in the reign of \textit{mahārājā} Vasudeva in the year 83.\textsuperscript{8} Further, it is mentioned in one inscription that Ārya Kṣema, daughter in law of a \textit{gandhika} installed the image of Arhat

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Ibid, No. 81, pp. 116-17. This inscription is now in Mathurā Museum No. 1316, originally found at Dalpat ki Khirki ka Mohalla in Mathurā .
\item Ibid, No. 74.
\item H. Lüders, “A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathurā ”, no. 76.
\item Ibid, no.7, p.34.
\item H. Lüders, \textit{Mathurā Inscriptions}, no. 133, pp. 169-70.
\item H.Lüders’, “A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathurā “, No. 68.
\end{enumerate}
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Mahāvira and made religious donations in the reign of Mahārājā Vāsudeva in the year 98 (i.e. 176 AD).\(^1\)

All these inscriptions have been found at Kankali Tila mound in Mathurā. Secondly, from the last two inscriptions it can be inferred that the first one was donated in the reign of Prince Vāsudeva. Third, the occupation of the gandhika or the dealer in perfume flourished in the Kuśāṇa age. Either the mother, wife or daughter in law could make such costly donations or else these female donors might themselves have been merchants. Since references to the donors' husbands in three instances are absent in sharp contrast to the specific mention of her father in laws or son's name, it is more probable that the donor herself was a female merchant.

**Prahaṇīka (Practitioner of Medicine):**

From the varied composition of the population in Mathurā and its probable large size, the profession of the practitioners of medicine may be assumed. Though we have only one inscription of the Kuśāṇa period where we have a gift of a pillar base by monk Suriya and Buddharaksita, the practitioners of medicine for bestowing of health of people.\(^2\) The royal physician Jivaka Kumaravaccha, son of a prostitute called Salavati, was one of the best lay disciples Buddha\(^3\). He made a fortune in Mathurā because of his skill as a physician.\(^4\) This practice must have continued in the Kuśāṇa period, though it is not very clear as to how lucrative this profession was.

**Petty Professions:**

\(^1\) H.Lüders, Ibid, No. 76.
\(^2\) H.Lüders *Mathurā Inscriptions*, no. 46, pp. 82-83.
\(^3\) *Mahavagga*, p. 380
There may have been lots of petty vocations followed by people in the complex socio-economic set up of Mathurā. Epigraphs which mostly recorded donations, understandably do not mention all, not even perhaps the majority of them. Again epigraphs are almost silent on unskilled labourers who must have been employed for running the industry and trade and for doing of all sorts of menial work in official establishments and households of well to do powerful persons. The Indian literary sources infer that they included hired labourers and slaves. Some of the jobs performed by them are illustrated by a number of panels of sculptures. On one occasion we have an inscription on the reverse of a pillar from Caubara mound referring to the gift of Kathika, ‘abhayāmtāropasthayākāsa’. Lüders compares this term with ‘abhyantāro ganaḥ;’ meaning ‘host of the residents of royal harem’ and the term ‘aupasthayikanirmundah’ meaning ‘the eunuch servants’ and derives the conclusion that the above mentioned inscription means the ‘servant of the royal harem’. The vocation of the donor seems to have determined the choice of figure represented on the obverse of the pillar. It is unique among the sculptures of Mathurā. The figure represents a young man standing under a mango tree in a blossom. Over the tree there is a rail or balcony. He wears a magnificent turban, large ear-rings, a necklace of beads and another elaborate necklace round his shoulders. Both wrists are adorned with bracelets and a sash is tied round his waist. His right hand is raised and two figures are placed in a coquettish way on the chin of head slightly bent. His left arm is hanging down. The figure represents probably one of the minor deities.

1 Devraj Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*.
3 Natyasasstra.24,17; cited in H'Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, p.56.
4 Ibid, 24, 51; cited in Ibid.
5 H. Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, p.56.
6 Ibid.
Barber:

An inscription found on a slab in Mathurā city reads: “rājanapitasya Jadasa”,\(^1\) i.e. of the king’s barber Jada. Lüders takes the word rājanapitasa as “the chief of barbers”. The same is suggested by V.S. Agrawala, who thinks that the slab was a signboard making some building which belonged to Jada, probably his house or shop.\(^2\)

Brick Industry:

Use of bricks in the buildings of Mathurā in early historical period indicates the presence of brick kilns and engagement of large number of people in it as labourers. On some bricks and brickbats from Ghosna (about 3½ miles to the east of the city of Mathurā’ now in M.M. No. 1678, 1679, 1680, 651). Some names such as are inscribed on it- Anandaputasa Nagadata (of the Nagadatta, the son of Ananda)\(^3\), Nagadatena Matudata (Nagadatta and his mother)\(^4\) and his mother and Vasugata\(^5\)

Probably they were the names of the makers of bricks.

Entertainers:

It appears that the professional entertainers as a group existed in Mathurā as elsewhere in pre- Kuśāṇa and Kuśāṇa periods. An epigraph datable palaeographically to Śaka-Pahlava age records a donation by wife of the nataka Phaguyasa.\(^6\) of a tablet of homage for the adoration of Arhat .The tablet bore the representation of a stūpa with rails and gate, as well as of two nude dancing women. Another inscription from the Kuśāṇa period of the year 26 speaks of the sons of Śailālaka (actors) of Mathurā, chief of whom was

