Chapter - IV

Animals on Inscriptions, Caves, Paintings and Coins & Seals
CHAPTER IV

ANIMALS ON INSCRIPTIONS, CAVES, PAINTINGS AND COINS & SEALS

A. Importance of Animals mentioned on inscriptions

![Brahmi script from Kanheri Caves](image)

Indian inscriptions engraved into stone or other durable materials, or etched into metal are an important historical source beginning from the third century B.C.E. The vast majority are found in South India, written on plates of copper, the stone walls of temples, or stone monuments. An estimated 100,000 inscriptions have now been found, and many of these have been catalogued and translated. These inscriptions corroborate information from other sources, give the dates and locations of significant events, trace detailed royal genealogies, and provide an insight into early Indian political structure, legal codes, and religious practices. They also document the development and use of written languages in India.

The earliest written materials on the Indian subcontinent are the Edicts of Aûoka, a collection of 33 inscriptions on the Pillars of Aûoka, as well as boulders
cave walls, made by the Emperor Aśoka of the Mauryan dynasty during his reign from 272 to 231 B.C.E..

These inscriptions have been found in over 35 locations throughout the areas of modern-day Pakistan and northern India, near towns, trade routes and religious centers. They were deciphered in 1837, by the Orientalist James Prince. In these inscriptions, Aśoka refers to himself as "Beloved of the Gods" and "King Piyadassi." The identification of King Piyadassi with Aśoka was confirmed by an inscription discovered in 1915 which referred to the donar as “Devānampiya Aśoka.”

Aśoka had engraved his Dharma, i.e., the 'Law of Piety' on the rocks and pillars in order to spread Buddhism. It contained the fundamental principles of mastery of the sense, purity of thought, gratitude, steadfastness of devotion, kindness, charity, purity, truthfulness, service, support and reverence.

The Aśoka's edicts carved on the rocks have been discovered at Kalsi, Sopara, Girnar, Dhauli, Jaugada, Maski and Yeraguddi in India and at Shahbaz Garha and Mansehra in the NWFP. Aśoka's edicts are mainly concerned with the reforms he instituted and the moral principles he recommended in his attempt to build a fair and humane society. They are unable to give us much information about his life. The inscriptions on rocks reveal the steps taken by Aśoka for the propagation of his "Law of Piety".

Aśoka's edicts are found scattered in more than thirty places throughout India, Nepal, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Most of them are written in Brāhmi script.

The Magadhi language is used in the edicts in the eastern part of the subcontinent, which is probably the official language of Aśoka's court. The language in the edicts found in the western part of India is nearer to Sanskrit.

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1. Basham A.L., A Cultural history of India,
One bilingual edict in Afghanistan is written in Aramaic and Greek. Aśoka's edicts have survived over the period of centuries is because they are written on the rocks and stone pillars. There is every possibility that there must have been many more edicts, although only ten with inscriptions survive today.

The average height of these edicts is between 40 and 50 ft and weighs up to fifty tons each. All the pillars were quarried at Chunar, just south of Varanasi and were dragged to the places where they were erected. Each pillar was originally capped by a capital, of a roaring lion, a noble bull or a spirited horse, and the few capitals that survive are widely recognized as masterpieces of Indian art. Both the pillars and the capitals exhibit a remarkable mirror-like polish that was the unique feature of the Mauryan art and has survived despite centuries of exposure to the elements.

Other significant stone inscriptions include the Hathigumpha inscription ("Elephant Cave" inscription) written by Kharavela, the king of Kalinga in Brahmi letters during the second century B.C.E.; the Rabatak inscription, written on a rock in Afghanistan and relating to the rule of the Kuśan emperor Kaniska; the Halmidi inscription, the oldest known inscription in the Kannada script. Tamil copper-plate inscriptions are copper-plate records grants of land or other privileges to private individuals or public institutions by the members of the various South Indian royal dynasties. 2

The ancient practice of inscribing cave walls or stone monuments to commemorate conquests, religious ceremonies and other important events existed in many parts of Asia. These inscriptions are valuable historical evidence of the existence and the activities of early kings and empires, showing by their locations the extent of their domains, and giving dates for certain events. Inscriptions also provide detailed genealogies and document religious practices, political organization, and

2. Archaeological survey of India collections taken by Henry William Hency Cornish in C. 1892
legal codes. Later copper plate inscriptions were used as records of land ownership to support a sophisticated system of taxation that is evidence of a well-structured bureaucracy.

Inscriptions represent the earliest written forms of Indian languages and are evidence that these written forms were already well-developed by the time the inscriptions were made. By studying the vocabulary, and forms of the inscriptions linguists have been able to advance their understanding of how languages developed and where they were used. More than 55% of the epigraphical inscriptions found by the Archaeological Survey of India in India are in Tamil language. 3

The inscriptions found in the eastern part of India were written in the Māgadhi language, using the Brāhmi script. In the western part of India, the language used is closer to Sanskrit using the Kharoṣṭhī script, one extract of Edict 13 in the Greek language, and one bilingual edict written in Greek and Aramaic.


3. The Hindu, students get glimpse of heritage, staff Reporter (Nov. 22, 2005)
The aspects in general include the origin and development of early scripts and languages, liberal donations to the monasteries by various segments of the society, movement of monks from one monastery to the other, patronage of Buddhism by the royalty and common people, prominent centres, different sects and schools of Buddhism, types of monastic structures, socio-economic conditions, existence of various categories of animals and their importance.

_Pasanikas_ (Skt. _Pāṣapa_=stone) were the artisans engaged in quarrying, cutting and dressing the stone required by the sculptors and architects for engraving inscriptions, carving sculptures and architectural details.

The _Lipakaras_ or _Lekhakas_, the scribes or engravers of inscriptions, also called as _Ulekha_ or _Ullekhakas_, were appointed in the royal courts to execute the royal charters. There were known as _Rajalekhakas_ or _Rajalipikaras_.

The _Cullavagga_ specifies rules regarding the eligibility of monks in supervising the building work. It is significant that even in a religious order like the Sangha, acquiring technical skills for construction work was considered important and relevant. On the basis of skill and proficiency the technicians were selected by a group of elder monks from among the monks located at a particular vihāra. Most of the monks thus selected had probably been artists or skilled workers before they were ordained as monks. _Mahāvamsa_ refers to a wise _There_ by name Indautta (Indragupta) gifted with six higher faculties, and who directed the construction of _Caityas_ and _vihāras_ as the Superintendent of the buildings.

Workers on stone were called as _Silavaddhakis_. A Nagarjunakonda inscription records the name of a _Silavaddhaki_, _Vidhika_, who accomplished some building works at that site.

_Avesanin_ is a term that occurs very frequently in the early inscriptions, meaning the foreman or the supervisor of the sculptural works.

The terms _Mahanavakammika_ and _Navakammikapadhana_ as referred in Amaravati inscriptions were the great supervisors of renovations
The *Navakammikapadhana (Navakarmika Pradhana)*, the chief supervisor of the renovation work.

Reference of the animals, their importance can be seen inscribed on the stone edicts mentioned below:

**Girnar Rock Edict No.1**

The Major Rock Edict at Girnar, Aūoka’s first rock edict, reads as follows:

![Image of the edict]

Translation

1. This religious scripture has been caused to be written by
2. King Devanamppiya Piyadassi
3. Here no living being should be killed, even for sacrifice.
4. No festive gatherings should be held.
5. King Devanamppiya Piyatissa sees many defects (evil) in such gatherings.
6. However, King Devanamppiya Piyatissa considers that some such gatherings are meritorious.
7. Formerly in the kitchen of King Devanamppiya.
8. Piyatissa many hundred thousands of animals
9. were killed daily for the sake of curry.
10. But now, today, when this scripture is being written
11. only two peacocks and one deer are being killed.
12. But even this way (of killing) is not permanent. These three creatures will not be killed in future.  

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4. Talim Meena, *Edicts of King Aūoka* p.5
Girnar Rock Edict No.1

Observations

This edict is proclamation of King Aśoka expressing his faith in teachings of the Buddha. It serves two purposes, namely (a) to guide his subject and (b) reveal his commitment to the principal teachings of Buddha, i.e., not to kill - panatipīta veramaṇi.

The present edict reminds us of ‘Kassapa siha-nada sutta’. Kassapa the Brahmin asked Buddha, ‘how to acquire sila (virtue)’? To him the Lord had said, “Idha Kassapam panatipatam pahaya, panatipata pativirato hoti nihita-dando, lajji, dayapanno sabbapabanbhuta hitanukampi vihārati. Idam 'pi assa hoti sila-sampadaya.”

Thus, Buddha had advised that one can acquire ‘sila’ (virtue) by discarding killing, not taking pleasure in killing, leaving aside a rod, weapon and have sense of shame, be kind to all living creatures. The same teaching has been reflected in this edict. King forbids killing animals even for the sake of sacrifice, which is a step taken to establish reforms in the society.

King Aśoka also observed many defects in the festival-gatherings. At the same time he accepts that some such gatherings are necessary in the society. This balanced attitude of the king is very laudable. His main purpose is to guide his subject.

Girnar Rock Edict No. II

Translation

1. Everywhere in the land which has been conquered by King Devanamppiya Piyadassi.
2. and likewise among his borders, such as the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Satiyaputtas, the Ketalaputtas, even
3. Tambapanni, the Yona King Antiyaka and the neighbourhood of Antiyaka, everywhere the king.
4. Devanamppiya Piyadassi has established two kinds of medical treatments.
5. One is medical treatment for men and the other is a medical treatment for animals.
6. Wherever there are no medicines available (which are) beneficial to men and animals, they should be brought and even planted.
7. Wherever there are no roots or fruits available, they should be all brought and planted.
8. On the roads wells should be dug, trees should be planted for the use of animals and men. 6

Girnar Rock Edict No. II

Observations

King Aśoka is concerned about the welfare of his subject. Setting up medical centres for men and animals, digging wells, planting trees, bringing herbs – all such activities cover not only civil facilities but ensures a foresight of the king. He is extending medical services to his neighbouring states which speaks of his broad vision. 7

6. Dr. Talim Meena, op. cit. p 8
7. Ibid
Girnar Rock Edict No. III
Translation

5. Meritorious is to abstain from killing animals; to be moderate in expenditure and possessions (goods)

Girnar Rock Edict No. IV
Translation

1-2. In times past, for many hundred of years, there had been increase in the acts of killing animals, hurting living beings and not looking after relatives, Brahmanas and Sramanas.

6. King Devanamppiya Piyadassi give instructions according to Dhamma, namely, abstain from killing animals, hurting living beings and to look after your relatives, Brahmanas and Sramanas, obedience to mother and father and obedience to the elders. 8

Girnar Rock Edict No. IV
Observations

It is interesting to note that in order to attract the people towards the doctrine of Kamma, he sets before them his own example. He exhibited a royal grandeur to insist on them that all these were the results of his good acts (Kamma). 9

Girnar Rock Edict No. VIII

1. In the past, the King used to set out on pleasure tours. On these tours hunting and other similar (such as this) pleasures were enjoyed.

8. Ibid p. 17
9. Dr. Talim Meena, Edicts of King Aśoka p.. 18.
Girnar Rock Edict No. IX

Translation

5. It is good to restrain killing (creatures), to give charity to Brahmanas and Sramanas and such other things are called Dhamma ceremonies. 10

Girnar Rock Edict No. IX

Observations

In the above edict King Aśoka observes ceremonies that people perform on certain occasions. He narrates that such festivals or ceremonies do not bear much fruits or help mankind. Hence he suggests some fruitful ways which are actually social reforms in the garb of Dhamma-ceremonies. He advised them, instead of performing such superficial ceremonies; they should given good treatment to slaves and servants, refrain from killing, and give charity to Brahmanas and Sramanas. He further states that by performing such practices, men will reach to heaven.

Girnar Rock Edict No. XI

Translation

3. Abstain from killing animals is good. This should be told to father, sons, brothers, friends, acquaintances and relatives.

Girnar Rock Edict No. XIII

Translation

7 ... for all living beings, let there be self-restrain, equality to all and kindness.

10. Dr. Talim Meena, *Edicts of King Aśoka* p.. 40.
Girnar Rock Edict No. XIII

Observations

There is a picture of an elephant engraved at the right side of an edict; below the thirteenth rock edict of Girnar. There is also a line inscribed as “.. sabbaseto natthi sabbalokasukhaya nama (vra svato hasti sarvaloka sukhavaha nama in Skt.)” which could be translated as “.. an entirely white elephant, bringing happiness to the whole world”.

A white elephant represents Buddha. Is it that the king wants to suggest an end of Girnar edicts with carving of this auspicious elephant? Unfortunately, the figure of an elephant is destroyed owing to construction of causeway for pilgrims. 11

Delhi -Topra Pillar Edict No. V

Translation

1. Piyadassi, the beloved of God, says thus: Twenty-six years
2. after coronation I have prohibited killing the following living beings:
3. suko (parrot), sālikā (myna), alunā (red-breast), chakkavāka (ruddy goose), hamsa (swan), nandimukho (the bird found at the mouth of river Nandā), gelata (?).
4. Jatukā (bat), ants on the mango tree (ambāpipilikā), dandi (terrapin), anatthikamacche (boneless fish), vedaveyaka (owl),
5. Gangakukkata (cocks at river Ganges), suvannamaccha (golden fish), kumma (tortoise), sallaka (porcupine), pannasasaka (jungle-rabbits), simalā (Barasing stag),
6. White pigeons or village pigeons, a bird that stay in the grove or wander in the space or in the thicket of leaves (samdake palasate okapinde).
7. All four-footed ones which are killed for enjoyment; they are not to be eaten.

11. Drs. Kern, Senark and Buhler, Note on p. 2
8. She-goat, she-pig either pregnant or suckling should not be killed and also their young ones and
9. even of a month old or cock should not be killed. Similarly, the living ones should not be burnt in husk.
10. Do not burn unnecessarily or for the purpose of violence (killing) which may cause a forest fire; do not make such fire.
11. One's life should not be nourished on the other's life.
12. In the three months of monsoon of the four months (cātumāsa), three full-moon days and three days of fourteen, fifteen and first day of fortnight, all these days, regularly;
13. should be fasting days. Do not kill fish nor even sell them. Similarly, on these days
14. the living creatures (category of) that live in the deep forest (where elephants dwell) or places of fishermen or from such other places do not hurt
15. their bodies. On the eighth day of both fortnight, fourteenth day, fifteenth day and those days of
16. Punabbasu (constellation) of three (months) of monsoon (four months); do not castrate (beaten down) bull on the festival day (sudivase = good day)
17. Goats, rams, pigs and any such animals should not be made (target) castrated.
18. On three days, namely, Punabbasu, four fortinights of four months (cātumāsa), a horse or a bull
19. should not be castrated. This is the twenty-sixth year of my coronation, and in between this period (span of time) ¹²
20. I have released twenty-five times, to those who were imprisoned.

¹². Dr. Talim Meena, *op.cit.*, p. 251
Delhi - Topra Pillar Edict No. V

Observations

King Aśoka is propagating non-violence and love for all living creatures. The gist of this edict lies in the eleventh line where he inscribed, ‘Jivena jivo na poseyyum’ = One’s life should not be nourished on another’s life. This ideal is so lofty and different from ‘Jivah jivasya jivanam’.

In line tenth, he had forbidden to kill many birds and animals. In the same line, one can observe his concern and consciousness towards environmental protection. He advises people, ‘Do not burn unnecessarily, or for the sake of killing which may cause a forest-fire.’

Today in the world we notice an environmental awareness but King Aśoka seems to be much ahead of the time. He prohibited people for making fire for roasting animal or bird, or to burn bird in husk or make a fire for not particular reason in the forest. He made them aware that such fire may cause forest-fire and there is always a danger that may fall upon the entire forest along with its inhabitants. A feeling that we, all human beings, owe something to nature, we are indebted to nature is very dominant in the mind of King Aśoka. Perhaps, the first Indian to think and scribe so very clearly his views about environmental neighbourhood.

Owl is known as a wise bird; hence = vedaveyyaka, which means ‘one who is accomplished with wisdom’. Dr. Malalasekara narrates a story of an owl who had great respect for the Buddha. Once he saw Buddha and lowered its wings, its claws and clasped together and stood to pay homage to Buddha. Hence, King Aśoka might have granted safety to this bird also knowing the incidence of an owl which has been mentioned by Dr. Malalasekara.  

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13. Dr. Talim Meena, op. cit. p. 252
14. Dr. Talim Meena, op. citp 266
In the line numbers eighteenth and nineteenth, there is reference to 'Castration or bull'. V.A. Smith seems to be little confused about the line and points out, "The Hindus of Bengal, before Muhammedan conquest are said never to have castrated bull." I however feel that this could have been possible, even at the time of King Aśoka As ancient history informs us that many Persians migrated to India in this period, it could have been a practice amongst these migrated Persians, especially those who belonged to Mithra cult of Persia. In this cult a castration of bull was considered as a holy religious ritual. There was an exodus of such Mithra-followers, who slowly and gradually moved in India, owing to religious persecution and political upheaval in the 6th century BC in Persia. Perhaps this foreign ritual could have been existing at the time of King Aśoka. A special characteristic of Mithra (God) is that he is always shown as a slayer of a bull and in every sculpture he is shown killing a bull. According to sources, "The death of a bull was a source of life, an act of renewal of creation" and is considered as a holy religious practice. There is a possibility that these foreigners who migrated to India may be observing ritual of Mithra cult at the time of King Aśoka. 14

Hence, King Aśoka may be referring to these groups of Mithraadherents in the present edict.

Delhi -Topra Pillar Edict No. VII
Translation

13. Piyadassi, the beloved of God says thus: This after considering I have erected these Dhamma-pillars; I have made (installed) Dhamma-mahamattas and proclaimed Dhamma. Thus said the beloved of God; I have caused nigrodha - trees to be planted on the roads, which will be useful for giving shade to animals and men. I have caused mango trees to be planted to make mango-grove; every half a mile dug water-wells.

14.Dr. Talim Meena, op.citp 266
14. Caused resting-places, caused to construct drinking halls, for the use of animals and men. These comforts are small, but in the past rulers have also given various comforts and happiness to people and my Rajukas have also made people happy. This is in connection with Dhamma and it should be followed. This I have done.

20. Here one may in a smaller way follow Dhamma-discipline but meditation is the best. I have myself done it by following Dhamma-discipline. These and those living beings should not be killed; I have made many such disciplinary rules. In this world of men, meditation will increase the growth of Dhamma. Be there a non-violence towards living beings and killing of animals should be prohibited. For this purpose. I made this. 15

Greek and Aramaic Rock Inscriptions from Kandahar

Translation

3. King has discarded killing. All men including hunters and fishermen have given up killing living beings. King has given up killing of living creatures.

Observations

This edict (Greek) propagates non-violence. King Asoka wants to bring to notice of Kandahar, that he as a head of the state has discarded killing of animals, therefore his subject including hunters and fishermen (lines 3 and 4) have followed him (similar to Major P. E. No. V). This is one of the way to appeal to people for non-violence. In this inscription he also conveys simple moral lessons such as to be obedient to parents and elders (line no.5), similar to Minor R. Eds. He had sent Dhammayuttas to this neighbouring country to propagate teachings and increase happiness and benefits for mankind. 16

15. Dr. Talim Meena, op.cit p 266
16. Ibid p. 323
Religious tolerance

Aśoka, based on a belief that all religions shared a common, positive essence, encouraged tolerance and understanding of other religions.

"All religions should reside everywhere, for all of them desire self-control and purity of heart" (Rock Edict Nb7, S. Dhammika). "Here (in my domain) no living beings are to be slaughtered or offered in sacrifice" (Rock Edict Nb1, S. Dhammika).

"Contact (between religions) is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desires that all should be well-learned in the good doctrines of other religions" (Rock Edict Nb12, S. Dhammika).

Respect for animal life

From the inscriptions it is observed that the Mauryan empire was the first Indian empire to unify the country and it had a clear-cut policy of exploiting as well as protecting natural resources with specific officials tasked with protection duty. When Aśoka embraced Buddhism in the latter part of his reign, he brought about significant changes in his style of governance, which included providing protection to animals, and even relinquished the royal hunt. He did not completely prohibit the killing of animals; he prohibited gratuitous killings (such as for sacrifices), advocated restraint in the number killed for consumption, protected some animals, and in general condemned violent acts against animals, such as castration. He may have been the first ruler in history to advocate conservation measures for wildlife. 17

Social and animal welfare

According to the edicts, Aśoka took great care of the welfare of his subjects (human and animal), and those beyond his borders, spreading the use of medicinal

17. Rangarajan M., India’s wildlife History (2001) p. 8
treatments, improving roadside facilities for more comfortable travel, and establishing "officers of the faith" throughout his territories to survey the welfare of the population and the propagation of the Dharma.

However, the edicts of Aśoka reflect more the desire of rulers than actual events; the mention of a 100 'panas' (coins) fine for poaching deer in royal hunting preserves shows that rule-breakers did exist. The legal restrictions conflicted with the practices then freely exercised by the common people in hunting, felling, fishing and setting fires in forests. 18

**Medicinal treatments**

Everywhere within Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi’s domain, and among the people beyond the borders, the Cholas, the Pandyas, the Satiyaputras, the Keralaputras, as far as Tamraparni and where the Greek king Antiochos rules, and among the kings who are neighbors of Antiochos, everywhere has Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, made provision for two types of medical treatment: medical treatment for humans and medical treatment for animals.