\(^{1}\) Ibid, no.74, p.110.
\(^{2}\) Mathurā Inscriptions, no.74, p.110
\(^{3}\) Ibid no. 108, p.153
\(^{4}\) Ibid, no.109, p. 153
\(^{5}\) Ibid, no. 110, p.153
Nanadibala who are known as Candaka brothers\(^1\) setting up of stone slab at the shrine of the lord of Nagas Dadhikarna. Inscriptions refer to various types of entertainers --  Śailālakas (actors),\(^2\) nataka -- nataka (dancers)\(^3\), gaṇika (courtesan)\(^4\), etc. Divyavadāna\(^5\) describes Mathurā as a place of residence of a famous courtesan in the earlier period. In fact the reference in an inscription to a mother and a daughter as gaṇika (courtesan) should indicate that courtesanship was treated as a hereditary profession.\(^6\) In the above inscription the two gaṇikas have been referred to in context of homage- tablet or Ṭvāgapatā carved with a complete stūpa surrounded by a railing and approached by means of flight of steps and ornamental gateway, erection of a shrine of Arhat hall, a cistern and Śilapatta (stone stab). It seems their occupation was quite lucrative to donate such a huge amount for the adoration of Arhat Vardhamana. The mother was described as Ada gaṇika and the daughter as nada gaṇika. Perhaps the term ādā and nādā indicate their professional hierarchy.\(^7\) Because of the urban milieu, a sizeable class of entertainers including actors, dancers etc. appear as donors for religious purposes. We also notice six musical instruments namely Saṅka (Conch), a flute, tabor, harp bag pipe (unidentified) and drum which are represented in sculptures.\(^8\) This would suggest that a few artisans were engaged in the manufacture of these instruments.\(^9\) Acting and dancing as a profession were quite respected as an inscription states that in the year 54 (i.e. 132 AD) a statue of Sarasvati was installed by Smith Gova, son of Siha at the instance of vacaka (preacher) Arya Deva the sraddhachari of the ganin Arya Mahavastu, the pupil

\(^2\) H.Lüders, "A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathurā ", no. 85.
\(^3\) Ibid, No. 100.
\(^4\) Ibid, No. 102.
\(^5\) Divyavadāna, C. 353.
\(^6\) H.Lüders, "A List of Brahmi Inscriptions from Mathurā ", No. 102.
\(^7\) Archaeological Survey of India, New Imperial Series. XX, p. 61, pl. CIII; J. Ph. Vogel, Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum at Mathurā , p. 185.
\(^8\) J.Ph. Vogel, catalogue of the *Archaeological Museum at Mathurā*, p. 126.
of the preacher Hastahasti from the Kotiya gaṇa, the sthāniya kula, the vaira sākhā and the srīgriha sambhoga.¹

**Guild Organisations:**

Mathurā was a commercial centre during the 2nd c.BC – AD 300. This picture has emerged from the composition of the artisans and the merchant groups. It may be assumed that the records leave out a number of social groups from their preview, but the most dominant groups nevertheless seem to have been different urban centres. The merchants undoubtedly played a significant role in the economic life of a city. They were known by different terms such as Vāṇīk, Śresthī, Sārthavāha, Vyavahāri etc. Atleast twelve Merchants are mentioned as donors in the inscriptions from Mathurā. Social groups other than merchants and artisans were represented by gandhikas (perfume traders), suvāṃkaaras (goldsmiths), lohakākāraka (iron mongers), kumbhakāra (potters), maṇiṇkāra (jeweller), kālavāla (wine distillers ), śilakuta (stone cutters), rayāgini (dyer), prahāṇikas (docters), natakas (dancers), şailakas (actors) and so on.

Guild organisation which integrated the activities of the merchants and the artisans were secular as well as religious. The Girdharpur inscription states that a chief deposited a sum of money with a guild of samitakara (flour makers), of Mathurā and directed that once a month one hundred brahmanas were to be fed out of the monthly interest of the money². Vihāras named after different trading communities like Prāvārika, suvāṃkaara, kastikiya etc³ suggest the involvement of guilds in founding of these vihāras. Perhaps the guilds represented the other groups of merchants and manufacturers too, which existed in the urban centers of Mathurā such as gandhikas, lohakārikas, kumbhakāras etc. Though we do not find mention of these in inscriptions, but the archaeological findings and frequent mention of the professional classes

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¹ Epigraphia Indica, I, no. 21, p. 391-92.
² Epigraphia Indica, XXI, p.55.
³ see the List of vihāras in the chapter IV.
suggest that these were organised sectors and were profitable enough to make donations frequently. There may have been śrenīs (guild) behind all these industries.

An eloquent testimony of expanding scope of activities of śrenīs is seen in the new function of śrenīs as banks. Inscriptions from western, central, eastern Deccan and Mathurā record a number of cases where guild accepted permanent deposit of money (akṣayanivi) on condition that the principal would be kept intact and only the interest (vriddhibhojyam) would be utilised\textsuperscript{1}. The Nasik cave inscription states that Usavadata deposited a permanent endowment (akṣayanivi) of three thousand kārṣāpana and a cave in order to support twenty Buddhist monks in the kolika śrenī. The entire amount was invested with the śrenī of Govardhana in the following manner: 2000 kārṣāpanas in a weavers guild, the rate of interest being one percent per month, 1000 kārṣāpanas in another weavers guilds, the rate of interest being $\frac{3}{4}$ percent per month.\textsuperscript{2} This banking business was not confined to towns only, but was spread to the villages as well, as is clear from some of the post – Mauryan inscriptions. Another inscription at Nasik in the 9\textsuperscript{th} yr. of the king Isvarsena, who ruled in third c. AD, records the investment of similar endowment with the guilds of Govardhana in the following manner: in the hands of guilds of kularikas (potters), 1000 kārṣāpanas; of the guild of Odayantrikas (probably workers fabricating hydraulic engines, water clocks etc.); 2000 kārṣāpanas. The last portion of the inscription is mutilated. But it shows that the amount was invested with the guild of tailikas (oil millers) and the sum of 500 kārṣāpanas with another guild\textsuperscript{1}.

The above mentioned inscriptions indicate that guilds could also handle money. They received deposits of public money at regular interest and lent out money

\textsuperscript{1} Nasik Inscriptions of Nahapana, yrs,41, 42 and 45 , D.C.Sircar, Select Inscriptions, pp.165-166
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
to the people. For the organisational purpose the śreṇis or guilds were organised under the leadership of Jetthakas or pramukhas. The literary evidence shows that each individual organisation had its own headman Jetthaka such as Kammakara Jettaka, Malakara Jettaka, Vadāḥaki Jettaka as well as other inferior crafts and of caravan guards etc. Though these references are not specific to Mathurā but they do indicate that guild activities that the guilds provided the vital capital to expand craft activities to various cities including Mathurā and that they played a vital role in contemporary trade network.