Wherever medical herbs suitable for humans or animals are not available, I have had them imported and grown. Wherever medical roots or fruits are not available I have had them imported and grown. Along roads I have had wells dug and trees planted for the benefit of humans and animals. Rock Edict Nb2 (S. Dhammika)

**Roadside facilities**

Along roads I have had banyan trees planted so that they can give shade to animals and men, and I have had mango groves planted. At intervals of eight /krosas/, I have had wells dug, rest-houses built, and in various places, I have had watering-places made for the use of animals and men. But these are but minor achievements. Such things to make the people happy have been done by former kings. I have done these

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things for this purpose, that the people might practice the Dhamma. Pilar Edict Nb7 (S. Dhammika)

**Officers of the faith**

In past there were no Dhamma Mahamatras but such officers were appointed by me thirteen years after my coronation. Now they work among all religions for the establishment of Dhamma, for the promotion of Dhamma, and for the welfare and happiness of all who are devoted to Dhamma. They work among the Greeks, the Kambojas, the Gandharas, the Rastrikas, the Pitinikas and other peoples on the western borders. They work among soldiers, chiefs, Brahmans, householders, the poor, the aged and those devoted to Dhamma – for their welfare and happiness – so that they may be free from harassment. Rock Edict Nb5 (S. Dhammika)

Thus the Buddhist inscriptions provide us information regarding the position and importance of Animals as well as social status and welfare of Animals in early Buddhism period.
B. Animals depicted on caves and Paintings

The earliest known examples of rock cut architecture in India are the caves in Barabar and Nagarjuni Hills near Patna in Bihar. They were excavated during the reign of Aśoka the Great, and were dedicated to the monks of the Ajivika sect as their dwellings during the rains (Varshanisidiya). With the growth of Buddhist monastic establishments, there was felt a pressing need to find permanent dwellings for the Buddhist Samaṇas who were required to stay in one place during the rainy season. The wooden hills of the western ghats seemed the right type of place where they could carve out their permanent lodging and could at the same time be placed for corporate worship. During Aśoka’s time Buddhism had entered western India. Two groups of rock cut caves are found clustered around Aśoka’s fourteen Rock Edicts, viz. at Junagadh at the foot of the ancient Raivataka hills in Saurashtra, and also in the vicinity of Sopara. There are about hundred and forty caves in the region around Junagadh, which consist of either a single cell or a series of cells. ¹⁹

The rock cut excavation took the form of a most vigorous movement ever witnessed in the field of Indian architecture. This particular form of architecture continued for a very long time beginning from the third century B.C. throughout the first millennium A.D. The rock cut architecture spreads over two phases, the earlier one of Hinayana art Buddha is shown in form of symbols only. Then there is a gap of about three centuries with great vigour. This latter phase was inspired by the Mahayana movement in Buddhism in which Buddha is shown in human form. These monastic institutions were the most remarkable contribution of Buddhism to Indian culture. ²⁰

Altogether there are twelve hundred distinct excavations in India. Some of these groups contain as many as hundred distinct caves i.e. caves of Junnar (near

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19. Meshram Pradip Saligram, Early caves of Maharashtra p.: 1
20. Ibid p. 2
Poona) and Kanheri. Of these about nine hundred are Buddhist and the remaining three hundred are of Jaina and Brahmanical origin.

Most of these Buddhist caves are scattered in the western Maharashtra. All these caves have been cut out of the solid rock. They are of two classes (1) Caitya halls, and (2) Vihāra. Of the Caitya halls not more than twenty known to exist in Maharashtra the rest are all Vihāra (monasteries).

There are eight important Caitya halls excavated in the Hinayana Period (200 B.C. to 200 A.D.) viz., Bhaja, Kondane, Pitalkhora, Ajanta (Cave X), Bedsa, Ajanta (Cave IX), Nasik and Karle, These are most probably excavated in the order named above. The first four in second century B.C. and the remaining in first century B.C. Except at Bhaja, there is very little sculpture carved in the earliest Vihāras and Caitya halls, none of any great beauty or interest. 21.

The rock-cut monasteries were used for the accommodation of the monks, which was known as the vihāra. A vihāra is a residence for one monk and would consist of a single cell. A group of such apartments for a community of monks was called Sangharama.

During the period Gandhara, Mathura in the north India, Bharhut, Sanchi and Pauni in east, Amravati, Nāgārjunakoṇḍa and Bhāttiprolu in the south played great role in the development of Buddhist art and architecture. This was the most flourishing period of Buddhism not only in Maharashtra but also in other parts of India.

The Buddhist monuments in Sanchi were built over a period of 1400 years, from the 3rd Century B.C. to 12th Century A.D. These Buddhist monuments are

21. Meshram Pradip Saligram *op. cit.* p. 3
included in the World Heritage list of UNESCO since 1989. Sanchi became an important commercial town when Aśoka (272 B.C. to 232 B.C.) occupied the Mauryan throne at Pataliputra. Agnimitra, the son of Puṣyantra Sunga shifted the capital from Pataliputra to Sanchi. The Buddhist edifices which were created during the Sunga rule (187 B.C. to 75 B.C.) such as those at Sanchi and Bharhut are among the grandest creations in India.

The Śātavahanas were a mighty power after Mauryas and a large number of Buddhist rock-cut temples were excavated during their reign in western India. 22

The animal figures on the gateways are the finest of their kind in India. The Sculptors understood the ways of animals and portrayed them with faithful and facile touch. To the sculptors of Sanchi, man was not what he had been to the sculptors of Greece – a thing of consummate physical beauty; nor was he what he was destined to become in the Golden Age of India or in the Renaissance of Italy and embodiment of ethical or spirituals ideals. He was far more than a mere item in the landscape of the universe. The Sanchi sculptures have been called “the Jungle book of India”. They are much more than that. They are a compendium of life in all its aspects. If they have graphic pictures to show us of life in the forest, they have equally graphic ones of life in court and city. 23

The Buddhist art and architecture has taken great care of animals, their importance and depicted them on various sculptures, caves and paintings.

**Animals represented on Sculptures and Paintings.**

Animals represented in the early sculptures and paintings of Maharashtra are of two classes, namely, the real and the mythical animals (Ihamriga or Vyalas). The latter

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22. Dhavalikar M.K.; *Monumental Legacy, Sanchi* p. 2

23. Dr. Rao Manjushree, *Sanchi Sculptures – An Aesthetic and Cultural Study* p. 66
are in a large variety include lions with beak or wings, winged horses, winged elephants, sphinxes etc. The real animals comprise quadrupeds like elephant, horse, bullock, deer, camel, lion, monkey, boar, reptiles like the nagas, python, birds like peacock, goose and aquatic animals such as fish, crocodile, etc. 24

I) CREEPING ANIMALS.

Creeping animals are those which are liable to move upon a firm surface without the aid of paired joined limbs. Under this category fall the serpents or snakes with their row of broad ventral scales. The creeping animals can be classified as under: (i) Nagas (ii) Python.

i) Nāgas

A hooded Naga occurs on each side of the Caitya cave (No. XII) of Nasik. Similar Nāgas are carved on the facades of Bedsa and Karle caves. The Nāga-snake, serpent has always been an object of fear and wonder. The serpent worship has existed in ancient India from pre-Vedic times. They were associated with trees and water and also guardians of treasures underground. The serpent power is embodied in Ananta, the endless.

ii) Python

In the early paintings of Ajanta (Cave X, Ṣaḍ-danta Jātaka) we can see a big python coiled to the tree. One of the elephant’s trunk can be seen in his mouth.

II) SWIMMING ANIMALS

i) Fish

A vihāra (No. XV) at Nadsur contains a bas relief depiction of a large fish upon which are standing male and female figures. The mouth of the fish which shows a row of teeth, top and bottom, is slightly open, and the tail is curved over to the back.

Among the aquatic animals, the fish is supposed to be so beautiful and attractive in appearance.

ii) Crocodile

In the early paintings of Ajanta(Ṣaḍ-danta Jātaka, below the python) we can notice a crocodile under the feet of an elephant which is lying on its back with its jaws wide open as if groaning with pain. The elephant has placed one of his fore-legs on the belly of crocodile and is exerting further pressure with his trunk.

III) LOCOMOTIVE ANIMALS

The animals who have adapted themselves for locomotion included lion, elephant, horse, bullock, boar, bear, camel and wolf. These animals are realistically depicted in the early paintings and sculptures. They can be divided into (i) wild and (ii) domestic animals. Lions, elephants, wolves, boars, bears and camels fall in the category of wild animals while the horses and bullocks come under the domestic head. 25

i) Wild animals

1) Lion

Lion is frequently depicted in the reliefs and is easily distinguishable by his mane surrounding his head. In the vihāra of Bhaja below Indra’s panel a lion face is carved in very low-relief. On the Nadsur (Cave VII), Nasik (cave no. III and VIII) and Tulaja cave lions are depicted. At Karle and Kanheri the lions appear on the pillar capital in front of the entrance.

Lion is a symbol of sovereignty. He is supposed to be the guardian of the North. He appears on several coins of Sātavāhana Kings. In the early Buddhist sculptures the lion appears in different forms and postures.

25. Meshram Pradip saligramop.cit.p.138
The lion is a royal beast, having princely qualities. He is the king of the forest. The lion would not stoop to lower himself. He would not touch a blade of grass and treat herb as his food. Even in killing the animals he would only aim at the highest and the most majestic of animals. 26

The tiger, however being a cunning animal is not a noble one like the lion. Nevertheless, he has great strength and his strength is stressed in describing the might of kings as on the Gupta coins, where King Samudra Gupta fights the tiger.

2) **Bear.**
A bear is represented only in Indra’s panel at Bhaja (below the elephant). A slightly open mouth shows a row of pointed teeth.

3) **Wolf**
A pair of wolves is shown on the pillar of Nasik cave (No. III) and at Pitalkhora. They are shown with grinning teeth. At Pitalkhora wolves are shown with riders.

4) **Boar**
A boar is another kind of wild animal represented at Nasik (Cave III) and at Kanheri (Cave III). In the porch of the cave of Horizontal band of animals is carved in which boars are shown.

5) **Camel**
Camels, are shown in the horizontal band, carved outside the Kanheri cave (No. III). Here camels are shown with a row of other animals like elephant, bull, boar. According to V.S.Agrawala this corresponds to the Catuspadapankti motif mentioned in Mahāvamsa. 27

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26. Sivarammurthi c. *Birds and animals in Indian sculptures* p.11
The camel portrayed at Sanchi on Stūpa 2 and Stūpa 1, is the two-humped Bactrian animal, although the sculptors were not at home with these animals, and the relative proportions of the beast on the northern gateway are fairly accurate, and the eyes and ears are reasonably correct, though the drawing of the head is lacking in character. In other examples, the animals are disproportioned to their riders, the ears are out of place, and the eyes look more like protuberances on the skull than what they are intended to be, and the two humps are exaggerated. The sculptor has successfully shown the peculiar bend of the hind legs.

6) Elephant

The elephant seems to have been a favourite subject for the artists who depicted them abundantly both in the paintings and sculptures of our period. The animal is represented in almost every possible position such as standing, kneeling, walking, running, sitting, eating, drinking, and on the stupa.²⁸

At Pithalkhora and Karle elephant figures are shown as half projecting forward from the rock. Their prototypes can be seen at Dhauli in Orissa depicted in the Mauryan period. The elephants roamed in forest since prehistoric times. They are represented on Harappan seals and are of common occurrence in Indian art and literature. In ancient times they were a symbol of sovereignty. The elephants were used for a variety of purposed and their tusks were a major item of export to western world. Today, the animal is confined to the forests of Mysore and Assam.

The elephants in Sanchi sculptures are so attractive because of their unaffected naturalism as in human figures. The elephants are the most striking among them. The best elephant appears on the back of the southern gateway, the worst on the back of northern gateway. Some fine workmanship is seen in the elephants of the lowest architrave in front of the western gateway, but the elephants on the left half of this architrave show a better understanding of the head and ear

²⁸ Meshram Pradip Saligram, op.cit.p139
structure than those in the right. The pair of elephants on the southern false capital are superior to those on the northern. The elephants doing honour to the Rāmagāma stūpa on the lowest architrave at the back of eastern gateway are not very successful. The five elephants to the left of the stūpa are evidently by a different hand from the rest, and their treatment is more skilful. All are stilted and wooden, especially at the legs, and the modeling lacks both vigour and truth. 29

The majestic elephant is a noble inspiring animal. He is the embodiment of great strength yet gentle in his approach to those pigmies who control him. The trumpeting of the elephant on the battlefield strikes terror in the enemy. In the battles the rages in ancient India, the elephant had an honoured place in it. Thus, elephant became the symbol of strength, stability and protection.

ii) Domestic Animals

1) Bullocks.

Two types of bulls short-horned or humpless (Vrishabha) and Brahmi or humped (Bos Indicus) were frequently represented in early sculptures. They are shown in almost every possible position. Bhaja and Nadsur (Cave VII), in the centre of the nich, two bulls are shown apparently fighting, caves at Shalarwadi and Kuda contain figures of humped bulls which have been used to decorate the pillars and the benches.

Bulls motif is shown carved on the pillars as well as on the rail on the doorway at Karle, Nasik, Pitalkhora, Bhaja, Bedsa and Kanheri, Sātavāhana kings seem to have issued the bull-type coins which were of long standing and were perhaps, more popular. These are the Buddhist monuments and the presence of the bull appears in some way connected with the Buddha whose birth sign is Taurus. 30

29. Dr. Rao Manjushree, Sanchi Sculpture An Aesthetic and Cultural Study, p 66
The bull was known in India from very early times. They have been represented on a large number of seal discovered at Harappa and Mohenjodaro. Comparable examples of bullocks occur in the sculptures of Bharut, Gandhara, Amaravati, and Sanchi.

The bull is considered as the most formidable, deadly with its horns and quick and undaunted in attack. The subjugation of bull by man ensured abundant food supply and transport power. Its virility and association with agriculture made it a symbol of masculinity and fertility. Based on these virtues, bull became a sacred animal.

Besides its utility in the agriculture fields, the bull also epitomizes the very culture of India. It demonstrates the great principle of living. The bull toils the whole day in the hot sun and helps to cultivate the fields for producing grains. In return for its hard labour it gets only some dry grass and water for its sustenance. It plays its role without worries of the past and anxieties of the future. It nearly does what it ought to do in life. That is the highest principle of action, the best code of living. The ancient Indians recognized this lofty principle in the life of a bull. They tried to emulate it in all their activities. They invoked the sacrificial spirit of the bull in their own lives. They worshipped the bull.

The humped bull is portrayed with much simplicity and directness. A pair of seated bull with riders on the top false capital on the northern side in front of the eastern gateway and other representations may be seen on the corresponding false capital to the left of the same gateway and on the lowest false capitals in front of the northern gateway. The forms of the bulls are fatter and clumsier. The bulls and riders exhibit breadth and directness of their treatment, without any conscious straining after-effect, and they are typical of the traditional spirit of Malwa art and they are well

31. Parthasarthy A; *The symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals*, p. 113
comparable with the Brahmanical bulls engraved on the seals of Mohenjodaro. The Sanchi artist has given a natural, unassuming dignity to the bulls from direct observation of his subjects.\textsuperscript{32}

2) \textbf{Horses}

Horses are frequently depicted in the early sculptures and paintings. The horse Kanthaka gets depiction once at Pitalkhora. At Bhaja the Sun chariot is shown drawn by four horses. We get several depictions of horse-riders in the sculptures.

The earliest literary reference to horses with riders is found in records of Hammurabi (c.2000 B.C.). In Bharhut sculptures horse is rarely depicted. But in the contemporary sculptures at Sanchi its depiction is profuse. The horse Kanthaka (in “Great Departure panel) is depicted more than once at Amaravati.

One horse nuzzling into the neck of another is a telling piece of work, otherwise other horses are mere stereotyped representations. A light riding pony very like the present day Arab, which is figures at the extreme left end of the bottom architrave at the back of northern gateway, and a sturdy type of a draft horse illustrated on the two middle false capitals in front of the western gateway are distinguishable and resemble Konarka horses. Most of them are related to the Marwari pony. All the horses are plumed and caparisoned. The pairs of horses with their riders and pairs of other fabulous animals in corresponding positions; winged and horned lions, winged griffins, humped-bulls and camels decorate the false capitals. The sculptors know well how to use them to their best advantage, and hence they have been used without any hesitation or feeling.\textsuperscript{33}

The horse is very swift and is usually depicted galloping and prancing. The ancient Indian chariots or rather rathas were driven by speedy horses. The power of

\textsuperscript{32} Dr. Rao Manjushree, \textit{Sanchi Sculpture An Aesthetic and Cultural Study} p. 67

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid.
horse was exploited by man until the advent of the machine age. Horse played vital role in agriculture, hunting, racing, and lent pomp and pageantry of royalty. The maneuvering ability of horse in warfare made him a valuable associate of man in battlefields. The association of the horse with the sun and water cosmology and fertility is well reflected in the Indian legends.

3) Buffaloes

   The buffaloes in the “Adoration of the Buddha” scene, on the back of eastern gateway, are also remarkable but there is a marked difference between the animals in the right and left halves of the two panels. The deer to the right of sacred wheel are recognizable as black-buck, with their does behind them. They are grouped with full freedom and create illusion of depth as a work of a well-practiced hand. Foreshortening of the crouching buck to the left of the group is noteworthy. In the panel of eastern gateway it is the left half of the relief that is more successful. The beast to the right of the central tree is a buffalo although his horns are wrongly set, the buffaloes on the left side “are first-class bits of sculpture, living images of those uniquely slow and patient-working beasts.”

   On the other hand, a buffalo is the very embodiment of sloth and so lazy that when birds peck on him he is almost unaware of it. The buffalo is the mount of Yama, the lord of death, who drives terror in the hearts of people. The cut head of the buffalo represents completely every type of darkness and ignorance.

4) Cat

   The cat has been conceived as a great hypocrite while the dog is a loyal and faithful companion of man. The hare is the most innocent of animals. This beautiful creature, humble and swift could save himself in any situation. The tortoise is a

34. Dr. Rao Manjushree, op. cit. p. 67
symbol of perseverance. Though very slow, he is steady and reaches his goal as narrated in the fable, ahead of the hare. The tortoise is also the symbol of might and has capacity to bear the most impossible burden.

The birds are also noted for their special traits. The parrot is supposed to talk when trained.

IV) JUMPING CREATURES

1) Stag

The stag gets realistic depictions both in the early paintings and the sculptures. In the Syāma Jātaka (Ajanta, X) they are shown in herd. Here the galloping of stag has been shown in a very faithful manner. In the same panel long and wavy horns of the stag are shown in the act of grazing. In the cave of Pitalkhora (cave IV), body of the stag is carved slightly pitted. Another depiction of stag appears in the Surya panel at Bhaja and Kuda (Cave no. VI).

The stag’s capacity to grow new antlers again after the old ones fall, made this animal a symbol of fertility too. 35

2) Deer

In the paintings and sculptures of our period deer got depiction at several times. In the panel of Syāma Jātaka (Ajanta, X) in the scenes of the forest they are shown running towards the cottage of Syāma. In the same panel (last episode) another deer is shown seated with her companion. In the sculptures of Nasik (Cave IV) deer is shown with another animals.

Comparable examples of the deer occur in the sculptures of Gandhara, Amaravati, Sanchi, and Bharhut.

35. Meshram Pradip Saligram op.cit.p. 141
The deer is the most gentle among animals. He suggests childlike innocence and is looked after with tender affection even by sages. The deer is a symbol of auspiciousness and holiness. The poets in India describe the beauty of fawn eye to which most feminine eye painted deep dark with kohl is compared.\textsuperscript{56}

The golden deer represents the fascinating sense-objects like colour and form for the eyes, sound for the ears, taste for the tongue, smell for the nose and touch for the skin. The joys derived from the sense-objects are transient and fleeting. They swiftly pass away like the deer.
And yet man falls prey to their golden enchantment and becomes a slave to his own sense organs – the five organs of perception and the five organs of action.

4) Monkey

The monkey was apparently a favourite subject for the artists. They are depicted in the scene of Shad-danta Jataka (Ajanta, X) only. Here they are shown sitting, playing on the terrance of the palace. In all these cases a long tail of the monkey is shown very realistically. Comparable examples occur in the sculptures of Sanchi, Gandhara and Bharhut.

The monkey is the very symbol of fickleness. The unsteady mind is compared to a monkey. The monkey forces represent the human mind. A monkey, like human thought, has two distinct qualities referred to as asthira (unstable) and cañcalā (wavering). Both these terms mean unstable. \textit{Sthira} means being firm at one place. Asthira is not being firm i.e. moving from one place to another. \textit{Cañcalā} is movement of the body while it is stationary in one place. A monkey is asthira in the sense that it cannot remain in one place. It keeps jumping about all the time. That is the nature of a monkey. Even if it is tied up in one place, a monkey keeps fidgeting

\footnote{Parthasarthy A, \textit{The symbolism of Hindu Gods and Rituals}, p. 87}
all the time indicating its cañcala nature. The human mind has these two qualities as well. It keeps on jumping from thought to thought. Roused to fury, the monkey can devastate anything. In the rock-cut sculpture of a Monkey family, Mamallapuram, the father is shown removing lice from the head of the mother. A young one is fondled by the mother in her lap.  

V) FLYING CREATURES

Under this category are included the birds like peacock, dove, goose which are depicted frequently in the sculptures and painting of our period.

1) Dove

The dove is shown in ponds in front of the hut of Syāma in the early paintings of Ajanta (Cave X). The bird is shown swimming in the water of the pond.

2) Goose

Hamsa, the Indian goose with red beak and snow white body flying sky high, is the symbol of valued excellence. It occurs once on the door of Gautamiputra cave Nasik on the right side where it is depicted at the right foot of a female with its beak upturned as if swallowing the water drops falling her wet hair (Karpūramaṇī). From the time of Aśoka, goose is a favourite element of decorative art. In Sanskrit and Pali literatures we frequently come across an aquatic bird called hamsa, and this word, means not only a goose but also a swan and flamingo.  

The swan or hamsa has capacity to sift and eliminate bad from the goods and accept only the best. The ascetics and philosophers who accept the highest truth of philosophy are called Paramahamsas.  