**LINKAGES OF MATHURĀ : FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ECONOMY**

As an urban centre of importance, Mathurā was obviously connected with many other centres. Mathurā’s linkage can be analysed by referring to:

1. Textual evidence on how Mathurā is mentioned as a point in early trade routes.
2. Textual and epigraphical references to how people actually moved from and moved to Mathurā.
3. Sources of raw materials and places of manufacture of any archaeological object/objects that may have been brought from outside.
4. Places where art objects produced in Mathurā have been found: such as Sarnath, Śrāvasti, Taksāśila, etc.

The early historical period (especially 200 BC-AD 400) is marked by far reaching changes in both the economic and social fabric of the sub-continent.

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1 H.Lüders', "List of Brahmi Inscription from Mathurā", no.1137.
2 Ibid, no.346.
3 Jātaka, III,405.
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Under the Mauryan period the epicentre lay in the middle Ganga valley, but in the post-Mauryan period, the focus shifted to the north-west. In the north-west, the beginning of the Christian era saw the consolidation of the Kusāna empire with Mathurā as a major centre.

In the analysis of early historical trade routes, connecting Mathurā with various regions, we have attempted in addition to archaeological data, to use some of the inscriptive and literary sources. Mathurā’s trade route developed in response to the demands of commerce and conquest as well as ethnic migrations and cultural interactions. Inter-regional trade routes and linkages are more due to the rise of powers in North western India. In addition, the developing institutional structures of the urban economy characterized by local professionals, industrial and mercantile guilds and financial and organisational instruments of long distance trade such as Śresthin and Sārthavāha as well as the expansion of international commerce imparted special significance to long distance trade. These factors contributed to Mathurā’s transformation from a regional metropolis into a sub-continental pivot of trade and communication.

Although, it occasionally used to denote the region in the north-western part of the sub-continent, the term Uttarapatha has been understood primarily in the literature on the subject to describe, the major grand route in the northern part of the sub-continent, originating in the western region beyond India and sweeping across the Indus and Gangetic plains to the port of Tamralipti on the eastern coast. The route was christened as such by Pāṇini in 500 B.C. whose Aṣṭadhyāyī noted the various kingdoms along the Uttarapatha.

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1 N.J. Lahiri, The Archaeology of Indian Trade Routes, p. 367.
2 See the above section.
3 V, 1.77. cited in V.S. Agrawala, Indian as known to Pāṇini, Lucknow, 1953, p. 244.
Pliny\(^1\) traced a highway from Caspian to the mouth of the Ganges via *inter alia* Alexandria of the Arii (in Herat), Prophthasia of the Drangae (in the Seistan area), the city of Arachosii (Alexandria in Kandahar), Hortospana (Kabul), Paucolatis (Puskalavati), Taksasila (Taxila), a place on the river Iomania (Yamuna i.e. Mathurā), a place on the confluence of the Iomania (Mathurā) and Ganges (Prayaga), and Palibothra (Pātaliputra). The evidence of Ptolemy,\(^2\) based partly on the itineraries of merchants may refer to routes on both sides of the Indus and to a highway from the north-west to central India. On the latter was Modoura (Mathurā). The *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*\(^3\) alludes to transit of articles of commerce from China and through Bactria, north India (apparently passing through Mathurā), Ozene (Ujjayinī), to Barygaza, a port in Western India.

The classical accounts indicate that Mathurā was an important nodal point which was connected to the north-west, west and east. The *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* describe the sections of the route. The *Mahābhārata*\(^4\) for instance noted Bahudhanyaka (Ludhiana), Sairshaka (Sirsa) and Rohitaka (Rohtak) between Pathankot and Rohtak. The *Ayodhyā Kānda*\(^1\) of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, also outlined the route along which Vasistha sent the messenger from Ayodhyā to Kekaya. The messenger crossed the Ganga at Hastināpura and going across the Pancāla country and passing through the Bahilka region, is said to have reached Girivraja. Nowhere in the epics we find the expression *Uttarapatha* occurring on denoting the northern grand trunk route which joins Mathurā within diverse sections of the sub-continent. But from the above data it is clear that Mathurā was situated at the nodal point from where it was connected to central Asia through the north-west route (*Uttarapatha*) which

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came alive only after 6th c. BC) and also with the western coast through Ujjayini route and it must have been connected to eastern coast through the Pataliputra route.

The Vinaya informs us that Jivaka, the great physician and a contemporary of Buddha proceeding from Taksaśila (Taxila) passed Bhadramkara (Sialkot), Udumbara (Pathankot) and Rohitaka (Rohak) to Mathurā. From Mathurā this route proceeded to Beranja, Soreyya, Sankisa, Kannakujja and finally reached Payagatittha (Prayaga tirtha). Here crossing the Ganga it reached Varanasi. Horses of fine breed were being imported from Uttarapatha to Mathurā, Varanasi and to other places.

Mathurā was not only connected to various places not only through land routes but also the river routes (Jalapatha). We have a story from Divyavadāna where Aśoka is said to have planned to meet the monk Upagupta (who was his contemporary) personally at the Urumunda hill where venerable Upagupta was residing along with other monks in the forest of Natabhataka. On hearing this Upagupta himself wished to meet the king at Pātaliputra. The king arranged for his coming by river route for which boats were deployed for journey from Mathurā to Pātaliputra. The same route may have been used for trade.