38. Vogel, J. Ph, The Goose in Indian Literature and Art p. 1
39. Sivaramamurti C - op. cit. p. 26
3) Peacock

The peacock is the most glamorous of Indian birds, with its fascinating colours, graceful flowing lines and its long luxuriant feathers. In the panel of Šad-danta Jātaka (Ajanta, X) the peacock is shown watching the cruel act of the hunter. The fresco is damaged at this place, but the tail feathers and the body of a peacock (on the right side) we can see a couple of peacock seated on the branch of the tree.  

Indian peacock is very restless especially at the approach of the rains. It is mostly wild (ranabarchi) but occasionally is tamed for play (Krida Mayura). Its Hebrew name (Thakkiyyim is said to have been derived from the Tamil word tuka. The peacock appears in the early sculptures of Gandhara, Sanchi and Bharhut.

The peacock is a beautiful bird with the brightest plumage. When the sky is filled with black clouds auguring rain, peacock expresses his joy by dancing in most hilarious way, spreading his plumage in a semi-circle.

The crow is the emblem of god of evil, Sanaiscara, who is of dark complexion. The crow is compared to something useless and unworthy. There is however a peculiar belief that the cawing of a crow has a message and is supposed to suggest the arrival of a guest.

The Cakkavāka pair is the most ideal expression of constancy in love and the bird is always represented in a pair as a symbol of affection.

The Sarasa cranes, the hamsas and the chataka birds fly in srenis or long rows against the dark clouds in the sky, expressing their joy in the rain and downpour

40. Yazdani G, Meshram Pradip Saligram, op. cit. p.142
41. Iyer. B., op. cit. p. 82
augured by the laden clouds. Their warble is so sweet and so expressive of their joy, that men and women look up and appreciate the beauty of their white form against the dark background of moving clouds.

The eagle has great wing power and traverses the heavens flying so high that it appears close to the sun and probably because of this, it came to be looked upon in the ancient world as the sun-bird.

As seen above, the fauna known to Maharashtra were abundant. The carnivorous animals like lions, wolves, herbivorous animals like deer and stag; domesticated animals like bullocks, horses were all known to the people of Maharashtra. The elephant was used for both State and ordinary occasions. The Hamsa seems to be the pet bird of pleasure for ladies. The birds like peacock can be seen in the Maharashtra even today. As for the aquatic beings, several rivers and sea shores provided a variety of fishes. Hiuen Tsiang described that “beyond the Ghats, the land is wild and desolate, full of tigers, apes and hug pythons” in Nahapanas times. However, wild animals like lions and elephants are not to be seen in Maharashtra but pythons are quite in number.

**MYTHICAL ANIMALS (VYALAS)**

The primitive man, the half-human and half -animal figure was quite a credible one. Pre-historic cave paintings depict him as a fantastic man-cum-animal. The composite form made up of different creatures must have appeared to the imagination of ancient man as more powerful than its constituents possessing magical virtues.

Animal attributes such as wings, horns and fish tail represent three distinct capabilities which ancient men desired to possess. Wings bestow the power of flying through the air, horns symbolize great striking power and the fish tail denotes the ability to move freely in water.
The winged animals like lion, bull, horses, deer, griffin, goats, elephants etc. display their newborn power. Horns are considered as formidable weapons of offence and defense. Ancient man regarded them as emblems of prowess. \(^{42}\)

The mythical animals or Vyalas represented in the early sculptures and paintings are in a large variety. They can be divided into two types namely (i) terrestrial (bhūcarin), (ii) aerial (vyomacarin)

Five-hooded Nagas, beaked animals, horse-headed Yakṣi and Sphinx are classed as terrestrial type and winged animals as the aerial type.

(I) TERRESTRIAL (BHUCARIN ANIMALS)

1) Five-hooded Naga

A huge five-hooded Naga, the most curious figures, can be seen over the doorway of the cell of Nadsur cave (No.VII) whose voluminous folds extend in several rolls.

Another five-hooded Naga occurs on the wall of Pitalkhora cave (No.IV) in a low relief. There are holes in the hoods of the Naga.\(^ {43}\)

The worship of nature-spirits like the nagas, the serpent-kings of the waters has a hoary antiquity in India. At Ajanta sculpture, the nagas are represented on the door-jambs of the entrance-doorway to vihāras and the inner cells containing the Buddha image. In all cases they are depicted as performing the function of the guardian deities.\(^ {44}\)

\(^{42}\) Iyer Bharota, *Animals in Indian Sculptures* p. 11
\(^{43}\) Deshpande M.N. *op. cit.* p.p. 74 - 75
\(^{44}\) Ghosh A. *op. cit.* p. 26
Nāgarāja and his consort on a rocky seat, on the wall to the right of the entrance are depicted in cave 19. Smaller panels depicting the nāga-rāja with a five headed canopy and his consort with a single hood over the head are also carved in caves 1, 2 and 23. The Nāgās or snakes are given human forms except for the hood of snake heads which was put round their heads. There was a belief that the worship of The Nāgā brings rains. Even nowadays peasants consider snakes auspicious. Cave 26 shows Nāgas holding the stem of the lotus.

2. **Beaked Tigers**

The beaked tigers, sitting back to back on the pillar capitals occur more than once a Nasik caves (No. X and XVII). The beak of the tiger is similar to that of the parrot which seems to have been affixed to the mouth of tigers. Another beaked tiger with a long rounded ear occurs at Kuda cave in the panel of Herdsman with other animals.

At Ajanta (Cave IX), in Herdsman frieze, occurs a tiger with the horns and the head of an antelope running in company of other animals. A Herdsman, like a little dwarf figure, who possessed Herculean strength and could control the movements of the wildest animals is shown holding their neck and tails in his hands. Similar Herdsman frieze occurs a Kuda chaitya cave (No. VI).

3. **Pair of Horses**

In the debris of Pitalkhora vihāra (No. IV) cave was found a pilaster of horses. This pilaster shows the horses joined back to back in a manner which approximates with that of Persepolitan capital.

4. **Lion-faced Ram**

In a fragmentary pilaster of Pitalkhora cave (No. IV) is shown a couchant ram with the face of a lion horns of a ram and the body and hoofs of a bull.

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45. Meshram Pradip Saligram Yazdani G. *op.cit.*, p.144.
5. **Horse-headed Yakshi**

In the panel of Indra at Bhaja is shown a Kinnari or a horse-headed Yakshi with female body. Her right hand is touching the shoulder of her companions. She is not absolutely nude but is wearing a headed girdle of three rows. According to Pada-Kūsala Mānava Jātaka\(^6\) she plays a very prominent role. She was a former queen of Benares, born as a horse-faced Yakṣi (Aśvamukhī) as a result of punishment for uttering a lie. Once she invited a Brahmin to meal. But he was too beautiful that she fell in love with him and kept him locked up in her cave. Mathura has a relief showing Aśvamukhī Yakṣi lovingly caring her hand on the shoulders of the young Brahmin.\(^7\) In course of time the Bodhisattva was born to them as their son. At Sanchi there is an interesting representation of Aśvamukhī) carrying the Bodhisattva as a child in her arms, and gathering mango fruits to feed him. Horse-headed Yakṣi also occurs in the sculptures of Bodhagaya.

6. **Sphinxes**

On the pillar No.13 Karle, facing the main entrance occurs an animal called sphinx. It has long ear-flaps pendants from a tight head-dress on a human face with floppy ears. The front claws are clear, but the main body of the animal is concealed by the body of the horse. Moreover, the supports left in the rock below the paws make the figure look like a squatting human dwarf from the ground. The sphinx, which faces the observers on left, is ridden by a man, the adjoining horse by a woman. This is unknown elsewhere in Indian iconography, but would bespeak powerful Greek influence. Another example of sphinx occurs at the left pillar (No. 11) of the Karle caitya cave. However, the human face is disproportionate largely, without earflaps.

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\(^6\) Fousboll, *Jātaka*, III (No. 432) pp507 - 514

\(^7\) Joshi, N.P. *Mathura Sculpture Pl. 16*
7. **Sphinxes with bovine bodies**

On the capitals of Bhaja (Cave XX), is shown a couple with human bodies from the waist up and of cows and bullocks from the waist down. These are sometimes termed as sphinxes, but resemble more with the classical centaur.  

V. S. Agrawala identifies them with Pungava-Pungavi. According to A. V. Naik of these figures are exceptionally fabulous like the sphinxes of Greek mythology.

8. **Human-faced Sphinxes**

The figures of sphinxes with human face and animal body and legs with hoof of animal, occur on the verandah pillars of Vihāra caves (No. III and VIII) at Nasik. Such sphinxes also occur on one of the pillars at Bedsa but here they are shown supporting the male and female riders.

(II) **Aerial (Vyomacarin) Animals**

1. **Winged Horse**

Two winged horses with up raised arms as if supporting the balustrade are shown in the case of Bhaja. Another example of this type with a prancing winged horse occurs in the corner of a triangular panel of Pitalkhora where two Yakṣas are also seen in low reliefs. Pairs of winged horses are represented on the capital pillars at Pitalkhora more than once. Horses have long, narrow wings attached to the legs by a band under the shoulders. Such winged figures are rare in the early period and occurs only in Amravati reliefs.

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50. Sivarammurti C - BMGM, P-IV, 8
2. **Winged Lions**

A pair of maned winged lions is represented in the sculptures of Pithalkhora cave only. These winged lions are shown in sculptures on the capital of pillars in an elevated position. Winged lions also occur in Amravati, sculptures and on the western gateway of Sanchi.

3. **Winged Elephants**

The winged elephants are shown tamely sitting back to back on the Pithalkhora pillar capitals. This is the only depiction in the entire range of the reliefs.

4. **Winged Camels.**

At Pithalkhora a pair of animals is represented with the heads of camels and the bodies and paws of a feline animal having long narrow wings attached to the legs by a band under the shoulder.

5. **Winged Wolves**

Next to the above pair are shown winged wolves with heavy paws and grinning teeth, like all other winged animals, they are sitting on the capital of the pillars.

6. **Winged Male Sphinxes**

A pair of winged sphinxes is represented by the side of the door and the window of the cell at Pithalkhora Vihāra. One of the two whose body is behind showing his teeth. The other has an ordinary human face and the wings, like all those other animal figures in this cave.
In early sculptures, these animal figures were used as architectural motifs. The Vyala sculptures at Bharhut, Sanchi, Amravati and Nāgārjunakoṭīa reveal almost identical shapes. The winged lions of Persia also resemble very much to those at Sanchi, Amravati and Pitalkhora. 51

LION CAPITAL

The most important sculptural remains of the Mauryan period are the capitals and crowning animal figures which provide an excellent evidence of sculptural art between 250 BC and 232 BC. The capital of each pillar like the shaft was monolithic comprising three principal members namely a bell, abacus and crowning sculpture in the round. The function between the shaft and the abacus was marked by a necking, the edge of abacus was decorated with bas relief designs and the crowning sculpture was occasionally a sacred symbol, such as a wheel or a symbolic animal or group of animals. 52

The best known Mauryan capital is that of the pillar of Samath. The abacus of the capital exhibits geese and honey-suckle pattern. The geese are noted for their

51. Meshram Pradip Saligram, op.cit.p. 147
52. Dr. Rao Manjushree, op.cit. p.74
traditional habit of separating milk from water. In the same way the Buddhist monks were famous for dissecting truth from untruth. That is why the geese may be taken as symbolical of the Buddhist Samgha.

The four lions which are seated adored on the abacus represent the Buddha as the sākyasimha. Throughout his career the Buddha remained indefatigable in religious and social meetings, gatherings, controversies, disputations and deliberations. That is why, he was said to have roared like a lion.

The epithet ‘lion’ may also be taken to mean that he was foremost amongst the religious leader of his times who discovered an all-abiding truth known as ‘the Four Noble Truths’, in Indian History. His discovery was unparallel and at once original which pervaded the whole world for thousands of years and even now it is a living force acknowledged by all. On the abacus the four lions symbolize that the Buddha’s message was carried to all the four directions of the globe, to each and every hook and corner of the earth not only in India but also in south-east Asia, North of Tibet, Nepal, China, Central Asia, Europe, etc. 53

This capital consists of an inverted lotus with gently carved petals. On the abacus are carved a lion, a galloping horse, an elephant and a bull separated from each other by a wheel. 54 These animals represent the turning points in Buddha’s life. The elephant symbolizes his conception of life in the womb of his mother, the bull his youth, the horse his renunciation of worldly life and the lion his attainment of enlightenment. Together they symbolize the four quarters of the universe, the elephant being the guardian of the east, the horse of the south, the bull as at Ramapurva of the west, and the lion as in the Nadangarh example, of the north. The four lions on top represent the physical power of the world.

53. Ibid p. 74
54. Chauley, G.C., Earliest Buddhist Art in India p. 8
It is however in the massive Buddhist composition poised above the abacus that the greatest imagination has been shown and symbolism utilized to its utmost extent. Most of the super structures consist of figures of animals, each of which has a mythological meaning.

Thus the lion-capital as a whole is entirely symbolical of the Buddha, his Sermon and his Sangha. These three principal elements are represented collectively in the *triratna* symbol which appears in the succeeding age of the Sungas.  

The lion capital of Sarnath is now the emblem of the Indian Republic.

Another fine artistic composition of the Mauryan is the frieze of elephants to the façade of the Lomas Rishi cave on the slopes of the Barabar hill near Gaya in Bihar. The elephant of Dhauli in Orissa is hewn out from a rock on which are carved the edicts of Aśoka. The sculpture shows a remarkable knowledge of the animal physiognomy. The elephant of the Sankisa capital is well modeled but unfortunately has been badly mutilated. The abacus of the Lauriya Nadangarh pillar is decorated by a row of flying sacred geese in quite low relief. The abacus of the pillars at Allahabad and the Bull-capital at Rampurva exhibit elegant designs composed of the lotus or honey suckle. The bull from Rampurva is probably the most effective early representation of the animal subsequent to the seals of Mohen-jo-daro.

Historian V.A Smith remarked, “It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient animal sculpture, superior or even equal to this beautiful work of art, which successfully combines realistic modeling with ideal dignity and is finished in every detail with perfect harmony”.

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55. Dr. Rao Manushree, *op.cit.*pp. 74 - 75
56. Sivarammurty C. *op.cit.*p., 18
BULL CAPITAL

Sanchi Stupa No.1, Full View, Madhya Pradesh

The bull capital of Aūoka from Rampurva, Bihar, also belonging to the third century B.C. is an interesting study as it is a mixture of Persian and Indian elements. The lotus capital is entirely formalistic. The motifs on the abacus are beautiful decorative elements like the rosette, palmette and the acanthus ornaments, none of them Indian.

However, the crowning element of the bull capital, that is the bull proper, is a master-piece of Indian craftsmanship, showing a humped bull, well modeled, with its soft flesh beautifully represented, with its strong legs, sensitive nostrils and the ears cocked as if it were listening. 57

AJANTA CAVE PAINTINGS

Ajanta caves are 107 kilometers North-East of Aurangabad. They depict the stories of Buddhism spanning from the period of 200 B.C. and 650 A.D. Ajanta Caves were discovered by a team of British Officers in 19th Century. It was only the accidental discovery of a British Captain John Smith, in 1819, which was out on a

hunting expedition that brought this monument to light. Cut into the semi-arid hills, the horse shoe-shaped Ajanta Caves are lying deep within the Sahayadari Hills in Maharashtra above the Waghoor River.

The Ajanta caves are exclusively Buddhist. There are altogether 29 caves of which the cave numbers 2, 3, 5, 8, 23 to 25 and 28 are unfinished. The numbers given to the caves are merely for convenience and do not represent their chronological order. Some caves have sculptures where as the others have wall paintings also. These paintings cannot be designated as frescos technically as in the western painting style because the paint in Ajanta and in other places in India was not applied on wet surface like in European frescos.

These paintings originating from the sixth and seventh centuries CE are much older than the paintings of the Renaissance Period in Europe. They represent the same importance and significance in the history of Asian Art as the Renaissance Period paintings have for the history of European Art. All Buddhist painting in South East Asia, Sri Lanka, Burma, China, Korea and Japan was inspired by the wall paintings of Ajanta. The sculptures and paintings at Ajanta depict scenes from life of Sidhartha Gautam Buddha and from the Jātaka tales of Bodhisattvas or previous incarnations of Buddha. They were done in a period when Buddhism in India was fast moving from the original Hinayana phase, where images of Buddha were not allowed to a blooming Mahayana phase, where images of not only Buddha but also of his previous incarnations and all the heavenly deities were very vividly depicted. 58

Paintings appear on almost every surface of the cave except for the floor. At various places the art work has become eroded due to decay and human interference. Therefore, many areas of the painted walls, ceilings, and pillars are fragmentary. The painted narratives of the Jātaka tales are depicted only on the walls, which demanded the special attention of the devotee. They are didactic in nature, meant to inform the

community about the Buddha’s teachings and life through successive rebirths. Their placement on the walls required the devotee to walk through the aisles and ‘read’ the narratives depicted in various episodes. 59

The wall surface for the mural paintings was sculpted rough by hammer and chisel. On this rough surface a plaster comprised of such organic materials like vegetable fibers, paddy husk, grass and similar plants was mixed with fine sand. At first a coarse layer of plaster was applied and then on top a very fine layer was applied to give a final extremely smooth finish to the surface on which the painting was done.

Except for the black color that was collected from the residue of oil lamps all others were mineral colors. The pigments and colors were all available locally except for the blue that was extracted from Lapis Lazuli, which had to be imported from central Asia. Some form of gum or glue was used as a binding material.

The sculptures and paintings depict Buddha and Bodhisattvas – the previous incarnations of Lord Buddha in both human and animal forms.

The Jataka tales that are depicted in the paintings usually have a moral significance. The mural showing scenes from Saç-danta Jātaka portrays boundless generosity. The Visvantara Jātaka tale mural is showing the quality of charity. The Vidhurapaṇḍita Jātaka mural depicts wisdom. It seems that the monks painting these murals were interested in influencing the viewer to lead a virtuous life in the first instance. If some one was influenced enough to study about Buddhism and even convert to that philosophy would have been a secondary motive. Men, women and children from all economic status in society are depicted along with animals.

In the cave 17 the humble ants are shown climbing a trunk of a tree in a scene from Śaḍ-danta Jātaka. On the ceilings the monk artists gave free vent to their creativity using not only real animals and creatures but also fantastic and semi-divine creatures taken from rich mythology of ancient India. There is literary evidence that by the time of the second phase of painting at Ajanta caves, the art of painting in India was highly developed. A treatise on painting was composed at the same time as this later phase at Ajanta that was called Chitrasutra, which is a part of the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa. This treatise documents thousands of guidelines informing the members of the guild of artists on how to paint. There are quite precise instructions about how to prepare various colored paint, how to use the colored paint and how to create the shades. For instance it mentions that the color of water in a pool is a reflection of the sky where as the falling water is the natural color of water that resembles moon light. In ancient India the different arts like painting, dance, music and sculpture were all intermingled. The painter was familiar with all the other disciplines and he could also be leading a life of an ascetic Buddhist monk.  

The Bodhisattva Padmapāni in cave 1 holds the lotus which symbolizes grace. One of the wonders of this cave is a relief carving of four deer who share one head in common. The pictures of the golden geese, the pink elephant and the bull fight suggest that all living things are one. Mr. Griffiths has described the masterly skill of the Ajanta artist in decorative design in the ceiling panels of cave 1 in these words:  

"The smaller panels are ornamented with design as varied and graceful as they are fanciful. Some with grotesque little figures, rich in humour and quantity, dressed in Persian turbans, coats, and striped stockings, gamboling amid fruits and flowers; dancing, drinking, or playing upon instruments; or chattering together; some with animals combined, with the lotus, drawn with remarkable fidelity and action; as the elephant, humped bull, and the monkey; parrots, geese and conventional birds singly and in pairs, with foliated crests, and trails convoluted like heraldic lambrequins, showing the upper and under surface of the ornament.

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60. [http://www.indiatravelerusa.com/city_Ajanta.html](http://www.indiatravelerusa.com/city_Ajanta.html) p. 1
Depiction of animals in Ajanta paintings signify events related with Buddha. Deer is a direct reference to the Buddha’s first sermon in the deer park, Sarnath. The message given is that Buddha’s disposition and benign presence was so wondrous that even animals came to listen to his sermons.  

61. Soumya Prakash, *Our Colourful World in Ajanta and Ellora*, p. 28
Pl. 87. Mahā Hamsa Jātaka, Ajantā
Pl. 75. Sarabumiga Jātaka, Ajantā
C. Significance of Animal Symbols on coins of Early Buddhism

An ornament called nishka was at first offered in the barter system. Thereafter, gold was obtained from the sands of rivers in India and also from Central Asia, Afghanistan and Tibet, and used in transactions during the Vedic period. This type of gold piece was known as hiranya-pinda (ingot). Likewise Satamana and pada become the pieces for the system. This was the period between 1500 and 800 B.C. approximately. Then was invented the custom of stamping the metallic pieces by kings of the States. It is only in the Aṣṭādhyāyi that the earliest definite mention of stamped metallic pieces or coins is made round about the 6th and 5th century B.C. It mentions that the ornament nishka now had a definite value. Satamana and pada are also mentioned in it. But it seems to be a fact that the coins in their final form had originated in India long before the time of Aṣṭādhyāyi, that is at least a century before Lydia or China thought of them. 62

The concept of money as coins, a piece of metal of defined weight stamped with symbol of authority for financial transaction was conceived by three different civilization independently and almost simultaneously. Coins were introduced as a means to trade things of daily usage in Asia minor, India and China in 6th Century B.C.