II. Movement of People

An inscription of year 776 of the time of Huviśka mentions the gift of the monk Jivaka, a native from Uddiyana, in the Huviśka Vihāra. Vakamihira has been mentioned three times in Mathurā inscriptions as Viśvāsika and similarly his son Horamuddaphara has also been mentioned three times in the same

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1 Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākānda, (Canto LXVIII).
2 Vinaya Texts, Part, III, p.2
3 Ibid.
4 Divyavadāna, p.219.
5 Ibid, 245.1'
6 H.Lüders’ Mathurā Inscriptions. no. 31, p. 68.
7 Ibid, no. 60. 61. 62, pp. 92-98.
inscription donating pious gift independently and along with his father for the protection of his sovereignty. Again in an inscription\(^1\) occurs the name Asyala (or Susyala) as Viśvasīka who is apparently a foreigner. In the Ganesa inscription\(^2\) Ulana has been mentioned as Mahādandanaśaka, which again is an Iranian name. Again in an inscription\(^3\) from Jamalpur mound mentions the name of Valana as Mahādandanaśaka, again an Iranian name. The inscription also mentions the word Talakiya (Talaki) which seems to designate some locality in Iran. An Inscription on the dome of a miniature Buddhist Stūpa\(^4\) mentions the gift of Nusapriya, the daughter of Surana. Surana appears to be an Iranian name. The names of the places and persons of Iranian origin appearing on Mathurā inscriptions indicate the movement of people from Iran to Mathurā during the Kuśāṇa period.

An inscription from Mathurā of year 70\(^5\) mentions a person whose name ending ...traya, son of Mitravarman, a native from Nagarhāra appears as a donor. Nagarahāra is modern Jalalabad in the North-West (Afghanistan).\(^6\) An inscription\(^7\) found at Mathurā mentions that an image of Jina was donated by the mother of Bhattidama, the native of Abhisāra (Abhisarakara). Two inscriptions mention the gift of the monk Buddhāraksita, the Vadaksa.\(^8\) Badakshan in Afghanistan is mentioned in Mahāvastu\(^9\) as the name of the town where Trapura and Bhallika erected the Nail stūpa (nakhaśtūpam karapitam). According to Huen-tsang, the stūpas erected by the two merchants were in the neighbourhood of the capital of Balkh\(^10\). An inscription mentions a gift of the monk .....mitra, the Vojaśvāsika, for the worship of his deceased

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\(^1\) Ibid, no. 63, p. 99.
\(^2\) Ibid, no. 110, p. 158.
\(^3\) Ibid, no. 30, pp. 66-67.
\(^4\) Ibid, no. 69, p. 104.
\(^5\) H.Lüders’ Mathurā Inscriptions, No. 78, p. 113.
\(^6\) B.Chattopadhyaya, The Kuśāṇa State and Society, p. 47.
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) H. Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, no.39 & 40,p.75-77.
\(^9\) Mahavasu 3, p. 310, 14
\(^10\) T.Watters, On Yuan Chuang’s Travels in India, Vol. 1, 1904, p. 111
parents and for bestowing the health on his companion Dharmadeva. Vojyavaśīka probably refers to the native place of donor. The term abhayatitakālagata for the ‘deceased’ has been taken over from the language of the canonical texts (abhhatita-kalamkata). It occurs also in a Buddhist formulary for the announcing of gift to the Order from eastern Turkistan. Iranian names Nusapriya and Surana are mentioned as donors in the inscriptions at Jamalpur.

A fragmentary inscription, whose provenance is not known, on the stone which was part of a railing pillar from Mathurā mentions a donor whose grandfather’s incomplete name appears on the inscription as ...vamitra (probably Drhuvamitra) belonging to the Pancālas. This inscription is pre-Kusana in character and is composed in Sanskrit. The Pancālas’ (who are mentioned in line 8) relation with the donor is not clear in this inscription. Banerji wanted to restore the name of the great grandfather of the donor as Drhuvamitra, which may be right, but it is not very clear from the inscription that he had any connection with Drhuvamitra whose name is found on the Pancāla Coins.

The movement of people were not only from outside to Mathurā but it was from both the sides. People from Mathurā also must have visited to these places as in one of the Mathurā inscriptions Mathurāka as hailing from Mathurā is also mentioned. This may suggest movement outward of people of Mathurā.

III

Sources of Raw Materials and Places of Manufacture of Archaeological Objects that may have been brought from outside:

1 H. Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, 44
2 Dīgha Nikāya, 2, p.200; Majjhima Nikāya, 1, p.464; Sāmyuktā Nikāya, 4, p.398.
3 H.Lüders, Mathurā Inscriptions, p.81.
5 Ibid, no.162, p. 195.
7 Ibid, no.19, p.49.
During the PGW phase, trade may not have been a major factor in the economy of the area and the artifacts found during this period were probably procured locally or from adjacent locality. Since the habitation was situated on the riverside, water channels must have also been used as routes to reach nearby localities.

In period I copper cels and harpoons of copper hoard type\(^1\) and antimony of copper rod\(^2\) have been found at Caubara and Ambarish Tila at Mathurā, not far from river Yamuna. The location of copper hoards along major rivers is common in Doab.

Copper continued to be found in Mathurā and at Sonkh. Fork and seven pronged mutilated bracelet were found at Sonkh\(^3\) in Period II and in the same period a few copper punch-marked coins were found at Dhulkot (MTR-7) in Mathurā.\(^4\) In period III copper cast coins were found at Ambarish Tila in Mathurā\(^5\) and mutilated copper pans with handles and spikes,\(^6\) antimony rod, tonggle, 2 eight shaped wire object, fragments of wheel with 4 spokes and bracelets of brass have been found at Sonkh\(^7\) in period III. In period III, at Sonkh,\(^8\) a plate with handle and thorns, a crusty figurative bronze of a male and female joined together and a bronze male figure have been found. In period IV 2 goblets with two bowls, fragmentary bangle, 2 rings, pin, antimony of copper rods, and ornamental objects have been found at Sonkh.\(^9\) In period V cart, circular disc antimony of copper rod, pin, 3 bangles, 2 rings and 2 conical objects have been found at Sonkh.\(^10\) In period VI copper bottle and wire have

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2 *IAR*, 1975-76, p. 54.
3 Ibid.
4 *IAR*, 1975-76, p. 54.
5 Ibid.
6 H. Hartel, *Excavations of at Sonkh*.
7 Ibid.
8 *IAR*, 1969-70.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
been found at Sonkh.\textsuperscript{1} It seems that copper was commonly used in the Mathurā region. Copper beads have been found at Sonkh. They are total 16 in number.\textsuperscript{2} It was found continuously from period I to V in Mathurā and at Sonkh. Copper must have been brought from the neighbourhood i.e. Rajasthan. There are several copper mines with evidence of the old workings in Rajasthan. These occur in districts Bharatpur, Alwar, Jaipur, Jhunjhunu, Sikar and Udaipur. Important among these is the Khetri copper mines located in Jhunjhunu district.\textsuperscript{3} The copper mineralization in Rajasthan is one of the most extensive that exist in India and is found in almost all areas in the state\textsuperscript{1}.