The archaeological evidences clearly indicate that the coins were minted in India long before 5th Century BC in Northern and Central India. Panini wrote Aṣṭādhyāyi in 4th - 5th Century BC in which he has mentioned Satamana, Nishkas, Sana, Vimastika, Karshapana and its various sub-divisions to be used in financial transaction.

62. Mishra B.N, Nalanda p. 261
Kautilya’s Arthasastra (400 B.C.) mentions Pana, Ardh-Pana, Pāda and Aśṭabhāga identified to be silver coins, and Pāda, Ashtabhāga, Māshaka, Ardhamāshaka, Kakani and Ardha-Kakani, identified to be copper coins.\textsuperscript{63}

The Buddhist texts mention the following coin-names: Kahāpana, Addhakahāpana, Pāda, Māsaka, Addha-māsaka and Kakani.

From the above, it is clear that Shatamana was the earliest coin with its Pada interpreted to be a quarter. The succeeding Shana, according to Mahabharata, was one eighth of the Shatamana. In the period of Aśṭādhyāyi two new names, viz., Vimsatika and Trimshatka were introduced and with them cropped the names Karṣapana, Paṇa and Masha. None of the names, e.g. Shatamana, Shana, Vimsatika and Trimśatka is mentioned in the Buddhist texts and the Arthasastra, and instead Karṣapana, Paṇa and Masha had come into currency in about the time of Panini, i.e., 5\textsuperscript{th} century BC and they continued to be current in the subsequent period of Kautilya and were also in vogue at the time of compilation of the Buddhist texts and the Arthasastra. But before the time of compilation of the Buddhist texts and the Arthasastra, the coins, namely, Shatamana, Shāna, Vimsatika and Trimśatka had ceased to exist.\textsuperscript{64}

The Arthasastra of Kautilya (c. 4\textsuperscript{th} century B.C.) records that the “metal was first melted in crucibles (Musha) and purified with alkalis (kṣara); then the metal was beaten into sheets on an anvil (adhiṁkāni) with a hammer (mushtika) and then cut into pieces with clippers (sandansa) and finally they were stamped with dies or punches having symbols (bimba-tanka). These coins are known as “Punch-marked coins.” The punched side was called the obverse. “The other side or the reverse remained blank. In course of time this side also was impressed with some minute marks. All these coins were silver coins. They were current from c. 8\textsuperscript{th} century B.C. \textsuperscript{65}

\textsuperscript{63} Bhanu Agrawal, Subas Rai, \textit{Indian Punch-Marked coins} p. 148
\textsuperscript{64} Bhanu Agrawal, Subas Rai, \textit{Indian Punch-Marked Coins} p.149
\textsuperscript{65} Mishra B.N., \textit{op. cit}, p. 261
The next metal-casting process began sometime during the 2nd century B.C. Terracotta casting moulds for making punch-marked coins have been found at Mathura, Jhusi (Allahabad), Sisupalagarh (Orissa) and Kondapur (Andhra Pradesh). A bronze matrix with the impression of a punch-marked coin is reported from Eran (M.P.).

Copper was used for manufacturing coins from the Mauryan times as referred to by Kautilya but they came in use in the post-Mauryan period. Most likely their manufacturing ceased sometime in the 1st century B.C.

During the Post-Mauryan-Pre-gupta periods the coins were either casts produced from moulds, the technique employed for copper coins in the Mauryan period, or were struck from the dies, the technique introduced in the time of the Indo-Bactrians. The technique of manufacturing changed during this period. Earlier, the symbols were stamped by separate punches; but they were now composed into one die or mould. A new element of inscriptions was also added to most of the coins to denote the issuing authority.

The moulds were made of bronze, stone, earthen ware, beaten clay or iron. The molten metal was run into moulds. The latest development was to strike them from dies. The double die-struck method was finally adopted.

The earliest coins of India are commonly known as punch marked coins. As the name suggests, these coins bear symbols of various types, punched on pieces of silver of specific weight.

Punch marked coins are marked with 1-5 (and sometimes more) marks representing various symbols. Two well known numismatics, D. B. Spooner and D. R. Bhandarkar after careful study independently concluded that the punching of various symbols representing animals, hills, tree and human figures followed a
definite pattern and these coins were issued by royal authority. Each of the kingdom have issued distinct type of silver coins to facilitate the trade.  

Ancient Indian coinage was based on 'karṣapaṇa' unit that consists of 32 ratti (3.3 grams of silver). A ‘Ratti’ is equivalent to 0.11 gms which is the average weight of a Gunja Steel (a bright scarlet coloured seed). Subsidiary denominations of karṣapaṇa like half karṣapaṇa (16 ratti), quarter karṣapaṇa (8 ratti) and 1/8 of karshapana (4 ratti).  

The earliest coins were dumpy silver 35-mashaka pieces of roughly 7.6 gm. that featured a single "6-arm symbol" punch. They seem to have been soon superseded by 25-mashaka pieces of roughly 5.5 gm. on thinner, more spread flans, but with the same 6-arm symbol punch. The next stage retained the same flan type and the same 6-arm punch in the center, but three additional punches were added around the central punch. Perhaps this group was issued by the Haryankas. This period included the time during which the Buddha came to Magadha, where he attained enlightenment in the Magadhan city of Gaya, and where he preached for most of the remainder of his lifetime.  

Around 420 BCE, perhaps with the ascension of Shishunaga, the 25-mashaka denomination was abandoned and replaced by a karshapana standard of roughly 3.5 gm. At first, the karshapana continued to feature four punches, but quite soon this was changed to a five punch design. Two of the punches were consistently a solar disc and a variety of the 6-arm symbol. The three remaining punches varied.  

67. Ibid p. 2
These are the first coins on which animal symbols were punched, shown in the table below:

**Silver 25-mashakas**  
c. 5th century BCE  
Weight: 4.73 gm., Dim: 27 x 23 mm.  
Central 6-arm punch, surrounded by three other punches / blank  
*Ref*: MATEC 2780-82.  

**Silver 20-mashakas**  
c. 5th century BCE  
Weight: 4.73 gm., Dim: 27 x 23 mm.  
Central 6-arm punch, surrounded by three other punches / blank  
*Ref*: MATEC 2780-82.

The first of these is the elephant, which is found on the obverse in two well-marked and distinct groups of coins. In other series the elephant is especially found on the cast copper coins and on the coins here attributed to Eran and Taxila. Although a common type is seems therefore to have a local significance.

**Silver karāpaṇa**  
c. 5th-4th century BCE  
Weight: 3.45 gm., Dim: 25 x 23 mm.  
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others, plus banker's marks / Banker's mark  
*Ref*: GH 48.

Silver karúapaíla
c. 5th-4th century BCE
Weight: 3.22 gm., Dim: 18 x 22 mm.
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others / Blank
Ref: GH 186.

The bull is a very common type on the punch-marked as on the coins of ancient India generally. On many series it is undoubtedly the bull Nandi of Siva, but that one ought to attribute so definite a religious significance to it on the punch-marked coins is unlikely. The following forms occur:

It is a common type on many of the tribal series, very frequently accompanied by a tree in railing, but its absence from Taxila and rarity on the varied types of Eran and Ujjain may be noted. The bull does not occur as a major reverse type, nor is it found on any reverse in the British Museum collection. 69

Silver karúapana
c. 5th-4th century BCE
Weight: 3.13 gm., Dim: 19 x 27 mm.
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others, plus banker's marks / Banker's marks
Ref: GH 200.

69. Allan John, catalogue of the coins of Ancient India P-XXVI
Silver karúapaña
C. 5th-4th century BCE
Weight: 3.27 gm., Dim: 23 x 20 mm.
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others / Blank
Ref: GH 201.

An animal which forms a characteristic symbol on one group of coins is the rhinoceros, which survived in the Panjab down to the sixteenth century. The horn is always represented as curved forwards as on the ‘unicorn’ of the Mohenjo-daro seals. This type is not found on the reverse nor on any other series. 70

Silver karúapaña
C. 5th-4th century BCE
Weight: 3.15 gm., Dim: 13 x 22 mm.
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others, plus banker’s marks / Blank
Ref: GH 320.

The rabbit occurs on several varieties of coins either alone or in combination with symbols. A rabbit in a crescent, which presumably represents the crescent moon and may be compared with the type on the coin of Viñjudeva, It also represent the moon. 71

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70. Ibid p. XXVIII
71. Ibid p. XXVIII
Silver karúapaña

C. 5th-4th century BCE

Weight: 3.09 gm., Dim: 15 x 24 mm.
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others, plus banker's marks
Blank
Ref: GH 359.

Silver karúapaña

C. 5th-4th century BCE

Weight: 3.07 gm., Dim: 14 x 21 mm.
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others
Banker's marks
Ref: GH 463.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Obverse</th>
<th>Reverse</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seven Symbols</td>
<td>![Image of Obverse Coin]</td>
<td>![Image of Reverse Coin]</td>
</tr>
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Coin #3:
Magadha janapada, Silver karúapaña, c. 4th century BCE
Weight: 3.45 gm., Dim: 25 x 23 mm.
Five punches: sun, 6-arm, and three others / Banker's mark
Ref: GH 48.
We do not know the significance of the punches. An intriguing sentence in an ancient text (Commentary) viz. Visuddhimagga says that by looking at a coin, a money-changer would at once know from which village, town, or mountain or river bank and by what means it was struck. This suggest that the punches did indicate the origin of the coin.

Kalinga Janapada  500-350 BC Silver, half Karshapana Uniface Weight: 1.6 gm
Very Rare

Shown above is a very rare coin of Kalinga Janapada which is in mint condition. This is from a recent hoard which supposedly surfaced from river delta; about half square and rest circular in shape.

In ancient India during 600-321 BC, many Janapadas issued coins with only one symbol like Lion (Shursena of Braj), humped bull (Saurashtra) or Swastika (Dakshin Panchala). Four symbol coins were issued by Kashi, Chedi (Bundelkhand), Vanga (Bengal) and Prachya (Tripura) Janapadas. Five symbol punch marked coins were first issued by Magadha which were continued during Mauryan expansion.
MAURYAS, THE FIRST EMPERORS

Mauryan Empire (Ashoka the great?)
310-181 BC
Silver Karshapana
Obverse: 3 deities and peacock
Reverse: Peacock on hill
Weight: 3.35 gm (32 rattis)
Reference: GH, Series VII
Scarce

Mauryan emperor which shows sun, the symbol of Mauryan.

Kuninda

Amoghbhuti Late 2nd Century BC Silver Drachm, Bilingual
Obverse: Deer and Deity, Brahmi Legends
Reverse: 6 symbols, Kharoshti legends
Weight: 2.4 gm

Kuninda, which referred as Kulinda in ancient literature, issued very attractive silver coinage in late 2nd century BC. These coins were issued by king Amoghbhuti who ruled in the fertile valley of Jamuna, Beas and Sutljaj rivers (modern Punjab in northern India). The obverse of the coins shows a deer and Laxmi (goddess of wealth) is holding lotus in her uplifted hand. Between horns of deer, a cobra symbol is depicted. The reverse shows 6 symbols. Hill and river below, Nandipada (hoof of bull), tree in railing, Swastik and Y shaped symbol. Interestingly, the coins
Kuninda kingdom was eventually invaded by Kuúan and Sákas in middle of first century BC. Both, Indo-Greek and Kuninda kingdoms were annexed to make next great empire of India, Kuúán Empire.

Coin #5:

Mauryan Empire, perhaps Aũoka the Great (273-232 BCE), Silver karúapaña
Weight: 2.96 gm., Dim: 10 x 15 mm.

Three punches (three deities, peacock on hill, "steelyard" / Single punch (peacock on hill)

Ref: GH 591

Coin 5 is a silver karúapaña of the Maurya dynasty. Unfortunately, we do not have a definitive way to attribute these coins to specific kings, but this coin may well have been an issue of Aũoka the Great. Most Mauryan coins continued the Magadha pattern of five punches: a sun, a 6-arm symbol, and three others. The punches include a very interesting one of a peacock perched on a 5-arch hill, which in all probability was a Buddhist symbol. A smaller version of the same punch appears on the reverse.

Although the Mauryan coins followed the coins of Magadha in many respects: they remained on the same karúapaña weight standard, had essentially the same
technique of manufacture and continued the use of five official punches, they differed in one important respect: their flans were a lot smaller.

The Mauryan empire started to weaken soon after Ashoka’s death and crumbled by the second century BCE when the Mauryan king was overthrown by his general, Pushyamitra Sunga, founder of the Sunga dynasty. The Sunga kingdom, however, was quite small and never attained anything like the magnificence of Aūoka’s empire, one of the largest ever known in India.

Another type of early shatamana or karúapaña coin, in the denomination of 16 pattis, from Magadha, c.500's BCE   Source: ebay, May 2007

Silver karúapaña

\[ \text{c. 4th-2nd century BCE} \]

Weight: 3.19 gm., Dim: 16 x 17 mm.

Ref: GH 477.

Silver karúapaña

\[ \text{c. 4th-2nd century BCE} \]

Weight: 3.01 gm., Dim: 15 x 14 mm.

Ref: GH 510.
Silver karūapaña

c. 4th-2nd century BCE
Weight: 3.15 gm., Dim: 12 x 12 mm.
Ref: GH 512.

There are two symbols in which an animal is associated with a tree. The animal certainly seems to be horned, but that it is a goat is more doubtful. It is more probably of the deer family, an animal such as is found on the coins of the Kunindas.

Silver karūapaña

c. 4th-2nd century BCE
Weight: 3.38 gm., Dim: 13 x 15 mm.
Ref: GH 516.

Silver karūapaña

c. 4th-2nd century BCE
Weight: 3.35 gm., Dim: 13 x 14 mm.
Ref: GH 519.

Silver karūapaña

c. 4th-2nd century BCE
Weight: 3.38 gm., Dim: 16 x 9 mm.
Ref: GH 530.
Silver karúapaña  
c. 4th-2nd century BCE  
Weight: 3.22 gm., Dim: 13 x 17 mm.  
Ref: GH 543.

Silver karshapana  
c. 4th-2nd century BCE  
Weight: 3.36 gm., Dim: 13 x 12 mm.  
Ref: GH 549.

Silver karúapaña  
c. 4th-2nd century BCE  
Weight: 3.08 gm., Dim: 14 x 17 mm.  
Ref: GH 550.

Silver karúapaña  
c. 4th-2nd century BCE  
Weight: 3.37 gm., Dim: 11 x 16 mm.  
Ref: GH 555.
Animal Symbols and their historical significance:

In the evolution of the species it has been universally acknowledged that man appeared in the last of all living creatures. Soon after his august appearance in the hoary past, his fast task had been to adjust himself with the nature and the species. Initially, of course he had unreasonable fear about other animals whom he watched carefully from the distance and in fact, he admired strength and craftiness of some of the beasts. In his observation there was awe, admiration, sympathy and above all love for certain animals.

Very soon man could distinguish between the ferocious as well as noble type. With his superior intellect man could tame the latter variety, specially those beasts who came down very near to the dwelling of man on their own accord. Of these some animals supplied milk, the flesh of some was taken as food, a few animals were chosen for riding, handling and chasing enemies, while a limited number of animals were used for drawing the plough-share. This close intimacy between the man and the animal was eventually reflected in art, sculpture and subsequently in coins. The fantasy and fascination of Indian mind for different varieties of animals make the coins of India highly Kaleidoscopic. 72

The characteristic features of the punch-marked coins are their various symbols, each portraying some especial significance of the then time and the clime. During the past decades, many scholars attempted to trace the origin, meaning and significance of these symbols.

Many scholars have identified punch-marked symbols with religious characters.

72 Rath Jayanti, op cit Pg. 58
Some of the punch-marked symbols do occur on ancient scales, in sculpture, and in figured beads, their meaning in most cases reflect the contemporary superstitious beliefs. The solar symbol, the hill in the association of some birds or animal and the crescent, the elephant, the bull, the dog, the rabbit, the snake, the fish, the crocodile, the frog and the trees, represented. 73

The animal word of the punch-marked coins consist of elephant, bull, lion, dog, cat, deer, camel, rhinoceros, rabbit, frog, fish, turtle, ghariyal (fish eater crocodile), scorpion and snake. Among the birds, peacock is very popular. The lion and horse symbols appear to have acquired greater popularity in 3rd century B.C.

This is evidenced by the capitals of Ashok. The horse symbol is also found on some coins of Yaudheyas and on the series of the coins of Mathura rulers Sivadatta (reverse). It appears as a sacrificial victim which evidenced by the Kanauja coins. Allan has noticed a Yupa or a linga (Yupa is more acceptable) with the horse symbol on their round copper coin of Kanauja. He explained that the reverse has a horse apparently before a sacrificial post (Yupa) and may thus commemorate an asvamedha sacrifice. The horse figure is very often found on the coins of Kanauja Kausambi, Mathura, Panchala and Vrishnis.

The symbol of bull standing before a symbol on the earliest coins of the Arjunayanas and the Yaudheyas, may very well represent the bull before yupa i.e. (sacrificial post). The bull was also a characteristic device of monetary issue of Ayodhya. This symbol is very common on Kausambi coins and also on a few specimens of Mathura. The coin from Almora also show the depiction of bull before tree in railing. The lion symbol gained more popularity than the horse in subsequent times. It came to symbolize power and might and ultimately royal dignity. It entry in

73. Agrawal Bhanu, Subash Rai op cit Pg. 155
Indian art and mythology was apparently from Western Asia and the earliest coins to bear lion figures were issued by the foreign rulers, i.e. the Indo-Greek kings called Pantaleon (C. 185-175 B.C.) and Agathocles (180-165 B.C.). However, the lion device is also appeared on the silver punch-marked coins and on few specimens of local coins. 74

Lion symbol appears on the indigenous coin of Taxila, Agaras (Punjab) (late 2nd C.B.C.), Rajanyas (Punjab), Rajasthan (C. 1st C.B.C.) and Malva. The elephant symbol is another popular symbol prominently shown on the coins. Bull and elephant together have conspicuous symbols on Indian coinage. In fact, these two animals dominated the ancient Indian art. Three elephants with riders is characteristic reverse mark on coin issued by early Hindi rulers of Mathura, while single elephant is favoured variously on the coins of Ayodhya, Kausambi, Mathura etc.

The stag or deer symbol is also depicted on the coin of Kunindas and Yaudheyas as well as those from Almora. 75

Among the bird symbols cock, peacock, swan and duck are frequently represented. The depiction of owl can also be seen in Punch-marked coin. The peacock symbol is very popular in the coin of Yaudheyas. On some specimens of punch-marked coins the peacock is placed on the top of a hill.

Among the reptiles the most conspicuous is the snake symbol, which is portrayed frequently on Indian coin. The fish symbol is generally depicted in pairs and also in a tank (Udhehikas early 2nd C.B.C.), but sometimes is to be found in a group of boar (on some punch-marked coins) or five (on a series of the Mathura ruler Gomitra I (C. 1st C.B.C.). Another water animal, represented on early Indian coin, is the crocodile. Frog is frequently depicted on punch marked coins. The Budhhist

74 Rath Jayanti, op cit Pg. 58
75 ibid
contact with lion further transformed it as the power of the seeker of the liberation from all bonds of nature, which according to Buddhist faith is primary cause of all casual nexus "Pratītya Samutpāda". Thus, the Buddha has been described as "Sakyasimha" i.e. the lion of Sakyas. The lions of the Aśokan pillar facing four quarters and carrying Dharma-chakra on their heads stands for a two fold implications:- On one hand they represent the Buddha, who set in motion the wheel of law or Dharma Chakra to deliver mankind from the sorrow of samsāra and on the other hand, they stand as the royal symbol of Aśoka who dedicated his life to propagate the gospel of Buddha to the world at large. 76

The association of birds and animals with the nude mother Goddess, represented on the Mauryan discs found from various places also needs emphasis. This Mother Goddess is usually associated with the Makara, the monkey, the elephant, the lion, the antelope, the deer, the stage, the dog, the boar, the goat, the rhinoceros, the goose, the crane, the parrot, the peacock, the owl and heron, some of which also appear on punch-marked coins.

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The symbols in the context of these coins had religious significance is well attested from the passage of the Visuddhimagga, where it is said that the or the money tester (Herrannika) can tell by looking to the coins "which of them were struck at which village, borough, town, mountain and river bank and also by what mint master".

76. Rath Jayanti, op.cit.p.58
Cunningham, Kosambi (D.D) has also pointed out that some of the name of the kings given in the Puranic and Buddhist literature lend themselves very readily to direct representations by the symbolism of the punch-marked coins. For example, Sunga means a fig. tree; the hare-in-a-crescent could certainly be read as Sasanka. The dog with puppy or hare with leveret-might symbolize Śiśupāla Peacock on the arches can only be taken to mean Maurya, the name of the dynasty. The crescent on the hill was the monogram used by Chandragupta, as he proclaimed his descent from the moon i.e. Chandragupta. The hare on the arches indicated descent from Sasa or Sisu and the bull on the five arches, descent from Nandi. He further indicated the caduceus mark was the mark of Aśoka, on the basis of the presence of symbol on a long series of coins and long, peaceful, stable, and prosperous time of Aśoka.

Due to the important significance of animals in Ancient India, the Indian Govt. on 26th Jan 1950 has adopted Sarnath Lion – Capital of Aśoka, as a National Emblem and printed on coins & currency notes.

The Sarnath Lion Capital is replete with symbolism inspired by Lord Buddha’s life. The four animals in the Sarnath capital are believed to symbolize different phases in Lord Buddha’s life. The Elephant is a representation of Queen Maya’s conception of Buddha when she saw a white elephant entering her womb in dream. The Bull represents desire during the life of the Buddha as a prince. The Horse symbolizes Buddha’s departure from palatial life while the Lion represents the attainment of Buddhahood.

Thus we find that the animal symbols on the coins has played an important significance in the Early Buddhism.

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77. Bhanu Agrawal, Subas Rai, op.cit.157
Rear view of the North Gateway, Sanchi Stupa 1