Iron implements\textsuperscript{4} and spearheads\textsuperscript{5} are found in the excavation at Mathurā in Ambarish Tila and Dhulkot (MTR-7) respectively, and 3 arrow heads with socket or barged tangle\textsuperscript{6} are found in excavations at Sonkh. In period I, iron objects like arrow-heads, rods, nails, triangular flat etc. have been found. In period II in excavation at Sonkh, arrow heads, spearhead, sickle, cod, coil, nail, hook, rings, bracelets are found in period III at Sonkh, arrow heads, spearhead, socketed triangular blade, sickle, knives or dagger, rod, hooksbolt, nail, harness or chain, clamp, horse shoe spoon, bangle etc. have been found at period IV, arrow heads, spearheads, knife etc. are found at Period V at Sonkh.\textsuperscript{7} It seems that the local ores available at Bharatpur\textsuperscript{8} and Agra\textsuperscript{9} were used in the beginning i.e. period I, but as the requirement of iron objects increased with the increase of habitation area and population in the subsequent period, and with the increasing movement of people from one place to another, people of Mathurā must have brought iron ores from Aravalli tract of Rajasthan or from the Uttar.

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{3} For detailed account of these copper deposits are available in \textit{The Rajputana Gazetteer}, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1879; \textit{The Wealth of India Raw Materials}, II, 1950.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid, 1975-76, pp. 53-55.

\textsuperscript{5} Ibid, 1976-77, pp. 54-55.

\textsuperscript{6} H. Hartel, \textit{Excavations at Sonkh}, p.25.

\textsuperscript{7} H. Hartel, \textit{Excavations at Sonkh}, p.25.

\textsuperscript{8} \textit{The Rajputana Gazetteer}, 1879, p.134.

Pradesh Himalayas.\(^1\) We have inscriptionsal reference to *lohakākāraka* which indicates that iron ores brought from outside Mathurā were smelted and iron tools and implements and other objects were made and sold in Mathurā.\(^2\)

Disc of translucent glass\(^3\) and beads of glass\(^4\) have been found in period Ib in Dhulkot (MTR-1, 3, 4, 7) at Mathurā. Crystal beads\(^5\) also have been found at Mathurā in period I, which may have been locally produced. Beads of Green, blue green, blue, black and yellow coloured glass have been found at Sonkh, although 73 in number. They are spread from period II to VI.\(^6\) Deposits of while friable quartzite for glass manufacture occur in Allahabad, Banda and Varanasi districts.\(^7\) Glass sand is also found in Rajasthan, in Sawai Madhopur, Bindi, Jatwara and where the Agra – Ajmer Road crosses the Aravallis.\(^8\) Rock crystal is found in most parts of India. Clear crystal of various types can be found at Dasoa in Jaipur and at Nawai and Hathona in District Tonk.\(^9\)

A minute flake of gold leaf at Maholi,\(^10\) a gold reliquary at Caubara mound D\(^11\) and a gold leaf ornament at Sonkh\(^12\) have been found all in period III indicating the increasing economic prosperity in the region. Inscriptions also refer to *Svarṇākāras* or workers in gold.\(^13\) Since we do not have any indication of gold mines in or around Mathurā region, it seems that gold was probably brought from south Karnataka where important gold deposits are found, especially in Kolar district. The gold of Kolar incidently also contains a large quantity of

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\(^2\) See the section on Occupations in the same chapter.

\(^3\) *IAR*, 1973-74, p. 31.

\(^4\) *IAR*, 1954-55, p. 15.

\(^5\) Ibid.

\(^6\) H. Hartel, *Excavations at Sonkh*.


\(^12\) *IAR*, 1966-67, p. 42.

\(^13\) See the section on occupation.
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silver. Also gold must have been brought from Afghanistan or Chinese Turkistan via north-west land route.

In Periods II and III silver punch-marked coins have been found in excavations at Sonkh. Silver may have been extracted from silver bearing lead ores such as argentiferous galena which are available in Bihar and Orissa and at the mines of Zawar, fifteen miles south of Udaipur in the Aravalli ranges of Rajasthan. Zawar mines show ancient workings and are the most likely course of silver for the Mathurā region. But it is also not unlikely that silver might have been brought from Afghanistan. Afghanistan was connected to Mathurā though Uttarapatha and important silver mines exists there since Harappan times.

The occurrence of three reel shaped discs made of coiled ear-stud in period III and 2 small disc ear studs in period IV in lead suggest that lead must have been brought from Rajasthan as there are a large number of lead deposits in Rajasthan. The main areas where lead deposits are found are Ajmer lead-zinc zone, the Jabalpur lead-zinc-copper belt, the Pur-Banera Belt, the Zawar lead zinc belt, the Basantgarh Deri belt etc. Many of these show ancient workings. Ivory beads have been found in Ambarish Tila, at Mathurā in period II.

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1 existence of gold mines in Karnataka is cited in N.J. Lahiri, The Archaeology of Indian Trade Routes, p.205.
3 H. Hartel, Excavations at Sonkh, Delhi, 1979, p. 113.
7 For the list of copper mines with ancient workings see H.C. Bharadwaj, Aspects of Ancient Indian Technology, p. 193-197.
10 IAR, 1976-77, pp. 54-55.
comb in Dhulkot in Period III\(^1\) and Ivory stand in Period IV Katra\(^2\) in Mathurā. Ivory must have been local product as dense forests in the upper Gangetic plains and the presence of wild animals including elephants have been pointed out by Makhan Lal.\(^3\) Possibly it was part of the local fauna of the region in the early historical period, although the elephant is practically extinct in northern India today.

Precious stones were found in abundance in Mathurā. Beads of agate, carnelian, jasper, amethyst, lapis lazuli have been found at Sonkh and in Mathurā all through the early historical period from period 1 to V (more than 150 beads of precious stones have been listed in Sonkh Excavation Report.\(^4\) Some are also found in the excavations at Mathurā from 1973 to 1977.\(^5\)

Agate and Carnelian and Chalcedony must have been brought from Bayana and Buneerah in Rajasthan and the Robertsgunj Tahsil of Mirzapur,\(^6\) Jasper in Mirzapur in Uttar Pradesh, in the Banas region of Rajasthan and in Madhya Pradesh.\(^7\) Lapis lazuli was available from Badakshan (Afghanistan).\(^8\) The presence of Lapis lazuli in the Nagpahar hills, three miles to the west of Ajmer, had been mentioned by R.H. Irvine,\(^9\) although this report was never subsequently confirmed.

A large number of sandstone statues have been found in Mathurā most of which are placed in Mathurā Museum.\(^10\) The majority of sculptures were of

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\(^1\) Ibid, 1973-74, pp. 31-32.
\(^2\) Ibid, 1975-76, p. 53.
\(^4\) H. Hartel, *Excavations at Sonkh*.
\(^5\) *IAR*, 1973-74, 74-75, 75-76, 76-77.
\(^7\) Ibid.
\(^8\) S. Asthana, *History and Archaeology of India’s Contacts with other countries from earliest times to 300 BC*, Delhi, 1976, p. 273.
red sand stone, though buff, yellow and white sandstones are also used.¹ Sandstones are available in Mathurā district and its neighbouring districts of Agra and Bharatpur, which must have been used for this purpose. The rocks in the district of Agra vary from red to greyish white and the Fatehpur Sikri range is well known for quarries of red sandstone.² In the nineteenth century, sandstone from Ruphas and other quarries in Bharatpur were utilized in Mathurā district including red and white stone.³

Shell seems to have been one item obtained from greater distance. Molluscs whose shells are used for jewellery and other objects are generally found on seacoasts or in estuaries.⁴ Shell may have been obtained from Ganga delta or from ports of Sind and Gujrat.

IV

Mathurā's position on the important trade routes from the Konkon to the lower Doab and Pātaliputra on the one hand and Gandhāra on the other. Direct artistic influence from Gandhāra was certainly there. Imports of the characteristic sculptures in grey schist, including a large and fine female figure, probably a donor, have been found at Mathurā.⁵ A number of Mathurā seated Buddhas, crude and of obviously late date, show unmistakable signs of having been influenced by Gandhāra schools.

Signs of more direct contact with the west are not lacking at Mathurā. A modified acanthus motif and the olive leaf band occur widely on doors and lintels. The famous statue, Hercules and the Nemean Lion¹ is indisputably based on a famous Greek or Hellenistic statue extant in dozens of Roman

² Ibid.
⁵ N.P. Joshi, Mathurā Ki Murti Kala, Fig. 53, 54, 1966; J.M. Rosenfield, The Dynastic Art of the Kusanas, Fig. 50.
copies. Of the so called Bacchalian groups, one at least showing drunken Silenus in a rocky setting flanked by men and women in Greek dress so far unidentified (probably also based on Roman groups) is found. Secular atmosphere of this particular character depicted in scenes no doubt suggests import from a source in the north-west.

Statues are found representing Kuśāṇa kings and princes in their native costumes-trousers or boots, sewn tunic or pointed Scythian cap of central Asian housemen, as they appear on their coins. What makes the larger free standing sculptures exceptional is that they are portraits, which are even in Indian art, and that the most important of them were found like similarly dressed individuals from Surk-Kotal in Afghanistan, in what appears to have been a royal shrine at the nearby village at Mat.

More than a thousand small pillars of the same style are found in different parts of Mathurā. They average from 6 ½ inches to 7 ½ inches in breadth with a height of 2 feet 9 inches, but a few are of smaller dimensions. Men and women are represented on principal faces of those pillars. Several of the latter are nearly nude, and two representations of Maya Devi, the mother of Buddha, standing under the Sal tree, have upper half apparently unclothed. The nuns are clothed with tunics. Two of these pillars from the Jail mounds are inscribed with the numbers 118 and 129. These pillar sculptures are different from other sculptures. They too are probably influenced by the Gandhāra School of Art, and since the transportation of stone pillars is difficult and stones are available in and around Mathurā region abundantly, it may not be ruled out that the sculptors had been brought from Taksasila as well as Greece who may have found employment with the wealthy Buddhists.

1 J.M. Rosenfield, *The Dynastic Arts of The Kuśāṇas*.
2 Ibid, p. 142-3, 190 and Fig. 11, 43, 44
Movement of articles for internal trade is suggested by several data. At Begram (Eastern Afghanistan) plaques of carved bones and ivory have been found which display figures carved following the style of art of Mathurā. They might have been imported from Mathurā as Begram and Mathurā both were under the Kusāṇa empire.¹ Stylistic influence of the Mathurā school can be noticed in a few ivory plaques unearthed at Dalverzin-Tepe in Uzbekistan (USSR) and dated to the Kusāṇa age.² Mathurā sandstone statues are found a Takṣasila.³

Statues of stone carved in Mathurā style must have been sent to other places on occasions. This becomes clear from the statue of an inscribed Buddha discovered at Śrāvasti. Although the inscription makes no reference to Mathurā, it records the pious gift of ‘Sihadeva, a Prāvārika’ at Sāketa⁴ and the sculpture resembles very much the style of Mathurā Buddha. Marshall on the basis of another similar statue in Mathurā Museum, suggests that both of these sculptures were the work of the same artist.⁵ Inscriptions refer to both at Sārnath and Śrāvasti where Boddhisattva images and stone umbrella of Mathurā origin was donated by bhikṣu Bala.⁶ The statues of Mathurā style have also been discovered from Kauśāmbi,⁷ Sārnath⁸ and Pātaliputra.⁹ Both at Sārnath and Śrāvasti, in the third yr. of maharaja Kaniska standing Bodhisattva statue and stone umbrella of Mathurā origin, set up by Bhikṣu Bala of Mathurā, who knew the tripitakas, have been found.¹⁰ An inscription of the yr.33 of Huviska¹¹ Bala is mentioned along with nun Buddhāmitra whose name is also found as donor of Sarnath image and Śrāvasti images. It is suggested that

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¹ M. Wheeler, Rome beyond the Imperial Frontiers, p. 193.
⁴ Epigraphia Indica, XIX, No. 1, p. 66.
⁵ Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report, 1910-11, p. 11.
⁶ Epigraphia Indica, VIII.
⁷ Epigraphia Indica, XXIV, p. 211.
¹⁰ Epigraphia Indica, VIII, no. 17, p. 173.
bhikṣu Bala along with nun Buddhāmitra came from Mathurā an erected the images at Kāsi and Śrāvasti on occasion of pilgrimage to the sacred sites of Buddhists.¹ In the district of Ludhiana, at the excavated site of Sanghol numerous beautiful pieces of Kuśāna sculptured pieces in white spotted red sandstone, in the context of a spoked and circular stūpa of Kuśāna period² have been found suggesting linkages with Mathurā.

10 lion statues of different sizes from 2 to 3 ft height are found at Katra, Mathurā. They are all represented in pairs, one having the left and the other having the right foot advanced as if intended for two side ornaments of a gateway just as we know them to have been used at Dharmkota near Amaravati.³ Amaravati sculptors might have come to Mathurā to carve these statues or they might have been brought from Amaravati.

Capitals of columns and pillars have been found at Caubara mound at Mathurā, which are strikingly similar to the capitals found at Sanchi and Gaya. These are formed by four recumbant animals placed at four angles, two of them are winged lions and others winged bulls with human heads, adorned with ramps and horns and ears.⁴

Weight System: Kuśāna rulers tried to introduce uniform weights and measures throughout the empire. The stone weights from Sirkap (Taxila) suggest that in the Scytho-Parthian age the average weight of the smallest unit of weight was about 53 grains and that in that period multiples of smallest units were also known.⁵ Similar weight system was prevalent in Kuśāna Mathurā. A Mathurā Inscription of year 28 of the Kanishka era refers to Purāṇas; i.e., silver

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¹ Ibid, p.173.
Karṣapānas. Adhaka mentioned in the above inscription is equivalent in measure (or weight) to 256 karsaś. The inscription also refers to prastha (equal in weight or measure to one fourth of an adhaka), ghataka (i.e. ghata) (equal in measure or weight to one drona, i.e. 10424 karsas, or 20 dronas i.e. 20480 karsas) and mallaka.

The efforts towards the introduction of uniform weight measures from Taxila to Mathurā is clear indicator of linkages not only between the two cities but the areas on the route of Uttarapatha. Presence of the coins of strato, Menander, Antimachus and Appollodotus at Mathurā suggests commercial links which extended to Barygaza on western coast, where according to the Periplus of the Erythrian Sea coins of Menander and Appollodotus were in circulation. The distribution of Soter Megas coins from Afghanistan to Mathurā indicates commercial transactions on the Uttarapatha.

The above survey of the economic condition of the period from 2nd c. BC to 3rd c. AD gives an impression that there was unprecedented growth of trade and commerce in this period. It is also attested by archaeological excavation unearthed from level 23 at Sonkh, assignable to the Ksatrapa age, reveal the use of stone in projected section of the building at street corners, probably to insure the projection against the damage by vehicles. This is rightly interpreted as a sign of increase in the volume of traffic and consequently that of merccandise and traders.

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1 Epigraphia Indica, XXI, pp. 60 f.
5 W.H.Schoff, pp. 41-42, Section 47.
6 See Chapter II, p. 40.
7 B.N.Mukherjee, Mathurā and Its Society, p. 110
The overall view of Mathurā suggests that it did not enjoy any special advantage from the agrarian point of view. The carrying capacity of soil was poor.\(^1\) In the villages the *Grāmika* seems to have played an important role as it is mentioned in two of the Mathurā inscriptions\(^2\). Probably he assessed and collected taxes from the peasants. We do not have evidence to show that the taxes collected from the peasants were sufficient to maintain the administrative and other establishments during the Śaka and the Kusāṇa rule. We do not have any idea about the land system or agricultural methods prevalent in Mathurā region. Finds of votive tanks in excavation and numerous references to the construction of well, tanks and water reservoirs for the religious purpose in the inscriptions\(^3\) suggests that the practice of providing water facilities may have followed in the countryside where it promoted the supply of water for both drinking and irrigation. Such facilities may have been organised individually and collectively; the state does not seem to have played any role in it.\(^4\)

The city of Mathurā which was an object of hatred in the *Anguttara Nikāya*,\(^5\) a Buddhist text of the 4\(^{th}\) c.BC, where Buddha says that there are five disadvantages in Mathurā, the ground was uneven, there is much dust, there are fierce dogs, beasts like Yaksas and alms are got with difficulties (*Paṇca ime, bhikkaave, adinava Madhurā yani katame paṇca Visama, bahuraya, candasunakta, valayakkha dullabhapinda*), is eulogised in the *Lalitvistara*, another Buddhist text in the 3rd c. AD as prosperous, large, beneficial with easy availability of alms and abounding in population (*iyam Mathurā nagari rddha ca sphita ca kṣemā ca subhiksā cakirṇā bahiyamanuṣya ca*)\(^6\)

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1. See Chapter I, section on Geography of Mathurā.
3. Ibid, no. 64, 82, 102.
5. *Anguttara Nikāya*, II, p.256
6. chapter,II, p. 15
Āvaśyaka- cuñi records that Mathurā was a great commercial centre and from there merchants would go to conduct business in Dakkhina Mathurā (Daksina Mathurā) identified as present day Madurai, and that one of the merchants had established family connection with the city. The Ācaranga-cuñi identifies Mathurā as a thalapattana (sthalapatha) were goods for trade were carried overland. Brhatkalpabhāṣya observes that inhabitants of Mathurā lived on trade.

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1 Āvaśyaka-cuñi, p. 472, cited in Moti Chandra, Trade Routes in Ancient India, p.164
2 Ibid.
3 Ācaranga-cuñi,1, p.472 cited in J.C. Jain, Life in Ancient India As depicted in Jaina Canons, p. 308
4 J.C. Jain, Life in Ancient India as Depicted in Jaina Canons, p.114
Mathurā: Possible direction of Linkages

1. Mathurā-Sanghol-Bactria.
2. Mathurā-Pātaliputra-Chandraketugarh
3. Mathurā-Śrāvasti
### List of sites in the Map 4:

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## LIST OF OCCUPATIONS MENTIONED IN THE INSCRIPTIONS OF MATHURĀ

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<td>Āyāgapata</td>
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<td>Śīvamutra of the Kauśika (family), wife of Gotipurā, a Kālavāla (wine distiller) for Pothayās and Sakas</td>
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<td>Early Kuṣāṇa</td>
<td>Mutilated Āyāgapata bearing representation of Stūpa with rails and gate as well as two naked dancing women</td>
<td>For adoration of Arhat</td>
<td>Śīvayasa wife of nataka Phaguyasa</td>
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<td>Mora well</td>
<td>Early Kuṣāṇa</td>
<td>Āyāgapata carved with complete Stūpa surrounded by railing approached by means of flight of steps and ornamental gateway</td>
<td>For the adoration of arhat vardhamana creation of shrine of Arhat, a hall, a cistern, and a stone slab at the century of nirgrantha arhat</td>
<td>The daughter of ada ganika Lōnasābhikā, Nādā ganika vasu, together with her mother, daughter and the whole household</td>
<td>H.Lüders, MI, no.27, p.63, El, I, no.18, p.390</td>
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<td>Kankali Tila</td>
<td>Pre- Kuṣāṇa or early Kuṣāṇa</td>
<td>Āyāgapata</td>
<td>For adoration of arhat vardhamana</td>
<td>Kālavāla (wine distiller) of Mathurā, Śivarakhita, together with his wife</td>
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<td>Āyāgapata</td>
<td>For the adoration of arhat</td>
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<td>Setthing up of Āyāgapata</td>
<td>Sovanika (goldsmith) Nandīghosa, son of Nandika</td>
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<td>Setthing up of image of Rśabha, at the request of Śisni Śāma, Śisni of Jethaḥasthi out of Kotiya gana, Brahmadāsika kula, uceNāgari Sākhā, arina sambhoga</td>
<td>Gulha the daughter of Varma and the wife of Jayadasa, Mahala the pupil of Jesthahasthi was a gandhika</td>
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<td>Ayala, the son of Indrasāma in the Suvanta Vihāra</td>
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<td>Rayāgini (dyer) Vasu, the daughter-in-law of Jabhaka &amp; the wife of Jayabhata</td>
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<td>Vacaka Datta who was Sadhachara of ganin, Pala the pupil of Ogha, who was pupil of Vacaka ganin Jamutra out of Kotiya gana Brahmadāśika kula the uce Nāga ri Sākhā and Śrīgha sambhoga</td>
<td>Jayabhatti the manikara of Kottamitra</td>
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<td>Setting up of a Śilāpata at the shrine of the holy lord Nāga Dadhikarna</td>
<td>Sons of Śailakas (actors) of Mathurā, chief of whom is Nandibala, who are known as Candaka brothers</td>
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<td>Gandhika Kumarabhatti, son of Kumaramitra</td>
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<td>Kankali Tila</td>
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<td>Broken image</td>
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<td>Lohikākāraka(worker in metal) Sura, the member of the committee(gottika), the son of SRāma naka</td>
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<td>Rai Bhadar</td>
<td>Yr. 8 of Kaniska</td>
<td>Pedestal of image of Nāga accompanied by two Nagis</td>
<td>Erecting a tank and a garden for the holy Nāga bhumo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Dalpat Kikhiri Mohalla</td>
<td>Yr 14 of Kaniska</td>
<td>image of standing Buddha</td>
<td>Setting up an image for the veneration holy God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>Yr.16 of Mahārājā Kaniska</td>
<td>Statue of Bodhisattva</td>
<td>For the worship of all Buddhas and for welfare of all beings, for the acceptance of Mahasanghika teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Kankali Tila</td>
<td>Yr. 38 of Huviṣka</td>
<td>Stone image</td>
<td>Setting up of Nandivisala for the worship of Arhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Kankali Tila</td>
<td>Yr. 40 of Huviṣka</td>
<td>Stone image</td>
<td>To please Rṣabha at the request of ganin, athe venerable Kharna of the venerable... &amp; pupil of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Material</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>..........</td>
<td>Yr. 83 of Vasudeva</td>
<td>image</td>
<td>Dedication of image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Kankali Tila</td>
<td>Yr. 98 of Vasudeva</td>
<td>image</td>
<td>Gift of image of Arhat Mahavira at the request of gandhika Varuna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Jamalpur</td>
<td>3rd c.A.D</td>
<td>Pillar base</td>
<td>Gift of pillar base for bestowing health or Prahanikas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34.</td>
<td>113 of Kumaragupta</td>
<td>Large setting Jina</td>
<td>Setting up of image</td>
<td>Sámadhya, daughter of Bhattacharya, house wife of a Prāvārika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35.</td>
<td>Maholi Ushar Road</td>
<td>400 AD</td>
<td>Stone</td>
<td>Asvadeva son of Prāvārika, Bhāvanandin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>